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President Pranab Mukherjee inspecting the Guard of Honor after the swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi on July 25.

India elects 13th President

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■ INDIA'S 'FIRST SUPERSTAR' RAJESH KHANNA PASSES AWAY

India gets a new President

Taking oath as India's 13th President, Pranab Mukherjee has pledged to preserve, protect and defend the Indian Constitution not just in word but also in spirit



Chief Justice of India Justice S.H. Kapadia administering the oath of office of the President of India to Pranab Mukherjee at a swearing-in ceremony in the central hall of Parliament in New Delhi on July 25.

It was a day of pomp and pageantry, tradition and modernity as India on July 25 got its 13th president in 76-year-old seasoned politician Pranab Mukherjee, who pledged to rise above partisan politics in his conduct of the high office and preserve, protect and defend the Indian constitution in letter and spirit.

Mukherjee, attired in a black sherwani and churidar, was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of India S.H. Kapadia inside the central hall of Parliament.

Escorted by his predecessor Pratibha Patil, he went from Rashtrapati Bhavan to Parliament and then back to Rashtrapati Bhavan — this time as the first citizen — in a tableau of color and ceremonial grandeur that has for decades marked this historic change of guard of democratic India's top office.

The president's mounted bodyguards, resplendent in their livery of white and with dark turbans to match, presented the national salute and 1,000 members of the three services lined along Raisina Hill for the *Hazar Salam* or thousand salute to the president — the supreme commander of the armed forces.

As the president's black stretch limousine with the mounted guards moving alongside headed slowly to the Parliament House, it made for a regal sight. As did the visual of Mukherjee sitting in the horse-drawn presidential buggy and taking the Guard of Honor in an open jeep.

In a brief speech marked by high prose, Mukherjee said: "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."

Among the dignitaries present at the swearing-in ceremony were Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Opposition leader L.K. Advani and Trinamool Congress Chief Mamata Banerjee.

Mukherjee, who won the July 19 presidential poll as the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) candidate, has been India's Finance Minister, Defense Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, in his 40 years as a politician.

He was a key member of the UPA and was chief troubleshooter for the coalition because of his excellent rapport with leaders of all political parties. He headed almost all ministerial panels with his vast fund of knowledge.

Acceptance Speech by Pranab Mukherjee on his assumption of office as President of India:

“I am deeply moved by the high honor you have accorded to me. Such honor exalts the occupant of this office, even as it demands that he rises above personal or partisan interests in the service of the national good. The principal responsibility of this office is to function as the guardian of our Constitution. I will strive, as I said on oath, to preserve, protect and defend our Constitution not just in word but also in spirit.

We are all, across the divide of party and region, partners at the altar of our motherland. Our federal Constitution embodies the idea of modern India: it defines not only India but also modernity. A modern nation is built on some basic fundamentals: democracy, or equal rights for every citizen; secularism, or equal freedom to every faith; equality of every region and language; gender equality and, perhaps most important of all, economic equity. For our development to be real the poorest of our land must feel that they are part of the narrative of rising India.

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;

“History has often been written in the red of blood; but development and progress are the luminous rewards of a peace dividend, not a war trophy”
— President Pranab Mukherjee

but that is nothing compared to what India, led by the coming generations, will create in the decades ahead.

Our national mission must continue to be what it was when the generation of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Ambedkar and Maulana Azad offered us a tryst with destiny: to eliminate the curse of poverty, and create such opportunities for the young that they can take our India forward by quantum leaps. There is no humiliation more abusive than hunger. Trickle-down theories do not address the legitimate aspirations of the poor. We must lift those at the bottom so that poverty is erased from the dictionary of modern India.

What has brought us thus far, will take us further ahead. India’s true story is the partnership of the people. Our wealth has been created by farmers and workers, industrialists and service-providers, soldiers and civilians. Our social harmony is the sublime co-existence of temple, mosque, church, gurudwara and synagogue; they are symbols of our unity in diversity.

Peace is the first ingredient of prosperity. History has often been written in the red of blood; but development and progress are the luminous rewards of a peace dividend, not a war trophy. The two halves of the 20th Century tell

their own story. Europe, and indeed the world, reinvented itself after the end of the Second World War and the collapse of colonization, leading to the rise of great institutions like the United Nations. Leaders who ordered great armies into the field, and then understood that war was more barbarism than glory, transformed the world by changing its mindset. Gandhiji taught by example, and gave us the supreme strength of non-violence. India’s philosophy is not an abstract in textbooks. It flourishes in the day-to-day life of our people, who value the humane above all else. Violence is external to our nature; when, as human beings, we do err, we exorcise our sins with penitence and accountability.

But the visible rewards of peace have also obscured the fact that the age of war is not over. We are in the midst of a fourth world war; the third was the Cold War, but it was very warm in Asia, Africa and Latin America till it ended in the early 1990s. The war against terrorism is the fourth; and it is a world war because it can raise its evil head anywhere in the world. India has been on the frontlines of this war long before many other recognized its vicious depth or poisonous consequences. I am proud of the valor and conviction and steely determination of



President Pranab Mukherjee taking salute after the swearing-in ceremony of the President of India in New Delhi on July 25. Outgoing President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, Vice President Hamid Ansari and Speaker of the Lok Sabha Meira Kumar are also seen.

Viceregal lodge to presidential abode

The magnificent 340-room Rashtrapati Bhavan, that once housed the British Viceroy and now the Indian President, is a symbol of continuity from the colonial past and also of change in an evolving nation.

The red sandstone presidential palace sits atop Raisina Hill in the national capital, overlooking a grand boulevard that stretches three kilometers to the India Gate martyrs' memorial. It is one of the most imposing avenues anywhere in the world and attracts tourists from all over.

Christened an "empire in stone" by its illustrious builder Edwin L. Lutyens, the sprawling complex, spread across 200,000 square meters, was built with 700 million bricks and

three million cubic feet of stone. It was completed largely in 1929 and along with the rest of Lutyens' New Delhi was officially inaugurated in 1931.

The most prominent aspect of Rashtrapati Bhavan is its dome which is superimposed on its structure.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan is a symbol of ceremonial India too.

The vast forecourt is where heads of state and government are greeted on their arrival on state visits by mounted horsemen and a guard of honor by the armed forces.

Its Durbar Hall is also where ambassadors present their credentials before assuming office. And it's where India honors her military

heroes and confers civil honors.

The imposing palace has seen a remarkable transformation from being just a presidential mansion to a complex that has broken new ground on ecological sustenance.

Its Mughal Gardens are a symphonic landscape. Three key projects — the Herbal Garden meant to awaken the spiritual senses, the Roshni Project and a Nature Trail — make Rashtrapati Bhavan an exemplary institution.

It is a relic of an imperial era and yet symbolizes the power of sovereign India — a change of order from the British to an Indian head of state, when the first Indian Governor-General Chakravarti Rajagopalachari took over from Lord Louis Mountbatten.

our Armed Forces as they have fought this menace on our borders; of our brave police forces as they have met the enemy within; and of our people, who have defeated the terrorist trap by remaining calm in the face of extraordinary provocation.

The people of India have been a

beacon of maturity through the trauma of whiplash wounds. Those who instigate violence and perpetuate hatred need to understand one truth. Few minutes of peace will achieve far more than many years of war. India is content with itself, and driven by the will to sit on the high table of pros-

perity. It will not be deflected in its mission by noxious practitioners of terror.

As Indians, we must of course learn from the past; but we must remain focused on the future. In my view, education is the alchemy that can bring India its next golden age. Our oldest



Pranab Mukherjee addressing after taking oath of the office of the President of India on July 25. Outgoing President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, Vice President Hamid Ansari, Speaker of the Lok Sabha Meira Kumar and Chief Justice of India Justice S.H. Kapadia are also seen.



President Pranab Mukherjee with the outgoing President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil on his way to Rashtrapati Bhavan riding a traditional *Buggi* after the swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi on July 25.

Journey to the top

During his more than four decades of public service, Pranab Mukherjee, 76, elected on July 22 as India's 13th President, was the government's principal trouble-shooter as he commanded tremendous respect across the political spectrum.

He devours books, works well past midnight. He is known never to have taken a holiday, except for his annual spiritual jaunt when he has a rendezvous with his favorite deity, Goddess Durga, at his ancestral home in Miriti village in Birbhum district, about 200 km from Kolkata.

His sharp memory, quick wit and persuasive skills are widely respected. His position in the party was indisputable — until June 15, when the United Progressive Alliance named him its candidate for President. He had headed 83 of the 183 ministerial decision-making groups, known as Group of Ministers.

Mukherjee has served as Foreign, Defense and Finance Ministers during his career.

He has, over a period of 25 years, presided over cabinet meetings when the Prime Minister has been away. A persuasive orator and a formidable negotiator, Mukherjee came to acquire in his five decades of parliamentary politics traits that have earned him the admiration of even his political opponents.

He was born into a middle-class family in Birbhum district of West Bengal in December 1935. His father, Kamada Kinkar Mukherjee, was also a politician.

After degrees in history, political science and law, Mukherjee gave up his two initial loves — teaching and journalism - to take to politics. His parliamentary career began in 1969. He was repeatedly nominated to the Rajya Sabha until 2004 when he entered the Lok Sabha, the lower House of Parliament.

scriptures laid the framework of society around the pillars of knowledge; our challenge is to convert knowledge into a democratic force by taking it into every corner of our country. Our motto is unambiguous: All for knowledge, and knowledge for all.

The weight of office sometimes becomes a burden on dreams. The news is not always cheerful. Corruption is an evil that can depress the nation's mood and sap its progress. We cannot allow our progress to be hijacked by the greed of a few.

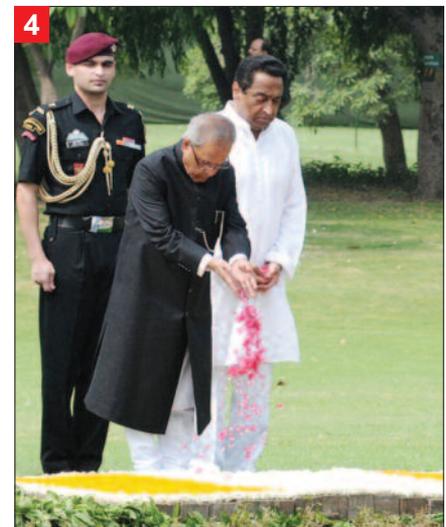
I envisage an India where unity of purpose propels the common good; where Centre and State are driven by the single vision of good governance; where every revolution is green; where democracy is not merely the right to vote once in five years but to speak always in the citizen's interest; where knowledge becomes wisdom; where the young pour their phenomenal energy and talent into the collective cause. As tyranny dwindles across the world; as democracy gets fresh life in regions once considered inhospitable; India becomes the model of modernity.

As Swami Vivekananda in his soaring metaphor said, India will be raised, not with the power of flesh but with the power of the spirit, not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love. Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care what be your color — green, blue or red, but mix all the colors up and produce that intense glow of white, the color of love. Ours is to work, the results will take care of themselves.

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

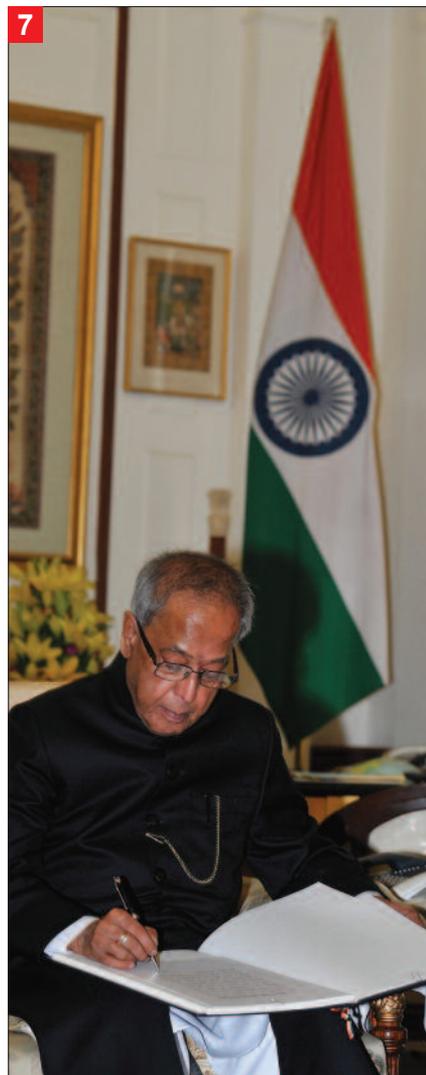
Jai Hind.”

IN FRAMES



President-elect Pranab Mukherjee paid homage to some of India's greatest leaders before taking over as India's 13th President in New Delhi on July 25.

1. At Rajghat, the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi.
2. At Shanti Van, the Samadhi of the former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.
3. At Vijayghat, the Samadhi of the former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.
4. At Shakti Sthal, the Samadhi of the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
5. At Vir Bhumi, the Samadhi of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.



6. President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, President-elect Pranab Mukherjee, Vice President Hamid Ansari, Speaker of Lok Sabha Meira Kumar and Chief Justice of India Justice S.H. Kapadia in a ceremonial procession at Parliament House for the swearing-in ceremony of the President of India in New Delhi on July 25.

7. President Pranab Mukherjee signing the register at President's office at Rashtrapati Bhavan, on his arrival from Parliament House after the swearing-in ceremony.

8. President Pranab Mukherjee and the outgoing President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil in a ceremonial procession at Vijay Chowk after the swearing-in ceremony.

9. President Pranab Mukherjee inspecting the Guard of Honor after the swearing-in ceremony.

Ambassador Rao calls on Governor Jindal

With a view to discussing the potential for cooperation between India and the State of Louisiana, Ambassador Nirupama Rao called on Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana, at the Governor's office in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 16. Ambassador Rao and Governor Jindal identified education, including faculty/student exchanges and community colleges; energy, including natural gas and shale gas; medical science and pharmaceuticals, including vaccine development; infrastructure development; manufacturing, including in the automotive sector; and agriculture as potential areas of cooperation.

The discussion also covered the complementarities between the two countries that help each other's economy through innovation, skilled manpower, joint development of technology, investment by leading companies in each other's markets and sharing of best practices, which provides a win-win situ-



Ambassador Rao with Governor Bobby Jindal in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 16.

ation to cooperate further for mutual benefit.

Governor Jindal complimented the rapid growth of India and said that the Indian and the U.S. economies were

complementary to each other, particularly because of the strong fundamentals and impressive growth of the Indian economy in all fields. According to him, both India and the United States have not only common strategic interests but also coinciding values of pluralism, democracy, free market economy and inclusiveness in growth. He spoke of the commitment both the countries have in the practice of democracy that leads to stability and predictability for the future. India has been "a constant friend" of the United States, he said. These values and capacities provided significant opportunities for further deepening of relations and to build on this friendship between the two countries, the Louisiana Governor said.

Ambassador Rao extended an invitation to Governor Jindal to visit India either during the Pravasiya Bharati Divas or at a time convenient to both sides. She assured him of a warm welcome in India. The Governor said he would look forward to visiting India at an early opportunity.

'Ambassador Abid Hussain exemplified the best traditions of public service'

Paying tribute to Ambassador Abid Hussain at the memorial service organized by National Council of Asian Indian Associations in Washington, D.C. on July 15, Ambassador Nirupama Rao called him a renaissance man in many respects and one who exemplified the best traditions of public service. A former Ambassador to the US, Hussain passed away in London on June 21 following a massive heart attack.

"What also distinguished him was that through every situation, he was the epitome of sportsmanship and good cheer, with his infectious laugh,

and the twinkle in his eyes. He exuded optimism and faith in the goodness of humankind," Ambassador Rao said recollecting her close association with the Late Ambassador.

Born on December 19, 1926, Dr. Hussain was honored with Padma Bhushan for meritorious services by the Government of India in 1988.

At a time when India was seeking to impart more probity, transparency, idealism, uncompromising integrity and the concept of true and selfless service in public life, the power of Abid Hussain's example was a significant one, Ambassador Rao said.

US Under Secretary condoles the Indians killed by US Navy ship

U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy R. Sherman conveyed her personal condolences and deep regrets for those Indian nationals killed and injured off the coast of UAE by a U.S. Navy ship on July 16 during her meeting with Ambassador Nirupama Rao on July 18. Under Secretary Sherman conveyed that the U.S. Government was investigating the incident in a thorough and independent manner and would keep the Indian Government apprised of full facts of the incident.

Ambassador Rao hails sister city agreements

To mark the signing of the sister city agreement by Cincinnati in Ohio with Mysore in the Indian state of Karnataka, Mark Mallory, the Governor of Cincinnati, hosted Ambassador Nirupama Rao at a dinner during her visit to the city from July 11-14. Ambassador Rao also discussed with the Mayor ways to further deepening bilateral cooperation between India and Cincinnati. A.H. Vishwanath, Member of Parliament, led the delegation from Mysore for signing the agreement.

During her visit, Ambassador Rao was also invited as the chief guest at an event organized by the India-Cincinnati Sister City Association and the Indian-American Chamber of Commerce. She thanked Dr. Ratee Apana, President of the India-Cincinnati Sister City Association, for her work in spearheading the signing of the agreement. Ambassador Rao highlighted the importance of such agreements in furthering of India-US relations.

During her visit to Cincinnati, the Ambassador also attended the World Choir Games 2012, a choir competi-



Ambassador Rao with Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory at the Mayor's office in Cincinnati, Ohio on July 13.



Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH), Ambassador Nirupama Rao and A. H. Vishwanath, Member of Parliament, India at a gala organized by the Sister Cities Association on July 12 in Cincinnati. (Photo: Amy Elisabeth Spasoff)



Ambassador Rao with Ratee Dr. Apana at a community event in Cincinnati on July 12. (Photo: Amy Elisabeth Spasoff)



Ambassador Rao meeting Dr. Gregory H. Williams, President of the University of Cincinnati on July 12. (Photo: University of Cincinnati)



From left, Mike McCabe, Director of Communications; Greg Asher, Program Manager; Andy Kuchta, Director of yhr Clermont County Department of Community and Economic Development; Bob Proud, Clermont County Commissioner and Board President; Ambassador Nirupama Rao; Neil Hensley, Senior Director of Economic Development, Cincinnati USA Partnership; Amar Naga, Director, TCS North America Delivery Centers; and Pramod Bajaj, Consul at the Indian Consulate in New York, at the TCS Center on July 12.

tion attracting choir ensembles from around the world. The Shillong Chamber Choir, Akshayam Choir, and Bombay Cambridge School Choir represented India at the event.

Ambassador Rao also met with University of Cincinnati President Gregory Williams to discuss opportunities for collaboration in higher education between United States and India. Ambassador Rao also toured the facility of Tata Consultancy Services in Cincinnati on July 12 and interacted with the management and staff to learn about their and their engagement with the Cincinnati community.

'People are lifeblood of India-US relationship'

Speaking at a live web chat with U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy Tara Sonenshine on July 19, Ambassador Nirupama Rao said that people were the lifeblood of India-U.S. relationship. The discussion on how people-to-people ties were at the heart of the India-U.S. relationship took place as a follow-up to the recently concluded US-India Higher Education Dialogue. Ambassador Robert Blake, U.S. Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs moderated the live web chat.

Pointing out that over 104,000 students from India study in the United States each year and more than three million Indian-Americans are living in the United States, Under Secretary Sonenshine said, "We want to work with India on all the new models of education: online models accessible to everyone, quality education affordable to everyone, community colleges and



The video of the web chat can be viewed at: <http://link.videoplatform.limelight.com/media?mediald=2e31eb69864f4984acd13eb2d187abaf&width=480&height=321&playerForm=7efa319222dd440f937d40e08d485780>

different types of colleges that enable our young people to be outfitted and prepared for the new global economy."

She said that more than 100 million Indians would be joining the workforce by 2020 and it was imperative for India and the U.S. to work together to train people to build viable futures for themselves.

Saying that education was an important pillar of India-U.S. relationship, Ambassador Rao emphasized that the

two countries need to focus on enhancing connectivity and improving infrastructure facilities in India. To enhance people-to-people communication and connectivity, Ambassador Rao said that youth exchanges was also very important. She expressed hope that Passport to India initiative would propel more young Americans to visit India and help strengthen the bond of friendship between the two countries.

The full transcript of the web chat can be read at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail2005/full-transcript-of-web-chat-on-the-theme-of-people-to-people-ties%3A-the-heart-of-the-u.s.-india-partnership-on-july-19-with-ambassador-nirupama-rao-and-u.s.-under-secretary-of-state-for-public-affairs-and-public-diplomacy-tara-sonenshine%2C-moderated-by-ambassador-robert-blake%2C-u.s.-assistant-secretary-for-south-and-central-asian-affairs>

No reversal of tide of economic reform in India: Ambassador Rao

Asserting that the 'India Story' is definitely not over, Indian Ambassador Nirupama Rao has assured American businesses that there is no question of the tide of economic reform in India being reversed.

"Look at the history of reform in India from 1991 onward. Successive governments have come and gone, but the direction of reform has not been reversed, ever," she said on July 26 at the Asia Society in Washington, DC.

Speaking on the topic of 'The United States and India: Implementing a Deeper Strategic Partnership' Ambassador Rao said the menu of future cooperation emerging from the recent India-US Strategic Dialogue is "unprecedented

and covers almost every field of human endeavor."

Ambassador Rao noted that the Indian economy continues to be one of the two fastest growing economies in the world despite the fall in growth rates in the last year.

Referring to "questions or doubts" being raised in the U.S. about India's pace of reforms or opening up, she said: "The logic of an open economy and its benefits have still to be understood fully."

"On our part, we realize the need to revitalize business and investor sentiments and remove supply side bottlenecks," the Ambassador said.

"I would like to assure U.S. investors that the Indian economy has the



Ambassador Nirupama Rao

capacity to respond dynamically to the current situation facing it."

The full text of Ambassador Rao's speech can be read at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail2005/remarks-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-asia-society---andquot%3Bthe-united-states-and-india%3A-implementing-a-deeper-strategic-partnershipandquot%3B>

An evening of musical performances at the Embassy Residence



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcomes the guests at an evening of musical performances featuring the Shillong Chamber Choir Soundarie David Rodrigo, Jeff Bauer and Lois Jones hosted at the Embassy Residence on July 17.

2. The Shillong Chamber Choir accompanied by musical band Deshh performing at the Embassy.

3. A presentation by Soundarie David Rodrigo, internationally acclaimed pianist.

4. Composer and pianist Jeffery Bauer and

pianist Lois Jones presenting a duet composition.

5. Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Soundarie David Rodrigo and the Shillong Chamber Choir.

6. Guests in attendance.

Indian delegation calls on Ambassador



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with the Indian delegation visiting the U.S. to promote 'Vibrant Gujarat 2013' Summit, at the Embassy on July 10.

Embassy bids farewell to Congressman Gary Ackerman

At an event to bid farewell to veteran Congressman Gary Ackerman on July 19, Ambassador Nirupama Rao said that “in his long and illustrious career — first as a New York State Senator, and then as a Member of Congress for fifteen terms, Mr. Ackerman has earned many feathers in his cap and is credited for a number of significant legislative measures, including the ‘Baby AIDS’ legislation,

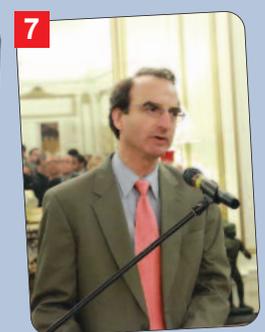
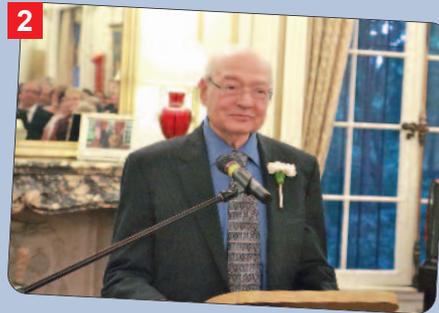
and the ‘Heroes’ postage stamp — to name a few.”

“For us in India, Mr. Ackerman stands for all that defines the India-U.S. relationship today — as a strong partnership based on common values and shared strategic interests,” she said.

Ambassador Rao said that the untiring commitment and the personal dedication with which Congressman Ackerman led and

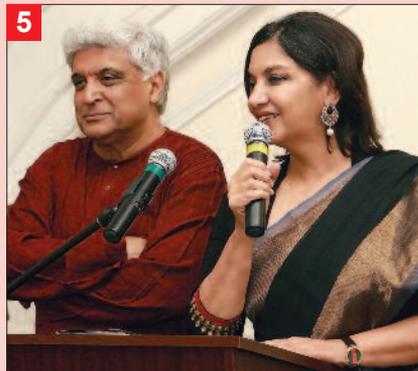
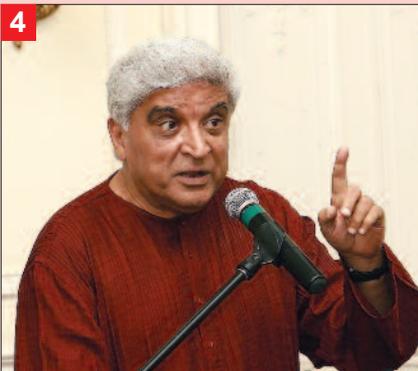
shaped the “Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans” in the House of Representatives was perhaps his biggest contribution to India-U.S. relations.

The full text of Ambassador Rao’s speech on the occasion can be viewed at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1998/remarks-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-a-reception-hosted-in-honor-of-congressman-gary-ackerman>



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing the guests at a reception hosted in honor of Congressman Gary Ackerman at the Embassy Residence on July 19.
2. Congressman Gary Ackerman addressing the guests.
3. Congressman Jerrold Nadler of New York presenting his views.
4. Congressman Rush D. Holt Jr. from New York addressing the guests.
5. Congressman Eliot Engel from New York addressing the audience.
6. Assistant Secretary of State for South & Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake addressing the guests on the occasion.
7. Jason Isaacson from the American Jewish Committee presenting his views on the occasion.
8. Ambassador Barukh Binah, Charge d’Affaires at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, D.C., addressing the guests.
9. David S. Adams, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, addressing the audience.
10. Guests in attendance.

Embassy hosts Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar



1. Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh addressing the gathering at a reception hosted at the Embassy for renowned film and theatre artist Shabana Azmi and celebrated poet/lyricist Javed Akhtar on July 3.
2. Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh

receiving a copy of Javed Akhtar's recently released book of poems *Lava*. Also seen are Dr. A. Abdullah (left) and Dr. Mahinder Tak.
3. Shabana Azmi reading out the English translation of Javed Akhtar's book.

4. Javed Akhtar reciting a few excerpts from his book.
5. Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar responding to questions during a Q&A session.
6. Guests in attendance.

Public ART

A monument to peace



With a view to promoting interfaith dialogue at the grass roots level, renowned Washington, DC-based artist Anil Revri has installed an artwork, Wall for Peace, at the Dulles International Airport in Virginia, USA. Anil Revri's monument to peace takes the form of a giant ticker tape that displays English translations of scriptures related to peace from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. Each horizontal band of text contains one selection from each of the six religions and scrolls across the entire surface of the unit ad infinitum. Rays of light emanating from the unit projected onto the viewers as they walk around the work become a symbolic act of cleansing of religious and racial prejudices.

Sixth Annual Independence Day Mushaira and Kavi Sammelan held

“Poets have played a significant role in our struggle for freedom and their contribution will remain in our hearts forever,” said Arun K. Singh, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, at the 6th Annual Independence Day Mushaira-Kavi Sammelan held at the Universities at Shady Grove Auditorium in Gaithersburg, Maryland, on July 14. Two recently published books of poetry were also released on the occasion.

DCM Singh praised the efforts of organizers for arranging an event which brought poets and audience of both Hindi and Urdu languages under one roof. “I would like to especially recognize the efforts of Abdullahji and Zafar Iqbal sahib, who have been actively engaged in bringing our diverse community members together,” he said in his concluding remarks.

Releasing Rashmi Sanan’s book of



From left, Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Dr. A. Abdullah, DCM Arun K. Singh, Dr. Maina Singh and Rashmi Sanan.

poetry, *Tanha, Tanha*, DCM Singh commented that he felt very elated in launching this book as the poet was a part of the Indian Embassy in Washington.

Daler Deol Aashna’s book *Rubaru* was released by Dr. Maina Singh. Professor Singh congratulated both the poets for their works.

Coordinator of the program Dr. Zafar Iqbal said that the goal of this

program, organized by the Washington Aligarh Alumni Association (AAA) with cooperation of the Metro-Washington Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) was to provide a forum where people could get together transcending political, religious, regional, and geographical boundaries to promote the diverse culture of the subcontinent.

Economy NEWS

‘We will restore growth, investor confidence’

While the world economy was facing challenging times, India’s growth story was still intact, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said while promising action on several fronts to restore investor confidence, including clarity on tax matters.

In an interview to the *Hindustan Times* newspaper on July 6, the Prime Minister also listed five areas as his priority in the short run to keep the India story going.

According to him, his five priority areas were:

- Bringing complete clarity on tax matters to send a signal that India treats everyone fairly and reasonably.
- Controlling fiscal deficit with measures on which consensus was being

built (Read: cut in subsidies, and decontrol of transport fuel prices).

- Reviving mutual fund and insurance industries to open new savings options other than gold.
- Clearing major proposals on foreign investment and make India a more business-friendly nation.
- Encouraging infrastructure development via the public-private partnership mode, including the Indian Railways.

According to the Prime Minister, while there was, indeed a slowing down of capital flows from



overseas, due to concerns over tax matters, the finance ministry was also issuing clarifications from time-to-time.

“This does not mean things have turned very bad. Coca-Cola has announced to invest \$5 billion in India a few days ago. IKEA plans to invest \$1 billion. The pessimism in the media and the markets is far more than reality,” he said.

“I am confident we will roll out measures to restore economic growth once again,” he said, adding he also did not believe that legislation was a bottleneck to economic growth.

No service tax on foreign remittances: Government

The government said remittances sent from overseas would not be liable for service tax charge, putting to rest the confusion that had arisen after the presentation of the federal budget for 2012-13 in March.

“The matter has been examined and it is clarified that there is no service tax per se on the amount of foreign currency remitted to India from overseas,” the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) said in a circular on July 10.

The circular clarified that remittance does not comprise a “service” and thus not subjected to service tax.

A confusion related to the service tax on remittances arose after the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in the federal budget for 2012-13 presented in March this year proposed to levy tax on all services except those in the negative list.

Various organizations and political parties had asked the federal government not to levy any such tax on remit-



tance. The CBEC further clarified that any fee or conversion charges levied for sending remittances were also not liable to service tax as the person sending the money and the company conducting the remittance are located outside India. “Such services are deemed to be provided outside India and thus not liable to service tax,” it said.

“Even the Indian counterpart bank or financial institution who charges the foreign bank or any other entity for the services provided at the receiving end, is not liable to service tax as the place of provision of such service shall be the location of the recipient of the service, i.e. outside India,” it added.

Indian Oil, Reliance lead Indian 8 in Fortune 500

Eight Indian companies have made it to *Fortune* magazine's 2012 list of world's 500 largest companies with public sector Indian Oil and Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries among the top 100.

While Indian Oil with revenues of \$86,016 million took the 83rd spot up from 98th place last year, Reliance Industries with revenue of \$76,119 million moved up from 134th to 99th position to become the first Indian private firm to join the top 100.

Third placed Bharat Petroleum with revenue of \$44,582 million is ranked 225th globally, Hindustan Petroleum with \$38,885 million comes next in 267th place followed by State Bank of India with \$36,950 million in the 285th spot.

Tata Motors with revenues of \$34,575 million is ranked 314th followed by Oil & Natural Gas with \$30,746 placed 357th and Tata Steel with \$27,739 million brings up the rear for Indian companies in the 401st place.

Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal's Luxembourg based ArcelorMittal with revenues of \$94,444 million is ranked 70th while American banking giant Citigroup led by Indian-American chief executive Vikram Pandit takes the 60th spot with revenue of \$102,939 million.

Business-friendly Gujarat appeals to US firms

Leading American businesses on the U.S. east coast have greatly appreciated Indian state of Gujarat's business-friendly approach to economic development and are upbeat about investment opportunities in the state.

An outpouring of support from the U.S. business community came at two events in New York and Washington hosted by the U.S. India Business Council (USIBC), the official 'Partner Organization' to the Vibrant Gujarat 2013 Summit, to meet a high-level 17-member delegation of government officials and business leaders from the state.

Led by D.J. Pandian, Gujarat's

Principal Secretary, Energy & Petrochemicals, the delegation's prime focus during the three day visit was to strengthen trade ties between the U.S. and Gujarat in energy, finance, pharmaceuticals and education sector.

“Our companies are enthusiastic



about the investment opportunities in Gujarat,” said Diane Farrell, Senior Director and Executive Vice-President of USIBC. “The progressive, investor-friendly environment was made apparent by the delegation and we look forward to Vibrant Gujarat 2013,” to be held in Gandhinagar from January 11-13, he said.

At the USIBC's session on 'Opportunities to invest in Gujarat', Pandian emphasized Gujarat's commitment to robust growth and encouraging foreign investments from the United States. “We welcome American companies and business community to forge partnerships and collaborate,” he said.

India to boost space assets

India is bootstrapping its space-based assets to meet the growing demand for enhanced services in communications, broadcasting remote-sensing and navigation, a top space agency official said on July 16.

"To meet the rising demand for multiple space-based services spanning communication, navigation and earth observation, we are enhancing our capacity in terms of rockets, satellites and ground-based systems," state-run Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman K. Radhakrishnan said at the 39th Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (Cospar 2012) at Mysore in Karnataka.

Unveiling the country's ambitious projects and missions at a roundtable meeting on 'Space Vision 2020 and Beyond', Radhakrishnan said for optimal utilization of space resources cost-effectively, ISRO was building heavier rockets and dedicated satellites for communications and television broadcasting, remote sensing and navigation applications.

"We are doubling our rocket



ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan

launches soon to deploy as many heavier communication and earth-observation satellites for meeting the growing demand of service providers, state-run organizations and security agencies," Radhakrishnan said.

He also called for international synergy in space missions. "I call for international synergy in space missions to reduce the cost of access to space resources and in exploring the interplanetary system through collaboration and partnership," he told heads and top officials of six other space agencies who participated at the event.

Astrosat to study universe at multi-wavelengths

Astrosat, the \$50-million astronomy satellite India is slated to put in polar circular orbit in 2013, will study the universe at multi-wavelengths for the first time, a senior space agency official has said.

"The Astrosat mission will study for the first time the cosmic sources of the vast universe at optical, ultraviolet and X-ray wavebands simultaneously," state-run Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Scientific Secretary V. Koteswar Rao said.

The 1.6-tonne satellite will be launched from the Sriharikota spaceport off the Bay of Bengal coast in Andhra Pradesh.

"Unlike astronomical satellites of other countries, Astrosat will study visible to high-energy X-ray emissions from celestial objects on a single platform, take the highest angular resolution imaging in ultraviolet and measure short-term variation of X-ray emissions," Rao said. Most astronomical objects emit radiation spanning the electromagnetic spectrum from long wavelength radio waves to very short wavelength gamma rays. "Simultaneous observation of the multi-wavelengths will enable us to understand the physical processes behind the phenomenon," he pointed out.

'N-tech will aid people, farms and factories'

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), India's premier nuclear research organization, will propagate the societal benefits of nuclear technology in agriculture, health and industry while completing its planned research reactor projects, its top official has said. It plans to take radiation treatment technology to the small towns of India.

"We do a lot in the field of agriculture like seed development, tissue culture and preservation techniques. It is now more a question of making the progressive farmers know and use them. On the industrial side, we transfer technologies developed by



BARC Director Shekhar Basu

us. Recently, we transferred water purification technologies to the Godrej group," B A R C Director Shekhar Basu said.

Basu, who assumed office last month, said his plans include taking the radiation treatment technologies to tier-two and three cities and facilitate infrastructure development in these areas.

"In the healthcare segment we have

a role to play in radiation treatment. My target is to go to tier two/three cities for this. This will need infrastructure presence there. I will try to reach that," Basu said. He said BARC has transferred the technology to manufacture the Bhabhatron — an affordable radiotherapy machine for cancer treatment.

BARC has developed micro-propagation protocols — a technique for large-scale rapid plant multiplication — for banana, sugarcane, pineapple, potato, turmeric and ginger. While the banana tissue culture production has been transferred to a couple of agencies, BARC is now working on sugarcane, pineapple and others.

Sunita arrives at her new home in space

Indian-American astronaut Sunita Williams, who holds the record of the longest space flight (195 days) for a woman, arrived at her new home amid stars with an international cast of crew for another four-month stay.

Williams along with Russian astronaut Yuri Malenchenko and Japanese astronaut Aki Hoshide docked their Soyuz TMA-05M spacecraft to the Rassvet module of the International Space Station (ISS) on July 17 after two days in orbit, NASA announced.

The hatches between the Soyuz and the Rassvet module opened on July 17 when the trio entered the ISS, the U.S. space agency said. Expedition 32 commander Gennady Padalka and flight engineers Joe Acaba and Sergei Revin greeted their new crewmates. The six-member crew conducted a



Sunita Williams pictured in the Cupola at International Space Station. (Photo: NASA)

welcoming ceremony with family and mission officials then participated in a safety briefing.

The docking occurred 37 years to

the day after the first ever docking of American and Russian spacecraft during the 1975 Apollo-Soyuz mission.

The Soyuz spacecraft carrying the trio blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 8.40 am on July 15 (8.10 a.m. India Time).

Daughter of an Indian-American father from Gujarat and a Slovenian mother, Williams holds three records for female space travelers: longest spaceflight (195 days), number of spacewalks (four), and total time spent on spacewalks (29 hours and 17 minutes) during her first space journey in 2006.

She is the second woman of Indian heritage to have been selected by NASA for a space mission after Kalpana Chawla and the second astronaut of Slovenian heritage after Ronald M. Sega. — IANS

Dancing to Indian tunes with an American soul

She is beautiful and she is American, but a quintessential Indian at heart and on her feet. Gaura Prema, founder of the contemporary Indian fusion dance troupe *Natyá Nectar*, which performed with Lady GaGa in India in 2011, says she is still “exploring new norms in modern Indian dance to suit her American personality and Indian upbringing to cater to the new cultural dialogue that is opening up between India and the west”.

“I wanted to find my own language for years. I am an American but I have been brought up as an Indian,” Gaura said, after an electric performance at the American Centre in New Delhi to celebrate the 236th U.S. Independence Day on July 4.

Her 15-member multi-racial international troupe brought the dance floor alive with a combination of acro-yoga (acrobatics and yoga), Kalaripayattu, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Mayurbhanj chhau, Hip hop and Ballet. The

designer costumes — exotic and fashionable — fusing Indian and western traditional elements added to the glamor of the high-energy dance.

Gaura has lived on and off in India as a child.

“My mother has been in Vrindavan



Natyá Nectar founder Gaura Prema

for the last 40 years. She is a member of the Iskcon religious sect and I have been raised in the Hare Krishna community,” Gaura said.

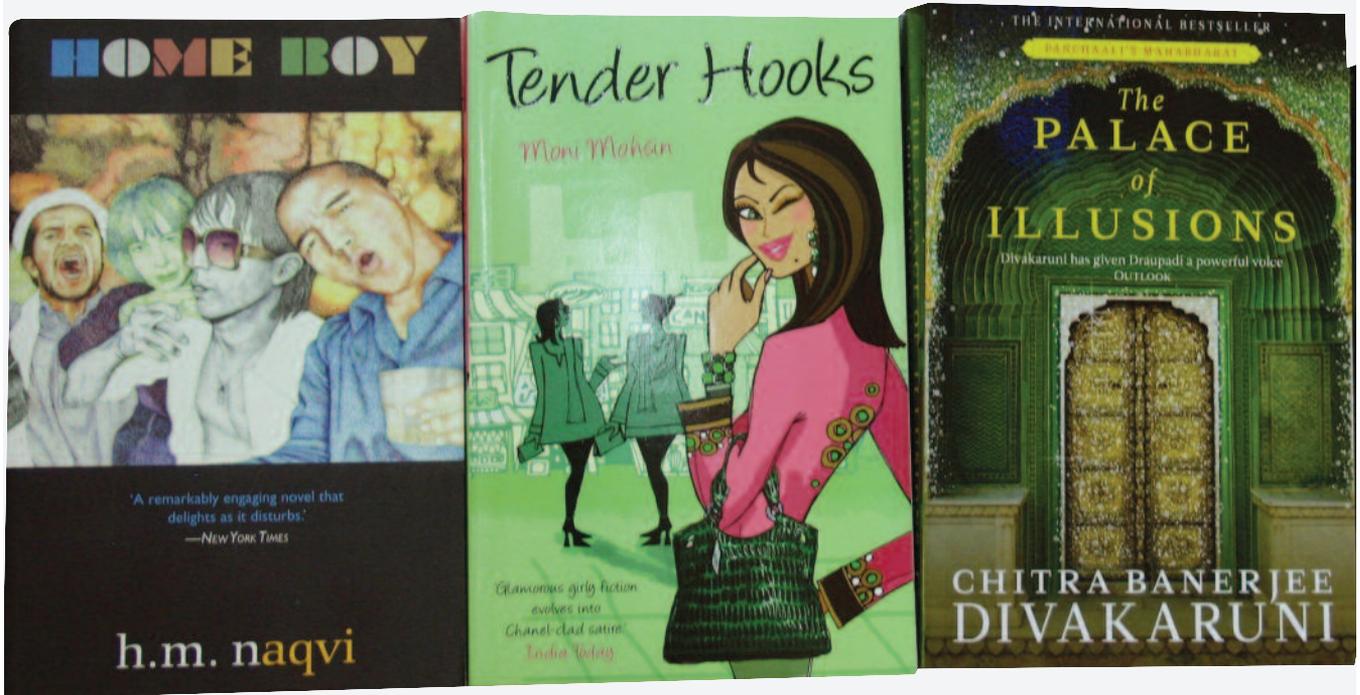
Recalling her initiation into Indian dance, Gaura said: “When I was in America as a toddler in a Krishna community, my mother sent me to my first guru V.G. Prakash in California to learn Bharatanatyam to cure my pigeon foot. It was cured. Later I learned ballet in college in the US.”

Gaura says her dance was about Radha-Krishna and “channeling her own energy through dance”.

She began to learn Kathak eight years ago.

“I began with the Lucknow *gharana* and then switched to the Jaipur *gharana* because I like the fast *chakkers* — vigorous movements — of the Jaipur *gharana*,” Gaura said.

The dancer uses a choreographer — who is a member of the troupe — for the western performances. — IANS



Printing charm in age of digital reality

Defying predictions, reading has seen a revival, with a flood of new titles, proliferation of publishers and explosion of young readers, say experts of the fine print

Books have not lost their mystical pull in the face of competition from digital extravaganzas, cinema, television reality shows and harsh publishing realities.

Defying predictions, reading has seen a revival, with a flood of new titles, proliferation of publishers, explosion of young readers, bustling vernacular markets and electronic reading aids, say experts and members of the fine print fraternity.

“Evidence is available to suggest that reading per se is increasing in children. We must encourage our children to read and open up to other people’s views,” says Samir Parikh, a psychiatrist based in the capital.

Parikh says the reasons for the resurgence are “peer group interaction on social networking sites, where young people enquire about the latest books being read by their friends in the same age group”. It applies to

adults as well because a gripping story enlivens the depressed mind and is often used indirectly in psychological therapy, Parikh says.

Of course, internet exercises the pull all the time. “In the cyber age, readers have become more selective about what they read. Books have to be condensed into capsules very soon for the Internet, but the reach of books has widened,” leadership guru,

motivational speaker and author Pavan Choudary says.

Vatsala Kaul Banerjee, the Publishing Director of Hachette, says in terms of numbers, children’s publishing has been growing by nearly 20 percent a year. “People are still reading but the big debate is about what they are reading. The way they are reading is changing with e-books. But the e-revolution in books depends on the kind of reading aides we have and how soon. You presume a certain affluence among e-readers,” Banerjee clarifies.

What’s selling

- Serious literary fiction popular among older people
- Growing readership of vernacular works; state government encouraging books in respective languages
- English books competing with influx of western books
- More and more youngsters drawn to Quran

Vernacular pride

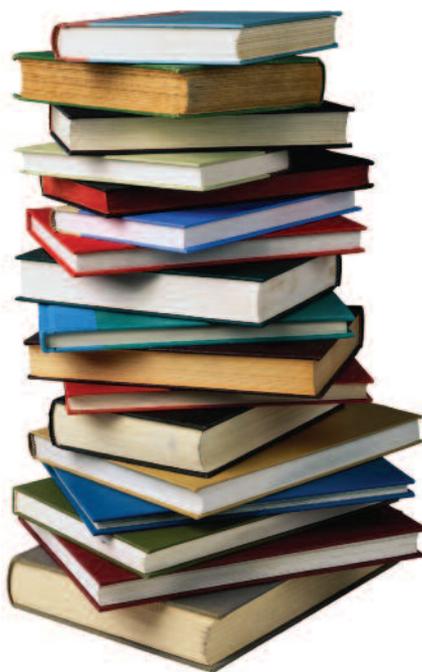
“I am sticking to the conventional print format because print is not going to go. People are still buying books and they want to read books; but we are not being able to reach them. E-books just complement the paperback,” Renu Kaul Verma, the Publishing Director of Vitasta Books says.

Serious literary fictions that still cost around ₹350 polled the maximum readers among older readers, pointed out Renu Kaul Verma, the Publishing Director of Vitasta Books. “Indian mass fiction has a large market, but it did not work for me,” Verma confesses.

The biggest area of growth in readership and business is the vernacular segment, says Anu Anand, Publisher of the Wisdom Village Publication Ltd.

“We have a big span. We have been expanding in various languages like Hindi, Kannada, Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali. English has a limited reach and the Hindi readership has shrunk lately. English language publishers in India have to compete with influx of second grade books from western markets, which fill the retail stores,” Anand says, adding that books in languages like Kannada and Gujarati are being pushed by their respective state governments.

In the world of Islamic books, the trend is double-edged, says Dawood Ahmad, President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, New Delhi.



“While readership for Islamic religious and social books has dwindled over the years because of the Internet, young readers have been drawn to the Quran — still the highest selling tome — because of the awareness generated by Internet,” Ahmad says.

The publishing unit of the sect boasts of translations of Quran in 72 international languages and the largest collection of Islamic books in English, informs Ahmad.

Author's rights

The new writer has become more conscious of his rights, says Pavan Choudary.

“The copyright of the book has to be very clear. And if a writer is willing to fight, the judicial process is always in favor of the writer in case of infringement. But the fight is tough,” Choudary says.

At the same time, the emerging reader also feels almost “pampered”. “The sheer variety and number of books in the market is mind-boggling. I don't mind spending ₹150 for a book, but the computer at home is a big help. I am downloading and reading more books than ever,” Paro Ghosal, a college-going nerd from New Delhi, says.

And with 300 million plus English language users in India, one can only hope for a longer life for the book. ■



Shivmoorthy — My Jeeves

By Anil Chandra



While establishing our factory near Gwalior in 1991, we needed a guest house. We located one at forty three, Sri Ram colony.

Once we occupied the house, we needed a caretaker. Our chairman Mr. Iyengar, a Tamilian of Spartan habits, recommended a young Tamilian living in Noida, a suburb of Delhi. This 'boy', as he called him, did all his jobs like filing his income and sales tax papers, getting odd repair jobs done in his flat and having his car repaired. The 'boy' worked in a factory and Mr. Iyengar paid him a nominal amount each month to look after his interests.

One day the 'boy' came to meet me. He was dark, short, had a pleasant disposition, and a smiling face. He could not have been more than twenty two years in age and was unmarried. He came from Bengaluru. When asked

whether he knew cooking he replied, "Not much, sir. But I can learn".

It is this which impressed me — his readiness to learn. I hired him. His name was Shivmoorthy.

Meanwhile, we also appointed a contractor, a Mr. Sri Nath to do our civil works. He too was from Bengaluru and a young bachelor. The contract with him was that he will stay in our guest house.

Both Sri Nath and Shivmoorthy reached Gwalior on the same day from Delhi. I reached a day later.

While Sri Nath and I broke the sod to start our civil works, Shivmoorthy went about organizing our kitchen and buying some essential items for house furnishings. The understanding was that I will visit Gwalior every fortnight to oversee civil construction and look after other matters pertaining to factory management.

When next in Gwalior, Shivmoorthy was at the railway station to receive me in the company's car. When asked who was the driver, he smiled and said, "I have learnt driving sir". On reaching the guest house, I found it was fairly well furnished with chairs, tables and two beds. Sri Nath told me Shivmoorthy had bought all these items for a bare five thousands rupees. I was impressed.

That evening, after Sri Nath and I returned from the factory, Shivmoorthy asked me whether he can buy a sofa-set with side tables, a dining table with chairs, two more beds with mattresses, a carpet and some other furnishing items. He said he had found a place where a 'garage sale' is on and we could-buy all these for twenty thousand rupees. He took me to the concerned house and I promptly purchased most of the

As months passed, I found that Shivmoorthy was not only a caretaker but managed all Sri Nath's finances and other matters pertaining to civil construction

items. It was a great bargain.

As months passed, I found that Shivmoorthy was not only a caretaker but managed all Sri Nath's finances and other matters pertaining to civil construction. He would be awake by five in the morning and have the meals ready by seven. Then onward he would be on the telephone helping Sri Nath with his suppliers and other sundry matters. When Sri Nath left for the factory at eight a.m., he would be given his packed tiffin.

Later, Shivmoorthy would do all types of odd jobs like arranging for bricks and cement. Very often he would himself accompany the transporter's truck to the factory to ensure that materials reached in time. During the day he would do various other chores — bank, telephone and electricity works, purchase of groceries and so on. Since we had installed a telex machine in our guest house, he had also become a telex operator.

The most remarkable thing about him was that he was always smiling. Tell him anything and he would do it. He never complained or shirked work. He was also completely honest.

Within a year the civil works were over. Sri Nath left for Bengaluru and a new team of engineers were at Gwalior to operate the factory. The attitude of Shivmoorthy to them was as positive as to Sri Nath, although most of these engineers were from Delhi.

As production started in the factory, the problems of running a factory began. Sometimes the raw materials had not arrived, sometimes there were breakages, sometimes proper quality products did not come out, and sometimes production had to be shut down for technical reasons.

I was now spending most of my time in Gwalior and the tensions of running a factory were increasing. Shivmoorthy understood my problems and always cheered me. I found him an excellent companion. His presence made me feel better.

Once, on returning from the factory in the evening a telephone came from our General Manger that the production of polyester resin,

one of our products, had stopped as the shaft inside the container was not rotating property.

We needed this polyester resin to be ready next day for dispatch to Bombay. We had a time bound export order and it was essential that the resin leaves for Bombay the next day. Its non-dispatch would have caused us a loss of one lakh (one hundred thousand) rupees and also a loss of face with an important foreign buyer.

The General Manager told me that the only way to have the shaft repaired was to have it taken out of the container and sent to Delhi in a special truck. It was not possible to have these repairs done at Gwalior as there was no proper workshop locally to do this job. Although the repair was not major, the journey time to and from Delhi, would be two days. Thus, with all speed, we could not start production for another two or three days.

I immediately instructed the General Manager that he should have the shaft taken out of the container and dispatched with an engineer to Delhi. The engineer must personally supervise its repairs and bring it back post-haste to Gwalior. The moment it arrived, it was to be fitted back and production started immediately. If the engineers were required to stay in the factory the whole night to achieve this, they must do so.

As I paced up and down the living-room thinking what excuses I could give to the foreign buyer, my adrenal rising and worry writ large on my face, Shivmoorthy came to me and asked, "Sir, what is the problem?"

To lessen the burden of my mind, I explained the problem. He too became very grim.

"Sir," he said after sometime. "I know somebody who can help. May I try, sir?"

I pooh-poohed the idea and while thanking him, asked him to serve my dinner.

I spent a sleepless night. When I awoke the next morning and hollered at Shivmoorthy to get me my morning cup of coffee, I found him missing. This further annoyed me.

I rang up the factory to check whether the shaft had left for Delhi. The General Manager who was on the line said:

"Sir, it has been repaired and we are now fitting it back into the container".

"Repaired?" I said in disbelief. "How could it have been repaired?"

"Shivmoorthy got it done. It seems he knows some mechanic at Gwalior. He brought him to the factory in the night and after it was taken out of the container, we noticed it had some-hair-line cracks on one side. Shivmoorthy and the mechanic mounted it in our jeep and took it to a workshop. There the mechanic soldered the hair-line cracks in a special way in his garage workshop. It is now back and once it is fitted into the container, we'll start the plant. Let's hope it functions properly."

I was too flabbergasted to say anything. I rushed to the factory.

The General Manager, engineers, the mechanic and Shivmoorthy were there. The engineers had just started the plant. The shaft was working properly. I asked the General Manager whether he was satisfied with the repair work. He answered in the affirmative and said that the production batch would roll out in a few hours.

"All parameters of production are working properly," he quipped.

I looked at Shivmoorthy. He was looking at me with his usual smile. I didn't know what to say. I smiled back at him.

"Can I take your car to the guest house, sir?" This was Shivmoorthy asking me.

"Of course. But why?"

"I have to cook your tiffin and bring it back by lunch time, sir." 

India's 'first superstar' bids a quiet adieu



Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan in a still from *Anand*

From the dizzying heights of fame to quiet shadows behind the arclights, Rajesh Khanna's life had a theatrical sweep, almost like one of his films. Bollywood's original superstar — simply the phenomenon to some — died in Mumbai on July 18, leaving behind memories cast in celluloid of that famous crooked smile and head tilt. He was only 69.

In an era long before this age of instant connect of mobile phones and internet, Rajesh Khanna

was the man who sparked a frenzy never seen before and never since, not even by the likes of Amitabh Bachchan.

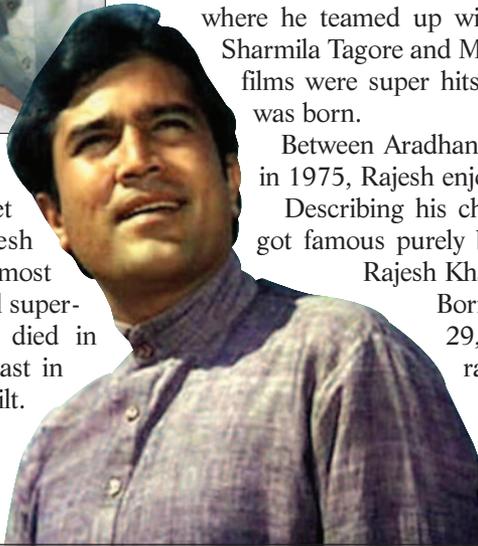
Kaka, as he was popularly known, was one of the highest paid actors of his time, his record of consecutive solo super hits still unbroken. Who can forget the years between 1970-1979 when he starred in mega hits like *Safar*, *Kati Patang*, *Sachaa Jhutha*, *Aan Milo Sajna*, *Anand*, *Amar Prem* and *Mere Jeevan Saathi*. Ever the urbane, suave romantic who wooed like few others. Glory and fame galore came his way with the two 1969 films — *Aradhana* and *Do Raaste* — where he teamed up with two of his best co-stars, Sharmila Tagore and Mumtaz, respectively. Both the films were super hits. Hindi film's first superstar was born.

Between *Aradhana* in 1969 and *Prem Kahani* in 1975, Rajesh enjoyed god-like status.

Describing his charm, Amitabh once said: "I got famous purely because I was working with Rajesh Khanna in *Anand*."

Born Jatin Khanna on December 29, 1942, he was adopted and raised by foster parents.

Like *Anand* from the film, the man is gone. But the memories will live on forever.



DARA SINGH loses last fight

He wrestled his way from the ring to the big screen and the small one to enormous success. Dara Singh went from muscle man to hero and then uncle, father and friend in numerous character roles that endeared him to generations of fans.

Bollywood's 'Iron Man' with a heart of gold died in Mumbai on July 12, following a brief illness. He may have lost his final battle but he will forever remain a "champ" and a "hero" in the eyes of his fans.

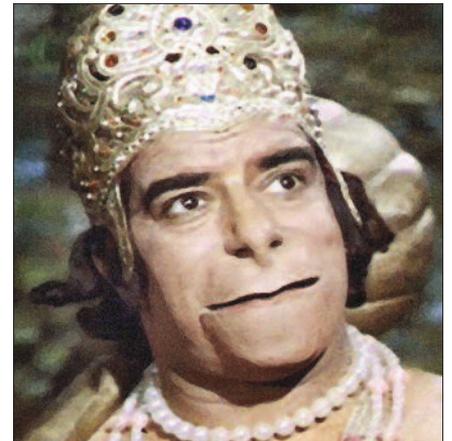
At a "grand old age" of 84, Dara Singh "used to stride down Juhu beach, body erect, smile on his face at a pace faster than 20-year-olds," filmmaker Shekhar Kapur recalled.



Dara Singh has featured in over 140 films, including classics such as *Anand* and *Mera Naam Joker*.

Few people would have made the transition from the *akhara* to the showbiz stage with the success of Dara Singh. In his over five-decade long acting journey, he featured in over 140 films, including classics such as *Anand* and *Mera Naam Joker*.

It was a many splendored life. There was Dara Singh the wrestler, Dara Singh, the hero of 'B' category



action films such as *Tarzan Comes to Delhi* and *Samson* in the 1950s and 1960s, Dara Singh, the friendly *pehlawan* in *Anand*, and then Dara Singh who played Hanuman with great effect in the TV blockbusters *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*. He was born to Balwant Kaur and Surat Singh Randhawa on November 19, 1928 in a village in Amritsar, Punjab.



MONSOON MAGIC IN GOA

Rolling dark clouds, sheets of rain and a rumbling restless sea. That's Goa for you in the monsoon, not the quintessential sun-and-sand beach holiday perhaps but still the perfect getaway for quiet walks, splendid views and lazy drinks.

Like the eternal fickle lover, tempestuous one moment and reflective another, Goa in the rains changes moods like quicksilver. Going from torrential downpours, thunder and lightning to a gentle breeze and the occasional hint of the sun peeping out of the clouds.

It's a world far removed from the crowds and bustle of peak season, prompting the visitor to move away from the beaches and retreat inland to what is perhaps the 'real' Goa.

The rain strips away the touristy Goa. You can't ride the surf, and you can't frolic on the beach. You can instead take in the quietude, have long, leisurely chats and pack in some serious and not so serious reading.

At north Goa's Baga beach, the most popular beach front in Goa, most restaurants are closed but old favourites like Tito's, for instance, or Britto's are open.

At Britto's, you can actually get a table when you want. The tables are

still full but the crowds are discernibly thinner. The waiters move around dexterously carrying plates piled high with calamari and crab but they too seem more relaxed. Grab a table by the beach, sip a watermelon juice, spiked with vodka of course, and gaze out into the restless sea. Quite unlike any other time of the year, the waters are just a few feet away from the restaurant.

The waves rise high, the surf breaking against the damp, grey sands. The red flags are up all over asking swimmers to stay away. So, finish your drink and take a long walk instead, maybe right up till Calangute some kilometers away, with the sands stretching empty into the distance — a far cry from the peak months when this

popular stretch is crowded with thousands of tourists.

The shacks are boarded and shut against the elements, there are no banana boats and jet scooters, only the odd fishing boat with the intrepid fisherman venturing deep into the sea for his daily catch. The clouds hang close, a damp breeze rustles your hair and the rain is just minutes away.

It always is, actually. You need to be prepared to get drenched anytime of the day, even when you least expect it.

But then there's nothing quite like it. Hire a bike and feel the rain streaming down your back as you make the climb to Fort Aguada for a panoramic view of the seas around and climb the narrow staircase to the top of the lighthouse. By which time, your clothes might be plastered to your skin and a shiver going up your spine every time the wind stirs the leaves — but how does it matter.

Locals say that there is no time quite like the monsoons to savour Goa, or Goans. At Cavalla, the charming hotel on two sides of the road just minutes from Baga beach, this is the time of the year to gather by the bar in the evening and meet up with a host of interesting people, some visiting, some who have made Goa their home and some for whom Goa has always been home. ■



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■ Journey for a cause...



Children walking past a mural painted on the side of the Red Ribbon Express train at the Sealdah station in Kolkata on July 27. The train is slated to travel through 23 States and Union Territories and 162 districts in the country to spread HIV/AIDS awareness and to promote safe behavioral practises. (Photo: AFP)

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