In its latest update to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) database, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) retained India’s growth forecast for the next two years, even as it pared the global estimate citing subdued demand and diminished prospects.

The update released last week expects Indian economy to grow 7.5 percent in Fiscal Year (FY)17 and FY18, the fastest among major economies. The IMF has pegged the current year’s growth at 7.3 percent, same as last year.

Continued on Page 4

Message of H.E. Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India to Kuwait

I convey my best wishes to the members of our community as well as our many, many friends, well-wishers and admirers in Kuwait on the auspicious occasion of India’s 67th Republic Day. Also, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the rule of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, I have the honour to convey our heartfelt greetings and profound regards from Indian leaders to His Highness for his good health and well-being and continued peace and prosperity to the people of Kuwait.

On 26 January 1950, the Constitution of modern India came into force, laying strong foundations of a democratic and secular State. During these years, our Constitution has remained steadfast, yet flexible, to accommodate various changes which the people of India desired and the manifold challenges India faced. The Indian Constitution is a beacon for the socio-economic and political transformation of India whose civilization has witnessed pluralism, advocated tolerance and promoted goodwill among diverse communities in all aspects, be it religion, language, ethnicity, political ideology, customs, or geography. There are constitutional guarantees to ensure diversity, assuring equal respect for all faiths and religions. India, therefore, is a great example of unity in diversity. A vibrant democracy has been India’s most enduring identity ever since India adopted its Constitution in 1950 that made it a democratic Republic with universal adult suffrage.

The current Government under the dynamic leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken various initiatives towards realizing the aspirations of its 1.2 billion people by improving the business environment, growth and creation of jobs in the country, and the intensity of India’s international engagement has greatly increased.

In an international environment where economic growth is modest, India today stands as a bright spot among the global economies. India has been the world’s fastest growing economy in 2015 and is expected to remain so in 2016. India enjoys among the best growth prospects in the coming decade. Indian Rupee has remained stable during the past few years. Coupled with stable political environment, our macroeconomic fundamentals such as high economic growth, low inflation and relatively low...
Encouraging innovations, enabling sustainability

The Indian government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the ‘Make in India’ initiative in 2014, with the aim of transforming the country into a global manufacturing hub. The major objective behind the initiative is to focus on job creation and skill enhancement in twenty-five sectors of the economy and to attract capital and technological investments to India.

By encouraging multinational, as well as domestic, companies to manufacture their products in India, the Make in India program targets increasing the share of manufacturing in the country’s gross domestic product from its current 16 percent to 25 percent by 2022.

The initiative also aims at maintaining high quality standards and minimize the impact on the environment. The prime minister’s call for realizing ‘Zero Defect Zero Effect’ in manufacturing signifies designing production mechanisms where products have no defects and the process through which product is made has zero adverse environmental and ecological effects.

As part of the Make in India initiative, the government has relaxed various norms and procedures with regard to setting up business units, as well as liberalized the foreign equity cap rules in a number of sectors. In addition, application for licenses has been made available online and the validity period of licenses increased to three years.

Growing attraction for India as a manufacturing destination is evident in that, between September 2014 and November 2015, the Make in India campaign drew proposals from electronics manufacturers worth more than US$18 billion. Here we look at how a few domestic manufacturers are contributing to the Make in India initiative.

For the first time, Indian suppliers have given samples of five items manufactured by them for the army to trial as part of the Siachen and Super High Altitude clothing. Soldiers deployed beyond an altitude of 14,000 feet – in Siachen, Kargil, Dras, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikker – are issued Siachen and Super High Altitude clothing which consists of 55 items.

As per defense ministry sources, the impetus to promote ‘Make in India’ in Siachen clothing came from a meeting last February with the Indian Technical textile Association (ITTA), representing the technical textile manufacturers in the country.

For a country accustomed to success only in services, the next few years are going to be wrapped around software and, in some cases, services, but what is interesting is that product innovations in hardware is becoming a norm rather than an exception.

A growing domestic market, the capability to take higher risks, rise of internet of Things, software as a service, cloud technologies, open source architecture, 3D printing, improved access to capital, mentorship and industry bodies advocating their cause, have played an important role to boost product hardware companies in India.

The Indian government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the ‘Make in India’ initiative in 2014, with the aim of transforming the country into a global manufacturing hub. The major objective behind the initiative is to focus on job creation and skill enhancement in twenty-five sectors of the economy and to attract capital and technological investments to India.

The government can also play a role in enabling the success of product hardware companies as this could lead to manufacturing. The governments of other Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, China, Singapore and Malaysia, have played a proactive and positive role. If the new government with its Make in India initiative gives a push, there is no reason why entrepreneurs cannot build brands out of India in this space.

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Offer valid from 8th December 2015 till 31st January 2016.
Since independence, India has placed a significant focus on developing Science and Technology, seeing it as a key element in fueling the country’s economic growth. In 2018, the Government of India unveiled its Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy-2018, which among other things, aims to place India among the world’s top five scientific powers. Today, India is among the topmost countries in the world in the field of scientific research and is positioned as one of the top five nations in the field of space exploration. It is also ranked among the world’s top 10 nations in the number of scientific publications and listed 12th in the world in terms of patents filed.

The country regularly undertakes space missions, including a space probe orbiting the planet Mars since September 2014, a lunar orbiter that was launched in 2008 and frequent satellite launches, both for domestic and international customers. The country’s renowned Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has had 37 consecutive successful missions. The 27 satellites, including 11 that facilitate communication network in the country, reiterate India’s advancement in the space technology domain.

Simultaneously, there has been considerable emphasis on encouraging scientific temperament among India’s youth through numerous technical universities and institutes, both in the private and government sectors. At present, the country has a total of 17 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), 31 National Institutes of Technology (NITs), 671 universities awarding about 29,000 doctorate degrees, and about 40 research laboratories run by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The government’s investment in scientific and technological research has also led to developments in different sectors of the economic, including in agriculture, healthcare, space research and nuclear power. These include:

- The recent commissioning of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project Unit - 1, attests to the country gradually growing self-reliant in nuclear technology.
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is taking steps towards developing its own reusable rocket using a Winged Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD), whose tech demo is expected to be conducted in February 2016.
- Antrix Corporation Limited, the commercial arm of ISRO, has finalized contracts to launch 16 satellites of six countries in the coming years.
- The space budget includes funds for Aditya, India’s first satellite to study the Sun, and is intended to launch after 2017.
- A project to build India’s largest underground laboratory for advanced research on the smallest particle known to man, which has been cleared by the prime minister’s office, will emerge as a major nuclear physics research hub.
- India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) aims to study the properties of atmospheric neutrinos, which are subatomic particles produced by the decay of radioactive elements.
- The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has developed and deployed technologies for the use of atomic energy in the areas of electricity generation, nuclear power, agriculture, food preservation, healthcare, isotope hydrology, R&D and deployment in areas pertaining to national security.
- Three multi-institutional networked virtual joint Clean Energy Research and Development program through second-generation biofuels, and building energy efficiency have been set up.
- ISRO is aggressively working towards establishing itself as a leader in innovation and technology development. Significant developments in the nuclear energy sector are likely as India looks to expand its nuclear capacity.
- Moreover, nanotechnology is expected to transform the Indian pharmaceutical industry. The agriculture sector is also likely to undergo a major revamp, with the government investing heavily for the technology-driven Green Revolution.
- The government aims to invest 2 per cent of the country’s GDP on research and development (R&D) in its 12th Five Year Plan period (2003-11).
- In a sign that India is emerging as a global center for scientific and technological advancements, numerous countries are signing cooperation agreements in various fields of science and technology.
- In addition to Germany recently signing a bilateral agreement with India on increased cooperation in the field of science and technology, India has launched a joint Indo-Canadian science program focusing on clean water technologies. The new program would be pursued through a joint collaboration between USAID’s office of Science and Technology under the ministry and the National Science and Engineering Council of Canada.
- The Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPRA) is India’s first and France’s sole bilateral organization, committed to promoting collaboration between the scientific communities of the two countries across the knowledge innovation chain.

Continued from Page 1

"India and the rest of emerging Asia are generally projected to continue growing at a robust pace," said the update. The global economy is now forecast to grow 3.4 percent in 2016 and 3.6 percent in 2017, a reduction in 0.2 percentage point for both the years from the forecast in October.

Emerging markets are currently going through a rough patch. Brazil is suffering its worst crisis in 20 years. Russia’s economy is contracting close to 5 percent compared to the previous year and China continues to decelerate. China’s growth is forecast to slow to 6.3 percent in 2016 and 6.0 percent in 2017, primarily reflecting weaker investment growth as the economy continues to rebalance. China’s growth eased to 6.8 percent in the fourth quarter, the weakest since the first quarter of 2009. Only India seems to be able to generate good news.

In the third quarter of this year, real GDP growth in India accelerated from 7.0 percent to 7.4 percent Year on Year (YoY). While exports continued to contribute negatively on growth, the domestic sector remained robust, due to a rebound in investment and private consumption resilience. Private consumption has been growing at an average rate of 6.1 percent annually in the last three years, rising 6.8 percent YoY in the latest quarter. Also, investment went up rapidly in the last three quarters: from 2.4 percent YoY in the last quarter of 2014 to 6.8 percent in the three months ending in October this year.

According to the central bank, the reasons behind the good evolution on investment are low oil prices and better business conditions, facilitated by the boost in public capital spending and cheaper credit. Inflation, historically the key constraint for growth, has improved markedly in the last year, mainly because food prices are stabilizing. Inflation has come down from 8 percent to 5 percent since early 2014, and that has made possible for the central bank to cut rates four times, reducing the lending rate by 65 basis points so far. The ‘twin deficits’ – simultaneous deficits in the current account and fiscal balance – that traditionally burden the Indian economy are also improving. The current account deficit fell in the last two years from about 7 percent to 1 percent of GDP, and the fiscal deficit from 5 percent to 3.4 percent of GDP since the beginning of 2014.

But India’s economic outlook is not without risks. First, growth will not be sustained through a crucial reform to reduce red tape and boost investment are implemented. The government recently eased restrictions for foreign investors, but two critical measures that will be able to simplify bureaucracy and reduce corruption – the goods and services bill – and reform for industry purposes - the land acquisition bill – are currently stuck in the upper house under amendment processes.

The second risk is the price of oil. Low global oil prices have helped significantly to improve inflation and deficits, as the country is a major net oil importer and the government subsidies gasoline. If prices were to rise, the room for reforms would disappear amid high inflation, higher interest rates, and growing deficits.

“Policy makers in emerging market and developing economies need to press on with structural reforms to address the various bottlenecks, facilitate a dynamic and innovation-friendly business environment, and bolster human capital,” said the IMF in its update to the WEO.

Speaking about his assessment of current Indian market, Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan said, “Things are moving, actions are being taken. I think if we persist in this, and I have no doubt that we will, this will amount to something much bigger. My sense is we are now something like we were in 2001-02, when we did a lot of work but that didn’t show up in the growth numbers. But then, we were leaving the stage, and may have had ten years of very strong growth. So my hope and expectation is we are doing the same thing now – a lot of little reforms that combine together to make a big reform.”
A country is defined by its people. It is the people realizing their ideas, hopes and dreams that make a country great...

Over 800,000 Indians proud to share in the social, cultural and economic progress of Kuwait

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We salute the people and government of INDIA on the country’s glorious 67th Republic Day

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fiscal deficit has made India one of the most preferred investment destinations in the world. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest report has projected India’s growth for next 2017 at 7.5% and rising to 7.9% in 2020. FDI flows to India during the year 2014-2015 reached US$ 44 billion. The Government of India has set an ambitious deadline for 2026 with regard to the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST). A clear out roadmap for lowering corporate tax from 30% to 25% over the next 4 years has been laid down. FDI limits have been liberalized (100% in railways, 49% in insurance, and 49% in defence which could go up to 100% on case-to-case basis).

As a result of these measures, India has substantially moved up its rankings on a global index of the world’s most competitive economies compiled by the World Economic Forum which underlines India’s continued economic buoyancy, improvement in the competitiveness of the country’s institutions and its macroeconomic environment. Emir & Young ranked India No.1 attractive investment destination globally, IMF ranked India No1 amongst the world’s fastest growing economies. Financial Times, UK ranked India No.1 as Greenfield Foreign Direct Investment destination during the period January-June 2018. Moody’s ratings revised India’s sovereign rating outlook to “positive” from “stable”.

We are particularly promoting our manufacturing sector, improving our services sector, investing in unpreceded scale in infrastructure; and, making our cities smart, sustainable and the engines of progress. India is keen to scale up investments in next generation infrastructure including digital networks and clean energy as well as in our social, industrial, and agri-infrastructure to give better income and quality of life to our people. About 800 million people in India are below the age of 35 years and their aspirations, enterprise and skills will be the force for India’s economic transformation. With this in view, our Hon’ble Prime Minister launched the “Make in India” initiative. Since its launch, India has emerged among the top destinations globally for foreign direct investment in 2015 and we are working on all fronts to make India a global manufacturing hub. Many international companies viz. Spice Group, Samsung, Hitachi, Foxconn, Huawei, Xiaomi, Lenovo, Boeing, Alstom and GE Transport have announced investing and setting up manufacturing plants in India. The Government of India is organising a “Make in India” Week from 13-18 February 2016 in Mumbai which would offer foreign participants unpreceded access, insights and opportunities to connect and collaborate with India and global industry leaders, academicians etc. A flexible PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model is being worked out, and many countries including the USA, Japan, China and Singapore, have promised to play a role under this scheme. Japan has agreed to build India’s first high speed train line between the financial hub of Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

We have the demographics, the talent, the talent they have in ISRO. If we have the demographics, we have the talent to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen. We have the ability to invest in space and the resources required to make it happen.
The style and variety of Indian indigenous paintings is as vivid as the colorful Indian culture. With regard to style and pattern, indigenous paintings can be categorized into seven special groups: Rajasthani painting, Madhubani painting, Tanjore Painting, Mughal Painting, Bengal style of art, Patta chitra, and Warli art. These seven streams of indigenous painting styles are different from each other but there is a cultural synchronization between all these styles, based on the fact that all these artworks are inspired by Indian history and heritage.

Madhubani painting: Originating in a village called Madhubani in the Bihar region of India, according to mythology, this tradition started when Janakiraj, father of Rani Sita asked his painters to paint the moments of the marriage ceremony of Sita with Lord Rama. Traditionally, it was done by Madhubani’s village women on the mud wall of the huts but later on, the base was converted into cloth, canvas, and handmade papers. Apart from the royal marriage of Ram and Sita, Madhubani art also depicts Hindu devotional stories and movements around deities like Krishna, Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati, and others. Different natural objects like, the moon, the sun, and plant Tulsi (an auspicious plant in Hindu religion) is also part of the themes of the Madhubani pictures. In Madhubani paintings no empty space is left on canvas, the gaps are covered by different geometrical motifs, floral, animals, and bird pictures.

Tanjore painting: Originating from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu in around 16th century, Tanjore painting is one of the most traditional streams of painting style and is famous for its contemporary look, surface richness, compact opus, and flamboyant color range. Tanjore paintings are known for their excellent versatility and therefore, Tanjore painting works are widely popular as brilliant home décor items. These Tanjore paintings are religious artworks of typical South Indian style and origin and look celestial in a pujaroom and elegant in other places. This art is also referred as ‘palagai padam’ in local dialect, which means a piece expression of love for the Almighty, beauty, truth, and spiritual devotion.

Rajasthani painting: Created in the 18th century from Rajasthan, India, and etymologically, this form of art was derived from a Persian style. These paintings depict Hindu devotional themes and stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata, Life of Lord Krishna, and different legends of Rajasthan war heroes. These paintings were found in miniature form but a major portion of Indian Rajasthani artwork was found on the walls of fortress, palaces, inner chamber of royal court, and in Shekhawati havelis. The colors used in these paintings were created from different minerals, diverse plant sources, and sometimes from conch shells, and there was a custom of deriving colors by processing costly stones, gold and silver.

Mughal painting: Developed at the time of Mughal dynasty in India, between 16th and 19th century, these paintings reflect a special amalgamation of Indian, Persian and Islamic art styles. The Mughal paintings in India circled around themes like battles, receptions, hunting scenes, legendary stories, portraits and more. Apart from Indian museums and different Mughal buildings, the Victoria and Albert Museums in London too have a huge and extraordinary collection of Mughal paintings collected mainly from India.

Pattachitra: A special type of folk painting from the state of Orissa ‘Patta’ means ‘chest’ or ‘clothings’ and ‘chitra’ stands for paintings. This form of picture is painted on a cloth base. The practice of Pattachitra is closely associated with the devotion of Lord Jagannath. Apart from the mesmerizing evidence of sculpture and paintings on the cave walls of Khandagiri and Udayagiri, and Konark temple, there are other temples in Orissa where these pattachitras are found in abundance. In the Indian history of art, Pattachitras are said to be of special significance as they are the earliest native painting stream from Orissa. Pattachitras were usually done by the Chitrakars.

Warli art: A 400-year old tribal art that came from a village called Warli. It is a 2-dimensional painting work, with no specific angle or proportion. These paintings appear uncomplicated and linear with optimum use of triangular shapes, and are usually painted by married women. Here the cycle of death and birth was an inevitable subject of each of the artwork. Indian indigenous painting style and tradition offers an artistic range that expands from the early civilization to this modern era.
India’s recorded history began in the cradle of Indus Valley around the 5th millennium BC. Since then, many rulers and kingdoms have risen and fallen on the subcontinent. During their reign, kings and emperors constructed a number of architectural wonders to mark their rule, their status to satisfy their creative impulses or to honor deities or their ancestors. Over the eons many of these architectural gems were destroyed by other rulers or by time, but several have survived giving us a glimpse on the architectural prowess of generations past. Here we look at few of these architectural wonders.

**Tughlaqabad Fort:** This site, located in the vicinity of Delhi, has an uncanny resemblance to the ruins of Mohenjaro-Harappa. Any sightseer who comes face to face with this monument will only wonder why it is not one of the biggest attractions of the city. The height of the citadel is imposing and the view from top is truly unique. The labor, knowledge and engineering skills that went into creating the artificial lake and embankments around the area is truly astonishing. The sheer size of this fortress and its earthy charm never fails to mesmerize visitors.

**Hampi:** Astonishingly carved into hillside rock, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, the Ajanta and Ellora caves are located in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra State. There are 34 caves at Ellora dating from between the 6th and 11th centuries AD, and 29 caves at Ajanta dating back to between the 2nd century BC and 6th century AD. While the Ajanta caves are rich in paintings and sculpture, the Ellora caves are renowned for their extraordinary architecture. The most incredible aspect about these caves is that they were crafted by hand, with only the movements of the sun, moon, planets and stars. There are a total of five Jantar Mantars, one each in Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura, Varanasi and New Delhi, with the one in Jaipur being the world’s largest stone sundial. Located near City Palace and Hawa Mahal of Jaipur, the monument features masonry, stone and brass that help in detecting time, identifying the constellations and even in analyzing the orbits around the sun.

**Kumbalgarh:** Also known as the jewel of Mewar, Kumbalgarh is situated in the Rajsamand district of Rajasthan. History, royalty, power and culture are all packed in this place. It is a treat to the human eyes and mind. The fort accommodates three hundred Jain and sixty Hindu temples.

**Fatehpur Sikri:** This magnificent fortified ancient city, 40km west of Agra, was the short-lived capital of the Mughal Empire between 1571 and 1585, during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Akbar visited the village of Sikri to consult the Sufi saint Sheikh Salim Chishti, who predicted the birth of an heir to the Mughal throne. When the prophecy came true, Akbar built his new capital here, including a stunning mosque and three palaces for each of his favorite wives. The city was an Indo-Islamic masterpiece, but erected in an area that supposedly suffered from water shortages and so was abandoned shortly after Akbar’s death.

**Hawa Mahal:** Jaipur’s most distinctive landmark, the Hawa Mahal is an extraordinary fairy-tale palace of pink sandstone constructed in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. The façade of the palace, with its delicately honeycombed exterior that rises a dizzying five storeys, allowed ladies of the royal household to view life and processions in the city without being observed by outsiders. The top of the façade offers stunning views over JantarMantar and the City Palace on one side and over the Siredeori Bazaar on the other. Within the palace is a small museum with miniature paintings and several rich relics, such as the ceremonial armor that evokes the royal past.

**Jaipur’s Jantar Mantars:** Constructed in the early 18th century, during the time when Jaipur was the seat of Maharaja Jai Singh II, the Jantar Mantars were built to compile astronomical tables and calculate the times and movements of the sun, moon, planets and stars. There are a total of five Jantar Mantars, one each in Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura, Varanasi and New Delhi, the one in Jaipur being the world’s largest stone sundial. Located near City Palace and Hawa Mahal of Jaipur, the monument features masonry, stone and brass that help in detecting time, identifying the constellations and even in analyzing the orbits around the sun.

**Ajanta and Ellora caves:** Not many people are aware that India had many ancient educational centers in the past including Vikramasila University, located 50km east of Bhagalpur in Bihar State. It was one of the largest centers of Buddhist learning and spread over hundred acres of land. The center has an astonishing fifty two rooms spread on both sides of a corridor with an elaborate stupa at the center. What is even more marvelous is the enormous library that has been excavated and which testifies to the rich history of India. A visit to this glorious and historical university is highly recommended just to get a sense of advancement that India had thousands of years ago.

**Vikramasila University:** Many kings and emperors constructed a number of architectural wonders to mark their rule, their status to satisfy their creative impulses or to honor deities or their ancestors. Over the eons many of these architectural gems were destroyed by other rulers or by time, but several have survived giving us a glimpse on the architectural prowess of generations past. Here we look at few of these architectural wonders.
Interesting tales of popular Indian dishes

Kichdi: Considered in Ayurveda as a ‘perfect meal’, Kichdi, originating from the Sanskrit word krsrāṇa or medley, was originally created by adding roasted and de-husked sesame seeds to a mix of butter and salt and then boiling it with rice.

It was also the strength food of the Rajputana armies that survived days of walk on ‘Sauitha’ which was khichdi made with barya and taani, made with broken rice. The Awadh kings gave it a newer version by creating ‘shoal and kuch’, which is kichdi with meat.

Dum Biryani: According to many historical sources Biryani originated in the princely state of Hyderabad in the era of Nizams. Dum Biryani or Biryani of Awadh was said to have originated in Lucknow, when the Nawab of Awadh ordered a meal of rice and spice to be cooked in huge brass pots and served to the people during a period of food scarcity in the region. The huge amount of food was to be known as ‘dum’.

Petha: Whoever has been to the city of the Taj Mahal will definitely say that Petha is the best item to eat in Agra. The invention of Agra ka Petha is linked to the construction of the colossal monument when around 21,000 workers were bored of the daily meal comprising only dal and roti. The then Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan shared his concern with master architect Ustad Isa Effendi, who requested Pir Naqshbandi Sahib for a solution to the Emperor’s worries. It is believed that the Pir went into a trance during prayers one day and received the recipe of Petha from the Almighty.

Mysore Pak: Also known as the signature sweetmeat of South India, Mysore Pak’s history can be traced back to the kitchens of Mysore Palace in the early 20th century when Nalawadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar was the king in power. One day, Kakaursa Madiappa, the then royal cook, made a new sweet dish with the mix of chickpea flour, ghee and sugar. When the King tasted it, the dish melted at the tip of his tongue. On being asked the name of the dish, the cook invented the name ‘Mysore Pak’ in a split of second. ‘Paka’ in Kannada means, a sweet concoction.

Jalebi: One of the most popular Indian sweet dishes, Jalebi owes its origin to West Asia and came to India along with the Persian invaders. This sweetmeat was called ‘Kundalika’ and ‘Jalavallika’ during the 15th century.

Poori: Dating back to Vedic ages, poori was the perfect accompaniment to curries that involved spices. The rise of the poori as a popular dish came about because it could take flavors and fillings equally well. The fact that pooris formed a part of temple food across India, only helped to strengthen its role on the Indian plate.

Chai: Although the tea industry is thriving in India today, it was first introduced by the British. Chinese varieties of tea were first introduced in an attempt to break the Chinese monopoly on tea. Tea was originally only consumed by Anglicized Indians, and it was not until the 1920s that tea grew widely popular in India through a successful advertising campaign by the Tea Board.

The Indian cuisine is closely related to the Indian history, each historical region developing a unique set of dishes, using diverse ingredients. However, a constant remains for all regions: the affinity for sweet desserts and spicy snacks. Besides being closely related to history, Indian cuisine is also strongly influenced by the diverse religions, cultures and traditions of the country, with no other country having a wider selection of exotic dishes or offering such a large variety of stimuli to the taste buds.
The invisible glass ceiling stopping women from gaining due recognition and rising to success in any field exists in most countries of the world. India is no exception, but in a country of over half a billion women there are additional barriers imposed on women by various social, economic, cultural and religious norms.

Despite these restrictions many Indian women have managed to break through the barriers and make a name for themselves in their chosen field. In large measure this is due to their sustained self-confidence, persistence and patience, as well as having a supportive family, finding the right mentors at the right time and being able to seize opportunities when presented with one.

If asked to name Indian woman who were first to breach the stereotype role in their respective fields, the handful of names that come to mind include Indira Gandhi, India’s first woman prime minister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the first woman president of UN General Assembly, Sanjini Naidu, first woman governor in independent India and a few more. Contemporary names could include India’s first woman police officer, Kiran Bedi, Indian born, US-based, late astronaut Kalpana Chawla, as well as sporting legends such as Asian boxing gold medalist Mary Kom and tennis star Sania Mirza.

But there are many lesser known Indian women who overcame great odds and broke down doors in their chosen profession, paving the way for other women to follow in their footsteps. Here are some Indian women whose names may not be familiar, but who nevertheless stand right up there on the podium of first Indian women.

Bachendri Pal: Being the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest in 1984, Bachendri Pal later led several expeditions with a team comprising of only women in Indo-Nepalese Women’s Mount Everest Expedition, The Great Indian Women’s Rafting Voyage, and First Indian Women Trans-Himalayan Expedition. Karnataka. Sinha’s advice to future generations is to always challenge the status quo. Her bank has also helped 6,000 women gain property ownership: truly ahead of its time.

Justice Fathima Beevi: The first female judge to be appointed to the Supreme Court of India, Justice Fathima Beevi was also the first Muslim woman to be appointed to any higher judiciary. She is also the first woman judge of a Supreme Court of a nation in India and Asia.

Priya Jhingan: In 1992, Priya Jhingan became the first woman to join the Indian Army officer cadre. After 10 years of mentorious service when she retired as Major Priya Jhingan, the feisty officer noted that it was her single-mindedness that won her an entry into the Army. Soon after she finished her graduation, she wrote a letter to the then Chief of Army Staff, General Sunith Francis Rodrigues, requesting him to open the doors of the armed services to women. The General wrote back saying that the Army was planning to induct women in a year or two. To bide her time, she studied law. When the full-page advertisement inviting women to join the Army appeared in 1992, she knew she would make it.

Surekha Yadav: Asia’s first female train driver, Ms. Yadav took the front seat in a busy Mumbai commuter train more than two decades ago, and has since inspired fifty other Indian women to take control of trains in the country. She is also an inspiration for women today because of her direct role in promoting female safety in public transport. After witnessing the daily eve-teasing and harassment of women, she was instrumental in the introduction of female only trains in four Indian cities. Easing the journey of thousands of women in the city, Yadav drove Mumbai’s first ‘Ladies Special’ train into the Victoria Terminus in Mumbai and in 2012 piloted the prestigious Deccan Queen Express from Mumbai to Pune.

Homai Vyarawalla: Commonly known by her pseudonym ‘Dalda 13’ Ms. Vyarawalla was India’s first woman photographer. First active in the late 1930s, she retired in the early 1970s and in 2011, was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award of the Republic of India. In a career spanning more than three decades, she photographed many political and national leaders, including Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, and Indira Gandhi and their families while working as a press photographer. At the onset of the World War II, she started working on assignments for the Bombay-based The Illustrated Weekly of India magazine which over the years till 1970, published many of her black and white images, which later became iconic.

Urvashi Butalia: Co-founder of India’s first publishing house dedicated to promoting women’s right, Ms. Butalia set up Kali for Women in 1984 with the aim of making a dent in the way the world sees women. The publishing house and its current imprint Zubaan Books have certainly done this. They have provided a great platform for female writers in South Asia and raised awareness for important issues such as sexual abuse and the dowry system. She remains an inspiration to all; women want to be the first, but it is truly ahead of her time in both the professional and personal sense.
The Constitution of India is the supreme law of India and the permanent instrument that makes the government system function. It lays down the framework defining fundamental political principles, establishes the structure, procedures, powers and duties of government institutions and fundamental rights, directive principles and the duties of citizens.

Following its independence, India’s Constituent Assembly set up a drafting committee headed by Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to prepare a draft constitution for India to form the basis on which the newly independent India would be governed. The Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November, 1949, and came into effect on 26 January, 1950. With its adoption, the Union of India officially became the modern Republic of India and the Constitution became the country's fundamental governing document.

Each year, India celebrates the coming into force of the constitution on 26 January as the country’s Republic Day.

The Indian Constitution is a distinctive document with many extraordinary facets to it, including being the longest written constitution of any sovereign nation in the world. In its original shape, it had 395 articles and eight schedules. Overtime the number of articles has increased to 448 due to 100 amendments.

The length is mainly because the framers of the constitution borrowed many of its principles from foreign constitutions while avoiding loopholes inherent in those constitutions, so as to ensure healthy political life to its citizens. Thus, the fundamental rights were borrowed from the United States' Constitution, parliamentary system of government from the British, the directive principles from the Irish Constitution and the idea of emergency from the German Constitution and the Government of India Act of 1935.

Some of the characteristics that distinguish the Indian Constitution are:

Federalism: According to the Constitution, India is a ‘Union of States.’ However, all the characteristics of a federation are also present in the Constitution.

Parliamentary form of government: The Constitution provides parliamentary form of government both at the center and in the states.

Flexible constitution: Although India’s constitution was initially in written form, it is far less rigid than many other federal constitutions. It is because of this flexibility that it has been possible to amend the constitution 99 times in less than sixty-five years.

Existence of a preamble: Like any other modern written constitution, the Indian Constitution has a preamble before it. The preamble is a very lucid exposition of the philosophy of the constitution. The original preamble declared India to be a Sovereign Democratic Republic. The 42nd amendment makes India ‘a Sovereign, Secular Socialist Democratic Republic.’ Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are set as the ideas to be achieved by India as a nation.

Guaranteed fundamental rights:

Rights to equality, freedom, religion and constitutional remedies are the enumerated fundamental rights of Indian citizens. Originally, right to property was also a fundamental right, but was later removed from the list.

Provision of Directive Principles: The Indian Constitution also provides a number of Directive Principles. Such principles do not constitute any constitutional obligation for the government to fulfill, rather they are guidelines to the government.

Secularism: India is a secular nation and does not have any state religion. In a country inhabited by people of all faiths, it is essential that the state remains neutral between religions. Acceptance of secularism as a political ideal was an act of wisdom and boldness particularly after the traumatic experience of India’s partition on religious lines.

Double citizenship: Indian constitution does not sanction double citizenship as in many other countries. There is only one uniform Indian citizenship.

The Indian Constitution was carefully tailored to suit the needs of the Indian people. It is a tribute to the founding fathers that their work has endured in spite of strains and stresses. Now reaching its 67th anniversary, the Constitution still remains strong and firm.
From quality of therapy, range of procedural and treatment options, infrastructure and skilled manpower to perform any medical procedure, zero waiting time and at a fifth to a tenth of what it would normally cost abroad, are just some of the benefits of traveling for medical treatment to India.

World-class accredited hospitals: India has a strong medical accreditation system, especially when it comes to the delivery of high-end healthcare. In addition, there are close to 300 internationally accredited medical facilities, including nearly two dozen accredited by the American Joint Commission International (JCI). These medical facilities provide healthcare that are on par or above global standards.

Cutting-edge technology: Accredited medical centers also have specialists using the latest state-of-the-art technology to support medical diagnostics and medical procedures. With heavy investment in supportive technology and operative technologies, recognized hospitals now undertake complicated heart surgeries, cancer care neuro-surgeries and even general surgeries, offering better outcomes, faster recovery and shorter hospital stays.

Top-notch medical personnel: India’s accredited hospitals with their razor-edge technologies are only one part of the story. India also has the largest pool of skilled world-class doctors, medical specialists and paramedics in South Asia, including over a million Allopathic doctors, two million nurses and tens of thousands of dental surgeons, as well as close to a million doctors formally trained in delivery Ayurvedic and alternate-medical treatments. Many of these doctors and medical professionals have established their credentials as leaders around the world.

Affordable cost: Quality of care is not the only element that attracts people to seek medical attention in India; the country’s top-end healthcare is also delivered at an unobstinate cost advantage. The confluence of highest quality and cost advantage is especially true when it comes to major treatments such as for leukemia where the difference in cost is 10 to 20 times. For other treatments, it could be anything from a fifth to a tenth when compared to Western countries and 80 to 90 percent of what is charged in other South Asian medical destinations.

Zero-wait time: Another factor working to India’s advantage when it comes to delivering quality healthcare is the quick and immediate attention for surgeries and all other medical interventions. Getting an appointment for bypass surgery or a planned angioplasty in certain countries takes almost 3-6 months, in India there is zero-wait time. Whether it is heart surgery, kidney care, cancer treatment, neuro-spinal procedure, knee/hip/joint replacements, dental, cosmetic surgeries or weight loss surgery, all you need is to call and fix an appointment at your convenience.

After-care: In addition to all the above reasons to choose India as a healthcare destination, there is that element of genuine warmth, care and hospitality provided by the medical personnel and support staff at Indian hospitals. Also, India has the highest percentage of English language speaking medical staff among top medical destinations in the world; expert interpreters are also available for other languages.

M-Visa: India’s medical tourism sector is not only a growing source of foreign exchange as well as prestige and goodwill for the country; it is also a new form of consumer diplomacy. Foreigners who receive medical services in India help the country to promote itself as a business and tourism destination. In a bid to further improve services for those seeking medical care in India, the government has initiated the M-visa. Those intending to travel to India for healthcare can now avail of the M-visa that allows them to remain in the country for up to a year along with accompanying persons.
From Child Slavery to Freedom

Kailash Satyarthi
Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Honorary President of the Global March Against Child Labour and the founder of Bachpan Bachao Andolan

It is a blot on the face of humanity that we have yet to eradicate slavery, of children, no less. Not only does child slavery persist; the number of child slaves, 5.5 million, has remained constant in the last two decades. They are bought and sold like animals, sometimes for less than a pack of cigarettes. Add to their number the 168 million child laborers, 59 million out-of-school children, and 15 million girls under 15 who are forced to marry every year, and the situation is beyond unacceptable.

Eighteen years ago, the Global March Against Child Labour spearheaded a global movement to bring child labor and child slavery to the attention of global leaders. Thanks to the invaluable contributions of fellow activists, workers, educators, and businesses, the campaign was a resounding success, leading to the adoption of the International Labor Organization’s Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention.

Clearly, however, there is much work left to do. That is why the Global March Against Child Labour worked so hard — collecting 50,000 signatures on a petition — to push world leaders to include strong language against child slavery in the Sustainable Development Goals, which will guide global development efforts for the next 15 years. Among the SDG targets is one that aims to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor. But now it is time to back that promise with concerted action.

After all, if child labor, slavery, human trafficking, and violence against children continue, we will have failed to accomplish the agenda’s overarching goal of achieving inclusive and sustainable prosperity. And the responsibility does not lie only with governments. Businesses, civil society, and individual citizens must all contribute, not least by pressuring their leaders to make a change.

Consider the situation in India, where impending revisions to two major development policies — the National Education Policy and the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act — are heading in opposite directions. On the one hand, a new education policy has the potential to address child labor as a barrier to education and, more broadly, to improve the life prospects of millions of marginalized and deprived children. On the other hand, the proposed amendments to the Child Labor Act would erect new barriers to further progress on education.

Specifically, the changes to the Child Labor Act would allow children under the age of 14 to help their families in ‘non-hazardous’ family enterprises or the entertainment industry. This may sound innocuous, but it fails to acknowledge a stark and undisputable reality: Work for ‘family enterprises’ can be as brutal as any other kind. And the list of ‘hazardous’ occupations is far from complete. Before being rescued by my organization, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, eight-year-old Arpita was forced to work 16-18 hour days in the home of her uncle as domestic help. When we rescued her, we had to break down the door. It was the dead of winter, and she was barely clothed and severely malnourished, covered in wounds, and covering under a rag on her uncle’s balcony.

Likewise, when we rescued ten-year-old Mohsin and eight-year-old Aslam in 2007 from a sweatshop, owned by their uncle, where they made children’s clothing for one of world’s largest garment retailers, they were starving.

The jobs performed by Arpita, Mohsin, and Aslam would not be considered ‘hazardous’ under the amended act.

In a recent analysis, we found that one-fifth of the children under age 14 rescued by Bachpan Bachao Andolan were working in family enterprises. More than 40 percent of the rescued children were performing hazardous jobs — for example, working in roadside restaurants (dhabas) or manufacturing garments, leather goods, cosmetics, or electronics — that would be allowed under the amended act.

There are millions of enslaved Arpitas, Mohsins, and Aslams. But if the proposed amendments are adopted, we will not be able to rescue a single child under 14 years of age who is employed by his or her ‘family’ — no matter how vile the conditions of their servitude.

The impact, not just on individual children, but also on the future of our society, will be devastating.

On behalf of India’s children, we call upon our parliament to do the right thing and reject the proposed amendments to the Child Labor Act. Beyond India, the imperative to protect children is just as strong. If we are to realize the future promised in the SDGs, surely we must do everything in our power to protect the fundamental human rights of every person, especially the most vulnerable. That is why governments worldwide must deepen their commitment to pursuing child-friendly policies and investing in the protection and education of their young people.

My colleagues and I have humbly done our part over the years, rescuing more than 84,000 children from despicable conditions. It has not been enough to end the plight of child slavery, but to those children and their families, it has meant everything. Still, far too many children remain enslaved, missing out not just on their childhood, but also on the chance for a happy, healthy, and prosperous future. It is time for the world to stand up and lend its voice to those whose cannot. We must demand that our leaders fulfill their promise of ensuring that every child’s life is free from exploitation, enriched by education, and full of promise.
Reaping India's demographic dividend

Today, India is a dynamic, young nation with over half of its 1.2 billion population below the age of 25, including more than 225 million in the higher-education-ready age group of 14 to 19. Furthermore, according to projections by the International Labor Organization (ILO), India will also have 116 million workers in the work-starting age bracket of 20 to 24 years. It is estimated that by 2020, the median age of the Indian population will be 29 years, compared to 40 years in the US, 46 years in Europe and 47 years in Japan.

In fact, it is projected that in the next 15 years, the labor force in the industrialized world will decline by 4 percent and in China by 5 percent, while in India it is set to increase by 32 percent.

Along with failing fertility numbers what this young demographic portends is that in the first-half of the 21st century India will have a young and vibrant workforce. The potential productivity of this youth dividend is that the country could see two percentage points added to its per capita GDP growth every year for the next two to three decades. However, key to harnessing this demographic dividend is providing the young with access to high-quality education and training, so that they are equipped to take advantage of opportunities presented and to meet the needs required of the modern workforce in the 21st century.

With data from around the world making it increasingly clear that the quality of education provided to youth will determine to a large extent the social and economic progress that the country makes, it is incumbent upon India to invest even more in education. Education remains the most important instrument today for empowering India's young demographic and is absolutely essential for an individual's self-realization, social mobility and economic progress. Since its establishment in 1956, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has played a significant role in the growth and development of higher-education in India. By designing innovative programs, implementing various schemes and providing academic, administrative and financial support to universities in the country, the UGC has attempted to foster quality higher education in the country. Nevertheless, the surfeit of educational institutions mushrooming around the country has meant that the deliverance of quality education has remained the most important instrument today for empowering India's young demographic and is absolutely essential for an individual's self-realization, social mobility and economic progress. Since its establishment in 1956, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has played a significant role in the growth and development of higher-education in India. By designing innovative programs, implementing various schemes and providing academic, administrative and financial support to universities in the country, the UGC has attempted to foster quality higher education in the country. Nevertheless, the surfeit of educational institutions mushrooming around the country has meant that the deliverance of quality education has remained the most important instrument today for empowering India's young demographic and is absolutely essential for an individual's self-realization, social mobility and economic progress. Since its establishment in 1956, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has played a significant role in the growth and development of higher-education in India. By design...
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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA ON THEIR 67th REPUBLIC DAY
Caesars Group wishes India and its citizens a Happy 67th Republic Day