India’s economic growth solid: IMF

WASHINGTON: India’s economic growth remained solid, with the government’s efforts to boost rural development and digital payments paying dividends, the International Monetary Fund said on Monday.

In its latest assessment, the fund praised the government’s efforts to increase the size of the formal economy and reduce the reliance on cash. It also highlighted the success of the digital payment system, which has helped drive down the cost of transactions.

The IMF said India’s growth rate for 2019 was expected to be 7.5%, down from 8.5% in 2018, but still above the 5% rate projected by the World Bank.

India has made significant progress in reducing poverty and improving access to basic services, the IMF said, adding that the country was on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, the fund warned that India needed to continue to invest in infrastructure, education, and health to sustain growth.

The IMF also called for greater openness to trade and investment, particularly in the services sector.

MUMBAI: Weak global markets and uncertainty over the outcome of stock market fall on Monday. Among 30 Sensex stocks, just two stocks - Bharat Sanchar Nigam and Coal India - managed to go up, while 26 others fell. The Sensex closed 371 points lower at 38,400, down from 42,111, set on Friday. The Sensex fell from 39,600 to 38,400 and then closed at 38,400. The Sensex has a lower of 3.50 million, which will be followed by 4.00 million. “Connectivity and mobility are vital for inclusive development, particularly for the Northeast region,” the report said.

With the inauguration of Kannur airport, Kerela is set to become a new tourism hub in the Eastern region. Among the attractions will be the famous tourist spots like Thirumullavaram and Kochi.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan flagged off the inaugural flight from the Kannur International Airport in Kerala.

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Indian social worker found dead in UAE

ABU DHABI: A 39-year-old Indian social worker in Ras Al Khaimah is believed to have committed suicide. Sandeep Sreedharan, the CEO and founder of 99on9, a mobile application company, was found hanged from the ceiling of his apartment. Sreedharan was the CEO and founder of 99on9, a mobile application company.
E-commerce to offer more jobs, better salaries and more in 2019

MUMBAI: Medical devices like pulse oximeters, blood pressure monitors, nebulizers, digital thermometers and glucometers are expected to be more in demand in 2019, as the government has decided to bring them under the purview of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, effective from January 1, 2020.

The Minister of Health and Family Welfare has notified that “...as per the powers vested in him under the Drugs and the Cosmetics Act, 1940, the [government] considers it necessary to regulate the retail trade in the aforesaid devices for quality and control checks. Once the proposal gets the green signal, the companies engaged in manufacture and import of these devices will have to get approval from the Central Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) from January 2020 onwards.”

The measure is expected to have an impact on the hiring policies of numerous companies in the health care segment, as the new rules will necessitate e-commerce and other ancillary activities to incorporate fitness methods that are readily adopted by users and this will have its own adjustments and innovations. The definition of drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, is expected to be widened to include these devices. The National Medical Devices Policy, 2017, suggests that information technology companies, working in the digital health space, instead of designing or manufacturing medical devices, under the purview of the Drug law, could hire medical device companies to manufacture and distribute these products. Such companies, he said, will have to be registered under the quality parameters prescribed under Medical Devices Rules, 2017 by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification.

As is the case with other industries, the medical device sector is also expected to face a shortage of professional talent, both in terms of skills and experience. Staffing agencies in this sector are expected to play a major role in solving the problem.

As the government has decided to bring devices such as pulse oximeters, blood pressure monitors, nebulizers, digital thermometers and glucometers, under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, many companies are expected to hire more professionals for Category Management and Business Development roles in Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Unlike for white-collar jobs, such roles are expected to have a fixed rate of growth or package increases for blue-collar jobs and will be based on performance.

Nissan to hire 550 techies

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Nissan Motor Corp is set to open its first global digital hub for drive-less cars at the software park in Thiruvananthapuram. The company targets to have a headcount of about 350 professionals at the proposed R&D facility by March 2019.

The hub is intended for innovation in automated and electronic vehicles. It will be shared by the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance, a Franco-Japanese strategic partnership.

"Hiring is on for the cream of innovation talent, as this is not a global off-shore centre, but a global innovation," said Tony Thomas, corporate vice-president and Nissan Motor Corp. "Already 350-plus professionals representing a wide range of domains – software development, UX/UI, big data, artificial intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT) – have been signed up by him," he said.

With large infusions of capital from private equity players and venture capitalists, cash burn seems to be of little concern. For some functions the raises in salaries have been more than the average; the India Salary Benchmarking report, published by Michael Page, shows that pay packets could double in 2018.

As this is not a global off-shore centre, but a global innovation, reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) and big data and artificial intelligence (AI) are in demand. People trained in these technologies are also being sought after by e-commerce and other ancillary activities for Category Management and Business Development roles in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

“While the industry will continue to provide jobs, the key challenge is whether these will have their own adjustments and innovations, depending on business priorities,” suggests Sharma.

The key technical skills that e-commerce sector will be looking for in 2019 include big data analytics, supply chain management, machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) and UI/UX design.

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Google comes up with new tech for journalists

NEW DELHI: Google is coming up with more in- novative products for the news industry as it uses Artificial Intelligence (AI). For example, the tool that it has designed for use with Polio, the international immunization taskforce at London School of Economics and Political science has been highlighted as an AI project.

This is an animation tool that has made use of the Google News Initiative (GNI). This will focus on journalism AI” project.

The project is a part of the Google News Initiative for training and research for newsrooms on the interaction of journalism and artificial intelligence. It was announced by Google at the GNI Innovation Forum. It will also collaborate with newsrooms and academic institutions to create a best practices handbook and provide a platform for training on how to use AI in the newsroom for journalists worldwide.”

Matt Cooke, Head of Partnerships and Training Google News (N e w s L a b s), said that the tool will be made available via the live blog. The tool will be open to newsrooms from all parts of the world. The tool is also expected to help journalists with new techniques to start using the product for their stories.

The project is part of Google News Initiative (GNI), which is a global partnership that helps newsrooms around the world to start using the product for their stories.

Last month, the Google News Initiative announced that it would be launching a new innovation challenge for journalists as well as for publishers in the Asia-Pacific region to help produce quality journalism in the digital age.

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**Indian Navy invites application for 3400 posts**

**JOBS & CAREERS**

T
inging the Indian Air Force (IAF) is a dream for lakhs of youths. So, if you wish to be part of the IAF, you can now apply for a new recruitment drive. The IAF which is currently recruiting for its two branches, namely the flying and ground duty branches, has now released a notification for the recruitment of 3400 posts. The notification is released on the official website of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Interested candidates can also apply online from February 18, 2019, to December 30, 2019.

**Vacancy details**

**Technical and Non-Technical**

1. **Sailor – Senior Deck Officer (SSO)**: 2303 posts
2. **Sailor – Artificer Apprentice (AA)**: 300 posts
3. **Sailor – Matric Recruit (MR)**: 400 posts

**Sailor – Artificer Apprentice (AA)**

- **Age Limit**: 20 to 24 years
- **Education**: 10+2 with Maths & Physics with at least 60 per cent marks in Math and 50 per cent in Physics from Board of School Education.
- **Salary**: Rs 21,700-Rs69,100 per month plus DA (as applicable)

**Sailor – Matric Recruit (MR)**

- **Age Limit**: 20 to 24 years
- **Education**: 10th pass with 40% minimum marks in Mathematics/Physics/Chemistry/Biology/Computer Science.
- **Salary**: Rs 21,700-Rs69,100 per month plus DA (as applicable)

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- **Salary**: Rs 21,700-Rs69,100 per month plus DA (as applicable)

**Important dates**

- **Application Open**: February 18, 2019
- **Application Closes**: December 30, 2019
- **Admit Card**: Available on IAF website
- **Exam Dates**: To be announced
- **Result**: Available on IAF website

Read the full notification on the official website of the Indian Air Force: [https://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in](https://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in).

**Chemicals in cosmetics and advertisements: puberty in girls**

**Sudoku Puzzle**

**Solution for Puzzle # 18**

```
\document{center}
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
9 & 3 & 5 & 2 & 1 & 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 \\
8 & 1 & 4 & 5 & 7 & 9 & 2 & 6 & 3 \\
3 & 7 & 2 & 6 & 8 & 5 & 9 & 4 & 1 \\
2 & 9 & 7 & 4 & 3 & 8 & 1 & 5 & 6 \\
1 & 6 & 8 & 3 & 9 & 7 & 4 & 2 & 5 \\
5 & 2 & 3 & 9 & 1 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 4 \\
4 & 8 & 5 & 7 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 9 & 6 \\
7 & 4 & 6 & 1 & 5 & 2 & 8 & 3 & 9 \\
6 & 5 & 1 & 8 & 4 & 9 & 3 & 7 & 2 \\
\hline
\end{array}
```

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear exactly once in the nine vertical columns, as well as once in the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine 3x3 squares.
There were reports that UAE entry permit can be obtained in 15 seconds. Can you please explain?

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has issued a notification that citizens of other countries who meet the criteria can apply for a UAE entry permit in 15 seconds. The system will thus scan documents before issuing visas on spot. “We have been working on this system for a long time and it proved to achieve full accuracy even more than human employers,” he added. “By +971, we mean we are moving 50 years forward.”

Col. Om Al Saeed Al Ali, a general manager of the entry and residency permits, said the system is connected to other government entities, which allows faster document checks. “For example, the system checks medical records, having a record of the health authorities,” The application time for UAE visa will be from four to six hours, to now reach only 15 seconds. “We can check criminals or wanted individuals, sending their information to security authorities. All procedures are computerized and it gives no room for security threats,” he added. “We can reject applications for visas including renewals.”

Leaving a company or employer

I am due five days of unpaid leave as far as I am aware but I was asked to sign a statement and argue my case. Is it correct?

The worker may be employed for a probationary period of three months stated in the contract or end of service gratuity. The employment contract is for a specific period of one month with full pay. Also, can we argue that against Mika Singh in India? The contract just says three months but it was extended in Dubai, so five days of unpaid leave is due.

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Bharti AXA General make profit

HCL Technologies HCL will acquire IBM software products for $1.8 billion. The acquisition is expected to close by mid-2019 after regulatory approvals. The software products to be acquired have a market of $5 billion, according to IBM’s statement. The products include Appian for secure application development, BigFix for secure device management, Unica for marketing automation, Commerce for e-commerce, and Sterling for Portal for digital experiences, Notes & Domino for email and low-code rapid application development, Convergion for Salesforce integration, and WorkStream for customer relationship management services.

SBI has the potential to contradict, said Chaudhuri. He said the venture catered to deliver high-quality services and this has been an outcome of diversified product lines, improved operating efficiencies and our focus on technology, he added. SBI’s profitability that takes account of expenses as a proportion of premiums, improved by over 15 percentage points to 116.5 per cent in the current fiscal from 91.6 per cent in the same period of 2017-18. At the same time, its net profit surged to 77.8 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal from 65.5 per cent in the same period of last year, the company said in a statement. Apart from retail business that grew by 19 per cent in the first half of 2018-19, SBI AXA General has plans to grow its corporate business by 20 per cent in the same period. Further, crop insurance, which accounted for 91 per cent during the entire first half of 2018-19 is said to be negligible in the current period of 2019-20. SBI AXA General, founded on building scalable success to face market competition, financial inclusion, and segment diversification, prudent product pricing and customer care, has been a boost to the company growth.

Apart from retail business, the company is likely to be discussed this fiscal, it is learnt. This general insurer’s insurance business (SMBs) and financial community in many domains. Not all: “It has been a challenging journey with various stakeholders to make a fulfilling journey with us and to get an efficient experience to our customers,” said SBI head. SWIFT India CEO Kunal A Pande, Chief General Manager, NABARD in the statement. The event will be held in association with the Indian National Bank and the Indian arm of Walmart.

Arundhati Bhattacharya to be SWIFT India Chairman

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WIFT India said it has appointed former SBI chairman Arundhati Bhattacharya as the new Chairman of its board.

Arundhati Bhattacharya will succeed former banker M V Nair, who is stepping down after five years with the company, the company said in a statement.

The bank has created a unique platform for many stakeholders to discuss and create value in the business and the financial community. Bhattacharya is a former SBI chairman and has the potential to contribute significantly to the growth and development of the country.

The proposals, which will be discussed on October 24, are likely to be accepted by the shareholders, the company said in the statement.
Visa on arrival for SKoreans in India

India has started granting visas on arrival to South Korean citizens over 60 years of age who are issued to South Korean business, tourism, conference and leisure categories. South Korean citizens including double nationals can get the visa on arrival since March 2018.

The National Day of the State of Qatar in Mumbai was celebrated on Friday, 07th Dec 2018 (National Day of Qatar is on Dec 11th).

India’s low-cost carrier Air India Express will start flying unaccompanied minor passengers from Dubai, resulting in an additional burden to NRI parents in the UAE who can send their children on vacation. Air India’s budget carrier Air India Express (AIX) will now charge a fee of Dh165 for one way ticket for unaccompanied minor passengers. The fee will be Dh165 if the child is not on an onward return trip as well. A circular issued to travel agents in this regard, cited that the fee has been introduced “in response to the unaccompanied Minor (UM) passenger charge restriction that the immigration authorities in Dubai Agency. "As per the circular dated Dec 4, 2018, parents or guardians of the child travelling in the above age group are requested to check their airline’s website for details pertaining to the same.

Dubai remains on track to become the most visited city for global travelers, according to the latest visitation figures released by Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism).

High tourist arrivals from the stable of highly experienced professionals in the travel and hospitality industry. IPEPCIL is a 36-year-old professional body devoted to resolving the grievances of overseas placement community. This council runs on its credibility and we are committed to this trust.

Indians off to Dubai

Air India Express to charge Dh165 for unaccompanied minor passengers

Around 279 hotels of the city, which had stopped taking bookings in Dubai, are again accepting travel portals MakeMyTrip and Goibibo aligning heavily with the commission and indemnify commitments, have been drawn down.

The Dh165 fee or equivalent in Indian rupees will be charged for the UM at the time of booking. It will be non-refundable when the ticket is cancelled. It will be charged even if the ticket is not used. Air India Express will operate a service to Dubai from next month.

The Dh165 fee is for unaccompanied minor passengers, and includes unaccompanied minor passport and check-in processing. Though visa-on-arrival has been extended to citizens of 12 countries—Cambodia, Finland, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Luxembourg, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and South Korea—it was discontinued in November 2014 after the launch of the e-Tourist Visa scheme.

Visa on arrival for Koreans in India

Travel / Entertainment

The National Day of the State of Qatar in Mumbai was celebrated on Friday, 07th Dec 2018 (National Day of Qatar is on Dec 11th).

The emirate welcomed 6.41 lakh visitors this year, a growth of 17pc over the previous year, with visitors from the three international flights from Vizag would sustain the momentum 22pc for city-based hoteliers. No minimum 22pc for city-based hoteliers. No minimum 22pc for city-based hoteliers. No minimum 22pc for city-based hoteliers.

Indian Airlines offers 20pc fare cut from Visag to Dubai

The flight from Vizag will take more patronage as it takes only two and half hours to reach Bangkok and the cost of the return trip from the Port City will be between Rs 10,000 and Rs 12,000. Besides, people from Vizag are now booking Bangkok flights either in Hyderabad or Chennai. Henceforth, they may prefer Vizag to go to Bangkok and would ensure a hassle-free journey in the capital city.