



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 6

April 1, 2016

Prime Minister Visits Belgium

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Belgium on March 30, 2016. He visited Maalbek Metro Station, which was one of the two places struck by terrorist attacks on 22nd March, and paid his respects to the victims, which included an Indian national. Belgian Prime Minister Mr. Charles Michel received him at Egmont Palace. The two leaders discussed cooperation in areas such as counter terrorism, infrastructure development, IT, renewable energy and biotechnology. Prime Minister Modi reflected on the need for international community to come together to combat the scourge of terrorism. Emphasizing the need to diversify trade, he highlighted the potential in the areas of ports and inland waterways against the backdrop that 100 rivers in India are planned to be developed as inland waterways. Prime Minister Michel reiterated Belgium's support for India's permanent membership in the UN Security Council and welcomed India's aspiration to become a member of the four multilateral export control regimes.

The two Prime Ministers jointly carried out the remote technical activation of a 3.6 metre optical telescope located in the lap of Himalayas at Deosthal in the state of Uttarakhand in India. It is a sophisticated, fully steerable telescope installed as a result of collaboration between Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) in India and Advanced Mechanical and Optical Systems (AMOS) in Belgium. The state-of-the-art telescope will contribute to observations for several frontline scientific applications.

In a joint press statement, Prime Minister Modi expressed the belief that a combination of Belgian capacities and India's economic growth can produce promising opportunities for businesses on both sides. He invited the Belgian government and companies to pro-actively associate with India's ambitious development projects including Digital India, Start Up India and Skill India. He suggested that Belgian businesses can make their global supply chains more cost effective by manufacturing in India.

Prime Minister Modi attended the 13th India-EU Summit along with President of the European Council Mr. Donald Tusk and President of European Commission Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker. Mr. Donald Tusk said that India is one of EU's most important partners and the India-EU agenda for 2020 would define the partnership for the next few years. The leaders discussed on the broad-based trade and investment agreement and agreed that discussions would be carried forward with a flexible approach on both sides. They discussed on global and regional issues, in particular the challenge of climate change. The leaders agreed that cooperation between the Indian Parliament and the European Parliament should be scaled up.

Mr. Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank and Mr. Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament joined the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission at the working dinner hosted in honour of Prime Minister Modi. They discussed cooperation in renewable energy. Prime Minister Modi discussed the possibility of the European Investment Bank investing in India's infrastructure and other sectors. He explained the schemes launched by the government of India to provide affordable housing and clean energy for all and sought the cooperation of European Union in executing them.

An agreement for first tranche of € 200 million was signed between India and the European Investment Bank for a metro rail project in Lucknow out of the total loan of € 450 million.

During the visit, Prime Minister Modi met select Members of European Parliament, leading Indologists, CEOs from various sectors and Board Members of the Association of Diamond Traders. He also addressed the Indian Community in Brussels.



PM meets Prime Minister of Belgium



India-EU Summit

Landslide Victory for Nur Otan Party in Kazakh Parliamentary Elections

The ruling party, Nur Otan, won a landslide victory in the elections for the lower house of Kazakh Parliament, Majlis, held on 20th March, 2016.

The elections to elect 98 members of the Majlis based on proportional representation were held along with elections for 3,335 seats of Maslikhats (local representative bodies) on 20th March, 2016. The remaining 9 members of the Majlis were elected by the People's Assembly of Kazakhstan on 21st March, 2016.



964 international observers and 147 representatives of foreign media monitored the election process. Voting took place at 9,840 polling stations including 65 in foreign countries. The number of eligible voters was 9,791,165 and the voter turn-out was 77.1%. The Chief Election Commission announced that Nur Otan Party, Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan and Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak Zhol polled 82.20%, 7.14% and 7.18% of the votes winning 84, 7 and 7 seats respectively in the Majlis. The international election observers announced that they did not notice any irregularities in the elections.

President of Kazakhstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev attended the swearing-in ceremony of the members of Majlis and addressed the joint session of the Senate and Majlis on 25th March. He congratulated the newly-elected members and spoke about the important tasks to be accomplished by the Parliament. He said that the government created favorable conditions for business including farmers and farm enterprises. He stated that 660,000 new jobs would be created in the next 10 years including 70,000 in processing and innovative sectors. The House expressed vote of confidence in the government of Prime Minister Mr. Karim Massimov with an overwhelming majority.

The new Majlis is notable for an increased number of women deputies. The number of women members in the Majlis increased to 29, which is 27.1% more than that in the previous House.

Chief Election Commissioner from India Visits Kazakhstan as Election Observer

Ms. Saleena Singh, Chief Election Commissioner of the State of Madhya Pradesh in India, visited Kazakhstan from March 18-22, 2016 as Election Observer for the elections held in Kazakhstan for the Majlis and Maslikhats on March 20-21, 2016. She met Ms. Lyazzat Suleiman, Member of the Central Election Commission on March 19. They discussed the preparations made for the elections. She visited polling stations on March 20 and expressed satisfaction over the way the elections were conducted at the press briefing later in the day. She also observed the election of deputies of Majlis by the representatives of the People's Assembly of Kazakhstan in Almaty on March 21, 2016.



Ambassador Meets Minister of Energy

Ambassador Shri Harsh Kumar Jain met His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Shkolnik, Minister of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Co-Chair of India-Kazakhstan Inter Governmental Commission on March 17, 2016. They discussed issues relating to bilateral cooperation between India and Kazakhstan in the context of the next meeting of the India-Kazakhstan Inter Governmental Commission and Cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons between the two countries.



Kazakhstan Celebrates Nauryz

Kazakhstanis celebrated Nauryz (New Year) across the country with traditional fervor and enthusiasm on 22nd March, 2016. President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated all Kazakhstanis on the occasion. He participated in the Nauryz celebrations and said that on this day, people forgive each other, do good things, help each other and extend wishes of happiness. He stated that Nauryz holiday marks the symbol of unity and friendship of all people and ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

Ambassador attended the official celebration of the Nauryz festival. He congratulated the people of Kazakhstan on the occasion in radio and television interviews.



Embassy Organizes Grand Concerts by the Centre of Indian Classical Dances

Embassy of India organized grand concerts by the Centre of Indian Classical Dances, Almaty to celebrate its tenth anniversary and award of the title of Honoured Worker (Artist) of the Republic of Kazakhstan to its Director Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova at Kazakh State Theatre, Almaty on 28th March, 2016 and at Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana on 30th March, 2016. Ms. Ruzanna Bektursinova, Deputy Head of Department of Culture, Almaty Region attended the concert on behalf of the City Administration in Almaty. Mr. Gani Muratove Myrza, Chief Expert represented the Minister of Culture and Sports at the concert in Astana.



Ambassador welcomed the guests and appreciated that Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova had painstakingly nurtured the Centre of Indian Classical Dances, Almaty during the last ten years. He underscored that the establishment of the Centre was an outcome of her deep love for Indian classical dance and strong desire to impart and showcase the knowledge that she received as a result of her learning and long stay in India to the children and people of Kazakhstan. He noted that the Centre has made a significant contribution in strengthening cultural ties and friendship between the people of two countries. He congratulated the Students and Alumni of the Centre on the occasion. Ambassador said that the high calibre of the Centre and its Director was evident from the fact that they have won several international awards, the most recent one being the Grand Prix at the International Competition held in Poland in November, 2015. He expressed happiness at the recognition of Akmaral's outstanding contribution by the government of Kazakhstan by awarding her the title of "Kazakhstanyn Enbek Sinirgen Kairatkery" meaning Honoured Worker (Artist) of Kazakhstan in December, 2015.

Ms. Ruzanna Bektursinova congratulated the Centre on its tenth anniversary and Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova for the award of Honoured Worker title to her and presented certificates to the students of the Centre. Mr. Gani Muratove read out a message from H.E. Mr. Arystanbek Mukhamediuly, Minister of Culture and Sports, "My congratulations to the Centre of Indian Classical Dances, Almaty on its tenth anniversary. The Centre was the first international non-commercial centre established in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It contributed to strengthening of cultural relations between Kazakhstan and India. The admirers of the Centre have been increasing year after year due to rich composition of the dance and exhilarating performance. The performing art presented by the Centre promotes humanism, integrity, justice and judiciousness and all spectators are joining together in celebrating the event today".

In his address, Vice Rector of Lev Gumilyov Eurasian National University Mr. Kamzabekuly Dikhan said that the Indian dance programme unites India and Kazakhstan closer and develops common values. About 500 people attended the concert in Almaty and 700 in Astana. The concert included Kathak and Bharatnatyam classical dance performance, folk dances from Punjab, Saurashtra and Nagaland and popular dances based on Indian films.

Mr. Tolegen Mukhamejanov Participates in World Sufi Forum

Mr. Tolegen Mukhamejanov, President of International Association "Peace through Culture" and first Co-Chair of the World Forum of Spiritual Culture, visited India to participate in the World Sufi Forum (WSF) in New Delhi from March 17-19, 2016. He addressed the Forum on March 19, 2016. He separately met Prof. Lokesh Chandra, President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR); Mr. Sunil Kanoria, President of ASSOCHAM and Non-Executive Director of SREI Foundation; and His Holiness Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni, Founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti; and discussed possibility of holding the 2nd World Forum of Spiritual Culture in India. He also met Ms. Rashmi Malik, Director, Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth (SPIC MACAY) and Mr. Kamal Kumar, Indian Handicrafts Emporium, who expressed interest in organizing his concert in India in November, 2016.



Lecture Room Dedicated to Tengri Bank Opened at KAZGUU

Kazakhstan National University for Humanities and Law (KAZGUU) in Astana opened a lecture room dedicated to Tengri Bank, a joint venture of Punjab National Bank, India, at the University on March 29, 2016. The room was inaugurated by Mr. Dinesh Kumar, Deputy Chairman of Tengri Bank. The lecture room will be utilized to organize special classes and guest lectures. The Bank also plans to open its counter at the university to provide banking facilities to the students and faculty members.



Kazakh Companies Participate in Defexpo-2016

Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar inaugurated the 9th edition of Defexpo India, a biennial exhibition on Land, Naval and Internal Homeland Security Systems, in Goa on March 28, 2016. The event was organised by the Ministry of Defence from March 28-31, 2016 to showcase India's capabilities in land, naval and security systems as well as its emergence as an attractive destination for investment in defence sector. Seminars were conducted on the sidelines of the exhibition to showcase developments and opportunities in the defence sector.



Unveiling the Defence Procurement Procedure-2016 (DPP-2016), Defence Minister said that the Government has tweaked the policies to address the concerns of defence manufacturers and suppliers and enhanced transparency. He emphasized that the DPP-2016 would ensure faster pace in procurement especially through newly introduced categories under Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured (IDDM) provisions. He informed that while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Defence Sector is capped at 49%, cases for higher FDI can be considered on case to case basis. India is among a handful of countries in the world with indigenous capabilities in defence fields such as multi-level strategic deterrence, ballistic missile defence, nuclear-powered submarines, main battle tank, stealth destroyers, aircraft carriers and fourth generation fighter aircraft.

1055 companies and 900 delegations from 48 countries besides India took part in the exhibition. Mr. Baurzhan Janseitov, Mr. Kenzhebay Satzhanov, Mr. Karim Zhumanbekov, Mr. Anes Zadabek and Ms. Raikhan Salimbayeva from "JSC NC Kazakhstan Engineering", Mr. Abiyur Alshimbayev from "LLP Kazakhstan ASELSAN Engineering", and Mr. Valentin Sundyukov from "JSC S.M. Kirov Machinery Plant" participated in the Expo from Kazakhstan.

Kazakh Professionals Participate in PCFD and ITEC Courses

Ms. Azhar Alshinbekova, Secretary of the Committee for International Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, was selected for the "61st Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD)" conducted by "Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi" from 6th April to 6th May, 2016. Mr. Kanat Bazaraly, Engineer at JSC NC "Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary", was selected for the course "Specialized Programme on Web Application Using .Net" conducted by "the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Noida" from 28th March to 20th May, 2016. Shri Ram Kumar, SS(PPS/ITEC) handed over air tickets to the candidates for their travel to India and briefed them about the courses.



Yoga Teacher Delivers Lecture at Mother & Child Hospital

Dr. Brijesh K. Gupta, Yoga Teacher at the Indian Cultural Centre in Astana, delivered a lecture on "the benefits of yoga as integrative medicine" at Mother and Child Hospital, Astana on 16th March, 2016, at the invitation of School of Medicine, Nazarbayev University. He also conducted yoga practice session, which included Pranayama (breathing exercise) and Meditation. He laid emphasis on management of stress by practising yoga.



Indian Music and Dance Programme by GS Sahaja Yoga at ICC

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana organized an Indian Music and Dance Programme on March 27, 2016 by GS Sahaja Yoga - Centre of Human Development through Meditation, Shymkent. The programme included singing of Bhajans (Devotional songs), Indian music, Kathak and Bhangra dances. 35 people attended the programme.

The ICC located at House No.2, Zhyly Oi Street, Karaotkel Microdistrict 2, Yesil Area, Astana conducts regular Yoga and Kathak dance classes besides other activities.



Indian Economy to Grow 7.7% in 2016-17 : ICRA

ICRA, a credit rating agency, projected the Indian economic growth to improve to 7.7 per cent in next fiscal led by domestic consumption demand on the back of implementation of 7th Pay Commission and One Rank One Pension (OROP) recommendations. ICRA said that a pick up in domestic consumption after the implementation of 7th Central Pay Commission's recommendations and OROP scheme for defence services as well as a potential upturn in rural demand is expected to boost economic growth in 2016-17.



India to Become 3rd Largest Aviation Market by 2020

"India Aviation Report" jointly released by KPMG, an international professional company, and FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) at the 5th International Exhibition and Conference on Civil Aviation in Hyderabad on March 17, 2016 concluded that India is likely to be the third largest aviation market by 2020. The report underscored that with 81 million trips, India's domestic aviation market grew over 20.3 per cent in 2015, which is the highest ever growth recorded in the world. It stated that the Indian civil aviation sector exhibited tremendous resilience to the global economic slowdown and ranks ninth in the global civil aviation market.



The report attributed the achievement to the growing economy, increased competition among airlines especially among low-cost carriers, modern airports, greater use of technology, foreign direct investment (FDI) and increased emphasis on regional connectivity. It observed that the National Civil Aviation Policy, which is likely to be out next month, would provide a significant fillip to the sector. It noted that the various fiscal and monetary incentives, liberal policies focused on ease of doing business and enhanced push for regional and global connectivity are extremely positive.

The report stated that aspects such as increasing disposable incomes, fall in prices of aircraft turbine fuel (ATF), increase in tourism, and visa reforms have placed India in a unique position. It emphasized that the steps taken by the government to revive 160 airports and make them operational would improve air connectivity to regional and remote areas.

Norms for Exim Trade Eased

The Central Board of Excise and Customs has developed an "integrated declaration" to incorporate all the information required for import clearance by various government agencies into the electronic format of the bill of entry with effect from 1st April, 2016. It has to be filed electronically at a single entry point, the Customs Gateway. The new system envisages lodging import or export documents at a single point and obtaining permissions online from other regulatory agencies such as animal or plant quarantine, drugs controller, textile committee, etc obviating the need for an importer or exporter to approach these agencies separately. It would be applicable for consignments to be cleared under the Indian Customs EDI Systems and not for clearance of imported goods in the manual mode.

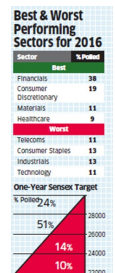


The integrated declaration would provide the importers and exporters a single point interface for customs clearance of import and export goods, thereby reducing interface with government agencies, dwell time and cost of doing business. This change signifies an important step towards overall ease of doing business in India.

India to Outperform Emerging Markets in 2016 : Morgan Stanley

A survey by Morgan Stanley released on 22nd March, 2016 concludes that India is expected to outperform emerging markets in 2016.

The concerns over the health of the global economy triggered a risk averse sentiment among global investors, who had withdrawn money from riskier assets and moved to gold and developed world bonds. But the survey conducted by the American financial services firm showed that a majority of foreign investors continue to have confidence in India's growth story. The Sensex has gone up 10% since the Budget for 2016-17 was presented on February 29. Foreign investors have invested nearly Rs 13,000 crore (US\$ 1.9 billion) into Indian equities in the first two months of the year.



World Sufi Forum

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sufi Forum in New Delhi on 17th March, 2016. The Forum was hosted by All India Ulama and Mashaikh Board from March 17-20, 2016 to discuss the role of Sufism in countering rising global terror and radicalization in the name of religion. The event was aimed at finding more constructive ways to spread the Islamic message of peace and tolerance, discuss the issues of extremism and find ways to work out effective counter-narratives. The Forum included an international seminar and a grand public conference in which hundreds of Islamic scholars, Sufi luminaries, writers, journalists, university academicians, social activists and grassroots workers from across the world took part.



In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that those spreading terror in the name of religion are nothing but anti-religious. He described the World Sufi Forum as an assembly of those whose life itself is a message of peace, tolerance and love. He reiterated India's abiding belief in '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*', the World is one family. He said that Sufism has emphasized an enduring lesson of human history that it is through openness and enquiry, engagement and accommodation, and respect for diversity that humanity advances, nations progress and the world prospers. He opined that for the Sufis, service of God meant service to humanity. He underscored that Sufism is the voice of peace, co-existence, compassion and equality; a call to universal brotherhood. He explained how Sufism has helped strengthen the inclusive culture, which is India's great contribution to the world's cultural tapestry.

Referring to the global challenge of terrorism, the Prime Minister said, "when the spiritual love of Sufism, not the violent force of terrorism, flows across the border, this region will be the paradise on earth that Amir Khusrau spoke about". He added, "when terrorism and extremism have become the most destructive force of our times, message of Sufism has global relevance". Describing the battle that mankind must fight against terror, he said that it is not a confrontation against any religion, but a struggle between the values of humanism and the forces of inhumanity. He added, "it is a battle that must be won through the strength of our values and the real message of religions". He said that the message of Sufism is not just confined to combating terrorism, but also encompasses the creed of "Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikaas" ("Together with all, Development for all").

In his remarks, Hazrat Syed Mohammad Ashraf, Founder President of the All India Ulama and Mashaikh Board, said that the Muslims of India stand confident of their future in the country, and committed to upholding the unity, integrity and territorial sovereignty of the nation. On the concluding day, the Sufi leaders passed a resolution condemning terror groups like Taliban, al Qaeda and ISIS and appealed to the people to shun extremist organisations that misinterpret the Quran.

BRICS Logo and Website Launched

External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj launched India's BRICS logo and BRICS website in New Delhi on March 22, 2016. The logo is painted in BRICS countries' colours and symbolizes India's national flower, lotus. India has assumed chairmanship of BRICS, an association of five major emerging national economies-Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, for the year 2016.



Smt. Sushma Swaraj said that core theme of India's chairmanship is Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions (BRICS). She announced that 8th BRICS Summit would be held in Goa on October 15-16, 2016. She informed that over 50 sectoral meetings would be organized at the Ministerial,

official, technical and track-II levels during India's chairmanship. She said that emphasis would be laid on institution building, implementation of previous commitments flowing from the past Summits and exploring synergies among the existing mechanisms.

She announced that a series of events would be organized including the BRICS Under-17 Football Tournament, BRICS Film Festival, BRICS Wellness Forum, BRICS Youth Forum, Young Diplomat's Forum, BRICS Trade Fair, BRICS Friendship Cities Conclave besides the Think-Tank and Academic Forums. She added that the BRICS events would be organized across the country in different States in order to give people a greater opportunity to enrich the BRICS process and provide an occasion for the BRICS partners to visit different cities and states of India.

A Public Fund, Kazakhstan-India Foundation, Formed

Mr. Ayothi Daniel Gunaseelan, an Indian citizen and CEO, Gateway Ventures and Dr. Laura Yerekesheva, Kazakh citizen and Deputy Director, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty formed a public fund, Kazakhstan-India Foundation (KIF), which was registered on March 27, 2016. The objective of the Foundation is to promote activities relating to development of humanitarian ties and fostering friendly relations between India and Kazakhstan through establishment of mechanisms of cooperation in areas such as academic research, education, cultural, technological, track-II diplomacy and people-to-people contacts. The Foundation is managed by a Governing Body, which outlines its strategy, policy and main directions of activity. The Executive body is responsible for implementing its day-to-day activities.

Incredible India Destination : Nainital

Nainital in the state of Uttarakhand is one of the most beautiful hill stations. It is located around the beautiful lake 'Naini' and the emerald waters of the mountain lake remain charm and beckon visitors from far and wide. Located at a height of 1938 metres, Nainital is surrounded by pine forests. Vantage points around Nainital offer a panoramic view of Himalayan peaks on one side and the plains spread out on the other. The best time to visit Nainital is from April to June and from September to October.

Snow View, Dorothy Seat, Hanumangarhi, Nainital High Altitude Zoo, Kilbury, Khurpa Tal, Naina Peak and State Observatory are some of the main spots of tourist attraction in Nainital.

Snow View, a hilltop area at 2,235 metres above sea level, offers a stunning view of Nanda Devi (7,816 m), the second highest Himalayan peak of the country. Dorothy Seat, also known as Tiffin Top, is located at an altitude of 2,292 metres. It is atop the Aryapatta Hill and is a famous picnic spot. There is a memorial to an English lady named Dorothy Kellet.

Hanumangarhi is located at an altitude of 1951 metres. There is a very beautiful Hanuman temple at the top. One can have a majestic view of the sun set from this scenic spot. Nainital High Altitude Zoo, located at a height of 2075 metres, is known for animals which live in high altitudes.

Kilbury is a tranquil place located amidst green forests. It gives a breathtaking view of the Himalayas. Khurpa Tal is a peaceful and enchanting spot at the outskirts of Nainital and is famous for fishing.

Naina Peak, locally known as Cheena Peak, is the highest point in Nainital. Nainital appears like a majestic shining bowl from there. Naina peak also gives a good view of the Camel's Back, another interesting peak. State Observatory is devoted to astronomical studies and optical tracking of artificial earth satellites. The observatory has one of the most advanced telescopes in India, which measures the movement of stars, planets and other astronomical objects to a great precision.

Bhowali health resort (11 km); Pangot (15 km) famous for bird watching; Bhimtal lake (22 km); Ramgarh (25 km), home of Kumaon orchards; Naukuchia-tal (26 km), a lake known for fishing and migratory birds; Jageshwar (34 km), a Hindu pilgrimage town; Ranikhet hill (54 km); Almora (67 km) known for picturesque surroundings; Chaukori (112 km), famous for fabulous view of the Himalayas; Jim Corbett National Park (113 km), one of India's best known wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserve; Kausani (120 km), a scenic hill station; and Pithoragarh (188 km) known for charming alpine meadows and glaciers are other tourist attractions near Nainital.



Bird's eye view of Nainital



Naini Lake



Hanumangarhi



Khurpa Tal



Bhimtal Lake



Jim Corbett National Park

PHOTO FEATURE

Ambassador Participates in Nauryz Celebration



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Concert at Almaty by Centre of Indian Classical Dances



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Visit of Mr. Tolegen Mukhamejanov to India




Embassy of India

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