73rd Independence day of India

AUGUST 15, 2019

$5 Trillion Economy! India sets roadmap to become third largest economy by 2025

Hima Das: ‘An unstoppable run to remember’

Chandrayaan-2: Proud India launches historic bid to put spacecraft on moon

Bright Outlook

Underpinned by a stable macro economy with expected GDP growth of 8 percent in coming years, India has cemented its reputation as one of the few bright spots in global economy.
Celebrating 73rd Independence Day with pride
President of India

The importance to infrastructure projects in the
and the government has thus accorded high
and the world’s 3rd
ing 2019-20. In the recently released Union
and is expected to grow at 7 percent dur-
ning 2019-20. India plans to increase the share
of natural gas in India’s energy mix, currently
about 7 percent, to 30 percent by 2030.

India holds the position of the third
targeted to accommodate the
inclusion growth through affordable, reliable
and sustainable energy. India now stands
4th in wind power, 5th in solar power, and
5th in renewable capacity globally. The share
of renewable energy in total power generation
also came down from just under 20 percent in
2016-17 to 7.3 percent in 2018-19. India plans to
increase the share of natural gas in India’s energy mix, currently
about 7 percent, to 30 percent by 2030.

India holds the position of the third
largest start-up ecosystem in the world and
is expected to have 100,000 start-ups by 2025,
worth $500 billion, which will create employ-
ment for 3.25 million people. A robust start-up
ecosystem has been put in place
through a tri-phase 19-point
Action Plan which includes,
setting up several incuba-
tion centres, patent filing,
tax exemptions, ease
of setting up business,
a Rs 100 billion corpus
funded by the government,
and a faster exit mechanism,
banks.

Today, India has firmly established itself as the world’s
largest democracy as a result of the
strong foundation laid by the founding fathers,
who framed a stable constitution and built strong
democratic institutions. We recently witnessed the
first general election in India - the general
elections - in which over 600 million people
elected their representatives to the 543
districts in the 17th Lok Sabha.

India has come a long way since
its independence on 15 August 1947. We have
achieved self-sufficiency in food produc-
tion and today export various food grains
to other countries. We are the largest producers
of tur, rice, millet, and pulses. India is
a recognized military power in the world today.

The Indian Space Research Organization
(ISRO) has been successful in developing
a highly-acclaimed, low-cost and efficient
space programme in the world. The recent
successful launch of Chandrayaan-2, a
fully indigenous mission, has put India in the
elite club of nations having highly advanced
space programmes.

Economic reforms in India have
emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the
world. It is the 6th largest economy globally and is expected to grow at 7 percent
during 2019-20. In the recently announced
Budget 2019, the government aims to achieve
8 percent annual GDP growth to become
a $5 trillion economy and the world’s 3rd
largest economy. Infrastructure is one of the
key sectors to realizing this growth objective
and the government has thus accorded high
importance to infrastructure projects in the
budget. Initiatives like Bhoomi Piyusha

The Indian Parliament is currently engaged in
developing infrastructure projects to promote
inclusive economic growth, enhance
infrastructure development, and create
new jobs.

President of India

India is a popular tourist and wellness destina-
tion amongst Qatari nationals, given the
emergence of the country as a
popular destination for Indian
tourists. Since the opening of
Qatar’s largest start-up ecosystem in 2019-20, India
has been able to organize some memorable
cultural events focusing on popular Indian
culture like dance performances, music con-
certs, painting, calligraphy and photography
exhibitions, etc. We have more events lined up
for the rest of the year.

India attains great importance to its multifac-
ted relations with the State of Qatar. India is
the third largest export destination for Qatar.
The total bilateral trade reached $12.13 billion
during 2018-19. Qatar is the largest supplier of
LNG to India, accounting for 50 per cent
of India’s global LNG imports and 15 per cent of
Qatar’s total export of LNG. We look
forward to strengthening our economic
cooperation, especially in the energy sector,
where we share a potential for mutual benefi-
cial cooperation. We also hope to promote
co-operation in the field of renewable energy,
which is a key area of mutual interest.

The two countries are currently
working on a number of initiatives in the
field of tourism, including the opening
of a new direct flight between Qatar and India.
We look forward to further strengthening
our bilateral relations in this area.

India and Qatar consider people-
to-people ties as a bedrock of great
significance in further deepening the
bilateral ties between the two nations.

The establishment of a regional office
by Qatar Tourism Authority in Mumbai
has further increased the scope for
promoting tourism between the two countries.
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tion amongst Qatari nationals, given the
cultural and historical ties that
counterparts of the two nations. Qatar
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Defence ties between India and Qatar
continue to prosper. The year 2018-19 saw
a number of bilateral visits. INS Kolkata
in March 2016, INS Mumbai in September 2017
and INS Teg in December 2018 have visited
Hamad Port. The Chief of Qatar’s Emiri
Naval Force led a delegation to India in April
2019 and held meetings with his counterparts
in India. We look forward to enhancing our
bilateral engagement in maritime and naval
cooperaion, training, joint production and
other areas.

The Indian Embassy remains committed to
promoting the interests of the Indian
community in Qatar. The Embassy
shall continue to make efforts to expand its outreach to various
sections of the Indian community and
remain in close contact with the authorities concerned in
this regard. The Embassy is dedicated to
promote the welfare and well-being of
Indian nationals. On this 73rd Independence
Day, I once again extend my warm greetings to
my fellow Indians in Qatar and thank them
for their valuable contribution to the
growth and development of Qatar and India. I am confident
that the Indian community will continue
to extend its full cooperation and support, as
in the past, to the Embassy.

Supplement Editor: Satyendra Pathak
Supplement Design: Shibu K Shamsudheen

IEP Kumaran 
Ambassador of India

in the 73rd Independence Day of India, I express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the
Emir of Qatar His Highness Sheik Tamim
bin Hamad al-Thani and the Government of the
State of Qatar for their continued support
and cooperation, and to the hospitality and
patronage extended to the Indian expatriate
community in Qatar.

Qatar, a stable and law-abiding nation, has thus accorded high
importance to infrastructure projects in the
world and the government has thus accorded high
importance to infrastructure projects in the
budget. Initiatives like Bhoomi Piyusha

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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Fifth meeting of India-Qatar JWG on Labour & Manpower Development held

The fifth meeting of the India-Qatar Joint Working Group (JWG) on Labour and Manpower Development took place on January 14-15. The two-day meeting, which was held on the basis of the labour agreement signed between the two countries, was co-chaired by Mohamed Hassan al Obaidli, assistant undersecretary for labour affairs at Qatar’s Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, and Manish Gupta, joint secretary for Overseas Indian Affairs at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

The meeting discussed means of promoting the bilateral relations in the field of labour between the two countries, the latest developments and reforms in Qatar and ways of developing the recruitment procedures of Indian labour to Qatar, especially technical and specialised employment, as well as in domestic labour.

Qatar’s transport minister attends Global Aviation Summit in India

A Qatari delegation led by Qatar’s Transport Minister HE Jassim bin Saif al Sulaiti, Civil Aviation Authority Chairman Abdullah bin Nasser Turki al Subayee and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar al Baker attended the two-day Global Aviation Summit on January 15-16 in Mumbai, India.

Qatar Media Corporation CEO meets India’s Ambassador

Qatar Media Corporation Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al Thani met with Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran on March 21 to discuss media relations and means to promote them.

Director of Public Security meets Indian Ambassador

Public Security Staff Director Major General Saad bin Jassim al Khulaifi met with Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran on June 20. During the meeting, they reviewed a number of topics of interest to both countries.

Minister of Culture and Sports meets Indian envoy

Qatar’s Minister of Culture and Sports HE Salah bin Ghanem al Ali met with Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran on January 25. During the meeting, they discussed aspects of cooperation between both countries in cultural and sports fields and ways to develop them.

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Indian delegation takes part in 140th IPU Assembly

The 140th Assembly of the IPU took place in Doha from April 6 to April 10. The Indian delegates participated in various meetings during the Assembly such as four Standing Committees of IPU, Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Governing Council of IPU as well as on an emergency item relating to a major event of international importance. The delegation also attended the meetings of regional groups like Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group and Coordination Committee meeting of Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

Gulf Warehousing Company establishes subsidiary in India

Gulf Warehousing Company (GWC), the leading provider of logistics and supply chain solutions in Qatar, has announced the establishment of a subsidiary in India named ‘LED India Private Technology Limited’, which was founded on April 3.

QIA invests in India’s education startup Byju’s

Qatar Investment Authority, the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar, has led $150 million investment in India’s online tutoring startup Byju’s. With the latest investment, Byju’s has become India’s most valuable edtech startup and has raised close to $1 billion in capital. According to TechCrunch, Byju’s is currently valued at $5.75 billion, up from $4 billion just seven months ago when the startup raised $400 million led by Naspers.

It is the second biggest investment by Qatar Investment Authority in an Indian tech startup. The Qatari sovereign wealth fund had previously invested in Indian ecommerce giant Flipkart in 2014.

Asia-Pacific Cooperation Dialogue

India participated in the Asia-Pacific Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Conference held in Qatar from April 30 to May 2. The Indian delegation was led by the then Union Minister of State for External Affairs General VK Singh. In his address, Singh stressed that the forum would strengthen cooperation to promote partnerships among Asian countries.

Focusing on the role of SMEs as a new engine for sustainable economic prosperity, he lauded the contribution of small and medium-sized industries in creating thousands of jobs. He noted that the sector currently accommodates about 128 million people in India. He also underscored the keenness of India to play an enabling role for ensuring collective action on various objectives and projects of ACD in order to promote the pursuit of stability, peace, growth and prosperity. He talked about food security, adequate access to fresh water, research and innovation, financial inclusion and sought enhanced collaboration from the member states in these sectors. The Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran was also present during the ACD.

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COMMUNITY WELFARE

National Voters Day
To create awareness amongst the Indian voters in Qatar, the Embassy of India, Doha celebrated the National Voters Day on January 25. On this occasion, Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran administered a pledge to all present on the occasion.

Republic Day Celebrations
The Embassy of India in Doha celebrated the 70th Republic Day of India on January 26. Hundreds of members of the Indian community were in attendance at the premises of the embassy. Indian Ambassador to Qatar HE P Kumaran unfurled the national flag and read out the address of the President of India on the occasion of the Republic Day. A reception was hosted later on January 28 at Sheraton Hotel, Doha. The event was attended by Minister of Transport and Communications HE Jassim bin Saif Ahmed al Sulaiti, Minister for Administrative Development, Labour & Social Affairs HE Yousuf Mohamed al Othman Fakhroo, Chief of Protocol HE Amb Ibrahim Ahmed, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ali Ibrahim Ahmed, members of the diplomatic corps and over 700 members of the Indian community in Qatar.

A cultural programme showcasing diverse folk dances were presented on the occasion by the school children.

Honouring the brave martyrs
Indian community took part in candle light vigil and condolence meeting at the Indian Embassy in Doha on February 18 to pay homage to 42 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans who were martyred in a terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir on February 14. The community came together to express solidarity with their nation. A minute’s silence was observed in respect for the martyrs. Speaking at the condolence meeting, Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran said, “The Government of India will do whatever it takes to bring the perpetrators and their sponsors to justice.”

Medical camps
The Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), a charitable organisation under the aegis of the Embassy of India in Doha, in association with the Ministry of Public Health, organised its 37th free medical camp for workers in the Industrial Area on March 22. The 38th free medical camp for fishermen and workers was held on June 14 at the Aster Medical Centre, Al Khor. The medical camps were inaugurated by the Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran.

Bust of Mahatma Gandhi unveiled
As a part of the ongoing celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary year of Mahatma Gandhi, a bust of Gandhi was unveiled by the Ambassador of India to Qatar HE P Kumaran at the premises of the embassy on July 14. Members of Indian community were also present on the occasion.

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The State of Qatar launched its first two Qatar Visa Centre (QVC) in India in New Delhi and Mumbai on March 27 and March 29 respectively. QVC’s were launched in the presence of officials from both Qatar and India. The Ministry of Interior proceeded with opening of five more centers across India in cities of Kolkata, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Chennai as well as Kochi. QVCs aim to provide distinct services for streamlining procedures for expatriates to work in Qatar and also facilitating all kinds of visa procedures in India itself. QVCs provide Biometric Enrollment and Medical Screening Services.

Details of Qatar Visa Centers in India are:
- Mumbai (Bandra East): 201/2, Hallmark Business Plaza, Sant Dyaneshwar Marg, Near Gurunanak Hospital, Bandra East, Mumbai – 400051
- Chennai (Saligramam): Shyamala Towers, 1st Floor, East wing, 136 Arcot Road, Saligramam, Chennai – 600 093
- Delhi (Akshardham): Unit no 2, Lower ground floor, Parsvnath Mall, Akshardham Metro Station, Akshardham, New Delhi – 110092
- Hyderabad (Telangana): Ground Floor, South Wing (Krishe Block), Krishe Sapphire Building, Hitech City Road, Madhapur, Hyderabad, Telangana 500081
- Cochin (Edappally): Door No 38/4111/D, Ground Floor, National Pearl Star building, Near Changampuzha Park Metro Station, Edappally Cochin-682024, Kerala
- Kolkata: Bengal Intelligent Park, Building Gamma, 1st Floor, Block-EP & GP, Sector-V, Salt Lake Electronics Complex, Kolkata – 700 091
- Lucknow (Gomti Nagar): BBD Viraj Towers, 2nd Floor, TC G/14 – V/3 Vishwuti Khand, Shaheed Path, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow Pin code – 226010, Uttar Pradesh.

The Indian embassy in Doha celebrated the annual International Day of Yoga on June 21. The event was held at National Museum of Qatar in the morning and at Qatar Sports Club’s multi-purpose indoor hall in the evening. Yoga camps and workshops were also held at Asian Town, Al Khor, and Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum. As a prelude to the celebration of the 5th International Day of Yoga, numerous workshops, demonstrations in collaboration with well-known Doha-based Yoga studios were conducted by the Indian Embassy. Workshops for students in Doha-based Indian schools were also organised.

Yoga workshops

- **YOGA CAMP ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**
  Indian Meetup Friends, a group of Indian expats in Qatar, held a yoga event at Al Bidda Park to mark the International Women’s Day. The event aimed at promoting healthy lifestyle among women.

- **YOGA FOR WOMEN**
  As part of Qatar-India Year of Culture 2019, a master class of authentic Indian Yoga for ladies at the Oxygen Park in Education City was held on April 19. The event was held in association with Qatar Museums and Qatar Foundation, Ritu Kumaran, wife of the Indian Ambassador to Qatar HE Kumaran, graced the event with her presence.

- **AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**
  A yoga sessions with Qatar Foundation was organized to mark Autism awareness month. The yoga session was designed to focus on specific yoga practices concerning motor coordination, body awareness, focus and concentration.

- **CBSE NATIONAL YOGA CHAMPIONSHIP 2019**
  The Indian embassy in coordination with Indian Sports Centre (ISC) conducted regular free Yoga training sessions to hone skills of shortlisted students from Qatar for participating in the CBSE National Yoga Championship. Students from five Indian schools like MES Indian School, Birla Public School, Olive International School, Rajagiri Public School, Al-Noor International School are participating in the championship.
India sets roadmap to become $5 trillion economy by 2025

India has unveiled plans to ramp up foreign investment and meet its ambitious target of growing into a $5 trillion economy by 2025.

“We need to invest heavily in infrastructure, in digital economy, in job creation,” Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, as she presented the first annual budget six weeks after the Bharatiya Janata Party captured a resounding victory in general elections.

She said that the government will consider liberalising some sectors, such as insurance, aviation and media, which have been tightly controlled.

Ahead of the budget, a government report said India will reverse the slowdown on the back of higher investment, savings and exports, in a way similar to how China propelled its growth.

The government also promised to give tax breaks and other benefits to boost start-ups, which help generate jobs that India needs.

While imposing higher taxes on the super-rich, the government also laid out ambitious plans to provide electricity, housing and clean cooking fuel to the millions in the country who still lack access to basic amenities.

We have set the ball rolling for a new India. Welfare for the poor are all increased, and clean cooking fuel to the millions in the country who still lack access to basic amenities, said Sitharaman.

According to IHS Markit, India will this year overtake the UK to become the world’s fifth biggest economy and is poised to surpass Japan to be the third largest in 2025.

Following the re-election of the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a second term of office in May 2019, the key goal of the government is to transform India from a $3 trillion economy in 2019 to a $5 trillion economy by 2025, lifting India into the ranks of the world’s upper-middle-income countries.

IHS Markit estimates that India will overtake the UK to become the world’s fifth largest economy in 2019, and forecasts that Indian GDP will reach $5.9 trillion in 2025, surpassing Japanese GDP to make India the world’s third-largest economy.

Also, the size of the Indian consumer market is forecast to increase to $5.1 trillion in 2019 to $5.6 trillion by 2025.

“As India continues to ascend in the rankings of the world’s largest economies, its contribution to global GDP growth momentum will also increase. As the size of its consumer market continues to grow at a rapid pace, India will also play an increasingly important role as one of the Asia-Pacific region’s major economic growth engines, helping to drive Asian regional trade and investment flows,” IHS said.

To achieve this, the country’s new economic roadmap highlights the importance of creating a virtuous cycle of investment, savings and exports in order to sustain rapid economic growth over the next five years.

“The role of investment is seen as a critical enabler for innovation, rapid productivity growth and new technology, helping to boost jobs growth. The roadmap described in the latest Economic Survey highlights the importance of creating a favourable ecosystem for private investment, particularly in the new economy,” IHS said.

IHS said accelerating the development of new economy startups and growing new unicorns is a critical strategy for creating valuable new sectors. "Despite significant achievements in new infrastructure construction during PM Modi’s first term, rapid infrastructure development in key sectors such as transport and energy infrastructure remain important priorities," it said.

India becomes investment darling for sovereign wealth and pension funds

Sovereign wealth funds are piling into India, buying stakes in everything from airports to renewable energy, attracted by positive demographics and continued economic growth and new technology, helping to boost jobs growth. The roadmap described in the latest Economic Survey highlights the importance of creating a favourable ecosystem for private investment, particularly in the new economy.

The push comes as India and the United Arab Emirates seek to strengthen economic and trade ties.

Regulatory reforms are also bolstering sentiment and attracted interest from foreign investors but in India it’s the other way round. There’s also the attraction of the demographics and a lot of assets that sovereign funds like, such as infrastructure, where there’s a huge appetite for foreign funding.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s election win last month consolidated his Hindu nationalist party’s power base and is expected to stimulate further foreign investment.

Foreign institutional investor flows into Indian equities are $11 billion year-to-date, surpassing the total annual tally in each of the four previous years and setting 2019 on course for the highest annual inflows since 2012. India’s benchmark BSE index has soared nearly 10 percent year-to-date.

“The rapid rise of an educated middle class offers enormous opportunities for the deployment of long-term capital, the kind that sovereign wealth funds are ideally suited to provide," said Ravi Menon, chief executive officer of HSBC Asset Management India.

The attention sovereign funds are giving India is like that they have to China, now clouded by a trade war with the United States, said a banker specialising in institutional investors. In the public markets, funds were focused on public equity and fixed income, he said. In the private market, momentum is also building.

Private equity deal activity in India surged to $19 billion in 2018, the highest level in at least a decade, according to Pitchbook data. Sovereign wealth funds and pension funds participated in about two-thirds of that amount.

Among recent deals, Singapore’s GIC sovereign wealth fund and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) this month agreed to make a further investment of $495 million in renewable energy firm Greenko Energy Holdings, which has wind, solar and hydro projects.

India is widening its use of solar and wind energy to help reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. In April, ADIA and India’s National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIF) agreed to buy a 49 percent stake in the airport unit of Indian conglomerate GVK Power & Infrastructure.

Another wealth fund is in talks on an infrastructure investment, while Canadian pension funds are seeking similar deals, a source familiar with the matter said.

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and GIC earlier this year participated in a $1.45 billion buyout of Oakridge International School, an operator of schools in India.

ADIA, the world’s third-biggest sovereign wealth fund, which has been investing in Indian equities and fixed income for years, has broadened its focus to include asset classes such as infrastructure, real estate and private equities, said people familiar with ADIA’s thinking.

Its increased interest in India is driven by the country’s strong growth potential, positive demographics and continued economic development, the people said. More than half of India’s 2.5 billion population is aged under 25.

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India launched its first lunar land- ing mission on July 22, with an unma nned spacecraft lifting off on a rocket from a spaceport off the country’s south-east coast. The Chandrayaan-2, or Lunar Orbiter Mission, has a target of landing on the Moon by September 7, according to the Indi an Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

“Congratulations to ISRO!” tweeted the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on the successful launch of its second moon mission, Chandrayaan-2.

The mission is significant for India as it aims to land a rover on the Moon for the first time. ISRO Chairman K Sivan said the successful launch is a “historic day” for India, adding that the country now has the capability to land a spacecraft on the Moon.

Nasa, global media hail India’s great leap forward

The launch of Chandrayaan-2 has been hailed by global media as a significant achievement for India’s space programme.

The mission is expected to boost India’s national pride and inspire future generations to pursue careers in science and technology. It also marks a milestone in India’s ambitious space exploration plans, which include launching a manned mission to the Moon by 2022 and building a space station by 2024.

Chandrayaan-2’s landing on the Moon will mark the beginning of a new chapter in India’s lunar exploration, with the mission set to conduct a series of experiments to understand the moon’s composition, resources, and the physics of its surface.

The mission is expected to pave the way for India’s future space exploration missions, including a manned mission to the Moon and a mission to Mars. India’s space programme is a testament to the country’s commitment to science and technology, and its efforts to become a major player in the global space community.

The launch of Chandrayaan-2 is a significant milestone in India’s space exploration journey, and it is expected to inspire future generations to pursue careers in science and technology. The mission is a testament to the country’s commitment to innovation and progress, and its efforts to become a major player in the global space community.
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The Indian medical tourism industry is growing at 18 percent CAGR year on year and is expected to be worth $9 billion by 2020. Currently, it has nearly 18 percent of the global medical tourism market share and is expected to be 20 percent by 2020.

The country offers a complete bouquet of healthcare services at an affordable price to the world. Highly skilled doctors and medical professionals, world class hospital infrastructure, cost-effective treatment and personalised care are some of the reasons for the fast growth of medical tourism industry in India. Additionally, apart from the fact that the country has shown the fastest adoption of recent medical technology, it is also one of the largest English-speaking nations.

Medical travel industry has come a long way. A decade ago, a patient used to travel across the border for affordable healthcare. However patients are now choosing a destination which offers the complete package of quality treatment, ease of communication and travel as well as competitive pricing.

Today, people consider themselves global citizens and are accessing services, especially medical treatment services, from across the world. However, current environment in some countries constrains such a practice. Thus, ease of travel and accessibility becomes a key driver for choosing a destination for medical tourism.

There are several factors that influence medical tourism, the critical one being quality of medical care.

India has more than 500 accredited healthcare providers and uses world class technologies on a par with the western world. Indian doctors are known for their excellence across the globe. One study reveals that over 10 percent of the doctors practising in the UK and US are Indian.

Besides the availability of advanced medical technology and modern hospitals, most of the medical care facilities and hospitals are staffed by experienced healthcare professionals who are proficient in the latest medical treatment methods.

Medical travellers visiting India for healthcare can save up to 50 percent of the cost that they might spend if they travelled to a developed western country to avail the same treatment.

Cost of treatment in India is approximately 40 percent less than that in any developed western countries without compromising on quality of care.

Cost of living in India is 66.54 percent lower than in the US (aggregate data for all cities, rent is not considered). Rent in India is 85.47 percent lower than in US.

Patients always travel with attendants and may require to stay for a longer period of time both before and after the medical treatment. This is also one of the important factors that decides the feasibility of a medical travel destination.

Medical visa norms in the country have been simplified to ensure a hassle-free travel, stay and treatment for the medical patient and attendant. The medical visa offers multiple entry and long term stay for medical care. The Union Government also recently launched e-medical visa to further ease the process.

India is claimed to be the second largest English-speaking country and also has a good number of interpreters which helps ease the process for medical travellers and their attendants. Moreover, the country is known for offering alternate medicines and has certified and accredited wellness and Ayurveda centres. Ayurveda, the 5,000-year-old system of natural healing with origins in the Vedic culture of India, has been enjoying a major resurgence in both its native land and throughout the world.

The AYUSH Industry is estimated to be worth $10 billion and is expected to grow to $25 billion by 2020. India is home to foodies and offers a variety of cuisines from across the globe. Getting to eat the food of your choice is today just a click of a button away, thank to food delivery apps. Food is also one of the key deciding factors for medical travellers and attendants.

Moreover, the country is known for offering alternate medicines and has certified and accredited wellness and Ayurveda centres. Ayurveda, the 5,000-year-old system of natural healing with origins in the Vedic culture of India, has been enjoying a major resurgence in both its native land and throughout the world.

The AYUSH Industry is estimated to be worth $10 billion and is expected to grow to $25 billion by 2020. The country has understood the significance and immense potential for medical tourism to thrive in the global market. Through initiatives such as launching incentive schemes for healthcare providers and promoting them in international events, an effective public-private partnership is emerging in the sector.

This, along with the cost benefits and localised resource advantages, is strengthening India’s position as a high potential hub in the medical tourism market.
Asian Athletics Championship 2019: India finishes fourth with 17 medals

The 23rd edition of the Asian Athletics Championship concluded in Doha on April 24. India, with 17 medals (3 Gold, 7 silver and 7 bronze), finished fourth in the tournament.

The four-day event saw participation from 63 nations across the world. Bahrain topped the tally with 11 gold, 7 silver and 4 bronze, followed by China with 10 gold, 13 silver, 7 bronze and then Japan with 5 gold, 4 silver and 9 bronze.

MEDAL WINNERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Medal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jyoti Prajapati</td>
<td>Women’s shot put</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gomathi Maramuthu</td>
<td>Women’s 800m</td>
<td>Gold</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Priyanka Dixit</td>
<td>Women’s 1500m race</td>
<td>Gold</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ajay Kumar Saroj</td>
<td>Men’s 1500m race</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Swapna Barman</td>
<td>Women’s heptathlon</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Annu Rani</td>
<td>Women’s javelin throw</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Shikali Singh</td>
<td>Men’s javelin throw</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Avinash Sable</td>
<td>Men’s 3000m steeplechase</td>
<td>Silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Prachi, Pooxamma,</td>
<td>Women’s 4x400m relay</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saratben Gayakwad and VK Vismaya</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Muhammed Ansar, MP Pooxamma,</td>
<td>Women’s 4x400m mixed relay</td>
<td>Silver</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VK Vismaya and Arakha Rajiv</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Arun Chaudhry</td>
<td>Women’s 200m</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>M R Pooxamma</td>
<td>Women’s 400m</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Priyul Chaubhney</td>
<td>Women’s 500m race</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Sanjiv Reddy</td>
<td>Women’s 10,000m</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Gaum Murali Kumar</td>
<td>Men’s 10,000m</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>M P Jabeet</td>
<td>Men’s 400m hurdles</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Saratben Gayakwad</td>
<td>Women’s 400m hurdles</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, the India’s ecommerce marketplace is reported to be growing at compound annual growth rate (CAGR) and is expected to further rise as the ecommerce space grows, boosting the overall consumer segment growth in India.

Speaking at the report launch, a Deloitte India spokesperson said, “This growth rate reflect the maturity of business and the solid platform existing in the country for all types of market players such as consumers, distributors, logistics service providers and development of the ancillary sectors including transportation, logistics and cold chain facilities that will help India consumer business to the next level of growth.”

The report also highlighted interesting insights in terms of sub-sector performance within consumer retail. While the F&F, apparel, footwear and accessories space contributed a bigger share to the consumer retail pie, fast-moving consumer goods and automotive companies had much higher numbers for total market.
Traditional Indian dining reaches new heights at Al Matbakh Restaurant. Explore the best street food to the delicacies of fine Indian cuisine.

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India plans $330bn renewables push by 2030

India is planning investments worth $330 billion over the next decade to power its renewable energy dream.

India wants to raise its renewable energy capacity to 500 Gigawatts (GW), or 40 percent of total capacity, by 2030. renewables currently account for 22 percent of India’s total installed capacity of about 537 GW.

“Additional investments in renewable plants up to year 2022 would be about $80 billion at today’s prices and an investment of around $350 billion would be required for the period 2023-2050,” according to the government’s economic survey presented to the parliament.

India wants to have 175 GW of renewable-based installed power capacity by 2022.

The investment estimate reflects the magnitude of financial challenges facing one of the world’s most important growth markets for renewable energy, with government data indicating a growth slowdown in private and capital investments in the year ended March 2019.

India, which receives twice as much sunshine as European countries, wants to make solar a cornerstone of its renewable expansion, but also wants to make use of its cheap and abundant coal reserves, the fifth-largest in the world.

The annual economic survey warned India against abruptly halting coal-based utilities, citing risks to its banking sector and the stability of the electricity grid.

It may not be advisable to effect a sudden abandonment of coal-based power plants without complete utilization of their useful lifetimes as it would lead to stranding of assets that can have a further adverse impact on the banking sector,” the survey said.

Thermal power plants account for 90 percent of all industrial emissions of particulate matter, sulfur and nitrous oxides in India.

India, one of the world’s largest coal producers and greenhouse gas emitters, estimates coal to be its energy mainstay for at least the next three decades. The country’s coal use rose 9.1 percent to nearly a billion tonnes in 2018-19.

The survey said it would be difficult for a growing economy like India to migrate to renewable power supply unless “sufficient technological breakthroughs in energy storage happen in the near future.”
Indian scientists develop wonder material ‘Black Gold’

Indianans are fascinated with gold, making India one of the largest consumers of the yellow metal globally. Now, Indian scientists have tinkered with the chemistry of the material and turned it into ‘black gold,’ which they say can be potentially used for applications ranging from solar energy harvesting to desalinating seawater.

Scientists at the Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) used gold nanoparticles and by rearranging size and gaps between them developed a new material which has unique properties such as capacity to absorb light and carbon dioxide.

Gold does not have these properties, therefore ‘black gold’ is being called a new material. In appearance it is black, hence the name ‘black gold.’

The findings have been announced in Chemical Science, a scientific journal published by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

“We have not doped gold nanoparticles with any other materials,” added other material. “We varied inter-particle distance between gold nanoparticles using a cycle-by-cycle growth approach by optimising the nucleation-growth step, using dendritic bifrons nanosilica, whose fibers were used as the deposition site for gold nanoparticles,” explained Vivek Polshettiwar, who led the research team, while speaking to India Science Wire.

One of the most fascinating properties of the new material is its ability to absorb the entire visible and near-infrared region of solar light. It does so because of inter-particle plasmonic coupling as well as heterogeneity in nanoparticle size.

Black gold could also act as a catalyst and could convert carbon dioxide into methane at atmospheric pressure and temperature using solar energy.

“If we develop an artificial tree with leaves made out of black gold, it can perform artificial photosynthesis, capturing carbon dioxide and converting it into fuel and other useful chemicals,” said Polshettiwar.

The efficiency of conversion of carbon dioxide into fuel, at present, is low but researchers believe it could be improved in future.

In order to study solar energy harvesting ability of the new material, researchers disposed the solution to light for one hour and the temperature of the solution was measured.

The temperature of the solution with pure silica spheres rose to 38 degrees while the ones with different concentrations of black gold rose to 67 to 88 degrees.

The maximum increase in temperature was attributed creation of thermal hotspots due to the heterogeneity of the particle sizes as well as optimum inter-particle coupling. Researchers said the material can be used as a nano-heater to covert seawater into potable water with good efficiency.

“Our results indicate the potential application of black gold in purification of seawater to potable water via steam generation using solar energy under atmospheric reaction conditions,” according to the researchers.

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Women bringing solar energy to thousands of Indian villages

India is trying to bring electricity to hundreds of millions of its citizens who live off the grid. And it’s trying to ensure that the power comes from clean and renewable sources. Frontier markets are helping to achieve both those goals in the western desert state of Rajasthan, selling solar-powered products to hundreds of villages. The company is thriving by turning its customers into salespeople.

The company employs women to sell products like lamps, stoves, and even TVs that run on solar power through a program called Solar Sahelis (Solar Friends).

Each woman is in charge of selling products to hundreds of rural households. “We learned that while the customer paying for the product was a man, the person using the product was a woman,” Frontier Markets CEO Ajaita Shah said in an interview with CNN Business.

“In fact, 70 percent of our users were women and that is when we realised that in order to properly serve the right households needs, women had to be at the center of that value chain,” she added.

Shah founded Frontier Markets in 2011, with the goal of providing clean energy to millions of rural Indians while also giving women a source of employment and income.

“The women communicate the benefits of clean energy to rural households, but also help Frontier Markets understand the kind of innovations that those households need most,” she said.

Another pressing need that Frontier Markets is helping to solve is getting more women into work. Only 22 percent of India’s workforce is female, according to the latest data from the World Bank, one of the lowest rates in the world. India lags behind countries such as Sudan, El Salvador and Afghanistan.

“As India starts growing and moving and changing and evolving, especially with the digital revolution, women are still being left behind,” Shah said. “It’s really important for us to continuously invest in our women’s skills and their education to be able to catch up.”

The business model appears to be working. Frontier Markets’ annual revenue has gone from around $300,000 in 2015 to nearly $2.7 million this year, and the company has partnered with big global names like Philips and Unilever.

Frontier Markets’ annual revenue has gone from around $300,000 in 2015 to nearly $2.7 million this year, and the company has partnered with big global names like Philips and Unilever.

“We are very proud of how we’ve been able to succeed with Frontier Markets,” Shah said. “It’s a part of my mission to make sure we understand that investing in women is not just an impact story but smart business and the key to end poverty.”
Doha Bank, StockHolding join hands to offer investment solutions in India

Doha Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (StockHolding), India’s premier custodian and depository participant, to facilitate its global customer base to invest in India.

Under the MoU, Doha Bank will offer all banking-related services, while StockHolding will offer compliance, clearing, settlement and reporting services for all investment activities of customers.

The customers will be able to invest through the permitted mechanism in all permitted securities across asset classes, such as equity, mutual funds, debt, all derivatives and securitised assets, among others.

In addition, StockHolding also offers all the eligible investors a direct access into the IFSC Market at Gift City, Gandhinagar. The IFSC has two international exchanges and offers various opportunities to trade on the derivatives segment in equity, indices, currency, and commodities on a single platform with all transactions being settled in US dollars.

Both institutions will complement each other in sourcing the investors globally, Doha Bank said in a statement. The MoU reiterates Doha Bank’s long-term commitment to the Indian market and will enable the bank to further expand its service offerings for its overseas customers looking to invest in India, thereby aligning with its intention to become a one-stop shop for its target customer base.

Doha Bank CEO R Seetharaman said, “The tie-up with StockHolding will enable Doha Bank to offer seamless and integrated investment solutions in India to its customers outside India looking for opportunities to invest in the Indian debt and capital markets through the Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS), Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) routes.”

“MoU will primarily target financial institutions, venture capital funds, pension funds, private equity funds, hedge funds, family offices and high net worth individuals (both non-resident Indians and other foreign nationals) based outside India and planning to invest in the Indian market.”

Set up in 1979, Doha Bank provides domestic and international banking services for individuals, commercial, corporate, and institutional clients through wholesale banking, retail banking, international banking, and treasury and investments.
India has had a long history of women who have shattered gender stereotypes and emerged victorious in a male-dominated society. They continue to do so and make us proud, both at the national and international platforms. Here’s a list of some firsts by Indian women that made us salute women power.

1. Lieutenant Bhavana Kasturi created history by becoming the first woman army officer to lead an all-men contingent at the Republic Day parade 2019. Source: Rediff

2. Captain Shikha Surabi became the first and only woman officer in the Indian Army’s Motorcycle Daredevils Squad at the Republic Day parade 2019. Source: DNA India

3. Dr. G C Anupama became the first woman to head Astronomical Society of India, the prime association of professional astronomers in the country. Source: NDTV

4. Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first woman fighter pilot to be inducted into the Indian Air Force. Source: DNA India

5. Shanti Devi became the first truck mechanic in India and has been working for more than 20 years now. Source: Motor Mania Buzz

6. Hampanpreet Kaur became the first Indian woman cricketer to score a T20 century. Source: Cricketkhabar

7. Garima Arora became the first Indian female chef to be conferred with the Michelin star. She was recently also named as Asia’s best female chef for 2019. Source: ABC

8. Karvia Devi created history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler with WWE. Source: India TV

9. Usha Kiran became CRPF’s first woman officer to be posted in the insurgency-affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. She is also the first woman CRPF officer to be part of COBRA, a specialised unit of the CRPF that is proficient in guerrilla tactics and jungle warfare. Source: Vagan India

10. Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi became the first Indian woman to solo fly a fighter aircraft. She flew a MiG-21 ‘Bison’, an aircraft renowned for its highest landing and take-off speed in the world. Source: India Today

11. Hima Das became the first Indian ever to win a Gold medal in a track event at the World U-20 Championships 2018. Source: IB Times

12. Anju P.S. is the first female live sound engineer in India who has harmonized sounds for over 50 events in a span of 7 years. Source: Facebook

13. Mary Kom became the first woman from the country to win a medal in boxing at the Olympics. Source: NDTV

14. Arunima Sinha became the world’s first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013. Recently, she also became the world’s first woman amputee to scale Antarctica’s highest peak, Mount Vinson. Source: BBC

15. Mithali Raj became the first ever female cricketer to play 200 ODIs. Source: India Today

16. Saina Nehwal became the first Indian woman to secure number 1 position in the world Badminton rankings in 2015. Source: India Today

17. M A Sneha became the first Indian woman to be recognised caste and religion-less legally. Source: Economic Times

18. Arunima Singh is the first woman in the country to rescue aquatic creatures like gharials and crocodiles. Source: Facebook

19. Indian-origin Gita Gopinath became the first woman chief economist of IMF. Source: NDTV

20. Nitisha Duduja became the first Indian woman to win the title of Miss Deaf Asia 2018. Source: Twitter

21. Nishta Biswas was crowned as India’s first transgender beauty queen in 2017. Source: 20W India

22. Deepa Malik became the first Indian woman to win a medal in Paralympic Games at the 2016 Summer Paralympics in the shot put. Source: India Today

23. Pranjal Palti became India’s first visually impaired woman IAS officer. Last year, Palti took charge as the Assistant Collector of Ernakulam district in Kerala. Source: Quint
HE decision to jointly celebrate the India-Qatar Year of Culture in 2019 was taken during the visit of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to Qatar in June 2016. This understanding was reflected in the joint statement issued at that time. The Embassy of India, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, has since been organising a Festival of India in Qatar, which has showcased the deep cultural roots and people-to-people links between India and Qatar. Several events have already been organised as part of this festival since the beginning of the year and more are to come in the next few months. In addition, the Indian embassy is also organising a number of other cultural events in partnership with various Indian community organisations to highlight the myriad dimensions of Indian culture. The embassy has partnered with Qatar Museums, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Qatar National Tourism Council, Katara Cultural Village, and a number of other relevant agencies on the Qatari side, as part of this endeavour.

The ‘Year of India’ assumes a special significance for India, as this is also the 70th year of India’s arrival as a Republic and 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. These celebrations indeed offer the two countries a unique opportunity of renewing and revitalising their special bonds of cultural heritage and help enhance the quality of their engagement at the people-to-people level.

The activities organised as part of India–Qatar Year of Culture-2019 are listed below:

### January 2019

**Indian Fashion Designers At Shop Qatar Design District**
- **Date:** January 5-12
- **Location:** Qatar National Convention Centre

Organised By Qatar National Tourism Council

A **Fusion** musical performance which brought together for the first time the teams of Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, composer Tomas Kantolinen and several Indian musicians, whose names are given below, to attempt a musical fusion of the Indian and Arab styles.

* Naveen Kumar (flute)
* Ravi Charli (sitar)
* Tanmoy Bose (tabla)
* Madhab Deka (keyboard)
* Pranav Robin Joseph (vocal)

Together, they mesmerised the audience with the following pieces:
- Theme from Bombay (by AR Rahman)
- Music from Bhaag Milkha Bhaag (by AR Rahman)
- Music from Dhadkan (by Vishal Shekhar)

**Contemporary Dance Performance**
- **Date:** February 21-22
- **Location:** St Regis And DPS-MIS School Auditorium

Supported By The Ministry Of Culture, Government Of India

Partner Organisations: Qatar Museums, Qatar Ministry Of Culture & Sports, Katara Cultural Village

The dance piece “Aura” highlighted the significance of spirituality in our lives, fusing together yoga movements and Indian contemporary dance. “Elements” depicted fire and water elements. “Two Shades” brought into picture the two sides of life. “Mohle Raag Do Laal” celebrated the festival of colour through Kathak dance and “Jali Bandh” was a fusion of dances highlighting the cultural diversity of India. The event ended with a Rajasthan folk dance "Holiya me ude gulal".

**Music Of Bollywood (Naveen Kumar And Troupe)**
- **Date:** February 5, Qatar National Convention Centre

Organised By Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Qatar Museums And Indian Community Benevolent Forum

**January 18, Lusail Sports Arena**

Organised By Qatar National Tourism Council, Ministry Of Culture & Sports And One FM Radio

Bollywood singing sensation Arijit Singh held a high profile concert and enthralled a large audience of nearly 20,000 with a soulful performance on January 18 at Lusail Sports Arena. The event featured renditions of a number of his most admired and award-winning tracks. ‘One FM Radio’ brought the renowned singer to a hit in association with Shop Qatar 2019, the third edition of the Qatar’s biggest shopping festival that is part of the Qatar National Tourism Council’s strategy to grow and diversify the country’s tourism offering.

**February 2019**

**Year Of Culture Opening Ceremony And Ticket To Bollywood**
- **Date:** February 5-6
- **Location:** Katara Cultural Village

Organised By Qatar Museums, Ministry Of Culture And Sports, Katara Cultural Village

**T**HE event, organised as part of the Festival of India in Qatar and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, featured a contemporary dance performance by Dishaa Creative Dance Group, led by Sanu Sharma. It was an amalgamation of several Indian dance styles and was enacted by a troupe of 12 performers. The performance was structured around six themes in six parts named “Aura”, “Elements”, “Two Shades”, “Mohle Raag Do Laal”, “Jali Bandh”, and “Holiya me ude gulal”.

**India Pavilion At Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition**
- **Date:** February 20-25
- **Location:** Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre

Organised By Qatar Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (Djwe)

**Pakistan Pavilion At Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition**
- **Date:** February 20-25
- **Location:** Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre

Organised By Pakistan Council for Jewellery & Watches (PKCW)

**India Pavilion At Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition**
- **Date:** February 20-25
- **Location:** Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre

Organised By Qatar Jewellery & Watches Exhibition (Djwe)

**India Pavilion At Doha Jewellery & Watches Exhibition**
- **Date:** February 20-25
- **Location:** Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre

Organised By India Pavilion at the 16th Doha Jewellery and Watches Exhibition (DJWE), held from February 20-25 at Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre. The India Pavilion included 13 exhibitors and showcased a complete range of products, including studded jewellery with precious stones, handmade jewellery specifically catering to Arab tastes and preferences and a wide range of contemporary and modern jewellery, with detailed craftsmanship and intricate designs inspired by the latest European and Middle Eastern trends.

The Pavilion served to showcase India’s unique capabilities and skills in the craftsmanship of intricate and exquisite jewellery, influenced by the rich history of architectural designs and elaborate art motifs. India is one of the largest exporters of gems and jewellery and exports 75 percent of the world’s polished diamonds. India’s gems and jewellery exports to the Middle East accounted for over US$ 1 billion in 2017.

The pavilion was inaugurated by the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani. The opening ceremony was also graced by the renowned Hindi film actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who was the brand ambassador for DJWE this year.

**Year of Culture - 2019**

Activities organised as part of India-Qatar Year of Culture-2019

**February 4-5, Katara Cultural Village**

Organised By Qatar Museums, Ministry Of Culture And Sports, Katara Cultural Village

Year Of Culture Opening Ceremony And Ticket To Bollywood

A group of Indian artists belonging to the Visual Arts Forum India (VAFI) in Qatar showcased their site paintings titled ‘Historical Monuments of India’ on the sidelines of the event.

**Organised By Qatar Museums, Ministry Of Culture & Sports And One Fm Radio**

The opening ceremony was also graced by the renowned Hindi film actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who was the brand ambassador for DJWE this year.

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Instrumental Music Ensemble (Jugalbandi)
February 28 & March 1-2, Katara Cultural Village and Indian Cultural Centre
Supported by The Ministry Of Culture, Government Of India
Partner Organisations: Qatari Museums, Ministry Of Culture And Sports, Katara Cultural Village

This event, organised as part of the Festival of India in Qatar and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, featured Tabla virtuoso and percussionist Pandita Anuradha Pal, who was also called the audience with his live performance at Drama Theatre, Katara Cultural Village. A repeat performance was given at the Indian Cultural Centre on March 2 for the larger Indian community.

Anuradha Pal, India’s first female professional Tabla and percussion virtuoso, presented an Instrumental Music Ensemble (Jugalbandi), along with her talented team consisting of some of the finest musicians. Anuradha Pal is an internationally acclaimed accompanist with top Indian classical musicians and an enthusiastic collaborator with Jazz, African, Latin, Flamenco, Crossover Classical, Percussion, Pop, Rock & New-age music. She holds the honour of being the youngest and first female Indian musician to perform at two of the most prestigious music festivals in the world – Woodstock Festival in 2008 and WOMAD Festival in 1999.

The performance, which featured a number of popular Bollywood hits, was held to a capacity crowd of over 6,000 at the venue. The FAB Entertainment, organised the event, also promoted the Welfare for Workers Initiative, which saw local companies with large numbers of Indian labours, giving them up for discounted tickets for its labour work force to gain access to the concert.

MARCH 2019
Musical Concert By Vishal & Shekhar
March 1, All Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena, Doha
Organised By: Fab Entertainment
Partner Organisations: Qatari National Tourism Council, Qatar Airways And St Regis Doha

VISHAL Dadlani and Shekhar Ravjiani, described often by the media as ‘Sultans of Swan’, performed in Doha on March 1 as part of the India-Qatar collaborative event. The duo, who were also joined briefly by Qatari Grammy-nominated singer Fahad Al Kohi, creatively combined with them for a rendition of their greatest hit ‘Swag Se Acha’ and ‘Swag Se Acha’ went viral on the internet.

The performances presented a soulful journey into the melody of Rajasthan music and folk dances.

Resaya Balam is described as the Soul of Rajasthan. This was sung for the warriors on their return home after fighting wars away from home, by their wives. Presently this song is sung as a welcome song for foreign tourists visiting Rajasthan. It is sung in Mandi singing style, inspired from the story of Dholka and Dal Dungri, a story of a Rajput’s bravery, sacrifice and victory, set against the backdrop of the Thar desert.

Gomar dance form was introduced by the Bhil tribe, and later adopted by the royal communities of Rajasthan. Known for its graceful movements, it is chiefly performed by veiled women who wear elaborate flowing costume called ‘phaghas’. It is danced by the women of the top 10 local dances around the world in 2013. The beauty of this folk dance is its two-time patterns that involve swaying hands, beating palms and spinning around, while singing traditional refrains.

Kalbelia, considered by UNESCO as intangible heritage and popularly called the snake charmer dance, performed by women of the Kalbelia community. Women deck up in traditional costumes, carrying angrahi (a jacket-like garment) odhani (veil) and black swirling ghaghra (long skirt), and dance sensuously and sinuously, to the music played by men using traditional instruments like dholak (a hand drum), khanjari and pungi (a percussion & woodwind musical instrument). The dance movements are mostly serpent-like; hence it is also referred to as ‘snake charmer’s dance’.

Kuve Par Ekali (Paniharin): Water is considered the most precious thing in the desert of Rajasthan and ladies who bring water from wells are also known as ‘Paniharin’. This dance was performed by women produced mellow songs that spoke of sihooorous rivers as well as the splattering waves. Rains and water constitute the theme for the majority of songs in Phaghas style.

Gorthand Nakhraka is a popular Rajasthani folk music, concentrated on the procedure of crafty ornamental strings for their conventional instrument, camel - the ship of the desert. The camel adoration is called ‘Gorband’. The song talks about the loneliness in the perfect work drawn for decorating the camel, sung with Kaharwa beat.

Moryo Aacho Bolio Re: Peacock dance is a very beautiful & attractive dust dance style. In this, a separated lead lady recalls the voice of Phoo-Phu of the peacock in the middle of night, and remembers her lover, who lives abroad. This dance is done with beautiful gestures on medium rhythm and slow.

Main to Mele ma Aayi: This duet dance highlights the festivities & rituals of Rajasthan. The dance is done at a very fast pace and rhythm. Through this dance, the lady, accompanied by her lover, describes her experience of missing him.

Chang Dhiro Re: This dance-form symbolises the colourful culture of Rajasthan. The Holi festival, the atmosphere of Rajasthan becomes very colourful. People dance in groups on Change-Dhiro (a jhumar) drum and blowing ‘Aahir-Gula’.

Kathak Dance ‘Rhythmic Expressions’
March 14-16, Katara Cultural Village, Al Khor Community And Indian Cultural Centre
Supported by The Ministry Of Culture, Government Of India
Partner Organisations: Qatari Museums, Katara Cultural Village

This event, organised as part of the Festival of India in Qatar and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, featured a Kathak dance performance by Rani Khanam and her troupe. It was first held at Dhowa Theatre, Katara Cultural Village on March 14, then at Al Khor Community on March 15 and thereafter at the Indian Cultural Centre, Doha on March 16. It was a lively and delightful rendition of many elements of Kathak.

Kathak is one of the eight classical dance forms of India, having its origin in the storytelling tradition of India. The word Kathak is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘kathak’ which means ‘story’, and Kathakar which means ‘story teller’. In this dance form, the performers, through their body movements, hand movements, footwork, and facial expressions narrate different stories. Rani Khanam and her group performed seven items, in which they narrated different stories.

The performances included a stylised dance form ‘Andas-e-Re’, highlighting the contribution of Persian culture, where the costumes play an intrinsic role in the kinetics of choreography. ‘Yamuna Naman’ showcased the significance of the river Yamuna in India. ‘Shri Nand Nandan Nachat Sudhian’ was based on the legend of Krishna. ‘Basant Hori’ showcased the celebration of the arrival of the spring season. ‘Tarana’ was a dance sequence to bring out the essence of melody and rhythm and ‘Chaap Tilak Sah Cheeni’ was a soulful performance about eternal submission to the creator. The concert ended with ‘Niraya Gati’ which presented intricate compositions, rapid movements, complex footwork and elegant facial expressions to communicate a sense of pure joy of rhythm.

Odissi Dance Performance By Rina Jana Group
March 21-22, Hotel Sheraton Doha, Oxygen Park At Education City
Supported by The Ministry Of Culture, Government Of India
Partner Organisations: Qatari Museums, Ministry Of Culture And Sports

The musical evening contained interaction with their live performance at Drama Theatre, Katara Cultural Village. A repeat performance was given in Al Majlis Hall, Sheraton Doha, on March 21 and again on March 22 at the Qatar International Food Festival (QIVF) at Oxygen Park in Education City.

Odissi is an ancient Indian classical dance-form which originated in Odisha, a state in Eastern India. It is traditionally a part of the dance-drama genre of performing arts. One of the most characteristic features of Odissi dance is the Tribhangi, where the body is bent in three parts like neck, torso and the knee and is considered one of the most graceful positions. The performances were composed and choreographed by Guru Rina Jana, who is a veteran artist and one of the frontliners of Odissi. She was trained under the tutelage of Padma Shri Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra and Padma Shri Sanjukta Pani-grah. In all the items the music is sweet and melodious, pure and classical.

The troupe consisted of five dancers and six musicians and the performance comprised six items like ‘Mangalacharana’ primarily expressing gratitude, ‘Dhasava - a celebration of the triumph of good over evil’, ‘Basanta Pallavi’ welcoming spring, a pleasing season with its blossoms, fragrance-filled breezes and colours, which is very dear to all, ‘Aabhiyana 1 & II’ encompassing expressive musical dance to communicate a story or enacting a song which speaks about love and ‘Moksha’ the concluding item, which literally means salvation or emancipation.

Indian Participation At Qatar International Food Festival
March 20-28, Oxygen Park, Education City
Supported by The Ministry Of Tourism, Government Of India
Partner Organisations: Qatari Museums, Qatari National Tourism Council

As part of the India-Qatar Year of Culture 2019, two Chefs were deputed by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, to represent India at the Qatar International Food Festival at Oxygen Park (Education City) in Doha from March 20th. They gave several live demonstrations of Indian cooking and also served as judges for cooking demonstrations by chefs from other countries participating in the Food Festival.

During their visit, the two Indian chefs also gave cooking demonstrations at Chef Yuvani Restaurant, with the support of Qatar Foundation on March 25 and March 27.
AR Rahman Show
March 22, Khalifa Stadium Doha. Organised By: Katara Studios, Ministry Of Culture & Sports, Qatar Airways, Supreme Committee For Delivery & Legacy And Aspire Zone

GLOBALLY acclaimed Indian composer and musician AR Rahman, along with an 80-strong troupe, captivated the audience with an electrifying performance at Doha’s Khalifa International Stadium. Billed as the biggest ever live stage concert in the history of Qatar, the much-anticipated event kept the over 30,000 crowd spellbound throughout the three-hour duration, with a number of his popular and award-winning numbers.

Rahman, a two-time Oscar and Grammy winner, was performing for the first time in Qatar. The team performed on a 30-metre-long stage, a world-first at the state-of-the-art venue, which is one of the stadiums for the FIFA 2022 World Cup. The maestro was joined in the concert by popular Indian playback singers Udit Narayan, Shweta Mohan, Haricharan Seshadri, A R Rahman’s sisters and popular singers from the South Indian film industry Rehana and Irshad Quadri, playback singer from the Malayalam film industry Alphons Joseph, Bollywood playback singer Javed Ali, singer and actor Benny Dayal, Indian film score composer Ranjit Barot, Rahman’s troupe singer Dilshad Shabbir Ahmed Shaikh and Indian-born Canadian singer Sunny Gandhi.

Before the formal start of the concert, there was a special performance by Doha’s emerging artist Aisha, who presented a tribute song honouring the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Written by renowned Qatari composer Dana Allard, the song was dedicated to the Qatar-India Year of Culture 2019.

April 2019

Dances Of North-East India By Amrapali Repertory
April 25-26, DPS-MIS School Auditorium
And Al-Khor Community Hall, Supported By The Ministry Of Culture, Government Of India
Partner Organisation: Qatar Museums

THIS event, organised as part of the Festival of India in Qatar and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, featured a 14-member Indian cultural troupe ‘Amrapali Repertory’, which showcased the richness and variety of dance forms of North-Eastern India. They presented an exquisite rendition of folklore and dances of North-East India on April 25 in the auditorium of DPS-MIS School and on April 26 at Al Khor Town. The performances, composed and choreographed by Pramaame Bhagawati and Jayanta Bhagawati under the title ‘Paradise Unexplored’, were presented in several parts, namely Shuddha Naad, Nitya Darpan, Geet Bhumik and Tannam Shankh Naad, Nritya Darpan, Geet Bhumik.

Fanqaar – An Exhibition
April 16-20, The Gate Mall. Partner Organisation: Vistas Global

SIXTY-THREE pieces of art by 20 leading Indian artists were on show at Fanqaar Exhibition at The Gate Mall, from April 16-20. The paintings covered a kaleidoscopic range of themes and wide-ranging styles representing various art movements from modern and contemporary, to cubism and expressionism, to surrealism and traditional contemporary.


Odisha: The Soul Of Incredible India
June 13-14, Abdul Aziz Nasser Theatre. Partner Organisation: Utkalika Qatar

THE Indian embassy, in partnership with ‘Utkalika’, the Odia Society of Qatar, organised Odisha – The Soul of Incredible India, a cultural programme on June 13-14 at Abdul Aziz Nasser Theatre, Souq Waqif. The event comprised an array of classical dances, contemporary performances, animation art and a special musical composition to showcase the cultural richness and variety of Odisha, a prominent state in eastern India. Celebrity performers had been flown in from India to present the cultural extravaganza. Jaju and his team from Lasyakala performed Odissi dance. Prince Dance Troupe of ‘India’s Got Talent’ fame presented some exciting contemporary dances. Anshu Pattnaik, renowned baulari flutist, rendered some special musical compositions. Munna Kr. Shibhoo, a sand-art artist, presented ‘Sand Art – A Journey: Qatar and India’.

‘Ude Re Gulal’
March 29, Retaj Salwa Resort & Oxygen Park, Education City
Partner Organisation: Rajasthan Parivar

THE State of Rajasthan in India is well-known for its folk music and folk dances. Folk music with traditional instruments like Khartal, Bhagpaz, Morchang is a vital part of Rajasthani culture. A troupe of 12 artists from Rajasthan, out of which seven are known for their folk songs and music, whereas the other five folk-dancers, showcased the traditional dances of Rajasthan.

Jasim Khan, a child folk singer from Rajasthan well-known for his performance in the famous singing TV reality show ‘Sa Re Ga Ma – Little Champ’ 2017 and ‘The Voice of India - Kid 2016’, presented a number of Rajasthani folk songs of the event. Pempa Khan, another artist, demonstrated his skill in the traditional art of playing the Rajasthani folk instrument ‘Khartal’. The troupe also presented a sample of folk dances from Rajasthan, especially Ghoomar dance of Udaipur and Kalbeliya dance of Jaisalmer. The troupe rendered a repeat performance at the Oxygen Park, Education City, as part of the Qatar International Food Festival.
Wishing all our readers from India a very happy 73rd Independence Day.
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