

सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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Vice President Participates in the 11th ASEM Summit

Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Mongolia to participate in the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Ulaanbaatar on the theme "20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity" on July 15-16, 2016.

In his address at the plenary session on 15th July, Vice President Ansari expressed confidence that ASEM's role can be elevated to harness the collective capabilities of two dynamic continents for the shared peace, progress and prosperity. He emphasized that ASEM is a dynamic bridge between Asia and Europe and shared endeavour of the member countries has been to promote multi-dimensional connectivity between the two continents.

He underscored that physical connectivity is the means to meeting the aspirations of the people, building mutually beneficial partnerships, and collectively addressing the regional and global challenges.

He added that the networks of connectivity must also include institutional, digital, economic and socio-cultural aspects. He urged all parties to show utmost respect for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which establishes the international legal order of the seas and oceans.

The leaders endorsed two main documents at the Summit - the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and the Chair's Statement. The Ulaanbaatar Declaration is a visionary document that underlined the leaders' commitment towards revitalizing ASEM into its third decade and promoting further connectivity, mutually beneficial, tangible partnerships and cooperation between Asia and Europe. The Chair's Statement focused on the deepening of Asia-Europe inter-connectedness, shaping and forging of multi-layered links, and mutually beneficial cooperation for peace and development and promotion of effective multilateralism. The leaders also endorsed a Special Statement on International Terrorism that strongly and unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The leaders supported India's call for strengthening of international legal regime against terrorism, notably through the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). They appreciated India's initiative towards tackling Climate Change with the formation of International Solar Alliance. They welcomed India's active role in shaping the discourse on working methods of ASEM and focus on tangible areas of cooperation, including identification of 'youth exchanges' as the 20th tangible deliverable to coincide with the 20th Anniversary of ASEM.

Vice President Ansari met President of Mongolia Mr. Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, Speaker of Mongolian Parliament Mr. M. Enkhbold and Prime Minister of Mongolia Mr. Jargaltulga Erdenebat, underlining the close and special relations shared between Mongolia and India. They discussed the matters of bilateral interest as well as regional and global developments. In his meeting with Speaker Enkhbold, the two exchanged views about the election process. Speaker Enkhbold informed that Mongolia emulated India's system of using indelible ink in the election process.

On the sidelines of the Summit, the Vice President Ansari held bilateral discussions with Prime Minister of Bangladesh Ms. Sheikh Hasina, President of Bulgaria Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, Prime Minister of Estonia Mr. Taavi Rõivas, President of Latvia Mr. Raimonds Vējonis and Prime Minister of Lithuania Mr. Algirdas Butkevicius.

Vice President Ansari visited the Pethub Monastery established in 1999 by Shri Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, former Ambassador of India to Mongolia. He unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Monastery.

Heads of State/Government/Representatives of 51 Asian and European countries, the High Representative of the European Union and the ASEAN Secretary General participated in the Summit.



Leaders at the ASEM Summit



VP unveils the statue of Mahatma Gandhi

Digital Application "Kazakhstan-Land of the Great Steppe" Launched

The Government of Kazakhstan launched a digital application "Kazakhstan - Land of the Great Steppe" at <http://mfa.gov.kz/index.php/en/component/content/article/16-materials-english/6143-kazakhstan-land-of-the-great-steppe>. It is a digital encyclopaedia of Kazakhstan covering a range of topics which are grouped into ten categories: Geography, History, Society, Culture, Government, International Relations, Economy, Tourism, Astana and EXPO 2017. The application, available in Kazakh, Russian and English languages, includes 68 chapters with more than 370 photos, 24 video clips, 12 3D objects, 20 panoramic pictures (with a 360° view), 12 interactive 3D graphs and 4 interactive 3D maps.

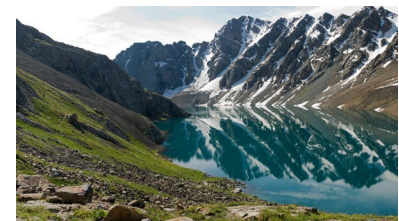


The application aims to present information about Kazakhstan in vivid and convenient form to a wide national and foreign audience. It may be of particular interest to academia and commercial companies in the fields of tourism and export.

Western Tien Shan Inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List

The Western Tien Shan mountain range located across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, has been included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List on 17th July, 2016.

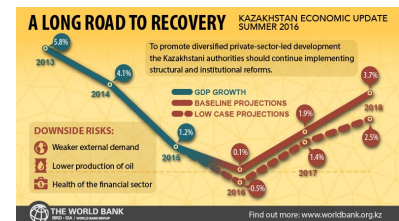
The Western Tien Shan ranges in altitude from 700 to 4,503 metres. It features diverse landscapes, which are home to exceptionally rich biodiversity. The nature of the Western Tien Shan region has a high level of endemism and endangered species of flora and fauna including Menzbier's marmot, the snow leopard and the Karatau mountain wild sheep. It is of global importance as a centre of origin for a number of cultivated fruit crops and is home to a diversity of tance as a centre of origin for a number of cultivated fruit crops and is home to a diversity of forest types and unique plants.



World Bank Forecasts Recovery of Kazakhstan's Economy

The World Bank forecasts a gradual recovery of Kazakhstan's economy in its semi-annual report titled "Kazakhstan: A Long Road to Recovery" published on July 22, 2016.

The report states that under the baseline scenario, GDP growth is expected to remain near zero in 2016, before rising to 1.9 percent in 2017 and 3.7 percent in 2018, as production commences at the Kashagan oilfield, global oil prices rebound, renewed consumer and investor confidence supports the recovery of the non-oil sectors and inflation eases to an average of 6-8% per year. The baseline scenario rests on the assumption that oil prices will average around US\$ 41 per barrel in 2016, rise to US\$ 50 in 2017 and reach US\$ 53.3 in 2018. According to the World Bank, Kazakhstan's GDP growth slowed from 4.1 percent in 2014 to 1.2 percent in 2015 and the economy contracted by an estimated 0.2 percent during the first five months of 2016.



On the monetary policy, the report states that re-introduction of base rate at the beginning of February 2016 after transition to a floating exchange rate and inflation targeting in mid-August 2015 stabilized the currency market and the currency began to strengthen with the rise in oil prices. The World Bank also notes the various measures taken by the Government of Kazakhstan to bring about structural reforms with the objective to promote diversified growth.

"Know India Programme" Announced

The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India is organizing "Know India Programme" (KIP) from October 1-25, 2016 to familiarize Indian Diaspora youth with India's culture and heritage, and contemporary India. The programme is open to the youth aged 18-30 years of Indian origin (excluding non-resident Indians), who have not participated in any previous KIP, Internship Programme for Diaspora Youth (IPDY) or Study India Programme (SIP). The highlight of this edition of KIP is a 10-day tour to the state of Punjab. The expenditure on local hospitality and 90% of the cost of air tickets would be met by the Government of India. Gratis visas will be issued to the selected participants.



The interested persons may send their applications to the Embassy by 25th August, 2016. The application form and other details of the programme are available at the Ministry's website: <http://mea.gov.in/know-india-programme.htm>.

Large Natural Gas Reserve Discovered in the Bay of Bengal

A large natural gas deposit in the form of highly enriched natural gas hydrate has been discovered in the Bay of Bengal by a team of scientists led by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) of India in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Japanese Drilling Company and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology. The discovery in coarse-grained sand-rich Krishna-Godavari Basin is one of the largest potentially producible blocks of gas hydrate in the world.

The scientists conducted ocean drilling, conventional sediment coring, pressure coring, downhole logging and analytical activities to assess the geologic occurrence, regional context and characteristics of gas hydrate deposits in the basin. USGS said that advances like the Bay of the Bay of Bengal discovery would help unlock the global energy resource potential of gas hydrates as well as help define the technology needed to safely produce them.

Gas hydrates are considered as vast resources of natural gas and are known to occur in marine sediments on continental shelf margins. The amount of gas within the world's gas hydrate accumulations is estimated to greatly exceed the volume of all known conventional gas resources.



Petrapole Integrated Check Post Inaugurated

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh Ms. Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the Petrapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) through video-conferencing on July 21, 2016. Chief Minister of West Bengal Ms. Mamata Banerjee also participated in the video-conference from Kolkata.

Petrapole(India)-Benapole(Bangladesh) is an important land border crossing for India-Bangladesh trade. Trade worth more than Rs. 15000 Crore (US\$ 2.24 billion) takes place through it. About 1.5 million people and 150,000 trucks cross the check post every year.



The Petrapole ICP will provide better facilities for effective and efficient discharge of functions such as security, immigration, customs and quarantine as well as support facilities for smooth cross-border movement of persons, goods and transport. It will serve to foster greater economic integration and connectivity between India and Bangladesh and will benefit the local business community with reduced transaction time and costs.

Student Registration Module Launched

A Student Registration Module has been placed within the MADAD Portal (Consular Services Management System) at www.madad.gov.in to compile data regarding Indian students in various countries. It will be expanded further with new features such as country-specific advisories, links to facebook pages, links to sites carrying information on accredited educational institutions in various countries, etc. The objective of the portal is to enable the Embassy to effectively engage with the students.

All Indian students pursuing education in Kazakhstan are requested to register themselves in the Student Registration Module. The guidance for registration is available on the homepage of the MADAD portal.



ARE YOU AN INDIAN STUDYING ABROAD ?

NEED consular help?
to connect with Indian govt abroad?
country specific advisories?

REGISTER FOR THE STUDENT REGISTRATION MODULE ON MADAD PORTAL

- Log on to www.madad.gov.in
- Register as new user/ login with existing ID
- Under **Student Registration** click on 'Manage Profile'
- link to manage the student profile
- Save and submit the details after filling the form
- Use 'Manage Course Details' to edit course details





Ambassador Inaugurates a New Indian Restaurant in Astana

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain inaugurated a new Indian Restaurant "India Gate" in Astana on 30th July, 2016. The restaurant is owned by Shri Nandhakumar and is located at 19/1, Ghabdullina Street.

The new restaurant would supplement the two Indian restaurants already operating in Astana.



Incredible India Destination : Sikkim

Sikkim is one of the most beautiful states in India. With its unique culture and natural landscape, Sikkim is a picture of perfection and pristine purity. Nestled in the Himalayas and endowed with exceptional natural resources, it is a hotspot of biodiversity and development. A quarter of the state is covered by Khangchendzonga National Park.

The Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) has been inscribed as India's first "Mixed World Heritage Site" on UNESCO World Heritage List by fulfilling the nomination criteria under both natural and cultural heritage on 18th July, 2016. The KNP exhibits one of the widest altitudinal ranges of any protected area worldwide. It has an extraordinary vertical sweep of over 7,000 metres (1,220 metres to 8,586 metres) within an area of only 178,400 hectare and comprises a unique diversity of lowlands, steep-sided valleys, numerous lakes, glaciers and spectacular snow-clad mountains including the world's third highest peak, Mt. Khangchendzonga. The KNP is home to a significant number of endemic, rare and threatened plant, animal and bird species.

Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, situated at a height of 5,500 ft, rose to prominence as a popular Buddhist pilgrimage site after the construction of the Enchey Monastery in 1840. In the early 20th century, Gangtok became a major stopover on the trade route between Lhasa in Tibet and cities such as Kolkata in British India. Today, Gangtok is a centre of Tibetan Buddhist culture and learning, with the presence of several monasteries, religious educational institutions and centres for Tibetology.

Institute of Tibetology, Rumtek Monastery, Phodong Monastery, Sangacholing Monastery, Deer Park, Nathula Pass, Tumlong Palace Ruins, Tendong Hill and Ipeccac Garden are other tourist attractions in Gangtok.

Tsongmo Lake, also known as Tsongmo Lake or Changu Lake, is a glacial lake located at a distance of 40 kms from Gangtok. Situated at an elevation of 3,753 metres, the lake remains frozen during the winter season. The lake surface reflects different colours with change of seasons and is held in great reverence by the local Sikkimese people. Yumthang valley, Lachung hill station and Pelling town (famous for unparalleled views of Mt. Khangchendzonga at dawn) are some of the other tourist attractions near Gangtok.



Rumtek Monastery



Sunrise at Mt. Khangchendzonga viewed from Pelling



Yumthang valley



Tsongmo Lake



Khangchendzonga National Park



Khangchendzonga National Park

PHOTO FEATURE

Digital Application "Kazakhstan—Land of the Great Steppe" Launched



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Ambassador Inaugurates a New Indian Restaurant "India Gate" in Astana



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