

सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

Inside this issue:

Conference on "Advancing Asia : Investing for the Future"	1
President Nazarbayev addresses diplomatic corps	2
Ambassador's Interview to Astana Times	2-3
India—a Bright Spot for Growth and Investment : Ernst & Young	4
India—the Best Place to be Looking for Work : ManpowerGroup	4
World Culture Festival	4
Applications Invited for "Know India Programme"	5
ISRO Launches India's Sixth Navigation Satellite IRNSS-1F	5
Mother Teresa's Elevation to Sainthood Announced	5
Incredible India : Destination—Kanyakumari	6
Photo Feature	7

Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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Conference on "Advancing Asia : Investing for the Future"

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered a key note address in the opening session of the international conference on "Advancing Asia : Investing for the future" jointly organized by the government of India and International Monetary Fund (IMF) from March 11-13, 2016. He said that Asia is growing at a rate three times greater than that of advanced countries. He termed Asia as a ray of hope for global economic recovery. He stated that the Asian countries' more reliance on developmental financial institutions and banks than on capital markets provides an alternative model for financial sector.



Prime Minister addresses the Conference

He highlighted the historical contribution of India to Asia in various ways. He underscored that India has dispelled the myth that democracy and rapid economic growth cannot go together. He reaffirmed that India is a haven of macro-economic stability and a beacon of hope, dynamism and opportunity and expressed belief that India can contribute to Asian prosperity and development by being economically strong. He mentioned the durable reduction in inflation, steady fiscal consolidation, a comfortable balance of payments



Participants of the Conference

position and build-up of foreign exchange reserves as the major gains in the macro-economic stability. He underlined the focus of the budget for the year 2016-17 on increased investment in rural and agriculture sector with a view to achieve inclusive growth.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Christine Lagarde said that with a young workforce and continuing policy reform, India has not only emerged as the fastest-growing economy, but its stars also shine bright amidst the current global gloom. She stated that India is the world's fastest growing large economy and it stands at a crucial moment in its history - with an unprecedented opportunity for transformation. She prioritized six measures to lift the poor out of poverty and lauded the schemes being implemented by the government of India to address the issue.

Finance Ministers, Central Bank governors and private sector representatives from Asia-Pacific region attended the conference. The participants took stock of Asia's strong economic performance and its ongoing policy challenges - monetary, fiscal and structural - in the face of an increasingly uncertain global economic environment. They held discussions on how to maintain and enhance the region's high growth record while boosting jobs, reducing inequality, and accelerating infrastructure and human capital development. They also exchanged views on managing capital flows, financial inclusion, demographic issues, women's empowerment and climate change.

An MoU was signed to establish South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Centre (SARTTAC) in New Delhi on 12th March, 2016. The Centre is expected to be the focal point for planning, coordinating and implementing the IMF's capacity development activities in the region on a wide range of areas, including macroeconomic and fiscal management, monetary operations, financial sector regulation and supervision, and macroeconomic statistics. The Center will help address existing training needs in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The capacity development by the IMF is expected to bring in the best practices from across the globe resulting in innovative solutions to fiscal, monetary and financial issues and effective response through use of IT and innovative techniques. Ms. Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, IMF thanked the government of India for offering to host the Centre and undertaking substantial financial commitment.

Among the prominent participants from foreign countries were Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General and Minister of Finance, Fiji; Mr. Ravi Karunanayake, Finance Minister, Sri Lanka; Mr. In-chang Song, Deputy Minister of Finance and Strategy, South Korea, Mr. Chatib Basri, Former Minister of Finance, Indonesia; Mr. Eisuke Sakakibara, former Vice Minister of Finance, Japan; Ms. Azeema Adam, Governor of Maldives Monetary Authority; Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor of Bangladesh Bank; and Mr. Sukudhew Singh, Deputy Governor, Bank Negara, Malaysia.

President Nazarbayev Addresses Diplomatic Corps

President of Kazakhstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev held his customary annual meeting with diplomats accredited to Kazakhstan on 2nd March, 2016. He emphasized that the current global economic turbulence should be used to lay the foundations of an adequate, effective and balanced global economic development model. He stated that building a peaceful, stable, prosperous and economically strong Eurasia would give a strong multiplier effect to global growth and would be beneficial to all. He said that the integration potential of Eurasian Economic Union and promoting the silk road economic belt project would strengthen the role of Kazakhstan as an essential business and transportation hub of Eurasia. He reaffirmed that Kazakhstan would actively participate in the development of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and make efforts to transform the Conference on Confidence Building Measures in Asia into an organization for security and development in Asia.



President Nazarbayev emphasized that the role of the United Nations and its Security Council in resolving conflicts should be enhanced. He called for modernization of UN Charter, but with basic international norms preserved. He stressed that the nuclear disarmament should be the main target of 21st century. He expressed happiness at the adoption of the Universal Declaration on a nuclear weapon free world by the UN General Assembly three months ago. He underscored that Kazakhstan has consistently contributed to strengthening the nonproliferation regime.

President Nazarbayev stated that the theme of the upcoming EXPO 2017 in Astana is "Future Energy" and it is Kazakhstan's contribution to implementing the UN's "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative. He invited the countries and the international organizations represented by diplomats to actively engage in the exhibition. He said that the year 2015 marked the nation's active foreign policy initiative. He informed that 275 economic deals worth around US\$ 60 billion were signed during his international visits in 2015. Ambassador Shri Harsh K. Jain attended the meeting.

Ambassador's Interview to Astana Times

The local English newspaper "the Astana Times" carried an interview of Ambassador Shri Harsh K. Jain on "India, Kazakhstan nurture millennia-long trade relationship" on 15th March, 2016. The full text of the interview is given below :

1. How would you assess Kazakh-Indian relations at this stage? In General?

India-Kazakhstan relations have been always warm and cordial and are growing steadily. India was one of the first countries to recognize Kazakhstan as a free, sovereign State after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. India was the first country, outside CIS, visited by President Nazarbayev in 1992. Since then, the relations between the two countries have exhibited considerable dynamism and momentum.

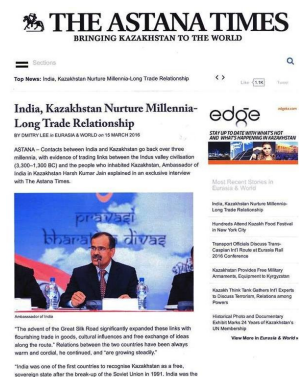
The relations were elevated to the level of strategic partnership during the visit of President Nazarbayev to India in January 2009, when he was the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day Parade. The visit by our Prime Minister to Kazakhstan in July 2015 has further strengthened these relations and opened new areas of cooperation.

The two countries have excellent political relations, similarity of views on most international issues and cooperation in multilateral fora. India has been a consistent supporter of Kazakhstan's initiative on Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and Kazakhstan is supportive of India's permanent membership of UNSC and full membership of SCO.

2. The two countries share a long history, including trading along the Silk Road. Speaking of trading how are things these days? What's being exported to India from Kazakhstan and vice versa?

Indeed, India-Kazakhstan contacts go back to over three millennium with evidence of trading links between the Indus valley civilization (3300-1300 BC) and the people who inhabited Kazakhstan. The advent of the Great Silk Road significantly expanded these links with flourishing trade in goods, cultural influences and free exchange of ideas along the route.

Kazakhstan is India's largest trade and investment partner in Central Asia. Although the bilateral trade is modest, constrained due to lack of efficient transport connectivity, it is growing steadily. It has grown four fold in the last decade. The bilateral trade reached US\$ 461 million in 2015, with Indian exports touching US\$ 241 million and imports from Kazakhstan- US\$ 220 million. Major items imported by India are crude oil, natural uranium, asbestos and titanium and products exported to Kazakhstan are pharmaceuticals, tea, agricultural & industrial machinery, garments and textiles products, and chemicals. There is also significant import of Indian products into Kazakhstan through third countries.



The operationalization of the railway line - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran is a positive development, which will make the movement of goods from India to Kazakhstan and vice versa, more efficient and cost-effective. Progress is also being made on the development of the International North South Transport Corridor and setting up of a dedicated freight terminal on the west coast of India for trade with Kazakhstan.

3. Could you give a little update on the EXPO 2017 situation with India? Where are things at the moment? Are you at liberty to unveil the concept of your theme pavilion?

India was one of the first countries to confirm its participation in Astana EXPO. This was reaffirmed by our Prime Minister during his visit to Kazakhstan. The India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), a Government of India Enterprise, has been assigned the responsibility to coordinate India's participation in the EXPO. India signed the Participation Contract on 12 Feb 2016.

The India Pavilion will consist of a Theme sub-Pavilion focused on "Future Energy" that will showcase innovative green technologies and a National sub-Pavilion, which will showcase India's strengths in areas such as science & technology, agriculture, automobiles, information technology, textiles, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewelry, handicrafts, leather etc.

4. Could you name a few big Indian businesses in Kazakhstan? And perhaps big Kazakh businesses operating in India that we don't know of?

One of the first major foreign investment in Kazakhstan came from prominent Indian businessman Mr. Lakshmi Niwas Mittal. Since then, Arcelor Mittal has grown in presence in Kazakhstan. Another example of a successful joint venture is KazStroyService, an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) company with a substantial presence in Kazakhstan.

Some of the other prominent Indian companies in Kazakhstan are SUN Group, KEC Ltd, Punjab National Bank, ONGC Videsh Limited, Gateway Ventures, Sun Drilling, Tea House, Kazmunai Services etc. Many Indian pharma companies like Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, Mega Life Sciences, Claris, Himalayas, Ajanta Pharma etc., have their Representative Offices in Kazakhstan. Several other Indian companies are active in sectors such as tea, hospitality, general trading, EPCs, travel industry, restaurants etc.

KazStroyService India Pvt. Ltd, a joint venture of KazStroyService, Kazakhstan and its holding company in Netherlands, has an active presence in India. It was one of the main EPC contractors for the Paradip Oil Refinery project inaugurated by Prime Minister of India last month.

5. What are some of the practical examples as a result of the visit of PM of India Mr. Narendra Modi last year? For instance the sides signed a memorandum to export uranium to India and also some cultural agreements?

In all, ten agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Kazakhstan. These include (i) Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons; (ii) Agreement on Defence & Military Technical Cooperation; (iii) MoU on Cooperation on Physical Culture & Sports; (iv) MoU on Technical Cooperation in the Field of Railways; (v) Contract for Purchase of Natural Uranium; (vi) MoU on Cooperation between Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and Adani Ports; (vii) MoU on cooperation between Samruk Kazyna and BHEL; (viii) MoU between Invest India and KaznexInvest on bilateral investment promotion; (ix) Work Plan on Agricultural Cooperation; and (x) Agreement on establishment of Joint Business Council. Both sides are actively working on implementation of these agreements.

Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated India-Kazakhstan Centre of Excellence in Information and Communication Technology at the Eurasian National University, set up with India's assistance, during the visit.

6. What's the situation with the sector of tourism? Are there any plans to revoke the visa regime for Kazakh citizens? Or is it too premature to discuss?

The tourism & hospitality industry is one of the largest service sector segments of the Indian economy. The government has introduced a scheme of E-Tourist Visa Facility for citizens of over 100 countries, which allows them to apply for tourist visa online and receive electronic visa authorization. The visa is issued on their arrival at an Indian airport. It saves them a visit to the Indian Embassy or consular office.

Tourist inflows from Kazakhstan to India are modest but growing. We issue about 15,000 visas annually. We already have a liberalized system for issuing visas to Kazakh citizens. Tourist visas are normally issued on the same day of submission of application.

7. What official visits or cultural events should we expect in the near future?

In the next 3-4 months, we are expecting a visit by Indian Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas to Kazakhstan to co-chair the 13th meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission. A business delegation led by FICCI would visit Astana in the third week of May to participate in KazBuild 2016 and attend the First Meeting of the Joint Business Council.

On cultural front, the Embassy will be organizing a concert to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of establishment of the Centre of Indian Classical Dances led by the Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova on March 28 in Almaty and on March 30 in Astana. The Embassy will organize the 2nd International Day of Yoga in Astana and Almaty in the 3rd week of June 2016.

India—a Bright Spot for growth and investment : Ernst & Young

"India is a bright spot for growth and investment", says EY's global chairman Mr. Mark Weinberger. He said that a survey conducted worldwide concluded a general assessment that India would be number one in attracting investments for the next three years. He stated that political security, non-reliance on commodities, fiscal discipline and good policies such as Make in India help attract investments and foster growth. He added that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's foreign trips have brought a lot of commitments for direct investment in India. He noted that foreign direct investment (FDI) has gone up in India when it is going down in rest of the world. Hailing the budget for the year 2016-17 unveiled by Finance Minister on 29th February, he said that it is focusing on rural sector, which would help create jobs and boost demand. He commented that the budgetary announcement of automatic approvals for FDI in agricultural marketing would be positive for the investment. He emphasized that clarification on withholding tax and commitment to not introducing retrospective taxes are positive announcements in the budget.



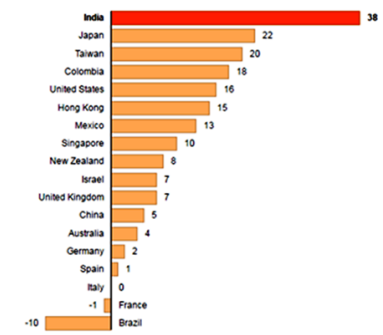
India—the Best Place to be Looking for Work : ManpowerGroup

A global survey of employers by ManpowerGroup released on March 8, 2016 showed that Indian companies are the most confident in the world on their intentions to hire. The survey by the global recruitment firm found that hiring in India's manufacturing sector would be the strongest followed by the services sector and the mining and construction industry.

ManpowerGroup asked nearly 59,000 employers in 42 countries about their hiring plans during second quarter of 2016 and India came out on top. The company gauges employer confidence by what it calls 'net employment outlook.' It takes the percentage of employers expecting an increase in hiring, subtracts the percentage of employers anticipating a decrease and then adjusts for inflation. With 48% of Indian employers saying they planned to increase staffing levels, 23% planning no change and 9% expecting a decrease, the country's net employment outlook was 38%.

Hiring Hopes

Indian employers were the most likely to say they planned to hire in April through June. Numbers are the percentage 'net employment outlook' for each country.



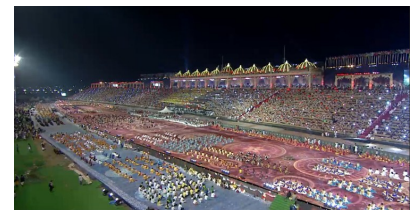
Source: ManpowerGroup Get the data

World Culture Festival

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Culture Festival in New Delhi on 11th March, 2016. The festival was organized by the Art of Living Foundation headed by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar from March 11-13, 2016 on the banks of the Yamuna river to commemorate the 35 years of its service to the mankind. The event celebrated the diversity in cultures from across the world. The festival was a musical and cultural ode to the spirit of humanity, teamwork and the diverse traditions that bind citizens of the world into a 'One World Family'- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Global leadership forum, key note speeches, inter faith meet, meditations and cultural celebrations formed part of the event. Nearly 36,000 artistes from around the world performed on what is possibly the world's largest stage.



Prime Minister Modi welcomed people from across the world and complimented Sri Sri Ravi Shankar for the great work being done by the Art of Living Foundation in over 150 countries. Paying rich tribute to the cultural heritage of India, he said that India has a lot to contribute to the world. He said that in order to be able to do so, it is necessary to appreciate the uniqueness and breadth of Indian culture. Speaking at length about the art of living, he said that the determination to achieve one's goal in the face of adversity requires 'the art of living'.



People from all walks of life participated in the festival with a desire for peace, unity and happiness despite the diversity of thoughts, cultures, art and languages. Political leaders including Union Ministers and a large number of dignitaries from around the world addressed the event. The festival drew some 20,000 foreign guests from over 150 countries. Among the foreign dignitaries who attended the event were Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Kamal Thapa, Crown Prince of Fujairah Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Vice-President of Suriname Ashwin Adhin, Speaker of Sri Lankan Parliament Karu Jayasuriya, Pakistan Senator Sherry Rehman, former Prime Minister of Norway Kjell Magne Bondevik, former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and Governor of Sverdlovsk Region (Russia) Evgeny Kuyvashev.

Applications Invited for "Know India Programme"

Ministry of External Affairs is organizing the next edition of Know India Programme (KIP) from May 5-30, 2016 to familiarize Indian Diaspora youth with India's culture, heritage and contemporary India. KIP provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences, and develop closer bonds with contemporary India.



The highlight of this edition of KIP is a tour of the state of Maharashtra on board the luxury train "Deccan Odyssey". The main elements of the programme are classroom presentations, interaction with college students, meetings with senior political leadership, participation in cultural programmes and yoga, and visits to places of historical importance, industrial sites and a village.

The KIP is meant for Indian origin youth in the age group of 18-26 years. Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) are not covered by this programme. Those who have not participated in any previous KIP, Internship Programme or Study India Programme will only be considered for this programme. Preference will be given to those who have not visited India before. The minimum educational qualification prescribed for the KIP is graduation from a recognized university and those who are pursuing graduation are also eligible to apply.

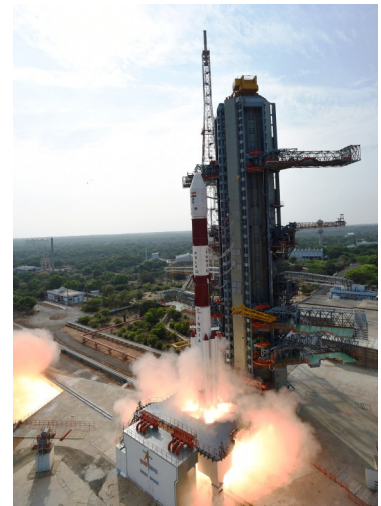
The selected candidates will be issued gratis visas. The Ministry of External Affairs will provide local hospitality viz., boarding, lodging and internal travel in India. The Embassy will reimburse 90% of the cost of air tickets to the participants on successful completion of the programme. The interested persons may send their completed applications along with requisite documents to the Embassy by 5th April, 2016. Further details of the programme are available at the Embassy's website: http://indembastana.in/upcoming_detail.php?id=58.

ISRO Launches India's Sixth Navigation Satellite IRNSS-1F

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)'s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C32) successfully launched IRNSS-1F, a 1,425 kg satellite, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on 10th March, 2016. It was the thirty third consecutively successful mission of PSLV and the twelfth in its 'XL' configuration.

IRNSS-1F is the sixth of the seven satellites constituting the space segment of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). The first five satellites of the constellation launched between July, 2013 and January, 2016 are functioning satisfactorily from their designated orbital positions.

IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1,500 km around the Indian mainland. IRNSS would provide two types of services, namely, Standard Positioning Services (SPS) - provided to all users and Restricted Services (RS) provided to authorised users. The ground stations responsible for generation and transmission of navigation parameters, satellite ranging and monitoring, etc., have been established in eighteen locations across the country.



Mother Teresa's Elevation to Sainthood Announced

Pope Francis on March 15, 2016 announced that Mother Teresa who dedicated her life to helping the poor would be made a saint of the Roman Catholic Church on 4th September, 2016.

Mother Teresa was born in Macedonia in 1910. After having lived in Macedonia for 18 years, she moved to Ireland and then to India in 1929. She founded the Missionaries of Charity with about a dozen nuns in 1950 to help the poor. It now has 4500 nuns worldwide. The Indian Roman Catholic nun received worldwide acclaim for her work for the poor in Kolkata. She received numerous honours including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She died in 1997 at the age of 87. She was beatified in 2003, the first step to sainthood.



The church defines saints as those believed to have been holy enough during their lives to be in Heaven and can intercede with God to perform miracles. She has been credited with two miracles in the church, both involving the healing of sick people.

Incredible India Destination : Kanyakumari

Kanyakumari is a rocky mainland on the Indian ocean in the state of Tamil Nadu and located at the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent. It is the meeting point of three water bodies—the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Besides its importance as a pilgrim centre, it is well known for its beautiful views of sunrise, sunset and moonrise over the waters. One can enjoy the unique spectacle of sunset and moonrise simultaneously on full moon days. Another interesting landscape at Kanyakumari is the beach sands of myriad colours.

Kanyakumari temple is dedicated to the virgin goddess Kanyakumari and 3000 years old. Legend has it that Goddess Parvati, in one of her incarnations as Devi Kanya, did penance at that spot to obtain the hand of Lord Shiva. The deity's diamond nose ring is famous for sparkling splendour.

Gandhi Memorial is erected at the place where his ashes were kept for public view before immersion into the sea. The memory of the father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi, is enshrined at the memorial. The architecture of the building allows the rays of the sun to fall on the exact spot where the ashes were kept on 2nd October, his birthday.

Thiruvalluvar Statue is a 133-foot tall (denotes 133 chapters of Thirukkural) stone sculpture of the popular Tamil poet, Thiruvalluvar, who authored the Thirukkural couplets. Thirukkural is regarded as a renowned work eulogized as a directory of the code of conduct and ethics to humanity.

Vivekananda Rock is a memorial built in 1970 in memory of charismatic philosopher Swamy Vivekananda imbibing various architectural styles prevalent in India. Regular ferry services are available from the shore to the rock memorial every day.

Government Museum has a good collection of sculptured arte facts and crafts of South Indian temples. The display covers a diverse range of exhibits including a 7th century bronze statue of Lord Nataraja.

Padmanabhapuram Palace, located 37 km away from Kanyakumari, is the ancient seat of Travancore rulers. It contains relics of historic and artistic value. The palace has elaborate woodwork of great beauty. In the Ramaswamy temple adjoining the palace, scenes from Ramayana are carved in 45 panels.

Thanumalayan temple at Suchindrum, 13 km away from Kanyakumari, is a repository of art treasures belonging to many kingdoms. Four musical pillars of 18 ft tall carved out of a single stone and a huge 18 ft tall Hanuman statue in the temple show the architectural excellence. Inscriptions of 9th century AD are found in the temple.

Sothavilai beach, located at a distance of 12 kms from Kanyakumari, is one of the best beaches.

Bay watch—water theme amusement park (2 km), Vattakottai fort (6 km), Sanguthurai Beach (15 km), Nagaraja temple at Nagercoil (19 km), Thekkuruchi beach (30 km), Muttom beach (32 km), Olakkay waterfalls (32 km), Udayagiri fort (34 km), Peer Mohamed Dargah at Thuckalay (35 km), Thirparappu waterfalls (42 km), Mandaikadu Bagavathy Amman temple (42 km), Jain monuments at Chitharal (55 km), Pechipparai Dam (60 km) and Subramanya temple at Tiruchendur (91 km) are other major tourist attractions near Kanyakumari.



Gandhi Memorial



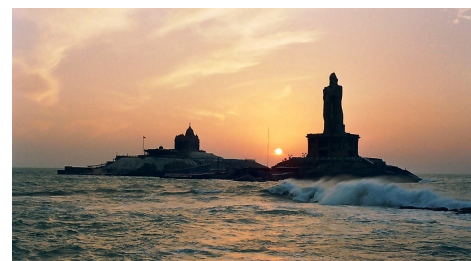
Thiruvalluvar Statue



Vivekananda Rock



Thanumalayan Temple at Suchindrum



Sunrise

PHOTO FEATURE

Ambassador Attends President Nazarbayev's Annual Meeting with Diplomatic Corps



World Culture Festival, New Delhi



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