



INDIA NEWSLETTER

Embassy of India, Tel Aviv

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Hon'ble Former President of India, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, visits Israel

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, 11th President of India, visited Israel on February 26-28, 2008. During his stay in Israel, he met with President Shimon Peres on February 28. The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the excellent relations between India and Israel, and discussed areas of possible future cooperation. Hon'ble Dr. Kalam was the Keynote Speaker at the 48th Israel Annual Conference on Aerospace Sciences that



President Shimon Peres receiving Dr. Abdul Kalam in his chambers

students and Faculty members on the subject of "Technology Convergence and National Development". He also delivered a guest lecture at 'The Yuval Neeman Tel Aviv Workshop for Science and Technology and Security' on "National Empowerment and Space" organized at the Tel Aviv University in cooperation with Israel's Ministry of Science and Technology, and Israel Space Agency. During his visit to the Weizmann Institute of Science on



Dr. Abdul Kalam addressing the seminar at Tel Aviv University

was held in Tel Aviv on February 27, 2008. At the conference he, inter alia, outlined his vision of 'World Space Vision 2050', and spoke about the need to create 'World Knowledge Platform'. On February 27, Hon'ble Dr. Kalam visited the Faculty of Engineering at the Tel Aviv University, and addressed the



Dr. Abdul Kalam and Ambassador at the '48th Annual Conference on Aerospace Sciences' (Continued on page 3)

Republic Day Celebrations 2008



Ambassador addressing the gathering

The 59th anniversary of the Republic Day of India was celebrated at the Embassy Residence on January 26, 2008. The event was attended by a gathering of about 600 people comprising Jewish persons of

Indian origin, Indian business community, Indian students, Embassy staff and their families and other well wishers. Following the flag hoisting and the national anthem, Ambassador read out from Hon'ble President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil's address to the nation. The cultural programme that followed included "Dandia" presentation by Warrant Officer K.P. Chaudhary and party from the Indian



Hoisting the National Flag

contingent of UNDOF. Israel-based Indian Jewish group "Namaste Israel" (Continued on page 6)

Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development Mr. Shalom Simhon visits India



Minister Sharad Pawar greets Minister Shalom Simhon in New Delhi



Minister Shalom Simhon, third from left, at FICCI seminar on Agriculture Cooperation

Hon'ble Mr. Shalom Simhon, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, led a high-level official and business delegation from Israel to India from January 15-23, 2008.

The delegation included senior officials from the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MASHAV), and representatives of leading Israeli companies.

Mr. Simhon held meetings with Mr. Sharad Pawar, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Food & Civil Supplies,

bilateral cooperation in agriculture and water management were discussed during these meetings.



Minister Shalom Simhon addresses the Interactive Session with the Israeli Delegation organised by FICCI and the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Simhon and Mr. Pawar reviewed the progress in implementation of the Work Plan on Agriculture Cooperation signed in May 2006 and agreed to further deepen the engagement. The two sides also agreed on an Action Plan for the years 2008-10.

Mr. Simhon took the opportunity to visit various agricultural sites in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. He also paid a visit to the National Dairy Research Institute in Karnal and the Indian Agriculture Research Institute at Pusa, New Delhi.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organized a seminar on Agriculture Cooperation on January 21, 2008 in New Delhi. Mr. Simhon, in his address, highlighted Israel's entrepreneurial

skills and outlined the key areas of cooperation between the two countries in agriculture, which include water, sewage recycling, irrigation systems, greenhouses, cooperation in R&D and horticulture development. Mr. Sanjay Kaul, Member, FICCI Agriculture Committee & CEO, NCDEX Institute of Commodity Markets & Research (NICMR) and Mr. Rajan Kohli, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI were the speakers from the Indian side. The Seminar was followed by one-on-one business meetings.



The two Ministers answering questions from the media following their meeting

FICCI, in cooperation with the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, organized another Seminar on Agriculture Cooperation with Israel on January 18, 2008 in Jaipur. The Seminar was addressed by Mr. Simhon, who focused on various areas of agriculture cooperation between Israel and Rajasthan.



Minister Shalom Simhon during visit to a dairy farm in Bhayandar, outside Mumbai City

Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Ms. Vasundhara Raje, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan and Mr. P.L. Saini, Hon'ble Agriculture Minister of Rajasthan during the visit. Possibilities of further expanding the

Visit by Business Delegation from North East India



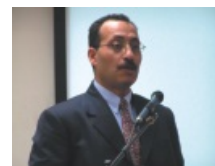
Mr. Uriel Lynn, President of FICC, with members of the visiting delegation, at the seminar organized by FICC and Embassy

A 15-member business delegation from various states in the North East of India visited Israel from February 9-12, 2008. The delegation, organized by the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati was led by Mr. Kamaruddin Ahmed, Director, IIE. The members of the delegation represented various industrial sectors including tea, tourism, handicrafts, perfumes, spices and

horticulture.

The Embassy in cooperation with the Federation of the Israeli Chambers of Commerce (FICC) organized a half-day Seminar on "Business Prospects in North East India for the Israeli Business Community". The Seminar was addressed by Mr. Uriel Lynn, President of FICC. Mr. Ahmed, Dr. Sriparna B. Baruah, Head of the Center for Industrial Extension, IIE, and Counsellor (E&C) addressed the Seminar from the Indian side. Mr. Bidyanand Barbakoty and Ms. Jahnabi Phukan from the Indian delegation gave presentations on Indian tea and tourism sectors respectively. The Seminar was followed by one-to-one business meetings with Israeli companies.

The Delegation also visited a technology



Mr. Mounmeer Agbariya, Director, Asia - Pacific, Israel's Ministry of Industry, Trade & Labor, addressing the seminar at FICC



Mr. Bidyananda Barkakoty, Vice Chairman, North East Tea Association, making his presentation

incubator and had an interactive meeting with the Manufacturers' Association of Israel on February 10, 2008.



At the one-to-one business meetings following the seminar

Pre-mission Briefing of Israeli Delegation visiting India on Renewable Energy Technologies

MATIMOP, Israel R&D Center of the Ministry of Industry Trade and Labor, organized a meeting of the members of the Israeli Delegation visiting India from April 6-10, 2008 at the Industry House in Tel Aviv on March 26, 2008.

The delegation comprised 15 companies from Israel dealing with various forms of renewable energy. Ambassador presented an overview of the Indian renewable energy sector and opportunities for Israeli companies in this area. Ms. Haya Miller, Deputy



Ambassador with Israeli delegates at the pre-mission briefing

Managing Director of MATIMOP and Mr. Raul Goldman, Director, International Cooperation Program for Asia and Pacific, participated in the meeting. The companies presented their plans and perspectives for cooperation with India.

(Continued from page 1)

Former President of India visits Israel



Dr. Abdul Kalam interacting with students during visit to Faculty of Engineering, Tel Aviv University

February 28, Hon'ble Dr. Kalam interacted with the students and faculty members of the Institute.



Dr. Abdul Kalam with students at Weizmann Institute of Science

INSEAD Annual Academic Winter Event on Global IT Competitiveness



Mr. Doron Nabmias, Managing Director, The INSEAD-Caesarea Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild Research Center, welcomes Ambassador to INSEAD Annual Winter Event

The INSEAD Annual Academic Winter Event took place at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange on March 3, 2008. This special event was organized by INSEAD Israel (The Caesarea Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild Research Center), Globes business newspaper, and Aviv Venture Capital. The theme of the event was: "Leveraging Technology for Competitiveness: Lessons from the Global Information Technology Reports".

Ambassador, as the opening speaker, provided an overview of the growing Indian economy with special emphasis



Prof. Soumitra Dutta, Mr. Doron Nabmias and Ambassador at the INSEAD Event

on IT and IT services sector. Prof. Soumitra Dutta, Dean of External Relations of INSEAD France, as the keynote speaker, presented "The Global Information Technology Report" produced by the World Economic Forum of which he happens to be the co-editor.



Ambassador addresses the gathering

Seminar on India held at IDC Business School, Herzliya

The Business School of the Inter Disciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya organized a special Seminar on India for its international MBA students and executives on January 8, 2008.

The keynote speaker was Prof. Amit Kapoor from Management Development Institute Gurgaon, who gave an overview of contemporary business environment in India and

presented several business case studies.

Dr. Pankaj Sharma, Counsellor(E&C) at the Embassy, gave a presentation on Indian economy and opportunities in India for the Israeli business community.

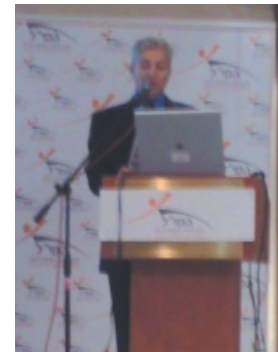
Mr. Hezi Hermon, former CEO of Tadiran, shared his perspective and experience of working in India.

High-tech CEOs Forum: Event on India



Ambassador addressing the seminar

The Israeli Management Center (Hamil) in cooperation with High-tech CEO's Forum of Israel and the Embassy of India organized a half-day seminar on "India: Advantages and Disadvantages of a Developing Market" on March 27, 2008. Ambassador was an invited keynote speaker, and made a presentation on opportunities for high-tech Israeli companies in the Indian market.



Mr. Shlomo Garman, Chairman of the High-tech CEOs Forum addressing the seminar

Other speakers included Ms. Pnina Shenav, CEO, Hamil, Mr. Shlomo Garman, CEO, ASG and the Chairman of the High-

tech CEOs Forum, Ms. Anat Bernstein Reich, Deputy Chairperson, Israel-Asia Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Shai Yarkoni, CEO, Target-in, Mr. David Keynan, Managing Partner, I2I Ventures, Mr. Effi Wachtel, President & CEO, RAD Data Communications, Mr. Shmuel Blank, Head of TCS Israel and Mr. Maiki Yoeli, Deputy Director General, Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute.

India participates in the 14th International Mediterranean Tourism Market Exhibition



Ambassador visiting the India Booth at the IMTM Exhibition

The Government of India Tourist Office based in Frankfurt (which also deals with tourism related to Israel) participated in the 14th International Mediterranean Tourism Market

Exhibition held in Tel Aviv Fair Grounds on February 5-6, 2008. The Indian participation included an India booth showcasing tourism opportunities in India. A special seminar on "India as an Attractive Tourism Destination" was organized on February 6, 2008 at the venue of the exhibition, which was attended by several travel agencies, tour operators and visitors to the Exhibition.

ILSI holds seminar on Globalization of Clinical Research



Ambassador addresses the gathering

The Israel Life Science Industry (ILSI) organized a Seminar on "Globalization of Clinical Research: India - the New Frontier" on February 10, 2008. The half-day event was attended by CEOs and senior executives of various biomed and pharmaceutical companies based in Israel and abroad. Ambassador, in his opening remarks, gave an overview of the strengths of Indian bio-med and



Dr. Vijay Kumar, President & CMO, Excel Life Sciences, USA, making his address

pharmaceutical industry and highlighted the vast opportunities for Israeli companies in this area.

Other keynote speakers included Dr. Yael Rogel-Fuchs, Executive Director, ILSI, Dr. Vijay Kumar, President and CMO of Excel Life Sciences, USA, Dr. Kurt Pfister, CEO, Pharma Focus, Switzerland, Dr. Ran Frenkel, CEO, Pharma Focus, Israel, Dr. Ari Shamiss, Managing Director,

AE Capital Seminar on Investment Opportunities in India



Keynote speakers at the AE Capital Seminar

A half-day seminar on Investment Opportunities in India was organized by the AE Capital, member of the Aviv Group March 18, 2008 at the Sheraton City Tower Hotel in Ramat Gan. The theme of this seminar was International M&A (Mergers and Acquisitions) and Capital Raising, with a focus on the Indian market, and the immense potential existing in India for Israeli companies.

The speakers included Mr. Yair Ephrati, Managing Director, AE Capital, Israel, Mr. Sumir Verma, Head of the Real Estate Division at Meghraj Bank, and Mr. Himanshu Anand, Head of the Hi-tech Division at Meghraj Bank, who had been invited from India for the seminar. The seminar focused on opportunities in the Indian IT & Hi-Tech Market and the Indian Real Estate Market with focus on mergers & acquisitions.

Sheba General Hospital, Israel and Dr. Gadi Ariav, Recannati School of Business Management, Tel Aviv University.



Dr. Yael Rogel-Fuchs, Executive Director, ILSI, addressing the seminar

World Hindi Day Celebration, 2008



Students participating in the World Hindi Day

The Embassy celebrated "World Hindi Day" in Israel on January 15, 2008 in association with the South East Asian Department of Tel Aviv University. The function was held at the auditorium in Gilman Building at Tel Aviv University. The celebration drew about 300 India-enthusiasts including students at the Tel Aviv University Haifa University, and Hebrew University at Jerusalem, participating in a range of activities in Hindi. This year the programme was built on the theme of Mahatma Gandhi and included a special lecture by the Head of Indian Studies Department at Hebrew University, Dr. Yohanan Grinshpon, who has published

books and articles on Mahatma Gandhi. The programme also included a short play and a quiz on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, an essay competition, enacting of scenes from the film 'Gandhi My Father', and singing of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite bhajan, 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram'. The whole programme was conducted by two Hindi students of third year.

Mr. Zvika Serper, Chairman of East Asia Studies centre at Tel Aviv University which includes a programme on Indian studies, appreciated the role played by the Hindi teachers, particularly Mr. Genady Shlomper in generating interest in the language among students. Ambassador, who was the chief guest, gave away prizes to the winners of the essay contest in Hindi and also read out Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's message on the occasion. The Embassy also presented Hindi books to the university library. Indian food was served at the end of the programme.

Recalling India: Images and Narratives



Dr. Maina Chawla Singh addresses the gathering at the Special Evening. On stage are Ms. Rebecca Yehezkel and Ms. Sophie Judah

A special literary evening, "Recalling India: Images and Narratives" was hosted by Ambassador and his wife Dr. Maina Chawla Singh on March 6, 2008 at the Embassy Auditorium. The event, conceptualized by Dr Singh included presentations from two recently published books by Indian Jewish

women: Ms Rebecca Yehezkiel and Ms Sophie Judah, who have both lived in Israel for over three decades. Following an introductory address by Dr. Singh about the Indian Jewish migration to Israel since the 1950s, Ms. Yehezkiel made a power point presentation on her recent book "Of Muse and Memories" - a unique pictorial narrative combining a family-history narrative with a collection of her own paintings. Ms Judah read out excerpts from "Dropped from Heaven" - her recently published collection of short stories about Indian Jews. The program and discussion were attended by about 100 people comprising of academics from Tel Aviv Bar-Ilan and Haifa Universities, artists, journalists, foreign office representatives and members of the Indian community.

Visit to Heritage Museum for Indian Jewry in Dimona



Ambassador handing over books to Dy. Mayor Mr. Ofer Talker at the Museum

Ambassador visited on February 6, 2008 the "Heritage Museum for Indian Jewry" in Dimona, which opened in September 2007. Ambassador and his wife Dr. Maina Chawla Singh took a round of the museum which exhibits Indian articles including musical instruments, wedding articles, dresses, books, photographs, etc., depicting the lifestyle and history of the Indian Jewish community.

International Day of Peace and Non-Violence



View of proceedings at the International Day of Peace & Non-Violence

The 1st International Day of Peace and Non-violence was celebrated in Israel in January, 2008. Two functions were organized by the Embassy to mark the occasion: the first function was organized by the Embassy on January 15, 2008 in association with the South East Asian Department of Tel Aviv University. The function coincided with the World Hindi Day.

The other function was held on January 30, 2008. A panel of Israeli scholars and speakers participated in the discussion devoted to the "legacy of Mahatma Gandhi". At the end of the panel discussion, the documentary, "Mahatma - A Great Soul of 20th Century" was screened at Cinematheque Tel Aviv

(Continued from page 1)

Republic Day Celebrations 2008



'Namaste Israel' in performance

led by Mr. David Nigrekar also performed to the tune of patriotic songs. The gathering was later treated to a variety of Indian snacks.



'Dandia' presentation by a group from the Indian Contingent of UNDOF

Visit to Daliat El Carmel



Ambassador with Dr. Akram Hasson, Mayor of Carmel City



Ambassador with Mayor of Carmel City, officials, leading figures and religious leaders of the Druze community in Israel

Ambassador visited the Druze village Daliat El Carmel on March 27, 2008. Ambassador was invited by the Mayor of the Carmel City, Dr. Akram Hasson, to come and visit the Druze community.

Ambassador had a meeting with the Mayor Dr. Akram Hasson, other officials and some leading figures of the Druze community in Israel including religious leaders.

Indian Community Function at Beer Sheva



Ambassador and First Secretary Alok Raj at the event, along with Mr. Efraim Satamkar (at left), Deputy Mayor of Beer Sheva (third from left), Ambassador is flanked by Mr. Avraham Nagaokar and the Mayor of Dimona

The Indian community of Beer Sheva organized a social and cultural evening on January 24, 2008 as part of an annual gathering.

The event included Indian music and dance performances by Jewish artistes of Indian origin, including the group "Swarg Se Sunder", "Haverim", Yitzik Shmuel, Ortal Gadker, Shiva Satamkar and Liraz Avraham. Ambassador and his wife were the guests of honour at the function. Mayor of Dimona, Deputy Mayor of Beer Sheva and Mr. Shalom Ashtivkar, Chairman, Central Organization of the Indian Jews in Israel (COIJI) also attended.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador described the Indian community in Israel as a "very important link" between the two countries and thanked Mr. Efraim Satamkar and Mr. Avraham Nagaokar for organizing the event.

"Sa Re Ga Ma Pa" Function in Eilat



Ambassador addressing the gathering, to his right is Mr Benny Binyamin

About three thousand persons of Indian origin, including Jewish persons of Indian origin living in Israel and NRIs gathered in the southern coastal town of Eilat from January 10-11, 2008 to celebrate the 15th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Israel and the 60th anniversary of India's independence. The highlight of the event was a live performance on January 10 by the "Sa Re Ga Ma" team of Zee TV, which had especially come from Mumbai to Israel

for the purpose. The performers included winners of the "Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Challenge 2007" finals: Aneek Dhar, Raja Hassan, Sumedha, Mauli Dave, Harpreet and Sanchita. They were joined by several local artistes from the community. Ambassador and his wife were the guests of honour at the function. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador expressed his appreciation to Mr. Benny Binyamin, Managing Director of M/s RT&T Triple "S" Travels and Tours Ltd. and Zee TV Asia Pacific for organizing the event.



Sa Re Ga Ma Pa team regaling the audience

Art Exhibition on India



Ms. Dorit Amitai, Ms. Orly and Mr. Dov Droval (left to right) with Ambassador

Ambassador inaugurated an exhibition of paintings and photographs at the Droval Art Gallery, Ramat Gan on February 23, 2008. The artworks included paintings and photographs on Indian themes by Ms. Orly and Mr. Dov Droval, owners of the Gallery, and Ms. Drorit Amitai.

The artists explained that their works were a result of their recent journey to India.

Screening of "Chak de! India"



The Embassy organized a special screening of the Indian film "Chak de! India" at Cinematheque Tel Aviv on January 25, 2008 to coincide with India's Republic Day. About 200 persons attended the show.

"Indian Heritage Evening" at Beer Yaakov



Dy. Mayor Mr. Niem with Ambassador

An "Indian Heritage evening" was held on March 27, 2008 by the newly-opened campus for education for elders of Beer Yaakov, in cooperation with the Council of Beer Yaakov and the local Sports and Culture Center.



Mr. Noah Massil, President, COIJI

The event was organized by Mr. Samuel Pezarkar, Indian-origin member of the Council, and Mr. Michael Daniel, member of the Central Organization of the Indian Jews in Israel (COIJI), Mr. Shlomo Chordekar and Mr. Moshe Reuben. Mr. Amram Niem, Deputy Mayor, Mr. Yossi Omid, education and cultural member of the Council, and Mr. Noah Massil, President, COIJI, attended the



Mr. Samuel Pezarkar and Mr. Yossi Omid with Ambassador

event. Ambassador was the guest of honour, and was felicitated by the organizers. The event included music and songs by the Sargam Folklore band of Mr. Moshe Malyankar and Ms Leora Itzak, and dance performance by "Swarg Se Sundar". About 250 persons attended the show.



Mr. Michael Daniel, Member of COIJI

Purim Celebration by Indian Synagogue in Lod



Ambassador with Mr. Noah Massil; Mayor Mr. Ilan Harari; MK Mr. Yoram Martziano and Mr. Benny Walter (left to right)

The Shaare Shalom Synagogue and the Indian Women's Organization in Lod held a Purim party on March 16, 2008 at Heichal Ha'tarbut Ha'ironi. Ambassador and his wife Dr. Maina Chawla Singh were the special guests along with Member of Knesset Mr. Yoram Martziano; Mayor of Lod Mr. Ilan Harari and President of the Central Organization of Indian Jews in Israel (COIJI) Mr. Noah Massil. The function was organized by the Chairman of the Shaare Shalom Synagogue in Lod, Mr. Benny Walter with the active assistance of Mr. Yoel Pabrekar, Secretary of the Synagogue, and Ms Osnat Anidjar, member, COIJI. Members of the Synagogue and volunteers were presented certificates by the dignitaries. The cultural programme, which followed, included songs by Ms Leora Itzak and Mr. Shachar Talker organized by Mr. Efraim Satamkar, and dance performance by "Swarg Se Sundar".

Hindi Theatre Show by Indian Community in Dimona



(Photograph: Mr. Arman)

Performance of "Sangam" by members of the Indian community of Dimona

The Indian Jewish community in Dimona organized a play "Sangam" on February 6, 2008 at the city's Cultural Centre. The play, based on the well-known Indian

film "Sangam", had mostly local residents of Indian origin, but also included some Israelis of Moroccan and Yemeni origins. Though not their mother tongue, the entire play was presented in Hindi. This involved more than a year of preparation and hard work.

The play was simultaneously translated into Hebrew on a screen on the side of the stage. The project was conceptualized and directed by Mr. Ilan Greenberg, financed by Mr. David Mirage, and supported by Mr. Noam Cohen, Head of the Cultural Centre. About 600 persons watched the play. Ambassador and his wife Dr. Maina Chawla



(Photograph: Mr. Arman)

Ambassador and Dr. Maina Chawla Singh at the drama performance

Singh, Mayor of Dimona Mr. Meir Cohen and Deputy Mayor Mr. Ofer Talker (of Indian origin) were the chief guests.

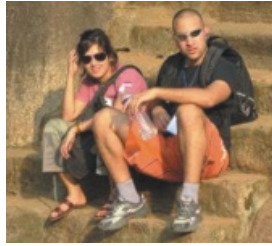
8th Know India Programme (KIP)



KIP participants enjoying at the Taj Mahal

Three Israeli youth of Indian origin: Ms Carin Shirky, Ms. Liora Shaffer and Mr. Zohar Best participated in the 8th Know

education, rural health, etc. The participants visited Mahabali-puram, Tanjavur, and Ooty, as well as



Taking a break during a tour

India Programme (KIP) from December 26, 2007 to January 18, 2008, organized by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Govt. of India, in partnership with State Government of Tamilnadu and logistic support of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS). They were joined by 31 other participants from Canada, USA, Fiji, Malaysia, Reunion Islands, UK and South Africa. The first leg of the programme started in Chennai and included visits to places of cultural, rural and industrial interest apart from participation in projects on environment, primary

a few villages. In Delhi, the participants attended the "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" 2008, apart from sight-seeing and a visit to Zee TV studio. They also saw the Taj Mahal in Agra, apart from other tourist places, and later visited a village in Haryana. The participants got the opportunity to meet and interact with the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil and Shri Vayalar Ravi, Hon'ble Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs. The KIP provided a unique opportunity to the participants to share their views, expectations and experiences and to bond closely with contemporary India.

Painting Exhibition by Naomi Naon



Ms. Naomi Naon with Ambassador at the exhibition

Ms. Naomi Naon of Indian origin, who immigrated to Israel decades ago, retained her love for Indian colours and took to painting after retiring from her job. She held an exhibition of her recent paintings from March 2 to March 27, 2008 at Yad Le'Banim, Auditorium Shaiin, Tel Aviv. The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Ambassador on March 4, 2008 in the presence of a large gathering of art lovers, including Jewish persons of Indian origin. Ambassador's wife Dr. Maina Chawla Singh also attended.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Meeting of the Heads of the Microsoft R&D Centers in Israel, India and China, January 15, 2008



Heads of the Microsoft Strategic R&D Centers in China, Israel and India (from L to R): Dr. Ya-Qin Zhang, Dr. Moshe Lichtman and Mr. Srinu Koppolu

The Microsoft R&D Center in Israel hosted a summit of the heads of Microsoft Strategic R&D centers based in Israel, India and China on January 15, 2008.

The respective delegations were headed by Mr. Srinu Koppolu, Managing

Director of the Microsoft strategic R&D Center in Hyderabad, Dr. Ya-Qin Zhang, President of the Microsoft strategic R&D Center in China and Dr. Moshe Lichtman, President, Israel R&D Center. During the summit the heads of the centers discussed the possibilities of further cooperation between the R&D Centers and agreed to institutionalize mechanisms for exchange of best practices and ideas. As part of the summit Microsoft hosted a dinner for its guests.

Dr. Pankaj Sharma, Counsellor (E&C) at the Indian Embassy and Counselor Ms. Zhang Xiao'an from the Chinese Embassy also participated in the Dinner.

INDIAN ECONOMY

India to have 500 airports by 2020

India's Civil Aviation Ministry has set a target of having 500 operational airports in the next 12 years, according to a report by Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA). CAPA announced that this will include the ongoing redevelopment of currently unused airports or little used airports and development of green field and cargo airports.

Indian Tourism to generate US\$ 100 billion in 2008

India's travel and tourism is poised for continued growth according to a leading international chamber of travel and tourism operators. "India's Travel and Tourism is expected to generate approximately USD 100 billion in 2008, rising to USD 275.5 billion by 2018 over the next ten years," says the latest Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) research released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and its strategic partner Accenture. The reports also says that travel and tourism is expected to contribute 6.1% to India's national GDP, and will create 30.5 million jobs in 2008

Four Indians among top 10 richest in the world

Four Indians have made it to the global richie-rich top 10 club, the most from any country. Mukesh Ambani, Anil Ambani and DLF's KP Singh have joined Arcelor Mittal's LN Mittal in this exclusive club, according to Forbes magazine's annual list of billionaires.

Car Sales in India rise 12% to reach record level

Car sales gained 12% to reach 1.2 million in the year ended March 31, 2008 from 1.07 million a year earlier, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, New Delhi.

India identified as most sought-after market by retailers

India was identified as the most sought-after market by retailers who are looking to the world's emerging markets to drive the success of their businesses in the future, according to new research by CB Richard Ellis. A report by the world's leading commercial real estate services firm has revealed that 40% of retailers expect emerging markets to provide their main source of growth over the next five years. The report reveals that 27% of international retailers surveyed have opened their first store in India in the last year or are planning to do so.

India's forex reserves swell by US\$ 110 billion

India's foreign exchange reserves shot up 55% in 2007-08 to close at US\$ 309.16 billion - an increase of nearly US\$ 110 billion from US\$ 199.18 billion at the end of FY 2006-07. The surge was mainly due to large foreign institutional inflows, higher overseas borrowings by Indian companies and remittances from non-residents.

Agriculture sector is estimated to grow at 2.6%

The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is estimated to grow at 2.6 percent during FY 2007-08.

Mumbai-Delhi air corridor sixth busiest

The Mumbai-Delhi air corridor has emerged as one of the busiest in the world. According to Mumbai International Airport (P) Ltd, a survey done last year showed it was the sixth busiest corridor. The list was led by

Barcelona-Madrid, Sao Paulo-Rio, Jeju-Seoul, Sydney-Melbourne and Cape Town-Johannesburg sectors.

India to have over 2,000 green buildings by 2012

In tune with global trend to protect the environment, the number of green building projects in India is expected to go up from the current 164 to over 2,000 by 2012.

Indian beer market expected to double in the next five years

The beer market in India is pegged around 12 million hectolitres and is expected to double in the next five years or so.

Tata is now 57th most valuable brand globally

The Tata group's intense activities in 2007 have seen it rising 45 places to No. 57 in Brand Finance Top 500 Global Brands, a widely respected ranking of brands by brand value published by the UK-based Brand Finance.

AAI lines up US\$ 3.13 billion airport revamp

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has planned to set aside US\$ 3.13 billion for the upgradation and modernisation process. For the three metro airports in Kolkata, Chennai and Trivandrum, AAI has earmarked 43% of its planned outlay, while the rest will go into upgrading other non-metro airports and modernizing the existing aeronautical facilities.

Gem & jewellery exports grow by 22% in FY 2007-08

The Indian gem and jewellery industry has witnessed a growth of 22.27%, amounting to total exports of US\$ 21 billion in FY 2007-08 compared to US\$ 17.1 billion in the previous year.

INVESTMENTS

VC, PE funds raise US\$ 7 billion in 2007

India-focused private equity and venture capital funds raised US\$ 7 billion in 2007, excluding real estate. Sequoia Capital raised US\$ 300 million, Sandalwood Capital (US\$ 350 million), Matrix India Partners (US\$ 300 million), Helion Ventures (US\$ 210 million), VenturEast (US\$ 150 million) and Nexus India Capital (US\$ 100 million).

PEs invest US\$ 1 billion in SMEs in 2007-08

PE firms have invested US\$ 1 billion in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in FY 2007-08, an increase of 75% from the previous year. Pharmaceutical, infrastructure, transportation and manufacturing attracted most PE funds among the SMEs in the current financial year.

World's largest hedge fund firm now in India

Renaissance Technologies, the world's largest hedge fund firm handling assets worth US\$ 35.4 billion, has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to operate in the Indian stock markets as a foreign institutional investor.

CPSEs to invest US\$ 36.95 billion in FY 2009

According to ASSOCHAM, the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) have lined up investments of US\$ 36.95 billion in infrastructure sectors like energy, power and telecom for 2008-09.

NHPC to invest US\$ 6.94 billion to double capacity by 2012

NHPC will double the power generation to become a 10,000 mw-plus corporation by 2011-12 envisaging an investment of approximately US\$ 7 billion.

New mineral policy sees US\$ 2.5 billion FDI

The new National Mineral Policy (NMP), which seeks to ensure assured right in mineral concessions, envisages foreign direct investment (FDI) of US\$ 2.5 billion annually.

MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

India Inc's M&As rise 150% in 2007

India Inc announced deals worth US\$ 70 billion in 2007, up 150% over the previous calendar year. Total merger and acquisition (M&A) and private equity (PE) deals in India, which were US\$ 42 billion more than their 2006 tally, accounted for about 5% of the increase in the value of global M&A deals. The value of total deals announced in India during the year stood at US\$ 70.14 billion as against US\$ 28.16 billion in 2006. The volume of deals involving Indian companies also crossed the 1,000 mark for the first time last year.

REAL ESTATE**India among top three global realty markets**

US retains top slot in a survey conducted by Association of Foreign Investors in Real Estate, with China and India following in second and third positions.

Parsvnath to develop 40 more hotels at US\$ 620.89 million

Real estate major Parsvnath Developers Ltd is looking to invest approximately US\$ 620 million for the development of 40 more hotels, for which it is talking to leading domestic and international hotel chains for tie-ups.

Realty industry attracting international planners and architects

With the US\$ 15 billion realty sector in India booming at an annual growth of 35% and global players lining up investments worth some US\$ 10 billion, this industry has begun attracting international planners and architects. A luxury villa designed by Giorgio Armani, an 18-hole golf course conceptualised by Greg Norman and skyscrapers with the FX Fowle touch - hiring global professionals has become a new trend with Indian realtors.

India Land to spend US\$ 625.63 million on 8 projects

India Land Ventures (ILVL), a part of the Madrid-headquartered Americorp Group, will invest US\$ 625.63 million in eight infrastructure projects across the country over the next two years. The projects include construction of IT parks, SEZs, hotels and townships.

Real estate developers to develop Railway land

Railway land has emerged as hot property with real estate majors such as DLF, Emaar MGF and Unitech lining up to commercially exploit the land on offer. Over 20 real estate companies have bid for developing each of the 10 locations for which Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) had recently invited technical qualification bids.

InterContinental plans 14 Holiday Inns in India

InterContinental Hotels Group is building 14 Holiday Inn hotels in India to tap rising middle class incomes and the growing traffic in inbound and outbound travel. The 14 properties, accounting for more than 3,700

rooms, are scheduled to open over the next three years in 11 cities including Bangalore, New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

TELECOM / IT / BIOTECHNOLOGY**IT sector share in GDP rises to 5.2%**

According to the NASSCOM-Deloitte study on Indian IT Industry: Impacting the Economy and Society, the IT/ITeS industry's contribution to the country's GDP has increased to a share of 5.2% in 2007, as against 1.2% in 1998.

After IT Parks, India to get IT Investment regions

After IT Parks and IT SEZs, the government has cleared a proposal for creating a much larger Information Technology Investment Regions (ITIRs) to give a fillip to the country's growing IT and ITeS sector.

Nokia production reaches 125 million in India

Nokia has reached production volume of 125 million in over two years of operations at its manufacturing unit in Tamil Nadu. The company has already invested US\$ 210 million in their manufacturing unit and would invest US\$ 75 million in 2008 for additional ramp up at the plant. With this, the total investment at the Nokia manufacturing plant and the Nokia Telecom Park reaches US\$ 285 million by December.

IT, BPOs bought 94 firms worth US\$ 2 billion in 2007

According to NASSCOM, domestic IT and BPO companies were involved in as many as 94 deals, largely cross-border in 2007, involving investment of over US\$ 2 billion. The momentum is expected to gain strength in 2008, with consolidation expected in the domestic arena and Europe likely to emerge as a key destination for outbound deals.

Information and communication technology market to reach US\$ 24.3 billion by 2011

According to the global research firm, Gartner, India's information and communication technology market is estimated to grow 20.3% annually to reach US\$ 24.3 billion by 2011.

Wi-Fi market in India to touch US\$ 891 million mark by 2011-12

A study by the Global Wi-Fi Alliance has estimated that Wi-Fi market in India will

grow to US\$ 891 million by 2011-12.

Biotechnology sector to occupy 140 million square feet by 2010

The Indian biotech industry is set to grow and occupy 140 million square feet by 2010. In addition to Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Mumbai, tier II and tier III cities like Vadodara, Coimbatore, Goa, Mysore, Madurai, Kolkata, Gurgaon, Thrissur, Nagpur and Thiruchirapalli have emerged as the preferred destinations to set up a biotech facility.

Bioinformatics market to double by 2010

The Indian bioinformatics market is poised to double by 2010, from US\$32 million to US\$62 million, according to a report by research firm Value Notes Outsourcing Practice.

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY**Volkswagen will increase investments in India by 40%**

German auto group Volkswagen AG is increasing its spend in India by around 40%, and will now invest Euro 580 million against the Euro 411 million announced earlier in its plant coming up at Chakan near Pune. It is also setting up a vendor park on a third of the 575-acre plot area where suppliers can lease space, and is in the midst of a tender process for a developer.

Fiat India to invest US\$ 585.71 million in Pune facility

Fiat India Automobiles will invest US\$ 585.71 million at its existing Ranjangaon facility in Pune to ramp up its capacity. Fiat India is a 50:50 joint venture between Tata Motors and Fiat Group Automobiles.

BMW looks to source bike engine components from India

German luxury car and bike maker BMW is looking to source parts for engines and chassis for its high-end two-wheelers from India.

General Motors to launch second small car in India

General Motors will launch a second small car in India in the next two years. General Motors, which had launched the Spark last year, has a 3% share. It sold around 2,800 units of the car per month. The company has a manufacturing plant in Gujarat and is building a second facility near Pune in Maharashtra.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN INDIA

India International Sign Show (IISS)

May 16-18, 2008. Bombay Exhibition Centre, NSE Exhibition Complex, Mumbai.

www.biztradeshows.com

Delhi International Leather Fair

Finished leather, shoes and shoe components, leather garments, fashion accessories, etc. May 16-18, 2008, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

International Conference & Exposition WATECH 2008

Industrial & Urban Water Management Technologies. May 29-30, 2008, FICCI, Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi.

www.ficci.com

ACMEE - International Machine Tools and Auto Components Exhibition

June 19-23, 2008, Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai.

www.biztradeshows.com

Global Education Fair 2008

June 21-22, 2008, Pragati Meidan, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

Toy Biz International 2008

Organized by the toys association of India. June 27-30, 2008, Pragati Meidan, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

India International Bearing Expo 2008 (IIBEX 2008)

Bearing Expo features a comprehensive range of bearing and related equipment, embracing a wide spectrum of mechanical engineering solutions for the automobile, railway, agriculture, mining metallurgy, chemical industry, textile, electric machinery, machine tools etc. July 5-7, 2008, Nehru Centre, Mumbai.

www.bearingexpo.com

India International Garment Fair 2008

International exhibition for Garments & Apparels. July 17-19, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

Hyderabad Jewellery Pearl & Gem Fair

July 24-27, 2008, Hitex Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad.

www.jewelleryfair.in

India International Build Expo

August 1-3, 2008, Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai.

www.expoqr.com

International Food, Beverage & Technology Exhibition

August 6-8, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.exhibitionsindia.com

HEAL 2008

August 7-8, 2008, New Delhi.

www.ficci.com

IIRWM-India International Recycle & Waste Management Exhibition-2008

August 16-18, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

Renewable Energy India 2008 Expo

Exhibition and Convention on bio energy, energy efficiency, hydro energy, solar energy, tidal energy, and wind energy. August 21-23, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.exhibitionsindia.com

Delhi Book Fair & Stationery Fair

August 30 - September 7, 2008, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

2ND SFAL (Sports, Fitness, Adventure, Leisure) Expo 2008

International exhibition that combines the sports goods and equipment industry with the converging fitness, health and wellness industries. September 5-7, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.exhibitionsindia.com

4th ELCOMP India 2008

4th International Exhibition & Conference on electronic hardware, components, subsystems and capital equipment and machines for the manufacture of electronic hardware and EMS providers. September 10-12, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.exhibitionsindia.com

International Flora Expo &

International Landscape Expo 2008

Flower and plant industry. September 14-16, 2008, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

www.exhibitionsindia.com

Sports Goods Fair

October 3-6, 2008, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

INDIA AVIATION 2008

The first international exhibition of its kind in India on Civil Aviation sector. The exhibition is being organized by Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt. of India jointly with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry October 15-18, 2008, Hyderabad.

www.ficci.com

International Arogya Fair

October 23-26, 2008, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

International Foodservice India

International Exhibition for Retailing, In-Flight, Rail, Ship, Hotel, and Event Catering. November 13-15, 2008, Mumbai.

www.ficci.com

Annappoorna - World of Food India - 2008

International Exhibition & Conference for the Food and Beverage Industry.

November 13-15, 2008, Mumbai.

www.ficci.com

India International Trade Fair

Information Technology, capital goods, scientific and technological achievements in all sectors of industry, agriculture, telecommunications, services sector, consumer durables, food and food products, textiles and clothing, giftware, kitchenware, toys, sports goods and equipment, building materials, medical and herbal products. November 14-27, 2008, New Delhi.

www.indiatradefair.com

CONSULAR SERVICES New Counter Timings

Receipt of Passports:

Monday to Friday - 9.00 am to 10.00 am

Delivery of Passports:

Monday to Thursday - 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm

Visa fees (for Israeli nationals)

Type of Visa	Visa Fees
Transit 3 Days	NIS 50
Upto 6 months	NIS 200
6 months to 1 year	NIS 330
From 1 to 5 years	NIS 650
Student (more than one year, up to 5 years)	NIS 380

Additional Charges

Visa transfer from old to new passport: NIS 30

Emergency services: NIS 180

For further information please contact the Consular Officer in the Embassy.

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