

Shikhar

Vol. 1 No. 4 2019

शिखर The India-ASEAN Connection



THE
NEXT
PHASE

inSp RENEUR 3.0

- ☯ India Elections: PM Modi's Plans
- ☯ Surbana Jurong CEO: Revving Up 'Operation India'
- ☯ International Day of Yoga 2019: Connecting with Common
- ☯ India at IMDEX ASIA & SIMBEX

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Nomita Dhar
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

India on the Move

In his address to the nation on Independence Day Prime Minister Modi, after his party's great win at the recent election in the country, said that India aims to be a five trillion dollar economy by 2025. He pointed out that "The target of nearly doubling the size of the Indian economy to \$5 trillion in five years may seem difficult but when we have in five years (of BJP rule) added \$1 trillion as compared to \$2 trillion size achieved in 70 years of independence, then this target is achievable." PM Modi, whose agenda is to make India a better place to do business, does not seem to want incremental progress, but feels a high jump is needed. He said that after the revocation of Article 370, the spirit of 'One Nation, One Constitution' has become a reality in India. "GST brought to life the dream of One Nation, One Tax. India has also achieved One Nation, One Grid in the energy sector. Arrangements have been made for One Nation, One Mobility Card. Today, India is talking about One Nation, One Election", he added further.

Investment in India continues to be a thrust area with the stability and policy continuity in rule of law and further economic reforms in India, as endorsed by the Indian Prime Minister, who is firmly at the helm of things again in his second term, with the landslide win of his party in the recent elections. A major thrust area is the financial sector. India's stressed assets are estimated at US\$250 billion in the banking sector. Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf highlighted how Singapore could potentially become a leading investor in India's stressed assets especially in the financial sector, rural development, a sector in which the government plans an investment of 25 trillion rupees (\$359 billion) in this area. Infrastructure and real estate (affordable housing) hold good as another potential area for investors. The changes in FDI policy will result in making India a more attractive FDI destination, leading to benefits of increased investments, employment and growth.

India and Singapore continue to engage on several fronts to cement their relationship and to jointly work together to bring the benefits that accrue to the larger ASEAN region— be it with regard to greater economic and trade ties, as discussed at the Singapore Symposium 2019 on the issue of 'India's Engagement with a Fast- Growing ASEAN', or the spin-off from India's participation in Asia's premier International Maritime Defence Exhibition & Conference (IMDEX) ASIA at the Singapore Maritime Expo or India's Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar's focus on the 12th India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue and of course, on a slightly lighter note, the importance of making yoga a part of one's life, as underpinned by the participation of about 7,500 Singaporeans in 200 sessions, over 130 locations, for a yoga session to commemorate the 5th International Day of Yoga (IDY 2019).

The diminishing number of tigers in the world continues to be of growing concern. India was one of the lead protagonists creating awareness for the conservation of the species at the Singapore Tiger Week meet, where it was suggested that Singapore could also play an important role along with India in this critical programme. Our focus appropriately is for visitors from Singapore and ASEAN to vacation this winter with tigers in some of India's finest Tiger Reserves.

Happy Reading!

Nomita Dhar
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Shikhar

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**PUBLISHER
& EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**
Nomita Dhar

EDITORIAL
Ranee Sahaney
Jenny Tan

DESIGN
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

**ADVERTISING
& MARKETING**
Swati Singh

PHOTOS
High Commission of India,
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SUN MEDIA PTE LTD
20 Kramat Lane
#01-02 United House
Singapore 228773

TEL: (65) 6735 2972 / 1907, 2986
FAX: (65) 6735 3114
E-MAIL: admin@sunmediaonline.com
WEB: www.sunmediaonline.com

In Memoriam



Smt Sushma Swaraj (1952 - 2019)
Former External Affairs Minister

"A glorious chapter in Indian politics comes to an end. India grieves the demise of a remarkable leader who devoted her life to public service and bettering lives of the poor. Sushma Swaraj Ji was one of her kind, who was a source of inspiration for crores of people.

An excellent administrator, Sushma Ji set high standards in every Ministry she handled. She played a key role in bettering India's ties with various nations. As a Minister we also saw her compassionate side, helping fellow Indians who were in distress in any part of the world. I can't forget the manner in which Sushma Ji worked tirelessly as External Affairs Minister in the last five years. Even when her health was not good, she would do everything possible to do justice to her work and remain up to date with matters of her Ministry. The spirit and commitment was unparalleled."

- Extract of Shri Narendra Modi Condolence Message

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, signing the condolence book for Her Excellency Smt Sushma Swaraj, former Indian External Affairs Minister, at the High Commission of India in Singapore, 13 August 2019.

Photo: Singapore Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Shri Arun Jaitley (1952 - 2019)
Former Finance Minister of India

"Arun Jaitley Ji was a political giant, towering intellectual and legal luminary. He was an articulate leader who made a lasting contribution to India. His passing away is very saddening. Full of life, blessed with wit, a great sense of humour and charisma, Arun Jaitley Ji was admired by people across all sections of society. He was multi-faceted, having impeccable knowledge about India's Constitution, history, public policy, governance and administration."

- Extract of Shri Narendra Modi Condolence Message



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world-class infrastructure

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Hyderabad, India



Goa, India



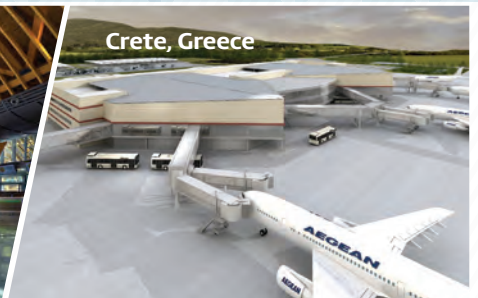
Nagpur, India



Cebu, Philippines



Crete, Greece



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Opportunities for **Greater Engagement** with Singapore & ASEAN



The High Commissioner of India in Singapore, Jawed Ashraf, in a wide ranging talk with Shikhar Editor-in-Chief Nomita Dhar that touches on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election to the steps for deepening political, economic, security, technology and cultural cooperation

The scale, scope and outcome of the recent elections have been unprecedented to say the least; please share some highlights of what goes behind the scenes to make it happen?

We have just concluded the largest election in human history. It beat the record we set in the last General Election. This is a truly huge exercise and a marvel of administrative, logistics and security arrangements. Some of the areas are remote, in thick forests or at very high altitude. We make sure everyone gets a chance to vote. Voting is entirely on electronic voting machines. A challenge is that each of the 543 constituencies may have 20 or more candidates to be accommodated on the voting machine.

The 2019 Indian General Election for the 17th Lok Sabha (Lower House or People's House) was held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019. The counting took place on May 23 and the results were known by the end of the day. Arrangements for security and logistics necessitate conduct of elections in several phases. No exit poll is permitted until after the conclusion of the last phase of polling.

About 900 million people were eligible to vote. There were 70 million new voters compared to 2014. Around 15 million in the age group of 18-19 came of age and became eligible to vote. There were one million polling stations in the country. The voting percentage was 67%, which means over 600 million people actually cast their vote. We also saw the highest ever participation of women voters.

The Election Commission of India deserves full praise for conducting an election on extraordinary that was peaceful, fair and transparent.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance won the elections with the BJP itself winning a clear majority. The BJP became the single largest party in the House with 303 seats, with its alliance partners bringing the NDA to a total of 353 seats.

Regarding Prime Minister Modi's vision for his second term - what does it mean to Singapore and ASEAN?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has returned to

office with stronger support and larger mandate. That is an affirmation of the progress in the past five years as also India's transforming global role. Since returning to office with a stronger mandate, Prime Minister has outlined his vision for a New India: accelerating economic growth with fiscal prudence; continuing emphasis on inclusion, access and empowerment for the poor and the remote; expanding new generation infrastructure; spurring manufacturing; making business sector efficient, innovative, resilient and transparent; improving ease of doing business and ease of living; and, generating employment and promoting sustainability.

It is also about intangible changes – in attitudes and mindsets; and, in turning sustainable, inclusive development into a national movement, involving people as much as the government. He has also spoken about India playing a more active role in advancing peace and prosperity in the world at a time of great turbulence and uncertainty.

India's economic development vast opportunities for Singapore and ASEAN. Equally, our engagement in Singapore and ASEAN will continue to grow. But, we must do more than that. India and Singapore represent an extraordinary vision for democracy, rule of law, economic progress for all and unity and harmony in diversity. These values form the bedrock of the two countries, and of our shared vision for the world. The more we are able to work together as two nations and the more we deepen our political, economic, security, technological and cultural cooperation, the more we will be able to contribute to realizing that vision for our region and the world.

Singapore is one of the largest investors in India; could you update the readers on the latest on the investment front? For example the island-republic's ranking and investment figures, (and, if possible compared to past/previous years), the major areas of investment and why it remains a favourite.

Since 2000, total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Singapore into India was US\$ 82.99 billion (till March 2019), which was 20% of total FDI inflow.

Singapore was the leading source of investments into India in 2018-19, valued at US\$16.23 billion

out of total FDI flow of US\$44.37 billion. The sectors which attracted investments include IT, real estate, manufacturing, construction, renewable energy and pharmaceuticals. One of the factors behind a sharp jump in FDI inflow from Singapore was the acquisition of 77% stake in Flipkart for US\$16 billion by Singapore based Walmart in May 2018. Singapore was also the largest source of FDI inflows into India in 2015-2016, when it accounted for nearly a third of the total inflows. While the bulk of the investments from Singapore into India come from Singapore-based companies, multinational companies and financial institutions also route investments into India through Singapore. Singapore is also the leading destination for Indian investments abroad. The cumulative value of Indian FDI into Singapore was US\$ 66.22 billion (till July 2019). FDI during FY 2018-19 was US\$ 4.491 billion.

Singapore is also the major source for Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPI) and External Commercial Borrowings by Indian corporates. More than 80% of listed offshore bonds by Indian issuers are listed on Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX). A

Shanmugam and Senior Minister of State (SMS) for Law and SMS for Health Edwin Tong have just returned from a visit to India from 28 to 31 August 2019.

From India, we have just wrapped up the visit here of Reserve Bank of India Governor Mr Shaktikanta Das last week and we are awaiting a visit by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. The two governments have planned a series of ministerial and official visits during the remaining part of the year.

In the course of the past two years, we have had several concrete outcomes in all areas of bilateral relations. These cover a number of agreements in defence and security; trade and investment; skills development; research and development; logistics and infrastructure financing; public administration and governance; urban planning and development, including in waste management and water recycling; and, logistics and infrastructure. Science and technology and innovation, startups and fintech have emerged as new areas of bilateral engagement. We have set up a Joint Working

manufacturing sector, especially the micro, small and medium scale sector, which is a major source of employment generation.

Meeting the needs of a rapidly urbanising India will be a significant growth driver. New cities, redevelopment of cities, integrated townships, commercial real estate, affordable housing – all of them will continue to see high level of investments.

Digitalisation, financial inclusion, digital payments, etc. have unleashed a new wave of entrepreneurship across the country, including in rural areas. India is today the third largest ecosystem for startups.

Government has taken a number of steps to revive the financial sector, including through recapitalisation and consolidation of public sector banks, strengthening the Non-Banking Financial Companies, deepening of the long-term corporate bond market and allowing a much higher level of investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI). The credit flow from the financial sector and

“In the course of the past two years, we have had several concrete outcomes in all areas of bilateral relations. These cover a number of agreements in defence and security; trade and investment; skills development; research and development; logistics and infrastructure financing; public administration and governance; urban planning and development, including in waste management and water recycling; and, logistics and infrastructure”

majority of Indian Rupee-denominated bonds (masala bonds) are SGX has also hosted several high-profile Masala Bonds.

There have been several bilateral visits between the two countries; could you brief the readers on the major highlights and outcomes of the recent visits?

There are regular high-level exchanges between the two country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited Singapore four times – twice in 2015 and twice in 2018. In June 2018, he came for a bilateral visit and to deliver the keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue. He was here in November 2018 for the East Asia Summit, India-ASEAN Summit and to deliver the keynote address at the Singapore Fintech Festival. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited India in 2016 and 2018. In addition, last year we had 15 ministerial visits from India and Singapore. The momentum of bilateral exchanges has continued after Prime Minister Modi returned to office. PM Narendra Modi and PM Lee met during the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan on 30 June 2019. Minister for Communications and Information & Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran and Minister of Education Mr. Ong Ye Kung visited India in June. Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law K

Group on Fintech and have taken a number of bilateral initiatives, including in the areas of acceptance of each other's digital payment products (Singapore is the first country outside India where the Indian RuPay card was launched; and, BHIM QR will follow soon); connect our digital payments infrastructure; connecting SMEs in India and the region; and, developing digital governance and financial inclusion products for the world, based on India's success. We have also made excellent progress in connecting our startup ecosystem. In November 2018, the Prime Minister also launched a global digital platform, APIX, to connect fintech companies and banks, starting with India and ASEAN.

Technology, fintech, trade, investment, property investments - where do you think the next growth cycle for India will be?

There would be many drivers for growth in India. First, government spending on infrastructure and public goods, which is at an unprecedented level, will generate a virtuous cycle of demand and consumption. We are targeting investments of US\$1 trillion in infrastructure in the next five years. Energy, especially renewable energy, will also see sustained high rates of growth. Government is providing a lot of stimulus and incentives to the

mobilization of funds from the capital markets are likely to grow sharply in the coming months, which will generate investments and demand.

Rural sector will be an important source of demand generation. The unprecedented expansion in the access of the rural population to basic amenities – from housing to power to cooking gas, insurance and pensions – will drive demand, as will the steps being taken to double the farm income in the next five years.

Sometimes investors find it easy to enter the Indian market and following that find it hard to navigate; how can the High Commission help such businesses or give advice to overcome such difficulties?

We provide advice and assistance all the time. We deal individually with investors and companies doing business in India to advise them on a range of issues and work with agencies in India to resolve problems. They have been generally satisfied with the outcomes. The first step is, however, for the companies to reach out to us.

What do you hope the ISNP can accomplish for India-Singapore relations?

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S INTERVIEW

It will set the stage for taking her strategic and economic ties to a new level. The objective is to set the agenda and momentum for the next five years.

Yoga has become the staple for fast paced corporates; there were several events organised by your mission in conjunction with International Yoga Day; what do you consider to be some of the highlights in this year event?

International Day of Yoga 2019 had around 200 sessions organized at 130 different locations in Singapore. The aggregate participation in our 10 day event was nearly 8500 people. We had representation from Singapore Government at several sessions including Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Communication and Information, Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister in the PMO, and Mr Melvin Yong, Member of Parliament for Tanjong pagar. Yoga sessions were also held at various centres of Sunlove Home, a place for care of the elderly and intellectually infirm and at various dormitories for foreign workers in Singapore. The response in Singapore has been progressively increasing in terms of the number of organizations that partner for IDY as well as the number of participants (8500 in 2019 compared to 7500 in 2018). As always, we try to make it a people driven event partnering with several government agencies such as Active SG and Sport SG, agencies for promotion of a healthy lifestyle and sport respectively, People's Association, a government statutory board that oversees neighborhood grassroots communities and social organizations Narpani, a grassroots community organization under People's Association.

In terms of Indian companies coming to Singapore, has the High Commission identified or recommend industries or sectors that might benefit from doing business here as well as comment on Singapore's advantage as hub for the rest of the region.

There are 9000 Indian companies registered in Singapore. This country is a leading destination for Indian investments. Singapore is seen as a gateway to Southeast Asia, but also to the global market. It has a number of advantages – ease of doing business, infrastructure, connectivity, an international financial market, a good IPR regime and a rules-based operating environment. It is a transportation, financial and trading hub – and, now a major innovation centre.

Indian companies are here in areas where Singapore has competitive advantage and core strengths. They are mostly here to conduct international trade. However, we also have a large presence of Indian IT companies, including all major ones, to serve Singapore market as well as the region. Increasingly, Indian startups and fintech companies are coming to Singapore, to raise funds or use it as a base for international operations.

The High Commissioner on India-Singapore: The **NEXT PHASE**

What is India-Singapore: The Next Phase (ISNP) conference all about and what participants can expect?

The High Commission of India in Singapore is organising the region's first international Business and Innovation Summit on India on 9-10 September 2019 in Prime Minister Modi's second term at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre in Singapore.

The Summit takes place after the first 100 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government and announcements on priorities, policies and initiatives to achieve the target of a US\$5 trillion economy in 2024 and facilitate economic modernisation, and access, empowerment and inclusion for all citizens.

The Summit will have two inter-related conferences:

- ☯ "India-Singapore: The Next Phase" – a business event that will focus on core areas, including the financial sector, infrastructure financing, urban development, real estate, logistics, regional trade, water, agro-tech and food processing, and skills development.
- ☯ InSpreneur 3.0: the third edition of the India-Singapore Innovation and Start-up platform launched by the High Commission in January 2018. This will focus on fintech, SMEs digital platforms, connecting start-ups in India and ASEAN, cyber security, artificial intelligence, future of data, Industry 4.0, and health and bio biotech.

Key features of the Summit so far are:

- ☯ 25 panel sessions with 90 speakers drawn from the best in government, corporate and tech sectors.
- ☯ Over 90 startups and incubators from India and Singapore have been selected to participate in the Startup Exhibition
- ☯ Over 3500 participants have registered so far. The number is likely to grow.
- ☯ Singapore will be represented by three Ministers; Singapore government agencies, top corporate leaders, investors and innovation hubs based in Singapore and abroad are participating.
- ☯ From India, there will be two Ministers from the Central Government and two from state governments; state delegations; corporate and technology sectors are also participating. CII, FICCI and PHD Chamber are bringing delegations.

It is a great platform to listen to the story of New India, the new opportunities in India's economic development and how to do business in and with India. There will be excellent networking opportunities, too. We will be setting the stage for the next phase of the India-Singapore Strategic and Economic Partnership as the Government in India moves into its second five-year term.

Which are the leading Indian states for FDI and that offer greater opportunities (Ease of Doing Business) and returns on investment that will be represented at the ISNP?

In India's competitive and cooperative federalism, states are competing to create an attractive business environment and offer incentives to draw investments and generate prosperity and jobs in their states. States are now being ranked on Ease of Doing Business that cover more than 350 variables.

Each state offers different opportunities in terms of resources, markets, skills, infrastructure as also policies and incentives. Some states have done better than the others. But each is working hard to catch up with the front runners.

For the Summit, we have delegations from Andhra Pradesh, a state in which Singapore is heavily engaged; from Odisha, which has developed significant linkages with Singapore, especially in the area of skills development and fintech; and, states like Punjab and Uttarakhand, which have in recent times reached out to engage Singapore.

More about The Next Phase

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The High Commission of India, in partnership with agencies of Governments of India and Singapore, chambers of commerce, professional associations and innovation labs, is organising a two-day Business and Innovation Summit, "India-Singapore: The Next Phase", on 9-10 September 2019 at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Singapore.

Day One Topics



Inaugural session speakers (from left): Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India and Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore

- Digital Partnership for ASEAN and Beyond
- Doing Business in India-from Delhi to districts
- Connecting Startups
- Skills Development & Education
- Water Roundtable
- Gala Dinner (By Invitation)

Day Two Topics



Mr Hardeep Singh Puri India's Union Minister (Independent Charge), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Ministry of Civil Aviation; Union Minister of State, Ministry of Commerce & Industry

- Ministerial Plenary: India-Singapore-The Economic Agenda
- Setting the Future Framework of Trade
- Setting the Agenda for Financial Sector
- Financing the Infrastructure Sector
- Harvesting Agro & Food Processing
- Logistics Sector: New Area of Growth
- Building Urban Future - Real Estate
- Healthcare and Biotech
- Cracking the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

For more details visit: <http://www.indiasingaporesummit.org>

EVENT

Prime Minister Modi at **G20 Osaka** Summit

India asks group of emerging national economies to focus on uncertainty in the world economy



From 28th - 29th June 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi was at the 14th G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan. The summit was attended by heads of governments of 18 member countries, EU and other invited countries. The G20 is a premier global forum for international economic cooperation, G20 members represent around 85% of global GDP, over 75% of global trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. Prime

Minister Modi met several world leaders on the sidelines of the summit. India has participated in all the G20 Summits held so far and will host the G20 summit in 2022 for the first time. The Summit under Japanese Presidency is centered around the theme "Human centered future society." The issues of importance for India at G20 includes energy security, financial stability, disaster resilient infrastructure, reformed multilateralism, WTO reforms, countering terrorism, return of economic fugitives, food security, democratization of technologies and portable social security schemes.



Glimpses of G20 Summit interactions of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi with many of the world leaders at the G20 Summit

After-Elections Report: India - The Politics of Investment

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is back at the helm for a second term after his party's landslide win. He is revved up to make India a US\$5 Trillion Dollar Economy by 2025. Backed by a slew of policy reforms, better conditions for doing business and supporting investors with alluring incentives, there is a new investment culture in the offing



Before taking his Oath of Office on 30th May 2019, PM Modi paid homage at the Samadhis of former PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi

"We are very focused on creating the financial, regulatory, capital controls, taxation, labour and infrastructure environment to make it convenient for global firms to bring goods in a friction-less manner into India, run factories or service centres here, and re-export the resulting products. As an example, the GST will soon rise to the full 'model GST' treatment of GST-on-imports coupled with zero-rating of exports, which is the most export-friendly indirect tax structure."

According to Marshall Bouton, acting director and visiting scholar at the Center for the Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania: "There is a new political culture in which people in India are looking first and foremost for a leader with whom they can identify, and who in their minds embodies their aspirations...."

He was speaking following the victory of the Prime Minister Modi in the May general elections and as the leader largely credited for India's improvement in its rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index over the last five years; India now ranks 77th among 190 countries compared with 134th in 2014.

Prime Minister Modi during his Independence Day address, after his re-election for a second tenure, noted how corruption had ruined the nation for 70 long years. He said, "Every effort made to remove corruption and black money is welcome. These are menaces that have ruined India for 70 long years. Let us always reward honesty." He also called for reducing the excess influence of Governments on people's lives. "Let our people have the freedom of pursuing their own aspirations, let the right eco-system be made in this regard". In an exclusive interview with **The Economic Times** (www.economictimes.indiatimes.com) following his re-election as Prime Minister, Narendra Modi strongly indicated that the private sector must continue to believe in the India story, with the assurance that he would do his best to make India a better place to do business.

In his message to boost investor confidence, he shared that: "In today's world, any discussion or debate across various forums on development, economic growth or political stability, attention of the world is automatically attracted towards India. Expectations from India are not only from within the country, but even in the context of global growth and development a lot is expected from our country. At the same time, unprecedented mandate given to our government during the recently concluded election in the largest democracy has further raised the hopes and expectations. Performance of our government during the last five years has shown the scale, speed and direction in which we work. This has given a new benchmark for the country to judge the performance of the government. I consider it a very positive development that there are a lot of expectations from us even though we have not yet completed even first 100 days of the new government. Strong and sound economic fundamentals coupled with stable government with



PM Modi takes his second Oath of Office at the Rashtrapati Bhawan (Presidential Palace) along with his ministers with a greater mandate from the people



increased majority — I see these as the reasons for this kind of high expectations.”

Entrepreneurs as Growth Ambassadors

He further added that he considered entrepreneurs as India’s ‘Growth Ambassadors’. “I want to tell them that our government will leave no stone unturned to make India a better place to do business in all aspects. We want entrepreneurs to get better productivity and better profits, we want our industries to grow in speed and scale, we want our businesses to get access to bigger markets, both at home and abroad. We want our investors to earn more, invest more and create more jobs. Viewed in a global context, investors can be assured that India is the best destination in the world,” he said.

Regarding his government’s agenda of achieving the US\$5 trillion goal by 2025 he said that: “We have laid a solid foundation for high, sustainable growth over the long run. India has broken the perception that developing countries cannot grow at a higher rate for a reasonable period without getting into the problem of overheating, that is, higher inflation. During the past five years, India witnessed the highest average growth rate with lowest average inflation. All the macro-economic parameters such as current account deficit, fiscal deficit, inflation, etc. were brought down to acceptable levels. This helped in restoring confidence in the economy and witnessed unprecedented FDI inflows.”

Prime Minister Modi’s growing confidence in India’s ability to rise above the odds stems from his experiences of last five years “that this country and people of India have everything in them to achieve higher goals

and higher objectives. I am confident that 1.3 billion people comprising millions of farmers, lakhs of industrialists, hundreds and thousands of young entrepreneurs and start-ups, women, through their collective endeavour, will take us there.”

Motivating Industrialists

Prime Minister Modi said that: “I want to motivate our industrialists to believe in the India story and in the long-term potential of Indian market. They should carry on their business and complete their investment plan without any confusion. I reassure all honest and law-abiding businesses of all possible support from our end. The vision for the next five years is to have investment-led growth. We are targeting `100 lakh crore worth of investment in the coming five years. To achieve this vision, the government is working on policies to promote inflows from domestic as well as foreign sources. This would entail further liberalising our FDI policy, simplification of labour laws, further enhancing ease of doing business, power sector reforms, asset monetisation and asset recycling in public sector, and reforms in banking, insurance and pension sectors. While investment has to be driven by private sector, the government will do its bit to ‘crowd-in’. In undertaking all these reforms, the government will work with an open mind in consultation with all stakeholders.”

In response to a query about India tapping opportunities accruing from the trade conflict between the United States and China, the Prime Minister pointed out that: “India today offers skilled human resources, rapidly improving infrastructure along with one of the world’s biggest markets. For anyone looking to shift base, India is an ideal location. There is no doubt that the

ongoing events are creating opportunities for some economies. But our policies are not designed to get some short-term benefit out of transient disruptions being seen around the world. We are focused on improving our competitiveness through long-term reform measures. It encompasses steps towards improving our ranking in ease of doing business, tax reforms with lowering of tax rates and simplifying procedures, labour sector reforms to encourage formalisation and FDI-related reforms to further liberalise the investment climate. We are very focused on creating the financial, regulatory, capital controls, taxation, labour and infrastructure environment to make it convenient for global firms to bring goods in a friction-less manner into India, run factories or service centres here, and re-export the resulting products. As an example, the GST will soon rise to the full ‘model GST’ treatment of GST-on-imports coupled with zero-rating of exports, which is the most export-friendly indirect tax structure.”

Addressing the concerns about the current slowdown in the economy right now Prime Minister Modi pointed out that the budget was neither the beginning nor the end of his government’s work in economic policy. “The Budget announced `70,000 crores capital in public sector banks to boost credit growth in the economy. Ideas such as asset monetisation, asset recycling and a continued focus on strategic disinvestment are aimed at raising funds for public capital expenditure. These measures will boost growth and crowd-in private investment soon,” he shared.

To read the full report:
News Updates https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/et-exclusive-will-make-india-a-better-place-to-do-business-says-pm-modi/

Capitalising on Opportunities in the Age of Disruption



Keynote Address by India High Commissioner, Jawed Ashraf, at the World Opportunities Forum 2019, held at Singapore's Fullerton Hotel, which gathered together a host of luminaries - diplomats, policy makers, CEO's entrepreneurs, innovators, thought leaders and creative minds, to exchange views and ideas on opportunity creation and growth between businesses

In his keynote address the High Commissioner offered a down-to-earth picture of the turmoil that the world was undergoing and traced the pangs of growth emerging tentatively out of this disruptive scenario. But he also pointed out to many positive outcomes from the transition that one is going through, from the international world order that one is familiar with - to one that is yet to take shape of the world - and focused on the enormous opportunities that would unfold and set the course for a bright future for all nations.

To capitalize on these opportunities, he opined one needs to invest in sound macro-economic management, in education, skills, human resources and in infrastructure in keeping the economies open and vibrant.

"This is a time when there is persistent tension, violence, turmoil, migrations, dislocation, trade wars, protectionism, the competition and rivalry of the great powers returning all that we have not seen since the end of World War II." But in his mind this is also a time when there are unprecedented opportunities, freedom, prosperity, education, health and connectivity in the world.

The High Commissioner pointed out that every generation in the world has thought they were going through a time of profound changes, "but I think ours is the one that is actually experiencing it because at no time in centuries past have so many changes, so many transitions come together at the same time."

Dawning of the Age of Digital Disruption

He shared that in India, in the course of four years, has opened 350 million bank accounts, bringing banking within the reach of all; the country, he added further, has 1.2 billion biometrics, over a billion phones and a billion bank accounts - a trinity which has transformed lives across the country in a way that was unimaginable years ago. He said: "We have been able to launch a health scheme that will touch 500 million lives, we have issued 145 million micro-loans amounting to \$90 billion in the course of four years to the most vulnerable and poorest sectors of society."

This, he pointed out, was not just in India that such things were happening; he cited the case of Africa and the EMPESA story, Egypt's MAK SAR, which is providing means for the blind to navigate places on their own, Flutterware in Nigeria and Sun Exchange in South Africa which were creating changes in lives with their transformative and innovative agendas— all enabled by the technologies which are changing the times in unimaginable ways. In Southeast Asia, he said, there was a 44% increase in the internet economy in the last year alone and in Indonesia, with the best broadband access in emerging markets today, its OVO, an e-wallet, saw a 75% increase in transactions in the course of just one year. He said: "These are the kinds of transformations that we are seeing today that technology has enabled at a time when we think of technology as the great disrupter."

Disruptive Climate Change

The other disruption, according to the High Commissioner is in the realm of climate change and clean energy. As one is passing out of the industrial age into the age of information, one is soon going to be leaving behind the world of fossil fuels and entering the world of clean energy.

India, in the course of the past four years has added 35 gigawatts of renewable energy, as revealed by HE. Today the bidding price for solar and wind power, he said, is lower than that for thermal power and that is the great market-driven change one is witnessing today. The amount of money a firm investing in renewable energy can raise from the market far exceeds

what a thermal power project can today. In the course of the last year two-thirds of the global power generating capacity that was added was in the form of renewable energy; 71% of that took place in the developing world, 61% of it took place in Asia.

China, Brazil and India are amongst the leaders, but there are countries in Africa, each of which is developing innovative models to provide solar power to the remotest villages. "Today we have about 3.1 million electric vehicles in the world, by 2030 that number is expected to go up to 125 million; if we get our policies right, says HE, it will go up to 220 million by then. That is small comfort when you think the total stock of vehicles will be 2 billion, there will still be 10 %." This is the kind of disruption that we are talking about that will be taking place", said the High Commissioner, who also felt that this world where **disruption is creating enormous opportunities, not only to provides us with clean energy, but also to make the right investment in developing industries that cater to the clean energy market.**

Capitalising on Emerging Opportunities

Today we are entering a world where infrastructure and connectivity are the driving forces for outcomes in the economy with so many initiatives connecting nations not only within themselves but with others as well, said the High Commissioner. The levels of connectivity, education, skills and research have reached unimaginable heights across the world in the High Commissioner's estimate. He opined that it is also the domestic policy space and the co-operation that will hold the key to realising the opportunities that the world presents. To capitalise on this one



needs to work together across nations, across divisions from those who are rising and those who have seen the greatest days, to work together to carve out institutions and agreements and framework for our futures, he said.

Lessons from the Singapore Formula

HE felt that one of the best places to have such discussions is Singapore, the hub of Asia, where the centre of gravity of opportunities and challenges are shifting, but is also a nation that has shown what it takes to be successful in a world of challenges by investing in human resources and infrastructure, by following right policies and by building a harmonious, multi-cultural society, which offers opportunities to all and confidence to each and every individual. It has been a constant voice of openness, connectivity and integration and its obvious its profile in the world is on the rise.

India: Future Positive

High Commissioner Jawed said, two things will stand out for India. Over the course of the past 30 years India has continued to be on the path of opening up and undertaking reforms and achieving sustained growth rates between 7.5% and more; for a nation of 1.3 billion people growing at 7 - 8% a year, it's a US\$2.6 trillion economy that is soon going to

be US\$5 trillion economy by 2025, with a trade of US\$2 trillion— its surely an opportunity for the world.

And today, said the High Commissioner when "we look at all the underlying determinants of growth and transformation, the demography, the population, the policies, the politics, the governance, the reforms, the scale of investment, the scale of ambitions, the digital revolution that is taking place in India, the urban revolution we are undergoing, the investment that is taking place in skills and education, the unprecedented scale of expansion and infrastructure (that is one of the biggest infrastructure stories in the world, where we have added 30km of four lane express ways daily, 30 new airports and 100,000 megawatts of power in the course of four years) - these are all the underlying determinants of growth that are coming together and being aligned in way that will sustain high rates of growth for years to come - all in the context of a society which is richly diverse, wedded to democracy and rule of law and counted to be playing by the rule of law internationally as well. So we look forward to working not just with Singapore, but with the rest of the world in sharing our opportunities, our prosperity and working together to make this world a better place... a more peaceful place."

WOF 2019 NOTE

The inaugural edition of the World Opportunities Forum saw 18 countries represented by their ambassadors, present the latest on business opportunities, policies, and next steps for investments. They presented information sessions on one platform to CEOs, SMEs, entrepreneurs and investors. This reflects the event's objective of using Singapore as a hub to 'create, connect and cross invest'. The WOF is organised by Sun Media Pte Ltd and supported by Enterprise Singapore, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation and the Singapore Business Federation. For more info visit: www.sunmediaonline.com



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VISITS & EVENTS

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIA'S 73rd INDEPENDENCE DAY



India's Independence Day 2019

15th Aug 2019

The High Commission of India in Singapore, celebrated the country's 73rd Independence Day on 15th August 2019 with a Flag Hoisting ceremony and a cultural performance segment presented by the students of several Indian schools. After unfurling the National Flag, High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf read out President Ram Nath Kovind's message to a large crowd of the Indian community and friends of India.



India Post at Singpex 2019

5th August 2019

India participated in Singpex 2019, the 36th Asian International Stamp Exhibition, where Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf released a 'Perfumes of India' stamp. Also present were Mr Viswapavan Pati, Addl Director General, India Post and Singpost representatives.



Sikh Community Harmony Walk

20th August 2019

As part of the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the Singapore Sikh community organised Community Harmony Walk for inter-racial harmony. Altogether 500 people joined from different places of worship Singapore's Senior Minister of State Chee Hong Tat and senior Indian High Commission officers on the Harmony Walk.





RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Visits

23rd - 24th August 2019

The 2-day visit by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Mr Shaktikanta Das, saw him call the Singapore Deputy Minister and Minister for Finance Mr Heng Swee Keat and Mr Das' counterpart the Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, Mr Ravi Menon. They had a wide range of discussions that included collaboration between India and Singapore in digital architecture and fintech. The RBI Governor also delivered the message that India's slight slow down in the earlier quarters of 2019 is a temporary one and the economy is likely to achieve a higher growth rate closer to 7 percent. He said that the RBI will continue to help "unlocking entrepreneurial energies and set India firmly on the trajectory towards the country's aspirations to become a US\$5 trillion economy within the next five years."



Minister Shanmugam: Call to India to tap on ASEAN Potential

28th August 2019

Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs and Law, Mr K Shanmugam was speaking at Singapore Symposium 2019, an interactive session held in Mumbai on 28th August 2019 in Mumbai. The theme was 'India's Engagement with a Fast-Growing ASEAN'. He urged India who is the regional grouping's seventh largest trading partner, to embark on greater economic cooperation. He also hoped that India will leverage the growing connectivity with ASEAN and embrace opportunities in sectors such as fintech. He and Senior Minister of State for Law and Health Edwin Tong were on an official four-day visit to India.



High Commissioner Opens SGX Market

26th August 2019

The High Commissioner of India in Singapore opened the business day at the Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX). HC Jawed Ashraf spoke about opportunities in India's growth and stability as well as easier FDI, FPI & ECB norms. Singapore is the leading source of investments and funds in India

VISITS & EVENTS



12th India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue 22nd July 2019

India's Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar addressed the 12th India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi where he enjoyed the interaction and "the level of energy and ambition in the relationship."



Minister Ong at Growth Net Summit 2019 6th – 7th June 2019

Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education spoke at the 14th Growth Net Summit 2019 in New Delhi on the theme of 'Talent and Skills for a Digital Economy'. The Summit is organised by the Ananta Centre and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and is attended by emerging countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and has emerged as a platform to connect with the entrepreneurial and technological dynamism of emerging economies. While in Delhi he also called on India's Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar.



Minister S Iswaran Visits Delhi 20th June 2019

Singapore's Minister of Communication & Information and Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations, Mr. S Iswaran, called on the Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman as well as the Dr S Jaishankar, India's Minister of External Affairs. He was on a working trip there India from 19th to 20th June 2019 to strengthen economic cooperation, especially in new



and innovative areas. Mr Iswaran said, "Digital connectivity is a potential new area for bilateral collaboration given the growth of the digital economy. We can also work together to deepen economic engagement within Asia. India and Singapore have many complementary strengths that can help create more opportunities and mutual benefit for our people and our businesses."



Launch of Tiger Week Conservation Initiative in Singapore 16th July 2019

Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf hosted the inaugural reception of the Singapore Tiger Week at India House that brought together conservation experts from India and other Asian countries to help the cause of preserving the tiger, which is an endangered species, in Asia (*full report in this issue pg 27*).



Milestone Mediation Treaty Signed 6th - 7th August 2019

India joined 45 other countries to sign the Singapore Convention on Mediation Treaty. Also known as the UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements, it provides for the enforcement of mediated settlement agreements across all the countries. High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf represented India for the signing ceremony.

SPOTLIGHT ON IMDEX & SIMBEX 2019



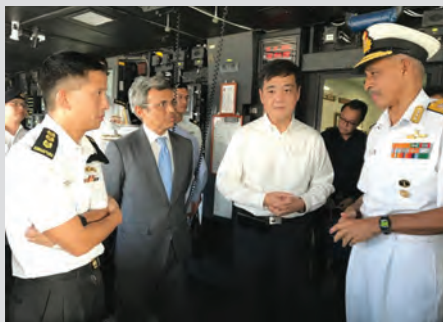
India @ IMDEX ASIA 2019 14th May 2019

Indian warships participated in Asia's prestigious **International Maritime Defence Exhibition & Conference (IMDEX) ASIA**, showcased at the Singapore Maritime Expo; also participating in the event were some of India's top engineering and ship building companies. A speech by Singapore's Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen got the ball rolling. Amongst those who toured the exhibition was Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf, who was accompanied by India's Dy Chief of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral M S Pawar; they also stopped by at Larsen & Toubro, the Indian missile maker involved in the state-of-the-art air, sea and ground launch cruise missiles, including the BrahMos cruise missile – said to be one of the world's fastest with a range between 300 to 400kms.



IMDEX & SIMBEX 19 13th May 2019

The INS Kolkata and INS Shakti, two warships of the Indian navy, were in Singapore to participate in the three-day Asia Pacific naval and maritime event IMDEX 16 and the 26th annual bilateral exercise Singapore - India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) 19. On the occasion High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf and their presence endorsed India's Act East Policy and strategic partnership with Singapore. Designed and built in India, INS Kolkata is an advanced stealth destroyer capable of engaging multiple threats from the air, sea and underwater; INS Shakti is a fleet support ship to provide fuel, provisions and munitions to warships at sea.



Senior Minister of State for Defence Visit to INS Kolkata 15th May 2019

Senior Minister of State for Defence Mr Heng Chee How was accompanied by High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf and DCNS Vice Admiral MS Pawar during his tour of INS Kolkata during IMDEX-19.



Indian Coast Guard Chief with Singapore's Naval Staff 13th May 2019

On the sidelines of IMDEX 2019 Director General Rajendra Singh of the Indian Coast Guard made a courtesy call on senior members of Singapore's Naval Staff to further consolidate existing ties, as also to explore new avenues of maritime cooperation.



Deck Reception by Indian Navy Ships 19th May 2019

High Commissioner of India welcomed Singapore visitors and other dignitaries onboard during the deck reception organised by Indian Navy ships Kolkata and Shakti as a part of SIMBEX 19. SIMBEX, the annual bilateral exercise, which has grown in tactical and operational complexity since its inception in 1993, is the longest uninterrupted naval exercise that India has with any country.



Reception at SIMBEX 19 21st May 2019

HC Jawed Ashraf interacts with the aircrew of the LRMASW P8i aircraft taking part in the Sea Phase of SIMBEX 19.

VISITS & EVENTS



Sikh Heritage Day 8th June 2019

The Sikh community in Singapore launched the first event to mark the 550th Prakash Divas of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Sikh Heritage Day was launched by President Halimah Yacob and it started off a year-long programme of activities for fellow Singaporeans to learn more about the 12,000 strong Sikh community here.



IBC Conference: Singapore Can Invest in Indian Stressed Assets 6th June 2019

About 200 investors and business leaders attended a conference on India's insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). India's stressed assets are estimated at US\$250 billion in the banking sector. Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf highlighted how Singapore could potentially become a leading investor in India's stressed assets especially in the financial sector.

Sunil Sanghai, chairman of the National Committee on Capital Markets in the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said, there is a proper and very structured regulatory framework which has been put in place which is not only helping assets to get restructured but also investors to take investment decision for participating in the stressed assets.



Photo: MCI / Kenji Soon

Natya Yatra - Celebrating A Century of Indian Classical Dance 14th April 2019

The Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS) celebrated its 70th anniversary with an original production titled Natya Yatra that pays tribute to '100 Years of Indian Classical Dance in Singapore.' President Halimah Yacob was the guest of honour for the premier and other luminaries included Indian High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf.



Joint Training in Uttar Pradesh 11th April 2019

The SAF and Indian Army completed the 12th annual joint exercise at Babina, near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh state. Titled 'Bold Kurukshetra' defence cooperation is a key pillar of the countries' strategic partnership.



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Temurnikar on Education: It's Knowledge, Spirit & Heart



Atul Temurnikar, the CEO and Co-Founder of the Global Indian International School (GIIS) in Singapore speaks out about today's generation of students and what education fortified with digital technologies can help "Schools that Learn"

How is the Global Indian International school crafting the global citizens of tomorrow?

GIIS is a school that learns. Our entire focus has been on giving the best to our students for the best learning outcomes and a brighter future.

At GIIS, we have implemented our award-winning holistic educational framework called the 9GEMS which emphasises not just on academic and sports excellence but also on excellence in art, encouragement towards entrepreneurship, leadership and innovation and development of universal values of peace and brotherhood.

GIIS has also embraced the use of carefully selected technology which acts as a catalyst in a student's educational journey. Through features like digital classrooms, virtual classrooms, Smartboards, interactive TVs, iPads for teachers, MacBooks and iPads for students, wi-fi connection, projectors, collar mikes, Apple TV etc we make our classrooms an interactive space. They can interact with each other and with outside experts using these facilities make virtual classrooms an important cog in the educational wheel.

This great amalgamation of learning tools and spaces gives our students maximum leverage in their learning journey to become well-rounded individuals with the knowledge to become global citizens of the future.

Indian civilisation is ancient and deep-rooted in knowledge; how is your school keeping this tradition alive and taking it forward?

We are an International school for the Global Indian. Which means we cater to the expat Indian community. Our presence in 7 countries around the world makes sure that the expat Indian gets the same quality of education that is enjoyed by students in India. We provide the CBSE curriculum which gives expat students a glimpse into the history and

culture of India. Extra-curricular activities include teaching performing arts like Indian Classical Music and Dance. Besides this, we diligently celebrate and enjoy all Indian festivities within the school.

The footprint of the Indian diaspora has increased across the world; how has your school contributed to providing the children continuity in their linkages?

Within all this technological environment, GIIS also focuses on nurturing the heart and the spiritual side of the students. We have important values in the curriculum - like peace curriculum, happiness index, kindness movement that imbibes good values in students. Under the aegis of our Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Universal Values, the peace curriculum imbibes in students the importance of tolerance, peace, respect and brotherhood among all nationalities and cultures - which is an essential part of the Indian roots (Vasudeva Kutumbakam). Service is also an important factor in our curriculum which is fulfilled through community integration activities. We hold events that celebrate Indian festivals and culture, participate in charity drives and community integration events etc to emphasise on the Indian tradition of universal brotherhood. Another aspect is an emphasis on environmental conservation through Green activities and focus on water conservation in the design of the school.

Since its inception in Singapore your school has expanded in many countries; what would you attribute the success and growth of your institution and what are your future plans?

We have a presence in 7 countries through our 22 campuses. The premium quality of our education at a moderate fee range is what appeals to the upwardly mobile diaspora who look for Indian system of education in the countries they move in. We have been appreciated for the quality of our teachers, the dedication of our staff and our vision to bring the best to the students.

Which is why our framework is popular in countries like Japan and Malaysia where parents are keen to enrol their children in GIIS for the strong foundation in English and Mathematics that the school provides.

In future, keeping with our plan of 'no child left behind', we will continue to expand our global footprint in places where children need good quality education for their brighter future. We will also continue to embrace the latest trends in education and technology to give our students an edge over their peers to excel in life.

What would you say to other entrepreneurs about using Singapore as a hub to enter other ASEAN markets?

Singapore is a small but prosperous island nation that has a lot to offer when it comes to individual growth. It is a great place for entrepreneurs to start their business, especially given its business-friendly policies and recognition of talent. The government is very hands-on when it comes to encouraging entrepreneurs to set up their businesses here. Singapore's strategic geographic position in ASEAN, and its impeccable insistence on quality and professionalism, makes it an ideal place to make it a hub for handling regional affairs. So I would encourage those who are looking at Singapore to start their ventures.

You have been imparting knowledge to impressionable young minds in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, UAE, Vietnam and India, what

is your student mix, and how would you describe today's students in Asia and what is your assessment of their mindset and how they will help in shaping the world of tomorrow?

We have students from 42 nationalities studying in our SMART Campus at Singapore alone, while other GEOs have a good mix of Indian and foreign nationalities. Students today are born with a device in one hand and speak the digital language fluently. Using technology comes naturally to them, hence their power of absorption of newer methodologies is brilliant. This is an excellent platform for them to absorb knowledge at an exponential level and be ready to take on future head-on.

"Both India and Singapore have a strong curricula which has benefitted the respective countries in many ways. Indian entrepreneurs and innovators are today heading many Silicon Valley companies while Singapore is known for its emphasis on quality, diligence and professionalism"

Asian students are bright, brilliant and hardworking. All they need is the right boost on the right levels on the right platform to excel. At GIIS, we believe in giving them all the right tools and the right spaces to make sure their inherent talents - be it in academics, in sports, in performing arts, in coding, or robotics etc - are nurtured.

But at the same time, we have to understand that the generation now has a short attention span. In this context, it is necessary to channelise their energy in the right way. It is also imperative that we challenge these young minds with a stimulus that will push them towards excellence. For eg: When we provide iPads to our students, it is not just to learn everyday classroom lessons, but also to make sure that they have the basic knowledge at an early age so that in future they will be able to use this when they learn coding or robotics or artificial intelligence.

Once these students are properly groomed, their energies channelled in the right direction, their emotional and spiritual intelligence honed, they will be the responsible new generation which will take the world in a brand-new direction.

Is your growth in line with your vision of the institution in 2002? What has changed?

Absolutely. Our motto was 'schools that learn' and our dream was to help students fulfil their dreams. This was the vision in 2002, this is the vision now. And

Atul Temurnikar in his element in the GIIS school and student environment



“India and Singapore have a lot to contribute to the field of education. Building the right bridge, by taking the best of both worlds and incorporating them in ASEAN education, could be a way forward. A lot of research and brainstorming will need to go in this regard, and while it is premature to say exactly how this can be done, I can only say it is possible and when it implemented the results will be inspiring”

our growth has always been in line with this philosophy. The change can be the continuous embrace of newer educational trends for our own improvement.

How can Singapore and India collaborate in making ASEAN as the hub for quality education?

Both India and Singapore have a strong curricula which has benefitted the respective countries in many ways. Indian entrepreneurs and innovators are today heading many Silicon Valley companies while Singapore is known for its emphasis on quality, diligence and professionalism. There are brilliant minds on both sides and both countries know the importance of hard work and dedication. The two countries have a lot to contribute to the field of education. Building the right bridge, by taking the best of both worlds and incorporating them in ASEAN education, could be a way forward. A lot of research and brainstorming will need to go in this regard, and while it is premature to say exactly how this can be done, I can only say it is possible and when it implemented the results will be inspiring.

How can students and educational institutions contribute to solving problems like global warming?

The new generation will have newer ideas to use existing tools to make a positive change in the world. They need to be prepared to face problems like Global Warming at the school level and become compassionate and socially responsible. The role of the school is to ensure that such a sense of social responsibility and community service is inculcated in students from a young age.

We at GISS have been emphasising on green and sustainable practices. The school has a Green Curriculum that teaches students the importance of embracing sustainability. Students regularly participate in events and programmes like water conservation, earth week, eco fests etc under the school's EcoClub which practises planting seeds using peat moss.

We have incorporated technology that reduces our carbon footprint like motion sensors to save electricity, terracotta facade to absorb less heat and reduce the use of air-conditioning etc. Our students are aware of these measures. They are also encouraged to be environmentally aware. Through facilities like the Envi-

ronmental Club we encourage them to participate in activities that would help increase their green footprint.

Could you share some success stories of your students in their contribution towards global issues?

It is heartening to see that the students of GISS take social responsibility so seriously, and have reached out to the community in more ways than one in keeping with their social and community spirit. Many of our students have actively contributed to various causes concerning the society. One such example is the 'Self-Watering Plant' - a device invented by two of our students which will help holidayers with the flexibility of watering their plants while they are away. The device uses sensors that detect dry soil and use battery powered motors to pump water into the plant pot until it is watered. This not just saves plants, but also conserves water in the long run.

What are the main factors you wish or would like parents to first or mainly consider in choosing a school for their children?

Parents look for two things in a school - what it offers my child and how is it different from the rest which will ensure my child's future success. When a school stands out among competition on factors that will benefit students and provides its unique pedagogy at an affordable price, that's when the school will be worthy of a parent's consideration. In GISS, parents will get all this.

First part to the SMART Campus story is the combination of 21st century learning. We have created a concept of learning that is more interactive, engaging, collaborative and a community exercise rather than just classroom learning. The second part is the huge emphasis on teachers efficiently using data analytics to make learning at the campus SMART learning. Each student's strengths and weaknesses are analysed and programmes are curated which benefits them in a maximum way. Combine all this with the fact that GISS provides high-quality education at an affordable price. This not just puts students ahead of the curve in learning, it also gives tangible benefits to the process of learning. Such high levels of involvement at every level makes GISS stand out as a school which puts students at the centre of its universe.

Long Term Vision Critical

Sanjeev Das Gupta, Executive Director and CEO of Ascendas India Trust (a member of CapitaLand) says to realise the potential of India's growth and scale you have to play the long game

As an established Singapore icon in the property development field what are the factors that made CapitaLand first go into the Indian market and how successful has your operations been since then?

India is a strategic market for CapitaLand. It is one of the largest economies in the world and **we have been a key contributor to India's IT industry development having pioneered the country's first work-live-play IT park concept with International Tech Park in Bangalore (ITPB) in 1994.** ITPB has set a benchmark for IT parks in India which have catalysed growth in India's IT and business process outsourcing sectors. Our IT parks house over 300 tenants and 120,000 IT professionals. We have since grown steadily and our deep expertise in India goes across the full real estate value chain from owning, developing, leasing and managing properties using capital of our fund vehicles, Ascendas India Trust, and private funds. Today, CapitaLand has a strong portfolio of 26 business and IT parks, industrial, lodging and logistics properties across eight cities in India - Bangalore, Chennai, Goa, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Mumbai Pune and Sri City.

CapitaLand has been operating in India for over 25 years with a diverse portfolio; are your expansion plans on track, could you update us on the latest?

We see potential to grow the business parks and logistics business in India which are core sectors for the Indian economy. Our extensive experience in these sectors over the last 25 years in India has been a key competitive advantage for us. Presently, CapitaLand manages 17 million sq ft of commercial space across business parks and logistics warehouses in India. We also have 4.5 million sq ft of business park space under development in Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune, and 8 million sq ft when our International Tech Park Gurgaon is fully developed. Another 7 million sq ft through forward purchases have been signed up and are under construction. This includes IT parks in Mumbai and Hyderabad, a 7th warehouse at Arshiya Free Trade Warehousing Zone, Panvel, near Navi Mumbai, and BlueRidge 3, an IT/ITES Special Economic Zone development in Hinjewadi Phase 1 in Pune.

We also recently acquired a 12.20-acre site to develop International Tech Park Chennai - Radial Road and are building up a logistics asset portfolio in India with 4.3 million sq ft planned for development. We have also set up a \$400-million equity fund with Temasek to invest in logistics and industrial facilities in India.

With a growing young workforce, favourable consumption trends, e-commerce growth and strong growth in the IT and IT-enabled services sectors, we plan to more than double our current commercial space in India to about 39 million sq ft in the next five years. We continue to evaluate other asset classes depending on the market developments.

With the growing trend of start-ups and increasing demand for flexible workspaces, we opened Bridge+, our first coworking platform in India in ITPB's Park Square Mall in end May 2019. Within two months, Bridge+ has about 50% occupancy. Members have access to Bridge+'s facilities and networking events. There are plans to expand Bridge+ to other IT parks in India.

Have the current trade war tensions already affected or will have a significant impact for buyers, businesses or investors in the real estate market in India?

There are impacts to different markets to some degree and some markets may benefit as well. As a company with diversified assets across geographies, we are better positioned to weather economic uncertainties and seize growth opportunities that may emerge across our core business segments.

Where in your experience are the most opportunities - is it residential, commercial, in the metropolitan cities or the second-tier cities (in India and globally)?

As an enlarged CapitaLand Group, we possess fully integrated capabilities in four core markets - Singapore, China, India and Vietnam, while we continue to build greater scale in developed markets. CapitaLand's combination with Ascendas-Singbridge helps us in diversifying into new sectors such as business parks, logistics and industrial properties across a bigger global network.

India's logistics and IT business park sectors offer good growth potential primarily in the top six metros. Residential is seeing some early signs of growth in the mid to affordable housing segment.

India has undertaken significant reforms in the last few years such as the introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act and Good & Services Tax. It is encouraging to see India climb 23 places to 77th position in the World Bank Group's Ease of Doing Business Rankings 2019. We look forward to seeing more improvements in the areas of building permits, simplification of various approval processes at the state level and measures for revival of the SEZ.

Has your company been able to get the desired talent in India and is it easy to get work permits for your expatriate staff?

Over the years we have managed to build a good local team that is fully aligned to our values and corporate culture. Today, we do not have any expatriate amongst our 250 employees in India. Getting work permits in India is a fairly smooth process. However, increasing the tenure of long-term business visit visas would help our Singapore staff who need to make frequent work trips to India.

What is your advice for new Singapore and international investors to India?

India is a large and complex country with several cultures and languages. Understanding these cultural nuances to adapt and manoeuvre will give companies an edge and having a local management team is important. This is our 25th year in India. Our experience is that the commitment to a long-term vision is a critical success factor to overcome challenges and benefit from the growth and scale that the Indian market has to offer.



Photo by CapitaLand

Surbana Jurong: Revving Up the Tempo of Operation India



Wong Heang Fine, Group Chief Executive Officer of Surbana Jurong, shares with readers of Shikhar his company's exciting plans and activities in India, as it blazes a path of global expansion out of its base in Singapore

As a leading Singaporean firm Surbana Jurong has a wide global footprint: can you tell us how it all began and what presently are your key services and projects?

Surbana Jurong was formed in 2015 as a result of the merger of Surbana and Jurong International Holdings (JIH) — whose names have been synonymous with the nation's early township and industrialisation efforts when they were operating as government agencies of Singapore.

Looking back over the past years, it's been very good for the company as it has moved from strength to strength, acquiring along the way Australia-based Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) and Robert Bird Group (RBG)— both of which are specialist engineering and development firms. We also picked up China-based architecture firm Sino Sun and Singapore-based AETOS Holdings, which provides security and safety solutions and advisory. In October 2018, Surbana Jurong further expanded its capabilities with the addition of two more firms— B+H, a Toronto-based architectural and interior design firm, and SAA, a leading architectural firm in Singapore.

It pleases me immensely to share with you that Surbana Jurong is now Singapore's largest design and engineering firm and one of the largest Asia-based global urban, infrastructure and management services consulting firms, with a global workforce of over 16,000 employees in more than 40 countries. We provide specialist solutions across the full urban and infrastructure development project life cycle, from planning and design, through to delivery and management.

Your tag line says "Global Enterprise, Local Knowledge"; you are operating in a wide range of geographies, how do you manage this USP?

The Surbana Jurong Group provides specialist expertise to complex projects worldwide, either independently or as combined entities. Our portfolio of core brands coupled with a growing family of specialist brands allows us to uniquely position our organisation as a globally integrated delivery partner. We then deliver our sustainable solutions through building up local capabilities that complement our global skills.

This also comes from our flexibility to operate in global markets either individually or in partner-

ship to add value. With size and scale becoming increasingly important for companies to effectively compete in larger urbanisation and infrastructure projects, Surbana Jurong can draw on its capabilities from across the entire group to provide specialist expertise.

Surbana has been involved with the Indian market for some time; tell us something about the projects you have going in India presently.

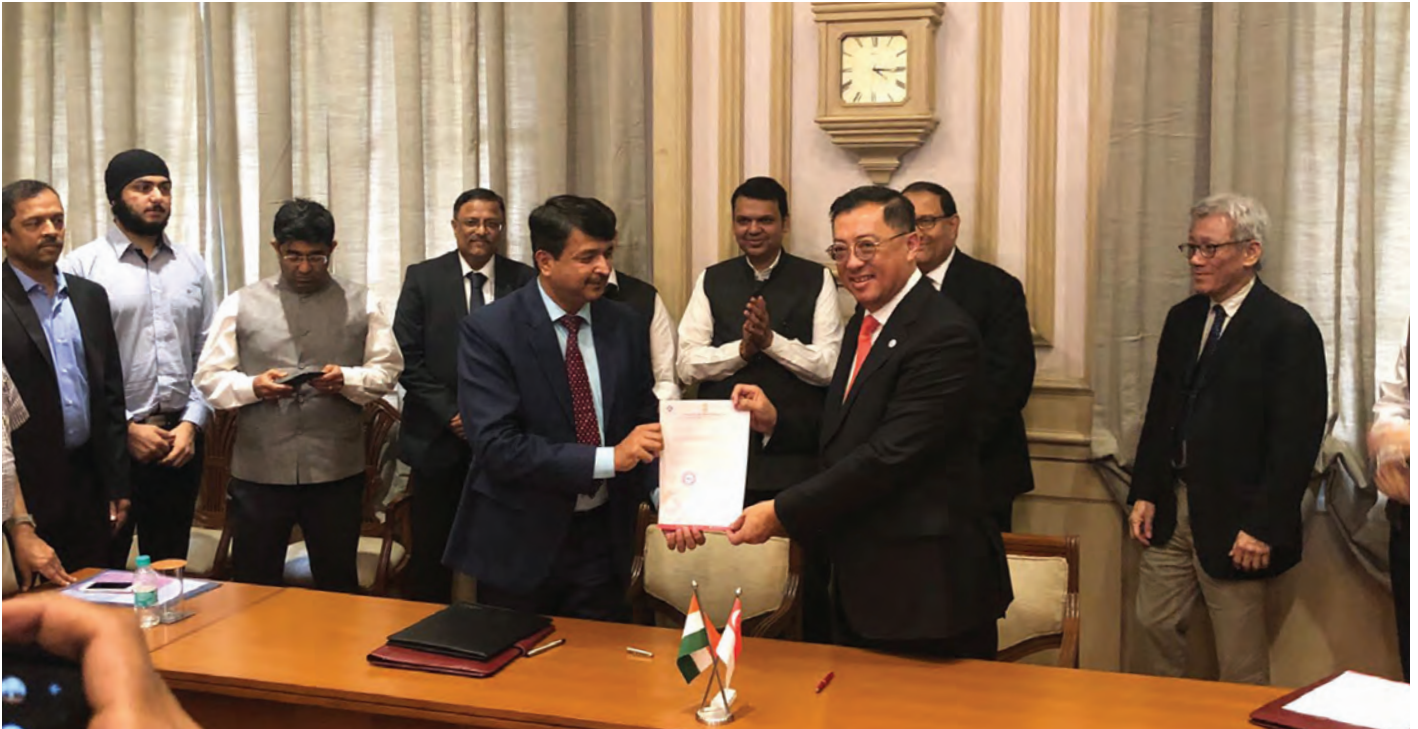
The projects experience of the Surbana Jurong Group in India is pretty diverse, and it mirrors quite radically both the depth of our expertise and our strong local roots. You may not be aware that we started our first project in India way back in 1975. After that there have been a number of significant projects of pride, including development of the vision plan for the IT corridor for Bangalore in 1998, the Mumbai Metropolitan master plan, the redevelopment of the City of Jamshedpur, the Manesar Bawal node on the Delhi- Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Mahindra World Cities and more lately the prestigious Sri City Industrial Park in Andhra Pradesh.

That not all, we also have a slew of other key projects, amongst them: the Rohtang Highway Tunnel; Kohala Hydro Electric Project; Andhra Pradesh Water Improvement Project; Pimpri Dedicated Freight Corridor and then there's the Karnataka State Highways rehabilitation project.

I must share with you that Surbana along with its other member companies, provides complete turnkey solutions across urban and infrastructure sectors; an exciting new project has been work on the Pune Metropolitan Region master plan. We also provided construction supervision consultancy services on the Green Energy Corridor in Madhya Pradesh, Integrated Masterplan and Design for Hyderabad Pharma City, Detailed Design and Engineering Services for the 1000MW Tehri Pumped Storage Project, Detailed Project Report for the Zojila Tunnel and Approach Roads, Project Management for Pimpri-Chinchwad Smart City Mission and many more.

As we can see you already have a solid presence in several key Indian cities with some really prestigious projects; where do you go from here, when it comes to your agenda for India ?

India is a large, geographically diverse and unique market on its own. Partnering closely with our



Surbana Jurong awarded project to provide masterplan for fast-growing Pune Metropolitan Region in Maharashtra. (Front row): Mr Kiran Gitte, PMRDA Commissioner and Mr Wong Heang Fine, Surbana Jurong Group CEO. (Behind them): Maharashtra's Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Singapore's Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S Iswaran

clients, we aim to establish our presence in the major cities where we can leverage the talent produced by high quality tertiary institutions. Keeping this in mind, and to further strengthen our footprint in the country, we have recently opened offices in Chennai and Guwahati, and Mumbai is in the offing.

So to reiterate, our business in India is very much on a growth path and as such we will continue to expand to meet the needs of our clients and communities. In fact, just for your knowledge the Bangalore-based Global Design Centre services multiple sectors across the globe.

India as a country has been growing steadily providing opportunities to many international players, how has your experience in the Indian market been?

We're proud to have been an integral part of India's growth story, especially after the Indian Government adopted the Economic Liberalization Policy in 1991. There has been a phenomenal growth in the Highways Sector and more recently in the Water, Power and Rail and Metro Sector—all of which have provided us ample opportunities to contribute our expertise to the development of the country.

I'd also like to add that despite the increasingly competitive environment, our strong relationships with our clients and reputation for quality delivery has kept our business on a growth trajectory. Also, considering the incessant efforts being made by the Government through development

of Smart Cities and willingness to invest in Urban and Rural Infrastructure, we envisage a really bright future ahead. The infrastructure sector is a key driver for the Indian economy, and there are on-going efforts to ensure world class infrastructure in the country.

What would be your advice to companies from Singapore and the ASEAN region that are keen to go into the Indian market?

My suggestion is that they primarily focus on the delivery of quality services and products in a timely manner, whilst seeking advice from trusted local partners. They should also genuinely make time to understand how to do business in the local market. Clients there are looking to partner with service providers who have established local offices and are committed for the long-term to support new projects and maintain existing assets. That's how Surbana Jurong and SMEC have nurtured their presence in India since 1975.

Trade, investment and tourism between Singapore and India has been on a higher growth trajectory in recent years; as an early market entrant, which sectors would you foresee growth?

Within our sectors of operation, we anticipate growth in aviation, rail, water and affordable housing. More broadly, the technology and, specifically, IT sector continues to be significant for India, with the medical tourism and logistics sector also well placed to see continued growth.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Construction Development sector (townships, housing, built

up infrastructure and construction development projects) from April 2000 to March 2019 stood at US\$ 25.05 billion, according to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). The Government of India is now expected to invest strongly in the infrastructure sector, mainly highways, renewable energy and urban transport.

What changes would you like to see in ease of doing business in India?

It must be acknowledged that the ability to interact with and operate businesses in India is certainly improving. I'm not asserting this on just my personal experience alone. This is supported by the World Bank's latest report on the ease of doing business. India witnessed a 23-notch jump to a record 77th position. That said, however, there are some areas which could do with some improvements. These would be in the areas of:

- 🌀 The financial regulatory environment, which is already receiving significant attention
- 🌀 Stronger commercial environment with more robust adherence to and enforcement of contracts
- 🌀 Framework to facilitate disciplined approach to deliver major urban and infrastructure projects
- 🌀 Approval systems on projects, including timely payment for services provided.

The Indian growth story has just begun and there is significant potential to transform this enormous nation and we at Surbana want very much to be part of that narrative.

IDY 2019: Connecting with the Common Heritage of the World

This year's International Day of Yoga commemoration was special - reaching a greater number of people in all strata of society including many in community centres, civic and private organisations, educational as well as health institutions in Singapore

It was on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal in 2014 that the United Nations declared one day in the year as International Day of Yoga. Recognising that "Yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being" the UN adopted June 21 officially as 'International Day of Yoga', which is now being celebrated the world over. The city-state of Singapore, in particular, has embraced the concept whole-heartedly with the Indian High Commission in Singapore Playing host to the event across the country.

This year, the 5th celebrations of International Day of Yoga, held to acclaim India's over 5,000-year-old physical, mental and spiritual practice which helps transform body and mind, was held on June 21, 2019. The event was kicked off at Singapore's iconic Gardens By The Bay, under the auspices of India's High Commissioner to the Republic of Singapore, High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf.

Iconic Landmark

International Day of Yoga 2019 was held at about 130 locations across the country with 190-200 sessions at a host of venues ranging from schools and colleges to health care centres and office complexes. "This is a record for the world; I don't think there is any other city in the world where International Day of Yoga is being held in this manner," said the High Commissioner at the start of the proceedings which kicked off the event at Gardens By The Bay. He was pleased that this was not just consigned to being one big event held at an iconic landmark in the city state; rather it was being carried

out in community centres, schools, colleges and universities, in health care centres, hospitals and elderly care centres...even in mental health care centres, all over the country as an exercise in making yoga part of one's life." There are very few places in the world, so open, so responsive in celebrating International Day of Yoga and more broadly adopt yoga as a way of life than Singapore," he pointed out at the huge gathering, all set for the first yoga session.

Purpose of Proposal to UN

The purpose of PM Modi's proposal to the UN for a dedicated International Day of Yoga, the High Commissioner said, was that this ancient Indian practice of physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing becomes a mass international movement. This will result in a healthier life, more holistic living, and more balanced mind to generate more noble thoughts and a more peaceful way of living.

He said, "Because yoga changes one's way of thinking, it also means there is a big difference in the way we relate to nature, both in terms of footprint and in the way we respect it. As it creates a harmony between our inner self and the world around us, and between humans and the planet."

The High Commissioner advised people about the need to do yoga in the prescribed manner, which includes asanas, pranayama, correct breathing and meditation —as this ancient science of wellness is propelled by a holistic view of man's wellbeing. "Done correctly (on a daily basis) it's not just a morning

ritual, about strong muscles and a series of exercises or the capacity to run a marathon; yoga can promote a healthier life, positive energy (as it counters stress brought about by the challenges we face at many levels in everyday life) resulting in an integrated sense of wellbeing. As a way of life, yoga can transform the way we approach ourselves, our work, our relationships with people around us - and the cosmos at a higher plane," said the High Commissioner.

International Movement

Over 193 member countries of the United Nations are observing International Day of Yoga in thousands of cities across the globe, bringing scores of people together to see and experience what yoga can do for their lives. Every yoga practitioner is becoming a part of a global movement for a better life, a better world and a better planet.

As shared by Adam Fazlur who has been teaching yoga in Singapore and Malaysia for over 15 years now, "In India it is an ancient tradition to inculcate the spirit of yoga as an intrinsic lifestyle philosophy right from a young age, so that it adopts yoga as a companion for its lifelong benefits.

High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf added, "Some might say that yoga may be an expression of soft power for India, but it is really a structured practice that can be adopted by anyone across the world as part of their daily lives." He pointed out that this ancient practice may be a gift from India, but is now the common heritage of the world.



Wild India!

Its stunning array of topographical diversities offers visitors exciting immersive experiences in India's wilderness spaces, which support nearly 6.5 percent of the world's known wildlife species

A host of National Parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests spread across India offer a window to some of the world's many endangered species— amongst them the Royal Bengal Tiger, the Asiatic elephant, the snow leopard, the Asiatic lion, the wild ass, the Indian one-horned rhinoceros, the barasingha and amongst the avifaunal kingdom the Great Indian Bustard and Bengal Florican.

Though India's wildlife heritage is of immense pride and delight to wilderness buffs, there are deeper concerns that need to be addressed to protect these vulnerable denizens of its forests and grasslands, its water bodies and ice fields, mountains and marine spaces. With agriculture, industrialization and mining gobbling up precious forestland, there is a growing loss of habitats for its many species, which creates plentiful reasons for man-animal conflict.

Keoladeo Ghana National Park

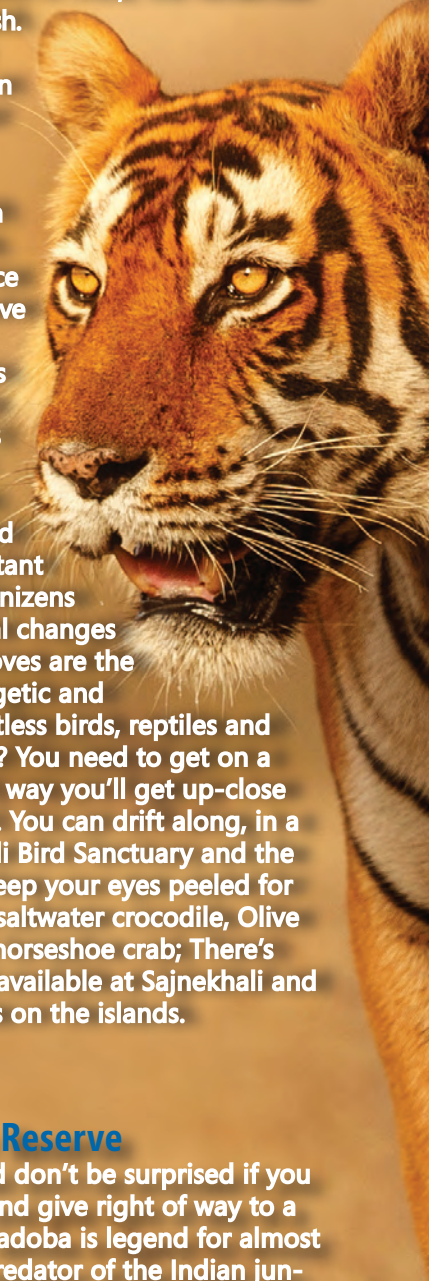
Back in the days of the Raj it played host to duck shoots for the Viceroy and his guests. Today this erstwhile private preserve of the Bharatpur royals is a UNESCO-acclaimed Natural World Heritage Site (1985) and also a precious Ramsar Wetland (1981). It's also a man-made wonder. Maharaja Suraj Mall, created this reservoir by damming up water brought in by the monsoon rains — setting up a perfect ecosystem to support an incredible number of avifaunal species. Bird shoots were banned here by the Indian government in and by 1982 it was declared a National Park. Also known as the Bharatpur bird sanctuary it is an important feeding and breeding ground for a host of rare and globally- endangered species. You can explore these gorgeous environs by bike, cycle rickshaw and tongas.

Sunderban National Park

Here the fish climb trees and tigers hunt in water— Welcome to the world's largest single tidal mangrove forest eco-system. Set amongst West Bengal's' expansive delta lands of the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers, Sunderban National Park is much-deserved UNESCO-acclaimed Natural World Heritage Site. Of its massive sprawl of 26,000sq km, 9,630 sq km falls in India, the remainder lies in neighbouring Bangladesh. Sunderban's has been long revered by wildlife buffs as an incredibly unique habitat for its fabulous wealth of flora and fauna which has over centuries come to terms with its primordial tidal environs. The supreme wildlife experience here is the sighting of the elusive Royal Bengal Tiger, whose adaptation for survival in this salt-water habitat is now the stuff of legend. It was in 1973 that it was declared a Tiger Reserve, under project Tiger, and in 1989 it was hallmarked as one of India's most important biosphere reserves. Other denizens of this primeval world of tidal changes and endless tracts of mangroves are the estuarine crocodile, the Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphin and countless birds, reptiles and amphibians. Keen to explore? You need to get on a boat; because that's the only way you'll get up-close and personal with this world. You can drift along, in a guided tour, to the Sajnekhali Bird Sanctuary and the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve. Keep your eyes peeled for endangered species like the saltwater crocodile, Olive Ridley turtle and Mangrove horseshoe crab; There's some basic accommodation available at Sajnekhali and a few privately run campsites on the islands.

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Driving down a forested road don't be surprised if you need to stop in your tracks and give right of way to a tigress and her young cubs. Tadoba is legend for almost daily sightings of the apex predator of the Indian jungles. Tadoba-Andhari Reserve (under Project Tiger since 1995) lies in Chandrapur district in eastern Maharashtra. It's not just for the tigers that people come hunting with their cameras. The other huge draw is its avifaunal wealth, largely congregated around Tadoba Lake. Amongst Maharashtra's oldest game parks the Tiger Reserve was declared a National Park in 1955. Running contiguous to it is the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary (notified in 1986), thus creating an additional expanse of 625 sq km for its tiger population. Jeep Safaris are permitted only on tourist routes in a 4WD vehicle.



Ranthambhore National Park and Tiger Reserve

Scores of heads of state and high-stepping celebs have been privileged to enjoy incredible tiger sightings in this princely game reserve set in the jungles of Ranthambhore. Straddling the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya ranges Ranthambhore is revered for its wealth of faunal, avifaunal and botanical splendour. It was in 1973 that, what was once the Sawai Madhopur Game Sanctuary, was brought under the umbrella of Project Tiger, as a one of India's top Tiger Reserves. In 1980 it was

declared a National Park and by 1991 included the adjoining expanses of the Sawai Man Singh and Keladevi sanctuaries. Of interest here too are the 10th century Ranthambhore Fort, Jogi Mahal, three lakes and a living Ganesh Temple from ancient times .



Singapore Tiger Week: Tiger Conservation Initiative

Indian and Nepalese experts on the tiger recently came together for a common cause with Singapore to highlight the plight of the tiger

Singapore Tiger Week was hosted at India House by the Indian High Commission in the Republic. Organizers Ravishing India Holidays and Singapore Wildcat Action Group used the platform to create awareness for the greater conservation of the tiger, a critically endangered species whose diminishing numbers continue to ring alarm bells for the health of the ecosystem and critical impact on the food chain. During the course of the week experts from India, Nepal, Malaysia and Indonesia spoke about the loss of habitat, man-animal conflicts, poaching etc as the main culprits for the fall in tiger numbers. They spoke passionately about conservation measures that would go a long way in helping protect their habitats and save the lives of tigers. India, thanks to its conservation practices has seen the numbers go up from 1400 in 2008 to 2,200, but as Dr Raghu Chundawat (*pictured below*), a conservation biologist pointed out, much still needs to be done, particularly in non-protected habitats



where money is needed most and support is very welcome from rich countries like Singapore. The city-state's last tiger was shot in 1930. Richard Tan of the Singapore Life Saving Society opined that Singaporeans should do their part in saving tigers because we are all part of the same family. Dr Ghazala Shahabuddin felt that Singapore had the financial resources and scientific capabilities to help tiger conservation in S.E Asia and suggested that it could be a hub for this as a lot of Singaporean are interested in tigers.

Moon Shot Just the Beginning

by Pallava Bagla

India harnesses space technology for the benefit of all



India's Moon Shot is well on its way to the Moon and if all goes well the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) hopes to soft land a robotic craft on the lunar surface in early September. Dr K Sivan the Chairman of ISRO (pictured right) has described the Chandrayaan-2 (Moon Vehicle) as the 'most complex space mission ever undertaken by India'.

India has a total of fifty operational satellites that provide navigation services, weather forecasting, help smart cities, aid satellite television and even help in banking operations, today "touching lives and saving lives is the Hallmark of ISRO" says Sivan. India has end-to-end capabilities in space making its own satellites, rockets and launching them from India. Many foreign companies use India's rockets to launch their satellites. The South Asia satellite launched in 2017 is a unique friendly bird in the sky that helps connect India's neighbours and India provided this communications satellite at no cost to the South Asian countries.

Most recently on the hot and humid afternoon of July 22, 2019 at India's rocket port the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota exactly at 2.43 pm India's most powerful rocket the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-3 nicknamed the 'Baahubali' lifted off into the monsoon clouds carrying India's Chandrayaan-2 satellite into space. In less than 17 minutes the 640 tonne rocket, equivalent to the weight of 1.5 Jumbo Jets, which stands as high as fifteen storey building at 44 meter in length completed its

mission by putting the Chandrayaan-2 satellite in a "better than expected orbit" said Sivan.

Faith & Fearlessness

Possibly the rocket was compensating for the heartburn it caused when a week earlier on July 15, 2019 the launch had to be aborted less than an hour before lift-off due to a 'technical snag'. Scientists at the Indian space agency burnt the mid night oil and fixed the glitch, bouncing back with aplomb. Speaking about the rapid come back Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "if you ask me what the two greatest lessons I have received from Chandrayaan-2, I shall say they are faith and fearlessness."

Prime Minister Modi is a known space enthusiast who knows how to deploy space technology for effective governance of the 1.3 billion Indians, he further added "the second important lesson is — never lose hope in the face of stumbling blocks or obstacles. The way our scientists rectified technical issues in record time, burning the midnight oil, is in itself an exemplary, unparalleled task. The world watched the 'Tapasya', the awesome perseverance of our scientists. We should also feel proud of the fact that despite hindrances, there is no change in the arrival time [on the moon] ... many are amazed at that. We have to face temporary setbacks in life... but always remember- the capacity to overcome them resides within us."

Mr. Pallava Bagla is the author of the book 'Reaching for the Stars: India's Journey for Mars and Beyond'



Venus Next?

India also has plans to send a planetary explorer to Venus and have another robotic mission to Mars in the next few years. The mother of all missions *Gaganyaan* is also well on its way where, by 2022 India hopes to send an Indian astronaut into space on an Indian rocket from Indian soil.

India is no doubt betting big on space technology. Prime Minister Modi says "I fervently hope that the Chandrayaan-2 mission will inspire our youth towards science & innovation. After all, science is the path to progress."

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