



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India  
ASTANA

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# Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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## Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Visits India

Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, paid an official visit to India on September 14-16, 2015. New Delhi was his first overseas destination after he assumed the office of Prime Minister for the fourth term in August, 2015.

President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee congratulated Mr. Wickremesinghe noting that his return to office reflected the faith of the people of Sri Lanka in his leadership. He underlined that history, culture and geographical proximity had made the relations between the two countries very special. He expressed hope that bilateral relations would scale new heights during Mr. Wickremesinghe's tenure.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held restricted and delegation level talks with the visiting dignitary on September 15.

Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence that with the wisdom and will of the leadership in Sri Lanka and the support of the people, Sri Lanka would achieve genuine reconciliation and development so that all Sri Lankans including the Sri Lankan Tamil community can live a life of equality, justice, peace and dignity in a united Sri Lanka. Seeking deeper economic engagement, Prime Minister Modi sought support for Indian investors who are keen to participate in Sri Lanka's economic development, especially in infrastructure, energy and transport sectors. He offered India's full support to strengthen connectivity between the two countries to deepen human and economic links. He assured Mr. Wickremesinghe of continuing commitment of India's development partnership in infrastructure, railways, energy, community development projects, agriculture, capacity building, science and technology, space and civil nuclear field. Both the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen defence and security cooperation. Both sides agreed to intensify cooperation in combating terrorism and work together for security and stability in the maritime neighbourhood. They also agreed that fishermen's associations on both sides should continue their efforts to find a solution to the fishermen issue. It was stressed that it should be seen as a humanitarian issue that affects livelihoods.

Prime Minister Mr. Wickremesinghe expressed his gratitude for India's assistance in resettlement and reconstruction in the North and the Eastern provinces. "We are looking at how power sharing and devolution takes place within the constitution, within a unitary state and there is still hope for much more to be done", he said.

In presence of the two Prime Ministers, four agreements were signed on 'Orbit frequency coordination of satellite for SAARC region', 'Supply of medical equipment to 200 bed ward complex at District General Hospital in Vavuniya', 'Establishment of Emergency Ambulance Services in Sri Lanka' and 'Renewal of MOU regarding Indian grant for implementation of Small Developmental Projects through local bodies, NGOs, charitable trusts, and education and vocational institutions'.



Prime Minister of Sri Lanka calls on President



PM of Sri Lanka meets PM

## Kazakhstan Celebrates 550th Anniversary of Kazakh Khanate

Kazakhstan celebrated the 550th anniversary of formation of Kazakh Khanate on September 11, 2015. Mass cultural, sporting events, conferences, exhibition of arts and crafts, craftsman workshops, gala concerts and forums dedicated to the anniversary theme were organized.

A magnificent theatrical show at Barys Ice Palace, the city's newly-built sports centre, depicted most significant events which occurred during last 3000 years on the territory of present-day Kazakhstan. Fifty yurts were built across Astana's Kazakh Eli Square, the site of most of the celebrations. Each yurt demonstrated features of a region and housed collections of Kazakh literature, artefacts, clothes, jewellery, household items, items, musical instruments, paintings, wooden and ceramic decorative items. Nazarbayev University organized Mangilik El, an international conference on the Kazakh Khanate, which was attended by scholars from scores of countries.



President of Kazakhstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev termed the celebrations as a tribute to the glorious past of the nation. He said that giving due credit to the ancestors' deeds inspires people's responsibility to the future. Independence is a blessing and Kazakhstan will always cherish, improve friendship and trust with its neighbours and build good relations with all countries. He emphasized that the generation raised in independent Kazakhstan had lifted the prestige of the country to unprecedented heights by realizing the centuries-old dream of its ancestors. He said that a monument dedicated to the Kazakh Khanate anniversary would be opened in a month in Taraz, a city that has more than 2000 years of history located in an area where events related to the formation of the Khanate took place 550 years ago.

Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Almazbek Atambayev, President of Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Sapardurdy Toylyev, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan and Mr. Ismet Yilmaz, Speaker of Turkish Grand National Assembly witnessed the celebrations at Astana.

## Goa Tourism Roadshow

Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) organized Goa Tourism Roadshow at Almaty on 11th September, 2015 to promote Goa as a favoured tourist destination. More than 100 leading tour operators and media persons attended the event.

Ambassador Shri Harsh K. Jain welcomed the participants and delivered a speech highlighting the potential of India, particularly Goa, as a favoured tourist destination. He recalled that President of Kazakhstan Mr. Nazarbayev and Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi placed special emphasis on ways and means to strengthen cooperation on tourism during the latter's visit to Kazakhstan in July, 2015. Mr. Rapol Zhoshybayev, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan visited India in August, 2015, and promotion of tourism from India to Kazakhstan was one of the main objectives of his visit.



Ambassador outlined the measures taken by the government of India to promote tourism in India. The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the largest service sector segments of Indian economy. The government of India has allowed 100% foreign direct investment in tourism through automatic route. Capacity building in the hospitality industry and creation of new integrated tourist circuits are under special focus of the government. To enable the potential tourists to obtain visa from the comfort of their home, the government has introduced e-Tourist visa facility for the citizens of 113 countries so far. He mentioned that extension of visa services in Almaty on all five days a week as against three days earlier was one of the first steps he took immediately after he assumed the office a year ago to improve ease of obtaining visa for India.

Highlighting some of the tourist attractions in India, Ambassador said that India has magnificent historical sites, of which 32 are world heritage sites, numerous forts and palaces, over 100 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, majestic Himalayas, sparkling oceans, undulating deserts, dancing rivers, enticing lagoons and magical backwaters. There are facilities for water sports and adventure tourism. People seeking spiritual solace can find ashrams, meditation centres and places of religious tourism all over India. India is a popular destination for medical tourism with world class facilities. He underscored that Goa has made a special place among the attractive tourist destinations in India. Goa offers a mix of many things and has its special charm. It has quiet, clean and pristine warm water beaches. It is a land of amazing contrasts, busy markets, carnivals and festivals and houses some of India's oldest temples and churches. More than half of the tourists to India from Kazakhstan visit Goa.

Mr. Flor Gracias, Deputy Director, GTDC made a presentation on the tourism potential of Goa and the year-round activities offered and special packages introduced by them. The roadshow also showcased Indian cultural performance and featured sampling of Indian cuisine.

## 7th Meeting of Expert Group of Coordination Council and 6th Coordination Council Meeting of INSTC

Department of Commerce, Government of India organized the 7th meeting of Expert Group of Coordination Council of International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) at New Delhi on August 19-20, 2015 and the 6th meeting of Coordination Council of INSTC on August 21, 2015. The meetings were attended by the representatives of Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.



INSTC Secretariat presented the status report of the INSTC agreement in the meeting of Expert Group of Coordination Council of INSTC. The Secretariat informed that currently, there are 13 member countries and 1 observer. Kuwait and Afghanistan have sought INSTC membership and more than 20 countries are studying the INSTC agreement before seeking membership. Citing global transit cargo figures vis-à-vis those among the INSTC member countries, the report emphasized the existence of a huge potential for increased movement of cargo through the INSTC route. Federation of Freight Forwarders Association of India (FFFAI) presented the outcomes of the dry run study carried out by it on two routes in 2014. The issues encountered in the dry run study were discussed. Issues relating to customs, shipping, railways, banking, insurance, tariffs and visas were also discussed and conclusions were arrived at for further action. India introduced a draft INSTC Agreement and explained that it would build on the parent INSTC Agreement signed by the founding members in 2000. It aims at providing legal protection for consignments plying on the INSTC route with its main purpose being facilitation of movement of goods. The member countries will study the draft document and the next Expert Group meeting will negotiate it for early finalization.

Chairing the 6th meeting of Coordination Council of INSTC, Commerce Secretary of India noted the developments since the 5th meeting held in Baku in June, 2013 and called for greater cooperation between member countries to address bottlenecks in the INSTC. In his keynote address, Foreign Secretary of India called for speedy implementation of decisions to make the corridor viable for the trading community. Referring to the discussions held during the Prime Minister of India's visit to Central Asia in July, 2015, India urged Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to take early measures towards joining the INSTC. Kazakhstan outlined the measures taken by its government in improving rail and road infrastructure and briefed the council about its involvement in developing terminals in Iran and India. The council drew up a schedule for meetings of Working Groups on 'Customs', and 'Commercial and Operational Issues'. The member countries agreed that they would provide details of their trade volume and types of cargo with other INSTC member countries for understanding infrastructure and investment requirements on the INSTC route. It was also agreed that the member countries would cooperate in facilitating banking and insurance related issues for seamless transportation of goods and all possible modes and ports of the member countries would be utilized for transportation of goods in the INSTC route.

## 10th World Hindi Conference

The 10th World Hindi Conference was organized at Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India on September 10-12, 2015 with the objective of promoting Hindi globally as a world language. The main theme of the conference was "Hindi Jagat : Vistar avm sambhavnai" (World of Hindi : Expansion and Possibilities). The conference deliberated on a series of contemporary issues and subjects and discussed ways of expanding the horizon and promoting use of Hindi in the areas of Science and Technology, Information Technology, Administration and Foreign Policy, Law, Media, etc. It deliberated on how Hindi could be more broad-based for use in almost all spheres of work and as a means to employment.



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the conference on September 10, 2015. He stated that English, Chinese and Hindi would rule the digital world in the coming days. He added that the language market is huge and companies could tap into it by creating apps. He called for steps to preserve the endangered languages and pointed to concerns voiced by scholars that 90 per cent of the 6,000 languages world-over faced the risk of becoming relics from the past. Highlighting importance of Hindi and the need for enriching it, he said that if people forget Hindi, it would be a loss to the country. It is the responsibility of every generation to protect and conserve its heritage and introduce it to the next generation. Noting that languages should be inclusive, he suggested to conduct workshops of various regional languages with an objective to include words of those languages in Hindi. He spoke about the growing popularity of Hindi in countries like Mauritius, Mongolia, China and Russia, and acknowledged the role of Hindi movies in promoting the language overseas. Prime Minister Modi released a postage stamp to commemorate the conference.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj inaugurated an exhibition on language, culture, tourism, wildlife and vegetation of Madhya Pradesh at the conference venue. She said that emphasis of the conference was more on the possibilities of propagating Hindi in various fields rather than just literary aspects of the language. Among the participants of the conference were 2000 scholars from 40 countries around the world and many foreign students learning Hindi in India.

## Incredible India Destination : Mumbai

Mumbai, capital of the state of Maharashtra, is a fascinating city and compact mix of the tradition and the modern. Once a cluster of seven islands, Mumbai has transformed itself into an entity with thriving markets, business houses and many different communities reflecting a cosmopolitan and trendy atmosphere rarely seen elsewhere. This busy city is also the hub of a thriving cultural life with a constant stream of performances in music, dance and drama. As the seat of the Hindi film industry, known popularly as Bollywood, it produces the largest number of films in the world. Mumbai caters to the adventurous and the romantic through its sporting activities, night clubs, pubs, theatres, beaches and restaurants.

Gateway of India, Mumbai's most striking monument, has an imposing gateway arch in the Indo-Saracenic style with Gujarati and Islamic elements. This area is also departing point for ferries plying to Elephant Island and other beaches across the port.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay is one of India's finest museums. It houses treasures, artefacts, paintings and sculpture from many periods covering India's history including Indus Valley Civilization.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, formerly known as Victoria Terminus, is an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic revival architecture in India blended with themes deriving from Indian traditional architecture. The magnificent building completed in 1888 figures in the UNESCO world heritage list.

Global Vipassana Pagoda, a peaceful haven for meditators, is the world's largest pillar-less dome with a capacity to seat 8,000 people. Buddha's genuine relics are enshrined in it thus becoming the first such pagoda in India after King Ashoka's era. The pagoda is said to radiate peace and harmony and encourages all to learn vipassana to transform oneself into a peaceful, powerful and pure person.

Juhu beach is a wonderful place to bring kids as it doubles up as an amusement park, play ground and open air restaurant. The camel ride at this beach is both fun and popular.

Mahalakshmi temple, Siddhivinayak temple, Haji Ali Shrine, Sanyas ashram, Jehangir art gallery, National gallery of modern art, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, RBI Museum, Mani Bhavan, Marine drive and chowpatty beach and Mahatma jyotiba phule market are other tourist attractions in Mumbai.



*Gateway of India*



*God Dattatreya Ivory in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay*



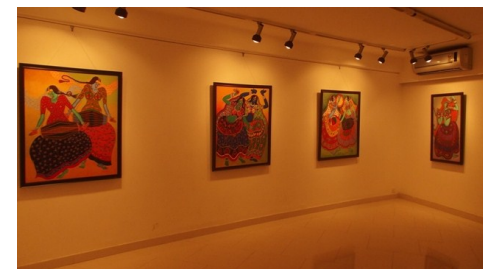
*Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus*



*Global Vipassana Pagoda*



*Marine Drive*



*Jehangir Art Gallery*

## PHOTO FEATURE

### Goa Tourism Roadshow at Almaty on September 11, 2015

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### 10th World Hindi Conference at Bhopal on Sep 10-12, 2015

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