



A Newsletter from Embassy of India, Paramaribo

2014 was India's year of 'breakthrough diplomacy': Sushma

The Government has placed special significance on India's Foreign Policy and diplomatic outreach, making 2014 a year of "breakthrough diplomacy". But 2015 promises to take Foreign Policy to a higher level with 'Diplomacy for Development' as the theme of India's global engagements, according to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

In a signed introduction to the e-book titled "Breakthrough Diplomacy: New Vision, New Vigour" that was released Wednesday, Sushma Swaraj outlined the hectic diplomacy that the Narendra Modi Government followed by "revitalizing traditional ties, re-setting strategic relations and reaching out to Indians abroad".



"With 'Diplomacy for Development' as the overarching theme of our global engagements in 2015, we will pursue the vision of a 'Rising India', with new vigour and even greater resolve," she said.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Modi, Obama unveil steps for new high to business, trade ties

India-US business links were set for a quantum jump with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance of "consistent policies" and "welcoming environment" leading to US President Barack Obama announcing steps to lead to \$4 billion trade with and investment in India.

"Over the next two years, our Export Import Bank (EXIM) will support \$1 billion Made In America goods exports to India. Our Overseas Private Investment Corporation will support lending small and medium businesses across India in more than \$1 billion in loans. And our US Trade and Development Agency will invest nearly \$2 billion in renewable energy in India," Obama said in his address at the US-India Business Summit here on January 26.



"We need to make sure that economic growth in both India and US is inclusive. Diaspora investment initiative will aid India," he said.

In his address earlier, Modi said the state should be driven by policies which should be consistent so as to draw more investments, while revealing US investments in India jumped by 50 percent in the first six months of his Government.

He assured US business that they "will find environment that is not only open, but also welcoming".

"We will guide you and walk with you in your projects. You will find a climate that encourages investment and rewards enterprise; it will nurture innovation and protect your intellectual property," Modi said.

Our goal is an economy where skills, infrastructure and resources will not be constraints to growth," he said, adding heavy investments in infrastructure and agriculture will improve the economy.

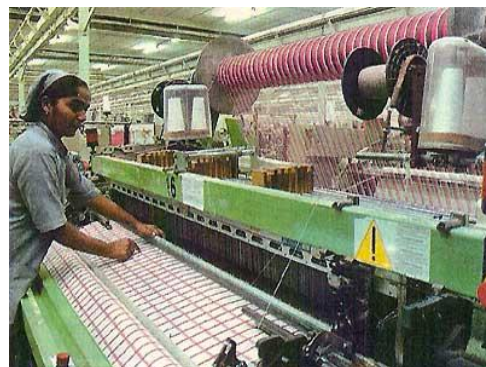
The US-India Business Council (USIBC) along with India's Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organised the Summit.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India's garment exports spin a manufacturing success story

The one sector where the Centre's 'Make in India' pitch seems to have found a ready resonance was the country's textile and garment industry, with India's exports to its largest single market, the US, headed for a record surge in the year 2014.

Between January and October, Indian textile and apparel exports to the US rose nearly 6.5 per cent, according to the US Department of Commerce's Office of Textiles and Apparel (OTEXA) data, compared with an average 2 per cent annual growth in the last five years. The growth in exports this year is being seen as significant as it happened despite the sharp strengthening of the Rupee since September 2013 (a stronger rupee results in a loss of competitiveness for exporters and vice versa).



Source: The Indian Express

Government sets up task force to revive domestic mobile manufacturing

Aiming to take the Make in India programme a step further, the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) has formed a Fast Track Task Force to re-establish growth in the country's mobile handset and component manufacturing eco-system.

"(One of the tasks is) To promote large-scale manufacturing/ assembling activity to achieve production of 500 million units by 2019.



This can create additional employment opportunities for 1.5 million approximately," a note issued by the department said.

The estimated domestic mobile handset market size is Rs.75,000 crore (\$12 billion) in 2014, of which handsets worth Rs.58,550 crore are imported. For 2015, the estimated market size is Rs.1 lakh crore, with imports accounting for Rs.75,500 crore.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

HAL ties up with industry for indigenisation in aerospace

State-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is partnering with the industry for greater indigenisation of aerospace products through the Government's 'Make in India' drive, a top official of the Defence behemoth said on December 26.



"Public-private partnership is the need of the hour to propel the Government's indigenisation efforts through its 'Make in India' drive, attract potential suppliers, and Research and Development (R&D) partners," HAL chairman R.K. Tyagi said in a statement here.

The Confederation of Indian Industry's Karnataka chairman, Sandeep Kumar Maini, said India Inc. was committed to the growth of a vibrant domestic aerospace industrial base in the country in partnership with HAL.

"To sustain global competitiveness, create an export ecosystem and develop MSMEs as a powerhouse of innovation, building Brand India was imperative by all the stakeholders," Tyagi added.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Automobile firms end 2014 with healthy sales growth

Indian automobile manufacturers closed 2014 on a positive note, as companies reported stellar sales for December last year. India's largest passenger car manufacturer Maruti Suzuki closed December 2014 with healthy sales growth of 20.8 percent, including exports at 109,791 units.



The company sold 90,924 units in December 2013.

Its domestic sales increased by 13.3 percent to 98,109 units during the month under review from 86,613 units sold in the corresponding month of 2013.

Maruti Suzuki exported 11,682 units last month, which was a rise of 171 percent from 4,311 units sold overseas during the last month of 2013.

Chennai-based manufacturer Hyundai Motor India's sales increased by 21 percent in Dec 2014 at 59,365 units from 49,078 units in the corresponding month of 2013.

The company said its domestic sales during the month under review grew by 14.7 percent and stood at 32,504 units - up from 28,345 units sold in the corresponding month of 2013.

The company's exports last month zoomed by 29.6 percent at 26,861 units - up from 20,733 units shipped out during December 2013.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Vibrant Gujarat Summit: 21,000 letters of intent worth Rs 25 lakh crore signed

A whopping 21,000 Letters of Intent (LoI) worth an astronomical Rs 25 lakh crore were signed during Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors' Summit.

Along with this, 1,225 strategic partnership agreements were signed during the summit, which saw participation of over 25,000 delegates from 110 countries, said Gujarat CM Anandi Patel at the valedictory address held in Gandhinagar on January 12.



The Summit also got thumping mandates from partner countries like Canada and the US.

Source: The Financial Express

A president, politicians, businesspersons among 15 Diaspora members honoured

The list of 15 Diaspora members honoured with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman here Friday includes a president, politicians, prominent businesspersons and scientists who have all worked for the Indian diaspora community in their respective countries.



Vice President Hamid Ansari gave away the Samman, the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians, during the valedictory function of the 13th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 9 evening at the Mahatma Mandir Convention Centre.

Mala Mehta from Australia was given the Samman for her contribution to Hindi language. She established an 'Indo-Australian Bal Bharatiya Vidyalaya' in Thornleigh suburb in Sydney and since then has been pursuing the growth of Hindi in Australia.

Donald Rabindernauth Ramaotar, the President of Guyana, has been awarded for his work for the Indian Diaspora in Guyana.

Rajaram Sanjaya, an India-born Mexico scientist, is winner of the '2014 World Food Prize' for developing 480 wheat varieties that have been released in 51 countries.

Kanwaljit Singh Bakhshi, an MP from New Zealand, is also known for his work for the Indian Diaspora.

Essop Goolam Pahad, a South African politician, was Minister in the Presidency from 1999 to September 2008 in South Africa. Mahendra Nanji Mehta, a Uganda-based businessman of Indian roots, and Nathuram Puri of Purico Group of Britain were chosen for their contribution to Indian Diaspora.

Lord Raj Loomba, a philanthropist and founder of clothing company, Rinku Group and a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords was also named for the honour.

Kamlesh Lulla, chief scientist for Earth observation in the Human Exploration Science Office at the Johnson Space Centre at NASA, was named for the award for his exceptional service to space science.

Nandini Tandon was given the award for her work in life sciences and healthcare and IT in USA and India.

Satyanarayana Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, was also named for the honour. Bharatkumar Jayantilal Shah is a Dubai-based businessman and philanthropist; Rajmal M. Parakh is from Oman while Justice Doraikannu Karunakaran from Seychelles and AAshraf Palarakunnummal from UAE.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Government clears 30 oil, gas discoveries for production

The Government has cleared 30 oil and gas projects stuck in contractual disputes, that would also help monetise about 2.6 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on January 12.

This is expected to result in exploitation of about 34 million barrels of oil and about 0.7 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas," Pradhan said here at the Geo India Conference co-sponsored by the Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC).

"The estimated reserves of discoveries where additional probing has been allowed is to the tune of about 172 million barrels of oil and 1.9 TCF of gas reserves," he added.

This policy provides for relaxations in timelines under the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) between the Government and the explorer so that Exploration and Production (E&P) activities do not suffer because of excessive rigidity in decision making.

Most of the discoveries so held up belong to state-run ONGC, the Gujarat State Petroleum Corp (GSPC) and private player Cairn India Ltd.



World Bank: India to be world's fastest growing big economy by 2017

Fuelled by economic reforms, India is projected to become the world's fastest growing large economy by 2017 with a growth rate of seven percent, overtaking China along the way, a World Bank report said on January 13.

According to the Washington-based World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) report, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that grew by 5.6 percent last year, is expected to zoom to 6.4 percent this year before reaching the seven percent mark next year and keep that level in 2017 when China decelerates to 6.9 percent.



India's economic growth will be helped along by falling oil prices and by lower interest rates in developed countries and these two factors can be a game-changer for the nation.

World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu said, "The lower oil price, which is expected to persist through 2015 is lowering inflation worldwide and is likely to delay interest rate hikes in rich countries. This creates a window of opportunity for oil importing countries, such as China and India; we expect India's growth to rise to seven percent by 2016."

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Modi pitches for making India a \$20 trillion economy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 16 called for making India a \$20 trillion economy, while stressing laws must evolve with time and his government had taken several initiatives towards "transforming India".

Addressing the Economic Times Global Business Summit here, Modi said that small acts can drive reforms and there was no contradiction between doing big-ticket items and small things.



Indicating launching a national programme for computerisation of public distribution system, he also said that steps were being taken for uninterrupted power supply to all consumers throughout the year.

Narrating his concept of economic good governance, he said the Government must nurture an eco-system where the economy is primed for growth.

He noted development, which must result in jobs, should be a people's movement and economic development cannot take a nation forward on its own.

"India is a \$2 trillion economy today. Can we not dream of an India with a \$20 trillion economy?" he asked, adding his Government was preparing the ground for it.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

CDC invests \$48 million in Narayanaa Hrudayalaya hospitals

CDC, the UK's development finance institution, has invested \$48 million (Rs.299 crore) in Narayana Hrudayalaya hospitals, a multi-speciality healthcare provider, it said on January 15.

CDC will receive a small minority stake in return for its investment, the statement said.

Narayana Hrudayalaya was founded by heart surgeon Dr. Devi Shetty and operates a chain of hospitals in India under the brand name of Narayanaa Health.

With this investment, Narayana Health will expand affordable treatment in eastern, central and western India.

Narayana Health current employs more than 12,500 people, and undertakes more than 13,500 cardiac surgeries every year, accounting for 10% of the national figure, according to the statement.

The company treats over 200,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatients each year. The healthcare provider expects to create an additional 8,000 jobs.

Source: Mint

ONGC stake sale by March after subsidy roadmap

The Finance Ministry will make all attempts to push the big-ticket disinvestment in Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) by March, with the Government giving finishing touches to an oil subsidy-sharing scheme, the details of which are likely to be unfolded in the upcoming budget.

The Centre plans to divest 5% of its stake in ONGC, a move that will garner Rs. 15,000 to 18,000 crore, depending on the price of the stock at the time it hits the market.

The Centre has announced its intent to draw a medium and long-term subsidy roadmap including food, oil and fertiliser. An RBI panel under former Governor Bimal Jalan is expected to submit its final report in 3-4 weeks and the new subsidy roadmap will find a strong reflection in the budget, Government sources said.

"The drop in oil prices has come as a big positive for the country's economy as also for companies such as ONGC that were sharing the subsidy burden on diesel," a Ministry official said.

Source: Hindustan Times



India, EU may resume FTA talks

After a gap of almost 20 months, India and European Union are likely to resume talks for the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to boost commerce and investment.

"We are keen and hopeful that at the next meeting (of India-EU FTA) there will be a positive result," Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here at the 10th UK India Joint Economic Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting here on January 19.



Launched in June 2007, the negotiations for the proposed Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) between India and the 27-nation European bloc has witnessed many hurdles with both sides having major differences on crucial issues.

"The Government is committed...We want to provide simplified tax rule," she said, adding India is the place to do business as the country has been witnessing GDP growth of over 5 per cent.

Source: Press Trust of India

Oil and gas sector may see Rs 6 lakh-cr investments in 7 years

In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' initiative to give domestic manufacturing a major push, the country's oil and gas sector is expected to see investments worth as much as Rs 5-6 lakh crore over the next five to seven years.

Manufacturing opportunity is expected to be created in the near-to-medium term across the oil and gas value chain including upstream sector (oil and gas exploration and development), midstream (gas pipelines and LNG ship building) and downstream (refining and petrochemicals), Petroleum Ministry sources said.



Further to jump-start manufacturing, the Government will emphasise on local value addition, opening of more service centres in India, providing access to capital at globally competitive rates, creating shipbuilding capabilities, the official said.

Source: Hindustan Times