

सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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India Sets World Record by Launching 104 Satellites Including a Kazakhstani Satellite in a Single Mission

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched "Al-Farabi-1", a 1.7 kg Technology Demonstrator Nano Satellite built by Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty along with 103 other satellites using Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C37) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on 15th February, 2017. With this launch, ISRO has set a world record of launching the largest number of satellites in a single mission surpassing the previous record set by Russia by launching 37 satellites in 2014.

India's 714-kg Cartosat-2 Series was the primary satellite for the launch. Of the 103 co-passenger satellites, two are from India and others belong to Israel (1), Kazakhstan (1), The Netherlands (1), Switzerland (1), United Arab Emirates (1) and United States of America (96).

The total weight of all the 104 satellites carried on-board PSLV-C37 was 1378 kg. After a flight of 16 minutes and 48 seconds, the satellites achieved a polar Sun Synchronous Orbit of 506 km inclined at an angle of 97.46 degree to the equator, and in the succeeding 12 minutes, all the 104 satellites successfully separated from the PSLV in a pre-determined sequence.

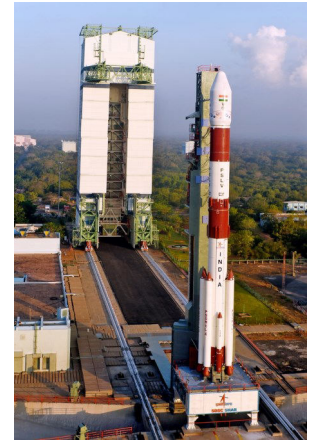
The imageries from Cartosat-2 series satellite will be used for cartographic applications, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management such as road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps and various other Land Information System (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications. The data sets can be used for urban planning of 500 cities under the Amrut Planning Scheme.

India's two Nano satellites (INS-1A and INS-1B) carried four different payloads from Space Applications Centre (SAC) and Laboratory for Electro Optics Systems (LEOS) of ISRO for conducting various experiments. The ISRO Nano Satellite (INS) is a versatile and modular Nano satellite bus system envisioned for future science and experimental payloads.

This mission involved many technical challenges such as realising the launch of a large number of satellites during a single mission within stipulated time frame and ensuring adequate separation between all the 104 satellites during their orbital injection as well as subsequent orbital life.

With this flawless launch, ISRO has further bolstered its impeccable scientific credentials as a reliable partner for space initiatives. Over the past two decades, India has become a key player in the commercial space market offering a low-cost alternative to existing international players. The total number of customer satellites from abroad launched by India's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV so far has reached 180. The launch was widely covered by the media in Kazakhstan in Kazakh, Russian and English languages.

India and Kazakhstan signed an MOU on cooperation in the field of space activities in January, 2009. The successful launch of Kazakhstani Nano Satellite will pave the way for further cooperation in the field of space activities between the two countries.



**Al-Farabi-1
(1.7 kg)**



Finance Minister Presents General Budget 2017-18

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Arun Jaitley presented the General Budget for 2017-18 (April, 2017 - March, 2018) in the Parliament on 1st February, 2017. He said that agenda of the budget is "Transform, Energise and Clean India (TEC)" - transform the quality of governance for better quality of life, energise various sections of society and clean the country from the evils of corruption, black money and non-transparent political funding. He said that the approach is to spend more in rural areas, on infrastructure and poverty alleviation while maintaining fiscal prudence.

For the first time, a consolidated Outcome Budget, covering all Ministries and Departments, was laid along with the Union Budget with a view to improve accountability of government expenditure. It was also for the first time that Railway Budget was incorporated in the General Budget.

Finance Minister proposed a total expenditure of Rs. 21.47 lakh crores (US\$ 321.89 billion) during 2017-18, which is an increase of 8.53% over previous year. He explained that the proposed higher public expenditure is due to sluggish private sector investment and slow global growth. He informed that the fiscal deficit for 2017-18 would be 3.2% of GDP.

He allocated Rs. 1,87,223 crores (US\$ 28.07 billion) for rural, agriculture and allied sectors, reflecting a hike of 24% over previous year. He fixed the target for agricultural credit at a record level of Rs. 10 lakh crores (US\$ 149.93 billion). He increased allocation by 25% to Rs.48,000 crores (US\$ 7.20 billion) for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Scheme, to support the resolve to double farmers' income. He proposed to spend Rs. 19,000 crores (US\$ 2.85 billion) under *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana* (PMGSY) and informed that 133 km rural roads were constructed per day in 2016-17 under PMGSY against an average of 73 km during the period 2011-14. He allocated Rs. 23,000 crores (US\$ 3.45 billion) for *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin*, an increase of 53% over previous year, and proposed completion of 10 million houses by 2019 for the houseless and those living in kutcha houses.

He announced "Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion Programme (SANKALP)" to provide market relevant training to 35 million youth with a budget of Rs. 4,000 crores (US\$ 600 million). He allocated a sum of Rs. 2,200 crores (US\$ 330 million) for the next phase of Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) to improve the quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in Industrial Training Institutes (ITI).

He increased allocation for the welfare of Women and Children by 18% to Rs. 1,84,632 crores (US\$ 27.68 billion) in 2017-18. He allocated a sum of Rs. 3,96,135 crores (US\$ 59.39 billion) for infrastructure development, out of which Rs. 2,41,387 crores (US\$ 36.19 billion) would be for rail, roads and shipping. He informed that Railway lines of 3,500 kms would be commissioned in 2017-18, as against 2,800 kms in 2016-17. He announced creation of "*Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh*" (Safety Fund) with a corpus of Rs. 1 lakh crores (US\$ 15 billion) for passenger safety over a period of 5 years. He provided Rs. 10,000 crores (US\$ 1.5 billion) for Bharat Net Project and announced that high speed broadband connectivity on optical fibre with wifi hot spots and access to digital services would be made available at low tariffs in more than 150,000 *gram panchayats*.

In a significant step to cleanse the system of funding of political parties, he said that the political parties can receive donations through Electoral Bonds to be issued by banks or a maximum of Rs. 2,000 in cash from one person. He announced second phase of Solar Park development for an additional capacity of 20,000 MW. He proposed setting up of two Strategic Crude Oil Reserves in addition to the three set up in the first phase, which would take the country's strategic reserve capacity to 15.33 MMT. He stated that "Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES)" would be launched to focus on export infrastructure. He announced abolishment of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) as it has successfully implemented e-filing and online processing of FDI applications and more than 90% of total FDI inflows are currently through the automatic route.

He allocated Rs. 10,000 crores (US\$ 1.5 billion) for recapitalization of Banks. He proposed to increase allowable provision for Non-Performing Asset from 7.5% to 8.5%, which would reduce the tax liability of banks. He doubled the lending target to Rs. 2.44 lakh crores (US\$ 36.58 billion) from previous year for "*Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana*" for development and refinancing activities relating to micro units.

He announced reduction of rate of income tax from 30% to 25% for micro, small and medium enterprises with annual turnover up to Rs. 50 crores (US\$ 7.5 million), which would benefit 96% of Indian companies. Considering the use of LNG as fuel and feed stock for petro-chemicals sector, he proposed to halve the basic customs duty on LNG from 5% to 2.5%. To provide relief to the middle class, he slashed the rate of income tax from 10% to 5% for individual assesses having annual income between Rs. 2.5 lakh (US\$ 3750) and Rs. 5 lakh (US\$ 7500).

TEC India

- Transform the quality of governance and quality of life of our people;
- Energise various sections of society, especially the youth and the vulnerable, and enable them to unleash their true potential; and
- Clean the country from the evils of corruption, black money and non-transparent political funding.

**TRANSFORM
ENERGISE
CLEAN INDIA**

Budget for better INDIA 2017

Budget 2017-18 at a Glance: Key Figures

(Figures in ₹ crore)	2015-16 Actuals	2016-17 Budget Estimates	2016-17 Revised Estimates	2017-18 Budget Estimates
Revenue Receipts	11,95,025	13,77,022	14,23,562	15,15,771
Capital Receipts ¹	5,95,748	6,01,038	5,90,845	6,30,964
Total Receipts	17,90,783	19,78,060	20,14,407	21,46,735
Scheme Expenditure	7,25,114	8,01,966	8,69,847	9,45,078
Expenditure on other than schemes	10,65,669	1,17,6094	1,14,4560	12,01,657
Total Expenditure	17,90,783	19,78,060	20,14,407	21,46,735
Revenue Deficit	3,42,736	3,54,015	3,10,998	3,21,163
Fiscal Deficit	5,32,791	5,33,904	5,34,274	5,46,532
Primary Deficit	91,132	41,234	51,205	23,454

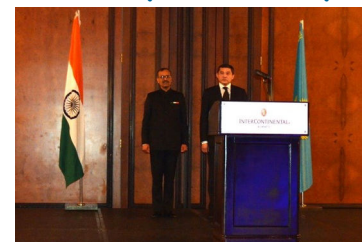
1 Including receipts under Market Credit/Finance Scheme
Source: Budget 2017-18 documents

Press Information Bureau



Embassy Celebrates the Republic Day of India, ICCR and ITEC Days in Almaty

The Embassy hosted a Reception in Almaty to celebrate the Republic Day of India, ICCR and ITEC Days at Hotel Intercontinental in the evening of 6th February, 2017. Mr. Arslan Dandybayev, Head of Representative Office of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Almaty represented the Government of Kazakhstan at the reception.



Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain welcomed the guests. In his address, he stated that the Republic Day of India honours the date on which the Constitution of India came into force on 26th January, 1950 and India became a Republic. He underscored that the Constitution of India has guided the country's destiny and aspirations of its people ever since the first Republic Day. He spoke about several initiatives taken by the government during last one year to transform the economic landscape of the country.

He highlighted the major events that took place during last one year as well as those likely to take place during the current year in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

He spoke about the short term specialized capacity building training programmes offered to Kazakh nationals under ITEC programme and ICCR scholarships awarded to pursue higher education in India. He stated that over 1000 Kazakhstani professionals have availed the ITEC programme and over 200 Kazakhstani scholars have availed the ICCR scholarships. He informed that one of the ICCR alumna Dr. Laura Yerekesheva, Deputy Director, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty has been selected for Distinguished ICCR Alumni Award, which she would receive at a ceremony in New Delhi next month. He congratulated her on her selection for this prestigious award.

The speeches were preceded by recital of national anthems of the two countries and followed by screening of a documentary "A day in the life of India" and performance of Kerala folk dance by the students of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances, Almaty led by its Director and accomplished ICCR Alumna Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova. A recorded video of Republic Day parade held in New Delhi on 26th January was screened in muted format during the remainder of the reception. An exhibition of paintings on India by Ms. Nurpeisova Botagoz was organized at the venue. About 175 people including 30 ITEC and 20 ICCR alumni attended the reception.

Ambassador Hands Over Certificate of Technical Assistance to KazNU

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain handed over a certificate of technical assistance of 7,835,000 Tenge for establishment of Mahatma Gandhi Centre and upgradation of India Studies Centre in the Department of Indology of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU), Almaty to the Rector of the University Mr. Galimkair Mutanov at the meeting of the University's Academic Board on 7th February, 2017. The grant was transferred to the University a few weeks before the handing over of the certificate.



In his address, Ambassador said that the year 2017 marks the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kazakhstan. He stated that the two countries have forged a strategic partnership between them based on mutual trust, respect and understanding. He highlighted some of the initiatives taken to strengthen the cooperation between India and KazNU during the last two years such as conclusion and implementation of MOU on Youth Exchange Programme between National Cadet Corps of India and Voenni Kafedra of KazNU, MOU between Amity University and KazNU, Commencement of yoga classes at KazNU and publication of the first Kazakh-Hindi-Kazakh dictionary.

The Rector thanked the Ambassador and awarded him a Jubilee Medal "80 years of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University" for his contribution to the development of the University and a certificate of gratitude for his continued efforts in strengthening friendship and cooperation between the two countries and for financial support to the Department of Indian Studies of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University. Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies Ms. Bayan Zhubatova made a presentation on how the grant provided by the Government of India would be utilized.

Kazakhstani Professionals Attend ITEC Programme in India

Dr. Assel Khasenovna, Senior Teacher at the Astana Medical University, was selected for the course "Health Security and Protection of Workers" conducted by V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida from March 3-24, 2017 under Government of India's ITEC programme. Ms. Gulnar Akhmetkanova, Specialist at Kazakh National Agrarian University, Almaty was selected for the course "International Programme on Financing of Inclusive Agriculture and Rural Development" conducted by the Bankers Institute of Rural Development, Lucknow from February 20 to March 10, 2017.



Ambassador Attends Vishwa Hindi Divas in Almaty

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain attended the celebration of Vishwa Hindi Divas in Almaty on 4th February at Hotel Kazakhstan. The celebration was organized by InCham with the support of the Embassy and participation of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU) in Almaty.

Ambassador felicitated Hindi teachers and spoke about the significance of Vishwa Hindi Divas. He informed about the efforts made for promotion of Hindi in Kazakhstan such as publication of first Hindi-Kazakh-Hindi Dictionary by KazNU last year, teaching of Hindi language at KazNU and organization of Hindi classes at the Centre for Indian Classical Dances and InCham with the support of the Embassy.

His speech was followed by short skits, talks and recitation of Hindi poems by students learning Hindi. Over 100 people attended the event.



Kazakhstani Artisans Participate in the Surajkund International Crafts Fair

An 8-member Kazakh Artisans group led by Mr. Berik Alibay, Head of the Department of Preservation and Restoration of Metal and Bonewares of National Museum of Kazakhstan, participated in the "31st Surajkund International Crafts Fair" at Surajkund, Faridabad from February 1-15, 2017. They showcased the traditional arts and crafts of Kazakhstan in the Fair. Haryana Tourism extended local hospitality to the visiting artisans. The Fair (Mela) was organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs. More than 20 countries participated in the Mela.

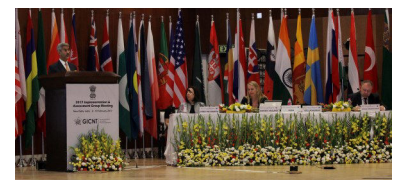


The Surajkund Mela showcases the richness and diversity of the handicrafts, handlooms and cultural fabric of India. The Mela is a custodian of heritage crafts involving use of traditional skills that are fading away due to cheap machine made imitation. The multi-cuisine Food Court in the Mela provides ethnic cuisines from all over the world. There are designated places for amusement, adventure sports and joy rides for the young. A large number of renowned national and international folk artistes and cultural groups present their performances in the Mela.

Kazakhstan Participates in IAG Meeting of GICNT in New Delhi

Foreign Secretary Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurated the Implementation and Assessment Group (IAG) Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) in New Delhi on 8th February, 2017. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs in coordination with the Department of Atomic Energy from February 8-10, 2017.

In his address, Foreign Secretary Jaishankar said that scientific community has played a vital role in harnessing nuclear energy and radiological sources for societal needs. At the same time, he cautioned that negative consequences of atomic power cannot be ignored. He said that terrorism remains the most pervasive and serious challenge to international security. He stated that nuclear security is a concern, especially as terrorist groups and non-state actors strike deeper roots and explore different avenues to spread terror.



He noted that given its impressive membership of 86 partner countries and 5 international organisations, the GICNT is expected to play an important role in providing an effective international platform to respond to malicious acts by terrorists. He reaffirmed that India remains committed to further the objectives of the Global Initiative. He pointed out that India has been contributing to the Nuclear Security Fund of IAEA and India's Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) is available to interested States for training courses and capacity building programmes in the field of nuclear and radiological security.

The IAG Meeting emphasized the GICNT's unique ability to bring together policy, technical and operational experts to enhance partners' capabilities to address complex and emerging nuclear security challenges. About 150 delegates from various GICNT partner countries and international organisations attended the Meeting. From Kazakhstan, Deputy Director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Sergey Savelyev attended the event.

Ambassador's Interview to the Astana Times

The Astana Times, a local English language newspaper, carried Ambassador's interview on 6th February, 2017. The text of the interview is reproduced below:

Q 1. Could you start off with a few comments about the 68th Republic Day of India that you celebrated in Astana past week? What has been the highlight of the relations in the last year?

The Republic Day is celebrated in India to commemorate the date on which the Constitution of India came into force on 26th January, 1950 and India became a Republic. The Embassy organized a flag hoisting ceremony in the morning of 26th January, 2017 at the Embassy premises in Astana and hosted a Reception at Hotel Radisson in the evening of 27th January. Around 300 guests including Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations accredited to Kazakhstan, senior Government officials, journalists, representatives of academic and cultural institutions, members of the Indian community and ITEC and ICCR alumni attended the reception.

The Government of Kazakhstan was represented by H.E. Mr. Kanat Bozumbayev, Minister of Energy and Co-Chair of the India-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Commission as the Chief Guest. In his speech, Minister Bozumbayev congratulated the people of India on the Republic Day and 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

I used the occasion to highlight the achievements of India and progress made in the bilateral relations with Kazakhstan in the last one year. I congratulated the people of Kazakhstan on 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence and achievements made by it in the last 25 years including its membership of UN Security Council. A short documentary on a day of life in modern India was screened on the occasion followed by an Indian classical dance performance by Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova, the honoured artist of Kazakhstan.

The bilateral relations last year focused on building the momentum generated by the visit of India's Prime Minister to Kazakhstan in July 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Nazarbayev met briefly in April in Washington and again in June 2016 in Tashkent. The Chief Minister of one of our most dynamic states, Andhra Pradesh, visited Kazakhstan in July and Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Akyzbek Kamaldinov attended the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference held in the month of December in Amritsar in India. India supported Kazakhstan's candidature for the non-permanent membership of the UNSC at the elections held in June 2016. A large number of academic, cultural, defence and business delegations exchanged visits during the year. India signed contract for participation in Astana Expo during the visit of Commissioner H.E. Mr. Rapol Zhoshybayev to New Delhi last February and the Joint Feasibility Study for a free trade agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union was completed in September.

Among other highlights, the Centre of Indian Classical Dances in Almaty celebrated its tenth anniversary in March, the two countries held the first joint military exercise, Prabal Dostyk, in September, India organized festival of India in four cities in Kazakhstan in the month of October, and the fourth India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in New Delhi in December.

Q 2. As we all know, India is a very attractive tourist destination for Kazakh citizens, especially Goa. But as of today, there are not convenient flights, to say for instance, Goa. Is there any progress in that direction?

Goa is one of the main tourist destination in India for Kazakhstani citizens. Though there is no direct flight to Goa from Kazakhstan, there is a daily flight from Almaty to New Delhi, which is well connected to Goa. Airport in New Delhi is also very well connected to other major tourist destinations in India. In addition, a chartered flight 'Sunday Airlines' flies once a week during the tourist season (Oct-March) directly from Almaty to Goa, which carries about 70-80 passengers per flight. There is a provision for upto 10 direct flights per week from Kazakhstan to Goa under the India-Kazakhstan bilateral air services agreement. If the number of Kazakhstani tourists rise, it should become possible to launch a regular flight to Goa, particularly during the Goa tourist season.

I may add that Indian civil aviation sector is growing rapidly with a lot of new capacity addition expected in the next few years. It would substantially improve air connectivity within India.

Q 3. We had already spoken about EXPO and India's role last year, and that it was among the first countries to confirm participation. Could you update on the progress of your country's pavilion construction? Basically anything new happening on your part ?

The Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) is the nodal agency responsible for India's participation in the EXPO. It is in regular contact with the EXPO organizers and has discussed various aspects relating to the concept and design of India Pavilion. The construction of the pavilion as well as commercial area allocated for other activities, such as catering, handicraft showrooms etc. is expected to commence by end of this month. The Embassy is also planning India's national day celebration (70th anniversary of India's independence on 15th August 2017), holding of 3rd International Day of Yoga and several other cultural activities at the Expo.



Q 4. Is EXPO popular in India? What do people in India know about the upcoming exhibition in Astana? Do you think it will attract a tourist flow from India?

The announcement of India's participation in Astana EXPO had attracted a lot of media attention in India. People in India have a lot of curiosity about the theme of the Expo and the city of Astana. India's participation in the SCO Summit that is going to be held on the eve of the opening of Astana Expo, would provide further publicity to the Expo in India. If it is marketed well by the tourist operators and a simplified visa and registration procedure introduced for visitors to EXPO, it may attract a large number of Indian tourists.

Q 5. This year is going into 3rd year of your mission in Kazakhstan. You have probably travelled to some places. Where would you take your delegations first in Kazakhstan? Could you share some of your thoughts about Kazakhstan, its progress, new reforms as now, you have more experience and knowledge about the country and its culture?

Yes, this is the 3rd year of my assignment in Kazakhstan. I have travelled to several parts of the country including Almaty, Aktobe, Semey, Ust Kamenogorsk, Atyrau and Temirtau and plan to visit few more cities in the next few months. I have also visited places of tourist interest like Borovoe, Charyn Canyon and Tamagaly Tas. All the places have their own charm and beauty.

Kazakhstan is a beautiful country. It has a small population but rich culture. Given our historical linkages, it has a lot of cultural similarities with India. The country has made an impressive socio-economic progress in the last 25 years and has taken several regional and international initiatives that have enhanced its international standing and prestige.

I am impressed by the way the leader of the nation President Nazarbayev has developed a vision for the country and that vision is being implemented through well conceived practical strategies. The economic policy "Nurly Zhol", "The Plan of the Nation" and the recent announcement to redistribute powers among various branches of the government, would put Kazakhstan on a new stage of economic development and progress, modernization, political democracy and prosperity. Kazakhstan is making wise investments in human capital too that would pay it rich dividends in future.

Q 6. At the end, could you enlighten our readers on some upcoming events or plans of your mission in Kazakhstan ?

India's participation in the SCO Summit and EXPO are obviously going to be major activities in the 2017 calendar. Major Indian companies in green and renewable energy sector would be showcasing their achievements and projects at Expo.

We plan to organise meetings of several bilateral mechanisms, including the Inter-Governmental Commission during the year to strengthen and further expand mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

We will organise a series of activities dedicated to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in Kazakhstan as well as India. The first such series of events would be a mixed Indian and Kazakh cultural performance by Centre of Indian Classical Dances (based in Almaty) on March 11 in Almaty, on March 25 in Chennai and on March 28, 29 and 31 in New Delhi.

India would be celebrating the 70th anniversary of its independence on 15th August 2017 at the Astana Expo. We will also celebrate the 3rd International Day of Yoga at in Astana, Almaty, Atyrau and Karaganda.

Medical Specialists from Indraprastha Apollo Hospital Visit Atyrau

Medical Specialists from Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi participated in a conference attended by healthcare specialists and Doctors in Atyrau and rendered free medical consultation to the people of the region on Oncology, Gastroenterology and Hepatitis on February 11-12, 2017. About 80 people consulted the Apollo Specialists.

Aricon Group, No.1, Kulmanova Street, Atyrau organized the event to promote medical tourism to India.



Indian Tennis Players Participate in International Competition in Astana

Kazakhstan Tennis Federation hosted the Fed Cup BNP Paribas Asia/Oceania Zone Group-I International Competition at the National Tennis Centre at 4/2, Turan Avenue, Central Park, Astana from February 6-11, 2017. Indian tennis players, Ms. Ankita Raina, Ms. Karmanaur Thandi, Ms. Snehadevi Reddy and Mr. Nandan Bal (Captain) participated in the competition.



Incredible India Destination: Mamallapuram

Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram in the State of Tamil Nadu is an ancient port with a flourishing maritime trade. It was the chief seaport of the Pallavas who ruled over South India from the 1st century BC to 8th century AD. Mamallapuram, recognized as the site of some of the greatest architectural and sculptural achievements in India, is a world heritage site and a testimonial to early Dravidian style of architecture.

Arjuna's Penance, Five Rathas, Shore Temple, Tiger Cave, Krishna's Butter Ball, Open-air museum and College of Sculpture are some of the major tourist attractions in Mamallapuram.

Arjuna's Penance, 27 m long and 9 m high, is the world's largest bas relief. This whaleback shaped rock features figures of gods, demigods, men, beasts, birds, etc. Five Rathas (temple chariots) are five free standing temples. Four of them were carved out of a single long granite boulder. The Rathas are named after the Pandavas, the five heroes of the epic Mahabharata.

Shore Temple constructed by King Rajasimha in the 7th century AD is a good example of the first phase of structural temples constructed in the Dravidian style. This temple's architecture influenced that of the Cholas who succeeded the Pallavas as the dominant dynasty in the area now covered by Tamil Nadu. Tiger Cave was an open-air theatre for hosting cultural programmes. Krishna's Butter Ball, a huge boulder near the Ganesha Ratha, rests precariously on a narrow rock base.

Open-air museum, a newly established museum of sculpture, reflects the cultural heritage of the Tamils from the Sangam age. College of Sculpture has a display hall, which exhibits beautiful traditional sculptures. The college provides training in various branches of temple art and architecture according to the Shilpashastra.

Crocodile Bank (14 km from Mamallapuram) is a farm where several species of Indian and African crocodiles and alligators are bred in captivity. Covelong (20 km), a small fishing village, has a fine beach with facilities for wind surfing. Cholamandalam Artistic Village (35 km) is located in serene surrounding by the beach where some eminent artists and sculptors live and work exhibiting and selling their creations. Mudaliarkuppam Boating (36 km) has row, pedal and motor boat services. Vedanthangal sanctuary (50 km) is visited every year by thousands of migratory birds during winter. Alamparai (50 km), a Mughal era fort, now ruined, stands against the backdrop of backwaters and sand dunes.



Arjuna's Penance



Five Rathas



Stone Carvings



Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary



Shore Temple



Mamallapuram Beach

PHOTO FEATURE

Celebration of Republic Day of India, ICCR and ITEC Days in Almaty



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Ambassador Hands Over Certificate of Technical Assistance to KazNU



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Ambassador Attends Vishwa Hindi Divas in Almaty



Kazakhstani Artisans Participate in the Surajkund International Crafts Fair




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