

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas**

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Statement of the Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan at the 12th India-Kazakhstan, Inter Governmental Commission meeting

His Excellency, Mr. Vladimir Shkolnik, Minister of Energy of Republic of Kazakhstan,

Representatives of the Media,

We have just concluded the 12th Meeting of the India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical Industrial and Cultural Cooperation, which I co-chaired with Minister Shkolnik. We have had extremely friendly, substantive and productive discussions covering all aspects of bilateral relations between India and Kazakhstan.

We reviewed developments since the last meeting of IGC in Astana in April 2014 and also discussed various ideas and proposals to further strengthen our bilateral relationship.

Cooperation in the energy sector was a major focus of our deliberations. As you are aware, ONGC Videsh is working in collaboration with the state energy company of Kazakhstan KazMunaiGaz on the Satpayev block. There has been satisfactory progress on this project. We expect exploratory drilling to commence early next month. Both sides are keen to expand our cooperation in the area of hydrocarbons. Various proposals are currently under discussions between the two sides. We also agreed to conduct a feasibility study on transportation of crude oil and gas from Kazakhstan to India via pipeline or as LNG.

We also reviewed developments in trade and investment. It was decided that we would work together within the framework of the Joint Study group to consider the feasibility of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union, of which Kazakhstan is a member.

We also discussed a range of mutual investment proposals. The Kazakh Minister for Investment and Development has just concluded his visit to India during which he interacted with various Ministers as well as public and private sector companies.

We had very useful discussions on transport and logistics linkages. India and Kazakhstan have decided to establish a Joint Working Group on connectivity which would look at all aspects of this issue. With the opening of the rail link between Iran-Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, we will explore the possibility of this route being developed as a linked corridor to the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Cooperation initiatives in various other sectors such as including Health, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture, Tourism, Civil Aviation, Mining, Textiles as well as Sports were also discussed.

Overall, the IGC meeting was extremely useful in deepening and strengthening our ties with Kazakhstan in the run up to the scheduled visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Kazakhstan.

I would like to once again thank Minister Shkolnik for his constructive and positive contribution and look forward to continuing my dialogue with him in the days ahead. I would now request Minister Shkolnik to say a few words.

MJPS/Rk