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President Pratibha Devisingh Patil paying tributes at the Amar Jawan Jyoti, India Gate, on the occasion of the 65th Independence Day, in New Delhi on August 15.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh inspecting the Guard of Honor at the Red Fort, on Independence Day, in Delhi on August 15.

India Celebrates its 65th Independence Day

■ NEXT PHASE OF ECONOMIC REFORMS GOVERNMENT'S TOP PRIORITY, SAYS PRIME MINISTER

■ INDIA OPENS MUTUAL FUNDS FOR QUALIFIED FOREIGN INVESTORS ALLOWING INVESTMENTS UP TO \$10 BILLION

■ SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS WITH MORE COUNTRIES SOON FOR PORTABILITY OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil addressing the nation on the eve of the 65th Independence Day, in New Delhi on August 14.

India celebrates 65th INDEPENDENCE DAY

Addressing the nation on the eve of India's 65th Independence Day, the President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, said that the country was committed to the welfare of all and was pursuing the agenda of inclusive growth. She said that the growing gross domestic product (GDP) along with the welfare of the people were the twin pillars of a progressive nation, and that anti-poverty programs, social welfare schemes and a commitment to ensuring food security formed the core of the government's philosophy of inclusive growth.

President Patil said the government was committed to providing common people opportunities to progress and to eradicating poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. Emphasizing the need for revolutionizing the agriculture sector, the President called for greater use of technology in the agriculture sector

to ensure better productivity. She also asked her countrymen to be ever vigilant to fight the menace of terrorism.

Excerpts from President Pratibha Patil's Address to the Nation *"Dear Citizens,*

As I speak to you on the eve of our 65th Independence Day, I extend my warmest greetings to all of you living in India and overseas. To the members of our Armed Forces and Para-military forces who guard our frontiers, and our internal security forces, I extend special greetings.

This significant day in our nation's calendar takes us back to the events that made our country, a free nation. It is to Mahatma Gandhi — the Father of our Nation, to all the other leaders of our freedom movement, and to the millions of people of our country, who fought with bravery and courage, that we pay homage. Our independence

was won on the principles of truth and non-violence. It is this, as well as the transformational impact it had in other parts of the world, that makes our freedom struggle exceptional. In Asia and in Africa, voices of freedom against oppression and colonial power, were encouraged by India's example. We can be proud that we all belong to a country that has proved its greatness through values, which have found such a wide resonance. We, as the inheritors of that great legacy, carry a responsibility to stand by truth and justice; to continue to conduct ourselves, in a manner that is in consonance, with India's standing, as a progressive and responsible country, where values of democracy, harmony and tolerance are deeply embedded.

Today, our nation stands at a threshold. There are important issues on which we must focus, and as we do so, keep in mind that these are times, when we should also be on our guard, about not straying away from our main objective, of strengthening the nation in its many aspects. This is a time for introspection, a time to take well-thought-out measures, and to prepare well for the future. There have been occasions earlier, when confronted with many questions, we did find

answers. The real strength of a nation is judged not by the challenges it faces, but by its responses. Therefore, as we analyze, make policies, legislate, implement schemes and enforce laws, we must not forget that the purpose of all our efforts is to move on the path of progress while ensuring that morals and ethics in our society do not get eroded.

India is the world's largest democracy. The country has performed well economically with a growth rate of 8.6 percent last year. We are committed to the welfare of all and are pursuing an inclusive growth agenda. There is much promise, much potential, much hope and much optimism about our future prospects. I point this out so that, as we deal with the challenges, we should not be unmindful of either our achievements; or of our past; or the principles on which our freedom, Constitution and democracy rest; or very importantly, of our future. Our actions today, our decisions today, will fashion our tomorrow.

A deep sense of responsibility is a call of our times. All institutions and all citizens, have to demonstrate great maturity and, if I may say so, a degree of self-restraint, as we deal with our problems.

As we look at our past performance, we can draw strength from the fact, that the framework of our Constitution has served us well. The institutions created by it — the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary — have been stable and have achieved much. The separation of powers, the elaborate system of checks and balances, have given our country a governance structure in which equilibrium is maintained, when every institution respects the field of responsibility of the others. Credibility of institutions depends upon their conduct, which must be in accordance with the constitutional framework. We should strengthen them and their ability to take corrective actions, whenever required. There should be no effort, consciously or otherwise, that will lead to the erosion of institutional credibility and authority.

The Census has just been completed

in our country. We are now a nation of 1.2 billion, constituting about a sixth of the global population. We will reap a demographic dividend, only when our population is educated and equipped with the necessary skills. This entails a focus on education and skill development, to build their capacities to meet the requirements of the nation. They can add immensely to India's economy — in the service sector, cutting edge technologies, manufacturing, industry, and agriculture.

The underlying purpose of our work is to provide to all citizens, opportunities of progress and to eradicate pover-

We are committed to the welfare of all and are pursuing an inclusive growth agenda. There is much promise, much potential, much hope and much optimism about our future prospects

ty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. I have always said that, it is a growing Gross Domestic Product along with the welfare of the people, that are the twin pillars of a progressive nation. Today, anti-poverty programs, social welfare schemes, and a commitment to ensure food security, form the core of our inclusive agenda strategy. There are also a host of special economic packages for the under-developed regions of our nation.

We need a model to revolutionize agriculture, from the time when agricultural operations start, till harvest is reaped and beyond, where post-harvest processing aspects are addressed. Institutions linked to making available credit, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, have to be pro-active and work in coordination with each other. There should be greater use of technology in the agricultural sector to enhance productivity.

Also, issues and problems relating to dry land farming, including labor

shortage require to be addressed in a focused manner. We may need to examine whether existing rural employment programs, can be utilized for agricultural land of farmers, whether small holders or otherwise, in rain-fed areas. This will help to stabilize agriculture in these areas.

Events of far-reaching consequences are taking place in the world. In a globalized world, these developments have ramifications beyond borders. We are all aware of the consequences of the global financial meltdown of 2008. Uncertainty is again confronting the world economy, and would need to be tackled through co-ordinated global action, as also by suitable precautionary measures in our country. Our economy has fundamental strength and resilience, and its large domestic market can help it maintain steady growth rates.

The attack in Mumbai last month is yet another grim reminder of the destruction that can be caused by terrorism. We need to be ever-vigilant, to fight this menace which is a global phenomenon.

I recall the words of Swami Vivekanand, "This national ship of ours, my countrymen, has been plying for ages, carrying civilization and enriching the whole world with its inestimable treasures." Dear Citizens, the challenge for us, is how effectively we carry forward the nation from now onwards. Let history be the judge that during our time, we found the right answers to the challenges we faced, and acquitted ourselves with dignity and continued to work with unity, to build the India of our dreams.

Dawn will break tomorrow and our flag will flutter. Whatever task you are doing in the interest of the country is important, and I call on all citizens to pledge, that they will work with full commitment and dedication, honesty and integrity and with a sense of pride. If we do this, there is much that we will be able to achieve as a nation.

With these words, I wish all citizens the very best on the occasion of Independence Day.

Jai Hind!



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the Red Fort, in New Delhi, to address the Nation on August 15.

On the occasion of the 64th anniversary of India's Independence, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh addressed the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Old Delhi and said that India had embarked on a journey to transform itself through rapid development. He assured the nation that funds would not be a constraint in the way of providing better education and healthcare to citizens. Noting that the government would lay emphasis on health in the Twelfth Five Year Plan, the Prime Minister also said that the government would establish a new Education Commission to suggest improvements in education at all levels. Prime Minister Singh said the government was now considering the universalization of secondary education.

Congratulating farmers for achieving a high output in the current year, the Prime Minister called for another Green Revolution to address the twin issues of rising prices and food security. He also said that Parliament would soon enact a legislation to provide people with food security.

The government would set up an environmental assessment and monitoring authority to streamline the process of environmental clearances, Prime Minister Singh said in his address.

Excerpts from the Prime Minister's Address to the Nation:

"My dear countrymen,

I heartily greet 1.2 billion Indians on the 64th anniversary of our Independence.

I have been addressing you from the historic Red Fort for the last seven years. In these seven years, our country has achieved much. During this period, we have traveled rapidly on the path of development and have seen success in many areas.

We are building the edifice of modern India on the foundation of the hard work and sacrifices of our soldiers, our farmers and our workers. We will not let their hard work and sacrifices go waste. We will convert the dreams of our freedom fighters into reality.

In the last seven years, our government has strived for political stability

and social and economic progress. We have established an environment of communal harmony in the country.

In these seven years, the pace of our economic development has been rapid. We have achieved this success despite the global economic slow-down of 2008 and rising prices of energy and commodities in world markets.

We have strived for reducing inequalities in the country. In the last seven years, we have taken special care of the needs of our brothers and sisters from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, minorities, women and children.

We have enacted laws which would guarantee our people their basic entitlements. After the rights to education, employment and information, we will soon enact a legislation for providing food security to the people.

In the last seven years, our relations with various countries of the world have strengthened and deepened. It is only because of the result of our hard work that today we have much more self-respect and self-confidence in ourselves.

These successes are not ordinary. Today the world recognizes our potential to be one of the major economic powers globally.

I congratulate the country's farmers for their achievements this year. The production of food grains has been at a record level. Wheat, maize, pulses and oilseeds have all seen record levels of production. It is because of the hard work of our farmers that today there are proposals for export of food grains, sugar and cotton.

We need a second Green Revolution in agriculture. We can tackle the problem of rising food prices only by increasing agricultural production and productivity. We also need to increase agricultural production to implement a food security law.

I wish to assure you today that we are continuously monitoring the situation to find out what new steps can be taken to arrest rising prices. Finding a solution to this problem will be our top-most priority in the coming months.

Our government wants to replace

the 117-year-old land acquisition law by a new Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation law which is forward looking and balanced. We have already prepared a draft legislation and have initiated steps to build consensus on it. We will soon introduce a Bill in Parliament to this end.

We are satisfied with our achievements in the last seven years in the areas of education and health. Whether it is elementary education, secondary education or higher education we have taken concrete steps for improvements at all levels. This has shown good results. In the last few years, fundamental changes have taken place in the area of education. Today every citizen has a right to elementary education. We are now considering universalization of secondary education.

I have often referred to the 11th Five Year Plan as an education plan. We will lay the same emphasis on health in the 12th plan as we laid on education in the 11th plan. I will propose to the National Development Council that the 12th plan should be specially focused on health. I also promise that funds will not be a constraint in the important areas of education and health.

We are continuously strengthening the physical infrastructure in our country. This is an area which requires very large investments. It is for this reason that in the last seven years we have pursued policies which encourage investment in infrastructure. As a percentage of GDP, investment in this area has grown more than one and a half times in the last seven years.

There have been improvements in our capacities in the petroleum sector and power generation, and in our airports, roads, especially rural road, and ports. As an illustration, the capacity in power generation that we are going to add in the 11th plan will be twice that of the 10th plan. In the 12th Plan, we will further accelerate investment in infrastructure. We will pay special attention to the remote areas of our country and to rural areas. Connecting such areas by rail



The Prime Minister inspecting the Guard of Honour at the Red Fort, in New Delhi, on August 15.

United States greets India

Sending India best wishes on its Independence Day, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said India's story was a powerful example of what people could achieve through peaceful means.

"India's independence movement and the inspirational leadership of Mahatma Gandhi still move people to be the change that they want to see in the world," Clinton said in a message on behalf of President Barack Obama and the people of the United States.

"At this time of profound change and hope for millions of people, India's story stands as a powerful example of what people can achieve through the peaceful pursuit of inalienable rights," she said.

The US, she said, believed that the US-India partnership would be one of the defining partnerships of this century.

"As you celebrate this special day with family, friends and loved ones, in Chennai, New Delhi or anywhere in between, know that the U.S. stands with you as a committed partner and friend," she added.



and road will get the topmost priority.

We have taken a major step this year for our poor brothers and sisters living in cities. Recently we have approved the Rajiv Awas Yojana. We want to make India slum-free through this scheme. We want the slum dwellers to get ownership of clean houses and have access to basic amenities like water and electricity. We will implement the Rajiv Awas Yojana as a national mission, together with the States.

Last month's terrorists attacks in Mumbai warn us that there cannot be any slip up in our vigilance as far as the fight against terrorism is concerned. This is a long battle to be fought jointly by the Central Government, the State Governments and the common man.

It is not an ordinary achievement for our democracy with a population of 1.2 billion and so many religions, languages and cultures to march rapidly ahead on the path of development. I congratulate the people of India on this achievement.

We have embarked on a journey to transform our huge and diverse country through rapid development. A development which benefits every citizen of the country. It is natural that tensions would sometimes arise in this process of change. In a democracy, such tensions also become issues of political polarization. We should endeavor that even as political parties oppose and engage in debate against each other, the pace of our progress does not get affected.

We should also have faith that our democracy, our institutions and our social ideals and values have the capacity to deal with any difficulty. We should all have faith in ourselves. The faith that we can build a promising future for ourselves. The faith, that united we can do the most difficult of tasks. Let us all resolve to build a bright future for our country.

Dear Children, join me in saying
Jai Hind
Jai Hind
Jai Hind."

EMBASSY CELEBRATES INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

India's Independence Day was celebrated at the country's Embassy in Washington on August 15. Charge d'Affaires Arun K. Singh unfurled the national flag in the presence of a gathering of around 200 Indian

expatriates and people of Indian-origin. The Charge d'Affaires read out the President's Address to the Nation delivered on the eve of the Independence Day. The audience then participated in the singing of patriotic songs.



PHOTO LEGENDS

1. Charge d'Affaires Arun K. Singh unfurling the national flag.
2. Charge d'Affaires Arun K. Singh reading out the President's Address to the Nation.
3. Debapriya Dutta, Murli Mathur, Kumud Mathur, Ayona Dutta, Alka Batra and Promila Gupta singing patriotic songs.
4. Kumud Mathur and Asha Varadan singing patriotic songs.
5. A cross-section of the audience gathered on the occasion.

DANCE MAESTRO PROF. C.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR AT THE EMBASSY

The Embassy of India hosted a presentation on Indian classical dances by Padma Bhushan Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar on August 2. He

elucidated the various classical Indian dance forms and also enthralled the guests with his Bharatnatyam performance.



Shailaja Maru, a pupil of Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar, introducing Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar.



Padma Bhushan Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar speaking on classical Indian dance forms.



Padma Bhushan Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar performing Bharatnatyam.



Radha Ganesan, a pupil of Prof. C.V. Chandrasekhar, thanking the Embassy for hosting the event.



A section of the audience.

CONFLUENCE OF THOUGHTS: MAHATMA GANDHI AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

In connection with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Dedication Week and the upcoming Gandhi Jayanti, the Embassy of India hosted a

special event titled “Confluence of Thoughts: Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” on August 24, 2011.



PHOTO LEGENDS

1. Charge d'Affaires Arun K. Singh addressing the guests.
2. Tony Johnson from the Executive Office of the Mayor of DC speaking on the occasion.
3. Chuck Hicks, Member of the Official DC Host Committee for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Dedication Week speaking at the event.
4. Carrie Trybulec, Director, Gandhi Memorial Center, speaking on the occasion.
5. Prof. Bidyut Chakrabarty, Mahatma Gandhi Chair, James Madison University, speaking at the event.
6. Dr. Har Swarup Singh speaking at the event.
7. A section of the guests in attendance.

64TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

The Consul-General of India, New York, Prabhu Dayal, hosted a reception on August 15, 2011, to mark the 64th anniversary of India's Independence. About 250 guests, including prominent members of the Indian-American community and local dignitaries such as Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula from New Jersey State Assembly, Assemblyman Dr. Prasad Srinivasan from Connecticut State Assembly and Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt, representative of the Vatican, attended the celebrations. Representative of the United Nations, Chef-de-Cabinet & Under-Secretary General at the United Nations, Vijay Nambiar also graced the function with his presence. The Consul-General greeted the distinguished guests on the occasion and read out the Indian President's



1. Consul-General Prabhu Dayal reading out the message of the Indian President delivered on the eve of the Independence Day.
2. Wayne Jennings, President, Cultural Diversity Awareness Council, New Hampshire, presenting a memento to Consul-General Prabhu Dayal.
3. Prominent Indian Americans jointly cutting a cake on the occasion.



message delivered on the eve of the Independence Day. Wayne Jennings, President, Cultural Diversity Awareness Council, New Hampshire, lauded the efforts of the staff of the Consulate General of India in furthering people-to-people contact across cultures. He also presented a memento on behalf of the New Hampshire Cultural Diversity Awareness Council to Ambassador Prabhu Dayal.

Prominent Indian-Americans representing various associations and fields of activities jointly cut a cake in celebration of the occasion.

CONSUL-GENERAL PRABHU DAYAL RINGS THE NASDAQ CLOSING BELL

To commemorate India's Independence Day, NASDAQ invited Prabhu Dayal, Consul-General of India, to ring the Closing Bell on August 15, 2011. The ceremony was attended by a number of prominent Indian-Americans.

Speaking on the occasion, Consul-General Prabhu Dayal said, "I feel highly privileged and honored to have been invited to ring the NASDAQ Closing Bell today.



Consul-General Prabhu Dayal ringing the NASDAQ Closing Bell

NASDAQ has organized this event to celebrate India's Independence Day, which indicates the ever growing relationship between NASDAQ and India. I was

also privileged to have been invited to ring the NASDAQ Closing Bell in 2009 and 2010 for celebrating India's Independence Day. NASDAQ's gesture is in recognition of the fact that India has become a global powerhouse."

GOVERNOR NIKKI HALEY'S VISIT TO DALLAS

Texas State Chapter of Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC), a prominent community forum, organized a function in honor of Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina, in Dallas on August 19, 2011. Sanjiv Arora, Consul-General of India in Houston, Tom Leppert, former Mayor of Dallas and Zulfi Sadeque, Acting Consul-General of Canada were invited as special guests at the event.



Governor Nikki Haley (center), Sanjiv Arora, Consul-General of India in Houston (to Governor Haley's left), Tom Leppert, former Mayor of Dallas (third from right) and Zulfi Sadeque, Acting Consul-General of Canada (to Consul-General Arora's left). Dr. Krishna Reddy, Founder/Chairman, IAFC and Prasad Thotakura, IAFC's Texas State Coordinator, are seen at third from left and second from right, respectively.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN HOUSTON

To celebrate India's 65th Independence Day, a flag hoisting function was held at Consul General Sanjiv Arora's residence on August 15.

The function was attended by over 300 people, with a large, diverse and broad-based representation of the Indian-American community in Greater Houston and neighboring cities; some other friends of India were also present. A number of students also participated in the celebration of India's Independence Day. The program comprised unfurling of the Tricolor; singing of the

National Anthem; reading President of India's Address to the Nation on the eve of India's Independence Day; singing of patriotic songs by Dr. Rathna Kumar, Founding Director, Anjali Arts Center, Houston, and Swaralayam Arts Forum (SAF) students.

As on earlier occasions, the Indian-American community was deeply appreciative of successive 'Open Houses' held at Consul-General's residence to celebrate India's National Days. As in the past, the Consulate also supported Independence Day celebrations by

Indian-American community fora and associations of international students from India in its jurisdiction.

On August 20, Consul-General had the honor of joining Mayor Annise Parker, other elected representatives and a large number of other attendees at the annual gala celebrations of Independence Day, entitled 'India Fest', organized by India Culture Center (ICC), one of the oldest and most broad-based Indian community fora in Houston, and their partners, at George Brown Convention Center in Houston.



PHOTO LEGENDS

1. Consul-General Sanjiv Arora unfurling the Tricolour at Independence Day Flag Hoisting ceremony at his residence. His wife, Chhaya is with him.
2. Consul-General Sanjiv Arora and Chhaya Arora (center) with Consulate officials and their families at Independence Day celebrations at Consul-General's residence on 15 August, 2011.
3. Consul General Sanjiv Arora (left) and Chhaya Arora (right) with students of Swaralayam Arts Forum (SAF) at Independence Day celebrations at Consul-General's residence on 15 August, 2011. SAF students took the lead in the singing of National Anthem and also sang patriotic songs at the function.
4. Consul-General Sanjiv Arora and Houston Mayor Annise Parker at Independence Day Celebrations, called 'India Fest', organized by India Culture Center (ICC) and their partners in Houston. ICC President Col. R.P.S Bhalla is to CG's right; on Mayor Parker's left are: Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Pro-tem Mayor of City of Sugarland Jacquie Chaumette, Sugar Land City Councilman Tom Abraham and Head of US Senator John Cornyn's Southeast Texas Office Jay Guerrero.

VISIT OF FORMER PRESIDENT DR. APJ ABDUL KALAM TO HOUSTON

Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India, visited Houston from August 21-22 at the invitation of University of Houston (UH) and Rice University (Rice). India House, a community center, acted as a co-host by organizing a public lecture by Dr. Kalam on August 21. The audience at the event included Congressman Al Green and County Judge Ed Emmett, among others.

On August 22, Dr. Kalam interacted with administrators, faculty and students at UH and Rice, besides visiting their research laboratories. Dr. Kalam also gave a public lecture at Rice. In his lectures, Dr. Kalam spoke of every citizen's responsibility for nation building ("What can I give?") and his vision for inclusive growth and development of India, highlighting his program Provide Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA).

Consul-General Sanjiv Arora hosted a dinner in honor of Dr. Kalam, which was attended by over 100 invitees, representing elected bodies, academia, science and technology, space research, healthcare, arts and culture, official agencies, consular corps and other fields. The guests came from various places serviced by Consulate General of India, Houston; a few of them also came from other parts of the United States.



PHOTO LEGENDS

1. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India being welcomed by Consul-General Sanjiv Arora and Chhaya Arora at a dinner hosted by them in his honor at their residence.
2. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam at the dinner hosted in his honor by Consul-General Sanjiv Arora (to his right) at his residence. On Dr. Kalam's left are: Digvijaya Singh, Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Ms Antel and Dr. John Antel, Provost of University of Houston.
3. Consul-General Sanjiv Arora (center) introducing Kanniks Kanikeswaran, an alumnus of IIT, Chennai & a music maestro based in Cincinnati, to Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam.
4. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam flanked by Consul-General Sanjiv Arora, his wife Chhaya Arora, along with Consulate officials and their families at the dinner.
5. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam presenting books to Chhaya Arora (right).

PUSHING REFORMS TOP PRIORITY: PM

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on August 20 said the next phase of economic reforms would be his government's number one priority and expressed confidence that political consensus would soon be reached to achieve the economic growth rate of 9 percent.

"I think second generation reforms are essential, but are also a lot more difficult to implement. They require a broad-based national consensus," the Prime Minister said after chairing a meeting of the full Planning Commission.

"That will be our priority number one — to push the reform process forward."

"Considering the uncertainties in the global environment, as also inflationary pressures at home, it would be prudent to have a growth target which would ensure the achievement of the objective of the target of sustained, inclusive growth," Dr. Singh said.

Expecting domestic and international market situations to improve, he said, "We will be working on a growth rate of 9 percent per annum. But we will also keep open the possibility of raising the growth rate to 9.2 percent."

India's gross domestic product (GDP) had risen at 8.5 percent last fiscal, despite the global financial crises and high commodity inflation, to emerge among the fastest-growing economies in the world.

The architect of first generation reforms, which he initiated as Finance Minister in 1991, Dr. Singh said while second-generation reforms were being pursued they would require a broad consensus. At the same time, he hoped such a consensus would eventually emerge, as it did when the program was first launched in 1991.

He said the next stage of economic liberalization would fall in place with parties of different political ideologies joining hands in national interest.

The Prime Minister said, "The process of fiscal consolidation needs to



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh

Economic census planned to assess reforms

The government on August 4 said it plans to carry out an economic census next year to assess the impact of economic reforms on various industries and to formulate policies better.

"The census would not only provide updated frame for detailed follow-up surveys but would also give entrepreneurial data at village and ward level for planning and development, especially for unorganized sector," Srikant Jena, Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation, informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

The census, which is the sixth such activity to be undertaken, will assess field work being done by the ministry from January to June of 2012, in collaboration with the state and union territory (UT) governments.

"The ministry plans to release the quick results within 60 days of completion of field work by the states and UTs and the all-India report within one year of completion of field work," Jena said.

be given priority even if it limits the availability of resources for developmental activities in the short run."

"Resource limitations imply the need to prioritize carefully. Some priority areas, for example, health, education and infrastructure, will have to be funded more than others," the Prime Minister said.

He also emphasized the need for more efficient use of available resources in view of the constraints.

The Prime Minister said the 12th Plan period approach paper has made certain suggestions like giving implementing agencies greater freedom, flexibility, promoting convergence between resources from different plan schemes, and the need for much greater attention to capacity building, monitoring and accountability to ensure optimum utilization of the available resources.

"We need to engage the states on all these issues," the Prime Minister said.

RBI UNVEILS DRAFT NORMS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL BANKS

Broking houses and realty firms are proposed to be made ineligible for new licences to operate commercial banks in the norms drafted by the country's central bank, which wants aspirants to be Indian entities with a sound track record of 10 years.

"The aggregate non-resident shareholding in the new bank shall not exceed 49 percent for the first five years, after which it will be as per the extant policy," say the draft norms issued on August 29 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for comments.

"Entities in the private sector owned and controlled by residents with diversified ownership, sound credentials and integrity and having successful track record of at least 10 years will be eligible to promote banks," it says.

Entities that earn 10 percent or more from realty, construction or broking



activities, either individually or taken together in the past three years will not be eligible for such licences, the apex bank has proposed.

The central bank, which has called for comments from all interested parties before October 31, also says that certain additional requirements may be stipulated in case of companies that earn 40 percent or more from non-financial business.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee had announced last year in his budget

speech that it was the government's intent to open up the banking sector further. The Reserve Bank, on its part, had also launched a discussion paper on the subject. Among the companies and industrial houses hoping to apply for banking licences include the Tatas, the Aditya Birla Group, Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group, Bajaj Financial Services and Shriram Finance.

The central bank said final guidelines would be issued and the process for licences would be started after receiving feedback on the draft guidelines as also after certain vital amendments to Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

The other highlights of the draft norms include a minimum capital of \$109 million. This apart, a wholly owned non-operative holding company also has to be set up to oversee both the banking and other financial companies within the promoter group.

This holding company will have to be registered with the Reserve Bank of India as a non-banking finance company and will need to keep at least 50 percent independent directors on its board. The draft guidelines also propose that existing non-banking finance firms, if considered eligible, could either promote a new bank or convert themselves into banks. The new entrants must have a viable business model, outlining their financial inclusion plan.

The other highlights of the draft include:

- At least 25 percent of branches should be in unbanked rural centers
- Exposure to promoters not to exceed 10 percent of the paid-up capital and reserves of the bank
- Aggregate exposure to all promoter group entities not to exceed 20 percent
- Banks should get their shares listed on stock exchanges within two years

RBI PROPOSES NEW REGULATIONS FOR NON-BANKING FINANCE FIRMS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on August 29 proposed new regulations for non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) which include seeking prior approval from the central bank for mergers and acquisitions where 25 percent or above shares of an NBFC change hands.

The report of the RBI Working Group on the issues in the NBFC Sector proposed that "any transfer of shareholding, direct or indirect, of 25 percent and above, change in control, merger or acquisition of any registered NBFC should have prior approval of the Reserve Bank."

The group was chaired by Usha Thorat, former Deputy Governor of the RBI and now director of Centre for Advanced Financial Research and Learning (CAFRAL).

An NBFC is a non-banking institution involved in the business of receiving deposits or lending to various classes of consumers. All NBFCs that raise funds from public are supposed to be registered with the central bank.

Some of the leading NBFCs in the country

are Reliance Capital, Bajaj Finance and Shriram Transport Finance.

The proposed guidelines also said that the RBI should register only those new NBFCs that have a minimum asset size of more than ₹500 (\$10.8) million, while those who were not raising funds from the public could be exempted from registration provided their assets are below ₹100 (\$2.17) billion.

The group also said that NBFCs could be asked to maintain certain liquidity ratios such that cash, bank balances and holdings of government securities fully cover the gaps, if any, between cumulative outflows and cumulative inflows for the first 30 days.

"Asset classification and provisioning norms similar to banks to be brought in phased manner for NBFCs. Suitable income tax deduction akin to banks may be allowed for provisions made under the regulations. Accounting norms applicable to banks may be applied to NBFCs," said a note from the working group.

The group also proposed to improve a host of disclosure and risk management norms for NBFCs.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT NORMS EASED IN DOMESTIC MUTUAL FUNDS

India on August 9 permitted foreign investors to participate in local mutual funds, allowing them to invest up to \$10 billion and expanding the capital flow channels into equities markets.

In separate statements, the Reserve Bank of India and the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (RBI), said that non-resident investors who met SEBI's know-your-customer requirements would also be allowed to invest in debt schemes run by mutual funds which were targeted at the infrastructure space.

SEBI said that Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) could buy equity or debt fund units in the primary market, but would not be allowed to trade in the secondary market. QFIs will also be allowed to buy another \$3 billion



worth of debt schemes, which invest in bonds of tenure of at least 5 years in the infrastructure sector.

If the cumulative QFI investment reaches \$8 billion in equity schemes or \$2.5 billion in debt funds, SEBI would auction the remaining limit to foreign investors. However, the QFI ceiling on debt funds will be within the overall ceiling of \$25 billion set by the RBI earlier for foreign investments in

corporate bonds issued by infrastructure companies.

Permitting foreign investors into the domestic mutual fund market was part of the budget proposals for 2010-11. But allowing mutual funds to accept overseas money into debt schemes was the result of a meeting between top industrialists and Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee. "The government accepted this recommendation and held a series of discussions with the regulators to give QFIs access to mutual fund debt schemes investing in infrastructure," said the ministry. "The QFI scheme will make it easier for overseas investors to participate in the infrastructure sector projects in India, and therefore would provide an additional source of overseas long-term debt funding," it added.

SOCIAL SECURITY PACTS WITH MORE COUNTRIES SOON

India is in talks with several countries for concluding bilateral social security agreements (SSAs) that would make it possible to reach the fruits of Employees' Provident Fund Schemes to international workers.

The integrated computerised system related to EPF functioning will also be fully operational by November, 2011.

"Under the EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Commissioner) there are 6,15,000 establishments and over sixty million members," Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner A.M. Raju said in Kolkata, India.

"Unless there is a social security agreement (SSA) between the country from which the worker hails and the country in which the worker works, he cannot avail the benefits under the Act. At present, we have agreements with about 15 countries including Belgium,

France and Luxembourg. The number of countries will increase gradually. Talks are on," said Regional PF Commissioner S.K. Gupta.

From November 1, 2008, international workers — both Indians working outside the country and non-Indian citizens working in India — have been brought under the ambit of EPFO.

"The integrated computerised system made operational in association with National Informatics Centre has enabled the EPFO offices across the country to function in a secured and efficient way. Claims are now being settled through the system in quicker time," he added.

Gupta also said with the National Electronic Funds Transfer in effect, the accounts of the members can now be directly credited or debited as and when required.

India's tax departments go green

India's excise and customs department has adopted an "environment strategy" under which it aims to eliminate paper documentation, promote web-based external and internal communication and give special attention to environment related issues.

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on August 16 gave his approval to the Central Board of Excise and Customs proposal to adopt an environment friendly strategy in its day-to-day dealings.

"It would change the way business is done by the customs, central excise and service tax officials," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The new strategy of the department includes training of officers for monitoring international trade in environmentally sensitive goods, sensitizing officers to enhanced detection of environmental violations and protecting frontline officers from hazardous substances by providing radiation detection kits. The excise and customs department also plans to "promote web-based external and internal communication and develop and implement green standards for infrastructure".

'MEDICAL TOURISM TO BE WORTH \$2.3 BILLION BY 2015'



India's world-class medical technology, coupled with a skilled medical workforce, will ensure that the Indian medical tourism industry is worth \$2.34 billion and that the number of foreign patients visiting the country crosses 3.2 million by 2015, a commerce chamber report has said.

'Emerging Trends In Domestic Medical Tourism Sector', prepared by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) estimated the current worth of Indian medical tourism

industry at around \$1 billion with about 850,000 foreign patients visiting India for treatment.

"India enjoys strategic advantage of essential resources like world-class medical technology, infrastructure and a skilled medical workforce. The rapid growth will not only earn foreign exchange but will also give a huge boost to the country's health sector," said the study.

According to Assocham, availability of top notch facilities, especially in sectors like cardiology, joint replacement, orthopaedic surgery, transplants and

others at a low cost, are certain key factors making India a favored destination for medical tourism.

"High-quality medical care at a fraction of the cost people would normally incur in developed countries is the basic reason behind this surge in number of patients flocking to India for treatment purposes," said D.S. Rawat, Secretary General of Assocham.

As per the study, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal and New Delhi are fast emerging as India's best medical centers where facelifts, dental and botox treatment, tummy tucks, eye care, etc. are the most sought-after treatments.

Further, with holistic medicinal services like yoga, meditation, ayurveda, allopathy and others, India offers a plethora of facilities difficult to match in other countries.

"Ayurveda is increasingly becoming popular as a non-surgical treatment for various ailments among the patients hailing from abroad," said the study.

India gets the most number of foreign patients from the Middle East, followed by the US, Europe and people from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and others.

However, Assocham added that India was facing tough competition from Australia, Belgium, Cuba, Costa Rica and Hungary, among others, that are actively promoting healthcare tourism. "We propose developing 'Multi-Specialty Health City' on a public-private partnership basis at 10 centers across the country," said Rawat.

ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE IN THE OFFING

India's Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) will give more teeth to healthcare by emphasizing on accessibility and affordability, a member of the plan panel said on August 24. "The medical technology industry needs to understand the demands of the Indian market for innovation in the health sector," Planning Commission member Arun Maira said at the fourth conference on medical

technology organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

"With over 80 percent of healthcare services met by corporations, a large part of the populace still finds itself outside the ambit of delivery mechanisms," he noted.

While Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his Independence Day speech, announced that health would be deemed a priority area,

experts said indigenous players in the health sector would have to be given more support to achieve the target.

"With a population of 1.2 billion, support should be given to indigenous manufacturers in addressing the issues of quality and narrowing the technology gap we have in healthcare," said Naresh Trehan, Chairman of the CII National Committee on Healthcare.

Indian-American named to top job in Maryland

A leading Indian-American entrepreneur, Rajan Natarajan has been named Deputy Secretary of State for Policy and External Affairs in Maryland state in the United States.

Democratic Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley appointed Natarajan, 51, to this administrative office, the highest held by any Indian-American to date in the state.

Natarajan's responsibilities in this new role include representing the governor or secretary of state at designated public and community outreach events, advising the secretary on exter-

nal affairs, planning and strategies, fostering and promoting international diplomatic relationships.

"Rajan brings a wealth of corporate business and industry experience to my administration," said O'Malley, noting "he has spent much of his professional life in the corporate world, helping companies grow."

Natarajan also "has significant experience in the technology sector and is used to thinking out-of-the box to



Rajan Natarajan

deliver innovative solutions, commercialization of technologies and business development," he said.

Born in Pudukkottai district, Tamil Nadu, in India, Natarajan came to the US in 1989 to pursue post-doctoral research at the Michigan State University after completing his doctoral degree in bioscience

at the University of Madras. After completing his MBA in 1999 at Michigan, he became a technology entrepreneur.

Indian-American to lead US efforts to expand ties with diaspora

Mitul Desai, an Indian-American international finance and law expert, has been brought in to the U.S. State Department's South Asia bureau to lead its efforts to expand "partnerships and engagement with the private sector and diaspora groups" in the US.

Announcing the appointment of Desai as Senior Advisor in the U.S. State Department's South and Central Asia Bureau at an India Donor Roundtable, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robert Blake said, "The U.S.-India relationship has never been stronger," thanks to the "important role" that the Indian community has "played in creating and strengthening these ties."

"Indeed I have made it a priority for the South and Central Asia Bureau to expand our partnerships and engagement with the private sector and diaspora groups here in the US," he said.

Desai, who has been named Senior Advisor for Outreach, comes from a private sector career in international finance and law, where he worked on many issues, including global health, Blake noted.

"He also has extensive experience working with diaspora communities. I know he is very excited to work with you in his new capacity," he said.

Desai received his BA in Chemistry and Philosophy at Rutgers University and his JD from the Boston University School of Law. He was born in Kankakee, Illinois, and lived in South Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania before moving to Succasunna, New Jersey, where he spent most of his childhood.

His parents, Indirajit and Surekha Desai who hail from Gujarat, India, came to the US in the 1960s, when they were both in their early 20s. He has a younger brother, Amit.



Mitul Desai

INDIANS AMONG MIT'S TOP 35 INNOVATORS

Two Indians and two persons of Indian origin figure among top '35 innovators under 35' (TR35) in the latest list of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Technology Review.

Ajit Narayanan of Invention Labs, Chennai, and Aishwarya Ratan of Yale University, who were part of TR35 India Winners announced in March 2011, have made it to the annual list of people who exemplify the spirit of innovation in business and technology.

"The honorees are blazing new paths in a wide range of fields, including medicine, energy, communications, IT, consumer technology, entertainment, and robotics," Cambridge-based institute in Massachusetts said on August 24. Chennai-based Ajit Narayanan, 30, was selected for his work on Avaz, an affordable speech synthesizer. He is currently working with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Aishwarya Ratan, 30, was working with Microsoft Research in Bangalore in India when she won the prestigious honor for her work on converting paper records to digital in real time. Ratan has since moved to Yale University, but the NGO that she was partnering with continues to test the slate in villages.

Two winners of Indian origin include Bhaskar Krishnamachari, 33, University of Southern California, who has been selected for his work on smarter wireless networks and Piya Sorcar, 33, for TeachAids, a software that can be localized to teach taboo topics.

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony during the 2011 EmTech MIT Conference, to be held from October 18 to 19, at MIT's Media Lab, USA.

INDIAN-ORIGIN SCIENTIST DESIGNS NANOSIZED BATTERIES

A team led by a scientist of Indian origin has packaged lithium ion batteries, which power mobiles and smartphones, into a single nanowire. The breakthrough could be a valuable power source for new generations of nanoelectronics.



Pulickel M. Ajayan

Pulickel M. Ajayan, who did his B. Tech in metallurgical engineering from Banaras Hindu University, India in 1985, India and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in the U.S. in 1989, had been inching toward single nanowire devices for years. The researchers at Rice University first reported the creation of 3D nano batteries in December, 2010, the journal *Nano Letters* reported.

“The idea here is to fabricate

nanowire energy storage devices with an ultrathin separation between the electrodes,” said Arava Leela Mohana Reddy, study co-author and research scientist, according to a university statement.

The team’s experimental batteries are about 50 micrometers tall, as thick as a human hair and almost invisible when viewed edge-on, Reddy said.

Theoretically, the nanowire energy storage devices can be as long and as wide as the templates allow, which makes them scalable. The nanowire devices show good capacity. The researchers are fine-tuning the materials to increase their ability to repeatedly charge and discharge, which now drops off after about 20 cycles.

‘SCIENTISTS GIVE INDIA STRATEGIC EDGE’

Scientists provide the country its strategic parity with world powers and innovations define the 21st century India, Ashwani Kumar, Minister of State for Science and Technology, said at the release of *The India Idea*, a book on scientific innovations, in New Delhi.

“To perceive and execute an idea is the genius of India,” he added.

“This is a nation of billion people and it is a nation of billion opportunities,” said Kumar, who is also Minister of State for Planning, Parliamentary Affairs and Earth Sciences.

The minister said his “passionate commitment” was to regularly applaud the achievements of the Indian scientists and to reiterate the debt of gratitude of the country for their innovations.

“The story of India is in its innovations and it defines the India of the 21st century,” he said, noting he had often been overwhelmed during his visits abroad by appreciation for India’s scientific innovations.

INNOVATORS FROM ACROSS INDIA AWARDED

Vijay Bhaskar Reddy left his highflying job in a leading multinational company in Bangalore to help farmers distressed by erratic power and water supply. He invented a device which promises to transform the way farmers irrigate their fields.

“The ‘Kisan Raja’ device allows farmers to remotely control the agricultural motors, using their mobile or landline phone with the help of a SIM card installed in the device,” Reddy said.

Reddy is part of a group of five innovators from across the country who were felicitated at the ‘Samsung Innovation Quotient’ in a scheme to support them financially. “If someone steals the device and changes the SIM card, the machine would not work,” added Reddy, an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

Kisan Raja is priced between \$65

\$108 depending on the features and was introduced in southern India in July 2011 with an ambition to cover the whole of India with the device soon.

“I’ve sold 50 of them so far and have received orders for another 100,” said Reddy adding that Samsung had promised to help him with GSM technology in the device, to reduce the prices.

While Reddy took upon himself to help the country’s poor farmers, some like K. Chandrasekhar decided to contribute to the country’s health sector by inventing a machine which prescreens five major eye diseases.

“This machine can detect eye diseases like cataract, diabetic retina, glaucoma tools and cornea issues within five minutes,” Chandrasekhar said. “This machine will eradicate the unnecessary need of visiting a doctor just for an eye checkup,” he added.

According to the alumni of Birla Institute of Technology, the scanning device — ‘3nethra’ is priced between \$9,756 and \$11,924 and Chandrasekhar has already sold 12 of them since its introduction in April, 2011.

Meanwhile, other innovations invented by another trendsetter included a coir bar named ‘Coir Atlas’ which can be substituted for a wooden log used by steel producers while transporting their products.

Among others on the roll included a device that makes the tie-and-dye process in the production of silk sarees less cumbersome. An NGO in Maharashtra that was involved in helping farmers increase their produce in the fields through innovative methods. At the end of the event, K. Chandrasekhar was declared the winner for inventing 3nethra, and received a cash prize of \$10841.



AUTOMOBILES INDUSTRY POISED FOR HEALTHY GROWTH

India is all set to become one of the world's most attractive automotive markets for both manufacturers and consumers. The automobile industry in India, currently estimated to have a turnover of US\$ 73 billion, accounts for 6 per cent of the country's GDP, and is expected to hit a turnover of US\$ 145 billion by 2016

The Indian automobile industry, the seventh largest in the world, has demonstrated a phenomenal growth. The industry has grown significantly over the last ten years, during which industry volumes have increased by 3.2 times, from a level of 4.7 million numbers to 14.9 million numbers, according to Vishnu Mathur, Director General, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

The industry, by virtue of its deep connections with several key segments of the economy, occupies a prominent place in the country's growth canvas. It exhibits a strong multiplier effect and has the ability to be the key driver of economic growth. A robust transportation system plays a key role in a country's rapid economic and industrial development, and the well-developed Indian automotive industry justifies this catalytic role by producing a wide variety of vehicles, which include passenger cars, light, medium and heavy commercial vehicles, multi-utility vehicles such as jeeps, scooters, motorcycles, mopeds, three-wheelers, tractors etc.

Auto Industry in India — Growth Drivers

The automobile sector in India has been experiencing significant growth in the last few years on the back of factors that include:

- Favourable demographic distribution with rising working population and middle class urbanization
- Rising affluence of the average consumer, as per capita income rises. With a tremendous growth in wealth as the economy grows, there will be significant increases in spending on discretionary items and consumer durables
- Increasing disposable incomes in the rural agri-sector
- Overall GDP growth, with a rise in industrial and agricultural output
- Introduction of ultra-low-cost cars
- Increasing maturity of Indian original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)
- Availability of a variety of vehicle models meeting diverse needs and preferences
- Greater affordability of vehicles
- Easy finance schemes
- Favourable government policies

Indian Automobile market — Key statistics

India's automobile industry, currently estimated to have a turnover of US\$ 73 billion, accounts for 6 per cent of its GDP, and is expected to hit a turnover of US\$ 145 billion by 2016.

The automobile industry currently contributes 22 per cent to the manufacturing GDP and 21 per cent of the total excise collection in the country, according to Praful Patel, Minister, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. In 2010-11, the total turnover and export of the automotive Industry in India reached a new high of \$75 billion and \$11 billion respectively. The cumulative announced investments reached \$30 billion during this period. He also said that the forecasted size of the Indian passenger vehicle segment was nearly 9 million units and that of two wheelers, close to 30 million units by 2020.

India achieved the position of the top growing passenger car market in the world during the January-June period in 2011, overtaking the US, which grew at 14.40 per cent, according to

SIAM. In passenger vehicles, India was the fastest growing market at 18.2 per cent during the six-month period.

India's automobile industry is expected to grow by 11 to 13 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2012, according to Pawan Goenka, President, SIAM. The industry body said that Indian automakers sold 143,370 cars in June 2011.

The four-wheel passenger vehicle market has grown impressively at the demands of the new middle class and there is huge opportunity, as market penetration remains low.

Domestic market share for 2010-11

India's automobile industry is growing fast, but two wheelers remain a dominant category. More than 78 per cent of motor vehicles on the road are two-wheelers, their popularity driven by low price, high fuel mileage, and an ability to drive efficiently through dense traffic. The share of different types of vehicles during 2010-11 was: passenger vehicles (16.25 per cent), commercial vehicles (4.36 per cent), three-wheelers (3.39 per cent), and two-wheelers (76 per cent).

Recent Investments/ Trends

The auto industry has made huge investments in the country. As per 2008-09, the total investment of auto industry in India was \$13.89 billion. Another \$17.78 billion of new investments have been announced by the auto industry out of which some have already been made and the rest will come up over the next 2-3 years. The industry, therefore, is keeping pace with the growing demand for vehicles in all segments.

The Karnataka government has cleared investment proposals amounting to more than \$19.74 billion. Murugesh Nirani, Karnataka Industries Minister, said that Honda Motorcycles and Scooter India would be investing \$307.7 million in Narsapur Industrial area of Kolar district of the State.

Demand for two-wheelers from six of the eight domestic mobike manufacturers rose 16 per cent in June, 2011 to more than 880,000 units, compared to 761,000 units in June 2010.

Australia is looking at possibilities of building better relations between its world-class firms and rapidly growing Indian automotive industries with an objective to create new export opportunities.

Pune-based Force Motors has signed an agreement with Daimler AG, under which Daimler will supply technology for the development of a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) by Force Motors.

Swedish automobile manufacturer Volvo Cars Corp is looking at introducing corporate editions of its luxury sedans S60 and S80 to shore up volumes in the Indian automobile market.

French car maker PSA Peugeot Citroen has selected a site near Sriperumbudur, to the west of Chennai, in Tamil Nadu for setting up its car plant. The company is planning to invest \$911.72 million in an integrated automobile project.

Toyota has launched its first made-for-India small car, the EtiosLiva, in the intensely competitive hatchback

segment. The car, priced between \$9,094 and \$13,653, will compete with Maruti Suzuki Swift, Hyundai i20, Volkswagen Polo and Ford Figo.

Government Initiatives

With the gradual liberalization of the automobile sector since 1991, the number of manufacturing units in India has grown progressively.

Currently, 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is permissible under automatic route in this sector, including passenger car segment. The import of technology/technological upgradation on the royalty payment of 5 per cent without any duration limit and lump sum payment of \$2 million is also allowed under automatic route in this sector.

The automobile industry is delicensed and import of components is freely allowed.

With an objective of accelerating and sustaining growth in the automotive sector and to steer, co-ordinate and synergise the efforts of all stakeholders, the Automotive Mission Plan (AMP) 2006-2016 was prepared. The plan aims at making India a global automotive hub. The AMP 2006-2016 aims at doubling the contribution of automotive sector in GDP by taking the turnover to \$145 billion and providing additional employment to 25 million people by 2016.

The Road Ahead

The automotive industry is at the core of India's manufacturing economy. India is all set to become one of the world's most attractive automotive markets for both manufacturers and consumers. The resulting benefits to society, such as economic growth, increased jobs, and stability for families employed by the automotive industry, are significant. As income levels rise, and easy finance is available, the automobiles industry in India is expected to experience a healthy growth rate.

(Courtesy: India Brand Equity Foundation)

Two wheelers remain a dominant category in India's automobile industry. More than 78 percent of motor vehicles on the road are two-wheelers



TATA Nano is world's lowest priced car

THE SPARROW

By Anil Chandra



The author, a former Indian bureaucrat, is a short story writer and a scholar. Chandra has also written three books on history covering ancient India and China

High above the earth on its giant lattice towers, the power line strode across the flat and unchanging countryside until it disappeared. One of the great pylons was near his father's hut in a square patch fenced off with barbed wire. Warning plates in red paint said in two languages. 'Danger!' And there was a huge figure of volts, thousands of volts. Hira Lal was eleven and he knew volts were electricity and the line took power far across the country.

Hira Lal filled the empty spaces in his life by imagining things and the power line took his thoughts away into a magical distance, far off among tall buildings and bustling towns. That was where the world opened up. Hira Lal loved the power line dearly. It made a door through the distance for his thoughts.

On clear evenings when the sparrows gathered he would see the wires like necklaces of glass beads. He loved to hear the birds making excited twittering sounds; he loved to see how they fell off the aluminium wire into space. The birds could fly anywhere they wanted and they opened another door for him. He liked them very much, too.

He watched the sparrows one morning taking off and occasionally coming back on the power lines. One of the sparrows, however got entrapped, hanging there flapping its wings. Hira Lal saw it was caught by its leg. He wondered how it could have got caught, may be in the wire binding or at a joint. He wanted to rush and tell his mother, but she would scold him for being late for school. So he climbed on his bicycle and rode off to school.

Coming back from school he felt anxious but did not look up until he was quite near. The sparrow was still there, its wings spread but not moving. It was dead, he guessed. Then he saw it flutter and fold its wings. He felt awful to think it had hung there all day.

The boy went in and called his mother and they stood below the power line and looked at the bird. The mother shaded her eyes with her hand. It is a pity, she said, but she was sure it would free itself somehow.

"Couldn't..." he began.

"Couldn't nothing," she said quite firmly in the way he knew she meant business.

His father came home in the evening. Hira Lal followed him and

soon got round to the sparrow.

"I know", his father said. "Your mother told me."

"It's still there."

"Well," his father said and looked at him hard with his sharp black eyes. "Well, we can't do anything about it, can we?"

"No father, but"

"But what?"

He kicked at a stone and said nothing more. He could see his father was kind of stiff about it; that meant he did not want to hear any more.

At dinner none of them talked about the sparrow but Hira Lal felt as if it were hanging above their heads. Going to bed, his mother said he must not worry about the bird.

"God will look after it."

"It's going to hang there all night by its foot," he said. His mother sighed and put out the light. The next day was Sunday and he did not have to go to school. First thing, he looked out and the bird was still there. He would rather have been at school instead of knowing all day that it was hanging up there on the cruel wire.

The morning was very long, though he did forget about the sparrow quite often. He was building a mud house under a tree and he had to carry

water and dig up the earth and mix it into a stiff clay.

When he was coming in at midday, he had one more look and what he saw kept him standing there a long time with his mouth open. Other sparrows were hovering around the trapped bird, trying to help it. He rushed inside and dragged his mother out and she stood shading her eyes again.

“Yes, they’re trying to help the entangled bird. Isn’t that strange?” She said.

In the afternoon Hira Lal lay in the grass and felt choked thinking how they helped it and nobody else would do anything. His parents would not even talk about it. With his keen eyes he traced the way a climber could get up the tower. But if you did get up, what then? How could you touch the sparrow? Just putting your hand near the wire, wouldn’t those thousands of volts jump at you?

The only thing was to get somebody to turn off the power for a minute, then he could climb the tower like a monkey. At dinner that night he suggested it and his father was as grim and angry as he’d ever seen.

“Listen son,” his father said. “I don’t want you to get all worked up about that bird. You leave it alone”.

Turning to his mother for support he said: “It’s only the other birds that’s keeping him alive. They were all trying to help today”.

“Yes, I know. I saw them,” replied his mother.

“He can’t live much longer, Amma. Why can’t father get them to switch off the electricity?”

“They wouldn’t do it for a bird, son”.

Leaving for school the next morning, Hira Lal tried not to look up. But he couldn’t help it and there was the sparrow spreading and closing its wings. He got on his bicycle and rode as fast as he could. He could not think of anything but the trapped bird on the power line.

After school, Hira Lal drove his bicycle to the nearest transmission

station near his village, a good 5 kms away. When he got there he was faced with an enormous high fence of iron staves with spike tops and a tall locked steel gate.

Hira Lal peered through the gate and saw some men off duty sitting in the sun playing cards. He called to them and a thin man in white shirt came over. Hira Lal explained what he wanted. If they would switch off the current then he could go up and save the sparrow.

The man smiled broadly and clicked his tongue. His name, he said was Ram Bharose. He was just a maintenance man and he couldn’t switch off the current. But he unlocked the gate and let Hira Lal in. “Ask them in there,” he said, grinning.

Inside, a junior engineer led Hira Lal to a room where a balding man with glasses was sitting at a desk. Hira Lal did not say five words before his lips began trembling and two tears rolled out of his eyes.

The man said: “Sit down, son, and don’t be frightened”.

Then the man tried to explain. How could they cut off the power? The factories would stop, hospitals would go dark in the middle of an operation. Hira Lal was concerned about the sparrow but things like that just happened and that was life.

“Life?” Hira Lal said thinking. “It was more like death.”

The balding man smiled. He took down Hira Lal’s name and address and he said, “You’ve done your best, Hira Lal. I’m sorry, I can’t promise you anything.”

Hira Lal got home hours later and his mother was frantic. He lied to her saying he had been detained after school. He did not have the stomach to look for the sparrow. He felt so bad about it because they were all letting it die. And that was life, the man said.

It must have been the middle of the night when he woke up. His mother was next to him and the light was on. “There’s a man come to see you,” she said.

He went out and saw his father and the back of a man in white shirt. It was Ram Bharose!

“Ram Bharoseji” he shouted “Are they going to do it?”

“They’re doing it,” Ram Bharose said.

A linesman and a truck driver came up. The linesman explained to Hira Lal’s father that a maintenance switch-down had been ordered at minimum load hour. He wanted to be shown where the bird was. Hira Lal glanced, frightened, at his father who nodded and said, “Show him”.

Hira Lal went in the truck with the man, the driver and Ram Bharose. It took them only five minutes to get the truck in position under the tower and run up the extension ladder. Ram Bharose hooked a chain in his belt and switched on his flashlight. He swung out on the ladder and began running up it as if he had no weight at all. Then using the pylon insulators and his flashlight, he picked out the sparrow hanging on the dead wire. He leaned over and carefully worked the bird’s tiny claw loose from the wire binding, and then he put the sparrow in the breast pocket of his shirt.

In a minute he was down and he took the bird out and handed it to the boy. Hira Lal was almost speechless holding the sparrow and feeling its slight quiver. In the light of the flashlight he could see its pale brown throat, and that meant it was a young bird.

“Thanks,” he said. “Thanks, Ram Bharoseji. Once again thanks, Ram Bharoseji”.

Hira Lal held the sparrow in his cupped hands and it lay there quietly with the tips of its wings crossed. Suddenly it took two little jumps and spread its slender wings. Frantically its wings beat the air and it seemed to be dropping to the ground. Then it skimmed forward just above the grass and Hira Lal remembered long afterward how, when it really took wing and gained height, that it gave a little shiver of happiness.

The man who jived and rock-and-rolled into our hearts is no more. Shammi Kapoor, the swashbuckling actor of the 1950s and 1960s who redefined the image of the traditional hero, to become an everlasting style legend, died on August 14 after battling illness for years. He was 79.

He was the “jungle”, who careened wildly down snowy slopes and straight onto the popularity charts, shouting “Yahoooo...” That full-throated scream that spawned a thousand imitations was the turning point in his career. Shammi Kapoor carved a niche for himself by putting on dancing shoes that minced, waltzed and twisted like none other before.

Shamsher Raj Kapoor, as he was named at birth, made his debut in 1953 with *Jeevan Jyoti*.

A star was born

The hits rolled out one after another. *Kashmir Ki Kali*, *Professor*, *An Evening in Paris*, *Teesri Manzil*, *Brahmachari*, *Rajkumar...* The list is long. The songs were an inalienable part of the persona of Shammi Kapoor. Mohammed Rafi was the chosen voice and soon, the star and his songs effortlessly segued to create a lasting legacy.

Shammi, ever flamboyant, twisted



Funeral procession of Shammi Kapoor in Mumbai being led by his son Aditya (left) and nephew Randhir Kapoor(right). Inset: Shammi Kapoor about a year ago.

wildly to “Aaja, aaja, mein hoon pyar tera” with Asha Parekh in *Teesri Manzil*, matched steps with Mumtaz in *Brahmachari* with “Aajkal tere mere pyar ke charche”, wooed Sharmila Tagore in *An Evening in Paris* with the wild “Aasman se aaya farishta”.

The story goes that dance composers would leave him to choreograph his own steps. Remember the abandon of “Tareef karoon kya uski”



when Shammi literally gave himself to the music, flailing his hands and legs as he moved skilfully between shikaras in *Kashmir Ki Kali* (leading to a sprain, it is learnt)?

Shammi was also the eternal romantic lover who melted the heroine with one intense gaze as he crooned “Ehsaan tera hoga mujh par” in *Jungle* or “Akele, akele, kahaan jaa rahe ho” in *An Evening in Paris*.

Shammi was married to the legendary Geeta Bali, who died early during the making of *Teesri Manzil*. The couple had two children, Aditya and Kanchan, who stayed away from the arclights for much of their lives.

He then married Neela Devi, who was a constant presence by his side.

FILMS DON'T WORK BECAUSE OF TRENDS: PARVIN DABBAS

Boy bonding is in and bromance is the new buzzword with films like *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, *Delhi Belly* and *Pyaar Ka Punchnama* making a mark at the box office. Actor Parvin Dabbas's directorial debut *Sahi Dhandhe Galat Bande* also centers on four boys, but he says that he isn't the one to follow any trend.

“I have not tried to follow the trend. These two, three films released recently, and I wrote my film much before these films came. Films don't do well because of trends. Films do well if there's something interesting for the audience to see,” Parvin said.

“You might get interested in a film due to a trend, but if you see it and don't like it, you're not going to talk good about it. You'll trash it on Twitter and Facebook and in front of your



friends! Word of mouth is very quick...so how well a film does doesn't depend upon trends. This is a mistake a lot of people make... They think ‘this kind of film is working well, so let's go with it’. But I don't think I would ever think like that,” he added.

The model-turned-actor and his actress wife Preeti Jhangiani have launched the uniquely named production company Very Fishy Films. *Sahi Dhandhe Galat Bande*, an action comedy written and directed by Parvin himself, is the first project under their banner.

“As filmmakers, we hope to make different kinds of cinema. It's not that we are trying too hard to maintain variety, and neither is it a business decision. It's just a creative decision,” he added.

EXCITING GETAWAY IN GUJARAT

The western coastal state of Gujarat boasts of a pretty little hill station Saputara, or the abode of snakes, tucked away in its southernmost part where the green hills, rolling mist and mountainous vegetation virtually transport you to the likes of some of the better-known hill resorts of north India.

Located in the Sahyadri hills in Dang district, Saputara is Gujarat's one and only hill station. It is 873 meters above sea level and inhabited by the Bhils and other indigenous people.

A man-made lake, nestling near the main motorway, is a major attraction with tourists for its boat rides and walks along the promenade. With a thick haze of mist covering the hills, a fine spray of rain beating down and the cawing of ravens amid the sal and bamboo thickets, Saputara is an ideal getaway for tourists in summer.

The Gujarat government is promoting Saputara in a big way and wants to give tough competition to the more popular hill stations dotting the Himalayas. It launched a month-long Monsoon Festival from the end of July to entice tourists with adventure sports like paragliding and trekking thrown in along with dances by the tribals and a glimpse of their crafts. The state government was also roping in Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan to promote the spot, said Vipul Mitra, State Principal Secretary, Tourism.

Located just around a kilometer away from the Maharashtra border, the Gujarat government is

targeting tourists from places like Nashik, just 77 km away, and the major religious spot of Shirdi, some 140 km away. The state's commercial capital of Surat is 164 km away and the journey by bus to Saputara takes around four hours.

"We are erecting two major gates on the border with Maharashtra to welcome visitors to Saputara," said Mitra, adding that they were advertising the hill station in a big way in places like Shirdi to woo people to spend a day there after visiting Shirdi or maybe even think of staying overnight at Saputara and visit Shirdi the next day.

"Often, it is very difficult to get hotel accommodation in Shirdi. We are advertising our hotels in a big way there so that people can choose to

stay in the Saputara hotels and visit Shirdi during the daytime," said Kamlesh Patel, Chairperson of Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd.

The state government is also constructing *Visamohs* or rest houses, at a cost of \$4.3 million, on the way from Maharashtra to Saputara where tourists can stop, bathe and rest for a while. It will even have play facilities for children.

To entice more tourists, the state government is planning to create a big lake, three times the size of the current one, with a promenade around its edge, as well as a butterfly park of international standards — all at a cost of around \$13 million.

"We are organizing a paragliding festival from December in Saputara," Patel said.

The state government is also erecting an amphitheatre where tourists can watch local artistes perform.

Saputara currently has 12 major hotels as well as some low-budget accommodation for tourists, totaling around 550 rooms.

The hill station also boasts of other tourist attractions like the sunrise and sunset point, the major waterfalls Gira and Girmal, a tribal museum, artistes' village and a ropeway.

Although named Saputara, the irony is that there are actually no snakes to be found in the resorts of the hill station! "There are snakes in the jungles, like in other places. However, the indigenous people of the region know how to treat snake bites with herbal remedies," said S.K. Nanda, District In-charge, Dang.



Top: A roadside shrine of Bhils.
Bottom: Bhils dancing at an event in Saputara.

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■ Celebrating Eid



Devouts offering Eid ul-Fitr prayers at the Jama Masjid mosque in New Delhi on August 31, 2011. Muslims around the world celebrate Eid ul-Fitr to mark the end of the month of Ramadan, after the sighting of the new crescent moon. AFP Photo / Manan Vatsayana

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