

सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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President of Cyprus Visits India

President of Cyprus Mr. Nicos Anastasiades paid a State Visit to India from April 25-29, 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 28th April, 2017. The leaders reaffirmed the traditionally close and time-tested friendship between India and Cyprus. They underlined their mutual commitment to further strengthen and diversify the relationship.



They reviewed with satisfaction the state of play of bilateral relations, covering a wide spectrum of political, economic, trade and cultural issues. They agreed that the long tradition of political collaboration at bilateral and multilateral levels provide a valuable base to take relations forward, which is underpinned on shared values of democracy, rule of law, international peace, security, shared prosperity and development of all nations.

President Anastasiades briefed Prime Minister Modi about the plan for developing hi-tech sector in Cyprus as the third pillar of its economy. The leaders identified IT, ITES, Biotechnology and R&D as potential areas for future cooperation. They also noted other potential areas for bilateral economic cooperation arising from Cyprus' expertise in financial services and cooperation in knowledge-based industry relating to accountancy, legal and investment banking and merchant shipping research.



The leaders discussed the need for reform of the UN Security Council, including ways to make it more effective, efficient and representative of the contemporary geopolitical challenges.

In the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that India has always stood by Cyprus on all crucial issues. He highlighted India's contribution of personnel to the UN Peace Keeping Force in Cyprus. He wished President Anastasiades every success in his initiative for resolving the Cyprus issue and bringing a new era of peace, development and security in Cyprus and the whole region. He suggested that the beautiful landscapes of Cyprus and the wide horizons of 'Incredible India' can be a source of tourism promotion in both the countries.

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee hosted a banquet in honour of President Anastasiades on 28th April. President Mukherjee said that India-Cyprus relationship is pinned on the foundation of ideological commonalities of founding fathers of the two countries - Mahatma Gandhi and Archbishop Makarios. He pointed out that both India and Cyprus suffer from the scourge of terrorism and emphasized that this global menace needs to be fought by all civilized societies and countries. He stressed that there is an urgent need to strengthen the global counter-terrorism legal framework.

He lauded the economic recovery of Cyprus under the leadership of President Anastasiades, particularly its return to a positive rate of growth - among the fastest in the European Union. He welcomed Cyprus to take advantage of India's flagship programmes such as 'Make in India' and 'Skill India', and join India's growth story. He said that information technology, renewable energy, natural gas, hydrocarbons, sustainable tourism, infrastructure, health and wellness sectors in India are open for partnerships and foreign investments.

President Anastasiades arrived in Mumbai on 25th April and addressed the Cyprus-India Business Forum on 26th April. He addressed the India-Cyprus Business Session on "fostering greater economic cooperation" and delivered a talk at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in New Delhi on 27th April.

Four Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on Merchant Shipping, Civil Aviation, Agriculture, and Culture, Education and Science.

Vice President Ansari Visits Armenia

Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Armenia from April 24-26, 2017. He called on President of Armenia Mr. Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan on 25th April. He met Prime Minister of Armenia Mr. Karen Karapetyan and held discussions on entire gamut of bilateral relations. Their discussions focused on cooperation in technology transfer and deepening of economic cooperation. They agreed that efforts should be made for opening up of civil aviation sector and liberalization of visa regimes to enhance greater tourism traffic and people to people contacts between the two countries.



Vice President Ansari suggested enhancing cooperation in the field of broadcasting. Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan welcomed shooting of bollywood films in Armenia. He appreciated India's development assistance, especially in setting up of centers of excellence in tele-medicine project, gifting of Param Super Computer and establishment of computer labs in schools. He lauded India's strength in IT, Pharmaceuticals and Machinery and expressed interest in forging joint ventures in these sectors. The leaders identified jewellery, stone cutting, watch manufacturing and agriculture as other areas of cooperation.

Vice President Ansari delivered a lecture at the Yerevan State University on 26th April, 2017. He said that a general categorization of challenges to the world of today is premised on a normal desire to live well, in peace and without human or natural threats. He stated that the right to live implies the right to breathe, food, water and health, which together necessitate sustainable development and the need to address the challenges of climate change. He mentioned the population, disease, energy and resources as other problems. He said that the requirements of human-kind transcend national boundaries and can only be addressed through global cooperation. He stated that the emerging imperatives have two-fold implications: technological and socio-political. He emphasized that some of the newer technologies that would impact on human progress relate to energy, cyber technology, robotics, artificial intelligence, quantum mechanics, gene-editing and space exploration. He added that all these have geopolitical implications in the future.

He said that the countries that have invested in educating their populations, built strong consumer economies, and have democratic institutions that can deal with social change will benefit, because their people will have had their basic needs met and can figure out how to take advantage of the advances in technology. The University awarded him a Degree of Honorary Doctor in recognition of his outstanding public and political achievements and contribution to development of India-Armenia relations.

Three Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in culture, youth affairs and space.

Vice President Ansari Visits Poland

Vice President Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Poland from April 27-28, 2017. He met Prime Minister of Poland Ms. Beata Syzdl0 in Warsaw on 27th April, 2017. The leaders reviewed the bilateral relations and discussed regional and international issues of common concern.

They agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of Defence, Railways, Food Processing, Solar Energy, Clean Coal, Treatment of Waste Water and Solid Waste. They noted the increasing number of Indian students coming to Poland to pursue higher education. At the joint press conference, Vice President Ansari informed that India would organize the Festival of India in several cities in Poland in the latter half of 2017 with the support of the Government of Poland.



Vice President Ansari addressed the Business Summit at the Ministry of Economic Development on 27th April, 2017. He said that Polish business looks for markets and business opportunities beyond Europe and India is a natural destination. He said that India's 29 states offer a climate of both cooperative and competitive federalism, with quantum improvements in investment conditions. He informed that the Government of India's new policy initiatives such as Make in India, Skill India and Digital India schemes present new business opportunities for Polish companies in various fields including healthcare, pharmaceuticals, bio-technology and renewable energy.

He delivered a lecture on "Seven Decades of Indian Democracy" at the University of Warsaw. He said that the solution to addressing the gaps and failings of democracy is indeed more democracy. He stated that people of India are the best guarantee for its democratic future. He added that as long as people of India hold true the values of democracy and cultural practices of syncretism, resist usurpation of their rights and do not succumb to sectarian and communal thought, there remains great hope that Indian democracy would continue to thrive and inspire others.

He called on President of Poland Mr. Andrzej Duda on 28th April. He inaugurated the newly constructed Embassy of India complex in Warsaw, spread over 10,000 sq. meters of prime land, facing the famous Lazienki Park on 28th April.

One MOU on cooperation in the field of Agriculture was signed during the visit.

President of Nepal Visits India

President of Nepal Rt. Hon'ble Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a State Visit to India from April 17-21, 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received her in New Delhi on 18th April. The leaders noted that India-Nepal relations derive their strength and salience from shared history, common cultural ethos and long years of close and intense people to people contacts facilitated by open borders. Prime Minister Modi conveyed India's support to ongoing efforts of the Government of Nepal in moving constitution implementation process forward through dialogue and taking all sections of its society on board.



She thanked India for its continued support for Nepal's socio-economic development. The leaders agreed to deepen and strengthen the ongoing cooperation in sectors such as trade, economy, investments, water resources, energy, security, post-earthquake reconstruction efforts, culture, education and people to people ties. They expressed satisfaction at the recent initiatives taken towards expediting implementation of cross-border connectivity projects such as development of Terai roads, cross-border rail links, integrated check posts and cross-border petroleum products pipeline. They reviewed with satisfaction the expanding vistas of bilateral energy cooperation, including development of hydropower projects in Nepal, power trade and development of high-capacity cross-border transmission lines.

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee hosted a banquet in honour of President Bidya Devi Bhandari on 18th April. He expressed belief that prosperity, security and welfare of the two nations are inter-linked and inter-dependent. He noted that as democratic and pluralistic nations, both India and Nepal aspire for a higher growth rate, an inclusive society, sustainable development and an external environment that facilitates the national development.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari interacted with Indian business community at a meeting hosted by the CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM in New Delhi on 18th April, 2017. She visited the Yamuna Bio-diversity Park, a showcase of environment conservation and protection efforts on the banks of river Yamuna. She went to Rajkot in the State of Gujarat and offered prayers at Somnath and Dwarkadhish Temples on 19th April. She visited Bhubaneswar in the State of Odisha where she attended a women empowerment programme of the State Government and offered prayers at Lingaraj Temple on 20th April. She also offered prayers at Jagannath Temple in Puri on 21st April.

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Visits India

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe paid a working visit to India from April 25-29, 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 26th April. The leaders discussed a range of bilateral issues and matters of mutual interest. They expressed satisfaction at the progress in implementing the outcomes of various recent high level exchanges, which further strengthened the historically close and friendly relations between the two countries.

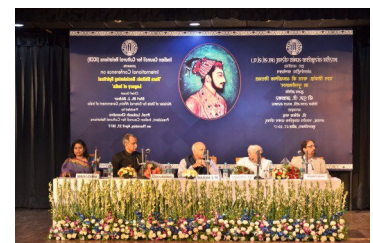


Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to promoting prosperity in the neighbourhood and continued support for realizing the vision of the Sri Lankan leadership for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka.

One MOU on cooperation in Economic Projects was signed during the visit.

Kazakhstan Participates in the Conference on Dara Shikoh in New Delhi

Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M. J. Akbar inaugurated the International Conference on "Dara Shikoh: Reclaiming Spiritual Legacy of India" organised by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in New Delhi on April 27-28, 2017. President of ICCR Prof. Lokesh Chandra presided over the inaugural session.



The conference highlighted the contribution and initiatives of Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan, in bringing about spiritual homogenisation of Hinduism and Islam and thereby building a cohesive social and cultural edifice of India. The ICCR also staged a play of Dara Shikoh at the National School of Drama, New Delhi on 27th April, 2017.

24 eminent scholars, academics and historians from 7 countries participated in the international conference. Dr. Galia Kambarkbekova, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty participated in the conference from Kazakhstan.

President Nazarbayev Addresses the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan

President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev addressed the 25th session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan on 26th April, 2017 on the theme "stability, unity, consensus - the basis of modernization". He said that the year 2017 is unique and special in the history of independent Kazakhstan as the country launched economic and political reforms, and modernisation of public consciousness.

He expressed confidence that the Assembly would contribute to modernizing public consciousness and suggested that the Assembly could take an active part in "Little Motherland - Tugan Zher", "100 New Faces of Kazakhstan" and "Modern Kazakhstani Culture in the Global World" programmes. He noted the relevance of the "Humanities New Knowledge" project which involves translation of the best books in the world in social and human sciences into Kazakh language for generating the consciousness of young people.

He assigned the Assembly and the executive authorities with the tasks to form public consciousness that meets the challenges of systemic modernization, strengthen civic identity, and ensure unity and harmony. He requested the authorities to create a multimedia portal of the Assembly and an interactive historical electronic map titled "the People of Kazakhstan" tracing formation of Kazakh land. He called upon the representatives of business and creative and scientific intelligentsia to take part in the "Little Motherland" project to support fellow countrymen in villages.

The members and veterans of the Assembly from all regions, chairpersons of the national and regional ethno-cultural associations, parliament deputies, heads of central executive bodies, heads of diplomatic missions, and representatives of political parties, religious associations, NGOs, intelligentsia and media attended the Assembly. The Session endorsed President Nazarbayev's article on modernization of public conscience and adopted an appeal on necessity of its implementation for the integrity and development of Kazakhstan.

Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain attended the Session.



4th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan JWG on Textiles held in Shymkent

The 4th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Joint Working Group (JWG) on Textiles led by Shri Subrata Gupta, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and Mr. B. Dzhamalov, Deputy Akim of South Kazakhstan Region was held in Shymkent (South Kazakhstan Region) on April 20-21, 2017. Both sides discussed the status and prospects of further development of cooperation between the two countries in the field of textiles. They exchanged views on the possibility of India's participation in strengthening and developing the textile industry in the region and export of raw cotton produced in the region to India for processing.



The members of Indian delegation called on Akim of the Region Mr. Zhanseit Tuimebayev. They visited the local industries such as Ontustik FEZ, the carpet factory Bal Textile LLP, the hosiery production plant Alem BT LLP, the garment factory AGF-Group LLP and Cotton enterprise-cellulose LLP. They also interacted with businessmen at the Atameken Regional Chamber of Entrepreneurs.

Indian Companies Participate in ICDA Members' Meeting 2017 in Astana

The Annual Members' Meeting of the International Chromium Development Association (ICDA) was held in Astana from April 25-27, 2017. The meeting analysed the chrome industry figures of 2016 and discussed the international situation, industry trend, development of ferrochrome market, future challenges of the industry, etc. The participants also visited the leading diversified natural resources producer, Eurasian Resources Group's new ferroalloy plant in Aktobe for a special technical tour.



The representatives of five Indian companies viz., Facor Alloys Limited, Ferro Alloys Corporation Limited, Tata Steel, Saumya Mining Company Limited and Areion Mining Limited participated in the meeting and discussed cooperation with local mining companies. Kazakhstan plays a prominent role in the chrome industry, ranking second and third for chrome ore and ferrochrome global production respectively. It is also the second largest exporter of chrome ore and ferrochrome.

The Embassy Invites Applications for ITEC Programme for 2017-18

The Embassy of India invites applications from the citizens of Kazakhstan for participation in the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme for the year 2017-18 (April, 2017 to March, 2018). The ITEC programme offers short term and long term training courses in leading institutions in India in various disciplines such as Accounts, Audit, Banking, English Language, Entrepreneurship, Environment, Finance, Management, Parliamentary Practices, Renewable Energy, Rural Development, Small & Medium Enterprises, Space Technology, Technical, Telecommunication, etc.



The scholarships under the ITEC programme are fully funded by the Government of India, which covers expenditure on return airfare, course fees, accommodation, study tours within India, a moderate living allowance and book allowance. Detailed information, including list of available courses, empanelled institutions and eligibility criteria are available on the Embassy's website: <http://indembastana.in/ieb.php?id=ITEC%20Programme>.

ICC Participates in the Annual International Dance Day at MIRAS School

The Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana participated in the Annual International Dance Day at MIRAS International School, Astana on 28th April, 2017. The celebration commenced with a Kathak Dance on a composition based on spring season by Ms. Chandrani Ojah, Dance Teacher at the ICC. This was followed by traditional and modern dances by the students. The School presented a letter of gratitude to the ICC.



ICC Participates in the Annual International Day of Spectrum School

Ms. Chandrani Ojah, Dance Teacher and Mr. Bhaskar Ojah, Music Teacher at the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana performed at the 7th Annual International Day of Spectrum School, Astana at the Mega Silk Way Shopping and Entertainment Centre, Astana on 29th April, 2017. The school students set up stalls dedicated to several countries including India. The celebration included folk dances of various countries by the students.



ICC Participates in the Kirtan Mela Celebrated by ISKCON

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana participated in the Kirtan Mela celebrated by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) at Orman Banquet Hall, Astana on 28th April, 2017. The students of ICC performed a dance composition of Kathak and Bollywood fusion. Mr. Bhaskar Ojah, Music Teacher at the ICC, was on Tabla and a student of ICC recited flute. The celebration was inaugurated by Spiritual Leader of ISKCON Mr. Govinda Swami Maharaj.



IMF Retains India's Growth Rate Forecast at 7.2% for 2017-18

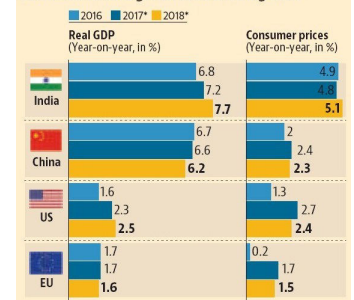
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) retained its growth projection for India at 7.2% for the financial year 2017-18 in its biannual World Economic Outlook (WEO) released on 18th April, 2017.

The IMF increased India's growth estimate for 2016-17 to 6.8% from 6.6% estimated in January, 2017. Its projection makes India the fastest growing major economy in 2016-17. The IMF's WEO says that India's medium-term growth prospects are favourable, with growth expected to rise to about 8% over the medium term as a result of implementation of key reforms, loosening of supply-side bottlenecks, and appropriate fiscal and monetary policies.

At the annual spring meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington on 20th April, 2017, Managing Director of IMF Ms. Christine Lagarde described the ongoing Goods and Services Tax (GST) reform in India as an act of courage and said that she expects positive outcome as a result of the decision. The GST, likely to come into force in July, 2017, will subsume central excise, service tax, value added tax and other local levies to create a uniform market. The GST is expected to boost India's GDP growth by about 2% and check tax evasion.

How India fares against the rest

IMF's projection makes India the fastest growing major economy in 2016-17 with 6.8%, with China estimated to have grown at 6.7% during 2016.



*Projection

Source: IMF WEO

Incredible India Destination: Saputara

Nestled at an elevation of 873 metres among the verdant hills of the Sahyadri range, Saputara in Dang District of the State of Gujarat is a popular hill station. It is a beguiling amalgam of beautiful hotels, parks, swimming pool, boat club, theatres and a museum. It is home to an awe-inspiring landscape.

Saputara Lake, Boat Club, Artist Village, Nageshwar Mahadev Temple, Saputara Tribal Museum, and Sunrise and Sunset points are some of the major tourist attractions in Saputara.

Saputara Lake with serene atmosphere and blue expanse of water has remained an all-time favourite with the visitors. The Boat Club near the lake offers facilities for boating.

The artisans in Gandharvapur Artist Village make beautiful pieces of pottery, jewellery, vases, and paintings made from bamboo chips and other locally found material.

Nageshwar Mahadev Temple is located on the southern banks of the Saputara Lake. A swayambhu idol of Lord Shiva is worshipped by the devotees there.

Saputara Tribal Museum deals exclusively with the culture of the tribal people of Dang and is an invaluable introduction to the indigenous people of Gujarat. On display are the lifestyle, ornaments and musical instruments of the tribes.

Sunrise point, at a distance of 1.5 km from Saputara, offers the best view of Saputara and adjoining Malegoan. Sunset Point has a scenic view of Dang Forest. A ropeway offers a ten-minute ride across the valley to the Sunset Point.

Echo Point, Honey Centre, Ambika Darshan, Ritambhara Vishwa Vidyapith, Lake Garden, Step Garden and Rose Garden are some of the other tourist attractions in Saputara. Gira waterfalls (52 km), Vansada National Park (60 km), Purna Wildlife Sanctuary (73 km) and Tithal Sandy Beach (130 km) are some of the major tourist attractions near Saputara.



Saputara Lake



Ropeway



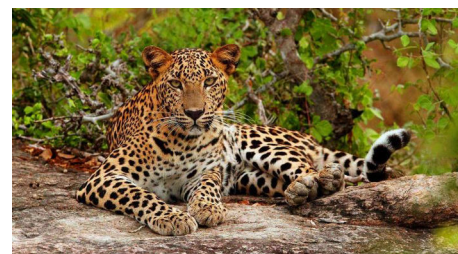
Artist Village



Tithal Beach



Gira Waterfalls



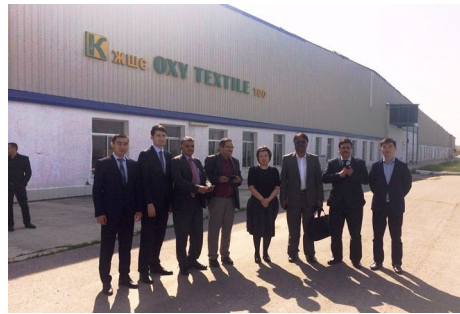
Purna Wildlife Sanctuary

PHOTO FEATURE

Kazakhstan Participates in the Conference on Dara Shikoh in New Delhi



4th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan JWG on Textiles held in Shymkent



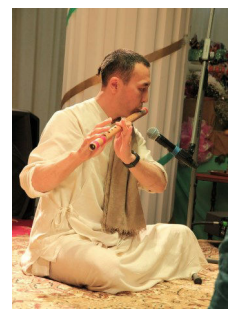
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