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# OPINION

# EXPRESS

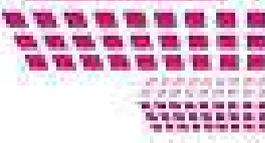
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A MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE

COVER STORY

# BLACK DEEDS

Supreme Court declared that all 218 coal block allocations made from 1993 to 2011 are illegal

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**NCR:** CAPT. VINAY GOYAL DHURV JANAK & CO. R -51

BASEMENT, RAMESH PARK, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-92

TELE: +919871232631 FAX: 011-22056817

**MUMBAI:** VIJAY KALANTRI - ADVISOR NEW

EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 6TH FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK

MARG, FORT, MUMBAI - 400 001 (INDIA).

PHONE: 91 - 22 - 2201 9265 / 2201 9160 FAX :

91-22- 2201 9764 / 2201 9760

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**EDITORIAL & CORPORATE OFFICE:**

OPINION EXPRESS HOUSE 24 - A CLYDE ROAD,

LUCKNOW-226001 (INDIA)

PH: 91-522-4045728/4060880 FAX: 91-522-

4060880 24X7 MOBILITY +91 9984437000

Email: info@opinionexpress.in

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# Apex Court cracks whip to clear coal block mess

**B**y cancelling 214 out of 218 coal block licences, allotted between 1993 and 2011, the Supreme Court has tried to correct a historic wrong. Of the 214 blocks cancelled, 190 allocations were done during the UPA administration between 2004 and 2011. The four blocks that have been spared are run by central firms, two of them allotted to ultra-mega power projects and two to state utilities.



In August, the apex court had had declared these blocks illegal. Allegations about illegal coal block allotments first surfaced after the CAG in 2012 said that the government gave away as much \$33 billion in windfall gains to companies by underpricing the allocations. The apex court also asked state-owned Coal India Limited to take over the operational blocks in six months. The allottees have been given a breathing space of six months to wind up, and the government has been allowed to auction these blocks again after March 31, 2015.

In August, while declaring the block allocation illegal, the court had remarked that they were done by an "ad-hoc and casual" approach "without application of mind" and without looking into aspects of "common good and public interest". The allocations lacked "transparent procedure" resulting in "unfair distribution" of a "national wealth" – coal – "which is king and paramount Lord of industry", the court had observed. The disputed coal block allocations to private companies were made on recommendations by a screening committee set up in 1992 to evaluate the merit of applications from such power-generating companies to run captive coal mines. The government companies were allocated coal blocks by the coal ministry through the government dispensation quota.

Shares of metal companies like Jindal Steel, Tata Steel, Usha Martin and Hindalco fell in the stock market soon after the court order. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his first speech from Red Fort on the Independence Day, announced that the government would replace the Planning Commission with a new body, bringing the curtains down on the 64-year old institution founded on the former Soviet Union's command-style development model.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, inspired by the Gosplan-aided industrialisation of the Soviet Union, set up the Planning Commission in 1950. The dominant view at the time, drawn from Fabian socialism, backed the need for state-led planned industrialisation and development. For the first eight Plans, the emphasis was on a growing public sector with massive public investments in basic and heavy industries.

The commission, housed at Yojana Bhawan a few hundred yards away from Parliament House, emerged as the government's primary go-to think-tank for policy prescriptions. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as well as President Pranab Mukherjee both served as the Planning Commission's deputy chairperson, the body's topmost executive. The prime minister is the chairperson of the commission.

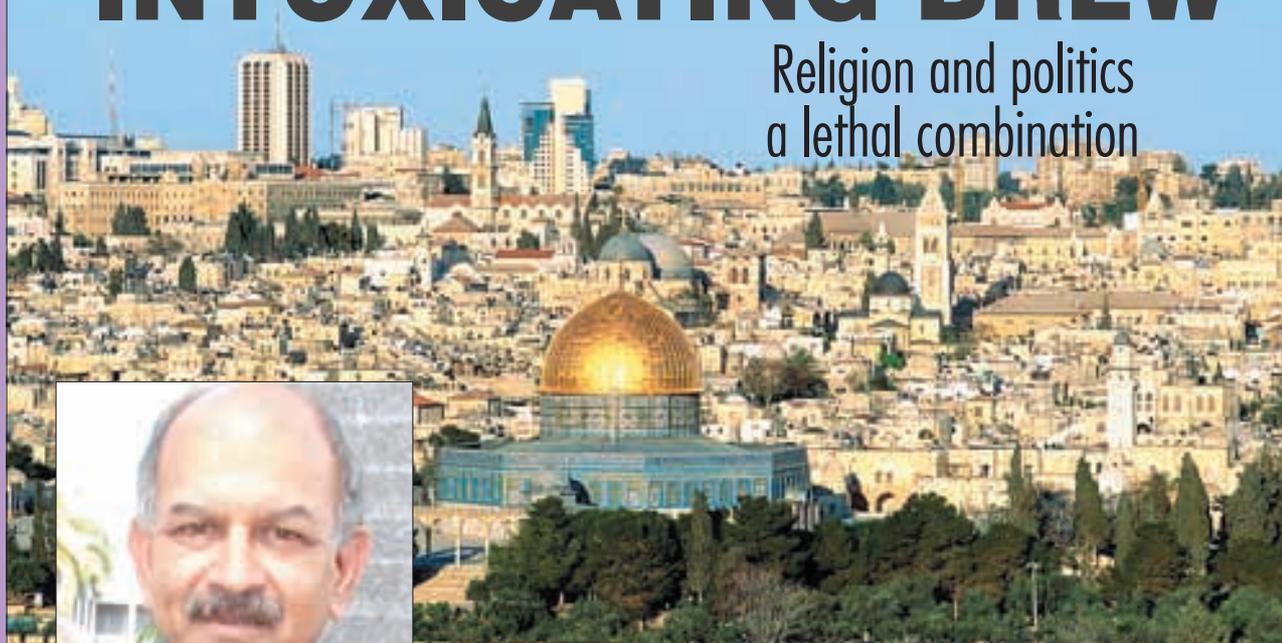
Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, an Isis spokesman, defined the Islamic state's territory as running from northern Syria to the Iraqi province of Diyala north-east of Baghdad, a vast stretch of land straddling the border that is already largely under Isis control. He also said that with the establishment of the caliphate, the group was changing its name to the Islamic State, dropping the mention of Iraq and the Levant. Through his campaign, Mr Modi had vowed to reboot the economy and deliver efficient governance -he said today "development for all" would be his mission. With its allies, the BJP now has over 300 of the 543 parliamentary seats. The stunning numbers provide incontrovertible evidence of the "Modi wave" that the BJP name-dropped for months.

—Prashant Tewari, Editor-in-Chief

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## INTOXICATING BREW

Religion and politics  
a lethal combination



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**P50** Postscript: **White House has nine staf of Indian-origin**

It was a giant leap by diminutive 13-year-old from Lucknow. And coming to her aide in good measures was none other than Mahatma Gandhi. Speaking on behalf of world youth at the opening session of Summit on Climate Change on Tuesday, Yugratna Srivastava quoted the Mahatma – "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed" – to finish her three-minute address amid a thunderous applause from an audience featuring over 100 heads of state.

Yugratna was the last to speak and it was just a coincidence that it was another Indian Dr Rajendra Pachauri of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) who had the session rolling after secretary general Ban Ki-moon's speech. And addressing it before the class IX student from St Fidelis College from Lucknow was the who's who of the world – US president Barack Obama, France president Nicolas Sarkozy, British prime minister Gordon Brown and Chinese premier Hu Jintao.

Although mother Roshini was with her at the UN headquarters, a proud father Dr Alok Srivastava had to content with some glimpses of the webcast of Yugratna speech shown by a local channel. The event was not being telecast live. "I have not even been able to speak to her," he said. "She will call around 4 in the morning and I am desperately waiting for that call," said Dr Srivastava, a reader at a government college in Lucknow. Speaking at the session after Professor Wangari Muta Maathai, Nobel laureate from Kenya, Yugratna said she was representing Tarumitra, a students' organisation networking in over 1,600 high schools and colleges in India.

She asked the world leaders present there, "If you have all the answers, why do we have so many questions?" Fr Robert Athickal of Tarumita, the organisation she was representing at the session, said "Yugratna pleaded for serious and urgent reflection on our future keeping always earth and its inhabitants in mind."

"She didn't get any time to prepare her speech," says her father. "She got the invite on September 9 and she had to fly on September 16. Her visa formality and all the paper work had to be done in between. She flew without any preparation and told me that would utilise the time she will get in New York to write her speech," he adds, ruing the fact that the botanist father couldn't help her dear daughter. The father more than made up for it when he welcomed her daughter at Indira Gandhi international airport on September 25 – now a brand ambassador for green world



**ECO WARRIOR:** LUCKNOW'S YUGRATNA SRIVASTAVA SPEAKING AT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DURING SUMMIT ON CLIMAT CHANGE

# GREEN CRUSADER FROM CITY OF NAWABS

# RELIGION INTOXICATES POLITICS

An investigation of by N.J. Demerath and Karen S. Straight



Worldwide, the volatile — and often violent — combination of a religious state with religious politics is on the rise. Of the alternatives, the authors find the secular state with religious politics most promising. But it is increasingly rare..

## Religious States & Religious Politics

**F**rom both a simple conceptual point of view and a simplistic historical perspective, this would appear the purest of the four cases, and perhaps the most common stereotype of non-Western, hence nonsecular, societies around the world. Because religion in one sphere is matched symmetrically by religion in the other, a religious state would seem to go hand in hand with religious politics. In fact, the combination is more the exception than the rule, and this is because it is so volatile and potentially violent. When a religious state is faced with religious politics, there is a religious conflict at issue. Under such circumstances, the state's very legitimacy is called into question, and violence may reflect preemptive actions of state control as well as the clash among contending religious parties. If there is a single pattern that lends itself to the most widespread religious and cultural violence, it is surely this one. And, alas, while the category is rare, it is hardly nonexistent.

Within our "sample" of countries, several cases invite inclusion here - at least at various points in their histories. Like most other Latin American countries, both Brazil and Guatemala were once officially Catholic states in a religious political system that involved the subjugation and suppression of indigenous religious alternatives. Formally, both countries had severed these state religious ties by the end of the nineteenth century; informally, ties have persisted in varying forms.

In Brazil, the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy is now seeking to reappropriate and renegotiate its seat at the right hand of the state, while at the same time both church and state are engaged in a new religious politics animated by persistent strains of liberation theology on the one hand and a surging pentecostal Protestantism on the other. In Guatemala, the dominant military state has shifted its ostensible religious affiliation from Catholic to Protestant in the last decade, and there is no question that its ongoing guerilla opposition is in part a movement of Mayan religious revitalization.



● **Jay Demerath**, professor of sociology at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is co-author of *A Bridging of Faiths* (Princeton University Press, 1992). He presented a reduced version of this paper on May 20, 1996, at the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in Tokyo as part of the spring lecture and dialogue series cosponsored by the Boston Research Center on Religion and Transnational Civil Society in the 21st Century.

● **Karen Straight** is completing her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Massachusetts; her dissertation involves a multinational analysis of women in politics.



### RELIGIOUS STATE?: ISRAEL FALLS INTO THIS CATEGORY

Or consider the case of Israel. Many Israelis would protest its categorization as a religious state, arguing that Zionism itself can be seen as a secular movement, and that the state makes ample provision for both secular practices and various non-Judaic faiths, especially Islamic and Christian. At the same time, there is no question that the Israeli state is perceived as Jewish by most Jews and non-Jews alike. Even if this were not the case, Zionism itself may be a sufficiently sacred commitment to qualify as religious in its own terms. Certainly there is no question that Israeli politics often take religious forms. This not only applies to the participation of Muslim Palestinians, including the Hamas, but also to the struggles among various Jewish groups - whether secularists on the left or contesting movements on the right, such as the Gush Emunim and the ultra-orthodox Haredi. As Yitzhak Rabin's assassination makes clear, the stakes are large and the rates of violence are correspondingly high.

But perhaps the clearest combination of a religious state with religious politics is found in Northern Ireland. There is no question that the state is perceived in Protestant terms, whether de jure as a result of its inclusion within Anglican Britain, or de facto because of the three-hundred-year political dominance of local Protestants.

Israelis would protest its categorization as a religious state, arguing that Zionism itself can be seen as a secular movement, and that the state makes ample provision for both secular practices and various non-Judaic faiths, especially Islamic and Christian...

Certainly there is no doubt that politics are riven with religion - at least insofar as they have involved extreme civil religious blocs that are "culturally" if not always "religiously" Protestant and Catholic respectively. The recent truce and possible signs of a negotiated settlement signal a change in the religious politics, but by no means its end. What was once a small Catholic minority may well become an effective political majority early in the next century, and Catholics have already begun to make gains through the ballot rather than the bullets of the IRA. Such a development is hastened by the increased out-migration of Protestants with resources, who read the new writing on the graffiti-emblazoned walls; it is compounded by the frustrations of those less advantaged Protestants remaining behind. As all of the above examples attest, the combination of a religious state and religious politics has occasioned some of the most deeply rooted and tragic violence of the modern era. This makes it especially important to consider the al-

ternatives, even though it is one thing to point out the dangers of this combination in the abstract and quite another to prevent countries from sliding towards it in reality. Then too, some of the alternatives have warts of their own.

## Secular States & Secular Politics

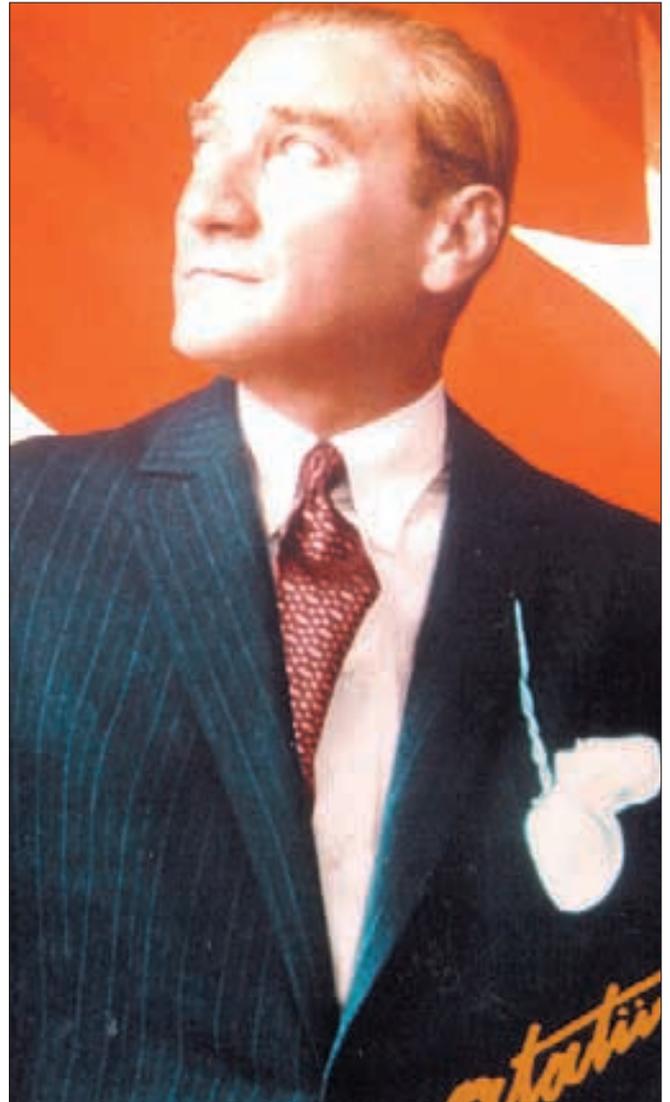
If the first combination is stereotypically non-Western, this one is commonly associated with the West. In one sense, it represents a realization of the Enlightenment vision through what Bryan Wilson (1966) called the "secularization of public religion" and what Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone (1994) call the "de-sacralization of the state." However much these authors are thought to disagree on other matters, they are in basic concurrence here.

There is no question that the secular-state secular-politics combination is often associated with Western Europe in particular. Despite the continued existence of "Christian" Democratic parties in Germany and France, both countries fall into this category, as does Italy in the wake of its recent revocation of its long-standing concordat with the Vatican.

Much the same is true if one looks functionally rather than formally at Anglican England or Lutheran Scandinavia. In fact, there are active movements on behalf of religious disestablishment in all of these symbolically religious nations. In part, these are efforts to revitalize religion as an autonomous political force, since many church folk now regard the relationship as inhibiting their prophetic roles. Indeed, the establishments that survive are often defended principally on nonreligious grounds. In Sweden, the church has functioned somewhat like an unofficial census bureau and is subvented for the purpose. However, Sweden has recently voted to dis-establish religion by the year 2000. Many politicians see these establishments as cases of the sublime-gone-ridiculous and the purely symbolic source of vestigial charm and occasional humor.

Although Europe does not exhaust the secular-secular category, its influence is apparent in two additional cases: Turkey and China. Turkey had been tilting toward the West throughout the latter days of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, where there was a special fascination with the secular theology of French positivism. In a sense, Kemal Ataturk both had and ate the Ottoman cake when he seized power in 1921 and carried through one of the most far-reaching and enduring politico-cultural revolutions in the twentieth century. Ataturk was familiar with sociologist Emile Durkheim's argument that an ethical society and effective political culture could be sacred without being religious. Partly as a result, Ataturk banned religion from both government and politics, just as he banned irregular verbs and Roman numerals from everyday discourse. For the most part, the reforms have remained. Although there have been several instances in which the military has stepped in to preserve secularism, it is characteristic of Turkey that even some members of the Islamic Refah ("Welfare") Party describe it as "fundamentalism-lite." However, Muslim political interests have begun to mobilize, and after winning a plurality of more than 20 percent in the 1996 election, Refah is now sharing power with the previously dominant "True Path" Party.

China also qualifies as a doubly secular case, again partly on the basis of an im-



PIIONEER OF SECULAR STATE?: ATATURK

ported Western ideology - in this case, of course, Marxist socialism. Actually, the regime's opposition to religion has softened of late, and there is even waggish talk of a "Third Opium

War," in this case an intra-party dispute concerning whether Marx was correct in dismissing religion as the "opiate of the masses." Of course, there are many respects in which Marxism itself resembles a religion, including its recent secularization. Indeed, one of the reasons why some Chinese leaders are more accepting of traditional Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic religious communities (as long as they operate on the state's own terms) is a much-lamented void at the core of Chinese society where only money has currency. While some would argue that this is a cue for the reintroduction of Confucianism, this is less preferable than imported faiths because party cadres see it as a feudal and anti-revolutionary anachronism, despite its considerable informal persistence. This is a time of transition in China, but not one that threatens a serious religionizing of either the state or politics in familiar terms.

Ataturk banned religion from both government and politics...Although there have been several instances in which the military has stepped in to preserve secularism, it is characteristic of Turkey that even some members of the Islamic Refah Party describe it as "fundamentalism-lite."



**RELIGIOUS STATE, BUT...:** WHILE THE STATE IS FORMALLY RELIGIOUS IN SWEDEN, IT REFLECTS A CULTURE AND A POLITICAL SCENE THAT IS HIGHLY SECULAR

Clearly, the combination of a secular state and secular politics has some empirical standing, and it is in some measure correctly associated with Western post-Enlightenment developments.

But this does not mean that all cases are confined to the West, or that religion is entirely absent in any instance. Indeed, the combination in pure form runs the risk of cultural lassitude, if not sterility.

Many of the above cases reveal persisting strains toward some form of religious or "sacred" alternative that must often be officially, if not coercively, dampened. While these pressures rarely operate as major trends in their own right, they are also seldom dismissable as idle epiphenomena.

So far, then, we have dealt with the two opposing polar combinations: the doubly religious associated with violence and the doubly secular tending toward vacuity. Of course, there are many anomalies within each. But the most instructive disjunctions involve the two combinations off the main diagonal. In most typologies these bear the most succulent fruit of the conceptual labor.

## Religious States & Secular Politics

There are basically three scenarios for the combination of a religious state and secular politics. The first involves instances in which the religiousness of the state is an empty symbol rather than a compelling commitment - more a case of anachronistic form than contemporary function. In fact, I noted several such countries under the secular-secular rubric. Lutheran Sweden is a case in point. While the state is formally religious, it actually reflects a culture and a political scene that is highly secular; the occasional religious movements and issues which compel attention are very much the exception.

If this first model suggests a certain ritualized indifference to religion, a second version involves a far more active and pointed religious presence. Here, religion is an important source of state legitimacy, and no alternative religious views are tolerat-

ed. Religion is banned from politics precisely because it is potentially so upsetting as an emotionally charged component of the culture at large. Often politics of any real substance is frowned upon, and religious grievances against the state are suppressed along with all others. Here are the true theocracies represented by some traditionally Catholic Latin American states as well as a number of Islamic hegemonies in the Middle East, including Pakistan at various points in its history. It also applies to several countries in South East Asia such as Buddhist Thailand. Here the state controls the political world very tightly and embraces religion more to control it than to submit to it.

In some ways these first two models of religious states with secular politics are opposites of each other. The first represents religious tokenism in the midst of apathy, while the second reveals a religious order imposed to quell potential religious disorder. Meanwhile, a third qualifies as a perverse variant of the second: states that carefully construct their own religion to frustrate the political mobilization of a genuine religious alternative.

Indonesia offers a case in point. Here the state has used "pancasila" as an imposed civil religion seeking to bind syncretically the loyalties of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and animists - not to mention the 90 percent of the population who are formally Muslims. Strict electoral rules make it virtually impossible for any one religious group to rise up against the regime, and the state's administrative apparatus ("golkar") also functions as a controlling political structure. In all of this, the object is to stifle the development of the so-called "Islamic fundamentalists," some of whose actual agendas are more secular than religious.

Thus, the combination of a religious state with secular politics produces strange partnerships. All three of its model scenarios are somewhat procrustean, and the latter two share a sense of unstable vulnerability as a sort of way station for cases caught in transition between the other three basic combinations.

## Secular States and Religious Politics

At first blush, this seems another strained and uneasy combination with squirming inclusions. After all, if a society is able to sustain a government that is basically secular, isn't this because there is too little religious action to animate its politics significantly? Put oppositely, when any society's politics become religiously infected, how can its state structures be sufficiently inoculated to resist the virus?

There is merit in both these queries; yet the logic behind a secularly neutral state with a free-ranging religious polity is that each complements and constrains the other. There need be no limits to the free exercise of religion in politics as long as there is a strict prohibition of any religious establishment within the state. Politicians, as politicians, may campaign on - and even vote - their religious consciences; nor is there anything to prevent them from bowing to the bidding of their religious organizations. But state officials and state administrations have a different responsibility. They must remain formally and functionally neutral, and not only in the pluralistic fray between religions but also in the larger struggle between religion, on the one hand, and secularism, on the other. The overall result should be a necessarily contested but vital politics framed by an equitable state that rises above the fray to guarantee fairness to

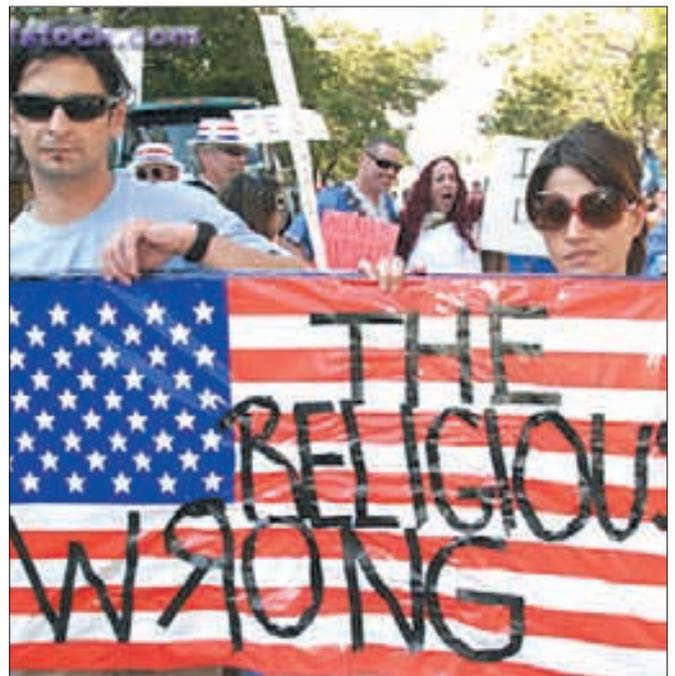
all.

This at least describes the constitutional theory and founding enthusiasm behind two countries that constitute the world's largest and oldest democracies respectively; namely, India and the United States. When India obtained independence in 1947, it took three years to develop a constitution. The result reflected a number of Western models, including the U.S. itself. But while the Indian form of government enjoyed a successful run of almost thirty years with its stability and legitimacy intact, this began to unravel in the 1980s.

A growing complaint within India today is that its Independence leaders were too quick to apply Western secular forms of government to an Eastern cultural reality that required a unique state response. The argument as articulated by such leading intellectuals as T. N. Madan and Ashish Nandy holds that a secular state may work well enough in a country like the

U.S., but it is discordant within an Indian society that remains intransigently non-secular at its core. Indeed, the very imposition of Western secularism has served perversely to fan the flames of religious politics by forcing religious advocates to adopt increasingly more extreme measures to make their case - measures that even include communal violence. Some go so far as to suggest that India is not just a deeply religious

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A SECULAR STATE MAY WORK WELL ENOUGH IN A COUNTRY LIKE THE US BUT IT IS DISCORDANT WITHIN AN INDIAN SOCIETY

country but a basically Hindu society that can only be led by a Hindu government. As Hinduism finds its natural expression in state control, it will revert back to its natural historical tolerance of the minority religions in its domain.

And yet this is only one reading of the Indian case. By no means all Indian intellectuals have thrown in the secular towel. Scholars such as Andre Beteille, Dipankar Gupta, and T. K. Ooman continue to defend an areligious rather than anti-religious reading of the Indian constitution. From this perspective, the cause of communal violence is not that the state is too secular but rather that it is not secular enough, not that the state should use its influence to curb or end religion, but rather that the state should be neutral among contesting religious groups and concerning the larger question of religion versus nonreligion as a cultural desideratum. Alas, from the very beginning, the Indian constitution included controversial religious allowances such as a state exemption for Muslim personal law; it also mandated liberal religious reforms within Hinduism concerning such matters as temple administration and a continuation of the British "reservations policy" designed to provide a form of occupational affirmative action for Hindu "untouchables."

These exceptions in secular state policy have festered and exacerbated over the years. From a neutral vantage point, religious personal obligations are fine as long as they do not contradict the minimal (not maximal) rights and responsibilities of the citizenry at large. Rather than use religious status as a basis for reserving jobs, some argue that this should be based on more general socio-economic disadvantage (and with an educational rather than occupational compensation).

In any event, it is clear that India's recently increasing "communal violence" (Hindus vs. Muslims in Ayodyah, Bombay, and Kashmir; Sikhs vs. Hindus in the Punjab; Tamil rebels in the South) reflects the tendency for state leaders and state structures to become embroiled in religious conflicts. As concessions made to one group require concessions made to its rival, constructing state policy has come to resemble shortening a chair one leg at a time: the results are never quite even, and the seat of power becomes increasingly unstable. The assassinations of both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi offer tragic reminders of the possible consequences.

But in a strange way, one's reading of India depends upon one's reading of the United States, and here too there are opposing options. On the one hand, the U.S. has also been construed as among the most religious nations in the world. It ranks high in virtually every measure of religiosity, with some 95 percent of Americans claiming a "belief in God," and more than 40 percent claiming to attend religious services on any given Sunday. And amongst the profusion of active religious movements, today one hears a good deal about America's "culture wars" as storm clouds gather on the religious right.

On the other hand, the U.S. can be portrayed as the secular nation par excellence, especially given its widely heralded "separation of church and state." This image has provoked both positive and negative assessments, the latter including Richard Neuhaus's critique of the "naked public square" (1984) and Stephen Carter's more recent concern over a "culture of disbelief" (1992). James Hunter's portrayal of hostility between "orthodox and progressive" religious forces (1991) can be seen

as illustrating a democracy at work rather the kind of culture wars that are tragically waged elsewhere (cf. Demerath, 1991). And as for those high estimates of religious belief and participation - both have come under close recent scrutiny. For example, Hadaway, Marler and Chaves (1993) have shown that actual religious attendance is probably less than half of what is claimed. If Asians tend to minimize their involvement in religion, Americans tend to maximize theirs. It is not hard to produce corrected estimates that are quite similar for both.

As Demerath and Williams have argued (1992), however, these two images of the United States are not as contradictory as one might suppose. Like the earlier account of a secular state and a religious polity, they are contingently compatible in the sense that each depends upon the other. Thus, we can have highly vocal and widely mobilized religious politics precisely because there is a separation of church and state where the actual affairs of government are concerned. At the same time, that same separation would be intolerable if there were not ample opportunity elsewhere in the society to exercise and express one's religious preference - or lack of one.

Overall, the United States may be the exception that com-

And yet this is only one reading of the Indian case. By no means all Indian intellectuals have thrown in the secular towel. Scholars such as Andre Beteille, Dipankar Gupta, and T. K. Ooman continue to defend an areligious rather than anti-religious reading of the Indian constitution.

mends the rule concerning the virtues of a secular state and a religious polity. It would be naive and unseemly to assume that the same combination would work identically for all other nations. Nor is India the only cautionary case. In Egypt (as in neighboring Algeria), the nation as a whole seems a battleground between a coercive and antireligious (as opposed to neutral) state "secularism," on the one hand, and a small group of religious extremists (led by the Islamic Group and other legatees of the Muslim Brotherhood). The scenario is not uncommon and has surfaced in a variety of other states that are unsuccessful in their efforts to suppress religious opposition - e.g., as previously described, Indonesia, Turkey, and Thailand. Of course, a variety of factors are involved, and "democracy" itself is not always a

panacea or even always interpreted the same way. Thus, democratic elections are one thing, but a democratic state is often quite another. In addition to regimes that constrain electoral democracy to uphold a nominally democratic state governance, there are certainly opposition movements that see electoral democracy as merely a stage in the ultimate suspension of democratic governance in the name of religion itself. The choices are not easy.

Meanwhile, post-1989 Poland also qualifies as a secular state with religious politics. Although one might suppose it to be doubly Catholic as a reflection of both its dominant cultural religious alignment and the oft-chronicled role of the church on the Solidarity side of the recent revolution, this has already begun to shift. Many Poles are more cultural than religious Catholics, and the old patterns of opposition to ecclesiastical authority are resurfacing, especially as the church pressured the new government to outlaw divorce and abortion. The response is especially apparent in the 1995 defeat of Lech Walesa by a crypto-communist but authentic secularist - a defeat that may have occurred because of (rather than in spite of) the intercession of Cardinal Glimp and Catholic officialdom on Walesa's behalf. And just recently, the government enacted a liberalization of the church-backed abortion prohibition of 1993. In sum, while

Poland currently illustrates the combination of a secular state with religious politics, it may soon join its European sisters to the West in the doubly secular category as its politics lose their religious flavor.

## Locating Japan

Finally, there is one country that offers an instructive case in flux. To this point, we have not even mentioned Japan, one of the most important, dynamic, and currently conflicted countries in the world. This is partly because Japan is a country where we are still very far from being experts, though we have learned a great deal from many Japanese scholars and such U.S. mentors and sources as Winston Davis (1992), Helen Hardacre (1989), Daniel Metraux (1996), James W. White (1970). It is also because Japan's position within our four types or categories is a matter of some doubt. In fact, at various times in its recent history, Japan has qualified for placement in all four combinations. While this is also true of many other countries - including some we have already categorized simplistically - it is worth pausing to note how the four types occur within the Japanese experience.

First, one reading of the almost 250 year, pre-1868 "Tokugawa" period in Japanese history is that it combined a religious government (or shogunate) with religious politics in the jousting among various Buddhist, Shinto, and even Christian movements. Second, it is at least arguable that the 1868 "Meiji restoration" ultimately produced a combination of a reli-

gious state and secular politics as a small elite self-consciously fashioned a new state religion out of traditional folk Shinto. The resulting State Shinto was used to define the government and to mobilize both industrialization and militarism. Opposing religious voices were stilled, at least during the war years, as the imprisoned leaders of such dissident groups as the lay Buddhist, Soka Gakkai, attest. Third, at least for the first three decades following the war and the adoption of a new constitution, the situation was more that of a secular state with secular politics. Not only was State Shinto disestablished but there was relatively little religious presence in the world of politics.

Fourth and most recently, the combination of religious politics and secular state has begun to surface, however imperfectly. Formally, of course, the state continues to be secular. Although some might argue that the Ministry of Education's 1989 requirement of the singing of the national anthem ("kimi-gayo") at public school graduation ceremonies and the retention of some aspects of Shinto mythology in the school curriculum marks a first step down a slippery slope toward a religious state, there remains some doubt in the courts whether Shinto itself qualifies as religious. Similar ambiguity surrounds the Cabinet member visits to the Yasukuni shrine honoring the war dead that began in the mid-1980s. And yet conservative politicians are increasingly persuaded that some kind of sacred revitalization is necessary to fill the void at the nation's cultural core where a devotion to industrial capitalism and a "yen for the yen" does not suffice.

Meanwhile, religious politics of a quite different sort are involved in the increasingly conspicuous role of new religious movements over the last decade. An especially pivotal event was the 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the



SECULAR, OR RELIGIOUS?...JAPAN MAY QUALIFY FOR ALL THE FOUR CATEGORIES

cult, Aum Shinrikyo. The resulting trial of the leader, Asahara, has turned out to be a siege for many marginal religious movements who feel stigmatized by the same stereotypes and sanctions applied to the Aum. This is especially true of the growing Soka Gakkai, whose membership has been reckoned one-sixth of the population but whose seventy-year history has been consistently controversial because of its zealous proselytizing and its formation of the only religious political party in Japan which is now the country's largest opposition party. It is true that Komeito (or the CGP, "Clean Government Party") has not been legally linked to the Soka Gakkai since 1970, and it has recently merged with the "New Frontier" Party. And yet there are sufficient perceived affinities remaining between Komeito and the Soka Gakkai so that discrediting one tends to discredit the other.

This is at least one plausible motivation behind the dominant (and generally conservative) "Liberal Democratic Party's" recently successful Religious Corporation Law. The result here is partly political in applying the same brush that tars the Aum Shinrikyo to the Soka Gakkai and then Komeito in turn. But it also marks a potential sea change in state policy toward religious groups generally, especially those that are somewhat off center. The introduction of tighter reporting requirements, greater monitoring vigilance, and vague new standards of religious propriety licences the government to fish in deeper waters for its opposition prey. This might seem consistent with a secular state in the antireligious sense of the phrase. But it is an alarming departure from a secular state that is neutral concerning both religion in general and religions in particular. It is precisely this connotation of a neutral secularity that best avoids a "religious establishment" while promoting the "free exercise" of religion. Of course, we would argue that this same combination is optimal in the long run not just for religion but for society as a whole.

So much for a cross-cultural reconnoitering of the various relations that exist between religion, politics, and the state. Any exercise that presumed to freeze and fit whole societies within a single simple conceptual grid would, of course, be a fool's errand. At the same time, it is sometimes useful to gain a sense of the various combinations and tendencies that exist today as a guide to tomorrow - especially since there is no more volatile intersection or one with greater consequences than the one at issue.



ONLY RELIGIOUS PARTY IN JAPAN WHICH IS NOW THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST OPPOSITION PARTY

**While the coupling of a secular state with religious politics is currently rare, it is arguably the most promising type for promoting both cultural vitality and structural stability. In the final analysis, no country need be dominated either by a vacuous and ahistorical secularism or a raging religious current that sweeps all else before it.**

Of the four combinations we have examined, that of a religious state combined with religious politics is certainly the most potentially violent. Unfortunately, it is also a direction in which many societies are being pressed. By contrast, the doubly secular combination may provide political stability at the price of cultural vacuity. The conjunction of a religious state with secular politics can be either a symbolic anachronism or the result of an imposed religious orthodoxy that relies heavily on coercion and tolerates no opposition.

While the coupling of a secular state with religious politics is currently rare, it is arguably the most promising type for promoting both cultural vitality and struc-

tural stability. In the final analysis, no country need be dominated either by a vacuous and ahistorical secularism or a raging religious current that sweeps all else before it.

Let us end with a more personal postscript. Anyone engaged in comparative research learns early and often to take refuge in the phrase, "all else being equal." In addition, any American engaged in global analysis and prescription must be especially sensitive to our long tradition of triumphal "exceptionalism" (cf. Lipset, 1996). One of the dilemmas of comparative work concerns the dilemma of dissimulating one's own values and one's best sense of what might work for others. Certainly Edward Said (1978) has alerted all Western scholars to the dangers of Orientalism and has made the term a byword for cross-cultural stereotyping. However, as James Carrier's collection on Occidentalism implies (1996), distorted perceptions and communications occur in both directions and are endemic in any situation in which power imbalances are compounded by cultural differences.

The problem is exacerbated when one seeks not just to understand but to prescribe. But even here there are two possible errors. The first is to blunder ahead and prescribe one's own medicine for every patient, regardless of the ailments and host conditions; the second is to pull back into a benighted relativism that treats every society as only analyzable in its own terms and only changeable in its own fashion. The latter is especially problematic when it is merely a pose - what Charles Taylor has referred to as the "obligatory hypocrisy" and false cultural respect of today's "multicultural" world.



# Preparing for the harvest ...

A new mood of aggressive evangelism has been emanating from America. Well-funded, superbly networked, backed by the highest of the land, seized of its moral supremacy, it has India as one of its key targets, reveals **VK Shashikumar** in a disturbing exposé

**T**his could be the plot of a fevered thriller. A jingoistic president, multi-million dollar corporations, high technology, a grand if furtive mission, networks spanning the globe, and biblical invocations. Only it's real. And its got India in its crosshair.

Religious expansionism has not witnessed this scale, scope, and state resources in a long time. Detailed investigations by Tehelka reveal that American evangelical agencies have established in India an enormous, well-coordinated and strategised religious conversion plan.

Since then, aggressive evangelists have found pro-active support from the new administration in their efforts to convert some sections of Indian society to Christianity. At the heart of this complex and sophisticated operation is a simple strategy—convert locals and then give them the know-how and money to plant their own churches and multiply.

Around the time that Bush Jr moved into the Oval office, a worldwide conversion movement, funded and effected by American evangelical groups, was peaking in India. The movement, which began as AD2000 & Beyond and later morphed into Joshua Project I and Joshua Project II, was designed to be a sledgehammer—a breathtaking, decade-long steamroller of a campaign that would set the stage for a systematic, sophisticated and self-sustaining "harvest" of the "unreached people groups"

## White House-Christian Coalition nexus

The American press is replete with reports on Bush's largesse to faith-based organisations. They say it's his "return gift" to the Christian Right for having loyally supported his presidential campaign. The Christian Coalition, founded by American TV evangelist and head of the multi-billion Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), Pat Robertson, played a crucial role in the 2000 election. Recently, in his TV programme, Club 700, broadcast on CBN, Robertson created a stir by announcing that he is confident Bush will win the 2004 election in a "blowout" because God has told him so.

Since Bush's ascendancy to the presidency this network of networks has multiplied rapidly in India. Bush supports conversion in India because he supports those American TMOs who fund and strategise conversion activities in this country. Organisations like the International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, Christian Aid, World Vision, Seventh Day Adventist Church and multi-billion enterprises run by evangelists like Pat Robertson, Billy Graham and Roger Houtsma, amongst many others, were instrumental in running a coordinated conversion campaign in India under the banner of AD2000. These later became the Joshua Project and when the decade-long movement officially closed down in March 2001, Joshua Project II was launched to sustain conversions and intelligence-gathering. Graham's TMO, Billy Graham Evangelist

Association, supports conversion activities in Gurgaon, Haryana, and Kolkata.

When AD2000 was conceived for India, the plan was based on a military model with the intent to invade, occupy, control, or subjugate its population. It was based on solid intelligence emanating from the ground and well-researched information on various facets of selected people groups. The idea was to send out spying missions to source micro details on religion and culture. The social and economic divisions in the various Indian communities were closely examined. Given the oppressive and institutionalised caste system in the Hindu society, American evangelical strategists chalked out plans for reaching these various "un-mixable" caste groups. The many fault-lines running through the country-divisions in terms of ethnicity, caste, creed, language and class-were all factored in during the generation of ethnographic data.

## Global evangelism plans

While AD2000 spied out the land and its inhabitants to get an accurate picture of opportunities and challenges for conversion activities in India, they also framed subversive strategies to implement their plans. Concepts like PLUG, PREM and NICE were conceived. PLUG refers to the target group-people in every language, urban centre and geographic division. PREM refers to the techniques to use-prayer, research, evangelisation and mobilisation. NICE refers to how the work is to be done-networking, taking initiative, and using an evangelist to spur existing groups and cohorts in their efforts to convert people to Christianity.

## Local networks

For Indian evangelical groups, access to American technology meant faster and more secure communication with their patrons. And, of course, the availability of the Bible in local languages. In fact, in today's India, the Bible is available in almost all languages and dialects. If the translation of the Bible was a symbol of huge transnational exercise, the massive distribution of gospel literature was nothing less than a distribution marvel. In India, a coordinated gospel literature distribution exercise was staged to reach 600,000 villages by the end of 2000. Finally, American evangelical organisations that also run cash-rich television channels pumped in money to buy slots on Indian television networks. In fact, Pat



**TARGET INDIA?:** AN AMERICAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

**American evangelical organisations pumped in money to buy slots on Indian television networks. In fact, Pat Robertson, who recently stepped down as the chairman of the Christian Coalition and the owner of the CBN set up a studio in Hyderabad to help Indian evangelicals minister through television programmes...**

Robertson, who recently stepped down as the chairman of the Christian Coalition and the owner of the CBN set up a studio in Hyderabad to help Indian evangelicals minister through television programmes. These programmes are broadcast on various networks in India where CBN buys time.

The Joshua Project, started by a splinter group of CBN, was also a large-scale intelligence operation that brought together American strategists, theologians, missionary specialists, demographers, technologists, sociologists, anthropologists and researchers to create the most comprehensive people group profiles in the 10/40 Window. In fact, the ethno-linguistic profiling of the people groups in India, probably, cannot even be matched by data with the government of India. The logic behind this massive intelligence gathering operation was to "make a priority of establishing as a minimum, a pi-

pioneer church-planting movement within every ethno-linguistic people of over 10,000 individuals by December 31, 2000."

The launch of the Joshua Project in the mid-1990s resulted in scores of American research teams arriving in India to lay preliminary roadmaps for the church-planting mission. Everyone came on tourist visas and, on their arrival in India, their respective mission partners took them in. This partnership with Indian researchers resulted in the production of enormous field data on various people groups in the country. This, in turn, led to the identification of areas and regions where evangelical activities could be carried out in a focused and methodical manner.

Joshua Project II is a continuation and expansion of the original plan. Its professed aim is to "highlight all the least-reached peoples (non-Christian) of the world and to help build ministry networks and partnerships focusing on these people." The constant research and updating of ethnographic data from India should ring alarm bells within the intelligence agencies in India. In fact, the project maintains its "peoples lists" in cooperation with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptists, as will be seen later, have traditionally worked hand-in-glove with the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). India's ethno-cultural data collected by the project is categorised by them as 'Security Level 2' because there is a danger to Indian and foreign missionaries if data relating to their conversion activities is made public.

### The main target: India

As part of AD2000, Christian organisations in most countries, including India, had embarked on an ambitious National AD2000 Initiative. In India the Evangelical Fellowship of India was central to the fulfillment of the goals set by this initiative. According to the founders of AD2000 (and that includes Bush's pal Billy Graham) north India is the 'kairos', the key. India is where the era of modern missionary effort began nearly 200 years ago with the arrival of William Carey, the father of modern evangelical missions. However, the nine north and central Indian states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana were considered areas of immense strategic importance for the following reasons:



Joshua Project II is a continuation and expansion of the original plan. Its professed aim is to "highlight all the least-reached peoples (non-Christian) of the world and to help build ministry networks and partnerships focusing on these people"

The Gangetic belt is one of the most heavily populated regions of the world. Forty percent of the Indian population lives here, New Delhi is the capital and centre of political power in India.

The India Missions Association (IMA) in partnership with Gospel for Asia, another big American missionary outfit, researched and published very informative and accurate books that unraveled the

intricate mosaic that is India. Some of those books are in Tehelka's possession. One of the big achievements of the Chennai-based IMA was conducting a detailed India-wide PIN code survey. India's postal service is one of the world's largest and it is important to understand why American mission agencies picked on India's postal system to devise their covert conversion strategy. The Indian

postal system has a network of 1,52,786 post offices-89 percent of them in villages, which means one post office for 23.12 sq. km of rural land and one for every 3.16 sq. km of urban stretch, or one for a village with 4,612 people or one for 12,924 people in a town or city.

## PIN-code theory

The 6-digit PIN code introduced in August 1972, identifies and locates every departmental delivery office. The first digit represents the zone, the second the sub-zone, the third digit shows the postal sorting district, the fourth digit indicates the mail route and the last two digits indicate the specific post office of destination in that zone. For this purpose the country has been divided into eight zones and each region in each zone has been assigned a particular postal circle in the first two digits of a PIN code. The Delhi circle, for instance, is 11. The digits 45 to 49 represent the Madhya Pradesh circle and 60 to 64 are for the Tamil Nadu circle.

This neat division of India through the postal codes is seen as a boon for strategising missionary work, coding the data emerging from the field and flowing it back to missionaries on the job. Given below are a few ways in which pincodes have helped evangelical work:

There is no easier way of locating workers than attaching pincodes to them. Media contacts can be linked easily with workers. Sorting "harvest forces" and mailing lists is easy. The codes make distribution of gospel literature faster and easier. Urban areas have more postal codes than rural areas. This helps in planning effectively to plant churches in each area.

To really come to grips with the implications of IMA's PIN-code theory one has to understand the 'Joshua Project II Data Background'. The report of the Joshua Project II is self-explanatory: "Joshua Project II provides a "blue-print" of the unfinished task of world evangelisation. It came out of the process of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement focusing on a list of approximately 2000 people groups that most need a church planting movement. The peoples listed here are over 10,000 in population and less than two percent Evangelical and less than five percent Christian adherent. Data has been compiled from many sources including: Southern Baptist Convention, Operation World, Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse, US Center for World Mission and the AD2000 movement.

"The mission of Joshua Project II is to highlight the peoples of the world who have the least exposure to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Joshua Project II seeks to accomplish this through information sharing and networking... the mission of the Joshua Project is threefold.

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First, to gather, manage and distribute strategic population, progress indicator and ministry activity information to maximise the visibility of the least-reached peoples to the Church. The goal is a comprehensive, accurate, validated, publicly available list of all the ethno-cultural people groups of the world.

Second, to be a least-reached peoples networking resource to the Christian mission community.

Third, to enhance the flow of information between Great Commission organisations by using standardised data coding."

## Laptop evangelists

Latest cutting-edge web technologies are used to keep in touch with various "unreached people groups" through key local interlocutors. They also track on a regular basis status indicators like number of evangelists working within a people group, the number of Christian adherents, church growth and mission agency progress indicators. All this information is then used to "promote networking and partnerships focusing on least-reached peoples in order to promote the flow of strategic ministry activity information between individuals, churches, denominations and mission

agencies.

## Faith-based policies of White House

Surprisingly, Bush's supporters like the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), made laborious protests then to condemn the collaboration between missionaries and the intelligence agency. "Any foreigner living in a foreign culture already comes under a natural suspicion. If this policy is reversed, it would totally erode the ministry of missionaries," said Jerry Rankin, the then president of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board. In effect, this amounted to a plea to the CIA to keep their most well publicized (and hardly noticed) secret guarded!! The very fact that CIA has been courting religious missionaries in India and elsewhere is testimony to the fact that US funded evangelical missions have an unparalleled reach to the remotest corners of the country. Christianity Today in its issue of April 29, 1996, carried the following comment by the NAE President Don Argue: "For intelligence agencies to seek any relationship whatsoever with our religious workers must be unequivocally prohibited."

## Crusade in India

India is key to the US religious agenda. US government has given grants to Christian charities that are involved in conversion activities in India. On October 3, 2002, the US department of health and human services announced that television evangelist, Pat Robertson's charity, Operation Blessing, would be given demonstration grants through the so-called Compassion Capital Fund. Robertson's organisation and the other "intermediaries" were free to distribute this federal grant (essentially American tax payers' money) to religious groups and community groups of their choice to provide social services. In other words, there was no restriction on how the federal grants were to be used. In an interview to Newsweek three years ago Robertson said, "I've got 10 good years left," and "my heart is on missions, and on getting people into the kingdom of God. That's the main thrust of my life." In the same interview, Robertson recalled fondly a recent crusade in India: "I spoke to a crowd of 500,000 people!" he said. "Eighty-two acres of people! The response was overwhelming."

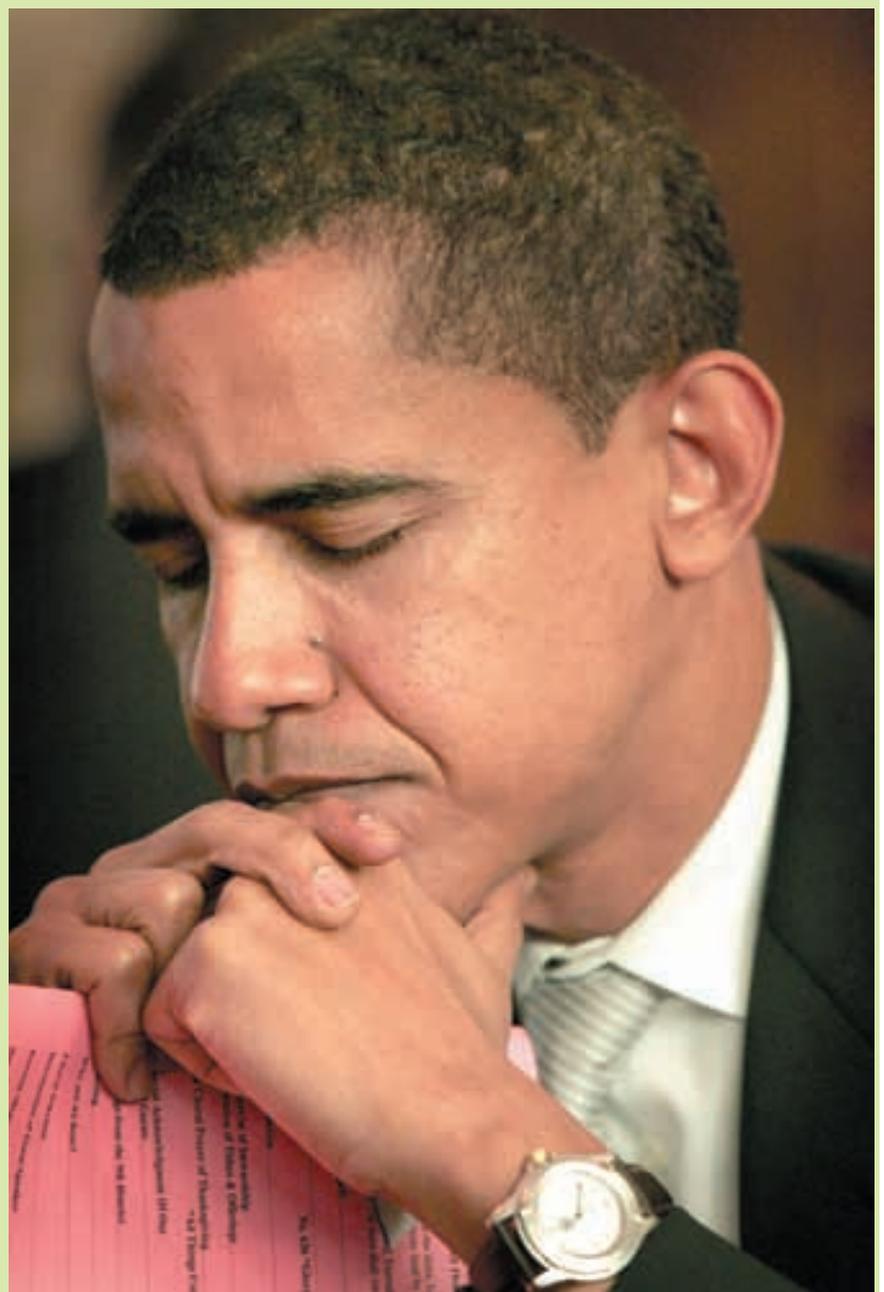
Robertson's Operation Blessing is very active in India through CBN India headquartered at Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad.

Incidentally, Robertson deftly defrauded the Indian government because Indian laws do not permit issuance of visas to Christian missionaries. In response to an unstimulated question (NO. 969) in the Lok Sabha on February 27, 2001 the minister of state for home, Vidyasagar Rao, responded that "no new missionaries are allowed after 1984. However, short term visas are being issued to the foreigners who are coming only in administrative capacity, to review working of their organisations etc." Certainly, Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition in the US and head of the multi-million Christian Broadcasting Network, might have had "administrative" reasons to travel to India. But he, surely, did not have either the permission or the right to evangelise.

The Indian government has been caught napping. Rev Bush, head of a decade-long global evangelisation programme, visited India in January 2003. He was a guest of the Evangelical Fellowship of India and presumably traveled to India on a tourist visa. In the early years of 2000, many evangelists entered India fraudulently. Amongst them were extremist Christians like Don Noble, president of Maranatha Volunteers International affiliated to a fundamentalist Christian group, the Seventh Day Adventists and Pastor Michael Ryan, director of Global Mission, the Seventh Day Adventist church's international outreach department which co-ordinates India evangelistic initiative. The US state department website makes no bones about the fact that American evangelists enter India by employing fraudulent means.

### Top Secret

What underlies all this is that the Bush administration's conservative evangelical worldview has proliferated to countries like India. Here the Church and Christian NGOs have been involved for a long time in the provision of voluntary social service. But churches and Christian NGOs in India and the trans-national (read American) faith-based NGOs who have a large presence in India have gleefully responded to the message emanating from the White House. Bush's support for religious conversion has happened on the persuasive power of the dollar. It is safe to say that almost all evangelical organisations in India and



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non-Catholic churches and the Christian NGOs get their funding from their American patrons or from USAID. These groups, like CARE or World Vision tend to Christian social workers and consciously infuse Christian religiosity as part of the help they provide to socially and economically marginalised communities.

### Holistic development tactics

World Vision, the world's largest Christian church mission agency, has traditionally been closely linked with successive American governments. The former US Ambassador for International

Religious Freedoms, Dr Robert Seiple, was WV chief for 11 years till 1998 when he was picked by former president, Bill Clinton, to head the office of International Religious Freedoms. Around the period when Seiple was the president of WV, its vice-president from 1993 to 1998 was Andrew S. Natsios. He is now the administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). For more than 40 years, USAID has been the leading government agency providing economic and humanitarian assistance to developing countries.

WV's focus is children and community development. It is involved in more than 162 projects in 25 states. It projects its community development programmes as "holistic development". This is implemented through Area Development Programmes (ADP). Each ADP works in an area that is contiguous geographically, economically or ethnically. These programmes provide access to clean drinking water, healthcare, education and setting up of income generating projects. But infused with such development works is the spiritual component-Bible classes.

In India, WV projects itself as a "Christian relief and development agency with more than 40 years experience in working with the poorest of the poor in India without respect to race, region, religion, gender or caste." However, Tehelka has in its possession US-based WV Inc.'s financial statement filed before the Internal Revenue Service, wherein, it is classified as a Church ministry. In any case, its mission statement is self-explanatory: "World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in working with the poor and oppressed, to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the Good News of the Kingdom of God."

Though, WV, has consultative status with UNESCO and partnerships with UN agencies like UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR and ILO, the fact is that its financial records reveal that it has funded evangelical activities all over the world, including India. WV uses its international clout and its close links with the US government through USAID to network with governments and corporate entities in the developing world.

WV has an ongoing channel of interaction with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII); its 2003 financial report it states that "the Rural Development Department of the Government of Assam recognised WV India as a leading development agency in the state and has recommended that WV be the choice for receiving bilateral funds. The government has also sought WV's assistance in creating a proposal for US\$ 80 million for development work in the state."

The income and expenditure account for the year ended September 30, 2002 shows that its total income was Rs 95.5 crores, which included foreign contribution of Rs 87.8 crores. For an organisation that claims to be only involved in development and relief work, it is quite stealthy about its positioning and exact nature of activities. When approached by Tehelka as part of its undercover operation for an interview, WV India's national director, Dr Jayakumar Christian, after having agreed to the interview backed out because he wanted copies of the fic-

titious Christian magazine that Tehelka claimed to be representing.

However, what goes unnoticed by the governments and the corporate world is WV India's evangelical missions as part of its development agenda. Proselytisation is an integral part of its provision of development services under its much-touted ADP programmes. Though none of the literature published by WV India even mentions its evangelisation missions, foreign publications of WV India proudly proclaim its "spiritual" component.

## Targeting the tribals

In Mayurbhanj, again in Orissa, WV regularly organises spiritual development programmes as part of its ADP package. The WV report says: "Opposition to Christian workers and organisations flares up occasionally in this area, generally from those with vested interests in tribal people remaining illiterate and powerless. WV supports local churches by organising leadership courses for pastors and church leaders."

WV India is active in Bhil tribal areas and openly admits its evangelical intentions: "The Bhil people worship ancestral spirits but also celebrate all the Hindu festivals. Their superstitions about evil spirits make them suspicious of change, which hinders community development. ADP staff live among the Bhil people they work with, gaining the villagers' trust and showing their Christian love for the people by their actions and commitment."

The Southern Baptists fiercely believe in conversion. Not many would know that people like Land oversee the US International Religious Freedoms report. The 2003 report is a no-nonsense document that conveys the official US policy supporting evangelisation. It openly admits that "US officials have continued to engage state officials on the implementation and reversal of anti-conversion laws." Here's an excerpt from the report:

## Post-9/11 strategy

Under the Bush Presidency and now with Obama Presidency, the post-9/11 period has been marked by two key initiatives: support to "frontline countries" that are helping US in its "war on terror" and appear committed to development and humanitarian issues like HIV/AIDS, poverty, and economic inequality. What is striking, however, is that the Bush administration, in its efforts to project US as a "soft power" as opposed to a marauding military superpower, has relied and been influenced disproportionately by faith-based groups and institutions.

And given the fact that US administration officials regularly hold consultations with Church groups and leaders, it is not surprising that American evangelical missions have found a deep reservoir of support with the US government for their activities in India and elsewhere.

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Courtesy: Tehelka.com

# Politics, religion and faith

An investigation by  
Opinion Express Team

**H**induism and India have been under attack for thousands of years. First it was Islam, then came Christianity, that have created havoc to the fabric of Hindu society. Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi both opposed it. Swami Vivekananda has given the most heart-rending accounts of the calumnies that Christian missionaries spread about Hinduism and about India. Most common Evangelistic words are "Hindus need to be saved from spiritual darkness," church plantings, rich harvest of converts, idol worshippers and un reached people." They speak openly of "spiritual conflict." Their text often have words like "God's armor," "battle," "weapons," etc. Sir John Woodroffe had predicted in his book, *Is India Civilized* that "In every way, the coming assault on Hindu civilization will be the greatest which it has ever had to endure in the whole course of its long history."

The missionary zeal has been to convert Hindus by giving the most lurid accounts in the West to raise money for financing their activities. It costs \$145 billion dollars a year to operate global Christianity, records a book on evangelization - *Arun Shourie Missionaries in India*. According to Professor Gauri Vishwanathan in her book *Outside the Fold* "religious conversion is probably one of the most unsettling political events in the life of any society."

Mahatma Gandhi called Christian missionaries, "Vendors of Goods". He said "In Hindu households, the advent of a missionary has meant the disruption of the family coming in the wake of change of dress, manners, language, food and drink". "If I had power and could legislate, I should certainly stop all proselytizing".

"I resent the overtures made to Harijans." "Stop all conversion, it is the deadliest poison that ever sapped the fountain of truth." Poverty doesn't justify conversion. He also considered missionaries as "a clear libel on Indian humanity."

Among the major religions, Christianity and Islam actively seek converts. The missionaries believe that only people who accept Jesus as Savior will be saved and go to heaven. The doctrine of racial superiority that the Europeans used to justify their colonial rule is gone, but the attitude of Christian religious superiority continues. Such religious exclusivism is backward and prejudicial, just like racism.

Most people targeted for conversion are poor, illiterate and uneducated Hindus and Tribals. Christian missionaries dare not try to convert the poor and destitute Muslims for the fear of violent confrontation. The Christian missionaries have effectively used the 3Ms - Media, Money and Manipulation.

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Swami Vivekananda speaking about what damage Christian missionaries have done to India, he says in a lecture reported in the Detroit Free Press said, "They come to my country and abuse my forefathers, my religion, and everything; they walk near a temple and say 'you idolators, you will go to hell', but they dare not do this to the Mohammedans of India, for the sword will be out but the Hindu is too mild."

"Evangelization in India appears to be apart Of uniform world policy to revive Christendom for re-establishing western supremacy and is not prompted by spiritual motives. The objective is apparently to create Christian majority pockets with a view to disrupt the solidarity of the non-Christian societies, and the mass conversion of a considerable section of Adivasis with this ulterior motive is fraught with danger to the security of the State."

Indologist Koenraad Elst (1959 -) Dutch historian, born in Leuven, Belgium, has pointed out that "Hindu Society has been suffering a sustained attack from Islam since the 7th century, from Christianity since the 15th century, and this century also from Marxism. The avowed objective of each of these three world-conquering movements, with their massive resources, is the replacement of Hinduism by their own ideology, or in effect: the destruction of Hinduism."

### Why this war on Hinduism?

These two (Christianity and Islam) hostile ideologies, flawed because they are not based on human experience but on spurious and fantastic literature, are based on a priori illusion that human beings are genetically flawed and can be redeemed only by symbolic conversion and the acceptance of their bookish deity. For instance, if the Christian and Islamic clergy do not propagate and force their sterile ideologies down the throats of unsuspecting or helpless people through dubious means, or do not force them to stay on with censure and punishment, their religions would be wiped out in decades. Europe is a primary example.

While passing through the anit conversion bill in Rajasthan Assembly, BJP leader Vasundhara Raje said to be a secular country (India), though it is not clear how it is. In the name of secularism, thousands and lakhs of Hindu brethren and children are converted to Christianity by hook or crook. This has been going on especially at a greater tempo after India attaining Independence , and in the



**Swami Vivekananda on Christian Missionaries:**  
**"They come to my country and abuse my forefathers, my religion, and everything; they walk near a temple and say 'you idolators, you will go to hell', but they dare not do this to the Mohammedans of India, for the sword will be out but the Hindu is too mild."**

name of Secularism while if one humbly calls himself, when asked, as just a Hindu, he is dubbed communal and anti-secular, and even obscurantist. As if this is not enough in our secular country if I call myself a Hindu in my own house the aggressive Christians have the audacity to call me a Satan's slave in my own house. Today the situation is such that we cannot discuss our Santan Dharma in our house. The churches habitually employ fraudulent means in their behavior in India and elsewhere in the whole of Purvanchal organizing protest day against 'The freedom of Religion Bill.' The whole political adventurism had the leading politico-religious elements among the ruling circle (who are well known for their anti Indian stance and were earlier underground fighting with the army for many years).

## View of a Christian missionary Vishal Mangalwadi on India's quest for freedom

"Many starry-eyed Indians, who are ignorant of Indian history, think that India was free before the British colonized it. The fact is that Hindu India, never, I repeat never, knew what freedom was, until the Evangelical movement began to set us free...India's freedom is a fruit of the Christian Gospel, not a result of Mahatma Gandhi's work."

There is no doubt that, in the fight to deliver Christianity to the heathen, both Protestants and Catholics sent their best brains to India, rather than Africa or China. This implied a recognition of the inherent spirituality of Hinduism, which demanded more than average sophistry and persuasion to win converts. There was a belief that India had a high degree of ancient civilization which by the late eighteenth century, as the Moghul Empire was fading, had allowed decadence to seep in, offering Christianity the chance to fill the gap. Annie Besant, proponent of the philosophy of Theosophy, gave many a lecture in which she aired her views that India was a victim of the mischief wrought by Christian missionaries.

Take, for instance, the forced conversions in the north-east. Christian missionaries, with active monetary and political support from the West, have been converting poor and innocent tribals in the north-east of India without any hindrance for the past 300 years. As a result, Nagaland is today 90 per cent Christian, Mizoram 86 per cent and Meghalaya 64.6 per cent.

This process is going on full speed at this very moment: There are now 1,20,000 Christians in Tripura, a 90 per cent increase since 1991. The figures are even more striking in Arunachal Pradesh, where there were only 1,710 Christians in 1961, but 1,15,000 today, as well as 700 churches. All this is often done by means of 'economic conversions'. "Miracle boxes" are put in local churches: The gullible villager writes out a request - a loan, a pucca house, fees for the son's schooling. A few weeks later, the miracle happens. And the whole family converts, making others in the village follow suit.

Is this ethical? No country in the world would allow this. France, for instance, has a minister in charge of keeping a tab on "sects". And sects means anything which does not belong to the great Christian family. Recently, two French schoolteachers were imprisoned by the police for a few days because they were Brahmakumaris and had used some Brahmakumari precepts in their teaching.

What conversions do to the psyche of India is catastrophic. They threaten a whole way of life, erasing centuries of tradition, customs, wisdom, teaching people to despise their own religion and look westwards to a culture which is alien to them. Look how the biggest drug problems in India are found in the north-east, or how Third World countries, which have been totally Christianised, are drifting away without nationalism and self-pride. "I was told after conversion that I should not wear a bindi on my forehead, as it is a heathen custom", says Shanta (not her real name) of Agartala, whose family converted recently to Christianity. Her friend Sushma, who has come back to her original religion, says that one of the Indian missionaries from Kerala told her "that I would go to hell if I ever entered a temple again. But I don't understand, she continues, when I was a Hindu, I found nothing wrong in going to a church, or to a mosque for that matter".

### Hindusim is weak to sustain the onslaught

The PRESENT Caste system is a dark blot on Hinduism. It goes against the principles and lofty philosophy of Hinduism which con-

siders each soul as potentially divine and eternal. Hindu philosophy insists on attitude of tolerance. Universal brotherhood is the chief message of Hindu religious tradition. The goal is to manifest this divinity within. Caste system is inhuman in its CURRENT form and its exploitative aspects must be abolished. Current caste system is something which no Hindu should be proud of. The sooner we get rid of it the better. The fault lies with the negligence of Hindus worldwide. We have failed to eradicate the caste system which has been wrongfully used against Hinduism by missionaries.

For decades Christian missionaries have used malicious propaganda against the caste system in India and abroad. They claim that the oppressive caste system is keeping Hindus in spiritual darkness and mired in poverty. Missionaries and Western media have used caste to undermine and demonize Hinduism, its culture and its institutions to its advantage. The main objective is to harvest as many converts as they can. The idea is to paint Christianity as the ideal Egalitarian and compassionate religion, in order to lure Tribals, Dalits and other oppressed Hindus in India. The Roman Catholic Church was aware that caste system and Hinduism were so bound together that even when a Hindu ceased to be a Hindu he mentioned his caste. So the Church proceeded with the conversion retaining the caste system, as a market concession! In the Catholic Church today the name 'Dalit Christians' is used to denote Christians of scheduled caste origin. The problem of the Dalit Christians has come to focus today. The Dalit Christians are in fact discriminated against by the government and the churches.

Churches in India and world-wide claim that they do not discriminate on caste lines and they criticize Hindu society for caste discrimination day in and day out. But the fact remains that churches practice discrimination based on caste. According to a reports 70 per cent of the Tamil Catholics are Dalits. It is reported that out of 14 Bishops in Tamil Nadu only one is a Dalit. The percentage of Tamil priests is only four per cent. In addition, the existence of separate churches for Dalits in Kerala makes a mockery of these claims. Apart from cutting off converted people from their roots and heritage, (like the Blacks in the U.S. who worship in separate churches) the Church has achieved little.

### Alienation of Indian Christians and Pride in Education

Christianity has often alienated Indian Christians from the mainstream in India. They are afraid for instance to participate in anything that has a Hindu connotation, or they are made to change their names. And since they get alienated, a certain fear psychosis sets in. And it is true that Christianity also introduced the feeling of guiltiness, of being a sinner, which is absent from Hinduism. "I would even say," adds Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, "that it sometimes gave Christians an unfortunate sense of superiority over Hindus."

Christians are also proud that they brought education to India, "but," counters Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, "it is not true: there were for instance 125,000 medical institutions in Madras before the British came. Indians never lacked education, the Christians only brought British education to India, which in fact caused more damage to India by westernizing many of us."

— Diwakar Shetty

diwakar\_shetty@hotmail.com

1 This chapter is in no way anti-Christian but rather anti-conversion. It provides information about the insidious campaign that is taking place to reduce and wipeout Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and other Vedic traditions that are followed by large sections of humanity in India and around the world.

# China challenge will test India's strength soon

Shekhar Gupta

China may have recently returned to our headlines - at least on some news TV channels - and we can argue about whether the threat on the border is real or exaggerated. But, for a moment, think the unthinkable. Could it be, could it just be, that we are a nation deeply scared of China? Not merely Sinophobic in the sense that many other major nations like the US, Japan and Korea may be, but genuinely scared. Since the short, sharp and disastrous war of 1962, could it just be that we have brainwashed two or three generations of Indians to live in dread of the dragon? We glare at Pakistan all the time, we look the US in the eye all the time now. But China? Just mention the word and we start talking trade, culture, shared values, centuries-old contacts and so on. Have we, over the decades, internalised, and institutionalised, a psychology of pretending a Chinese challenge, economically, politically and militarily (I have chosen that order deliberately) does not exist? And believing that, if it does, we can do nothing about it?

We flatter ourselves often enough comparing ourselves with China, we feel flattered when, rather occasionally, we are mentioned in the same breath as China. We were obviously so thrilled when some in the global financial community started saying, particularly when they came visiting India, that China "and India" were now key to a global recovery. But let's be honest. Do facts on the ground justify that ranking?

Consider just one fact. Since the governments around the world initiated stimulus packages exactly a year ago, the Chinese banking system has pumped an additional Rs 70 lakh crore of credit in their economy. Compare this with the total credit currently outstanding in our entire economy: just about Rs 27 lakh crore. So the Chinese, in less than a year, have shored up their economy and manufacturing by releasing additional credit that is two-and-a-half-times all credit of all times in India. And we, at the same time, are so self-congratulatory, we want to teach financial regulation to the world, and our central bank is fighting so fiercely to guard its bureaucratic turf it might be an interesting idea to send some Mint Street troopers to sort out the Chinese on the Ladakh border.

The idea here is neither to justify our fear of China, nor to exacerbate it. I am only making a case for a reality check. Because it is only when we face the truth that we can hope to find answers. For nearly half a century we have dealt with China with a sense of escapism, barring, probably, two occasions. One, when Rajiv Gandhi made a bold move towards reconciliation, and second when Vajpayee gave it a fresh impetus. By and large, oth-

erwise, we have been hiding behind an out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach. How escapist we have been shows in the minimal, if any, protest on our part over China's arms supplies to Pakistan, while we go ballistic if the US even offers to upgrade a few squadrons of old PAF F-16s. We complain only in whispers when the Pakistanis modify Chinese missiles and nuclear weapon designs, but are so outraged when they fiddle with American Harpoons. The argument here is not whether this is the right approach or not. Maybe, rather than under-reacting to China, ours is a case of over-reacting to Pakistan and America. But the general approach is, say or do nothing to provoke the Chinese. Yet China never leaves our mind as our most serious security threat.

If that was not the case, why would we be so paranoid about growing Chinese involvement in what, normally, should have been entirely virtuous business, building our roads, power plants, telecom? We are now worried that too many of our new power producers are buying equipment from China. What do you expect them to do when your domestic manufacturers cannot fulfil even a fraction of the demand? We have wasted two decades of reform protecting one PSU Navratna and rapacious but rent-seeking government utilities rather than help the private sector build real turbine-making capacity. So how do you react? By delaying visas for Chinese workmen and engineers. Then how do the Chinese respond? By painting a few rocks red along the border in Ladakh. And we go into panic again: do or say nothing to provoke them. And let's hope they are not watching the two-and-a-half of our utterly illiterate TV channels that, having failed to

stir up a war with Pakistan after 26/11, are checking out the Chinese now.

You don't have to over-react. But the time has come for us to look inwards for the solution to our half-century fear of the Chinese. We use the "Chinese threat" to justify our nukes. But have we shown any of the focus or determination required to build our economy, political system and military might (again, deliberately in that order) to be at least China's near-equal? The disparity in our economic strength is well known. Politically, we show waffling and confusion where the Chinese display focus and firmness. If you were a Chinese analyst in Beijing, you would have read with so much delight the foreign policy section in the CMP which became the agenda of UPA-I. It dismissed the US and Russia in half a sentence each while it held forth on China in language that would do no sovereign foreign policy any credit. Just that reference, obviously put in to please the Left, had the word "suppliant" written all over it.

And militarily? We have not been able to buy a new artillery gun in 22 years. The bulk of our anti-aircraft artillery is still the six-decade-old L-70. Our navy's missiles are blocked by just a



**You don't have to over-react. But the time has come for us to look inwards for the solution to our half-century fear of the Chinese.**

whiff of scandal which looks more and more like no more than arms bazaar skulduggery and cynical politics. Our air force has waited 10 years to even hold proper trials of a new fighter. We are so politically muddled; and we think we can continue to be like that because the only military threat we instinctively think of is Pakistan. Meanwhile, the Chinese are engaged in the greatest military modernisation in the history of mankind.

We have to head neither for the bunker in fright, nor to the battlefield. We have to start a process now of ridding ourselves of this irrational and uncalled-for fear of China. China may be almost a superpower now, but it is not an irrational power. It has as big a stake in stability as we do. Its economy, finance, exports are all much more globalised than ours, so do not expect it to rock the boat just because it felt like picking up a fight in the neighbourhood one day. It might enjoy, however, reminding you occasionally of how far

We have to start a process now of ridding ourselves of this irrational and uncalled-for fear of China.

it has left you behind. But it is not about to start pushing things on the borders, nibbling territory and risking skirmishes as some of the crude and militaristic scare-mongering in some of our media suggests. We have to act like grown-ups, not think "border" or "threat" the moment somebody mentions China. We cannot exorcise the demon unless we come to terms with the defeat of 1962. One reason we have brought up two-and-a-half generations of Indians on the fear of China is that we have avoided a fair appraisal and understanding of 1962. The greater the inclination on the part of a nation, a family or even an individual to hide from an unhappy truth, rather than look it in the eye, the greater the fear that it will return. We, the people of India, need an honest process of truth and reconciliation with 1962 - and there is no better way of starting that than making the report of the Henderson Brooks commission, which probed that debacle, public. It's only when you face up to the truth that you can learn to deal with it, particularly when the fears that haunt you lurk in your mind rather than on your borders.

*Writer is a senior journalist and CEO of India Express Group)*

# China: Trouble within emerging super power



The glittering function is over, and the Olympic Games declared closed. The recent economic recession have impacted China too but it has emerged stronger though internal geo political unrest is brewing there. As the floodlights on the Olympic Stadium are switched off, an interesting question remains...Does Claude Api have an answer?

## What is the future of China?

The leadership in Beijing would certainly have gone through an enriching experience. They would have learned the hard way that many across the world do not appreciate their lack of value for human rights and freedom or the way they treat 'their nationalities', in particular the Tibetans. Once the exacerbated nationalist wave within China dies down, the leadership in their paradisiacal enclave of Zhongnanhai will have to draw up a balance sheet and ponder on the future.

## What will happen to freedom?

Radio Free Asia recently reported that thousands of taxicabs in Beijing have been fitted with video cameras and satellite technology that transmit a live audio feed of conversations in the cab. They are later monitored by computers capable of analysing dozens of languages and even recognising faces. An employee at a major Beijing cab company told RFA: "It was about two or three months ago. All the taxis in our company had this fitted." The measure is not restricted to Beijing, it has been implemented in other main Chinese cities as well as restive provinces such as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. In some places, the cameras automatically take a picture of every taxi occupant. Of course according to the People's Daily, it is to "help authorities keep watch for illegal activity". The question is: will these devices be dismantled on August 25? I can bet not. It means that there will be an increased intrusion into the private lives of the Chinese citizens.

## What will happen to the Internet access?

One of the most serious controversies before the Games was the access to the Internet. Connection for the Main Press Centre during the Games was 'limited' as per the official jargon.

A month before the last years Olympic Games, Jacques Rogge, the President of the IOC had told Agence France-Presse: "For the first time, foreign media will be able to report freely and publish their work freely in China. There will be no censorship on the Internet." Beijing set up a "Great Firewall of China" to block users from reaching sites with contents objectionable to the Communist Party leadership. For Beijing, being angry pays. As usually if a country wants to censor the Internet, specific Web sites or Web addresses are blocked. But as usual, China is a precursor in this field. It uses sophisticated devices to filter the Web content and specific keywords. According to OpenNet Initiative, a partnership between different Western universities, a giant intranet setup managed by the Chinese authorities called the Golden Shield is the most performing tool for the purpose: "Compared to similar efforts in other states, China's filtering regime is pervasive, sophisticated, and effective. It comprises multiple levels of legal regulation and technical control. It involves numerous state agencies and thousands of public and private personnel. It censors content transmitted through multiple methods, including Web pages, Web logs, on-line discussion forums, university bulletin board systems, and e-mail messages." Further, some 30,000 Internet policemen are working around the clock to keep the filters up to date and check the emails of persons suspected of receiving "propaganda harmful to national security and social stability of the People's Republic".

## What will happen to the Tibetans?

In a recent exclusive interview Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, the Tibetan Prime Minister-in-exile warned: "After the Olympic Games are over, the Chinese authorities will probably come down very heavily on the Tibetans. They will also bring more [armed] forces inside Tibet and increase the transfer of [Han] population. The post Olympics is therefore more dangerous than the present moment." Last month, Irene Khan, the head of Amnesty International, said that the world will "need to maintain pressure on China for human rights reform after the Beijing Olympics". "Abuses, including the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, use of the death penalty, censorship, restrictions on assembly and repression of minorities are still commonplace in China," says the latest Amnesty report. As the world has witnessed in March and April, even peaceful demonstrations have been ruthlessly suppressed. It is feared by many that the Tibetans will have to pay for their 'arrogance' and daring actions once the Olympics are over.

Zhang Qingli, the Party Chief in Tibet, in a secret communication to the Communist cadres advised the cadres for the post-Olympics period: "We must learn lessons from this issue [March-April demonstrations] and organise our masses to build up an impregnable fortress against the tide of encirclement to beat our enemy... So you, the leaders of work units, must guard your gates and manage your people well. Let leaders of street committees be vigilant and keep watch on all outsiders." "Propaganda and education are our party's greatest advantages. These are the most useful weapons with which to defend ourselves against the Dalai Lama group," he concluded. Ominous words from the person who called the Dalai Lama a 'wolf in monks' cloth". Given the cowardice and political expediency followed by most world leaders, the future of the Tibetans is sombre.

## What will happen to the environment?

One good thing about the Olympics is that it brought an im-

provement in the air quality, particularly in Beijing. The Chinese authorities had promised that the Games would unfold under a blue sky; with no haze shrouding the city. The pollution level would be safe for athletes. Beijing is said to have invested \$17.6 billion to clean the air of the capital. Factories miles away from the Forbidden City were closed down and over half the city's 3.3 million cars were removed from the roads. Even though the air pollution levels remained higher than the World Health Organisation standards, it was an immense progress. But will it continue? Certainly not! The factories will be re-opened; the cars will be on the road again.

Let us not forget that thanks to the phenomenal economic growth, China will surpass the US as the world's No 1 emitter of greenhouse gases in 2008. It is the largest depleter of the ozone layer. Sixteen of the world's 20 most polluted cities are Chinese, 70 per cent of the country's lakes and rivers are polluted, and potable drinking water is scarce. What will happen after the Games is anybody's guess.

## What will happen to the economy?

In this domain, any prediction is difficult. However, China will be facing serious problems with the global economic meltdown affecting the Chinese manufacturing industry the most, as the consumers in North America and Europe have drastically reduced purchasing goods hence the exports from China is reduced to almost half in just last six months, factories are shutting down at rapid rate and workers lay off is creating social problems. "China will find that controlling the Internet is easier than taming global meltdown pressures. Officials in Beijing have compliant executives at Google and Yahoo helping them censor cyberspace. Even after employing all of the conventional tools of economic policy, tackling economic challenge is easier said than done."

Many other factors such as the fact that China has an aging demography or that the public sector enterprises are weak, does not encourage an optimistic view on the future.

John Pomfret, a former Washington Post Bureau Chief in Beijing, rightly pointed out: "But on a per capita basis, the country isn't a dragon; it's a medium-size lizard, sitting in 109th place on the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook Database, squarely between Swaziland and Morocco. China's economy is large, but its average living standard is low." And the difference in income between the rich and poor keeps increasing.

How will the leadership tackle these issues? Will they try to bully their way through or will they listen to the stakeholders, whether inside China or outside?

It is a billion yuan question. During his first foreign jaunt in Qatar last month, an interesting remark by Xi Jinping, the Chinese Vice-President and Hu's heir apparent is worth mentioning. He declared: "It's like a huge cage where all kinds of birds coexist. If you try to drive away those noisy ones, you would lose that wonderful variety and colour. The key is to mind our own business well."

<sup>1</sup> Born in Angoulême, France, Claude Arpi's real quest began 36 years ago with a journey to the Himalayas. Since then he has been an enthusiastic student of the history of Tibet, China and the sub-continent. He is the author of numerous English and French books including. His book, 'Tibet: the lost Frontier' (Lancers Publishers) was released recently.



# CUT YOUR FLAB IN STYLE

**T**he only way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise so that you burn more calories than you consume. But this simple arithmetic is very difficult to put into practice. Every day, situations crop up that make it impossible for you to find time for the gym or have a healthy tuna salad for lunch. The challenge lies in finding the perfect diet-activity balance that works for you.

There are hundreds of fad diets and weight-loss programmes that promise quick and easy weight loss, but in most cases, the weight lost comes back. "The basic foundation of every successful weight-loss programme still remains a healthy diet combined with exercise. You have to change your lifestyle to lose weight and then keep it off," says nutritionist Ishi Khosla.

Some sustainable ways to lose weight and keep it off is eating a wide variety of nutritionally dense foods and following the five basic principles of healthy eating.

## 1. Know when to stop eating

Inactive men need about 1,800 calories and women up to 1,600 calories a day. Eating 300 to 400 fewer calories a day will help you shed 2 kg in a month, but to ensure you don't have deficiencies, opt for nutritious foods that are low in calories, such as vegetables and whole-grains and legumes.

## 2. Get moving now

There is no getting away from it. Do at least 45 minutes of exercise at least five times a week. "It's a myth that exercise makes you hungry and you end up eating more and putting on weight. In fact, exercise pushes up the basal metabolic rate and makes you burn up more calories through the day, even when you are not exercising," says Dr Parmeet Kaur, chief of dietetics, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

## 3. Don't fall for fad diets

Fad diets don't work for long as they usually exclude certain types of foods, or at times, entire food groups. "Fad diets are not balanced and deprive people of important nutrients, creating a nutritional gap. They are also difficult to follow and cause people to give up and gain weight again," says Khosla.

## 4. Cut back on fat and sugar

The best way to keep weight off is to make small dietary changes, such as avoiding - but not totally giving up - fried foods and desserts, that often contain



### SWEET POISON?: SUGAR ADDS TO FLAB

more calories than the rest of the meal without the nutrition. Replace desserts with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and legumes; eat small, single servings of foods high in fat or calories; choose low-fat or double-toned milk products and reduced fat cheeses; ration edible oils and have a mix of them; choose roasting or steam foods as a cooking option; avoid sugary drinks, including sweetened fruit juices; and avoid alcohol. "People end up drinking a lot of calories, so it is important to keep track of what you are drinking too," says Khosla.

Most packaged food labels list the amount of nutrients and calories the food gives you, so do read up. "But don't follow labels blindly, as sugar-free may have fructose, which is worse with insulin resistance than glucose," says Khosla.

#### 5. Avoid diet pills

Diet pills available over the counter do not make a big difference to how much you lose or how long you can keep the weight off. However safe they may claim to be, never have them without prescription. "Diet pills are needed only for the morbidly obese or those who have hormonal imbalances and should never be had without prescription as they can cause side effects, such as high blood pressure, even in healthy people," warns Khosla.

Also, be careful about taking cough or cold medicines with over-the-counter diet pills as these medicines may contain the same molecule as the one used in diet pills, or a similar drug with the same effects. "If you take more than one medication together, it may interact and cause problems, so don't look for short-cuts to lose weight," says Kaur.

Most advertisements that promise quick-fix weight loss solutions using machines and gizmos don't work.

Finasterid can be obtained through a prescription and it is in the form of a tablet taken daily.

"If the treatment is stopped, the hair loss as a rule will start again," said Garcia Bartels. The price of the drug - about 150 euros (\$220) for a three-month supply - is high. Somewhat more economical is Minoxidil, which is a lotion that must be applied to the scalp twice a day. Originally developed as a blood pressure medication, Minoxidil was found to have the side effect of hair growth.

Minoxidil's success rate is however lower: while hair loss is stopped in 80 percent of the people who use finasterid, the rate is 70 percent among people who apply Minoxidil. Additionally, 70 to 80 percent of finasterid users experience hair re-growth. This is true for 50 to 60 percent of Minoxidil users.

Apart from these medicines and the toupee, there is another way of achieving a full head of hair again - hair transplantation. This involves removing pieces of skin with hair follicles from another part of the body, typically the back of the neck, and transplanting them at the bald spots.

"Such measures come into play only if the hair loss has ended," said Garcia Bartels. Otherwise, the remaining original hair will continue to fall out around the newly transplanted hair.

Hair transplantation is a very costly solution of baldness. The cost of refilling in a small spot with hair can run over 1,000 euros.

"The results that I have seen thus far are not especially satisfying," said Hofmann. Apparently, it is better when a man accepts his baldness.

"The problems that men have with hair loss decline anyway as they get older," said Henss. "Perhaps time does not grant a full head of hair, but it does heal all wounds."

On the Internet there are numerous advertisements offering lotions and similar remedies for hair loss. Hofmann said these are best avoided.

(Sources DPA, inputs from Sujit Kumar Jha )

# A shining Star

**Question :** India and Mauritius are traditional friends, it is said that Mauritius can be used as the gateway to Africa by India to explore entire African market. What efforts are initiated by your government to consolidate this strength?

**Ans:** Our government headed by Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam is working on propagating strategic location strength of Mauritius to the world in general and India in specific. India can utilize Mauritius location to expand business ties with the entire African continent using COMESA, SADC and IOR treaties of which Mauritius is a prominent partner. The world class infrastructure and high living standards in Mauritius offers tremendous operating base for Indian Multi National companies to set up regional head quarters in Mauritius for expanding in Africa and therefore benefiting from important tax

concessions. I make an appeal to the Indian companies not to consider Mauritius as a friend only but a partner to take advantage of the AGOA convention which guarantees access to USA markets for over 4400 products which can be manufactured in Mauritius using foreign raw materials i.e it can be sourced from any producing countries and where it is cheapest. Make use of the triangular advantages of Asia, Mauritius and Africa.

I am confident there is scope to set up an important convention centre here which would group all Indian companies through a trade exhibition centre and which would attract buyers from all African countries. The infrastructure is available and it is only a question of proper tie-up.

**Question :** India and Mauritius have focused extensively on trade and commerce in the recent time, effecting cultural ties between the two nations. What efforts should be done by both the countries to preserve this unique similarity?

**Ans:** Yes, lately the international relations are governed by economics rather than cultural affinity but government of Mauritius have taken series of steps to keep the cultural ties alive with India. There are many cultural groups exchange programs organised by both government and private sectors in Mauritius to keep the local population aware of the cultural roots with India.

**Question :** Ruling labour Party in

Mauritius and Congress Party in India have established any interactive mechanism to consolidate democratic process in both countries? As all powerful General Secretary of Labour Party, what approach do you suggest to consolidate this aspect of intra party governance in democratic set up?

**Ans:** Democracy is all about public participation. The more active participation of the masses generally leads to a vibrant democracy. We can achieve full democratic delivery by ensuring that the ruling elites are subjected to constant selection process to avoid forced monopoly of certain person or group. The intra party selection process should be transparent and open, offering equal opportunity to all to ensure true people participation to select right person to lead them.

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the father of the nation had introduced this principle which is followed very closely by our Prime Minister, Dr Navin Ramgoolam and the same in India where Rahul Gandhi is trying to bring real democratic values in Congress Party at the grass root level.

Furthermore, the usage of modern technology helps in achieving great transparency between the leadership and masses. The extensive usage of internet, networking sites, online broadcasting have helped a lot in the improvement of communication.

**Question :** This question is for entire global PIO community, how do you assess the development of democracy in Africa in the recent times, the road map ahead and your vision for the zone.

**Ans:** Some countries in Africa should learn from our experience in imparting democracy. Mauritius can be a role model for the entire Africa zone to emulate in governance. We have a vibrant democracy with a strong government and equally vocal opposition. Judicial and Media freedom have ensured better delivery of democratic norms in our country. There are many countries in Africa which have transformed in a better ruled states but I agree that much more efforts are required to improve the democratic values in the entire African continent. It is having huge natural resources and potential but lack of proper governance have ruined the probable explosive growth of the continent.

We are working with the global community to impart basic lessons of democ-

PIO personality  
of the month



Devanand Virahswamy is a qualified FCCA ( fellow of the association of Chartered and Certified accountants ), Member of the executive committee of the Mauritius Labour Party since 1988, Member of the politburo of the MLP, Elected Member of the National Assembly in the constituency of Piton-Riviere du Rempart 1995 and defeated the previous Prime Minister

Appointed Minister of Energy and Water Resources on 30 December 1995. Was given additional responsibilities as Minister of Local Government and Public Utilities in November 1996 and promoted to Minister of Public Infrastructure and Public Safety in 1998.

He was appointed Secretary General of the Mauritius Labour Party in February 2006. Our Mauritius bureau had a discussion on wide ranging issues.

racy so that the entire governance of the continent can be drastically changed, it is heartening to know that the young leadership of many African countries are visionary and literate, hence the application of technology with the conventional means of governance tools are implemented to achieve macro level improvement. The road ahead may be tough but the leadership of African nations is united to bring about realistic change for the population at large.

*(Interviewed by Rajiv Agnihotri,  
Mauritius Bureau)*

# TWO OF A KIND

A tribute to living legends Tendulkar and Paes by Akshay Iyer



**BRAVEHEART:** LEANDER PAES

There's something about watching Sachin Tendulkar and Leander Paes in action that even makes a non-sporting fan sit up and take note of the magic that these two stalwarts bring to their respective sports.

Tendulkar and Paes are not only great ambassadors for cricket and tennis respectively as well as India, but they have also inspired a whole generation of Indian youngsters to not only take interest in sports, but also challenge themselves to achieve results beyond the possible. Both these legends have been blessed with immense talent, but they have also trained with dedication and have modified their game over the years to suit the changing nature of their respective sports.

Tendulkar and Paes are also similar in that both have carried the expectations of a billion people on their shoulders for over a decade with class and elan. Rarely have these two appeared to be flustered in the middle, and neither have these huge expectations ever caused seeds of self-doubt or any unnecessary pressure on the duo.

Watching them handle these expectations would appear to a few that it is no big deal and that is their job. That, however, is not the case for Tendulkar in a cricket-crazy country like India. In tennis, India has had stalwarts like Ramanathan Krishnan, Ramesh Krishnan and Vijay Amritraj; but it took Paes to really put active spotlight on his sport amongst the media and general public.

Tendulkar has almost all the batting records in cricket to his credit, while Paes has set precedents galore for Indian tennis, both individually as well as in partnership, first with Mahesh Bhupathi, and then with Martina Navratilova and now Lukas Dlouhy. Both these legends are also fierce patriots and take immense pride in representing the country at the international level. In fact, it was once said of Paes, that show him the Indian tri-colour and he will improve his game by at least three-four notches! There can be no bigger compliment for an international sportsman.

In spite of attaining the level of success that they have, Tendulkar and Paes have remained grounded and focussed

on the task at hand, be it representing India, or acting as role models for the youth across the world who look up to them. And, there certainly can't be better role models than Tendulkar and Paes, when it comes to Indian sports. This is not to say that they are the only role models in Indian sports, but the duo are certainly a notch above the rest.

Another interesting fact about both Tendulkar and Paes is that they still seem to be enjoying playing their respective sport after all these years as they did in the initial years. They are still both fierce competitors and hate giving away even a single inch to their opponent. The passion and love that they have for their sport and sports in general, comes shining through even now in these 'young' guns. Tendulkar and Paes, in spite of their numerous achievements, still maintain that they are living the dream and the thrill of playing for the country is still the same as it was when they first made their international debuts.

It would have been an easy decision for Tendulkar and Paes to take a step back, and let the youngsters do all the hard work. Instead, the two legends have taken up roles as mentors and are taking active interest with the emerging talent in their sport, even as they continue to give it their all individually for the country.

Tendulkar and Paes also continuously keep setting new targets for themselves and strive towards achieving those goals relentlessly; no less can ever be expected of these champions! And, they each have set a target for themselves that they want to achieve before they call it quits – Tendulkar wants to win the 2011 World Cup, while Paes aims to better the bronze medal that he won at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that seeing Tendulkar and Paes work themselves so hard even now can put a few youngsters to shame and can serve as a valuable lesson to them in handling success in the future.

They may be senior players in body, but both Tendulkar and Paes are still the 'young' guns of Indian sports at heart, and one can only hope that they continue on in the same vein and keep their recent form going, because even after all these years, the duo still come up with something new, exciting and inspirational every now and then.

There will come the time for these two legends to exit the stage, but until that happens, Messrs. Tendulkar and Paes – keep the magic flowing and inspire emerging talent to follow and emulate your gigantic footsteps.



**MASTER BLASTER:**  
SACHIN TENDULKAR

# From Kiwi's land to motherland

Shruti Agarwal, NZ's Indian origin girl making big in India

It is a sort of home coming to Shruti Agarwal, she was away to New Zealand but her attraction to show biz attracted her to homeland. Shruti owns a degree in Communications and Public Relations from New Zealand. After her return to India, she got into full time modeling. With a height of 5 feet 8 inches, this sexy damsel was crowned Miss Pune. After winning the beauty pageant, Shruti received many offers. Shruti was featured for major print campaigns like Rocky S Couture, Canon Calendar, L'Oreal, Westside, Jashn, and the Tanishq Campaign. But the biggest offer she ever got was from Maxim to pose for the popular Men's magazine, and she accepted the offer with open arms. For Maxim cover, she posed in an itsy-bitsy black and white striped two-piece, looking uber hot! She has appeared in Kingfisher Swimsuit Calendar twice, She has also appeared in a music video with choreographer Ganesh Hegde. The hottie is all set to take her big leap to Bollywood, and is taking her acting training at Anupam Kher's academy. Shruti is having a clear road to succeed in fashion and entertainment industry, her dedication and hard work is facilitating her to achieve objective with ease..

Listening to music, traveling and reading are something she is addicted to specially biographies, and surely loves driving people round the bend.

— Yashwant Amin from Australia/New Zealand Bureau..





IN AUGUST COMPANY: UP CM MAYAWATI POSING IN FRONT OF HER OWN STATUE IN COMPANY OF DALIT ICONS'

# Sheikh Chilli Dreams

Prakhar Misra

Once upon a time there lived a man by the name Sheikh Chilli. The ambitious Sheikh Chilli was a poor man with high dreams, and his daydreaming went on expanding endlessly.

Ultimately, the story goes, he faltered by shaking his bloated head and poor

UP chief minister  
Mayawati  
refuses to take any  
lesson from history

Sheikh Chilli was grounded, with all his dreams shattered.

Sheikh Chilli is the current inspiration and role model for Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati. Like Sheikh Chilli, super-ambitious Maya has started dreaming very big. Mayawati wanted to occupy the coveted throne of the prime minister of India. Mallika-e-Hindustan, if you please, nothing less.

Though the results of recent Lok Sabha elections told her a different story. She has no interest in understanding, nor has she taken any lessons from history.

She has heard the names of some prime ministers, though. Her ready-to-please sycophants have incessantly echoed this lucky Dalit woman's 'right' to become CM or PM. She has, therefore, started aping prime ministers like Manmohan Singh, Indira Gandhi, Inder Kumar Gujral, H D Deve Gowda, Chandra Shekhar, V P Singh etc. Did you mention the patriot Lal Bahadur Shastri? No way, he was far too transparent and honest.

She was convinced that she will hold the balance of power in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Whosoever wants Maya Chilli's support will have to make her the prime minister. Nothing short of her pound of flesh will satisfy this greedy politician.

She also wants to model herself on the lines of the strong-willed Indira Gandhi.

She apes her and acts in the same dictatorial style as Indira Gandhi did in her prime. Maya Chilli little realises the damaging power of the electronic media which was almost absent in Indira Gandhi's era.

Like Indira of the pre-Emergency days, Maya Chilli too has completely cut herself off from the common man. Like Indira Gandhi, Maya Chilli has become inaccessible to, nay isolated from, most bureaucrats except her small coterie of loyalists-cum-sycophants.

During the Emergency (June 1975 to January 1977), it was famously said that bureaucrats crawled when Indira Gandhi asked them to merely bend.

Today, an intermediate-pass makes the all-powerful IAS officers dance to his tunes! Maya Chilli is simply beyond their reach.

Cabinet ministers have to wait for weeks even for a fleeting dekho.

Maya Chilli nurses the illusion that she is a devi (goddess). And like the devi she has to remain invisible/inaccessible to all those who seek a darshan (audience). Her tremendous aspiration to become immortal have attracted public and judicial anger but she cares the least, She has termed the entire statue episode that galloped a mere Rs 2000 crore from the state budget a well planned conspiracy hatched by Manuwadi forces to limit her role in national politics.

Even the media has to pick up routine handouts. When Madam condescends to address the media, they have to bear the humiliation of lapping up Maya Chilli's dull monologues and reading from a prepared text.

No questions from the free and fearless



**GOALS BEYOND REACH? UP**  
CHIEF MINISTER MAYAWATI AT A  
FLAG-HOISTING CEREMONY

media at Maya Chilli's press conference. Even political opponents are treated with red burning carpet welcome, ask Rita Bahuguna Joshi about her experience for raising a voice of protest and she will narrate her horrifying story.

So what if the dreaded Atiq Ahmed is accused of killing her party MLA and loyalist Raju Pal or that Maya Chilli had herself put Atiq Ahmed behind bars to score a political point. 'My MLA Raju Pal was killed during the Samajwadi Party's rule, but accused SP MP Atiq Ahmed was al-

lowed to roam free. It was in my rule he surrendered and is now in jail,' she claimed just the other day. Today, she has brazenly inducted that very same Atiq Ahmed into her inner circle of hatchet men.

Mukhtar Ansari and Afzal Ansari were with Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav. Mukhtar Ansari is accused of killing Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Krishnanand Rai. Mayawati even informed us that 'Mukhtar Ansari remained free till I came to power. He surrendered in court when on my directions the police tightened the noose.' She has since revised her views and hijacked him without batting an eyelid. The Ansari duo and their goons will, henceforth, work for Mayawati.

She has also succeeded in hijacking Arun Shankar Shukla alias Anna from Mulayam Singh's Lucknow camp. He was her party nominee from the Unnao Lok Sabha seat.

What about her erstwhile number one target, Raja Bhaiyya, whose vast property she had ordered to be ransacked and ruthlessly put him behind bars? How naive and gullible can you get! Of course, she has ensnared the dreaded Raja Bhaiyya and wants him to support her for which she has agreed to forgive and forget.

Someone the temerity to ask Mayawati why she was patronising 'criminals'. Without hesitation Mayawati shot back: 'When these very 'gentlemen' could have dinner with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, then why can I not avail of their support to fulfill my dream of becoming the prime minister?'

Imagine the scene: Maya Chilli as prime minister surrounded by Atiq Ahmed, D P Yadav, Guddu Pandit, Shekhar Tiwari, Arun Shankar Shukla 'Anna', Mukhtar Ansari, Akhilesh Singh and Daddan Mishra.

India was practically saved by the dreaded prospect of being governed by the dictatorial Mallika-e-Hindustan Maya Chilli duly supported by her Navratnas! But the state of Uttar Pradesh is extremely unlucky in this regard. People must seek some divine intervention to put the largest state of the country back to normalcy otherwise one sixth of the countries population would be at the mercy of Maya Chilli and her Navratnas for good!! The vital issues of primary education, basic health care, rural infrastructure, industrial development have been deleted from the government agenda for constructing parks, memorials, statues to glorify her self. The democracy is mocked and basic rights to millions of hapless citizens were infringed by whimsical behaviour of ruling elite, God save UP from Maya Raj..



ANNUAL RITUAL: INDIA DAY CELEBRATION IN NEW YORK

## Grow up FIA, for India 's sake

Prakaash M. Swami

**T**hough it is said that Indians move as villagers, it looks as if the US-based Indians move along with their fraternal associations originating in India. We have Tamil Sangams, Gujarati Samajs, Kannada Kootas and Maharashtra Mandals that help them connect with their roots and provide the much-needed cultural connection. Such associations offer invaluable support in retaining heritage and culture besides providing a forum for their (Indian-Americans') children to art forms like Bharatanatyam and vocal music.

Though Indian associations grouped, re-grouped, get split and re-formed like the National Federation of Indian Associations (NFIA), Association of Indians in America (AIA) -- FIA itself has split into several groups...

Though the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) and the Association of American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) are the two largest bodies of their kind, they are more of professional organizations catering to people who follow a particular trade or practice. But the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), which comprises all cultural and linguistic associations, is truly a grass-roots organization. Though Indian associations grouped, re-grouped, get split and re-formed like the National Federation of Indian Associations (NFIA), Association of Indians in America (AIA) -- FIA itself has split into several groups in the East and West Coast, yet it continues to be the

premier body.

The annual FIA parade that rolls down the streets of Manhattan to commemorate India's Independence Day was something every Indian in the Tristate area looked forward to attend. Did I say was? Such celebrities as Amitabh Bachchan, Raj Kapoor, A R Rahman, Dilip Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar have walked along with governors, mayors, Indian ambassadors and US lawmakers, greeting the crowds waving the Tricolor proudly. Not even the Dotbusters issue that rocked the Tristate area in late 1980s or terrorist attacks of 9/11 could dampen this spirit.

So, what went wrong? The spirit of service among FIA officeholders is slowly giving way to publicity craze. Gone are the days when FIA leaders and officeholders worked tirelessly to push the umbrella body to greater heights without craving the media attention. Seeking publicity is no sin and in fact it acts as a morale-booster. But it seems that the FIA has decimated India Day parade as a mere photo-op at the expense of sponsors who still believe in keeping India's flag flying high in a foreign land.

Pushing and jostling to be next to the grand marshal goes on unabashedly in front of thousands of those who wait for hours to get a glimpse of their favorite star pass by. Depending on his or her popularity graph, the star takes home \$30,000 to \$60,000 to attend the parade and the following day's banquet. Plus he or she is given 5-6 first class airline tickets (usually by the grand sponsor Air India) to bring along parents, pets, nannies, and friends.

To chronicle the antics of these visiting stars and how FIA officials bend over backwards to accommodate them calls for a separate book. There have been only a few celebrities who never made a fuss and simply accepted to be grand marshals. Among them was Oscar-winning composer A R Rahman, who charged the organizers not even a penny. So, do we really need the high-maintenance stars?

Things have come to such a sorry pass that spots to be next to the star are now being "auctioned" and the highest bidder in the FIA gets to walk in tandem with the celebrity waving out to the waiting crowds and pose for photographs. Like in the past years, the front line at the start of the parade formed with Consul General, New York, who represents the Government of India, the Indian ambassador to the UN, heads of Air India and the State Bank of India (SBI) – the last two pick up hefty sponsorship amounts – and other prominent non-film invitees from India were

**GOA**

**India Day Celebrations**

*G.O.A. is once again participating in India Day!*

**Sunday, August 9th**  
**Yonge & Dundas Square, Toronto**  
*Organized by Panorama India*  
*In Association with the Consulate General of India*

- Participate in the Grand Parade
- Walk beside G.O.A.'s Float
- Watch the cultural dances of India
- Visit the Indian Bazaar

**ALL DAY FREE EVENT**  
*Festivities Begin at 10 a.m.*

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Attendees agree and understand that any pictures, audio, or video from this event taken by The Goan Overseas Association, Toronto or authorized representatives may be used for promotional purposes and/or posted on the GOA Toronto website for further communications and remain the property of the Association.

So, what went wrong?  
 The spirit of service among FIA officeholders is slowly giving way to publicity craze. Gone are the days when FIA leaders and officeholders worked tirelessly to push the umbrella body to greater heights without craving the media attention. Seeking publicity is no sin and in fact it acts as a morale-booster.

quickly relegated to the third or fourth row with the arrival of the grand marshal and mayor. No wonder, despite repeated pleas by FIA top echelons, governors, mayors, Indian envoys, US lawmakers declined to attend the parade. Once bitten, twice shy?

The FIA president, serving a one year term, always tries to do the balancing act to be good to the grand sponsors who open their checkbooks to be in the front row and VIPs like the consul general and UN envoy whose support he needs to get sponsorships from Air India, SBI and India Inc. But what happened this year was unprecedented even by FIA standards. It seems as if the entire FIA leadership - past and present – wanted to be seen next to Bollywood diva Shilpa Shetty, causing unexplainable embarrassment to other guests. What a shame? Each of these so-called community leaders had their own embedded shutterbugs with fake press badges to click non-stop as soon as



**PHOTO-OP: AN NRIS MEET**

their "clients" came close to the star.

Unable to tolerate the humiliation, Consul General Prabhu Dayal and Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri -their first Independence Day in New York - did not come to the review stand and walked out of the parade half way through. Their predecessors had done the same in the past. It was their first experience with FIA. Top FIA leaders had to troop down to the consulate later to ask for forgiveness from the consul general for their shameful act of pushing consul general to the back rows.

The consulate places the historic ballroom at the disposal of the FIA each year to announce and kick off the parade. Last year, the then consul general Neelam Deo was insulted when the FIA leaders lit the inaugural lamp without waiting for her to come to the podium as chief guest. She walked out of the ballroom in sheer disgust. Worse, the organizers disrespected the national anthem of both the US and India by abruptly stopping and re-playing alternately thrice, something that made major headlines in India .

New York Governor George Pataki who

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came to the parade several years ago realized his misjudgment and stayed away the following years. Ditto with present Governor David Paterson who came as a Lt. Governor but was not respected. Another Governor, Mario Cuomo, said in a radio program that the India Day parade was the worst he ever attended in his lifetime. Mayor Mike Bloomberg who did not attend except a few times during his eight

years in office, showed up because this is the election year.

Accredited journalists and photographers of the local Indian media, assigned to cover the parade, were prevented from going near the star to take photos and got pushed around by security personnel while several American photographers shot the star and the mayor to their hearts' content. All pleas by Indian media fell on deaf ears of FIA leaders. Discrimination of Indians by Indians? Sad but true. FIA needs publicity but not the Indian media.

The press release issued by the FIA had 12 photos, of which eight were that of only the two FIA leaders with Shilpa Shetty. Unabashed misuse of power!

FIA also committed a grave blunder by taking sides in the political system by openly canvassing for Mayor Bloomberg at the parade in the full glare of his opponent New York City Comptroller William Thompson. FIA leaders freely distributed "Indians for Mike Bloomberg" placards and told people to wave out when Bloomberg passed by to please him and may be as a return favor for showing up at



VIJAY MALLYA AND DEEPIKA PADUKONE AT INDIA DAY PARADE. (BELOW) TWO PARTICIPANTS AT AN NRIS MEET

the parade. "These leaders have no idea of the potential damage their actions could cause to FIA. The federation could lose its non-profit status for taking such active part in local politics," lamented a former FIA president. The news media were not treated fairly even at the press conference with Shilpa Shetty at the Radisson Hotel in Manhattan. The hall was filled with digital camera-toting children and women all from FIA folks' families. Media persons waiting in the front row for better view for over an hour were asked to go to the back rows to accommodate the family of FIA president, past presidents and other officeholders.

"Is this a news conference or a family conference in disguise," asked a reporter who was shouted down. Finally the press conference began but with a very unusual "appeal" by the media coordinator - no personal question, no film question, no embarrassing question and if possible no question at all. After some "soft" questions, one reporter asked Shetty for her reaction to the "detention" of Shah Rukh Khan and she was getting ready to answer - a kind of sound bite for the half a dozen TV channels eager to develop the King Khan story that created a wave of protests in India. Just then, the media coordinator rushed in to announce that Shetty would not answer such questions much to the embarrassment of the actress herself. What a travesty in the country that had adopted

### First Amendment in the Constitution?

At the Royal Albert's Palace reception in New Jersey on August 17 too the media were treated as if they had come there

Last year, guests had to go hungry as there was not enough food for everyone though the FIA had pocketed \$50,000 for the reception as donation from Dr. Vijay Mallya who was the chief guest along with grand marshal Deepika Padukone.

merely to eat and drink. "We do not need you," screamed an FIA official with the hapless president not knowing where to hide. This when journalists were invited to the reception repeatedly during the press conference and the kickoff party at the consulate. Several FIA past presidents and stalwarts decided to return home fed up with the total mess created at the registration desk and being made to wait for hours for banquet tickets. Senior journalists including this writer who has been covering the parade and reception for over a decade, decided to walk out rather than take the heap of insults.

Last year, guests had to go hungry as there was not enough food for everyone though the FIA had pocketed \$50,000 for the reception as donation from Dr. Vijay Mallya who was the chief guest along with grand marshal Deepika Padukone.

We journalists certainly have nothing against the FIA and want it to grow into a professional organization and learn a lesson or two from the organizers of the Colombia Day parade, the Puerto Rico Day parade or even the Pakistan Day parade that is growing into a big attraction.

The FIA is after all a public charitable organization (a 501 © 3 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code) whose income and expenses are open to public scrutiny. It's advisable for those at the helm of affairs not to lose the non-profit status by their reckless acts and tarnish the image of India in the US.

*( Though the organiser of the show have strongly denied the charges by suggesting that all FIA members have worked tirelessly to successfully hold the largest parade in the world where all celebrity and political dignitaries happily attended the parade. In fact they gave amazingly positive remark on the hard work of FIA team. Such illegal yellow journalism cannot be tolerated )*

**Writer is Consulting Editor,  
The South Asian Times**



## INDIA DAY PARADE ORGANIZERS VIOLATING FREEDOM OF FREE SPEECH RIGHTS OF A JOURNALIST : Voice of concerned PIO

Dear Editor,

I congratulate Mr. Prakaash Swami for showing courage and honesty for his article Grow up FIA, for India 's sake related to Annual India Day Parade in New York . I fully agree with Mr. Swami this Parade has nothing to do with India and its rich culture but every thing to do with our PHD (Photo Hungry Desi's) FIA office bearers.

India Day Parade in New York by FIA & in New Jersey by IBA has become a mindless affair for Democrat Party & few PHD individuals posing as Indian Leaders along with their friends who can not be paraded for any cause any where in the world. These so called community leaders who can not stand up against the worst ever called racial slurs against the entire Indian community by a Police Union, for the human rights of the less fortunate in the community and can not give any help to a 4 year old and 7 year old children in distress are paraded on the streets of NY & NJ like those who are paraded in famous annual Pushkar Mela in Rajasthan, India.

In both Parades the organizers do not try to promote local talent who can play their ancestors musical instruments and can sing their traditional songs. This year FIA got Ms. Ashwariya from India to do the National Anthem of India and USA which NY based Riti "sunshine" Bhalla and her elder brother Vishal could have done if not better but equally good. The locals FIA & IBA promotes you can see them dressed up in vulgar costumes and shaking on vulgar numbers of Bollywood & Hollywood.

Most pathetic in India Day Parade is dominance of Bollywood personalities & their totally out of tune & character local imitations with doubtful integrity, who are stealing from the community by selling our honor & dignity. Then there are meaningless & irrelevant floats which is no where reflecting the rich culture and heritage of Maa Durga's India or Lord Krishna's India or Guru Nanak Dev Ji's India or Jesus Christ's India or Prophet

Mohammad's India or Mahatama Gandhi or Sardar Patel or Abdul Kalam or Ratan Tata or Azim Premji's modern India. Neither these floats reflects the contribution of Indian American's like Dr Sam Pitroda, Deepak Chopra, Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Nora Jones, Prof Jagdish Bhagwati, Prof Sunil Khilnani, Indra Nooyi, Victor Menenzes, H P Rama, B U Patel, Umang Gupta, Vikram Pundit, Sucheta & Anil Kapuria, Vinod Khosla, Vinod Dham, Sonny Mehta etc. in the American society and economy.

People who understand public service and are capable of bringing good for the community are side lined because they are not willing to bow to the dictates of photo crazy organizers. Then there are those who are buying spots in these mindless events like a crazy doctor who bought a Pravasi Bhartiya Award by bribing the Indian officials and another got it for controlling GOPIO for 20 long years.

Please support Journalist Prakaash Swamy for his Freedom of Free Speech Rights in Public and US Courts. It is very pathetic when FIA organizers can attack, violate & threaten the Free Speech Rights of a respected & honest Journalist one can imagine how they behave with the members of the community. We wish there are more journalist like Mr. Swamy in Indian community who have the guts to expose what is going on in Indian Religious, cultural & business organizations. Practically all of them are exclusive clubs for individuals with doubtful character & integrity with no transparency and accountability to the community.

with best regards,

**Dave Makkar**

davemakkar@yahoo.com



# Indians must shine



*in the US*

## Unite & Increase Population To Participate In Governance

India is the only country with 237 million skilled and highly skilled in the age group of 19 to 35 who will be driving the world economic growth engine for at least next 30-50 years. America, China & Japan has either too young or too old, Europe has negative population growth, South America is a travel destination or narcotics heaven, Australia & Canada Asian immigrants are gaining grounds and Middle East is too pre-occupied in religious fanaticism. Then India is the largest consumer market in the world with its 350 million middle class, which is more than the entire US population of 303 million. Who is left to drive the economic growth engine around the world? The Answer is Indians.

Those who say in America to get into main stream politics, one must know and visit 3 I's; Israel, Italy & Ireland are living under illusions. They are dead wrong, there are 4 I's and 4TH I is India. Now the time has come Indians must get political representation also for their highly positive contributions in American economy and society. With rising fortunes of Indians in America and India, how any one can be disrespectful to Indians or ignore Indians or can dic-



Those who say in America to get into main stream politics, one must know and visit 3 I's; Israel, Italy & Ireland are living under illusions. They are dead wrong, there are 4 I's and 4TH I is India. Now the time has come Indians must get political representation...

tate Indians?

How Indians can ignore rich in natural resources, strategically, geographically, financially and politically most stable country America in the world? America being a country of immigrants belongs to every one; so why not Indians start behaving like owners of America. How Indians can forget they are equal owners of America with others? Why they are not participating in the governance of America? Indians must legally increase population & political representation in America. If more than 50% of total world Jewish population can migrate to America than what is stopping the Indians?

So called Leaders representing Indian community in America have no courage to criticize Local, State and Federal Politicians for massive legalized corruption and racial discrimination to Indians. Neither they have the courage to participate in American main stream politics. They are not at all concerned about 3 million Indians living in America with ZERO representation at Federal, State & local levels even in states like CA, TX, NY, NJ, FL & IL where the majority Indian lives.

They are not at all concerned about Indians being murdered, brutalized, racially discriminated and called Cockroaches, Animals, Illiterates and Illegal go home in the presence of Media by Zionist controlled Police Union with impunity from US laws on apartheid & racial equality.

Then they have no clue that New Jersey a state in USA is the most corrupt and racist state in the entire world. This state in 8,000 sq miles for 8.5 mil people has 588 governments in 566 racially segregated towns with uneven population and uneven area. These governments are represented by over 9,000 Elected Unionized Politicians & 400,000 under worked and overpaid employees appointed for political reasons. It's Governor (Chief Minister) bought the State House for \$144 Millions and has the sanity to put it in writing that Corruption & Racism does not come under his jurisdiction in answer to a resident's complaint about it. Further he has the insanity to pay \$6 millions to sleep with the local Labor Union President on the bed of Public Interest (NYT). All of the above makes New Jersey the only state in the entire world which is legally corrupt and legally racially segregated.

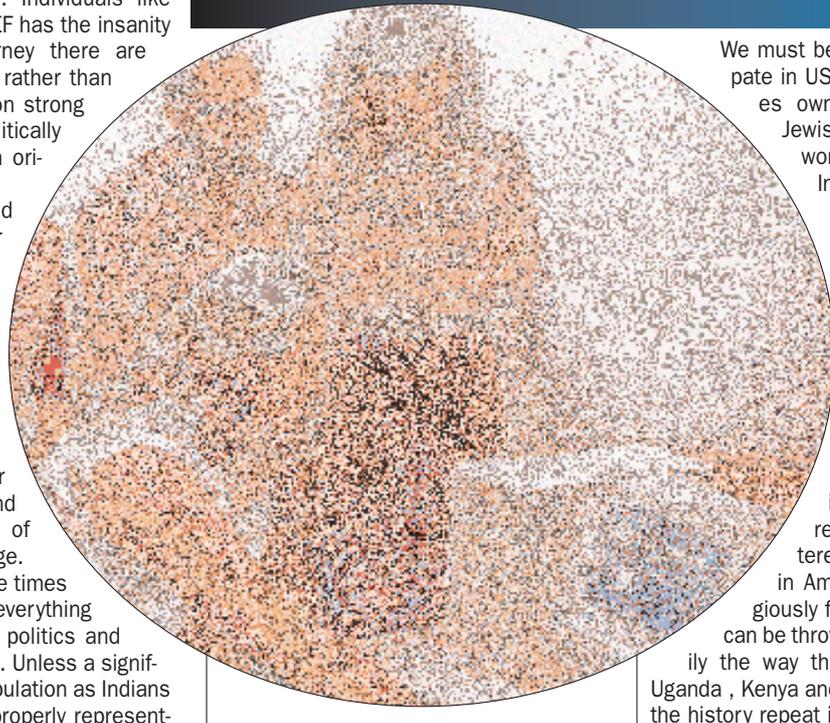
Over 3 million Indian Americans are the only minority community in America where 80% members have college degrees, 65% males are in Managerial/Professional/Technical jobs, 45% of the women are employed outside home, 30% of all Hotels & Motels are Indian owned, 7% are physicians and 25% of the Indian families income is 30% higher than all US household. Surprisingly only 40% Indians have taken American citizenship. Most pathetic is; in America also we are divided & regionalized as Punjabi, Sikh, Gujarati, Bengali, Jat, Bihari, UP, Kerala, Tamil, Muslim, and Christian Associations etc. Individuals like Rajbir Singh Datta of SALDEF has the insanity to write to the US Attorney there are 500,000 Sikhs in America rather than writing we are over 3 million strong economically, socially & politically active community of Indian origin.

Datta does not understand no body cares in America for few hundred scattered voters. Factionalism, lack of Unity among people of Indian origin and apathy towards participation in governance, overall picture of Indians in America is of religiously fanatic Petty Traders living in USA for money. We all must Unite and participate in governance of America to change this image.

It is a known fact from the times of ancient civilizations that everything in our life revolves around politics and our political representatives. Unless a significant segment of our 1% population as Indians represent in America, are properly represented at the top or senior levels of Local, State and Federal government-where policy is determined, the budget is distributed, acquisitions,



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We must become US citizens, participate in US Politics and big businesses owned by Indians like their Jewish counterparts; must bring workers in US legally from India . We must increase our population like Jews in America . We must learn from Jews; with 2.2% of US population they control America with 13% representation in Senate & 8% in the House of Representatives. American Indians must have a long term policy to increase their political representation in the larger interest of every Indian settled in America . Factionalized religiously fanatic Petty Trader Indians can be thrown out of America very easily the way they were thrown out from Uganda , Kenya and Fiji etc. We should not let the history repeat itself we must unite for the sake of our children to bring a positive change in our Leadership at all levels and must participate in the governance of America.

contracts and jobs are determined-Indians will continue to be ignored, underserved, abused and discriminated in America.



**F**rom corporate bigwigs to technology whizkids to Hollywood impresarios, American Indians have leapfrogged into mainstream America.

With Bobby Jindal one step shy of becoming the first American governor of Indian origin, in Louisiana, the focus is once again on the rising influence of the almost 2 million-strong Indian American community in the United States.

The money-power of the community speaks for itself. The US Census Bureau has pegged the Indian American median family annual income at \$60,000 as against the national average of \$38,885. Despite the recession, the dotcom bubble burst and the tech meltdown, the estimated annual buying power of Indian Americans stands at \$20 billion.

This high average comes as no surprise. American Indians are running Fortune 500 companies and regularly featured in top business magazines across the world. Rono Dutta, president of United Airlines; Rakesh Gangwal, president and CEO of US Airways; Kolkata-born Rajat Gupta, managing director of consulting giant McKinsey & Co.

The number of New Economy millionaires is in the thousands, though many have been bitten by the meltdown. Some successes are well known, such as Vinod Khosla, co-founder of Sun Microsystems; Sabeer Bhatia sold Hotmail to Microsoft for \$400 million; Massachusetts' Gururaj Deshpande, co-founder of a number of network-technology companies, was at one time worth between \$4 billion and \$6 billion.

There are many more who make an elite mass. Until recently, more than 300,000 Indian Americans worked in technology firms in California's Silicon Valley, with their average



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income estimated at \$125,000 a year. About one-third of the engineers in Silicon Valley are of Indian descent, while over 7 percent of valley's high-tech firms are led by Indian CEOs.

It is no surprise that among the tasks spelt out for new governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in California is the Asian element of his constituency, as well as the vexed issues of outsourcing and a cap on H1-B and L-1 visas that regulate the number of foreigners working in the country.

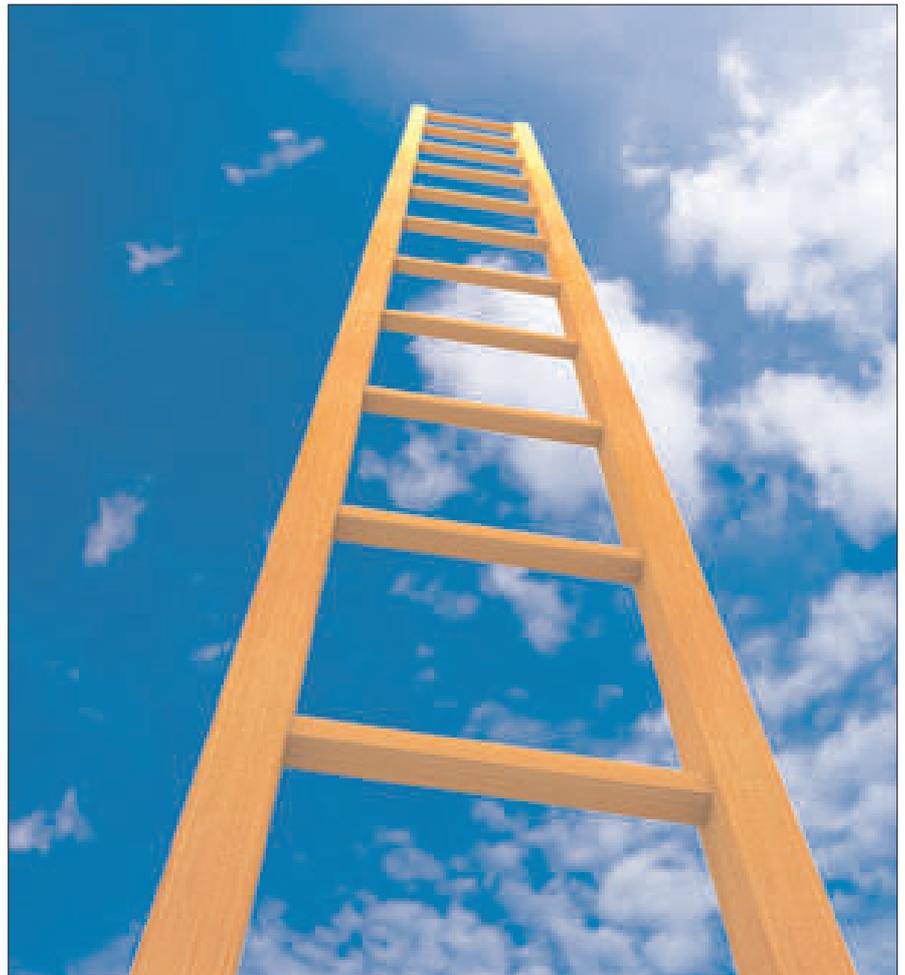
Technology of course is the known area of Indian expertise. The story has moved further. Prominent Indians who have become symbols of success for the Indian community are the late Kalpana Chawla, who became the first Indian American to fly in a US space shuttle; Walt Disney paid Manoj Night Shyamalan \$2.5 million for the screenplay of the movie *The Sixth Sense*. Amartya Sen won the Noble prize in economics in 1998, joining laureates Har Gobind Khurana of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and S Chandrashekhar in medicine and physics.

As with any other culture, the ingenuity of Indian Americans is not limited only to the positive aspects of society. Indian white-collar criminals have also surfaced in the process, leaving a trail of fraud and dubious records. Surinder Singh Panshi, an Indian American doctor, has been sentenced to 16 years in jail by a California court for running a fraud ring that bilked the state's health program of \$20 million. A Los Angeles-based lady doctor, Lakshmi Nadgir, has pleaded guilty of defrauding Medicare of \$5.5 million. Across the Atlantic, 26-year-old computer clerk Sunil Mahatani has earned the notoriety of being Britain's biggest credit card fraudster. With his dotcom wealth, Naveen Jain bought two mansions, yachts and a piece of an NBA team; a US federal court has asked him to fork out \$247 million for insider trading.

The negative, however, has been more than balanced out by the positives. In the arena of politics, feisty faces, apart from Jindal, have emerged. It is no easy matter for Jindal to be top contender, despite Louisiana being as conservative as an American state can get.

Perhaps the highest profile effort to play a direct role in politics, until Jindal arrived, is by Kumar Barve, a US-born Indian American, a delegate for several terms in the Maryland assembly. Upendra Chivukula is a member of the New Jersey assembly; Satveer Chaudhary at 33 is the youngest member of the Minnesota state Senate while Swati Dandekar is the first Indian woman to be elected representative in the US in Iowa. Several Indian-Americans have held the position of mayor - Bala K Srinivas in Hollywood Park, Texas, John Abraham in Teaneck, New Jersey, and Arun Jhaveri in Burien, Washington.

Indian-Americans have traditionally exercised the most political influence through campaign contributions, and have been actively involved in fund-raising efforts for political candidates at the federal, state and local levels. Though the Indian American population in Louisiana is far too small to influence Jindal's election, reports from the US suggest that 20 percent of the nearly \$2 to \$2.5 million has



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This was the natural course of progression as in addition to being achievers in the professional realm over the past decade, Indian-Americans have become a strong voting force in the US. According to the US Census, around 35 percent of Indian Americans have been naturalized. Along with close to half a million US-born Indian-Americans who are already US citizens, the Indian-American community comprises a formidable voting bloc. More Indian-Americans have chosen to undergo the naturalization process, and their voting power is

growing.

Perhaps one of the biggest friends of the Indian American community has been former US president Bill Clinton. Clinton is closely associated with the American India Foundation and visited India in 2001, as head of an Indian delegation to collect funds for victims of the Gujarat earthquake. There was considerable talk at that time that the Clinton visit was a well-orchestrated plan to cultivate the Indian American community to prepare for Hillary Clinton as president of the US.

From powerless, to power-brokers to powers-in-themselves, Indian Americans have truly arrived.

(Courtesy : Siddharth Srivastava)

# From boom *to* HOUSING BUST



By Divyansh Bajpai

**Portland, Oregon:** Optional Adjustable Rate Mortgage, is a loan product which, in addition to having a very low down payment (usually 5% of the home value), gave the borrower an introductory period during which he could choose to pay the interest due alone for the month or to pay an even lower repayment termed "minimum payment". Making only minimum payments would result in an ever increasing outstanding loan amount resulting in the "principal" growing large, which is known as "negative amortization".

The US housing boom, which occurred around 2001-2005 attracted a lot of curiosity and interest. The people and the banks of United States, wondered how to make the most of this consistently escalating prices in the real estate market. People were interested in buying homes and selling them at a profit. The subprime borrowers, who had a poor credit score felt obviously they had an opportunity



to pay off all their outstanding loans by cashing in on this boom. Banks decided to cater to this segment as well. One such product, which became a rage during this boom season was Option ARM. The product pioneered by World Savings Bank, run by the Sandler's seemed like a miracle loan that could help people, particularly subprime borrowers aspiring for a change in fortunes. This subprime mortgage has been the subject of intense discussion, ever since it came into the limelight revealing shocking details and appalling truths of the intense drama of a lending operation gone

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Making only minimum payments would result in an ever increasing outstanding loan amount resulting in the "principal" growing large, which is known as "negative amortization".

One of the main USPs of this miracle loan is the fact that you can pay the low minimum payment in the first year, which is calculated at an interest rate of as low as one per cent, and for a few years the monthly payment rises by only 7.5 per cent. The flip side for those choosing the minimum payment option is that after the introductory period, their monthly payment will suddenly double or increase even further.

This will happen under two circumstances:

The first circumstance is that after the introductory period of about 5 years, the monthly payment gets "recast" to adjust the amortization to its full limits. The monthly payments will then be recalculated at the prevailing interest rates for the remainder of the loan tenure. This happens irrespective of the extent of increase in the amount to be repaid.

The second circumstance is when the outstanding loan exceeds a negative amortization maximum, which is about 125 per cent of the original loan amount. If the balance hits this limit, which can happen before a period of 5 years, when interest rates rise, the payment is increased to its full amortization level. Both the recast clause and the negative amortization cap can result in a rude "payment shock".

The Option-ARM terms run something like this:

\$500,000 loan, 1.5% start rate, 2.80% margin over cost of funds, 11.95% lifetime cap, 125%/10-year reset cap, The minimum payment is based on the 1.5% start rate, and changes +/- 7.5% per year.

In this example, that minimum payment is:

1st year - \$1,725.60, 2nd year - \$1,855.02, 3rd year - \$1,994.15, 4th year - \$2,143.71 and so on.

However the fully-amortized payment on the \$500,000 is \$3,296.35. This means that during the initial years, the principal gets larger



and larger.

When the loan balance reaches 125 per cent of the original loan amount, the loan resets, causing the monthly payment to more than double as now the amount owed is much larger and the payment needs to be increased to a level, which enables the principal to be paid off.

Right from the early days of Option ARMs, it was clear that borrowers would not be able to afford the monthly payments once the loans reset, however banks made these loans in the hope that housing prices would continue to increase rapidly.

As long as housing prices rose, borrowers could sell their houses for a profit before their monthly payments were increased and pay back the bank, thus making a healthy profit for both the bank and the borrower. However once housing prices started to stagnate, borrowers were stuck in houses that they could not afford to keep but could not sell either. This is when the US housing bubble started to burst.

When the real estate markets crashed, many of banks had to declare bankruptcy. Two noteworthy examples of such lenders include Wachovia Corporation and WaMu (Washington Mutual). The former acquired the bank from World Savings, which was earlier run by the Sandlers, who pioneered the attractive loan product Option ARM.

By the time Wachovia bought over World

Savings, the days of profitability were being counted and when Wachovia demanded more growth noticing the slackening market, an aggressive and indiscriminate selling of the loan product led to a sudden surge in the lending figures.

The sale of this product increased dramatically and the year 2005 recorded \$238 billion made in option ARM loans nationally, out of which World Savings issued about \$52 billion!

Of course when the market crashed a lot of subprime borrowers felt cheated and argued the logic of such a lending product, while the Sandlers who pioneered the concept kept saying in their defense that if only the market prices did not crash, the scenario would be the exact opposite.

WaMu on the other hand was promoting their loan shop aggressively and one notable ad campaign they ran was the "Power of Yes" campaign, which practically sums up their loan business model. They said yes to every loan purchase inquiry, without conducting a stringent quality check on the loan consumer's ability to repay the loan. In the bid to make the most of the real estate boom WaMu started ignoring even the basic eligibility factors like the compatibility check between loan and income.

There were examples of people claiming salaries that were ridiculously high for their professions. A popular newspaper in the United States, cites the incredible example of a "Mariachi Singer" (a profession that one usually did not hear of) getting a loan approval and the documented proof for her profession that went into her file, was a photograph of the singer in her mariachi outfit! It's no wonder then that when the real estate markets crashed in the United States, WaMu eventually had to shut down its sub prime lending operations, recording a \$67 million loss in 2007.



## The lending scenario in India

A subprime crisis of this nature and magnitude is unlikely to occur in India, thanks to some very strict bank policies that are in practice.

As a general rule the borrower needs to pay a down payment that covers 15-20 per cent of the cost of the property. This by itself is a test of the borrower's credit worthiness and enables him to have a stake in the property. Also, the bank safeguards its lending interests by ensuring that the money lent is below the market value of the property making allowance for a nominal dip in property prices.

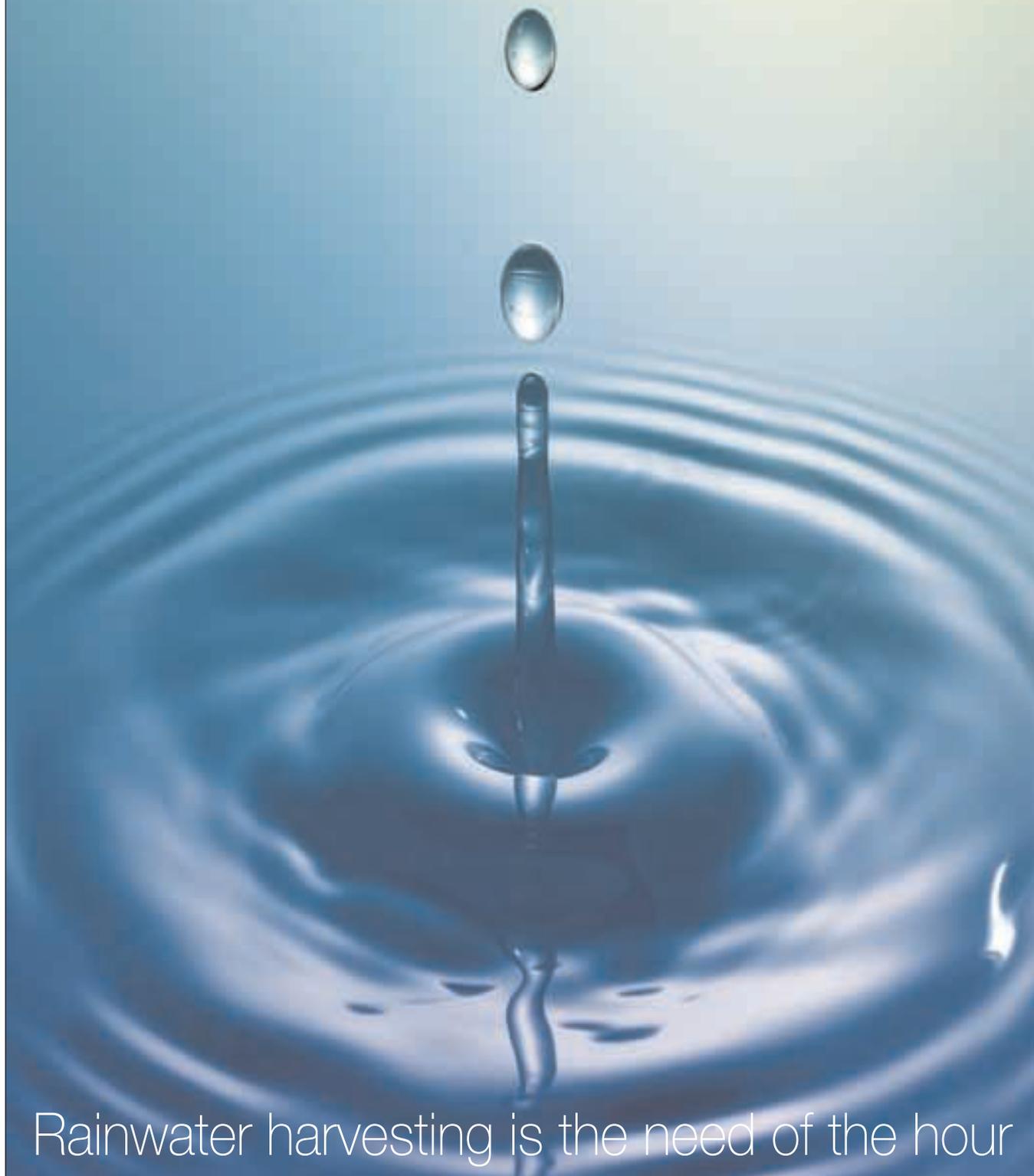
Another important factor is the initial screening banks conduct to confirm the eligibility of the loan seeker for the requested loan amount. Banks make sure that the EMI of their loan applicants does not exceed 50-55 per cent of their monthly incomes. This ensures that as long as the borrower is able to maintain his current income levels, he will

have no trouble in making his monthly payments.

Moreover the Indian sentiment revolves around buying a house and spending a lifetime there. Home buyers looking to live in the house purchased rarely change homes in short time frames while in a place like America embracing change is second nature. A situation like this may be far away for India, as we are a growing economy, where mortgage levels are not comparable to developed economies.

We also have strict regulatory bodies like the Reserve Bank of India [Get Quote], which ensures that loan products that could produce systemic risk never make it to the market. Besides this aspect, a favourable market does not exist in India for similar loan products like the Option ARM. The psyche of the Indian consumer does not easily accept debt instruments and a loan is usually high priority and the focus is usually on closing it as early as possible.

*It's raining...*



Rainwater harvesting is the need of the hour

# An answer to climate change

It is now widely accepted that climate change will lead to an intensification of the global hydrological cycle and will have a major impact on regional water resources. It is also clear that in many parts of the world, variability in climate conditions, next to many socio-economic and environmental developments is already having major impacts and that such variability is increasing. Both present variability and long-term climate change impacts are most severe in the developing world and particularly affect the poor in these regions.

The most high profile issue on the table of every Prime Minister and President is the global climate change negotiations. The water problems are affecting the economy of the world and it could be said that the global economy runs on water. We at KRG India Research Centre for Rainwater Harvesting and Environment have developed latest technologies to make full and best possible use of "Rainwater" as a solution to all the problems related to the environment and global climate change.

The technologies developed by us on Rainwater harvesting are very simple and increasingly becoming the scientific and cost effective technology to get a lasting solution to overcome the emerging water shortage, to stop sea water intrusion at coastal regions, to develop coastal ground water bed, to develop thick forest on coastal regions, to develop forests on vast lands, to control floods, to reduce drought effects, to develop dry zone and most importantly recharging the dry and dead rivers.

In context to our Honorable Minister for Environment Mr. Jairam Ramesh's one of the first responses sent to the Campaign for Environmental Justice India on May 29, "I don't know what I can do but I will listen and try to make a difference", we appreciate his vision but at the same time the Honorable Minister believes that the concept of river interlinking is not feasible for India, he once noted: "India's track record in resettlement and rehabilitation has been pathetic. This is a blot on our collective conscience. With the type of track record that we have had, if we em-



bark on this fanciful scheme of river linking with 30 storage reservoirs involving massive displacement of people, I think it is going to be fraught with grave consequences."

In regard to above point we agree with him, but keeping his concerns in mind we still can have successful river linking projects as the Rainwater in the form of rivers is the key to meet the challenges of Global Warming. We at KRG India believe that the river interlinking or river diversion of surplus water to scarce areas is essential and feasibly possible, but in a limited geographical context where the distance to be covered for interlinking is very small or the possible impacts of such interlinking do not affect a large number of people. KRG has applied this concept exactly where it suits, the in salinity-affected areas of GHED, Porbandar district, Gujarat. Where a lot of water from the local rivers submerge entire Ghed area, Ghed being low stream saucer shape area located on sea coast the sea

water intrusion effects it badly with the coastal population left with no choice but to use saline Groundwater. We have submitted the feasibility report to the collector of Porbandar.

As a experienced Professional and member of the World Water Forum (WWF)—the world's largest organization for the water issues—I have been working during office and non-office hours on the issues related to water problems and environment in India since summer of 96. With challenge I assure that against all odds we can use 'rain water' as a successful "weapon" against global warming. Therefore I would like to request people of this planet to act as responsible residents of the earth to attend our goals to overcome global climatic changes. If we wish together we can make the issue of Global Climate Change an issue of Past. Our coming generation must not blame us for the failure of ours on this most important issue of Human Kind, its high time we begin our revolution for blue from our home...

— Diwakar Shetty

(Writer is CEO - KRG India Research Centre for Rainwater Harvesting and Environment is working on water harvesting has come forward with the solution to the most important issue of our time "The Climate Change")

The water problems are affecting the economy of the world and it could be said that the global economy runs on water. We at KRG India Research Centre for Rainwater Harvesting and Environment have developed latest technologies to make full and best possible use of "Rainwater" as a solution to all the problems...

# Indians continue to FLOURISH GLOBALLY

## GOPIO's 20th Anniversary Convention A Huge Success

**G**GOPIO International, the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin ([www.gopio.net](http://www.gopio.net)), celebrated its 20th Anniversary Convention in New York on August 20-23, 2009. The conference themed "People of Indian Origin: Strengthening Global Connections" drew wide participation by 500+ attendees from 20+ countries. The Diaspora deliberated and evaluated GOPIO's progress over the last 20 years, networked, exchanged ideas and connected with People of Indian Origin (PIO) and Non Resident Indians (NRI) delegates from around the world.

Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in a message felicitated GOPIO for its contribution to the Indian Diaspora Movement. "GOPIO has emerged as a leading organization providing a unique platform to the vast Indian Overseas community for promoting their interests and realizing their aspirations. It has contributed significantly in the process of engagement between the Government of India and the Indian Diaspora. The bonds between the motherland and people of Indian origin across the globe are valuable and precious. It is my hope that through such events, they will continue to flourish."

The convention was inaugurated on August 21st evening at the Crowne Plaza LaGuardia Hotel. An array of dignitaries graced the occasion. They included Indian Consul General Prabhu Dayal; Mr. Basdeo Panday, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and currently the Opposition Leader; Mr. Jagdish Shetter, Speaker of Karnataka State Assembly; Mr. D.N. Srivastava, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs; Hon Bayney Karran, Guyana's Ambassador to the United States; Lord Diljit Rana. Member of the House of Lords, UK; and other Indian American political leaders including Mr. Upendra Chivukula, Deputy Speaker of New Jersey State Assembly. Former US Ambassador to India, Frank Wisner was the keynote speaker on Friday, August 21.

At the inauguration, Indian Consul General Prabhu Dayal said that "GOPIO's views are taken very seriously by the Indian government." Dayal congratulated the GOPIO team for its great success and accomplishments in the last 20 years.

The program started with a welcome reception and dinner on August 20 at the World Fair Marina. The chief guest for the evening was Ambassador Manjeev Puri, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations (UN). On August 21, the conference "India and the Indian Diaspora in the Context of Global Economic Challenges and



Ambassador Bayney Karran speaking at the GOPIO 20th Anniversary Convention Inauguration

Development" focused on PIO/NRI Business, Economic and Development issues, and was a roaring success. On August 22, the conference "Indian Diaspora: Challenges and Opportunities in the New Millennium" provided a global perspective on the socio-cultural, civic and political issues being addressed by the worldwide PIO community. These engaging and lively sessions included "The Living Pioneers - Global Perspective of Indian Elders" to discuss challenges encountered by the PIO seniors, and "The Next Generation" to engage and solicit input of the PIO youth and young professionals to develop GOPIO's future agenda.

GOPIO was able to focus global, especially United Nations' attention to the plight of fellow Indians in countries where their human rights were violated. GOPIO fought such human rights violation through media campaign, demonstrations and filing cases with the United Nations Human Rights Council. GOPIO remains the only global organization to share this deep concern and work for the plight of PIOs and NRIs throughout the world.

Fostered activism and helped encourage Indian communities in countries across the globe to become part of the political mainstream of the nations they lived in. GOPIO has constantly professed assimilation especially in countries with large PIO population asking the people to become more aware of their current and potential contributions to their adopted homeland.

Championed the approval of the Person of Indian Origin (PIO) Card and the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Card given by the Government of India. This was part of the resolution passed by the First Global NRI/PIO Convention in 1989. The Government of India has been granting the PIO card since the year 2002 and the OCI card for PIOs in select countries since 2006.

GOPIO had in the 2000 Zurich Convention

resolution appealed to the Government of India for a separate ministry for NRIs/PIOs. The UPA government fulfilled this demand by setting up a separate Ministry of Overseas Indian affairs in 2004.

The First Global Indian Convention in 1989, and subsequent annual GOPIO conventions motivated the Government of India to organize the inaugural "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" (PBD) event in New Delhi, India in 2003. An annual PBD event in India and a Mini PBD overseas are now a regular feature and well attended. To strengthen the interaction with the Diaspora, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has created the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC) in India with branches at certain major embassies of India to facilitate exchange and transfer of financial, human and intellectual capital between India and the adopted land of the PIOs and NRIs.

On August 23rd, the final day of the 20th Anniversary Convention, GOPIO members and leaders adopted several resolutions pertaining to the NRI/PIO community including violence against Indian students in Australia, problems of property rights of NRIs/PIOs in India, tax parity on equities for NRIs/PIOs similar to what is done in Mauritius, voting rights for Indian citizens living outside India, and the red tape and other hurdles faced by NRI/PIO high school graduates to obtain permission in pursuit of college education in certain Indian universities.

GOPIO International held elections for the new two-year term. Lord Diljit Rana of United Kingdom (UK) was elected as International President, Ashook Ramsaran, of USA as Executive Vice President and the outgoing GOPIO International President Inder Singh as the Chairman per the bylaws of GOPIO.

The outgoing Chairman and founder of GOPIO, Dr. Thomas Abraham was lauded for his selfless and dedicated service to GOPIO and the Indian Diaspora movement.

# Call for more economic engagement with India

The conference was chaired by outgoing GOPIO Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham who said, "In the last 200 years, the world has seen three successful diasporas who have contributed to the well being of their members and their Motherland, i.e. British, Jewish and Chinese, now, it is the turn of Indian Diaspora to become one of the most dynamic and emerging Diaspora which is spread in 150 countries of the world." GOPIO as an organization has made its presence felt in more than 30 countries of the world. GOPIO organizers hope to increase trade, investment and business opportunities between countries with large PIO population and India.



Seated from L. to R. Former T&T Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, Indian Deputy Consul General Dr. Ajay Gondane, Conference Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham, Inder Singh and Conference Co-Chair Dr. Maya Chadda; (Inset) Convener Ashook Ramsaran welcoming delegates at the NRI/PIO Economic & Business Inaugural Session

"Overseas Indians have played a major role for India to become a destination for new investments and setting new businesses as well as important role in for many multinational companies to go to India," Dr. Abraham continued. "With the financial success of Overseas Indians, many countries are reaching out to Overseas Indians for investments because of their advantages in having access to new technologies," said Dr. Abraham.

The keynote speaker at the session was India's Deputy Consul General Dr. Ajay Gondane who said that NRIs and PIOs mobilized themselves for their common benefit and their love for their motherland is worthy of emulation. Indian Diaspora was not engaged with its motherland for a long time, however, it has come of age now. "GOPIO has brought in this concept from nebulous stage and built a strong presence in many countries," said Dr. Gondane who further called upon GOPIO members and the PIO community for more economic engagement with India.

Former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago praised GOPIO for its role in reaching out the PIO community in developing countries. "GOPIO had been responsible in bringing an Indian Diaspora Movement among the PIO population all over the world and PIOs from the Caribbean and other developing countries look to GOPIO as a guiding force," said Panday.

Conference Co-chair Dr. Maya Chadda, professor of political science at William Paterson University setting the tone of the conference, said strong subsidy regime and bureaucratic controls coupled with lack of reforms in labor market acted as a

deterrent to spur more investments. Dr. Chadda said that questions were asked as to what the Indian Diaspora had done to capacity building such as education, healthcare, drinking water facilities and poverty alleviation measures. Indian remittances stood at \$52 billion compared to \$40 billion from China, Still there are lot more pains to be erased.

The session India & the Global Economy: Prospects and Challenges was chaired by Dr. Chadda. The speakers were Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Professor of Economics and Jagdish Bhagwati Professor of Indian Political Economy Columbia Univ. School of International & Public Affairs; Sreedhar Menon, Chairman of the Board, Strategic Advisor & Co-Promoter of VITEOS Fund Services Inc., NJ and Bangalore; and Dr. Sanjay Ruparelia, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Faculty Fellow of the India China Institute, New School for Social Research, New York, NY. All speakers provided excellent analysis on the impact of global economy challenges on India.

Former US Ambassador to India Frank Wisner delivered the keynote address before the next session. Wisner, praised the role of Indian Diaspora for its involvement in India's social and economic development. "Similarly, education, social reforms, better living conditions like electricity and roads could help change things in Pakistan. If more schools are opened in Pakistan, fewer students would go to the Madrasas", he said.

Wisner dismissed fears in some quarters that only George W. Bush was very close to India and not President Barack Obama.

## Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas 2010 in Jan

The 8th edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), the flagship event of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), will be held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 7-9 January, 2010. The high-profile convention will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India on 8th January. The President of India will deliver the valedictory address on 9th January and would confer Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards for 2010.

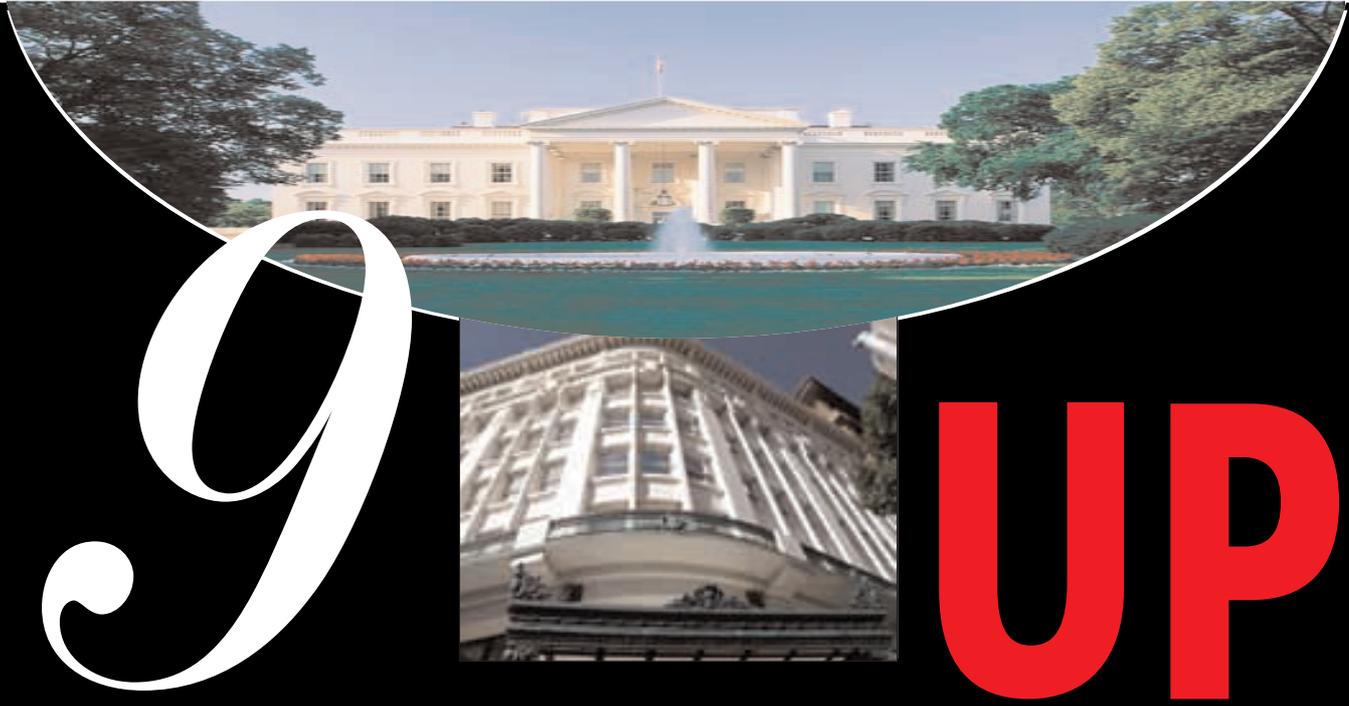
### GOPIO-Metro DC President honored for scientific research

Dr. Renuka Misra, president of GOPIO Metro Washington DC Chapter, was recently honored for her outstanding research achievements and contributions to the field of "Drug Discovery from Natural Products" and clinical trials for last several years, especially cancer research, AIDS, Alzheimer, Cardiovascular & in recent years Herbal Products and Dietary Supplements. Dr Mishra received the award from Mauritius President Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

**Agreement signed:** The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has signed a bilateral social security (SSA) agreement with the government of Switzerland which will benefit workers in each other's country. The SSA was signed by Mr. K Mohandas, secretary, MOIA, and Philippe Welti, ambassador of Switzerland in India.

**Awards night:** India Empire, a magazine for NRIs/PIOs, published from Delhi, is inviting nominations for awards to be presented at a gala event on Jan 10, 2010, at Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi. The nominations can be filed at [www.Indiaempire.com](http://www.Indiaempire.com).

**Visa reopened:** With some 25,000 visas still up for grabs, the US has reopened the H-2B visa window for semi-skilled foreign workers. As in the case of H-1B visas for highly skilled workers, there has been a sharp drop in recruitment of foreign workers in recession-hit U.S. However, with the economy now appearing to be recovering slowly, the US citizenship and Immigration Services has decided to allow employers to file additional petitions for qualified H-2B temporary foreign nonagricultural workers.



## Nine Indian-origin people work in White House

Washington: At least nine Indian-origin people work in the White House, with some getting \$100,000 or more a year, official figures released by President Barack Obama's office have revealed. According to the figures, Sonal Shah, who's the Deputy Assistant to the US President and Director at Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation, gets an annual salary of \$120,000.

Both Rachana Bhowmick, who is the Director of Special Projects, and Aditya Kumar, also Director of Special Projects as well as Special Assistant to Office of Chief of Staff, earn \$99,000 a year each.

Those in the salary slab less than \$90,000 are Anisha Dasgupta who works as a Counsel at an annual package of \$86,927 and Pradeep Ramamurthy, the

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Director of Response Policy, whose gross salary is \$86,927. The figures, released on the White House blog, also reveal that Kavita Patel who is the Director of Policy for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement gets \$65,000 annually, while Shomik Dutta, the Special Assistant to White House Counsel, earns \$62,000.

Likewise, White House Policy Advisor Manashi Deshpande earns \$54,000 a year while Taara Rangarajan gets \$40,000 for her services as Deputy Associate Director.

According to the White House, consistent with Obama's commitment to transparency, the figures have been disclosed on its website as it is transmitted to the US Congress. Since the year 1995, it's required to deliver a report every year.

## UKTI felicitates Indian businessman

**Mumbai:** Founder of HCL and chairman of HCL Technologies, Shiv Nadar, was presented the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) Business Person of the Year Award.

Nadar was presented the award in acknowledgement of the company's pioneering investment in the UK under his leadership and for his focus and di-



Kiran Bhagwanani, HCL Senior Vice President and Head India Business (L) receiving the 'Business Person of the Year Award' on behalf of HCL Chairman Shiv Nadar from UK Minister of Trade Investment and Business, Lord Mervyn Davies

celebrate India-UK business partnerships in terms of inward investment, collaborations, entrepreneurship and innovation.

"UK holds a special place for us at HCL. Our work there has grown not just in volume but in the value we are able to deliver to our partners in the UK; and from the UK to the rest of the world," Nadar said. "These awards are about celebrating success."

They recognise the achievements made by businesses of all sizes. I congratulate the talented entrepreneurs who are bringing India and the UK closer together," said UK Minister for Trade Investment and Business, Lord Davies of Abersoch, presenting the awards.

rection in establishing HCL as a leader in the information and communication technologies industry in India. The UKTI India Business Awards cel-

HCL chairman Shiv Nadar

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