



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India  
ASTANA  
Republic of Kazakhstan

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# Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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## Prime Minister Narendra Modi's five day tour to Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka (March 10-14, 2015)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on a three-nation tour of Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka from March 10-14, 2015. In the media statement prior to his departure, Prime Minister said that his visit to the three Indian Ocean island countries "reflects our foreign policy priorities in India's immediate and extended neighbourhood". He emphasized that India "attaches paramount importance to strengthening relations with this region, which is vital for India's security and progress".

In the first leg of his tour, PM Modi reached Seychelles on March 10, 2015. This was the first visit to Seychelles by an Indian Prime Minister in 33 years. The entire top leadership of Seychelles as well as opposition leaders attended the public function where PM Modi addressed the Indian community in Mahe.

Prime Minister Modi thereafter touched down in Mauritius in the evening of March 11 for his two-day visit. PM Modi was warmly welcomed at the airport with a ceremonial reception. PM Modi held extensive meetings with the President of Mauritius, Mr. Rajkeswur Purryag and other dignitaries on the same evening. In his joint press conference with PM of Mauritius, PM Modi highlighted the special relations shared by the two countries that were deeply rooted in history. Expressing his gratitude for being the Chief Guest on the National Day of Mauritius on March 12, PM Modi said India and Mauritius have always stood in solidarity and support for each other. PM Modi also termed the agreement on the development of Agalega Island as a major stride in India-Mauritius cooperation in infrastructure sector.

PM Modi, the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Sri Lanka in 28 years, held summit level talks with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, who was in India last month on his first foreign trip after assuming office in January. PM Modi also held talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickramasinghe. The visit by PM was aimed at further strengthening all aspects of the bilateral relationship. PM Modi addressed the Sri Lankan Parliament during the visit. He became the first Indian Prime Minister and only the second foreign leader after British Premier David Cameron to visit Jaffna, the war-ravaged Northern province, where he handed over homes built with the help of Indian assistance to local beneficiaries.



PM Modi being received by President of Seychelles, Mr. James Michel



PM Modi meets the President of Mauritius, Mr. Rajkeswur Purryag



PM Modi with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena

## SAARC Yatra by Mr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary (March 1-4, 2015)

Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar undertook first phase of his four nation SAARC Yatra to Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan from March 1-4, 2015. The main objective of the Yatra was to convey Indian Government's desire to give fillip to its neighbourhood outreach policy. On the first leg of his Yatra, FS reached Bhutan on March 1, 2015 where he met with Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. Both sides discussed bilateral ties as well as ongoing connectivity projects.



On the second leg of the Yatra, FS arrived in Bangladesh on March 2, 2015 and held Foreign Secretary level talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Shahidul Haque on a wide range of bilateral, sub-regional and regional issues. FS assured his counterpart about Indian Government's intention to move swiftly on finalizing the Teesta Water sharing pact and the Land Boundary Agreement. He also called on Bangladeshi Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmood Ali and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and handed over a letter from PM Modi expressing his willingness to visit Bangladesh in the near future.



FS arrived in Pakistan on March 3 and met his Pakistani counterpart Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhury. In his talks, FS expressed the desire of India to forge a cooperative relationship with Pakistan. The two sides agreed to work together to "find common ground" and "narrow differences". FS also called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Advisor on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz. He also handed over a letter from PM Modi to PM Nawaz Sharif.



FS arrived in Afghanistan on March 4 as the last stop for the first phase of his 'SAARC Yatra'. FS met with Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani and discussed issues relating to connectivity, development projects and security. Afghan leaders welcomed India being "partner of choice" for Afghanistan and briefed the Foreign Secretary about India's involvement in furthering the cause of stability and security in the country. He also met former Afghan President Hamid Karzai during the visit.



## Meeting of Ambassador Harsh K. Jain with Mr. Yerlan Sydykov, Rector of the Eurasian National University, Astana

Ambassador met Mr. Yerlan Sydykov, Rector of the Eurasian National University in Astana on March 3. He discussed a wide range of ongoing cooperation issues including the establishment of India-Kazakhstan Centre of Excellence in Information and Communication Technology at the Eurasian National University. He also discussed about ongoing Youth Exchange Cooperation between the Voenni Kefedra of the University and National Cadet Corps (NCC) of India.



## Celebration of Golden Jubilee of ITEC Programme and ICCR Day

Embassy of India, Astana organized a reception to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of ITEC programme and mark ICCR Day on March 10, 2015 at Radisson Hotel, Astana. H.E. Mr. Askar Mussinov, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kazakhstan, was the Chief Guest at the function.

The programme was attended by more than 100 ITEC and ICCR alumni from Kazakhstan, representatives of the local government, journalists and other friends of India. Ambassador Harsh K. Jain and Mr. Mussinov addressed the gathering.

Ambassador Jain described the ITEC programme as "a visible symbol of India's role and contribution to South-South cooperation and a fundamental pillar of India's foreign policy". Referring to the activities of Indian Cultural Centre, Astana, he said that the Centre has become a major vehicle of cultural exchanges between the two countries. He also mentioned about the initiative of Prime Minister of India on yoga which led to declaration of June 21 as the 'International Day of Yoga' by United Nations.

Mr. Mussinov said that ITEC and ICCR scholarships are not just training programmes but also tools for development of bilateral relations and strengthening of people-to-people contacts between Kazakhstan and India. He added that India has a rich experience in the development of human resources and technology that meets the requirements of the modern world. He said that Kazakhstan has also reached a stage of economic development where it can now extend aid to lesser developed countries. In this connection, he mentioned about setting up of a new agency "KazAID" by Government of Kazakhstan in 2014 to oversee the activities of Kazakhstan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme.

Several ITEC and ICCR alumni came forward and shared their experiences with the audience. They gave a vivid description of their unforgettable experiences in India and said that the ITEC/ICCR programmes have helped them upgrade their skills. They expressed deep gratitude to the Government of India for giving them the opportunity to study in the best institutions of India.

A short documentary film on the ITEC programme was screened on the occasion. The cultural part of the programme included a demonstration of a sequence of 18 advanced yoga postures (Asanas) by Dr. Brijesh Kumar Gupta, Yoga Instructor, Indian Cultural Centre, Astana and a scintillating performance of classical dance by Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova, Director of Centre for Indian Classical Dances, Almaty.



## Holi celebrations by the Indo-Kazakhstan Friendship Society, Almaty

The Indo-Kazakh Friendship Society, Almaty celebrated the festival of Holi at Bollywood Restaurant on March 7. The celebration was attended by more than 180 Indian nationals and some prominent Kazakh friends of India. The event included games for children, a dance programme followed by lunch.





## Ease of Doing Business: Only 3 documents needed for imports, exports

As part of the efforts to improve its ranking on 'Ease of Doing Business', India has decided to reduce the number of mandatory documents required for import and export of goods to just three as against 10 required currently. The move will lead to reduction in transaction costs and time. The notification issued to this effect by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade will come into force from April 1. The mandatory documents required for export of goods from India will now include Bill of Lading/Airway Bill, Commercial Invoice cum Packing List, and Shipping Bill or Bill of Export. The mandatory documents required for import will include Bill of Lading/Airway Bill, Commercial Invoice cum Packing List, and Bill of Entry. For export or import of specific goods or category of goods, which are subject to any restrictions/policy conditions or require NOC or product specific compliances under any statute, the authority concerned would notify additional documents.

## Kazakhstan Officers will learn Hindi

According to the Press Service of the Ministry of Defence of Republic of Kazakhstan, there are plans to open a Hindi classroom at National Defence University. This will supplement the classrooms for learning Turkish, English and Chinese languages, which are already available in the military institution. Learning languages of different nations will help officers to get acquainted about history, culture, traditions of a particular country. These classrooms are the result of constantly strengthening cooperation between Defence Ministries, Military Institutions of Kazakhstan and CIS and non-CIS countries.

## Incredible India Destination: Kerala

Kerala is situated on the southwestern coast of India. This tropical paradise enjoys a unique topography with Arabian sea, a part of the Indian Ocean on the west and the Western Ghats on the east. Kerala's unique culture and traditions coupled with its varied demography have made it one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

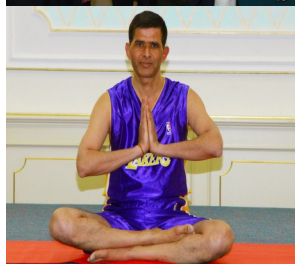
Kerala is well known for its ecotourism initiatives; beaches at Kovalam, Kappad, Cherai & Varkala; mountain ranges; wildlife sanctuaries at Periyar; Eravikulam National Park and backwaters in Alappuzha & Kollam. The backwaters have a unique ecosystem - freshwater from the rivers meets the seawater from the Arabian Sea. The Kettuvallams (Kerala houseboats) in the backwaters are one of the prominent tourist attractions in Kerala.

Although houseboats on serene backwaters remain the iconic image of Kerala, it is also attracting tourists for ayurvedic healing. Kerala stands out prominently in the backdrop of India's rich Ayurvedic tradition. One can find hundreds of herbs with medicinal properties in the courtyards of Kerala houses. The easy availability of such a wide variety of herbal medicine in Kerala has facilitated the development of several unique medicines and treatment methods over the years.



## PHOTO FEATURE

### Celebration of Golden Jubilee of ITEC Programme and ICCR Day



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### Holi celebration by the Indo-Kazakhstan Friendship Society, Al- maty



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### Presentation of gifts to female employees of Embassy on the occa- sion of International Women's Day

