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2015 'best year' yet in Indo-Jordanian relations — ambassador

By Abeer Numan - Jan 25,2016 - Last updated at Jan 25,2016

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AMMAN — India’s house and embassy in Amman will commemorate the country’s 67th Republic Day on Tuesday, alongside celebrations in countries across the world, marking the day on which the constitution came into force in 1950.

Despite the expected snowstorm, celebrations will go ahead as planned, with a flag hoisting ceremony scheduled for Tuesday morning, India’s Ambassador to Jordan Anil Trigunayat said Sunday.

In an interview with The Jordan Times ahead of the occasion, Trigunayat said: "The year 2015, in my view, was the best year in our relations."

The year 2015 saw a first-time visit by India’s President Pranab Mukherjee to Jordan, which the ambassador said had opened new areas of cooperation, followed by a visit by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

Trigunayat , who has been India's ambassador to Jordan for a year and eight months, also pointed to the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and His Majesty King Abdullah on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session last September, where they discussed bilateral issues and cooperation in security and counterterrorism.

"We are looking forward to a visit by His Majesty King Abdullah to India at his convenience," he said. "The president of India and the prime minister have extended an invitation for the King to visit India."

The diplomat noted that Jordan and India have agreed to work more closely together in multilateral institutions such as the UN and the World Trade Organisation.

"We greatly appreciate His Majesty King Abdullah's support for India’s candidature for a permanent seat in the renovated UNSC [Security Council]," he said.

“Jordan is a very important and valued partner of India in the region," he added, noting that "we have similar approaches vis-à-vis the different challenges confronting countries all over the world."

The ambassador also highlighted opportunities to enhance economic relations and expand cooperation in education.

"During the last joint commission meeting in March 2015, we decided to set a bilateral trade target of $5 billion by 2025. To achieve this, we have offered a $100 million line of credit and we have shared all related documents and information," he said.

The ambassador noted that Jordan's exports to India substantially increased in 2015, and India remains the third-largest export market for Jordan, while India is the largest investor in Jordan.

Through the Indo-Jordan Business Forum and the reviving of the Joint Business Council, Amman and New Delhi are sharing viable projects which could be attractive for both sides, he added.

Educational cooperation is also expected to see further expansion, as memoranda of understanding were signed between the top 10 Jordanian and Indian universities and institutions during the president’s visit to the Kingdom, Trigunayat said.

“We have more than doubled the number of our fully funded scholarships through the ITEC programme for Jordan, to become 50 now across 200 training programmes, after the number was 20 in 2014," he elaborated.

Building on 65 years of diplomatic relations, several joint cultural activities will continue to take place in Jordan, including a photo exhibition at the National Library Department on Thursday, which will showcase the progress of Indo-Jordanian relations.

A dance troupe from Rajasthan will be performing on February 4 at the King Hussein Cultural Centre, and there will be a Bollywood show performed on March 4 and 5.

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