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Two first time young voters showing mark of indelible ink after casting their votes during the general elections in Barjora, Bishnupur, West Bengal on May 7.

India votes to elect a new government

■ INDIA SET TO GROW AT 5.4 PERCENT IN 2014, PREDICTS IMF

■ RECORD RISE IN SEAFOOD EXPORT, CROSSES 1 MT

■ POET VIJAY SESHADRI WINS PULITZER PRIZE

India votes to elect a new government

Spread over 35 states and 10 Union Territories (UTs), the nine-phased Parliamentary election in India involving over 814 million voters, thousands of candidates plus electoral officers is a mammoth democratic exercise attracting global attention.



Voters standing in a queue to cast their votes, at a polling booth, during the general elections at Enadi, in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on May 7.

It is indeed a daunting task for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to hold a free and fair and violent-free election to elect 543 new representatives to India's Lower House (Lok Sabha). The nine-phased Parliamentary election involving over 814 million voters, thousands of candidates plus electoral officers and tens of thousands of security personnel ensuring a smooth polling is a giant democratic exercise attracting global attention. Kudos must go to the ECI for accomplishing the task quite commendably. Here it will be pertinent to have a glance at the entire electoral process as conducted by the poll panel.

The five year term of the 15th Lok Sabha is due to expire on May 31, 2014. Credible elections, conducted at regular prescribed intervals, are the very soul of any democratic system. Article 324 of the Constitution of India bestows the relevant powers, duties and functions upon the Election Commission while Section 14 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for conduct of the elections to constitute a new Lok Sabha before the expiry of its current term.

Taking into account these Constitutional and legal provisions, the Election Commission has made comprehensive preparations for conduct of

elections to the 16th Lok Sabha in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

Elections to world's largest democracy pose immense challenges with respect to logistics and man and material management and Commission's endeavor in this direction has been to consult all stakeholders, invite inputs from all relevant departments/organizations and evolve a coordinated framework for smooth delivery of yet another round of general elections.

In the course of assessing various dimensions involved in holding elections to the 543 Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs) and, in particular, the parameters to be considered for

their scheduling and phasing, the Election Commission of India held a meeting with the representatives of all recognized national and state political parties on February 4, 2014.

At this meeting, the Commission also shared its concerns with the representatives of the political parties on certain aspects relating to maintenance of the standards of election campaign and political discourse which the commission has assiduously been trying to ensure, with cooperation from all stakeholders, over the past few decades. The issues that emerged during the meeting with political parties provided the backdrop for the planning process to be taken forward.

In this direction, the Commission organized a Conference of the Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of all the 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) on February 10 in New Delhi. All aspects of election preparedness were reviewed for each state and UT and relevant instructions were issued to the CEOs for ensuring efficient conduct of the elections. The Commission also held a meeting with the Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police, Home Secretaries, Chief Electoral Officers and Police Nodal Officers of all states and UTs on February 20 to assess the overall law and order situation, ascertain State/UT specific areas of concern, deliberate on the quantum of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) required in each State and UT and to review the overall preparedness of the election machinery.

The conduct of general elections in the entire country requires considerable deployment of Central and state police forces to ensure peaceful, free, fair election with fearless participation of electors, especially in the vulnerable areas. Mobilization, deployment and disengagement of these forces with minimum criss cross movement and optimal utilization, involved complex planning and detailed analysis, carried out over several rounds of consultations with the senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs, CAPFs, police nodal officers of the states and UTs. The Commission too, held dis-



Voters standing in the queue to cast their votes, at a polling booth, during the 7th Phase of General Elections-2014, at Jubilee Hills, in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh on April 30.

Election Commission of India setup

The Election Commission of India has a separate Secretariat at New Delhi, consisting of about 300 officials, in a hierarchical set up. Two or three Deputy Election Commissioners and Director Generals who are the senior most officers in the Secretariat assist the Commission. They are generally appointed from the national civil service of the country and are selected and appointed by the Commission with tenure. Directors, Principal Secretaries, and Secretaries, Under Secretaries and Deputy Directors support the Deputy Election Commissioners and Director Generals in turn. At the state level, the election work is supervised, subject to overall superintendence, direction and control of the Commission, by the Chief Electoral Officer of the State, who is appointed by the Commission from amongst senior civil servants proposed by the concerned state government. At the district and constituency levels, the District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers, who are assisted by a large number of junior functionaries, perform election work. The gigantic task force for conducting a countrywide general election consists of nearly five million polling personnel and civil police forces. This huge election machinery is deemed to be on deputation to the Election Commission and is subject to its control, superintendence and discipline during the election period, extending over a period of one and half to two months.

Executive interference barred

In the performance of its functions, Election Commission is insulated from executive interference. It is the Commission which decides the election schedules for the conduct of elections, whether general elections or bye-elections. Again, it is the Commission which decides on the location polling stations, assignment of voters to the polling stations, location of counting centers, arrangements to be made in and around polling stations and counting centers and all allied matters.

Political Parties & ECI

Political parties are registered with the Election Commission under the law. The Commission ensures inner party democracy in their functioning by insisting upon them to hold their organizational elections at periodic intervals. Political Parties so registered with it are granted recognition at the State and National levels by the Election Commission on the basis of their poll performance at general elections according to criteria prescribed by it.

Election Commission ensures a level playing field for the political parties in election fray, through strict observance by them of a Model Code of Conduct evolved with the consensus of political parties. The Commission holds periodical consultations with the political parties on matters connected with the conduct of elections; compliance of Model Code of Conduct and other similar issues.

cussions with the Union Home Secretary to highlight the areas of coordination for effective deployment of these forces.

The Commission also had discussions in details on the nation-wide Election Communication Plan with the Secretary, Department of Telecommunication (DoT) and senior officials of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) to ensure effective multi-mode communication system so that the Commission could track events on each of the poll days' uninterruptedly.

Meeting was also taken by the Commission with Chairman, Railway Board and other senior officials of the Ministry of Railways in regard to the specific requirements of special trains for smooth and timely movement of CAPF Companies and other police forces across states and UTs, including their intra-state shifting during the election period.

Keeping in view the interests of the students and also the fact that polling stations are mostly located in school buildings and teachers are engaged as



Elder voters showing the mark of indelible ink after casting votes, at a polling booth, during the 6th Phase of General Elections-2014, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on April 24.

polling personnel, the Commission has consciously factored-in the examination schedules of various State Boards, including the Central Board of Secondary Education, in the process of finalizing the poll dates. In addition to this, other relevant factors like various holidays and festivals falling in the months of March, April and May, har-

vest season in certain parts of the country and the inputs obtained from the Indian Meteorological Department on the pre-monsoon rainfall, onset and spread of monsoon and acute hot weather conditions in certain parts of the country were also taken into consideration while announcing the poll dates by the ECI.

'The efficacy of Indian elections is time tested'

CEC VS Sampath

The number of voters for this Lok Sabha election has increased. What are the administrative challenges the Election Commission faces due to this?

There has been an increase of about 100 million voters between the 2009 and 2014 general elections. It means we need more polling stations. We have added about 100,000 polling stations across the country. This also means an increase in the size of the election machinery and security personnel. Besides, there is also need to create auxiliary polling stations where the number of electors in a particular polling station is higher. Also, summer elections have their own set of inconvenience from the voter's point of view. This needs to be taken into consideration in order to ensure higher voter turnout in spite of the hot weather.

The extended period of the election stretch-

ing for nearly a month must impose strains both on the Election Commission and state governments. Indian elections represent one of the largest and most complex election management exercises in the world. This is the most demanding process not merely because of the extended period of election, but also otherwise.

In a vast country like India starting from the preparation of schedule and sequencing of elections in various states till the date of counting it has to be a focused exercise involving an election machinery of 11 million plus people.

The Election Commission is absolutely confident about handling this exercise effectively. The efficacy of Indian elections is time tested.

Have any steps being taken to deal with the election process in different states?

The diversity of geography and demography of India is truly reflected in the challenges faced

during the election process. Besides from the security point of view, there are regional specific and location specific challenges. These problems have been identified and necessary precautionary measures are being taken.

Is the institution of election observers working well and is the Election Commission responding to feedback from them?

The internal system of monitoring by neutral and senior government officers has become time-tested and proving to be very useful during elections. The Commission approaches the government well in advance to obtain the names of senior officers for the purpose of appointment as observers before any election.

Once the names are received, the officers are called for a briefing meeting to make them aware about the system of election and the points where they should focus while in field.

Thus, while deciding on the number of poll days for each state and UT and the composition of the PCs that go to polls on a particular poll day, the Commission has, to the extent possible, taken all relevant aspects and information into consideration.

ELECTORAL ROLLS

Preparing the electoral rolls for the entire country is yet another big exercise done by the ECI. Electoral rolls have been revised with reference to January 1, 2014 as the qualifying date and have been finally published in all states and UTs.

The total number of voters in the country as per final published electoral rolls are around 814.5 million compared to 713 million in 2009, thereby recording an increase of over 100 million electors.

There has been a remarkable increase in the enrollment of electors in the age group of 18 to 19 years., i.e., the first time voters. Over 23 million electors are first time voters. The first time voters constitute 2.88 percent of total electors, against 0.75 percent in 2009.

814.5 MILLION VOTERS (2014) COMPARED TO 713 MILLION IN 2009

TOTAL NUMBER OF FIRST TIME VOTERS OVER 23 MILLION (2014)

FIRST TIME VOTERS CONSTITUTE 2.88 PERCENT OF TOTAL ELECTORS (2014) AGAINST 0.75 PERCENT IN 2009

APPROXIMATELY 930,000 POLLING STATIONS (2014) COMPARED TO 830,866 IN 2009.

AROUND FIVE MILLION POLLING PERSONNEL AND CIVIL POLICE FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN CONDUCTING THE ELECTIONS.

Presently there are approximately 930,000 polling Stations in the country, as compared to 8,30,866 set up during Lok Sabha election in 2009, an increase of nearly 11.9 percent.

This increase is largely due to rationalization of polling stations that the Commission undertook recently.

USE OF IT

To make the entire electoral process a success, the ECI uses Information Technology (IT) in a big way. IT is used for providing easier access to

electors for service delivery, greater transparency and better election management. IT is being used will be used to increase transparency by putting affidavits of candidates on website, electoral rolls in PDF form on the website, use of webcasting from polling stations.

LAW AND ORDER

In order to encourage the voters to exercise their voting rights without any fear and favor, the Commission has involved elaborate security management. It also includes ensuring the security of polling personnel and materials, security at the polling stations and also the overall security of the election process.

Security forces have been deployed for area domination prior to poll in order to build confidence in the minds of voters.

The Commission has taken various measures to ensure free and fair elections by creating an atmosphere in which each elector is able to access the polling station, without being obstructed or being unduly influenced or intimidated by anybody.

The officers are normally sent to the assigned constituency on the last day of filing of nominations and they remain in the constituency till the poll/re-poll, if the elections are phased, or till counting of votes if the elections are in single phase. During their stay in the constituency, they send reports to the commission at regular intervals like on arrival, after finalization of list of contesting candidates and so on. They also send reports on any issues they find abnormal on procedural, legal deviations by the field officials, candidates or their agents.

On the day of the poll, the observers tour the entire constituency and visit as many polling stations as they can to see that poll process is going on smoothly and as per procedure of law and as laid down by the Commission.

On the next day of poll the scrutiny of presiding officers' diaries and register of voters are done in their presence and re-poll, if any, is ordered if recommended by the RO in consultation with the observer.

On the day of counting of votes the observer,



Chief Election Commissioner VS Sampath (C) along with the two other Commissioners.

remains present throughout the process and in the end result of election is declared by the RO after taking written permission of the observer that the counting of votes has been done in a free and fair manner and there was no complaint from any of the candidates.

What is the difference between abstaining from voting and exercising NOTA (None Of The Above option)?

In India voting is not compulsory under law. Abstaining from voting would mean that an elector not going to the polling station to exercise his/her franchise. Whereas exercising the

option of NOTA would mean that s/he comes to polling station, records her/his arrival, goes to the ballot compartment and exercises the None of the Above option.

How challenging is it to conduct an election?

Conducting free and fair elections is a challenging job for the Election Commission of India keeping in view various factors: The number of voters which has increased to around 100 million between 2009 and 2014 require increased number of polling stations and more polling personnel to manage the elections. Another challenge is to engage more and more voters in the electoral process and ensure their ethical and inducement-free participation in voting. Achieving higher participation from women, youth and urban population is also focused at.

But the basic theme that makes the challenges easy to overcome is the commitment of the people who come out and vote expressing their will and their confidence in democracy.

(Excerpts from an interview of CEC VS Sampath by Rediff.com)

India and the United States: The Long View

Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar delivered a speech at the Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA on April 17 on 'India and the United States: The Long View'. The Ambassador in his speech touched upon the various issues of India-US bilateral relations.

Excerpts from his speech.

"It is really a great pleasure to speak to all of you on the relationship between India and the United States. As the Ambassador of one nation to the other, it is my responsibility to promote these ties. That is a task which I have addressed myself to for more than three decades, twice in the Foreign Ministry and twice more at the Embassy. It was also my privilege to be associated deeply with a phase when these relations underwent real transformation.

On the American side, Ambassador Burns was a key partner during that period. So, it is a special honor to be here at his invitation and to share my thoughts, with him present, on where India-US ties could be headed.

In diplomacy, as indeed in life, taking a long view is sometimes seen as a luxury. But the fact is that some nations do have 'permanent' interests. These are more consistent objectives that tend to be generally broader and more strategic in nature. They require consensus at home and sustained application abroad. As a generalization, bigger nations are more prone to taking a long view.

Over a period of time, this could get internalized to a point where it actually becomes an attitude, even the basis of assumptions. In the case of the US, maintaining its global dominance is the strategic goal, expressed through the espousal of its values and pursued using the politics of alliances. Where India is concerned, consolidating and building on its hard won independence is the primary objective. This leads as much to an emphasis on political sovereignty as on rapid economic development. Pursuing these goals by



Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar

widening its options was a logical though not always easy tactic. The history of the first five decades of our relationship was one of the intersection of these approaches. But then, the world changed and in more ways than one. In fact, that process unfolds even as we speak. Larger trends — political, economic, social, demographic or technological — are making themselves felt. A new long view is coming into being in both nations, not yet fully comprehended even by policymakers who, therefore, tend to lapse into old habits at times. It is the story of this transition that I would like to share with you all today.

The early years of our relationship were dominated by the generous economic assistance that the US offered India. Even before that, there was a foundation of goodwill arising from the efforts of the United States in pressing the United Kingdom to accept Indian independence. That a long view was at work is evident from the fact that US representatives to India - be they politicians like Louis Johnson or diplomats like William Phillips, the latter incidentally a Harvard graduate - showed sympathy

for Indian nationalism in the face of resistance from your closest ally. Not many would be aware that it was on President Roosevelt's personal insistence that the UK consented to India signing the UN declaration in 1942. From material accessible today, it is a fair conclusion that India's democratic politics was an important factor in these attitudes. That the emergence of the US as the dominant global power also required the winding up of antiquated colonial empires does not materially detract from the argument.

This approach continued into the Truman Administration as well. By this time, India was independent and the frictions on non-alignment and Kashmir were already in evidence. Yet in 1951, the US Congress passed legislation at President Truman's request that began food aid which was to continue for the next two decades. Both the policy and its committed band of supporters, mainly liberal Democrats, became symbols of the values connect as a result. The Eisenhower era is more associated with Cold War politics, military alliances and John Foster Dulles. However, this was the time that saw a massive expansion of food supplies using the PL-480 mechanism, coordination with other aid donors through the World Bank, the start of our nuclear cooperation, and some understanding of India's industrialization ambitions. More tellingly, it produced a broad theory of helping the economies of democratic nations to 'take off', made famous through the writings of Walt Rostow and Max Milliken of the MIT.

Ironically, the big error of this era was in its assumption that a democratic India would not get close to the USSR even if its national security was undermined. The Kennedy period is regarded as much truer to the beliefs of the two societies, even if Nehru himself related much better at a personal level to his predecessor. *For the complete story click https://www.indianembassy.org/press_detail.php?nid=2031*

Ambassador attends book launch program at the Brookings Institution

Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar attended a book-launch program at the Brookings Institution on April 29. The book *Reimagining India: Unlocking the Potential of Asia's Next Superpower* is a collection of 62 essays.

"It is good to be back at Brookings, especially for an India event. I have great pleasure in joining you all for the Washington release of *Reimagining India*. I would like to thank McKinsey, Asia Society and the Brookings Institution whose coming together has made today's function possible.

Those of you who had a chance of glancing through this volume would have surely appreciated the value of this collection of 62 essays. It is, of course, a full spectrum effort, spanning a wide variety of issues and challenges. But it also captures the broad array of approaches to them. While doing so, the book is both descriptive and analytical, is big picture as well as sectoral, highlighting problems as much as it does solutions. Its tone and texture are as varied as its contributors, taking the reader truly into a virtual Indian drawing room.

Let me first state that there could not have been a better time to discuss this collection. The issues of this book are the very debates of India's 16th general elections that are still unfolding. And if you look at what our political parties are doing, they are actually asking the voters to reimagine India, locally, regionally or nationally. So whether it is the distribution of power or the nature of growth, vision or implementation, the material or intangible, this book represents much of today's internal Indian conversation. The vote is still underway and the results are more than a fortnight away. We have seen a high turnout so far, possibly an indication that these debates do indeed resonate with the voters.

The overarching theme of the vol-



Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar

ume is of India's passage into modernity. Captured by the sub-title - unlocking the potential of Asia's next super-power - this is articulated in its many facets by the numerous authors. It is tempting to find a sweeping explanation for the progress, or lack of it, on that journey. I do take Yasheng Huang's very valid caution that the relationship between political systems and economic outcomes is ambiguous and indeterminate. But having lived in the USSR, USA, China, Japan, Singapore amongst others, and of course India, it is difficult to resist that temptation. My take emphasizes subjective aspects, also known as the human factor.

China, where I was till recently, to my mind, owes its progress most to its leadership quality. Not surprisingly, it has most serious leadership training program today. In contrast, the USSR collapsed primarily due to loss of faith. Japan's stagnation was a mix of risk aversion and lack of imagination. Singapore, on the other hand, is an extraordinary story of vision and will

power. As for the United States, it is all about openness and optimism; or occasionally, the lack of it. When it comes to India, however, we are often told that our strengths are diversity and improvisation. The merits of the first are indisputable. But the downside of a 'plan B' culture is that its commitment to 'plan A' is rarely as dedicated as it should be. The magnitude of challenges brought out by this volume leaves little doubt of the need for serious and sustained responses.

If you are still searching for correlations, let me point out that Harsha Bhogle's essay on cricket is improbably instructive. It connects national sports and nationhood, reminding me of Frank Zappa's famous statement that all you need for a country is an airport, a beer and a football team. Substitute cricket for football and you could well get a story of modern India's evolution. And to cut a long tale short, that is one of graduating from playing safe to wanting to win. Taking risks is as much a part of going up the ladder, as is serious application.

Obviously, not all parts of the book are easy to accept. I can imagine the reaction of many Indians when charged with not having an open mind. Which, of course, proves the author's point. Today, it is just as important to realize our shortcomings, as it is to wake up to how the world perceives us. At the end of the day, we will be judged by how we pass the twin tests of ambition and performance, or if you prefer Kishore Mahbubani's term, of imagination. Finally, if we are reimaging India, perhaps we should also reimagine the India-US relationship. It is an important factor in the future development of India. And it awaits its next quantum leap patiently. Since all successes need a sequel, in Hollywood as much as in Bollywood, McKinsey might wish to give this a thought. Thank you for your attention." ■■■

Photo album of Ambassador's meetings



1. Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar with Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii on April 3.
2. Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar meeting with Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado on April 3.
3. Ambassador Dr S Jaishankar met with Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Hawaii on April 8.
4. Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar with Governor Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii on April 9.



India calls for data sharing on taxation in G-20 meet

In the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Washington held on April 11, India called for data sharing on taxation. Participating in the meeting, Economic Affairs Secretary, Arvind Mayaram, said that India would like this to be considered in the next meeting so that jurisdictions are defined in accordance with their treaty obligations.

Mayaram represented India during the spring meet of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank held in Washington recently.

In a communique, the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors reiterated their commitment to boost global growth by two percent or over \$2 trillion in the next five years to achieve exchange rate flexibility.

The Secretary maintained that calibrated and clearly communicated monetary policies will build trust and improve business sentiments across the globe by leaving little room for speculation. “Calibrated and clearly communicated policies will greatly act as trust builders and improve the busi-



Economic Affairs Secretary Arvind Mayaram

ness sentiments across the globe by leaving little room for speculation.

“In terms of exchange rate policy, while flexible exchange rates are desirable, a cautious approach should be followed before going for currency revaluations which can result in trust deficit and currency wars,” he said.

“We believe monetary policy cooperation is extremely crucial in the current juncture. This calls for calibrated

monetary policies by advanced economies which are communicated clearly among our central bankers and between central bankers and the market plus a willingness to listen to others,” the Secretary added.

Recent risks of very low inflation in euro areas might demand use of appropriate tools in the coming time to thwart deflation tendencies, Mayaram said in his intervention at the meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

Structural policy gaps regarding investment, product and labour markets further need to be filled to put the global economy on sustainable higher growth trajectory in the medium to long run, he said

Investment in infrastructure should be a priority area for filling output and growth gaps, he said, adding financing of the same is a challenge the G20 is yet to fully cater to.

“Financial innovation and investment by institutional investors of surplus countries is an area where cooperation can produce tangible results,” Secretary Mayaram said.

RBI governor Dr. Raghuram G. Rajan speaks at Brookings

Speaking at the Brookings Institute, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Dr. Raghuram G. Rajan drew the attention towards the conduct of monetary policy in this integrated world. “A good way to describe the current environment is one of extreme monetary easing through unconventional policies,” the RBI Governor said.

“To ensure stable and sustainable growth, the international rules of the game need to be revisited. Both advanced economies and emerging economies need to adapt, else I fear we are about to embark on the next leg of a wearisome cycle,” the RBI Governor said. “The last few months India has experienced large inflows of capital, not outflows, and is seen by the mar-



kets as an emerging economy that has made some of the necessary policy adjustments,” Raghuram Rajan said in his speech.

USIBC committed to long-term investment

Corporate America has reaffirmed US companies’ commitment to India’s growth and focus on reviving investor sentiment and cross-border collaboration in the first year after India’s elections. The US-India Business Council (USIBC) made the reaffirmation at a meeting in New York on April 14 with the RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan. The private meeting was attended by top executives from global financial services companies and institutional investors. They included industry heavyweights like KKR Co-Chairman Henry Kravis, Harold “Terry” McGraw, Chairman, McGraw Hill Financial among others.

Celebrating the launch of the book 'Reimagining India'



1. Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar addressing the gathering at a dinner hosted at the Embassy Residence on April 29 to celebrate the launch of the book *Reimagining India*.

2. Ambassador Dr. S. Jaishankar addressing the gathering. Also seen are Adil Zainulbhai, McKinsey & Company and Tom Nagorski of Asia Society. Pictures 3 and 4: Guests in attendance.

DCM hosts Members of Congress



Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu hosted Congressman Charles Boustany (R-LA), Congressman Mark Meadows (R-NC), Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Congressman Peter Welch (D-VT) and Congressman Ami Bera (D-CA) for a dinner and discussion event at the Embassy on April 7.

Basant: Spring with Music and Dance



1. Anoushka Pant performing Rabindra Nritya on — ‘Ore bhai Phagun lege che bone bone’ — a spring song by Rabindranath Tagore.
2. Nistha Raj playing the Violin, accompanied by Ajay Ravichandran on Mridangam and Nita Chawla on Keyboard.
3. Deepak Ram playing the flute, accompanied by Enayet Hossain on tabla.
4. Guests in attendance.



'Tunes of the Dunes' — An Evening of Rajasthani Popular Music



The musical event 'Tunes of the Dunes' — An Evening of Rajasthani Popular Music with Barmer Boys was hosted by the Embassy on April 25.



1. 'An introduction to the Manganiyar of Rajasthan, India' — Talk by Shalini Ayyagari, Assistant Professor of Music, American University.
2. Ankur Malhotra, Co-Founder & Director, Amarrass Records Introducing the 'Barmer Boys' to the audience.
3. The Barmer Boys (L to R) — Rais Khan (morchang, bhapang, beat-boxing), Mangey Khan (vocals, harmonium) and Magada Khan (Dholak), at the Embassy.
4. The Barmer Boys — Lead vocalist Mangey Khan.
5. The Barmer Boys — Magada Khan playing the Dholak
6. The Barmer Boys — Rais Khan playing the khartaal.
7. Guests in attendance.



CGI New York

East Meets West Concert in CGI NY

On the evening of April 10, the Consulate General of India, New York in association with Charlotte White's 'Salon De Virtuosi', presented the annual 'East Meets West' concert at the Consulate's Ballroom.

This was the 23rd annual performance organized at the Consulate.

Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay welcomed and congratulated Ms. Charlotte White who was present on the occasion on her 100th birthday.

In his remarks, the Consul General informed that the Consulate was organizing monthly events aimed at discussing and highlighting India's global image, identity, aspirations, role and projection and related themes for mainstream media, university students, youth and second generation Indian-Americans.

Ms. White, the founder of 'Salon de Virtuosi', an organization aimed to support emerging artists, speaking on the annual presentation in the Consulate admired India's culture and traditions and mentioned about her long standing relations with India extending to over seven decades.

Representing the West, Gideon Whitehead, a young outstanding and classical guitarist, captivated the audience with his scintillating performance.

The young guitarist brought out the subtle inner details and communicated directly with the listeners.

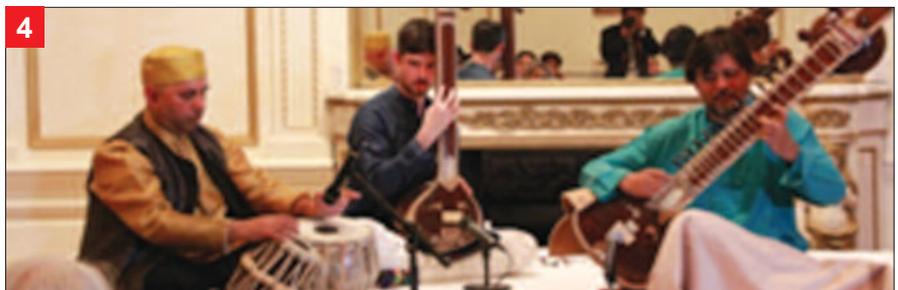
Representing the East was the virtuoso Tabla player Samir Chatterjee and the brilliant Partha Bose on Sitar. Partha is a rising star in the world of Indian classical music.

Both Samir Chatterjee and Partha Bose mesmerized the audience with their ragas.

The musical evening concluded with a *jugalbandi* by the three artists filling the atmosphere of unity.



1. Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay speaking on the event.
2. Ms Charlotte White speaking during concert on her 100th birthday.
3. Mr Gideon Whitehead on guitar.
4. Samir Chatterjee on Tabla and Partha Bose on Sitar.
5. Jugalbandi by three artists Samir Chatterjee on Tabla, Partha Bose on Sitar and Gideon Whitehead on Guitar.
6. Audience enjoying the concert.



CGI New York

Vaisakhi celebrated in CGI

On the evening of April 16, the Consulate General of India, New York in association with ‘International Punjabi Foundation’ celebrated the Vaisakhi in the Consulate ballroom.

Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay in his opening remarks informed about Consulate’s flagship lecture-series “Media India 2014-15”, aimed at discussing India’s global image, identity, aspirations, role and projection and related themes for mainstream media, University students, youth and second generation Indian Americans. The second flagship series “State-by-State” will introduce the diversity and vibrancy of Indian states. These events are open

to all provided participants’ registration through CGI website is made. The Consul General also highlighted the importance of the festival of ‘Vaisakhi’ and how it is celebrated all over world under different names around the harvesting season.

Prof. Indrajit Singh Saluja speaking on behalf of International Punjabi Foundation made a beautiful presentation of heritage of state of Punjab and contributions of Punjabi people around the globe through a documentary produced by ‘The Indian Panorama.’

The distinguished speaker Dr. I J Singh, Prof Emeritus of anatomical sciences at New York University delivered a lecture on “Sikh

Americans: Towards a More Perfect Union” and summarized his belief in Unity of faiths.

The festival of Vaisakhi was celebrated with Punjabi song by Ms Prachi Makkar, Bhangra folk dances and cake cutting to celebrate the birth of Khalsa and Vaisakhi.

The guests’ list included mainstream people who enjoyed the performances and lecture by Dr I.J. Singh. Special Correspondent for the CBS Rita Cosby for whom October 11, 2010, was declared “Rita Cosby Day” in the State of New York for her “extraordinary journalism and exemplary service on behalf of her community, was also present. ■



1. Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay delivering the closing address
2. Prof Indrajit Singh Saluja addressing the gathering.
3. Dr I.J. Singh delivering his lecture on Sikh-Americans
4. Bhangra dance performance during the event.
5. A view of audience at the event.

CGI New York

International Regional Hindi Conference 2014

The Consulate General of India in association with 'Yuva Hindi Sansthan' and New York University organized the International Regional Hindi Conference 2014 in New York during April 25-27 under the theme 'The Hindi Language in the 21st Century Global World'.

Discussions were held on two sub-themes: 'Hindi as the Language of the Indian Diaspora' and 'Hindi Education'.

On April 25, a welcome reception and dinner was held at the Consulate for all the experts and participants during which 'Prayog Hindi Manch', USA, staged the play *Andhon Ka*

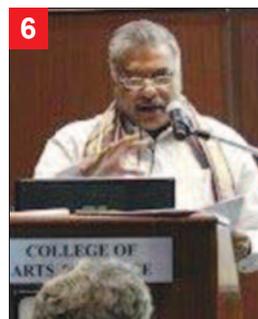
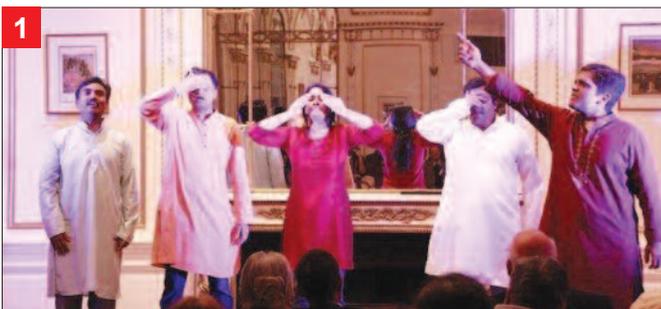
Haathi written by famous Hindi writer the Late Sharad Joshi.

On April 26, Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay expressed his good wishes for the success of the Conference. The Conference was inaugurated with the telecast of Ambassador of India to the USA, Dr. S. Jaishankar's message. This was followed by a Keynote address by the Chairman of Yuva Hindi Sansthan, Dr. Surendra Gambhir of University of Pennsylvania on 'America's Vision of Building a Multi-lingual Society: A Golden Period for Hindi'.

A number of proposals were put forth during the Conference such as setting up of a Hindi Center in the US,

holding the Conference annually, etc.

In the closing session of the conference on April 27, Prof Gabriela Nik. Iliyeva of New York University presented the Conference Review. Deputy Secretary (Hindi), Ministry of External Affairs of India, Smt. Suniti Sharma addressed those present. In his closing address, Consul General of India expressed his congratulation on the successful conclusion of the Conference. He presented certificates of recognition to all the experts who had made presentations during the Conference. The conference concluded with a Vote of Thanks by the Chief Coordinator of the Conference, Shri Sugandh Rajaram.



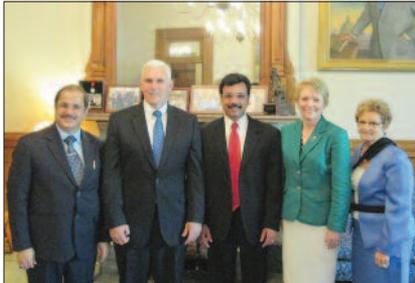
1. Staging of play *Andhon Ka Haathi* written by Late Sharad Joshi.
2. Ambassador of India to the US, Dr. S. Jaishankar's Video Inaugural Address.
3. Dr. Surendra Gambhir during his keynote address
4. Prof. Gabriela Nik. Iliyeva giving her speech.
5. Dr. Rupert Snell addressing the audience.
6. Dr. Yaralagadda Lakshmi Prasad during the conference.
7. Dr. Shailja Saksena during the meet.
8. Pt. Rampersad Parasram.
9. Consul General Dnyaneshwar M. Mulay delivering the closing address.



CGI Chicago

CG meets Governor and Lt. Governor of Indianapolis

Consul General Dr. Sayeed met Lt. Governor of Indiana, Ms. Sue Ellspermann in April 24, 2014. As Lt. Governor, Ms Ellspermann manages five state agencies including the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, the Office of Energy Development, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and the Office of Tourism Development.



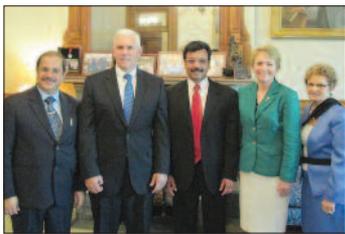
Consul General Dr. Sayeed with Governor of Indiana, Mike Pence, Lt. Governor Ms. Sue Ellspermann, Secretary of State Ms. Connie Lawson and Raju Chinthala.

The discussions included possible areas of cooperation between India and Indiana in Agriculture, Energy and Tourism. Consul General apprised the Lt Governor of India's friendly FDI policy and proposed a trade delegation from Indiana to India.

The Consul General also had a separate meeting with Secretary of State Ms. Connie Lawson and also briefly called on Governor of Indiana, Hon'ble Mr. Mike Pence.

Sister City anniversary celebrations

Dr Ausaf Sayeed, Consul General and Mr. Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor of Indianapolis, were Chief Guests at the 4th Anniversary celebrations of Indianapolis Hyderabad Sister City Committee. The Consul General addressed the gathering and spoke on



Consul General Dr. Sayeed with Mayor of Indianapolis Gregory Ballard and Raju Chinthala, President, Indianapolis-Hyderabad Sister City Committee

how such Sister City relationships have helped in strengthening business and trade partnerships between the US and Indian cities by building global cooperation, promoting cultural understanding and stimulating economic development. Like the city of Hyderabad,

Indianapolis is a growing leader in the Information Technology (IT) sector.

CG meets IEDC officials

Consul General met members of Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) office and apprised them of the various opportunities for investing in India and discussed avenues to increase bilateral trade between India and the state of Indiana. The US investors belonged to the sectors like logistics infrastructure, roads, power and energy, manufacturing and private equity.



Consul General Dr. Sayeed with members of IEDC and Board Members of Kiwanis International in Indianapolis.

Meeting with US Congressman Todd Rokita



Consul General Dr. Sayeed with Congressman Todd Rokita and Douglas Boles, President of Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Consul General recently met Todd Rokita, Representative from Indiana's Fourth Congressional District. Prior to his service in Congress, Representative Rokita served as Indiana's Secretary of State. Rokita

expressed his keen interest in learning about India's experience in electoral reforms and process involved in the conduct of India's Parliamentary and state elections.

CG attends World Trade Day in Indianapolis

Consul General participated in the World Trade Day Conference at Indianapolis on April 25. The event was hosted by Develop Indy, a business unit of Indy Chamber, an annual large gathering of international trade and business professionals,

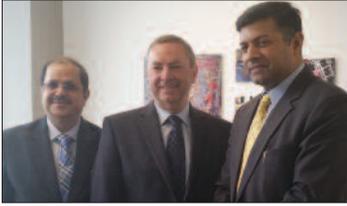


Consul General Dr. Sayeed participating in Panel Discussion on 'Economic Opportunities for US Companies'

international and local political and economic leaders, besides Indiana companies. Diplomatic missions in the Midwest regions like Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Turkey and UK participated in the event. He spoke on 'Economic Opportunities for US Companies in India' and the investment climate in India.

CGI Chicago

EAM official visits Chicago



Consul General Dr. Sayeed with Mr Vikram Doraiswami, JS Americas and Dr. Nigel Lockyer, Director, Fermilab.

Vikram K. Doraiswami, Joint Secretary (Americas) visited Chicago from April 27 to 30 and had discussions with officials of the University of Chicago, Fermilab and the Art Institute of Chicago. He

spoke at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs on India-US relations.

Consular General visits MSU

Consul General visited the Michigan State University (MSU) in Lansing on April 25 and met Dr. Karim Maredia, Head of South Asia Partnership program at MSU and several other MSU experts working on food systems in India. The MSU is engaged in active collaboration with several



Consul General Dr. Sayeed with senior professors of Michigan State University

leading institutions in India, including the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Annual Sikh Day Parade

Consul General Dr. Sayeed attended the 10th Annual Sikh Day Parade in Lansing, Michigan on April 25 as Chief Guest. The Sikh Parade at Lansing is the biggest Sikh congregation in the Midwest and the second biggest in the US after New York. The event saw participation of more than 3000 people. The Mayor of Lansing, Police Chief, Congressman and many other elected officials from the region also graced the occasion. The parade was followed by cultural program in the Riverfront Park in Lansing.



Tenth Sikh Annual Day Parade in Lansing, Michigan

Consul General Dr. Sayeed attended the 10th Annual Sikh Day Parade in Lansing, Michigan on April 25 as Chief Guest. The Sikh Parade at Lansing is the biggest Sikh congregation in the Midwest and the second biggest in the US after New York. The event saw participation of more than 3000 people. The Mayor of Lansing, Police Chief, Congressman and many other elected officials from the region also graced the occasion. The parade was followed by cultural program in the Riverfront Park in Lansing.

Roundtable discussion on Doing Business with India

Consulate General of India, Chicago participated in the round table “Doing Business with India” breakfast meeting hosted by MB Financial Bank in Rosemont, IL on April 11. Debashish Banerjee, Head of Chancery attended the event and spoke on the Consulate’s role in encouraging trade and investment in India. Issues like business climate, establishing corporate banking relationship and financing facility in India were discussed. Representatives from Yes Bank, India and U.S. Department of Commerce, Commercial Service in Chicago, business leaders attended the discussion.

CGI Houston

Vaisakhi celebrations



Consul General P. Harish and Mrs. P. Nandita were Chief Guests at Vaisakhi-2014 Festival organized by Punjabi Society of Houston (PSH) on April 19. (From L to R) Ms. Jasmeeta Singh, Event Chair and Director, PSH; Mr. Gurmit Bhatia, Director, PSH; Mrs. P. Nandita and Consul General P. Harish and Mr. Prabhjot, Youth Volunteer, PSH.

A tribute to Ravi Shankar



Consul General P. Harish was the Chief Guest at ‘The Legacy of Ravi Shankar: Tribute by Maestro’s Disciples I’ Performance organized by Indo-American Association, Houston (IAA) on April 13. In this photo, Consul General P. Harish (L) is seen greeting Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt.

India set to grow at 5.4 percent in 2014: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India's growth to recover from 4.4 percent in 2013 to 5.4 percent in 2014 and strengthen further to 6.4 percent next year, essentially unchanged from its earlier forecast in January.

These projections are based on the assumption that government efforts to revive investment growth succeed and export growth strengthens after the recent rupee depreciation, the multilateral finance institution said in the April 2014 World Economic Outlook (WEO).

India's growth recovery is supported by slightly stronger global growth, improving export competitiveness, and implementation of recently approved investment projects, it said.

A pick-up in exports in recent months and measures to curb gold imports have contributed to lowering the current account deficit, IMF said.

Policy measures to bolster capital flows have further helped reduce external vulnerabilities.

"Overall growth is expected to firm up on policies supporting investment and a confidence boost from recent



India's growth recovery is aided by a stronger global growth and improving export competitiveness

policy actions, but will remain below trend," IMF said.

"Consumer price inflation is expected to remain an important challenge, but should continue to move onto a downward trajectory," the WEO said.

In a number of economies, including Brazil, India, and Indonesia, inflation pressure continues and could be reinforced by currency depreciation since mid-2013, IMF said.

In India, further tightening of the monetary stance might be needed for a durable reduction in inflation and

inflation expectations.

The forecast for China is that growth will remain broadly unchanged at about 7.5 percent in 2014-15, only a modest decline from 2012-13.

For Asia as a whole, growth is expected to accelerate modestly, from 5.2 percent in 2013 to about 5.5 percent in both 2014 and 2015, the WEO further said.

The improved outlook in advanced economies, alongside more competitive exchange rates in some cases, will help boost exports.

Six percent growth possible with reforms: CII

India can achieve a growth rate of over six percent in the 2014-15 financial year, provided systemic reforms are carried out quickly by the new government, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president Ajay S Shriram said in New Delhi on April 1.

He said the growth rate could be taken back to the eight percent level in the next three years.

"A market-friendly environment is required that would proactively promote investments, business and entrepreneurship," Shriram, who took over as the president of the chamber recently, said at a press meet while unveiling CII's action theme for the year. "Accelerating



Growth, Creating Employment".

He also said that a strong economic revival package and right implementation of policies by a new government could help create as many as 150 million jobs in the next 10 years.

CII has proposed a strong 100-day action agenda for the new government to boost growth.

The theme for the year said the key priorities for CII in the coming year will be in 10 areas — education, skills, economic growth, manufacturing sector growth, investments, ease of doing business, export competitiveness, legal and regulatory architecture, labour law reforms and entrepreneurship.

"Industry is looking for top policy steps such as introduction of GST, easing of interest rates by 100 basis points, keeping subsidies at 1.7 percent of GDP, and restructuring of labour laws to promote mass manufacturing," he said.

India's exports grow by 4%, trade deficit narrows

India's exports grew by a 3.98 percent to \$312.35 billion in financial year ended March, missing the official target of \$325 billion, while trade deficit narrowed on lower imports.

According to data released on April 11 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi, exports stood at \$312.35 billion in the financial year 2013-14, up 3.98 percent from the previous year's \$300.40 billion.

The government had set a target of \$325 billion of exports for the fiscal 2013-14.

Total value of imports for the fiscal 2013-14 was \$450.94 billion, 8.11 percent lower from \$490.73 billion recorded in the previous year.

The trade deficit for the fiscal ended March 31, 2014, was substantially lower than in the previous year. Trade deficit narrowed to \$138.59 billion in 2013-14 from \$190.33 billion recorded in the previous year.

"Factors which could be attributed for slowdown in exports are exchange



Government had set a target of \$325 bn of exports rate volatility, steep hike in global oil prices, curb on gold imports coupled with its direct impact on jewellery export," said Sanjay Budhia, chairman of CII export committee.

Budhia said global factors like tough economic situations in the US and Europe also led to the slowdown in exports growth. Imports declined due to a sharp drop in gold imports as the

policymakers put curbs to discourage demands for the precious metal.

This has helped narrow the country's current account deficit that had risen to an alarming level of \$88 billion.

Imports dropped by 2.11 percent to \$40.08 billion in March, leaving the monthly trade gap of \$10.50 billion.

For the whole fiscal 2013-14 oil imports were valued at \$167.62 billion, 2.2 per cent higher than the oil imports bill of \$164.04 billion in the previous year. Non-oil imports in March 2014 dropped by 11.8 percent year-on-year to \$24.30. For the fiscal 2013-14, non-oil imports declined by 13.3 percent to \$283.32 billion.

"It is worrisome that our exports fell by more than 3 percent in each of the last two months and we have missed the export target of \$325 billion," said Arbind Prasad, director general of FICCI, while expressing concern over the decline in exports. Prasad said India's exports are likely to pick up in the current fiscal on the back of recovery in the global economy.

Record rise in seafood export, crosses 1MT

The provisional estimates of the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) shows India's seafood export has crossed one million tonne mark for the first time, earning over ₹272.27 billion in 2013-14. According to the provisional estimates, the increase of ₹60 billion in revenue in 12 months is a great achievement. Export revenue grew 30 percent in dollar terms. During 2011-12 and 2012-13, earnings were ₹210 billion. In rupee terms, the estimates indicated an earning of ₹200 billion.



In 2012-13, India exported 928,215 tonnes valued at ₹188.56 billion. In 2011-12, the country had exported 862,021 tonnes valued at ₹165.97 billion.

GE unveils turbine for wind energy in India

Multinational General Electric (GE) recently unveiled a low-speed turbine to generate wind energy for meeting India's unmet power needs.

"The new turbine (1.7-103) has been developed and engineered specifically for India's low-wind speed conditions. A 100MW wind farm powered by the new version of turbines can produce electricity that can light up 413,000 homes annually," GE South Asia chief executive Banmali Agarwala said in a statement in Bangalore.

Renewables accounts for five percent of the country's energy mix by production and 12 percent by installed capacity. The US-based global power major has already installed 22,000 wind turbines worldwide using its evolutionary technology platform.

"The new wind turbine is a testa-



ment to our commitment to energizing India and catering to its low wind speed environment," Agarwala said.

The cost of wind power is closer to grid parity and technology advancement is making its generation more predictable.

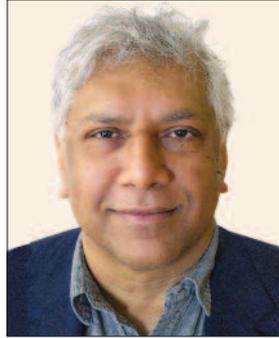
With about 5,300 technologists, GE's research centers in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai are developing technologies for domestic and overseas wind farm operators.

Seshadri wins Pulitzer for poetry

Indian-American poet Vijay Seshadri has won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for his work *3 Sections*. The citation described it “a compelling collection of poems that examine human consciousness, from birth to dementia.”

Seshadri, 60, will get the \$10,000 (₹602,900) prize for a distinguished volume of original verse by an American author, Columbia University, which administers the prestigious prizes announced on April 15.

The citation further describes *3 Sections* published by Graywolf Press as “a compelling collection of poems that examine human consciousness, from birth to dementia, in a voice that is by turns witty and grave, compassionate and remorseless”.



Also nominated as finalists in the poetry category were *The Sleep of Reason*, by Morri Creech (The Waywiser Press) and *The Big Smoke*, by Adrian Matejka (Penguin).

Seshadri’s other poetry collections include *The Long Meadow* (Graywolf Press, 2004), which won the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets, and *Wild Kingdom* (1996).

Seshadri, who came to America at the age of five, grew up in Columbus, Ohio, where his father taught chemistry at Ohio State University. Currently, he teaches at Sarah Lawrence College. He has lived in many parts of America, including the Pacific Northwest where he spent five years working in the fishing and logging industries.

India-born surgeon in US Congressional race

Anil Kumar, an Indian-American surgeon and small business owner in Michigan has filed papers as a Democratic candidate in the race for the US



Anil Kumar

House of Representatives from the state’s 11th Congressional district. Kumar, who has practised medicine in Metropolitan Detroit for the past 30 years, said, “I’m running for Congress because we need leaders with fresh ideas to get our state, and our economy, back on track.”

“Now more than ever, we need to create good-paying jobs, make education affordable, protect Social Security and Medicare, and assure healthcare is accessible to everyone,” Kumar added.

Kumar, a women’s rights advocate, said his campaign will prioritize solutions not partisan politics.

Indian-American named alternate IMF director

President Barack Obama has nominated Sunil Sabharwal, an independent Indian-American investor in the payments sector, to a key job as US Alternate Executive Director at International Monetary Fund (IMF). “I am grateful these accomplished men and women have agreed to join this administration, and I’m confident they will serve ably in these important roles,” Obama said naming ten persons, including Sabharwal, to key administration



Sunil Sabharwal

posts. “I look forward to working with them in the coming months and years,” he said.

At over two dozen, Obama administration boasts of having the highest number of Indian Americans in key jobs than any previous administrations in US. Sabharwal was the Chairman of the Board of Ogone, an e-commerce payment company.



Gopal T.K. Krishna

India-born is co-chair of Iowa Republican party

Hyderabad-born Indian-American businessman Gopal T.K. Krishna has been elected as co-chairman of the Republican Party of Iowa state, which has traditionally held the first caucus in presidential elections.

Krishna, a successful businessman with a background in electrical engineering, replaces Danny Carroll, who has been elected as chairman. “I have been, and am a Republican for all Republicans. The first three letters of my name are G-O-P. I ran because I don’t want to wait until the primary elections to promote unity,” Krishna said after his election.

7 Indian-American students win scholarship

Seven Indian American college students have been awarded the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship that would fund their educational expenses in the coming years. Out of 1,660 students who applied for the award this year, 283 were selected, making this one of the most competitive years for the award. The selected

students are: Swati Sureka (Cornell University), Radhika Agarwal (Indiana Univ), Adam Ramsaran (Delaware Univ), Sivabalan Manivasagam (University of North Texas), Tushar Swamy (Northeastern Univ), Loveprit Singh (Univ of Oregon) and Nitin Anantha Krishna from Western Kentucky University.

India launches PSLV-C24

An Indian rocket, Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C24 (PSLV-C24), carrying the country's second navigation satellite, IRNSS-B, on April 4 blasted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

The PSLV-C24 standing around 44.4 meters tall and weighing around 320 tonnes tore into the evening sky with orange flames fiercely burning at its tail. The rocket carried the 1,432 kg IRNSS-1B (Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System), into the space.

India is expected to have its own satellite navigation system with four satellites in the space before the end of this year, ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan said.

President Pranab Mukherjee congrat-



PSLV-C24 after being launched on April 11

ulated ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan for the successful launch. "The launch marks an important landmark in our space program and demonstrates, yet again, India's capabilities in space launch technology," the President said.

NRI scientist develops paper microscope

An Indian-American scientist Manu Prakash from Stanford University has developed an incredibly low-cost microscope made almost entirely out of paper.

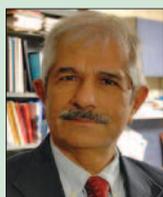
The microscope, known as The Foldscope because of its design, comes in three parts - a slip of paper which acts as the slide on which the specimen is kept, a slide for the ball-shaped lens, and a piece that contains an LED light, to help illuminate the subject being examined. The Foldscope can be shipped in a flat configuration and assembled in minutes.

Dr Prakash, an assistant professor, physicist, and bioengineer at Stanford University, and his team at the university hope that the microscope's size and inexpensiveness will make it widely used in areas where such technology is not readily available.

"We have a very simple goal that every single kid in the world should grow up with a microscope," Prakash was quoted as saying.

India-born Prof is Solar Champion of Change

White House has named Indian-American professor Rajendra Singh as one of ten 'Solar Champions of Change' who are taking the initiative to spur solar deployment across America. Rajendra Singh is D. Houser Banks Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and director of Clemson University's Centre of Silicon Nanoelectronics in South Carolina.



Rajender Singh

"Today, the White House is celebrating ten Solar Champions of Change who are driving policy changes at the local level to expand energy choices for Americans, grow jobs, and add new clean energy to the grid," a White House announcement said. The champions include community leaders helping to reduce permitting times, business owners looking for a cleaner energy source, or homebuilders looking to offer new, renewable options for their customers, it said.

NRI boy fuels debate on typeface change

An Indian-American student's bold suggestion to the US government that it could save \$136 million a year by simply switching fonts from Times New Roman to Garamond in government printing has caught national attention, with printing officials terming his work as "remarkable" while others dismissed it saying he was too young to understand the "oddy" of font measurement.

Suvir Mirchandani, a 14-year-old middle-school student, came up with the suggestion after analyzing ink use for a school project and then expanding his research to government, which spends a whopping \$1.8 billion annually on printing. For Suvir, it all started as a science fair project when as a sixth-grader.

Bangalore projects win NASA prize

Three projects by students of a school in KR Puram in East Bangalore have bagged prizes in NASA's Space Settlement Contest-2014. Of these, one project — NEA ZOI — by two class eight kids Ayush Basavesh and R Jyothi Kishore secured the worldwide second prize, while 32 students, part of two other teams, saw their projects 'Astraeus' and 'Kalpavruksha' win the eighth and ninth prizes respectively.

Award for cardiologist

An Indian-American cardiologist has won the American College of Cardiology's Simon Dack Award for Outstanding Scholarship in recognition of his contributions to its peer-reviewed medical journals. Sumeet Chugh, associate director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute and a leading expert on heart rhythm disorders will receive the award at the medical society's Annual Scientific Session. "Dr. Chugh is leading the quest to unlock the mysteries of how to prevent sudden cardiac arrest," said Shlomo Melmed, dean of the Cedars-Sinai medical faculty.

IIFA makes American debut

It was *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* all the way at the 15th edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend. Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's directorial venture bagged the maximum top honours including best picture and best director as well as the best actor award for Farhan Akhtar.

Deepika Padukone won the best actress trophy for playing a Tamil girl in *Chennai Express* and the actress, who gave back-to-back four hits last year, also walked away with the best entertainer of the year award.

Hollywood star John Travolta received an award for his outstanding contribution to international cinema.

Held on April 26 at the Raymond James Stadium, the Indian cinema's extravaganza was enjoyed by an overwhelming crowd of 20,000 (90 percent were Indian) who were entertained and enthralled by a bevy of Bollywood stars like Hrithik Roshan, Madhuri Dixit, Ranveer Singh and Priyanka Chopra.

Hollywood actor-director-producer Kevin Spacey was the show stealer at the IIFA Awards — he danced on the



Cavin Spacey (extreme left) shaking a leg to a Bollywood song

stage to *Lungi dance* number with Bollywood diva Deepika Padukone.

"It is great to be here and see the performances at IIFA," said the 60-year-old Oscar winning actor, known for his work in *The Usual Suspects* and *American Beauty*.

Hollywood actor John Travolta, a dancer and singer par excellence, also matched steps with Priyanka Chopra on *Tune maari entry* without any prior preparation and wowed the audience.

He said he is a big fan of Hindi films and feels they are "very original and full of life".

He said that Bollywood's influence was felt more widely and that musicals in Hollywood were rare.

Highlighting the international appeal of India's Bollywood film industry, the IIFA Awards event was held in the US for the first time in Tampa, Florida, on April 26.

Ugly to open New York Indian film fest



Director Anurag Kashyap

The New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) will open with Anurag Kashyap's *Ugly*, a sensational tale of corruption, indifference, and systemic violence that begins with the disappearance of an aspiring actor's 10-year-old daughter. Celebrating its 14th year, NYIFF, widely recognized as the oldest, most prestigious Indian film festival in the US showcasing some of the greatest talents working in the diaspora, will run May 5 to 10 at a variety of prestigious New York City venues.

These include the Skirball Centre for Performing Arts, where the opening and closing films are set to be screened, NYIFF announced. Anurag Kashyap returns to NYIFF after closing the 2012 festival with his highly received film, *Gangs Of Wasseyapur*, a two-part five-hour-long drama centered around the coal mafia of Dhanbad, Jharkhand. "We are thrilled to be opening this year's New York Indian Film Festival with *Ugly*," said festival director Aseem Chhabra.

'Million Dollar Arm', a motivating sport film

Based on a true story, *Million Dollar Arm* is a motivating sport film from the Disney stable, made keeping with economics at its core. Its intention seems to entice and convert youngsters, who have never played the national sport of the United States before. The film was released in India on May 9, a week ahead of US release (May 17).

The background score for the Disney movie is being composed by the Mozart of Madras AR Rahman, who has earlier scored music for *Slumdog Millionaire* and *127 Hours*.

The film is about the fate of JB Bernstein's career as sports agent that rests with finding a brilliant young cricketer in India, who can be trained for an



American major league baseball team.

After failing to sign a prominent sports personality they've been courting for over a year, JB hits upon an idea to create a reality contest that will take place in India. They reach out to cricket players and see if they can find a few players who they could groom to become baseball players. Last year, backed by *First Pitch: The US-Manipur Baseball Project*, Director Producer Mirra Banks' documentary, *The Only Real Game* revealed some startling facts about baseball in Manipur. And now, *Million Dollar Arm* goes a step further to reveal how a reality show conducted in India, helped its promoters identify hidden talent.

LUXURY RESORT IN MEADOW OF FLOWERS



Situated 8,825 feet above the sea level in the midst of an endless expanse of pine trees, the Khyber resort is spread over seven acres of land

As this world-famous resort prepares to host a record number of tourists this summer, Gulmarg's only 5-star luxury property, the Khyber, claims it is now an internationally-established brand.

Priding itself on two prestigious citations within just 15 months of throwing its doors open for high-end tourists, The Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa of the Pinnacle Resorts was conferred a Special Jury Award — Indian Hotel Debut of the Year by Outlook Traveller and the Best

Boutique Hotel in India by Travel Leisure India and South Asia at its India's Best Awards last year.

Situated 8,825 feet above the sea level in the midst of an endless expanse of pine trees, overlooked by snow-clad peaks with its magnificent ski slopes and a stone's throw from the world's highest cable car project, the Khyber resort is spread over seven acres of land. "The awe-inspiring location of the resort, combined with the unfolding drama of Gulmarg's changing seasons, has been tempting guests to return again and again," the manage-

HOW TO REACH

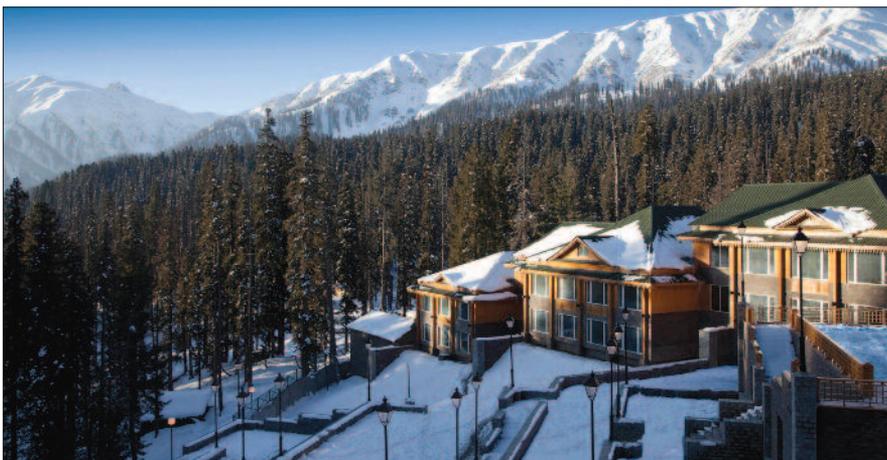
REACHING GULMARG is not a big deal. The tourist spot is 901 km away from Delhi.

BY TRAIN: Closest Railhead from Gulmarg is Jammu. Jammu is connected by rail to many cities in India especially direct trains are available from northern cities.

BY AIR: Nearest airport to Gulmarg is Srinagar which is 56 km away from Gulmarg.

BY BUS: Gulmarg is well linked by bus services from most of the cities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Khyber Himalayan Resort and Spa of the Pinnacle Resorts is the only 5-star hotel in Gulmarg



ment claimed. The fact that even before this year's tourist season gets going, the resort is already flooded with bookings proves one simple fact: Gulmarg's potential as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations is still not fully explored.

More than 1.1 million tourists visited the Valley last year. Tourist officials say they are expecting the number to increase this year. The other major tourist destinations in the Valley, including Pahalgam and Sonamarg hill stations, are also looking forward to their share of visitors this year.

EMBASSY OF INDIA

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