

# Governor Markell Meets with Ambassador, Business Leaders to Discuss India-Delaware Relations



Dr. S. Jaishankar, Ambassador of India to the United States, presents Governor Jack Markell with a vase from India as a gift during his visit to Delaware

**Wilmington, DE** – Joined by a dozen Delaware business leaders, Governor Markell spoke with Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar on the future of India-Delaware relations today at a breakfast reception organized by the Delaware Economic Development Office and the World Trade Center Delaware. Attendees at the reception included Bill Kurtz, chief financial and commercial officer for Bloom Energy; Hara-Prasad Nanda, global strategic planning director for DuPont; and Tom Keefer, deputy executive director of the Diamond State Port Corporation.

“In the new economy, giving Delaware businesses the opportunity to serve customers around the world and attracting foreign investment are major factors in creating jobs and economic opportunity for Delawareans,” said Markell. “We are proud to already have many connections with India and we appreciate the opportunity to engage with American companies founded by people from India as well as Delaware companies looking to create customers in India.”

Ambassador Jaishankar told the group that the election of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May, leading to India's first majority-led government in 30 years, has already led to improved relations between India and the United States. He expects the new government will work quickly to make the regulatory changes and infrastructure improvements needed to increase the country's growth rate, which has slid behind neighboring countries in recent years.

"Modi thinks there's a need to modernize the society to support that kind of growth, so there's a big social sector push for literacy and gender issue, cleanliness, infrastructure, skill development," Jaishankar said. "There's a much broader social economic agenda today."

Ambassador Jaishankar said the government has made it a priority to improve the ability for foreign companies to do business in India, simplifying tax systems and raising the limits for foreign investment in certain sectors. Sanitation, electric power, health care, environment, food and infrastructure are just a few of the industries that will all see new opportunities in India, he said.

"You're going to see a new China-level demand in the market," Jaishankar said.

Rebecca Faber, president/CEO of World Trade Center Delaware, hopes to see Delaware businesses capitalize on that growing demand.

"India is growing as a potential market for exports and partnerships for Delaware companies, and signs from the Modi administration indicate the speed of growth is likely to accelerate," Faber said. "Already this morning, Ambassador Jaishankar was able to offer assistance to a few of the companies in the room specific to their business needs."

World Trade Center Delaware is planning to lead a delegation of companies to the Embassy of India in Washington D.C. for further discussions in early 2015.

Bill Kurtz of Bloom Energy, a provider of solid oxide fuel cell technology with a manufacturing plant in Newark, was one of those companies able to bring opportunities and concerns to the ambassador during the meeting.

“We see India has a very attractive market opportunity for Bloom Energy to bring reliable, clean energy to improve their infrastructure and support growth and development in their economy,” Kurtz said.

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