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Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, led a delegation to Astana, Kazakhstan from 19-20 September 2017 to co-chair the 13th meeting of the India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC). Mr. Kanat Bozumbayev, Minister of Energy of Republic of Kazakhstan co-chaired the meeting from Kazakh side.

During the meetings both Ministers discussed entire gamut of India-Kazakhstan bilateral relations covering all areas of contemporary relevance and issues of mutual concern and ideas for stepping up the cooperation in energy sector, trade, economic, investment, transport & connectivity, agriculture, information technology, space, healthcare and cultural spheres between the two countries with his counterpart.

The delegations discussed the possibilities of expanding cooperation in E&P of hydrocarbons and investments infrastructure projects in oil & gas sector. In the nuclear energy sector both sides agreed to work on application of nuclear science in the areas of health and agriculture. They explored possibility of expanding the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) by linking it to the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran rail link. INSTC has already become operational by agreeing to conduct a dry run feasibility study on the Railway Link. The sides also agreed to develop and deepen bilateral relations in the field of agriculture, mining and civil aviation sector.

Kazakhstan is strategically located between Europe and Asia and offers enormous business opportunities for investments. The country is rich in mineral resources, such as uranium, oil and natural gas. Both leaders agreed to collaborate in the oil and gas sector for mutual benefit and further strengthen the engagement by addressing issues of concerns to Indian investors, particularly in Kazakh hydrocarbon sector.

Mr Bozumbayev, Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan expressed his keenness to work with India towards deepening the bilateral relations. He invited Indian investments in various sectors particularly in the hydrocarbon sector, infrastructure, peaceful use of nuclear energy, co-production of films, cooperation in food processing and Information Technology. Both sides exchanged lists containing priority export items.

Sh Pradhan also called on first Deputy Prime Minister Askar Mamin and discussed issues of bilateral economic interest and connectivity.

India and Kazakhstan enjoy historical and close relations which have withstood the test of time. Today, Kazakhstan is the largest partner of India in the region. There are also great prospects for further development of cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade and commerce, logistics and connectivity, oil and gas, people to people contact activities such as culture and tourism, etc. Kazakhstan was one of the first countries with which India launched civil nuclear cooperation through a uranium purchase contract.

The India-Kazakhstan Inter-governmental Commission established in 1993 is the apex bilateral institutional mechanism for developing trade, economic, scientific, technical, industrial and cultural cooperation between the two countries. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas on the Indian side and Minister of Energy on the Kazakh side are the Co-Chairs of the Commission. The 13th IGC meeting aims to follow up on the agenda set between India and Kazakhstan during the two visits of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Kazakhstan in July 2015 and June 2017.

At the end of the 13th IGC meeting both sides expressed satisfaction on the outcomes of the meeting and expressed confidence that it will further strengthen the engagement in all areas of mutual interests. Both Ministers directed their Ministries and Departments to work continuously to accomplish the action points arising out of the meeting.

Shri Pradhan was accompanied by a delegation comprising senior officials from Ministries/Departments, including Petroleum and Natural Gas, Mines, Electronics & IT, Tourism, ISRO, Department of Atomic Energy, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and also high level executives from ONGC Videsh and Railway Board.



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