

सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India ASTAN

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Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bengaluru

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention held in Bengaluru from January 7-9, 2017 on the theme "Redefining Engagement with the Indian Diaspora". Prime Minister of Portugal Dr. Antonio Costa graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The PBD is held on 9th January every year. Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India on this day in 1915.



In his key note address, Prime Minister Modi said that there are over 30 million Overseas Indians living abroad and they represent the best of Indian culture, ethos and values. He hailed them as role models for other immigrant communities abroad with their hard-work, discipline, law-abiding and peace loving nature. He noted that the remittance of close to US\$ 69 billion per annum by the overseas Indians makes an invaluable contribution to the Indian economy.

He reaffirmed that the welfare and safety of all Indians abroad is the top priority of the government. He highlighted the various steps taken to strengthen the administrative arrangements for the welfare of overseas Indians such as timely consular services, legal advice, medical assistance, provision of shelter, and transportation of mortal remains to India. He informed that in order to safeguard the emigration of Indian workers, online registration of foreign employers on e-Migrate portal has been made mandatory and the amount of Bank Guarantee to be deposited by the recruiting agents has been increased from Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs. 50 lakhs. He announced that skill development program "Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana" would be launched shortly to ensure that the migrating Indian workers enjoy better economic opportunities abroad.

He announced (i) simplified procedure for issue of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) from Girmitya countries, who had moved there four or five generations ago; (ii) setting up of special counters at immigration points in New Delhi and Bengaluru airports for OCI Card holders; (iii) launching of Visiting Adjunct Joint Research Faculty (VAJRA) to enable overseas scientific community including NRIs and PIOs to participate and contribute to research and development in India; (iv) treatment of investments by PIOs on non-repatriation basis and by companies, trusts and partnerships owned by them as domestic investments at par with investments made by resident Indians; and (v) expansion of Know India Programme from four to six batches a year.

In his address, Prime Minister Mr. Costa recalled his Indian connection saying that his father spent his childhood in Madgoan (Goa) and informed that his relatives still live there. He said that the Indian diaspora, which is well integrated in Portugal and contributing to the nation's development, is willing to help improve ties between the two countries.

President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards to 30 overseas Indians on 9th January recognizing their contributions in various fields both in India and abroad. He expressed hope that the Indian Diaspora spread across the world would remain foremost emissaries of the unfolding Indian story. He noted that while they showcase India to their host countries, they also bring along the cultural heritage of their adopted lands to India.

Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Vijay Goel and Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh inaugurated the Youth PBD on 7th January on the theme "Role of Diaspora Youth in the Transformation of India". Vice President of Surinam Mr. Michael Ashwin Adhin was the Special Guest. The Youth PBD sought to reconnect young overseas Indians with their Indian roots and enhance their awareness of the culture and heritage of India. In his address, Vice President Adhin suggested that India may transfer nature-friendly technology to Suriname to enable it to compete in the global market. He recited verses in Sanskrit from the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads. He informed that currently, Indians account for 30 per cent of Surinam's population and hold key positions in the society.

14 plenary sessions were held on issues which are of significance to the Indian diaspora. An exhibition was organized, which gave an opportunity to delegates to know more about the government's ongoing programmes and the vast strides taken by India in various sectors. B2B meetings were arranged at the venue. The Government of Karnataka organized industrial visits for the delegates. A Hand Book on the Welfare and Protection of Indians Abroad and Brochure on E-Migrate were released during the PBD. More than 7000 delegates from 72 countries participated in the PBD.

On the sidelines of the PBD, Prime Minister Modi met Vice President of Suriname Mr. Michael Ashwin Adhin. They discussed bilateral cooperation in various sectors such as animal husbandry, agriculture, palm oil and food processing. Vice President Adhin sought India's help to create an ecosystem for the propagation of Ayurveda in Suriname. He sought Indian investment in various sectors such as pharmaceuticals and mining in Suriname and said that Indian investors can utilize Suriname to export to other countries in Central and Latin America.

Prime Minister Modi met Foreign Minister of France Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault. They discussed strengthening of cooperation between India and France in various sectors such as defence, civil nuclear energy and space. They also discussed participation of France in sustainable development of Indian cities. Prime Minister Modi also met Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Special Envoy of Malaysia for India for Infrastructure and Datuk Seri Dr. S Subramaniam, Minister of Health of Malaysia.

Prime Minister of Portugal Visits India

Prime Minister of Portugal Mr. Antonio Costa paid a State Visit to India from January 7-12, 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 7th January. They affirmed their strong commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations and build a forward-looking 21st century partnership based on the strong links of shared history, culture and people-to-people relations. They agreed to work together to enhance economic, scientific and technological cooperation, building upon the complementarities between the two countries and forge a contemporary global partnership to promote peace, security and prosperity of the two countries.



The leaders called for expanding two-way trade and investment by leveraging their complementary strengths to boost economic growth, sustainable development, research, innovation and entrepreneurship, and build networks of cooperation for mutual growth and progress. They identified the following focus sectors for strengthening cooperation: infrastructure, renewable energy, defence industries, information and communication technology (ICT), start-ups, agriculture, food processing, food security, water and waste management, tourism, hospitality, pharmaceuticals, automotive products, marine research, maritime transport and ports.

The leaders issued a Joint Declaration on Cooperation to strengthen bilateral economic and commercial cooperation in third countries. They jointly issued a commemorative postage stamp depicting dance forms as a celebration of the shared cultural heritage. They expressed strong condemnation of extremism and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations and called for early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations. In the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that India and Portugal have built a modern bilateral partnership on the foundation of a shared historical connect. He stated that expansion and deepening of trade, investment and business partnerships between the two countries is the shared priority.

Prime Minister Costa called on President Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 7th January. President Mukherjee said that India attaches great value to its historical bonds with Portugal spanning over 500 years. He underscored that India and Portugal share core values of democracy, pluralism, multiculturalism and rule of law. Prime Minister Costa said that he was honoured to pay a state visit to India as the first Portuguese Prime Minister of Indian origin. He stressed that efforts should be made to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries and emphasized that Portugal is keen to strengthen its ties with India.

Prime Minister Costa attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Convention in Bengaluru on 8th and 9th January and a business meeting "India -Portugal: Partners in Growth" organized by CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM in Bengaluru on 9th January. He also attended the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar on 10th January.

He visited Goa on 11th and 12th January against the backdrop that his father had spent his childhood in Goa before leaving for Portugal at the age of 18. He visited his ancestral home in Margao city in South Goa and dined with close relatives and friends. He visited Old Goa Church complex, a UNESCO world heritage site; the Mangueshi temple; the Birla Optical Fibre factory in Verna; Latin quarter in Fontainhas; and the Salgaocar Law College at Miramar. He inaugurated the Centro de Lingua Portuguesa at the Portuguese cultural organisation, Fundacao Oriente.

Seven Agreements/MOUs were signed on cooperation in the fields of IT and Electronics, agriculture and allied sectors, renewable energy, marine research and resources, defence, establishment of an ICCR Chair of Indian Studies in University of Lisbon and waiver of visa for holders of diplomatic passports.

President of Kenya Visits India

President of Kenya Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta paid a State Visit to India from January 10-12, 2017. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 11th January. They underscored the historical ties between the two countries and praised the strength of the re-invigorated India-Kenya partnership, which serves to increase stability, prosperity and security in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions. They agreed to enhance cooperation in the areas of defence, maritime security, sharing of white shipping information, joint hydrographic surveys, enhancing trade and investment relationship, information technology, digital and cashless economy, blue economy, e-Governance, culture, sports, tourism, comprehensive convention on terrorism and reforms of international institutions including the United Nations.



President Kenyatta appreciated the power transmission line projects being executed by Indian companies under a Line of Credit (LOC) of US\$ 61.6 million. He thanked India for the progress in installation of a telecobalt cancer therapy machine at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi. He thanked India for the grant of US\$ 1 million for renovation of Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library at the University of Nairobi and the setting up of an ICCR Chair for Indian Studies at the University. The leaders noted with satisfaction the implementation of US\$ 29.95 million LOC for up-gradation of Rift Valley Textiles Factory and US\$ 15 million LOC for development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that broad based and wide ranging cooperation in agriculture and food security is the shared priority of the two countries. He announced a Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million for agricultural mechanization in Kenya. He informed that long term arrangement with Kenya for production and import of pulses is being explored. He offered to share the best practices in organic farming with Kenyan farmers.

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee hosted a banquet in honour of President Kenyatta. He said that India's relationship with Kenya is centuries old and the two countries are bound by a common belief in democratic values and traditions. President Kenyatta lauded the role of Indian community in Kenya whom he described as part and parcel of the Kenyan society. President Mukherjee reaffirmed that India remains committed to its developmental partnership with Kenya and stands ready to assist it further in its human resource development and capacity building efforts. President Kenyatta attended the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2017 in Gandhi Nagar on 10th January and the India-Kenya Business Forum in New Delhi on 12th January.

Two Agreements/MOUs were signed on cooperation in agriculture and its allied sectors and providing a Line of Credit of US \$100 million for agricultural mechanization in Kenya.

President of Rwanda Visits India

President of Rwanda Mr. Paul Kagame paid a working visit to India from January 9-11, 2017. Prime Minister Modi received him in Gandhi Nagar on 10th January. They discussed a wide range of issues covering bilateral relations and India's increasing engagements as a development partner for Africa. They decided to elevate the multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries to a strategic partnership and issued a Declaration to this effect. Prime Minister Modi said that India is positively considering opening a resident Mission in Kigali.



The leaders agreed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in culture, tourism and people-to-people links between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi welcomed the commencement of a direct flight between Kigali and Mumbai by Rwand Air. President Kagame welcomed the increased private sector investments from India, highlighting progress in business and investment climate that makes Rwanda a competitive and conducive environment to do business.

Prime Minister Modi announced gifting of US\$ 2 million of medicines and a cash grant of US\$ 1 million for sourcing medical equipment from India. He conveyed India's readiness to support Phase-II of the Nyabarongo power project, Technical and Vocational Training Centres (TVET) and Huye-Kibeho road project through lines of credit. President Kagame acknowledged India's assistance in augmenting Rwanda's electricity production with the commissioning of the 28 MW Hydroelectric Project on the Nyabarongo River under a Line of Credit of US\$ 80 million. The leaders expressed confidence that development of Export Targeted Irrigated Agriculture Project and its expansion under India's Line of Credit of US\$ 120 million would bring irrigation facilities to more than 41,190 hectares of cultivable land and agreed to fast track its implementation. President Kagame appreciated the training being given to its defence forces in training institutions of Indian army under ITEC programme. He also attended the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar.

An MOU on cooperation on forensic sciences between Gujarat Forensic Sciences University and Rwanda's National Police and a Framework Agreement for Rwanda to become 25th co-signatory country to the International Solar Alliance were signed.

President Nazarbayev Congratulates Kazakhstanis on New Year 2017

President Nazarbayev congratulated the people of Kazakhstan on the occasion of New Year 2017. In his New Year address on 31st December, 2016, he wished them happiness, good health, prosperity and success in their endeavours in the new year. He said that 2017 would be an important year for Kazakhstan, making it the focus of major international events viz., World Winter Universiade, Astana International EXPO and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Science and Technology Summit. He said that Kazakhstan would function as a non-permanent member of UN Security Council in 2017-18. He called these events as a token of confidence reposed on the country and a new stimulus for its development. He stated that new welfare programmes such as measures aimed at helping over half a million people to begin their own businesses, new agro-industrial programme with the objective to increase the quality of farm produce, and increase in pension and other social payments strengthen confidence in future.



President Nazarbayev attended the New Year Charity Ball at the Palace of Independence in Astana on 29th December, 2016. He said that Kazakhstan has overcome the difficulties and gained success due to accord and firm unity in the society.

Policy Address by President Nazarbayev at the UN Security Council

Foreign Minister Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov presented the policy address by President Nazarbayev "Kazakhstan's Concept Vision on Sustaining Global Partnership for Secure, Just and Prosperous World" on 10th January, 2017 to mark the beginning of Kazakhstan's term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2017-2018.



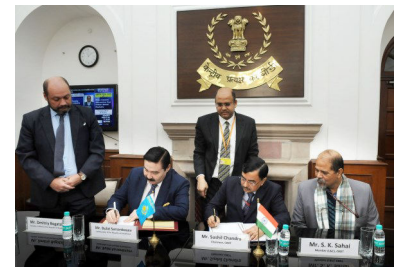
In the address, President Nazarbayev stated that Kazakhstan would work in a balanced and unbiased manner on the Council's entire agenda keeping in mind the paramount importance of maintaining and strengthening peace and security. He reaffirmed that Kazakhstan intends to work on an equal basis with all Security Council Members to promote compromise and consensus to strengthen international peace and security.

His address identified Kazakhstan's priorities as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, which include building a nuclear-weapon-free world, eliminating the threat of a global war, promoting peace in Afghanistan, creating a regional peace zone in Central Asia and a Global Antiterrorist Coalition (network) under the auspices of the United Nations, fostering peace in Africa, promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, adapting the United Nations to the needs of the 21st century and holding regular Security Council meetings at the level of Heads of State and Government in order to strengthen the collective political will to address global challenges. The policy address was registered as an official document of the UN Security Council.

The national flag of Kazakhstan was raised in a special ceremony in front of the hall of the UN Security Council at the United Nations in New York on 31st December, 2016 signifying the assumption by the country of its duties as a non-permanent member of the body for 2017-2018.

India and Kazakhstan Sign Protocol to Amend the DTAC

Shri Sushil Chandra, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and Mr. Bulat Sarsenbayev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to India, signed a Protocol to amend the existing Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) between the two countries on 6th January, 2017. The DTAC aimed at avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income had been signed on 9th December, 1996.



The salient features of the amending Protocol: (i) it provides internationally accepted standards for effective exchange of information on tax matters; (ii) it inserts a 'Limitation of Benefits Article' to provide a main purpose test to prevent misuse of the DTAC and allow application of domestic law and measures against tax avoidance or evasion; (iii) it inserts specific provisions to facilitate relieving of economic double taxation in transfer pricing cases, which is a taxpayer friendly measure and in line with India's commitment under 'Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action Plan' to meet the minimum standard of providing Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP) access in transfer pricing cases; (iv) it inserts service PE provisions with a threshold and provides that the profits to be attributed to PE will be determined on the basis of apportionment of total profits of the enterprise; and (v) it replaces existing Article on 'Assistance in Collection of Taxes' with a new Article to align it with international standards.

Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Kazakhstan

The Embassy celebrated the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) at the Indian Cultural Centre, Astana on 9th January, 2017. Ambassador Shri Harsh Jain welcomed the guests and spoke on the significance of the PBD and key policy announcements made by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his inaugural address at the 14th PBD Convention in Bengaluru on 8th January, 2017. It was followed by screening of a thematic film on PBD and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's inaugural address. Shri R. Gururaj, First Secretary made a presentation on various government programmes including those aimed at the welfare of diaspora and participation of Overseas Indians in India's growth and development and road-map for engagement with the diaspora. Some Overseas Indians also spoke on the occasion.



In Almaty, the PBD was celebrated at the new premises of the Representative Office of India on 9th January, 2017. Shri Martin Cyriac Clemense J. B., Second Secretary welcomed the guests and spoke on the policy announcements made by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his inaugural address at the 14th PBD Convention in Bengaluru on 8th January. Several Overseas Indians spoke on the occasion expressing gratitude to the Government of India for the several welfare schemes for overseas Indians initiated by the Government in last couple of years.

Akkerbez National Dance Ensemble from Kazakhstan Visits India

A 10-member "Akkerbez National Dance Ensemble" from Zhambyl Region of Kazakhstan visited India from January 6-15, 2017 at the invitation of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to participate in various cultural festivals spread across four cities in India. The Group participated in the following events: Island Tourism Festival in Port Blair on 8th January, which is a ten-day long festival of dance, drama and music organized by the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration; Rhythms & Melody, an Evening of Dances & Music of Kazakhstan organized by ICCR in collaboration with Government of Assam in Guwahati on 10th January; a cultural evening "Dance and Music of Kazakhstan" organized by ICCR in collaboration with Government of Meghalaya in Shillong on 12th January; and the 7th edition of 4-day International Dance and Music Festival organized by ICCR in New Delhi on 14th January, 2017.



The cultural group enthralled the audience by performing various dance forms including Bile-Bile, Gakku, Shattyk, Akku, Zhailauda, Mereke, Saryozen and Kara Zhorga.

Kazakhstani Professionals Attend ITEC Programme in India

Dr. Khabiyev Alibek, Associate Professor at Kazakh National Research Technical University, Almaty, was selected for the course "International Training Programme on Solar Energy Technologies and Applications" conducted by National Institute of Solar Energy, Gurgaon from 30.01.2017 to 17.02.2017 under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Ms. Makpal Kanagatova, Teacher at Pavlodar Technical College, was selected for the "Certificate Course in Spoken English and Web Development" conducted by NIIT Ltd., Gurgaon from 26.12.2016 to 24.02.2017.



VAJRA Faculty Scheme Announced

In his address at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held in Bengaluru on 8th January, 2017, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty Scheme to promote a globally competitive environment for catalyzing cutting edge

research for accelerated development of scientific and technological progress and overall economic prosperity of the nation. The VAJRA Faculty Scheme has been conceptualized by the Science and Engineering Research Board, a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology, to bring an international dimension to the R&D ecosystem of India by leveraging expertise of overseas scientists to the Indian research framework.

The Scheme recognizes the value of collaborative research as a crucial element for sharing information among researchers for updating and acquiring knowledge and skills, and also to draw different perspectives to solve a shared problem. The Scheme offers adjunct/visiting faculty position to undertake high quality research in Public-funded Indian Institutions/Universities. The scheme is open to overseas scientist/faculty/R&D professional including Non-Resident Indians (NRI) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) working as an active researcher with overseas academic/research/industrial organizations with proven track record of research and development. More details of the Scheme are available at: <http://www.vajra-india.in/>.



Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 8th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, 2017 in Gandhi Nagar on 10th January, 2017 on the theme "Sustainable Economic and Social Development". The Summit is held biennially since 2003 to rekindle the pace of investments in the State of Gujarat. In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that India's strength lies in three Ds: Democracy, Demography (vibrant youth) and Demand (huge domestic market offered by rising middle class).



He pointed out the substantial improvement achieved by India in key macro-economic indicators such as GDP growth, inflation, fiscal deficit, current account deficit and foreign investments in the recent years. He reiterated that India has become the fastest growing major economy in the world. He highlighted the projections made by World Bank, IMF and other institutions for further better growth in the coming years. He cited introduction of Goods and Services Tax, new arbitration framework, new IPR regime, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and setting up of National Company Law Tribunal as a few examples of the government's commitment to continue the economic reforms. He informed that India is taking a leap towards next generation infrastructure such as freight corridors, industrial corridors, high speed and metro rail projects, logistics parks, smart cities, coastal zones, regional airports, water, sanitation and energy initiatives. He stated that these initiatives offer unprecedented opportunities for the investors.

25,578 agreements (investment intentions) were signed in various sectors during the Summit held from January 10-13, 2017. An exhibition was held showcasing the latest trends and technology, products and services across sectors. Networking forums were organized to foster interaction between stakeholders through B2B and B2G meetings.

Over 5,000 people from 100 countries including corporate leaders, senior policy makers, heads of international institutions and academia attended the Summit. Among the prominent participants in the Summit were President of Kenya Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta; President of Rwanda Mr. Paul Kagame; Prime Minister of Portugal Mr. Antonio Costa; Prime Minister of Serbia Mr. Aleksandar Vucic; Deputy Prime Minister of Poland Mr. Piotr Glinski; Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Mr. Dmitry Rogozin; Minister for Energy, Utilities and Climate of Denmark Mr. Lars Christian Lilleholt; Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel Mr. Uri Ariel; Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Mr. Hiroshige Seko; Minister for Upper Secondary School and Adult Education and Training of Sweden Ms. Anna Ekström; and Minister of State of United Arab Emirates Dr. Rashid Ahmad bin Fahad.

IISC Scientists Develop Low-Cost Paper Sensor for Diagnosing Diseases

A paper biosensor, which has a fabrication cost of less than Rs.1 (US\$ 0.015) has been developed by a team of scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru to rapidly detect the presence of lipase, an enzyme routinely examined for the diagnosis of several cardiac and liver related diseases.

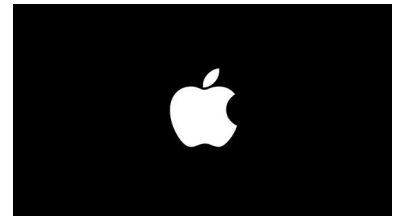


The biosensors, which play an important role in the diagnosis of different diseases, are used to detect biological elements like tissues, microorganisms and enzymes by measuring the interaction of a chemical substance with the biological element. The interaction is quantified by converting it into an electrical or a light signal. The paper biosensor comprises a paper disc, embedded within which is a gel, made with terbium, a rare earth metal, and doped with a synthetic enzyme substrate. As the disc comes in contact with lipase, it turns green when illuminated under UV light. The change in intensity of the colour indicates the amount of the enzyme present in the sample.

India to be the World's Third Assembler of iPhones

Apple has decided to set up an assembly plant of iPhones in Bengaluru's industrial hub of Peenya. With this decision by the American multinational technology company, India has become the third country in the world to do the final assembly of iPhones.

India is one of the world's biggest smart phone markets and one of iPhone's fastest growing markets. Data from Hong Kong-based Counterpoint Technology Market Research showed that Apple sold 2.5 million iPhones in India from October, 2015 to September, 2016, a rise of more than 50% over the year-ago period. Though Apple has only a 2% share of Indian market, its sale amounted to Rs. 9,997 crore (US\$ 1.49 billion) in 2016, up 56% from Rs 6,472 crore (US\$ 966 million) in the year before. Analysts believe that with a local assembly unit, Apple can avoid import tariffs and cut the iPhone price by around 15%.



Incredible India Destination: Meghalaya

The word "Meghalaya" literally means the Abode of Clouds in Sanskrit. The forests of the North Eastern State of Meghalaya are notable for their biodiversity of flora and fauna. Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is located in Khasi hills at an altitude of 1496 metres above sea level. The city has its own charm with natural scenic beauty enhanced by waterfalls, brooks, pine grooves and gardens. The place, people, flora and fauna and the climate make Shillong an ideal resort throughout the year.

Ward's Lake, Botanical Garden, Botanical Museum, Skywalk, Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures, State Museum and Entomological Museum are major tourist attractions in Shillong.

The Ward's Lake is one of the most popular tourist spots. Adjacent to the Ward's Lake are the Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum. The skywalk provides the visitors 360 degree view of the city. Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures houses a world class seven-storied museum showcasing the rich cultural heritage of north eastern states of India. The State Museum exhibits the anthropological and cultural life of the people of Meghalaya. The Entomological Museum is devoted to moths and butterflies.

Umiam Lake, located at a distance of 15 km from Shillong, is the biggest artificial lake in Meghalaya and very popular for fishing and water sports. Mairang (47 km from Shillong) was the headquarters of U Triot Sing Syiem (King of Nongkhlaw) who raised battle cry against the British rule in 1829. Close to Mairang town lies Kyllang Rock, a massive rock of granite that rises 5,400 ft above sea level. Ranikor (56 km), is a fishing spot where golden mahseers are available.

Cherrapunjee, renamed as Sohra (60 km), is the heaviest rainfall area in the world and dotted with a number of waterfalls. Jakrem Hot Spring (64 km) is believed to possess therapeutic qualities. Nongkhnum Island (100 km), the second largest river island in Asia, is formed by the bifurcation of Kyunshi river into Phanliang and Namliang rivers.

Collection of megalithic stones in Nartiang, Monument of Kiang Nongbah in Jowai town, Syndai cave, Siju Caves, Nokrek National Park, Balpakram National Park, Lady Hydari Park, Thadlaskein Lake, Jadukata water sports, Elephant Falls, Crinoline Falls and Bishop and Beadon Falls are some of the other tourist attractions in Meghalaya.



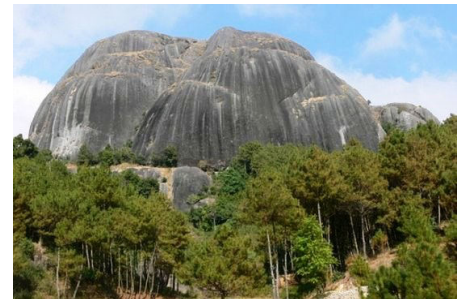
Double Decker Root Bridge



Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures



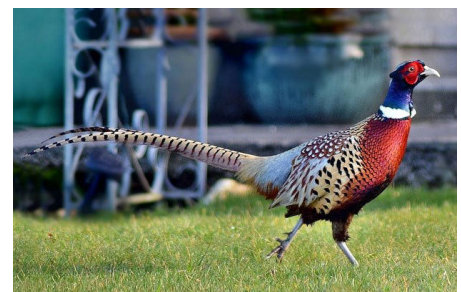
Umiam Lake



Kyllang Rock



Nongkhnum Island



Nokrek National Park

PHOTO FEATURE

Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Kazakhstan

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Akkerbez National Dance Ensemble from Kazakhstan visits India

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