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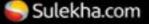
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AN INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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FEEDBACK

LETTERS MATTER

Congrats!

I am a regular reader of your magazine since beginning. I had been seeing advertisements and announcements you were making about organizing Sammaan awards, etc., but I never came to know whether you did it or not. Now, after reading in your January issue that you are doing your Indian Women Achievers Sammaan 2017 in Bahrain is a welcome step.

I saw details of the event on your website. Please accept my deep hearted congratulations & best wishes for your future endeavors. it was strange to know that you invited leaders from Congress party, especially Rahul Gandhi, whereas I always saw your magazine tilted towards NDA Govt. Anyway media should be unbiased. you should always do a balanced act.

It's not a small achievement that you did your first event out side Indian shores. I think the connectivity you have made all these five years or so through your magazine must have helped a lot in achieving this feat.

I would like to know your next plan, so that if it's possible I would also like to accompany your troop next time. Congrats once again.

Ashfaq Ul Hassan, Dubai, UAE

जिद्दियों का सपना पूरा हो ही जाता है!!

क्या बात है, आपके जनवरी अंक के कवर को देखते ही दिल खश हो गया. आखिर आपने अपना सपना पूरा कर ही लिया.बहुत-बहुत बधाइयां. आज के इस मंदी और संघर्षमय दौर में एक प्रकाशक के लिए विदेश जाकर कोई कार्यक्रम करना काफी दिलेरी की बात है. सोशल मीडिया पर आप द्वारा जारी किये गये अपडेट से पता चला कि 50 से ज्यादा लोगों का डेलिगेशन ले गये थे. अपने पहले प्रयास में इतना करना वाकई तारीफ के लायक है, इससे यह तो झलकता है कि आप स्वयं भी एक अचिवर्स से कम नहीं हैं. मेरी राय में आपको इंडिया में भी जल्द कोई कार्यक्रम करना चाहिए जिसमें मौजदा सरकार के साथ साथ सभी विपक्षी दलों की शिरकत भी होनी चाहिए. मेरा कहने का तात्पर्य ये है कि आपको याद होगा कि जब इंडिया टीवी के रजत शर्मा ने अपना कार्यक्रम किया था तो देश-विदेश की ढेरों हस्तियों ने हिस्सा लिया था, कुछ ऐसा ही आपसे भी उम्मीद करती हूं. क्यों कि आप खुद ही तो कहते हो कि जिद्दियों का सपना पूरा हो ही जाता है. जरीन सबा. न्ययार्क, अमेरिका





सूरीनाम के बारे में भी छापें

मैं आपकी पत्रिका की नियमित पाठक हूं. भारतीय मूल और सूरीनाम की नागरिक होने के नाते आपसे निवेदन है कि पत्रिका में सूरीनाम के बारे में भी छापें.

संपूर्णा जोगेश्वर, सूरीनाम

Changing face of your magazine!

Good to see changes in the presentation of your magazine. It's the need of the hour to change with the changing time. Also accept my 'Badhayian' for honoring more than a dozen women for their achievements in their respective fields. I am curious to know that what was the criteria to select them. I didn't see any famous name among the awardees. May be you had your own way of selecting the achievers. My suggestion is that there should be some jury or nomination system through which the selections should have been made.

Anyway, as a first your deserve all applause for making it to happen. I hope to see more things happening at your end in the near future.

Khushi Ahuja, Mumbai, India





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SUCSESS STORY



HAT TRICK YUSUFF ALI

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ACHIEVEMENTS OF **INDIAN DIASPORA:** A POINT OF PRIDE FOR INDIA'

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ACADEMICS UK: Indian academics in demand

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SILVER SCREEN 54

टास्तान-ए-शॉर्ट फिल्म



इस साल छह जनवरी को जब एनआरआई अचिवर्स के बैनल तले 50 से ज्यादा विशिष्ट लोगों का जत्था बहरीन की सरजमीं पर एकत्रित हुआ और वहां विश्व की 13 विमेन अचिवर्स को उनकी कामयाबियों के लिए सम्मानित किया गया तो वाकई मंजर काफी खुशनुमा हो गया.



अब आगे...

अचिवर्स ने पांच सालों में ही सही, लेकिन अपना सपना पूरा कर ही लिया. सभी पाठकों को दिल से शुक्रिया, शुभकामनाएं...

इसी साल छह जनवरी को जब एनआरआई अचिवर्स के बैनल तले 50 से ज्यादा विशिष्ट लोगों का जत्था बहरीन की सरजमीं पर एकत्रित हुआ और वहां विश्व की 13 विमेन अचिवर्स को उनकी कामयाबियों के लिए सम्मानित किया गया तो वाकई मंजर काफी खुशनुमा हो गया.

इस खुशनुमा मंजर के दीदार के लिए हमलोगों ने कितने उतार-चढ़ाव देखे, कितने कष्ट झेले, कितनी यातनाएं सही, लेकिन विश्वास का झोला ज्यों का त्यों मजबूती से थामे रखा, सुचिन्द्रन, सुमित सिंह और मुकेश चंद्रा का साथ रहा. खूब लगे रहे सभी, समय कम था लेकिन जज्बा और करेज ऐसा था कि सिर्फ मंजिल दिख रही थी.

देखते-देखते सब हो गया. हम बहरीन पहुंच गये. गल्फ का छोटा सा देश, लेकिन बड़े दिलवाला. क्या माहौल था- चेहरे पर मस्कराहटें थीं.

विश्व भर से सैकड़ों एनआरआई, पीआईओ और इंडियन डायस्पोरा वहां जमा थे. राहुल गांधी, शिश थरूर, सैम पिट्रोदा, राज पुरोहित, आरती कृष्णा समेत कई जानी मानी हस्तियों की शिरकत थी. एनआरआईज के महत्वपूर्ण और जरूरी मुद्दों पर ठोस गोष्ठियां और पिरचर्चाएं हुई. आमंत्रित मेहमानों ने अपने विचार रखे और आगे की रूपरेखा तय की गई और इसी के साथ एनआरआई अचिवर्स ने भी बहुत कुछ सीखा और तय किया कि अब आगे यह सिलसिला जारी रहेगा.

कुछ संजीदा कार्यक्रम नियमित रूप से किये जाते रहेंगे. दुनिया के विभिन्न हिस्सों से अचिवर्स को ढूंढ कर सम्मानित किया जाता रहेगा. अगल-अलग देशों में रह रहे भारतीयों के साथ द्विपक्षीय संवाद की संभावनाओं को बनाया जाता रहेगा और एनआऱआई अचिवर्स द्वारा जल्द ही एक ऐसा मंच तैयार किया जाएगा जिसके जिरये इंडियन डायस्पोरा को विभिन्न सेवाएं प्रदान की जाएंगी.

इस पर विस्तृत रोशनी अगले अंकों में...

- राजीव गुप्ता, एडिटर

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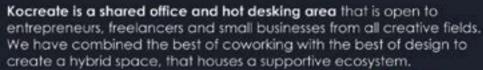
> "With dedicated training and incubation, along with co-working space,
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KOCREATE

Kocreate Incubation and Training Program is India's first such program for creative entrepreneurs and businesses. Kocreate aims to support beginners and young professionals that want to dream, build, hustle and sustain their own business in the creative field.





"Kocreate is a dream that we had for aspiring creative entrepreneurs and business. It is our way of translating my experience of 22 years in design, and making it a learning experience and supported journey for people in the creative field."

- Vivek Khurana

Vivek Khurana
 Originator





"I have always been passionate about creating impactful business and Kocreate is my vision for that come true. With Kocreate we are looking to associate with interesting people from all fields, especially design, and collaborate and create better design services!"

 Sumit Duggal Founder & CEO

Night Train from Old Delhi

here's one railway journey that I frequently undertook, that is, from Delhi to Dehradun. Mainly to meet the writers hailing from that region. Sometimes I did it twice.

There were times when the Delhi-Kalka Mail would reach Delhi a couple of hours behind schedule and I had to make a dash for the Mussoorie Express usually scheduled to leave Old Delhi station a little after 10 pm. At other times I would arrive at New Delhi station in the morning, take an auto always at double the existing rate and hire a retiring room at Old Delhi station for 12 hours.

After a couple of rides in this train I realised one had to occupy one's reserved berth as soon as the train pulled into the platform, for there's the risk of having to compromise your berth in exchange for the one located in an unkempt coupe or the middle berth which could not accommodate my 6-foot frame.

During one such journey I boarded the train before most others. In a sleeper-class compartment I had a reserved lower berth. I kept my valuables (tape recorder and camera) in a bag that doubled up as a pillow and my suitcase under the berth.

People started pouring in and occupied their berths. Then a good-looking lady with a crutch limped her way to the cubicle I was in. There was a gentleman on the other lower berth. She first approached me: "I got a middle berth in the next bay. I can't climb there. You take mine and let me have yours." Had it been the upper one I'd have gladly accepted it. But there was no question of acceding to the request. I said I had problems with my knees and so my movements were restricted. The other gentleman however ceded the lower berth to her, reluctantly though. The lady then lowered herself with some effort, put the crutch beside her and went to sleep, her head towards the window as was mine.

The compartment grew quiet as the train left the station and gathered speed. Although the lights within the carriage were switched off, the darkness was occasionally pierced by bars of light streaking in through the windows. Watching the intermittent play of light and shadow I fell asleep. I had no idea how long I slept. I woke with a start and felt as if all hell had broken loose. The train was standing still. The woman on the other lower berth was crying herself hoarse. She was hollering in Hindi and I gathered that some thief had through the open window snatched away a gold chain worn around her neck.

Hearing her shrieks, some passengers from the neighbouring cubicles came to see if the lady was under any threat. But as soon as they crowded us, shouts from elsewhere rent the air. The sound 'chor, chor' could be heard. Each one of them rushed back. I could sense people running helter-skelter, shouting, in hot pursuit of the thief. There was utter chaos.

Then the hooter of the engine was heard. The train moved with a jerk. The passengers who had chased the snatchers out of the carriage scrambled back into it. I sat still throughout, somewhat a dazed.

During one such journey I boarded the train before most others. In a sleeperclass compartment I had a reserved lower berth. I kept my valuables (tape recorder and camera) in a bag that doubled up as a pillow and my suitcase under the berth.

NRIs bear the brunt of biometric **ID** linkage



The non-resident Indians are finding it difficult to access government services for the insistence of Aadhaar, the biometric ID. Started out as a voluntary programme help tackle benefit fraud, the federal government

now made it mandatory, but the NRIs are not entitled to enrol. The land registration authorities are also insisting on Aadhaar for India's ambitious programme to digitise land records to prevent fraudulent transactions. "The insistence on Aadhaar without allowing you to take one is, to put it simply, inhuman," said KV Shamsudheen, director of the Dubai-based Barjeel Securities, who was here this month to digitise his land documents."Now you need an Aadhaar number for everything, from your son taking public exams to get cooking gas or telephone connection back home. The banks are reminding you every day to seed your Aadhaar if you want to avoid services getting disrupted."

The Indian Workforce Will Be In 'Vulnerable Employment' **By 2019**

Language barriers, poor living conditions, restrictions on movement and low pay, often below the minimum wage, are some of the problems plaguing migrant workers in Bengaluru's garment factories, a new re-



port states. Migrant workers, the study has found, are often treated worse than local workers in these factories.In January 2016, the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), a human rights rganisation, released a report titled 'Unfree and Unfair' focusing on the dismal housing conditions offered to migrant workers in garment factories. Two years later, they went back to see what things are like now - and despite promises made by the major international companies supplying from Bengaluru's factories in question, not much seems to have changed. This year's study, conducted by the ICN in collaboration with the Garment Labour Union, Bangalore and titled 'Labour Without Liberty', was based on interviews with 63 female workers at three companies manufacturing clothes in Bengaluru.



An appeal to help families of those who lost their lives by cyclone Ockhi

Cyclone Ockhi which battered coastal Kerala has adversely affected the nesting of the endangered Olive Ridley turtles along the Thottappally coast, one of the prime locations for egg-laying turtles in the State. Secretary of the Green Roots Nature Conservation Forum Saji Jayamohan told that 800 metres of the Thottappally coast used by Olive Ridleys to lay eggs had been destroyed following sea erosion. "The turtles used to generally nest in an area of around 800 metres north of the estuary at Thottappally but its natural habitat had almost completely vanished in the cyclone. Last year, we stumbled upon four nests on the Thottapally coast. However, not a single nest has been found in the area after the cyclone. The long seawall is also preventing the turtle from nesting in the area," Mr. Jayamohan said. An NRI Ajay Ghosh from Enthurai, urgent appeal to help families of those who lost their lives by cyclone Ockhi in Kanyakumary district. He said the turtles seemed to be moving to the nearby Pallana beach, south of the estuary. "The real impact of the cyclone on turtle nesting will be known in the coming months," he said.

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Two Indian-Amercians vying for Congress from same New York seat

Two Indian-Americans from the Democratic party have thrown their hats in the ring for the same Congressional seat from New York in the US House of Representatives. Omar Vaid and Mohan Radhakrishnan have announced to fight out the Democratic primary to earn the party's nomination for the November mid-term general elections to defeat the Republican incumbent Congressman Don Donavan in New York's 11th Congressional District. While New York is a heavily Democratic leaning State, the 11th Congressional District of late has emerged as a Republican stronghold. US President Donald Trump had won the seat in 2016. Both Vaid and Mohan seek to unseat Donavan this time. But before that they need to win the Democratic party primary for which currently more than half a dozen candidates are in the race. Son of two immigrant parents of Gujarati-Indian heritage, Vaid grew up as a Muslim in Illinois and Florida, according to his campaign website. As a member of the Democratic Party, he believes diversity is an asset and that all voices must be included, it says. Vaid says that Trump has put the country on a path towards an "isolationist" foreign policy. He is running on the platform of free-market platform, climate change and improving the transportation system instead of border wall, labour union leader, Mohan, is a 27-year resident of Staten Island, New York and an active member of the Community Board 1 of Staten Island.





The Indian Finance Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley, unveiled the current government's last full budget on February 1, India Budget 2018: What's in the 2018, before the general elections slated for 2019. The Budget puts a long term focus on investments in hard infrastructure such as smart cities, transportation and digital connectivity in both cities and rural areas as well as on the soft infrastructure needed to provide healthcare and education. While the Budget is aiming to achieve sustainable growth, it offers little cheer for individual taxpayers and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). Instead, in some areas, the tax incidence will increase for residents and non-residents alike. One of the dampening change in the Budget was the re-introduction of Tax on Long-term Capital Gains (LTCG) on listed equity shares, units of an equity oriented mutual fund and units of business trusts (listed securities). Currently, LTCG on listed securities is exempted from income tax subject to the transaction being carried out on the Stock Exchange and subject to payment of Securities Transaction Tax (STT). A NRI Achievers News Network

Orange Passports for 'Unskilled' Workers

Kerala High Court issued a notice to the Centre on a public interest litigation over the Ministry of External Affair's decision to introduce orange colour jackets for passports of 'unskilled' workers, terming it as a violation of the fundamental right to privacy and dignity. According to media reports, a lawyer, Shamsuddeen Karunagappally along with a co-petitioner, Shajahan, who is an ECR passport holder, have filed the PIL. Both are residents of Kollam district in Kerala. A bench of acting chief justice Antony Dominic and justice Seshadri Naidu issued the notice. Earlier this month, the MEA had announced that it planned to stop printing the last page of the passport booklet which listed several details including address and ECR status. "As the last page of the passport would not be printed now, the passport holders with ECR status would be issued a passport with orange colour passport jacket and those with non-ECR status would continue to get a blue passport," MEA said.

bag for NRIs?



NRIs in UK keen to invest in varsities in Uttar Pradesh: Dinesh Sharma



Non-Resident Indians in the UK have expressed their willingness in setting up universities in Uttar Pradesh, state's deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma said here. Sharma, who also holds the education portfolio, said that leading industrialists are also interested in investing in the "rapidly modernising" state during his meetings here. He was in the UK on a three-day visit to attend the Education World Forum 2018 here. "A number of them (NRIs) expressed interest in investing in universities that would combine spiritual aspects with modern education to create an ideal institution. We will explore this concept," he said.

"The conclusions of the summit were around the importance of providing education on the basis of equality. We have already started implementing steps in that direction in our state," said the deputy chief minister. Highlighting plans for virtual and Wi-Fi enabled classrooms across the educational institutions, he said UP's education system was undergoing a digital revolution and the UK visit had proved to be an important learning experience which would enhance the process of transformation already underway in the state.

Conference of NRIs on cultural heritage

A small group of NRIs and their relatives here in India participated in the 'NRIs in Vidya, Vaidya and Veda' conference conducted by the NRI Parents and Relatives Association, Chennai under the aegis of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt at Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Viswa Mahavidvalava, Enathur, near here. According to the organisers, the objective of the Association was to unite the Hindu NRIs with their roots in India by creating awareness about the 'sanathana dharma' and the cultural and heritage of the soil, particularly among the youth. To achieve this goal, the first conference of NRIs was held on January 26, wherein the participants were exposed to various aspects of cultural and heritage values and the efforts initiated by the Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt to preserve the same for posterity. The junior pontiff, Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi, laid stress on the need for the NRIs to be in touch with their roots so that their wards would not forget their ancestral lineage.



Telengana to help NRIs stuck in Kuwait

Minister for NRI affairs K.T. Rama Rao of Telengana Govt. said that the state government is taking all steps to ensure a hassle-free return of NRIs from Kuwait. He said that all those persons who are unable to afford flight tickets would be helped by the government on humanitarian grounds. Mr Rama Rao had appealed to NRIs to make use of the opportunity and return to India. Officials have been asked to coordinate with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait for the purpose. The minister said that the NRI affairs department is collecting details from the embassy about the people from Telangana.



Inheritance can be cumbersome for NRIs



An individual, whether a Resident or a Nonresident, can devolve his assets to his legal heirs or to any one of his choice via a Will. On demise of an individual when an asset is transferred to his legal heirs or if he has created a Will, then it is called devolution of an asset. The person who receives the said asset is called inheritor and the process is called inheritance. Let's see what happens when Indian Parent leaves behind certain assets for his NRI child. Now, if he leaves these assets without writing a Will (which means he dies intestate) then the child will have to obtain succession certificate from the Indian Courts. This involves submitting documents to the court such as death certificate of the departed, birth certificate of the successor. Property purchase and registration documents, etc. NRIs should be prepared to spend some time in India as presence is normally required and helpful for clearing matters of property inheritance. If his parent has executed a Will, then the child will have to apply to the court for Probate. An NRI can inherit movable and immovable assets. There is no much restriction or challenge while inheriting a movable asset. But while inheriting an immovable asset there could be certain conditions that need to be fulfilled. A non-resident Indian (NRI) or person of Indian origin (PIO), can inherit any immovable property in India, whether it is residential or commercial. They can even inherit agricultural land or a farmhouse, which they are otherwise not entitled to acquire by way of purchase. An NRI can inherit the property from anyone including his relatives.

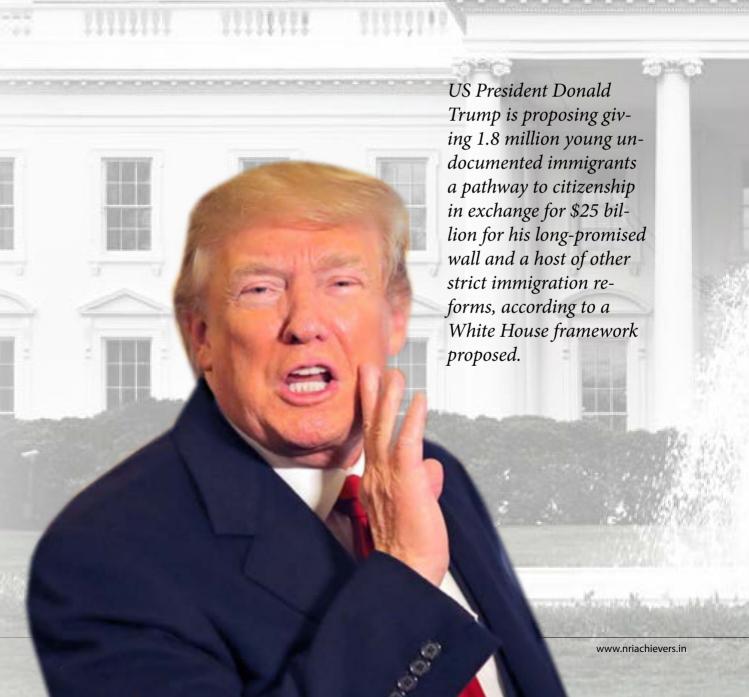
Narayana Murthy's son-in-law inducted into UK Government



Rishi Sunak, the son-in-law of Infosys chief Narayana Murthy, is among two new Indian-origin MPs to be inducted into the UK Government by British Prime Minister Theresa May following the recent reshuffle of her team of ministers. Sunak, 37, a Conservative party MP for Richmond (Yorkshire), has been appointed the new parliamentary under- secretary of state in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of a New Year reshuffle this month. Sunak is joined by fellow pro-Brexit campaigner, Goan- origin Suella Fernandes, who takes charge as parliamentary under-secretary of state in the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU). Sunak and Fernandes, who take charge of their junior ministerial roles as part of Theresa May's team, were among the prominent Indian-origin campaigners in favour of Britain's exit from the EU in the June 2016 referendum, pushing for closer ties with Commonwealth countries like India. "From working in my mum's tiny chemist shop to my experience building large businesses, I have seen how we should support free enterprise and innovation to ensure Britain has a stronger future," said Sunak. The UK-born son of a pharmacist mother and a National Health Service (NHS) general practitioner father is married to Murthy's daughter Akshata Murthy. The Oxford University and Stanford MBA graduate co- founded a 1-billion-pound global investment firm and specialised in investing in small British businesses before his entry to the British Parliament in the 2015 general election. Since his re-election in last year's snap election called by May, Sunak was widely tipped for a ministerial role in a government keen to enhance the ethnic mix of its Cabinet. Sunak believes small businesses in the UK would flourish as a result of Brexit as the "vast majority of British businesses (94 per cent) do not have anything to do with the EU; but they are still subject to all EU law".

NRI Achievers News Bureau

WHITE HOUSE PROPOSES PATH TO CITIZENSHIP FOR 1.8 MILLION PEOPLE



n what the White House framed as a "dramatic concession" and "compromise," Trump would accept a path to citizenship not just for the roughly 700,000 undocumented immigrants were covered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program when it was ended. But the proposal would also cover those undocumented immigrants who meet the DACA criteria but did not sign up and even more who would be newly eligible under the proposal's timeframe requirements - giving legal status and a pathway to citizenship to about 1.8 million people.

In return, the White House would like to see a \$25 billion investment in a trust for border infrastructure and technology, as well as more funds for personnel, and an end to family migration beyond spouses and minor children. The diversity visa lottery would also be abolished, though the visas would be reallocated so that the backlog of people already waiting for family visas and high-skilled immigration green cards would

be processed.

In what may end up being the most contentious piece of the proposal, the White House is also looking to close "legal loopholes" that will allow it to deport more immigrants, specifically as it relates to undocumented immigrants from countries that don't border the United States -- which would likely include changes in immigration enforcement authority that would be virtually impossible for Democrats to swallow.

The White House official sold the plan as a "compromise position" that it believes would get 60 votes in the Senate -- a point White House officials underscored multiple times -- and then could be "sent over to the House for additional improvement and modification."

One senior White House official told conservative outside groups, surrogates and congressional officials in a call that the bill "should make Democrat support to get to 60 votes a given.'

They spoke out against immigrants. So she un-

earthed their own immigrant ancestors

"This legislation that really represents a bipartisan consensus point. It is extremely generous in terms of the DACA piece and then fulfills all four of the President's priorities," a senior White House official told reporters. "This bill is right down the center in terms of public opinion.'

Senior White House officials who briefed reporters Thursday on the framework also expressed a pointed rejection of the Durbin-Graham bill that the White

House rejected in recent weeks.

One official quipped that an agreement on immigration between Sen. Dick Durbin, a Democrat, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican, is "like announcing the sun has risen and there's fish in the ocean."

The White House's portrayal of the framework as a broad-based compromise is likely to face skepticism on Capitol Hill, where immigration reform has long been contentiously disputed.

Another official also said that despite suggestions from Senate Democrats, the White House's framework is "galaxies apart" from what Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer proposed to the President.

White House officials said Thursday they expect lawmakers on Capitol Hill to "digest" the proposal and formulate legislative text to bring to the floor in the Senate and called it "kind of the bottom line for the President.'

But the officials signaled that while the framework should pass muster in the Senate, they did not expect it to be the basis for legislation in the House.

Instead, one senior White House official said it is 'probably likely" that the two chambers will pass different bills and "end up in conference."

The White House's portrayal of the framework as a broad-based compromise is likely to face skepticism on Capitol Hill, where immigration reform has long been contentiously disputed. While the proposal's pathway to citizenship for nearly 2 million undocumented immigrants will earn plaudits from many Democrats, the framework also includes several hardline immigration reforms that Democrats may find hard to swallow.

Some conservatives are also likely to oppose the pathway to citizenship that Trump is endorsing.

Those eligible will be able to become citizens in 10 to 12 years, Trump said, contingent on meeting work and education requirements the White House is leaving up to Congress to establish.

'If they do a great job, I think it's a nice thing to have the incentive of, after a period of years, being able

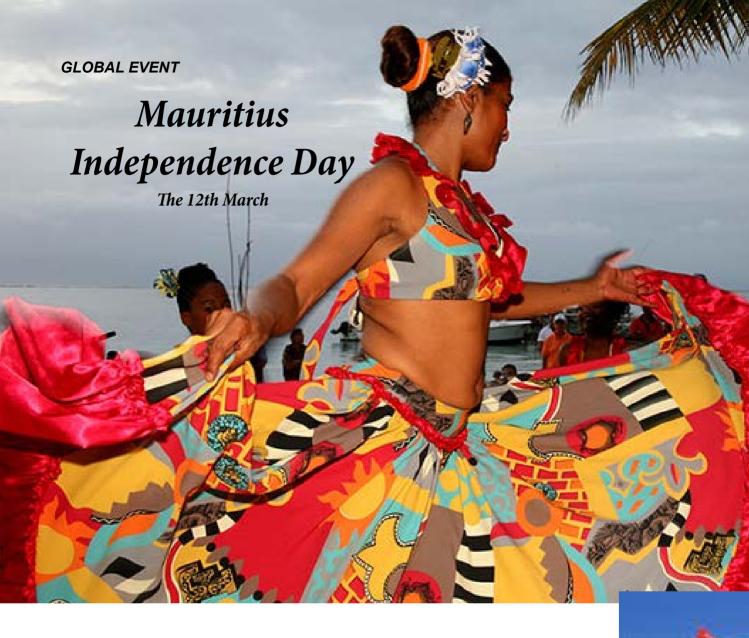
to become a citizen," Trump said.

And the clock is ticking down for lawmakers to find a solution, with DACA protections expiring March 5.

If a deal can't be reached by then, a senior White House official made clear that those immigrants whose protections expire could be subject to deportation.

"If it doesn't work then they'll be illegal immigrants and if they fall into the hands of ICE," the official said. "They won't be targeted, but if they fall into the hands of ICE ... well they'll be put into the system ... and ultimately could lead to their deportation."

NRI Achievers USA Bureau



THE MAURITIUS MIRACLE

MAKE A BIG SUCCESS OF A SMALL ECONOMY



The US ought to learn a thing or two from Mauritius, where all citizens enjoy high standards of healthcare and education

By S K Asthana

uppose someone were to describe a small country that provided free education through university for all of its citizens, transport for school children and free healthcare – including heart surgery – for all. You might suspect that such a country is either phenomenally rich or on the fast track to fiscal crisis.

After all, rich countries in Europe have increasingly found they cannot pay for university education, and are asking young people and their families to bear the costs. For its part, the US has never attempted to give free college for all, and it took a bitter battle just to ensure that America's poor get access to healthcare – a guarantee that the Republican party is now working hard to repeal, claiming the country cannot afford it.

But Mauritius, a small island nation off the east coast of Africa, is neither particularly rich nor on its way to budgetary ruin. Nonetheless, it has spent the last decades successfully building a diverse economy, a democratic political system and a strong social safety net. Many countries, not least the US, could learn from its experience.

In a recent visit to this tropical archipelago of 1.3 million people, I had a chance to see some of the leaps Mauritius has taken – accomplishments that can seem bewildering in light of the debate in the US and elsewhere. Consider home ownership: while American conservatives say the government's attempt to extend home ownership to 70% of the US population was responsible for the financial meltdown, 87% of Mauritians own their own homes – without fuelling a housing bubble.

Now comes the painful number: Mauritius's GDP has grown faster than 5% annually for almost 30 years. Surely, this must be some "trick". Mauritius must be rich in diamonds, oil, or some other valuable commodity. But Mauritius has no exploitable natural resources. Indeed, so dismal were its prospects as it approached independence from Britain, which came in 1968, that the Nobel prize-winning economist James Meade wrote in 1961: "It is going to be a great achievement if [the country] can find productive employment for its population without a serious reduction in the existing standard of living ...

As if to prove Meade wrong, the Mauritians have increased per capita income from less than \$400 around the time of independence to more than \$6,700 today. The country has progressed from the sugar-based monoculture of 50 years ago to a diversified economy that includes tourism, finance, textiles, and, if current plans bear fruit, advanced technology.

The author is an eminent journalist



The United Arab Emirates has launched a smartphone app for Indians seeking work visas that is aimed at streamlining the process and completing most of the procedures in India so that the applicants can make a hassle-free entry into the workforce.

Currently available in Hindi and English for Android platforms, the app will soon be rolled out in Malayalam in view of the large number of people from Kerala who apply for work visas.

"Much of the procedures that were earlier done in the UAE are now done here. The app will facilitate visa applications and make things easier," UAE ambassador Ahmed Al Banna said.

The app provides guidelines and directions to make the journey safe and hassle-free. It is meant to work like a map with key waypoints along with guidelines to complete a particular process, such as the mandatory medical checkup, attestation police clearance certificate.

"Earlier the checks India. We want to cut down the hardships for India and the applicants can now start working within a day of arriving in the UAE," said Al Banna.

The UAE currently has three visa centres in India — Delhi, Mumbai, and Thiruvananthapuram and the one in the national capital alone issued about 50,000 work visas last year. A total of 1.6 million Indians visited the UAE last year, while Indian visitors to Dubai alone crossed the 1-million mark

during January-September 2017.

The UAE is home to an Indian expatriate community of more than 2.6 million, the largest in the country. Professionally qualified workers make up about 20% of the community, followed by 20% whitecollar non-professionals and the remainder are blue-collar workers.

Al Banna also said the two countries were close to a major breakthrough in resolving the problems linked to investments by DP World, a leading operator of marine and inland ports. The problems linked to investments by Etisalat and Emaar are still being looked at, he said.

"In the case of DP World, we are almost on the edge of sorting out the technical is-

sues," he said, with giving de-

Al Banna's remarks coincided with Dubai-based DP World and India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIF) announcing that they had created a fund to invest up to \$3 billion of equity in the transport and logistics sectors of India.

In the case of Etisalat, which had exited its India operations in 2012 after the Supreme Court cancelled 122 mobile licences in the 2G spectrum case, Al Banna said a high level committee was "going deeper into the issues and hopefully, it will be sorted out soon".

The "legacy issues" faced by Etisalat, Emaar and DP World had been taken up at the meeting of the India-UAE task force on investment in Abu

Dhabi on January 14. The meeting, chaired by Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed al Nahyan and commerce minister Suresh Prabhu, also discussed new business opportunities, including planned investments of about \$1.5 billion from the UAE in logistics, dry

The UAE currently of documents and has three visa centres in India - Delhi. Mumbai, and were done in the UAE, Thiruvananthapuram and the one in the national capital alone issued about

50.000 work visas

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NRI Achievers UAE Bureau



In Collaboration with



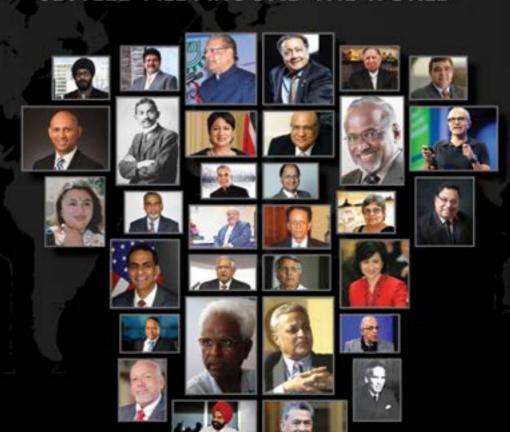
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GOPIO CONV

Outside Indians are The Indians in India:

ou can take an Indian out of India, but, you in the Indianness from him. People outside India are more Indian than people inside India. In fact, the destiny of Indian diaspora is in many ways inextricably intertwined with India." This feeling strongly reverberated at the three-day biennial convention of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin held here. The international convention held here during Jan 6-8 in Bahrain drew more than 400 delegates from not less than 40 nations. Besides, them a large number of dignitaries from India, Bahrain and other countries visited the convention to interact with the PIOs, NRIs and OCIs. During the convention, Mr. Sunny Kulathakal, an Indian from the Middle East was sworn in as the Global President of the organization. It is the first time in the history of 30 year old GOPIO that an Indian from a country outside the US & Europe was given

this position. Kulathakal has been actively involved with Gopio for more than a decade. He served the Organization as Middle East Co-Coordinator, Executive Vice-President & Global Ambassador.

Three-day event featured discussions about India, its economy and people, with many well-known personalities from India participating. The opening session was attended by delegates including Raj Purohit, Cabinet Minister of Maharashtra and Dr Chandan Mitra, Editor of The Pioneer.

In his speech, Raj Purohit outlined how India has progressed over the years, lauding the progress made by the nation. Apart from these addresses delegates participating in the convention got an opportunity to discuss various issues facing them in different countries. In different sessions, they also pondered over the issue of contributing in development of their country of origin. Indian organizations as well as politicians also availed of this great opportunity of interacting with the Indian diaspora at one place. Leading Indian magazine NRI Achievers co-partnered the event and organized Indian Women

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ENTION 2018

more Indian than Kulathakal

Achievers Sammaan 2017 on 6th of January. Rahul Gandhi, President of Indian National Congress addressed the convention in the concluding session of the event. He was accompanied by Sam Pitroda, Chairman, overseas congress AICC, Milind Deora, Ex-Minister, Govt. of India. The visit was coordinated by Dr Arathi Krishna, Deputy Chairman, NRI Forum, Govt. of Karnataka and Madhu Yaskhi, Secretary, AICC."

Welcoming Rahul Gandhi Mr. Kulathakal said, 'We left the shores of India, but India has not left us. That is why Rahul Gandhi, the AICC President is with us today. This is his first overseas visit after taking over as the President of AICC.'

Mr. Kulathakal asserted that GOPIO represents the largest vibrant Indian Diaspora. GOPIO's future endeavors will further the bridges of friendship with India & their adopted countries. He also said, 'The world knows India mostly through its expatriate's diaspora who are looked at as epitomes of tolerance, loyalty & trust.

Rahul Gandhi in address appreciated the efforts of GO-PIO in uniting and giving a common forum to the dias-

pora spread across five continents. He said, it is a great service to the diaspora- even to those who might have merged well with their newly found nations in the course of the time. He felt that the NRIs settling in other countries in past 70 years are culturally still in the process of assimilating with the culture of their adopted society and need a lot of psychological support from the people who could understand their pangs and travails. He supported Kulathakal's observation that India doesn't leave Indians even when they are far off the Indian shores.

Praising outstanding achievements of NRIs, OCIs and diaspora as India's most authentic representatives in the world, he said the people and governments of India have always been sensitive and sentimentally attached with them. The Congress president also said that the NRIs are the true representatives of our soft power.

Admitting the impact of diaspora's opinion on Indian politics, he appealed to the delegates to extend their support to any political party keeping in view their conformance to Indian value system.

NRI Achievers Team

COVER STORY





obal Organization of People BAHRAIN CONVENTION 20



COVER STORY



of Indian Origin

18













OVERSEAS EVENT

he Indian diaspora is present all over five continents. And, it is continuously growing in different parts of the world; according to a report of Indian External Affairs ministry, 4.5 lakh Indian nationals acquired citizenship of different countries in past three years. In spite of their reasons for migrating to other countries and successfully adjusting in their new societies, people of Indian origin love their original country, people and the culture. Fortunately, the Indian migrants have proven themselves to be amongst the top performers in all fields across the globe and their recognition amongst other global communities has bolstered their confidence as global citizens. However, their bond with India remains inalienable and they continue to carry their identities like that. Deep down their hearts, they yearn to attain recognition and love from the people in India. It reassures them of their roots and the bond with the people back in India.















There was always this need for a bridge between the Diasporas and the motherland. For long, it remained an ignored issue as the system in India never reflected positively towards the migrants. On the other hand, those choosing to settle in a country other than India, initially didn't care much about their roots, people and the culture. However, with the passage of time both sides started to feel the need and started taking initiatives in a positive direction despite systemic lacunae and laxities. Serious attempts in this direction started only in last decade, both at official and unofficial levels. An attempt to create a strong communication bridge was initiated some five years ago with the start of publication of NRI Achievers. Editor of the magazine, Rajeev Gupta says at the onset of the venture it had been decided to make sure that besides connecting with the Indian diaspora through the magazine, they shall arrange to honour NRIs and POIs as well as achievers from India for their outstanding achievements.

However, connecting with the diaspora spread in five continents and bringing them on a single platform in some part of the world is something which requires a lot of commitment, propriety of the purpose and hard work. NRI Achievers' dream could come through only in the first week of this year at Bahrain where well known organization of PIOs the GOPIO (Global Organization of Persons of Indian Origin) had planned to hold its international convention. Here at the convention held at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa, the NRI Achievers successfully organized Indian Women Achievers Sammaan Samaroh 2017.

As many as 13 distinguished women achievers, having proven their outstanding skills in different roles at different places, were honoured in the felicitation ceremony at global gathering. More than 400 delegates from 40 countries comprising Indian influencers, businessmen, NRIs, PIOS & OCIs gathered to cheer the honoured ladies. Apart from the Indian diasporas, the event attracted









top VIPs of Bahrain and guests from across the world. Indian politicians, business leaders and other delegates also actively participated in the convention and Sammaan Samaroh.

Among those honorued at the ceremony were dancer & Padamshri Ms. Geeta Chandran, Activist Sudha Acharya, scientist Dr. Vibha Dhawan, businesswoman Shraddha Agrawal, philanthropist Parull Mahaajan, non-resident Indian lobbyist Arathi Krishna, Penguin-Random House Editor-in-Chief Milee Ashwarya, US-based entertainment & radio host Shabnam Modgil, Bahrain chief executive Kanika Dewan, Canada based radio host & charity worker Molly Banerjie, Beauty Queen Mrs. United Nations 2017 Roshini Hassan, entrepreneur Shivani Malik & rural activist Smita Shrivastva.

Addressing the gathering, Rajeev Gupta, the Editor & Publisher of NRI Achievers, said, "people say 'sky is the limit' but such limits have been left behind by those who commit to fly high. Ladies present among us today have broken all such limits in carving out a niche for themselves in our male-dominated society.

Keynote speakers at the event were Bahrain's Crown Prince's Court president Shaikh Khalifa bin Duaij Al Khalifa and Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority chief executive Shaikh Khalid bin Humood Al Khalifa. One of the highlights of the convention was a visit by the Congress president Rahul Gandhi along with a 35-member delegation of MPs, businessmen and other dignitaries. Other widely known names attending the conference were senior Congress leader Dr. Shashi Tharoor, telecom entrepreneur Sam Pitroda and senior journalist Chandan Mitra.

Addressing the gathering GOPIO president Sunny Kulathakal said, it's a great occasion for all of us that we all have gathered here to celebrate the success of women achievers. The idea of women power being felicitated in front of del-





| FEBRUARY 2018 | www.nriachievers.in







egates from all over the world was so overwhelming that achievers and GOPIO members in different countries immediately agreed to support NRI Achievers in its efforts. Mr. Kulathakal also mentioned the three-day international convention & Pravasi Sammelan in Bahrain as a proud moment for GOPIO.

International President of GOPIO Neeraj Baxi also spoke on the occasion along with other dignitaries who were present during the gala evening. Others who spoke on the occasion included the Chief Guest and Maharashtra MP as well as GOPIO special adviser Raj Purohit, Bahrain businesswoman & Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry Board Member Ms. Ahlam Janahi, UK House of Lords member & GOPIO former President Lord Diljit Rana, organizing committee chairman Varghese Kurian, reception committee chairman Soman Baby GOPIO founding president & GOPIO international chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham were among those present at the ceremony. Indian business delegation as well as PIOs participating in the convention also got an opportunity to look out for business possibilities in Bahrain.

The GOPIO international Chairman Thomas Abraham was all praises for key partners of NRI Achievers Sumit Singh, Mukesh Chandra, Chakravarthi Suchindran and Ashish Chaturvedi who put in their best efforts to make the event a great success. Editor of the magazine Rajeev Gupta also announced that NRI Achievers would soon organize another event INDIAN ACHIEVERS SAMMAAN 2018. It will be held either in Mauritius or Dubai sometime in the month of April or May. Preparations are in full swing to invite top notch dignitaries from around the world who will attend the program. FMCG Company DS Group, Who are famously known for their Catch Masala, Ramson Prime, who are the manufacturer of electrical appliances from India, Shobha Developers from UAE supported the program.

NRI Achievers Team

Glimpses of

INDIAN WOMEN ACHIEVERS SAMMAAN 2017

BAHRAIN









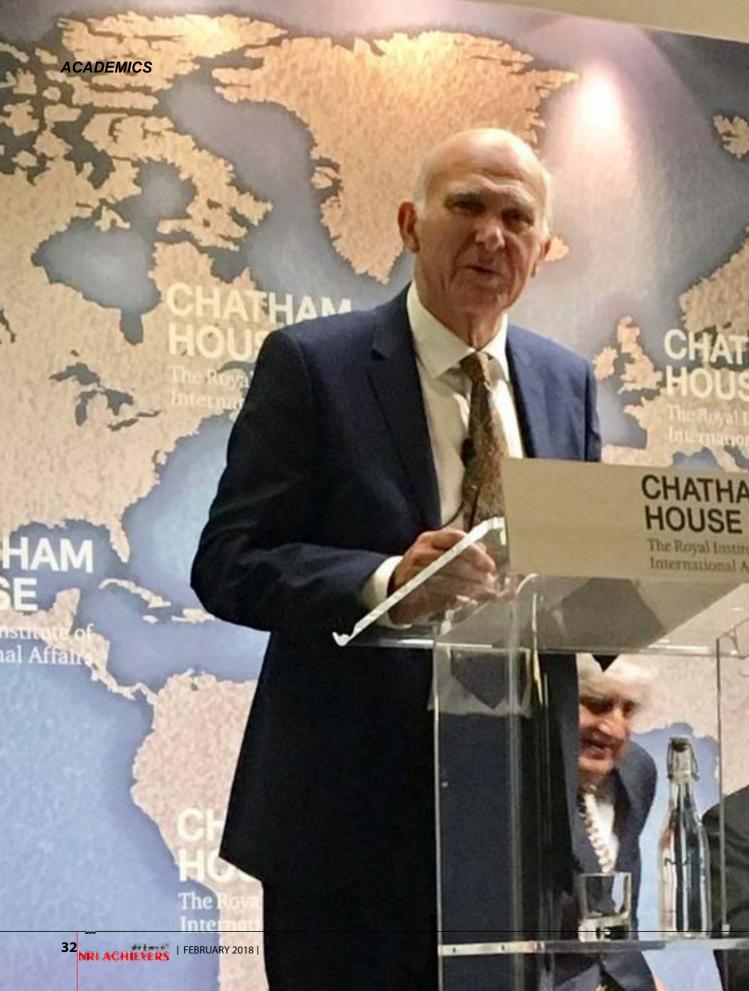












UNITED KINGDOM

Indian academics in demand

'niversities with the highest number of Indianorigin academics include Oxford, Cambridge, University College London, King's College London, Manchester, and the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, the latest HESA figures showed.

The number of Indian students coming to British higher education institutions has dwindled since 2010, but the number of academics categorised as "British Indian" has crossed the 5,000 mark for the first time, reflecting their expertise across disciplines.

The category includes Indian citizens and British citizens of Indian-origin. During 2016-17, the 5,245 academics in this group included 2,185 Indian citizens, according to new figures provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Indians have long taught various subjects in British universities, including economist Amartya Sen, educationist Sugata Mitra and engineer Kumar Bhattacharyya, but this is the first time their figure has crossed 5,000 across the United Kingdom.

In 2017, two India-born women experts, Parveen Kumar (medicine, based at the London School of Medicine) and Pratibha Gai (electron microscopy, University of York) were honoured with damehood, the female equivalent of knighthood, one of Britain's highest civilian honours.

Universities with the highest number of Indian-origin academics include Oxford, Cambridge, University College London, King's College London, Manchester, and the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, the latest HESA figures showed.

Clinical medicine is the discipline employing the highest number of such academics. Other subjects using their expertise include biosciences, business and management, mechanical, aero and production engineering, and information technology. Many of them came from India for doctoral studies and later took up academic positions.

The HESA figures complement the findings of a 2015 study that said Indian academics in research-intensive universities are preferred due to their "singlemindedness, competitiveness, resilience and work centrality", as well as their links with Indian institutions and knowledge of India.

The study found Indian academics are "singled out for jobs over other candidates" partly due to their willingness to "play the game" of prioritising research over teaching. However, they were said to be unsure about the future due to growing focus on teaching.

The study by Dulini Fernando of Warwick Business School and Laurie Cohen of Nottingham University Business School said research-intensive universities with science and engineering departments, which recruit high numbers of international staff, found that "cultural, social and domestic capital" can put Indian academics in a more favourable position than homegrown talent.

Fernando said: "The Indian academics in our study used their valuable social connections to India and important cultural knowledge to obtain highly prized symbolic capital in the form of research partnerships with leading academics in the West, thus challenging the assertion that migrants' networks and resources do not facilitate upward career mobility.

"These findings show 'ethnic capital' advantages such as cultural knowledge and networks can be used to move up the career ladder."

Fernando added that the Indian academics surveyed were comfortable with "rules which require academics to prioritise research over everything else". She attributed this quality to "single-mindedness, competitiveness, resilience and work centrality", influenced by their early experiences of overcoming challenging circumstances and growing up in a society with limited resources. A

NRI Achievers UK Bureau



ACADEMICS

So what is plaguing the universities of a country which boasts of its ancient culture which is decorated with examples of the best education systems and universities in the ancient world?

In recent decades, China has spent a huge fortune to bolster its education system especially higher education. In the process it has also allowed investments by foreign educational institutes and welcomed their entry into their country. On the other hand, India has been cautious about the entry of the foreign universities in India citing possible non-compliance with the Indian educational regulatory systems. In the past, investments by government on higher

and technical education have been minimal from the international standards, resulting in poor performance by Indian universities in the world rankings. Another strategy used by China in creating world class quality universities has been to invite and motivate Chinese scholars of eminence working in top universities abroad (especially in US and Europe) and channelizing them to create these wonderful and world class higher educational institutions. India too needs to invest and incentivize return of Indian scholars in India to create new higher educational institutions to match the world quality standards.

Moreover in last several decades, China has spent heavily on creating world class infrastructure in their universities to attract foreign students. Already China is ranked as the third most attractive destination for foreign students and likely to overtake United Kingdom as the second most attractive destination for foreign students by 2020. The questions of security for foreign students, right infrastructure to match with their lifestyles in their home countries, sports facilities etc. will remain ticklish areas for India unless government intervenes in creating the right echo-system for foreign students to enroll, reside and study in best Indian Universities. Without such improvements, Indian higher education will not be able to reach its desired global standards which are so importantly required in present geopolitical scenario.

Government of India had come out with policies to allow entry of foreign institutions in 2010 but soon it shut the doors for such entries. Present government too announced with much fanfare their own policy in 2016 to open the doors for foreign universities but all these efforts have been half hearted and not well thought or well planned. The result has been dismal for the dream of foreign quality global education in India. At the same time, more and more Indian students are heading to foreign shores to get most sought-after educational degrees. While such migration helps somewhat the aspirants themselves albeit at unaffordable costs, it does not improve the status of higher education in India.

As a matter of fact there are serious gaps in the India's



regulatory and evaluation mechanism for higher educational institutions running in India, in terms of their standards and as required presently. It is an much debated fact that India faces serious problems in its higher education system. Having the world's third largest students-base of approximately 15 million, seeking higher education opportunities, India is yet capable of educating just over 12 percent of that pool, compared to 27% in case of China and almost 50% in case of many middle income countries. With lack of quality of the institutions of higher education even this 12 percent is not able to get world class education and many are unemployable. Lack of investments, reservations for backward classes and other regulatory barriers have retarded the growth of investment in education sector either from the government side or from the private sources. Foreign universities have also not found merit in setting up their campuses in India in such an environment. An integrated policy aimed at inviting world class universities and creating its own wonderful universities with the help of Indian scholars of eminence invited from abroad is the need of the hour. Half baked policies are not likely to bring the desired results.

Another issue plaguing the higher education system in India is related to quality of output the system is generating. A large number of higher education graduates in India are unplaced despite demand being there. This situation indicates the weaknesses of our higher education system in terms of its inability to provide skills which can make our higher education graduates employable. Global higher education institutions with their vast international experience can deliver much better results and in the bargain can make Indian institutions better in providing practical and useful contents in their curriculum. However such models require an open mind policy of government of India. One way to achieve this is to study the regulatory and control mechanisms adopted by most successful countries in providing best educational systems in those countries. Excessive obsession of higher education seekers in India towards IT and engineering degrees have also caused much of these problems of so called educated unemployment. <a>A NRI Achievers Desk



HAT TRICK YUSUFF ALI





he Caledonian, a grand Edwardian hotel overlooking Edinburgh Castle, joins Yusuff Ali MA's portfolio of \$650 million worth of luxury properties across the UK, the Middle East and India. Leading NRI businessman Yusuff Ali MA has acquired an iconic Scottish hotel based in Edinburgh in a \$120 million deal clinched by Twenty14 Holdings (T14H), the hospitality investment arm of his Abu Dhabi headquartered Lulu Group International.

The Caledonian, a grand Edwardian hotel overlooking Edinburgh Castle, joins his portfolio of \$650 million worth of luxury properties across the UK, the Middle East and India. The T14H announced plans to invest \$28 million for the expansion and enhancement of the historic hotel under its ownership, while retaining its heritage and distinctive architecture. "We are excited to add The Caledonian to the portfolio of Twenty14 Holdings. With more than 100 years of history, The Caledonian brings with it a rich heritage, character and unique opulence," said Adeeb Ahamed, managing director of T14H. Ahamed added that the company plans to honour the "Scottish landmark", while adding to the experience the hotel already offers. Among some of the plans for the site, the T14H intends to engage local craftsmen to work on the hotel's historic Caledonian suites. "Luxury and style will be the keynote of these improvements. Bespoke furniture, eclectic artwork and en-suite bathrooms featuring marble and burnished chrome fittings will feature among a host of exclusive additions," T14H said.

The latest acquisition fits into the company strategy of investing in profitable luxury sites while preserving their historical legacy. The Caledonian operates under the Hilton group's flagship Waldorf Astoria brand. First opened in 1903 as part of the old Princes Street Railway Station, the hotel currently has 241 rooms and is home to two famous restaurants operated by Michelin-starred brothers Chris and Jeff Galvin—the Pompadour by Galvin and Galvin Brasserie de Luxe. It also houses the only spa by French skincare brand Guerlain in the UK, echoing the glamour of its counterpart in Paris. Twenty14 Holdings was founded in 2014 as the hospitality arm of Lulu Group International to capitalise on the growth in the global hospitality industry.

The group, which had acquired the Old Scotland Yard headquarters in London in 2015, has struck a £110 million agreement with property developer Galliard Homes to create a boutique five-star hotel on the site—1-5 Great Scotland Yard.

The custom-built 92,000 square feet project is to be called the Great Scotland Yard Hotel. Among its other properties worldwide, T14H co-owns the landmark Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat, a 230 room five-star hotel re-opened in 2016, and owns the Steigenberger Hotel Business Bay in Dubai besides hotels in Kerala and Karnataka.

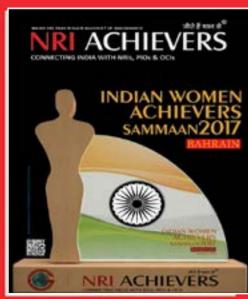
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INDIA BUDGET

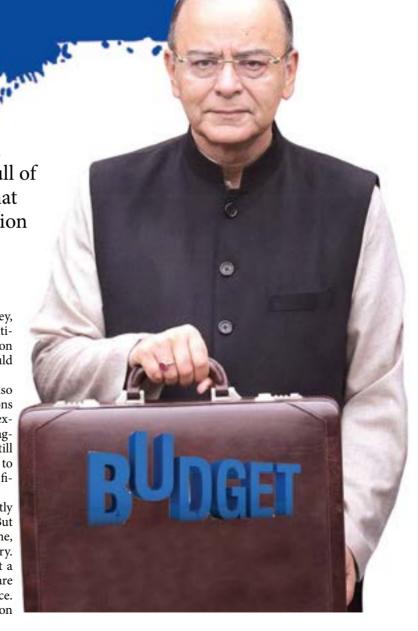
SELLING DREAMS FOR VOTES?

India's annual budget - which was unveiled on 1st Fab - is full of vague promises, suggesting that it is aimed at the general election due by mid-2019.

Before India's finance minister, Arun Jaitley, presented his fifth and final budget, political watchers suspected the general election could happen earlier. Now, they believe it could happen by the end of this year.

India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is also gearing up for 10 different state assembly elections during the course of this year. It was widely expected that Jaitley would do something for the agriculture sector - the bulk of India's workforce still depends on it. Growth in the sector is expected to come in at just 0.91% (gross value added) this financial year.

The government buys rice and wheat directly from farmers at a minimum support price. But many farmers do not benefit from this scheme, given its limited coverage across the country. Jaitley has now promised to buy other crops at a minimum price or compensate farmers who are unable to sell their produce at a minimum price. The latter is a particularly expensive proposition





but Jaitley did not explain how the expenditure would be met. The government also plans to develop and upgrade 22,000 rural markets, which will allow farmers to sell directly to consumers, including those who buy in bulk.

The release of the budget has long been an occasion where major policy directions are announced - this is something that Indian agriculture badly needs. The sector has high "disguised unemployment", which means that there are too many people trying to earn a living from agriculture. Although they seem employed, their employment is not productive, since production would not suffer if they stopped working. A recent paper by a government thinktank said that nearly 84 million people - about 25% of India's rural workforce - need to move out of agriculture for it to be economically viable. But no government up to now has addressed this problem.

In other countries, when the workforce has moved away from farming, it has found jobs in construction and real estate. But India's agricultural workforce is largely unskilled or semi-skilled. And India's investment-to-GDP ratio has been falling for the past 11 years - it peaked at 35.6% in 2007 and then slid back to 26.4% by 2017, according to the latest Economic Survey. Jobs and employment opportunities cannot be created unless investment picks up again. Mr Jaitley has tried to provide some fillip through a scheme that aims to build 5.1 million homes during 2018-2019. Earlier, the government had also announced a massive programme to build roads, which would also help.

But there's only so much the government can do given that it accounts for 12% of all expenditure. An increase in private investment requires a slew of reforms - reforms that would simplify the laws around labour, taxation and land acquisition, improving the overall ease of doing business.

The Economic Survey remained sceptical of a revival in investment: "India's investment decline seems particularly difficult to reverse." Jaitley only referred to identifying "372 specific business reform actions".

All this is even more important given that India is in the middle of a demographic dividend, with one million people entering the workforce every month. The lack of jobs for them is a huge problem. In recent years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government have made several statements which seem to show they are yet to acknowledge this problem. In his budget speech, Jaitley did not acknowledge it either. Education, or rather the lack of it, is another major

factor holding back India's workforce. The amount of money spent on education by the government (at the state and federal level) has fallen from 3.2% of the GDP in 2011-2012 to around 2.7% of the GDP in 2017-2018.

This is not surprising given that successive federal governments have continued to bail out banks, which the government has no plans of selling. "The recapitalised banks will now have a greater ability to support growth," Jaitley said. Between 2009 and now, more than 1,500bn rupees has been spent on recapitalising the 21 government-owned banks. The government also runs several organisations that are in losses.

The money needed to revive these banks or keep these failing companies running often comes at the cost of sectors such as education and health. The learning outcomes of children from India's public education system have dropped sharply over the years - nearly half the children in rural India in grades three to eight cannot meet a fairly basic learning standard.

Jaitley acknowledged this in his speech and also talked about improving the quality of teachers.

But this has been said before. Apart from allocating more money to primary education, what is required is a change in the way children are taught in Indian schools. It would have been interesting to hear more from the government about this. Instead of trying to set up a government school in every neighbourhood, the government can give poor parents education vouchers. The parents can then decide which school their children should attend. This would give parents some sort of bargaining power. But no Indian government likes market-oriented solutions.

On the health front, the government plans to launch a flagship scheme to cover more than 100 million poor and vulnerable families (approximately 500 million individual beneficiaries). The coverage extends up to 500,000 rupees (about \$7,800; £5,500) per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

Jaitley did not elaborate on how the government will pay for or implement such an ambitious scheme.

In short, Jaitley has tried to sell dreams without detailing how the government will achieve them. And, like budgets before it, this one too did not take aim at the structural problems that affect India's economy.

NRI Achievers News Network



MEHUL GARG

BEATS IQ SCORES OF EINSTEIN, HAWKING ON MENSA TEST

10-year-old Indian-origin boy in the UK has become the youngest applicant in a decade to achieve the highest score in the Mensa IQ test, beating geniuses like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking.

Mehul Garg, also known by his nickname Mahi, decided to take the test to follow in the footsteps of his elder brother, 13-year-old Dhruv Garg, who had also scored the highest score of 162 last year.

"Mahi is fiercely competitive. His elder brother had achieved the same score last year so he really wanted to prove that he is no less intelligent than his brother," said his mother Divya Garg.

The pupil of Reading Boys Grammar School in Reading, southern England, scored the maximum score of 162 to become a member of Mensa, the High IQ Society.

His score is two points higher than Einstein and Hawking and places him in the top one per cent of people in the world who achieve this distinction.

"Mehul said the paper challenged his language skills,

including analogies and definitions, and his sense of logic," said his mother.

The anxiety of the time-pressured exam did make the 10- year-old extremely nervous but cheered on by his father, Gaurav Garg, he relaxed after he had solved the initial few questions.

"I was in tears when I got the results back," Mehul said after he got the results recently.

While his passion is cricket and ice-skating, the schoolboy whose favourite subject is mathematics has ambitions of heading a major tech company

like Google. He enjoys solving the Rubik's cube under 100 seconds and is also pursuing higher grades in playing the drums.

But he and his brother also find time to pursue other projects and are currently raising funds to build an app to reduce social isolation by connecting neighbours with each other.

"We are passionate young men with an ambition to make a difference in the world around us," they write on their online fund raising page, which has already attracted over 1,300 pounds.

"They both are currently working on social projects and want to give something back, to make the world a better place. And I hope they continue on this path always. For me this is more important than their marks," said their mother. Mehul is also working towards his participation in the 'Child Genius 2018' show on Channel 4 after being shortlisted among the top 100 candidates for this year.

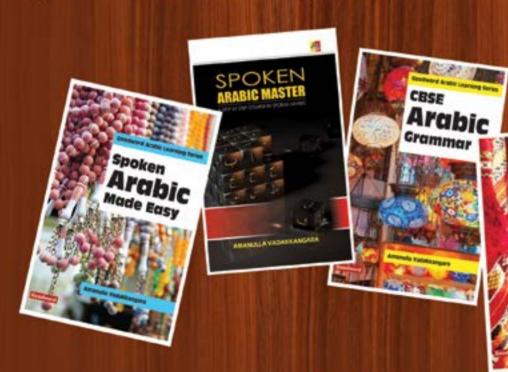
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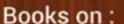
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Sushma Swaraj:

'INDIA HAS NOT JUST CHANGED, IT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED'

ndian Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj drew a huge crowd to the Marina Bay Sands for the gala dinner marking the closing of the ASEAN India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2018. Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean was also present. Swaraj had spent the day at the event, delivering the opening address in the morning before interacting with delegations of Indian-origin from the ASEAN countries and speaking again before a full house at the gala dinner.

Delivering the speech largely in Hindi, the minister highlighted the versatility of Indians across the globe and reiterated the government's commitment to ensure their talents, skills and potentials were recognised. She also stated that Indians abroad were 'unofficial ambassadors' of the nation and their actions and opinions shaped international perceptions of India.

Introduced as the "people's minister" by the High Commissioner of India, Singapore, Jawed Ashraf, Swaraj is known for using social media, especially Twitter, to handle problems faced by Indians abroad and foreign nationals.

"The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is my favourite event of all the programmes organised by the Ministry of External Affairs," the minister said in her opening remarks. She added that she had heard three things about Indians living abroad; they were good neighbours, hard-working and law-abiding residents.

"I want to add one more observation," Swaraj said, "Whenever an Indian settles abroad, he assimilates very quickly to the new conditions, but never forgets his mother country in his heart. That is why you all have



come to attend an event like the PBD." Swaraj in her speech also recounted how, until recently, the affairs of the diaspora was not a high priority for the MEA, attributing it to the existence of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA). She added that there was confusion of the division of labour between the two.

"PM Modi allotted me both the ministries, as their functions were complementary. However, I found that they had difficulties in coordination; I went to the PM and told him that the problem could not be solved by having one minister for both ministries, but by having one ministry. Then we would be able to make a difference," Swaraj said.

Swaraj went on to provide her perspective on her use of Twitter as a tool to solve the problems that came up. She praised the Indian High Commissions around the



world for being alerted to any issue and taking steps to resolve them swiftly and efficiently.

"We solve most problems within 10-15 minutes with a few tweets," she said. "You can say we work at supersonic speeds." She also praised the high commissioner and members of the government for leading from the frontlines during crises and being sensitive to the diaspora's every mood.

"India has not just changed; it has been transformed," she stated. She concluded by recounting that she had told the PM that Singapore was the most appropriate venue among the ASEAN nations for hosting this year's PBD, not just because it was taking over as the chair of the body, but as it was the nation which had proposed creating the original partnership agreement with India.

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, the guest of honour at the gala dinner, offered his congratulations to the MEA and the Indian High Commission in Singapore on a successful conference. "India has played a major role in our region and has left a mark on language, food and religion. Over the years, the cooperation between ASEAN and India has expanded to include security, trade, tourism, education, and culture," Hean said.

"The Indian diaspora has played an important role to integrate India into our regional network, and can be counted on to do so in the future as well. The strong, centuries-old socio-cultural links fostered by the diaspora have made it easier for Indian companies to strengthen their regional presence. Similarly, the diaspora acts as a catalyst to forge greater business links from our region into India," the Dy PM said.

He added that India has participated actively in ASE-AN-led cooperation platforms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, or ADMM+, and the East Asia Summit and trade relations have been enhanced by the ASEAN-India free trade agreement which came into effect from 2010. Trade between ASEAN and India has risen steadily from USD2.9 billion in 1993 to USD58.4 billion in 2016.

He also highlighted that India, which is located strategically along important sea-lanes from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, was integral to the security of South East Asia and said he was heartened as the discussions during the two-day conference had highlighted the huge potential for further cooperation between India and ASEAN.

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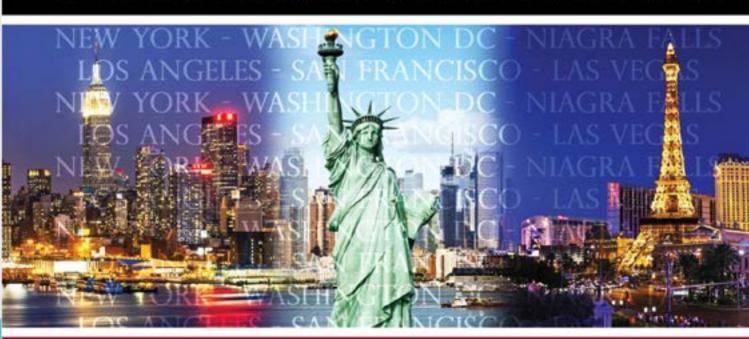
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श्रीराजेश

र्निमान राष्ट्रवादी सरकार के रहते जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट के चार जजों को पहली बार मीडिया के सामने आकर कहना पडा-'लोकतंत्र खतरे में है.' तब राष्ट्रवाद का नारा खोखला सा लगने लगता है. लोकतंत्र में 'लोक' और 'तंत्र' के खतरें का भय दिखा कर जब राजनीति सत्ता में आती है. तब 'लोक' और 'तंत्र' दोनों को यह भरोसा हो गया होता है कि अब लोकतंत्र सुरक्षित है, लेकिन 12 जनवरी, 2018 की उस शाम देश के 130 करोड़ भारतवासियों को फिर से बता गया कि जी, नहीं, लोकतंत्र अब भी खतरें में है. यह शाम दिगर शामों से कुछ निश्चित ही अलग थी और देश के इतिहास में एक नया अध्याय जोड़ रही थी कि न्याय के मंदिर 'सुप्रीम कोर्ट' के न्यायमुर्तियों को भी न्याय की उम्मीद में जन अदालत का सहारा लेना पड सकता है. यह देश के इतिहास में पहला वाकया है जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट के न्यायाधीशों को कोर्ट के बाहर अपनी बात कहने के लिए आना पड़ा. लोकतंत्र में असहमति सीमेंट का काम करती है लेकिन बगैर रेत के सीमेंट की पकड भी ढीली ही होती है. तब सवाल उठता है कि इन न्यायाधीशों के उक्त कथन कि - 'लोकतंत्र खतरें में हैं' को किस रूप में लिया जाना चाहिए.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट के चार न्यायाधीश जे चेलमेश्वर, जस्टिस रंजन गोगोई, जस्टिस मदन लोकुर और जस्टिस कुरियन जोसेफ़ जब एक साथ मीडिया से मुखातिब हुए तो केसरिया सत्ता के राष्ट्रवाद से लेकर लोकतंत्र के पहरूआ होने तक के दावों पर सवालिया निशान लग गया. हालांकि इन चार न्यायाधीशों की इस पहल की न केवल जूडिशियरी बल्कि पूरे देश में चर्चा हो रही है, गैर केसरिया राजनीतिक दलों की जैसे बाछें खिल गई हों. जब ऐसी स्थित को राजनीतिक नफा-नुक्सान् के तराजू पर तौला जाने लगे और उसी के अनुसार आचरण होने लगे तो सही में मानना पड़ेगा कि लोकतंत्र की नींव कमजोर हो रही है.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट के मुख्य न्यायाधीश का पद पहले भी कई मामलों को लेकर चर्चा के केंद्र में आ चुका है, लेकिन मुख्य न्यायाधीश के कामकाज के रवैये को लेकर ऐसा पहली बार हुआ कि चार न्यायाधीशों ने कोर्ट की परिधि से बाहर आ कर अपनी बात रखी हो. हालांकि अभी 21 और न्यायाधीश इसी मुद्दे को लेकर मुख्य न्यायाधीश दीपक



मिश्र से मिलने वाले हैं. इन पूरे मामलों को देखा जाए तो यह स्पष्ट होता है कि सप्रीम कोर्ट के इन न्यायाधीशों का बागीपन कोई युं ही नहीं है. मामला गंभीर जरूर है.

जस्टिस करियन जो कि चार न्यायाधीशों में शामिल हैं, इस विचार पर कायम हैं कि सब कुछ ठीक तो सुप्रीम कोर्ट के अंदर ही होगा. चारों जजों में दो का लगभग बाकी 21 न्यायाधीशों से मेलजोल ठीक है. वहीं बाकी दो इस विषय पर दूरी बनाए हुए हैं. खबर तो यह आ रही है कि बाकी 21 न्यायाधीशों के मुख्य न्यायाधीश से मिलने का उद्देश्य इस मामले को सुलझाना है. सप्रीम कोर्ट के चारों न्यायाधीशों ने प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस कर ये बात जनता के बीच रखी थी कि भारतीय लोकतंत्र को खतरा है क्योंकि सुप्रीम कोर्ट में सबकुछ ठीक नहीं चल रहा है. इन चारों जजों ने मख्य न्यायाधीश पर ये आरोप लगाए थे कि वो रोस्टर को अपने तरीके से चला रहे थे. यानी कि किस बेंच को कौन से मामले की सुनवाई करनी है इसमें मुख्य न्यायाधीश दीपक मिश्रा अपनी

अपने आवास पर आयोजित प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के नंबर दो जस्टिस जे चेलमेश्वर ने कहा था कि 'हम चारों इस बात पर सहमत हैं कि इस संस्थान को बचाया नहीं गया तो इस देश में या किसी भी देश में लोकतंत्र ज़िंदा नहीं रह पाएगा. स्वतंत्र और



यूं तो रोस्टर बनाना मुख्य न्यायाधीश की ही जिम्मेदारी है लेकिन इसके तहत मामलों की सुनवाई के आवंटन में कनिष्ठों को वरिष्ठों पर वरियंता देना यह साफ करता है कि इससे महत्वपूर्ण मामलों की सुनवाई और फैसले को निष्पक्ष होने से रोका जाना है.

निष्पक्ष न्यायपालिका अच्छे लोकतंत्र की निशानी है.'

'चुंकि हमारे सभी प्रयास बेकार हो गए, यहां तक कि आज सुबह भी हम चारों जाकर मुख्य न्यायाधीश से मिले, उनसे आग्रह किया. लेकिन हम अपनी बात पर उन्हें सहमत नहीं करा सके. इसके बाद हमारे पास कोई विकल्प नहीं बचा कि हम देश को बताएं कि न्यायपालिका की देखभाल करें. मैं नहीं चाहता कि 20 साल बाद इस देश का कोई बुद्धिमान व्यक्ति ये कहे कि चेलमेश्वर, रंजन गोगोई, मदन लोकुर और कुरियन जोसेफ़ ने अपनी आत्मा बेच दी है.'सवाल है कि सुप्रीम कोर्ट एक ऐसी संवैधानिक संस्था है जो केवल कानून की किताबों के आधार पर फैसला नहीं देता बल्कि वह परंपरा और नैतिकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए किसी फैसले पर पहुंचता है ऐसे में जब चारों न्यायाधीश नैतिकता के तकाजे को समझते हुए यह कहते हैं कि उन्होंने अपनी आत्मा नहीं बेची है, तब मामला कहीं और गंभीर हो जाता है.

यूं तो रोस्टर बनाना मुख्य न्यायाधीश की ही जिम्मेदारी है लेकिन इसके तहत मामलों की सुनवाई के आवंटन में कनिष्ठों को वरिष्ठों पर वरियता देना यह साफ करता है कि इससे महत्वपूर्ण मामलों की सुनवाई और फैसले को निष्पक्ष होने से रोका जाना है. लेकिन यह इतना भी सरल और सहज ढंग से नहीं हो सकता. मख्य न्यायाधीश का पद जिम्मेदारी का पद है और इस पद पर बैठे किसी न्यायाधीश से ऐसे पक्षपात की उम्मीद नहीं की जा सकती लेकिन उसी कोर्ट के चार अन्य वरिष्ठ न्यायाधीशों का इस पर सवाल उठाना न केवल देश में लोकतंत्र पर बल्कि न्यायतंत्र के भी खतरें में जाने का संकेत देता है. यह मामला केवल कुछ न्यायाधीशों का बागी होना भर नहीं कहा जा सकता. 🛭

> (लेखक अंग्रेजी मासिका पत्रिका CULT CURRENT के संपादक हैं.)

'ACHIEVEMENTS OF INDIAN DIASPORA: A POINT OF PRIDE FOR INDIA'



PIO parliamentarian conference: PM Modi says 'reform to transform is our guiding principle. As many as 120 parliamentarians from 23 countries participated in the conference. Prime Minister Modi delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session of the PIO Parliamentarian Conference at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj delivered the opening remarks.

peaking at the first 'PIO Parliamentarian Conference' at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra at Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi heaped praise on India and people of Indian origin.

"No matter where they are, I believe your ancestors will be very happy to see you all here. Everyone Indians go, they integrate into the diaspora. They take up the culture, sports and the other everyday things of their surrounding environment," said Modi.

Talking about the pride India feels, he said, "Your achievements are a point of pride for us. Even when you are nominated for political office anywhere, we are very happy. You affect geo-politics and the world and frame laws. Indians watching these developments are very happy to hear about your achievements."

Turning to India, Modi said the country had developed rapidly in the last few years. "India is changing. We are ranked high on the World Competitiveness Index, Logistics Performance Index and other such indices. Organisation like World Bank, IMF, Moodys all look at India positively. Sectors like air transport, mining, computers, electrical equipment have all seen enormous investment in the last three years. Our motto is 'Reform to Transform'. We want transparency and freedom from corruption. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has eliminated multiple taxes across the country. There is no sector where we have not brought reforms. India is a young State, and the government is working for its youngsters. Multiple schemes are in place for them," said Modi.

Modi then spoke about the developing infrastructure in the country. He said that new railway lines and national highways are being built. Where the shipping industry had zero growth earlier, now it is up to 11 percent, Modi added.

"We believe in 'Vaasudev Kutumbakam'. The values of Indian culture and civilisation can guide a world gripped in increasing instability. On my suggestion, World Yoga Day was celebrated on such a large scale. We are the first responders in a crisis. In Yemen, we saved not just our citizens but also people from 48 other countries. Indian soldiers laid down their lives in World War I and World War II even though the country did not have any economic interest in the wars. Our relationship with a country is not based on give and take, it is based on humanity. We don't have an interest in exploiting anyone's resources or taking away anyone's territory," said Modi.

Modi then turned to the relationship between Indian and the attendees. "Whenever I travel, I like to meet people of Indian origin. I have met many of you like this. The reason is that you are permanent ambassadors of the country. My government has tried to connect to Indians overseas and solve their problems. Earlier we had different schemes and ministries



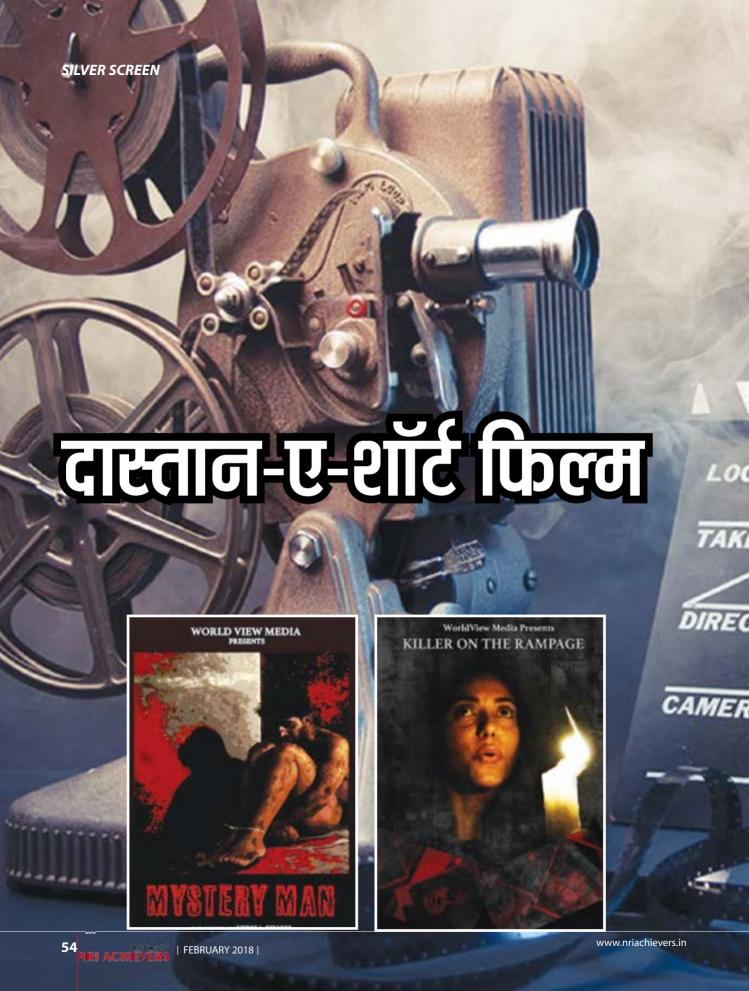
but now it is all integrated under the external affairs ministry. Sushma Swaraj is working for you constantly. Overseas residents can help us in many ways. You send remittances and we are thankful for that. You can also invest in India. We know your experience is important for the betterment of India. You can take India to the world. We want to be with you when you succeed," said Modi.

He ended his speech by thanking them for taking out the time and coming to the conference. He said that he hoped to meet them next year as well.

Over 140 Indian origin MPs and mayors from 23 countries converged in New Delhi as part of the conference which was inaugurated by the prime minister. The conference seeks to boost ties with these countries by leveraging the diaspora links, secretary (consular, passport, visa and overseas Indian affairs) in the MEA, Dnyaneshwar M Mulay, had said earlier.

Mulay said invitations were sent to 30 countries after getting feedback on diaspora presence there from various Indian missions, of which 23 confirmed participation. "A total of 141 public representatives from these countries participated. 124 MPs from the UK, Canada, Fiji, Kenya, Mauritius, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and other countries took part. Besides, 17 mayors, including from the US, Malaysia, Switzerland, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago also joined the day-long event," he said.

NRI Achievers News Bureau



अविनाश त्रिपाठी

द्ध हो चुकी 19वी शताब्दी के पैरहन पर एक दिन सफ़ेद पारदर्शी रौशनी कुछ चित्र खींच देती है. देखते ही देखते इन चित्रों में आत्मा आ जाती है और एक दूसरी दुनिया बसने लगती है. एक नई और पूर्ण कला दुनिया के सामने आती है जिसको लोग सिनेमा के नाम से जानने लगते हैं. दरअसल, सिनेमा वो जादू है जिसमें चमत्कृत करने के भाव तब भी थे, आज भी हैं.

सिनेमा का अपने शुरुआती दिनों की कुछ मिनट की छोटी कॉमिक फिल्मों से बड़ी फीचर फिल्मों तक का सफर भी अत्यंत रोचक रहा है, ग्रिफिथ की 'बर्थ ऑफ़ नेशन' के पहले की ज़्यादातर फ़िल्में कम समय की तथा किसी एक विषय पर केंद्रित थीं. इन छोटी-छोटी फिल्मों में दृश्य संयोजन के अपने-अपने तरीके थे. कोई सर्वमान्य नियम या व्याकरण विकसित नहीं हो पाया था. धीरे-धीरे सिनेमा की विकास यात्रा के दौरान नियम, रचना, एस्थेटिक्स सब बनने लगे. सिनेमा अब एक सम्पूर्ण कला का आकार ले चुका था और इसमें तमाम कला-विधाएँ सम्मिलित हो चुकी थीं. सच तो यह है कि कविता, कहानी, पेंटिंग (किसी एक फ्रेम को फ्रीज़ करके). संगीत इत्यादि विधाओं के सूत्रों का इकट्ठा होकर एक माला गुथना जो करिश्मा करता है, वहीं वो सिनेमा कहलाता है. इस नए कला माध्यम की न सिर्फ विश्वसनीयता बढ़ रही थी बल्कि खुद बयानी और कहानी कहने के बेहतरीन नैरेटिव की वजह से कई साहित्यकार भी इस माध्यम को अपना रहे थे. ख्वाजा अहमद अब्बास, गुलजार सहित कई साहित्यकार सिनेमा को माध्यम से अपनी कहानी कहने

लेकिन इस माध्यम की जहाँ अपनी ख़ूबसूरती और परिपूर्णता थी, वहीं इसके अत्यंत महंगा होने के कारण बहुत सी कहानियाँ गर्भावस्था में ही दम तोड़ने लगीं. नतीजतन, कम पैसे में विजुअल नैरेटिव की मांग दुबारा से उस विधा की तरफ मुड़ने लगी जहाँ कुछ मिनट में ही अपनी कहानी कही जानी होती है. यहीं से शार्ट फिल्म ने दोबारा खुद को आधुनिकता में रंग कर ऐसे पेश किया कि हर कोई अपनी कहानी अपने-अपने लहजे में अपनी-अपनी अदायगी से बताने लगा.

इन तमाम कोशिशों के बावजूद अहम सवाल यह था कि आखिर इस फिल्मों को कहां प्रदर्शित किया जाए. सालों तक अपनी रचनात्मक प्रतिभा का जयघोष करने का माध्यम बनी शार्ट फिल्में देश-विदेश में आयोजित फिल्म फेस्टिवल्स का मुंह देखती रहती थीं. सिर्फ यही एक माध्यम था जो उनकी प्रतिभा को एक छोटा बाजार, देखने को कुछ बुद्धिजीवी और फिल्म-मेकर प्रदान करता था. शॉर्ट फिल्में अभी भी आम इंसान की दस्तरस से बहुत दूर किसी जलते चिराग की तरह थीं.

इस बड़ी परेशानी को डिजिटल क्रांति ने दूर किया जब डिजिटल कैमरे के साथ-साथ यूट्यूब और विमेओ जैसे सोशल-मीडिया प्लेटफार्मों ने शॉर्ट फिल्मों की रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति को आम आदमी की जद में ला दिया. यही नहीं, लगभग मुफ्त में उपलब्ध विभिन्न एडिटिंग सॉफ्टवेयरों ने खुद के शूट किये रॉ-फुटेज को एडिट करना भी आसान कर दिया. सस्ते डिजिटल कैमरे द्वारा, जिसे संचालित करने के लिए बड़े और महंगे पाठ्यक्रमों नहीं बल्कि थोड़ी सी एस्थेटिक्स की जानकारी चाहिए, ऑटो-मोड पर भी फिल्म को शूट किया जा सकता था. अब सिनेमेटोग्राफी के लिए गहन तकनीकी ज्ञान, लाइटिंग-सेंस इत्यादि अनिवार्य नहीं रह गए क्योंकि आधुनिक कैमरे खुद ब खुद सब संचालित कर लेते हैं. बिना मैन्युअल-मोड के कहानी के कथ्य और क्राफ्ट को सुरुचिपूर्ण तरीके से कहा जा सकता था.

शॉर्ट फिल्म को दिखाने के लिए पूरा विश्व बाजार यूट्यूब जैसे डिजिटल वीडियो प्लेटफार्म के रूप में उपलब्ध था. सिर्फ अभिव्यक्ति और रचनात्मक प्रक्रिया ही नहीं, अब कम लागत के रिटर्न की भी आस हो गयी. एक निश्चित संख्या से ज़्यादा दर्शक मिलने पर यूट्यूब फिल्मकार को पैसा भी देना लगा.

इस प्रक्रिया ने विश्व सहित भारत के शार्ट फिल्म बनाने वालों के लिए क्रांति का काम किया. अब दिल में फांस की तरह गड़ी हुई बहुत सी कहानियाँ, दर्द में रूह खुरचती किवताएं, ख़ुशी में खिलखिलाती कलेजे से निकली बातें अब रुपहले परदे की मुन्तजिर नहीं रह गयीं. कोई भी साधारण डिजिटल कैमरे से फिल्म बनाकर यूट्यूब जैसे माध्यम पर अपलोड कर देता और लोग उनकी कहानी कहने की कला पर वारे-वारे हो जाते. समाज की बहुत सी बातें, कहानी कहने के नए क्राफ्ट, किवताएं सब के सब कभी शार्ट फिल्म तो कभी विजुअल डाक्यूमेंट्स की तरह उभरने लगीं. यूट्यूब विजुअल माध्यम का दिया बन गया. युवा फिल्मकार साल दर साल किसी बड़े फिल्म निर्माता का असिस्टेंट होने के बजाय अपनी कहानी अपने लहजे में कहते हुए अपने क्राफ्ट के बल पर बड़े प्रॉडक्शन हाउस के दरवाजे पर दस्तक देने लगे.

देश में शार्ट फिल्म फेस्टिवल को पॉपुलर बनाने में बड़ा योगदान देने वाले शामियाना के संस्थापक सायरस फ दस्तूर के मुताबिक आजकल की व्यस्त दुनिया में लोगों का अटेंशन-स्पेन बेहद कम हो गया है. ऐसे में मोबाइल पर अच्छे कंटेंट वाली शार्ट फिल्म देखना उनके लिए सुविधाजनक होता है. हालाँकि सायरस के अनुसार जैसा कि लोगों को लगता है यूट्यूब पैसा कमाने का बेहतर माध्यम नहीं हैं. नेटफ्लिक्स जैसे कुछ डिजिटल प्लेटफार्म जुरूर बेहतर रिटर्न दे रहे है.

अपनी कहानी को अलग लहजे में कहने के लिए कई बड़े फिल्म मेकर भी आजकल शार्ट फिल्म का सहारा ले रहे है. अनुराग कश्यप, सुधीर मिश्रा सहित कई प्रतिष्ठित फिल्म मेकर भी आजकल कम बजट की शार्ट फिल्म बना रहे हैं. 'मिस्ट्री मै' और 'किलर ऑन द रैम्पेज' जैसी चर्चित शार्ट फिल्म बनाने वाली विभा सिंह ने शार्ट फिल्म को क्रिएटिव एक्सप्रेशन का सबसे बेहतर माध्यम बताया. विभा के अनुसार बेहद महंगे हो गए फिल्म माध्यम में शार्ट फिल्म एक निर्देशक के रचनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का सस्ता, कारगर और बेहतर माध्यम है. यही नहीं बल्कि नेटफ्लिक्स और अमेजन जैसे माध्यम ने शॉर्ट फिल्मों को बेहद मजबृत और डिजिटल फ्लेटफार्म उपलब्ध करवा दिया है.

नई पीढ़ों को निर्भरता डिजिटल मीडिया पर बढ़ने की वजह से अब ये फिल्म अच्छा व्यावसायिक प्रोडक्ट भी बन रही है. यही वजह रही की पिछले कुछ वक्त में टीवी सीरीज की तुलना में वेब सीरीज या वेब एपिसोड का चलन बेहद तेजी से बढ़ा है. अब युवा फिल्म मेकर टीवी या बड़े परदे पर अपनी फिल्म प्रदर्शित करने के बजाय सीधे डिजिटल प्लेटफार्म पर रिलीज़ कर रहे हैं. देखते-देखते वेब फिल्मों का भी दौर आ गया है जहाँ पर करोड़ों रुपये लगाकर सिर्फ इस माध्यम के लिए फिल्म बनायीं जा रही है जो अब डिस्ट्रीब्यूटर, थिएटर की मोहताज़ नहीं. यही नहीं, बहुत से लेखक, किव तथा अन्य साहित्यकार भी अपनी रचनाओं को विजुअल लहजा देकर डिजिटल प्लेटफार्म पर ला रहे हैं जिससे नयी पीढ़ी उनकी रचनाओं अपने ग्राह्य तरीके से सुन पाए और आनंद ले सके.

(लेखक जाने माने फिल्म समीक्षक हैं)

CINEPPETS

RANI MUKERJI CANCELS TV SHOW SHOOT DUE TO BACK INJURY

ctor Rani Mukerji, who is awaiting the release of her comeback film Hichki. had to cancel the shoot for India's Next Superstar after developing acute back pain. The TV show features Rani's close friend Karan Johara one of the judges, apart from Golmaal Again director Rohit Shetty. The actor, who was supposed to promote Hichki on the Star Plus show, injured her back a few days ago. Nevertheless. Rani reached the show's set for the episode but after the pain aggravated, she decided to skip the shoot, says a source from the set.

SHAH RUKH KHAN MAKES FUN OF HIS RAEES CHARACTER

You can always count on the Badshah of Bollywood, Shah Rukh Khan, to make things seem funnier than they are with his brilliant wit and charm. Shah Rukh can even turn a serious government affair like International Customs Day into a completely fun event. Bollywood stars graced the big event in Mumbai. While SRK performed to great cheer from the audience, other actors like Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Anushka Sharma and Ranveer Singh were also seen performing at the function. When SRK finally took the stage, the gathered crowd started yelling "Raees". Shah Rukh, as usual, quickly turned things around with a joke saying, "Mai sirf ek baat bolna chahta hu, wo film me character tha ek to custom wale mujhe serious na lein kabhi as Raees. Wo smuggler type tha, mujhe lagta hai bilkul accha nahi tha. Aur jab mai dadhi karta hun tab aisa hota hu, aisa mai hoon nahi. (I do not want the customs officers to take the character I played in Raees seriously. He was a smuggler of sorts, I never really developed a fondness for the character. I only look like a smuggler when I grow my beard, I am not actually one."



FARAH KHAN RETURNS TO CHOREOGRAPHY

arah Khan has made every superstar dance to her tunes. However, a decade back, she took a break from choreographing stating that her main aim was to make films and become a full time director. But now, Farah has returned to choreographing for Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter. The special song is a part of their Bollywood debut, Dhadak, which is the Hindi remake of Marathi superhit Sairat. The film is being produced by Farah's good friend Karan Johar. No points for guessing the





song. Yes, it is the popular track from Sairat titled "Zinghat". Well, Farah is to choreograph the new version of the song for this Shashank Khaitan directorial. Farah shared a picture on her Instagram account revealing her latest stint as a choreographer. The new song is called "Jhingaat". Farah wrote, "Keeping it under wraps!! Doing JHINGAAT all night With #gennext @ishaan95 @jahnvii.kapoor "In other picture she had shared with Shashank, Farah wrote, "Night shoot!! #comingoutofretirement for Shashank Khaitan." While this announcement has made us extremely excited, it somewhere has made us nervous too whether or not.

KANGANA RANAUT ON HER BOND WITH KARAN JOHAR



lot has been said and done around nepotism in the past one year. It has been a complete blame game between two of Bol-▲lywood's A-listers – Kangana Ranaut and Karan Johar. However, 2018 began on quite a shocking note when a picture of the two surfaced from one of the episodes of reality show India's Next Superstar. We saw Kangana and KJo exchanging smiles, which raised speculations whether the two have resolves their differences. While the episode

in question got aired this weekend, Kangana later cleared air about the entire thing and rejected claims of any sort of new friendship developing between her and the ace director. In an interview, Kangana mentioned that she did not want him to change but just brought the issue of nepotism under light just like several other issues she had spoken about in the past. "I have been on his (Karan) other show and met him otherwise too. See, I don't have a personal agenda no matter who I have spoken about. I have always spoken about issues be it nepotism, exploitation, sexual harassment, these are issues. Not that I am always right, I have been wrong in many instances in life.

ANUSHKA SHARMA PICKS UP THE SUI DHAAGA

nushka Sharma and Varun Dhawan ended 2017 on an exciting note. They had announced their next project Sui Dhaaga, under the banner of Yash Raj Films, which would see Varun and Anushka sharing screen space for the first time. While we had seen Varun gearing up to know about his character inside out, now it is Anushka who is seen learning the art of sewing and embroidering. Well, this love story is surely going to be a different one. Last year, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, the makers of Sui Dhaaga had released a video in which Varun and Anushka were seen saying, "Jo bana lauh se, lahu se, aag se, desh ke liye bana, desh se bana. Satya ka tha aagrah, nayi thi kalpana.'



JHANVI'S GLAMOROUS AVATARS A CONCERN FOR MOM SREEDEVI

hanvi Kapoor, daughter of Bollywood beauty Sridevi and producer Boney Kapoor, is yet to boast of a film released. But the aspiring actress is already the talk of the town for her stunning looks. Sridevi too doesn't leave any stone unturned to ensure that her daughter secures a permanent position in the audience's hearts just like she did. However, if reports are to be believed, Ihanvi's glamorous appearances at public events are causing much headache for Sridevi. The twenty year old lass is already a fashionista and often grabs eyeballs for her extremely glamorous avatars. It seems ace designer Manish Malhotra is Jhanvi's favorite couturier as the young fashionista has been spotted at various public events dressed in beautiful clothes designed by Manish. Sridevi and Jhanvi Kapoor turned up at the Lakme Fashion Week recently and the paparazzi apparently went berserk spotting the mother daughter duo.





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