



Embassy of India Astana

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Prime Minister Modi Visits Indonesia

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Indonesia on May 29-30, 2018. He met President of Indonesia Mr. Joko Widodo in Jakarta on 30th May, 2018. They held extensive discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, and provided strategic directions that would further enhance the solid and expanding relations between the two countries.



They agreed to establish a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" to take the bilateral relationship into a new era. They adopted the "Shared Vision on Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific between India and Indonesia" to develop further cooperation in maritime sector.

The leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in the sectors of trade, information and communication technology, space, connectivity, health, pharmaceuticals, food security, defence, terrorism, cyber crime, drug trafficking, culture, education, parliamentary exchange, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi informed that the two countries would celebrate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2019 and many festivals would be organized in both the countries to promote the relations into a higher level aiming to enhance mutual goodwill and greater understanding among the peoples of the two countries.

The leaders jointly unveiled the First Joint Kite Exhibition on the theme of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat. They attended the India-Indonesia CEOs Forum. They visited the Arjuna Wijaya Chariot statue and Istiqlal Mosque. Prime Minister Modi addressed the Indian community. He spoke about the special ties between India and Indonesia. He highlighted the unparalleled transformation witnessed by India in the last few years such as openness of Indian economy, ease of doing business and competitiveness of the Indian economy.

Three announcements were made during the visit on collaboration between Tata from India and PT Pindad from Indonesia for supply of TATA trucks; opening of first overseas office in Jakarta by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with its representative from India; and twinning of Bali and Uttarakhand under sister province arrangement.

A total of 15 Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in the fields of defence; exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes; technology; railways; health; pharmaceutical, biological and cosmetics regulatory functions; interaction between think tanks; Plan of Activities to celebrate the 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Indonesia; cultural heritage of Prambanan Temple and Taj Mahal; scholarship to facilitate study and research at International Institute of Information Technology, Bengaluru; and cooperation between Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration of India and National Institute of Public Administration of Indonesia; Kite Museum, Ahmedabad and Museum, Layang Layang; PT Pindad (PERSERO) and Bhukhanvala; CII and KADIN; and Himalaya Drug Company and PT Kalbe Farma.

Prime Minister Modi Visits Russia for Informal Summit

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Russia on 21st May, 2018 for an informal Summit with President Mr. Vladimir Putin in the city of Sochi. The Summit provided an occasion for both the leaders to deepen their friendship and exchange views on international and regional issues, in keeping with the tradition of high level political exchanges between India and Russia.



The leaders held detailed exchange of views on national development plans and priorities. They expressed satisfaction over deep trust, mutual respect and goodwill that characterize relations between India and Russia. They agreed to institute a Strategic Economic Dialogue between NITI Aayog of India and the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia to identify greater synergy in trade and investment. They noted with satisfaction the expanding cooperation in the energy sector and welcomed the arrival of the first consignment of LNG under a long-term agreement between Gazprom and GAIL. They reiterated the significance of longstanding partnership in military, security and nuclear energy fields and welcomed the ongoing cooperation in these areas.

The leaders agreed that the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia is an important factor for global peace and stability. They shared the view that India and Russia have an important role to play in contributing to an open and equitable world order. They decided to intensify consultation and coordination with each other and agreed to continue to work together through multilateral organisations. They expressed concern over terrorism and radicalization, and their determination to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The leaders visited Moya Russia-Ethno Centre, and Sirius Education Centre in Sochi and interacted with the talented young people from all regions of Russia at a special monthly camp. They sailed together from Bocharov Creek to Olympic Park in Sochi. They welcomed the idea of holding informal Summits as an additional engagement at leadership level.

Prime Minister of Netherlands Visits India

Prime Minister of Netherlands Mr. Mark Rutte paid an official visit to India on May 24-25, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 24th May, 2018. The leaders held wide ranging and constructive discussions on a variety of regional and international issues. They underlined the growing convergence between the two countries and agreed to deepen and strengthen the longstanding historical bonds of friendship between the two peoples spanning over four centuries. They welcomed the opening of a new Dutch Consulate General in Bengaluru.



The leaders called for expansion of ongoing collaboration between the two countries in the fields of agriculture, food processing, water, technology, digital technology, cyber space, smart city development, defence, space, health care, climate change, clean energy, finance and culture.

They underlined the opportunities for intensive Indo-Dutch collaborations under Government of India's flagship initiatives such as Make in India and Start Up India.

They reaffirmed their support for the strategic partnership between the European Union and India, based on shared principles and values, as well as a commitment to a rules-based international order. They noted that addressing climate change and promoting secure, affordable and sustainable supplies of energy are key shared priorities, and agreed to undertake mutual cooperation for reducing the cost of development and deployment of clean energy projects through technology innovation, knowledge sharing, capacity building, trade and investment.

At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude for Netherlands signing the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). He announced that Netherlands would be a partner country in the Tech Summit, scheduled to be held in India in 2019. The leaders attended the CEOs Round Table.

Prime Minister Rutte inaugurated the Indo-Dutch Ganga Forum. He appreciated the efforts made under Namami Gange Programme. He advocated waste-to-wealth approach to encourage sustainability of projects. He addressed a public event organised by Carnegie India. He launched the "Clean Air India Initiative", which aims to curb air pollution in cities by promoting partnership between Indian start-ups and Dutch companies.

A total of 51 Agreements/MOUs were signed and initiatives announced during the visit for cooperation in various sectors such as water, agrifood, horticulture, hi-tech, IT, space, life sciences, health, smart cities, urban development, business and sustainability.

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Visits Santiniketan

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Ms. Sheikh Hasina visited Santiniketan in West Bengal on 25th May, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received her. The leaders attended the convocation of Visva Bharati University, founded by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, at Santiniketan. In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that teachings of the Vedas, which describe the entire world as one nest or one home, are reflected in the values of the Visva Bharati University.



The leaders also inaugurated the Bangladesh Bhavan at Santiniketan. In his address, Prime Minister Modi described it as a symbol of cultural ties between India and Bangladesh.

INSV Tarini with All-Women Crew Completes a Historic Circumnavigation

Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini (INSV Tarini) completed the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe on 21st May, 2018. Defence Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman received the six-member all-women crew of Tarini in Goa on 21st May, 2018. She had flagged them off from Goa on 10th September, 2017.



The vessel covered over 22,000 nautical miles, visiting five countries viz., Australia, New Zealand, Falkland Islands (UK), South Africa and Mauritius during her 254 day long voyage. The expedition was covered in six legs, with halts at 5 ports: Fremantle (Australia), Lyttleton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falklands), Cape Town (South Africa) and Port Louis (Mauritius).

The crew also collated and updated meteorological, ocean and wave data on a regular basis for accurate weather forecast by India Meteorological Department, and monitored and reported marine pollution on the high seas. The INSV Tarini is a 56-foot indigenously-built sailing vessel. The expedition titled "Navika Sagar Parikrama" is in consonance with the national policy to empower women to attain their full potential.

Ambassador's Interview to "the Astana Times"

The local newspaper "the Astana Times" carried Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar's interview on 24th May, 2018. The text of the interview is given below:

India and Kazakhstan share a long history. At the beginning of the first millennium, the Sakas went from Central Asia to India and Buddhism from India was introduced in Kazakhstan. The Great Silk and Spice Routes united India and Kazakhstan in the Middle Ages. There was a constant exchange of goods, ideas and thoughts between the two countries. The year 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Kazakhstan. Since Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, the two countries have strengthened their relations.

In 2009, India and Kazakhstan became strategic partners following President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to India. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Kazakhstan in 2015 and 2017. Politically, we have excellent relations and economic and commercial ties are improving day by day. The two countries are partners in areas such as healthcare, education, space, IT, technology and energy. I intend to work on strengthening the existing relationship, including through better economic partnership.

We feel that there are a lot of opportunities, especially in the area of energy, where Kazakhstan is strong. We would like to increase our cooperation in this area and invest more in the oil and gas sector. India is well positioned in renewable energy, especially in wind and solar. Prime Minister Modi initiated establishing the International Solar Alliance (ISA) comprising more than 121 countries. The primary objective of the alliance is to work towards exploiting solar energy efficiently to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, which will also help countries meet the climate change goals. We would like to invite Kazakhstan to become a member of the alliance. India can help in promoting renewable energy in Kazakhstan by bringing our expertise in solar and wind energy.

Kazakhstan is India's largest trade partner in Central Asia, with trade turnover between the two countries reaching US\$1 billion last year. India is interested in Kazakhstan's oil, uranium and ferroalloys and Kazakhstan imports mainly medicines and tea from India. The two sides can increase this figure by improving transport connectivity between the two countries. Now, there is a good flight connection. Air Astana has direct flights to Delhi from both Astana and Almaty. However, land connectivity is challenging. Kazakhstan is connected to Turkmenistan and from Turkmenistan to Bandar Abbas port in Iran. This route can be used to transport goods from India to Kazakhstan and vice versa.

Direct flights have had a positive impact on tourism. Approximately 20,000 people from India visited Kazakhstan and approximately 15,000 Kazakhstani visited India last year. The figures are on the increase. India has simplified the procedure for issuing visas. We have introduced electronic visa (e-visa), which can be applied and received online. It is cheaper than normal visa and is valid for two months. Medical tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of Indian tourism, as the country annually attracts a large number of individuals for medical treatment. India's Ayurveda therapy is known worldwide for its holistic healing methods to promote good health. Approximately 200 people from Kazakhstan visited India for medical treatment last year.

Culture is another area of cooperation between the two countries. The Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in the capital has been engaged in various cultural activities for many years, offering yoga, music and Kathak dance lessons. The Embassy celebrates the International Day of Yoga on 21st June every year, which is attended by a large number of yoga enthusiasts.



India Participates in KADEX 2018

President Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev inaugurated the 5th International Exhibition of Weapons Systems and Military Equipment "KADEX-2018" in Astana on 23rd May, 2018.

In his address, President Nazarbayev said that a special emphasis was placed on development of electronic system and communication and armament control system in this edition of KADEX. He stated that the exhibition would enable the visitors to get familiar with the latest advances in the military-industrial sector and space industry. He mentioned that the agreements and contracts signed during the exhibition would promote development of international cooperation and partnership between domestic and foreign defence-industrial enterprises. He asserted that the exhibition would also help attract investment, and increase export potential and competitiveness of the Kazakh economy as a whole.



318 enterprises from 28 countries showcased the latest advances in the military-industrial sector and space industry in the 4-day exhibition. Indian Space Research Organization (Antrix), BrahMos Aerospace, Zen Technologies Ltd, Larsen & Toubro Ltd and ELCOM Innovations Pvt. Ltd. from India participated in the KADEX-2018.

NCC Cadets Visit Kazakhstan

A 14-member delegation consisting of two officers and 12 cadets of National Cadet Corps (NCC) of India visited Kazakhstan from May 13-26, 2018 under the Youth Exchange Programme between the NCC and Voenni Kafedra of Kazakhstan. The cadets interacted and shared their experience with the cadets of Voenni Kafedra of South Kazakhstan State Pharmaceutical Academy, Shymkent from May 13-18, 2018 and Taraz State University, Taraz from May 19-25, 2018.



SVCC Participates in the "Kids First" Festival

Ms. Arina Sergeyevna Garashchuk, a student at Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Astana won first prize in solo dance category at the "Kids First" festival held at Kazmedia Centre, Astana on 26th May, 2018. She danced to a famous Bollywood song "Deewani Deewani" from a recent film, Bajirao Mastani. Dancers of different age groups (5 - 15 years) from various parts of Kazakhstan participated in the event. Ms. Shruti Ghosh, Dance Teacher at SVCC, received Diploma and Certificate of Gratitude and Recognition in appreciation of her choreography.



SVCC Participates in the Celebration of International Day at QSI International School

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), Astana participated in the celebration of International Day at QSI International School, Astana on 25th May, 2018. Shri Bhaskar Ojah, Music Teacher and Ms. Shruti Ghosh, Dance Teacher at the SVCC performed flute recital and Kathak dance respectively. An Indian table was set up to showcase Indian handicrafts and various Indian musical instruments.



Prime Minister Modi Unveils Major Infrastructure Projects in J&K

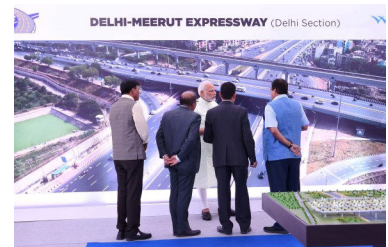
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 330 MW Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project constructed at a cost of Rs. 5882 crore (US\$ 865 million) in Bandipora District of Jammu and Kashmir on 19th May, 2018. He laid the foundation stone of the 1000 MW Pakal Dul Power Project to be constructed at a cost of Rs. 8112.12 crore (US\$ 1.19 billion).



He also unveiled a plaque to mark the commencement of work on the 14-km long Zojila Tunnel constructed on the Srinagar-Leh section of NH-1A at a cost of Rs. 6800 crore (US\$ 1 billion). It will be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel and will provide all-weather connectivity among Srinagar, Kargil and Leh. It will cut down the time taken to cross the Zojila pass from the present three and a half hours to just fifteen minutes. It is expected to lead to all-round economic and socio-cultural integration of these regions.

PM Modi Inaugurates EP Expressway and Phase-I of Delhi-Meerut Expressway

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 135-km long Eastern Peripheral Expressway, stretching from Kundli on National Highway-1 to Palwal on National Highway-2 on 27th May, 2018. The fully access-controlled six-lane expressway, constructed at a cost of Rs. 10,517.87 crore (US\$ 1.56 billion), will contribute to the twin objectives of decongesting and depolluting the national capital by diverting traffic not destined for Delhi. This is the first expressway in the country to use solar power on its entire length. Weigh-in-Motion (WIMs) equipments have been installed at all 30 entry points of the expressway to stop entry of over-loaded vehicles. Rainwater harvesting has been provided at every 500 metres and drip irrigation for plants provided all along the expressway.



Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated the 14-lane, access controlled, Phase-I of the Delhi-Meerut Expressway, stretching from Nizamuddin Bridge to Delhi-UP Border. This is the first National Highway in the country with 14 lanes. It has several features that would help reduce pollution. These include a 2.5-metre-wide cycle track on either side of the highway, a vertical garden on the Yamuna Bridge, solar lighting system and watering of plants through drip irrigation. The entire length (82 km) of the expressway is likely to cost Rs.4975.17 crore (US\$ 738 million).

Incredible India Destination: Gangtok

Gangtok, the capital city of the state of Sikkim, is located on a ridge at a height of 1700 metres in the eastern Himalayan range. It is a Tibetan Buddhist Centre and a base for treks through Sikkim's Himalayan mountain ranges. Mount Kangchenjunga (8534 metres), the highest peak in India and the third highest peak in the world, is located in Sikkim. Kangchenjunga National Park is a UNESCO world heritage site. With magnificent views of the Kangchenjunga peak, uniqueness and vibrancy in colours of culture and tradition infused into the stunning sceneries and the right dash of subtle city life, Gangtok is one of the most beautiful hill stations in India.

Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology, Enchey Monastery, Ganesh Tok, Tsomgo Lake and Nathu La are some of the tourist attractions in and around Gangtok.

Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology, established in 1958 to promote study and research on Buddhism, has a rare collection of antiques of Tibetan/Buddhist artifacts, iconography, thangkas (cloth paintings) and statues. Its building resembles a fantasy palace with colourful mural frontage and corner towers.

Enchey Monastery (3 km away from Gangtok) is a 200-year old monastery built on a hilltop. This monastery was blessed by Lama Dhruptob Karpo, a renowned saint who was known to have flying powers. Ganesh Tok (7 km from Gangtok) is a small Ganesh Temple located at an altitude of 6500 metres. One can get a panoramic view of the sprawling city of Gangtok and mount Kangchenjunga from there.

Tsomgo Lake (35 km) located at an altitude of 3750 metres, is embedded in steep and rugged mountain terrain. The ethereally beautiful lake is covered by snow during winter. Associated with many legends and myths, Tsomgo is revered as a holy lake by the people of Sikkim. Rides on colourfully decorated yaks and mules are offered at the lake site.

Nathu La (54 km) is a mighty mountain pass located at a height of 4310 meters and is considered to be one of the highest motorable mountain passes in the world. It connects Sikkim with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

Chungthang, Lachung, Pelling, Ban Jhakri Waterfalls, Kupup Lake, Gurudongmar Lake, Lachung Monastery and Pemyangtse Monastery are some of the other major tourist attractions near Gangtok.



Bird's Eye View of Gangtok



Kangchenjunga Viewed from Gangtok



Namgyal Research Institute of Tibetology



Ropeway Ride Over Gangtok



Enchey Monastery



Tsomgo Lake

PHOTO FEATURE

India Participates in KADEX 2018

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NCC Cadets Visit Kazakhstan

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