



Embassy of India Astana

NEWSLETTER

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India Hosts the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President of France Mr. Emmanuel Macron co-chaired the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance in New Delhi on 11th March, 2018. The idea of International Solar Alliance (ISA) was conceived by India and jointly launched by India and France on the sidelines of Paris Climate Conference in November, 2015. Out of 121 prospective member countries, 61 have already joined the Alliance, out of which 32 have ratified the Framework Agreement of establishment of the ISA. The ISA, treaty-based intergovernmental organization headquartered in India, is working for deployment of over 1000 GW of solar energy and mobilising more than US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by the year 2030.



In his address at the founding conference, Prime Minister Modi said that the world's largest renewable energy expansion program has been started in India with the target to generate 175 GW of electricity by 2022 with solar energy component being 100 GW. He added that India has already achieved the target of 20 GW installed solar power.

He informed that apart from providing for ISA Corpus Fund, India has contributed US\$ 62 million for establishment of the ISA Secretariat. He announced that India would provide 500 training slots in solar energy to the ISA members every year. He stated that India has completed or is currently implementing 13 solar projects worth US\$ 143 million worldwide and is now offering US\$ 1.4 billion in assistance to 27 other projects in 15 other developing countries. He announced that consultancy support would be provided to partner countries to design bankable projects by the Project Preparation Facility set up by India. He also announced that India would launch Solar Technology Mission to fill the gap in solar technology. He presented a 10-point action plan aimed at making solar power more affordable while raising the share of power generated.

The founding conference adopted a visionary and action-oriented Delhi Solar Agenda, which reflects the determination of member-states to jointly combat climate change and harness energy from the sun for the shared benefit of mankind. Representatives from 58 countries including 23 Heads of State/Government, 6 Vice Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers, and 19 Ministers attended the founding conference. President Shri Ram Nath Kovind hosted a banquet in honour of President Macron and Heads of State/Government attending the founding conference on 10th March, 2018. In his address, President Kovind said that the ISA is embarking on a gleaming journey and presence of so many leaders at the founding conference asserts, "*We did not inherit our future from our ancestors; we have borrowed it from our children*".

President of France Visits India

President of France Mr. Emmanuel Macron paid a State Visit to India from March 9-12, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Macron held wide ranging discussions in New Delhi on 10th March. They agreed to deepen the bilateral ties based on shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law and respect for human rights. They decided to strengthen cooperation in the fields of economy, space, defence, maritime, education, environment, railways, smart cities, culture and tourism. They reiterated the goal of commencing work at the proposed world's largest Nuclear Power Plant at Jaitapur with a capacity of 9.6 GW by end-2018.



The leaders underlined their commitment to furthering and deepening concrete projects and programmes under the aegis of International Solar Alliance to mobilize affordable financing for massive solar energy deployment. They addressed a joint press conference. Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in Indian Ocean Region and India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation were issued. President Shri Ram Nath Kovind received President Macron on 10th March, 2018. He pointed out that the bilateral trade of about US\$ 11 billion is far below potential and emphasized the need to diversify the trade basket and look for new avenues to boost trade.

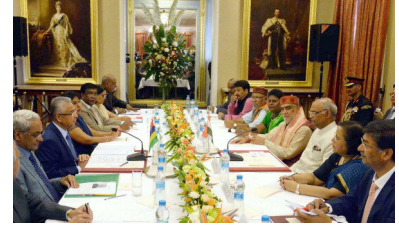
Prime Minister Modi and President Macron attended the India-France CEOs Forum in New Delhi. President Macron interacted with students from across India in New Delhi. He visited Taj Mahal in Agra and attended the Knowledge Summit, the first Indo-French conference on research and higher education, in New Delhi on 11th March, 2018. Prime Minister Modi received President Macron in Varanasi on 12th March, 2018. The leaders jointly inaugurated a 75-MW solar power plant in Mirzapur, which was built in collaboration with a French company under ISA programme. They visited the Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul, a trade facilitation centre for handicrafts, and interacted with the artisans. They took a boat ride from Assi Ghat to Dashashwamedh Ghat on the river Ganges.

14 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on combating illicit traffic and consumption of drugs, migration and mobility partnership, mutual recognition of educational qualifications, railways, provision of reciprocal logistics support between the Armed Forces, environment, sustainable urban development, exchange and reciprocal protection of classified or protected information, maritime awareness mission, Jaitapur nuclear power project, Hydrography and Maritime Cartography, Credit Facility Agreement of Euros 100 million for funding smart city projects and projects in ISA member countries in the area of solar energy.

President Kovind Visits Mauritius

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a state visit to Mauritius from March 11-14, 2018. He attended the 50th anniversary celebrations of the independence of Mauritius as the Chief Guest on 12th March, 2018.

He met Prime Minister of Mauritius Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth on 12th March, 2018. He announced a new Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million for defence procurement by the Government of Mauritius. He also announced that India would provide a Multi-Purpose Offshore Patrol Vessel (MPOPV) to Mauritius to augment its security capacity.



He met President of Mauritius Dr. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim on 11th March, 2018. He reaffirmed India's commitment to its development cooperation partnership with Mauritius. He attended a banquet hosted by Prime Minister Jugnauth on 11th March, 2018. In his address, he said that Mauritius is gateway to Indian Ocean Region and Africa and it can serve as a hub for Indian companies looking to access the African mainland.

He addressed the students at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute at Moka on 11th March, 2018. On educational cooperation between India and Mauritius, he said that over 300 Mauritian students are undergoing civilian and defence related training in India each year under ITEC programme and about 100 Mauritian students are pursuing higher education in India under Government of India's scholarship programme. He visited Ganga Talao and Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Site to pay his tributes on 12th March, 2018.

He inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building constructed with Indian assistance on 13th March, 2018. He launched the World Hindi Secretariat's logo. He laid foundation stone for an ENT hospital and a social housing project, and launched a project for supply of e-tablets to primary school children across Mauritius, which are funded by the Government of India under a US\$ 353 million Special Economic Package. He addressed the Indian diaspora at a reception hosted by the High Commissioner of India. He said that people in India rejoice at the remarkable success of their brothers and sisters who left Indian shores many generations ago. He highlighted the special provisions made for Mauritius in the OCI scheme with a view to connect with the diaspora.

Four Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on establishment of an Ayurveda Chair at the University of Mauritius; cultural exchange; cooperation between Nalanda University and Mauritius; and cooperation between Union Public Service Commission of India and Public Service Commission of Mauritius.

President Kovind Visits Madagascar

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a state visit to Madagascar on March 14-15, 2018. He met President of Madagascar Mr. Hery Rajaonarimampianina in Antananarivo on 14th March, 2018. They acknowledged the long-standing excellent bilateral relations between India and Madagascar and re-affirmed the mutual desire to strengthen cooperation in the spheres of defence, economy, commerce, maritime, science and technology, education and culture.



President Rajaonarimampianina thanked India for offering an LOC of US\$ 80.72 million for agricultural development. He welcomed India's generous gesture of granting of 1000 metric tonnes of rice, Bhabhatron-II Cancer therapy machine, 100 tonnes of medicines, 100,000 NCERT text books, deputation of English & IT teachers, gifting of computers and peripherals to University of Tulear and Lycee Moderne Ampefiloha School, and providing of election related materials and office equipment to CENI.

The leaders jointly inaugurated the Centre for Geoinformatics Applications in Rural Development (CGARD), set up in Antananarivo with India's assistance. President Rajaonarimampianina conferred the Grand Cross, the highest Malagasy award, on President Kovind. President Kovind handed over a cheque for US\$ 2 million to BNGRC, the National Office for Management of Risk and Disaster Relief, as India's contribution to disaster relief. He reaffirmed India's readiness to help Madagascar in building infrastructure projects in energy, roads and port development.

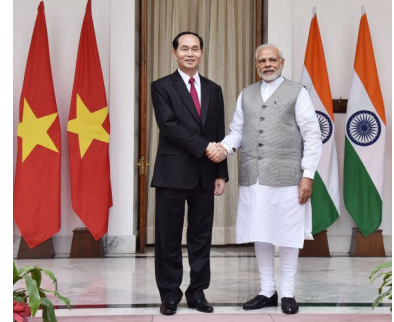
President Kovind attended an Indian community reception on 14th March, 2018. He outlined the several initiatives taken by the government of India to engage with the diaspora around the world. He interacted with the members of India-Madagascar Business Forum on 15th March, 2018 and urged them to further trade and business opportunities. He addressed the students and the faculty at the University of Antananarivo. He said that educational cooperation is at the base of India-Madagascar relationship. He stated that as an ISA member state, Madagascar would be accessing a solar grant pilot project to be commissioned by India's National Institute of Solar Energy.

Two Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation on Defence and Air Services.

President of Vietnam Visits India

President of Vietnam Mr. Tran Dai Quang paid a state visit to India from March 2-4, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 3rd March, 2018. President Tran Dai Quang commended India on its achievements in economic and social development, science and technology, and improving its people's living standards. Prime Minister Modi congratulated Vietnam on its important achievements in socio-economic development.

The leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in the areas of trade & investment, agriculture, S&T, cyber security, terrorism, transnational crimes, maritime security, climate change, food security, culture and tourism. They decided to expedite implementation of the US\$ 100 million LOC for building high-speed patrol boats for the Vietnam Border Guards and called for early signing of a framework agreement on the US\$ 500 million LOC for defence industry.



President Tran Dai Quang thanked India for increasing scholarships to Vietnamese students and implementing projects under the fund of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). He welcomed Indian businesses to expand their oil and gas exploration activities in Vietnam. He thanked India for extending support to Vietnam in building a research reactor for the purpose of peaceful uses of atomic energy. He appreciated the Indian LOC for restoration and preservation of Hoa Lai Tower and Po Klong Garai Cham Tower. The leaders agreed to explore the possibility of extending the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway further to Vietnam through Cambodia and Lao PDR.

They welcomed commencement of direct flights between New Delhi and Ho Chi Minh City during the visit. Prime Minister Modi appreciated Vietnam's proposal to establish a Vietnam Cultural Centre in India. At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that contribution of Archaeological Survey of India in the preservation and renovation of UNESCO World Heritage Site, MySon, is a matter of pride for India.

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind hosted a banquet in honour of President Tran Dai Quang on 3rd March, 2018. He said that India and Vietnam have common perspectives on peace, stability and security in the Indo-pacific region. He expressed belief that a strong India-Vietnam partnership would lead to peace and prosperity for the people of the two countries and the wider region. President Tran Dai Quang attended the India-Vietnam Business Forum and interacted with several prominent leaders of Indian industry. He visited the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya.

3 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in trade and economy; agriculture; and atomic energy.

The Embassy Organizes a B2B Meeting in Astana

The Embassy organized a Business-to-Business (B2B) Meeting for a delegation of businessmen led by the Federation of Gujarat Industries (FGI) at Hotel Radisson, Astana on 15th March, 2018 in collaboration with the Kazakh-Indian Business Council.

In his inaugural address, Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar spoke about the economic cooperation between India and Kazakhstan and expressed his firm belief that such B2B Meetings would contribute immensely to realizing the unexplored potential of business relations between the two countries. Mr. Zhandos Orzaliyev, Managing Director, Kazakh Invest and Mr. Azhmat Alimov, Co-Chairman of the Kazakh-Indian Business Council also spoke on the occasion.



The FGI delegation, led by Mr. Kashyap Shah, MD, Anugrah In-Org(P) Ltd, comprised representatives from 15 Indian companies in Gujarat from Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture & Food Processing, Healthcare and Hydrocarbon sectors.

Celebration of Holi Milan in Kazakhstan

Indian Community in Astana celebrated the Holi Milan at Best Western Plus Hotel, Astana on 3rd March, 2018. Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar greeted and addressed the gathering. Prof. Prashant Jamwal also spoke on the occasion. The Indian Cultural Centre, Astana and Indian students from Astana Medical University presented a short cultural performance. The celebration concluded with a buffet dinner. About 80 people participated in the celebration

The Holi festival was celebrated in Almaty on 4th March, 2018 at Bollywood Restaurant. About 150 members of Indian community participated in the celebration organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Culture in Kazakhstan (Incham).



Vice Minister of Health of Kazakhstan Participates in "The Delhi End TB Summit"

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated "The Delhi End TB Summit" co-hosted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India, WHO South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) and Stop TB Partnership in New Delhi on 13th March, 2018. He launched Tuberculosis Free India Campaign and set 2025 as the target for India to eliminate TB, five years ahead of the global target. The TB Free India Campaign will take the activities of National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB elimination forward in mission mode. The NSP for TB elimination is backed by funding of over Rs. 12,000 crore (US\$ 1.8 billion) over the next three years to ensure every TB patient has access to quality diagnosis, treatment and support.



Health Ministers from 20 countries including Vice Minister of Health of Kazakhstan Mr. Alexei Tsoi participated in the summit. The participants committed to further intensifying efforts to ensure rapid and concrete progress to End TB by 2030.

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, 2018. The celebration began with the lighting of lamp by Mrs. Tilottama Vaidya Kumar, Spouse of Ambassador. Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar welcomed the guests and spoke about the importance of celebrating the International Women's Day. He felicitated the women present in the function. Mrs. Kumar also addressed the gathering. The ICC presented a short cultural programme. About 70 people attended the celebration.



Kazakhstani Professionals Participate in ITEC Programmes in India

Ms. Maral Akhmetova, Teacher, International College of Business and Communication, Almaty was selected for the course "Certificate Course in Verbal Linguistics and Web Development" conducted by NIIT Ltd, Gurgaon from 29.1.2018 to 23.3.2018; and Ms. Ayagoz Akhbalina, Manager, West Kazakhstan Agrarian Technical University, Uralsk was selected for the course "Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency" conducted by the Energy and Resources Institute, New Delhi from 29.1.2018 to 16.2.2018 under ITEC Programme funded by the Government of India.

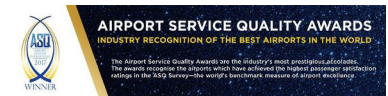
Ms. Meruyert Kitmanova, Teacher, Municipal Public Institutional Secondary School, Almaty was selected for the course "Sustainable Livelihoods and Mainstreaming with Market" and Ms. Aigerim Shaimova, Senior Teacher, Eurasian National University, Astana was selected for the course "Entrepreneurship Education to Strengthen Emerging Economies" conducted by the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Gandhinagar from 5.2.2018 to 16.3.2018.



Delhi and Mumbai Airports Ranked Number 1 in the World on Service Quality

Delhi's Indra Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport have been adjudged the best airports in the world for the year 2017. Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards announced by the Airports Council International (ACI) on 6th

March, 2018 places these two airports at number 1 position under the category "Best airport by size: over 40 million passengers", which is the highest category. Seven other airports in India also made it to top three positions in the following categories making it the country winning the highest number of awards: Bengaluru (2nd) and Chennai (3rd) in the 15-25 million category; Hyderabad (1st) and Cochin, Kolkata and Pune (3rd) in the 5-15 million category; and Lucknow (1st) in the 2-5 million category.



India Home to the Third Largest Number of Billionaires in the World

India has the third largest number of billionaires in the world. Forbes business magazine's annual list of wealthiest individuals from around the world released on 6th March, 2018 says that India is home to 121 billionaires - 19 more than last year. It notes that Mr. Mukesh Ambani, the energy and petrochemicals magnate, who keeps his standing as the richest Indian, is richer by US\$16.9 billion in 2018 with assets of US\$ 40.1 billion and moved from 33rd to 19th global rank on the list of 2,208 billionaires worldwide.



Incredible India Destination: Lahaul and Spiti

Lahaul and Spiti are two mountainous tracts located in the state of Himachal Pradesh on the Indo-Tibet border. These valleys located at a height of 2745 metres above sea level are unsurpassed in mountainscape. Little rain in this region enables climbers and trekkers to enjoy a long and unbroken season in perpetual sunshine to explore the wilderness and grandeur of inner Himalaya. This is a land of fascinating Buddhist art and culture. Lahaul is marked by a central mass of uniformly high mountains and massive glaciers. The Spiti River flows fast through deep gorges at some places.

Tabo Gompa(Monastery), Dhankar Gompa, Kee Gompa, Kibber and Giu Village are some of the major tourist attractions in Lahaul and Spiti.

Tabo Gompa, built in 996 AD, is the oldest continuously functioning Buddhist monastery in India and is one of the most sacred shrines of trans-Himalayan Buddhism. It has 9 temples, 23 chortens, a monks' chamber and a nuns' chamber. It contains a series of amazing galleries of wall paintings and stucco statues. It is called "the Ajanta of the Himalayas" because it is endowed with some of the greatest art treasures in the world.

Dhankar Gompa at an altitude of 3890 metres is a repository of Buddhist scriptures in the Bhoti script. The Gompa is part of the Dhankar fortress, the location of which is strategic and offers a wonderful view of vast expanses on the Spiti valley. Above the Gompa lies a fresh water lake set amidst lush green pastures.

Kee Gompa, constructed at a height of 4117 metres, possesses priceless Than-kas fabric paintings and an array of ancient musical wind instruments. Hundreds of lamas receive their religious training in the monastery. It is also known for its beautiful murals, rare manuscripts, stucco images and its collection of weapons.

Kibber, located at an altitude of 4205 metres in a narrow valley on the summit of a limestone rock, has the distinction of being one of the highest permanently inhabited villages in the world connected by a motorable road. It also acts as the base for several high altitude treks. Giu village has a naturally preserved unique mummy, which is more than 500 years old.

Guru Ghantal & Khardang Monasteries, Kunzam Pass, Chandra Tal, Tandi, Trilokinath Shrine and Lingti Valley are some of the other tourist attractions in Lahaul and Spiti.



Kee Gompa



Tabo Gompa



Dhankar Gompa



Chandra River Near Kunzam Pass



Chandra Tal Lake



Mountain Serenity in the Hills in Lahaul & Spiti

PHOTO FEATURE

The Embassy Organizes a B2B Meeting in Astana



6/1, Kabanbay Batyr Avenue,
5th floor,
Kaskad Business Centre,
Astana.

Tel. Phone: + 7 7172-925700/925701
Fax: + 7 7172-925716
E-mail: info.astana@mea.gov.in

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The Embassy Celebrates the International Women's Day




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