

India Review

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www.indianembassy.org

Indian Ambassador Ronen Sen unfurling the National Flag at the Indian Embassy, Washington, on August 15. This year's I-Day celebrations were special as it marked the 60th anniversary of India's Independence amid a wave of high optimism backed by strong economic fundamentals and the country's growing stature in the world order.

India celebrates its 60th anniversary of Independence

! IT giant Wipro buys U.S. Infocrossing for \$598 million, its biggest acquisition in the U.S. market.

! Infosys and TCS are most reputed corporate houses in India, according to TNS Reputation Index

! Indian economy to see 9.4 percent growth in 2007, says a report by Merrill Lynch

Ensure equitable growth for all: President Patil

Even as the Indian economy is surging in strength and resilience and being watched by the world with singular interest, growth must be inclusive and touch all sections, President Pratibha Patil said in her maiden address to the nation on the eve of India's 60th Independence Day.



"Growth, when unevenly spread, dwarfs overall prosperity," the President said.

"We have to ensure equitable growth for all. The fruits of economic development must necessarily touch, especially, the living and working conditions of our toiling masses and people below the poverty line," Patil added. Stating that the 60-year-old democracy was today set to take off, the newly elected woman president reminded fellow citizens of their duty to ensure that this unprecedented moment did not go unutilized. "We have to take special care to bring in egalitarian reforms to ensure that the full benefit of economic liberalization reaches people at all levels.

"For our nation to rise and claim its glorious destiny, we must realize that it is our billion hands that can shape it and, in the immortal clarion call of Swami Vivekananda, I ask my fellow citizens to 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached'."

Bush greets India

I send greetings to those celebrating the 60th anniversary of India's Independence. India's independence stands as one of the great moments in the story of freedom. For many years and through numerous struggles, the Indian people maintained their belief in the promise of liberty. They were empowered by Mahatma Gandhi's message of hope and justice, and on August 15, 1947 they achieved their independence. In the years since founding its Republic and instituting its Constitution, India has offered a compelling example of how a country's unique culture and heritage can be preserved while guaranteeing the universal freedoms that are the foundation of true democracies. This day is an opportunity to commemorate India's independence and celebrate the rich history of this great Nation. The bonds between the U.S. and India have never been stronger, and we remain united in our belief that the best way to ensure peace is to advance freedom. We will continue to strengthen the ties between our two democracies and work together to build a future of prosperity and opportunity for both our people. Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion.

Besides delving on the economy, Patil also focused on the other challenges before the country including the status of women, poverty, health and agriculture.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi as saying that "salvation of India lies in the elevation of her women", the new president said history bore sufficient proof that women excelled not only as able

homemakers but also in the task of nation building.

"Let us resolve that they are not left marginalized in our society. Let us also resolve to expand opportunities for their wholesome participation in every field of activity and make them harbingers of sustainable development," said Patil. "For any nation and its people to become great, there is a need to pursue the path of collective vision. The more developed amongst us should inspire and enthuse the less developed," she said.

Pointing out that agriculture played a critical role for balanced development, Patil said besides attaining the goal of food security, "a strong and robust growth in agriculture can help reduce rural poverty".

Alluding to India's young, Patil said it was imperative to bring the needs, rights and expectations of the youth to the centre of development concerns.

For the text of the President's speech click on www.presidentofindia.com

Highlights of President's address to nation

- The President has asked the people to internalize the spirit of democracy and keep the sacred flame burning in the new millennium.
- Calls for a morally superior and clean administration to build a more vibrant India.
- Calls to expand opportunities for womenfolk in every field of activity.
- Need to recapture the spirit of unity and

integration in all parts of the country.

- Special care required to bring egalitarian reforms to ensure full benefit of liberalization to people at all levels.
- Resolve to get rid of poverty and build a strong and resurgent India.
- Asks agriculturists to formulate appropriate policies to make agriculture more rewarding.
- Need for a supportive environment to

help foster the potential of India's youth.

- Foster conducive environment to promote higher standards of education.
- Need to qualitatively empower health care system and good living conditions.
- Intensify cooperation to fight against global challenges of terrorism for international peace and security.
- Asks the people to help build a strong, robust and prosperous India.

Focus will be on agricultural development, PM

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh marked the 60th anniversary of Independence with a pledge to focus in the coming years on the crisis-hit agriculture sector but insisted that industrialization was critical to progress and employment.

Delivering his fourth speech from the ramparts of Red Fort in New Delhi, the Prime Minister touched upon an array of subjects but his focus was on education and agriculture.

In his crisp 35-minute address, the prime minister voiced his government's determination to crush terrorism. He also urged people to keep the country clean and green and to use the Right to Information Act to check corruption.

Manmohan Singh devoted much of his time on agriculture, promising a Rs.250 billion package to boost farm output.

"In the coming years, our main emphasis will be on agricultural development," he said.

"We will soon launch a special program to invest Rs 25,000 crore in agriculture, to enhance the livelihood of our farmers and increase food production."

The Prime Minister also said that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act that guarantees at least 100 working days in the countryside would now be extended to the entire country. But the economist-turned-politician made it clear that there were limits to how much income agriculture alone can generate, given the large population dependent on farming and the small size of farms in the country. "India cannot become a nation with islands of high growth and vast areas untouched by development, where the benefits of growth accrue only to a few," he said. "Therefore, it is essential that we create new employment opportunities outside of agriculture.



There is no developed country today anywhere in the world that is not an industrial economy. Industrialization is critical for progress.

"If employment generation is the best weapon against poverty, then industrialization is the most effective means to create new job opportunities... We will pursue policies that will help in our rapid industrialization."

Seeking a "revolution in the field of modern education", Manmohan Singh announced the plans for setting up colleges in 370 districts, 6,000 new high quality schools in every block of the country and 30 new central universities.

The government, he added, would also promote five new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, eight new Indian Institutes of Technology, seven new Indian Institutes of Management and 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology.

"It is my fervent desire that India becomes a fully educated, modern, progressive nation... We will make India a nation of educated people, of skilled people, of creative people."

Asserting that India had "emerged as a bridge between the many extremes of the world", he said New Delhi desired "good relations" with all the countries.

"I assure all our neighbors that we... want peace and the best of relations with all of them. I sincerely believe that in the prosperity and well being of our neighbors lies the key to our own security and progress."

"We have had success on some fronts and setbacks on some others," he said. "But there is no doubt that we have been steadfast in our resolve."

He said the Indian economy was growing "at historically unprecedented rates", and sought more creative processes of urbanization to overcome the many problems urban areas face.

For the text of Prime Minister's speech click on www.pmindia.nic.

Highlights

Key Messages

- India is on the move — poverty eradication is now a feasible goal.
- Time for a revolution in modern education.
- Farmers welfare is core of all concerns. Need to bridge rural-urban divide.
- Industrialization is the most effective means to create new employment opportunities.
- India's approach to global problems based on the idea of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam — the the whole world is one family.
- India's composite culture and pluralism make India a "bridge between global divides".

Key Initiatives

- Massive increase in public spending on education, health care, agriculture and rural development.
- To promote social security in unorganized sector.
- Revolution in modern education — 6000 new good quality government-funded schools. Universalization of secondary education on the anvil. 30 new central universities.
- Mission on vocational education and skill development — 1600 new industrial training institutes and polytechnics; 10,000 new vocational schools; 50,000 new skill development centers.
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to be implemented in the entire country.
- Special program to invest at least Rs.250 billion in agricultural sector.

PM's statement on Indo-US civil nuclear initiative

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh made a statement in Lok Sabha on the Indo-U.S. Civilian Nuclear Energy Cooperation on August 13.

Following are the excerpts of the Prime Minister's statement:

"I rise to inform this august House that the Government of India has reached agreement with the Government of the United States of America on the text of the bilateral Agreement on Cooperation for Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

This Government has kept Parliament fully in the picture at various stages of our negotiations with the United States. We have never shied away from a full discussion in Parliament on this important issue. I have myself made statements on several previous occasions — on July 29, 2005 soon after my return from Washington; on February 27, 2006 during which I took Parliament into confidence regarding our ongoing discussions with the United States on the Separation Plan; and on March 7, 2006 following the visit of President Bush to India. I also made a detailed statement in the Rajya Sabha on August 17, 2006 conveying certain solemn commitments to which I shall return shortly.

Our Government has adhered scrupulously to Parliamentary traditions and practices.

After the conclusion of the Agreement we have also briefed many of the parties represented in Parliament on the details of the Agreement.

The Agreement is about civil nuclear energy cooperation. It is an Agreement between two States possessing advanced nuclear technologies, both parties having the same benefits and advantages.

The significance of the Agreement lies in the fact that when brought into effect, it will open the way for full civil nuclear energy cooperation between India and the United States.



There has been considerable public debate and discussion on various aspects of the Agreement. On August 17, 2006, I had given a solemn commitment to Parliament and to the country regarding what we can agree and cannot agree with the United States to enable civil nuclear energy cooperation with India.

With your permission, I wish to draw the attention of this august House to the main features of the Agreement in some detail. It would become evident that the commitments I had made to Parliament, including those on August 17, 2006, have been fully adhered to.

Full Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The concept of full civil nuclear cooperation has been clearly enshrined in this Agreement. The Agreement stipulates that such cooperation will include nuclear reactors and aspects of the associated nuclear fuel cycle, including technology transfer on industrial or commercial scale.

A significant aspect of the Agreement is our right to reprocess U.S. origin spent fuel. This has been secured upfront. We view our right to reprocess as a key element of a closed fuel cycle, which will enable us to make full use in our national facilities of the energy potential of the nuclear fuel used in our reactors. India will establish a new

national reprocessing facility dedicated to reprocessing foreign nuclear material under IAEA safeguards. India and the US will mutually agree on arrangements and procedures under which such reprocessing will take place in the new facility.

Any special fissionable material that may be separated may be utilized in national facilities under IAEA safeguards. Thus the interests of our three stage nuclear programme have been protected.

The United States has a longstanding policy of not supplying to any country enrichment, reprocessing and heavy water production facilities. This Agreement provides for such transfers to India only through an amendment. Forward-looking language has been included for dual use transfers of enrichment, reprocessing and heavy water production facilities.

The Principle of Reciprocity

The principle of reciprocity, which was integral to the July 2005 Statement, has been fully safeguarded in this Agreement. There is no change in our position that we would accept only IAEA safeguards on our civilian nuclear facilities.

(iii) Certification:

This Agreement emphasizes the desire of both countries to cooperate extensively in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as a means of achieving energy security on a stable, reliable and predictable basis.

There is no provision that states that US cooperation with India will be subject to an annual certification process.

Hon'ble Members may recall that the 18th July 2005 Joint Statement had acknowledged that India be regarded as a state with advanced nuclear technology enjoying the same advantages and benefits as other States with advanced nuclear technology, such as the U.S."

For the complete text of the Prime Minister's statement click on www.pmindia.nic.in

India is Asia's largest consumer of outsourcing

India has emerged as the biggest consumer of outsourcing services in the Asia Pacific region, ahead of Japan, China, and Australia, according to sourcing consultancy firm Technology Partners International Inc. (TPI) in Houston, Texas.

Most of that business, though, went to multinational service companies, such as Hewlett-Packard and IBM. Indian outsourcers don't tend to focus on their home market because they don't find it as lucrative as the U.S. and Europe, analysts have said.

In the first half of the year, outsourcing contracts from India were worth \$1.7 billion and accounted for almost a third of contracts awarded in the Asia Pacific. Japan came second with contracts worth \$1.2 billion and China third with \$1.1 billion.

The demand in India has come mainly from the country's booming telecommunications industry, including two very large contracts worth about \$1.3 billion. Still, momentum for



contracts in India is huge and the country will stay among the top three consumers of outsourcing even if more large contracts don't materialize, Siddharth Pai, a partner at TPI and managing director of its Indian operations, told reporters in Bangalore.

TPI tracked the contracts worth more than \$25 million for its regional survey. Had it included smaller con-

tracts, the Indian outsourcing market would be three times as large, Pai said.

Globally, the number of outsourcing contracts worth more than \$50 million fell 25 percent in the first half of the year, according to TPI. The total value of contracts also fell by 23 percent.

Indian outsourcing companies, such as Infosys Technologies and Wipro, had only a 4 percent share of the global market in the first half of the year. That figure does not include multinational companies like IBM that offer services from India.

A new opportunity for Indian companies is what TPI calls Knowledge Services Offshoring (KSO), which is the offshoring of highly complex work, requiring high level skills, such as research and analytics. Unlike business process outsourcing (BPO), KSO work is non-repetitive and requires staff to use judgment. A significant portion of the offshore KSO work will be done by subsidiaries of multinationals rather than by outsourcers.

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Indian economy to see 9.4 percent growth in 2007: Merrill Lynch



Projecting a robust 9.4 percent growth for the Indian economy in 2007, Merrill Lynch has said along with China the two countries had ensured that the U.S. today cannot change the global outlook significantly.

"The impact of our lower U.S. growth forecast is smaller than many investors realize. The 80 basis point cut in our U.S. growth forecast brings 2008 global growth to 4.8 percent from 5 percent previously," the consultancy's 'Global Economies' report said.

"This highlights the changes that have occurred to the global economy

over the past five years — 75 percent of global growth comes from emerging markets, with China and India contributing the lion's share. Barring a major recession, the U.S. economy alone cannot significantly change the global growth outlook. This is a critical fact for an open, export-dependent region like Asia." The report's economic growth forecast for 2007 is 10.9 percent for China, 1.8 percent for the U.S., 4.6 percent for South Korea, 7.9 percent for Singapore, 3.7 percent for Thailand, 2.7 percent for Germany and 2.8 percent for Britain.

The report said domestic demand has been strong in India for several years and that, unlike the U.S., the consumer in India was not credit driven to reflect that it is a high-savings economy with rising foreign exchange reserves. Terming it as its "strongest views", it said growth risks in Asia were limited.

Allergan opens research facility in Bangalore

Allergan Inc., the \$3-billion US-based pharma major, has set up a research and development center here to undertake global R&D projects in ophthalmology, neurology and urology.

As part of its worldwide R&D operations, Allergan Pharmaceutical Development Center India Ltd will focus on therapies such as inflammatory and infective conditions of the eye, especially in retina, movement disorders and urological symptoms.

"The Indian center will be our fourth R&D facility worldwide, with the other three operating in California, London and Sydney. A team of 15 clinical research and data management personnel will take up the projects to develop innovative treatments for patients in the subcontinent and the world over," Allergan managing director for R&D Scott M. Whitcup said.

With 17-18 percent of the company's revenue spent on R&D annually, Allergan will work with other researchers and doctors in select public and private hospitals across the country to conduct clinical trials in ophthalmology and neurosciences.

India is Asia's top spot for billionaires: FORBES

From being one of the world's poorest economies six decades ago to becoming a 'top spot' today, India has come a long way, *Forbes* says in a special report even as it lists more billionaires in India worth \$191 billion than in any other Asian nation. India's top ten, worth \$112 billion, account for two-thirds of that wealth, it says in the report 'India at 60'. "India's rising fortunes are underscored by the increasing prosperity of its wealthiest citizens," it adds, as it lists 36 billionaires in the country.

"India was one of the world's poorest economies when it won its Independence from Britain in 1947. Incredibly, 60 years later, the country's



Richest Indian
L.N. Mittal

emerging economic clout has made it Asia's top spot for billionaires."

This year, for the first time in two decades of wealth tracking, *Forbes* counted more Indians than Japanese billionaires. Three Indians made it to the list of top 20 of the world's richest and only the U.S. had more billionaires than India.

'We have made decent progress in several areas during the last 60 years. We have produced world-class scien-

tists, engineers, journalists, soldiers, bureaucrats, politicians and doctors,' says N.R. Narayana Murthy, the co-founder of one of India's best known software companies and among those in the rich list.

According to *Forbes*, it was a vastly different story in 1987 when the magazine began tracking fortunes around the world — that year the only Indian on the list was the Birla family with a net worth of close to \$2 billion.

Today, London-based Lakshmi N. Mittal is the richest Indian worth \$25 billion, followed by brothers Mukesh and Anil, who unseated Azim Premji of Wipro, who had been India's richest resident for several years. ■

IT giant Wipro buys Infocrossing for \$598 million



In its largest buyout and the first in the U.S., Indian IT giant Wipro Technologies on August 6 announced it was acquiring Infocrossing Inc., a leading provider of IT infrastructure management, enterprise application and business process outsourcing (BPO) services, for \$598.4 million in an all-cash deal. "The acquisition of Infocrossing will be through a tender offer for its 32 million fully diluted shares at the rate of \$18.70 per share and the transaction will be completed by December,"

Wipro plans 4 facilities in the U.S.

Wipro is planning to open several software development and IT facilities in the U.S. In addition to a software development centre to be opened in Atlanta within three months, Wipro is also considering three new U.S. facilities, Sridhar Ramasubbu, Wipro CFO for the U.S. and Europe said. He said Wipro is considering Raleigh in North Carolina, Austin in Texas and Richmond in Virginia as the locations for these facilities, which could open as early as next year. The company first wants to see "how it goes" when its Atlanta centre opens by the year's end, he said, adding Wipro expects to have about 1,000 American workers within three years.

Wipro vice-president and chief financial officer Suresh Senapaty said. Infocrossing has about 900 employees and posted revenues of \$232.4 million in the last fiscal ending March 31, with a net income of \$9.3 million.

It has five data centers across the U.S. in California, Georgia, Arizona, Nebraska and New Jersey.

"The acquisition is not only our largest deal till date, but also the first one in the U.S. market, which accounts for over 60 percent of our (flagship) IT division's revenue. Senapaty said.

Post-acquisition, Infocrossing will be merged with the Indian company's U.S.-based subsidiary Wipro Inc. ■

FDI inflows into India cross \$10 billion for the first time



Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal

Foreign equity inflows into India have risen to \$15.7 billion in fiscal 2006-07 as against \$5.5 billion in 2005-06, thereby crossing the \$10 billion mark for the first time, India's

Nath said in New Delhi on August 17. During the first quarter of the current financial year (2007-08), the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows have been \$4.9 billion as against \$1.7 billion received during the corresponding quarter of 2006-07, an increase of a whopping 185 percent.

The first six months of the current calendar year (Jan-June 2007) have witnessed FDI inflows of \$11.4 billion as

against \$3.6 billion received during the same period in 2006, indicating a growth of 218 percent, as per the official data released.

According to the commerce ministry data, the maximum foreign equity came from British telecom major Vodafone for \$801 million, followed by Japan's electronic giant Matsushita for \$342 million and GA Global Investments Ltd, which invested \$258 million.

U.S. faces prospect of reverse brain drain: Study

India may have provided more in intellectual capital to the U.S. just over the last decade than all of the financial aid the U.S. has given to India over the last 60 years, says an Indian American entrepreneur researcher who has done a study on the immigration issue.

“So one may ask — who’s helping who, here,” said Delhi born Vivek Wadhwa, a technology entrepreneur currently working as Wertheim Fellow at Harvard Law School and executive in residence at Duke University on the release of the study Wednesday by Kauffman Foundation.

But for the first time in its history the U.S. faces the prospect of a reverse brain drain because of its flawed immigration policies, says the study, the third in a series of studies focusing on immigrants’ contributions to the competitiveness of the U.S. economy.

The U.S. should bring in highly skilled immigrants not as temporary workers but to stay if it does not want to lose them to countries like India and

China, the study suggests. The study is co-authored by Guillermina Jasso, professor of sociology at New York University, Ben Rissing and Gary Gereffi research scholars at Duke University and Richard Freeman, Herbert Asherman Chair in Economics at Harvard University.

Noting that the number of skilled workers waiting for visas is significantly larger than the number that can be admitted to the U.S., it says this imbalance creates the potential for a sizeable reverse brain-drain from America to the skilled workers’ home countries.

The study estimated “there are more than one million individuals waiting in line for legal permanent resident status. The wait time for visas for countries with the largest populations, like India and China, ranged to four years in June and may be even higher when visas are again available in October.

This backlog is likely to increase substantially, given the limited number of visas available, it said. Evidence from the “New Immigrant Survey” indicates

that approximately one in five new legal immigrants and about one in three employment principals either plan to leave the U.S. or are uncertain about remaining.

Moreover, media reports suggest that increasing numbers of skilled workers have begun to return home to countries like India and China where the economies are booming.

Some key findings:

- Foreign nationals residing in the U.S. were named as inventors or co-inventors in 25.6 percent of international patent applications filed from the United States in 2006, up from 7.6 percent in 1998.

- In 2006, 16.8 percent of international patent applications from the United States had an inventor or co-inventor with a Chinese-heritage name, representing an increase from 11.2 percent in 1998.

- The contribution of inventors with Indian-heritage names increased to 13.7 percent from 9.5 percent in the same period.

Coca-Cola to invest \$250 mn in India over three years



Soft drink giant Coca-Cola Friday said it would invest \$250 million in India over the next three years to expand its product portfolio and strengthen the firm’s infrastructure.

“We are investing around \$250 million within the next three years towards enhancing our infrastructure for sales equipment, bottling lines, other equipment, transport and logistics,” Atul Singh, president and CEO of Coca-Cola India, said at a press conference here.

The company also unveiled some of its new products that would be rolled out across the country in phases.

“We are constantly exploring several beverage opportunities like energy drinks, sports drinks, flavoured water and juices,” Singh said.

The company currently has 61 bottling plants and is on the lookout to open more across the country.

“We continue to evaluate where we would set up bottling plants. As part of our infrastructure development strategy we would put the bottling plants where there is a market,” Singh said.

Coca-Cola India, which has already invested over \$1.2 billion in India and employs 150,000 people, is also planning to set up a retail university to equip Indian retailers with the right techniques, tools and knowledge.

Spices export may touch \$1 bn by 2009

Spices export is likely to touch \$1 billion by 2008-09 on higher demand for chilli, cumin and mint products, said Spices Board chief V. J. Kurian said. The country is likely to export spices worth \$875 million in 2007-08, up 10% from a year ago, according to the data from the board. “By 2017 we would like India to be the only processing hub for spice in the world,” Kurian said.

The country is aiming to become a global processing hub and plans to set up 6-7 spice parks in major growing centers and regional quality control laboratories at Guntur, Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi.

India is the world’s largest spice producer accounts for 44 percent of global output and 36 percent of global trade. India’s production in 2007-08 is expected jump 10 percent from this year’s 4 million tons, Kurian said.

The Spices Board is planning to apply for the Geographic Indication (GI) status for Sannam chillies and Tellicherry pepper, he added. It has already filed for GI registration of Malabar pepper, Alleppey green cardamom and Coorg green cardamom. GI status protects certain distinct or generic products associated with a region, especially in the absence of international agreements. It usually prohibits registration of a trademark under the name. Tellicherry pepper is grown mainly in northern part of Kerala. Sannam is the major chilli crop in the country and grown in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

The board has now launched a weekly electronic auction for cardamom in Bodinayakanur, a trading hub in Tamil Nadu. “The idea is to make sure that the farmer gets a better deal and there is more transparency in the system,” he said, adding the process would eliminate middlemen. The board hopes to take the e-auction to the six other auction centers, mainly in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.



Infosys, TCS are most reputed corporate houses in India

Indian IT majors Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) are the most reputed corporates in India while Tata Motors, Tata Steel and Hindustan Unilever have tied for the second place, says a corporate reputation index study.



ization and brand equity," TNS said.

The corporate reputation index represents stakeholder expectations and experiences with the company

and its services, processes, management and systems.

The study reflects views of financial community and senior and middle business managers in the industry. It also includes expectations of opinion leaders. A total of 70 leading companies across various sectors were selected for the study.

"We observe that amongst the financial community, Tata Steel leads with a CRS Index of 94. Other companies with relatively strong corporate reputation in this stakeholder group are ICICI Bank, Intel, Wipro, Tata Motors and Reliance Industries," TNS said.

Tata Tea is the best corporate with a CRS Index of 92. Others at the top are Infosys, SAIL, Asian Paints and Tata Motors.

The largest car maker in the country Maruti Udyog has got the third highest number of votes on the index, says the global consultancy firm TNS' latest Corporate Reputation Index.

The research firm said India's progress is led by IT sector followed by FMCG and Petroleum.

"Corporate reputation is assuming increasing importance in today's business, economic and social environments. As corporate behavior is increasingly under scrutiny and corporate valuations go beyond financial performance parameters, it is regarded as a measure of confidence in the organization and goes beyond market capital-

Kraft to go solo for biscuits foray in India



Kraft Foods, the world's largest cookie maker, which recently made a binding offer for Groupe Danone's global biscuit business, will soon launch its international biscuit brands in India on its own.

Recently, when Kraft bid for Danone's biscuit range, it left out the Indian and Latin American biscuit business interests of Danone. Company executives said Kraft was planning to launch many of its globally renowned products, including biscuit brands Oreo and Ritz; chocolate brands Toblerone and Milka; instant coffee brand Maxwell Coffee House; and cereal brand Post in India soon.

Tod Gimbel, director, corporate affairs, Asia Pacific, Kraft Foods, said, "At present, Tang-powdered beverage was the only product in the company's Indian portfolio. In the near future, consumers will be able to buy Kraft's iconic brands across a wider geographic area and significantly larger number of stores in India," he added.

Though some of these brands are available in some parts of the country, the distribution is limited.

"With a large consumer base and an increasing spending power, India continues to be an attractive investment destination for any MNC, including Kraft. While we can't predict what may or may not happen in the future, what we can say is that Kraft will explore every opportunity around the world to build international scale, and give us access to new categories, capabilities and technologies," Gimbel said.

In 2006, Kraft re-launched Tang-powdered beverage on its own. This was after the Altria group's (the parent company of Kraft, previously known as Philip Morris) Indian subsidiary KJS India snapped ties with Dabur Foods, with whom it had a distribution arrangement. The company had even set up a factory in Hyderabad in early 2002, but the market was not ready to accept the Tang brand.

Gimbel said Tang had consistently delivered against Kraft's expectations.

Airlines encash demand in India-U.S. sector

The airspace between India and the United States is set to get more crowded in the coming months, providing travellers with greater choice, shorter travel time and, hopefully, lower fares.



Delhi and New York from January 7 next year. On the cards are plans for flights from Delhi to Frankfurt and onwards to San Francisco and from Mumbai to Frankfurt and

onwards to Los Angeles. For passengers from Delhi to Los Angeles, Air India will fly them from Delhi to Frankfurt and transfer them on to the Mumbai-Los Angeles flight.

Jet Airways, which launched its Mumbai-Bussels-New York service recently, is also planning more one-stop flights between India and the US.

But is there room for all these new services? "We feel that the non-stop service is popular not only with families and elderly people but also with business people. In fact, the new Mumbai flight will open up a host of new travel options for Indian travellers," said Recoura.

In less than two months US airline Continental will expand its services to India by starting a four-times-a-week non-stop flight from Newark to Mumbai. "From October 2 the flight will be four times a week but will become a daily flight from October 28," the airline's Senior Country Director, Laurent Recoura, said. At present, Continental, the first airline to launch a non-stop flight between America and India, operates a daily New York-Delhi flight.

Similarly, Air India, the only Indian airline to offer a daily non-stop Mumbai-New York flight, is to start another daily flight between

India test base for Windows SkyDrive



Microsoft Corp, in a bid to further its strategy of blending PC-based software applications with the online platform, launched an upgraded version of its mail service Windows Live Hotmail along with a new online storage service Windows Live SkyDrive.

The new email version has been released worldwide, including India, while SkyDrive has been launched in its beta version in three markets: India, the U.S. and the U.K. The inclusion of India among the other mature Internet markets underscores the Redmond-based software giant's increased focus on this market, despite the comparatively small Internet user base in India.

The mail service includes several features common to Microsoft's PC-based mail client Outlook Express, such as auto forwarding, file drag-drop and the ability to reply to meeting requests from Outlook clients.

"The idea is to ensure the web offers the same rich experience that a user gets on the PC," says Jaspreet Bindra, country manager, MSN India. The company has also increased free storage limit to 5GB per account. This is aimed at surpassing competitor Google Inc's 2.8GB storage on Gmail, which is slated to become a paid service for storage beyond 2.8GB. The upgraded version comes barely three months after the official release of Windows Live Hotmail, which was an updated version of Hotmail. The upgrades will take place over the next several months.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, Microsoft will release several upgrades and services in keeping with its 'Cloud' Internet services. The software giant had earlier outlined its intention of moving into a business model that combines its expertise in software services with a web-based platform. However, it released details of its online software services strategy recently. It aims to create a middle layer that blends the two areas, with a strong advertising supported platform.

Sky Drive, its latest launch in the Windows Live suite, allows users to store large files-documents, music, photos and videos-online, with a free storage limit of 500MB. These files can be stored, shared with friends on the user's messenger list, or made public. Microsoft is taking the file storage function from a PC-based offline environment to online, with competitors in U.S.-based Box.net and Omnidrive Inc.

Sun to triple services growth in India in three years

The U.S.-based Sun Microsystems hopes to triple its services business growth in India in three years, with an increasing number of businesses adopting its opensource platforms.

"The market in India is not as mature as other geographies, though we see a significant number of our software platform downloads happening among the developers' community and researchers in India. This will give us greater opportunities," said Bhaskar Pramanik, president, India GEM, Sun Microsystems. India is the smallest among the company's 16 geographically established markets (GEMs).

In the financial year ended June 30, 2007, the services business contributed 18 percent to the company's revenues in India, a growth of 22 percent, whereas the share of services in the company's topline globally was 35 percent. Pramanik said the company's efforts would be to take the share of services in the company's revenue in India to 35 per cent by 2010, at par with that globally. Sun has added 264 customers in India in storage, software



and services. Telecom is the major contributor to Sun's revenues in India, followed by financial services, manufacturing, retail and the government.

"The requirements of large corporates in India is as promising as their global counterparts. Last year we started looking at retail, which is doing very well now. The government which is one of the largest service providers could also be one of our growth drivers in India," Pramanik said.

Sun also saw a rise in adoption of its core developer platforms, including Java and Solaris. India is the largest registered developer base under the sub development networks (SDN) for Sun worldwide, with about 5,30,000 developers.

After Jonathan Schwartz took over as CEO in April 2006 from co-founder Scott McNealy, the company has reportedly cut about 4,000 jobs. It had in a recent submission before the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission said that it was planning to cut an unspecified number of jobs as part of a new restructuring plan.

Texas Instruments lays big bet on India

Almost two decades after Texas Instruments (TI) set up its R&D base in Bangalore, it is eyeing the Indian market in a big way, thanks to the buoyancy in the local electronics products market, particularly cellular handsets. But not only



mobiles, growth in consumer electronics, defense and automotive segments too has pushed the \$14.2-billion semiconductor behemoth to work out an India-focused marketing strategy.

"Indian growth is just the tip of an iceberg giving the company a once-in-a-generation opportunity," says TI India director of marketing and sales Arun Jain. "The inflec-

tion point is 2007 and the growth rate over the 3-4 years will be five times that of global electronic manufacturing. TI India will play a larger role with strong local support, ease of buy and a large portfolio of analog and signal processing solutions."

High disposable incomes, changing lifestyles and affordability due to falling technology costs are the prime drivers behind this growth.

TI's Locosto, ultra Locosto, ecosto and OMAP chips for cellphones are aimed at emerging markets like India to address the spurt of feature-rich cost-effective phones that cater to both need and lifestyle.

Nortel takes stake in Tejas Networks

Nortel Networks is picking a minority stake in Bangalore-based optical network firm Tejas Networks. The deal is part of a product sourcing arrangement wherein the \$11.4-billion Canadian telecom equipment company was to get the equity stake after certain purchase milestones with Tejas as the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) supplier.

According to sources close to the deal, Tejas would issue warrants to Nortel to acquire 12,954 equity shares of Rs. 10 each at a premium of Rs. 9,046 per share. This would translate into an investment of about Rs. 120 million.

Significantly, the price at which the warrants would be issued has been modified recently. As per the original terms of the agreement between Nortel and Tejas struck three years back, the exercise price of each share was fixed



at Rs. 13,115. However, last month the two parties decided to change the exercise price to Rs. 9,056 per share. In this transaction, Nortel is not being inducted as a promoter and would not have a lock-in period for its shares.

Incidentally, Tejas is expected to go public next year. Though it is not clear if the public offering would be launched in India or in the U.S.

As per the deal between the two parties, a certain number of warrants was to vest with Nortel after each \$5 million worth of OEM purchase from Tejas. In total, 12,954 warrants was to vest with Nortel after its cumulative OEM purchase from Tejas hit the \$50 million mark.

Tejas is a privately-owned company

co-founded by Sanjay Nayak (CEO), Kumar Sivarajan (CTO) and Arnob Roy (VP Engineering). It is backed by investors, including serial entrepreneur and ace venture capitalist Gururaj Deshpande, and VC firms Battery Ventures and Mayfield. The other investors include U.S.-headquartered Sycamore Networks, investment funds Sandstone Capital, Intel Capital and the Khemkas-owned Sun Group.

The company, which has a strong presence in the next generation optical networking space with about 25 percent market share, is targeting a topline of Rs. 4 billion in the current year. In FY07, it reported revenues of around Rs 2.34 billion which was five times its revenues in FY05.

For Nortel, this would be second such equity deal in India after it picked a minority stake in long-term supplier Sasken Communications Technologies in 2005 by investing \$10 million. ■

Medical tourism to grow to \$2 bn by 2012

India's medical tourism market is growing by 25 percent annually and is expected to become a \$2 billion-a-year business opportunity by 2012, the tourism ministry said.

"Medical tourism has gained momentum in India over the past few years, a trend underpinned by India's low-cost advantage and the emergence of new high-quality healthcare service providers," a ministry statement said. The medical tourism market in India was estimated at \$333 million in 2004, the year in which some 150,000 patients arrived in the country for treatment from the U.S. and Britain, as also from the Gulf, Africa and SAARC (South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation) nations.

Since then, the number of such arrivals has increased by 20 percent while the size of the market has gone up by 25 percent, the ministry said.



To give medical tourism a boost, the Indian government has also introduced a new category of medical visa for foreigners. The visa is initially issued to a patient with a companion for a one-year period and can be extended up to three years.

As part of its Incredible India campaign, the tourism ministry has also developed a medical tourism brochure and CD detailing the speciality facilities available in the country that have been distributed worldwide.

The cost of what a medical tourist pays is a fraction of what many in the West pay as hospital bills. According to officials, the average price of heart surgery in the West is \$50,000. In India, it costs \$10,000. Similarly, a heart bypass in India costs about \$4,000 compared to about \$15,000 in the U.S. Similarly, a liver transplant sets a patient back by \$350,000 in the U.S. but in India costs just \$50,000. ■

Mittal to sell U.S. mill in new deal

A global team of companies led by a U.S. steel distributor and maker has agreed to buy a coveted



Maryland steel mill, paving the way for Mittal Steel to complete its acquisition of Arcelor SA and become the world's top steel-maker by far, The Wall Street Journal reports.

Chicago-based Esmark Inc., a closely held steel distributor that is buying steel-maker Wheeling-Pittsburgh Corp., formed a joint venture with Brazilian iron-ore producer Companhia Vale do Rio Doce and Ukrainian steel-maker Industrial Union of Donbass Corp. to buy the Sparrows Point plant in Maryland, according to the report.

A person familiar with the transaction valued it at \$1.35 billion. Mittal was under a U.S. Justice Department mandate to sell the 118-year-old plant in order to alleviate antitrust concerns before allowing its \$33 billion deal to acquire Luxembourg-based Arcelor to be completed.

Lockheed Martin plans innovation center in India

The U.S. defense and aerospace major Lockheed Martin Corp has entered into a 50:50 collaborative venture with Bangalore-based Wipro to set up a center for innovation in Gurgaon on the edge of Delhi — its third such facility globally.

“We’re calling it the Network Centric Operations Centre (NCOCC). It’ll have core competence in testing and analyzing war-fighting concepts and other command and control operations,” said Richard G. Kirkland, the group’s president for South Asia.

The Gurgaon facility will help defense and homeland security customers fight terror and tackle issues



Richard G. Kirkland

like natural disasters in an integrated manner by suggesting how resources can be optimally deployed.

Technically, the services offered by the centre will combine what is also called C4ISR capabilities — com-

mand, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

“Essentially, the facility will develop for its civil and defense customers the solutions required to address complex problems, emerging threats and similar operational challenges, using modern techniques,” Kirkland said.

Explaining the methodology further, he added: “Our expert team at the centre, together with the customers, can effectively simulate various operations so that a clearer understanding emerges about the challenges and opportunities of a situation and the technologies needed.”

Nokia opens its first design studio in India



Nokia, the world leader in mobile communications, has chosen India as the location for the first in a series of satellite design studios it plans to establish in design hot spots around the world, signaling the increasing impact the country has had on the development of mobile phones.

Established via a two year partnership with the Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, it will give

Nokia designers and India’s talented young designers the opportunity to work together on new design ideas for India and the global markets.

Alastair Curtis, Nokia’s Chief Designer, said “India is a dynamic and inspiring place for designers with its diverse mix of cultures, traditions and color. Reflecting India’s status as one of the hottest countries for design I expect our work here to influence not only our thinking on new trends and ideas for India, but also for other global markets.”

The satellite studio will explore a range of design trends and themes while researching into color and material trends in India, mobile use of the internet in India and its implications for design, and new features and uses for mobiles.

Geetha Narayanan, Founder and Director, Srishti said, “Nokia’s investment reflects the growing importance of India’s designers and the wealth of new talent being developed here.” Nokia has 300 designers in its global team representing 34 different nationalities. The group includes designers, psychologists, researchers, anthropologists, engineers and specialists based in major cities of the world.

U.S. banks turn greenbacks flow towards Indian SMEs

A number of U.S. banks have spotted a huge business opportunity in the small and medium enterprises (SME) in India that contribute 9 percent of the country’s \$1-trillion GDP.

A wave of liberal offers for credit along with U.S. government guarantee is set to make its way to the segment with the U.S. seeking to boost its exports by providing trade finance to SME importers in emerging economies.

The U.S. government has asked its banking sector to be proactive in extending credit to SMEs in emerging economies with this objective, minister counselor for commercial affairs in U.S. embassy in the Capital, Carmine D’Aloisio, said.

The move comes at a time when India expects its trade with the US to double to \$60 billion by 2009. U.S., which is India’s largest trading partner, accounted for 16.8 percent of the country’s exports and 6.3 percent imports in 2005.

The first bank to come to Indian shores with an SME focus is New York-based M&T Bank. Its line of credit has U.S. Exim Bank guarantee and does not require collateral — which most Indian banks insist on from SMEs.

The other banks learnt to have partnered the U.S. Department of Commerce’s trade promotion unit are AmSouth Bank, North Carolina-based Branch Banking & Trust Co, Atlanta-based Sun Trust Banks Inc., and Bank of Oklahoma NA. The banks are reported to be evaluating their India strategy.



Bharti, Wal-Mart join hands for wholesale store

Telecom-to-retail group Bharti Enterprises and the world's largest retailer Wal-Mart Stores, Inc, on August 6 announced the establishment of their joint-venture Bharti Wal-Mart Private Ltd. for wholesale cash-and-carry and back-end supply chain management operations in India. The new entity targets the opening of the first wholesale store by end of next year. It has plans to open 10 to 15 such stores over the next seven years. The joint venture is expected to employ over 5,000 people spread over seven to eight years, officials said.

Bharti Wal-Mart Private Ltd. will source products from local neighborhood stores, fruit and vegetable resellers, restaurants and other small manufacturers.




Raj Jain, Wal-Mart's India operations head (L) and MD, Bharti Enterprises Rajan Bharti Mittal in a press conference in New Delhi on August 6.

"Wal-Mart's global expertise in supply chain and logistics will bring enhanced efficiencies across the retail ecosystem. This venture promises to bring great value to million of farmers, artisans, small manufacturers and retailer across India," said Sunil Bharti Mittal, chairman and group CEO,

Bharti Enterprises.


The wholesale cash-and-carry operations of Wal-Mart, which is quintessentially based on a business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-commerce (B2C) model, is globally carried on by the firm under different models such as Maxi and Sam's Club.

According to Raj Jain, country president for Wal-Mart's India operations: "One of the key reasons for Wal-Mart's international success is the fact that in every location we operate, we are local. We source local products from local suppliers that appeal to local tastes, needs and fashion." He said the U.S.-based retail juggernaut has no immediate plans to come into India's multi-brand retail sector directly due to the current Indian law. 

Brocade's R&D center in Bangalore

Brocade, a U.S. based software company, has opened a world class research and development facility in Bangalore. The Bangalore based R&D center has the latest state-of-the-art infrastructure and according to Mike Klayko, Brocade, Chief Executive Officer, the new centre at Bangalore will make a significant milestone in the global growth of Brocade. "The Establishment of Brocade R&D center in Bangalore reflects our global footprint as we meet the challenges of the rapidly growing volumes of data," he said.

The company, which is one of the leading providers of networked storage solution, already has R&D centers in various parts of North America, and in Israel and China. Outlining the reason for setting up a center in Bangalore, Zahid Hussain, Brocade Vice president of Engineering said, "In Bangalore we are able to find outstanding engineering talent with the right level of experience and expertise".

According to Gartner, an IT research firm, India witnessed the second-highest revenue growth in storage networking in the Asia-pacific region with 22.5 percent. 

Apollo Hospital eyes U.S. acquisitions



Healthcare chain Apollo Hospital Enterprises Apollo Hospitals has acquired Atlanta based Medical BPO Zavata for \$180

million. Zavata has strong operating margins of about 20 percent and has over a thousand process certified staff. Its clients include the New York University's Health Department. Apollo Hospitals says that it is looking for more such acquisitions in the U.S. Analysts say that the buyout gives a lot of upside to the stock as it gives Apollo Hospitals access to the \$700 billion U.S. hospital industry.

Apollo Hospitals stock price however didn't capture much excitement about this deal and has been trading range bound since a month now. Perhaps, with the passage of time after seeing the impact of this deal on its financials, it helps to bring some cheer to its shareholders.

The Indian healthcare chain is in advanced talks with other U.S. firms for a possible takeover as part of its plans to expand in medical business process outsourcing.

Sierra Atlantic acquires ArrAy, Inc.



Indian IT solutions firm Sierra Atlantic on August 8 announced it had acquired ArrAy, Inc, a Boston-based software engineering services company with global delivery centers in China. The combined entity after the firms assimilate operations will have over 1,500 employees worldwide, a company statement said in Hyderabad.

"By expanding our operations into China, we will not only provide greater delivery capabilities and flexibility but also enable our customers to more aggressively pursue the developing local Chinese market," said Raju Reddy, chairman and CEO, Sierra Atlantic. The combination of the two companies will create the largest IT services company in South China, serving U.S. and European customers.

Indian team for Arctic to study climate change

With climate change increasingly becoming a hot global issue, Indian scientists are set to go over to the Arctic region for a first-hand understanding of all aspects of the phenomenon. Launching the first-ever Indian scientific expedition to the icy region on August 3, Earth Sciences Minister Kapil Sibal said that not only the Arctic Ocean but also surrounding areas were one of the most important regions, which governed the earth's climate.

The Indian scientists will try to unravel the exact mechanism by which the tele-connection functions. They will conduct studies on thermohaline circulation which, originating in the northern Atlantic and southern Arctic, not only drives oceanic circulations but also regulates global climate. Emphasizing that the expedition would be an annual event, one in summer and the other in winter, Sibal said that under the new Indian Arctic research program, scientists would



Union Minister of Science and Technology Kapil Sibal launching the First Indian Arctic Expedition, in New Delhi.

also conduct studies on use of arctic microbes in biotechnology and glaciology, geology and palaeoclimatology studies. The Arctic Ocean and its surrounding regions were considered an excellent ground for studying the history of global climate, apart from its future.

Experiments would be conducted at Ny-Alesund, located on

the west coast of Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago of Norway. The first expedition would be led by the Director of the Goa-based National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Rasik Ravindra. The members are S. Shivaji, Deputy Director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad; C.G. Deshpande, scientist from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune; D.S. Singh, lecturer, University of Lucknow, and S.M. Singh, scientist from NCAOR.

Indian astronaut in space by 2015



India will be able to send its astronaut into the space by 2015 and embark on a lunar mission after 2020, noted space scientist and chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Madhavan Nair said in Nagpur on August 2. "India will be launching its satellite Chandrayan by mid-next year for carrying out scientific experiments on moon," Nair told reporters after inaugurating an

information and communication technology gallery at the Raman Science Centre in Nagpur. The satellite with a payload of 560 kg will carry various instruments to study the surface of moon and will be launched by PSLV sometime around August next year. It will orbit near the moon and take visuals and photographs to study real colour of the surface.



First thorium unit in India soon

India is on the verge of setting up the world's first advanced heavy water reactor (AHWR), which uses thorium as a fuel. "We have the design and the technology to install a 300MW thorium-based reactor. It is going through the process of regulatory clearance. We will start work on it in the Eleventh Plan (2007-2012) period... and we hope to complete the work within seven years," Baldev Raj, director of the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam, said.

Raj, an internationally-acclaimed metallurgist, said the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Trombay, near Mumbai, has been doing research into thorium-based reactors for the past 50 years. He explained that India was the only country in the world with adequate reserves of thorium to make the use of the reactors based on it financially viable.

"As of today, no other country in the world is doing any research on thorium-based reactors as they do not have adequate thorium reserves," he added.

This would be a major technological achievement for the country as thorium-based reactors would see the completion of India's nuclear fuel cycle, according to him. The first stage of India's nuclear program saw pressurized heavy water reactors which created plutonium.

Indigenous cryogenic stage tested

An indigenous cryogenic stage developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) was successfully tested on the ground on August 4 at the

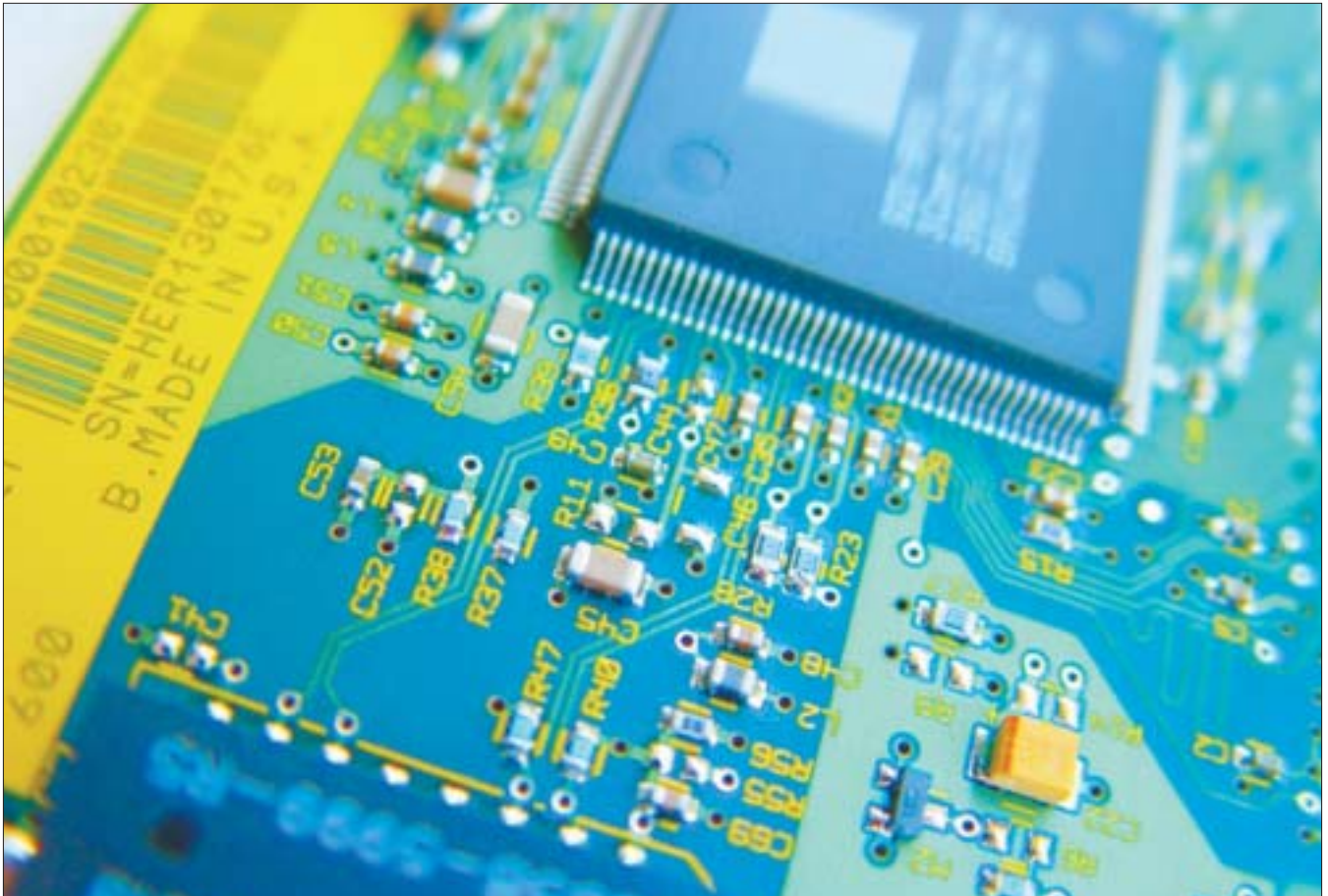


Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) at Mahendragiri, near Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu. ISRO officials called it a good test. All parameters of the stage including its engine performed normally, they said. A cryogenic stage is used as the topmost stage in ISRO's Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) for putting in orbit INSAT-class of satellites weighing up to 2,500 kg in orbit. This

stage is necessary for putting such heavy satellites in orbit. This includes the engine, tanks for storing the propellants, control and guidance systems, and so

on. Its development involves complex technology and use of propellants at extremely low temperatures. The propellants used in the cryogenic stage are liquid hydrogen at minus 260 degrees Celsius and liquid oxygen at minus 160 degrees Celsius.

In a GSLV flight, the cryogenic stage performs for 12 minutes before injecting the satellite into orbit.



Indian semiconductor industry

A blue chip biz

When Nokia, the world's leading mobile phone handset maker, set up a plant in 2006 near Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, it not only raised many an eye-brow in the electronics industry, but spawned a new era of manufacturing trend in the country. Almost a year down the line, Nokia acknowledged that production of electronic goods in Chennai was cheaper than in Shenzhen, China, the traditional manufacturing hub, preferred by well-known original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

India has catapulted to the world league in semiconductor manufacturing. The reasons — a maturing ecosystem for the electronics industry

and the policy decisions taken by a proactive government to attract investments in the electronics industry, particularly semiconductor manufacturing. India is now seen as the next hub of semiconductor manufacturing. Already, a number of companies set up by Indians with technical support from global giants have unveiled their plans for the country.

According to the India Semiconductor Association (ISA), the premier body of semiconductor companies and chip design firms in India, the country has already emerged as a preferred destination for chip designing and embedded software purely because of the talent pool. India can now go a step ahead and take up manufacturing of semiconductors for both

the world and domestic markets.

There are two reasons. The first is that companies, particularly MNCs, can cater to the rapidly growing domestic electronics market at cheaper costs by sourcing semiconductors from India. Secondly, India can emerge as an alternative to China and Taiwan in manufacturing semiconductors.

The case for serving the domestic electronics industry is stronger. According to an ISA-Frost & Sullivan report, India is developing as one of the largest markets for electronic equipment. India's electronic equipment consumption was estimated at around \$28.2 billion in 2005. It is expected to reach \$126.7 billion by 2010 and \$363 billion by 2015 growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 29.8



per cent. Another encouraging sign is that the semiconductor content in the estimated electronic consumption in 2015 is expected to be \$36.3 billion accounting for 6.5 percent of the global semiconductor revenues.

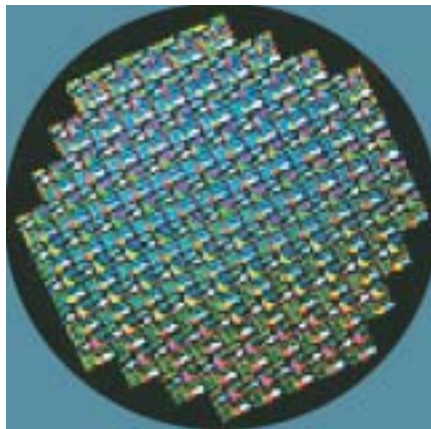
India offers high potential for electronic equipment manufacturing companies. The estimated production of \$155 billion in 2015 is expected to create an opportunity of \$15.52 billion for semiconductor companies and also for Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) companies.

A direct revenue generation of \$43.07 billion by 2015 is expected to generate employment for 781,780 engineers. The indirect and induced revenue generation of \$33.59 billion is expected to generate employment of 2.96 million.

The major advantage is that they can source chip design locally from Indian companies. A chip or microprocessor is the most complex part of an electronic device and designing chips is at the top end of the software value chain. Chips are an integral part of semiconductors. VLSI (Very Large Scale Integration) and System on Chips (SoC) are at the pinnacle of chip design. Incidentally, India specializes in both categories.

Indian chip designers provide design services or work at the subsidiaries of global chip companies, especially the U.S. and European firms.

Industry leaders believe India is becoming a 'design store' with a strong



India's electronic equipment consumption was estimated at around \$28.2 billion in 2005. It is expected to reach \$126.7 billion by 2010 and \$363 billion by 2015 growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 29.8 percent.

presence in Intellectual Property (IP) development, integration and embedded software services.

When compared to other chip design clusters of the world, Bangalore has the fastest growing community of VLSI engineers — 15,000, next only to Silicon Valley in the U.S., which has 55 chip design services firms employing around 20,000 VLSI engineers.

The industry in the U.S. is nearly two decades old whereas Bangalore entered this premier club less than a decade ago.

The ISA-Ernst & Young Benchmarking Study: 'India in the Global Semiconductor Design Ecosystem', which, was released recently, rates India the best among different destinations, including Silicon Valley, Taiwan, the U.K., Israel, Canada and the Czech Republic on availability and scalability of talent.

Firms in Bangalore are involved primarily in front-end design work and providing testing and verification-level services.

Buoyed by the success of the chip design sector, the Indian government, which sees tremendous growth opportunity for the semiconductor sector, recently unveiled a policy to attract investments.

But much before the Semiconductor policy was announced, firms had made a beeline to invest in manufacturing in India.

Thus the SemIndia project, promoted by an NRI consortium and headed by Vinod Agarwal, which announced a \$3 billion 'Fab City' project, including a \$100 million ATMP (Assembly, Test, Mark, Pack) facility. Moser Baer, a manufacturer of optical storage media devices, announced a solar fab in collaboration with Applied Materials at a cost of \$250 million at Greater Noida near Delhi. Certainly, India has begun on a win-win note.

India-born Stanford academic wins top ISA award

Krishna C. Saraswat, an India-born engineering professor at the Stanford University in the U.S., has become the first recipient of the Techno Visionary award of the Indian Semiconductor Association (ISA) for lifetime achievement in the field of electronics.

The 58-year-old academic received the prestigious award, which carries a citation and a cash prize of Rs. 5,00,000 (\$12,500) from Principal Scientific Advisor and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) Secretary R Chidambaram at the second annual meet of the ISA in Bangalore.

The Technovation awards, instituted jointly by the ISA and the VLSI (very large system integration) Society of India (VSI), are aimed at building the Indian semiconductor eco-system and encouraging the academic fraternity for its development. After obtaining a graduate degree in electronic engineering from the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) at Pilani in Rajasthan in 1968, Saraswat went on to do his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford in 1974.

“Saraswat has been chosen for the first TechnoVisionary lifetime award by the ISA panel for his outstanding research work and contributions in nano-technology, three-dimensional integrated circuits technology, single wafer manufac-



turing for a micro-factory and thin film technology for VLSI inter-connections and contacts,” the citation said.

Receiving the award, Saraswat told the 120-odd ISA members though he was honored with many international awards in his academic career spanning over three decades, this was the first time his contributions, including research have been recognized in India.

“India is poised to become a superpower not only economically, but also technologically and militarily, thanks to the rapid strides the country has made in nuclear energy, space, IT and other growth sectors because of its strong education system,” he said.

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi’s professor Jagadish Kumar was presented the ISA’s TechnoMentor award for his research abilities and successful mentoring of hundreds of under-graduates and post-graduates.

IIT Chennai and IIT Kharagpur were jointly selected for the TechnoShield trophy in recognition of their contribution in semiconductor research. The TechnoInventor award was presented to R. K. Sharma of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Kurukshetra and E. Syam Sundar Reddy of IIT Chennai for their post-graduate and doctoral research theses.

A medical college in honor of Kalpana

The Haryana Government would set up a medical college to commemorate India-born astronaut Kalpana Chawla at Karnal in Haryana with the assistance of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said.



He was inaugurating the Kalpana Chawla Memorial Planetarium at Kurukshetra.

The planetarium has been constructed by the National Science Museum Council, the Union Ministry of Culture, and the Haryana Science and Technology Council.

Hooda said the country was proud of the achievements of Kalpana Chawla in the field of astronomy and outer space.

The Karnal-based Kalpana had never forgotten her Indian roots while getting higher education in the U.S. and later working for NASA as an astronaut, the Chief Minister said.

Indian American doctor conferred highest Rotary award

Sudhir Parikh, asthma and allergy consultant known for his philanthropy and community service leadership, has been conferred the Paul Harris Award, one of the highest honors from Rotary International. The award



was presented to him Saturday at a reception at the Hyatt Regency, Jersey City in New Jersey, a press release said.

Those who came to congratulate Dr. Parikh included Congressman Anthony Weiner, Indian Ambassador to Argentina, Pramathesh Rath, Indian Consul General in New York, Neelam Deo, Indian Parliamentarian Urmila Ben Patel, hotelier Sant Chatwal and Ketan Gandhi, publisher of a New Jersey paper titled *Home News Tribune*. The occasion also coincided with the doctor’s birthday.

Video greetings came from new age

author Deepak Chopra, yoga guru Swami Ramdev, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma and New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine. A documentary on the life and achievements of Parikh was screened as well.

It carried compliments from Swaminarayans’ religious leader, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, industrialist Srichand Hinduja and former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

The highlight of the evening was a performance by Broadway artistes and a fireworks display. Parikh is also a recipient of the prestigious Ellis Island Medals of Honor 2005, the highest civilian honor given to an immigrant in the U.S., and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman 2006, the Indian government’s honor for NRIs.

Indian American developing 'brains' for space missions

Sandeep Shukla, an Indian American researcher on embedded computers said to be the 'brain' behind many everyday mechanisms, is now developing embedded software code generation for space and aviation missions.



of interest for Shukla. "Because nano-scale devices are so small and the manufacturing process is affected by so much variation and inaccuracy, a significant percentage of computer chip devices manufactured at the nano-scale are defective," he

Embedded computers are used in wireless devices, cars, climate control systems, traffic signals, washing machines, as well as complex systems including space mission controls, avionics and weapons systems. "The makers of the Airbus 380 claim to have all control software automatically generated," Shukla was quoted by EurekAlert, an online news service operated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). "We should develop similar technology to increase productivity and safety of embedded software-based space and air-borne systems," he said.

Nano technology is another sphere

said. His work in designing, analyzing and predicting the performance of electronic systems — particularly embedded computers — has drawn acclaim from the National Academies, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the White House. The most recent honor for Shukla, an associate professor in the Virginia Tech College of Engineering's Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, is an invitation from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to participate in the 19th annual Kavli Frontiers of Science Symposium, from November 8 to 10 in Irvine, California.

Indians honored at 'Global India Splendor Awards'

The six-day-long extravaganza to celebrate India's 60th year of Independence in Los Angeles paid tribute to global Indians like Infosys Chief Mentor Narayana Murthy, music maestro Zubin Mehta and Bollywood filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra at the 'Global India Splendor Awards'.

The award function, organized by M Global Trust, UCLA, ICM and Art Wallah, was hosted by Kabir Bedi.

M Global Trust Chairman Dr. B.K. Modi said: "The Global India Splendor Awards are meant to celebrate and felicitate Indians, who epitomize the three facets that make India splendorous — heritage, holistic and hi-tech."

"We are honored to have our esteemed awardees who have carved a niche for themselves by placing India on a global platform in fields as diverse as cinema, technology, music, art and spirituality to name a few," Modi added.

Bollywood stars who performed live on the occasion were Bipasha Basu dancing to her superhit song 'Beedi'. A soulful performance by sitar player Nishat Khan that evoked a standing ovation among the crowd and Sonu Nigam's sensational performance showcasing the best of his vocals were part of the event.

Prominent Indian personalities like Gulshan Grover, Pooja Batra, Ashok Amritraj were present at the award ceremony.

Other awardees of the night were NIIT Chairman Rajendra Pawar for his work in developing human resource potential in the field of technology and Silicon Valley entrepreneur Raju Vegesna.

Hollywood actress Maggie Grace, known for her performance in the acclaimed series 'Lost' awarded writer Vikram Chandra, whose books 'Red Earth' and 'Pouring Rain' have won him critical acclaim. Other personalities who were awarded on the occasion were Eros International chairman Kishore Lulla, actress Aishwarya Rai and filmmaker Mani Ratnam. Those who were awarded in the field of business included Enam Consultants founder and chairman, Vallabh Bhansali, Dabur chairman Vivek C. Burman and Sobha Group chairman P.N.C. Menon for their work in financial services, FMCG and construction respectively.

Indian American neurosurgeon donates \$20 million to native village

An Indian American who made millions as a neurosurgeon and lived a lavish life, once owning a Rolls-Royce, five Mercedes-Benzes and an airplane has donated \$20 million to his native village in Kerala.

Kumar Bahuleyan, 81, who was born to a Dalit family in India, decided to donate his personal fortune as a gratitude to his village, to establish a neurosurgery hospital, a health clinic and a spa resort in Chemmanakary, in Kottayam district of Kerala.

"I was born with nothing; I was educated by the people of that village, and this is what I owe to them," Bahuleyan said in Buffalo where he has lived since 1973.

"I'm in a state of nirvana, eternal nirvana," he said. "I have nothing else to

achieve in life. This was my goal, to help my people. I can die any time, as a happy man." The urge to do something for his village arose some 20 to 25 years ago, when Bahuleyan returned to Chemmanakary and was struck by how little it had changed.

"The village remained absolutely the same — not a road, no school, no water supply, no sanitary facilities," he said. "I looked in the (people's) faces and saw the same people living in the same miserable conditions I had grown up with."

Bahuleyan has come full circle: from dire poverty in India, to the lifestyles of the rich in America and back to his native village, where he's traded his Mercedes for a bicycle, *The Buffalo News* reported.

WINGS



By Asha Bag

Translated by Gauri Deshpande

Asha Bage is an established writer in Marathi. Her works have received critical acclaim and four awards from the state of Maharashtra. A recipient of the Katha award for creative fiction in 1992 also, many of her stories have been translated into English, besides other Indian languages. She lives in Nagpur and is a connoisseur of Indian classical music.

Wings reflect India's changing social set-up and lifestyles.

A few special things happen every year when, right after the exams, the summer holidays begin. My mother goes to her brother's place. And I get to go with her. For a good month or two. Only me. Deepu and Sonu stay back at home. At my mama's, there are lots and lots of mangoes. We lap up the amras and suck the mangoes whole till there's nothing left but the seed. Juice and pulp. And there are still so many mangoes left over. Aaji — my mother's mother — is always making things with them. Sometimes she squeezes out their juice, adds sugar to the pulp and spreads it out in the sun to dry, to make thin, chewy strips. Mmm ... I can smell those mangoes! Right here. And the exams are not even over yet.

The other thing we always do the day exams end is go to the cinema. With Aai and Baba. Sonu and Deepu come along too. I don't really like films. I can't make out what's going on. But I still love to go with Aai and Baba. The film starts and soon enough Aai reaches for her handkerchief and then I begin sniffing too. But Baba comes to the movies as though it is a punishment for him. If the hero falls into a lake, Baba thinks he is dead. He gets up happily as if the film has come to an

end, saying, Come on, let's go! — that too in a loud voice. Aai, Deepu, Sonu — they are all terribly embarrassed.

We have a little joke about this Buche Kaka. You see, in our family, all of us are music-minded. We all sing. Aai has a lovely voice. Deepu plays the tabla. As for Sonu and I, we go to a music school. Aai always says that this music comes from her family. I don't quite agree. I think this music comes from the throat of Nistane Sir, our music teacher. Often Sonu, Deepu and I — even Aai sometimes — speak to one another in music. It's our secret language.

If we are singing Raag Bhoopali and slide into Deskar, Aai calls out from the kitchen "wrong turn"! So, on Sundays, when Buche Kaka dropped in to play bridge, Deepu and Sonu would softly sing in Bilawal, "Here comes Kakaji Buche!" spiralling into intricate alaaps. We even began to call him Bilawal Kaka. Later Aai changed it to "Here lands Kakaji Buche."

And the third event at the start of summer, was my doll's wedding.

Before we leave for Mama's house, my doll, my little bhawli, is always married off to Uju Bedarkar's bhawla. All the grown-ups come to the wedding. Aaji — Baba's mother — makes all sorts of snacks for the occasion and

Ajoba is sent to the market a hundred times. Aai sings the Mangalashataka in her beautiful voice.

The day after the wedding, I get my exam results and I dance home, waving my report card. That same evening, we are off to Mama's.

That year when I came home after the last exam, no one spared me a glance. No one even asked me how I had done. I rushed to Aai, and hugging her tight, asked: Film? Aai pushed me away saying, Wait, wait ... Later I found out that some guests were coming to stay with us. Aaji didn't know if she could manage alone, and so there was a chance that Aai would not go to Mama's that summer.

I latched on to Aai's neck again, shaking her, asking, "So we are not going to the film? And my bhawli's wedding is also cancelled?"

"You can still go to Mama's, Meenu," Aai added. "Even if I can't."

Oh, no! Go to Mama's without Aai? Unthinkable. It's all such great fun when she is there. The whole house revolves around her — and around me too, because I am hers. My great big aai becomes a little girl again. Her aai does all sorts of things for her. She washes her hair and lets her curl up next to her for a nap in the afternoon! Ajoba brings home all the vegetables

Aai likes, especially dangars. All her brothers come to visit her. One of them stays in the same village. Aai and Aaji chatter endlessly.

I suddenly asked Aai, "Why don't you have a job?"

"What's this now?" Aai asked. But I couldn't quite explain. Irritated, I said, "Why are those people coming to stay here?"

"Well, people don't go and stay with other people just like that. They do it because they have to."

"But they should go to their mamas'!"

"They might not have mamas ..."

I was dumbstruck. Not have a mama's house to go to in the summer holidays!

Then Aai explained to me that an old friend of Baba's was coming to stay with us to look for a husband for his daughter.

What fun! A search for a husband!

The next morning, Aai woke me up real early. I could hardly open my eyes. I love to sleep on the terrace. All the neighbours were still sleeping on their terraces. I pulled the sheet over my head again, but Aai pulled it right off and said sharply, "Get up! We have to get ready for the guests."

Someone was playing the sitar on the TV, or maybe it was the sarod. I couldn't tell.

"Meenu, name the raag," Aai said.

I thought it might be Bhairav, but it didn't sound like that song from Bhairav, Jaago Mohan Pyare. Then Aai said it was Bairagi Bhairav.

"You mean like bairagis in stories?"

"Yes. These people get up when it's still dark. They live way up in the Himalayas where there's always snow. It's bitterly cold. Still they get up in the dark, wash themselves in cold water, and then light a fire for warmth. The red of the fire slowly becomes one with the colour of the rising sun. With the increasing warmth the notes of this raag go climbing up into the sky. Listen to the way the rishabh is sung here ..."

I listened as Aai sang the raag, and saw everything exactly as she described it. I almost saw her climbing a mountain like those bairagis.

I heard Aaji call.

"Meenu!"

The guests were here already. I half-dried myself and scrambled into my clothes. When I came out I saw there were only three guests. A man, a woman and a girl — about the age of my younger mami, a bit older than Sonu maybe ... She touched Aaji's feet and then Aai's.

The girl went inside the house. I followed her. She had such long hair. One thick, long plait. She wasn't fair though. Everyone in our family is very fair. But I liked her eyes. And she looked sweet when she smiled at me.

"What's your name?" I asked her.

"Kamalini. Kamu."

"And I am Meenu."

"Meenu, don't start bothering her already," Aaji warned.

I was annoyed. I said, "I am not bothering her!" Yet I did want to talk to her. Her eyes reminded me of Raag Brindavani Sarang. But I couldn't say why or how. I asked her, "Do you sing?"

I was surprised when she said, Yes. None of our guests or friends knew anything about music. Only Aai, Sonu, people in Mama's house and I did. I asked her what class she was in and she smiled again. She said she had finished college and was teaching in a music

I had no wings to fly with.

If I had, I wouldn't have let Kamutai go like that.

Kamutai never came to us in the summer holidays again... My whole world had changed. How

come this one thing never did? And those flights Aai had talked about ... those wings ...

they had fallen off, I guess. Maybe I never had any. Nor the song that came on those wings ...

school. I thought she was great. We all learn music and we all sing. But none of us can teach music.

"Can you sing Brindavani Sarang?"

"Yes."

"Will you sing it?"

"Not now. Later. In the afternoon."

After lunch, everybody lay down for a nap, and I reminded her of her promise. So she took me out to the backyard. It was full of neem seeds. In the lovely shade of the neem tree, she sang Brindavani Sarang. Exactly like our teacher, first the scales, then the song. As she came to the line, sees mukut aur kanan kundal, she gazed straight up at the top of the tree. Sonu sings this bandish too, but this was quite different. I thought Kamutai's voice filtered up to the sun through the shadowy branches of the neem.

"Our teacher taught me another song. Na bolo shyam."

"Both are about Krishna. One is about looking for him and the other is about sulking at not finding him."

I forgot to ask her why she hadn't gone to her mama's or if she didn't have one to go to. I spent the whole day near her. Aaji and Aai didn't have to scold me even once for running out into the sun. So Aaji asked Aai, "How did this crooked imp get straightened out?" And Aai laughed and said, "That Kamu, she's a new toy!"

The next morning no one woke me up. When the sun came up high, I burrowed deeper into the sheet and then, still asleep, rolled under the bed. When I finally woke up, the terrace was full of sunlight and the fallen neem leaves had been neatly swept up and piled into a corner. Someone was tickling my sole. I rolled out from under the bed and Kamutai smiled at me, asking, "Had a good sleep?" No one, not even Aai, smiles at me so lovingly when I have lain in bed so late...

"When did you go down, Kamutai?"

I felt like telling Kamutai that her smile was like moonlight... Still I said, "Your smile is like the Bahar raag."

"How?"

"I'll have to ask Aai."

She smiled again, and I suddenly remembered the question I had wanted

to ask her. “Kamutai, don’t you have a mama’s house?”

“What?”

“You know, a mama’s house to go to. In the summer holidays.”

“I don’t have summer holidays.”

“How come?”

“I don’t go to school.”

“But did you go to your mama’s house when you were in school?”

“No, Meenu.”

“Why not?”

“Well, my mama’s house is not like the mamas’ houses in stories and songs.”

“So that’s why!”

“That’s why what?”

“You’ve come here looking for a husband!”

Suddenly her face sort of broke up and I thought I had said something wrong. She quietly began to roll up my bed, but I didn’t let her and said to her before going downstairs, “I too have to look for a husband for my bhawli.”

“Really?” She seemed amused.

“Actually, I had a fight with Uju and she’s not going to give her bhawla to my doll in marriage. Now my bhawli can’t get married.”

“Why not?”

“But we’ll have the wedding.”

“That stupid Uju won’t let me have her doll ...”

“Never mind Uju. I’ll make you a bhawla.”

I was thrilled. Then suddenly my eyes filled up... I asked Kamutai, “Can you sing Yaman?”

“Oh yes. It’s my favourite raag. Vast and bottomless, like the sea.”

I told Aaji that I didn’t need Uju’s bhawla any more because Kamutai was going to make me a new groom. “Well, let her find her own first,” Aaji said in a surprisingly curt voice. “We’ll see about your bhawla after that.” I shot a quick look at Kamutai. Aaji shouldn’t have said that. She says things like that sometimes, to Aai, to Sonu, to me ... but she is still a nice person. I wanted to tell Kamutai that.

The next ten days or so, Kamutai was away with her parents. I knew that they had gone to find a husband for her. Some people had come to our

house too, earlier, to “look her over”.

Kamutai looked lovely when she sang. She used to hum to herself, just like Aai. Aai said that songs spilt out of Kamutai’s eyes and over her cheeks as she worked. I often thought that all those “husband-people” who came to look her over, should see her when she hummed her songs.

Kamutai never hummed when leaving for another town or when someone came to “see” her. No one saw her when she was singing. No one suspected that she could sing. And her parents — a right pair of mad people — didn’t seem like her parents at all. Her father looked like Kapale Sir in our music school who takes around the fees-due notice from class to class. And her mother never smiled. Who taught Kamutai her smile, I wondered.

That night, Kamutai’s mother talked about going back. Aaji said, “Stay the season. She’ll find a husband.”

“But there should be something, someone we can pin our hopes on. We’re just a burden here.”

“Nonsense,” Aai said, “You are no trouble to us. As though you are strangers!”

I liked that. After all there was still my bhawli’s wedding to be celebrated. And really, neither Kamutai nor her mother seemed like guests.

That night when Kamutai went to the terrace to spread out our beds, I followed her. I just wanted to look at her spreading out the beds. She would lay out the mattresses, cover them with washed, white sheets, tuck them in tight from all sides and then put down the pillows neatly at one end. I sat there thinking that I wanted to just stare at the neat bed she had made, didn’t want to sleep on it, didn’t want to muss it up.

I sat on the edge of the bed and she perched on the parapet. Kamutai was staring into space. She looked so nice. She didn’t look like that when all those people came to “see” her. “Kamutai,” I said impulsively, “if you’re making the bhawla, then you be the groom’s mother.”

“No, Meenu, I’m just going to make him.”

“Then he belongs to you.”

“See Meenu, the things in a shop don’t belong to the shopkeeper. They belong to those who buy them.”

The moon was now high over our heads and she was looking up at it.

“Kamutai, sing a song, please ...”

She began at once as though she had wanted to sing all the time:

Still in the shrubs ...

I didn’t know the song, but I liked it. I loved it. Seemed as though she wanted to make it rise up and up, to the moon. By the time she finished, Aai, Aaji, Sonu, Deepu, everyone had come up to listen. Aaji said as usual, “Where on earth has the girl’s groom hidden himself?”

On Sunday, another man was coming to look at Kamutai. He was supposed to be fond of music. As she got everything ready that day, Kamutai kept humming. I thought this “husband” would definitely choose her.

Kamutai looked sweet when she finished dressing up. Finally, those people arrived. I looked for the husband, but couldn’t make out who it could be. Our Tulsa who comes to wash our clothes is the darkest person I had ever seen, but the man who I thought might be the one, was far darker. Plus he had a wide nose and he was fat.

After they had eaten and everything, they asked Kamutai to sing. But she just pursed up her lips and did not sing a note.

I was glad. I wouldn’t have liked her to sing for that man. The moment she came back in, I told her I didn’t like that man at all. But when he sent word rejecting her, Kamutai’s parents scolded her for not singing that day.

Two days later, there was another man. He wasn’t bad-looking, but really skinny. Thinner even than Deepu. “Anyone can floor him with a blow. A mere mosquito,” Deepu said. He too liked music it seemed. This time Kamutai sang, but there was no music in it at all. Even before the song was over, the man waved his handkerchief and said, “Wah! That was great!” Kamutai got up and quickly went in. I was annoyed. Why should anyone say Wah! to a bad song and that too with a hanky up in the air? The very next day,

the man sent a message saying he had chosen Kamutai. Aaji, Baba, Kamutai's parents, were all thrilled. But Kamutai didn't say anything. Neither did Aai.

Then Kamutai called me aside. She said to me, "Call Baba here."

"Mine or yours?"

"Mine."

He was talking to the man who had brought the happy news. Aaji was making raw-mango juice for him. Kamutai's father came in and said happily, "Well Kamu, you have won at last!"

Kamutai didn't look at him at all when she said, "I don't want to marry the man."

Her father lost his temper. He shouted, "Who do you think you are?" Her mother began to cry.

"I don't think he is a good man."

"Good, bad, it all evens out after marriage," her mother said.

"That man will sell me and my music on the streets," Kamutai muttered.

"What use is your music anyway? It is for your husband, his family. Isn't it?" her father barked. "And what am I to say to that man who is waiting outside?"

"Tell him I said, No."

I was worried about my bhawli's wedding. Kamutai had said Tuesday, but how was I going to ask her? But Kamutai made the bhawli on Monday. Then she made the bhawla too. The bhawli was so sweet, almost real. I wanted her to make the bhawla first, because after all, though old and dirty, I had a bhawli. I told her but she said, "Oh, no, Meenu. The girl comes first. If the girl refuses to get married, what will the boy do? He is not important."

I didn't agree. How could a wedding be held if the boy said, No. Wasn't I in a fix because the bhawla belonged to Uju and we had had a fight?

Kamutai looked up at me and said, "It's only because a girl has no sense of self-respect and stands with her head bowed before any man just to get married ... that's why these men poke their noses into the air."

Kamutai made a wedding-pandal

with wood shavings wrapped with coloured paper. The roof was made with leaves. There was a gaily-coloured earthen wedding-platform. She had even made akshatas, and garlands for the pandal. But the most beautiful thing was the bride's wedding saree. Kamutai had made it out of an old, parrot-beak-coloured blouse of Aai's. It had a parrot-green border on which she had sewn sequins.

Kamutai said, "Now we have to give her a name ... Let's call her Venu."

I didn't like Venu all that much but didn't want to say, No, to Kamutai. After all she had made the bhawla and the bhawli.

Then she said, "Let's call the groom Vanamali."

Kamutai began to make the wedding feast. Normally Aaji made all the snacks with Aai and Sonu but this time Kamutai made everything and Aaji and Aai helped her.

We wanted the wedding to start at two or three in the afternoon. But Kamutai said, "Oh, no. No one gets married in the afternoon. It had better be six - the auspicious godhuli time."

So six in the evening it was. We held up the screen between the bride and the groom at four. Kamutai sang the wedding songs instead of Aai. The first was about Ganapati and all the rivers. But I liked the second so much that I wrote it down afterwards. Never had she sung so sweetly:

In her life forever will echo songs so sweet,

Forever his feet will dance to their beat, All is music when Venu-Vanamali unite,

Sheer song this wedding, auspicious the rite...

I got goose-flesh listening to her. Forgot to throw the rice. Looked at Aai. Her eyes were swimming in tears. Looked at Kamutai. Hers too. Even Aaji was mopping up tears. And I immediately felt all choked up.

I knew the wedding, the bride and groom, all the preparations and the feast, all were make-believe, but this song of Kamutai's was very real. And

these two names were real. The bhawli was just a bhawli, but Venu was real...

The next morning I got up and came downstairs before anyone came to wake me up. I couldn't see Kamutai and her parents anywhere and asked Aai where they were.

"They're getting ready to go," she said.

I left my milk and ran out. I rushed up to Kamutai and asked her, "You're leaving too?" She hugged me.

"You can stay."

"I'll come again sometime. And don't you have to go to your mama's house now?"

I didn't want to go to Mama's. I wanted Kamutai. Only Kamutai.

And Kamutai left. Though Aai was at home I felt lonely. I thought, my bhawli got married, but Kamutai didn't.

I rushed to Aai. "Why don't you get Kamutai married to Parag Mama?"

"Don't be silly, Meenu! Parag is an engineer ... and he's so fair and handsome."

"Kamutai looks beautiful when she sings!" I insisted.

But Aai merely said, "Flights of fancy! Were you born with wings?"

She didn't understand everything after all. I had no wings to fly with. If I had, I wouldn't have let Kamutai go like that.

Kamutai never came to us in the summer holidays again. The next year Divakar Mama's wife died and Aai got him to marry Kamutai. And I, I never played at bhawli's wedding either. Never felt like it ...

Years went by. I also stopped going to Mama's house in the vacations. By and by, the movies came home. And one year, after the exams, Aai and Baba got ready to parade Sonu before prospective husbands. Aaji was gone by then. And I thought, Sonu was Kamutai now and after Sonu, it would be me.

My whole world had changed. How come this one thing never did? And those flights Aai had talked about ... those wings ... they had fallen off, I guess.

Maybe I never had any. Nor the song that came on those wings ...

Santosh Sivan on road to Hollywood

From terrorism to historical characters, Santosh Sivan has tried his hand at everything. And now he transcends borders with his period film 'Before the Rains' which has Hollywood actors and producers.

Jointly produced by Hollywood studio Echo Lake and Sivan, the film revolves around the planter, played by Linus Roache, his wife (Jennifer Ehle), his lover (Nandita Das) and his assistant (Rahul Bose).

Sivan started his career as a cinematographer with the acclaimed Amir Khan starrer 'Raakh' and thereafter went on to win five National Awards for cinematography. Later he turned director and his third film, 'The Terrorist',

grabbed attention. The film had Ayesha Dharker playing a young female terrorist on a suicide mission.

'Before the Rains', which was earlier titled 'Road to the Sky', is relevant in today's time, feels Sivan.

The director feels Indian films haven't made the desired impact on the world audience, despite India being one of the largest film producing countries, because of the traditional way of storytelling that distances it from the global audience.



Chandrasekaran's Iraq book being adapted for film



The acclaimed non-fiction book on Iraq by Rajiv Chandrasekaran, the *Washington Post* senior editor, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, is being adapted for a major Hollywood film.

Paul Greengrass, who specializes in dramatization of real-

life events, will direct the film for Universal Pictures.

The director has earlier made films like 'United 93', about one of the hijacked 9/11 flights, and the \$100 million 'The Bourne Ultimatum' with Matt Damon. Damon, star of 'Ocean's Eleven' and its two sequels, is likely to star in *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* slated for release in 2009.

The book was published last year by Knopf/Random House and won the £30,000 Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction for 2007.

It is based on Chandrasekaran's experiences in Iraq, where he was stationed as the newspaper's Baghdad bureau chief in 2003-04. The Indian-origin journalist is based in Washington.

According to Chandrasekaran's website, his first book as author is "an unprecedented account of life in Baghdad's Green Zone, a walled-off enclave of towering plants, posh villas and sparkling swimming pools that was the headquarters for the American occupation of Iraq".

Imperial Life in the Emerald City is one of several feature films being made against the background of Iraq war.

Chandrasekaran said he is "thrilled that a director as accomplished as Paul Greengrass wants to turn 'Imperial Life in the Emerald City' into a movie. Paul is a brilliant guy and he has a very compelling vision for the project."

Aishwarya Rai's model unveiled



The Madame Tussauds at the bustling Times Square unveiled Rai's strikingly lifelike wax model on August 15, amid Bollywood dancers performing to popular Hindi film songs. It was the museum's Independence Day gift to lovers of India and its popular cinema. The only other Indian at the museum spread over many levels and rooms is Mahatma Gandhi in his familiar garb of loincloth, holding a cane. He stands in a chamber for political and other world figures.

Rai's model has been borrowed for six weeks from the parent museum in London, where it was unveiled in 2004. Janine DiGiacchino, general manager of Madame Tussauds in New York, said: "Aishwarya is a celebrity icon in India and beyond." Madame Tussauds has become known for creating strikingly lifelike wax statues of the world's most popular personalities. It was set up by Frenchwoman Marie Tussauds in London in 1835. It also has branches in Amsterdam, Las Vegas, Hong Kong and Shanghai, with Washington being added to the list in October this year.

Rai's big ticket Hollywood film 'The Last Legion', with Colin Firth and Ben Kingsley, was released in the U.S. on August 17.

Aspiring director Ashok Amritraj has ticket to Hollywood



Hollywood-based Indian producer Ashok Amritraj has shifted his focus to India and was in Mumbai to find a director through his talent hunt reality show, 'Gateway'.

Amritraj, who churned out hits like 'Raising Helen' and 'Walking Tall' under his banner Hyde Park Entertainment, has collaborated with PIX, the English movie channel from SET India, for the show that will go on air on November 4.

"This is for me a way to give opportunity to an Indian talent to show his creativity to the world. The winner would be given a chance to direct a film in Hollywood. And it will be distributed by Hyde Park Entertainment and Sony," Amritraj said.

The talent hunt is applicable only for aspiring directors and not established ones. 'Gateway' is PIX's maiden local production of a television series. Aspiring filmmakers can send films that are not more than two-four minutes long to the PIX.

Said Aaron: "We will take entries till September 15. After that we will review all and make a final list of 50 directors and interview them in the next selection round."

DALHOUSIE

HEAVEN'S SYLVAN RETREAT



Established in 1854 by the British Empire in India as a summer retreat for its troops and bureaucrats, this magnificent hill town, named after then viceroy Lord Dalhousie, still proudly bears the legacy of the British Raj.

Built on and around five little hills, this beautiful hill station in Himachal Pradesh is the perfect getaway where you can retreat, relax and rejuvenate physically and spiritually.

The cool breeze blowing among the tall oak, rhododendron, pine and deodar trees, and the sylvan views of rich shrubbery soothe your soul and invite you to savor this nature's sylvan paradise.

On the northern side is the Thandi Sarak from where beautiful views of the valleys below and the Pangi Hills (18,000-21,000 ft) above offer indelible visual delights.

Dalhousie's natural beauty, invigorating air, warm sunshine and quiet surroundings add enchantment to its level walks and treks amidst the dense forests.

Major Attractions

GPO: The GPO (or Gandhi Chowk) is the town's hub of activities, — bustling shops, showrooms and restaurants, and is the starting point for most treks.

On its western end is Subhash Chowk (or Charing Cross). From here starts a northern level walk around Potrein Hill.

This circle along with the circular walk around Tehra constitutes the famed 'Circle of 8', where tourists are seen walking and ambling.

Kalatop-Khajjjar Trail: No trip to Dalhousie is complete without follow-

ing this trail, through the thick forests of deodar (cedar) trees and alpine hills. Hiking is the best way to appreciate the beauty of the flora and fauna.

Interestingly, Khajjjar is officially called the 'mini-Switzerland of India'.

From Tagore Chowk, a 3-km plain walk around Upper Bakrota is very popular with serious walkers. Rabindranath Tagore had spent a few months with his father at Snowdun Cottage in Upper Bakrota.

On the northern side of the Bakrota Circle, are beautiful views of the Pangi range.

On the southern side, one can enjoy splendid vistas of the valleys and rivers of the Punjab plains below.

Punjpula and Satdara: Punjpula, about 3 km from the GPO, is a popular picnic spot on a stream. There is a samadhi of Shahid Ajit Singh, Shahid Bhagat Singh's uncle, who died here on August 15, 1947.

Several uphill treks start from here, winding through the Punjpula stream's unique rock formations and leading to Dain Kund Range.

Jandrihat Palace: Jandrihat Palace is also about 3 km from the GPO. The pleasant walk along the western edge of Bakrota Hill offers beautiful views.

The palace belongs to the Raja of Chamba. This jeepable trek winds its way through Karelu Khad and Chail Kothi enroute to Chamba.



■ Raksha Bandhan, an Eternal Bond



Indian college schoolgirls tie 'rakhis' (sacred thread) onto the wrists of Indian Border Security Force soldiers at the India-Pakistan border post at Wagah during the Hindu festival of 'Raksha Bandhan', on August 28. The festival celebrates the eternal bond between brothers and sisters.

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