



India-Kuwait Relations Based on Trust, Mutual Support, Shared Values

The Times Kuwait Report

For much of the 18th and 19th century, Kuwait, with its natural harbor, its pearl diving and seafaring heritage, and its strategic location at the northern end of the Arabian Gulf, was an important trading port. In its own distinctive manner, Kuwait developed strategic partnerships and engaged in mutually beneficial business practices with countries far and wide, principal among them being India.

among them being India. Even before the period when Kuwait and India were conjoined as constituents of the British empire, a highly lucrative trade flourished between the two countries. Merchants from Kuwait, sailing their dhows propelled by the gusting monsoon winds, arrived at ports along the western coast of India. They brought with them dates, pearls and other sea products in exchange for spices, textiles and every other necessary commodity in Kuwait.



Many of the merchants sailed back on new ships built by Indian craftsmen using local wood, sailcloth, anchor ropes and navigational tools made by Indian artisans.

Having to spend a considerable time in India engaged in trade, or

as their new ships were being built, or until prevailing monsoon winds became favorable, many Kuwaiti merchants set up families and businesses in India and made the country their second home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

India and Kuwait: Partners in Progress, Prosperity and Peace

H.E. Paramita Tripathi
Ambassador of India to the State of Kuwait



calls Kuwait home.

I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His High-Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, for their patronage and for a strong India-Kuwait Partnership.

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A photograph of a woman in a pink sari dancing in front of the Taj Mahal, framed by a red archway. The image is used as the background for an advertisement.

India moving towards integrated AI development



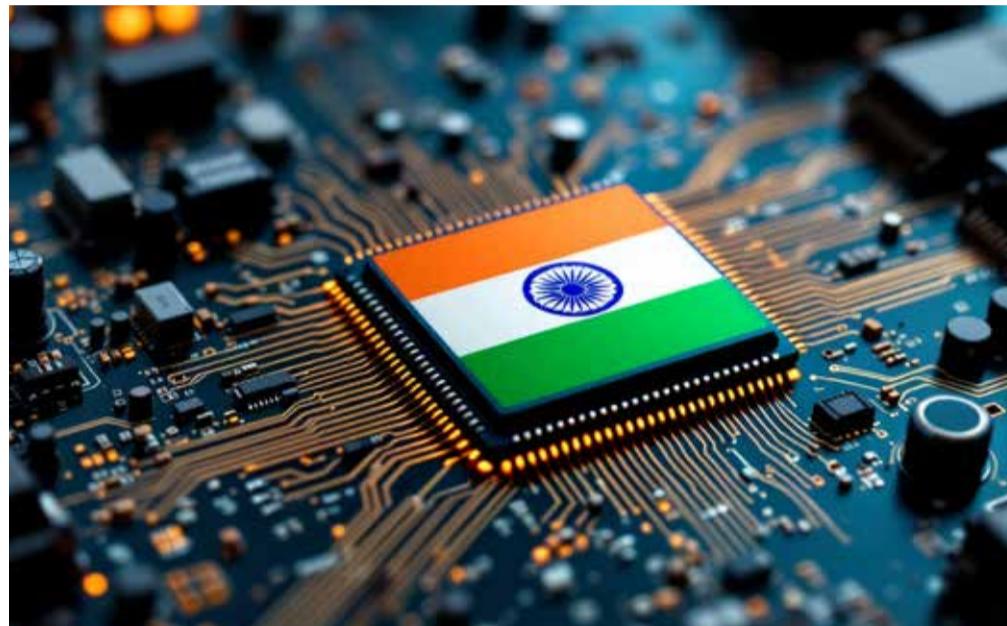
Ashwini Vaishnaw
Union Minister of Railways, I&B,
Electronics and IT

With the Fifth Industrial Revolution upon us, India is working towards building the full artificial intelligence (AI stack). This will make AI work at scale while remaining rooted in India's realities, and leaving a real impact on people's lives

Human progress has always been shaped by technology. Electricity transformed how we lived and worked. Computers changed how we processed information, and the internet connected the world. Later, mobile phones brought technology into the hands of everyone. Each phase reshaped society.

We are now entering the Fifth Industrial Revolution, where AI works alongside humans to transform every sector of the economy. It builds on the digital advances of the past decade. It focuses on humans and machines working together, using AI to improve lives and address challenges in agriculture, health, climate change and a host of other sectors.

AI is often described as a technology enabler with a multiplier effect because it strengthens existing systems rather than operating in



isolation. When used in areas like farming, healthcare, manufacturing or governance, it makes processes faster, more efficient and accurate.

Improvement in one sector creates multiple benefits across the economy, including higher productivity, lower costs and better decisions. Countries that develop and use AI effectively stand to gain an advantage in competitiveness and resilience. In this sense, AI is becoming a capability that strengthens the nation and

improves the lives of its people.

Our prime minister has consistently emphasised that technology in India must be democratised, both in usage and in development. It should not be confined to a few companies, individuals or even nations. Every section of society must benefit from it. India's digital revolution also reflects this philosophy. UPI transformed digital payments by making them open and accessible. Aadhaar enabled digital identity

at scale. India built its own 4G/5G stack. AI must also follow the same path.

AI Stack: Application First: In our understanding, the AI stack has five layers. At the top of this stack is the application layer. In the 1960s and '70s, semiconductors laid the foundation of modern electronics. But the actual impact was realised when these were widely adopted across industries. Similarly, the internet created value when people and systems began using it at scale. Mobile phones transformed society when they became part of everyday life. Sensors delivered real impact once they were widely deployed to observe and measure the physical world. The data they generated was used to solve real-world problems.

AI will follow the same pattern. Those who apply it widely will derive the maximum value from it. Today, AI and algorithms are transforming the very nature of our society. They are being used across sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, manufacturing, transport, governance and climate action.

In agriculture, for instance, AI-based sowing advice has helped farmers in Andhra Pradesh increase crop yields by up to 30 percent. AI-powered decision-making in Maharashtra has helped farmers increase sugarcane yield by 50 percent. AI is also helping improve milk yield and animal health.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

77 Indian Republic Day

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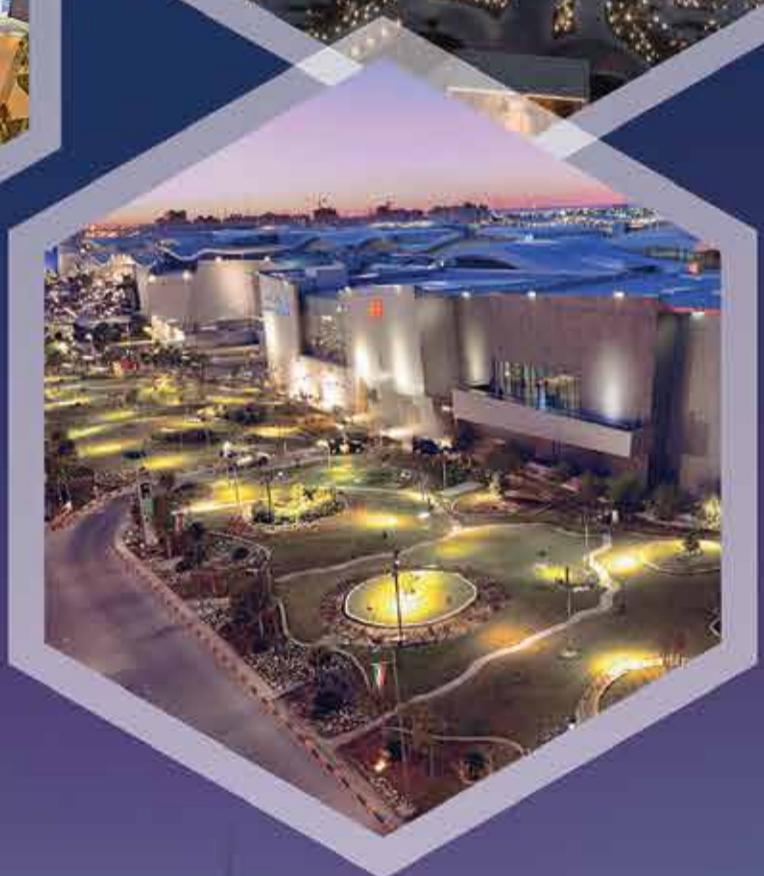
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India moving towards integrated AI development

Continued from Page 2

Wearable IoT (internet of things) devices now track nutrition, fertility and early signs of disease in farm animals. In several states, these solutions have reduced methane emissions by up to 30 per cent.

In healthcare, AI solutions are bringing top-notch hospital capabilities to district hospitals. Indian startups are developing AI screening tools that support doctors by analysing medical images and other clinical data. AI is also helping detect neurological diseases earlier and more accurately by deciphering complex brain signals. It is clear that any nation that wants to grow rapidly must learn to use AI at scale across sectors. We are following this strategy of 'AI diffusion' or AI adoption at scale.

India is among the top three startup ecosystems. Today, it is estimated that nearly 90 per cent of startups are AI-powered in some form. This shows how deeply AI is already embedded in innovation.

AI Models: Brain Behind The Applications: The second layer of the stack is AI models. While applications create visible societal impact, the AI model serves as the brain that powers them. Large

global players, including OpenAI, Google and Meta, led the early progress in developing these frontier models. Those models demonstrated what AI could achieve at scale and expanded the boundaries of what was technologically possible.

However, training and running these models required enormous computing resources, making them expensive to develop and deploy. As a result, access to advanced AI development capabilities remained limited to a few players. Then came engineering innovations that brought a slew of models from China. Decades of investment in engineering and technological research propelled these innovations.

As the model layer evolves, we have a very large number of open-source models that are developed in so many countries. These models lower the entry barriers by reducing the cost of training and deployment. Through these models, startups, researchers and developers can build on existing work rather than starting from scratch. This makes innovation faster, improves transparency and builds trust. It also allows AI to be tailored to local languages, specific sectors, and also adapt to national regulations.

But in the age of AI, it is imperative for every nation to have its sovereign models too, for they ensure data security, cultural relevance

and strategic autonomy. To achieve this goal, 12 indigenous AI models are being developed under the IndiaAI Mission. These models will be used to solve real-world problems at scale in the Indian context.

One example is Sarvam AI, which is building full-stack, India-first AI models in multiple Indian languages. It will help users for voice calls, documents and citizen services, understanding and responding in Indian languages. These models have been trained from scratch in 22 Indian and six UN languages.

In healthcare, the Qure.ai model uses AI to assist doctors in detecting TB, lung cancer and other conditions from medical images, reaching millions globally. NeuroDx is using AI to analyse brain signals (EEG) to detect neurological conditions like epilepsy and dementia early. This will enable specialised services in remote hospitals. BharatGen is developing open, India-centric foundation models in Indian languages, with 2 billion to 1 trillion parameters. These models will support research, startups and public sector applications. This shows how Indian startups are using AI to deliver affordable, inclusive and population-scale solutions across sectors.

Compute Layer: The Chips Behind The Brain: The third layer of the AI stack is the compute needed for training and inference. This compute is powered by advanced chips. Modern AI relies on powerful processors such as NVIDIA's Blackwell GPUs, Google's TPUs, NPUs, and other server-grade chips that power large-scale training and inference.

Under the India AI mission, we are supporting Indian researchers, startups and academia in training their AI models. Around 40,000 GPUs are being provided at a subsidised average rate of Rs 65 per hour, which is one-third of the global average cost. In addition, custom chips are being developed to meet specific training and inference requirements. In India too, several startups are designing specialised AI chips, strengthening domestic capabilities in AI compute. This effort is being supported by India's growing semiconductor ecosystem. Ten semiconductor projects have already been approved, including two fabs (fabrication) and eight ATMP (assembly, testing, marking and packaging) units. These projects will create chip development capabilities in India and eventually support the compute needs of India's AI and digital infrastructure in future.

Data Centres: Ai Infrastructure Layer: Data centre and network infrastructure is the fourth layer of the AI stack. Under the prime minister's forward-looking leadership, India has covered more than 85 per cent of the country with 5G services. Optical fiber cables criss-cross the country, providing network efficiencies. And now close to Rs 6 lakh crore is being invested in data centres to create the brain power that will propel us in the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

Innovation is also reshaping how data centres are built and operated. New approaches are improving cooling systems, enhancing water efficiency and reducing overall energy consumption. Expanding data centre capacity within India also reduces dependence on foreign digital infrastructure. It ensures that India's AI models, datasets and innovation pipelines remain within the country's digital jurisdiction.

Global technology leaders such as Google, Microsoft and Amazon have already announced major long-term investments in AI and data centre infrastructure in the country. Indian companies are also investing heavily. These reflect confidence in India's digital future. The growth of data centres also generates high-

value employment and supports strong local innovation ecosystems.

Energy: Fifth Layer In The AI Stack: Energy is the final layer of the AI stack. AI data centres are energy-intensive. As AI adoption grows, the need for more data centres and high-capacity power will increase. The electricity demand for data centres is expected to increase significantly.

This makes sustainable and reliable power solutions critical. Solar and wind energy are central to India's clean energy transition. However, they are intermittent and cannot by themselves meet the round-the-clock power needs of large AI systems and data centres.

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Nuclear energy, therefore, becomes an important energy source, providing clean, stable continuous power for AI infrastructure. Prime Minister Narendra Modi foresaw this challenge. The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, recently passed by Parliament, positions nuclear power as a stable and round-the-clock source of clean energy for AI and data centres.

As research in nuclear technology grows, we can expect small modular and micro reactors that will generate 15-50 megawatts of power and be deployed in compact, container-sized units. These will enable the supply of clean and reliable energy even while maintaining high safety standards. This makes nuclear power a practical on-site solution for energy-intensive digital infrastructure.

The SHANTI Act also facilitates public-private partnerships and foreign investment in India's nuclear sector. This will bring in capital, technology and expertise in the nuclear energy sector and ultimately help the development of AI and data centres.

AI For Humanity: We are building the full AI stack, step by step. It is to make AI work at scale, rooted in India's realities, affordable for innovators, and delivering real impact in people's lives. Each layer of the stack, from applications and models to compute, infrastructure and energy, is designed to remove barriers and enable widespread adoption.

As PM Modi said at the Paris AI Action Summit last year, "AI is writing the code for humanity in this century." We are building each layer of this stack with a sense of responsibility towards our people. We are making sure that the code so written fits our context, reflects our values, and actually solves real problems of people.

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Water conservation, a key aspect of India's identity, cultural history

Water conservation has been a fundamental aspect of India's identity and cultural history spanning centuries. Water conservation in the form of rainwater harvesting is an ancient Indian tradition that has become more relevant in the present-day scenario.

India is home to 18 percent of the global population and 15 percent of livestock with only 4 percent of freshwater resources, the availability of which has been decreasing over time. This makes water conservation policies and practices a key plank in the country's water security strategies.

The World Economic Forum, in its Global Risk Report for 2020, recognised water as one of the top five global risks of long-term impact. For its part, India's National Institution for Transforming India Commission (NITI Aayog) Composite Water Management Index predicts a six percent gross domestic product (GDP) loss due to decreased water availability in India.

Water conservation is therefore essential not only to overcome shortages but also for climate change risk preparedness and socio-economic development. Over the past few years, the Indian government has been making sustained and people-centric efforts to promote water



conservation and supply. It has launched several schemes, including the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission, to ensure that water does not become a limiting factor for the nation's socio-economic development.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, through his monthly radio program 'Mann ki Baat', has appealed to Indians for water conservation and under his leadership, the government is

undertaking several initiatives to promote water conservation activities across the country.

Vagaries of rainfall: Hydrologically, India is not endowed with water equity, both temporally and geographically. From June to September, the South-West monsoon contributes 70 percent of total rainfall while the North-East monsoon from October to December contributes 30 percent.

But there is an enormous regional disparity as average rainfall varies from more than 2,000 mm in the Western Ghats and Sub-Himalayan areas of the North-East to less than 500 mm in western Rajasthan and the Deccan Plateau.

On an average, India has 130 rainy days and more than 50 percent of annual precipitation takes place in less than 100 hours. Groundwater use, considered a lifeline in most parts of the country, is also increasing. India's groundwater extraction is over twice as much as the US and China put together. With the dwindling per capita water availability, over-exploitation of groundwater and inadequate storage availability, the Prime Minister's appeal is timely for addressing this critical issue. Unless addressed now, the issue can become an impediment to our rapid socio-economic development.

The Gujarat model: Water being a state subject in India, states are empowered to enact laws for its regulation. The reason for the Prime Minister's call for a people's movement in water conservation can be traced back to his pioneering role in integrated water management in Gujarat as the then Chief Minister of the State.

After taking over as the state's Chief Minister in October 2001, he took priority measures to provide safe drinking water in drought-affected areas of the state. He also introduced several developmental initiatives to promote integrated water management to meet the increasing water demand of growing economic activities.

The measures included people's participation in all water conservation and management efforts like rainwater harvesting, artificial recharge with scientific planning and monitoring, strengthening of existing canal systems and building new dams like the Sardar Sarovar dam, and distribution canal network.

He also focussed on educating farmers in water conservation and the creation of the Water and Sanitation Management Organization, to plan and implement decentralized, demand-driven and community-managed water supply systems in the villages. The integrated water management approach became very successful in Gujarat. As compared to 2004, by 2017, Gujarat had a 50 percent increase in the utilizable groundwater recharge and is continuously improving. Since 2001, agriculture production in the state has increased by 255 percent.

Today, more than 83 percent of rural households in Gujarat have an assured tap water supply and more than 76 percent of families are regularly paying monthly water service charges.

Breaking the silo approach: On a national level, PM Modi created the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019 by bringing together all related ministries and departments under one umbrella. The move meant that water, in all its manifestations, including demand and supply, quality and access could be tackled in a holistic manner.

This integrated approach to water management focussed on improving surface and groundwater availability; reversing the depletion of groundwater; improving water-use efficiency; improving service delivery in terms of provision of potable water to every household; addressing water quality issues and sustaining the Open-Defecation Free (ODF) status achieved through Swachh Bharat Mission. On 15 August, 2019, PM Modi launched the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) for providing household piped drinking water supply to every rural home by 2024. The budget allocation for the mission in 2020-21 was INR 50,011 crore. In a short span of 18 months, the percentage of households with tap connections has increased to 7.30 crore (38.15% increase).

JJM has a holistic approach to water supply, service, delivery and scientifically addresses source sustainability, water supply, greywater treatment and re-use, and water works operation and maintenance. Every village prepares a one-

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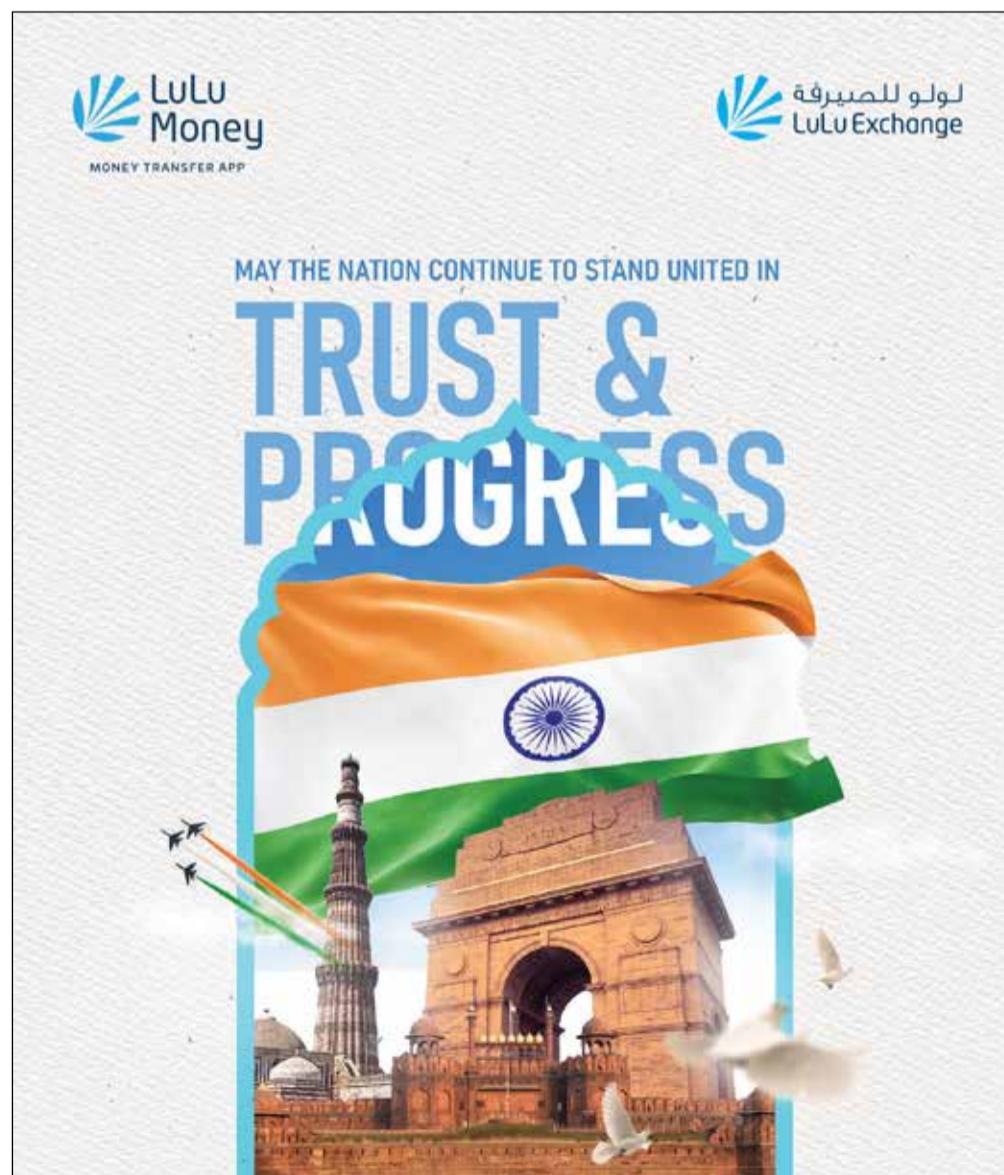
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time plan for five years called the Village Action Plan (VAP) capturing these details.

Funds are dovetailed through the convergence of several rural programs at a village level. The focus has shifted to the assured supply of potable water to every home rather than mere infrastructure creation. Increasing climate change repercussions has made us realize that water is key to public health and productivity. The Prime Minister's timely call to all citizens for action on water conservation has generated enthusiasm among all key stakeholders to add their strength for the greater good of water security for all. The momentum thus generated from the success of various government initiatives needs to be maintained for ensuring water is both available and not destroyed.

As mentioned in Yajurveda (an ancient Vedic Sanskrit text): 'Amirtham vaaapaha; amirthasya aanthararithai' (Let water be ever-present and not destroyed).



MAY THE NATION CONTINUE TO STAND UNITED IN TRUST & PROGRESS

Happy Republic Day India

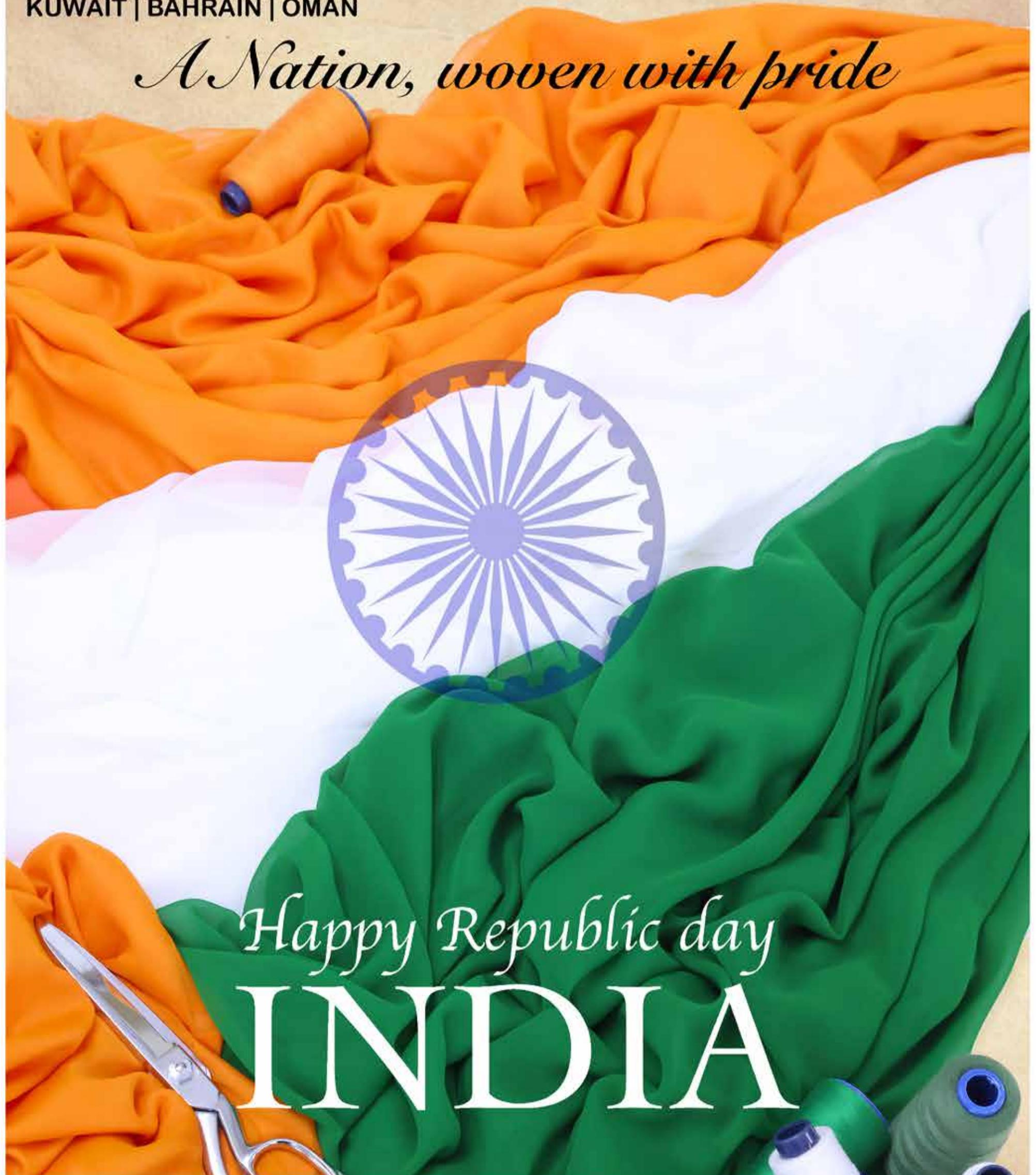
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Youth at Center of India's March Towards Viksit Bharat

In his address at the concluding session of the 'Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026' in New Delhi on 12 January, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized that the period leading up to 2047, when India marks 100 years of independence, is a decisive phase for both the nation and its youth. He stated that the strength and capabilities of young Indians will shape India's strength, and their success will elevate the country to new heights. He further underscored the critical role of youth leadership in achieving the vision of a developed India.

Noting that the event coincides with the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. "Remembering Swami Vivekananda, we celebrate National Youth Day every year on 12 January. Inspired by his ideals, 12 January has been chosen for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue. The life of Swami Vivekananda is a great guiding light for all of us", Shri Modi emphasised.

Expressing satisfaction over the rapid growth of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue, Shri Modi described it as a powerful platform enabling direct youth participation in shaping India's development agenda. "The association of crores of young people with this initiative—



more than five million registrations, over three million youths participating in the Viksit Bharat Challenge—and sharing their ideas for the nation's development, such large-scale engagement of youth power is unprecedented", Shri Modi highlighted.

Appreciating the quality of inputs, the Prime Minister particularly lauded the thoughtful

ideas presented on key themes such as Women-Led Development and Youth Participation in Democracy. Referring to the presentations made during the event, he said they reflect the strong resolve of India's Amrit Peedhi—the generation responsible to build India over the next 25 years—to build a developed nation. The Prime Minister also underlined the creativity and innovative spirit of India's Gen Z and congratulated all young participants and members of the Mera Yuva Bharat organization for the successful conduct of the dialogue.

The Prime Minister recalled the period before 2014, describing it as an era of policy paralysis, excessive red tape, and limited opportunities for youth. He noted that young people then faced cumbersome procedures for jobs, exams, and starting businesses, with delays in decision-making and poor implementation of policies. He emphasized that what seems abnormal today was routine a decade ago, highlighting how governance reforms have since changed the experience of India's youth.

The Prime Minister cited the startup ecosystem as an example of change, noting that despite global growth in startup culture over decades, India had very limited focus on startups before 2014. "Until 2014, there were fewer than 500 registered startups in the country. In the absence of a startup culture, government intervention dominated every sector. Our youth talent, their capabilities, did not get the opportunity to fulfill their dreams", Shri Modi remarked.

The Prime Minister emphasized his trust in the capabilities of India's youth, stating that this confidence led to a new development approach focused on empowering young innovators. He highlighted key reforms and initiatives such as Startup India, Digital India, Ease of Doing Business, and simplification of tax and compliance, which accelerated India's startup revolution by opening previously government-dominated sectors to entrepreneurship.

Citing the space sector as a major example, Shri Modi said, "Until 5–6 years ago, the responsibility of advancing the space sector rested solely with ISRO. We opened the space sector to private enterprise, and created supporting frameworks and institutions." Shri Modi noted that opening it to private participation has led to the emergence of over 300 startups. He highlighted achievements by Skyroot Aerospace and Agnikul Cosmos as evidence of how youth-led innovation is transforming India into a global leader in emerging technologies.

The Prime Minister highlighted how easing restrictive regulations transformed the drone sector, which was earlier burdened by complex laws and licensing. "Simplified rules enabled youth-led growth in drone technology, benefiting national security and agriculture

through Made-in-India drones and initiatives like the Namo Drone Didis", he added.

He also noted major reforms in the defence sector, which public enterprises once dominated. "Today, more than 1,000 defence startups are operating in India. One young person is building drones, another is developing anti-drone systems, someone is creating AI-powered cameras, while others are working in robotics," Shri Modi underscored.

The Prime Minister highlighted the impact of the Digital India initiative in nurturing a new generation of creators and driving the growth of India's Orange Economy, centred on culture, content, and creativity. "India is witnessing unprecedented growth in the 'Orange Economy', that is, culture, content, and creativity. India is emerging as a major global hub in areas such as media, film, gaming, music, digital content, and VR-XR" Shri Modi noted. "The 'World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit' (WAVES) has become a major launch pad for young creators. In other words, no matter the sector, the doors of limitless opportunities are opening in India today," Shri Modi added. He urged youth to pursue their ideas boldly, assuring them of the government's continued support.

The Prime Minister stated that the reform agenda initiated over the last decade has accelerated, with youth at its core. He highlighted next-generation GST reforms and tax relief up to ₹12 lakh as measures that simplify processes and increase savings for young professionals and entrepreneurs. Emphasizing the growing demand for energy driven by AI and advanced manufacturing, he noted that reforms in civil nuclear energy, the SHANTI Act, aim to ensure an assured power supply, generate large-scale employment, and create positive spillover effects across the economy.

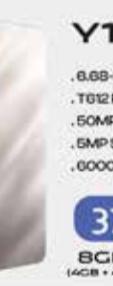
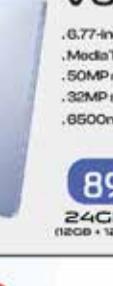
The Prime Minister highlighted global workforce shortages and emphasized India's strategy to prepare its youth for international opportunities. "Our effort is to ensure that India's youth are prepared for the opportunities emerging across the world. Therefore, continuous reforms are being carried out in sectors related to skill development", Shri Modi underlined. He reiterated that after the new National Education Policy, regulations related to higher education are now being reformed. "Foreign universities are also opening their campuses in India. Recently, the PM SETU Programme was launched with investments worth thousands of crores of rupees. Under this, thousands of ITIs will be upgraded so that youth can be trained in line with the current and future needs of industry", Shri Modi noted.

The Prime Minister stressed that self-confidence is essential for a country to be self-reliant and developed. He also highlighted the importance of being open to global knowledge while valuing India's own heritage, quoting the Vedic phrase 'Aano Bhadrāh Kratavo Yantu Vishwatah', meaning 'Let auspicious, beneficial, and excellent thoughts come to us from all directions'. "You must learn from the best practices around the world, but never let the tendency to undervalue your own heritage and ideas dominate", Shri Modi stated.

Shri Modi cited Swami Vivekananda who embraced global ideas but challenged misconceptions about India, inspiring a vision for a better nation. He encouraged youth to advance with energy, maintain fitness, and embrace joy, expressing unwavering faith in their potential. "I have complete faith in all of you, in your capabilities and energy. With these words, I once again wish you all a very Happy National Youth Day", the Prime Minister concluded.

Happy Republic Day

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India and Kuwait: Partners in Progress, Prosperity and Peace

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Republic Day and the enduring legacy of 'Vande Mataram': Today, we celebrate not just a date on the calendar, but the enduring idea of India that came alive with the adoption of our Constitution on 26 January 1950. Seventy-seven years after our Constitution came into force, India's tryst with democracy is stronger and more confident than ever before. As we mark Republic Day, we honor the framers of our Constitution, and the millions of Indians representing 'we the people' who give it life, meaning, and strength every day.

We all know that India's Independence in 1947 came after a long struggle during which the song 'Vande Mataram' composed by Shri Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay became the voice of India's freedom struggle. It was adopted as India's national song on 24 January 1950 by the Constituent Assembly. As we celebrate 150 years of 'Vande Mataram' let us be reminded of not only how we won our freedom, but also of how we must safeguard it.

India continues firm on its upward growth and development trajectory

The story of India is one of aspiration, confidence, and steady transformation, despite a challenging global environment. India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies, with annual GDP growth above 6 percent and quarterly growth reaching 8.2 percent in 2025.

India is now the world's fourth-largest economy, charting a confident course toward becoming the third largest by 2030, with GDP projected at US\$7.3 trillion.

India is rapidly expanding its capacity in areas such as smartphone production, semiconductors, and medical equipment, making it an attractive alternative to traditional manufacturing hubs. In pharmaceuticals, India remains a global leader in generics and is scaling up production in high-value areas such as biotechnology and vaccines, reinforcing its role as a key player in global healthcare.

Across India, new expressways, airports, metro systems, and logistics corridors are transforming the way people live and work, while enhancing investment and employment. Government of India's flagship initiatives, such as Make in India, Digital India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat, are boosting manufacturing, supporting startups, and bringing digital services to citizens, from real-time payments through UPI or Unified Payments Interface to new e-commerce and governance platforms.

India's science and technology achievements have brought special pride, with the successful Chandrayaan-3 soft landing near the Lunar South Pole and advanced preparations for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission. India is deepening its role in climate action, expanding renewable energy capacity, and leading the International Solar Alliance, of which Kuwait is

a member, while reaffirming its commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.

India's growing global role: The ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family) remains the guiding star of India's foreign policy, with democracy, pluralism, and unity in diversity forming the traditional ethos of Indian society. India believes in the principle of strategic autonomy and follows a path of multi-alignment.

India's global engagement has continued to gain depth and respect, including its successful G20 Presidency, which helped amplify the voice of the Global South and brought the African Union into the grouping as a permanent member. India's reputation as a reliable first responder in humanitarian crises has reinforced its credibility on the world stage.

Through sustained leadership in fora such as the United Nations, G20, BIMSTEC, and BRICS, India has emerged as a credible bridge between regions and perspectives. India has been working closely with partners globally, in the Gulf, Asia, Indo-Pacific, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, on issues ranging from trade and technology to energy security and climate resilience.

This outward engagement is guided by the belief that global challenges, whether pandemics, climate change, or supply-chain disruptions, require cooperative solutions. India's growing economic weight and youthful demography have reinforced its role as a trusted and responsible stakeholder in shaping a more balanced, multipolar world.

Sabah was awarded the Padma Shri in early 2025 for her efforts in promoting Yoga. In May 2025, the Indian Embassy and Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) hosted an exhibition at the National Library to commemorate 250 years of friendship, showcasing rare documents and historical artifacts.

Kuwaiti achievements and shared aspirations: Kuwait is on an inspiring path of renewal and reform under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Vision 2035, with its focus on diversifying the economy, modernising infrastructure, and creating a knowledge-based society, resonates strongly with India's own development aspirations. In these efforts, Indian companies, professionals, engineers, doctors, teachers, and skilled workers are proud to be partners, bringing experience from India's own modernisation journey.

The Indian community: a living bridge: The Indian community of over one million in Kuwait is at the heart of this special partnership, serving as a living bridge between our countries. From hospitals and schools to banks, businesses, construction sites, and IT firms, Indian professionals and workers contribute daily to Kuwait's growth story while remaining deeply connected to their roots. Indians lead the workforce community in Kuwait, with around 0.9 million workers, about 30 percent of Kuwait's total workforce, thus serving as an important partner in Kuwait's development story while reinforcing strong people-to-people ties.

Indian schools in Kuwait, now numbering over two dozen and educating more than 50,000 children, symbolise this bond of hearts and minds, nurturing future generations who feel at home with both Indian and Kuwaiti cultures. The community's charitable initiatives, cultural festivals, and support networks, whether during the pandemic, in emergencies, or in everyday life, showcase the best of Indian values in their adopted home. Kuwait, for its part, has extended generosity and understanding to Indian residents, and both Governments remain productively engaged on issues of welfare, labour rights, and consular facilitation.

We, the Embassy, place our highest priority on the welfare and well-being of the Indian Community in Kuwait. I thank all community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, and members of the Indian community for joining hands with the Embassy to ensure and enhance the welfare of the community and to strengthen the India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership.

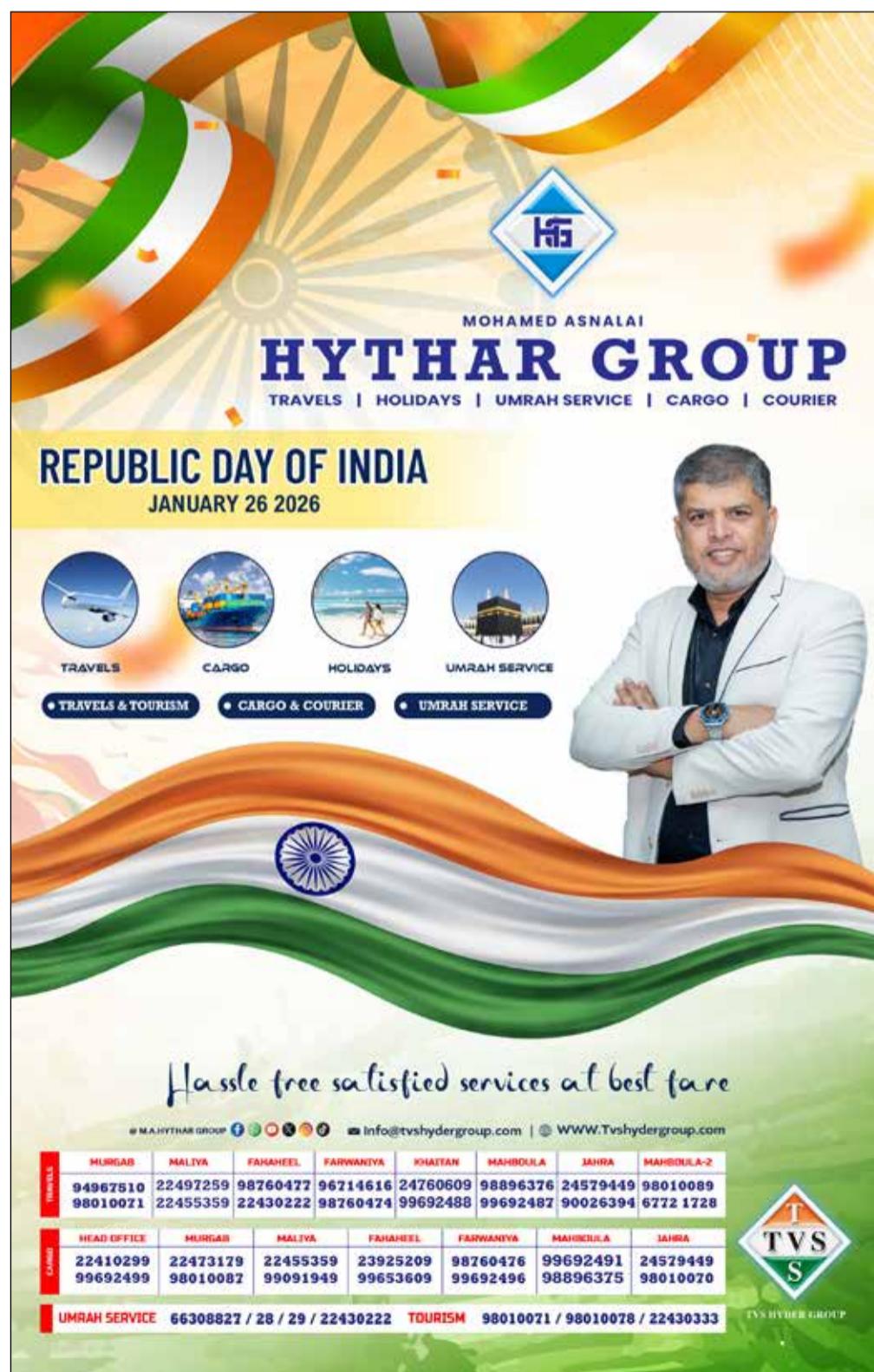
Looking ahead with confidence: As we mark this significant occasion, the path ahead for India-Kuwait relations is full of promise. The Strategic Partnership, the Joint Commission for Cooperation, and the agenda set during Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit provide a clear roadmap for deeper cooperation across a wide range of areas.

Future high-level exchanges will help sustain this momentum, ensure regular reviews, and open new opportunities for businesses, professionals, investors, researchers, and students in both countries.

The successes of India and Kuwait in the years ahead will be greater when our two hands work together in harmony: one from the shores of the Arabian Sea, the other from the Gulf, joined in friendship, trust, and shared aspiration.

On this joyous occasion, I once again extend my warmest greetings to the leadership and the friendly people of Kuwait and to all Indians in Kuwait, with a heartfelt wish that our Strategic Partnership continues to flourish for the benefit and prosperity of the people of India and Kuwait.

Jai Hind! Vande Mataram!



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India-Kuwait Relations Based on Trust, Mutual Support, Shared Values

Continued from Page 1

This shared history of strong business ties and familial lineage, then a major component of Kuwait-India relations, was further cemented during the colonial era. In the sea-saw battle by European powers, contending for domination, control and pre-emption around the world, British India extended its reach to the Gulf region through the protection treaty signed between Great Britain and Kuwait in 1899.

For the next many decades, political and economic interests of strategic importance to the British Empire overshadowed and dominated all other relations between Kuwait and India. It was only after British domination ended with the independence of India in 1947 and Kuwait in 1961 that relations were brought back on an even keel. Following independence of both countries, bilateral ties were further reinforced, through visits and discussions by leaders and officials of both countries on issues of common interest and means of strengthening bilateral relations in all spheres.

India and Kuwait not only share a historical affinity, cultural empathy and buoyant mutual trade, we also share democratic values, religious tolerance, equal opportunities, an open media,



free and fair elections and, yes, until recently in Kuwait, a fractious parliament. Farsighted leaders at the helm in both countries have a clear appreciation of the implications of international economic trends such as globalisation and its trade practices, of global advances in information technology and of changes driven by a knowledge based economy.

Both India and Kuwait are also aware of

their youthful demographic dividend, and the enormous potential for trade to create strategic partnerships around the world. Both countries are also conscious of the fact that geographical size alone is not a guarantee of economic prosperity, and, nor is it a constraint to creating economic opportunities.

In today's globalised world and liberalised economic environment, any country given the right fundamentals can become a center of economic activity. This realisation has allowed both countries to provide new direction and impetus to their economies by opening up their markets and embracing changes consistent with international practices.

Also, to ensure inclusive growth for its people both countries have renewed their emphasis on economic development by reinvigorating the private sector, widening their industrial base and generating additional venues and opportunities of employment for its youth.

India has consistently been among the top-ten trading partners of Kuwait. Indian exports to Kuwait included food items, cereals, textiles, garments, electrical and engineering equipment, ceramics, machinery and mechanical appliances, cars, trucks, buses, tyres, chemicals, jewelry, handicrafts, metal products, iron and steel, and others. While Kuwaiti exports were mainly in oil and its derivatives. To Kuwait, India is not only a major trading partner, Indians also account for the largest expatriate community in the country. By the end of 2025, the Indian community in Kuwait reached over a million who contribute effectively to the Kuwaiti economy.

Given the strong historical ties and trade links between Kuwait and India and the people to people contacts, Kuwait and India share a relationship that is both unique and special. The ties were further cemented in December 2024 with the historic visit to Kuwait by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when the two sides decided to elevate their relations to a strategic level.

Among the many areas that could be developed to take the relationship to the next level are: accelerating institutionalised and strategic consultation mechanisms, fostering better business to business interactions, facilitating joint research and academic cooperation in scientific, technological and healthcare fields, supporting human resource development and training in medical, educational and defense spheres, as well as promoting trade exhibitions and cultural exchanges through regular events in both countries.

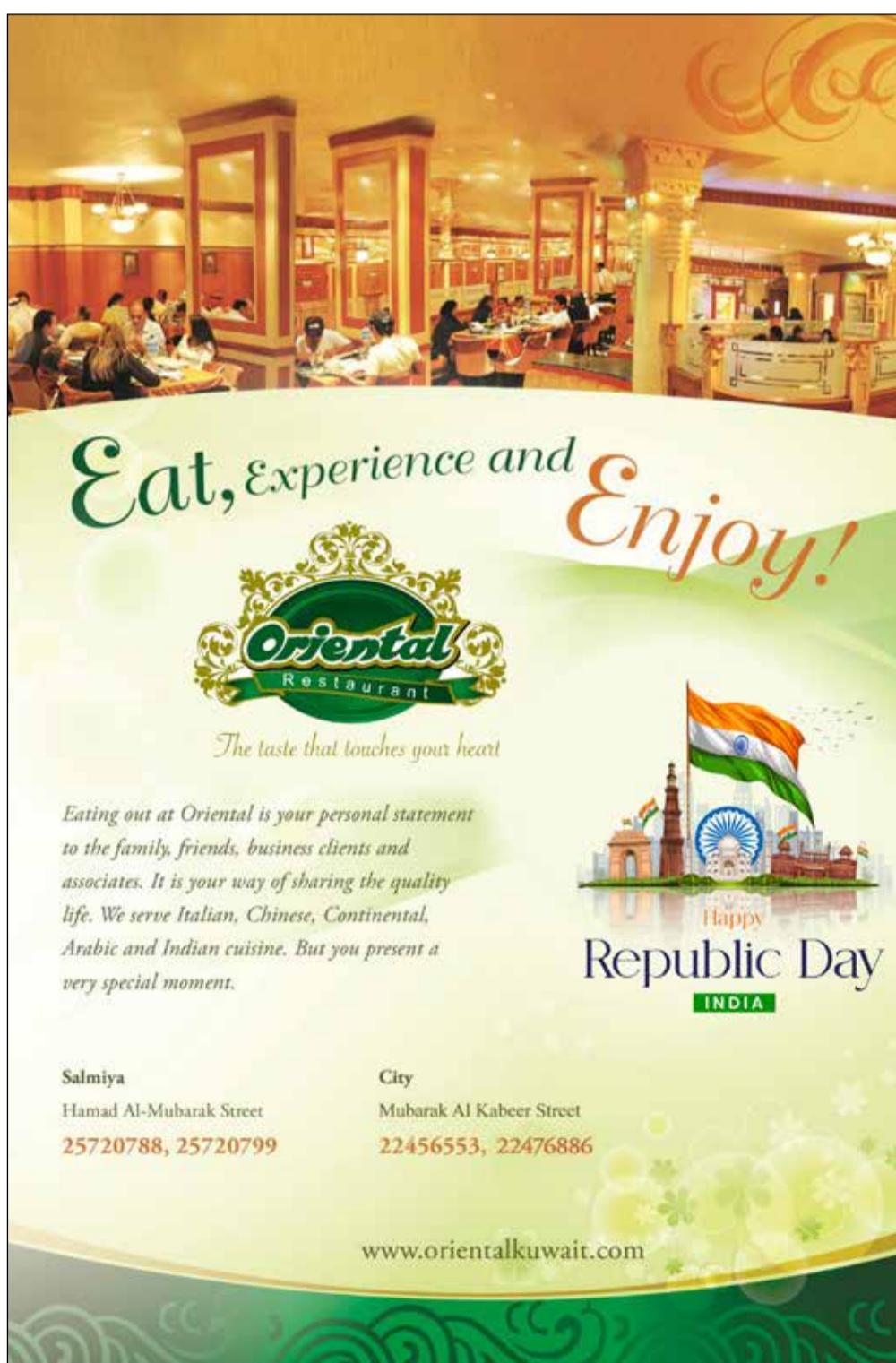
There are also a number of areas where Kuwait and India could cooperate to confront the challenges facing them bilaterally and on the international arena, including the

environment, agriculture, human resources and their shared concerns for security and stability in the region.

Focussing on the economic dimension alone, it soon becomes apparent that there is enormous potential for the two countries to work towards their mutual benefit. Kuwait, situated at the vanguard of a hinterland teeming with a young and vibrant population yearning for change and economic prosperity, could become a production hub for many knowledge-based industries and a platform for value additions to medium and small enterprise sectors in the region.

Besides the substantial scope for joint venture partnerships in innovative businesses, collaboration with its skilled manpower and exchange of technical and managerial expertise, India also offers Kuwait one of the best investment platforms in the world. India, the fourth largest global economy in terms of purchasing parity power and the seventh largest country in size, is a market of a billion plus people with a seemingly insatiable demand for goods and services.

In addition to its size and large population, India also has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Kuwait's Sovereign Wealth Fund, which is among the largest in the world, will find India an ideal investment destination. With strong financial fundamentals, robust legal framework and a booming economy propelled by intrinsic growth brought on mainly by consumption and capacity demand, there are very few places in the world with investment potential as promising as India.



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As the two countries remain poised to enter a new phase in the centuries-old relationship, it bears remembering that the destinies of Kuwait and India are inter-linked by historical ties, close geographic proximity, strong cultural affinity and an open and broadminded viewpoint that embraces diversity and pluralism. The overarching vision that Kuwait and India have for a future is also defined within the shared parameters of peace, stability and economic prosperity, democratic values and a global outlook.

To ensure a stable and secure regional environment and continued economic prosperity for its people, Kuwait and India must consciously work towards nurturing and developing these strategic relations that have epitomised their interactions for centuries.

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India: A colorful platter of food diversity

Being such a large and diverse country, it is not surprising that Indian cuisine varies considerably as one crosses the borders of its states and territories, and sometimes even between districts within states. Endowed with this multitude of exotic cuisines and dishes that encompass every known flavor, and range from mild to fiery hot, it is no wonder that Indian cuisine enjoys a premier standing among world cuisines.

Each of the 28 states and 8 union territories has its own unique identity in terms of demography, history, tradition and culture, which along with the religious diversity of the country, influences the cuisine of the region, the foods used and cooking methods employed.

The country's vastness, its ethnic diversity, vibrant culture,

varying topography and historic significance contribute to the versatility of dishes when moving from north to south or east to west. Along with culinary diversity, festivals and special occasions also feature a variety of mouth watery delicacies.

Renowned for its exotic spices in ancient times, Indian dishes are infused with a tantalizing blend of spices with unique flavors.

Besides lending distinct flavors, and sizzling aromas to the dishes, spices also serve as a characteristic coloring and act as a substitute in place of artificial preservatives.

On this 77th Republic Day, let us celebrate Indian culinary diversity with a few recipes of savory delicacies one should definitely try out.



Hyderabadi Biryani

Hyderabadi biryani, with its distinct mix of spices, meat and rice, and meticulous preparation method that lends it a rich flavor and unique taste, is said to have originated in the kitchens of the Nizams of Hyderabad in the 18th century.

Although several variations of this dish exist across India, the style of cooking inevitably remains essentially the same, with the raw meat, rice and spices cooked together, unlike other biryani recipes.

Ingredients:

- 1kg meat
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tbsp red chili paste
- 1 tbsp green chili paste
- Sautéed brown onions (to taste)
- 1/2 tbsp cardamom powder
- 3-4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 4 cloves
- A pinch of mace

- Mint leaves to taste
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 250g curd
- 4 tbsp clarified butter
- 750 gms semi-cooked rice
- 1 tsp saffron strand
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup oil
- For garnishing:
- Eggs, boiled carrots, sliced cucumbers

Instructions:

In a pan, add the meat, salt, ginger-garlic paste, red chili powder, green chili paste, sautéed brown onions, cardamom powder, cinnamon, cumin seeds, cloves, mace, mint leaves and lemon juice.

Mix well and then add curd, clarified butter, semi-cooked rice, saffron, water and oil. Mix to bring all ingredients together

Wet flour to form a sticky dough, and paste it along the top edge of the pan, place the lid and seal with dough. Cook for about 25 minutes.

Remove the lid and garnish the rice mixture with boiled eggs, sliced carrots, cucumbers and serve hot.

Chicken Makhani/ Butter Chicken

This flavorful, fragrant curry is a favorite amongst foodies across the globe. A vibrant texture with tender chicken traditionally cooked in a tandoor (clay oven) will spice up your taste buds. Butter Chicken, which originates from Northern India, is a staple in restaurants across the country and is a classic chicken recipe that can never be out of place when serving guests.

Ingredients:

For marinating:

- 1kg boneless, skinless chicken cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 tsp red chili powder
- 2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup curd
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp kasuri methi (dried fenugreek leaves)
- 2 tsp mustard oil

For gravy:

- 2 tsp oil,
- 4 cubes butter or as per taste
- 3 gram cloves,
- 1 cinnamon Stick (broken),
- 1 tsp mace
- 7 cardamom seeds
- 4 tomatoes (chopped)
- 1 tsp garlic
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 1/2 tsp red chili powder
- 1 tsp kasuri methi
- 2 tsp honey
- 1 green chili
- 2 tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tbsp cream

Instructions:

Place the chicken pieces in a mixing bowl,



add salt, red chili powder, ginger-garlic paste and lemon juice. Mix and refrigerate for 15-20 minutes. Add curd to the refrigerated mix, followed by more salt, ginger-garlic paste, red chili powder, garam masala, kasuri methi and mustard oil. Mix well and refrigerate again for an hour.

Roast the marinated chicken in an oven for about 30 minutes or sear the chicken in a skillet or pan until it is three-fourth done.

Heat 2 tsp of oil in another pan with 2 cubes of butter. Add cloves, cinnamon stick, mace and cardamom. Sauté for a few minutes then add chopped tomatoes, garlic and ginger.

In another pan, heat another two cubes of butter, along with ginger-garlic paste, add the tomato puree made from the mixture.

Add red chili powder, kasuri methi, honey and finally the roasted chicken pieces. Let it simmer, add green chili, cardamom powder and cream. Mix well.

Serve with a teaspoon of cream over the dish

Goan Prawn Curry

With such a lengthy coastline, it's no surprise that some of the best Indian specialties involve fish. Among the numerous renditions, Goan prawn curry is high on the list. What really gives the curry an edge, however, is the use of tamarind pulp to add a pleasantly sour tang. Next, coconut (shredded, cream, or milk) is incorporated into the dish, highlighting the fruit's abundance in Goa. The sauce often incorporates tomato and onion, and the fresh flavors of coriander leaves are always welcome.

Ingredients

- 400g raw king prawns, deveined, with tails on
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tbsp Goan vinegar or malt vinegar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 90g onion, finely chopped
- 80g tomato, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, pounded to a paste
- 2.5cm piece of fresh root ginger, pounded to a paste
- 400ml coconut milk
- 80 ml water
- 1 tbsp tamarind paste
- 3 green chilies, slit lengthwise
- Pinch of sugar
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves, to garnish



For the powdered spices

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 15-18 black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds

Instructions:

- In a bowl add the prawns and sprinkle over the turmeric powder, vinegar and salt. Mix and set aside for 15-20 minutes while you get the curry ready. In a coffee grinder tip in the cumin seeds, peppercorns and coriander seeds.
- Blitz to a fine powder and set aside. Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat and add the onions and fry for 5-7 minutes until they start to change colour to a light brown.
- Add the chopped tomato and fry for 5 minutes. As they begin to soften add the garlic and ginger paste and fry for a further minute. Now add the powdered spices and mix it all together.
- Fry for 2 minutes and add the marinated prawns. Stir, coating them in the spiced sauce for a further 20-30 seconds, then add the coconut milk, water and tamarind paste. Cover and simmer gently for no more than 4-5 minutes until the prawns turn pink. Add the green chilies and sugar. Garnish with coriander leaves and check seasoning. Serve with lime and coriander rice.



Aloo gobi (potato-cauliflower)

Renowned as a 'comfort food', and a flavorful and healthy option to boot, Aloo Gobi is as simple to prepare and as rustic as it can get. This combination of soft chewy potatoes and crunchy cauliflower is cooked in numerous styles varying from region to region.

Ingredients

- 2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 2 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1 cup water
- 1 large serrano pepper (split down the middle leaving halves attached)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 small head cauliflower (cut into small florets)
- 1 potato (peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes)
- Salt to taste
- 2 tsp freshly minced cilantro leaves (for garnish)

Instructions:

- To form a wet masala, mix the ginger-garlic paste, coriander, turmeric, and 1/2 cup water in a small bowl and set aside
- In a pan, warm the oil over medium-high heat until simmering, but not smoking. Add the serrano pepper, and after a few seconds, the cumin seeds and wait for a few more minutes
- Add the wet masala and cook for around 2 minutes, until the paste thickens and oil oozes up from the masala
- Add the cauliflower and potatoes, stirring to coat the vegetables with the masala
- Add salt, 1/2 cup water, cover and cook over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes
- Stir once carefully, and cook until the cauliflower and potatoes are cooked
- Garnish with cilantro and serve hot.

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There is something about watching animals interacting in their natural environment, their hunting, feeding, playing and caring, that appeals to everyone's basic instincts. It could be the novelty or curiosity that impels us to experience wildlife in its raw surroundings, or perhaps, witnessing the primordial nature of these wildlife interactivities strikes a chord on the strings of our evolutionary roots.

India is blessed in that it has an abundance of spectacular ecological, topographic, climatic and geographic variations across the country that are made even more attractive by the diversity of its wildlife, and wildlife experiencing opportunities, bundled within its borders. Wildlife experiences in India are truly exciting, allowing us to get in touch with nature and take a break from the concrete jungle that engulfs us. With so many wildlife vacations on offer across the length and breadth of India, it is often difficult to narrow down the choices to just one region or place.

Nevertheless, whether you have two weeks to spare or two days, there is a wildlife vacation to suit you. From endangered species of wildlife to ones that have been rehabilitated in their natural ecosystems, from lumbering elephants to fleet-footed cheetahs, and on to tiny endemic species of amphibians, mammals and birds, India offers you the opportunity to see them all.

The country's rich diversity in natural forests and sprawling parklands hosting a multitude of wildlife species makes India a magnet for tourists looking for adventure and for exploring unspoiled natural beauty in an eco-friendly tourism mode. Wildlife abodes abound in India and span from the lofty Himalayan ranges down to the plains and coastlines. The diversity of wildlife experiences in India are amazing and its uniqueness can only be experienced.



Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh: Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its outstanding biodiversity in 2014, this beautiful national park is more a space to enjoy nature than chase after animals.

A place of stunning natural beauty, with misty mountains and silvery rivers, the higher reaches of the park (accessed by trekking) are home to the Himalayan brown bear, Himalayan tahr (wild goat), bharal (blue sheep) and other magnificent mountain animals. You can also spot birds like the Himalayan griffon vulture, the huge golden eagle and Himachal's state bird, the western tragopan.



Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand: The country's oldest national park, Corbett has always been a favorite weekend getaway from Delhi – and a popular destination for family holidays. Jim Corbett's forest is steeped in history and locals will tell you amusing tales about the legendary figure Carpet Sahib. The sightings of elephants, wild boars and tigers are fascinating. Take a safari or sit on the forest's edge, inside your luxury retreat, having a fine meal and enjoying the therapeutic sounds of the jungle.



Kaziranga National Park, Assam: The only habitat of the endangered one-horned rhino, Kaziranga draws wildlife addicts from across the world for a glimpse of this massive beast. A beautiful park with tall grasslands, Kaziranga safaris are mostly on elephants rather than in vehicles. Because of its unique biodiversity, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, and is also home to tigers, bears, panthers and elephants, along with hundreds of exotic birds.



Manas National Park, Assam: The second national park in Assam that is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Manas National Park is less frequented than the popular Kaziranga, which means it offers a more untouched wildlife experience. Its most famous resident is the pygmy hog, apart from other strange and wonderful creatures like the Assam roofed turtle and the golden langur. There is also the chance to spot a tiger.

Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh: A relatively smaller park, it nevertheless has the highest density of tigers in the country, in addition to a vast biodiversity and topography. The 2,000-year-old Bandhavgarh Fort inside the park stands testimony to the times when this used to be hunting grounds for the Rewa maharajas, and makes for an unforgettable backdrop to jungle safaris.

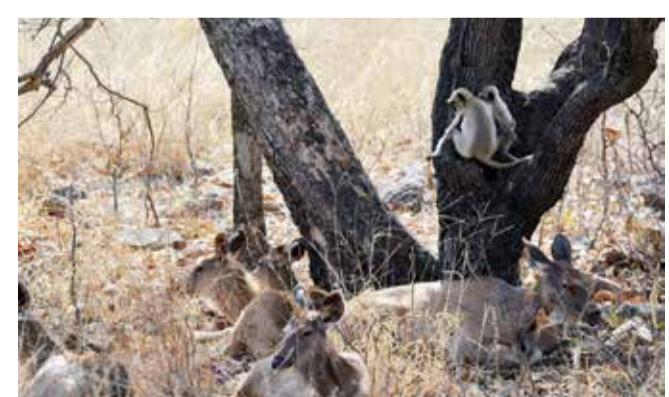
Today, this National Park is a haven for animals and birds with over 250 species of birds, 37 species of mammals and



80 species of butterflies. The park also contains many rock paintings and man-made caves. Also not to miss are the White Tigers that reside in their natural habitat within this parkland.



Sundarbans National Park, West Bengal: On the southern edge of West Bengal, facing the Bay of Bengal, is this unique part of the country: the world's largest river delta with mangroves and mudflats around a network of creeks and water channels. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site to protect its fragile ecosystem, the Sundarbans National Park is the largest reserve for the Royal Bengal tiger, apart from being ideal territory for spotting crocs, reptiles and a large variety of water fauna.



Panna National Park, Madhya Pradesh: When it comes to wildlife, Madhya Pradesh is blessed with some of the country's best parks boasting the highest chances of a tiger sighting. Another of its gems is the verdant Panna National Park, where you can spot the sloth bear, the sambar, nilgai and, if you are lucky, the tiger and the leopard. The surroundings make for a beautiful spot to enjoy a picnic breakfast and listen to the sounds of birds, such as the blossom-headed parakeet and changeable hawk-eagle.



Kabini Forest Reserve, Karnataka: The biggest attraction at Kabini right now is its resident melanistic leopard, or the black panther that is spotted frequently during wildlife safaris into Nagarhole National Park.

On the park's periphery, Kabini Reserve is the ideal place to stay for the region's best hotels and a whole host of wildlife experiences – such as boat safaris on the Kabini River, coracle rides and bird-watching walks.

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra: A beautiful park that is still less known, Tadoba offers a chance to sight the dhole, or wild dog, which is often considered more difficult to spot than the tiger itself. There are also several elegant raptors, including the crested serpent eagle, gray-headed fishing eagle and the honey buzzard.



Silent Valley National Park, Kerala: Located in rainforest territory, Palakkad is as lush and beautiful as they come. Recently named a UNESCO World Heritage Site (2012), it is part of the delicate Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, revered for its biodiversity. Spot tigers, leopards and elephants, and watch out for snakes and reptiles, as there are well over 400 species here.



Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan: There is a good reason why this is the most popular (and the most crowded) national park in the country: fantastic tiger sightings. Ranthambore is more than just an opportunity to spot wildlife – one of India's prettiest parks,

it is dotted with historical monuments and hunting lodges of the maharajas of yore, adding charm to the landscape. Spot scores of strikingly beautiful birds such as cormorants, lapwings and eagles.



Gir National Park, Gujarat: Your only chance to see the Asiatic lion in the wilderness, not just in India but anywhere in the world, Gir has a special place in India's wildlife experience. Home to the majestic but endangered beast,

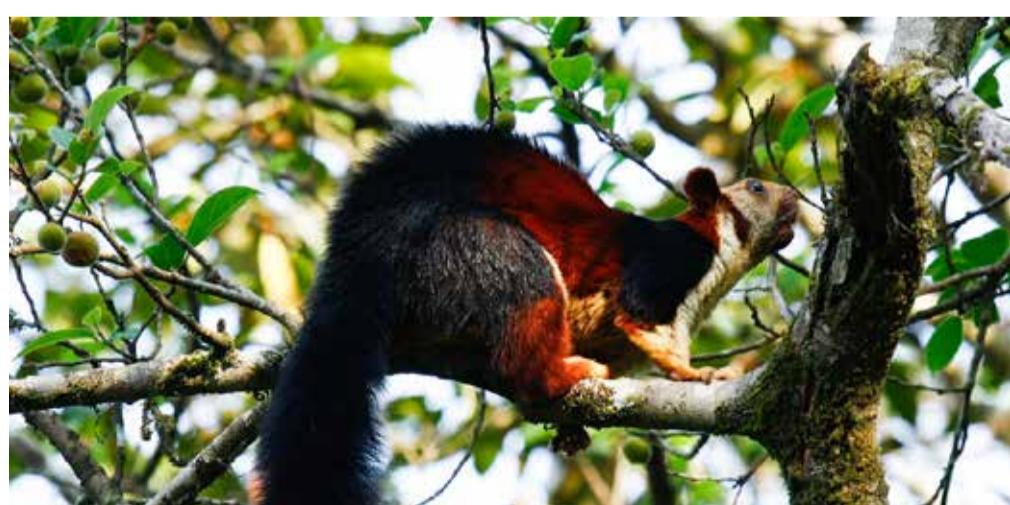
this is also your chance to spot elusive animals like the panther, jackals, hyenas and porcupines. Known locally as Sasan Gir, spotting one of the lions against the grasslands of Gir is a truly unforgettable moment.



Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Goa: Not all wildlife experiences are about the big cats. In Goa, this small sanctuary for birds on the island Chorao on Mandovi River is named after India's premier ornithologist, Dr Salim Moizuddin Ali. Make your way into

the mangroves at this little wonderland in canoe-like boats over a channel of canals that lead through a paradise for bird lovers. Egrets, kingfishers, cormorants and drongos abound, and look out for rarer species such as the black bittern and the pied avocet.

Jhalana Reserve Forest, Rajasthan: The surprise of the season is definitely India's newest wildlife destination: the recently opened Jhalana Reserve Forest. Over 20 leopards have adopted Jhalana as their home over the past decade, leading the government to declare it a protected reserve and then, in May 2017, open the park up for guided jeep safaris. Plenty of birds like the shikra and white-eyed buzzard, and lots of peacocks, add beauty to the lush forest.



Periyar National Park, Kerala: For an experience that really differs from the wildlife parks of north and east India, head to the south, where the green is greener than any you have ever seen. Criss-crossed by the Periyar River, this evergreen forest is home to elephants

and tigers, and creatures not seen in north India, such as the Malabar giant squirrel and Nilgiri langur. Locally called Thekaddy, this is a lovely hilly tract with nice trekking options — a wonderful way to see birds including the Nilgiri wood pigeon and laughing thrushes.

Indian Handicrafts

Defining Culture, Traditions of Land

Handicrafts are often a reflection of the culture and traditions of a country. Passed down through the centuries and perfected over generations of artisans and craftspeople, handicrafts contribute to a country's cultural heritage. Here is a look at a selection of superb handicrafts from across India that reveal the dexterity of craftspeople, both from ancient times and today



Sitalpati Mats, Goalpara, Assam

Once synonymous with Assamese summers, these mats are made from murta reeds that grow in the marshes around the state. These are dried and stripped, then bound together by hand-weaving.

Once the artisans finish weaving the mats they are sometimes dyed using natural pigment extracts while others are hand-painted with traditional designs. Sitalpati stays cool even in toasty weather, and hence the cottage craft's popularity in eastern India.

But deforestation and loss of wetlands in the state means that the raw material used to make the mats is often hard to come by.



Phad Painting, Shahpura, Rajasthan

Long before the printing press was invented and people still relied on oral traditions to pass down their collective history, there was Phad painting.

After listening to priests in temples singing legends of Hindu gods, artists in ancient Shahpura came upon the idea of drawing the stories on a long scroll in a sequential manner, and that is how phad, which means to read a mythological story through pictures, came to be.

Back in those days, epics such as the Ramayana and Hanuman Chalisa and deities such as Pabuji, Devnarayan and Ram Dala with the accompanying prayers were painted on 5x30ft khadi tapestries that told the whole story.

Rogan, Nirona, Gujarat



A 300-year-old tradition that once flourished in Gujarat's Kutch region, 'oil-based' or 'Rogan' in Persian, painting uses the thick residue formed when castor oil is heated and cast into cold water. After it is mixed with natural colors, the residue is drawn out into a fine 'thread' with a wooden stick and then applied to cloth. Lack

of awareness took the craft to the brink of extinction as entire villages that practiced it switched to other trades.

Recently, it has been experiencing a boom with efforts being made to preserve the art form. Rogan motifs, which once graced mainly ghaagra-choli, bridal trousseaus, bed sheets and tablecloths, now adorn more contemporary items.



Bidri Artwork, Bidar, Karnataka

It is an ancient art dating back to the 1400s, bidriware designs typically borrow heavily from Islamic art and Mughal-era motifs, with solid geometric lines interspersed with depictions of flowers and vines. Modeled using a wooden cast, bidri is made from an alloy of zinc and copper. After hand-filing and smoothing the cast alloy, the product is dipped in a copper sulphate solution to blacken it and then artists carve intricate patterns on it. With a chisel and hammer, silver wire is then inlaid in the grooves. Many hours of polishing and smoothing later, the piece is dipped in a solution of water and sand taken specifically from a dark, little-exposed corner of the 15th-century Bidar Fort, before the product is finally dipped in ammonium chloride that blackens everything but the silver inlay, giving bidri its unique look.

Chamba Rumal, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

The Chamba Rumal gets its name from Chamba, a hill-station in Himachal Pradesh, where the craft has been practiced for centuries. The earliest records of the region dates back to 2nd century BC, making it one of the most ancient crafts in the state.

The region is known for its history, architecture and landscapes but the local community is also known for its arts and crafts, in particular the miniature Pahari paintings. The Pahari school of art has received royal patronage since the 17th century when it is believed to have originated in the region.

Though miniature Pahari paintings are most commonly recognized, the term encompasses a variety of forms from murals to paintings. The impeccable needlework on the Chamba Rumals too is derived from this art movement, combining miniature art with embroidery. Chamba Rumals are



typically made in square or rectangular fabric of varying sizes.

The base art, characterized by intricate lines, is traditionally drawn by artists with expertise in miniature painting. Once the art is complete, the embroidery, usually undertaken by women, is meticulously executed on the fabric. The earliest example of the embroidery incidentally can be found in Punjab

— Bebe Nanki, sister of the Sikh spiritual leader Guru Nanak, reportedly embroidered one in the 16th century and the item was preserved in the state's Hoshiarpur shrine.

Another handkerchief made its way to Britain in 1883 when Raja Gopal Singh presented a Chamba Rumal to the British, embroidered with a scene from the Mahabharata, which was later added to the collection of London's Victoria & Albert museum.

In the 17th century, the Chamba Rumal embroidery was done by the queens and royal ladies of Chamba for wedding dowries, important gifts and ceremonial coverings.

Pallava Stonecraft, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu

Distinctive-looking sculptures, characterized by their rounded form and exaggerated features are characteristic of temples built during the Pallava dynasty that ruled large swathes of southern India between 3rd and 9th century. Designs of the temples and the sculptures that adorned them eventually found their way across Southeast Asia where they became a



significant influence in shaping regional architecture. The Shore Temple in Mahabalipuram with its intricate sculptures has been accorded a UNESCO World Heritage site. The craft from this area is also given a Geographical Indicator tag, recognizing its uniqueness and its origins in Mamallapuram, the earlier name of Mahabalipuram.

Khurja Pottery, Uttar Pradesh

The baked clay pottery is said to have travelled to India with Afghan King Taimur Lung as he passed through Khurja along with an expedition of potters from Egypt and Syria during an easterly campaign over 500 years ago. Khurja pottery has characteristic exotic painted floral patterns, in soothing shades of blue and brown, on an off-white background, which gives it an elegance and ancient charm. A thick slip is used to raise some motifs in relief, creating a three dimensional visual feast. Over the years, the potters have also widened the array of colors to include warm orange and light red glazes, creating variety yet preserving the individuality of the art. This pottery is known for its beautiful patterns and timeless appeal.

Today, the art form has been kept alive by some 5,000 passionate artisans who work relentlessly in 500-odd units to produce these fine specimens of craftsmanship. Khurja in Bulandshaher is one of the earliest centers for glazed pottery in India where potters have the monopoly of making highly artistic blue pottery. These potters often call themselves as 'Multani Kumhars', suggesting that their origin was Multan.





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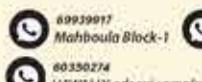
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