



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India
ASTANA

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Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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Celebration of the first International Day of Yoga in Kazakhstan, June 21, 2015

Embassy of India, Astana celebrated the first International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2015 in three major cities of Kazakhstan: Astana (Capital), Almaty (largest city) and Temirtau.

In Astana, the celebration was held with great fanfare at the square opposite Astana Opera, which attracted about 425 yoga enthusiasts and practitioners, representatives of government, diplomats, yoga lovers and friends of India.

Ambassador Shri Harsh K. Jain welcomed the participants and read out an extract from letter sent by H.E. President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulating him on the successful adoption of resolution declaring June 21 as the International Day of Yoga and message by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of first International Day of Yoga. H.E. Mr. Galym Akhmedyarov, Vice-Minister of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan; H.E. Mr. Askar Mussinov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan; H.E. Mr. Shirish Soni, Ambassador of South Africa; Mr. Tolegan Mukhamedzhanov, a Celebrated Poet, Composer and Musician; Mrs. Dinara Satzhan, a Popular TV Anchor, Blogger, Journalist and Winner of 'Mrs. Kazakhstan 2009'; and Swami Brahmtej of Art of Living also spoke on the occasion.

This was followed by a common yoga protocol and a yoga art performance by yoga instructors in Astana. An exhibition displaying yoga books and photographs was held at the same venue. Light refreshments were served to all participants at the end of the function.

In Almaty, the event was attended by about 600 people including diplomats, members of Indian community, members of Yoga Sanskar, Brahma Kumari Ashram, ISKCON, Classical Yoga Centre and other yoga enthusiasts.

The event began with flying of balloons with IDY banner by invited guests and welcome remarks by Shri Naveen Kapur, Second Secretary, ROI, Almaty. This was followed by short speeches by Ms. Murzabekova Svetlana Viktorovna, Deputy Director, Nursultan Nazabayev Educational Foundation, Mr. Kazhimkhan Kasymovich Massimov, Yoga Pioneer in Kazakhstan, Ms. Sholpan Dzhamanbalayeva, Vice Rector of Social Development of Al Farabi Kazakh National University Almaty (KAZNU) and Mr. Sandeep Jadhav, Coordinator of the event. The programme included a yoga performance as per the common yoga protocol and a demonstration of advanced yoga postures by some yoga instructors in Almaty. The Centre of Indian Classical Dances presented a scintillating cultural performance depicting yoga.

The programme culminated with distribution of mementos with IDY Logo and certificates to special guests and yoga instructors followed by light refreshments.

In Temirtau, Karaganda region, the function was attended by about 70 people including yoga enthusiasts and members of Indian communi-



International Day of Yoga (Astana)

Remarks by Ambassador Shri Harsh K. Jain

Ambassador welcomed all the participants at the first International Day of Yoga celebration in Astana. He first read out an extract from the letter of H.E. President Nazarbayev congratulating H.E. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the successful adoption of the United Nation resolution declaring June 21 as the International Day of Yoga:

"On behalf of the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan and myself, we congratulate you and the Republic of India on successful adoption of the Resolution in the United Nations General Assembly to declare June 21 as the International Yoga Day.



Promotion of such noble initiative by the government of India will provide wide expansion of Yoga around the world. Kazakhstan greatly values our benevolent cooperation with India and highly encourages international peacemaking, health and well being efforts such as International Yoga Day.

With today's globalization, creating a space of peace and harmony is becoming increasingly challenging. An official day reminding the world of the importance of raising conscience, maintaining physical, mental and environmental balance is especially important. We remain a trusted adherent of the Republic of India in its initiatives."

Ambassador then read out the message from the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on the first International Day of Yoga:

"The whole world is committed, determined and looking forward to June 21, the International Day of Yoga. India feels proud of the fact that the UN has taken this mission forward. 177 countries of the world co-sponsored it, and India's invaluable heritage has become the world's invaluable heritage today. It is an attempt to connect I to the We, it is an endeavour to connect our world with the universe, an attempt to let the unity of body and soul be felt. And the world, which is moving towards isolation today, each member of family is isolated, we feel lonely even in a crowd. Each country feels isolated in the world. This situation is not in our collective interest. To connect is the part of natural order. Connecting body to soul and for this Yoga is the medium. How should we connect with nature, connect with our near and dear ones, how to connect with one's self? How should I connect with my inner self?

In our society one witnesses rampant stress. Is there no way out of this stress? If we really wish to have a stable, stress free life, we need to have a stable inner self. The opportunity of stability of inner self comes through practice of Yoga when we attempt to explore our inner self everyday for a certain period of time. The ways of Yoga make it easier to achieve this feat. I firmly believe that through International Day of Yoga, the world, which is suffering from the dilemma of stress, a person who is stressful, a person who cannot share his problems even with his near ones may attain the inner strength to get rid of stress by connecting with the inner self. And finally, if a person is able to get rid of stress, society at large will be free of stress. A stress free society makes for a stress free human race; and if the human race is free of stress, this universe will certainly be a place to rejoice in a happy peaceful and harmonious environment. So, a big dream starts with a small beginning with Yoga.

I heartily felicitate the international community for supporting the International Day of Yoga. May this attempt make your life stress-free, may it fill your life with joy, may you learn to live in the present, may you realize your own strength and potential, may you find the way to make your inner energies more potent. You see, if it benefits you, be sure it holds the betterment of the whole world in it. Yoga is something that you need to begin with yourself. Today, the world has adopted it. It is beneficial not only for those who believe in preventive health, but also for those who believe in holistic health. Today, some in the young generation are misguided in following the path of violence and suicide, and leading a life of depression, Yoga I think, is the easiest way to save them. Let us all connect with this great discipline for the welfare of humanity, let us connect with this great heritage. This is a heritage of the humanity and the world. This heritage is your heritage. And it is our responsibility to hand over this great heritage to the future generation in the best possible manner. And today let us equip ourselves for this noble task. My best wishes to you on the International Day of Yoga."

Remarks by Mr. Galim Ahmediyarov, Vice Minister of Culture and Sports

Mr. Galim Ahmediyarov congratulated the participants on the celebration of the first International Day of Yoga and said "President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev pays special attention to the health of the nation, namely, the development of physical culture and sports in the country. Therefore, Kazakhstan has actively supported the initiative of India in UN General Assembly to proclaim June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. Yoga is a whole philosophy, which has a long history and which reflects the best of Hinduism and Buddhism. In our country, there are a lot of followers of this philosophy. I would like to say that in every town, yoga centers have been opened. We also have Kazakhstan Academy of Yoga, which is working. Today, I would like to say that we are launching a new tradition that unites two cultures of two nations. I am sure that the annual observance of the International Day of Yoga will be a new milestone for the development of bilateral cooperation between India and Kazakhstan. I would like to congratulate the Embassy of India in Kazakhstan and all the supporters, fans, the practitioners of yoga on this remarkable day and wish you good luck, health, happiness and peaceful sky. Thank you."



International Day of Yoga (Astana)

Remarks by Mr. Askar Mussinov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Askar Mussinov said, "Today is the holiday for everyone who loves this ancient art form and who considers himself a follower of this culture and philosophy of yoga. The first International Day of Yoga is being celebrated in more than 177 countries around the world today. The people around the world have come out to the public squares and coastal banks to dedicate themselves to practice sessions of this wonderful art. This morning, according to our reports, in Delhi about 40,000 followers of yoga have come out, gathered together and started practicing. In our meeting today, certainly we are comparati-



vely smaller in number but I hope that in the future more and more people will join. I would like to thank the Embassy of India for organizing this day and I hope that every day, every year, we will meet together but not limited to only one day of the year, and do it more often. That's the key to this. We have set up our Academy and the School of Yoga. Ambassador of South Africa Shirish Soni told me this morning, "With the rise of the sun, yoga sessions are taking place all over the world, starting from the east, then to India and now this wave has reached us. It will be all day today rolled out country to country. Now is our turn. I congratulate you once again."

Remarks by Shri Shirish Soni, Ambassador of South Africa to Kazakhstan

In his remarks, Ambassador Shrish Soni said, "Yoga is not jut the exercise that we do. Yoga teaches us all our communication with the people. It teaches us how to respond in all situations. That is why I have invited Swami Brahmtej so that this message of yoga is spread across Kazakhstan. I would like to congratulate the Embassy of the Republic of India for spearheading such beautiful events in Astana, Almaty and Temirtau. It is the good leadership of Ambassador Harsh Jain that has brought us here today. Let us give him a big hand. Thank you very much."



Remarks by Mr. Tolegen Mukhamedzhanov, President of International Association, Peace through Culture

Mr. Tolegen Mukhamedzhanov addressed the gathering saying, "I am infinitely glad that I am at the same place at the same time when I see so many wonderful people who are searching for harmony between body and soul. I want to wish you all success on this path. Yoga is a figurative expression of light. This light, which ignites in your heart, will never fade. I wish that this light that burns in your hearts blazes even more, thanks to your efforts. I think that the man who follows this path will surely find harmony with himself and the world around him. I envy you, everyone of you, who is here today and who will be engaged in the practice of yoga. It is said that when one wants to express his/her special thanks, people take off their hats. Here I go, I take off my hat in front of you. I wish you success."



Remarks by Mrs. Dinara Satzhan, TV Presenter, Blogger and Journalist

In her remarks, Ms. Dinara Satzhan said, "About 10 years ago, when I first moved to Astana, I met one Sundar. I think at that time he was the only Yoga coach /teacher in Astana. Today, I know we have over 100 schools of yoga, and probably more than 100 Kazakh yoga teachers. I love India - India is a fairyland. Yoga is an ancient art and truly is a lifestyle, a path to a happy life. So I am very pleased that today we are celebrating the day of Yoga in Kazakhstan and I think that the followers of Yoga will be much more from today. Thank you."



Remarks by Swami Brahmtej of Art of Living Foundation

Swami Brahmtej said, "We all share this beautiful planet and today this beautiful city right now. There are several days like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Environment Day and today is Yoga Day. It is actually Myself Day. Yoga is for the body. All other days are for something else. Today is the important day for myself, for my mind and that is the commitment we take today. This body that has served us so long in life and which is going to serve us for more years through this body and mind we are going to experience life as long as we keep it healthy, the life will be worth living. I congratulate the Ambassador and the Minister for organizing such a beautiful day."



International Day of Yoga (Almaty)

Remarks by Mr. Kazhymkhan Kasymovich Massimov

In his remarks at the IDY event in Almaty, Mr. Kazhymkhan Kasymovich Massimov said "I won't call you guests as all of you are yogis. I still can't believe you are really sitting here. When I was young, I was scared. In 70s-80s in Soviet times, I was the founder of "Yoga in Kazakhstan" and it was not easy to talk about yoga. Perhaps some of those students are here. Yoga was regarded as a sect and persecuted. So now when we are together, we realize what it really is and the base of it is Hatha Yoga. Yet that was a tough time.



As a rule, healthy people do not immediately start practicing yoga until they have issues, so they gradually start, they perceive the meaning of it, they see progress and then they can't quit. So we did. It was in Moscow, we were 10 yogis and were persecuted. In Kazakhstan, I was the only one. As for me, I started in Omsk City. I had my personal program, well you understand what I am talking about. I did not give up. If I was made to leave one place, I started in another one. Russia is big and if I was made to leave one city, I moved to another. So we managed till 90s. From place to place, from school to school, from basement to basement etc., but we were tightly stuck together.

Then there was a lucky day in 90's, when Michael Gorbachev visited India and noticed yoga as a good activity. In Moscow, we organized the "Yoga Association of the USSR". I was a pioneer who started the "Yoga Association" in Kazakhstan in 90's and since then we successfully practiced and were eager to prove the benefit of Hatha Yoga.

As you know, Yoga evolves around body and mind but we were also covering spiritual field. Still I have a functioning group at the Central Stadium. Thanks to Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was supporting it till the last year. We do not do anything bad, just general exercises. I was allowed to teach but with no spiritual bias. As I had an Indian program, I did not separate spiritual and physical part. It was told: "You are not related to medicine and have no physical education, so how can you teach?" So I had to take the third high education and graduate from the University of Physical Education to have a right to teach. Those days there were a lot of amateurs coming. That is how it was. I graduated from the University, got my degree and was authorized to teach simple wellness exercises. The practice had been divided. People told I was using unknown words so I conducted physical part only. I was giving dynamic part and static part. I submitted to others.

At present, I have applied to the Government, to the Ministry of Health and Education and the Ministry of Physical Education because up till now there is no legal right for it. We have suggested a program to be accepted in the Ministry and we were legalized to teach yoga. When we achieve it, we probably will start a school".

Minister of Investment and Development of Kazakhstan visits India

H.E. Mr. Asset Issekeshov, Minister of Investments and Development, Republic of Kazakhstan visited India with a high level business delegation on June 15-17, 2015.

On June 15, Mr. Issekeshov met Minister of Steel and Mines Shri Narendra Singh Tomar and discussed areas of cooperation in the mining sector between the two countries.

On June 16, Mr. Issekeshov met Minister of Communications and Information Technology Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad and discussed possibility of Indian investments in Kazakhstan's software technology park in Almaty. Mr Issekeshov thanked the Minister for India's assistance in setting up the India-Kazakhstan Centre of Excellence in ICT in Astana. Both sides agreed to prepare a serious agenda in mutual consultation for the next Joint Working Group on Information Technology.

On June 17, Mr. Issekeshov met Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and discussed areas of cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector.

Mr. Issekeshov met President of FICCI on June 15 and discussed strengthening of cooperation between the chambers of commerce of the two countries. He also held one-on-one meetings with CEOs of several Indian companies.



12th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation

The 12th meeting of the India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation was held in New Delhi on June 16-17, 2015 under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas of India and H.E. Mr. Vladimir Shkolnik, Minister of Energy of Republic of Kazakhstan.

The two sides reviewed developments since the last meeting of IGC in Astana in April 2014 and held substantive and productive discussions on all aspects of bilateral relations.

On conclusion of the meeting, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan made a statement to the media. He said, "We have just concluded the 12th Meeting of the India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation, which I co-chaired with Minister Shkolnik. We have had extremely friendly, substantive and productive discussions covering all aspects of bilateral relations between India and Kazakhstan.

We reviewed developments since the last meeting of IGC in Astana in April 2014 and also discussed various ideas and proposals to further strengthen our bilateral relationship.

Cooperation in the energy sector was a major focus of our deliberations. As you are aware, ONGC Videsh is working in collaboration with the state energy company of Kazakhstan KazMunaiGaz on the Satpayev block. There has been satisfactory progress on this project. We expect exploratory drilling to commence early next month. Both sides are keen to expand our cooperation in the area of hydrocarbons. Various proposals are currently under discussions between the two sides. We also agreed to conduct a feasibility study on transportation of crude oil and gas from Kazakhstan to India via pipeline or as LNG.

We also reviewed developments in trade and investment. It was decided that we would work together within the framework of the Joint Study group to consider the feasibility of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union, of which Kazakhstan is a member.

We also discussed a range of mutual investment proposals. The Kazakh Minister for Investment and Development has just concluded his visit to India during which he interacted with various Ministers as well as public and private sector companies.

We had very useful discussions on transport and logistics linkages. India and Kazakhstan have decided to establish a Joint Working Group on connectivity which would look at all aspects of this issue. With the opening of the rail link between Iran-Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, we will explore the possibility of this route being developed as a linked corridor to the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

I would like to once again thank Minister Shkolnik for his constructive and positive contribution and look forward to continuing my dialogue with him in the days ahead. Cooperation initiatives in various other sectors such as including Health, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture, Tourism, Civil Aviation, Mining, Textiles as well as Sports were also discussed.

Overall, the IGC meeting was extremely useful in deepening and strengthening our ties with Kazakhstan in the run up to the scheduled visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Kazakhstan."



Indian Army Observer delegation participates in "Golden Owl" Competition

A two-member Indian Army Special Forces Observer delegation led by Colonel Ranjit Jha and Major S.D. Ashok visited Kazakhstan for participation in Special Operations Reconnaissance (Special Forces) Group Competition 'Golden Owl' conducted by Kazakh Armed Forces from June 28 - July 4 2015. The competition was conducted at Spassk Training Area, Karaganda. A number of teams from Kazakhstan, Russia, China and USA participated in the event.

Message of External Affairs Minister on the third Passport Divas

The third Passport Divas was celebrated on June 24, 2015. Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs gave following message on the occasion:

"It gives me great pleasure to felicitate all our Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad on the third Passport Seva Divas being held on the 24th June, 2015. The day signifies the enactment of the Passports Act, 1967 and its enabling provisions of passport issuance. The Ministry of External Affairs and its subordinate office, the Central Passport Organization have reason to celebrate as well as to mark the event with renewed commitment to provide passport services in a timely, assured and efficient manner.



The past one year has been noteworthy in many respects. In particular, I am proud of the recent three ISO certifications of Passport Seva, which is hallmark of international quality standards besides being the recipient of the National Award on e-Governance and Web Ratna Platinum Icon Award. It was also the first time that the Ministry has taken passport services closer to citizens in a big way by way of organizing Passport Seva Camps in far off places across the country. The opening of four Passport Seva Kendras in North-East, co-opting of Common Services Centres, organizing Passport Melas and simplifying the procedures for passport application submission are some other citizen-friendly measures that have been taken in the last one year.

Our Government is committed to the principle of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' and delivering services to citizens in a convenient, accountable and transparent manner and putting in place more and more inclusive and robust mechanisms to achieve these objectives. Let us rededicate ourselves, on this important day, to take more effective steps with renewed vigour to make our passport issuance system worthy of emulation.

Sushma Swaraj"

Swami Brahmtej, Art of Living Foundation, India gives a lecture on meditation

Swami Brahmtej, Art of Living Foundation, India gave a lecture on meditation on June 27, 2015 at Indian Cultural Centre, Astana. About 40 yoga students and other interested people attended the lecture. Swami Brahmtej spoke on the importance of yoga and meditation in the contemporary world.



India participates in Central and South Asia Regional Conference on Countering Violent Extremism

Shri Rakesh Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India participated in Central and South Asia Regional Conference on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana on June 29-30, 2015. The conference was organized as a follow up to the agreements reached during the CVE Summit hosted by the President of United States in February 2015. The outcomes of the Astana conference will be presented to the Heads of State at the summit meeting being held in New York during the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2015.



The discussions at the conference were designed to facilitate the development of new strategies for countering violent extremism. The conference stressed on the central role of UN in addressing violent extremism and called on UN and other regional and international organizations to play an active role in promoting cooperation among countries to counter violent extremism, which causes terrorism. It also called for strengthening legal, institutional and operational frameworks and capacities to address terrorism.



PHOTO FEATURE

Celebration of International Day of Yoga in Astana on June 21, 2015

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