

INDIA PERSPECTIVES

Volume 28 ■ Issue 2 ■ May-June 2014

A hand is shown pointing at a map of India. The map is cut out of a greyish paper and placed on a background of yellow and green geometric shapes. Overlaid on the map are several blue ballot boxes with red dots, arranged in a row. The hand is pointing at one of the boxes.

*World's largest
democracy votes*

STRIDES TOWARDS
WORLD PEACE

NEIGHBOURS
INDIA-SRI LANKA TIES

CULTURE
JOURNEY OF SUFISM

REVIEW
THE INDIAN WOMAN

POTPOURRI

UPCOMING EVENTS ACROSS INDIA

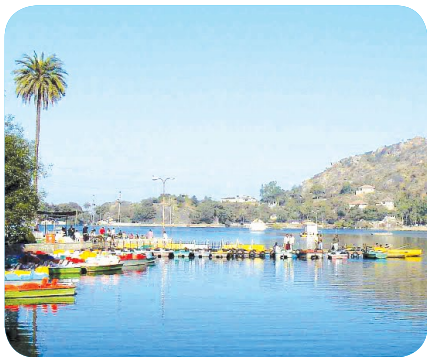


MOATSU FESTIVAL

Celebrated by the Ao tribes of Nagaland state in North East India, Moatsu Festival celebrates the end of the plantation season. You witness singing and dancing with people dressed up in their best, sitting around a fire, enjoying a sumptuous meal.

WHEN: First week of May

WHERE: Mokokchung district villages particularly Chuchuyimlang, Nagaland



MT ABU SUMMER FESTIVAL

The Mt Abu Summer Festival in Rajasthan starts with ballad singing followed by regional folk dancing and a fireworks display. It offers sporting activities like boat racing on Nakki Lake and roller skating race. The highlight is the Sham-e-Qawwali show featuring renowned *qawwals* of India.

WHEN: May 12-14

WHERE: Mt Abu, Rajasthan

BUDDHA PURNIMA

Buddha Purnima celebrates the birthday of Lord Buddha. Activities include prayer meets, religious discourses, recitation of Buddhist scriptures, group meditation and worship. Indian Railways runs the Mahaparinirvan Express Buddhist tourist train that visits all Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India.

WHEN: May 14

WHERE: Various Buddhist sites across India, particularly Bodh Gaya



SUMMER FESTIVAL

A hill station in Tamil Nadu, Ooty comes alive with the Summer Festival. The flower show is a visual treat. There's boat racing and trekking too.

WHEN: Early May

WHERE: Botanical Gardens, Ooty, Tamil Nadu



LAMAYURU FESTIVAL

The two-day festival, Yuru Kabgyat in Lamayuru, is held at the most ancient monastery of Ladakh. There are mask dances by lamas. Another important ritual – burning of effigies signifying burning of the ego.

WHEN: June 14-15 and June 24-25

WHERE: Lamayuru Monastery, Ladakh



CHAMPAKULAM MOOLAM BOAT RACE

The oldest snake boat race of Kerala is held on River Pamba. Participants use different boats like the *chundan* and *iruttu kuthi*. A stunning procession is held before the race featuring exotic water floats and decorated boats.

WHEN: June 23

WHERE: Champakulam, Alleppey, Kerala

Foreword

As the world's largest democracy, India, goes to polls to elect a new government, former Chief Election Commissioner of India Dr SY Quraishi shares his views on this 'celebration' of democracy and the changing scenario over the years. From social media websites to emails and SMSes, we showcase the way political campaigning has changed in the country. And look at how elections are attracting foreigners to Indian shores, thus giving birth to a new genre called 'poll tourism'.

On the industrial front, India's progress has been commendable. We present an overview of the upcoming Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor that aims to develop industrial zones across six states in the country which will be hubs for global manufacturing and trading. The dedicated corridor passes through the states of Uttar Pradesh, NCR Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra with a total length of 1,483 km.

We take a look at how India's strong relations with Sub-Saharan Africa received further boost in terms of growing business opportunities at the 10th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership. This issue also highlights India's initiatives in Sri Lanka which include housing, humanitarian aid and medical equipment supplies and agricultural implements. On the occasion of International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on May 29, we talk about India's peacekeeping efforts across the globe.

While Indian filmmaker and fashion designer Muzaffar Ali traces the roots of Sufism, on how it arrived in India and its power to unite, renowned Kathak danseuse Shovana Narayan reviews the Ministry of External Affairs' publication, *The Indian Woman*, and talks about how this coffee table book celebrates her grit and determination. Another feature to look out for is veteran Indian theatre director Nadira Zaheer Babbar and other thespians from Indian stage sharing views on how theatre has evolved and embraced modern trends in India.

We also have some visual gems in this issue: Radhanagar Beach at Havelock Island in the Andamans in India with its white sands and turquoise waters and the flora and fauna at the wildlife sanctuaries in Mudhumalai, Nagarhole, Wayanad and Bandipur in south India.

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Syed Akbaruddin



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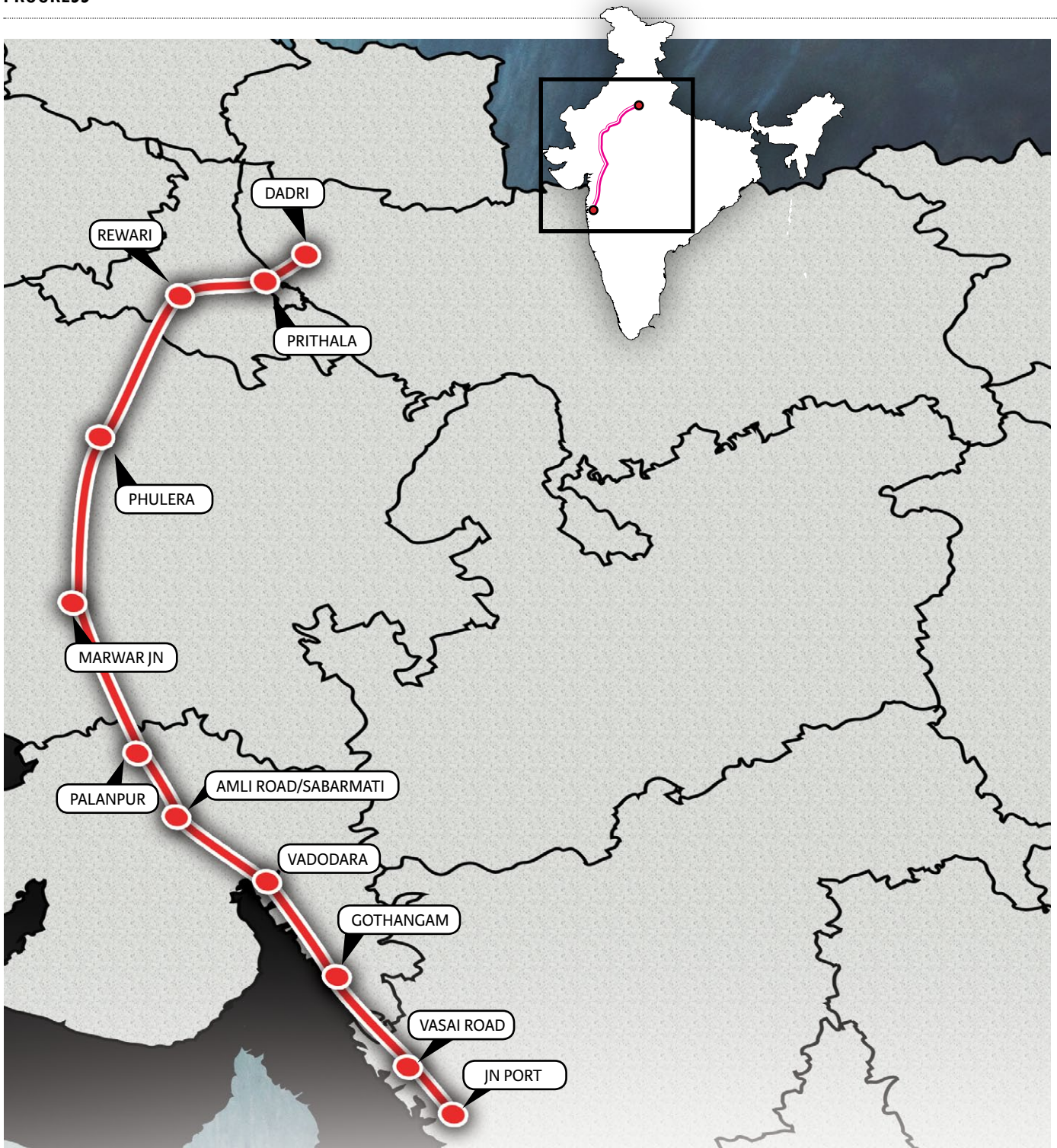
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6 states, 1,483 km,
better tomorrow



The Indian Government has formulated the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) to develop an industrial zone across six states in the country. We take a look at what's in offing from this ambitious project

To create a strong economic base with the globally competitive environment and state-of-the-art infrastructure to enhance foreign investments, activate local commerce and attain sustainable development, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, conceptualised the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). In fact, DMIC has been conceived as a model industrial corridor of international standards with special emphasis on expanding the manufacturing and services base and to develop it as a global manufacturing and trading hub.

DMIC is a multi-modal high-axle load Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) between Delhi and Mumbai, covering 1,483 km, with end terminals at Tughlaqabad and Dadri

in the National Capital Region of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru Port at Mumbai. The envisaged alignment of this freight corridor passes through Uttar Pradesh, NCR of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra and is mostly aligned parallel to the existing railway tracks.

The distribution of length of dedicated freight corridor indicates that Rajasthan (39%) and Gujarat (38%) together constitute 77% of total length followed by Haryana and Maharashtra (10% each) and Uttar Pradesh and the National Capital Region of Delhi

(1.5% of total length each) between Delhi and Mumbai. It is envisaged the alignment of the proposed corridor will have nine junction stations for exchange of traffic between the existing railway system and the DFC in addition to the end terminals. Over the next three

***DMIC has
been conceived
as a model
industrial
corridor of
international
standards***

decades, the industrial cities, to be developed as part of the DMIC project, are expected to attract investments of around \$100 billion. During the first phase, the Government has approved financial assistance of ₹17,500 crore at an average of ₹2,500 crore per city (subject to a ceiling of ₹3,000 crore per city) for development of seven industrial cities including Dadri-Noida-Ghaziabad Investment Region, Manesar-Bawal Investment Region, Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana Investment Region and Ahmedabad-Dholera Investment Region. It is likely to generate employment for around three crore people.

In order to optimise the alignment of DFC and the feeder transport infrastructure requirements, influence region for development of high impact economic regions with quality infrastructure is considered to be extended up to 200 km on both sides of the alignment of DFC. In addition to

the influence region, the development of DMIC would include augmentation of feeder rail and road connectivity to hinterland, markets and the select seaport locations along the western coast. Project Influence Area (PIA) for DMIC comprises of 436,486 sq km area which constitutes 13.8% of geographical area of overall India.

Based on area distribution, PIA of DMIC comprises of seven states and two union territories. The project influence area for DMIC comprises of a combined population of 178 million constituting approximately 17% of total population of the country.

DMIC states contribute 50% of agricultural produce of principal crops of the country and 60% of overall exports from the country. Moreover, the foreign investment trends indicate that DMIC states cater to 52% of overall FDI equity investments into the country during January 2000-December 2006.

GUJARAT

One of the most industrialised states in India, Gujarat has exhibited a 12.5% high industrial growth rate from 2002-2007. In India's 10th Five Year Plan, it has achieved the highest GDP growth, of 10.2%. Gujarat accounts for 15.14% (US\$ 114.52 billion) of total investments in India. Gujarat witnessed the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of 10.2% (2002-07) and a target GSDP of 11.2% is envisaged (2007-12).

The Ahmedabad-Dholera Investment Region is located around 100 km from the Dedicated Freight Corridor at Vadodara/Ahmedabad. The state government has designated Dholera as the Special Investment Region and initiated preparation of development plans. It has also shortlisted Dholera for developing a greenfield port development; work on this has started.

Around 38% (564 km) of the 1,500 km length of Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) will pass through Gujarat while 62% of the total area of Gujarat (18 out of 26 districts) are within the influence area. The state has signed an MoU



with various industrial corporates worth ₹2, 84,451 crore, offering employment to around seven lakh people.

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan is a natural corridor between the wealthy northern and the prosperous western states of India, making it an important trade and commerce centre. With nearly 39% of DFC passing through Rajasthan, opportunities for industrial establishment are eminent – the corridor will make Rajasthan accessible to western and northern markets. About 60% of the state's area (in 22 districts including Jaipur, Alwar and Bhilwara) falls within the project influence area. So the state will become an attractive destination for industrial and support infrastructure units. In Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana region, an integrated industrial township is being developed; similarly, a township with other support infrastructure and projects is planned in Jodhpur-Pali-Marwar area under DMIC in the first phase. The state offers opportunities of large investments in



innovative tourism projects and wishes to attract investment in automobiles, consumer goods and IT.

MAHARASHTRA

The first phase has potential to generate an industrial output of ₹20 lakh crore and manufacturing jobs for 38 lakh by 2042. The state government will take up the development of Shendre-Bidkin Industrial City at Aurangabad with an investment of ₹17,319 crore. Maharashtra will provide land while the Centre's contribution will be to the tune of ₹3,000 crore for each township project. The state government and DMIC Trust have formed a joint venture for developing these projects wherein the state will have 51% stake, the rest will be held by DMIC. The key highlights of Maharashtra include State Domestic Product: US\$ 74 billion; exports: US\$ 44 billion (45% of total Indian exports); industrial sector: around 19% of total NVA in industrial sector; average annual economic growth: 9.3% during last three years and highest FDI approvals in the country. The state is the principal financial centre and a major commercial hub.

Growth in IT/ ITeS, banking and financial service sector is expected to boost the share of

the state's tertiary sector. About 226 functioning industrial areas were set up by MIDC in Maharashtra. Emerging industry segments in economy are engineering, food processing, automobile/ auto-component, leather, chemical and pharmaceutical.



HARYANA

Haryana has the advantage of being situated in the National Capital Region (NCR), a prominent trade and consumption centre. The initiatives planned under DMIC here are expected to catalyse industrial activities and give exponential fillip to the manufacturing sector in the medium and long term, generate huge employment opportunities and attract investments. In the first phase, Manesar Bawal Investment Region (MBIR) has been taken up for development. The MBIR spans across 800 sq km of which 402 sq km is being initially developed. A Greenfield Integrated Township has been planned as a model future city within MBIR. An output of ₹2.5 crore is expected to be generated within MBIR over 30 years, besides generating employment for 1.6 million.



Pre-feasibility studies are underway for low-cost housing, education-cum-health hub and integrated multi-modal passenger hub, eco-city, fresh water storage and transmission projects within MBIR. The highlights include fourth highest per capita income in the country, leading producer of automobiles and automotive components and third largest exporter of software.

DELHI

One of the most important locations for businesses and investors, Delhi NCR comprises Noida, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Ghaziabad and is the principal commercial centre of north India. The state's Gross State Domestic Product at current prices increased from US\$ 15.9 billion in 2002-03 to US\$ 17.8 billion in 2003-04, registering a growth of 12.1%. The key highlights include State Domestic Product (SDP): US\$ 17.8 billion (2004); a fast growing economy driven by services sector; second most-favoured FDI destination in India; biggest consumption centre for consumer goods and cars; highest concentration of "super rich" and "rich" households and attractive tourist destinations. Delhi is among the most advanced economies with the services sector contributing 77% to SDP.



UTTAR PRADESH

The state has a share of more than 10% in aggregate domestic product. Uttar Pradesh (UP) will be the main beneficiary of DMIC as it is the meeting point of the eastern and the western corridors. Its entire agriculture produce will be linked to cold chains and put on western corridor at Dadri, enabling agricultural products to reach ports in record time.

The overall impact of the western and eastern corridors and the new industrial cities being developed will create over 30 lakh jobs and enhance the state's industrial output by ₹24 lakh crore.

The vision of this Investment Region is to develop a smart, sustainable and well-connected infrastructure-led integrated industrial city.

The Integrated Industrial Township has been planned on an area of 302 hectares with the key objective to create a “knowledge-based ecosystem” integrated with industries leading to innovation and economic development.

The project will generate employment for about 58,000 workers, encourage new businesses by fostering collaboration and innovation. UP has attracted significant investments in sugar, cotton fabrics and diversified food preparations.

The state witnessed a growth of 42% in cement output in 2003-04. At 13,645, UP is in the top quartile in the total number of factories in the country. The electronics, leather, textiles and mineral-based industries have shown promising growth in industrial investments. The services sector is the key emerging sector here. UP emerged as a hub for IT companies

and ranks fourth in software exports. Several MNCs have established their facilities in Noida industrial area, which is close to the national capital. The total investment is around US\$ 14.4 billion of which infrastructure investment constitute US\$ 11.45 billion.

UP has attracted many international players, offers wide opportunities for private sector investments in augmentation of infrastructure facilities viz express highways, captive power plants, international airport, dry port facilities and development of recreational and tourism infrastructure.

The Integrated Industrial Township has been planned on an area of 302 hectares with the key objective to create a ‘knowledge-based ecosystem’





Estimated development outcomes

The project outline envisages development of project influence region as model industrial corridor of international standards with emphasis on expanding the manufacturing and services base and developing DMIC as the global manufacturing and trading hub.

Accordingly, the goals of DMIC project include double employment potential, triple industrial output and quadruple exports from the region – all in five years. DMIC would lead to development of enabling environment to activate local commerce, promote global investments with world-class industrial, physical and social infrastructure. It is estimated that development of DMIC will offer employment opportunities for three million people with over 67% in the manufacturing/processing industry. There will be other beneficiaries with increased agriculture/

farming activity in the DMIC Influence region and corresponding impact on the employment generation. As DMIC project involves implementation and operation of

Adequate connectivity between ports/ hinterlands and proposed dedicated freight corridor is essential for DMIC's successful implementation

various industrial activities and infrastructure facilities viz roads, railways, airports, ports and logistics infrastructure and integrated townships, there will be innumerable employment opportunities in construction, operation and maintenance of envisaged facilities. This can generate about 10 million job opportunities during the functional/ operation and maintenance stage.

Foreign Direct Investments

Analysis of the trends in foreign direct investment indicates that DMIC states cater to 52% of total FDI equity inflows into the country. Mumbai and Delhi together constitute 92% of total FDI equity inflows among the project influence states thanks to better



infrastructure facilities. Accordingly, the vision for DMIC envisages identification of “potential but underdeveloped regions” and provision of world-class infrastructure to facilitate shift of focus areas for investments away from metropolitan areas to these new investment regions along the industrial corridor.

Road network

Inventory of existing, ongoing/ proposed road development projects in the project influence area of DMIC is focussed on aspects like review of road network development pattern in DMIC states; review of projects identified under various phases of National Highways Development Project (NHDP) of Government of India and review of available road development plans of respective DMIC states. In the case of NHDP, review is carried out for highway development projects envisaged under Golden Quadrilateral Corridor, East-West Corridor, port connectivity and development of other feeder national highway linkages within the influence area.

Railway network

Adequate connectivity between ports/ hinterlands and the proposed dedicated freight corridor is essential for successful implementation of the project. So railway network needs review – overview of existing railway network and review of ongoing plans for further development of railway network.

Dedicated Freight Corridor

The most important impending development is the Ministry of Railway’s proposal to build two dedicated freight corridors along the Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata legs of Indian Railways’ Golden Quadrilateral. By providing higher speed (100 kmph) and higher per train throughout capacity, the high axle load (25 tonne per axle) western DFC will be particularly relevant to DMIC.



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The list of registered voters in each Parliamentary constituency is revised annually in India

814 million voters, 930,000 polling stations, *1.19 million EVMs*

The 2014 General Elections can be described as the biggest humanly managed event in the world

words | SY Quraishi

India is globally recognised as a thriving and vibrant electoral democracy. Its foundation was laid by the far-sighted framers of the great Constitution. Over the last six decades, it has been nurtured by parliament, judiciary, political parties, media and above all, the people of India. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has contributed its might to keep it on track through these 60 years.

When the founders of the Constitution adopted universal adult suffrage reposing faith in the wisdom of the common Indian to elect his/her representative to the seat of power, the Western world was aghast at our audacity. While some called it a giant leap forward and a bold enterprise, others termed it as 'foolhardy' and 'an unparalleled adventure'. The reason for their scepticism was clear. At that point in time, 84% Indians were illiterate, living in abject poverty in a caste- and communalism-ridden society.

It did not take long for India to silence its critics with a highly successful first General Election 1951-52. In the process, India has proven Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's famous statement that a country does not become fit for democracy, it becomes fit through democracy.

One of the reasons for democracy taking roots in India quickly was a fiercely independent Election Commission that has ensured free and

fair elections each time. Over the past six decades, ECI has conducted 15 general elections to the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) and over 350 elections to State Legislative Assemblies, facilitating peaceful, orderly and democratic transfer of power. Free and fair elections conducted with a level-playing field has ensured that the leaders belonging to the marginalised sections of society like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, farmers, women and

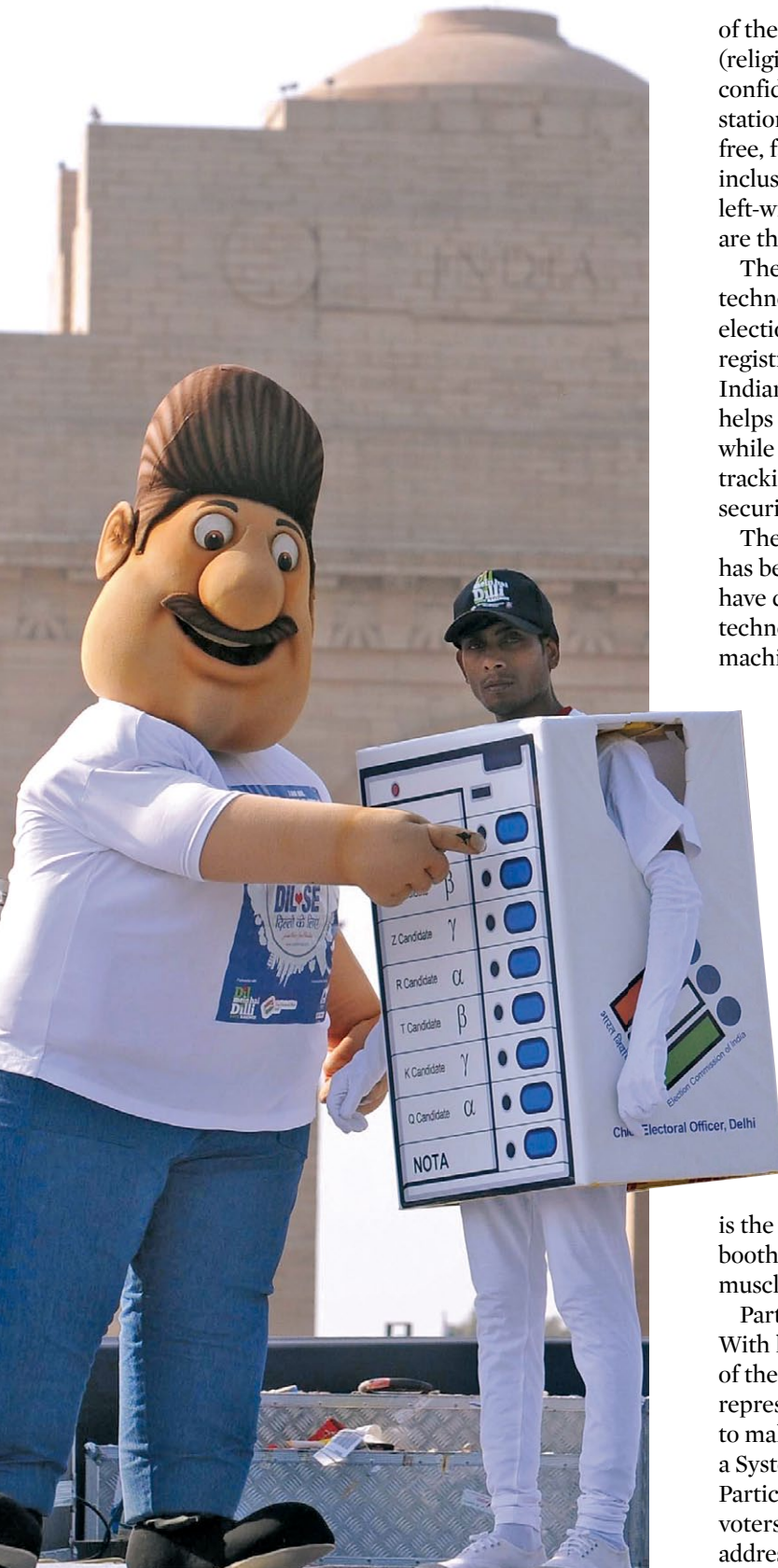
minorities got an opportunity to head national and state governments and to important positions.

In sheer size, the Indian elections may be mind-boggling. The Indian voters exceed the voter population of all countries of any continent put together. The current general elections to the Indian Parliament being held in 2014 can be described as the biggest humanly-managed event in the world. With 814 million voters, 930,000 polling stations, 1.19 million Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and 11-12 million polling and security

personnel, the world is witnessing the biggest election in history.

The biggest challenge is the diversity of India in all its dimensions, be it geographical (deserts, mountains, plains, forests, islands, coastal areas) or being a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society. This makes inclusivity of every section and every individual a special concern. Depressed and deprived sections

One of the reasons for democracy taking roots in India quickly was a fiercely independent Election Commission that ensures fair elections



The Election Commission's Mascot Mr Votu during a voter's awareness campaign at India Gate in New Delhi

of the population, the handicapped, minorities (religious, cultural and linguistic) all have to feel confident and comfortable going to the polling stations. It is the responsibility of the ECI to deliver free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections, ensuring inclusiveness and participation. Terrorism, militancy, left-wing extremism, caste and communal tensions are the issues to be addressed effectively.

The Election Commission uses all types of technology to ensure efficient management of the elections. Fully computerised voter rolls and online registration of voters have helped reach every adult Indian citizen. Geographic Information System (GIS) helps in deciding the location of the polling stations, while Global Positioning System (GPS) enables tracking of movement of the political parties and the security forces.

The most significant technology initiative, however, has been the use of EVMs that few countries have dared to adopt. We deliberately use a simple technology for these standalone, not-networked machines to guard against even the slightest possibility of manipulation of results. ECI considers it the wonder machine of Indian democracy. Even High Court has termed it as 'the pride of India'.

With the recent introduction of Voters Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), the transparency has improved further.

Ensuring a level-playing field for all contestants is a major concern. The party in power has all the resources at its command which could give it an unfair advantage. Therefore, ECI acts to neutralise it right from the day the election schedule is announced. This is done through the Model Code of Conduct, a voluntary code evolved with the consensus of political parties in India.

Despite the lack of statutory backing, the compliance is immense. Public opinion is the moral sanction for its enforcement while booth capturing and intimidation of voters by the musclemen is now history.

Participation is the key to the success of democracy. With low voter turnout and low percentage of voters of the winner, even the legitimacy of the elected representatives comes into question. Therefore, to make democracy truly inclusive, ECI has setup a Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) division to reach out to the voters through multi-media campaigns, especially addressing youth and urban voter apathy.

Every state election is preceded by a scientific survey of Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and



The most significant technology initiative has been the use of EVMs that few countries have adopted

Practices (KABP) of voters before launching voter awareness programmes. This initiative made phenomenal impact, in terms of recoil registration and turnout in each in partnership with civil society and the media state election.

One of the historic developments in this context has been the declaration of January 25 every year as the National Voter's Day (NVD) from 2011. The purpose has been to increase the enrolment of voters, especially the newly eligible ones. By the fourth NVD, the additional voters has crossed the 100 million mark. Many other countries have shown interest to adopt this model.

The success story of Indian elections has led the aspiring democracies around the world to seek and share knowledge, skills and expertise at ECI's disposal. Responding to increasing global demands, especially from Afro-Asian and Commonwealth countries, the Commission has established the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM)

that serves as a training and resource centre for national and international participants. In three years of its existence, the institute has imparted training to election managers of over 40 countries, besides, of course, thousands of domestic master

trainers. While the ECI has gone from strength-to-strength, some lurking concerns still trouble us. The foremost is the role of black money in elections that upsets level-playing field and vitiates free and fair elections. The increasing number of candidates with criminal cases is also worrisome.

ECI has proposed several reform proposals aimed at cleaning up the electoral process so that the foundation can be laid for good governance and a corruption-free polity. Some of these proposals deal with criminalisation of politics,

regulation of campaign finance and internal democracy within political parties. Once these reforms are implemented, the biggest democracy in the world will move a step closer to becoming the greatest.

The Election Commission of India has proposed several reform proposals aimed at cleaning up the electoral process

Parliamentary *elections of India*

We bring you some interesting facts and figures about the biggest electoral process in the world

WHEN ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE ?

- **Every five years**, unless the House is dissolved earlier.
- **Called earlier by the President** upon dissolution of Lok Sabha, if Government loses confidence of majority of members and there is no alternative Government to take over.
- **2014 Elections** shall be the 16th. The 1st General Elections were held in 1951-1952.

POLITICAL PARTIES

- Conduct of elections largely dependent on their behaviour
- Should be registered with the Election Commission of India

POLITICAL PARTIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE 2009 GENERAL ELECTIONS

- National Parties
- State Parties
- Registered (Unrecognised) Parties

07

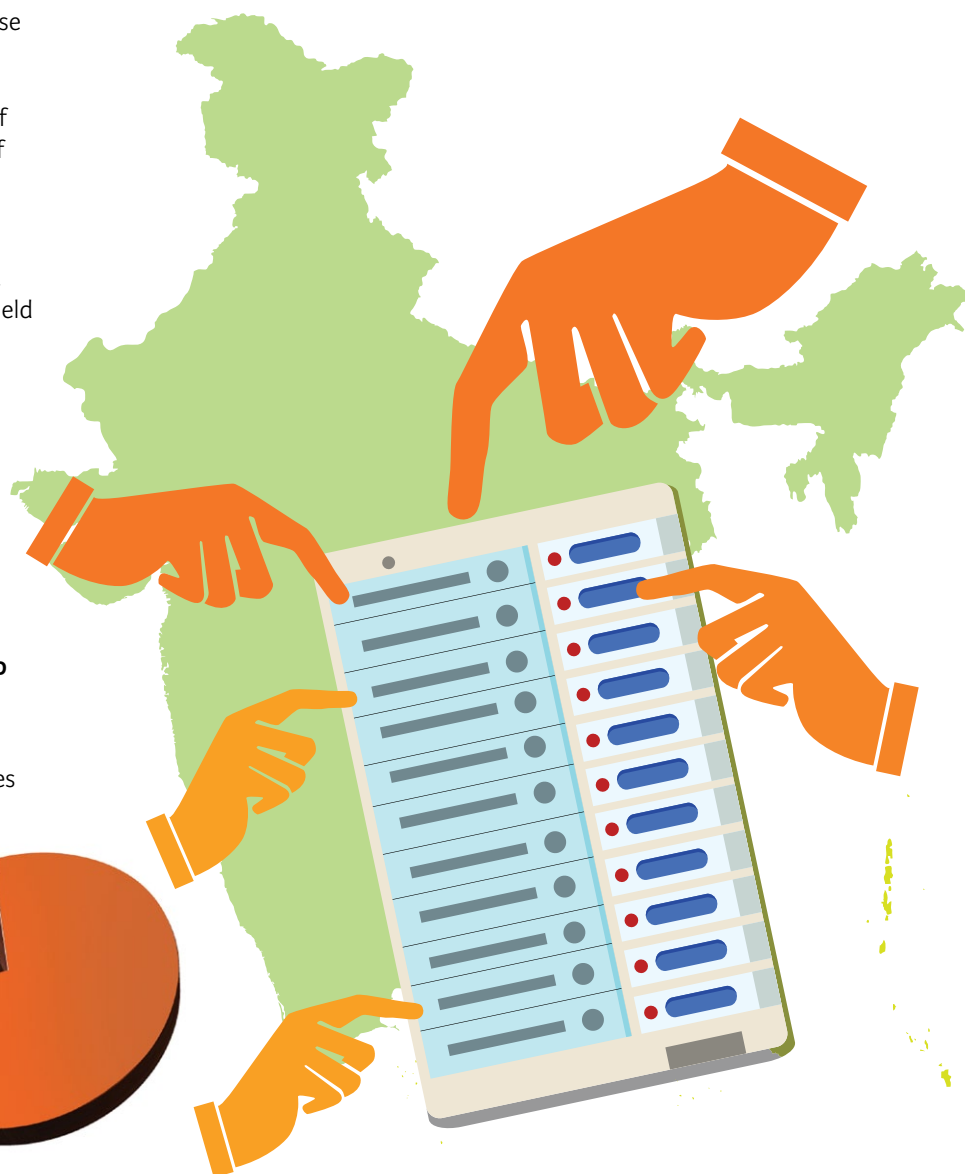
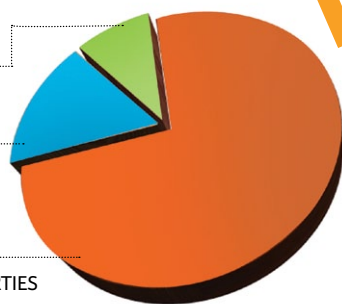
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34

STATE PARTIES

322

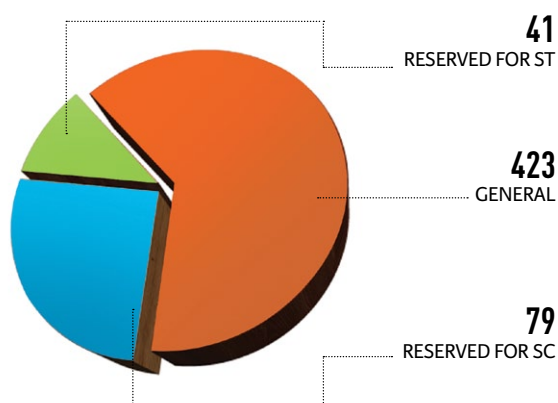
REGISTERED
(UNRECOGNISED) PARTIES



THE ELECTORAL PROCESS - DECIDING THE BATTLEFIELDS

DIVISION INTO PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

- India divided into 543 constituencies.
- Based on number of seats allocated to each of the 28 states and seven union territories on the basis of population.
- Size and shape determined by Delimitation Commission of India.
- One member elected to Lok Sabha from each constituency, filling 543 of 545 seats.
- Two members nominated by the President from the Anglo-Indian community.



WHO CAN VOTE ?

- Any Indian citizen over the age of 18 on January 1 of the year and who is an ordinary resident in the constituency concerned.
- Based on universal adult suffrage.
- Eligible elector to register in respective constituency.
- Indian citizens living abroad can be enrolled at the address given in their passports.

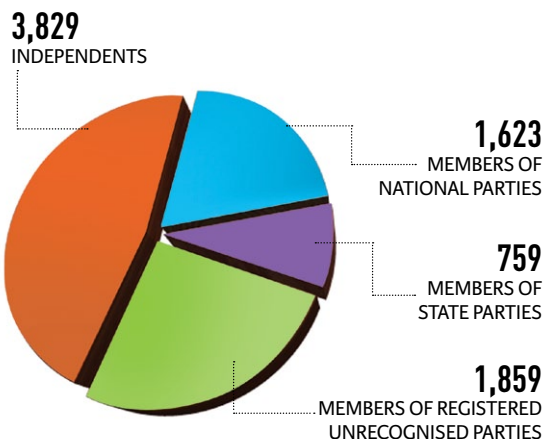
WHAT'S NEW

NONE OF THE ABOVE (NOTA)

- Introduced in 2013 in State Assembly Elections.
- It's the last button on the EVM.
- Voter can press this button if he/ she does not wish to vote for any candidate.

VOTER VERIFIABLE PAPER AUDIT TRAIL (VVPAT)

- Prints a ballot slip showing the name and symbol of candidate to whom vote has been given.
- To improve voter satisfaction.



ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

ELECTORAL ROLLS

- Lists of registered electors in each constituency.
- Revised annually.
- All rolls computerised; include electors' photos.

EPIC

- Electors' Photo Identity Card.
- Provided upon registration to each elector.
- Free of cost.

SVEEP

- Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation.
- To improve electoral participation and to build up a culture of participative democracy.
- Integral to election management in India.

CANDIDATES

WHO CAN CONTEST ?

- Any Indian citizen registered as a voter who is over 25 years of age.
- May belong to a party or independent.
- Every candidate has to make a security deposit.
- Deposit is ₹25,000 for general candidates and ₹12,500 for SCs and STs.
- Candidates to file affidavit about their assets, liabilities, criminal background and educational qualifications.

POLLING MANAGEMENT

ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES

- Voting by secret ballot
- Used since 2004 General Elections

POLLING STATIONS

- Usually in public institutions.
- Within 2 km of every voter.
- No polling station deals with more than 1,500 voters.

POSTAL BALLOT

- Certain voters entitled to vote by post.
- Includes those on election duty, service voters and certain others.

PROXY VOTING

- Option to vote through proxy or through postal ballot is available to service voters in the Armed Forces or to members belonging to a force to which the Army Act applies.

COUNTING OF VOTES

- Done after completion of all phases of polling.
- Under the supervision of returning officers and election observers.
- Counting for all 543 constituencies done on a single day.
- Results declared within a few hours.

INTERESTING FACTS OF GENERAL ELECTIONS 2009

- Highest polling station: Auleyphu in Leh (15,300 m)
- Maximum votes polled by a candidate: 8,32,224
- Minimum votes polled by a candidate: 118
- Maximum candidates in a constituency: 43
- Minimum candidates in a constituency: 3
- Maximum voter turnout in a constituency: 90.32%
- Minimum voter turnout in a constituency: 25.55%
- Largest constituency (by area): Ladakh (J&K) – 1,73,266.37 sq km
- Smallest constituency (by area): Chandni Chowk (Delhi) – 10.59 sq km
- Largest constituency (by size of electorate): Outer Delhi (NCT of Delhi) – 31,03,525 electors
- Smallest constituency (by size of electorate): Lakshadweep – 37,619 electors
- A polling station was set up in Junagadh district in Gir Forests of Gujarat for one elector.



WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRATIC EXERCISE

2009 ELECTIONS

- 8,070 candidates
- 363 registered political parties
- 10 million personnel on poll duty
- 834,919 polling stations
- 717 million registered electors
- 2,046 observers
- 1,39,284 micro observers
- 46,90,575 polling staff



2014 ELECTIONS

- 9,19,452 polling stations
- Nine poll days
- EVMs: 9,08,643 control units
- 11,83,543 ballot units
- 74,729 videographers
- 40,599 digital cameras
- Election Expenditure by Central Government – ₹8,466 million
- 1,080 counting centres
- Five phases
- Spread over one month
- 814 million registered electors

Source: Election Commission of India

Election *enterprise*

As India witnesses its biggest-ever General Elections, tour operators are offering poll packages to attract foreign visitors by combining tourist attractions with political rallies and candidate interactions

words | Pallavi Thakur Bose



Politics, glamour, religion, drama and grandeur... The 2014 General Elections in India are turning out to be the biggest potboiler of this decade. There are new fashion trends surfacing and a variety of political merchandise is being retailed.

From Aam Aadmi brooms to NaMo brand of cell phones, the election season is fast turning out to be the biggest celebration of Indian democracy. However, one industry that is gearing up to market the poll frenzy is the tourism industry. With the world sitting on the edge to watch 'The Great

Indian Election', tour operators in India are doling out poll packages to attract tourists. Packages ranging between \$1,200 and \$1,800 per person for a six-night-seven-day trip combine visits to tourist attractions in India and promise interaction with representatives of political parties and participation in political rallies.

For instance, under a Delhi-Agra-Jaipur package, a tourist could visit various sites in New Delhi, attend political rallies and spend the day interacting with representatives of political parties while enjoying evening visits to the Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh and Hawa Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

In Alappuzha backwaters of Kerala, campaigning is on a different level. It's a great experience to watch paddy fields

In Alappuzha, campaigning is different and it is a great experience to see paddy fields dotted with flags of political parties

dotted with flags of political parties and polling officials carrying ballot boxes in boats. Since 2004, when poll tourism was first introduced here, several groups of foreigners have flown down to witness this innovative style of political campaigning. Witnessing huge turnouts at political rallies, banners, hoardings and gigantic cutouts of political leaders in the southern regions of India, the entire election is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many foreigners.

In Gujarat, a tour operators' team had approached the Election Commission of India to seek approval for foreign tourists to visit poll booths which was turned down due to security reasons. As of now, around 30 tour operators in Gujarat and Delhi have joined hands to get foreign tourists



Tourists can visit destinations like Hawa Mahal in Jaipur, Rajasthan and Alappuzha backwaters in Kerala, India

to India, making themselves visible through social media platforms. In fact, some claim to have got positive response from countries like Ukraine, Indonesia, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uganda, France, Italy and Canada. "We had initiated this project during Gujarat elections in 2012 and got positive response. We had more than 90 tourists from Ukraine and Germany visiting the state. This year, we have three confirmed groups visiting from the UK, Germany and UAE. This concept is going to be a big hit in future," says Lav Sharma from Akshar Tours in Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

However, most inquiries have concentrated to Delhi-Agra-Jaipur circuit. Arun Chowdhary, managing director, Travel Care, a Jaipur-based tour operating agency, gives a more realistic picture. He

As of now, around 30 tour operators in Gujarat and Delhi have joined hands to get foreign tourists to India

says, "Beginning April, the tourism sector in India witnesses a downward trend.

Therefore, to boost tourism we try and come up with such packages. To make it sound interesting and novel, we are trying to connect it to the election frenzy! Since the package is lucrative, people get tempted and book. Moreover, terming it as poll tourism adds another dimension to it. A number of NRIs are showing interest in the elections this time. And with Easter holidays around, they are flying to witness the polls."

Lovesh Sharma, director, sales and marketing, Jaipur Marriott Hotel, says, "It is an innovative idea as it gives people an opportunity to see the country and know how, being the largest democracy in the world, it conducts its elections."



Tourists will be taken to political rallies in various parts of the country

Mass 'media' appeal



From wall post to inbox and from radio station to recording studio, political parties are using novel communication strategies to reach out to the smartphone-savvy India in the 16th General Elections

words | Sumantha Rathore

Here's a look at some facts and figures on the money matters of the various 2014 general elections campaigns.

According to a report by Madison Media, \$800 million will be earned by Indian advertising companies who are looking after these campaigns. It has been estimated that the total campaign expenditure for this election will reach \$5 billion – a budget that's second only to 2012 US Presidential election campaign in which \$7 billion was spent by candidates, parties and support groups. While the election commission limits a candidate's campaign cost to ₹7 million, the politicians end up spending at least 10

times more. Centre for Media Studies in New Delhi, that tracks these spends, has estimated that politicians contesting in the elections will lighten their wallets by ₹300 billion collectively to reach out to the electoral. Not even one third of it was spent in the 2009 elections, but then modes of political communication were hoardings, telephone calls, rallies and leaflets.

Times have changed. Facebook has over nine crore users and Twitter has an estimated three crore accounts in the country today. According to a report published in April 2013 by the

Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMA) and the Mumbai-based Iris Knowledge Foundation, voters in 160 of the 543 constituencies in India will

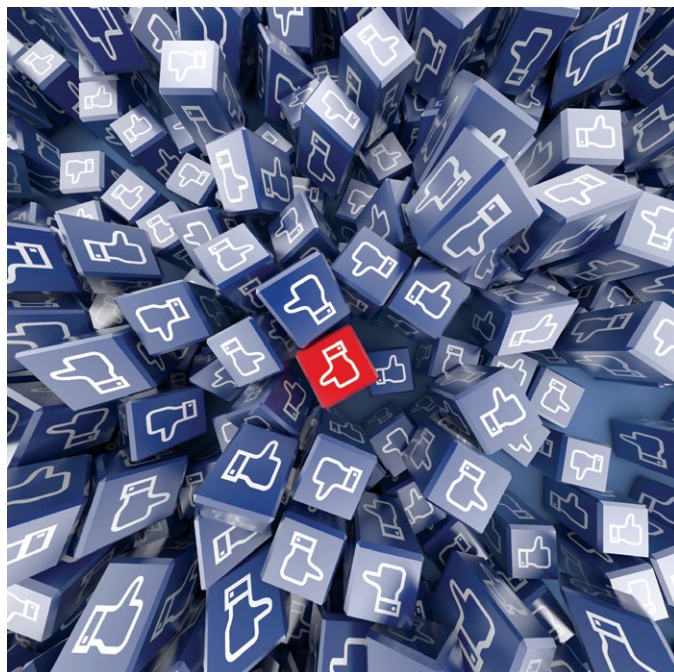
Total campaign expenditure for this election will touch \$5 billion, a budget second only to 2012 US presidential election campaign



be influenced by the general opinion on Facebook while voting.

It's digital all the way

Everyone from the local newspaper vendor to the tea stall owner in India is clued to some sort of digital media. Especially the age group of 18 to 25, which forms the bulk of the voters in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, is digital fanatic. Politicians are taking part in Google+ Hangouts, televised interviews organised by Facebook and using the Facebook-owned smart phone messaging app WhatsApp to connect with millions of tech-savvy urban voters. According to industry experts, the digital media spending in 2014 elections has gone up by 20 times than last year, and the rise is not only because of popular politicians and parties like Congress and BJP, but because of lesser-known parties and candidates. In



Indian National Congress
Facebook Likes: **2.7 million**
Twitter Handle: **@INCIndia**
Twitter Followers: **165000**



BJP
Facebook Likes: **3.6 million**
Twitter Handle: **@BJP4India**
Twitter Followers: **427000**



Nationalist Congress Party
Facebook Likes: **0.2 million**
Twitter Handle: **@NCPspeaks**
Twitter Followers: **17100**



AAP
Facebook Likes: **1.8 million**
Twitter Handle: **@AamAadmiParty**
Twitter Followers: **610000**



an interview to a leading Indian business daily, Google India's industry head Gaurav Kapur said the company is expecting its government advertising revenue to rise by 250-300% in 2014. Parties like BJP and Congress are now keeping 2-5% of their communication budget exclusively for digital and social media companies.

Mobile messages

These have become more targeted; the message that's being sent to voters in the south of metro city Mumbai will be different from the one sent to electorals in Mumbai suburbs. Campaigns are being devised according to voting patterns and voters' behaviour in specific demographic pockets. According to media reports, every big

party has spent close to ₹15 crore on mobile communication. It's not just text messages and outbound calls, but also inbound calls and missed calls. BJP has introduced Live Talk, in which the voters can call in and listen to Modi's favourite rally speeches. Even AAP allows people to call them up and take an account of the party's work.

According to media reports, every big political party has spent close to ₹15 crore on mobile communication, text messages and calls

Politicians on the air

The radio reaches millions of people and so has almost a bombardment of election advertisements. In the last Delhi elections, about ₹250 million to

₹500 million were spent just on radio. Aam Aadmi Party, led by Arvind Kejriwal, had allocated 60% of its ₹20 million to ₹30 million advertising budget to radio and phone calls.

App above the *world so high*

Mobile app libraries are being increasingly puffed up with apps tweaked to suit Indian consumers, a share of which every telecom developer wants to own

words | Sumantha Rathore



WHATSAPP: The cross-platform messaging app has more than 40 million active users in India which accounts for around 10% worldwide users. According to last year estimates, Whatsapp is adding five million Indian users every month. It recently added support for Hindi language for Windows phones in India as Hindi is the fourth most widely spoken language globally, behind Mandarin, Spanish, and English. Also, India is one of the fastest growing markets for Windows phones.

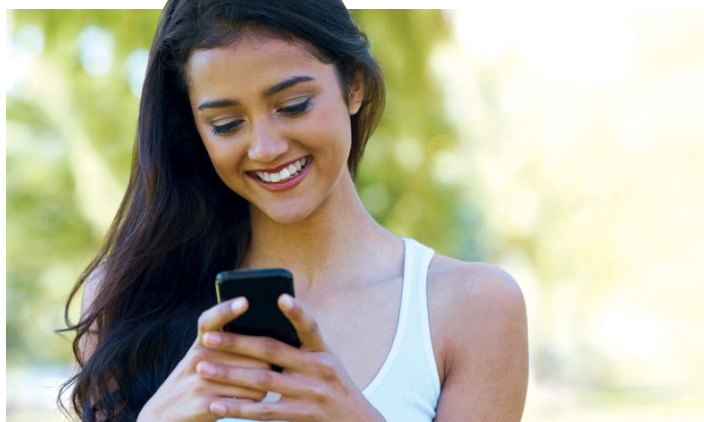
FACEBOOK: FB recently enabled its messenger voice-calling feature in India that lets users call their Facebook contacts for free, using either mobile data or wi-fi. Similar to other VoIP services, it is

available via Facebook Messenger for Android and iOS. Facebook, in an earlier attempt to woo

Indian users had added a new set of stickers, Chumbak, for the Indian market. These stickers were made available on both messenger and Facebook apps on Android and iOS. Other messaging apps Line and Hike too had their own set of stickers for Indian markets.

MXIT: When South Africa-based mobile social networking website Mxit launched a mobile instant messenger application in India this January, it was available in English and Hindi. The messenger will soon support Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam because the developers are keen on launching the

WhatsApp recently added support for Hindi language for Windows phones in India as it is one of the fastest-growing markets for Windows phones



A study released by Avendus Partners in 2012 pegged Indian app market ₹150-200 crore with Google Play and Apple App Store spinning ₹330 crore annually. In October 2012, these two app libraries earned ₹27.5 crore collectively. A year later, shipments of smart phones from foreign companies have tripled and it is estimated to reach ₹2,000 crore by 2016

application in Tier II cities of Andhra Pradesh, followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

PAYTM'S BARGAIN: The all-new Paytm Shopping app lets you bargain with the seller through a messenger. So, if the seller quotes ₹1,000 for a product and you wish to pay ₹700, you can do it through the messenger. The app features shopping in various categories including men, women, kids fashion and home furnishing along with mobile & DTH recharge options which were already available on Paytm.

GOOGLE MAPS: The next time you want to locate your favourite brand's store in a mall, seek help from Google Maps that helps users browse through and locate specific locations through its indoor maps. With Indoor Google Maps, you can access detailed floor plans for 75 popular indoor venues, free. These venues have been selected from Bhopal, Coimbatore, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Jaipur, Kochi, Lucknow, Ludhiana and Moradabad.

VISIT BRITAIN'S BIB: Britain's tourism board, VisitBritain introduced a Bollywood theme travel application, Bollywood in Britain (BiB) to help travellers from India chalk out vacations in Britain. The mobile app, available on Android and iOS devices, features a number of destinations where Hindi films have been canned.



Indian smartphone users literally have the world at their fingertips



Facebook India has 93 million users, second only to the US with 75 million. Of these on mobile (December 2013), WhatsApp has 36 million active users in India. New entrant Mxit aims to target 500 million middle-segment users

Unending *cooperation*

ITEC is a major component and dynamic part of India's bilateral assistance programme manifesting in diverse areas of cooperation



To address the needs of developing countries through innovative technological cooperation between India and a partnering nation, the Government of India

launched a bilateral assistance programme, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). The programme was initiated following a decision of the Indian Cabinet on September 15, 1964 and under which



partner countries are invited to share in India's developmental experience acquired over six decades of her existence as a free nation. Today, ITEC is a major component and dynamic part of India's bilateral assistance programme manifesting in diverse areas of cooperation.

The programme, born out of the vision of India's first prime minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, was launched under the premiership of Lal Bahadur Shastri. The decision regarding setting up the ITEC programme was predicated on the underlying belief that "it was necessary to establish relations of mutual concern and inter-dependence based not only on commonly held ideals and aspirations, but also on solid economic foundations. Technical and economic cooperation was considered to be one of the essential functions of an integrated and imaginative foreign policy."

ITEC resources have been used for cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context

In recent years, ITEC resources have been used for cooperation programmes conceived in regional and inter-regional context such as Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN), G-77, G-15, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Economic Commission for Africa, African Union (AU), Afro-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), Pan African Parliament, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Commonwealth, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and the India-Africa Summit Forum. Under ITEC and its sister programme, Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme (SCAAP), 161 countries in Asia, Africa, East Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Pacific and Small

Island countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience.

As a result of different activities under this programme, there is now a visible and growing awareness among other countries about the competence of India as a provider of technical know-how and expertise as well as training opportunities, consultancy services and feasibility studies. These programmes have generated immense goodwill and substantive cooperation among the developing countries.

ITEC and SCAAP continue to draw large numbers of participants to the training courses conducted by institutions in India, both in government and private sectors, under the civilian and defence training programmes.

ITEC has acquired a strong brand name in the field of development partnership. Engagement with alumni networks has continued to strengthen through annual ITEC Day functions organised at headquarters and in Missions abroad as well as through social networking tools.

***ITEC and
SCAAP
continue to
draw
participants to
training courses
conducted by
institutions
in India***

In order to effectively handle India's assistance projects abroad through the stages of concept, launch, execution and completion, Ministry of External Affairs established the Development Partnership Administration (DPA). ITEC/ SCAAP programme has the following components:

- Training (civilian and defence) in India of nominees from ITEC partner countries
- Projects and project-related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services
- Deputation of Indian experts abroad
- Study tours
- Gifts/donations of equipment at the request of ITEC partner countries
- Aid for disaster relief

Training

People from developing countries are offered training courses, both civilian and defence, in different centres of excellence in India.

Civilian Training Programme: There are 47 empanelled institutions conducting 280

Training or capacity building is one of the major activities under ITEC





In recent years, ITEC resources have been used for cooperation programmes

courses. The training programme is demand-driven and subjects selected are of interest to developing countries for their working professionals on a wide and diverse range of skills and disciplines. The courses are divided into seven categories:

- Accounts, audit, banking and finance
- IT, telecommunication and English
- Management
- SME/ rural development
- Specialised
- Technical
- Environment and renewable energy

Project-related cooperation

India assists ITEC partner countries, on the basis of mutually agreed projects, to establish infrastructure facilities with technology and skills appropriate to their resources and needs. Through project assistance, India demonstrates its skills, technologies and HR capabilities. A number of bilateral projects are undertaken, notably in the fields of archaeological conservation, IT and Small

and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Feasibility studies and consultancy services are also carried out.

Deputation of Indian experts

Indian experts are deputed to friendly countries to assist in developmental activities. The experts study the problems and suggest solutions without disturbing local socio-economic and cultural environment.

Study tours

Undertaken at the request of ITEC partner countries. Specific areas of interest are identified and two-three week programmes are arranged during which delegates are taken to institutions, training centres and places of interest.

Gifts/ donations of equipment

The Government provides gifts/ donations to ITEC partner countries to assist in their developmental efforts. These gifts/ donations are usually in response to requests of these

friendly countries and the commitments made by the political leadership.

Aid for disaster relief

India supplies humanitarian aid like food grains, medicines and cash assistance to countries struck by natural disasters. To commemorate the programme, September 15 has been designated as ITEC Day. Indian Missions in ITEC/ SCAAP partner countries host a reception to celebrate the event. In many countries, ITEC alumni have formed friendship societies and interact through FB.

Another cooperation programme, the Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan was started in 1950 to provide technical assistance to Colombo Plan countries. India provides comprehensive and integrated training to participants from Asian member countries to enhance administrative and technical capabilities through HRD. The Ministry of External Affairs has been entrusted with the administration of the TCS of Colombo Plan since April 2010. India offers 500 slots for training in India at 26 centres of learning covering diverse disciplines keeping in mind the needs of Colombo Plan countries.

Civilian Training Programme

During 2012-13, over 8,000 civilian training slots under ITEC/ SCAAP were allotted to 161 developing countries in areas of interest and advantage to them. The Civilian Training Programme, with 47 institutions on the panel, conducted around 280 courses, primarily short-term, for working professionals in a diverse range of skills and disciplines. Training was imparted to government officials and others in finance and accounts, audit, banking, education, planning and administration, parliamentary studies, crime records, textiles, rural electrification, tool design... In addition, general courses pertaining to rural development, SMEs and entrepreneurship development attracted many participants.

India provides comprehensive and integrated training to participants from Asian member nations of Colombo Plan

Special courses

At the request of ITEC/ SCAAP partner countries, special courses were conducted including hands-on training of one Armenian surgeon of thoracic surgery at LRS Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases, New Delhi; special course on election management principles and practices at IIDEM, New Delhi; special course on urban infrastructure management for Bhutan's Municipal Engineers at the HSMI, New Delhi and more.

Technical Cooperation Scheme (TCS) under Colombo Plan

The Colombo Plan for Cooperative and Economic Social Development in Asia and the Pacific is a regional inter-government organisation established in 1951 to enhance



economic and social development of the countries. As part of the South-South Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan, the Government started TCS to provide technical assistance to 18 countries of the Colombo Plan.

It was transferred to the Ministry of External Affairs from April 1, 2010 from the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. During 2012-13, 500 training slots were allocated for Colombo Plan member countries. This included 90 slots placed at the disposal of the Colombo Plan Secretariat.

Defence Training

Defence training in the three wings of the Defence Services continue to be popular with defence establishments in partner countries. During 2012-13, 1,500 defence training slots were allocated to partner countries. The courses were both general and special and included security and strategic studies, defence

management, counter insurgency and jungle warfare, as also foundation courses for young officers in the three services.

Projects and project-related activities

A number of bilateral projects were undertaken in archaeological conservation; Information and Computer Technology and Small & Medium Enterprises. The focus was on setting up of requisite physical infrastructure and capacity building to ensure long-term sustainability.

Main projects under implementation:

- (i) Cambodia: Conservation and restoration of Ta Prohm temple.
- (ii) Lao PDR: Conservation and restoration at Wat Phou by ASI.
- (iii) Syria: Initial training of two years at the ICT Centre, Damascus, has been completed.
- (iv) Grenada: The ICT Centre was





inaugurated in 2011 and a C-DAC expert started training here.

(v) Vietnam: India-Vietnam Advance Resource Centre in Information and Communication Technology (ARC-ICT) was inaugurated in 2011. C-DAC experts assisted course delivery by Vietnamese experts trained in India.

(vi) Zimbabwe: Last phase of on-the-job training to Zimbabweans for the SMEs project started in 2007 and completed in 2012.

(vii) Indonesia: Last phase of on-the-job training for the Vocational Training Centre in construction sector work in Aceh, Indonesia, was completed in 2012.

(viii) Dominican Republic: The IT Centre at Santiago, Dominican Republic, was inaugurated in 2011. Training in progress.

(ix) Maldives: An eight-storey building of India Maldives Friendship Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies has been constructed in Male.

Deputation of experts

At the request of governments and

international organisations, 26 experts in civilian and defence fields were sent on

deputation to advise and provide expertise in areas including IT, auditing, legal affairs, agriculture, pharmacology, statistics and demography, public administration and textiles. The services have been availed by Laos, Malaysia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Uganda.

The services of defence teams have been availed by Laos, Mauritius, Malaysia and Trinidad & Tobago

Aid for Disaster Relief

- India rendered immediate relief assistance to countries affected by natural calamities.
- Relief assistance in cash or kind donations were rendered to Republic of Congo, Libya, Bangladesh, Fiji, Syria and Myanmar.

Feasibility studies

A feasibility study for setting up of ICT Resource Centre at Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science & Technology (NM-AIST) at Arusha in Tanzania was carried out by C-DAC.



India-Sri Lanka cement *their historic ties*

From housing to humanitarian aid and medical supplies to agricultural implements, Indian Government is going all out to help people in Sri Lanka return to normal life as quickly as possible

words | Vinit Wahi

With nearly three-decade long armed conflict between Sri Lanka forces and LTTE ending in 2009, the focus at subsequent bilateral exchanges between India and Sri Lanka at various levels has shifted to implementation of developmental assistance projects for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the island country which has helped cement the bonds of friendship between the two nations though irritants like Tamil fishermen being shot by Lankan army remain.

That the two sides want to carry their over 2,500-year-old historic ties forward became evident yet again when India abstained from a UN Human Rights Council resolution in Geneva calling for a probe into alleged war crimes by Sri Lanka. India maintained that the resolution ignores the efforts at reconciliation being done by Sri Lanka in the predominantly Tamil north including organising elections. We, in India, are concerned that the resolution has the

potential to hinder the efforts of the country rather than contribute constructively to its efforts and hence, inadvertently complicate the situation.

Since the end of the armed conflict saw the emergence of a major humanitarian challenge with nearly 300,000 Tamil civilians housed in camps for IDPs, it is here that the Indian Government decided to take the Herculean task in its hands to help these people return to normal life. India's immediate humanitarian aid to IDPs included supply of 2.5 lakh family relief packs, establishment of an emergency medical unit which treated over 50,000 people, supply of over one million roofing sheets and four lakh bags of cement for constructing temporary housing and provision of 95,000 packs of agricultural implements.

The Indian Government is now focussing on housing for IDPs. During the Lankan president Mr M Rajapaksa visit to India in 2010, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh had announced that India would support

We, in India, are concerned that the resolution has the potential to hinder the efforts of the country rather than contribute constructively to its efforts





a programme to reconstruct 50,000 houses in Lanka. Accordingly, a pilot project involving construction of 1,000 houses was launched in November 2010 and completed in July 2012. An MoU was inked with Sri Lanka on the modalities of implementation of the remaining 49,000 houses. The second phase, involving construction and repair of 43,000 units in northern and eastern provinces, was launched in October 2012. In fact, this project worth ₹1,372 crore is one of the largest grant assistance projects implemented by the Government outside India. As many as 10,184 houses under the owner-driven model were completed in the northern province during 2013. The target is to complete construction by 2015.

Sri Lanka is one of the major recipients of development credit given by India. Under a line of credit of \$167.4 million, the tsunami-damaged Colombo-Matara rail link has been repaired and upgraded. Another line of credit of \$800 million for track laying and supply of rolling stock to support construction of Medawachchiya to Madhu, Madhu to Talaimannar, Omanthai to Pallai, Pallai to Kankesanthurai railway lines and setting up of signalling and telecommunications systems in

northern Sri Lanka is already operational. The completion of work undertaken under this line of credit is expected later this year.

India is involved in projects for renovation of Palaly Airport, Kankesanthurai Harbour, construction of a Cultural Centre in Jaffna, interconnection of electricity grids between the two nations, construction of a 150-bed hospital in Dickoya and setting up a coal power plant in Sampur as a joint venture between National Thermal Power Corporation and Ceylon Electricity Board. India continues to assist development projects in areas like education, health, transport connectivity, small and medium enterprise development and training in many parts of the country through its grant funding.

India's External Affairs Minister Mr Salman Khurshid, who visited Jaffna last October, had reiterated India's commitment to assisting the affected people in their endeavours

for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Our belief is that these initiatives would provide a substantial fillip to the local economies on both sides. As the minister put it, an MoU was signed to provide technical assistance to support the 10-year national plan for a trilingual Sri Lanka which, "we believe is an important

India continues to assist a large number of smaller development projects in areas like education, health, transport connectivity, small and medium enterprise development



Left: Mr Salman Khurshid at the IPKF Memorial in Colombo during his official visit to Sri Lanka in October 2013 and below left: the External Affairs Minister of India distributing certificates to the beneficiaries of the Indian Housing project in Northern Province of Sri Lanka



initiative to promote harmony and national reconciliation between various linguistic communities in Sri Lanka”.

The minister reiterated India’s commitment in pursuing the full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Lankan Constitution and building upon it, to achieve a meaningful devolution of powers. This amendment created provincial councils in Lanka and also made Sinhala and Tamil as the official languages of the country and English as the link language.



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India aspires to build *future Africa*

With US\$ 150 billion worth of potential business opportunities in Africa by 2025, India aims to turn around the continent towards economic progress riding on its strong bilateral relations with the African nations

words | Sanjeev Bhar



Mr Chandrajit Banerjee, director general, CII; Dr Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Prime Minister, The Kingdom of Lesotho; Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India; Mr Sanjay Kirloskar, CMD, Kirloskar Brothers Ltd during the inauguration of the exhibition at the 10th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership on March 9, 2014 in New Delhi

BRICS (Britain, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is an important block to talk about economic development and progression of each country through mutual cooperation. But India's scope lies much beyond South Africa when the focus is on the African continent. It offers a huge opportunity with an estimated GDP expected to grow to US\$ 5.3 trillion by 2025 from US\$ 2.1 trillion at present. The opportunities are

waiting to be explored by the Indian business fraternity as India awaits to play a game-changer role providing a shot in the arm to its economic wheel. Many aspects favour this brewing expectation as India-Africa share proximity and cultural affinity.

India has strong relations with the continent and makes a perfect ally who can offer self-reliance to African nations. There is a history of Indian Government agencies and corporates contributing immensely

to Africa's manufacturing sector through direct investments, effective knowledge and skill transfers. Africa, to progress into the next development level, can rely on India which can perfectly offer its proven expertise. A decade back, India witnessed the phase that Africa is going through. Thus India is an ideal partner to nurture their business goals in international trade. Africa, too, is welcoming Indian ideologies and understanding.

In March 2014, during the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership, Rajat Gupta, director, McKinsey & Co, remarked, "India contributes 6.5% (US\$ 6.4 billion) of Africa's total FDI inflows (US\$ 1,013 billion) preceded by USA, UAE, France and UK." And that there is far more scope for India to invest in Africa with 'n' number of sectors. By 2025, India will stand at US\$ 150 billion worth of business opportunities in Africa. Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, said that the 21st century will be the century of India, Asia and Africa. He said India-Africa partnership is 'distinct and different', exemplifying the spirit of South-South Cooperation. "India

has committed over US\$ 10 billion to Africa for infrastructural and development projects since the holding of the first and second India Africa Forum Summit meetings in 2008 and 2011, and is partnering in establishing 70 pan-African and regional institutions across Africa." He made a special mention of the Buyers Credit, introduced by his ministry to support Indian companies' investments.

At the Conclave, the Republic of Congo was the 'focus country' and its senior minister, Charge of Industry, Isidore Mvouba, talked about Government of India and Indian industry's role in his country's rural electrification, urban transportation and food quality control projects along with other industries. He pinpointed sectors like agriculture and agro-processing, mining, oil, tourism and financial services as areas where Indian investments could make a big difference. To take the relation between the two countries to a different level, the president of the Republic of Congo, Mr Denis Sassou Nguesso,

will pay a state visit to India this year.

CII and McKinsey released a report, 'Joining hands to unlock Africa's potential – A new Indian industry-led approach to

India has committed over US\$ 10 billion to Africa for infrastructural and development projects since the holding of the first and second India Africa Forum Summit



Dr Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Prime Minister, The Kingdom of Lesotho; Mr Noel N Tata, chairman, CII Africa Committee and Managing Director, Tata International Ltd; Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and Ms Arancha Gonzalez, executive director, International Trade Centre at the inauguration ceremony of the exhibition during the Conclave



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2014



Africa'. It articulates Africa growing at an average of 5% during 2013-25, second only to Asia and Middle East. This is likely to open a plethora of investment opportunities for India.

Macro-economic factors also favour the move. First, in the last decade, African nations have witnessed stable political environment, drop in inflation, governance debt and exchange rate volatility. Second, these nations are building foundations for easy business activities – reforming business approach, telecom deregulation, tax cuts, power sector reforms and more. Third, higher returns on FDI in comparison to other emerging economies has made it an attractive ground for investments that started to rise since 2005, majorly in the manufacturing and

In the last one decade, African nations have witnessed stable political environment, drop in inflation, governance debt and exchange rate volatility

service-oriented sectors. Fourth, consumer spending is expected to increase by US\$ 2.2 trillion by 2025 driven by an 80% increase in middle-class households to around 190 million. The report states that Africa has significant mineral reserves and a strong agri base waiting to be explored. An emerging market like Africa poses challenges for Indian companies. Usual infrastructure roadblocks, lack of skilled workforce and a young financial services sector are challenges to start with but African nations are taking keen interest to ease issues to bring in Indian companies. For example, Ms Maria Kiwanuka, Minister

of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda, was willing to leverage the present level of interaction



Left: The inaugural session of the Conclave on March 9, 2014 in New Delhi

Above: An exhibition during the Conclave

between India & Africa at the conclave. She said, “We have rationalised the licensing process by forming ‘Uganda Investment Authority’ which addresses the concerns of investors as a single point platform.” It is a semi-autonomous government agency operating in partnership with the private sector and Government of Uganda to drive national economic growth. So, countries are taking initiatives to curtail difficulties for investors in hope of attracting direct investments and participation. The Indian private sector is expected to profit by adopting a solutions partner approach in Africa. The continent could well become the base for globalisation for Indian companies but in this, there will be challenges like Africa’s fragmented

India will have to understand the needs of 55 different countries with each having its own culture, customs and behaviours

geography. India will have to understand the needs of 55 different countries, each having its own culture, customs and behaviour.

Nonetheless, there are many Indian companies who have set up their units and are upbeat about the proposition of investing in Africa. Sanjay Kirloskar, chairman & managing director, Kirloskar Brothers, feels Indian companies in Africa should engage in the training of local human resources. A trained local workforce is key to Africa’s sustained industrialisation. He points out that Indian AAA technologies have great relevance in Africa’s industrial sector. Manoj Kohli, managing director, Bharti Enterprises, cites three key challenges for investors in India – physical infrastructure bottlenecks, local currency



INDIAFRICA: A Shared Future participated in The Entrepreneurship Caravan organised by Educat and Rwanda Development Board in March 2014. The Caravan provided a great opportunity to promote the INDIAFRICA contests among the youth in Rwanda, Africa.

volatility, and shortage of skilled manpower. Companies that efficiently deal with these challenges have immense business opportunities in Africa. There are two key dimensions to development cooperation – effectiveness of the cooperation endeavour as to how every dollar and every rupee goes a longer distance, and its sustainability, feels Shishir Priyadarshi, director, Development Division, World Trade Organisation. The African countries will only benefit if India focusses on IT, medium-sized infrastructure – these would grow substantially in the coming years and develop the nations. In e-governance and banking alone, Africa is expected to grow from US\$ 30 billion to US\$ 90 billion by 2025 and would require 2.5 million additional

African nations will only benefit if India focusses on IT and medium-sized infrastructure as these would grow in coming years

IT and ITeS workforce. Over the next two years, 30 African cities are expected to be big consumers in the Indian markets. India's value proposition and Africa's need for development put some sectors in priority viz education, agriculture and infrastructure, pharma and healthcare, consumer goods, IT services, engineering consultancy and automotive-commercial vehicles. India can offer low cost innovation/operating model, highly-skilled manpower and entrepreneurship and service orientation approach. This is a moment when India is hedging its investments risk for future and going to Africa is best as other markets are getting saturated with low returns on investments. India's FDI in Africa has been US\$ 60 billion for 2003-13 and is estimated

AFRICA'S MACROECONOMIC OVERVIEW

	Africa today (2013)	Africa tomorrow (2015)	India today (2013)
GDP (nominal)	US\$ 2.1 trillion	US\$ 5.3 trillion	US\$ 1.9 trillion
Consumer spending (nominal)	US\$ 1.3 trillion	US\$ 3.6 trillion	US\$ 1.1 trillion
Working age population	618 million	845 million	822 million
Cities with >1 million people	54*	103	51*
Households with discretionary Income	108 million	194 million	197 million
Mobile phone users	815 million	1,141 million	873 million

*The latest data available is for the year 2010 SOURCE: IHS Economics; C-GIDD; McKinsey Global Institute; Cityscope 2.2; Business Monitor International; McKinsey analysis



Students avail of mobile internet service in the ICT Bus during The Entrepreneurship Caravan in Rwanda, Africa

to escalate to US\$ 100 billion for 2013-25. Therefore, India should raise its bar of offering a sustainable growth to African nations. At the moment India has a substantial ground in its favour that it has built over the last decade and economists believe this is the best time for India to indulge in Africa's development story in the making.

INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Under ITEC, a large number of professionals in Africa have been trained in diverse fields. Alok Kumar Sinha, JS (DPA-I), Ministry of External Affairs, says, "In addition, special programmes have been organised at the request of various countries in specific areas of interest. In the recent past, we have been developing institutions of excellence in African countries. Two important strands have been added to the capacity building initiatives – the extension of concessional lines of credit to developing countries, particularly in Africa, which would help them to import goods and services from India and undertake projects of infrastructure development, and building capacity in accordance with the development priorities identified by the recipient countries. Mozambique and Ethiopia are the largest recipients of the Lines of Credit from India. The third strand of the development partnership initiative is project assistance."

Strides towards *world peace*

To commemorate the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on May 29, we showcase glimpses of India's peacekeeping efforts across the globe

words | Sumantha Rathore



Whenver peace has ceased to exist in any part of the world, Indian troops have ensured the hope of harmony is not quashed.

Out of 65 peacekeeping missions of United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO), 40 have witnessed participation of over a lakh of Indian army and police personnel. In April 2012, over 8,000 Indian personnel were assisting UNPKOs at nine locations across

the globe. India is, at present, contributing 7,837 peacekeepers to the UN force, according to January 2014 UN figures. Officially, India is the world's third-largest contributor of UN peacekeepers.

The first deployment of Indian troops was in 1950 in Korea when India had sent paramedical troops and custodian forces to guard prisoners of war and cater to victims. Indians then participated in several peacekeeping missions in Middle East, Congo,

Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia-Eritrea. The troops have ensured that in post-war situations, people get services like housing, sanitation and food. In fact, the first all-women contingent to be deployed in a harmony-building UN mission was from India. The all-women Formed Police Unit was deployed in Liberia in 2007 to prevent violence against women due to the increasing reports of women being exploited by male peacekeepers in post-war zones. The women who participated in this mission inspired other nations to send all-women contingents. The Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Corps (EME) has been working consistently in UN missions as an integral

The 211 EME Field Workshop Company was the first unit to take part on foreign soil in any of the peacekeeping force in 1961

part of the Indian contingents which are operating as UN peacekeeping forces. The 211 EME Field Workshop Company was the first unit to take part on foreign soil in any peacekeeping force in 1961. Another laurel came when a stamp was issued in 2004 to commemorate Indian soldiers' participation in world peace missions. But we have paid a heavy price for restoring peace world over. More than 160 Indian peacekeepers have laid down their lives serving in various UN peacekeeping operations.

UN ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION:

This mission was spread across three phases: 1988-91, 1991-95, 1995-97. The first phase started in January 1989 during



UN Photo/ Martine Perret

Indian peacekeepers serving with United Nations Mission In South Sudan (UNMISS), performing a night drill in Akobo, Jonglei state, South Sudan
Facing page: (Left) A member of the Indian battalion of the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) patrols the newly-installed operating base (Right) UNMISS peacekeepers on a short duration patrol Indian Military Contingent

the civil war in Angola, to ensure withdrawal of Cuban troops. Other two were follow-up missions.

UN MISSION IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA, 1995–2002: UNMIBH's mandate is to contribute to the establishment of the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina by assisting in reforming and restructuring local police, assessing the functioning of the existing judicial system and monitoring and auditing the performance of the police and agencies involved in maintaining law and order.

SUDAN, 2011-ONGOING: In April last year, five Indian army personnel were martyred in South Sudan during a UN peacekeeping mission when their 32-member convoy came under attack in Gurmuck in the violence-trapped state of Jonglei. There were around 2,200 army personnel comprising two battalions, one in Jonglei and the other in Malakkal, on the border with Sudan in July 2011.

UN OPERATION IN SOMALIA II, 1993-95: In the second phase of peace restoring initiatives of UN in Somalia, 28,000 personnel including 20,000 troops and 8,000 logistic and civilian staff were deployed from India, Pakistan, Egypt and Canada. From India, 66 Independent Infantry Brigade comprising personnel from Bihar, Mahar, 2 JAK Rifles and 3 Mechanised Infantry 7 Cavalry participated in the mission.

UN YEMEN OBSERVATION MISSION 1963-64: When civil war erupted in North Yemen in 1962 because the country separated from Egypt, UN set up this mission to ensure the war is confined to Yemen and not become an international event as Saudi Arabia and Egypt joined in by 1963. UNYM was assigned with the duty. Though the war ended within a year, the mission continued operations to prevent



Peacekeepers serving with the Indian military contingent of the UNMISS conduct a foot patrol of the market area in Pibor, Jonglei state, South Sudan

violent outbreaks and ensure Saudi Arabia and Egypt disengaged in the war in the manner promised.

CONGO: Indian peacekeepers have been working relentlessly in Congo for several years now to ensure that peace returns to the country tormented by the militia. The Indian contingency in Congo once comprised of four infantry battalions, three fighter jet contingents, 11 general purpose helicopters and four reconnaissance helicopters. Not only did they secure the nation with 27x7 patrolling but also with basic amenities like water, sports and resettling orphans. As a result 150 personnels from four Infantry Battalions, the Aviation contingent, Level II hospitals and Military observers were decorated by MONUC Force Commander Lieutenant General Babacar Gay.



UN Photo/Martine Perret

Indian military contingent ensure security for a human rights monitoring field visit of the Mission in Jonglei state, South Sudan



UN Photo/ Eric Kanalsstein

CONTRIBUTION IN MOTION

Blue Berets, a five-minute documentary by Ashok Raina, briefly documents the participation of Indian army and police personnel in UN peacekeeping missions. This film pans on the approach, acceptability, professionalism and importance of Indian peacekeepers in the missions. It starts with a narration on how have the Indian troops participated and excelled in the UN peacekeeping missions. Then it explains, through logic and data, why Indian peacekeepers have become phenomenally important to peacekeeping missions.



Muzaffar Ali listens on as renowned Sufi music exponent Abida Parveen sings a couplet

In search of *spirituality*

While the essence of Sufism has always existed in India, it speaks the universal language of love and beauty

words | Muzaffar Ali

Sufism is a process of self-realisation, both internal and external. You connect with the contemporary world around, see its conflicts and imbalances and simultaneously, watch it mirror within your soul as a reflection of divine grace. And through this process reach an equilibrium that negates the ego to feel the essence of beauty that joins the human being with the ultimate creative force. Sufism, to me, is this realisation. It illuminates one through the lives of saints, their messages and poetry of surrender and abandon.

My book, *A Leaf Turns Yellow - The Sufis of Awadh*, is the ultimate message of a mystic. It is about death before dying. The mystic lives like a leaf dismembered from the tree and awaiting its final journey into nothingness.

It is about the saints that stalked the soil of Awadh and made it fragrant forever through a culture of co-existence and compassion. Awadh is ruled by the heart. People accept people of the heart as gods who abdicate power. This is the land of Ram. The land glorifies those who are not in the rat race, who foreground human values and spirituality, not just religiosity. When people visit Awadh, they experience

this invisible aura surrounding the land that gets reflected on faces. A series of well-chosen subjects define this rare phenomenon so special to this soil and shares its beauty with other parts of India, the subcontinent and

the world. It builds bridges of understanding and creates a world without boundaries and oneness of the human race. The tragedy of our existence is that we are losing ourselves to alien influences which take away our fragrance that pulls the world towards us. In fact, it will be the rest of the world that will accept us before we are accepted by our own soil. But our aim should be local. It's said Sufism originated in the 9th-10th centuries. As Islam is all about what preceded Islam so is Sufism. Islam through the exemplary lives of the Prophet Mohammad and the sharer of his divine secrets,

Hazrat Ali, helped Sufism evolve into its present form.

The spirit of Sufism always existed in India. It was the fragrance of love that was sensed by the Prophet of Islam. There is a *Hadith* (saying of the Prophet) in which the Prophet said that it preceded Islam from the direction of Hindustan and so did Sufism. Many Sufis belong to the family of the Prophet and have

***Sufism's future
is the perennial
celebration of
truth, unity and
submission.***

***Like all
celebrations,
it seeks no
exposure or
visibility. Its
essential spirit
is to remain
a secret***



The customary Sema dance is a form of meditation



An artistic interpretation of an Arabic letter or word that brings the Sufi farther along his path to God when he remembers or repeats it in his devotions

lived up to this legacy of being in quest of the source of this love, and in this search, found their way to India. This is all about the spiritual quest which is opposite of temporal power that Sufis negate. In fact, when Islam became an empire and Husain rejected the earthly splendour of the then Caliph of Islam, Yazid, he made a plea to be allowed to go to India. His request was turned down and he was martyred in the battle of Karbala (It took place on Muharram 10, in the year 61 AH of the Islamic calendar – October 10, 680 – in Karbala, situated in present-day Iraq).

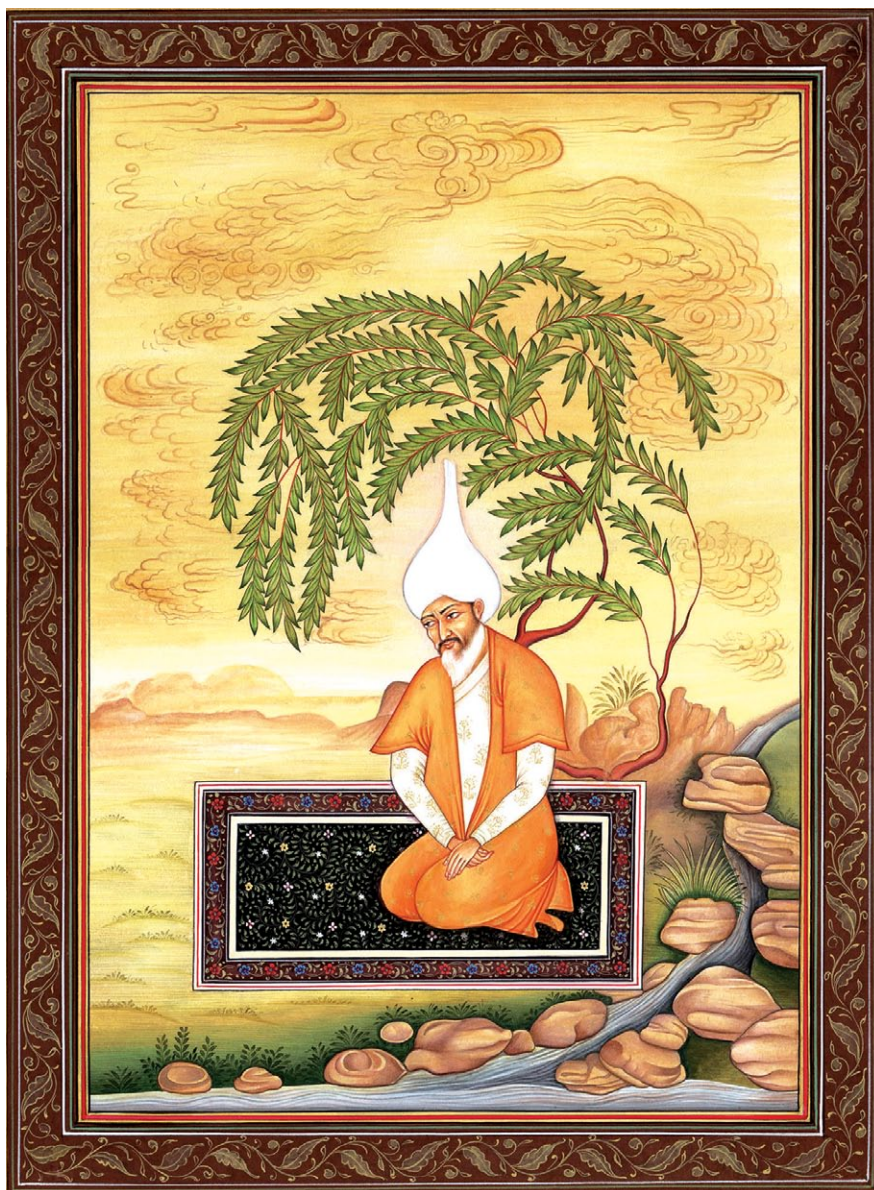
Syed Ali Hujwari was the first Sufi to step on Indian soil. Followed by Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti who wrote:

*'Deen ast Husain, deen panah ast Husain
Sar daad na daad dar dast e Yazid
Haqqa ke binaye la illah ast Husain'*

*'Husain is the faith,
the refuge of belief
Who gave his head but did not give his nod to Yazid
And Husain became the everlasting testimony
That there is no God but God.'*



An artist's impression of the whirling dervishes



The Sufi, water colour painting on paper by artist Kailash Raj

Sufism's future is the perennial celebration of truth, unity and submission. Like all celebrations, it seeks no exposure or visibility. Its essential spirit is to remain a secret. Its power lies in drawing towards it the true seeker, the lover in each human regardless of his caste, creed and religious beliefs. It appeals to the Indian essence and makes it instantly universal. This is its true character. Therefore, in today's day and age, it has the wings to fly beyond the realms of imagination.

I started Jahan-e-Khusrau Festival of Sufi Music in 2001. It evolved out of an inner quest and to celebrate the poetry of the mystics. Displaced from the vale of Kashmir and reaching Delhi, I realised the hidden truth of the place. I found the futility of political power play. Like Khusrau I felt both in and out of it. I had seen the serenity of Kashmir become a victim of this game. Soon afterwards, Awadh and all of India were prey to such machinations. I began to realise there was an inner world of ecstasy of helpless people that needs to be discovered and given a form. And that was Jahan-e-Khusrau, a landmark of the soul in the journey of our lives.

This year, it has had a setback due to political uncertainties. I'm sure it will rise in an even grander and bigger than ever before as it has taken roots in the hearts of people. Above all, it celebrates the splendour of the soul.

The author is an Indian filmmaker, fashion designer, poet and artist



Abida Parveen performs at the Jahan-e-Khusrau Sufi music festival



Persian astrolabe by Khalil Muhammad ibn Hasan 'Ali carries the Qur'anic Throne verse



Sufi whirling is a form of *dhikr* – remembrance of God



Whirling dervish dance at Jahan-e-Khusrau festival of Sufi music



SUFISM'S MYSTICAL JOURNEY

According to English scholar Reynold A Nicholson, Sufism represents the mystical spiritualism of Islam in three chief languages: Turkish, Arabic and Persian. For many Indian scholars, Sufism represents the mystical expression of all mankind.

Islam was first introduced to the Malabar Coast of India by Arab sea traders, then travelled to Sind, and later Multan in southern Punjab by Arab conquerors. In 1035, Sheikh Ali Hujwiri, venerated as Data Ganj Bakhsh (Giver of Unlimited Treasure), reached Lahore from Ghazna in Afghanistan as divinely commanded. He wrote the first known manual to define Sufism, the *Kashf al-Mahjub*, with material drawn from Arabic sources in Persian. Thus,

began the flowering of Indian Sufism and the cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices between Islamic Sufis, Nath yogis, Buddhists and Hindu mystics.

The Chishti Order of Sufis was essentially Indian, springing from the town of Chisht in modern Afghanistan which was an eminent Sufi centre by the end 9th century. According to some accounts, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti (regarded as the foremost preacher of Sufism) was also led to Lahore in a vision. The Khwaja was fond of devotional music, Qutubuddin Kaki (Muslim Sufi mystic) having established the practice of *sama* in Delhiites.

Thus, music and mystical poetry united from the beginning of Sufism, which acknowledged the innate spirituality of Indian music.

Courtesy: *Hu: The Sufi Way*, Volume 4, The Sufis of the Punjab



The new face of *Indian theatre*

This artistic genre is all set to steal the limelight by embracing modern trends in India

words | Nadira Zaheer Babbar

In the 1970s, when I passed out from the National School of Drama (NSD) in India's capital Delhi, doing professional theatre was not well-paying. Alongside, we had to do different jobs to survive. Sometimes there used to be more people on the stage than the audience in the entire hall! Things have changed over the years. Today, people not only love watching stage plays but also encourage and appreciate theatre groups. Getting even

three bookings a year in a popular performance space is pretty difficult now.

Thousands of people come to Mumbai in West India every day to become actors and the only way they can showcase their talent is through theatre. In fact, theatre actors often end up forming their individual groups here. The theatre scene in Mumbai is very vibrant. People are enthusiastic and patronise theatre passionately. There is never a dearth



A Midsummer Night's Dream organised by British Council India explored a whole new theatre language



“

There are two aspects to the growth of Indian theatre – popularity and quality of work. Increasing theatre festivals across the country, long queues outside halls, cutting edge and experimental work – it's heartening to see all this”

Kirti Jain, veteran thespian and former director of India's National School of Drama



A glimpse of the play *Yeh Hai Bombay Meri Jaan*, written and directed by Nadira Zaheer Babbar

of audience in Mumbai. This is not so in Delhi. Delhi theatre lacks public patronage. But one distinct advantage Delhi has, is Bharat Rang Mahotsav. Organised annually by the NSD, it brings theatre groups from around the world to Delhi. It is at this time that theatre halls go houseful.

Smaller cities have a different tale to tell. Significantly, theatre is very popular there. Recently, I got an award from a theatre group in Raipur (Chhattisgarh). This was conferred to me by an 84-year-old former bank employee (he instituted it in the memory of his departed wife, a theatre-person). During the function

the man spoke at length about the growth of theatre in Raipur which gave us an insight into the theatre scene in the city. In fact, we also presented our play on the occasion. The theatre was packed with an enthusiastic audience; many who didn't get tickets were waiting outside. This shows that mindsets are truly changing.

One more thing has changed with time, and that is respect for theatre. Here, I would also give credit to myself. Whenever we are called for a performance, I have insisted on good transportation arrangements, good food and clean and decent hotels and vehicles for my team. Earlier, these facilities were an exception but now these

Organisers are now ready to provide the best of facilities to theatre people as well, just like they do for a television star



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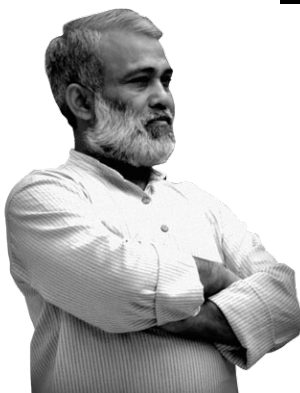
Theatre is becoming a popular weekend entertainment option, performing spaces are improving... It's almost a renaissance”

Vir Das, Indian film actor and standup comedian



A scene from *Othello* directed by Rosten Abel

“



Indian theatre is vibrant and energetic today. The last 20 years have seen a sea change, with experiments galore. We now perform to packed auditoria. There is a greater social acceptability; girls are participating with family support. Earlier, theatre was a hobby but is now a strong career option which allows one to follow one's passion. It has been introduced as a subject in schools too”

Arvind Gaur, veteran Indian theatreperson



Famous Indian writer Munshi Premchand's play *Gaban* directed by Surendra Sharma at Shri Ram Centre auditorium in New Delhi, India



A scene from the play *Yeh Hai Mumbai Meri Jaan*

have become a norm. Organisers are now ready to provide the best of facilities to theatre people as well, just like they do for a television star.

Theatre is now part and parcel of people's lives across India. Also, it is no longer considered a taboo for women. Some time back, we had gone for a performance to Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. The girl who was in-charge of the costume changes had to leave due to a family emergency. There was just one hour to go for the performance. I asked a few old students based in the city for options and within minutes they arranged another girl, one who understood our time-bound requirements (in which she also had to manage costume changes in three just seconds) and did a great job.

That girl left after 10 at night, only after we had wound up. And she was all alone, there was no one chaperoning her. Gone are the days when fathers and brothers used to accompany young girls who worked in theatre and other such jobs!

The Indian theatre scenario has truly changed. Perhaps, the sheer thrill of a live performance has hooked one and all!

Theatre is no longer considered a taboo for women in India. Gone are the days when fathers and brothers used to accompany girls who worked late at night

Nadira Zaheer Babbar is a well-known Indian theatreperson

Compiled by Neharika Mathur Sinha



Download 'ARplay' on your iPhone/Android device & scan this page to watch a related video

Come, wander, *experience*

Hindu Nectar – Wanderings In Sacred India, a Public Diplomacy initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs, is a journey undertaken by Akanksha Joshi to show what Hinduism is all about

India entices people the world over to come, live and discover itself. The film *Hindu Nectar - Wanderings In Sacred India* by Akanksha Joshi is a daughter's conversation with her parents, a journey to discover the eternal and the universal.

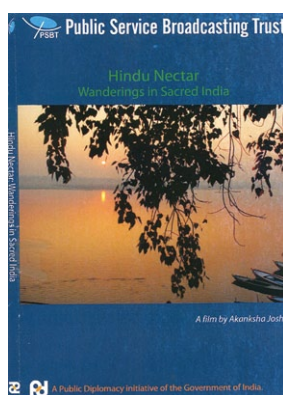
The film begins with Joshi's arrival on the banks of holy river Ganges. Showing the scenic beauty of India, the 49-minute film is a journey into the heart of Indian spirituality woven with conversations with spiritual healers and common people.

Journeying from the Himalayas to peninsular India, through rivers, mountains, forests and caves, she meets many practitioners of Hindu religions from whom she tries to elicit the true meaning of Hinduism. Each conversation reveals the deep meanings of the rituals she has been

practicing all her life. And it is these meanings which she has been looking for, all her life.

The film is a daughter's attempt to understand the stories she has been told since her childhood, but what comes out is the essence of India. "The teachings of Vedas, written around 3000 BC, hold true even today," says Francisco who came to India from Spain 40 years back as a 20-year-old. He attributes his transformation and love for India to the *Bhagwad Gita* that he read when he was 15. "The most beautiful aspect of Hinduism is that there is no

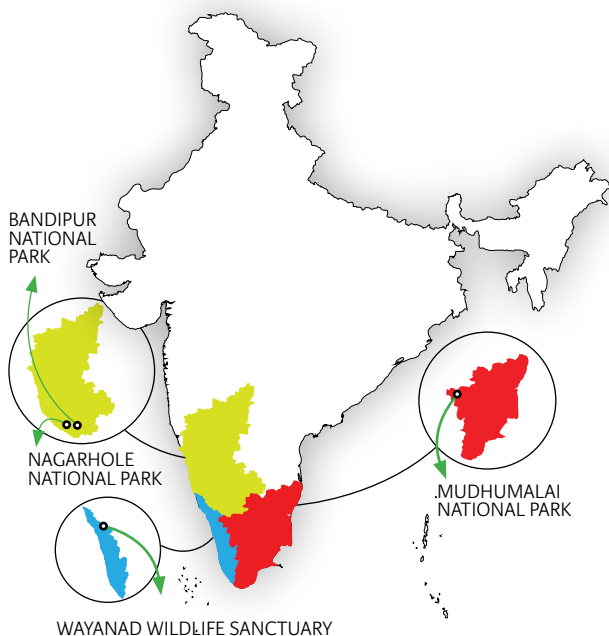
one book, no one God, no one practice. It embraces anything and everything," he says. Joshi is also the cinematographer and editor with Rajiv Mehrotra as its producer and commissioning editor and Tulika Srivastava as executive producer.





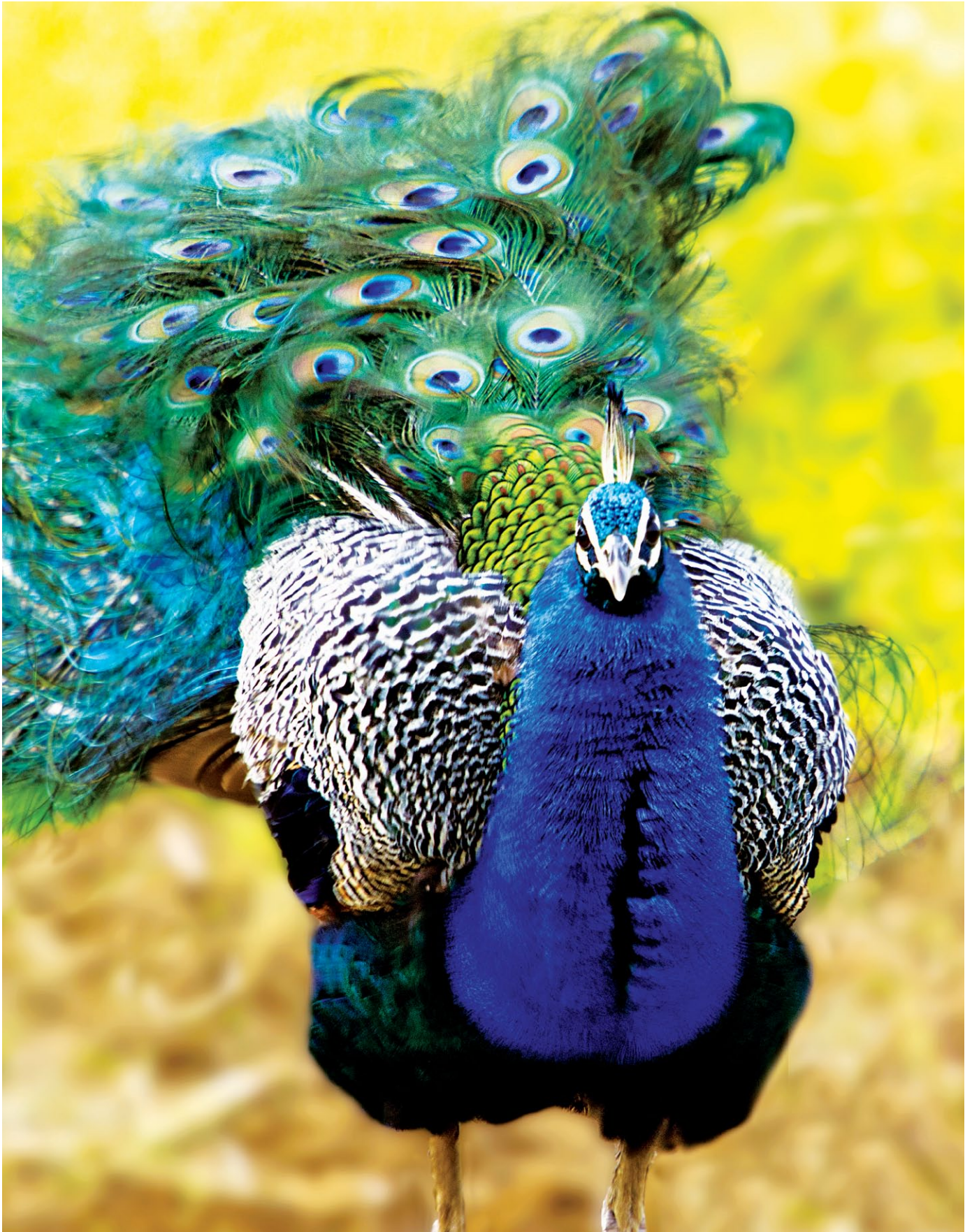
Great Hornbill's impressive size and colours have made it important in many tribal cultures and rituals in India

It's a wild, wild, *wild world*



Glimpses of fauna, some rare and some simply beautiful, from national parks and sanctuaries in Mudhumalai, Nagarhole, Wayanad and Bandipur

Photographs | Ramakrishna Sreenivasan and Rishi Bajpai



The peacock, India's national bird, in all its splendour

SNAPSHOTS



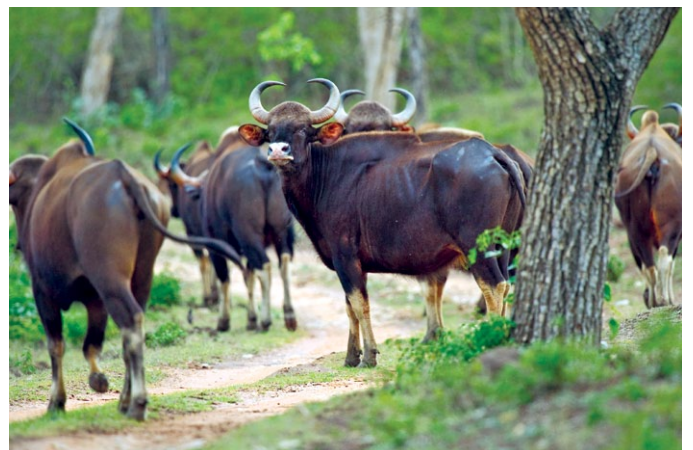
A leopard looks straight into the photographer's lens at Nagarhole



Majestic beauty: The Indian Tiger



Lion-tailed Macaques are found only in the southern Western Ghats



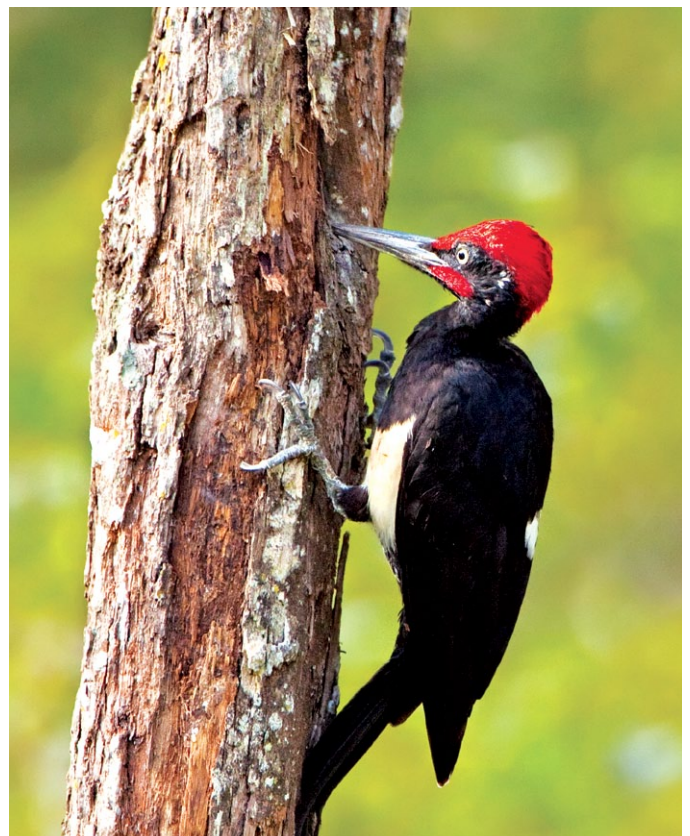
Gaur or the Indian Bison is the largest extant bovine



The omnivorous nocturnal large brown Flying Squirrel



Black and Orange Flycatcher is mostly found in high-elevation plateaus



White-bellied Woodpeckers like to nest in large dead trees next to rivers



The Ceylon Bay Owl is one of the rarest birds found in India



The grey-breasted laughing thrush feeds on flower nectar



Malabar Grey Hornbill has a loud cackling and laughing call



Nilgiri Pipit tends to fly into low trees when disturbed



The male Blue Roller loves to perform acrobats during breeding season



Spotted Deer or Chital is known for its grace and beauty



An Indian Elephant enjoys a stroll next to a river, its preferred habitat



Vibrantly coloured, the Shortwing is a medium-sized insectivorous bird

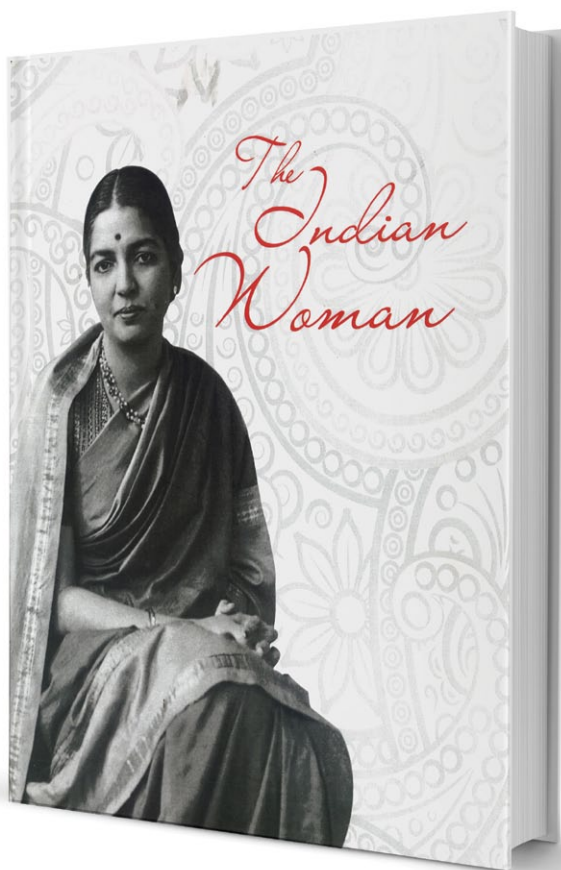


The Large Egret is distinguished by its yellow bill and black legs and feet

Of grit and *determination*

The Indian Woman, an iconoclastic book, captures the fascinating journeys of some of the most celebrated women of the country

words | Shovana Narayan



Perceptions about Indian women are diverse and paradoxical. Cultural ideas, symbols, norms and values of our heterogeneous Indian society play a significant role in the creation of this image. They also nurture differentiation of gender roles. She is Bharat Mata. She is the epitome of motherhood and the faithful wife. She has been considered 'most chaste' and 'most virtuous' by European scholars of the 19th century. Paradoxically, she enjoys a higher status in scriptures than in practical life. Equality of status, power and position that she enjoyed in ancient India nosedived in the succeeding medieval period. In real life, she is discriminated because of her sex. Many among her lot are denied education and employment opportunities by their own families. In pockets of the country, this child-bearing machine's status and security is ensured if she produces a male child. But she is also the victim of rape, battering and sexual harassment each day, despite legislation prohibiting such violence, common policing and workplace policies.

Against this background, it is the sheer will, grit, determination and courage of many women that has seen them break through the shackles of prejudiced mindsets



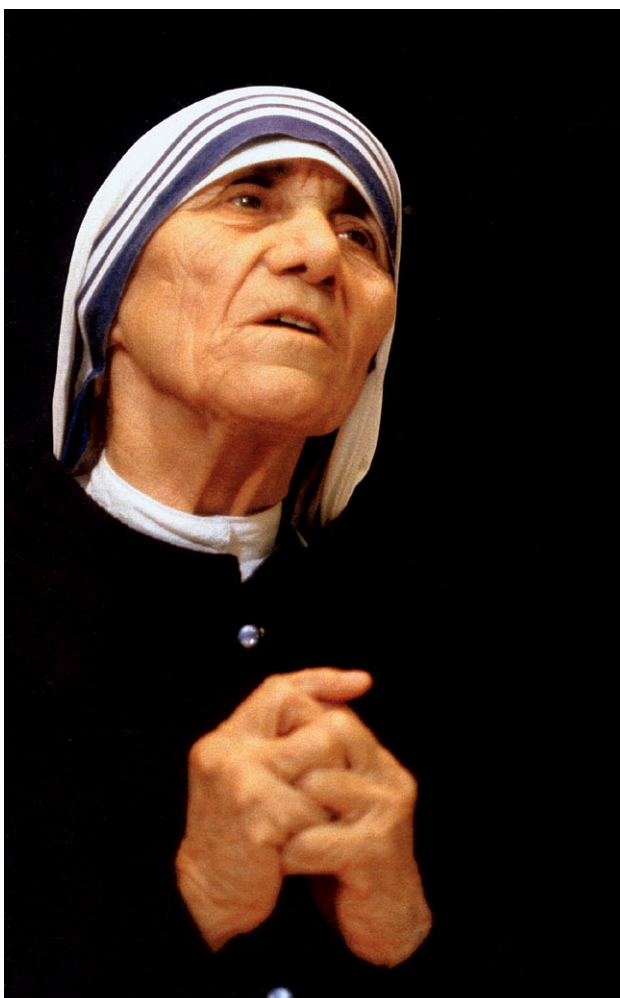
India's women achievers: singer Lata Mangeshkar, entrepreneur Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, banker Naina Lal Kidwai and boxer MC Mary Kom



Alisha Abdullah, India's fastest woman bike racer



Padma Bandopadhyay commanded the Air Force Medical Services. She created history by becoming the first woman Air Marshall in the world



Nobel laureate Mother Teresa

and economic disadvantages and carve a niche of their own. The book, *The Indian Woman*, a Public Diplomacy initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs and curated by Shobhit Arya and edited by Richa Anirudh, draws attention to the struggles of some women who did not look for concessions on gender or other related compassionate grounds and yet achieved great results. They set new benchmarks while competing shoulder to shoulder with men in their respective professions. Divided in three parts: I Am Every Woman, Every Woman Is Her and She Is In Every Woman, the book features 32 women (10 in part 1 and 11 in parts 2 and 3 each). Most women featured are well-known names whose contributions have been universally felicitated and honoured time and again. While recognising the fact that there are several achievers and pioneers among women in various other fields and that it is impossible to include them all, I feel it would have been of interest to be enlightened about the process of selection.

The three titles of the sub-chapters is a universal truth. What is equally true is the age old saying that 'person has to be in the right place at the right time!' Besides dogged



Lata Mangeshkar always sings barefoot as a mark of respect to the platform where she sings

determination, effort, sincerity and passion, it is equally true that opportunities should come their way and be recognised. The Festival of India in 1982 showcased Teejan Bai while the churning social environment in the wake of the Abolition of Devadasi Bill saw the efforts of Rukmini Devi Arundale, are just some examples. These could have been mentioned in the essays for they served as catalysts for their work.

The essays have been written in a lucid manner engaging the attention of the reader while being informative

The essays have been written in a lucid manner engaging the attention of the reader while being informative. They colour the personality of the subject sympathetically while intelligently steering clear of being indulgent. The book with captivating photographs has been well designed. The size and the good quality of paper and printing also need special mention. This book will be an inspirational guide for all, especially the youth.

The author, a well-known Kathak dancer, is a Padma Shri and Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee



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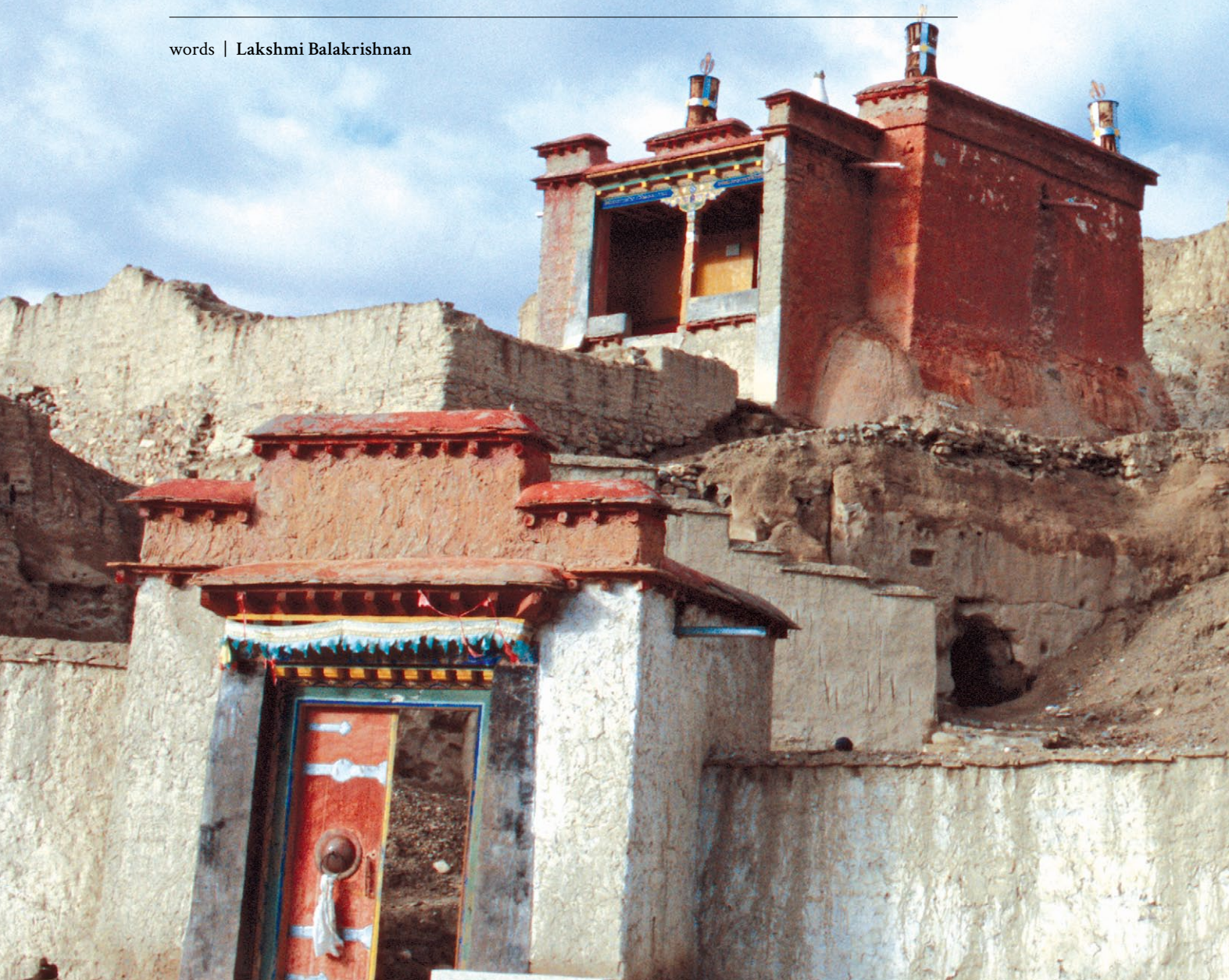


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Buddhist *footprints*

Through his documentary, *Indian Roots of Tibetan Buddhism*, Benoy K Behl traces the journey of this philosophy in India

words | Lakshmi Balakrishnan



Remains of the Guge Castle in Tsaparang, Tibet



Twenty three years after he first captured the majestic and magical paintings of Ajanta Caves in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra in 1991, scholar and art historian Benoy K Behl narrates the Buddhism story one more time. His documentary, *Indian Roots of Tibetan Buddhism*, is a Public Diplomacy initiative by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Scripted and directed by Behl, this documentary of just over 49 minutes, takes us on an engaging and epic journey that starts in Bodh Gaya in the state of Bihar and travels across the globe to trace the growth of Buddhism and its philosophy. The film covers a vast ground, beginning at Bodh Gaya and tracing the footprints of Buddhism to Nalanda, Sarnath, Karnataka to Spiti, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Tibet. The film, shot at all of these places, add to the visual appeal. Benoy is also the voice of the film, providing it the calm note it requires.

By providing a historical background and delving into the various schools of Buddhism, the documentary helps the viewer



Atisa mural in Tholing monastery, Western Tibet



Nalanda Monastic University, Bihar, India



An artwork at the Patna Museum in Bihar, India

watch Tibetan Buddhism in the context of the philosophies and its growth rather than in isolation. The historic University of Nalanda finds an important place in the documentary. Seen as the ancient seat of knowledge, Behl's effort connects the dots between the early days of Buddhism as practiced in India and the current practice of Tibetan Buddhism. As Benoy notes in the documentary, it was in Nalanda and its "vibrant intellectual thought and climate of discussion and debate" that such philosophies would be born.

The documentary captures the essence of the time and the rich exchange of knowledge that would have taken place in the universities of Nalanda, Vikramshila, Somapura and Odantpuri. This stress on Nalanda,

through the film, is perhaps not misplaced.

Experts including The Dalai Lama himself notes the importance that Tibetan monasteries have

The film covers a vast ground, beginning at Bodh Gaya and tracing the footprints of Buddhism to Nalanda and to Tibet

placed on the ancient school as it was here that they received their first teacher. One of the highlights of the film, though, are the interviews with The Dalai Lama and other Buddhist leaders. From basic Buddhist approach to India's contribution to Tibetan Buddhism, a lot has been covered here. The Dalai Lama sums this long standing relation with India, "We, Tibetans, are reliable *chelas* (disciples) of yours, our Indian gurus. In guru's land, Buddha dharma had lots of ups and downs and during

this period, we, your *chelas*, kept your knowledge intact through centuries. So our relationship is very unique."

Simply. *pristine*

At Radhanagar Beach in India's Andaman Islands, a traveller gets no time to breathe as he gets soaked in the natural beauty and underwater activities

words | Sutapa Mukerjee





Not only does Radhanagar casts a spell over you with emerald and indigo colours of the sea and soft powdery white sand, it transports you to a different world no sooner do you set foot here. Little wonder then that *Time* magazine declared it the best Asian beach in 2004, their ranking based on the quality and colour of the sand,

depth of the sea besides other parameters. Radhanagar Beach, also known as Beach No. 7 in the Havelock Island, is the largest of the islands which comprise Ritchie's Archipelago, a chain of islands to the east of Great Andaman in the Andaman Islands. It is not tough getting to one of the most talked about beaches in the world. Most visitors take a catamaran for Havelock at



Clockwise from top left: The beach provides delicious solitude; turquoise blue waters make Radhanagar Beach a soothing indulgence for travellers and the underwater world leaves one mesmerised

the Phoenix Bay Jetty. And it takes around an hour-and-a-half to reach the jetty at Havelock. This island is crescent-shaped and the sea appears like an endless shimmering green delicate chiffon laced with sparking white froth. Once there, time seems too short for the innumerable options this beach throws at you. While the sandy bottoms are great for swimming, the ones with coral

reefs are excellent for scuba diving, a rare combination indeed.

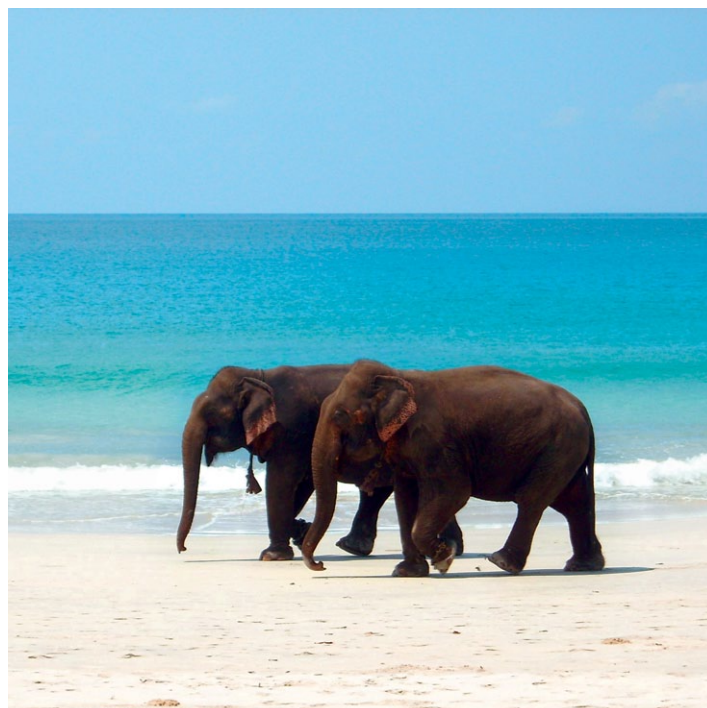
A dreamer can just sit at the seaside and plunge oneself in the serene beauty all around; swaying palms, forests with branches swooping down intermittently to kiss the warm water, sea shells punctuating the white stretch of sand and a few noisy sea-birds competing with parakeets. And



not this alone, hills spring up at a distance – the sight better than any on a painter’s canvas. You can choose to take a stroll along the beach, sit in a shady corner under a tree or read your favourite author, lazing around in a hammock. Most importantly, you need not be scared of sun burns at Radhanagar as there are plenty of trees all around to protect you.

For water sport-lovers, there are immense temptations. Almost each resort here proudly holds its own diving activities, though they share the same diving sites. They have professional divers to help the travellers fulfill their passion for snorkelling or scuba diving. These centres are certified and well stocked with the most sophisticated equipment and seasoned divers.





You do not miss all that much while snorkelling: The sea here gives you colourful and amazing sights of a variety of fish, algae and coral reef. The prices are more or less standardised. As for your safety, don't worry as there are a number of speed boats that the government has made mandatory to be stationed here to avoid any eventuality. The length of Havelock is endless while the breadth seems pleasingly stunted by the magnificent sea. There are many resorts and hotels to choose from, some are run by the government while others are private properties. Each of them is in a secluded area with a story of its own. Only one common element strings most of them together and that is the sea.

Those who are not great swimmers have ample length to wade into the sea feeling the soft baby powder-like sand below. An advice to all travellers – do not miss the sunset. The beauty of the sky and the sea is unparalleled. And boredom can never set in as you have to wait a bit long for the sun to set. Then there are coffee corners, excellent seafood to gorge on and several local garment and trinket shops in the vicinity. Besides, a stroll in the forests can be an exciting option, especially when you do not have to use your feet but sit lazily on the back of an elephant...

Diary of a princess

Princess Rajyashree Kumari of Bikaner in Rajasthan, India holds the distinction of being an Arjuna awardee at 16 for her shooting prowess. She's opened a museum in her palace where scholars from across the world come for research. She also undertakes social welfare activities and is the author of two books on Rajasthan royalty

words | Kavita Devgan

Princess Rajyashree Kumari was relaxing with her three pugs at her residence in India's capital city Delhi when I met her. Her love for animals and the fact that she is a big supporter of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is well known. In fact, when she saw the poor condition of animals housed in Rajasthan State Zoo at Bikaner in Rajasthan in 2008, she followed up with the authorities persistently till they agreed to shift them to a better place.

Shooting star

Daughter of Maharaja Dr Karni Singhji of Bikaner, Princess Rajyashree is an achiever in sports, with a successful stint as a shooter for India. She was born in a 'hunting-shooting family', her great grandfather and grandfather being keen shooters. Thanks to her father's encouragement, she began really young, at age six. Before being handed a gun, "I was taught to respect it," she says. At the age of seven, she already had her first championship win; India's National Air Rifle Championship (below 12 years





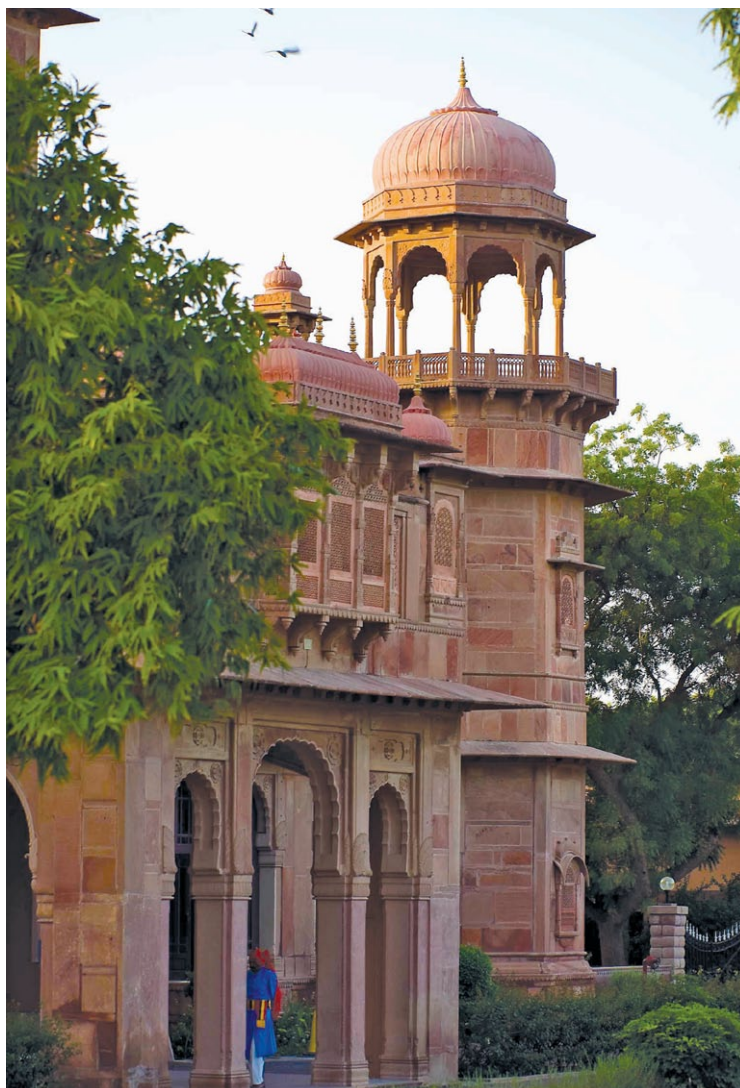
The princess stands next to a photograph of her father Maharaja Dr Karni Singhji of Bikaner in Rajasthan, India



The princess in royal finery



In traditional Indian ensemble



Lallgarh Palace in Bikaner in Rajasthan, India

category). This was just the beginning of a long sports career. She was declared “sportsperson of the year” and awarded the Government of India’s prestigious Arjuna Award (excellence in sports) in 1969 when she was only 16. “I enjoyed my shooting days as it gave my father pleasure and it was an honour to represent my country in the sport. Often I was the only girl competing, even in the international championships,” she recalls. Now that her sporting days are over, she is busy managing social welfare activities by virtue of being the CEO of a number of Trusts.

Saving history

Lallgarh Palace in Bikaner is close to her heart and she takes active interest in its refurbishment

and operations. She also looked after the construction of a new museum in the complex in 2007 and is responsible for setting up of the archival research section which houses Anup Sanskrit Library, old files and books where scholars from world over come for research. “There are valuable ancient Sanskrit documents there that were saved during Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb’s era by Maharaja Anup Singhji,” she shares. Getting the city on the air map is another priority; she’s been pursuing this with the Central Aviation Minister and state tourism ministers. She has also penned *The Maharajas of Bikaner* and *The Lallgarh Palace: Home of the Maharajas of Bikaner* – much admired editions that present an enchanting slice of history.



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