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Top: Three planes in arrow formation fly over Rajpath during the 63rd Republic Day Parade-2012, in New Delhi on January 26, 2012.

Above: Border Security Force camel contingent passes through the Rajpath during the parade.

India Celebrates 63rd Republic Day

■ 10TH PRAVASI
BHARATIYA DIVAS
CELEBRATED AT JAIPUR
IN RAJASTHAN

■ SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
CHAIR ESTABLISHED
AT UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

■ 99TH INDIAN SCIENCE
CONGRESS HELD AT
BHUBANESHWAR IN
ODISHA

India celebrates 63rd Republic Day

The day was as much about celebrating India's cultural diversity and military prowess as it was about introspecting and reflecting on the country's destiny



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil with Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade, and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on January 26.

It was a celebration of India in all its diversity, complexities and color. The 63rd Republic Day unfolded on January 26 with a grand pageant in New Delhi showcasing India's cultural kaleidoscope and military power. There were also millions of tricolors hoisted across the country in ceremonies big and small.

President Pratibha Devisingh Patil, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, took the salute, as military and paramilitary contingents marched down the Rajpath, a grand boulevard in the heart of New Delhi. History, tradition and modernity married perfectly during the 90-minute ceremonial parade.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister

Dr. Manmohan Singh laid a floral wreath at the Amar Jawan Jyoti to pay tribute to Indian soldiers. Soon after, a grateful nation acknowledged one of its heroes when President Patil posthumously conferred the Ashok Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award, to young army commando Lt. Navdeep Singh, who died battling terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir.

As Thailand's first woman Prime Minister Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, the guest of honor, watched along with the President, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries, the spectacle began with the uniformed men and women of armed and paramilitary forces marching down the Rajpath.

There were camels and horses, the showcasing of India's advanced

arsenal, including India's latest nuclear-capable strategic missile Agni-IV displayed for the first time, elaborate tableaux from states and ministries and schoolchildren dancing down the road. As the sun shone brightly and crowds squinted to look up at the blue skies, the fly-past began with intricate aerial maneuvers by Indian Air Force aircraft formation. The Indian Air Force's (IAF) latest acquisition, the US Lockheed Martin C-130J transporter, made its debut. The culminating act was the vertical Charlie maneuver by a lone Sukhoi. Petals were showered on the people below as the parade drew to a close. Amongst those at the ceremony were a group of 20 children from Afghanistan who were special invitees of the Indian government.

‘We look toward an India, where there is equity and justice’

Complimenting all citizens for their contribution to the process of nation-building, President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, on her Address to the Nation on the eve of India’s 63rd Republic Day on January 25, laid out the goals and vision of India.

“We look at building our country, as one whose economy demonstrates a robustness to grow, so that we can become a developed nation. For us, however, economic prosperity alone is not enough. We look toward an India, where there is equity and justice. We look at democracy, rule of law and human values, as being essential for making our country strong. We want a scientific and technological outlook in our people. We also look toward India as a country which will continue to bring moral force on to the global stage. I believe that there is a unity behind this vision of India,” the President said.

Stating that India wishes to build bridges of cooperation and friendship with all countries of the world, President Patil said that India had been seeking an architecture for global institutions that was more reflective of contemporary realities.

Excerpts from the President’s Address:

“On the eve of our 63rd Republic Day, I convey my warmest greetings to all of you across the country, from every walk of life and in different parts of the world. I convey my special greetings to the Armed Forces and the Para-Military Forces who guard our frontiers with great vigil and valor, in high mountainous terrains, deserts and the plains, on the coasts and the seas. I also convey my best wishes to our internal security forces and to our civil services. I compliment all citizens for their contribution to the process of nation-building.

We are living in a world that is com-



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil addressing the Nation on the eve of the Republic Day in New Delhi

plex and challenging. Forces of globalization have created an interlinked and interdependent world. No country exists in isolation; it is continuously being influenced by external developments. All nations, developed and developing, are facing the impact of global economic instability, as well as problems of unemployment and inflation, in varying degrees. Indeed, the 21st Century has brought in its trail a host of issues at a breath-taking pace. There are growing aspirations of the people, coupled with their expectations of immediate solutions. We are observing, an information explosion and ever-newer technological inventions. These have altered lifestyles and there is also a growing quest for materialism. There are persistent questions about how growth and resources will be shared in a more equitable manner. There are worries about the direction in which the human community is heading in this age of globalization, knowledge and technology.

For us in India, the discourse is about how an ancient civilization and a young nation, will move ahead to take India to its destiny. Our vision and our goals are clear. We look at building our country, as one whose economy demonstrates a robustness to grow, so that we can become a developed nation. For us, however, economic prosperity alone is not enough. We look toward an India, where there is equity and justice. We look at democracy, rule of law and human values, as being essential for making our country strong. We want a scientific and technological outlook in our people. We also look toward India as a country which will continue to bring moral force on to the global stage. I believe that there is a unity behind this vision of India. But, yet, sometimes one gets distracted by discordant pulls and pressures. How should we proceed to build our nation and its people? I believe that the answer lies in our age-old values; the ideals of our free-

dom movement; the principles of our Constitution, as also in our unity, a positive attitude and our aspiration to grow.

It is often said, but not fully realized, that we are very fortunate to have a rich legacy of values, traditions and teachings. The ageless spirit of India, the eternal voice of India, has been resonating through millennia. What are those intrinsic qualities which have seen India prosper through centuries and eras? What is the message that should light our path, as we chart our future course? Our civilizational ethos contains the lessons of duty and truth. It tells us to be humane in all our thoughts and deeds. It highlights the qualities of compassion, care and of respect for others. It teaches that human beings and nature must exist in harmony with each other. All issues should be viewed in the context of humanity as a whole. Concepts like *Samanvay*, *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah*, and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* are the very essence of Indian thought. This philosophy has given succeeding generations the inherent strength to grow, embracing in their fold a vast diversity of cultures, languages, religions and communities. So, when the question is asked, as to what ideals should be placed before the new generation, to take the country forward, should there be any dithering or doubt in a country like India? As the inheritors of thousands of years of history and culture, we should follow the high ideals of our age-old civilization. More particularly, the youth should understand this, as they are the architects of the future as well. Our past becomes the essential guide for the future as well. In this context, I recall the lines of Gurudev Tagore, "Every great people holds its history so valuable because it contains not mere memories, but hope, and therefore the image of the future." The past of India has been glorious and so must be its future.

We can also draw inspiration from our independence movement. It was a unique struggle, as it involved non-violent methods and required extraordinary mass discipline, steadfastness and patience. We followed this course,



Subedar Major, Honorary Lieutenant (Retd.) Joginder Singh receiving the Ashoka Chakra on behalf of his son Lieutenant Navdeep Singh (Posthumous) of the Army Ordnance Corps / 15th Battalion, The Maratha Light Infantry, from President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil in New Delhi on January 26.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paying homage at the Amar Jawan Jyoti India Gate on the occasion of the 63rd Republic Day Parade 2012 in New Delhi on January 26.

under the leadership of Gandhiji, because we had faith in ourselves and in our strength. Surely, we can demonstrate the same discipline in nation-building. But, how do we do this? It is, only when we resolve to make the goal of nation-building more important, than anything else and, show strong belief in it. It is then that courage, confidence and determination, shall be our companions in this task, which has to be carefully piloted in a constitutionally acceptable order.

In fact, during various times of difficulties or when searching for an answer, the Constitution has provided us our moorings. It was framed by

those who had participated in the freedom struggle, and had a deep understanding of the aspirations of the people, and of our culture. The Constitution has been and should be our compass, guiding us in nation-building.

There is tremendous work to be done to move forward on our social and economic agenda, if we are to achieve fast, inclusive and sustainable growth. Our foremost priority is the removal of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. All social welfare programs must be implemented efficiently. Agencies involved in the delivery of services should have a

strong sense of duty and work in a transparent, corruption-free, time-bound and accountable manner.

We have a population which is predominantly young. With education and training, they can become skilled and, thus, capable of finding their livelihoods, starting their own businesses and thus, becoming productive assets. Reinforcing our health and education sectors is fundamental for developing our human resources. Primary education is now a fundamental right for children. There is a commitment to universalize secondary education. Expansion of school education will also require increase in the number of higher education institutions. This process has to be structured with great thoughtfulness, to ensure quality and excellence. Moreover, education must reach every section of our society, as must access to health reach all. We need to expand health services, particularly in rural areas. We need quality medical facilities for our population, which are affordable. In today's era of ICT, technology can be very useful in our mission of health and education. In fact, science and technology is a critical input for the growth of the nation and for all sectors of the economy. Focus on research and development is an investment in our future. Our agriculture, industry and service sectors need to be working more efficiently, with greater scientific inputs and more inter-linkages with each other. Agriculture, however, is

one sector whose integration with other sectors of the economy remains inadequate. We need to look at models of partnership, of farmers with industry and with R&D institutions in various activities, so that, not only does agricultural productivity increase, but farmers benefit as well. Special focus is necessary on dryland farming, given its enormous potential and the fact that a large proportion of farm labor and poor farmers are dependent on it. At the same time, it is very important to build our physical infrastructure —

We are also proud of the contributions of the Indian Diaspora, spread over many countries and across continents, to the economic, professional and political fields of the countries where they live

such as roads, ports and airports, to overcome constraints to rapid growth.

I strongly believe that women need to be drawn fully into the national mainstream. Empowerment of women will have a very big impact on creating social structures that are stable. The National Mission on Empowerment of Women set up in 2010, should help in the co-coordinated delivery of women-centric and women-related programs.

India's foreign policy is aimed at the promotion of an environment that is conducive to its socio-economic transformation. We seek to build bridges of cooperation and friendship with all countries of the world. We constructively engage with the international community to find responses to global challenges. The role and stature of India, has been growing and our nation has been scaling up in the ladder of the comity of nations. India seeks an architecture for global institutions that is more reflective of contemporary realities. We are also proud of the contributions of the Indian Diaspora, spread over many countries and across continents, to the economic, professional and political fields of the countries where they live.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we must build a strong, prosperous nation, based upon a firm system of values. As we remove poverty, let us also enrich our thoughts. As we remove disease, let us all remove ill-will towards others. As our youth study more and acquire more knowledge, let them also learn to be more involved in activities for the progress of the nation, other than only self-advancement. As we legislate, let us also understand that the most effective law is the conscience of citizens. As we advance in science and technology, let us realize and understand that it is more for human welfare. As we use the Earth's resources, let us not forget to replenish and renew its vitality.”



Left: DRDO tableau 'Snow & Avalanche Hazards and their Mitigation Scheme' passes through the Rajpath during the 63rd Republic Day Parade-2012, in New Delhi on January 26, 2012. **Right:** The National Bravery Awards-2011 winning children pass through the Rajpath during the parade.

10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrated in Jaipur

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), India's annual conclave to connect with its 25 million diaspora in some 180 countries, was held on January 7-9 at Jaipur in Rajasthan with the focus this time being on inclusive growth. Inaugurated by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, the event saw more than 2,000 delegates from 59 countries participating in the three-day event, which was the 10th edition of PBD.

Welcoming the Chief Guest of the event, Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, Prime Minister Singh paid tribute to the great journey of the Indian diaspora. Referring to the role played by the Indian diaspora around the world, the Prime Minister said, "The Government and people of India recognize and greatly value the important role being played by Indian communities living abroad. We believe that the Indian diaspora has much more to contribute to the building of modern India. We propose to facilitate, encourage and promote this engagement."

As a measure of the Government's intent to help deepen and widen this relationship, the Prime Minister outlined the key initiatives taken during the past year. In particular, he referred to the improvements brought about in the law enacted in Parliament to enable Non-Resident Indians to vote in elections in India. "Pursuant to the law that was enacted to enable Non-Resident Indians to vote in our national elections, the Government has issued notifications for registration of Overseas Indians under the Representation of People Act, 1950. This constitutes the first major step to enable Indians resident abroad to participate in our election processes."

Referring to the People of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizen of India schemes, the Prime Minister said, "In the last session of our Parliament we



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh inaugurating the 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2012 at Jaipur in Rajasthan on January 8. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Governor of Rajasthan Shivraj Patil, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi and Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot are also seen.



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil presenting the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Kamla Persad-Bissessar, at the valedictory session of 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at Jaipur in Rajasthan on January 9. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi is also seen.

have introduced a Bill intended to merge and streamline the People of Indian Origin and Overseas Citizen of India schemes by amending the Citizenship Act. This will rectify some of the anomalies in the schemes and provide for an Overseas Indian Card which will be given to foreign spouses of such card holders as well."

Reflecting on the theme of PBD-2012, Prime Minister Singh lent a philosophical dimension to the discourse. "The theme for this year's event is 'Global Indian – Inclusive Growth'. Indian civilization and society have always been inclusive in character. It is only natural that our political and eco-

nomical processes have also to be 'inclusive' in their orientation and in their outcome... We in India speak in different languages and follow different faiths. But Indian culture has a tradition of assimilating and accommodating diverse traditions, customs, beliefs and peoples. That is what makes Indian society, Indian civilization endure and flourish. The 'global Indian' is a symbol of this diversity of our ancient land. Your individual prosperity and personal achievement are a symbol of what a diverse people like us can achieve."

The Indian government proposed to facilitate, encourage and promote its engagement with the Indian diaspora,

Prime Minister Dr. Singh said on January 8. On the occasion, he also announced the introduction of a new Pension and Life Insurance Fund for overseas Indian workers.

Three key initiatives

In his address at the inaugural ceremony, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi referred to three key initiatives the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs had put in place for the benefit of overseas Indian workers. The 'Indian Community Welfare Fund' or the ICWF, a fund placed at the command of the Heads of the Indian Missions across the world meant to extend 'on-site' welfare services to overseas Indians in distress; the Indian Workers Resource Centre, established in partnership with the Government of the UAE, in Abu Dhabi, providing electronic attestation of all work contracts, extending counseling services and operating a shelter with a helpline for workers in distress; and the establishment in Jaipur of an office of the Protector of Emigrants and a Migrant Resource Centre to help young men and women of Rajasthan to avail of all services related to migration overseas.

Referring to the landmark right to vote for Overseas Indians, Minister Ravi said, "I would be remiss if I did not



A view of the audience at PBD 2012

mention the longstanding demand of overseas Indians for voting rights. I am happy to inform you that we have made this a reality. Indian nationals living abroad can now exercise their franchise, in India, at the time of the elections."

Idea of Indian identity

In an address at the Plenary Session on "Inclusive Growth: Two Decades of Economic Liberalization", Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said, "I feel proud of the achievements of our nation and of Indians. I am using the word 'Indian' to mean much more than nationality. The gathering today is a symbol of the larger idea of Indian identity. This is an identity that goes beyond nationality. It refers to our common history and heritage. In that sense this is a gathering of family mem-

bers who have spread all over the world but who nevertheless share a deep common bond." Exhorting Overseas Indians to be part of the idea of India, Mukherjee said, "India presents an opportunity for the world as a whole. Our overseas Indian family with its multifaceted talents, excellent capacity for adapting to and ability to operate within different cultures and environments should make a concerted effort to connect with India's growth and its prosperity in the times to come."

Valedictory address

In her Valedictory Address, President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil paid tribute to the Indian diaspora and hailed the Chief Guest, Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

Referring to the relationship that India sought to build and deepen with the Indian diaspora, President Patil said, "We deeply cherish our relationship with the Indian diaspora. The Government of India is keenly interested in the well-being of the People of Indian Origin living overseas."

"Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebration of Indians living abroad. It is an occasion to welcome them to the land of their ancestors, to interact with them and to reacquaint ourselves with each other," the President said.

14 overseas Indians honored with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil on January 9 conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman on 14 eminent overseas Indians and a Canada-based institution, for their outstanding contributions toward enhancing India's image globally. Among the awardees, Surendra Kumar Kaushik and Dr. Kalpalatha Kummamuri Guntupalli are from the US.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman is the highest award conferred by the Indian government on Non-Resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and institutions run by them for serving the Indian diaspora and contributing to the enhancement of India's image in different parts of the world.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, a person of Indian origin who became the first woman Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, is also among this year's awardees. The other Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awardees include: P.V. Radhakrishna Pillai



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil conferring the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman on Dr. Kalpalatha Kummamuri Guntupalli.

from Bahrain, Sachchidanand Sahai from Cambodia, Deepak Naraindas Shivdasani from Côte D'Ivoire, Victor Shahed Smetacek from Germany, Chairman of Indorama

Corporation Prakash Lohia, Jose Parayanken from Mozambique, Kiran Navinchandra Asher from Oman, Hassan Abdulkarim Chougule from Qatar, former Singapore President S.R. Nathan, Khoshed Noshir Ginwala Rustomjee from South Africa and Rajesh Kumar Saraiya from Ukraine.

Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce and Industry was also honored for its contribution in bettering business and economic relations between the two countries.

"I would like to congratulate all the winners... It is an extremely distinguished list and we are honored by the presence of the awardees at this function," President Patil said after conferring the award.

So far, 133 NRI and PIOs and three institutions have been conferred the award. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi observed that the 10th edition of the annual diaspora meet saw the highest participation.

Swami Vivekananda Chair established at University of Chicago



Vivekananda, through lectures, seminars and suitable related academic activities on Indian Culture and Indian Studies.” He added, “Swami Vivekananda loved America and Americans in particular. On 19th

September 1893, he concluded his paper on Hinduism with a stirring tribute to America: ‘Hail Columbia, motherland of liberty! It has been given to thee, who never dipped her hand in her neighbor’s blood, who never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by robbing one’s neighbours, it has been given to thee to march at the vanguard of civilization with the flag of harmony.’”

Left: Martha T Roth (left), Dean, Division of Humanities at the University of Chicago, and Sanjiv Mittal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, signing an agreement on establishing a ‘Vivekananda Chair’ at the University of Chicago to honor the life and legacy of Swami Vivekananda, on January 28; **Right:** Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee unveiled the Swami Vivekananda Plaque at the Art Institute of Chicago on January 28. Also seen in the picture are Ambassador Nirupama Rao and Douglas Durick, President of the Art Institute of Chicago. (Photo:-Jay Mandal)

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee speaking at Art Institute of Chicago. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

As part of the initiatives to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, India is providing a grant of \$1.5 million for setting up of the Ministry of Culture Swami Vivekananda Chair at the University of Chicago that would establish a visiting professorship in the field of Indian studies. For this purpose, in the presence of Minister Pranab Mukherjee, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between University of Chicago and the Ministry of Culture on January 28.

Addressing the University of Chicago on establishment of the

“It was the decision of our National Committee headed by the Prime Minister to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of one of India’s greatest souls, Swami Vivekananda, at the city of Chicago, where he delivered his stirring address in 1893”

— Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee

Swami Vivekananda Chair, Finance Minister Mukherjee said, “The activities that would be undertaken under this Chair would focus on

The full text of the Finance Minister’s speech can be viewed at: [http:// www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1854/text-of-the-union-finance-minister-pranab-mukherjeeandrsquo%3Bs-address-at-university-of-chicago-on-establishment-of-the-swami-vivekananda-chair](http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1854/text-of-the-union-finance-minister-pranab-mukherjeeandrsquo%3Bs-address-at-university-of-chicago-on-establishment-of-the-swami-vivekananda-chair)



‘The Last Harvest: Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore’ in Chicago

As part of the worldwide celebrations of Tagore’s 150th birth anniversary, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated an exhibition titled “The Last Harvest: Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore” at the Art Institute of Chicago on January 28. The exhibition, on view from January 29 through April 15, 2012 presents 61 works drawn from three collections in India.

The exhibition is co-organized by the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee cutting the ribbon to formally inaugurate the exhibition. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

India's growth fundamentals are strong: FM

Addressing the Chicago Council of Global Affairs in Chicago on January 28, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said that even though the world economy was passing through turbulent times, India's growth fundamentals remained strong. "The Indian economy is, in some ways, better placed than many other nations to withstand a fresh round of global economic turmoil," he said.

Emphasizing the key role of infrastructure in sustaining high growth and strengthening the growth dynamics of the Indian economy, the Finance Minister said India's Twelfth Five Year Plan would seek to accelerate the pace of investment in infrastructure.

"India needs to invest an additional 3-4 per cent of GDP on infrastructure or about \$1 trillion to sustain current levels of growth and to equalize its benefits over the Plan period," Minister Mukherjee said. The Finance Minister urged the U.S. investors to seize the opportunity that India provided and "contribute to our collective prosperity in the times to come".

The round table meeting was also attended by the Ambassador of India to the United States, Nirupama Rao. Among the business leaders from the U.S. who attended the meeting included Marshall Bouton, President, Chicago Council on Global Affairs; Charles Evans, President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, among others.

Excerpts from the Finance Minister's speech on the occasion:

"The global financial crisis and its after-effects have forced many of us to take a re-look at some of the basic principles of economics and finance. It has generated a fundamental change in the national mindset and we are all witness to a new world order, which is more integrated and has a higher degree of interdepend-

ence amongst nations. While we take steps to address the resurgent immediate concerns for the stability and recovery of the world economy, we need to also move on correcting the underlying global imbalances. One way of doing that is to leverage global imbalances to address developmental imbalances.

If we need to add demand to the global economy, to offset the moderation of demand in industrialized countries, a good way of doing that is to expand infrastructure investment in developing economies. This suggestion may well be extended to increasing investment



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee (Photo:- Jay Mandal)

“India’s robust performance in difficult times makes it a safe haven that global capital is looking for. Even as we grow and acquire economic strength we are a willing hand in the global recovery and improved financial stability”

— Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee

in infrastructure generally, and a more liberal flow of technology to developing countries, which in turn could spur output and productivity growth in both advanced and developing countries.

Looking forward, I would say that India's growth fundamentals are strong and they look more attractive in a world challenged by problems of confidence and lack of growth. India's robust performance in difficult times makes it a safe haven that global capital is looking for. Even as we grow and acquire economic strength we are a willing hand in the

global recovery and improved financial stability. India presents opportunity at this moment that cannot be ignored. I urge you to seize this moment and contribute to our collective prosperity in the times to come.”

The full text of the Finance Minister's speech can be viewed at:

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1855/text-of-the-speech-of-the-finance-minister-shri-pranab-mukherjee-delivered-at-the-chicago-council-of-global-affairs>

Bilateral meeting on health issues held

A delegation from the United States led by United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius met with the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad for a bilateral meeting on health issues on January 11. The discussions focused on the progress of the US-India Health Initiative launched in 2010.

Minister Azad reaffirmed India's commitment to the ongoing cooperation in the field of health and "also to find new avenues to further broaden and deepen the commitment to ensure better health at affordable costs for our people".

He said that the Government of India had been implementing health-care reforms in the field of infrastructure, human resources, health research and disease surveillance aimed at providing better service delivery at grass root levels. Expressing satisfaction particularly at the progress of Polio containment efforts, the Minister said, "We are excited and hopeful, at the same time, vigilant and alert."

The Health Initiative is an interagency umbrella mechanism for



A U.S. delegation led by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius called on the Minister for Health and Family Welfare Ghulam Nabi Azad, in New Delhi on January 11.

bilateral discussions between the United States and India on health collaborations and program implementation.

The discussion focused on the progress on the US-India Health Initiative launched in 2010

To take the agenda further, four Working Groups had been constitut-

ed, namely, Working Group on Non-Communicable Diseases, Working Group on Infectious diseases, Working Group on Maternal and Child Health and Working Group on strengthening Health System and Services.

India-U.S. collaboration has successfully taken shape in the last several decades in the areas of medical research such as tuberculosis, nutrition, cancer, neurosciences, mental health, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, environmental and occupational health.

MoU signed for upgrade of skill training in India

The Wadhvani Foundation (WF) from India and the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education (VFCCE) from the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi on January 10 to upgrade skill training in the country. Human Resource Development Minister Minister Kapil Sibal and U.S. Senator Mark Warner, Co-chair of the Senate India Caucus were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sibal underlined the requirement for enhanced skill development in the country, considering that the high



rate of growth India needs massive skill upgradation to prepare for the jobs that will be created.

The WF and VFCCE partnership

seeks to leverage the combined expertise of Virginia's Community College system in running industry relevant professional education sharing technical and organizational know-how, curriculum/courseware and teacher training to enhance such programs in India.

As part of the MoU, the VFCCE and the WF will together identify high impact skill development programs in India. While VFCCE experts will serve as consultants, sharing best practices, the WF will provide local support and co-funding for this capacity building endeavor.

Ambassador Nirupama Rao calls on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

Ambassador Nirupama Rao called on the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, DC, on January 25.

Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rao discussed a broad range of bilateral and regional issues. The two recognized that there had been tremendous progress in strengthening the India-U.S. global strategic partnership and they agreed to continue their efforts to further consolidate upon the progress made and work toward implementing the initiatives that had been taken in the last few years, including in the area of civil nuclear cooperation. Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rao also exchanged perspectives on regional issues of



Ambassador Rao calls on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on January 25. **Credit:** U.S. Department of State

mutual interest, including the situation in Afghanistan, and recent developments with regard to Iran and Myanmar.

Ambassador Rao meets Congressman Adam Smith

Ambassador Nirupama Rao met with Congressman Adam Smith at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on January 18. Ambassador Rao and Congressman Smith exchanged views on India-U.S. bilateral relations and took positive note of the growing momentum of cooperation across a wide range of issues, built upon shared values and convergent interests. Congressman Smith described India as a critical partner for the U.S. and welcomed the deepening India-U.S. strategic partnership.

Both Congressman Smith and Ambassador Rao also attributed the recent positive developments in the bilateral India-U.S. relationship to the contribution of a dynamic Indian-American community. Congressman Smith warmly welcomed India's interest in establishing a Consulate General in Seattle.

The discussions also touched upon the situation in South Asia, and the common interests of India and the U.S. in the long-term peace, security



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Congressman Adam Smith at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on January 18.

and development of Afghanistan. Ambassador Rao referred to India's traditional ties with Afghanistan, which were now a strategic partnership. She informed the Congressman

about India's robust development assistance to Afghanistan and its vision for an independent, sovereign, stable, united, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan.

Ambassador Rao invited Congressman Smith to visit India. Congressman Smith accepted the invitation, and said that he would be in touch with the Ambassador to explore a mutually convenient time for the visit.

Congressman Smith, who represents the state of Washington in the U.S. House of Representatives, is the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services

Committee and is known for his keen interest in foreign and security policy issues. He is a member of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans.

'India's global outlook and foreign policy is a reflection of the priorities that it has defined for itself'

Addressing a seminar on "India as a Global Power: Contending Views from India" jointly organized by the Center for a New American Security in partnership with the George Washington University's Rising Powers Initiative in Washington, D.C. on January 23, Ambassador Nirupama Rao has said that a strong sense of realism and pragmatism informs India's foreign policy. "India's global outlook and foreign policy is a reflection of the priorities that it has defined for itself as it seeks to develop, to be secure, to withstand external threats, to ensure that it's national and developmental interests are not diluted by actions by hostile players in the global arena," she said.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao

“ *If you just look at the progress we have made across a wide range of sectors in the last two years or so, it would be clear that our bilateral relationship with the U.S. is today better than it has ever been* **”**

— Ambassador Nirupama Rao

Excerpts from Ambassador Rao's speech on the occasion:

Like for all countries, our foreign policy seeks to forge strategies that serve India's interest, protect its sovereignty and its security concerns, and promote its economic development. Our vision of a secular, pluralistic and tolerant society within the country, embracing diversity of opinions and outlook, is sought to be articulated in our dealings with the world. While we have paid attention to the strengthening of our military and strategic deterrent capabilities, we are not protagonists of the first use of force in settling outstanding issues, but rather, we have been advocates, consistently, of the use of diplomacy and statecraft in building relations and addressing problem issues.

Today as India's economic growth provides it more weight and adds to our influence we remain conscious that with this comes ever increasing responsibility — responsibility in weighing every move we make and positions we take with the realization that India is growingly, one of the key players on the global stage today and

will be called upon increasingly to deploy its potential in the interest of global peace and development. And buoyed by its sustainable economic growth, India is more willing and able to play a role commensurate with its size and destiny, whether in the UN Security Council or other multinational institutions such as G20.

India-US global strategic partnership

Today India and the U.S. share a convergence of interests to ensure security of our people and stability in the world. If you just look at the progress we have made across a wide range of sectors in the last two years or so, it would be clear that our bilateral relationship with the U.S. is today better than it has ever been. The visits of Prime Minister Singh to Washington in 2009 and of President Obama to New Delhi and Mumbai in 2010; the launch of the Strategic Dialogue whose third round will be held here in Washington in the summer of this year have led to a qualitative change and expansion of our global strategic partnership.

Our dialog and cooperation on strategic issues and our bilateral cooperation in counter-terrorism, information exchange and defense have matured and today there is much enhanced mutual understanding.

We are trading both in goods and services much more than ever before. Investments are now in both directions. Commercial links are strong and growing; research based partnerships are on the increase and technology exchanges are expanding in different fields of economy. I would like to

believe that we have outgrown the "buy-sell" paradigm.

In conclusion, I would say that the relations between India and the United States are defined by shared values, convergent interests, the need to bring more progress and prosperity to our peoples, and by the pragmatic realization that we are on the same side when it comes to eliminating those forces that threaten the freedom of our democracies, and hinder our development. The fact that this "GPS", as it were, identifies our relationship is certainly an encouraging augury for the future. Indeed, it should provide a beacon for our future efforts.

The full text of the speech can be viewed at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1846/address-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-seminar-andquot%3Bindia-as-a-global-power%3A-contending-views-from-indiaandquot%3B-jointly-organized-by-the-center-for-a-new-american-security%2C-in-partnership-with-the-george-washington-universityand-rsqquo%3Bs-rising-powers-initiative>

India, US have limitless horizon to work together: Ambassador Nirupama Rao

Addressing the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. on January 25, Ambassador Nirupama Rao said that India and the United States had a limitless horizon to work together.

“In myriad ways we are working together with our partners in the US, both in the government and outside, such as with experts here at the Woodrow Wilson Center, to build a great partnership based upon common values, converging interests and a shared vision of the world,” she said.

Excerpts from Ambassador Rao's speech on the occasion:

In myriad ways we are working together with our partners in the US, both in the government and outside, such as with experts here at the Woodrow Wilson Center, to build a great partnership based upon common values, converging interests and a shared vision of the world.

India is in the midst of a national endeavor to achieve socio-economic development for its billion-plus population in an inclusive and participatory way.

While we have been able to achieve good economic growth in recent years, we remain acutely aware of the enormous development challenges that confront us. We need to improve our agricultural productivity, build more schools and institutions in higher education, focus on skill development to reap the benefits of demographic dividend, and strengthen our health infrastructure. And in this task, we see the United States, with its economic and technological prowess, as an important partner on the basis of mutual benefit. Cooperation in areas such as nuclear energy, high technology and clean energy resources, agriculture and



Ambassador Nirupama Rao

health are making our partnership mutually more rewarding, with flow of ideas, knowledge and people in both directions.

We are partnering with the U.S. across the entire range of issues related to agriculture — from using space technology for better monsoon prediction and crop productivity to improving the linkages from farms to markets. Health is yet another critical area where there are exciting opportunities for collaboration tapping into each other's comparative advantages. We are working together across a full portfolio of clean energy options. The U.S. is assisting us in mapping our reserves of shale gas resources.

The growth of knowledge economy is an exciting frontline of our engagement today. We are tapping into our respective scientific and technological strengths, innovation, and encouraging co-development of a vibrant S&T eco-system through projects under the bilateral Science and Technology Endowment Fund of \$30 million. I believe this could produce benefits for both our countries as well as produce global public goods.

Both the Governments had launched the “Singh-Obama 21st Century Knowledge Initiative” in November 2009 with funding of \$5 million from both the sides to

increase linkages between the U.S. and Indian universities. The first India-U.S. Higher Education Summit held in Washington, D.C. last year has laid a road map for our joint efforts in expanding collaboration in the field of higher education between our two countries.

Our relationship is unique in that it goes way beyond what the two Governments are doing. In fact, people-to-people links are at the heart of our growing partnership. The energy, creativity and enterprising spirit of our people, private sector and civil society are building new bridges across hitherto uncharted waters and adding resilience and vibrancy to our relations.

I believe we have a robust agenda for qualitative improvement in our partnership in the months ahead at the bilateral and global levels, from our development partnership in education, health, agriculture, science and technology, clean energy to trade and economic cooperation, security cooperation, dialog on export controls and high technology trade and deepening of consultations on global issues.

I would like to conclude by noting that both our governments are committed to build on the excellent foundation that has been created to fulfill our common objective of creating a partnership that not only benefits the peoples of both countries, but also responds to the global challenges of our time. It has the potential to shape the destiny of our peoples, and indeed, of the larger humanity. ■

The full text of Ambassador Nirupama Rao's speech can be viewed at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1852/remarks-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-woodrow-wilson-international-center-for-scholars%3A-25-january-2012>

PM calls for increased R&D expenditure

Inaugurating the 99th Indian Science Congress (ISC) at Bhubaneswar in Odisha on January 3, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh called for changing the face of Indian science and increasing the spending on research and development (R&D) to two percent of the GDP from the current 0.9 percent by the end of the Twelfth Five year Plan (2012-17). He said this could only be achieved if industry, which contributed only 25 percent of the total R&D expenditure today, increased its contribution.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh addressing the 99th Annual Session of the Indian Science Congress at Bhubaneswar in Odisha on January 3.

“While research generates new knowledge, we need innovation to use this knowledge creatively and productively for social benefit. Our Government has declared 2010-20 as the ‘Decade of Innovations’” — PM

“We have to increase public private partnerships and catalyze significantly increased interaction between publicly owned Science and Technology institutions and industry” — PM

“We must strengthen the supply chain of the science sector,” Prime Minister Singh said in his address at the ISC. The Prime minister informed that a proposal was under consideration to build national capacity and capability in supercomputing which would be implemented by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, at an estimated cost of \$1 billion.

Prime Minister Singh pointed out

that over the last few years, the number of scientific publications by Indian scientists working in India had increased at more than 12 percent per annum against the global average of 4 percent. India had moved from the 15th rank in 2003 to the 9th rank in 2010 with respect to the number of publications in peer-valued journals.

More than 15,000 delegates participated in the January 3-7 event held at



the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology in Odisha. The theme of the conference was ‘Science and Technology for Inclusive Innovation — Role of Women’. The Prime Minister declared

that the year 2012 would be celebrated as the Year of Mathematics to pay tribute to one of India’s noted scientists — M S Ramanujan.

The full text of the Prime Minister’s speech can be viewed at:
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=79318>



Time to think out of the box and think big: Ambassador Nirupama Rao

Inaugurating the first Women Science Congress on the sidelines of the 99th Indian

Science Congress at Bhubaneswar in Odisha on January 5, Ambassador Nirupama Rao called for redoubling efforts to make science more inclusive. “It is time to think out of the box and think big if we are to emerge as global leaders in science and harness the potential of science as an agent of transformation and development,” she said.

Excerpts from Ambassador Rao’s speech on the occasion:

The moot point is why scientific streams remained largely male-dominated or why there are very few women members in various national science academies or in decision-making positions in scientific establishments.

This also begs a question whether we are doing enough in India to encourage the participation of women in Indian science, or more importantly, what more should we be doing to make science more inclusive.

It is time to think out of the box and think big if we are to emerge as global leaders in science and harness the potential of science as an agent of transformation and development.

The full text of Ambassador Nirupama Rao’s speech can be viewed at:

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1836/inauguraladdress-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-indian-women-science-congress-at-bhubaneswar-%285-january-2012%29>

Embassy celebrates Republic Day 2012



Ambassador Nirupama Rao unfurling the National Flag at the Republic Day 2012 celebrations on January 26.



Rendering of the National Anthem.



Ambassador Rao reading out the President's Message to the Nation.



A group led by Ayona Dutta rendering patriotic songs in various Indian languages.



Ambassador Rao paying floral tribute at Mahatma Gandhi's statue in front of the Embassy.

Embassy welcomes Minister Vayalar Ravi



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests.
2. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi addressing the guests, including prominent Indian-American community members, at the Embassy on January 22.
3. Guests in attendance.

Embassy hosts Harvard Club of Washington, DC



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao interacting with members of Harvard Club of Washington, DC on 'India and India-US relations' on January 23.
2. Ren'e Rocque Lee, President, Harvard Club of Washington, DC proposing the vote of thanks.
3. Guests in attendance.

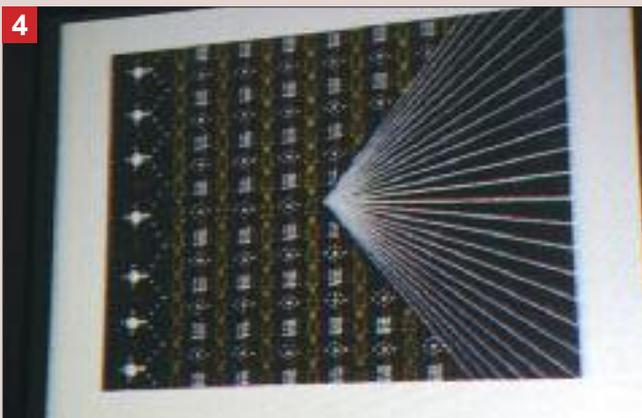
Presentation by Indian-American Artist Anil Revri at Embassy

In connection with Anil Revri's exhibition 'Faith and Liberation through Abstraction' — an interfaith project comprising of drawings, paintings and sculpture — inaugurated at the

American University Museum (Katzen Arts Center), he made a presentation on his work and its relevance in contemporary global society at the Embassy on January 19.



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests.
2. Jack Rasmussen, Director and Curator of Katzen Arts Center introducing Anil Revri to the audience.
3. Anil Revri making his presentation.
4. Image of a piece of work by Anil Revri.
5. Guests in attendance.



CGI New York celebrates 63rd Republic Day



Top: Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi addressing the audience on the occasion.
Bottom: Consul General Prabhu Dayal reading out of the speech of President of India.

Celebration of Vishwa Hindi Divas



Consul General Prabhu Dayal welcoming the audience.

The Consulate General of India in New York celebrated Vishwa Hindi Divas at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in New York on January 20. On the occasion, Consul General Prabhu Dayal acknowledged the efforts of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and its contribution in promoting Hindi language and Indian culture abroad.

Finance Minister in Chicago



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee addressing the Indian- American community at a reception organized in his honor by the Consulate General of India, Chicago on January 29. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

CGI Houston celebrates 63rd Republic Day



Left: Sanjiv Arora, Consul-General of India in Houston, unfurled the National Flag at India's Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

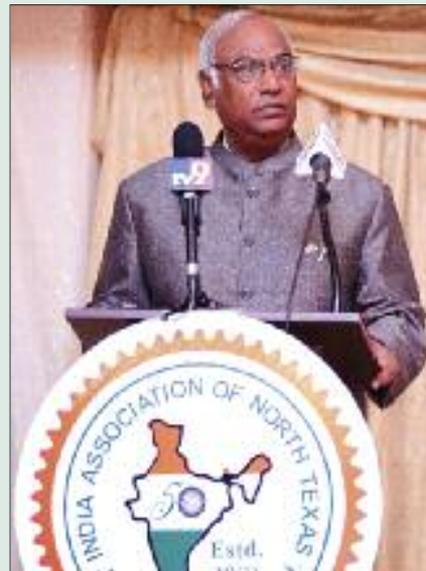
Above: U.S. Congressman Pete Olson (22nd District of Texas) greeting Consul-General Arora on the occasion of India's Republic Day-2012.

Lok Sabha speaker visits Miami



Meira Kumar, Speaker of Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament of India) with Tomas Regalado, Mayor of Miami, during her transit visit to Miami on January 12, at a reception hosted in her honor by Dr. Eduardo J. Padron, President of Miami Dade College.

Minister Mallikarjun Kharge visits Dallas



Minister of Labour & Employment Mallikarjun Kharge addressing the Indian-American community at a function organized by the Texas Chapter of Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC) and the India Association of North Texas (IANT) in cooperation with Consulate General of India, Houston, on January 29 in Dallas. During the visit, he also paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of Martyrs' Day on January 30 at University of Texas, Arlington.

India to grow by 7.7 percent in 2012: UN

India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow by 7.7 percent in 2012 and 7.9 percent in 2013, the United Nation's Department of Economic Affairs said on January 17. India's GDP grew by 7.6 percent in 2011.

"The prospects for world economy are not good. The U.S. and European economic growth will slow down further," said Nagesh Kumar, Chief Economist of the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific.

He said strong domestic demands and high savings rates would help India maintain its growth momentum despite slowdown in the U.S. and European economies.



A Namma Metro train runs through the city of Bangalore. Over 1.2 million people are expected to use the metro service by 2013.

The UN's annual economic report, World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012, said the world's economic growth would fall to 2.6 percent in 2012 as compared to the estimated 2.8 percent in 2011 and 4 percent in 2010, because of the slowdown. "India will be able to weather the crisis, with scars," he said while releasing the report.

Kumar said Asia, especially India and China, would be the main drivers of the economic growth in the coming years.

"It used to be said that when the U.S. and Europe sneeze, the world catches a cold. But now, the situation has changed. Today, the Western economies have a cold but India and other developing economies are doing well," he said.

South Asian economies are expected to grow by 6.7 percent this year and 6.9 percent next year, largely driven by the Indian economy.

However, there is a downward risk. GDP growth in South Asia will dwindle by two percentage points, the report says.

'QFIs can directly invest in equity markets'

The federal government on January 1 allowed qualified foreign investors (QFIs) to directly invest in equity markets to decrease volatility.

"In a major policy decision, the federal government has decided to allow qualified foreign investors (QFIs) to directly invest in Indian equity markets in order to widen the class of investors, attract more foreign funds, and reduce market volatility and to deepen the Indian capital market," a Finance Ministry statement said.

The distinction of a QFI ranges from an individual to a group of investors that comply with the international standards of the financial action task force (FATF).

The move is also important because currently only foreign institutional investors or sub-accounts (FIIs/sub-accounts) and non-resident Indians (NRIs) were allowed to directly invest in equity markets.

"As a first step in this direction, QFIs have been permitted direct access to Indian mutual funds schemes pursuant to the 2011-12 budget announcement. As a next logical step, it has now been decided to allow QFIs to directly invest in Indian equity market in order to widen the class of investors, attract more foreign funds, and reduce market volatility."

India allows 100 percent FDI in single brand retail

India on January 10 allowed 100 percent foreign equity in single brand retail, notifying the norms that among other things all wholly-owned international brands would need to source 30 percent of their requirements locally.

The government justified the move, saying that foreign direct investment (FDI) in single brand would attract investments in production and marketing, improve the availability of such goods for the consumer and encourage sourcing of goods from India.

"The cabinet took the conscious decision to liberalize policy for FDI in single brand retail. FDI in single brand has led to emergence of some global majors in Indian market," said Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma.

Until now, global retailers owning a single brand had to look for an Indian partner as the cap on foreign equity

was 51 percent. "This is a welcome move with a potential to lift the general mood in the economy. Increased investments by foreign single brand retailers will not only help improve consumer choice but also enhance competitiveness of Indian enterprises," said Rajan Bharti Mittal, Vice-Chairman and MD, Bharti Enterprises.



As per the notifications, products to be sold should be of a single brand only as they are sold internationally. Companies which propose to set up wholly owned subsidiaries under the single brand format would have to source at least 30 percent of the value of products sold from Indian small industries, artisans and craftspersons.

Also, only products that are branded during manufacturing will be considered for entry under the single-brand format.

Apex Bank cuts cash reserve ratio

After nearly two years of tight check on money supply to tame inflation, India's central bank took steps on January 24 to infuse more liquidity in the system by reducing a key rate.

The cash reserve ratio (CRR), the amount against deposits which commercial banks have to keep as liquid assets such as cash, has been lowered by 50 basis points to 5.5 percent from 6 percent.

"This step will release \$6.5 billion into the system," Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor D. Subbarao said in a statement, soon after presenting the third quarter review of the monetary policy for the current fiscal year.

"The policy actions and the guidance are expected to ease liquidity conditions, mitigate downside risks

to growth and anchor medium-term inflation expectations on the basis of a credible commitment to low and stable inflation," he added.

"The announcement should help address the money market liquidity sit-



uation, which has tightened in the past two-three months," Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on January 24.

Industry welcomed the cut in CRR, but urged the central bank to start lowering interest rates in forthcoming reviews.

"This gives a clear signal that the RBI has recognized the challenges to growth owing to a weakening demand condition. The RBI needs to start reducing the repo rate as well in order to start the investment cycle, which has weakened," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director-General, Confederation of Indian Industry.

"The growth-inflation balance of the monetary policy stance has now shifted to growth, while at the same time ensuring that inflationary pressures remain contained," the RBI Governor said.

India's annual rate of inflation currently stands at a two-year low of 7.47 percent for December, 2011.

'India can be a great power using more renewable energy'

India can be a great power, ushering in a game changing third industrial revolution by utilizing its renewable energy resources and collaborating with power producers and suppliers, says American economist and author Jeremy Rifkin.

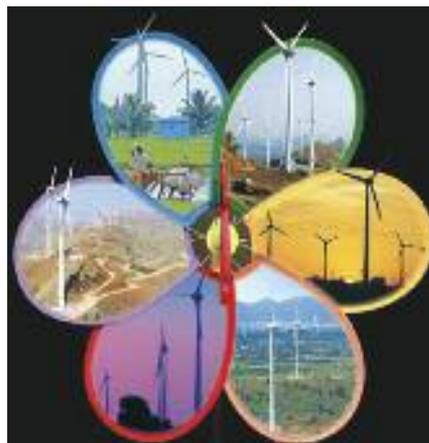
"With the second industrial revolution, which was ushered in through internal combustion engine and heavy use of crude oil, being on life support, this is the right time for India to use its renewable natural resources to start the third industrial revolution," Rifkin, President of Washington-based Foundation on Economic Trends, said.

Rifkin was in New Delhi for the release of a report, Mega Trends of the Emerging Third Industrial Revolution in India, prepared in collaboration with FICCI Young Leaders.

"India is the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy sources and if

properly utilized, India can realize its place in the world as a great power," said Rifkin.

According to Rifkin, the country can leapfrog into the third industrial revolution by creating infrastructure



that allows individual buildings, houses and villages to generate energy by utilizing renewable sources like solar, wind and geothermal energy.

"Imagine houses in villages producing energy through solar power and then selling the same energy through internet or distribution companies, this will give level-playing field to the rural areas in terms of industrialization."

The report claims that if 20 percent of all energy needs be sourced from renewable sources, it would create jobs and industries that in the long term will lower the cost of generating energy through these methods.

"It's just like the case of personnel computers. Earlier they were very expensive but with mass production and usage the cost of one (personnel computers) has come down," said Rifkin.

Some of the mega trends mentioned in the report include less dependence on fossil fuels, new business models in sharing of energy, new and intelligent technologies, collaborative education for preparing a workforce of the 21st century.

'Tulsi' as anti-radiation medicine

From grandma's home remedies for cough, cold and other ailments, 'tulsi' (Holy Basil) is now being tested by Indian scientists for treating people exposed to harmful radiations and initial tests have shown some positive results.

Scientists at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have developed a tulsi-based herbal medicine for treating people exposed to radiations. The medicine is already in the second phase of trials. According to scientists, tulsi has anti-oxidant properties and can repair cells damaged by exposure to radiation.

"Tulsi-based medicine is already in second phase of clinical trials. It has to undergo some more trials before it is finalized and goes for commercial production. Animal trials have also been conducted and their results were quite encouraging," DRDO's Chief Controller (Research and Development) W. Selvamurthy said.



Besides tulsi, sea-buckthorn and Himalayan mayapple (*Podophyllum hexandrum*) were other herbs chosen to develop medicines not just to treat those effected by nuclear radiations but also as a precaution for those going for rescue work in radiation-affected areas.

Selvamurthy said it was for the first time in the world that tulsi was being used for countering the harmful effects of exposure to radiation.

"The medicines used for treating radiation-related ailments are very toxic in nature. These herbal medicines would change the way radiation treatment takes place, as they would be quite safe," he added.

Listing out other innovations by the research organization, Selvamurthy said a special Aloe Vera based anti-frostbite cream, Alocal, had been developed for soldiers deployed at higher altitudes. The medicine, which is already in the market, prevents frostbite.

India's first Start-up Village at Kochi

The country's first Public Private Partnership (PPP) telecom business incubator — Startup Village — will be set up at KINFRA Park in Kalamassery near Kochi in Kerala.

The Startup Village will focus primarily on student start-ups from college campuses and would be modeled on Technology Incubators in the Silicon Valley, US.

It aims to incubate 1,000 product start-ups over 10 years and start the search for a billion-dollar company from a college campus by the turn of this decade.

The National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), the



Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, Technopark and MobME Wireless have joined hands to set up the Startup Village.

An agreement for 15,000 sq ft space was signed between MobME CEO Sanjay Vijayakumar and KINFRA Managing Director S. Ramanath.

Ramanath said the Startup Village would provide a vibrant ecosystem for start-ups to create breakthrough technologies for the global telecom-

munications industry. "This would be made possible in association with leading companies in the telecom sector by setting up Telecom Innovation Zones that bring the latest technology platforms and products to the start-ups in the incubator before it is released in the commercial markets," said Ramnath.

The first phase of the Startup Village is expected to be inaugurated by February this year and the first batch would be inducted by April.

Sijo Kuruvilla, CEO of Startup Village, said the campus would have full 4G network, advanced telecom labs and provide all services required for a student to start a company even while in college.

Birds are back at Hokarsar



Hokarsar Bird Reserve — this premier wetland in Srinagar is in the prime of its beauty these days. It is host to more than 600,000 migratory birds, with the numbers swelling with each passing day.

Each year, thousands of migratory birds leave their summer homes in Russian Siberia, the Philippines, eastern Europe, China and Japan, flying thousands of miles by navigating their long arduous journeys through instinct, to reach their winter homes in the valley.

More than 600,000 migratory birds, including greylag geese, mallards, gadwalls, garganeys, pochards, grebes, wigeons, shovellers, teals, coots and pintails, have reached this bird reserve.

“We have around 4,000-5,000 greylag geese in the reserve this time and more are arriving each day,” Wildlife Warden (Wetlands) Rouf Zargar says, adding his department has formed special anti-poaching patrols to check illegal hunting of the birds outside the reserve. Bird hunting has been banned in Jammu and Kashmir since 2001.

“Bird protection has to be a communal effort and all of us have to understand that our survival is directly linked to the well-being of wild animals and birds around us,” the warden asserts.

Encouragingly, some migratory bird

species like the purple moorhens have started living inside this bird reserve as residents.

“We have around 50,000 purple moorhens in the reserve this time. They lay eggs inside and bring up their chicks,” says Muhammad Ramzan, a forester at the reserve.

More than 600,000 migratory birds have left their summer homes in far away places to reach the Hokarsar Bird Reserve



“Initially, they used to be migratory in nature, but for the last six years they have changed their habits and live as resident birds here.”

Ramzan also spotted scores of cormorants.

“The cormorants are basically birds of passage. They live here for a short time after their arrival. They will soon fly out to the Indian plains where they spend the winter months.

“They will again spend a part of their time in this reserve in the spring before flying out to their summer homes,” says Ramzan.

Displaying their mutli-colored plumage, the birds fly in systematic patterns, creating a mesmerizing spectacle over the skies in the reserve.

“We also host Ruddy Shelducks in the reserve. The migratory bird is known for its capacity to fly high,” says the warden.

“All the migratory birds leave the reserve in the evenings for feeding in the Wullar Lake and other water bodies, but with mathematical accuracy, they return in the mornings to spend the day in the safety of the reserve.”

The birds feed on water chestnuts and wild grass, but when the water bodies are frozen during the extreme winter cold, the wildlife department arranges special paddy meals for them.

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A view of the illuminated Rashtrapati Bhawan (C), the two North and the South Blocks of the Central Secretariat atop Raisana Hill during the Beating the Retreat Ceremony, in New Delhi on January 29, 2012.

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