

India, Kazakhstan to bolster defence, energy cooperation

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India and Kazakhstan today agreed to further strengthen their defence cooperation as External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met the country's top leaders and discussed ways to consolidate the strategic partnership in areas like trade, energy, security and information technology. Swaraj is on a three-nation tour to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as part of India's efforts to boost strategic partnership with the resource-rich central Asian nations.

During talks with her Kazakh counterpart Kairat Abdrakhmanov, the two leaders held a comprehensive discussion on deepening cooperation in trade and investment, defence and security, energy, Information and Communications Tech-



Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister, is on three-nation tour

nology (ITC), pharmaceutical sector, capacity building and culture. Kazakhstan is India's largest trade and investment partner in the Central Asia region. She also called on Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Bakytzhan Sagintayev, and exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in trade and investment, ICT, joint film production, tourism and people-to-people contacts.

Swaraj said during her

meeting with Abdrakhmanov, they discussed the full range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest. "We took stock of progress in our bilateral relations. India's relations with Kazakhstan are built on a strong foundation of centuries old historical and cultural ties.

Swaraj said during her talks with Abdrakhmanov she sought to consolidate and further strengthen India's friendly relations with Kazakhstan.

"Both Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov and I expressed our interest to further strengthen our defence cooperation based on solid foundation that we have in place. Our defence and security sector cooperation has intensified in the last two years," she said. — PTI