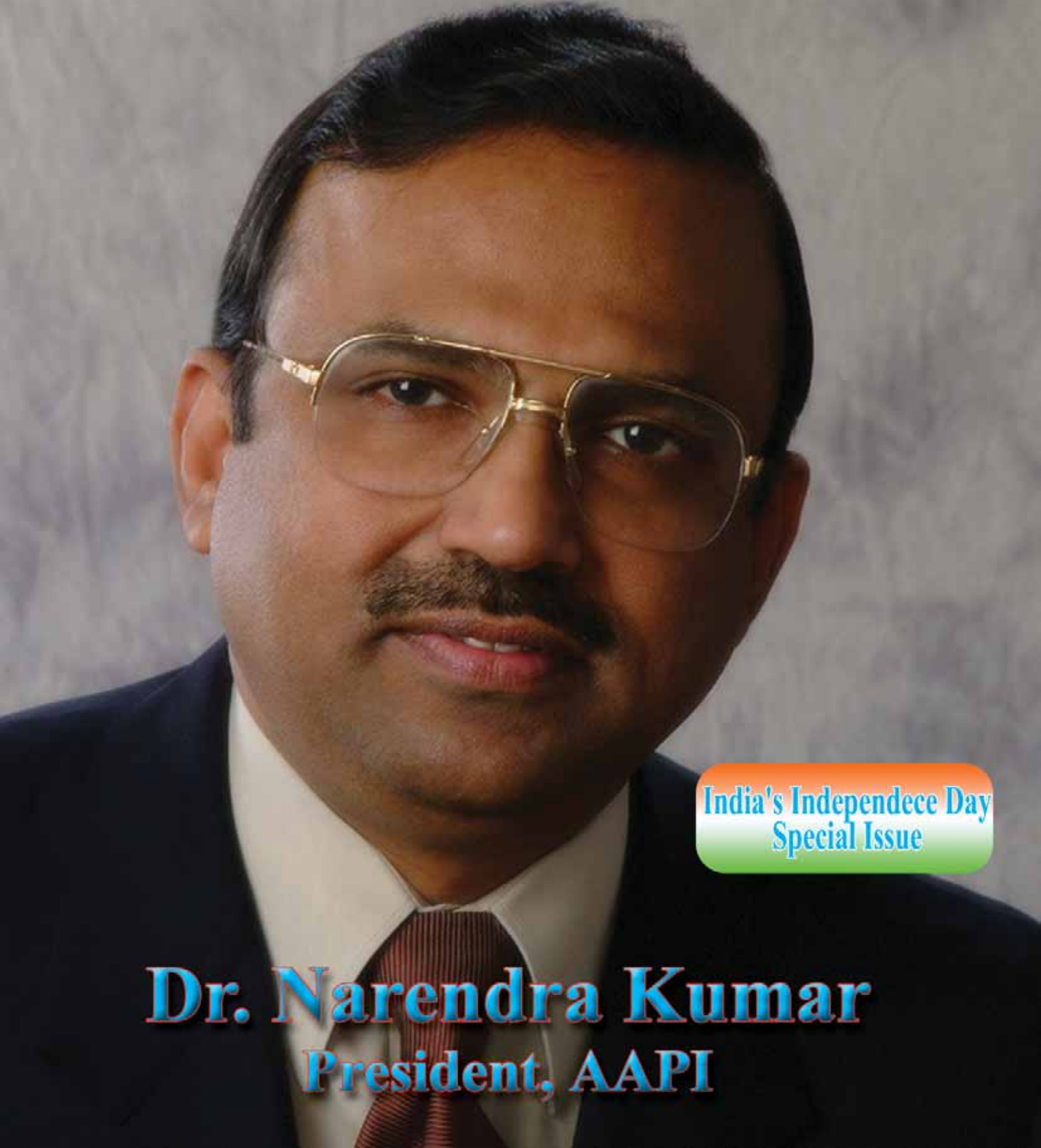


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India's Independence Day  
Special Issue

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President, AAPI

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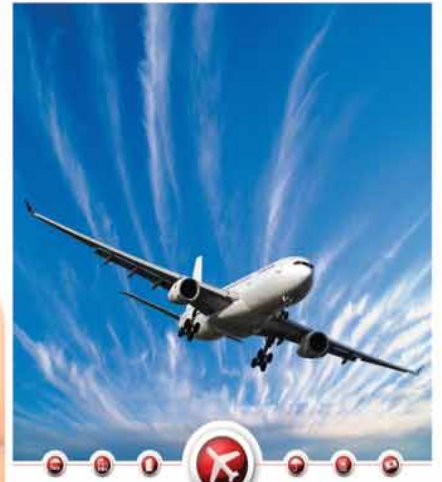
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## The Power of Money in Politics

The Supreme Court recently revisited the 2010 Citizens United case. The court's conservative majority by a 5-4 margin affirmed their earlier decision disallowing any limit on corporate election spending. Everyone knows the impact of the court's ruling that has ushered in an era of unprecedented money power that is unleashed on the citizens of this country, influencing their beliefs and voting patterns. Estimates say, the money raised during the 2012 cycle of elections will exceed an unprecedented three Billion Dollars. If President Obama had vowed to raise a Billion Dollars, his opponent, Mitt Romney is raising more money than the President every month since he secured his Party's nomination.

The Supreme Court ruling not only allows individuals and corporations to contribute unlimited money to their respective political parties and candidates, but also they could remain anonymous from disclosing their names and the amount to the public. In the name of the First Amendment, corporations and individuals pour in millions of Dollars into campaigns. The irony is that these biggest donations are given to tax-free advocacy groups of political parties and campaigns in defiance even of the admonition in Citizens United that independent contributions should be disclosed. Congress can — and should — require disclosure of secret donations. The Internal Revenue Service should crack down on political organizations that pose as tax-exempt "social welfare" organizations to avoid current disclosure rules.

The net result of this ruling and its national implications are that rich people are going to buy our elections. This is a blow to democratic governance. It means that the political process in this country is going to be up for sale. It allows billionaires to buy the political process. Businesses all over the place want to do away with regulation on business practices. The banks and finance companies are for deregulation. They don't want government regulation. The corporations that do not want government regulators to monitor their shady deals could pour in millions of Dollars to elect a President or a Member to the Congress or a Senator of their choice and who would favor their unregulated plundering and mismanagement of wealth and ways to generate profits. This is also true with the elected Judiciary members, where there are cases where corporations have poured millions into an election to oust or have a Judge favorable to deregulation elected to the Courts.

It was of some relief to note Justice Stephen Breyer sharing his unwillingness to accept the majority's belief, expressed in Citizens United, that independent expenditures do not give rise to corruption or even give the appearance of corruption. He also pointed out that the majority conservative Justices had made it plain that they did not have the slightest interest in reconsidering or altering its (unjust) decision.

Democracy is of the people, by the people and for the people, where a majority decide the type of government and leaders they want to rule over the country. However, when money decides who the winner is and the ruling party is going to be, it is not true democracy. A small minority with its money power is able to buy votes, influence elected officials and ultimately has a greater say in policy making. The more the money the rich spend, the more chance they have, they think, of getting their way and of getting policies that are more to their liking. Billionaires come in and spend tens of millions of dollars to defeat a candidate they don't like or to support a candidate they do like.

The First Amendment is about freedom of speech. It's not about freedom to spend unlimited amounts of money in an election to buy votes and influence elections and policies. There's a difference between speaking freely and the sort of influence-peddling that campaign finance reform laws attempt to protect. And in allowing unlimited political spending, this court has opened the door to corruption and to special interest domination of politics. David Axelrod, President Obama's political strategist, recently invoked a common perception about the 2012 campaign by blaming the Supreme Court for empowering 21st-century "robber barons trying to take over the government."

And that's not democracy.

*Ajayghosh*  
**Ajayghosh**

# DR. NARENDRA KUMAR: AAPI PRESIDENT

## Calls Members To Stand United & Give Back To Society

BY AJAY GHOSH

Healthcare has come to occupy center stage, especially after the recent Supreme Court ruling upholding the Affordable Health Care Act enabling nearly 47 Million Americans without health coverage to buy or obtain health care coverage. Physicians play a central role in providing healthcare services to every individual, both in preventing as well as treating diseases.

Physicians of Indian Origin in the United States are reputed to be leading health care providers, holding crucial positions in various hospitals and health care facilities around the nation. Leading an organization that represents more than 45,000 physicians of Indian Origin in the US, and being their voice and providing a forum to its members to collectively work together to meet their diverse needs, is a major challenge. Dr. Narendra Kumar, president of American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) appears to be right on task and is committed to lead AAPI to greater heights.

Dr. Narendra Kumar, an Otolaryngologist of Kerala origin, practicing medicine in the state of Michigan, assumed office as the president of the prestigious American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) during its recent 30<sup>th</sup> annual Convention in Long Beach, CA on June 25th, 2012. Dr. Kumar, who had completed his medical degree from Trivandrum Medical College, Kerala and post-graduate residency from Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi, India) and Case-Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, has been practicing Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery in Saginaw, Michigan since 1988.

Committed to giving back to the community and to the enhancing of opportunities for the professional growth of the over 65,000 Indian origin physicians and 25,000 fellows and residents of AAPI, Dr. Kumar is the right leader at the right time to lead this prestigious global organization that represents the influential and committed members of AAPI.

Commenting on the steady growth of the organization, Dr. Kumar, told this writer in an exclusive



*Dr. Narendra Kumar*

interview: “The organization’s meteoric rise from a basement chat three decades ago to become one of today’s premier ethnic medical associations is a tribute to its past leaders, a network of hardworking committees, and a constituency of 45,000 physicians and more than 15,000 medical students and residents. AAPI has become a force to reckon with. AAPI’s stellar role has come in for appreciation with the US political leaders and law makers.”

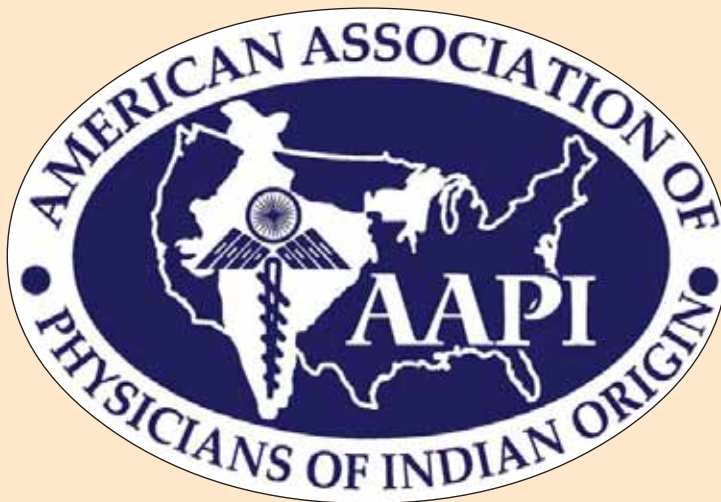
“It’s been a privilege for me to be associated with AAPI because I recognize the tremendous role that is being played by AAPI in promoting friendship between India and the United States. And we will carry on this responsibility of ours with greater commitment. As



members of AAPI, we have not forgotten our roots and are engaged in several activities such as conducting Indo-US Healthcare Summit in Kochi this year that will blaze new trail in healthcare sector in India and will pave way for new frontiers in public private partnership.”

On his vision for the organization under his leadership, Dr. Kumar, who has ascended to prominence during decades of hard work and dedication for the organization and the people it is committed to serve, said, “AAPI has several primary goals. We are into education of physicians both here in the US and in India : providing best medical care to patients; and maintain legislative presence in Washington DC .”

Serving in various capacities in his local Michigan chapter and subsequently the parent AAPI, Dr. Kumar has an intimate knowledge of the “nuts and bolts” of this giant organization. He has been instrumental in establishing an Electronic Learning Resource center in various medical colleges in Kerala , India . Ever smiling, affable and approachable, Dr. Kumar is a solid leader in the AAPI tradition.



Among the many tasks ahead of him, Dr. Kumar, who is currently focused on the AAPI Global Healthcare Summit in Cochin, Kerala during January 1-4, 2013, is being assisted in his efforts by a committed Executive Committee consisting of Dr. Jayesh Shah, President-Elect; Dr. Ravi Jahagirdar, Vice President; Dr. Seema Jain, Secretary; Dr. Ajay Lodha, Treasurer; Dr. Durgesh Mankikar; Dr. Kusum Punjabi, YPS

President; and Dr. Amit Bhakoo, MSRF President.

“Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve you as your President. Let’s start this ‘New Year’ on a positive note,” Dr. Kumar told his fellow physicians, who had elected to him to lead AAPI. And he assured them that “we will put all our energy in the positive direction to restore AAPI’s image, improve financial health, and bring unity, integrity and stability to our organization.” Dr. Kumar was confident that the new Executive Committee will “work together for the betterment of the organization as well as the members and the people we are committed to serve. Being united staying focused, and make you all proud of our organization.”

While lauding the efforts of the outgoing team and the committee that







had organized the recent Convention, Dr. Kumar said, "We just concluded our 30th Annual convention in Long Beach and it was well attended and well organized. My sincere appreciation to Dr. Sudeep Kukreja and his committee for putting together such a fabulous convention."

While serving as an umbrella organization for more than 130 member associations nationwide, AAPI was formed to coordinate the efforts of the physicians of Indian origin, currently working in the United States. Headquartered in Chicago, with an office in Washington, DC AAPI has come to be recognized as a strong voice in the healthcare legislation and policy arena.

Dr. Kumar has been involved in social professional and political arenas and has taken active leadership roles in various medical organizations both in USA and abroad. Recognizing his leadership and contributions, the AMA honored him with the Leadership Award in 2008. He is also a recipient of several honors and awards.

Dr. Kumar has ascended to prominence with his decades of hard work and dedication for the organization and the people it is committed to serve. As a Regional Director of AAPI, Dr. Kumar had attended almost all the local AAPI chapter meetings in his region in an attempt to serve as a liaison between the local chapters and the national organization, and he was instrumental in

recruiting over 170 new AAPI patron members during this time.

Expressing relief and satisfaction over amicably "putting to rest" the sensitive \$100 membership issue after the discussions in detail in the Governing Body and General Body meetings, Dr. Kumar reported that "It was decided to accept those 1,400 new members in question as legitimate patron members with full privileges and accept 80 more applications for patron membership received at the AAPI office this year without any sponsor names." From July 1, 2012 AAPI has increased the patron membership fee to \$1,000 and annual membership fee will remain as \$100.

For more details on the Nine City educational, scientific, and musical tour by Shreya Ghoshal party from September 21 to October 7, 2012, and the AAPI Global Healthcare Summit Registration in Cochin, Kerala during January 1-4, 2013 please visit: [www.aapiusa.org](http://www.aapiusa.org)

## AAPI's New Team Is Committed To Giving Back To The Society



Dr. Seema Jain

Commitment of team members to work together effectively to accomplish the goals of any organization is a critical factor in the success of the group. The relationships team members develop out of this commitment are key in team building and team success. The new

Executive Committee under the leadership of Dr. Narendra Kumar assumed charge of running the prestigious American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) during its recent 30<sup>th</sup> annual Convention in Long Beach, CA on June 25, 2012. The new cohesive team is committed to continuing to build on the lofty ideals of AAPI, says Dr. Kumar, AAPI's new president.

"The slate of officers for AAPI 2012-2013 comprise of individuals who are dedicated, industrious, experienced and very aware of the challenges that lie ahead," says Dr. Kumar, who has already been dedicating long hours each day to develop and execute a sustained strategy to take AAPI forward in the next 12 months and beyond. The members of the new executive committee consists of Dr. Jayesh Shah, President-Elect; Dr. Ravi Jahagirdar,



Vice President; Dr. Seema Jain, Secretary; Dr. Ajay Lodha, Treasurer; Dr. Durgesh Mankikar, Chairman, Board of Trustees; Dr. Kusum Punjabi, YPS President; and Dr. Amit Bhakoo, MSRF President. According to Dr. Kumar, "Each of them has been loyal 'foot soldiers' for the organization for many years. They bring to the table a team spirit, willingness to listen and learn, and the ability to adapt and change."

Committed to giving back to the community and to the enhancing of opportunities for the professional growth of the over 65,000 Indian origin physicians and 25,000 fellows and residents of AAPI, Dr. Narendra Kumar has been practicing Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery in Saginaw, Michigan since 1988. He has been involved in social, professional, and political arenas, while playing active leadership roles in various medical organizations both in USA and abroad. Ever smiling, affable and approachable, he is a solid leader in the AAPI tradition. His mantra is all about standing united and giving back to society. "AAPI has become a force to reckon with; we will all work together, stay focused and make you proud of our organization," he promises.

Dr. Jayesh Shah, the President-Elect of AAPI, is an



Dr\_Jayesh\_Shah

internationally recognized clinician in Wound Management and Hyperbaric Medicine. A two-time recipient of Jefferson C Davis Memorial Award at the Gulf Coast Chapter,

Dr. Shah has pioneered the formation of Hyperbaric Medical Society in India and is a superb writer and educator and an international speaker and young published scientist. Dr. Shah rose through the ranks in AAPI and has conducted many leadership seminars to enhance the involvement of young physicians and has been involved with AMA as Chair of AMA IMG Section. "With its extensive knowledge network, AAPI could advance the science of healing all over the world," Dr. Shah says. As a premier organization, Dr. Shah wants to see AAPI being "respected for its service and advancement of medicine."

The youngest president-elect of AAPI, Dr. Shah says, "I became a physician to serve and help one patient at a time. Joy of healing someone's wound, joy of relieving someone's pain can only be felt, not described," He wants AAPI to reach locations where AAPI has never

reached before. "I am looking forward to AAPI having an administrative office in Chicago, a legislative office in Washington and an India liaison office in New Delhi."



Dr\_Ravi\_Jahagirdar

Dr. Ravi Jahagirdar, elected as the Vice President of AAPI, is a man of many interests. He combines his passion for community service with his passion for surgery. As a practicing urologist in Orlando, Florida, Dr. Jahagirdar has been one of the pioneers of robotic surgery in

his field. As a grass-root leader, he had been instrumental in starting several AAPI chapters in Central Florida and chaired the Annual 2009 AAPI convention in Orlando.

Serving as the president of the Orange County Medical Society, Dr. Jahagirdar has been a long time delegate for the Florida Medical Association. He has had an active involvement in fighting the malpractice crisis which has belabored Florida. As an "early - adapter" he wishes "to incorporate cutting edge technology to enhance the AAPI image."

Having a flair for and interest in different Indian languages, and an avid traveler to different parts of the country, Dr. Jahagirdar has worked hard to make AAPI an all inclusive group. Chairman of the Hindu Society of Central Florida, Dr. Jahagirdar has a special interest in obtaining industry liaison and corporate sponsorship for conditions unique to the Indian Diaspora. "We have to ensure that our organization stays relevant to our younger generations," he reiterates.

Dr. Seema Jain, the new Secretary of AAPI has over two decades of service to the causes of the doctors, of Indian origin. She brings in a wealth of experience, and vision clubbed with infectious zeal and unwavering commitment. "At this time, AAPI is under strong leadership and the executive team is full of energetic and visionary physicians taking AAPI to the next level," Dr. Jain says. "My role as a woman leader in AAPI is to take up women's health issues in society; we as women leaders have a mission and goal to endeavor to create new programs for women's health." A superb organizer and fund-raiser over the years, Dr. Jain believes that the challenges the profession is facing both specialty-based and otherwise, need a strong organization, close collaboration with AMA and Political Health Committees. A practicing psychiatrist in New Jersey, she strongly believes in creating evidence based accountability for AAPI leadership.

Behind his quiet demeanor, Dr. Ajay Lodha, the Treas-





Dr\_Ajay\_Lodha

surer of AAPI, hides a power house of entrepreneurial skills. As the President of Queens Medical Services, Dr. Lodha has extensive background of overseeing quality assurance and quality improvement. A recipient of many awards for research and development in the

New Jersey area, Dr. Lodha is involved in administrative activities at various Long Term Care centers. An active member of his alma mater, RNT Medical College, Udaipur, he continues to help in strategic planning of giving back and helping communities in the US as well as in Rajasthan. He wants "AAPI to be a platform in helping our young physicians coming from India to seek residencies and to help them in settlement and to get jobs." As a treasurer, "I will be completely transparent and will try to overcome financial problems and foster harmony and end regionalism and groupism," says Dr. Lodha.



Dr\_Durgesh\_Mankikar

Dr. Durgesh Mankikar, Chairman, Board of Trustees, has been a member of AAPI since mid-1980s. Serving as member of several vital Committees of AAPI, Dr. Mankikar has risen through the ranks to become the Regional Director from New York and New Jersey, Speaker of the

House at Governing Body, a member of the Board of Trustees in 2010 and now been elected it's Chairman. Having served as President of New Jersey chapter and of the American Society of Indian Anesthesiologists, Dr. Mankikar has been very active in the Society of Anesthesiologists. His disarming and jovial persona hides a sharply honed sensibility of the rules and bylaws governing this organization. With his love of Indian Classical music, he wants to harmonize the relationship between officers and BOT: "To bring our prestige up as physicians and Indians in USA." As Chairman, he wants to "Make AAPI the Premier Indian organization in USA, make every Indian physician proud to belong to it, and have charitable works in USA, the land we chose to settle in."

Dr. Kusum Punjabi, the new energetic, dynamic, and attractive leader of the young physicians group, is

the President of Young Physicians of AAPI. As an Emergency Room Faculty physician at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey, she is a consummate multi-tasker. A Member at Large for the Women's Congress of AMA, her goal is to foster leadership amongst the young doctors and to improve awareness of AAPI. Dr. Punjabi has plans to undertake a five city networking event sponsored by the industry in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and



Dr. Kusum Punjabi

Atlanta. Media savvy and determined, Dr. Punjabi wants to use her "skills to improve the image of AAPI and to make AAPI aware of the issues confronting my generation of physicians and those still in training."

Dr. Amit Bhakoo, President, Medical Student, Residents and Fel-

lows Section, is pursuing his Residency in Radiology at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida. Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, he completed his undergraduate and medical degree from the George Washington University in Washington D.C. Dr. Bhakoo has initiated video teleconference sessions and hopes to obtain mentorship programs for AAPI. Looking forward



Dr. Amit Bhakoo

to his tenure with keen enthusiasm, Dr. Bhakoo's vision "for the upcoming year is to increase membership, increase commitment to community service across the United States and further develop leadership and professional programs to enrich the educational experience of many of the members and enable them to further pursue their professional goals."

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve you as your President. Let's start this 'New Year' on a positive note," Dr. Kumar told his fellow physicians, who had elected to him to lead AAPI. And he assured them that "we will put all our energy in the positive direction to restore AAPI's image, improve financial health, and bring unity, integrity and stability to our organization." Dr. Kumar was confident that the new Executive Committee will "work together for the betterment of the organization as well as the members and the people we are committed to serve. Being united staying focused, and make you all proud of our organization."

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# A Short-Sighted US Work-Visa Policy

BY AJAY GHOSH

Despite the unemployment in the U.S. continuing to be above 8%, it's ironic that there are employers across the nation, who are struggling to find highly skilled workers to fill specialized jobs, particularly those in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The H-1B visa program allows thousands of highly skilled foreign workers to enter the country each year to support the private sector and its fees support high-skills training for the existing workforce.

The need to fill vacancies for highly skilled workers prompted the US Congress to fix the problem in 1990 when it established special visas for highly skilled workers and researchers, professors and others of outstanding abilities. But the law set the limit of visas available to 140,000 — which included those for family members of those admitted. Worse, it applied the same absolute quotas on populous countries like China and India as it did on tiny countries like Luxembourg. Subsequently, the Congress reduced the number of work-visas or the H-1B visas granted each year to a mere 65,000, which gets filled up in a matter of weeks after the process begins every year.

Right now, only 15 percent of annual temporary visas are set aside for employment purposes. Of these, some go to seasonal agricultural workers, while a small number of H-1B visas are reserved for “specialty occupations” such as scientists, engineers, and technology experts. The number reserved for scientists and engineers is drastically below the 195,000 figure allowed between 1999 and 2004. The US need to reexpand the number of these high-skill visas to at least that

level to enable US companies to attract top workers.

The IT industry is still “the greatest mover,” said USCIS press secretary Christopher Bentley. U.S. employers are “requiring workers from India and China in greater proportions.” However, the current spike in H-1B visa applications is not as high as it has been in earlier years, according to USCIS spokesman William Wright. In 2008 and 2009, the H-1B visa cap was reached in the first week of the application season. Visas for those with “advanced degrees” were exhausted in the first week in 2008, and within a month in 2009.

While there are hundreds of thousands of applicants for every job available under this category and the job openings that could be filled with skilled foreign workers in the US, the limit set by the Congress has left potential employers who seek skilled workers and those who are aspiring to fill these openings in the lurch. The problem is especially acute for foreign students graduating from American universities with degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), according to a new study by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP).

The NFAP states the problem well: “Absent changes in the law by Congress, the long wait times for high skilled foreign nationals, including those educated in America, will continue. At a time when there is fierce competition around the world to hire highly skilled individuals, this threatens to deprive the country of talented individuals who will choose to develop innovations, make their careers and raise their families in other nations.” Wait times to obtain employment visas for professionals from India and China can already be eight years or more. To be eligible for these visas,





applicants must already have a job offer. How many employers are willing to extend an offer eight years down the road?

India, with its huge reservoir of skilled job seekers, is keen to work on a framework to increase the mobility of skilled workers with the US to tap the full potential of bilateral ties, Indian Ambassador to the US Nirupama Rao, has said, as she warned against “voices of protectionism” in America. “As India continues on its path of inclusive social and economic development, mobilising the immense creativity and energy of its people, we see the US as an important partner in this journey,” she said last month. “In this context, it would be beneficial if we could work also on a framework that would help increase the mobility of high skilled workers across the two countries. In these difficult economic times, sometimes we do hear the voices of protectionism,” she added.

In the meantime, a series of reforms, including changes in the F-1 and H-1B visa rules, that may benefit professionals from India by the US administration making America more attractive to highly-skilled foreign students and workers the United States has been welcomed by all. The interim measures are aimed at improving the competitiveness of US companies in the world market and stimulating US job creation before comprehensive immigration reforms for “fixing our broken immigration system,” the Department of Homeland Security announced.

Her remarks came amid US President Barack Obama’s frequent tirade against outsourcing. He has said that US firms shipping jobs off shores should be denied tax breaks if manufacturing is to be brought

back to America and employment is to be raised. Obama said all tax benefits should go to companies that produce jobs inside the country.

President Barack Obama has said that he does not want US companies to look for skilled and educated workers in India and China in fields like engineering, technology and science. To prevent that, Obama said, he wants to give the school and teachers the resources they need to train and educate students in the US. President Obama, after sending the annual budgetary proposal (for the fiscal year 2013) to the Congress, said that he does not want US companies to look for skilled and educated workers from India and China in field of engineering, technology and science. Well, Mr. President, this is not going to happen any time soon. Let me tell you why.

“As both India and the US work towards becoming truly knowledge societies they are also working together to translate these immense opportunities into practical cooperation....,” she said. “With a strong foundation in place, the two nations are uniquely positioned to pool their talent to address what President Obama’s innovation strategy called the Grand Challenges of the 21st Century,” she said.

The benefits of allowing skilled foreign workers to work in the US creates a win-win situation for both the US and India. The contributions by these foreign-born and often foreign-educated employees are immense. As a writer recently put it: “Almost all the cutting edge research that happens in various schools is mainly due to the efforts of Indians and Chinese Ph.D. students. You take these students out of the equation and I am sure that majority of the research



activities happening in major Universities will stop. Now where do these students who graduate with their Ph.D. go? Companies will be competing to hire them as they have knowledge in latest technologies thanks to their Ph.D. No company may want to wait to get non-existent Americans while you have properly trained Indian and Chinese counterparts from good schools graduating every year.”

When the US companies seeking skilled workers could not find them here and are not given work permits to work in the US, these firms seek to send jobs abroad through, what is known as “outsourcing,” which has become a political hot-button issue with Presidential candidate Mitt Romney being targeted for sending jobs overseas while serving as the CEO of Bain capital. For years there was pretty much one choice for U.S. companies seeking to move jobs offshore: India . Outsourcing grew to a \$69 billion business there and transformed backwaters such as Chennai and Hyderabad into teeming cities. That wave has crested. In 2011 companies in Latin America and eastern Europe opened 54 new outsourcing facilities, vs. 49 for India , according to industry tracker Everest Group.

India had substantial advantages in offshoring’s first phase: plenty of English speakers to staff call centers and enough tech talent to run remote data-processing and computer support centers—all at about a 60 percent discount to stateside workers. But having wrung substantial costs out of back-office functions, U.S. companies are exporting skilled white-collar jobs in research, accounting, procurement, and financial analysis. Even Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)—India ’s outsourcing leader, with estimated sales of \$9.8 billion in 2011—has 8,500 employees in South America, including Peru and Paraguay . Using an outsourcing firm to hire an entry-level accountant in India would cost 51 percent less.

According to a Wharton Business School scholar, “Unless a cultural and mental revolution happens in US, the country will have to depend upon skilled workers from India , China and other countries. for their existence. That is the truth and a political statement by the American President is not going to change this truth.”

The U.S. is facing ‘reverse brain-drain’ right now. According to a recent report, skilled workers are returning to countries like India and China from the U.S. , hence giving Indian companies access to increased number of skilled workers in the next couple of years. Over a million skilled immigrant workers, including scientists, engineers, doctors, researchers and their families, compete for 120,000 permanent US resident visas each year. This creates an imbalance that could fuel a ‘reverse brain-drain’, according to a report, Intellectual Property, the Immigration Backlog, and a Reverse Brain-Drain, released by the US-based Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

The study conducted by researchers at Duke University, New York University and Harvard University,

focusing on immigrants’ contributions to the competitiveness of the US economy, documented that one in four engineering and technology companies founded between 1995 and 2005 had an immigrant founder. Researchers also found that these companies employed 4,50,000 workers and generated \$52 billion in revenue in 2006. Indian immigrants founded more companies than those from the United Kingdom , China , Taiwan and Japan combined.

There is substantial evidence that the United States is falling behind on innovation. The key findings in a recent report are that foreign nationals contributed to more than half of the international patents filed by a number of large, multi-national companies, including Qualcomm (72 percent), Merck & Co (65 percent), General Electric (64 percent), Siemens (63 percent) and Cisco (60 percent). Forty-one percent of the patents filed by the US government had foreign nationals as inventors or co-inventors.

In 2006, 16.8 percent of international patent applications from the US had an inventor or co-inventor with a Chinese-heritage name, representing an increase from 11.2 percent in 1998. The contribution of inventors with Indian-heritage names increased to 13.7 percent from 9.5 percent in the same period. An analysis of patents granted shows that long-term dominance of the US has come to an end. In 1999, American scientists were granted 90,000 patents, compared to 70,000 to those from all other countries. By 2009, though, non-US innovators earned more patents (around 96,000) compared to Americans (93,000).

The United States also is falling behind in nurturing home-grown science and engineering expertise. Whereas 38 percent of Korean students earn degrees in science and engineering, compared to 33 percent for Germany , 28 percent for France , 27 percent for England , and 26 percent for Japan , only 16 percent of American graduates have backgrounds in these crucial areas.

Many of America ’s greatest artists, scientists, inventors, educators, and entrepreneurs have come from abroad. Rather than suffering from the “brain drain” of talented and educated individuals emigrating, the United States has benefited greatly over the years from the “brain gain” of immigration. These gifted immigrants have engineered advances in energy, information technology, international commerce, sports, arts, and culture. To stay competitive, the United States must institute more of an open-door policy to attract unique talents from other nations. Yet Americans resist such a policy despite their own immigrant histories and the substantial social, economic, intellectual, and cultural benefits of welcoming newcomers.

The United States needs a policy agenda that defines immigration as a way to improve job creation, economic competitiveness, and national innovation. Using this perspective, national leaders would elevate brains, talent, and special skills to a higher level of consideration in setting policy.





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# Indian Physicists Are Part of the Team That Found Particle Seen as Key to Universe

BY RENUKA KORALA

Indian scientists and research institutes were part of the discovery of a new sub-atomic particle that is crucial to understanding how the universe is built. The discovery was made at the European Organization for Nuclear Physics known as CERN in Switzerland last month.

Signaling a likely end to one of the longest, most expensive searches in the history of science, physicists said that they had discovered a new subatomic particle that looks for all the world like the Higgs boson, a key to understanding why there is diversity and life in the universe.

Scientists from Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP), Kolkata, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, Harishchandra Research Institute, Allahabad and Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar took part in the ambitious experiment over the years. The Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics' five member faculty team associated with the project was jubilant and flooded phone calls and video conferences.

The long-sought particle, known as Higgs boson or God particle, is also partly named after an Indian scientist Satyendra Nath Bose. Bose, who studied at Presidency College, Calcutta (now Kolkata), had worked with Albert Einstein in the 1920s and made discoveries that led to the most coveted prize in particle physics. The work done by Bose and Albert Einstein, later added to by Peter Higgs, led to this discovery.

However, SINP Director Milan Kumar Sanyal said while Higgs is given due credit, Satyendra Nath Bose has been denied it. His name is spelt as 'boson' while it

should be given as "Boson". Sanyal said he would write to CERN about it. Sharing the joy of the quantum leap in physics is also the Raja Ramanna Center for Advanced Technology (RRCAT) Indore. The Center, a nodal agency of Department of Atomic Energy, supplied vital parts, including magnets and software, for Large Hadron Collider (LHC) of CERN.

"I think we have it," said Rolf-Dieter Heuer, the director general of CERN, the multinational research center headquartered in Geneva. The agency is home to the Large Hadron Collider, the immense particle

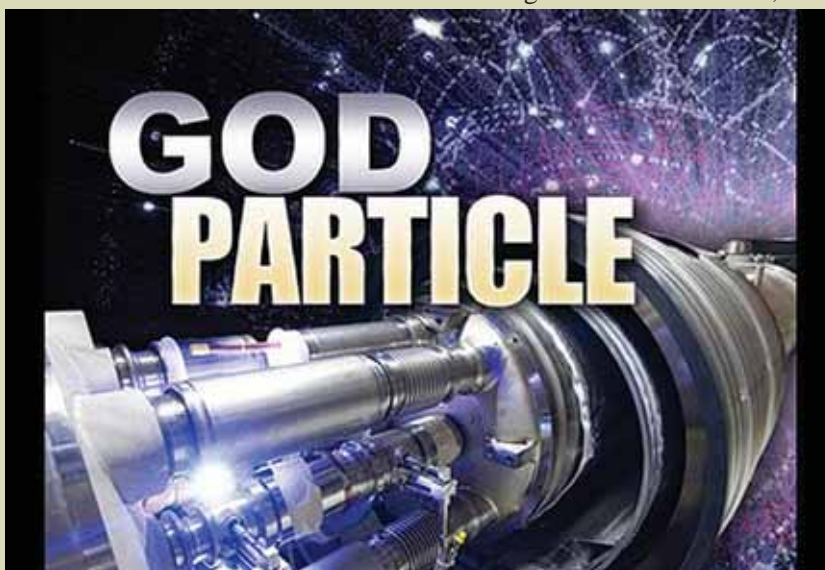
accelerator that produced the new data by colliding protons. The findings were announced by two separate teams. Dr. Heuer called the discovery "a historic milestone."

He and others said that it was too soon to know for sure, however, whether the new particle is the one predicted by the Standard Model,

the theory that has ruled physics for the last half-century. The particle is predicted to imbue elementary particles with mass. It may be an impostor as yet unknown to physics, perhaps the first of many particles yet to be discovered.

According to reports, the new particle has a mass of about 125.3 billion electron volts, as measured by the CMS group, and 126 billion according to Atlas. Both groups said that the likelihood that their signal was a result of a chance fluctuation was less than one chance in 3.5 million, "five sigma," which is the gold standard in physics for a discovery.

Gerald Guralnik, one of the founders of the Higgs theory, said he was glad to be at a physics meeting "where there is applause, like a football game." Asked to comment after the announcements, Dr. Higgs seemed





overwhelmed. “For me, it’s really an incredible thing that’s happened in my lifetime,” he said.

Dr. Higgs was one of six physicists, working in three independent groups, who in 1964 invented what came to be known as the Higgs field. The others were Tom Kibble of Imperial College, London; Carl Hagen of the University of Rochester; Dr. Guralnik of Brown University; and François Englert and Robert Brout, both of Université Libre de Bruxelles.

One implication of their theory was that this cosmic molasses, normally invisible, would produce its own quantum particle if hit hard enough with the right amount of energy. The particle would be fragile and fall apart within a millionth of a second in a dozen possible ways, depending upon its own mass.

Satyaki Bhattacharya, a member of the team and associated with the project from 1996, said “it is a definite boost to the Indian physicists and the country which had invested a lot of money on research in physics.” He said he would be on the lookout for more particles in the collider.

Besides Bhattacharya, Suchandra Datta, Sunanda Banerjee, Subir Sarkar and Manoj Saran were the other members of the team involved in Compact Muon Solenoid experiment at CERN. “India is like a historic father of the project,” Paolo Giubellino, spokesperson of CERN, reportedly said.

It conceptualized, designed and developed precision-positioning devices and its maintenance, the Center’s sources said. Besides the Raja Ramanna Center for Advance Technology, Indore based Indo-German Tool Room also played a major role in the development of Jacks on which the 27-km long LHC is positioned.

Raghunath Sahoo of Indian Institute of Technology Indore, who had worked at CERN for a decade, said

the institute is a member of ALICE Collaboration at LHC (CERN). He said “I will take some students to the CERN probably next year to see what exactly has been found and how the great lab functions.” That possibility is particularly exciting to physicists, as it could point the way to new, deeper ideas, beyond the Standard Model, about the nature of reality. For now, some physicists are simply calling it a “Higgslike” particle.

“It’s something that may, in the end, be one of the biggest observations of any new phenomena in our field in the last 30 or 40 years,” said Joe Incandela, a physicist of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a spokesman for one of the two groups reporting new data.

Reports here stated, the Standard Model, the Higgs boson is the only manifestation of an invisible force field, a cosmic molasses that permeates space and imbues elementary particles with mass. Particles wading through the field gain heft the way a bill going through Congress attracts riders and amendments, becoming ever more ponderous.

Without the Higgs field, as it is known, or something like it, all elementary forms of matter would zoom around at the speed of light, flowing through our hands like moonlight. There would be neither atoms nor life.

Physicists said that they would probably be studying the new particle for years. Any deviations from the simplest version predicted by current theory — and there are hints of some already — could begin to answer questions left hanging by the Standard Model. For example, what is the dark matter that provides the gravitational scaffolding of galaxies? And why is the universe made of matter instead of antimatter?



## Health World

# Rao Papineni Discovers Cancer Treatment

In what is being considered a path-breaking innovation, a scientist hailing from Hyderabad and his colleagues have invented a system in which a nano-particle carries the payload of anti-cancer drug and releases it only in the cancerous cell, thus protecting healthy cells around. The cutting-edge research done in the United States has been patented recently.



The nanotechnology scientist, Rao Papineni, told the media on the phone from the U.S. that the patent application received approval (patent no. US 8,202,544 B2) on June 19. Dr. Papineni, chief scientist and senior principal investigator in medical applications of nanotechnology at Carestream Health, Inc USA, along with his fellow researchers, filed for the patent in 2009. "This patent will potentially change the way radiation is administered. It will improve localisation and monitoring of tumour and will help in highly targeted delivery of drugs to kill cancer cells," he said.

Together with Alan Pollack, chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology, University of Miami, Dr. Papineni has been exploring the ability of nano-particles as a targeted drug carrier. "In rough terms, nano-particles are like payload delivery vehicles that can enhance... damage to cancer tissues and simultaneously reduce the toxicity of normal and healthy tissues during radiation treatment."

"The title of the patent is 'High Capacity Non-Viral Vectors.' The non-viral vectors are nano-particles. The nano-particles will allow the drug particle to target the diseased site with pinpoint precision. The nano-particles will allow the drug to be released inside the diseased cell. They will enhance the function of the drug... Our nano-particles will carry the... drug precisely with minimal collateral damage to healthy tissue," Dr. Papineni said.

## Cell Phone's Damaging Impact on Children

A new study published in the *Journal of Neurosurgery* has identified the dangers posed by the magnets used in the iPad 2 to the brains of children suffering from hydrocephalus.

The study by researchers at the University of Michigan focused on the effect of the iPad 2's magnets on shunt valves that are used to help children with hydrocephalus, a build-up of fluid inside the skull that

leads to brain swelling.

Researchers found that the magnets can change the valve settings if held within 5 centimetres of the valve, causing a valve malfunction until the problem is recognised and the valve is adjusted to the proper setting.

The study was undertaken after when one of the researchers' patients, a 4-month-old girl, experienced a shunt malfunction after her mother used an iPad2 while holding her. Everyone agrees that data-guzzling smartphones and tablets are selling fast, and the wireless industry needs to keep up. Cisco, the networking company, [published a study](#) that shows mobile data usage more than doubled in 2011.

Cellphones are radios and their calls are carried on the electromagnetic radio spectrum just like an FM radio signal or a walkie-talkie. The F.C.C. divides up the spectrum by bands of frequency, under the theory that no one wants signals on certain frequencies interfering with one another.

The *Parliamentary Assembly* in Europe concluded recently — [after an in-depth examination of evidence](#)— that cell phones and Wi-Fi should be banned in schools. Why? Because of their "potentially harmful" effects on humans...especially "little" humans. The [World Health](#)



[Organization](#) is now labeling mobile phones a "carcinogenic hazard"—like lead and chloroform.

Children are always the most vulnerable victims of environmental pollution. For instance, because of their size, they absorb 50 percent more air pollution than adults. When it comes to EMFs, studies have shown that their inner skulls and bones allow them to absorb twice the amount of radiation as an adult. EMFs can more deeply penetrate their brain tissue, which is more conductive than an adult's because it contains a higher concentration of fluid and ions. One study found that a cell phone call lasting only two minutes causes brain hyperactivity that persists for an hour in children.

Because they're growing 24/7, children's cells are

dividing at breakneck speed. The more cells that divide, the greater the risk for damage at critical junctures. EMFs can cause breaks in the blood-brain barrier, which is more permeable in children. That breach can allow toxins to travel to the brain through the bloodstream and can result in oxidative stress, damage to nerve tissue, and adverse effects to brain hormones such as dopamine and serotonin. Despite their findings, the researchers stressed that the iPad 2 could still be used safely with the same precautions that would normally be employed around other household magnets.

## New Diabetes Pills

A new drug for Type-2 diabetes has been launched recently in India by Boehringer Ingelheim India (BI) and Eli Lilly and Company, the 5mg film-coated tablet Linagliptin is sold under the brand name Trajenta. Introduced in metros like Mumbai and Delhi earlier last month, the new drug is to help Type-2 diabetes, a progressive disease and often, over a period of time, people are unable to maintain their sugar levels, requiring therapies to prevent diabetes-induced complications. New drugs are constantly being tested and introduced in the hope of finding a solution to maintain the blood glucose levels at acceptable levels.

Chennai-based diabetologist V. Mohan said that the new tablet is an improvement on the other three products in the same class as a person has to take it only once a day. "The earlier tablets like sitagliptine, vildagliptine and saxagliptine have proved to be effective. This group of drugs are quite effective with very mild hypoglycaemia-inducing property. Linagliptin can be given even if (a person has) renal or liver failure."

According to him, the tablet has been marketed by the company after conducting a five-year study for its effect on the human cardiovascular system. "Normally when such drugs come into the market, the Food and Drug Administration in the US calls for a five-year study. Other drugs underwent the study after being launched but in this case the study was done before launch and was found to be safe," he said. Regular use of the drug showed improvement in pancreatic beta cells function, an important component in controlling blood sugar levels. The tablet has been found to maintain the levels for a 24-hour period, he said.

He however cautioned that these drugs have been around only for six to eight years and hence there is no knowing what the side effects could be when it is used for a long term. Another factor would be the cost of the tablets itself. Dr. Mohan said if the price is reduced then more patients would benefit.

## Sitting Less To Live Longer

People who don't sit more than three hours a day are more likely to live an additional two years, a new study has claimed. Scientists from Louisiana University in the U.S. found that those adults who are only seated for a maximum of three hours a day typically live an extra two years.

Watching television has a similar effect, according to the researchers' calculations. They found that those who limit their daily viewing to two hours live for nearly

a year and a half longer, the *Daily Mail* reported.

Experts have long blamed the growing sedentary lifestyles for rising levels of obesity and a lack of fitness in today's adults. This in turn is linked to heart problems, **diabetes** and many forms of cancer.

The new findings, published in the journal *BMJ Open*, will no doubt cause concern amongst office workers who spend most of the day at their desks.

The new research reviewed past studies involving 167,000 adults aged 18 to 90. The researchers compared the subjects' life expectancy with how much time they had spent sitting down and watching television.

They calculated that 27 per cent of all deaths in America are partly caused by adults spending too much time sitting down. Similarly 19 per cent of all deaths are in part due to watching too much TV.

"The results of this study indicate that extended sitting time and TV viewing may have the potential to reduce life expectancy in the U.S.," they concluded.

Commenting on the study, Natasha Stewart of the British Heart Foundation said: "It does highlight what we already know about sedentary behaviour being a risk factor for developing heart disease. And recent U.K. guidelines suggested we should all minimise the time we spend sitting down. "We all need to be regularly active to keep our hearts healthy. So whether it's by walking to the shop rather than driving, or playing sport rather than watching it on TV, there are lots of ways to be more active and improve your health."

But other experts said the study certainly did not prove sitting down for too long shortened your life expectancy. "This is a study of populations, and does not tell you personally what the effect of getting off the sofa might be," said Prof. David Spiegelhalter of the University of Cambridge.

"It seems plausible that if future generations moved around a bit more, then they might live longer on average. But very few of us spend less than three hours sitting each day, and so this seems a very optimistic target."

## Pistachios can protect your heart during acute stress

Scientists say eating a handful of pistachio nuts a day can help reduce the damage done to the body by acute stress. Experts at Pennsylvania State University have claim that the nuts help **lower blood pressure** and heart rate in difficult situations.

In a study participants were given a variety of healthy diets, some containing pistachios, some without.

The scientists then measured their subjects' cardiovascular responses, first as they took a challenging mental arithmetic test and again as they immersed their feet in cold water. The largest drop in blood pressure was associated with eating about 1.5oz of nuts a day.

"Daily events, such as a tight deadline or public speaking can increase blood pressure," the *Daily Mail* quoted Dr Sheila West, lead author of the study published online in the journal *Hypertension*, as saying.

"These results are significant because they show that physiological responses to stress are affected by the foods we eat," she noted.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual The Light of India Awards Honor NRIs

BY JITIN HINGORANI

New York : NY: Over the years, the Indian community abroad has contributed significantly not only to their country of residence but also to the Indian economy back home. Worldwide, Indians are recognized as the most valued ethnic community in terms of their intellectual capital. Their efforts in infusing capital, ideas and international practices have also contributed significantly to the Indian economy apart from keeping alive the Indian traditions and culture



far and wide. Indians today have done the country proud through their contribution in various fields like art, science, technology and politics the world over. The Light of India Awards 2012 recognized exemplary achievement by NRIs in the fields of business leadership, corporate leadership, political leadership, science and technology, journalism and literature, and arts and entertainment.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual The Light of India Awards, a platform created to recognize excellence and the exemplary achievement of Indians living abroad by Remit2India, was held at the Taj Pierre Hotel in New York recently. During a glittering ceremony here prominent Indians from around the world were honored for their success, commitment, vision, and contributions to the world with the Light of India Awards. Attended by a select audience comprising of the world's renowned personalities, the second annual event was organized by Remit2India, ranked the world's No. 1 online money transfer portal for non-resident Indians (NRIs) by AC Nielsen, marking its 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary and over half a million satisfied customers.

"Remit2India The Light of India Awards aims to raise awareness about the achievements of Indians abroad," said



Avijit Nanda, President of TimesofMoney Group. "We are very excited about this year's winners, which includes stalwarts from various fields."

"It is great to see so many leading luminaries excel and build the profile of India globally," said Dr. Anil Kumar Sharma, Chairman of The Amrapali Group, the title sponsor for the event. "The Amrapali Group is glad to be associated with these leading lights and hopes to work together in further enhancing the global image of India and its people."

Excellence Awards in Business Leadership went to: Bharat Desai, Founder of Syntel – JURY AWARD and to Gurbaksh Chahal, Internet entrepreneur and a best-selling author – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD. Excellence in Science & Technology Awards were given to: Pradeep K. Khosla, Dean of the College of Engineering & the Philip & Marsha Dowd University Professor at Carnegie Mellon University – JURY AWARD, and Sabeer Bhatia, Co-Founder of Hotmail Service & Jaxtr – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD. Excellence in Corporate Leadership Awards went to: Anshuman Jain, Co-CEO of Deutsche Bank – JURY AWARD, and Padmasree Warrior, Chief Technology Officer of Cisco Systems – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD.

Excellence in Education & Academics Awards were given to: Renu Khator, President of the University of Houston – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD; Soumitra Dutta, Roland Berger Chaired Professor of Business and Technology and founder and academic director of elab – JURY AWARD; and Mohanbir Sawhney, Director of the Center for Research in Technology & Innovation at Kellogg School of Management – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD.

Excellence in Literature & Journalism Awards were given to: Amitav Ghosh, Author – JURY AWARD; Indu Sunderesan, Author – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD. Excellence in Arts & Entertainment awards went to: Padma Lakshmi, Host of 'Top Chef' – JURY AWARD and Lisa Ray, Actor & Host of 'Top Chef' Canada – PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to: Columbia University Professor & Economist, Jagdish Bhagwati; Founder & CEO of Patni Computer Systems, Narendra Patni; and Former CEO of Vodafone Group – Arun Sarin. Three Special Awards were also given away. Amrapali Young Achievers Award was given to Chairman & CEO of RadiumOne, Gurbaksh Chahal; Power of Influence in Education Award went to University of Buffalo President, Satish K. Tripathi; and Power of Influence in Technology to Co-inventor of USB Technology, Ajay V. Bhatt.

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# 'The Rise of Asian Americans'

(Adapted From A Study By Pew Research)

A century ago, most Asian Americans were low-skilled, low-wage laborers crowded into ethnic enclaves and targets of official discrimination. Today they are the most likely of any major racial or ethnic group in America to live in mixed neighborhoods and to marry across racial lines. When newly minted medical school graduate Priscilla Chan married Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg this summer, she joined the 37% of all recent Asian-American brides who wed a non-Asian groom.

The Pew Center's recent 'The Rise of Asian Americans' report, which makes it very clear that Asians, not Latinos, comprise the largest immigrant arrivals in the U.S., has taken many by surprise," says Asia Society President Vishakha N. Desai. "Given that most immigration debates have so far focused on the Latino population, and that Presidential election discussions are full of talk of the potential of the Latino swing voters, it seems counter-intuitive that Asians outnumber Latinos in their desire to come to this country and also happen to be the most educated, and most highly paid minorities."

Desai went on to say: "On the face of these findings, now already three years old, we should expect to have a bigger voice for Asian Americans in American politics and indeed in American society. Even in the corporate world, Asian Americans are seen as highly successful with more advanced degrees than all other ethnic groups. And yet, as a recent Asia Society survey suggests, Asian Americans continue to be in very short supply when it comes to leadership positions."

"In other words, Asian Americans have all the traditional American qualities, including a drive to succeed, work ethic, and an optimistic sense of the future. So why is it that they remain a 'hidden' minority when it comes to visibility in American political or corporate life? It's time that diverse Asian American communities, often more focused on their own ethnic groups than strategic alliances across various cultural dividing lines, come together to create a focused plan to increase their role in this new American world."

These milestones of economic success and social assimilation have come to a group that is still majority immigrant. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Asian-American adults were born abroad; of these, about half say they speak English very well and half say they don't. Asian Americans trace their roots to any of dozens of countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Each country of origin subgroup has its own unique history, culture, language, religious beliefs, economic and demographic traits, social and political values, and pathways into America.

Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated and fastest-growing racial group in the United States. They are more satisfied than the general public with their lives, finances and the direction of the country, and they place more value than other Americans do on marriage, parenthood, hard work and career success, according to a comprehensive new nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center.

According to a survey conducted among Asian Americans currently living in the U.S, Asians recently passed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants to the United States. The educational credentials of these recent arrivals are striking. More than six-in-ten (61%) adults ages 25 to 64 who have come from Asia in recent years have at least a bachelor's degree. This is double the share among recent non-Asian arrivals, and almost surely makes the recent Asian arrivals the most highly educated cohort of immigrants in U.S. history.



Compared with the educational attainment of the population in their country of origin, recent Asian immigrants also stand out as a select group. For example, about 27% of adults ages 25 to 64 in South Korea and 25% in Japan have a bachelor's degree or more.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, nearly 70% of comparably aged recent immigrants from these two countries have at least a bachelor's degree.

Recent Asian immigrants are also about three times as likely as recent immigrants from other parts of the world to receive their green cards—or permanent resident status—on the basis of employer rather than family sponsorship, although family reunification remains the most common legal gateway to the U.S. for Asian immigrants, as it is for all immigrants.

The modern immigration wave from Asia is nearly a half century old and has pushed the total population of Asian Americans—foreign born and U.S. born, adults and children—to a record 18.2 million in 2011, or 5.8% of the total U.S. population, up from less than 1% in 1965.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, non-Hispanic whites are 197.5 million and 63.3%, Hispanics 52.0 million and 16.7% and non-Hispanic blacks 38.3 million and 12.3%.

Asian Americans are distinctive as a whole, especially when compared with all U.S. adults, whom they exceed not just in the share with a college degree (49% vs. 28%), but also in median annual household income (\$66,000 versus \$49,800) and median household wealth (\$83,500 vs. \$68,529).

According to the Pew Research Center survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian Americans, conducted by telephone from Jan. 3 to March 27, 2012, in English and seven Asian languages, they are more satisfied than the general public with their lives overall (82% vs. 75%), their personal finances (51% vs. 35%) and the general direction of the country (43% vs. 21%).

They also stand out for their strong emphasis on family. More than half (54%) say that having a successful marriage is one of the most important things in life; just 34% of all American adults agree. Two-thirds of Asian-American adults (67%) say that being a good parent is one of the most important things in life; just 50% of all adults agree.

Their living arrangements align with these values. They are more likely than all American adults to be married (59% vs. 51%); their newborns are less likely than all U.S. newborns to have an unmarried mother (16% vs. 41%); and their children are more likely than all U.S. children to be raised in a household with two

married parents (80% vs. 63%).

They are more likely than the general public to live in multi-generational family households. Some 28% live with at least two adult generations under the same roof, twice the share of whites and slightly more than the share of blacks and Hispanics who live in such households. U.S. Asians also have a strong sense of filial respect; about two-thirds say parents should have a lot or some influence in choosing one's profession (66%) and spouse (61%).

Asian Americans have a pervasive belief in the rewards of hard work. Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) say people can get ahead if they are willing to work hard, a view shared by a somewhat smaller share of the American public as a whole (58%). And fully 93% of Asian Americans describe members of their country of origin group as "very hardworking"; just 57% say the same about Americans as a whole.

By their own lights, Asian Americans sometimes go overboard in stressing hard work. Nearly four-in-ten (39%) say that Asian-American parents from their country of origin subgroup put too much pressure on their children to do well in school. Just 9% say the same about all American parents. On the flip-side of the same coin, about six-in-ten Asian Americans say American parents put too little pressure on their children to succeed in school, while just 9% say the same about Asian-American parents.

The immigration wave from Asia has occurred at a time when the largest sending countries have experienced dramatic gains in their standards of living. But few Asian immigrants are looking over their shoulders with regret. Just 12% say that if they had to do it all over again, they would remain in their country of origin. And by lopsided margins, Asian Americans say the U.S. is preferable to their country of origin in such realms as providing economic opportunity, political and religious freedoms, and good conditions for raising children. Respondents rated their country of origin as being superior on just one of seven measures tested in the survey—strength of family ties.

When findings from this survey are compared with recent surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project among Asians in major Asian countries, a mixed picture emerges. For example, adults living in China are more satisfied with the way things are going in their country than Chinese Americans are with the way things are going in the United States. By contrast, the publics of India and Japan have a more downbeat view of the way things are going in their countries than their counterpart groups do about the

## THE RISE OF Asian Americans





U.S.

Across the board, however, U.S. Asians are more likely than Asians in Asia to say their standard of living is better than that of their parents at a similar stage of life. U.S. Asians also exceed Asians in their belief that hard work leads to success in life. And while many U.S. Asians say that Asian-American parents place too much pressure on their children to do well in school, even more Chinese and Japanese say this about parents in their countries. (For more details on these and other cross-national comparisons.

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The Pew Research Center survey was designed to contain a nationally representative sample of each of the six largest Asian-American groups by country of origin—Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans and Japanese Americans. Together these groups comprise at least 83% of the total Asian population in the U.S.

The basic demographics of these groups are different on many measures. For example, Indian Americans lead all other groups by a significant margin in their levels of income and education. Seven-in-ten Indian-American adults ages 25 and older have a college degree, compared with about half of Americans of Korean, Chinese, Filipino and Japanese ancestry, and about a quarter of Vietnamese Americans. On the other side of the socio-economic ledger, Americans with Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and "other U.S. Asian"

origins have higher shares in poverty than does the U.S. general public, while those with Indian, Japanese and Filipino origins have lower shares. Their geographic settlement patterns also differ. More than seven-in-ten Japanese and two-thirds of Filipinos live in the West, compared with fewer than half of Chinese, Vietnamese and Koreans, and only about a quarter of Indians.

The religious identities of Asian Americans are quite varied. About half of Chinese are unaffiliated, most Filipinos are Catholic, about half of Indians are Hindu, most Koreans are Protestant and a plurality of Vietnamese are Buddhist. Among Japanese Americans, no one group is dominant: 38% are Christian, 32% are unaffiliated and 25% are Buddhist. In total, 26% of Asian

Americans are unaffiliated, 22% are Protestant (13% evangelical; 9% mainline), 19% are Catholic, 14% are Buddhist, 10% are Hindu, 4% are Muslim and 1% are Sikh. Overall, 39% of Asian Americans say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 58% of the U.S. general public.

Compared with the general public, Asian

Americans are more likely to support an activist government and less likely to identify as Republicans. Half are Democrats or lean Democratic, while only 28% identify with or lean toward the GOP. Among all American adults, 49% fall in the Democratic camp and 39% identify with or lean toward the Republican Party. Indian Americans are the most heavily Democratic Asian subgroup (65%), while Filipino Americans and Vietnamese Americans are the most evenly split between the two parties. President Obama gets higher ratings from Asian Americans than from the general public — 54% approve of the way he is handling his job as president, compared with 44% of the general public. In 2008, Asian-American voters supported Obama over Republican John McCain by 62% to 35%, according to Election Day exit polls.

Large-scale immigration from Asia did not take off until the passage of the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Over the decades, this modern wave of immigrants from Asia has increasingly become more skilled and educated. Today, recent arrivals from Asia are nearly twice as likely as those who came three decades ago to have a college degree, and many go into high-paying fields such as science, engineering, medicine and finance. This evolution has been spurred by changes in U.S. immigration policies and labor markets; by political liberalization and economic growth in the sending countries; and by the forces of globalization in an ever-more digitally interconnected world.







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# Who Can Control The Downward Trend In Rupee Value?

BY AJAY GHOSH

Indian Rupee has lost its value against US Dollar by over 25 per cent in the last one year alone. Rupee breached the Rupees 57 level against the dollar on June 22<sup>nd</sup> this year and is threatened to drop further in the medium-term. To many observers, the rupee's fall embodies all that has gone wrong with macro-economic management of India recently. Recent trends in Indian economy point towards this. After growing at an

leading business daily in India : "The real cause of the rupee's weakness is the relentless deterioration in our economic policies in recent years. A falling rupee is simply a symptom of the underlying disease: unsound economic policies." Acharya was part of the team that helped design the original economic reforms of 1991 and is a former chief economic adviser to the Indian government.

In a similar vein, in a [recent op-ed column](#) in The

Wall Street Journal, Eswar Prasad wrote: "The falling Indian rupee, which Monday closed at an all-time low relative to the dollar, is a perfect metaphor for the free fall India's economy seems to be in." He went on to lay the blame squarely on the government's failure to pursue necessary economic reforms,



unprecedented near 9% annual growth, India's economic growth has been slowing down, falling to 6.5 per cent in 2011-12. While industrial output continues to be sluggish with a mere 0.1 per cent growth in April, inflation remains elevated. Of specific concern has been the precipitous and psychologically damaging decline in the rupee's external value. From the start of this financial year, the Indian Rupee has depreciated by 6.86 per cent and it was the worst performer among major Asian currencies losing nearly 12 per cent of its value since touching its 2011 high of 43.85 against the dollar.

Shankar Acharya wrote in The Business Standard, a

contending that the "real message" of the depreciating currency is that "India's policy making has lost its way." Prasad is a professor at Cornell and a former senior official of the International Monetary Fund.

There are many factors that cause a currency to lose its value. I am reminded of my Economics 101 Class, when asked about the fluctuating Indian currency's value my Professor at Nagpur University, summarized it all: "It's all about demand and supply: When there is a greater demand around the world for Indian currency, Rupee gains in value. On the other

hand, when the demand is less than the supply, Rupee slides in its value.”

Historically, the Indian Rupee has been depreciating roughly in line with the fall in its Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) since the early 1980s. While the PPP was 15 around 1982, the actual exchange rate was Rupees 9.30 per US Dollar. It is the inflation that negatively impacts PPP and pushes a currency down. But the present spike was rather sharp on the back of debt default concern in the euro zone and after the downgrading of two largest French banks, besides Lloyds Insurance withdrawing its deposits from European banks have led to euro losing its value against dollar. As large banks, investors and financial institutions started selling euro and bought dollar, the latter appreciated against all major currencies including rupee.

With FII flows too coming down, the pressure got accentuated and rupee has been on a sliding trend. Moreover, the global volatilities are bound to have an impact in the entire Asian markets, including, India, pointed out Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund CEO A. Balasubramanian. “The rupee weakness is basically due to the European crisis and has nothing to do with the domestic economy,” added HDFC Bank’s head of forex operations.

Global risk aversion is putting pressure on the domestic currency as foreign funds are pulling out money. Besides, a widening current account deficit and concerns of investment in India is also putting pressure on the rupee. The Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council Chairman, Dr C. Rangarajan, had attributed the depreciation in the value of rupee to a high current account deficit (CAD) which arises when import of goods and services exceeds its export. The CAD had touched 4 per cent of GDP at the end of December 2011.

The recent measures announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in consultation with the government did not seem to make any big impact in reversing this trend of steep downward trend. These measures aimed to boost foreign exchange inflows by selectively relaxing existing rules and regulations had little impact on arresting the decline in Indian currency’s value. One school of thought is that unlike its Asian peers, the RBI

could not have intervened in a big way in the currency markets with its fragile holding of foreign exchange reserves. Avers Jamal Mecklai of Mecklai Financial Services: “The RBI is going to intervene only if it is meaningful. The biggest issue is of course the uncertainty with the Euro. Nobody believes that the Euro problem is solved.”

Is the falling rupee good or bad for India? What impact will it have on the global competitiveness of Indian firms? How does the decline in Rupee affects various sections of people who use the currency? When a currency depreciates, the exporters rejoice because they get more of the local currency for every unit of foreign currency though the quantum of trade remains unchanged. But this time, many exporters were caught off guard. For one, there is little dollar supply in the market as most exporters seem to have covered themselves in the Rs 45-46 range. “Sudden changes in

the position of the rupee do not really matter much. “Exporters these days resort to hedging against such risks (of volatility),” said the Federation of India Export Organisations (FIEO) chief Ramu Deora. Besides, the buyers overseas also renegotiate and push rates down.

The depreciating rupee will be positive for the Indian IT sector who generate more than 80-90 per cent of their \$70 billion revenue from the overseas markets and this kind of appreciation in

foreign currency will enhance their actual realization of revenue in dollar terms. Every one per cent change in rupee-dollar has a 40 basis points impact on the margins on the net profit numbers of IT services companies like TCS, Infosys, HCL to mention a few. However, IDBI Bank chairman R M Malla was of the view that “exporters gain only in the short term and after that overseas buyers seek price adjustment.”

Individually, expatriates living outside India too gain by rupee depreciation. In fact, the expat Indians understand the currency movement lot better than the resident Indians. Says Bank of Baroda GCC Operations CEO Ashok K Gupta: “Expat Indians in the UAE usually accumulate dirham with an eye on the exchange rates and remit funds as soon as the rupee falls.” India was the world’s largest remittance recipient in 2010 with \$55 billion transferred to the country by expatriates.

Leisure travelers from abroad are evincing more interest in India as hotel stay has become cheaper, say tourism industry officials. India has suddenly become a widely searched topic on the web for its tourist





destinations, with most mid-level travelers, who would earlier come in the discounted off-season, now enquiring about expensive hotels.

When a currency loses its value it creates many problems for the economy. The importers will have to pay higher prizes and they in turn pass on the higher prizes to the customers.

All products and commodities are more expensive to import now. The depreciation in Rupee leads to high inflation. India imports around 70 per cent of its crude oil requirement and the government will have to pay more for it in Rupee terms. Further, this higher import bill will lead to rise in fiscal deficit for the government and will push the inflation, which is already hovering around the double-digit mark.

Corporates, who have foreign currency loans on their books, also take a view that despite a depreciating rupee, keeping the benign interest rates in developed markets would be lot better to hold on to foreign currency debt as one gets 0-2 per cent interest on dollar debt compared with 12-14 per cent on rupee debt. Individually, traveling abroad becomes more expensive as travel cost can go up by at least 10 per cent. Students studying abroad too will be hit as more Rupee will go out to pay for the courses and stay.

Depreciation of rupee also affects the money flow in the Indian stock markets. FIIs, the main investors in the Indian equity markets, also start withdrawing their investments from the markets fearing loss of value. In terms of portfolios, if you hold stocks in oil and gas, infrastructure, fertilizer or tyre business, your returns will take a hit as the shares of these companies will fall when the Rupee falls as they procure their raw materials from abroad.

On the other hand stocks of Information Technology (IT) companies and export-oriented units should do better. "Overall it's positive as the higher limit means more demand for government bonds," said Krishnamurthy Harihar, a Mumbai-based treasurer at FirstRand Ltd. "But there is some disappointment over how far the measures go."

However, the woes aren't restricted to corporate corridors or the Dalal Street. The weakening Rupee has made crude oil, fertilisers, medicines and iron ore, which India imports in large quantities, costlier. For the common man, the falling rupee is going to hit where it hurts the most-the pocket. From essentials such as food and education to foreign vacation and the swanky gadget you plan to buy, the falling Rupee will hurt you in more

ways than one.

"The impact of rupee depreciation on the FMCG sector will be due to higher cost of imported raw materials. The companies were already facing cost pressures. The rupee depreciation has added to their woes. They will have to revise prices. Hindustan Uniliver and Procter & Gamble have already taken steps in this direction. Many others will increase prices in the coming months," says Kaustubh Pawaskar, FMCG analyst, Sharekhan.

The falling rupee is bad news for itinerant Indians and vacationers to a foreign country. "Air fares are going up due to an increase in fuel surcharge. The stay will be costlier by at least 3-5%. Also, shopping can become expensive by 5%. Eating out will also be costlier by the same percentage," says Karan Anand, head, relationships, Cox & Kings India.

The depreciation of rupee has impacted the automobile sector in three ways. First, input costs have risen as these companies use imported components. Second, some companies will have to pay higher royalty to foreign parent firms. Third, many have foreign currency loans

in the form of external commercial borrowings and foreign currency convertible bonds.

Electronic consumer goods such as computers, televisions, mobile phones, etc, with imported components will also become costlier. International food chains which run outlets in India are not denying the impact on profitability.

"The depreciating rupee has had a significant impact on our capital expenditure as we import a lot of special kitchen equipment. There has been an indirect impact too as a small part of inputs are imported by our suppliers. If the trend continues, we will be forced to pass on some burden to customers," says Vikram Bakshi, managing director and JV Partner, McDonald's India (North & East).

As The New York Times wrote recently, "The Indian rupee's weakness, the flip side of which is the strength of the U.S. dollar, is as much about investors' desire to park their assets in dollars, and shun volatile emerging market currencies, while the global economy is in turmoil.... the "right" value of a currency is determined in foreign exchange markets, and there's nothing inherently good or bad about a currency going up or down, any more than it would be good or bad for the price of oil, or bananas, or anything else to go up or down in response to market conditions."





# Telugu Convention in Texas

**BY THE ASIAN ERA NEWS  
SERVICES**

HOUSTON, TX : The weekend of June 29th witnessed an event that showcased the rich cultural and literary heritage of the Telugu population while providing wholesome Texas style hospitality and entertainment. Houston played host to the first ever convention of the NATA, a non-profit organization serving the needs of the Telugu speaking population of the North America . The event was a culmination of hundreds of hours of planning, dedication and hard work of the Board of directors, Committee members and hundreds of volunteers.

The convention, attended by over 1500 people from around the world, was telecasted live in four different channels, telecasted over the satellite and internet. Artists & performers from India and across the US showcased their talent and entertained the audience with a series of spellbinding programs over the weekend. The programs spilled over to the early hours providing the attendees with some wonderful moments that they are bound to cherish for a long time.

The event was a testimony to NATA's intent to play a significant role in serving the needs of the Telugu speaking population of US. NATA, under the able leadership of Mr. AVN Reddy, ensured that no stone was left unturned to make this a grand event. The convention was under the stewardship of Mr. Jithender Reddy who as the convener and along with Mr. Vintha Janardhan Reddy, Coordinator, assembled a team to make sure that the event was planned and executed to perfection. It would not be an understatement to say that the event exceeded the expectations of one and all.

Sanjeev Arora, Consul general of India , extended his

support and wishes to NATA on its first convention. Vinjamuri Anasuya garu (Lifetime and literature), Dr. M.S Reddy & Mrs. Shama Reddy, Mr. Rama Muthyala, Dr.Samba Reddy, Dr. Arun, were among those felicitated for their achievements. U.S Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, City of Sugarland Council member Harish Jajoo and Mohan Matta from Office of the Consul General of India congratulated and wished the NATA members on the first convention and extended their support and solidarity for the organization.

Key note address by noted Cine Poet and Writer Jonnavithula, a discussion on current literary standards of Telugu cinema with the likes of cine poet Suddala Ahok Teja and a series of interactive sessions and speeches from noted personalities in literary circuit like Narala Rama Reddy, Mahadevamani Dhoolipala, Vaddepalli Krishna and actor, writer, poet and singer Akkiraju Sundara Rama Krishna regaled the audience with their experiences, enlivened the audience. Literary events included "Avadhanam" by the legendary Guru Sahasravadhani Shri Kadimilla Venkata Vara Prasad, Narala Rama Reddy, Prof. Puduri Jagadeeshwaran, Dhoolipala Mahadevamani, Janani Krishna, and Vaddepalli Krishna.

The banquet included a titillating musical concert by noted singers Geeta Madhuri and Ramu. A traditional and religious ceremony marked the beginning of the convention. The ceremony was followed by a vedic chanting by 51 kids from Houston and a spellbinding opening sequence written by the eminent poet Bhuvana Chandra. It was beautifully choreographed by the dance schools in Houston under the aegis of Mrs. Rathna Kumari and Vedantam Raghava. NATA felicitated legendary actors Nandamuri Balakrishna and Rajendra Prasad for their outstanding contribution to the Telugu Cinema over the last 25 years.



# Akanksha Named 'NGO of the Year' by The Rockefeller Foundation, Opens Four New Schools in Mumbai in June

**BY JITIN HINGORANI**

*New York, NY :* **The Akanksha Foundation**, an education non-profit organization credited with creating the charter school system in India through public-private partnerships, has announced the opening of four new schools in Mumbai by mid-June: Laxmi Nagar, Bandra; Mahalaxmi MPS, Mahalaxmi; Wadibunder, Mazgaon; and Nutwar Nagar, Jogeshwari.

Each new location will house ONE lower kindergarten classroom, which will educate 30 students and employ two teachers, for a total of 120 new students and eight new teachers. "As part of our commitment at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) last year, The Akanksha Foundation pledged that it would open six new schools by 2015, for a total of 15 fully-operating schools," says **Vandana Goyal**, the organization's Chief Executive Officer. "We are well ahead of our goal, and we are looking forward to reporting our progress at CGI this September."

Last year, The Akanksha Foundation was recognized as 'NGO of the Year' for **The India NGO Awards**, co sponsored by **The Resource Alliance** and **The Rockefeller Foundation**.

*The Akanksha Foundation is a Mumbai-based not-for-profit organization providing a high-quality education to children from low-income communities in urban India, enabling them to maximize their potential and transform their lives. Akanksha serves more than 4,000 children through its centers and schools in Mumbai and Pune each year. Twenty one years ago, Akanksha centers were formed with the vision to supplement serious gaps in the formal school system and the intent to make learning fun.*



*Having seen success with its model for the centers, The Akanksha Foundation and its partners now run nine full-time schools in Mumbai and Pune, with four more slated to open in 2011 and expect to have fifteen operational by 2015 through its School Project initiative, in addition*

*to its centers. By ensuring the model is delivering the highest quality education to the poor while being scalable and replicable, these schools have the potential to serve as catalysts for education reform across the country, using evidence from the schools, the extensive training process, and the public-private partnership model to advocate for policy changes. For more information, please visit, [www.akanksha.org](http://www.akanksha.org).*



# Four Star India Networks Launches With Time Warner Cable

**BY CASSIE BALINT**

**New York, NY:** This summer has brought exciting news for Time Warner Cable subscribers. All four of STAR TV's popular channels - STAR India PLUS, Life OK, STAR India GOLD, and ABP News, have been launched in New York and New Jersey to Time Warner Cable customers via subscription. A package including all 4 STAR channels is available for \$19.99 per month in addition to a Time Warner Cable subscription.

"This collaboration between our two major companies, STAR TV and Time Warner Cable, will offer an increased distribution to reach and entertain more viewers," said Rajan Singh, Executive Vice President of International Business for STAR TV. "Our existing viewers already appreciate STAR TV's wholesome entertainment for the entire family. This beneficial partnership will complement and enhance the array of channels being offered on Time Warner Cable to a new group of viewers. Being available on Time Warner Cable will enable us to reach a broader audience and move closer to our objective: to ensure that the STAR Network of channels is available to every South Asian in the world. This will complement and enhance the array of Hindi-language channels being offered on Time Warner Cable," Singh added.

STAR India PLUS is the jewel in the crown of the STAR Network and is rated No. 1 in the official Hindi TV ratings in India. It has an enthralling mix of wholesome family entertainment shows that television has to offer, including: Family dramas, mythological epics, and ground breaking reality shows. The channel is distributed to over 43 million homes across the globe.

Time Warner Cable subscribers will have access to all of STAR TV's top Hindi channels including STAR India PLUS, officially India and U.K.'s #1 General Entertainment Channel, which is completely subtitled in English for intergenerational viewing. Subscribers to the STAR TV package will enjoy entertaining soaps, dramas, reality and talk shows, including the immensely popular *Satyamev Jayate*, *Diya Aur Baati*, *Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon* and *Devon Ke Dev Mahadev*.

As India's general entertainment leader for over a decade, STAR India PLUS regularly features many of

the top programs in the country week in and week out. Prime time programs on STAR India PLUS include household-name soap operas as well as some of the nation's favorite reality and game shows. The biggest phenomenon to come to STAR India PLUS is Aamir Khan's *Satyamev Jayate*, which debuted on May 6<sup>th</sup>. The viewership this show has increased substantially over three episodes, and is estimated to be a record-breaking 330 million people.



STAR India, the leading Media and Entertainment conglomerate, has the highest reach amongst the country's broadcasters, beaming to over 400 million people, every week across India and over 65 countries across the globe. Its portfolio includes 33 channels in eight languages, including STAR Plus, Life OK, STAR Gold, Channel [V], STAR Jalsha, STAR Pravah, STAR World, STAR Movies, STAR Utsav; along with the joint venture channels Asianet, Asianet Plus, Vijay TV, Suvarna, ABP News, ESPN and STAR Sports. STAR India also manages a portfolio of business ventures including DTH operator Tata Sky, Content Aggregator MediaPro, News Channel operator MCCS, Film Production and Distribution Business Fox STAR Studios India and STAR CJ Home Shopping.

News Corp Star US LLC is one of the largest distribution networks and a leading choice for South Asian channels available in Hindi in the U.S. The channel portfolio in the U.S. includes Star India Plus, Star India Gold, Life OK and ABP News available through both satellite and cable platforms. Visit [www.us.startv.com](http://www.us.startv.com) for more information.

Time Warner Cable Inc. (NYSE: TWC) is among the largest providers of video, high-speed data and voice services in the United States, connecting more than 15 million customers to entertainment, information and each other. Time Warner Cable Business Class offers data, video and voice services to businesses of all sizes, cell tower backhaul services to wireless carriers and, through its NaviSite subsidiary, managed and outsourced information technology solutions and cloud services. Time Warner Cable Media, the advertising arm of Time Warner Cable, offers national, regional and local companies innovative advertising solutions. For more information on the STAR channels, customers can visit [www.twc.com/nynj/](http://www.twc.com/nynj/) international or and [www.twcmmedia.com](http://www.twcmmedia.com) or call Time Warner Cable at 1-877-609-7832.





# India-US Relationship Draws Strength & Dynamism From Shared Values

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

**Washington, DC :** After holding three rounds of strategic dialogues, India and US said their ties now have entered a phase of maturity in which there is no longer need for dramatic breakthroughs that was seen earlier. In a joint statement issued by US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and India's Minister of External Affairs SM Krishna on the US-India Strategic Dialogue, after their meeting in Washington, DC, on June 13, 2012, for the third annual U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue, said, both the leaders "reflected on the remarkable expansion and growth of the bilateral



relationship since the inaugural Strategic Dialogue in 2010." They committed to further broaden and deepen the US-India global strategic partnership and charted a vision for the future, centered on promoting shared prosperity, peace and stability.

The third round of talks in Washington, D.C. last month was held amidst growing concern that the U.S.-India relationship is failing to live up to its potential or what U.S. policymakers expected from it seven years ago when the civil nuclear deal was first unveiled. A number of differences between the U.S. and India have arisen over the last couple of years. While none of the issues on its own would be a major cause of concern, when taken together, the irritants have led some in the U.S. to question the value of India as a strategic partner for the U.S.

Recognizing that the India-US relationship draws

its strength and dynamism from shared values, the breadth and diversity of the engagement and growing links between the people of the two countries, leaders of both countries have placed promotion of closer ties between the people, private collaborations and public-private partnerships at the center of the Strategic Dialogue.

Secretary Clinton was, among others, joined by Ambassador to India Nancy Powell, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, USAID Administrator Raj Shah, and other senior officials. Minister Krishna was accompanied by Minister for Health and Family Welfare Ghulam Nabi Azad, Deputy Chairman of Planning



Commission Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Prime Minister's Public Information Infrastructure and Innovation Advisor Sam Pitroda, and other senior officials.

On the margins of this Strategic Dialogue, an unprecedented number of sub-dialogues have taken place, including the Global Issues Forum, S&T Joint Commission Meeting, the Counterterrorism Joint Working Group, the Higher Education Dialogue, co-chaired by Secretary Clinton and Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal, Cyber Consultations, the Information and Communications Technology Working Group, the Women's Empowerment Dialogue, Homeland Security Consultations and other events. In addition, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta visited India on June 5-6, 2012.

The United States and India have engaged in comprehensive regional consultations that touched on

nearly every region of the world. The statement pointed to the fact that "the United States and India have a shared vision for peace, stability and prosperity in Asia, the Indian Ocean region and the Pacific region and are committed to work together, and with others in the region, for the evolution of an open, balanced and inclusive architecture."

The two leaders stressed the importance of sustained international commitment to Afghanistan as it assumes full responsibility for governance, development and security. The two leaders agreed to continue the dialogue on West Asia and Central Asia, while expressing "satisfaction with the progress in defense relations, which is an important dimension of their strategic partnership."

The two sides welcomed progress towards the full implementation of the historic Civil Nuclear Initiative including the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Westinghouse and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) committing both sides to



negotiate an Early Works Agreement for the preliminary licensing and site development work associated with construction of the new Westinghouse reactors in Gujarat state, and the ongoing progress between General Electric-Hitachi and NPCIL on their Memorandum of Understanding. India expressed appreciation for the strong support extended by the United States for India's full membership in the four multilateral export control regimes - Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group. The United States welcomed steps India has taken in pursuing outreach with each of the regimes.

Building on the progress in cooperation on counter-terrorism and related homeland security issues, the United States and India committed to implementation of a detailed action plan intended to share best practices, facilitate the exchange of operational approaches, and promote the development of concrete capacity building programs to secure our respective countries. Recognizing the growing threats and challenges in cyberspace, they welcomed the second round of Cyber Consultations held on June 4, led by their respective national security

councils, during which the US and India exchanged views and best practices on a broad range of cyber issues in the interest of advancing security and the effective and timely sharing of digital evidence and information to support counter-terrorism and law enforcement.

Secretary Clinton and Minister Krishna welcomed the progress in India-US cooperation in the energy sector, including in the areas of clean and renewable energy, and energy conservation and efficiency. They applauded the expansion of the US-India Higher Education Dialogue, which made significant strides in fostering cooperation between the two countries in higher education, research and innovation, and community colleges. The United States and India plan to hold the next annual Higher Education Dialogue in 2013 in India. The two leaders welcomed the rich array of public and private science and technology cooperation between U.S. and Indian institutions and partners.

Secretary Clinton and Minister Krishna commended the progress the two sides have made in implementing the initiatives for international partnership for development and capacity building announced by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and President Obama in November 2010.

Secretary Clinton welcomed Government of India's plans to open a Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., noting the powerful U.S.-India connections provided by the nearly three million Indian-Americans in the United States, as well as the more than 100,000 Indian students studying in U.S. universities. The United States announced the launch of a new online philanthropy platform, a natural extension of the deep and vibrant people-to-people ties between the United States and India, providing private donors in the United States with information to help make decisions about contributing to NGOs in India more effectively (ProjectIndiaGiving.org).

They also appreciated the establishment of the "Indian Ministry of Culture Vivekananda Chair" at the University of Chicago and an agreement signed between the Ministry of Culture and the Art Institute of Chicago for the "Vivekananda Memorial Program for Museum Excellence" for upgrading the skills of Museum Professionals of India as part of commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The next meeting of the Strategic Dialogue is planned in New Delhi in 2013.

Despite the setbacks in relations over the last couple of years, it seems nearly inevitable that India will continue to be an important partner of the U.S. as both countries share democratic values and similar geopolitical goals, such as meeting the challenges of a rising China, controlling terrorism in the region, and ensuring Afghanistan does not return to Taliban rule. But in order to meet the full potential of the U.S.-India partnership, India and the US will have to focus on and implement in concrete ways to cooperate with each other on issues of strategic importance.







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**Indianica's Team London.**

(Left to Right Bottom Row): Purvina Patel, Paheli Patel, Ohara Patel, Jeevika Seri, Shivani Badgi, Supriya Mishra & Siddharth Singh. (Left to Right Top Row): Akshar Sidana, Jeet Patel, Felicia Maisuria, Mukta Sharma, Varun Gangwani, Devansh Gupta, Radhika Gupta, Saurabh Parikh, Anita Chitnis, Founder - Mr. Jagdish Sidana, Chief Trustee - Dr. Navin Mehta, Maliya Sahu, Founder & Choreographer - Mrs. Padma Khanna Sidana, Sarika Agarwal, Jamie Jadev, Tanvi Chaudhry, Shivani Majumdar, Neha Sidana Puniani & Nikunj Patel. (Members not in photograph) Avinash Saraf & Radhika Mehta.

# Indianica Academy On Global Stage in London During Olympics

BY SHIVANI MEHTA

**Edison, New Jersey** : August 2012 marks Indianica Academy's entry on to the global stage. For the first time an American based organization will perform traditional Indian dance at the PAE 2012 London Invitational during the Olympics. According to Akshar Sidana of the Academy, "Indianica Academy strives every day to bring Indo-American harmony not only in performances but also in our democratic value-based teaching methods and our systematic curriculum. This will be followed by other organizations but we are proud to be the first to share our unique South Asian perspective on Indian idealism, truthfulness and tradition," Sadana added.

During the Cultural Pioneers Dinner organized by Indianica Academy and hosted by T.V. Asia and its founder H R Shah, with full attendance at the Mahatma Gandhi Auditorium at the T.V. Asia headquarters in Edison, New Jersey on July 20<sup>th</sup>, Indianica Academy announced the names of twenty-four PAE 2012 London Invitational performers who are all local artists belonging to New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania regions. As either enrolled students or alumni, they bring with them Indianica Academy's unique brand and obsession with perfection.

As opined by revered Pt. Nehru, Indianica firmly believes that "Success comes to those who dare and act; it seldom comes to the timid." Indianica Academy under the direction of Padma Khanna Sidana and Jagdish L. Sidana has accepted a regionally exclusive invitation to perform in the London 2012 Invitational of the Performing Arts Educators (PAE). The group will be performing during the London Summer Olympics 2012. Performance venues in London will include venues in the Olympic borough of Tower Hamlets, within walking distance of the Olympic equestrian competitions at

Greenwich. In addition, Indianica Academy will appear on the stages at the Performing Arts Educators, All UK Performing Arts Festival at Warwick Castle, historic seat of the English house of the White Roses. Indianica Academy will be welcomed in London by not only English audiences but also by the large South Asian community that is expected to turn out for the outdoor festival performances on the lawns of Warwick Castle (next to the river Avon) and of Island Gardens (next to the River Thames).

Indianica Academy has been honored with the Finale Position at the last two PAE Annual Lincoln Center Invitationals. Indianica Academy is an American based dance school which features Indian dance including traditional to Bollywood. Indianica is dedicated to preserving and promulgating the rich world of Indian dance to American audiences and preserving the tradition among its young dancers.

Indianica will perform three different pieces showcasing distinct Indian styles from classical Kathak to folk Bhangra to Bollywood fusion. Ranging from the Gayatri Mantra to a dance ballad of an episode of the Krishna Leela. Participants in the London 2012 Invitational will experience the opportunities and spirit of the great city of London during that exciting time and will help represent Indo-American performing arts, known throughout the world for its quality and professionalism.

"We were sitting with our Indianica team in our assigned seats in the auditorium. The auditorium was bustling with prominent personalities of the South Asian community, members of the press and Indianica families. Our entire team was enthralled and overwhelmed to be part of a group representing the arts and cultures not only of one but two motherlands (India & America). We heard a voice thanking and paying respects to our Guruji (teacher). All the way in front of the auditorium

an unassuming figure stood up, turned around, and very gracefully took a bow with her hands joined: The founder of Indianica Academy, Mrs. Padma Khanna Sidana. Her humility sparked something in me. I looked to my peers and said 'We should stand up'. Our team stood up applauding our Guruji and the entire auditorium followed suit." This is how Devansh Gupta recollects the evening of July 20th.

Indianica is an arts, culture and knowledge institution based in Iselin, New Jersey. For over 16 years Indianica Academy has brought to the South Asian diaspora multicultural fine arts programs that maintains a strong relationship with the educated elite of our community! From rigorous training of Indian classical & cultural dances (Kathak & folk), Indian music (vocal and instrumental), and stage and screen acting lessons, Indianica Academy is home for artists and art lovers of all ages.

Indianica Academy organizes an annual gala performance endearingly titled "Chamakate Sitaaray" every June bringing to stage performers of all ages, backgrounds, talents and expertise. We are humbled to be associated with the rich culture and art of India not only in the Tri-State area but also among South Asians across the nation.

A senior Professor from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai) and Visiting Professor at The New School University (New York), Dr. Usha S. Nayar wrote to the students of Indianica: "Once you are part of such an organization that has graced many stages, performed for important delegations, mingled with the best-of and the most-

humility but value the

dedication required to achieve the kind of accolades Indianica has achieved. Whether you are headed to London with your friends or not, your performances are bound to be showcased one way or another because Indianica Academy is ultimately about you."

INDIANICA Academy is organized by the prominent personalities of Indian Cinema, who've got long and elaborate backgrounds in the fields of the Art & Culture of India. The cultured and educated elite of the NRI community from multiple spheres supports it.

Padma Khanna, a famous actress and Kathak dancer,



has played the largest role in sculpturing the young talent. Moving with the times and in tune with her students taste, she edited an old kathak song to rejuvenate it. The chief choreographer and founding member, belongs to the holy city of Benaras (Varanasi), which is home to some of the best vocalists, percussionists, & dancers. She has been known as the "The Dancing Queen of Indian Cinema" and has acted in more than 300 Bollywood movies. She also acted as Kaikeyi in the famous TV Serial "Ramayan."

Producer and founding member is former Movie Director Jagdish Sidana, who completed his education & received his Diploma in Fine Arts from the cultural city of Allahbad and received his Degree in Cinema from FTII, Poona. He worked in the movie industry in Mumbai as an Editor, Director & Producer for 28 years and won many awards including the President Award.

Chief Trustee & Guiding Light is Dr. Navin C. Mehta M.D., F.I.C.S.,

P.C., one of the most renowned Otolaryngologists in New York City and is also affiliated with Metropolitan Hospital, where he teaches and supervises residents in the clinic and in the operating room. He was recognized as The Best Surgeon of NY. Dr. Mehta is a great philanthropist of the community as well.



important people in our community without once forgetting the youngest performer, the slowest learner or the shyest newcomer, it is impossible to imagine anything "less than" perfect! Stand proud among your colleagues, artists, friends and teachers... you are standing among the best people who not only value



# Indians Create Community Bank

## “The Old Fashion Way ” in New Jersey

(Adapted from the *Investment Guide* issue of Forbes Magazine)

Edison, NJ: Bipin Patel, the 55-year-old founder of Speedy Mart Food Stores; Dilip Patel, a 57-year-old liquor and convenience store owner; Mahesh Shah, a 62-year-old pharmacist who owns a string of drugstores in New York and New Jersey; and Manher Shah, a 73-year-old accountant, have joined hands to create a Bank in New Jersey, the Forbes magazine reported last month.

“The men all wear smart business suits and shirts open at the collars. All emigrated from India 20 or more years ago and scratched their way up the ladder. And now, with the money they’ve made and the expertise they’ve gained, they’re helping more recent Indian immigrants start their own businesses,” Forbes wrote about them.

According to the magazine, together these four men have helped fund (sometimes with interest-free loans) more than 200 small businesses owned by fellow Indo-Americans. Doing so, they believe, makes for a stronger neighborhood and a thriving downtown area, and perhaps creates a bit of good karma. “It is better than investing in the stock market,” says Mahesh. “It lifts everybody up. It’s better to help somebody to be independent so he can support himself. And maybe in the future someone will help you.”

It is, in some ways, the antithesis of Lendingclub.com, where return-hungry investors make high-interest-rate loans to anonymous strangers based on their credit scores.

Bipin, Dilip, Mahesh and Manher prefer the old-fashioned practice of investing in people you know—often by face and name but at least through common cultural norms. Craig Galbraith, a professor at the Cameron School of Business at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, who studies ethnic economies, calls it “social capital.” Says Galbraith: “In economic terms it means the unique cultural attitudes and well-understood behaviors within an ethnic community that encourages people to do business with each other, almost like members of a club.”

The use of social capital is fairly common in immigrant communities, according to Miliann Kang, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Sometimes there’s a monthly pot that a group of people pays into. Each month a different participant takes home the pot, using it to fund a business, education or even a wedding.

Forbes reports, the Indo-American entrepreneurs of Edison help out others in the community. And together, in 2007, they created a federally insured community pot. Bipin helped raise \$20 million from 70 primarily Indo-American business owners in the Edison area to start the Indus American Bank in nearby Iselin, N.J. The bank now has \$200 million in assets and four



branches. It has been profitable for the last two years, netting \$257,000 in 2011. The bank makes loans to younger members of the community who might not qualify for financing from a big bank. Established community members vouch for their creditworthiness.

Dilip, whom Mahesh refers to as “the godfather of the whole thing,” helped start the Asian American Retailers Association. The 1,000-member organization hosts seminars to help newcomers learn about credit cards and legal and insurance issues. A smaller group of 300—the Indian Business Association—holds a monthly meeting at Chowpatty. Manher acts as the accountant advisor for both groups. “When we started our businesses here in the U.S., we didn’t know which way to go,” says Dilip. “We were the pioneers. We want to make it easier for people now.”

According to Forbes, Bipin has helped well over 100 people in the community start businesses through personal loans and contacts at the bank. When employee Chirag Patel wanted to start his own stores a decade ago, Bipin pitched in with a no-interest loan for \$100,000. “I knew that Chirag was hardworking and honest,” says Bipin, who also helped him negotiate with vendors and contractors. Chirag is now a partner in six Speedy Marts and owns two on his own, with the most recent purchase in 2010. He has paid back Bipin’s original investment. “I know if I needed more money, Bipin would help,” says Chirag. “And I now can help others who were just like me.”

Forbes also reported of Mahesh and Navin Mehta, an ear, nose and throat doctor, recently helping a famous Indian actress get back on her feet after she had struggled financially following a move to the U.S. They discreetly refused to name her, but the woman now owns dance studios and is happily married. “Occasionally something doesn’t work out and an investment goes sour,” says Mahesh. “But you don’t punish everyone for that.”

# Oscar Fernandez Praises Contributions Of NRIs

BY HEMANT BISWAS

NEW YORK: Indian Diaspora's contributions are vital to improve the bilateral ties between India and the U.S and to take it to greater heights, said Oscar Fernandez, MP and General Secretary of All India Congress Committee. The senior Congress Party leader and the former Union Minister was addressing the Indian-American community after inaugurating the reorganized executive committee of the Indian National Overseas Congress (I) headed by George Abraham at Hotel World Fair Marina in Queens, NY on July 25th.

Fernandez said the UPA-II Government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh has brought in revolutionary measures to ensure India marched forward. The enactment of right to education as a law that makes school education compulsory for every kid born in India is sure to remove illiteracy and poverty from the face of the nation besides abolishing child labor totally.

Also, the new legislation to provide 100 days of assured job guarantee to economically weaker sections of the society has been hailed a very progressive policy that is bound to bring in prosperity and peace in the family. Over 50 million people have so far registered and are benefiting from the program, he said.

Chair of Public Relations Committee Prasad



Kambhampaty proposed a vote of thanks. Malini Shah, chairperson of INOC(I) Diamond Council was the emcee of the evening. The Indian American Community was represented in large numbers and was drawn from every walk of life from academics to business, medical to law. Mohinder S. Taneja, community leader from the Town of Hempstead; President of National Federation of Indian Association Lal Motwani; Global Organization of People of Indian Origin's Long Island President Bagga; Federation of Indian Association's Vice Chairman Yash Pal Soi; former FIA President Sudhir Vaishnav; India Association of Long Island (IALI) President Dr. Sukhvinder Ranu, Secretary of IALI Rekha Valliappan, Indian American Forum's Co-Chair Gobind Munjal and American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin of Queens and Long Island's President Dr. Sunil Mehra, Co-founders of INOC Zach Thomas. R Jayachandran and Stanley Kalathara, Former AAPI President Dr. Dayan Nayak, were among participants at the gala reception and dinner.

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# Saif Ali Khan Pataudi To Lead 32<sup>nd</sup> India Day Parade in New York

BY AJAY GHOSH

New York, NY: "Saif Ali Khan Pataudi will be the Grand Marshall of the 32<sup>nd</sup> India Day Parade in New York to be held on Sunday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012," declared Kanubhai Chauhan, president of the Federation of Indian Associations amidst loud applause from a packed audience during the traditional Curtain Raiser Event at the Indian Consulate in New York, NY last month. FIA, the largest umbrella organization of the NY, NJ & CT, officially launched the campaign for the 2012 India Day Parade with the lighting of the traditional lamp by a host of Indian American community leaders, led by Ambassador Prabhu Dayal.

The Parade is a stellar milestone event celebrated to mark the Indian Independence Day. In his opening remarks, past President of FIA Bipin Patel expressed his gratitude and the pleasant experience during his term. He then welcomed the current President Kanubhai Chauhan, a pioneer in promoting Bollywood Shows in the USA and a successful businessman.

Chauhan introduced his new executive committee for the 2012 and led them in lighting of the lamp. Grand sponsors as well as the FIA's Board of Trustees & past presidents which included Ramesh Patel, Yash Paul Soi, Chandrakant Trivedi, Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Rambhai Gadhvi, Dipak Patel, Shobhnaben Patel joined him in this solemn inaugural ceremony.

Chairman of FIA, Ramesh Patel, a well known community leader and activist since past 50 years, and one of the founding fathers of FIA along with many other community Organizations, in his address, emphasized the fact that FIA along with the celebrations of Indian Independence & Republic Day is also at the forefront in addressing and fighting for burning community issues like immigration, domestic injustice, discrimination, bias and hate crimes etc.

Ambassador Prabhu Dayal lauded the efforts by FIA, especially their social activities that benefit the Indian community in the tri-state along with putting together remarkable events. "This is the largest parade outside of India in the world. This a very fascinating show of celebration of Indian Independence in the world," he commented.

Among those who had addressed the gathering, included, Vice Chairman of FIA Yash Paul Soi, past presidents & Trustees Dr. Sudhir Parikh, and Dipak Patel, FIA's Grand Sponsor for 3 years in a row, Husam Ahmad of HAKS.

Chauhan said, apart from Saif Ali Khan Pataudi, there will be surprise Super Star Celebrities in attendance at the parade as well. He also added that FIA will continue in succession with the prestigious Lighting of the Empire State Building in Tricolors as well as the Opening Bell Ringing Ceremony at Nasdaq for this year as well.

Detailing the parade, Ankur Vaidya, **Chair for Media & Publicity** told this writer, "India Day Parade starts at 12.30 pm from 41st Street on Madison Avenue, New York, and winds down to 27th Street. The parade review will be at Madison Avenue and 30th Street. Three hour long cultural programs are scheduled at Madison Avenue and 23rd Street, starting from 3 pm."

The event also presented an audio-visual presentation regarding the parade and its theme from the 2012 Committee as well as a dance show performed by local artists. General Secretary of FIA Srujal Parikh proposed the vote of thanks.



# Wells Fargo, HDFC Bank Agreement Doubles Pay Locations in India

BY LISA WESTERMANN

San Francisco, CA: Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) has doubled its **ExpressSend**® remittance network payout locations in India through an agreement with HDFC Bank. With the addition of HDFC Bank's more than 2,500 branches and over 8,900 ATMs, Wells Fargo customers' beneficiaries can now choose from a network in India of over 5,200 branches and more than 16,000 ATMs for remittances to India.

"India has one of the highest remittance volumes in the world according to the World Bank," said Daniel Ayala, executive vice president and head of Wells Fargo's **Global Remittance Services**. "This is evident from high customer demand as well. We are glad we can make payout locations even more convenient now by expanding our remittance payout network in India with HDFC Bank."

"While we're a major player in the Gulf-India remittance market, this alliance with Wells Fargo will help us expand in the US-India sector, which has been growing exponentially. Given our reach and the web-based nature of the service, this will allow people to send money back home in one of the safest and fastest possible ways. HDFC Bank places great emphasis on use of technology to provide faster and better service and this remittance alliance is testament to the leadership position in technology the Bank is striving towards," said Harish Engineer, executive director, HDFC Bank.

"Wells Fargo's expansion of its remittance service over the years has been remarkable for its steadiness and success," said Gwenn Bézard, Aite Group research director. "When other U.S. banks got distracted away from money transfers, Wells Fargo invested in improving the product. When private equity firms with grandiose plans to roll up the market threw the towel in, Wells

Fargo continued to expand its network. The deal with HDFC Bank highlights once more the value of time and commitment over fast and furious in this market."

Wells Fargo ExpressSend customers can send up to \$5,000 per day to their beneficiary's HDFC Bank account using the account-based ExpressSend service for a \$5 fee. The fee for account-based transfers to HDFC Bank will be waived through August 31.

Remittances to HDFC Bank are denominated in Indian Rupees. Once a customer has set up the ExpressSend agreement and the beneficiary account information is verified with HDFC Bank, the customer needs to conduct their first transaction in a store. Subsequent account-based transactions can be conducted online through Wells



*Wells Fargo's executive vice president and head of Global Remittance Services Daniel Ayala, HDFC Bank's executive director Harish Engineer, and Wells Fargo East Bay Regional Banking president Micky S. Randhawa at a press conference held at the India Community Center in Milpitas, Calif*

Fargo.com, at a Wells Fargo banking location or through Wells Fargo Phone Bank. Funds are sent to HDFC Bank quickly for credit during HDFC Bank's local processing hours Monday – Saturday, excluding India holidays.

Wells Fargo provides multiple channels for transferring money, including by Wells Fargo Phone Bank (800-556-0605 or 1-800-TO-WELLS), at one of Wells Fargo's more than 6,000 banking locations and online at **wellsfargo.com**— more channels to serve customers than most competitors. The Wells Fargo **ExpressSend** customer experience is consistent among all channels.



# 15th Biannual Convention of the FOKANA

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

HOUSTON, TX : The 15th Biannual Convention of the FOKANA (Federation of Kerala Associations of North America) was held in Houston at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Kirby and 610 loop from June 30 to July 4, 2012.

In the last 30 years since the FOKANA's founding, this is the first time Houston was favored to celebrate a convention of this magnitude.

During the four-day celebration, Kerala culture was showcased with pomp and pride. Kerala traditions were followed for the inaugural function like lighting of the traditional lamp and Thalapoli for the parade.

The Convention also hosted a series of other events like Sahitya Sammelan, seminars for business, media, women, political awareness and health. The dance festival that featured a variety of items by the local talents was part of the cultural extravaganza. Other attractions like the contests: Miss FOKANA and Mr. FOKANA were well participated and enjoyed. Winners, Shijimon Jacob was declared as Mr. FOKANA and Ashley Roy as Miss FOKANA. Nancy Varghese received the title of Kalathilakam and Bright George was crowned Malayalee Manka.

Over 1,500 people from across the country enjoyed and shared their views and values at the Convention. The main banquet was attended by India's Ambassador to USA Mrs. Nirupama Menon Rao. Being a native of Kerala, Rao gave a speech in part Malayalam and part English connecting well with the audience. She praised the many activities that the FOKANA is involved in which

include helping the government and the people of Kerala. She said Kerala was always in the fore front of globalization. Keralites were spread all over the world since the beginning and have made their mark with their success and achievements the world over.

Consul General Sanjiv Arora addressed the gathering starting with a few words in Malayalam and later spoke in English. His Grace Zacharia Mar Nicholavus, Bishop of the North East Diocese of Orthodox Church,

a regular guest of the FOKANA conventions, expressed his appreciation for the activities of FOKANA. His Grace Alexios Mar Eusebius, Bishop, Malankara Orthodox Church, South West Diocese of America Region, also expressed his satisfaction and appreciation of being a part of the celebration



of the FOKANA.

G.K. Pillai in his farewell message said that he is fully satisfied with the way his team handled the responsibilities and was happy that next convention is handed over to a vibrant team under the able leadership of the first woman president Mariamma Pillai of Chicago. Secretary Bobby Jacob, Treasurer Shaji John and others also spoke on the occasion.

Thomas Mathew, the main architect of the convention, led a team of dedicated committee members and volunteers under his able leadership and worked endless hours planning and executing the whole project. The FOKANA presented plaques to all media members, winners of the competitions, sponsors and others in recognition of their contribution to the Convention's success. A special recognition was awarded to Thomas Mathew for his leadership for a job well done.

## A Journey Of 8 weeks; 600 Miles & A Lifetime Of Memories



### BY NISHIL PARIKH

India is a land of many cultures, languages, and customs which may all be admired and appreciated through the performing arts. When viewing these multiple cultures, our obligation at the Indian Performing Arts Center is to look at the bigger picture. With that in mind, we have not only been able to provide award winning performances, but also an arena in which to promote the basic values of life involving lessons on self-esteem, self-confidence, sharing and caring for one another, and friendship. opportunity to develop life long friendship.

There are several organizations that promote Indian culture in the United States. Among those one that stands out is India Performing Arts Center (IPAC). Its founder and president, Smita "Miki" Patel continuously strives to keep the passion of folk dancing alive in the girls of all ages. More recently IPAC's two dance teams, Adult team and senior team, participated in the prestigious The Federation of Gujarati Associations of North America (FOGANA) Dance competition in Dearborn, MI. Teams from dance schools across the United States participated in this competition.

FOGANA was founded in 1980, with the aim of bringing all the Gujarati people living in North America closer together by promoting a common platform to sustain and perpetuate the cultural heritage of Gujarat, India. Initially, FOGANA aspired to meet the needs and welfare of Gujaratis while assisting them in adapting to the mainstream America. They hoped to do this by building up and centralizing resources, energies and talents and thus create a stronger image of the Gujaratis.

Using such tools as folk dancing, which is an integral part of any celebration in the Gujarati culture, they initiated their effort by conducting folk dance competitions in various regions that culminated in finals in one or other North American city. Gujaratis from all corners gathered for these events. Workshops in cultural aspect such as dance, costumes communities, music etc. was offered. Also Drama and Debate competitions/festivals were conducted in some of the regions as well as a Conference in Washington. Visiting dignitaries in many fields were honored and brought in contact with the Gujarati community at large.

In the words of Jags Patel, president of FOGANA, "If we do not wish to have our heritage interpreted by those whose perspectives we feel are full of incorrect assumptions or by those with 'fake and fluff' credentials, we need to give an alternative to that which is offered as our culture. We have the resources, capabilities and road maps in our midst to supply the know-how on the 'wherefores and wherein'. It is no longer acceptable to bemoan this or that state of affairs or the lack of our 'beloved values' when we continue either to sit on the side lines or to move with a lack of urgency, at 'snails pace'. We need to prioritize, to roll up our sleeves and try to do something about it, not tomorrow, or in a little while, but today, right now?. For all around us the technical age is whizzing past and our youngsters are riding its wave. They will not wait. They are with us today but tomorrow they will be off! So we invite all Gujarati's to participate and commit to a cause that, if we think about it, is as worthy as any that demands and gets support."

Patel, who is fondly called 'Miki aunty', choreographed dances for both the IPAC teams. The Adult team comprised of professional women, who were also full time mothers, wives and daughter-in-laws. Their training started 8 weeks back with 8 hours of practice each day, every weekend till July 21<sup>st</sup>, the day the competitions were held. Their hard work and perseverance paid off, and they won the 1st prize. The senior team worked with same zeal and passion. All of them are bright full time students. Considering the tough competition they had in the group to compete with, it was an uphill challenge. They bagged the 3rd place.

The India Performing Arts Center (IPAC), a non-profit organization (501 (c) (3)) was founded in 1999 by Smita "Miki" Patel to advocate the importance of preserving and promoting rich India folk heritage while integrating American culture. IPAC's guiding principle is to provide our next generation with a solid cultural foundation, not only to hold on to our family values, but to help them to blossom into something even greater than before. "With this win, IPAC also provided a forum for adult women to challenge themselves in their passion for folk dance, have fun while doing it and make lifelong friendships and memories. The trophy was the icing on the cake," a participant in the contest said.





# Elusive Olympic Medal Hunt For Indian Athletes

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

In the entire history of the Olympic movement, India has won just 20 medals. If the 11 for men's field hockey are not counted, the total is 9, of which just 7 were for the performance of independent India in individual events: 5 bronze medals, 1 silver and a lone gold. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, which was India's best showing yet, the country ranked 50th. As some Indians have pointed out, Mongolia was ahead. India is expected to do better than ever at the London Olympics, which begins July 27, but it is still likely to be a dismal showing considering the number of people in the world who are called Indian.

as with the run-up to every Olympics, the Indian medal hopes rise and recede like an ocean wave, as the country's prospects are dicey in any given discipline. Gold



in field hockey was India's staple diet in the Olympics from 1928 to 1956, but that too became elusive.

India's first gold medal in hockey came in Amsterdam in 1928; the country went on to dominate the next six editions, but eventually lost its hold on the gold. The last gold medal of 1980 at the Moscow Games came in an edition boycotted by the West, following the erstwhile Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, thereby marring India's glory.

Since then, the Indian hockey team has been in the hunt for that elusive gold, failing even to qualify for the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The team finds itself in London, where it won the gold in the post-war Games in 1948. It has been placed in a difficult group, which includes the European hockey powers, Holland and Germany.

In individual sports, India's first gold came only in the Beijing Olympics 2008, courtesy shooter Abhinav Bindra. In the same games, Vijender Singh won a silver in boxing and Sushil Kumar took home a bronze in wrestling. The 'feat' at the Beijing Games has now heightened Indian expectations for London 2012.

Shooting remains a big hope and the burden of bringing home a medal squarely rests again on Abhinav Bindra, Gagan Narang and Ronjan Sodhi. In boxing, Vikas Krishna

and Mary Kom have emerged as the nation's best bet. All eyes will be on archer Deepika Kumari, a world cup gold medallist in individual recurve.

There are several reasons for India's pathetic performances at the world level. As the New York Times wrote recently, "Indians know whom to blame — politicians and sports administrators who are corrupt and incompetent." Indians never gave preference to sports as been in most other countries for years. However, in recent years, focus has been shifting. The country's athletes train in conditions that are much better than in the past but that would still be unacceptable to American livestock. Weight lifters practice in damp, odorous halls with leaking roofs. Female athletes cannot bear to enter the toilets designated for them. Runners do not always have proper shoes, boxers train with torn gloves, wrestlers do not have mats, no modern diet plans are in place, and there is no proper medical care.

But most athletes are so impoverished and their lives so dependent on various government-financed federations that it is not uncommon to see many of them touch the feet of sports administrators, a gesture of unambiguous respect and flattery. Servility will help them survive, and self-respect will destroy them.

In his book "A Shot at History," Abhinav Bindra, the shooter who won India's only individual Olympic gold medal, dedicated a chapter to sports administrators. In the chapter, titled "Mr. Indian Official: Thanks for Nothing," he writes: "In India, we must swim through chaos on the way to a medal. It almost feels as if our medals are more meaningful, considering what we go through to win one."

Looking into the prospects at the London Olympics, Badminton has suddenly emerged as a medal prospect, thanks to world number 5 Saina Nehwal. After winning four Super Series tournaments in 2010, Saina had an impressive run in 2011, as she was a runner-up in four Super Series events again. In a warm-up to the London Olympics, she won back to back titles at the Thailand Open and the Indonesian Open. Also in medal contention in badminton is the mixed doubles pair of Jwala Gutta and V. Diju.

Tennis has been in the spotlight as a probable medal mine for India. Mahesh Bhupathi and Rohan Bopanna would make a formidable pair in men's doubles. A medal in the mixed doubles gold looks a distinct possibility, provided Sania Mirza and Leander Paes put all the fracas that marked the selection behind them and play as Team India. The Indian contingent might not return with a huge haul of medals, but it may just better its Beijing benchmark.



## Hindu Women's Network Conference

**BY PRAKASH WAGHMARE**

Immigrating from an ancient culture and exposed and living under the constant influence of the modern world, especially for women can be a challenge. The first ever "Hindu Women's Network" Conference was convened at "New Dorp High School" in Staten Island, N.Y last month with the initiative of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA). Although open to all women in general, the forum was meant to give voice to Hindu women on contemporary issues faced by them as the nucleus of the family in USA and develop, support structures for their holistic, physical, intellectual and emotional empowerment.

As the director and main convener of this unique gathering, Dr Ila Sukhadia's primary objective for the conference was to highlight the various challenges faced by women and create an interactive network to guide them as support-group, in their moment of crisis. With this goal in mind, this daylong well attended 'Conference' was divided into ten different sessions, headlining various needs of the womanhood. The subject matters incorporated for various panel discussions and expert's counseling sessions were – Family Relations, Self-Identity & Connecting with your roots, Motivating Children, Caring for Aging Parents, Personal Loss & Loneliness, Marital & Conjugal conflicts, Fitness & Health, Empowerment, Youth Session, and Money Management.

During the panel discussion on 'Family Relations,' Sweta Vikram emphasized that, "while playing the role of mother, wife or daughter one should not lose self-identity and self-confidence and cautioned all mothers against trying to mold their children in your own image". According to her "reasoning with the children was the key to gain their trust". Dr Bharati Palkhiwala, the renowned Psychiatrist, while commenting on stress, anxiety and depression asked women to open up channels of communication with people they trust most and try to change the overall attitude to look at the things. She further elaborated that, "one should come to terms, as soon as possible, with the misguided notion of stigma most of the Hindu women feel about getting treatment for Anxiety and Depression". She assured them that both of these conditions are perfectly medically treatable which

can empower them to lead normal fruitful life."

Talking about elderly parents, Jaya Asthana said," a mature woman typically has to tackle three generations of people in a family whose needs are varied. The most neglected among them are the elderly parents. She suggested to be sympathetic to them, understand their loneliness, and try to assimilate them in all family affairs, and community groups with similar interests. For the afternoon youth session, the subject matter was bullying, peer pressure and merciless teasing whose undercurrent, according to Dr. Sai Patil, the moderator, is invariably gaining 'power-advantage' over other person.

The discussion-participants for these currently hotly debated issues were college-smart Shelley Jain, Sai Khisti and Priya Dave. Sai Khisti, who had just returned from 'Cambodia', after serving the community there, credits her own handling of destructive situations to self-confidence, hanging out with the right crowd and having her 'Mom' as the best friend in life.

The participants were impressed to note that Shelley Jain has formed an Organization, called "SPARK" specifically to pump up self-confidence in youth and Priya Dave wants to tap youthful synergy through her own group called "CHY" ('Coalition of Hindu Youth') for the benefit of society. The 'Money Managers', Lata Kripalani and Shefali Ajamera, touched the nerve of the audience when they talked about appalling ignorance and indifference shown by most of the women when it came to monetary aspects of their lives. They urged women to get to know the whereabouts and details of all important family documents related to assets, investments, different insurances, bank accounts, etc and educate themselves with entitlements programs of the Government. Sukanya Krishnan, the famous TV personality of WPIX CH 11 was the key note speaker of this conference. The evening concluded with a brief entertainment program, coordinated by Manu Misra, celebrating 'Unity in Diversity' as the theme for fashion show depicting different 'dressings' of different states of India. This was the only time slot for which men were invited. On the heels of grand success of this conference, the ambitious 'Hindu Women's Network' is already planning to convene multiple such forums throughout USA.



# Kulandei Francis Wins Magsaysay Award

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

An Indian grassroots activist whose pioneering community initiatives in Tamil Nadu empowered thousands of rural women to form micro enterprises and break the poverty spiral, is among this year's six winners of the prestigious Magsaysay award.

Kulandei Francis, 65, whose Integrated Village Development Project in Krishnagiri has helped changed the lives of many in Tamil Nadu villages was adjudged the winner, along with other activists from Taiwan, the Philippines, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Francis is being recognised for "his visionary zeal, his profound faith in community energies, and his sustained programmes in pursuing the holistic economic empowerment of thousands of women and their families in rural India," said a statement from the Magsaysay Foundation.

Kulandei Francis was born in 1947 to the parents of Kulandei and Mathalai Mary in a village called Karipatti, Salem Dt. Tamil Nadu, India. There was little wealth in his family, so funding even the most basic education for Francis was a struggle. His parents, however, understood the importance of education, so sacrificed the small piece of land (considered to be the family's only property) in order for Francis to attend and graduate from Annamalai University. As Francis, personally experienced early age poverty, he started IVDP to help the poor and needy.

This immense sacrifice of parents inspired Francis to dedicate his life towards helping the poor. Following his ambition to become a priest, he joined the Fathers of the Holy Cross in 1970 and was sent to study Theology in Pune, Maharashtra. As part of the degree he was involved in relief work with Caritas India, offering aid during the Bangladeshi war. He also participated in relief work with those affected by the drought in Pune in 1972.

Francis, who himself came from a modest background, attained a graduate degree from Annamalai University, and started the IVDP in 1979, and over the years has expanded its reach in the state. It helped establish self-help groups for women that supported poverty-stricken women engage in group activities and start micro enterprises, create savings accounts, and secure reliable loans.

Through education and community activities, thousands of women have been able to help their families wriggle out of poverty. At present there are over 8,000 self-help groups across the three districts of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Vellore, supported by IVDP.



Both Francis's wife and daughter play prominent roles in running his organisation.

Other winners of this year's award are Chen Shu-Chu from Taiwan, Romulo Davide from the Philippines, Syeda Rizwana Hasan from Bangladesh, Yang Saing Koma from Cambodia and Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto from Indonesia.

Francis continues to educate himself in order to advance the charity, and has taken a Social Development Course at Coady International Institute, Canada, and a Rural Management Course in the Philippines. At present there are over 8,000 self-help groups across the three districts of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Vellore, supported by IVDP. Both Francis's wife and daughter play prominent roles in running his organisation.

Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's highest honor and is widely regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize. It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine president, and is given every year to individuals or organizations in Asia who manifest the same sense of selfless service that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.

The six 2012 Magsaysay awardees join 290 other laureates who have received Asia's highest honor to date. This year's Magsaysay Award winners will each receive a certificate, a medallion bearing the likeness of the late President, and a cash prize. They will be formally conferred the Magsaysay Award during Presentation Ceremonies to be held on August 31 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

# Singapore Is Home To Asia 's Wealthy

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

Singapore is home to Asia's wealthy last year as declining stock markets hit the former British territory a lot harder than its South-east Asian rival, according to a report by Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management. The number of high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) - defined as having at least US\$1 million to invest - fell 17.4 per cent to 83,600 in Hong Kong last year, compared with a decline of 7.8 per cent to 91,200 people in Singapore, according to the World Wealth Report.

Singapore has in recent years also attracted many rich people worldwide, including Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin who earlier this year gave up his United States citizenship. Despite the decline in the number of HNWI in both Hong Kong and Singapore, Asia had for the first time more millionaires than North America last year.

The number of HNWI in the Asia-Pacific region jumped 1.6 percent to 3.37 million, compared with a 1.1 percent decline in North America to 3.35 million. RBC Wealth said the high concentration of HNWI is the reason why the region holds much allure for wealth managers, who will also have to contend with competition from domestic banks.

"The wealth bands which are below \$5 million are moving into what is the preferred or priority services of banks which have a sizeable consumer network," said RBC Wealth's Head of Emerging Markets Barend Janssens. "It's concentrated on the high end of consumer services, instead of the low end of wealth management."

Despite the global financial recession, the world's population of millionaires grew by 0.8 per cent to a record 11 million last year, according to the report, yet their collective wealth fell by 1.7 per cent to \$42 trillion. Every region except the Middle East saw declines in wealth. It was the first global drop in millionaire wealth since the 2008 financial crisis, when the ranks of the wealthy fell by 15 per cent and their wealth contracted by 20 per cent.

Singapore has attracted the world's rich in recent years, with more Indonesian millionaires living there than Jakarta. Facebook co-founder, Eduardo Saverin also lives on the small island and recently gave up his US citizenship in favour of Singapore.

Asia's high net-worth individuals with \$1 million or more in investable assets - are younger than their Western counterparts. Forty-one per cent of Asia-Pacific's HNWI are 45 or under versus a global average of 17 per cent, according to Capgemini and Merrill Lynch. This

means they are still creating and growing their wealth, as opposed to Western HNWI who tend to focus more on wealth preservation.

Another important difference is that a greater proportion of Asian HNWI (63 per cent in the case of our clients) are business owners, mostly first or second-generation. They have earned their money the hard way, and are more reluctant to let others manage it, meaning that the private banking model applied for decades in the West may not work for them.

Instead, many Asian clients prefer a much more hands-on approach, talking to their bank more often and looking for a faster turnover within their portfolios.

Asian HNWI also tend to be more ambitious - obvious, perhaps, given the higher returns they would have seen in the past couple of years. We see the same trend among Asia's entrepreneurs, the region's future rich. The 2012 Futurewealth survey, by Standard Chartered Private Bank, Scorpio Partnership and SEI, shows that entrepreneurs in Asia set themselves considerably higher



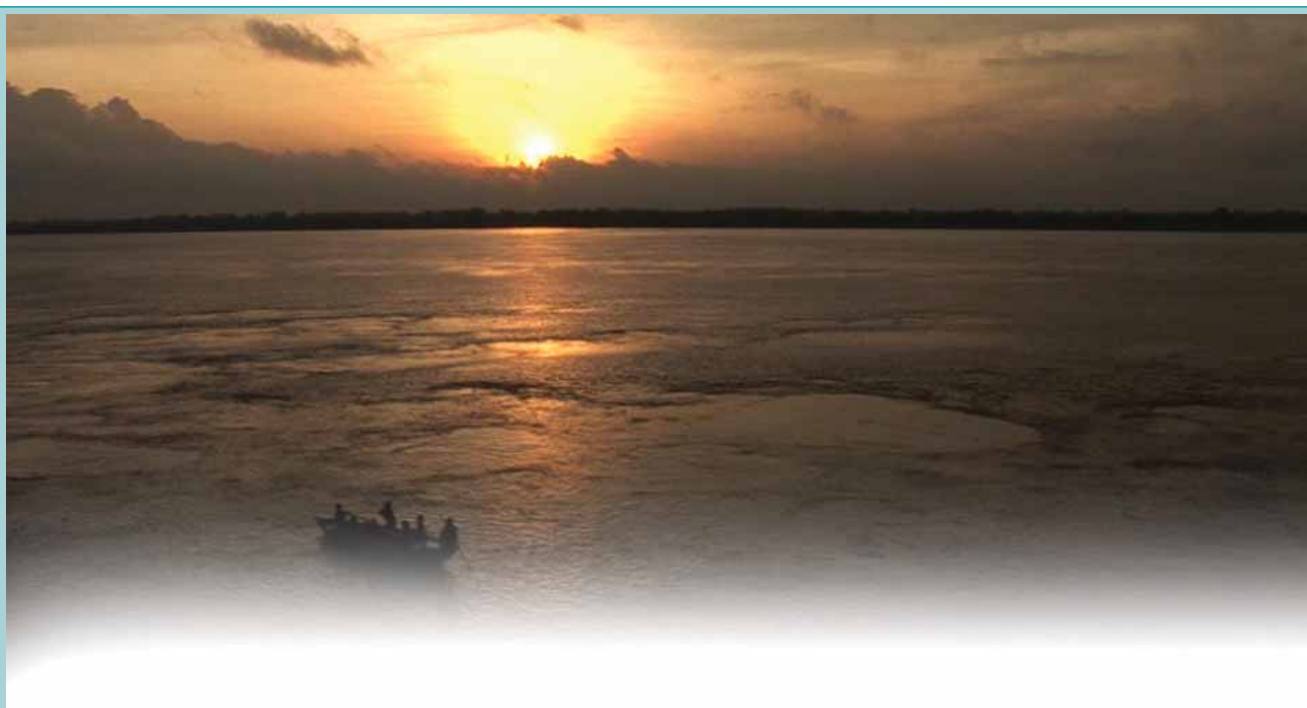
wealth goals and expect to get there faster than their counterparts in the West.

Futurewealth also shows clear differences when it comes to what Asian clients like to spend their money on - and more generally what they prioritize in life. Asian wealth creators tend to be more driven and focused on achieving their professional goals. They are also more interested in buying luxuries such as cars, watches, jewellery and works of art.

All this naturally affects what Asia's swelling band of millionaires need from private banks. So what should banks do to serve them? For starters, clients who are entrepreneurs typically have much of their wealth tied up in the business. On the one hand, they need finance for the business to grow and prosper, while on the other, they need to separate out and protect their personal wealth. A private banker who offers them only investment opportunities with a similar risk and reward profile to their own business, won't add much value.

Because their wealth goals are more aggressive, Asian HNWI also tend to be more willing to take risks. Their portfolios are often heavily skewed towards domestic Asian markets - which they understand better and whose growth story they believe in. Many Asian clients also prefer the comfort of investing in tangible assets, such as real estate, a strategy validated in recent years as prices of property in most Asian cities have risen to record levels.





# LIVING RIVER: *Ganges River Film* Opens In New York

BY SUSAN FINKELSTEIN

The HOLY Ganges River nourishes the soul and washes away sins of millions who bathe in the river and drink from it. But what happens when the river is polluted? How has a holy river become unholy by those who use it? The Ganges, the iconic river of India supports 400 million people everyday. Volunteers clean the river only to find the river is still polluted. This is their story, following the journey of hope to the death and cancers that follow, revealing a controversy riddled with denials, disbelief, and damage: 25 years of delays and excuses that pollute the river and choke the nation. What is the price of saving the Ganges or the 5,000-year old culture it supports?

Living River is a groundbreaking and up-close look at the pollution that's been an ecological scourge troubling the revered Ganges River in India. The film delivers as yet an unexplored and authentic view of the river and the people struggling to compel change. With unprecedented access, the film brings to light an age-old industry of leather production in transition, bringing in USD\$4 Billion to the Indian economy at a cost of degradation of the environment and the health of the residents.

Does the end justify the means? This film illustrates the irony of Hindus profiting from the skin of "holy" cows while polluting the "sacred" Ganges River.

**LIVING RIVER**, the award-winning environmental documentary about India's sacred Ganges River opens with its filmmaker Vinit Parmar and music score composer Premik Russell Tubbs on **Sunday, July 29 in the Real-to-Reel Documentary Series at Cinema Arts Centre, 423 Park Ave, Huntington, NY.**

This film began as a concept when Vinit, the filmmaker, was commissioned to make a 20-minute documentary on the Health and Environmental Issues in Tannery and Textile Industries for a three-day Fulbright-sponsored industry-government conference in Chennai. Vinit visited towns all over India, like Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi, Kanpur, Kolkata, Patna, Raipur, Ranchi, and Varanasi.

Production on the film commenced in 2004 and the film was shot over several years. In 2008, the film was accepted at six international film festivals, and won awards at almost every festival. It won the Best Environmental Vision Award during the 10<sup>th</sup> Sacramento International Film Festival: At the 7<sup>th</sup> EarthVision International Film Festival, the film won the Katherine Knight



Award in the Best Pollution Documentary category.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister told: *"The Ganga, especially, is the river of India, beloved of her people, round which are intertwined her memories, her hopes and fears, her songs of triumph, her victories and her defeats. She has been a symbol of India's age-long culture and civilization, ever changing, ever flowing, and yet ever the same Ganga."*

The "Life of Ganga" can best be understood through a wonderful pictorial illustration and brief, accurate description from work created by Pieter Welteverde: Illustrations of the Life of Ganga. The river is home to over 140 fish species, 90 amphibian species and five areas which support birds found nowhere else in the world.

In recent years, a variety of fish which helped keep the river clean are near extinction. Fresh river dolphins, once found in the Ganga, are near extinction. Studies show tumors in zooplankton. As small fish eat them, and bigger fish eat the small ones, tumors are now in the food chain.

Over a quarter of the Indian population, that is, over 300 million Indians depend critically on the river. 1.2 billion people live around the 1557-mile stretch of the river from its origin in Gangotri to the Sundarbans delta.

Sources of pollution include, unrestricted agriculture, domestic and residential uses, spiritual functions, animal husbandry, and commercial needs. Idol immersion pollutes the river and attempts are being made to ban the practice during the Durga Puja festival every year but thousands of idols are dumped into the river. Plastic bag use is also banned near the river but continues rampantly.

Industrial pollution from metal works (chrome, iron, copper, etc.) paper mills, dye and salt manufacturers, and leather factories. For example, Kanpur has over 300 factories along the river's edge. Water-intensive facto-

ries use up fresh water but dump oxygen-depleted water termed "heavy" water that contains chemicals like chromium, nickel, copper, etc., and undocumented amounts of colored dyes and salts.

Domestic waste from 32 treatment plant points along the river Varanasi has five such conduits, and all flow directly into the river unabated or treated. Varanasi water contains over 200 times more fecal bacteria than maximum tolerable levels.

Free-range animals like cows, buffalos, dogs and all other land-based wild life bathe and die, decaying in the river. The ancient practice of dumping dead human bodies or partially cremated bodies into the river continues. Over 100,000 land-based animals die and decay in the river. Over 10,000 bodies are thrown into the river every year even though it is declared illegal. Chemicals used by over 100 million Indians like chlorine to clean wells and detergents to bathe and wash clothes.

The exposed water pollution in India is a red flag for fresh water rivers around the world suffering from endemic problems of improper and inadequate treatment plants, illegal activities by chemical industries along riverbanks, improper oversight and weak implementation of government regulatory agencies, corruption, and lack of public awareness.

Vinit Parmar, Esq., began his film work as a sound mixer in New York fifteen years ago after making the transition from an established legal career of seven years. He works professionally as a sound mixer for features, shorts, and commercials, and continues to direct his own documentary films. He loves to teach film production courses as a full-time tenured faculty member of the Film Department at Brooklyn College as part of the City University of New York.



# “The Asian & Abrahamic Religions: A Divine Encounter in America ”

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

For decades in America , formal interfaith conversations have typically involved Christians and Jews, or Christians, Jews and Muslims. Increasingly, however, adherents of these traditional “Abrahamic faiths” are becoming aware of and thoughtfully beginning to engage devout representatives of various Asian religions. In neighborhoods, in classrooms, in professional settings and in the public square, Americans are discovering the need to understand the religious values and customs of, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and others. Many peoples of the Western world are hard pressed to begin to understand and appreciate these seemingly strange and unfamiliar eastern religions whose presence is well established, and growing on

American soil. To many Americans the Asian religions remain a mystery. Yet the presence of the Asian religions has been growing on American soil almost from the country’s beginning. Over time Asian religious practices began to influence and transform everyday life for ordinary Americans who discovered Yoga, meditation and the martial arts and healing.

“The Asian and Abrahamic Religions: A Divine Encounter in America,” a documentary, explores the beliefs, practices and rituals of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, showcasing how these religions are similar to and yet different from Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

A decade of spiritual research has led three filmmakers to their third film in a documentary series that discusses the similarities and differences of seven religions in the United States . In this 105-minute documentary Auteur Productions filmmakers Gerald Krell, his son, Adam Krell, and Meyer Odze examine the similarities and differences with the Abrahamic religions, how they perceive each other, confront prejudice and stereotypes and how they can understand and respect one another.

The primary aim of the documentary is to demystify the Asian religions; the misconceptions and stereotypes that many Americans have about them, and to show the deep historical roots of the Asian religions in America . The documentary will help create a broader acceptance of religious pluralism in the United States and the world, and serve as a catalyst for interfaith dialogue, understanding and respect. The documentary is also meant to help audiences find greater understanding of these religions as ways to refine and deepen their faith in their own religions; and clarify how they define their own identity.

Prominent world renowned personalities in the documentary include: Noted author Karen Armstrong; Robert Thurman, Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies in the Department of Religion at Columbia University , President of the Tibet House, and The first American to be ordained a Tibetan Monk by the Dalai Lama. Diana Eck,



Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at the Harvard Divinity School and Director of The Pluralism Project; famous historian Romila Thapar, winner of the Library of Congress Prize; Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion, Boston University and co-editor "Asian Religions In America.", Professor Islamic Studies Akbar Ahmed, American University. Distinguished theologians including The Right Rev. John Bryson Chane, Bishop of Washington, Diocese of Washington; Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee; Professor Francis Clooney, Harvard Divinity School, Director of the Center for World Religions, and internationally revered swamis and gurus from the Asian religions.

The documentary and the accompanying study guide, allows students to explore some of the holy texts and sacred practices of the not-so-familiar major Asian religions found in America . Through interviews with scholars and spiritual leaders, and the filming of on-site religious observances, the documentary uncovers those timeless strands common to the human condition and expressed in parallel ways in different religions.

While no two religions are identical, the discovery and highlighting of many of these existential, universal strands is vital to understanding culture, religion and the self-quest that historically binds the human family together. These common concerns and connecting religious links include perceptions of the Divine or Ultimate Truth, spirituality, worship, nature of religious leadership, communal life-cycle events, the after-life, the challenge of modernity, engagement of the religious “other,” and approaches toward establishing a global community of justice and peace.

The program’s educational outreach message is clear. The Asian populations in America provide a great challenge, and opportunity. We can no longer choose to ignore or simply tolerate the other. Rather we must celebrate the opportunity for interreligious understanding this brings. “The Asian and Abrahamic Religions: A Divine Encounter in America ;” cuts to the very core of cross-cultural awareness. Its cogent content of religious and cul-

tural diversity should lead to changed perspectives and changed behavior toward the other. The documentary is being broadcast on public television stations nationwide. The documentary was the official selection at the Sun Valley Spiritual Film Festival, dedicated to the exploration of the human spirit through the medium of

film and discourse. Praises and rave reviews have come in from critics and religious leaders. John Doyle, a TV Critic, wrote: "This excellent, thoughtful and educational doc, attempts to explain Indic traditions and religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism) and compare the core belief with those of other religions.

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# HINDU UNITY DAY 2012 IN NEW YORK

BY NARAIN KATARIA

"The Hindutva (Hindu-ness) is an antidote to the widespread corruption in India." "Sanskrit is the most perfect language for computers." "Hindus must get united and take all necessary action to safeguard their future." "Hindus must become a formidable force on the global level for Vedic Dharma." "India is a secular country because Hindus are in the majority in India." "The DNA tests conducted in many universities in USA have conclusively established that all Indians from the North to the South have the same dominant DNA composition." "Send one million retired soldiers to Kashmir, settle them there and solve the Kashmir problem for ever."

The above assertive statements were made by Dr. Subramanian Swamy, who was the Keynote Speaker at the Eighteenth Annual Hindu Sangathan Divas (Hindu Unity Day) celebration in New York. The topic of his speech was "Globalization of Hindu Unity".

The high profile annual event organized jointly by the Hindu Temple Society of North America and Indian American Intellectuals Forum was supported by many rich Hindus, professionals, several Hindu associations and temple managements in the area.

The general mood of public and the atmosphere in auditorium was simply electrifying. The manner in which Hindus from India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Guyana and different states of India expressed their solidarity was highly stimulating. The energetic spirit of attendees who freely mingled with each other irrespective of the distinctions of caste, color and social status shattered the myth and debunked the obnoxious theories propounded by the prophets of doom that Hindus cannot be united.

The Hindu Unity Day celebration by now has become a tradition for Hindus of the tri-state area who eagerly await its arrival each summer. This extremely successful

and ever popular event has boosted the morale of Hindus in America and created a sense of confidence in them that they are second to none. That they are a power to reckon with.

Addressing the large congregation of Hindus, some of whom traveled over 100 miles and flew from Chicago and Canada to listen to Dr. Swamy warned that Hindus should guard against the mischievous Aryan and Dravidian theory

propagated by our enemies for the sole purpose of creating a rift within the Hindu society. "The DNA tests conducted in many universities in USA have conclusively established that all Indians from the North to the South have the same dominant DNA composition," asserted Dr. Swamy.

Expressing pain and anguish at the plight of Hindu refugees from Kashmir, Dr. Swamy said that half a million Hindus driven by Kashmiri Muslims are still languishing in Indian refugee camps. This was very sad. The infuriating problems like these could actually be solved very quickly by sending one million retired Indian army-men in Kashmir and settle them in the state.

The other distinguished speakers were: Dr. Uma Mysorekar, President, Hindu Temple Society of North America; Dr. Narinder Kukar, Director of Diabetes and Endocrinology in a major teaching hospital

in New York; Pt. Jagdish Tripathi, disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; Pt. Swasti Narayan Dubey, President and Priest of the Maha Lakshmi Mandir; Ms. Sheetal Shah, Senior Director for the of Hindu American Foundation (HAF); and Badri Hiriyur, an engineer by profession.

Earlier Indira Narasimharajan welcomed the audience. Priya Sahani Sood emceed the program brilliantly. Arish Sahani spoke about an Essay Competition open to the students in the age group of 11-25 regarding Hindu Unity Day, and Narain Kataria thanked the audience for their participation, enthusiasm, support, vitality and vigor.



# Pace of Indian IT Firms Hiring In USA To Accelerate

BY RANJIT GOWDA

BNAGLORE , INDIA : While there is much politicking about offshoring of American jobs and curtailing work visas to foreigners, the pace at which Indian Information Technology (IT) will expand its direct presence in the US with local hires looks certain to accelerate rapidly. Media reports say, Indian IT already supports 280,000 jobs in the US , including 107,000 direct jobs and over 175,000 ancillary jobs, as per a recent study by IT industry body Nasscom. These jobs were created in the last five years. The next five could see a multiple of this.

Indian IT companies have invested a over five billion dollars in FDI through acquisitions and green-field projects, according to India 's top envoy here. Addressing the Asia Society, Indian Ambassador to the US , Nirupama Rao said, "Our IT companies supported 280,000 jobs in the US last year. The IT companies have invested more than 5 billion dollars in FDI through acquisitions and green-field projects."

According to reports, while the general anti-offshoring mood among American politicians and the growing difficulties in obtaining visas are two big reasons for this, there are other reasons emerging. With Indian IT's capabilities growing and customers willing increasingly to outsource complex work to them, a lot more of onsite work is imminent. Wipro's CEO for the IT business TK Kurien told TOI that IT architecture work, system design and prototyping work will happen onsite, in front of the customer. "This means that it's not enough to have a dedicated sales force at the client end; you also need system architects in different geographies," he said.

Infosys Technologies has plans to hire 2,000 people for its new delivery centre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin , by the end of this calendar year. The new centre will provide services across system integration, consulting and end-to-end technology. Last year, the company hired 1,200 people in the US . TCS hired 1,600 people in the US last financial year and they plan to hire 2,000 people this year for its centres in Cincinnati, Milford and Michigan . Wipro declined to break up its yearly numbers but said that as of January , it had in excess of 10,000 people in the Americas and that 40% of these were local hires.

"Indian IT companies need to have significant delivery capabilities in consumer locations," said Siddharth Pai , MD of outsourcing advisory firm ISG. "There is tremendous value in stepping up onsite hiring." Though Indian companies say they are resilient to the anti-outsourcing rhetoric, the pressure to create jobs locally is evident.

There has been a sharp increase in the rate of rejection of applications for H-1 B and L-1 work visas by Indian IT professionals. "The new normal has brought in a new set of challenges that is changing the market dynamics in unprecedented ways. The economic slowdown across the world, especially in developed economies like the US and Europe , is putting pressure on the social and community systems," said Naveen Narayanan, global head of talent acquisition in HCL Technologies. HCL, he said, plans to

create 10,000 jobs by 2015 in the US and European markets.

The company has collaborated with Consumers Energy, the fourth largest US electric and natural gas company, to open a new centre of excellence called the Michigan Technology Development Centre.

HCL expects to hire 300 local technology professionals during the first phase of the centre's opening. The company recently opened a global delivery centre in Redmond , Washington , with an initial investment of \$4 million, which will create more than 400 jobs in the Seattle area over the next two years.

"It is important to build scale and size into onsite locations for IT companies to be effective in their offshore operations," Ambarish Dasgupta, executive director in consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, said. The challenge is to get the right talent, since there is a shortage of technical people in the US . According to Wipro, since it is difficult to get lateral entry (people with experience) employees in the US , the company was focusing on hiring freshers from colleges. Infosys is planning to re-skill people in the US by looking at the shortage in specific technologies and areas. The company says once its proposed development centre in the US is operational, it will help the company to do so. "In India , IT companies invest significantly in re-skilling employees. We need to set up the development centre to start training and re-skilling of people in the US," said Nandita Gurjar, senior VP & group head of HR. Infosys has a little over 8,000 employees in the US, of which 1,500 are local Americans. For calendar year 2011, it had applied for 2,000 H1B visas, less than that of previous years.

"The unemployment rate in the tech-space in this country is much lower than in manufacturing and that is where the effort is concentrated we believe today -- to go back the jobs in manufacturing to this country," Ambassador Rao said. Acknowledging that India 's trade and economic relationship with the US has not scaled the heights reached in US trade and economic ties with China , she said there are goals yet to be achieved in this area. "The voices of Indian companies and business interests are often unheard in the audio stream of voices from the US side who are constantly urging India to 'do more' on the reform front," she said.

In this crescendo from the American side, is the political economy and anthropology of India understood sufficiently? she asked. "There is no question of the tide of economic reform in India being reversed. Look at the history of reform in India from 1991 onwards. Successive governments have come and gone, but the direction of reform has not been reversed, ever," she said.

"Do not take us at face value. When the chips are down, our system responds very well. As our Prime Minister told Secretary Clinton when they met in Delhi in May, 'the message I would like you to carry is that India remains open, and the climate (of reform) will not be disrupted'. The India Story is definitely not over," the Ambassador said.



# Pranab Mukherjee Makes Rashtrapati Bhavan Home

BY AJAY GHOSH

New Delhi , India : Pranab Mukherjee, the 76-year-old former F Minister of India , was sworn-in as the 13<sup>th</sup> president of India on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Earlier, Mukherjee, who was the nominee of the ruling United Progressive Alliance , defeated his opponent, P.A. Sangma, with 397,776 votes, and was declared elected to be India 's next President. Sangma was backed by the Bharatiya Janata Party and some other opposition parties.

Briefing the media after his election, Mukherjee pledged to "protect, defend and preserve" the Constitution. "I

voted according to party lines at the poll.

Pranab Mukherjee will move into one of the largest government residences in the world. The Rashtrapati Bhawan or the Presidential Palace, in New Delhi , was designed by the architect Edwin Landseer Lutyens for Britain 's viceroy to India and as the permanent seat of British Empire in India . When the British colonial authorities decided to move the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, the modern city of New Delhi was born, designed by the architect Edwin Lutyens, with Herbert Baker. It took 18 years to build this historical building and 18 years of its completion India became independent in 1947.



will try to justify in a modest way as I can to be trustworthy," he said. Mukherjee, a ruling Congress party loyalist, was the overwhelming favorite for the post of head of state after drawing broad support over his 64-year-old rival. Voting for the presidential election took place on July 19th. The electoral college for the poll comprises members of the parliament (MPs) and legislative assemblies. Out of 748 Members of Indian Parliament, who had voted, Mukherjee secured 527 votes with a value of 373,116 against 206 votes for Sangma which has a value of 145,848. Each MP has a vote value of 708. The electoral college also consists of the Legislative Assembly members of all the Indian states, who had

The column of Jaipur, a gift of the Maharaja of Jaipur rises to a height of 145 meters in the middle of the main courtyard in front of Rashtrapati Bhawan. Another impressive feature of the Rashtrapati Bhawan consists of the beautiful Mughal Gardens open to the public in the Spring, occupies an area of 13 acres. It has Mughal style canals, fountains and terraces at different levels with flowering shrubs and Western style lawns, hedges and flower beds. It has two water channels, six lotus-shape fountains and more than 250 varieties of roses. To the east lies a vast court with the huge Jaipur column of red sandstone. It is topped with a bronze lotus and the six

pointed glass star of India , in the center. At the bottom of the building is a spacious square, known as Vijay Chowk.

Built as visceral Lodge, Delhi Rashtrapati Bhawan has four floors and 340 rooms. This mansion has four floors, 340 rooms and a total floor space of 200,000 square feet. It was built with 700 million bricks and three million cubic feet of stone. Hardly any steel was used in construction. Its Durbar Hall has a two-ton chandelier hanging from a height of 33 meters, the Ashoka Hall features a Persian-style painted ceiling and the Banquet Hall displays portraits of all the former presidents. To all



Indian Presidents' credit, none of them have ever occupied the actual Viceroy quarters, deeming it to be too extravagant in nature. Instead all have occupied certain portions of the guest enclave of the building.

The mansion is considered to be an elegant mix of Western and Indian styles, Indian architectural patterns such as Buddhist railings, chhajjas, chhatris and jaalis are found in the building. Chhajjas are stone slabs designed for preventing the sunrays from falling on the windows and protecting the walls from the rains. Chhatris adorn the rooftops of the building through their elevated positions. Jaalis are stone slabs designed with delicate floral/geometric patterns. Raisina Hill, the area which houses the Rashtrapati Bhavan, gets its name from Raisina and Malcha villages which were cleared to make way for Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Almost all official ceremonies such as the inauguration of the Prime Minister, Cabinet and Parliament Members, and Justices of the Supreme Court are held in this room. In addition, Arjuna Awards are awarded by the President himself. Mukherjee, who will have this large and elegant historical palace to be his residence for the next five years, adhered to his humble beginnings in his inaugural address. "I have seen vast, perhaps unbelievable, changes during the journey that has brought me from the flicker of a lamp in a small Bengal village to the chandeliers of Delhi. I was a boy when Bengal was savaged by a famine that killed millions; the misery and sorrow is still not lost on me. We have achieved much in the field of agriculture, industry and social infrastructure; but that is nothing compared to what India, led by the coming generations, will create in the decades ahead.

There is no greater reward for a public servant than to be elected the first citizen of our republic."

As a child, Mukherjee used to study by the light of an oil lamp. He studied history, political science and law. In a political career spanning more than four decades, he was elected to Parliament seven times and held several ministerial positions, including defense, finance, and foreign, the senior-most ranks in Indian Cabinet. Besides the mansion, the job comes with two retreats: a wooden house in Mashobra, in the Himalayas, and a 70-acre spread in Hyderabad called Nilayam. While the residences are luxurious, the salary is not. As a president, Mukherjee will receive compensation of 150,000 rupees (\$2,700) per month in addition to all the benefits and privileges.

The office of president is considered largely ceremonial. His office plays an important role, especially in choosing the Prime Minister. When there is a hung Parliament with no Party having a majority in the House, his role is even more critical. His inauguration ceremony took place in the central hall of India's Parliament in the presence of the former president, the prime minister, cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and others, and was followed by 21-gun salute. India's independence was declared in the same hall on the night of Aug. 14, 1947, and India's constitution was also drafted there. After the swearing-in ceremony, Mukherjee was taken to Presidential House in a horse-drawn carriage, escorted by mounted presidential guards. For the next five years, India's new President will have this large mansion to be his home.



# Rio+20 Fails A Future

BY AJAY GHOSH

If we are to leave a liveable world to our children and grandchildren, the challenges of widespread poverty and environmental destruction need to be tackled now. The world today has 7 billion people and by 2050, there will be 9 billion. One out of every five people – 1.4 billion – currently lives on \$1.25 a day or less. A billion and half people in the world don't have access to electricity. Two and a half billion people don't have a toilet. Almost a billion people go hungry every day. Greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, and more than a third of all known species could go extinct if climate change continues unchecked.

Living in world of inequalities and poverty, "Rio+20" Summit, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 – twenty years after the landmark 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, was expected to give hope of a better future to the world today and the future generations.

At the Rio+20 Conference, world leaders, along with thousands of participants from the private sector, NGOs and other groups, came together to shape how we can reduce poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet.

The official discussions focussed on two main themes: how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty; and how to improve international coordination for sustainable development.

At the end of the Summit, more than \$513 billion was pledged to build a sustainable future. It signaled a major step forward in achieving the future we want. However, lack of bold vision, commitment and leadership failed to make the broader objectives become a reality. World leaders approved the outcome document for Rio +20, entitled "The Future We Want."

Government negotiators from 193 nations failed in their attempt to find a breakthrough at the United Nations conference on sustainable development. And the thousands of activists who decried the three-day summit as dead on arrival. "This is an outcome that makes nobody happy. My job was to make everyone equally unhappy," said Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the conference, summed up the mood. In the end, this conference was a conference to decide to have more conferences. The result was hailed as a success by the 100 heads of state who attended. The environmental summit

fell off the cliff as the global economic turmoil squashes political will to take on climate and conservation issues.

Analysts said, faced with the real prospect of complete failure, negotiators who struggled for months to hammer out a more ambitious final document ended up opting for the lowest common denominator. "We've sunk so low in our expectations that reaffirming what we did 20 years ago is now considered a success," said Martin Khor, executive director of the Geneva-based South Centre and a member of the U.N. Committee on Development Policy.

Some of the biggest issues activists wanted to see in the document that didn't make it in included a call to end subsidies for fossil fuels, language underscoring the reproductive rights of women, and some words on how nations might mutually agree to protect the high seas, areas that fall outside any national jurisdictions.

"We saw anything of value in the early text getting removed one by one. What is left is the clear sense that the future we want is not one our leaders can actually deliver," said Greenpeace executive director Kumi Naidoo. "We now need to turn the anger people around the world are feeling into creative, thoughtful and meaningful action."

The U.S. agreed to partner with more than 400 companies, including Wal-Mart, Coca Cola and Unilever, to support their efforts to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains by 2020. Andrew Deutz, director of international government relations at the Nature Conservancy, pointed out that Indonesia, Australia and Colombia all made strong commitments to protecting oceans in their national waters, in part to ensure future food security.

Despite the shifting global economic order, with the rise of nations like Brazil and China and a host of other "middle-income" countries, critics said negotiators still argued along the lines of old "north-south" arguments that pit richer developed nations against developing nations.

The Group of 77 nations that represents the poorest on the globe maintained their demand that richer nations in Europe and the U.S. recognize their "historic debt" eating up a much greater amount of the globe's resources since the industrial revolution began 250 years ago. They say rich nations should finance environmental improvements in the poorer nations, and also freely transfer technology that would help the developing nations use more renewable energy and build cleaner industrial sectors.

"Everything has been kicked down the lane a few years, we'll have to wait to formalize sustainable development goals and make the transition to a green economy," said Muhammed Chowdhury, a lead negotiator of Group of 77. "It's not a good scenario."



# ure To The World

However, a U.S. delegate member said that countries can no longer debate issues with an eye on the past, that once poor nations are becoming rich, and that anybody looking for the Rio+20 summit and its 193 members to somehow reach a magical agreement and solve complicated environmental and development challenges would be sorely disappointed.

"I think the expectation that there is one document or one approach that can solve one of the major questions of our time - how do you maintain economic growth and protect the environment? - there's not one paper that can do that," said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones. "This is a process. We have to embrace it as a process, look at the positive things we have done, and keep working, as there is much more to do." Environment and development charities claim the Rio +20 agreement to be too weak to tackle social and environmental crises.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, author of a major UN sustainable development report 25 years ago, said corporate power was one reason for lack of progress. Nations will spend three years drawing up sustainable development goals. They will also work towards better protection for marine life on the high seas. But moves to eliminate subsidies on fossil fuels - recommended in a number of authoritative reports as likely to boost economies and curb CO2 emissions - came to naught.

Plans to enshrine the right of poor people to have clean water, adequate food and modern forms of energy also foundered or were seriously weakened during the six days of preparatory talks. And many governments were bitter that text enshrining women's reproductive rights was removed from the declaration over opposition from the Vatican backed by Russia and nations from the Middle East and Latin America.

The UN had billed the summit as a "once in a generation chance" to turn the global economy onto a sustainable track. "It absolutely did not do that," said Barbara Stocking, chief executive of Oxfam GB. The rights of poor people to have access to clean water were not enshrined as hoped. "We had the leaders of the world here, but they really did not take decisions that will take us forward," she told the media.

"It was a real lack of action that is very worrying, because we know how difficult the situation is in much of the world in terms of environment and poverty, and they did not show the leadership we needed them to bring."

The president of the most impoverished country in the western hemisphere, Haiti's President Michel Martelly,

said the summit could have delivered more. "I feel like these poor countries, these countries that are always being hit by catastrophe - things have not changed much," he said. "So on this summit I will say that much more effort needs to be done so we can correctly and precisely come out with resolutions that will have an impact on the lives of people being affected."



Developing countries had argued that they needed financial assistance in order to meet the costs of switching onto a green development path. But with the US in an election year and the EU deep in eurozone mire, any mention of specific sums was blocked.

As a consequence, developing countries refused to let the declaration endorse green economics as the definitive sustainable development path. Prof Jeffrey Sachs, the Columbia University economist and special adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, said support was needed. "Those of us who look at this day in, day out know that many poor countries need that kind of help," he said.

Developing countries had said they needed financial help to adopt greener forms of development. "And it does not do any good to cite large ambitious promises many years out, and then behind the scenes to say 'we're not going to talk about how they're going to be fulfilled.'"

But Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and deputy head of the US delegation here, said the US was fully behind the "green economy" - and that the summit could help deliver the vision. "The negotiated document, which is really the first time we have a multilateral document that talks about the green economy that has broad-based support - that is a big push," she said.

"But probably more important are the connections that are being made between businesses large and small, civil society, academia and of course governments at the national and sub-national level - all those things are pushing the green economy forwards."

World leaders finalized an agreement at Rio +20 that will advance action on sustainable development, as businesses, governments, civil society and multilateral development banks announced hundreds of voluntary commitments to shape a more sustainable future for the benefit of the planet and its people.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon summed it all up: "Rio +20 has given us a solid platform to build on. And it has given us the tools to build with. Rio +20 has affirmed fundamental principles - renewed essential commitments - and given us new direction. The work starts now."



# Tarun Tahiliani Presents 'Jewel of Fashion'

BY ARYA MANJREKAR

Tarun Tahiliani Couture Exposition 2012, was an extravagant affair. The four-day event in new Delhi, from July 25th-28th, showcased sixty beautifully crafted pieces against glass backdrop, celebrating style with luxury. Fusion of Indian and Western techniques clubbed with Swarovski Elements, different weaves and jewels form the exquisite collection.

Distinctive Indian cultural richness and unabashed modern glamour were on view in 35 spectacular Tarun Tahiliani Couture creations. Bringing a culturally rooted, yet highly contemporary sensibility to the time honored wedding ritual, the Exposition showcased the season's newest trends, exquisite designs and jewel colors in bridal and occasion wear. There were lehengas, saris, anarkalis and shararas for the bride, sherwanis, kurtas and dhotis for the groom. Different fabrics such as brocade, cotton, mesh, tulle, silk, chiffon and georgette are put to awesome use.

Clothes are not just pieces of fabrics but a reflection of your personality. And the celebrated designer takes care of not only different personas but also their moods. "I'm introducing the new couture collection which has many moods and is based on what people would wear to different functions. I can take you to lovely sections for cocktail, engagement, sangeet, mehendi or bridals. And of course, different people will choose different things that suit their moods," Tarun says.

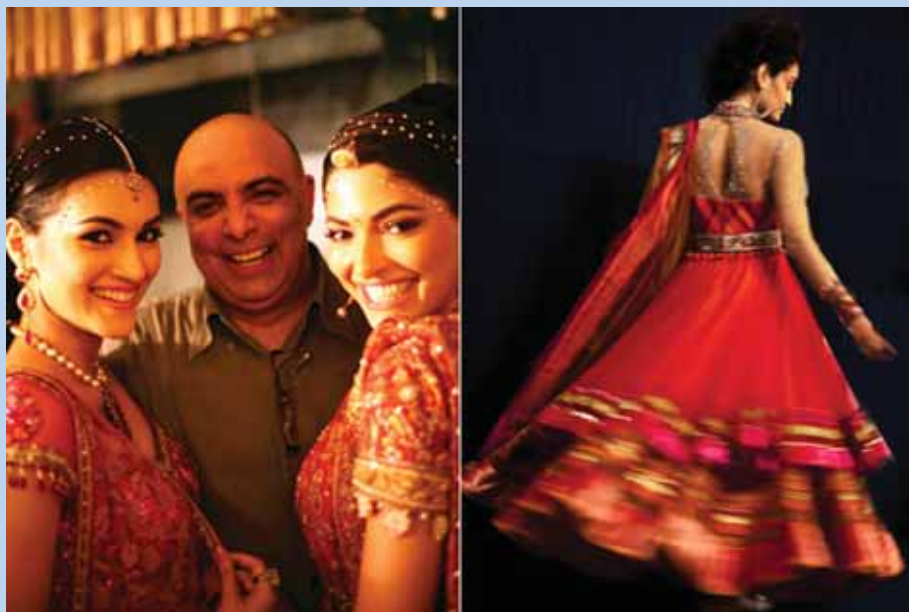
"This idea came out when we were sitting with AIS (Glasxperts), who's a sponsor and collaborator. We have the glass and the jewels. Couture is like a jewel. It's the jewel of fashion, workmanship, embroidery and finesse. We can see it as a jewel box with mannequins inside. I have collaborated with people who are jewels in their fields," he explains.

Tarun started his professional career in management, with a degree from the Wharton School of Business. In 1987 he conceived of starting a world-class fashion store in Mumbai that would house up-market designer clothing. Tarun and his wife Sailaja chose a handful of talented young, undiscovered designers, which led to the birth of Ensemble, and along with it a revolution that would change the face of the fashion industry. Tarun's

own design career also had its inception in the birth of Ensemble.

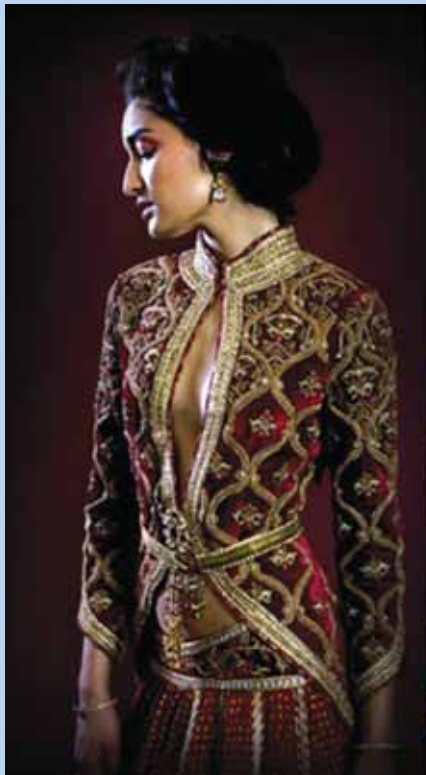
Although he had the flair he honed his technical knowledge in design by qualifying for an associate degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Style, craftsmanship, quality and refinement are the defining symbols of Tarun's garments. His collections attempt to rejuvenate ideas towards a renewal for contemporary Indian life. A wide spectrum of silhouettes and styles complement his trademark drapes and subtlety. Today, Tarun, the master of drape, is one of the most sought after and successful fashion designers in the country whose clients cover a domestic and international arena.

Recently, Ensemble inaugurated a boutique in New Delhi. Tarun Tahiliani's first 'store within a store' at



Ambawata, Mehrauli has an attached couture salon where bridal and occasion wear will be designed and fitted in consultation with clients. Menswear and home-furnishings are also retailed from this outlet. Ever since the tremendous success of his first solo show "The Rubaiyat" in September '1994 at the Dorchester in London, he has continued to present exclusive, well attended and highly publicized shows in major cities all over the world.

Bridal has been dropped from the original 'Tarun Tahiliani Bridal Couture Exposition' as the designer caters to not just the bride. "The focus is on the bride. But it's for the bride as well as her friends and family... different folks, different moods." Tahiliani has used different tints and shades but still gives you the liberty to go for your



personal favourite. "My colour palette is very strong. Let's start with mangoes... my ivories and beiges are always there... pale pinks, lilacs, deep magentas, of course reds and oranges," he says adding, "But these clothes can be ordered in many different options."

After launching his own collection of watches and venturing into interiors, now Tahiliani has added another feather to his cap. He has forayed into technology by designing limited edition television sets. Ever thought of idiot box as an item of beauty? This is where Tahiliani steps in and presents India's first designer TV. "It's not like I have designed the technology of the TV. It's just a decorative thing. It's amazing. You like it, I love it."

His first solo show was held in September 1994, at the Dorchester Hotel in London. Since then, he has shown countless collections at home and around the world. In September 2003, he was the first Indian designer invited to showcase his work at the prestigious Milan Fashion Week and has since shown collections in New York, London, Milan, Tokyo, Dubai, Singapore

, Hong Kong, Moscow, South Africa and Karachi.

In 2004, Tahiliani was awarded the Moët and Chandon Fashion Tribute Award for Designer of the Year for India and was invited to represent India in Hong Kong. He was also awarded the 2004 F Award for Best Women's Designer for Couture. He is an office-bearer and founding member of the Fashion Design Council of India.

In 2005, Tahiliani was the first Indian Designer to be invited to show in the Milan Fashion Week. He now retails from many prestigious retail locations worldwide. The Tarun Tahiliani brand is available at 4 Tarun Tahiliani Boutiques in New Delhi and Mumbai. This year will also see a new addition in Hyderabad.

In 2008, the Tarun Tahiliani Design Studio moved into its new Design Headquarters. Designed by Stephan Paumier, this 45000 square feet structure is home to a vast repertoire of skills and applications that span the design process. This is the global headquarters for design and all related functions.

Tarun has also launched FNP Tahiliani which de-



signs stylized flower decorations for weddings and events with his signature stamp. He also dabbles in Interiors and Architecture and has designed many a boutique hotel and restaurant in India.

In February 2010, Tarun Tahiliani was one of only two Indian

designers amongst 52 prominent fashion designers from around 40 countries, to unite on the catwalk for Ecochic Fair at the Palais des Nations, headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, for the first time ever. "We are starting work on a big new hotel project in Goa which will be beautiful. Basically that's fashion architecture," concludes the designer. Tarun Tahiliani's clothing epitomizes style, craftsmanship, quality and refinement.



# This is going to be a very close race throughout: Obama Campaign

## THE ASIAN ERA NEWS SERVICES

Washington: As the crucial US presidential elections less than 100 days away, a top Obama aide on Sunday acknowledged that this is going to be a close race throughout; with latest opinion polls reflecting that the US President, Barack Obama, and his Republican rival, Mitt Romney, heading for a dead heat for the November polls.

"I think this is going to be a very close race throughout it. That's what we've prepared for. That's why we're investing in a grassroots army to win this race on Election Day," Robert Gibbs, the top Obama Campaign advisor told the ABC news in an interview.

Gibbs, before leaving for the Campaign served as the White House Press Secretary for the first two years of Obama's current term. The latest Gallup Poll has reflected a tie between Obama and Romney. According to RealClearPolitics, which keeps track of all the opinion polls, Obama has a slender lead of 1.6 point over Romney in an average of all the opinion polls. Of the top seven recent polls, Obama leads in six of them – even though it is by a small margin – while Romney is leading in only one.

However, the Obama Campaign exuded confidence that the US President would be able to make it through the November elections even if it is going to be close. "I think what's going to break this race out ultimately is the choice between two candidates and two extremely different visions about how we build this economy and how we come out of the economic disaster that we were in and how we recover," Gibbs argued.

"I think, whether or not -- you're going to have that choice of whether Barack Obama, who wants to invest in education, invest in entrepreneurs, cut taxes on small businesses, and build our economy here, or somebody in Governor Romney, whose expertise, quite frankly, is in outsourcing and offshoring," he said.

Kevin Madden, advisor of the Romney Campaign, agreed with Gibbs that it is going to be a close campaign, but vouched that it is Romney who would ultimately win the elections. "I do believe that this is a very close race and it will continue to be a close race. I think what's going to make a big difference is how the American public judges the last three-and-a-half years and whether or not the economy has gotten better in these last three-and-a-half years," he said.

"I think that's where we do see this sort of crystallization between the two candidates. I do think it is a choice, and I do think it's a choice about how we go forward. This is a president who sort of abandoned, really, any idea of offering the public any new ideas about getting out of the current economic stagnation,"

he said. PTI / LKJ

## Tulsi brightens prospects of first elected Hindu in the US Congress

Washington : Tulsi Gabbard, who trailed behind her nearest rival by more than 40 points a few months ago, has now made the dramatic turnaround in the race for



the Congressional seat from Honolulu, with latest polls showing her taking a narrow but crucial lead of five points, thus raising the bright prospects of being the first Hindu to be ever elected to the US House of Representa-



tives.

Tulsi Gabbard has eclipsed Mufi Hannemann and is now the front-runner in the race to succeed Representatives Mazie Hirono in US House of Representatives, said Mellman Group releasing its latest round of opinion polls. The seat has become vacant as Hirono has opted to run for the US Senate seat this year.

Ahead of the Democratic Primary election in Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District on August 11, Honolulu City Councilwoman Tulsi Gabbard now holds a five point lead over former Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann (37 percent Gabbard, 32 percent Hannemann), said the prestigious Mellman Group releasing its latest poll results.

"This represents a sea change in the race since our previous poll, conducted in April, where Hannemann led Gabbard by 26-points. Indeed, Gabbard's share of the vote has increased 21 points, while Hannemann has actually shed 10 points over the last three months," the group said.

A confidant Tulsi says she is on her way to victory, though she conceded that it would be a close race. Proud of her Hindu religion, she is not Indian or of Indian heritage. Her father Mike Gabbard, is currently Hawaii State Senator and mother Carol Porter Gabbard is a educator and business owner.

Currently a Company Commander with the Hawaii Army National Guard, who has volunteered to serve on two deployments to the Middle East, Gabbard served as Hawaii's youngest state representative in 2002 and is the youngest woman in the USA to be elected into such a position. The recent turn around in the race has raised prospect of her being elected as the first Hindu to the House of Representatives. Dalip Singh Saund, the first Indian American elected to the House of Representatives in 1950s was a Sikh, while Bobby Jindal the second Indian American to make it to the House of Representatives had converted to Christianity.

Having never visited India so far, Tulsi says she is looking to make her first trip to India as an elected member of the House of Representatives. "As a Vaishnava, I especially look forward to visiting the holy sites of Vrindavan," she told PTI.

According to her bio provided by her campaign, Tulsi's spiritual lineage is the Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya. She is a disciple of Jagad Guru Siddhaswarupananda Paramahansa who is disciple of AC Bhaktivedanta Swami. Jagad Guru Siddhaswarupananda Paramahansa is a co-founder of the World Vaishnava Association, an umbrella organization of over 30 India-based and world-wide missions adhering to and promoting Vaishnava teachings.

Notably Hawaii'i is comprised of a majority of Christians with a significant number of Buddhists (10-15 percent of the population). The number of Hindus living in Hawaii'i is relatively small, with only two Hindu temples in the entire state, the Iskcon Temple on Oahu and the Aadheenam Temple on

Kauai.

Her religion, Tulsi said is not an issue for the election, neither it has been a negative factor in her electoral campaign, she noted. Tulsi was born in 1981 in Leloaloe, American Samoa, the fourth of five children born to a Hindu mother and a Christian (Catholic) father. At the age of two, the family moved to Hawaii'i, the 50th state of the US, also known as the "Aloha State"; which is also the birth place of the US President, Barack Obama. "I am humbled and gratified by the support and enthusiasm our campaign is receiving. The voters are embracing our message that Hawaii needs fresh leadership in Washington D.C.," she said.

"City Council member Tulsi Gabbard has overcome an early 45-point deficit to pull into a dead heat with the former Honolulu mayor two months before the Democratic primary likely to determine Hawaii's new representative in Congress," wrote Honolulu Civil Beat.

Tulsi, according to local newspapers, now has the clear momentum. Her recent televised debate performance caught the attention of prominent political bloggers around the state, including Ian Lind who said "We watched with interest as Tulsi Gabbard clearly outshined the field. She was extremely well prepped, and was the image of confidence."

The most recent fundraising reports filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on July 15 showed that Tulsi out-raised her opponent in the most recent quarter and has a higher cash on hand total entering the final month of the primary campaign.

Her campaign raised USD320,505 from April 1 through June 30, outpacing former Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann's campaign, which closed the quarter with USD252,392 in contributions. PTI / LKJ

## Congress wants State Department to designate Haqqani network as terrorist outfit

Washington: Building up pressure on the Obama Administration to designate the Haqqani network as a foreign terrorist organization, the Congress has passed





a resolution in this regard. The US Senate Friday unanimously passed a resolution urging the State to designate the Haqqani network as a foreign terrorist organization within one month of the legislation being signed into law.

The Haqqani Network Terrorist Designation Act of 2012 was passed by the House of Representatives early this month and in doing so made changes into the version of the bill which was passed by the Senate late last year. The bill now heads to the White House for the US President, Barack Obama, to sign it into law.

"This is a significant development, the House and the Senate have now spoken unanimously that the President should designate the Haqqani Network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," said Congressman Mike Rogers, Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

"The Haqqanis are engaged in a reign of terror in Afghanistan and the network poses the single largest threat for IED's our soldiers face in that country. They actively plot and kill US and allied soldiers and routinely harm innocent Afghan civilian men, women and

children in their path," he said.

"To better protect the lives of US soldiers, now is the time for action, not simply paperwork and talk. I applaud the Senate passage of this important bill, and I urge the President to sign in quickly into law," Rogers said, adding that the Haqqani Network is responsible for killing and injuring hundreds of US servicemen and women in Afghanistan.

In May 11, Congressman Rogers, Ranking Member Dutch Ruppersberger and their Senate counterparts, Chairman Dianne Feinstein and Vice Chairman Saxby Chambliss, called on the Obama Administration to designate the Haqqani Network as an FTO.

On June 2h, Rogers, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon introduced legislation to express the sense of Congress that the Haqqani Network be designated. Language from the Rogers/Ros-Lehtinen/McKeon bill was included in the bill that passed the House on July 17, 2012.

## Obama has developed "fantastic working relationship" with PM

Washington, July 27, 2012 : The US President, Barack Obama, has developed a "fantastic working relationship with" the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, a senior administration official said Thursday adding that the United States recognize the importance of India as a important regional and global power.

"President Obama developed a fantastic working relationship with Prime Minister Singh that you're well aware of. I also want to extend congratulations to India on the election and to President (Pranab) Mukherjee on his election, and we look forward also to working with him as well," the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Mike Hammer, told foreign journalists here.

"So I think what we've seen is the growth of this partnership that we enjoy with India based on common values, and it's something that I think both of our peoples benefit from tremendously, and we recognize the importance of India as an important regional and global power, and it's why we are very keenly interested in continuing to grow that relationship, as we also look to address regional issues and global issues that are of mutual concern," Hammer said in response to a question at the Washington Foreign Press Center.

Responding to a question on India-US trade relationship and the apprehensions in the US about India's investment climate in this regard, Hammer said the US is always looking for opportunities to promote Ameri-

can business and American jobs.

"As a way of promoting American business and American jobs, we're always looking to advance free trade opportunities and to develop the kind of important trade relationships like the one with India, which I think can be beneficial to both countries," he noted.

"The key here is to lower barriers, to ensure that there's a free and fair and level playing field so that, again, both countries can compete and look to see how best to promote sort of economic growth and business opportunities," he said

Observing that that's the focus of American effort, he said: "We will

always, as the United States, be looking to create jobs for America, but we also see that through our relationships and through increased trade, that does create increasing number of jobs not only in the country that we're partners with, but also at home. So I don't see a contradiction in that."

The efforts, he said, are focused on creating economic growth. "That provides opportunity because when there's growth in India, that creates markets for American products. So the key here is, again, to work in partnership to ensure that the opportunities are available for our US businesses to succeed and to promote an investment climate that we hope is beneficial and allows for that kind of economic activity," the State Department official said.



# The Politics of Counterterrorism in India

In the wake of the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008, terrorism and counterterrorism in India became the focus of international, regional, and national attention. Here, Prem Mahadevan, by using three case studies of Sikh separatist, Kashmiri separatist and pan-Islamist groups, focuses on the efforts of India's decision-makers and intelligence agencies to create coherent and effective counterterrorism policies and actions.

Questioning why Sikh separatist groups have been effectively contained, and yet pan-Islamists have not, Mahadevan draws the conclusion that, due to a gap between the expectations of decision-makers and the capabilities of strategic intelligence agencies, India's ability to prevent terrorist attacks has been undermined. In addition, the role played by Pakistan's intelligence agencies in the border regions is given extensive analytical treatment.

Combining a theoretical approach with empirical analysis of India's counterterrorist activities, this book holds valuable information for those examining strategy-making and counterterrorism - practitioners as well as researchers - in addition to those interested in the politics of India.

If Pakistan doesn't stop backing terrorists acting against India, New Delhi must pay back Islamabad in the same coin, says a scholarly book on Indian counterterrorism strategy. "Indian policymakers need to critically evaluate whether in fact a 'strong and stable Pakistan' is in India's interest," says Prem Mahadevan in "The Politics of Counterterrorism in India" (I.B. Tauris).

Prem Mahadevan is Senior Researcher at the Center for Security Studies in Zurich. He holds a PhD from the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

Suggesting that the entire basis of Indian counterterrorist policy might need to be re-examined, the 297-page book says that New Delhi should take a unilateral two-pronged approach against pan-Islamist jihad. While implementing domestic security reforms, the book says, the "more productive approach could be to take the counterterrorist offensive inside Pakistan itself".

"This would be a daring move, requiring considerable political courage to initially be implemented. Once started, however, it has the potential to exert a strong deterrent effect upon the ISI (Inter Services Intelligence agency) and Pakistani jihadists."

According to the author, a senior researcher at the Centre for Security Studies in Zurich, India's failure to

declare Pakistan a long-term adversary, "whose covert operations need to be reciprocated, has left Indian citizens vulnerable to further terrorist attacks".

Mahadevan quoted former RAW chief K. Sankaran Nair as saying: "If what Pakistan does within our borders exceeds our capacity to control it, then we must take the fight to their doorstep. There is no question." The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is India's external intelligence agency. The book says: "Strikes against terrorist masterminds, including 'rogue' or 'freelance' ISI officials, would thus be an integral component of an ideal Indian counterterrorist policy."

Former Intelligence Bureau Ajit Doval is also quoted as saying: "India cannot afford to

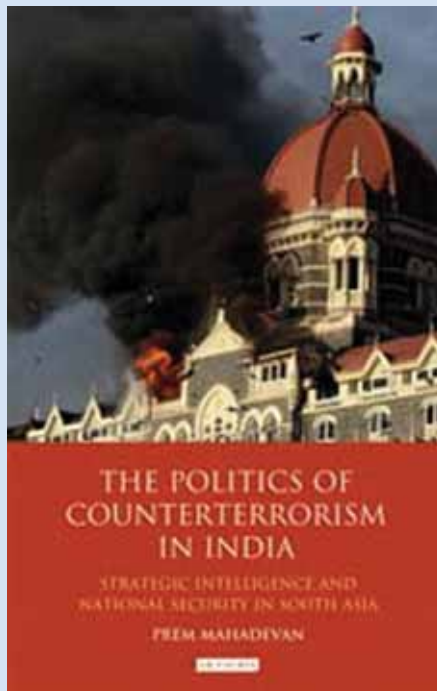
indefinitely play the game in defensive mode, which is like playing soccer with a single goalpost in which you only receive the hits. "Developing credible covert capacity, whose use can be controlled and calibrated, will be an effective deterrent against Pakistan."

The book asks India to jettison "the current policy of mortgaging Indian counterterrorist efforts to Western strategic agenda..." Western governments, it says, seem increasingly indifferent to Indian concerns about Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. India can explore options for disciplining the Pakistani establishment through covert action. The adoption of an offensive counterterrorist policy would require massively upgrading Indian intelligence capabilities and orient-

ing them for offensive use.

"It would also involve crafting a diplomatic strategy that portrays Pakistan as a weak state unable to control radical elements within its borders. For purely tactical purposes, India can partially endorse the official line by Islamabad that cross-border terrorist attacks are the work of non-state actors."

The book goes on to say that New Delhi can use the diplomatic space thus created to liquidate Pakistani terrorists while insisting that it does not seek to target or otherwise undermine the Pakistani state. "Symbolic peace talks can also be held with Islamabad for the sake of retaining international goodwill. Although the ISI and LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba) can be expected to hit back, at least they would no longer enjoy impunity while doing so. Eventually, given the sheer asymmetry of power between India and Pakistan, the former is bound to win a covert war."





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