



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTANA

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India Celebrates the 70th Independence Day

India celebrated the 70th Independence Day on 15th August, 2016 with fervor and enthusiasm. Indian community spread across the globe participated in the celebrations. In his address on the eve of Independence Day, President Shri Pranab Mukherjee said that strong edifice of democracy built by founding fathers of the nation on the four pillars of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity has withstood several threats from both within and without and has grown from strength to strength since India gained independence in 1947.

He appreciated the ruling party and the opposition coming together in pursuit of national agenda of development, unity, integrity and security of the nation. He expressed confidence that the forces of divisiveness and intolerance would remain marginalized and India's remarkable growth story would continue uninterrupted.

He underscored that one unique feature that has held India together is the people's respect for each other's cultures, values and beliefs. He stated that in the networked environment of today, a caring society can only be developed by harmonizing religion with modern science. He stressed that India will grow only when all of India grows and the excluded ones have to be included in the development process.

He noted that India has had remarkable growth in recent times, often growing above eight percent per annum over the last decade and the start-up movement and the innovative spirit of young entrepreneurs have attracted international attention. He cautioned that it would be wrong to rest on laurels. He urged that the country should build on its strengths so that the lead can be sustained and furthered.

On external affairs, President Mukherjee said that India's foreign policy has shown considerable dynamism in recent times. He stated that India's focus on foreign policy would remain on peaceful co-existence, and harnessing technology and resources for its economic development. He said that the world has witnessed a spate of terror activities having their roots in radicalization of people on the basis of religion and these forces now pose a danger to the entire comity of nations. He urged that the world would have to fight them unconditionally and in one voice.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi unfurled the National Flag from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15th August. In his address to the nation, he said that 1.25 billion Indians have now resolved to complete the journey from "Swarajya" (independence) to "Suraj" (real freedom). He said that the achievement of Suraj will require sacrifice, hard work, discipline, dedication and courage, and added that every institution from Panchayat to Parliament must work unitedly towards this goal.

He defined various attributes of Suraj, such as Sensitivity, Responsibility, Accountability, Transparency, Efficiency and Good Governance. He illustrated each of these attributes through examples of the working of the Union Government in areas such as online registration in major hospitals, promptness of income tax refunds, speeding up the process of passport delivery, faster registration of companies and ending interviews for Group C and Group D positions in the Government.

He mentioned how the speed of delivery in vital areas of governance has increased such as construction of rural roads, capacity of generation of renewable energy, laying of transmission lines and cooking gas connections. He spoke of the scale in which work has been accomplished in certain areas such as opening of 210 million bank accounts



President Addresses the Nation



Prime Minister Delivers Speech at Red Fort



Prime Minister Delivers Speech at Red Fort

under the Jan Dhan Yojana, electrification of 10,000 unelectrified villages in a short span of time and huge saving of electricity due to widespread use of LED bulbs.

Prime Minister Modi explained the integrated approach that the Government has taken towards the agriculture sector, which includes focus on soil health cards, irrigation, solar pumps, seeds, fertilizers and crop insurance. Giving illustrations of effective delivery, Prime Minister Modi mentioned clearance of arrears of payment for sugarcane, new LPG connections and PSUs such as Air India and BSNL reporting operational profits. Mentioning the emphasis on transparency, he said that subsidies are being better targeted to those who need them.

In a strong message for social cohesion, he said that every Indian must abide by the message of peace, oneness and brotherhood. He said that various initiatives and programmes of the Government are all contributing to employment generation for the youth. He highlighted some of the major decisions taken by the government such as grant of One Rank, One Pension, declassification of files related to Netaji and the Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh. He announced welfare measures for pensioners, Adivasi freedom fighters and healthcare for the poor. He strongly condemned those who attempted to glorify terrorists as martyrs.

Several events were organized in connection with Independence Day to generate patriotic fervor among the people such as Tiranga Yatra (in which 75 ministers visited 150 places associated with freedom struggle), visit by women Ministers to the country's borders to tie rakhis on soldiers on Raksha Bandhan Day, talks on independence struggle by eminent persons at Institutions, sporting events and various competitions in schools and colleges.

Independence Day Celebrated in Kazakhstan

Embassy of India, Astana celebrated the 70th Independence Day of India on 15th August, 2016 with great fervor and enthusiasm. Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain unfurled the national flag at the Indian Cultural Centre in Astana and Shri Naveen Kapur, Second Secretary unfurled the national flag at the Representative Office of India in Almaty.

The unfurling of the national flag was followed by national anthem, reading of President of India's address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day and a short cultural programme. A short video on the "70th Year of Independence - 70 Initiatives by the Modi Government for People's Welfare" was screened. Indian nationals, Persons of Indian Origin and Embassy staff attended the ceremony.



"Goods and Services Tax" to be Introduced in India

The Parliament of India unanimously passed the 122nd Constitution Amendment Bill, 2014 on August 8, 2016 for introduction of Goods & Services Tax (GST) in the country. The GST, described as the biggest taxation reform in India, will replace a raft of different state and local taxes with a single unified value added tax system. It will subsume all central indirect levies such as excise duty, countervailing duty and service tax as well as state taxes such as value added tax, entry tax and luxury tax. Under the new regime, goods will be taxed at the point of consumption rather than production, dispensing with the current procedure of taxing goods multiple times at different rates.



The GST, seen as potentially transformative for India's economy, is expected to add as much as 2 percentage points to GDP, improve the ease of doing business, encourage investment in manufacturing, result in greater tax compliance and boost government revenues.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi expressed gratitude to all political parties for approving the Amendment Bill in one voice and hailed the coming on board of most political parties and States as the strength of democracy. He emphasized that the GST would go a long way in helping states, support small entrepreneurs and curb the menace of corruption.

Shri Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), said that GST would bring in much-needed transparency and higher investments in the coming years. Shri Mahesh Gupta, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry opined that GST would enhance manufacturing sector, expand growth of services sector, attract foreign investments and create new employment opportunities in the economy.

Kazakhstan Joins OECD Competition Committee

Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan announced that Kazakhstan has become a member of the Competition Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

According to the Ministry's statement of 27th July, Kazakhstan's accession to the OECD Competition Committee opens up possibilities to learn from the best world practices and implement them to strengthen the integration process with the most developed countries of the world. It states that access to the existing OECD research and analytical materials will allow the country to avoid errors and speed up the process of antimonopoly regulation reforms.



It emphasizes that the contemporary goal of Kazakhstan is to comply with the main principles and standards of the OECD in competition matters, which would create better conditions for competition on domestic commodity markets and would strengthen the general competitiveness of the country as part of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Kazakhstan is not an OECD member; however, the organization's Competition Committee admits observers from non-member states in order to promote antitrust reforms. Kazakhstan is the first country in Central Asia to become a member of the OECD Competition Committee. The organization consists of 35 member states, whose economies account for about 60 percent of the world's GDP.

Kazakhstan Signs Paris Climate Change Agreement

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Mr. Erlan Idrissov signed the Paris Climate Change Agreement at the UN Headquarters in New York on August 2, 2016. He emphasized that Kazakhstan is committed to dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and has set an ambitious long-term goal to generate 50% of energy using renewable energy resources by 2050.

In his meeting with UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, they discussed the state and prospects of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the UN, as well as priorities of the membership of Kazakhstan in the UN Security Council in 2017-2018. They also exchanged views on projects in the field of sustainable development and the initiatives spearheaded by the country in the UN.



180 countries have signed the Climate Change Agreement so far. The Agreement is an important symbol of determination of the world community to put an end to environmental degradation. Addressing the global climate change problem is a key condition to ensure sustainable development, eliminate poverty and achieve socio-economic well-being for all countries in the world.

Kazakhstan Companies Participate in "Source India 2016"

Synthetic & Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC) organized "Source India 2016", India's premier and largest Sourcing Show for Indian man-made fibre and blended textiles, at Surat on August 13-14, 2016. The Show displayed an entire spectrum of man-made fibre textiles, its value chains and blended textile items including fibre, yarn, fabrics, accessories, home textiles, technical textiles, etc. Business seminars and workshops on trends and fashion forecasts, fashion shows, international Buyer-Seller meets, etc were organized as parallel events.



The Source India was an ideal networking event for global business opportunities in man-made fibre and blended textiles. International buyers from 36 countries attended the show. Three companies from Kazakhstan viz., SHE "Elegant", Aida Kavme Nova LLP and Printing & Dyeing Cloth participated in the event.

India is one of the few countries offering complete textile supply chain, right from diverse fibres to a range of yarns, fabrics and made-ups. India is capable of delivering customized packages to customers. Today, India supplies a wide variety of fibres, yarns of different counts and deniers, fabrics in an amazing range of textures and finishes and exquisite made-ups to most of the countries across the world. The Indian man-made fibre textile industry is modern, vibrant and growing and its future potential for a sustainable growth is bright. India is the second leading producer of cellulosic fibre/yarn and the third largest producer of synthetic fibre/yarn in the world.

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant-I Dedicated to the Nation

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Russian President Mr. Vladimir Putin and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Ms. J. Jayalalithaa jointly dedicated the first unit of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant to the nation through video conferencing on 10th August, 2016.

The 1,000 Mega Watt Kudankulam nuclear power plant was built with Russian expertise following a pact signed between India and Russia in November, 1988. The first unit of Kudankulam nuclear power plant attained criticality in July 2013. It was synchronised with southern power grid on October 22, 2013 and its commercial power generation started by the end of December 2014. More than 10,800 million units of power has been generated from it till now.



Addressing the dedication ceremony, Prime Minister Modi said that today is another historic step in India-Russia relations. He stated that successful completion of the power plant is not just a fine example of the strength of special and privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries, but also a celebration of abiding friendship between the two countries. He stated that the two countries are determined to pursue an ambitious agenda of nuclear power generation. He informed that with the capacity of 1000 Mega Watt, Kudankulam-I is the largest single unit of electrical power in India and five more units of 1000 Mega Watt each are planned at Kudankulam. He emphasized that he has a vision for India where engines of industrial growth are driven by clean energy and Kudankulam-I is an important addition to India's continuing efforts to scale up production of clean energy in India.

He hailed the success of joint efforts of India and Russia in nuclear power generation as a proud achievement of cooperation between the two countries. He stated that it demonstrates the common resolve to keep the ties between the two countries firm and steady, and showcases President Putin's personal commitment, consistent support and strong leadership in transforming the substance and character of the relationship between the two countries.

President of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin said that a fast growing and enormous economy like India needs nuclear energy for development. He stated that the two countries hope to sign the General Framework Agreement for setting up units 5 and 6 by year-end, while work already commenced on units 3 and 4 in February this year. He also spoke about the safety of nuclear plants.

India Moves Up in MasterCard Consumer Confidence Index

MasterCard Index of Consumer Confidence for the first half of 2016 released on August 11, 2016 has placed India in "extremely optimistic" territory. The country also further solidified its position with a score of 97.6, moving up to the second spot in the Asia Pacific region.



The survey states that India's emergence as an economy with an extremely optimistic outlook was attributed to a rise in scores across five major components which serve as parameters for evaluating an economy's success viz., regular income, employment, quality of life, economy and stock market. Mr. Porush Singh, Country Corporate Officer-India and Division President of South Asia for Mastercard, said that the findings are encouraging for India, which is among the most optimistic markets in the Asia Pacific region. He underscored that growing consumer confidence and higher incomes are boosting consumer spending, signifying further impetus to overall economic growth and dynamism across sectors in India.

Overall, consumer confidence in the Asia Pacific markets remained stable, increasing by only 0.05 points to 59.72 in the first half of 2016, from 59.67 points in the second half of 2015. The number of markets below the 50 neutral line remains the same (eight of the 17 markets) as the last survey.

Meditation Class by ICC

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Astana in collaboration with Californication Yoga Centre, Astana organized a meditation class with live Indian Music (flute recital) by Shri Bhaskar Ojah, Music Teacher of the ICC, at the Californication Yoga Centre on August 2, 2016.

About 30 people participated in the meditation class.



Incredible India Destination : Udaipur

Udaipur in the State of Rajasthan is a 'City of Lakes'. Maharana Udai Singh of Mewar founded it in 1559. He was succeeded by Maharana Pratap who valiantly defended the city from Mughal attacks. It is a centre for performing arts, crafts and famed miniature paintings. The shilpgram festival is a great crowd-puller on New Year. City Palace, Lake Palace, Fateh Prakash Palace, Crystal Gallery, Jag Mandir, Collection of vintage/ classic cars and Maharana Pratap Memorial are major tourist attractions in Udaipur.

The City Palace on the banks of Lake Pichola along with Sajjan Garh (Monsoon Palace) on the hill above enhances the beauty of this magnificent city. It was a custom to weigh the King under the Triple Gate in the city palace in gold and silver and distribute them to the populace.

The Lake Palace, located on Jag Niwas island in the Lake Pichola, is the finest example of architectural and cultural marvel. Built as a royal summer palace in 1743, it has now been converted into a five star hotel. Its beauty and enduring charm, and its reflection in the middle of the lake is like a leaf straight out of a fairy tale book. Jag Mandir, the other island palace on Lake Pichola, was constructed in 1620. It served as a hideout for Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) during his revolt against his father, Emperor Jehangir.

Fateh Prakash Palace, the grand heritage palace hotel, represents the royal luxury at its best. The warmth of royal hospitality greets the visitors as they walk along the corridors lined with large paintings of the Mewar School. Crystal Gallery, situated in the Palace, has a breathtaking collection of crystal items including tables, sofa sets, dressers, fountains, beds, washing bowls, decanters and perfume bottles. There is also an exquisite jewel studded carpet.

Collection of Vintage/Classic Cars within the grounds of the Garden Hotel comprises a variety of vintage and classic vehicles like Cadillac, Chevrolet, Morris, etc owned by the Maharanas of Udaipur. There is an impressive bronze statue of Maharana Pratap on his favourite horse 'Chetak' stands atop the Moti Magri (Pearl Mount) overlooking Fateh Sagar lake. People climb up the hill to pay homage to Rana Pratap and 'Chetak' which was fiercely protective of its master and stood by him till its last breath.

Ahar, located 2 kms East of Udaipur, is an impressive cluster of cenotaphs of the Maharanas of Mewar. Nearby lies the Ahar Museum, which contains very rare earthen pottery, sculptures and other archaeological finds. Some of the pieces date back to 1700 BC. The tenth century metal figure of Buddha is a special attraction.

Chittorgarh, a city located 110 km from Udaipur, epitomizes Rajput spirit, valour, pride and romance. The imposing and awe inspiring fort stands on a 240-hectares site on 180-metre high hill.

Ranakpur (100 km from Udaipur) has beautifully sculptured Jain temples. Created in the 15th century, these are considered as one of the five holy places for the Jain community. The central Chaumukha (four-faced temple) is dedicated to Lord Rishabha Dev (Adinathji). The temple is an astounding creation of architectural splendor with 29 halls and 1,444 pillars - all distinctly carved, no two pillars being alike.

Kumbhalgarh Sanctuary, located in the Aravalli hills in Pali, Rajsamand and Udaipur districts of Rajasthan, is home to a large variety of wildlife, some of which are highly endangered species.

Jagdish Mandir; Saheliyon ki Bari (Garden for Women); Fateh Sagar Lake; Eklingji temple complex built in 734; Haldighati, historical site of the great legendary battle fought by Maharana Pratap and the Mughal army in 1576 (40 km); Shree Nath Ji-Nathdwara, vaishnavite shrine of 17th century dedicated to Lord Krishna (48 km); and Kumbhalgarh Fort (84 km) are some of the other tourist attractions in and near Udaipur.



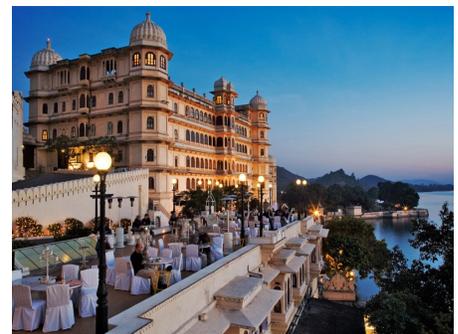
City Palace



Sajjan Garh (Monsoon Palace)



Lake Palace



Fateh Prakash Palace



Khajanchendzonga National Park

PHOTO FEATURE

Independence Day Celebrations in Astana



Independence Day Celebrations in Almaty



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