



## Newsletter for the month of February 2020

### India

#### Visit of US President Donald Trump:



*US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi*

At the invitation of India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump paid his first State Visit to India on February 24-25, 2020. He was accompanied by his wife First Lady Melania Trump, daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner, as well as a high-level delegation. The visit began with the "Namaste Trump" event in Ahmedabad where President Trump inaugurated the world's largest cricket stadium, the Sardar Patel Stadium and addressed a crowd of more than 100,000 Indians. President Trump and the First Lady paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at

Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, the home to Mahatma Gandhi during India's freedom struggle. This was followed by the visit to Taj Mahal in Agra and bilateral meetings in New Delhi. Being leaders of sovereign and vibrant democracies recognizing the importance of freedom, equal treatment of all citizens, human rights and a commitment to rule of law, President Trump and PM Modi vowed to strengthen an India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. President Trump and PM Modi pledged to deepen bilateral defence and security cooperation, and agreed to promptly conclude ongoing trade talks which could become phase one of a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement.

#### Presentation of Union Budget 2020-21:



*Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presenting the Union Budget 2020-21*

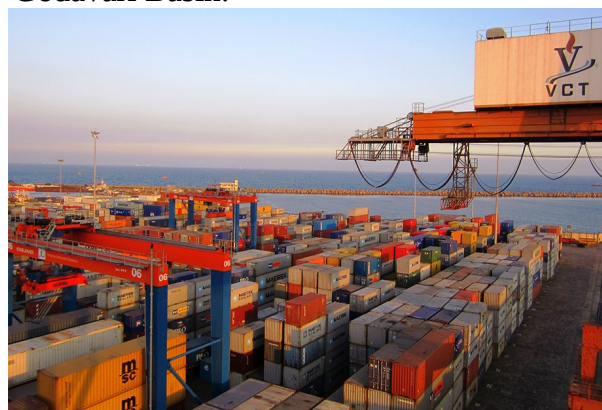
On 1 February, Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2020-21 in the Lok Sabha. The budget contained a series of far-reaching reforms, aimed at energizing the Indian economy through a combination of short-term, medium-term and long-term measures. The three prominent themes of the budget were (i) an aspirational India, aiming to improve standards of living with access to health, education and better jobs for all sections of the society, (ii) economic development for all, and (iii) having a caring society which was both humane and compassionate.

**Explaining India's Citizenship Amendment Act:** On 17 February, the online newspaper Norway News.com published an article on explaining India's Citizenship Amendment Act, written by Shri Kanwal Sibal, former Foreign Secretary of India. The article stated that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) legislation had been passed through an open, transparent and fully democratic process, but that the constitutionality of the legislation had nonetheless been questioned by opponents, and that the matter would be adjudicated by the Supreme Court of India. The article highlighted that the opposition was over-dramatizing issues and that outside observers needed to better understand the dynamics of internal politics in India.

## Indian States / Festivals

**Andhra Pradesh:** Andhra Pradesh is located in South India, bound by Tamil Nadu on the south, Karnataka and Telangana on the west and northwest, Chhattisgarh on the north, Odisha on the northeast and the Bay of Bengal on the

east. Separated from Telangana in 2014, the state economy of Andhra Pradesh ranks 9<sup>th</sup> among India's 36 states and union territories with an estimated GDP of USD 150 billion in 2019-2020, and the state economy is among the fastest-growing in India with GDP growth rate of 15.3% from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The economy of Andhra Pradesh is based on sectors like agro and food-based industries as the state constitutes a major agricultural belt due to the presence of rich climatic and soil conditions, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, IT, textile and leather, automotive, gems and jewellery. Also, an important growth driver for Andhra Pradesh is the Port of Visakhapatnam, which is among India's largest ports by volume of cargo handled, and Andhra Pradesh has huge oil and natural gas reserves in the state's Krishna Godavari Basin.



Visakhapatnam Port  
Photo: [Themaritimstandard.com](http://Themaritimstandard.com)

Moreover, the state has implemented business promotion initiatives such as simplification of procedures for getting industrial clearances, establishment of 20 operational Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as of November 2019, and development of sector-specific industrial clusters like biotech parks, textile parks and hardware parks. The state ranked first in the Ease of Doing Business 2018 ranking of Indian states.



Araku Valley  
Photo: Vizagtourism.org.in

In 2019, the number of domestic tourist arrivals in Andhra Pradesh was 195.8 million, and the number of foreign tourist arrivals was 0.23 million. The state is well-known for its pristine beaches, sacred places of worship, lush green forests, spicy cuisine and hospitable people, and some of the most famous tourist attractions in the state are the ancient and sacred pilgrimage sites of Tirumala, where the Lord Venkateswara Temple is located, and Tirupati, which is home to several magnificent temples such as Varahaswami Temple. Other tourist attractions include Visakhapatnam, also known as Vizag, which is the state's largest city and is surrounded by several beaches along the Bay of Bengal coast, scenic hills, valleys and caves, and the Araku Valley which, at an altitude range of 900 to 1400 metres above sea level in the Eastern Ghats, has lush greenery, waterfalls and streams, and is famous for its coffee plantations.

**Udyanotsav Festival:** From 5 February to 8 March, the annual Udyanotsav Festival was held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi. During the Udyanotsav, hundreds of varieties of flowers and trees including roses, tulips and bougainvillea were on display in the magnificent 15-acre Mughal Gardens at the President of India's

residence, which was opened up to the public on the occasion. Guests were also invited to visit special themed gardens such as the Spiritual Garden, Herbal Garden, Bonsai Garden and Musical Garden.



Udyanotsav Festival  
Photo: Tripsavvy.com

## International commercial & business activities in India

### 11<sup>th</sup> Defence Expo India 2020:



PM Modi at the 11<sup>th</sup> Defence Expo India 2020

On 5 February, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the biennial 11<sup>th</sup> Defence Expo India 2020, which was held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from 5 to 9 February. The Defence Expo India is one of India's largest defence exhibition platforms and one of the leading defence exhibitions worldwide, and gathered more than a thousand defence manufactures and 150 companies from all over the world. PM

Modi stated that a prosperous Indian defence industry would not only increase India's security, but also create new employment opportunities in the defence sector.

### India-Norway:

#### Visit of Norwegian Climate and Environment Minister to India:



Norwegian Minister Rotevatn and Indian Minister Javadekar

Photo: Government of Norway

From 14 to 20 February, Norwegian Climate and Environment Minister Sveinung Rotevatn visited India. He met India's Union Environment Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar on 16 February, at the sidelines of the high-level segment of the UN Conference on Migrating species (CMS COP13) in Gandhinagar. The two ministers agreed to continue and strengthen the cooperation on environment and climate between the two countries, including on ocean affairs. They also issued a Joint Statement stating that they agreed to support global action to address plastic pollution, and exploring the feasibility of establishing a new global agreement on plastic pollution. On 18 February, India's Minister for Earth Sciences, H.E. Dr. Harsh Vardhan and Mr. Rotevatn opened the India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable

Development in New Delhi. The purpose of the task force was to develop and follow up joint initiatives between the two countries on sustainable use of ocean resources. Also on 18 February, Norway and India signed a Letter of Intent confirming that they would develop a new framework for collaboration on Integrated Ocean Management and Research.

#### Visit of Norwegian education and research delegation to India:

During the week 3-9 February, a 50-member delegation representing Norwegian education and research institutions, led by Ms. Anne Line Wold, Director General, Ministry of Education and Research, paid an official visit to New Delhi and Chennai. During the visit, several MoUs in fields such as bio-photonics, health and diagnostic tools, nanotechnology, water management, renewable energy, student and researcher mobility, tunnelling technology and cold region technologies were signed between Indian and Norwegian education and research institutions. Ms. Wold stated that there was great potential for increased bilateral education and research cooperation, and highlighted that India was an important strategic partner for Norway within higher education and research.



Visit of Norwegian education and research delegation  
Photo: Maan Singh Sidhu/Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi