

HARMONY

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Connecting the IAS Community

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Say No to Private Awards

Who doesn't feel good about an award or recognition for the toil he or she has gone through to achieve success? In fact: *Breathes there an officer, with soul so dead, Who never to himself hath said, "Where is my own, my dear award?"* *Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd, As home his footsteps he had turn'd From wondering on a Babu-land.*

So, will it be proper for a member of the All India Services to accept an award from a private body? The Department of Personnel & Training has affirmed that, barring circumstances like rewarding, which does not involve any monetary benefit, the merit of an officer for work done outside the purview of his functions in government or where Government thinks that an individual deserves a particular award, it will not be appropriate for such officer to accept a complimentary or valedictory address or testimonial or to attend a meeting or entertainment held in his honour from a private organization.

The verdict is unassailable. For, the activities of the Government extend over wide ranging fields, some of which are well publicized and some are not. So, accepting such award could mean an unintended but undesirable preference in recognition for persons engaged in the former category. Secondly, some of the bodies which institute awards may also be involved in activities which may prove embarrassing to the Government. Thirdly, the Government certainly has various methods to recognize its employee's outstanding work, merit and service. Fourthly, a civil servant is not to seek publicity or public recognition; his job is to act in a fair manner within the framework of the policy laid down by the political executive, and hence seeking private awards can affect such functioning. Lastly but most importantly, the achievement which may merit an award is invariably a result of co-ordinated efforts of a team and not because of one person alone. But then, shouldn't the competent authority have simply said: *Work is its own reward?* ■

Rameshchandra Kanade

Welcome to the Cadre

We welcome the following officers of the 2003 batch of the IAS and wish them a happy and rewarding stay in the districts as Supernumerary Assistant Collectors:

■ *Muthukrishnan Sankaranarayanan*, Maharashtra, BTech (Mech Engg): Sangli. ■ *Saurabh Rao*, UP, MA (Pol Sc): Wardha. ■ *Sanjeev Kumar (II)*, J&K, (MBBS): Aurangabad. ■ *Shaila Beevi A.*, Kerala, JRF (Eco): Ratnagiri. ■

Who's gone where?

■ *Sandeep Bagchee (1973)*: Principal Secretary & Special Enquiries Officer-II.



By VS GOPALAKRISHNAN

"Another decision taken to protect greenery in Mumbai is to have all the buildings painted green!" ■

[Our inimitable cartoonist VS Gopalakrishnan (1962), Director General World Trade Centre, Mumbai, can be contacted on: 022-22182879; 24936429; vsgopal2000@yahoo.com] ■

Biswas, LV Deshmukh selected to do PG Course

Director of Census for Maharashtra *Samir Kumar Biswas* (1990) and Municipal Commissioner of Akola Municipal Corporation *Laxmikant Vasant Deshmukh* (1995) have been selected for the 3rd Two-Year Post Graduate Programme in Public Policy & Management to be conducted at the Centre for Public Policy, IIM Bangalore commencing on 1 June 2004. Congrats, Samir and LV! ■

DA merged with Basic Pay

Thanks to the relentless struggle by the Association to fulfill the long-pending demand, the 50 per cent of the dearness allowance, which has already reached 61 per cent level, has now been merged with the basic pay. ■

Mopalwar to Denver

Director, Groundwater Survey & Development Agency (Pune) *RL Mopalwar* (1995) will be on short term training to be held at Western Management Development Centre, Denver, USA, during 17-28 May 2004. ■

Insurance for spouses

The Association has taken up the issue about inclusion of the surviving spouses of IAS officers dying in harness in the insurance scheme specially formulated by the National Insurance Company Limited. The NICL's Manager at the Mumbai Regional Office, Mr KS Sankar, has informed that the issue is engaging their active attention "in terms of putting in place the necessary internal approvals". ■

Transit quarters soon

Thanks largely to the prompt action taken by Additional Chief Secretary (Planning) Nand Lal, the construction work for the transit accommodation for service officers will start soon on a plot behind the *Yashodhan* building on D.V. Road, Churchgate, Mumbai. We are thankful to Mr Nand Lal for sanctioning Rs 50 lakh for the project. ■

Nominations streamlined

State Governments may now submit their nominations, duly approved, along with vigilance clearance, directly to the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. But they will be responsible for ensuring all necessary clearances after the candidate is finally selected for the course but before he/she proceeds on foreign training. ■

Retiring, they leave their mark behind

The farewell, this time, was unique and different. Unique because there was no similar farewell before and different because the persons who were felicitated this time had retired quite some time ago but continued to grace public office until last month.

Making this pleasant departure, the Association felicitated two senior retired colleagues: **RC Iyer** and **Asoke Basak** on 30 April 2004.

The speakers: Satish Tripathi, Govind Swarup, Rajiv Sinha, UK Mukhopadhyaya, and KS Baroi eulogized the guests of honour.

Crediting them with the rich qualities of head and heart and valuing a very happy association with them so far, the speakers also regaled the audience with some humorous experiences concerning them.

Both Mr Tripathi and Mr Swarup recalled that Mr Iyer was a delight on the cricket ground and said that he is very friendly, straight forward, and always says what he thinks is proper. Mr Sinha said that back in 1989 when he was posted in Mumbai and had no house to live, it was Mr Iyer who as Secretary GAD gave him the keys to the vacant flat of Mr JS Sahni, who was on foreign training. For this, Mr Iyer first spoke to Mr Sahni *sui motu*. Mr Mukhopadhyaya recalled how Mr Iyer had helped him reach Parbhani in time to be able to take charge as CEO on promotion. He also thanked Mr Iyer for having persuaded him to get married and helped him preserve his sanity. Mr Baroi narrated the funny incident that took place when he was temporarily staying in the Rest House at Majestic Hotel after being posted in Mumbai. One day his son dropped a comb from the window. Oddly enough, it fell on Mr Iyer who happened to be walking along the footpath down. Unexpectedly, Mr Iyer came up and returned the comb to Mr Baroi. That was the beginning of a lasting friendship, which culminated in Mr Iyer treating him as his younger brother.

Describing him a tough master, who knows how to get the work done, Mr Tripathi said that Mr Basak is a fine gentleman and a very tidy person who loves his family most dearly. Mr Swarup recalled his days at Nasik when he was Addl Tribal Commissioner while Mr Basak was Nasik Collector. Expressing his gratitude for the guidance he got, Mr Swarup said that Mr

Basak took keen interest in Bengali activities and also involved him actively. Mr Rajiv Sinha revealed that as probationer at Nasik he was about to leave the service and return home as he was feeling bored and lonely there but it was Mr Basak, the Collector, who advised him to get married. (The rest is history. His wife Mintu Sinha brought peace and harmony to his life). Mr Mukhopadhyaya praised his batch-mate Asoke Basak for being meticulous and a good person. Mr Baroi said that he had succeeded Mr Basak at Chandrapur on the rehabilitation work and that they had become family friends and worked together later in life to organize the activities of the Bengali Club.

Felicitating the two colleagues, Chief Secretary Ajit Nimbalkar remarked that it was unique that they were getting farewell



not at 60 but beyond. He said that Mr Iyer was always very open and frank and took interest in many things and always gave a tip or advice. He found Mr Iyer helpful and never hesitating to speak his mind, albeit bluntly at times. Mr Iyer had worked as Collector Sangli, rose to become Addl Chief Secretary in Higher & Technical Education and then was elevated as Upa Lok Ayukta, purely on merit. He hoped that Mr Iyer would continue to guide the service officers.

About Mr Basak, his batch-mate, the Chief Secretary remarked that he was very competent and had occupied almost every important post in the State government, but despite several opportunities to go to the Government of India stayed back to serve the State. Mr Basak also took personal interest in his children's education because of which they are well settled, he said. The Association President then wished the two colleagues and their families a healthy and happy retirement life.

Replying to the farewell, Mr Iyer said that he always felt he was part of the service. As Upa Lok Uykta he understood the pressures on secretaries and therefore never called or nagged them but wrote to them what he thought was proper and advised them. He promised to remain in touch with all through his writings in *Harmony*. Mr Basak said that he was very happy to have worked in Maharashtra ever since his days as Probationer at Wardha. He recalled the happy days including those he had spent with Mr Habeebullah whenever they happened to be at the same rest house

and share the same room. He recalled with nostalgia that Mr Habeebullah would arrive late in the night and wake him up from his sleep and chat all through the night. He said he would cherish such friendship he had with many others despite many changes around.

These two very senior officers may have demitted office. But they will continue to shine because of their dazzling past. ■

(Rameshchandra Kanade)

IAS XI Wins a Cricket Match

The second match, friendly yet competitive, between the two teams was played at the Mumbai Police Gymkhana on 21 March 2004 as a day and night fixture. The IAS XI batted first and set target of 208 runs. In a nail-biting finish, the ITC XI lost just by one run. The match was witnessed by Chief Secretary Ajit Nimbalkar and ITC (West) District Manager PK Misra.

It was a memorable event indeed. ■

DK Sankaran bereaved

Prof DK Nambudripad, 90, father of Addl Secretary (Dept. of Atomic Energy) DK Sankaran (1970), passed away on 22 April 2004 at Chennai. He was Professor of Electrical Engineering in Guindy Engineering College, Anna University, Chennai. We share the grief of the Sankarans. *May God rest his soul in peace.* (Mr DK Sankaran can be contacted on 022-22835555). ■

Mr NR Ranganathan's son-in-law passes away

Chander Sriram, 43, passed away in Mumbai at his *Dilwara* residence. A Finance man, working with the Chatterjee Group, Chander was a fitness freak and played cricket, squash, and golf but succumbed to a massive heart attack. A very friendly person, he was extremely popular. He is survived by his parents, wife (Lata), daughter (Tara), and a brother. We are with Mr Ranganathan and his family in this calamity. *May God rest the soul of the departed in peace.* (You may contact Mr Ranganathan or his daughter on: 022-22041772). ■

'Each of us is a Brand Ambassador for Brand India'

Who has not heard of Geetanjali Kirloskar, the 37-year-old Ad Veteran and Industrialist? An actress, art collector, media professional, wife of



Toyota Kirloskar Motor vice president and chairman & MD of Kirloskar Systems Vikram

Kirloskar, she is president of India's first professional entertainment company, Lintertainment.

But why should we bother about her? Well, because she is a great achiever, and being daughter of State Election Commissioner Yeshwant Rajwade (1964), she belongs to the IAS community.

Starting out in industrial advertising in an agency launched by the Kirloskar Group, called Pratibha, she succeeded in bringing in the first brand account, Weekender. Soon Sansui, TVS, and Kenstar followed suit, making the first lady of advertising. She went on to become head of Quadrant Communications, the world's second largest ad agency, increased the Quadrant's billing from Rs 45 crore to Rs 65 crore in just one year and merged the in-house ad agency Pratibha with the world wide Interpublic Group, and created media history.

After successfully heading Quadrant for 14 long years, Geetanjali had actually decided to say goodbye to all that, for she wanted to spend more time with her family. But that was not to be, because the mantle of Lintertainment, the Rs 1,000-crore media buying and selling arm of Initiative Media, dealing with films, channels and film industry, fell on her shoulders. And she took the challenge.

But it has not been a cakewalk for her. She married at the age of 19, spent early days at her family town of Harihar in Karnataka, and then proceeded to work on the shop floor of the family's machine tool factory. At 21 she became a trainee at Pratibha. She did not care if her move raised a thousand eyebrows. She had decided to prove herself as a

professional. Therefore, she worked round the clock, though it meant neglecting the family. But ambitious, dogged, self-assured, and fearless, she was determined not to get into the rut of the kitchen and home.

All along she has believed in 'getting emotional', because it fuels passion and makes one go places. She has full faith in hard work and believes in results.

She is excited by challenges and chaos and likes to bring in order. She believes that one has to be professional to survive in today's customer-is-the-king world. With her priorities right and clear, she concentrates on implementation because good ideas are worthless unless you know how to use them.

Always sure of herself, she does not think that being a woman is a hindrance. She believes that her profession overcomes those stumbling gender issues. She likes to think big because "Otherwise, you'll stay small".

Like most successful persons, she is workaholic. She travels almost continuously and works also while traveling and clears lots of paperwork on board itself.

Over the years she has learnt to strike a good balance between her social, professional and family life. More mature and calm, she has trained herself not to react to situations impulsively.

For her relationships are very important. She believes in home, family and the values surrounding them. That is why you may rarely find her in parties. She would rather conserve her time and energy for home and family.

Geetanjali has many interests. She has already written a novel and is planning another. She enjoys globe-trotting sometimes with her husband Vikram and daughter Manasi to re-charge her batteries. Acting is a hobby with her. She has acted in a Tamil movie including Girish Karnad's Kannad thriller, *Chelva*.

Despite her all-round success, she retains her child-like enthusiasm and continues to have the zest for life and likes to live life to the fullest. An avid

cricket fan, she takes interest in almost all games.

What is the secret of her liveliness and success? It can be found in the upbringing she received from her well-educated and cultured parents, followed by the teachings she got mainly from the doyen of Indian Industry and her own grandfather-in-law Shantanurao Laxmanrao Kirloskar, popularly known as SLK. A mechanical engineer from MIT Boston, SLK was a man of culture and intellect. It was from him that Geetanjali learnt the value of living with self-respect, integrity, scruples, conviction, and courage.

She also learnt that it is possible to achieve success without giving up one's principles. Through his own example, he taught her that one must work hard to create a superior product and commit to its quality, reliability and continuous improvement in order to have the competitive advantage by making one's name sound synonymous with values and ultimately becoming the most preferred option for the customer.

But surely, no woman in India can achieve success unless she has support and encouragement in abundance from her own family, especially her husband. Geetanjali has been exceptionally fortunate. Her husband, Vikram, has always believed in her talent and backed her in all her decisions including the one to act in films.

But what makes her great and noteworthy is her genuine concern for the country and its future. Recently, at the time of elections, she exhorted the youngsters to vote because it their right and because it is in their power to create the difference they have always wanted to.

Geetanjali is happy that the corporate circles, trade associations and governments are keen to present India in a dynamic way in the international market. But she thinks that it is more important for each of us to feel intensely and passionately about our country whenever we interact with people as we travel across the world. "In order to contribute truly to building

Continued on page 6.

Inside China

By ABHAY ABHYANKAR

Speculating about the relative future



economic performance of the world's two most populous countries, China and India, has been attracting

much attention from professional economists and others. For example, Huang and Khanna (Foreign Policy, 2003) point out that while India is not out-performing China in overall terms it is doing better in certain areas because of its advantage in homegrown entrepreneurship. They suggest that the relative advantage in entrepreneurial talent may enable India to catch up with and even overtake China. Others, however, are less optimistic. Lord Meghnad Desai in a paper for a recent conference on India and China concludes "while China will become a viable Great Power; India may become just a Great Democracy."

Indeed he points out that the private entrepreneurship factor, emphasized by Huang and Khanna, is in danger of being stifled by an interventionist government and a rapidly deteriorating regulatory regime. He points out that a basic condition for both financial and other markets to develop, a system of well-defined and enforceable property rights has been eroded because of excessive intervention by the State and by weak implementation thanks to an ineffective legal system. It is well known that a key factor in well-developed financial markets is the enforcement of regulatory provisions. However, this is difficult even in well-developed financial markets in the US (witness the Martha Stuart case, Enron, Tyco, etc). However, if trust -- an important but intangible factor -- is to be nurtured the State must be seen to effectively tackle financial and other fraud. This is something that has not happened in India, in spite of a large number of financial scandals.

My purpose here is not to add to this debate. Economists will argue for some time the relative role of political

systems and economic policies in the economic development of both India and China. My limited objective is to describe my experiences in a recent visit to China which included Beijing, Shanghai and Yichang. Yichang, a city in central China, is home to the Three Gorges Corporation, perhaps the largest hydropower project in the world. Though my visit was only for exploring academic links with two major Chinese universities and their faculties of economics and finance, I was able to observe some aspects of the Chinese economy that are hidden behind data about GNP growth and FDI investment. In investment banks highly rated equity analysts are those that go behind the companies they value and talk to the customers. Managers visit the company's shop floor and retail outlets to get at qualitative feel. This is as important in valuing stocks as having a sophisticated equity valuation model. My article is in this spirit.

My journey began at Beijing. The first impression was of a huge, clean and efficient airport facility. There were many customs / immigration officials available, and waiting times were minimal. The luggage was quickly available on the belts and we were outside within half an hour. Then we drove some 65 km to our hotel near the Tiananmen Square in central Beijing. Beijing is a vast city criss-crossed by four lane expressways and a number of ring roads. The traffic was bumper-to-bumper and it took about an hour to cover a distance of about 40 km. However, there were a number of striking things I saw. First was the complete absence of any two-wheelers or three-wheelers on the roads. There were some cyclists there but they were in restricted special lanes. Looking around I saw a wide variety of cars on the roads, mostly American (Buicks made at GM in Shanghai) and Audis and Volkswagens (also made in Shanghai). Indeed all the taxis are Volkswagens. VW were one of the first foreign car makers in China and this decision has now paid off. High officials and party functionaries use Audi A6s, all black with tinted windows and interesting registration plates. There are far fewer Japanese or Korean cars. It appears that the Japa-

the Japanese car industry is a late-entrant to China and has far less market share than the German car manufacturers. Perhaps this has something to do with the past history between Japan and China. The hotel was like any other luxury hotel elsewhere in the world. As in India, you would see many people to do the job that one person would do. Any western hotel would have had about one-fifth of the complement of staff. That day, despite the jet lag, we visited the Great Wall at about 60 km from Beijing and a Ming dynasty tomb site that is on the same route. The Great Wall is an incredible engineering feat, stretching about 5,000 km down the north of China to keep out Northern invaders. It does not match the beauty of the Taj, but is nevertheless very impressive. My personal achievement was to walk up to the highest tower, whilst some of my less fit colleagues gave up much earlier!

There are a number of tourist sites like the Ming tombs we visited on the way back to Beijing, dotted across China. What is striking, the architecture is very simple and uses wood rather than stone or brick. As a result, these appear simple and frugal in aesthetic terms compared to the elaborate carvings and architectural features you see in Indian stone built monuments from a similar era. It is difficult to avoid making a comparison with New Delhi. Like all capitals Beijing has its share of grand vistas and boulevards though perhaps less magnificent than Lutyens's New Delhi. Most of the government buildings are in Soviet style and equally drab and anonymous. I visited Tiananmen Square, full of Chinese tourists and possibly with an equal number of policemen and security personnel everywhere. The memories of 1989 are probably not far away from the rulers' minds. In a sense, the Forbidden City was a bit of a let down. It is a series of elaborate carved palaces, similar in design but not particularly interesting. There is none of the interest and variety that one would find in, say, Fatehpur Sikri or any of the other lost cities built by various kings across India. *(To be continued)* ■

[Abhay (1974) is Professor of Finance at the University of Durham where has recently moved from the University of Warwick. His research interests are in asset pricing and corporate finance. He has publications in top tier economics journals including the Economics Journal, the JFQA and is co-holder of a two-year UK ESRC Research Grant of £45,000 for working on "Puzzles in Exchange Rate Economics". He can be contacted at abhay.abhyankar@durham.ac.uk. ■

The Truant Tahsildar

By ZAFAR IQBAL

There was something about the Honourable Minister. He had very few favourites amongst the officers. And he never played with them. This reputation of his had been developed over the years: the Honourable Minister never demeaned himself by petty-mongering between the officers in the District.

Oh, nasty he could be. Demanding? Yes. He loved having the senior officers around, just to show that he could command them. No, impolite, he never was. Rudeness and anger being bandied about in public were anathema to him. But he loved showing off the District Officers to the public at the numerous public functions that he managed to get organised practically every weekend. He would insist on their attendance, just around him, just behind him. No questions asked, no orders barked. Just be seen, like good children. He revelled in the aura of the officers.

You could kiss your holidays good-bye, for the Honourable Minister would tirelessly hover from function to function. For him Sundays were what the Good Lord had ordered after six days of relaxation. For him this meant speeches at more and more functions, in different parts of his constituency. And he loved his mellifluous rendering of Ghalib, Hali, Iqbal, Mir Taqi Mir, Firaq, Kabir and so many quotable Urdu poets. And surprisingly, the audience loved it, too, invariably doing a David Copperfield with a single glass of porridge.

As happens at most such functions, a number of people would thrust petitions at the Honourable Minister, who would accept them with a re-assuring smile, nod an encouragement at the supplicant, and give a meaningful look at any officer who happened to be within his sight range. Never mind the fact that the public never knew the difference between the officers. And during office days, all these petitions would get sent to the concerned officials, for a "quick disposal commensurate with the petitioner's claim". This had become quite a phrase with the Honourable Minister.

He was indeed blessed with a very sharp memory. One glance at a petition,

and the petitioner, would have registered in his memory bank for long. Computerisation of public petitions was a century away. And invariably, before departing for the State Capital, the Honourable Minister would start questioning the officers about the previously sent petitions, at random. But never a major question with regard to postings of junior level officers within the District.

With this in the background, Rajan Mathur, the Collector, was surprised that the Honourable Minister called him from the State Capital and barked an order, almost rudely as to why Pavan Kumar, the Tahsildar, was not being given a posting.

"Honourable Minister," Rajan Mathur managed to get a word in. "Pavan has just come out of a suspension. He has never completed more than six months in any posting. He manages to annoy the people, the local MLA, or the MP, and nobody seems to want him. He has worked in practically every district of the state."

"I know! I know!" The Honourable Minister sounded off impatiently. "You have to find some place for him. Post him there immediately. Or you get posted out."

Rajan almost said, "You are welcome, sir", for he had not yet fully unpacked his bags, on his being posted as Collector & District Magistrate, Amirpur, nor was he particularly keen to remain here. New Delhi, and then the UN posting at New York were his targets, not even the State Capital. Macroeconomics and development formats on a global scale were the subjects he wanted to further work in. Not transfers and postings of petty officers.

Who was this Pavan Kumar? And why had he got the Honourable Minister's goat? Rajan sent for him, the first thing in the morning, only to see his *Peshkar* look back blankly at him.

"Sirr. You are not getting him posted here." It was as if the *Peshkar* was pleading with him to ensure that it did not happen.

"Why? What is wrong with this fellow?"

"Sir, he just does not work. He only comes on the first to collect his salary, chat a bit, have some tea, and

goes away. All the other days, he just comes, signs the attendance register, and simply goes away. Everyday, Sir. He does this. If he stays on, he fights with everyone."

Pavan Kumar came at once when summoned by the Collector, the epitome of a super polite junior officer, with a permanently folded hands and a stiff arched back that would never let him stand up in front of his so senior officer.

"Yes, Sir." These were the only words that he would utter. No complaints, no regrets at opportunities of a promotion lost, no ambitions. He will work, as the "Honourable Collector" desires.

So what was with this Pavan Kumar that had made the Honourable Minister so concerned about his posting? The *Peshkar* did confirm that this was the first time that the Honourable Minister had ever asked for him. For, no political leader had ever spoken on his behalf as Pavan had endeared himself to none.

So why was the Honourable Minister so concerned about him? Ours is not to reason why, but just to do, and not die. What die? I will be only too happy to be posted out of this place. What do I achieve in not listening to the Honourable Minister? The fact is that Pavan Kumar has resumed his duty after his period of suspension. Service Rules required that he be given a posting. And that was all that the Honourable Minister was asking him for. Not any particular posting.

"Pavan Kumar."

"Yes Sir."

"I will post you as the Leave Reserve Tahsildar, with special charge of the Protocol Department. You will now be responsible for the VVIP and VIP visits to the District. All right? Now don't let me down."

"Yes Sir. Yes Sir. Never let you down, Sir. Yes Sir." After all, a jeep went with this posting.

A few weeks later Rajan got another call from the Honourable Minister. "Make sure that idiot Pavan is not before my eyes, the next time I visit Amirpur." ■

[Zafar Iqbal (1975) is a Freelance Professional. He can be contacted on 022-26480767/2650; zafariq200@vsnl.net] ■

Give titles, not cakes

By GURCHARAN DAS

Thousands of miles away in distant Peru lives Hernando de Soto and he has a simple message for us in India. People are poor, he says, because they usually lack formal title to the little property that they own.

Without a legal right they cannot use their property as collateral. They cannot go to the bank and get a loan in order to start a business. Their potential is locked up in "dead capital".

De Soto calculates that the dead capital locked in untitled assets held by the world's poor is around \$9.3 trillion, which is many times the total foreign aid given by all the rich countries to all the poor countries for the past 50 years.

Whether a sharecropper in Bihar or a slum dweller in Mumbai, the vast majority of India's poor have unclear titles. For decades after Independence, we had socialist minds and thought that property rights were a capitalist idea; so, we ignored this terrible flaw in our governance.

But after the 1991 reforms our mindset has changed and we have lost our hypocrisy towards private property. Today, the best thing that our state and local governments can do for the poor is to simplify and streamline the process of granting property titles.

Two of our states, Andhra and Karnataka, have recognised this problem and have tried to make land transactions easier.

My friend in Guntur district tells me that land records and titles in Andhra are now on the Internet, and corrupt officials who deal with land are the unhappiest people there.

Hernando de Soto observes in his book, *The Other Path*, that most businesses in Peru also lacked titles. To find out why he and his colleagues started a fictitious clothing factory.

It took them 289 days working full time plus Rs 55,400 in bribes and expenses to get all the approvals they needed from 11 departments. Next, he and a group of low-income families petitioned the state for a vacant plot to build housing; it took them six years and 11 months plus Rs 97,020 per person to get all the bureaucratic clearances.

Finally, to get a pushcart licence to sell fruit on the street in Lima took them 43 days plus Rs 26,550. (India is not the only country with License Raj!)

Poor people are not stupid. In countries like Peru and India they naturally avoid this bureaucratic nightmare and simply start businesses without approvals; and this is called the informal or the black economy.

Every Indian city, and especially Delhi, is a hive of this feverish activity.

The poor, thus, have houses but no titles; crops but no deeds; business without licences.

The informal economy is people's spontaneous response to the state's failure to do its job. Much maligned, this parallel economy is in many ways more authentic, hardworking, and creative than our legal economy.

When the common citizen has to fight for 10 months with 11 departments just to keep the file moving - this explains why the Third World is poor. The answer to poverty is not the socialist one - for the state to provide all things - but to give people freedom to own property and create wealth from it.

We need the state to quickly confirm title on the citizen and get out of the way. Classical liberals were right in believing that true liberty flows from the right to property.

Curiously, de Soto's ideas have had so much impact that he was the target of the Shining Path, the Marxist terror group, in the early nineties - the only economist I know with the distinction of an assassination attempt. ■

[Mr Gurcharan Das is a well-known columnist in *The Times of India*. This piece, of great relevance to us bureaucrats has been reproduced here with his permission. Let's do something concrete so that he changes his mind about us. Mr Das can be contacted at: gurcharandas@vsnl.com. ■

A system PAR excellence

By RN JOSHI

After I took over as Municipal Commissioner of Aurangabad Municipal Corporation in April 2003, I observed that the volume of public complaints was increasing day by day. Most of the complaints pertained to sanitation, choking up of drainage and disturbance in water supply. All these complaints required a little but timely action, but as usual the staff concerned was in the habit of sleeping on the files without any substantial reason.

To overcome this problem I introduced a system called "PAR System". I started marking these complaints to my Personal Assistant and instructed him to monitor these specific references and ask the concerned HoDs to take immediate remedial action as per rules and to

further submit compliance report thereof. This was followed by a fortnightly review and interaction with the officers in respect of this subject.

This resulted in an astonishing positive impact and the number of such complaints started decreasing. During period from April 2003 to March 2004, 663 PAR references were sent to various Departments and as many as 397 were disposed of to the satisfaction of complainants.

Before coming to Aurangabad I was working as Chief Executive officer of Jalgaon Zilla Parishad. There also I implemented this System. At both these places the general public and media have lauded these efforts to redress public grievances and minimize the number of complaints. ■

[Mr RN Joshi (1995) can be contacted on: 0240-2331194; 2331309; 9823155111]. ■

'Each one of us is a Brand Ambassador for Brand India.'
Continued from page 3.

a brand and creating value for it, we must first intrinsically believe in it. We must enhance our knowledge levels and pride in the brand. We must feel almost emotional about its potential and scope.

"We must do away with the cynicism which results from specific personal experiences because in some way, each of us is a Brand Ambassador for Brand India. It is only our individual passion that will lead to excellence and collective achievement", she adds very passionately.

How true! Isn't that a sufficient reason to say that Geetanjali is great? ■

(Rameshchandra Kanade)

How to conserve water and save life

We all can conserve water and save life. How?

In the Kitchen

Use an aerator and/or a water flow-reducer attachment in your sink faucets, to reduce water usage.

Turn taps off (always) tightly so they do not drip.

Repair promptly any leaks in and around your taps and faucets.

Never run water continuously while hand-washing the utensils. Wash them in a partially filled shallow tub and then rinse them using minimum water.

Never clean fruits and vegetables under a continuously running tap. Wash them in a partially filled sink and then rinse them quickly under the tap.

Save water, when boiling vegetables, by using just enough to cover them and fit the lid tight.

In the bathrooms and toilets

(In addition to some of the above)

When brushing your teeth or washing or shaving, use pots like bucket-tumbler rather than running the tap continuously.

For bathing get wet, turn off the water while you are soaping/shampooing, and then rinse off quickly using bucket and tumbler.

Place a stone/weighted bottle filled with water, in the flush tank of your toilet.

Install dual cistern (with low and high flush) toilets.

Flush your toilet only when it is really necessary.

Check regularly for toilet tank leaks into the toilet bowl by putting a small amount of liquid coloring into the tank and observing whether it spreads to the bowl without flushing. Repair leaks promptly.

Ensure that the float ball is properly adjusted so that the tank water level does not exceed the height of the overflow tube. Examine periodically whether the plunge ball and flapper valve in the tank are properly 'seated' and replace parts when necessary.

Regularly check for leaks at the base of your toilet, and get them promptly repaired.

Never flush garbage of any kind down the toilet. Household cleaners, paints, solvents, pesticides and other chemicals

can be very harmful to the health of your septic tanks as well as for environment.

Before flushing down anything into the drains look for the things that can create problems for sewerage lines and treatment plants.

Wash only full loads in your washing machine. Use the shortest cycle possible for washing clothes in machines. If your washing machine has an adjustable water-level indicator, set the dial to use only as much water as is really necessary. Promptly repair any leaks around the taps, hoses or fittings of your washing machines or the spouts used for it.

In the Garden

Lawns and gardens require only a small amount of water per day during warm weather. Less is needed during cooler weather.

Water lawns every three to five days, rather than for a short period every day. Green grass does not need watering. Water is required when the grass starts developing a black tinge along the top. Recovery is almost immediate when water is applied at this stage. Blackening does not hurt grass; browning does. Do not overuse water in anticipation of a shortage. Soil cannot store or hold that extra water.

Water the garden during the cool part of the day, preferably in the evenings. Avoid the sunny part of the day. Do not water on windy days; it increases evaporation and thereby causes loss of water.

Keep your lawns healthy and maintain them at a long length. Taller grass holds water better, and a healthy lawn will choke out weeds.

Young or freshly transplanted garden plants need small quantities of water more frequently until they are well established.

Most shrubs and young trees need water only twice a week, even in hot weather.

Clean walkways and driveways with a broom, not with a running hose.

Hotels & Restaurants

Discourage using large size glasses for providing drinking water. Under the disguise of etiquettes many eateries

keep filling the glasses or keep replacing them with filled ones and cause wastage of water. Demand Management to change such practices; it is a National loss. Avoid / stop visiting such hotels if they don't change such faulty practices. Encourage by appreciation if they improve.

As a citizen

Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, abandoned free-flowing taps, etc.) to the property owner as well as the local authorities managing the water supply.

Exercise your rights as citizens: request information, participate in public hearings, attend the awareness programmes and remain informed.

Educate your children and your friends. Environmental problems cannot be solved in a single generation; our children and their children will have to carry the torch.

Change

By ALAKANANDA SEN

Why is it, that people do,
Resist change and would rather stew,
In or at an unhappy place
With no room for laughter and mirth or grace.

Is it out of an unseen fear,
Of losing things that one holds dear,
Or is it that one has forgotten how,
To stand up for oneself and stop to bow,
For, it takes but a change in view,
And the conviction to focus on something new,

To make a change and see it through,
Especially one, which is good for you.
Easier said than done the cynic would say,
Changes don't come about; it's no child's play,

But I do believe that it is within us,
To stay in the queue and still board the bus.
We have to believe in the power within,
Face change, not with a frown, but with a grin,
And things will sort out, they always do,
Such is the case with "changes" too.

[Alakananda Sen, daughter of Mr PR Dasgupta (1963), stays in Bangalore along with her husband and two children. She is currently setting up a school called Gopalan International School, Bangalore].

In the World of Hindi Cinema

By BN BHAGWAT



Over the last four decades I must have seen hundreds of Hindi movies. But if you ask me to tell the story of a movie I have seen the previous day I would plead helplessness. Somebody rightly compared the Hindi film industry to a large ice-cream factory. You take a scoop from the same pot every time, add the flavour that the customer wants and presto you have a new plot—er, ice-cream. But though I am incapable of recounting the sequences of the so-called story coherently, I have developed a knack of anticipating how the characters are going to behave as the picture progresses and how the conflicts are going to be resolved, which never fails to impress my wife. This is because by now I am thoroughly familiar with the world of Hindi cinema, a world which is populated by persons who possess and exhibit traits and characteristics markedly different from yours and mine. Let me point out a few of those here.

You may think that in our mundane world two individuals looking exactly alike is a rarity. But in the world of Hindi cinema there is a very high percentage of identical looking persons who are sometimes not even twins. And they create havoc. They exchange each other's character with impunity. In a movie we saw recently the two chaps interchanged positions at the drop of a hat and the wife of the first one couldn't find anything amiss. Of course, as expected, the second one was a man of honour and didn't take advantage of his enviable position. Typically, clone No. 1 happens to get injured and is in a hospital. Either the criminal gang or the police stumble on the other clone and the poor chap thereafter is just a pawn in the big game between the police and the gang. Very neat.

Sometimes, in a different scenario, the exact duplicate of the hero is created by simply putting a perfect skin-

mask of the hero on a minor baddy and nobody is any wiser until the police officer simply peels off the mask in the last scene to reveal the identity of the impersonator. The hero and the heroine lead charmed lives. They may live in Mumbai, Nasik or Kanpur but they are invariably possessed with the most vivid imagination. This extraordinary faculty enables them to be transported to the most scenic spots of the world. In a recent movie the hero and heroine led a humdrum life but after every half an hour, with my experienced insight, I could detect that glazed expression coming over them which signalled their instantly going to the sylvan locales of New Zealand to sing a song.

Apart from this unique ability, the general IQ of the main as well as other characters is normally pretty low. But their dialogue delivery is surprisingly faultless. The more discerning of cinema fans would have also noticed the most of the dishonourable characters of Hindi cinema are gifted with astonishingly sharp ears. This enables them to eavesdrop every now and then. Conversations behind closed doors between father and son or the old *ayah* and the relative reveal the necessary secrets to our gifted friends and they can now blackmail the right parties. The inevitable question, "*Tum muzhe blackmail karna chahate ho?*" occurs at least once in every honest Hindi cinema.

Fights, and more fights, are an integral part of Hindi cinema. But what is special about those players is the ability to withstand any number of falls and knocks. That a Hindi film hero can take on a minimum of a dozen fellows is known even to a child. The trick is that while the first goon attacks our man the second goon is fractionally tardy and begins his attempt only when his colleague is about to collapse and so on till the last one is given his due. In a major one-to-one fight with the chief villain the hero always gets an opportunity to deliver the *coup de grace* but the gallant hero gives the villain a chance to

survive (how will the film be prolonged otherwise?)

In one of those films when the villain was allowed to take to his heels shouting obscenities, my wife could not hide her anguish and feared for the hero's fate. I assured her that things would turn out to be fine because even though the dreaded fellow would have no qualms in killing the hero at the first available opportunity when next big fight between the two occurs, I knew that the screen villains tend to be excessively verbose and like to gloat over the prey and thus lose precious moments. I told my wife that this verbosity will give the hero enough time to throw the chap over the cliff or the police will come and surprise him. I was wrong. Instead, the mother of the villain, thoroughly disgusted with the latter's antics, delivered a nice little speech and pumped bullets into him!

The mould of typical Hindi cinema of seventies and eighties may have been broken somewhat by a few 'cross-over' films, of late, but the heart of the mainstream cinema remains wedded to the FORMULA, and those like me who are willing to suspend disbelief are assured of the continuous supply of their staple *masala*. ■

[Mr BN Bhagwat (1961), known to our readers for his piquant observations and delightful writings, can be contacted on 022-24945789; mbhagwat@vsnl.net]. ■

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Email id: ■ harmony@iasmah.org ■ r_kanade@hotmail.com ■ Phones: 022- 22025349; 22834329; 9820025277.

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