

INDIAN POLITICAL,
DIASPORA, BUSINESS
AND DIPLOMATIC
CONNECTIVITY

INDIA EMPIRE

MONTHLY, FIRST PUBLISHED
IN OCTOBER 2004

Rs 400
(India)

US\$ 9
(Overseas)

PM MODI'S HISTORIC US
VISIT—Pg 10

JULY 2023
Vol. 19 No.02



GREEN KARMA YOGI

Ashwani Khurana, Founder-CEO at Karma Lakelands, has built a unique high-end green township around a golf course in Gurugram that has been receiving top awards and recognitions for being eco-friendly and sustainable

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Editor's Desk

Sustainability is no longer about doing less harm. It's about doing more good.

-Jochen Zeitz, Chairman, President and CEO, Harley-Davidson



In a way what Jochen Zeitz says has become the driving principle, the abiding inspiration, the daily essence of Ashwani Khurana's life at Karma Lakelands and beyond. As the Founder-CEO of Karma Lakelands, a 300-acre green township in Gurugram set amidst a verdant green forest cover off the Jaipur highway and just across the Delhi border, Ashwani's life today revolves around sustainability and greening. He has built a magnificent, top-end gated residential complex elegantly woven around water bodies and a soothing golf course designed by Phil Ryan of Pacific Coast Design, Australia, all bathing in luxury. In 2016, in recognition of his commitment towards a Greener Earth, Golf Digest recognized Karma Lakelands with India's Eco-Friendly Golf Course award. In October 2022, Today's Traveller declared Karma Lakelands as the Best Golf Resort in Delhi NCR and the same month the Golf Industry Association of India announced that the place was the Number One Golf Club in the Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Category.

It wasn't always like this, though. When Ashwani became India's highest tax payer in 1989, he was on his way to becoming the country's Lottery King, a sobriquet that sat well on him for well over a decade. His partnership concern, K & Co, would subsequently go on to become the highest tax-paying firm over the next 10 years. While he made his profits, Ashwani did not forget to pay his taxes for the greater good of the country, and that made him a formidable name to reckon with in the industry. At the same time he invested in real estate which he hoped to work on in the future.

By the turn of the century he had loftier ambitions, to do something good for the earth, and leave a green legacy behind. He eased himself away from the lottery business and focused on green real estate projects. In our cover story this month we look at what he's been able to do as a Green Karma Yogi over the last two to three decades.

Staying with the subject of clean and green energy, we've an article from the Embassy of Cuba in Delhi on the role of solar energy in the transformation of the energy matrix of Cuba, a nation that is one of the 93 countries that has signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance Framework (ISA) and is also one of the 115 countries to have signed the ISA Framework Agreement. The ISA itself was co-founded by India and France in 2015.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a successful trip to the US where he was a State Guest and was hosted by President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. Many landmark agreements were signed during the course of the visit, many memorable addresses delivered, and many American CEOs committed to increasing their economic footprint in India. We've a summary of the highlights of the visit.

We'd like to end with a note of caution. The grass isn't always greener on the other side. Young Indians lured by dreams of a great future often fall into the trap of unscrupulous student recruitment agents and sham colleges. In Canada, for instance, a deportation drama of students is unfolding itself, as we write. Likewise, things have turned sour for a section of Indians who have made New Zealand their home. They have petitioned the country's Parliament calling for Governmental action against growing incidents of daylight crime and robbery against Indian-owned dairy store owners. The matter is quite serious since the petition has been signed by a whopping 34,000 people.

There are plenty of stories in the magazine that could spark your interest. Do send us your feedback. Happy reading.

Sayantana Chakravarty

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Sayantana Chakravarty is in a select group of 12 writers alongside Nobel Laureate William Butler Yeats, RK Narayan (Padma Vibhushan and Sahitya Award winner), journalist and poet Walt Whitman, writer Saki (Hector Hugh Munro), poet Nissim Ezekiel (Sahitya Akademi Awardee), writer Jerome K Jerome (author of *Three Men in a Boat*), poet Edward Lear, Roald Dahl (16th on Time Magazine's list of greatest British writers) and others chosen by Scholastic Education to promote advanced English literature for schools worldwide.

Sayantana Chakravarty's stories featured in *Best of Indian Express of 25 years* and *Best of India Today's 25 years*.

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INDIA EMPIRE

Volume 19 No. 02 July 2023
www.indiaempire.com

RNI No.: DELENG/2005/16693

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Printed, published, owned by Sayantan Chakravarty. Editor is
Sayantan Chakravarty. Published from N -126, II Floor,
Greater Kailash I, New Delhi 110 048, INDIA.

Printed at Archana Advertising Pvt. Ltd., C-78, Okhla
Industrial Area, Ph-1, New Delhi 110020.

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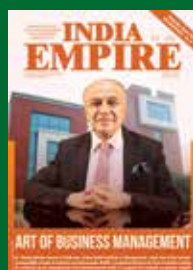
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THE GREEN KARMA YOGI

Sayantana Chakravarty and Yogesh Sood



If you want to be creative in any field, you have to observe. The deepest possible observation will bring enormous vision.

—Sadhguru

Back in 1989 when India's economy was still on the thresholds of opening up to the world and liberalization was a term that hadn't seeped its way into our collective consciousness, Ashwani Khurana, only 28-years-old at the time, became the country's highest income tax payer. It was a powerful statement by a young businessman, who growing up in the 1960s and 70s, had seen his family—uprooted violently from erstwhile West Pakistan during the painful throes of India's partition—navigate almost constantly in dire financial straits. By becoming the highest income tax payer in India at a very young age, Ashwani not just covered himself in glory by leaving many celebrities and top industrialists behind, he made his family very proud as well. Indeed, Ashwani Khurana had arrived!

His financial success in the 1980s allowed him to invest in a 300-acre tract of land—today famously known as the Karma Lakelands—just across Delhi's border in Gurugram, on the national highway to Jaipur. He decided it

would be a top-end, gated residential complex, full of trees, a place where brick and mortar would not be shy of playing hide and seek with the plentiful forests. This at a time when going green wasn't quite in vogue. Clearly, Ashwani Khurana was ahead of his times, his deepest observations of the environment around him had given him a vision to do something good.

THE INCREDIBLE KARMA LAKELANDS

Karma Lakelands is today a magical place, a must visit for those who like to know more about aesthetics in town planning. It has high-end villas, and cottages, all in a forested setting, away from the din and bustle of a busy city life. The place is elegantly woven around water bodies and, of course, its pièce de résistance, the soothing golf course designed by Phil Ryan of Pacific Coast Design, Australia. In terms of setting high standards, it is the proud recipient of India's Eco-Friendly Golf Course Award by Golf Digest. It is also a place where Ashwani would take the great Sadhguru—his spiritual master at one time—to soak in the lush ambience, and the two golfed together whenever the universe permitted them to.



It is also a happening place. Recently, Karma Lakelands has tied up with the well-known Sobha Developers for raising a 700-apartment complex. The Government approval is already in place. The project promises to provide a unique fusion of the values that both companies represent.

ACING THE LOTTERY BUSINESS

In the world of lottery business, Ashwani Khurana arrived like a breath of cool, fresh air. He was a cut above the regular lottery operators, not many in the trade spoke with the same flair and authority as he did. He could articulate the views of the industry with clarity and calm. He paid his considerable taxes on time. His lotteries were clean, unlike those run by some others where there were allegations of fixing to benefit kith and kin. K & Co., his firm, became the largest lottery company in India, promoting the very successful Sikkim Lotteries that changed the economic fortunes of many. All this won him the respect of peers and regulators, but unsurprisingly, it also earned him a fair bit of jealousy.

Surely, but not slowly, he managed to build a lottery empire in the 1980s and 1990s, the likes of which earned him the sobriquet Lottery King of India. It had its pleasant fallouts. The rich and the famous did not give up the slightest opportunity to dine and wine with him. Delhi's Page 3 people liked to be photographed alongside the successful Ashwani. The powerful courted him, and Delhi's media and those in Sikkim where he operated largely, always wanted a piece of this lottery magnate.

His level-headedness, however, is what sets him apart from people who get rich quick. The incredible success and the rise from a modest upbringing to becoming a man of fortune did not go to Ashwani Khurana's head. Feet firmly on the ground, he knew that eventually he wanted to own a township where he could leave behind a legacy of abundant greenery, appealing aesthetics, mystic bonds with nature and, of course, the tranquil golf course. One day the decision was made within—the lottery business had given him enough, and he needed to part ways with it, and

the interminable ambitions it brought along the way.

THE RISE OF A CONSERVATOR

To give up a successful venture that one has nurtured, and forgo the limelight when you are perched on top, takes enormous courage and conviction. Ashwani showed just that as he walked away from the lottery spotlights in 2000 and chose instead to focus almost entirely on growing and nurturing Karma Lakelands. There had come a trigger, though, for him to leave the lottery stage. A fellow lottery operator had started fixing state lotteries quite unabashedly, and his shenanigans were not something Ashwani wanted to put up with any longer. It would require a mammoth effort to correct the system, and he

wasn't game for getting into the murky world. He'd loftier things in mind.

To his advantage, he had absolute clarity about his goals, and also, inherently, knew the value of conservation. A go-getter during his lottery days, he carries the same drive about conservation into his pet green projects today. Erosion of soil and the brazen pollution of air and water is a harbinger of disaster in a modern world that is battling climate change on an unprecedented scale. Ashwani has been doing more than his bit as a conservator.

In the cautioning and valuable words of much-respected Sadhguru, also a driver of the internationally popular Save the Soil movement, "Our body is essentially soil and water, the quality of soil and water determines the quality of our food, our body and our life. Every one of us must become conscious of this. Restoring soil health is not an act of generosity. It is an act of survival we owe to the next generation. May we not fail our children." Ashwani is ever cautious of this foreboding piece of advice. He tells people wherever he goes that recognition precedes replication. These are golden words heard and borrowed from Peepal Baba, the world famous tree planter who's planted over three crore trees and is a Partner to Karma Lakelands in the social forestry initiative. Ashwani totally believes in this idea and goes all out to practice what he preaches at the Karma Lakelands.





It was in 1986 that Ashwani set up an ambitious target of planting 100,000 trees in Delhi over the next 10 years of his life. As things stand in the middle of June 2023, he and his team have planted 260,000 trees. The number will, doubtless, continue to grow. Interestingly, he once said that, “Greening, like charity, begins at home, but shouldn’t be ending there.” His greening drive began from his home in Golf Links with the landscape undergoing a transformation to accommodate more trees and flora, including spaces outside the house such as the public park which he turned into a ‘mini forest.’ Wherever he’s lived, he’s practiced the beautification of streets and maintaining them over a 1.5-km radius from his properties. He is drawn to the trees he plants, and there is a perceptible emotional connection between him and a sapling that he’s parented into a tree. He can often be seen communicating silently with his trees, across his properties and on roadsides.

His ‘Greenathon’ concept caught on like wildfire. Schools and colleges came to him, asking him to fund their annual festivals and green up their campuses. But not everything was hunky dory, some of his team members would face the ire of residents, be beaten up and taken to the police station for ‘damaging’ local business interests for trying to remove advertisement boards nailed to trees. The environment was the least of the priorities in the last century.

Nevertheless, Ashwani soldiered on undeterred by the occasional disruptive behavior of local businesses. By creating the Earth Sense initiatives, he has aimed to inculcate good values among the younger generation so that it grows up being responsible citizens who know how to care for mother earth, and importantly, leave behind a green legacy.

There has been a raft of other pioneering initiatives. Karma Lakelands has bio-composting organic-agro, rainwater harvesting, recycling of water, solar energy, kitchen, plastic and e-waste segregation management, eco-bricks and a no-horn policy. The compost used for soil enrichment is a collection of plant clippings mixed with cow dung and sewage (treated as liquid gold) from the villas. This mixture of biomass with sewage triggers and expedites the decomposition by raising the temperature of composting piles to between 50 and 70 degrees Celsius. It

helps keep the place smell-free, and also becomes a natural repellent for flies and mosquitoes. The township’s natural green cover and fresh air lovingly shelters thousands of birds, bees, butterflies, and with it a vibrant, colorful theatre of flora and fauna.

On campus, Ashwani is a ubiquitous figure, walking, cycling and occasionally indulging in the luxury of driving a golf cart when showing his guests and visitors around. His Whatsapp status directly reflects his ethos, it says: “Responsible- Conscious Living in Karma Lakelands. At war with litterers, smokers, honkers & straw-suckers.”

His green drive has not failed to take residents at Karma Lakelands along, in fact he has their full backing. Says Gautam Nair, a residence owner: “My good friend Ashwani Khurana is an unreasonable man, in fact a very unreasonable man. George Bernard Shaw famously said that a reasonable man adapts himself to the world, and an unreasonable man persists in trying to get the world to adapt to him. Therefore, all progress depends upon the unreasonable man. It is because of Ashwani’s ‘unreasonableness’ that we are all here today.” It is perhaps this unreasonableness that helped transform a barren piece of land on the outskirts of Delhi into the idyllic settings of Karma Lakelands that we find today.

THE BIRTH OF K VILLA

When in the initial years Ashwani found it difficult to meet his target of planting 10,000 trees each year, he decided to invest in suburban, rural land in Delhi. In 1989, the year he invested in the 300 acres tract at Karma Lakelands, he also bought a property at Green Avenue, Vasant Kunj. It resulted in an eco-resort where Ashwani and his family resided until moving out to Karma Lakelands during the pandemic period in 2020.

His friend Nek Chand, the designer of the famed Rock Garden in Chandigarh and a Padma Shri recipient, helped with the landscaping of K Villa. It is modeled on the best green practices, responsible and conscious living, and is a microcosm of the larger, more sprawling Karma Lakelands. It was Nek Chand who inspired him to become an environmentalist, the Green Karma Yoga that he’s today.

Between them, the Green Avenue community and the Karma Lakelands Golf Resort & Residences handle a truck load of biomass and half-a-million litres of recycled water, including sewage, each day. The organic-agro initiatives boast of a mini dairy farm with A2 milk producing cows and livestock with in-house nurseries at both places. Every kind of single-use product, especially plastic, is strictly avoided.





EARLY YEARS

Ashwani grew up in the 1960s and 1970s in south Delhi's Lajpat Nagar, then a designated resettlement colony for those who had been forced to leave West Pakistan and migrate to India. The nation had been economically left in the doldrums by the British colonialists, and when India and its national capital gained independence from the Raj, there was hardly any budgetary provision to look after the displaced immigrants who had taken refuge in numerous resettlement localities like Lajpat Nagar. So conditions, growing up, were not the best, in fact quite down-at-heel. Ashwani's parents—father Iqbal Chand and mother Kailash—and his two younger siblings had to endure some very tough days. The family tried its hand at sundry businesses including selling handkerchiefs, buttons, and sunglasses. They even tried to produce mosquito repellants to make ends meet.

His father eventually started a lottery business, but somehow it failed to bring him any luck. When news about this setback reached his school, his peers and even teachers made fun of him. One of his teachers went to the extent of telling him to get a 'lucky lottery ticket' from his father, else he'd have to cane him. Very soon the teacher derived immense sadistic pleasure in caning Ashwani, a humiliation that he has never let go from his memory. Academically, matters went south, and Ashwani, disturbed by the abuse in school, dropped out of his class IX final exams and was forced to repeat one year.

DEALING WITH CRISES

According to their ancient philosophy, the Chinese believe that opportunities emerge from crises. Likewise, Ashwani wanted the crises of his childhood to turn into opportunities. For that he'd to make determination and courage his constant companions. "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's

determination," said the famed American baseball manager Tommy Lasorda. These words ring true for Ashwani. He left failure behind, charted a new course for himself, dived deep into the world of lottery, and success began to chase him like a shadow.

In 1983, a personal bereavement was to teach him a great life lesson. While he was on a business trip to Sikkim, his brother passed away in a road accident in Delhi. In spite of all the money in the world, Ashwani couldn't find a plane to charter to reach back Delhi to attend his brother's funeral. Forlorn and downcast, he realized that all the money in the world can sometimes be of little use. The incident was sad, and humbling.

In 1997, Ashwani, struggling with a fragile marriage, took a break to attend an OPM (owner/president management) program at the Harvard Business School. The time spent at Harvard was one of deep reflection, and he strategized to exit his marriage. It eventually led to a divorce with Ashwani gaining sole custody and responsibility of his three children who were eleven, nine and two years old at the time.

His resolve to leave behind a greener world was strengthened upon the passing of his beloved mother. Out of sheer respect for trees and the environment, no wood was burnt at her funeral where she had a dignified burial, a process he termed "soil to soil smokelessly." The Kailash Sacred Forest named after her is where 10,000 trees are currently under plantation, once again in partnership with Peepal Baba of the Give Me Trees Trust, and supported by several corporate entities. It remains a sacred lush grove that the family often visits. It is also here that Ashwani has a silent communion with nature.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Also a Tanguero, a golfer, a mentor and an influencer, Ashwani Khurana is the recipient of several distinctions and honors. They include the Kotler Award of Excellence for lifetime achievement at the World Marketing Summit, 2018, the Champion Award from the Responsible Tourism Society of India, recognition as the Number One Golf Club in the Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Category from the Golf Industry Association of India (October, 2022), the Best Golf Resort in Delhi NCR from Today's Traveller (October, 2022).

The man who broke into the national consciousness in 1989 by becoming India's highest tax payer, and later earned the nickname of Lottery King, is today a seasoned environmentalist and a veteran of several sustainable technologies. Indeed, we have to doff our hats to Ashwani Khurana for making the world a cleaner, greener and better place.

PM MODI MEETS TOP AMERICAN CEOs



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his US visit in June met a cross section of American CEOs in Washington and sought their technological collaboration in India. In a series of back-to-back meetings on June 21, Mr

Modi first met the President and CEO of Applied Materials Gary E. Dickerson and invited his company to contribute towards strengthening the semiconductor ecosystem in India and also to develop process technology and advanced packaging capabilities.

PM Modi and Dickerson discussed the potential of Applied Materials' collaboration with academic institutions in India to create a skilled workforce. The Prime Minister then met CEO of General Electric (GE) Lawrence Culp Jr., during which Modi appreciated the company for its long-term commitment of manufacturing in India.

The discussion focused on GE's greater technology collaboration to promote manufacturing in India, while Modi also invited the company to play a greater role in the aviation and renewable energy sectors in India. Later in the day, Modi also met Sanjay Mehrotra, the Indian-American CEO of Micron (see separate story on Micron's investment plan in India).

The Prime Minister invited Micron Technology to boost semiconductor manufacturing in India and noted that the country can provide competitive advantages in various parts of the semiconductor supply chain.

PM MODI DISCUSSES SPIRITUALITY WITH ELON MUSK

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 21 said that apart from discussing energy with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, they also touched upon the topic of spirituality. PM Modi met Musk on June 20 as part of his three-day state visit to the US, where he met several prominent personalities from across the spectrum. "Great meeting you today @elonmusk! We had multifaceted conversations on issues ranging from energy to spirituality," the Indian PM said in a tweet. Musk reacted: "Great conversation" with Mr Modi.

The Tesla CEO also posted about his meeting with Mr Modi in New York: "It was an honour to meet again". After the meeting, Musk said that his electric vehicle and battery company will now come to India "as soon as it is humanly possible".

"I am a fan of PM Modi. India is great for solar energy investment. We are also hoping to bring Starlink internet to India," the outgoing Twitter CEO told reporters. "I am incredibly excited about the future of India. I think India has more promise than any large country in the world," he added. Musk recently discussed the meaning of life and whether he believes in God on the Full Send Podcast.

"I would say I generally agree with the teaching of Christianity, but I'm not religious. I've never been particularly religious," he said. When asked if he believed in God, Musk answered, "Something created the universe, or the universe is here."



Musk, who is yet to bring his electric car-maker Tesla to India, said the country is great for solar energy investment. "I am incredibly excited about the future of India. I think India has more promise than any large country in the world," he added. Asked if Tesla will enter the Indian market, Musk said, "I am confident that Tesla will be in India and will do so as soon as humanly possible."

"I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his support and hopefully we will be able to announce something in the not so distant future," Musk noted. In April this year, Musk started following the Indian PM on Twitter. Musk and India have been in talks for years, but disagreements over a local factory and the country's import duties of as much as 100 per cent have led to an impasse.

MUSK SAYS TESLA COMING TO INDIA



New York: After hearing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Make in India" pitch, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has announced a change of plans, saying that his electric vehicle and battery company will now come to India "as soon as it is humanly possible".

Musk told reporters in conversations following his meeting with Modi in June, "He really cares about India because he's pushing us to make significant investments in India, which is something that we intend to do and we're just trying to figure out the right timing."

It was a change of plans for the mercurial Musk who had earlier refused to consider manufacturing in India unless India lowered tariffs for imported Teslas to be sold in India. PM Modi "really wants to do the right thing for India," he said.

PM Modi wants to make sure that the advantage from investments "accrues to India's advantage, which is, you know, obviously, that's the job," he added. India has more "promise than any large country in the world," he said.

If Tesla comes to India, it will be following the pattern of companies like Apple diversifying their manufacturing from China because of geopolitical and supply chain issues. Musk gushed about his "fantastic meeting with the Prime Minister" and declared, "I am a fan of Modi."

He said that Modi had invited him to visit India and that he would next year. Musk added that India has tremendous potential for "the three pillars of sustainable energy future" -- a goal of Modi. These were power generation using solar and wind energy, deploying batteries to store it, and having electric vehicles that run on it, the Tesla CEO said.

"The interesting thing you will find is that this is a lower-cost way to go as well," he added. Another Musk venture is Starlink which uses low-orbit satellites to provide broadband internet connections. He said that he was "hopefully looking forward" to bringing it to India.

Asked about former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's assertion that the Indian government had asked the company to shut down a large number of accounts, Musk said bluntly that a company "doesn't have a choice but to obey local governments".

"If we don't if we don't obey local government laws, then we will get shut down. So the best we can do is really to hew close to the law in any given country," he added. It is impossible for us to do more than that (or) we will be blocked and our people will be arrested, Musk said.

He added that there are "different rules and regulations, different forms of government, so what we'll do, the best to provide the freest speech that is possible under the law". Modi met earlier with Nassim Nicholas Taleb, the nemesis of Musk. The author and thinker who expounds on the quirks of history and how they impact the world.

Taleb and Musk have been engaged in twitterfights, and Taleb took a dig at Musk on his own Twitter: "Elon Musk, while attacking me on Twitter, was next (in line to meet Modi) but I did not run into him." After Modi's meeting with Taleb, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted, "PM lauded Prof Taleb for his contribution in bringing complex ideas of risk and fragility in popular conversations. Highlighted India's growing start-up ecosystem and the risk-taking abilities of India's young entrepreneurs."

MICRON TO SET UP \$2.75 BILLION FACILITY IN INDIA



Bengaluru: Micron Technology on June 22 announced to set up a new \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in Gujarat, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Sanjay Mehrotra, the Indian-American President and CEO of Micron, in Washington DC during his state visit to the US.

Micron's investment will be up to \$825 million over the two phases of the project and will create up to 5,000 new direct Micron jobs and 15,000 community jobs over the next several years. Under the government's 'Modified Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) Scheme,' Micron will receive 50 per cent fiscal support for the total project cost from the Centre and incentives representing 20 per cent of the total project cost from Gujarat.

The combined investment over the course of two phases will be up to \$2.75 billion. Micron's new facility will enable assembly and test manufacturing for both DRAM and NAND products and address demand from domestic and international markets, the company said in a statement.

The Prime Minister had invited Micron Technology to boost semiconductor manufacturing in India and noted that the country can provide competitive advantages in various parts of the semiconductor supply chain. "We are excited about the steps India is taking to develop the local semiconductor ecosystem," said Mehrotra.

"I am grateful to the Indian government and all of the officials involved that made this investment possible. Our new assembly and test location in India will enable Micron to expand our global manufacturing base and better serve our customers in India and around the world," he added.

The phased construction of the new assembly and test facility in Gujarat is expected to begin in 2023. Phase 1,

which will include 500,000 square feet of planned cleanroom space, will start to become operational in late 2024, and Micron will ramp capacity gradually over time in line with global demand trends.

Micron expects Phase 2 of the project, which would include construction of a facility similar in scale to Phase 1, to start towards the second half of the decade. "Micron's investment to set up assembly and test manufacturing in India will fundamentally transform India's semiconductor landscape and generate tens of thousands of high-tech and construction jobs," said IT and Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

"This investment will be a crucial building block in the country's blossoming semiconductor ecosystem," the minister added. Micron will build and operate the assembly and test facility in accordance with the company's sustainability goals and in line with local and global environmental commitments.





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“COMMITTED TO INVEST \$26 BILLION IN INDIA BY 2030”



Washington: E-commerce giant Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said on June 24 that the company is committed to invest \$26 billion in India by 2030. Amazon has invested about \$11 billion in India so far and has plans to invest \$15 billion more by 2030.

“Productive meeting with Prime Minister @NarendraModi. Discussed Amazon’s commitment to invest \$26 billion in India by 2030,” Jassy tweeted after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi here. “Working together, we will support startups, create jobs, enable exports, and empower individuals and small businesses to compete globally,” the Amazon CEO added.

India is a key market for Amazon, where it has invested over \$6.5 billion in e-commerce in the last decade. In May this year, Amazon Web Services

(AWS), the Cloud arm of e-commerce giant Amazon, announced plans to invest Rs 1,05,600 crore (\$12.7 billion) into cloud infrastructure in India by 2030 to meet growing customer demand for cloud services in the country.

This investment is estimated to contribute Rs 1,94,700 crore (\$23.3 billion) to India’s total gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030. The fresh investment followed AWS’s investment of Rs 30,900 crore (\$3.7 billion) between 2016-2022, which will bring AWS’s total investment in India to Rs 1,36,500 crore (\$16.4 billion) by 2030.

AWS has two data centre infrastructure regions in India -- the AWS Asia Pacific (Mumbai) Region, launched in 2016, and the AWS Asia Pacific (Hyderabad) Region, launched in November 2022.



“DEFENCE DEALS STRENGTHENED DURING PM MODI’S US VISIT”

New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on June 26 said that India will now be able to produce its own aircraft engines, specifically the F414 engines used in the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft.

Citing the several defence production deals signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit to the US, she said: “GE, the largest aeronautics company, has signed an agreement with HAL for the joint production of F414 aircraft engines. This joint venture will take place in India, with 80 per cent of the technology being transferred. “I highlight this because HAL is often criticised by the Indian opposition, but now we can see that HAL is entering into this joint production agreement with GE.”

Sitharaman also said that the HAL-made engines would be utilised in the indigenous Tejas aircraft, which is entirely produced in India. She also mentioned that India is acquiring unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), specifically the sea guardian MQ-9B, which will greatly strengthen the armed forces.

She also said that with Master Ship Repair Agreements, India is set to become the largest center for ship repairs, as the US Navy has already reached an agreement with Karthupalli (near Chennai), Larsen and Toubro, and two other shipyards. Furthermore, they are also working on agreements with Mazagon Docks in Mumbai and Goa Shipyards, she added.

NASA-ISRO TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION



New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on June 26 said that scientists of US’ NASA and ISRO would collaborate to establish an International Space Station in 2024. During a discussion on critical mineral partnerships here, she revealed the NASA-ISRO plan to set up the international space station.

“NASA will provide advanced training to the ISRO, facilitating a joint effort towards the International Space Station in 2024,” she said. Sitharaman also emphasised the creation of new jobs through semiconductor technology. “I would like to highlight the semiconductor supply chain. For instance, Micron Technology is expected to invest \$800 million towards a \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in Gujarat. This investment alone will create more than 5,000 new direct jobs and 15,000 indirect jobs at the community level,” she stated.

She also announced that India would become a part of alliances related to rare earths and materials, expecting to support over \$2 billion in planned investments. The Semiconductor Centre for Commercialisation and Innovation, which is being established in Bengaluru, will play a significant role.

“In its first five years of operation, the centre is expected to support more than \$2 billion in planned investments, create 500 new advanced engineering jobs, and potentially add another 2,500 jobs to the manufacturing ecosystem,” she said. Sitharaman highlighted the importance of this progress and the semi-verse solutions programme, which aims to train up to 60,000 Indian youth in artificial intelligence and semiconductor-related education. She stated that this initiative would help achieve workforce development goals. “I have mentioned the critical mineral partnership. Several companies are planning to establish these capacities in India because lithium, cobalt, and other rare earths will play a crucial role in the future of energy and energy transition,” she added.

Sitharaman also mentioned that India and the US have launched a public-private joint task force for the development and deployment of open RAM systems in the field of advanced telecommunications.

“PM’S US VISIT TO CREATE UP TO 1 LAKH DIRECT JOBS”



New Delhi: The three key announcements in the semiconductor sector during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s US visit will create a minimum 80,000 to 1 lakh direct jobs in India, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, said on June 23.

Addressing a press conference here, the Minister said the investments in the semiconductor sector will also help create several thousands of indirect jobs in the overall supply chain. “The electronics industry created 10-12 lakh jobs in the last two years alone. The latest announcements, like by Micron, to make memory chips in India is an important milestone for us. I think there will be at least 80,000 to 1 lakh new direct jobs being created with these initiatives,” Chandrasekhar said.

US-based Micron Technology on June 22 announced to set up a new \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in Gujarat, a day after Modi met Sanjay Mehrotra, the Indian-American President and CEO of Micron, in Washington D.C. Micron’s investment will be up to \$825 million over the two phases of the project and will create up to 5,000 new direct Micron jobs and 15,000 community jobs over the next several years.

US-based semiconductor giant Applied Materials also announced plans to build a collaborative engineering centre in India with an investment of \$400 million over four years. Lam Research, a US supplier of wafer-fabrication equipment and related services to the semiconductor industry, announced a training programme in India for up to 60,000 high-tech engineers.

“This is just a beginning as there is more to come as India rapidly grows as a significant and trusted partner to global electronics and semiconductor value and supply chain,” Chandrasekhar said. In the last 18 months, after the announcement of semiconductor vision by Prime Minister Modi and the planned investment of Rs 76,000 crore to catalyse and build India’s Semicon ecosystem, much progress has been made.

SITHARAMAN LISTS KEY FINANCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES AT PARIS SUMMIT



New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on June 22 listed out some key measures undertaken by the Central government to ensure financial inclusion. “Today, we’re able to send most of the benefits directly to the bank accounts of citizens. After the introduction of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the government was able to save Rs one lakh crore in just one of the provinces in India through direct benefit transfer,” she told dignitaries, while addressing the summit for the New Global Financing Pact in Paris.

“DPI has allowed us to make optimum use of taxpayers’ money,” she said. Under ‘Stand-up India’ scheme, women were identified not just in big cities but tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and are being granted collateral-free loans at concessional rates, so that they can stand up on their own.

Push given for startups was not just an urban phenomenon, Sitharaman said. “Women street vendors and small merchants are being given collateral-free loans,” the Finance Minister told the gathering. Listing out some women-centric projects initiated by the Indian government, the Minister said that all the public sector banks across India have been mandated to give loans to at least one woman per bank branch at a concessional rate without any collateral, Sitharaman added.

Maternity leaves were raised to 26 weeks, she informed, adding that women self-help groups in villages can now procure locally produced grains, build silos and storage capacities. Viability gap funding is being provided to them. A national agriculture market has been created through which women can find a better market for their produce.

“GANGA IS MUCH CLEANER NOW”

Santosh Kumar Pathak

New Delhi: Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has said that several initiatives undertaken on mission mode by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 7-8 years to clean Ganga river has resulted in the cleanliness of its water, from the point of origin till its drainage into the sea (the river empties into Bay of Bengal).

In a conversation with IANS, Shekhawat spoke on several issues, including nine years of Modi government at the Centre, its achievements and criticism by the Opposition.



Here are some excerpts:

IANs: As a Union Minister, what according to you is the biggest achievement of your government in the last nine years?

Shekhawat: Let's recall what the country was passing through before the Modi government came to power in 2014. The corruption was at its peak. New scams that were unfolding every other day were making the headlines. The country was facing a number of challenges on diplomatic, strategic and security fronts. Also, the nation was facing a number of social and economic problems.

People began losing faith in the system. Amid such a scenario, the country handed a historic mandate to the BJP and Narendra Modi and the government was formed. For the first time in 30 years, and also after Independence, people gave such a resounding mandate to a non-Congress party.

If I have to say in a single sentence, this is the biggest achievement of the Narendra Modi government. It re-instilled the faith of the people in the country's system from which they were losing belief.

IANs: But contrary to the government's claims, the opposition parties have been criticising the Modi government over its functioning, and also levelling some serious allegations against it...

Shekhawat: The nation properly understands the pangs of the Opposition, especially that of Congress -- and even more than the party, that of Rahul Gandhi. They have been shown the exit door by the people, and the Congress has not been able to accept this fact that the country has a well-functioning government for the last nine years despite the grand old party not being in power.

Whenever the nation witnessed a moment of pride in the last nine years, the Congress tried to embarrass the country by resorting to making controversial remarks.

IANs: The opposition parties have now been trying

to come up with a front against the Modi government for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls...

Shekhawat: They are not doing so for the first time. In 2018, they tried to malign PM Modi over Rafale (fighter jets) and other issues. Many irresponsible statements were also made, yet the people reposed faith in PM Modi in the 2019 general elections. I am fully confident that even in 2024, people will make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister once again, and that too with a higher margin of votes.

IANs: How many seats are being

expected (in 2024)?

Shekhawat: In 2019, there was an increase in vote share in comparison to 2014. The same thing will be repeated in 2024, i.e., the ballot share would be more than 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

IANs: PM Narendra Modi came up with the Jal Shakti Ministry keeping several objectives in mind, and you were appointed the Minister. How much progress has been made in terms of achieving those goals?

Shekhawat: A number of initiatives were undertaken as a result of which today, India is not just one of the most-spending nations when it comes to investing in water resources, it has also come up with a major scheme focussed on drinking water. For the first time after Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019 decided that in the next five years, every rural household will be provided with an adequate amount of clean water.

Back then, only 16 per cent households in the country had water supply. And despite the challenges posed by the Covid crisis and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, today, over 12 crore houses are getting drinking water as compared to 3.23 crore houses back then. We are taking several steps to ensure every house in the country gets water by 2024.

IANs: The government had made several promises on cleaning the Ganga river. However, the Opposition is claiming that the Namami Gange project has failed...

Shekhawat: The job of the Opposition is to criticise for the sake of doing it. But as far as the question of cleaning Ganga is concerned, due to the initiatives undertaken by PM Modi on mission mode in the last seven-eight years, the river scores high on several parameters of cleanliness today -- from the point of its origin till its flow into the sea. An investment of Rs 3,000 crore was done towards this direction. The number of aquatic creatures in the Ganga has also increased -- which proves that cleanliness has improved.

On the auspicious occasion of Kumbh, 22,000 crore people have witnessed the cleanliness of Ganga. The UN has ranked India's 'Namami Gange' mission related to Ganga cleanliness among the top 10 World Restoration Programmes.

SOLAR ENERGY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENERGY MATRIX IN CUBA

The use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) is the future of electricity generation in the Republic of Cuba. It is urgent to promote projects with the use of RES, since currently 95% of the electricity generated comes from fossil sources.

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Cuba approved the Policy for the prospective development of RES and their efficient use until 2030. Within this policy, solar energy has a leading role, due to its easy installation and high potential in Cuba, equivalent to 1800 kwh per square meter per year.

The vision is to generate 100% of the Power with RES, for which 11 GW of photovoltaic solar parks are planned to be installed, with 2 GW in energy storage systems. The goal is to have at least 2.1 GW of solar photovoltaic parks in operation by 2030.

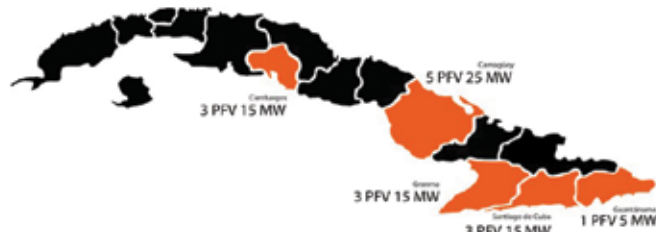
In that endeavor the consolidation and development of the presence of foreign companies in the sector are crucial. There are already different projects related to solar being executed in Cuba by companies from different regions of the world, but this needs to be boosted and diversified. There is a huge potential for Indian companies.

Cuba has a favorable environment for Foreign Investment, which offers the possibility of executing projects related to photovoltaic solar technology, in different modalities, such as: Totally Foreign Capital Companies, Joint Ventures, Commercialization of equipment and resources on Consignment, among others.

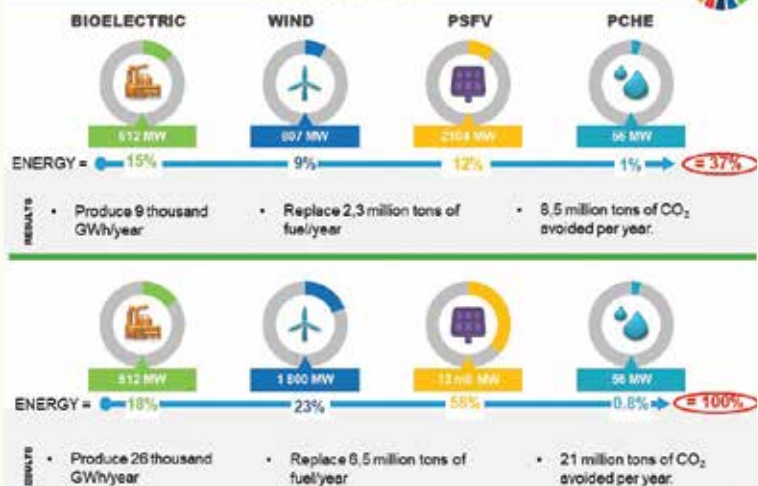


Project Installation of 75 MW in 15 Photovoltaic Parks in 5 provinces of Cuba.

- 75 MW (15 photovoltaic parks) in 5 provinces of the country.
- The estimated energy to be generated is 108 GWh/year.
- LoC from Eximbank of India for USD 75 million.
- DPR prepared by the Indian company WAPCOS.



CUBA-POLICY AND VISION COUNTRY STRATEGY FOR RES DEVELOPMENT



There is a secure and transparent legal framework, as well as several tax and infrastructure facilities, among them:

- Law 118 on Foreign Investment and its complementary legislation, which provide guarantees to foreign investors.
- Decree Law 345 "On the development of Renewable Sources and the efficient use of energy".
- A single window mechanism for foreign investment (VUINEX).

BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER AT G20 DMM



Varanasi: Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, M.P., Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, attended the G20 Development Ministers Meeting (G20 DMM) held at this historic Indian city on June 12, 2023. Foreign Ministers/Ministers from a number of the G20 countries as well as guest countries attended this important meeting, which primarily focused on multilateralism, progress of implementation of SDGs and Green Development.

Dr. Momen intervened at various sessions of the G20 DMM held on 12 June 2023, where he emphasized on upholding the true spirit of multilateralism for greater interest of the Global Community. He stressed on the challenges faced by the Countries of Global South and called for support from developed countries on means of implementation, financing and capacity building. Dr. Momen highlighted the various steps and achievements made by Bangladesh under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in implementation of SDGs, Green Development and adopting various initiatives to facilitate the 'Lifestyle for Environment' Mission.

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh met his Indian counterpart on the sidelines of the G20 DMM. Both Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction on the existing excellent bilateral relations between the two countries. They discussed issues of bilateral interests and various important events which are expected to take place in the coming days. Dr. Momen appreciated India for successfully steering the G20 meetings and their leadership role in addressing the global challenges under India's G20 presidency. Both Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction on various achievements which have been taken in the recent time.

Dr. Momen also met Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, Singapore and Ms. Isobel Coleman, Deputy Administrator of USAID. During his meeting with the Singaporean Minister, Dr. Momen emphasized on expanding the areas of cooperation with Singapore and employing more people from Bangladesh. Dr. Momen during his meeting with the Deputy Administration of USAID stressed upon the robust partnership between Bangladesh and USAID that has spanned for more than five decades. During both meetings, Foreign Minister sought the support for early and sustainable repatriation of all displaced Rohingyas to their homeland in the Rakhine State of Myanmar.





RETURN OF FII's DRIVE MARKET'S RECORD SURGE

Venkatachari Jagannathan

Chennai: A combination of factors – better corporate Q4 results in FY23, return of the foreign institutional investors (FII), India's improving macroeconomic data, being the brightest among the emerging market and small investors not wanting to be left out and coming into the market -- have together taken India's stock markets on a record high, said experts.

The market indices – NSE's Nifty and the Sensex of the BSE- are nearing their 52-week high points. The Nifty of the NSE on Friday opened at 18,723.30 and touched a high of 18,864.70. The 52-week high point was 18,887.60.

Similarly, the Sensex of BSE opened at 62,960.73, touched a high of 63,520.36 and closed at 62,917.63 points. The highest level was 63,583.07 points. "The domestic economic indicators continue to remain healthy and showing sustained momentum in both manufacturing and services growth along with now declining inflation numbers raising hopes of

increase in consumer demand as well. This has been one of the key reasons for our markets performing relatively well since a few weeks ago. Now recently, with global macros also showing some improvement on the inflation front is helping to sustain the positive sentiments," Roop Bhootra, CEO - Investment Services, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers told IANS.

"One of the key drivers of the Indian stock market's upward trend is the overall positive economic outlook of the country. India's robust economic growth, supported by government initiatives such as infrastructure development, taxation reforms and efforts to improve the ease of doing business are moving the market upwards," said Hardick Bora, Co-Head – Equity, Union Asset Management Company Private Ltd told IANS.

Given the structural nature of these factors, India's economic growth is expected to be one of the fastest over the five years. This has enhanced overall



Roop Bhootra



Dhiraj Relli



Hardick Bora

investor confidence, Bora added. Experts do not agree that the return of the FII to Indian markets as the sole or major factor for the markets to go up.

“We believe that even though FII activity can impact stock prices in the short term, in the medium to long term, prices tend to move in line with their intrinsic values. Moreover, FIIs often invest in markets based on their long-term growth potential and the attractiveness of the particular economy,” Bora said. Bhootra pointed out at the healthy about Rs.14,000 crore per month inflows from the domestic systematic investment plans of domestic mutual funds.

So, for how long the uptrend in the market would continue or when will the party end? “The upward movement in the Indian stock markets could continue as long as the global risk appetite remains high, interest rates do not rise majorly from here and domestic macros do not deteriorate in the face of El Nino pattern developing or other factors,” Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO, HDFC Securities told IANS.

“Markets may start getting nervous ahead of the next round of state elections due in November/December 2023,” he added. On the other hand, Bhootra said buoyancy in the markets could continue to remain for the year as the overall economic situation is good and in an uptrend. “The only risk to the markets may be from global events and do not see anything alarming on the domestic front,” Bhootra said.

Stressing that ups and down are part of the markets and it never goes in one direction continuously Bhootra said if one looks from

valuations and long-term growth perspective, India will continue to remain a long term growth story for years to come and there would be a lot of opportunities in the markets in between.

“In terms of valuations, the recent rally has discounted a part of the growth for this year, and we could say that we are trading at reasonable valuations now as compared to a quarter earlier,” Bhootra added. “Our approach to evaluating equity markets revolves around intrinsic value, as we believe that stock prices tend to align with intrinsic values over the long term. Our internal research indicates that the Nifty is presently trading at a moderate premium to its fair value. However, considering the anticipated growth in this fair value, we find the premium to be justified and see equity markets as an attractive asset class from a long-term standpoint,” Bora said.

Bora said stock prices tend to follow fair values. And growth in fair value of Nifty has in turn been driven by nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth. Hence, we believe one of the most critical metrics to track is India’s GDP growth.

“Despite being the fifth largest, the Indian economy is likely to be the 17th fastest growing economy in the world as per International Monetary Fund (IMF). Many factors are aiding this growth potential, including growth-oriented Government initiatives,” Bora said.

Other macroeconomic variables like inflation, interest rates, foreign exchange rates, industrial activity, fiscal deficit and others have impacted stock prices, but their effect has been temporary since most of these correct themselves over time.

MIEBACH JOINS USISPF BOARD OF DIRECTORS



New York: The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) has announced the appointment of Mastercard CEO, Michael Miebach, to its board of directors. Miebach said that in his new role he looks forward to working with the top advocacy group focused on strengthening India-US partnership in Washington, and hopes to build strategic, commercial, and people-to-people ties between the two nations.

“USISPF is a critical forum for business and government leaders to come together and drive the next phase of growth in the US-India partnership. I believe the relationship between our two countries will define the future of the global economy and shape our ability to tackle the most pressing global challenges together,” Miebach said in a statement.

“I look forward to working with USISPF to build the strategic, commercial, and people-to-people ties that will serve as the bedrock of the US-India partnership in the 21st century,” he added. Miebach’s appointment comes at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on an official visit to the US on the invitation of President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.

Welcoming Miebach’s confirmation to the Board, USISPF president and CEO Mukesh Aghi said: “Michael has been a true champion of digital economy cooperation between the United States and India, helping drive cutting-edge innovation that powers commerce and societies in both countries.”

The USISPF said that Miebach’s addition to the board reflects a consistent commitment from the senior-most levels of Mastercard to strengthen the US-India corridor and trade and commercial

relations between the two countries. “Mastercard’s steadfast commitment to financial inclusion and digital transformation is a model for the private sector -- both in the US-India corridor and around the world. I look forward to continuing our partnership with Mastercard and engaging with Michael as a USISPF Board Member,” he said.

Miebach, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Passau in Germany, joined Mastercard in 2010 to lead its Middle East and Africa operations. He is a member of The Business Roundtable, The Business Council, the US-India CEO Forum, the International Advisory Panel of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, and The International Business Council of the World Economic Forum.



ADANICONNEX SEALS LARGEST DATA CENTRE FINANCING DEAL IN INDIA

New Delhi: Adani ConneX achieved financial closure through its maiden construction facility by entering into Financing Framework, raising \$213 million for its under-construction data centre asset portfolio. The tied-up facility will finance two data centres with an aggregate capacity of 67 MW that includes ‘Chennai 1’ campus with Phase 1 of 17 MW and Noida campus of 50 MW.

India is one of the fastest-growing data centre markets in the world, and as per CRISIL estimates the data centre capacity in India is expected to double from ~870 MW in FY22 to 1700-1800 MW by FY25. To address the growing need for reliable IT infrastructure, AdaniConneX is investing capital with a mission to build a 1 GW Green Data Centre platform, enabled by hyperscale to hyperlocal data centre investments across the country.

The Platform Infrastructure Financing finalized through the Framework Agreement with international lenders will institutionalize the development agenda for AdaniConneX. ING Bank N.V., Mizuho Bank, Ltd., MUFG Bank, Ltd., Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation have committed to the facility.

The access to the wide pool of liquidity strengthens AdaniConneX strategy to fast-track the implementation of the under-construction asset portfolio in sync with accelerating demand. “The construction facility is the key ingredient of AdaniConneX capital management plan, providing the pathway for us to deliver on-time a reliable and sustainable data centre capacity of 1 GW by 2030,” said Jeyakumar Janakaraj, CEO of AdaniConneX.

“The achievement marks a significant milestone in developing this transformative initiative, which is set to revolutionize the digital infrastructure in India. We are committed to delivering a pan-India Data Centre platform,” said Anil Sardana, Director of AdaniConneX (Adani representative on the board).

“The facility shall encourage overall implementation philosophy to power the digital infrastructure by delivering clean and long-term renewable energy solutions aiming toward a carbon-neutral footprint. EdgeConneX extensive data centre expertise and industry-leading technology solutions combined with Adani’s expertise in full-stack energy management, renewable power, and project development are set to transform the sector.”

“We welcome the banking partners through their participation with AdaniConneX. We are excited about our overall journey with Adani in India that has started with a robust implementation plan and a tremendous customer pipeline that will quickly establish AdaniConneX as the leading digital infrastructure platform for all of India. Leveraging Adani’s proven infrastructure experience and EdgeConneX data centre record, we are keen to play an integral and pivotal role -- bringing in a digital revolution,” said Edmund Wilson, Director, AdaniConneX (Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, EdgeConneX).

The construction facility finances two data centre projects in Chennai and Noida, with customised enterprise colocation offerings and hyperscale solutions. The ‘Chennai 1’ campus with ‘Phase 1’ 17 MW data centre capacity is Tamil Nadu’s first pre-certified IGBC [1] Platinum Rated data centre providing customized co-location solutions to the enterprise segment. The under-construction Noida campus is being implemented with a 50 MW capacity to support strategic expansion needs of hyperscale customers in India.

ING Bank N.V., Mizuho Bank Ltd., MUFG Bank Ltd., Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation acted as Mandated Lead Arranger, Bookrunner (MLAB). Among other partners, Allen & Overy and Saraf & Partners were the borrower’s counsels. The lenders’ counsels were Clifford Chance and Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas.



INDIA'S LARGEST PRIVATE RAIL COACH FACTORY OPENS IN TELANGANA

Hyderabad: India's largest private rail coach factory was inaugurated at Kondakal village in Rangareddy district near Hyderabad on June 22. Chief Minister K. Chandrsekhar Rao inaugurated the facility built by Medha Servo Drives Private Limited, a Telangana company which designs and manufactures complex electrical and electronic Railway products.

The Chief Minister said Telangana was proud that a home grown company will be building rail coaches in the state. He expressed happiness over the company bagging Mono rail order from Mumbai. As part of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014, Telangana was promised a Rail Coach Factory within six months of its formation. However, despite repeated appeals by the state government, this did not become a reality.

In 2017, Medha Group had signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TSIIC) to establish a private rail coach factory. It was on August 13, 2020 that Industries Minister K.T. Rama Rao had laid the foundation stone for the factory.

It was then announced that with an investment of Rs 1,000 crore, the private rail coach factory will have a production capacity of 500 coaches and 50 locomotives per year. Spread over 100 acres, the factory will develop all types of railway rolling stock including coaches, train sets, locomotives, Metro trains and Monorails. Medha Managing Director Kasyap Reddy said at the inaugural ceremony that about Rs 400 crore have been invested in the first phase. The proposed investment for the project is Rs 805 crore. He said 558 people have already been employed and an additional 500 people have benefited indirectly. An additional employment of around 1,000 people will be made in the near future.

He announced that by the end of this year, total coach manufacturing for the Monorail project will happen at the facility. "With the second and third phases of the project, we plan to manufacture Railway products not just for India but the world," he said. Medha claims to be the only Indian company that has in-house R&D facilities. It is also currently manufacturing bogies for

the Indian Railways and will soon commence manufacturing of the complete Mumbai Monorail train sets.

Medha also owns various subsidiary companies including in Spain, Italy, USA, Brazil and Poland for serving Railway customers across the world. Medha Servo Drives has also signed a joint venture (JV) agreement with Swiss railway rolling stock manufacturer Stadler Rail for a new rail coach manufacturing factory in Telangana.

Stadler, headquartered in Bussnang, Switzerland, has been building rail vehicles for over 80 years. It has been manufacturing railway rolling stock and has a dominant market share across the global railway market. The Joint Venture will use the proposed Telangana Unit to cater to its tenders from the Indian market and exports from customers across the Asia Pacific region.

Medha was established in 1984 and has been supplying various products to Railways since 1990. It is the largest propulsion equipment (Electronics) supplier to Indian Railways. It is also the largest traction motor manufacturer for Railways and also largest Indian company supplying advanced signaling and safety systems. The company has an annual turnover of Rs 2,500 crore and has employed about 5,000 people.

Kasyap Reddy said Medha was also bringing innovative technologies to India in areas like solar inverters, propulsion systems for battery electric vehicles and canal automation systems. It also made foray into defence manufacturing by signing a MoU to develop large propulsion motors for the Indian Navy. TSIIC has also allotted 25 acres of land at E-City to Medha for the manufacture of Solar PV Inverters. Medha will be investing Rs 80 crore in two phases and will be creating employment of 210 people across both phases.

HIGH DEMAND FROM INDIANS PROPELS DH900 MILLION PROJECT IN DUBAI

Dubai: Danube Properties (a part of the Danube Group), the fastest-growing private real estate developer in the UAE, announced the launch of Elitz 2 at the Jumeirah Village Circle (JVC), with a development value exceeding Dh900 million in the presence of Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade and Bollywood diva Malaika Arora. Danube Group, a diversified business conglomerate, was launched by Rizwan Sajan, one of the "Top Indian Leaders in the UAE".

Danube Home, from Danube Group, is one of the largest home decor retailers in the GCC with a growing footprint across the region, including India with three showrooms spread across Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Elitz 2 is the 23rd residential project by Danube Properties in the past 9 years since the company started development activities in 2014 and the 8th project in a row to be launched in the last 16 months, that translates to one project launches in every two months -- making it also the busiest private real estate developer in the UAE.

Danube Properties maintains a policy of launching one project at a time, sell it out, then appoint a contractor to build the project, before launching the next one. It has so far sold out 22 of the 23 projects launched so far and delivered 12 of them while the rest are currently under various stages of construction. The project will have smart and sustainable homes that consume less energy and comply with green building standards that are in line with the UAE's commitment to sustainability. Danube Properties offers homeowners 10-year Golden Visa -- especially those who qualify as per the investment criteria -- subject to government approval. The Dubai Land Department recently signed an agreement with Danube Properties to offer Initial Sale Contract (Oqood) to property buyers almost instantly.

Rizwan Sajan, Founder and Chairman of Danube Group, said: "The launch of Elitz 2 is in response to the continued high demand for quality homes and comes within less than two months of launching of Fashionz project which is nearly sold out. Elitz 2 is one of our large projects in terms of the number of residential units -- 750 to be specific -- that is to cater to the growing demand. With more than 40

lifestyle facilities, homes in Elitz 2 offer luxury and larger-than-life lifestyles to homeowners who will be pampered with the best of the best that is available in the market."

Elitz 2 will be near Elitz 1 tower -- which is currently under construction -- and will help meet the growing demand for quality homes at prime locations. Launched in 2022, Elitz 1 witnessed investment from over 40 per cent Indians. When completed in the third quarter of 2026, Elitz 2 will deliver 750 residential units including studio apartments, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom apartments and a few retail stores.

Like most other Danube projects, homes at Elitz 2 will also come with more than 40 amenities including health and lifestyle amenities and a health club, swimming pools, sports arena, tennis court, barbecue area, jogging track, among other facilities.

Prices of residential units start from Dh650,000 (Rs 1.45 Crore) for a studio apartment. However, prices of the units will continue to appreciate with time, making them worth investing in. Danube Properties' homes come with attractive and trend-setting 1 per cent payment plan, following the initial deposits making home acquisition more affordable and simple.

The homes are usually delivered around mid-way of the payment plan, which means the buyer can move in the apartment after paying 60 per cent of the total value of the property. This helps homeowners to extract additional value either by increasing savings on the rents or by paying the equated monthly instalments (EMI) from the rental income.

"The launch of Elitz 2 comes within a week after we completed Wavez and breaking grounds for the construction of Viewz -- one of our largest projects -- with sales value exceeding Dh2.05 billion that was unveiled in January and sold out within two weeks. This marks the construction of Viewz while the last project Fashionz will go into groundbreaking process in the next few weeks. As a developer, we have a very customer-centric approach and that's why we are focused on delivery. Most of our projects are handed over before the promised delivery date -- that reflects our strong commitment to home buyers and investors in line with our slogan -- "We launch, we deliver," Rizwan Sajan added.

As one of the most successful developers in the UAE with the highest launch-to-delivery ratio, Danube Group has recently delivered Bayz, Glamz, Starz, Resortz, Elz, Lawnz and Wavez while it prepares to deliver three more projects this year. All these projects have been greatly appreciated by those who had bought units in them.



AIR INDIA SIGNS PURCHASE AGREEMENTS FOR 470 AIRCRAFT IN PARIS AIR SHOW

New Delhi: Air India, the Tata Group-owned airline, on June 20 signed purchase agreements to acquire 470 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing, going one step further in its \$70 billion fleet expansion programme that it had announced in February this year. The purchase agreements were signed on the sidelines of the ongoing Paris Air Show.

Air India's orders include 34 A350-1000, six A350-900, 20 Boeing 787 Dreamliners and 10 Boeing 777X wide-body aircraft, as well as 140 Airbus A320neo, 70 Airbus A321neo and 190 Boeing 737MAX narrow-body aircraft.

"This landmark step further positions Air India for long-term growth and success that, we have every hope, will come together to represent the best of modern aviation to the world," said N. Chandrasekaran,



Chairman of Tata Sons and Air India.

"Our ambitious fleet renewal and expansion programme will see Air India operate the most advanced and fuel-efficient aircraft across our route network within five years. We are proud to be working with all our partners in this journey to rebuild a global airline which reflects India

taking a more confident posture around the world," said Campbell Wilson, CEO and MD, Air India.

According to airline officials, Satair, an Airbus company, and Boeing Global Services will support Air India with a broad range of solutions, including parts and maintenance provisioning, digital applications, and modification services. "The Airbus A350 will lead the deliveries of the new aircraft later this year, with the bulk of the order to arrive from mid-2025 onwards," an official said.

INDIGO PLACES ORDER FOR 500 AIRBUS A320 FAMILY AIRCRAFT

New Delhi: IndiGo Airlines has made a groundbreaking announcement regarding the placing of an order for a staggering 500 Airbus A320 family aircraft, scheduled to be delivered between 2030 and 2035. The purchase agreement was finalised at the Paris Air Show 2023, with representatives from IndiGo and Airbus present.

In a statement on June 19, IndiGo confirmed that the engine selection and the precise mix of A320 and A321 aircraft will be determined in due course. Currently operating a fleet of over 300 aircraft, IndiGo already has outstanding orders for 480 aircraft, expected to be delivered by the end of this decade.

With this new firm order for 500 aircraft in the 2030-2035 time-frame, IndiGo's order-book now boasts almost 1,000 aircraft, securing a steady stream of deliveries well into the next decade. IndiGo's order comprises a combination of A320NEO, A321NEO, and A321XLR aircraft.

"This substantial investment further strengthens the strategic partnership between IndiGo and Airbus, which has been evolving since the airline's inception in 2006. In fact, IndiGo has now ordered a remarkable total of 1,330 aircraft from Airbus, reflecting their confidence in the A320 Family and their commitment to growth," it said.

The fuel-efficient A320NEO Family aircraft align perfectly with IndiGo's vision of reducing operating costs and enhancing fuel efficiency, while maintaining exceptional reliability standards. "With a young and fuel-efficient fleet, IndiGo aims to achieve its sustainability goals, building upon the already impressive 21 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions between FY16 and FY23. The airline anticipates welcoming 100 million passengers on board this year, solidifying its role as a vital contributor to India's aviation landscape," it said.

Expressing the magnitude of the order, Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, said that it is difficult to overstate the significance of IndiGo's new historic order for 500 Airbus A320 Family aircraft. "An order book now of almost 1,000 aircraft well into the next decade, enables IndiGo to fulfill its mission to continue to boost economic growth, social cohesion and mobility in India. At IndiGo, we take pride in being India's preferred airline for connectivity in and with India; and by doing so, being one of the leading airlines in the world. This order strongly reaffirms IndiGo's belief in the growth of India, in the A320 Family and in our strategic partnership with Airbus," said Elbers.



INDIA TO CROSS RS 120,000 CRORE IN MOBILE EXPORTS



New Delhi: Buoyed by friendly government policies and production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, India is set to cross Rs 1,20,000 crore in mobile exports in the current fiscal year (FY24), driven by tech giant Apple, the top electronics industry body told IANS on June 20.

The country surpassed a remarkable Rs 90,000 crore worth smartphone exports in the fiscal year 2022-2023. According to the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), the mobile phone exports have already registered a massive 128 per cent growth in the months of April-May this year.

“Mobile phone exports growth in 2023-24 have bucked the trend of falling exports with a growth of 128 per cent in the first two months of 2023-24,” Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA, told IANS. “We are confident of crossing Rs 120,000 crore in this financial year compared to Rs 90,000 crore in the last financial year which was a phenomenal 90 per cent growth,” Mohindroo added.

Amid this stupendous growth in the mobile exports, Apple’s share is set to exceed 50 per cent in FY24. In May, iPhone exports reached a record Rs 10,000 crore, pushing the total mobile shipments from the country to Rs 12,000 crore. The top five global destinations India currently exports mobile phones to are the UAE, the US, the Netherlands, the UK and Italy.

“The mobile phone industry will cross \$40 billion manufacturing output,” according to Mohindroo. More than 97 per cent of the smartphones sold in India are now being produced locally. India is now the second largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world. The country is now moving in a different direction, “which is largely export-focused and led by the government’s PLI push”.

According to estimates, India and Vietnam are set to become the biggest beneficiaries of smartphone supply chain migration out of China.

RUBY SINHA IS PRESIDENT OF BRICS CCI WE



New Delhi: The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BRICS CCI) has appointed Ruby Sinha as the President of BRICS CCI WE, the women’s vertical of the BRICS CCI for a period of three years. The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry works towards promoting active trade, commerce and entrepreneurship between the BRICS and other friendly nations. She takes over from Shabana Nasim who has become an Executive Director in BRICS CCI and Chief Patron of BRICS CCI WE.

The BRICS CCI women’s vertical is endeavouring towards building a credible repository of working professionals, entrepreneurs, business partners across different geographies and industry verticals and promoting business interactions among members by organising regular events platforms and other forms of interactions. It also facilitates mentoring/training programs for women professionals.

Announcing the appointment, B.B.L. Madhukar, Director-General - BRICS CCI said, “We firmly believe that Ms Ruby Sinha’s vision, strategic acumen, and dedication will elevate the women’s vertical to new heights of success and significantly contribute to the overall objective of the Chamber. On behalf of BRICS CCI, I extend my warmest congratulations to her.”

Speaking about her new role, Ruby Sinha, President, BRICS CCI WE said: “It’s an honour for me to come at the helm of affairs of the women’s vertical of BRICS CCI at a time when the G20’s focus on gender-based digital inclusivity and skilling along with our Hon’ble PM’s vision of this decade being a Techade is a prime focus. I have been a part of the women’s vertical BRICS CCI WE since its inception and being a woman entrepreneur myself, I hope to take our focus on women empowerment and enterprise further during my tenure.”

An entrepreneur herself, Ruby Sinha is the Founder of Sheatwork, a one-stop knowledge hub for women entrepreneurs and Kommune Brand Communications. She started her career as a journalist and has been involved in initiatives to support and encourage entrepreneurship among women.



“INDIA AMONG NATIONS INTERFERING IN CANADA”

Toronto: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s National Security Adviser Jody Thomas has said that India is among the top sources of foreign interference in Canada. “When I talk about foreign interference and economic security, I’m now talking about a number of state actors and non-state proxies,” Jody Thomas said in June at a conference organised by the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. “This includes Russia, Iran and India. That said, the actor that comes up most on these issues, and it’s no surprise to anybody, is China,” she was quoted as saying in Toronto Star.

University of British Columbia professor Vina Nadjibulla told Toronto Star that it was “striking” that Thomas listed India along with the three other countries -- a move that could hit the close India-Canada ties. The NSA’s

remarks came months after the Liberals highlighted India as part of their Indo-Pacific strategy and as a priority for establishing closer economic and scientific ties.

“The relationship we have diplomatically with India is improving rapidly, but I think we would be kidding ourselves if we were not to acknowledge some of the diaspora politics and local issues here in Canada, which will have a significant impact,” Nadjibulla said. According to The Star, “federal agencies have indirectly warned in recent years of India exerting improper influence in Canada, but rarely by name”.

On the contrary, India has raised strong protest with the Canadian government against radical Khalistani elements organising referendums in the North American nations and meddling in India’s domestic affairs, particularly the farmers’ protests. Despite exhortation from India to act, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has failed to take action against a new wave of Khalistani activism in Canada.

This is because Trudeau heads a minority government which is backed by the New Democratic Party (NDP), headed by Jagmeet Singh, a Khalistani sympathiser, IANS reported by IANS earlier. Singh’s NDP has 24 seats in parliament, whose support is critical for the survival of the Trudeau government.

Singh has been called out time and again on Twitter for attempting to meddle in Indian affairs, especially after he “raised concerns” over the crackdown in Punjab against ‘Waris Punjab De’ chief and Khalistan sympathiser Amritpal Singh. According to India Narrative, Singh has long been suspected of attempts to link Khalistani and Kashmiri separatism from his perch in Canada. He is apparently connected with prominent Khalistani and Kashmiri separatist groups based in different countries of Europe, according to media reports.

PRESIDENT MURMU ANNOUNCES RELAXATIONS IN SURINAME



New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu announced that India has decided to extend the eligibility criteria for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card up from the fourth to the sixth generation of the original Indian immigrants who had arrived in Suriname from Indian territories. She made this announcement in early June after witnessing a cultural festival in capital Paramaribo on the occasion of the commemoration of 150 years of the arrival of Indians in Suriname. She said that the OCI card can be seen as an important link in their 150 year old relationship with India.

The President urged members of the Indian diaspora to continue to make efforts to maintain their connections with India. President Murmu said that at a time when Suriname is celebrating the legacy of its ancestors and its links with India, India stands with Suriname in solidarity and reverence.

Murmu further noted that both Suriname and India have made efforts to rebuild their economies and social systems after a long period of colonial rule. “This experience has created a feeling of solidarity between the two countries,” she said. The first ship -- Lalla Rookh -- carrying 452 Indian labourers, had arrived in Suriname’s capital Paramaribo on June 5, 1873. Most of the labourers hailed from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

RELIANCE GROUP APPOINTS PARUL SHARMA AS GROUP PRESIDENT



New Delhi: The Reliance Group has announced the appointment of Parul Sharma as the Group President with effect from June, 20. As a global communications strategist, Parul brings a rich body of experience to power the Group, and -- as Tony's wife -- the continuity to carry forward his formidable legacy.

For nearly 40 years, Tony Jesudasan was the public face of the Reliance Group, its bulwark in Delhi and across the world. Tony passed away in February 2023.

Welcoming Parul to the Reliance Group, Anil Ambani said, "I am pleased that Parul is joining us as Group President. While this is her first professional association with the Group, she has for long been a part of the broader Reliance family as Tony's partner. Our memories of Tony and what he meant for the Group makes Parul's entry all the more special."

Parul Sharma steered the communications strategy for Rupert Murdoch's 'Star India' for 15 years, shaping its corporate image, publicity and relationships. Prior to that she was with the German broadcaster 'Deutsche Welle', based in Cologne.

"Stepping in Tony's shoes is not the easiest thing to do but he would be pleased to see me try," said Parul Sharma. "Besides my experience with global media outlets, I hope to blend empathy and humanism in my stakeholder management. This is a transformative journey for Reliance Group that seeks to uphold the enduring spirit of the past."

Parul Sharma will be based in New Delhi.



WILL ALLOCATE INR 100 CRORE TO NURTURE ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Gurugram: Haryana will be allocating around Rs 100 crore in their upcoming state budget as a part of new innovative incentives, setting up incubation centres, and assistance for loans, all aimed at fostering balanced regional development and nurturing entrepreneurship among youth in the state, stated Shri Dushyant Chautala, the honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana at the 3rd ASSOCHAM Haryana MSME Samvaad.

Speaking at the event, Shri Chautala informed that the state government's vision is to build Haryana as the competitive and most favoured investment destination. "Haryana MSME sector also has to attract investment of over Rs 1 lakh crore and generate 5 lakh jobs in the state and to reach this target and lay the foundation of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'," he said.

He informed that the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Haryana has witnessed remarkable growth, with a staggering 2,81,024 new MSME manufacturing units registered in the past five years alone. "This has created more than 15 lakh jobs and has propelled Haryana to the top ranking among all northern states, contributing significantly to the state's GDP and employment," he pointed out.

He explained that in line with the state's focus on bolstering the MSME ecosystem, the PADMA scheme, or the Programme to Accelerate Development for MSME Advancement, was introduced. This comprehensive program aims to establish dynamic and self-sustainable industrial infrastructure at the cluster level, facilitating local product promotion and generating employment opportunities for the youth and Antyodaya families. The PADMA scheme includes a venture capital fund of Rs 200 crore to support the growth of MSMEs, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster start-up development, he said.

Recognising the potential of the textile industry, the Haryana AtmaNirbhar Textile Policy has positioned the state as a key player in the sector. Shri Chautala explained

that through a robust package of incentives, infrastructure support, and skill development programs, the policy has stimulated investment, innovation, and employment generation in the textile sector.

He said that Haryana's commitment to sustainability, technological advancements, and export-led growth has solidified its status as a prominent textile manufacturing and trade hub. He informed that the establishment of a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) in Haryana showcases the government's unwavering commitment to bolstering and empowering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within the MSME ecosystem. Through this proactive initiative, the Haryana government addresses the challenges faced by SMEs and fosters an environment conducive to their growth and success.

"The PMU will streamline processes, provide technical assistance, facilitate access to finance, and promote entrepreneurship, catalysing the growth of MSMEs and contributing to our state's economic development and prosperity," he added.

Anand Mohan Sharan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary Industries & Commerce, Government of Haryana said MSME formalization plays a huge role in the state's economy and is the backbone of the industry. The developmental ecosystem provided in Haryana for MSMEs is phenomenal and there are a plethora of schemes to incentivize MSMEs. In fact, Haryana has the highest number of schemes formulates just for the MSME sector.

He further said, multiple focus areas include MSME manufacturing and innovation policies, medical devices policies, electronic policies. The Government's vision is to support women entrepreneurs and weaker sections to ensure employment. Digital commerce is the leading trend post COVID-19, with a lot of MSMEs coming out with their products and services. PADMA scheme initiates acceleration of small businesses and Haryana state is adamant to implement where budding entrepreneurs can come up. There is a short supply of land in the state but there is a concern for cheap and affordable space.

Swatantra Kumar Singal, Chairman, Haryana Renewable Energy Development Agency shared that, "Conducive policy regime and adoption of energy conservation measures will help MSMEs to produce cost effective products".

Vijay Sharma, Chairman, ASSOCHAM Haryana Development Council, said that Haryana has a huge potential to become the hub of MSMEs not only in India but at the global level. "Today's deliberations, which focussed on making Haryana a preferred investment destination, strengthening digital ecosystem and unlocking new schemes for MSMEs in the state, would go a long way in scaling the greater heights of success by MSMEs in the state," he said.

Other key government dignitaries who were present included Shashi Kant, Additional Director, Directorate of MSME, Government of Haryana, Sukhchain Singh, Project Coordinator, HAREDA, and industry speakers P K Jain, Co-Chair, ASSOCHAM Haryana State Development Council & Global CEO Head HR-TCIL, Kajol, Manager, Energy, WRI India, Jaideep Singh Kalra, Director & Region Head - Business Banking, North India, HSBC, Mani Lal Chaudhary, General Manager – Gurugram, SIDBI and many others.

DIASPORA NEWS



“Our partnership has been strengthened by Indian-Americans”

Meenakshi Iyer

New Delhi: Affirming that India-US relationship will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century, Congressman Gregory Meeks credited the Indian-American community for bolstering the ties between the two nations.

“The US-India partnership has only grown in importance over the course of past 14 years, strengthened by our people-to-people ties with overwhelming (majority of) Indian-Americans, many of whom live in the city of New York, and of course, in my congressional district,” Meeks who serves the fifth Congressional district of New York, said in a video message shared by the Indian Embassy in the US.

“We can leverage this vibrant diaspora to enhance our cooperation and create greater opportunities for the people of our two great nations,” Meeks said in his message. As Prime Minister Modi prepares to board the Air India One, it is the ecstatic Indian-American across the US waiting to welcome the leader, and has been actively extending their messages and wishes on social media.

More than 7,000 Indian-Americans are expected to be present as a 21-gun salute accompanies the President and First Lady as they welcome Modi to the White House



next week. The community from across the length and breadth of the country has been organising big-ticket events and cultural events to welcome the Prime Minister.

Stating that the US-India relationship will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century, Meeks said he wants to see the two nations work in unison to advance peace and prosperity. “I

look forward to hearing from the Prime Minister during our joint meeting of Congress on his vision for India, for India’s relationship with the US, and I see us work together to advance peace, prosperity, democratic values and stability in the Indo-Pacific,” Meeks said concluding his message with “Jai Hind”.

Indian-Americans are the second-largest immigrant group in the US, with their population estimated to be around 4 million. The New York City area, specifically, is home to the largest Indian-American population of any metropolitan area in the country

According to estimates, close to 600,000 South Asian Americans live in New York, making it home to the nation’s second largest South Asian population, behind only California.

JEWISH ACTIVISTS FIRED UP OVER SETTY’S REMARKS

New York: Jewish activists have called for the ouster of Sudha Setty, the Indian-American dean of City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, for allowing and congratulating a graduate student for her anti-Israel ‘hate speech’. A group of 50 protesters rallied outside CUNY’s Manhattan headquarters last week over Fatima Mohammed’s May 12 remarks bashing Israel and calling the NYPD “fascist” in her controversial speech, the New York Post reported.

In her fiery speech, she also accused Israel of encouraging “lynch mobs” and lauded resistance to “Zionism around the world”. According to The Post, Setty was seen congratulating and applauding Mohammed’s remarks - which were condemned by the CUNY board of trustees as “hate speech”, and “hurtful to the entire CUNY community”.

“As heinous as the student’s remarks to her Jewish classmates and their families were, it is even more reprehensible that the Dean of CUNY Law, Sudha Setty, would echo that hate speech with applause,” Ronald S Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress, tweeted. “To that end, I am calling on the Board of Trustees to immediately fire Dean Setty without equivocation to send a message that Jew Hate will not be

tolerated in New York’s public universities,” Lauder added.

The protesters declared a “state of emergency” at the state’s public university system and made several other demands of CUNY, which included “booting any professor who endorsed or approved of

Mohammed’s Jew-targeting commencement speech”. It also called CUNY to implement mandatory anti-semitism training; apply and enforce the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism; punish students who engage in anti-semitism, and ban the practice of allowing students to select a commencement speaker.

Also, a coalition of Jewish legal groups separately urged the American Bar Association (ABA) to consider stripping the law school of its accreditation, which would prevent its graduates from sitting for the bar exam in any state.

Setty joined the CUNY School of Law on July 1, 2022, becoming the first woman of South Asian descent to serve as dean of an ABA-accredited law school. Previously, she served as dean of Western New England University School of Law, where she focused on enhancing social justice lawyering and increasing institutional commitments to racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion



CHEATING AGENTS, SHAM COLLEGES BEHIND CANADA'S DEPORTATION DRAMA

Toronto: Though the Canadian authorities have cancelled the deportation of about 700 Indian students who got into colleges here with forged admission letters, the fate of many of them will be known once an immigration inquiry is finished. Canadian Immigration Minister Sean Fraser, who has set up a task force to investigate, has promised that those found not involved in fraud will not be deported.

Of the nearly 320,000 Indian students in Canada, students from Punjab account for the majority of them. The students facing deportation are from Punjab. As many of these students have been in Canada since 2017 and some have completed their studies, it means admissions through forged letters have been taking place for some time now.

The order to cancel the deportation of these students follows after student Lovepreet Singh managed to stop his deportation on June 13. He and many students sat on a 17-day dharna here before the order to stop his deportation came. This scam has its roots in Punjab where the craze to get into Canada leads students and their parents to become easy prey to dubious immigration agents.

This scam also has its roots in one/two-room private colleges which have mushroomed in major Canadian cities over the past few years. Most of these colleges offer courses in business management, hospitality, IT, healthcare, social services. "It is very easy to start a private college in Canada after getting provincial registration. Private colleges have become a means to make quick money as they charge four times more fees than public colleges. Punjabi students study mostly in these private colleges because few Canadian students go to these private colleges," says an Indian-origin private college owner in the Toronto area.

"Admission agents based in Punjab have tied up with Canadian private colleges to get them students. These colleges issue admission letters on the basis of which study visas are issued in India," says Bikramjit Singh Kullewal of Brampton-based Naujawan Support Network which is supporting the students. But because of the craze for admission letters in Punjab, he says, it is obvious immigration agents created forged admission letters for these students.



"Or there is a possibility that these agents may have managed to get more admission letters than the required number of seats in a particular college," he says, hinting at bribes being given to people in Canadian private colleges by the agents in India. The students came to know that their admission letters were fake only when they landed in Canada and went to their colleges. But they kept quiet as they didn't want to jeopardize their immigration chances.

"Since Canadian study visas allow you to change colleges, many of these students took this route after being told by their colleges (for which they applied from India) that they are not on their rolls as their admission letters are fake. Why did these students stay quiet about their forged admission letters?" asks an Indo-Canadian community activist in Brampton. The issue of fake admission letters came to light only when students applied for extension of the study permit or permanent residence (PR).

That's when the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) told them that they got into Canadian colleges fraudulently on forged admission letters. Bikramjit Singh Kullewal says his Naujawan Support Network has written to all political parties to investigate not only the role of immigration agents in India and private colleges here, but also the immigration authorities. "Why weren't the admission papers of these students properly vetted by immigration officers when they landed at Canadian airports?" he asks.

There are also reports that some students who come here on forged admission letters don't join their colleges at all. "Instead, they bribed our local trucking companies to get them LMIA (Labour Market Impact Assessment) documents to become eligible to work as foreign workers. This practice is rampant in our community," says a local Punjabi journalist, requesting anonymity.

The Canadian immigration minister was probably hinting at action against these people who may have taken advantage of the study visas on forged documents to come to Canada. "It is a complex matter. Agents have duped genuine students and we will fight for them," says Kullewal.

CANADA—THE PUNJABI IMMIGRANT'S MAGNET



Toronto: Canada is the favourite destination for Indian students - mostly from Punjab - for the simple reason that this country is home to the largest Punjabi diaspora in the world. Of about 800,000 international students currently studying in Canada, 320,000 are from India. Though there are no precise figures, Punjabi students roughly make up about 70 percent of the Indian students here.

The second reason for these students to come to Canada is that a study visa offers them easy passage to permanent residence (PR) in a time period of five to six years. But more than anything else, it is the lure to make quick cash while studying here that is drawing a record number of students from Punjab to Canada.

"Since almost all of these students are here only to get their PR, many work long hours per week to make money so that their parents in Punjab can pay back loans they took to send them to Canada," says a Mississauga-based immigration consultant.

She says she knows cases of Punjabi students who work throughout the week in the Greater Toronto Area and then travel together to Montreal at the weekend to attend their colleges. "These students have become the

source of cheap labour for Canadian businesses. They are willing to work below minimum wage because they want cash. The huge influx of Indian students here has introduced a parallel cash economy in cities like Brampton. Everybody wants to avoid paying taxes," says a Brampton Punjabi journalist.

Another reason why Canada is the preferred destination for these students is that they can quickly get visas for their parents to visit them. Once their parents land in Canada on a visitor visa, they too start working for cash. "I know many cases of students who have been in Canada only for six months, but they invited their parents to visit them immediately. Once their parents landed here, the very next day both father and mother were working for cash. They spent a few months in Canada and went back with enough cash to pay their debt. This is happening under the radar. The Canadian authorities have no clues. That's why most Punjabi students want to come to Canada," says the Brampton journalist.

The study visa route is also being used by many students from Punjab to enter Canada and then buy a foreign worker permit from trucking companies at a hefty price so that they can work full-time and make money.

RITU KALRA NAMED HARVARD'S VP FINANCE, CFO



New York: Ritu Kalra, an Indian-American investment banking and financial management expert, has been named Harvard University's vice president for finance and chief financial officer. Kalra currently serves as Harvard's assistant vice president of finance and treasury and special projects adviser.

In her new role beginning July, she will oversee all aspects of financial management, including long-range planning, annual budgeting, endowment fund spending policy, treasury, and financial accounting and reporting. Overall, she will lead multiple financial departments with a full-time workforce of more than 200 people, a University statement released in June said.

"Harvard's ability to forge collaborations within and beyond the University, across a breathtaking breadth of disciplines, doesn't happen by accident. It requires a rare and sustained marriage of strategic leadership and executional excellence," Kalra said. In her treasury management role, Kalra oversees and advises on the University's capital structure, including the critical role of forecasting debt and liquidity needs, and managing cash operations and investments.

"Since joining Harvard in 2020, she has provided exceptional leadership and been a trusted adviser on an array of financial matters and University priorities," Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick said. "Her Harvard experience, coupled with her track record as an innovator in private sector banking and finance, positions her well as a leader who will continue to build on what has been strong stewardship of the University's finances in recent years."

Before joining the University, Kalra spent 18 years at Goldman Sachs, where she held several progressive roles culminating in managing director and served as head of public sector and infrastructure finance for the western region, and as head of higher education finance nationally. In her infrastructure financing practice, she provided strategic advisory services to public and private sector entities throughout the US, including designing innovative financing strategies to manage climate-related risks, according to the University statement.

She also advised the state of California in capitalising a \$21 billion fund to mitigate the impact of catastrophic wildfires, led a restructuring of the Long Island Power Authority to create financial capacity to harden the electrical grid following Hurricane Sandy, and created debt financing strategies that leveraged philanthropic capital for land and forest conservation across the country.



CANADIAN ENVOY APPALLED

Chandigarh: The High Commissioner for Canada in India, Cameron MacKay in early June said he was appalled by reports of an event in Canada that celebrated the assassination of late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. "There is no place in Canada for hate or for the glorification of violence. I categorically condemn these activities," he said in a tweet.

His reaction came after social media was abuzz with videos depicting a tableau depicting the assassination of the late Prime Minister by her Sikh bodyguards as part of a five-km-long parade by the Indian diaspora in Brampton on June 4. The tableau depicted Khalistan flags with a poster that said "revenge".

People in Punjab were aghast over the development. They had said India should summon the Canadian High Commissioner to strongly object to the inclusion of Indira Gandhi assassination tableau in a parade. Intelligence agencies here believed that it seemed to be linked with the 39th anniversary of the Indian Army's 'Operation Bluestar' in Amritsar that was carried out between June 1 and 8, 1984, claiming several lives and leaving the Golden Temple and its complex damaged.

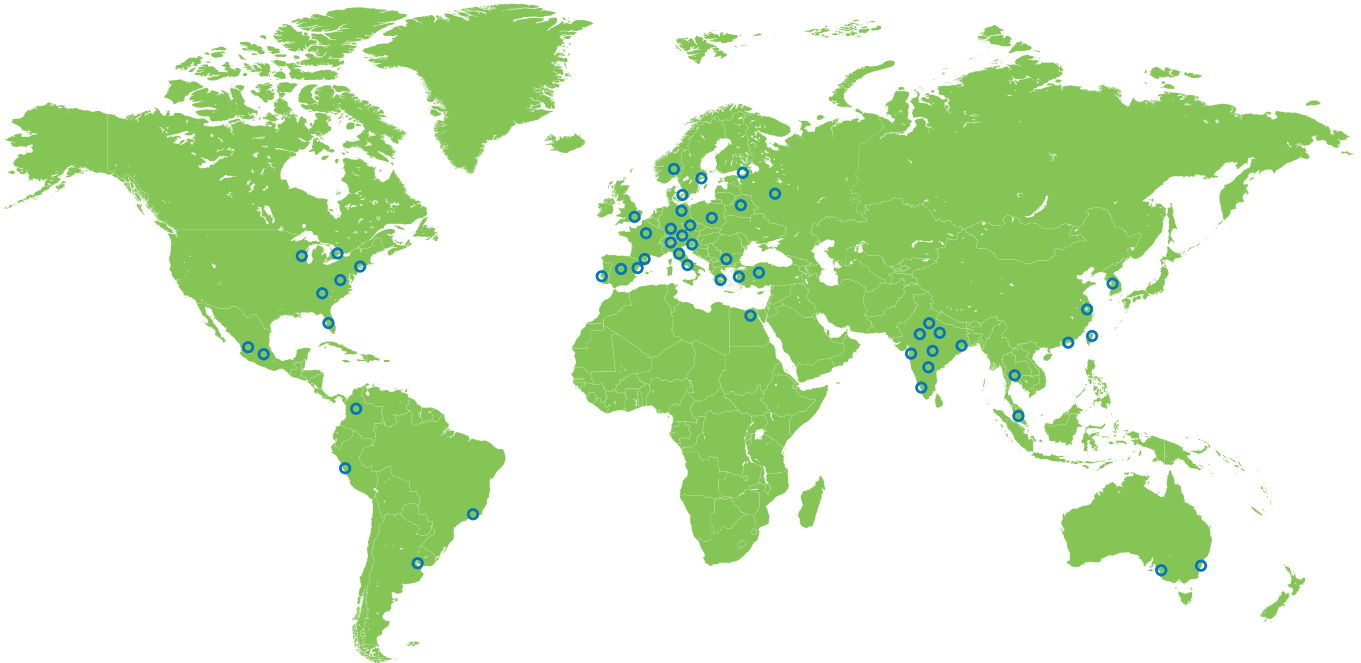
'Operation Bluestar' was a military action ordered by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to flush out militants led by Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale holed up in the Golden Temple complex. Earlier, a Hindu temple was vandalised with 'anti-India' graffiti in Brampton province, leaving the Indian community in shock. The Indian Consulate General in Toronto had issued a statement condemning the attack on the Gauri Shankar temple.

India had already summoned the Canadian High Commissioner to convey "its strong concerns about the actions by pro-Khalistani extremist elements against Indian diplomatic missions in Canada in recent times".

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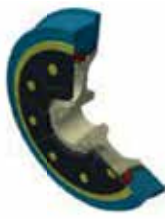
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PROFESSOR GUPTA AWARDED 'DUTCH NOBEL PRIZE'



New Delhi: Indian-origin professor Joyeeta Gupta has been awarded the Spinoza Prize, the highest distinction in Dutch science, for her scientific work focusing on a “just and sustainable world”. Gupta, Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South at the University of Amsterdam since 2013, was chosen by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) selection committee for her “incredibly broad and interdisciplinary” research. Also referred to as the ‘Dutch Nobel Prize’, the award will give Gupta 1.5 million euros to spend on scientific research and activities related to knowledge utilisation.

Gupta’s research involves solutions to issues arising from climate change through good governance. At the core of her research is an attempt to unravel the connections between the climate crisis, global water challenges, possible solutions and justice, a University of Amsterdam statement read.

“Justice for both people and the planet is the common thread in Joyeeta’s work. She is relentlessly

committed to climate justice, always looking beyond the boundaries of disciplines, realising that this is the only way to approach the climate issue,” said Peter-Paul Verbeek, Rector Magnificus of the University of Amsterdam.

Gupta, who is the twelfth researcher from the University of Amsterdam to receive the award, will be officially honoured on October 4 at a presentation ceremony. She studied at Delhi University, Gujarat University and Harvard Law School, and obtained her PhD from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She is also a professor at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education. In addition to her professorship, Gupta is co-chair of the Earth Commission, founded by Future Earth and supported by the Global Challenges Foundation, the University statement said.

She was also lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) between 1988 and 2014, which shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with former US Vice President Al Gore.



“ADDRESSING MENTAL AND VISION HEALTH NEXT FRONTIER”

Cupertino: Indian-origin Sumbul Desai, Apple's Vice President of Health, has emphasised that the next goal for the company is to help users improve their mental and vision health. Mental health and vision health are important, but often overlooked. “We're excited to introduce features that offer valuable new insights to provide users with an even better understanding of their health. These insights help support users in their daily decisions and offer more informed conversations with their doctors,” Desai said during the company's Worldwide Developers' Conference (WWDC) here.

New mental health features in iOS 17, iPadOS 17 and watchOS 10 allow users to log their momentary emotions and daily moods, see valuable insights, and easily access assessments and resources. iPhone, iPad, and Apple Watch offer new vision health features that encourage healthy behaviours that help reduce the risk of myopia, and the Health app comes to iPad, giving users new ways to see their health data.

“Our goal is to empower people to take charge of their own health journey. With these innovative new features, we're expanding the comprehensive range of health and wellness tools that we offer our users across iPhone, iPad, and Apple Watch,” said Desai.

At Apple, Desai oversees health initiatives including clinical product development, innovative clinical partnerships and medical research. She also leads the regulatory and quality teams at the tech giant. She recently served as Vice Chair of Strategy and Innovation in the Department of Medicine at Stanford Medicine in the US.

The Health app in iOS 17 and iPadOS 17, and the Mindfulness app in watchOS 10, bring an engaging and intuitive way for users to reflect on their state of mind. Users can

scroll through engaging, multidimensional shapes and choose how they are feeling in a range from Very Pleasant to Very Unpleasant.

They can select associations that are having the biggest impact on their feelings, like Travel or Family, and describe their feelings, such as Grateful or Worried. Myopia, or nearsightedness, is the leading cause of vision impairment globally. It's estimated to affect over 30 per cent of the population currently and expected to grow to 50 per cent, or 5 billion people, by 2050.

According to Apple, in the Health app, users can now view the amount of time spent in daylight detected by their Apple Watch. Time spent in daylight can help reduce the risk of myopia in children and provide additional benefits to physical and mental health. With watchOS 10, Apple Watch introduces the ability to measure time spent in daylight using the ambient light sensor. Users can view the amount of time spent in daylight detected by their Apple Watch in the Health app in iOS 17 and iPadOS 17.

“Children who do not have their own iPhone can use Family Setup to pair their Apple Watch to their parent's iPhone, giving parents visibility into the amount of time their kids are spending in daylight with Health Sharing,” Apple said. Time spent in daylight can provide additional benefits to physical and mental health, so this feature is available to all watchOS 10 users.

The new ‘Screen Distance’ feature in iOS 17 and iPadOS 17 also encourages users to move their device farther away after holding it closer than 12 inches for an extended period of time. “Data in the Health app is never shared with any third party without the user's explicit permission,” according to Apple.

A close-up portrait of Vikram Patel, a middle-aged man with grey hair and a beard, smiling. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt. The background is a solid grey color.

VIKRAM PATEL NAMED CHAIR OF HARVARD'S GLOBAL HEALTH

New York: Mumbai-born psychiatrist and researcher Vikram Patel will be the next chair of the Harvard Medical School's Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, starting September 1. Patel, who succeeds Paul Farmer, is the Pershing Square Professor of Global Health in the Blavatnik Institute at Harvard Medical School and a well-known expert in global mental health. "Vikram is both a worthy successor and uniquely prepared to carry the torch. A venerable and a charismatic educator, Vikram (Patel) was recruited to HMS in 2017," said George Q. Daley, dean of Harvard Medical School (HMS).

Patel's appointment comes at a time of increasing awareness of a growing mental health crisis around the world, Daley said in a statement released by the HMS, announcing the appointment. At Harvard, Patel heads Global Mental Health@Harvard, an interdisciplinary initiative that reaches across the University, as well as the Mental Health for All Lab, housed within the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine.

He launched the EMPOWER program in 2020 as part of the Global Mental Health initiative to deploy a suite of digital tools and methods to enable frontline health workers to learn, master, and deliver evidence-based psychosocial interventions needed to effectively address mental health issues in their communities.

"I am deeply honored to serve as the chair of the department. I am motivated by the potential of this role at this critical juncture in the long and storied history of a department committed to the goal of health equity in this country and globally," Patel said. Globally, Patel has served on several World Health Organization advisory committees and has served on multiple Lancet commissions on global mental health, most recently leading the Lancet-World Psychiatric Association Commission on Depression. He was a co-founder of Sangath -- a community-based NGO in India which won the MacArthur Foundation's International Prize for Creative and Effective Institutions in 2008.

He was a member of a group constituted by the Union Ministry of Health tasked with writing India's first mental health policy and designing the National Mental Health Program for the period of 2012-17. In 2015, he was named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people of the year, and in 2019, he was awarded the John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award, considered the most prestigious global health prize.

‘Robbed’, ‘ram-raided’, ‘murdered’

Wellington: As incidents of crime and robbery continue unabated in New Zealand, a group of dairy store owners, mostly of Indian descent, presented a petition signed by 34,000 people to the New Zealand Parliament in June, calling for government action.

The petitioners have called on the government to take a harder stance on crime, with more police presence on the streets, legal penalties for parents of youth offenders, and stronger punishments for teenagers who were offending, the NZ Herald reported. “There was a consensus among Kiwis that something needed to be done. We are being burgled and robbed 18 times a day, we are getting ram-raided every ten hours,” Sunny Kaushal, who leads the Dairy and Business Owners Group in New Zealand, said.

The petition, which says ‘enough is enough’, comes after 34 year-old Indian-origin dairy worker Janak Patel was brutally stabbed to death last year during an alleged robbery at the Rose Cottage Superette in Sandringham. Three men have been charged with his murder and will go to trial next year. Following Patel’s death, protests erupted in New Zealand with people turning up in huge numbers asking the government to do more to combat robberies.

Even though the country announced new measures to counter retail crime, which included providing a NZ\$

4,000 subsidy to shop owners to install fog cannons in their shops to stop burglaries, crime has continued unabated. Patel’s father, who was among the petitioners, demanded a strong action from the government in preventing such tragedies in future.

The group also presented a manifesto, which called on the government to reform the laws of self-defence and the defence of property based on the Australian Criminal Code, among other things. “We need to feel safe in our communities... It is time for red lines before we have another murder in New Zealand,” Kaushal told NZ Herald.

Just a day before the petition was presented, three masked men rammed their way into a vape store owned by an Indian-origin Pawik Patel in Goulstone Road, and stole products worth NZ\$ 8000. Patel, owner of Boom Vape Shop, said that he has been forced to shut his shop temporarily due to the damage caused by the burglary early on a mid-June morning. CCTV footage showed a car with three masked men pulling up to the kerb before getting in position and ramming the shop’s storefront twice. The car rammed into the shop’s door with more force to open it, causing smoke to come out of the car. The trio is seen in the footage taking several loads of products from the top shelf.

RICHARD GERE JOINS PM FOR YOGA SESSION AT UN



New York: Hollywood actor Richard Gere and the President of United Nations General Assembly, Csaba Korosi, were among some of the prominent personalities who joined Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a yoga session at the UN headquarters in New York to mark International Day of Yoga on June 21. Mr Modi led the yoga session at the UN headquarters in New York, where he had reached a day earlier as part of his three-day state visit to the US.

Some other personalities attending the yoga session include New York Mayor Eric Adams, UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed, Vala Afshar, who is the chief digital evangelist at Salesforce, American singer and actor Mary Millben, composer Ricky Kej and chef Vikas Khanna, among others.

FINLAND'S NEW GOVERNMENT TAKES OFFICE

Helsinki: The new government of Finland, led by Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, has taken office. The cabinet consists of the Prime Minister and 18 ministers from the National Coalition Party, the Finns Party, the Swedish People’s Party, and the Christian Democrats, reports



Xinhua news agency. Orpo said in his speech during the government’s welcome visit to the presidential palace that the Finnish people have “voted for change”. The government parties are united in their view of the state of public finances, he said, adding: “We must tighten our belts.”

Born in November 1969, Orpo was first elected as an MP in 2007. Before serving as Prime Minister, he held three different positions as a member of two governments, including minister of Agriculture and Forestry, minister of the Interior, and minister of Finance. He was elected leader of the National Coalition Party at the party conference in the summer of 2016.

In its first plenary session on June 20, the new government decided on the division of responsibilities among ministers, the composition of ministerial committees and working groups, and deputizing arrangements for ministers. The Orpo government also outlined the government program to Parliament.



THANEDAR BACKS BILL TO REMOVE GREEN CARD BACKLOGS

New York: Asserting that immigration needs to be merit-based and not dictated by arbitrary caps, Indian-American Congressman Shri Thanedar announced that he will be co-sponsoring a bill on eliminating visa backlogs.

Eliminating Backlogs Act of 2023, the bipartisan bill introduced in the House of Representatives earlier this year, seeks to effectively utilize the employment-based visas that are allocated each year under existing federal immigration law.

“Proud to co-sponsor the H.R. 1535 Eliminating Backlogs Act of 2023, bipartisan legislation which increases employment-based immigration visas. Immigration needs to be merit-based, not dictated by arbitrary caps,” Thanedar tweeted in June. The Congressman had earlier said that the long Green Card backlog is creating hardships for skilled workers, including Indians, at a time when American businesses need more immigrants.

According to estimates, there are only six available workers for every 10 job openings in the US. The bill, introduced by Congressmen Larry Bucshon and Raja Krishnamoorthi on March 10, would recapture the unused employment-based Green Cards accumulated over the past three decades, going back to 1992 when the current Green Card allotment system took effect.

Unused Green Cards are the ones left unissued due to bureaucratic delays and slow USCIS processing. In addition, the bill would exempt these recaptured Green Cards from the 7 per cent per-country cap. As a consequence of numerical limits, per-country caps, and administrative delays, the employment-based Green Card backlog reached 1.6 million by the end of Fiscal Year 2022, according to the National Immigration Forum.

The US sets aside 140,000 employment-based green cards for skilled, unskilled, and professional workers from all around the world every year. In addition to the numerical limit, Congress has put a limit on the maximum number of Green Cards that can be allocated to nationals of a particular country.

As per the existing federal law, individuals from any one country cannot be issued more than 7 per cent of the total number of Green Cards each year. The existence of these per-country caps means that individuals from countries with high numbers of Green Card applicants, such as India, China, Mexico, and the Philippines, face backlogs lasting years or even decades.



NADI SHODHNAME PRANAYAMA

Puranas mention the churning of the celestial ocean by the devas and asuras to obtain the Divine nectar or amrit. It was agreed that the fruit of churning will be shared by the two sides. Mount Meru became the churning rod and Naag Vasuki offered itself to become the churning rope which was pulled alternately by the devas and asuras. Lord Vishnu in his Kurma avatar provided support to the Meru. As a result of the churning various gems and siddhis came out of the ocean, also came out the venom, Halalal...before obtaining the Amrit. Lord Shiv then drank the vish and held it in his throat, distributing the siddhis and vibhutis to all.

The above mentioned incident, also describes the awakening of the Kundalini shakti in the pranamaya kosha of the human body...through practice of yoga and sanatana kriya, under the sanidhya of a Guru, who is the reflection of Adi Guru Shiv, in a physical form. The sushumna becomes the churning rod, the twin nadis of ida and pingala represent the opposing forces of cold and hot, moon and sun that perform the churning. Kundalini that lies coiled at the base of sushumna assumes the role of Naag Vasuki. As the churning happens, immense heat is released, which opens the various blockages in the body and melts the kundalini energy making it rise through the sushumna, granting the being siddhis associated with each center. While the heat unclogs the body and activates the shakti of the kundalini, if generated in an uncontrolled manner in the absence of Guru, its intensity leads to destruction of the body which is unable to bear the heat. A guru assumes the role of neelkanth, taking in the destructive aspects (poison) of the heat of yoga, granting the sadhak various siddhis up the ladder of evolution.

Sanatana Kriya details the practice of Nadi Shodhnam, where prana from breath powers the ida and pingala nadis, which together perform the

churning to generate immense heat in the body. As this heat spreads to various parts of the body, it opens up the blockages in the path of experience of higher energies, awakens kundalini and opens doorways to supernatural experiences.

For Nadi Shodhnam Pranayama, close your eyes and sit in Vajrasana. Paying reverence to the Guru and to Lord Ganesh, we begin the pranayama. Gently place the thumb of your right hand on the right nostril, the ring finger touches the left nostril, and the middle finger rests on the agya chakra, at the center of the forehead. The left hand may be placed on the left knee.

Shut the left nostril with the ring finger and inhale from the right nostril. Exhale from the left nostril by pressing the thumb against the right nostril and simultaneously releasing the ring finger from the left nostril. Next inhale from the left nostril and exhale from the right using the thumb and index finger. Inhale to the count of four and exhale to the count of eight. This completes one cycle. Repeat this cycle seven times. With every breath, try to make the breath deeper and slower. You may increase the count of cycles gradually as you progress into the practice.

A word of caution. Immense heat is generated in the body with the practice of nadi shodhnam pranayama. The pranayama must be attempted only under the supervision of your guru, and is always followed by the Sanatana kriya. The practice must be done in a well-ventilated and clean environment on an empty stomach. If you are performing the pranayama in a room, open the doors/windows and avoid sitting under the direct blast of the fan/air-conditioner/cooler while performing the pranayama. □

Article from Ashwini Gururji of Dhyana Ashram

JINDAL SCHOOL TIES UP WITH UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

Sonipat: The Jindal School of Art & Architecture (JSAA) at O.P. Jindal Global University is proud to announce the unique Dual Degree Architecture Masters with the University of Adelaide (UoA). Under the Jindal-Adelaide Architecture Pathway (JAAP), students will be able to receive a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Built Environment Studies from the JGU, the Bachelor of Architectural Design from the University of Adelaide and a Master of Architecture from the University of Adelaide within a total period of 6 Years (3+1+2).

The JSAA students undertaking Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Built Environment Studies at O.P. Jindal Global University will be able to transfer to the Bachelor of Architectural Design at the UoA after three years at JGU completing another one year at UoA.

The Founding Vice Chancellor of O.P. Jindal Global University, Prof. (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar said, "I congratulate the Dean and the faculty members of the Jindal School of Art and Architecture (JSAA) and The School of Architecture at the University of Adelaide for developing this unique programme.

"The Jindal Adelaide Architecture pathway is the first and only architecture program in India that is designed to graduate global architects who will be eligible for licensure across Australia, New Zealand, India and many other countries through reciprocal arrangements. As part of this path breaking collaboration for creating a unique dual degree programme for our students at JSAA, the University of Adelaide and JGU are committed to work together on promoting global experiences for our students in the areas of Architecture and Design."

Some of the key elements of the JAAP programme include:

1. Only Architecture programme in India that will produce architects eligible for registration across India, Australia, New Zealand and other commonwealth countries (through reciprocal agreements).

2. Graduating students eligible for minimum three-year post study work visa in Australia.
3. Global Curriculum which blends architectural education and expertise across India and Australia.
4. Study in two top ranking universities with highly accomplished global faculty; get to meet top architects and designers across India, Australia and New Zealand.
5. Be a part of the Deloitte Academy of Studies at the University of Adelaide.
6. Access state of the art facilities in BIM, 3D modelling, Motion Capture and Rapid Prototyping across JGU and UoA.

Prof. (Dr.) Jaideep Chatterjee, Dean-JSAA said, "The Jindal-Adelaide Architecture pathway is an absolute game changer for the discipline of architecture in India today. For the first time ever, this remarkable programme brings together two highly sought undergraduate architecture degrees and a professional Master of Architecture degree under the same roof. This combination will finally allow students from India to graduate and directly be a part of the global workforce of architects from which they had been long excluded.

"As a premier institution, the Jindal School of Art & Architecture (JSAA), OPJGU is extremely glad to be partnering with the University of Adelaide, a top university in Australia to bring this unique program to aspiring architects in India."

Dr. Jessica Gallagher, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement), University of Adelaide welcomed the partnership and said, "It is with great enthusiasm that we launch this new agreement with OP Jindal Global University. We look forward to continuing to build upon this relationship and welcoming their students to Adelaide in the future. Indian students greatly contribute to the cultural richness of our University campuses and Australian society more broadly."



“I DREAM 8 BILLION PEOPLE ON EARTH CAN HAVE AN AI TUTOR”



New Delhi: Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella has revealed his dream that everyone of earth's 8 billion people can have an AI tutor, an AI doctor, a programmer or maybe an AI consultant in the future. In an interview with *Wired*, Nadella, 55, said that AI is going to be democratised.

“I was in India in January and saw an amazing demo. The government has a programme called Digital Public Goods, and one is a text-to-speech system. In the demo, a rural farmer was using the system to ask about a subsidy programme he saw on the news. It told him about the programme and the forms he could fill out to apply,” Nadella said.

“Normally, it would tell him where to get the forms. But one developer in India had trained GPT on all the Indian government documents, so the system filled it out for him automatically, in a different language,” he added. According to him, something created a few months earlier on the West Coast in the US had made its way to a developer in India, who then wrote a model that allows a rural Indian farmer to get the benefits of that technology on a WhatsApp bot on a mobile phone.

“My dream is that every one of Earth's 8 billion people can have an AI tutor, an AI doctor, a programmer, maybe a consultant,” he noted. On a question that we are going to hit that artificial general intelligence (AGI) superintelligence benchmark, Nadella said he is much more focused on the benefits to all of humanity.

“I am haunted by the fact that the industrial revolution didn't touch the parts of the world where I grew up until much later. So I am looking for something that may be even bigger than the industrial revolution, and really doing what the industrial revolution did for the West, for everyone in the world”.

“So I'm not at all worried about AGI showing up, or showing up fast. Great, right? That means 8 billion people have abundance. That's a fantastic world to live in,” he added. On controlling or even stopping AI experiments, as being asked by a group of top AI researchers and billionaire entrepreneurs like Elon Musk, Nadella said that instead of just saying stop, “I would say we should speed up the work that needs to be done to create these alignments”.

“To align an AI model with the world, you have to align it in the world and not in some simulation,” he stressed.

Goa to go big on homestays to promote sustainable tourism

Sanjay Borkar

Panaji: Goa Tourism is in the process of formulating a 'homestay' policy, which the government feels would set an example for sustainable tourism that can be replicated worldwide. As per the official records, in 2019 about 71,27,000 domestic tourists arrived in Goa, while 9,31,000 were foreign tourists.

Goa's Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte has said that the state plans to expand its tourism offerings by promoting lesser explored areas like spirituality, health and wellness, eco-tourism and traditional aspects.

Sources informed that tourist arrivals in Goa are picking up post COVID and the government is making efforts to attract more tourists to the state, as tourism plays a major role in the coastal state's economy. According to Khaunte, Goa has witnessed significant growth in its tourism infrastructure, with over 6,000 hotels accounting for more than 55,000 rooms.

"Through initiatives like the policy on homestays, which focuses on creating cluster economies and engaging the local community, Goa is setting an example for

sustainable tourism that can be replicated worldwide," Khaunte said.

He said that tourism holds immense potential in shaping our global future. "The tourism industry, as a catalyst for economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development, has the ability to transcend borders, forge friendships, and create opportunities like no other," Khaunte added.

"Goa's vibrant blend of rich heritage, diverse culture, and breathtaking landscapes offers an experience that is both mesmerizing and enchanting. From its picturesque beaches and lush tropical forests to its vibrant festivals and warm hospitality, Goa embodies the very essence of a traveller who is seeking an immersive and experiential paradise destination," he said.

Goa's distinct attractions, such as its beautiful beaches, tropical climate, diverse wildlife, historical landmarks, lively festivals, water sports, Ayurvedic practices, and authentic cuisine, set it apart as a unique destination.





“By implementing targeted marketing campaigns and promoting experiential tourism, Goa aims to establish itself as a top choice for travellers worldwide, emphasizing its exceptional offerings and encouraging visitors to explore its rich cultural and natural treasures.” Khaunte said.

“Goa is focusing on enhancing connectivity to support its tourism growth. While the state already has two active airports with domestic connectivity, there is a need to improve international air connectivity and we are exploring options such as ‘Open Skies’ and working with the Centre to seek the best option to get more international flights to the state,” Khaunte added.

With a view to promote medical and eco-tourism in the state, the Goa government has also decided to develop a botanical garden at Salaulim Dam at Sanguem in South Goa by investing Rs 130 crore.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that it is the responsibility of the people of Goa to take the tourism area beyond the ‘Sun-Sand-Sea’ concept, for which the government can help by creating the infrastructure.

“Earlier the tourism concept was only ‘Sun-Sand-Sea’, now we have to take this concept beyond it. Only the government can’t do it, people of the state will have to take responsibility for it. We can create infrastructure in remote areas, however the tourism activities will have to be created by the PPP model,” Sawant said.



DIASPORA BOOSTS SOFT POWER PARADIGM BETWEEN INDIA, US

Meenakshi Iyer



New Delhi: The Indian diaspora's expertise in healthcare and IT in the US have strengthened the soft power between the two nations, noted Indian-American professionals from the field said in June.

As visiting Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a slew of CEOs and sought their technological collaboration on Wednesday, eminent members of the diaspora community also said that it is time to further bolster US-India ties in strategic areas like defence and manufacturing.

"The Indian diaspora's expertise in Healthcare and IT have strengthened the soft power between India and the US. I expect the two leaders to strengthen this bond further in more strategic areas like defence, manufacturing," Dr Mahendra Bhandari, Director Robotic Research and Education, Vattikuti Urology Institute at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, told IANS in an email interview.

On the first day of his three-day historic state visit to the US, Mr Modi met a group of American academics from diverse fields such as agriculture, marketing, engineering, technology and health. He spoke of emerging trends in healthcare and discussed ways to augment healthcare capacities in India with experts working in the field.

Speaking of collaborations, Dr Bhandari said that the two biggest democracies can work to bring in best practices in the medicine and pharma sector. "Highly accomplished Indian-origin doctors and surgeons can collaborate with the Indian healthcare system to bring in the best practices -- from public health, robotic surgery to use of AI in delivering outcome-based medicine," Bhandari told IANS.

"On the other hand, the highly-advanced Indian pharma industry can collaborate with the large US pharma

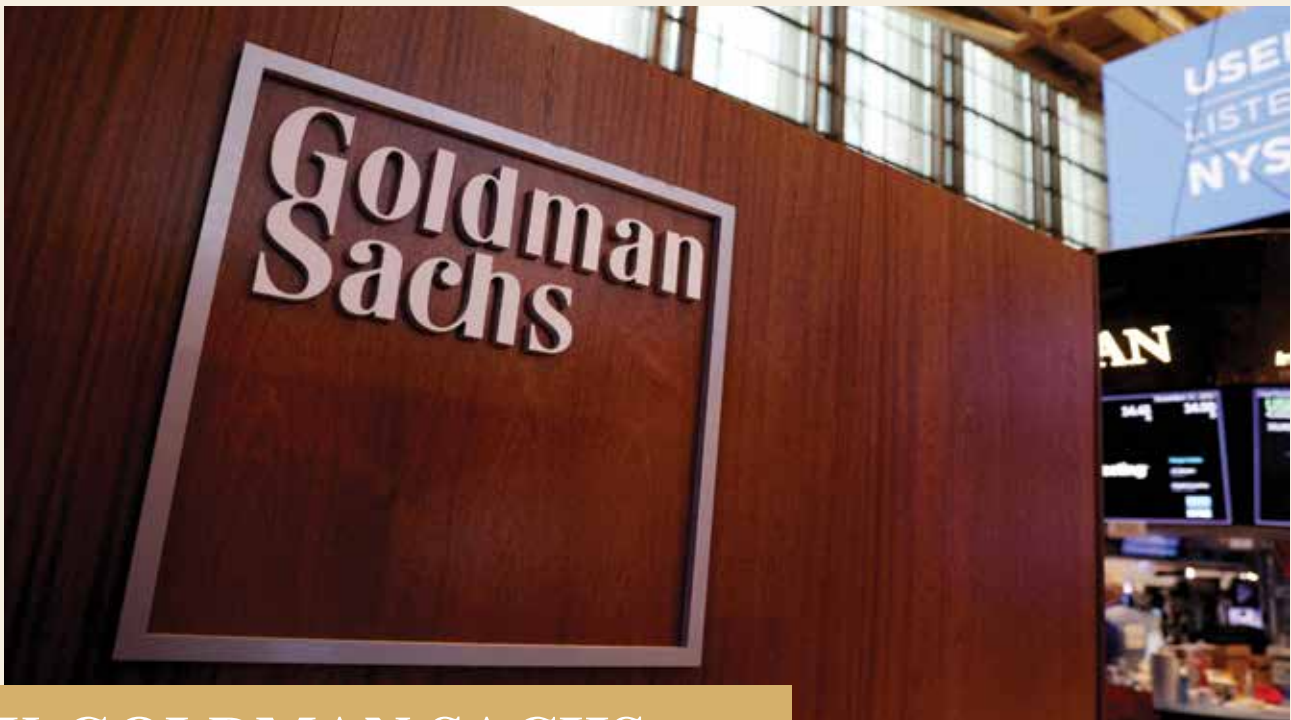
companies to manufacture critical drugs and vaccines for the less privileged nations of the world," he added. Mr Modi also discussed pandemic healthcare in his meeting with Nobel Laureate Peter Agre, Lawton Robert Burns, Stephen Klasko, Peter Hotez, Sunil A. David and Vivian S. Lee.

The use of digital technologies for quality healthcare, a greater focus on integrative medicine and better healthcare preparedness was also discussed. India has established itself as a global tech giant, and the competence of the Indian doctors and researchers in the US is well established. "I expect convergence of AI, healthcare and pharma will make way for India's emergence as a leading healthcare destination. The vast population health database in India too can be leveraged for training the NLP engine," Chocko Valliappa, Founder and CEO of Bengaluru and New York co-headquartered technology and IT services firm Vee Technologies, told IANS.

According to Valliappa, the diaspora expects a slew of significant initiatives to be rolled out during the Modi-Joe Biden summit. "Since the US and India are both going into election mode next year, this is the ideal time to take bold steps to increase trade," Valliappa told IANS.

India has to play the fact that several American tech giants like Facebook, WhatsApp, Google, Microsoft, as well as other niche tech firms owe a significant part of their market cap to a vast pool of consumers from India, while China has shut its doors to them.

"As this fact is not lost on the US government in the recent geopolitical dynamics India's manufacturing industry is bound to gain from the state visit of PM Modi," Valliappa told IANS.



EX-GOLDMAN SACHS BANKER CONVICTED OF INSIDER TRADING

New York: Former Goldman Sachs investment banker Brijesh Goel has been convicted of insider trading and obstruction of justice by a New York jury, after prosecutors said he passed tips about potential mergers to a friend. Goel, 38, was convicted in June after a seven-day trial for tipping off former Barclays Plc trader Akshay Niranjana about deals at Goldman, yielding total illegal profits of approximately \$280,000. He is scheduled to be sentenced on October 19, the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York announced.

“Brijesh Goel, a senior banker at a leading investment bank, betrayed the trust of his employer and unlawfully shared inside information with his squash partner in an agreement to trade on that information,” Attorney Damian Williams said.

According to the indictment, statements made in public court proceedings and filings, and the evidence at trial, Goel received confidential, internal emails directed to Goldman Sachs’s Firmwide Capital Committee and Credit Markets Capital Committee. This contained detailed information and analysis about potential merger-and-acquisition transactions Goldman Sachs was considering financing.

In violation of the duties that he owed to Goldman Sachs, Goel misappropriated that confidential information and tipped Niranjana, who worked at another investment bank in New York, with the names of potential target companies from those internal emails during in-person meetings.

Niranjana used the confidential information passed by Goel to trade call options, including short-dated, out-of-the-money call options, in brokerage accounts that were in the name of Niranjana’s brother. Goel and Niranjana agreed to split the profits from their trading, the Attorney said. Between approximately 2017 and 2018, Goel tipped Niranjana on at least six deals in which Goldman Sachs was involved.

According to Bloomberg, Niranjana, after making some \$280,000 in illegal profits by using the information, later flipped on his friend, Goel.

Niranjana recorded their conversations and cooperated with federal investigators before taking the stand at Goel’s trial in the Manhattan federal court.

The trial, which began on June 12, offered a striking portrait of a close Wall Street friendship torn asunder amid federal scrutiny, the Bloomberg report said. According to Goel’s lawyers, it was “the ultimate betrayal”. In his defence, Goel said that Niranjana set him up, but the jurors rejected his attempt to explain his side.

Between approximately May and June 2022, Goel also obstructed investigations by a Grand Jury in the Southern District of New York and the US Securities and Exchange Commission. Specifically, he deleted and asked Niranjana to delete electronic communications regarding the insider trading scheme, including during an in-person meeting that Niranjana had consensually recorded.

Goel was convicted of four counts of securities fraud and one count of obstruction of justice, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and one count of conspiracy to commit securities fraud and tender offer fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

“Today’s verdict should remind those in the capital markets that if you engage in insider trading, we will catch you and hold you accountable,” Attorney Williams said. Goel now faces prison and likely deportation to India.

TWO INDIAN-AMERICANS WIN DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES IN VIRGINIA



New York: Indian-American candidates Suhas Subramanyam and Kannan Srinivasan have won the Democratic primaries for the House of Delegates in Virginia. Subramanyam, who had announced his bid for Virginia's newly-drawn 32nd Senate District in March, defeated former state delegate and dentist Ibraheem Samirah by a narrow margin.

According to the preliminary results from the Virginia Department of Elections, Subramanyam had 73.6 per cent of the vote in the primaries held on June 20. "Thank you to every single volunteer, team member, and voter for yesterday's victory. We truly could not have done this work, or delivered this win, without each and every one of you," Subramanyam said in a statement shared on Twitter.

He will succeed Senator John Bell, who announced he will not be in the race for Senate again. A resident of Loudoun County, Subramanyam became the first Indian-American and South Asian to ever be elected to the Virginia General Assembly in 2019.

A technology and regulatory attorney, Subramanyam served as a White House advisor to former President Barack Obama in 2015, where he led a task force on technology policy that addressed job creation, IT modernisation, and regulating emerging technology.

Srinivasan defeated fellow Indian-American Sirisha Kompally to grab the 26th District of the Virginia House of Delegates, which includes several Loudoun communities, including Brambleton, Stone Ridge and South Riding.

"Thank you to our amazing team and volunteers and everyone who gave your time and talents. Your work made this possible. And thank you to the voters of District 26 for putting your faith in me. It's an honor to be your Democratic nominee," Srinivasan tweeted after his victory.

A Loudoun resident for almost 25 years, Srinivasan immigrated from India in 1993, according to his campaign. He serves as vice chair of the Virginia State Medicaid Board, and has helped to expand Medicaid to cover more than two million Virginians.

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