

Beat: News

Obama to travel to India in January to mark Republic Day

-, 21.11.2014, 16:47 Time

USPA News - U.S. President Barack Obama will travel to India in January next year to participate in the country's Republic Day celebrations as the guest of honor, making him the first American president to do so, a White House spokesman said on Friday. The visit was announced just hours after Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said he had invited Obama to be the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26. "This Republic Day, we hope to have a friend over. I invited President Obama to be the first U.S. president to grace the occasion as Chief Guest," he said.

The White House later confirmed that Obama had accepted the invitation. "The President will meet with the Prime Minister and Indian officials to strengthen and expand the U.S.-India strategic partnership," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said. He did not say how long Obama plans to stay in India. Friday's news comes just two months after Prime Minister Modi, who took office earlier this year, visited the White House in an effort to strengthen the strained relationship between India and the United States. Obama's high-profile for Republic Day, which is one of India's biggest national days to commemorate the adoption of the country's constitution, could further strengthen U.S.-India ties. Obama's visit to New Delhi in January will be his second trip to India since his inauguration as president in 2009. He first traveled to India in November 2010 to commemorate the terror attacks in Mumbai two years earlier, to meet with the country's prime minister, and to address a joint session of the Indian parliament.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2990/obama-to-travel-to-india-in-january-to-mark-republic-day.html>

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619