



India, Afghanistan vow to work together to fight terror, boost trade

India and Afghanistan on April 28 pledged to work together to fight terrorism and also boost bilateral trade and connectivity as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with visiting Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in New Delhi.

Ghani, whose country continues to battle the Taliban menace after the drawdown of the US-led international forces, spoke out strongly against terrorism.

“Terror must be confronted and must be overcome... we are determined to make Afghanistan the graveyard of terror.”

Ghani, who arrived here on Monday night on a three-day official visit, pushed for a regional framework of peace and cooperation in order to fight the “disease of terror” and cure it “lock, stock and branch”.

“Terror cannot be classified into good and bad, it cannot be differentiated. We must have a unified approach, and we must be united in the region and globally to contain the phenomenon.”

The joint statement noted that there is no justification for acts of terrorism and both leaders expressed determination to work together, along with the international community, to combat and defeat the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

They called on the international community to severely deal with the safe havens for terrorists that continue to threaten regional and global security.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Govt steps to boost growth to 9-10%: FM

Initiatives being taken by the Government to boost investments and introduce tax reforms will lead to 9-10 per cent economic growth in the coming years, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on April 30.

“The cumulative impact of these (initiatives), I believe, will increase our capacity to grow more than nine per cent,” he said in an interview to Doordarshan.

Significant work is being done in the infrastructure as well as agriculture sectors and the Government is making special efforts to tackle farmers issues, particularly irrigation, he added.



Jaitley said the Government has created a transparent environment and has given up discretionary powers to dole out incentives to corporates.

Indian economy is expected to grow at 8-8.5 per cent in the current financial year, up from the estimated 7.4 per cent for the previous financial year.

Source: Press Trust of India

German lending agency to fund Andhra's green energy corridor

German lending agency KFW and the central Government have agreed to fund the proposed green energy corridor in Andhra Pradesh, which is aimed at transforming the state into a renewable energy hub.

KFW has communicated to the state Government that it will sanction Rs.500 crore (US\$ 78.137) at a concessional rate of interest.



According to the State Energy Conservation Mission, the union power ministry will provide Rs.515 crore (US\$ 80.481) to develop the Rs.3,500 crore (US\$ 546.96) green energy corridor.

Ajay Jain, secretary for energy, industries and infrastructure, said that the green corridor would be developed to support the upcoming solar and wind projects with an initial cost of about Rs.1,289 crore (US\$ 201.438).

The state is making efforts to secure necessary funding with the support of the centre and international financial institutions.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

US to sell India \$96 mn support for C-130J Super Hercules aircraft

The US State Department has approved the sale of \$96 million worth of follow-on support for C-130J Super Hercules aircraft to India to enable the Indian Air Force to remain mission-ready for disaster relief and international humanitarian assistance needs like in quake-hit neighbouring Nepal.

Pentagon's arm handling foreign military sales notified the US Congress of this possible sale to India last week saying the "proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region."

This proposed sale of additional equipment and support will enable the Indian Air Force to sustain a higher mission-ready status for its C-130J fleet," the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said.



India needs this support for its Super Hercules aircraft to ensure its aircraft operate effectively to serve its transport, local and international humanitarian assistance, and regional disaster relief needs, the agency said.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

World Bank arm to partner PFS India to fund green energy projects

The International Finance Corp (IFC), the private financing arm of the World Bank, on April 28 said it will partner PTC India Financial Services (PFS) to provide infrastructure financing for renewable energy projects in India.

“PFS becomes the first institution in India, and the twenty-sixth globally, to sign IFC’s master cooperation agreement. This collaboration will help standardize steps that lenders take when co-financing projects with IFC,” the World Bank Group member said in a statement here.

“The ultimate aim is to make local currency financing available in shorter time-frames and reduce financing costs for borrowers, enabling them to operationalize projects faster,” it added.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Indians largest non-Arab investors in Dubai real estate market

Indian nationals have emerged the largest non-Arab investors in Dubai’s real estate market, accounting for property transactions worth 3.040 billion Dhiraams (\$820.8 million) in the first quarter of 2015.

The Dubai Land Department’s (DLD) annual report said a total of 11,603 real estate transactions in the emirate in the first quarter of 2015 exceeded 64 billion Dhiraams (\$17.28 billion).

The total value of non-Arab investments in Dubai real estate market’s amounted to more than 12 billion Dhiraams. “Indian nationals were ranked the highest value foreign investors, making a total of AED 3.040 billion worth of property transactions through 1293 investors,” the DLD said in a statement. It did not give details of the Indian investors.

Source: Hindustan Times

India, Japan sign action agenda to boost trade, investment

India and Japan on April 30 signed a five-point action agenda to increase bilateral trade and investment.



The five-point agenda includes development of selected townships in India as Japanese industrial townships, promotion of investment and infrastructure development, further development and cooperation in IT sector, enhancing cooperation in strategic sectors and Asia-Pacific economic integration.

Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and visiting Japanese Trade and Industry Minister Yoichi Miyazawa signed the agenda agreement.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India, Bangladesh agreement on HYV rice seeds trade

Seed associations of India and Bangladesh on April 30 signed a cooperation agreement to initiate cross-border trade in high-yielding variety (HYV) rice seeds that will also enable knowledge-sharing in their production and trade.

A Memorandum of Understanding for this purpose was signed here between the Bangladesh Seeds Association and the National Seed Association of India.



While a protocol has been recently signed between India, Bangladesh and Nepal creating the possibility for the release of seed varieties developed by one country in others, Thursday's MoU marks a definitive step closer to formalisation of rice seeds trade and knowledge-sharing.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India's forex reserves touch record high at \$345 bn

India's foreign exchange reserves rose \$1.4 billion in the week ended April 24 to touch \$344.6 billion, creating a new record, the Reserve Bank of India said on May 1.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Jewellery export might hit 4-year high in FY16

Jewellery exports from India are likely to hit a four-year high, crossing \$40 billion, in the current financial year on robust American demand.

Also expected is a rise in demand for gold ornaments in West Asia and Turkey. The Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) has fixed a target of \$43 billion this year.



Source: Business Standard

ISRO successfully tests indigenous cryogenic engine with four-tonne capacity

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully tested an indigenous cryogenic engine on April 29 which will allow launch vehicles to carry satellites of up to four tonnes.

Congratulating the scientists on the successful testing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter, “The engine tested today will enable us to put satellites of up to 4 tons in geostationary orbit. A proud accomplishment.”



Although the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV Mark III) successfully launched an unmanned capsule that could be used for manned missions in December, it had a passive cryogenic stage.

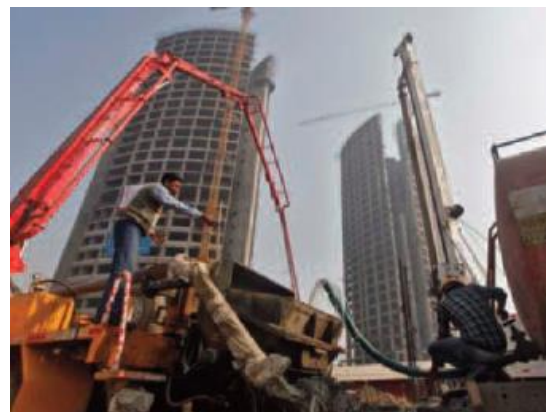
While GSLV Mark III is India’s largest launch vehicle, carrying up to four-tonne vehicles will only be possible with a cryogenic engine with the capacity.

Source: Mint

GDP will grow at 7.7% in 2015-16, India Ratings says

The country’s GDP (gross domestic product) would grow by 7.7% in 2015-16, driven by a further pick-up in private consumption demand, India Ratings and Research has said.

Consumption demand is expected to expand 8.1% in 2015-16 compared to 7.1% in 2014-15 and 6.2% in 2013-14. The economy is estimated to have clocked 7.4% growth in 2014-15.



“A significant moderation in inflation and inflationary expectations is likely to boost consumer sentiments, albeit gradually,” the agency said.

The share of private consumption demand in GDP is around 60%. “Even investment and Government expenditure would provide adequate support to consumption-led GDP growth,” it said.

India Ratings, which is part of the Fitch Group, expects that agricultural growth will touch 2.1% in 2015-16.

Source: The Times of India

Manufacturing PMI up in April

India's manufacturing activities, now a focus area for the Government at the Centre, saw a moderation in growth in April when compared with the previous month, because of lower new orders, showed the widely tracked HSBC Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI).

As expansion in new orders slowed, firms did not increase output much and reduced hiring.

Manufacturing PMI in April fell to 51.3 points from 52.1 in March. But it was higher than the 51.2 points in February.

A PMI reading above 50 shows expansion while one below that implies contraction. This was, however, 18th straight month of expansion in the country's manufacturing activities.

"Following the solid readings seen in March, the Indian manufacturing economy recorded a slowdown in growth during April. Total new orders increased at a weaker rate and, as a result, companies reduced staffing levels and raised output to a smaller degree," Market Economics, which compiles PMI data, said.

Source: Business Standard

Smart Cities offer largest potential area for US investment: Envoy

Describing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "100 Smart Cities" as an area with "seemingly unlimited potential", US envoy to India Richard Verma on April 28 said the initiative is a "largest" potential area for US investment and commercial cooperation.

Addressing the annual general meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in India, Verma sought to develop a symbiotic relationship between US businesses and the US Government that could work together to address challenges in way of becoming India's "best" partner, as per US President Barack Obama's vision. "Cooperation on infrastructure development and Prime Minister Modi's 'Smart Cities' initiative" are "two of the largest potential areas for US investment and commercial cooperation".

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

'IIT Bombay best technical institute in India, Delhi University top varsity'

IIT Bombay has emerged as the best technical institute in India and one among the top 100 worldwide according to subject-wise ranking by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a leading world university ranking agency.



Delhi University topped the 20 leading Indian varsities which featured in the ranking list, bagging the 17th position in the world for its performance in Development Studies, as per QS University World Rankings by Subject released in April 30. Nine Indian institutions are listed in the top 100 within nine disciplines, a statement issued by the agency said. "Indian universities display increased international competitiveness in the top 100 with a stronger presence across the subjects," it said.

Source: Press Trust of India

Huge potential for enhancing business ties with Russia: President

Underlining the huge potential for enhancing commercial and investment exchanges between India and Russia, President Pranab Mukherjee has said that new opportunities arising between the two economies should be fully tapped.

Speaking at a reception hosted on May 9 by India's ambassador to Russia P.S. Raghavan for the Indian community here, Mukherjee said the last 15 years have seen a qualitative change in India's relations with Russia.



Mukherjee said India today terms its relationship with Russia as "a special and privileged strategic partnership" in recognition of the multi-faceted bilateral engagement. He said the Indian community in Russia has contributed significantly to development of close ties between India and Russia.

Total trade between India and Russia was \$6 billion annually, which is less than one per cent of India's total trade of \$765 billion.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Make in India drove FDI up by 56%: Data

As the Government struggles to maintain investor confidence, foreign direct investments (FDI) into India has surged by 56% in five months since the Make in India programme was launched on September 24, official data revealed.

"India received \$21.2 billion in inflows overall during the five-month period, against \$13.5 billion in the same period last year. If this surge continues, then as per our estimates, 2015-16 would be the year with the second highest FDI ever received by the country since 2000 (when maintenance of data started)," the official said.



The highest FDI inflow into India was in 2010-11, at \$45 billion. FDI inflows in April-September 2014 were to the tune of about \$16 billion.

Source: Hindustan Times

Nivea opens first plant in India, invests Rs 850 crore (US\$ 133.26 million)

Personal care products maker Nivea India Pvt. Ltd on May 6 opened its Rs.850-crore (US\$ 133.26 million) plant at Sanand in Gujarat, its first in the country.

It will help the company raise the development and production capacity for India and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) markets, the Indian affiliate of German personal care major Beiersdorf AG said in a statement.

The 72,000 sq. m. land to build the plant at the Gujarat Industrial Development Corp. (GIDC) industrial park was acquired by the company last year.

Source: Mint



China proposes joint mining of Indian Ocean with India

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit here next week, China has said it is "eager to cooperate" with India on deep seabed mining in the Indian Ocean where its deep diving vessel reported to have discovered large deposits of precious metals like gold and silver.

"With quickening oceanic development and increasing mineral exploration in the Indian Ocean, China is eager to cooperate with India on deep seabed mining," the China Daily quoted China Ocean Mineral Resource R&D Association as saying.

Terming India an ideal partner, deputy director of the association He Zongyu told the state-run daily that "China and India are both developing countries and contractors with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) so we have a lot in common and plenty of opportunities for further cooperation."

The association is China's official organisation engaged in exploration and development of ocean floor and subsoil.

Chen Lianzeng, deputy director of the State Oceanic Administration, visited India on April 20 and suggested the two sides enhance cooperation on oceanic research and development. "If we cooperate, we could share the costs, the risks and the benefits," He said.

Proposing the cooperation, He said China and India are on about the same level in terms of the development of deep seabed mining, which makes India an ideal partner.

Deep seabed mining is high-cost and high-risk work, with costs for a mining site topping USD 1.6 billion, He said.

Source: Press Trust of India



ISM Dhanbad, Australian varsity to sign MoU on mining tech

The Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad will ink a MoU with an Australian varsity for student exchange programmes targeted at cutting-edge technologies in open-cast mining, an Australian official said on May 5.

“As part of an exchange programme for undergraduate, graduate, faculty members and research fellows, ISM, Dhanbad, will soon sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Newcastle University in Australia,” said Stuart Rees, trade commissioner (acting), Australian Trade Commission and mentor, Mining and Energy Team, South Asia. Rees was speaking on the sidelines of an interactive session organised by CII Eastern Region here. He said the agreement will focus on cutting-edge technologies in open-cast mining.



Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Australian expert visits India to boost links in mining education and research

Professor Stephen Fityus, one of the foremost Australian experts in mining and geotechnical engineering from the University of Newcastle, is visiting India to tap opportunities for collaboration with prominent Indian higher education institutions, research centres and industry bodies. Professor Fityus has made contributions to a wide range of research areas including minesite geomechanics, geotechnical and geo-environmental engineering, and engineering geology.



Source: The Economic Times

Govt approves Rs5,000 crore (US\$ 783.88 million) tax-free bonds to support solar mission

The ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) has approved the sale of tax free-bonds worth Rs.5,000 crore (US\$ 783.88 million) to support the Government's solar mission.

Of this, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) is likely to raise Rs.2,000 crore (US\$ 313.55 million) through an issue of tax-free bonds in the next few months. The announcement was made by Tarun Kapoor, MNRE joint secretary, in a speech at the Solar Power Summit-2015 in New Delhi.



IREDA is expected to use these funds to lend to solar energy developers at a lower interest rate of 10.5%. Developers, in turn, will use these loans to fund roof-top solar panel installations. Kapoor also

announced a withdrawal of subsidies extended on targets of non-conventional power generation for industrial and commercial purposes.

Source: Mint

India tops China in number of tech venture capital deals

In a sign of the rising opportunities in India, the country outpaced China in the number of deals struck by venture capital (VC) funds in the first quarter of 2015.

India saw 69 deals happening in the first quarter as against China's 66, according to a report by CB Insights, a New York-based firm that tracks VC funding.

India saw the most deal growth among Asian countries, at 60% compared to the first quarter of 2014, when the number of deals stood at 43.

Source: The Times of India

India becoming one of world's fastest growing economies: IMF

India's growth rate is expected to rise to 7.5 percent this year and next, making it one of the fastest growing economies in the world, according to the IMF's latest economic health check.

The other Asian giant China's economy is slowing to a more sustainable pace - 6.8 percent GDP growth in 2015, and 6.3 percent in 2016, according to the International Monetary Fund's Regional Economic Outlook for Asia and the Pacific.

Growth in Asia and the Pacific will continue to outperform the rest of the world, and is expected to remain steady at 5.6 percent in 2015, easing slightly to 5.5 percent in 2016, said the report released Thursday. Growth will be driven by domestic demand, underpinned by healthy labour markets, low interest rates, and the recent fall in oil prices.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India's e-learning market second largest after US, says report

India has become the largest market for e-learning after the US, and the sector is expected to receive a boost from the Government's Rs.1.13 trillion Digital India initiative, says a recent report by the UK-India Business Council.



While the existing educational infrastructure is inadequate to meet the current and future needs of the country, the Digital India initiative will increase Internet access, which in turn will help take quality education to large parts of the population that have been hitherto neglected, says the report.

India's e-learning sector is expected to grow at a compounded annual rate of 17.4% between 2013 and 2018, twice as fast as the global average.

Source: Mint

Amid dollops of culture, Modi, Xi hold 'extremely productive' talks

With China's rich cultural heritage and the ancient links of Buddhism forming a grand backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 14 held "extremely productive" summit-level talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during which the border issue, the widening trade imbalance and "strengthening trust" were high on the agenda.



Modi, who arrived in Beijing late on May 14 on the second leg of his visit, tweeted his "special thanks" to Xi for "extremely productive meeting" earlier in the day in Xi'an.

Modi arrived in the morning in the historic city of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi province and the hometown of President Xi, and spent a busy day, absorbing the ancient civilisational grandeur of Xi'an at the Terracotta Warriors Museum, the Da Xing Shan Buddhist temple and the Wild Goose Pagoda.

President Xi, who was welcomed by Modi in Ahmedabad and treated to a colourful walk along the Sabarmati river front during his India visit last September, in a reciprocal gesture, welcomed Modi in his hometown Xi'an.

The over 90-minute talks between the two Asian leaders, held at the Shaanxi Guest House, were "very substantive and the atmosphere was very comfortable", said Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, briefing newsmen.

He said both the leaders "built on the chemistry" that had started with Xi's India visit last year.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Modi stresses Buddhism, population; says India, China joint force for world

India and China on May 15 inked 24 agreements after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 16 stressed the shared legacy of Buddhism between India and China and their commonalities, including their large population, and said the



two countries together could not only solve their problems but also be a force of good for the entire world. Modi, who wound up his three-day visit to China by attending many functions in Shanghai, devoted the morning to business events. He met the CEOs of top Chinese companies, including Jack Ma of Alibaba and top smartphone maker Xiaomi's head Lin Bin and invited them to 'make in India'.

He assured them of the ease of doing business. The Chinese CEOs reacted positively to the invite to invest in India.

Addressing the India-China Business Forum, that also saw 21 business agreements worth \$22 billion being signed between businesspersons of both countries, Modi stressed the unifying factor of Buddhism among the Asian nations. "The serenity of Buddhism in Asian countries is the seed of their success. I strongly believe that this century belongs to Asia. And Buddhism will be a further unifying and catalysing force among the Asian countries," said Modi.

He also stressed the shared knowledge base between India and China, flowing through centuries, like the discovery of zero and the planets by ancient Indian mathematicians and astronomers, to say that both countries need to forge their strengths. "We have a lot in common and we can do a lot together. As we helped each other growing spiritually, we have to help each other growing economically. I have a lot of hope from the relationship which I and President Xi are trying to build," he said at the forum.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India, Mongolia stress 'bonds of hearts and minds'

India and Mongolia forged a strategic partnership, building on the "bonds of hearts and minds" over the "barriers of distance", as Narendra Modi on May 17 became the first Indian prime Minister to visit the landlocked northeast Asian nation which has declared India as its "third neighbour" as well as "spiritual neighbour".



The two countries also inked 13 agreements, including in the sphere of air services, cyber security and transfer of sentenced prisoners.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

World's perception of India has changed during the last one year: Modi in Seoul

The world's perception of India has changed in the past one year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his address to the Indian community in Seoul.

"India is being seen as the fastest growing economy of the world," he said.



Modi arrived in Seoul on May 18 morning, in the last leg of his three-nation visit that also took him to China and Mongolia.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Google to build largest campus outside US in Hyderabad

Global Internet services company Google will build its largest campus outside the US in Hyderabad with an investment of Rs.1,000 crore (US\$ 156.961 million), announced Telanagana Information Technology Minister K. Tarakarama Rao on May 12.



The Minister, who is on a visit to the US, said the state Government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Google, which will develop about two million square feet campus, the first in Asia.

The global search engine giant will build the facility on 7.2 acres in Gachibowli, the IT corridor in Hyderabad, said a statement released by the state Government on May 12 evening.

It will be one of the largest facilities globally and Google's first own campus in India.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Tata Motors, Vietnamese company enter into distribution agreement

Automobile major Tata Motors on May 15 entered into a distribution, supply and technology license agreement with Vietnam-based TMT Motor.



"Our foray into Vietnam is an important step in our continuing journey to become a truly global player and in particular our focus on the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region after our recent entry into Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia," said Ravi Pisharody, executive director, commercial vehicles business unit, Tata Motors.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Japanese keen on \$1.6 tn highways funding: Nitin Gadkari

India is firming up plans for a \$1.6-trillion financing institution that will fund highway projects across the country with a 26- percent stake held by Japanese companies, to achieve a target of 30 km of road-laying per day, Nitin Gadkari, one of the most important Ministers in the Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has said.



Source: Indo-Asian News Service

South Korea offers \$10-bn fund for Modi projects

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi commenced his two-day visit to Seoul on May 18, South Korea has offered to set up a \$10-billion fund to support several of his ambitious projects, from bullet trains to smart cities, the country's envoy to India Joon-gyu Lee has said.



"My country is offering India a financial package amounting to a total of \$10 billion. This will comprise an economic development cooperation fund of \$1 billion and export credits of another \$9 billion," Lee told IANS in an exclusive interview.

"This fund will be used to support several of Prime Minister Modi's initiatives on infrastructure development, including smart cities project, railways, power generation, transmission and also other sectors that can be agreed upon at a later stage," Lee added.

According to him, South Korean companies are especially interested in developing India's railroad network, ports and other modern transportation mediums. "Discussions with the relevant ministries and companies are ongoing -- like in upgrading the existing railways," the ambassador elaborated.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Sweden keen to build smart cities in India via PPP mode

Sweden is keen on partnering with Indian companies to build 'smart cities' through the public private partnership (PPP) mode in states like Karnataka, Telangana and Maharashtra, a senior Swedish official said.



Early signing of a pending memorandum of understanding (MOU) on urban development framework between the two countries is expected to facilitate for collaboration, she said.

"Rather than adopting cities in India, we will work on actual PPP model, where in, we will bring in Swedish expertise and world class state-of-the-art knowledge and investment, said Anna Liberg, Trade Commissioner to India, Business Sweden India and South Asia.

Sweden, which has expertise in urban planning, power, sustainable transport and waste management, sees business opportunities with Indian partners in states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, she told PTI.

"There are 150 Swedish companies in India and the number is growing. A considerable part of them are in the field of urban development under the umbrella of smart cities. We are very strong in that," Liberg said.

Source: Press Trust of India

Indian retail market to touch \$2.1 trillion by 2025: Study

Increasing affluence, changing lifestyle and attitude towards spending by young Indians is pushing the retail market, which is expected to grow from about \$550 billion in 2015 to \$2.1 trillion by 2025, an almost fourfold growth over a decade, a study said on May 15.

“India’s young population, increasing affluence, changing lifestyle and attitude towards spending and increasing availability in the smallest of the towns, is spiralling consumption and driving the retail market,” said the retail report done by Confederation of Indian Industry along with Wazir Advisors.



“The Indian retail market is thus expected to grow from about \$550 billion in 2015 to an estimated \$2,100 billion by 2025, an almost four fold growth over a decade,” it added.

Within the same period, organised retail is expected to grow seven fold and online retail, a mind boggling 26-fold.

The main drivers for the retail market would be the demographic dividend, increasing incomes fuelling aspirations and rurbanisation and urbanisation.

There are an estimated 12-14 million retailers, making India a country with one of the highest retail densities. The sector is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 14 percent over the next 10 years and will remain one of the top growth markets globally.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Govt contains fiscal deficit at 4% of GDP; beats its own target

The Government has limited fiscal deficit for 2014-15 at 4% of GDP, lower than the revised estimate of 4.1% announced in February helped by lower than estimated revenue deficit and by limiting both plan and non-plan spending for the just concluded fiscal, according to latest figures released by the finance ministry.

A statement from the finance ministry attributed the improvement in key fiscal indicators to the “result of prudent policies and (the Government’s) commitment to fiscal consolidation.”



In his 2015-16 budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had deferred the fiscal consolidation roadmap by a year and kept the target for 2015-16 at 3.9% of GDP compared to the earlier target of 3.6%.

Source: Business Standard

India's growth to be highest among G20 countries: Moody's

Ratings agency, Moody's on May 13 said that at 7.5 percent, India's growth rate during 2015-16 will be the highest among the global 20 major economies (G20).

It said the growth has been predicted on the basis of various reforms initiated by the Government in face of lower oil prices.

A report from the global credit rating firm said: "We forecast strong growth in India. At 7.5 percent in 2015-16, the highest among the G20 economies. Lower oil prices will reinforce gradual growth-enhancing reforms to support robust economic activity over the forecast period."

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Looking forward to the establishment of the BRICS bank: Kamath

Days after being appointed as the head of the up-coming BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) New Development Bank, banker K.V. Kamath on May 15 said he looked forward to the establishment of the financial institution and commencement of its operations.

"I look forward to the establishment of the bank and commencement of its operation for the service of the BRICS nations," said Kamath, 67, who is the non-executive chairman of ICICI Bank as well as the non-executive chairperson of the Indian IT giant, Infosys.

Kamath said in a statement that he was honoured and humbled by the Government of India's decision to nominate him as the first president of the new development bank for the BRICS nation. Kamath will have a five-year term at the BRICS bank, which is likely to be operationalised within one year.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Modi woos South Korean businesses, winds up three-nation tour

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 19 outlined his vision of an inclusive Asian century fuelled by India's progress and wooed South Korean businesses to 'make in India' in a big way.

Winding up his two-day visit to South Korea, the final leg of his three-nation visit, Modi addressed the Asian Leadership Forum and also the India-Republic of Korea CEOs Forum.

He visited the Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) shipyard, one of the biggest ship construction companies in the world, in Ulsan where he spent over an hour.



Modi held talks on May 19 with top South Korean CEOs, including LG Electronics' Kim Jinhong and POSCO chief Kim Jin-il and Hyundai Motor Co's Chung Jinhaeng.

On Monday, Modi had held talks with President Park Geun-hye after which the two sides inked seven agreements, including for avoidance of double taxation.

Seoul also offered to provide \$10 billion for infrastructure projects in India, including smart cities and railways.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Modi satisfied at progress in India-Vietnam ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 25 expressed satisfaction at the progress made in defence and security cooperation between India and Vietnam.

During a meeting with Vietnam's Minister of National Defence Phung Quang Thanh, Modi recalled the successful visit of Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to India in October 2014, an official release said in New Delhi.



Thanh briefed the prime minister about defence and security related developments in the India-Vietnam bilateral relationship.

Modi expressed satisfaction at the progress made in bilateral defence and security cooperation, the release said. Thanh and Modi also discussed developments in the Southeast Asian region.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Quick, transparent decisions hallmark of Modi government: Jaitley

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on May 22 the approach to governance in India has seen a complete transformation in the past year, not just with decisiveness but also in terms of speed, clarity and transparency, that has earned the country global respect.

At a press conference on one year of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, that had assumed office on May 26 last year, the finance minister said decisions were taken almost daily or on a weekly basis to augment growth and development, than being bogged down by resistance.

"Decisiveness even in the face of obstructionism has been the hall mark of the Modi government," he said, adding: "There is also absolute clarity in the direction in which the government ought to go, and that direction is towards growth and development."



He specifically said some fast and far-reaching decisions were taken in a transparent manner in areas like railways, power, coal, mining, rural roads, telecom, highways, urban development, financial services, subsidies and petroleum, and these have left a mark for future growth.

“A key feature of this government has been a corruption-free administration, decision-making and transparent mechanisms and to take decisions without discrepancies,” he said adding that all this had led, among other things, to India’s business confidence index moving up.

“We are today the fastest growing economy in the world. But that is not enough for us,” he said, adding that the public at large now was able to even ask: “Why aren’t we growing faster than the 8 percent, and this restlessness to grow faster is the real potential of India.”

He added: “Our decisions are as fast as this restlessness.”

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

ArcelorMittal, SAIL tie up to make auto steel in India

The world’s leading steel maker, ArcelorMittal, on May 22 signed an agreement with Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) to set up an automotive steel manufacturing facility in India, under a joint venture (JV).



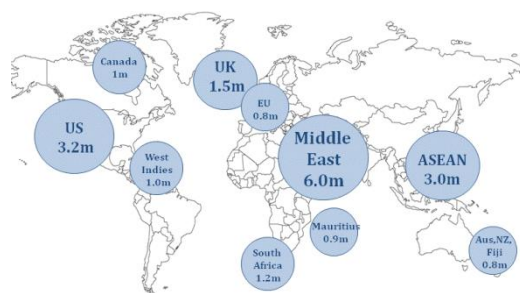
This would be the first greenfield investment by the LN Mittal group in India’s steel sector, after years of trying to get a foothold in the country.

“In the coming months, a working group, with representatives from both companies, will work on evaluating a structure for the proposed JV and carry out feasibility studies as part of a comprehensive due-diligence process,” said a joint press release.

Source: Business Standard

Investment policy for overseas Indians made easier

The union cabinet on May 21 approved certain amendments to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy to make investments by overseas Indians in the country easier and simpler. Overseas Indians comprise Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).



According to a cabinet communique, the cabinet approved redefining an NRI as an individual resident outside India who is a citizen of India or is an OCI cardholder under Section 7 (A) of the Citizenship Act, 1955, while PIOs who have registered under the August 19, 2002, central government notification “will be deemed to be overseas citizens of India”. Investment by NRIs under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) will be treated as a domestic investment at par with investments made by residents.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Chinese companies to set up units at GMR SEZ in Andhra, invest \$3.5 bn

GMR Infrastructure has inked an agreement with Guizhou International Investment Corp (GILC), a consortium of three Chinese manufacturing firms, to set up units at its special economic zones (SEZs) in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.

The move will see \$3.5 billion (about Rs 22,299 crore) worth of investments from the Chinese companies over the next five years.

GMR did not disclose the amount of rental income it will get from GilC.

GilC signed an MoU with Kakinada SEZ (KSEZ), a subsidiary of GMR Infra, to set up an industrial park for high-end Chinese equipment manufacturing companies, GMR Infra said in a BSE filing on May 18.

Source: Hindustan Times



Indian firms ready to invest in Mexico oil, gas: Pradhan

Indian companies are willing to participate in the exploration of even deep water and unconventional hydrocarbon resources in Mexico, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan told Mexican officials during his recent visit to the central American nation.

“Indian companies are willing to participate in exploration and production activities in Mexico, including in deep water and unconventional resources,” the petroleum ministry said in a release in New Delhi on May 20. Pradhan also offered to help Mexico upgrade its refining sector, saying India has emerged as a modern refining hub with expertise to develop complex refineries in a most cost-effective manner, the statement added.

Mexico’s Energy Minister Pedro Joaquin Caldwell, and state-run PEMEX chief executive Emilio Lozoya Austin have invited Indian investments in all areas of the hydrocarbon sector.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Cipla’s British arm buys majority stake in Ugandan firm

The British subsidiary of Indian drug major Cipla Ltd has acquired 51 percent equity stake in Uganda-based Quality Chemicals Ltd for \$30 million (Rs.191 crore) in tranches from its current shareholders.



As per the agreement, both companies signed on May 21, Cipla (EU) Ltd will pay \$8 million (Rs.51 crore) upfront and the balance amount of Rs.140 crore in five equal installments of \$4.41 million annually to the shareholders.

The transaction is expected to be completed by July.

The 18-year-old Kampala-based Quality imports and distributes drugs and consumer products in the east African nation. Incorporated in 1997, it is engaged in the business of import and distribution of pharmaceutical and consumer products.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Indian businesses explore Ethiopia for investment opportunities

A delegation of Indian investors from various sectors came on a three-day visit here during the course of which they met Ethiopian officials to discuss multi-sector projects that would benefit the two countries and strengthen the long standing Ethiopian-Indian diplomatic and socio-economic relations.

The 24 business delegates came from sectors including IT, infrastructure, hospitals, power and natural gas, paper and industries, plastic, mining, stainless mills and, for the first time, from the entertainment industry.



“The delegation members received positive response and information that will be able to help them establish the kind of business they would like to invest in and they would like to come back in a month or two to investigate more on the opportunities and business environment,” said Ishwarya Lakshmi, editor in chief and publisher of World Reflections Magazine, who organised the visit along with the Ethiopian embassy in Delhi. She told IANS.

“This is a mutual benefit because it will help create job opportunities for both nations,” she told IANS.

Ethiopia. They understand that Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Africa and the infrastructure development is suitable for new opportunities compared to other African countries they have been to. Ethiopia is exceptionally open to investment and development potential.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Bullet trains on track: Railway minister

The project to bring bullet trains to India was on the right track and the government was also trying to increase the speed of express trains, Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu said on May 21.

“Bullet train is one big project that we are working on Feasibility studies are being done for Ahmedabad-Mumbai route with the help of Japan and Delhi-Chennai route with the help of China. The project is on the right track,” Prabhu said at the ‘Manthan’ conclave organised by Aaj Tak here.



Source: Indo-Asian News Service

India outpaces others in steel output

According to World Steel Association's recent data, India's steel production grew by an impressive 6.7% in the first four months of the current year vis-à-vis a decline of 1.3% in China, the highest producer by a wide margin and 1.7%, globally.

India, now the world's third largest producer, produced 29.97 MT steel during the January-April period of the current year compared to 28.09 MT in the same period a year ago.



China's production fell to 270 MT from 274 MT a year earlier.

Output in Japan fell by 3.7% to 35 MT during the period. Production in the US also dipped by 8.5% to 26.3 MT in the period. Global production came down to 536 MT in January-April from 546 MT a year ago.

In April also, India's steel production growth remained in the positive terrain while decline in output in all other major producing nations. Production in China, Japan and the US fell by 0.7%, 6.1% and 9.8% respectively.

Source: The Financial Express

IIM-B ranked 48 on FT's top 50 executive education schools list

The Financial Times (FT) Executive Education 2015 Top 50 Rankings saw the Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B) at the 48th position.

The FT 2015 rankings are based on the satisfaction of the participants and clients, the diversity of participants and faculty and the schools' international exposure.



Participating schools are marked on various parameters, from preparation to facilities, which accounts for 80 per cent of the ranking.

Source: Business Standard

India-based vendors bag 25 percent of IT deals: IDC

India-based outsourcers bagged nearly 25 percent of the top 100 IT deals in 2012-14, global market research firm International Data Corporation (IDC) said on May 20.

Analysis of outsourcing deals worldwide in the past three calendar years revealed that top five vendors captured 50 percent of



the total contract value as against 43 percent in 2013.

The top five top vendors with captive units are IBM, which bagged deals worth \$13.8 billion, followed by CGI with \$2.8 billion, Cognizant with \$2.7 billion, Capgemini with \$2.6 billion and Wipro with \$2.3 billion.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Indian financial sector to spend Rs.53,600 (US\$ 8417.7 million) crore on IT: Gartner

The Indian financial sector would spend Rs.53,600 crore (US\$ 8417.7 million) on IT products and services in calendar year 2015, global IT research firm Gartner said May 19.

“The IT spend by Indian banking and securities companies in 2015 will be 15 percent more than Rs.46,600 crore (US\$ 7318.4 million) spent during calendar year 2014,” Gartner said in its report “Forecast: Enterprise IT spending by vertical industry market, worldwide.”

The forecast includes spending by financial institutions on internal IT, external IT services and telecommunications.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Tata Motors launches GenX Nano

India’s automobile major Tata Motors on May 19 launched the GenX Nano, a new technologically advanced entry level hatchback car with a starting price of Rs.1.99 lakh (US\$ 3,120).

Mayank Pareek, company president for passenger vehicles, said Nano has put India on the world motoring map by demonstrating innovation and frugal engineering.

“It continues to remain an important brand in our passenger vehicle portfolio and we have been constantly evolving the product.”

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Eros ties up with 3 Chinese firms for film production

Global film entertainment company Eros International has entered into agreements with three major Chinese state-owned film and entertainment companies to promote, co-produce, distribute and unlock value in respective intellectual properties for Sino-Indian films across all platforms in both the countries.



China is the second largest movie market after the US, with a size of US\$ 4.8 billion in 2014 and estimated growth rate of 34 per cent in 2014.

China produced over 600 films in 2014. The number of theatre screens in China has quadrupled since 2010 with 5397 screens being added in 2014 alone taking their screen count to 23,600.

As per industry projections, in 5 years' time China is expected to surpass US to be the world's largest Box Office. In comparison, India's widest release till date has been across just 5,000 screens.

Source: Business Standard

India eyes 15% jump in medicine exports this fiscal

Indian drug makers are hopeful of achieving double digit growth in exports this fiscal after being confined to single digit growth for two years, helped by factors such as several medicines going off patent, strengthening dollar and access to new markets in Asia.

"We hope to achieve 10-15 per cent growth in export of pharmaceutical products during the current fiscal," said PV Appaji, director general at Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil). This optimism is driven mainly by anticipated increase in the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approvals as a large quantum of medicines are going off patent.

"Increased focus of Indian drug makers on complex and high value generics and growing acceptance to our generics in key new markets like Japan and appreciating dollar should also help us achieve the targeted exports," Appaji told ET.

Source: The Economic Times

M&M to buy stake in Mitsubishi Heavy's farm machinery unit

Vehicle maker Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd said on May 21 it would buy a 33- percent voting stake in the agricultural machinery-making unit of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd for \$25 million.

Source: Reuters



Renewable energy seen generating one million jobs

As India, the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases but 127th in terms of per capita emissions, ponders over an energy-balanced growth, jobs creation and environment protection in the future, there is encouraging news.



The renewable energy sector, a particular focus of attention for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has generated 400,000 jobs till 2014, according to a report released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The sector could generate a million jobs by 2022, if the government reaches its goal of 100 giga watts (GW) of solar photovoltaic (PV) energy and 60 GW of wind energy.

India is ranked fourth globally with 5.7 percent of all the people employed in the renewable-energy sector worldwide. China is the largest global renewable-energy employer with 44 percent of the world's jobs, or 3.4 million, followed by Brazil with more than 0.9 million jobs, USA (0.7 million), India (0.4 million) and Germany (0.3 million).

Globally, more than 7.7 million people are employed (directly or indirectly) in the renewable-energy sector (excluding large hydropower). This is an 18 percent increase from last year's 6.5 million, according to the IRENA report.

India has a renewable-energy potential of about 895 GW, of which solar alone could generate 750 GW, as India Spend previously reported. The Five of the top 10 countries providing jobs in this sector are from Asia -- China, India, Indonesia, Japan, and Bangladesh.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

UN raises projections for India's growth, making it the fastest-growing economy

The UN has now raised its projections for the Indian economy's growth this year by 1.7 percent to 7.6 percent and by 1.4 percent to 7.7 percent next year from the estimates it made in January. The Mid-Year Update to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 released on May 19 puts India on the trajectory to be the world's fastest-growing large economy, outpacing China, the previous champion in the development stakes.



Source: Indo-Asian News Service

Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore in fastest growing global cities list

India's three metropolitan cities, Kolkata, Mumbai and Bangalore, have emerged as the top three fastest growing cities in A T Kearney's Global Cities Index, which is topped by New York and London.

The three cities have been improving their scores steadily in business activity, information exchange, human capital and cultural experience key parameters used to measure a city's global engagement in the index released today, said the London based global management consulting group.



The three India cities have made particularly strong improvements in information exchange, in part due to gains in the number of broadband subscribers, it said.

“The ability to attract human capital is key to the success of any city. For that it needs to be able to provide a good environment for living as well as innovation,” said Debashish Mukherjee, a partner with A T Kearney.

Source: Press Trust of India

India continues to lead global consumer confidence index: Nielsen

India remained at the top of Nielsen’s global consumer confidence index for the fourth quarter in a row, but whether confidence translates into consumption is still in doubt.

The country’s confidence score rose 1 point from the previous quarter and 9 points from a year ago to 130 in the three months ended March. India was followed by Indonesia (123) and the Philippines (115), according to the online survey conducted by Nielsen.



Source: Mint

India on fast track of development: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a message on the first anniversary of his government on May 26, has expressed his happiness to see India on “the fast path of development”, and added that the country’s environment since the NDA government came to power last May is “suffused with a new enthusiasm”.

In a message on the completion of the first year of his government, the Prime Minister said the nation can be proud of the fact that it has an improved image on the international front and is determinedly marching forward to achieve its overall goal of providing welfare to the poor and lifting the marginalized sections of society. Prime Minister Modi’s message described himself as a “Pradhan Sevak”, and adds that he was fulfilling his responsibilities “with that bhakti”.



“Antyodaya has been the principle of our political agenda. We have always kept in mind the welfare of the poor, marginalized, labourers and farmers. The Jan Dhan Yojana, opening a bank account for all families, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and the Atal Pension Fund are proof of this goal of Annandaata Sukhi Bhava. That is our supreme goal,” he said.

“When our government was formed, the economy was in doldrums and prices were rising. I am happy to say that India is on the fast path to development. The entire environment is suffused with a new enthusiasm. On the international front, India’s image has improved. Foreign investment has increased. Make in India and Skill India programmes are intended to create jobs in youth,” he further stated in his message.

Source: Asian News International

Net FDI inflows touch record high of \$34.9 bn in 2014-15

While foreign portfolio investments to India are slowing, net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, which are far more stable, have touched a record high of \$34.9 billion in 2014-15, as made clear by the chart, compiled by Nomura Global Markets Research.

In fact, net FDI inflows touched 1.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) in the just-ended fiscal year, up from 1.1% of GDP the previous year.



Source: Mint

France to cooperate in future Bengaluru, Kochi metro projects

France is looking to collaborate in a major way in India's sustainable urban development and smart cities projects, and has evinced interest in the phase II Metro projects in Bengaluru and Kochi as well as in the launch of Metro services in Nagpur, officials said here on May 27.



French envoy Francois Richier, speaking at an event here, said bilateral cooperation in the field of sustainable development and smart cities was "very important" and France was "committed to working with India" in both the areas.

France's public financial institution Agence francaise de developpement (AFD) is providing the funding for the projects.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France (April 9-13), French President Francois Hollande decided to increase France's line of credit from euro 1 billion (\$1.09 billion) for three years to euro 2 billion (\$2.18 billion) to support projects related to sustainable urban development and smart cities in India.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

ETI Dynamics introduces solar electric hybrid vehicles in India

ETI Dynamics announced the launch of a solar electric hybrid vehicle here on May 29.

According to ETI Dynamics, the prototype is a hybrid scooter that has a canopy of bendable solar panel.

The company touts that it was the first of its kind vehicle in the country that can charge on the go.



The prototype can travel for more than 50 km on a single charge at a top speed of 45 kmph, the company said.

The scooter is light weight and accompanies a weather proof design and propagates the concept of mobile charging infrastructure.

“The prototype is amongst several other adaptations of the technology such as auto-rickshaws, buses, golf-carts, shuttle that will be launched in the next 12 months. The addition of solar panel to the vehicle increases the distance it is able to travel by 15-20, thus providing more efficiency gains,” a company spokesperson said.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service

SAP ties up with IIMA to nurture entrepreneurs

German software maker SAP SE’s Indian arm has joined hands with the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) to launch a start-up accelerator programme aimed at mentoring early-stage entrepreneurs from small Indian towns.

Through the accelerator programme set up in collaboration with the Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship (CIIE) at IIMA, SAP is looking to develop a pipeline of start-ups that can be invested in.

The initiative will let the entrepreneurs tap angel networks, co-working spaces, fabrication labs, incubators, industry associations, technology and academic institutions.

“The programme seeks to help entrepreneurs from tier-II and tier-III towns drive sustainable economic growth and innovation, and make Digital India real,” said Adaire Fox-Martin, president of SAP Asia Pacific Japan.

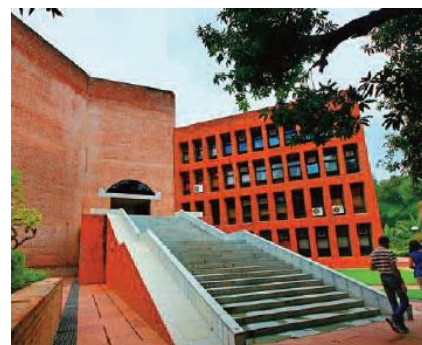
As part of the programme, entrepreneurs will undergo a three-month non-residential boot camp and monthly training workshops and will work closely with domain experts from SAP Labs in Bengaluru.

Source: Mint

India plans to increase crude imports from Colombia

India is planning to increase crude oil imports from Colombia by 20-30%. Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who recently concluded his visit to the Latin American nation, discussed the matter with his Colombian counterpart.

Sources told FE that Pradhan met with minister of mines and energy Tom s Gonzalez Estrada and other senior officials in Bogota. While no firm decision has been taken yet, Colombia is keen on expanding crude export to India.



Also, ONGC Videsh, which is currently holding seven blocks in Colombia, intends to expand its presence in the country. Pradhan had also visited oil fields where Indian firms have stakes.

Currently, India imports about 60% of its total crude oil needs from Arab nations and 20% from Latin America. India plans to increase the imports from Latin American nations to 50% over the next five years. At present, Venezuela, Mexico and Colombia are the nations that supply larger amount of oil to India.

Source: The Financial Express

Forbes names SBI chief as 30th most powerful woman in the world

Forbes has named State Bank of India Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya in its annual 100 Most Powerful Women list, with a ranking of 30 in the world, a statement said here on May 27.

The Kolkata-born Bhattacharya, 59, has moved up six spots (from No.36) in the list from her ranking last year and is the SBI's first woman chairperson since October 2013.

As SBI chairperson, she oversees 220,000 staff in 16,000 branches which service 225 million customers as India's largest lender with offices in more than 36 countries.

Source: Indo-Asian News Service



Govt contains fiscal deficit to 3.99% of GDP in FY15

According to national accounts data released by Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Gross Domestic Product at current is estimated at Rs. 125.41 lakh crore (US\$ 19630938 million) in the last financial year ended March 31, 2015.

Fiscal deficit, gap between government's expenditure and revenue, at 3.99 per cent of GDP is lower than the downwardly revised estimate of 4.1 per cent provided in the government's first full Budget announced in February.

Source: Press Trust of India

