

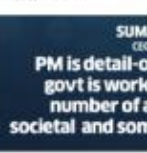
ET Global Business Summit 2015



PHEE TEIK YEOH
CEO, Midea
I was expecting PM to talk about aviation. I am sure as a great leader his focus is to ensure overall development



RAHUL BHATIA
CEO, IntraGlobal Enterprises
PM exudes honesty of purpose and immense confidence. The country has great expectations from him



SUMANT SINHA
CEO, Reflex Power
PM is detail-oriented. The govt is working hard in a number of areas—some societal and some economic



ET EXCLUSIVE Q&A

JAGDISH BHAGWATI
Economist

Modi is God's Gift to India

Jagdish Bhagwati laughs at the notion of a role in the Modi government. At the age of 80, says the celebrated economist and Columbia University's professor of economic and law, he is prone to falling asleep and is unlikely to be able to put the kind of hours the prime minister demands from his top aides. He is also willing to bet a case of wine—Indian wine—that Modi will open multi-brand retail to foreign investors within a year because the mandate has given the PM a constituency beyond petty shopkeepers.

Edited excerpts from an interview with ET:



What's your perception on Modi?

I've met a number of statesmen like Merkel, Cameron, and lots of ambassadors. I have met all PMs in India. But he (Modi) is quite unique. He is hands-on and not motivated by any ideological conceptions.

But isn't he shaped by a particular ideology?

He is shaped by an experience. But that experience is not an ideology. To him, in the end, it is to get the parties together and see what you can

do to push growth.

Are you on talking terms with Amartya Sen?

No. I haven't seen him in a while. But there is a joke. One guy tells another: These two people have not been on talking terms. So the other guy said I just heard them shouting at each other. (Laughs)

Some fellow had suggested that I was jealous of Professor Sen because he had the Nobel Prize and I don't. If I was going to be irritable, envious and so on, every fellow don't get something. I will be in definitely all the time. Who gets all whatever he or she wants? Even he hasn't. He was opposed by the 1991 reforms. Professor Sen says that growth is a fetish. He was not for FDI (Direct Foreign Investment). Or trade he is in favour. But not for it. And now when he thought on the FDI regime he was coming back with the Sena Gandhi sort of people he was plotting for social engineers. I am also for social engineers.

What are your views on Rajin, especially given this recurring charge that this government is uncomfortable with Rajin...

I couldn't tell you. But in my opinion he is a pretty able guy. Rajin comes from corporate finance. He has learnt some macro economics. Even if he makes a mistake once in

while, it really doesn't matter. One important point which you should know—I was discussing with PM (Jagdish)—is that even if he isn't not done right, nobody is going to be affecting much importance to it. There is no possibility of India being downgraded as changes are going to

What advice will you give to vice-chairman of MFI Kaanagi Prasad Panagariya?

I think he and Jagruram Rajan should be able to work things out. I think we are at a fairly juncture. I would do what Rajin did—lower interest rates. Because inflation is less, oil price has fallen and so on. It's from the demand side that we are having a problem.

What are your views on Rajin, especially given this recurring charge that this government is uncomfortable with Rajin...

I couldn't tell you. But in my opinion he is a pretty able guy. Rajin comes from corporate finance. He has learnt some macro economics. Even if he makes a mistake once in

but it is highly unlikely. Now that you have a superb man in Panagariya, I could prepare a report, like I did for Manmohan Singh in 1993. But that's just writing a report. Because at the age of 80, I can't work like he expects me to work. I fall asleep often. I have done enough for two lifetimes. (Laughs loudly). He (PM) (obviously) seems to like me. He came down (after the speech) and said keep the show and you'll in Gujarat. He didn't have to do it.

You have had a lot of face time with Modi. Did Modi talk to you about some kind of a role in the government or on the periphery?

No. I am 80. It might happen.

On Amartya Sen

Amartya Sen killed UPA 2...He says growth is a fetish. He was not for Direct Foreign Investment

There is always this little speak which talks about how we did the Panchayats and the Gandhi and the plastic surgery. But I think as soon as we improve the current situation on the economic front, you are not going to need that kind of a speech to boost your ego.

If you were to describe him (PM) in a word, what would that be?

He is a detail-oriented person. He is not just accumulating money. It's using it for social spending, like the Dutch Burghers.

How should Manmohan Singh be regarded in history?

I think he is a fundamentally courageous man. I think the Game of Two in Congress must have been here. If you resign, the party will be hurt.

In one word? It's very hard. I will just say he's God's gift to India. I have met all PMs here. But I have never met anybody like him.

What impresses you most?

It's his total lack of ideological preoccupation. His great drive is that the country moving. He is committed to removing poverty. He emerged from poverty. Not a point which Congress leaders Shree Swaraj mention that if you are running a tea store, it means, you are poor. Once in Ahmedabad, I discussed this with him. You have to tell people what Gujarat models. It is not just accumulating money. It's using it for social spending, like the Dutch Burghers.

How much time do you give that?

I will give it a year. Because the great advantage is that the party was always dependent on the shopkeepers and traders. But now he has got such a huge constituency for it. Young people—who are not petty shopkeepers. They want a forward movement. Now we can afford to be bold in Direct Foreign Investment.

the country will be hurt. And he is quite able enough to believe that. He is not what he used to be. It's a very funny problem. Going from big success to this situation. I think history in the long run will be kind to him. Right now I have a suspicion, they are all (in the Congress Party) being under a cloud of suspicion.

At Solihale lecture you said FDI in multi-brand retail will come...

Yes, I will give you a case of wine—Indian wine. Not foreign wine. (Laughs)



1. Jagdish Bhagwati with Suresh Prabhu, Railway Minister
2. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of International Trade, Nepal
3. (L) Usha Shankar Bhatia and Rahul Puri
4. (L) Suresh Prabhu, Jagdish Bhagwati, Gagan Adani and Suresh Bhatti Mittal



CANDIDCAMERA An Evening to Remember for the Capital



1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Minister of Rural Development Arun Jaitley
2. (L) BJP National Spokesperson Sambit Patra, Punjab Group Chairman Anil Puri
3. Reflex Power CEO Sumant Sinha, Union Minister of Planning Commission Arun Jaitley
4. IIFM president Aditya Ghosh, Ex-member of Planning Commission Arun Jaitley
5. IIFM Group Vice-Chairman Ravi Raj, Union Minister of Planning Commission Arun Jaitley
6. Chairman of JRF
7. IIFM India Chairman Deepak Kapoor, Union Minister of Finance Arun Jaitley
8. Congress MP Raju Bhargava and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley
9. Ambassador of the Netherlands, Ambassador of the Netherlands, IIFM Group Chairman Arun Jaitley
10. IIFM Group Chairman, Chairperson, Competition Commission of India (CCI) Ravi Narain, non-executive vice-chairman of the NSE