



HELPING HANDS  
Of Indian-American  
Community , IRMA  
Hurricane Sweeps Florida

AAPI LAUDS  
DR. VIVEK MURTHY  
for contributions in  
public health

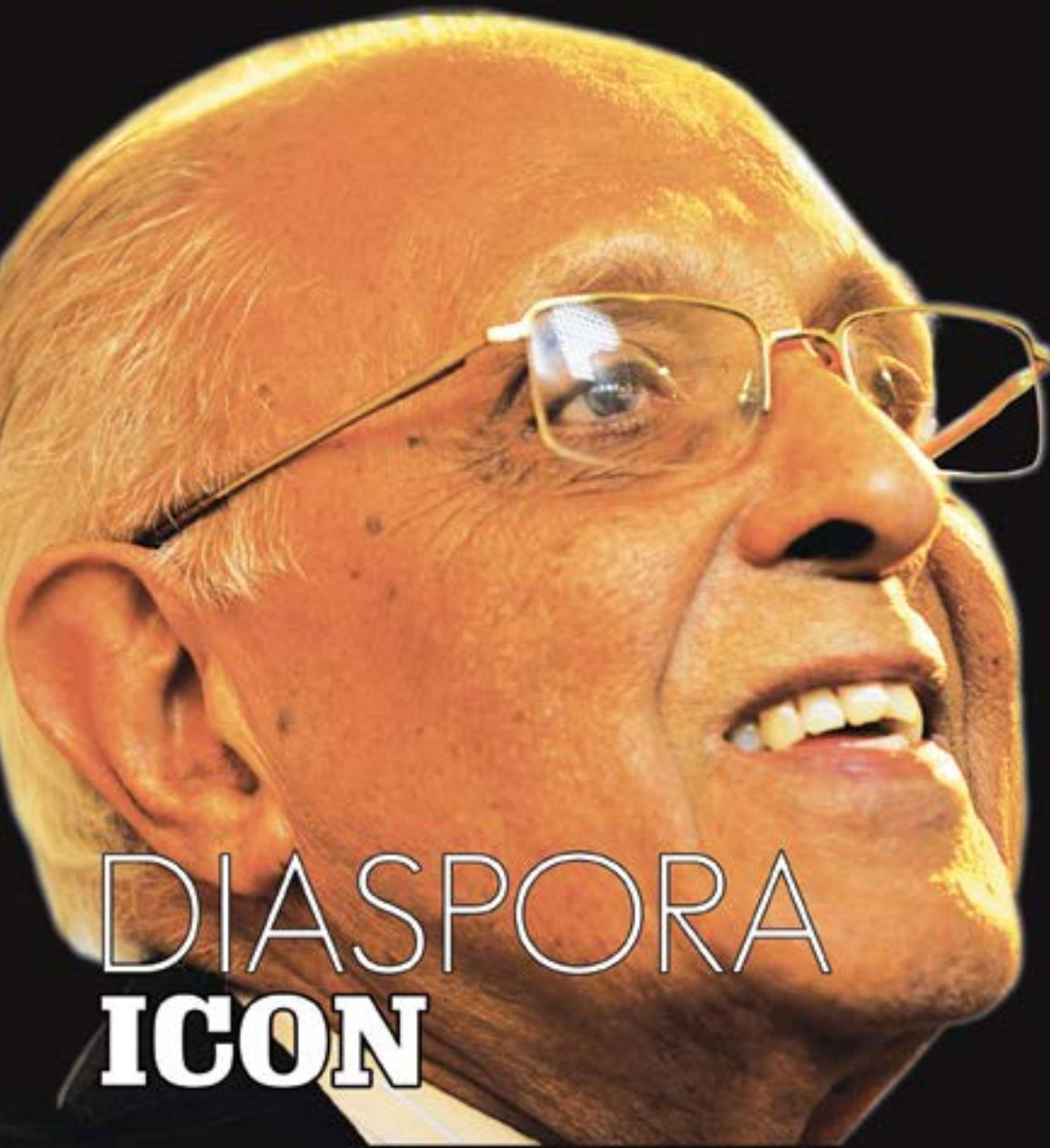


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# NRI ACHIEVERS

AN INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE CONNECTING INDIA WITH NRIs, PIOs & OCIs



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# NRI ACHIEVERS

AN INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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CONNECTING 'INDIA' WITH NRIs, PIOs & OCIs ALL AROUND THE WORLD

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# LETTERS MATTER

## MESSAGE FOR ALL

OFBJP has been working very hard to support PIO, OCI and NRI community in need in The Netherlands. OFBJP Management team would like to inform you that if there is any Undesirable case such as sudden death of a person who doesn't have relative or money for cremation, the Indian Embassy helps all such people. So far it is OFBJP experience that the Indian Embassy in The Netherlands has taken immediate action and has been extremely supportive. In our recent meeting with his excellency Ambassador of India Venu Rajamony told OFBJP that "The Indian Embassy is always there for the people of Indian origin and will do everything in their capacity to provide necessary support. "OFBJP encourages you all that when such event takes place please contact Indian Embassy directly. OFBJP will continue to inform Indian Embassy of such incidents. OFBJP thanks the Indian Embassy for providing such excellent support. In case you have any further questions or need assistance please contact Mr. Vinayak Desai, Head of Social & Embassy Affairs.

*OFBJP, Netherlands*

## INCLUDE CUISINE & RECIPES

Thank you for keeping me on your subscription and mailing list, it keeps me happy and I do read your magazine quite regularly. It is my opinion that you could include some more content that will be of interest to housewives like me, for instance, a section on culinary matters like various regional Indian cuisines, and a few recipes to go with them. Also, you could add some content on beauty tips, and such other tidbits of information that could interest home-bound women. Hope to see such content appearing on the pages of your magazine soon.

*Meena Sharma, Dehra Dun*

## ADD NEW TOPICS!

Dear NRI-A team, your magazine is chock-a-block with fairly well-researched and attractive content, it has made me a fan and I read every issue online. I will appreciate if you add more topics, especially those that are related to education opportunities, fashion and jewellery, etc. Another thing I like about the magazine is that almost all pictures are awesome, many are like, keepers. I think you should also

add more pages to accommodate new sections and new topics.

*Poonjola kanti Karan, Fiji*

## BOUQUETS & BRICKBATS!

It is human nature to aspire and try to achieve better things. And NRI Achievers really unfolds the layers of its toil to showcase major and informative stories month after month, covering leads from political arenas to the world of entertainment, business and social life. It touches lives with its narration of stories about achievers, and often brings to the fore unsung heroes and tells you of their unassailable passion for work. If you are looking for a mag that not only gives info but also inspires you a lot, you have found it – and this is it. Starting with its powerful editorial, this magazine takes you across different portals via its cover feature, realpolitik, Indian achievers, real estate, silver screen and many more. After a rather heavy dose of information it leaves you browsing with entertainment, depicting silver screen. Now coming to the part of its appearance. Graphics, pictures, and layouts will please you easily, as it is pleasingly crafted, and is neat and attractive. But yes, we all know no one is perfect in this world, and NRI-A is no exception here, and has a few flaws. The tagline 'jeete hai shaan se' is rather stale and too common. Achievers always live with shaan including NRI ACHIEVERS. There is nothing new in it as they already live with shaan. The very word Achievers is in itself too strong. To define it, there is a need of another powerful word which could instill enthusiasm in the readers. Heroic souls are one of the examples. Editorial page has also drawn my attention as editor name is missing from the page. To know that you need to glance at the masthead. We all know, its the 21st century and people have hardly time to go through each page.

*Dr. Senoka Issaac, Abu Dhabi, UAE*

## WHY NOT EDUCATION ?

All good wishes for your magazine. It's a nice and eye-catching media product both for NRIs like us and other Indians as well. All the content and visual material is nicely presented, attractive. One thing which stuck me though was that you are ignoring a vastly important sector, Education. Especially when there is all this talk about raising skill levels in India, academic or even vocational. There is also another missing component, sports. I am an MBA student, and I would welcome any information about the expanding opportunities in the Indian education system. Hope you will pay heed to thoughts expressed by people like me.

*Akash Sharma, London, UK*

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बीते कुछ सालों में दुनिया के विकसित देशों में भी रोजगार के अवसर कम हुए हैं और इसकी वजह से उन देशों में संरक्षणवादी रवैया बढ़ा है. अमेरिका से लेकर ब्रिटेन तक में स्थानीय लोगों को रोजगार के ज्यादा अवसर उपलब्ध कराने के लिए इन देशों की सरकारें Reservation तक की व्यवस्था पर विचार कर रही हैं.



## एक पत्थर तो तबियत से उछालो यारों...

**वै**श्विक व्यवस्था में बदलाव बड़ी तेजी से हो रहे हैं. दुनिया सिमटती जा रही है-दूरियां कम होती जा रही हैं. विज्ञान व तकनीक ने इस बदलाव की यात्रा को न केवल सुगम बना दिया है बल्कि Development oriented भी बनाया है. बावजूद इसके, अब समय यह भी आ गया है कि इस शुक्ल पक्ष की चांदनी के पीछे के कृष्ण पक्ष के अंधेरे पर विचार कर उन्हें दूर करने का प्रयास हो. वस्तुतः अंधेरे का अपना कोई अस्तित्व नहीं होता, वह प्रकाश की कमी का प्रतिफल है. बस हमें उस प्रकाश पुंज को ही तो वहां ले जाना है जहां प्रवासियों के सरोकारों के सूक्ष्म मुद्दे भी उभर कर सामने आएँ और उनका निदान हो सके.

लगभग दो दशक पहले तक हमें यह भी सटीक तौर पर ज्ञात नहीं था कि हमारे देश और हमारे मूल के कितने लोग किन-किन देशों में प्रवास कर रहे हैं या रह रहे हैं. लेकिन इस अंधेरे को दूर करने में प्रवासी भारतीय के संगठन और सरकार का पृथक् प्रवासी मंत्रालय अपनी भूमिका निभाने की कोशिश कर रहा है. इसी वजह से हमारे अपने, हमारे और करीब आएँ और उनके करीब आने से उनकी चकाचौंध भरी जिंदगी के साथ ही प्रवासी जीवन के अंधेरे पहलू से हम कुछ ना कुछ ही रू-ब-रू हुए.

सबसे अहम है प्रवासियों की सुरक्षा, उनका सम्मान, उनके आर्थिक हित. आगे भी यही मुद्दे चर्चा में रहने वाले हैं, पर इनमें कई नए पहलू लगातार जुड़ रहे हैं, उन पर चर्चा भी जरूरी है. प्रवासी भारतीयों की एक बड़ी Problem है, जो बहुत पुरानी भी है, उस पर भी Seriously विचार होना चाहिए. वह है विदेशों में काम करने वाले भारतीय मजदूरों की. ये मजदूर आईटी क्रांति होने और विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था के liberal होने के काफी पहले से विदेशों में काम करने जाते रहे हैं. अक्सर ऐसा होता है कि मजदूर विदेश जाते हैं और उनका पासपोर्ट उन्हें नौकरी देने वाली कंपनी द्वारा रख लिया जाता है. बीते कुछ सालों में दुनिया के विकसित देशों में भी रोजगार के अवसर कम हुए हैं और इसकी वजह से उन देशों में संरक्षणवादी रवैया बढ़ा है. अमेरिका से लेकर ब्रिटेन तक में स्थानीय लोगों को Employment के ज्यादा अवसर उपलब्ध कराने के लिए इन देशों की सरकारें Reservation तक की व्यवस्था पर विचार कर रही हैं.

प्रवासी भारतीयों के आर्थिक हितों को लेकर भी काफी चर्चा हुई है. अगर एक NRI भारत के किसी भी राज्य में कुछ Invest करना चाहता है और देश के विकास में भागीदार बनना चाहता है तो उसे Priority पर सुविधाएं मिलनी चाहिए. लेकिन ऐसा हो नहीं रहा. आमतौर पर जो NRIs बड़े उद्योगपति हैं, उन्हें तो अपने Business स्थापित करने में आसानी होती है. लेकिन छोटे Investors के साथ कई किस्म की समस्याएं आड़े आ जाती हैं. ऐसे अनेक प्रवासी हैं, जो अपने Home Town में कोई छोटा कारोबार या उद्योग स्थापित करना चाहते हैं, पर उनकी चाहत देश की लालफीताशाही में उलझ कर दम तोड़ देती है. इसलिए उनके आर्थिक हित किस तरह सुरक्षित हों, उनका Investment कैसे सुरक्षित रहे और वे किस तरह से आसानी से अपना कारोबार शुरू कर सकें, इस पर सिर्फ विचार ही नहीं बल्कि कार्रवाही भी जरूरी है. संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ की सुरक्षा परिषद में भारत को स्थायी सदस्यता दिलाने में ये प्रवासी भारतीय बड़ी भूमिका निभा सकते हैं. चिंताएं अनेक हैं, समस्याएं अनेक हैं- लेकिन समाधान के रास्ते भी अनेक हैं. बस शिद्दत से एक प्रयास की जरूरत है. बकौल दुष्यंत कुमार के-

कैसे आकाश में सूर्याख हो नहीं सकता,  
एक पत्थर तो तबियत से उछालो यारों.

- राजीव गुप्ता, एडिटर



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by a non-resident Indian woman!





CHAKRAVARTHY SUCHINDRAN  
Consulting Editor

# AT THE CROSSROADS?

**F**irst and foremost, we at NRI Achievers feel that an apology is due to our loyal readers who have stayed with us through thick and thin ... we are indeed very sorry to have been inordinately late with our past few issues. So much so that some of you have even queried our editorial desk about it. We have therefore taken it upon ourselves to make amends, and here is the first tranche of outcomes – to start with this issue. It is a sort of mega-issue in the run-up to our fifth anniversary that is just round the corner in September-October this year. We have tried to bring back some of the favoured sections that many of you might be missing, as we strive to revamp and reshape the content mix yet another time. Do be patient with us and also a mite charitable if you will ... by overlooking the wee lapses that have been plaguing our release schedules these past few months.

The world is in a flux, what with the Middle East in flames, Europe struggling with keeping the clan together and grappling with a refugee crisis of monumental proportions, the US under Trump by and large sending out contradictory signals vexing friend and foe alike, and a realignment of power equations looming on an increasingly complex world. In this global context India so far seems to be sailing in placid international waters, to some extent insular and unaffected, but that could well be a lull before the storm one fears. Domestically too there are no major vexatious issues both politically and economically. GST, or one single uniform tax regimen across the country, was implemented more or less smoothly last month. It will, however, take some months before opportunistic profiteering and spreading of misinformation subsides. And yes, India has a new President in HE Ram Nath Kovind. An advocate and a former governor of Bihar, Kovind, 71, will be the second Dalit leader since Independence to occupy India's highest ceremonial post after RK Narayanan.

In our immediate neighbourhood there are some tensions and unforeseen developments – the Chinese keep needling us at our common borders, Pakistan is in a state of flux after indictment of its Prime Minister, and the Nepal constitutional problem has Indian repercussions. All in all, nothing earth-shaking, but just the same old messy situation all around.

NRI Achievers has been more of a work-in-progress for the past two three months, as we seek to shift gears and beef-up our online presence to make it evolve into a platform of choice for our Diaspora and domestic readers, when they want to access news, views, features and quality information on connecting with diaspora communities and the ever growing great Indian story. This attempt will now gradually start reflecting not only on our website, but also in the shape and structure of our print products, and of course NRI Achievers and Indian Achievers. We are leaving no stone unturned to strengthen Diaspora connect, and bring back popular columns that have dropped by the wayside over the years. But that said and done, the character remains unchanged, as we retain most of our other newsy sections and others continue as before.

We hope you will find this issue in your hands richer, more interesting, and well worth a read. Have a great month ahead, it is adieu until the next issue!

*The world is in a flux,  
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tions looming on an  
increasingly complex  
world.*

## 40% DECLINE IN US VISAS FOR PAK, 28% INCREASE FOR INDIA



Pakistan has had a significant 40 percent drop in the number of American visas granted to its nationals under the new Trump administration, despite not being on the list of the US President's travel ban countries. Interestingly, the number of non-immigrant US visas

to Indians has increased by 28 percent in March and April this year, as compared to the monthly average of the previous year, according to the newly-released monthly official data. Non-immigrant visas granted to Pakistanis are down by 40 percent in March and April this year compared to the 2016 monthly average, a Pakistani media report said, quoting data released by the US State Department. Pakistanis were issued 3,925 non-immigrant visas in April and 3,973 visas in March 2017 under the Trump administration. The Obama administration last year issued a total of 78,637 non-immigrant visas to Pakistanis with a monthly average of 6,553, which was 40 percent higher than the current average. Before March this year, the State Department did not release monthly breakdowns of visas and only annual figures were available. The report compared the March and April 2017 figures with monthly averages for 2016. Even in 2015, monthly average remained 6,179 as a total of 74,150 Pakistanis had been granted visas.

## OVER 30K INDIANS OVERSTAYED IN AMERICA LAST YEAR: REPORT

A total of 1.4 million Indians traveled to the US on various visas last year, of whom over 30,000 overstayed in the country, according to an annual official report on departures and overstays. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) submitted the report on foreign visitors who entered the US on various visas, including business, tourists, students and visitors exchange as non-immigrant visitors, to the Congress. The report covers about 96 percent of the total non-immigrant visitors. As per the report, more than 50 million non-immigrants were expected to depart from the US in 2016. Of these, 739,478 overstayed their admission, resulting in a total overstay rate of 1.47 percent. Of the more than 739,000 overstays, DHS said 628,799 were suspected "in-country" overstays, meaning there is no record of these foreign nationals leaving the US. The rest left the country after the expiry of their lawful admission period, which is called out-of-country overstay.



## INDIA ASKS MADHESIS TO DROP DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN CONSTITUTION

Indian diplomats in Kathmandu have asked Nepal's Madhesi leadership to drop their demand for changing the Constitution, a move being seen as a dramatic U-turn on a policy crafted over two years. New Delhi however insists its old policy of broader constitutional accommodation is intact, but Madhesi leaders, who expressed dismay at what they said was a betrayal, told Indian media that the "advice" came from the "highest levels" of the Indian establishment. A misreading, misinterpretation of the message and there is no shift in India's stand, say sources in New Delhi. After Nepal promulgated the Constitution in September 2015, the country has witnessed a standoff between Kathmandu and parties of the Terai, the plains that border India. The Madhesi parties argue that the Constitution eroded political representation and affirmative action; and created provinces in a way that would dilute political power of the plains. India has maintained the need to bring in amendments to address the demands of all political stakeholders, including the Madhesi. New Delhi's strong stance saw ties take a hit with the previous KP Oli government. But a change in government with the election of Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" as prime minister and an alliance between the Nepali Congress and the Maoists improved bilateral ties. The rest of the international community in Nepal, which often looks to India for the lead, is also confused. A Western diplomat averred: "India often conveyed to us that a constitutional amendment must come before constitution implementation, as a prerequisite for stability. But we sense a shift."






## MINISTRY OF STEEL ORGANISES STEEL CONSUMERS' MEET

The Second Meeting of the National Steel Consumers' Council, on the theme of "Current Status of Steel Industry and the Way Forward" was held under the Chairmanship of the Indian Steel Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh, in Bhubaneswar recently. The function of the Steel Consumer Council is to advise Government on matters relating to supply, availability, quality and the market trends of iron and steel. While India is currently the world's third largest steel producer, domestic consumption remains at a mere 60 Kgs per capita, far below the world average of 208 kgs, and India's Ministry of Steel wants to boost domestic consumption by exploring versatile steel uses. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved a policy for providing preference to domestically manufactured Iron & Steel products in Government procurement, and this meeting comes at a good time to address all steel related issues. This meeting provided a vibrant platform to discuss viable options for generating domestic steel consumption, the domestic steel industry scenario, global steel trends and advantages of using steel over other construction materials. Attendance came from representatives of various ministries, industry associations, producers and consumers of iron & steel Industry, house builders and related industries, industry experts and leading domestic steel makers.

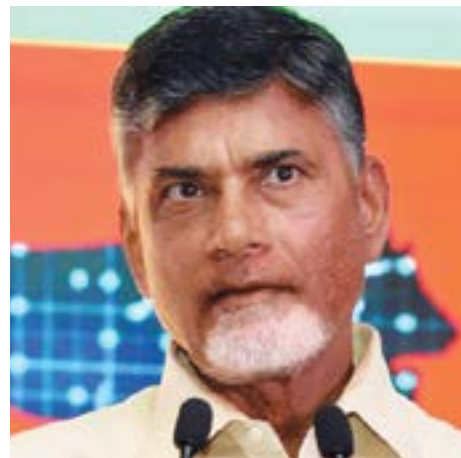


## INDIANS ISSUED MAXIMUM WORK VISAS TO UK IN 2016

Indian nationals were issued the maximum number of skilled work visas to live and work in the UK last year, according to statistics. Indians accounted for 58 percent of the total skilled work visas granted last year - 53,863 of a total of 93,566. Americans were the second largest community with 9,255 visas. "The information technology sector sponsored 42 percent of skilled work visa applications, followed by professional, scientific and technical activities (18 percent) and financial and insurance activities (12 percent)," says the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The figure for Indian students coming to study in the UK stood at 11,642, marginally up from the 2015 figure of 11,160. The latest figures reflect an overall drop in net migration figures for the UK - estimated to be 248,000 in 2016 which registers a fall of 84,000 from 2015. This drop indicates a Brexit effect as 117,000 European Union (EU) citizens emigrated out of the UK.

The US-India Business Council has chosen N Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, as the most 'transformative Chief Minister,' in recognition of his efforts to strengthen ties between the two countries at the state level. The USIBC's award was presented to him at the USIBC West Coast Summit in the Silicon Valley during the month of May. The award acknowledges excellence in public service and recognises the honoree's achievement in championing US-India ties in areas of trade, politics and culture. The Summit saw the participation of Indian government officials and 150 industry leaders from sectors like information technology, banking, food processing, healthcare, clean energy, digital payments and manufacturing. Companies such as Amazon, PayPal, Deloitte, Facebook, Mastercard, Dell, TransAsia, Varian Medical and Visa attended the summit. The USIBC was established in 1975 to act as a direct link between business and government leaders to enhance trade and investment ties between the US and India. USIBC works in partnership with major trade associations of India like the CII, FICCI, NASSCOM, et al. 

## CHANDRABABU NAIDU MOST 'TRANSFORMATIVE CHIEF MINISTER'



NRI Achievers News Network

## INDIAN BILLIONAIRE TO PAY FOR EXPAT PRISONERS' TICKETS



**D**ubai-based Indian billionaire Firoz Merchant, founder and chairman of Pure Gold Jewellers, will donate a total of USD 130,790 a year to fund the return tickets of expatriate prisoners who have been released from jails in the UAE. Merchant has just signed a memorandum of understanding to the effect with the UAE's Faraj Fund, a charity initiative that seeks to promote the welfare of inmates in the country. Merchant has promised to provide Dh 480,000 a year to pay for the air tickets for released prisoners, so that they may go back to their country and reunite with their families. Faraj Fund was established in June 2009 in Abu Dhabi through a decree issued by the Minister of Social Affairs. The fund will be extended to inmates who cannot afford to pay for their airfare. The Dh 40,000 monthly budget will be released to Faraj Fund once it submits a list of deported inmates. The Mumbai-born businessman, who has an ongoing initiative to help clear the debts of expatriates who land in jail, has apropos just secured the release of 132 prisoners by paying off their combined borrowings amounting to Dh 150,000.

## INDIAN CROWNED MISS TEEN UNIVERSE 2017



**M**s. Srishti Kaur of India has been crowned Miss Teen Universe 2017 at Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. She won after beating 25 contestants from across the world, and succeeds Niveles Gonzalez of Puerto Rico as the Miss Teen Universe. This is for the first time an Indian has won the title. In addition, she also bagged an award for the best national costume, which featured a peacock, India's national bird. Ms. Kaur, a resident of Noida, is currently pursuing her education at the London School of Fashion. The Miss Teen Universe pageant was started six years ago, and this annual competition is organised by the Miss Universe organisation for teens aged 15 to 19. The winner is decided based on physical beauty and incorporating qualities such as personality, talent, and intelligence.

## BHAICHAND PATEL HONOURED BY FIJI

**B**haichand Patel travelled all the way from India to receive his Member of the Order of Fiji (MF) medal, a Honour bestowed by the Government of Fiji. He was one of the 60 Fijians who received awards at the Order of Fiji Investiture Ceremony at State House in Suva. Mr. Patel, 80, a former resident of Fiji, now lives in retirement with his family in Sujana Park at New Delhi. He received his medal from the President, Major General Retd. Jioji Konrote. Mr Patel said, "I feel really great and humble to receive this medal from the Fijian Government. I left this country when I was only a teenager and I have spent all my life and career abroad and getting this recognition from my own Fijian Government is a great pleasure." Mr Patel said his parents came to Fiji after the Indentured System ended in Fiji and started a shop. After completing his secondary school at the Marist Brothers High School at Suva, Mr Patel applied for a scholarship to study in India. Bhaichand Patel was a barrister, and has also worked for 26 years with the United Nations. He has to his credit the distinction of being the first Fijian to be recruited by the UN after the country got its independence in the year 1970.





## MATHEWS, SAVIOR OF INDIANS DURING GULF WAR, DIES



**P**rominent Indian businessman Mathew Mathews, who was instrumental in the safe evacuation of stranded Indians during the Iraq imbroglio in 1990, has passed away in Kuwait. 81-year-old Mathews, originally from Kumbanad in Pathnamthitta district of Kerala, was ailing for some time. Expressing his condolences, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan recalled how during the 1990 Gulf war, Mathews had saved literally thousands of Indians, helping them flee the gulf nation. By not making efforts to save his own life and property, Mathews had done yeoman service to bring his countrymen who had lost everything in the war, safely back. "He provided sustenance to stranded Indians and we remember it with gratitude," Vijayan said. The then VP Singh government had in 1990 carried out the biggest evacuation during the gulf war, when over 1.50 lakh standard Indians had to be safely brought back by flight. Those days, Mathews had functioned as the Central Government's "unofficial representative" in Kuwait to coordinate the evacuation process, the Kerala CM said. Popularly known as 'Toyota Sunny', Mathews was said to be the inspiration of Akshay Kumar's character in Bollywood film 'Airlift'. Mathews had departed from Kerala for Kuwait in 1956 in search of job, at the age of 20. He joined as a typist in the Toyota company and rose to become its Managing Director when he retired in 1989.

## एनआरआई शादी के लिए आधार अनिवार्य की सिफारिश

एक अंतरमंत्रालयीन समिति ने विदेश मंत्रालय से अनिवासी भारतीयों (एनआरआई) की शादी के पंजीयन के लिए आधार को अनिवार्य बनाने की सिफारिश की है। विवाह से जुड़ी कई समस्याओं से निपटने के उद्देश्य के तहत समिति ने यह अनुशंसा की है। भारतीय पासपोर्टधारकों को लेकर विशेष समिति की अनुशंसा का लक्ष्य ऐसी महिलाओं के अधिकारों की रक्षा करना है जिनको उनके एनआरआई पति छोड़ देते हैं, साथ ही इसका ध्येय ऐसी महिलाओं के अधिकारों की रक्षा करना है जिनको दूसरे देशों में घरेलू हिंसा और दहेज उत्पीड़न का सामना करना पड़ता है। पिछले महीने की 30 तारीख को विदेश मंत्रालय को सौंपी गई इस रिपोर्ट की सामग्री के बारे में जानकारी रखने वाले एक सूत्र ने बताया कि (भारत में) एनआरआई की शादी के पंजीयन के लिए आधार को अनिवार्य बनाए जाने का प्रस्ताव है। भारतीय विशिष्ट पहचान प्राधिकरण एनआरआई लोगों, दूसरे देशों में रह रहे भारतीयों और भारतीय मूल के लोगों के आधार पंजीयन को लेकर नीति पर काम कर रहा है। वर्तमान में भारतीय नागरिकों समेत सभी निवासी और वैध वीजा वाले विदेशी व्यक्ति आधार नंबर के लिए पंजीयन करा सकते हैं। समिति ने कई देशों के साथ अपनी प्रत्यर्पण संधि में संशोधन कर घरेलू हिंसा को किसी आरोपी की हिरासत मांगने का आधार बनाए जाने की भी सिफारिश की है।

## INDIAN-BORN REHANA AMEER ELECTED TO CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

**A** 43-year-old UK entrepreneur has become the first India-born woman to be elected as a Councillor to a ward in the UK. Rehana Ameer, born and brought up in Chennai, contested from Vintry ward in the City of London county as an independent candidate, and was elected as a councillor to the Court of Common Council. "As an elected councillor, my key focus areas are road safety, improved air quality, mental health and better representation of all types of businesses as part of the Brexit negotiations," says Rehana. She aims to promote the city's businesses in international markets and develop the city's presence overseas. The City corporation is the richest local authority in the country and controls the 1.3 billion pounds city cash fund. The City of London is divided into 25 wards and elected councillors represent each ward.



## FIRST SIKH WOMAN MP IN UK'S HOUSE OF COMMONS

In a first, Preet Kaur Gill, a Sikh and a woman to boot, has won her term at the hustings from Birmingham Edgbaston, going on to become the first ever Sikh woman to be elected to the British Parliament's House of Commons. Preet Gill secured 24,124 votes contesting on behalf of the Labour Party with a majority of 6,917. "I am delighted I have gotten the opportunity to become the next MP for Edgbaston where I was born and raised. I want to engage with the people of Edgbaston and with hard work, passion and determination I think we can achieve great things together," she said. Being the first female Sikh



MP was also a "huge privilege" and she said she hoped she would become "one of many" who would now come forward and get involved. Gill has served as a board member of the Sikh Network, which she says has provided her with a unique platform and opportunity in the last two years to raise her political profile. Similarly, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi aka Tan, has won from the Slough constituency, becoming the first turban-wearing Sikh to be elected to the House of Commons. Dhesi said he was 'humbled' and wanted to serve the town where he was born and raised. Interestingly, this will be for the first time that the House of Commons will have a record 12 Indian-origin MPs, two more than the present record of 10 – five each from Labour and Conservatives. The victories of Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi is considered a significant milestone for Sikh politicians in the United Kingdom this election. According to one political observer, "The Sikh community for generations has been a vital contributor to the economy and community, but for too long not represented in the decision making process in the Houses of Parliament. .... it's great that we have now someone from the local area as a voice for Sikhs there".

## INDIAN-ORIGIN SCIENTIST WINS PRESTIGIOUS DAN DAVID PRIZE

Indian-origin scientist Shrinivas Kulkarni, a professor of astrophysics and planetary science at the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena, has won the prestigious Dan David prize as recognition for his contributions made in the field of astronomy. With this award, the Indian-origin scientist has joined other prominent Indians such as noted author Amitav Ghosh, music conductor Zubin Mehta and renowned chemist Bharat Ratna Dr. CNR Rao. Shrinivas Kulkarni, who obtained his MS in Physics from IIT Delhi and his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, is considered a pioneer in the field of time-domain astrophysics, and is also credited with building and conducting the Palomar Transient Factory, a large-area survey of the night sky that has turned up with thousands of stellar explosions. The Dan David Foundation was established in 2000 by the late Dan David, an international businessman and philanthropist. Annually, three Dan David prizes of US\$ 1 million each are awarded in the categories of "Past," – chosen from the field of history, archaeology, paleontology, biography, etc; "Present" – chosen from arts, media, policy, economics, etc; and "Future" – chosen from one of the exact or natural sciences.






## FIRST TURBANED FEMALE JUDGE IN THE WORLD

An Indian-origin Sikh woman human rights activist, Ms. Palbinder Kaur Shergill, has been appointed a Judge of the Canadian Supreme Court of British Columbia in New Westminster. With this appointment, she has become the first turbaned Sikh woman to be appointed not only as Canada's Supreme Court judge, but a first globally. A sole practitioner with Shergill & Company, this Indian-origin Sikh woman practitioner has extensive trial and appellate experience and has appeared before courts and tribunals across Canada, including the Supreme Court of Canada. The World Sikh Organisation has welcomed Ms. Shergill's appointment, calling it a "milestone" for the Sikh community in Canada. WSO President Mukhbir Singh says: "It is a matter of great pride that today we have the first turbaned Sikh appointed to the judiciary in Canada. Ms. Shergill has been instrumental in helping shape human rights and religious accommodation law in Canada through her work as general legal counsel for the WSO since 1991". Justice Palbinder Kaur Shergill was born in Rurka Kalan in Jalandhar district, Punjab, and had migrated with her family to Canada at the age of four. She grew up in Williams Lake, BC, and received her law degree from the University of Saskatchewan. Called to the British Columbia Bar in 1991, she held leadership positions within and outside the legal community. Justice Shergill has fought various cases and has actively represented the interests of the Canadian Sikh community, for instance the right of Sikh students to wear a 'kirpan' in schools. She was also involved with the Cabinet of Canadians, the Trial Lawyers Association of BC, and the Canadian Bar Association.



## FIRST INDIAN WOMAN ON A UN LAW BOARD

In a significant victory for India at the UN, international law expert Neeru Chadha has won a crucial election to a top UN judicial body that deals with disputes related to the law of the sea, becoming the first Indian woman and also only the second woman ever, to be appointed as a judge at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on a term of 9 years between 2017 and 2026. This legal association deals with maritime dispute settlements and other laws in association with the sea. With her long experience in international adjudication and legal proceedings, she served as a representative of the government of India during its Maritime borderline case against Bangladesh. Prior to this, she had also remained India's official spokesperson for the case with Italy in 2012, when two Italian marines were charged for having shot innocent Indian fishermen at the coast of Kerala. She had also been India's envoy at The Hague Conference, sharing her valuable knowledge in fields relating to humanitarian law, international terrorism and criminal law etc. Her participation was significantly noted at the International Court of Justice for the case centering Negotiations with respect to termination of nuclear arms race with Marshall Islands. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, expressed gratitude for the broad support of countries that resulted in Chadha's "emphatic success" at the elections to the ITLOS. " Dr. Chadha is a PhD and pursued her law education at the University of Delhi and later on, at the University of Michigan. 



## PRODUCT SCAN



### MOTOROLA LAUNCHES MOTO C

Motorola has launched its Moto 'C' in India at an eminently affordable price of INR 5,999/-. The 4G enabled Moto-C features a five inch display, 1GB of RAM with 16GB of internal memory that is expandable upto 32GB via SD Card, 5MP rear and 2MP front cameras and powered by a 2350 mAh battery.

### BLUE MOUNT ALKALINE FILTER

Well known Bollywood heartthrob and actress Karisma Kapoor had recently done the honours of launching the new Blue Mount Alkaline RO/UV Filter 'Advance' in Delhi, which has been priced at INR 17,490. It's innovative tech is focused on the significance of unalloyed water for various benefits, such as skin and hair health, immunity and weight management, among others.



### FUJIFIM LAUNCHES - RANGE OF MIRROR-LESS CAMERAS



Japanese company, FujiFilm, has launched its 1st hybrid Instax Square SQ10, which can be used to save as well as print images. It is

equipped with a digital image sensor and digital image processing technology, enabling improved photographic image quality and image editing/processing before printing. Capable of capturing square format pictures, the hybrid camera has been priced at Rs 29,999. In its X-Series range of cameras aimed at the professional photographer, the company has added four new cameras. The retro SLR styled X-T20 comes with a 24.3 MP sensor and is priced at Rs 79,999, while the rangefinder style X100F features the same 24.3MP sensor and is priced at Rs 114,999. The X-A10 compact featuring a 16.3 megapixel sensor will launch for Rs 42,999, and the X-A3 features a 24.2 MP APS-C sensor and sports a retro design with a touchscreen rear LCD, at an affordable Rs 51,700.

### BAJAJ OVERVIEW



The Bajaj conglomerate has come up with its Next Pulsar series 180 NS in India, at prices range between INR 70,000/- to 80,000/-. This new series is expected to grab the attention of users in the currently competitive market of bike lovers. The overall design of the Bajaj Pulsar NS180 continues to be inspired by the Pulsar NS200, which is one of bajaj's most successful models. Expected launch September 2017 – December 2017.

### TATA NEXON- New Mini SUV

Tata Motors is introducing its new mini-SUV in the Indian market this month. Prices ought to be in the range of INR 6.5 10.5 lakh ex-showroom Delhi. The car comes with the successful 1.3-litre multi-jet diesel outputting 90 BPH at 4,000 RPM and torque of 200Nm at 1,750-3,000 RPM. While initially the car is likely to be launched mated to a five-speed manual transmission, interested buyers may also opt for a five-speed AMT gearbox. A petrol variant powered by a 1.2-litre engine outputting 90 BHP at 5,000 RPM along with 140Nm torque at 1,500-4,000 RPM featuring a five-speed manual gearbox will also be available. 7





# TOP POSTINGS



**Shri Deepak Kumar** has taken over as the Chairman, National Highways Authority of India. He succeeds YS Malik, who has been appointed as the Secretary, Road Transport and Highways. Kumar is a 1984 batch IAS officer of Bihar Cadre, who has held important positions in the governments. A B.Tech in Civil Engineering from IIT Delhi, he has experience in urban development, tourism, health & family welfare, education and general administration.

**Mr. Dinabandhu Mohapatra** has taken charge as the new MD & CEO of the Bank of India. He has served earlier as the Executive Director of Canara Bank, and was also on the Boards of Canara Bank's Subsidiaries – CHOICE, Canbank Factors & Canbank Computer Services Limited. Mohapatra, apropos had joined the Bank of India as a Direct Recruit Officer in the year 1984.



**Dr. R K Tyagi** has been appointed as a non-official Independent Director on the Board of Air India Limited (AIL), for a period of three years. Dr. Tyagi is the former CMD of HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited). Dr. Tyagi is a distinguished Alumni of IIT Roorkee and ISB Hyderabad. A unique technocrat who has contributed his mite in three important sectors of economy, viz., Petroleum, Civil Aviation and Defence, he is known to be a successful strategist and turnaround specialist.

**Ms. P Alli**, who presently holds the post of a Director (Finance) at CONCOR, has been selected for the post of Chairman & Managing Director, Cotton Corporation of India Limited (CCIL), at a PSEB (Public Enterprises Selection Board) meeting held recently.



**Mr. Debasis Jana**, Director (Planning) of Andrew Yule & Co Limited (AYCL), has been selected for the post of Chairman-cum-Managing Director AYCL at a Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) meeting held on May 19, 2017.



**Smt. Yogamaya Acharya**, First Lady of the NLC family was honoured with the prestigious 'Shrikshetra Samman.' Smt. Acharya, who is also the President of the Neyveli Ladies Club and Sneha Opportunity Services, also received the Best Social Worker Award from Shri Damodhar Raut, Minister for Agriculture, Odisha, at the Folk Fair and Krishi Mela organised by Shree Shrikshetra Soochana Sangh at Puri, Odisha.



On the occasion of the 61st Raising Day celebrations of the Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited (NLCIL), Dr. SK Acharya, CMD, NLCIL honoured Smt. & Shri V. Sarvanan (both above 85 years of age), the oldest retired employee of NLCIL. The celebrations took place as 'Gratitude Day' at Neyveli.

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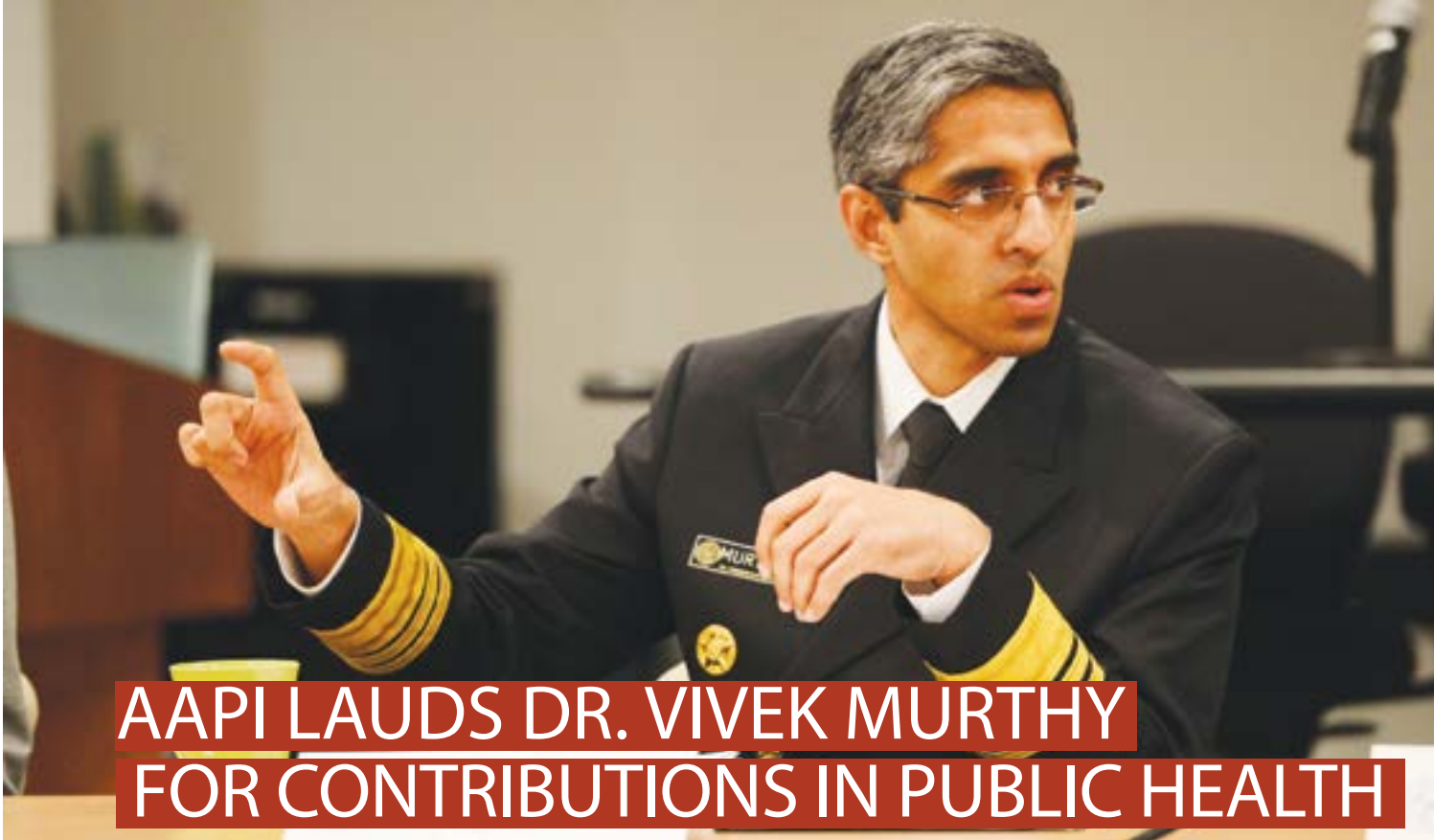


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## AAPI LAUDS DR. VIVEK MURTHY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH

**D**r. Vivek Murthy, former Surgeon General of the United States and member of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), was the recipient of many laurels for his contributions to public health during his tenure. "On behalf of AAPI, I want to applaud the many contributions and initiatives of Dr. Vivek Murthy, one of our esteemed members, in the healthcare sector during a very short span of about two years since he became the US Surgeon General in 2014," said Dr. Ajay Lodha, present President of the association.


Dr. Murthy is a regular at AAPI meetings and has always acknowledged the contributions of AAPI and the Indian community. He is known to have asserted that: "I am proud of our community of Indian physicians for all the progress that we have made over the years, and I know that AAPI has been a pivotal force in making this process possible. The advice you shared and assistance you kindly offered were important pieces of this journey,"

The growing influence of doctors of Indian heritage in the US healthcare sector is self-evident, as more and more physicians of Indian origin rise to hold critical positions in healthcare, academic, research and administrative positions across the nation. With their hard work, dedication, compassion and skill-sets, they have thus carved out for themselves an enviable niche in the American medical community. And AAPI's role has come to be recognized as vital among members and among lawmakers today. The US Surgeon General rep-

resents the Health & Human Services Secretary in addressing public health practice in the nation. Murthy, 39, was America's youngest-ever doctor to have held that position, and is also the very first surgeon general of Indian-American origin. His sense of ethics, quiet leadership style and impeccable credentials made him a smart choice for that position.

Grand-son of a farmer, second generation Indian American physician Dr. Murthy says he will always be grateful to "our country for welcoming my immigrant family nearly 40 years ago and giving me this opportunity to serve..." Dr. Murthy played a key role in bringing to the forefront many crucial health issues confronting the nation. In a landmark report on addiction released in November last year for instance, he had said dependency on opioids and other substances must not be looked upon as a "character flaw," in a first publication from a surgeon general that has addressed drug and alcohol addiction.

On having been chosen for the top job, Murthy had embarked on a three-month listening tour of the US ahead of his ceremonial swearing in, to listen to the people and to fellow professionals before taking on this important role.

AAPI expressed sadness as he has been asked to relinquish his post in the aftermath of the new POTUS taking over, but wishes him well as he moves on to a new phase in life and is confident that his talents, skills and experiences will be utilized effectively for the greater good of the nation. 

NRI Achievers USA Bureau



## GOPIO AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT AT DURBAN SOUTH AFRICA

# INDIASPORA BUILDING AFRICA THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND FRONTIERS

GOPIO, the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, together with the GOPIO Chapter of Durban, South Africa, had organized a three day business summit in Durban city from May 19 to 21. The business conference where networking meetings were held and ideas were exchanged, was attended by delegates from many countries. The main motive of the summit was to see the progress and development of South Africa through Cooperation, Guidance and Entrepreneurship.

Ishwar Ramlutchman, Convention Convener and International Coordinator, along with his team of volunteers, did a wonderful job of planning, hosting and welcoming the delegates who had made a beeline to Durban from across the world. He had a lineup of the Royalty and top Government officials who attended the various events and mingled with the guests. For GOPIO visitors from other countries, the convention started right at the airport. A delegation dressed in traditional Indian clothes received them with folded hands saying Namaskar. Pictures were taken in front of the Gopio banners announcing the Gopio convention and creating quite a stir among the onlookers. This was an excellent advertisement besides the television, radio and print ads, which had been running in Durban for weeks ahead of the summit.

Later the same afternoon, Dr. Shashank Vikram, Consul General of India in Durban, invited the whole international delegation and prominent community members for high tea at the Indian Consulate, and met with each and everyone individually, welcoming them to South Africa. As if that was not welcome enough, a reception was held for all GOPIO members and local Indian dignitaries and business people to meet with the GOPIO visitors and local members at the hotel.

Among the many welcome addresses the ones that hit the spot were by Mrs. Shameen Thakur-Rajbansi, member of Parliament for the Minority Front in

Durban, South Africa. She brought forward the point that Indian Diaspora needs to be recognized and appreciated for the success they have achieved in foreign countries. And that GOPIO is a wonderful platform for PIOs/ NRIs for such acknowledgement and appreciation.

Dr. Udit Raj, Member of Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha) who was visiting from New Delhi, emphasized that today India is a land of opportunity under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. He also extended the invitation to all Indians living abroad to come to India and his doors will be open to help them.

Dr. Thomas Abraham, chairman GOPIO from the US made a powerpoint presentation tracing the journey of GOPIO since its inception 28 years ago, mobilizing the community as an activism group looking at the human rights violations to a group which is involved in all aspects of community development and contribution to India and other countries. GOPIO has now launched the GOPIO International Chamber of Commerce (GICC) where members can successfully network and forge connections with other like-minded business people and entrepreneurs from all over the world.

GOPIO Executive Vice President Noel Lal quoted Prime Minister Modi extolling diaspora Indians to commit and contribute to the countries they live in. Mr. Ishwar Ramlutchman, Africa International coordinator and convener for the GOPIO Business summit, finished off with a very emotional vote of thanks, specially to those who have traveled from far-off countries to visit his South Africa. He thanked his team for their tireless work of last few months to put the convention together. He finished off with very important message, "Let us all take something from this convention".

Many discussion panels were held covering the entire gamut of topics for helping Africa Grow through entrepreneurship and helping in the growth of Industries like Hotel and Tourism, Small Scale Industries, Mi-



cro Credit Financing to name a few. Some of the local dignitaries who attended and spoke were Acting High Commissioner of India Dr. S. Janakiraman, Consul General of India Dr. Shashank Vikram, Deputy Mayor of Durban Mrs Fawzia Peer, and Mr. Ravi Pillay, MEC for Rural Development and Public Works.

In the afternoon, the business summit was honored by the presence of His Majesty the King Goodwill Zwelithini KaBhekuZulu and his wife. The King was pleased to be attending the summit and to be among Indians in particular. In his speech, he emphasized that ALL RELIGIONS should live together in harmony. South Africa, he said that today his people are called, "The Rainbow Nation".

The VVIP list for the Gala dinner at the conclusion read like the who's who from the Durban area. His majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini and her Highness, Princess MG Buthelezi MP, A.V, Mohammed of Jumma Masjid Trust and Deputy High commissioner of India Dr. S. Janakiraman, not to mention South African Member of parliament Aumsen Singh were present. The Gala dinner was a display of warmth, love and hospitality of the South African Indians. It seems the clock may have stopped for them, 3-4 generations ago when their ancestors landed in Durban as indentured labor on a ship. Today the success and their achievement is noteworthy and something to be proud of.

From lightening the traditional lamp to welcome speeches to fabulous array of dishes on the buffet table was a sight to be seen. Highlight was the plaques of recognition to professional and business achievers, the host committee team and the people who needed to be recognized for their service to the community and the growth of Indian heritage in general. The King was presented with the Life Time Achievement Award. His majesty the King Goodwill Zwelithini himself stood on the dais and presented each and everyone with the plaque of recognition with a smile and handshake. 7

## NRI man erroneously accused of Rape charges in India

**D**ue to complex International Private Laws, the lower judiciary in India without full knowledge of applicable laws governing marriage and divorce in India sometimes commit grave errors and passes unbelievable orders jeopardizing the career and life of innocent NRIs living far away from their country of birth for livelihood.

In a unique case of its kind, an NRI, Sachin Jain who is residing in USA for last 9 years, has been accused u/s 376 on charges of Cohabitation in USA with his own legally married wife. An FIR u/s 376 (Rape) has been registered in this regard by the Delhi Police on the orders of Metropolitan Magistrate Chhavi Kapoor of Karkardooma Courts of Delhi. In this case, the wife allegedly filed a complaint in the Karkardooma District court claiming to have cohabited with the NRI man after ex parte divorce obtained in USA. The couple that is still married as per applicable Indian Laws got a divorce decree from Superior Courts of New Jersey, USA on the grounds of 'Irreconcilable Differences in marriage'. This type of Divorce decree also known as 'No Fault' Divorce in USA and European Countries is granted by foreign courts without arguments and submission to the court by other party. This is completely not acceptable in India as per Hindu Marriage Act.

Surprisingly, the couple who got divorce decree in USA are still legally married in India as the Divorce Decree granted by USA Courts on account of 'Irreconcilable Differences in marriage' is unrecognized in Hindu Marriage Act 1955 and section 13 of Civil Procedure Code. This is iterated a number of times by various High Courts of India after the landmark judgment of Supreme Court in the case of Y. Narasimha Rao And Ors vs Y. Venkata Lakshmi And Anr on 9 July, 1991

As per section 44a of Civil Procedure Code 1908, India has reciprocal agreements with only 11 countries in the world which allows India and the other country to accept each other's court judgments as it is. As a matter of fact, there is no reciprocal agreement in place between India and USA for accepting each other's judgments. Due to no reciprocal agreements, India does not give any recognition to the judgments and decrees passed by USA. The Humble Metropolitan Magistrate of Delhi District court, without knowing this fact that the judgments passed by USA court can not be taken into cognizance and the fact that couple is still married as per Indian Laws ordered the Delhi Police to register an FIR u/s 376 which gives unlimited power to Delhi Police to arrest the accused immediately, open Look Out Circular (LOC) against the accused, issue Red Corner Notice taking help of Interpol. This makes an innocent person terrorist and criminal jeopardizing his career, job, and life.

After an FIR u/s 376 is registered against an NRI, he is faced with another challenge of corruption, extortion, blackmailing in the name of this legal terrorism. The complainant wife and her lawyer start blackmailing the NRI husband asking for exorbitant sum of money in crores to settle the matter out of court. we request to the Supreme Court of India, to create special courts for dealing with NRI related matters where expert judges with full knowledge of International Private Laws should take up the matter for hearing. This will help lakhs of NRIs facing immediate arrest on account of false complaints of heinous crimes by disgruntled wives. The lower judiciary would also be saved from passing erroneous orders against applicable Indian laws. 7

# HELPING HANDS

## Of Indian-American Community

### *IRMA Hurricane Sweeps Florida*



**A**s you read this, Hurricane Irma would have roared into Florida, and Hurricane Jose and Hurricane Katia would have slammed into the Americas — the Caribbean Islands (once again) and Mexico, respectively.

These storms accompanied by torrential rainfall and floods come barely a fortnight after Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Houston, a disaster that the Texas

governor estimated would call for up to \$180 billion to rebuild the battered parts of the state. Indian community organisations like Sewa International, which has chapters across the US, will have their hands full in the days ahead with relief and rehabilitation work.

They were busy in Houston, too, distributing free meals and helping with hardware suppliers.

“Our volunteers have already put in 23,000 hours of





work towards various relief and rehabilitation projects and we have raised around \$2,50,000. We plan to support rebuilding efforts of homes that need to be fixed through a public-private partnership with US government agencies and many of the Indian American entrepreneurs in Houston,” says Gitesh Desai, president of Sewa in Houston. Vivek Sharda, who went to the city as a student of the University of Houston (UH) from Ahmedabad and now works at an engineering firm, has been volunteering for various activities at Sewa for the last two years.

“Over the last few days we have been engaged in rescue and moving people to safer locations. After this we will join rebuilding and relief efforts in the coming weeks,” he says. Renu Khator, UH’s chancellor and president, recounts the challenge that came her way on August 27 when Anupam Ray, the Indian consul general in Houston, reached out to her through social media.

Ray informed her that about 200 students — many of whom had just arrived in the US — were stranded in two apartment complexes in a flooded area. The Houston area is host to over 3,000 Indian students. “The way many Indian American families reached out and took many of these students into their homes was truly heartwarming. Those who chose to stay back had meals sent to them by different Indian American organisations, including the Dawoodi Bohra Masjid, the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple and Sewa International,” recalls Khator. For Ray, it was a huge challenge to reach out to roughly 1,50,000 Indians spread across a large area in Houston in the aftermath of the hurricane. “It was not very difficult to mobilise key

members of the Indian American community in Houston, some of whom are business leaders and top professionals,” Ray told us from Houston.

Ray has now become the focal point to coordinate larger relief and outreach efforts by the Indian American community, and a bridge between different organisations involved in rebuilding and relief efforts and many of the victims.

“The Indian American community here is also using this opportunity to give back to the larger Houston community that has accepted them with open arms and also reached out to support India on many occasions,” says Ray. Even as organisations such as Sewa, Sikh National Centre Gurdwara, BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir and the Dawoodi Bohra community in Houston step up efforts in rehabilitation after Hurricane Harvey, Indian American business owners and companies in the region are carrying out a consolidated fund-raising effort to contribute to the Mayor’s Fund and the Governor’s Rebuild Texas Fund. The target is to raise \$1 million, and contributors include local business owners as well as Indian corporations — private and public sector — such as Gas Authority of India, Mahindra North America, Oil India USA, ONGC Videsh and Wipro. The Indian community comprises 2-3% of Houston’s population of roughly 2.4 million.

This is now one of the largest hubs for Indians in the US, with many students and professionals on H-1B visas coming in every year. Many don’t know that after the Latur earthquake in India people of this city adopted a village in Gujarat which is now called Houston,” adds Ray.

Jiten Agarwal, an IIT alumnus and founder of data




analytics firm Expedien in Houston, was one of the first to respond to the consul general's call for support. He also evacuated an American family with a child on a ventilator during the storm and is now pitching into the fundraising efforts in a big way.

"From my own experience, I feel that Indian Americans should be better integrated in the mainstream community in Houston and this is a big opportunity to associate with some of the community efforts such as those by churches to help in rebuilding public buildings and homes. Many American families have helped Indians who needed help, and now it should be our turn," says Agarwal. Harish D Katharani, a healthcare entrepreneur and founder of Southside Group of Companies, is supplying essential medicines to hospitals and people affected by the hurricane. For instance, Katharani shipped a rare and expensive drug all the way from Orlando, Florida, to Texas Children's Hospital, for a child who urgently needed it.

"Some areas around Houston are still flooded, and we have been delivering free medicines at shelters and health centres. We will continue with our free healthcare services efforts for at least another month

to help people facing crisis in the aftermath of the storm." Sikh organisations in Houston have been at the forefront of efforts to help people affected by Hurricane Harvey.

"Our gurdwara was not submerged by the waters. We volunteered to cook and put together food packets. During the worst days of the hurricane we were supplying 1,000 meals daily to churches and shelters," says Tej Kour, a volunteer at the Sikh National Center Gurdwara. In the following weeks, through an outreach to gurdwaras across the US, truckloads of supplies of fresh fruit, vegetables and building material will pour into Houston from California and other American states. The Sikh National Center Gurdwara. In the following weeks, through an outreach to gurdwaras across the US, truckloads of supplies of fresh fruit, vegetables and building material will pour into Houston from California and other American states. The Sikh National Center is engaged in community rebuilding efforts, which include repairing senior centres, churches and playgrounds. 

**NRI Achievers USA Bureau**



## PUNJAB GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

# 'Connect to your roots' A programme for Non- Resident Punjabis



**T**he Punjab government will reach out to the non-resident Punjabi youth settled in various foreign countries through its newly conceived 'Connect to your roots' programme.

Foreign-born youth who are into second, third and fourth generations of Punjabis and have never travelled to Punjab are the focus of the programme. The government plans to bring them to Punjab and showcase its culture, heritage, education system and the way of living of the people here.

Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh will launch the programme at the India House – Indian high commission in London, on September 13. Officials said the high commission will make all arrangements on behalf of the state government. Depending on the success of this programme, the government will replicate it in North American countries – USA and Canada, Europe and other nations where Punjabis are settled in large numbers.

NRIs always have been the focus of the Punjab government, whichever party heads it. In the run-up to assembly polls, the SAD-BJP government had sent its

ministers to connect with the NRIs, especially after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received a lot of support from them. The government has also been organising NRI samellans from time to time. "We have asked the high commission to organise a meeting of Punjabi families settled in London, and the CM will roll out the scheme to bring them back to the roots. After the launch of the scheme, the state government's department of NRI affairs will follow up with the Punjabi families to bring them here and draw a programme for them in Punjab," said a senior official of the state government.

He said youth might be the focus of the government's programme, but NRIs in older age group want to come to Punjab and contribute for the development of their native places. The government would make the arrangements accordingly, he added. Taking no chances on security. The Punjab government is making all-out efforts to make the security arrangements for the CM during his Britain tour foolproof. With a number of Khalistan supporters settled in foreign countries, security has always been the issue for any political leader or senior functionary travelling from Punjab. **7**

**NRI Achievers Punjab Bureau**

# DIASPORA ICONS



**Amb. R Dayakara**

The author is Senior Vice-President, Indian Council for International Cooperation, and has formerly served as India's ambassador to Iraq.

*Starting with this issue, NRI Achievers proposes to every now and then feature some of the more iconic among our Indian Diaspora, who have carved a place for themselves under the sun, doing their adoptive land proud, and while doing so, doing India proud as well. We start with some of the truly more iconic personalities, all of whom battled all odds to serve their communities, societies and countries, and hugely succeeded. Read on ...*



Courtesy :ARSP Bulletins







## CHEDDI JAGAN

**A**s the first wave of emigrants in India's modern history went to the far corners of the globe as indentured workers in the 19th century, they began to progressively move from the margins of their adoptive societies into the mainstream of their newfound citizenship in their countries of adoption. This they achieved through sheer effort, and their succeeding generations produced a whole bouquet of leaders whose contribution in the nation-building process left a lasting impression on their fellow countrymen.

Cheddi Jagan, who became Chief Minister of British Guyana in 1961, and later President of the independent country in 1992, is one such distinguished icon, whose forefathers had emigrated to Guyana from the Basti district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. He rose to become undisputed leader of his country by sheer dint of hard work and public service, with a particular focus on the working class.

Cheddi Jagan was born on March 22, 1918, as Cheddi Berret Jagan in Port Mourant, in a sugar plantation to plantation workers Bachoni and Jagan, whose parents had in turn emigrated to Guyana as indentured workers in 1901. His middle name Berret is actually a localized version of Bharat. His early life was one of hardships and scarcities with his father unable to earn enough to support his education. So, he had to work to earn some money while attending the school. His primary and secondary schooling took place close to the plantation. He later went to the country's capital, George Town, to complete his secondary education.

Lack of opportunities and limited avenues in Guyana for further education took him to the USA in 1936 after school to obtain a degree in dental surgery. While in USA, he met and married Janet Rosenberg, an American citizen in 1943, who remained his life-long companion in arms, fully participating in both his professional and political work.

On return to Guyana in 1943, he began to practice dentistry. His social context and milieu influenced him enough to then begin articulating the cause of the working class in Guyana. He went on to found the Political Affairs Committee aka PAC, that championed the rights of plantation workers. PAC later transmogrified into the PPP (People's Progressive Party), through a merger with another party, the British Guyana Labour Party aka BGLP.

His first election win came in 1953 in the British Guyana and he took over the mantle of its Chief Minister. But could not run the government as the British dismissed his entire cabinet and suspended the constitution, suspecting him of harbouring pro-Soviet leanings in the context of the raging cold war between the East and the West. He returned to power once again as the Chief Minister through the 1961 elections, but lost support in Parliament in the 1964 elections. He stayed on as the opposition leader for nearly three decades before he was elected the President of the country in 1992. Jagan suffered a heart attack in February 1997 in Georgetown and was taken to USA for surgery, where he died on 6th March 1997. On his death, the highest tribute paid to him was by his successor Sam Hinds, who declared a six-day mourning and described him as "the greatest son and patriot that had ever worked this land" of Guyana.

His wife Janet Jagan was elected the Prime Minister and President of Guyana, a recognition to the outstanding service he had rendered to Guyana. After Janet Jagan, his party elected Bharrat Jagdeo as the President.

For the Indian Diaspora, Cheddi Jagan is the first PIO to have adorned any public office as the Head of a Government. He enjoyed a mass adoration in his country of adoption. He is a true icon of the Indian diaspora. This year marks the 20th anniversary of his death, and the next year is his birth centenary. Both days deserve to be commemorated appropriately.



## JAGERNATH LACHMON

Jager Nath Lachmon, whose statue stands in Paramaribo at the Independence Square in front of the National Assembly of Suriname, played a pioneering role in the political empowerment of the Indo-Surinamese community, at a critical time when it was emerging from the shadows of the indentured system. In the process, he emerged as a leader of Suriname itself by fostering multi-ethnic harmony and co-existence, and nurturing democracy in both letter and spirit in the face of formidable challenges.

Lachmon was born in 1916 in the district of Nickerie, not far from Paramaribo, to immigrant parents from the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh who had been taken to Suriname – then known as Dutch Guiana – as indentured labourers to work in sugar plantations. On expiry of their indenture obligations, his parents ventured into running a small dairy farm.

Lachmon underwent his schooling in Nickerie and Paramaribo, and thereafter went for legal studies under a Creole lawyer. He was among the first immigrants to commence their own law practice in 1940, and was soon drawn into politics when he founded the Hindoostan-Javanese Political Party (HJJP) with himself as the chairman in 1947. The HJJP later merged with several other ethnic parties in the country to form the 'United Hindustan Party' (known as the VHP by its Dutch initials), which too elected him as its chairman. He was then re-elected to that position continuously until his death. The VHP in later times transformed

into the Progres-sive Reform Party, and by a quirk the initials of the Party in the new dispensation remained the same – VHP.

Early in his political career, Lachmon made it his firm conviction that the future of Indo-Surinamese lay in sharing power with other ethnic groups in the country. In 1949, he won a seat for the first time in the States of Suriname, an elected body that later became the National Assembly, but his own party failed to get a majority. Lachmon reached a political understanding with the Afro-Surinamese leader J A Pengel, to give effect to ethnic fraternization and shared power from 1958 to 1967. This period is notable for political stability, economic growth and inter-ethnic peace and harmony. In one of the elections, Lachmon withdrew one of his candidates in support of Pengel.

Lachmon was elected Chairman of the States in 1964 which position he held until 1967 and later from 1969 to 1973. However, ethnic fraternization was perceived differently by Lachmon and Pengel. For Lachmon, it meant sustaining multiculturalism ("unity in diversity") which allows each ethnic component to maintain its distinct identity in harmony with other groups without assimilation into an amorphous entity; while Pengel saw in it the path for assimilation and social integration. This divergence led



## COVER STORY

to Lachmon, otherwise a supporter of independence for Suriname, advocating a deferment of the Surinamese independence from the Dutch, who however were ready to leave Suriname in 1975. Lachmon feared domination of the Indo-Surinamese by the Afro-Surinamese in a hastily drawn independence. He felt the colonial Dutch would be better placed to ensure continued socio-political equity for all. He called for a referendum on the subject of independence, arguing that in the 1973 voting that brought to power Henck Arron as PM, independence was not an issue. However, the Dutch were not agreeable to the proposal. His sense of realism led him to change his views just before Suriname attained independence on 25 November 1975. Nevertheless tens of thousands of Surinamese, mostly of Indian origin, preferred to relocate to the Netherlands.

The newly independent Suriname had to undergo through a period of painful deterioration in political and socio-economic harmony, leading to a military take-over that lasted from 1980 to 1987. The VHP under Lachmon entered into an alliance with different political parties to win the elections in 1987. VHP formed part of the government and Lachmon became the Chairman of the National Assembly. He held that position a total of 5 times in his entire career. His name was reported to have entered the Guinness Book of Records in 1989, as the longest serving parliamentarian in the world.

Given the very nature of practical politics, some members of his party left to form their own groupings, alleging arbitrary and authoritarian functioning on the part of Lachmon. Such developments did not however affect his standing and stature. Lachmon passed away while on an official visit to Amsterdam in 2001. He was succeeded in the party by Jules Ajodhia, who later became the Vice-President of Suriname.



## KHIMJI RAMDAS

**K**himji Ramdas is the progenitor of Khimji Ramdas aka the KR Group of Companies in Oman, which was established in the year 1870 and whose billboards and nameplates now dot the business districts of Muscat and other cities and towns in that country. The Khimji Ramdas saga dates back to the mid-19th century, when his father Ramdas Thackersey shifted to Oman along with the young Khimji in the 1860s from Mandvi, the Kutch coastal town of Gujarat, to start their commercial operations. The Gujarat coast in Kutch is one of the points in India closest to the Omani coast. It was a time when there were no nation-states as they exist today, nor were passports or visas in vogue. Neither were there cumbersome customs inspections, nor border checks. "Laissez passer" (Free Passage) was the norm. Those were also the times when there was no electricity or clean drinking water. Medicines and medical facilities were scarce. Piracy at sea and pillages on land by brigands were not uncommon.

Ramdas undertook both wholesale and retail trade and also acted as a banker by financing trade deals. Their stock-in-trade consisted of imported grain, spices, coffee, tea and cotton goods from India and dates, limestone, and frankincense for export from Oman. The transport was by dhows moved by winds and steered by sailors manually. The payment was more often than not through barter. The commercial documentation was at best no more than a single piece of paper or hand-written chits or notes from the buyer and the seller, and transactions largely depended on trust and one's honour. In that humble setting, Khimji Ramdas laid the foundation for the future billion-dollar eponymous corporate conglomerate that would give employment to hundreds of people and extend philanthropic support in setting up educational institutes for Indian students in Oman. This Khimji saga will shortly be passing by a milestone when the corporate set-up will complete 150 years of its life in 2019.





# Khimji Ramdas

• S I N C E 1 8 7 0 •

During the two world wars, the K R Group became a leading supplier of provisions for the allied forces stationed in Oman. When the oil-boom began and petrodollars began to flow into the gulf countries beginning mid-1970s, Oman, under the present ruler Sultan Qaboos bin Said, undertook massive infrastructure projects, a rapid industrialization programme and state investment into people's education and health. The Khimji family, well groomed in soft skills and business acumen, became an essential part of this economic upturn in Oman. While Oman remained their principal business domain since inception, they have over time developed commercial presence in India and the UAE dating back to several decades. Later they further diversified into Iran and Turkey as well.

It is the character and soft skills of Khimji Ramdas like patience, hard work, integrity, business ethics, prudence, respect and adherence to local traditions, and philosophy of give and take that were imbibed by his succeeding generations that enabled them to face an increasingly competitive and challenging milieu. The soft power of the present day Khimjis – fourth generation descendants of Khimji Ramdas – has an unmistakable imprint of their forefather. These attributes helped them maintain cordial relations with the ruling family, governors, government officials and the public. When the Gulf countries commenced a policy of nativisation of the work force, variously called Saudiisation in Saudi Arabia, Emiratisation in the UAE and Omanisation in Oman, Khimjis were among the first to launch skill development for native people, groom them for responsible positions and create job placements for them. At the same time, the generational change over a century has not affected their social life. Despite their century long expatriation, they have remained steadfast to their ancestral customs and traditions and social mores. They remain vegetarians to this

day in conformity with their family heritage. They displayed the quintessentially Indic trait of adaptation to local life, patience, family values, absorption of local community, inter-community connectivity and communication and social essentials without losing their own identity and Indian roots. They are said to maintain their ancestral Vaishnavite traditions and remain devotees of Lord Shreenathji.

Among the millions of present day PIOs (Persons of Indian Origin), Khimji Ramdas' descendents stand unique. Kanaksi Khimji, now 80, took over in 1970 from his father Gokaldas, who was a son of Khimji Ramdas. He led the group in playing a role in the development plans of Oman. In recognition of this, Kanak bhai, as he is popularly known, was conferred two rare honours by the government of Oman. He was among the first to be offered the Omani citizenship, which in those days, was a rare honour for a non-local and non-Muslim. More importantly, in a historic first he was bestowed the title of Sheikh by the government of Oman, which was an unprecedented gesture. He is the only one among the entire Indian diaspora in the Middle-East to have been officially conferred the title of Sheikh. The term "Sheikh" is an honoured social position in West Asia's layered society that connotes respect and regard and informal authority. It reflects an acknowledgement of leadership of a tribe or community or clan. The title is generally hereditary though probably needs to be given official recognition at every generational change. Kanak Khimji, grandson of Khimji Ramdas, born in Muscat in 1936, the patriarch of the present day Khimji generation who took over the family control in 1970, is the one and only Hindu Sheikh in the entire world.

As for the honours in his ancestral country India, Kanak Khimji was among the ten overseas Indians



chosen by the Government of India for the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award in 2003, the very first year of its inception, in recognition of his extraordinary achievements and service to the community.

Present day Khimjis are into their fifth generation (counting from Ramdas Thackersey). The Khimjis have played an admirable role in the service of their Janmabhoomi, that is Oman and Mathrubhumi, that is Bharat. In Oman, apart from their corporate role, they pioneered education by starting the first Indian school, with English as medium that now caters to various expatriate children, showing the way to others for starting more such schools to meet the needs of the growing number of expatriate families. There are now about 20 Indian schools in Oman imparting primary and secondary education to tens of thousands of children of different nationalities. And the Khimjis' have extended this to India, where they run schools in Gujarat. Oman and India have distinct historical connections. For millennia, Oman has been at the maritime cross-road between India and the Gulf. Vasco-da-Gama is said to have employed Omani sailors as navigators in his voyage to discover a sea route to India. The Malabar ruler, Zamorin, who died while on a voyage centuries ago, is believed to be lying buried at a place in the Omani seaboard on the Indian Ocean. From the 15th to the late 19th century, Oman, being located strategically in the shipping route from India to Europe, was coveted by Portugal, France and the UK for domination and control of the trade route, with the UK eventually succeeding in the mission. A sizeable number of Indian traders who had migrated to Oman, mainly from Gujarat, were dominant in Oman's commerce. However, the inauguration of the Suez Canal in 1869 linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, cutting the nautical distance between India and Europe substantially and opening a new land route, affected the geo-economic importance of Oman. As an expression of the trust and acceptance enjoyed over the generations by the Indian community in Oman, two temples were allowed to be built in the capital Muscat, the first and the only instance in the Gulf Arab countries until recently.



## AHMED KATHRADA

**A**hmed Kathrada, the doyen of anti-apartheid activists among PIOs in South Africa, passed away following brief hospitalization in Johannesburg in March this year, at the age of 87. Kathrada attained iconic status with his relentless fight against the apartheid and the racist regime run by the white minority in South Africa. In the struggle for freedom, democracy and liberation from the apartheid, he suffered imprisonment along with other South African legends Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki. In all, he was imprisoned for 26 years and three months.

Born in the then Western Transvaal province in 1929 to Mohamed and Hawa Kathrada, a Bohra couple who had migrated to South Africa from Surat in the western Indian state of Gujarat a decade earlier, Kathrada had his schooling in Johannesburg's Indian High School, where he was primed to play a future role in the growing freedom movement under the influence of Yousuf Dadoo and

## DOSSIER

Cachalia brothers of Transvaal Indian Congress.


His baptism into political activity began at the tender age of 12 in 1941, when he joined the Young Communist League of South Africa. Five years later, he left the school to join the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council to take part in the campaign against the blatantly racist Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, which had legalized discrimination against Indians in matters of political representation, land ownership, habitation and commerce. For this activism, he was charged along with 20 other accused in the Defiance Campaign Trial that earned him his first imprisonment for a month in a Durban jail. This experience led him to get elected subsequently as the head of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress, which sent him as a delegate to the World Festival of Youth and Students in East Berlin in 1951. His leftist affiliation led him to stay on in Europe for months and visit Poland and Budapest for participation in student and youth events.

Kathrada maintained a close association with ANC (African National Congress) leaders Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu in the fight against apartheid. He was charged with treason for his political activity but acquitted in 1960 after a four year trial. The South African government banned anti-apartheid organizations including ANC in 1960 and Kathrada was detained several times and faced house arrest. He disappeared in early 1962 to carry-on the anti-apartheid activities underground, but was arrested in July 1963 near Johannesburg and accused along with eight others of attempts to overthrow the government. And after the infamous Rivonia Trial he was sentenced in 1964 to life imprisonment and was sent to the notorious Robben Island prison. The other leaders who were given similar sentences included Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. He was released in 1989 after 26 years in jail. In prison, he educated himself and obtained several academic degrees. He quit the Communist Party in July 1991 when he was elected to ANC's National Executive Committee. In the first ever free elections in South Africa in 1994, he was elected as a Member of Parliament and given the position of Political Adviser to President Mandela. He quit politics in 1999. His wife Barbara Hogan was until recently a Cabinet Minister.

One remarkable feature of Kathrada throughout his life was his bold articulation of his beliefs and questioning others' viewpoints, only to absorb what he thought was good in them. This trait had pitted him quite early in his life against many contemporaneous leaders including then emerging leader Nelson Mandela, who dismissed the young Kathrada "as being barely 21 and like all youth, keen to flex his muscles". But that verbal exchange laid a foundation for the development of a life-long mutual respect and collaboration between the two in fighting apartheid and liberation of South Africa from colonialism.



Ahmed Kathrada received a number of honours. The ANC bestowed upon him its highest honour, the Isitwalende Award, when he was still in prison. His ancestral land, India, honoured him with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award and made him the chief guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2006. Elinor Sisulu, daughter-in-law and biographer of Walter Sisulu, leader of the African National Congress, calls him "one of South Africa's greatest liberation heroes." President Zuma, who did not see eye-to-eye with Kathrada on various matters, decreed the South African flag be flown half-mast throughout South Africa on the day of his funeral and postponed his Cabinet meeting to allow the members to pay their respects at the funeral. He praised him for serving South Africa "selflessly throughout his adult life". He declared a special official funeral for him. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Peace Nobel Laureate described Kathrada as "a man of remarkable gentleness, modesty and steadfastness," adding that he was one of the "people of highest integrity and moral fibre who through their humility and humanity inspired our collective self-worth-and the world's confidence in us." Kathrada addressed Mandela as his "elder brother," who in his foreword to Kathrada's book "Memories" wrote, "Ahmed Kathrada has been so much a part of my life over such a long period that it is inconceivable that I could not allow him to write his Memories without my contributing something".

At the funeral service organised by Kathrada's family, priests from Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jewish faiths offered prayers. Strangely, in the politically charged atmosphere that is obtaining currently in South Africa, Kathrada's family advised Zuma against his attendance at the funeral though his ministers and a former President attended. Zuma, in deference to the family wishes, stayed away from the burial ceremony. 



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# MIKE PATEL: A MAN OF VARIED INTERESTS AND PURSUITS

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**C**aptain Mukundray Patel, aka Mike Patel, is a multifaceted personality who has diverse interests and pursuits that have taken him all across the world and exposed him to several global experiences. Born in Uganda in the year 1952, his young years and schooling took place there until 1971, when he landed in the UK to pursue his further studies. He did well, and today holds both a PhD and FRSA as academic degrees.

Going back, on completing his basic studies, he was highly commended by the Uganda Resettlement Board (a UK Foreign & Home Office Government body)

in 1972, for his role in serving the Indian Diaspora during the Uganda Crisis that arose during the latter half of the 1960s.

Captain Mike, who basically trained to become a professional airline pilot, then branched out into several fields that fascinated him. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts & Commerce and an international member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (IAOPA-US). While most of his time is spent flying aircraft across the globe, he also had an inclination to dabble in bugs and other spy devices. This had started as a mere hobby in his earlier years but soon grew into





an obsession. Patel has also conducted home-courses in private investigation, and had started his own company in the UK. His job today involves acquiring various types of products and selling them to government and private agencies. The Spy Phone is the first creation by his company.

Speaking on his bug services and Spy Phone, the captain explains, "There are all kinds of bugs available in the market, but the infinity bug is the best one to get ... most bugs need a monitor. So when you attach the bug onto a phone, that equipment becomes its monitor and energy source". This infinity bug is considered versatile, as it can be attached to light bulbs, laptops, basically anything that can provide it energy to work. Patel's new-age product is a phone which has a built-in gadget, used frequently with the Nokia phones. Being a highly professional product, its use is mainly meant for intelligence agencies and law and enforcement. "Most of the pieces have been sold to private investigation companies, but people in high-risk businesses have bought some, too. Of course, some people expect to use it to monitor their house and office, but we hope some good will come out of it", he says.

The Captain is also a founder member of the Overseas Friends of India (OFI), and a valued member of the Juna Akhada Kumbh Naga Babas, regarded as the largest order of naga sadhus in India. Professionally, his interests have taken him in diverse directions, including a Diploma in Private Investigation, a role in the management of an International Entertainment Association, and even as a Doctor of Spiritual Counseling and a Masters in Rudraksha Research and Studies. Mike is founder of Tantra Mantra Yantra, a multicultural centre that has over 10,000 followers across the world, including in such countries as the UAE, Russia, India and all over Africa. He is a great fan of Sardar Patel, and works tirelessly to globalise Sardar Patel's ideology and social work. For all these reasons, he is the recipient of major awards that have recognised his outstanding accomplishments in diverse fields. Some notable ones include the "Hind Ratna Award & Pravasi Award in 2006, Navrattan Award, NRI Barclays Pravasi Award, Sardar Patel Award, Pride of India Award, Pinnacle Award & NRI Achievers Award in 2007, Bharat Gaurav Award & Pravashi Ratan Award in 2008, Pride of India Gold Award & Gold Star Award – Spiritual Counsellor of the year – House of Lords in 2009, Bharat Samman Pravasi Award in 2010, Global Indian Association (GIA) International Excellence Award in 2013, International Gold Star Award in 2014 & Gandhi Charkha Award in 2014.

Overseas Indians who have become citizens of the countries of their settlement are actually the best ambassadors India could have in these nations. Apart from what they do for themselves or their families, or in their respective vocations, they tend to spare ample

time and energy for spreading India's message and culture, and finding ways to strengthen the motherland. For a fact, India's impressive Diaspora, or Indiaspora as we call them, have played a singular role in promoting India's interests abroad and have always acted as its unnamed unofficial ambassadors. Ergo, when we see such a diverse profile of an NRI as that of Captain Mike, one cannot help but be impressed by the many feathers in his hat ...





## THE PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND

### LEO VARADKAR SON OF AN INDIAN IMMIGRANT



**ASHWANI SRIVASTAVA**


*The author is a Senior Research Lead on Policy and energy topics & M. Tech in Chemical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur.*





In what is being flaunted as a massive generational shift in the politics of Ireland, 38-year Indian-origin politician Leo Varadkar has taken on the mantle of the country's Prime Minister, succeeding Enda Kenny, 66, and bringing with his election a series of firsts in a historic mandate. He was elected as leader of the governing Fine Gael party on 2nd May, 2017, marking a symbolic moment for Ireland in several ways. First, this was the first time an Indian-origin politician gets to become the once-staunchly straight-laced Catholic country's first openly gay PM; and he's also the first of a person of Indian descent and the youngest ever to hold such office.

When Leo Varadkar's father Ashok moved to Ireland in the 1970s, he chose one of Western Europe's most socially conservative countries to call his home. And now, 38-years down the line, his child has become the youngest PM of Catholic Ireland. Leo Varadkar was born in Dublin out of wedlock between his Indian doctor father and an Irish nurse. He came out publicly as a gay in the run-up to a 2015 referendum that legalized same-sex marriages in Ireland. "If somebody of my age, of my mixed race background and of all the things that make up my character can potentially become the leader of our country, then I think that sends out a message to every child born today that there is no office in Ireland that they can't aspire to," says Varadkar.

Varadkar has since been voted in as the prime minister by Ireland's Dáil (parliament) on June 13th. However, there are some concerns that he is relatively inexperienced when compared to past prime ministers. The Indian-origin politician has been a Teachta Dála (TD) since 2007 (first elected in 2007), currently for the Dublin West constituency. Importantly, he entered Ireland's political stage when he was just 22. He was elected to parliament at 27 and nine years later, he publicly came out as gay. He has also previously served as Minister for Social Protection from 2016 to 2017, Minister for Health from 2014 to 2016 and Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport from 2011 to 2014. 

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Shiv Khera

*Author, Educator, Business Consultant & a successful entrepreneur, the writer is a much sought after speaker, who often inspires and encourages individuals to realize their true potential. He has taken his dynamic personal messages to opposite sides of the globe.*

## “IF YOU DON’T REMOVE ROAD BLOCKS, YOU ARE A ROAD BLOCK”

**According to modern guru Shiv Khera, star performers avoid certain actions and activities, and always shun saying things like the following:**

- ❑ “I thought everyone knew about it” – This is typical response of non-performers to ensure that no one is accountable.
- ❑ “I thought someone else was going to do it” – This is a great justification for inaction. Remedy is, a responsible person should ask questions to keep things moving on track.
- ❑ “No one ever asked me to do it” or “no one ever told me about it” – People who talk like this, are operating with blinders or with a tunnel vision totally oblivious of what’s going on around them.

❑ “They were supposed to get back to me” or “they did not get back to me” – All these responses are total demonstration of lack of initiative and responsibility. Why? Because, expecting someone else to get back puts you at their mercy and stops the actions from your side.

❑ “I just had no time” or “I have been busy up to my neck” – When people keep talking such things too many times, it is time to evaluate if they are worth retaining as their intent is in question.

❑ “I did not think of that” or “I did not think that it was important to ask those questions” – Such phrases show the inability or unwillingness to see beyond and to grasp what is coming.

**The only job security is ‘performance’. Everybody hits road blocks and removing road blocks is what the person is paid for.** 🚧



# NRI ENTREPRENEURS

## HURDLES AND OPPORTUNITIES



*According to the country's Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), some 25 million people of Indian origin do not live in India, but abroad. The Indian government recognizes this Diaspora as People of Indian Origin (PIO). A high-profile subset of this group (though, strictly speaking, it is a classification for tax status) is the Non-resident Indian (NRI), which is loosely considered to mean Indians who still hold Indian passports and have not taken citizenship in their host countries. Their ranks include many highly successful scientists, entrepreneurs and corporate executives, including PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, former Citigroup CEO Vikram Pandit and Google's former chief business officer Nikesh Arora, to name a few. In this issue, we take a look at the problems and prospects for NRI entrepreneurs who wish to return to the home country to start their own ventures.*





Sanjay Govil, founder and chairman of Infinite Computer Systems, a company that provides mobility solutions and IT services to some of the world's largest corporations, says that the most important factor for any entrepreneur is "believing in what they want to do." Passion is a very important driving factor, he notes, adding that NRIs need to be focused on customer satisfaction. "As you pursue your dream, it is also very important that you are constantly evolving your concept because the marketplace is constantly changing," he states.



Munish Narula, who founded Tiffin.com, Tashan Restaurant & Lounge and Tiffin Bistro which is now part of the Narula Restaurant Group, was formerly an investment banker. He founded Tiffin.com, a web-only and delivery-only restaurant concept that soon evolved into a multi-platform operation offering a full e-commerce website, delivery and takeout, dine-in and catering. Following up on that success, Tiffin has opened five more locations in the Philadelphia market, and is exploring growth opportunities in both the US and India. Narula says that although the required skill-set and drive are the same whether you are an entrepreneur in India or an NRI, there is "a little bit of additional pressure" associated with being an NRI.

Narula began his US business career on Wall Street, but for all the wrong reasons, he notes. "I had a miserable time on Wall Street, because my only motivation was the money." In his current career as a hospitality sector entrepreneur, "I found what I love, and I love what we do." Like Govil, Narula sees entrepreneurship as an opportunity to pursue his own dreams. "Being an entrepreneur is following your dream, listening to your customers" and constantly reinventing your products and managerial strategies to respond to the needs of those customers, he notes. "If you are not adapting to the market needs and demands, your company will die at some point. I don't think that being an NRI differentiates your skill-set from others, but it does give you a bit of an edge, and it gives a bit of additional pressure."



Prasad Setty, vice-president of people analytics and compensation at Google, has spearheaded the company's well-known data-

driven approach to attract and retain the best talent by creating a positive and productive environment, and rewarding its employees in innovative ways. Although Setty believes that NRIs are playing an important role in Silicon Valley and in some Indian companies, he says that they could be playing an even more significant role if more of India's talented young NRIs were directed into research-focused careers. "If India wants to lead the world, there needs to be a lot more research that is done there," Setty noted. "Last year, there were only 125 computer science PhDs" in India. Although the country produced a large volume of engineers, "very few PhDs were doing the hard-core research" that India needs.

## ELIMINATING BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION



Kanika Dewan, founder and chairperson of Ka Design Atelier and group president of the Bahrain-based Bramco Group, stresses the importance of eliminating the deeply ingrained corruption in Indian bureaucracy. Dewan's firm was responsible for the design and construction of the new Terminal Three of Delhi International Airport, the world's third-largest. She recalls a particular incident that dramatizes the problem. Her firm was working on the Mumbai Airport, and had acquired rented accommodations for several hundred workers. Some people came by and said "get out of this accommodation." When Dewan asked them why, she was told she needed to provide a payoff to a local inspector. She rejected making such a payoff citing corporate policy. She added that these types of illegal payments go beyond "the flavour of corruption to literally criminal activities. We believe the outside world or the developed world, as we call it, is going to change that."

According to Dewan, India has been "very accepting" of non-Indians arriving from the US or elsewhere, armed with skills and good ideas for doing business. Apart from welcoming this "reverse brain drain" from the West, India also provides entrepreneurs with access to a vast labour pool from the country's humungous human capital resources. "That is where India needs to go to tap into the resources that are within, but we need to organise ourselves in a more efficient manner; and this is where quality control, corruption et al come into play." Infrastructure is such a large issue, she adds, and there is huge opportunity for kickbacks; this is where the politicians earn their bad reputation. India's geographical position "allows it to bring in lots of intellectual property from both the Middle East and



Asia — which will help us — but we have to learn from the West how to be able to avoid these kinds of issues.”

Govil says that accountability and inconsistency in governmental policies are major challenges for NRIs and other entrepreneurs doing business in India, therefore the government needs to focus on improving the consistency of its policy initiatives. “If the rules change on the fly, it is very destructive for business.” For example, a few years ago, the government was setting up special economic zones that were supposed to be tax-free. Although several companies showed interest in setting up centres for research and manufacturing in the zones, that policy was suddenly reversed. Rather than provide investors with tax-free treatment, they were now to be subject to a minimum tax of 20%. “The commitment of the government was there for three years, and then that changed,” Govil pointed out. These sorts of reversals create “indecisiveness and uncertainty in the industry. And that’s why we have seen a significant reduction in investments in India.”

In a second example of government inconsistency, Govil cited a new law governing corporate social responsibility, or CSR. Every company having a net worth, income, or net profit above a certain threshold level needs to spend at least 2% of its average net profits for the past three years on CSR activities. The challenge for NRIs and other business leaders in India,






notes Govil, is that “we don’t even know if this 2% will be tax-deductible.” Too many Indian laws seem very ambiguous with gray areas that “create problems with accountability,” he added.

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Has India fully capitalized on the potential of the IT industry? Setty notes that India has “certainly become very important” for Google. However, he argues that there is still a shortage of content available in local languages and that the industry needs to try and get Indians to become “more used to using the Internet for e-commerce.” While E-commerce sites such as FlipKart and Snapdeal have enjoyed much growth, they have hardly penetrated into the vast Indian market. For its part, Google is working with local R&D teams to address the specific needs of its Indian users.

Govil stresses that NRIs should “do something that you really want to do.” He also advises entrepreneurs to take advantage of India’s very talented labour pool. “Use India as a source of human capital. That is the biggest thing India has going for it, whether it is in infrastructure, IT, or whatever,” Govil notes. Ultimately, he adds, Facebook’s recent acquisition of WhatsApp for US\$ 19 billion is really a big play on the Indian consumer, who will be using its online messenger service in ever larger numbers in the future.

Dewan advises female NRIs to prepare themselves for various forms of intimidation. In her sector — design and construction — “they expect women not to put their foot down so much,” she says. On one occasion, for example, a male business colleague asked her, “Shouldn’t you be shopping?” rather than attending a business meeting. Dewan notes that women should “retaliate, and stick to your guns. Get your team to support you. You can’t be scared. You have to share your problems and work as a team.” 

NRI Achievers Bureau

***“We don’t even know if this 2% will be tax-deductible.” Too many Indian laws seem very ambiguous with gray areas that create problems with accountability,”***

***- SANJAY GOVIL***



THE INDIA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION OF OVERSEAS INDIANS

# GIVING BACK TO INDIA

***NRI Achievers, as part of our fact-gathering activity, connects with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs every month – more particularly the Overseas Indian Affairs Section that formerly used to be a separate ministry until recently before getting reabsorbed by the MEA. In this edition, we bring you excerpts from an Interaction we had with Shri. Gyaneshwar Mulay, Secretary to the Government of India at the Ministry of External Affairs & Overseas Indian Affairs.***



***In the past few years, the Ministry of External Affairs has undertaken various new initiatives to strengthen Diaspora engagement. How is MEA tapping the Indian Diaspora to accelerate Indian Government's development initiatives?***

In recent years the Government has enhanced its engagement with the Overseas Indian Community led by Hon'ble Prime Minister himself. As you have seen in recent years, the Prime Minister has interacted with the Indian community at mega events abroad whenever he is on a foreign visit.

As a result of our outreach, I noticed among the Indian Diaspora a stronger sense of belonging to the motherland, pride in their Indian roots and heritage, a keen desire to connect with contemporary India, and enthusiasm to become a part of the transformational changes which are taking place in every sector. During our interaction with the Overseas Indian community, they often express their desire to give back to their home country. It is in this context that the India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) assumes a very important role. IDF-OI was set up



by the Government in 2008 as a not-for-profit Trust to channelise the philanthropic propensities of overseas Indians into social and development projects in India. In May 2015, the Board of IDF-OI gave a new mandate to the organization to promote Government of India's flagship programmes: Swachh Bharat Mission and Clean Ganga Mission and projects identified by State Governments.

*Overseas Indians have an emotional attachment to their native place/school/college, and often want to do something for their community back home. Does IDF-OI identify projects as per donor's wish?*

Diaspora philanthropy for India has grown dramatically. Giving back is strongly imbibed and traditionally rooted in the Indian culture and ethos. Contributions from Indians abroad often are made on an individual basis; through religious groups, student organizations or other Indian associations.

We recognize that overseas Indians are emotionally connected to their village and State. We are taking several measures to connect with the overseas Indian community, and we have called on them to partner with the Government in our ongoing development efforts. Therefore, IDF-OI is working very closely with State Governments to select projects in these States and seek Overseas Indians' engagement with these projects. IDF-OI has gathered more than 75 projects from 15 states in sectors of Sanitation, Education, Women's Empowerment, and Healthcare. IDF-OI is also signing MoUs with State Govts. to strengthen and streamline its partnership with States, under which the State Govt. will appoint a Nodal Officer who will identify projects and coordinate with IDF-OI.

*Donors distrust and regulatory constraints are the primary concerns when dealing with Diaspora philanthropy. How does IDF-OI address such issues and makes Diaspora Giving easier?*

We understand that overseas Indians are keen to know how their money is being utilised and its impact on beneficiaries. Recognising that accountability is an important aspect that will inspire donors, IDF-OI incorporates transparency and objectivity in all aspects of its work. To strengthen and ensure sustained engagement with overseas Indian contributors, IDF-OI has put in place a robust mechanism for quality control and regular reporting/updates to contributors on projects funded by them. It also facilitates project site visits by donors to experience the first-hand impact of their contribution. I would like to emphasise that IDF-OI does not deduct any administrative cost from contributions

received from Overseas Indians. 100% of contribution received from overseas Indians is utilised for project implementation.

*Usually newly built infrastructure deteriorates after the project implementation is over. How does IDF-OI ensure sustainability of asset created through funding by Overseas Indians?*

We are aware that one of the biggest concerns amongst overseas Indians is the maintenance of an asset after project is completed. To ensure that the asset created through funding by overseas Indians is being maintained and is operational, IDF-OI has put in place stringent mechanisms. At the stage of project submission, the implementing agency is mandated to submit the project cost along with operational & maintenance (O&M) cost for a period of at least three (03) years. IDF-OI ensures that O&M for a minimum period of 03 years is undertaken by the State Administration. The implementing agency is also responsible for sending periodic updates to IDF-OI regarding the usage of the asset. To ensure timely implementation of projects, we regularly follow up with the State Governments. All these processes are a part of IDF-OI's endeavour to address these major concerns and lead overseas Indian philanthropy into India.

*Most social development projects pertaining to asset creation run into multiple lakhs. How can an average Overseas Indian, especially, young professionals participate in this programme?*

IDF-OI is keen to connect with the second generation of overseas Indians. Given the increasing use of and preference for internet and online platforms for payments, IDF-OI's On-line Payment Gateway was launched by Chairperson, Smt. Sushma Swaraj on 31 July, 2016. I am glad to inform that overseas Indians can make contributions online to IDF OI, by using their credit or debit cards. The Payment Gateway has provided an easily accessible platform for overseas Indians to enable small and regular contributions from overseas Indians as per their preference and capability. IDF-OI offers overseas Indians the option of contributing to either specific projects based on their sector and State of preference or to IDF-OI Pool Fund. They can either select a project in totality or contribute to individual components of the project. Contributions can be made by overseas Indians either individually as a group of individuals, or as an Association of Indians. The minimum contribution online is US\$ 100 or its equivalent in other foreign currencies. Overseas Indians can send contributions as an individual, as a group of individuals, and even as an association. ■



# THE PASSPORT ACT 1967




**T**he Ministry of External affairs celebrated 50 years of the Passport Act 1967 as the 5th Passport Seva Divas and a Conference of the Regional Passport Officers in New Delhi, on the 22nd and 23rd of June 2017. Apropos it was on 24th June 1967 that the Passport Act came into effect. India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Minister of State for Communications (IC) Manoj Sinha, and Ministers of State for External Affairs Gen V K Singh and M J Akbar, attended. A Special Commemorative Stamp was also released on this special event. Senior officials of the ministry of External Affairs and other government departments, beside 38 Passport officers and officials of service provider TCS, were present at the function where awards of excellence were presented to the best performing Passport Officers and Police Officers for best passport and verification services.

Speaking at the event, External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj gave this message to Passport Issuing Authorities in India: "It is a matter of immense pleasure for me to felicitate all our Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad on the occasion of the Fifth Passport Seva Divas on 24 June, 2017. This year we are celebrating the completion of 50 Years of the enactment of the Passports Act, 1967. The Ministry of External Affairs and its subordinate office – the Central Passport Organisation – have good reasons

to celebrate as well as mark the event with renewed commitment to provide better passport services in a timely, assured, and efficient manner.

The year that went by will go down in history as the one in which this Ministry took path-breaking steps in its endeavour towards building better passport delivery mechanisms. Not only did we simplify the Passport Rules but also we took giant strides in taking passport services closer to our citizens. We have teamed up with the Department of Posts to utilize Head Post Offices as Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) to extend passport services to our citizens on a larger scale and for ensuring wider area coverage. We have decided to set up 235 POPSK in two phases – 86 in Phase-I and 149 in Phase-II. It is matter of great satisfaction that 52 POPSKs identified in Phase-I have already been operationalised. Applicants who apply for their passports online through the passport portal can now schedule an appointment and visit the designated POPSK to complete the formalities similar to those at the PSK necessary prior to the issue of the passport. We have been able to reduce the distance required to travel by an applicant to get a passport.

As a part of our simplification drive, we have permitted submission of several new documents as proof of date of birth and removed several Annexes to the Passport Rules. 

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# 70 Years of India's Independence TOWARDS REFORMED & REJUVENATED REALTY



**BY: Vinod Behl**

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In its seven decades of journey since independence, the real estate and housing sector, has come a long way from early years of restrictive policies, deficient planning and highly inadequate resources, to reach a progressive, planned, organised and reformative stage, facilitating urban transformation and speedy economic growth.

The present government's vision is to ensure long term inclusive development through good governance and transformative reforms to boost real estate, housing and infrastructure - the vital sectors that hold key to economic development. It is a far cry from Nehru era of 1947- 64, when there was no serious implementation effort to boost housing/urban infrastructure due to lack of resources and staff capacity to design and deliver. But, it was during this period that the government introduced state housing boards, mandated to construct houses for public and laid the ground for planned cities and subsequently Chandigarh & Gandhinagar came into existence in 1952 and 1960 respectively.

The Gandhi era ( 1965- 1990) was marked with regulatory restrictions. But it was in this period that the policy boost was given to the growth in housing finance sector, with the formation of Housing Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), National Housing Bank (NHB) and Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC). The Urban Land Ceiling Act was passed in 1976 with a purpose to curb speculative land pricing, but was later repealed by all states except West Bengal & Kerala as it failed to serve its purpose. Significantly, during this period (1988), National Housing Policy came into being and a rural housing scheme for downtrodden was launched.

In the post- liberalisation period ( 1991-2000), the role of government as enabler, away from direct provider of housing, as proposed in National Housing Policy, was further reinforced with the creation of efficient legislative, legal and financial frameworks for private sector for the development of real estate and housing.

Further, to give a boost to urban development and housing, urban local bodies were empowered and housing finance market was deepened. In the post -2000 period of economic globalization, JNNURM, an urban- focused programme to encourage cities to go for phased improvements in the civic service levels, involving investment of \$20 billion was launched in 2005. It was in this year only that a major reform of allowing 100% FDI in real estate /construction business was undertaken. In 2013, Rajiv Awas Yojana was launched.

Real estate, housing and infrastructure are at the forefront of Modi government's policy to boost economy and push up growth. When NDA government, led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi took over in May, 2014, economy was in shambles, inflation & current account deficit were high and projects were stuck due to corruption and policy paralysis and foreign investment was hit. But, with its focus on good governance and through a spate of reforms, the NDA government could manage to restore the growth. It has brought down fiscal deficit from 4.5 percent in 2013-14 to 3.5 percent in 2016-17, targeting 3.2 percent in 2017-18. The GDP growth that had fallen to 6.6 percent in 2013-14, clocked 7.1 percent in 2016-17 and Moody has projected 7.5 percent growth rate in 2017-18.

Immediately after taking over, the government liberalized FDI in construction development, significantly reducing minimum area and capital investment requirements for foreign real estate developers. This, according to Sachin Sandhir, Global MD, Emerging Business, RICS, eased foreign investment for the sector, troubled by regulatory bottlenecks and paucity of funds. The second wave of FDI reforms in 2016, allowing 100 percent FDI in civil aviation, food processing sectors and easing norms in defence and pharmaceutical sectors, was much to the advantage of real estate. The growth of these sectors, according to Anshuman Magazine, CMD, CBRE, South Asia, will boost real



estate. In fact, the positive impact of FDI reforms is already visible. Foreign investment has shot to record \$156 billion during 3 years of Modi government, with FDI in real estate touching \$5.7 billion, according to 2016 World Investment Report of United Nations. During UPA time, it was \$1.2 billion in 2013-14.


Fully realizing that cities are the engines of growth, Modi government, following the global trend of promoting urbanisation, directed its policies towards improving cities productivity. It launched key reform programmes of 'Atal Mission of Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation' (AMRUT) & '100 Smart Cities Mission', with investment of about one lakh crore, over 5 years, adopting incentive based approach, directly linking financial incentives to reforms undertaken by urban local bodies for developing urban infrastructure in cities. AMRUT is targeted to rejuvenate 500 cities on PPP model, benefiting 2 crore urban households. While under UPA's urban renewal mission (JNNURM), Rs 36000 crore was released against commitment of Rs 42800 crore, NDA government has committed 98000 crore under AMRUT & Smart Cities Mission. The government's policy emphasis to promote urban transformation, has already started paying dividend. Forty seven percent of 11705 urban projects approved during 2015-16, are already under implementation, to be completed by stipulated time period of 2019-20, compared to 39 percent of 3138 projects approved during 2005-2014 period. So much so that today foreign investors are eyeing smart cities for investment. The US & French development agencies have signed pacts to adopt 3 cities each for development as smart cities. Japan has shown interest in creating smart cities while Chinese companies are keen to develop mega industrial townships. The government through these reform initiatives, is focusing on improving the quality of human life. And for that purpose, a City Livability Index has been launched for major cities on the basis of quality of life they offer.

As urban infrastructure holds the key to urban transformation, the government is putting emphasis on boosting urban infra investment. A record allocation of Rs 3.96 lakh crore was made for infra sector in the union budget for 2017-18. For highways, the budget allocation was hiked from 57676 crore to 64000 crore and budget for rural roads was stepped up to 27000 crore. The initiative to set up National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) for the development of infrastructure projects, including revival of stalled projects, may well come handy in mobilising equity and debt capital, especially as several overseas sovereign and pension funds have shown interest. The policy initiatives on the infrastructure front are clearly showing results. The cost overruns in central sector infrastructure projects came down sharply to 11 percent at the end of FY 17, from 20 percent, 3 years back when Modi



government took over, reflecting increased efficiency in project implementation and faster clearances.

As part of its urban reforms agenda, the government's mission of 'Housing for All by 2022' assumes great significance. The mission focuses on building 3 crore new low cost, affordable homes (including 1 crore rural homes). And to ensure the success of its ambitious programme, the government has taken enabling policy decisions like according infrastructure status to affordable housing, tax incentives for affordable housing to builders and home buyers and credit linked interest subsidy under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) to home seekers. The key reform to set up Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), will come handy to fund capital-starved developers. Benami Property Act, aimed at stamping out black money and other measures to weed out cash transactions, are also going to check artificial & speculative spurt in prices and making homes more affordable. The enactment of landmark RERA (Real Estate Regulation Act) is going to boost real estate and housing by bringing in transparency and credibility, protecting the interests of property buyers and making the business regulated and more organised. The biggest tax reform of independent India - GST, will further make real estate transactions more transparent & tax efficient.

Notwithstanding these path breaking reform initiatives, the immediate challenge before the government is to ensure smooth and effective implementation of these measures while executing its unfinished agenda of reforms like single window clearance, ease of doing business, rental housing, rationalization of land prices and stamp duty among others. Seized of these challenges, the government is making all out efforts to see that the cumulative effect of all its reform initiatives ensures transformational changes on ground, bringing in significant improvement in the quality of life of ordinary people. 



# खुद पर भरोसा रख...

## बिना साहस के मंजिल नहीं मिलती

गणि राजेन्द्र विजय

जैन संत

बचपन के दिनों में मार्क रुदरफोर्ड एक दिन समुद्र के किनारे बैठे थे। दूर समुद्र में एक जहाज लंगर डाले खड़ा था। बाल-सुलभ आकांक्षा मन में आई। जहाज तक तैरकर जाने की इच्छा बलवती हो उठी। मार्क तैरना तो जानते ही थे, कूद पड़े समुद्र में और उस स्थान तक पहुंच गए जहां जहाज लंगर डाले खड़ा था। मार्क ने जहाज के कई चक्कर लगाए। मन प्रसन्नता से भर गया। विजय की खुशी और सफलता के सुख से आत्मविश्वास बढ़ा। लेकिन जब उन्होंने वापस लौटने को किनारे की तरफ देखा तो निराशा हावी होने लगी। किनारा बहुत दूर लगा, बहुत अधिक दूर।

मार्क ने लिखा है-मनुष्य जैसा सोचता है, उसका शरीर भी वैसा ही होने लगता है। कुविचारों के कारण मैं, एक फुर्तीला नौजवान, बिना डूबे ही डूबा हुआ-सा हो गया। लेकिन विचारों को मैंने निराशा से आशा की ओर धकेला, और क्षण भर में चमत्कार होने लगा। मैं अपने में परिवर्तन महसूस करने लगा। शरीर में नई शक्ति का संचार हो रहा था। मैं समुद्र में तैर रहा था और सोच रहा था कि किनारे तक न पहुंचने का मतलब है डूबकर मरने से पहले का संघर्ष। मेरा बल मजबूत हुआ, मेरे अपने ही विचारों से। मैं फिर से शक्तिमान हो गया। जैसे मुझे संजीवनी मिल गई। पहले मन में भय था और अब विश्वास। किनारे तक पहुंचने की क्षमता का अहसास। मैंने संकल्प किया और अपने लक्ष्य की ओर तैरने लगा।

विचार के सहारे ही रुदर फोर्ड वापस लौटकर किनारे तक पहुंचने में सफल हुआ। दुनिया भर में मशहूर इस लेखक के पूरे जीवन पर बचपन की इस घटना की गहरी छाप रही। उसका जीवन-दर्शन ही बदल गया। मार्क ने लिखा- बिना साहस के मंजिल नहीं मिलती। बिना विश्वास के संकट से उबरा नहीं जा सकता। संघर्ष में ही सफलता का रहस्य छिपा है। आदमी संकट के नाम से ही घबराता है। संकट का आभास होते ही वह उससे बचने के उपाय करने लगता है। लेकिन संसार में शायद ही ऐसे व्यक्ति का जन्म हुआ हो जिसने

संकटों का सामना कभी न किया हो। महापुरुषों ने संकट को जीवन की पाठशाला कहा है। इस पाठशाला में व्यक्ति जितना अधिक सबक याद करता है, वह जीवन में उतना ही सफल होता है। संकट का मुकाबला करके नया जीवन जीने वालों के अनुभवों की पोथियां प्रेरणा की किरण हैं।

विचार की शक्ति अणु से भी महान होती है। विचार ही तो है जो मनुष्य को संकट में डालता है या फिर उससे उबारता है। विचार ही मनुष्य को नैतिक बनाता है या पतित करता है। विचार पहले, क्रिया बाद में। कार्लाइल ने संकट को अनुभव माना है और इसे पाठशाला की संज्ञा दी है। उसने उदाहरण दिया है-अखाड़े में उस्ताद अपने शिष्य को बार-बार पटकनी देकर गिराता है, उसे चोट भी लगती है,

मोच भी आती है, शरीर से धूल लगती है, थकान होती है, लेकिन बार-बार की पटकनी से ही शिष्य वह सीख पाता है जिसके लिए वह अखाड़े में आता है।

संकटों के बिना जीवन का असली आनंद नहीं आता। इतिहास में उन्हीं को जगह मिलती है जिन्होंने चुनौतियां स्वीकार करने का साहस दिखाया है। नैतिक बल के सहारे संकटों का मुकाबला किया जा सकता है। अनैतिक लोगों के हाथ लगी सफलता तात्कालिक होती है, अल्पकालिक होती है, नैतिक बल से प्राप्त सफलता स्थायी होती है। गंतव्य की प्राप्ति से पूर्व उसका

निर्धारण आवश्यक है। लक्ष्य निर्धारण हो जाने के बाद भी आलस्य और प्रमाद इंसान को गतिशील नहीं बनने देता।

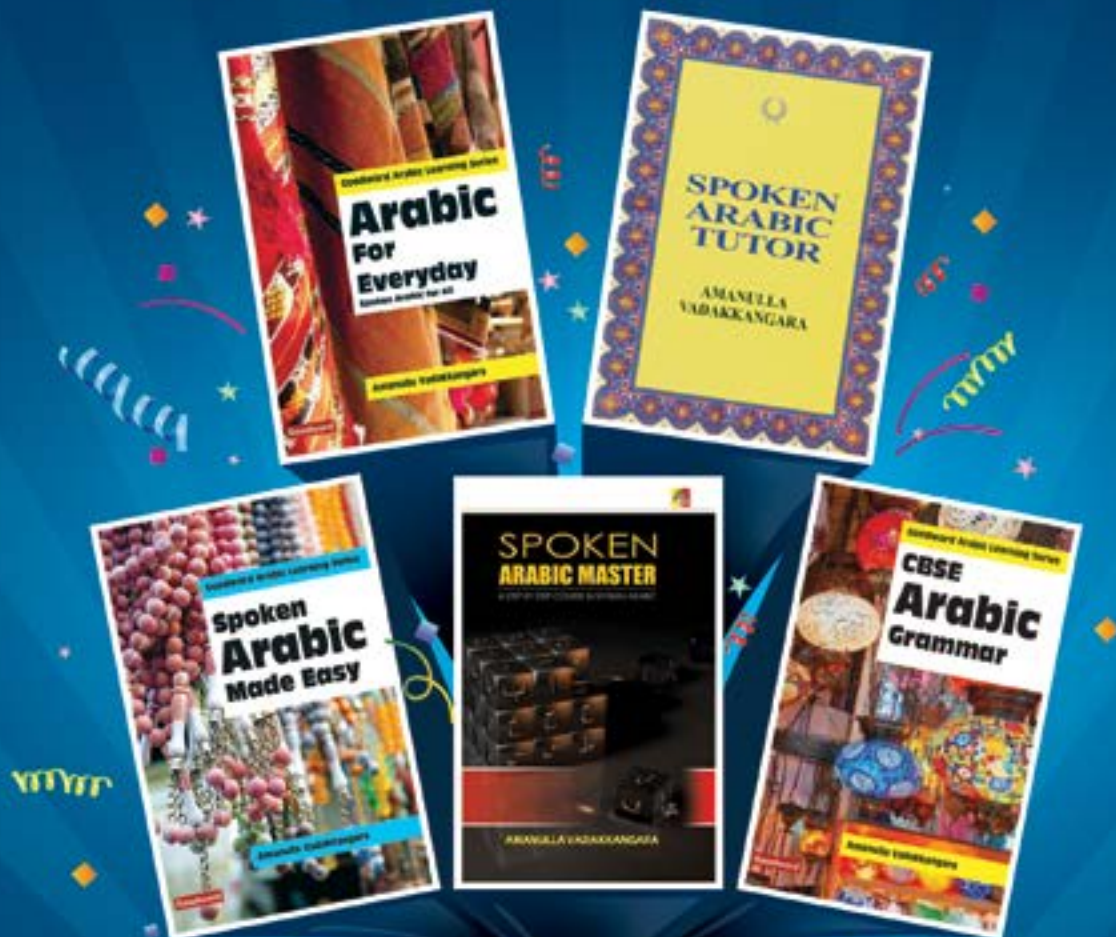
मार्ग में अवरोध भी आ सकते हैं। उन्हें उत्साह और साहस के साथ पार करना होता है। कहीं अपमान मिलता है, कहीं निराशा सामने आती है, इन स्थितियों का विश्लेषण इनसे मुक्ति का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकता है। अधिकांश लोगों के दुर्भाग्य का कारण यही होता है कि उन्हें अपने ऊपर भरोसा नहीं होता। वे अपने भाग्य को ही कोसने रहते हैं। जो इंसान खुद को कमजोर समझता है उसे कभी विजय नहीं मिल सकती।



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# किस आदमी को औरत ने कब्जे में नहीं किया

लगभग 2400 वर्ष पूर्व नालंदा विश्वविद्यालय के महान आचार्य चाणक्य एक ऐसे महान विभूति थे, जिन्होंने अपनी विद्वत्ता और क्षमताओं के बल पर भारतीय इतिहास की धारा को बदल दिया। मौर्य साम्राज्य के संस्थापक चाणक्य कुशल राजनीतिज्ञ, चतुर कूटनीतिज्ञ, प्रकांड अर्थशास्त्री के रूप में भी विश्वविख्यात हुए। इतनी सदियाँ गुजरने के बाद आज भी यदि चाणक्य द्वारा बताए गए सिद्धांत और नीतियाँ प्रासंगिक हैं तो मात्र इसलिए, कि उन्होंने अपने गहन अध्ययन, चिंतन और जीवानानुभवों से अर्जित अमूल्य ज्ञान को, पूरी तरह निःस्वार्थ होकर मानवीय कल्याण के उद्देश्य से अभिव्यक्त किया। चाणक्य नीति में कुल सत्रह अध्याय हैं। यहाँ प्रस्तुत है चाणक्य नीति का सोलहवां अध्याय:-

1. संसार के उद्धार के लिए जिन लोगों ने विधिपूर्वक परमेश्वर का ध्यान नहीं किया, स्वर्ग में समर्थ धर्म का उपाजन नहीं किया, स्वप्न में भी सुन्दर युवती के कठोर स्तनों और जंघाओं के आलिंगन का भोग नहीं किया, ऐसे व्यक्ति का जन्म माता के यौवन रूपी वन को काटने वाली कुल्हाड़ी के समान है।

A man who never remembers the Almighty will not get out of life-death cycle. One who is deprived of the wealth of religion will never reach the doors-of-heaven and one who has not even dreamt of enjoying a woman. Such person is comparable to an axe that destroys that the forest of his mother's youth.

2. स्त्री (यहाँ लम्पट स्त्री या पुरुष अभिप्रेत है) का हृदय पूर्ण नहीं है, वह बंटा हुआ है। जब वह एक आदमी से बात करती है तो दूसरे की ओर वासना से देखती है और मन में तीसरे को चाहती है।

The heart of a woman is not united but divided. While she is talking with one man, she looks lustfully at another and thinks fondly of a third in her heart.

3. मूर्ख को लगता है कि हसीन लड़की उसे प्यार करती है। वह उसका गुलाम बन जाता है और उसके इशारों पर नाचता है।

The fool (mudha) who fancies that a charming young lady loves him, becomes her slave and dances like a shakuntal bird tied to a string.

4. ऐसा यहाँ कौन है जिसमें दौलत पाने के बाद मस्ती नहीं आई।

क्या कोई बेलगाम आदमी अपने संकटों पर रोक लगा पाया। इस दुनिया में किस आदमी को औरत ने कब्जे में नहीं किया। किस के ऊपर राजा की हरदम मेहरबानी रही। किसके ऊपर समय के प्रकोप नहीं हुए। किस भिखारी को यहाँ शोहरत मिली। किस आदमी ने दुष्ट के दुर्गुण पाकर सुख को प्राप्त किया।

Is there one who having become rich has not become proud? Which licentious free man has put an end to his calamities (A grievous disaster)? Which man in this world has not been overcome by a woman? Who is always loved by the king? Who is there who has not been overcome by the ravages of time? Which beggar has attained glory? Who has become happy by contracting the vices of the wicked?

5. स्वर्ण मृग न तो ब्रह्मा ने रचा था और न किसी और ने उसे बनाया था, न पहले कभी देखा गया था, न कभी सुना गया था, तब श्रीराम की उसे पाने (मारीच का मायावी रूप कंचन मृग) की इच्छा हुई, अर्थात् सीता के कहने पर वे उसे पाने के लिए दौड़ पड़े। किसी ने ठीक ही कहा है- 'विनाश काले विपरीत बुद्धि।' जब विनाश काल आता है, तब बुद्धि नष्ट हो जाती है।

No golden deer took birth nor anyone saw it before. Still, Lord Rama went after it. It appears as that the wisdom deserts a person before the arrival of the problem in the life of a person.

6. व्यक्ति को महत्ता उसके गुण प्रदान करते हैं, वह जिन पदों पर



## BUZZ

काम करता है सिर्फ उससे कुछ नहीं होता. क्या आप एक कौवे को गरुड़ कहेंगे यदि वह एक ऊंची इमारत के छत पर जाकर बैठता है.

A man attains greatness by his merits and not simply by occupying an exalted seat. Can we call a crow an eagle (garuda) simply because he sits on the top of a tall building?

7. गुणों की सभी जगह पूजा होती है, न कि बड़ी सम्पत्तियों की. क्या पूर्णिमा के चांद को उसी प्रकार से नमन नहीं करते, जैसे दूज की चांद को?

A man is respected for his qualities even if he lacks in money. The little moon on the second day of antecedence is given much more importance than a full moon.

8. जो व्यक्ति गुणों से रहित है लेकिन जिसकी लोग सराहना करते हैं वह दुनिया में काबिल माना जा सकता है. लेकिन जो आदमी खुद की ही डींगें हांकता है वो अपने आप को दूसरे की नजरों में गिराता है, भले ही वह स्वर्ग का राजा इंद्र हो.

The man who is praised by others as great is regarded as worthy, though he may be really void of all merit. But the man who sings his own praise lowers himself in the estimation of others though he should be Indra (the possessor of all excellences).

9. यदि एक विवेक संपन्न व्यक्ति अच्छे गुणों का परिचय देता है तो उसके गुणों की आभा को रत्न जैसी मान्यता मिलती है. एक ऐसा रत्न जो प्रज्वलित है और सोने के अलंकार में मढ़ने पर और चमकता है.

If good qualities should characterise a man of discernment, the brilliance of his qualities will be recognised as a gem that essentially bright, really shines when fixed in an ornament of gold.

10. वह व्यक्ति जो सर्वगुण संपन्न है अपने आप को सिद्ध नहीं कर सकता है, जबतक उसे समुचित संरक्षण नहीं मिल जाता. उसी प्रकार जैसे एक मणि तब तक नहीं निखरता जब तक उसे आभूषण में सजाया ना जाए.

Even one who by his qualities appears to be all knowing suffers without patronage; and a gem though precious, requires a gold setting.

11. मुझे वह दौलत नहीं चाहिए जिसके लिए कठोर यातना सहनी पड़े, या सदाचार का

त्याग करना पड़े या अपने शत्रु की चापलूसी करनी पड़े.

I do not deserve that wealth which is to be attained by enduring much suffering, or by transgressing the rules of virtue, or by flattering an enemy.

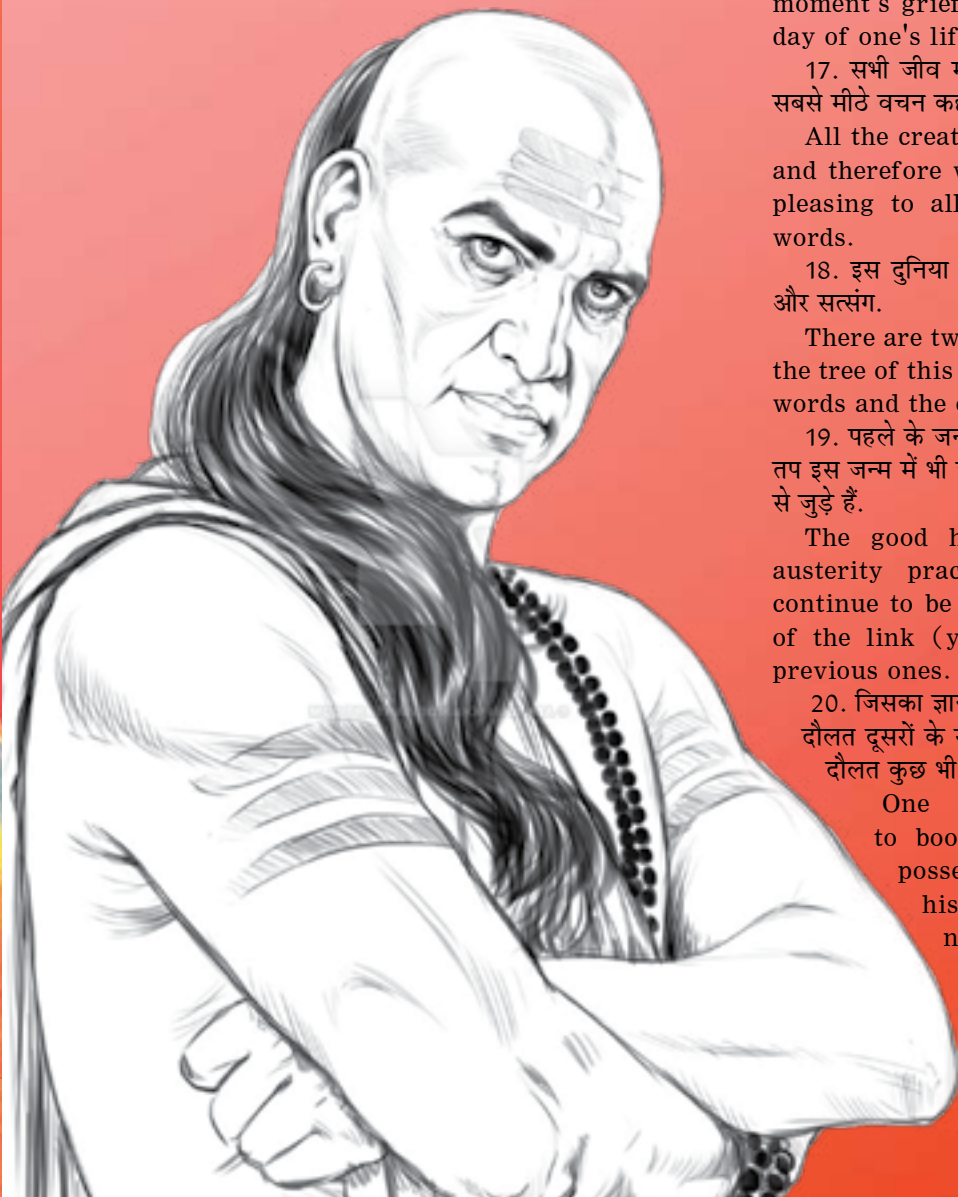
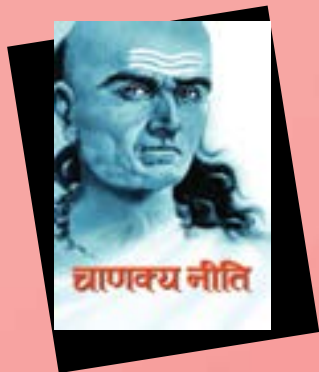
12. उस लक्ष्मी (धन) से क्या लाभ जो घर की कुलवधू के समान केवल स्वामी के उपभोग में ही आए. उसे तो उस वेश्या के समान होना चाहिए, जिसका उपयोग सब कर सके.

Money comparable to the bride of an orthodox family is not of much use. It must be like a prostitute available to anyone in need.

13. जो अपनी दौलत, पकवान और औरतें भोगकर संतुष्ट नहीं हुए ऐसे बहुत लोग पहले मर चुके हैं. अभी भी मर रहे हैं और भविष्य में भी मरेंगे.

Those who were not satiated with the enjoyment of wealth, food and women have all passed away; there are others now passing away who have likewise remained unsated; and in the future still others will pass away feeling themselves unsated.

14. सभी परोपकार और तप तात्कालिक लाभ देते हैं. लेकिन



सुपात्र को जो दान दिया जाता है और सभी जीवों को जो संरक्षण प्रदान किया जाता है उसका पुण्य कभी नष्ट नहीं होता.

All charities and sacrifices (performed for fruitive gain) bring only temporary results, but gifts made to deserving persons and protection offered to all creatures, shall never perish.

15. घास का तिनका हल्का है. कपास उससे भी हल्का है. भिखारी तो अनंत गुना हल्का है. फिर हवा का झोका उसे उड़ा कर क्यों नहीं ले जाता. क्योंकि वह डरता है कहीं वह भीख न मांग ले.

A blade of grass is light, cotton is lighter, the beggar is infinitely lighter still. Why then does not the wind carry him away? Because it fears that he may ask alms of him.

16. बेइज्जत होकर जीने से अच्छा है कि मर जाए. मरने में एक क्षण का दुःख होता है पर बेइज्जत होकर जीने में हर रोज दुःख उठाना पड़ता है.

It is better to die than to preserve this life by incurring disgrace. The loss of life causes but a moment's grief, but disgrace brings grief every day of one's life.

17. सभी जीव मीठे वचनों से आनंदित होते हैं. इसीलिए हम सबसे मीठे वचन कहें. मीठे वचन की कोई कमी नहीं है.

All the creatures are pleased by loving words; and therefore we should address words that are pleasing to all, for there is no lack of sweet words.

18. इस दुनिया के वृक्ष में दो मीठे फल लगे हैं. मधुर वचन और सत्संग.

There are two nectar-rich fruits hanging from the tree of this world: one is the hearing of sweet words and the other, the society of saintly men.

19. पहले के जन्मों की अच्छी आदतें जैसे दान, विद्यार्जन और तप इस जन्म में भी चलती रहती हैं क्योंकि सभी जन्म एक श्रृंखला से जुड़े हैं.

The good habits of charity, learning and austerity practised during many past lives continue to be cultivated in this birth by virtue of the link (yoga) of this present life to the previous ones.

20. जिसका ज्ञान किताबों में सिमट गया है और जिसने अपनी दौलत दूसरों के सुपुर्द कर दी है, वह जरूरत आने पर ज्ञान या दौलत कुछ भी इस्तेमाल नहीं कर सकता.

One whose knowledge is confined to books and whose wealth is in the possession of others, can use neither his knowledge nor wealth when the need for them arises. 7



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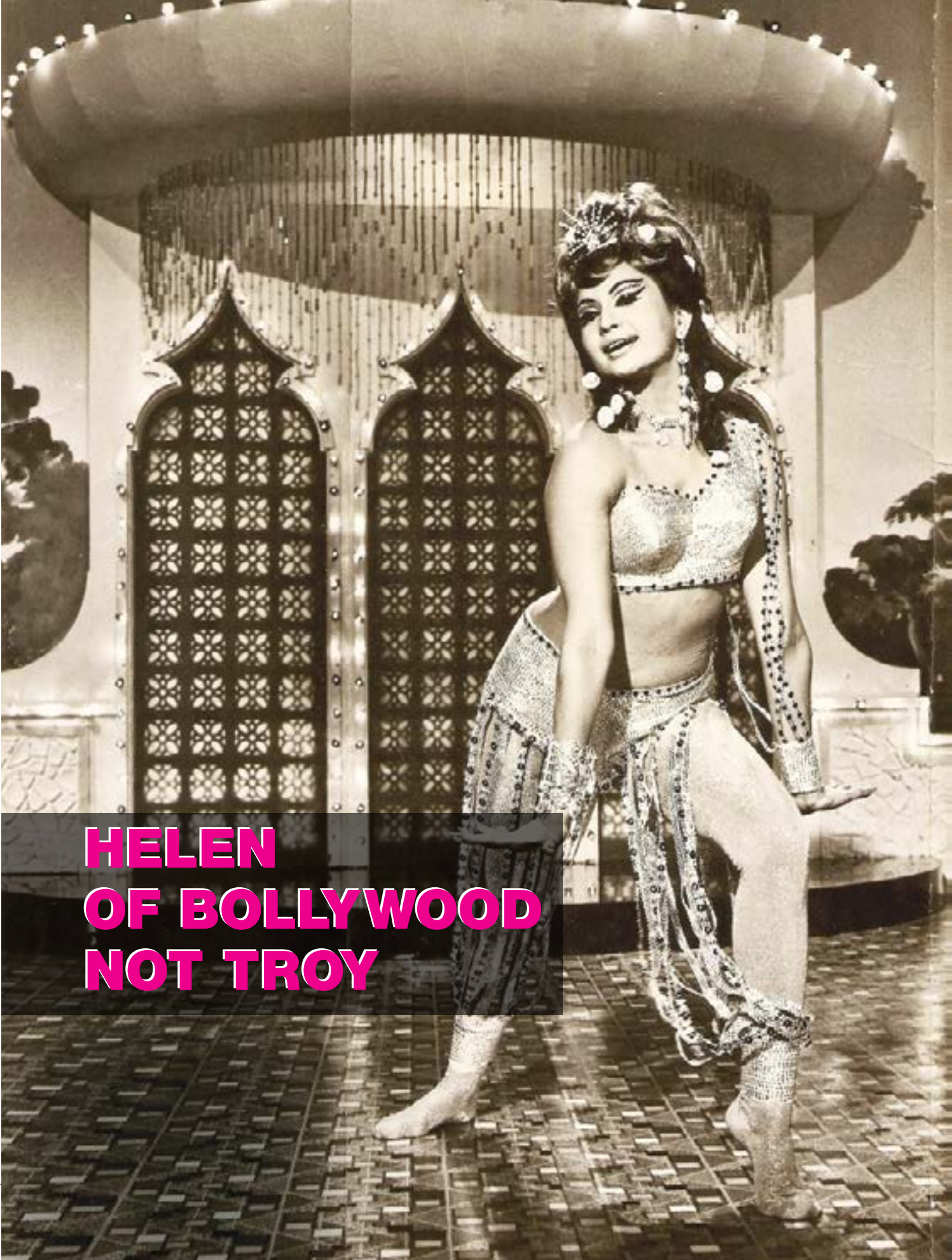


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**HELEN  
OF BOLLYWOOD  
NOT TROY**





*Helen, now a ripe old 78 years, has been an iconic Hindi film personality, who has played the vamp in innumerable films and has literally acted with the historic Who's Who of Bollywood. In this issue, we reproduce for your reading pleasure this rare interview given by her to our Mumbai maven Jyothi Venkatesh, that had for the first time appeared in the Free Press Bulletin dated November 25, 1978 ... 39 years ago. Read on ...*



**Jyoti Venkatesh**

*The writer is a well known  
& established film critic*

**H**elen looks alluring on the sets of Tito's RAM BALRAM. I manage to pin her down for an impromptu chat in her make-up room, where she was cooling her heels for the august arrival of Dharmendra and Zeenat Aman, who play the romantic lead in the film. Without much ado, here are excerpts from that chat I had with her.

'Aren't you fed up of wiggling your hips in film after film?' I ask her to set the ball rolling. 'Yes, yes. You bet my bottom penny on it', Helen smiles, accenting the word bottom, and adds, 'Gone are those good old days, when I used to derive satisfaction out of my work. Today all the time I am called upon to shake my hip here and my shoulders there. All that my producers need me for today is to titillate their audiences.'

'Why can't you put your foot down and refuse to be typecast?' I ask. Helen crosses her shapely legs and stretches herself comfortably, before saying: 'It is a question of one's survival. If you want to compete with others and yet retain your position in the industry, you have got to accept whatever you are offered.'


Helen does not think that the audience is to be blamed if an artiste is typecast, or for that matter believe that the image is a must for an artiste in order to click. 'Today, the audience is pliable. They are not as rigid as they were in the past. They are more mature and intelligent and have a flexible attitude. No longer do we find blind adulation for the star system. Thanks to the change in the audience taste today we have new artistes like Rameshwari, Ranjeeta and others'.

Like most of the oomph girls, Helen too has been anxious to do 'acting' roles. She says, 'I have decided to challenge the

roles gracefully before I am eased out of the dancing scene. One of the roles I did lately was in IMMAN DHARAM opposite Amitabh Bachchan. Why, at the moment, out of the 20 odd assignments that I have on the floors, I do have good roles in NAYA BAKRA, in which I play a romantic part opposite Utpal Dutt and LAHU KE DO RANG in which Vinod Khanna has been pitted opposite me. Believe it or not, in LAHU KE DO RANG, Danny enacts the role of my son. My role in the film is bound to be a turning point in my career.'

Though Helen welcomes the emergence of new starlets like Sheetal, Komilla Wirk and the rest on the dancing scene, she laments that quite a few of them tend to copy her style. 'Every artiste should try to have his or her own individual style of dancing. I confess that in the initial stage of my career I was inspired by Cuckoo and Anna Margaret. I learnt a little bit of dancing from each of them, observing the way they conducted themselves on the screen. But later I went on to develop my own individual style. I even learnt Bharat Batyam from dance master P L Raj. Not many are aware of the fact that I am quite proficient in Bharat Natyam. This is the reason I tend to do natural dances more often on the screen. Mehmood has given me a Bharat Batyan dancer's role in NAYA BAKRA being produced by Rekha's brother Babuji.'

What surprises everyone is the fact that despite her age (Helen is in her late 30's), she has maintained her trim figure. Recently when she was in USA in connection with some dance recital, she happened to meet Padmini. Helen was surprised when even Padmini complimented her on her trim figure. 'Coming from a colleague of mine, that too a beautiful and graceful lady, it came as a pleasant surprise to me', Helen laughs.

Just for the record, Helen's current assignments include RAM BALRAM, NAYA BAKRA, PAAKHANDEE, JHUTA KAHIN KA, LAHU KE DO RANG, Brij's new film and DOSTANA. 

## आपसे मिलने को बेताब विद्या बालन


'तुम्हारी सुलू' के रूप में होगी रू-ब-रू

**वि**द्या बालन की फ़िल्म 'तुम्हारी सुलू' का ट्रेलर हाल ही में रिलीज़ हुआ है जिसे लोग बहुत पसंद कर रहे हैं। वैसे, विद्या को भी अपने फैन्स का पूरा खयाल है और वो जानती है कि हर कोई उनकी यह फ़िल्म देखने के लिए एक्साइटेड हैं। शायद, इसीलिए आपकी सुलू आपसे मिलने अब एक सप्ताह जल्दी आ रही है। जी हाँ, 'तुम्हारी सुलू' जो पहले 1 दिसम्बर को रिलीज़ होने वाली थी, वो अब एक सप्ताह पहले 24 नवम्बर को रिलीज़ होगी। आपको बता दें कि अमिताभ बच्चन और ऋषि कपूर स्टारर '102 नॉट आउट' भी 1 दिसम्बर को रिलीज़ होगी। 'तुम्हारी सुलू' के प्रीपोंड होने के पीछे बच्चन साहब के साथ बॉक्स ऑफ़िस क्लैश भी एक वजह हो सकती है।

## 'पोस्टर बॉयज़' और 'डैडी' पर भारी हॉलीवुड फ़िल्म IT

**स**नी देओल और बॉबी देओल की 'पोस्टर बॉयज़' और अर्जुन रामपाल की 'डैडी', दोनों फ़िल्मों पर भारी पड़ी है हॉलीवुड हॉरर फ़िल्म 'IT', जिसने रिलीज़ के पहले हफ़्ते में तगड़ी कमाई की है। ट्रेड जानकारों के मुताबिक 'पोस्टर बॉयज़' और 'डैडी' के साथ रिलीज़ हुई 'इट' ने 8 सितंबर से 14 सितंबर तक 13 करोड़ का कलेक्शन किया है, जबकि 'पोस्टर बॉयज़' ने 11.20 करोड़ जमा किये, वहीं 'डैडी' के एक हफ़्ते का कलेक्शन 7 करोड़ से भी कम बताया जा रहा है। गौरतलब है कि 'इट' ने ओपनिंग वीकेंड में भी इन दोनों फ़िल्मों से बेहतर कलेक्शन (7.52 करोड़) किया था। इट सात बच्चों की कहानी



है, जो खुद को लूज़र्स क्लब कहते हैं। इन बच्चों की ज़िंदगी सामान्य नहीं है क्योंकि दूसरे शरारती बच्चों के साथ इनकी ज़िंदगी में 'इट' का भी ख़ौफ़ है। देश में इस साल रिलीज़ होने वाली ये दूसरी हॉलीवुड हॉरर फ़िल्म है। 



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