

GULF TIMES
Special Supplement

26th January

INDIA



REPUBLIC DAY



INDIA: THE POWERHOUSE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

JAISALMER: A CULTURAL AND FESTIVE HAVEN FOR TOURISTS

2022: A YEAR OF MANY FIRSTS FOR INDIAN SPORTS

10 ETERNAL INDIAN FOLK ARTS AND
THE ARTISTS KEEPING THEM ALIVE



HAPPY INDIAN REPUBLIC DAY

On this historic occasion, we celebrate with pride the glorious nation of India and salute with utmost admiration its' visionary leaders, for leading us towards greater peace and prosperity.

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Smt. Droupadi Murmu
President



Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Ambassador's Message

On the glorious occasion of 74th Republic Day of India, I extend warm greetings to all my fellow Indians in Qatar. It was on this historic day in 1950 that the Constitution of India came into effect, establishing India as a democratic Republic. Today, we reaffirm our love for our nation, respect for our national flag and faith in our Constitution.

I take this opportunity to thank His Highness the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, members of the Royal family, the Government and the friendly people of the State of Qatar for their support for stronger relations with India and their continued patronage of the vibrant Indian community in Qatar.

On 26 November 1949, we the people of India adopted, enacted and gave to ourselves our Constitution. The Constitution, whose core values – Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are sacred to us and continue to be our guiding principles, came into effect on 26 January 1950, which is celebrated as Republic Day. Our Constitution enshrines the values and ideals of our freedom movement and the spirit of our unity. On this auspicious occasion, we remember with utmost respect the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and other great men and women who inspired our freedom struggle.

While we celebrate glorious achievements during 75 years of our Independence, we have not lost sight of our future. Prime Minister of India H.E. Narendra Modi has set targets for the Amrit Kaal – Roadmap to the next 25 years as we approach the centenary. India has made great strides – in economy, business reforms, infrastructure, technology, StartUps, Innovation, sustainability & inclusivity, to name a few. With nearly 1.4 billion people, India is the world's largest democracy. Last year, India became the world's fifth largest economy and on target to become the \$5 trillion economy by 2025-26. India is already among the fastest-growing major economy. Today, India ranks first in terms of smartphone data consumption. India ranks first in Global FinTech as well as IT-BPM outsourcing distribution. India is the world's third largest aviation market and third largest auto market. With ever growing digital infrastructure, financial inclusion is one of the highest priorities for the government. Today, around 80% have bank accounts, 80% use digital payments, and 99% have unique IDs. India has transformed itself into an incubator and emerged the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world with over 88,000 startups, 107 unicorns with a combined valuation of \$341 billion. With an average age of 28, India's entrepreneurs rank among the youngest in the world.

India has taken a lead in green energy transition. Presently, India ranks 4th in the world in terms of installed renewable energy capacity. 42% of India's power requirements are met from non-fossil fuel source, and 40% of this is from renewable energy sources. India has been ranked amongst the top 5 countries in the world, and the best among the G20 countries, as per the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2023). In 2022, Prime Minister H.E. Narendra Modi announced the National Hydrogen Mission with an aim of making India a hub for the production and export of green hydrogen. The mission plans to achieve green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT per annum and reduction of nearly 50 MMT of annual greenhouse gas emissions.

As the 'Pharmacy of the world', India meets 60% of the world's vaccine and 70% of WHO's vaccine demand. The world's first SARS-CoV-2 vaccine that can be delivered through nasal route is being launched today on 26 January. India's space odyssey continues and first privately developed rocket Vikram-S, developed by Skyroot Aerospace, was launched last year. It was fitted with a rocket engine that was 3D printed!

Last year, India achieved a momentous feat by commissioning its first indigenous Aircraft Carrier – INS Vikrant, which was built in the Cochin Shipyard, marking India's entry into the coveted club of countries to build indigenous aircraft carriers. The year 2022, also marked the induction of the indigenously produced, multi-role, Light Combat Helicopter Prachand that can operate higher than any other attack helicopter in the world. Indian defence are expected to cross Rs 19,000 crore by 2023.

In the global sports arena, in 2022, India was the host for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup. Presently, India is once again hosting the 2023 Men's FIH Hockey World Cup. Men's Cricket World Cup will be held in India later in 2023.

In December 2022, India assumed the Presidency of G-20. The theme – "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – One Earth, One Family, One Future" – reflects the motto rooted from our core values and culture since times immemorial. The priorities of India's G-20 Presidency include: Green Development, Climate Finance & LIFE (Life Style for Environment); Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth; Accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goals; Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure; Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century; and, Women-led development. As our theme signifies, India is all set to welcome the member countries of G-20 to its family, and work alongside them to build a much better and safer world.

Last year, we also successfully completed our tenure in the United Nations Security Council during which we spoke out in support of peace, security & prosperity and were the Voice of the Global South. Just a few days ago, we hosted the Voice of the Global South Summit, to focus international attention on priorities, perspectives and concerns of the developing world. The Summit saw participation of Leaders and Ministers from 125 countries.

At India's proposal, the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Today, when the world is facing the detrimental effects

of climate change and acute water shortage, millets are proving to be a silver lining as they require minimal growth inputs and are resistant against cold weather conditions, drought, salinity, and can also be cultivated on dry and arid lands, thereby contributing to global food security. This initiative is an attempt by India to enhance global food security and promote a healthy lifestyle for a wholesome future generation.

On the bilateral front, centuries old bonds of friendship between India and Qatar continue to grow strength to strength. The year 2023 is very special. We celebrate the 50th anniversary of establishment of full diplomatic relations.

The bilateral relationship continues to be nurtured closely by the leadership and supported ably by the deep-rooted people to people contacts. In 2022, we had the honour to organize two visits of the Hon'ble Vice President of India in Qatar within a span of six months. The first ever visit at the Vice-Presidential level from India was held in June 2022. Later, at the invitation of H.H. the Amir, the Hon'ble Vice President of India represented India at the inaugural ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

Close to 800,000 Indians call Qatar their second home. Through their skill, commitment, dedication and sincerity, they continue to make immense contribution to socio-economic development of the country. Indians supported the successful hosting of a memorable and unique FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar in every possible way. The Indian fans were among the largest ticket holders. Nearly 16% of the visitors to Qatar during FIFA were Indian fans. Thousands of Indian workers helped in the construction of stadiums and other infrastructure. Indian professionals – Engineers, Medical professionals, Chartered Accountants, Consultants in various fields contributed to the design & development. Indian businesses worked to maintain supply chains thereby ensuring food security even when millions of fans visited Qatar for the FIFA World Cup. More than 5000 volunteers from the Indian community worked with organisers to ensure a seamless & pleasant experience for fans. The Indian community also organized many cultural events to support Qatar Museums' efforts to entertain fans. The Indian community will continue to support Qatar authorities as it prepares itself to host the World Judo Championship 2023, AFC Asian Cup 2023, ITTF World Table Tennis Championships 2025, Asian Games 2030 and many more world stage sporting in the future.

Qatar is India's biggest LNG supplier, and India has always been its reliable partner. The bilateral trade and economic relationship between India and Qatar has always been strong and robust. The trade between both countries reached \$17.5bn during January – November 2022, which is an almost 33% increase compared to 2021. In 2022, Qatar accounted for 45% of India's total LNG imports. India has set an ambitious target to raise the share of natural gas in its energy mix from 6.3% to 15% by 2030, and Qatar's role as India's partner in energy security will be instrumental in achieving this target.

The year 2022 was a delightful year for the Indian community as we officially entered the Guinness Book of World Records by setting the record for the most nationalities participating in a yoga lesson. This world record attempt wouldn't have been a success without the kind cooperation and generosity of the expatriates from the 114 countries who took part in the event. This historic event stands as a testament to "Our Strength is in our Unity", and has set an example that "Cooperation is always more powerful than Competition". I would also like to congratulate Indian long distance runner Ms. Sufiya Sufi on emerging victorious and achieving the Guinness World Record for "fastest run across Qatar" in 30 hours and 31 minutes. No words are enough to laud her determination and hard work in achieving this incredible feat.

While the Indian community has made a mark for themselves for their peaceful and hardworking nature and continue to spread their branches, they remain true to their roots. A 280-member strong contingent from Qatar participated in the recently held 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in Indore. Various community organizations work hard to keep our culture and traditions alive and also support the host Government & Embassy's efforts to reach out to those in need – especially by conducting Blood donation camps, health camps etc.

The welfare and the well-being of the Indian community in Qatar is the top priority of the Embassy of India, and we had been relentless in our efforts to ensure and facilitate the needs and requirements of the Indian diaspora. In order to facilitate a seamless consular service, the Embassy of India has recently re-introduced the walk-in system, so that the public can seek our service at their convenience. During the Hon'ble Vice President's visit to Qatar on two separate occasions in June and November last year, the Embassy of India had hosted separate interaction session for the migrant workers. The Embassy also regularly hosts consular camps in distant locations of Qatar, to offer consular services for the Indian community residing outside Doha.

As we celebrate our 74th Republic Day, I once again extend my warm greetings to my fellow Indians in Qatar and congratulate and thank the Indian community for their continued contribution and cooperation in strengthening the India – Qatar relationship.



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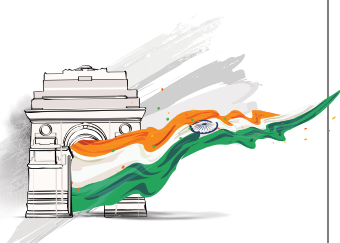
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SPECIAL THANKS

The Gulf Times thanks the Embassy of India, Doha-Qatar for the support rendered in preparing this supplement

Bilateral Engagements and Activities

Vice President's visit to Qatar

India's vice president Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar and Dr Sudesh Dhankhar visited Qatar to attend the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 opening ceremony. His Excellency and the accompanying delegation were welcomed upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by Qatar's Minister of State HE Sheikh Fahad bin Faisal Al-Thani and Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Qatar HE Dr. Deepak Mittal.



India's vice-president Jagdeep Dhankhar with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani at the FIFA World Cup 2022 opening ceremony.

The vice president had a meeting with His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar.

The vice president held conversations with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, FIFA President Gianni Infantino, IOC President Thomas Bach, and other world leaders on the sidelines of the World Cup.

He also held a series of interactions with the Indian community in Qatar.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

The 17th edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention was held from 8 – 10 January 2023 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. The theme of the 17th PBD was "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in



Amrit Kaal". Over 3500 diaspora members from nearly 70 different countries had registered for this year's convention.

Street Children World Cup 2022

India's young football ambassadors took part in the



Street Children World Cup 2022, organised by the Qatar Foundation.

Cultural performance

Flag Plaza, an art installation, was inaugurated in Doha on 7th October 2022 where 119 flags have been raised, forming a community space for people to view and enjoy. The flags represent the nations with diplomatic missions accredited by the state, the European Flag, the United Nations Flag and the Gulf Cooperation Council Flag. Cultural



performances showcasing India's rich culture were held by the Indian Embassy in partnership with Qatar Museum during the inauguration.

Embassy marks Hindi Day





Meeting with Director of Public Security

HE Director of Public Security Staff Major General Saad bin Jassim Al Khulaifi, met with the Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Qatar Dr. Deepak Mittal on 6th September 2022.

Visit to Qatari Diar

The Ambassador of the Republic of India to the State of Qatar Dr. Deepak Mittal visited Qatari Diar and had a briefing with the Chief Investment Officer on their investments and ongoing projects. Avenues for enhanced bilateral cooperation in real estate and infrastructure were discussed.



Uniq hosts cricket tournament

United Nurses of India-Qatar (Uniq) organised its second cricket tournament for Indian nurses in Qatar. More than



230 nurses from various healthcare facilities were among the 16 teams participating in the tournament.

Agricultural season

Nammude Adukkala Thottam (Our KitchenGarden) Doha, a group of agriculture enthusiasts promoting organic farming in Qatar, held 9th agricultural season which was



inaugurated by Ambassador Dr Deepak Mittal at Birla Public school on 16 September 2022. 'Young farmer' and 'Business Excellence' awards were given.



Qatar Indian School Youth Fest

The Qatar Indian School Youth Festival, Kalanjali 2022, was held from 12-16 September. A total of 980 students from 17 different Indian schools participated in 66 events, with MES Indian School ultimately taking home the Rolling Trophy.

ICC celebrates Gandhi Jayanti

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) Qatar celebrated Gandhi Jayanti on October 2. The programme started with a live quiz on the theme 'Celebrating Bapu'. Indian ambassador



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The Rise of India's Drone Industry

Over the past year, the government of India has introduced various measures to support the domestic drone industry

Bilateral Engagements and Activities

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Dr Deepak Mittal was the chief guest. His wife Dr Alpna Mittal, Indian embassy first secretary Sachin Dinkar Shankpal, defence attache Mohan Atla, ICC president P N Baburajan and other community leaders were present.

Yoga For All

As part of Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, Embassy of India along with Indian Sports Centre organised Yoga For All. The session included yoga for beginners, demonstration of advanced yoga and a talk by famous Yogi Dr Anand Balyogi.



From capturing breathtaking videos to delivering life-saving drugs, drones can carry out a wide range of activities. Governments and industries across the globe are using drones for executing tedious, repetitive, or dangerous tasks. New-age drones provide enhanced levels of safety, accuracy, and efficiency. Over the past year, the Indian government has introduced various measures to support the domestic drone industry. With its traditional strengths in innovation and information technology, India has the potential to become a global drone hub by 2030.

The drone industry: an overview

A drone or unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is essentially an aircraft that operates without a human pilot. They are remotely controlled and can even fly autonomously using advanced software programs. In the 1930s, the British manufactured several radio-controlled aircraft and used them as targets for training purposes. Since then, drone technology has come a long way. They come in all shapes and sizes these days— from those that can fit in your palm to large, high-flying, armed ones.

Drones are widely associated with military forces around the world. It can carry out anti-aircraft target practice, gathering intelligence, and surveillance. Military drones can travel long distances and carry weapons systems. They are equipped with thermal imaging cameras, laser range finders, and even tools to perform surgical strikes.

Government agencies use drones for geographical mapping and surveillance in areas that are not easily accessible. To save time and costs, farmers use special drones to spray pesticides, insecticides,

and fertilizers in pre-fixed quantities and patterns. It can even perform field surveys and track livestock. On the other hand, we see many logistics and e-commerce companies conducting trial runs of drones for automated last-mile delivery.

You would have seen drones used by law enforcement agencies to monitor Covid-19 hotspots and containment zones. Across all these use-cases, drones replace human labour and improve efficiency. The application and potential are endless!



Government's boost

While presenting the Union Budget 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke about the government's focus on drone technology. In the agricultural sector, 'Kisan drones' will be used for crop assessments, digitisation of land records, and spraying insecticides. The Centre will also promote startups that work on various applications of drone services under the Drone Shakti scheme.

Earlier this month, the Government of India announced a blanket ban on the import of foreign-made drones. Now, drones can only be imported for research & development (R&D), defence, and security after due clearances. This move aims to

promote the domestic manufacturing of drones and offer protection against commercial imports.

In September 2021, the Centre approved a Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for drones and their components. The government has set aside Rs 120 crore (spread over three financial years) towards this scheme. If they avail of the scheme, the manufacturers of drones and essential components will receive an incentive of up to 20%.



Last year, the Centre established liberalised drone rules to encourage R&D and make India a drone hub. It abolished several time-consuming permission and approval procedures. Now, a remote pilot license is not necessary for the non-commercial use of micro and nano drones. Moreover, drones can carry payloads up to 500 kilograms. The government will develop drone corridors for cargo deliveries as well.



The way ahead

The drone market is developing at a rapid pace in India. As a result of the new regulations and incentive schemes, the drone manufacturing industry could see direct investments of more than Rs 5,000 crore over the next three years. The government expects the industry to generate 10,000 direct jobs. Several environmental conservation projects use drone technology for mapping and monitoring ecologically-sensitive areas.

Many large players are now competing to secure a piece of this emerging market. As per reports, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has set its sights on developing drone technology via a Bengaluru-based startup, Asteria Aerospace. Meanwhile, Info Edge has entered the segment through its investment in Skylark Drones, a startup developing

infrastructure for a global drone ecosystem. Zomato has acquired TechEagle, a leading manufacturer of long-range, high-speed delivery drone solutions.


Paras Aerospace is well-known for its direct involvement in developing UAV technology. The subsidiary of Paras Defence & Space Technologies has partnered with Europe-based FIXAR and Nurjana Tech to bring drones to India. On the other hand, Zen Technologies Ltd has developed anti-drone technology and is working on heavy-lift logistics drones. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) manufactures combat air defence drones for the Indian armed forces.

Due to high demand, India's drone market could easily become a multi-billion dollar industry over the next decade. It's time to keep a close watch on this space.



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All about Vikram-S India's first privately-developed rocket



In a historic moment, India's first privately developed rocket, Vikram-S, was launched into space on 18 November 2022, from the launchpad at Sriharikota of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Skyspace Aerospace, a Hyderabad-based startup told PTI, "Heartbeats quicken. All gazes are up to the sky. The earth is listening. It all points to 18 November 2022 for launch."

Who designed Vikram-S?

Skyroot Aerospace is an Indian startup in the aerospace industry that has developed a rocket under the 'Prarambh Mission'. This Hyderabad-based startup's design will be launched with three payloads on a suborbital mission known as Prarambh.



Let's be proud that our country has such a rich history and heritage.



Greetings to the Government and the People of India on the Joyous Occasion of **74th REPUBLIC DAY**



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In addition to being the nation's first private launch, it will also be Skyroot Aerospace's first mission, named "Prarambh," that will carry three payloads into space. There will be two Indian and one foreign customer among them, reported PTI.

In remembrance of Vikram Sarabhai, the renowned scientist who established the Indian space program, the name "Vikram" is chosen for the Skyroot launch vehicles. Skyroot is also the first new startup to sign a memorandum of understanding with ISRO to launch its rockets.

All about Vikram-S

The Vikram-S rocket is a single-stage sub-orbital launch vehicle that would carry three customer payloads. Vehicles that travel slower than the orbital speed are

considered suborbital flights. This indicates that their speed is sufficient to reach outer space but not sufficient to maintain an orbit around the Earth.

The majority of the technologies in the Vikram series of space launch vehicles would benefit from its testing and validation. Skyroot has been developing three distinct versions of the Vikram rocket.

The Vikram-S is a small satellite launch vehicle developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is designed to launch small payloads into orbit, including remote sensing satellites, communication satellites, and scientific satellites. The Vikram-S is a solid fuel rocket and has a lift-off mass of 27.8 metric tons. It is equipped with four stages, and is capable of placing payloads weighing up to 500 kilograms into low Earth orbit. The rocket has a length of 20.8 meters and a diameter of 1.2 meters. The Vikram-S was first launched in April 2021, and has conducted several successful missions since then.

The Vikram-I can carry a payload of 480 kilograms, while the Vikram-II is designed to carry 595 kilograms and the Vikram-III can carry 815 kilograms into a 500-kilometre Low Inclination Orbit.

What is the Prarambh Mission?

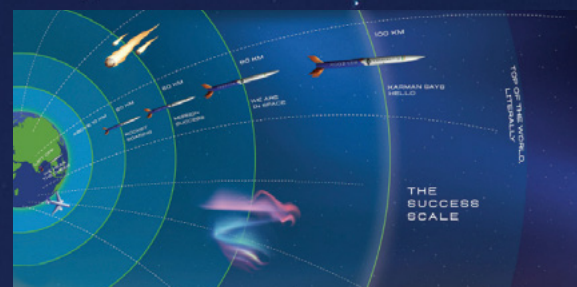
The Prarambh mission aims to launch three payloads

into space, one of which is a 2.5-kilogram payload created by students from several countries. The Hyderabad-based startup received substantial assistance from the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre) for the development of the Prarambh mission and the Vikram-S rocket.

Impact on India's private space industry

Skyroot will become the first private space company to launch a rocket into space from India if the mission is successful. This will open doors for the growth of India's private space sector, which opened in 2020. Since then, India is trying to attract private space companies to launch rockets from India.

According to PTI reports, the ultimate goal of opening India's space sector to private companies is to remove barriers to entry and create a favourable environment for cost-effective satellite launch services. This will make spaceflights affordable, dependable, and routine for everyone, advancing these businesses' goals.



Congratulations

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India set to become world's third-largest economy by 2030: report

India has the conditions in place for an economic boom fuelled by investments in manufacturing, the energy transition, and the country's advanced digital infrastructure and these drivers will make it the world's third-largest economy and stock market before the end of this decade ending 2030, said global investment bank Morgan Stanley in a report.

The report titled 'Why This Is India's Decade' looked at the trends and policies shaping the future of India's economy.

"As a consequence, India is gaining power in the world economy, and in our opinion, these idiosyncratic changes imply a once-in-a-generation shift and an opportunity for investors and companies," it said.

The four global trends - demographics, digitalization, decarbonization and deglobalization are favouring what it termed as New India. It said India would drive a fifth of global growth through the end of this decade.

How will growth affect consumption

The number of households earning in excess of \$35,000/year is likely to rise five-fold in the coming decade, to over 25 million.



The implications of the rising household earnings are GDP likely to more than double to \$7.5 trillion by 2031, a discretionary consumption boom, and an 11 per cent annual compounding of market capitalization to \$10 trillion in the coming decade.

India's per-capita income, it said, would rise from USD 2,278 now to USD 5,242 in 2031, setting the stage for a discretionary spending boom.

Offshoring: 'Work from India'

The number of global in-house captive centers that opened in India over the last two years was almost double that of the prior four years.

During the two pandemic years, the number of people employed in this industry in India rose from 4.3 million to 5.1 million, and the country's share of global services trade rose 60 basis points to 4.3 per cent, it said.

In the coming decade, the number of people employed in India for jobs outside the country is likely to at least double to over 11 million, and the report estimates global spending on outsourcing could rise from \$180 billion per year to around \$500 billion by 2030. This, the report said, will have significant effects on both commercial and residential real estate demand.

Aadhaar system and its multiplier effects

Talking about the success of India's Aadhaar system, the report said it is the foundational ID for all Indians, designed to process high volumes at low cost with small-value transactions.

"After a hesitant start and several challenges, including legal ones, Aadhaar and IndiaStack have become ubiquitous. With 1.3 billion people carrying a digital ID, financial transactions have become easy and cheap. Aadhaar has enabled the direct payment of social benefits with efficiency and no leakage."



Further, the report estimates that India's manufacturing share of GDP will rise to 21 per cent by 2031, implying an incremental \$1 trillion manufacturing opportunity.

India's global export market share is expected to more than double at 4.5 per cent by 2031, providing an incremental \$1.2 trillion export opportunity.

India's services exports will almost treble to \$527 billion (from \$178 billion in 2021) over the next decade.

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India surpasses 1.5 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres



In a significant achievement demonstrating strengthening of the country's health infrastructure, India has surpassed a notable landmark- 150,000 Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) have been operationalised before 31 December 2022, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said in a statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded the efforts of the nation in accomplishing this feat before the set deadline and said that these centres will help provide citizens easy access to primary healthcare facilities.

"Translating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision into reality, the collected and collaborative efforts of States / UTs and Central Government have catapulted India into a global model for assured comprehensive primary health care services," said Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

"Fulfilling the principles of "Antyodaya"- leaving no one behind, 150,000 Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) are transforming the delivery of comprehensive primary health care services which are universally free and cater to all age groups from birth to death, through a continuum of care approach," the ministry said.

Ensuring the reach of healthcare services to the innermost regions of the nation through various initiatives, AB-HWCs have surpassed 8.5 teleconsultations via e-Sanjeevani, where nearly 4 lakh teleconsultations take place on a daily basis.

Ayushman Bharat Health & Wellness Centers are a network of primary care facilities that were established by the Government of India in 2018 as part of the Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission. The centers provide a range of basic healthcare services, including diagnostic tests, treatments, and referrals to specialist care as needed. They are intended to serve as the first point of contact for people seeking healthcare, and to help reduce the burden on larger hospitals by providing care for common ailments and injuries. The centers are located in both rural and urban areas and are intended to be accessible and affordable for all members of the community.



According to the ministry, more than 134 crore people across the country have benefitted from AB-HWCs, and more than 86.90 crore beneficiaries have been cumulatively screened for non-communicable diseases which include 29.95 crore for hypertension, 25.56 crore for diabetes, 17.44 crore for oral cancer, 8.27 crore for breast cancer and 5.66 crore for cervical cancer. In light of expansion of AB-HWCs, the number of essential medicines has increased to 172 at Primary Health Centres – Health Wellness Centres (PHC-HWC) and 105 at Sub Health Centres – Health Wellness Centres (SHC-HWC) and essential diagnostics have also expanded to 63 at PHC-HWC and 14 at SHC-HWC.

AB-HWCs also encompass wellness sessions on yoga, zumba, cyclathons, walkathons and provide guidelines on diet, physical activity, positive parenting, tobacco, alcohol cessation among other aspects to imbibe a mindset for community well-being, it said.

Till date, more than 1.60 crore wellness sessions have been conducted at these centres.

Additionally, AB-HWCs have also operationalized 2-3 centres in urban sphere under the umbrella of Urban Primary Health Centre-Health and Wellness Centre (UPHC-HWC), strengthening outpatient care, and covering a population of 15,000 to 20,000.





Contd. from pg 11

Key points from the Morgan Stanley report:

- E-commerce penetration to nearly double from 6.5 per cent to 12.3 per cent by 2031.



- Internet users in India to increase from 650 million to 960 million while online shoppers will grow from 250 million to 700 million over the next 10 years.
- Around 25 per cent of incremental global car sales over 2021-2030 will be from India and expect 30 per cent of 2030 passenger vehicle sales to be electric-run.



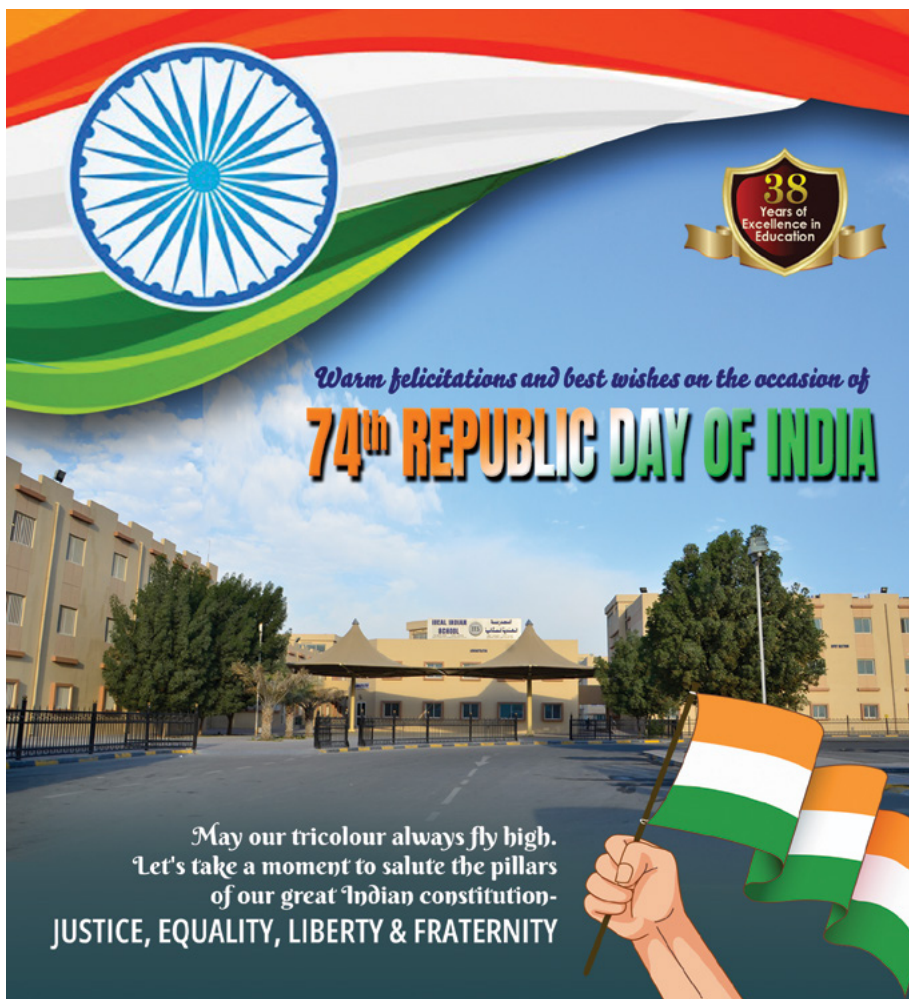
- India should hit a "major inflection point" for the next residential property boom in 2030 - a confluence of high per-capita income, a mid-30s median age, and higher urbanization.
- India's workforce in the technology services sector to more than double from 5.1 million in 2021 to 12.2 million in 2031.
- Healthcare penetration in India can rise from 30-40 per cent now to 60-70 per cent; implying 400 million new entrants to the formal healthcare system.
- Over \$700 billion in energy investments are expected over the next decade as India accelerates its energy transition.



Voice of Global South Summit



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses at the opening session of Voice of Global South Summit 2023 via video conferencing on January 12, 2023.



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Initiating a vibrant and energized approach towards geopolitics, India launched the Voice of Global South Summit on January 12, 2023 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivering the inaugural address. Numerous conversations at the ministerial level were a part of the summit, which was conducted virtually. Regardless of whether it was at the UNSC or multilateral forums, India has always addressed and voiced the needs of the Global South.

The term Global South in common parlance is used for the countries which have low levels of economic and industrial development, which are mainly located in the southern part of the world and are located to the south of the industrialized, developed nations. Another way one can understand Global South is the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Additionally, the phrase 'Global South' paints a vision of the world with the historically neglected and minor geopolitical players at its center.

India, with its enormous population and enormous economic capabilities, is working to unite the nations of the Global South into a powerful front so that an action oriented approach can be adopted for the countries of the global south. Tracing a connection between the nations, one may explain how the global south has suffered greatly yet contributes relatively little to global crises. The industrialization consequences, food crisis, and climate change among others have had a significant negative influence on the developing world.

"In the last Century, we supported each other in our fight against foreign rule. We can do it again in this Century, to

create a new World Order that will ensure the welfare of our citizens," said Prime Minister Modi while addressing the Voice of Global South summit.

The world is fully aware of the untapped potential that exists in the growing economies of the Global South. The countries will witness significant progress if they cooperate in areas like technical exchanges, ideas exchanges, exchanging best practices in manufacturing, and other areas.

India: The powerhouse of the Global South

India has successfully positioned itself as a 21st-century powerhouse during the course of its 75-year journey. The country's global stature has continuously expanded and has played a crucial role in mitigating global crisis situations. Aside from having one of the largest diasporas, other factors such as technical breakthroughs, economic potential, and improvements in social indicators have helped the country to establish itself as a strong global leader.

India has a lot to offer to the world, especially to the countries of the global south. In addition, to India's Vaccine Maitri, which provided medicines and vaccines to over 100 countries during the pandemic, the world has seen how the nation played a significant role in evacuating citizens from Afghanistan and Ukraine during the times of hostilities in those countries.

Notably, India's digital public assets like UPI, RuPay, and India stack, which are supporting such a large portion of the Indian population, can be a powerful instrument for the digital transformation of other developing and



emerging countries. The first nation to implement the Bharat Interface for Money – Unified Payments Interface (BHIM-UPI) was Bhutan, which is a direct neighbor of India. Various other nations, like Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, also permit the use of the RuPay card system.

Another example of India's assistance to other nations is its hospital system, which treats thousands of foreign patients and has proved to be one of the most efficient and effective healthcare systems worldwide. If the Global South and India worked together, they could make significant advancements in the fight against terrorism, maritime policy, and other fields.

We Salute our nation on the joyous occasion of 74th Republic Day of India

On this day of the year 1950, we adopted the constitution and gave to ourselves a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic.

On this great occasion, let us salute the great freedom fighters and the personalities who, through their sacrifices, made it possible for our country to attain freedom and become a Sovereign Republic.

A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. As India and Indians march forward, we remain committed to engaging the global community to build a secure and prosperous future for ourselves and for the entire humanity.

Wishing a very Happy Republic Day 2023 to all!



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Eastern India's first Vande Bharat Express rolls out

P rime Minister Narendra Modi recently flagged off the Vande Bharat express connecting Howrah and New Jalpaiguri in the presence of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee virtually.

The event was also attended by Governor C V Ananda Bose and Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

The nation's seventh Vande Bharat express train between Howrah-New Jalpaiguri (NJP) was flagged off through video conferencing by the Prime Minister minutes after the last rite of his mother Hiraben Modi.

Modi took part in the flag-off from Gujarat as the train left Howrah station in Bengal. The train will cover a distance of around 550km and will take a little more than seven and a half hours to reach its destination, with only three stoppages from Howrah to NJP. The Shatabdi also runs between the two terminals. The Vande Bharat will run six days a week except on Wednesdays. The train will depart at 5.50am from Howrah and reach NJP at 1.25pm. From NJP, the train will depart at 3.05pm and reach Howrah at 10.35pm.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister apologised for not being physically present, as for him, this is the day to bow to the land of Bengal as the history of the freedom struggle is infused in every particle of Bengal.

"Land from where the call of Vande Matram originated, saw the flagging off of Vande Bharat today", the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister recalled that on Dec 30, 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted the Tricolour in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and set the wheels in motion for the independence of India. On the 75th year anniversary of this historic day, the Prime Minister informed that he got the opportunity to visit Andaman to name an island in honour of Netaji. He further added that India had taken a resolve to start 475 Vande Bharat trains during the celebrations of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and the train being flagged off today from Howrah to New Jalpaiguri is one of them. Mentioning the multiple projects whose foundation stones are being laid and inaugurated today, the Prime Minister said that the government is spending approximately 5000 crores for the completion of these projects.

The Prime Minister linked reforms and development of Indian Railways with the development of the country. That is why, he said, the central government is making record investments in the modern railway infrastructure. A nationwide campaign is going on to transform the Indian Railway, he said. He listed modern trains like Vande Bharat, Tejas Hum Safar and VistaDome coaches and the modernisation of Railway Stations

including New Jalpaiguri, doubling and electrification of Railway lines as examples of this modernization. He also mentioned eastern and Western dedicated freight corridors as projects that will bring revolutionary changes in the logistics sector. The Prime Minister highlighted strides made in the fields of Railway safety, cleanliness, coordination, capability, punctuality and facilities. The Prime Minister emphasised that in the last 8 years, Indian Railways worked on the foundation of modernity and the coming years will see Indian Railway embarking on a new journey of modernization. The Prime Minister informed that while 20 thousand route kilometre rail lines were electrified in the first 70 years of Independence, more than 32 thousand route kilometres have been electrified since 2014. The Prime Minister said that the Metro Rail system is an example of India's speed and scale today. "Metro network which was less than 250 km before 2014 had the highest share in Delhi-NCR. In the last 7-8 years Metro has expanded to more than 2 dozen cities. Today Metro is running on an approximately 800 km long Metro track in different cities of the country. Work is going on Metro routes of more than 1000 km", he informed.

Highlighting the love for the land in the people of West Bengal, the Prime Minister remarked on the enthusiasm that they show in visiting the different places of cultural



heritage in India and also learning from it. "The people of Bengal possess the spirit of Nation First, even in tourism", he continued, "When connectivity in the country gets a boost, and the railway, waterway and highways are becoming more advanced, the result is Ease of Travel and the people of Bengal have also benefited from this", Shri Modi remarked.

The Prime Minister concluded the address by reciting a few lines by Guru Rabindranath Tagore which translates to "The soil of my country, I bow my head to you". The Prime Minister pointed out that in this Azadi ka Amrit Kaal, everyone must work together by deeming utmost priority to our motherland. "The entire world is looking at India with the eyes of hope and expectations. Every citizen of the country must dedicate oneself to the service of the nation", the Prime Minister concluded.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Joka-Taratata Stretch of the Joka-Esplanade Metro Project (Purple Line). The 6.5 km stretch having 6 stations namely Joka,



The Joka-Taratata Stretch of the Joka-Esplanade Metro Project (Purple Line)



Thakurpukur, Sakher Bazar, Behala Chowrasta, Behala Bazar and Taratala has been constructed at a cost of more than Rs 2475 Crore. Passengers of southern parts of Kolkata City like Sarsuna, Dakghar, Muchipara and South 24 Parganas will be immensely benefited from the inauguration of this project.

The Prime Minister also dedicated four railway projects to the nation. These include the Boinchi - Shaktigarh 3rd

Line developed at a cost of Rs 405 crore; the Dankuni - Chandanpur 4th Line Project developed at a cost of Rs 565 crore; Nimita - New Farakka Double Line developed at a cost of Rs 254 crore; and Ambari Falakata - New Maynaguri - Gumanihat Doubling Project developed at a cost of more than Rs 1080 crore. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the New Jalpaiguri Railway Station to be developed at the cost of more than Rs 335 crore.

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Celebration of Pride!"**

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on the occasion of the

74th Republic Day of India





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Jumbo ELECTRONICS

India-Australia Economic and Cooperation Trade Agreement comes into force

The India-Australia Economic and Cooperation Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA), which is expected to double trade between the two countries to \$50 billion, came into effect on 29 December 2022.

The negotiations for a free trade agreement with Australia re-started in September 2021 and was signed in April 2022. This is the first major trade agreement with a western country under the Narendra Modi government.

"All the necessary notifications required for entry into force of Ind-Aus ECTA on 29.12.2022 have been issued by the Department of Revenue and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade in the Department of Commerce," the government said.

The Ind-Aus ECTA provides an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries. It covers almost all the tariff lines dealt by India and Australia.

India will benefit from preferential market access provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines, including all the labor-intensive sectors of export interest to India, such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear, furniture among other, the commerce ministry said.

On the other hand, India will be offering preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines, including lines of export interest to Australia, which are primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores and wines, it added.

"Products like agricultural products and the dairy sector - which were very sensitive for India and without which Australia has never done an agreement before - have been protected, I am hugely grateful to the Australian government for this," commerce minister Piyush Goyal said.

It is estimated that an additional 10 lakh jobs would be created in India under ECTA, Goyal said, adding that Indian yoga teachers and chefs are set to gain with the annual visa quota.

"Over 1 lakh Indian students would benefit from a post-study work visa (for 18 months to 4 years) under the ECTA. The agreement is also likely to increase investment opportunities, promote exports, create significant additional employment and facilitate strong bonding between the two countries," he further said.

Australia is an important strategic partner of India. They are also part of the four nation QUAD, Trilateral Supply Chain Initiative and the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum.

An Australian government statement said: "From 29 December, tariffs on 85% of Australia's exports to India will be eliminated and high tariffs on a further 5 per cent of goods will be phased down."

It added: "Entry into force of the agreement before the New Year delivers a double bonus of two tariff cuts in quick succession: one as the agreement comes into effect and a second on 1 January 2023."

Australian trade minister Don Farrell said businesses have to prepare themselves now to take advantage of the substantial improvements in market access to India under the new agreement. "The ECTA's two tariff cuts in quick succession intensify the up-front benefits of this agreement for our exporters," he added. The deal, signed on April 2, is India's first trade deal in a decade with any developed country.

India already has a free trade agreement with UAE, which was signed on February 18 and officially entered into force on May 1. It is in the process of negotiating similar in some deals with four key economies or blocs: the UK, the European Union (EU), Canada and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Official timelines for the negotiations are yet to be finalised.

The deal closest to formalisation is the free trade agreement with the UK, which is expected to be concluded by March.

With Canada, meanwhile, the Indian side held the fifth round of talks between November 14 and 18 while a third round of discussions will be held with the European Union after trade talks were resumed this summer after a gap of almost a decade. India is also negotiating the terms of reference for a trade deal with GCC, which includes UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait.



10 Eternal Indian folk arts and the artists keeping them alive

We journey through the heartlands of India and encounter 10 artists who are keeping folk art traditions alive in the present Text and Images by: India Art Fair

Be it Maharashtra's Warli wall paintings, Andhra Pradesh's Kalamkari textiles or West Bengal's Kalighat bazaar art, each corner of India has its own folk art legacy, going back centuries and millennia. While each of these art-forms are based on distinct styles, techniques and themes, they share in common a celebration of community and narrative—and together tell the layered story of India through the ages. Here, we meet ten contemporary artists who carry forward their folk traditions into the 21st century, paying homage to history while unlocking the expressive potential of each style to tell new stories of today and tomorrow.



1. Ajit Kumar Das, Kalamkari (1957)

"An alchemist of natural dyes," Ajit Kumar Das has been practising and developing the centuries old Kalamkari technique of dyeing and printing for more than fifty years. Hailing from the North-East Indian state of Tripura, Das began his artistic career as a printer at the Weavers Service Center in Ahmedabad where he trained with renowned Indian modernists like C. Chandramouli and K.G. Subramanyam, and was influenced by curators like Martand Singh, who on seeing Das at work, said it was like watching a dancer move. To create his works, Das uses the kalam or bamboo reed, block printing and dyeing to create flora, fauna and abstract forms on textile. Drawing from traditional dyes, techniques and aesthetic sensibilities, Das has developed a visual language that evokes a purity and elegance of colour and form.

2. Kalam Patua, Kalighat (1962)

At 60, Kalam Patua is one of the most celebrated Kalighat artists working today. The artist is credited for breathing new life into the once hugely popular 'bazaar' art

form from Kolkata, known for its bold lines, bright colours and sharp satire and which has been in decline since the advent of photography.

Hailing from the Rampurhat district of West Bengal into a family of pattachitra scroll-makers—practitioners of the



ancient narrative painting tradition from East India from which Kalighat painting eventually evolved in colonial Calcutta—Patua began painting under his uncle and mentor, Baidyanath Patua.

Much like the Kalighat painters of 19th century Calcutta, Kalam Patua's artworks melds Hindu religious mythology and the images of the modern urban elite, critiquing both with innocent humour. The artist's own life bleeds into his work too, such as in his 'Post office' series, directly inspired by his day-profession as the postmaster of his local post-office.

3. Bhuri Bai, Bhil (1969)

Born in 1969 into a family from the Bhil tribe in Pitol, Madhya Pradesh, Bhuri Bai was the first woman from her community to take up painting, against all convention. While working as a construction worker, she painted at home and eventually covered the walls of her house with colourful forms resembling plants, humans, and animals.

Encouraged by artist and writer J. Swaminathan to live and work out of Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal, the artist gained recognition for her unique vision and crossed over to painting with acrylics on canvas, the first Bhil artist to do so. In keeping with the traditional techniques of Bhil art, Bhuri Bai uses bright colour and dotted patterns to enliven large and imaginative scenes of human and animal figures.



In paintings such as *Story of the Jungle*, in which a whale transforms into an aeroplane, and *Antelopes with Birds*, a simple scene of an antelope rendered in almost psychedelic patterning, we see

the artist's ability to remain true to the techniques of Bhil art while using them to express a new aesthetic. A recipient of the fourth highest Indian civilian award, the Padma Shri Award in 2021, Bhuri Bai continues to teach the traditions and techniques of Bhil art to young girls in her village.

4. Bhajju Shyam, Gond (1971)

Born in 1971 in the Gond-Pardhaan village of Patangarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bhajju Shyam is a prominent painter in the Gond tradition who began his journey in art observing and assisting his uncle, Jangarh Singh Shyam, the now-late artist who almost single-handedly brought Gond art to the world stage. Much like in his uncle's works, many of which now hang in his house in Bhopal, Bhajju Shyam's works on canvas and paper use motifs from the natural world, with abstracted

Contd. on pg 26



Warm Greetings

To the Government and
the People of India on
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JAISALMER: A Cultural and Festive Haven for Tourists

The Jaisalmer Annual Desert Festival is an annual cultural event that takes place in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, India. The festival typically features a variety of traditional Rajasthani music and dance performances, camel and turban-tying competitions, puppet shows, and other cultural activities. The festival also includes a colorful parade of camels and other traditional Rajasthani folk performances. The festival is held in the month of January/February and is an attempt to promote the rich culture and heritage of Jaisalmer.

The 44th Jaisalmer Annual Desert Festival, 2023, is scheduled to take place in the lovely city of Jaisalmer at the Poonam Singh Stadium from February 3 to 5.

The event will be held in the magnificent and rustic dunes of the Thar Desert and will feature a spectacular display of beauty and extravaganza that will highlight Rajasthan's naturally rich cultural legacy that is woven into every facet of the city's beautiful geography. The enchanting desert festival allows visitors to immerse themselves in Rajasthan's regal tradition, which is seen in every intricate detail, large or small, of the



The Annual Desert Festival in Jaisalmer will showcase a dazzling display of Rajasthan's rich cultural heritage, intricately woven into the city's stunning landscape

event. The dunes come to life during the three-day celebration, which includes traditional dance and music performances, as well as a multitude of other cultural delights.

While talking about the Jaisalmer Desert Festival, Rooparam Meghwal Member of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly said: "Jaisalmer Desert Festival is an expressive way to celebrate or indulge in the glorious graphic heritage of Rajasthan. Guests at the festival will have appropriate moments to rejoice in the celebration with their loved ones. All the guests at Jaisalmer Desert Festival will be witnessing the traditional roots of Rajasthan in different forms, from local folk fare to other festive celebrations. Talking about the significance of the Desert Festival in Jaisalmer, its main objective is to showcase to worldwide spectators the artistic side of royal Rajasthan in the best possible way! It is all about spraying its colours, playing the local folks and dances, and whirring its heels from the hub of Thar Desert. In the folk fusion of Jaisalmer, tourists alike - whether domestic or international, will be taking a deep plunge into Rajasthan's traditional colours like never before." Surreal performances by Indian maestros and performers such as composer pair Salim Suleiman, Ankit Tiwari, Salman Ali, Shanmukha Priya, and Raghu Dixit Project will light up the environment.



Gajendra Singh, Owner of The Mamas, Resort & Camp adds: "Jaisalmer Desert Festival is one of the most popular and colourful cultural events of Rajasthan, which is visited by several tourists. It is the best platform to portray the state's culture and traditions through dance, music, and other art forms. Rafting through the pits and falling on the shimmering sands is the most sought-after feature of the Jaisalmer Desert Festival 2023. In this activity, one will be riding in a 4X4 vehicle on the dunes, alongside off-roading on the dunes under expert supervision. And apart from dune bashing, there's quad biking in the Thar Desert, and parasailing to give tourists an incredible adrenaline rush."



Art camps with live art activation by around 20-25 artists are an attraction that art fans can enjoy. The event is a major venue to celebrate the skilled artistry of the handicrafts community and will include an exotic handpicked handmade collection at the Handicrafts Bazaar at the Shaheed Poonam Singh Stadium by a self-help handicraft organization from Jaisalmer. The delightful 'Dine with Jaisalmer' programme will be organised by the 'I Love Jaisalmer Foundation'.

The programme would entertain guests at Jaisalmer residents' homes for a divine and scrumptious local thali (plate) supper with families at the same table. The idea was designed as an ode and tribute to travellers visiting



from all over the world for the festival, as well as to form friendships that will last longer than a few days. Visitors to the festival will be able to see a gorgeous sky with celestial bodies near the Sam and Khuri dunes. Camel Safari, Motor Paragliding, Helicopter Ride, Kalbeliya Dance, and Jaisalmer Folk Songs may be enjoyed at the Sam and Khuri Dunes.

Jitendra Singh Rathore, President of the Red Cross Society, Jaisalmer said: "During the desert festival, the sands around Jaisalmer are adorned with vibrant hues of music and dance, accompanied with sounds of laughter and joy. Musicians entice you with haunting ballads - a mixture

of romantic verses weaved together with tunes of tragic pain. The fair has snake charmers, puppeteers, acrobats, and folk performers. Camels, also play a stellar role. This desert festival of India closes with an enchanting sound and light show amid the sand dunes on a moonlight night. Evenings are meant for the main shows of music and dance. Continuing till late into the night, the number of spectators increases by each night and on the final day, under the full moonlight night, the whole place is swarming with people who make it a point to be there to witness this mega show."

Jaisalmer Fort



The Jaisalmer Fort, also known as the "Golden Fort," is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most notable landmarks in the city of Jaisalmer. It is located on a hill in the middle of the city and is made entirely of yellow sandstone, which gives it its golden appearance and nickname. The fort was built in the 12th century by Rajput ruler Rawal Jaisal and has served as the main residence for the rulers and their families for several centuries.

It includes several palaces, havelis, temples, and a bazaar. The fort also offers a panoramic view of the entire city and the surrounding desert. The fort is also known for its beautiful Jain Temples, which are famous for their intricate carvings and sculptures. It is a must-visit destination for history buffs and those interested in Rajput architecture and culture.



Location: The fort is located in the middle of the Thar Desert, which makes it a unique fortress as it was built to protect the city and its inhabitants from desert invasions.

Architecture: The fort is made entirely of yellow sandstone, which gives it a distinct golden colour and earned it the nickname "Golden Fort." The architecture of the fort is a combination of Rajput and Islamic styles and is characterized by intricate carvings, sculptures, and latticed windows.



Living Fort: Unlike many other forts in India, the Jaisalmer Fort is still inhabited by people, which gives visitors a chance to see how people lived and continue to live inside a fort.



Happy Republic Day

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For a sustainable future

India has a long history of managing and conserving its forest resources, dating back to ancient times when kings and emperors established protected forests for hunting and religious purposes. Today, the Indian government has several policies and programs in place to protect and sustainably manage its forests.

One of the key initiatives for sustainable forest protection in India is the Forest Conservation Act (1980), which regulates the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes and lays down guidelines for the management of forests. Under this Act, the central and state governments are responsible for protecting and conserving forests and wildlife, and for ensuring that forest land is not used for activities that may cause ecological damage.

Another important initiative is the National Forest Policy (1988), which lays down guidelines for the conservation and development of forests. The policy aims to increase the forest cover in the country to 33% of the total geographical area and promotes the participation of local communities in forest management.

The Indian government also has several programs in place to protect specific forest types, such as the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats and Project Tiger, which aims to protect tigers and their habitats. In addition, there is a network of protected areas, such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, which are dedicated to the conservation of various plant and animal species.

The government also launch a National Green Tribunal, which is an specialized court that deals with issues related to environmental protection, and Forest Rights Act 2006, which grants rights to the local communities who have been dependent on the forests for their livelihoods.

India also promotes agroforestry, in which trees and crops are grown together to provide multiple benefits such as food security, income generation and environmental protection.

In recent years, India has also been focusing on reforestation and afforestation. India's Forest Survey of India (FSI) conducts biennial surveys to assess the forest cover and forest resource status in the country. According to the FSI's 2019 report, the total forest cover in India is around 24.56% of the total geographical area, up from 24.16% in 2017.

Despite the government's efforts, India is still facing some major challenges in sustainable forest protection. Illegal logging, mining and agriculture are still causing damage to forest ecosystems and wildlife habitats, particularly in protected areas. Climate change and increasing human populations also putting pressure on forest resources. However, India is making efforts to overcome these



challenges through increased law enforcement, stricter regulations, and more active involvement of local communities in forest management.

Overall, sustainable forest protection is a crucial task for India, as the country's forests play a vital role in supporting biodiversity, regulating the water cycle, protecting soils, and maintaining the ecological balance. They also serve as a source of livelihood for many people, particularly in rural areas.

India's stance on the global biodiversity framework

The second phase of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has finally delivered a new global biodiversity framework that will guide global action on biodiversity conservation. Spread across four overarching goals and 23 targets, the 'Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework' (GBF) is finalised by 188 government representatives. The ambitious framework urges countries to conserve 30 percent of biodiversity on land and underwater by 2030. It has also set forth a financial mobilisation target for the developed world.

Achieving these targets will require strong leadership from key countries and mechanisms to ensure that countries adhere to the commitments. India urged the world to tackle biodiversity issues from a holistic 'ecosystems-based' approach.

India has 8 percent of global biodiversity, four cross-border global biodiversity hotspots, a high degree of endemism, strong credentials in preventing illegal wildlife trade, and unique systemic ways of biodiversity conservation. India's Forest Rights Act has presented a unique way of striking a balance between mainstreaming of indigenous communities and biodiversity conservation. Its traditional practices and community-conserved biodiversity areas offer successful



examples of participatory biodiversity conservation even for the countries in the Global North.

An ecosystem-based approach to biodiversity conservation that India is advocating for is well embedded in the CBD. The CoP5 held in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2000, agreed to use an ecosystems-based approach to conservation. Given the interconnectedness of climate and environmental challenges, India's call for including CBDR-RC-like principles under CBD is fair. For now, using GBF, India needs to provide the world with ways of replicating holistic conservation measures that can also deliver on environmental conservation, equitable use, climate justice, livelihood protection, food security, and mainstreaming indigenous communities.



2022: A year of many firsts for Indian sports

The year 2022 will be remembered by Indian sports fans. It was a year of many firsts and historic achievements by Indian athletes on the world stage - a good follow-up to an almost equally impressive 2021 which saw the country's stars shine bright at the Tokyo Olympics.

Here's a relook at the peaks Indian athletes touched in 2022.

Neeraj Chopra stamps his mark on the World Championships and Diamond League

Maintaining that ideal run in 2022 after winning the gold medal at the Olympics in Tokyo the previous year would have been a difficult task for Neeraj Chopra. But the Indian men's javelin throw champion rose to the occasion, and what a rise!

Neeraj Chopra roared back into the international circuit to win a silver medal and set a national record at the Paavo Nurmi Games. Neeraj Chopra had missed the first half of the 2022 season in order to restore his condition following a 10-month sabbatical following his Tokyo 2020 campaign.

For Chopra, things only got better. The Olympic champion won yet another silver at the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Oregon, giving India its best performance at the event to date. This is only the second medal India has won on the world stage since Anju Bobby George's bronze medal in the long jump at the 2003 World Athletics Championships in Paris.

Neeraj qualified for the Diamond League Final in Zurich after placing second in the Stockholm meet and first in the Lausanne leg, the first-ever victory by an Indian in the Diamond League. He became the first Indian to win a Diamond League title after an outstanding performance in the Swiss city.

Neeraj Chopra repeatedly broke the national record during this time, and his most recent personal best throw of 89.94 metres came in the Stockholm Diamond League competition.



A Commonwealth Games of many firsts

Shooting, which has contributed to the majority of India's medals at the Commonwealth Games to date, was removed from Birmingham 2022's schedule, making it unlikely that India will bring home an impressive haul.

However, Indian athletes rose to the occasion and came away with 61 medals, including 22 golds, 16 silvers, and 23 bronze. While the expected performers

- the weightlifters, wrestlers, boxers, badminton and table tennis players - impressed, there were also some surprise triumphs.

With the women's team earning a gold medal and the men's team taking home a silver, Lawn Bowls, a sport that had previously received little attention from Indian sports fans, came to light. India had never previously competed in the sport at the Commonwealth Games and won medals.



Track and field athletes from India also achieved notable firsts. Eldhose Paul earned India's first triple jump gold at CWG 2022 after defeating fellow countryman Abdulla Aboobacker to give India its first-ever 1-2 finish at the Games. Murali Sreeshankar won India's first silver medal in the men's long jump.



The Indian hockey teams and women's cricket teams also bagged medals in Birmingham.

Race walkers Priyanka Goswami and Sandeep Kumar also got a place on the podium, but the highlight of the competition was steeplechaser Avinash Sable, who finished with a silver medal in the men's 3000m steeplechase, sandwiched between two Kenyans, in a time that set a new national record.





Maiden Thomas Cup badminton win

At the Thomas Cup 2022 held in Bangkok, Thailand, the Indian men's badminton team, captained by Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, Kidambi Srikanth, and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, helped write yet another chapter in Indian sports history.

India entered the competition as the fifth seeds despite never having won the men's badminton team world championships in the previous 31 editions. However, India played flawless badminton the entire tournament.

To advance to the knockout rounds, the Indian team came second to Chinese Taipei in their group. As he pulled off back-to-back clutch victories under duress to help India defeat Malaysia and Denmark, respectively, by identical 3-2 scores, HS Prannoy emerged as the hero in the quarterfinals and semifinals.

Indian shuttlers put up a professional performance to defeat Indonesia, the competition's reigning champions and most successful team with 14 championships, in the decisive match 3-0 to win their first Thomas Cup championship.

Nikhata Zareen becomes boxing world champion

The Indian boxer Nikhata Zareen would have considered the year 2022 to be successful if she had won the gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

The Indian fighter, however, went one better by also winning the title of world champion.

Nikhata Zareen, the fifth Indian woman to win the title after the legendary MC Mary Kom, Laishram Sarita Devi, Jenny RL, and Lekha K. C., defeated Thailand's Jutamas Jitpong, a Tokyo Olympian, 5-0 in the Women's World Boxing Championships 2022 final.

She is also the only one besides Mary Kom to become a world champion abroad.



India win inaugural FIH Women's Nation's Cup

After New Zealand and Australia withdrew owing to COVID-19, the Indian women's team was given the unexpected chance to compete in the FIH Pro League 2021-22 season, and they embraced the chance to compete against the best in the world.

India put in a great performance in their first campaign, challenging powerhouses like Argentina and finishing a creditable third.

With a goal in mind, Savita Punia and the company entered the eight-team event in December. They won all three of their group matches to advance to the semifinals, where they defeated a determined challenge from Ireland in a shootout. The Indians defeated Spain in a high-stakes game that finished with a 1-0 victory for them.



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lines and colours, to explore philosophical and mythical themes such as the creation of the world and the meaning of art. In these large vibrant paintings, as well as in his illustrations or recent paper cut-outs, Shyam is equally inspired by his rural roots and travels around the world, employing traditional Gond techniques to depict modern life and personal experiences. With many international exhibitions and publications, Shyam was awarded the fourth highest Indian civilian award, the Padma Shri in 2018.



5. K.M. Singh, Pichvai (1971)

Born in 1971, K.M. Singh belongs to a long line of Pichvai artists from Nathdwara in Rajasthan, making devotional and intricate textile paintings that pay homage to lord Krishna as a young child. In many of Singh's works, the young Krishna, also known as Srinathji, takes centre stage, adorned with jewels, flowers and garlands, and surrounded by a rich cast of religious figures and icons. Working under the patronage of the ancient Shrinathji temple in his hometown, Singh draws his subjects and motifs from tradition, but with a rare mastery of colour and composition that can transcend and transport viewers. Today, many Pichvai artists are also experimenting with newer styles, including hyper-realistic painting inspired by artists such as the modernist Raja Ravi Varma.

6. Putli Devi, Malo Devi and Parvati Devi, Hazaribagh

Putli Devi, Malo Devi and Parvati Devi

are painters and muralists celebrated for championing the traditional wall art of Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand. Murals with exquisite representations of flora and fauna, traditional Hazaribagh art has two distinct forms—Khovar murals, created during weddings using a 'reverse-slip' technique in which layers of black and white earth pigments are applied, let dry and scraped out using combs; and Sohrai murals created during the winter harvest using red ochres, yellows and blacks to depict symbols of wealth like the lord of animals or Pashupati. The three artists each have their specialisms, with Malo Devi



being known for Khovar and Putli Devi and Paravti Devi for Sohrai. The artists use their imagination as much as traditional images in their work, often painting from memory of childhood experiences. The women artists represent a swindling community of Hazaribagh artists, as Putli Devi explains, "what is special about the art form is that it is only made by women and passed on by women, and a handful of them at that."



7. Chanchal Chakraborty, Metal art

A maestro of brass sculpture, Chanchal Chakraborty was trained in Chemistry in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, and began his career as a bronze sculptor after moving to New Delhi in the 1990s. Chakraborty uses sand-casting to create his works that are typically treated with chemical washes to create a patina finish. Best known for his works that use natural and spiritually significant forms like that of the lotus flower or Mahabodhi tree, Chakraborty received the National Award in 2012 for his mastery of bronze sculpture.

8. Avinash Karn, Madhubani (1990)

At just 32, Avinash Karn is one of the most exciting new names in Madhubani painting, a traditional art form also known as Mithila art because of its origins in the Mithila region of India and Nepal. Born into a family of traditional artists in the village of Ranti



in Bihar, the artist draws on both traditional Madhubani motifs and contemporary pop-cultural imagery, as in his depiction of Delhi in Delhi Behrupiya Sahar that combines the classic Madhubani trees and birds with renderings of urban advertisement hoardings and tourist filled monuments. Karn's works are dense with symbols and imagery that together represent our social reality in all its complexity. Not just an artist, Karn is also an educator with a mission to make the once caste-restricted Madhubani art form accessible to all. Since 2021, the artist has been running ArtBole, a studio in his village dedicated to helping people from marginalised communities, particularly Muslim women, tell their stories through Madhubani painting.

9. Vayeda Brothers, Warli

(Tushar (1987), Mayur (1992))

Born and brought up in the Warli village of Ganjad in rural Maharashtra, brothers and artists Mayur and Tushar Vayeda grew up surrounded by Warli stories, rituals and the ceremonial Warli paintings, recognisable for their geometric patterns and natural and community themes. In an effort to "bring back the history of Warli artforms practised by tribal ancestors," the Vayeda brothers have developed a practice that stays true



to the traditional materials and motifs of Warli art— creating rhythmic alphabet-like forms with white pigment on surfaces primed with contrasting reddish-brown cow dung. Simultaneously, the brothers use the centuries-old visual language to reflect on the world today, telling stories of urbanisation and natural destruction along with the myths and folktales passed down through the generations.

10. Sangita Jogi, Jogi (1998)

19 year-old Sangita Jogi practices an art form unique to her family in rural Rajasthan. 'Jogi' art has been practised by three generations of her family, and is characterised by narrative drawings of figures in landscapes rendered in intricate dots and dashes of black ink on white paper. Once nomadic musicians, the Jogis turned to visual art to give form to traditional songs and stories after being forced to give up music for manual labour due to industrialisation. Along with her siblings, Sangita Jogi has been innovating on the art form ever since she began drawing as a child, imbuing it with colour, movement and using it not just to reflect



on the real world around her but to fabulate new lives for herself and the women around her, as can be seen in her Women Partying, a star-studded dance scene, and Women Rescuers, showing women in helicopters bringing aid to a flooded village. As the artist says, "I draw what I would like to see—empowered women enjoying life."

India Art Fair

India Art Fair, the leading platform showcasing modern and contemporary art from India and South Asia, takes place from 9 – 12 February 2023 at the NSIC Exhibition Grounds in New Delhi. The fair will present 85 exhibitors, including 71 galleries and 14 institutions. Building on the success of the last edition, the 2023 fair will be the most ambitious to date, with expanded floorspace to showcase South Asia's greatest talent, spanning cutting-edge contemporary art and modern masters, and an extended Studio presenting the fair's Digital Artist in Residence programme. The fair will be a meeting ground for collectors, curators and art professionals, strengthening cultural dialogue and ties with the international art scene.

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