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(Above) IAF helicopters carrying the tricolor and three services flag, during the 64th Republic Day Parade-2013, at Rajpath in New Delhi on January 26. (Below) BSF marching contingent passing through the Rajpath during the Republic Day Parade.



India celebrates 64th Republic Day

■ 11TH PRAVASI
BHARATIYA DIVAS
HELD IN KERALA

■ FIRST INDIAN APPAREL
TRADE SHOW IN NEW
YORK A SUCCESS

■ 100TH SESSION OF
INDIAN SCIENCE
CONGRESS IN KOLKATA

India will fight sexual violence

After a horrific rape, Delhi has resolved to move beyond words to action. The people demand it...

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and India's political leadership, like all Indians, expressed distress and sadness over the brutal rape of a 23-year-old woman in December in New Delhi. But our leaders were more than emotional when the news broke. They were and remain determined to change our nation's laws — as well as the implementation of those laws — to prevent such heinous acts in the future.

Media outlets have reported and re-reported the horrible facts of the events that led to the young woman's death. But they have underemphasized an important and incontrovertible fact: Mr. Singh has asked not only his national government in New Delhi, but also governments at all levels in India, to find solutions and implement them as soon as possible.

"Government has decided to review the present laws and examine the levels of punishments in cases of aggravated sexual assault," Mr. Singh said in late December. "Women and girls represent half the population and our society has not been fair to this half."

These were not just words. The Prime Minister quickly appointed a commission of inquiry comprised of eminent jurists and headed by the former Chief Justice of India J.S. Verma to conduct a wide-ranging examination of the facts.

The commission's report came out last week and is a concrete step in the direction of safeguarding women's safety. It recommended an overhaul of the legal system dealing with sexual assault, including implementing speedier trials and more severe punishment for rape. In a letter thanking Mr. Verma for the efforts made by the commission, Mr. Singh has assured that the government will be prompt in pursuing its recommendations.

But the government is not alone in



promising action. Nongovernmental organizations, civic associations, media and motivated young people and women have used the incident to redouble their efforts. They are making citizens aware not just of the problem of rape, but also of violence in homes and gender discrimination.

Many thousands of people took to the streets spontaneously to express their outrage after the New Delhi rape. They were empowered by enhanced awareness, new technology and social media — themselves offshoots of the economic and social progress taking place in India.

All of this energy and determination to improve, to bring about and demand change, is good for India. It reflects the strong democratic experience and institutions in the country.

"Gender inequality is another aspect, which deserves special attention," Mr. Singh said in his remarks last month.

Nongovernmental organizations, civic associations, media and motivated young people and women have used the incident to redouble their efforts

"The emergence of women in public spaces, which is an absolutely essential part of social emancipation, is accompanied by growing threats to their safety and security."

As I know well and personally, women have a growing and important role in Indian society. We have had a fearless and charismatic woman prime minister (Indira Gandhi) and a woman president (Pratibha Patil). Today, we have our first woman speaker of the Parliament in Meira Kumar, among many other senior positions in both government and business. In my own family, I have seen how the nurturing encouragement of my parents encouraged me and my sister, who is now an admiral in the Indian Navy, to be independent women with dreams of our own.

But this progress, and there has been a lot of it, has not come without some growing pains. Although our society has steadily welcomed women as full partners in civil society and business — and progress on gender issues has been made — all-encompassing success takes time.

The government will not stop at changing laws. Solutions will need to include changes to institutions, society and mindsets, as well as updates to legal statutes. We know this is true in India, just as it is true in other countries that experience similar challenges — whether "honor killings," domestic violence or discrimination at the workplace.

But what's pivotal here is that the tragic death of a young woman will not have been in vain. The true homage to her memory will be to channel legitimate emotions and energies into a constructive, effective course of action.

We, the people of India, are committed to bringing about this change.

(Published in Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2013).



Vignettes from India's 64th Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26.

India celebrates 64th Republic Day

The country showcased its indigenous military hardware and rich cultural diversity at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi

With millions taking part, India celebrated its 64th Republic Day on January 26 with pomp and pride.

Men, women and children participated enthusiastically in numerous events across the length and breadth of the world's most populous democracy which was declared a Republic on January 26 in 1950.

It was the first Republic Day for President Pranab Mukherjee, and the chief guest at the main event in the capital was King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk of Bhutan.

In the national capital, the celebrations began on a clear and sunny morning with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paying homage to the unknown soldier at the India Gate war memorial in the heart of the capital.

The President's Bodyguard, resplendent in their red tunics, white breeches and black boots, red and white pennants fluttering from their lances held high, presented the National Salute.

The National Anthem was played and a 21-gun salute boomed out.

That was the signal for the parade to roll down Rajpath, the grand boulevard

that stretches three kilometers from Vijay Chowk at the foot of the Raisina Hill that houses the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

There was a perfect blend of indigenous military hardware and rich cultural diversity as the country showcased its military strides as well as its roots with the past.

The smartly attired marching contingents came from the armed forces, the paramilitary forces, the National Cadet Corps and school students in their colorful best.

There were also tableaux from 19 states and government departments.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry paid a tribute to 100 years of Indian cinema. With posters of prominent artists and stills from classic movies, the tableau also had artists dressed as famous Hindi film characters.

Equally eye-catching was the tableau from the Ministry of Social Justice, which had physically challenged people on wheel chairs, giving a message of their strength and aspirations.

Festivals and different art forms dominated the state tableaux.

Uttar Pradesh showcased the

famous 'Lathmar' Holi, which is observed before the Holi festival and entails women hitting men with sticks.

The West Bengal's tableau paid a tribute to Swami Vivekananda, whose 150th birth anniversary was celebrated this year.

The Meghalaya tableau had its harvest festival 'Hundred Drums Wangala', while Odisha had the 'Chandan Yatra (sandalwood voyage) of Lord Jagannath'.

Karnataka displayed its kinnal art — colorful wooden handicrafts, while Bihar had 'sikki' art — making of mats and baskets of a special grass, which is harvested once in a year.

Jammu and Kashmir presented a tableaux showcasing its famous Pashmina wool shawls.

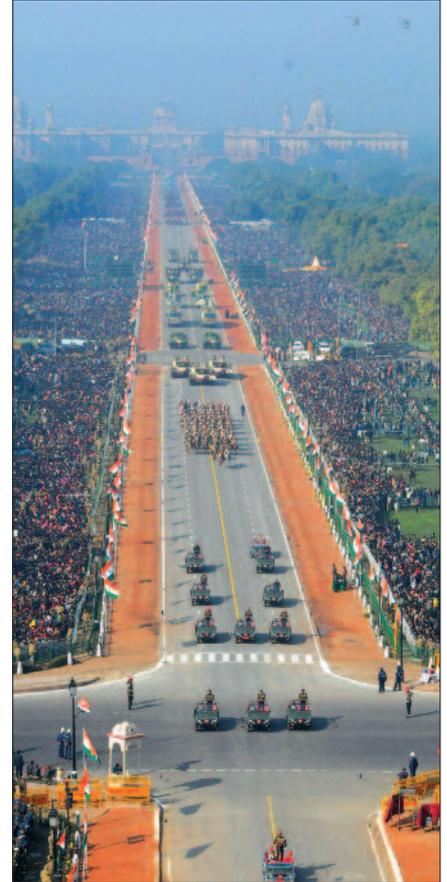
The parade was split almost equally between the military and cultural elements, the latter bringing up the rear.

A flypast by the air force provided the grand finale with the piece de resistance being a lone Sukhoi Su-30MKI streaking into the wild blue yonder in a Vertical Charlie manoeuvre.

Republic Day celebrations were held in state capitals and district headquarters with patriotic zeal.

India's enduring vitality is at work: President

Lauding India's rapid progress in achieving high economic growth and social stability over the last six decades, President Pranab Mukherjee said the country would progress more in the next ten years than it had in the last sixty



President Pranab Mukherjee addressing the Nation on the eve of India's 64th Republic Day, in New Delhi on January 25. (Right) A bird's eye view of Rajpath, during the Republic Day Parade-2013, in New Delhi on January 26. (Photo AFP)

In his maiden Republic Day eve speech, President Pranab Mukherjee hailed the spirit of the Indian youth and predicted a bright future for India.

In a crisp speech laced with his trademark intellect, the President said, "On our 64th Republic Day, there may be some reason for concern but none for despair."

"If India has changed more in six decades than six previous centuries, then I promise you that it will change more in the next 10 years than in the previous sixty. India's enduring vitality is at work," he added.

"The energy of youth has to be channelized toward change with speed, dignity and order."

He spoke of India's many successes over the past six decades, the vision of India's founding leaders and asked the civil society and the government to work together for the country's betterment.

"India can double its growth rate by turning today's disadvantages into multiple engines of economic development," he said.

"Even the British," he said, "sensed that they were leaving a land which was very different from the one they

had occupied... The spirit of India is written in stone."

Excerpts from the President's address to the Nation:

"On the eve of our 64th Republic Day, I extend warm greetings to all of you in India and abroad. I convey my special greetings to members of our armed forces, paramilitary forces and internal security forces.

India has changed more in last six decades than in six previous centuries. This is neither accidental nor providential; history shifts its pace when touched by vision. The great dream of



(Left) Chief Guest of Republic Day, King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, with President Pranab Mukherjee during the 'At Home' reception, hosted by the President, on the occasion of the 64th Republic Day celebrations, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on January 26. (Right) Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paying homage at the Amar Jawan Jyoti, India Gate, on the occasion of the Republic Day Parade 2013.

We stand with you, US tells India

Greeting the people of India on the eve of India's 64th Republic Day, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a message on January 25 said the India-U.S. strategic partnership was making the world more united, prosperous, and secure.

Following is the full text of Secretary Clinton's message on the occasion:

"On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I am delighted to send my best wishes to the people and government of India as you celebrate your 64th Republic Day this January 26th.

The United States and India share an unwavering commitment to democratic government. Our shared values are the foundation for the innovative, entrepreneurial drive that is allowing more and more of our 1.5 billion people to realize their potential.

My three trips to India as Secretary of State reinforced my unyielding belief that the U.S.-India strategic partnership is making the world more united, prosperous, and secure. Together we are strengthening our ties and working to address some of the most difficult global challenges.

As you celebrate this special day, know that the United States stands with you. Best wishes for a year filled with peace and prosperity."

raising a new India from the ashes of colonialism reached a historic denouement in 1947; more important, independence became a turning point for an equally dramatic narrative, nation-building. The foundations were laid through our Constitution, adopted on 26 January 1950, which we celebrate each year as Republic Day. Its driving principle was a compact between state and citizen, a powerful public-private partnership nourished by justice, liberty and equality.

India did not win freedom from the British in order to deny freedom to Indians. The Constitution represented a second liberation, this time from the stranglehold of traditional inequity in gender, caste, community, along with other fetters that had chained us for too long.

This inspired a Cultural Evolution which put Indian society on the track to modernity: society changed in a gradual evolution, for violent revolution is not the Indian way. Change across the knotted weaves of the social fabric remains a work in progress, impelled by periodic reform in law and the momentum of popular will.

In the last six decades there is much that we can be proud of. Our economic growth rate has more than tripled. The literacy rate has increased by over four times. After having attained self sufficiency, now

we are net exporters of food-grain. Significant reduction in the incidence of poverty has been achieved. Among our other major achievements is the drive toward gender equality.

No one suggested this would be easy. The difficulties that accompanied the first quantum leap, the Hindu code bill, enacted in 1955 tell their own story. It needed the unflinching commitment of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Babasaheb Ambedkar to push through this remarkable legislation. Jawaharlal Nehru would later describe this as perhaps the most important achievement of his life. The time has now come to ensure gender equality for every Indian woman. We can neither evade nor abandon this national commitment, for the price of neglect will be high. Vested interests do not surrender easily. The civil society and the government must work together to fulfill this national goal.

We are on the cusp of another generational change; the youth of India spread across villages and towns, are in the vanguard of change. The future belongs to them. They are today troubled by a range of existential doubts. Does the system offer due reward for merit? Have the powerful lost their Dharma in pursuit of greed? Has corruption overtaken morality in public life? Does our legislature reflect emerging India or does it need radical

108 eminent personalities to get Padma awards



From left, scientist Yashpal, cricketer Rahul Dravid and actor Sharmila Tagore.

Noted scientists Yashpal and Roddam Narasimha, cricketer Rahul Dravid, actor Rajesh Khanna and comedian Jaspal Bhatti (both posthumous), and boxer Mary Kom, are among the 108 eminent and illustrious personalities named for India's highest civilian honors, Padma awards, this year.

According to a release from the Home Ministry on January 25, President Pranab Mukherjee approved the names of the 108 awardees, who include four Padma

Vibhushan, 24 Padma Bhushan and 80 Padma Shri. As many as 24 of the awardees are women.

Among the Padma Vibhushan awardees are Yashpal, Roddam Narasimha and artist S. Haider Ali Raza.

Among the Padma Bhushan awardees are actors Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila Tagore, Bhatti, industrialist Adi Godrej, as well as Dravid and Mary Kom.

Actor Nana Patekar, Urdu poet Nida Fazli, wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, boxer Dingko Singh,

filmmaker Ramesh Sippy, Magsaysay Award winner Nileema Mishra, Olympic medallist Vijay Kumar are among the Padma Shri awardees.

The country's top civilian awards are given under various disciplines like arts, literature, social work, public affairs, medicine, and sports.

Padma Vibhushan is given for exceptional and distinguished service, Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field.

reforms? These doubts have to be set at rest. Elected representatives must win back the confidence of the people. The anxiety and restlessness of youth has to be channelized towards change with speed, dignity and order.

India's most impregnable asset is self-belief. Each challenge becomes an opportunity to strengthen our resolve to achieve unprecedented economic growth and social stability. Such resolve must be nourished by an avalanche of investment, particularly in better and greater education. Education is the ladder that can help those at the bottom to rise to the pinnacles of professional and social status. Education is the mantra that can transform our economic fortunes and eliminate the gaps that have made our society unequal. So far education has

not reached, to the extent desired, to those most in need of this ladder. India can double its growth rate by turning today's disadvantaged into multiple engines of economic development.

On our 64th Republic Day, there may be some reason for concern, but

In the last six decades there is much that we can be proud of. Our economic growth rate has more than tripled. The literacy rate has increased by over four times

none for despair. If India has changed more in six decades than six previous centuries, then I promise you that it will change more in the next ten years than in the previous sixty. India's enduring vitality is at work.

Even the British sensed that they were leaving a land which was very different from the one they had occupied. At the base of the Jaipur Column in Rashtrapati Bhavan there is an inscription:

"In thought faith...
In word wisdom...
In deed courage...
In life service...
So may India be great"

The spirit of India is written in stone.
Jai Hind!"

India, US join hands to improve agricultural productivity in African countries

The three-year India-US-Africa triangular partnership program will train 180 mid-level African government and private sector agriculture professionals from Kenya, Malawi, and Liberia

India and the United States inaugurated the first triangular India-U.S.-Africa partnership in agricultural training for 30 trainees from three African countries — Kenya, Liberia and Malawi — at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, on January 6. As part of the India-U.S. strategic partnership, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed during President Obama's visit to India in November 2010 to use the expertise of both countries in agricultural capacity-building to extend food security to interested third countries.

The three-year triangular partnership program aims to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen agricultural value chains, and support market institutions in Kenya, Liberia, and Malawi.

Supported by the U.S. Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture of India, the program is being implemented by two of India's leading agricultural training institutes — National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, and the Chaudhary Charan Singh National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The program will train 180 mid-level government and private sector professionals from the targeted countries in agricultural extension practices, agribusiness, and agricultural marketing. The training will include classroom sessions, group work, field trips, and interaction with industry experts. After



Acting Special Representative for Global Food Security Jonathan Shrier addressing the participants of the first U.S.-India-Africa Triangular Training Program at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) in Hyderabad on January 16. (Photo: USAID India)

their training, these professionals will go home with new knowledge, skills, and potential innovations to address their domestic challenges in food and nutrition security.

Joint Secretary (Information Technology and Extension) in Indian Ministry of Agriculture Sanjeev Gupta,

Head of the Ministry of External Affairs Branch Secretariat in Hyderabad Srikar Reddy and the U.S. Department of State Special Representative for Global Food Security Jonathan Shrier (Acting), attended the first agricultural training program for the three African countries in MANAGE on January 16.

The two-month training program covers 15 major themes of agricultural extension management and includes study tours to different parts of the country. The study material developed by the faculty in MANAGE, also covers basic skills in computers, Internet, and other information and communication technology tools. MANAGE will also undertake impact evaluation six months after the completion of the program.

The three-year program aims to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen agricultural value chains, and support market institutions in Kenya, Liberia, and Malawi

Bridge of friendship, cooperation

At the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh assured the overseas Indians of all possible help to deepen their connection with India

Applauding the overseas Indians for serving as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between India and their adopted homes abroad, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said India was committed to deepen their connection with India and advance their interests.

“While honoring their achievements, we will also seek to facilitate their travel, business and education and make it easier for them to be a part of life in India, enjoy due rights and participate in India’s economic development,” the Prime Minister said in his address at the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at Kochi, Kerala, on January 8.

Highlighting the recent steps that the government had taken to boost domestic and foreign investments in India, the Prime Minister said India’s strong economic fundamentals, backed by sound policies, would help the country return to a higher growth path.

Prime Minister Singh said that the overseas Indian community should be a vital partner and participant in India’s social and economic development. “Whether you wish to invest or share your knowledge, technology and skills, whether your enterprise takes you to the cities or your compassion brings you to a remote village, I assure you of our continuing effort to support your endeavours,” he said.

He also assured that the government was deeply concerned about the safety and security of the overseas Indians. When needed, the Prime Minister said, the government of India would provide prompt and necessary assistance.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the government had launched an insurance scheme for workers abroad, established welfare funds for distressed Indians and created mechanisms to help vulnerable women abroad.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh lighting the lamp to inaugurate the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Kochi, Kerala, on January 8.

‘Indian diaspora should help build knowledge society’

President Pranab Mukherjee on January 9 said India viewed its vast diaspora as a valuable contributor to its growth and was keen to expand the bonds further in building an inclusive and knowledge society.

The President said the record remittance of \$67 billion from overseas Indians was a testimony to both the emotional attachment and the fulfillment in investing in India’s strong economy.

“We should explore ways and means to encourage further participation by the diaspora to give additional impetus to India’s growth story,” President Mukherjee said in his valedictory address at the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Kochi, Kerala.

“I also wish to see the Indian diaspora as a stronger partner, not only in India’s economic growth, but also in building India’s knowledge



President Pranab Mukherjee delivering the valedictory address at the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in Kochi, Kerala, on January 9.

society, while continuing to engage culturally and emotionally, and serving as the effective ambassadors that they have been for this country,” the President said.

He said India was the world’s third-largest economy on the basis of purchasing power parity and the second fastest growing economy after China.

He said the diaspora could become partners in India’s progress. “For accelerated growth, investment level has to increase. You all can help in the

process by investing in Indian companies and establishing new ventures,” he said.

“It is a matter of pride for every Indian that there are at least five heads of state or government, and over 70 senior political leaders such as deputy heads of state, speakers, ministers in various countries, who can trace their roots to India,” President Mukherjee said.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards for 15 eminent overseas Indians

President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards on 15 eminent overseas Indians for their contributions at the 11th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Kochi, Kerala, on January 9.

The lone woman in the list is Patricia Maria Rozario, who is settled in the UK. She has won the award for contributions in the field of music.

Australian Indian Society of Victoria and Indian Doctors Forum in Kuwait are the two organizations that have been named for the award, and both get the award for community service. President of Mauritius Rajkeswur Purryag, who was the chief guest at the opening session of the event, led the list of other awardees, winning it for public service.

Among others who won the awards are: Professor Gurusharan Singh Chatwal, Germany (Science); Ashok S. Vaswani, Guinea



President Pranab Mukherjee with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awardees at PBD-2013.

(community service); T.S. Ravindra Menon, Malaysia (Community service); Dr. Rasik V. Joshi, Mexico (Literature); Dr. Satendra K. Singh, New Zealand (Community service); Gilbert. C. Moutien, Reunion Island (Business);

Mohammed R. Karuvanthodi, Saudi Arabia (Business); Ismail E. Ebrahim, South Africa (Business); Bava Pandalingal, UAE, (Community service); Dr. N.R. Kumar, US (Health care); and Subhash Razdan, US, (Public service).

“This protection and promotion of the rights and interests of Indian businesses, professionals and workers abroad is also a key task for our missions in various countries. Our Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements and Social Security Agreements with a number of countries play an important role in this regard,” he said.

The Prime Minister also released a special postage stamp to celebrate the centenary of the Gadar Movement on the occasion.

Excerpts from Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh’s address on the occasion:

“Over the ages, the relationship between Pravasis and Bharat has taken many forms. One of its most glorious manifestations has been their contribution to India’s independence movement. Nearly a hundred years ago, almost to this day, Mahatma Gandhi returned to lead a nation’s march to freedom. This year, we are celebrating the centenary of the Gadar Movement, which was a luminous spark of support in distant California for the struggle for independence being waged at home in our country. Apart from com-

memorating it by the issue of a special postage stamp today, we will also upgrade the Gadar Memorial in San Francisco into a functional museum and library with a sculpture to honor the Gadar Babas, the heroes of this great national movement.

Post-independence, overseas Indians have served as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between India and their adopted homes abroad. Regardless of whether they are successful professionals, traders and entrepreneurs, or second generation Indians, comfortably reconciling their two identities, or workers toiling hard to build a future for their families, they are at all times a most effective window for the world to India’s heritage and its progress.

We in the Government will do all that is possible to deepen their connection with India and advance their interests. While honoring their achievements, we will also seek to facilitate their travel, business and education and make it easier for them to be a part of life in India, enjoy due rights and participate in India’s economic development.

As the Indian expatriate community develops a more global presence, they also become more vulnerable to eco-

nomnic crises, conflicts, civil unrest or just senseless hate crimes. At a time of turbulence in many parts of the world, the safety and security of overseas Indian communities are uppermost in our minds. We derive comfort from the assurances that we have received from governments in the countries of your residence that they will do everything for your safety and security. We recognize that the primary responsibility rests with the host countries, but when needed, as was the case last year in Libya, our government will provide prompt and necessary assistance.

Apart from physical safety, we are also concerned with the social and emotional well-being of our overseas brethren. We have therefore launched an insurance scheme for workers, established welfare funds in our embassies for distressed Indians, and created mechanisms to help vulnerable women abroad.

Let me assure you that as India continues to grow, as our external engagement increases and as we assume higher international responsibilities, Pravasi Bharatiyas will continue to remain close to our hearts, as partners in our national efforts and as vital links to the outside world.”

'Indian apparel can meet US market demands'



Ambassador Nirupama Rao making the opening remarks at the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Trade Show in New York City on January 28. (Photo:-Jay Mandal/On Assignment)

Ambassador Nirupama Rao has said that India's apparel sector has upgraded its technology and is highly competitive in meeting the U.S. market demands in various segments, including in high fashion and mass consumption segments.

Inaugurating the first Indian apparel trade show organized by the Apparel Export Promotion Council of India (AEPC), in cooperation with M/S Trade Good, in New York on January 28, Ambassador Rao said that at \$5.3 billion, India's export of garments represented one of the important constituents of overall India-U.S. trade. Consul General of India in New York Prabhu Dayal, Chairman of AEPC A. Sakthivel and President of American Apparel and Footwear Association Kevin Burke were also present on the occasion.

Ambassador Rao highlighted that through DISHA (Driving Industry towards Sustainable Human Advancement), the Indian apparel industry had implemented an industry-wide measure for facilitating and preparing Indian apparel manufacturers toward becoming more socially and environmentally responsible.

The first Indian apparel trade show, featuring 35 exporters and their Fall/Winter 2013-14 collections, brought more than 300 U.S. buyers, including at least 20 brand stores.

Some of the major buyers who



Ambassador Rao inaugurating the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Trade Show in New York City on January 28. (Photo:-Jay Mandal/On Assignment)



Ambassador Rao unveiling the catalogue at the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Trade Show in New York City on January 28. (Photo:-Jay Mandal/On Assignment)

attended the two-day show included Ralph Lauren, Warnaco, Children Place, Lord & Taylor, Under Armour, VF Sportswear, Nautica, Red Cat and Jones Apparel.

The buyer-seller meet helped generate substantial spot business and

cement long-term business partnerships for participating exhibitors.

India is the third largest producer of cotton yarn, the second largest producer of cellulosic yarn, the second largest producer of silk and the fourth largest producer of synthetic fiber. ■

Republic Day Reception at Embassy Residence

On the occasion of India's Republic Day, Ambassador Nirupama Rao hosted a reception on January 24. Welcoming Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, Congressman Ami Bera and other distinguished guests, Ambassador Rao said that India's Republic Day was an occasion to celebrate the "strength and resilience of India's vibrant democracy, her respect for fundamental freedoms, her upholding of the rule of law, and her commitment to friendship with neighbors and our partners all over the world". It was also an occasion to "renew our pledge and our determination to protect our Republic, and to work for the progress of our country", she said.

Ambassador Rao said that it was India's faith in democracy and its democratic dividend that united the country with the U.S. in a partnership. "Our strategic partnership with the United States is marked by energy, by hope, by the vision of our leaders that our cooperation for global peace, progress and stability can make a difference for our century," she said.

"We have particularly valued the friendship, the commitment and dedicated cooperation of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Deputy Secretary Burns, Under Secretary Sherman, and other outstanding colleagues in the Department of State in this journey that we have jointly undertaken to strengthen the

India-U.S. partnership over the last few years," she added.

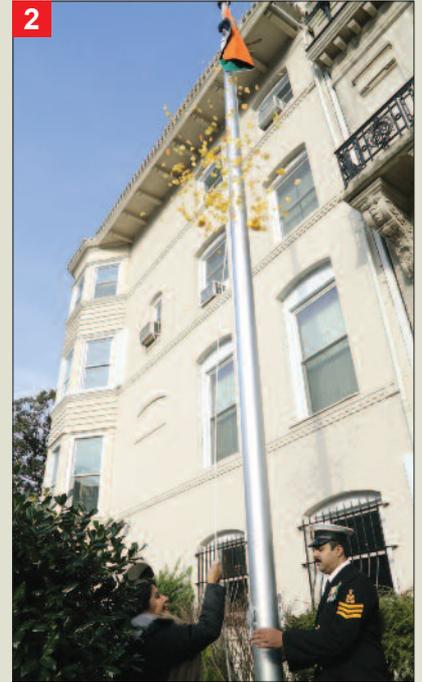
Speaking of a new phase of India-U.S. relationship after President Obama's reelection, Ambassador Rao quoted Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's congratulatory message to President Obama on his reelection. "I have no doubt that there is much more we can do together to further strengthen the India-U.S. partnership and thereby advance peace and stability, expand mutual economic opportunities, harness the potential of science and technology, innovation and higher education and empower our people to address global challenges," Prime Minister Singh had said.

Ambassador Rao said India and U.S. must work together to realize the agenda clearly spelled out by Prime Minister Singh. Such a partnership was crucial not only for India and the U.S., but for the rest of the world as well, she said.



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming and addressing the guests at a reception to celebrate India's Republic Day at the Embassy Residence on January 24.
2. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns addressing the guests on the occasion.
3. Ambassador Rao with Deputy Secretary Burns.
4. Ambassador Rao with Congressman Ami Bera.
5. Guests in attendance.

Embassy celebrates Republic Day 2013



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao paying floral tribute at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on January 26 on the occasion of India's 64th Republic Day.
2. Ambassador Rao unfurling the National Flag.
3. Ambassador Rao addressing the guests and reading out the President's message to the Nation.
4. Musical group 'Tarang' rendering patriotic songs in various Indian languages.
5. Guests in attendance.

CGI Houston celebrates India's Republic Day

The Consulate General of India in Houston organized a Flag Hoisting Open House for Indian nationals and friends of India on the occasion of India's 64th Republic Day at the residence of Consul General of India in Houston

P. Harish on January 26. Congressman Al Green, Representative (D-TX 9th District), graced the occasion with his presence, among others.

On the following day, a reception was also organized. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Representative

(D-TX 18th District), Congressman Pete Olson, Representative (R-TX 22nd District) and Congressman Green were among those who attended the reception. A cultural program by prominent Indian artists enchanted the audience on the occasion.



1. Consul General P. Harish unfurling the National Flag on the occasion of India's 64th Republic Day on January 26.
2. Congressman Al Green, Representative (D-TX 9th District), presenting a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition to Consul General Harish on the occasion.
3. A presentation by Anisha Rajesh of Upasana Kalakendra, at the Republic Day reception on January 27.
4. From left, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Representative (D-TX 18th District), Consul General Harish, Congressman Pete Olson, Representative (R-TX 22nd District) and Congressman Al Green, Representative (D-TX 9th District) at the Republic Day reception.
5. A cultural program presented by Divyaa Unni, Artistic Director, Sreepadam School of Arts, and her students at the Republic Day reception.



A reception to mark India's 64th Republic Day

The Consulate General of India in New York hosted a reception to celebrate the 64th Republic Day of India on January 26. Consul General Prabhu Dayal read out President Pranab

Mukherjee's address to the Nation on the eve of the Republic Day. In his address, the Consul General commended the Indian-American community for its contribution to the strengthening of India-U.S. relations.

Representatives from the Indian-American community and Consul Generals of other countries, among others, attended the event. New Jersey-based singer Varsha Joshi rendered patriotic songs on the occasion. 



Consul General Prabhu Dayal welcoming and greeting the guests.



A cross-section of the audience on the occasion.

Mahatma Gandhi Punya Tithi observed

The Consulate General of India, New York, in association with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA observed the 65th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's Punya Tithi on January 30. Consul General of India in New York Prabhu Dayal and

Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan H. R. Shah payed floral tributes to the Mahatma's portrait.

In his address, Consul General Prabhu Dayal shed light on the continued relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy in the contemporary world.

Sanjukta Sen and students of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan presented of Gandhi's favorite bhajans on the occasion. Around 50 guests, including teachers, students, journalists and office bearers of the Bhavan attended the event. 



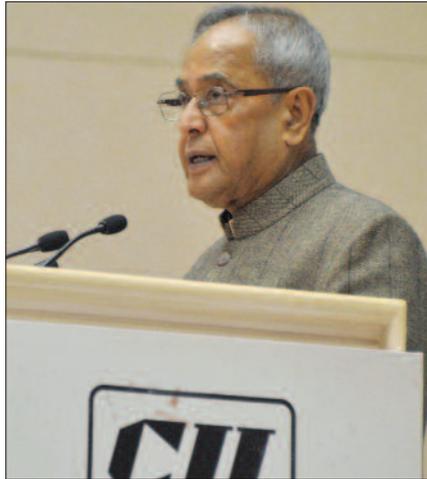
1. Consul General Prabhu Dayal addressing guests on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's Punya Tithi on January 30.
2. Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan H. R. Shah speaking on the occasion.
3. Sanjukta Sen and students of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan presenting devotional songs on the occasion.

'Balance economic growth and environment'

Economic growth is undoubtedly the prime driver of a country's overall development but the natural ecosystem and the people who make up the society are also vital for nation-building, President Pranab Mukherjee said on January 14.

Speaking at the presentation of the CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2012, President Mukherjee said: "We need to usher in a culture of social responsibility in the governance of Indian companies."

"Indian business, by integrating social and environmental objectives in their operations, can make a positive contribution for the betterment



President Pranab Mukherjee speaking at the CII-ITC Sustainability Awards for 2012 presentation ceremony, in New Delhi on January 14.

of our society. Inclusive growth should not be a mere slogan but a fundamental driving force for sustainable development," he said.

Appealing to the Indian industry to be part of the sustainability movement, President Mukherjee said: "What is necessary for our industry is a belief that the compulsion of creating value for a business cannot be separated from our concern for society and environment."

He said that environmental sustainability had an important place in today's global discourse on growth and development. He urged the industrialists not to compromise the future capacity of the ecosystem.

India to expand indigenous nuclear power program: PM

Stating that nuclear energy would remain an increasingly important element of the nation's energy mix, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on January 15 said that India was in the process of expanding its indigenous nuclear power program. He emphasized that the government would also ensure that the safety and livelihood of people were not affected in pursuit of nuclear power.

"As we pursue our national growth objectives to meet the rising aspirations of our people, the supply of affordable clean energy will be one of our foremost national challenges and a key priority for our government," he said.

The Prime Minister said the first nuclear reactor with Russian collaboration at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu would start operating soon and the second reactor would follow by the year-end.

"Even as we implement our power program, we will continue to ensure that nuclear power remains wholly safe. The Fukushima incident in 2011 raised justifiable safety concerns about nuclear power," he said.



Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh addressing at the Lifetime Achievement Awards 2011 presentation ceremony of the Department of Atomic Energy, in New Delhi on January 15.

India defers anti-avoidance tax norms to April 2016

In a move to boost investor confidence, India on January 14 deferred the implementation of the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) by two years to April 2016 and exempted non-resident Indians in foreign institutional investors (FIIs) from its purview.

"Having considered all the circumstances and relevant factors, the government has decided that the provisions of Chapter 10A will come into force with effect from April 1, 2016 as against the current provision of April 1, 2014," Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said.

The GAAR norms introduced by the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee is targeted at the foreign investors and companies routing money through tax havens like Mauritius.

"GAAR will not apply to such FIIs that choose not to take any benefit under an agreement under section 90 or section 90A of the Income-tax Act, 1961. GAAR will also not apply to non-resident investors in FIIs," he said.

Highlights of the amendments:

- If a tax structure is impermissible, GAAR will apply
- No treaty override in new provision
- GAAR will ensure same income is not taxed twice in the hands of the same taxpayer in the same year or in the next assessment year
- GAAR will not apply to such FIIs that choose not to take any benefit under section 90 and 90A of the IT Act
- If there is a tax avoidance arrangement, the existing provisions of the IT act say that GAAR provisions will prevail.

Boeing delivers IAF's first C-17 for flight testing

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has received its first Boeing C-17 strategic airlifter for flight testing by the U.S. Air Force (USAF).

The technologically sophisticated machine, which has a 77 ton payload, was received on behalf of the IAF by Air Commodore Sanjay Nimesh, Air Attache in the Indian embassy in Washington, and some IAF officers who have been stationed in Long Beach, California, to oversee the completion of the project and for training.

This is the first of the 10 C-17 Globemaster III airlifters that India is buying for \$4.1 billion in accordance

with a 2010 government-to-government agreement and under the U.S. government's foreign military sales (FMS) program.



Boeing has promised to deliver four more aircraft this year and the remaining five in 2014 as per the agreement.

"It was exciting to see the C-17 fly again, this time with Indian Air Force markings, and we look forward to the day that the first IAF C-17 flies over

India," Air Commodore Nimesh observed.

The airlifter will now enter a USAF flight test program at Edwards Air Force Base in Palmdale, California, for training the IAF crew as per the FMS arrangement with the USAF.

"The C-17's ability to operate in extremely hot and cold climates; transport large payloads across vast ranges; and land on short, austere runways makes it ideal for India's airlift needs," said Nan Bouchard, Boeing Vice President and C-17 Program Manager.

Agreement finalized for US engines for indigenous Indian fighter jet

India has finalized an agreement for 99 GE 414 engines to power its indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas.

This is the first, and significant, engine contract for GE Aviation to power fighter jets for India and the LCA will be

Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas will be the first combat aircraft in the inventory of the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy with engines from the US.

Minister) V.K. Saraswat told *India Strategic* (www.indiastategic.in) in an interview that the agreement with GE was signed recently, and that he expected the aircraft to be a success for both the IAF and the Indian Navy.

GE won the contract for its F414-GE-INS6 afterburner turbofan engine



the first combat aircraft in the inventory of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy with engines from the US. Both services have U.S.-made transport aircraft though and all the three U.S. engine majors, GE, Honeywell and Pratt & Whitney have supplied power units for them.

DRDO Director General (and Scientific Adviser to the Defense

in September 2010 with a narrow margin against a competing bid by the European Eurojet EJ 200.

GE, which is already supplying its LM 2500 gas turbine engines for some newer Indian Navy ships, was given the necessary clearance by the U.S. Government. It will supply an initial lot of 18 engines while the remaining will be progressively assembled and made in India.

US media firm acquires stake in Graphic India

CA Media, LP, the Asian investment arm of Los Angeles based The Chernin Group, LLC (TCG), has acquired a large minority stake in Graphic India, a comic book and animation company.

Graphic India is focused on creating mythological and superhero characters, comics and stories for the Indian youth market, published across mobile and online platforms.

Launched last year by media entrepreneurs Sharad Devarajan, Gotham Chopra and Suresh Seetharaman as a subsidiary of U.S. comic book company Liquid Comics, it will now be jointly owned by Liquid Comics and CA Media.

Devarajan will be appointed CEO of Graphic India and will remain Executive Chairman of Liquid Comics, according to a news release.

"At Graphic India, we intend to find, nurture and promote a new generation of creators to transform the world with their stories. The team at The Chernin Group and CA Media bring an unparalleled level of experience in entertainment and we could not imagine a better partner to work with to launch this mission," Devarajan said.

'Take science to people'



President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh releasing the commemorative postage stamp at the inauguration of the 100th Session of Indian Science Congress on January 3.

Help spread the scientific culture among people and win another Nobel for India soon, said President Pranab Mukherjee while inaugurating

the centenary celebrations of the Indian Science Congress in Kolkata on January 3.

"I would like to urge upon you all to apply modern tools for communicat-

ing science in a manner that can be understood by the common man. "This understanding would contribute to the creation of a science culture in the Indian society."

Citing the example of Indian scientists working a century ago, the President said they delivered lectures in a language that lay people could understand and thus motivated a generation of people to move towards scientific endeavor. "Culture of excellence is the second nature of creative scientists. Eminent scientists of the world have always been concerned as to how their understanding of natural phenomena could be applied to solve social problems of the future," he said.

Stating that India was expected to emerge as a major economic power by 2035, he said the country should also emerge as a major knowledge power.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Policy launched at the event aspires to position India among the top five global scientific powers by 2020.

Harness science to boost agriculture: PM

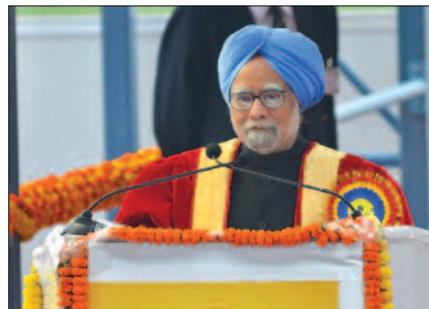
Science and technology must be used for boosting agricultural production as well as to promote inclusive development, said Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh while addressing the Indian Science Congress in Kolkata on January 3.

The Prime Minister said scientific tools must be used to find out new breakthroughs in water-saving technologies of cultivation, boosting land productivity as well as development of climate-resistant varieties of crop.

"The transformation of agriculture must be top priority concern of our public policies, including science and technology policies," he said.

"As India seeks a sustained growth of its national income, we must endeavour to harness the tools of science to cater to the needs of the underprivileged and to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots," he said.

The five-day conclave witnessed



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh speaking at the 100th Session of Indian Science Congress in Kolkata on January 3.

the participation of six Nobel laureates, 60 foreign scientists and over 15,000 delegates.

The Prime Minister also called for popularizing science in schools and colleges, as well as in homes and workplaces through communication methods. "Eventually, science must help in establishing an inclusive society that seeks to solve major social problems through the application of science," he stressed.

Science policy envisages greater private sector role

India's new science, technology and innovation (STI) policy brought out on January 3 envisages greater private sector participation in research and innovation, and forging of international alliances and collaborations to meet the national agenda of inclusive growth.

The policy, unveiled by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the centenary session of the Indian Science Congress in Kolkata, seeks to accelerate the pace of discovery, diffusion and delivery of science-led solutions.

India's demographics have changed significantly over the years, with an overwhelmingly young population that is highly aspirational. New paradigms of innovation have also emerged with globalization.

The STI policy 2013 seeks to trigger an ecosystem for innovation leveraging partnerships among diverse stakeholders and by encouraging and facilitating enterprises to invest in innovations that are country and context specific.

Ami Bera on House foreign affairs panel

California physician Ami Bera, who has become the third Indian-American member of the U.S. House of Representatives, has been named on three prestigious committees on foreign affairs, science, space and technology.

"I am honored to have been named to the House Foreign Affairs Committee," he said in a statement after he was named to the committee following his swearing-in on January 3.

"In an increasingly complex global landscape, relationships with other nations have tangible effects here at home and we need strategic thinking to guide our foreign policy in the 21st century," he said.

The Sacramento region, which Congressman Bera represents, he said, was "uniquely situated to benefit from



Congressman Ami Bera

opening up new markets for our goods and services around the world.

"That would help create jobs here at home. Through my new role on the Science, Space and Technology, I will

also work to foster innovative industries that can bring good jobs to the 7th district," he said.

Recalling his links to India, Congressman Bera said: My parents emigrated here from India in the 1950s with very little but the dream of a better life. I grew up believing America was a land of opportunity, where if you worked hard and played by the rules, you could reach your full potential.

"My family's story isn't unique; it's the story of the American Dream. I will work every day to ensure that we continue to invest in the next generation and keep the American Dream alive."

Raised in La Palma, California, Democrat Bera defeated three-term Republican incumbent Dan Lungren by a narrow margin. — IANS

Indian-Americans celebrate second-term inauguration of President Obama

President Barack Obama's half-sister Maya Soetoro-Ng came to cheer with Indian-Americans as they had a ball to celebrate the second-term inauguration of the man they voted overwhelmingly.

"Indian-Americans are tremendously important and we hope they would be increasingly visible not only in the government, but also in all parts of American life," said Maya at what was billed as "Indiaspora 2013 Inaugural Ball" on January 19.

"It is certainly a reflection of how important India is and how important Indian-Americans are to the fabric of the nation," added Maya at what was termed the Indian-Americans' political "coming-of-age party" at Mandarin Oriental in the national capital.

Joining the President's half-sister were a bevy of American politicians and Indian-American officials from the Obama administration.

The Indian-American community is counted as the most affluent and well-educated ethnic group in the US. — IANS



'Beyond Bollywood' to showcase Indian American experience

The rich history of immigrants from India and Indian Americans and their many contributions to the U.S. will be brought to life in Washington through an upcoming exhibition, *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*.

Scheduled to open in late 2013, the exhibition will showcase the Indian American experience and the many dynamic roles they have played in shaping American society and culture through a collection of photographs, artefacts, videos, interactive stations and stories.

"The Indian American story has yet to be fully told," said Konrad Ng,

Director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Centre, which is mounting the exhibition with New Jersey-based TV Asia network, serving South Asians across the U.S. and Canada, as the media sponsor.

"Visitors of all ages will leave the exhibition with a deeper understanding of this vibrant community as they strive to realize life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in America. This exhibition is about celebrating a community that embodies the American spirit."

Over a two-year period, the exhibition is expected to draw more than seven million visitors before embarking on a national tour in 2015. — IANS

The crows and the serpent

(From *Panchatantra*, a collection of ancient Indian fables)

Once upon a time, there stood a huge banyan tree on the outskirts of a small village. In this tree there lived a pair of crows with their young ones. One day, a snake came to live in the hole at the bottom of the tree. The crows were not happy at the arrival of the snake, but they could do nothing.

After a few days, the female crow hatched her eggs and some baby crows were born. When the crows went out in search of food, the snake crawled up the tree and ate up the babies. When the crows came back, they could not locate their babies. They chased high and low, but to no avail. The crows were full of grief on the loss of their young ones.

After a few months, the female crow hatched some more eggs. This time the female crow stayed in the nest while the male crow went out in search of food. The snake was greedy and ignoring the presence of the female crow, he crept up the tree and attacked the babies. The female crow who was keeping a watchful eye on her babies, tried to fight with the snake, but she was weak. Hearing the shriek of the female crow, other crows came to help her, but the snake had already eaten the young ones and slithered back into his hole.

This killing became the feature of their life. Every time the crows laid their eggs, the snake crawled up the tree and ate all the young ones. Due to this, the crows were never able to raise their young ones. The crows were sad, but they didn't know how to get rid of the killer snake.

One day, the female crow told her partner crow that she wanted to leave that tree at once. The male crow consoled her by saying that the tree had been their home for many years and that they should continue to reside



there. He considered of asking a wise fox for help in order to get rid of the snake. With this thought, both of them went to the place of the wise fox. The fox welcomed her friends and said, "Both of you seem to be very sad. What happened?"

The crows replied, "We are in a big problem. A snake is after us and he eats up our eggs and the young ones. We seek your help in this matter." They narrated the whole story to the fox. The fox was intelligent; she thought for a few minutes and then laid out a brilliant plan before them. She said, "Listen carefully and do it as per the plan. In the morning, go to the river bank where the ladies of the royal family would be bathing. They keep their ornaments in a tray on the river bank. The guards keep a watch on them from a distance".

The fox suggested the crows to pick up a necklace from the tray and fly away making a loud noise. This would compel the guards to chase them to the tree as the crows would drop the necklace into the hole of the snake. In order to get the necklace,

the guards would kill the snake to save themselves and take the necklace. The crows liked the plan and swore to execute it the next morning.

So, the next morning, the crows were ready with their plan. The crow couple flew to the river bank; the female crow picked up the necklace and flew off. While, the male crow shrieked loudly to attract the guards' attention. The guards ran after the crows brandishing their sticks and swords. Soon, they reached the banyan tree where they saw the crows dropping the necklace into the snake hole.

As the guards were trying to take the necklace out with the help of a stick, the snake came out of the hole. The snake hissed at them. The guards killed the snake by sticks and swords. They took the necklace and returned to their place.

The crows were happy to see the sight from a distance. They thanked the fox for her help. Thereafter, the crow couple lived happily with their young ones in the banyan tree. ■

INDIA'S shining SILK industry

Second largest producer of silk in the world, India has the distinction of being the only country to produce all the five known commercial silks, namely mulberry, tropical tasar, oak tasar, eri and muga

India has a rich and complex history in silk production and its silk trade dates back to 15th century. India is also the only country producing all the five known commercial silks, namely, mulberry, tropical tasar, oak tasar, eri and muga, of which muga with its golden yellow glitter is unique and prerogative of India. India's traditional and culture bound domestic market and an amazing diversity of silk garments that reflect geographic specificity have helped the country achieve a leading position in silk industry.

Over the last six decades, the Indian silk industry has registered an impressive growth, both horizontally and vertically. Plans and schemes implemented by the federal and state agencies and relentless efforts of thousands of dedicated persons in the fields of research and extension have contributed to this growth trajectory. For instance, the age-old multivoltine hybrids have been replaced by multivoltine x bivoltine and bivoltine hybrids. The sericulture industry has witnessed a quantum jump in raw silk productivity.



A muga silk *chador* worn by women in Assam. Muga silk, with its golden yellow glitter, is unique and prerogative of India.

Sericulture in National Economy

Sericulture industry provides employment to approximately 7.56 million people in rural and semi-urban areas in India. Of these, a sizable number of workers belongs to the economically weaker sections of society. Around 60 percent of the sericultural activities are undertaken by rural women.

Silks of India

With 14.57 percent share of world's silk production, India is the second largest producer of silk in the world,

second only to China. India has produced around 23230 Metric Tons (MT) of silk, which includes 18395 MT of mulberry silk and 4835 MT of *vanya* silks during the year 2011-12. Mulberry silk is a dominant variety of sericulture practiced in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir. India is the largest consumer of raw silk in the world. As the consumption of raw silk (around 28,733 MT) exceeds the production, the additional requirement of around



Tasar silk is mainly produced in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Tasar culture is practiced on small scale in some parts of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

5,700 MT of silk (particularly bivoltine mulberry silk of international quality) is imported, mainly from China.

Eri, tasar and muga are other varieties of silk produced in India. These are collectively called *vanya* silks (or wild silks) as these silks are mostly products of the forests. Tasar silk is mainly produced in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha while in some parts of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, tasar culture is practiced on small scale. Oak tasar is now being practiced in sub Himalayan states like Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Eri silk ranks first among non-mulberry silk production and found mostly in the hill tracts of the northeastern states besides some parts of Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha. Muga silk, also known as the golden silk, is exclusively found in Assam and is widely distributed in the Brahmaputra Valley.

Research & Development

The Central Silk Board has a network of research and development institutes with a network of Regional Sericulture Research Stations and Research Extension Centers throughout the country to provide necessary research and development support to the industry. The technology developed by R&D institutes of CSB has been popularized among the farmers to maximize yield



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and returns which in turn is bringing out vertical growth of the industry. The raw silk productivity has increased from 87.84 kg/hectare (2007-08) to 90.90 kg/hectare (2011-12). Renditta (numbers of cocoons in kilograms required to produce 1 kg silk) has gone down from 8.13 (2007-08) to 7.66 (2011-12) due to R&D interventions.

Seed Support

CSB has the responsibility of supplying basic seed material for both silkworm and its host food plants besides undertaking production of quality silkworm seed (F1) to supplement the efforts of the concerned state sericulture departments. Under this program, technical assistance and field level training are also provided to the farmers by the grain extension centers. The CSB has a chain of Basic Seed Farms supplying basic seeds to the states. Its commercial seed production centers augment efforts of the states in supplying commercial silkworm seed to farmers. CSB's commercial seed production involvement is about eight percent of the country's current estimated absorption.

Sericulture Development Programs implemented by CBS

The Central Silk Board is currently implementing the Catalytic Development Programs (CDP) under which a number of federally sponsored schemes are taken up for the development of sericulture with the involvement of the state governments, both in traditional and non-traditional areas.

Silk Mark

The Ministry of Textiles came up with an initiative for the protection of the interests of the consumers and other stakeholders by bringing out the 'Silk Mark' scheme in June 2004. Silk Mark, the assurance label, signifies that the product to which it is affixed is made of pure silk. Silk Mark labels can be affixed to primary, intermediate and finished silk products, including yarn, fabric sarees, garments, carpets, etc.

And the Filmfare Award goes to...

Ranbir Kapoor starrer *Barfi!* emerged the top winner at the Filmfare Awards 2013 bagging six trophies, including best film and best actor, while Vidya Balan's *Kahaani* followed close with five wins.

The heart-wrenching love story between a deaf-and-mute boy and an autistic girl, directed by Anurag Basu, won Ileana D'Cruz the best debut (Female) award. Pritam received the Best Background Score and Best Music Director trophies for *Barfi!*. The film, which was India's official entry at the Oscars this year, also won the Sony Trendsetter Of The Year award last night at the 58th Filmfare awards held at the Yash Raj Films studio in suburban Mumbai.

While Vidya continued her winning spree with the Best Actress award for her portrayal of a pregnant woman in search of her



(Above) Vidya Balan receiving the Best Actor (Female) award for *Kahaani* from veteran actor Rekha during the 58th Filmfare Awards in Mumbai. (Left) Actor Ranbir Kapoor speaking after winning the Best Actor (Male) award for *Barfi!*.

husband in *Kahaani*, Sujoy Ghosh won the Best Director award for the film.

It was a big night for most small budget content-driven films released in 2012. Anurag Kashyap's directorial *Gangs of Wasseyapur*, went head to head with John Abraham's debut production *Vicky Donor*, both bagging four awards

each. Annu Kapoor won the best actor in a supporting role (male) for his portrayal of Dr Chaddha in *Vicky Donor*. The film's writer Juhi Chaturvedi earned the Best Story award.

Ayushmann Khurrana, who made his acting debut in the movie, won two awards — Best Debut (male) and Best Playback Singer award (male) for 'Paani Da Rang'.

Irrfan Khan bagged the Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male) for *Paan Singh Tomar*.

Amole Gupte to focus on cinema's place in school curriculum

From making cinema a part of school syllabus and ensuring healthy working hours for child artists to making a roadmap for animation films' release — as the new Chairperson of the Children's Film Society Of India (CFSI), Amole Gupte plans to try new alternatives to create a strong foothold for children's movies in the country.

"As the CFSI chairperson, I should make a difference to children's cinema. Otherwise what's the point? I have the Information & Broadcasting Ministry's full support. My first mandate is to find an alternative distribution network for children's films through schools," said Gupte.

He would be putting forth a proposal to include cinema as a subject in the school syllabi.

"We must start building cinema into the school curriculum in India so that good films would be woven into



Amole Gupte

a child's aesthetic sensibilities from early in his life," said Gupte, the writer of *Taare Zameen Par* and director of *Stanley Ka Dabba*.

"I'd like our children to view Iranian and European films in the same way that they enjoy other school activities like elocution and debate. At the moment, the arts and culture are set aside by students when they reach class VIII. Why can't cinema and the arts be given the same importance as science and chemistry? Give our children early access to aesthetics," he added.

Gupte also suggests regular screening of CFSI produced films in schools.

"In theory, this has been around for many years. But we need to implement the screening of CFSI films in schools more diligently."

OF CULTURE AND FAITH

The Tourism Ministry plans to promote spiritual tourism and attract foreign footfalls by opening Buddhist, Jewish and Sufi centers across the country

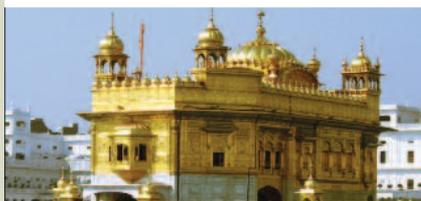
Multicultural India is planning to pitch faith tourism by developing more religious tourist circuits to attract foreign footfalls and encourage greater domestic traveling that has seen double digit growth in recent years benefiting the local economy.

Faith tourism is “recession-proof” and, realizing this, the government is making efforts to promote pilgrimage tourism from ASEAN countries to Buddhist centers and opening a Jewish center in Kochi.

“We have to have a proactive approach for developing these centers,” said Tourism Secretary Parvez Dewan.

Other circuits could be the 22 Sufi centers and the British-era war cemeteries in the country. There are also plans to connect pilgrimage centers in the North with those in the South.

The government has appointed a consultant to identify the spiritual tourism circuits. Tourism Minister K. Cheeranjeevi said that while identifying and developing the circuits, efforts would be made to plug infrastructure gaps and provide necessary amenities to tourists.



From top, Shri Mahavirji Jain Temple in Rajasthan; The Dargah of the Sufi saint Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, in Ajmer, Rajasthan; and the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab.

“We should be sensitive to the needs of people who are visiting these centers,” added Dewan. “For instance, hotels set up in Jain religious centers should address the values and food habits of the people,” he said.

Foreign tourist arrivals have been on the rise and the government wants to

(Above) The Tawang monastery is the largest monastery in India and a very popular tourist attraction in Arunachal Pradesh.

maintain the momentum by developing more sites and certain niche circuits. According to the Planning Commission Working Group on Tourism, India is targeting one percent of world tourist arrivals by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan (2017).

India’s share in international tourist arrivals in 2011 was 0.64 percent.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), nearly 40 million Indians are employed in tourism and the country has the highest growth potential over a 10-year period between 2009 and 2018.

Recognizing the significance of the industry, the government recently relaxed its tourist visa rules by lifting restrictions imposed on foreign visitors.

According to the Tourism Ministry, 6.29 million foreign tourists arrived in 2011, earning the country \$16.5 billion. In the first 11 months of 2012, 5.89 million tourists came to India against 5.57 million in 2011, earning the nation \$16.78 billion, a growth of 22.1 per cent over the like period in 2011.

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■ Magical Music...



Marching bands from the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force march in front of the Central Secretariat and Parliament buildings during the Beating Retreat Ceremony at Vijay Chowk in New Delhi on January 29. The ceremony marks the culmination of Republic Day celebrations in India. (Photo: AFP)

EMBASSY OF INDIA

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