

## **Речь Mr. Harsh Kumar Jain, Посол Индии в республике Казахстан, 11 сентября 2015**

Mr. Harsh Kumar Jain, Ambassador of India in Kazakhstan. Speech at “Goa Tourism Roadshow”

September 11, 2015 at 1730hrs at Hotel Kazakhstan, Almaty

Present: Mr. Flor Gracias, Dy Director, Goa Tourism and Mr. Naveen Kapur, SS (Cons), ROI, Almaty.

Dear distinguished guests and friends,

It gives me an immense pleasure to welcome you all to the ‘Goa Tourism Roadshow’ today evening. We organized “Know India Seminars” in Kazakhstan about two weeks ago. And today we are here with you with a special focus on the Goa Tourism.

Both these events demonstrate India’s keen interest in developing tourism between the two countries.

The high importance of the tourism was highlighted by our leaders during the visit of Hon’ble Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi to Kazakhstan two months ago. President Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Modi placed special emphasis on ways and means to strengthen cooperation in this important sector.

Following the visit, Mr. Rapol Zhoshybayev, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan visited India. One of the objectives of his visit was to promote tourism from India to Kazakhstan. He met the First Deputy Minister of the Indian Ministry of Tourism Mr. Narendra Kumar Sinha and discussed cooperation in the field of tourism, simplification of visa regime, organization of Days of Indian Culture in Kazakhstan in 2017 and possibility of opening direct flights between the two capitals. A memorandum on tourism cooperation between the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and Astana EXPO 2017 was also signed. We welcome these initiatives and are ready to support it in all possible ways.

Development of tourism can make significant contribution to the Kazakhstan’s economy. In fact, the tourism & hospitality industry is one of the largest service sector segments of the Indian economy. The Government of India is paying special attention to this sector. It has allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in tourism through automatic route. It is putting special focus on capacity building in the hospitality industry and creating new integrated tourist circuits. The government has introduced e-Tourist Visa Facility for citizens of over 100 countries, which allows them to obtain visa authorization from the comfort of their home in the same way as they book a hotel accommodation or an air ticket.

India is not new to the people of Kazakhstan. Indian TV serials, Cinema, Bollywood music and dance, and Yoga have made India a familiar name and country.

India is one of the most ancient civilizations of the world, rich in diversity and full of charm. It is dotted with attractive historical sites of which 32 are world heritage sites. It has over 100 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

The majestic Himalayas, the sparkling oceans, the undulating deserts, the dancing rivers, the enticing lagoons and the magical backwaters, greatly appeal to the lovers of the nature.

India offers adventure tourism to those who prefer a more challenging holiday like water rafting, paragliding, trekking & mountain climbing.

India's wildlife sanctuaries and botanical gardens attract those who have special love for flora and fauna. The majestic Bengal tiger is a special attraction for the foreign tourists.

People seeking spiritual solace can visit pilgrimage sites, ashrams, meditation centers, temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras & other places of worship, new & ancient, that are spread all over India.

For those who prefer beach & sunshine, water sports, scuba diving and snorkeling, India offers serene islands as well as provide beaches along the beautiful coastline of the Indian mainland.

India has numerous historical sites, forts & palaces. Many of these monuments have become icons of Indian tourism. Taj Mahal is well-known the world over. Many of the forts and palaces have been converted into heritage hotels combining the best of the hospitality with the medieval charm. India offers rich diversity of culinary offerings, art, culture, folklore, music, dance, tradition, costumes, handicrafts, fairs and festivals. Each of the 29 States in the country has its own unique culture and charm.

India is also becoming a popular destination for the business travel market and one of the preferred destinations for medical tourists seeking timely healthcare interventions at par with the best in the world, Ayurvedic treatments, natural therapies as well as learning Yoga and meditation techniques.

Among all this variety and diversity of most attractive tourist destinations and products in India, Goa has made a special place. Goa has become a major international tourist spot attracting millions of domestic and foreign tourists every year. It is because it offers a mix of many things. It is because of its special charm. It is because of its quiet, clean and pristine warm water beaches. It is because it is a land of amazing contrasts, busy markets, carnivals and festivals and some of India's oldest temples and churches.

I am happy to note that tourist inflows from Kazakhstan to India have been steadily increasing over the last few years. The Embassy's consular offices in Astana and Almaty issue around 15,000 visas annually. More than half of these tourists travel to Goa, which also accounts for over 30 chartered flights every year.

On our part, I would like to assure you that both the Embassy of India in Astana and Rep office of the Embassy in Almaty are ready to fully support you in promotion of tourism from Kazakhstan to India. We are frequently holding Indian cultural events and promoting tourist destinations through our newsletter and social media presence. One of the first things, which I did after I arrived in Kazakhstan, was to extend visa services in Almaty to all five days a week as compared to three days a week earlier. I also instructed the Consular offices to make all efforts to issue tourist visas the same day and improve the experience of people visiting the Embassy for visa purposes.

With these remarks, I thank you all for joining us today evening. I specially thank Goa Tourism Development Corporation for taking this very timely initiative of organizing the Goa Tourism Roadshow.