

Moonilal: Modi visit historical

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A HISTORIC moment in Trinidad and Tobago's diplomatic history.

That is how Energy Minister Dr Roodal Moonilal described the official visit by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week.

Modi concluded an official visit to T & T on Friday, marked by a series of bilateral agreements and symbolic ceremonies.

During a packed itinerary that Moonilal described as a 'whirlwind, hectic but extremely productive visit', both nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) encompassing six key agreements.

The signing was followed by a symbolic tree-planting ceremony at the Red House in Port of Spain.

'As you knew from the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, we have agreed on several matters across several departments,' Moonilal said.

He highlighted India's contribution of laptops for students, describing it as a welcome gesture.

The agreements span various sectors, including agro-processing, renewable energy, forensic science, and information technology.

'We welcome very much the contribution in terms of agro-processing, machinery and technology, which we have already received. We welcome the priority commitment that India has announced for Trinidad and Tobago in several areas, including the Forensic Science Centre,' Moonilal said.

Energy policy

Renewable energy was also high on the agenda, with India recognised as a global leader in solar power.

Moonilal said discussions are ongoing regarding energy policy and sustainability.

'We are discussing alternative energy. We are discussing other matters in terms of energy security as well.

But (Friday) has been a historic day,' he emphasised.

He stated: 'We look forward to enhancing our relationship, not only culturally, but also in terms of trade and investment, job creation and the creation of additional value that will come to us with co-operation from such a large and powerful economic and industrial country,' he added.

Minister of Works and Infrastructure Jearlean John echoed similar sentiments on the significance of the MoU. Reflecting on India's global stature, she spoke about the country's strength in multiple sectors.

John described India as a 'pharmaceutical superpower, IT superpower'.

'Many of the names you are hearing now in Silicon

Valley, they come from India. They are an agriculture superpower,' she said.

John added that India's advancements in strategic sectors could help guide Trinidad and Tobago's economic diversification efforts.

'So really, India has been really recently a healthcare superpower as it were, in some very strategic areas and areas that will do us well. Because as we move to diversify our economy, it won't shower us a blessing. You have to earn; you have to work to diversify your economy.

'Whether it is finance, AI, the areas in which we have deep interests, sports, they have been raised ahead as a country that has the resources...and they have been really becoming very wealthy,' she added.

Prime Minister Modi also highlighted the environmental co-operation between the two nations through the symbolic 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' (A Tree for Mother) movement.

In a post on his official Facebook page, Modi wrote: 'Gratitude to Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar for taking part in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' (a tree for Mother) movement. India and Trinidad & Tobago understand the adverse effects of climate change and will do everything possible to make our planet greener and better.'