



## Newsletter for the month of January 2020

### India

#### Raisina Dialogue 2020:



*Raisina Dialogue 2020*

The annual conference “Raisina Dialogue 2020” was hosted by the think-tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi from 14 to 16 January. The conference is a multilateral conference committed to addressing challenges facing the global community, and has, since its inception in 2016, emerged as India’s flagship conference on geopolitics and security. At the “Raisina Dialogue 2020”, issues such as response to climate change, technology and the digital age, and the importance of democracy and multilateralism were discussed. The

conference gathered prominent participants such as the foreign ministers of Australia, South Africa, Czech Republic, Hungary, Denmark, Uzbekistan, Estonia, Latvia and the Maldives, as well as seven former heads of state and government of Sweden, Denmark, Canada, New Zealand, Afghanistan, Bhutan and South Korea.

#### 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress:



*PM Modi at the 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress*

The 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress was held at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru from 3 to 7 January under the theme “Science & Technology: Rural Development”. In his inaugural address on 3 January, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi stated that the growth story of India depended on its achievements in the science and

technology sector, and highlighted that the four steps of “innovate, patent, produce and prosper” would lead India towards a faster development. PM Modi also encouraged young scientists to work in the field of rural development where there were several opportunities for cheaper and better innovations.

### Republic Day Parade:



*Republic Day Parade*  
*Photo: Tripsavvy.com*

On 26 January, the Republic Day Parade was held at the Rajpath Avenue in New Delhi. The parade showcased the strength of the three divisions of India’s armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), and also included traditional dance troupes. This year, the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day Parade.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Khelo India Youth Games 2020:** From 10 to 22 January, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Khelo India Youth Games 2020 were organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, GoI, in partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), School Games Federation of India (SGFI) & Assam as host state in Guwahati, Assam. During the games, more than 6,000 athletes in the age groups under-17 and under-21 from across the country competed in 20 disciplines.

### Indian States / Festivals

### Ladakh:



*Solar power in Ladakh*  
*Photo: Opindia.com*

Ladakh is located in Northern India, and became a Union Territory (UT) on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019, after bifurcating the state Jammu & Kashmir into two UTs (J&K and Ladakh). The Union Territory consists of two districts, Leh and Kargil, which are also the Territory’s two largest cities. Ladakh is characterized by being a mountainous region, and the Union Territory is also known as the Land of High Passes, being one of the highest altitude places globally with average altitude at above 12,000 feet (approx. 3650 metres). The economy of the Union Territory has traditionally been based on small-scale agriculture, with both livestock and crops constituting major parts of the economy. In recent years, the Government of India has initiated a number of development projects for Ladakh in the areas of power, solar energy, education and tourism, with an estimated investment of Rs. 50,000 crore. The projects have included the Srinagar-Leh Transmission Line for electricity, 14 solar projects for Leh and Kargil, two new degree colleges, five new tourist circuits and tracks and subsidized helicopter services and hospital upgradation. With regard to the development requirement of the union territory, the government has made a provision that the budget allocation for Ladakh will remain non-lapsable, to enable



local administration to make full use of the funds. Moreover, the government plans to develop and complete India's largest solar project of 7500 MW in Ladakh by 2023, and the project is expected to bring development and employment opportunities in the Ladakh region.



*Pangong Lake, Ladakh*  
Photo: Holidify.com

Some of the most famous tourist attractions in Ladakh are the Leh Palace, a nine multi-storey residence used to be occupied by royals, various Buddhist monasteries and historical monuments like the Shanti Stupa, Thikse Gompa and Tso Gompa, and beautiful lakes such as the Pangong Lake, Tso-Moriri Lake and Tso-Kar Lake. Other tourist attractions include valleys such as the Nubra Valley which is also known as the Orchard of Ladakh, Suru Valley and Zaskar Valley, and the Khardung La Pass which is the world's highest motorable pass at a height of 18,380 feet (approx. 5600 metres) above sea level.

**Pongal Festival:** The Pongal festival was celebrated from 14 to 17 January across southern India. Pongal is a popular harvest and thanksgiving festival which marks the first day of the sun's return to the northern hemisphere. The most important part of the festival is cooking on the second day of the Pongal dish, consisting of boiled milk and rice. In some parts of India, the harvest festival is also known as Makar Sankranti and Lohri.



*Pongal Festival*  
Photo: Tripsavvy.com

## **International commercial & business activities in India**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Global Potato Conclave 2020:** From 28-31 January, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Potato Conclave 2020 was organized by the Indian Potato Association (IPA), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the ICAR Central Potato Research Institute and the Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The conference gathered scientists from across the world, potato farmers and other stakeholders, and issues such as food and nutrition demand, shortage of planting material, supply chains, post-harvest losses, enhanced processing and policy support measures for production and use of certified seed, long-distance transport and export promotion were discussed. Addressing the Conclave through video conferencing, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi stated that his government was taking rapid steps towards the goal of doubling the income of farmers by 2022. He also highlighted that the efforts of farmers combined with government policy had made India among the top three countries in the world in the production of several food items.

## **India-Norway:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Session of India-Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment:** From 15 to 16 January, the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of India-Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment (DTI) was held in New Delhi. The session was based on the Terms of Reference (ToR) signed between India and Norway in January 2019, and issues such as blue economy, shipping & maritime, ICT, renewable energy and fisheries were discussed. The main session on 16 January was co-chaired by Ms. Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, GoI, and Mr. Erling Rimestad, Director General, Norway's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries. Both sides noted that the dynamic nature of commercial exchange between the two countries would result in increasing number of companies interested in establishing and gaining access to the markets in India and Norway.

## **Indian Community:**

### **Celebration of the Republic Day of India:**



*71<sup>st</sup> Republic Day of India*

The Embassy celebrated the 71<sup>st</sup> Republic Day on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 with gaiety and enthusiasm at the Embassy premises. Following the flag-hoisting ceremony at 10.00am, Cd'A a.i. Ms. Arundhati Das read out the Hon'ble President's Message to the Nation. A group of Indian Diaspora

sang a number of patriotic songs on the occasion. The ceremony was attended by over 300 Indian nationals, PIOs and friends of India representing different walks of life.

### **Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2020 and Constitution Day of India:**



*Keynote Speaker Prof. Mads Andenas*

Coinciding with celebration of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2020, the Embassy celebrated the Constitution Day on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 and organized a Talk on "Constitution Day and Campaign on Citizens' Duties" at Embassy premises. The Keynote Speaker Prof. Mads Andenas, Chair of the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo spoke on the Indian Constitution and its Article 51A with a special focus on the 1<sup>st</sup> Fundamental Duty to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem. During the event, the Embassy also organized screening of a film "Mooknayak: Leader of the Silent". The Guest of Honour Shri Himanshu Gulati, Member of Parliament spoke on "Role of Indian Diaspora in strengthening India-Norway Relations" and also shared his experiences of attending the Youth PBD 2019 as a Special Guest/PBD Convention 2019.