



Embassy of India Astana

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Prime Minister Modi Visits Nepal

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a State Visit to Nepal on May 11-12, 2018. He met Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon'ble K.P. Sharma Oli on 11th May, 2018. They reaffirmed their resolve to work together to take bilateral relations to newer heights by strengthening ongoing cooperation in diverse spheres as well as expanding partnership for socio-economic development on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit.



They underscored the importance of trade and economic ties between India and Nepal. Underlining the catalytic role of connectivity in stimulating economic growth and promoting movement of people, they agreed to take further steps to enhance economic and physical connectivity by air, land and water. They agreed to strengthen cooperation in the sectors of water resources, defence and security.

They jointly laid the foundation stone for the 900 MW Arun-III hydro-electric project in Nepal with an investment of Rs. 6000 crore (US\$ 895 million). They launched Nepal-India Ramayana Circuit connecting Janakpur, the birthplace of Sita, with Ayodhya and other sites associated with the epic Ramayana. In Janakpur, the leaders flagged off the inaugural direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya. Prime Minister Modi offered prayers at the Janaki temple and attended the civic reception in Janakpur.

At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that the two countries have introduced several innovative initiatives in agriculture, inland waterways and railways, which will increase mutual connectivity of people and businesses of both the countries. He stated that the cooperation between the two countries in inland waterways is particularly important emphasizing that Nepal should not be land-locked, but rather land-linked and water-linked. He announced that the survey for new railway link between Raxaul and Kathmandu would start soon. He informed that a comprehensive review of the Treaty of Trade would be undertaken soon to further strengthen the relationship in trade and investment. On health cooperation, he announced that Bhabhatron Radio-Therapy Machine, developed in India, would soon be installed at Bhaktpur Cancer Hospital in Kathmandu.

He called on President of Nepal Rt. Hon'ble Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari. The leaders renewed their commitment to take the friendly relations to new heights. Prime Minister Modi visited Muktinath and Pashupatinath temples on 12th May, 2018. He attended the Civic Felicitation Programme hosted in his honour by the City of Kathmandu.

Vice President Naidu Visits Guatemala

Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu paid an official visit to Guatemala from May 6-8, 2018. He called on President Mr. Jimmy Morales Cabrera in Guatemala City on 7th May, 2018. They shared views on furthering bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas of mutual concern.



President Jimmy Morales said that his country could benefit from the successful economic story of India and stressed on the need for improving bilateral engagement in various fields. He informed that he is a great fan of Indian cinema and TV Serials, and proposed greater cooperation with India in the fields of cinema and television. He highlighted the enormous popularity of India-made two wheelers in Guatemala given their quality and after-sale service.

He met Vice President Dr. Jateth Cabrera Franco. They reviewed the main issues of bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues. They agreed to explore and strengthen cooperation in various sectors such as education, academic exchanges, renewable energy, technology, wild life, environment, agriculture, trade and investment, IT and ITES, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, culture, tourism and counterterrorism. Vice President Naidu said that India is now making rapid strides with a stable government and able leadership with focus on reforms and performance for transformation. He suggested that India and Latin American countries could benefit from increased cooperation in trade and investments. He agreed to the request of Guatemala for supplying solar panels to its airports.

He met Speaker of Parliament Mr. Alvaro Arzu Escobar. They discussed issues of common interest including democracy and legislation, with the purpose of expanding the ties of friendship in the parliamentary ambit. Speaker Escobar said that India's vibrant democracy is a role model in harmonizing vast diversities and offers a lot to learn. He addressed the Indian community at a reception hosted by Ambassador of India.

He visited the historic Antigua Guatemala City, a popular UNESCO world heritage site, on 8th May, 2018. He met Mayor of the city Ms. Susana Heidi Asencio Lueg. Addressing the Municipal Council of Antigua Guatemala, he referred to the ancient Mayan Civilisation of Guatemala and the Indus Civilisation of India and stressed on the need to preserve the rich cultural roots which would guide the present and future generations.

An MOU on training of diplomats and a Letter of Intent for training Guatemalan English Teachers in India were signed during the visit.

Vice President Naidu Visits Panama

Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu paid an official visit to Panama from May 8-10, 2018. He met President Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodrigues in Panama City on 9th May, 2018. They held discussions covering all aspects of bilateral, regional and multilateral relations.



Their interactions highlighted the common values of democracy, pluralism and inclusive development, and reflected the spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect. The leaders reiterated the commitment of their respective Governments towards the principles of democratic values, respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms that are essential to securing the well-being and the social and economic development of the global population in an environment of peace, social justice and equity. President Varela informed that Panama has included India as one of the countries for strengthening relations under its new foreign policy called "Falcon Policy".

Vice President Naidu announced Lines of Credit for US\$ 25 million to set up a Centre of Bio-diversity and Drug Tracking and a Centre for Innovation and Technology. He announced extension of training of Panamanians in English language in addition to the training already imparted in various other disciplines under ITEC programme. President Varela welcomed India's proposal for setting up a Telemetry, Tracking and Tele Command (TTC) Earth station in Panama for supporting operations of geostationary communication and meteorological satellites of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), which could guide research and analysis by Panamanian experts in the fields of agriculture, meteorology, disaster management, climate change, etc. He invited Indian investments in IT, agriculture, cold storage, textile and pharmaceutical sectors.

The leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of exchange of tax information, maritime, air services, traditional medicines, culture, parliamentary exchange, space, intelligence sharing and human trafficking.

President Varela chaperoned Vice President Naidu around the Panama Canal. Vice President Naidu delivered an address to Students of University of Panama and young Panamanian Diplomats on the topic "In search of a more Representative and Relevant World Order" at the Panama Foreign Office on 10th May, 2018. He paid floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi's statue. He also interacted with Indian community.

An MOU for exemption of visa for Diplomatic, Official and Consular Passport holders and a Work Plan for cooperation in agricultural research were signed during the visit.

Vice President Naidu Visits Peru

Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu paid an official visit to Peru from May 10-12, 2018. He called on President Mr. Martin Alberto Vizcarra Cornejo in Lima on 11th May, 2018. They noted the expanding relations between India and Peru, and expressed a strong desire to deepen and diversify the multifaceted ties, and elevate the bilateral relationship to a higher level. President Cornejo said that his country is closely watching India's progress in different sectors including its transition from an agrarian economy to being an IT leader with strong capacities in science & technology, space, etc.



Vice President Naidu met Prime Minister Mr. Cesar Villanueva. They reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest. They discussed ways to strengthen bonding in economic, commercial and cultural areas of cooperation. They reiterated their commitment to work together and identify new areas for bilateral technical cooperation. Prime Minister Villanueva underscored the importance of intensifying negotiations for an early conclusion of a comprehensive free trade agreement for mutual benefit.

Referring to the success of India-Peru Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (IPCEIT) set up by India in Peru, Prime Minister Villanueva requested for establishment of more such centres in other parts of the country. He noted that India is acknowledged as a leader in pharma sector and Peru could benefit from it. He suggested that Indian pharma companies set up generic medicine production facilities in Peru.

Vice President Naidu attended the celebrations commemorating the 55th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Peru. He interacted with the members of Indian community. He met President of the Congress Mr. Luis Fernando Galarreta Velarde. They discussed issues of common interest and agreed to further enhance parliamentary cooperation and exchanges between India and Peru.

He paid homage to the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Parque Mariscal Castilla in Lima on 12th May, 2018. He visited the historical Pachacamac Archaeological Site and the National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History.

An agreement was signed on cooperation in new and renewable energy during the visit.

Ambassador Gives Live Interview to National TV Channel "Qazaqstan"

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar attended the live programme "Tansholpan" on the National TV Channel "Qazaqstan" as the Hon'ble Guest on 1st May, 2018. The programme was dedicated to the celebration of 1st May, the Day of Unity of the People of Kazakhstan.

In the live interview, Ambassador answered various questions such as celebration of the Day of Unity in Kazakhstan and similar festivals in India; important aspects of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan; and dynamic bilateral ties between India and Kazakhstan as evidenced by frequent high level visits, commercial cooperation and cultural exchanges.



He noted that many Indian companies are successfully operating in Kazakhstan. He highlighted that Indian students are pursuing courses in medicine in various medical universities in Kazakhstan and the Government of India is offering scholarships to Kazakhstani students to pursue higher education in reputed educational institutions in India and organizing short-term capacity development programmes to Kazakhstani professionals in premier institutions in India. He pointed out the presence of many common words in both Hindi and Kazakh languages signifying the age-old relationship between India and Kazakhstan. He noted the similarities of the two countries such as family system and the popularity of Indian films and TV serials in Kazakhstan.

Ms. Alua Makhmetova, a student of Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Astana performed an Indian dance at the conclusion of the interview.

India Participates in the SCO Forum in Astana

A six-member delegation from India led by Ambassador P.S. Raghavan, Convenor, National Security Advisory Board attended the XIII Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Forum in Astana on May 4-5, 2018.

The delegations from SCO member states, observer states and dialogue partners attended the SCO Forum, which was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and the Institute of World Economy and Politics under the Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan. The SCO Forum held a broad exchange of views on the role and significance of the SCO in the new geopolitical realities and the prospects for further development of the Organization. The participants discussed the promotion of cooperation in security, trade, economy, investment, transport and tourism within the framework of the SCO.



The Embassy Participates in the Football Tournament of SCO Diplomatic Missions

A football team of the Embassy of India, Astana participated in the Football Tournament of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Diplomatic Missions in Astana on 13th May, 2018 organized by the Embassy of China in the run-up to the SCO Summit held in Qingdao, China on June 9-10, 2018. Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar and Ambassadors of other SCO countries attended the event.



SVCC Participates in the Celebration of the Day of Unity at Arkalyk

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Astana participated in the celebration of the Day of Unity at Arkalyk (Kostanay Region) on 1st May, 2018. Indian Stall decorated to represent various aspects of Indian culture and National symbols was put up by the Nataraja Dance School, Arkalyk with the support of the Embassy. The students of the Dance School led by its Director Ms. Aigerim Ossipova performed an Indian dance based on Bollywood song on the stage. Eight other countries also participated in the celebration. Shri Bhaskar Ojah, Music Teacher, SVCC presented flute recital at the Indian Stall. Indian sweets and masala tea were served to all the visitors. Mayor of Arkalyk Mr. Balgarin Amantai Kakimbekovich visited the Indian Stall.



Shri Bhaskar Ojah and Ms. Shruti Ghosh, Dance Teacher, SVCC conducted master classes in music and dance respectively for the students of the Nataraja Dance School. Dr. Sanjay Garg, Director, SVCC addressed the students and distributed prizes to them.

NRI and PIOs Invited to Participate in the Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz

The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India will organize the 2nd edition of Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz for two distinct categories of NRIs and PIOs in the age group of 15-35 years. The BKJ Quiz will be conducted in 4 rounds. Registration on the portal is mandatory to participate in the 1st round of the Quiz. The 1st round of the Quiz will be conducted by the Embassy online from July 19-21, 2018. Top three contenders of the 1st round from each category of NRI and PIO will be given medals by the Embassy and will be eligible for the second round.



The 2nd round of the BKJ Quiz will be conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs online in August/September, 2018. Top 10 finalists of the 2nd round from each category of NRI and PIO will be invited to India for a 15-day Bharat Ko Janiye Yatra including a visit to Lakshadweep and participate in the 3rd round of BKJ Quiz in January, 2019. The Government of India will bear their international airfare and all expenses including board and lodging. From 3rd round, top 3 candidates will be selected to participate in the 4th round (final round) of BKJ Quiz. Top three winners of 4th round of BKJ Quiz from each category of NRI and PIO will receive Gold, Silver and Bronze medals and a Certificate at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention to be held in Varanasi from January 21-23, 2019.

The details of the 2nd edition of BKJ Quiz are available on the web portal: <https://www.bharatkojaniye.in/>. All the eligible NRIs and PIOs in Kazakhstan are invited to participate in the BKJ Quiz by registering themselves in the web portal.

Kazakhstani Professionals Participate in ITEC Programmes in India

Ms. Dariya Tukhmetova, Sales Manager, Labour Pharma LLP, Almaty was selected for the course "Specialised Training Programme in Multimedia and Web Design Technology" conducted by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Mohali from 19th March to 8th June, 2018; and Ms. Gulmira Issayeva, Associate Professor, South Kazakhstan State University, Shymkent was selected for the course "Progress to Proficiency-Advanced" conducted by the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad from 12th June to 31st August, 2018 under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme funded by the Government of India.



Telecom Commission of India Approves In-flight Connectivity within Indian Airspace

Telecom Commission of India approved the in-flight connectivity within Indian airspace on 1st May 2018. The decision expected to be operationalised within 3 to 4 months will enable flyers to avail data and voice services during flights over Indian airspace.



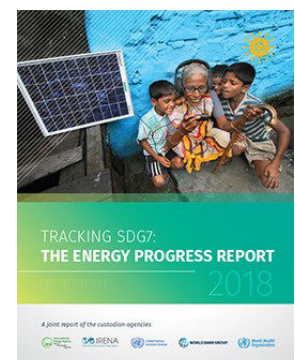
This will enable the airlines to be equipped to bring dramatic, yet cost effective, enhancements to the passenger experience - with passengers ordering products from their phones and tablets and arranging to have them delivered to their homes, or the hotel on arrival at their destination. The connectivity to the ground means that cabin crews can help passengers change their onward transit plans to accommodate for changes to their flight, while they are still in the air. The facility of voice and data connectivity will also be extended to ships.

India doing Extremely Well on Electrification: World Bank

The World Bank said that India has been providing electricity to 30 million people each year, more than any other country, from 2010 to 2016.

"Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2018" jointly released by World Bank, International Energy Agency, International Renewable Energy Agency, UN Statistics Division and World Health Organization on 2nd May, 2018 says that India is doing extremely well on electrification with nearly 85% of the country's population having access to electricity.

Referring to India's tremendous electrification effort, the report says that it expects 250 million people gaining electricity access between now and the early 2020s, when the country will reach full access. It attributes the rapid growth of electricity access in India to the country's US\$ 2.5 billion electrification programmes aimed at reaching universal electrification.



Incredible India Destination: Alappuzha

Alappuzha, referred to as the Venice of the East, is a popular tourist destination in the state of Kerala offering cruises on picturesque backwaters. The backwaters are a vast interconnecting system of rivers, canals, lagoons and lakes lying parallel to Arabian Sea coast. They connect tiny villages and farms on islands with the mainland and are used by the locals as aquatic highways. These backwaters have a unique ecosystem, as freshwater from the rivers meets seawater from the Arabian Sea. They are home to a vast array of aquatic wildlife and birdlife.

The sought-after experience by the visitors in Alappuzha is the houseboat cruise along the backwaters. The houseboats are equipped with well furnished bedroom, cozy living room, kitchen, and modern bath and toilet facilities. The houseboat cruise connects Kumarakom and Cochin to the North and Quilon to the South. One can enjoy an uninterrupted view of life in the backwaters while staying in a houseboat.

Alappuzha is known for its snake boat races and one of the prestigious competitions glorifying this tradition is the Nehru Trophy Snake Boat Race held on every second Saturday of August. To compete for the trophy, one must ride in a snake boat which can be more than 100 ft long and carry over hundred people. Each boat is about 20 ft high at the back, making it look like a snake with a raised hood.

Ayurvedic spas and wellness centres abound in this region. Alappuzha Beach, Lighthouse, RRK Memorial Museum, Krishnapuram Palace, Mullackal Devi Temple and Kidangamparamba Devi Temple are some of the major tourist attractions in Alappuzha.

Pathiramanal Island (13 kms from Alappuzha) is a bird watcher's paradise. Kumarakom (40 kms) is an enchanting backwater destination with shimmering water, bright green mangrove forests, coconut palms lining the embankments and blue skies. Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary on the banks of Vembanad Lake is among the most popular bird watching spots in the country. One comes across numerous rare avian species and a variety of migratory birds that flock in thousands from places like the Himalayas and Siberia.

Karimadi Kuttan, a 9th century black granite statue of the Buddha in Karumady; Marari Beach; and St. Andrew's Basilica constructed in the 16th century in Arthunkal are some of the other major tourist attractions near Alappuzha.



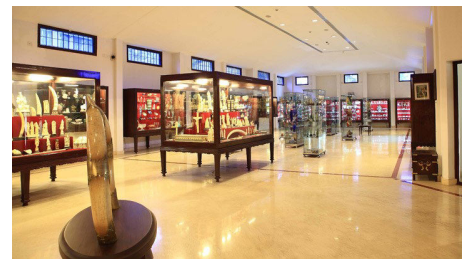
Houseboat in the Backwaters of Alappuzha



Alappuzha Light House



Snake Boat Race



RRK Memorial Museum



Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary



St. Andrew's Basilica in Arthunkal

PHOTO FEATURE

India Participates in the SCO Forum in Astana



The Embassy Participates in the Football Tournament of SCO Diplomatic Missions



SVCC Participates in the Celebration of the Day of Unity at Arkalyk



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