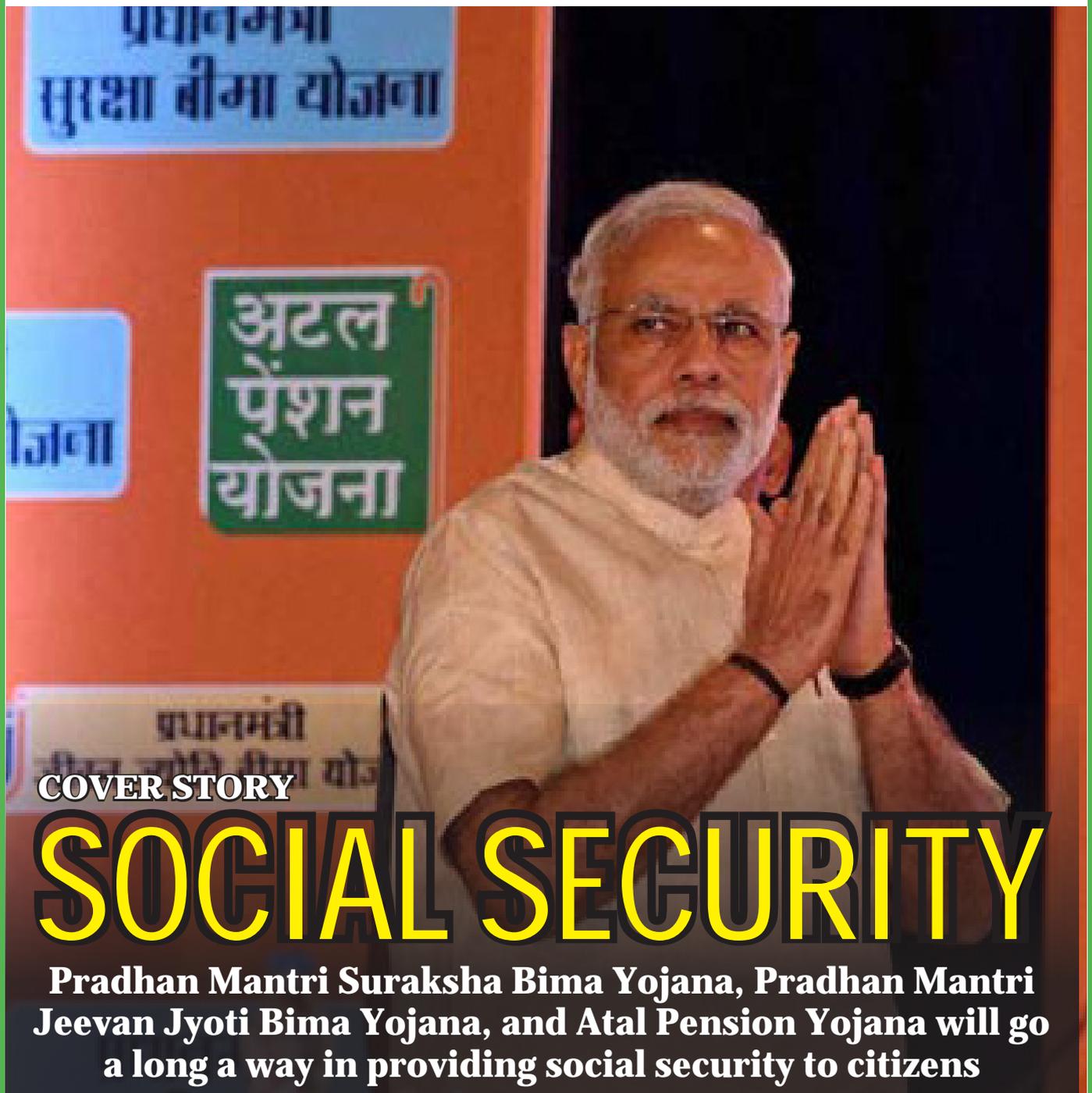


Vol: 23 | No. 6 | June 2015 | ₹20

# OPINION EXPRESS

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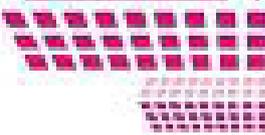
A MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE



COVER STORY

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, and Atal Pension Yojana will go a long way in providing social security to citizens

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The magazine is published and printed by Rajiv Agnihotri for Opinion Express Communications & Entertainments Pvt Ltd, from 2 Ashok Nagar, Lucknow And printed at Kumpu Graphic Press

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# Three govt schemes to ensure social security for citizens

**A**fter Jan Dhan and providing bank accounts to 15 crore unbanked people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi niw has launched three social security schemes, including a Re 1 per day insurance cover, and said that the poor need empowerment, not aid – three mega social security initiatives plus one pension and two insurance schemes in all.



These are Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

Narendra Modi said Rs 15,800 crore has been deposited in the 15 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened in four months and the scheme to provide cooking gas subsidy directly into bank accounts of beneficiaries has helped stop pilferages and leakages worth hundreds of crores of rupees.

“I told the poor, this nation, this government and our banks are for you... poor do not want ‘sahara’. We need to change how we think. The poor need ‘shakti’,” he said at the event, also attended by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. PM Narendra Modi said 80-90 per cent people in the country neither have insurance cover nor any possibility of pension.

While the three schemes will come into force from June 1, the Prime Minister said that in the first seven days of the trail-run, banks have enrolled 5.05 crore people, including 42 lakh from West Bengal. The schemes — Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) — were simultaneously launched at 115 locations throughout the country.

Stating that it is a misconception that large industrial houses provide more jobs, Modi said about 5.5 crore small and medium entrepreneurs provide employment to more than 14 crore people. “We can achieve whatever but if the fruits do not reach the poor, our development journey is incomplete... we are calling the world to make in India and at the same time we are opening bank accounts for the poor,” he said.

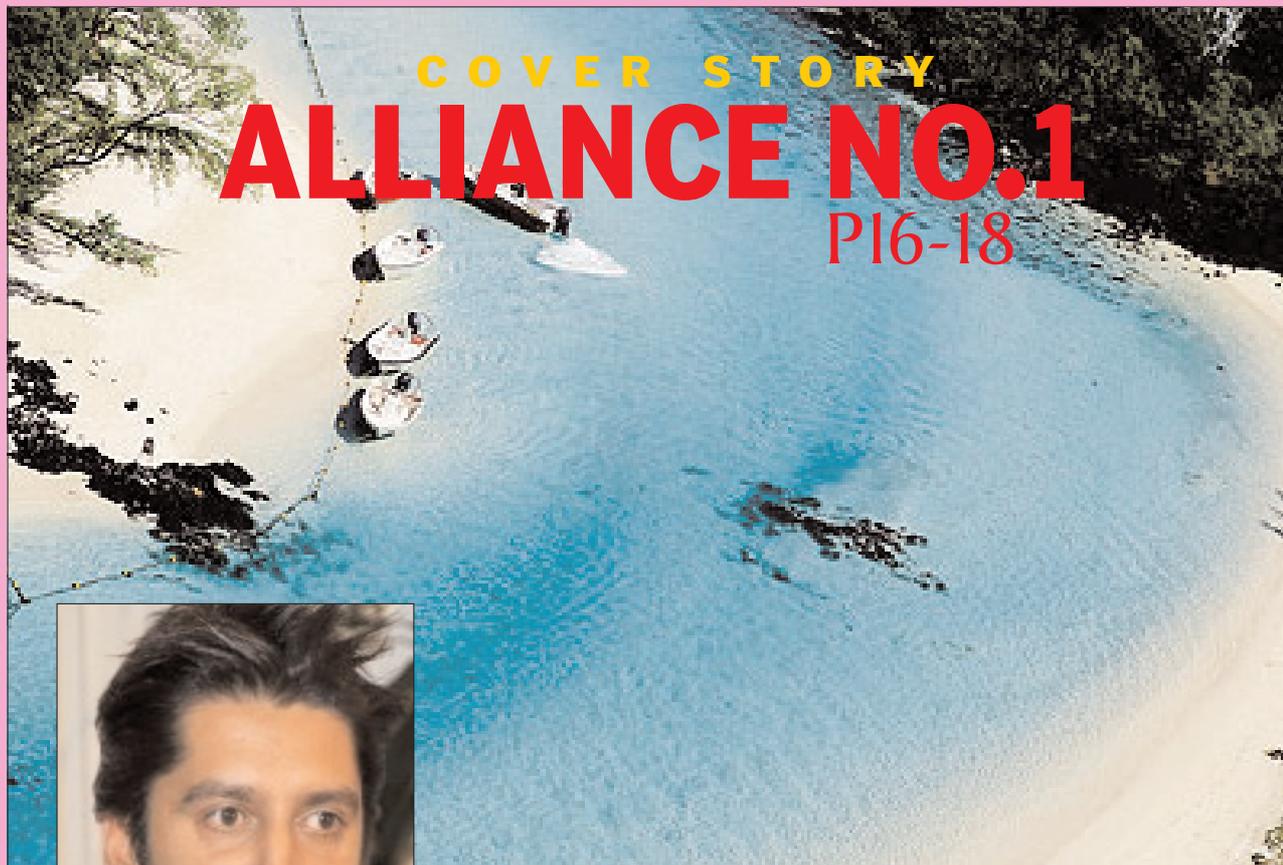
The Prime Minister also urged people to pay small premiums towards insurance schemes for their domestic helps, drivers, and liftmen, among others. Paying tributes to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Modi said “this land (Bengal) has been blessed by Goddess Lakshmi and Saraswati”.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said governments must always work for the people. “Centre and states have to work together. That is when good of the nation happens. Let us dedicate this programme to the people of India,” she said.

PMSBY will offer a renewable one year accidental death-cum-disability cover of Rs 2 lakh for partial/permanent disability to all savings bank account holders in the age group of 18-70 years for a premium of Rs 12 per annum per subscriber.

PMJJBY, on the other hand, will offer a renewable one year life cover of Rs 2 lakh to all savings bank account holders in the age group of 18-50 years, covering death due to any reason, for a premium of Rs 330 per annum per subscriber. Atal Pension Yojana will focus on the unorganised sector and provide subscribers a fixed minimum pension of Rs 1,000, Rs 2,000, Rs 3,000, Rs 4,000 or Rs 5,000 per month, starting at the age of 60 years, depending on the contribution option exercised on entering at an age between 18 and 40 years.

—Prashant Tewari, Editor-in-Chief



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**T**he air crash in Mangalore that killed 158 people has underlined fears about safety gaps in the country's booming airline industry and raised doubts about whether infrastructure can keep pace with rapid economic growth.

It was not clear what caused Saturday's crash, but pilots and aviation experts say regulatory oversight of safety and quality control are often poor. Staff training standards are also falling, they say.

Although India has had few major accidents in recent years, some half a dozen mid-air misses over the past year has underscored that safety issues exist.

Last year an Indian Airlines plane with about 150 passengers on board barely avoided a collision with an army helicopter that was part of the President's entourage in Mumbai.

Media regularly reports about routine checks finding pilots reporting drunk for duty and in one instance last year pilots and crew were involved in a mid-air scuffle, leaving the aircraft to fly on its own for sometime.

"The Air India Express crash was waiting to happen," said A. Ranganathan, an airline safety consultant and pilot instructor.

"Safety standards in Indian aviation have been on the wane for the last six years. Efforts being made to correct the drift, but the systematic rot is so deep ... we are not likely to see any improvement in safety unless drastic changes are made."

Sustained robust growth has put more money in people's pockets, spurring air travel and an exponential growth in the number of low cost airlines. Domestic passenger traffic has tripled and international traffic doubled in the past five years.

But infrastructure may not have kept pace and a shortage of staff may be stretching both airlines and traffic control staff. Indian Commercial Pilot Association said in a statement 78 percent of crashes took place due to fatigue-related human error.

"You also need to augment the strength of air traffic control which is stretched," Kapil Kaul, head of the Centre for Asia-Pacific Aviation in South Asia, told Reuters.

The hill-top airport at Mangalore, the site of Saturday's crash, had other geographical challenges, and critics say the runway, though adequate for landing the Boeing 737 that crashed, was not long or wide enough to leave any room for error.



# Question mark on air safety

## Mangalore Air India Express crash has exposed chinks in the air traffic safety rules

"This was no accident, but the direct result of the deliberate failure of officials at the high levels," said a statement of Environment Support Group which had sought to block the construction of the runway.

While it was yet to be established if the accident was related to wider problems in the country's aviation industry, experts say a lack of training, overworked staff and inadequate infrastructure only compounds the situation.

For instance, only seven radars serve Indian air space and only big airports have the latest low-visibility landing systems, a senior official of the Airports Authority of India told Reuters.

"A disaster was waiting to happen and we have been very lucky to have had no major accidents in the past 10 years," the official involved with aviation security said on condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity.

In April 2008, then director general of civil aviation, Kanu Gohain, told the Mint

newspaper that India had just three inspectors for 10 commercial airlines and 600 planes.

That number has now gone up, but many remain under-trained and a backlog of lapsed inspections may take years to clear.

A 2006 safety audit by the International Civil Aviation Organisation listed India as worst on "technical personnel qualification and training".

As the airline sector expanded, a shortage of pilots was met by hiring foreign pilots, some 565 of them flying now. But the government has ordered airlines to replace them with Indians by next summer, raising concerns about how the country will be able to produce enough qualified pilots so quickly.

There are also calls to make inquiries into air accidents transparent. "To my knowledge in the last 50 years no inquiry report has been made public," Kaul said. "There is also the need for an independent safety board."



**IN BIG LEAGUE:** NAVIN RAMGOOLAM, WIFE WITH THE OBAMAS

# HISTORIC WIN FOR ALLIANCE

With 41 out of 60 seats, the Alliance de l'Avenir, led by Navinchandra Ramgoolam has scripted a landslide...



**SHEER JOY:** ALLIANCE SUPPORTERS CELEBRATE THE VICTORY

### **RAJIV AGNIHOTRI** in Mauritius

**T**he Alliance de l'Avenir led by Dr Navin Ramgoolam has won in the general elections by a comfortable majority. It secured 41 out of the 60 directly elected seats in the Assembly. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the strength that the Alliance du Coeur had been gathering during the past three weeks, aided in this by an aggressive campaign on its behalf by the pro-MMM press, namely the l'express media group and Week-end.

The alliance that the Alliance Sociale contracted with the MSM did not directly contribute to raise the number of votes secured by the Alliance de l'Avenir if only for the fact that there is little differentiation between the voters of Labour and the MSM when both are aligned on



**CLOSE ENCOUNTER:** NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM WITH INDIA PRIME MINISTER MANMOHAN SINGH

the same side. However, this alliance was of a highly strategic importance, it being given that any alternative potential MMM-MSM alliance would have so considerably trimmed down the margins as to be able to upset the applecart. Had an MMM-MSM alliance materialised instead, it would have turned Labour's incumbency into a heavy liability and changed the outcome of voting unpredictably.

The election has shown if it was at all necessary, with what speed and effectiveness a vast propaganda machine can be mounted and launched by the opposing camp. It stopped short of nothing, including the whipping up of past communal reflexes. In that sense, despite the defeat of the MMM, the clock has been set back on the question of national unity. It was amazing how identity suddenly assumed an overwhelming importance in the election.

It became so important that political parties including the Alliance de l'Avenir had to concede on some of the most opportunistic vindications made from a purely ethnic standpoint. Inroads were sought to be made even within individual communities in order to tribalise whole communities into sub-groups. It can only be hoped that the wounds inflicted by these ethnic tactics will not fester and arrest the nation's progress towards a more glob-

alised outlook with feet firmly planted in a growing culture of sharing, understanding and meritocracy.

There have been times in the country's political history when ethnicity has been given a prime position against a poor eco-

The election has shown if it was at all necessary, with what speed and effectiveness a vast propaganda machine can be mounted and launched by the opposing camp. It stopped short of nothing, including the whipping up of past communal reflexes.

nomical background facing the country. It was easy to flog up ethnic feelings of apartness when unemployment was on the rise and economic prospects bleak as it was the case in the 1960s and the late 1970s.

However, this time on, the feeling was aroused despite much better prevailing economic conditions. It was perhaps the

only plank that could have salvaged the quickly patched-up Alliance du Coeur to gather steam enough to make a brave showing in the elections for which it had been caught napping.

The results show that even this device was not enough to turn the tide in its favour. One hopes however that the virus of ethnic politics as we have just witnessed it is not here to stay, especially with the younger generation that is going to vote on an altogether different platform in 2015. Unfortunately, this factor has required that both major political alliances concentrate their campaign on objectives of immediate importance without attending to much broader issues of national importance. The sights have not been set on a choice of more long-lasting national goals; they have been focussed on welfare spending.

There is one positive factor that has emerged from the 2010 elections however. Abstracting from the ethnic factor which was infused during the past four weeks in the campaign, voters in several constituencies have clearly signalled to candidates that they will not tolerate candidates who appear only at the time of elections to solicit votes but are absent or in-existent during the bulk of the mandate from their constituencies. Many deputies would have learnt at their expense that a



**VOTE TO VICTORY:** NAVEENCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM CASTING HIS VOTE

high price needs to be paid to compensate for such absences or inadequate identification with the circumstances of their local voters. The permanent proximity which politicians of yesterday rightly used to cultivate with their constituents has disappeared in the present set-up.

Voters have indicated quite clearly that they are not prepared to tolerate absentee deputies who come over on the eve of elections to give a semblance of involvement in their wards. In this sense, a committed presence translated into tangible progress made in each constituency will have a real effect during the next elections. This means that political parties may not be able to opportunistically designate candidates in the different constituencies at the last minute; they may well suffer defeat. Nor may political par-

Voters have indicated quite clearly that they are not prepared to tolerate absentee deputies who come over on the eve of elections to give a semblance of involvement in their wards. In this sense, a committed presence translated into tangible progress made in each constituency will have real effect during next polls

ties defer the execution of economic projects till the last minute as a demonstration of "work-in-progress" and thus hope to impress voters. Without the essential planning that makes for timely implementation of well integrated, cost-saving and validly prioritised projects, political parties may not be so lucky the next time over. The age-configuration of voters and the tools they will employ to communicate will not yield to the assumption that personal charisma will be enough to win over. Next time over, voters cannot be taken for granted.

The Alliance de l'Avenir has won a mandate to govern the affairs of the country for the next 5 years. It should govern and not lose its way in internal bickering, as we have seen it happen so many times with different governments. While much

credit goes to Navin Ramgoolam for having neutralised the recent irrational campaign based on ethnicity, he should take the opportunity to democratise the decision-making process within his alliance so that people are convinced that new and capable figures will emerge to take on the various challenges which will inevitably face the country in a world that is not really out of the economic woods. The elections of 2015 will be decided on a platform unlike those of 2005 and 2010 which bear a lot of resemblance to each other.

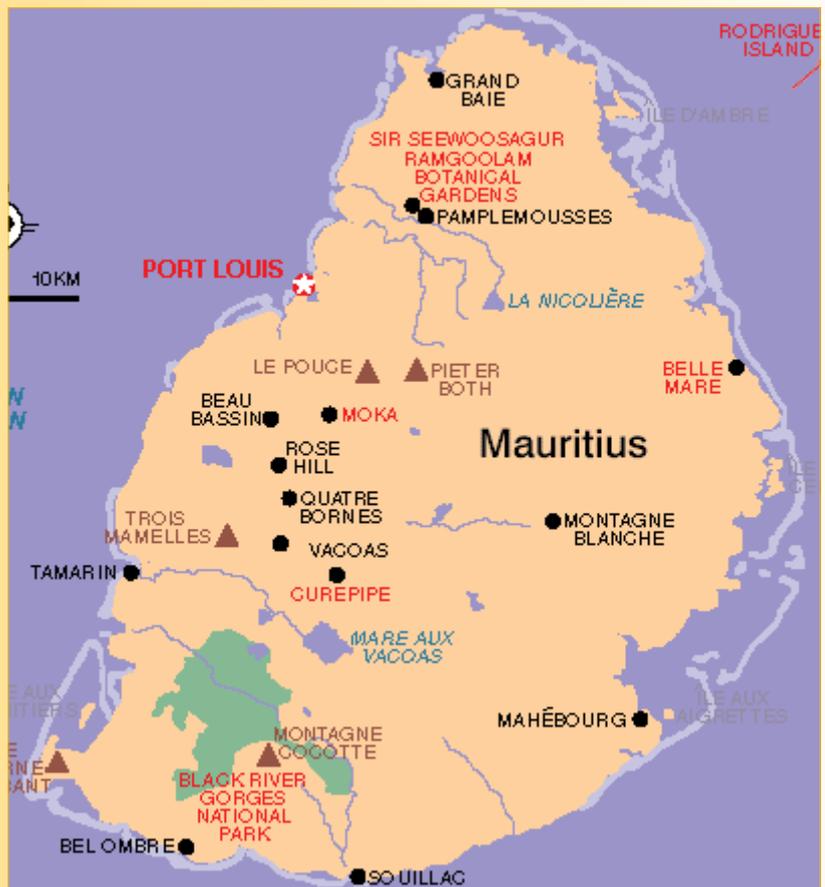
The more there is projected an image of cohesiveness and authentic team spirit of the new governing alliance, the less difficult it will be for Navin Ramgoolam to get on successfully to 2015. There is a dearth of talents the world over; Mauritius cannot

The new voters will need to be inspired to aim at higher goals in a spirit of solidarity, rather than being incited by some socio-cultural leaders and priests to believe falsely at each turn of the electoral process that some weird conspiracy would be hatching up against them or those belonging to their flock by some unidentified adversary. T

be an exception to this condition. It would therefore not be appropriate to invite the tribalism that almost dismembered our society in the course of the last electoral campaign. We will inevitably have to inculcate new values that will match the ambitions of the younger generation which will form the core voter group the next time over. The new voters will need to be inspired to aim at higher goals in a spirit of solidarity, rather than being incited by some socio-cultural leaders and priests to believe falsely at each turn of the electoral process that some weird conspiracy would be hatching up against them or those belonging to their flock by some unidentified adversary. Tangible results will count as a demonstration of management capability in social and economic affairs of the nation. For the present, a spirit of magnanimity will pull together the fabric that has just been unfairly torn apart putting at risk the social fabric. The work of confident reconstruction can help save the situation.

*(Writer is bureau chief in Mauritius & MD, OEMCL with inputs from local press)*

## From local press...



The Alliance de l'Avenir, led by the Prime Minister Dr Navin Ramgoolam, won a clear-cut victory at the general election which was held on May 5, with 41 seats out of 60. The MMM-led Alliance du Coeur won 18 seats and the big surprise came with the election of Cehl Meeah, who is now at the head of the FSM ( Front Solidarite Mauricienne). This is the first time a small party not belonging to a major alliance wins a seat at the general elections since independence.

All the three leaders of the Labour-PMSD-MSM alliance topped the polls in their respective constituencies, Ramgoolam in Pamplemousses Triolet, Pravind Jugnauth in Quartier Militaire-Moka and Xavier Duval in Belle rose Quatres Bornes. The MMM leader also topped the list in his constituency of Stanley Rose Hill but several of his top team lost. His designated deputy Prime Minister, Ashok Jugnauth lost in Quartier Militaire-Moka and his designated Finance minister, Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo lost in Riviere des Anguilles-Souillac.

At a press conference he on May 6, the Prime Minister and leader of l'Alliance de l'Avenir Dr Navin Ramgoolam stated that he was fully satisfied that his alliance had rallied support from both the rural and urban areas and that all communities had voted for the Labour Party/ PMSD/ MSM alliance. " Together we will build the future," he promised. He added that all through the electoral campaign he has noticed that a majority of the population had adhered to the programme of government of l'Alliance de l'Avenir, which he insisted has been prepared 100% by Mauritians.

" There has not only been adhesion to our programme but there has been enthusiasm. I received telephone messages, letters and e-mails from Mauritians disapproving of the demagogic campaign of our opponents."

" Whether in the villages or in the towns, the electorate has trusted us. Some try to insinuate that there has been a division but we have elected five candidates in the four constituencies of Port Louis. In Belle Rose/ Quatre



**PROMISE TO FIGHT BACK** : PAUL BERENGER, LEADER OF L'ALLIANCE DU COEUR, AT A RALLY

Bornes, we have two elected candidates, in Vacoas/ Floreal we have two elected candidates and in La Caverne/ Phoenix we have three elected candidates," said the Prime Minister.

" The entire population has adhered to our philosophy of unity, equality and modernity. I have been able to rally a majority of the population. It is vote for national unity. At the start of the campaign I said that we should not focus on petty matters but we should indulge in a debate on ideas." He blasted a " section of the press" whom he accused of behaving like agents of l'Alliance du Coeur under the cover of " independence". " The duty of an independent press is to inform and not to try to manipulate public opinion. These are the same people who will give lessons on freedom of expression and on the liberty of the press."

Dr Ramgoolam explained that there are still numerous challenges ahead, mainly on the international front. "The situation is still volatile and we still do not know when the sustained recovery will start. There are positive signs in the US but for us we must see what happens in Europe." Security of all citizens remained one of his priorities, he said, adding that he will continue reforms in the Police Force. He also listed his other priorities, which are education, health, youth, empowerment of women and the democratization of the economy. He insisted that economic growth should go hand-in-hand with social justice.

## Our struggle will continue: Berenger

**O**n his part, speaking to his constituents after his victory in constituency No. 19 ( Stanley/ Rose Hill), where he topped the list, the leader of L'Alliance du Coeur, Mr Paul Berenger, said the general elections " were not free and fair because of role of the MBC". " We conceded defeat on the national level but the MBC has made the elections not to be free and fair. Beyond that there has been dirty money." " I would like to make an appeal. We should not do anything or say anything that will divide the population in whatever way. I am proud that on the list of elected candidates of l'Alliance du Coeur there are all communities." " We should not be discouraged. We should not feel bitter," advised Mr Berenger. He announced that the politburo of the MMM will meet this afternoon ( Friday) to analyse the election results. He also announced that l'Alliance du Coeur' will hold a press conference on Saturday morning. " At each difficult moment we say the struggle must continue," said Mr Berenger.

## Representation in parliament

The Electoral Commission met to allocate the 12 Best Loser seats. Parliament contains 70 MLAs: 60 are elected by direct vote in the island of Mauritius, 2 by direct vote in the island of Rodrigues and the remaining 8 seats are allocated according to the Best Loser system.

Before the allocation of these seats, the representation in parliament is as follows: MMM: 18 seats, MR ( Rodrigues), 2 seats, Labour-led alliance :41( Labour: 27, MSM:12, PMSD:2) and FSM of Cehl Meeah, 1.



**CARNIVAL:** ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN FULL SWING IN MAURITIUS

## Rodrigues: MR on top

In the constituency of Rodrigues, it is the MR ( Mouvement Rodriguais) which has elected its two candidates, Christian Leopold and Nicolas Von Mally. They won respectively 10, 477 and 10, 456 votes. The two candidates of the OPR ( Organisation du Peuple Rodriguais), Francisco Francois and Soopramanien Sooprayen won 9,468 and 9, 345 votes respectively.

## Cabinet sworn in

The new members of the cabinet were sworn in on May 11 in front of the President of the Republic, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. The cabinet comprises 25 members including the Prime minister. 15 ministries have gone to the Labour party, 7 to the MSM, 2 to the PMSD and 1 to the Mouvement Rodriguais.

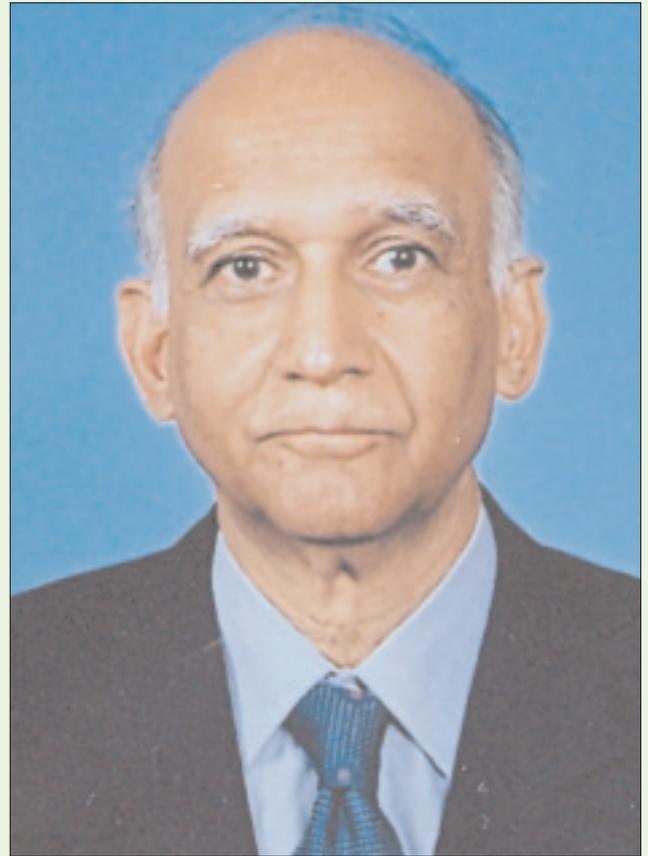
Twelve MPs who were not ministers in the outgoing government, as well as the new Attorney General Mr Yatin Varma, took the oath of allegiance: they are Pravind Jugnauth, who has also been appointed as Vice Prime Minister, Nandoomar Bodha, Showkutally Soodhun, Deva Virahsawmy, Leela Devi Dookun Luchoomun, Santi Bai Hanoomanjee, Mookhesswur Choonee, Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum, Louis Joseph Von Mally, Ashit Gungah, Shakeel Mohamed and Michael Yueng Sik Yuen.

Eight ministers have kept their original portfolios. Dr Rashid Beebeejaun has been reappointed Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, while Anil Bachoo keeps the Ministry of Public Utilities, Land Transport and Shipping and also " inherits" the National Development Unit. Dr Arvin Boolell remains at Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Abu Kasenally ( Housing and Lands), Dr Vasant Bunwaree ( Education and Human Resources), Satish Faugoo ( Agro- Industry and Food Security) and Devanand Ritoo ( Youth and Sports). Mr Aimee, who has been appointed again as Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, loses the portfolio of Rodrigues, which has been given to Mr Nicholas Von Mally, the leader of the Mouvement Rodriguais ( MR). He will also hold the portfolio of Fisheries.

Mrs Sheila Bappoo, who was Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare, is back at the ministry of Women's Rights, now restyled as the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

Mr Duval, leader of the PMSD, finds himself with a new, challenging super ministry - that of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.

## THE NEW CABINET



**FORMIDABLE TWOSOME** : NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM AND AHMED RASHID BEEBEEJAUN

1. **Dr the Hon Navinchandra RAMGOOLAM**, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications
2. **Dr the Hon Ahmed Rashid BEEBEEJAUN**, GCSK, FRCP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
3. **The Hon Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc DUVAL**, GCSK, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
4. **The Hon Pravind Kumar JUGNAUTH**, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
5. **The Hon Anil Kumar BACHOO**, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
6. **Dr the Hon Arvin BOOLELL**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
7. **Dr the Hon Abu Twalib KASENALLY**, Minister of Housing and Lands
8. **The Hon Mrs Sheilabai BAPPOO**, GOSK, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
9. **The Hon Nandcoomar BODHA**, Minister of Tourism and Leisure
10. **Dr the Hon Vasant Kumar BUNWAREE**, Minister of Education and Human Resources
11. **The Hon Satya Veyash FAUGOO**, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
12. **The Hon Showkutally SOODHUN**, Minister of Industry and Commerce
13. **The Hon Devanand VIRAHSAWMI**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
14. **Dr the Hon Rajeshwar JEETAH**, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
15. **The Hon Satyaprakash RITOO**, Minister of Youth and Sports
16. **The Hon Mrs Leela Devi DOOKUN-LUCHOOMUN**, Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
17. **The Hon Louis Hervé AIMÉE**, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands
18. **The Hon Mrs Santi Bai HANOOMANJEE**, Minister of Health and Quality of Life
19. **The Hon Mookhesswur CHOONEE**, Minister of Arts and Culture
20. **The Hon Tassarajen PILLAY CHEDUMBRUM**, Minister of Information and Communication Technology
21. **The Hon Louis Joseph VON-MALLY**, GOSK, Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues
22. **The Hon Ashit Kumar GUNGAH**, Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms
23. **The Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack MO-HAMED**, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
24. **The Hon Yatindra Nath VARMA**, Attorney General
25. **The Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao YEUNG SIK YUEN**, Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection

# VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

## WHAT DOES THE VERDICT OF THE MAURITIUS POLLS 2010 SAYS?

Roshni Banymandhub

**T**he dice is cast. The ballot boxes have revealed their secrets and now the time has come for the winners to sit down together and to draw the necessary lessons. Vox populi Vox Dei goes a Roman saying. The English translation reads, the voice of the people is the voice of God. It is also said of Democracy that it is not the best form of government but it is better than any which has been invented so far.

I leave it to political Pundits to analyse what has been the psyche of the voter at the polls. In fact, since the verdict of the polls was known, everyone – layman or political analyst alike – has been trying to find the reasons behind the victory of the Labour Party, MSM and PMSD alliance led by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. People may speculate but it is only the individual face to face with his or her conscience in the Polling-booth who knows the reason why he or she is taking such a decision. The reason may be emotional or logical. Absenteeism in itself carries a message which has to be interpreted. The Alliance of the

People may speculate but it is only the individual face to face with his or her conscience in the Polling-booth who knows the reason why he or she is taking such a decision. The reason may be emotional or logical. Absenteeism in itself carries a message which has to be interpreted. The Alliance of the future has the task of translating into reality the ideas mentioned in its manifesto...

future has the task of translating into reality the ideas mentioned in its manifesto. We have no doubt that these will improve the way of life of the Mauritian people and bridge the gap between the poor and the rich. Also, the little inconveniences of the people have to be looked into and steps taken to make their life more comfortable.

The new Government issued from the polls, indubitably, can look into these areas and take the necessary steps. After all, politics implies managing the affairs of the city.

### PROUD TO BE MAURITIAN

For quite some time now, I have noticed that as a nation we have gained in maturity. barring a few stray incidents, the electoral campaign was devoid of squabbles among the supporters of the different parties. Many are the examples of peaceful co-existence among them that can be quoted. This bodes good for the future. Elections come and go, alliances are made and un-made but as one people, as one nation we have to live together



**VOICE OF MAURITIUS:** PRIME MINISTER NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM AT THE UN HEADQUARTERS

er here. It is important that no tension should prevail among people.

I have mentioned it to many persons that I am proud of the people who live in my locality. I am proud to be a Mauritian. In my locality no one openly expressed his or her political inclinations. When we met our neighbors we talked about all and sundry matters except politics. The same situation prevails in the aftermath of the elections. I am given to understand that the same spirit has prevailed in other localities. I cannot but be happy at this thought. We can teach many countries a lesson or two about how to behave at the polls. People may not be sharing the same ideology but this does not mean that they should not be on speaking terms. This childish attitude is behind us.

I also admired the magnanimity of both the winners and losers. One has to know how to be humble in victory and to accept defeat with equanimity. There are moments in life when the individual is confronted with both though at different times perhaps. Let our minds be set on the future for the greater glory of this country. It will not be out of place to say that a great future awaits it, provided we set aside our petty quarrels and join together. In unity, it is said, lies our strength. I for one cannot differ.

**(The writer is the Resident Editor of Opinion Express Group, Mauritius)**



# Shock defeat for Rama Sithanen

It is a pity and a loss as well as such an intelligent and self made man finished or almost ended his career in such a humiliating manner. He himself should share the responsibility. The PM had tried to spare him such degradation by shifting him to a different constituency for he was pretty well aware that a strong anti Sithanen current was blowing in Quatre Bornes for the fiscal measures taken though with his consent had affected a large number of middle class civil servants.

Many had had to sell cars and bungalows as they found the new taxes imposed upon them difficult to bear and they had vowed revenge. The PM has his network of informants in every ministry and knows what happens therein and takes action in the light of information provided to him. As a friend, in gratitude to Sithanen for having saved the country from the traumatism of a recession, he tried to rescue him. Alas! Sithanen was a victim to Hubnis Syndrome. He did not see the danger lurking at him. He consid-

ered himself powerful, indispensable and overconfident. It is these that spelled his doom.

He thought that the PM would later woo him, court him and ....plead to him. He was mistaken. He could not foresee that none is indispensable however good he may be. There are so many top civil servants, top professionals who have left us but time does not stop and the country goes on hobbling and wobbling. After all life goes on. This is not all. not enough. Sithanen went further and history won't forgive him, he behaved exactly like somebody out of his mind.

He joined the opposition and campaigned against his former colleagues by asking the Q.B and B.R electorate to vote for MMM candidates. This is beneath the dignity of a man of his caliber. He will go down in history as the poor man who reached the top by sheer hard work and finally arrogance and overconfidence undid him. Sometimes one is tempted to question what he has after all done to help the poor come out of their vulnerable and

DESPITE THUMPING WIN OF THE LAI-ANCE LED BY NAVIN RAM-GOOLAM (ABOVE), FINANCE MINISTER SITHANNEN (RIGHT) COULD NOT MAKE IT



downtrodden situation.

On the contrary, it is felt that he avenged his poverty by inflicting untold hardships. During his term of office, price of basic goods had risen beyond limit and the poor grumbled under it. He did not come to their rescue. He had the consent of the cabinet and foresee the consequences of his measures and inform the cabinet with a view to making the situation tenable. Yet he did not move a finger and who knows their tears and sobs fell like a curse on him. It become a trap set up by himself hence the dramatic downfall for Sithanen was designed by ultimately-himself.

**B.Gopaul & Ramlakhan** from Mauritius

# MAN WITH MIDAS TOUCH

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DEVANAND VIRAHSWAMY IS A MASTER STRATEGIST



**D**evanand Virahswamy is appointed as the new environment minister in the new Mauritius cabinet post general election 2010 victory. He played extremely vital role in shaping up the election strategy for Labour Party being the general secretary of the Labour party led alliance that emerged victorious in the recently concluded elections. Prime Minister Hon'ble Dr Navin Ramgoolam has rewarded him with important ministerial berth in the cabinet. The new minister elaborated his priorities in brief chat with **Rajiv Agnihotri**, our bureau chief, Mauritius in, Port Louis.

**Question: Congratulations for your party's spectacular victory in the recent elections, how satisfying is the experience for you being the general secretary of the party?**

**Ans:** Many thanks, i am grateful to the people of my constituency for electing me as member of Parliament and I am highly obliged to the entire population of our country for electing Dr Ramgoolam led Labour Party alliance to the power. The elections were remarkable because there was no violence and bitterness hence reflective of the maturity that our countrymen have acquired in understanding the true value of democracy. Today I can proudly claim a decisive leadership for Mauritius in the entire African region to show case Mauritius as the best governed and managed country.



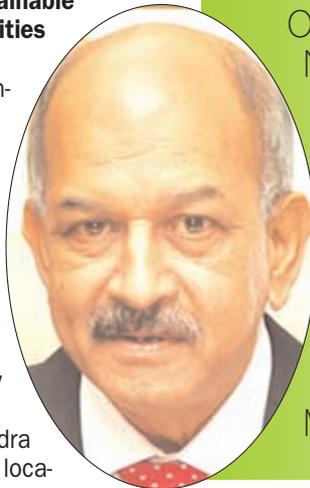
**CLOSE LOOK:** DEVANAND VIRAHSWAMY BROWSING THROUGH THE PAGES OF 'OPINION EXPRESS'

**Question: Now you are Environment & sustainable development minister of the country, what priorities have you short listed for your ministry?**

Ans: When the world is debating the environment degradation, i would focus on building unique strategy for Mauritius and its coastal asset resource to preserve nature and multiply sustained development via alternate means to generate eco friendly revenue module.

**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 and SADC 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



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companies to set up regional head quaters in Mauritius for expanding in Africa.

**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?**



**CANDID:** ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DEVANAND VI-RAHSWAMY IN A TETE-A-TETE WITH OE BUREAU CHIEF RAJIV AGNIHOTRI IN ST LOUIS

We will work with the global community to impart basic lessons of democracy 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.

Ans: Yes, lately the international relations are govern 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 :** 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: 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 will work with the global community to impart basic lessons of democracy 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.



# Indian-origin Kamla creates history in Trinidad and Tobago

Divyansh Bajpai

A

s the euphoria unfolds in Mauritius with the remarkable election victory for Indian-origin leader Dr Navin Ramgoolam, another Indian-origin leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar was elected as the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago in the recently concluded election in Trinidad and Tobago. She is the first woman PM who had a glorious victory defeating the 43 years of ruling government.

Leading the political coalition People's Partnership, Kamla Persad got the majority winning 29 of the 41 parliamentary seats in the election on Monday. The 58-year-old Hindu woman, who is a granny of two, is grateful for the womens' immense support across the country for choosing her as the PM.

With an excellent educational and professional background in West Indies, Ms. Persad-Bissessar was the first woman attorney general. She had also served as minister of legal affairs as well as minister of education earlier.

An Indian-origin PM hails from 1, 48,000 Indian labourers, who were shifted there to work on sugar and cocoa plantations during 1845-1917.

Kamla Persad-Bissessar was to become the first female prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago as her five-party coalition headed for a strong victory in snap elections in the former British colony. Skip related content

A subdued Prime Minister Patrick Manning conceded defeat some five hours after the close of polls. "What I do know is that we've lost the elections," Manning said on live television. "The peo-

ple have spoken." Meanwhile, jubilant crowds gathered at the headquarters of Persad-Bissessar's United National Congress (UNC), the main opposition party, which heads the People's Partnership coalition.

Persad-Bissessar's campaign tapped into voters' worries about rising gang violence and corruption scandals here. The 58-year-old has promised to increase pensions and create a multi-million-dollar fund for sick children in a campaign focused on change. "I take full responsibility for the defeat," Manning said, after calling the risky vote in the middle of his five-year-term in the energy-rich Caribbean nation. The 63-year-old veteran politician from the People's National Movement (PNM) had grown increasingly unpopular over accusations of neglecting healthcare, after pouring millions of dollars into giant building projects and hosting two major summits last year. The winner needs a simple majority of seats in parliament, where until now the PNM held 26 seats, with the rest going to the UNC. The tables started to turn as key marginal seats began to go to the yellow coalition of Persad-Bissessar before the final count had ended. Just over one million people were eligible to vote, while first estimates put turnout at around 60 percent. Foreign observers expected little

Manning's PNM draws most of its support from Afro-Trinidadians while the UNC of Persad-Bissessar largely relies on Indo-Trinidadian backing. Her coalition campaigned strongly for multi-ethnic support. It also includes the multi-racial Congress of the People, and the smaller

change in energy policy in the oil- and gas-rich nation, regardless of the outcome. Politics here have long been divided along lines of Indian or African descent.

Manning's PNM draws most of its support from Afro-Trinidadians while the UNC of Persad-Bissessar largely relies on Indo-Trinidadian backing. Her coalition campaigned strongly for multi-ethnic support. It also includes the multi-racial Congress of the People, and the smaller National Joint Action Committee, the Tobago Organization of the People and the Movement for Social Justice. After loud campaign rallies with partying in the spirit of the nation's famous carnival, the election took place calmly, with no music near polling stations and an alcohol sales ban in place. Foreign diplomats overseeing the vote reported no major incidents, while the Electoral and Boundaries Commission called for a probe into ballots reportedly not initialed by officials in five seats, including two key marginals. It was unclear why Manning decided to dissolve parliament in April, shortly before a vote of no confidence he was expected to win but also amid corruption allegations, which have damaged both main parties in recent years.

*(Writer is our US bureau chief)*



**HISTORIC FEAT:** KAMALA PERSAD-BISSESSAR



# Children and Fear of War & Terrorism

Jo Biring

**T**he recent circular by Ministry of home affairs in India putting schools on high alert have fueled speculation about intelligence agencies apprehension of new terror threat. Terrorist attacks in our country and threats or realities of war are frightening experiences for all Indians and innocent people throughout the World. Children may be especially fearful that threatened or actual military action overseas will result in more personal loss and violence at home. Because repeated scenes of destruction of lives and property are featured in the news media, they understand that "enemies of the United States" and enemies of India can cause harm in India AS WELL AS TO NRI Indians Overseas.

Adults need to help children feel safe at a time when the world seems to be a more dangerous place. Parents and teachers in particular must help youngsters understand current events factually, how events do or do not impact their lives, and how to handle their emotional reactions. The degree to which children are affected will vary depending on personal circumstances. Children who have suffered a personal loss from, or had firsthand exposure to, terrorist acts or military actions will be much more vulnerable. Especially American/ British Children whose parents may be involved or serving with the armed forces in conflicts in Iraq/Afghanistan so are at greater risk and those children whose parents are involved in emergency response or public safety.

Children are not responsible for their parents actions so All children, however, are likely to be affected in some way by war or terrorism. For many, the guidance of caring adults will make the difference between being overwhelmed and developing life-long emotional and psychological coping skills. Teachers and caretakers can help restore children's sense of security by modeling calm and in-control behaviour. It is crucial to provide opportunity for children to discuss their concerns and to help them separate real from imagined fears. It is also important to limit exposure to media coverage of violence. It will also be important to teach children that not all from one particular religion or country are the same so that discrimination factors are erased from the child's mind.

## EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

Emotional responses vary in nature and severity from child to child. Nonetheless, there are some similarities in how children (and adults) feel when their lives are impacted by war or the threat of war:

**1 Fear:** Fear may be the predominant reaction—fear for the safety of those in the military as well as fear for their own safety. Children's fantasies of war may include a mental picture of a bomb being dropped on their home. While their worries are probably exaggerated, they are often based on real images of terrorist attacks or war scenes. When children hear rumours at school and pick up bits of information from television, their imaginations may run wild. They may think the worst, however unrealistic it may be. Any publicized threat of war or terrorism close to home may also add to their fear.

**1 Loss of control:** Military actions are something over which children—and most adults—have no control. Lack of control can be overwhelming and confusing. These feelings were experienced by most people in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Children may grasp at any control that they have, including refusing to cooperate, go to school, part with favourite toys, or leave their parents.

**1 Anger:** Anger is a common reaction. Unfortunately, anger is often expressed at those to whom children are closest. Children may direct anger toward classmates and neighbours because they can't express their anger toward terrorists or countries with whom we are at war. Some children may show anger toward parents who are in the military, even to the extent that they do not want to write letters. Knowing that those who are involved in the military are volunteers only helps to justify anger. Patriotism and duty are abstract concepts, especially for younger children who are experiencing the concrete reality of separation from a loved one.

**1 Loss of stability:** War or military deployment interrupts routines. It is unsettling. Children can feel insecure when their usual schedules and activities are disrupted, increasing their level of stress and need for reassurance.

**1 Isolation:** Children who have a family member in the military, but who don't live near a military base, may feel isolated.

Children of reserve members called to active duty may not know others in the same situation. Such children may feel jealous of friends' undisturbed families and may strike out at signs of normalcy around them. Another group of children who may feel isolated are dependents of military families who have accompanied a remaining parent back to a hometown or who are staying with relatives while both parents are gone. Not only do these children experience separation from parents, but they also experience the loss of familiar faces and surroundings.

" Confusion: This can occur on two levels. First, children may feel confused about terrorist attacks and war, what further dangers might arise, and when the violence will stop. Second, children may have trouble understanding the difference between violence as entertainment and the real events taking place on the news. Today's children live in the world of Armageddon, Independence Day, Air Force One, and cartoon Super Heroes. Some of the modern media violence is unnervingly real. Youngsters may have difficulty separating reality from fantasy,

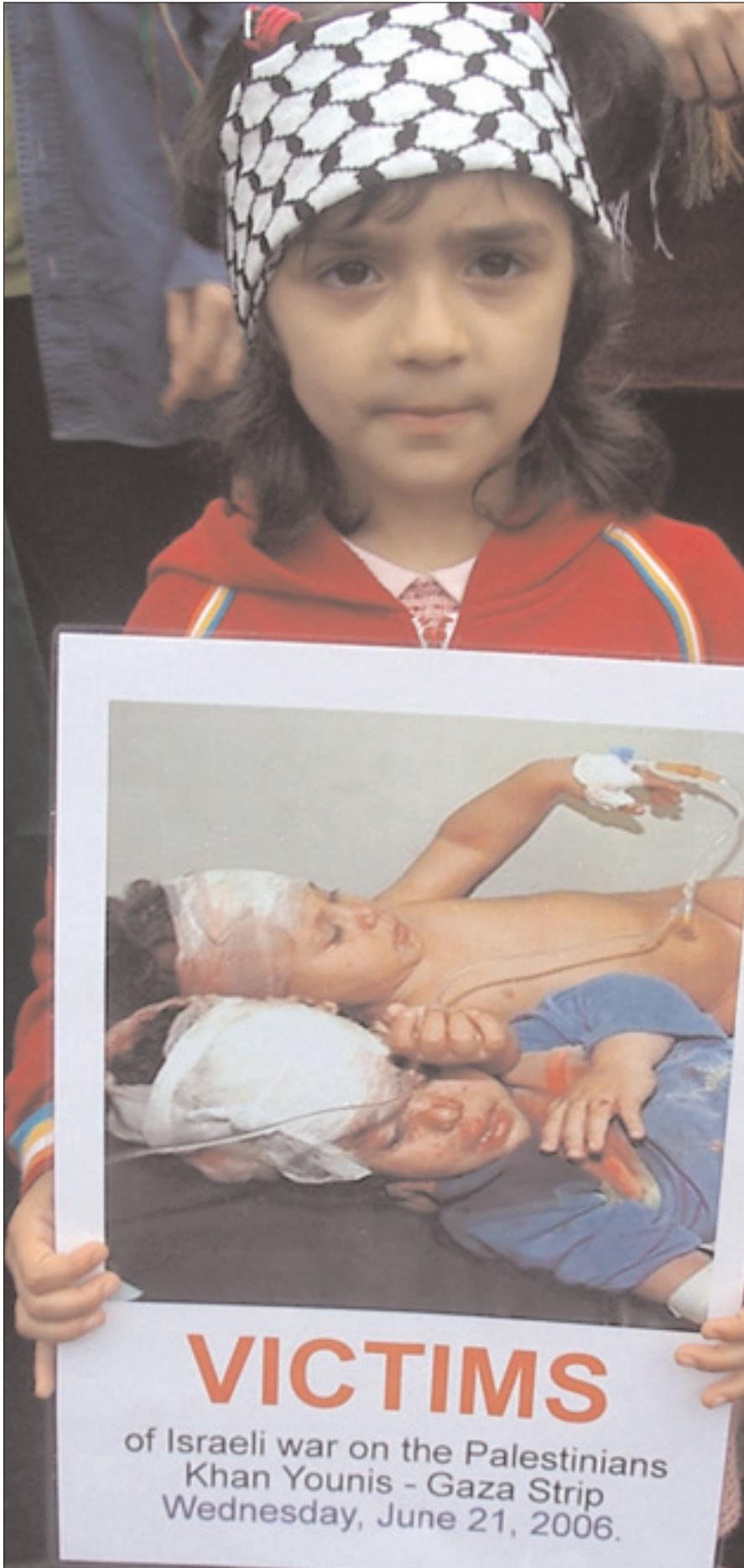
cartoon heroes and villains from the government soldiers and real terrorists. Separating the realities of war from media fantasy may require adult help.

## What Can Parents and Teachers Do?

Everyone, including adults, feels stressed during times of crisis and uncertainty. If your children or students seem to need help beyond what is normally available at home or school, seek mental health services in your community. School psychologists, counsellors and social workers can help identify appropriate services and help with the referral process. For most



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children, adults can provide adequate support by the following actions:

## ACKNOWLEDGE CHILDREN'S FEELINGS

- 1 Knowing what to say is often difficult. When no other words come to mind, a hug and saying "This is really hard for you/us" will work. Acknowledge that you don't like war either, but we hope that our military can stop the terrorists or help bring peace to other countries.
- 1 Try to recognize the feelings underlying children's actions and put them into words. Say something like, "I can see you are feeling really scared about this," or "It is hard to think that your dad had to go so far away to help our country," or "I know it will feel great when your mom comes home."
- 1 Sometimes children may voice concern about what will happen to them if a parent does not return. If this occurs, try saying, "You will be well taken care of. You won't be alone. Let me tell you our plan."
- 1 Some children will be afraid that their country will be attacked. Tell them this is a real concern and life offers no absolute promises. Nonetheless, reassure them that our government has taken many steps to prevent attacks from terrorists and that the military conflict is very far away. For younger children, saying that you love them and will keep them safe is often sufficient. For older children, you can discuss specifics such as heightened security in airports and significant public buildings.
- 1 At times when your children or students are most upset, don't deny the seriousness of the situation. Saying to children, "Don't cry, everything will be okay," does not reflect how the child feels and does not make them feel better. Nevertheless, don't forget to express hope and faith that things will be okay.
- 1 Older children, in particular, may need help clarifying what they believe about war and the roles of the United States/Canadian/British in the specific conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Questions such as, "Could my parent shoot someone?" and "Are we killing innocent people in other countries?" are issues which may need discus-



sion.

- 1 Always be honest with children. Share your fears and concerns while reassuring them that responsible adults are in charge.

### HELP CHILDREN TO FEEL PERSONALLY SAFE

- 1 Differentiate between terrorism and war. Our homes and schools are not at risk. Only a very few people in the world are terrorists. The war itself will be carried out far away.
- 1 Help children understand that precautions are being taken to prevent terrorism (e.g., bomb-sniffing dogs, passport checks, heightened airport security) or attacks on the United States. While these efforts might seem scary or frustrating to children, explain that these precautions might actually make them safer now than they were before.
- 1 Deal with fears such as the end of the world. Discuss what realistic modern technology of war versus science fiction is. If children are imagining Star Wars-type battles, help them to understand that even the most sophisticated weapons available are not capable of

Top children from stereotyping people from specific cultures or countries. Children can easily generalize negative statements. Adding tolerance curriculum to school lessons during this time can help prevent harassment of students and improve their sense of safety.

reaching distant targets as seen in the movies. Let children share their fears regarding war in our own country, most of which are unrealistic and a result of rumour and anxiety. Put these fears in perspective as to what is realistic.

- 1 Let children who are worried about a loved one know that the chance of returning from a war against terrorism is very high. Advances in medicine and technology have greatly reduced potential losses from military actions.

Acknowledge that the loss of any life is sad, but that their individual family member is likely to be fine.

- 1 If participation in a faith community is part of your family life, talk to your faith leader about how to help your child think about the concepts of death and killing, in age-appropriate terms. This can be very important to calming children's fears for their own safety and that of loved ones.
- 1 Try to maintain normal routines and schedules to provide a sense of stability and security.
- 1 Stop children from stereotyping people from specific cultures or countries. Children can easily generalize negative statements. Adding tolerance curriculum to school lessons during this time can help prevent harassment of students and improve their sense of safety.

### HELP CHILDREN MAINTAIN A SENSE OF CONTROL BY TAKING SOME ACTION:

- 1 Send letters, cookies or magazines to those in the military and public safety jobs.



- 1 Help older children find a family who has a parent on active duty and arrange some volunteer babysitting times for that family or offer to provide meals occasionally.

### IF A FAMILY MEMBER IS AWAY, MAKE PLANS FOR SOME SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

- 1 Gatherings with other families who have a loved one on active duty can help provide support for you as well as for your children.
- 1 Special parent and child times can provide an extra sense of security, which might be needed. Let your child know that you will set aside a particular half hour each day to play. Make the time as pleasant and child centered as possible. Return phone calls later and make your child the real focus of that special time.
- 1 Involve children in planning how to cope. Control and ownership are fostered when children help to plan strategies for dealing with a situation. Children often have practical and creative ideas for coping.

### PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CHILDREN WHO MAY FEEL ISOLATED

- 1 Children who are new in school due to relocation may benefit from a special network of "friends" to help orient the student to new school routines and encourage participation in school activities.

- 1 Children who are one of a few with parents involved in the military may need extra attention to their feelings of separation and fear of loss.

### EXPECT AND RESPOND TO CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

- 1 All children will likely display some signs of stress. Some immature, aggressive, oppositional behaviors are normal reactions to the uncertainty of this situation.

- 1 It is important to maintain consistent expectations for behavior. Be sure children understand that the same rules apply.

- 1 Some children may have difficulty at bedtime, particularly those whose parents are on active duty. Maintain a regular bedtime routine. Be flexible about nightlights, siblings sharing a room, sleeping with special toys, and sitting with your child as they fall asleep. Doing so typically does not cause life-long habits.

- 1 Children may play "war," pretend to blow things up, or include images of violence in artwork and writing. This may

Children may play "war," pretend to blow things up, or include images of violence in artwork and writing. This may be upsetting to adults under current circumstances, but it is a normal way for children to express their awareness of events around them.

be upsetting to adults under current circumstances, but it is a normal way for children to express their awareness of events around them. Gently redirect children away from violent play or efforts to "replay" the terrorist attacks, but don't



are appropriate, but be cautious about placing major burdens on children.

1 Take time for yourself and try to deal with your own reactions to the situation as fully as possible. This, too, will help your children and students. Coordinate between school and home:

1 Parents and other caregivers need to let school personnel know if a family member is being called to active duty or sent overseas. Tell your child's teacher if he or she is having difficulties and what strategies make your child feel better. If necessary, seek the help of your school psychologist, counselor or social worker.

1 Teachers should let parents know if their child is exhibiting stress in school. Provide parents with helpful suggestions or information on community resources. Maintain general academic and behavioral expectations, but be realistic about an individual child's coping skills.

1 Teachers should share with parents' information about social studies/history lessons and other relevant discussions that take place in the classroom. This will help parents understand what their children are learning and can foster thoughtful discussion at home.

1 Invite parents with relevant professional experience to come to school to talk about their jobs, in age appropriate terms, and how their skills contribute to the war effort or safety at home.

1 Create a sense of collective security between home and school. This will help children feel safe and provide a sense of protection.

Children are our future and their positive growth is very important as these children will be adults one day and who will be in professional positions. Let us not destroy or distort the truth of reality in the world we presently live in, let us all give them the positive love, time and attention they require so that they can grow up to be balanced, educated, compassionate and law abiding adults. Children are not responsible for their parent's actions and should not be punished for the parents' sins. World Homeland Security Group is there for ALL irrespective of one's country, culture or religious beliefs.

**(Writer is an international security expert , He can be connected at [jbirring@worldhomelandsecurity.com](mailto:jbirring@worldhomelandsecurity.com))**

be overly disapproving unless the play is genuinely aggressive. Talk with children about their art or written images and how they feel. Share your reactions. Help them to consider the consequences of war or terrorist acts-what happens if a building blows up or a bomb explodes? For children who seek pretend play as an outlet, encourage role playing of the doctors, firemen, policemen, etc. who have helped to save lives. If a child seems obsessed with violent thoughts or images for more than a few days, talk to a mental health professional.

1 Some children may be at increased risk of suicide because of their emotional reaction to increased stress and any pre-existing mental health problems. Consult a mental health professional immediately if your child shows signs of suicidal thinking or talk, or other self-destructive behaviors.

1 Extra support, consistency, and patience will help children return to routines and their more usual behavior patterns. If children show extreme reactions (aggression, withdrawal, sleeping problems, etc.), talk to your school psychologist regarding the symptoms of severe stress disorders and the possible need for a referral to a mental health agency.

### KEEP ADULT ISSUES FROM OVERWHELMING CHILDREN:

1 Don't let your children focus too much of their time and energy on this crisis. If children are choosing to watch the

Some children may be at increased risk of suicide because of their emotional reaction to increased stress and any pre-existing mental health problems. Consult a mental health professional immediately if your child shows signs of suicidal thinking or talk, or other self-destructive behaviors.

news for hours each evening, find other activities for them. You may also need to watch the news less intensely and spend more time in alternative family activities.

1 Know the facts about developments in the war and protections against terrorism at home. Don't speculate. Be prepared to answer your children's questions factually and take time to think about how you want to frame events and your reactions to them.

1 Try not to let financial strains be a major concern of children. Although the economic impact of the terrorist attacks and resulting military action may result in job cutbacks, or going from a civilian job to active duty in the military may cut family income, children are not capable of dealing with this issue on an ongoing basis. Telling children that you need to be more careful with spending



UN MEET ON NPT STARTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS ON MAY 4

# TILL THEY MEET AGAIN

India absent at UN-Sponsored non-proliferation meet to avoid pressure

C.K. Arora

India was absent at the month-long Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, which began at the United Nations' Headquarters in New York on May 3. This was no surprise in itself. The most astounding aspect, however, was India's decision to stay out even as an observer. On the eve of the conference, which assembles every five years, Indian mission at the U.N. issued a brief written statement, saying that the country is not a member of the 40-year old treaty. Therefore, it will not participate in its review process. But, the general impres-

In India's view, the NPT is a flawed treaty as "it does not recognize the need for universal, non-discriminatory verification and treatment." India is a nuclear weapon capable state. Pakistan and Israel enjoy the same status.

sion here is that the Indian move is intended at warding off the expected international pressure to join the treaty. As an observer, India could have been present at the conference but without the right to express its views on the treaty, the privilege available only to its members. Formally, India may not be associated with pact, it had made known at every international forum that it is committed to the idea of nonproliferation. But, it has certain objections to the very foundation of the NPT.

In India's view, the NPT is a flawed treaty as "it does not recognize the need for universal, non-discriminatory verification and treatment." India is a nuclear weapon capable state. Pakistan and Israel enjoy the same status. All the three are out of the NPT. India and Pakistan had undertaken nuclear tests but Israel avoided such a course apparently considering it unnecessary. But, it is a known fact that Tel Aviv possesses about 200 nuclear weapons. North Korea which had been a signatory to the treaty from the very inception walked out of it 2001 and conducted tests in 2006 and 2009 to demonstrate its weapon capability. Pyongyang's action raised a new threat of proliferation not only for the Korean peninsula but for the world as a whole.

The treaty, opened for signatures in July 1968, came into force on March 5,

1970. The then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi decided against associating with the treaty on the advice of retired administrator L.K. Jha. The policy laid down by Gandhi still holds good. India considers the international pact as discriminatory, denying equal rights to all its signatories. New Delhi, along with Israel and Pakistan, contend that the NPT establishes a club of "nuclear haves" and a large group of "nuclear have-nots. It restricts the possession of nuclear weapons to those countries which tested them before 1967 (the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China), without spelling out the rationale for such a distinction.

India's Security environ had a lot to do with the country's decision. China, by conducting a nuclear test in 1964, had found a seat in the club of "nuclear haves." (According to an estimate of the Federation of American Scientists China has about 180 active nuclear weapon warheads and 240 total warheads as of 2009, which would make it the fourth largest nuclear ar-

sure and stuck to the policy.

How for the 1974 international sanctions affected the country's progress? Both, media and the political class avoided any public debate on the issue. The domestic politics that obtained at that time had lot to do with this silence. Indira Gandhi's government and the opposition were in a state of confrontation. Railways workers, at the behest of the leftist opposition groups, went on an indefinite strike, bringing the economic life to a stand still, though briefly. A popular anti-government movement in Gujarat, known as 'navnirma' was at its peak. Veteran freedom fighter Jaya Prakash Narayan had taken to active politics in Northern India, protesting against the administrative corruption. In that highly polarized political climate, India's nuclear achievement virtually went unnoticed at home. But, there appeared to be a general consensus on the issue in the country. That was one of the main reasons for the silence on the consequences of the nuclear-related economic sanctions.

Meanwhile, the progresses on the nuclear weapons research reportedly slowed down.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) revived the issue by including it in its election manifesto. Shortly after its leader A.B. Vajpayee installed his ministry, India conducted, one after another, five nuclear tests. Pakistan responded promptly and with equal strength. Once again, India was subjected to international sections which, unlike its first nuclear test in 1974, were detrimental to the policy of economic liberalization set in motion in 1991. Vajpayee dispatched Jaswant Singh as his special envoy to Washington to mend fences with the United States. He met with unexpected hostility in

Washington. None of the Clinton Administration officials was willing to see him. Apparently in a bid to pave for the dialogue, the Indian government, through middlemen, sent a message to the Clinton Administration pledging against conducting nuclear tests in future. The oral commitment led to the commencement of talks between the two countries which subsequently resulted in the signing of the U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement. Signed into law by President George Bush in October 2008, the agreement lifts 30-year-old ban on the sale of nuclear material technology and equip-



A couple of years ago, India and China had a brief border war. Then in 1965, Pakistan attacked India with the intention of acquiring Kashmir by force. China's sympathy was with Pakistan. Although India's nuclear program had begun around since its independence in 1947, its objective had always been peaceful.

senal amongst the five major nuclear weapon states.) The same year, India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru died. A couple of years ago, India and China had a brief border war. Then in 1965, Pakistan attacked India with the intention of acquiring Kashmir by force. China's sympathy was with Pakistan. Although India's nuclear program had begun around since its independence in 1947, its objective had always been peaceful. It is widely believed that the then Prime Minister Lal Bhadur Shastri, who succeeded Nehru, set in motion the process of reconsideration of the existing policy and in May 1974 India tested its first device at Pokhran in Rajasthan. The test, which shocked the world, attracted international sanctions. Indira Gandhi successfully withstood the pres-

ment to India. Pakistan reacted rather angrily. It said that the deal "would have implications on the strategic stability (of the region) as it would enable India to produce significant quantities of fissile material and nuclear weapons from its un-safeguarded nuclear reactors. Pakistan wants similar agreement for itself. American officials have, however, repeatedly declined Islamabad's demand, insisting that India's situation is unique. The nuclear know-how and equipment are available only to the signatory to the NPT. The exception made in case of India added to its credibility as a responsible nuclear power.

Though the U.S.-India nuclear deal is not on the agenda of the review conference, Pakistan has intensified its anti-India lobbying. Some other countries demand bringing India, Pakistan and Israel

all nations eventually agree that being a signatory to the NPT is not in their interest and also in the interests of global security and safety."

Besides, expansion and strengthening of the NPT, others issues that dominate the conference without being part of its agenda included Iran's clandestine attempts at developing nuclear weapons, Israel's undeclared nuclear weapons program and North Korea's aggressive attitude.

Even before the commencement of the conference, reports of its failure had begun to be heard. They are not totally baseless. According to its tradition, the conference takes all decisions by consensus. It can not pass any resolution even if one of its 189 members opposes it. The last two conferences had ended in failure. Prospects of the current

clear stance. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon also administered a snub to Ahmadinejad. Ban left the General Assembly hall when Iranian leader rose to address the conference, denying that Tehran was trying to develop atomic weapons. Clinton, in her response, accused Iran of trying to hide its crimes and that the international community could not allow the treaty to be undermined. Earlier, Ban had scolded Iran for defying U.N. resolutions.

The purpose of the conference is to review the implementation of the NPT and highlight those issues that have not been properly addressed. In this context, North Korea's decision to opt out of the treaty and reported Syrian move to build a reactor without informing the IAEA, as required, would figure prominently.



**ODDBALL:** IRANIAN PRESIDENT AT THE NPT MEET

into the NPT fold. In reply to a related question, Secretary Hillary Clinton said: Well, we want every country be a signatory to the NPT. And, we continue to urge all states, every single one outside the NPT, to join the treaty, accept full-scope safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as required under the treaty. We believe strongly in this. That's why we are taking steps which have never been taken by any administration before. And, we would like to see every nation become a signatory and we want every nation that is a signatory to live up to their obligations. And, it is important that the United States take the steps, we are taking, to build confidence, to demonstrate our commitment. But, we continue to hope that we will see

conference, the 8th in the series, are equally bleak. Iran's attitude is a proof. Its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the only head of the state who led his country's delegation; others were led by their foreign ministers. The Iranian leader hit out at the United States, for introducing nuclear weapons to the world and for fueling the global nuclear arms race. He accused the United States and other nuclear states of manipulating the international arms control system, including the IAEA to preserve its nuclear privileges and pressuring non-nuclear states to give up their rights to produce their own nuclear fuel for energy purposes.

The U.S. and its European allies walked out in protest against Iran's nu-

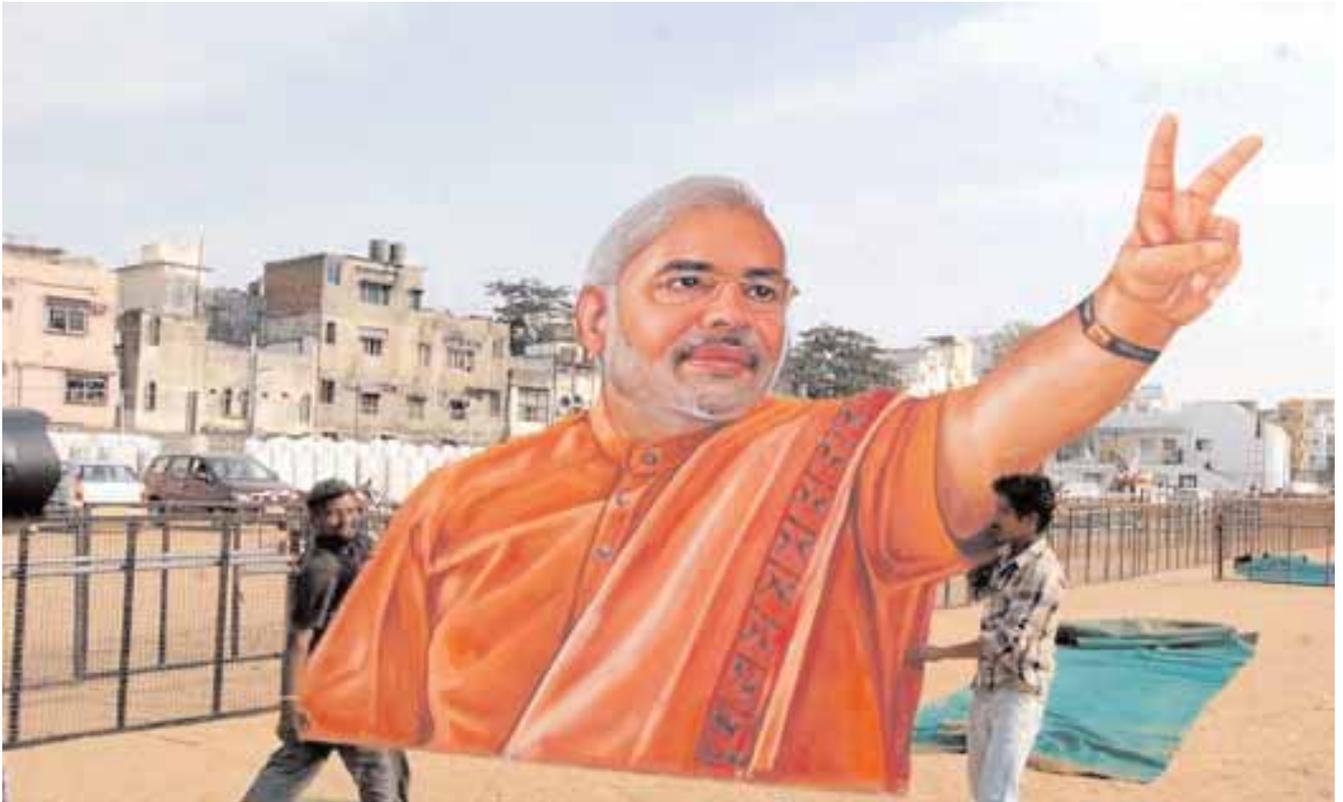
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Reports are that the conference is discussing a second draft, circulated on May 19, calling on the nuclear "haves" to set clear benchmarks for the elimination of atomic weapons. The first draft called on them to meet no later than 2011 to discuss how to move forward on nuclear disarmament, after which time United Nations Secretary-general Ban Ki-moon would convene an international conference some time in 2014 to make further progress. The new document simply says that the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) should immediately establish an appropriate subsidiary body to reduce nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their elimination. The review conference is scheduled to end on May 28 and hopes are that a consensus would emerge by then.

**(Writer is Washington-based free-lance journalist)**



# THE POLITICS OF CORRUPTION



Day "Musings". Had the NDA won the 2004 election, he would have completed his task. But the NDA's defeat became the springboard for a wholesale rejection not only of his closest colleagues in the BJP, but also of the philosophy of tolerance, and respect for diversity, that he had tried to instill into the Sangh Parivar.

There is reassuring evidence that Modi, like Vajpayee before him, has devoted a good deal of thought to this challenge, and has come to similar conclusions. As long ago as at the Hindustan Times Leadership summit in 2007, he had insisted that Hindutwa does not mean Hindu cultural, let alone religious supremacy but its opposite - a respect for India's religious pluralism and cultural diversity. He has not made a single anti-Muslim statement throughout his campaign, and has rebuked those who have. But like Vajpayee when the NDA first came to power in 1998, he too will have to find a way of making the Sangh Parivar accept this definition.

Modi's task, however, will be far harder than the one that Vajpayee faced a decade ago. For India is now in the dangerous middle stage of capitalist development that Europe passed through in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is the stage in which a relatively new, and still financially insecure, propertied class tries to tame growing class conflict by diverting

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the attention of the have-nots towards convenient scapegoats on whom they can pin the blame for their misfortunes. Europe chose Jews to be the scapegoats. The result was a rising, increasingly virulent, anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust.

In India, extremists in the Sangh Parivar have elected Muslims to be the scapegoats. If Modi does not reign them in India will, literally, have no future. For India is a world of minorities, in which the Muslims are only the largest. An attempt to impose cultural homogeneity upon them will lead to its disintegration.

The BJP's absolute majority, and the decimation of not only the Congress but all the caste-based smaller parties of north India, has made Modi's task more difficult, for it has removed most of the natural checks to cultural authoritarian-

ism within our democracy. However, absolute majority has also created one silver lining: Absolute power brings with it absolute responsibility. For the last five years the BJP has played the role of a spoiler in India politics, constantly stoking religious and cultural animosities, disrupting the functioning of parliament and ensuring that an already weak Congress is able to do nothing. Absolute majority has put an unambiguous price upon that kind of irresponsibility. That road is now therefore a costly one for the party to travel. One can only hope that its leaders will realize this before they have had the time to do further damage to India's social fabric.

The Congress has only itself to blame for its rout, for in the past six years it has given the country the worst government it has ever had. The list of its mistakes, and of the opportunities it



has missed, is too long to accommodate in this essay, but one stands out above all others because of the misery it has inflicted upon ordinary Indians, and because it became the launch pad for Modi's rise to power. This is the complete dog's dinner it made of the economy.

In the last four years GDP growth has halved from 8.4 percent (in 2009-10), to a little over four percent in the past year. Industrial growth has collapsed spectacularly - a 16.4 percent drop from 14.5 percent in October 2009 to March 2010, to minus 1.9 percent in January to March 2014.

This has devastated the economy. The construction industry is moribund: the skyline of Gurgaon and NOIDA in Delhi is pockmarked by the silhouettes of half-constructed skyscrapers. The growth of real fixed investment has fallen by 80 percent from the level reached in 2010-2011. There has been only one large Initial Public Offering of shares by a private company for an industrial or infrastructure project, since Reliance Power's 7,500 crore IPO in February 2008, and that too occurred as long ago as in January 2011. Over 200 blue chip companies, that had borrowed heavily or issued convertible debentures

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abroad, are staring a debt default in the face, because of the collapse of their share prices and the 40 percent devaluation of the rupee in the past five years.

Within the country tens of thousands of small companies have gone quietly bankrupt, with no one even bothering to keep count. Data on employment collected by the National Sample survey and the Ministry of Industry suggest that at least 40 million job-seekers have lost, or failed to find, jobs and been deprived of a future.

Had the collapse been caused by forces beyond the government's control there would have been misery but not the level of anger that they have shown at the polls in the past five months. This anger has been fed by the suspicion, that has hardened into conviction, that the government's faulty policies were responsible.

While they may not have understood precisely what the UPA did wrong, they have not believed its repeated assertion that the economic collapse had been caused solely by the global recession. If this was true, they have wondered, how did industrial growth bounce back in July 2009 within less than a year of the start of the recession when the global recession was at its height.

To industrialists, shopkeepers and workers unorganized sector workers, if not to Dr Manmohan Singh's legion of economists, the mistake has been obvious for three years. His government became obsessed with fighting inflation in order to retain its popularity, and did not realize that unlike the inflation of 1993-95 and all previous bouts of inflation in India, the inflation that began in the summer of 2006 was not driven by an excess demand but by global and



local shortages of supply. From January 2007, therefore, it began applying the wrong remedy. It kept raising interest rates and cutting down money supply to lower demand when the cause of the price rise lay in a relentless rise in global commodity prices fuelled by China's voracious demand, by freakish weather conditions and limitless exports of vegetables and fruits regardless of what that did to domestic prices.

Not only did the government start raising interest rates as far back as January 2007, but it persisted in doing so for seven years in the face of unequivocal evidence that these had had absolutely no effect on the cost of living. Instead of giving price stability and economic growth all that the Manmohan Singh government gave the people was stagflation and despair. Untrammelled power was therefore the Congress' gift to the BJP, perhaps the last gift that it will ever be in a position to give.

Indian politics has entered uncharted waters, but these are not as unfriendly as many secular and liberal intellectuals believe. As of 7.00 PM on Friday, with the counting almost over The Congress' share of the vote had fallen by almost 10 percent to 19.8 percent. This is huge and probably spells the end of the party as an all-India party. But 19.8 percent is 1.4 percent

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**Second and more important, the Aam Admi Party may have got only 2.2 percent of the national vote but for the poor and underprivileged it has opened the gates to an empowered future. Not only has it won four seats in Punjab, but starting with nothing in a totally alien town, Kejriwal collected 36 percent of the vote in Varanasi. And although it didn't win in Delhi it retained 33 percent of the vote.**

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more than the BJP got in 2009. So the Congress is down but not necessarily out. Whether it will continue to decline will depend on its capacity to stay together in defeat and to realize that the slavish sycophancy that it fostered within itself by clinging to the so-called Gandhi-Nehru charisma has outlived its purpose and become a millstone around its neck.

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Indeed, had the regional and caste based parties known any history, and realized the danger that the combination of prolonged economic distress and

a powerful orator promising immediate economic relief could pose to them, and had AAP got out of its nihilistic mood, understood the reasons for its sudden rise in Delhi, and planned its electoral campaign around a national platform of reforms that would empower the have-nots, the result of this election would have been far more balanced.

The Mayawatis Mamatas and Yadavs of the world may not have got the esage before, but it is difficult to believe that have not got it now. This is that the days of fighting national elections on the basis of caste, creed and community are rapidly coming to a close. A Yadav or Kurmi or Chamar's vote is not a party's entitlement. It has to be earned. Throughout the electoral campaign Kejriwal and Modi had one thing in common - neither of them once appealed to the voter to caste his or her ballot for anything other than performance and justice. Therein lies our hope for the future.

# Independence Day - NaMo Style

**Kapil's Khichadi**

Follow me on Twitter: @kdudakia

1 6th of May 2014 will go down in history when India was given a second chance to secure its independence. Our Shri Narendrabhai Modi transcended the binds of caste, creed, religion, language and ethnicity to take the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to its most profound election victory ever. The landslide victory decimated the dynastic socialist Gandhi Congress and the so called 'Third' front. The media was left breathless as the results started to come in. TV anchors that had for more than a decade shown total bias

against PM Modi ji were left dumbfounded. As the minutes ticked by you could see the shock on their faces - the sudden realisation that they had got it all wrong and backed the wrong horse in Rahul Gandhi and Congress. In a desperate attempt to salvage some credibility, TV/Media anchors changed their tune to pro-Modi. In one instance we even had mithai being shared by TV anchors and their guests. In the end, those who had for years fed the masses untruths about PM Modiji were left having to eat their own words. It truly was awe inspiring to see these parasites grovelling in full public view.

PM Modiji has shown that regard-

less of the opposition, the Lion of Gujarat can handle it all. He is more than capable of sorting India out. However for us the UK we must take stock of who our friends are, and those who wish us harm and show disrespect. It is now time for the Modi tsunami to hit our shores and for us to take up that challenge closer to home.

Let me remind you also how the then Labour government in 2002 instigated a diplomatic ban on Gujarat - even though there was no shred of evidence implicating Chief Minister Modi. It was the Congress Government in India under Manmohan Singh that stayed silent whilst one of its democrat-





ically elected CMs was hounded by foreign powers. How disgraceful knowing that for political gain Congress stooped to the gutter instead of protecting CM Modi. On that day the integrity of the Congress Government died totally. They had sold their souls and the country to the imperial masters for whom they do the bidding.

I must therefore congratulate and commend David Cameron who within months of getting into power lifted the stupid illegal diplomatic ban. He travelled to India thrice showing that the future belongs to India and that the UK wants to be part of that bright vision. On his last visit he even stated live on CNN-IBN that he was very happy to work with Narendrabhai Modi. David Cameron therefore became the first western leader to openly nail his colours to the mast. I can now also tell you that our Prime Minister was one of the first to send his congratulations to PM Modiji. In fact from the information I have, PM Modi ji took only one call on that day - and that was from David Cameron.

I am disgusted with Ed Miliband and the Labour Party. Did you know that the 1st tweet made by Ed Miliband on the Indian elections was at 12:02 pm - 18 May 2014. By this time I had already reminded him at least three times that he had failed to tweet his message of congratulations to PM Modiji. I then checked to see if this was a pattern within the Labour MPs - and guess

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what, yes it was. It seems Labour MPs were either all ignorant of the biggest election taking place in the world, or they had been instructed not to comment on it. Even the so called 'Labour Friends of India' had not posted a message of congratulations to PM Modiji.

I don't know about all of you, but I take that as the highest form of disrespect to PM Modiji, to Indian democracy, to the Indian people and to all Indians in the UK. Ed Miliband wants to be the Prime Minister of UK yet on the world stage he failed monumentally in his duty to do the right thing. I have been informed by a number of people that the Labour Party wanted to secure the Muslim vote in the elections. In effect it seems it was easier to ignore Hindus, Sikhs and Jains as long as the Muslim vote was kept happy. How true and widespread this might be - only Ed Miliband knows. However the evidence suggests that the Labour Party has

shown a distinct lack of judgement when it came to PM Modiji and the Hindu community in the UK.

I wish to leave you all with a parting thought. Huge expectations exist both in India and overseas with regard to PM Modiji and what he can do for India. I would just say to everyone, 60 years of bankrupt corrupt governance will take time to sort out. Let us all support PM Modiji in whatever way we can. Let us understand that time and space will be required to restructure Bharat so that it is fit for the 21st Century. In my view PM Modiji will require at least two clear terms to turn the Indian juggernaut around, but a glimpse of what we can expect in the future will become a reality within months. The next few years will see breath taking changes and opportunities in India. It is time Bharat and its people took their rightful place on the world stage. India has finally secured its independence. Jai Hind.

# India's Journey to Independence and Division

**Patrick French (Patrick French is an award-winning historian and political commentator. His books include 'Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division', 'The World Is What It Is' and 'India: A Portrait')**

**A**t India's first general election in 1951, the Congress won 81 seats in Uttar Pradesh alone. Today, they are reduced to 40-odd seats across the entire nation. Not only is it a stunning reversal for the outfit that has long considered itself India's natural party of government - it is also an upending of many of the truisms surrounding electoral politics. Like the 1977 general election, which saw the Janata Party win over half of the popular vote, 2014's result is a turning-point that reconfigures Indian democracy. Many old assumptions will have to be swept aside as a new dispensation forms.

First is the rule that the BJP can win support nationally only by appealing to the baser instincts of voters, and will govern only by forming post-poll alliances with reluctant allies. Neither of these is true any longer. The BJP has an undeniable mandate. Their campaign conspicuously avoided invoking Hindutva as a reason for voting BJP, and focussed instead on governance, development, aspiration and the promise of jobs.

Second is the Congress convention that leadership is unimportant, prime ministerial candidates don't have to be declared and the press will take care of itself. The amateurishness of their media campaign, compared with the slickness of the BJP's operation, had a direct bearing on the number of votes they received: Rahul Gandhi's flat-footed TV interviews inspired nobody to join the cause. Astonishingly, given his third-person oration about how "Rahul Gandhi and millions of youngsters in this country want to change the way the system in this country works," it was the young who turned most defiantly away from his Congress worldview, and towards a 63-year-old leader. Narendra



Modi won a sweeping victory partly because he broke with convention and campaigned in presidential style. According to exit polls, it was first-time voters aged 18-22 who backed the BJP more strongly than any other demographic.

Third: even disadvantaged voters no longer regard the dispensing of entitlements as a reason to back a party. They may have no objection to support from the centre, but are more concerned with getting opportunities to make a living on their own terms. Gifts handed out by Delhi - the granting of a right to cheap food, statehood for Telangana, or the promise of jobs through MGNREGA - do not translate into seats in the Lok Sabha. The 2014 election result was much more than an anti-incumbency wave: it was a dismissal of the traditional right to rule, a vote against both entitlement and entitlements. An old kind of politics practiced by India's parties of the left, including those like the Congress which depend on a swathe of

junior hereditary politicians, was rejected by voters. Many of the 'Young Turks' have been evicted from office.

Fourth - and this is the most important message of today's historic election - the Indian electorate is more volatile than it has been before. The extent of the swing away from Congress and towards the BJP is greater than any psephologist could have predicted a year ago. Expectations that a region or community will reliably support a particular leader no longer hold true, as Mayawati has discovered to her cost. The speed of this change shows that younger Indians in particular obtain their information and make their choices about which party to support on their own terms, not on the basis of caste and family. This volatility will be both a threat and an opportunity to Narendra Modi's new government: he knows voters now want results, delivery, better infrastructure and jobs more than they want uplifting words and promises.

# MODI PRODS PAKISTAN ON TERROR ON FIRST DAY AS PM

● Sanjeev Miglani & Shyamantha Asokan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a blunt warning to traditional neighbouring foe Pakistan on his first day in the job on Tuesday that it must prevent militants on its territory from attacking India.

Despite the directness of his message, both sides said Modi's meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in New Delhi was cordial and they agreed to push for a restart of peace talks between the nuclear-armed rivals.

They also agreed to pursue normalising trade ties, which have long been held hostage to distrust between their countries after fighting three wars since independence from Britain in 1947.

Modi, 63, invited Sharif and several other South Asian leaders for his swearing-in ceremony on Monday. Unprecedented in India's history, the invitations were seen as a reflection of Modi's eagerness to play a prominent role on the global stage following a stunning election victory for his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

After Tuesday's 50-minute meeting

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between Modi and Sharif, India said the new prime minister had "underlined our concerns relating to terrorism".

"It was conveyed that Pakistan must abide by its commitment to prevent its territory and territory under its control from being used for terrorism against India," Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh told a news conference.

Modi also pressed for speedy progress of trials in Pakistan of people accused of masterminding a 2008 commando-style attack on Mumbai in which 166 people were killed.

## "A NEW PAGE IN RELATIONS"

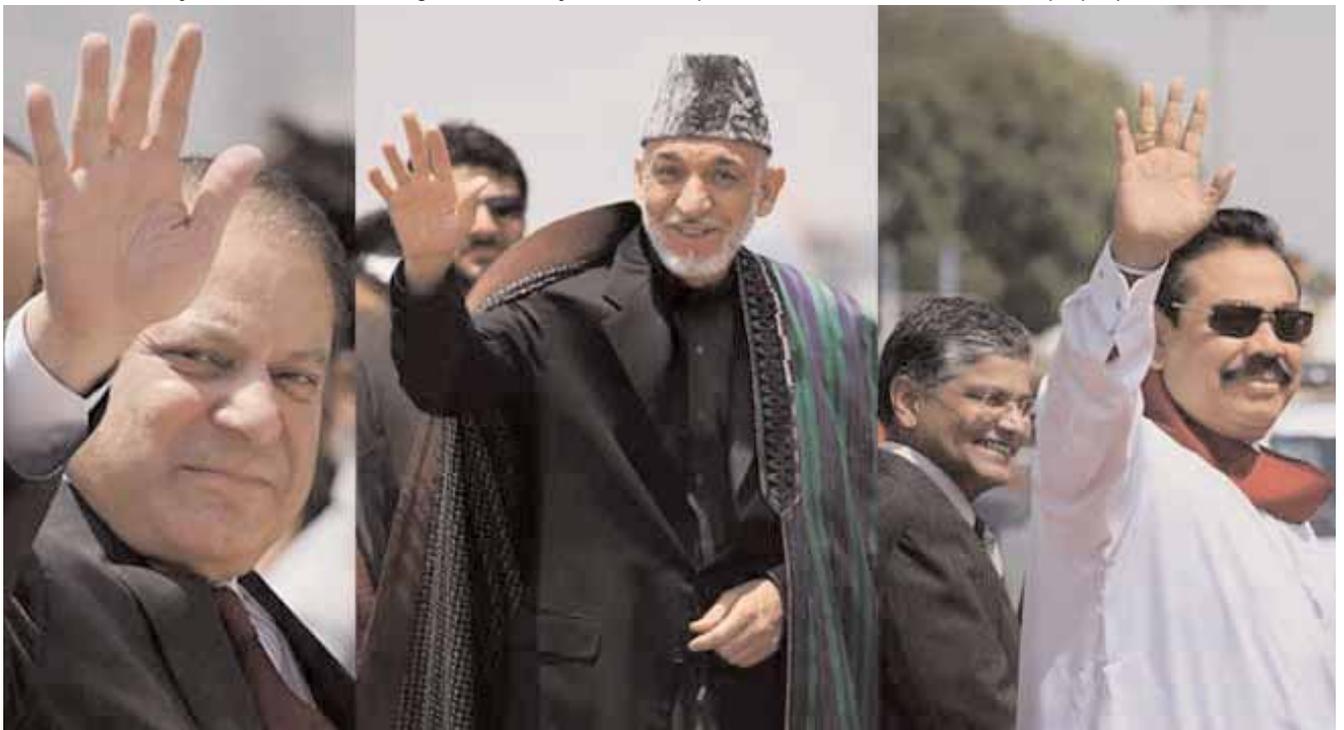
The BJP has long advocated a tough stance on Pakistan, and Modi has been seen as a hardliner on issues of national security. In that respect, Modi's invi-

tation to Sharif was a surprise and raised hopes for a thaw in relations, which have been particularly frosty since the Mumbai attacks.

Responding later, Sharif sounded a conciliatory note, describing the rare meeting as an historic opportunity to turn "a new page in our relations". However, he rebuffed assertions that Pakistan was a launch pad for militants to attack India.

"We have to strive to change confrontation to cooperation: engaging in accusations and counter-accusations would be counter-productive," he said.

Modi also held talks with Hamid Karzai, outgoing president of Afghanistan, a country over which India and Pakistan are vying for influence as Western troops prepare to withdraw.





Karzai told Indian TV that, according to information given to him by a Western intelligence agency, the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) was responsible for an attack last week on India's consulate in the western Afghanistan city of Herat.

The LeT, which has also been blamed for the Mumbai attack, has long targeted Indian interests and New Delhi has accused Islamabad of shielding, or working with, the group.

"They wanted to cause embarrassment to both Afghanistan and India around that inauguration of the new prime minister," Karzai told Times Now.

Karzai, who has presented India with a wish-list of weapons to tackle Islamist Taliban militants after the departure of foreign forces, said some on the list had already been offered and he was confident that Modi would consider the rest favourably.

Pakistan took three days to decide whether to accept Modi's invitation, a signal that there were sharp differences on the matter in a country where the military has traditionally called the shots on security and foreign policy.

Still, the two leaders were seen shaking hands and laughing during their meeting on Monday, and in the briefings later there was no mention of

the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir, over which their countries have gone to war twice.

### **NEW FINANCE MINISTER AIMS FOR GROWTH**

The low-caste son of a tea stall-owner, Modi this month won India's first parliamentary majority after 25 years of coalition governments, giving him ample room to advance economic reforms that started over two decades ago but stalled in recent years.

He named his new cabinet on Monday, handing the job of reviving economic growth to Arun Jaitley, an urbane corporate lawyer and close party colleague. "We have to restore back the pace of growth, contain inflation and obviously concentrate on fiscal consolidation itself," Jaitley told reporters. Public finances are in dire straits as government spending has outpaced revenues. The new administration will immediately need to take a decision on slashing subsidy spending which is threatening a budget blow-out and a sovereign ratings downgrade.

Jaitley, a student leader who was jailed during a period of emergency in 1975, will also be handling the important defence portfolio for the transition.

Modi, who built his reputation as an

economic moderniser by putting his home state of Gujarat on a high-growth path, has moved to streamline the cabinet towards a more centralised system of governing.

Several government ministries have been clubbed under one minister, aimed at breaking decision-making bottlenecks widely blamed for dragging down economic growth. The new administration has 45 ministers compared with 71 in the outgoing government. "I am sure the political change itself sends a strong signal to the global community and also domestic investors," Jaitley said. "I think over the next few months by expediting decision-making processes, I am sure we will be able to build that."

The chief of the BJP, Rajnath Singh, will be the new home minister, charged with the task of ensuring internal stability and calming the anxieties of India's religious minorities who see his party and its hardline Hindu affiliates as pursuing a partisan agenda.

Modi himself has been dogged by allegations that he didn't do enough to protect Muslims during an upsurge of violence in 2002. He has denied the charge and a Supreme Court-ordered investigation acquitted him of any responsibility

# SIT on black money: If there is political will, it should go for gold and a big haul

● Prof R. Vaidyanathan

More than six years ago, in February 2008, the German authorities had collected information about illegal money stashed away by citizens of various countries in a Liechtenstein bank. The German Finance Minister offered to share the names of these account-holders with any government interested in them. The UPA-1 government, unfortunately, did not act for many months and, after much prodding by the Opposition, asked for the list in late 2008.

A German intelligence agency appears to have paid an unnamed

informer more than \$6 million for this confidential and secret data about clients of the LGT group, a bank owned by the Liechtenstein Prince's family. The revelations have already led to the resignation of the head of Deutsche Post, which is currently the world's largest logistics company. Liechtenstein leaders were furious and have focused all their ire on the theft of the data rather than on the facts of the case.

The German list contained the names of 1,400 clients of the Liechtenstein bank, of whom 600 were Germans. A spokesman for the German finance ministry, Thorstein Albig, had said in March 2008 that information on

the other accounts would be shared without charging any fees. Finland, Sweden, and Norway quickly obtained the data, but our government began pussyfooting around this issue. If it had genuinely wanted to act against black money, it should have immediately despatched senior officials/ministers to get the names. Pushed and prodded by the Opposition and the media, when the government finally moved, it got nearly 100 Indian names – but those names have been kept a secret.

This writer, who has been studying tax havens for more than a decade, wrote in April 2009 (in the journal *Eternal India*, published by India First





Foundation) about the need to get back the illegal deposits kept by Indians in various tax havens, including Liechtenstein. A public interest litigation was then filed by Ram Jethmalani and others in the Supreme Court, to which the government responded that it was taking steps to recover such amounts. It had also mentioned that the German government had given a list of people who had kept money in the LGT Bank of Liechtenstein (May 2009). The government's response also said that steps were being taken in the case of Hasan Ali Khan, a Pune horse-breeder, who was alleged to have indulged in several illegal transactions through the UBS Bank of Switzerland.

In the meanwhile, the then Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, LK Advani, had constituted a committee consisting of S Gurumurthy, well-known Chartered Accountant, Ajit Doval, the current National Security Advisor, lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani, and this writer. The report of the committee was also used by Ram Jethmalani in his PIL filed with the Supreme Court.

The government maintained that it cannot reveal the names received from Germany since it had obtained the same under the double taxation avoidance treaty. The point is: why did the government ask for information under

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**A report in The Economic Times dated 4 June 2009 said that of the 50 Indians who have stashed funds in LGT Bank, 25 belong to Mumbai. The tax authorities have reopened assessments of these 25 tax evaders under section 148 of the Income Tax Act.**

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the double-tax treaty with Germany when the issue – stolen data from the Liechtenstein bank by Germany – was unconnected to the treaty? Where is the issue of confidentiality vis-a-vis criminals? Actually, it is wealth kept illegally in the bank in Liechtenstein, and the money does not even concern Germany.

The double-tax treaty generally prevents the use of information supplied under the treaty for any purpose other than the levy and recovery of tax. It is doubtful whether the income tax department can share the details it has secured under the treaty with the Enforcement Directorate or the National Investigation Agency which

tracks terror cases, or the NSA. That is why the Supreme Court had refused to regard it purely an issue of tax evasion.

The finance ministry says it has the names but will not reveal them. But is this right? The accounts are those of international crooks who have deprived our land of huge financial resources through capital flight. It is an unpatriotic act which can be equated to financial terrorism. Domestic black money (that is untaxed income) is merely a no-confidence motion against the government's tax policies, but black money in tax havens abroad amounts to no-confidence against the country - which is akin to treason.

A report in The Economic Times dated 4 June 2009 said that of the 50 Indians who have stashed funds in LGT Bank, 25 belong to Mumbai. The tax authorities have reopened assessments of these 25 tax evaders under section 148 of the Income Tax Act. This implies that the government is treating it as tax evasion and not capital flight and a crime against the country. But on 19 January 2011 – after two years of waiting - the Supreme Court made a historic observation about this shameful phenomenon of Indian funds being kept illegally abroad and the obstructionist attitude of the central government in unravelling the truth.




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**The SIT is essentially a group of bureaucrats with varying degrees of expertise about tax havens. This is mainly for illicit money kept abroad and not for domestic black money. Most of the double tax treaties which the UPA-2 entered into are prospective in nature and the task of looking into past illegal funds is complicated.**

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The group should distinguish between pure tax evasion (let us call it vegetarian black money) and funds connected to terror/arms smuggling/narcotics (say, non-veg black money). The former is easy to focus on and can be dealt with through penalties. A recent Supreme Court judgment, which says that "that Indian resident beneficiaries shall not be taxed on the income of an offshore discretionary trust as long as the trustees do not distribute income to the beneficiaries," may help many in the first category.

The best way to proceed is to have a joint sitting of Parliament and pass a resolution stating that "any funds abroad held by Indian nationals belong to the Republic of India" unless they have been kept abroad under legal rules and regulations. Armed with such a resolution and recent agreements entered into by Switzerland and Singapore with OECD countries, the SIT can go for gold! Actually, the SIT should be willing to use the concept of sama/dhana/bheda/dhanda in achieving its task - many secretive jurisdictions, including Switzerland, can and should be arm-twisted to part with information. After all they have huge investments in India

It is also necessary to consider the gold/diamonds/precious items kept by Indians in the lockers of banks in tax havens abroad. The road ahead for the recovery of illegal money stashed abroad is full of pot holes and craters, but we Indians have a way of navigating such impediments. What is needed is the political will for the same.

*(The author is finance professor, IIM Bangalore. These views are personal)*

A report in The Hindu quoted the court as saying that black money stashed abroad by Indians was "pure and simple theft of national money." The court "questioned the Centre's approach to tackling this menace and retrieving the huge amounts kept in foreign banks. When Solicitor-General Gopal Subramaniam furnished in a sealed cover a list of 26 names who had accounts with (the) Liechtenstein Bank, a bench of Justices B Sudershan Reddy and SS Nijjar was not convinced of the steps taken by the government for getting back black money. Justice Reddy, after perusing the list, told the SG: 'This is all the information you have or you have something more? We are talking about huge money. It is a plunder of the nation. It is pure and simple theft of national money. We are talking about mind-boggling crime. We are not on (the) niceties of various treaties.'

The court then insisted on the formation of a special investigation team (SIT) with ex-Supreme Court judge Jeevan Reddy as Chairman, assisted by Justice MB Shah, and asked the government to share details about the Liechtenstein list. The UPA government dilly-dallied and used every ruse in the legal book to buy time. But the Supreme Court was very upset and told the government that it can be hauled up for contempt of court. The court, in

its order of 1 May 2014, had given the government three weeks' time to issue a notification for setting up an SIT to be presided over by Justice MB Shah (since Justice Jeevan Reddy had declined to head it for personal reasons), with retired Justice Arijit Pasayat as vice-chairman, to guide and direct the investigation.

The three weeks ended on 22 May and extended to 27 May due to a change in the government. Hence, the first decision of the new government was about the SIT. It was a decision pushed down the throat of the government of India by the court due to the sustained efforts of Ram Jethmalani, represented by Anil Dhavan, and armed with reports of this writer. The SIT will consist of the Chief of the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, a Deputy Governor of the RBI, the IB Director, the Narcotics Bureau chief, and the head of the Enforcement Directorate. The group will also have access to the accounts of HSBC Bank, Geneva, details of which were given by the French government.

The SIT is essentially a group of bureaucrats with varying degrees of expertise about tax havens. This is mainly for illicit money kept abroad and not for domestic black money. Most of the double tax treaties which the UPA-2 entered into are prospective in nature

# AFTER CRIMEA

## INDIA'S RISE BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

● N.V. Subramanian

**New Delhi:** The Crimea has joined Russia. The United States and the rest of the West demand that the world turn against Russia. Russia has thanked India and China for such support as they have shown. The Kashmir dispute on one hand and China's troubled Xinjiang and Tibet regions limit the scope to uphold Russian action although private sympathy runs strong in Beijing and New Delhi. But the Crimea affair won't go away soon. In this writer's thinking, Crimea is forever Russian, unless Russia breaks up, which is unforeseeable.

Simultaneously, the Barack Obama administration is out-of-depths with the development. The United States needs

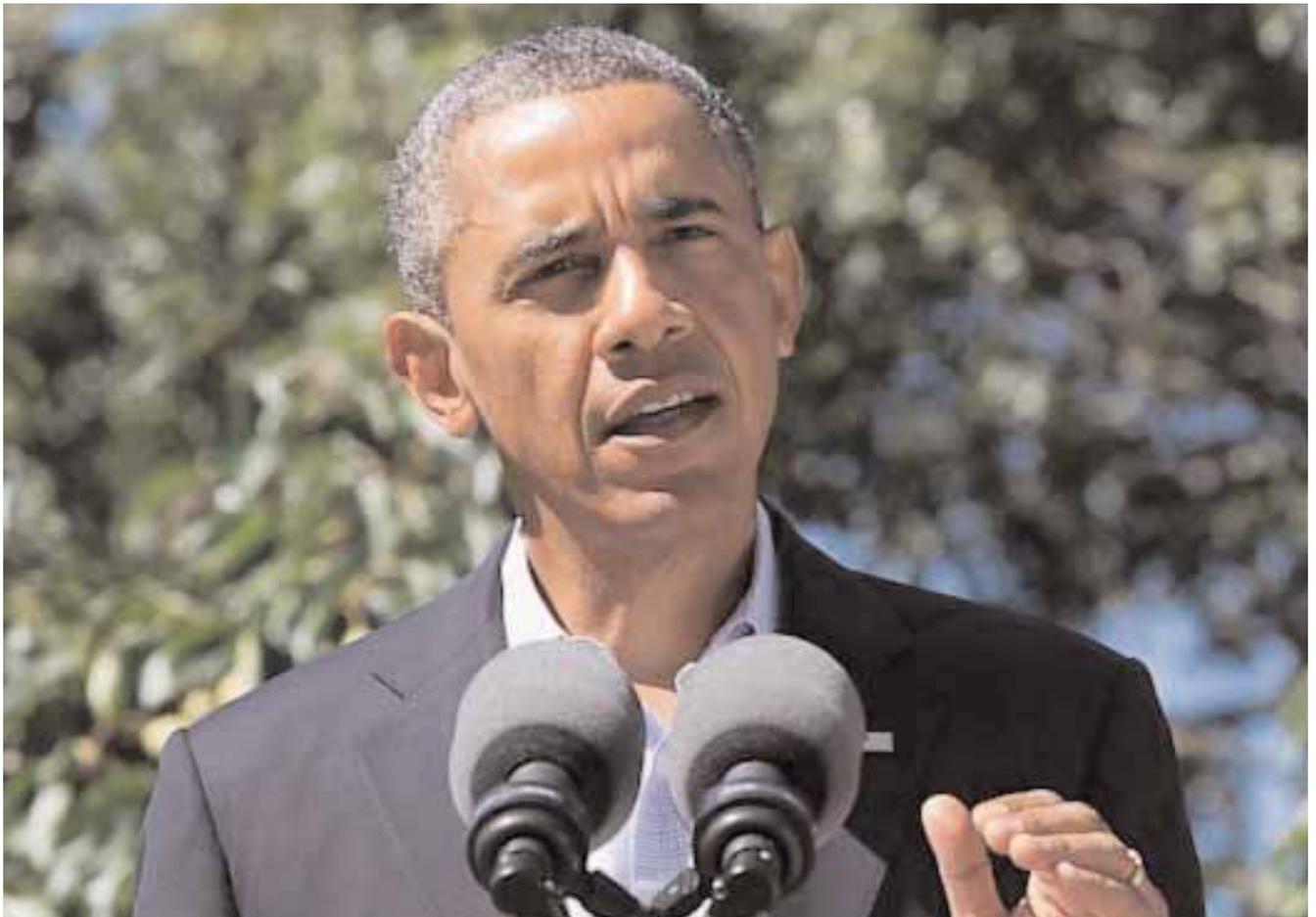
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**Simultaneously, the Barack Obama administration is out-of-depths with the development. The United States needs capable diplomats such as George Pratt Shultz and James Addison Baker III but it evidently does not produce their kind. The United States has to level with Russia, talk to it as an equal, and return to the first Cold War phase of setting up separate spheres of interest. In the 100th anniversary of the First World War, the present situation has some chilling similarities with it. Nationalism has not gone away. And militarism comes toggled out in military uniform and wrapped in fraudulent slogans of democratic liberalism.**

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How should India handle the new situation and the defining one for this century?

The new government in June would squarely have to deal with the new Cold War, and a single-party government would be better at the task, provided it keeps India's interests at the core of its concerns. The new Cold War is not ideological if you have the inclination and the capacity to look through Western hypocrisy. In bed with the worst regimes in the Middle East, aligning with the Al-Qaeda in Syria, and playing the hyphenation game with India's terrorist neighbour, Pakistan, the West has exhausted its capital of goodwill with this country. On India's disputes with China, the United States has been weighing in, more often than not, on the side of China, keen on a peace-making role for it in South Asia. There are also specific cases where the United States has hurt India. In a position to prevent the 2008 Bombay terrorist attack, it let it happen. It won't hand over the Pakistani-American terrorist involved in the attack. It is livid at the inability to access India's markets threatening

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retaliation. And it has re-indicted an Indian diplomat in the "maid case" after a local court dismissed it. A knowledgeable official attributed it to India's support for Russia on the Crimea. This

writer cannot readily believe it, but often, facts are stranger than fiction.

So, to return to the question. How does India deal with the Crimea? Modi is new Prime Minister of India, how should he go about it?

Rather than look for clues in the beginning of the first Cold War when Jawaharlal Nehru alighted on Non-Alignment, the starting point for the present may be the phase of the unravelling of the Soviet Union when Pamulaparti Venkata Narasimha Rao was the prime minister. Coming to political maturity in the Cold War and moulded by it, he had an instinctive distaste for the manner of Boris Yeltsin's destruction of the country. He supported the coup against Yeltsin, and eventually reconciled to the lush, but Russia didn't, after the euphoria over the collapse of communism gave way to terrifying concerns about survival and future.

What did Narasimha Rao do in that phase, when terrorism and insurgency were raging in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, the economy was in a shambles, and the unity of India was threatened by a Soviet Union-like breakup? The prime minister concentrated on rebuilding India brick by brick, while he tried to handle the external environment with as much finesse and wiliness as his nature and intellect permitted, coloured by huge and abiding suspicions about the West. Narendra Modi



would find himself located in not a very dissimilar situation, but with the added complexities of resurgent Russia and rising China and a declining and injudicious United States.

Pragmatism will see India through. The current crisis cannot be visualized in ideological terms because no ideology underwrites it. This is not the moment for Non-Alignment or balancing. The moment concerns -- and ought only to concern -- India. Relations with the United States have reached a plateau. Barack Obama is not interested in India. He does not understand India. It may be equally said that he does not understand the world. There is an interesting phrase about Obama, which is that he leads from the rear. He is on the side of public opinion, never against. American public opinion wants America to mind its own business and look inward. That is what he is about. When he is reminded about America's responsibilities as a world power, he looks for short-term solutions, which inevitably become party-political responses. His secretary of state does not talk the language of the United States which has often led the world in diplomacy but of a Democrat who remains in denial, and who lies at the

smallest opportunity. A great power is being today helmed by mediocre people with zero vision.

In the circumstances, India cannot be committed to the United States in any form. Their relations must be need-based and absolutely and entirely founded on reciprocity. While the United States has undeniable sway over the financial world, India is not a mean power, and if Narendra Modi focuses his energies within, the terms of engagement would be satisfactory. The simple truth is that the United States does not want Narendra Modi in power. It wants a puppet prime minister. Rising India is unfavourable to the United States. So Narendra Modi has to be clinical and businesslike in his dealings with the United States.

India and the United States cannot have strategic relations because, ultimately, the United States is untrustworthy. It has toppled more governments worldwide than any comparable democracy. It is the only power to have used nuclear weapons. Contrasted with Russia, the United States cannot -- and will not -- aid the growth of Indian military power. It will not sell aircraft carriers or lease nuclear submarines or assist in developing cruise missiles. The

United States is a transactional power and the new government in June must not forget this. Put alongside the United States, Russia is a more dependable ally. Indian entrepreneurship and Russian science and technology can be game-changers. But a lot of this need not be stated.

Finally, India's own rise will determine where it stands on the new Cold War inaugurated by the Crimea action. It must aim to become its own pole in international politics and not follow any. Pragmatism is the key. Non-Alignment makes no case for action. India must act to further its interests, and in many ways, its interests would be served by acting in concert with Russia on issues concerning Eurasia, from which the United States is separated by oceans. The United States is a declining power. The present administration is unable to arrest the decline. The solid Republican administrations of the first Cold War are what the United States needs, but voters are unlikely to deliver them soon. Indian calculations must take this into account.

*N.V.Subramanian is Editor, [www.newsinsight.net](http://www.newsinsight.net) and writes on politics and strategic affairs.*

# OLDEST RUNNING CAR FETCHES \$4.62M

This is the oldest motor vehicle car in the world that still runs. It was built one year before Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler invented the internal combustion engine.

The world's oldest running motor vehicle has been sold at auction for an astonishing \$4.62 million (R36.5-million), more than double the pre-sale estimate, as two bidders chased the price up in a three-minute bidding war.

The 1884 De Dion Bouton et Trepardoux Dos-a-Dos Steam Runabout drew a standing ovation as it was 'driven up onto the stage' at Friday's RM Auction in Hershey, Pennsylvania - to prove that this 127-year-old car really does run! - and attracted a starting bid of \$500 000, which was immediately doubled to \$1 million. Encouraged by the applauding crowd, the bidding went swiftly up to \$4.2 million (R33 million) - 4.62 million (R36.5 million) including the 10 percent



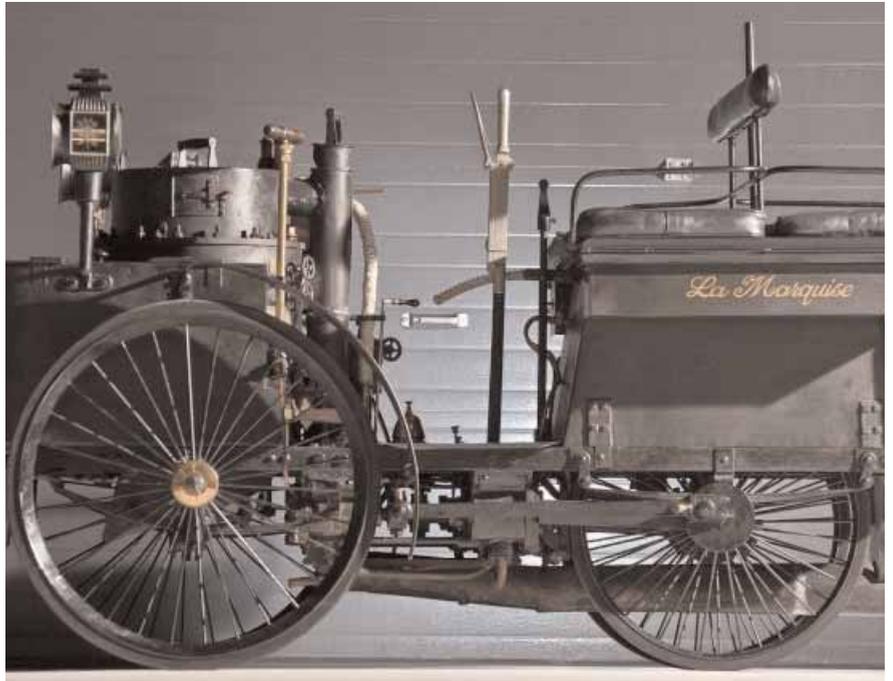
commission - before the car was knocked down to a'unnamed buyer'.

The Dos-a-Dos (Back-to-Back) Steam Runabout was built in 1884 by George Bouton and Charles-Armand Trepardoux for French entrepreneur Count de Dion, who named it 'La Marquise' after his mother.

In 1887, with De Dion at the tiller, it won the world's first ever motor race (it was the only entrant to make the start line!) covering the 32km from the Pont de Neuilly in Paris to Versailles and back in one hour and 14 minutes (an average of 25.9km/h) and, according to contemporary reports, hitting a breathtaking 60km/h on the straights.

La Marquise has only had four owners, remaining in one family for 81 years, and has been restored twice, once by the Doriol family and again by British collector Tom Moore in the early 1990's. Since then, it has taken part in four London-to-Brighton runs and collected a double gold at the 1997 Pebble Beach 'd'Elegance in California'.

Count de Dion winning the first ever motor race.



# Renowned Cancer Surgeon to Receive Honorary Fellowship in Edinburgh

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) in Britain is to recognize the achievements of Dr. Jatin Shah, chief of Head and Neck Service at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, at a diploma ceremony at the Edinburgh College April 25.

Chair of the Council of the International Academy of Oral Oncology, Shah will receive the Honorary Fellowship from the RCSEd's Faculty of Dental Surgery in recognition of the contribution he has made to medicine, particularly in the field of oral oncology, RCSEd said in a press release.

"I am deeply humbled and sincerely grateful to the RCSEd, for bestowing this distinguished honor upon me," the

press release quoted Shah as saying. "Recognition by colleagues from a different background is a high point in my career, and a unique privilege with a special meaning.

Such recognition will go a long way towards strengthening the common platform created between surgeons from differing backgrounds involved in the care of patients with Oral Cancer, such as Head and Neck Surgeons, Otolaryngologists, plastic surgeons and Dental / Oral / maxillo facial surgeons," he added.

Having received medical training in Baroda, Shah undertook a research fellowship in Philadelphia, before moving in New York and undertaking a series of research and senior surgical positions,

including most recently being appointed to the position of professor of Surgery at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York. In addition, he has over 400 peer reviewed publications to his name as well as Honorary Fellowships from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, England and Australia.

Established in 1505, and with a worldwide membership, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is one of the world's oldest and largest surgical establishments dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and advancement in surgical and dental practice, through its activities in education, training and examinations.

*By a Staff Writer*



# India-born Hinduja brothers emerge richest in Britain

India-born Hinduja brothers, Srichand and Gopichand Hinduja, have emerged as the richest men in Britain with a net wealth of 11.9 billion pounds (about \$20 billion), according to a report.

The owners of the global conglomerate Hinduja Group saw their fortune rise by 1.3 billion pounds during last year, the Daily Mail reported citing the 2014 Sunday Times Rich List that will be published May 18.

The London-based businessmen,

who ranked third last year, replaced last year's richest man Russian business magnate Alisher Usmanov at the top after the Arsenal shareholder saw his fortune fall to 10.65 billion pounds, the report said.

Lakshmi Mittal, an Indian steel tycoon owning ArcelorMittal, ranked third in the list with a fortune of 10.25 billion pounds.

The study revealed a total of 104 billionaires based in Britain with a combined wealth of more than 301 billion

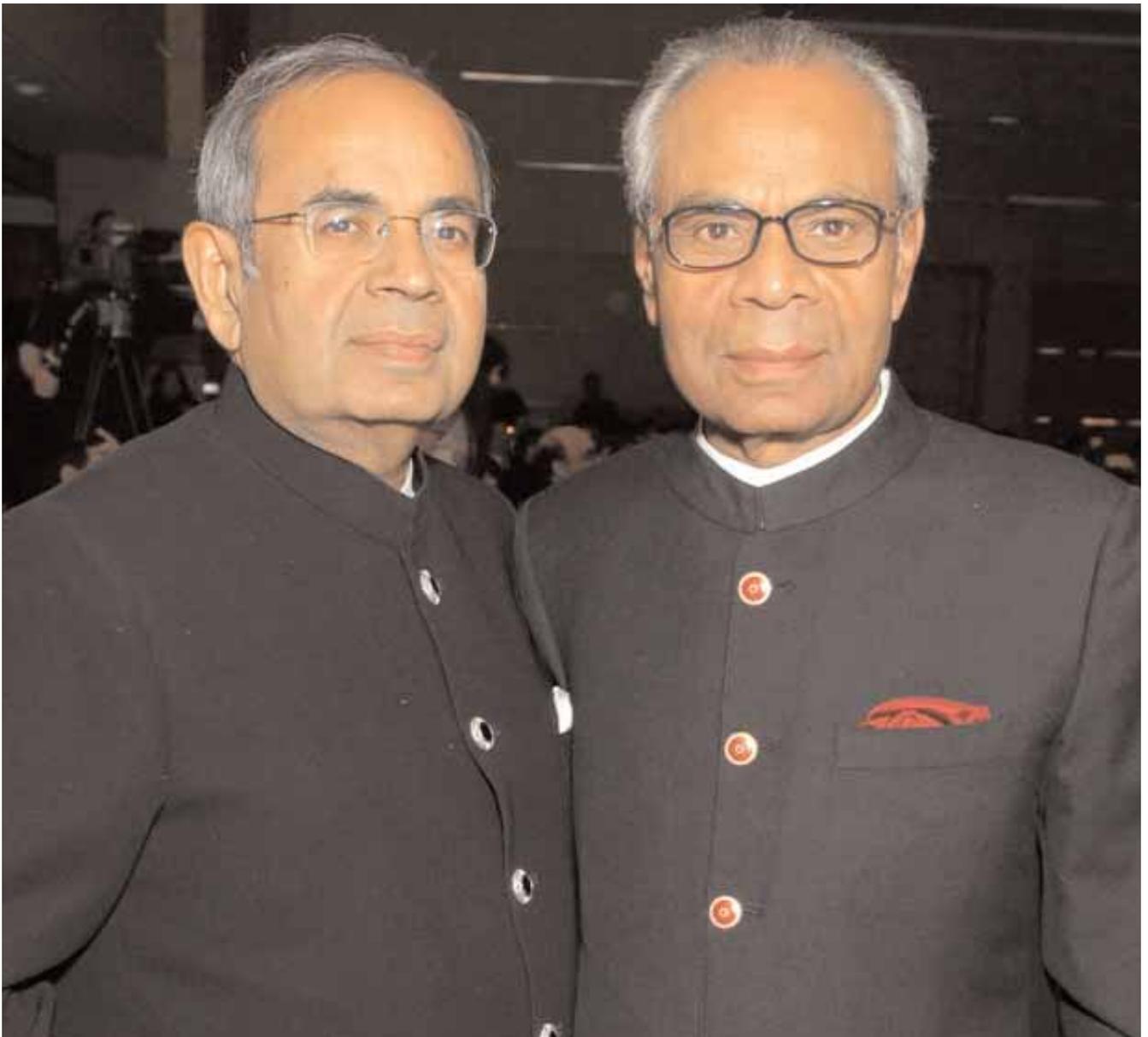
pounds.

That number has more than tripled in a decade, according to the list.

The richest Briton on the list is the Duke of Westminster whose fortune rose to 8.5 billion pounds.

Of the 104 billionaires, London is home to 72 of them - the highest in any city in the world.

The list also pointed out that Britain has more billionaires per head of population than any other country in the world.



# OPEN LETTER TO THE Rt Hons Ed Miliband MP

**Date: 19th May 2014**

Sir,

I have written to you in the past as well as tweeting questions directly to your twitter account. Your responses thus far have been poor and I write to you again in the hope that you will begin to recognise the importance of taking the issues I raise with you seriously.

I do not profess to speak on behalf of the Indian community nor the Hindu community. However I do believe I have my finger on the pulse of the community to know what the issues of concern are, and other matters that impact our community.

In the form of this open letter I seek your responses to the following points:

a. Can you confirm that it was the then Labour Government that imposed a diplomatic/visa ban on the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendrabhai Modi?

b. Can you confirm the date on which this decision was taken (I believe you were quite close to the government of the day) and the people involved in that decision making? In addition, can you confirm if the then Labour Government was lobbied by anyone or any entity in the UK or external to affect such a decision? If so, who?

c. Can you confirm the exact reasons for imposing such a ban on an officially and democratically elected politician who had never been found guilty of any wrong doing by any court?

d. Can you confirm if the then Labour Government had introduced any type of ban on investments into the State of Gujarat either via the government departments and/or corporate entities?

e. Can you confirm how many British led projects were established in the State of Gujarat during the tenure of the Labour Government? Please include the total sums involved.

In addition to these points, the following require your attention also:

f. On 26th February an anti-modi event was hosted by some Labour MPs/Peers with organisations such as Awaaz and TMG-UK. Can you please confirm that you denounce the role of the Labour MP/Peers? In addition can you also confirm that you reject the report titled, 'Narendra Modi Exposed'?

g. On 1st May another anti-modi event was host by some Labour MPs at the House of

Commons in Committee Room 14. You should note this took place on the same day when the House of Commons was celebrating 'Gujarat Foundation Day'. Can you please tell us why after the fiasco of the 26th February, you still allowed this event to go ahead with the assistance of Labour MPs? In light of this current history can you confirm that you denounce the role of these MPs in the said event?

h. Shri Narendra Modi became PM elected on 16th of May 2014. As far as I can make out you tweeted your congratulations at 12.02PM on 18th May 2014. This is a good 48 hours after the landslide victory by PM Modi was known. Can you please explain why as the leader of the Labour Party and the official opposition, it took you so long to respond to the biggest event taking place in the world at that time? I am sure you will appreciate that I had to remind you at least three times to make such a statement.

Mr Miliband there is a rising concern within the community that you and your Party appear to be showing incredible levels of disrespect in how some of your MPs are behaving, and what appears to be a total lack of any control on your part to ensure that a sizeable and important community is not disrespected.

By way of this open letter, which I will share with-in my community, I hope you will take the opportunity to respond with clear responses. I do hope you appreciate that rhetoric and platitudes don't work any longer, and that as a community, we deserve to know what the leader of the Labour Party, a person who wants to be the next PM of UK, really thinks about us.

In addition, I am willing to meet you in person to conduct an interview to secure your responses - if you would find that more helpful.

You now have had ample opportunities to respond but unfortunately hitherto you have failed. I do hope that you consider this letter as yet another attempt by me to give you the option of sharing your thoughts. Failure to do so will be telling in itself.

I leave the matter in your good hands and trust that I may have your reply within the next 7 days.

I thank you for your time and am available should you wish to clarify any of the points raised.

Thank you.  
Yours sincerely,  
**Kapil Dudakia**

# Bollywood is my goal : Ranjana

Ranjana from bangalore. She is modelled for various brands and designers down south. To name a few they are alicé jewellers,karnataka silk,levis and wrangler,aircel,3 roses add with jeeva and santhanam, emmanuel silk, kalaniketana,royal orchid goa and many more. Have walked bangalore fashion week, signature show and walked ramp for many famous designers. Presently shooting for a kannada project called kidigedi. Upcoming project is with actor jd chakravarthy (satya fame) which is a bilingual called gundu chettyil kudru ottam. Upcoming project is aiyram poi solli. Acted as a lead in an international film (srilanka)called paragon which is a documentary film and paragon is a part of few international film festivals.

**Ranjana is an actor & presenter - explain your acting background and vision for future? And presenter means you are hoisting events, launches etc?**

I have been modelling from past 3 years. Ventured into acting sometime back with my first kannada movie called kidigedi. Releasing soon.I shall be doing next a tamil film called aiyram poi solli and doing a telugu next.

**Mainstream films from Hollywood & Bollywood always attracts global talent, you have an ambition to explore the option, if offered?**

I already completed a srilankan film called paragon which is going for film festivals so I have already put my 1st step forward in the international market. Yes bollywood is my goal if I get a good offer and a good break. Hollywood films are seen world wide so it attracts me too but am not dying to again a good film should do. Even it's a metier role with great stars counts a lot.

**You are business management graduate, how the studies have helped you in shaping your career in entertainment industry?**

I am a bsc student. My study has nothing to do in shaping my carrier. I'm not using my education when I'm acting cos acting is totally different. But I can proudly say I'm educated and have worked with an mnc company too unlike most of the actors who start acting at an early stage without completing their studies.

**As a liberated soul and educated girl, how do you think we can change the life of millions of girls in Indian conservative society. There are sever cases human right violations and submission of basic rights to the female population in the region, how this issue can be addressed for the welfare of humanity?**

It's a very soft topic to be spoken



about. I have discussed and still discussing. I have no powers as such to change society but if my words and initiative can help I would love to be a part of women organisation. Am already part of 2 ngo programmes for poor and deprived. Called rya and sparse. I feel to be free which is our right no one can stop us, we don't have to be educated for it. We women have to fight and be a rebel for everything. We deserve all so let's fight this evil out. And education is an added advantage no doubt. Let's be strong join hands and be free.

**Returning to the entertainment industry, how the famous artists are accepted in the mainstream society? The icons are remunerated in parity of the quality work if we compare it with western societies?**

An artist is an artist big or small. To

get there is a struggle. Am sure we all accepted well and with respect. We are no different from normal being just that the work is different and because people see us on silver screen so to them we look different offscreen. We are entertainers and it's a job and we are paid a salary. That our bread and butter too.

**Ranjana is living for making change via art or vice versa?**

I'm passionate about acting. Television is a medium for change am sure all will accept. What we see we learn we follow we live we are driven towards cinema and serials, and we relate our life to it because we can see reality in most of the movies apart from the Sci-fi ones. I'm here to do quality work and be a part of the change in process of changing the society.



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Connectivity - Northern and Southern bank  
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