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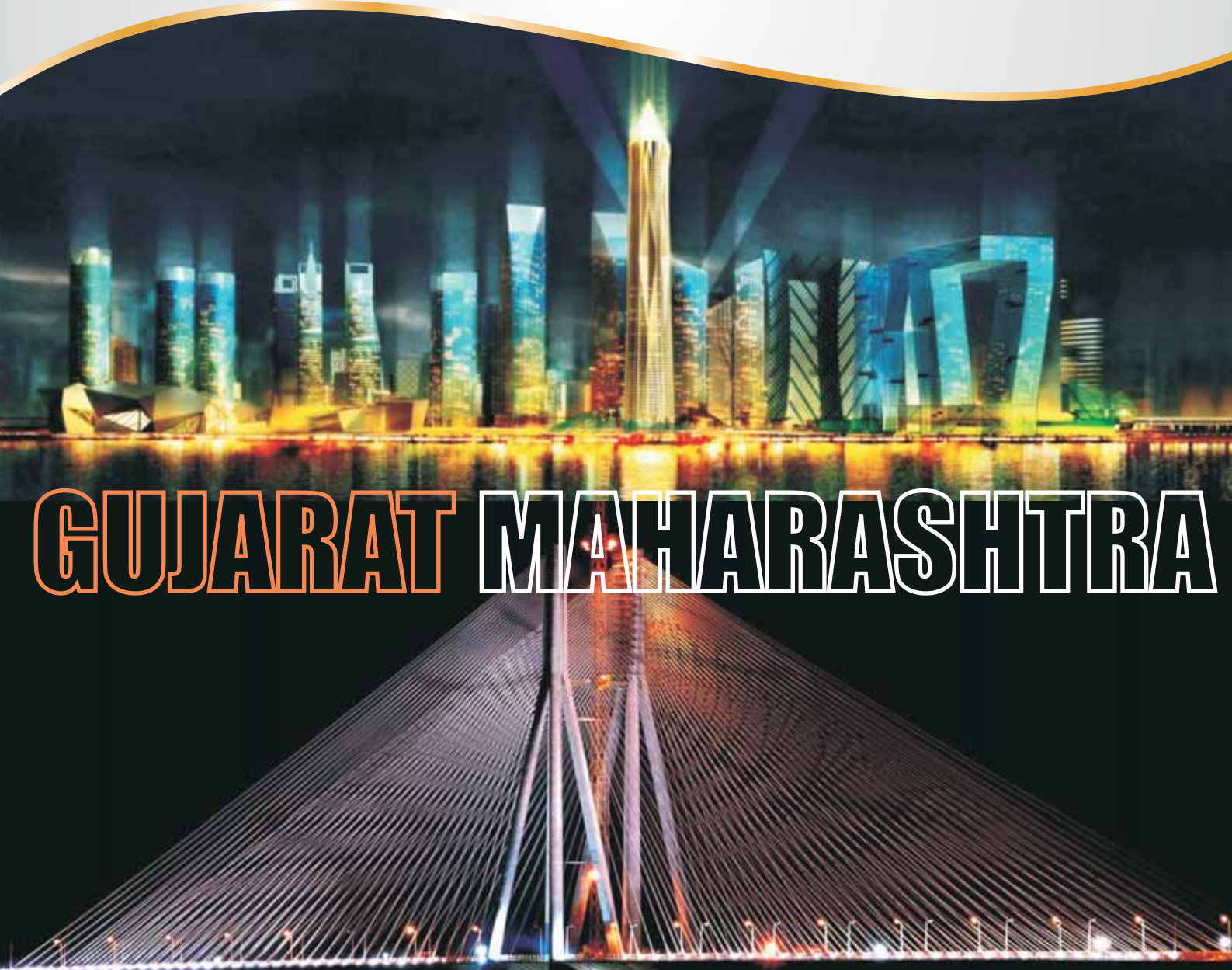
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India's Onus



GUJARAT MAHARASHTRA

GOLDEN HALF CENTURY



Gujarat:
Swarnim Jayanti



IPL:
Pros and Cons



Exclusive Interview
Nitin Gadkari



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Above - Gujarat International Finance
Tec-City (GIFT) Animated Picture
Below - Bandra-Worli Sea Link, Mumbai

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Celebrating the Golden Day for Gujarat and Maharashtra

This issue of our magazine is dedicated to two great states of India: Gujarat and Maharashtra. When the National Anthem 'Jana Gana Mana' was composed, the first two regions mentioned in it were Punjab and Sindh. On 15th August 1947, more than half of Punjab and whole of Sindh were no more within Indian bounds. Then follow Gujarat and Maratha. 50 years for a nation's history is like a blink of an eye. Yet, 50 years can have a grand meaning for the nation. Though the British left the Indian economy and social harmony in smithereens, the nation today has trouced even monumental challenges.



Gujarat has over 50 million people (5% of India's population) and contributes 21% of exports and 13% of India's industrial production. The state has the distinction of achieving the highest GDP over 11% in the country.

As part of the Indus-Saraswati civilization, Dholavira and Gola Dhoro were highly developed urban centers of the region in ancient times. Lothal had the largest port of that period and conducted business world wide. In recent times, Gujarat has gifted some of the most influential people to India. Though the field of action for Jamshedji Tata was Maharashtra, he was born in Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi's name comes next, followed by Jinnah, the key player in the partition of India and the unfortunate division of people of the sub-continent.

However, when the call came, another great individual, Iron Man Sardar Patel, stepped up to create a strong and 'United Republic of India' almost single handedly. Dhirubhai Ambani, whose name is synonymous with the Reliance industries, hailed from Gujarat. Gujarat also gave the nation a Prime Minister, Morarji Desai. Today, the leadership of Narendra Modi is known beyond Indian borders. He has converted the region into a symbol of progress, leading from the front in transforming India into a 'developed' nation. Modi's Gujarat and his leadership stand as role-models not only for other Indian states, but

also for many other countries around the globe.

Maharashtra, with about 97 million people (second largest in the country), is India's leading industrial state contributing 15% of national industrial output and over 40% of the national revenue. The Ajanta and Ellora murals showcase the ancient traditions and arts of the country. Tukaram, Dhaneswar, Ramdas, and Sai Baba are only a handful of the great spiritual masters of Maharashtra. Chhatrapati Shivaji's memory lingers in every speck of dust of the state. Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi showed the world that Indian women can be equally if not more capable of holding onto their own while fighting an enemy.

Gradually, Mumbai became the gateway to India in many ways. Today, it is the business capital and the entertainment capital of the country. The recent Mumbai terror attacks and the portrayal of the city in the film 'Slumdog Millionaire' may have marred the image of Maharashtra, but the region and its people are known since the old days for their strength and valor. While the famous Salt March started in Gujarat, it may be argued that the culmination of the Freedom Movement occurred in Mumbai with the Naval Revolt, which, many say, was the final nail in the coffin for the British. Tilak, Gokhale, Savarkar, Vinoba Bhave, Ambedkar, Narlikar, Amitabh Bachchan, Lata Mangeshkar, and Sachin Tendulkar all these names have added to the glory of the country. More recently, it was from Maharashtra that the current President of India, Pratibha Patil, emerged.

When on May 1 this year, these two states celebrate their Golden Anniversary, it is hoped that Global Indians living in various parts of the world, especially those whose roots belong to these states, would join hands to commemorate the great moment. Their continued contributions to the progress of Gujarat and Maharashtra will, in turn, contribute to the peace and progress of not only India, but of the entire world. This is because in today's globalized era, every action of the global citizens has a worldwide effect.



Kanchan Banerjee
Editor-in-chief

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IPL: Pros and Cons

Evolve to the Next Phase

The Indian Premier League has been at the receiving end even as the glamorous version of 20:20 cricket in India, which has brought in Indian city-based but multinational cricketing teams play a much marketed series of matches, just turned three. Let us first look at the arguments that have been going around against it.

Online critics have come out with a veritable list of arguments against IPL. First, cricket and Bollywood do not go well together. Shahrukh's Knight Riders, Preity's Punjab Kings XI, Shilpa Shetty's later entry to Rajasthan Royals have all been doing very badly. Second, the purists of the game note that the IPL3 came along with commercial breaks, strategic timeouts, advertisements in the middle of the overs, loud music, insipid commentators, irritating studio guests, et al, and killed the fun of watching the actual game. Your home is where Lalit Modi's heart is. Hence, Deccan Chargers had to play 'home' games in Nagpur and Navi Mumbai, and Rajasthan Royals in the dry state of Gujarat!

The biggest criticism is that IPL is an 'invite only' club. IPL Commissioner's friends and family have been winning media and technology service contracts. A franchisee owner's stepchild working for the Commissioner. His school chum owning a franchisee. The Mauritian route to own franchisees, at least partly, is all too obvious in case of many team ownerships.

An online critic noted megalomania of Lalit Modi and narcissism of Shashi Tharoor clashed to ensure that both lost and the muck in the whole exercise unravelled! Several more ask whether India has anything better than to watch cricket, and some 90 matches in a row!

Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav has turned his ire on cricket itself, describing it as a 'videshi' or foreign game distorting the sporting scene of India. CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury has accused industrial magnates of exploiting the popular passion for the game to make money. Bal Thackeray of Shiv Sena has also entered the fray to call for saving the "gentleman's game"!

Since the IPL was interpreted as a manifestation of the spirit of free enterprise with its intermingling of sporting talent, business acumen and uninhibited entertainment, exemplified by the introduction of attractive women as cheer-leaders for the first time in India, its fall from grace has been grist to the mill of its detractors. While the CPI leader Gurudas Dasgupta described the frenetic 20-20 format as a 'caricature' of cricket and preferred returning to the five-day test matches (!), social commentators are



moaning over the huge expenses for the gala events even as the poor suffer in silence.

Another is the condemnation of anything foreign and flashy like the IPL. The subtext of this outlook is the conviction that any event which is so glitzy violates the country's traditions of sobriety and restraint. Since such a display of conservative preferences is expected to touch a chord in the Indian heart, it is not surprising that the line-up of critics ranges from the rural hinterland of North India's cow-belt to city-based trade union leaders.

There surely are merits in these and many arguments against IPL. But let us look at the other side of the coin as well.

IPL has turned out to be one of the most successful sporting ventures in the world and a favourite of the 500 million plus middle class of India. According to Newsweek, it has been valued at \$4.13 billion, which is comparable to America's National Football League's value of \$4.5 billion. The resultant beneficiaries are not only some foreign players but a large number of talented local young men who were unknown to the people just a couple of years ago.



major regional power, and a sporting nation of repute in times when India has already emerged as the youngest nation of the world.

In continuity with the mall-multiplex culture of urban India, the IPL has come to reflect the lifestyle of the young, middle class Indians, many of whom earn more in a month than their fathers did in a year. The major parties, Congress and BJP, have

not spoken against the IPL as such, like many others, for not wanting to alienate the vocal social sector.

The IPL has also shown that a mix of commercial interests, branding and media visibility with a well-packaged game can give rise to things unforeseen, like the theatre screening of IPL matches. This success can show a way forward for the beleaguered national sports of hockey or show bigger possibilities for the passionate game of football, or tennis, or athletics. A new dawn of sports communications, events and marketing is already brightening up possibilities for other games in India today. IPL is already a marketing-branding-media content case-study for the world.

The right focus is on bringing greater transparency into the affairs of the various teams and their sponsors so that the baby is not thrown out of the bath water. Concentration of too much of power in one hand, now gone with the suspension of Lalit Modi, and avoiding to run by consensus and systems and more by intuition and relations need to go. And rightly so! But not something which is path-breaking. IPL, in essence, is something that India can be proud of.

Just a post-script! Let us not forget amidst all this euphoria, Indianization of sports premier leagues was first being done by Subhas Chandra of Zee group through his Indian Cricket League, which was brutally murdered by BCCI and IPL Commission by banning the ICL players and various other monopolistic measures. Letting ICL to flourish would have made IPL also more accountable, allowed more choice to the average viewer, and ensured greater transparency in the whole process by prohibiting monopoly either of IPL or of Lalit Modi.

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Many foreign players avoided coming to India earlier because of the heat and unhygienic conditions. But now the lure for money and improved living conditions have made them flock to India even ignoring terrorism and security threats! Their arrival has also made India stand out as an attractive sporting venue while Pakistan and Afghanistan are in a bad state and neither is the Middle East a preferred region. IPL surely marks a step forward in India's regional emergence as a



STATE FOCUS

GUJARAT



Swarnim Gujarat

While the state is all set to turn 50 on May 1, Gujarat does not seem to stop even for a breath on its fast-track to all-round and sustainable development. **Pratap Rao** summarises the saga of this spectacular progress.

Fifty years ago, when Gujarat came into existence after a fierce and bloody struggle by a host of leaders led by late Indulal Yagnik, today an icon of Gujarati pride and simplicity. Although the state has been a hotbed of leaders, who fought the independence struggle from the front, the two most prominent revolutionaries were Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. Ravishankar Raval was another true national symbol of service to the society, who worked amongst the depressed and the downtrodden. After its inception, Gujarat laid the foundation stone of the Panchayati Raj system in India under the leadership of its second Chief Minister Balwantrao Mehta. Simultaneously, the milk revolution started by Dr Verghese Kurien, flowered for the entire country in the 1970s thus dealing a major blow to the

management, urban and rural development, water management, ports and petroleum sector.

Truly, if Gujarat led the *Swarajya* movement around pre-independence period, the state today leads the *Surajya* or Good Governance movement at the national level. It is widely known that Gujarat is attracting the maximum investment in India and has drawn praise from such business leaders like Ratan Tata, thanks to the annually-held Vibrant Gujarat Summit, being hosted by Modi which have become like one magic wand for attracting investment. But broadly, Gujarat's achievements are on a much wider scale. Only few can deny that under the leadership of Modi, Gujarat has emerged the laboratory that is finding solutions to many of the India's burning problems. Clearly, the first decade of the 21st century in India belongs to Gujarat if its many achievements in urban and rural sectors are many indications.

Take for example, India's water crisis. Gujarat's water management policy is a lesson for other states of how to grapple with this burgeoning problem of the 21st century. First, the state undertook check dam building drive under government-people partnership on small rivers and rivulets which has eventually seen construction of over one lakh check dams in the state. Simultaneously, the Modi government launched a huge drive to popularize drip and sprinkler irrigation techniques backed by incentives combined with many smaller measures designed at arresting the state's depleting water table. The results are incredible and beaming a ray of hope to the entire nation. In the past seven years, as many as 52 of the 82 *talukas* of Gujarat have come out of the dark zone label which signifies those *talukas* where earlier the water table has gone down most dangerously. Conversely, in as many as 52 water-starved *talukas* the water table is going up from average to optimal level. And this latest survey is most precise being carried out by the National Ground Water Board and based on satellite data.

No wonder than that when agricultural growth in most states is going down it is going up by leaps and bounds in Gujarat, a state with large semi-arid tracts never known for good crop production. Last year Gujarat posted an agro growth of a whopping 9.6 % against a national average of 2.9 %. And from an annual agro output worth just Rs 18,000 crores (including production from animal husbandry) in 2000-2001 Gujarat's agro production now

Only few can deny that under the leadership of Modi, Gujarat has emerged the laboratory that is finding solutions to many of the India's burning problems.

monster of malnutrition and taking us closer to our dream of a healthy India. Then came the Navnirman agitation against the Congress-led Chimanbhai Patel government which taught the country to fight against corruption, and in fact began the movement of "total revolution" spearheaded by Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan.

If there is one state that has literally led the nation, it is Gujarat. In the past one decade, lead the country with perhaps redoubled vigour, scaling new milestones in diverse fields, setting new paradigms of progress and development and showing that path to the nation that will

make it a world leader. If the government of Narendra Modi, itself the author of Gujarat's dynamic progress in the past decade, is celebrating 50 years of Gujarat's birth with pomp and fervour under the label of "Swarnim Gujarat", it is not an iota undeserving.

If someone will look at Gujarat's milestones, he will understand the state stands for inclusive development with futuristic, modern approach, with global perspective symbolized by a search to find solutions to not just national but global problems. Its quest touches a diverse span of sector as human resources, industry, agriculture, disaster



revolves around Rs 49,000 crores

The figure is most impressive even after deducing that Gujarat has had a reasonably steady monsoon ever since Modi took over in 2001-end and the value of agro products has gone up since. As leading agriculture scientist MS Swaminathan put it “Gujarat owes it to a scientific and integrated approach to agriculture during Narendra Modi's tenure which is backed by a sharp vision.”

Inclusive Governance clearly is becoming the hall mark of Gujarat's Governance. Take for example its inclusive approach through schemes like Kanya Kelavni (girl's education), Vanbandhu Kalyan (Tribal welfare) Scheme and Sagar Khedu (Fishermen welfare) Scheme . Tribals have become orchard owners in areas like Dahod and Valsad districts. Polytechnics have been dedicated to tribal areas. The Gujarat coast was once seen as a threat, mainly due to salinity ingress it was causing. Today, the problem of salinity ingress is being tackled by Bandharara scheme of the Gujarat government that aims at creating fresh water lakes on sea coast by damming the rivers just before they meet the sea. More, a dynamic port-led development policy of the government has turned the Gujarat coast in to virtually the country's 'big gate' for development based on exports and imports.

In Petroleum sector Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Ltd (GSPCL) symbolises a new dynamic approach. The first ever oil company to be floated by a state in the country, it today boasts of one of the highest oil and gas reserves in the Krishna-Godavari basin.

In climate change too Gujarat has sent a message to the entire world by floating India's first ever Climate Change department and by coming out with the most dynamic solar investment policy that is bringing solar investors to Gujarat in droves from across the world. International experts of renewable energy are of the opinion that Gujarat has one of the highest potentials in the world for producing green energy looking to the potential it has for tidal, wind and solar energy and the day is not far when it will be a leader in Solar energy. Amul's 'white revolution' has changed the lives of thousands of farmers in Gujarat. Now, a Gujarat-based research institute plans to replicate the co-operative model for cultivating *Jatropha*, which produces bio-diesel. Gujarat's effort in the renewable energy sector shows that it is finding a solution to a global challenge.

Another area where Gujarat has made an international mark is Disaster Management. Turning the bloody 2001 earth quake to its advantage the government came out with the country's first ever disaster management department; and then with a Disaster Management Act. Today Gujarat's disaster management edifice has become a model for not just India but even Third World countries.



During the last earthquake in Iran, Iranian experts consulted Gujarat's disaster management officials and when cyclone hit Sri Lanka, the state played a key role in providing succour through its disaster management umbrella.

But Gujarat's biggest achievement is its attempt to develop the Human Resource Development Sector in a manner which would be a point of envy of even the developed countries. As many as 14 new universities have been floated in Gujarat since Modi took over including many that are India's first like the Gujarat Forensic Science University which will produce experts of international class in various disciplines of forensic sciences and the Raksha Shakti University which will train security personnel for diverse security requirements from police to defense services to private security experts. A long-time political observer and commentator Vidyut Thakar said “None can deny that Gujarat has set new paradigms of development which show a new path to the nation.”

Where Gujarat exactly stands on the surface was best symbolized by a seminar that the Interpol held on forensic sciences under the aegis of the Gujarat Forensic University in Gandhinagar last week. That the Interpol thought it fit to hold an international seminar in Gujarat and that too under the umbrella of one of its institutions was clearly was a measure of the strides Gujarat had made globally.

Finally, a unique project called '*Vanche Gujarat*' that focuses on promoting the art of reading across the state is underway as part of the celebrations. This program aims to reach out to millions of people through mobile reading vans, through neighborhood libraries, through reading interventions in local schools, through street plays on the importance of reading and through donation drives for books.

During its Golden jubilee year Gujarat deserves a Golden tribute to its all-round and futuristic development.

During its Golden jubilee year Gujarat deserves a golden tribute to its all-round and futuristic development. ■

Gujarat braces for Golden Jubilee Celebration

Gujarat Government is in full swing to garner the support of Gujaratis from across the world for making the Swarnim Jayanti celebrations a milestone event. **Satyavir Singh** reports

Come Gujarat this May, and you will witness fanfare and celebration everywhere. Gujarat is observing 50 years of attaining statehood on May 1, 2010. Under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, the year-long Swarnim Gujarat celebrations have a very profound influence. It is going to win huge and active participation from the Gujarati people, who are residing in other states, also staying outside India. Not only will they take part, they would also organise various programme across the state and country, where they are staying, to mark the golden jubilee celebration.

The preparations and meetings have begun talking place. Minister Narottambhai Patel had held a meeting with various institutes and organisations in Chennai, and briefed them about the theme and vision of Swarnim Gujarat. He conveyed the message of Modi, also giving an invitation to all, to attend the grand gala event.

The convention held in Chennai witnessed a very encouraging response from local leaders and Gujarati community. The leaders of local Gujarati associations gave an assurance to the delegation that large number of people from Chennai and Tamilnadu would share the joy and glory of the sparkling festivity. The Shwetamber

S t h a n k v a s i J a i n Association has made selfless effort, extending full support in organizing the convention at C.U.Shah Hall.

Speaking on the occasion, Patel highlighted the theme and vision of Swarnim Gujarat celebrations; it is also aimed to expedite the development of Gujarat, rising above party politics, all would participate into

it, and all would contribute for Swarnim Gujarat.

According to the vision of Modi, high-level delegations are touring different states, meeting people of Gujarat, explaining them about the importance and glory of the

event. As a part of Swarnim Gujarat Ceremony, a kalash (Pot) would be given to people, which may be taken in public procession as 'Kalash Yatra' in their town and States.

Minister Shri Narottambhai Patel stated that Swarnim Sanklpa Jyot Rathyatra connects every village and town of Gujarat. People are taking pledge to contribute for Swarnim Gujarat. Modi envisions building Swarnim Gujarat pledge by pledge. "The 5.5 crore pledges by the people of Gujarat is to take the state forward by 5.5 crore steps," he added.

Under the abled leadership of the Modi, Gujarat has made remarkable strides on all fronts. "As Gujarat played a leading role in the freedom struggle, Gujarat is yet again playing a pivotal role in the movement for good governance," said Patel.

Minister enumerated the special scheme, which encourage children to visit Gujarat, their tour is subsidised under the scheme. They may get acquainted with the rich cultural heritage of their motherland. The Gujarati schools outside Gujarat may organise various functions, highlighting the culture and theme of Swarnim Gujarat.

As many as 14 high-level delegations, under the leadership of state ministers, are to tour different states of nation. They would meet and invite them to take part in 'Swarnim Gujarat Celebrations'.

The state government has prepared a special database, which includes the activities of Gujarati people residing outside Gujarat. As we know, Gujarati people are organising various social and cultural activities in as many as 142 countries, and there are about 407 such organisations active across the world. They are celebrating the national and cultural festivals of India in their country. The state is in process of further strengthening the database in the coming days.

Gujarat government has also launched a special foundation for NRGs and NRIs, by preparing a versatile database about them. It aims to utilise their skill and expertise for the development of Gujarat. Swarnim Gujarat celebrations will commence from May 1, 2010, and it would continue up to May 31, 2011.



Kalash: Hallmark of half-century

Em'power'ed by Sun

Satyavir Singh throws light on the world's biggest solar plant to be set up in Vadodara region.

encouraging Solar Energy policies of Gujarat have attracted global investors. "Gujarat is on every investor's radar. It is all set to emerge as the Global Solar Energy Hub," added he.

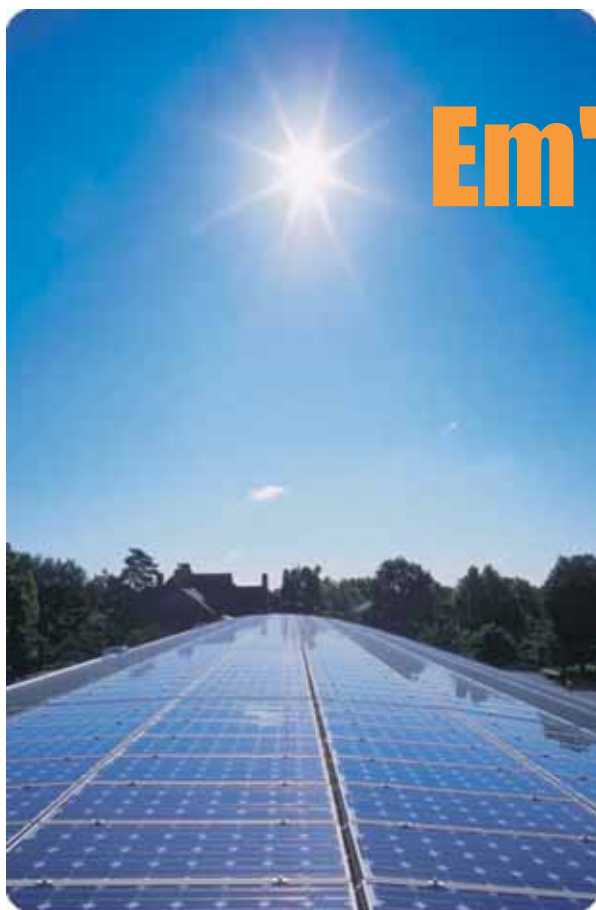
While projects like AEVA will curb the energy crisis in the state, it is expected that all the 18,000 villages across the state are getting un-interrupted quality electricity-supply. Spread across 500 hectares, the project will create 20,000 jobs in the region. Reiterating his commitment to inclusive and equitable growth, Modi outlined state's initiatives that are aimed to strike an ideal balance among agriculture, industry and service sector. "By every yardstick, the strides achieved by the state during the last decade are impressive ones," Modi highlighted.

While criticizing Non-Proliferation Nuclear Treaty with America, Modi also drew attention to threats that a nuclear plant poses. He observed that any disaster in our nuclear Power Station may cause chaotic situation.

With the commitment of encouraging clean energy, Gujarat government has come up with flying colours. The state government has approved 34 solar power projects at an investment of Rs.12,000 crore (Rs.12 billion/\$2.4 billion) over the next few years- to rank it the top Indian state in utilizing the renewable sources. With summing up all the ongoing and upcoming solar power projects, Gujarat is likely to generate 1,250 million units of eco-friendly energy every year. It can avoid the use of 875,000 tonnes of coal on an annual basis and 1.25 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emission.

There is no doubt that Modi has opened the floodgates for investment in the non-conventional sources of energy. The state government has given concessions for solar power generation. Many leading companies are eyeing at this prospect. Players like Tata, Azure and Moser Baer are all set to install solar projects in the state.

"Gujarat is on every investor's radar. It is all set to emerge as the Global Solar Energy Hub."



When non-renewable sources will exhaust, the mankind will have to return to the primary source of earth's energy the Sun. With rising consumption of coal and petroleum products, the day seems to be inching closer everyday. Despite being aware about the imminent crisis, most of the nations and governments have turned deaf ear to the issue. But, as there are always exceptions, prudent leaders like the Gujarat CM Narendra Modi, have gauged the future earlier. And the recently-announced AREVA plant bears the testament of the Gujarat Government's prudence. AREVA is going to be the world's largest solar project, with power generation capacity of about 3000 M.W

In collaboration with Clinton Foundation, the government of Gujarat is setting up the plant in Vadodara region. The facility is expected to cost Rs 20,000 crore (about \$475 million) and will produce raw materials and manufacture panels on site.

This is expected to reduce costs so that the power produced at the site will cost about Rs 4 (\$0.10) per (unspecified) unit. In fact, even the cost of power generation could be 70 percent less than using conventional methods.

Chief Minister Narendra Modi, while dedicating the 765K.V. transformer to the nation at the site, said that the





Port of Progress

Pipavav port

A visionary policy by the Government of Gujarat the liberalization of port policies in 1995 which encouraged the participation of private players ushered in a new era of development and brought about sea of opportunities in Gujarat. This policy regarded as one of the best public policies in Asia has played a significant role in economic development of the state.

Globalization and liberalization opened up new vistas for trade and commerce .The Government realized its



Kandala port

abundant economic potential very early and prepared a roadmap for development of ports to make the best economic use of the 1600kms sea coast. They invited private players into the development fold and sooner the sea coasts of Gujarat started bustling with vibrant trade activities

Gujarat having one third of the total sea coasts of the nation, owns around 42 ports. Kandala is one of the most

- The Gujarat Maritime Board ports achieved a record growth of 35% by handling 206 mn tones of traffic during the fiscal year 2009-10. It accounts for 75% of the total cargo handled by all minor ports of India.
- Gujarat having one third of the total sea coats of the nation, owns around 42 ports.
- Gujarat at present has a number of private ports like the Adani group owned-Mundra port, Pipavav port and private jetties developed by industries like Reliance.

With the liberalization of port policies the trade in Gujarat experienced wind in its sail, **Anand Singh** overviews the port led development in the state

important ports, almost 40 small and medium ports are being managed by the state government. Out of 20 Port cities, seven port cities fall in Gujarat.

The efficiency of Gujarat ports have improved from 23 million tonnes to 180 million tonnes. Under the concrete planning and the support given in the 11th plan, it likely to be increased up to 400 million tones.

To maneuver the maximum cargo traffic Gujarat crafted out visionary planning, the state adopted a work plan in three the form of prongs strategy. Under this work plan, private capital investment was attracted. To improve the traffic capacity over the light range Ports, Jetties were built and expanded with the help of private investments. The Gujarat Maritime Board approves and grants sanction to build, maintain and operate Jetties. The Reliance, Essar, L&T, and Gujarat Ambuja Cement have made investment to the tune of Rs. 4334 crores for Hajira, Dahej, Original Dwarka, Sikka and Pipavav ports.

The Gujarat Maritime Board has identified 10 green field spots and deep water ports where the ships can upload and unload the goods directly. Out of ten ports, the Simar, Mithi Viradi, Dholera, Hajira, Vasi-Boresi, and Maroli will be developed by private operators. Other four ports- Razi, Poshitra, Dahej and Mundra are going to be developed as a joint venture. The significant infrastructure facility created by the Government is the key factor attracting the private capital investments. Gujarat at present has a number of private ports like the Adani group owned-Mundra port, Pipavav port and private jetties developed by industries like Reliance.

The Gujarat Maritime Board ports achieved a record growth of 35% by handling 206 mn tones of traffic during the fiscal year 2009-10. It accounts for 75% of the total cargo handled by all minor ports of India. Gujarat ports have played significant role in the country's international trade. The state represents 20.87 percent of India's exports and 20.11 percent of imports.

The development of the port played a vital role in the equitable growth of the state. The Global Investors Summit has inked MOUs of 12 lakh crores. It has become obvious that Gujarat will mark its presence in the world through the port-led developments. It is time to salute the economic transformation and the vision.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Satyavir Singh elaborates on how the administration of the Village Panchayats of Gujarat have gone digital way, after the implementation of an e-programme in the state.

Despite being one of the key IT players in the world, rural areas of India are still majorly cut away with technology. There is no doubt that technology can boost the rural economy and also improve administration of a village. But, this would be unfair to say that rural area of every state is deprived of technology. In fact, there is an e-programme already running in the underbelly of Gujarat for past two years, which is empowering the Panchayat rule across the villages in the state. Implemented by the Gujarat CM Narendra Modi, the project *E-gram-*



Villagers savouring technology under E-gram

Vishwagram is turning out to be a boon for rural administration.

Linking the Gram Panchayats through broadband connectivity, the programme is running across 13,693 village Panchayats. After bringing about economic and social revolution in 18,000 villages by providing three phase electricity supply for 24 hours through 'Jyotigram' Yojana, the CM has given a new message to the villagers of India by successfully strengthening the villages through technology. "This government has infused a new life in to the entire Panchayati Raj system by introducing them to technology. An era of technology enabled rural empowerment has begun," said Modi during the launch of the programme. Of these, 7,400 village panchayats have Ku Band facility and are well connected to the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Application and Geo Informatics (BISAG), Gandhinagar, for two-way audio and one-way video facility.

Currently, all the Village Panchayats are entitled to give few services to villagers like birth certificate, death certificate, and farmer's status certificate, document for

caste certificate, income certificate, tax collection receipts and application forms for various development schemes

Now, technology provider companies like Google, Microsoft, Intel and Cisco have also roped in the programme to bridge the digital divide between rural and urban Gujarat. Google has signed an agreement with the state government for running the e-Gram website. Software giant Microsoft has also joined hands with the state government to devise an e-learning curriculum for



village entrepreneurs, while Intel is helping in spreading computer literacy among the village children. Cisco is providing ICT-based agricultural services like soil health cards, SMS-based alerts and agri-resource directory services.

Gujarat has become well known in the world for its road-infrastructure network of 'Rajmarg' so also now it has been known in the country for 'Rural Communication Digital Road Map'. The power of the 'E-Gram' and 'Jyotigram' projects is so immense that this government wishes to fulfill the dream of remarkable improvement in the education of the villages, and to see that the villages get the facility of 'Telemedicine' for health care.

He also stated that, after the grand success of 'Vibrant Gujarat', the government of this state equally cares for its common man of the villages, and for their comforts and care.

Linking the Gram Panchayats through broadband connectivity, the programme is running across 13,693 village Panchayats.

Gujarat: Where fields are greener

VN Balakrishna recites the tale of agricultural transformation in Gujarat, which gave a new lease of life to the farmers of the state.

Gujarat's phenomenal agricultural growth at 9.6% per year between 2000-01 and 2007-08 has set a benchmark for many states. There were several factors which played pivotal role in transforming the barren fields of the state into the green ones. Gujarat is not endowed with the overabundance of water resources, like its eastern counterparts. Nor, the soil of Gujarat is as fertile as of other states. But, still the state has turned out to be the winner, as far as the agriculture sector is concerned. Let's trace the key instruments in the government's policy which drove a sort of agricultural revolution in the state.

Water management

Two large parts of Gujarat viz., Saurashtra and Kutch had been lacking water for agriculture and even for drinking since decades. This scarcity resulted in huge migration to urban areas. The migration comprising largely of young workforce began considering agriculture as a ritual or secondary activity. The cattle too were affected with migration towards greener parts of south Gujarat. Added

Gujarat saw a real transformation with over a lakh small, medium and big ones being built through a social movement popularly called Check Dam Abhiyan.

to the woes, sea water ingressed up to 50-80 km inland of Saurashtra making the agriculture land saline and barren. The overall situation was indeed gloomy.

But then people elected the BJP government in Gujarat a decade ago and then a paradigm shift took place in the agricultural scene of the state. The incumbent Chief

Minister Narendra Modi decided to pick up the gauntlet and took the challenge of water crisis quite seriously. He realized intuitively that the primary requirement was not the electricity to pump water out of the bore wells, but keeping large quantities of water stored round the year. This idea encouraged the farmers to build the check dams. Gujarat saw a real transformation with over a lakh small, medium and big ones being built through a social movement popularly called *Check Dam Abhiyan*. Water harvesting through check dam proved beneficial, given the topography of Saurashtra that has low water table due to its inverted saucer shape topography.

The struggle had been intense and the people took up rain water harvesting passionately through well-recharging, building farm ponds, check dams and creating new ponds or deepening the existing ones.

Schemes

In the wake of two continuous two drought-like situations, the Modi government implemented "Sardar Patel Sahbhagi Jal Sanchaya Yojana" popularly known as *Public Bhagidari Scheme*, or the 40:60 check dam scheme. It provided 60% government share and 40% by farmers or beneficiaries through participatory labour or donations. It was one of the best public welfare schemes that instead of making people dependent on a government made the people the major stakeholders of water resource. This was the most successful movement of the decade that saw an all round growth of the state with the industrial growth reaching to 11.2%.

Augmentation in crop variety

The geographical area of the state furnishes a mosaic of geologic, physiographic, soil and climatic variation which further gets accentuated due to the 1,650 km long coastline. These diversities coupled with the innovative nature of the farmers provided opportunities for growing variety of crops particularly cash crop such as vegetables, cotton or tobacco. This has brought vibrancy to the state's agriculture that has not been witnessed anywhere in India so far.

Organic farming



Organic agriculture is welcome given the high-level of chemical pollution in the soil. Organic farming can be done even without fertilizers in a natural way viz. using *vermicompost* or with the help of earthworms. Cow dung, cow urine, cow ghee is used for farming instead of pesticides, fertilizers etc. It is now established that whatever method is used, organic farming yields more than what is achieved by using the current fertilizer/chemical based method.

Insulation from climate factors

The situation that once was alarming due to irregular seasonal rainfall and withering monsoon crops had now changed. There was sufficient water available at any given time to be accessed from nearby check dams or wells. Now, farmers could even go for a third crop such as vegetables, fruits or flowers. Increased milk flow and livestock production also came about thanks to the rising ground water level to eight meters from water harvesting. Repeated percolation after each phase of rainfall during monsoon had raised the water table which in turn prevented sea water ingress in Saurashtra.

It was political will and vision that these dramatic changes came about. With global warming threat growing bigger, the CM had also realized the importance of Green Credit to tackle the crisis of climate-change even as he overcame agricultural challenges.

"As we adopt the philosophy of Carbon Credit to nullify the adverse effects of climate change, Green-Belts must be developed to protect the environment, which will inspire the future industrial infrastructure. Gujarat has made a new beginning in this direction. It is bound to avert the wrath of nature," Modi believes.

The rich tradition and wisdom of ancient Indian agriculturists could help in achieving the New Millennium goals as it supplements the central theme of an humane economy without clashing with nature. The development preaches the idea of agro-economy with socio-economic values.

Impact

Indeed, in the last decade agriculture growth touched 9.6% more than double of the country's growth and much faster than Punjab's. This unprecedented agricultural boom is among the fastest growth recorded anywhere in the world. Agriculture production in the state had risen from Rs 9000 crore to over Rs 34,000 crore. The agricultural strategy had paid dividends, thanks to cut in input cost for the farmer facing adverse climatic situations. The magnitude of this achievement has largely come following good governance practices and the government's determination to evolve a permanent solution to the vexed water crisis.



Cotton farming in Gujarat

Agriculture is the backbone of many Indian states, which was also of the rain-dependent Gujarat. Today, a miracle of sorts on the agriculture front has seen the return of those who had left their parched agriculture lands especially in Saurashtra in search of other vocations like diamond polishing.

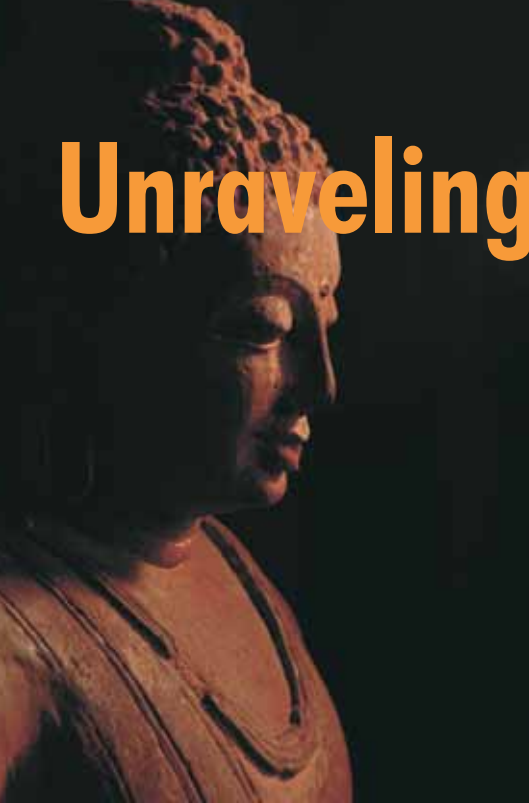
"I had left with my family of seven to Surat in 2002 after my land turned fallow. My two sons began earning Rs 15,000 at a diamond polishing factory in Surat. I returned early 2007 after seeing plenty of water in check dams," shares Kanubahi Rambhai. 62-year-old Suva Khaki from a village in Rajkot district owns 15 bigha (about 14 acres) in Rajkot. Today, Suva harvests 25 maunds of Bt cotton that fetches Rs 15,000 per bigha. After cotton, he then sows wheat. His annual earning is Rs 1.5 lakh per annum. Along with Suva, 25 families had left Khaki Jalia village eight years ago. Except five families, all of them have returned to their village. Suva is one of those farmers who had set the trend of reverse migration with agriculture once again becoming an attractive proposition. Thanks to 30,000 small check dams and 300 big ones built in Saurashtra region alone, it has rejuvenated the lives of Saurashtra farmers facing water woes.

Today, a miracle of sorts on the agriculture front has seen the return of those who had left their parched agriculture lands especially in Saurashtra in search of other vocations like diamond polishing.

It is said Gujarat has a history of seven years of drought at a stretch out of every 10 years. Thanks to the vision of Gujarat chief minister if water wars break out in the country it seems unlikely that Gujarat would be one of its victims as Saurashtra has shown the way.

Unraveling Buddhism in Gujarat

The state government is not leaving any stone unturned to promote the state as the Buddhist destination. **Satyavir Singh** deciphers the traces of Buddhism in the state and observes the government's effort to promote them.



Buddhist footprints in Gujarat

Every aspect of Gujarat has a strong Hindu identity be it history, places, beliefs, politics or people. But, probably, most of the people are clueless about the fact that Gujarat has been a significant place for Buddhism too. The recent excavation in Vadnagar has again thrown light on the strong links of Buddha with the state. Although, archeologists have unearthed many evidences earlier, the recent one could unravel many mysteries.

The traces of Buddhist establishments have been discovered across Gujarat in the form of carved-out caves, stupas and monuments. The coastal region of Gujarat, stretching from Kutch to Saurashtra, and up to Bharuch is dotted with several such caves. It is believed that most of the caves were excavated between 2nd century B.C. and 6th century A.D, mostly during the Kshatrapa rule.

However, the most startling evidence found till date is the ashes found in a casket at Devni Mori site near Shamalaji. Many historians and archeologists are claiming it to be the ashes of Lord Buddha himself. The excavation was carried out by a team from MS University in 1963. Since then, this incredible discovery was in the possession of the University's department of archaeology and ancient history.

In account to this finding, Buddhist scholars suggest that Lord Buddha on his deathbed had asked his disciples to erect stupas over his remains. Later, as per his discretion, his relics were distributed and stupas were constructed over them. Then, the famous Buddhist patron and the great Mauryan emperor Ashoka reopened seven



Khapra Kodia. After deciphering scribbles and letters on the wall, it was discovered that the caves are datable to 3rd-4th century AD



Siyot Caves



Vadnagar Toran



Kadia Dungar Caves, Bharuch



Rock edict of Ashoka, Junagadh

*Buddhist monastery, Vadnagar.
The arrangement of cells around the central courtyard
appears as a swastika-like pattern*



Buddhist items of Vadnagar

out of the eight original sharik stupas, in a bid to erect more stupas across the region. A major portion of relics were distributed among 84,000 stupas that were built by him throughout his empire. This was about the previous breakthroughs. Now, fresh excavations carried out in Vadnagar region, has found a monastery dating back to the Buddha era. In fact, two stupas have also been recovered along with many other antiques. Vadnagar has also revealed a Bodhisattva image, which is assumed to be brought by the monks from Mathura in the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

In account to the new excavations, the Gujarat tourism department has realized the prospect of promoting the state as Buddhist pilgrimage destination. Therefore, to acknowledge the Buddhist community about these findings, a three-day international seminar on Buddhist heritage was held in Vadodara's MS University campus from January 15-18. Many Tibetan lamas and Buddhist scholars from all across the world gathered here. The seminar was inaugurated by the Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama and presided by the Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. During the seminar, a proposal to set up a center for religious studies in MSU campus was approved by the CM along with His Holiness. Modi also ensured to build a Buddhist temple and an academy for Buddhist education.

Anjlee Pandya, a prominent NRG and coordinator of the event said, "This great event is the beginning of a new era of Buddhism in Gujarat. Gujarat will soon become a significant Buddhist pilgrimage and a major tourist attraction. The proposed Buddhist Temple and a Center for Buddhist Studies, a new Buddhism Institute will further the study and understanding Buddhism worldwide."



These plans imply that the Gujarat government is leaving no stone unturned to highlight the recent archeological breakthroughs. Besides, casket of ashes has already become a subject of interest among the patrons worldwide. Hence, considering all these developments together are pointing out that Gujarat is all set to become a new signpost on the Buddhist map of the world.

What they miss about home



Even as they look back fondly at the days spent at home, Non-Resident Gujaratis (NRGs) recollect memories of the 'best days' of their lives, and tell **Ritika Arora** what they miss the most about their homeland.

that Indians are among the most educated among all ethnic groups, and their growth rate easily surpasses that of American locals.

And among all these Indians that have done the nation proud, perhaps the most stellar example is that of the NRG (Non-Resident Gujarati). From the United States to Germany and France, from South Africa to Tanzania, and from the UK to the Middle East - there must hardly be any corner that the Gujjubhai has left unexplored, or hasn't dug his roots into. Besides, the innate warmth and hospitality, every Gujarati has ensured that he should be able to make himself comfortable wherever he has gone.

They're known as the Indian 'Diaspora' abroad, and make up such a significant chunk in several foreign lands that they often outnumber the locals. Indeed, Indians settled abroad, or the 'NRI's as we like to call them, have dispersed so widely across the world that it would now be difficult to find a corner of the globe that has not witnessed contributions from natives of the Indian subcontinent.

They tend to compare everything they do with how it could be done back home!
"This ensures that we are perpetually missing being in Gujarat"

to the US were from India, with about 16 percent of the Asian-American community being Indians. According to the Little India magazine, Indians own about 50% of all economy lodges and 35% of all hotels in the US,

There are statistics to prove this as well. In the year 2002, about 66% of the total migrants

combined value of which comes to be around \$ 40 billion. Surveys done across the US unanimously report

However, it would be a big mistake to think that NRGs are indifferent to their homeland. On the contrary, it is not uncommon to hear Gujaratis settled abroad talk about the various facets of their life back home that they perpetually miss elsewhere. No matter how comfortable life may be, home will be home, as several NRGs testified. And on being asked what it is that they miss the most about home, they came up with answers ranging from the predictable Undhiyu and Dhokla to Makar Sankranti victory calls and even the art of bargaining!

Aarohi Joshi, a fourteen-year old high school student has been in the United States since she was three. Born to a staunchly Indian couple, Joshi recently lost her father to a freak accident back home. However, that hasn't shaken her love for her country one bit, and she still looks forward to home-coming just as much as she did as a kid. "I remember how it used to be forbidden to speak any language other than Gujarati at home. I speak five languages, three of them European, but being at home meant that you had to bond in your mother tongue," quips she.



The fact of being connected with the language is something London-based student Shachi Patel is fiercely proud of too. "We often start speaking in Gujarati outside home as well, much to the astonishment of the locals," she grins. She says no matter how hard they try, the food never tastes the same. "Maybe it is the lack of pesticide content in the veggies - I don't know, but it is just not the same thing. But the most unusual aspect of being abroad, according to her, is that they tend to compare everything they do with how it could be done back home! "This ensures that we are perpetually missing being in Gujarat," says nostalgic Shachi.

Fifty-four year old Amrut Patel was a banker in Ahmedabad till he left for Kenya several years ago, and back now in the city, he is choking on words, describing his happiness at getting back on home ground. "I love Kenya for the fact that it gave me and my children livelihood for several years, and in that sense, my respect for the place will always be the same. However, all said and done, there is no place like my motherland. This is one place where I need not worry about being a second-class citizen, and I never need to explain or justify my identity. My children are in the US, and contemplating permanently coming back to India once their education is done. Need I say more?" shares Amrut.

It isn't just the comfort factor. Many NRIs say the frequent opportunities they get of going home ensure a healthy balance, giving them the best of both worlds. Joshi says she is as effortless with the 'garba' and the 'thumka' as with wearing micro-minis to school, calls herself 'transformable'. "It's quite amusing, the blend that we've managed to create of Indian (Gujarati) and Western sensibilities. I personally speak with an American twang, but consider myself very lucky to have been born a Gujarati. We may shop at Hollister and go for prom nites, but enjoy nothing quite like flaunting our Indian nose rings! And with all these 'bal-gokulams' and 'shishu-bhartis' progressing here, there is no dearth of exposure to Indian culture," she says.

And then, there's twenty-seven year old Ratna Sheth who has become a much bigger fan of vernacular newspapers since leaving India. "I regularly read Divya Bhaskar, Gujarat Samachar and Desh Gujarat nowadays, to keep up with the changing trends back home." Her religious inclinations have stayed



intact. "I make sure to pray everyday, as was the case in Gujarat, and go to the temple every Sunday without fail."

Sunday, she says, is also the day when they savour Gujarati delicacies, including the family's favourites, the 'handvo' and 'muthiyas'.

It isn't just the comfort factor. Many NRIs say the frequent opportunities they get of going home ensure a healthy balance, giving them the best of both worlds.

The one thing however, that they all testify for, is that home

is an oft-repeated word. "We may not get to come back home very often, but whenever we do, it is nothing less than a moment of rejoicing," adds Shachi. Avani Parmar, pursuing her Masters in Dentistry from the US agrees. "Gujaratis are the most genial of the all ethnic communities I have known here," she believes. "Undhiyu, jalebi, dances and festivals, celebrations and little triumphs are all firmly ensconced in my memory from the days we spent there. But the best memories that I have are of the good times I've spent with my family. No amount of affection or comfort in any other part of the world can make up for that feeling of being with one's loved ones," she concludes.



Volun'teaching' in Education

Vinay Pagarani sketches how one alliance, the Avbodh-IQG Initiative, is boosting the situation of elementary education in Gujarat, a sine qua non for India's development.

Background

For many centuries, India was renowned for being economically prosperous, which lured people from across the world to tap the business prospect of the country.

However, in the 18th Century, the Scientific and Industrial Revolution, which started in the West, changed the world economic scenario completely while leaving India's progress way behind.



India could not cope with the technological evolution and the West went many

steps ahead with advancements as far as the economic development was concerned. Nevertheless, there has been a paradigm shift again in the 21st Century which has brought a new measurement of the country's economic strength. And Knowledge Economy is the foremost cause behind the resurgence.

It would be a gargantuan task for any government to effectively educate children without the help of the citizens.

In the centuries to come, intellectual capital will overpower physical capital. Countries having the best of knowledge resources will be the most powerful ones. This puts India at a great advantage, as India consists of the largest pool of skilled people and has an incredibly rich history of innovation. India also has numerous quality institutes across the nation. It also has a large number of youth (55%) of the population who are below the age of 25 years, and approximately 330 million people in India are below 15 years old.

The capabilities of these youth will be the critical determinants of India's future. Therefore, the Generation Next needs to be provided with the right opportunities, this could brew into a terrible situation that may spiral out of control if not tackled in the appropriate manner.

If the Indian youth is not provided with the right opportunities and direction, India could end up with a substantial mass of unemployment and frustrated youngsters. This could stem into violence and crime, if not dealt with right away. The key to this solution is to provide a good standard of health, education and vocational opportunities.

According to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008 it shall be the duty of every parent or guardian to admit the child to a neighbourhood school for elementary education, and every child in the 6-14 age groups will be eligible for free education. Seeking to carry out radical changes in the primary education pattern, this bill promises free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14. That is for the law and for the records. The issue that still stands is, 'how can it be effectively executed?'

It would be a gargantuan task for any government to effectively educate children without the help of the citizens. One of the possible solutions is by encouraging the educated citizens of our country to teach those children who have limited access to education infrastructure especially such children are in rural areas of India.

Actually, as per the Indian tradition, teaching always was a voluntary activity. Today, however, teaching is considered as just like any other profession. However, the need of the time is to keep primary education out of the professional boundaries.

VolunTeacher The Concept

There is one programme which is not only preaching but also practicing the noble concept of spreading education. AIREP is an activity which encourages participation of people, institutes and organizations, who would like to join and promote the concept of VolunTeaching (teaching voluntarily).

Avbodh IQG Rural Empowerment Programme (AIREP) has evolved on the core concept of VolunTeaching. The foremost objective is to garner participation of the educated people to inculcate education among rural children. That too by going to the village schools just three days a week, during and/or after the school hours. The programme is running for almost two years now and it is yielding excellent results. The members invite individuals, institutes, corporate, NGOs, government

bodies; everyone to join this philosophy and help to empower those who wish to live a quality life.

Avbodh-IQG Initiative

Avbodh Knowledge Foundation has teamed up with Innovative Quality Group focusing on the primary aim of making learning a joy in villages located near the city of Ahmedabad. The effort is steadily growing and is spearheaded by Ravin Vyas of Avbodh, who has the strong support of a dedicated team. Even more so after joining forces with Innovative Quality Group's Spirit Evolves via Awareness (SEVA) Project, led by Hiral Mehta, their mission is to improve the overall quality of life, focusing mainly on rural areas of India. IQG was founded in Boston, USA in 1997 and has mushroomed over the past few years in Gujarat.

Innovative Quality Group's Spirit Evolves via Awareness (SEVA) Project chose 8 rural villages near Ahmedabad three years ago. Ever since then, they have been working with the children of the villages. Although, there are approximately about 1000+ children in Paldi-Kankrej, it took six months (24 Sundays) to convince the parents of 120 children for letting their kids attend Sunday Classes.

Initially, only ten children from the village attended the Sunday schooling held by the IQG, they played fun filled and interactive games with them and tried to find out what they like; how they would like to study and what

children's education. From then onwards, the interaction with the children and the local villagers have formed a good bond and trust amongst each other.

The children were taught yoga, fitness, prayer, hygiene and above all, to enjoy studying at the most. The children, who turned out to be so eager to go to school, deserve every opportunity to be educated and illuminate their minds. Now, with more than 250 children attending the regular teaching sessions on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, their future seems to be thriving for a bright



Avbodh volunteers playing with children

future. From sitting in a disorganized manner, they now sit in a disciplined lotus position, waiting for instructions from their Volunteachers.

Support from the system

Looking at the success of the concept, the founders of newly formed Gujarat Educational Innovations Commission came forward

to support the cause. They equipped the team with a permission to use the Jilla Panchayat School Building to impart education in an efficient manner.

The Department of Higher Education has facilitated campaign in colleges for constant recruitment of VolunTeachers. In fact, AIREP Field Learning Certificate which is issued to the people who complete six months of volunteaching with the team, has got recognition by the department.

Now, the challenge in the coming years is to come up with a model, which is replicable. So that anyone across any boundary can share their knowledge and resources to impart education to those who need it.

For more info, please contact info@avbodh.org

Visit: www.avbodh.org



would be the reason they would not attend school. They also went to the schools to know perspectives of the principle and teachers on the situation.

As a result, kids started going to school on a regular basis and after the success of one performing arts event organized by the VolunTeachers in that village, the parents also became more involved in the process of their



Claim your NGI identity!

The essence of NGI

NGI is a platform for forward-thinking Indians living across the globe. Connecting and enabling the Global Indians to the advancement of their lives. Helping India leverage its strengths in all sectors including, economic and geopolitical spheres. These include the NGI itinerary.

The NGI media is targeted to serve Indians within the territory of India and the world over. Erasing the dividing line between NRIs and Indians (living in India), is an NGI objective. Allowing members and patrons, the opportunity to trade and share all the necessary elements involved in the making of these entities. This is attained by enabling them to voice their opinions via forums created both online and offline.



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If you love India and its people; if you are a person of Indian origin; if you belong to any ethnic group, speaking any language, practicing any or no religion and living wherever, then you too can be an NGI!

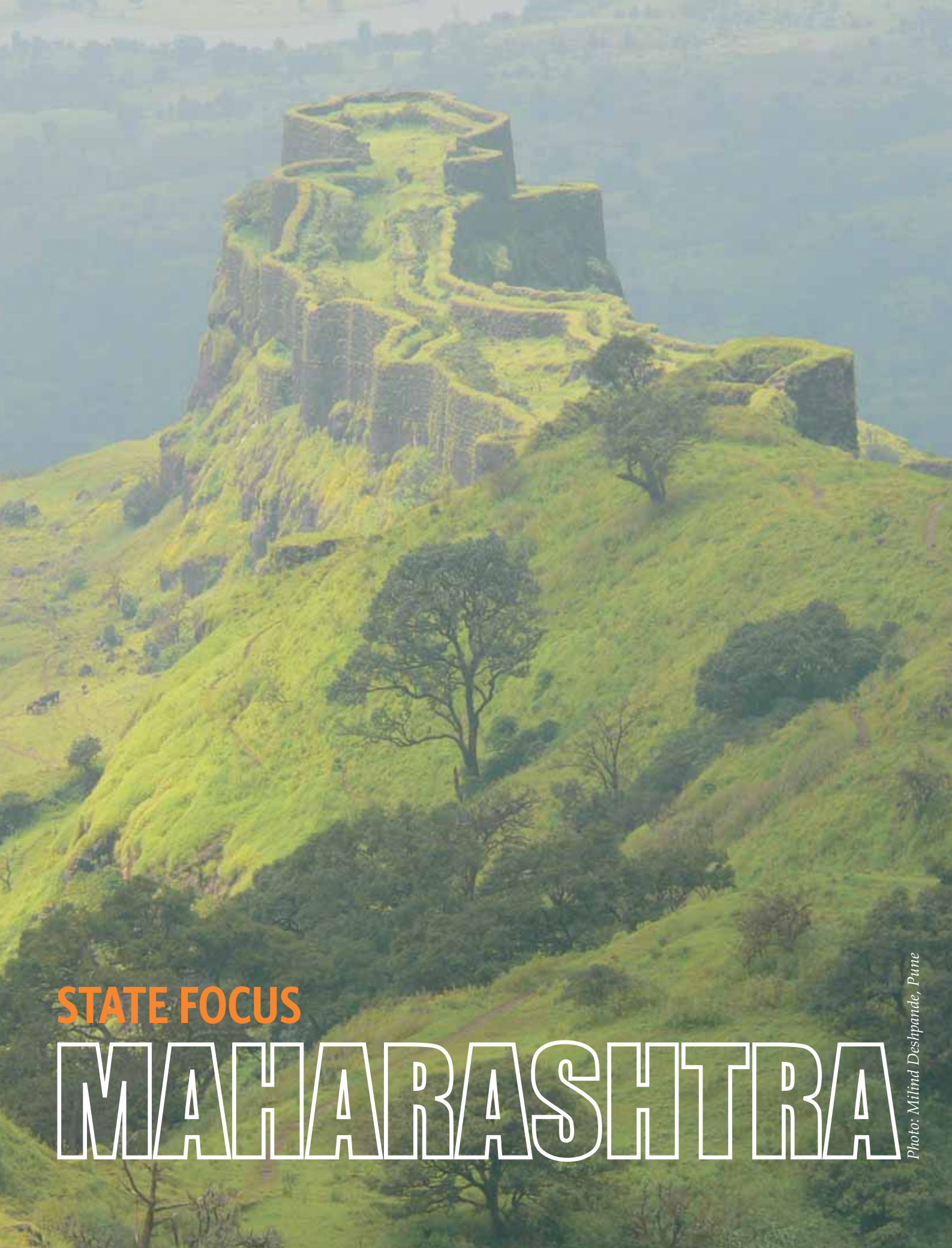
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STATE FOCUS

MAHARASHTRA

Photo: Milind Deshpande, Pune

'Industry'ous Maharashtra

Vinay Pagarani measures the technologically advanced lands of Maharashtra and its features.



Maharashtra Industry

Established in 1962 under M.I.D. Act 1961 as the premier industrial infrastructure development agency of Government of Maharashtra.

Objectives

- Set up Industrial Areas for planned and systematic industrial development
- To function as a special planning authority in development of industrial areas
- "Prosperity to all through Industrialisation" is the corporate philosophy of MIDC

Achievements

- Built 225 industrial complexes with 1,30,000 acres of land
- Developed specialized parks for different industrial sectors, including IT, BT, Wine (Grape Processing) Park, Silver Zone, Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, Leather, Chemical Industry, Electronics, Food Processing, Floriculture etc.
- Elaborate network of industrial & domestic water supply, total quantity supplied 1285 MLD

Millennium Business Park, Navi Mumbai

One of the largest software park developed in the state,



spread over a planned and landscaped area of 48 acres, with 35 buildings having 23,000,00 sq.ft. total built-up area.

- 140 Mbps connectivity through MTNL, 4 Mbps through VSNL, 8 Mbps through STPI
- Dedicated sub-station (22/11 KV)
- Comprehensive facilities and amenities like a clubhouse, restaurants, bank & ATM facilities
- The success of the park reflects in the names it has already attracted. Such as Aptech, CMC, Hexaware, Mastek, Rolta, TCS, Intelnet Global, PCS, Medicure Ltd, Exult Ltd, E-sobs Ltd, ML Groups, MTNL, VSNL, STPL, etc.

Samruddhi Venture Park, Mumbai

A unique one of its kind venture established to facilitate and encourage entrepreneurship in the IT



sector in Maharashtra.

- The Samruddhi Venture Park is an ideal location for Venture Capital firms and Incubator firms
- Angel Investors (Several Angel Investor Firms from the Silicon Valley associated with the project)
- Intl. Lawyers/Accounting firms
- Offices of NASSCOM & TiE already functional. Tufan Infotech, an incubator firm floated by Dr. Suhas Patil has already set up base here.

Airoli Knowledge Park, Navi Mumbai

- A sprawling 100 acres of land with well-developed roads and other infrastructure.
- Within easy driving distance from Mumbai

airport and the Eastern suburbs, yet away from the hustle and bustle of city life

- Close to the Airoli Bridge connecting Navi Mumbai with the Eastern Suburbs of Mumbai City
- Selected by Patni Computer Systems for their new Software Development campus
- Ideal for software and BPO units

Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park, Hinjawadi, Pune

Hinjawadi, Phase-I

- Maharashtra's largest IT Park spread over 238 acres of exquisitely developed land
- A resounding success with names like Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant, Geometric, Tata Technologies, Veritas etc. already based here
- 140 Mbps connectivity through VSNL and an 80 Mbps earth station set-up on campus by STPI



- Dedicated telephone exchange with optic fibre cable network
- Dedicated electric sub-station (220 KV)
- Amenities such as hostel, shopping complex, banks etc.
- Underground services like data cabling etc.

Hinjawadi, Phase II

- A short drive from Phase I
- 200 acres of beautifully landscaped, gently sloping hilly land
- Chosen by Infosys for their new 110 acre campus

Hinjawadi, Phase-III

- Additional land close to the existing park, under acquisition and development, available for IT and BPO units since early 2004

Talawade IT Park, Pune

- A campus-style IT Park, already

home to names like Syntel and Kanbay

- Set amidst tranquil, green surroundings on 190 acres of land on the banks of Indrayani River
- IT Tower with 1,00,000 sq.ft. built-up space
- Dedicated Telephone Exchange
- VSNL's earth station on campus
- Underground services like data cabling etc.

Kharadi IT Park, Pune

- 10 minutes away from Pune Airport
- An ideal IT destination set amidst picturesque, peaceful environs spread over 75 acres
- Total built-up area of over 1,70,000 sq.ft.
- Dedicated Telephone Exchange.
- Underground Services like data cabling, etc.

Other IT Parks

With the aim of providing all round growth of the IT industry and to tap the potential of the abundant and varied IT skill-sets available throughout the state, MIDC has developed several IT parks in centres like:

- ▶ Nagpur ▶ Aurangabad ▶ Kolhapur ▶ Nashik ▶ Amravati ▶ Satara ▶ Sangli ▶ Latur ▶ Ahmednagar ▶ Solapur





The Real Taste of Real Estate

Vinay Pagarani assembles some bare facts of the real estate market of Maharashtra. Coupled with the 'Property Problems: Pondering and Perspectives' covered in NGI's Feb-March issue, this report may serve as the right guide for Indians looking to invest in Maharashtra from anywhere in the world.

Background

With property boom bruited about, real estate in India is touching new heights. With the new policies adopted by the Indian government regarding foreign direct investment (FDI) since 2002, the realty sector has seen an unprecedented boom ever since. Two reasons why it happened: One, the burgeoning industrial sector dilated the demand for office-buildings and dwellings. Two, liberalisation policies of the government eased the licensing and authorization processes before taking up mega-construction projects.

Every potential investor looking forward to dig profits has been eyeing the property market in India for a wide variety of reasons. It's ever growing economy has been on a roll with 8.1% increase seen in the last financial year. The

Every potential investor looking forward to dig profits has been eyeing the property market in India for a wide variety of reasons.

upturn in economy increases the purchasing power of its people, which in turn generates demand in the real estate sector.

The share market has also shown phenomenal growth again in the last three quarters, which has directly relativity with the property market. Currently, lingering around 18,000 points in April'10, Sensex is said to cross its 20,000 points benchmark by year 2012.

India has welcomed a number of Fortune 500 and other reputed companies. Their financial gain has attracted more companies to initiate operations in India thus creating more demand for corporate space.

Over the years, the real estate market has yielded surplus

for its investors. 70 percent of foreign investors in India have made huge gains with another 12 percent breaking even.

India's IT, ITES and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industries are perceived as the best in the world. Its expertise in sectors like chemicals, pharmaceuticals, auto-components, apparels and jewellery has also made the grade.

Nationalised Banks of India too have stepped into the foray making the process of investing effortless for investors in India. ABN Amro, Bank of Baroda, Citibank, Om Kotak Mahindra and ICICI include some of the popular banks in India that have augmented their Home Loan schemes at lesser capital interest rates than other loans. They have set afloat numerous home projects; where in the bank has affiliations with some select building projects. These initiatives by the Indian banks have gripped investors into the real estate market, when trustworthy names such as HDFC, Standard Chartered et al are associated with building projects.

These positive attributes of the Indian real estate sector will continue to attract more and more foreign investments in the near future.

The scope of Maharashtra

Every favourable aspect of the Indian realty sector mentioned above is evident in the attributes of the realty sector of Maharashtra.

Much to offer their esteemed investors on the realty front, today, these sugarcane-producing lands have evolved into lofty avenues of business, trade and commerce.

Maharashtra has delved into other areas of economies and superseded even other the states. It ranks first nationwide in coal-based thermal electricity as well as nuclear electricity generation

The Government of Maharashtra is a stable and reliable one. The government has adopted favourable measures to keep realty biz in Maharashtra at an all-time high. For instance in early 2010, the government took the bold step of increasing the FSI (floor space index) i.e. the ratio of total floor area of a building to the size of the plot. It indicates the maximum construction allowed on a plot in a particular area. This decision opened up the possibility for redeveloping 16,461 old buildings, which aided the price rise.

Yen for Mumbai

Mumbai, with its international airport, an international port on the coast of the Arabian Sea, and sprawling national highways, has made the entire state easily accessible for the world to see.

Some of the Top Builders in Mumbai namely Hiranandani Constructions, K Raheja Constructions, Shapoorji Pallonji & Co Ltd, Kalpataru Builders & Developers, Ansal API Builders, Vascon Engineering, Panchshil Realty Group, D S Kulkarni Developers, Oberoi Constructions and Godrej Properties etc are creating huge residential, commercial and industrial projects to fulfill the demands of the Mumbai Property market.

Pune

The second most important city of Maharashtra Pune stands next to Mumbai. Termed as the cultural capital of Maharashtra and the educational capital of the country, Pune is a cosmopolitan city, where different cultures have blended seamlessly. It is dotted with a number of transnational companies such as IBM, Accenture, and Dell, as well as Indian companies like Wipro, Infosys, and Bajaj Auto. Evidently, Pune is becoming a hub of the Information Technology sector, along the lines of Bangalore. It has emerged as one of the most important Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centers in India. All these factors make the real estate in Pune extremely popular and sought-after.

Having more than a hundred educational institutes and extensive industrial prevalence, Pune has urbanized faster than any other city in India.

Having more than a hundred educational institutes and extensive industrial prevalence, Pune has urbanized faster than any other city in India. This feature of the city is the reason for the high demand of apartments and houses by students who come from around the country and even the world.

Houses in areas such as Aundh, Koregaon Park, Viman nagar, NIBM road, Camp and Kothrud yield high rentals due to the proximity to many educational institutes. Sensible students are easy to find, especially, with the help



This most-desired property destination for real estate property hunters has attracted major builders and developers not just in India but also the foreign collaborators. The core area called the 'Island City' has the most expensive real estate in all of India. The Real Estate market news in Mumbai clearly indicates an upward trend for offices and commercial units' requirements. The demand for office spaces in Mumbai is primarily driven by the telecom, pharmaceutical, IT/ITES, finance, and insurance sectors.

Mumbai houses the top MNCs and business conglomerates along with the entertainment and media industry, both of which call for diverse immigrants, everyday. This has generated a never ending demand for homes in the City of Dreams.



of estate agents who are endemically available. The agents do the paperwork, keep an eye on the tenants and ensure that the rent reaches the landlord's bank account, regularly. Many NRIs have their houses on lease under a similar arrangement in & around the city limits of Pune.

The finest of builders in Pune include Aditya Builders, Kumar Builders, Gokhle Builders, Dream Associates, Naiknavare & Associates among others. Their projects vary in terms of location, space, facilities, value; hence the investor can probe to seek what he is looking for. Township projects, especially on the outskirts of the city, are in vogue today. Magarpatta, Krishna Keval, Runwal, Sacred Heard, etc. consist of the well-known of Township. They have gained popularity amongst foreign investors too and are very much in demand. Although, the investor must note that reselling such properties are vexed.

This 'Wine Capital of India' is located in the Western Ghats on the banks of the river Godavari. Nashik is regarded as one of world's holiest Hindu cities, which witnesses the Kumbh Mela once every 12 years.

Nashik

About at the same distance as Pune is from Mumbai, Nashik is known for its picturesque surroundings and delightful climate. In many ways, its cityscape too resembles that of Pune's. This 'Wine Capital of India' is located in the Western Ghats on the banks of the river Godavari. Nashik is regarded as one of world's holiest Hindu cities, which witnesses the Kumbh Mela once every 12 years.

When Nashik's first-ever IT hub was inaugurated back in January 2007, commercial and residential property

development was expected to gain momentum. Construction activities saw the upswing, and were undertaken on the lines of Mumbai and Bangalore. Today, the city is on a fast track to becoming a major business centre, thus leading to the development of all kinds of properties in Nashik.

From office spaces to flats, apartments, residential plots, bungalows, villas, the urbanising city has a provision for all types of demands and budget with regard to buying property. With the high-ranking builders of India already involved in projects in the city, India already regarded Nashik as one of its fastest growing cities.

Subhadra Properties, Saishree Group, Nishant builders and Kalpataru Developers and such other construction companies are at the forefront of Nashik's residential development process. Several housing societies and commercial complexes have made property buying there a painless task.

Residential projects in areas such as Trimurthy Chowk, Indira Nagar, Deolali Camp, Rajiv Nagar and Gangapur Road are the most sought after for the state-of-the-art amenities that come with them there. The number of professionals from other cities is rising in Nashik, which has brought up the demand for rental homes.

The real estate market in India is yet in a nascent stage and the scope is boundless, even still. It does not resemble a bubble that will burst. An incessant rise for the next two decades is almost certain.



Rising up: skyscrapers of Mumbai

Guiding the stars

Vinay Pagarani came face to face with the one who serves as an illumination to many. From the stars of the East to the NRIs of the West, Subrato Banerjee has given direction to many an Indian with the power of astrology.

A guru to almost half of Bollywood's prominent and upcoming celebrities, directors and producers, Subrato has rightly guided the Indian Entertainment Industry to their glory years. Since the turn of the century, he emerged as the most influential of astrologers in India.

What is the methodology you follow to know about the future?

SB: To attain the right results, predictions have to always be done systematically. It starts with intensive research on the subject at hand, then followed by a pooja specifically tuned for the required answers. This special pooja is coupled with a type of Tantra, making it a very positive form of prayer. An extensive session of meditation tops it all. This is where all the doubts are cleared. After which, we arrive at a final conclusion of our prediction.

Is your theory associated with Hinduism, in any way?

SB: Hinduism is the essence of my astrology, vastu and poojas. Infact, 100% of it is derived from Hinduism.

What is astrology?

SB: Astrology is somewhat related to astronomy. Where, astronomy has more to do with the science of the astral bodies, astrology has more to do with the meaning of their movement. It delves into understanding them.

It is on the positive side of magic. Scientific, in a sense, and the results, themselves, are proof enough. On Sahara channel's Dhan Jyotish TV show, I had predicted the share market a number of times in the past which all claimed true.

What is Subrato Banerjee's aim?

SB: My aim is to prove that astrology is real. People think it's a fake. But, in fact, with the power of astrology, we can predict the future to the slightest possible detail.

I want the world to witness the power of Indian Pandits. This gift can help predict the future and be used for the well-being of the world.

When did you decide that you wanted to be an astrologer?

SB: I realized my potential back in 2004 with a chronicle of incidents that happened to me. I was a graduate from the Calcutta University and decided to do my Astrological study, which I did from Chennai. I was certain by then that I wanted to be the one to predict the world and its people's future.

Do you have a mentor?

SB: The heavenly god and Tara the mother of Jupiter.

What is your source of inspiration?

Challenges, overcoming them!

How accurate are your predictions?

SB: I am confident that I haven't made a single prediction that hasn't come true.

What are the current projects you are working on?

SB: Currently, I am busy with a project in Mumbai related to the entertainment industry.

Another plan that I am working on is about forecasting everyday about any part of the world and making available the information from my website. My international clientele include industrialists and NRIs, who have invited me over for vastu pointers and forecasts.

Any scoops over the upcoming turn of events for India?

SB: According to my predictions, India will become a super power by 2012. Its clout would be equivalent to that of China's. India's GDP would cross its 8.2% benchmark in 2010. Nitish Kumar will continue to serve Bihar as the CM after the 2010 assembly elections there.

You have built two ashrams. Please tell us about them.

SB: Yes, the Tarapith Ashram at Bolpur, West Bengal and another at Kamakkha, Assam are very important to me. They offer revitalizing services to their visitors such as spiritual healing, meditation sessions and such other.

In two-three months, I am going to establish another ashram nearby Mumbai which will provide self-conscious and positive energy to its visitors. The negative energy in them would naturally be diminished.

Any message for our readers?

SB: Every person must take interest in meditation. No drug in the world is more elevating. Science has shown that meditation helps increase the positive energy in a person.

Subrato Banerjee can be contacted via his website <http://www.subratabanerjee.co.in> for future predictions and regarding any decisive problems.



India will become a super power by 2012. Its clout would be equivalent to that of China's. India's GDP would cross its 8.2% benchmark in 2010.

Saints of Modern Maharashtra

Dr. Sunil V. Gokhale identifies the commendable works by some impacting NGOs in Maharashtra.



Baba Amte

corner of Maharashtra and in every area of life. Let's look at a few organizations and their leaders, who kindled the flame of various social changes on the Maratha land. But while we read the names of these 'leaders', remember that a dedicated army of volunteers is essential for any leader to achieve anything.

When one thinks of selfless social work in Maharashtra, the pictures of Baba Amte and Anna Hazare come in our

There are literally thousands and thousands of volunteers and hundreds if not thousands of NGOs that are working for the better in every corner of Maharashtra and in every area of life.

mind. Though, Baba Amte is no more, his second and even third generation perseveres, who are expanding their work. Dr. Vikas Amte is looking after Anandwan, the ashram for leprosy affected people founded by Baba Amte. Dr. Prakash Amte and Dr. Manda Amte literally went and stayed where no 'civilized' man had gone before. After getting medical degrees they went to live in wild jungle among the tribals in Hemalkasa in Gadchiroli district. This is the most backward and Naxal affected part of Maharashtra. Through patience and great hardship, their Lok Biradari project has now brought improvement in the lives of thousands of Adivasis. They have been honoured with the Magsaysay Award for their work.

Another inspiring couple from Gadchiroli is Drs. Abhay and Rani Bang. Abhay Bang is a product of Gandhiji's Sewagram Ashram at

Gandhiji used to say that Maharashtra is a beehive of social workers volunteers. Does the state still carry the same philanthropic spirit in the age of Bollywood and Twenty20 cricket circus? 'Definitely so' is the answer if one takes a look at the myriad voluntary organizations and their impact on Maharashtra. There are literally thousands and thousands of volunteers and NGOs that are working for the betterment of society in every

Wardha. Their organization, SEARCH, works to improve the health of infants. One of their innovations is 'barefoot doctors'. They train semi-literate woman in primary health care, to be administered at home. They have also carried out an influential survey on the causes of malnutrition in children. Largely because of their work, the infant mortality numbers have gone down in Gadchiroli. Their work is seen as a model in similar projects worldwide. They too have won the Magsaysay Award for their work.

ARTI or Appropriate Rural Technology Initiative of Dr. A.D. Karve, Pune uses the apposite technology to solve basic

problems of the rural population. They make efficient chulhas(ovens) and simple equipment to make fuel from bio-waste. Because of their important work in renewable energy, ARTI received the prestigious Ashden Award for sustainable energy twice. Once, for making the Compact Digester useful for producing biogas from food waste and then again for making Charcoal Briquettes from sugarcane trash (leaves), which is not generally used as cattle fodder. Today, his daughter endeavours to take the project further.



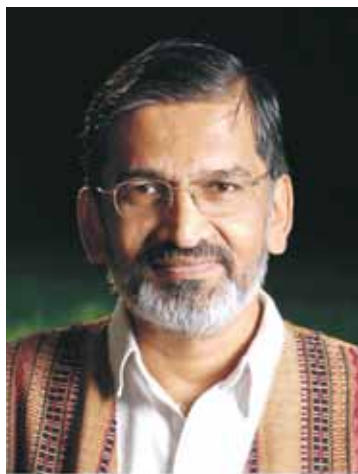
Prakash and Mandakini Amte

Jnana Prabodhini, Pune is well known as a school for intelligent children. The idea behind this school is to select high IQ children, and to nurture them to bring about social change. But this 'school' is not just a school. It is a multi-disciplinary NGO. One of their momentous projects was organizing



Anna Hazare

'Sakhar-shala', literally, Sugar-schools. These 100 days schools ran for the children of migrant labourers who cut the sugar cane. In absence of such schools, these children would go through the life illiterate. This work was so successful that most of the co-operative sugar factories in Maharashtra now organize such schools. Jnana Prabodhini also trains all interested adults, irrespective of cast and gender, to become *purohit* or priest for conducting various rituals. Now eye-brows are no longer raised in Pune if there is a lady priest for a marriage ceremony.



Dr. Abhay Bang and Rani Bang

There are many other organizations such as the Swayamsidha in Kolhapur, run by Kanchan Parulekar that works for the empowerment of young girls and women or the Shramjeevi network in Satara district which labours for the upliftment of Katkaris (a backward caste) or Human Rights Organizations such as 'Vidhayak Samsad' of Vivek Pandit (now, an Assembly Member) in Vasai near Mumbai. Some other social workers run orphanages, some like Mr. Vilas Chaphekar of 'Vanchit Vikas' look after the children of women trapped in the flesh trade. There are also thousands of others working on smaller scale: some of them conduct Abhyasikas or study circles for poor children, some organize rubbish collectors.

There are many other people or NGOs whose area of work invites controversy by default. But one cannot ignore them just because they are controversial. Because they too have had tremendous impact on Maharashtra and on India.

And we will leave it to history to decide about them. The foremost name is, of course Narmada Bachav Andolan and Medha Patkar. It was very easy to stand 'with the dam'. But they took the side of those who lost their entire villages and their way of life to the Narmada Dam. Technically, the movement was unsuccessful. But they were so effective in delaying the dam work and in making land evictions a burning issue that now all land eviction projects will be re-thought and where unavoidable, the evicted would receive much better treatment.



Medha Patkar

The recently proposed Special Economic Zones (SEZs) also invited opposition from local people and from the NGOs for the same reason, uprooting entire populations from fertile lands. Many organizations are opposing such SEZs and have met with some success. There is also Andhashradha Nirmoolan Samiti, an organization that is dedicated to spreading rationalism and to fighting bogus swamis and god-men in Maharashtra.

Anna Hazare is a one man army. A simple man, without much formal education but with great determination, who transformed Ralegan Shiddi a poor village in Nagar district. His work served as a model and as an inspiration for many others and that is what he became acclaimed for. But I believe, his far greater contribution to society is his role in getting the 'Right To Information' Act (RTI) passed

I believe, Anna Hazare's far greater contribution to society is his role in getting the 'Right To Information' Act (RTI) passed by the Indian parliament.

by the Indian parliament. This act is going to have positive impact on millions of Indian in years to come. The act has not only empowered ordinary people but it is also acting as a check upon corruption in the government. There were many other organizations that fought to get the RTI act passed. These organizations are also active today to see to it that the RTI is implemented, daily.

It is heartening to see that even today so many people are discreetly doing social work, which no government, no corporation and no celebrity can do. Hats off to them!



Coming out of its shell

A tiny village on the Konkan coast is not only protecting the endangered Olive Ridley turtles, but has also initiated a preservation drive together with a gainful proposition. Aditya Paul reports.

With a burgeoning population, it is an accepted fact that in India man is increasingly coming in conflict with his environment. Inevitably, the ever-increasing strain on resources leads to the now all-too-familiar story of environment exploitation. It is perhaps expecting a bit too much of those living in rural areas that they would care for the environment at the expense of their own financial security. However, an idyllic little village called Velas on Maharashtra's Konkan coast has proved all sceptics wrong in this regard.

Velas, located in Ratnagiri district, has a population of 1800. Like its other cousins along the coast, it has a pristine beach and tiny lanes lined with jackfruit and other trees. The place is isolated to the extent that one has access to

cellular network only at a small spot about 500 meters before entering Velas.

Thrice a year, the residents of Velas along with an NGO, Sahyadri Nisarg Mitra (SNM), organize the Velas Turtle Festival where tourists are invited to live with the villagers and observe the turtle hatchlings before they set forth for their life in the sea.

What sets Velas apart

from its costal cousins is that it is a nesting site for Olive Ridley Turtles, a species that is protected by the villagers as their own kin. Thrice a year, the residents of Velas along with an NGO, Sahyadri Nisarg Mitra (SNM), organize the Velas Turtle Festival where tourists are invited to live with the

villagers and observe the turtle hatchlings before they set forth for their life in the sea.

The smallest of the marine turtles, Olive Ridleys have been classified as Critically Endangered in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN) Red List. Since 2002, the people of Velas, ably aided by SNM, have not only been protecting turtle nests from poachers, jackals, and other threats, but they have also initiated a Turtle Festival. A unique endeavour, the festival has become quite a hit with tourists, thereby ushering in a hitherto untapped source of income, namely, tourism. The villagers donate 10% of the earnings from these festivals to a fund whose aim is to provide better facilities and more hatcheries as and when the need arises. Currently, the village has a single hatchery that can take care of 22 nests.

"The villagers had no idea about why they should be protecting these turtles until they understood that tourists arrived only because of the turtles. This was followed by the realization that the influx of tourists will continue as long as the turtles are alive, thereby assuring the villagers a steady source of income", asserted Bhau Katdhare, who heads SNM. "We call this a harmony between conservation and livelihood. It is a sustainable model because it provides villagers with an

Olive Ridley turtles

1. Named after H.N. Ridley FRS who reported the first sighting in Brazil in 1887.
2. Their shells are heart shaped and olive green in colour.
3. The smallest of the marine turtles, they grow to an average of 70 cm in length and can weigh up to 45 kg.
4. They nest on beaches. Each adult female lays approximately 100140 eggs at a time.
5. The largest breeding ground for them is on the beaches of Orissa.

economic incentive to protect their environment, rather than asking them to undertake any sacrifice for it”, he added.

The beach of Velas, now a haven for turtles, was once a much favored spot for silver smugglers. “The villagers would go to the beach and collect stray bars of silver that had fallen off”, revealed Katdhare. “When the police got wind of the matter, they imposed a curfew on the beach. It was this curfew that made us aware of the turtles when one of our volunteers, who just happened to be in Velas, went scouting for nesting grounds. Since no one else had been on the beach, he was quite surprised to see turtle tracks on the sand”, he elaborated.

Almost immediately, SNM swung into action. They began by searching for nests and taking the eggs they found to artificial hatcheries, thereby sheltering them from predators, both man and beast. “From the very beginning we knew that what we were aiming to achieve would not be possible without support from the villagers. In the first year itself, we managed to protect 50 nests and set free 2732 hatchlings. Encouraged by this success, we pressed on and in 2007, we began organizing the Turtle Festival, again with help from the villagers”, revealed Katdhare.

The festival is held during the hatching season in March or April. Advertisements on the SNM website attract tourists from Mumbai and Pune. “Every house takes care of the tourists”, remarked Prakash Doshi, a resident of Velas. “We take in as many people as we can. Few of us also cook wholesome Marathi vegetarian food for them”, he added.

“We are told by the tourists not to change anything about our village because they love what they experience”, said Avinash Yadav, another resident. “Many tourists pay a return visit and when they do so they always call and tell me that they would again want to stay with me and my family. This year, there has been a steady stream of tourists for the entire month of March, right through April”, he stated.

“It is a refreshing change from living in hotels and sight-seeing that comprise most of my holidays”, said Ragini Mohite from Mumbai. “It makes me feel good that my money is helping protect an endangered species”, she added. “Back home, it is a major issue getting ten people in a building to agree on the color of paint. But here an entire village is united in the conservation and protection of these turtles”, exclaimed Aditya Bohra, a commerce student.

From initially having to organize everything from home-stays to hatcheries, gradually SNM has withdrawn itself from the festival. Now, it is the villagers who run the show. In the words of Shilpa Rediz, a volunteer working with SNM, “This year,

all we have done is put up the dates of the festival on our website alongside a couple of phone numbers of the residents. Rest all, the villagers have managed.”

To organize and manage the festival better, the villagers of Velas have formed the Kasav Mitra Mandal that sets aside 10% of all the villages' earnings. The earnings are then pooled together and utilized for various conservation efforts. In the last seven years, the villagers have successfully protected 553 nests and released more than 25,000 hatchlings. For the past two years, the project has been working under a United Nations Development Fund grant. There is no doubt that the festival has helped the project stand on its own feet. Last year, the villagers made enough money to pay for a hatchery and regular patrolling of the seaside.

Along the 720 km coastline of Maharashtra, SNM has identified 30 more villages towards the purpose of turtle conservation. “We are hoping that every village along the coast will follow the example set by the people of Velas”, emphasized Katdhare.

Details about the Turtle Festival are available on the website www.snmcpn.org along with directions to Velas and a detailed bus time table.



“We call this a harmony between conservation and livelihood. It is a sustainable model because it provides villagers with an economic incentive to protect their environment, rather than asking them to undertake any sacrifice for it.”



Turtles on a run



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- ✓ Capacity building of primary education personnel under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

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- 328 Programmes
- Over 3,500 Courses
- 12 Centres
- 21 Schools of Studies

State-of-the-art Education Facilities

- 48 Mbps connectivity
- Webcast, Telecasting
- Videoconferencing
- Mobile Telephony for Learning
- E-Governance
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- EduSat, Gyan Darshan, Gyan Vani channels
- Providing Infrastructure, Facilities & Content for Management courses to 53 African nations through TCIL E-Pan African Network hub at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Chair for Satellite Education
- Chair for Technology-Enabled Learning

Trend-Setting Initiatives

- ✓ For 400 Community Colleges, to offer Associate Degrees within current Plan
- ✓ With four Union ministries for capacity-building programmes for both formal and informal education of BPL people
- ✓ With ministry of labour and welfare for a slew of capacity building programmes
- ✓ With states for training in-service teachers under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme
- ✓ On Demand Exam ● Walk-in Admission ● Answerscript Revaluation
- ✓ Broadband connectivity to all centres.
- ✓ Centre for Advanced Innovative Informatics at learning and pedagogy

Public Private Partnerships

- ✓ Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) for educating and training youths to build up their employability
- ✓ Security Skills Council of India (SSCI) to train and build up reserves for continuous inflow of trained security personnel to industries
- ✓ Rainmaker for building up trained human resources among people engaged in the profession of Law for Legal Process Outsourcing
- ✓ Confederation of Manufacturers Associations of India (CMAI) for low-cost mobile handsets to reach the rural poor and disadvantaged through Mobile Telephony
- ✓ Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) for developing Community Radios for improving professional lifestyles of the disadvantaged and marginal worker groups
- ✓ Accenture for launching programmes in BPO for creating tertiary sector job opportunities for youths and training them on-the-job
- ✓ Retail Association of India (rai) for training and educating youths willing to join retail chain management and industry

International Collaborations

- ✓ For German Language with Max Muller Bhavan and Goethe Institute of Germany
- ✓ For Japanese Language programmes with Embassy of Japan
- ✓ For Persian Language programmes with Embassy of Iran
- ✓ For Spanish Language programmes with Instituto Cervantes
- ✓ For Dual Degree and PhD programmes with Queensland University, Australia
- ✓ Deutsche Welle Akademie for a slew of annual training programmes in Journalism for working journalists and mass communication students
- ✓ Project Management Association, Geneva for project management programmes
- ✓ The Foundation of Educational Partnership, United Kingdom
- ✓ University of Central Lancashire for Sign Language programmes for deaf and speech-impaired



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Commonwealth Games 2010: Planning Ahead

Sugandha Thapan attended the first session of the Commonwealth Games Summit, where the discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

With the 19th Commonwealth Games (CWG) less than six months away, the administrative body and the officials concerned are leaving no stone unturned in their efforts towards ensuring that the Games turn out to be a landmark event in the history of Indian sports. To take stock of the progress so far and to ponder over the planning and prospects of the event, a summit was organized in Delhi from March 28 to March 30, 2010.

The inaugural session, a panel discussion moderated by Arnab Goswami, Editor-in-Chief, Times Now revolved around a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis of the upcoming Games. "Media is less optimistic and more cynical about the

"A well-organized Commonwealth Games will pave the way for our bid to host the Olympics. We are seeking active media support to promote the games worldwide."

Commonwealth Games. There exists healthy concern for both viewers and stakeholders. Through this discussion, we intend to find out answers about what all can be achieved through the Games." With these words Goswami set the ball rolling.

When queried on the preparedness of the event, Suresh Kalmadi, President, Indian Olympic Association (IOA)

responded, "All the preparations will be over by the end of June. We still have 190 days in our hands." S Jaipal Reddy echoed Kalmadi's optimism while providing an update on the CWG project. "As many as 18 venues have already been completed and 14 more will join the list by June 30", Reddy informed. He sounded quite confident in his claim that India would organize the most remarkable edition in the entire history of the Commonwealth Games.

Elaborating on the marketing plans for the event, Kalmadi emphasized that a whopping Rs 1600 crore has been earmarked for marketing, branding, and advertising. Needless to say, with such massive investment being sanctioned, the returns are expected to be more than good. "A well-organized Commonwealth Games will pave the way for our bid to host the Olympics. We are seeking active media support to promote the games worldwide", revealed Kalmadi.

According to Chief Minister of Delhi Sheila Dikshit, "It is a great honor and opportunity for us. CWG is, indeed, a jackpot for Delhi. The scope is enormous and we are confident that the event will end on a joyous note."

Undoubtedly, what makes a grand event like CWG a success is proper co-ordination among the various administrative bodies "A total of 34 operational bodies are working hand-in-hand on various aspects of the event. They include consultants from the Beijing Games, and organizations like Wizcraft and Percept. There will be as many as 30,000 CWG volunteers", asserted Kalmadi.

Responding to the allegation that events like the CWG is nothing but a colonial relay, Kamlesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Organizing Committee remarked that sports is meant for all and events such as the CWG help in community building, developing integrity, evolving socio-economic opportunities and fostering healthy competition.



(From left to Right) Bran Stoddart, Arnab Goswami, S. Jaipal Reddy, Kamlesh Sharma, Randhir Singh

More than just Fun and Games

At an exclusive session during the CWG Summit, **Neha Suyal** learnt how a sporting occasion that was simply an imperial affair transformed itself into a multicultural event.

Even though most of us know that the 19th Commonwealth Games (CWG) are going to be held in New Delhi in October, not many of us are aware of the rich history and significance of the CWG. During a special session on the first day of the recently held CWG Summit in New Delhi, the gathered audience had the opportunity to learn from some key members of the CWG fraternity, how the Games have evolved from being merely a sporting event to a cultural melting pot. The session titled 'The Politics of the Commonwealth Games' was organized by the South Asia Research Foundation (SARF) along with The Times of India Group and was moderated by Jim Nickel, the Deputy High Commissioner of Canada.

Sam Ramsamy, legendary sports administrator and Executive Board Member, International Olympic Committee, while explaining the criterion that needs to be fulfilled in order to become a member of the Commonwealth fraternity, stated, "Any nation who wants to join CWG has to have a relation with one of the existing members of the group. Cameroon became a part of the Commonwealth by practising such a method." "CWG incorporates the old political ideology with the new ethos of globalization. It is an intense mixture of sports and politics. The event has a strong political connotation", he added.

Jim Nickel elucidated that the history of the event boasts of a number of remarkable leaders who had tackled many a political issue in their bid to preserve the event. "The real strength of the Commonwealth Games lies in the diversity of its members and the fundamentals it follows", Nickel added.

Brief history of CWG

The first Commonwealth Games were held in 1930 in Canada. It was the brainchild of a Canadian gentleman named Melville Marks Robinson. At that time it was simply called British Empire Games. However, in 1954, the event was re-christened as British Empire and Commonwealth Games. In 1970, the name was changed yet again, this time to British Commonwealth games. The current name was adopted in 1978. Today, the Commonwealth Games is the second largest sporting festival of the world, second only to the Olympics.

On the topic of the Games' ideological transformation, Ramsamy highlighted how, for decades, colonial tyranny had loomed over the event. He recounted the exclusion of



Sam Ramsamy, Lachlan Strahan, Jim Nickel

South Africa from CWG in the 1950s, purely on racial grounds. "The Commonwealth Games have contributed in uniting countries against apartheid and other evil practices, which clearly shows that it has transformed itself from a multiracial association to a multicultural one," expressed Ramsamy, who was himself a trusted aide of Nelson Mandela during the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

"The Commonwealth Games have contributed in uniting countries against apartheid and other evil practices, which clearly shows that it has transformed itself from a multiracial association to a multicultural one."

Addressing the rising security concerns among the participating teams, Dr. Lachlan Strahan, Deputy High Commissioner, Australia allayed the fears and urged all teams to participate without being apprehensive about the ongoing hearsays about security threats in India. He also ensured that Australia is fully committed to the Delhi CWG this October. "We are confident that India will effectively tackle any security problem if it arises", he emphasized.

Playing under Pressure

Some renowned sportspersons mull over different kind of pressures, a sportsman has to face when he battles against opponents on-field. **Santwna Kaushik** reports

Unlike other sessions dealing with the Commonwealth Games and related subjects, panel got a theme which was addressing the woes of sportspersons. It brings to the issue of various pressures that a player undergoes during his highs and lows of his/her career. When the noted sports presenter Charu Sharma asked the panel to "Put their gloves on", he introduced the topic and discussed the Indian scenario in world of sports.

Generally, it's not unusual for a sportsman to play in pressure. But, as Charu mentioned, "In India, needless pressure is created by hysterical fans, expecting a team or an individual to win every time, which is not possible. This situation is further worsened by the media."

Ace athlete Samresh Jung pacified the intense discussion with his humour. "I come from an army background, so working in high pressure has never been a problem for me.

I love playing with guns. Therefore, playing on field does not exert me so much," said Samresh Jung.

Hakimuddin S. Habibulla, former Olympian mentioned about the three kinds of

pressures a sports person generally goes through. "First, parents want their children to be the best in academics. Even if the child wants so try his hands at Sports, parents misunderstand it and think the child is going to drift away

from studies. Understanding a sportsman's potential is the key. Second, society exerts pressure on both the child and its parents. They make them think that sports is waste of time and can never be a career option. As all these are not enough, competition is the third kind of pressure that a sportsperson endures. Though, it's very positive in nature. It makes the sportsman strong and makes him fight for the prestige of his nation."

Olympic Medallist, Viren Rasquinha, former Indian Hockey Captain too, mentioned how important self-confidence for an athlete is. He did not deny the pressure, but he says pressure is important for a sportsman to analyse his potential.

"One should respect sports. In India cricket resides in the heart of people. But, simultaneously, we tend to ignore other sports. Another major thing we need to work on is hiring good instructors. India lacks trainers. We have well developed infrastructure for cricket and we recruit coaches from abroad; but are we doing it for all the sports," questions Rasquinha.

Charismatic boxer and Olympic medallist Vijendra Singh has been sweating out in ring since childhood. He feels that one is bound to stand on people's expectations. He also believes a sportsperson should be given his share of recognition and respect. "Even after doing so well in my field, people don't recognise me. I have faced problems simple procedures like getting application forms and Visa," reveals Vijendra.

The discussion was brought to an end by Charu summing it up. The panel was right in all the viewpoints shared. They understood the weak points India needs to work on. Certainly, India should welcome all categories in Sports. Though, cricket is the most favourite and Hockey, too is the national game, yet there are many sports which need to be encouraged for both men and women.

"In India, needless pressure is created by hysterical fans, expecting a team or an individual to win every time, which is not possible. This situation is further worsened by the media."



Taking Indian Sports to Greater Heights

A new perspective was brought forth on encouraging the sports scenario in the country through a philanthropic marketing tool, namely, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at a session during the CWG Summit in Delhi. **Harshita Singh** reports.

Sports have always played a pivotal role in promoting peace and harmony. Organizing friendly matches to generate money for charity is quite a common occurrence. History bears testament to the fact that at times sports have also played mediator and harbinger of peace between warring nations. Today, this humane side of sports has taken on a corporate avatar, with numerous business conglomerates organizing sporting events as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaign.

At a special session during the Commonwealth Games Summit in New Delhi last month, the discussion centered on how the sports scenario in India can be given a shot in the arm by spurring such activities in both public and private sectors. The discourse, titled 'Sports, Corporate Social Responsibility, and the Public Sector' was moderated by Dharma Kovvuri, Dean, Business School, University of Central Lancashire, who put forward some key issues pertaining to CSR and sports. Nandan Kamath, co-founder and Director, Go Sports stressed on adopting a 360 degree approach in the efforts towards encouraging today's youth to build careers in sports. "Unlike cricket, other sports are not marketable due to lack of popularity and disconnect with the common man", he pointed out. Kamath believes that support resources such as sports academies, fund, food, and adequate opportunities should be provided to each and every sportsperson of the country. "European players are provided with funding resources and training academies. Similarly, Australian athletes are also endowed with excellent infrastructure and training", he asserted to underline his point. He was

of the opinion that Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are a good source of employment generation, while foreign investment is a sound source of funds. "What India needs is a judicious mix of both", he opined.

Harshvardhan Neotia, MD, Ambuja Realty highlighted the importance of sports in marketing by citing his own company's strategy. "Earlier, we were not involved in cricket, the cult sports of India. Gradually, we realized the paramount importance of promotion through sports and decided not to remain mere supporters," Neotia explained. His organization now provides budding sportspersons the much required infrastructure and training. The infrastructural initiatives include a gymnasium, football ground, basketball court, badminton court, table tennis court, and swimming pool. "With the relevant infrastructure now available right inside their respective housing societies, more and more families are paying attention towards their children's interest in sports. Hence, it can be concluded that all that is needed is exposure coupled with motivation", revealed Neotia.

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Among the other panelists, Shailendra Singh, Joint Managing Director, Percept Limited asked a very pertinent question: "Are our sports being run by people who really deserve?" while S K Goel, Chairman and MD, UCO Bank spoke on the importance of encouraging sports at the domestic level.

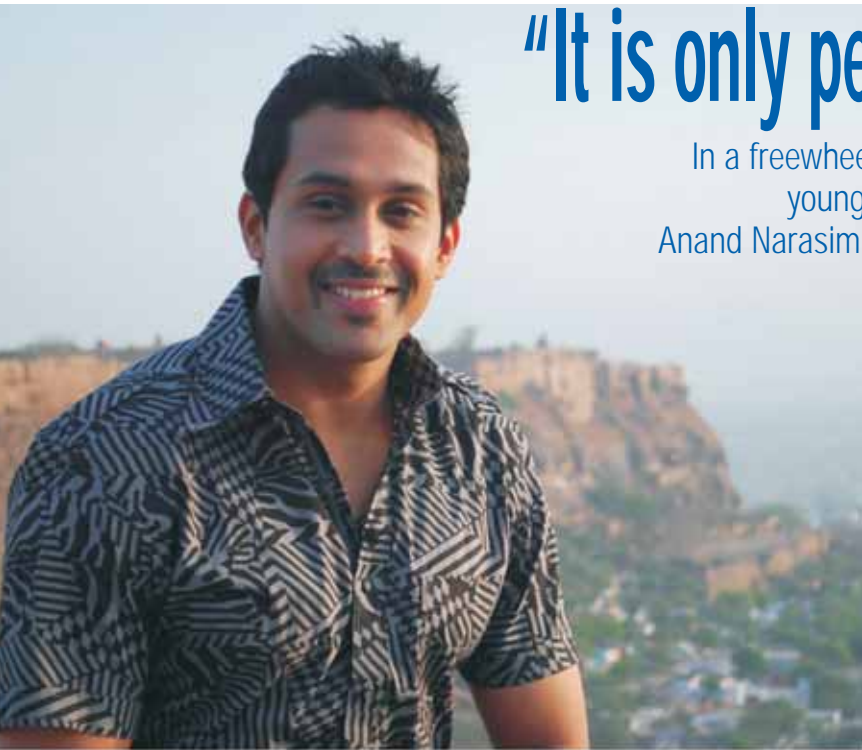
The concept of CSR itself is at a nascent stage in India. Hence, needless to say, there is still a long way to go for it to act as an impetus towards boosting the overall sporting scenario of the country. However, what this discussion succeeded in doing was to bring forth the baby steps that have already been taken in this regard and reach a consensus that to make India a sporting nation, it needs excellent infrastructure, academic training, along with a changed outlook of its people towards sports.



Harshvardhan Neotia, Nandan Kamath, Dharma Kovvuri, S. K. Goel, Shailendra Singh

"It is only performance that counts"

In a freewheeling tête-à-tête with Sugandha Thapan, young and charismatic sports presenter Anand Narasimhan explains various facets of Indian sports.



What are your impressions on the developmental efforts spurred by the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Delhi?

AN: Undoubtedly, the Commonwealth Games is acting as a catalyst in developing the infrastructure of the capital city. The city has ample space to develop the requisite infrastructure and this is not only a huge advantage for Delhi but also for India as a whole. In the past, in 1982, we successfully conducted the Asian Games, and that, too, amidst fear of Khalistan uprising. The upcoming CWG is yet another chance for India to project itself as a secure and peaceful nation.

In your opinion, what role can media play towards developing Indian sports?

AN: I think media is already playing a crucial role in promoting sports in India by evolving a sports culture among the masses. It is also encouraging youngsters to opt for various kinds of sports besides the popular options.

"People love controversies because it intrigues them. It is our inherent nature. This is why off-field activities become a toast for the media."

Even though the interest in sports is on the rise, yet the Indian mindset is such that education is always top priority. In such a scenario, is there a way that education can actually bolster sports rather than act as an impediment?

AN: I believe that in order to change this rigid mindset, parents need to motivate their children to take sports

seriously. Schools, too, should play their part by incorporating sports as a part of their curriculum. Respect for sports comes only when you play it.

While media showers its attention on a handful of sports, others go unnoticed. What do you have to say about this rampant media bias?

AN: I do not think that media is biased towards anyone. It is only the performance that counts. Few years ago, hockey was at the pinnacle of popularity. Today, cricket is the most well-liked game in the country. I am sure that the time will come for other sports, too, to share the limelight.

If performance is all that matters, why is it that controversies draw more attention?

AN: People love controversies because it intrigues them. It is our inherent nature. This is why off-field activities become a toast for the media.

With every sport getting commercialized, what according to you could be the pros and cons involved?

AN: Since commercialization generates revenue, naturally, the biggest outcome of this trend is more and more money. For example, what saved South Africa from going into a recession is sports. With the business angle becoming ever-prominent, sports is becoming more accessible and attractive. Today, people watch more sports than ever before, and this encourages funding and participation. However, the flip side of commercialization is that glamour takes center stage and gradually diminishes the spirit of a game. In fact, it has negatively affected the performance of many players.

Today, the digital media is omnipresent. According to you, how best can it serve as a medium of interaction and branding for sports?

AN: The Internet and mobile phones have widened the reach of users. Spectators today are not confined to stadiums and televisions. One can watch a match live on the Net or on phone, while sports updates are available at one's fingertips. No wonder then, digital media is taking sports to a higher level of fanfare and excitement.

"Events like CWG give birth to celebrities"

Abhishek Shivam speaks to the noted writer Nalin Mehta, where he explains how the Commonwealth Games can consolidate the business prospects for Indian sports tremendously.



Nalin Mehta is Honorary Fellow with LaTrobe University, Melbourne. He has co-authored a book with Boria Majumdar titled Olympics: The India story. He is also authoring a forthcoming book

"Delhi 2010: Commonwealth Games (published by Harper Collins India Ltd.). In his book, he has expressed his views about CWG.

What kind of benefits will CWG provide to India as a host?

NM: India wants to show itself as a strong emerging economy. Therefore, CWG is a great platform for India to showcase her talent and infrastructure on the global front.

Can you suggest any example where a sporting event became a harbinger or a mascot of the country's development scene?

NM: During 2008 Olympics, Beijing was known globally and China came up as a strong nation. The same happened with Kuala Lumpur in 1990.

How do media play its role in such big sporting events?

NM: Media has a very vital role to play. Media measures the success of such events and it also gives birth to celebrities.

What do you mean by saying "it also gives birth to celebrities"?

NM: During 2008 Beijing Olympics, Indian boxer Vijender won the silver medal and Indian media made him a star overnight. Celebrity status in India can be attained very easily; you just need to hit the right button once. Thanks to media. Indian media can make you a celebrity, but when you do something substantial.

Glamour is always associated, but to be in that stratum you need to break the pot.

What is your take on the commercialisation of cricket in India?

NM: Cricket is like a combo meal. It involves entertainment plus money. Cricket is getting larger and larger and is generating huge money, involving as many nations as it can. Now it is being a part of world economy. That's cricket for you.

What about IPL?

NM: IPL is a very huge financial extravaganza. In the first season, IPL generated revenue of around \$2million; in the second season it got doubled and this time the target is beyond \$5million. IPL has already attained at the pinnacle of success. Every season, the turnover of IPL is increasing. While it is garnering patronage from across the board, it is becoming a sorcerer's stone for organisers.

How is Digital Media expanding the reach of sports?

NM: Digital media is a fast, cost-effective and a multi dimensional tool. It is easily accessible, attractive and less commercial, and therefore it is the best option for sports to promote itself. For example, IPL (season 3) is being telecast online via Youtube. This was for the first time any sporting event was dished out on a website. Other sports can do the same as digital medium is faster than other mediums.

What is your take on Globalization and CWG?

NM: Sports is one of the fastest and emotionally appealing medium for connecting people of different nations to each other. These global sports not only provide platform for the players to garner recognition but they also help in expanding the extent of business globally. ■



Celebrity status in India can be attained very easily; you just need to hit the right button once.

Games and the Media

Reshma Paul attended the session devoted exclusively to media at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games Summit in New Delhi and came back enriched by the varied opinions of some eminent individuals who represent sports in media.

It was a panel discussion that every media aficionado dreams of attending a dais shared by spokespersons from different media houses, individuals we hardly get the

opportunity to hear from. However, the second day of the Common Wealth Games 2010 Summit provided just that by bringing together a panel that consisted of Mautik Tolia (Executive Vice President Programming, Neo Sports) Soumitra Bose (ESPN-Star Sports),

Shamya Dasgupta (Sports Editor, News X), Prof. U K Chowdhury (Executive Director, ISB&M School of Communication), V Krishnaswamy (author and analyst) and Anand Narasimhan (Sports Presenter).

While moderating the session, Prof. Chowdhury elaborated on the value-added coverage that has been provided till date to other sports besides cricket. He also highlighted the advent and reach of new media vehicles,

the important role played by on-air media, and evolution of a new era in sports via event management.

Mautik Tolia, a firm believer in the power of expression in

sports, opined that the biggest challenge faced in engaging an audience towards sports comes from presenting the entire package in an interesting manner. "All that matters is viewership", he emphasized. Tolia expects his channel Neo Sports to grow exponentially, primarily because India has witnessed a silent surge in sports. "The common man now recognizes a Saina Nehwal, Narain Karthikeyan or a Vijender Singh in the same way they recognize Sachin Tendulkar. These sportspersons are doing a fabulous job in taking their sports forward, and more and more people are now taking interest in watching them perform", he added.

According to Tolia, a channel needs to follow certain commandments. These include: 'Thou shall build and not just cover'. It is not enough to just set up six cameras to cover an event. One needs to convert the neutral audiences into avid viewers something that cricket has succeeded in doing very well. 'Thou should go beyond cricket'. Tolia

believes that it is a myth that cricket is given a lot of importance by the media in our country. After all, wasn't it the media, which played a stellar role in making Abhinav Bindra and Vijender Singh the stars they are today? This goes to prove that all that is required is for sportspersons to prove their competency in their respective sports. 'Thou should build a positive engagement'. In today's world, what is needed is to involve the audience both emotionally and passionately.

Soumitra Bose spoke about the facilitation in media reach that has accompanied the advent of enhanced technology. To explain his point, he cited the example of 'Mobile ESPN' that was launched in the mid-1990s. Even though the concept was an innovative one, it did not cut much ice, primarily because the consumer had to buy a separate mobile to avail of the service. Relating the history of ESPN, he revealed that it was in 2006 that ESPN launched in South-East Asia to tap the potential 2 billion customers. However, the channel adopted a completely different business model in that market. It tied up with Vodafone and Airtel to provide Mobile ESPN service. Today, Mobile ESPN is considered 'lifestyle media', simply because mobile phones are an integral part of consumer lifestyle. "With 3G technology making inroads, the time will come soon when one would prefer watching television on mobiles, rather than sitting in front of TV sets", he surmised.

Shamya Dasgupta was of the opinion that it is grossly incorrect to conclude that Indian media gives undue preference to cricket when it comes to sports coverage. According to him, "It is not that only cricketers are the creation of media. Look at Sania Mirza, Abhinav Bindra and Vijendra Singh, to name just a few."



Mautik Tolia, Hector Kenneth, Soumitra Bose, Shamya Dasgupta

"The common man now recognizes a Saina Nehwal, Narain Karthikeyan or a Vijender Singh in the same way they recognize Sachin Tendulkar."



“We only show what people want to see”

In a conversation with Mautik Tolia, Vice-President, Programming, Neo Sports, **Santwana Kaushik** raises some glaring issues pertaining to media, and the 19th Commonwealth Games.

What are your views on the emergence of regional media?

MT: If there is one key area where we need to focus today, it has to be regional media. Today, numerous regional channels are catering to the diverse cultures of the country. Not many of us know that we have sports channels in Marathi, Tamil, Haryanvi, and Bengali. Media is playing a vital role in keeping the common people informed and aware, while preserving the myriad languages and cultures of the country. This is why, I think, regional media is crucial in reaching out to the 'true India', which resides in villages.



What are your views on the abundance of download footage telecast on various news channels?

MT: My channel, Neo Sports, is all about broadcasting live footage. We offer only exclusive coverage. Having said that, it is indeed sad to see many channels today are lacking in footage. They have the necessary infrastructure, but still they use typical tools like YouTube for footage.

In most foreign countries, there is only handful of news channels or sports channels. But in India, the scenario is completely opposite! What is your opinion on the mushrooming news channels?

MT: It is a fact that there are countless news channels in our country. Broadcasting still lacks in the quality department, but that has not prevented news channels from growing. With increased competition, these channels have no other option but to show what they can in their efforts to lure viewers. In such a scenario, it is necessary that the government takes the necessary steps while issuing licenses to more news channels.

How far would you agree with the notion that media today is more a business than the 'fourth pillar' of the society?

MT: We only show what people want to see. Mostly, viewers are not interested in what all good is happening around them. They are keen to learn about controversies, gossip, and glamour. The content we provide is tailored according to our viewers' interest. In this sense, media has indeed become a business. At the same time, one cannot deny the fact that media is

still the fourth pillar of democracy. The story of Prince, the boy who fell in a bore well, is the biggest example.

What was your immediate reaction when you learnt that the Commonwealth Games would be held in India?

MT: It feels great that our country will become the center of attention when one of the biggest sporting events in the world will be inaugurated in Delhi. Needless to say, the Games will offer immense international exposure to Indian sports.

How far is Delhi ready for CWG?

MT: The government is working diligently to make the event a successful one. After all, the Games is a matter of our national prestige. I am sure that we shall emerge with flying colours. With the necessary infrastructure coming up at a fast pace, the event is all set to give a facelift to our capital city. All this bodes well for our future.

“With increased competition, these channels have no other option but to show what they can in their efforts to lure viewers. In such a scenario, it is necessary that the government takes the necessary steps while issuing licenses to more news channels.”

A convention of communication

Argho Mukherjee and Raushni Bhagia witness the grand inauguration of the PRCI Global Meet in Delhi.

The Public Relation Council of India held their fourth global meet and fourth annual Chanakya Awards 2010 at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on April 3, 2010. The convention began with an enlightening spiritual address by Swami Suryaji and environmentalist

Shridhar Ramanujam, CEO, Brandcomm spoke about the transformation that the communication industry in India has undergone in the past decade. Elaborating on the same, he also raised some thought-provoking notes. He said that India, being a young nation, is an opportunity as well as a challenge that the country would be facing.



In focus: Dr. Kiran Bedi and Barkha Dutt

“The demographics of the country has framed in the recent times in such a way that the decision-makers are in their 50s; the employees facing their 40s; whereas the backbone of the economy customers are still growing up in their 20s. How are the managers supposed to understand and get an insight into the new 20-year-olds who face them as their prospective customers?”

Ramanujam pointed out that another critical issue with the corporate communications department that they are oblivious to the internal communication. He shared that approximately 80 per cent of CEOs in the country are aware of the fact that the internal communication efficiency in their respective organisations is very low. He expressed concern over

the 'unable to change' attitude of the Indians. He quoted a statistical phrase, “Customers are changing daily. Markets are changing dramatically. Strategies are changing globally and companies are changing structurally. So, why are you the same?”

Aiyar then shared his views regarding the inadequacy of the media to comply by their contractual obligation. He slammed the media as being apathetic to the Aam Aadmi. “The talk shows like *We The People*, don't reflect the hardships of a common man. They merely convey the stories of a few middle class Delhiwalas and their transitions,” regretted Aiyar. He took a further dig at the Indian media by blaming that the media is always more interested in covering events as fashion shows and IPL while turning a deaf ear to the one-third districts of India currently under insurgency. He urged to set up a platform to serve dumb and mute. ■

A corporate organisation should not serve the society through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) but through corporate personal responsibility.

Dr Matthew Hibberd, who shared his pool of experiences about preserving the environment.

The discussions proceeded with a brief and intense speech by India's first woman IPS officer Dr. Kiran Bedi. Her

NGO was awarded for the best NGO of the year. She delightfully chose to share the dais with her team. Noted TV Journalist Barkha Dutt was also awarded as the Media Personality of the decade.

The chief guest, Mani Shanker Aiyar, (former Union Minister) formally inaugurated the program by lighting a lamp. A prayer was offered by a group of young girls from the NAB (National Association Centre for Blind Woman).

Enhancing Communication

Vineet Kumar and Priyanka Bhatia attended the last session of the recently-held PRCI Meet, and returned with some precious takeaways on communication today and tomorrow.

Even though the concluding session of the PRCI Global Meet was devoted to the PRCI Corporate Collateral Awards, in reality, the event culminated with an enlightening session that focused on the rising trend of specialized communication in the PR industry.

After paying homage to the memory of Ms. Dhara, one of the founder members of PRCI,



ND Rajpal

who lost her life in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, the session began with the Chief Guest, former Union Minister B N Singh, sharing the dais with the former CBI Director Joginder Singh, alongside Gopal Das, Director, Human Resources, BSNL.

While expressing his views on the theme, Joginder Singh elaborated that despite various

advancements in communication, the world has been unable to bridge the communication gap at an interpersonal level. "In the US, parents cannot devote more than 45 minutes to their children per day, on an average. This is where we all have failed", Singh lamented. While elucidating on the proper ways of communication, he added that objectivity and accuracy are of paramount importance. "We need to learn how to communicate more within a short span of time", opined Singh. Clarity of thought, positive body language, listening intently, and not losing eye contact also play a vital role in effective communication.

B N Singh dismissed the commonly-held belief that today technology has become imperative to the communication industry. He

revealed that even though he does not carry a mobile or have an email-id, he has still been successful in not only communicating but also preserving communication channels with those around him.



Gopal Das

The session led to the emergence of a number of out-of-the-box ideas with delegates and participants joining in and sharing their own notions about how technology and innovative methods can play a part in enhancing communication. A touch of glamour

was added to the proceedings when Shehnaz Hussain, the queen of Indian beauty industry, graced the occasion. In her brief address, she conveyed how she built her successful brand only with the help of PR and not through advertisements.

The session that saw quite a few enriching and engrossing debates and discussions culminated with the PRCI Corporate Collateral Awards ceremony.

We need to learn how to communicate more within a short span of time



Shehnaz Hussain

Adapting PR to Media Aggression

PR professionals discuss on the changing face of the news industry and its impact on PR practices, reports Kavita Bajpai and Neha Bachuwar

PRCI is a council body which provides a platform to upcoming PR professionals to exchange their ideas and thoughts. It has influenced various corporate, media houses and other related fields to gather under the same roof and discuss related emerging issues in the country.

PR professionals need to change their perception that anything can be polished simply by offering money to the media i.e. paid news, rather than focusing upon the quality of news and information exchange.

The views and experiences shared by the professionals at the PRCI Global Meet help the participants to build up a large network, which would guide them to create a niche in their professional careers ahead.

The Panel discussions encompassed themes on climate change, communications, and practitioner's dilemma which were related to the emerging trends in marketing, media, PR and other related communication domains. The first group of invited panelist who spoke on the theme *Adapting PR to Media Aggression* were Jitendra Bhargava (Former PR Executive Director, Air India), Sunil Jain (Sr. Associate Editor, Business Standard), S. Bhattacharjee (News Editor, Financial Express), Deepak Jolly (Vice

President, Corporate Communications, Coca-Cola India).

Moderating the panel, Bhargava emphasized on PR and media relations. According to him, "The competence level is high and the media channels are increasing. Every media professional needs to be immediate and fast."

Panelists discussed on how earlier journalists and PR professionals used to work in tandem. But the scenario has changed tremendously over the past five years. The communication industry is becoming more profit-oriented and everyone has become more career-oriented.

The discussion then moved towards the change in scenario of media and its response. Jolly said, "Media doesn't report the real face but information from some unreliable sources which gets published and transferred to public domain."

As the discussion moved on Bhattacharjee strongly pointed out, "The thin line which divides news and paid news disappears when we focus on the relationship of journalists and PR professionals." He added that most of the companies are absolutely clear about what should be spoken about. PR professionals need to change their perception that anything can be polished simply by offering money to the media i.e. paid news, rather than focusing upon the quality of news and information exchange.

At the end of the discussion, Sunil Jain elaborated on the category of journalists. "First who know the subject, second those who don't know but are willing to know and the third are those who don't know the subject but have the mindset of knowing everything," quipped he.

Deepak Jolly gave an example to prove the above statement, "Around 15 years ago, a journalist published a news about Shiv Sena chief who wanted to have chicken, but the fact was he was a vegetarian. All this happens because the journalist himself doesn't make the headline."

Bhattacharjee concluded on a positive note by stating that developments are happening and journalists are changing.



Practitioner's Dilemma

In one of the sessions at the PRCI meet, **Esha Majumdar** learns about the ethical issues a PR professional faces in the communication industry.

The third session was followed by a panel discussion addressing the fundamental and ethical issues pertaining to the communication industry. Some eminent media luminaries were invited to throw light on what ethical and professional dilemmas a PR professional goes through.

AK Shivanandan, GM, Jet Airways began the session by highlighting the changing PR trend and values. "PR personnel should have a certain value and code of ethics, in order to live up to the standard of the company they are working with. These days, PR professionals focus more on media relations than on media ethics," said Shivanandan.

While stressing on the skilled manpower that media requires, he said that the industry has a talent crunch. "There are many aspects that come under the field of PR such as government and media relations. They don't know how to handle issues and, eventually, digress from the objectivity," added he.

Dr CV Narasimha Reddy, Editor of the journal Public Relations' Voice, pointed out that the greatest challenge confronting a PR professional today is ethical standard. He also spoke about the role of Public Relations in a country's economy. "PR is not directly related to the market activities. Thus, a PR professional has to play a crucial role in a company's growth to prove his mettle in an organisation," explained Shivanandan.

Despite emphasizing immensely on corporate communications, how incidents like Satyam scam take place? In a response to this question Deepak Mukherjee,

Head, Corporate Affairs, Shell said that to work ethically one must have a thorough understanding and the knowledge of his own organization and area of work, the current government scenario and the economy of the country. Only then should one try to deliver the value that his stakeholders and public is looking for. He added that there is a whistle policy for all; they can inform media about any evil practice going in the underbelly of a corporate house. "A PR should not only concentrate on making strategies to overcome crisis, but should think in a 360 degree manner about the pros and cons of an action," shared Mukherjee.

Dr S Narendra, Independent Communications Consultant highlighted the need of imparting PR education among the aspirants. "PR education and its content in terms of quality are important before entering the PR field along with communication skills," he articulated. He pointed out the qualities a PR professional should possess.

"To survive in the competitive corporate world, one has to be informed, versatile and skillful. They should also have quality educational background," Narendra mentioned. While addressing the issue of downplaying the communication department in the corporate world, he said "PR is not given enough authority to be on the board instead of keeping confined in addressing media."

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“What the Indian Diaspora looks from the Government is soft infrastructure”

Ajit Kumar in conversation with Rahul Kumar Barnwal, Senior Manager, Siemens Power Engineering Limited

What should be the Role of Indian Diaspora / NRI Community in the development of India (any or all aspects)?

RKB: The rise of a knowledge-based economy or knowledge economy has prompted many countries, including India, to think more seriously about their Diaspora. This somewhat recent phenomenon has led to a situation where participation of the Diaspora in any developmental activity at home immediately attracts attention of the local government, intelligentsia, and the media, thereby leading to a domino effect.

Though, participation in any developmental activity is for the good, I believe that one of the key areas the Indian Diaspora should focus on is the health care sector. While India lacks mass level infrastructure in the medical field, medical professionals constitute a substantial portion of its Diasporic community. The immediate impact would be that has been already been the case the reverse flow of doctors from abroad and their taking up pioneering roles in setting up compact medical facilities in their home towns or villages. Most of these people have reached the stage in their career where they do not need to work for sustenance and, hence, they would be more than willing to go back to their roots if local support is provided.

This is just one example. In reality, it is not just the doctors, but the engineers and the management professionals settled abroad who can also bring in their technological know how and help to contribute to the progress of the country.

What is the Role of Indian government and society so far to tap this potential of the Diaspora and the future possibilities/measures?

RKB: I feel more than huge infrastructure like airports and highways, probably, what the Indian Diaspora looks from the government, is soft infrastructure like security, education, entertainment, and recreation facilities. Once these are in place, they can contribute towards various developmental activities without worrying about the need of their children and other family members.

Needless to say, such things take time to develop, but the good news is that the government is realizing the need for such soft infrastructure and some state governments, of

late, have started allocating a separate budget for the same.

Who is a New Global Indian? What is the role of New India in the changing global context today?

RKB: While in the past, a lot many people only talked of doing something to change the state of affairs, today more and more people are taking initiatives to actually bring about change. This new mindset can be termed as the New Global Resurgent Indian. I know of one engineer who has returned from the USA to his native village in Bihar which still lacks continuous supply of electricity. His noble mission is to harness solar power and develop indigenous solar panels which can make the village self-sustained in electricity.



Is there any case study of involvement of NRI / Diaspora in Indian social / economic development in which you are associated with or know closely?

RKB: Not a formal case study as such, but I know people who have come back to their roots to bring about change. There are people who took a sabbatical from work to help out in the recent Kosi flood rehabilitation, which is considered to be one of the worst to hit India. Support has come from many others who have contributed their bit for the cause via money, clothes, articles of daily use, etc.

Do you want to give any feedback or suggestions on the NGI magazine and portal and how to develop this further and take this mission to higher level?

RKB: The NGI magazine, though a new kid on the block, is slowly but surely creating a niche for itself by focusing on development in the neo-reformed states like Bihar which were not so long ago classified as 'bimaru'. Thumbs up for the NGI team and wishing them a prosperous future!

“While in the past, a lot many people only talked of doing something to change the state of affairs, today more and more people are taking an initiative to actually bring about change.”

"A Global Conference on Global Village"

Richa Taneja delves into a conversation with Dr Yahya R Kamalipour, Chairman and Krishna B Mariyanka, Conference Secretary of the Global Communication Association's to find out about its scope and vision.

After making a strong presence in the two previously held conferences in Shanghai and Oman in the years 2007 and 2008 respectively, GCA hosted its third international conference in India on 26th November 2009 at Lalit Ashok Hotel in Bangalore.

India and China are rapidly developing and expanding their global reach, economically and politically. If the current trend continues, both countries will become globally influential in the future; hence holding the 3rd annual conference of GCA in India is quite appropriate and exciting.

programs and explores myriad opportunities and challenges in the areas of teaching, learning,

"Global Village: Are we there yet?" is the theme of the Global Communication Association Summit - India conference 2009 which facilitates joint projects and research opportunities among scholars, researchers and graduate students. It offers faculty research and exchange

communication development, globalization, mass media and international cooperation", points out Mr. Krishna B. Mariyanka, Conference Secretary, GCA India Conference 2009 and Director Governing Council & Vice President National Executive or Public Relations Council of India (PRCI).

He further explains, "GCA is a global platform focusing on the new age communication democracy. This year's conference will aim at understanding the challenges we face, the current trends and chart the future growth path. We have received more than 50 paper submissions; the best 36 will get an opportunity to be presented at the conference."

The conference is being jointly organized in association with Public Relations Council of India (PRCI) and supported by Purdue University, Calumet, USA and Manipal University, Symbiosis International University & Bangalore University in India.

When asked about his personal opinion over the topic 'Global Village: Are we there yet?' he strongly stated, "The global village is a myth, a dream. Due to geo-political reasons, the super power nations will never allow the developing ones to flourish. They want their upper-hand always; hence the political tensions and turmoil are bound to prevail, so I don't see the idea of global village coming true, for me it's an illusion."

After getting a brief idea from Mr. Mariyanka about the Conference, Yahya R. Komalipour, Chairman of GCA explained about GCA's vision and future plans in much detail. **What is the idea behind organising the Global Communication Association (GCA) Summit in India?**

YK: The key reason for organising the 2009 GCA conference in India is to bring together researchers, scholars, media professionals, and representatives of diverse academic and non-academic institutions from throughout the world

India and China are rapidly developing and expanding their global reach, economically and politically. If the current trend continues, both countries will become globally influential in the future; hence holding the 3rd annual conference of GCA in India is quite appropriate and exciting.

Since it's a global conference, how many countries are likely to be represented?

YK: Over a dozen countries will be represented at the conference, including Austria, Canada, Chennai, China, England, Germany, Iran, Japan, United States, The Netherlands, Uzbekistan, and others. If the potential participants are successful in obtaining their entry visas to India, prior to the conference, we will have a strong global representation.

What was the idea behind the title 'Global village: Are we there yet?'

YK: Despite the seemingly ubiquitous technological tools, such as the Internet and cell phone, around the world and electronic interconnectivity, we are far from Marshall McLuhan's 1960s' prophetic vision of an ideal 'global village'. A global village in which, similar to the pre-industrial days of our ancestors, people could work toward a common set of goals in a harmonious and productive manner. In view of the fact that over 50% of the



world population does not yet have access to the new communication technologies and cannot even afford them including the old ones, such as a traditional wired telephone we cannot claim that we now live in a global village.

However, in my view, the ideal of establishing a relatively harmonious global village is quite plausible and possible. We have the tools, intellect, channels, and infrastructure. What is needed is a collective willingness and vision to create such a global environment. Humans have created the existing obstacles and therefore humans can remove them. The main obstacles toward achieving a relatively harmonious 'Global Village' are self-interest (narcissism), greed, inequality, divisiveness, and a host of other social-cultural-economic-religious-political issues.

One of the reasons for choosing the theme of 'Global Village: Are we there yet' is to explore and discuss some of the above obstacles and find workable approaches, strategies, and recommendations for overcoming these human-made obstacles and capitalizing on our common good or common interests. In other words, focusing on our similarities and building bridges of understanding rather than on our differences and what sets us apart.

With the papers going to be extremely research oriented, how do you gauge the academic research and rigour required for such paper presentations?

YK: Not all papers are going to be highly academic and esoteric. I think many panels, papers, and presentations will be quite suitable, understandable, interesting, and useful to the non-academic audience. Again, our goal is to be inclusive not exclusive.

Since this is the third International conference by GCA and this time too it's going to be a big event with scholars and researchers from all over the world sharing their opinions, how do you envision the scope and output of such conferences? Any personal expectations?

YK: GCA is a novel concept and, unlike traditional media/communication associations, does not require an annual membership fee. It is open to all interested individuals involved in media communication, globalization, and related areas, including public relations, advertising, visual communication, intercultural communication, political communication, journalism, new media technologies, and more. Furthermore, in order to encourage sustained discussion, interaction, collaboration, and networking, participation at the GCA conference is capped at 200 people.

After the Bangalore conference, a selected number of papers presented will be published in the *Global Media Journal - Indian Edition*, other journals, and perhaps in a book format. The goal is to distribute the proceedings of

the conference as widely and possible. As you may know, *Global Media Journal* (www.globalmediajournal.com) is another initiative of mine which is open and free to all interested people in the world. The journal has 15 established and independent editions and is rapidly growing.

To accomplish this monumental and unprecedented project, I have benefited from the support, cooperation, and encouragement of many colleagues from throughout the world. Our collective goal is to democratize knowledge and information sharing.

Since how long has your team been working on it and what are the challenges encountered?

YK: For at least one year, my colleagues in India representing the Public Relations Council of India, Manipal University, Bangalore University, and Symbiosis International University have spent a great deal of time, energy and effort to plan and coordinate the numerous tasks and details involved in organizing a global conference. I am indeed grateful to all of them.

One of the challenges posed by the organizing team and potential international participants is the arduous process and bureaucratic paperwork required by the Indian consulate and embassies in foreign countries for obtaining an entry visa to India. In fact, one of my concerns is that some of our international participants may not be able to obtain their visas in time; hence will not be able to attend. This has been a key challenge to me and my organizing team but we remain hopeful and optimistic.

Any special words/efforts of your team member(s) that you would like to state?

YK: Naturally, I am looking forward to having a very successful and productive conference in Bangalore and hope that our international participants will be able to overcome the visa hurdles in a timely manner. All in all, I am thankful to my Indian colleagues for their dedication, enthusiasm, cooperation and teamwork.

What can we expect the next summit?

YK: I am pleased to report that the 2010 GCA conference scheduled for October 26-29, 2010, will take place in Krakow, Poland; the 2011 conference in Ottawa, Canada; the 2012 conference in Rostov, Russia; and the 2013 conference in Madrid, Spain. In fact, the announcement for the Polish conference will be published in the GCA India Conference Program Guide this means that we have already started the process of planning for the conference in Poland.

The main obstacles toward achieving a relatively harmonious 'Global Village' are self-interest (narcissism), greed, inequality, divisiveness, and a host of other social-cultural-economic-religious-political issues.

India: Where Guests are Gods

Nicole Dunbar, an ardent traveler from Canada, is grateful to India for teaching her the 'divine' meaning of guests.

I'm a tourist on a tourist visa, a tourist backpack, destined to visit tourist sites. I have 'tourist' written all over me. I am accustomed to the role of a tourist. I have witnessed the volcanoes of America, encountered sparkling cities of the US, survived bank-breaking Europe, dodged kangaroos in Australia, and encamped in the Bornean jungles. But, I had never got to explore India. Though, the thrill to tour the land of Gods was lingering in my mind for very long. The thrill of witnessing the monument of love the Taj Mahal, the mighty mountains of the Himalayas, the enchanting beaches of Goa, the deserts of Rajasthan, and the backwaters of Kerala.

My journey began with a casual mention about my subtle desire to visit India to one of my Indo-Canadian acquaintances. Unlike acquaintances from western countries, whose recommendations end with, "I'll see you

I knew that India was the Land of a thousand gods. But I was not told that it is also the land of one billion unusually-large-walking hearts.

at some restaurant or museum," her palpable response drove me to India at once. My arrival to the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi was equally unlike

and overwhelming, as was the persuasion to come here. I was received with a family-worthy greeting by her uncle.

I've never picked up a tourist from the airport. I am kind, but I am not an Indian. I reserve the inconvenience of crammed parking lots and late arrivals of guests. I am familiar with the western norm of arrival where tourists look for taxis and guests seek family. But, look at this gentleman. He waited until three o'clock in the morning, as the infamous Delhi fog disrupted the air-traffic.

The warm hospitality followed by, four days of home-

cooked meals, guided city tours, humorous translations of The Times of India marriage classifieds, stories of meeting Phoolan Devi, hot showers and a comfortable bed, every night. I was sure that the real India was still to come. The India where I am lucky if I can walk ten paces without being trampled by thick, swarming crowds. The India, which is on the roadmap of intrepid travelers not on a solitary young Canadian woman's. I was now really keen to soak in the chaotic rhythm of the country I had heard so much about.

However, I reminded myself why I did board an India-destined plane. "I have a tourist visa and I'd better use it. Dare not to fill stomach with home-cooked food, anymore," I told myself admonishingly. With this sudden realisation, I left all the luxury with a three pound guidebook and prepared myself for ten weeks of infamous Indian cultural curry. It came in a typical Indian fashion, not the way I expected. Nonetheless, the four-day homely treatment did not end here. It extended into weeks marked by caring phone calls from my Delhi host to ensure that all was well. And all was well, indeed.

Indians do not require a home for such geniality. Blue-cushioned trains do just fine. At first glance, my Indian Railways ticket was stating my travel from Delhi to Varanasi in Sleeper Class, C1, Seat 05, in some illegible font. Before I had rattled my way through the city's suburbs to the railway station, I was engrossed in a lively card game with half of the C1 passengers. Though, I failed miserably at interpreting the rules of the game. For the next ten hours, I devoured chapattis with my hands, bags of train station chips and countless plastic cupful of passing chai. My innards were swimming with startling generosity.

I noticed a key point that my guidebook failed to mention golden ticket. Clearly, I landed myself being lonely yet lucky with a 'golden ticket' in India. Every ticket is a golden ticket because it brings a new train boasting seats filled with new friends and another round of bizarre





hospitality. I am given extra blankets in the cold, chilled drinks in the heat, free guidebooks worth of traveling advice, transit tickets, and an overwhelming stream of invites to exchange hotel reservations for lovely Indian homes.

It is not just blue-cushioned trains, I was wedged between six others in a rickshaw, and the invites keep coming. In simple words, people are not so benevolent in Canada. I was a tourist and tourists sleep in tourist hotels, not Indian homes with Indian families. Now, the west in me was confused.

In a fervor of western confusion (and typical tourist fashion), I remained steadfast on my tourist identity and tested my equanimity with a course in meditation. I was at Nasik immersed in a ten-day-course of Vipassana. The confusion was overtaken by the exhaustion of ten and a half hours of daily practice. The west subdued quietly in me. I was not sure whether this sense of solace surfaced due to my newfound skills in meditation; or if I had pockets filled with unknown bundles of good karma; or perhaps there is something strikingly good in the Indian air. I think it was the latter because when the silence broke on the final day, I was immediately adopted to the 28 other women, who were students of meditation with me.

Now, I had plans for Rishikesh, but I chose to visit the maximum city Bombay. After whisking with auto-rickshaws and local buses, I was standing on a rambling street in Mumbai with about 15 women, who were arranging my plans for a week in Hindi. The big-Indian-hearts beat the west out of me and 'No-thank-you' gesture transformed into 'I'd-love-to' expressions.

It seems my hosts had a guest-catering mission. I sat in a big circle of cheerful faces with a big plate of ever-piling food. I played living-room cricket with toddlers, admired albums of wedding memories, exchanged life philosophies with parents and slept soundly in a newly arranged family quarter.

In another benevolent replay of the great Indian reception, I was scooter-escorted to a family, who welcomed me with

open arms. Conveniently, my three pound guidebook was lost somewhere along the way to make room for seven pounds of thoughtful gifts, clothes, and a beautiful copy of the Bhagavad Gita.

As my departure drew nearer, I returned to where it all began with a notebook full of friends and a belly full of love. Until my last four days which I spent with my Delhi friend, I learned the common Indian saying 'Guests are like Gods'. I knew that India was the Land of a thousand gods. But I was not told that it is also the land of one billion unusually-large-walking hearts.

At home we welcome tourists with warm smiles, helpful directions, and the occasional friendly conversation, India delivers palpable human connections. No wonder, I was not culturally shocked after seeing revered cows lumbering on every street corner, or the plethora of saffron-robed Sadhus; or the cacophony of horn-honking chaos. For me, the cultural shock was its exuberant hospitality— something far more unusual, something purely Indian and entirely foreign to my western blood.

I left the Indira Gandhi International Airport with more pictures of people than places. Though my visa clearly states 'Tourist', I know it proverbially means, 'Exceptionally-cared-for-guest'. Because, in this country, guests are treated as gods and the west in me has much to learn from this Indian definition.

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Nicole Dunbar

"We need proper implementation of earthquake-resistant regulations"

Ajit Kumar caught up with Prof. Chandan Ghosh, Professor & Head, Geohazards, National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, to apprise our readers on the earthquake scenario in India.

How prone India is to earthquakes?

CG: Several earthquakes that have occurred in the recent past are reminders of the high level of seismic hazard and risk prevailing in the country. About 59% of India's land area is under the threat of moderate to severe earthquakes with intensity VII and higher. During the last two decades, seven major earthquakes have resulted in over 24,000

deaths in our country. The regions far away from the Himalayas and other inter-plate boundaries, which were once considered to be relatively safe have also experienced

several devastating earthquakes. The huge losses of life and property in the earthquake-prone areas of the country have shown that the built-environment is extremely fragile, and our ability to respond to these events is extremely inadequate. It has been found that the casualties were primarily due to the collapse of buildings that have usually no earthquake-resistant features. This emphasizes the need for strict compliance of town planning by-laws and earthquake-resistant building codes in India.

You mentioned 'collapse of buildings'. What are the results of such collapses and how can these be avoided?

CG: When buildings cave in, they result in widespread loss of lives and property, including lifeline infrastructure, such as roads, dams, bridges, hospitals, as well as public utilities like power and water supply installations. Though there are a number of earthquake-resistant design codes and other regulations available, we need to ensure their proper implementation.

Though there are a number of earthquake-resistant design codes and other regulations available, we need to ensure their proper implementation.

How far India is active when it comes to earthquake-resistant construction measures?

CG: India has advanced considerably in developing earthquake-resistant codes of practice and guidelines for constructing Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) and steel-framed buildings, brick or stone masonry buildings, and combination of clay, wood, bamboo, and thatched houses. Yet, the high level of earthquake risk in our country's context is mostly attributed to the unplanned and ill-planned urban infrastructural developments. In order to reduce vulnerability, it is important to create proper awareness about earthquake induced damages and their mitigation measures.

How can we go about ensuring earthquake-safe construction in India?

CG: The Indian government is taking the necessary steps to establish the requisite techno-legal and techno-financial mechanisms in order to ensure that all stakeholders like owners, builders, architects, engineers, and government departments responsible for regulation and enforcement adopt earthquake-safe construction measures in all design and construction activities.

The main focus here is on the following: earthquake-resistant design and rehabilitation of structures, developing Indian standards and guidelines on earthquake technology, seismic evaluations and retrofitting of selected lifeline buildings, disaster-safe construction practices and issues, techno-legal and techno-financial framework for earthquake protection compliance, and training and capacity building of masons, architects, and engineers.



“My book allows Malayali vernacular authors to reach out to readers”



Achamma Chandersekaran, a noted Malayalee literary figure, has translated an anthology of short stories written by not-so-well-known Malayalam writers. In conversation with **Anubhav Khandelwal**, she explained how her book is an attempt to highlight the diligent women of Kerala.

Universally known for its natural beauty and high literacy rate, what is truly exemplary of 'God's own country', is the empowerment of its women as evident from the number of female achievers in diverse fields who have emerged from Kerala.

Daughters of Kerala highlights this exclusive aspect of the state through a refreshing collection of fictional narratives that vividly depict the everyday experiences of Kerala's women. The book is Achamma Chandersekaran's maiden solo translation project.

Do give us a brief insight into your life so far and your journey into the literary world.

AC: I came to the United States with a full scholarship to do my undergraduate studies. After getting my B.A. in English from Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois in 1966, I obtained a Masters in teaching English as a second language from the University of Illinois. Later, in 1977, I went back to college and completed my MBA in Finance from Drexel University. I was a co-translator along with Dr. R.E. Asher, of three novellas by the late Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, for the UNESCO Program of Representative Works. Today, I am here with my solo translation work.

What was your main objective behind translating this particular collection of short stories?

AC: Kerala has a number of

internationally acclaimed female authors. However, there are many vernacular authors who are equally talented, but they do not enjoy popularity or recognition primarily because they are inaccessible to non-Malayalam readers. Thus, I decided to translate their brilliant works in English so that they could reach out to a hitherto untapped segment.

What is the main theme of 'Daughters of Kerala'?

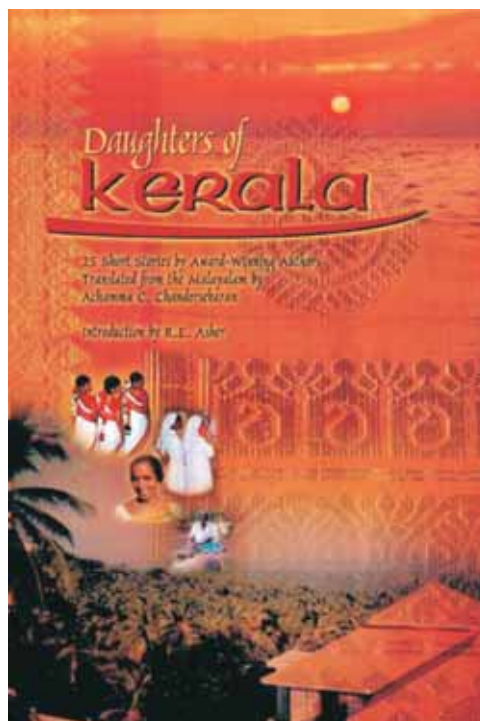
AC: The stories included in this volume can be grouped according to two sub-themes. The first brings forth the

“The first theme brings forth the disconnect between educational superiority and lack of autonomous condition for women. The other theme involves stories that deal with women confronting patriarchal norms imposed on them in their roles as wives and mothers.”

disconnect between educational superiority and lack of autonomous condition for women. The other theme involves stories that deal with women confronting patriarchal norms imposed on them in their roles as wives and mothers.

How would you define Malayali women? Also, in your opinion what can women from other parts of the country learn from them?

AC: Malayali women are hardworking, educated and enterprising. Although the trend of pursuing higher education by girls is new in India, the fairer sex of this state has had always been keen on education. Moreover, nurses are synonymous to Malayali women.



Caring Society

Mini Jain, a volunteer with Bhumi, writes about extraordinary contribution the organisation has bestowed on the society.

"Zindagi Jeene Ke do hi tareeke hote hain. Ek, Jo ho Raha Hai, Hone do, bardast karte jao; Ya fir, Zimmedari Uthao usse badalne ki"

These famous words from Rang De Basanti aptly convey the purpose of the inception of Bhumi. Keeping up to its mission statement "Change today...Change tomorrow", Bhumi is a youth volunteer organisation, which stands defiant to the societal gaps and tries to fill them with education.

Bhumi believes in the 'Power of Education', and that the gap in society can be bridged only through quality education.

Inception

Bhumi, the brainchild of four individuals, is '1500 heads strong' today, and to our astonishment this growth transpired over a period of three years. Bhumi was registered as a non-profit organisation under the Tamil Nadu Societies Act on August 15, 2006.

Four years ago, with a noble pursuit to educate underprivileged children, four friends began teaching English at an orphanage in Chennai. But soon they were asked to stop because the warden found unstructured

extra classes to be futile for children. This was when Hari Shankar, Dr. Prahalathan, Ayyanar and Prakash realised that the outcome of the efforts would improve if the teaching was methodical.

They learnt that by assembling unused peripherals that they possessed, a working computer could be assembled. They started teaching computer science at an underprivileged school called *Anbu Karangal*; thus was born Bhumi's first programme *Kanini*, meaning Computers in Tamil.

We believe in the 'Power of Education', and that the gap in society can be bridged only through quality education. The programmes of Bhumi are synonymous to our belief. In March 2008, we joined hands with Make a Difference (MAD), a non-profit youth volunteer network and began teaching English to children. A concrete syllabus developed by EZ Vidya, an educational consultancy for social initiatives, with components that focus on listening, reading, writing and speaking makes MAD classes fun, interactive and vibrant.



Happy faces of Bhumi

We do

Providing an opportunity to explore nuances of computer, *Kanini*, our e-literacy programme educates those children who have never even touched a computer. Currently ongoing at 15 centres, Kanini has been able to reach out to 300 children. Our other programmes include *Career Counselling* wherein we help children decide which path to tread by exploring avenues that could otherwise continue to be unknown to them. Under the guidance of some eminent psychologists and counsellors, a repository of SWOT analysis, psychometric tests, and motivational presentations have been developed. Through Bhumi's *Little Einsteins* programme, Mathematics and Science are taught with an emphasis on understanding concepts through experiments and multimedia tools.

Apart from education, we understand our responsibility towards other major problems that the world is facing today. Our programme *Think Green* aims to spread awareness about climatic changes. In this direction, Bhumi has partnered with India Youth Climate Network (IYCN), Greenpeace Chennai Volunteers and Nizhal. Our activities include developing a park, de-nailing the trees, minimising the use of plastic etc.

We understand that classroom is not the only place to learn; certain things can be learned only through experience. Therefore, in December, Bhumi launched the annual inter-orphanage fest, *Siragugal*, meaning wings in Tamil. 1,000 children were brought from over 30

orphanages on a single platform to compete against each other. A plethora of activities were organised to ensure individual participation. We want our children to develop self-confidence, team spirit and, most importantly, coping with failure while being humble when victorious.


In this small journey, we have been fortunate enough to meet people from various walks of life who share our dreams and vision that education is the most precious gift that we can give to the next generation.

Our efforts have always been selfless and we never sought recognition; it was a moment of immense pride when the Rotary club of Madras conferred upon us the 'Excellence in Literacy' Award, 2009. We were also the semi-finalists in the 'Youth Action Net' youth social entrepreneurship competition that had entries from non-profits across the world.

The award citation reads "You, BHUMI, are indeed a species of rare kind"; and we indeed are. We are an under-30 group of students and professionals that spares two hours every weekend for the enlightenment of disadvantaged children. Every moment, we strive towards improving and increasing our productivity so that our dream of a better India comes true. We believe that the calibre and the spark ignited in ourselves would continue to keep the flame of Bhumi kindled.

<http://www.bhumi-india.org/>

Bhumi bagged the 'Excellence in Literacy' Award, 2009, conferred upon them by the Rotary club of Madras.












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In the name of Woman, the Adi Shakti unite

Dr. Suvrokamal Dutta finds out how far the recently-enacted Women's Reservation Bill is effective in empowering women from marginalised section of society.



India and its parliamentary democracy just passed through a huge crisis of an unprecedented nature as never seen before. The issue behind the whole crises was sadly regarding the plight of women who for ages have been a force of unity and not division in a family, society and state. Woman who has been angelized in Indian scriptures as the Adi-Shakti, Ardh-Nariswar, or for that matter Shiv-Shakti has become a huge contention of debate in the name of woman liberation among the ruling political class of our country. The ruckus seen in the Indian parliament on the woman reservation bill of giving 33 per cent reservation to Indian woman in the elected bodies of the state assemblies and the Indian parliament has turned into a huge political street fight and social volcano.

really disheartening is to see the level of politics being played on such a sensitive issue which has a huge long term social dimension with grave consequences in future. What was due for the woman of India, way back in 1947, was never given to her for so long; these can be attributed to nasty politics played in the name of caste, region and religion to prevent her from getting that social respect and political space which should have been hers back then.

Why not bring in the economic criteria now? Why do we have to always think in a barbaric, regressive way based on the prism of caste, creed, region and religion? Why can't we, for once, adopt an avant-garde technique to an upright nation building process?

While pondering over the whole issue and thinking over it again and again, certain ideas comes in mind which I think can help in putting out the fire which is engulfing our country from all sides. We must appreciate the efforts of

It's true to the nature of our social system, our economic distribution of wealth and the kind of caste ridden society that we have caused several bed sores in our political system. In order to do away with this devil which has plagued our society for ages; it's important for us to think on progressive lines to eradicate fragmented polity on social level. Need of the hour is to bring in the true economic line based on the distribution of wealth not only on the 33 percent woman reservation bill but also on the reservation policy per say. 60 years of reservation on caste lines have fetched us nothing except for further social fragmentation and more deprivations. Why not bring in the economic criteria now? Why do we have to always think in a barbaric, regressive way based on the prism of caste, creed, region and religion? Why can't we, for once, adopt an avant-garde technique to an upright nation building process?

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi who had the determination to force the UPA government to introduce the woman reservation bill in the Rajya Sabha; after initial dilly-dallying by the UPA government, it was passed in the upper house notwithstanding an exclusive pandemonium.

Is it necessary for us to always have a narrow vision of things to win some extra political votes? Why can't the polity of our country for once think about society and nation as a whole? Those politicians who act as a messiah of the Dalits, Muslims, OBC and the down trodden should introspect as to what they have done so far for the upliftment of the deprived lots in our country.

But at the same time I feel disheartened when I see the

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equal gender justice? Why can't we use these criteria to elevate them to the highest ladder of Indian politics instead of trying all ploys to kill the bill in an indirect way? Bringing up illogical arguments will put back the bill into such a dungeon that it dies a natural death!

Was fourteen years not enough for playing nasty politics with such an important legislation which has the dimension of changing the Indian society and polity towards a milestone?

Why are the politicians of our country so fearful of getting this legislation passed? The answer lies in a very simple fact that is the performance test once elected. It is nigh on the fact that most politicians of our country do not perform on the development front in relation to his constituency once elected. That is exactly what unnerves him about the legislation if passed; he might lose out his constituency to a new woman politician. Which is why, we see such mythical ideas being projected that if the cyclical change of the constituency is done; the every five-year plans would cease to yield. In the first place, when no development is evident, where does the question of putting a stop to development come from? Had the politicians of our country been so honest in terms of economic development, then after 62 years of independence our country would least be free of pot holed roads, power cuts, slums, water crises and the many health hazards. It's an accepted fact that women are better performers than men

when it comes to the question of social and economic developments as well as social justice. It is this hidden truth which scandalizes the male politicians of our country of the bill.

However, looking into the above aspect, a change can be incorporated in the bill by which the constituency would not change every five years but after every ten or fifteen years after the delimitation of the constituency. It's time for us to think on these lines so that every downtrodden woman, irrespective of her caste, region, religion and

creed, gets her due share in the national society. We have already divided our manhood on the basis of caste, creed, region and religion. Lets us repeat this crime with the matrons of our country. Let us make her the true manifestation of Annapurna and Durga.



The author is a renowned television personality, foreign affairs expert and a political critic.



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Clipped Wings: India's Civil Aviation Sector in 2009

In 2008, the global recession led to the aviation sector suffering a staggering \$9 billion in losses. Even during 2009, with several North American airlines looking poised to recover from the wrath of the global meltdown, the Indian aviation sector, unfortunately, was still hiccupping on its way back to normalcy. **Ritika Arora** reports.

As a sector, aviation underwent a couple of massive changes post 2006, when Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) changed the way the common man perceived flying. Airlines went from being the exclusive domain of the affluent to becoming a pivotal medium of transport for the middle class. However, the joy of being able to fly was short-lived, when the industry began to face niggling issues from several quarters, notable among them being infrastructural problems.

With thousands of passengers thronging airports on a daily basis, there was bound to occur tremendous tumult.

Describing the industry as being “in intensive care”, Bisignani said at the beginning of the year that India stood to post losses of almost \$ 1.5 billion, next only to the US. Despite being poised towards becoming the biggest aviation presence in the Asia-Pacific region, India might lose in market share if it does not iron out its problems soon, he pointed out.

In addition, Aviation Minister Praful Patel was reluctant to allow foreign capital investment into domestic carriers, which led to airlines complaining of an inability to expand. Patel relented and allowed a 9 percent increase, bringing the total investment proportion to 49%. Besides, ailing national carrier Air India was merged with Indian

Airlines, and safety measures on airlines and related issues, as well as the upgradation of 35 airports was initiated, making 2007-08 one of the most dynamic phases

in Indian aviation.

However, the verdict at the end of 2008 very clearly stated that civil aviation in the country was gasping for breath. In the words of Giovanni Bisignani, chief of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the global aviation industry suffered losses to the tune of \$5 billion in 2008 alone, and similar trends were being forecast for 2009 as well. Describing the industry as being “in intensive care”, Bisignani said at the beginning of the year that India stood to post losses of almost \$ 1.5 billion, next only to the US. Despite being poised towards becoming the biggest aviation presence in the Asia-Pacific region, India might lose in market share if it does not iron out its problems soon, he pointed out.

Thus, the very beginning of 2009 for the civil aviation sector was marked by extreme precaution and staunch pessimism, what with predictions that Asia-Pacific carriers were slated to face losses to the tune of \$1.1 billion in 2009, a figure that was nearly double of that in 2008.

Among various incidents that caused this industry to be constantly in the news, one major factor was the ailing carrier Air India. Notorious once upon a time for unprofessionalism and rampant corruption, Air India was consistently exploited by governmental position-holders for their personal gains. With haphazard HR policies and unbelievable fringe benefits being handed out to the employees, a major chunk of their expenses were due to the staff themselves.

Posting a total loss of Rs. 7200 crore at the beginning of 2009, Air India announced that it desperately needed a bailout package from the government to sustain itself. With an equity of a paltry Rs. 145 crore, the airline asked for assistance in the form of soft loans and infusion of liquidity into the market scenario. The airline's working capital requirement went up from Rs. 2,369 crore in 2006, and present figures of the same peg it to be around Rs. 16,300 crore. To add to their woes, the National Co. of India Ltd., or NACIL, which handles Air India, announced a late payment of salaries to some 31,500 employees in June-July. The decision led to a long series of strikes and protests by the employees against the management.

In May 2009, Arvind Jadhav, an IAS from the batch of 1978 took over the responsibility of the airline as the CMD





- The civil aviation sector in India grew at a CAGR of 18 percent, and in 2008, was worth more than \$ 6 billion.
- Domestic carriers flew 26 percent more people in August 2009 than in the corresponding period last year a total of 3.67 million passengers this year.
- According to CAPA estimates, domestic traffic will grow at 25 to 30 percent till 2010 and international traffic at 15 percent, implying that the market will have more than 100 million passengers by 2010
- By 2020, Indian airports will handle more than 3.4 million tons of cargo per annum
- India ranks fourth after the US, China and Japan in domestic passenger volume. Accordingly, about \$ 9 million will be spent on airport restructuring and modernization by 2010.

(Chairman and Managing Director). When the demands for financial assistance grew, he emphasized on the importance of liquidity infusion in the airline, thereby pushing for as large a bailout package as possible. Though the figures being quoted in the market at that time were around Rs. 15,000 crore, the final worth of the package was expected to be around Rs. 9500 crore.

At the same time, the government took a tough stance on the airline, emphasizing that the Ministry could only do so much: the real initiative had to come from Air India alone. "The government is not standing with an open cheque book", Patel remarked in one of his interviews. True to what was promised, the airline was provided with assistance, but only with a stern warning to pull up their socks in administrative and managerial issues.

A plan for the restructuring of the airline was worked out, where the figures on the new aircraft to be brought in remained untouched (for that is the only way the airline can renew itself), and it expected that in the next two to three years, Air India might limp back to normalcy.

Even as the airline continued to introspect on its various forms of expenditure, a decision was taken to try and eliminate a part of the Productivity-Linked Incentives (PLIs) that constitute a large chunk of the income of the airline's staff. With an accumulated debt of more than Rs. 15,000 crore, the airline realized there was an opportunity to save a staggering Rs. 700 crore, by cutting down 30 to 50 percent of the PLIs. However, the AI staff protested vehemently against the same, with strikes and protests marring the already tainted track record of the national airline in the past year.

Presently still in a rather precarious condition of reconstruction and development, it is expected that Air

India will need at least three to four years to bounce back. It has, however, already caused irreparable damage to the common man, considering the staggering bailout amount that went to the ailing airline that was paid out of the taxpayers' money.

Over and above the Air India fiasco, swine flu and the terror attacks were also two factors that majorly affected passenger traffic in 2009. Out of a total worldwide loss of about \$ 9 billion, roughly 20 percent came from India, more specifically due to the Air India debacle.

However, even with the Air India embarrassment, it is not as if the Indian aviation sector was in limbo. The expansion and redevelopment of airports are very much on in full swing, and are expected to be completed by 2010. Also, the process of policy making on the issues of ground handling, air safety measures, etc., are still being dissected and debated upon, with the repercussions to be felt soon. Several infrastructural deals are being negotiated, while foreign investment is also at a definite high.

All in all, though the aviation segment is anything but asleep at the moment, the fact remains that till the Air India crisis is effectively dealt with, the Indian civil aviation sector will continue to be on tenterhooks. But if that is in place, India can look forward to a much more stabilized and comfortable flying experience in another couple of years from now.

With an accumulated debt of more than Rs. 15,000 crore, the airline realized there was an opportunity to save a staggering Rs. 700 crore, by cutting down 30 to 50 percent of the PLIs. However, the AI staff protested vehemently against the same, with strikes and protests marring the already tainted track record of the national airline in the past year.

The New Beacon of the BJP

In an intense dialogue with the BJP President Nitin Gadkari, **Kanchan Banerjee** was moved by the newfound concepts that the party plans to implement. Excerpts of the interview.



There is no visible large scale plan has been seen yet to revitalize the party at the grass-roots level. As a new and young president of the BJP, what are your short and long-term plans to revitalize the party?

NG: Last February, we had a very successful party conclave in Indore. There was an air of enthusiasm all around with a very high level of participation at our Indore conclave. It has inculcated a sense of 'we can do it' among the party rank and file. In my speech there, I outlined certain initiatives. We are planning a major

"Long before I entered politics, I was moved by the following lines from Sant Tukaram. I continue to seek inspiration from these lines even today.

Je kaa ranjile gaanjele, tyaaasi mhane jo aapule! Tochi saadhu olakhaava, Dev tethechi jaanaava!!"

nationwide campaign to build the capacities of our party workers, party functionaries and elected representatives at every level. This *Prashikshan Maha-Yojana* will be given a final mould very soon.

We are planning a three phase structured training programme for party workers. Comprehensive syllabi for all major sections of party rank and file will also be drafted very soon. We are also launching **e-training** programmes. I must also mention that while selecting party workers for shouldering responsibilities, emphasis is given to their abilities and capacities to deliver.

We will review the performance of all, party office bearers at various levels, elected representatives, MPs, MLAs and even ministers. Those who perform will be rewarded. We are planning to institute awards at national level to the best performing MP, MLA or MLC, and even Municipal Councilor and *Sarpanch*.

Many think that the BJP has become a non-assertive, reactionary party. Some supporters feel that it is apologetic about its ideology and depends on some ideologically asymmetrical regional parties for support.

What is your opinion?

NG: Our major challenge is the gap between our image and the reality. It is far from facts that we are a reactionary and non-assertive party. Besides, there is absolutely no question of being apologetic about our ideology of Integral Humanism. In India, we are going through the era of coalition politics. And when there is a coalition, a little 'give and take' happens. We work on a Common Agenda while in a coalition and ensure that party interests are also taken care of, along with the nation's needs and priorities.

Your leadership may help the BJP to undo the image of 'old people's party'. What are your plans for providing a platform to involve the young upcoming leaders and giving them an opportunity to lead?

NG: I have already answered a good part of this question earlier. Let me tell you that we are preparing an India Vision 2025 document as a guide to take India to the next level of Development. While preparing this, we are seeking participation of all well-meaning young, enthusiastic individuals with fresh ideas and new concepts. I appeal to all our supporters and others as well, to send me their suggestions for this vision document. We are planning to give every opportunity to the young minds to come forward and lead, and take a significant role in building the nation.

Despite a 9% growth of India's economy, the number of poor has increased. The bottom of the nation is suffering as usual. What is your party doing to alleviate poverty in states where you are in power and also where you are not in power?

Remember, for almost 54 years after India became independent, Congress ruled. The state of affairs today is the result largely of the wrong economic policies and bad governance that Congress gave us. The failure has been affirmed by official sources themselves. A committee headed by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisor, Dr. Suresh Tendulkar, has revealed recently that the population of the poor in India has increased by 12 per cent. Poverty in rural India stands at 42 per cent, and not 28 per cent as was estimated earlier. Contrast this with the stark fact that, in recent years, the wealth of a small section of India's rich has increased astronomically. Is this not a warning signal that a policy review is needed?

And as far as the BJP government is concerned, when we were in power at the centre, we had ensured a check on inflation. Our government in Chhattisgarh has earned laurels for its very innovative PDS scheme providing rice at Rs. 2 per kilogram. In Gujarat, Garib Kalyan Melas are taking the welfare schemes to the disadvantaged sections of the people. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar are also ensuring that the poorer sections of the society are given every possible help.

The first and foremost task in correcting India's development imbalance is to follow the principle of Antyodaya – eradication of abject poverty, provision of the basic necessities of every Indian family, and ensuring that the last man in society gets the first opportunity to rise in life. This is what Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Deendayal Upadhyaya and other saintly figures in India had emphasized. Long before I entered politics, I was moved by the following lines from Sant Tukaram. I continue to seek inspiration from these lines even today.

Je kaa ranjle gaanjele, tyaaasi mhane jo aapule!

Tochi saadhu olakhaava, Dev tethechi jaanaava!!

(One who embraces the disadvantaged and oppressed, the downtrodden and the suffering as his own, is a true saadhu or a pious person. God dwells in his/her abode.) Therefore, I urge all BJP governments as well as all my fellow countrymen to rededicate themselves to the ideal of Antyodaya.

You are known as a pro-development, hands-on and practical leader. As India has a larger role in the world economics in times of slowdown, what is your vision for the Indian economy in the coming years?

NG: As a party that has governed at the Centre, and that aspires to do so again; it is also our duty to evolve practical solutions to the multifarious problems that India has been facing. Neither the people, nor we are happy with India's socio-economic development, which is full of imbalances, and also with its governance, which is full of corruption and inefficiency. Most problems before the nation have very little to do with caste, creed, language or such other

factors. They are rooted in the wrong policies of development and wrong kind of governance. I must point out here that today, the nation has an energy shortfall of 55000 Megawatts and we have no stock of coal for power generation under the 12th plan. This Energy Deficit is making this great nation's development handicapped, mainly due to the absolute lack of foresight. We in the BJP are proud of the initiatives and achievements of the NDA government. Now, based on our experience of governance at the Centre and in the states, we should conceptualise, propagate and implement an alternative model of development and governance. I regard this to be one of the most important tasks before the party.

India has come a long way since 1947, when under the influence of the Soviet model; the government gave state-run enterprises primary role in the nation's economy. The past six decades have seen enormous growth in the capabilities of India's entrepreneurial class. The same period has also shown that by and large, governments cannot run economic activities efficiently. It is time for India to abandon the old model completely by redefining the role of government in economics. The government's duty is confined mainly to strategic planning, legislation of sound laws and their effective enforcement. The actual business of performing economic activities should be left to non-governmental enterprises.

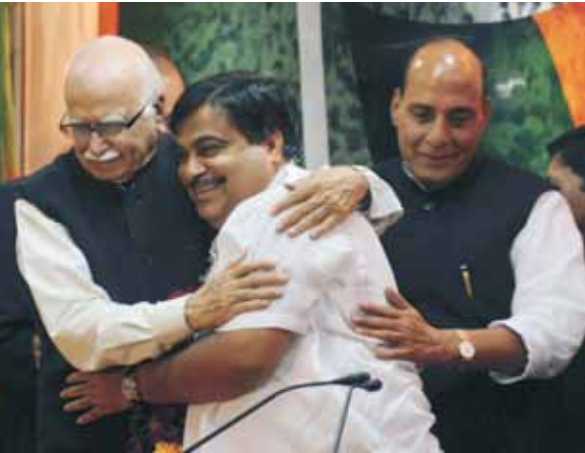
When we talk of enterprises, by no means do we refer only to big corporates. Our small and medium enterprises have immense potential, which, unfortunately, has been stifled by wrong policies and insensitive governmental functioning. Even the enormous energy of cooperatives has been smothered. Moreover, government enterprises have been reduced to grazing grounds for corrupt politicians – which is evident in the manner in which the Prime Minister has allowed his colleagues to loot national resources in civil aviation, telecommunications, textiles, coal and mining and other sectors. Further, unscrupulous politicians and bureaucrats have formed a nexus with unscrupulous businessmen, and this has resulted in an alarming spread of corruption and criminalization at all levels. Unfortunately, even law enforcement agencies and sections of the judicial system apparently have become a part of this nexus. Breaking this nexus, and encouraging healthy entrepreneurship, ensuring lawful and people-focused economic growth, has to be the objective of government's role in the economy.

Gradually people are becoming used to and immune to the terrorist and Naxal attacks. As if it is part of life now. What course do you think the state and central

However, now that China is emerging as a global power, its attitude towards India is far from being friendly. Because of China's intransigence, there has been little progress in the talks to resolve the border dispute.

governments should take, especially on the Naxal terror?

NG: In view of the developing security environment in our neighbourhood, India's defence preparedness must not be lowered under any circumstances. Utmost vigilance and more effective strategies are also needed to tackle the twin threats to India's internal security – namely,



(L to R) LK Advani, Nitin Gadkari, Rajnath Singh

jihadi terrorism and Naxalism. The government's performance in dealing with terrorism in its first stint was absolutely disastrous. The Pak-sponsored 26/11 terrorist attack on Mumbai forced it to correct some of its mistakes. However, the manner in which the investigation into the 26/11 attack is being carried out raises grave doubts. There are

reasons to believe that the government seems to be uninterested in probing the local links of the planners and perpetrators of the attack.

Naxalism, the second major threat to India's internal security – indeed, to our democratic system itself – must be countered with a firm hand. Both the theory and practice of Maoism are completely alien to everything that India

PIOs can contribute in multiple ways: by way of giving ideas, suggesting innovative development models based on their experience, also by making the international community more aware of the idea of India.

holds in high esteem. Let us not forget that foreign forces are actively fomenting unrest in India and encouraging Maoists to exploit the situation. The BJP has urged the government to show absolutely no lenience

towards Maoist leaders. We also urge the so-called civil rights activists not to dress up this murderous ideology in clothes of legitimacy. Of course, all-out efforts should be made to accelerate pro-poor and corruption-free development in areas affected by Naxal violence.

Some states are having reservation for the Muslims, do you think that it shows their failure of in improving the lives of the Muslims and is a desperate attempt to woo them for votes?

NG: Votebank politics is having a free run in the haste with which both the Congress and Communists are proceeding to introduce religion-based reservations in education and employment for Muslims which goes against the letter and spirit of the Indian Constitution. The BJP supports

every effort for socio-economic development of our Muslim brethren through greater spread of education. Indeed, their backwardness is an eloquent testimony to how the Congress party has only exploited them for its own political gain. Besides, it does not even lead to the all-round development of the community as a whole. Rather, it is a divisive move that will harm the unity and integrity of the country in the long run, besides encouraging religious conversions.

Do you believe that China really has a design to destabilize India? If you came to power in Delhi what would be your policy towards China?

NG: The BJP favours friendly, good neighbourly and cooperative relations with China, as befits two ancient Asian civilizations. However, now that China is emerging as a global power, its attitude towards India is far from being friendly. Because of China's intransigence, there has been little progress in the talks to resolve the border dispute. Beijing's totally untenable and unacceptable claim on Arunachal Pradesh is being frequently expressed in many offensive ways. Recently, our own government has admitted that China has made incursions into Indian Territory in other stretches of the border. This cannot be taken lightly, as the government indeed seems to be doing. China's growing military presence in Indian limits, including reports of Beijing's plans to set up a military base in Pakistan, are also a matter of concern. BJP believes that China will appreciate the fact 2010 is not 1962. Peaceful co-existence is the only way for the two historic civilizations to engage with each other.

There are over 30 million people of Indian origin outside of India. In your view what else needs to be done to bring these global Indians in the building of a prosperous India?

NG: People of Indian Origin abroad can strengthen their bonds with their ancestral land and contribute in many ways. They can contribute in multiple ways: by way of giving ideas, suggesting innovative development models based on their experience, sharing their unique, advanced technological knowledge and experience for the rapid development of various less developed and needy sectors in India. Innumerable investment opportunities are created in India; global Indians need to be made aware of these schemes. Another duty the PIOs are performing well and can do more is by making the international community more aware of the idea of India.

I expect the friends of BJP around the world to do away with the large scale misperceptions about BJP and its ideology. They should engage themselves pro-actively in this mission and create a climate where India's principal opposition party is understood well world over.

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Quality Matters

Focus on quality should be the core strategy towards creating a confident workforce that drives both innovation and growth, writes **Anirban R Banerjee**.

Today, no matter what the field of 'work', quality is the key to survival and the crucial factor to make the right impact. We spend the major part of our lives in pursuit of our dreams. This drive towards a goal comes to an end only when it yields a result. It is doing quality work alone that can provide us with a sense of fulfillment, peace of mind, and satisfaction in whatever we manage to achieve. Failure to deliver quality output will not only mean a career setback or loss in business, but it will also impact our motivation and put a question mark on our ability to lead or be competitive.

Quality is an important enabler towards developing competency. Quality initiatives such as learning intervention can play a vital role in creating and driving a culture of change that enables the workforce to continuously focus on developing their competency.

A 2008 Quality Report mentions that quality is the single largest determinant of people's perception about society, nation, and business. In other words, it is a vital component of branding.

add new skills to meet the organization's expectations. As a Human Resource Analyst has pointed out, organizations with quality as their prime focus have

45% faster rate of talent development, as compared to organizations with quality as just one of their priorities.

That quality enables growth is evident from the fact that in the '80s and '90s, industries that adopted quality as a crucial strategy grew at a faster rate. With faster business growth came more opportunities when it came to qualitative roles and assignments for employees. Several research papers indicate that organizations with across-the-board focus



on quality were able to create 24% more high-end roles in every three years and 35% more new roles, as compared to the previous decade. This resulted in a paradigm shift in expectation from technology's ability to drive business and the individual's ability to do things.

A 2008 Quality Report mentions that quality is the single largest determinant of people's perception about society, nation, and business. In other words, it is a vital component of branding. A recent Chamber of Commerce report has revealed that Philippines brought about a

positive change in the way it is perceived in the Business Processing Outsourcing sector by simply focusing on quality education and skill-training facility.

Since for any organization, people are assets, it is critical to develop a qualitative talent base that is aligned to the organization's

business objective. This will not only make the human resources more confident, but will also help in faster growth of leaders and drive innovation. In this way, we shall create a chain of change that drives growth for a better tomorrow and gives us satisfaction in what we do, thereby making our lives more fulfilling. ■

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