



— Research shaping the development agenda

## Infrastructure at the Centrestage of India's Priorities

— Shri Arun Jaitley

In 2018, India is hosting the third Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in Mumbai on 22-27 June 2018. Given numerous opportunities and challenges in different sectors of infrastructure in India and other member countries of the AIIB, the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, has identified the RIS, New Delhi, as the Knowledge Partner to conceptualize, plan and organize a number of events on pertinent issues of infrastructure financing in the run up to the AIIB Annual Meeting. As a part of this series, RIS would organise the lead-up events in collaboration with industry associations such as the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM) and the Export-Import Bank (EXIM Bank) of



Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Finance Minister of India, delivering the Inaugural Address at Curtain Raiser Ceremony of AIIB Annual Meeting held at New Delhi.

India. Besides, the Curtain Raiser Ceremony on 27 February 2018 in New Delhi, 8 lead-up events are being organised on different themes of infrastructure in different cities across India from March to June 2018. During the Annual Meeting in June 2018, a number of Host Country Seminars would be held as side events. These events aim to capture critical dimensions

of infrastructure financing such as sources and instruments of financing; legal, institutional and governance issues; emerging sectors of infrastructure investments including futuristic, resilient and digital infrastructure, gender infrastructure; new technology choices and alternatives; factors constraining flow of investment to different sectors; the ways and



Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways & Shipping, and Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs with the panelists for the Session on New Financing.

*"India aspires for Infrastructure creation not only in terms of conventional infrastructure but also rural infrastructure."*

*"Asia is the region which conventionally suffered from an infrastructure deficit. And Asia is the region where in the last few decades growth has started picking up..... covering up for the infrastructure deficit that it had. This is the region which has been providing the growth leadership as far as the world is concerned."*

— Shri Arun Jaitley

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### Mass Rapid Transport Systems for Urban Areas: Opportunities and Challenges



*Distinguished participants at the inaugural session.*

As reported, the Government of India would host the third Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at Mumbai in June 2018. In this regard, RIS is closely working with the Ministry of Finance as the Knowledge Partner for organizing thematic 'lead up events' on issues related to infrastructure financing in various parts of the country. After successful organization of the curtain raiser ceremony in New Delhi on 27 February 2018, a one day 'lead up event' was organized on the theme, Mass Rapid Transport Systems for Urban Areas: Opportunities and Challenges, at Kolkata on 13 March 2018 in association with ASSOCHAM, India.

The Inaugural Session began with the remarks of Ms Perminder Jeet Kaur, Director (East and North East), ASSOCHAM. Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS chaired the inaugural session. Shri Sanjay Jhunjhunwala, Chairman

(Eastern Region), ASSOCHAM, and Dr Kumar Vinay Pratap, Joint Secretary (Infrastructure, Policy and Finance), Ministry of Finance, Government of India made Welcome Remarks. Thereafter, Mr Soon-sik Lee, Senior Investment Operations Specialist, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Beijing, made a presentation. Mr Rakesh Ranjan, Advisor, NITI Aayog, New Delhi, made the lead presentation. Dr Mangu Singh, Managing Director, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited, New Delhi, delivered the Inaugural Address. The Session ended with Vote of Thanks by Dr Priyadarshi Dash, Research Associate, RIS.

The lead up event had several Panel Discussions on Mass Rapid Transport Systems for Urban Areas: Investment Opportunities, Financial Sustainability & Regulatory Framework, Financially Sustainable Operations

of MRTS; Investment Opportunities in MRTS for Urban Areas; and Technological Options for Sustainable Future Urban Mobility.

In the Valedictory session, Report from the Conference was presented by Mr Subhomoy Bhattacharjee, Consultant, RIS. Ms Bandana Preyashi, Director (Multilateral Institutions), Ministry of Finance, Government of India and Mr Rakesh Ranjan, Adviser, NITI Aayog made special remarks. Mr Pradeep Singh Kharola, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India Limited delivered the valedictory address. The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Mrs. Perminder Jeet Kaur Director (East and North East) and ASSOCHAM and Mr Soon-sik Lee, Senior Investment Operations Specialist, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Beijing.

The detailed agenda is uploaded on RIS website. ■

### Launching of 'Development Cooperation Review'



*Launch of Development Cooperation Review by Shri M.J. Akbar Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India.*

In the recent past several initiatives have been taken to promote development cooperation with fellow developing countries and several milestones have been crossed both in terms of quality and quantum. This has assumed wider global importance not only in terms of India's efforts for global development but also in the context of Triangular and South-South Cooperation, as many other developing countries have also stepped up similar efforts. At this point of time, all the details are scattered across national and other sites. It is in this context that RIS has planned to bring out a periodical, capturing this emerging dynamics in a monthly publication called 'Development Cooperation Review (DCR)'.

The DCR aspires to review and analyse bilateral/multilateral cooperation efforts, highlight key developments and issues in development cooperation, besides underlining its discernible trends and patterns. In evolving narrative, different modalities and divergent ideas are emerging. The purpose of the DCR is to highlight developments through the notion

of 'development compact' with all possible pluralities associated with the term and simultaneously inform the readers.

Shri M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs launched the DCR on 29 March 2018 at New Delhi. The programme started with a panel discussion and Welcome Remarks were made by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. Mr Seshadri Chari, Member, RIS Governing Council and General Body chaired the session. The eminent panelists were: Mr Prashant Agrawal, Joint Secretary (DPA-I), Ministry of External Affairs; Dr Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA; Dr Harsh V. Pant, Distinguished Fellow, ORF; Dr Benard Muok, Director, Centre for Research, Innovation and Technology (CRIT), Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Kenya; Ms Karin Costa Vazquez, Researcher & Advisor, School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University; Mr Sudhanshu S. Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Humanitarian Aid International; and Prof. Milindo Chakrabarti, Visiting Fellow, RIS.

The launching of the DCR was preceded by Setting the Context by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, and was chaired by Ambassador Mohan Kumar, Acting Chairman, RIS. H.E. Mr Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia; H.E. Ms. Chitranganee Wagiswara, High Commissioner, High Commissioner for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; H.E. Mr Baraka H. Luvanda, High Commissioner, High Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania; and Prof. Anuradha Chenoy, Chairperson, FIDC made special remarks.

Shri M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, released the DCR and also delivered the special address. In his thought provoking address, the Hon'ble Minister underlined that Development Cooperation should be based on the principle of shared prosperity with inherent strength of humanitarian consideration. The programme concluded with remarks extended by Ambassador Amar Sinha, Distinguished Fellow, RIS. ■

### Interactions with Students from New York University

RIS organized an interactive session with students from New York University on 8 January 2018 at New Delhi. The Inaugural Session had introduction by: Mr Cyrus Kamau Kihuha, Chief Scientist, Infrastructure (Engineering) and ICT, National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation, Republic of Kenya; Ms. Heather Hollow, NYU; Mr Ariya Das, NYU; Ms. Maria Florencia Collados, Foreign Trade Officer, Santa Fe Government Investment and Foreign Trade Agency, Argentine Republic.

The session was followed by Welcome Remarks by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. Ambassador Amar Sinha, Distinguished Fellow, RIS chaired the session. Dr Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament delivered the Inaugural Address. Dr S.R. Rao, Advisor, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, made special remarks. Special lecture on Science, Technology and the Global Society was delivered by Prof. Thomas Pogge, Leitner Prof.



*Dr Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, delivering the inaugural address.*

of Philosophy and International Affairs, Yale University delivered a Special Lecture.

Thereafter, an Interactive session on Indian Economy: Development Priorities was organized in which Mr Subhomoy Bhattacharjee, Consultant, RIS; and Dr Sabyasachi Saha, Assistant Prof., RIS gave their point of view. In the Interactive Session on SDGs, Dr Ashok Jain, Adviser (RD) NITI Aayog, Government of India UN

Representative addressed the participants. A Panel Discussion on Multilateralism, Democracy and Economic Growth was also moderated by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. The panelists were: Mr Rajeev Kher, Distinguished Fellow, RIS; Dr S.Y. Quraishi, former Election Commissioner of India; and Dr Sanjaya Baru, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). ■

### Overview of Argentina's G20 Presidency

Buenos Aires, Argentina has taken up the next Chair for G20. It has already set out key priority areas and possible outcome of G20 Summit. In this context, RIS has initiated a dedicated work programme on G20 and as part of this organized a Roundtable on 'Overview of Argentina's G20 Presidency' jointly with the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) on 26 February

2018 at Seminar Room, NMML, New Delhi.

The programme began with welcome remarks by Mr Shakti Sinha, Director, NMML and Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. Mr Shaktikant Das, India's Sherpa to the G20 chaired the session. Mr Amar Bhattacharya, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Brookings; Prof. Manmohan Agarwal, RBI Chair

Prof., Centre for Development Studies; Mr Alok A. Dimri, Joint Secretary (MER), Ministry of External Affairs; and Dr Ramkishan S. Rajan, Vice-Dean (Research) and Prof., Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore were the main panelists. A large number of participants interacted in the open discussion that followed. ■

### SDGs targets at End poverty in all its forms everywhere

RIS has been actively engaged with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since the process of evolution and in adoption in September 2015. As part of the major work programme of the SDGs, the RIS has pursued for effective implementation of the Agenda of the SDGs in the domestic and international process, particularly from the Indian point of view with the focus on localization of SDGs. It is also collaborating with key international think-tanks and organizations in India on specific issues related to the SDGs to strengthen knowledge partnerships. The NITI Aayog, Government of India, is the nodal agency to coordinate and lead the implementation of the SDGs in India.

Since 2016, NITI Aayog, UN India and RIS have jointly organized a number of high-level National Consultations focusing on different SDGs. India also organized high level panel discussions at the UN Headquarters in New York and UN Foundation New York Office



*Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, delivering the keynote address.*

during 14-19 July, 2017, alongside the UN High Level Political Forum, where it formally presented its *Voluntary National Review Report, 2017*. In this endeavour, RIS along with NITI Aayog and UN India organized National Consultation on the goal 1 to 'End poverty in all its forms everywhere' on 14 March 2018 at New Delhi. Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Government of India delivered the keynote address.

The programme began with Welcome Remarks by Dr Ashok Kumar Jain, Adviser, NITI Aayog. Initial Remarks were made by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS. Shri Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator India and Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog gave their points of view. Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog gave special address. The detailed agenda of the programme is available on the RIS website. ■

### Panel Discussion on 'South African Presidency of IORA'

RIS organized a Panel Discussion on 'South African Presidency of IORA and forthcoming BRICS Summit' on 20 January 2018 at RIS. Dr Anil Sooklal, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa was the lead speaker. Ambassador (Dr) Mohan Kumar, Vice-Chairman, RIS chaired the discussion. Mr Alok A. Dimri, Joint Secretary (MER), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and Mr B.J. Joubert, Acting High Commissioner/ Minister



*Distinguished participants at the panel discussion.*

Plenipotentiary, South African High Commission, also graced this

occasion with their remarks. The discussion was very fruitful. ■

## 5<sup>th</sup> Roundtable of the ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks (AINTT)

ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS in collaboration with the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, Ministry of External Affairs of India, Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry organized the 5<sup>th</sup> Roundtable of the ASEAN-India Network of Think-Tanks (AINTT) on 6-7 January 2018 at Jakarta, Indonesia. The title of the Roundtable was “ASEAN and India: Partners of Integration in Asia”. Several experts and scholars from ASEAN countries and India attended this roundtable to exchange views on strengthening the already established linkages in political, economic and socio-cultural areas among them.

Welcome Address was delivered by Amb. Suresh Reddy, Indian Ambassador to ASEAN. Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon’ble External Affairs Minister of India delivered the Inaugural Address. Keynote Address was given by Mrs. Retno Marsudi, Hon’ble Foreign Minister of Indonesia. Special Remarks were delivered by H.E. Mr Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN. Vote of Thanks was delivered by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, New Delhi. The 4<sup>th</sup> AINTT Proceedings on “ASEAN-India: Strengthening the Ties That Bind” was released at



Release of AINTT Report by Hon’ble External Affairs Minister of India and Foreign Minister of Indonesia.

this roundtable. All the ASEAN countries nominated their officials and experts to the Roundtable, and over 100 participants including senior officials attended the 5<sup>th</sup> AINTT roundtable.

The Roundtable had five major sessions to identify maritime challenges between ASEAN and India that need to be addressed through greater cooperation; to review the barriers to services trade between ASEAN and India for making a series of recommendations to strengthen the economic relations; to deal with cultural heritage of ASEAN and India and

identify the scope and opportunities in promoting shared cultural relations; to identify the barriers to educational cooperation and design a way forward to strengthen the partnership and finally, to discuss the potential and challenges of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and implication for India and other dialogue partners. The Roundtable analysed and placed together the various components that would help strengthening the partnership between ASEAN and India. Dr Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC presented the summary of the roundtable and extended the Vote of Thanks. ■

### Development Studies, International Relations and Public Policy

Lately, there has been great emphasis on integrating domestic and external sectors for stimulating economic growth. This calls for analyzing having informed debate on international economic relations, development studies, and the interface with

policy formulation. RIS in this process of having a common platform where all stakeholders can exchange views for evolving policy cohesion. RIS organized the brainstorming session on ‘Interaction among Researchers for Development Studies, International

Relations and Public Policy’ on 13 January 2018 at New Delhi. Dr Mohan Kumar, Vice Chairman, RIS and Amb. S.T. Devare, Chairman, RIS Research Advisory Council also the graced the session and led the discussions. ■

### International Conference on “ASEAN-India @ 25: Retrospection and the Way Ahead”

To commemorate 25 Years of ASEAN-India Partnership, ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS organised an International Conference on “ASEAN-India @25: Retrospection and the Way Ahead” at New Delhi on 12 January 2018. Welcome Address was given by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS; Opening Address was delivered by Amb. Mohan Kumar, Vice-Chairman, RIS. H.E. Mr Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, Ambassador of Indonesia in India gave the Special Address. Special Remarks were given by Amb. Sudhir Devare, Chairperson of RIS Reseach Advisory Council and Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Dr Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC made a presentation on e-compendium.

The event also marked the release of e-compendium of RIS' Contributions to ASEAN-India Relations. The Conference was divided into three sessions: Look



*Release of AIC-RIS e-compendium on ASEAN-India relations.*

East to Act East: India's Journey from Dialogue Partnership to Strategic Partnership; achievement and way forward on ASEAN-India Economic Partnership; and ASEAN and India in an integrated Asia: The way ahead. Senior scholars from Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia attended the event as

panelists. ASEAN HOMs in Delhi also attended and nominated their senior representatives. The panelists and participants of the Conference were government officials, practitioners, academicians, researchers and media personnel. Prof. Prabir De extended the Vote of Thanks. ■

### Brainstorming Session On India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue

RIS has recently launched an IBSA Fellowship Programme, as part of it, a Brainstorming Session on India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue was organized on 27 March 2018 at RIS. Ambassador Amar Sinha, Distinguished Fellow, RIS chaired. Ms Camila Amorim Jardim, IBSA Fellow Researcher in RIS, PhD candidate in the International Relations in PUC-Rio (Brazil) and research collaborator at BRICS Policy Center (Brazil) and Mr Daniel Martins Silva, IBSA Fellow Researcher in RIS, M.Sc in International Relations from San Tiago Dantas Program (Brazil) and



*RIS-IBSA Fellows presenting their research findings.*

research associate at South-South Cooperation Research and Policy Center (Brazil) presented their

salient research findings. This was followed by open discussion. ■

### Understanding the Digital Economy: What Is It and How Can It Transform Asia?

ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS organised jointly with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) a workshop on “Understanding the Digital Economy: What is it and How Can it Transform Asia?” on 21-22 February 2018 at New Delhi. Welcome Address was given by Dr Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC at RIS. Opening Remarks were made by Dr Chul Ju Kim, Deputy Dean, ADBI and Introduction to the Workshop was delivered by Dr Aladdin D. Rillo, Senior Economist, ADBI. Special Address was given by Mr Prasanto Roy, Vice-President, National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), New Delhi. Keynote Address was delivered by Mr Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, New Delhi. About 60 participants from Asian and African countries attended this workshop.



*Participants of the workshop.*

The workshop was conducted in eight sessions to understand digital economy such as big data, mobile technology, and the internet; role of digital economy in facilitating inclusive trade; impact of financial technology on payment and lending in Asia; special session on country panel discussion on how to promote the digital economy and what critical issues to address; role of technology, innovation

and education in a digital world; securing the digital economy on trust, privacy and transparency and finally on policies to promote and manage the digital economy. The concluding remarks were made by Dr Chul Ju Kim, Deputy Dean, ADBI and Dr Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC at RIS. Finally, the Vote of Thanks was extended by Dr Durairaj Kumarasamy, Consultant, AIC at RIS. ■

### Discussion Meeting on ‘Research Priorities for the IOR Region’

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has occupied a prominent place in RIS work programme since 1990s. Currently, as part of this programme, the institute has launched Blue Economy Forum (BEF). Earlier, the RIS had brought out an extremely rich report on ‘Prospects of Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean’. A set of Policy Briefs, deliberating upon the idea of blue economy has also been brought out and is made available on the BEF webpage.

In continuation of the work programme, RIS planned a Discussion Meeting on ‘Research Priorities for the IOR Region’ on 16 January 2018 at New Delhi. The 19 IORA Member States had also approved MoU between RIS and IORA Secretariat for promoting closer research ties. Coinciding with the Discussion



*Signing of MoU in the esteemed presence of Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen. (Dr) V.K. Singh (Retd.).*

Meeting, the MoU was also signed between RIS and IORA Secretariat in the presence of Hon'ble Gen. (Dr) V.K. Singh (Retd.), Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India. The programme began

with Welcome Remarks: Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. On this occasion, Ambassador K.V Bhagirath, Secretary General, IORA made special remarks.

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### Role of Sri Lanka in South Asia and Beyond: Emerging New Contours

RIS organised a special Lecture on 'Role of Sri Lanka in South Asia and Beyond: Emerging new Contours' by Dr Dinusha Panditaratne, Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Sri Lanka on 19 January 2018 at New Delhi. The Programme began with welcome remarks by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS. Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar, Former Indian Diplomat chaired the session. H.E. Ms. Chitranganee Wagiswara, High Commissioner of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, New Delhi made special remarks.

In her lecture, Dr Dinusha Panditaratne broadly centred her presentation on the present and future role of Sri Lanka in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. In particular, she highlighted the new vision that Sri Lanka is currently embarking upon based on the increasing assertion of a new geographical identity i.e. the Indian Ocean identity by its people. In the course of her presentation, she referred to data and trends to substantiate this claim. The new contours of Sri Lanka's role was captured in four interrelated factors such as the rise to a new geographical identity defined as the centre of the Indian Ocean from the traditional South Asian identity, shift from focus on political diplomacy to economic diplomacy, from strategic non-alignment in the past to cautious but active engagement with regional powers, and a shaper not only just a follower of international norms.

In the post-conflict period, Sri Lanka experienced a relatively better political stability along with a growing economy and successful experiment to date with coalition government since 2015. The



*Dr Dinusha Panditaratne, Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Sri Lanka delivering the special lecture.*

perception of a new Indian Ocean identity is rooted in the strategic location of the country in the Indian Ocean as well as the volume of trade and commerce conducted through the Sri Lankan waters. The country is the mid-way for international maritime traffic between Asia, Middle East and Europe. It helps the country to visualise itself as a stronger nation than just a small island nation. However, this new identity of Sri Lanka is not to be viewed as the frustration with the South Asian identity. Instead it is the extended scope for the country to leverage its growing role in the region and at the global level. Within South Asia, Sri Lanka has performed well in comparison to its South Asian peers in terms of a number of social and economic indicators. For instance, in terms of life expectancy at birth, literacy and mobile phone subscriptions Sri Lanka is placed relatively better than to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. On economic front, Sri Lanka's trade with rest of the world has increased over the years. Further, FDI flows to Sri Lanka have gone up in the post-war era. The number of tourists visiting the country have also increased

considerably in the recent years, and the sector offers vast potential for further diversification and value addition in future.

With respect to diplomatic engagements, Sri Lanka has strategically adhered to non-alignment. However, the country's dissociation with any global alliance of powers has to be understood from the perspective of the difference between the principle of non-alignment and the non-aligned movement. Since its independence, the country has chosen political diplomacy as a priority over the economic diplomacy. However, the nature of diplomatic engagements has changed in terms of content and direction over the time. Sri Lanka is now seeking to increase the number of Free Trade Agreements and CEPAs both within South Asia and with countries in other regions of the world. Along with five Southern states of India, the country envisions the possibility of an economic sub-region also. Thinkers view the current diplomatic regime of Sri Lanka as a new non-alignment. Firstly, as mentioned above, it is the differentiation between the

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### Heartfelt Tribute to Dr Baldev Raj

The eminent Indian Scientist, Dr Baldev Raj left his mortal Coil on 6 January 2018. It is indeed a great loss for the country and the international community. Dr Baldev Raj was also an active Member of RIS Governing Council and General Body. In order to pay tribute to Dr Baldev Raj, RIS organized a condolence meeting on 16 January 2018 at New Delhi. Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Dr Ram Ramaswamy President, Indian Academy of Science (IASc) and Ambuj D. Sagar, Head, School of Public Policy, IIT Delhi all paid their heartfelt tribute to the departed soul. ■



Condolence meet for Dr Baldev Raj.

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principle of non-alignment and the non-alignment movement itself. Perhaps, Sri Lanka embraced mostly the principle of non-alignment than its active role in non-aligned movement. At the global level, the country's scope of engagement with other countries has widened on account of signing of a number of free trade agreements, diversity of investment partners for infrastructure financing, active involvement in IORA, Belt & Road Initiative, BIMSTEC and other regional for as and so on.

Another dimension to Sri Lanka's perceived elevation as a

crucial player in the international relations is its contribution to shaping international norms. Traditionally, it had remained a follower of international norms and conventions. Unlike the past, the country is now being viewed with importance and attracts international attention. Colombo now is a site for the regional offices of a number of inter-governmental organisations, including from later this year, the Amnesty International. Facilitated by the uncertainty over the liberal economic order in the West due to protectionist policies by the United States and European countries, Sri Lanka is poised to

support the vision for an Indian Ocean Hub via rule-based order and regional integration. The country observes a positive link between the economic diplomacy and the rule of law which is getting translated into country's acceptance at the global level. The current government of Sri Lanka also proposes a Code of Conduct for Indian Ocean. In addition, the success of small island countries in other parts of the world prompts Sri Lanka to explore regionally-inspired global engagements much more actively than before. The lecture was followed by open discussion. ■

### Delegations received at RIS

- A delegation led by Mr Yutaka Funada, Global Head, Credit Assessment and Risk Management Group, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Tokyo visited RIS on 16 February, 2018 for an interactive session about Japan Bank for International Cooperation (a governmental financial institution in Japan) and its participation in infrastructure Financing in India and discuss about the concept of 'free and open Indo- pacific'. The members of the JBIC delegation included: Mr Etsuaki Yoshida, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Tokyo; Mr Ichiro Hayashidani, Chief Representative, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).
- A delegation from Xinjiang Am chi Uyghur Medicine Research Center, China visited RIS on 1 March 2018 and held wide ranging discussions on traditional medicine in India and China, including the position of Uyghur medicine in China's health-care system.

### International Economic Issues and Development Policy (IEIDP)

RIS organized its flagship capacity building programme on 'International Economic Issues and Development Policy (IEIDP)' from 12 February to 9 March 2018 at New Delhi. The programme was conducted under the auspices of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme funded by the Ministry of External Affairs. Twenty eight delegates from 21 developing countries took part in it.

The agenda of the programme included sessions on: Interactive Session on International Economic Issues and Development Policy; International Financial Architecture (UN-FFD and G20); New Financial Institutions - the NDB and the AIIB; The Asian Century and India's Act East Policy; Blue Economy and the Indian Ocean Rim Association; Group Discussion/



*Participants of the ITEC Capacity Building Programme on International Economic Issues and Development Policy with RIS faculty members.*

Preparation of Research Article; SDG Indicators and Monitoring – The Challenges; Indian Culture and Social Transformations; and Strengthening People's Participation and Improving Governance - Role of Civil Society

in India. Eminent experts were invited to deliver special lectures and interact with the participants. The detailed agenda is available on the RIS website. ■

### ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Science Diplomacy

RIS organized a ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Science Diplomacy from 8-19 January 2018 in New Delhi.

The Inaugural Session of the programme was held in conjunction with an interactive session with Students from New York University at New Delhi on 8 January 2018, as reported in this issue of the RIS Diary (page 4).

The agenda of the programme included special lectures on Technology Assessment and Science, Technology Policy, A Conceptual Framework for Science Diplomacy, and Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of Science Diplomacy. This was followed by a Panel Discussion on India's Own Experiences across specific sectors- Such as Chandrayaan,



*Participants of the ITEC Capacity Building Programme on Science Diplomacy with RIS faculty members.*

Space Collaboration, Pharma Sector; and Agriculture. The next series of special lectures were on: Developing Countries in the Realm of Science and Diplomacy and South-South Cooperation, India's Science Diplomacy, Technology, Trade and Science Diplomacy, New Issues

and Science Diplomacy, SDGs and Development Priorities. Eminent experts covered various dimensions of these topics in their lectures and interactive sessions with the participants. The detailed agenda is uploaded on RIS website. ■

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means to overcome those constraints; and sensitizing government and other concerned agencies for ensuring enabling environment for promoting investments in infrastructure sectors.

The Curtain Raiser Ceremony was organized on 27 February 2018 in New Delhi by the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, AIIB, and the RIS. The inaugural session of the ceremony began with the Welcome Remarks by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS followed by a Keynote Address by Mr Jin Liqun, President AIIB, and an inaugural address by Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Finance Minister, Government of India. Mr Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary (Economic Affairs), Ministry of Finance, Government of India while setting the context, informed august audience that AIIB is the first multilateral institution in the world essentially floated by the borrowers. This was followed by first presentation by Sir Danny Alexander, Vice President & Corporate Secretary, AIIB; and Dr M.M. Kutty, Additional Secretary (Economic Affairs), Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Mr T.S. Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India made Special Remarks. The inaugural session was concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS.

The next session on 'New Financing Paradigms for Sustainable

Infrastructure' was chaired by Shri. Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India. In this session, Mr Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways & Shipping, Government of India, delivered the Keynote Address.

Prof. Amitabh Kundu, Distinguished Fellow, RIS, New Delhi; Dr Amar Bhattacharya, Former Director, G24 Secretariat on International Monetary Affairs and Development, Washington, D.C.; Dr D.J. Pandian, Vice President

*"The Highways and Shipping sectors in India today are financially very sound and offer tremendous investment opportunities under their respective flagship programmes - Bharatmala and Sagarmala"*

- Shri Nitin Gadkari

and Chief Investment Officer, AIIB; Dr Junaid Kamal Ahmad, India Country Director, World Bank; and Mr Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director, India Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank were the panelists. A large number of participants took part in the open discussion.

During the discussions in the curtain raiser, the main issues

that emerged were increase in the demand for infrastructure financing. Simultaneously, there would be a need to efficiently mobilize private capital even though the role of public resources would continue to be critical. Also along with the traditional infrastructure sectors, the focus has shifted to inclusive, resilient, quality and sustainable infrastructure. Emerging markets and developing economies would require massive investments in infrastructure in the form of roads, metro railways, ports, digital infrastructure, smart cities, renewable energy etc in order to maintain the growth momentum witnessed in those economies during recent years. In that drive, the role of development banks is critical particularly from the perspective of integrated development of the countries.

In the Post-Lunch session, a High Level Roundtable on Infrastructure Financing was also held in which experts deliberated on issues related to sectors such as: Mass Rapid Transportation Systems; Port & Coastal Infrastructure; Urban Development, Digital Infrastructure, Inclusive, Resilient & Futuristic Infrastructure, Regional Development, Clean and Renewable Energy, Water and Sanitation, and PPP & Innovation in Resource Mobilization.

The detail programme of the Curtain Raiser is uploaded on RIS website. ■

*Discussion Meeting on 'Research Priorities for the IOR Region'*

*continued from page 8...*

Hon'ble Gen. (Dr) V.K. Singh (Retd.), Minister of State for External Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India delivered special address.

After remarks by Dr S.K. Mohanty, Professor, RIS a Panel Discussion took place. Dr Pankaj Jha, Assistant Prof. & Assistant Dean

for Global Engagement, O.P Jindal University, School of International Affairs; Dr Ruchita Beri, Senior Research Associate & Coordinator, Africa, LAC & UN, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses; Mr Amarendra Khatua, formerly Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations; Ambassador

Aftab Seth, Chairman and CEO, India Global Link Co., Ltd; Ambassador Anup Mudgal, Former Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius; and Dr Swaran Singh, Prof., Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University were the distinguished panelists. ■

## Contributions to Outside Policy Dialogues

### Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi

#### Director General

- Participated in the First PIO-Parliamentarian Conference on A Journey from Struggle to Parliament organised by the Ministry of External Affairs on 9 January 2018 at New Delhi.
- Made presentation on Trade and Economic Policy priorities at the Interaction of Economists and Sector Experts with the Hon'ble Prime Minister on Economic Policy: The Road Ahead organised by NITI Aayog on 10 January 2018 at New Delhi.
- Chaired the Panel Discussion on 'Accelerating Sustainable Trade and Investment' at the India-Israel Business Innovation Forum organised jointly by CII and Embassy of Israel, New Delhi on 15 January 2018 at New Delhi.
- Participated in the Expert Committee Meeting to review the pre-proposals on Bio-banking facilities, organised by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India on 15 January 2018 at New Delhi.
- Panel Members at the Joint Meeting on Collaborative Research on 'Urban Transformation in India' organised jointly by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), UK on 23-24 January 2018 at New Delhi.
- Participated as a Member in the Second Meeting of the CII Committee on International Trade Policy 2017-18 held on 5 February 2018 at New Delhi.
- Lead Discussant in the session on 'A Critical Historical Perspective of Development Paradigms' at the Expert Meeting on Rethinking Development Strategies organised by OECD Development Center on 8 February 2018 at Paris.
- Made a presentation on 'SSC for Overcoming Global Challenges' at the Meeting on South-South Cooperation in a New Development Context: towards a Consensus Agenda for Action, organised by the UN Office on South-South Cooperation and OECD Development Center on 9 February 2018 at Paris.
- Made a presentation on 'Collective efforts for Development of Indore: Role of Education Institutions' at the Brainstorming organised jointly by DAVV University and Center

for Contemporary Studies, Indore on "Student-Faculty Cooperation for an Enriched City and Society" on 12 February 2018 at Indore.

- Chaired the session on "New Issues: Electronic Commerce at the Brainstorming on WTO in Post-MC11 Phase" held on 19 February 2018 at New Delhi, organised by the WTO Center, IIFT and Ministry of Commerce, Government of India.
- Participated in the Meeting of the Speaker's Research Initiative (SRI), Group on Health, Agriculture and Education held on 23 February 2018 at New Delhi.
- Chaired the Open House Discussion at the Stakeholder Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security: WFP India's Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 organised by the World Food Programme on 28 February 2018 at New Delhi.
- Led the 'Interactive Session on Leave no One Behind - Awareness Programme on Sustainable Development Goals' organised by CARENIDHI on 3 March 2018 at New Delhi.
- Participated as a Member of the ICSSR Selection Committee of National Fellowship organised by ICSSR held on 5 March 2018 at New Delhi.
- Delivered Inaugural Address at the International Conference on Innovation, Knowledge Accumulation and Development in the Era of Fourth Industrial Revolution organised by the Department of Economics, Punjabi University, Patiala on 15 March 2018 at Patiala.
- Participated in the India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 organised jointly by the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Government of Japan on 19 March 2018 at New Delhi.
- Participated in the Discussion Meeting on 'Blue Economy' organised by NITI Aayog held on 20 March 2018 at New Delhi.
- Made a presentation on 'AAGC Vision Document' at the Annual Conference of Association for Asian Studies (AAS) on 24 March 2018 at Washington DC.
- Chaired the session on 'India-UK: Building a Framework for Future Cooperation in Africa' at the 13th CII EXIM Bank Conclave on India-

Africa Project Partnership on 26 March 2018 at New Delhi.

- Made a presentation at the Roundtable on 'Development Cooperation Initiatives' at the 13th CII EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership on 27 March 2018 at New Delhi.
- Made a presentation on India-Africa: Deepening the Engagement at the 4th India-Africa Strategic Dialogue - India and Africa: Deepening the Security Engagement organised by IDSA on 28 March 2018 at New Delhi.

### Prof. S. K. Mohanty

- Participated in the Review Meeting on the report on 'India - Mauritius joint study report on the comprehensive economic cooperation and partnership agreement', organised by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, New Delhi on 5 January 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'India's Engagement with LAC Countries in Trade and Investment' at the Discussion Meeting organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 5 January 2018.
- Participated in the Third Round of Discussion Meeting between Mauritius and India on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) and Lead the Indian Delegation at Mauritius from 22-24 January 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'Service Sector' at the Discussion Meeting organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 2 February 2018.
- Participated in the 'Digital Video Conference between India and Mauritius on India - Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement' organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 5 February 2018.
- Participated in the 'Brainstorming session on WTO in the Post-MC11 Phase' organised by Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 19 February 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'Synchronising India's LAC Policy with Country's Journey towards a Five Trillion Dollar Economy by 2025' at the Discussion Meeting organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 22 February 2018.

## Contributions to Outside Policy Dialogues

- Participated in the Review Meeting on the report on 'India - Mauritius joint study report on the comprehensive economic cooperation and partnership agreement', organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 23 February 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'Blue Economy - A New Paradigm of Development: Approach Towards Sustainable Marine Cooperation' at the TERI-KAS Resource Dialogue IV on Marine Resource-Sustainable development through geopolitics and trade, held at Chennai on 1 March 2018.
- Delivered lecture on 'Growth Dynamism in SIDS: Towards Sustainable Policy Choice', at the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi on 8 March 2018.
- Participated in a review meeting on India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), organized by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 13 March 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'Blue Economy: Emerging Challenges for India', at the dialogue meeting on Blue Economy organized by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, NITI Aayog, New Delhi on 20 March 2018.
- Participated in the Discussion Meeting on the 'Proposal for Institutional Reform of the IORAG', organised by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi on 22 March 2018.
- Made a presentation on 'India's Economic Engagement with the Pacific Alliance' at the Discussion Meeting on LAC Study organised by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 24 March 2018.
- Participated in the Discussion Meeting on India's Engagement with Latin America and Caribbean countries in Trade and Investment organised by Department of Commerce, New Delhi on 28 March 2018.

### Prof. T. C. James

#### Visiting Fellow

- Participated in the workshop on registration of Marayoor Jaggery as a Geographical Indication of Goods organised by the Government of Kerala, Department of Agriculture and the Kerala Agricultural University at Marayoor, Idukki, Kerala on 5 January, 2018 and made a presentation on the technical and legal issues relating to registration of a geographical indication and the economic benefits of such registration for the farmers.
- Participated in the workshop on 'Indian Pharmaceutical Industry: Challenges of Industrial and Technological Upgrading' organised by Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi on 23 January 2018 and made a presentation on Pharmaceutical Policy and Future Agenda.
- Made a presentation on 'New Drug Development and Issues related to IPR' at the International Conference on Unani Medicine organised by the Ministry of AYUSH and the Central Council of Unani Medicine in New Delhi on 10th February, 2018.

### Dr P. K. Anand

#### Visiting Fellow

- Made presentations and participated in detailed meetings on SDG 2 Roadmap Framework on 13th and 14th January 2018 organized by WFP, New Delhi.
- Made Special Remarks during the Inaugural Session of two events on "Training Programmes on Social Impact Assessment, Resettlement and Rehabilitation" on 15th January 2018 and 5th February 2018 organized by TERI, New Delhi.
- Made Remarks as a Panelist in the Session on "Round Table: new frontiers for evaluation in the context of SDGs", Chaired the Session on "Interactive roundtable session on capacity building in evaluation" and made Remarks during Valedictory Session on 8th and 9th February in the Evalfest 2018 organized by Evaluation Community of India (ECOI) at New Delhi, with other evaluation partners.

- Made Special Remarks in a Seminar on 'The Assam Experience of Implementing the SDGs' on 16 January 2018 organized by TERI, New Delhi.
- Made remarks and suggestions in the "Stakeholder Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security: WFP India's Country Strategic Plan on SDG 2" on 28 February 2018 organized by WFP, New Delhi.

### Shri Krishna Kumar

#### Visiting Fellow

- Made a presentation and participated in detailed meetings on "Draft Report on SDG 2 Roadmap Framework" on 13th and 14th January 2018 at WFP, New Delhi.
- Made Remarks as a Panelist in the Session on "Round Table: new frontiers for evaluation in the context of SDGs" and participated in the Session on "Interactive roundtable session on capacity building in evaluation" organized by Evaluation Community of India (ECOI) on 8 February at New Delhi.
- Made Special Remarks in a Seminar on "The Assam Experience of implementing the SDGs" on 16th January 2018 at TERI.
- Participated in the "Stakeholder Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security: WFP India's Country Strategic Plan on SDG 2" on 28th February 2018 organized by WFP, New Delhi.

### Dr K. Ravi Srinivas

#### Visiting Fellow

- Made a presentation on Fourth Industrial Revolution, Globalization and Regionalism at the Seminar on "Emerging Trends in Globalization and Regionalism" held on 8th Feb 2018, ICWA, at New Delhi.

### Dr Sabyasachi Saha

#### Assistant Prof.

- Participated in the International Conference on Innovations, Knowledge Accumulation and Development in the Era of Fourth Industrial Revolution held on 1-16 March, 2018 at the Panjabi University, Patiala and made a presentation on "Industry 4.0: The Near Myth and Mammoth Realities" at the Plenary Session on Fourth Industrial Revolution and South Asia.

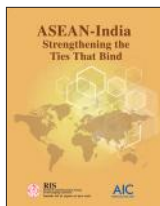
## Latest Publications

### BOOK/REPORTS



#### Global Governance, Development Initiatives and South-South Cooperation

RIS, New Delhi, 2018



#### ASEAN-India Strengthening the Ties That Bind, 2018

AIC – RIS, New Delhi, 2018



#### E-Compendium of RIS Publications of ASEAN-India Relations, 2018

AIC – RIS, New Delhi, 2018

### RIS/AAGC DISCUSSION PAPERS

- #222 **Cooperation in Disaster and Climate Risk Management in AAGC** by *Rajeev Issar*
- #221 **Cooperation in Agriculture in AAGC: Innovations and Agro-Processing** by *Krishna Ravi Srinivas*
- #220 **Raising Farming Efficiency for Sustained Agriculture in Asia Africa Growth Corridor** by *T. P. Rajendran*

### RIS POLICY BRIEF

- #80 **Chabahar Port and India** by *Subhomoy Bhattacharjee*, Consultant, RIS.

### FITM POLICY BRIEF

**Access and Expansion of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library and Incentivization of Innovations**  
RIS, No. 1, New Delhi, 2017

### RIS DIARY

Vol. 14 No. 1, January 2018

#### Contributions to Outside Publications by RIS Faculty

- Chaturvedi, Sachin. 2018. 'AAGC: Moving towards Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region'. *TGII India and World*, Special Issue on India-Africa Interwined Dreams, Vol. 1 No. 4.
- Chaturvedi, Sachin (co-ed.). 2018. *Manufacturing and Jobs in South Asia: Strategy for Sustainable Economic Growth*. New Delhi: Springer.
- Chaturvedi, Sachin. 2018. 'India-ASEAN ties hold the key to Indo-Pacific stability'. *Hindustan Times*, January 26.
- De, Prabir. (ed.) 2018. *Twenty Years of BIMSTEC: Promoting Regional Cooperation and Integration in the Bay of Bengal Region*. BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka.
- De, Prabir. 2018. "How India Faces Trade Protections? An Analysis of Trade Barriers", in Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) (ed.) *Studies in Comprehensive Regional Strategies: Collected Papers*. Seoul.
- De, Prabir. 2018. "Indo-Asean is new model for regional cooperation", *The Economic Times*. 26 January 2018.
- De, Prabir. 2018. "BBIN Challenges". *Trade Insight*, Vol. 13, No. 3.
- De, Prabir. 2018. "Celebrating 25 Years of ASEAN-India Partnership: What Makes it So Unique?". *India Foundation Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1.
- De, Prabir. 2018. "Northeast India: A Bridge to ASEAN". *India and World*, Vol. 1, No. 3.
- Kumarasamy, Durairaj and Singh, Prakash. 2018., "Access to Finance, Financial Development and Firm Exportability: Experience from Asia-Pacific Countries", *Asian Economic Journal*, John Wiley Publications, Vol. 32, No.1, pp.15-38.
- Agrawal, Pradeep and Kumarasamy, Durairaj. 2018., "Impact of Foreign Capital Flows in Emerging Asia", in Pradeep Agrawal (ed.) *Reviving Economic Growth in India*, Cambridge University Press, pp.209-229.



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Core IV-B, Fourth Floor, India Habitat Centre  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003, India., Ph. 91-11-24682177-80  
Fax: 91-11-24682173-74, Email: [dgooffice@ris.org.in](mailto:dgooffice@ris.org.in)  
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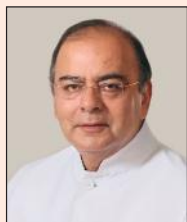
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Managing Editor: Tish Malhotra

## India Aspires to Improve Quality of Life of Its People



**Shri Arun Jaitley**  
*Hon'ble Finance Minister,  
Government of India*

President of the AIIB, Mr Jin Liqun, Vice-president Sir Danny Alexander, my other colleagues on the dais and friends, let me at the very outset welcome the President of the AIIB and all his colleagues to India as a part of this opening exercise as a curtain raiser for this year's third meeting of the AIIB in June at Mumbai. I recollect that a few years ago, when we had to take in India a critical decision as to whether India would be a part of the AIIB or not, we debated it from various points of views. And after three years of its active functioning, I am glad, with the wisdom of hindsight, that India agreed to be not only a participant but also a very active participant in the AIIB.

In a short span of less than three years under the President's leadership and with the cooperation of all members and his team, the bank has already started functioning fairly effectively. Last year in June when I went to Jeju for the second meeting, many of us went there with the idea that we would get some time to spare and look around at the beautiful island. But I found to my surprise that the kind of buzzing activity at the AIIB, it was no less different from what we see at Davos or what we see at the annual meetings of other multilateral institutions. There were the formal meetings, there were the informal meetings, there were the bilaterals, there were the sectoral meetings, there were the seminars, and it was booming with activity. The bank indeed has come of age within a very limited period. And of course as has already been mentioned, there is a pipeline of many projects and India has been in the forefront of providing a pipeline of some of those active projects, that already five of them have been actively funded by the bank itself. And there are many others, which are under active consideration.

Asia is the region which conventionally suffered from an infrastructure deficit. Asia is the region where in the last few decades growth has started picking up. It is the region, which really has even in terms of poverty alleviation, needs to grow faster in order to eliminate it, to be in a position to bring up the standard of living of its own people and cover up for the infrastructure deficit that it had. This is the region which has been providing the growth leadership as far as the world is concerned. China has demonstrated it for almost three decades that covering up infrastructure deficit and growing faster, it could effectively change the destiny of many people. In the last several years, India has been on a high growth trajectory itself. And infrastructure creation has been almost on the top of one of India's infrastructure priorities.

Today, India aspires not only in the sense of conventional infrastructure but also of the rural infrastructure, to be developed to an extent where the quality of life of its people does improve effectively. There are areas where we are doing much better, our highways, our airports, our ports, our power productivity, and there are areas like railways, where we have an existing infrastructure, where we need to modernise and hasten the pace of that improvement. Regarding urban infrastructure, I am glad that this time as a part of the curtain raising efforts, we are going beyond the traditional one or two big cities and are going into other Indian cities where I can actually today see a number of them where infrastructure effectively has significantly improved.

I am given to understand that one of those suggestions is that in the main event in June, we would ensure that representatives of those cities around the country also are invited to become active participants in the events which are to be organised as a part of the annual conference itself. But it is rural infrastructure also which is of utmost importance to India, and within the limitation of our own resources, whether it is connectivity by the road network, provision for rural housing, provision for rural sanitation, electrification, these are important milestones, which we have been trying to achieve in the country.

I think with infrastructure almost on the centrestage as far as our priorities are concerned, both within the potential of our domestic resources as also with the assistance of multilateral agencies like the bank itself, I am quite certain that this distance which we would be able to effectively cover. Since this is a high priority item for India, I am glad that after Beijing and Jeju, Mumbai itself has been chosen as the venue for this particular conference. I am sure with each annual meeting, the activities of the bank, its resources, its pipeline of projects itself are going to expand.

As was explained, it is a leaner, cleaner, greener priority of the bank which does exist. It probably will also become bigger with each year and each passing event that takes place. And I am sure under the President's leadership and with the active cooperation of his team, and I am glad that the President in particular has been extremely keen to have a very large pool of talents as far as India is concerned, the Bank certainly is going places. We are fortunate Sir to have you and your team to this annual meet in India, and I am sure with this curtain raiser, what is well begun today, will achieve the necessary milestone that you have in mind. My best wishes to you and I am sure this conference which we have in June for which we have these eight preparatory events will turn out to be a great success. Thank you. ■

*Excerpted from the Inaugural Address delivered at the AIIB Annual Curtain Raiser Ceremony, organised by RIS jointly at New Delhi on 27 February 2018.*