

VICE PRESIDENT RETURNS AFTER SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO SERBIA, MALTA AND ROMANIA

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Vice President's Secretariat

Vice President returns after successful visit to Serbia, Malta and Romania

Posted On: 21 SEP 2018 9:51AM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was on an official Visit to Serbia, Malta and Romania from September 14-20, 2018 and returned today after a successful official visit.

The visit was characterised by extremely cordial discussions with Heads of Governments, PMs and other senior political leaders. The visit helped in deepening bilateral ties with each of these three countries.

Some key outcomes:

1. Support for India's aspiration to be on UNSC and for taking forward UN reforms.
2. Endorsement of India's stand on terror and support for early adoption of United Nation's Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
3. Strong support for resuming EU-India trade agreement after Romania assumes Presidency of EU.
4. Business Forums generated a good deal of enthusiasm among the industrialists and businessmen in every country as they got to listen to the Vice President about India's transformative initiatives. The growth story and the reports from World Bank, IMF quoted by Vice President enhanced awareness.
5. The leaders in all the countries expressed unequivocal admiration for India's economic growth and were eager to engage and partner with India politically, economically and culturally. In Romania, there was a special interest in Space and Aerospace. Malta expressed its desire to join the International Solar Alliance.
6. There was a clear demand for Parliamentary friendship groups and frequent visits by Parliamentarians.
7. The visit gave an opportunity for the members of India Diaspora to listen to the Vice President about the transformative agenda of the government and encouraged them to think of various ways in which they can contribute to the country's development. The vice President underscored the growing importance of India on the world stage and drew attention to four key features that need to be recognised. He called them 4Ds – Democracy, Demographic dividend, Demand and Diaspora.
8. The visit evoked a lot of interest among the top political leadership and there was an air of bonhomie in all the meetings. The banquets hosted by the President of Serbia and Malta as well as by the President of Senate of Romania provided an opportunity for sharing views on bilateral and multilateral issues with rare candour.
9. The address to the Serbian Parliament was very well received and the admiration for India as the largest democracy and a vibrant, well functioning polity was more than evident in the

standing ovation the Vice President received at the end of his address.

10. MOUs entered into related to plant protection, tourism, air services, oil research, diplomatic training and maritime cooperation.

11. In all the three countries, there was considerable interest in Yoga and Ayurveda and in Romania, the Vice President launched two books on Ayurveda and inaugurated an Ayurveda Information Centre.

The Vice President was accompanied by Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, the Minister of State in Ministry of Finance, three Members of Parliament from Rajya Sabha - Shri Prasanna Acharya, Smt Vijila Sathyananth, Ms. Saroj Pandey and one Member of Parliament from Lok Sabha - Shri Raghav Lakhanpal and other officials.

Following is the detailed Press Note:

"The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was on an official Visit to Serbia, Malta and Romania from September 14-20, 2018 and returned today.

On the first leg of his three-nation tour, the Vice President visited Serbia from September 14-16, 2018 at the invitation of the President of Serbia, Mr. Aleksander Vucic.

During the visit, the Vice President had a meeting with President of Serbia, Mr. Aleksander Vucic, who hosted a Banquet in the honour of the Vice President. There were also separate meetings of Vice President with Ms. Maja Gojkovic, Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia and Ms. Ana Brnabic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia hosted a lunch for the Vice President. The Vice President laid a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Serbia.

Marking the revival of the spirit of warmth and cooperation of Marshal Tito-Pandit Nehru years, the Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was extended the rare honour of addressing the special session of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. It was in the same hallowed hall of the National Assembly of Serbia that former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the world leaders while launching the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) along with the veteran leader of Yugoslavia Marshal Tito in 1961.

Speaker of the Serbian Parliament received Shri Naidu and escorted him to the podium and introduced him to the Members of the House.

The Vice President's address was applauded quite a few times and particularly when he said that Marshal Tito was a household name in India when he (Shri Naidu) was a school student. The Vice President received huge standing ovation on the conclusion of his address to the law makers of Serbia.

During the day, Shri Naidu held detailed discussions on a range of bilateral and multilateral issues with President Mr. Aleksander Vucic, the Prime Minister Ms. Ana Brnabic and Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia Ms. Maja Gojkovic besides addressing a business forum.

During the joint media briefing along with Shri Naidu, President of Serbia Mr. Aleksander Vucic complimented the Indian political leadership for stellar economic results. He said "India is witnessing exceptional economic progress. We are happy for the country who has been our long time friend and well wisher". He also thanked India for recognizing Serbia's territorial integrity. Mr. Vucic stressed that Serbia is keen to engage with India on agriculture, pharmacy, IT and generic medicines. He evinced interest in defense cooperation.

On the occasion of 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Serbia Post and India Post have released commemorative stamps on renowned Serbian

Physicist and Innovator Nikola Tesla and Swami Vivekananda. Shri Naidu noted that Swami Vivekananda's thoughts and ideas left a deep impression on Tesla's works.

In the presence of the President of Serbia and the Vice President of India agreements were signed. Agreement on Plant Protection and Quarantine that seeks to enhance trade in fruits, vegetables and processed foods and revised Air Services agreement aims at promoting connectivity boosting trade and tourism including direct air link between the two countries.

He also addressed the business representatives of India and Serbia at a Business Forum and interacted with the Indian Community during the visit.

The Vice president visited Malta from September 16-18, 2018 at the invitation of the President of Malta, Ms. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. India was one of the first countries to recognize Malta in 1964 and established diplomatic relations soon after the independence of Malta.

During the visit, the Vice President had a meeting with President Ms. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. The two leaders discussed the whole gamut of bilateral relations and also our cooperation in multilateral and international forums. President Coleiro acknowledged Indian diaspora's positive contribution to the Maltese society especially in sectors like Health care and Information Technology. The fact that both Indian and Maltese economies are performing very well, the scope of mutual cooperation is very high in several sectors such as ICT, pharmaceuticals & health care, maritime cooperation, tourism etc.

President Coleiro thanked the Government of India for opening a Resident High Commission of India in Malta. The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, saying that there could be no justification for terrorism. There is an urgent need to strengthen the global counter-terrorism legal framework to combat this global menace.

The two leaders expressed concern about issue of global warming and climate change. President Coleiro commended India's effort to focus on renewable energy and the initiative of International Solar Alliance. Malta is giving a positive consideration to joining the ISA as a partner country.

Malta confirmed its support to India's candidature in various multilateral forums.

Three Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) namely; (i) MoU on Maritime Cooperation between Ministry of Shipping, India and Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, Malta; (ii) MoU on mutual cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, India and The Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta, and (iii) MoU in the field of Tourism Cooperation between India and Malta, were signed in the presence of the two leaders.

The Vice President also had a meeting with Dr. Angelo Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Parliament of Malta and Mr. Evarist Bartolo, Acting Prime Minister of Malta. Later in the day, the Vice President addressed the business representatives of India and Malta at a Business Forum and the Indian community during the visit.

The Vice President visited Romania from September 18-20, 2018 at the invitation of the Mr. Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, the President of the Senate of Romania. The Vice President, Shri Naidu was received by President of Senate Tariceanu and was accorded a very warm welcome. The visit is coincided with the 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Romania and the Centenary year for Romania. It was also the fifth year of Declaration of Extended Partnership between India and Romania.

The Vice President had a separate meetings with the President of Romania, Mr. Klaus Iohannis, the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romanian Parliament, Mr. Nicolae Liviu Dragnea, and the Prime Minister of Romania, Ms. Vasilica Viorica Dancila.

The bilateral talks with the Romanian leadership were held in a warm, cordial and positive atmosphere, reflecting the long-standing and friendly bilateral relationship between India and Romania.

Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Tourism, Memorandum of Understanding between Petroleum-Gas University, Ploiesti and Pandit Deen Dayal Petroleum University, Gandhinagar and three Memorandums of Understanding of Bucharest Chamber of Commerce each with CII, ASSOCHAM and PHDCCI were signed during the visit.

Both sides appreciated a long tradition of the Indology and welcomed the growing popularity of Yoga in Romania. Given the increasing interest in Ayurveda in Romania, the Vice President of India inaugurated the AYUSH Information Cell and unveiled a Book on Ayurveda.

The Romanian leaders offered their support for resumption of negotiations for early conclusion of India-EU Broad based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) with balanced outcomes, especially in the context of Romania's upcoming Presidency of EU Council from January 2019.

Both sides affirmed the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including its Security Council. In this context, President Iohannis and Prime Minister Dancila reaffirmed the Romania's endorsement of India's aspirations to become a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council.

Both sides expressed satisfaction regarding mutual support for each other's candidatures for international organizations. Both sides affirmed commitment to fight the scourge of terrorism, its financing and safe havens. In this context, Romanian side expressed its support to developing consensus on draft UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

The Vice President Naidu addressed India-Romania Business Forum meeting along with Romanian President of Senate, Minister for Business Environment, Commerce and Entrepreneurship. This kind of Business Forum was being held after almost a decade and was co-ordinated by Bucharest Chambers of Commerce and Indian Chambers of Commerce like CII, PHDCCI, and ASSOCHAM. The presence of larger number of Romanian business people indicated growing interest in investing in India, especially in the sectors like Petroleum and Natural gas Information technology, manufacturing, defence, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, real estate, tourism etc.

The Vice President Naidu addressed the Prahova Chamber of Commerce in Ploiesti and also addressed the vibrant Indian diaspora in Romania on 20 September.

The Vice President was accompanied by Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, the Minister of State in Ministry of Finance, three Members of Parliament from Rajya Sabha - Shri Prasanna Acharya, Smt Vijila Sathyananth, Ms. Saroj Pandey and one Member of Parliament from Lok Sabha - Shri Raghav Lakhanpal and other officials.

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(Release ID: 1546901) Visitor Counter : 615

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