

President's Message

Friends,

It is my privilege to have taken over as President of this illustrious and prestigious Chamber. At a time when the Indian economy's stature as a major economic power has been re-enforced with Moody's Investors Service raising India's sovereign rating for the first time since 2004, I am excited to pioneer the PHD Chamber's initiatives as "We Walk Our Talk". The Finance Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley's view that Moody's upgrade is in sync with the reforms taking place in the country, particularly in the last 3-4 years, resonated well with the Chamber's mission of growth and progress. Given the reforms including GST, recapitalization of state-owned banks, Bankruptcy code & macro-stability have placed India on a path of high trajectory growth, it shall help to achieve the vision New India 2022.

This is further reiterated with India's historic jump of 30 ranks in the World Bank's 'Doing Business' Report, 2018; whereby India's rank in the ease of doing business has risen to 100 from the past 130th position. This jump is an outcome of strides made by our entrepreneurs due to greater opportunities in the MSME sector under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and his mantra, 'Reform, Perform & Transform.'

November 8 marked the first anniversary of the historic demonetization, the banning of high value currency notes. As a financial reform, demonetization pushed consumers towards transparent digital transactions, which in turn paved a smoother path for the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax. However, the perceived slowdown due to demonetization is still persisting as demand in the economy is lacklustre and industry not enthusiastic to implement large scale production, an after effect of lower demand and sales. This transient impact is majorly being seen on the SME sector, which is highly dependent on cash transactions. However, this has brought about a major surge in uptake of digital technologies, with India becoming a leading player in financial products and associated cashless transactions. Start-ups engaged in designing platforms for easy-to adopt point-of-sale instead of legacy systems dependent on cash flows are the new age go to shops.

The Chamber welcomes the GST



Mr. Anil Khaitan
President, PHD Chamber

Council's decision to slash rates on 178 of more than 200 goods and retaining only 50 of over 220 items in the highest Goods and Services Tax slab of 28 percent, which is a big relief to the consumers. Industry also welcomes the easing of return filing procedure and the compliance burden. The GST rate charged by restaurants has been cut to a uniform 5 percent now -- from the earlier 12 percent or 18 percent, which is a measure in the right direction for the hospitality sector.

Going ahead, I would like to share my vision for the Chamber for the year ahead. The role of Indian states is becoming increasingly important in sustaining development of our nation. In this context, we plan to reinforce our focus on States, a priority of the Chamber since past many years. We will work to form State Chapters and get them to interact on a regular basis with the State Governments and other national agencies.

We plan to undertake important initiatives in expanding our presence in the international arena by implementing MoUs signed between PHD and Chambers of Commerce in other countries as well as promoting the MSME sector. The Chamber opened its first international office in the Kingdom of Bahrain, to promote bilateral trade and business opportunities for our members between India and the entire GCC region. I visited Bahrain last month, wherein I signed a MoU with Al Hilal Group, which shall act as the regional representative office of our Chamber.

We also launched The Ambassadors'

Economic Forum at the PHD House, to promote expansion and diversification of trade and economic cooperation between India and other countries. With this, institutional arrangements are being established to facilitate understanding of markets and opportunities by utilizing insights, expertise and local knowledge of foreign diplomats as well as retired Indian diplomats and enable focused networking, especially for MSMEs.

In addition for our MSME members, a MSME Facilitation Cell has been set up to ensure that central government schemes are made available for their benefit. This Cell will enable credit facilitation, provide marketing information and linkages as well as establish a Technology Bank for providing incubation facilities. India has all the potential to become a leading player in digital technologies and a global knowledge hub.

Our two mega events held last month in the Civil Aviation sector on enhancing air connectivity were much awaited niche events. The 2nd Aero Expo India -2017 at IGI Airport, New Delhi was inaugurated by Hon'ble Vice President of India, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu and also graced by Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Mr. Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Mr. Jayant Sinha. The 1st Heli-Expo India-2017 jointly with Pawan Hans Ltd at India's first integrated Heliport-Pawan Hans Rohini Heliport was inaugurated by Mr. Satpal Maharaj, Minister of Tourism, Uttarakhand.

A major stride towards promotion of skill development, one of the thrust areas of the Chamber has been the opening of DCM Center for Skill Development to skill and train students to be more employable by creating capabilities and competitiveness through training, consulting and research, in collaboration with industry.

As we embark on our journey, I would like to emphasize that we, together, as one big family/team, work at our highest level, with dedication and positivity for creating conditions for building a New India, free from poverty, with equitable distribution of wealth and prosperity and thus come in the ranks of developed nations in the coming years. For this, I seek the cooperation of every Member as well as the Secretariat to work towards PROGRESS, HARMONY AND DEVELOPMENT as our Nation moves towards greatness.