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Cover Story

THE AMBASSADORS

**Human Capital is India's Best Export To The World.
PIOs Are The Driving Force to Make It A World Power**



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Acknowledging PIO contribution in nation building

India has made significant progress in the last few decades, and today it is one of the most prominent country in the new world order. The steel frame of the country is constructed by brilliant leaders namely Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira

Gandhi, PV Narsimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dr Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi to position India in the top list of global super power. Technocrats, Scientists, Bureaucrats, Diplomats, Judges, Journalists, Social community leaders has put their maximum effort to uplift India from an under developed nation to a highly progressive nation. Today we are at the high table of the various global power centers and the world acknowledges the contribution of India in making the world a better place to live. Initially the role of People of Indian Origin people living in various part of the world

is greatly undermined because of the size of the Diaspora but liberalization process and opening of Indian economy has put the PIO community in the mainstream of the global Indian interest, so the Indian Diaspora started acting as India's permanent Ambassadors spreading the country's cultural ethos and heritage.

A recent UN report says that India now has the largest 'Diaspora' in the world, with more than 16 million persons of Indian origin living abroad. This Non Resident Indian (NRI) pool represents a little over 1 per cent of India's population but is a crucial cog in the wheel of India's development.

How does the Indian Diaspora benefit India? The biggest way is through regular remittances. According to a World Bank report released in April, India was the largest remittance-receiving country in the world, with an estimated \$69 billion in 2015. This amounts to a whopping 3.4 per cent of India's GDP, an amazing multiplier because just 1 per cent of the citizenry, which does not even live in the country, contributes more than three times its fair share to the nation's wealth. India should show that it is serious about managing its relationship with the NRIs by opening a separate Minister-of-State level department for NRI administration - similar to the Veterans' Administration in the US. This department would act as the NRI voice across various Indian government agencies and promote engagement with NRIs to help India's larger cause.

The Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2019 is special for the visiting PIO community because the event is organized at the oldest living city of the modern world - Varanasi, it will be an experience for the participant to explore the ancient Indian culture and learn more about India. Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore may offer better facilities and accommodation but the true prospective to learn the Indian way of life can be understood by staying in Varanasi for few days.

As we are entering in 2019, the global PIO population is poised to shine even brighter. A prominent Senator lady of Indian origin is likely to contest US presidential elections in 2020, major global tech companies continues to be headed by PIO technocrats, global media is dominated by prominent Indian journalists, new generation entrepreneurship is likely to drive several business entities. The Indian Diaspora has contributed enormously to strengthening India's cultural, literary, political and economic bonds across the world. India sees PIO community as an important bridge with the countries where PIO community is living. PIO community must be effectively utilized as an instrumental in building the people to people ties to promote brand India at the global platform.

—Prashant Tewari , Editor-in-Chief

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Brain Drain Or Gain: NRI Contributions To India

India must realise that its NRIs can act as a crucial force in its development, and leverage its potential

By Prashant Tewari

A

recent UN report says that India now has the largest 'diaspora' in the world, with more than 16 million persons of Indian origin living abroad. This Non Resident Indian (NRI) pool represents a little over 1 per cent of India's population but is a crucial cog in the wheel of India's development.

How does the Indian diaspora benefit India? The biggest way is through regular remittances. According to a World Bank report released in April, India was the largest remittance-receiving country in the world, with an estimated \$69 billion in 2015.

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Stimulating the economy

There are other advantages which diaspora populations bring that are harder to measure. When they visit India, they tend to spend more lavishly than the locals, thereby helping economic activity. NRIs are more prone to donating to domestic charities because of the strong cultural and emotional feelings that they nurse.

They bring technical and domain expertise to domestic startups and often act as angel investors. Diaspora Indian faculty abroad volunteer time and resources to help faculty on Indian campuses improve the quality of education — as in the case of member institutions of the Indo Universal Collaboration of Engineering Education.

With a little commitment and some creative thinking, the government could double or even treble the already substantial economic value of diaspora contributions by carefully designing a set of policies to exploit the talent, industriousness and patriotism of those living abroad. (Full disclosure: This writer has been an NRI for 30 years).

For inspiration, India just needs to look at recent policies implemented by the US, Canada and Germany in the last 18 months to take advantage of Indian migrants. President Obama signed executive orders in May to extend the optional practical training visa durations of foreign students who earn

Diaspora Indian faculty abroad volunteer time and resources to help faculty on Indian campuses improve the quality of education — as in the case of member institutions of the Indo Universal Collaboration of Engineering Education.

Master's and PhD degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields to two full years. In effect, using a host of legal manoeuvres towards an ultimate green card, such students never really need to return home.

In January 2015, Canada relaxed its rules to immigrate even more permanent residents under its popular, competency-based, points system. Even Germany, which is saturated with refugees now, is quietly extending an olive branch to import even more skilled workers through programs such as free tuition for post graduate education.



Human capital

How much do the Indian diaspora cost India? Not much, because, largely living abroad, they do not consume the country's public services or drain its natural resources. It is true that the Indian government spends a lot of money educating migrants before they leave for greener shores, but there are ways to recover this investment.

For example, as part of a new NRI policy, the government must immediately work with rich countries to ask that they kick back a portion of the income tax revenues they collect from the Indian diaspora.

This is fair because these countries did not invest anything in creating this talent but benefit immediately when the immigrant pays taxes abroad. If negotiations fail, India should approach the WTO to argue that developing countries must be officially compensated for the human capital they export.

India should show that it is serious about managing its relationship with the NRIs by opening a separate Minister-of-State level department for NRI administration - similar to the Veterans' Administration in the US. This department would act as the NRI voice across various Indian government agencies and promote engagement with NRIs to help India's larger cause.

The government should launch various win-win schemes

to make it more attractive for its diaspora to step up participation in India's development. India should formalise a rotation program wherein top NRI scientists, engineers, doctors, managers and professionals serve Indian public sector organizations for a brief period, lending their expertise. This kind of lateral induction of senior staff can do wonders to both host and contributing personnel as was evidenced by the tenure of Dr. Rajan at the RBI. Many NRIs would be willing to serve for no compensation if living expenses, travel and accommodations are paid for.

India should show that it is serious about managing its relationship with the NRIs by opening a separate Minister-of-State level department for NRI administration - similar to the Veterans' Administration in the US.

In the country's interest

India should aggressively court NRIs to invest in India — especially for projects which focus on rural development — by offering attractive interest rates on deposits. A new Foreign Currency Non Resident (FCNR) programme where each NRI can invest up to, say \$100,000 per person, at 10-year rates close to the Indian domestic market (say 6.0 per cent), will bring in a flood of much needed cash and stabilise the rupee. Interest rates in most western countries are not much higher than zero. If just 25 per cent of the diaspora population invests the maximum amount, this could bring in \$400 billion in new remittances to India.

As long as the interest differential is high, the likelihood that NRIs will withdraw these funds is low, so banks could essentially use new deposits to pay current interest obligations, much like the US Treasury does. While the theoretical expense of interest payouts is higher, it is no higher than borrowing from global banks with onerous lending terms.

Social media tools have made it easy and inexpensive for diaspora Indians to stay in touch with family and friends back home, and their link to India has never been stronger. It is time that the Indian government leveraged this strong bond for the greater good of the nation.

Let's talk a bit about Indians for whom biscuits and chocolates have become cookies and candies — people who always carry a mineral-water bottle and a unique accent, wherever they go! Yes! We are talking about NRIs — a term which is more recognized among Indian citizens than RBI.

There have been many discussions on the subject of NRIs, and they have been frequently criticized by wannabe deshbhakts (patriots) on social media. In this article, we are going to analyse some statistical facts and figures about NRIs.

We start with statistics regarding the population of NRIs and their distribution all around the globe. In total, there are 29.22 million Indians staying outside India which is more than the total population of many countries around the world.

Now, let's see how this NRI population is distributed. The list excludes the members of neighboring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan.

Here is the list with the approximate percentage of Indian population overseas:

ASIA	
Bahrain	19%
UAE	40%
Qatar	15.7%
Oman	17.5%
Kuwait	21.6%
Singapore	9.1%
Malaysia	8.7%
Saudi Arabia	9.8%
Myanmar	2%
OCEANIA	
Fiji	40.1%
Australia	2%
New Zealand	2.6%
AFRICA	
Mauritius	68.3%
South Africa	2.7%
Seychelles	6.3%
EUROPE	
UK	2.3%
AMERICAS	
Canada	3.54%
CARIBBEAN	
Guyana	43.5%
Trinidad and Tobago	40.2%
Suriname	27.4%
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	19.7%
Grenada	11.7%
Jamaica	3.4%
Saint Lucia	2.8%
Saint Kitts and Nevis	2.6%
Belize	0.2%

Source: Non Resident Indians Online

USA is on the list – but it is an honorable mention with an ethnic Indian population of around 1%. The biggest surprise lies in the Caribbean Region.

There were expectations that Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe would reveal a significant Indian population out there, but none of them meet the 1% bar. As for Europe, no other countries apart from the UK (2.3%) and The Republic Of Ireland (1.9%) are reported to have an Indian population of 1%.

For the longest time, NRIs have been a symbol of ‘brain drain’. NRIs study in India and work outside. They are educated in India, but serve the foreign land. The question we need to ask here is whether studying in the Indian education system leads to learning, on a global scale?

It is extremely necessary to go out and expose yourself to the world. One cannot put enough emphasis on how important it is to explore, know, learn, observe and understand how the world functions. Let’s remember a few great legends who were and are at times, NRIs – for instance, Kalpana Chawla and even Gandhi! Yes, our own bapu was once an NRI. What’s more?

There are a few more honorable mentions. The founder and creator of Hotmail is Sabeer Bhatia, an Indian. The co-founder of Sun Microsystems is an Indian – Vinod Khosla. The creator of the Pentium chip is also an Indian – Vinod Dham. Narinder Singh Kapany, a Punjab-born genius, is known for his contribution to the field of fibre optics. Har Gobind Khorana, an Indo-American biochemist born in Raipur, Punjab, bagged the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1968, for cracking the genetic code along with Robert Holley and Marshall Nirenberg.

An Indo-Canadian of the Sikh community, Harjit Sajjan, also got appointed as the defence minister of Canada in 2015. The sheer number of NRIs notwithstanding, these are some of the NRIs who have made India proud.

Not only are they doing exceptionally good in their respective fields, they are also supporting the Indian economy at the same time. Despite a steep drop in the global remittances to India in 2016, India has received \$65.5 billion in the past year. A report by wealth consultancy WealthInsight stated that the number of NRIs with millionaire status last year was 2.36 lakh, with an average wealth of over \$3.83 million.

The total NRI population was pegged at around 28 million. The US accounted for the largest proportion of NRI millionaires with a total of 133,564 or 56.5% share, followed by the UK with a 0.7% share. Other countries with a significant number of NRI millionaires include the UAE, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan. The total wealth of NRI millionaires was estimated at some \$915 billion in 2015 and is expected to reach \$1.4 trillion by 2019. Remittances from NRIs are often used for investments in stocks, term deposits, land and property.

The NRIs often return with lots of knowledge, potential and passion to drive change, which they often exhibit through entrepreneurial and charitable activities. The NRIs around the world, thus, have made contributions not only to the development of their country of residence, but also to the development of India.

An analysis of these facts and figures shows that this is not ‘brain drain’ – rather it’s a significant ‘brain gain’. NRIs also take their Indian roots along with them, wherever they go, thereby, contributing to the dispersal and popularization of Indian cultures and traditions all around the world. Most importantly, they often earn recognition and respect for India and its citizens at the global scene.

Every time an NRI achieves something, it is a plus point for India too! They are really helping India become more global. Let’s break the ‘brain drain’ stereotype and feel proud of the ‘global Indians’!

25 Non Resident Indians Across The World Who Have Made India Proud

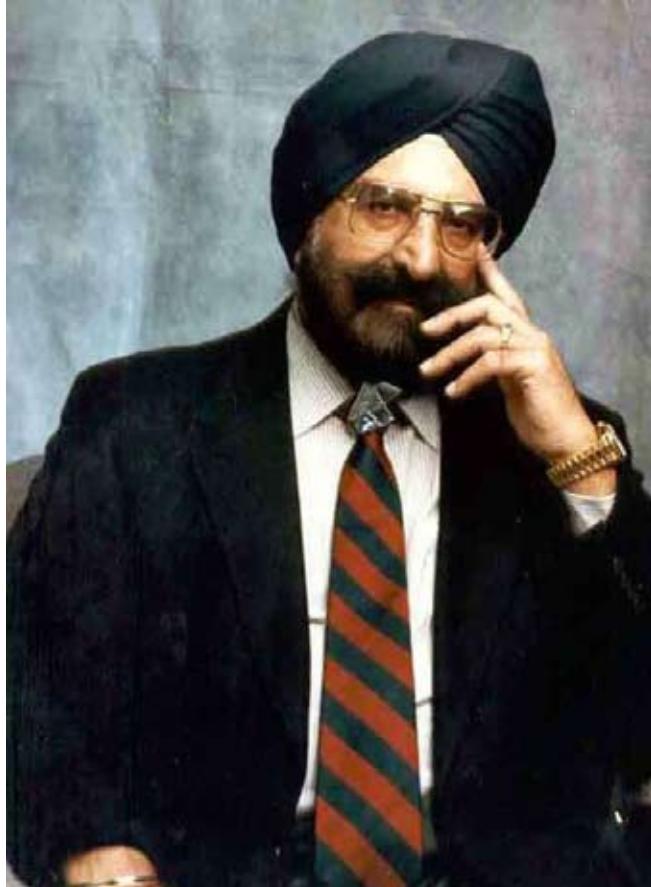
By Shreya Pareek

These Indians have gone places and brought great glory to the country they were born in. From science to arts, business to literature, here is a list of 25 exceptionally talented Non Resident Indians (NRIs) who have given us several more reasons to be proud of –

1

Narinder Singh Kapany

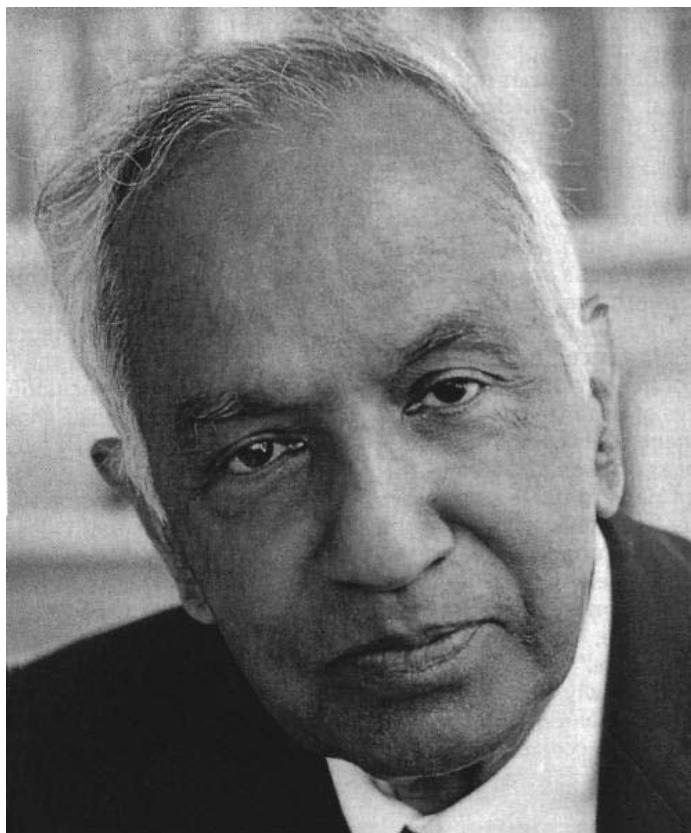
This Punjab-born genius is known for his contribution to the field of fibre optics. He was included in the list of seven ‘Unsung Heroes’ by Fortune magazine in their ‘Businessmen of the Century’ issue. He is considered as one of the founders of fibre optics and revolutionized the way information is transmitted today. Kapany has played many roles in his life including that of an entrepreneur, philanthropist and scholar, which won him major international acclaim.



2

Salman Rushdie

Born in Mumbai, this 67-year-old Kashmiri Indian author is best known for his contribution to English Literature. His second novel, *Midnight's Children*, won the Booker Prize in 1981. He also won the 'Booker of Bookers' prize in 1993 for the same novel. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him 13th on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945. He started his career as a copywriter with the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather. He is also known for the controversy due to his book *Satanic Verses*. He has authored eleven novels so far and written several short stories. His books have been translated in over 40 languages. He was appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999 and was also knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to literature. More than one reason to be proud of this amazing scholar, right?



S. Chandrasekhar

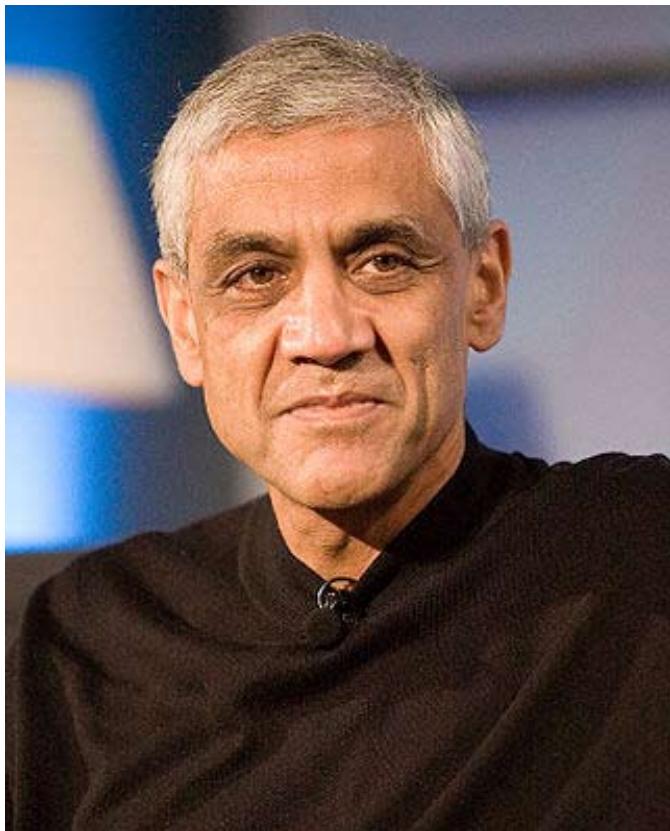
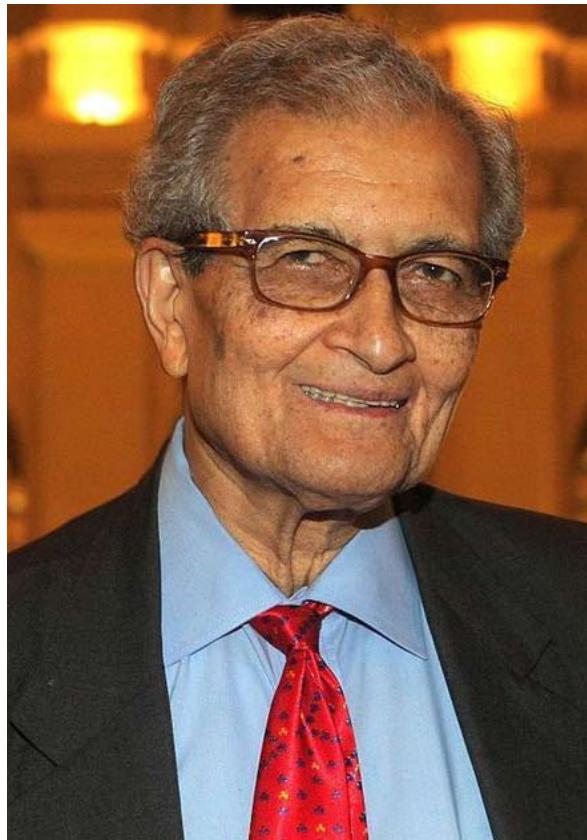
Born in Lahore, British India, he is famous for his mathematical theory of black holes for which he won a Nobel Prize in 1983. The Chandrasekhar limit is named after him. His most celebrated work concerns the radiation of energy from stars, particularly white dwarf stars, which are the dying fragments of stars. R. J. Tayler in the Biographical Memoirs of the Fellows of the Royal Society of London wrote, "Chandrasekhar was a classical applied mathematician whose research was primarily applied in astronomy and whose like will probably never be seen again."

3

4

Amartya Sen

Born in Santiniketan, West Bengal, this Indian economist and philosopher is best known for his amazing contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, economic and social justice, economic theories of famines, and indices of the measure of well-being of citizens of developing countries. His extraordinary work in welfare economics won him the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998. He is the chancellor at Nalanda University and also a Fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows. He is also internationally acclaimed for his writing. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* is one of his best works.



5

Vinod Khosla

Listed as a billionaire by Forbes Magazine, Khosla is one of the co-founders of Sun Microsystems, a company which created the Java programming language and Network File System. He later formed his own company, Khosla Ventures. He was born in Delhi and attended Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He was a keyplayer in the founding of Daisy Systems and TiE. He has also played an important role as an investor in environmental startups. Khosla has committed around \$450 million of his personal wealth to various “green” initiatives like ethanol factories, solar-power parks, etc. His green investing has made him immensely popular in the media globally.

6

Har Gobind Khorana

This Indian American biochemist won a nobel prize in 1968 for Physiology or Medicine for cracking the genetic code along with Robert Holley and Marshall Nirenberg. Born in Raipur, Punjab, Khorana was the first scientist to chemically synthesize oligonucleotides. His contribution to science is tremendous and has won him immense international acclaim.



Rohinton Mistry

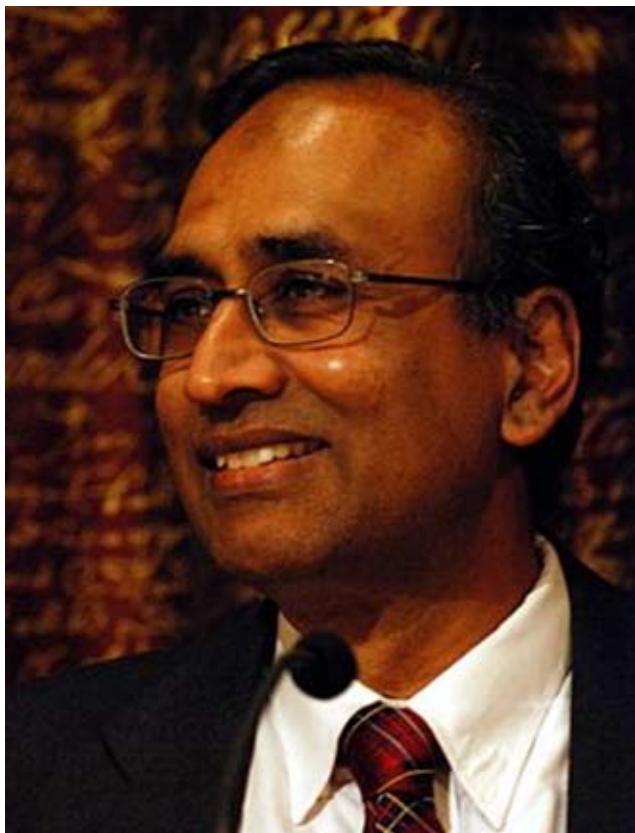
This internationally acclaimed writer was born in Mumbai and did his BA from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. He later on shifted to Canada in 1975 with his wife. He published his first book, 11 connected short stories titled Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from the Firozsha Bag in 1987. His second book Such a Long Journey, was published in 1991 and achieved huge national and international acclaim. His other works received similar popularity. His third book A Fine Balance is considered to be one of his finest works and was a finalist for the Booker Prize.

7

8

Pan Nalin

This award winning film director, screenwriter and documentary maker was born in Gujarat and is best known for his amazing and award winning films like Samsara, Valley of Flowers and Ayurveda: Art of Being. He received international acclaim just after the release of his first film Samsara which made him win over 30 international awards. His other feature film Valley of Flowers was pre-sold in 35 countries and is considered a major underground hit. He was invited to be on the panel for the France-India Co-production forum at Salon du Cinema in Paris along with the delegation headed by Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. Nalin says that Indians are "hungry for good documentaries". And we think his amazing work is satiating that hunger.



9

Venkatraman Ramakrishnan

Born in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, this structural biologist won the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Thomas A. Steitz and Ada E. Yonath, "for studies of the structure and function of the ribosome". He is an elite member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. He was awarded with the Louis-Jeantet Prize for his contribution to Medicine in 2007. His great contribution to science also won him India's second highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan, in 2010.

10

Mira Nair

This amazing film maker was born in Rourkela, Orissa and started her career as an independent short-film maker, going on to win the Best Documentary prize at the American Film Festival for India Cabaret, an investigative documentary of Bombay's strippers. She runs a production company called Mirabai. Her debut feature film *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), won the Golden Camera award at the Cannes Film Festival and was also a nominee for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Her most popular works include *The Namesake* and *Monsoon Wedding*. She was also awarded India's third highest civilian award, the Padma Bhushan, in 2012. Her work is globally acclaimed and she even got an offer to direct *Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix*, which she rejected.



Anita Desai and Kiran Desai

This mother-daughter duo is famous for exceptional writing skills. Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* won the Man Booker Prize in 2006 and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. The exceptional writing comes as an inheritance, as Kiran's mother Anita Desai has also been short-listed for the Booker Prize thrice. Kiran has been winning accolades from various notable figures ever since she published her first book. Anita won the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* and has also won the British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea*. Anita is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the American Academy of Arts and Letters and also writes for the *New York Review of Books*. Her novel *In Custody* is one of her finest works.

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12

Manu Prakash

Manu was born in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh and completed his BTech in computer science and engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur before moving to the United States for his masters and PhD. Currently An assistant professor of bioengineering at Stanford University, Manu is famous for his super cool inventions. The inventons include a foldable microscope, The Foldscope, that is easy to use and fold from a single sheet of A4 size paper! The cost of this microscope is 50 cents (or Rs. 30) only. He also recently invented a computer that runs on water. He used the unique Physics of moving water droplets to design a clock that is required in a computer.



13

Kalpana Chawla

This lady needs no introduction. Born in Karnal, India, she was the first Indian-American astronaut and also the first Indian woman in space. She began working at NASA's Ames Research Center in 1988. In her career span and two space missions, she spent 30 days, 14 hours, and 54 minutes in space. She was killed in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster along with six other crew members in 2003. India's first weather satellite was renamed 'Kalpana-1' in her honor. She was a role model for many young women internationally and inspired many people to pursue a career in Aerospace Engineering.



14

Lakshmi Mittal

This business tycoon is the chairman and CEO of ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel-making company. Born in Sadulpur, Rajasthan, he completed his B.com from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. He was the richest man of Asian descent in the United Kingdom in 2007 and was ranked as the sixth richest person in the world by Forbes in 2011. He is also 47th "most powerful person" in the Forbes list of 2012 and one of the "100 most influential persons in the world" by TIME in 2007. He holds a 34 percent share in Queens Park Rangers F.C. He has set up the Mittal Champions Trust with \$9 million to support 10 promising Indian athletes.



15

Pranav Mistry

Hailing from Palanpur, Gujarat, this 33-year-old computer scientist and inventor is currently Vice President of Research at Samsung and is the head of Think Tank Team. He has contributed in Wearable Computing, Augmented reality, Ubiquitous computing, Gestural interaction, AI, Machine vision, Collective intelligence and Robotics. He was also honored as the Young Global Leader 2013 by World Economic Forum. His groundbreaking technology 'SixthSense' won him international acclaim. SixthSense is a device that interprets human gestures and has both a data projector and a camera



Indra Nooyi

She is the Chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo, the second largest food and beverage business in the world by net revenue. This Chennai born girl has been included in the list of "World's 100 Most Powerful Women" on a regular basis. In spite of this, Nooyi is still fighting to "have it all" and maintain work and personal life balance. As per Business Week, the company's annual revenues have risen 72 percent and net profit has doubled since she became CFO in 2000. She was also included in Wall Street Journal's list of 50 women to watch in 2007 and 2008.

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17

Lakshmi Pratury

This strong lady was co-host of TEDIndia 2009, host and curator of The INK Conference and founder of Ixoraa Media. She aims at strengthening the relations between India and America through sponsored corporate, cultural, and media events. She was part of the “100 Most Powerful Women” list by Forbes Asia in 2010. She also played a key role in American India Foundation, an organization that raised over 30 million dollars in five years towards development activities in India.



Sabeer Bhatia

Having started his career as an employee with IBM who knew nothing about insurance, Orissa-born Ajit Jain is now the President of Berkshire Hathaway Insurance group. Warren Buffet had once said that Jain's mind is an “idea factory”. Having worked with Buffet for around three decades, Jain is being speculated as the successor to this renowned American business magnate. The IIT Kharagpur graduate is currently leading Berkshire's Indian insurance market venture.

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19

Zubin Mehta

Born in Mumbai, he is one of the world's leading conductors. This amazing orchestral conductor and musical director is best known for his expressiveness on the stage. He is Music Director for Life of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Main Conductor for Valencia's opera house. His conducting is considered as flamboyant, vigorous and forceful. His name has been mentioned in the song "Billy the Mountain" on the 1972 album Just Another Band from L.A. by Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention. He also received a special prize in Israel for his extraordinary contribution to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. He also received the 2,434th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, putting India on the international map.



Raghava KK

This Bangalore born contemporary artist was named by CNN as one of the 10 most fascinating people the world is yet to know of. The genres he dabbles in vary from painting, film, installation, multimedia, performance, and even his own wedding. He began as a cartoonist in Indian publications. He has lectured at New York University and several other art institutions across the globe. He was invited as a guest of the French city of Nîmes to exhibit his work at the Carre d'Art Musee d'Art Contemporain.

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C.K.Prahlad

Renowned as one of the most influential business thinkers in the world, he was the distinguished professor of Corporate Strategy at University of Michigan. Born in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, he became established as a business guru when he helped Philips in reconstruction as it was on the verge of collapse. He was also a prominent writer until his death in 2010 and had authored many books like *The Future of Competition* (with Venkat Ramaswamy, 2004), and *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits*. He was a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission of the United Nations on Private Sector and Development. He was also the first recipient of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Award for contributions to Management and Public Administration in India in 1999.



Ajit Jain

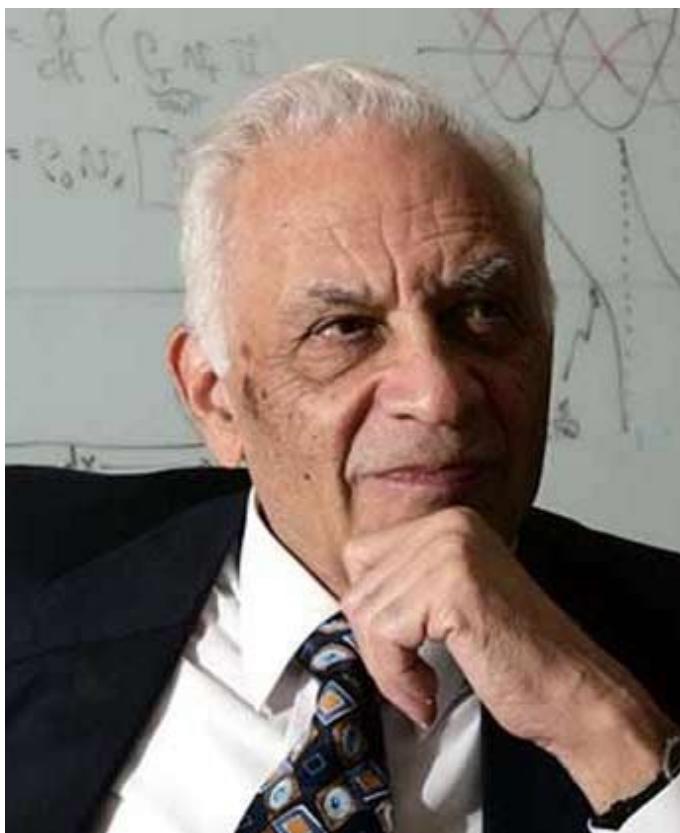
This Indian-American entrepreneur born in Chandigarh founded the Hotmail email services and Jaxtr. He grew up in Bangalore and went to BITS Pilani for his bachelor's degree. Later on he was transferred to California Institute of Technology from BITS where he completed his graduation. Hotmail was the world's second largest e-mail provider with over 369 million registered users in 2011. He sold Hotmail to Microsoft in 1997 for \$400 million and it was then called MSN Hotmail. He also started a free messaging service called JaxtrSMS. The venture capital firm Draper Fisher Jurvetson named him 'Entrepreneur of the Year 1997', MIT chose him as one of 100 young innovators who are expected to have the greatest impact on technology and awarded him the 'TR100'.

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Dipak C. Jain

Born in a small town Tezpur in Assam, he is the current Dean of Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Earlier he was Dean of INSEAD and currently holds a position of Chaired Professor of Marketing there. He also held the position of Dean at Kellogg School of Management. He holds another important position of Independent Director on the Board of Indian Conglomerate Reliance Industries Limited. He has received several awards and honors for his contribution as a teacher, including The Sidney Levy Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1995 and The John D.C. Little Best Paper Award in 1991.



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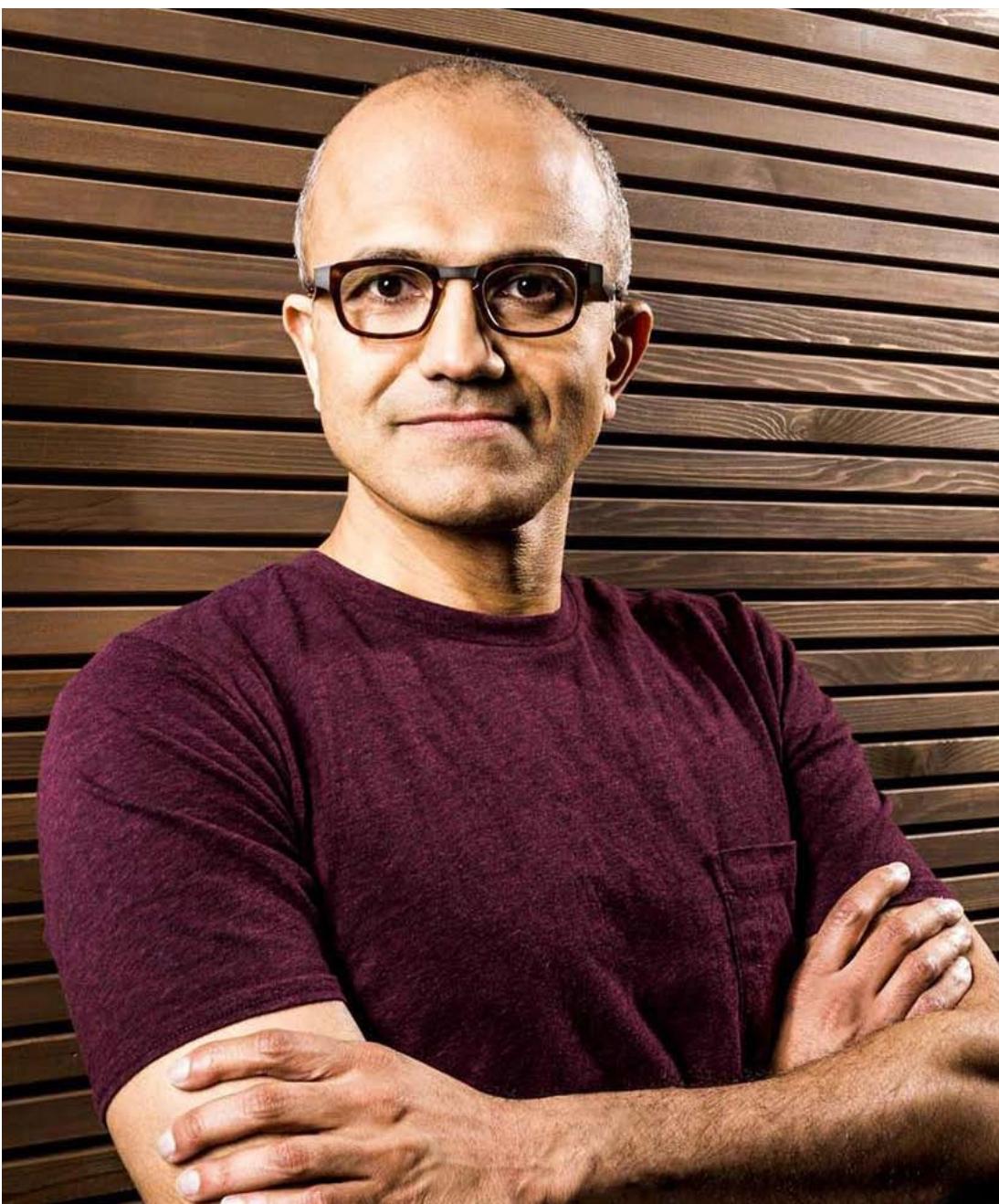
Amar Bose

Born in a Bengali Hindu family, this amazing electrical engineer and sound engineer served as a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for over 45 years. He was also the founder and chairman of Bose Corporation which he later donated to MIT. He was also listed as the 271st richest man in the world by Forbes in 2007. He has received various teaching awards in his lifetime. The Bose Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Junior Bose Award were established in his honor for his services at MIT. He was also an honorary member at Audio Engineering Society.

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Satya Nadella

This current CEO of Microsoft was born in Hyderabad and earlier worked with Sun Microsystems as a member of its technology staff before joining Microsoft in 1992. He was Executive Vice President of Cloud & Enterprise Group and President of Server & Tools at Microsoft Corporation before becoming the CEO in February this year. He played an important role in the transformation to the cloud infrastructure and services business which occupied the market. He has also been a key person in taking various internal decisions at Microsoft.



RAJKAMAL RAO The writer is the managing director of Rao Advisors LLC & Vivek Modi in GlobeScope

PM & Rahul make strong pitch for PIO Community

Opinion Express News Desk

Appreciating the role of PIO community in promoting brand India globally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said India is seeing a substantial transformation in the last three-four years and that the focus on the country has grown in an unprecedented manner while the economy has undergone a paradigm shift.

"You must have felt a major transformation in India in the last three-four years. The outlook towards India has changed. The focus on us has increased, perception of the world towards us is also changing. India has come far ahead of that era when the thinking was nothing will change in India," Modi said while addressing the first PIO-Parliamentarian Conference here.

'Partners in development'

While inaugurating the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra here in the Capital, Modi said NRIs are partners for India's development. He said that NRIs have an important position in the Action Agenda till 2020, drafted by the NITI Aayog. As many as 124 parliamentarians and 17 Mayors of Indian origin attended the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

The Prime Minister said he felt as if a Mini World Parliament of Indian origin was gathered in Delhi. He noted that persons of Indian origin are today Prime Ministers of Mauritius, Portugal and Ireland.

He added that persons of Indian origin have also been heads of state and heads of government in many other countries. He said he considers the Indian diaspora as India's permanent Ambassadors spreading the country's cultural ethos and heritage wherever they settle.

"Whenever I'm on an official tour of a foreign country, I try to meet with the Indians residing there because I believe the Indian diaspora is the permanent ambassador for bilateral relations with countries all over the world," he added. He also said his government has taken some far-reaching policy reforms for the growth of Indian the economy due to which the country is witnessing "irreversible change" in the socio-economic



set up of the country.

He said it is due to these reforms that the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into the country reached \$60 billion in 2016-17 and India's ranking in the 'Ease of Doing Business' index has improved to 42. On the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rollout, Modi said this has enabled the government to eliminate several other taxes. The Prime Minister also lauded the fact that India is the world's largest recipient of remittances. "Today, institutions like the World Bank, IMF and Moody's are looking at India in a very positive way," he added.

Indian Prime Minister extended appeal to PIO community in building brand India globally to achieve the target of making India a super power in the near future.

Meanwhile during his visit to Dubai recently, Congress President Rahul

Gandhi has made a pitch to attract NRI/PIO community. "Every single Indian, irrespective of where they live, is responsible to bring India together once again. We have to say enough," Mr Gandhi said.

He said the Indian workers in the UAE have given their sweat, blood and time for the development of this city and have made Indians of all backgrounds proud.

"Single biggest problem that we face in India today is unemployment. We need to take this head-on. We need to show the rest of the world that not only we can beat unemployment but we can also challenge China."

"When I drive through the UAE, I see your energy, blood and sweat. You have helped build this nation, and I feel proud that you have played your part with dignity, togetherness and tolerance," the Congress president said.

Pravasi can participate in Public Service

Bibek Debroy

A recent government decision has the potential to blur the difference between public and private recruitment. All public recruitment agencies [UPSC, Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), RBI, armed forces, paramilitary, public sector banks, public sector enterprises] will use the Ministry of Labour and Employment's NCS (National Career Service) portal to disclose scores/rankings of candidates in the final stages of recruitment processes. Courtesy NIC, there will thus be an integrated information system for public recruitment agencies. This will have all the details about a candidate.

As a candidate, when I fill out an application form, I have the option of opting out of the disclosure scheme. If not, my data are there on the portal for other private and public sector agencies to use. As an applicant, I may have got through

As a candidate, when I fill out an application form, I have the option of opting out of the disclosure scheme. If not, my data are there on the portal for other private and public sector agencies to use.

to final stages, but may not have been able to clear the last hurdle for whatever post I applied for. In that event, my data can be used by other recruiters. Take the railways. Not long ago, there was an announcement about a little more than 18,000 non-technical posts and more than nine million applied and were

tested. (Sure, all 9 million don't qualify for final stages, but that's not relevant.) Subsequently, railways advertised for 2,54,587 non-technical posts. Within the public segment, there is a wealth of application and testing information and the private sector routinely complains about the lack of people with requisite skills. If an initiative matches excess demand in one with excess supply in the other, it can only improve the efficiency of the intermediating function.

Who is entitled to sit for the UPSC examination? I don't mean academic eligibility, age, or number of attempts, but nationality. For the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service(IPS) or Indian Foreign Service (IFS), the candidate must be an Indian citizen. For other services, the candidate can be a citizen of Nepal, Bhutan, a Tibetan refugee (who migrated before January 1, 1962), or a person of Indian origin who has migrated from Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, East African coun-





tries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Ethiopia) or Vietnam with “the intention of permanently settling in India”.

For non-Indians, the Government of India has to issue an eligibility certificate. This doesn’t necessarily have to be produced at the time of taking an examination, but must be produced before the appointment letter is issued. For public office and public appointments, all countries, India included, have a requirement that the person must be a citizen. There are several different ways to become an Indian citizen — before the commencement of the Constitution, by birth, by descent, by registration (Section 5 of the Citizenship Act), by naturalisation. “Intention of permanently settling in India” and the consequent “eligibility certificate” sound vague and discretionary and are often reflective of historical legacies. Public office and public appointments should have the requirement of being an Indian citizen, not only for IAS, IPS or IFS, but all services. When? At the time of taking the examination or time of issuing the appointment letter? Since the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2006 (and preceding amendment to Citizenship Act in 2005), there is a category known as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI). The former PIO (person of Indian origin) system has gone.

OCIs have several privileges — multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visas, exemption from foreigner registration requirements, parity with NRIs (except in the purchase of agricultural

OCIs have several privileges — multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visas, exemption from foreigner registration requirements, parity with NRIs (except in the purchase of agricultural land and plantations).

land and plantations). Progressively, there has been more liberalisation — parity in inter-country adoption, domestic air fares, entry fees for wildlife sanctuaries (2007), employment, parity in entry fees to national monuments and museums (2009), easier proof of residence (2012). However, OCI doesn’t mean dual citizenship, at least not from an Indian perspective (the UK has a different view).

Therefore, there are three rights OCIs don’t possess today — the right to vote, right to public office and right to public appointments. But given the distinction between taking an examination and the issue of an appointment letter, why shouldn’t OCIs be allowed to take UPSC exams? Logically, it is an appealing idea. If a person is selected, an appointment letter will be issued only

after the existing citizenship has been renounced in favour of Indian citizenship. This is the kind of announcement that can be made at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2018.

Note that security clearances are necessary before any public appointment is made. So security concerns are non-sequitur. If PoK or CoPoK (China occupied Pakistan occupied Kashmir) residents wish to take the UPSC examination, so be it. In the process, they will learn something about India. More seriously, Pakistan is outside the ambit of OCI. On occasion, there has been lateral entry into public service at senior levels by people who were PIOs, not NRIs. They renounced their existing citizenship and became Indian citizens. But these were isolated instances, on ad hoc basis.

Lateral entry increases competition and the broader the catchment area, the better. It is unlikely that a large number of OCIs will wish to take UPSC exams. Given the nature of the exam, it is unlikely that many will qualify, even if they wish to. Even then, from the competition point of view, why not broaden the base? From the appointment point of view, becoming an Indian citizen and imbibing things Indian are easier at an age of 25 than they are at an age of 55. We have done it on ad hoc basis at age 55. Let’s do it more systematically at an age of 25.

(The writer is member, Niti Aayog. Views expressed are personal)
Courtesy: Indian Express

Year of women in US

Kamala Harris, Nikki Haley, Tulsi Gabbard in the limelight

Sujeet Rajan & Pratbha Shalini

NEW YORK – The year 2019 has a strong possibility of a woman emerging as a viable Presidential or Vice-Presidential candidate in the United States, for the 2020 elections. It remains to be seen if a woman will indeed challenge the incumbent, President Donald Trump, for the White House.

The path to that distinct possibility is not hard to see: the 116th Congress which was seated on January 3, 2018, has more than 100 women members – the most in history, headed by a woman, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, in the House of Representatives. Also, the first major candidate to pitchfork herself into the presidential election mix is a woman, Democrat Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren.

The Indian American community, which for years and decades had its sights fixed on increasing the number of candidates in Congress – and has seen slow progress on that front as the number is stalled at four in the House, and one in the Senate – is suddenly hit with the prospect of one of their own actually becoming the most powerful politician on Earth.

California Senator Kamala Harris, who is expected to announce her presidential bid soon, is one of the strongest Democrats in a burgeoning list of candidates for the nomination. The Indian American Harris, whose mother is from India, and father from the West Indies, may pitch her candidacy on national TV, as early as next week.

The Hill reported that Harris is making a return trip to "The Late Show," and will sit down with Stephen Colbert on the CBS late-night show on January 10. It's the same show where last month, after Colbert egged on Julián Castro, a former Housing and Urban Development secretary, about whether he would be running in the next presidential race, his twin brother, Rep. Joaquin Castro, from Texas, replied, "I'll speak on his behalf here; he's going to run for president."

Apart from Harris, the Democrat Congresswoman from Hawaii, Tulsi Gabbard, the first practicing Hindu in Congress, is also expected to contest the

presidential polls, in 2020. The progressive Gabbard is in the process of putting a team together for her initiative, and an announcement of her candidacy is expected sometime this month. She has already been endorsed by a few conservative leaning Indian American groups, who are delighted by the prospect of a Hindu getting pole position in US elections.

A terrific and exciting prospect for the Republicans is Nikki Haley, who stepped down as the Ambassador to the United Nations, on January 1, 2018.

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The former Governor of South Carolina, whose parents emigrated from Punjab in India, is considered a top prospect to be the running mate for Trump in 2010, if he decides to dump the incumbent VP Mike Pence. The other, and more exciting possibility for the community, is Haley running for President herself, if Trump decides to recuse himself for a shot at a second-term. What Bobby Jindal, the former Republican Governor of Louisiana couldn't achieve, perhaps Haley will.

In the history of US elections, only two women have ever been nominated to run for the office of Vice President, the furthest they have achieved in a quest for the White House: Sarah Palin by the Republican party in 2008 and Geraldine Ferraro by the Democratic party in 1984. Here's a brief look at how these three beloved women of the Indian American community stand at present, and what the mainstream and local press is saying about them:

Kamala Harris

Harris, who recently went on a fact-finding trip to Afghanistan, to burnish her military and foreign relations credentials, is booking speeches in early primary states, reported the San Francisco Chronicle. "The Democratic Party is becoming increasingly non-white and nominated women in record numbers in 2018. As Harris is the only women of color anywhere near the top tier for the 2020 Democratic nomination, it shouldn't be surprising at all if she ends up winning," it said.

There is likely to be tremendous enthusiasm for Harris. Women of color powered Hillary Clinton's sweep of the southeast in the 2016 primary. Last year, they were the base for Democrat Doug Jones's shocking victory in the Alabama special Senate election, noted CNN.

Harris also appeals to many senior citizens, and disgruntled Republicans who have felt the repercussions of repeal of parts of the Affordable Care Act, and are struggling to find quality, inexpensive healthcare.

An essay adapted by The New York Times from Harris' forthcoming book, "The Truths We Hold: An American Journey," has Harris writing of the death of her mother from colon cancer, in 2009. She writes about the merits of the Affordable Care Act.

"Without the protections of the A.C.A., Americans with pre-existing conditions could be denied health insurance and insurance companies would once again be allowed to discriminate based on age and gender. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, more than 50 million Americans could be rejected for coverage by health insurers



if the A.C.A. were to disappear," Harris wrote.

"At the same time, people in their mid-20s would get kicked off their parents' plans. Lifetime caps could come back. Out-of-pocket costs would no longer be capped. The expansion of Medicaid in dozens of states could be reversed. The human toll would be unthinkable, with some experts estimating that 20,000 to 100,000 people could die each year.

"We must fight with everything we have to avert this catastrophe. And as we do so, let's also accept the truth that even with the Affordable Care Act intact, our health care system still needs fixing. Let's acknowledge that there are nearly 30 million Americans who still don't have health insurance. And there are plenty more who have insurance but can't actually afford the rising cost of health care."

Harris writes: "I believe that health care should be a right, but the reality is that it is still a privilege in this country. We need that to change. When someone gets sick, there is already so much else to deal with: the physical pain for the patient, the emotional pain for the family. There is often a sense of desperation — of helplessness — as we grapple with the fear of the unknown. Medical procedures already have risks. Prescription drugs already have side effects. Finan-

cial anxiety should not be one of them."

Harris also writes, poignantly of the loss of her mother, which also highlights her proud heritage: "And though I miss her every day, I carry her with me wherever I go. I think of the battles she fought, the values she taught me, her commitment to improve health care for us all. There is no title or honor on earth I'll treasure more than to say I am Shyamala Gopalan Harris's daughter. As I continue the battle for a better health care system, I do so in her name."

However, Harris has plenty of obstacles and hurdles to clear before her nomination is water tight.

The Roll Call reported that Harris' fellow Democrat Senator from California, Dianne Feinstein, said Thursday that she would support former Vice President Joe Biden, over her, in a presidential race.

"I love Kamala. But this is a different kind of thing," Feinstein said, after she praised Biden, and was asked of support for her fellow Senator Harris. While Feinstein's endorsement of Biden would have miffed Harris, she would be more concerned by a scathing opinion by the Editorial Board of the Wall Street Journal on January 3. It reprimanded Harris for what it deemed as taking the party away from its roots, acceptance of Catholics.

"We're still a year from the 2020

presidential primaries, but Senator Kamala Harris is already showing America how far the Democratic Party has strayed from its roots," it noted, after her controversial manner of questioning Trump's nominee for a federal district court in Nebraska, Brian Buescher, who is a member of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization.

"Ms. Harris's embrace of religious intolerance is especially significant because in two years she could be the next U.S. President. What does it say about today's Democrats that no one in the party of Al Smith and JFK sees fit to rebuke her?" the editorial said.

Harris also got the dubious honor of being named the '2018 Porker of the Year' by the Citizens Against Government Waste, which seeks out candidates who they fathom guilty of promoting patently flawed policies, defending wasteful boondoggles, and pushing a big-spending agenda. Harris was chosen for "proposing a bill that would subsidize rent with taxpayer dollars. Her bill would have encouraged the same behaviors that led to the student loan bubble."

The Tax Foundation concluded that Harris's plan, "would fail to address the root causes of the high cost of housing. Instead, it would wind up benefiting landlords, not significantly improv-

ing the lives of renters, and carrying a hefty price tag.” University of Georgia economics professor Jeffrey Dorfman wrote, “Instead of the Rent Relief Act, we could call it the Landlord Enrichment and Taxpayer Fleecing Act.”

Even if she were to ignore these initial hiccups on the road to glory, Harris might well take note of a letter published in the San Francisco Chronicle, from a reader who admires her, and has a warning for her.

“I am writing to ask Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., not to run for president in 2020. I think she is an admirable woman, and I am delighted to have someone with her intelligence and political viewpoint as our California senator. However, the idea that she would abandon us after less than half her first term is alarming. We need her as our senator, and we deserve to have her in that office for at least a full term.

“Besides, I shudder to think what the Trump base, the Russians, and the fringe right-wing trolls would do in attacking her as a liberal woman of color. I don’t know if the country could take this on top of the years of Trump,” the letter concluded.

Tulsi Gabbard

The young and attractive Gabbard, 37, who was born in American Samoa, was one of the first female combat veterans to join Congress and was a supporter of the 2016 presidential bid of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. She was first elected to the House in 2012, becoming the first Hindu member of Congress, and was sworn into office with her hand on the Bhagavad Gita.

Gabbard also previously served as vice chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, but conservative hawks love her too because she’s an Iraq war veteran who criticized President Barack Obama on foreign policy.

The Honolulu Civil Beat reported that Gabbard has expressed loyalty to a “guru dev” or “spiritual master” named Chris Butler. Gabbard, who announced her interest in the presidential race on MSNBC’s “Hardball”, said: “I’m concerned about the direction of the country.” That’s something a lot of voters can empathize with, especially with the ongoing government shutdown and a possible recession looming in the horizon, though the job numbers have shown robust growth.

The Washington Post reported that during stops in New Hampshire, Gabbard reportedly highlighted her sup-

port for a single-payer Medicare-for-all health-care bill and her efforts to reduce the influence of money in politics, among other policies. That position is the same as Sanders, and critics have pointed out that it wouldn’t make sense for her to run against Sanders.

In an interview to the Associated Press last month, Gabbard, who went on a limb by meeting the Syrian dictator Bashar Assad in 2017, said US wars in the Middle East have destabilized the region, made the US less safe and cost thousands of American lives. At the same time, terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group are stronger than before the September 11 terrorist attacks, she said.

“Those who have been setting our country’s foreign policy are lost,” Gabbard said, placing blame on both Democrats and Republicans. “Our policies have been without clear objective or purpose for some time. And it’s cost our country, and it’s cost the world, dearly.”

When it comes to domestic issues, Gabbard stands out for doing 180-degree turns on abortion and gay marriage, noted AP.

In 2004, the then-state representative urged Hawaii voters to support a

federal constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages nationwide. She was worried gay marriages licensed in Massachusetts would be deemed valid in Hawaii.

Eight years later, while running for Congress, Gabbard said she would work toward requiring the federal government to recognize same-sex marriage. She also metamorphosed from being anti-abortion to in favor of abortion rights. The Honolulu Civil Beat reported that in Gabbard’s view the most important meaning of ‘aloha’ is love, something she said she explains frequently back in Washington, D.C., and as she travels the country.

She said she views aloha as the solution to what ails the nation, a force that motivates people to take action for “the well being of others.” Gabbard would need plenty of ‘aloha’ from both Democrat and Republicans if she hopes to achieve her aspirations. By taking both liberal and conservative views, with a balanced perspective, she would make for a good VP pick too.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley gestures as she stands in front of Humayun’s Tomb in New Delhi, India, June 27, 2018. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi





Nikki Haley

The skillful Haley, who managed to stay abreast of Trump's ire and resigned gracefully, described to NBC News how she leveraged Trump's personality: "I got the job done by being truthful but also by letting him be unpredictable and not showing our cards."

Haley showed her diplomatic acumen and lofty political aspirations in her last appearance at the United Nations, before she stepped down on January 1, 2018, where her speech clearly established that she didn't want to be on the wrong side of Trump, and not having blame attached to her own self.

Reuters reported that Haley during a UN Security Council meeting on the Middle East gave no details of exactly what was in the long-awaited, unpublished plan to broken peace between Israel and Palestinians. It's a plan prepared by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and it was widely expected that Haley would reveal the plan before she left the UN.

It's this adroit sidestepping and de-

Reuters reported that Haley during a UN Security Council meeting on the Middle East gave no details of exactly what was in the long-awaited, unpublished plan to broken peace between Israel and Palestinians.

flection of thorny and controversial issues that has earned Haley accolades and admiration in her stint with the Trump administration. The New York Times reported that Haley has been mentioned as a potential running mate for Trump in the 2020 election, a move that could improve the ticket's popularity among women voters. Trump has

also reportedly asked his aides if they thought Pence was still loyal to him. Haley, on her part, made it clear after her resignation that she would support Trump in his re-election bid.

Haley, however, has not backed away from ribbing Trump. At a charity fundraiser in New York after she announced her resignation, Haley made some jokes at the president's expense, reported The State. "When the president found out that I was Indian American, he asked me if I was from the same tribe as Elizabeth Warren," Haley told the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner in October, to guffaws from the audience.

For now, though, Haley is moving to New York, and has plans to write a book, on her experience of working at the UN. All that may change this year, though, if she starts to campaign and do fundraisers for Trump. What are the odds of Harris vs. Haley in 2020, or 2024? Pretty good, one can safely bet.

(USA Bureau)

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Ayushman Bharat: Health to All

The insurance scheme launched by PM Modi is path-breaking move to ensure a healthy India

Priya Jain



Few days ago I was going Jaipur. Plants on both side of the Delhi- Jaipur highway were swaying in the breeze. My car stopped at a red-light. A poor woman, carrying an infant in her one arm and few books in another hand knocked at the window of my car. She was pale, looking like suffering from acute anemia and infant was a heart-wrenching picture of malnutrition.

Though it is a common scene on almost every red-light of all metro cities, that day I was deeply moved by the plight of the woman. I directed my driver to park the car and came out. During few minutes chat with her I came to know her husband is suffering from tuberculosis and child has been in the grip of fever for past many days. Her one daughter died due to non-availability of proper medicine. She had no money to consult a doctor and purchase medicine. While narrating her misery she was in tears. I purchased a copy of 'Pyjamas are Forgiving' (authored by Twinkle Khanna) and gave her some money and moved ahead. But the misery of the woman haunted me for hours. I was disturbed and sad. Her name was Shakuntala.

Such scenario prevails all over country due to socio-economic problem. India is presently in a state of health transition. I have read somewhere that infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, dengue, pandemic influenza and antimicrobial resistance as well as chronic non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer etc are posing serious threat and emerging as major causes of mortality. Rate of infant and maternal death is alarming.

Suddenly I recalled the lives of great saints Swami Vivekanand and Mother Teresa. They both established many hospitals and related medical infrastructures to provide free and adequate treatment to poor. I, too, help down-trodden residing in Delhi and a number of times even of Jharkhand. I have my limitations.

Undoubtedly India is making phe-



I have read somewhere that infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, dengue, pandemic influenza and antimicrobial resistance as well as chronic non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer etc are posing serious threat and emerging as major causes of mortality.

nomenal progress but if one man dies due to financial constraints it will be shame on part of entire country.

In prevailing such unfortunate situation Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi came as saviour. On 23rd September he launched centre's flagship Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission from the land of Jharkhand. It will cover more than 10 crore Poor and Vulnerable families. It is an insurance scheme which covers costing upto Rs 5 lakh per family per year for medical

treatment. Present medical infrastructures will be upgraded and new will come up. It will generate employment especially for women.

Certainly there would be many challenges while implementing this scheme. This is the time and call of the hour that every citizen, organisation especially Private Hospitals will have to be co-operative and human. Let us wish now no 'Shakuntala' meets on red-light of metro cities or anywhere in country.

(The author is from Nirogi Bharat)

ISLAND OF PEACE

Sultan Qaboos inspire Oman to push for global peace

Mohiba Khalil

As sultanate Oman has chosen for the path of peace, I would love to introduce it as the highest form of intellectual stimulation and to involve in discussions in a unique debate for the world problems. To make it happening, that the Arabic world was never used to. A conference where ideas are being respected, after all as we all know, the Oman and his Majesty Sultan Qaboos proved itself in the new dimension of civilization as well as in science, commercial values and the culture of the Humanistic -tradition.

The choice of Sultanate Oman will be offering the international oriental platform with the highest intellectual qualities. As we all know that the Arabic world as well as the western world is struggling with conflicts and how we will repeat the past with glory and not the mistakes (wars) of the past.

Cases that do matter for both societies: Tolerance is required, a debate is required. In my point of view there is nothing called politics, there is something called economics. A mission has

to be accomplished world wide.

In my opinion this must be the highest educational cultural intellectual moral awareness to teach the new generations how to deal with differentiation into societies in a peaceful matter. We want discussions to happen Boundaries to be set away. The Answer is taken with both cultural backgrounds the debate will bring people together. The new generations have to deal with the highest technical inventions that can bring the world together. Art, artists, philosophers, politicians, scientists and many distinguished guests of all religious parties will take place in Sultanate Oman to discuss future of the Middle East being affected by the West Vice Versa.

We shall discuss on an intellectual site in a humble and luxurious procedure with possibilities to open eyes and make the awareness happen. Dialogue will take place. People will be heard. Performances will happen with investments groups with projects that can put Sultanate Oman on the map of peace.

Royalties do have a mission; they are decision makers for the best of their knowledge. Every one of us must be

guided.

I think that Oman with the position in the Gulf region has been in this moment very crucial. It is having an excellent position to hold a masterpiece with a unique opportunity to deal with the topics.

Awareness has to be spread. We need international speakers that think and can inspire for finding solutions for a peaceful platform. Universities cannot do it alone; we need to give tools to our children, in cooperation with the government of Sultanate Oman. Poets will be heard, every Arab must be proud as H.M. Sultan Qaboos, the king of Oman just received the unique award of peacemaker man of the year. Let us make gardens and spread our borders, Let us hide from provoking wars. The great Arab culture and philosophy will lead to peace. With courage of knowledge we shall speak about all urgent questions. Let us talk of the nobility of the spirit of the new dimension of civilization. Let us make peace and build better tomorrow for the next generation.

(The writer is an international peace ambassador and prolific writer)



THE VISIONARY

PV was India's first "accidental" path-breaking prime minister

Most of us visualize P.V Narasimha Rao as a frail old man, but he was a firebrand activist in his youth engaging in guerilla type insurgency to topple the Nizam of Hyderabad. According to one source, while the rest of India was celebrating the Independence from British Rule on 15 th August 1947, PV was hiding in a forest to escape the Nizam's soldiers. The angry young man subsequently rose to become Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy. P.V.Narasimha Rao caliber and competence can be equated with Jawaharlal Nehru's gold standard in politics. The interesting tale of perhaps India's two best Prime Ministers is contradictory yet fascinating. Jawaharlal Nehru and P.V. Narasimha Rao do not have much in common except that both were intellectuals. Nehru's intellectualism was shaped by Harrow, Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn; by Bernard Shaw, Russell, the Fabians. He probably dreamt in English. The title of his book, *The Discovery of India*, is a disarming confession of his need for discovering the land of his birth.

P.V. Narasimha Rao's intellectual centre, on the other hand, was India. Unlike Nehru his knowledge of Sanskrit was profound. His speech on Mahatma Gandhi at UNESCO on May 11, 1995 was a masterpiece. One has only to read his address "India's Cultural Influence on Western Europe since the Age of Romanticism" given at Alpach, Austria on June 19, 1983 to realise that





PV was a man of learning, a scholar, a linguist and a thinker of the first order. His roots were deep in the spiritual and religious soil of India. He did not need to Discover India.

P.V. was a man of the soil. From humble social origins, Pamulaparthi Venkata Narasimha Rao rose to become the 9th Prime Minister of India from 1991 to 1996. As a teenager, he was part of VandeMatram movement in late 1930s in the Hyderabad state. Rao was a polyglot, aside from his mother tongue, Telugu, he had excellent command over several other languages – nine Indian languages (Marathi, Hindi, Oriya, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu) and six foreign (English, French, Arabic, Spanish, German and Persian). P.V.'s political career was shaped by his involvement in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule. His early mentors included Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira

P.V. Narasimha Rao was the most trusted advisor to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, having impressed her with his intellectual prowess. Former law minister of India, HR Bharadwaj, acknowledges the fact that Indira Gandhi always depended on P.V.'s intellect to navigate her government policies and party machine.

Gandhi. In fact, it was his proximity to the Nehru-Gandhi family, in addition to his seniority, that first got him the nation's top job after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991.

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India, HR Bharadwaj, acknowledges the fact that Indira Gandhi always depended on P.V.'s intellect to navigate her government policies and party machine. Recalls a former bureaucrat: "He would come up with pros and cons on every issue and this enabled Indira Gandhi to make decisions." Adds former cabinet colleague Pranab Mukherjee: "Rao and



word processor in just six months. However, he was unable to push for the required funds to implement the ambitious policy, which included the Navodaya schools.

Rao's 'tendency to procrastinate' was often commented upon. Most bureaucrats who worked with Rao including Former cabinet secretary B.G Deshmukh, however, defends Rao. Says he: "Rao gives the impression of not being decisive because he looks at all aspects of a problem." Other bureaucrats comment upon his skills of negotiation and persuasion. Says Anand Sarup, for-

in turmoil and grappling with change, the historical significance of which was not immediately understood by many.

Rao's ascendancy to the Prime Minister ship was politically significant in that he was the first holder of this office from a non-Hindi-speaking region, the South of the country. The economic significance of his Prime Ministership is well known. It was he who oversaw a major economic transformation of the country. Rao also was instrumental in setting up the 'Look East' policy and competently handled several matters affecting the national security of the coun-

By the summer of 1990, P.V. was preparing to go into retirement from public life and had packed his bags to move home to Hyderabad when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by LTTE sympathizers against the Indian government decision to send troops to Sri Lanka and suddenly circumstances catapulted PV into the country's top job.

mer education secretary: "His troubleshooting would be through a process of interaction, conciliation and persuasion." This led to the impression that Rao was a dove.

By the summer of 1990, P.V. was preparing to go into retirement from public life and had packed his bags to move home to Hyderabad when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by LTTE sympathizers against the Indian government decision to send troops to Sri Lanka and suddenly circumstances catapulted PV into the country's top job. Rao was supposed to collapse soon — if not under his advancing age, then from pressure from multiple sources. Instead, he lasted the full five-year term; turned the economy around; brought normalcy to Punjab; and stamped his authority by virtually pushing detractors to the wall to be the real centre of power in the Congress. How did he manage this feat? What led to the transformation of a timid party worker more willing to follow than lead, into a decisive head of Government? How did the change of heart from a Left-leaning protectionist to a free market champion, happen? What techniques did he apply to have his way in a party that largely had little regard for him? This happened in a year of multiple changes and challenges for the country. India and the world were

try, including laying the foundation for the nuclear security programme.

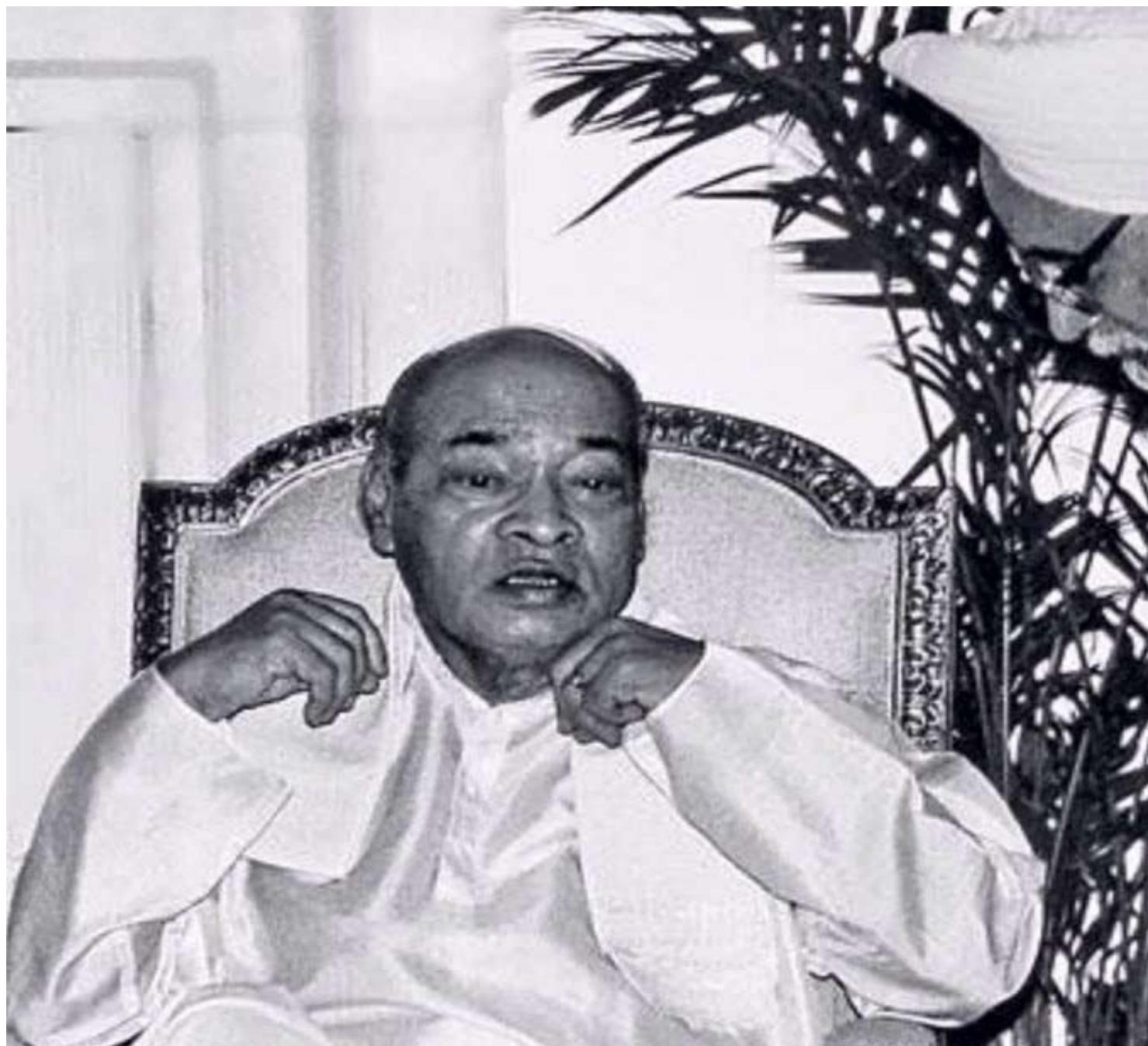
India's Economic Crisis and Transformation

Similarly, we hold PV in high regard for his right-wing, pro-capital reform measures for opening up the economy to liberalization, privatization and globalization. But P.V was a fierce advocate and practitioner of Socialism when he was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. His land reforms for redistribution of land to the poor and down-trodden, and his strict enforcement of land ceiling act, created such a strong backlash from the established big land lords, that the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to take back P.V from the state politics as a Minister in the Union Cabinet, and declare President's rule in Andhra Pradesh for some time. So it extremely wrong to paint PV to be a right wing politicians just because he was an architect of economic reforms in India.

The economic crisis of 1991—an external payments, or a balance of payments crisis, to be precise—was the consequence of a political impasse India found itself in. A series of political and economic events of the 1980s came to a head around 1990-91. India was on the verge of defaulting on its external

Venkataraman were considered the two wise men of Indira Gandhi." Rao, on his part, never challenged Indira Gandhi's decisions, which led him to face some flak about his unflinching commitment to her leadership. In any case, Indira Gandhi valued his services enough to assign to him the drawing up of the party's manifesto in 1979 – a task that he continued to do until 1996. She also appointed him foreign minister in 1980. This was the big break. With his penchant for picking up languages, Rao fitted snugly into the high-flying world of international diplomacy despite being a teetotaler and a vegetarian. A senior diplomat who worked with him considers Rao as the "real spirit of the Non-Aligned Movement, ensuring peaceful co-existence despite differences".

In 1986, Rao, as Human Resources Development minister, personally formulated the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 on his newly-acquired



payments obligations, with foreign exchange reserves dwindling rapidly as oil prices went up, exports went down, and non-resident Indians began withdrawing their deposits in foreign currency accounts in India.

While this situation can, in part, be attributed to unexpected and extraneous factors like the Gulf War of 1990-91, one important reason for the precipitous fall in foreign exchange reserves was a loss of confidence in the Indian government's ability to deal with a difficult economic situation. That difficulty was almost entirely on account of the political brinkmanship and populism of a variety of political actors. The economic crisis of 1991 was as much a consequence of bad economic management

of the preceding half decade during the tenures of Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989) and V.P. Singh, as it was of the political choices they made. In the end, it was politics that trumped economics. The responsibility for the events that combined to push India to the brink of default must lie with Rajiv Gandhi and VP Singh. It was then for Chandra Shekhar and Narasimha Rao to arrest the slide and clean up the mess. And the credit for understanding the seriousness of the situation and acting in time goes to Rao.

Rao, who held the Industries portfolio, was personally responsible for the dismantling of the License Raj, as this came under the purview of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. For this, he

is often called the 'Father of Indian Economic Reforms', although his own party refuses to acknowledge it. Rao was in fact the author of the most radical shift in India's economic policy since Jawaharlal Nehru's famous Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956. Nehru's resolution had declared that India would strive to establish a "socialistic pattern of society". In 1991, Rao moved away from that pattern to unleash private enterprise.

Adopted to avert impending 1991 economic crisis, the reforms progressed furthest in the areas of opening up to foreign investment, reforming capital markets, deregulating domestic business, and reforming the trade regime. Rao's government's goals were reducing the fiscal deficit, Privatization of the



raised on international capital markets) in India grew from a minuscule US \$132 million in 1991–92 to \$5.3 billion in 1995–96. Rao began industrial policy reforms with the manufacturing sector. He slashed industrial licensing, leaving only 18 industries subject to licensing. Industrial regulation was rationalised.

Future Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh continued the economic reform policies pioneered by Rao's government, setting the Indian economy firmly on the growth trajectory.

National Security

Rao increased military spending, and set the Indian Army on course to fight the emerging threat of terrorism and insurgencies, as well as Pakistan and China's nuclear potentials. It was during his term that terrorism in the Indian state of Punjab was finally defeated. It is said that Rao was 'solely responsible' for the decision to hold elections in Punjab, no matter how narrow the electorate base would be.

Rao also handled the Indian response to the occupation of the Hazratbal holy shrine in Jammu and Kashmir by terrorists in October 1993. In dealing with Kashmir, Rao's government was highly restrained by US government and its president Mr. Clinton, but he brought the occupation to an end without damage to the shrine. Similarly, he dealt with the kidnapping of some foreign tourists by a terrorist group called Al Faran in Kashmir in 1995 effectively. Although he could not secure the release of the hostages, his policies ensured that the terrorist's demands were not conceded to, and that the action of the terrorists was condemned internationally, including Pakistan.

Rao's government introduced the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), India's first anti-terrorism legislation. Scenarios of aircraft hijackings, which occurred during Rao's time ended without the government conceding the terrorists' demands. He also directed negotiations to secure the release of Doraismwamy, an Indian Oil executive, from Kashmiri terrorists who kidnapped him, and Liviu Radu, a Romanian diplomat posted in New Delhi in October 1991, who was kidnapped by Sikh terrorists.

Father of the Nuclear Programme

Rao was the "true father" of India's nuclear programme. While a secret de-

cision to go nuclear had been taken in 1988, after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, it was unclear how to proceed. After he became PM in 1991, Rao took the nuclear programme in hand. The end of the Cold War and the international concerns on non-proliferation resulted in relentless pressures from the US to cap India's nuclear programme, but Rao and Dixit, former national security adviser, devised a variety of diplomatic strategy to resist international pressures without confronting the US head-on and thus gained valuable time for Indian scientists to come up with a credible programme of nuclear tests, including the Hydrogen bomb.

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The appointed day arrived in mid-December 1995. The nuclear devices were already put into the L-shaped hole dug for the purpose in Pokhran desert. The Ministries of External Affairs and Finance had estimated of the costs of US sanctions that would have followed. The officer in the MEA specialising in the nuclear issue had a prepared statement in his drawer justifying India's decision. As US satellite pictures began to show Indian preparations for the test, the New York Times broke the story about India's plans to test on December 15. After two days, India finally declared it had no intention to test. Had Rao tested in 1995, India's political history might have been different. With elections due in mid-1996, the nuclear card could have possibly returned Rao to power. Yet, inexplicably Rao chose not to. Some say he succumbed to US pressure. Others say he was concerned about Pakistan reaction and the eco-

public sector and increasing investment in infrastructure. Trade reforms and changes in the regulation of foreign direct investment were introduced to open India to foreign trade while stabilising external loans. Rao wanted I.G. Patel as his Finance Minister. Patel was an official who helped prepare 14 budgets, an ex-governor of Reserve Bank of India and had headed The London School of Economics. But Patel declined. Rao then chose Manmohan Singh for the job. Manmohan Singh, an acclaimed economist, played a central role in implementing these reforms. The impact of these reforms may be gauged from the fact that total foreign investment (including foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and investment

nomic consequence.

Rao told "Kalam, be ready with the Department of Atomic Energy and your team for the N-test and I am going to Tirupati. You wait for my authorisation to go ahead with the test. DRDO-DAE teams must be ready for action."

Three years later, prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee fulfilled his party's campaign promise by ordering five nuclear tests below the shimmering sands of Rajasthan. But, as former prime minister Vajpayee revealed, Rao's national security legacy was no less important. Participating at a Writers' conference meet in Gwalior, a somewhat emotional Vajpayee said Vajpayee said that, in May 1996, a few days after he had succeeded Rao as prime minister, he received a note from Rao. "Saamagritayyarhai," the note had said. ("The ingredients are ready.") "You can go ahead." Vajpayee said: "Rao told me that the bomb was ready. I only exploded it. Rao had asked me not to make it public, but today when he is dead and gone, I wish to place the record straight".

Diplomacy

Rao also made diplomatic overtures to Western Europe, the United States, and China. He decided in

1992 to bring into the open India's relations with Israel, which had been kept covertly active for a few years during his tenure as a Foreign Minister, and permitted Israel to open an embassy in New Delhi. He ordered the intelligence community in 1992 to start a systematic drive to draw the international community's attention to alleged Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism against India and not to be discouraged by US efforts to undermine the exercise. Rao launched the Look East foreign policy, which brought India closer to ASEAN. According to Rejaul Karim Laskar, a scholar of India's foreign policy and ideologue of Rao's Congress Party, Rao initiated the Look East policy with three objectives

in mind, namely, to renew political contacts with the ASEAN-member nation; to increase economic interaction with South East Asia in trade, investment, science and technology, tourism, etc.; and to forge strategic and defence links with several countries of South East Asia. He decided to maintain a distance from the Dalai Lama in order to avoid aggravating Beijing's suspicions and concerns, and made successful overtures to Tehran. The 'cultivate Iran' policy was pushed through vigorously by him. These policies paid rich dividends for India in March 1994, when Benazir Bhutto's efforts to have a resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva on the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir failed, with opposition by China and Iran.

Ayodhya

In the late 1980s, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) brought the Ram Janmabhoomi issue to the centre-stage of national politics, and the BJP and VHP began organising larger protests in Ayodhya and around the country. Members of the Vishva Hindu

Parishad (VHP) demolished the Babri Mosque. The site is the birthplace of the Hindu God Rama. The destruction of the disputed structure, which was widely reported in the international media, unleashed large scale communal violence, the most extensive since the Partition of India. Later Liberhan Commission, after extensive hearing and investigation, exonerated PV Narasimha Rao. It pointed out that Rao was heading a minority government, the Commission accepted the centre's submission that central forces could neither be deployed by the Union in the totality of facts and circumstances then prevailing, nor could President's Rule be imposed "on the basis of rumours or media reports".



Taking such a step would have created "bad precedent" damaging the federal structure and would have "amounted to interference" in the state administration, it said. The state "deliberately and consciously understated" the risk to the disputed structure and general law and order. It also said that the Governor's assessment of the situation was either badly flawed or overly optimistic and was thus a major impediment for the central government. The Commission further said, "... knowing fully well that its facetious undertakings before the Supreme Court had bought it sufficient breathing space, it (state government) proceeded with the planning for the destruction of the disputed structure. The Supreme Court's own observer failed to alert it to the sinister undercurrents. The Governor and its intelligence agencies, charged with acting as the eyes and ears of the central government also failed in their task. Without substantive procedural prerequisites, neither the



Supreme Court, nor the Union of India was able to take any meaningful steps.

Rao was referred to as Chanakya for his ability to steer tough economic and political legislation through the parliament at a time when he headed a minority government. PV not only ruled a full term but his policies ushered in a new era and gave a new direction to national politics. He was an unlikely prime minister but a seminal one. Unlike the many short-lived prime ministers before him—Gulzarilal Nanda (May-June 1964, 11-24 January 1966), Morarji Desai (March 1977-July 1979), Charan Singh (July 1979-January 1980), Vishwanath Pratap Singh (December 1989-November 1990), and Chandra Shekhar (November 1990-June 1991)—PV was not even a Member of Parliament on the day he was named India's twelfth prime minister.

He led an important administration, overseeing a major economic transformation and several home incidents af-

fecting national security of India. It is significant, and relevant to our argument about PV's centrality to the reform process, that as prime minister he not only retained the industries portfolio but also kept the Ministry of Civil Supplies and Public Distribution under his charge. The now famous national rural employment guarantee programme (NREGA) had its initial launch during PV's tenure as prime minister.

Persona non grata for INC?

In spite of significant achievements in a difficult situation, in the 1996 general elections the Indian electorate voted out Rao's Congress Party. Soon, Sonia Gandhi's coterie forced Mr. Rao to step down as Party President. He was replaced by Sitaram Kesri. Rao rarely spoke of his personal views and opinions during his 5-year tenure. After his retirement from national politics, he published a novel called *The Insider*. The book, which follows a man's rise through the ranks of Indian politics, re-

sembled events from Rao's own life.

Rao suffered a heart attack on 9 December 2004, and was taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where he died 14 days later at the age of 83. His family wanted the body cremated in Delhi. "This is his karmabhoomi", Rao's son Prabhakara told Manmohan Singh. But it is alleged that Sonia Gandhi's closest aides ensured that the body was moved to Hyderabad. In Delhi, his body was not allowed inside AICC building. His body was kept in state at the Jubilee Hall in Hyderabad. A reformer, educationist, scholar conversant in 15 languages, intellectual, a man called the 'Brihaspati' (wiseman) of Andhra Pradesh" was insulted by Congress leadership.

On multiple occasions, Sonia Gandhi praised contributions of all Congress prime ministers except P V Narasimha Rao in her various speeches. Making no mention of Rao, she claimed that Rajiv Gandhi scripted the course

of economic policies that were followed by the government (headed by Rao) for the following five years. Even today, the Congress leadership shows extreme reluctance to acknowledge the role PV Narasimha Rao played in appointing Manmohan Singh as his finance minister and giving him the freedom to unveil the economic reforms package to bail the Indian economy out of an unprecedented crisis.

Down Memory Lane

PV was India's first "accidental" prime minister, and a path-breaking one. He took charge of the national government and restored political stability; assumed leadership of the Congress, proving that there was hope beyond the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty; pushed through significant economic reforms; and steered India through the uncharted waters of the post-Cold War world. While the Congress party has distanced itself from him, the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi has acknowledged PV contribution in building the nation. While this could be a political strategy to get benefit in southern India based middle class who were greatly benefited by PV governance, the fact remains that Rao was as former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam said, a "patriotic statesman who believed that the nation is bigger than the political system". According to Sanjay Baru, PM Manmohan Singh wanted to give Bharat Ratna to Rao during his tenure but the compulsion of politics had other roadmap for the legend. While long due, it is only a fitting tribute for Rao to be honoured with the Bharat Ratna, a demand that has been supported by people across the party line, including Telangana CM K. Chandrashekhar Rao and BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

In his book, "How P V Narasimha Rao made History", Sanjaya Baru, a former newspaper editor and media ad-

visor to prime minister Singh, analyses Rao's role during that landmark year in an interview to Indian press.

How crucial was P V Narasimha Rao's leadership in 1991?

It is the political leadership, first with Chandra Shekhar (Prime Minister before Rao) and then with Rao, who were able to create a political environment in which the economic crisis was

dealt with. The economists in government, be it Manmohan Singh, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Rakesh Mohan or many others, were only facilitating policy making. But the political leadership in a democracy is provided by the prime minister. The tragedy of the last 25 years is that the Congress party buried Rao's legacy. Professional economists have written of it as though the reforms were all thought of by economists and conducted by economists. But why is it that Rajiv Gandhi, who was prime minister for five years with 400 members of parliaments, failed to undertake these reforms? Because he never had the political skills or the requisite experience to run the country.

But did Rao not want to take credit for what he did?

He allowed Dr Manmohan Singh to get all the credit for the economic policy. But in the realm of foreign policy, he was quite happy to take credit. The Look East policy, the recognition of Israel, beginning the talks with China, he deserves credit for all that. He did not shy away from taking credit on the foreign policy front. But the problem is not that he did not want to take credit. The problem is that, once he was out of office, the Congress party simply buried him and his legacy.

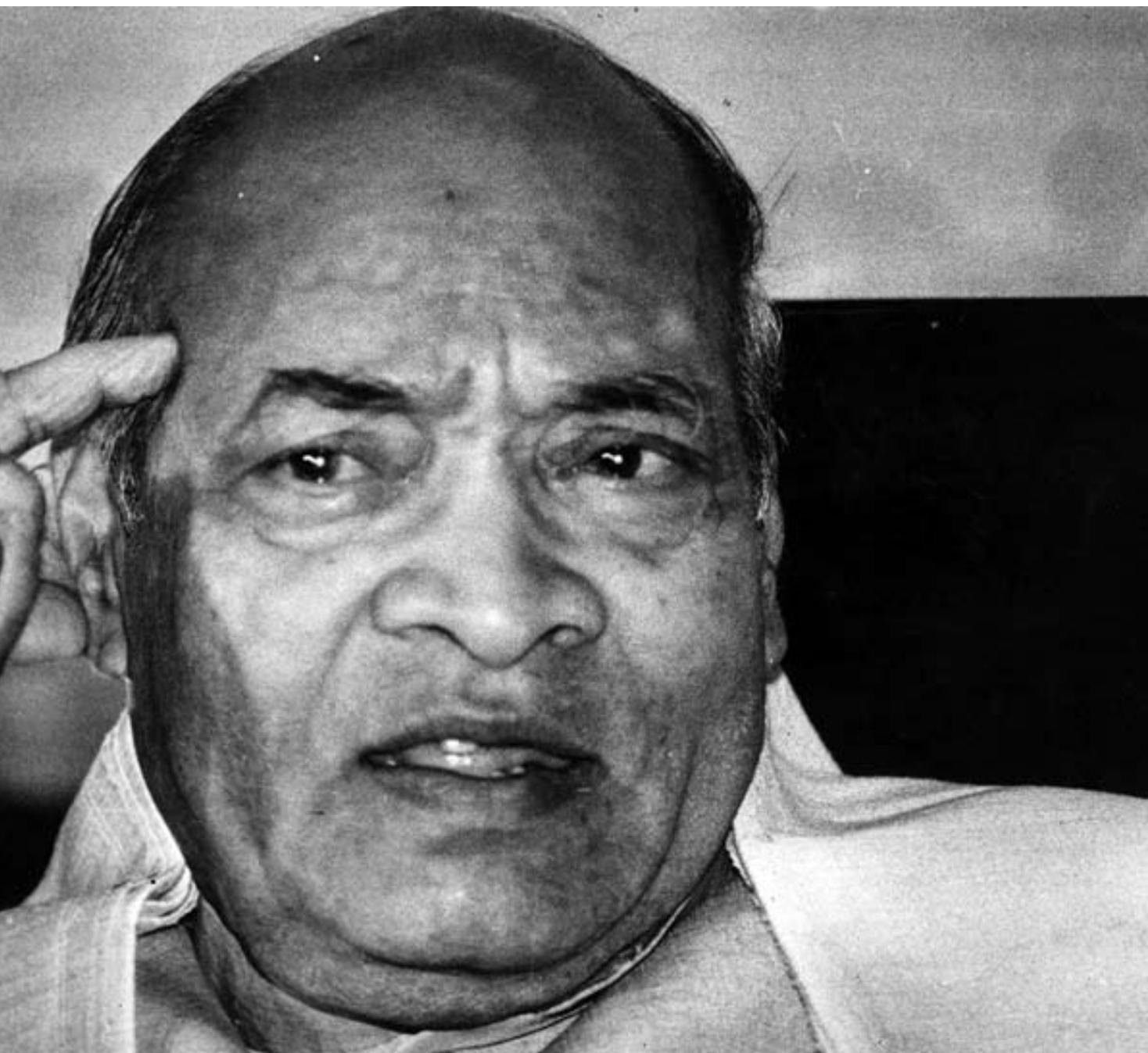
How do you rate his foreign policy initiatives?



I would rate him next to Jawaharlal Nehru in that area. Nehru gave Indian foreign policy a direction after independence. He was the architect of foreign policy. In 1991, Rao redefined India's foreign policy by reaching out to our neighbours. He was the first prime minister to reach out to Nawaz (Sharif). He also reached out to the leadership in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In fact, he is the original architect of Narendra Modi's neighbourhood policy.

Second, he reached out to East Asian nations, particularly Japan, South Korea, and Singapore and defined what is now called as the Look East policy.

Third, he recognised Israel and redefined India's relations with West Asia, particularly with Saudi Arabia and Iran.



Fourth, he began border talks with China, and laid the framework for the negotiations over the next 30 years. Fifth, he managed the transition of the Soviet Union, especially with the rise of Russia. Finally, he began a new phase with India's engagement with the US.

As India's best prime ministers, how do you rate Manmohan Singh and Narasimha Rao?

There is no doubt in my mind. Next to Nehru, the greatest prime minister has been Rao. I would not have written this book if I weren't convinced. Every prime minister makes mistakes. Nehru made big mistakes in handling Kashmir, China, and the 1962 war. Indira

made mistakes, so did Rajiv. Rao also made mistakes. On an average I would rate Rao's tenure as the most significant as it put India on a new trajectory.

Finally, history will remember PV as the leader who transformed the modern India in an economic global power house. He never took credit of any work and modestly said, When I don't make a decision, it's not that I don't think about it. I think about it and make a decision not to make a decision. Such was the grace of the person that he always conducted with supreme grace and delivered maximum government to people of India.

Rao deployed similar Chanakya-like tactics and strategies in dealing with the minority status of his Government,

winning over support at times through questionable means. PV mind was deeply influenced by Indian philosophical thought and yet alert to the practicalities of governance (where Chanakya's saam, daam, dand, bhed come into play). Rao was a man of simple tastes but with a complex mind. Vinay Satpati, biographer has done an admirable job of putting up the thought-process of the original 'accidental Prime Minister', and the good and bad which came from that accident. In the end, though, the good is so overwhelming that the bad must take a back seat. To quote Sitapati, "His legacy lives on...his half-burnt body continues to glow."

By Prashant Tewari
Editor in Chief Opinion Express

VOICE OF INDIA IN BRITAIN

Kapil Dudakia

The world moves at an ever-faster rate. Those who take too long to decipher the modern code tend to be left behind. However, there are individuals who have the capacity to rise above these challenges and put themselves bang in the centre of the storm. They chase the twisters and harness that energy to give life to issues that often get forgotten or misrepresented. My friend Bob Blackman, Member of Parliament in the UK has not been shy about where he stands on even the toughest of issues. Today I write to give you a glimpse of the man who has become the champion for India, and for Jammu and Kashmir.

Bob Blackman MP of Harrow East has been a long-term champion of the Indian diaspora in the UK. He has remained a strong voice of the British Indians representing them in the parliament as well as other National and International platforms for over 25 years, including as a Councillor and Leader of the Brent Council nearly two decades before being first elected as the Member of Parliament for Harrow East in 2010 and re-elected to the seat in 2015.

In the House of Commons, he stood up and said, "I know of no other issue that creates such emotion among this country's Indian and Pakistani communities as the position of Jammu and Kashmir. It is important that we as elected representatives should debate the issues and represent those views. I stand as an unabashed friend of India to defend India's position in the conflict and the people who were ethnically cleansed from Kashmir." And as recently as 26 October 2015, Bob sponsored the historic seminar commemorating the 68th anniversary of the signing of the instrument of accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India by Maharaja Hari Singh.

I caught up with Bob and below I share with you in brief some key elements which I am sure will be both informative and enlightening.

What is your current position?

I was elected MP for Harrow East



in 2010, winning the seat from Labour, and successfully re-elected in 2015 with an increased majority. I am Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus, Secretary of the India APPG, member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Inter-Parliamentary Union Executives and Secretary of the 1922 Committee. I am also a member of the Communities

dramatically improving local services.

Who/What inspires you?

Mahatma Gandhi for changing the world through peaceful means. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel for being the inspiration in the creation of a strong India and in my view, he should have been the PM. Winston Churchill for being steadfast in the face of the most severe adversity. Margaret Thatcher for rescuing the UK from being the sick man of Europe. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making Gujarat the economic powerhouse of India and for inspiring India to believe that the whole nation can become a great power.

What has been the biggest obstacle in your career?

I attended a state comprehensive school and Liverpool University. I have only had the privilege of a loving family and the wonderful support of my wife. At every stage of my political career, I have had to overcome the obstacle of those with prejudicial views on an in-

Konversations with Kapil

& Local Government, Procedure and Backbench Business Committees.

What are your proudest achievements to date?

I was instrumental in turning around the London Borough of Brent which was regarded as a centre of left wing radicalism in the 1980s, reforming the finances and cutting the local tax rates every year for 6 years whilst

dividual's background. At every stage, people have tried to prevent me from achieving my potential.

Who has been the biggest influence in your career to date?

My wife has been my constant guide and help over the years. I have observed a number of politicians over the years and taken appropriate guidance from each of them. I have cherry-picked ideas from others rather than had one inspiration!

What would you like to achieve before GE2020?

I am keen to ensure that we abolish the ill-thought out, unnecessary and divisive caste discrimination legislation. This was passed in the last Parliament but has not been enacted as yet as it was passed by a combination of Labour and Liberal MPs against strong Conservative opposition. The legislation has created consternation amongst the Hindu community who rightly regard this as creating friction where none exists.

If you were the Prime Minister of the UK, what one policy would you wish to implement and why?

I strongly believe that we need to create an international partnership between the UK, India, USA and Israel to help preserve the security of the free world. I believe that the special relationship that exists between the UK & USA needs to be replicated with both India and Israel.

Where do you stand on the EU Referendum and why?

I am immensely proud to represent one of the most diverse constituencies in the UK. Harrow is also one of the safest boroughs in London, home to a lot of hardworking people who genuinely care about our community and ways of life.

I was born and raised in North London. As a former local Councillor and representative of Brent and Harrow on the Greater London Authority, I have seen the damage being caused by remote and unelected bureaucrats from the European Union. Endless red tape is harming local businesses, unchecked immigration from Europe is making a housing shortage into a crisis and lots of people are being trapped by unfair visa policies.

It doesn't have to be this way. Our hands are tied by European Union policy which is designed to discriminate,

so that jobs go to Europeans who can move freely across our borders instead of potentially better qualified people from our Commonwealth cousin nations, despite far closer family ties and shared history and values.

When people can't even welcome relatives to the UK short term for weddings or family events, and our temples can't bring over the expert stonemasons they need to maintain their buildings, because of a biased and overloaded immigration system, we have to do something.

I want the UK to trade freely with our friends from the Commonwealth and other developing nations. I want the immigration system to be a fair and just one where people from India are given preferential access to the UK. Currently we have no control over immigration from the EU and draconian restrictions are placed on those applying from outside the EU as a result. We also need to remove the artificial trade barriers against goods from the Commonwealth and provide an equal playing field to those goods and services from the EU.

You are very outspoken when it comes to Jammu and Kashmir, can you tell us where you stand on this critical issue?

I have been outspoken on the issue since 1991, when I heard about the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. I held a conference in Brent Town Hall on the subject and was instrumental in ensuring that the subject of Jammu and Kashmir was mentioned in the 1992 Conservative Party Manifesto for the 1992 General Election.

I am firmly of the view that the whole of Jammu and Kashmir is part of India and so it should remain. I believe that the Pakistani forces, illegally occupying part of Jammu and Kashmir, should leave the region and the whole of the state should be reunited under Indian Administration in line with the original decision of the Maharajah.

I visited Jammu and Kashmir in February 2016, and I saw for myself the opportunity for increased trade, commerce and tourism to the state. I am looking forward to helping to promote the first ever Jammu and Kashmir festival in the UK in the autumn.

If you were marooned on a desert island, which historical figure would you like to spend your time with and why?

If I was marooned I would want someone with me with a practical capability of surviving in extreme circumstances! I take a very practical view! I would therefore choose David Livingstone, the famous explorer.

So, you now have a sense of the man. Let me also bring you totally up-to-date. On 13th July 2017 Bob placed before the British Parliament the following EDM:

That this House condemns the recent killings of innocent Hindu pilgrims in Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir in India; recognises it as a gruesome attack on innocent pilgrims by Lashkar-e-Toiba, an internationally recognised terrorist group, led by Abu Ismail; urges the Government to condemn strongly the attack and stand with India in the fight against terrorism; calls on the Government to investigate if there are any direct or indirect links to organisations or individuals in the UK that may be involved in such cross-border atrocities in India; and further calls on the Government to reject all forms of terrorism and support to organisations and individuals propagating such ideology and to take strong action against such organisations and individuals in the UK to ensure peace in the UK as well as India.

This has been one of the most powerful statements ever presented to the British Parliament on Jammu and Kashmir. So I say to Indians everywhere, search out in your politicians, people of character and integrity who are willing to champion the toughest of causes – so that in the end we can secure justice for those who have been wronged. Great Britain and India have a history. It has not always been rosy, and yes there are multiple areas where redress is still outstanding. However, Indians in the UK are beginning to galvanise political support so that many of these important matters can be approached with seriousness and the customary diplomatic tact.

The era of PM Modi has given hope to millions in India and around the world. We have even seen the USA issue their formal State Department note in which they now formally say, the 'State of Jammu and Kashmir'. In the space of a few years the world order is changing. With such changes the UK and India, with their special understanding and relationship, can take full advantage of the situation for the welfare of their respective citizens. We live in interesting times, let's see who remains steadfast in reaching their goals.



ON THE HIGH, DOWN UNDER

India registers maiden Test series win in Australia

Diwakar Shetty

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell feels the Virat Kohli-led side is India's best in pace bowling and fielding but it is nowhere close to being the best in batting. India defeated Australia 2-1 for their maiden Test series triumph Down Under, ending a 71-year wait.

The historic victory has garnered widespread praise for Kohli's men with several former players lauding the gritty performance. Asked if this was the best Indian team of all time on 'ESPNcricinfo', Chappell said, "This Indian side is the best fast bowling contingent I have seen from India and the best fielding side that I have seen from India."

"But it's not the best batting side. I have seen better batting combinations from India than this team," he added, but did not dwell on which batting line-up he



Pujara, who scored 521 runs at an average of 74 with the help of three hundreds, was named Player of the Series in the historic series win.





considered the best. Although Cheteshwar Pujara was adjudged man of the series for being the series' top-scorer, India's traditionally much-vaunted batting was, for once, overshadowed by the team's pacers. The Indian pacers accounted for 50 of the 70 Australian wickets during the engagement.

The visiting pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami combined for an average of 21.62 in the four-match series, while Australia's pace battery, comprising Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, averaged over 30. Chappell said the Indian bowlers did well to exploit the conditions. "I thought the Indian bowlers did really well and overall they out-bowled the Australians. They got more swing than the Australian bowlers. "I think the seam position of the Indian fast bowlers was very good. They kept it up the whole time and perhaps that's why they swung the ball more than the Australians," he explained.

India's top run accumulator Cheteshwar Pujara Monday described the current team which clinched the country's maiden Test series win in Australia as the best he has been a part of with lethal bowling attack complementing the batting. Pujara, who scored 521 runs at an average of 74 with the help of three hundreds, was named Player of the Se-

The current team which clinched the country's maiden Test series win in Australia as the best he has been a part of with lethal bowling attack complementing the batting.

ries in the historic series win.

"It's a great feeling for all of us. We've been working hard to win a series overseas, and winning in Australia has never been easy. This is the best Indian side I have been part of. I would like to congratulate the team," he said after India clinched the four-match series 2-1.

The fourth and final Test at the SCG ended in a draw after the fifth day's play was abandoned due to persistent rain. India clinched the series 2-1, ending a 71-year-old long wait of winning a Test series on Australian soil. The 30-year-old Pujara was all praise for the bowling attack. "We've had four bowlers, and it's not easy taking 20 wickets, so credit goes to all our fast bowlers and spinners...It is remarkable," he said.

Asked about his tremendous form in the Test series, Pujara said, "I am really pleased with my contribution. As a batsman, I was just getting used to the pace and bounce. "Apart from that, playing in South Africa and England has helped me improve my technique. For me, it's all about preparation and I was very well prepared."

He said his first hundred of the series in Adelaide was special. "Scoring a ton at Adelaide and going 1-0 up is what we were aiming for." On his future plans, he said, "I'll be playing some first-class cricket back home, and I'll play some county cricket during the IPL. "The next Test series is some 6-7 months away, it'll give me some time to prepare. I would like to play white-ball cricket, but Test cricket is my priority, and it always be so."

Australian captain Tim Paine admitted his side was outplayed by a superior team and India deserved to win the series. "Have to tip our hat to India, we know how tough it is to win in India so congrats to Virat and Ravi because it's a huge achievement. They deserve to win the series. "We are disappointed, definitely over the last two Tests. We had our chances in Adelaide, in Perth I thought we played some good cricket, but in Melbourne and Sydney, we've been outplayed," the home team captain said.

(With inputs from The Pioneer)



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HK ON FIRE

Hong Kong is lit by an Indian talent

Nithya Ramesh

Proud Indian and Mother, model and flight attendant, Mukta Chopra has already won a regional Mrs Asia title and hopes this week's pageant for married women will bring more exposure in her home city. Hong Kong-based beauty queen Mukta Chopra has been brand ambassador of brand India for long now. Her personality and style has attracted plenty of attention.

If she notices the appreciative glances, it doesn't show. Besides, the pageant winner gets all the satisfaction she needs from her career, husband and two children.

The flight attendant and model, an Indian national who has lived in Hong Kong for 20 years, was earlier this summer crowned Mrs South Central Asia. In Guangzhou, she competed for the title of Mrs Universe – the married woman's equivalent of Miss Universe. In fact, she has dominated the Far-East region in modeling and fashion for over two decades.





For all her confident air, Chopra hesitates when asked her age, laughing and stroking her hair before revealing that she's 43. Still, she says, she is proud to be taking part in a tournament that promotes strong, mature women.

"In the past, there were no contests for married women. They devoted most of their time to taking care of their children and their husbands," she says. "But married women nowadays have careers and are health-conscious. They are doing really well and taking care of themselves."

Chopra took part against 19 other women in the Mrs South Central Asia contest, held in India, after qualifying by fielding questions about her education, goals and how she could contribute to society. There was another criterion: "All of the contestants had to have won some kind of contest before," says Chopra, who was named Mrs Beautiful Eyes in the 2014 Mrs India pageant.

Since earning that title, she has been hired for many fashion shoots and catwalk shows, including last year's Fashion Week Dubai. She has donated the money earned from her fashion work to charities in India helping orphans and cancer survivors. Although she has had no modeling job offers in Hong Kong - "It's difficult to get exposure in Hong Kong," she says - Chopra hopes her Mrs South Central Asia title - and maybe a Mrs Universe crown - could change that.

Despite her modeling work, a 20-year career as a flight attendant, and children aged seven and 11 to care for, Chopra says she still finds time to look after herself.

"I love yoga and I work out a lot," she says. "I always begin my day with honeyed lemon water. I am a woman, and women are inherently blessed with

the natural ability to multi-task. I'm fascinated by my overlapping roles as a mother, career woman, and now a beauty pageant winner. They all come naturally to me."

Chopra says she probably spends more time with her children than women with a standard nine-to-five job. "I have the option to do short flights, so I choose that. It gives me enough time to be with my family."

Her daughter constantly encourages her to follow her dreams, she says, and her husband is equally supportive, reminding her: "You'll regret if you don't pursue your passions."

Achievements

- Made to top 5 in Mrs India 2014
- Won the title of Mrs Beautiful eyes in Mrs India 2014.
- Winner of Mrs Universe South Central Asia' in June 2016.
- Won the title of 'Mrs Universe Devoted' in 2016 in Guangzhou, China
- Walked the ramp to support organizations helping cancer patients and children affected by Thalassemia.
- Brand Ambassador for brand 'Elysian Desire - Indian Global Diva'.
- Brand Ambassador for ' Curves Alive'.
- Appointed as a face of franchise 'Hunghomjdjaguars' cricket team in Hongkong.
- Director Hong Kong for' Mrs India Universe'
- Have done a Media advertisement for a company in Hkg
- Won the best International model award fm IIFT in March 2015.
- Walked as showstopper at Lucknow fashion fest in April 2015.
- Walked as a showstopper for designer Aditi Goyal in Delhi in April 2015.
- Walked the ramp as a show stopper for the Bridal Raga themed fashion show at 'Lucknow Fashion Fest'.
- Was showstopper for Designer Mohd Javed for his Bridal Collection.
- walked at the' Hyderabad Haute couture week's a showstopper in Aug 2015.
- Walked the ramp in Delhi for ' Festival of hope' in Meera Mujaffar Ali's designer outfits.
- Walked for International Designer Ms Mona Almansuri from UAE at 'International Fashion Week Dubai' in Dubai.
- Walked for red carpet celebrity designer ' John Riff' at the 'International Fashion Week Dubai' in Dubai.
- Walked for Pakistani Designer Shahwan Sethi at the ' International Fashion

week Dubai.

- Walked for 'Le Salon Del Amode' (Designer bags fm Italy) at the ' International Fashion Week Dubai' in Dubai.
- Walked for Italian designer academy ' accademiacr laziono' at the ' International Fashion Week Dubai'.
- Have walked the red carpet at the 10th Asian Film Festival in Macau.
- Done shoots for Branded clothing companies and make up academy.
- Walked for 'Anju Modi' in her Bajirao Mastani collection in Delhi in Oct 2016.
- Walked for International Designer Amilani from Srilanka, as her showstopper at ' Asian Designer Week ' in Delhi in Nov 2016.



- Was invited to judge 'Milestone Mrs India International ' in Pattaya, Thailand.
- Done shoots for Italian sunglass brand 'Maesta', jewellery brand 'Shivam Gold & Diamonds' , Vinati Jewellers, Pooja sarees, Swaroop jewellers, Mona shroff jewellery , Hong kong, Sky726 restaurant Hong Kong, Samudra collections Dubai, The kaftan company Hyderabad and many designers too.
- Walked as a showstopper for Singaporean designer at Asian Designer week in May 2017.
- Have done shoot in Paris and London for prestigious designer labels.
- Appeared on cover pages of some prestigious magazines.

The Last Crusader

Southern Politics in tailspin courtesy Dr Subramanian Swamy

J Gopikrishnan

Dr Swamy's effort to cleanse southern states politics has started yielding results. Tamil Nadu politics minus Chidambaram's influence shall be ethical and healthy. Dr Swamy's long legal battle with PC & corrupt family is reaching to its logical conclusion. In fact, Congress people should thank Dr Swamy for prosecuting corrupt PC so that the grand old party can be liberated from the maximum corrupt practices promoted by Chidambaram since he has become a power centre in the party. Chidambaram was the architect and author of all the mega scams in India namely 2G, Coal, NPA scam, Aircel Maxis, NDTV, Vasan Eye Care, Shradha Scam, Forex derivatives scam, Airbus scandal to name the few scams that rocked the nation.

It was Dr Swamy in August 2018 who unlocked the clandestine relationship between PC, Ahmed Patel with Congress Karnataka leader DK Shivkumar and handed over the evidence to investigative agencies leading to the ED registering case against DK recently. IT department has already collected enough evidence against this agent of PC and Ahmed Patel who with his set of conduits' operated cash collection for his Delhi bosses. Incidentally the set of information regarding the corrupt trio is provided to Dr Swamy by rival group of disgruntled Congress leaders unhappy with the JD(S) Congress party alliance to form the collation government. The streaming of classified information is flowing now due to the vertical split in the Congress party that includes information on the controversial Govind Raju diary wherein the IT department has raised demand from the tainted Congress MLC.

With the seizure of the property of Karti Chidambaram: there is a huge unrest in the entire Congress party. The imminent action that was installed by certain forces in the government seems to be broken by the Prime Minister's interference on the specific complaint made by Dr Subramanian Swamy to PMO. The Congress leaders and associates likely to be prosecuted are P Chidambaram & family, Robert



Vadra, Ahmed Patel, BS Hooda, DK Shivkumar, Virbhadr Singh. Modi government has yielded to the advice of Dr Swamy to fast track investigation against the Congress leadership so that BJP can go in the 2019 elections with conviction that they have delivered on the election promise of dealing the corruption head on. PMO has instructed the investigative agencies to fast track pending investigation to bring confidence in the common masses, it will bring floating votes back to BJP.

Dr Swamy has vowed to track down all the white color criminals to cleanse the politics. After hunting down Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in National Herald case, P Chidambaram & family in multi corruption cases, BS Hooda in HUDA case, DK Shivkumar in Hawala

case linked to AP & PC: Dr Swamy is likely to push for the prosecution of the culprits in the court of law.

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu politics is likely to witness tremendous structural change in the next few days. Dr Swamy is a man in hurry to convict the Neta's who have looted the country and they are responsible for the entire mess in the country including the poverty, naxalism, poor health care and disastrous education system, poor justice system. According to his own words, "corruption in India is the biggest cause of misery for millions for native Indians and I have taken pledge to wipe it off from the country with or without the support of the government machinery".

(Courtesy: The Pioneer)



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