

BRITISH ENVOY APOLOGISES FOR ATTACK ON INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION

Speaking at the Indian Defence and Aerospace Summit, he denounced the vandalism by protesters outside the Indian High Commissioner's office in London.

**TSG BUREAU
NEW DELHI**

Dominic Asquith KCMG, the British High Commissioner to India apologised for the attack that was carried on the Indian high commission in London, while speaking at the Indian Defence and Aerospace Summit that was organised by the NewsX and *The Sunday Guardian* in the capital on Saturday.

"I really do feel bad about the demonstrations that happened in London and I apologise for it. We respect peaceful protests, but at the same time, our foremost concern was to protect the premises and staffs working in London. A police inquiry is ongoing and I think whatever happened was unfortunate," Dominic Asquith said.

He also stressed on the perception that the UK was behind the United Nations' Security Council meeting,



Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, British High Commissioner to India, delivering his address.

Dominic made it clear that the UK was not really supportive of this step.

Dominic Asquith said "There was the member of permanent-5 wanted to have a meeting of UN Security Council, in my understanding, when permanent five members seek a meeting that

is respected and that's a big thing. But what happened in New York was just an informal meeting of the UN Security Council and that is considered to be the lowest level of the meeting. There was no statement after the meeting and it was just an informal press briefing. Our

point was that if there is any consensus we will certainly go for that but we never push for anything of that sort."

"What happened next to the meeting really puzzles us. In terms of how it was interpreted, a misperception and a wrong interpretation was circulated. What struck me

that some of the comments were very critical about us, but most of these comments were based on just misrepresentation of facts," Dominic Asquith added.

The British envoy spoke on many issues that bind the two nations together, the most prominent of them being the climate change issue.

"In context to the climate issue, the most important step that we have taken is the decision to cut our emission and we have set a deadline of 2024 to reduce our emission sharply. India too is looking for a coalition with the Disaster Resilient Programme, supported by UK and Japan with climate as a core issue," Dominic Asquith said.

Stressing on the growing, partnership in the research sector, Dominic Asquith said "UK -India Research fund has reached the highest level. In 10 years UK-India research fund has gone from

zero to 300 billion. India is the second-biggest partner in the research programme. India-UK is also working on to improve the cyber partnership. There is a shift in G5 and now the E-7 countries are going to turn into the biggest economy. India has now intense focus and is bargaining hard and working in direction of improving technology and other sector. UK and India is the top investor in each other's space."

On the counter terrorism front, Dominic smith said that the UKs stand is being misrepresented. "On Counter terrorism, when I hear that UK has turned a blind eye on the issue, I feel disappointed," Dominic Asquith said

While speaking about the economic power centre scenario in London, Dominic Asquith said: "The UK remains an economic powerhouse and more Euros were traded in UK then



in entire European Union (EU). Almost double the times of FDI came to UK in last quarter. So UK is still the financial centre and it is very attractive place for innovative startups to operate. In terms of the soft power, in summer we have cricket world cup in summer, the formula-1 and Wimbledon virtually at the same time."

Dominic Asquith also said "Largest network of diplomatic mission we have in India. We have also increased the relationship with Indian Banks like SBI, IDBI, IDFC and others. In last three years we have doubled the number of student Visas. On the global side the data use and cybersecurity are the biggest challenge on which India

and UK are working. On the strategic side the scenario is changing. India is bargaining hard, Defence modernising is happening in India. It has an intense focus on the outcome and it recognizing the needs of digital modernisation."

Replying to the question of NewsX that why India's military ties are not growing, like it is growing with US, Dominic replied "When Prime Minister Modi visited UK in 2015 that created the structure and that has created the base which have expanded the horizon. On the government to government level we and UK are working to increase not only the Defence partnership but UK and India is also working to push the Defence education.



(L-R) Lt. Gen. M.M. Narvane, Vice Chief, Indian Army, Admiral Tim Fraser CB, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, UK, and General Bipin Rawat, Chairman-COSC (Chiefs of Staff Committee) at the summit.



Some of the key delegates of the summit.



Men in uniform at the summit.

India, Israel are natural allies, says envoy

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Calling India and Israel not only strategic partners but "natural allies", the Israeli Ambassador to India, Dr Ron Malka said the scope of collaboration between the two countries was more than any other allies in the world. Speaking at the Indian Defence and Aerospace Summit 2019, organised by NewsX and *The Sunday Guardian* of the iTV Network, Malka said India and Israel must work together in areas like food security, water security and cyber field apart from countering the common threat of terrorism.

"Looking East from Israel, India is the first and the only democratic country. Like-



Israeli Ambassador to India, Dr Ron Malka, at the summit.

wise, the most democratic country India finds on its West is Israel. Apart from the rich ancient culture and civilization, the two countries also face similar challenges and hostilities which essentially make India and Israel natural allies and not just strategic partners.

Israel is 150 times smaller than India yet the scope of collaboration between the two countries is immense," Malka said.

Giving impetus to the "Make in India" mission of the Narendra Modi government, the Ambassador said Israel has been keen on "Making

with India", developing and exporting defence products to other countries. He said with abundance of skilled and unskilled manpower, India was the most ideal country for investment and developing strategic partnership with Israel. He also emphasized on new technological innovations and said it had the potential of defusing tension and reducing conflicts with neighbouring countries.

Touching upon the common challenge of fighting terrorism, the Israeli Ambassador said the world now understands that they need to unite against global terrorism and that India and Israel have big scope of partnership in this area. He claimed that with the use of advanced technology, Is-

rael has been successful in protecting its borders. However, the use of technology could also result in defusing tension and thus making world more sustainable, he added.

Malka noted that even in the area of military alliance, there was a big scope for India and Israel to forge partnership in communication and digital defence, which he termed was the future of national security. He cautioned that India and Israel must be fully prepared to tackle any cyber attack on its stock market and power infrastructure. Laying the vision for future, he urged the Israeli companies to manufacture with India and take up new research and development to be exported to the rest of the world.



Special guests at the summit.