

India is indispensable to US, says Barack Obama

US President Barack Obama warmly welcomed Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington, affirming that India and the US will form the defining partnership of 21st century to face global challenges.

Praising India as a world leader, Barack Obama Tuesday said India was 'indispensable' for his country and that the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington reflected the 'abiding bond' between the two countries.

Welcoming Manmohan Singh at the White House, Obama said it was the 'first state visit in my presidency'.

'It is fitting that you (Manmohan Singh) and India are so recognised.'

The US president said that the 'visit reflects the abiding bonds' between the two nations.

'Ours is a common story...two bold experiments in democracy,' Obama said, and added that the constitutions of the two countries begin with the words 'We, the People'.

Saying that 'ours is a story of two economic marvels', Obama said India is leader in Asia and around the world.

'India is indispensable,' Obama said and noted that the two countries shared a world vision and stand together in fight against the terror.

The two leaders made their statements at the East Room in the White House, after the grand ceremonial welcome on the South Lawns had to be cancelled due to rains.

After the two leaders walked in, they stopped as the anthems of both countries were played. On one side of the room, children waved flags, while members of Indian delegation and corporate honchos lined up on another part of the room.

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