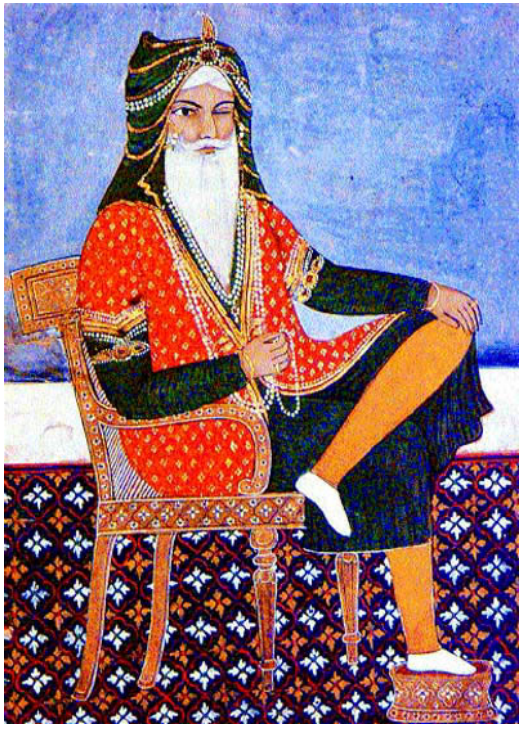
SANDESH BHARATI

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भारत पाकिस्तान की सीमा वाघा पर इस वर्ष 15 अगस्त को राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ के स्वयंसेवकों ने पूर्ण गणवेश में घोष के साथ राष्ट्रीय ध्वज को सैन्य प्रणाम किया। इस घोष पथक का नेतृत्व श्री बृजमोहन शर्मा ने किया। संघ के स्वयंसेवकों को संचलन करने के लिए सीमा सुरक्षा बल के अधिकारियों ने निमंत्रित किया था। वाघा सीमा के निकटवर्ती गांव अटारी की शाखा में स्वयंसेवकों से सीमा सुरक्षा बलन के जवानों ने इस हेतु संपर्क किया था। प्रातःकाल सात बजे हुए इस संचलन में 25 स्वयंसेवकों के घोष दल ने भाग लिया था। सी.सु.बल के जवानों के आग्रह पर पुनः 9.15 बजे संघ घोष बजाया गया। उस समय दिल्ली लाहौर बस सेवा से पाकिस्तान जा रहे यात्री भी वहां उपस्थित थे। इनमें यूरोपियन, अरबी, पाकिस्तानी और भारतीय यात्री भी थे। सभी संघ द्वारा रचित धुनों को सुनकर मंत्रमुग्ध हो गए।

■**राजीव कुमार, पाञ्चजन्य**

OUR HOLY LAND - LEPAKSHI

The temple of Virabhadra (a form of Lord Shiva) in Lepakshi, in Anantapur district, is a store house of painting and sculpture. Its murals claim an honoured place in the annals of Hindu aesthetics. It also houses the largest Nandi in the world.

According to tradition the temple was built by Virupanna, helped by his brother, Viranna, in the reign of the Vijayanagar emperor, Achyutha. One day he happened to notice a small temple of Lord Papanasa on a hillock called the Kurmasaila, of the Hill of the Tortoise, from its resemblance to a resting tortoise. This stands near the village of Lepakashi. He decided to build a temple complex here .

As a treasurer of the empire, and possibly also as Governor of the province of Penukonda, Virupanna had unlimited money at his disposal. This was used to build the temple, engaging famous architects, sculptors and painters. If Lepakshi's architecture is subordinated to its sculpture and painting, that is only because these two are out-standing. Its architects have made clever use of the undulating rocky surface and of the spurs on it .Some of the shrines have these spurs as walls. A high wall encompasses the temple. On its inner side is a cloister which undulates with the rock surface .

The temple's plan is irregular because of circumstances under which it was built. Its three main parts are the Virabhadra shrine with its ardhamandapa, the mukha-mandapa, and the kalyanamandapa. In the main part of the temple ,

where the Virabhadra shrine stands, there are eight shrines in all. On one of the sixteen heavy pillars here, each carrying life-size sculptors of divinities, there is an image of Goddess Mahishamardhani. On the ceiling is a huge and celebrated painting of Lord Virabhadra.

About 200m, north east of the temple stands India's second largest monolith, the celebrated Lepakshi Nandi, which is smaller only then the image of Gomatesvara, the Jain saint, on the hill of Sravanabelgola (Karnataka). It is 8.25 m long and 4.6 m high. Though massive, it is a real work of art, of sounds proportions and absolutely realistic. On one of the chains round the neck there is the insignia of the "Ganda-bherunda", a double-headed eagle. This originated in Takshasila,the ancient university city, now lost to Pakistan.

The paintings are in the finest classical style. They are full of vitality, and they depict intense drama. Technically, they are in a single plane, there being no attempt to suggest depth. Often the painter is content with telling his story. But in doing so he brings to glory not only his individual skill but also the accumulated traditions of his day. Here on these walls, sixteenth century South India comes alive.

The longest panel in the mandapa, about 18 m from east to west, is very narrow, only 2m wide. Here is painted the story of king Manunidhi Chola, an old Tamil Nadu tradition associated with the temple of Sri Tyagaraja, in Tiruvarur. He setup a bell in his palace, so that those who were aggrieved could ring in order to draw his attention. One day his own son

and heir, driving his chariot, ran over and killed a calf. Its mother, the cow rang the palace bell and complained. The king ordered that his son be run over by the same chariot. The Gods, pleased with the king's sense of justice, restored the prince and the calf to life. This story is recaptured on the ceiling in a series of incidents. It is told vividly and dramatically.

A panel at the eastern end tells the story of Draupadi's marriage with the Pandavas. In the next panel no story is told. It depicts Sri Krishna as a baby, recalling the famous prayer in Kulasekhara's splended hymn,the "Mukundamala". In another scene Lord Virabhadra is conferring grace on the builders of the temple, Virupanna and Viranna. They are stately figures wearing conical caps.

Asia's largest painting is on the ceiling of the sanctum; it is set in a huge rectangular panel about 7.6 m by by 4.3 mm. Around the main figure of Lord Virabhadra there are panels. The main painting is "mostly in gray, with strong, evenly flowing black lines all over". Its technique is different from that of the others in the temple. "The drawing is strong, the colour subdued, and it acquires the appearance of a gigantic figure floating in and dominating the whole sky . This remains a masterpiece of all time in Indian art, not simply by its size, but by the original treatment given by the un-known immortal artists of Lepakshi". At the bottom of this magnificent composition Virupanna, with his family, is offering obeisance to the Lord. A beautiful border of textiles designs frames this masterpiece.

The sculptures in the temple, considered as a whole, fall in to many divisions. There are divine images, two stories are told in the narrative style, there are human representations from a study of which the scholar may obtain an idea of the social life of the day, there are floral, geometric and abstract designs, Finally there are relief of bird, animals, trees and plants

The two sculptural stories are those of Siriyala and Arjuna's quest for weapons to use in the war against the Kauravas. Thus, the latter story is depicted in Lepakshi in two forms, the Siriyala story takes up a total length of 10 m. The Arjuna story is longer, almost 15m. Both are masterly achievements, concise but dramatic and clear. But these qualities are among the least we could expect of the Lepakshi artists. In this temple, they have produced a perfect synthesis of architecture, sculpture and mural.

LOCATION

Lepakshi is a small village located 17km east of Hindupur in Anantpur district (ANDHRA PRADESH). Hindupur is on the Hyderabad – Bangalore train line, about 130 km north of Bangalore.

My faith is in the younger generation, the modern generation; out of them will come my workers. They will work out the whole problem, like lions. I have formulated the idea and have given my life to it. If I do not achieve success, some better one will come after me to work it out, and I shall be content to struggle.

- Swami Vivekananda

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY IN ANCIENT INDIA

METALLURGY IN ANCIENT INDIA

Just as in mathematics, the contributions of ancient Indians in metallurgy were very outstanding. In the Rig Vedic period, mining the ore (nidhi) was known in an elementary form. The mined product (Khanitram) was obtained by using a digging tool (Khanitra). Grinding using a pestle(musala) or mortar (ulukhala) was done before the ore body was put in furnace. Gold, silver and copper were made solely by melting the ore using fire and some kind of furnace. Several metal made tools were used in agriculture, hunting and as household items during that period.

Krishna Yajurveda mentions for the first time some more metals –iron (Shyama), lead (Sisa) and tin (Trapu). Several other words for tin were later evolved as Kastina, Vanga and Ranga. The Shukla Yajurveda emphasizes the softness of lead.

Coins made of gold, satmana and silver were used in the Vedic times. In Kautilya's Arthshastra, (late 4th century B.C) mines were considered to be of supreme interest for the economic welfare of the society and defence of the nation against aggression.

The epics Ramayana & Mahbharata also refer to metals and a variety of items made of metals. Sushruta and Charaka refer to several metallic powders in the context of their medicinal use.

IRON TECHNOLOGY

Carbon dating of excavated iron objects revealed that iron technology was known in several parts of India from 1400 BC onwards. In the early stage (1400-600 B.C), use of iron was restricted to simple tools. In the middle stage (600-100 B.C) more advanced and effective hunting, agricultural and household tools were made. The late stage (100 BC –600 AD) witnessed many peaks in iron technology including the great iron pillar of Delhi.

The iron pillar at Mehrauli (in Delhi) has been universally acclaimed as among the most impressive technological achievements of Ancient India. It is almost equally startling to find that after exposure to wind and rain for 16 centuries, it has remained unrusted and the inscriptions are as clear and as sharp as the time when they were made.

The Pillar is 6.7 M above the ground and 0.5 below, tapering from 420 mm Diameter to 300 mm at top. The total weight is 6 tonnes. There are 3 Sanskrit Shlokas inscribed on the pillar, which state that, the Date of Iron pillar is 370-375 A.D. The iron pillar is a Dhvaja Stambha (Symbolic Flag Staff) installed originally in a Vishnu temple in Mathura by a royal devotee who was also a mighty conqueror and an empire builder most likely Chandragupta II also known as Vikramaditya. The inscription is by his son and successor. The pillar remained there till the temple was looted and destroyed in 1018 AD. The Tomar King, Anangapala, founder of Delhi, brought the iron pillar to Delhi by its present site, around 1050 A.D.

Following elaborate scientific studies, it was concluded that the Iron pillar was made of wrought iron and has 99.7% iron content. The iron pillar is a low carbon steel structure with rather high phosphorous content. The pillar was not cast in one piece but fabricated ingeniously by forging and hammer welding lumps of balls of hot pasty iron in step-by-step process. The presence of lead solder in the joints between the decorative ball Capital and the main body of the pillar, confirmed by X-ray analysis, establishes the use of lead based solders.

Besides this most famous Iron pillar at Delhi, there are at least 2 more of the similar pillars worth mentioning. The first is Iron Pillar at Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. It was built by Raja Bhoja (1000-1055 AD) as a " Vijaya Stambha". Its 3 broken parts added together are 14 M high and weigh more than 7 Tonnes.

The other Iron pillar is located in the Adi-Mookambika temple as Dhwaja Stambh at Kodachadri village (12 Km from Manglore in Karnataka). In spite of being in marine air environment, this pillar is not corroded and has a total height of 14 m.

Among other massive iron objects it may be mentioned that iron beams are present in the Surya temple in Konark, Orissa.

THE INDIAN WOOTZ STEEL

The name Wootz steel probably originated from the Kannada-Telugu word for steel, which was "wukku". This steel was prepared by mixing at high temperature low carbon soft iron and high carbon brittle iron and appropriate heat treatment. From the 2nd Century A.D

onwards India used to export steel to Iran, Arabia and other countries. This steel was basically used to make high quality armament. Later Indian steel became synonymous with the Damascus Swords and was widely exported to the West and East.

COPPER TECHNOLOGY

Even the early Indus valley people were familiar with copper, its mining, metal making and use. Archaeological studies revealed a number of copper mining and smelting sites in Rajastahan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, some of them operating since 11th Century B.C. Some high purity copper ingots (99.81% pure) found in Lothal suggests that the Lothal metal workers had learnt the art of purifying metals.

Harappans used copper vessels, which required technology of joining, "running on" and revetting. Metallography of these objects shows that they knew the cooling of castings and annealing after cold work.

In the period ranging from 2000-900 B.C the people in Kayatha, near Ujjain had mastered the technology of copper, as seen from the fine copper axes with sharp cutting edges and a lenticular section. The most noteworthy features are that they are made from casting in a mould.

Another important location of copper technology is the Nasik-Ahmednagar-Pune district area. The technology flourished on the banks of Pravara, Ghod, and Godavari rivers. The best example of the achievements in copper is the huge magnificent statue of Buddha, made of copper. The statue was made in the 5th Century AD

during the Gupta period. It is about 2.25 M high and weighs 1 Tonne.

BRONZE TECHNOLOGY

Bronze was known in the Indus Valley even before 3000 B.C. Bronze objects were made by lost-wax casting, heating and shaping by hammering. The art of casting bronze was an established industry in Mohenjodaro. Bronze was considered essential for making objects of decorative and artistic value. Two bronze icons of the later Harappan period 2000-1800 B.C were found in Daimabad on the banks of Parwara, a tributary of Godavari river.

The tradition of icon making started in the Buddhist period. The first icons were of the Amravati group of Buddhist bronzes, which are now kept in several museums at Chennai, Colombo, Kualalumpur, Hanoi etc. A cast bronze icon of the Kushan period, 2nd Century A.D, was also found. Strong icon making traditions existed in Gujarat, Nalanda, and Orissa. Several hundred Buddhist icons have been found in these regions. Also more than 350 Buddhist and Brahmanical bronzes have been found in the Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu belonging to the Chola kings of Tanjore. The beautiful icons of that period are a matter of India's pride and a significant past of our culture-artistic, philosophical and technological.

BRASS TECHNOLOGY

The earliest found brass artifacts are from Lothal (before Greeks came India). Brass technology culminated in the unique 4th Century artifacts from Taxila. The earliest brass containing more than 28%

Zinc came from Taxila. A vase containing 34% Zinc has been found which is strong evidence of availability of metallic Zinc in the 4th Century B.C and possibly much earlier in Rajasthan. By the 6th & 7th Century A,D the brass revolution was in full swing in India and numerous brass objects were being made throughout the country.

GOLD & SILVER TECHNOLOGY

A major source of gold in ancient India was the "placer-metal" found in the auriferous sands of a number of rivers. Gold washing was practiced in all parts of India. The Harappans also knew surface collection of gold nuggets. Much of the Mohenjodaro and Harappan gold is alloyed with a substantial percentage of silver. This native natural alloy of gold and silver (up to 40%) known in Sanskrit as Rajita-Hiranyam and as Electrum in English is found in Kolar gold fields. Lothal has yielded over 100 gold objects of various sizes, apart from a large number of micro beads used in necklaces.

Silver was used more extensively than gold in Mohenjodaro. It was mainly extracted from argentiferrous galena (ore of lead) over 200 items of silver including Jewellery were found in Taxila. These were made in either stone moulds or in copper or bronze discs.

LEAD & TIN

The Harappans were acquainted with lead ores like galena (lead sulphide) and cerussite (lead carbonate) and their smelting process. Lead is found associated with silver and sometimes with copper. Lead was extensively mined in various parts of India, mainly due

to its association with silver. Discovery of high purity lead (99.54%) shows that purification methods of lead were practiced. 45 lead coins on 2-4th Century AD were found in Nagara, Gujarat.

Tin occurs in small quantities as casserite in western India. Casserite is often found in the form of water concentrated "placer" deposit. Tin produced from its known as stream Tin. Tin was not known as a separate metal in Mohenjodaro but only as an alloy with copper in bronze. Soldering was known to Indus Valley people, tin-lead alloy solder w as used during those days.

From the above facts, we can learn the immense contribution that India has made to the world in the field of metallurgy.

HONG KONG SANGH NEWS

HSS HOLDS ANNUAL SPORTS DAY FUNCTION *- by Gordhan Gurnani*

To celebrate Vijaya Dashami day (DUSSHERA), Hindu Swayemsevak Sangh (HK) held its second annual sports day on 4th October 2003 in Kowloon Tsai Park near La Salle college.

A total of 30 swayamsevaks and adhikaries attended the event. This was the second such event in the year and the swayamsevaks eagerly participated in the events and showed not just their individual abilities but also their good sportsmanship. When they arrived at the location, they were divided into 2 teams namely Ram and Laxman (The Heroes of the Ramayana), led by Priyank Baid and Janam Shah respectively. The day started with warm-up games such as human chess, ring-games and Kho-kho. Before dispersing

for lunch, there was a 100-meter race. The main festivities began after lunch, when the team games were played; both teams played very well displaying their skills, talent and abilities.

The RAM team emerged as the winning team. In the category for the best sportsman, this year's winner was Vaibhav Dada. Vaibhav had shown great enthusiasm as well as great sportsmanship in all events. In addition to this, a new set of awards were given to the best strategists in Kabadi and the best runners in Sitting Kho. These events were won by Janam Shah and Akshay Khatod in kabbadi and Kavi Agarwal and Karan Shah in sitting kho.

Before dispersing, Hitesh Sacheti gave an inspiring speech of why we celebrate Dusshera. He also mentioned the added significance of this day for all of us in HSS, as it was on this day that Dr. Hedgewar founded Sangh, in the year 1925 in Nagpur, India.

The day concluded with Prarthana and all of us greatly enjoyed the day. Like the earlier event held in January, this time also the programme was completely conducted by young shikshaks (instructors) like me and Hitesh Sacheti.

Sadhvi Rithambara Devi in Hong Kong

In October, we in Hong Kong were fortunate to be blessed with a visit by Sadhvi Rithambara Devi, who leads the Param Shaktipeeth in Delhi and has been involved in many Hindu causes for more than 15 years. We from HSS had the opportunity to speak with her, and following are the extracts of what she spoke:-

a. Christian missionaries are taking advantage of Hindu apathy towards Dalit and low-caste brethren; many Hindu swamis are not interested in visiting these villages because of the lack of facilities and amenities. But, missionaries do go there, work amongst them and then convert them. These converted

persons later become devoted missionaries and engage in conversion activities all over India. Due to Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram's success in working among the tribals, the Christian missionaries have stopped making tribals their prime target of conversion, instead concentrating on Dalit and "low – caste" villages.

b. Sadhviji is presently running an organization – Param Shaktipeeth – which is working among orphans and illegitimate children, destitute and unmarried women, among those old people who have been thrown away from their houses as well as training tribal girls/women in various occupational fields. This organization has also been creating a "Vatsalya Parivar" – which will consist of a complete family – a grandmother, a mother, an aunt and 6-7 kids. In this way, the old wouldn't need to go to an old age home, the destitute women to a women's welfare society and the children to an orphanage. Instead, they would be bound by love and togetherness as one family and one unit.

c. She mentioned that the Ram temple will surely be constructed. And with the ASI report being in favor of a temple, there should be no reason why construction should not take place immediately.

d. An interesting question was asked – why is it that despite India being the most blessed nation on earth, the land of *rishis,* the land where GOD appeared, the land of Hinduism – why is it that despite all this, present day India is beset with so many problems, so much violence, so much poverty. Sadhviji replied very aptly that we Hindus have forgotten our Vedic Dharam. We have become mentally and physically lazy. We have become fatalistic. Many of our Sadhus have also to take the blame by saying that what will happen is our *karma,* why bother making the effort. She said that this is completely

contrary to our Vedic teachings, where it is mentioned very clearly that one must make an effort to do one's duty, one's Karma and not worry about the result. It is never said that one should just wait for the result without doing Karma. Similarly, as far as nation-building is concerned, we Hindus have the same approach. We don't bother fighting for our rights. We don't bother fighting for what is rightfully ours. With this kind of approach, our country has suffered. But, Sadhviji found a glimmer of hope in the new generation who are willing to stand up unitedly as Hindus, to defend our honour as Hindus/Indians.

e. Also, in an answer to another question of how to win peace of mind and advance spiritually, Sadhviji replied that there should be a proper balance between materialism and spiritualism. She commented that the Western nations were rich materially but extremely poor spiritually. While the poor in India were aware of the hunger of the stomach, the rich in the West inspite of their wealth have no peace of mind. So, she said that one has to draw a proper balance between one's material and spiritual life. She added that one should know how to make proper use of our material possessions for spiritualism. She gave an example of a drunkard who frustrated by his inability to kick his habit of drinking, wanted to cut off his legs as that would prevent him from visiting the bar. But his friend correctly advised him that by doing so, he would also lose the opportunity to visit a temple. Peace of mind could be achieved if a person knew where to draw a boundary with one's material needs and not over-indulge in anything which is unnecessary. This would also be the necessary step for those who wish to uplift themselves spiritually.

KNOW YOUR HINDI

This is our ninth article about Hindi language. In our previous issues, we had mentioned that the so-called Hindi language is not spoken and written at its entire purity by the masses but is a mixture of mainly Farsi(Persian), Arabic and Turkish words. In Hindi movies, over 80% dialogues spoken use Farsi and Arabic words. In this issue, we continue the series of listing 10 such foreign words very commonly used in Hindi and have mentioned the apt Hindi word for it. It is about time that we should make an attempt to speak and write our national language as purely as possible

WORD	ORIGIN	CORRECT HINDI WORD	MEANING IN ENGLISH
NAMAK	FARSI	LAVAN	SALT
DUNIYA	ARABIC	SANSAAR	WORLD
ZAMANA	FARSI	SAMAJ / YUG	SOCIETY / ERA
HAQ	ARABIC	ADHIKAAR	RIGHTS
HAQIKAT	ARABIC	SACHHAI	TRUTH
MUQABLA	ARABIC	SAAMNA	CONFRONT
MAUJOOD	FARSI	UPASTHIT	PRESENT
JUNG	FARSI	YUDH	WAR
WAQT	ARABIC	SAMAY	TIME
RAAH	FARSI	MAARG	WAY

Brazil resonants with Jai Shri Ram

South America was sighted by the European sailors for the first time during the period of European history known as “the renascence”. Brazil, area wise the biggest country of the South American continent, was reached by the Portuguese explorer, Pedros Alvares Cabral in 1500 A.D. In fact, Pedros had sailed from Lisbon for “the fabled India”, that is, the Bharat of those days when the Europeans were searching for spices and sea

routes to India. By geographical error, these early sailors changed the course of history as they landed in South America instead of India.

Portuguese did come to India but were soon driven out by the British who remained as the paramount ruling colonial power in India. The only pockets of Portuguese rule in India were Goa, Daman and Diu that had to be taken back by force in the sixties after India became independent.

Now as India spreads out its wings with a renewed sense of history and power, it is reclaiming its cultural influence in places, far and near, with which its ancient links got severed by foreign rulers who were alien to Vedic culture. Therefore, the sound of "Jai Shri Ram" on the banks of the mighty river Amazon that runs through most of South America may not come as a big surprise.

But, surely, it enhances our national and cultural influence and confidence. The news that Sant Murari Bapu has organised a recitation of the Ram Katha in the Amazon rain forest should gladden the hearts of all Rambhakts in India who are engaged in an endlessly unpleasant contention with the anti-Ram stance of our own native "secularists". Brazilians are reported to have danced joyfully day and night for ten days to the rhythmic and resounding chants of "Jai Shri Ram"! The famous Amazon resort, known as "the Aryan towers", which has treetop rooms, wore a celestial look. All the residents of this place observed vegetarianism and wore saffron shirts, including the hotel resort staff, during the course of Hindu festivities.

As a footnote it may be mentioned that India had formed an alliance with Brazil to combat the Western agenda at the WTO conference in Cancun.

Cover Story

MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH – *THE LION OF PUNJAB*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was born on 13th November, 1780. His father was Mahan Singh, who was a chieftain and a warrior. His mother's name was Raj Kaur, who happened to be the daughter of the king of Jind. Actually the name given to him by his mother was Budh Singh, but at that time, his father Mahan Singh was in the battlefield (Rann). When he was victorious in that battle, he returned to his palace and gave his son the name of RANJIT SINGH (meaning the Winner of battles).

At a very young age, Ranjit Singh became a champion swimmer, expert horse rider and an able swordsman. He was greatly inspired by the fact that Guru Gobind Singh's sons had fought the Mughals very bravely at the tender ages of 14 and 17. Ranjit Singh too led his first war at the age of 11 years, and defeated the army of the ruler of Gujrat.

When he was 12 years old, his father died. He was given the reins of the kingdom. In the year 1795 he got married to Mehtab Kaur.

Later he fought two severe battles with the Afghans, with a smaller army and took over the city of Lahore on 7th July , 1799. After years of misrule by foreign invaders, the people of Lahore were very happy and they had great respect for him; he assured the citizens of a good administration.

In those days Punjab was divided and ruled by different small rulers, but under the leadership of Ranjit Singh, the various Sikh chiefs united and on Baisakhi day of 1801, the title of "

MAHARAJA OF PUNJAB" was conferred on him. Shortly afterwards he started to extend the frontiers of Punjab further north to Kashmir and eastwards towards Multan & Peshawar.

THE BRAVE HARI SINGH NALWA

In many of his victories, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was ably assisted by his trusted and brave General, Hari Singh Nalwa. His actual name was Hari Singh, but during a hunting expedition, a tiger suddenly attacked Hari Singh from behind. He did not have enough time to take out his sword. But he was so bold that instead of being frightened, he managed to catch the jaw of the tiger with his bare hands and pushed it away with his arms. As the tiger again leapt at him, Hari Singh quickly pulled out a sharp dagger from his waist and stabbed the tiger to death. When the Maharaja saw all this he conferred on him the title of "Nalwa", meaning one who can slay a tiger by his bare hands.

There was a kingdom of Kasur, north of Punjab. One day its citizens sent a delegation to the Maharaja, complaining that the soldiers of Nawab Qutb-ud-din were harassing and looting unarmed civilians throughout the state. Also the Nawab was grabbing the land of the farmers. At that moment Hari Singh Nalwa came forward and told the Maharaja that he be given the charge of the army in order to attack the kingdom of Kasur. When he was told that it would be a very difficult task, the reply of this bold and courageous Nalwa was "The harder the campaign, the more glorious the victory". In the year 1807, the Maharaja gave the permission to Hari Singh Nalwa to attack the kingdom of Kasur and subjugate its Afghani owner Qutb-ud-din Khan. The Sikh army marched to Kasur and besieged the fort for 3 months. The Nawab had to surrender. The troops

marched inside the fort, and then Hari Singh captured the Nawab alive and took him to the Maharaja.

The next expedition was to conquer Multan. Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa together marched to Multan. But it was difficult to make a breach on the wall of the Fort there. Hari Singh had an idea. He told the Maharaja that gunpowder be kept near the wall, which when lit would create a huge explosion and the wall would be broken. It was a very difficult and courageous task, as the enemy soldiers were constantly attacking from the walls of the Fort. But Hari Singh achieved this himself; the wall was broken and the courageous Sikh army was able to enter the Fort. They fought the enemy soldiers, defeated them and in this way Multan was also brought under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Then Maharaja now turned towards Kashmir. Hari Singh's regiment was in the forefront to get Shah Shuja released from the Governor of Kashmir. Shah Shuja's wife Wafa Begum had promised the "Kohinoor" diamond for the Maharaja if her husband was freed from prison in Kashmir. In 1814 A.D, Hari Singh's forces routed the Kashmiri forces. Shah Shuja gave the Kohinoor Diamond to the Maharaja.

Actually the Kohinoor, the world's greatest diamond, which is currently in the hands of the British monarchy, is a very ancient diamond. It had also been mentioned in the Bhagwat Purana more than 5,000 years back. Its original name was Symantaka. For many years, it had been under the illegal possession of the foreign invaders. It was thanks to Hari Singh that the Kohinoor was retrieved from the foreigners and rightfully restored to an Indian ruler.

After the Kashmir expedition, Hari Singh was appointed governor of Kashmir. He freed the population from the grip of the horrible Jiziya tax (a tax which the non Muslim population had to pay to the Muslim rulers for practicing their faith). He also ordered a ban on cow slaughter with immediate effect. It made such a great impact that upto today Kashmiri Muslims, by and large, do not eat beef. And Hari Singh's forces never destroyed any mosques or abducted Muslim women despite the fact that the foreign rulers had committed so many atrocities on the non-Muslim population.

The Afghanis of the North West region across the river Indus around Peshawar were divided into several tribes. They were people who would not obey any rule. From time to time, Punjabi forces from Lahore were sent there to put them down. Each time they would offer some tribute and then again revolt. To take control of them, Hari Singh was given charge. A significant battle was fought there and Hari Singh was able to capture alive the self styled chief Ghulam Ali, who was then consequently presented to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore. The Maharaja was quiet pleased and allowed Hari Singh to strike a coin in his name.

Then to curb the Afghani menace, a series of small forts were built from Attock to the Khyber Pass. Hari Singh built a fine fort, Jamrud Fort, at the mouth of the Khyber Pass. The most important object of this fortification was to put a complete halt to invaders who had attacked India entering from Khyber Pass, starting from Greeks in 500 B.C.. So after 2,300 years of regular defeats and humiliation of the Indian people, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, under the able leadership of Hari Singh Nalwa, was able to totally shut down this historic route of invasion into India.

Once in a battle with the wild mountain tribes of the area of Pakhli and Dhamtur, 20,000 tribesmen opposed the army of 7,000 of Hari Singh. Hari Singh, after vain efforts to induce the enemy, attacked them with much vigor and force and defeated them against great odds.

After his numerous battle victories in the Afghan areas, people there had become very scared and frightful of him. Wherever his army used to march, the opponents were scared and ran for their lives shouting " Hari Rangla"(means Hari is coming). It is said that those Afghani children who would be troublesome while sleeping were scared by their mothers to sleep, otherwise " Hari Rangla".

In the year 1818, after Wazir Fateh Khan of Kabul was murdered, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had the opportunity to attempt the conquest of Peshawar. As there was complete anarchy in Kabul, the Punjabi forces led by Hari Singh did not have to face any major fight in Peshawar. Jahan Dad Khan was made Governor of Peshawar. But later in 1823 the Kabul Wazir (Mohd Azim) occupied Peshawar with the help of a large army.

Then, an expedition was sent by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The battles of Jahangira and Naushera were fought in March 1823, where Hari Singh marched with his army in the battlefield and gave a crushing defeat to the Afghans in the battle of Jahangira. A more serious and inspiring battle was fought at Naushera. The trained army of Maharaja was far better and better equipped than the untrained militia, who were greater in numbers. This battle, in which Hari Singh emerged victorious, sealed any further prospects of Wazir Mohd Azim of Kabul and established Sikh supremacy over Peshawar.

On 6th May 1834 Peshawar was annexed to the Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Hari Singh Nalwa was made the first non-Muslim governor of Peshawar.
(here it would be worthwhile to remind that recently when American forces attacked Afghanistan, it was claimed by the media that not even the British were able to successfully occupy Afghanistan, but that is not at all true as there is concrete historical evidence that Kabul and Peshawar were under direct control and part of the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh).

In the year 1837 Dost Mohd Khan mobilized all his resources and attacked Peshawar. Hari Singh's forces came from Lahore to Peshawar. But at that time Hari Singh was down with high fever and was advised complete rest. In the meantime outside Jamrud Fort, the Afghans started collecting in great numbers as they had got the news that Hari Singh was in Peshawar unable to move. They attacked the Fort of Jamrud. When this news reached Hari Singh, in spite of his sickness and undeterred by his advisers, he immediately moved to Jamrud Fort with his forces. At Jamrud, when the Afghans saw the dust raised by horses, they knew it was Hari Singh coming and they all fled in terror shouting "Hari Rangla"," Hari Rangla." (means Hari is coming)

When Hari Singh reached the fort, he could not see any siege by a large army of Afghans He was told that only a few of the tribesman had come to attack, and now they were all running back to their villages. Then Hari Singh, instead of taking a large army, took a few soldiers to the nearby villages. There, everything was under control. While he was coming back to the Fort, it was dark and in the jungle, the enemy soldiers were hiding and seized their opportunity and attacked him. Hari Singh fought with great courage but since his forces were smaller in numbers, he received wounds on both his shoulders

in the fighting. In spite of that, he kept on fighting, overcame the enemy and was able to get back to the Fort of Jamrud. Outside the fort, large numbers of Afghans again collected to attack. But they were fearful of Hari Singh as he was still alive.

But Hari Singh was a great fighter and patriot. To bluff the enemy he told his soldiers to carry him to the ramparts of the Fort. Outside the Fort there was great confusion in the Afghans. But when they saw Hari Singh standing on the walls of the Fort, they were all frightened and fled from there. Immediately after that Hari Singh could not survive and died a martyr's death.

When Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to know of the martyrdom of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa he was greatly moved and with a heavy heart he took over command.

THE REIGN OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

The rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a revival of the golden age in Punjab. In spite of the extended boundaries of the Kingdom as far as Peshawar and Kashmir, the Maharaja never became proud or arrogant. He was a liberal ruler and did not bother about the colour, caste or creed or nationalities of his employees. There were a number of English, Italian, German, French and other foreigners employed under him and working in his court. The Maharaja ruled in a democratic manner and never isolated himself from the masses. He was a kind and generous ruler. There were equal rights for all communities in his kingdom. The British ruling the rest of India, were very cunning and they realized that they could not beat him so they signed a peace treaty with him in the year 1809

Under the leadership of the Maharaja, several schools were opened, most notably the Khalsa schools at Amritsar and Lahore, which were run by Sikhs and admission to these was open to all the general masses. The Maharaja did not allow any British missionaries to open Christian schools in Punjab although they were allowed to preach independently. Ranjit Singh, through his foresight had brought peace and prosperity in Punjab.

In May 1839, the Maharaja had a severe attack of paralysis, which could not be cured . While giving his kingdom to his successor, his son Kharak Singh , he appointed Raja Dhyan Singh Dogra as prime minister. He gave them advice that they must not weaken the kingdom or fight amongst themselves. He told them to be aware of the evil plots of the enemies. He told them that he had taken Punjab and other places out from the clutches of the foreigners so that they must ensure that the foreigners do not take them back. Shortly after, that is on 27th June, 1839, the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh died. After his death the Royal treasury was opened and large amounts were donated to the poor.

The greatness of Maharaja was that even though he was born in the family of a small leader of a small province, his ability, courage and hard work resulted in him developing such a great kingdom, which was spread from Sutlej in the east to Peshawar in the west, and from the boundary of Tibet in the north to Sind in south. The annual income of the Kingdom was 35 Million rupees. During his lifetime there were thousands of precious stones and jewellery and other items in his treasury. His army was always victorious in the numerous battles they fought. He also closed the doors of the invaders coming into India from the west. In fact, Maharaja Ranjit Singh is affectionately called as the “LION OF PUNJAB”

ENGLISH IS NOT THE KEY TO A NATION'S PROSPERITY – 2

"I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But, I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. I would at once stop the printing of Arabic and Sanskrit books. I would abolish the Sanskrit college at Calcutta. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".

- **LORD MACAULAY'S MINUTE, FEBRUARY 1835**

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(*In 1834, Lord Macaulay had accepted a position on the Supreme Council of colonial India, in charge of allocating funds for education. He had argued against releasing funds for Sanskrit, Arabic and vernacular teaching, as he claimed that it was a waste of money. Instead, he argued that available funds should be used to teach English and European systems of philosophy, science, history, etc in order to brainwash India's young generation into believing that English education was most necessary if they had to progress).*

Some time back, when I had written "English is not the key to a nation's prosperity", many people had criticized my article by saying that it was unrealistic and against "progressive and modern values". They were firm believers in the theory that only that nation can be successful where people would communicate with each other in English. As I had mentioned in my previous article, not just was this false but also it was based on fantastic and dangerous presumptions – it simply

meant that the first step to progress was to learn English thoroughly, even if it was at the cost of ignoring our own Indian languages. And secondly, this theory went a step further – just knowing English was not enough. One ought to speak English with friends, with family members, in official functions, in business meetings, everywhere – basically it meant that English was the key to one's own as well as the nation's prosperity! Just by having a good command of this language, a person's value would increase greatly.

It clearly shows that Macaulay's famous minute of 1835 continues to have a drastic effect on our country's psyche. Isn't it ironic, strange that 56 years after independence, the education policy in India continues to suffer from this slavish mentality. It is totally out of tune with the absolute reality of who we are – WE ARE INDIANS, AND AS INDIANS, we should be communicating with each other in Hindi or in our native tongue – not in English. When two Japanese speak in Japanese, two Germans in German, and two Turks in Turkish, how weird that two Indians should speak in English? For Indians to be communicating in English with each other is the worst form of colonialism.

What is taught in Indian schools is a continuation of what Macaulay had intended. When one brave person – Human Resources Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi – attempted to undo the long damage in 1999 by making education more Indian-oriented and pursuing the cause of Indian languages, including Sanskrit - he was dismissed by the "elitist" crowd and the English-language media as a fanatic and full of "old ideas".

And so, it continues. In India, people continue thinking that any person not having sufficient knowledge of English is as

good as an illiterate. Never mind if he was proficient in Hindi or his native tongue (by this theory, a Japanese scientist not speaking English would be considered an illiterate in India!!!). And thus, everybody will speak or at least attempt to speak in English publicly (even if they might have been speaking in English at home). This can be illustrated by the following incidents which occurred during my recent trip to India:-

a) I decide to eat in Pizza Hut, located in Mumbai's posh and suave Juhu neighbourhood. The doorkeeper greets me with "Good Afternoon Sir" and my order is taken in English. Thrice, I try to switch the conversation in Hindi, but to no avail because I am answered back only in English. Great. While waiting for my meal, I visit the washroom. The sweeper stops me at the door and speaks in his broken English "Toilet now cleaning, you waiting 5 minutes". Now, this is getting too much. Even the sweeper is attempting to speak in English. I return to my seat and while waiting for my meal, manage to overhear the conversation of the family sitting on the next table. The mother telling the kid that she likes the way he is progressing in school, the husband telling his wife that they will watch a movie tomorrow, etc, all normal family talk, *but only in English*. The table behind me is full of youngsters deciding on which discotheque they should visit and but natural, the spoken language is only English and that too, full of American slang words. By this time, my patience is wearing thin. Luckily, my vegetarian pizza arrives. The manager walks by the restaurant and asks me in his accented English if I am enjoying the meal. Now, enough is enough. I ask him in English if there was any unwritten rule in their restaurant of speaking to customers only in English. Stunned at my question, he hesitates and

then answers in Hindi (thank God, I could hear some Hindi finally!) that I am free to speak in Hindi. I tell him, the point over here is why do you people speak with customers in English in the first place? After all, we are sitting in Mumbai, not New York!

b) The next day, I am in McDonalds branch on Linking Road, also in Mumbai. A woman in front of me struggles to tell the waiter that it is her first time in McDonalds and she is not very comfortable reading in English. She wants the waiter to tell her exactly what she should order, or to read her the menu and tell her what is what in Hindi? I wonder – such a situation would not be there in any other country. In China, the menu is only in Chinese. In other countries, it is only in their national language. If at all, there is a crowd in India who prefer reading in English, why should others who are not good in English or prefer reading in Hindi suffer? The least fast food chains/restaurants like McDonalds/others can do is to print a bi-lingual menu. Why take it for granted that a person would want to read the menu in English?

c) I take the train to Pune. I make friendship with a middle-aged couple. The gentleman happens to own a small-scale factory while his wife teaches in a convent school. I ask her why students studying in convent schools are punished if they speak in Hindi or regional languages with their classmates. This creates a negative impression in their minds that speaking in their native tongue is inferior to speaking in English. She ignores my question but instead tells me what she firmly believes. That it is very necessary for all who can afford it to send their children to English medium schools. She even suggests Government subsidies for this purpose! Not stopping, she continues that only if

today's kids speak perfect English, would they stand a chance of succeeding when they went abroad to study or work. So, that is it. Suddenly the entire thrust of education should, according to this lady, be geared towards people emigrating to foreign countries!!! This is the level of confidence that this lady has in our country's economy that she foresees that everyone should, at the earliest opportunity, start life abroad!

Of course, one doesn't need to travel to India to witness what is going on in the minds of people there, especially those belonging to the elitist and upper class. All you need to do is to switch on your Indian cable channel. I can highlight the following instances that I have seen recently:-

a) I watch the Star news channel in English. The reporter asks a question to a leading Delhi politician – Vijay Kumar Malhotra. Mr Malhotra answers in Hindi. The reporter reminds him to speak in English. And poor Malhotraji has to switch speaking in English. Compare this with the Hindi Zee news network. When a similar instance occurs and if the person interviewed speaks in English instead of Hindi, Zee news network takes the trouble of writing the subtitles in Hindi while the person continues speaking in English. Zee news network will never gather the courage to ask that person to speak in Hindi, even if he was from North India. Why? For the very same reason – it is *expected* that if a person is from a rich background, a leading politician, socialite, filmstar, businessman, he would *definitely be speaking* in English. Because English is the language of the elite. So, Star News network will pursue that person to speak in English. But, Zee news network will never do the same, because of the very same reasons. Successful people, the elite, filmstars,

of course they will never converse in Hindi! Because that will be below their dignity.

b) Coming back to another programme, Zee TV's Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai is shown on Fridays – where the host, Farooque Shaikh or Suresh Oberoi – converse only in Hindi – but the guest who is interviewed – in most cases - answers back in English. This includes people as diverse as Hindi film stars Aishwarya Rai and actor Aftab Shivdasani's mother – their replies are always in English. This creates a very curious situation – questions in Hindi, answers in English. What does one make of it? On a Hindi network, on a programme conducted in Hindi, people who know perfect Hindi prefer speaking in English. There is something terribly wrong in all of this. There can be no other parallel found in any other country

c) And speaking about film artistes, what can be more bizarre and absurd than the annual Filmfare awards which are held to nominate the best performances in the Hindi film industry – but where the entire programme is conducted in English!!! And not just that, when the nominated best actor or the actress, best director or playback singer acknowledges his award, he always addresses the audience in English – only in English!!! And to think of it that the awards were being distributed for the Hindi film industry, not Hollywood movies!!!

Does the widespread speaking of English, as in India, make a difference to that country's progress and prosperity. A brilliant research done on this subject, by Sankrant Sanu "THE ENGLISH CLASS SYSTEM" (whose article will be published in the next issue of Sandesh Bharati), details the list of the top 20 richest countries, whose population exceeds 5

million. This list includes Switzerland (No.1 position – official languages German/French/Italian), Denmark (No.2 position – official language Danish) and Japan (No.3 position – official language Japanese) all the way to Israel (No.16 position – official language – Hebrew) and South Korea (No.20 position – official language – Korean) as well as English-speaking nations like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. The most important message that Mr Sanu conveys through this list is "in none of the top 20 richest countries is the language of official business (and the primary medium of education at the school level) *different than the native language used by the general population*. Furthermore, the top 20 are not restricted to European languages alone – Japan and Korea have done perfectly well economically by using their native languages as the medium of education, including in the sciences

Then he makes a table of the 20 poorest nations, whose populations are over 5 million. Out of these 20 nations, save Nepal and Ethiopia, the official languages of these countries are either English, French or Portugese. And these official languages are the languages of colonization that are foreign to the native culture of these countries. The vast majority of this list of the poorest countries has a class system similar to India, where the language and culture of the colonial masters is considered superior to the native languages, with much of the Government and businesses being conducted in the colonial language".

Thus Mr Sanu completes his data by saying " there are more countries in this list of poorest countries with English as the official language than in the list of richest countries – obviously that hasn't helped their economic good".

Here, we need to take a look at the fastest-growing economy of the world, CHINA. I am based in Hong Kong and am a frequent traveller to the mainland. How much does English function in China? When visiting China, my clients struggle to explain things to the Chinese suppliers, to the hotel and restaurant staff, etc. My friends from India visiting China are even stunned to see that most of the road signs (outside the highways) are almost exclusively in the Chinese script. Despite an increasing knowledge of the English language among persons connected to the tourism and commercial field in China, it would still be considered as nothing more than elementary as compared to the English spoken in India. And as far as the common people in China are concerned, English just doesn't seem to exist.

I have an interesting story to tell. Last year, I accompanied my client from Panama to Guangzhou. During this trip, my client fell sick. He was staying in a 5-star hotel, which also had a clinic inside. I advised my client to visit this clinic. But, he called me up within 5 minutes after reaching there – saying that the doctor couldn't understand a word of English. Finally, I had to rush to this clinic in order to translate for him. Would this be believable in India? A clinic inside a top 5-star hotel in China, and the doctor not speaking any English???

Forget about doctors, the top factory owners and businessmen in China do not necessarily know how to speak English. Many of them that do, do not speak properly. And a lot more hire secretaries or translators who are trained to speak/write English.

And despite all that, overseas clients would not even dream of stopping business with China. During the recent SARS

outbreak, clients had missed going to the Guangzhou Trade Fair in April, 2003 but 6 months later, the October Trade Fair saw record crowds. Everything became normal in a short time. Can you imagine what would have happened if such an outbreak had hit India? Despite the IT and other economical success stories that India has achieved recently, Indian economy would have been badly hit – despite the knowledge of English, etc. But nobody would even dream of deserting China – despite the lack of knowing English. The truth is that India's knowledge of English does not give India any kind of advantage over China. **At the end of the day, what overseas customers need is quality, price, reliability and service – and English or no English – clients will find a way to do business with the best country that matches these requirements. Otherwise Japan, Korea, Thailand and now China – with their limited skills in the English language - would never have been the success stories that they are today**.

Even coming back to the IT industry, there are people who say that India's software success primarily results from its large English-speaking workforce. This view is put forward mainly for a lack of a serious study into other factors. Here again, Mr Sanu with his brilliant and sharp intellect says " If this were true, then all English-speaking countries must display this advantage consistently. In particular, countries like Kenya with comparable histories to India of colonization and resultant poverty, an English – based colonial class system and a large English workforce, must also be successful in software. This turns out to not be the case. Furthermore this theory also fails to explain why Israel, which follows largely Hebrew and Arabic-medium schooling, is also a notable software success".

Mr Sanu continues "In India traditionally learning has been considered the highest good. All our scriptures extol learning, and parents have traditionally placed a great emphasis on learning. In the Indian schooling system, even today parents emphasize academic success over other achievements. Thus the correlation of India's success in software to the traditional love of thought and knowledge in Indian society bears investigation", thus implying that could be the prime reason for India's success in software.

So, what is the solution, what needs to be done? Mr Sanu says "A first step would be the exploration of converting all English-medium schools into, at the very least, dual-medium schools. In particular, there is very little reason that social sciences need to be studied in English. This will allow proficiency to develop in native Indian languages that will increase demand for written materials in native languages". By this suggestion, Mr Sanu correctly draws our attention to the fact that people who study in English-medium schools, by and large, do not patronize Hindi or regional newspapers / magazines / books. This is another drawback. Today, this segment, by and large, writes and reads only in English.

I would like to re-iterate over here that I am not against the study of English in schools. English can be taught as a compulsory second language. And for those who are in the tourism sector or whose work demands them to trade with English-speaking nations like the United States or Australia, they could take special classes in English to improve their command over it, just like if a person working with Japan may need to learn Japanese or a person trading with Latin America may need to learn Spanish. The point is, English should be thoroughly studied by those whose work needs

them to. But for the common people at large, why should English be given special or super-important status?

Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture, Rajnath Singh had correctly said "If Israel can become an effective and powerful country of the world through her language – Hebrew – and China can also achieve an outstanding place on the world map through her own Chinese languages, why cannot India make progress through her own languages? Fact is that the total development of the country lies in the promotion of Indian languages. Need of the hour is to give up unnecessary affection for English".

I have a humble request to make to all people who read this article. If you have not yet been speaking in Hindi / native tongue with your family members or your Indian friends, now is the time to act. If you wish to pass on your heritage, your language to the next generation – you need to do it rightaway. Start speaking in your native tongue. If you are not too comfortable with it for whatever reason (especially for those residing overseas), attempt speaking it, so that in due course you will master it. But let not this excuse deter you from communicating in your language.

The YOGA page

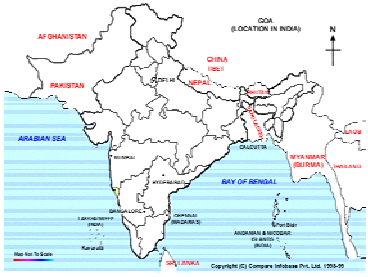
We continue with our four-series, THE YOGA PAGE, from where we left off last time. This column is written by Shri Vinod Sharma, an acclaimed yoga teacher in Hong Kong. More details about Vinodji can be found in his website, www.ayuryoga-intl.com

BENEFITS OF YOGA

1. In most other forms of physical exercise, the internal organs of the body do not get proper exercise. In contrast, Yoga asanas

(postures) give sufficient exercise to the internal organs of the body, improving the functioning of internal organs such as heart, lungs, kidneys etc. Consequently, an individual can maintain good health and longevity of life.

2. Increased oxygen intake resulting in purification of the blood, higher red blood cell count and enhanced blood circulation to all parts of the body – skin becomes bright and glowing, toxins are expelled from the body, removing blockages in energy channels.
3. Improved digestive system - body is able to absorb nutrients well from the food we eat resulting in increased energy levels.
4. Improved immune system - body becomes more resistant to common illnesses. Toxins and other waste matter is eliminated in a proper manner from the body, hence the body has more resistance power to prevent diseases.
5. Yoga asanas naturally stimulate important glands in the body such as pituitary, pineal, thyroid, parathyroid etc. these stimulated glands function at optimum level, helping the body to acquire a well-balanced growth.
6. Prevention and cure of several ailments such as asthma, diabetes, constipation, blood pressure, hernia, migraine, insomnia, stress, obesity, PMS, impotency, sterility etc.
7. The body becomes flexible by doing Yoga asanas. It becomes active with an increased ability to perform activities. One who performs Yoga asanas also looks younger and lives longer.
8. Life span, youth and health depend upon the flexibility of the spine. Yoga helps to keep the spinal cord strong and flexible.
9. Yoga has a greater impact on the mind and the senses compared to most physical exercises, resulting in the development of one's physical and mental powers to calm the mind and control the senses.
10. Helps in developing stronger powers of concentration and better memory.
11. Yoga helps the mind to experience tranquility. There is progressive intellectual development because of the calm mind, improving ability to manage stress, hypertension, problems in day to day living, etc.
12. Self confidence becomes stronger due to improved physical and mental well being, allowing the individual to realize his/her full potential.



The states of BHARAT

WEST BENGAL

Area:- 88,000 sq.km, Population:- About 74 million
State capital:- Kolkata Main language:- Bengali
Famous pilgrimage centers:- Belur Math, Mayapur, Sagardwipr
Famous touristic places:- Darjeeling, Sunderbans, Bishnupur,

WEST BENGAL IS ONE OF THE MOST DENSELY POPULTED STATES IN THE COUNTRY. THE STATE CAPITAL OF KOLKATA (FORMERLY CALCUTTA) IS ONE OF THE GREATEST CITIES IN THE WORLD. THE CITY HAS CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE ARTS, SCIENCE, MEDICINE AND SOCIAL REFORM IN ITS PAST. AN ENTIRE GALAXY OF REVOLUTIONARIES WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE MADE KOLKATA THEIR BASE. THE FIRST INDIAN TO WIN THE NOBEL PRIZE, RABINDRANATH TAGORE, ALSO LIVED HERE AND NEARBY SANTINIKETAN. THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW CITIES IN INDIA TO STILL RETAIN A PUBLIC TRAM SYSTEM. THE WORLD FAMOUS EDEN GARDENS AND BOTANICAL GARDENS ARE ALSO IN KOLKATA. A MOST INTERESTING HIGHLIGHT OF THE BOTANICAL GARDENS IS ITS FLOURISHING 200 YEAR OLD BANYAN TREE WITH A CIRCUMFERENCE OF OVER 380M, SAID TO BE THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD. THE TOWN OF BISHNUPUR, EAST OF KOLKATA, IS FAMOUS FOR THE BRILLIANT 17^{TH} AND 18^{TH} CENTURY TERRACOTTA TEMPLES, MOSTLY DEDICATED TO KRISHNA AND RADHA. THE SUNDERBANS MANGROVE SWAMPS AND RIVERINE FORESTS COVER AN AREA OF OVER 2,500 SQ KM IN THE GANGA DELTA. THEY ARE SAID TO BE THE LARGEST ESTUARINE FORESTS IN THE WORLD. THE AREA HAS A VAST NETWORK OF CREEKS AND CHANNELS AND IS ALSO HOME TO OVER 200 ROYAL BENGAL TIGERS. PERHAPS THE STATES'S MOST POPULAR TOURIST ATTRACTION IS DARJEELING, LOCATED 2,134 METER ABOVE SEA

LEVEL IN THE HIMALAYAS AND ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS HILL STATIONS IN INDIA. THE AREAS AROUND DARJEELING PRODUCE ABOUT A QUARTER OF THE TEA PRODUCED IN INDIA (INDIA IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST GROWER OF TEA), AND DARJEELING TEA IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE MOST AROMATIC AND SUPERIOR QUALITY TEA IN THE WORLD. ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING WAYS OF GOING TO DARJEELING IS BY THE WONDERFUL NARROW GAUGE "TOY TRAIN", WHICH RUNS BETWEEN NEW JALPAIGURI – DARJEELING

READERS COLUMN

I would like to thank you very much for your July/Aug/Sept newsletter. Sandesh Bharati is very informative and makes interesting reading. Definately a lot of work and a commendable job to inspire a lot of people. The Hare Krishna movement as we know has spread throughout the world and as a result, people just love India, the cradle of civilization. To have more information about this great country is just wonderful. Sometime ago, I had read an article about RSS in Hinduism Today and always wanted to read a little more about that, so it was a pleasant surprise to read about P.P. Shri Raju Bhaiya.

Keep up the good work and HARE KRISHNA

Bhakta Victor,
Clearwater, Florida,
USA

A rare Hindu temple of 'Fire Goddess' in Azerbaijan

Sunday, September 28 2003 17:05 Hrs (IST), INDIAN INFO COM

Baku: In an old settlement of oil workers situated 30 km from this Azerbaijani capital is a rare Hindu temple dedicated to 'Jwalaji' or the Goddess of fire, forgotten for decades but now catching the attention of tourists.

The temple, called the 'Atishgah', in this predominantly Muslim republic of the former Soviet Union is a typical Hindu shrine with an iron 'trishul' (trident) on its roof with a dome.

Encircled by a stone wall, the Jwalaji temple stands in the middle of a courtyard, surrounded by cells for pilgrims coming all the way from India to worship the Fire Goddess in its hey day.

Built in 1713, a stone plaque in Hindi on the portal of the main gate says that this gate was built by one Ram Datt in 1866.

On the carved entrances of cells are stone plaques describing who built them and in which year. In all there are over 20 stone plaques, of which 18 are in Devanagri (Hindi), one in Gurumukhi and one in Farsi (Persian), text on which begins in Hindu tradition "Om Shri Ganeshaya Namah."

The temple was built on the spot where subterranean gas leaking out of the rocky ground used to burn day-and-night.

Local records say that it was built by a prominent Hindu traders' community living in Baku and its construction coincided with the fall of the dynasty of Shirwanshahs and the annexation by Russian Empire following the Russo-Iranian war.

Powered by pizzas & soda, NRI builds a supercomputer

SEEMA HAKHU KACHRU, INDIAN EXPRESS

HOUSTON, NOVEMBER 9 : Virginia Tech's scientists led by 30-year-old Indian American Assistant Professor Dr Srinidhi Varadarajan have amazed the computing industry by putting together the world's third-fastest supercomputer in a record time of three months, and at record low cost of $5.2 million, using off-the-shelf components.

Most other machines of its class cost upward of $40 million and take years to assemble. Japan's Earth Simulator, the number one supercomputer, is said to have cost at least $350 million.The tab was kept low by Varadarajan and his team by using hundreds of student volunteers, who were paid only in soda and pizza for assembling the cluster in less than a month. They ate between 600 and 700 pizzas, Dr Varadarajan, who teaches Computer Science, estimates.

''This is arguably the cheapest supercomputer and is definitely the most powerful home-built supercomputer,'' adds its architect. Dean of Virginia Tech's College of Engineering Prof Hassan Aref calls it ''a ground breaking project'' and says the team behind it ''pulled off miracles, raising glass ceilings and opening locked doors''. The supercomputer made from 1,100 dual-processor power Mac G5s, nicknamed by some as 'Big Mac', ranks third among the world's 500 fastest supercomputers, many of which handle with ease one trillion calculations per second.

The Top 500 is twice-a-year listing started in 1993 to provide a ''who's who '' of hot computers, spotting and

tracking trends in high-performance computing. The ranking by the Top 500 project will be officially announced later this month at the supercomputing conference in Phoenix. Theoretically, Big Mac could handle a potential 17 teraflops, or 17 trillion operations per second. That still falls short of the No. 1 machine, Japan's Earth Simulator, whose 5,000-plus processors allow it do 35.8 teraflops, with the potential of another five teraflops. This is followed by two other supercomputers, at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, both dedicated to weapons design and running at between 7 and 9 teraflops, according to a widely-accepted ratings list maintained by Big Mac. ''The newly completed supercomputer operates at 9.55 trillion operations a second, or 9.55 teraflops,'' says Varadarajan, but he says it can go higher. System optimisation is nearly finished, but ''we still have a few more tricks,'' he says. ''We're hoping for a 10 per cent boost, hopefully shortly.''

According to Varadarajan, ''It all started when the school wrote for a grant to build a new machine to replace a 200-node system which was becoming too small for its computing needs. When the proposal was being finalised, Apple came out with its new 64-bit G-5 Mac which the team found to its liking.'' The new Dean of Virginia Tech gave permission to build the supercomputer on his first day on the job. Varadarajan ordered the G5s three days after Apple Computer announced them, and key software was written in ''a matter of weeks ''. ''Our goal is to build a world-class supercomputer to enable big science and engineering research at a price well below any comparable centre,'' says Vardarajan. ''We expect this facility to be a powerful model for universities around the world.'' (PTI)

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