

सत्यमेव जयते

## Embassy of India ASTANA

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# Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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## Prime Minister Visits USA

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to the United States of America from June 6-8, 2016. He met President Barack Obama on 7<sup>th</sup> June. They discussed cooperation on a range of issues from business and technology to governance. President Obama stated that India and the US are the largest democracies in the world and their wider cooperation would be helpful for the developing countries of the world. President Obama welcomed India's application to join NSG.



Prime Minister meets President Obama

The leaders agreed to enhance mutual support for sustainable and inclusive growth, job creation, skill development and innovation. They concluded that India would open a new consulate in Seattle and the USA would open a new consulate at a mutually agreed location in India. Recognizing India as a major defence partner, the USA committed to work to facilitate technology sharing with it to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners.



PM addresses joint meeting of US Congress

Prime Minister Modi attended a ceremony for the return of stolen idols to India. US Attorney General Ms. Loretta Lynch said that the process has begun for returning as many as 200 stolen artefacts to India. Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude to the US government for the sensitivity shown to India's heritage. Prime Minister Modi had an interaction with thinktanks. They discussed current global issues in a medium and longer term perspective and looked at opportunities and ways to work together.

Prime Minister Modi attended a US-India Business Council (USIBC) roundtable with the top CEOs in the USA. US Commerce Secretary Mr. Penny Pritzker said that the India-USA partnership would define the 21st century. Prime Minister Modi outlined the strengths of the Indian economy and its talented workforce and discussed solar energy and digital connectivity. He invited the CEOs to work more closely with India, in India.

Prime Minister Modi addressed the 40th AGM of the USIBC. Mr. John Chambers of Cisco informed that USIBC members are on track to invest US\$ 45 billion in India. Amazon Inc Chief Executive Mr. Jeff Bezos announced that the company would invest an additional US\$ 3 billion in India, boosting its committed investment to over US\$ 5 billion. Honouring innovation and entrepreneurship, Prime Minister Modi presented the USIBC Global Leadership Awards to Mr. Dilip Shangvi of Sun Pharmaceuticals and Mr. Jeff Bezos. He spoke about the reforms undertaken and the policies introduced by the government to impact inflation, fiscal deficit and current account deficit.

Prime Minister Modi addressed a joint session of the US Congress on June 8, 2016. He said that the temple of democracy has empowered other democracies across the world. He applauded the spirit of America, which is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. He appreciated that the US Congress helped to turn barriers into bridges of partnership. He called for transformational ideas in India-US ties to realise the full promise of the extraordinary relationship.

Prime Minister Modi addressed a reception hosted by the Foreign Relations Committee & India Caucus. He said that he wants the combined power of India and the USA to become a force for good in the world. He stated that there is much that the two countries can do together from combating global warming to terrorism by pooling resources.

Six Agreements/MOUs were signed in the run up to the visit on Energy Security, Clean Energy and Climate Change; Exchange of Terrorist Screening Information; Wildlife Conservation and Combating Wildlife Trafficking; Development of an International Expedited Traveler Initiative (the Global Entry Programme); Unclassified Maritime Information Sharing; and Cooperation in Gas Hydrates.

## Prime Minister Visits Afghanistan

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Afghanistan on 4th June, 2016. He jointly inaugurated the Afghan-India Friendship Dam, earlier known as Salma Dam, with President of Afghanistan Dr. Ashraf Ghani at Chist-e-Sharif in Herat province in Western Afghanistan on 4th June, 2016. The dam is a multipurpose project planned for generating 42 MW of power, irrigating 75000 hectares of land, water supply and other benefits to the people of Afghanistan. It is a landmark infrastructure project undertaken by Government of India on river Hari Rud.



The gross capacity of the Dam is 633 Million cubic metres. The height of the Dam is 104.3 metres, length 540 metres and width at the bottom is 450 metres. The Rs.1775 crore (US\$ 260 million) project was funded by Government of India and took more than ten years to complete. The successful completion of the project represents culmination of years of hard work by 1,500

Indian and Afghan Engineers and other professionals in very difficult conditions. It highlights India's continued commitment to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development.

In his address, Prime Minister Modi thanked President Ashraf Ghani for naming the dam as Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam. He said that it is not just a project to irrigate land and light up homes, but it is to revive the region, restore hope, renew life and redefine Afghanistan's future. He remarked that the dam is a generator not just of electricity but also of optimism and belief in the future of Afghanistan. He stated that the dam was not built by bricks and mortar, but by the faith of friendship between the two countries and the valour of Afghans and Indians. He said that the Chishti Silsila or Chishti tradition of Sufism came to India from there. He informed that it draws people from all faiths with its message of love, peace, compassion; of harmony among people of all beliefs; of respect for all of God's creations; and service to humanity. He stated that Indians and Afghans know that these values, not extremism and violence, define Afghanistan - a nation brimming with poetry of love and spiritual tradition of peace and harmony. He added that these are the values that give the Afghan people the patience and persistence to seek peace with their own who have chosen the path of violence and also with those who support them.

Prime Minister Modi was conferred with Amir Amanullah Khan Award, Afghanistan's highest civilian honour, by President Ashraf Ghani.

## Prime Minister Visits Qatar

Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Qatar on June 4-5, 2016. He met the Emir of Qatar His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani on 5<sup>th</sup> June. They exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. His Highness the Emir appreciated Prime Minister Modi's vision to further accelerate India's growth and development, and expressed his confidence in India's growth narrative. He lauded his new initiatives including, "Start Up India", "Make in India", "Smart City", and "Clean India", etc saying that they have a strong potential to provide Indian economy a positive thrust for growth. He appreciated the role and contribution of the Indian community for the development and progress of Qatar.



Prime Minister Modi highlighted the major initiatives undertaken by the Government for 'Ease of Doing Business' and invited Qatar to be a partner in India's growth story. Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral trade in the energy sector, with Qatar being the largest supplier of LNG and LPG to India. They agreed upon the need to strengthen the bilateral trade ties, particularly through diversifying the trade basket. The Qatari side evinced interest in the opportunities offered under the 'Make in India' initiative for joint production of defence equipment in India and appreciated India's offer to conduct training programmes for the personnel of Qatar Armed Forces and Coast Guard. The two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in various fields such as tourism, culture, sports, health, maritime security, cyber security, financial services, counter-terrorism, development of best practices and technologies, capacity-building, law enforcement, anti-money laundering and drug-trafficking.

Prime Minister Modi met Qatari business leaders. They gave some specific suggestions on what India should do to help them to invest more in India. Prime Minister Modi promised that Government of India would take necessary measures to facilitate Qatari investments. He made a courtesy call on Father Emir Sheikh Hamad. He addressed & interacted with Indian Community at a reception hosted by Indian Ambassador.

After his arrival in Doha on 4th June, Prime Minister Modi visited a Workers Camp. He addressed the Indian workers, interacted with them and sat down to share a meal with them. He met Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Al Thani. They held discussions over a private meal hosted by him at his own home for the Prime Minister and the delegation.

Seven Agreements/MOUs were signed on cooperation in the fields of tourism, health, youth and sports, skill development and recognition of qualifications, mutual assistance in customs matters, exchange of intelligence related to money laundering and terrorism-financing and related crimes, and cooperation between National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) of India and Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) to establish a framework for facilitating participation of Qatari institutional investors in Infrastructure projects in India under NIIF.

## Prime Minister Visits Switzerland

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Switzerland on June 5-6, 2016. He met President Mr. Johann Schneider-Ammann on 6<sup>th</sup> June. They reviewed the multifaceted bilateral ties between the two countries. They discussed collaboration in the fields of trade, technology, skill development and renewable energy. They shared the view that the common commitments, values, people-to-people and economic ties would take India-Switzerland relations to new heights. They agreed to build on the Swiss Vocational and Educational Training system suited to India's needs. They discussed the need for an early and expeditious exchange of information to bring tax offenders to justice. Both agreed to support each other for their respective bids for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.



In the joint press conference, President Schneider-Ammann announced that Switzerland would support India in its efforts to become a member of Nuclear Supplier Group. Prime Minister Modi said that the economic links between the two countries are strong and vibrant with many Swiss companies being household names in India. He highlighted that there is a perfect connect between India's development needs and Switzerland's strengths and invited the Swiss companies to avail of this opportunity to be a key partner in India's economic growth. He stated that Indians are very familiar with the enchanting beauty of Swiss landscapes thanks to the Indian film industry, but, India is keen to welcome larger number of Swiss visitors. India had extended the facility of e-Tourist Visa for Swiss nationals earlier this year. He cited the partnership of famous Swiss player Martina Hingis with Sania Mirza and Leander Paes of India in the Grand Slams of the tennis world as one of the success stories of the bilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Modi and President Schneider-Ammann held a business roundtable with Swiss CEOs in Geneva on 6<sup>th</sup> June. CEOs from major companies from across the sectors joined the meeting including ABB, Lafarge, Novartis, Nestlé, Rieter and Roche. Prime Minister Modi said that India's economy is growing rapidly and the coming together of India's development needs and Swiss strengths can be beneficial. He stated that the economic linkages between the two nations are strong and vibrant. He said that India is not just a market of 1.25 billion, but it has skills and a government which is open to business. He added that India wants to have manufacturing of global standards and hence the Swiss model of skill development is very relevant to it. A group of Indian scientists and students at CERN met the Prime Minister.

## Prime Minister Visits Mexico

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a working visit to Mexico on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. He met President Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto and held discussions with him. President Enrique Peña Nieto elaborated on the structural reforms undertaken in Mexico to promote economic growth and development. Prime Minister Modi highlighted the initiatives undertaken by his Government for the economic growth and improvement of standard of living of the people.

The two leaders identified that information technology, energy, pharmaceuticals and automotive industries are among the key growth areas of commercial linkages between the two countries. They agreed to prioritize concrete projects in areas of agricultural research; biotechnology; waste management; disaster warning and management, and solar energy. They also recognized the potential to expand the commercial, mutual investments, and Science and Technology partnerships in new areas.



In the joint press statement, President Enrique Peña Nieto announced the support of Mexico to India's membership of the Nuclear Supplier Group. Prime Minister Modi said that the two countries have agreed to develop a roadmap of concrete outcomes to upgrade the bilateral ties into a Strategic Partnership. He stated that Mexico is an important partner for India's energy security and the two countries are looking to move from buyer-seller relationship into a long-term partnership.

## Competition to Design a Logo for PBD Conventions Announced

The Government of India has announced a competition to design a new logo that would best reflect the spirit of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Conventions on MyGov portal. The PBD Conventions are an important platform for engagement of the Government with the overseas Indian community.

The competition is open to Indian nationals and Persons of Indian Origin. Entries have to be submitted online after registering at the portal : <https://www.mygov.in/task/design-logo-pravasi-bharatiya-divas-convention/>. The winning entry will get Rs. 50,000 in cash prize. The last date for submitting the entries is 5th July, 2016.





## President Visits Ghana

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid a State Visit to Ghana from June 12-14, 2016. He met President John Dramani Mahama on 13th June at Presidential Palace, known as Flagstaff House, which is an iconic building constructed with Indian assistance. President John Dramani Mahama conveyed deep appreciation for India's concessional developmental assistance by way of grants and lines of credit, particularly for major socio-economic projects such as the Komenda Sugar Plant and Elmina Fish Processing Plant. He acknowledged India's contribution to capacity building and human resource development. The two leaders called for expanding bilateral co-operation in the field of defence and security. President Mukherjee announced an increase in ITEC slots to Ghana from 250 to 300 and ICCR full-time scholarships from 20 to 40 a year.



President Mukherjee addressed the India-Ghana Business Forum organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) and Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He said that India-Ghana relations transcend political ideologies and geographical space. He stated that the economic cooperation between the two countries can be extended beyond government-funded projects by identifying viable projects for the Indian private sector to invest in. At an Indian community reception, he appreciated the role played by the vibrant Indian community in strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries. He invited them to actively participate in various programmes announced by the Government of India such as Digital India; Stand-Up India; Start-Up India; Smart Cities; Swatch Bharat, etc.

He addressed the students and faculty of the University of Ghana. He said that the two countries should define a positive and create a brighter, innovative and updated narrative of India-Ghana relations. He urged them to make use of the training programmes under ITEC programme and scholarships granted by the government of India. He unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, gifted by ICCR, at the University of Ghana.

President Mukherjee addressed the students and faculty members of India-Ghana Kofi Annan Centre for Excellence in ICT, which was set up with Indian assistance, on June 14, 2016. He said that the establishment of the Kofi Annan Centre and its partnership with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in India is an example of the successful co-operation between Ghana and India in the field of Information Technology and human resource development. He announced an additional grant of US\$ 1 million to the Kofi Annan Centre to help the Centre initiate a Masters programme, expand its laboratory facilities and introduce additional curriculum.

3 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports, establishment of a joint commission and cooperation between the Foreign Service Institutes of the two countries.

## President Visits Cote d'Ivoire

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid an official visit to Cote d'Ivoire on June 14-15, 2016. He met President Mr. Alassane Ouattara on 14<sup>th</sup> June. They held discussions on wide range of issues of mutual concern. They agreed on the importance of an early meeting of Joint Commission to expand bilateral trade and economic ties and achieve the desired target of doubling the bilateral trade to US \$ 2 billion by 2020. President Ouattara appreciated India's assistance in the development of Côte d'Ivoire through concessional Lines of Credit. He assured an encouraging environment for investments from India including in the areas of agro-processing, minerals and infrastructure.



President Mr. Alassane Ouattara hosted a Banquet in honour of President Mukherjee on June 14, 2016. President Mukherjee said that India would remain a steadfast partner in assisting Cote d'Ivoire in its economic development and growth. President Mr. Alassane Ouattara conferred on President Mukherjee the highest national award of Cote d'Ivoire, the Grande Croix Commandeur in National Merit Order.

Governor of Abidjan Mr. Robert Beugré Mambé presented President Mukherjee the Key and Parchment of city of Abidjan in presence of distinguished citizens and traditional chiefs of the city on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. The presentation of Key is a symbolic conferment of Honorary Citizenship of Abidjan. Honorary Citizens are members of Committee of Wise Men of City advising effective functioning of the administration of the City. President Mukherjee addressed a Business Forum organized by the Centre for Promoting Investments into Côte d'Ivoire and the Confederation of Indian Industry on 15<sup>th</sup> June. He said that India and Cote d'Ivoire are exploring new areas of friendship, cooperation and investment. He hoped that the opening of the regional office of EXIM Bank in Abidjan would facilitate the process.

President Mukherjee addressed the Indian Community Reception hosted by Indian Ambassador on June 15, 2016. He congratulated the Indian Diaspora for their law abiding nature and cooperation with the people of the country of adoption. He said that they are symbols of the soft power of India and unofficial cultural ambassadors of the country.

Two MOUs were signed between CII and CEPICI to enhance cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce of the two countries and between Tata Motors and Sutra for supply of 500 buses by Tata Motors and a headquarters agreement for opening of a regional office of EXIM Bank of India in Abidjan was exchanged during the visit.

## Vice President Visits Morocco

Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari paid an official visit to Morocco from May 30 to June 1, 2016. He met Prime Minister Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane in Rabat on May 31, 2016. He held a detailed one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister followed by delegation-level talks. They discussed the whole gamut of relations. They emphasized that the relations between the two countries should not be unidimensional, but should encompass everything from trade, culture, people-to-people exchanges, parliamentarians, counterterrorism, etc.



Prime Minister Mr. Benkirane was very keen that Indian businesses use Morocco as a platform for access to both European and American markets with which Morocco has preferential and free trade agreements. He also expressed the view that India and Morocco could work together to target markets in Africa too. He said that as Morocco has a very well established banking and distribution network into West Africa, lack of payments and distribution network in Africa can be overcome by Indian companies joining with Moroccan companies to target African countries.

On terrorism, Vice President Ansari said that both countries have a shared perception and that the two countries need to cooperate on intelligence sharing, etc. He underlined the fact that the sectors of automobile, auto parts, engineering, biotech and health care are of core importance where India would like to share its expertise and experience with Morocco. He highlighted that Indian companies could look at Morocco to set up IT and ITES companies for BPO operations because there is educated young population in Morocco.

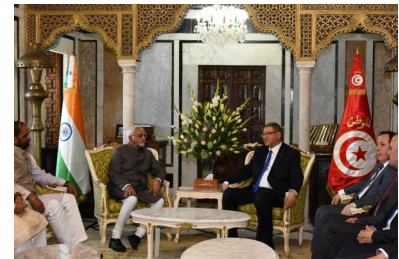
Vice President and the Prime Minister of Morocco, Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane launched the India Morocco Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Rabat, Morocco. Earlier, he laid wreath at the Mausoleum of Mohammed V, in Rabat. He also met the Imams and Intellectuals in Mohammad VI Institute of Training of Imams in Rabat.

Vice President Ansari delivered a lecture at the Mohammed V University in Rabat on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016 on the topic 'Accommodating Diversity in a Globalising World: The Indian Experience'. He said that the challenge for the modern world is to accept diversity as an existential reality and to configure attitudes and methodologies for dealing with it. He was conferred an honoris causa degree by the Moroccan University. He travelled to Marrakech where he visited the Bahia Palace and Chez Ali.

Two MOUs were signed on cultural exchange programme and cooperation between the diplomatic institutes of the two countries.

## Vice President Visits Tunisia

Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Tunisia on June 2-3, 2016. He met Prime Minister Mr. Habib Essid. They held discussions on bilateral and regional issues. They discussed India's experience as a democratic country and how it can work as a role model. Their discussions also covered trade and technology. Vice President Ansari praised the success of democratic process in Tunisia saying that different political parties managed to work together in the aftermath of Arab Spring. Both leaders agreed to rejuvenate the relationship and focus on identified areas. They agreed that the menace of terrorism could be addressed with international cooperation for which they expressed their willingness to work bilaterally.



Vice President Ansari called on President Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi on 3rd June.

The leaders of Tunisia made references to India's support to Tunisia's freedom movement. They fondly recollected the fact that Vice President Ansari in his capacity as Chief of Protocol had helped Tunisia set up its Embassy in New Delhi soon after its independence. They appreciated the investments made by Indian companies in Tunisia. Against the backdrop that Tunisia is trying to work out a services deal with Europe, they invited Indian companies to join hands, which can provide them a platform to service European markets.

Vice President Ansari addressed the Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies on 'India and the World' on 3rd June. He said that relations between India and Tunisia are friendly and free of discord and the two countries share common principles and have a similar approach on many issues and hence he sees a prosperous and peaceful future for the bilateral ties as commercial and political interactions deepen. He laid out the global context in which India is operating today, its rising profile, its own engagement with the world particularly with its neighbours and the great powers. He dwelt on India's strengths. He asserted that in today's context, the global forums where India is not present are of limited relevance.

Vice President Ansari visited Zaitouna Mosque and Bardo Museum. He also visited the ancient historical city Carthage, a seaside suburb of Tunis.

Two MOUs were signed on cooperation in the fields of Handicrafts, and IT and ITES during the visit.

## Prime Minister Has Telephonic Conversation with President Nazarbayev

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev on 14th June, 2016. They discussed the current status and prospects of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues. President Nazarbayev stated that Kazakhstan and India's common stance on global issues serves as a favorable basis for steady development of bilateral relations. Prime Minister Modi said that development of mutually beneficial cooperation with Kazakhstan is one of the priorities of India's foreign policy in Central Asia. The two leaders expressed their readiness to make every effort to develop comprehensive economic cooperation.



## Indian Companies Participate in KADEX 2016

4<sup>th</sup> International Armament and Military-Technical Equipment Exhibition, KADEX-2016, was held in Astana from June 2-5, 2016. The exhibition presented a display of aircraft and space technologies, army and navy armaments, air defence systems, IT technologies, robotic systems and military equipment utilising alternative energy sources. President Nazarbayev participated in the opening ceremony. He surveyed a number of pavilions showcasing domestic and foreign military equipment and armament. He stated that Kazakhstan has done tremendous work to develop its armed forces and pays great attention to training its military men.



About 350 companies including 200 foreign organizations from 40 countries participated in the KADEX 2016. Several contracts were concluded in the exhibition including long-term cooperation agreements entered into by JSC Kazakhstan Engineering with foreign and local companies totalling 45 billion Tenge (US\$ 134.6 million).

Three Indian companies viz., Brahmos Aerospace, Elcom Innovations and L&T participated in the KADEX 2016. The Elcom Innovations and Kazakhstan's S.M. Kirov Plant signed a memorandum of cooperation in communications and electronics.

## Special Yoga Session for Yoga Instructors at ICC

Dr. Brijesh Gupta, Yoga Instructor conducted a practice session on Common Yoga Protocol for yoga instructors at Indian Cultural Centre, Astana on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016, as part of preparation for the celebration of 2nd International Day of Yoga in Astana on 19<sup>th</sup> June. 20 Yoga instructors attended the programme.



## Conversion of PIO Cards into OCI Cards

The Government of India had declared that all the existing PIO cardholders would be deemed to be OCI cardholders with effect from 9.1.2015 and accordingly, advised them to apply for OCI cards in lieu of their PIO cards. Now, the government has extended the date for submission of the application for registration as OCI cardholder by the erstwhile PIO cardholders till December 31, 2016. The conversion of PIO cards into OCI cards will be done free-of-charge (gratis) for the applications submitted till December 31, 2016. The PIO card holders may, therefore, avail of the opportunity to apply for conversion of their PIO cards into OCI cards well before the deadline.



## Short Term Yoga Programmes Included in Tourist Visa

Realizing the spread and importance of yoga world over, the Government has included "attending a short term yoga programme" in the list of permissible activities under Tourist Visa and e-Tourist Visa on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2016. Besides, "short duration medical treatment under Indian systems of medicine" has also been in the list of permissible activities under e-Tourist Visa. Before introduction of this liberalized policy, a Tourist Visa was granted to a foreigner whose sole objective of visiting India was recreation, sight seeing and casual visit to meet friends or relatives and E-Tourist Visa was granted to a foreigner whose sole objective of visiting India was recreation, sight seeing, casual visit to meet friends or relatives, short duration medical treatment or casual business visit.





## India Ranks 2nd on GRD Index on Ease of Doing Business

India has jumped 13 positions from last year to rank second among 30 developing countries on the ease of doing business this year. According to AT Kearney's 2016 Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), a pick-up in GDP growth and better clarity on foreign direct investment (FDI) regulations have helped India achieve the second ranking. The London-based business consultancy, AT Kearney's study released on June 3, 2016 points out that India's strong ranking reflects foreign retailers' increased optimism in its retail market and its vast growth potential. It notes that India has relaxed several key FDI regulations in single-brand retail, which paved the way for multinational firms to enter the market. According to AT Kearney, India's retail sector has expanded at a compound annual growth rate of 8.8% between 2013 and 2015, with annual sales crossing the US\$ 1 trillion mark.



The GRDI ranking underscores that India's retail sector has also benefited from rapid growth in e-commerce. It points out that India is the world's second-largest internet market and the increasing internet and smart phone penetration in the country is contributing to the expansion of e-commerce. The report states that as Indian consumers become more comfortable with shopping online, venture capital and private equity firms have boosted investment in the sector providing further momentum.

## Government of India Announces Civil Aviation Policy

In a big push to its reform agenda, the Government of India announced an integrated Civil Aviation Policy on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. The policy aims at making India become the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest civil aviation market by 2022 from 9<sup>th</sup>, increasing domestic ticketing from 80 million in 2015 to 300 million by 2022, increasing the number of airports having scheduled commercial flights from 77 in 2016 to 127 by 2019, increasing cargo volumes by 4 times to 10 million tonnes by 2027, etc.



The salient features of the policy provide for relaxation of conditions for commencement of international flight whereby an airline can commence international operations provided it deploys

20 aircraft or 20% of total capacity, whichever is higher, for domestic operations. The policy introduces liberalized regime of bilateral rights and code share agreements leading to greater ease of doing business and wider choice to passengers. It provides that "open skies" will be implemented on a reciprocal basis for SAARC countries and countries beyond 5000 kms from Delhi. It enables the government to promote helicopter usage by issuing separate regulations for helicopters and development of four heli-hubs initially. The policy asserts that Airport Authority of India will continue to develop and modernise its airports and upgrade quality of services and the upgradation and modernisation of Air Navigation Services will continue in line with global trends. It sought to replace the existing ground handling policy with a new framework to ensure fair competition.

## Tiger Express Train Launched

The Government of India launched a Tiger Trail Circuit Train, also called Tiger Express Train, on 5th June, 2016. The air-conditioned train with 5 days/6 nights itinerary will start from Delhi and will take the tourists to Bandhavgarh National Park, known for high density of tiger population, leopards and various species of deer; Kanha National Park, known for the presence of tigers and swamp deer; and the famous Dhuadhar Waterfall in Madhya Pradesh. The itinerary includes three tiger safaris, which would give ample opportunity to the visitors to have a sight of the majestic wild cats in their natural environs and a spectacular view of the wildlife. The package cost starts from Rs. 38,500 (US\$ 575). It includes transportation, accommodation and meals. Regular monthly trips of the train would begin in October, 2016. The booking may be made online at: [www.irctctourism.com](http://www.irctctourism.com) or by e-mail to: [tourism@irctc.com](mailto:tourism@irctc.com).



## Ambassador Attends HOMs Conference in New Delhi and Visits Jaipur

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Heads of Missions (HOMs) Conference held in New Delhi from May 27-31, 2016 on the theme "Transforming India : Impacting the World". The HOMs called on Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari and President Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 27<sup>th</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> May respectively. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed the HOMs on 31<sup>st</sup> May. After the conference, all HOMs had a State Attachment in which they visited different State Capitals with a view to better understand the requirements of the States and help the State Administration in establishing and strengthening their links with the Indian Missions abroad.



Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain visited Jaipur, Capital of the State of Rajasthan as part of his State Visit from June 1-3, 2016. The group of Ambassadors visiting Rajasthan met the Chief Secretary Shri C.S. Rajan and called on the Governor Shri Kalyan Singh and Chief Minister Smt. Vasundhara Raje on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2016.

## Incredible India Destination : Manali

Located at a height of 1,926 metres on the northern end of the Kullu Valley in the state of Himachal Pradesh, Manali is holding a magical allure for visitors with its incredible landscape, abundant greenery and exquisite scenery. Travel to Manali evokes many images—fairy-tale snow-capped mountain vistas, flower-covered meadows, glaciers, winding rivers, temples and Buddhist monasteries. The vast expanse of varied and awe inspiring landscapes offer some of the most exciting sporting pursuits, which range from skiing and snow-boarding to hiking, paragliding, rock climbing, mountain biking and white water rafting.

Hadimba Devi Temple, Vashist Springs, Tibetan Monasteries, Manali Wildlife Sanctuary, Solang Valley, Rahalla Falls, Kothi Kothi and Rohtang Pass are popular tourist attractions in Manali.

Hadimba Devi Temple, built in 1533, is situated in the middle of forests and is one of the masterpieces of the temple architecture in India. Hot Springs are situated under snowy peaks of the rocks at Vashist, a village located on the west bank of river Beas. The water from the steamy springs is noted for its medicinal value and healing properties.

There are colourful Tibetan monasteries where visitors can buy carpets and other Tibetan handicrafts. Two monasteries are located in the town and one at Aleo on the left bank of the river Beas.

Manali Wildlife Sanctuary, a premier destination for wildlife lovers, is home to musk deer, brown bear, leopard and snow leopard.

Solang Valley, 13 km away from Manali, offers the view of glaciers, and snow capped mountains and peaks. It has fine ski slopes. Training in skiing is imparted there. Winter skiing festival is organized there.

Rahalla Falls, 14 km from Manali, are located at an altitude of 2,500 metres. Kothi Kothi, 12 km from Manali, is a picturesque village that has a thrilling view of the deep gorge through which the river Beas swiftly flows. Rohtang Pass, located 50 km Manali at an altitude of 4,111 metres, is a paradise for adventure sports enthusiasts .

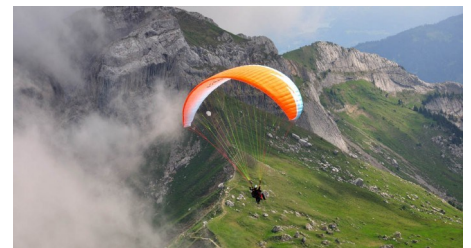
Brighu lake, Nehru Kund, Arjun Gufa (Cave) and Manu temple are some of the other tourist attractions in Manali.



*Palchan, Manali*



*Hadimba Devi Temple*



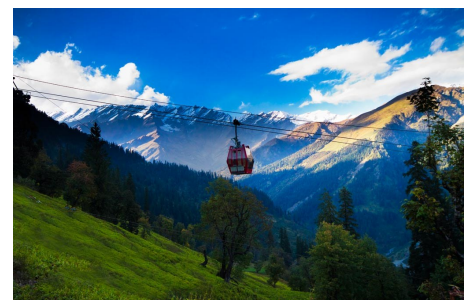
*Paragliding in Manali*



*Manali Wildlife Sanctuary*



*Rohtang Pass*



*Solang Ropeway*



## PHOTO FEATURE

### *Ambassador Attends HOMs Conference in New Delhi and Visits Jaipur*

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