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Pak may see Washington's November invite to Singh as a snub: Expert

Ani *July 21st, 2009*



NEW DELHI - U.S. President Barack Obama's invitation to Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to visit Washington in the last week of November is unlikely to go down well with Pakistan, feels an expert on South Asian affairs.

The invitation to visit the United States was given by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, when she met Dr. Singh at his residence in New Delhi over Junch.

"India wants to separate itself from Pakistan in the eyes of the world, but we can't deal with India in a vacuum. Islamabad is going to see this [the Obama invitation to Singh and India's elevated status in Washington] as a snub, so we can expect new pressure between the US and Pakistan," the Christian Science Monitor quoted Malou Innocent, a South Asia expert at the Cato Institute in Washington, as saying.

Clinton said the Indian Prime Minister would be President Obama's guest at the White House on November 24, making him the first foreign leader to visit the United States under the new American leader.

The importance bestowed on Singh may be fitting, some regional experts say, given India's booming economy, its example as a stable multiethnic society, and its status as the world's largest democracy.

The attention to India and Singh, however, may cause problems between the United States and another crucial partner-Pakistan.

The state visit for Singh "says the US wants to strengthen diplomatic relations with India, a rapidly growing power and one that will be critical to addressing the big global issues Obama wants to address, so the level of visit is appropriate," said Innocent.

At the same time, she adds, the US can't neglect the issues that keep India and Pakistan rivals - especially Kashmir, as well as sectarian extremism and nuclear competition. (ANI)

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