



Embassy of India Astana

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

MARCH 1, 2018

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President of Iran Visits India

President of Iran Dr. Hassan Rouhani paid a State Visit to India from February 15-17, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 17th February, 2018. They held wide-ranging and constructive discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues. They noted that mutually beneficial ties between the two countries were based upon the strong foundations of two millenia old cultural and civilisational connect.

They welcomed the successful inauguration of the Phase-1 of Chabahar Port in December, 2017. President Rouhani invited Indian investments in setting up plants in the Chabahar FTZ in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy.

The leaders agreed that India would grant e-visa facility to Iranian nationals and Iran would grant e-visa to Indian nationals. They decided to hold the Festival of India in Iran in 2018-19; establish a Chair of Indian studies in Tehran University; organise Indology courses for Iranian diplomats by the Foreign Service Institute of India; support Persian language courses in India; and cooperate further in the areas of archaeology, museums, archives and libraries. They agreed to strengthen cooperation in energy, defence, security, maritime, trade and investment sectors.

In their joint address to the media, Prime Minister Modi committed India's support to the development of Chabahar-Zahidan railway line so as to fully utilize the potential of the Chabahar Port and its connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The leaders released a joint postage stamp depicting Deendayal Port, Kandla and Shahid Beheshti Terminal, Chabahar reflecting enhanced prosperity through greater connectivity.

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind received President Rouhani on 17th February, 2018 and hosted a banquet in his honour. President Rouhani visited Hyderabad on February 15-16, 2018. He attended Friday prayers at Mecca Masjid and addressed the congregation in Hyderabad.

9 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income; exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports; ratification of extradition treaty; traditional systems of medicine; establishment of an expert group on trade remedy measures; agriculture and allied sectors; health and medicine; postal cooperation; lease contract for Shahid Beheshti Port Phase-1 of Chabahar during interim period.



Prime Minister of Canada Visits India

Prime Minister of Canada Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau paid a State Visit to India from February 18-24, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 23rd February. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the ongoing diversification and growth of strategic partnership, based on shared values of democracy, diversity, pluralism and rule of law.

They applauded the launch of Canada-India Accelerator Program for Women Tech Entrepreneurs and the decision to convene a Canada-India Track 1.5 Dialogue on Innovation, Growth and Prosperity. They agreed that the two countries work together to finalize an arrangement to export Canadian pulses to India and facilitate access for Indian organic products. They welcomed the continuation of uranium exports from Canada for peaceful uses of nuclear power. They agreed to enhance geo-spatial collaboration and consider Indian participation in Canadian Arctic research.



They welcomed the announcement of new health innovations in India through Canada and India Grand Challenges. They resolved to facilitate movement of highly skilled persons from India to Canada under the Global Skills Strategy. They agreed to strengthen cooperation in the sectors of space, healthcare, IT, start up, trade and investment, science and technology, tourism, defence, cyber security, and people-to-people contacts. They interacted with the CEOs of Indian and Canadian companies at the India-Canada CEOs Dialogue.

At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that Canada is an important destination for Indian students for higher studies and the MOU signed on higher education would help facilitate the increased movement of students and teachers of both the sides. He stated that increased movement of skilled professionals between the two countries would benefit both the countries.

Prime Minister Trudeau called on President Shri Ram NathKovind on 23rd February, 2018. He visited Agra, Gandhi Nagar, Mumbai and Amritsar from February 18-22, 2018.

6 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in the sectors of ICT and Electronics; Sport; Intellectual Property Rights; Higher Education; Science, Technology and Innovation; and Terms of Reference for the India-Canada Ministerial Energy Dialogue.

King of Jordan Visits India

King of Jordan His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein visited India from 27th February to 1st March, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 1st March, 2018. The leaders discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. They agreed to strengthen ties in trade and investment, defence, security, cyber security, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.



President Shri Ram Nath Kovind received King Abdullah II on 1st March, 2018. He lauded that Jordan has remained stable and peaceful in a troubled region because of the stellar and visionary leadership of King Abdullah II. He appreciated Jordan for providing hope and shelter to a large number of refugees and conveyed India's readiness to give Jordan a helping hand in rendering humanitarian assistance to the refugees.

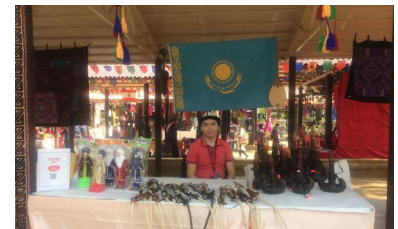
King Abdullah II visited the National Security Guard Training Center at Manesar on 28th February, 2018 where a demonstration of its capability in counter terrorism was made. He met a group of CEOs in a meeting organized by FICCI, highlighted the investment opportunities available in Jordan and invited Indian businessmen to take advantage of Jordan's strategic location and its free trade agreements in North America, Europe and Arab countries. He visited IIT, Delhi to explore collaboration with Jordan technical institutes. He addressed a Business Forum jointly organized by FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM. Many sectors were identified for cooperation including IT, mining, tourism, retail and renewables.

King Abdullah II delivered an address at a special event on "Islamic Heritage: Promoting Understanding and Moderation", organised by India Islamic Center in New Delhi on 1st March, 2018. He lauded India's religious plurality in achieving success against extremism. In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that Jordan is situated on a holy land from where the message of God reverberated in the entire world in the form of the voice of prophets and saints. He stated that all the religions and sects have flourished on the Indian soil and democracy is just not a political system in India, but also the fundamental basis of equality, diversity and concord.

12 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in defence; customs; manpower; waiver of visa for diplomatic and official passport holders; cultural exchange programme; health; setting up of a next generation Centre of Excellence in Jordan; long term supply of rock phosphate and fertilizer/NPK to India; establishment of an ICCR Chair for Hindi language at the University of Jordan; and mutual cooperation between Agra and Petra; Indian Institute of Mass Communication and Jordan Media Institute; and Prasar Bharati and Jordan TV.

Kazakhstan Participates in the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Fair

A 5-member Artisans Group from National Museum of Kazakhstan, Astana and Union of Artisans of Kazakhstan, Almaty led by Mr. Berik Alibay, Head of the Department of Preservation and Restoration of Metal and Bonewares at National Museum of Kazakhstan, participated in the "32nd Surajkund International Crafts Fair" at Surajkund, Faridabad from February 2-18, 2018. Haryana Tourism extended local hospitality to the visiting artisans. The artisans showcased the traditional arts and crafts of Kazakhstan in the Fair. The Fair was organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Textiles and Culture.



State Facilitation Programme Organized in Almaty

The Embassy of India, Astana organized a State Facilitation Programme "Kerala: Advantages and Opportunities" in Almaty on 28th February, 2018 in collaboration with the Incham.

In his address, Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar spoke about the facilities available and opportunities presented by the southern state of Kerala. He underscored that the areas that are open to investors include tourism, traditional industries, agro processing, IT, logistics and healthcare. He emphasized that its strategic location on the trans-national trade corridor, rich natural resources, and simple and transparent procedures make the state favourably suited for investments. He informed that a series of such events promoting various Indian States would be organized with the objective to connect Indian States with Kazakhstan.



Shri Ashok Sajjanhar, former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan and Prof. Madhavan K. Palat, eminent scholar and academician from Kerala also spoke on the occasion. A presentation on investment opportunities in Kerala by Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation was made and several short video clips on Kerala were screened.

Ambassador Meets Mayor of Almaty

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar met Mayor of Almaty Mr. Bauyrzhan Baibek on 28th February, 2018. They discussed strengthening of cooperation between India and Kazakhstan, particularly Almaty in various sectors. Mayor Bauyrzhan said that Kazakhstan is the major trade and investment partner of India in Central Asia. He stated that India is one of the largest exporters of Information & Technology (IT) services and Almaty is interested in studying the experience of development of IT hubs and establishing cooperation with Indian IT parks. Ambassador highlighted the potential for enhancement of cooperation between India and Almaty in the fields of education, capacity building, culture and tourism.



Ambassador Inaugurates a Conference “India at 7.0: History and Modernization”

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar and Prof. Abdsattar Derbissali, Director, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty jointly inaugurated an International Conference “India at 7.0: History and Modernization” organized by the Kazakhstan-Indian Foundation (KIF) and the Institute of Oriental Studies with the support of the Embassy of India on 27th February, 2018 in Almaty.



In his address, Ambassador spoke about the ancient ties between India and Central Asia as well as growing bilateral ties between India and Kazakhstan with regular high level visits, increased people to people contacts, easier visa norms, etc. He explained that both the countries are looking for a strategic autonomy. He emphasized that multi ethnicity and sustainable development are unique developmental challenges and the two countries can learn from each other in these areas. He informed that the final issues on operationalizing the International North South Transport Corridor would be sorted out shortly and it is likely to give a great fillip to the trade between India and Kazakhstan.

Prof. Peter De Souza, Centre for the Study of Developing Countries, outlined India's experience in democracy. Shri Ashok Sajjanhar, former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan spoke about the status and prospects of India-Kazakhstan relations. Prof. Madhavan Palat, Editor-in-Chief of multi-volume series “Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru” highlighted the importance of the series as a major source of history of India and the world of the 20th century. Dr. Sanjay Garg, Deputy Director, National Archives of India (NAI) made an online presentation on the role of the NAI as a key depository of sources, particularly related to nation-building.

Several scholars from India and Kazakhstan participated in the conference. The conference highlighted the issues related to nation-building, modernization processes, transformation of global order and socio-economic development. The participants emphasized to strengthen academic links, conduct joint research and establish links in the fields of archives and libraries between the two countries.

Ambassador Attends Annual Concert of the Centre of Indian Classical Dances, Almaty

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar attended the Annual Concert of the Centre of Indian Classical Dances, Almaty at Zhambyl Kazakh State Philharmonic Hall, Almaty on 28th February, 2018. He released an educational DVD titled “Indian Classical Dance Bharatanatyam for Beginners”, brought out by the Centre with the support of the Embassy of India in Kazakh, Russian and English languages. In his address, Ambassador said that India and Kazakhstan have established mutually beneficial cooperation in practically all areas and an outstanding example of such cooperation is the presentation of the concert. He appreciated Director of the Centre, ICCR alumna and Honoured Artist of Kazakhstan Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova for her efforts to promote cultural cooperation, understanding and friendship between India and Kazakhstan.



Mr. Murat Auezov, Former Ambassador of Kazakhstan and Writer also spoke on the occasion. Ms. Aigerim Sanbayeva, Head, Administration Wing, Department of Culture of Almaty City Administration presented a Letter of Gratitude to Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova in appreciation of her 20 years of work in the field of culture.

30 students of the Centre participated in the concert comprising Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Bollywood Dance, Folk Dances of India and Kazakhstan, Hindi Songs, Fusion, etc. The event was widely covered in the local media including newspapers “Vremya”, “Almaty Akshami” and “Kazahstanskaya Pravda”, and TV Channel “Khabar 24”. Tengri Bank, Gazhapp Undistan Charity Foundation and Asia SU Limited supported the conduct of the concert.

India Extends e-Visa Facility to Kazakhstan

The Government of India has extended the facility of e-Visa Scheme to the nationals of Kazakhstan in addition to existing visa facilities. The e-Visa is granted to ordinary passport holders under three categories viz., e-Tourist Visa, e-Business Visa and e-Medical Visa to visit India for the purpose of recreation, sight seeing, casual visit to meet friends or relatives, attending short-term yoga programmes, business visit or medical treatment.



In order to avail of the facility of e-Visa, the applicants should fill in the application online at: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>. The applicants may apply online minimum 4 days in advance of the date of arrival with a window of 120 days. The applications will be cleared in 72-hours and an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) slip sent to the applicants by e-mail. The applicants should be in possession of a copy of ETA at the time of travel along with passport. The validity of e-Visa will be 60 days from the date of arrival in India. Double entry may be permitted on e-Tourist Visa and e-Business Visa, and triple entry may be permitted on e-Medical Visa.

A sum of US\$ 50 or equivalent amount in Indian Rupees per passenger will be charged from Kazakhstani nationals as e-Visa fee. Bank transaction charges of 2.5% will be charged additionally on applicable e-Visa fees. The e-Visa can be availed by an applicant for a maximum of two times in a calendar year. Detailed information on e-Visa facility is available on the e-Visa website: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>.

2nd Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Joint Business Council in New Delhi

The 2nd Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Joint Business Council was organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Foreign Trade Chamber of Kazakhstan in New Delhi on February 15-16, 2018. Chairman and Managing Director of RRB Energy Limited Mr. Rakesh Bakshi and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to India Mr. Bulat Sarsenbayev co-chaired the meeting. Shri G. V. Srinivas, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and Mr. Yerzhan Shaikenov, CEO of Tengri Bank also spoke on the occasion with an emphasis to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries. Over 100 Indian companies and 30 Kazakhstani companies participated in the business council meeting.



The representatives of the companies from the two countries held B2B meetings, during which they exchanged information and discussed prospects for cooperation. An updated roadmap on trade, economic and investment cooperation between the two countries was adopted.

AIFC Delegation Visits India

A delegation from Astana International Financial Center Authority (AIFC) led by its Chief Executive Officer Mr. Nurlan Kussainov visited the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), the State Bank of India (SBI), the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and other banking and financial institutions in India from February 19-23, 2018. They discussed about establishing cooperation between AIFC and leading financial institutions in India.



Kazakhstani Professionals Participate in ITEC Programmes in India

Ms. Dina Kudaibergen, Human Resources Inspector, Nazarbayev Intellectual School, Taldykorgan, was selected for the course "Progress to Proficiency-Intermediate" conducted by the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad from 9th January to 30th March, 2018; and Ms. Raushan Mukhamejanova, Senior Lecturer, KAZGUU University, Astana, was selected for the course "Tourism and Hospitality Management" conducted by the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Hyderabad from 22nd January to 16th March, 2018 under ITEC Programme funded by the Government of India.

Ms. Azel Bekenova, Manager, Eurasian Bank, Almaty was selected for the course "Certificate of Proficiency in English & Business Communication" conducted by Aptech, New Delhi from 22nd January to 1st April, 2018; and Ms. Karlygash Tursynbayeva, Biophysics Teacher, Aviemaed Medical College, Almaty, was selected for the course "Diploma in Advanced Networking" conducted by NIIT, Gurgaon from 29th January to 20th April, 2018 under the ITEC programme.



Incredible India Destination: Shimla

Shimla, the capital of the state of Himachal Pradesh, is one of India's most popular hill stations. It is located at an altitude of 2,276 metres on the south-western ranges of the Himalayas. Snow-capped Himalayan peaks and green pastures surround Shimla. Shimla was the Summer Capital of the British in India and the echoes of the British Empire linger on in the architecture and ambience of this hill resort. Kalka-Shimla Railway line opened in 1903 with more than 800 bridges and 100 tunnels was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Mountain Railways of India) in 2008. Shimla has the largest natural ice skating rink in South Asia. The arts and crafts of Shimla are very popular and its shawls are well known for their fine quality.

The Mall, Ridge, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Jakhoo hill and Summer Hill are some of the major tourist attractions in Shimla.

The Mall, the main shopping street, is the hub of Shimla's social life. The Ridge is a large open space in the heart of the town and presents excellent view of the mountain ranges. It is the centre of most cultural activities. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study is housed in the former Viceregal Lodge built in 1888. It is a spectacular English renaissance-inspired grey-stone structure with Burma teak woodwork on the interiors.

Jakhoo hill is the highest point in Shimla and offers a panoramic view of the town's hills and distant mountain ranges. This offers spectacular views at sunrise and sunset especially during the monsoons. The peak has a temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman. Summer Hill is a picturesque township on the outskirts of Shimla. Himachal Pradesh University is situated there.

Naldhera (located at a distance of 22 kms from Shimla) is a very quaint and serene town. It boasts of the oldest 9-hole golf course in the country. Tattapani village (45 km), situated on the banks of river Sutlej, is famous for its hot water springs and the water is said to have curative powers. Tattapani offers adventurous sports such as river rafting, mountain biking and trekking.

Chail (45 km), the summer capital of the former princely state of Patiala, was built by Maharaja Bhupender Singh in 1890s. It houses a cricket pitch, which is the highest in the world. Sarahan (170 km) presents a spectacular view of Srikhand range and has the majestic Bhimkali Temple .



Kalka Shimla Railway



Indian Institute of Advanced Study



River rafting in Tattapani



Chail



Shimla



Bhimkali Temple in Sarahan

PHOTO FEATURE

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