



# Embassy of India Astana

## NEWSLETTER

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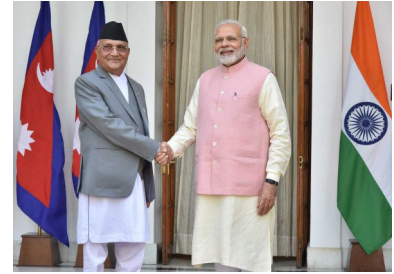
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## Prime Minister of Nepal Visits India

Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon'ble Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli paid a state visit to India from April 6-8, 2018. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received him in New Delhi on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. They comprehensively reviewed the entire spectrum of multifaceted ties between the two countries and resolved to work together to take bilateral relations to newer heights on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit.

The leaders inaugurated the Integrated Check Post at Birgunj in Nepal and witnessed the ground breaking ceremony of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj cross-border petroleum products pipeline at Motihari, India through video link.



At the joint press conference, Prime Minister Modi said that the visit of Prime Minister Oli was taking place at the backdrop of the recently concluded historic democratic process in Nepal. He congratulated the people and the government of Nepal for expressing their confidence in democracy and the federal system. He said that the landmark decision to develop inland waterways with India's assistance would lead to Nepal getting direct connectivity to the sea.

Prime Minister Oli called on President Shri Ram Nath Kovind on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. President Kovind expressed happiness that Prime Minister Oli visits India on his first visit abroad after his appointment as the Prime Minister of Nepal. He said that no other countries in the world have the bonds of friendship and cooperation that exist between India and Nepal. He noted that the two countries are bound together not only by a shared geography but also by history, culture, civilisation and close people to people and familial ties.

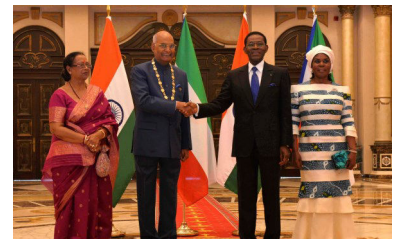
Prime Minister Oli attended India-Nepal Business Forum in New Delhi on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. He addressed the students at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. He suggested development of cooperation between the University and the Universities of Nepal to strengthen agricultural research. The University conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Science on him.

Three separate joint statements on the following key areas of mutual interest were issued during the visit: India-Nepal: New Partnership in Agriculture; Expanding Rail Linkages: Connecting Raxaul in India to Kathmandu in Nepal; and New Connectivity between India and Nepal through Inland Waterways.

## President Kovind Visits Equatorial Guinea

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a State Visit to Equatorial Guinea from April 7-9, 2018. He met President of Equatorial Guinea Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The leaders acknowledged the longstanding excellent bilateral relations and reaffirmed their mutual desire to strengthen economic, commercial, technical, educational, agricultural, scientific and cultural cooperation between the two countries. President Kovind said that Equatorial Guinea has seen rapid growth and progress under the leadership of President Obiang and congratulated him on the country achieving the highest per capita GDP in the African continent.



President Kovind conveyed the decision of the government of India to open the Embassy in Equatorial Guinea. He announced setting up of an Entrepreneurship Development and Vocational Training Centre and an English Language Training Laboratory in Equatorial Guinea. He said that India would be happy to assist in developing project proposals in various sectors of Equatorial Guinea's economy to avail of the concessional line of credit of US\$ 10 billion extended by India for African countries. President Obiang appreciated the support being extended by the Government of India in capacity building.

President Obiang hosted a luncheon banquet in honour of President Kovind. He conferred on President Kovind the Condecoracion, the highest honour accorded to a non-citizen by the government of Equatorial Guinea. President Kovind addressed members of the Parliament on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. He said that as Equatorial Guinea seeks to diversify its economy from oil and gas sector, it will find in India a credible partner. As sea-faring societies, the two countries are equally conscious of the safety and security of the oceans and of the continued need for a transparent and rules-based order of maritime governance. He reaffirmed that India would be glad to enhance cooperation with Equatorial Guinea, and offer its technical and other capacities in defence, and disaster planning and preparedness.

President Kovind addressed the Indian community at a reception hosted by Ambassador of India to Equatorial Guinea. He urged the community to help enhance business and cultural links between the two countries. Three Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in the fields of AYUSH and traditional medicine; medicinal plants; and an action plan for Information and Communication Technology.

## President Kovind Visits Swaziland

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a State Visit to Swaziland on April 9-10, 2018. He met His Majesty King Mswati-III on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

President Kovind conveyed the decision of the Government of India to open a resident Indian diplomatic Mission in Swaziland. King Mswati III responded that Swaziland would reciprocate by opening a diplomatic mission in New Delhi in the near future. President Kovind and King Mswati III jointly inaugurated the Information Technology Centre located in the Royal Science & Technology Park (RSTP), which was built with the assistance of Government of India. The Centre hosts the National Data Centre and would provide high-quality training and education in IT.



President Kovind announced that India would provide a new credit line of US\$ 10.4 million to help establish a "Disaster Recovery Site" for the National Data Centre. King Mswati III expressed gratitude for the Indian donation of medicines and medical equipment worth US\$ 3 million. He expressed warm appreciation for the ongoing Indian-assistance project for improving productivity of maize. President Kovind announced that the Government of India would assist Swaziland in establishing a "Centre for Agricultural Excellence" to serve as a one-stop-shop for dissemination of agricultural technologies to farmers. He also announced Indian grant assistance of US\$ 400,000 for construction of irrigation infrastructure in Lubuyane.

The leaders agreed that expansion of renewable energy could help in containing the effects of climate change. President Kovind conveyed the Government of India's decision to set up 20 solar charging stations in Swaziland. He announced a donation of US\$ 1 million and food grains to support the Swaziland National Disaster Management Agency in the wake of El-Nino induced drought in the country. He announced that India would double the scholarships for Swaziland under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme from this year.

King Mswati III hosted a State Banquet in honour of President Kovind on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. He conferred the highest honour of Swaziland, the Order of the Lion, on President Kovind. President Kovind addressed members of the Parliament of Swaziland on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. He announced that India would support construction of a new Parliament building in Swaziland through technical and financial assistance.

Two Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on cooperation in health sector and exemption of visa for holders of diplomatic and official passports.

## President Kovind Visits Zambia

President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a State Visit to Zambia from April 10-12, 2018. He met President of Zambia Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2018. The leaders acknowledged the longstanding excellent relations between India and Zambia and reaffirmed the mutual desire to further strengthen economic, commercial, technical, educational and cultural cooperation between the two countries.



President Lungu warmly recalled contribution of India towards capacity building of Zambian Defence Forces and sought further assistance for training of defence personnel. President Kovind announced India's support to construct the Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre in Lusaka. He also announced provision of medicines and medical equipment worth US\$ 3 million and renovation of Mahatma Gandhi Primary School at a cost of US\$ 100,000 in Zambia. He conveyed India's readiness to offer assistance to Zambia in the area of biomass gasifier source of energy.

President Lungu hosted a banquet in honour of President Kovind. In his address, President Kovind said that India and Zambia have a shared commitment to democratic governance, rule of law, human rights and inclusive development. He stated that Indian companies are encouraged by the economic policies of the government of Zambia and are keen to create new ventures in partnership with Zambia. He called on Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, the founding President of Zambia. He addressed the India-Zambia Business Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

The leaders participated in the ground breaking ceremony of the 93-km Lusaka City Roads Decongestion Project on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, which will be implemented with the support of India. President Kovind travelled to Livingstone and addressed the Indian community. He stated that the dialogue with the diaspora is aimed at providing possibilities and platforms through which it can learn about and participate in India's transformation.

Four Agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit on avoidance of double taxation; establishment of entrepreneurship cooperative development centre in Zambia; exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports; and judicial cooperation.

## Vice Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan Participates in IEF16 in New Delhi

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 16th International Energy Forum Ministerial (IEF16) in New Delhi on 11th April, 2018. In his inaugural address, Prime Minister Modi emphasized the need for responsible pricing and transparent and flexible markets to ensure growth for both producers and consumers. He emphasized his Energy Vision which has four pillars viz., Energy Access, Energy Efficiency, Energy Sustainability and Energy Security.

The two-day meeting on the theme "the Future of Global Energy Security: Transition, Technology, Trade and Investment" focused on how global shifts, transition policies and new technologies influence market stability and future investment in the energy sector. One of the important developments on the sidelines of the IEF16 is the signing of an MOU between Indian Consortium of IOC, BPCL and HPCL with Saudi Aramco to jointly build the world's largest refinery at Ratnagiri with a capacity of 60 MMT and an investment of over US\$ 44 billion. 1345 delegates from 53 countries including Energy Ministers, industry leaders and heads of key international organizations attended the IEF16.

Vice Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan Mr. Magzum Mirzagaliyev participated in the IEF16. He also met Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.



## Vice Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry Participates in DefExpo in Chennai

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 10th edition of Defence Expo "DefExpo-2018" at Thiruvaidanthai in Kancheepuram District on the East Coast Road near Chennai on 12th April, 2018. The biennial exhibition on Land, Naval and Internal Homeland Security Systems, was held from April 11-14, 2018 with the theme "India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub" showcasing India's capability in export of defence systems and components. It provided an opportunity to professionals and industry to find a new meeting ground for developing military industrial enterprises.



In his address, Prime Minister Modi said that two Defence Industrial Corridors would be established in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, which would become the engines of economic development and growth of defence industrial base in the country. He informed that a Defence Investors Cell has been established to assist and handhold the investors involved in defence production. He stated that the 'Innovation for Defence Excellence' scheme launched that day would set up Defence Innovation Hubs throughout the country to provide necessary incubation and infrastructure support to the start-ups in defence area.

More than 670 exhibitors including over 150 international exhibitors took part in the event. Mr. Timur Shaimergenov, Vice Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan attended the DefExpo.

## Applications Invited for Know India Programme

Applications are invited from Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) in the age group of 18-30 years to participate in 47th to 52nd editions of "Know India Programme" (KIP) organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India during the year 2018-19.

The KIP is a 3-week orientation programme for diaspora youth to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication & information technology, and culture. The KIP provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences and develop closer bonds with contemporary India. Minimum educational qualification required for participating in the KIP is graduation from a recognized University or enrolled for graduation. Non-resident Indians (NRI) are not eligible for KIPs. Participants of 49<sup>th</sup> to 52<sup>nd</sup> editions of KIP will also have the opportunity to participate in PBD Convention, Kumbh Snan (The Holy Ganges Bath) and Republic Day parade.

The expenditure on local hospitality and 90% of the cost of air tickets would be met by the Government of India. Gratis visas will be issued to the selected candidates. For further details and submitting applications, please visit: <http://kip.gov.in/>

### Know India Programme Schedule 2018-19

Edition	Date	Partner States
47 KIP	25 Sep - 19 Oct 2018	Tamil Nadu
48 KIP	25 Oct - 18 Nov 2018	Manipur & Mizoram
49 KIP	05 Jan - 29 Jan 2019	Karnataka
50 KIP	05 Jan - 29 Jan 2019	Gujarat
51 KIP	16 Jan - 09 Feb 2019	Bihar & Jharkhand
52 KIP	16 Jan - 09 Feb 2019	Daman & Diu and Maharashtra

## Ambassador Visits Shymkent

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar visited Shymkent on April 6-7, 2018. He met Mayor of South Kazakhstan Region Mr. Zhansait Tuimebayev in Shymkent on 6th April, 2018. They discussed strengthening of cooperation between India and South Kazakhstan Region in trade, economy, education, culture, tourism, etc. Mayor Tuimebayev said that South Kazakhstan Region is in the forefront of developing agrarian industries and expressed confidence that cooperation in this field would be established with various states of India. Ambassador recalled participation of an Indian delegation in the 4th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Joint Working Group on Textiles in Shymkent in April, 2017 and its visit to various industries in the city and expressed confidence in strengthening of cooperation in this field. Ambassador also planted a sapling in the city.



Ambassador visited the Regional Investment Centre "ONTUSTYK" in Shymkent. He met Mr. S. Mazhitov, Advisor to the Akim of South Kazakhstan Region; Mr. K. Baytor, Chairman of the Board of the Regional Investment Centre; and Mr. D. Aryngazin, Director of Micro Finance Organization, Yrys. They discussed the investment opportunities available in South Kazakhstan Region and the potential for forging mutually beneficial cooperation between the enterprises of India and the South Kazakhstan Region. Ambassador also visited South Kazakhstan Medical University and interacted with Indian students.

## Ambassador Visits Atyrau

Ambassador Shri Prabhat Kumar paid an official visit to Atyrau on April 12-13, 2018. He met Mayor of Atyrau Region Mr. Nurlan Nogayev on 12th April, 2018. They discussed strengthening of bilateral ties between India and Kazakhstan, particularly Atyrau Region in various fields. The Mayor spoke about the favorable investment climate of the Region and readiness of the administration to create conducive environment for Indian enterprises to develop joint ventures with the companies in the Region.



Ambassador visited the Regional Chamber of Entrepreneurs "Atameken" in Atyrau on 13th April, 2018. He met Director of the Regional Chamber Mr. Abdolla Idrissov. They discussed the trade and economic relations between India and Atyrau region and the investment potential of the region.

## Kazakhstan Introduces 72-hour Visa-free Regime for Transiting Indian Nationals

Kazakhstan has introduced a 72-hour visa-free regime for Indian nationals transiting through the international airports of Astana and Almaty. The decree issued by the Government of Kazakhstan on 6th April, 2018 states that the facility would be available up to 2359 hrs on 31st December, 2018. The 72-hour visa free regime will enable Indian nationals travelling from India to a third country or from a third country to India through Astana or Almaty to explore Kazakhstan without having to obtain visa. It is hoped that this initiative will strengthen people-to-people exchanges between India and Kazakhstan.



## Kazakhstani Professionals Participate in ITEC Programmes in India

Mr. Bauyrzhan Aimukhanbet, Technical Control Engineer, Kaz Electro Privod, Almaty was selected for the course "International Training Programme on Laboratory Quality Management Systems" conducted by the National Institute of Training for Standardisation (NIS), Noida from February 5-23, 2018; and Mr. Zhandos Bupetayev, Senior Consultant-Public Auditor, Accounts Committee for Control Over Execution of Republican Budget of Kazakhstan, Astana was selected for the course "Environment Audit" conducted by the International Centre for Information Systems & Audit, Noida from 12th February to 9th March, 2018 under ITEC programme sponsored by the Government of India.

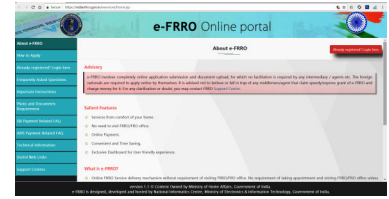
Ms. Moldir Kulshigashova, Lead Inspector and Ms. Assel Orynbayeva, Lead Specialist, Kazakh National Agrarian University, Almaty were selected for the course "Financing of Inclusive Agriculture and Rural Development" conducted by the Bankers Institute of Rural Development, Lucknow from 12th February to 2nd March, 2018 under ITEC programme.



## e-FRRO Scheme Launched

As part of a constant endeavour to provide fast and efficient services to foreigners visiting India, the Government of India launched a web-based application 'e-FRRO' (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

The e-FRRO application will enable foreigners to apply online on the portal (<https://indianfrro.gov.in/eservices/userlogin.jsp?disclaimer=1>) and obtain as many as 27 visa and immigration related services in India through email/post without appearing in person at the Foreigners Registration Office/Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRO/FRRO). The services that can be availed by this application include registration with FRO/FRRO, extension of visa, conversion of visa, change of address, change of educational institutions and exit permits.



The e-FRRO scheme aimed at building a centralized, transparent online platform to provide faceless, cashless and paperless services is a quantum jump in improving the ease of service delivery with respect to foreigners visiting and staying in India.

## New Delhi Airport Becomes One of Top 20 Busiest Airports in the World

New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport has jumped six notches to break into the group of top 20 busiest airports in the world in 2017 in terms of traffic volumes.

Airports Council International (ACI)'s report dated 9th April, 2018 states that the GMR Group-run New Delhi airport grew by 14.1 per cent year-over-year at 63.45 million, pushing it up from 22nd to 16th busiest airport in the world solidifying its status as one of the fastest growing airports in the world for passenger traffic. Besides, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai were also ranked among the fastest growing airports in the world with an year-over-year growth of 26.9 per cent, 19.6 per cent, 12.9 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively during 2017.



The report notes that the move towards a more liberalised aviation market coupled with stronger economic fundamentals has helped the country become one of the fastest growing markets in the world. ACI's World Airport Traffic Forecasts predicts that India will represent the third largest aviation market in terms of passenger throughput by 2020.

## India has recovered from Temporary Impact of Demonetisation, GST: World Bank

The World Bank said that Indian economy has recovered from the temporary impact of Demonetisation, and Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Bank has projected the economic growth rate of India at 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019.



In its bi-annual South Asia Economic Focus report released on 15th April, 2018, the World Bank said that Indian recovery would lift South Asia as a region and make it the world's fastest growing region again. The report says that India's strong economic growth will drive South Asia's growth to 6.9% in 2018 and 7.1% in 2019. It notes says that growth of India's economy declined to 6.7% in 2017 due to temporary disruptive development of demonetisation and transition to GST, both of which are positive in the long run.

## PSLV-C41 Successfully Launches IRNSS-1I Navigation Satellite

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C41, successfully launched the 1,425 kg IRNSS-1I Navigation Satellite from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

IRNSS-1I is the latest member of the "Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)" system. NavIC, also known as Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), is an independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1,500 km around the Indian mainland. A number of ground facilities responsible for IRNSS satellite ranging and monitoring, generation and transmission of navigation parameters, satellite control, network timing, etc., have been established in many locations across the country as part of NavIC.

PSLV has so far launched 52 Indian satellites and 237 customer satellites from abroad successfully.



## Incredible India Destination: Ladakh

Ladakh in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is encircled by two of the world's mightiest mountain ranges: the Great Himalayas and the Karakoram. It is the highest inhabited region in India and its raw beauty is matchless. Below the snow-draped peaks lie cold and arid high altitude deserts, vast glaciers, valleys adorned with lunar like rock, formidable mountain passes, rushing rivers and shimmering lakes, and monasteries and small villages clinging to the steep hills. The sun shines for over 300 days in Ladakh and the region offers amazing opportunity for trekkers, mountaineers, adventure lovers, nature lovers and cultural observers.

Leh, Shanti Stupa, Pangong Tso, Tso Kar, Tso Moriri, Nubra valley, Zaskar valley, Thiksey Monastery and Lamayuru are some of the major tourist attractions in Ladakh.

Leh, the largest town in Ladakh situated on the banks of the Indus river at a height of 3521 metres, was an important halt on the ancient trade route with Central Asia. Leh is home to many amazing ancient monuments and lamas draped in colourful robes. Shanti Stupa is situated at a height of 4267 meters overlooking Leh city. It gives a panoramic view of surrounding snow-capped mountains. The location of Shanti Stupa is such that it is visible from all over Leh city.

Pangong Tso lake is located at an altitude of 4267 metres. The India-China border bisects this salty turquoise blue lake. The lake acts as an important breeding ground for a variety of birds including a number of migratory birds. Tso Kar and Tso Moriri lakes are located on the cold, high altitude arid desert plateau of Rupshu and their deep blue waters sparkle and stand out like diamonds and sapphires.

Nubra valley is situated to the north of Leh. The main attraction of this area is the Bactrian camels (shaggy double hump camel). One can go on camel safari at this highest desert. Zaskar valley is famous for its beautiful high mountains and landscape. Zaskar is a hotspot for trekking, paragliding and water rafting.

Thiksey Monastery is popular for its architecture and location. The 12-storey monastery has 10 temples, an assembly hall, and is home to 120 monks and nunnery. Lamayuru, on the Leh-Srinagar highway, is known for its monastery and lunar landscape. The landscape is incredible with its spectacularly odd geological formations and undulating series of mountains that resemble the surface of the Moon.

Hemis Gompa, Likir monastery, Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, Chang La, Khardung La, Alchi village and Tangstey village are some of the other tourist attractions in Ladakh.



*Leh*



*Pangong Tso Lake*



*Sand Dunes of Nubra Valley*



*Zaskar Valley*



*Thiksey Monastery*



*Confluence of Zaskar river and Indus river in Ladakh*

## PHOTO FEATURE

### *Ambassador Visits Shymkent*



### *Ambassador Visits Atyrau*



### *Vice Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry Participates in DefExpo in Chennai*



6/1, Kabanbay Batyr Avenue,  
5th floor,  
Kaskad Business Centre,  
Astana.

Tel. Phone: + 7 7172-925700/925701  
Fax: + 7 7172-925716  
E-mail: [info.astana@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.astana@mea.gov.in)

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