

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Flag Handing over ceremony on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 230 Pm at the ASEAN Secretariat**

Indian Mission to ASEAN at Jakarta in partnership with Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Indonesia and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), is organizing the Tri-flag handing over ceremony to the team of mountaineers from the Indian subcontinent who will make an attempt to climb Puncak Jaya or Carstensz Pyramid (4884m), the highest mountain of ASEAN, Indonesia, Australia and Oceania. Puncak Jaya is the highest Island Peak in the world. Puncak Jaya is also the most technical peak among all the seven summits. The friendly expedition is another unique event to bring India and ASEAN come close together through sporting events like mountaineering which can act as a catalyst to improve the people-to-people relations amongst them. The team also wants to spread the message on sustainable development of the world, particularly for the vulnerable people in island countries.

#### **Association of ASEAN and Indonesia with this climb**

India and ASEAN are commemorating 25 years of dialogue relations and 15 years of summit level relations and 5 years of Strategic Relations in the year 2017. Significantly, this will coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of establishment of ASEAN in the same year. This mountaineering event is part of the commemorative celebrations to be held throughout the year in India and ASEAN countries. The Commemorative activities are covering various sectors of India-ASEAN engagement and give special emphasis on people-to-people connectivity. The commemorative activities will involve a number of cultural activities such as ASEAN-India Joint Cultural Performances in performing arts, dance, music, Food and films etc. There is special emphasis on ASEAN-India Youth in these activities – and this mountaineering expedition is one of the many ASEAN-India youth activities planned during the year. The team will carry the ASEAN, Indonesian and Indian flags, which will be very symbolic and one of its kind, and plant them on the Puncak Jaya Summit.

#### **Seven Summits and Carstensz**

Climbing the highest mountain of each continent is a prestigious achievement in Mountaineering world and is termed as seven summits. This includes:

Africa – Mt Kilimanjaro

Europe – Mt Elbrus and Mt Mont Blanc

North America – Mt Denali also known as Mt McKinley

South America – Mt Aconcagua

Asia – Mt Everest

Australia - Mt Kosciuszko (mainland Australia) and Puncak Jaya/Carstensz Pyramid (including Oceania)

The highest mountain of Mainland Australia is Mt Kosciuszko, according to the “Bass List” of seven summits. If Oceania and Australia are taken together, then Puncak Jaya or Carstensz Pyramid is the highest of Australia and Oceania and makes it to the “Messner’s list” of 7 summits.

### **The team members:**

#### **Satyarup Siddhanta, India – Leader of the expedition**

Satyarup climbed Mt Everest on 21 May, 2016 and is just one mountain away from completing his 7 summits i.e. climbing the highest mountain in each of the continents. He already climbed the Mt Denali unguided in Alaska (Highest of North America), Mt Aconcagua (Highest of South America), Mt Elbrus and Mt Mont Blanc (Highest of Europe and Western Europe), Mt Kilimanjaro (Highest of Africa), Mt Kosciuszko (Highest of Mainland Australia). Satyarup is climbing Mt Vinson Massif on December 2017 and will also ski the last degree to the South Pole. Satyarup has done his basic mountaineering course from Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling.

#### **Nandita Chandrasekhar Nagangoudar , India**

Nandita attempted Mt Everest and could reach to 8000m on 20 May, 2016. Because of shortage of Oxygen, she had to abandon the expedition. Nandita climbed many mountains in India like Badabangal, Kshitidhaar, Friendship peak and also climbed Mt.Jungfrau, Grampion Mountains in Europe. She has completed the basic mountaineering course from Atal Bihari Vajpayee institute of mountaineering & allied sports (ABIMAS). Nandita is climbing Mt Vinson Massif on December 2017 and will also ski the last degree to the South Pole.

### **Background to ASEAN-India Relationship**

India’s relationship with ASEAN has emerged as a key cornerstone of India’s foreign policy. The relationship has evolved from the Look East Policy enunciated in early 1990s which led India to become a Sectoral Partner of ASEAN in 1992, a Dialogue Partner in 1996 and a Summit-level Partner in 2002. The India-ASEAN Strategic Partnership acquired a new momentum with the announcement of “**Act-East Policy**” in the 12<sup>th</sup> India-ASEAN Summit in 2014. It conveyed a clear intent on the part of India to infusing a new dynamism in its engagement with the ASEAN Member States. The ASEAN Member States welcomed the announcement of Act East Policy noting that it reflected the new dynamism and vigour in the partnership.

India and ASEAN have regular annual Summit of Leaders to infuse new spirit and take stock of the politico-security, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the relationship. These political level interactions are further strengthened through Ministerial meetings in Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism, Agriculture, New and Renewable Energy, Environment and Telecom and supported through the Senior Officials’ Meetings, as also specialized Working Groups in the various sectors.

Shared historical ties, culture and knowledge have continued to underpin India's sustained interactions with Southeast Asia. Cultural and intellectual exchanges and people-to-people contacts continue to be an important pillar of India-ASEAN relations.

Along the Socio-Cultural Pillar, a slew of people-to-people exchange programs have been the mainstay of our functional cooperation with ASEAN. These include the Students Exchange Program, Media Exchange Program, Farmers Exchange Program, Delhi-Dialogue, Network of Think-tanks, Eminent Person Lecture Series and many others.

On the economic front, India and ASEAN signed a Free Trade Agreement in Goods 2009 and in Services and Investment in 2015, to establish a free trade area. Besides, India is also part of negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP), which includes ASEAN and its six FTA partners. Regional cooperation is the key to promoting economic stability, competitiveness, growth and integration in the region.

India supports ASEAN centrality in regional affairs for peace, progress and shared prosperity. India also supports and welcomes the formation of ASEAN Community in December 2015, which it considers a landmark event. It enables India and ASEAN to make significant strides along the three pillars of our regional engagement. It reinvigorates our historical connect while offering new opportunities for a closer ASEAN-India strategic partnership of peace, progress and shared prosperity. India is also considered a valuable partner in Narrowing the Development Gap within ASEAN by supporting the socio-economic growth of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

India and ASEAN have laid-out an ambitious Plan of Action for the years 2016-2020 under which they plan to expand and deepen the strategic partnership into new and crucial areas of cooperation for peace, progress and economic prosperity of the region. India's expanding role in the region has been welcomed by all ASEAN countries whose full impact would be visible during commemorative festivities in 2017.

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