



High Commission of India

Trinidad & Tobago

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High Commissioner of India visits Tobago



His Excellency Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, High Commissioner of India to Trinidad and Tobago visited Tobago from 02- 04 December, 2020. During his visit, he met with the Honourable Mr. Ancil Dennis; Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), Mr. Martin George; Attorney at Law and the Minority Leader; Mr. Watson Duke. During these meetings, the High Commissioner shared some of the developments taking place in India concerning Information Technology, Telecommunications, Agro Sciences, and Bio-Medical Technology. The Chief Secretary expressed his desire to promote cooperation in cricket for the youths in Tobago as he was once a national cricketer. The High Commissioner also briefed about the growing young population in India and the rise of the number of young entrepreneurs in the country and the possibility of skills development among youths in Tobago. The High Commissioner also talked about capacity building through the Indian Technical for Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training programmes and sought active participation by the Trinidad and Tobago nation.

Prominent Christian Organizations visit MGICC



MGICC held a short programme starting with the welcome address by High Commissioner Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu where he spoke about the history of the Cultural Centre and the Indian ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is one family) and keeping that spirit alive, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation will welcome people and organizations of all faiths and cultural backgrounds to be associated with its programmes and activities. Fr. Martin Sirju, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain, Roman Catholic Church, The Right Rev. Claude Berkley- Bishop of the Anglican Church of T&T, Right Rev. Joy Abdul-Mohan from the Presbyterian Church of T&T and Abbot John Pereira from the Mt. St. Benedict Roman Catholic Church also delivered their brief remarks and ushered-in the festivities of the season at the newly constructed cultural centre. The visit also featured remarks from Mr. Chanka Seeterram President of the Hindi Nidhi Organization and Mr. Peter Sheppard President of the Art Society of T & T.

United Nations Declares Invest India The Winner of the Investment Promotion Award 2020



The United Nations (UNCTAD) has declared Invest India- the National Investment Promotion Agency of India- as a winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award. The award ceremony took place on 7th December 2020 at UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva. The award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements and best practices of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) across the globe. The evaluation was based on UNCTAD's assessment of work undertaken by 180 Investment Promotion Agencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to numerous challenges for Investment Promotion Agencies forcing them to shift focus from routine investment promotion and facilitation towards crisis management, notification of government emergency and economic relief measures, provision of crisis support services, and contribution to national COVID-19 business response efforts. All this was being done while agencies had closed offices, moved functions online and asked staff to work from home. In March 2020, UNCTAD constituted a team to monitor the response of IPAs to the pandemic. UNCTAD reported best practices from Investment Promotion Agencies in the IPA Observer publications in April and July 2020. The response of IPAs to the pandemic became the basis for the evaluation of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award. UNCTAD highlighted good practices followed by Invest India, such as the Business Immunity Platform, Exclusive Investment Forum webinar series, its social media engagement and focus COVID response teams (such as business reconstruction, stakeholder outreach and supplier outreach) created as a response to the pandemic, in its publications. Invest India has also shared long-term strategies and practices being followed for investment promotion, facilitation and retention at UNCTAD's high-level brainstorming sessions. This United Nations Investment Promotion Award is the most coveted award for Investment Promotion Agencies.

Read more:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1678902>

Our investment plans in India on track, Indian economy has strength to bounce back: Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia the world's largest oil exporter said its investment plans in India are on track, noting that the Indian economy has the strength to recover from the adverse impact of the corona virus crisis. In February last year, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced that Saudi Arabia would invest over USD 100 billion in India in petrochemicals, infrastructure, refining, mining and manufacturing, agriculture and several other sectors. "Our plans to invest in India are on track and we are in discussion to prioritise investment opportunities in several sectors in both countries," Saudi Ambassador Dr. Saud bin Mohammed Al Sati told PTI in an interview. Stating that Saudi Arabia values India as a strategic partner and a close friend, Al Sati identified ongoing cooperation in areas of training, knowledge sharing and combating terrorism as key elements of the partnership in defence and security sphere. Al Sati complimented India's measures to revive its economy in view of the impact of the pandemic and said the economic recovery of both countries will help elevate other economies in the region as well. "The economic relief package provided by India for its most prominent sectors is commendable. As the fifth-largest global economy and the largest economy in South Asia, the Indian economy has the impetus to recover from the impact of the ongoing pandemic," he said. Gen Naravane on Sunday held extensive talks with Commander of Royal Saudi land forces Gen Fahd Bin Abdullah Mohammed Al-Mutir as he began a two-day rare visit to the Gulf country to lay the ground for deeper military ties.

Read more:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/saudi-arabia/>

Deeply honoured, says PM Modi on Legion of Merit award



US President Donald Trump had conferred upon PM Modi the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, one of the highest military honours in the US. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was conferred the Legion of Merit medal by US President Donald Trump, tweeted that “I am deeply honoured,” adding that the honour recognises efforts of people of both countries to improve bilateral ties. PM Modi further reiterated his government’s “firm commitment” to strengthen the ties between the two countries. “I am deeply honoured to be awarded the Legion of Merit by @POTUS @realDonaldTrump. It recognises the efforts of the people of India & the US to improve bilateral ties, reflected in the bipartisan consensus in both countries about the Indo-US Strategic Partnership,” PM Modi said in his tweet. “The 21st century presents both unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities. The India-US relationship can leverage the vast potential of our people’s unique strengths to provide global leadership for the benefit of entire humanity,” he posted in a subsequent tweet. “On behalf of the 1.3 billion people of India, I reiterate my government’s firm conviction and commitment to continue working with the US government, and all other stakeholders in both countries, for further strengthening India-US ties,” PM Modi concluded. Trump conferred the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, on PM Modi for “exceptionally meritorious service “as the leader of India. It is one of the highest military honours of the US and can only be conferred by the US President. A rarely awarded medal, it is usually given to heads of state or government. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India’s envoy to the US, accepted the honour on behalf of the prime minister from Robert O’Brien, the US National Security Advisor, in a ceremony at the White House.

Read More:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/deeply-honoured-says-pm-modi-on-legion-of-merit-award/story-kAzHloJOaaAubIQChCkm9H.html>

India’s entrepreneurs have a ‘once-in-a-lifetime opportunity’ to shape the future of tech, says Paytm founder



India’s entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to shape the future of technology, not only within their own country but across the globe, according to the billionaire founder of one of the country’s most successful start-ups. Vijay Shekhar Sharma, CEO of financial technology company Paytm, said accelerating internet adoption under the pandemic has increased the need for new, tech-enabled tools in developing countries — a market India is well-placed to serve. “It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for entrepreneurs to build this in this side of the region,” Sharma said at the Singapore FinTech Festival. Technology today is primarily designed for sophisticated users in wealthy countries, noted Sharma. That may suit around 1 billion people, he said. But the rest of the world’s 4.6 billion internet users (and counting) will require new, tailor-made solutions as internet use becomes more prevalent. That’s where entrepreneurs in Asia — and in particular those in India — could come in, leveraging their physical and social proximity to developing markets, he said. “The next 5 billion customers in the world will be served using the technologies and the methodologies that are built in Asia,” said Sharma. “Those, I believe, significant (numbers) of them will be built in India.” Sharma claimed some 350 million users domestically. Such opportunities have only grown over time with the adoption of technology, he said. “We as Indians, we as start-ups and technology companies in India, have an opportunity of a world-class impact,” said Sharma. Today, India is home to the world’s second-largest internet market after China. As of June, India had nearly 750 million internet users, according to the latest government data — a number expected to hit 1 billion by 2025.

Read More:

<https://www.cnb.com/2020/12/15/paytm-ceo-india-has-a-once-in-a-lifetime-technology-opportunity.html>

India and UK to move forward on trade talks as Boris Johnson plans visit



India and Britain will push negotiations on trade ties, their foreign ministers said after talks in New Delhi as both countries seek to restart economies battered by the coronavirus pandemic. Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar said trade ministers from both countries had held discussions and there was "a serious intent" to deepen trade. Britain's Dominic Raab said the two foreign ministers "would like to nudge our trade negotiators along and see what we can achieve." "What I think we recognise is the possibilities of a deeper trading relationship. The contours of our economies would allow that and we, certainly, as foreign ministers see a very powerful strategic case," Raab said after four hours of talks with Jaishankar. Trade and investment will be high on the agenda of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who will travel to New Delhi in January, his first bilateral visit since taking office. Earlier this year, trade minister Piyush Goyal said India was open to engage with Britain on a preferential trade agreement, ultimately leading to a free trade agreement. India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, an Asia-Pacific free trade agreement, last year due to fears over China's access to its markets. Britain is seeking fresh deals, having cited the freedom to strike bilateral agreements as a benefit of leaving the EU. Trade between Britain and India totalled more than 20 billion pounds (\$26.60 billion) in 2018, according to Britain's Department for International Trade.

Read more:

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-and-uk-to-move-forward-on-trade-talks-as-boris-johnsonplansvisit/articleshow/79740177.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Auto parts sector sees PLI scheme driving it to global destinations

In top gear

Factors favouring the Indian auto components sector

- Global supply chain realignment, wherein companies are trying to trim dependence on China with 'China Plus 1' model
- Government's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan that supports local production
- About 40% allocation for sector under PLI scheme



What Centre needs to do further

- Announce details of PLI scheme
- Avoid policy flip-flops

"Localisation always works in the interests of the industry as we are in a very price-sensitive market."
Vinnie Mehta, Director General, ACMA



A new future beckons the Indian auto components industry. Potential exists for the sector to not only grab a larger share of the world trade but also, in the process, make some home-grown brands globally recognized and respected. Many favourable factors have set the stage for it. The global supply chain realignment, a drive to make India self-reliant, and the Centre's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme have all supported this progress. While the domestic auto parts industry has emerged as a strong export-led one with about a quarter of its production exported worldwide, its share in the \$1.3-million global automotive trade is still a minuscule 1.3 per cent. To start with, the realignment of the global supply chain is real and the Indian auto parts makers have started to feel its benefits. They are seeing several enquiries and, in some cases, orders from buyers who were till recently sourcing from China. A strong domestic market and a significant exposure to exports make the auto components sector ideally placed to grab a share of the China market. While China will remain the biggest and fast-growing market (\$550 billion in size as against India's \$50-billion industry), the key message coming home to auto parts companies is the 'China Plus 1' model that global automotive players are embracing. Several leading auto parts companies such as Sundram Fasteners, Wheels India and the Rane Group have started getting orders due to 'China Plus 1'.

Read More:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/auto-parts-sector-sees-pli-scheme-driving-it-to-global-destinations/article33292086.ece>

Huge potential for Made in India apparels in Spain: AEPC



Focus on value addition, quality & safety requirements by implementing traceability solutions key to increase export of Indian spices: Secretary, Spices Board of India



The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) said that India is currently the seventh largest readymade garment supplier to Spain with an export of USD 817.6 million in 2019, which is just 4.2 per cent of Spain's market. There is an immense potential for Indian apparel manufacturers, including readymade garment players, to increase their exports in Spain as the European country imports significantly from other countries, the AEPC said on Wednesday. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) said that India is currently the seventh largest readymade garment supplier to Spain with an export of USD 817.6 million in 2019, which is just 4.2 per cent of Spain's market. In manmade fibre garments, while Spain's global import stood at USD 7,629 million, imports from India was just USD 217.6 million, a market share of mere 2.9 per cent. Speaking at 'India-Spain Synergies in Apparel and Textiles' organised by the AEPC, Deputy Ambassador of India to Spain Madan Singh Bhandari said Indian apparel manufacturers can significantly increase their exports to Spain considering the recent transformations that the sector has undergone in India. "Despite good presence of Indian products in Spain, India's share in apparel imports by Spain is very less. There is a huge potential for this to grow as India has taken several structural reforms in recent past and there is a growing positivity in the Indian economy," he said.

AEPC Chairman A Sakthivel said that for the last three months, the council has seen seeing a positive sentiment towards India. "There has been an increase in exports compared to last year. This corona crisis turned out to be an opportunity as we grew our production of medical textiles, technical textiles and also MMF based garments," Sakthivel added.

Read More:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/business-news/huge-potential-for-made-in-india-apparels-in-spain-aepc/story-KNMyniPinHgCDelaqKclZI.html>

Mr. D Sathiyam, Chairman and Secretary, Spices Board of India and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India said that amid the COVID-19 crisis, India's spices export has performed well and has crossed \$ 3 billion for the first time in the history of spices exports. Addressing the webinar on 'Enhancing Export competitiveness of Spices' organized by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Mr. D. Sathiyam said that the Spice Board of India has set a target of achieving an export target of \$5 billion by 2025 and \$10 billion by 2030. "For achieving this target, the need of the hour is to have infrastructural development for value addition and maintain focus on quality and safety requirements through destination markets," he added. Mr. Sathiyam also mentioned that traceability solutions should become integral part of supply chain to sustain the robust demand of Indian spices in international market. Mr. Sanjay Sacheti, Co-Chairman, FICCI National Agriculture Committee & Country Head & ED, Olam Agro India Pvt. Ltd said, "Given our rich heritage and portfolio of locally grown spices and herbs and the expertise developed by the industry in supplying value added products through a supply chain built on sustainability and traceability, India has the potential to grow manifold its exports of spices and related value-added products over the next few years with suitable governmental support and strong private sector initiatives." Mr T R Kesavan, Chairman, FICCI National Agriculture Committee & Group President, TAFE Ltd said, "To ensure quality needs of export markets in spices, it is important to invest in traceability technology."

Read More:

<http://ficci.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=3999>

Govt ready to accept any challenge and improve research environment in country: PM Modi



PM Narendra Modi invited the global community to innovate in India, invest in the country and its talent and said the Government is ready to accept any challenge and improve research environment in the country. In his inaugural address at the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020, the PM said the biggest long term challenge Science faces is to attract high quality youngsters and retain them. He said the Government's efforts are aimed at making India the most trustworthy centre for scientific learning. One of the steps taken to achieve this is hosting and participating in hackathons to provide exposure and opportunity to Indian scientists, he said. Modi also gave a call to the global community to invest in Indian talent and innovate in India. "I want to invite the global community to invest in India, Indian talent and innovate in India. India has the brightest minds. India celebrates a culture of openness and transparency. "The Govt stands ready to address any challenge and improve the research environment here," he said. Modi pointed out that there are many challenges in the country like water scarcity, pollution, soil quality, food security, for which modern science has solutions. Science also has a big role in rapidly exploring the water, energy and food resources in the sea, he noted. He said India is running Deep Ocean Mission for this and has achieved success, adding the benefit of new inventions in science finds a way in commerce and business as well. Modi said reforms have now been undertaken in the space sector to encourage youth and the private sector to not only touch the sky, but also the heights of the deep space. He said the new production linked incentive scheme also focuses on science and technology.

Read more:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/govt-ready-to-accept-any-challenge-and-improve-research-environment-in-country-pm-modi/articleshow/79874895.cms>

India to benefit from shifting of Global Supply Chains from China: survey



New Delhi: India could benefit from the likely shift in global supply chains from China to other economies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a survey. The FICCI-Dhruva Advisors Survey conducted this month covered more than 150 companies in India. "Another major outcome of COVID-19 is the likely shift in global supply chains away from China to other economies. Nearly 70 per cent of the survey participants have said India could benefit from this move and they expect a fair share of manufacturing to shift from China to India in the near future," said FICCI on the findings of the survey. Moreover, the prospect of introduction of a vaccine against COVID-19 early next year has improved the confidence level of businesses, with almost 74 per cent of the participants foreseeing a significant positive impact on their business once the vaccine is made available, the survey revealed. However, to capitalise on the opportunities that could come India's way, there is need to strengthen its manufacturing ecosystem. Under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package, the government has introduced several measures to address the immediate pain points of the economy as well as steps to improve India's manufacturing competitiveness. These measures have been well received by the industry, with 45 per cent of the surveyed companies rating the latest set of announcements made under Aatmanirbhar Bharat package 3.0 as 'good to excellent'. "The results of the survey are encouraging and highlight the ongoing industrial and economic recovery. This momentum needs to be built upon and now all eyes are on the upcoming Budget," FICCI President Mr. Uday Shankar said.

Read more:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/india>

India has become the world's second largest smartphone manufacturer: Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad



Union Minister Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad said that India has become the world's second largest Smartphone manufacturer and has a clearly established objective of outshining China. Union Minister said, "When we first came to power in 2014, India had just two Smartphone factories, now India has over 260. India has been the world's second-biggest mobile maker. I'm aiming to reach at the top right now and that's my dream." Mr. Ravi Shankar, speaking on the 'Leveraging ICT for Economic Revival in Post COVID-19 Era', said, "The ecosystem of Digital India, which we developed, finalised and sorted to bring on the ground, given a major ecosystem to face the COVID challenge. Simply put, Digital India is built to empower common man with the power of technology." He further said that, in the last five and a half years, the hundreds of government schemes, have provided nearly Rs. 13,000,000 crores (US\$ 1.76 trillion) to the bank accounts of the poor. He said, "In the last 5.5 years, we have delivered almost Rs. 13,00,000 crores (US\$ 1.76 trillion) in 440 government schemes to the bank accounts of the poor, MGNREGA payment, gas link subsidy and food subsidy, etc. And we saved Rs. 1,70,000 crores (US\$ 23.05 billion), which the intermediaries earned." "We built the welfare delivery system with India's 1.3 billion-plus population, 1.2 billion mobile phones, 1.26 billion Aadhaar cards. Via leveraging all this with the Jan Dhan account." In the end, without any intermediaries, the progressive design of digital India that we have envisioned could impact the lives of ordinary people through digital delivery. He added, "When the COVID arrived, the question raised a serious challenge. Then we got the idea of working from home. There have been a variety of challenges with regulatory requirements, with financial requirements."

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/india-has-become-the-worlds-second-largest-smartphone-manufacturer-mr-ravi-shankar-prasad>

PM Modi inaugurates world's largest renewable energy park in Gujarat



Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the 30,000-megawatt (MW) capacity hybrid renewable energy park in Kutch district of Gujarat. It will be the largest renewable energy park of its kind in the world. It is expected to play a major role in fulfilling India's vision of generating 450 GW (4,50,000 mw) of power by 2030. He said that the plant would provide employment to about one lakh individuals and power produced from it would curb five crore tonne of carbon dioxide emissions every year, which is equal to planting nine crore trees. "This park will be spread over 70,000 hectares of land, equivalent to Singapore and Bahrain. About Rs 1.5 lakh crore will be invested in the construction of this park," PM Modi said in his speech. He added that the setting up of wind turbines along the border region would strengthen and improve India's border security as well. The park will have a hybrid park zone for wind and solar energy storage, as well as an exclusive zone for wind park activities. India's solar power capacity has increased 16 per cent in the past six years, added PM Modi in his address.

Key features of the renewable energy park:

*The park is being constructed between Khawda and Vighakhot villages near India-Pakistan border.

*The renewable park will have two dedicated zones, one each for the wind energy and solar energy.

*It will be spread over 72,600 hectares of waste land, including 49,600 hectares for solar project and 23,000 hectares of land for wind power.

Read more:

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/>

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