

सत्यमेव जयते

## Embassy of India ASTANA

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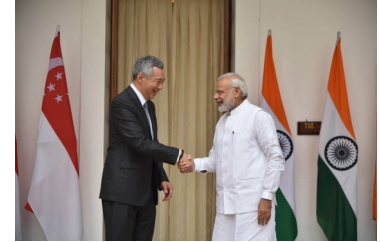
# Embassy of India ASTANA NEWSLETTER

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## Prime Minister of Singapore Visits India

Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Lee Hsien Loong paid an official visit to India from October 3-7, 2016. He met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 4<sup>th</sup> October. They held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues.



The two leaders reaffirmed their strong cooperation in the areas of smart cities, urban solutions and skills development through knowledge sharing and capacity building. They noted the continued progress in cooperation in defence R&D and technology, regular joint military exercises and training between the Armies, Air Forces and Navies, service-to-service cooperation, naval ship visits and the sharing of White-Shipping Information.

The leaders expressed satisfaction at the ongoing cooperation to address common security concerns such as counter-terrorism, maritime security, cyber security and illicit drug trafficking. They recognized the importance of further strengthening economic cooperation between India and Singapore and the many complementarities and opportunities that exist between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi briefed Prime Minister Lee on the efforts made to boost investments into India in the field of infrastructure development. Welcoming the launch of six satellites of Singapore by Indian Space Research Organization in December 2015, the leaders appreciated the growing cooperation between India and Singapore in space technology and stressed on the need for furthering cooperation in R&D.

The two leaders recognized that terrorism continues to remain the single most significant threat to peace and stability and reiterated their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stressed that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever. They called for reinvigorating multilateral action on terrorism, including through the finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations at the earliest.

In the joint press statement, Prime Minister Modi said that if there is one country that seems to act in the present, but is alive to the needs of the future, it is Singapore. He commended that what Singapore does today in fields such as manufacturing, environment, innovation, technology or delivery of public services, the rest of the world would do tomorrow. He stated that India-Singapore partnership aims to combine the strengths of Singapore with the scale of India and dynamism of Singapore with vibrancy of the States of India in order to deliver benefits to the people of the two countries.

He welcomed the inauguration of the Centre of Excellence for Tourism Training in Udaipur in cooperation with the State Government of Rajasthan. He informed that Rajasthan is also partnering with Singapore in the fields of urban development and waste management. He said that trade and investment ties form the bedrock of bilateral relationship and expressed hope that the MOU on intellectual property would facilitate greater business to business exchanges and collaborations.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong called on President Pranab Mukherjee on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. President Muherjee said that he was happy to note that Singapore is collaborating with the Government of Assam in developing a skill centre in Assam. He stated that investor confidence in India is at an all-time high and India is among the most attractive destinations for investment and expressed hope to see more Singapore companies investing in India. Prime Minister Lee strongly condemned the Uri terrorist attack and said that Singapore remains on constant vigil against terrorism. He visited Udaipur in the state of Rajasthan on October 5-6, 2016.

Three MOUs were signed during the visit. ITE Education Services of Singapore signed MOUs on technical and vocational education and training with the National Skill Development Corporation and the Government of Assam, and the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion signed an MOU on cooperation on intellectual property with the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore.

## Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Visits India

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe visited India from October 4-6, 2016 to attend the India Economic Summit. He called on President Pranab Mukherjee on 5<sup>th</sup> October. President Mukherjee appreciated Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's role in Sri Lanka's active re-engagement with the world. He assured that Sri Lanka can count on India's continued support in its endeavour for national unity and reconciliation. He emphasized that the two countries must unite in isolating and targeting the source of ideological and financial sustenance in the region which provides shelter as well as training to terrorists. He stated that India has given special emphasis on meeting Sri Lanka's developmental requirements and its aid projects in Sri Lanka have a commitment of more than US\$ 2.6 billion.



Prime Minister Wickremesinghe warmly reciprocated President Mukherjee's sentiments. He said that there has to be a genuine commitment to fighting terrorism in South Asia and there cannot be any cross border terrorism.

Prime Minister Wickremesinghe met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and attended the Opening Plenary of the India Economic Summit hosted by the World Economic Forum and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 6<sup>th</sup> October. In his address, he said that India and Sri Lanka would sign an enhanced bilateral economic partnership agreement by the year-end in addition to the existing Free trade Agreement (FTA), which would offer a strategic economic advantage to Sri Lanka and the fast growing five southern states of India. He suggested creation of a larger special zone of economic cooperation around the Bay of Bengal taking on board Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia in addition to BIMSTEC countries - Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

## Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2016 coinciding with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that at a time when the world is keen to engage with India, the "fear of the unknown" can be the biggest obstacle, which the Indian diaspora can help overcome.



The Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (Overseas Indians Centre) is a tribute to the overseas Indian community and commemorates their migration to various parts of the world, the challenges faced by them, and their achievements and contributions. The Kendra is expected to develop into a hub of activities for sustainable, symbiotic and mutually rewarding economic, social and cultural engagement between India and its Diaspora. Activities such as seminars, events and workshops pertaining to the Indian Diaspora would be organized in the Kendra. The Museum in the Kendra depicts the history of migration of overseas Indian community, their experiences and contributions. The Kendra has a state-of-art auditorium, multi-purpose halls, conference and seminar halls. The Kendra library is a valuable repository of material about the Indian Diaspora including books written by overseas Indians in different languages.

The Representative Office of India in Almaty organized a live webcast of the inauguration of the Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra at its premises on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The Embassy organized screening of the webcast of inauguration of the Kendra at the Indian Cultural Centre, Astana in the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

## Ambassador Inaugurates Workshop in Almaty

Ambassador inaugurated the International Workshop on "Spiritual Heritage and Interactions of Cultures along the Great Silk Routes" in Almaty on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. The workshop was jointly organized by Kazakhstan-India Foundation and Institute of Oriental Studies with the support of the Embassy. Former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan Shri Ashok Sajjanhar, Prof. Anupa Pandey, Dean, Department of History & Art, National Museum Institute, New Delhi and Prof. Sushmita Pandey, Chairperson, National Monuments Authority of India participated in the Workshop.



The workshop was aimed at discussing historical aspects of intercultural links between Central and South Asia. It covered the impact of the Great Silk Routes as seen from various perspectives such as historical sources written in different languages - Oriental as well as European; various traditional schools of historiographies which shed light on the history and events that otherwise could not be known and the achievements of the interaction presented in various aspects of people's life - ideological, intangible culture, art, etc.

Ambassador Sajjanhar and other participants from India also attended the Conference on "Oriental Studies Research in Kazakhstan: Achievements and Prospects" on 12<sup>th</sup> October dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Institute of Oriental Studies and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence of Kazakhstan.

## Festival of India in Kazakhstan

The Embassy organized the "Festival of India" in Kazakhstan from October 6-12, 2016. It comprised six performances by two Indian cultural groups spread across four cities in Kazakhstan.

Ms. Smita Nagdev, an accomplished sitar exponent from India, presented sitar recital at Kazakh Concert Hall, Almaty on 6th October as the curtain raiser of the Festival. The recital comprised rendition of assortment of evening ragas and bhajans on Mahatma Gandhi. Shri Dinesh Kumar, Deputy Chairman of Management Board, Tengri Bank, Shri R. Gururaj, First Secretary and Ms. Smita Nagdev jointly inaugurated the event. The sitar recital was followed by Indian classical dance by the Centre for Indian Classical Dances, Almaty led by its Director and honoured artist of Kazakhstan Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova.

The Festival of India in Kazakhstan was inaugurated by Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain with sitar recital by Ms. Smita Nagdev at the National Museum in Astana on 7th October. Ambassador and Director of National Museum Mr. Darkhan Mynbai welcomed the guests. The sitar recital was preceded by cocktail reception hosted by the Ambassador.

In his address, Ambassador recalled that when Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Kazakhstan last year, it was decided that the two countries should intensify cultural cooperation by extending mutual support for holding cultural events in each other's country and exchange of cultural festivals. He stated that the festival is dedicated to the 70 years of India's independence, 25 years of independence of Kazakhstan and 25 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Ms. Smita Nagdev presented sitar recital at the Atyrau State University, Atyrau on 8th October. Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain and Rector of the University Mr. Abzal Taltenov jointly inaugurated the event. The performance in Atyrau coincided with the Atyrau city day.

A Cultural Group from the West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur presented Lo-krang, an ensemble of Indian Folk Dances from the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra at the Kazakh State Drama Theatre, Almaty on 10th October. The performance comprised playing of Bhopang (musical instrument); Puppetry; Lavani, folk dance of Maharashtra; Garba and Raas, folk dances of Gujarat; and Bhavai and Kalbelia, folk dances of Rajasthan. Former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan Shri Ashok Sajjanhar inaugurated the event.

The same group presented Indian Folk Dances at Eurasian National University, Astana on 11th October and the concluding performance of the Festival of India at the Central Palace, Temirtau on 12th October. Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain, Deputy Mayor of Temirtau Mr. Galym Spabekov and CFO of Arcelor Mittal Mr. Ashok Santhalia welcomed the guests in Temirtau.

Ambassadors, diplomats, government officials, members of Indian community, representatives of media, Kazakhstani nationals and students attended the events held in various cities.

The Festival was co-sponsored by Tengri Bank (Sitar Recital at Almaty), National Museum, Astana (Sitar Recital at Astana), ONGC Videsh Limited, RITM Oil and Atyrau State University (Sitar Recital at Atyrau), Eurasian National University, Astana and JK Capital (Folk Dance at Astana) and Arcelor Mittal (Folk Dance at Temirtau). Kaz Energy Suppliers, Kazakhstan-India Foundation and Centre for Indian Classical Dances in Almaty also supported some segments of the Festival of India.



*Sitar Recital at Almaty*



*Sitar Recital at Astana*



*Sitar Recital at Atyrau*



*Folk Dance at Almaty*



*Folk Dance at Astana*



*Folk Dance at Temirtau*



## Celebration of 147th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Kazakhstan

The Embassy celebrated the 147th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the 10<sup>th</sup> International Day of Non-Violence at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana on 2nd October, 2016. The celebration began with garlanding of the Bust of Mahatma Gandhi. Prof. Yerlan Sydykov, Rector of the University and Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain welcomed the guests. H.E. Mr. Roman Vassilenko, Deputy Foreign Minister graced the event as the Chief Guest.

In his address, Ambassador summed up the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi in five principles of good conduct viz., Non-violence, Satya or belief in truth, Asteya or the honesty of the purpose and the means, Aparigraha or detachment towards material things, and the Brahmcharya or self-restraint. He emphasized that while the five principles support and complement each other, the first and foremost is the principle of non-violence. He stated that Mahatma Gandhi combined the philosophy of Non-violence with Aparigraha to lead a life of a very low carbon footprint. He recalled Gandhi's famous words that "there is enough for everybody's need, but not enough for anybody's greed".

Ambassador informed that paying homage to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, India decided to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on the auspicious occasion of birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Ambassador recalled the time spent by Gandhi in South Africa, where he honed the techniques of non-violent resistance and Satyagraha. He informed that the day on which Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India is marked as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or the Overseas Indians Day. Ambassador noted that while he was speaking, the Prime Minister of India was inaugurating a Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, Overseas Indians Centre, in New Delhi and dedicating it to the Indian Diaspora.

In his address, H.E. Mr. Roman Vassilenko, Deputy Foreign Minister said that it is the name of Mahatma with whom the very idea of non-violence is associated with in today's world. He stated that Mahatma Gandhi inspired millions and generations to seek their goals with persistence without succumbing to the dark power of rage and aggression. He noted that Mahatma Gandhi's teachings "My life is my message" and "Be the change you want to see in the world" provide powerful inspiration to strive for a better world and these values are close and dear to the people of Kazakhstan too. He pointed out that Kazakhstan won its independence with non-violence, but stubborn resistance.

He highlighted that Kazakhstan stood up to the Soviet military to shut down the world's largest nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk in non-violent method. He added that to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic act, Astana hosted a major international conference entitled "Building a Nuclear Weapon-Free World" a few weeks ago and among its participants was Ms. Ela Gandhi, a granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi.

He informed that United Nations General Assembly voted for adoption of universal declaration for nuclear weapons free world initiated by President Nazarbayev and India was the only nuclear power to back the initiative and vote for the adoption of the declaration. He reaffirmed that Kazakhstan looks forward to work with India and other countries to transform the world into a safe place for present and future generations through peaceful means.

In his address, Mr. Norimasa Shimomura, UN Resident Coordinator for Kazakhstan said that the UN General Assembly resolution that established the commemoration of the International Day of non-violence specifies that it is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness" and there is no better audience than youth for conveying that message. He said that the rise of violence, terrorism and extremism has become the global scourge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to end the violent conflict, the international community can revisit and learn from the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi for inspiration and guidance.

In his address, Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Apostolic Nuncio, Embassy of Vatican stated that non-violence was generally considered a weakness, but Gandhiji turned it into a sign of fearlessness and strength of dignity and power of a person's inherent nobility and unbreakable character. He encapsulated Gandhi's life as follows: He was a man who "saw the invisible, heard the inaudible, believed the incredible, thought the



unthinkable and attained the unattainable" and in doing so, he changed the course of history and restored the dignity to Indians, which made him a Mahatma, the Great Soul, the greatest gift India could have ever given to the world.

Two students of the University Mr. Issayev Nursultan and Mr. Zhakay Arman, spoke on how Mahatma Gandhi inspired them. A documentary film on Mahatma Gandhi was screened for the students before the event and a Book and Photo Exhibition (Mohan to Mahatma) on Mahatma Gandhi was organized at the venue.

Representative Office of India in Almaty marked the 147th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at the Gandhi Park on 2nd October, 2016 by paying floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Several people spoke on the life and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion.

## India's GDP Growth to Remain Strong: World Bank

The World Bank said in its latest biannual report on South Asia Economic Focus released on 3rd October, 2016 that India's GDP growth would remain strong at 7.6 per cent in 2016 and 7.7 per cent in 2017, supported by solid growth contributions from consumption - boosted by normal monsoon and civil service pay revisions. It anticipates that over the medium term, accelerated infrastructure spending and a better investment climate may help increase private investment and exports.

Real GDP growth, at constant market prices	2013	2014	2015	2016e	2017f
Afghanistan	2.0	1.3	0.8	0.5	1.8
Bangladesh	6.0	6.1	6.6	7.1	6.8
Bhutan	2.1	5.5	6.1	7.3	9.8
India	6.6	7.2	7.6	7.6	7.7
Maldives	4.7	6.5	1.9	3.5	3.9
Nepal	4.1	6.0	2.7	0.6	5.0
Pakistan	4.4	4.7	4.7	5.7	5.0
	(3.7)	(4.1)	(4.0)	(4.7)	(5.0)
Sri Lanka	3.4	4.9	4.8	4.8	5.0

Source: World Bank  
 Note: GDP is measured in constant market prices. For Pakistan, figures in parentheses are measured in constant factor prices. Figures are in percent.

The report says that given its weight in the region, India sets the pace for South Asia as a whole. It underscores that South Asia, led by solid performance in India, has defied a sluggish world economy and solidified its lead as the fastest growing region in the world in 2016. It highlights that South Asia remains a global growth hotspot and has proven resilient to external headwinds such as China's slowdown, uncertainty around stimulus policy in advanced economies and slowing remittances.

## India Jumps 16 Places in Competitiveness Index

India jumped 16 places in the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2016-17 to emerge as the highest rising economy. India was ranked 39 out of 138 countries which were reviewed and this is the second year in a row that the country has climbed 16 places in the ranking.

CGI report says that the Indian economy has stabilized and now boasts the highest growth among G20 economies due to improved monetary and fiscal policies, as well as lower oil prices. It says that recent reform efforts were concentrated on improving public institutions, opening the economy to foreign investors and international trade and increasing transparency in the financial system.



GCI scores are calculated by drawing together country-level data covering 12 categories - the pillars of competitiveness - that collectively make up a comprehensive picture of a country's competitiveness. The 12 pillars are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation. The report emphasizes that updated business practices and investment in innovation are now as important as infrastructure, skills and efficient markets.

## Kazakhstani Professionals Participate in ITEC Training

Ms. Zhaniya Urymbayeva, Specialist of Standardization and Certification at the Centre of Certification of Products and Services LLP and Ms. Anel Galimova, Quality Controller at Ai Rus Company LLP were selected for the course "International Training Programme on Standardization and Quality Assurance" conducted by the National Institute of Training for Standardization, Noida from 17th October to 19th December, 2016 under Government of India's ITEC programme.

Mr. Alibek Zhabbasbayev, Engineer at Kazakhtelecom JSC and Mr. Adilbek Zholamanuly, System Engineer at KT Cloud Lab LLP were selected for the course "Internet Protocol Version-6 (Ipv6)-Implementation Strategies in Telecom Networks" conducted by the Centre for Excellence in Telecom Technology and Management, Mumbai from 17th October to 9th December, 2016. Shri Ram Kumar, Second Secretary (ITEC) handed over air tickets for their travel to India.





## Incredible India Destination: Somnath

Somnath, also known as Prabhas Patan, in the State of Gujarat is one of the Dwadasa Jyotirlinga shrines or the 12 temples enshrining Shiva in the form of a Jyotirlingam in the country. One of the oldest places of pilgrimage, the temple finds mention in ancient texts and scriptures. Its glowing description by 11th century Arab traveler Al Biruni prompted an unwelcome visit by Mahmud of Ghazni who ransacked and destroyed the temple in 1025 AD. Razed and rebuilt at least six times since its foundation, the existing temple standing at the shore of the Arabian Sea came into being as a result of the efforts of Sardar Patel, the Iron man of India.

Somnath temple, Balka Tirth, Dehotsarga, Ahilyabai temple and Archaeological Museum are some of the major tourist attractions at Somnath.

Somnath Temple attracts a large number of devotees every day. Legend has it that the Kala Bhairava Shivalinga there was worshipped by the Moon, and hence is referred to as Somanatha, Lord of the Moon. The Skanda Purana describes the Sparsa Linga of Somnath as bright as the Sun, the size of an egg, lodged underground. The Mahabharatha also refers to the Prabhasa Kshetra and the legend of the Moon worshipping Shiva.

Bhalika Tirth is the place where Lord Krishna, mistaken for a deer, was wounded by an arrow of a Bhil tribal and left his mortal body. Dehotsarga is the holy place where Lord Krishna, having been injured, passed the last moments of his life under a pipal tree. Ahilyabai Temple, built by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar in 18<sup>th</sup> century, is dedicated to Lord Shiva. There is an archaeological museum in Somnath showcasing relics of previous Somnath temples.

Chorwad (25 km away from Somath) is a quiet and charming sea resort along the Arabian Sea. It is home to the summer palace of the former Nawab of Junagadh. Sasan Gir (48 km) is located within Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary. It is the sole entrancing preserve for the Asiatic lion, whose population is more than 400. It is also home to 38 species of mammals, 37 species of reptiles and more than 300 species of birds.

Ahmedpur Mandvi (79 km) is one of the finest beaches in Gujarat. It is a magnet for people fond of water sports, with facilities of water skis and scooters, speedboats, water toboggans, etc. Tulsi Shyam (109 km), located in the heart of the Gir forests, is a scenic spot famous for hot springs. The place also attracts devotees for its temple dedicated to the Pandava Bhim and his mother Kunti.



*Somnath Temple*



*Chorwad Beach*



*Sasan Gir*



*Ahmedpur Mandvi Beach*



*Tulsi Shyam Temple*



*Sasan Gir Resort*



## PHOTO FEATURE

### *Ambassador Inaugurates Workshop on Spiritual Heritage and Interactions of Cultures along the Great Silk Routes in Almaty*



### *Celebration of Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi*



### *Festival of India in Kazakhstan*



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