Aiming for the skies

In April, India’s space and missile scientists made the nation proud with the twin launches of Risat-1 and Agni-V ballistic missile. A chronicle of the journey behind these successes.
GLOBAL – INDIAN NETWORK OF KNOWLEDGE (GLOBAL-INK):
“THE VIRTUAL THINK TANK”
AN INITIATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

Global–INK positioned as a strategic “virtual think tank” connects Overseas Indians (knowledge providers) with the development process (knowledge receivers) in India and empowers them to partner in India’s progress.

Being a next generation knowledge management, collaboration and business solution platform, Global-INK provides context to connect knowledge experts with knowledge seekers. Consequently, these connections enable flow of knowledge and expertise from the Diaspora back into India and facilitate collective action.

Global – INK will catalyze Diaspora ability and willingness into well thought out projects and programs for development, transform individual initiatives into community action and achieve critical mass in chosen verticals.

The portal can be accessed only by registered users. Registration request can be submitted by filing out the registration form located on the Global-INK homepage (www.globalink.in)
Contents

10

AIMING FOR THE SKIES
With the twin launches of the all-weather Radar Imaging Satellite (Risat-1) and the 5,000-km range Agni-V ballistic missile, India’s space and missile scientists have proved they are among the best in the world. We chronicle the story behind their success.

18

SECOND LIFE
A special pension and life insurance scheme would benefit over five million unskilled and semi-skilled Diaspora workers, mostly in the Gulf.

20

SRK CHARMS YALE
The Ivy League institution felicitates the Badaash of Bollywood with Chubb Fellowship, one of Yale’s top honours.

38

RAY’S COMRADE
Actor Soumitra Chatterjee, the lead actor of ‘Apur Sansar’, recalls what it meant to work with the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray.

40

THE LAADLI
Abhi no jaana chhod kar... ki cake abhi kare nahin... ki pet abhi bhara nahin, sang veteran actor Zohra Sehgal on her 100th birthday.

41

OF MUMBAI AND MANTO
In his short life spanning barely 43 years, Manto left a legacy of some of the most profound and popular contribution to Urdu literature.

42

BEKAL: DESTINATION NEXT
After popularising destinations like Kovalam, Kumarakom, Wayanad and Thekkady, the Kerala government now aims to place the pristine and scenic town of Bekal on the global tourism map.

32

NOT JUST A BHUJA STORY
Bikaner, one of the oldest Rajput fiefdoms, has transformed itself without compromising on its old-world sensitivities, says Rajyashree Kumawat Bikaner.

34

NEW-AGE COLLECTORS
From Wedgewood cutlery to Moorcroft glass sculptures, high-end ‘interior art’ from Europe and the US is finding a niche market in India.

44

FOOD FOR LIFE
‘No secrets in the kitchen’ is the mantra of celebrity chef Vikas Khanna whose signature dish gobi/la pakoda was served to none other than US President Barack Obama.

38

DESTINATION AUSTRALIA
Britain’s loss is Australia’s gain. UK’s stringent visa rules are driving more and more Indian students Down Under.
CLEAN ENERGY: LEAP FOR INDIA

India has taken a leap in the clean energy race, according to a new study.

India’s renewable energy sector has shown exponential growth, according to a top official said recently.

“The growth of civil aviation is likely to push India from ninth to third position in the world in terms of volume of traffic, necessitating a very strong security system,” said Gurjot Singh Malhi, Commissioner of Security (Civil Aviation), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. “The bureau has endeavored to help equip stakeholders responsible for aviation security in the country with cutting-edge technology, skill enhancement of security personnel, training in use of advanced technology and acquisition of security equipment,” he said.

The civil aviation sector had grown at an exponential rate, a top official said recently.

INDIA TO BECOME THIRD LARGEST AVIATION MARKET

India is likely to become the third-largest aviation market in the world from its current position as traffic volumes grow exponentially, a top official said recently.

“The growth of civil aviation is likely to take high quality pictures of celestial objects such as asteroids, galaxies, nebulae and clusters. The international space science project — ‘Internet Telescope’ — is brought to India by SPACE (Science Popularisation Association of Communicators & Educators), an organisation working for spreading awareness about astronomy in youngsters. Internet Telescope enables school students to remotely control telescopes to see and explore the night sky visible in the U.S. and Europe while sitting in India using an Internet telescope,” said C.B. Devgun, additional secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, India’s special envoy on Sudan and Security (Civil Aviation), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. “The bureau has endeavored to help equip stakeholders responsible for aviation security in the country with cutting-edge technology, skill enhancement of security personnel, training in use of advanced technology and acquisition of security equipment,” he said.

INDIAN OIL INVESTMENTS IN BOTH SUDANS SAFE

Both Sudan and South Sudan have assured India that its $2.5 billion investments in the oil industry spanning the trans-national border are safe and will not be affected by the simmering dispute over oil revenues between the two countries.

Caught in the simmering dispute over oil revenues between the two countries.

The conflict between the two Sudans has affected OVL’s commitment in supplying 12,000 barrels of oil per day to Sudan, causing a loss of over $8 million.

This was conveyed to Amarendra Khanna, India’s special envoy on Sudan and additional secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, when he met top ministers and officials in Khartoum and Juba recently.

ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), the overseas arm of India’s state-owned oil major, had investments worth $2.5 billion in petroleum exploration and production in unidivided Sudan as part of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Co., in which it owns a 25 percent stake. The conflict between the two Sudans has affected OVL’s commitment in supplying 12,000 barrels of oil per day to Sudan, causing a loss of over $8 million.

The national oil company has assured India that its investments are safe and will not be affected by the simmering dispute over oil revenues between the two countries.

Both Sudan and South Sudan have assured India that its $2.5 billion investments in the oil industry spanning the trans-national border are safe and will not be affected by the simmering dispute over oil revenues between the two countries.

Kerala Ad Wins Award in Prague

The Kerala Tourism advertisement campaign ‘Your Moment is Waiting’ has won the bronze medal at the prestigious Prague International Advertising Festival (PIAF) in the category of ‘State as an Advertising’. “This is an unprecedented honour for us. It is a recognition of the hard work put in by the Kerala Tourism in managing the Brand Kerala and devising effective marketing strategies,” said Kerala Tourism Minister A.P. Anil Kumar. The other big names, which shared the podium with Kerala Tourism, included McDonald’s Germany, Sony Pictures, Heineken and Lego. The PIAF is an exclusive event in the global advertising calendar.

A First, Here Comes Bengaluru Financial City

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee laid the foundation stone for the country’s first financial city, being built by the state-run IFCI Infrastructure Development Ltd (IIDL) at Hardware Park, near the international airport at Bagalur, about 30 kms from Bengaluru.

“We are developing India’s first financial city as a premium urban infrastructure in association with leading banks and institutions on 50 acres of land, provided by the Karnataka government,” IFCI chief executive and IIDL chairman Atul Kumar Rai said on the occasion. The ambitious project is scheduled to be completed in three years. The layout of the financial city is based on the Zen geometry concept, with effective circulation and activity patterns.

Westminster University to Strengthen India Ties

Britain-based University of Westminster has signed a memorandum of understanding with Mumbai’s HR College of Commerce and Economics to expand its Indian scholarship programme, officials said.

“India has historically been an important partner for the University of Westminster, through students who have come to learn with us, academics who have shared their expertise, and as a partner for research,” said Myrzaa Guzikowska, University of Westminster Pro Vice-Chancellor, announcing its new Indian presence.

The University also announced its new partnership with the Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi.

“It is our goal to strengthen these existing ties into long-term, sustainable and mutually-beneficial relationships for the university and for India,” Guzikowska added.

Now Explore Stars in the US, from Indian Territory!

Students from nearly 80 Delhi schools would soon get an opportunity to explore the night skies in the United States while sitting in India using an Internet telescope through a project in collaboration with the International Astronomical Search Collaboration.

Students, sitting at their desks in India, will remotely control telescope to see and explore the night sky visible in the US and take high quality pictures of celestial objects such as asteroids, galaxies, nebulae and clusters.

The international space science project — ‘Internet Telescope’ — is brought to India by SPACE (Science Popularisation Association of Communicators & Educators), a non-profit organisation working for spreading awareness about astronomy in youngsters.

Internet Telescope enables school students to remotely control telescopes to see and explore the night sky visible in the US and Europe while sitting in India using an Internet telescope.
Thiruvananthapuram, Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed has said.

"Sixteen children from the slums of Ahmedabad in Gujarat will tour the United States in June to spread Mahatma Gandhi's message of ‘oneness’ through a 90 minute dance-drama. Titled ‘Ekatva’ (Oneness), the show, sharing a ‘message of love, inspiration, and a call to action: to push the world closer to oneness and peace’ will be staged in Chicago, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Austin, Atlanta and New York."

Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS.

"The new Consulate is also expected to enhance trade between Kerala and the UAE. More than a million people from the state live and work in the UAE, says a study by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has decided to set up its Kerala Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram, Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed has said.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.

"The decision to set up the Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram is because of the rule that Consulates can be set up only in state capitals. There are certain rules and guidelines and they have to be adhered to," Ahamed told IANS. The minister said the Consulate would start functioning in a few months.
In April, India’s space and missile scientists made the nation proud with the twin launches of the all-weather Radar Imaging Satellite (Risat-1) and the 5,000-km range Agni-V ballistic missile. N.C. Bipindra chronicles the story behind these successes.

April 2012 will go down in India’s history as a milestone month when the nation’s scientific community touched the skies with glory, literally. It was in this month that India’s space and missile scientists made the nation proud with the twin successful launches of its all-weather Radar Imaging Satellite (Risat-1), that can be put to both civilian and military use, and the 5,000-km long-range Agni-V ballistic missile that can reach targets deep inside China’s northern parts and the whole of Pakistan. Come, be part of the Indian space Odyssey mission:

RISAT-1
The indigenously made Risat-1 was launched from the spaceport of Shriharikota in Andhra Pradesh, some 80 km from Chennai, on April 26. This one act propelled India into a select group of nations like the U.S., Canada, and some European countries having such technology.

Remote-sensing satellites send back pictures and other data. India has the largest constellation of remote-sensing satellites in the world, providing imagery in a variety of spatial resolutions, from more than a metre ranging up to 500 metres, and is a major player in vending such data globally.

With 11 remote sensing/earth observation satellites orbiting in space, India is a world leader in the remote sensing data market. The 11 satellites are TES, Resourcesat-1, Cartosat-1, 2A and 2B, IRS-1D, RSAT-2, Oceansat-2, Resourcesat-2 and Megha-Tropiques. Risat-1’s synthetic aperture radar (SAR) can acquire data in C-band and would orbit the earth 14 times a day.

In 2009, ISRO had launched 300-kg Risat-2 with an Israeli-built SAR enabling earth observation in all-weather, day and...
night conditions. With the launch, the PSLV rocket has successfully put in orbit 53 satellites out of 54 it carried — mostly remote sensing/earth observation satellites both Indian and foreign — and has been a major revenue earner for ISRO. Its sole failure happened in 1993, when a satellite was not able to attain orbit.

The rocket that delivered RISAT-1 into space is ISRO’s four-stage PSLV’s upgraded variant called PSLV-XL. The letters XL stand for extra large as the six strap-on motors hugging the rocket at the bottom can carry 12 tonnes of solid fuel as against the base version that has a fuel capacity of nine tonnes. The PSLV’s four stages are fuelled with solid and liquid propellants. The first and third stages are fuelled by solid fuel, while the second and fourth stages are powered by liquid fuel. ISRO had used the PSLV-XL variant for its Chandrayaan-1 moon mission in 2008 and for launching the GSAT-12 communications satellite in 2011.

AGNI-V

With the Agni-V launch from Wheeler Island off the Odisha coast on April 19, India emerged as a major missile powerhouse of the world, having developed this long-range ballistic missile. India is a missile power now,” an exultant Saraswat said.

“During the test, the 17.5-metre-long, 50-tonne Agni-V reached an altitude of 600 km with the one-tonne warhead, almost entirely independently over the last four years. With the development, India also stormed into an elite, exclusive club of nations comprising the U.S., Russia, China, France and Britain — all U.N. Security Council permanent members — that have this capability.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh hailed the successful test as “another milestone” in the country’s “quest for security, preparedness and to explore the frontiers of science”.

“The three-stage Agni-V missile’s entire performance has been successfully demonstrated. All mission objectives and operational targets have been met,” Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief V.K. Saraswat said.

“India is today a nation with proven capability to design, develop and produce a long-range ballistic missile. India is a missile power now,” an exultant Saraswat said.

“It was a fantastic launch. It hit the target with high accuracy,” S.P. Dash, the director of the test range, added.

Reaction came in swiftly from China as well, where Foreign Ministry spokesperson Liu Weimin downplayed the tests, saying: “China and India are both big emerging countries, we are not rivals but cooperation partners.”

During the test, the 17.5-metre-long, 50-tonne Agni-V reached an altitude of 600 km with the one-tonne warhead, almost entirely independently over the last four years. With the development, India also

1962 The Indian National Committee for Space Research is set up by Department of Atomic Energy, and work begins on building Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS).

1963 First sounding rocket is launched.

1965 Space Science and Technology Centre is established in Thumba, Kerala.

1968 Experimental Satellite Communication Earth Station is set up in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

1969 The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is formed under Department of Atomic Energy.

1971 The Satish Dhawan Space Centre is formed in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

1972 Department of Space is established and ISRO brought under DOS. ISRO Satellite Centre is established in Bangalore and the Space Applications Centre is formed in Ahmedabad.

1975 Satellite Instructional Television Experiment is done, using a U.S. satellite.

1976 First Indian satellite Aryabhata launched.

1979 Bhaskara-1, an earth observation experimental satellite is launched. First experimental launch of Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-3) carrying Rohini satellite. Satellite is not placed in the orbit.


1965: Space Science and Technology Centre is established in Thumba, Kerala.

1967: ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Radhakrishnan (left) and his team showing high-quality images acquired from RISAT-1 to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.

1972: Department of Space is established and ISRO brought under DOS. ISRO Satellite Centre is established in Bangalore and the Space Applications Centre is formed in Ahmedabad.

1975: Satellite Instructional Television Experiment is done, using a U.S. satellite.

1976: First Indian satellite Aryabhata launched.
agencies that have also jointly built two heavy satellites — the 3,453 kg W2M and the 2,541 kg Hylas — for the French agency EADS Astrium.

On its own, India uses its satellites for civilian (earth observation/remote sensing, communication, meteorology) and defense purposes. Recently, the government told Parliament that communication satellites for Navy and Air Force would be launched within a two-year timeframe.

The high point in India’s space odyssey was its moon mission in 2008 when it launched Chandrayaan-1. Chandrayaan-2, the moon mission in 2014. However, by that time, ISRO had already built and launched two satellites — the 358 kg Aryabhatta and the 444 kg Bhaskara-1.

“Starting from the scratch was the challenge before us while we began the Aryabhata project. A majority of the team members were new to this field. The time given was just two-and-half-years so that it could be flown in a Russian rocket. Building clean room, thermo vacuum room and other facilities were all new,” recalled Rao.

After Bhakara-1, the Indian space agency built the APPLE communication satellite that laid the ground for the INSAT series satellites possessing multiple capabilities — telecom, television, meteorological and imaging. “Building the four-in-one satellite was a challenge. While we designed the INSAT-1A satellite, it was made by Ford Aerospace and was launched by an American rocket. The satellite had a short life,” said Pranav Kale, the first project director for INSAT.

However, success started smiling at ISRO from INSAT-1B onwards which, according to Rao, ushered in the communication revolution in India. There was no looking back for the space agency on the satellite side. From one-tonne satellites, the INSAT series started growing in weight to become three-tonners and ISRO later started making satellites for others. Scientists at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram during those times were, however, toiling to get their rocket right, as the SLV and Augmented SLV (ASLV) missions gave mixed results.

“The two ASLV failures were the real test beds for perfecting the PSLV rocket. Issues like rocket tumbling, monitoring of rocket’s main forces, detailed profiling of wind and other issues were done,” said S.C. Gupta, former director of VSSC.

The third ASLV with Stretched Rohini Satellite Series (SROSS) turned out to be successful but the result of the first PSLV flight in 1993 was negative, owing to a software error which was later sorted out. The two ASLV failures were the real test beds for perfecting the PSLV rocket. Issues like rocket tumbling, monitoring of rocket’s main forces, detailed profiling of wind and other issues were done,” said S.C. Gupta, former director of VSSC.

The two ASLV failures were the real test beds for perfecting the PSLV rocket. Issues like rocket tumbling, monitoring of rocket’s main forces, detailed profiling of wind and other issues were done,” said S.C. Gupta, former director of VSSC.

The third ASLV with Stretched Rohini Satellite Series (SROSS) turned out to be successful but the result of the first PSLV flight in 1993 was negative, owing to a software error which was later sorted out.

Since then, it has been a steady march ahead for ISRO as far as the PSLV rocket is concerned. The space agency has now three PSLV variants. “As technology was not available, we developed our own navigational systems,” Gupta said.

But the serious issue before ISRO is perfecting the technology for its heavier rocket — the G cryogenic engine for the GSLV rocket. The success story continues.

A GIANT LEAP

The space agency is in the process of getting its cryogenic engine ready to power the GSLV sometime during September/October 2012.

Meanwhile, ISRO, that is also developing an upgraded GSLV variant called GSLV Mark-III, plans to fly the rocket without the cryogenic engine during 2012-13.

THE MISSILE TRAJECTORY

India’s journey in missile technologies has been one roller-coaster ride, punctuated with efforts at isolating the country from obtaining critical dual-use technologies for conducting its only two nuclear tests in 1998 and 1999. Effectively, India’s entry into missile development to provide it a credible second-strike option and deterrent to any nuclear adventure that its adversaries in the neighbourhood could attempt happened only in 1998 when Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was roped in to pioneer the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP). The IGMDP was successfully concluded in 2007. But its first step was the 150-km-range, single-stage, liquid-propelled, surface-to-surface Prithvi missile’s test in February 1988. The single-stage, solid-fuel 700-900-km range Agni-I test was followed in May 1989. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) did slow down the Indian missile programme but did not cripple it in any way. India continued its march and here we have Agni-V, with all its three stages powered by solid propellants, as a “game-changer” for India.

The march was ably aided by DRDO’s "consortium approach" that roped in many of its own laboratories to work on specific technologies, private industries that produced components through technology transfers and universities that collaborated on projects to infuse new thinking. The success story continues.

1982 Launch of Insat-1A communication satellite by an U.S. rocket.
1983 Second developmental flight of SLV-3 places Rohini satellite in orbit. Insat system is commissioned with the launch to Insat-1B satellite.
1984 First Indian astronaut Rakesh Sharma enters Russian space station ‘Salyut 7’.
1987 First development launch of Augmented SLV (ASLV) with satellite SROSS-1. Mission fails.
1989 First launch of second operational remote sensing satellite IRS-1B.
1993 First development flight of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) with IRS-1E. Mission fails.
1996 Third developmental flight of PSLV with IRS-P3.
1997 First operational launch of PSLV carrying IRS-1D.
India is set to ferry its heaviest foreign satellite into orbit, ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan tells V. Jagannathan

C ome August, an Indian rocket will ferry a French satellite, an 800-kg SPOT-6 — the heaviest foreign satellite till date — towards the heavens. In the process, Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will earn a handsome fee.

What is further interesting is that the launch deal signals the increasing confidence of others in the precise satellite launch capability of ISRO’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). “Today, internationally, India is viewed as a front-running space-faring nation. Of course, this is a great testimony to our capabilities that the French satellite maker EADS Astrium prefers PSLV over the other launch vehicles of the same class. You may also remember that we had earlier built two commercial communication satellites for European operators EUTELSAT and Avanti Communications, in collaboration with EADS,” ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan said. With augmentation of manufacturing capacity and industry participation, we will aggressively pursue the international market for satellites in the future, he added.

Radhakrishnan, 62, was busy with the post-launch activities of India’s own Radar Imaging Satellite (Risat-1). He dwells on ISRO’s plans to build heavier satellites, measures to increase the transponder capacity and other matters.

Excerpts:

On ISRO’s plans to build heavier satellites having more transponders...

ISRO currently develops satellites in the 3-3.2 tonne class lift-off mass and around 8 kW power. We are currently developing a 4-tonne class communication satellite, GSAT-11, that will have around 14 kW power and a Ka/Ku band hybrid payload. The throughput of this satellite would be around three-four times of the satellites that we have today. We are also planning to develop a 6-tonne class communication satellite with even higher payload capacity. Current transponder capacity, operated as INSAT capacity, is around 250. This includes capacity from ISRO satellites and leased transponders. The INSAT capacity is set to reach the 300 mark by the 12th plan.

On the view that India should first perfect its heavier rocket, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), before inter-planetary missions...

Launching heavier rockets and conducting inter-planetary missions are not mutually exclusive. Both are imminent to be pursued at the same time for the country. We plan to have the next flight of GSLV with an indigenous cryogenic engine very soon. Our GSLV Mark III is in an advanced stage of development and an experimental flight test is being planned.

On India and China in space sector.

The Indian and Chinese space programmes have reached new heights in their respective endeavours. The Indian space programme is evolving with the impetus for national imperatives and for social and economic uplifting of the people. India’s space programme is bright and several successful missions in a short span of time are a testimony to this unconcealed truth.
A special pension and life insurance scheme would benefit over five million unskilled and semi-skilled workers employed overseas, mostly in the Gulf countries, says Sanu George.

From left, State Excise Minister K. Babu; CPI parliamentarian K. E. Ismail; State Non-Resident Kerala Affairs Minister K. C. Joseph; Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi; Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and MLA Hibi Eden.

SECOND LIFE

The much-needed “lifeline” that will address the social security needs of millions, was announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Jaipur this January.

The scheme, aimed at people in the age group 18-50, caters to those having a stamp of “emigration clearance required” on their passports, besides a valid work permit or an employment contract.

The pension will commence after age 60 and there would be an accidental cover once the member of this scheme returns from abroad.

According to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), over five million people belonging to the poorest of the poor in the NRI community would be eligible for this scheme.

Incidentally, this scheme is generally meant for those in the Middle-East countries. “This is a life insurance scheme, besides helping the holder to save for old age and accumulate savings for resettlement. My ministry would also contribute from its budget to the PLIF,” said minister Ravi.

Any person availing the scheme has to pay ₹5,000 while the MOIA would chip in with ₹2,000 for male workers, and ₹3,000 if the person entering the scheme is going abroad to work as a housemaid.

“In this scheme, the Life Insurance Corporation and Bank of Baroda are also participants. People opting for this would get a unique number and all the details of the members would be available on a computer,” added the minister.

He said all the Indian embassies have been informed that they should help of those who approach them to become a member.

“Incidentally, this is the pilot project that has been launched and one which is going to bring some sort of stability for the NRIs. We also call upon the non-resident organisations that are working abroad to take interest in promoting this unique scheme,” said Ravi.

The minister also praised the efforts of Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in making the scheme a reality.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, present during the launch of the scheme, said this was going to be one of the best gifts ever given to the ordinary working-class NRI.

“The much-needed ‘lifeline’ that will address the social security needs of millions, was announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Jaipur this January. The scheme, aimed at people in the age group 18-50, caters to those having a stamp of “emigration clearance required” on their passports, besides a valid work permit or an employment contract.

The pension will commence after age 60 and there would be an accidental cover once the member of this scheme returns from abroad.

According to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), over five million people belonging to the poorest of the poor in the NRI community would be eligible for this scheme.

Incidentally, this scheme is generally meant for those in the Middle-East countries. “This is a life insurance scheme, besides helping the holder to save for old age and accumulate savings for resettlement. My ministry would also contribute from its budget to the PLIF,” said minister Ravi.

Any person availing the scheme has to pay ₹5,000 while the MOIA would chip in with ₹2,000 for male workers, and ₹3,000 if the person entering the scheme is going abroad to work as a housemaid.

“In this scheme, the Life Insurance Corporation and Bank of Baroda are also participants. People opting for this would get a unique number and all the details of the members would be available on a computer,” added the minister.

He said all the Indian embassies have been informed that they should help of those who approach them to become a member.

“Incidentally, this is the pilot project that has been launched and one which is going to bring some sort of stability for the NRIs. We also call upon the non-resident organisations that are working abroad to take interest in promoting this unique scheme,” said Ravi.

The minister also praised the efforts of Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in making the scheme a reality.

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, present during the launch of the scheme, said this was going to be one of the best gifts ever given to the ordinary working-class NRI.

“A good number of the poorest of the poor working abroad generally return empty-handed. As a result, his requirements like home, education and marriage remain a distant dream. With this scheme in force, no one needs to worry about their future,” remarked the chief minister.

According to a recent study by the Centre for Development Studies on the Kerala diaspora, the number of Kerala emigrants living abroad in 2011 was estimated to be 2.28 million, up from 2.19 million in 2008, 1.84 million in 2003 and 1.36 million in 1998.

The report said the total remittances to Kerala in 2011 were estimated to be €69,685 crore compared to €43,288 crore in 2008. Nearly 40 percent of Kerala’s emigrants live in the UAE and 25 percent in Saudi Arabia. In the last three years, especially, after the global crisis, Saudi Arabia has gained about 2 percentage points and UAE has lost out by the same proportion.

NEW LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT

- The Overseas Ministry will provide an annual co-contribution of up to ₹5,000 for female workers and ₹2,000 for male Indians working overseas.

- Workers will be required to partly contribute for their pension and resettlement returns.

- The pension will commence after age 60 and there would be an accidental cover once the member of this scheme returns from abroad.

- The scheme provides opportunity to low-paid workers to accumulate savings for resettlement pension when they return to India.

- It also provides life insurance cover for a specified period in case of natural death.

- People opting for this would get a unique number and all the details of the members would be available on a computer.
SHAH RUKH CHARMS YALE

The Ivy League institution felicitates the Baadshah of Bollywood with the Chubb Fellowship, one of Yale’s top honours.

Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan enthralled the students of Yale University as he came to the Ivy League institution as a Chubb Fellow, one of its top honours.

A crowd gathered outside the Shubert Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, early on the afternoon of April 13 and as the day went on, the line snaked around the corner. Fans travelled from as far as Alabama and California to join with members of the New Haven and Yale community to hear Khan speak to over 1,700 people.

Khan charmed the crowd as he spoke to them about success and failure and how to live life to the fullest. He encouraged young people to find fulfillment in creativity, to learn to laugh at themselves and to never become cynical about their lives.

“Failure is a fiendish friend that can lead to success by teaching one to be pragmatic, to work harder and to be true to oneself,” the superstar said, adding that the true strength of one’s friendships is tested in the face of strong adversity.

Khan emphasised the importance of young people appreciating and cherishing their parents’ love.

“Whatever you do, whichever mistakes you make, your parents are your best friends,” he stressed.

The lecture took a light-hearted turn when Khan executed his signature ‘Chammak Challo’ dance moves with Yale student Natalie Khosla.

“This is the most fun I have had in months!” Khan said.

The actor was introduced by Yale student Isha Ambani, who is president of the South Asian Society at Yale, and participated in a conversation onstage with Jeffrey Brenzel, Yale dean of undergraduate admissions and master of Timothy Dwight College, the Yale residential college that administers the Chubb Fellowship; Yale College alumna Sarika Arya; and Yale Law School student Nikhil Sud.

As part of the Yale Chubb Fellowship, Khan attended a reception and dinner at Timothy Dwight College with over 120 Yale students, including members of the South Asian Society at Yale, fellows of Timothy Dwight, and other members of the Yale community.

Each year, three or four distinguished men and women have been appointed as visiting Chubb Fellows. Former Chubb Fellows include presidents George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Jimmy Carter; authors Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, and Toni Morrison; film-maker Sofia Coppola; architect Frank Gehry; choreographer Mikhail Baryshnikov; and journalist Walter Cronkite.

Former Chubb Fellows have nicknamed the bags “Abdul Muqet Bags”, and he is popularly known as the “Paper Bag Boy.”

Muqet is never shy about stopping a stranger in a supermarket to deliver his message. “I tell them that recycling one tonne of paper saves 17 trees,” he said.

Muqet has held demonstrations in Marina Mall, Abu Dhabi Mall, Khalidiya Mall, Jimi Mall in Al Ain, Dubai Festival City and Dubai Marina Mall.

His mother Andaleeb Fatima said Muqet has received several awards for his commitment to environmental conservation.

His parents now accompany him to his demonstrations. “When we saw his enthusiasm, we wanted to nurture his interest. I want to tell mothers that every child can give back to the community,” she said.

Currently, Muqet is fulfilling his mission by campaigning to reduce CO2 levels in his home country.

Abdul Muqet, a 10-year-old Indian boy in UAE, has a passion for saving the environment — he makes paper bags and distributes these to malls and stores.

What he could do personally and how he could get other people to act. Every day after school, Muqet began making bags from old newspapers. In two years, he has made and distributed about 4,500 bags to supermarkets, stores and malls.

Muqet started his project when he was only eight, after his father explained to him the negative impact the non-biodegradable plastic bags have on nature.

This led Muqet to think about eco-friendly ideas — what he could do personally and how he could get other people to act. Every day after school, Muqet began making bags from old newspapers. In two years, he has made and distributed about 4,500 bags to supermarkets, stores and malls.

Muqet has held demonstrations in Marina Mall, Abu Dhabi Mall, Khalidiya Mall, Jimi Mall in Al Ain, Dubai Festival City and Dubai Marina Mall.

His parents now accompany him to his demonstrations. “When we saw his enthusiasm, we wanted to nurture his interest. I want to tell mothers that every child can give back to the community,” she said.

Currently, Muqet is fulfilling his mission by campaigning to reduce CO2 levels in his home country.
TOP OF THE HEAP

$65 billion in remittance came to India in 2011, making the country the top recipient of money from diaspora in the world.

India remains the top recipient of money from Diaspora as total remittance flow to the country is estimated to have crossed $63 billion in 2011, almost 3 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP), according to World Bank data.

In an update on migration and remittance, the World Bank said remittance flow to India has surged due to the weak rupee and robust economic activities in the Gulf countries. The World Bank revised upward remittance flow estimate for 2011 by $5.8 billion from its previous estimate announced in November last year. “An upward revision to flows to India in 2011 (by $5.8 billion) is primarily due to a weak rupee and robust economic activity in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which are major destinations of recent migrants,” the World Bank said.

In a report last year, the World Bank had said remittance flow to India was likely to reach $58 billion.

However, the Washington-based multilateral agency has now updated the figure to $63.66 billion. India received $54.03 billion remittance in 2010. With estimated inflow of $62.49 billion in 2011, China remains the second-largest recipient of money from Diaspora. But remittance accounts for only 0.8 percent of China’s GDP.

Total remittance to developing countries is estimated to rise to $372 billion in 2011, an increase of 12.1 percent over 2010 figure. Worldwide remittance flows, including those to high-income countries, reached $501 billion in 2011.

The remittance flow surged due to robust economic activities in the Gulf, according official, actionable complaints by the Transportation Security Administration.

KEY FINDINGS

- 70 percent of surveyed companies increased the number of employees since 2005
- More than 34 percent of the surveyed companies established manufacturing facilities in the U.S., investing more than $280 million
- Since 2005, the surveyed companies collectively conducted 72 mergers and acquisitions in the U.S.
- Their collective revenues for 2010-2011 were more than $23 billion
- Projected research and development investments of the surveyed companies are estimated to be over $190 million in 2012 alone
- Nearly 65 percent of companies engage in CSR initiatives

YUSUUFFALI MAKING WAVES IN GULF

Keral-born M.A. Yusuffali is today dubbed as one of the most influential Indians in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

He is the first non-Arab elected member of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Thrisur-born Yusuffali is managing director of the Middle East's retail giant Emke Lulu Group. The group is all set to register a 20 percent business growth this year, hitting $5.4 billion as the UAE's home-grown regional brand expanded outlets to 100 with the opening of a hypermarket at its newly-built mall.

Lulu, which started out as a supermarket and department store chain, has gradually moved onto to the big format hypermarkets (retail store that combines a department store and a grocery supermarket), and now manages 10 shopping malls in the GCC, said Yusuffali.

The retail major, accounting for 32 percent of the retail business within the GCC, cruised to a 19 percent sales growth in 2011 to $4.5 billion despite the general downturn. Yusuffali said despite the global financial meltdown, and industry-wide recession, the Lulu Group has gone ahead with its plans. It opened 23 hypermarkets and shopping malls in last three years in almost all major cities of the GCC. He added that the Lulu brand’s success story would continue apace with the opening of more outlets in the Middle East and India this year.

He said the retail major would have four new stores in 2012 in the GCC and Egypt and would make a retail foray into India with the opening of a hypermarket by end-2012.

The group’s next move is to launch a “Webstore”. “One of the most popular and recognised local brands of the region, Lulu today is a market leader in almost all the countries that they operate,” he said.

INDIANS CREATING JOBS IN US: SURVEY

Indian companies operating in 40 American states have invested over $2.820 million in manufacturing facilities in the U.S., creating thousands of jobs, according to the 2012 India Business Forum (IBF) survey.

The survey, titled ‘Indian Diaspora: Roots, American Soil: Adding Value to U.S. Economy and Society’, released by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at a reception on Capitol Hill recently, highlights the significant economic and social impact made by Indian companies on American communities.

Nearly 65 percent of companies are estimated to be over $190 million in 2012 alone, according to World Bank data.

More than 34 percent of the surveyed companies are estimated to be over $190 million in 2012 alone, according to World Bank data.

The remittance flow surged due to robust economic activities in the Gulf.
CHANGE AGENT

Meet Reshma Saujani, the first Indian-American woman to run for the US Congress who wants to create opportunities for immigrants in New York City, says Arun Kumar.

Reshma Saujani, the first Indian-American woman to run for the US Congress, has a lawyer, politician and entrepreneur. After her 2010 ambitious run against Democrat Carolyn Mahoney, a nine-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York, she is now “exploring a race for citywide office in 2013.”

“Things were not getting around me become jaded and the first Indian-American woman to run for the U.S. Congress was frustrated by the lack of leadership and the lack of political courage we were seeing in Congress.”

“My 15 months at the Public Advocate’s office were truly some of the best of my life,” said Saujani, currently the deputy advocate for special initiatives in the watchdog body, charged with ensuring that all New Yorkers have a voice in shaping the city’s policies.

“What we were able to accomplish with the Fund for Public Advocacy, from encouraging immigrant entrepreneurship to providing scholarships to undocumented students, was powerful,” she said. “I’m committed to being a leader in charting the future of New York City, and I want to keep creating opportunities for the people who live here.”

Explaining what made her run for the US Congress in the first place, Saujani said: “Things were not getting done in Washington, and I was frustrated by the lack of leadership and the lack of political courage we were seeing in Congress.”

“I was noticing people around me become jaded and I wanted to do something to change it,” she said.

“New ideas are so important for driving innovation in this country, and I wanted a chance to get my ideas out there,” she said. “I was talking to voters and I wanted to do something to change it.”

Reshma Saujani made by showing up, by being at the senior centre or the street fair and meeting the people that are working to make a difference in our communities,” Saujani said.

“I’ve always been an organizer, and as the daughter of immigrants, I have always been especially passionate about engaging people in the political process, who have been excluded from it or who felt no one was listening to them.”

She is behind the ‘The Light of India Awards’ that are “a powerful way to celebrate the work Indian Americans are doing and to show their innovations and accomplishments,” Saujani said, noting that they “are in every form of government from policy leaders to activists to change agents”.

Author Bhupati Lahiri, television personality Padma Lakshmi and CNN contributor and surgeon Sanjay Gupta are among the nominees for the second annual ‘Light of India Awards’, recognizing excellence and exemplary achievements of Indians abroad.

The winners of the awards, in the fields of business, education, science & technology, arts and entertainment and literature, journalism, were to be announced on June 1 at a gala event in New York.

MIDAS TOUCH

Nine Indian Americans make it to the Forbes ‘Midas List of Technology’s Best Investors’

Nine Indian-origin entrepreneurs made it to this year’s Forbes ‘Midas List of Technology’s Best Investors’ for fuelling a bull market for hot young companies.

Heading the Indian-American list is Greylock Partners’ Aneel Bhusri at No. 25 (15 in 2011). Bhusri is co-CEO of Workday, the cloud-based financials and human resources software company. Four-time consecutive Midas member Rob Chandra of Bessemer Venture Partners comes next at No. 28 (26 in 2011).

Chandra, who has a string of IPOs on India public markets, has two late-stage companies in India-based Ibarat Matrimony and Summit Microelectronics.

New Jersey-born Victor Roy will use his award to study for an MD at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. Born in Norwalk, Connecticut to an Indian father and Chinese mother, Indra Sen will use his grant to pursue a Master’s degree in public policy at Harvard University. Born in India, VineetSingal plans to use his grant to study for a medical degree at the Mayo Clinic School of Medicine. Louisiana-born Rina Thomas, who deferred her admission to Harvard Law School to become advisor to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal on economic development, taxes and budget policy, will use the grant to complete her law degree.

SIX-PACK POWER

Six Indian Americans were among 30 immigrants and children of immigrants from 20 countries who won ‘2012 Paul and Daisy Soros New American Fellowships’ to pursue advanced degrees. Each award provides up to $90,000 in tuition and support for two years of graduate study in the U.S. in any field.

Texas-born Sahil Singh Grewal, will use his grant to pursue a law degree or MBA. Singh worked on health care issues while interning at the White House.

Jasmeet Ahuja plans to use the money to pursue a law degree at Yale Law School. Victor Roy is interested in investing in file-sharing company Dropbox is doing quite nicely, going by the rumoured $4 billion valuation in 2011. Forbes noted. He has recently invested in an India online shopping site called Flipkart.

Khosla Ventures’ Vinod Khosla follows at No. 34 (71 in 2011). Khosla is known for off-the-beaten-path clean-tech investments.

Khosla’s passion for social entrepreneurship led to an investment in SKS, the Indian microfinance lender he funded in 2006, Forbes said. Other Indian-Americans on the Midas list include Battery Ventures’ Neera Agrawal at 36 (51 in 2011), Maryfield Fund’sNavin Chadha (66), Bain Capital Ventures’ Ajay Agarwal (95), Greylock Partners’ Ashneer Chandna (96) and Accent India’s Subrata Mitra (99).
Rohan, a science student of Dubai Modern High School who topped ICSE Grade 12 exams worldwide, hopes he can return to India one day, writes Malavika Vettath

“I think the hours spent in tuition should be spent in studying yourself with focus on extra-curricular activities,” he added. Contrary to the image of a topper, Rohan doesn’t believe in studying long hours or cramming either. In fact, the teenager was busy organising an international debate competition in his school just a week before his exams. “We were hosting the ‘Modern World Debates,’ which saw teams coming from the UK, India, Qatar and Singapore. It was a responsibility we had to fulfill,” said the bespectacled youngster who is also the president of the school debating society. He might not have been worried, but his mother sure was. “Believe me, I was very worried but we had no choice,” Sandhya told IANS, adding that Rohan is a good tennis player and swimmer as well.

Rohan’s school principal Darryl Bloud too is all praises for him. “Rohan Sampath has re-defined the word ‘full potential’ by raising the bar at Modern High with his phenomenal achievement at the ISC Examinations 2012. We salute this outstanding member of the Modern community,” Bloud said. Despite having grown up in Dubai all along, Rohan says he has a special connect with India. Recalling his holidays with grandparents to India, he said: “I don’t think it will be that tough. I don’t find much difference between me and kids my age in India except that we don’t talk much Hindi.” He credits his parents’ bringing him and his school for inculcating in him “the Indian value system with a global perspective.”

Rohan has chosen to attend Stanford University and study either economics or engineering.

“I have always wanted to return to India after my education. The Modern community, the teachers in school have been instrumental in my success. I look at private tuitions as an insult to my teachers as I trust them completely,” said Rohan.

The Trailblazer

Barack Obama cites Dalip Singh Saund to laud Asian contribution in the building of America, says Arum Kumar

This 17-year-old knew he would do well in his Grade 12 exams but becoming the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) topper worldwide with 99.5 percent marks was unimaginable. India-born Rohan Sampath now looks forward to joining Stanford University and unlike many brought up in Dubai, he really hopes he can return to India some day.

“My first reaction was disbelief. I thought it was a typo. I didn’t expect it,” Rohan, a science student of Dubai Modern High School, told IANS in an interview. Born in Mumbai, Rohan scored 100 percent in mathematics, 100 percent in physics, 100 percent in computer science and 98 percent in English, becoming the highest scorer in the history of the ICSE examinations.

His parents, who have been in Dubai for 18 years, are naturally overjoyed but say they were more elated when he got through both Stanford and Yale universities in the United States. “We were not that concerned about marks. He has topped in school every year with 98 percent. My elation was higher when he got through Stanford and Yale only later when we realised that he had topped ICSE across the world, then of course we were very happy,” said his mother Sandhya.

Rohan’s parents originally hail from Tamil Nadu but they too were brought up outside their home state. Rohan’s success has suddenly shifted the spotlight to the thousands of Indian expatriate children around the world who study and compete with their Indian counterparts for top honours at school level.

“Few of them had money. A lot of them didn’t have belongings. But what they did have was an unshakeable belief that this country — of all countries — is a place where anybody can make it if they try,” Obama said.

Poland sways to Tagore’s musical

Paying glowing tributes to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary, Poland organised an enthralling dance musical based on his work to wound down celebrations.

The dance group’s “Taal” from Chorzow, Poland, gave two outstanding performances in Krakow and Warsaw recently.

Dalip Singh Saund was elected to House of Representatives in 1956 from California and represented 29th district in California from 1957 to 1963.

It selected Tagore’s dance musical ‘Shyama’, a romantic tragedy, in which there are two intertwined love stories — that of Shyama, a court dancer, and Hojroshan, a foreign merchant. Sabina Sweta Sen, the director and choreographer of the ‘Taal’ group, said: “It was a great challenge for us to enact this musical play. One needed tremendous concentration and commitment to put on the stage.” Sen had to prepare 20 young dancers to learn Bengal and make them understand the nuances of ‘Tagore’s genius. They took six months to stage this dance musical as Polish artists had to sing Tagore songs on the stage themselves along with the dancers. The director used the music from Oboi Chatterji’s film ‘Shyama’.

“We are very keen to take this dance musical to many places not only in Europe but also in West Bengal and Bangladesh. We are searching for different avenues and patronage,” Sen told IANS.

The president of the Indo-Polish Cultural Committee (IPCC) in Krakow, Umesh Nautiyal, and Indian Ambas- sador to Poland, Monika Kapila Mohta, have really encouraged us to produce more classical programmes,” Sen added.

Congress, Obama added. Born in Chiquihual, Punjab, Saund represented the 29th District of California from 1957 to 1963.

“When I think about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, I think about my family — my sister, Maya; my brother-in-law, Konrad. My nieces Suhaila and Savita. I think about all the folks I grew up with in Honolulu,” Obama said, striking a personal note.

“I think about the years I spent in Indonesia. So, for me, coming here feels a little bit like home. This is a community that helped to make America that country that it is today. The Asian Americans, he said, “came here looking for new opportunities not merely for themselves, but for their children, and for their children’s children, and for all generations to come”.

“I have always wanted to return to India after my education. The Modern community, the teachers in school have been instrumental in my success. I look at private tuitions as an insult to my teachers as I trust them completely,” said Rohan.

“The dance group’s “Taal” from Chorzow, Poland, gave two outstanding performances in Krakow and Warsaw recently.

It selected Tagore’s dance musical ‘Shyama’, a romantic tragedy, in which there are two intertwined love stories — that of Shyama, a court dancer, and Hojroshan, a foreign merchant. Sabina Sweta Sen, the director and choreographer of the ‘Taal’ group, said: “It was a great challenge for us to enact this musical play. One needed tremendous concentration and commitment to put on the stage.” Sen had to prepare 20 young dancers to learn Bengal and make them understand the nuances of ‘Tagore’s genius. They took six months to stage this dance musical as Polish artists had to sing Tagore songs on the stage themselves along with the dancers. The director used the music from Oboi Chatterji’s film ‘Shyama’.

“We are very keen to take this dance musical to many places not only in Europe but also in West Bengal and Bangladesh. We are searching for different avenues and patronage,” Sen told IANS.

The president of the Indo-Polish Cultural Committee (IPCC) in Krakow, Umesh Nautiyal, and Indian Ambas- sador to Poland, Monika Kapila Mohta, have really encouraged us to produce more classical programmes,” Sen added.

“The dance group’s “Taal” from Chorzow, Poland, gave two outstanding performances in Krakow and Warsaw recently.

It selected Tagore’s dance musical ‘Shyama’, a romantic tragedy, in which there are two intertwined love stories — that of Shyama, a court dancer, and Hojroshan, a foreign merchant. Sabina Sweta Sen, the director and choreographer of the ‘Taal’ group, said: “It was a great challenge for us to enact this musical play. One needed tremendous concentration and commitment to put on the stage.” Sen had to prepare 20 young dancers to learn Bengal and make them understand the nuances of ‘Tagore’s genius. They took six months to stage this dance musical as Polish artists had to sing Tagore songs on the stage themselves along with the dancers. The director used the music from Oboi Chatterji’s film ‘Shyama’.

“We are very keen to take this dance musical to many places not only in Europe but also in West Bengal and Bangladesh. We are searching for different avenues and patronage,” Sen told IANS.

The president of the Indo-Polish Cultural Committee (IPCC) in Krakow, Umesh Nautiyal, and Indian Ambas- sador to Poland, Monika Kapila Mohta, have really encouraged us to produce more classical programmes,” Sen added.
FOCUS HOSPITALITY

It’s time to revolutionise India’s hospitality industry, Sam Pitroda tells Indian American hoteliers at an Atlanta event

As Indian American hoteliers savour their ever-growing clout in the United States, they are now being asked to revolutionise the hospitality industry in India. Sam Pitroda, advisor to the Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovations, called on Indian American hoteliers at the annual convention of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) in Atlanta recently to bring their expertise to bear and transform mid-segment hospitality infrastructure in India. “Second and third tier towns in India are in desperate need of professionally-run, affordable hotels. I think AAHOA members have the ability to transform this segment,” Pitroda said.

PepsiCo’s India-born CEO Indra Nooyi is one of the 18 women executives by the leading US business magazine. She “has overcome a shift in focus from soft drinks into less profitable, albeit healthier, snack foods market in recent years,” Others on the list that includes more women CEOs than ever before are Meg Whitman of Hewlett Packard (10th) and Ginni Rometty of IBM (19th), both of whom started within the last year. Also on the list are Patricia Woertz of one million farmers Archer Daniels Midland, Irene Rosenfeld who heads Kraft Foods and Ursula Burns who is CEO at Xerox and Sherilyn McCoy at Avon. Rometty is IBM’s first female CEO and Xerox chief Ursula Burns is the first African-American woman to head a Fortune 500 company.

“If America, with its little over 300 million population can have five million rooms, surely India with its billion plus people should at least match that number,” he said. He called on AAHOA members to create their own brands suitable for the Indian conditions, rather than just bringing their American franchises. “India is booming and its 550 million people below the age of 25 are not only potentially the workforce for the world but also a major market for the hospitality industry as well,” he said.

Pitroda said that with dispensable incomes among the Indian middle class rising, they travel around the country more than ever before but are often hard-pressed to find decent accommodation. Himanshu Vyas, an Ahmedabad-based entrepreneur, told IAAS: “I have been impressing upon AAHOA members to get into the game right away. As Pitroda said, the whole country is waiting to be transformed in terms of mid-segment hotels.”

GLOBAL LEADER

The University of South Florida honours Infosys founder N.R. Narayana Murthy for his leadership and contributions to the international business world

The University of South Florida has honoured Infosys founder N.R. Narayana Murthy with the Global leadership and Free Enterprise Awards for his leadership and contributions to the international business world. Presenting Infosys chairman Emeritus Murthy with the awards at the Patel Centre for Global Sustainability recently, USF President Judy Genshaft praised him for his entrepreneurial spirit.

Earlier, in an informal conversation with past and present students, Murthy said because of his middle class background, it was not as difficult for his company to maintain its values as it might be for the mass of people eking out a living. “You need a spirit of sacrifice and you need to have trust,” he said.

Murthy explained how the company’s ethos has its roots in the very first meeting held at his house in Mumbai with his six fellow founders. Their discussion was focused on profitability. Murthy focused their attention on “seeking respect”, “living in harmony with society” and making sure “you don’t shortchange your customers,” he said. When you do those things, “revenue will come. Profit will come.”

In response to a question from about the chances of Murthy entering politics, he mentioned his preference for “rational discussion” and the difficulty the political world offers for such and expressed some hesitation. Kaushal Chari, chair of the

MEET KAMAL BAWA, THE SAMARITAN

India-born professor Kamal Bawa has donated the entire prize money of one million Norwegian Kroner (about $10 million) from the world’s first major international sustainability award to the Indian organisation he founded in 1996.

Bawa, distinguished professor of biology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, is the 2012 winner of the Gunnerus Sustainability Award is given for outstanding scientific work that promotes sustainable development globally, and the first award was given to Bawa for his work on biodiversity in Central America, the Western Ghats in India and the Himalayas.

Bawa was recently elected to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences for his contribution to public discourse and public policy surrounding sustainability.

Award from the Royal Norwegian Society of Scientists and Letters (DNVKS). He gifted the prize money to the Bangalore-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), a research institute in the areas of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The Gunnerus Sustainability Award is given for outstanding scientific work that celebrates and demonstrates commitment to environmental sustainability. In response to a question about the chances of Murthy entering politics, he mentioned his preference for “rational discussion” and the difficulty the political world offers for such and expressed some hesitation. Kaushal Chari, chair of the

NOOYI 4TH IN TOP FORTUNE 500 LIST

PepsiCo’s India-born CEO Indra Nooyi is one of the 18 women who have shattered the glass ceiling to lead America’s 500 largest corporations, according to Fortune magazine’s latest ranking.

Nooyi, who leads the 41st biggest company in America, is listed fourth among top Indian Nooyi leads the 41st biggest company in America.
The kitchen, as a designer space at home, is becoming vital to tasteful interior decor in urban homes, says Indian designer Wendell Rodricks (below).
NOT JUST A BHUJIA STORY

The rugged district of Bikaner, synonymous with munchees known by their brand name ‘Bikaneri Bhujia’, has a rich history that makes it one of the most popular destinations for tourists in Rajasthan, after Jaipur. The appeal of Bikaner lies in the fact that it is one of the oldest Rajput fiefdoms that has transformed itself without compromising on its old-world sensitivities and values, says former princess Rajyashree Kumari Bikaner who has updated the history of the palace in her new book, ‘The Maharajas of Bikaner’ (Amaryllis). After it acceded to the Indian Union, the state has become a prosperous business centre, even as the erstwhile royal family has acted as a guardian to its traditions. Its well-kept archives are open to scholars and its palaces to guests and filmmakers from Mumbai who find its period characteristics which made the royal region of Rajputana, “I don’t want Bikaner to lose its character and become another metro city. One of its strengths is its harsh terrain — only the hardest could reach it and it has Bikaner out of the way of unchecked urbanisation. “To my mind, Jaipur has grown to such an extent that it risks losing its identity. Let’s not lose the identity – the very characteristics which made the royal region of Rajputana,” she said.

The ‘bhujias’, of course, is another story. It is a successful commercial face of working-class Bikaner, said the former princess.

AN INDIAN CREATED ELVIS!

A claimed Indian artist Jamen J. Kang (seen at left) teamed up with legendary superhero creator Stan Lee to sketch the artwork for a new comic book honouring Elvis Presley — the ‘King of Rock n’ Roll’. Written by Lee, co-creator of some of the world’s leading superheroes characters (Spider-Man, X-Men, Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Daredevil, Hulk, Thor), the new short story was released recently. Commemorating the 35th death anniversary of Elvis Presley, the story by Lee was originally created as part of an exclusive hardcover, collector’s item anthology titled, ‘Graphic Elvis’, which was limited to only 2,500 copies worldwide and available through select online retailers and at www.GraphicElvis.com. Los Angeles-based Liquid Comics has now made Stan Lee’s ‘Elvis’ story available to millions for free as part of ‘Free Comic Book Day’, the industry’s biggest annual giveaway of free comic books across America. In addition to the physical book, an interactive digital and mobile app titled, ‘Graphic Elvis: The Interactive Experience,’ is now available for $5.99 and features all of the content from the ‘Graphic Elvis’ collector’s book with bonus videos, animated and interactive features.

Beyond the original illustrations, ‘Graphic Elvis’ also features numerous hand-written notes and musings, never before seen by the public and written in the margins of various books owned by Elvis, making the hardcover collector’s book and the digital app a must-have collectible for Elvis fans around the world. Lee was joined by some of the most acclaimed graphic novel creators in the industry to portray the King of Rock n’ Roll in unprecedented visual styles. They included Kang, Mukesh Singh, Saumin Patel and Samit Basu.

Kang created the artwork of the famous “Spider-Man: India comic.” He has been signed by Liquid Comics, founded by Sir Richard Branson and his Virgin Group, author Deepak Chopra, filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, and entrepreneurs Sharad Devarajan, Suresh Seetharaman and Gotham Chopra, to create art for their Indian comics. His other works include ‘The Sadhu’ (Virgin Comics, 2006) and ‘Seven Brothers’ (based on a concept by John Woo, five- issue mini-series, Virgin Comics, 2006).
Rising disposable incomes and increasing global travel have exposed the Indian middle- and upper-middle classes to unique art forms. This means that interior accessory art such as Amanda Brisbane sculptures, Wedgewood cutlery, Royal Doulton, Moorcroft, Arthur Price, Poole Pottery from UK, Costaboda from Scandinavia, Svaja from Eastern Europe, Versace sculptures, Armani from Italy, Rosenthal from Germany, Lladro from Spain, Felix Valez bone sculpures, Cyan Glass and Franz porcelain from Spain.

High-end lifestyle art brands from across Europe and the US are looking at India as a large market to sell their products at cheaper prices – a “reverse trend” from pre-independence times, when Indian goods were sold for a pittance in Europe, says a leading UK-based home arts promoter of Indian origin.

“The Indian economy is growing and so are people’s choices. Indians have become adventurous. We have been exporting high-end art any more and the countries have to find emerging markets. “Indian economy is still strong. It is a reverse trend,” he said.

Sethi, the founder of Interarts that offers contemporary art for corporate and private collectors, promotes high-end accessory art brands like Wedgewood, Royal Doulton, Moorcroft, Arthur Price, Poole Pottery from UK, Costaboda from Scandinavia, Svaja from Eastern Europe, Versace sculptures, Armani from Italy, Rosenthal from Germany, Lladro from Spain, Felix Valez bone sculpures, Cyan Glass and Franz porcelain from Spain.

An Interarts showcase of home accessory art at Bikaner House in New Delhi on April 27-28 displayed more than 100 limited edition objects’ art from Europe and the US — featuring the best of contemporary crystal, porcelain, bronze and glass sculptures and cutlery. The prices ranged between Rs. 2,500 and Rs. 14 lakh.

A section dedicated to coloured glass sculptures by Amanda Brisbane, Will Shakespeare and Richard Golding — a few of Britain’s best glass artists — was the centre of attraction. Brisbane sculpts large products from nature in single sheets of expensive shaded glass while Shakespeare crafts futuristic shape in crystalline fired glass. Golding, the founder of Okra Glass, fuses metal with glass.

The three, along with hot glass artist Ian MacDonald, cameo glass artist Helen Millard, glass revivalist Andrew Potter, glass designer Rebecca Morgan, the Isle of Wight Glass Studio and veterans like Simon Moore, represent UK’s new face of glass art, a tradition that dates back to the country’s ties with glass capitals Venice and Murano in Italy in the early medieval era. However, historians say, glass, as a medium of crafting, was used as early as 1,500 BC.

“I started collecting glass in 1992. The first piece of glass that I bought was from Okra Glass. Over the years, my collection has grown and I befriended the artists, glass studios and large glassware chains to set up a export platform,” said Sethi, who, with wife Purnima, set up Interarts some four years ago.

He has exhibited and sold British accessory art in Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Chandigarh. When not in India, Interarts conducts business with Indian buyers on the Internet, he said.
**DESTINATION AUSTRALIA**

Britain's loss is Australia's gain. UK's stringent visa rules are driving Indian students Down Under, says Paritosh Parasher

It is a classic reversal of a situation a few years ago, Australian universities now stand to benefit from the recent tightening of student visa rules and a decrease in enrolments in Britain from India.

British universities have experienced a fall of more than 30 percent in Indian enrolments while the percentage of the number of enrolments and visa grants for Australia is reported to be in three figures.

The number of Indian student visa applications for Australia has gone up by a whopping 120 percent in the last nine months while the number of visa grants has also improved by nearly 80 percent in the same period.

Eric Thomas, president of Universities UK — the representative organisation for Britain's universities — has reportedly written to British Prime Minister David Cameron, warning that the immigration changes could cost the country as much as five billion pounds ($8 billion) in tuition fees alone.

The recent immigration crackdown is reported to have led to Indian students shunning British universities.

Besides Australia, the Canadian and European universities and vocational training institutes are also benefitting from international students looking for overseas options other than Britain.

The profile of Poland has gone up by many notches as a cultural destination for Indian artists. After Bollywood films and translations of Urdu masters into Polish language, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, one of the doyens of Indian classical music, enthralled Polish crowd in three cities — Wroclaw, Krakow and Warsaw — recently.

In all these places, Chaurasia won the hearts of the audience with his spell-binding flute recitals.

"He creates magic with his flute and we simply feel enchanted with his performance. It was once in a lifetime event and so memorable that we would love to remember him for a long time to come," Janusz Kryczkowski, president of the India-Poland Cultural Committee in Warsaw, told IANS.

Pt. Chaurasia's event was jointly sponsored by the Pandit Chatur Lal Memorial Society of New Delhi, along with its sponsors the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Embassy of India. They had persuaded Pt. Chaurasia to perform at concerts in Poland to mark the annual Chatur Lal Music Festival.

Pandit Chatur Lal was regarded as a tabla wizard in his days when he used to play with Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and other great artists, not only in India but also in western countries.

Yehudi Menuhin, a great violinist, once said: "Chatur Lal was one of those few supreme pioneer musicians who won for India the greatest and growing following it now commands. He stole the hearts of his audience wherever he went with his art and his enchanting personality."

Unfortunately, Chaur Lal died at a young age of 40 in October, 1965. After his death, a memorial society was established, in his young age of 40 in October, 1965. After his death, a memorial society was established...

**MUSIC**

One of the doyens of Indian classical music, Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia enthralled Poles in Wroclaw, Krakow and Warsaw, writes Surendra Bhutani

The love for Indian classical music in Poland had a feast of Supreme pioneer musicians who won for India the greatest and growing following it now commands. He stole the hearts of his audience wherever he went with his art and his enchanting personality."

Unfortunately, Chaur Lal died at a young age of 40 in October, 1965. After his death, a memorial society was established, in his recent 'Strategic Review of the Student Visa Programme 2011' report.

British authorities, on the other hand, have abolished Post Study Work Scheme for international students. Many critics of the immigration curbs consider this as the single-most damaging of a "multitude of recent policy changes".

Indian students seem to have reacted negatively to the denial of work rights in Britain as the number of applications for British student visas from India and other South Asian countries is on a sharp decline.

The Cameron government has also removed work rights for most private college students. Work rights for other students were also reduced to just 10 hours a week.

Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia performed at three concerts in Poland to mark the annual Chatur Lal Music Festival.
RAY’S COMRADE

Soumitra Chatterjee, the lead actor of Apur Sansar, tells Pradip Tapdar and Shirshendu Panth what it meant to work with the legendary Satyajit Ray.

---

I don’t know what I would have done if he was not there. But I can say one thing for sure, that many dreams would have remained unfulfilled.

— Soumitra Chatterjee

I couldn’t have learnt so much. Even today he remains alive in me. Even today he is an inspiration for me,” Chatterjee, who is the winner of ‘Officer des Arts et Metiers’, the highest award of Arts by the French government, told IANS.

Chatterjee said he had declined offers from Bollywood at the time as he neither would have been able to work freely nor would have succeeded in pursuing other literary genres. “I couldn’t have done recitation, theatre. The whole world knows me through Ray’s films. So why would I need to go to Mumbai?” he asked.

Making his debut in Ray’s masterpiece Apur Sansar (The World of Apu), the third part of the Apu Trilogy, in 1959, Chatterjee became the famed director’s favourite actor, playing lead roles in Ray’s masterpieces such as Sonar Kella, Jai Baba Felunath, Charulata, Ghare Baire, Ashani Sankat, Devi, Abhijan, Avunier Din Ratri and Gunahatar.

Rated as one of the finest actors in India, Chatterjee has also worked with legendary movie directors such as Mrinal Sen and Tapan Sinha. Although the actor describes Ray as his mentor in films, it was the famous theatre personality Shishir Bhaduri who drew Chatterjee towards acting.

“It’s true that Ray is my mentor in film acting. I have learnt a lot from him. But it was Shishir Bhaduri’s acting that attracted me towards this art. After watching his acting, I had decided that I will do only this. My ideas towards life have also been nourished by him,” he said.

Apart from Ray and Bhadhuri, the actor said he is also grateful to Sinha for helping him understand the art of cinema as well as acting.

---

To celebrate his father’s birthday, Sandip Ray said: “I will make a film on Professor Shonku — a famous character created by the legendary filmmaker. Sandip Ray played western classical. “During his birthdays, it was mandatory for him to listen to it (Western classical),” Sandip added.

---

On his father’s 92nd birth anniversary Sandip Ray said: “I will make a film on Professor Shonku, a famous character created by the legendary filmmaker. Sandip Ray said: “I will make a film on Professor Shonku, a famous character created by the legendary filmmaker.”

To mark the Oscar-award winning late director’s birthday, a portal on Goopy Gayne, a comic character from the film Goopy Gayne Bagha Bayne was also launched.

Several people, including film personalities, visited Ray’s residence on Bishop Lefroy Road in Kolkata to pay tributes.

The director’s five favourite foreign language films — Bicycle Thieves, Rashomon, Metropolis, Battleship Potemkin and The Passion of Joan of Arc — were screened at the Nandan theatre.

To celebrate his father’s birthday, Sandip Ray played western classical music. “During his birthdays, it was mandatory for him to listen to it (Western classical),” Sandip added.
Abhi na jaana chhod kar... ki cake abhi kata nahin... ki pet abhi bhara nahin (Don’t leave the party, the cake hasn’t been cut yet, tummy isn’t filled yet), sang the blue-eyed “baby” of entertainment Zohra Sehgal on her 100th birthday, before she ‘knifed’ the cake.

The cake hasn’t been cut
(Don’t leave the party, Abhi na jaana chhod kar...)

Manto

In his short life spanning barely 43 years, Manto left a legacy of some of the most profound and popular contributions to Urdu literature, says Quaid Najmi.

Over the years, he was catapulted to fame with works ‘Boo’, ‘Khol Do’, ‘Thanda Gosht’, and his magnum opus, ‘Tooba Tek Singh’.

In the biographical sketch of Nur Jehan, Manto writes: “I think I arrived in Bombay on Aug 7, 1940, and my first meeting with Shaukat (Syed Shaukat Hasan Rizvi) took place at 17 Adelphi Chambers, Clare Road, which served both as office and his residence.”

His ever-popular story, ‘A Question of Honour’, described in great detail the places with which he was associated in the city, the places he lived in, ate, visited during his few years here.

In ‘A Question of Honour’, Manto mentions Mumbai’s famous Arab Gully: “Another street in the area was called Arab Gully, with 20-25 Arabs living there, all apparently in the pearl trade. Others were Punjabis and Rampurias. I was in Arab Gully that I had rented a room, which was so dark that the light had to be kept on all times. The monthly rent was exactly nine rupees, eight annas....”

Despite an early struggle, Manto was fortunate that the film studios of that era recognised his gift for storytelling and he wrote several scripts which later became movies. They include Kheech, Apne Naagariya, Begum, Naatach, Chal Chal Re Naujawan, Ghamandi, Beli, Mera Pyaari Bahen, Dosti, Shikhaat, Aatish Din, Azhag and Miraaz.

He has also acted in a couple of films — Eight Days and Chal Chal Re Naujawan.

Considered one of the best Urdu short story writers of the 20th century, Manto also developed a reputation for being the most controversial. Known for penning topics which were considered social taboo in the Indian and Pakistan societies of those days, Manto was reviled and revered in equal measure and often compared with British writer D.H. Lawrence.

Manto’s focus of writings ranged from the grim socio-economic injustices prevailing in the pre- and post-colonial subcontinent, to the more controversial topics of love, sex, in- cent, prostitution and the typical hypocrisy of a traditional subcontinental male.

He died on January 18, 1955, in Lahore, Pakistan. And the literary void he left behind has been difficult to fill.
After Kovalam, Kumarakom, Wayanad and Thekkady, the Kerala government now aims to place the pristine and scenic town of Bekal on the global tourism map, says Arvind Padmanabhan.

After firmly putting places such as Kovalam and Kumarakom on the global tourism map, the Kerala government has picked this idyllic town of beaches and backwaters as destination next for visitors to ‘God’s Own Country’.

The ‘Know Bekal’ campaign to kick off the tourism initiative in this pristine and scenic town was launched recently after Kovalam, Kumarakom, Wayanad and Thekkady.

Starting 17 years ago have now begun to bear fruit. Our top priority is to improve road, rail and air connectivity,” Chief Minister Oommen Chandy told IANS.

“Where else can you find beaches, backwaters and hills all within a few kilometres?” asked the chief minister, referring to the variety of options offered by this town, which has settings similar to Goa.

“Bekal received some 3.2 lakh tourists (320,000) last year. We would like the numbers to go up to more than six lakh by 2015. That is our target, that is our aim…,” The chief minister also said this destination was the fifth to come up under the ‘Kerala Tourism Initiative’.

The ‘Know Bekal’ campaign to kick off the tourism initiative in this pristine and scenic town was launched recently after Kovalam, Kumarakom, Wayanad and Thekkady.

Otherwise on National Highway 17, less than 10 km from Kasaragod in north Kerala, Bekal is easily accessible by rail network, some eight kilometres away. The nearest airport is at Mangalore in Karnataka, 70 km north. The chief minister also said this destination was the fifth to come up under the ‘Kerala Tourism Initiative’.

“Around 50 other properties in the area offer around 1,000 rooms. You also have home-stays villas and ayurvedic centres. Accommodation will be expanded and people are welcome to invest, especially in budget hotels,” Rani George, director, Kerala Tourism, told IANS.

Detailing the major attractions in and around Bekal, she not only referred to the majestic Bekal Fort, but also those at Hosdurg and Chadragiri.

“There are also many stunning beaches, backwaters and hill stations in and around Bekal,” she added.

Ancient temples and mosques, handicraft like lamps, utensils and curios made of bell metal, and preservation of rich culture like Theyyam dance form and Kalaripayattu martial arts are other attractions, George said.

Most other existing resort destinations are close to urban centres and therefore over-developed. Bekal, on the other hand, is still virgin and pristine.

**Travel tips**

Bekal is on National Highway 17, less than 10 km from Kasaragod in north Kerala. Easy accessible by rail network.

The nearest airport is at Mangalore in Karnataka, 70 km north.

Bekal received over 3.2 lakh tourists last year.
FOOD FOR LIFE

No secrets in the kitchen is the mantra of celebrity chef Vikas Khanna (above) whose signature dish gobi ka pakoda was recently served to none other than US President Barack Obama recently, is also a strong votary of the philosophy of “no secrets in the kitchen”.

Food has to be shared as it represents sharing of cultures which is the way civilisations move forward, says Khanna, whose new cookbook, ‘Flavors First,’ has hit the stands.

“You food starts absorbing more influences. I agreed to do this,” he said. The book is divided into segments devoted to an introduction to the Indian kitchen, condiments, starters, rice, breads, legumes, soups and salads, vegetables, and the “Indian women in kitchens from where the food comes.” It also includes collaborative recipes that Khanna has learnt through his interactions with cooks from across the world.

The book has been divided into segments devoted to an introduction to the Indian kitchen, condiments, starters, rice, breads, legumes, soups and salads, vegetables, and the “Indian women in kitchens from where the food comes.”

Khanna, whose new cookbook, ‘Flavors First,’ has hit the stands.

For foodies and cooking enthusiasts, here are some recipes by Vikas Khanna

Chai-Infused Emperor’s Green Rice

INGREDIENTS: 1 cup of emperor’s green rice, 2 table spoons of unsalted butter, 4 bay leaves, 4 white cloves, 3 three-inch long cinnamon sticks, 6 green cardamom pods, 1 two-inch long ginger, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

French Breakfast Radishes with Mustard Dressing

INGREDIENTS: 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 th tablespoon of cumin seeds, 1/4 th teaspoon of black mustard seeds, 1 small red onion minced, 1 small red bell pepper cut into strips, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1/4 th cup of mustard dressing.

PROCESS: Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Season the (whole small) hens with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, lemon juice, garam masala and lavender flowers.

The hens with the marinade. Heat oil over medium high heat and sear the hens from all sides so that the oil coats. Transfer hens in a roasting pan and roast in oven till hens are tender. Insert thermometer in the thigh of hens and wait till it reads 165 degrees F. Arrange on platter and garnish with lavender sprigs.

Masala Honey Cornish Hens

INGREDIENTS: 4 cornish Cornish hens rinsed well and patted dry, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, juice of 2 lemons, 1/4 th cup garam masala, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder ground, sprigs for garnish and 1/4 th cup olive oil.

PROCESS: Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Season the (whole small) hens with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, lemon juice, garam masala and lavender flowers.

Rub the hens with the marinade. Heat oil over medium high heat and sear the hens from all sides so that the oil coats. Transfer hens in a roasting pan and roast in oven till hens are tender. Insert thermometer in the thigh of hens and wait till it reads 165 degrees F. Arrange on platter and garnish with lavender sprigs.

French Breakfast Radishes with Mustard Dressing (lal-mooli and moongfali chaat)

INGREDIENTS: 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 th tablespoon of cumin seeds, 1/4 th teaspoon of black mustard seeds, 1 small red onion minced, 1/4 th table spoon turmeric, 1/2 table spoon salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

Chai-Infused Emperor’s Green Rice

INGREDIENTS: 1 cup of emperor’s green rice, 2 table spoons of unsalted butter, 4 bay leaves, 4 white cloves, 3 three-inch long cinnamon sticks, 6 green cardamom pods, 1 two-inch long ginger, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

French Breakfast Radishes with Mustard Dressing

INGREDIENTS: 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 th tablespoon of cumin seeds, 1/4 th teaspoon of black mustard seeds, 1 small red onion minced, 1/4 th table spoon turmeric, 1/2 table spoon salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

Masala Honey Cornish Hens

INGREDIENTS: 4 cornish Cornish hens rinsed well and patted dry, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, juice of 2 lemons, 1/4 th cup garam masala, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder ground, sprigs for garnish and 1/4 th cup olive oil.

PROCESS: Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Season the (whole small) hens with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, lemon juice, garam masala and lavender flowers.

Rub the hens with the marinade. Heat oil over medium high heat and sear the hens from all sides so that the oil coats. Transfer hens in a roasting pan and roast in oven till hens are tender. Insert thermometer in the thigh of hens and wait till it reads 165 degrees F. Arrange on platter and garnish with lavender sprigs.

Chai-Infused Emperor’s Green Rice

INGREDIENTS: 1 cup of emperor’s green rice, 2 table spoons of unsalted butter, 4 bay leaves, 4 white cloves, 3 three-inch long cinnamon sticks, 6 green cardamom pods, 1 two-inch long ginger, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

French Breakfast Radishes with Mustard Dressing

INGREDIENTS: 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 th tablespoon of cumin seeds, 1/4 th teaspoon of black mustard seeds, 1 small red onion minced, 1/4 th tablespoon turmeric, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

Masala Honey Cornish Hens

INGREDIENTS: 4 cornish Cornish hens rinsed well and patted dry, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, juice of 2 lemons, 1/4 th cup garam masala, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder ground, sprigs for garnish and 1/4 th cup olive oil.

PROCESS: Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Season the (whole small) hens with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, lemon juice, garam masala and lavender flowers.

Rub the hens with the marinade. Heat oil over medium high heat and sear the hens from all sides so that the oil coats. Transfer hens in a roasting pan and roast in oven till hens are tender. Insert thermometer in the thigh of hens and wait till it reads 165 degrees F. Arrange on platter and garnish with lavender sprigs.

Chai-Infused Emperor’s Green Rice

INGREDIENTS: 1 cup of emperor’s green rice, 2 table spoons of unsalted butter, 4 bay leaves, 4 white cloves, 3 three-inch long cinnamon sticks, 6 green cardamom pods, 1 two-inch long ginger, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

French Breakfast Radishes with Mustard Dressing

INGREDIENTS: 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 th tablespoon of cumin seeds, 1/4 th teaspoon of black mustard seeds, 1 small red onion minced, 1/4 th tablespoon turmeric, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 cups of small and sliced French breakfast radishes, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 cup roasted peanuts, 1 tablespoon of chopped cilantro.

PROCESS: Heat oil in small saucepan with a lid. Add cumin and mustard seeds. Cover and shake the pan till seeds sputter. Add onion, turmeric, salt and cook. Remove from heat and then cool. Use it as dressing. Place radishes in a bowl and add radishes with lemon juice. Serve with peanuts and cilantro.

Masala Honey Cornish Hens

INGREDIENTS: 4 cornish Cornish hens rinsed well and patted dry, 1/2 tablespoon salt, 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, juice of 2 lemons, 1/4 th cup garam masala, 1/4 th cup of lavender powder ground, sprigs for garnish and 1/4 th cup olive oil.

PROCESS: Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Season the (whole small) hens with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine honey, soy sauce, lemon juice, garam masala and lavender flowers.

Rub the hens with the marinade. Heat oil over medium high heat and sear the hens from all sides so that the oil coats. Transfer hens in a roasting pan and roast in oven till hens are tender. Insert thermometer in the thigh of hens and wait till it reads 165 degrees F. Arrange on platter and garnish with lavender sprigs.
Justice Dalveer Bhandari, a sitting judge of the Indian Supreme Court, has been elected to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is the first time an Indian has managed to get this key international post in over two decades.

Bhandari secured 122 votes in the United Nations General Assembly against 58 for his Filipino rival.

In simultaneous elections at the UN headquarters in New York, Bhandari also secured an absolute majority in the Security Council. In the election to the ICJ, a primary judicial organ of the UN, Bhandari was locked in a fierce contest with Justice Florentino P. Feliciano of the Philippines.

Bhandari takes the place of Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh of Jordan who resigned from the Asia-Pacific region seat at the end of 2011.

An eminent legal luminary, Bhandari will serve the remainder of the term from 2012-18. Acknowledging his outstanding contribution, the Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago, while celebrating its 150 Years (1859-2009), selected Bhandari as one of its 16 most distinguished alumni.

Indian American journalist Manu Raju was among the ‘White House Correspondents Journalism Award’ winners for 2012, honoured at the association’s traditional dinner with President Barack Obama. Raju, along with colleagues Glenn Thrush, Carrie Budoff Brown and John Bresnahan at Politico, was named the winner of the ‘Merriman Smith Award for Excellence in Presidential Coverage Under Pressure’.

Vikram J. Singh has been appointed to a key Pentagon position to take care of South and South-East Asia. Singh was appointed to the Senior Executive Service and was assigned as deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy). He previously served as special assistant, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy).

Asian Lite, a fortnightly focusing on British Asian events and issues and edited by Indian-origin journalist Anasudhin Azeez, has won the prestigious ‘How-Do Newspaper of the Year’ award for 2012. A judging panel comprising BBC veteran Jim Hancock and Google’s Andy Barke selected ‘Asian Lite’ as the ‘Newspaper of the Year 2012’ from the short-list of eight leading British titles, including Rupert Murdoch-owned News Corporations’ The Times, Newsquest’s The Bolton News and Johnston Press Group’s Lancaster Guardian. Asian Lite was the only British ethnic media title shortlisted in the 18 award categories.

The committee said Asian Lite bucked the trend in declining sales and circulation in publishing and with innovative solutions.

For details contact:
Ms. Sujata Sudarshan
CEO, OIFC, and Director – CII
249-F, sector 18, Udyog Vihar, Phase IV, Gurgaon — 122015, Haryana, INDIA
Tel: +91-124-4014055/6 | Fax: +91-124-4309446
Website: www.oifc.in
The nation, and expatriates across the world, celebrated the traditional harvest festivals — Baisakhi, Vishu and Bihu — with fervour. “They are not only an occasion to celebrate the harvest but also a time to mark a new beginning,” said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, while wishing every one on the occasion. “May these festivals usher in prosperity and happiness for all,” he said. In the United States, Maryland state governor Martin O’Malley opened his house to celebrate Baisakhi. Over 150 Indian and Sikh community leaders gathered at O’Malley’s residence for the celebrations in Annapolis. In Kerala, crowds gathered at the famed Sabarimala, Guruvayoor, Sree Padmanabha Swamy temples since early morning. The most important event of the day started with the ‘Vishukani Darshan,’ the auspicious sight of their favourite deity. Baisakhi is celebrated mainly in Punjab, Vishu in Kerala and Rongali Bihu in Assam.