SANDESH BHARATI

Vol VII No. 1 Jan/Feb/Mar 2004 HongKong

Special Issue



Dr. Harilela and other esteemed awardees with Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister of India, Shri L.K Adwani on the occasion of the first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Sandesh Bharati turns 7

Mark Twain: "India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, grandmother of legend, and great grand mother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."

With Best Compliments from:

Mr. & Mrs. Radhe Shyam Saraf

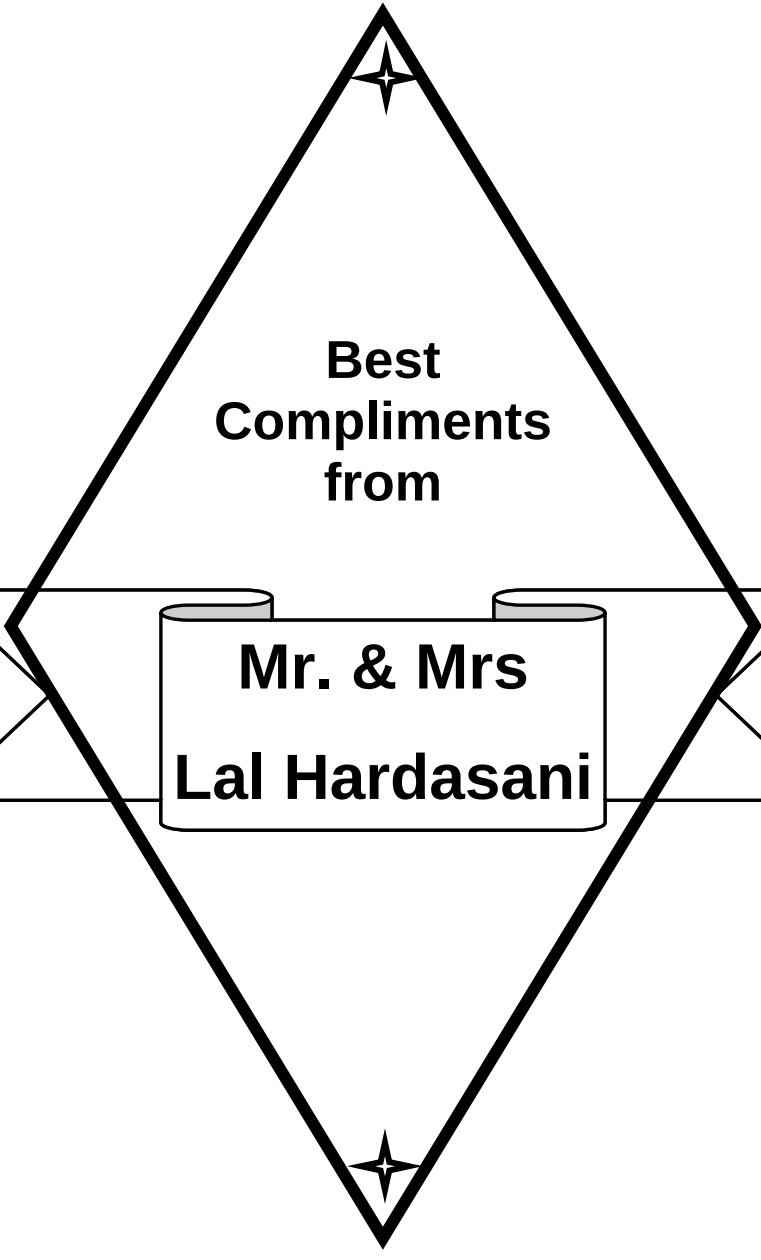
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With Best Compliments from:

Mr. & Mrs K P Daswani




Best
Compliments
from
Mr. & Mrs
Lal Hardasani

Sandesh Bharati turns 7

Sandesh Bharati has completed six years and has just entered its seventh year of publication. To celebrate this occasion, we are bringing out this special issue, which covers some of the best articles that have appeared in the previous issues of Sandesh Bharati, along with the current articles. We hope you will enjoy this very special issue.

We also take this opportunity to provide you with more information about our newsmagazine, in a question and answer format.

What is SANDESH BHARATI (SB)?

Sandesh Bharati is a quarterly newsletter published free of charge by Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) since 1998.

What information is contained inside SB?

A typical issue of Sandesh Bharati includes a cover story on a great religious / historical figure, current news events on India, information about our HSS activities in Hong Kong and elsewhere, regular columns like States of India, Our Holy Land, etc, a Children's page and lots of other information about

Hinduism and India. SB is educative, informative and interesting to read.

Who reads SB?

Sandesh Bharati's articles are well received by Hindus in Hong Kong. SB is also mailed to Hindus residing in China, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, India, UK, USA, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Australia.

What is the aim of SB?

Sandesh Bharati is the publishing wing of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh. And it's objects are to highlight India's ancient and current contributions and to make Hindus staying abroad aware of their common heritage. SB also serves as a platform to unite the diverse Hindu community and uphold their rights and protect their interests.

How can one contribute to SB's efforts?

Sandesh Bharati is distributed free of charge; however monetary support for future publications is welcome. In addition, one may also contribute their articles to SB for publication. SB encourages readers to send their questions and comments to hongkong_hindus@yahoo.com If anyone requires extra copies for distribution to their friends, please write. SB would be most glad to send them out.

Who are the editors of SB?

Nirmal Laungani:- Nirmal, 33, has been in HSS since 1983. Despite being born and brought up in Hong Kong, he can read, write and speak fluent Hindi. He is an avid reader and has a thorough knowledge of anything connected with India. Besides being the chief editor of Sandesh Bharati, he has also written many articles. Most of the cover stories that appear in each issue are written by him. His "Common Questions Posed to you – How do you answer" and "English is not the key to a nation's prosperity" proved popular among our readers. His article, "HINDU – BUDDHIST UNITY – THE IMMEDIATE NEED" was also published by the Hawaii-based HINDUISM TODAY magazine. He also takes charge of Chandragupta Shakha held every Saturday. Nirmal runs his own export firm.

Manoj Kumar Motwani:- Just 31 years old, Manoj is the Karyawah (General Secretary) of HSS in Hong Kong. He also co-ordinates with HSS leaders in other countries. A swayamsevak since his childhood, Manoj has been in Hong Kong since 1993. Manoj holds a doctorate in Finance. He is a Director of Diadora Hong Kong Ltd and is proficient in Finance and Mangement. Manoj is responsible for the design layout and graphics in SB. He has his pulse on all Indian newspapers and magazines and his knowledge on this matter comes handy for SB.

Haresh Khushi:- The youngest in the editorial team, Haresh has been attending *Shakha* since 1988. Having been born and brought up in Hong Kong, he has a very good understanding of both Indian and

Western cultures and understands how best to live in a Westernized society without forgetting our Indian heritage. He is a young, dynamic and energetic worker. He takes keen interest in all things Indian. His "OUR HOLY LAND" column is being published since Sandesh Bharati's inception in 1998. Haresh is in the import / export field.

Dipak Kumar:- Lucknow-born Dipak's family has a long association with RSS/HSS. His father is a retired army engineer. Dipak works in a watch export company and has been in Hong Kong for a long time. Dipak is very knowledgeable not just on matters related to India, but also on economic, scientific and other issues. Anyone who has read his "KNOW YOUR HINDUISM" column would agree that it was written with a great grasp of the subject. His current column is "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN ANCIENT BHARAT".

Vijai Jeandani:- Vijai has studied in Jaipur as well as in Hong Kong. He is highly intelligent and has a 20-year long experience in runnings *shakhas* and camps. He regularly contributes articles to Sandesh Bharati. He had written "INDIGENOUS GAMES OF BHARAT" highlighting India's contribution in many games. Vijai's Hindi is excellent, and he has always insisted on speaking pure Hindi. In fact, the message of his "KNOW YOUR HINDI" column is something very dear to his heart. That is, the Hindi language must be spoken in the correct way, the Persian and Arabic words imposed on its vocabulary must be removed. Vijai has been in the trading business since the past twenty years.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman 2003

Videsh mein desh ki shaan banayi, Bharat ki pehchaan;
Sada hamare dil mein baste, kaise kahen mehmaan;
Door door jakar bhi bhool na payen, maa ka pyar;
Is mitti ki gandh bikheri saat samundar paar;
Bharat maa ke beton ka hai (isme betiyaan bhi shamil hai), bharat mein satkar;
Jab jee chahna tab aa jaana, sada khule hain dwar."

" .....We invite you not only to share our vision of India in the new millennium but also to help us shape its contours. We do not want only your investment we also want your ideas. We do not want your riches we want the richness of your experience....."

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, at the Inaugural function of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, January 2003

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the NRIs / PIOs sentiments about India and create a policy framework for a sustained and productive interaction
- To acquaint the Indian people with the achievements of the Indian Diaspora and their expectations from India
- To create a network of the Indian Diaspora across 110 countries of the world
- To recognize the contributions made by the Indian Diaspora towards improving India's relationship with the host countries

- ❖ To engage the younger generation of the Indian Diaspora
- ❖ To understand the issues affecting Indian workers and professionals abroad

Highlights and Achievements

- Created a consciousness of Global Indian Family.
- The conference attracted over 2000 foreign delegates from 61 countries and an equaly encouraging domestic participation of 1200
- 134 Diaspora speakers from 25 countries shared the dais with an almost equal number of Indian speakers and enriched the deliberations at this 20 - session conference
- A rich mix of conference, food fest, exhibitions and entertainment evenings
- Invocation by Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar and Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan and Farewell by the Tri-Services mass band display
- Action on the L M Singhvi Committee Report: Significant policy announcements (including that on Dual Citizenship) by the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers of India
- As a follow up to the First Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, a separate welfare fund has been created for Indian overseas labour
- A large number of action points to be taken up by various Ministries and FICCI Diaspora Division emerged during the conference. If implemented, these will open new dimensions in India's ties with the Diaspora

- Conferment of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to 10 eminent NRIs/PIOs.

- The event symbolized a successful Multi-Ministerial effort put forward by the Government of India with active role played by MEA, PMO, Ministries of Home, Finance, Information Technology, Defence, Information and Broadcasting, Civil Aviation, Tourism and Culture, Sports, Health, Education, HRD & Science and Technology and National Airport Authority Of India. Some Other Organizations were ITPO, Doordarshan, PIB, SPG and Delhi Police.

- A unique example of public-private partnership where FICCI and MEA joined hands to successfully host the event.

- FICCI mobilized Private Sector capability across a broad spectrum and raised substantial sponsorship, which will enable Government to keep its expenses within allocated budget.

- Overwhelmingly impressive media coverage- both print and electronic-Reportage largely positive and appreciative.

- The PBD Initiative taken by the Government has generated a wave of positive sentiment within the Diaspora and created a platform for forging a new relationship.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards have been instituted to recognize and reward the meritorious contributions made by NRIs and PIOs in the furtherance of India's interests and causes. They would be presented each year.

The 10 outstanding Indians who received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards on 9th January 2003 were:

- Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, Mauritius
- Lord Navnit Dholakia, UK
- Dr. Manu Chandaria, Kenia
- Prof. Fatima Meer, South Africa
- **Dr. Hari N Harilela, Hong Kong**
- Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji, Oman
- Ujjal Dosanjh, Former Premier of British Columbia, Canada
- Rajat Gupta, Worldwide Managing Director, McKinsey & Co., Inc., USA
- Sridath Ramphal, Former Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat, UK
- H E Dato' S Samy Vellu, Minister of Works, Malaysia

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards - An Honour

In view of the large number of Indians living abroad, and their exemplary professional and social contributions in the country they reside, the Government of India had constituted a high level committee on the Indian Diaspora in September, 2000 with the noted jurist Dr LM Singhvi as Chairman. Its mandate was to make a comprehensive study of the global Indian Diaspora and to recommend measures for a constructive relationship. The Committee found strong evidence of deep and abiding ties with, and commitment to, India's welfare in the Diaspora. The Committee came up with certain recommendations and conclusions.

One of the recommendations of High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora is institution of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards for NRIs / PIOs. The Govt. has since accepted this recommendation and has decided to give a maximum of ten awards to NRIs / PIOs every year on the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

The awardees are selected by a Jury-cum-Awards Committee. The persons who can be nominated are NRIs and PIOs who have made outstanding contributions towards fostering better understanding abroad of India and its civilization; for persons among them who have extended their support to India's causes and concerns; and those who have advanced her interests internationally. The awards may also be given to NRIs / PIOs for significant contributions or service to the Indian Diaspora. The following persons are eligible to nominate NRIs / PIOs for the consideration of the Committee.

a) Heads of Indian Diplomatic Missions abroad
b) PIOs who are Members of Parliament in their respective countries.
c) The Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the External Affairs

Speech of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee

January 9, 2003, New Delhi

Your Excellency, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Eminent representatives of the global Indian family, Distinguished guests,

My simple greeting to all of you here today is: Welcome home.

Many of you are citizens of your adopted countries. Over 20 million of you have set up home in scores of countries, near and far. But each one of you shares a common identity – your Indianness – and a common origin – this Motherland of your forefathers. Therefore, this great gathering, which is the first of its kind, is truly a homecoming.

It is also a grand occasion for the country to pay tribute to its sons and daughters who have succeeded in reaching the pinnacle in so many diverse fields of human endeavour all over the world.

There is yet another important aspect of this unique celebration of the Pravasi Bharatiya's association with his land of origin. Many of you – or your forefathers – left India in search of fortune or a better livelihood. Today, India has itself become a land of opportunity. We want to share with our extended family our achievements, hopes, concerns, aspirations and goals. Your awareness of our current national course and understanding of our perspectives would enrich your bonds with India and heighten your sense of belonging in the global Indian family.

Friends,
The odyssey of our people to the four corners of the globe has been a saga of courage, enterprise and character. In ancient times, our forefathers went to distant lands as traders, monks, teachers and temple builders. A century and a half ago, Indian indentured labour was sent forth to sugar, tea and rubber plantations in near and far-flung parts of the British Empire. They worked on lands as far apart as Fiji and Mauritius, Suriname and Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Burma, Guyana and Malaysia.

The next wave of emigration was of entrepreneurs and traders who sailed intrepidly into uncharted waters for unknown countries. Since the 70's, young Indian professionals have been migrating abroad to corporate boardrooms, research laboratories, engineering workshops and university faculties. The emigration of doctors, nurses, engineers, managers, plumbers, and electricians to West Asia and the Gulf, has seen a steady growth.

Today, the success of every category of these emigrants all over the world testifies to the indomitable spirit, which they

carried from Indian soil. It is a tribute to their patience and forbearance in the face of hardship, rebuke and denial. It speaks of their dedication to their chosen professions, overcoming various trials and tribulations.

Friends,

On this day, 88 years ago, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India after nearly 20 years as a Pravasi Bharatiya in South Africa. His struggle against discrimination, deprivation and exploitation of Indians in South Africa not only fired the imagination of Indian patriots. It also inspired a spate of freedom movements right across the African continent. Out of those freedom movements emerged Pravasi Bharatiya heroes like Seewoosagar Ramgoolam of Mauritius; Yusuf Dadoo and Monty Naicker of South Africa; Cheddi Jagan of Guyana; Jagernath Lachmon of Suriname and many others.

Not many people today remember the painful Kamagatamaru episode of the early 20th century, when a boatload of Sikhs from India were most brutally left to fend for themselves on the high seas off the coast of Canada. Today, Sikhs are among the most prosperous Canadians and are increasingly influential in Canadian politics. In Ujjal Dossanj, we honour one such prominent Canadian figure.

Even the illiterate indentured plantation labourers empowered succeeding generations through a determined pursuit of education. Sir Vidia Naipaul, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Dato Samy Vellu and millions of others are living symbols of the transformation of an oppressed community to leaders of society in the space of a few generations.

Let us remember that, unlike the British, the French, the Dutch and the Germans, India was never a maritime power. All the same, Indians ventured forth across the seas to set up new homes in new lands. They went in peace, often with nothing more than faith in their destiny. No country can claim that Indians entered its territory in

the spirit of colonialism. This also is a glorious tribute to you and your forefathers. Few people who entered foreign lands can claim such a testimony.

Friends,
Pandit Nehru once remarked that wherever there is a Indian, a bit of India goes with him. Pravasi Indians have truly taken India abroad – Indian culture, Indian society and Indian traditions, not to mention Indian films and Indian cuisine!

The outside world has also attracted the best Indian talents, skills, brains and abilities – like Amartya Sen and Jagdish Bhagwati; E.C.G. Sudarshan and S. Chandrashekhar; Hargobind Khorana and Zubin Mehta. The Pravasi Bharatiya family today also includes:

Indian writers in English with an international readership;
Entrepreneurs and industrialists with a global reach of operations;

Management and lifestyle gurus with a huge following; and,
Filmmakers, sportspersons, artists and performers of great popularity.

They have dramatically changed the world's perception of Indians, and hence of India. They have provoked a new appreciation of this land which has produced and exported so many achievers. They have built bridges of understanding between the international community and India.

The benchmarks for success, which the Pravasi community has set, are a challenge for us in India. They make us examine why the Indian is so much more innovative, productive and successful abroad than in his own country. They prod us to create a business, investment and economic climate, which is as conducive to success as anywhere else in the world.

I assure you that we are fully committed to creating such an environment in India.

We are modernizing our infrastructure. Our telecom facilities are already as good as anywhere in the world. The combination of India-based IT companies and Indian professionals abroad, have made India a premier software power. We are building world-class highways through our National Highway Development Project. Our rural roads network is being upgraded. We have ambitious plans for airports, ports, and railways. Housing construction has acquired an unprecedented speed. Literacy, especially women's literacy, has registered a marked rise over the last decade.

We are aware of the slow progress in several areas of our social sector development, but we are determined to move faster than before. All in all, we are guided by the ambitious goal of making India a Developed Nation by 2020, free from all vestiges of poverty and full of opportunities for all our one billion people.

We would like to create an environment in India which will make you want to return, not just for sentimental or emotional reasons, but in the conviction that you can excel in this country as much as you could anywhere else in the world.

I believe that the Pravasi Bharatiya can be a catalyst for rapid change in this direction. Each of you, through your network of friends, relatives and acquaintances can create a strong urge for change in India. Our collective attention needs to be rescued from the sterile controversies and trivial issues that dominate the headlines, and focused on the real tasks to be accomplished, so that India can catch up with the developed world.

At the same time, you can project the truth about India to the world in a credible and effective manner. Misleading, one-sided and negative pictures are often put out due to bias, ignorance or design. Your familiarity with the Indian reality and with the perspectives of your adopted society equips you to correct such misrepresentations. You could project a positive image of India -- not as propaganda, but as a true reflection of the reality on the ground.

For example,
India continues to have one of the fastest growing economies, at a time when most developed economies have slowed down.

Our exports grew by 19 per cent, in spite of a global slowdown and a strong rupee.

Till recently, India needed to import food grain to feed its population. Last year, we exported food grain worth over 60 billion rupees to 25 countries.

About a decade ago, we had to mortgage our gold to tide over a difficult Balance of Payments crisis. Today, we have record foreign exchange reserves of nearly 70 billion dollars. (as of January 2003. It has reached close to 104 billion early this year)

How often have we seen such facts quoted outside the country? It is far more likely that mindless political gossip or isolated acts of crime and violence would dominate the headlines around the world.

Friends,
India has been deeply appreciative of the support of the Pravasi Bharatiya community, at times of need. Whenever India has faced a challenge to its security or to its territorial integrity, you have tirelessly championed its cause. When there was an effort to isolate India after our nuclear tests of 1998, you came forward to stand by India.

Your enthusiastic response to our Resurgent India Bonds in 1998 helped us raise over 4 billion dollars, when we needed it most.

Many of you have been generously helping the schools, colleges, IITs and universities, as their grateful alumni. I commend this gesture of Guru Dakshina. Some of you have met me with interesting suggestions on how to expand the scope of Pravasi Bharatiya involvement in the development of India's educational infrastructure. The Ministry of Human Resource Development also has taken some initiatives in this direction. Since education is going to be one of the main competitive strengths of India in the emerging Knowledge Society, let us work together to seize the opportunity.

In this context, I will take the luxury of offering a word of advice. The Indian community abroad often reflects the diversity, which is the hallmark of our society here. We are proud of this diversity - whether it is linguistic, religious or regional. Groupings like the Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi and Marathi associations serve a useful purpose in preserving linguistic skills and regional cultures. But it is also necessary to strengthen the broader Indian identity in the country of your residence. When you are united as Indians, your voice carries greater weight: both for highlighting issues of your concern in your host country, and for promoting Indian causes. This is a truth of great long-term significance for Indian communities everywhere.

I have always been conscious of the need for India to be sensitive to the hopes, aspirations and concerns of its vast diaspora. It is like a parental charge. It is also a obligation derived from our civilizational heritage.

It was with this perspective that we set up a High Level Committee, headed by Dr Laxmi Mall Singhvi, to examine all matters relating to the interaction of the community with India. I would like to congratulate Dr Singhvi and his

colleagues for the thorough and exhaustive nature of their report.

The idea of celebrating the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas annually flows from the recommendations of the Committee. The revised and improved scheme for PIO Cards is also based on the ideas of the Committee.

Friends,

Indians who have chosen to settle in foreign lands should be loyal to their country of adoption. The biggest challenge facing every immigrant community is to integrate harmoniously into the political, economic and social life of the host society, while preserving and cherishing its civilizational heritage. Over the years, Indians have achieved this delicate balance virtually everywhere, without a contradiction between their adopted citizenship and their original Indian identity.

It is in this background that my government has decided to accept the High-level Committee's recommendation to permit dual citizenship for People of Indian Origin living in certain countries. We are now working on the administrative regulations and procedures governing dual citizenship. We will introduce the necessary legislation during the Budget Session of Parliament.

The NRI of today is the Pravasi Bharatiya of tomorrow. The welfare of NRIs in the Gulf region is of utmost concern to us. A compulsory insurance scheme for Indian workers migrating to this region will be unveiled shortly. Parliament is already considering a bill to establish a welfare fund for the overseas Indian workers. To meet the educational needs of children of workers in the Gulf, we plan to reserve a certain proportion of seats in our academic institutions for the children of the Gulf NRIs.

Friends,

Our preparations for this first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, and the encouraging response to it, have convinced us of the fruitfulness of this event. We will continue to engage closely with the communities of Indian origin. For this, we are setting up an Advisory Committee, which will meet periodically to suggest new initiatives to the Minister of External Affairs.

We are prepared to respond to your expectations from India. We invite you, not only to share our vision of India in the new millennium, but also to help us shape its contours. We do not want only your investment. We also want your ideas. We do not want your riches, we want the richness of your experience. We can gain from the breadth of vision that your global exposure has given you.

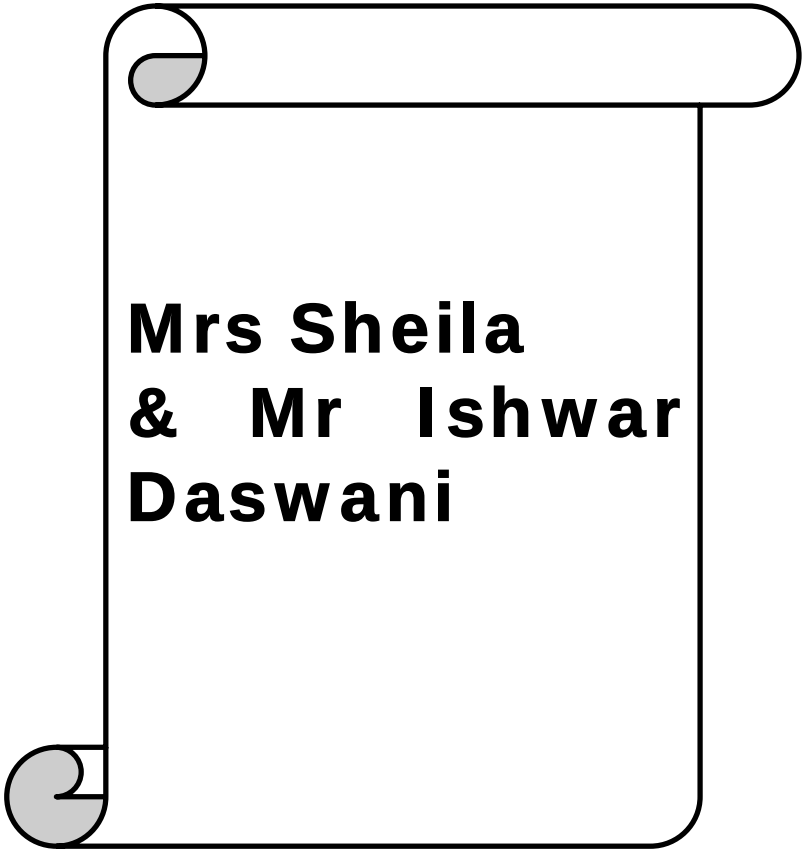
When you left this country, you carried with you the primary colours of the Indian ethos. A cross-fertilization of cultures over time has added new shades to those vibrant hues. Today we invite you to brush in some of these new colours onto the ever-evolving canvas of India's development.

Thank you.

"...You are our ambassadors in the countries you have chosen to make home. Given your links with India and your stature in your home countries, you are in a unique position to explain what India is, and what India can be..."

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India at Inaugural Ceremony, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, held in New Delhi on 9th January 2004

With Best Compliments from:



A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR HONG KONG - DR HARI HARILELA HONOURED BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT



Dr Hari N.Harilela needs no introduction. Everyone in Hong Kong, not just the Indian community, is familiar with the name HARILELA. Born in 1922 in India, Dr Harilela grew up in Hong Kong. Through his successful business ventures and community welfare activities, he has long been considered the standard – bearer and the most recognizable symbol of the large Indian community in Hong Kong. He has helped raise the profile of the community through excellent interactions with the Hong Kong community at large, both before and after the handover.

Dr Harilela has been the recipient of both the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and the Gold Bauhinia Star of the Hong Kong SAR. He has also received the "Gold Dragon Medal" from the Scout Association of Hong Kong. He is a Justice of Peace (JP) and an appointed member of the Hong Kong Affairs Adviser to the People's Republic of China. He is also the President of the Council of Hong Kong Indian Associations and Friends of the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong.

The Indian Government's honouring Dr.Harilela with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman is a big event for the entire Indian community in Hong Kong.

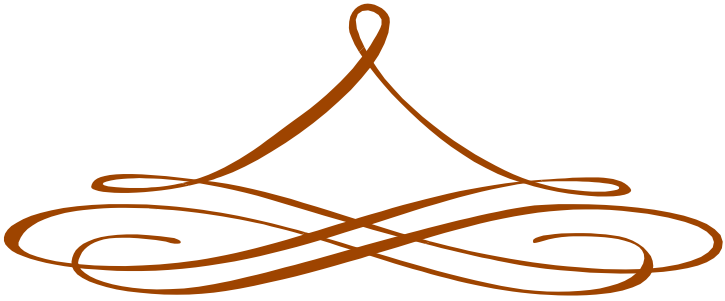
Dr. Harilela has a long time association with India dating back to the 1950s, when he played a key role in arranging the visit to Hong Kong by the first Prime Minister of India, a role he consistently played in subsequent visits of high Indian dignitaries to Hong Kong. Dr Harilela has investments in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and the Harilela family is associated with a number of initiatives to expand cultural and commercial links with India and to promote India as a tourist destination. Dr Harilela has also undertaken philanthropic activities in India, the latest instance being his substantial contribution to the relief work in the aftermath of the devastating Gujarat earthquake.

Dr. Harilela is founder patron of a large number of Indian community organizations abroad. The Harilela family also publishes the excellent BHARAT RATNA magazine for overseas Indians. Dr. Harilela is recognized for his outstanding contribution in service of the Indian Diaspora and for fostering better understanding abroad of India and its civilization.

The Harilela empire is a family run business and owns real estate, hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, etc.

The Harilela family inspires Indians all over the world by living together under one roof, conforming to the strong Indian emphasis on family values. More than sixty family members spanning four generations live in their 40-bedroom apartment on Waterloo Road. As Dr Hari Harilela has said, “We have a very strong temple in our home which binds us together”.

With Best Compliments from:



Mr. Kishu Khemlani

Krishna said,"Do your duty, Arjun, as your nature dictates. All work fetters, as all fire gives smoke. Only selfless duty saves. Fix your mind on me. Surrender all deeds to me. All problems will be solved by my grace. Pride will lead only to your moral ruin. If, filled with pride, you say, 'I will not fight,' it is all in vain. You are foolish. Fight you will, your nature will make you fight. Your karma will make you fight. You will fight in spite of yourself."

-Bhagwat Geeta

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An introduction to Sangh and Dr.Hedgewar

An Indian settled in Canada for a long time was returning back home to India after a gap of twenty years. None of his friends or relatives had been left behind. After his arrival in Mumbai, he decided to visit a grocery shop. As soon as he entered the shop, he noticed a huge portrait of a great personality and immediately queried from the shopkeeper, "Are you from the Sangh? I too happen to be a swayamsevak in Toronto".

The great person whose portrait the man had noticed, belonged to Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, known affectionately as Doctorji, the founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Its affiliate organizations abroad are called Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh or Bharatiya Swayamsevak Sangh (as in Kenya).

Who was Doctor Hedgewar? Who was that person who had suddenly united two Indians living in two different countries so far away from each other? Who was that person because of whom two strangers met as if they had known each other for many years.

Dr.Hedgewar was born on the auspicious Hindu New Year Day (called as Varsha Pratipada in Sanskrit) in 1889 in Nagpur to Shri Baliram and Shrimati Rewati Bai Hedgewar. He was born in a family which was deeply religious and learned in the Vedas, though their economic condition was not good.

From his very childhood, Keshav's life was full of inspiring and extraordinary events. Even when still a child, he loved his country dearly and was deeply influenced by the lives of our great heroes like Shivaji, Rana Pratap and Guru Govind Singh. Once while he was at junior school, the school authorities decided to celebrate the birthday of Queen Victoria. They distributed sweets to each and every student. But when young Keshav, just eight years old, got the sweets he immediately threw them in the dustbin and told his fellow students "Queen Victoria is the queen of England, not of Bharat. So why should we celebrate this occasion by eating these sweets. On

the contrary, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves that we have remained slaves for so many years."

These words from a young boy showed that the boy was highly patriotic and intelligent for his age. It was exactly this patriotism that led him to be rusticated from school when he led all the boys to sing VANDE MATARAM which during the British rule was prohibited to be sung. Not only was he not allowed to study in that school, but he was also prohibited from studying in any other school in Nagpur.

And yet, Keshav did study. He completed his education in Kolkota (Calcutta) and got his doctorate degree in medicine from there. In those days, the profession of a doctor was a very high salaried and special one as there were not too many doctors around. As soon as Keshav obtained his degree, he got an interesting job offer from Burma but he immediately turned it down. He told his friends, "I became a doctor to serve the poor, not to earn money out of it".

In fact, he was an ardent lover of the poor. This was proved in a particular incident when heavy floods hit the Damodar River in Kolkota and Keshav worked day and night to serve the affected people, without paying enough attention to his own sleep and food

While he was in Kolkota for his studies, he also took advantage to come into the association of revolutionaries. In those days, Kolkota was the hotbed of revolutionary activities in the country. Keshav joined the Anusheelan Samiti which was a part of the movement. He worked together with the revolutionaries for many years before joining the Indian National Congress, which was at that time led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Because of being in the Congress and taking part in the Satyagraha movement (non co-operation) movement, he was sent to jail. It can be seen that even though he was in jail, he was always in a jovial and relaxed mood. In fact, he gained weight by the time that he was

released. He later rose to become joint-secretary of the state unit of the Congress.

However Dr Hedgewar soon got disillusioned by the Congress. Because the Congress was fighting on a single-plank of independence from the British without simultaneously making sincere efforts to unite the people and to instill a sense of pride in them towards their culture and country. While he was in jail, he had come to the conclusion that the main reason for the country's downfall was due to a lack of unity amongst the people. That was the reason why such an ancient and great nation like Bharat could be overrun and ruled by foreign invaders for over 1,000 years. Dr.ji felt that in its efforts to win over the Muslims on their side, the Congress had become very defensive in its attitude towards Hinduism and Bharatiya culture. He felt that the primary goal should be to first unify the Hindus since Hindus formed the backbone of the country but they appeared so hopelessly fragmented.

The Hindus were divided into numerous castes and communities and a feeling of oneness was missing in them. Dr.ji however knew that the main cementing bond unifying the country was the common Hindu heritage. So, he knew that to prepare the ground for a strong independent India, it was essential to make people aware of the greatness of their country and culture.

And in this regard, he decided to start an organization which would work especially for the unity and upliftment of Hindus. On the auspicious Vijay Dashami Diwas (Dusshera) in 1925 in the city of Nagpur, Dr.ji formally started the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with just five boys.

Since its formation, the RSS has never looked back. As it grew, Dr.ji started more and more branches (called as "shakhas"). Slowly and gradually, RSS became popular and well – known. In each shakha, the average number of people who attended were between 20 – 30. And in each shakha, normally held daily, there would be a

group leader who would conduct Indian games, exercises, lead discussions on Ramayana, Mahabharat and about the other great personalities from Indian history as well as give suggestions to problems prevailing in Hindu society. Besides that, camps were held, processions took place and there were other community activities. Through this way, Dr.ji was able to bring about much – needed unity among Hindus.

Within the life span of Dr.ji, the Sangh spread by leaps and bounds. In 1934, even Mahatma Gandhi visited the RSS camp in Wardha district in Maharashtra. Gandhiji was very impressed by the discipline that he saw in the camp and also the fact that nobody practiced untouchability or worried about the other person's caste (which was very common in those days).

Dr.Hedgewar passed away on 21st June,1940 in Nagpur. During the last fifteen years of his life, he gave all his time and energy from morning till night, for the sake of mobilizing and energizing Hindu society. He opened new Shakhas all over the country, and never bothered about his personal comforts.

He started RSS with just five boys. Today there are hundreds of thousands of people who go to shakhas in Bharat daily. Not just in Bharat, the Sangh has spread to major countries across the world including the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, USA, Canada, Trinidad, Hong Kong, etc.

Thus from Dr Hedgewar's life, we can learn that it was a life full of dedication, courage, patriotism, humbleness and sacrifice. It was only because of Dr.Hedgewar's vision that today, the RSS and its affiliate organizations are so well-known all over the world.

(This article was published in the 1st issue of Sandesh Bharati – Jan/Feb/Mar, 1998)

"Have you the courage to face any hurdles, however formidable? Have you the determination to pursue your goal, even if those near and dear to you oppose you? You can be free men only if you have confidence in yourselves. You should develop a strong physique. You should shape your mind through study and meditation. Only then will victory be yours."

- Swani Vivekanand

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OM or PRANAVA

Om or Pranava is the universally accepted symbol of Hinduism. All sections and groups honour this and use this. Even Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs have adopted this. It is the system of the Absolute of Hindu philosophy.

The word PRANAV literally means 'that by which GOD is effectively praised'. It also means 'that which is ever new'. The word OM is effectively derived from the Sanskrit root 'ava', which has nineteen different senses. From there, it is possible to summarize that OM represents that power which 1) is omniscient, 2) rules over the entire universe, 3) protects one from the evils of life, 4) fulfils the cherished desires of its devotees, and 5) destroys ignorance and gives enlightenment.

SOUND MECHANISM OF AUM

AUM has come from three distinctive letters, A, U and M. The pronounciation of AUM creates a vibration in the heart, earth and ether when A comes from the throat, U from the rolling forward of the tongue and M at the closing lip sound.

BASIS ON SCRIPTURES

The very central theme of Mandukya Upanishad is the syllable OM through which the mystery of Brahman is gathered to a point. The text of this Upanishad first treats OM in terms of the Upanishadic doctrine of the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping, but then passes on to the fourth (TURIYA), thus transporting us beyond the typical Upanishadic sphere into that of the later "Classic Advaita Vedanta". Speaking of OM, the Taittiriya Upanishad says, "The Pranav (OM) which is the head of the whole Veda, which is the form of the universe, and

which was born as essence out of immorality, from amidst the Veda – may that Supreme Pranav gratify me with knowledge, so that I may become the bearer of the wisdom that gives immorality. May my body be efficient; my tongue be sweetest; with my ears, let me hear amply (the spiritual teachings); O Pranava, thou art the casket of the gem of the Supreme Spirit, covered with the lid of intellectual; guard my learning". (Taitt. 1-4).

Kathopanishad (II:15) says, "The word (or goal) which all the Vedas declare, that which all penances proclaim and desiring which people lead an austere life, that word (or goal), I tell thee in belief; It is OM".

OM REPRESENTS ALL TRINITIES

OM is everything. It supports the entire phenomenal world. The whole sense universe has been projected from OM. The A represents the physical plane. The U represents the mental and astral planes – the world of spirits and all heavens. The M represents the deep sleep state, all that is unknown even in your waking stage, and all that is beyond the reach of the intelligent. OM is the basis of life and thought.

Every kind of trinity is represented by the sacred OM – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Past, present and future. Birth, life and death. Creation, preservation and destruction. Waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

Gayatri, which is regarded as the most powerful of all mantras, is also an expanded version of OM

Japuji, the manifesto of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, begins 'EK AUMKAR', and thus AUMKARA (OM) has an important place in Sikh prayers. Buddhism has accorded a place of holiness on OM too. In Buddhism, the famous meditation on 'AUM MANI PADME HUM' is also important.

OM is the sacred word in the Vedas, the scripture of the Hindus, which are of course, the oldest in the world. It is both the symbol of the Personal GOD and also of the unmanifested formless ABSOLUTE.

Thus, we can see that OM is the most appropriate symbol of GOD in the Hindu religion.

OM

V

B	M	I
P	F	T
O	E	T

Interpretation of symbols:-

The Absolute Reality
OM

Distorted by the veil of
Vasanas (V)

Express through the instruments of:
The Body (B), Mind (M), Intellect (I)

The individual ego:
The Perceiver (P), Feeler (F), Thinker (T)

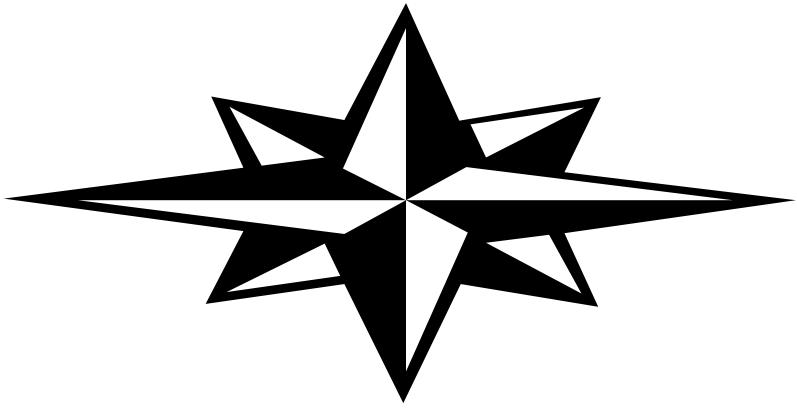
In the world of:
Objects (O), Emotions (E), Thoughts (T)

Diagram: An analysis of Life

Swami Chinmayananda

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati July/Aug/Sept 1998 issue)

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Scientists Confirm Purifying Powers of sacred Gangajal

The Ganga has been venerated as the holiest of all rivers from time eternal and is bound with countless beliefs and faiths. The Gangajal has traditionally been regarded as an inexhaustible gift of nature. It is proved to have mystical purifying qualities and it is a common practice to have it stored at room temperature for hundreds of years.

Surprising Property

The property is surprising because of the obvious and extensive microbiological pollution taking place all along its course from Hardwar to Gangasagar. Is it possible that bacteria present in the Ganga are gradually cleansed by concurrently occurring bacteriophages? In fact, the French scientist, A.J.H. De Manto, in his experiments carried out in 1940 on the occasion of the Kumbh Mela, adduced evidence for this mysterious bacteriophage activity.

Recently, Dr (Smt) M.Sen of the Department of Botany, University of Kalyani, West Bengal carried out exploratory experiments on the Gangajal under a scientific study program commissioned by the Government of Bharat.

Purifying Quality Observed

The study was made on water samples taken from the Ganga in Nadia, 24 Parganas and Hughly districts of West Bengal. Dr Sen observed lytic activity indicating presence of bacteriophage against e-coli, vibro cholerae, shigella flexneri, salmonella typhi, staohylococcus aureus and sarcina lutea. She concluded that harmful bacterial pollution is controlled in the Ganga water by activity of bacteriophages.

Mystery unsolved

Incidentally, the experiments on Gangajal by Dr (Smt) Sen were carried out thousands of kilometers away from the river's

place of commencement at Gangotri. Scientists are still unable to throw light on how the bacteriophage occurs **only in Ganga and no other river in the world**

(This article was published in Sandesh Bharati's 1st issue – JAN/FEB/MAR, 1998)

WHY TAKE PRIDE IN INDIA?

What is special about India? Many of us, who have been born and brought up in foreign countries, don't have any special affection for our motherland. Rather, we feel quite disgusted and frustrated when we visit India – looking at the dirt and pollution all around, we even feel ashamed to call ourselves Indians. When we look at the countries that we stay in and the 'advancement' that they have made, we feel that we belong to a very backward country where time seems to have stopped. We feel quite embarrassed to discuss about India and Indian culture in front of foreigners; in fact, since we feel that there is nothing special about Indian culture, we neither take any special interest in retaining it or promoting it. We are overwhelmed by American culture, what we like to call as 'world culture' that we choose to remain ignorant of the fact that once upon a time Indian culture **was indeed the most-followed culture** in the world.

How many of us know that India has the due honour of being the only country in the world to record an unbroken continuity in its culture and traditions. No doubt the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Babylonian cultures were also old but where do they survive today? Only in their ruins and monuments. On the other hand, we Indians are following the same culture and traditions that had been followed by our predecessors since at least 7,000 years.

India's contribution to the world has been unique. From the numerical and decimal system in mathematics, to astronomy, to

music, to medicine, to navigation, India was the center of the ancient world and the biggest contributor to human civilization. Just like students all over the world today go to the United States and England for their higher studies, in the ancient days the most prestigious centers of education were Takshashila and Nalanda, from where students all over the world came to study. Also, the very fact that almost all the languages in the world have their origin in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit goes on to show the extent of Indian influence in the ancient times.

But more than all these achievements, it is India's Vedic religion that sets India apart from other nations. India is the land of *Sanatan Dharma* or Hinduism as it is commonly called. Sanatan Dharma is the eternal faith, it is beyond time and it is India's unique gift to the world. For us Hindus, who draw their strength from the Vedic scriptures, India is not just a geographical landmass but it is our *punyabhoomi*, it is our spiritual homeland.

Just like, Mrs Annie Besant had said, "India is the mother of religion. In her are combined science and religion in perfect harmony; this is the Hindu religion and it is India that shall again be the spiritual mother of the world".

The Mahabharat sings the praises of Bharat in the following way:-

'ATRAPI BHARATAM SHRESTHAM JAMBUDWEEPE MAHAMUNE,
YATO HI KARMABHOORESHA YATONYA BHOGABHOOMAYAH,
ATRA JANMA SAHASRANAM SAHASRAIRAPI SATTAMA,
KODACHILLABHATE JANTUR MANUSHYAM PUNYASANCHAYAT'

Translation:- 'BHARAT (meaning India) is the greatest land on earth and it alone is the land of action while the rest are lands of

pleasure. It is only after great acquisition of merit that a person gets the privilege of being born a human being in this country'.

The Shrimad Bhagvatam even says that the *devas* (demigods) in the heavenly planets sing the praises of the Bharat*vasis* (inhabitants of India), that they have accomplished so many auspicious deeds to have been able to take birth in India. The *devas* further say '**that it is far better to win a few moments of life in Bharat than thousands of lives in the celestial regions because in Bharat, heroic souls can achieve GOD consciousness and please HARI (GOD) easier'**.

In fact, for Hindus the whole of India is a holy land. For, within this great land, GOD Himself has appeared countless number of times. The entire Bharatvarsha has been blessed by HIS personal appearance. This is why India is full of pilgrimage spots associated with the places that the Lord in his different forms appeared. Vaishnavas believe that when KRISHNA appeared in India, he brought with him the same Vrindavan that existed in the spiritual world. Mother Ganga, which used to flow in the spiritual world is the same Ganga which flows in present day India, thanks to Lord Shiva. All the rivers and mountains in the country are connected with the memory of the LORD. In this land, sages and holy men have achieved the highest stages of spiritualism. This is why Hindus regard India with so much love, respect and reverence.

Even today, Indian influence is very far-reaching across the world, though many Indians don't even realize it. In the United States and the European countries, a very large number of people practice *yoga* and *meditation*. A growing number of non-Indian people are becoming vegetarian, which is one of the essential aspects of our culture. The Vedic theories of re-incarnation and *karma* have become household words across the world, being believed by a growing number of people. *Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian medicinal system and Vedic mathematics, the

ancient Indian treatises on mathematics, are becoming increasing popular all over.

In South-East Asia, we see that even Muslim countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei are heavily influenced by the Vedic culture, which they still retain to a high degree. The Ramayana and Mahabharat are as well-known to them as to us. In Thailand, for example every king keeps the title of 'RAMA' and near Bangkok, even exists the ancient capital of Thailand 'Ayuthapuri', derived from Ayodhya. Their languages use countless number of Sanskrit words and most of their names are of Sanskrit-origin. It shows the kind of influence that India wielded in these countries in the ancient days.

In those days, India was the richest country on earth with every invader, from the Romans to the Egyptians, from the Central Asians to the Europeans, dreaming of conquering India.

And yet, at present, the country is financially weak. There are many reasons for this situation but one very important reason is the loss of self-respect amongst us Hindus. We are ashamed to own up to our culture and traditions. We are eager to adapt to Western values while being disdainful of Indian ones. Everyone thinks of bettering himself rather than worrying about the country. Corruption, crime, pollution and so many social evils have become rampant in the country.

But there is still much hope. There is a 'hidden' unity which exists in all Indians but it is not transparent at all times. It becomes visible when there are natural calamities and disasters, when our nation is at war or when there are certain emotive issues. During those times, all Indians living in India and abroad rise as one. If our 'oneness' is utilized more, we can do away with all the vices that have crept up in our society. Of course, we have progressed tremendously since 1947 if we take into account the fact that India has one of the largest numbers of scientists, doctors and other professionals in the world, that

India is one of the few countries to posses nuclear and space technology and that India has one of the largest economies in the world with among the highest annual growth rate but still much more has to be done to **re-build a strong, powerful and influential India firmly rooted in its Vedic cultural values, which is our most important treasure.**

For those of us, living abroad, the message is that it has been our good fortune to be born as Indians, even though we may have been born outside India or taken up foreign nationality. We should thus make it a point to know more about our country, our culture. We should not be put off by our country's poverty, after all to love one's country depending on its economic situation is extremely unfair. Instead, we should take pride in being Indians and own up our heritage.

(This article was published in Sandesh Bharati Apr/May/Jun issue, 2000)

Swami Vivekananda : "Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient and modern times, wonderful ideas have been carried forward from one race to another...But mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets and the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood..... Each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. This, many other nations have taught; but India for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist... Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it. We, of all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head, and therefore we live...."

90% Kashmiris feel infiltration must be stopped instantly: Poll

A survey conducted in Jammu and Kashmir by a leading UK based market research company, MORI, has indicated that India's position on Kashmir and particularly cross border terrorism has received strong support from the people in the state.

The poll says: “Most Kashmiris, 65 per cent of them feel that the presence of foreign militants has damaged their cause.”

The poll goes on to say, “Nearly 90 per cent of the Kashmiris say that cross border infiltration must end.”

On the issue of citizenship, “61 per cent of the people surveyed say they will be better off with India, only 6 per cent favour being with Pakistan, while 33 per cent were undecided. However, the survey has not touched upon the question of independence and how many people favour that as an option.

The survey indicates that “55 per cent want more autonomy” for the state. The people in the Valley are more in favour of this option than those in the Jammu region.

According to the survey most people, 86 per cent feel that free and fair elections will help bring peace to the region.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Apr/May/Jun 2002 issue)

Albert Einstein: "We owe a lot to Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made."

With Best Compliments from:

Mr. Ashok Mahtani

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Mr. Gordhan Gurnani

The Spirit of Nachiketa

- BY FRANCOIS GAUTIER

Last week, the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his deputy L K Advani conferred on me the Nachiketa award of journalism, which rewards forthrightness, courage, and dedication to truth in this profession.

I would like to believe that my quest in India has been - even in a small degree - like Nachiketa's: what is the real India, behind the clichés? What does India stand for? What can I do to help this great country, which is India?

I was lucky: I came to India when I had just turned 19, an age where the mind has not yet settled in hard and frozen patterns. I was also extremely privileged to spend the first eight formative years of my time in India in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, where I came in contact with Indians from all over the country and was able to meet the Mother, an extraordinary person, as well as read Sri Aurobindo, whose writings have had a deep influence on my life.

Today, I am also indebted to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living, because he embodies the ancient rishi's dedication to his country: His work is not only spirituality, but also to bring god into all realms of life, including politics, because in ancient India the rishis were also advisers to the kings.

Nevertheless, when I began freelancing in the early 1980s, I started with the same prejudices, set ideas, that most of my fellow correspondents have: secularism is the best system for India, given the explosive mosaic of its ethnic races and religions; the Congress is the flag-bearer of

'secularism'; there are also Hindu 'fundamentalists'; or Christian missionaries are doing 'wonderful' work in India.

Once again, I was fortunate. Instead of plunging straight into political India, I did photographic features in the deep South: the extraordinary kalaripayat, in the villages of Kerala, which is the ancestor of all great Asian martial arts; the absolutely amazing Ayyappa festival on the border of Tamil Nadu and Kerala; Ayurveda, the most ancient medical system in the world still in practice; the exquisite Ayanars of Tanjore district... There, I discovered that the genius of India is in its villages and that the tradition of gentleness, tolerance, hospitality, is rooted in rural India- and not in the cities of India, where people have often lost touch with that inner reality.

When I entered the world of south Asian politics (in 1984, for Le Journal de Genève), I was ready to have my eyes opened. Thus slowly, as I came in contact first-hand with the political reality of India and South Asia, I realised that the Congress had divided India on caste and religious lines to survive in power; that India's minorities had taken advantage of secular governments by getting more privileges than the majority community; that Hindus are probably the most tolerant people in the world; that Hindus have ironically been the target of one of the most horrible genocides ever perpetrated upon mankind in the name of religion.

I also saw that even today they are the prey of jihadis: witness the ethnic cleansing of the Kashmiri Pandits, far more horrible than the one of the Bosnians; that they are still the target of Christian missionaries, who use unethical economic means to convert the Harijans and the untouchables. I saw too that Hindus have given shelter to

all the persecuted minorities in the world: Syrian Christians, Armenians, Parsis, Jews, Tibetans today.

So at some point, I thought that a marvellous majority like the Hindus, which has such a long tradition of tolerance, gentleness, spirituality and hospitality, needs a government reflecting these qualities-and not the successive governments which have come in since Independence and instituted casteism, corruption, statism and bureaucracy.

And when Murli Manohar Joshi went to Srinagar on August 15 one year to raise the Indian flag, I found this pretty courageous and said so in my articles, though he was ridiculed by the entire Indian press, particularly by Newstrack, the only television news channel of those times. When Advani started his rath-yatra, I thought it too was a good idea, because it would rally the Hindus who tend to be politically amorphous, and I said so. At that time nobody-including me-believed the BJP would ever come to power. They have now. Nevertheless, it's lonely at the top.

Of course nobody from the French Embassy was present at the award ceremony. Fact is that France is only the 11th largest investor in India, after all the overtures that have been made towards France by the BJP government in the last five years.

But I am considered an outcast by the French embassy and my advice is never sought, though I have lived 34 years here and am probably the French journalist who knows India best. Forget about French Indologists, who are all pals of the JNU crowd and Romila Thapar (<http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/may/13praful.htm>) : they hate my guts; many of my fellow Western

correspondents also think I am either a crackpot or a traitor to my culture!

This raises an important question: why is it that amongst the 300-odd Western correspondents sitting in Delhi, there is nobody (that I know of) who comes to the same logical conclusion that Hinduism is what makes this country great and that an Indian Christian or an Indian Muslim are different because of the softening influence of Hinduism?

After all, many of those correspondents arrive here well-meaning, with an aspiration to understand this complex country. Why is it that not only most of them go after five years not knowing India better, but very often ending up hating it? There is a Mark Tully, of course, who genuinely likes India, but even he, maybe because he is British and a BBC man, is very muted and discreet when it comes to defending India.

The only answer I can find is that it is only when the Indian press will become a little less negative, a little more proud of its roots, that in turn the Western correspondents will be positively influenced, because the first input they get when they open an Indian English paper or switch on a TV channel is negativity: everything is hopeless about this country, when India has actually done quite well since Independence and is a much better bet for the Western world than totalitarian China, or Islamic Pakistan.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati April/May/June 2003 issue)

With Best Compliments from:

Mr & Mrs K B Rathi



RSS: call it ready for selfless service

Since its inception in 1925, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has now spread over 30,000 places -- including both in Bharat and outside Bharat. No section or group in the society, students, traders, artisans, etc., has been left out of its fold. Many full-time swayamsevaks (volunteers) have been working relentlessless and selflessly for a dynamic and positive transformation of the Bharatiya society. The sustained efforts have had their desired effect.

The **Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram** (VKA) has been running schools and hospitals in the rural and tribal areas. For example, the village Tayning (in Nagaland) has a school, an associated hostel and a medical centre operated by the Ashram with the assistance of Heraka Naga Leaders. VKA has 808 full-time workers, executing more than 6000 projects.

Education in rural areas occupies a place of importance in the scheme called **Vidya Bharati** (VB). This scheme runs about 6500 schools across Bharat, and has about 53,000 teachers all over the country. The number of "one teacher one school" type of institutions in the far-flung vanvasi areas are growing fast. The residential school in Haflong in North Cachar Hills district has 150 students drawn from 20 janajaati groups comprising Nagas and others. The **Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal** (BSK) has about 26,000 active workers, almost half of whom are women.

The **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad**, popularly known as the ABVP, is the largest University organization today. ABVP has not just undertaken the task of conducting reforms at the University level, but has attempted to generate awareness regarding the national problems among students as well. The role of ABVP in bringing the Assam problem to all-Bharat

level is significant. The ABVP workers are actively engaged in apprising the Bihar Government, the press and people about the growing threat from Bangladeshi infiltration. The ABVP has a membership exceeding 750,000; 3091 chapters in 126 (out of 170) universities with 289 full-time workers. As a special mention, 600 ABVP workers devoted their time and effort in providing succor and help during the Latur Earthquake. Most recently, an infanticide survey project in Tamilnadu was carried out and programs were convened to educate the people as regards of the associated ills.

Social transformation, upliftment of the poor, enhancing the self-esteem of the downtrodden occurs with proper samskars imparted by various service activities. **Seva Bharati** is dedicated for such a cause. For example, Seva Bharati of Delhi has over 200 projects, with baalwadis, baalsamskar kendras, tailoring classes, coaching classes, medicare centres, kirtan mandalis, night schools, reading rooms, etc. covering about 75 slum areas. More than 250 projects have been launched, with a participation of about 150,000 Sangh karyakartas.

Akhil Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), a labour organization, encourages excellence of performance whether in production or in rendering service. There have been a number of instances where the co-operation of BMS Unions have helped the management to get over their troubles and run the industry efficiently. This organization has about 3400 unions with a 4.5 million membership across the country.

Akhil Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), over the years, has emerged as a major peasant force in the provinces like Gujarat and Andhra and is making rapid strides in other provinces as well. Successful agitations have been launnced by the BKS to get farmers' grievances redressed and their legitimate demands fulfilled. The uniqueness of the BKS movement lies in the detailed study and constructive approach in solving agricultural problems. BKS was the first

to demand crop and cattle insurance, which is now accepted by the Central/State Government. BKS is active in 301 districts and 11,000 villages with a membership of about 0.25 million.

Rashtriya Sikh Sanghat has been formed for promoting greater cordiality between the Sikh community and rest of the Hindu society. Its all-Bharat convention held at Nagpur in March 1987 presented a beautiful blend of various shades of enlightened Sikh opinion. The **Rashtriya Suraksha Samiti** has been very active in Punjab to fight the secessionist and anti-national elements. The Sikh Sanghat has 135 coordinating committees.

Our master-artists, trained in traditional skills, could carve out even from the crudest of stones the magnificent images of the Divine! With the passage of time, however, this unique tradition began to loose its sublime motivation. In this context, **Samskar Bharati** was concieved to promote originality, creativity and educative content to art. With its units in most states, Samskar Bharati has organized several seminars and symposia of artists and literateurs with a view to finding out how best art could be made to combine healthy entertainment with ennobling samskars.

Vigyan Bharati (VB) was established to provide scientific and technological knowledge to rural areas, befitting the concept of appropriate technology. Programs and seminars have been organized in engineering and medical schools illustrating the use of scientific know-how for the betterment and improvement of life in general, and in rural areas in particular. Groups of volunteers associated with VB have set up information centres in villages to provide necessary technical advice required by their rural brethern. Family planning programs have been organized by medical students.

The **Vishwa Hindu Parishad** promotes awareness about Hindu heritage and about matters of vital importance to the

Hindu society in particular, and humanity in general. The Parishad offers a variety of programs and projects that cater to the needs of the society. Baal-Vihars, Education Fund, Regional Hindu Conferences, Youth Camps, presenting Hindu Art Exibitions, Support-a-child projects, etc. are some of the activities of the VHP - in Bharat as well as abroad. The VHP, along with the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, is working in 20 different countries; for example, Kenya has 53 branches in 31 different places.

Many other schemes and social welfare programs have been inspired and launched by the RSS for achieving and producing a dynamic and vibrant Hindu society but promoting proper samskars through education and service. The **Bharatiya Vichar Kendra** (based in Kerala), **Pandit Deendayal Upadhaya Institute**, and others are involved in organizing discussions, lectures, seminars, essay and elocution competitions, etc. to enhance intellectual understanding and deriving solutions to problems facing the contemporary Bharatiya society. "**Vigil**", a forum founded in Madras, represents the vigilant voices concerning public welfare. This group is active in projecting nationalist views through the mass media and reacting against every injustice. Arranging educative camps for writers and poets is one of its popular programs.

In 1952, a few swayamsevaks expressed interest in serving the society through participation in politics. They joined nationalist Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in founding a new political party rooted in country's ethos called *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (BJS). The sapling planted by Dr. Mukherjee with the help of swayamsevaks has grown into a tree in the form of **Bharatiya Janata Party** (BJP). BJP remains the party of choice for swayamsevaks interested in politics even though they have a wide variety of choice among mushrooming political outfits in the country. However, overall percentage of swayamsevaks participating in politics remain negligible though the current Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee

and Deputy Prime Minister Shri LK Advani are among the prominent swayamsevaks.

Sevika Samiti which is doing a parallel work for the uplift and unity of Hindu women. There are numerous, literally hundreds, of other programs and projects inspired by RSS, and/or by its allied organizations pervading all aspects of social and national life. They are simply too many to mention. However, hopefully, the above provides sufficient glimpse of RSS activities -- a step towards fulfilling the dream and vision of a better, peaceful and harmonious society.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jan/Feb/Mar 2000 issue)

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Conversions… loss of self-respect

Mahatma Gandhiji, the foremost leader of India's independence movement said the following of Conversion:

"***There is nothing but vilification of Hinduism in the books distributed by the missionaries. The other day a missionary descended on a famine area with money in his pocket, converted the famine-stricken by distributing it amongst them and then got them to demolish their own temple. That was outrageous. The advent of a missionary in a Hindu household has meant the disruption of the family. The missionaries are vendors of goods who target the most susceptible when they are most vulnerable, using just not dialogue but allurement and violence. If I had power and could legislate, I should certainly stop all proselytizing.***"

Hindus do not believe in conversion. Hindus believe in *Ekam Sataha Vipraha Bahudha Vadanti*, or "The truth is One but different Sages call it by Different Names"

Yet, for at least past 1300 years, there have been vigorous attempts at converting Hindus. Some of those who sought to convert Hindus use force, while others used fraud and inducement. Very few Hindus are converted by changing their hearts. Hundreds of thousands of Hindus faced severe brutalities at the hands of Islamic invaders to defend their rights to preserve their dharma and way of life.

During the British rule, the conversion of Hindus to Christianity started in ernest, the attempts to convert Hindus continues unabated today with millions of dollars each year poured by the missionaries. Great leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekanand spoke about the futility of conversion, and yet, ironically, today those who speak against the conversion of Hindus are branded fundamentalist and worse.

The conversion of Hindu is usually accompanied by loss of compassion towards other religions, loss in respect for the Hindu and Indian culture and way of life and more often than not, loss of self-respect.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jan/Feb/Mar 2000 issue)

Ancient India's Contribution to MEDICAL SCIENCE

Medical Science was an area where great advances were made in ancient times in India. These advances were in all spheres of medicine but specifically in the areas of plastic surgery, extraction of catracts, dental surgery, etc., These are not just tall claims. There is documentary evidence to prove the existence of these practices.

The **Ayurveda** is the oldest system of medicine in the world having been revealed by the great Hindu physician, DHANWANTARI, to his pupil, SUSHRUTA. Ayurveda literally means the 'science of living' (longevity). Its mention is found in our holy scriptures, the VEDAS.

The feature that distinguishes this system of medicines from other systems like Allopathy and Homeopathy is that it is solely based on herbs and herbal compounds. According to CHARKA, 'A physician who fails to enter the body of a patient with the lamp of knowledge and understanding can never treat diseases. He should first study all the factors, including environment, which influence a patient's disease, and then prescribe treatment. It is more important to prevent the occurrence of disease than to seek a cure'.

These remarks may appear rudimentary today but they were made by someone who appeared at least 25 centuries ago. In fact Charaka was the first physician to present the concept of digestion, metabolism and immunity.

It has by now been clearly proven **that the Hindus were the oldest surgeons in the world**. This need not come as a surprise because surgery (Shastrakarma) is one of the eight

branches of Ayurveda. The oldest treatise dealing with surgery is the Sushruta-Samahita (Sushruta's compendium). Sushruta who lived in Kashi, was one of the most famous Indian medical practitioners; some of the other well-known ones included Atreya, Charaka, Kapishthala, Harita, Kankayana and Gonikaputra.

Sushruta was one of the first to study the human anatomy. In the Sushruta Samahita, he has described in detail the study of anatomy with the aid of a dead body. Sushruta has also mentioned rhinoplasty (Plastic surgery) and ophthalmialogy (ejection of cataracts). Shushruta has described surgery under eight heads, Chedya (excision), Lekhya (scarification), Vedhya (puncturing), Esya (exploration), Ahrya (extraction), Vsraya (evacuation) and Sivya (Suturing).

The Sushruta Samahita gives detailed descriptions of how rhinoplasty and ophtalmialogy surgeries were conducted and there is evidence to show that the success in this and other kind of surgeries was very high which attracted people from all over the world.

In fact, the surgery of the Hindu physicians was bold and skilful. They conducted amputations, arresting the bleeding by pressure, a cup-shaped bandage and boiling oil. They performed operations on all parts of the body. They put lots of efforts to train students by means of operations performed on wax spread on board or on the tissues and cells of the vegetable kingdom and dead animals. They also devoted great care to the making of surgical instruments so much so that in her 'Ancient and Mediaeval India' Vol.II written at the turn of the last century, Mrs Mannings wrote, 'The surgical instruments of the Hindus were sufficiently sharp, **indeed as to be capable of dividing a hair longitudinally**'.

It is beyond dispute that Indian medical knowledge first spread to the Arabs and through them to Europe. The ancient Greeks also praised Indian medicine in glowing terms. ACTUARIUS has given references to an Indian medicine called *triphala* as well as other medicines.

According to Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras state during the British rule in the 1900s,'I am not sure whether many Indians know that **medicine originated in India** and from there was first exported to Arabia and thence to Europe. Down to the close of the 17th century, European physicians learnt this science from the works of the Arabian doctors while the Arabian doctors many centuries before had obtained their knowledge from the works of great Indian physicians such as Dhanwantari, Charaka and Sushruta'.

All of this goes on to show that India achieved such a high degree of proficiency in the field of medicine in the ancient days and **that it's contribution to modern medicine is extremely valuable.**

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jul/Aug/Sept 1999 issue)

Indians ahead in IQ

Recently, "The National Geographic Magazine" reported a survey of IQ of average person in various countries. It reported that an average person is said to have an IQ (Intelligent Quotient) of between 95-110. The survey found that Germany had an average IQ of 125, Australia had 130, India had the highest of any country reviewed in the survey i.e. IQ average of 140+.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jul/Aug/Sept 1999 issue)

HOW I SPEND MY SATURDAY EVENING

- CONTRIBUTED BY NITESH SACHETI (12 YEARS)

Every Saturday evening, it is time for young Bharatiyas boys, like myself, to go to SHAKHA. It starts at 4:30 p.m and the fun never ends. Where does it take place? It wouldn't be hard for you to find it. Just visit the famous Kowloon Park and hear the echoes of BHARAT MATA KI JAI !

And what do we do in Shakha? Well, we play games, all sorts of interesting and exciting games like Kho-Kho, Ring-O-Stick, Kabbadi, Guru Chela, Tank, Dog and the Bone. Never heard of these games. Well, they are Bharatiya games, games that came from India. After all the football, basketball, hockey and other games that we play anyway, these games are really refreshing and all of us tremendously enjoy them and look forward to our Saturday evening.

We play games until 6:15 p.m when it is time for 'SARVA MANAGAL MANGALYAM', which is our Prarthana(prayer) to our motherland, BHARAT. After the prayer is over, we disperse to meet again in our Kayalaya at 7:00 p.m, where we learn about Hindu culture and religion. For example, the different incarnations of GOD, Ramayan, Mahabharat, our historical heroes, about our geography, etc. I personally love this class because it is so informative. Living in Hong Kong, we hardly get exposed to our culture and so much is learnt on this Saturday class. Then, we play some sitting and intellectual games finally winding up the Saturday activities by singing 'JAN GAN MAN', our national anthem.

So, what exactly is Shakha? Shakha actually means branch and the name of the organisation is Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh(HSS) which is working for the unity of all Hindus. The HSS is a global group, having lots of shakhas in nearly all around the world. The parent organisation in India has hundreds of thousands of shakhas in India. So, in shakhas worldwide, games are played and knowledge about our culture is gained and in this way, Hindu people of different communities get together as one.

In Hong Kong, the president of HSS is Mananiya Shri G.T.Gul ji and our Saturday shakhas are conducted by Nirmal ji, Manoj ji, Haresh ji, Kamal ji and Dhananjay ji. Each week, we have about 30-35 boys attending our Hong Kong shakha.

I feel that my life has really changed after coming to Shakha. Before that, I didn't think much about our Hindu culture or about Bharat. Now, my ideas and views have changed. After coming to Shakha, I have learnt the greatness of Bharat Mata, the land of the GODS, where GOD himself appears. Also, in Shakhas, the emphasis is always on speaking Hindi and other Indian languages, not on English, which we learn in school anyway. So, every Saturday evening when I go back home, I feel proud of belonging to a country which has one of the oldest and greatest cultures in the world.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jul/Aug/Sept 1999 issue)

INDIGENEOUS BHARTIYA GAMES AND SPORTS - CHESS

Most of the games and sports that we play today have been originated or invented in the west. Even if they are not we assume it to have been originated or invented in the west. But that is not quite true. There are many sports and games that have been originated in Bharat, not today or yesterday but since ancient times. One such game is that we know it nowadays by the name of Chess.

Yes! Chess is the game, which has been played in Bharat since ancient times. It was the favourite indoor game of Bharatiya Kings. It is a games which uses complex mathematics, and which other country could have invented it, none other but Bharat, who gave the science of mathematics to the world.

It is an indoor game played on a Board which has 32 white and 32 black squares. A total of 64 black and white squares which gives aritistic as well geometric looks to the game. It is played by two players and each players has a *Raja* (King), a *Mantri* (Queen), two *Ashwa* (Knights), two *Gaj* (Rook), two *Oonth* (Bishop) and eight *Sipahi* (Pawns). Aim of the game is makes designated moves to defeat or kill the opponent's king. The moves made could be infinite permutations that even computer cannot think off. Imagine, the greatness of those ancient people of Bharat who had developed this interesting game which very much represented to practicalities of those days when pitched battles were fought with armies comprising of infantry (Sipahi or foot soldiers), *Cavalary* (horseback soldiers), *Gaj-sena* (elephants back soldiers), *Oonthh* (camelback soldiers), and wits of army commanders involved. Since the army consist of 4 varieties, it was called as *'chaturangi saina'*, that means four-pronged army. The game was therefore, also called as '**Chaturang**'. Apart from playing this game on the board, kings in ancient times also use to play 'live' game of chaturang in their courts.

In the passage of time, our country became slave to arabs and mughals. Who also use to play the game of 'Chaturang' very passionately. Since they were foreigners, speaking in arabic and persian languages, were

not able to pronounce sanskrit words correctly. Therefore, the mal-pronounciation took place and the chaturang gradually became to be called as '**Shatranj**', the present day Hindi word known to many people in Bharat.

Needless to say this game became popular in whole world and first it was played by arab neighbours of Bharat, who called it as 'Shatranj' and later on by Europeans who called it as Chess.

To show that west is superior, they have made new international rules of playing chess which are modified from our basic ancient rules of the game.

It is the wittiest of all the games, in which there is no slice of luck involved but only the brain, which makes one win the game. Vishwanathan Anand of Bharat is the current World Grand Master of Chess or Chaturang. This is our own indegineous game, which is now played by whole world and we should feel proud of it. We should call this game by our indegineous name of '**Chaturang**'.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jan/Feb/Mar 2001 issue)

Koreans Search for Roots in Ayodhya

Source: Vinay Krishna Rastogi, Lucknow

A high-power delegation from South Korea visited Ayodhya to revive two millennia-old ties with the temple town. The South Koreans discovered that a Princess of Ayodhya was married to Korean King Suro in the first century CE.

Suro was the King of Kimhay kingdom or the present Korea. The Princess was married to the Korean King at the age of 16. The Koreans believe that the Princess was the mother of the descendants who unified various Korean kingdoms in AYODHYA the 7th century CE. Since the first century CE, her descendants

prospered and became the largest clan in Korea, known as the Karak, whose members had been highly distinguished people.

The present President of South Korea Kim Dae-Jung believes that he is also a descendant of the Great Princess of Ayodhya. She is regarded as the most blessed queen of Korea in the last 2,000 years, and Koreans believe that this could be due to the religious significance of the great temple city of Ayodhya where Lord Rama was born. The Counsel General of Korea said "I hope historians will be able to learn more about this great ancient Hindu city." He urged the ex-Raja of Ayodhya BPN Misra to strengthen the cultural ties between Ayodhya and South Korea.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Apr/May/Jun 2003 issue)

Russians seek solace in Bharatiya gurukula

by Probir Sengupta

While the majority of Indians are moving away from their traditional Bharatiya cultural ethos and take pride in their children being students of West-modelled convent schools, the westerners themselves seek solace in the ancient Bharatiya gurukulas. One such example is Moscow Bhaktivedanta Gurukula being run by International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON). Pervaded with the complete ancient Bharatiya gurukula ambience, the school teaches not religious beliefs, but behaviour and philosophy. Seeing students sitting cross-legged on the floor— with girl students having long braids and boys shaved heads and shikhas, one cannot imagine that he is in a regular Moscow school. The students rise to greet a newcomer with their hands clasped in the prayer form of pranam. In the classrooms, small groups of students study beneath brightly colored posters of Hindu deities, woven tapestries and home made art. It is worth mentioning that there is no tuition fee in the school.

An accredited Russian school, the gurukula is named after the founder of ISKON Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. At a time when Russia is passing through a phase of gloomy fiscal scenario, schools are not left without being influenced from the social degrading environs. While the schools in Russia are afflicted with such social ills as drugs, alcohol, violence, etc., the gurukula extends a curing hand by teaching the children about spirituality and behaviour right from the beginning. According to a report in Moscow Times (15-4-2003), the school's major benefactor and chairman of its board of directors, Sanjeet Kumar Jha claims, "We try to help Russians who are from broken houses, from orphanages, not only materially, but to help them be happy for a life time."

The gurukula is from preschool to grade 11 and classes there are held in Russian. Although emphasis on English instruction is also laid on as it is started from preschool level. No wonder the gurukula excels other schools. The gurukula has been educating students for 12 years using a curriculum that includes classes on ancient Indian culture, literature and philosophy, Sanskrit and traditional South Asian instruments. The school, meeting the Russian state standards, is a unique mix of ancient and modern education, as the school lays emphasis on Information Technology seriously, which is included in the curricula right from the fifth grade. The highlight of the school is high academic standards with equal emphasis on spirituality.

The gurukula has students from several different faiths: Hindu, Muslim, Russian Orthodox, etc. Except for two Indians all the students are Russians. "Seeing how well the students were performing, the denizens of the school's nearby area migrated their children to the gurukula," points out school director Irina Yakimechko, who became a Hare Krishna after marrying a devotee. For this, credit goes to strict discipline adhered to in the gurukula, which seeks purity of mind by following four rules: no gambling, no intoxicating, no meat and no illicit sex.

Although the gurukula is prospering today, it had to overcome a lot of obstacles initially. According to Moscow Times report, "Jha pointed out that getting accredition from the Education Ministry was extremely difficult at first because the government was suspicious of the school's uncommon agenda. But the Ministry has since leased it a small green-and-white building and provides a little money." The bulk of school's support comes from charity, largely from Moscow's Indian community and Russian Hare Krishna. It is to be noted that today there are more than 100,000 devotees of Hare Krishna in 20 Russian cities.

The success story of this gurukula should be a lesson to the Indian 'secular' 'liberals' who find fault with everything associated with glorious Indian past but would hanker after it, once recognized and acclaimed in the West.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Apr/May/Jun 2003 issue)

DID YOU KNOW???

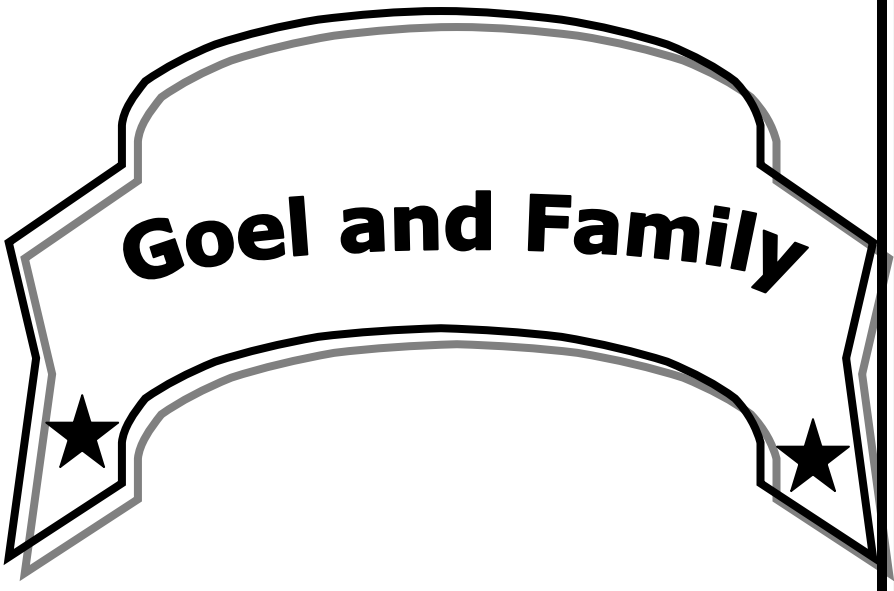
DIAMONDS WERE FIRST MINED IN INDIA

Knowledge of diamonds started in India, where it was first mined. The word most generally used for diamond in Sanskrit is transliterated as "vajra", which means thunderbolt, and "indrayudha" which means Indra's weapon. Because Indra is the warrior god from Vedic scriptures, the foundation of Hinduism, the thunderbolt symbol indicates much about the Indian conception of diamond.

Early descriptions of diamond date to the 4th century BC. By then, diamond was a valued material. The earliest known reference to diamond is a Sanskrit manuscript by a minister in a northern Indian dynasty. The work is dated from 320-296 BCE.

(This article appeared in Sandesh Bharati Jan/Feb/Mar 2003 issue)

Best Wishes from:



There is no crowning ceremony for the Lion in the forest. Simply by virtue of its own strength, it is declared the king of animals.

Annie Wood Besant :

"After a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect ,none so scientific, none so philosophical and none so spiritual than the great religion known by the name of Hinduism. Make no mistake, without Hinduism, India has no future. Hinduism is the soil in to which India's roots are stuck and torn out of that she will inevitably wither as a tree torn out from its place. And if Hindus do not maintain Hinduism who shall save it? If India's own children do not cling to her faith who shall guard it. India alone can save India and India and Hinduism are one. "

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NRI leads Mars rovers software team

(SIFY NEWS, 12/01/04)

Indian American computer engineer Kanna Rajan led a team of scientists to develop software that enabled America's Spirit rover to land on the red planet. As soon as the Mars Exploration Rovers leave their landers, they will be confronted with completing hundreds of manoeuvres and scientific tasks.

The order in which they do these tasks will be decided by computer software developed by a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) team led by Rajan. Rajan said the team sometimes worked 16- to 18-hour days on the software that will allow NASA technicians to programme the rovers with each day's set of instructions. Instructions include driving around the planet and scooping up Martian rocks to run experiments on them.

"There's a fair amount of risks," Rajan said. "You can damage the arm, you can damage the rover, and that's the end of the mission," he was quoted as saying in the Star-Telegram, a daily published from Texas. Rajan said when the mission gets over he would like to spend more time with his wife and their three-year-old daughter. Rajan is a 1990 University of Texas computer science and engineering master's graduate and now a principal investigator and senior scientist at NASA Ames Research Centre in Moffett Field, California.

Spirit, the first of the rovers, is already on Mars and should be deployed in a few days. When it is, Rajan and a subset of his team will be in the main control room preparing to command the rover with their software, according to the University of Texas, (UTA) Arlington College of Engineering.

Rajan, 41, likened the rover's tasks to collecting and placing hundreds of items in a bag. The software examines the items

and decides the order and placement of items to achieve the best collection, based on scientific importance, location and time and resources available. Rajan said he and his NASA Ames and Jet Propulsion Laboratory team worked three "very difficult years on this effort, but it's exhilarating to get to this point, ready for surface mission operations, which is really what this mission is about".

Their software, called MAPGEN (Mixed-Initiative Activity Plan GENerator), for building activity plans with complex constraints and dependencies will be the first published artificial intelligence-based system to command a rover on another planet.

Opportunity, the second rover, is scheduled to arrive on Mars on January 24. Each rover carries five scientific instruments and a grinding tool. The rovers will spend at least three months investigating two sites that may have once hosted liquid water, which scientists consider a prerequisite for life.

Rajan says he learned the fundamentals of artificial intelligence – and concepts he built into the rover's software - at the University of
Texas-Arlington.

Spirit has sent back the highest-resolution colour photos ever taken on the surface of the red planet. The 385-pound rover is equipped with a mechanical arm and other tools for experiments.

IANS
http://headlines.sify.com/3002news3.html?headline=NRI~leads~Mars~rovers~software~team

India shining

Writes M.V.Kamath

We are at last coming out of the shadow of colonialism, under which we have lived for over half a century-ever since Independence. As a people, we had lost our self-confidence. Now, India and Indians have regained their self-confidence and are marching confidently into the future determined to take the place that once was theirs in the sixteenth century.

IT may sound a little exaggerated but it is nevertheless true that there are no other people on earth who are more critical of their own country and more contemptuous of their own culture than Indians. It almost seems that their ruling passion is self-hatred. Indians, especially educated Hindus, take special delight in despising Hinduism and constantly running it down and, what is worse, taking immense pleasure in doing so. At a time when the rate of economic growth was hovering around a measly three per cent, one benighted economist even thought it appropriate to dismiss it as the “Hindu Rate of Growth”. One could almost hear him smack his lips as he derided the enterprising spirit of his countrymen-or the lack of it. But times are changing. As the NDA Government is now coming to the end of its term, people's spirit is lifting.

A full-page advertisement in the local English papers said it all. “Our country is prospering. Our lives are changing. Our tomorrow is promising. You’ve never had a better time to shine brighter,” said the text. But the advertisement said something more that is significant. “Across India you can feel a new radiance. The economy is looking up. Industry is upbeat. We are on the threshold of further progress. Prices are stable. Roads are being added.

Highways are being modernised..." And so it went. "India Shining" was how progress was summed up. And no truer words were said. The truth is that we are at last coming out of the shadow of colonialism, under which we have lived for over half a century-ever since Independence. As a people, we had lost our self-confidence.

For years, we had been accustomed to look to the white man for guidance and sustenance. Now we are finally coming into our own That point is well stressed in a special issue of Common Cause brought out by that remarkable social activist, H.D. Shourie. Reading it makes one feel proud to be an Indian. But what is it that is so special about India? Consider some of these facts: We have eighteen major languages. 1,600 'minor' languages and dialects, society is divided into over 6,400 castes and sub-castes, there are 52 major tribes and ethnic groups in our 28 States-and yet we are one united country. We are the largest functioning democracy in the world. In the last general elections, 619 million voters took part in choosing their representatives and they number about 2.5 times the entire population of the United States of America. We have over 5,000 dailies, 16,000 weeklies and more than 6,000 fortnights in various languages. Not many countries can boast of such total freedom of thought and action. Our railway system covers over 1,00,000 km with 700 stations with 11,000 freight and passenger trains plying the country every day carrying over one million passengers, daily.

More graduates come out of our colleges every year than in any other country barring the United States. India's turnover now is of 75,000 Information Technology and two million English-speaking graduates in a year. With the financial support of barely $450 million, we have designed, developed, fabricated and tested our own launch missiles, of which 23 are now in orbit. One hundred major European, American and Japanese companies have set up

their Research, Design and Development laboratories in India during the last five years. We have become the sixth largest manufacturer of medium and heavy commercial vehicles in the world. Over 2.2 million of our buses and trucks travel the length and breadth of our country. We have steered into the automobile map of the world and cars made in India are regularly being exported to countries such as Indonesia, Algeria, Bangladesh, Columbia, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Mexico and even China. Fifteen of the world's automobile manufacturers are now obtaining components from Indian firms. Exports of auto-components last year were worth $375 million. This year they are close to $1.5 billion. A company, which started with the manufacture of a few bicycles in Ludhiana, has now become the largest manufacturer of motor cycles in the world, with an annual output of 17 lakh. Or take the pharmaceutical industry. Presently it is worth $6.5 billion and it has been growing at the rate of 8 to 10 per cent every year. In terms of volume, it is the fourth largest pharma-industry in the world and its exports have crossed the $2 billion mark-that something no one would have dreamt of when India became free.

India is among the three countries in the world, which have built super-computers of their own, the other two being the United States and Japan. We have now reached the stage where we can produce Param Super Computers that are the envy of even American engineers. In the sixties India was going abegging for food and financial aid. Today we have not only loaned $300 million to the International Monetary Fund but are actively aiding 11 developing countries. While once we were importing wheat to feed our starving population, today we are exporting foodgrains and our storage bins are overflowing.

In the field of education, the number of upper primary schools has increased from 13,596 in 1950-51 to 1,95,000 in the current year. The number of higher

secondary schools and junior colleges has increased from 7,416 in 1950-51 to 1,07,500 in 2003. True, our population has grown over three times during the last half a century but in setting up schools and colleges, India has outdone its own record. Wealth is being created all the while. According to the World Wealth Report, there are over 50,000 high-net-worth individuals with financial assets of more than one million dollars, presently, in India. Even more significantly, there are 200,000 millionaires of Indian origin in the United States alone. And that means that one in every nine Indians in the US is a millionaire-which is hard to believe!

India is rapidly emerging as a global power in Information Technology and as one of the largest generators of expertise of software in the world. In the IT industry of India, revenues in the software sector have grown more than ten times from $50 million in 1988-89 to over $6.5 billion. In another decade, India expects to emerge as an IT Super Power. The annual growth in the software industry is over 50 per cent-which is something of a record.

Not even China, whose productive capacity India was once afraid of, can beat us now. India-and Indians-have regained their self-confidence and are marching confidently into the future determined to take the place that once was theirs in the sixteenth century. And may it be stated that much of this progress was made in just the last five years-the five years that the NDA government has been in power. And what is more, this is just the beginning. There is no stopping India come what may and in another fifteen years it should surprise no one if the country becomes a Great Power, if not a Super Power, in its own right. Brightly shines India as time flies by. Let the world beware.

READERS COLUMN

We received your OCT/NOV/DEC issue and we appreciate your cover story on Maharaja Ranjit Singh. We will put these in our library. Thanks for your efforts

- **KHALSA DIWAN, (SIKH TEMPLE) HONG KONG**

Regarding "ENGLISH IS NOT THE KEY TO A NATION'S PROSPERITY II" (OCT/NOV/DEC), it was a wonderful piece. I am deeply touched by its powerful message. It is something that we experience daily, but hardly write about. We would be interested to use its translation in our weekly newspaper. My congratulations to the author.

- **TARUN VIJAY,**
Editor, Panchjanya newspaper, India

Regarding "ENGLISH IS NOT THE KEY TO A NATION'S PROSPERITY II" (OCT/NOV/DEC), the article reminded me of my own past. After studying Hindi for a few years in Dubai, I shifted to an international school in India at the age of 15. Prior to my arrival in India, I thought I needed to know and practice Hindi frequently. But it bomb shelled me as everybody there, be it foreigners or even local Indians, always spoke to each other in English. Likewise no work was done in Hindi in my school. In short, there was no need for me to even be acquainted with our common language and I stopped bothering about even trying to communicate in Hindi

with others. Living 3 years in India, I was surely able to speak the basic Hindi needed to survive, but that's it.

However the problem arose when I came to study at the university in Australia. I noticed that the most common thing between all nationalities was that they communicated with each other in their own language. Only we Indians were the exception. We always spoke in English. My friends and I too belonged to this class. Whenever we met each other, we would speak to each other in English. We all imagined that if we spoke in Hindi, we would be laughed at.

However, we soon overcame our misgivings and thought to ourselves that everyone around us were speaking in their native language and were not being mocked at, so why should we Indians speak in a foreign language? With this attitude in mind, a few of us began communicating in Hindi. After a few days and then weeks, the number of people speaking Hindi increased. Now that our group has become much bigger, it has started to feel much more like staying at home rather than being in a foreign country.

My Hindi is still not perfect, but gradually I am becoming more confident speaking it. My appeal to all Indians is that they should make an attempt to speak in Hindi. Even though their grammar may not be good, but still they must make a genuine attempt to speak it, and in this way they will be able to gain mastery over our national language.

- **NINAAD KARVE,**
Melbourne, Australia

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दिल्ली में दूसरा प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मेलन

हम भारत के, भारत हमारा

--विनीता गुप्ता

वर्षों पहले दुनिया के दूरदराज देशों में अपने साथ भारत की खुशबू ले जाने वाले भारतवंशी एक बार फिर भारत की धरती पर लौटे। 9 जनवरी, 2004 को नई दिल्ली के आसमान पर भारतवंशियों की इंद्रधनुषी छटा छायी हुई थी। 61 देशों से 1,500 से ज्यादा भारतवंशी द्वितीय प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस समारोह में शामिल हुए। नई दिल्ली के इंदिरा गांधी इनडोर स्टेडियम की हवा में एक ही अनुभूति हवा में तैर रही थी- 'भारतवासी और प्रवासी आओ साथ चलें...'। प्रधानमंत्री ने इस प्रयास को भारतवासियों और भारतवंशियों के बीच 'जुगलबंदी' कहा। निश्चित ही यह जुगलबंदी सन् 2020 के परम वैभवशाली भारत की दिशा में नया उद्घोष है।

तीन दिवसीय प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस समारोह का पहला सोपान इंदिरा गांधी इनडोर स्टेडियम में प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी द्वारा दीप प्रज्वलन के साथ हुआ। दिए की लौ के साथ ही विशाल सभागार में गूंज उठे वायलिन और सारंगी के स्वर। देश के सुप्रसिद्ध वायलिन वादन और व्यवसाय से चिकित्सक डा. एल. सुब्रह्मण्यम् और सांरगी वादक उस्ताद सुल्तान खान की अनूठी जुगलबंदी ने उपस्थितजन को भाव विभोर कर दिया। अतिथियों का स्वागत करते हुए समारोह आयोजन समिति के अध्यक्ष और सांसद डा. लक्ष्मीमल्ल सिंघवी ने कहा कि भारतवासी और भारतवंशियों के मिलन से एक नए वैश्विक भारत का उदय हुआ है। यह भारत के विश्व में सांस्कृतिक, बौद्धिक और आर्थिक महाशक्ति बनने का संकेत है।

भारत का विकास पथ किस प्रकार महाशक्ति बनने का संकेत दे रहा है, इसका उल्लेख विदेश मंत्री श्री यशवंत सिन्हा ने अपने भाषण में किया। दक्षेस शिखर सम्मेलन के बहाने भारत-पाकिस्तान संबंधों पर जमी बर्फ पिघलने की चर्चा करते हुए उन्होंने वैश्विक स्तर पर भारत की बढ़ती साख का उल्लेख

किया। इस वित्त वर्ष में भारत की सकल घरेलू उत्पाद दर 8.4 प्रतिशत रही, हमारे पास सौ अरब अमरीकी डालर से ज्यादा विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार है, हमारे भंडारों में अतिरिक्त अन्न है, मुद्रास्फीति नियंत्रण में है, व्यापार जगत फल-फूल रहा है और सबसे बड़ी बात है, भारत का ठप्पा लगी वस्तुओं की मांग बढ़ रही है। निश्चित रूप से शीघ्र ही भारत विश्व की तीसरी सबसे बड़ी आर्थिक शक्ति बन जाएगा। लोगों के चेहरों पर भारतीय होने का गर्व और 'अच्छा अहसास' साफ झलक रहा है।

अपने उद्घाटन भाषण में प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी ने कहा कि भारतीय वैश्विक परिवार के हम सभी सदस्य मिलकर भारत को उसका प्राचीन गौरव वापस दिलाएंगे। वैश्विक आकाश पर भारत का उदय हो चुका है। कल तक क्या कोई सोच सकता था जो भारतीय साठ-सत्तर के दशक में दस से भी कम डालर लेकर अमरीका गए थे, एक दिन उन अमरीकी भारतीयों की आय आम अमरीकी नागरिक से 50 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा होगी। क्या कोई सोच सकता था कि प्रवासी भारतीयों द्वारा भेजी गयी 55,000 करोड़ रुपए की राशि में से आधी राशि सिर्फ एक ही राज्य केरल से गए 25 लाख प्रवासी भारतवासियों द्वारा भेजी जाएगी? एक समय था जब भारत दूसरों से सहायता को मोहताज था, आज भारत दूसरों की सहायता करने वाला देश बन गया है। एक समय वह भी था, जब भारत का प्रतिभावान युवा पलायन कर पश्चिम की ओर जाता था, आज बड़ी संख्या में योग्य, प्रतिभावान युवा भारत को अवसरों और उपलब्धियों की जमीन के रूप में देख रहे हैं। विदेशी कम्पनियां भारत में आ रही हैं।

इस अवसर पर प्रधानमंत्री ने घोषणा की कि यदि भारतीय उद्योगपति चाहें तो अपनी सौ प्रतिशत पूंजी विदेशों में निवेश कर सकते हैं, उन पर लगा १ अरब डालर की सीमा का बंधन हटाया जाता है। इसी प्रकार भारतीय उद्योगपतियों के लिए वैश्विक स्तर पर कृषि क्षेत्र में अपनी पूंजी लगाने पर किसी प्रकार प्रतिबंध नहीं है। प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि वैश्विक माहौल में भारत के पक्ष में हवा बहने लगी है। इसका ताजा उदाहरण इस्लामाबाद में सम्पन्न हुए दक्षेस शिखर सम्मेलन में देखा जा सकता है।

भारतवंशियों के समक्ष प्रधानमंत्री ने वर्ष 2003 के प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मेलन में किये वादों के पूरा होने की घोषणा की। इनमें पहला वादा था, दोहरी नागरिकता का प्रावधान! उल्लेखनीय है कि गत वर्ष नागरिकता कानून में एक संशोधन द्वारा 16 देशों में बसे प्रवासी भारतीयों को दोहरी नागरिकता की सुविधा दी गई थी। ये देश हैं -अमरीका, कनाडा, ब्रिटेन, हालैण्ड, इटली, आयरलैण्ड, पुर्तगाल, स्विटजरलैण्ड, मिस्र, साइप्रस, इस्त्रायल, आस्ट्रेलिया, न्यूजीलैण्ड, फ्रांस, स्वीडन और फिनलैण्ड। इसके अलावा खाड़ी में बसे भारतीयों के लिए अनिवार्य प्रवासी भारतीय बीमा योजना का प्रावधान भी एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है।खाड़ी और दाक्षिण पूर्वी एशियाई देशों में बसे भारतीय श्रमिकों के भारत में रह रहे बच्चों के लिए शिक्षा संस्थाओं में आरक्षण प्रधानमंत्री की एक महत्वपूर्ण घोषणा है।

प्रधानमंत्री ने नई दिल्ली में एक प्रवासी भारतीय केन्द्र की स्थापना की भी घोषणा की, जिसके लिए 25 करोड़ रुपया केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा दिया जाएगा। इस केन्द्र का संचालन स्वायत्तशासी निकाय द्वारा किया जाएगा।

युवा भारतवंशियों को भारत से जोड़ने के उद्देश्य से भारत सरकार ने हर साल विभिन्न देशों के 50 भारतवंशी युवाओं को दो सप्ताह के लिए भारत में आमंत्रित करने का फैसला किया है। इस वर्ष 20 युवा दो सप्ताह के लिए भारत आए हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री ने बड़े गर्व से प्रवासियों भारतीयों के साथ हुए अनुभव बाटंते हुए कहा, 'मैंने उन्हें यह कहते हुए सुना-भारतीय होने के लिए इससे बेहतर समय कोई नहीं था, भारत में रहने के लिए इससे बेहतर समय कोई नहीं है।

इस अवसर पर प्रधानमंत्री ने 12 भारतवंशियों को प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मान से अलंकृत किया। सम्मान स्वरूप उन्हें सम्मान पत्र और स्वर्ण पदक प्रदान किया गया।

कार्यक्रम में विशिष्ट अतिथि के रूप में उपस्थित गुयाना के राष्ट्रपति श्री भारत जगदेव ने सभी सम्मान प्राप्तकर्ताओं की ओर से स्वीकारोक्ति भाषण में कहा कि दुनिया में बसे लाखों भारतवंशियों के दिलों में आज भी भारत जीवित है। श्री जगदेव ने कहा कि आज सम्पूर्ण विश्व का भारतीय सभ्यता और संस्कृति को समझने का समय आ गया है। मुझे गर्व है कि मेरे पूर्वज भारतीय थे। इन्हीं भारतीय संस्कारों ने हमें परिवार में रहना और त्याग करना सिखाया। हम सबका कर्तव्य है कि अपने बच्चों को भारतीय संस्कृति से परिचित कराएं। बेहतर विश्व बनाने में भारतवंशियों का बहुत बड़ा योगदान है। भारत विश्व में अहिंसा और शांति का प्रसारक है। इसे सुरक्षा परिषद् में स्थान मिलना ही चाहिए। इस दिशा में संवाद शुरू हो गया है।

उद्घाटन समारोह की समाप्ति पर भारतीय वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग परिसंघ (फिक्की) के अध्यक्ष श्री योगेन्द्र कुमार मोदी ने उपस्थित जन को धन्यवाद ज्ञापित करते हुए कहा कि प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मेलन भारत और भारतवंशियों के बीच एक 'वेब लिंक' है। इसके जरिए हम सब एक-दूसरे से जुड़े हैं। एक संजाल स्थापित हुआ है। उद्घाटन समारोह के बाद विभिन्न चर्चा सत्रों का सिलसिला शुरू हुआ। इनमें विशेष था युवाओं पर आयोजित सत्र। जिसकी अध्यक्षता सांसद ज्योतिरादित्य सिंधिया ने की। सत्र को केन्द्रीय विनिवेश एवं संचार मंत्री श्री अरुण शौरी ने विशेष रूप से संबोधित किया। इस चर्चा सत्र में विभिन्न देशों के ९ प्रतिनिधियों ने भावी भारत के सपने और उसे सच करने के मार्ग पर चर्चा की। विज्ञान भवन में आयोजित विभिन्न चर्चा सत्रों के अलावा आकर्षण का विषय था, वहां लगी प्रदर्शनी में विभिन्न मंडप।

संध्या समय आयोजित सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों में दर्शकों ने जहां भारतीय संगीत का आनंद लिया, वहीं कैरिबियाई देशों-त्रिनिदाद, टोबौगो के चटनी सोका और कैलिप्सो की संगीत लहरियों में श्रोता झूम उठे। १० जनवरी को इंदिरा गांधी इंडोर स्टेडियम में आयोजित भारतीय श्रृंगार परम्परा कार्यक्रम में भारत की समृद्ध विरासत के दर्शन हुए। तीन दिवसीय इस सम्मेलन में दूर देशों से आए भारतवंशी यह अहसास करा गए कि हम भारत के, भारत हमारा। ■

आंखें नम हुईं और गला भर आया

जब सभागार में भारतीय मूल की अमरीकी अंतरिक्ष यात्री स्वर्गीय श्रीमती कल्पना चावला को प्रवासी सम्मान देने की घोषणा हुई और उनके पति श्री जे.पी. हैरिसन यह सम्मान ग्रहण करने मंच पर आए तो सभागार में उपस्थित हजारों लोग भारत की इस बहादुर बेटी के सम्मान में खड़े हो गए। सभी आंखें नम थीं और गला भर आया था।

हमारे दिल में सदा रहता है भारत

-भार्गव दम्पत्ति, *वाशिंगटन*

वाशिंगटन से आये भार्गव दम्पत्ति इस आयोजन से बेहद आहलादित थे। वे कहते हैं, 'हमारे दिल में भारत हमेशा ही रहता है।' चार्टर्ड फाइनेंशियल सलाहकार श्रीमती योगनिद्रा भार्गव को भारत आकर लगा कि जो चीज हम बाहर देखते रहते हैं, वह सब अब भारत में है। 40 साल पहले भारत से गए श्री योग भार्गव का मानना है कि इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रम से भारतवंशियों में भारत के प्रति प्रेमभाव बढ़ेगा। श्री भार्गव ने भारत के युवाओं के लिए एक उद्यमी प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम शुरू किया है ताकि भारतीय युवा अच्छे उद्यमी बनें।

अपार संभावनाओं का देश है भारत

-लार्ड मेघनाथ देसाई

सदस्य, हाउस आफ लार्ड्स, इंग्लैण्ड

यू.के. में हाउस आफ लार्ड के सदस्य और जाने-माने अर्थशास्त्री लार्ड मेघनाद देसाई लंदन स्कूल आफ इकनामिक्स से एक लम्बे आरसे तक जुड़े रहे। इस वर्ष प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मान से अलंकृत लार्ड देसाई धाराप्रवाह हिन्दी में बातचीत करते हुए कहते हैं कि भारतवासी और भारतवंशी सरकारी हस्तक्षेप के बिना स्वाभाविक ढंग से एक-दूसरे के लिए जो कर सकें, वह उन्हें करना चाहिए। प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस के माध्यम से अनेक संभावनाएं बनी हैं। यहां व्यापार के बहुत अच्छे अवसर हैं और भारतीय भी अपने व्यापार विदेशों में स्थापित कर सकते हैं। भारत में इतनी अच्छी कम्पनियां हैं कि उन्हें मौका मिले

तो वे विश्व बाजार में छा जाएंगी। लार्ड देसाई भारत को तेजी से उभरती आर्थिक महाशक्ति, महान लोकतंत्र, महान समाज के रूप में देखते हैं।

नई दिल्ली में सम्पन्न हुआ भारतवंशियों का सम्मेलन
विश्वभर में अपनी मेहनत और कौशल का सिक्का जमा चुके भारतवंशियों का अनूठा संगम



सम्मेलन के मंच पर प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी और उप प्रधानमंत्री श्री लालकृष्ण आडवाणी के साथ प्रवासी सम्मान से अलंकृत दस भारतवंशी। (बाएं से) सर्वश्री कनक खीमजी, लार्ड नवनीत ढोलकिया, श्रीदत्त रामफल, उज्जल दोसांझ, मनु चंदरिया, अनिरुद्ध जगन्नाथ, हरि एन. हरिलीला, प्रो. फातिमा मीर, एस. सामिवेलु एवं रजत गुप्ता

मुट्ठी में आकाश!

विनीता गुप्ता

विदेश में देश की शान बढ़ायी, भारत की पहचान
सदा हमारे दिल में बसते, कैसे कहें मेहमान
दूर-दूर जाकर भी भूल न पाए, भारत मां का प्यार
इस मिट्टी की गंध बिखेरी, सात समंदर पार
भारत माता के बेटों का, भारत में सत्कार
जब जी चाहे, तब आ जाना, सदा खुले हैं द्वार!

प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के इन शब्दों में पूरा भारत बोल रहा था, भारतवंशियों पर प्यार ममता उड़ेल रहा था। ये भारतवंशी जहां-जहां गए अपने साथ भारतीय धरोहर लेकर गए और लौटे तो भारत के लिए गौरव बनकर। महात्मा गांधी से लेकर आज तक यह परम्परा अनवरत चली आ रही है। इसका प्रमाण था 9,10 और 11 जनवरी 2003 को नई दिल्ली में सम्पन्न हुआ भारतवंशियों का पहला सम्मेलन। जनवरी की कड़कड़ाती ठंड और कोहरे में जैसे एक नए भारत के दर्शन हो रहे थे। प्रकाशमान भारत, समृद्ध भारत, दूर देशों तक फैला भारत! 110 देशों में बसे 2 करोड़ भारतवंशियों में से 60 देशों के 1900 भारतवंशी इस सम्मेलन में आए। भारत से जुड़ने की ललक, भारतीय होने का गर्व उनके चेहरे पर साफ झलक रहा था।

सम्मेलन क्या, पूरा एक कुम्भ पर्व जैसा माहौल लग रहा था। नयी दिल्ली में प्रगति मैदान के कामा गाटामारू सभागार (हाल नं. 11 को दिया गया नया नाम) के बाहर सुबह साढ़े आठ बजे से ही प्रवासियों का आना शुरू हो गया था। साढ़े दस बजते-बजते सभागार खचाखच भर चुका था और बहुत सारे बाहर खड़े लोग भीतर जाने की प्रतीक्षा में थे। अनेक केन्द्रीय मंत्रियों के साथ विभिन्न राज्यों के मुख्यमंत्री और अनेक विशिष्टजन भी सम्मेलन के उद्घाटन समारोह में शामिल हुए। प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी ने दीप प्रज्ज्वलित कर सम्मेलन का विधिवत् उद्घाटन किया और उसके बाद सभागार दो भारत रत्नों,

उस्ताद बिस्मिल्ला खान और पं. रविशंकर की जुगलबंदी के स्वार्गिक आनंद में भाव विभोर हो उठा।

विदेशमंत्री श्री यशवन्त सिन्हा ने स्वागत भाषण की शुरुआत में ९ जनवरी के महत्व पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा कि जिस प्रकार महात्मा गांधी ने प्रवासी के रूप में भारत लौटकर भारत को बदल दिया था, गौरव बढ़ाया था, उसी प्रकार प्रवासी भारतीय भारत का गौरव बढ़ाएं। भारतवंशियों को सम्बोधित करते हुए श्री सिन्हा ने आगे कहा, 'आपकी सफलता भारत की सफलता है। आप सफल होंगे तो भारत सफल होगा। आप चाहे किसी भी देश में रहें, कोई भी भाषा बोलें, कोई भी परिधान पहनें, लेकिन फिर भी 'दिल है हिन्दुस्तानी'।

सम्मेलन की आयोजन समिति के अध्यक्ष डा. लक्ष्मीमल्ल सिंघवी ने कार्यक्रम के उद्देश्य पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा, 'भारतवंशियों के साथ मिलकर शुरू हुई हजारों मील लंबी यात्रा का यह पहला कदम है। यह सम्मेलन भारतवासियों और भारतीयों के बीच एक सेतु स्थापित करता है।' डा. सिंघवी ने कहा, 'भारतवंशी भारत के विकास का स्रोत हैं। दूर देशों तक फैला भारतवंश एक सतरंगी इन्द्रधनुष है।

सर अनिरुद्ध जगन्नाथ ने अपने विशिष्ट सम्बोधन में कहा कि भारतीय संस्कृति विश्व में शांति की वाहक हो सकती है। भारतवंशी जहां-जहां गए वहां-वहां उन्होंने भारत की छाप छोड़ी। गुलाम देशों की आजादी में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया। हमारे पूर्वजों ने भोर से गोधूलि वेला तक अपना पसीना बहाकर उन देशों को समृद्ध बनाया। अपने भाषण के अंत में श्री जगन्नाथ ने कहा, 'हमारा इतिहास पर नियंत्रण नहीं हो सकता, लेकिन भविष्य हमारी मुट्ठी है, हमें अपने मार्ग खुद बनाने हैं।'

प्रधानमंत्री श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी ने फिक्की के सहयोग से आयोजित इस समारोह को घर-वापसी की संज्ञा देते हुए कहा, 'आज भारत संभावनाओं का देश है। एक वक्त था जब हमारे लोगों को चाय और रबड़ के बागानों और गन्ने के खेतों में मजदूरों के रूप में ले जाया गया था। उन्हीं मजदूरों ने उन देशों

की किस्मत लिखी और '70 के दशक के बाद विदेशों में गए भारतवंशियों ने जिस तरह उन देशों की आर्थिक, वैज्ञानिक, प्रौद्योगिक प्रगति में योगदान दिया, वह अभिनंदनीय है।'

श्री वाजपेयी ने भारतवंशियों का भारत में पूंजी निवेश के लिए आह्वान करते हुए कहा, 'हम आपको पूरा वातावरण देंगे। हम ढांचागत सुधार कर रहे हैं। आपके साथ मिलकर हम सन् 2020 तक भारत को तेजी से बदल कर ऐसा बना देंगे कि आप खुद भारत लौटना चाहेंगे।' श्री वाजपेयी ने आगे कहा कि भारत के बारे में विदेशों में फैले भ्रमों को दूर करने में भारतवंशी महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे सकते हैं।

अपने भाषण में श्री वाजपेयी ने भारतवंशियों की चिरप्रतीक्षित आकांक्षा पूरी करते हुए उनके लिए दोहरी नागरिकता की घोषणा की और कहा, 'हमें आपका धन ही नहीं, आपकी समृद्धि, आपके समृद्ध अनुभवों की जरूरत है। आप अपने साथ भारत के रंग लेकर गए, अब हम आपको बुलाते हैं, आइए और भारत के कैनवास पर अपनी तूलिका से रंग भर दीजिए।' उद्घाटन समारोह के बाद चर्चा सत्रों का सिलसिला शुरू हुआ। विदेश मंत्री श्री यशवंत सिन्हा के साथ पहले सत्र का विषय था भारत और भारतवंशियों के बीच रचनात्मक सम्बंध। इस सत्र के वक्ताओं में प्रमुख थे ब्रिटेन के हाउस आफ लार्ड्स के सदस्य प्रो. भीखू पारीख, दक्षिण अफ्रीका के सांसद री मेवा रामगोविन, फिजी के पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री श्री महेन्द्र चौधरी, नोबुल पुरस्कार विजेता प्रो. अमर्त्य सेन, श्री रजत गुप्ता, श्री उज्जल दोसांझ, जिम्बाब्वे के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के पूर्व न्यायाधीश न्यायमूर्ति ए.एम. इब्राहीम, और प्रो. फातिमा मीर आदि। श्री यशवन्त सिन्हा ने कहा कि भारत अगर समृद्ध है तो धन की वजह से नहीं, बल्कि अपने प्रतिभाशाली लोगों की वजह से है। लेकिन इस प्रतिभा का उपयोग व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर हो रहा है, यदि सामूहिक रूप से ये प्रतिभाएं हाथ मिलाकर भारत के लिए आगे बढ़ें तो भारत निश्चित रूप से आगे बढ़ेगा।

केन्द्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी ने भारत की प्राचीन वैज्ञानिक परम्परा का उल्लेख करते हुए विश्व के लिए भारत के

योगदान को रेखांकित किया और बताया कि भारत की वैज्ञानिक प्रतिभाओं ने करिश्मा किया है। यदि आज एंथ्रेक्स और एड्स की सस्ती दवाएं भारत विदेशों को निर्यात कर पा रहा है तो यह यहां के चिकित्सा वैज्ञानिकों का ही कमाल है। डा. जोशी ने गांव-गांव में छुपी प्रतिभाओं की तकनीकी और वैज्ञानिक मेधा की चर्चा करते हुए नवसर्जकों को भारतवंशियों के समक्ष रेखांकित किया।

वित्तमंत्री श्री जसवंत सिंह के साथ एक विशेष सत्र में व्यापार संभावनाओं पर चर्चा हुई। श्री जसवंत सिंह ने भारतवंशियों के समक्ष भारत की आर्थिक स्थिति बयान करते हुए कहा, 'अब वह दिन दूर नहीं, जब भारत सिर्फ 'सर्विस सेंटर' नहीं, उत्पादन का प्रमुख केन्द्र बन जाएगा और यह दस साल में संभव हो सकता है।

10 जनवरी को उप प्रधानमंत्री श्री लालकृष्ण आडवाणी और सर विद्याधर नायपाल के साथ एक विशेष सत्र का आयोजन किया गया। सत्र शुरू होने से पहले श्री आडवाणी ने एक अंतःक्षेत्र का उद्घाटन किया। यह अंतःक्षेत्र भारतवंशियों को आपस में और भारत के साथ जोड़ सकेगा। इसके माध्यम से वे अपने सुझाव दे सकेंगे। अपने भाषण में श्री लालकृष्ण आडवाणी ने भारतवासियों और भारतवंशियों के बीच जुगलबंदी का आह्वान करते हुए कुछ देशों में रह रहे **भारतवंशियों को दी गई दोहरी नागरिकता के बारे में भ्रम का निवारण करते हुए इसके दो कारण बताए-पहला, उस देश में भी दोहरी नागरिकता का प्रावधान होना चाहिए। दूसरा, आंतरिक सुरक्षा।** श्री आडवाणी ने २१वीं शताब्दी को भारत की शताब्दी बनाने की बात दोहराते हुए कहा कि हम वचन लें कि सन् 2020 तक भारत की गिनती विकासशील नहीं, बल्कि विकसित देशों में हो। हमें इसके लिए मिलकर प्रयास करने होंगे।

इन सत्रों के अतिरिक्त प्रगति मैदान में एक साथ कई समांतर चर्चा सत्रों का आयोजन किया गया, जिनमें केन्द्रीय पर्यटन मंत्री श्री जगमोहन के साथ भाषा, साहित्य, पर्यटन पर चर्चा हुई। सेवा कार्यों, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी, सूचना एवं जैव प्रौद्योगिकी, स्वास्थ्य एवं औषधि, मनोरंजन एवं प्रसार माध्यम आदि क्षेत्रों पर विभिन्न चर्चा सत्रों में इन क्षेत्रों के देश-विदेश के जाने-माने लोगों ने अपने

विचार रखे। मीडिया पर चर्चा सत्र में सूचना एवं प्रसारण मंत्री श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज और स्वास्थ्य पर चर्चा में श्री शत्रुघ्न सिन्हा ने भाग लिया।

सम्मेलन के दौरान तीनों दिनों की शामें यादगार बन गईं। दिल्ली के इंदिरा गांधी इनडोर स्टेडियम में आयोजित सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों में नए और पुराने फिल्मी कलाकारों ने हजारों दर्शकों का मनोरंजन किया। सम्मेलन के अंतिम दिन ११ जनवरी की शाम को विजय चौक पर घोष वादन की ध्वनियों के बीच भारतवंशियों को भावभीनी विदाई दी गई। और दिन ढलते ही साउथ ब्लाक और नार्थ ब्लाक नन्हें, नन्हें बल्बों की रोशनी से जगमगा उठे।

जब अंग्रेज ने मेरा बैग उठाया

-लार्ड नवनीत ढोलकिया

सदस्य, हाउस आफ लार्ड्स, ब्रिटेन

29 अक्तूबर, 1997 को श्री नवनीत ढोलकिया ब्रिटिश संसद के उच्च सदन हाउस आफ लार्ड्स के लिए चुने गए थे। उस दिन की एक कहानी सुनाते हुए वे कहते हैं, 'जब मैं हाउस आफ लार्ड्स में पहुंचा तो मेरे एक अंग्रेज मित्र ने कहा, 'लाइए अपना बैग मुझे पकड़ा दीजिए', मैंने उसे अपना बैग थमा दिया। मेरे होठों पर आयी मुस्कान देख वह बोला, 'आप मुस्कुरा क्यों रहे हैं?' इस पर मैंने कहा, 'इसलिए नहीं मुस्कुरा रहा कि आपने मेरा बैग उठाया, तो मेरा बोझ कम हो गया। बल्कि इसलिए मुस्कुरा रहा हूं, क्योंकि मेरे मन में एक संतोष का भाव है। २५० साल पहले हमारे पूर्वजों ने आपका बैग उठाया था, आज आपने मेरा बैंग उठाया, आज हम बराबर हो गए।' प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मान ग्रहण करने के बाद उन्होंने कहा कि यह सम्मान मेरे लिए उस आर्डर आफ ब्रिटिश अम्पायर से भी ज्यादा बड़ा है, जो ब्रिटेन की महारानी ने मुझे दिया था।

उन्होंने आगे कहा, 'मुझे ब्रिटिश नागरिक होने का गर्व है तो भारतीय होने का गर्व उससे कहीं ज्यादा है। भारत हमारे भीतर कितना बसा है, इसका सबूत अगर कोई दिया जा सकता है तो हम भी दे सकते हैं। याद आता है हनुमान जी को जब किसी ने अपनी स्वामिभक्ति का प्रमाण देने के लिए कहा था तो

उन्होंने अपना सीना चीर कर दिखा दिया था कि उसमें राम और सीता की तस्वीर ही है। अगर कोई हम प्रवासियों से भारत-प्रेम का सबूत मांगे, हम सीना चीरें तो यकीन मानिए यहां भारत का नक्शा ही देखने को मिलेगा।'।□

प्रवासी भारतीयों ने एक स्वर से कहा- भारत की चिंताएं हमारी अपनी चिंताएं हैं

□ चीन के बाद एशिया में अगर किसी देश में 'टाइगर इकानामी' होने की क्षमता है तो वह भारत में है। इस क्षमता का दोहन तभी हो सकता है, जब भारत में माहौल बदले।

-लार्ड आर.के. बागड़ी, ब्रिटेन

□ भारतवंशी महिलाओं की भूमिका को रेखांकित करना चाहिए। अनेक देशों में भारतवंशियों की सफलताओं के पीछे महिलाओं का पसीना है।

-डा. लिन्डा बाबूलाल
अध्यक्ष, सीनेट, त्रिनिदाद- टोबैगा

भारतीय नाम व स्वरूप पर गर्व है

-न्यायमूर्ति आनंद सत्यानंद,लोकायुक्त, न्यूजीलैण्ड

'मेरे पूर्वज 120 वर्ष पहले भारत से गए थे। मेरी दादी मद्रास की थीं और नानी उ.प्र. की। मेरे माता-पिता का जन्म फिजी में हुआ था। हमारा परिवार फिजी से न्यूजीलैण्ड चला गया। मेरा जन्म न्यूजीलैण्ड में ही हुआ। मेरी शिक्षा-दीक्षा भी वहीं हुई।

न्यूजीलैण्ड में भारत को एक मित्र देश की दृष्टि से देखा जाता है। दोनों देशों के बहुत से हित समान है और सहयोग पर आधारित हैं। मैं न्यूजीलैण्ड का निष्ठावान नागरिक हूं पर मुझे अपने भारतीय नाम और भारतीय स्वरूप पर गर्व है। □

2020 क्यों, 2010 क्यों नहीं?

-परविंदर सिंह चंडोक, भारत-ईरान वाणिज्य संघ (मुम्बई) के ईरान स्थित मानद प्रतिनिधि

'मेरे माता-पिता भारत के ही हैं। वे अविभाजित भारत के झेलम (अब पाकिस्तान में) के रहने वाले थे विभाजन के बाद वे भारत आए और यहां से ईरान चले गए। मेरा जन्म ईरान में ही हुआ। अब वहां हमारी तीसरी पीढ़ी है। मैं इस समारोह में इसलिए आया हूं क्योंकि हमारा दिल भी एक है और जान भी। इसलिए भारत के विकास के लिए हम हरसंभव सहायता करेंगे। इस अवसर पर हमारे प्रधानमंत्री वाजपेयी जी ने जो कहा, उसने दुनिया में जहां कहीं भी भारतवासी हों, उनका दिल जीत लिया। इससे भारतीयों, प्रवासी भारतीयों के मन में एक नई ऊर्जा का संचार होगा। भारत के बारे में मेरा सपना भी वही है जो भारत के राष्ट्रपति अब्दुल कलाम का है। कलाम साहब ने भारत को महाशक्ति बनाने के लिए सन् 2020 तक लक्ष्य रखा है। पर मैं भगवान से प्रार्थना करता हूं कि हम सन् 2010 में ही इस लक्ष्य को हासिल कर लें। मुझे बहुत खुशी है कि भारत में एक नई जागृति का संचार हो रहा है। भारत सही दिशा में बढ़ रहा है, एक विशिष्ट शक्ति के रूप में उभर रहा है। □

संभावनाओं से भरपूर देश है भारत

■ हरि एन. हरिलीला

संचालक, द हरिलीला ग्रुप, हांगकांग

प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मान पाने वाले हांगकांग के बड़े व्यावसायियों में एक श्री हरि एन. हरिलीला की सफलता की कहानी बड़े कठिन दौर से शुरू होती है। वे बताते हैं, 1930 में हम हांगकांग आए। हमारे पिता बहुत धनवान थे, लेकिन मंदी के कारण हमें बड़े बुरे दिन देखने पड़े। हमने नए सिरे से अपनी किस्मत गढ़नी शुरू की और अपना कपड़े का व्यवसाय शुरू किया। कपड़ा मिल शुरू की। हमारी कंपनी हांगकांग की अग्रणी कपड़ा मिल थी उसके बाद हम होटल व्यवसाय और रियल एस्टेट

व्यवसाय में आ गए। अब दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया के कई देशों, लंदन, मांट्रियल, सिडनी में हमारे होटल हैं।

श्री हरिलीला के भाई श्री बाब एन. हरिलीला भी भारतवंशियों के इस सम्मेलन में भाग लेने आए। भारत आने पर हरिलीला बंधुओं के चेहरों पर एक असीम प्रसन्नता का भाव झलक रहा है। फर्राटे से हिन्दी बोलने वाले श्री बाब हरिलीला कहते हैं, 'यह दस साल पहले होना चाहिए था,ि जससे भारतवंशियों की पूंजी का बड़ा हिस्सा भारत में ही निवेश होता। खैर! 'देर आयम, दुरुस्त आयद यह निश्चित ही मील का पत्थर साबित होगा' कहते हुए श्री बाब अपनी किशोर ... की स्मृतियों में खो जाते हैं। चीन में जन्म लेने के बाद बड़ा हुआ तो 16 साल की उम्र में पहली बार भारत आए थे, और यहां से लौटने के बाद उनके मन में भारत के प्रति घृणा का भाव था, तब मां से कहा था, 'मां मुझे भारतीय होना अच्छा नहीं लगता और मां ने कहा था तुम शीशे में अपनी शक्ल देखों सब कुछ बदल सकते हो लेकिन अपना रंग नहीं बदल सकते। वह तुम्हारे भारतीय होने की पहचान है।' उसके बाद युवा बाब ने भारत और भारतीय संस्कृति का गहन अध्ययन किया और फिर भारत रच-बस गया उनके मन में।' श्री हरि एन. हरिलीला कहते हैं, 'इस सम्मेलन ने भारतवंशियों को भारत में पहचान दी है। जो पहले कभी नहीं हुआ था। इससे युवा पीढ़ी को बहुत प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा। आज हमारी युवा पीढ़ी सोचती है, पूछती है, हम भारत क्यों करें? इस सवाल का जवाब उन्हें इस सम्मेलन में मिल जाएगा। वे अपने भारतवंशी होने पर गर्व कर सकेंगे, भारत को प्यार करेंगे। भारत में ज्यादा से ज्यादा निवेश करेंगे। हममें भारत में रहने वाले भारतीयों से ज्यादा राष्ट्र भक्ति है। हम भारत में सिर्फ अपनी पहचान चाहते हैं। भारत यह माने कि हम उसके अपने हैं। हम जहां कहीं भी जाएं, कहीं भी रहें, लेकिन भारतीय ही रहेंगे। हरिलीला बंधु भारत को संभावनाओं का देश मानते हैं।'□

उन्हें भारत से हिन्दुत्व जोड़ता है

-शंकरराव तत्ववादी

विश्व विभाग प्रमुख, रा.स्व.संघ

भारत के बाहर रहने वाले भारतवंशियों को भारत से जोड़ने के लिए भारत सरकार का यह प्रयास प्रशंसनीय है। भारतवंशियों के सम्बंध में केन्द्रीय मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री डा. मुरली मनोहर जोशी ने अपने सम्बोधन में इन्हें एक विस्तारित परिवार की संज्ञा दी। यह सम्बोधन बहुत अच्छा है। सम्मेलन कई दृष्टि से काफी महत्वपूर्ण कहा जा सकता है। बहुत से लोग पहली बार भारत आए। उनके मन में भारत के प्रति काफी आत्मीयता है। अपने पूर्वजों की धरती पर एक लंबे समय के बाद आने पर उन्हें काफी प्रसन्नता हुई होगी। भारतवंशियों के मन में भारत के प्रति श्रद्धा और आत्मीयता का भाव ही उन्हें भारत से जोड़ता है। ऐसा कह सकते हैं कि भारतीयता की उनकी पहचान ही उन्हें भारत से जोड़ती है। हम इसे हिन्दुत्व भी कह सकते हैं। क्योंकि भारतीयता और हिन्दुत्व दोनों पर्यायवाची ही हैं। यह ठीक है कि भारतीय कहने से भौगोलिकता का अधिक आभास होता है, लेकिन विदेशों में भारतवंशियों की पहचान का सही पर्याय हिन्दुत्व ही है। उनकी भारत के प्रति श्रद्धा और उनकी पहचान को दृढ़ करने के लिए ऐसे सम्मेलनों का महत्व तो है ही। उन्हें बारंबार भारत आने और ठहरने की और अधिक सुविधाएं मिलनी चाहिए। उनके भारत-दर्शन के कार्यक्रम बनाने चाहिए। सरकार ने दोहरी नागरिकता की जो घोषणा की है, उससे इसमें कुछ लाभ हो सकता है। हालांकि दोहरी नागरिकता में सुरक्षा आदि कई प्रश्न भी जुड़े हैं और संभवतः इसीलिए सरकार ने इसमें काफी सावधानी भी बरती है। सभी देशों को यह सुविधा नहीं दी जा रही है।

भारतवंशियों ने विदेशों में अपने कला-कौशल, योग्यता और ज्ञान से काफी प्रतिष्ठा अर्जित की है। वे चाहें तो भारत के लिए बहुत कुछ कर सकते हैं। वे कर भी रहे हैं। इसमें उनके अपने देश का संविधान कोई अड़चन नहीं है। और सबसे बड़ी बात है कि वे अपनी भारतीय संस्कृति की अच्छाइयों से वहां के

समाज को बहुत कुछ दे सकते हैं। वे अपने अनुभवों, अपने विचारों और ज्ञान से भारत को लाभ पहुंचा सकते हैं।□

नया आत्मविश्वास जगाया है

-ब्रह्मभिक्षु, त्रिनिदाद-टोबैगो

प्रवासी भारतीय सम्मेलन ने भारतवंशियों में एक सशक्त ऊर्जा का संचार किया है जो भारत की एक मूल्यवान सम्पत्ति है। भारत सरकार ने यह सम्मेलन आयोजित करके भारतीय पूर्वजों की इन संतानों में एक नए आत्मविश्वास की ज्योति जगाई। ये भारतीय मूल की सन्तानें अपनी प्रतिभा, ज्ञान से भारत मां को सहयोग देने के लिए सदैव लालायित रही हैं। इस सम्मेलन ने एक स्वर्णिम सुअवसर प्रदान किया है। इसके आयोजक प्रशंसा के पात्र हैं।□

हिन्दुस्थानी हैं, हिन्दुस्थानी ही रहेंगे

-बासुदेव बलवंत रूपानी

प्रबंध निदेशक, एपामैक्स लि., जापान

मैंपिछले 34 वर्षों से टोक्यो (जापान) में हूं। बहुत मजे में हूं। हमारा वहां 'इलैक्ट्रानिक्स' तथा 'ब्राडकास्ट इंडस्ट्री' क्षेत्र में अच्छा नाम है। जापान से भारत का सम्बंध कोई नया नहीं है। यह इससे पता चलता है कि वहां 82 वर्ष पहले 'इंडियन मर्चेंट ऐसोसिएशन आफ यूकोहामा' का गठन हो गया था। मैं इस ऐसोसिएशन का 6 वर्ष अध्यक्ष रहा हूं। मैं भारत आता रहता हूं। यहां भी हमारा व्यवसाय है। मुझे लगता है कि यहीं अभी बहुत कुछ विकास होना बाकी है। हां, आधारभूत सुविधाओं के मामले में अच्छी प्रगति हो रही है।

अब जो प्रवासी भारतीयों का सम्मेलन हुआ है, मैं समझता हूं यह बहुत पहले प्रारम्भ हो जाना चाहिए था। कोई बात नहीं, देर आयद-दुरुस्त आयद। भविष्य में इसे और अच्छी तरह से आयोजित करेंगे तो बहुत लाभ होगा। जापान में इतने वर्षों तक रहने के बाद भी मेरा पारपत्र (पासपोर्ट) भारत का ही है। कुछ लोगों ने मुझे कहा भी कि 'जापानी पासपोर्ट' ले लो, पर मैंने कहा कि हम तो हिन्दुस्थानी हैं, हिन्दुस्थानी ही रहेंगे।□

हमारे अपने

प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस का आयोजन अविस्मरणीय और अद्‌भुत रहा। वे लोग जिनको हम कभी प्रतिभा पलायन तो कभी भारतमाता को छोड़ विदेशों में सुख से जीने वाले महत्त्वाकांक्षी, स्वार्थी भी कह बैठते थे, आज वही भारत की धरोहर, हमारी आंखों के तारे और लाड़ले सहोदर के नाते दिखाई दिए। हालांकि जितने भी आए सभी पैसे वाले थे। विदेश जाने का एक सुख और परिणाम तो यह मिलता ही है, लेकिन इस सम्मेलन में पैसे की चमक के ऊपर अपनेपन, अपनी संस्कृति, अपनी भाषा, अपनी भूषा, अपने खान-पान की दमक हावी रही। ये लोग अपने ब्रिटिश, अमरीकी, सूरीनामी या डच उच्चारणों में बात करते थे, पर इनकी एक बात में भी नकलीपन या दिखावा नहीं दिखा। बात सीधे दिल में उतरती चली गई। इनके मन में देशभक्ति का जो ज्वार दिखा और जो विभिन्न देशों के नागरिक हो चुके हैं उनमें अपनी पुण्यभूमि, मातृभूमि के प्रति जो निष्ठा और ममत्व प्रकट हुआ, वह अद्‌भुत था। सचमुच ये भारतवंशी भारत का नया भाग्य लिखने वाले ब्रह्मा ही प्रतीत हुए। उनके मन में भारत के प्रति यदि कहीं शिकायत के भी स्वर हैं, तो वह शिकायत भी भारत का अपना होने के कारण, उसके पिछड़ेपन को देखने से उपजी एक बेटे की शिकायत है। वे जिन देशों में जाकर बसे हैं, वहां का वैभव, ऐश्वर्य और प्रगति उन्हें अच्छी लगती है, इसीलिए तो वे वहां गए हैं और बसे हैं। लेकिन उनके मन में एक कसक रहती है कि भारत भी, उतना ही अच्छा, श्रेष्ठ और विकसित बने, क्योंकि जब भारत ऊपर उठता है तो अपने-अपने देश में उनका माथा ऊंचा होता है, उनका सम्मान बढ़ता है। जैसे दुनियाभर में फैले भारतवंशियों के आगे बढ़ने में भारत का गौरव बढ़ता है, वैसे ही भारत की गौरव-वृद्धि में भारतवंशियों की प्रतिष्ठा बढ़ती है।

इस सम्मेलन ने बड़ी आशाएं जगाई हैं। इस बात की आशा ही नहीं है कि ये सब मिलकर भारत में और ज्यादा पैसा भेजेंगे, बल्कि इस बात की आशा है कि इनकी सफलताएं देखकर हम भारतवासी भी अपनी अयोग्यताओं, संकीर्णताओं और क्षुद्रताओं को छोड़ भारत की एक नई यशोगाथा लिखेंगे। सच में आकाश हमारी मुट्ठी में आ सकता है, आएगा ही।

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Mahatma Gandhi during his visit to a RSS camp at Wardha, Maharashtra in 1934 where he also met our founder Dr K B Hedgewar.

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