



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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Vice President Attends the 1st IORA Leaders' Summit in Jakarta

Vice President Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Indonesia to attend the first Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Leaders' Summit held in Jakarta to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Association on 7th March 2017. India is one of the leading players driving the IORA process. The Association was revitalised under India's Chair during 2011-13 when six priority areas were identified for cooperation. India announced 12 major initiatives across a range of cross-cutting issues in October, 2016, of which four have already been implemented.



In his address at the Summit, Vice President Ansari said that Indian Ocean is a bridge that connects the IORA member states and has facilitated exchange of ideas through trade, religion and culture for centuries. He recalled the unveiling of "Project Mausam" by India to rekindle the cultural linkages of the region and the recent launch of "Kalinga -Indonesia Dialogue" aimed at reviving traditional, historical and cultural ties between Kalinga (Odisha) and Indonesia.



He urged all the member states to work out modalities for institutionalizing IORA cooperation mechanism on cyber security and proposed a network of think tanks to enable the collation of available resources with member countries. He announced India's intention to establish "IORA Centre of Excellence (ICE)" in one of the coastal cities of India with the objective to provide academics and researchers with access to a collective source of data and resource material.

He offered to host Information Fusion Centre in India to strengthen Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) saying that maritime safety and security can be reinforced by setting up such centre and institutionalizing cooperative mechanisms such as White Shipping Agreements. He also offered to share India's hydrographical capability with the member states for better navigation and understanding of marine topography.

He emphasized the imperative need for the region to have open trade and open sea lanes and called upon the IORA member states to ensure that the freedom of navigation and over-flight in the Indian Ocean is respected by all, as an expression of the commitment to UNCLOS. He noted that the Action plan adopted at the summit is a vision of shared priorities and affirmed India's commitment to work with other members to realize the region's untapped potential and ensure that the Indian Ocean becomes a zone of prosperity and harmony.

He said that terrorism has become the major impediment to development and threatens all pluralist and open societies and no cause justifies the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. He emphasized that IORA must show zero tolerance for state-sponsored terrorism and the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of terrorism must be isolated and face strong sanctions.

On the sidelines of Summit, he held bilateral meetings with President of Indonesia Mr. Joko Widodo, President of Sri Lanka Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Yemen Mr. Abdrabu Mansour Hadi, Vice President of Indonesia Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla and Foreign Minister of Iran Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd) attended the meeting of the Council of Ministers of IORA in Jakarta on 6th March, 2017.

Three documents adopted at the Summit were: IORA Concord laying out the vision of IORA for the future, focusing in particular on cooperation among the 21 IORA member states on maritime safety and security; Declaration on Preventing Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism; and the Action Plan of IORA for the next five years.

President Mukherjee Inaugurates the 12th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the 12th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in New Delhi on 9th March, 2017. In his address, President Mukherjee said that India and Africa have together made a long and steady journey of progress and bonds between them have strengthened over the years. He emphasized that India is committed to building genuine partnerships that create jobs and opportunities for the people of Africa.



In his valedictory address on 10th March, 2017, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M.J. Akbar said that growth must eliminate poverty and emphasized that the Banks must become partners in this mission. He underscored that India and Africa share a common understanding on most key global issues and are on the same side of crucial negotiations to make the global economic order more 'equitable and South-friendly'.

He described the Pan-African e-Network project launched in February, 2009 as an excellent example of India-Africa Cooperation saying that it provides tele-education and telemedicine services by linking educational and medical centres of excellence in India with their counterparts in 54 African countries. He said that another key element of India's development cooperation policy is the extension of Lines of Credit (LoC) to Africa, which enables execution of vital projects in a wide range of sectors. He pointed out India's commitment to provide US\$ 10 billion worth of LoCs to Africa between 2015 and 2020. He said that India and Africa together can pave the way for their industries to move up the global value chains, which is critical for the sustained growth of respective economies. He suggested that R&D and innovation are new areas where India and Africa should look to deepen partnerships and collaborative arrangements.

Business-to-business meetings were organised as part of the Conclave apart from several sessions covering various sectors such as Trade & Investment, Development Partnership, Agriculture, Health, Infrastructure, Power, Skill Development, Irrigation, Water Supply, Small and Medium Enterprises, Rural Electrification and Railways. King of Swaziland His Majesty Mswati-III and Prime Minister of Uganda Mr. Ruhakana Rugunda attended the event as Guests of Honour. 33 Ministers and 400 other delegates from 37 African countries attended the Conclave.

King Mswati III of Swaziland Visits India

His Majesty King Mswati III of Kingdom of Swaziland paid a working visit to India from March 8-15, 2017. President Shri Pranab Mukherjee received him on 10th March, 2017. He said that India and Swaziland traditionally enjoy a friendly and co-operative relationship. He reaffirmed that India values its friendship with Swaziland and appreciated its consistent support to India in multilateral forums.



President Mukherjee expressed happiness that the Royal Science and Technology Park in Swaziland is now near completion. He called it a symbol of the King's progressive vision and commitment to the development of Swaziland. He spoke about another successful collaborative project for enhancing maize productivity saying that it would help Swaziland become self-reliant in maize. He said that India offers Swaziland a large market, affordable technologies and finance. He called upon the King to create conditions to attract Indian investments in areas of interest to Swaziland. He assured him that India would be happy to assist Swaziland to achieve its developmental goals.

King Mswati said that India's expertise is highly valuable for the countries of Africa and they are grateful to India for its willingness to share it with them. He also attended the 12th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in New Delhi.

Prime Minister of Uganda Visits India

Prime Minister of Uganda Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda paid a working visit to India from March 7-12, 2017. He called on President Shri Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi on 9th March, 2017. President Mukherjee congratulated Prime Minister Dr. Rugunda and his party for their victory in the Presidential and Parliamentary elections held in the previous month. He expressed happiness at India's role in the exercise by providing indelible ink. He said that India is committed to continue its political, technical and economic cooperation with Uganda in a manner required by the Government of Uganda to meet its developmental goals. He stated that Indian companies are also keen to participate in the development of the Ugandan oil sector.



Prime Minister Dr. Rugunda appreciated the Indian business community in Uganda saying that though they are small in number, they play a prominent role in the Ugandan economy. He thanked India for the developmental assistance and expressed his commitment to further strengthen the relations with India. He called on Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari on 10th March. He also attended the 12th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in New Delhi.

President Nazarbayev Signs a Bill Devolving Powers to Parliament and Government

President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev signed a bill on introducing amendments to the Constitution of Kazakhstan on 10th March, 2017 devolving some of the President's powers to the parliament and government.

President Nazarbayev said that the amendments to the Constitution are essential to cope with the challenges posed by the changing world. He stated that the political system would acquire a higher level of democratic character and stability, but at the same time, the presidential system would remain the basic structure of the government.

Earlier, the draft constitutional amendments were published for public discussion and feedback from 26th January to 26th February, 2017. In its meeting on 1st March, the Working Group on distribution of powers reported that it received more than 6000 proposals from the people. The bill proposing amendment to 23 articles of the Constitution and redistribution of 35 statutory powers of the President was introduced at the joint session of the Parliament on 3rd March, 2017. In his address in the joint session of the Parliament, President Nazarbayev said that the proposed constitutional amendments would significantly strengthen the role of Parliament in the affairs of the state, including in the formation of the government; make the government more independent with the powers to manage the economy; modernize the constitutional framework of law enforcement and judicial systems; improve the system of constitutional control; and secure the guarantee of immutability of the country's independence, unitary status, territorial integrity and form of government at the constitutional level. He informed that all the proposed amendments were supported by the public; however, it was decided not to amend Article 26 relating to right to property saying that there is a need to further improve the legislation and clarify its basic provisions to the public.

The parliament adopted the bill on 6th March. President Nazarbayev referred it to the Constitutional Council to verify whether it is in line with the constitutional values and key tenets on the functions of and the form of governance in the country. The Constitutional Council approved the bill on 9th March, 2017.



President Nazarbayev Congratulates Women on International Women's Day

President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated the women of Kazakhstan on the occasion of the International Women's Day (8th March). At a traditional meeting "Koktem Shuagy" held in Akorda Presidential Palace on 7th March, which was attended by women from different walks of life, President Nazarbayev noted the invaluable role played by women in the development of the society. He appreciated that women work tirelessly in various fields including science, education, health, public service and private sector.



He recalled the target set by him 12 years ago to raise the share of women in power to 30 per cent, which seemed incredible at that time. He informed the gathering about the achievement of the target saying that 27 percent of Majilis deputies, 22 percent of Maslikhat deputies in regions and 55 percent of civil servants in the country are women and every second company in the country is headed by a woman.

He touched upon the state's demographic policy, focusing on the issues of support and protection of motherhood and children. He highlighted the implementation of Family and Gender Policy Concept 2030 this year. He announced that the amount of childbirth allowances would be increased by 20 percent in July. He underscored the significant drop in maternal and infant mortality in the last ten years. He emphasized the importance of the institution of family in strengthening the country's gender policy.

He drew attention to the need to eradicate aggression against children and provide employment for the younger generation. He suggested holding an all-Kazakhstan Children's Olympiad every four years under the supervision of Olympic champions. He expressed confidence that the women would play a significant role in the current political modernisation. He presented "Altyn alka" (Golden Pendant) award to Ms. Oksana Mukasheva, a mother of many children, and conducted a tour for the participants around the Akorda.

Yoga Teacher Visits Akkol

Dr. Brijesh Gupta, Yoga Teacher at the Indian Cultural Centre, Astana visited Akkol (Akmola Region) on March 10-11, 2017 at the invitation of Ms. Valentina Bogoslovstseva, Yoga Teacher at Fitness Centre "SOYUZ". He conducted master classes in Yoga, followed by Question and Answer sessions. He gave yoga consultations for those who are suffering from various ailments. About 60 people attended the classes and consultations.



Ambassador Attends the Celebratory Concert in Almaty

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain attended the celebratory concert dedicated to the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kazakhstan in Almaty on 14th March, 2017 as the Chief Guest. Ambassador Mr. Murat Auezov, a highly respected Diplomat and Writer, attended the concert as the Guest of Honour. It was organized by the Centre for Indian Classical Dances, Almaty led by Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova.



In his address, Ambassador expressed happiness that in the last 25 years, the relations between India and Kazakhstan have grown steadily and transformed into an enduring strategic partnership. He underscored that the two countries have established mutually beneficial cooperation in practically all areas of bilateral and multilateral relations. He highlighted the existence of high level of mutual trust and understanding between the two countries. He termed the celebratory concert consisting of joint Indian and Kazakh cultural performances by Kazakh girls as an outstanding example of cooperation between the two countries. He informed that the same group of girls would travel to India later in the month and showcase their art.

He thanked Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova for taking the initiative to organize the celebratory concert and expressed admiration at her untiring efforts to promote cultural cooperation, understanding and friendship between the people of the two countries through the medium of art. The concert was supported by the Embassy, Stroi Development, Chaiyy Dvor, Tengri Bank, Druzhnye Rebyata, Telebashnya and Chemodan Tourist Company.

The Embassy Celebrates the International Women's Day

The Embassy celebrated the International Women's Day at the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana on 8th March, 2017. The celebration began with the lighting of lamp by Spouse of Ambassador Smt. Vandana Jain, followed by screening of a documentary film "The Indian Women - An Indomitable Spirit".



In his address, Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain highlighted the significance of celebrating the International Women's Day. He felicitated the woman participants. It was followed by a cultural programme by ICC and refreshments.

IISc, Bangalore Figures in the List of Top 10 Institutions in the World

Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore has entered the list of top 10 institutions in the 'Best Small Universities' category of the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings 2017. The ranking released on 6th March, 2017 places the IISc at eighth position. The small universities are those with fewer than 5,000 students. The IISc established in 1909 is a public university for scientific research and higher education.



Ms. Seeta Bhardwa, Student Editor at THE said that the ranking highlights that the small universities provide high student satisfaction and good working relationships between students and their professors. She stated that many students are drawn to smaller class sizes, higher teacher to student ratios and the community-like feel provided by small universities.

Hyderabad and Jaipur Airports Rank 1st in Airport Service Quality in the World

Hyderabad and Jaipur Airports rank first in the world in airport service quality in 5-15 million passengers per annum (MPPA) and 2-5 MPPA categories respectively in the Airports Council International (ACI)-Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Survey for the year 2016. Delhi and Mumbai airports secured second position in the world in airport service quality in over 40 MPPA category and Srinagar airport secured second position in 2-5 million MPPA category.



The annual ACI-ASQ Awards recognize and award the best airports in the world according to passenger satisfaction survey. As the industry's most comprehensive passenger service benchmarking tool, the ACI-ASQ Survey reliably captures passengers' immediate appraisal while they are at the airport's departure gate. 320 airports across 80 countries participated in the survey for the year 2016.

Incredible India Destination: Hampi

Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was the capital of the mighty Vijayanagara Empire (1336-1565). It is situated on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra in the state of Karnataka. Chroniclers from various countries who visited the empire left graphic and glowing accounts of the city. Temples of this city are noted for their large dimensions, florid ornamentation, bold and delicate carvings, stately pillars, magnificent pavilions and a great wealth of iconographic and traditional depictions which include subjects from the great epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Zanana Enclosure, King's Palace, Mahanavami Dibba, Queen's Bath, Lotus Mahal, Pushkarani, Lakshminarasimha, Hazara Rama Temple, Vithala Temple and Virupaksha Temple are some of the major tourist attractions in Hampi.

Zanana Enclosure is a rectangular wall, in which there are remains of three palaces and watch-towers, a pond, a store and a double-storeyed palace. King's Palace is the largest enclosure including two major platform structures, an underground chamber, double fortification walls and several interesting architectural elements.

Mahanavami Dibba is a massive stone platform where the king used to sit on gem-studded golden thrones and watch the processions passing by. Queen's Bath has stunningly ornate interior with graceful arched corridors, projecting balconies and lotus-shaped fountains which used to spout perfumed water for ladies of the court.

Lotus Mahal derives its name from its beautiful, geometrically arranged cusped arches that resemble the petals of lotus flower opening to the sun. It is an elegant example of the fusion of Hindu and Muslim style of architecture. Pushkarani is a stepped water tank crafted from rectangular pieces of granite. Lakshminarasimha, a 6.7 metre monolith depicting the man-lion form of Lord Vishnu, is seated on a seven-hooded serpent.

Hazara Rama Temple was a royal temple reserved for ceremonial use. Its walls are richly carved with friezes depicting processions of horses, elephants, dancing girls and soldiers attired in splendid weaponry. Vithala Temple is Hampi's crowning glory, with a magnificent stone chariot standing in the temple courtyard. Virupaksha Temple is still used for worship.

Anegundi fortress town (15 km), Tungabhadra Dam (17 km) and Chitradurga hill fort (150 km) are some of the tourist attractions near Hampi.



Vithala Temple



Lotus Mahal



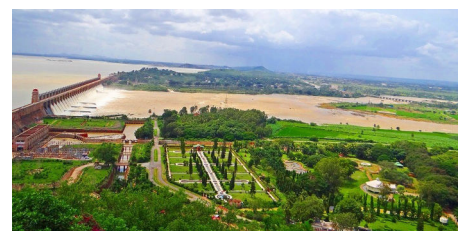
Pushkarani



Hazara Rama Temple



Virupaksha Temple



Tungabhadra Dam

PHOTO FEATURE

Ambassador Attends the Celebratory Concert in Almaty



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The Embassy Celebrates the International Women's Day



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Yoga Teacher Visits Akkol




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