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AGA KHAN FOR A PRIVATE SECTOR LED PEACE



KABUL MAKEOVER



IT'S TIME TO FORGE ALLIANCES

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IN CIVIL SOCIETY EVERYONE IS

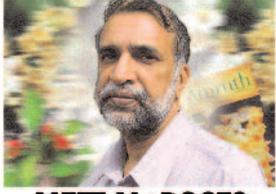
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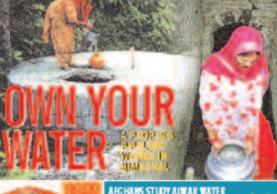
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ANIL KUMAR ON WHY INDUSTRY MUST LEAD

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ARCHANS STUDY ASKED WATER PHILANTHROPIST TO TAKE A KNOCKING OPEN LETTER TO SHARAD KUMAR, RAJ KUMAR AT THE BOTTOM

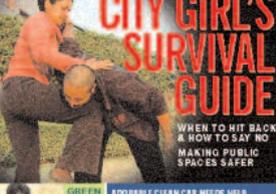
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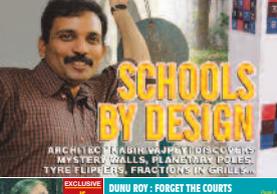
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ARCHITECT RAJIB BANERJEE DISCOVERS NEW STRATEGIES FOR DESIGNING SCHOOLS

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IMAGE BOOST FOR NGOS

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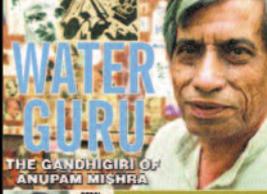
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WATER GURU

THE GANDHIGIRI OF ANUPAM MISHRA

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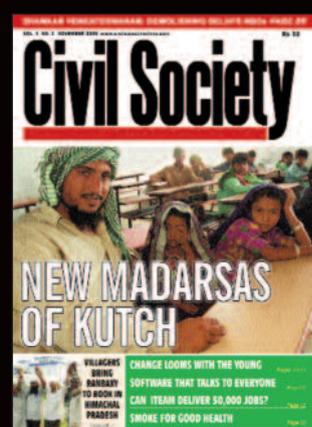
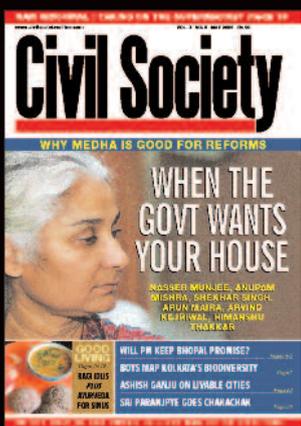
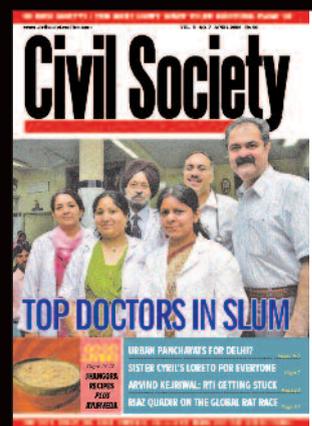
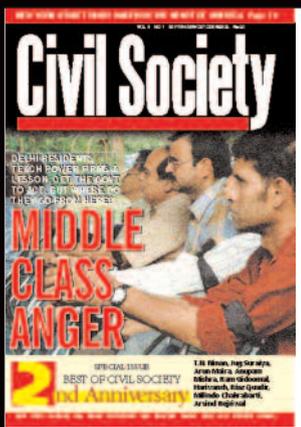
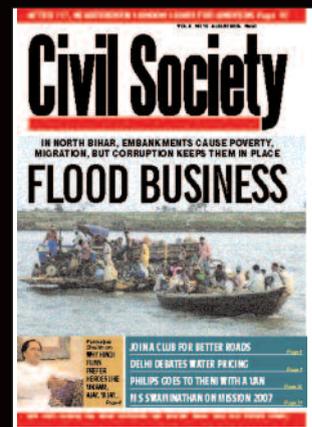
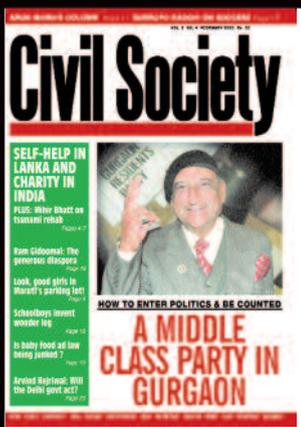
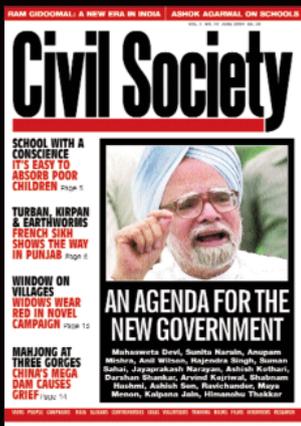
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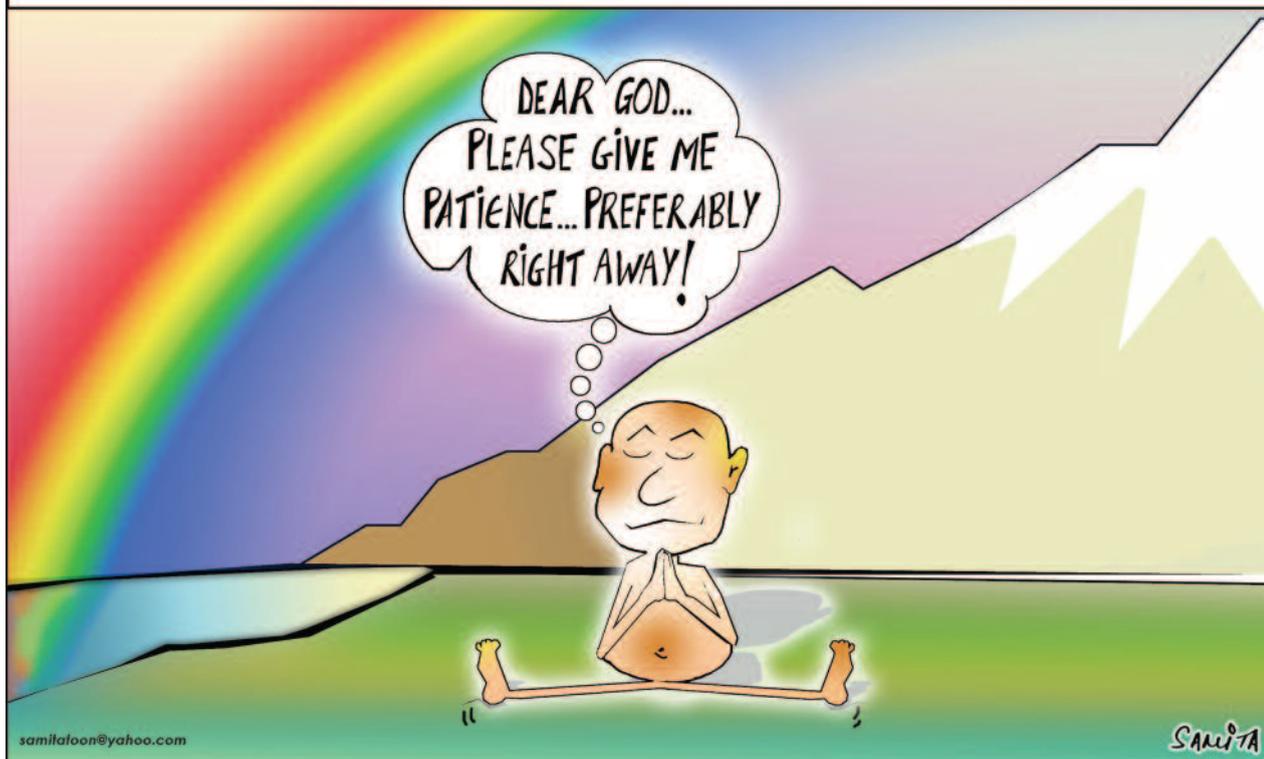
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IN THE LIGHT

by SAMITA RATHOR

**Hawker power**

Your cover story, 'Kolkata Hawker Power' made interesting reading. It is good that food hawkers have taken the initiative to be hygienic. We see many food stalls on pavements which are really dirty and filthy. But even food plazas in Gurgaon's fancy shopping malls are unclean and sell contaminated food that makes people sick. No standards are maintained.

The government must provide training and lay down rules for food stalls. Pavements all over the world have stalls and they always attract more customers than restaurants. If food stalls improve quality they will give the restaurants and shopping malls stiff competition.

P Siddharth, New Delhi

Hawker map

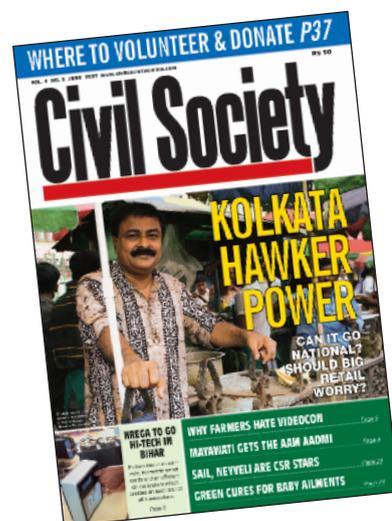
The hawkers' federation should make sure that every city's master plan includes space for hawkers. There is no city, town or village in India that does not have hawkers. So they are a reality. Hawkers unions can also make a survey of all areas in a city where hawking can be done. Such clusters should have clean, attractive kiosks. The federation can also design a hawker's map and give ratings to each area. It would be useful for tourists.

Amita Das, Kolkata

BJP vs Mayawati

I hope the BJP is pondering over its many electoral defeats. Their anti-Muslim propaganda in UP got them nowhere. Mayawati took the Brahmin vote from under their noses. They lost Goa because they were seen as communal. In Punjab they did not play the communal card and they won.

So the BJP should wind up the Bajrang Dal and the VHP and transform itself into a young,

LETTERS

modern party of the Right. It will attract more votes if it stops its stupid attacks on Muslims and Christians. Even the Hindu trader middle-class, which is busy minting money and jetting around the world, is getting embarrassed by its communalism.

Amrita Singh, Lucknow

Bihar and NREGA

It is heartening to know that NREGA is becoming hi-tech in Bihar. For once the state is becoming a trend setter. Most of the time I get only bad news from Bihar: floods, poverty, caste conflicts and corruption. It is only since Nitish Kumar took over as chief minister that good news has started floating in. The state has got a dynamic chief minister and he can revive Bihar's economy, environment (especially the mess in water management) culture and social indicators. I wish him all the best.

Naresh Kumar Singh, Gurgaon

Green Cures

I would like to thank Dr GG Gangadharan for his advice in Green

Cures. The one on baby ailments was very useful for my baby.

Anita Kohli, Manesar

Nandigram

Vandana Shiva's article on Nandigram gave an interesting point of view to the debate on SEZs. What emerges is that the government knows nothing about the land it is grabbing and the people it is dispossessing. Agriculture of the type being practised in Nandigram is a much healthier alternative to a chemical hub. It preserves biodiversity, does not pollute and creates a sound economy for villagers. But this kind of development is anathema to the politician and economist although it is essentially Gandhian.

Biswajit Chatterjee, Kolkata

Public sector triumphs

I would like to congratulate SAIL and Neyveli Lignite for winning the FICCI-SEDF awards for corporate social responsibility. So much fuss is made of the private sector. Yet their contribution to the nation's overall development is very suspect. I think public sector units should be helped to become role models for the private sector. The government must lead the way with good practices.

Vishwanath TS, Chennai

Delhi's Chipko movement

I liked your story on the tree campaigners in Delhi. Concerned citizens must protect the environment. They can spread good messages on tree planting, waste management, energy conservation, rainwater harvesting and, most importantly, public behaviour. Unfortunately many resident welfare associations, who could do all this, are busy politicking and picking on meaningless issues. They are not improving the quality of life in colonies.

Suhel Arora, Delhi

“ I see a definite realignment of forces with communists, socialists, alternative forces, non-party activists and progressive people with democratic orientations. There is great possibility of a huge political churning against the SEZs. ”

Dipankar Bhattacharya

General Secretary, CPI (ML)

“ Sustainable development is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots and given the ways and means to take responsibility for its own future. ”

The Aga Khan

at the Enabling Environment Conference in Afghanistan

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**COVER STORY****MAKEOVER IN KABUL**

A conference convened by the Aga Khan in Kabul has sought to build on the first signs of sustained peace in Afghanistan and create an environment for private sector led normalcy.

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Cover photograph by UMESH ANAND

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Civil Society*Kabul to Chennai*

CIVIL Society was in Kabul and then Chennai in quick succession last month. Both visits were to attend conclaves seeking ways of achieving inclusive growth through private sector investments.

For so many reasons, India is not Afghanistan. Therefore it is interesting that Indian industry, for all its successes and strengths, should be grappling with some very basic issues of identity and relevance that closely resemble concerns in a nascent and troubled economy like Afghanistan's.

In Kabul, the Aga Khan, through his foundations and investment arms, is helping establish an "enabling environment" in which private enterprise can come into its own and take the economy of Afghanistan forward quickly. There is a huge backlog of problems. Bottom-up growth and social accountability for the private sector are key components of the Aga Khan's initiatives.

His professed way is to build businesses that make not just profits, but also deliver what society needs. It is a part of this model to defer profitability so that a business can generate prosperity in ways that short time frames do not permit. His investments also take on high risk. They are made in situations that are politically and socially volatile.

The Aga Khan-led effort makes it a point to define the private sector as encompassing not only big industry, but enterprises of all sizes, including micro businesses that traditional craftsmen run. The private sector to him also includes the non-profit sector because of the social entrepreneurship that it represents. Defined in this way, the private sector becomes the source of an array of initiatives, untapped energies and creative solutions.

It is much the same challenge in India, which needs a newer and more democratic definition of the private sector. Right now the private sector in practice means only the big guys, who seem to set the rules. There is little consultation and civil society is narrowly defined as NGOs who offer themselves for corporate adoption. The result is that though companies have gotten richer and the GDP has gone up, poverty remains and situations of conflict have multiplied. Industry is inviting dislike and suspicion.

In Chennai, Venu Srinivasan of the TVS Group wants to set up with CII a centre of excellence for corporate social responsibility to teach managers to be more conscious of the needs of society.

Now, Venu runs good companies, which are inclusive, responsible and spread prosperity (see *Civil Society* June 2006). But he is not the average Indian entrepreneur, who, sorry to say, is driven excessively by profit and treats CSR purely as an act of charity.

The centre for excellence in CSR in Chennai will cater to managers. But what will managers do when they go back into their companies? Who will they seek inspiration from?

What is needed in India is a new brand of entrepreneurship, a reinvention of the private sector, if you will. CSR will become relevant when entrepreneurs and promoters see themselves as leaders in strengthening democracy and promoting equity and justice through businesses.

It is our belief in this magazine that there is a groundswell of support for private enterprise in India. The challenge is to build dialogue beyond familiar frontiers and give everyone access to opportunities.

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United and divided over SEZs

Partha Majumdar
Kolkata

GROUPS cutting across activist and political positions met in Kolkata from June 2 to 3 to oppose Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The turnout was not huge but it was significant that people came from all parts of the country. "We could not bring in people from the SEZ affected areas because the cost implications were unmanageable," said Sumit Choudhury, one of the organisers of the All India Convention on Nandigram and SEZs.

He said he was happy that people with extremely divergent views were sharing the dais for the first time. To a large extent he is right.

If DN Saibaba, a Maoist was there, so was Dipankar Bhattacharya, general secretary, CPI(ML-Liberation). And the two would probably not see eye to eye. Similarly, there was Medha Patkar, leader of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), John Dayal of the All India Catholic Union and Arun Khote of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights.

Leading lights of the Gana-Unnayan O Jana-Adhikar Sangram Samiti, a combination of 26 West Bengal-based organisations, Sardar Amjad Ali, former Rajya Sabha member, Maulana Siddiquallah Chowdhury, Vaskar Nandy and others were present, while Santosh Rana joined the meeting on its concluding day. The convention ended with a public rally



Medha Patkar

on Chowringhee Road, amid a gathering of about 3,000 people.

While Siddiquallah Chowdhury wanted an end of the CPM-led Left Front rule in West Bengal, Medha Patkar was keen to keep the movement against SEZs outside the ambit of electoral politics. Patkar was quite clear that chances of a viable alternative emerging within mainstream electoral politics were dim in the foreseeable future and that the movement might have to carry on for an indefinite period to mount pressure on mainstream political parties.

Patkar said, "The SEZ policy of the Central Government is unconstitutional. The SEZ Act is anti-national and anti-people. We will never accept these methods of increasing absolute and unilateral control over the lives, resources, land and livelihood of the people by allowing corporate companies to loot the resources and life support systems of indigenous people, farmers and ordinary citizens. The Constitution says that if the plans for the villages are not made then the plans of the districts can also not be made. Then, how can the SEZs be imposed on the people?"

Patkar finds support from unusual quarters. The CPI (ML) strongly endorses the anti-SEZ movement. There seem to be differences in strategy though. While Bhattacharya appears to favour a militant nationwide movement to overthrow the present dispensation, Patkar would rather work for a change in the 'value framework' so that people-friendly alterna-



Siddiquallah Chowdhury

tives for development emerge. DN Saibaba, on the other hand, called for armed struggle and revolution.

Mukul Sinha of the Gujarat Federation of Trade Unions and Jan Sangharsh Manch, Ahmedabad, recalled the struggle launched in 2001 against the Positra Port project in Gujarat by the Manch and several other organisations. The project was ultimately

(Continued on next page)

'It's time to forge alliances beyond ideology'

Amit Sengupta

New Delhi

THE CPI (ML-Liberation) seems to mark its presence at nearly every rally or protest organised by people's movements these days. Is this merely a show of solidarity or is a closer alliance with groups like the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) on the cards?

The CPI (ML) came over ground in the early 1990s and has joined mainstream politics albeit with a different vision and agenda. The deleterious effects of the government's economic reforms at the grassroots, especially its Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy, are providing the party fertile ground to grow.

Civil Society met Dipankar Bhattacharya, the CPI (ML)'s young general secretary to find out where the party was headed.

How do you see Nandigram?

Nandigram has sent out a very strong message. Here we had a strong CPM led government with 80 per cent majority in power for the last 30 years. In terms of policy implementation, the SEZ policy was enacted unanimously in Parliament. The government was not even expecting an iota of protest. And despite a grand political alliance comprising the Right and the Left, the people of Nandigram played such a crucial historical role of democratic opposition. They had to pay a heavy price, but it also shows the tremendous strength and resilience of a people's movement.

Besides, the state government wanted to attempt a diabolical strategy of polarising the Muslims. Muslims constitute a majority in Nandigram, including landless peasants. The government wanted to create a communal rift. There was a concerted attempt to cow down the Muslims, whose visible participation was significant.

Even Dalits and other poor communities like fishermen were involved and they too got killed.

Yes, but they did not polarise the situation in terms of Dalit participation. They targeted the Muslims. This triggered off bigger protests. The political establishment in India has already tried to push Indian Muslims into the status of second class citizens with the most brutal application of this policy in Gujarat. Even the Jamiat (who were part of the struggle in Nandigram) are a nationalist and secular force. The struggle in Nandigram is against the SEZs and the land-grab policy. Muslims like others here are peasants, and they resisted to save their land. They are equal citizens in India, regardless of religion. As peasants, they and other communities, as people, have the right to fight back. This factor is going to play an important role for the future of Indian democracy and is

LAKSHMAN ANAND



Dipankar Bhattacharya

It's not a question of political power. We have found that people are the ultimate force against money, muscle and media power.

of crucial relevance for the people's movement.

Will your party align with movements like the NBA and NAPM?

That trend is there. There is a convergence in Parliament on this issue. On this side of the fence too, therefore, we can see convergence. All civil society organisations and people's movements have to forge forces. The CPI (ML) is known for its history of peasant resistance – and it has to play a special role in this convergence. Because of the Nandigram massacre there is also a 'Lal Hatao' campaign, an anti-communist scare. If one section of the Left in power is pushing the SEZs, other communist forces are fighting against it.

We have to forge new realignments between various forces beyond ideology or what Arundhati Roy calls the biodiversity of struggle – Marxist, non-Marxist, those who believe in alternative development models.

There is a singular need to work together, with new tactics and vision.

When the entire political spectrum seems united on SEZs, economic reforms and globalisation, is there any political hope for the CPI-ML and the people's movement?

Despite the convergence, I don't think their social or support base will remain intact. The people are not amused. Within the CPM and CPI there are differences. I don't see their entire party structures agreeing with Buddhadeb Bhattacharya. Nandigram has raised a big debate. This debate has entered all democratic forces and other parties too. For instance,

Naveen Patnaik's BJD and the BJP are together in Orissa. But there are forces within the BJD who are terribly uneasy with Posco, especially after the Kalinganagar killings and the big protests in Kashipur and elsewhere in Orissa.

I see a definite realignment of forces with communists, socialists, alternative forces, non-party activists and progressive people with democratic orientations. There is great possibility of a huge political churning against the SEZs: a 'special politics' against the UPA-NDA cross convergence. If Nandigram can stop an SEZ which has unanimous backing in Parliament with just about four or five panchayats, despite being throttled by the CPM, then here is a big lesson. They are now planning to shift it to Haldia, so another battle awaits.

Your base is in Bihar. You are spreading. You have been campaigning in south India recently. What was the response?

Tremendous response across South India, including in Tamil Nadu and

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scrapped last year.

Sinha expressed his unhappiness over the lack of a meaningful discussion on the details of the SEZ Act. The convention did not offer many interactive sessions. Sumit Choudhury blamed that on the catastrophic last minute shift in venue from the Salt Lake Stadium to the Netaji Subhash Institute in Sealdah. This led to the abandoning of the interactive sessions because of lack of space.

Sinha had his reservations on other points too. To him a lot of valuable time was wasted in the rhetoric on anti-imperialism, a non-issue here. The real issue, he said, was the "looting of public revenue by private or corporate profiteers." The crux of the matter, he explained, was the exemption of excise duties on raw materials and service tax on the companies

operating in SEZs. He quoted government figures to say Rs 16 lakh crore will be lost in revenue to the government by 2010. This will give the companies an undue cost advantage when they sell their products at market prices. Therefore, the movement should be directed at the corporate conspiracy rather than any imperialist game. Among the 63 notified SEZs, only three involve MNCs.

The movement against SEZs cannot be narrowed down to the issue of displacement alone and has to be directed against corporate profiteering, Sinha suggests. It also has to address the destruction of the country's biodiversity caused by large scale changes in land-use patterns.

Both Sinha and Patkar blamed the new upwardly mobile middle class who they said are the chief votaries of liberalisation. While Sinha is in favour of a

people's movement to change policies, Patkar wants the movement to work towards the long term goal of changing society's value framework.

The convention accepted the following resolutions:

- Scrap the SEZ Act, 2005.
- Stop work on all 63 notified and 234 approved SEZs.
- Abolish or reformulate (in consultation with the people) the colonial and draconian Land Acquisition Act of 1894.
- Resignation of West Bengal's Chief Minister. Punish everyone involved in the Nandigram massacre.
- People's institutions at the grassroots must be given autonomy to act so that peace and dignity returns to places with land acquisition conflicts, such as Nandigram.

Companies discover rural telecom

Vidya Viswanathan
New Delhi

COMPANIES are finally realising that supporting rural livelihoods means big business. Nasscom Foundation, the non-profit wing of Nasscom, the IT industry's association, organised a conference titled, 'Spreading the ICT Revolution to Rural India' with RMAAI (Rural Marketing Agencies Association of India). The conference was swarming with corporate representatives including those from Ericsson, Reuters, MCX and Fino who wanted to 'listen' to communities.

The CSC (Common Service Centre) project by the Ministry of IT was a point of discussion. The bids for many states have gone to big players because they did not ask for any revenue support from the government.

For instance, in West Bengal the Anil Ambani group has won the bid. It is in discussion with non-profits like Grasso to help them work with communities and set up rural kiosks.

The bid for Bihar and Jharkhand has gone to the Rs 1,000 crore Delhi-based Zoom Developers. "We will only create the infrastructure. The kiosks will have to be put up and run by the community. This is going to become the channel for all kinds of rural services," said a Zoom representative.

FINO, a start-up funded by ICICI and many public and private sector banks, is developing a smart card and building infrastructure so that CSC kiosks can be used as bank extensions.

Ericsson has some interesting initiatives to promote rural enterprises. It is a big headache for telecom operators to maintain towers in rural areas. They have to run generators on diesel and cart the fuel by jeep for miles. Ericsson is working with Idea Cellular in a few areas in Maharashtra where these towers can be powered by locally available bio-mass, including rotten fish. The collaboration intends to build five to 10 base stations powered by cotton or jat-



Rajen Varada

LAKSHMAN ANAND

In West Bengal the Anil Ambani group is in discussion with non-profits to help them work with communities and set up rural kiosks.

ropa by mid-2007. A local entrepreneur will put up the biomass plant and run it.

Aravind eye hospital found that despite all their outreach efforts only seven per cent of the people who need eye care are being reached. So they have developed a low-cost business model with University of California, Berkeley. Aravind has set up kiosks manned by ophthalmic assistants who are trained in eye-care for a year. Low-cost technology has been developed where a digital camera with an adaptor

can be used instead of an expensive diagnostic machine that costs Rs 10 lakhs.

The images are transmitted on Aravind's wireless network and the patient has a live consultation with a doctor. The prescription is printed out in the local centre. The details of the transactions will be maintained permanently in an electronic medical record. Out of 25,000 people that have used this facility in five centres, only 1,500 needed to go to the hospital for surgery. The local centre requires Rs 20,000 a month to be viable. Sale of spectacles at the centre makes up this revenue. Aravind has now started a similar project in Baramati with Intel. In Tripura, it is working with the government to turn CSC centres into eye care centres too.

Reuters has launched a service called Reuters Marketlite for farmers. It will provide them satellite-based weather data and information on prices at 7,500 *mandis* close to the farmers' location via local language SMS. The service is on trial in Maharashtra and several hitches have to be ironed out including the availability of telephone sets that support SMS in all Indian languages. Reuters is in the process of partnering organisations from whom they can get primary data.

While most of these companies are targeting rural and marginal communities as consumers, a Bangalore based non-profit, Technology for the People (TFP), has come up with a scheme which enables rural folk and marginalised urban communities to become producers and benefit from the technology revolution.

TFP runs a bridge course for inner city girls in Hyderabad to pass school. The NGO was faced with the task of making the school and their NGO sustainable and creating livelihoods for the girls.

TFP's idea was to teach girls who had artistic skills like applying *mehndi*, to train in animation. They decided to find a corporate partner who

'Political churning against SEZs is

(Continued from page 7)

Karnataka. In Karnataka, there has been no vibrant communist movement, except the involvement of students, activists and intellectuals in Bangalore etc. Now we are expanding in rural pockets and people are coming closer, knowing that we stand for peasants' resistance and thus have political relevance. The need of the hour is to fight for land reforms.

With electoral politics dominated by caste, communal, muscle and money power, do you see yourself capturing power?

It's not a question of political power. We have found that people are the ultimate force against money, muscle and media power. You can't suppress and silence the people and get away with it. With our limited resources, we have had limited electoral gains, with strong support bases in many places, some MLAs and one MP in

Parliament.

Our crucial role has been to expose the real nature of Indian democracy. For instance, we have for several years fought against the criminalisation of politics. We have made many sacrifices but our model has proved to be the only viable one of fighting criminalisation. Shahabuddin in Siwan became an icon. But we have won seats in Siwan, mobilised the people and reached a logical conclusion with his conviction and political alienation.

How we can expand this politics is a challenge. It's not going to be easy and smooth. We will have to face repression. Even when we are fighting for the implementation of the NREGA in UP, our activists are brutally treated by the police, one of them is picked up, hung upside down with third degree torture. When we demand basic democratic rights for the people, this is the way the state condemns communist

revolutionaries.

So will it be fringe or mainline politics?

I am a strong believer in people's power. We have no illusion about bourgeois democracy. It is capital and money which rules. People have to fight back, fight for gradual democracy and expose the sham which goes in the name of democracy and search for an alternative. Surely, not military dictatorship, but more vibrant, real, deeper democracy, seeking the fulfillment of constitutional and political promises.

What is your party's relationship with the Maoists who are spreading?

They might be spreading in many states, but they have to clarify an important question which has originated from this particular variety of Maoism. They believe in armed struggle as an exclusive form of struggle. This concept proved

would underwrite the cost of training and employ the girls. "If we did not work with any corporate, they would not talk to us later," says Rajen Varada of TFP.

TFP developed a six-month training course in animation. "Poor people do not have time," explains Varada. Star Features, a small animation studio founded by Uttam Kumar, agreed to work with them. The studio has deployed high-end animation workstations at the TFP centre in Hyderabad.

TFP insists that girls who want to train in animation have to also pass school. So far 30 girls have undergone training. Star Features can now outsource their work to TFP's centre. The girls pay back the company based on the number of hours they use these machines for work. They also charge the company an hourly rate for production.

"Star Features now has a team of 50 people to whom they do not have to pay salaries or PF when they are on the bench. We will balance that by doing work for many companies," says Varada. The industry has a high attrition rate. "Star Features now wants us to train another 70 girls," says Varada. "Uttam is a great business man. If he makes money, I make money."

He also plants to sell his training material to other companies. Nasscom Foundation has signed an MoU with Varada to use his animation training material for students in 12 of their partner centres.

TFP is also publishing four magazines for rural schoolchildren in kindergarten, primary, secondary and senior secondary schools. "Rural children do not have reading material in their local language. We need a constant source of revenue," says Varada. Star Features will market the magazine.

The publication comes with other services. "Children drop out of school because a father gets ill or passes away," says Varada. So TFP has tied up with Cholamandalam Finance to provide a life insurance cover of Rs 1 lakh for children who subscribe to the magazine at Rs 199 a year. The child will be insured against his or her parent's death or illness. TFP and Star Features share the profits in the ratio of 50:50. The magazine is already selling in rural Hyderabad. All its content will be provided by the centre run by girls.

Varada is examining several livelihood options for the youngsters they train. "You have to do a business process study of BPO companies and propose what you can do. In many cases what is done by a post graduate can be done by someone who has finished school if the processes are in place," he says.

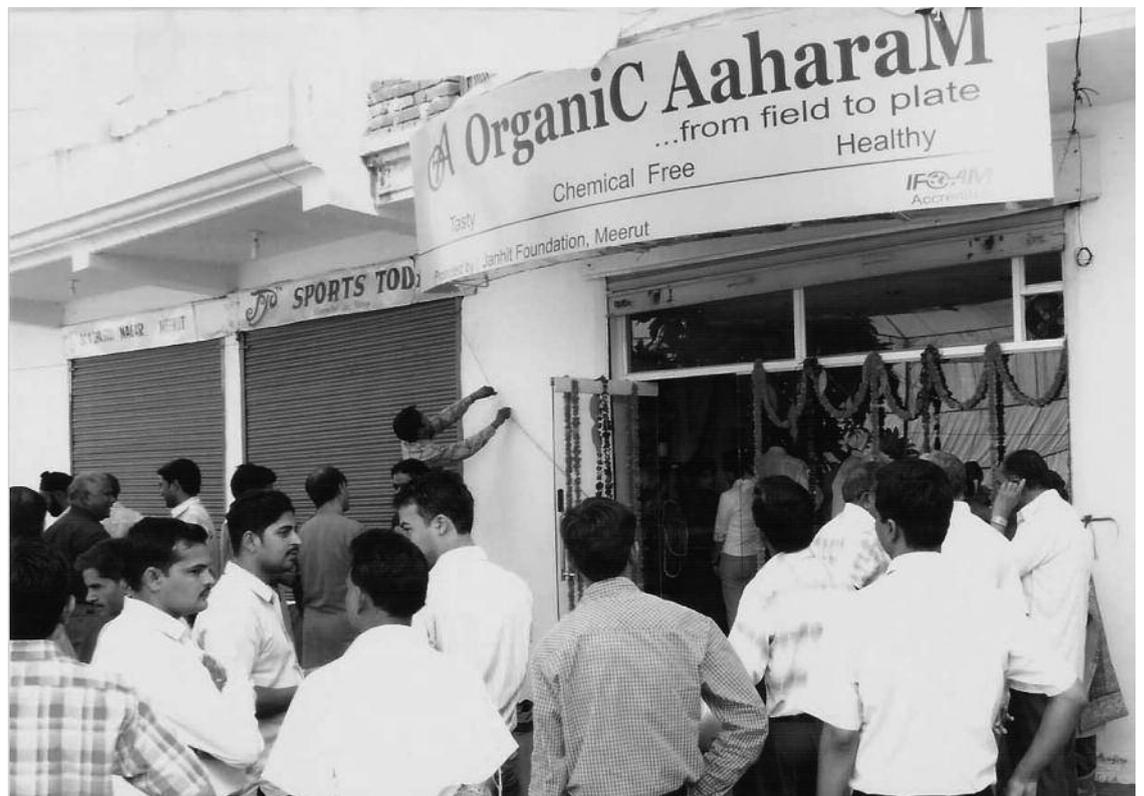
growing'

to be counter-productive and hollow in Andhra Pradesh. They could not lead resistance movements against Chandrababu Naidu's World Bank policies. Earlier, they boycotted elections. In the last elections they supported the Congress.

Then they came for talks. Presumably, the talks failed. After that, there has been a spate of killings in which even their senior leaders have been killed, their machinery has been paralysed by state repression in Andhra.

This has exposed a certain political bankruptcy and I hope they take political lessons from this. The Maoists have to align with the people's movements.

There can be cooperation with them if they agree to use other means and forms of struggle, and not only stick to the exclusivity of armed struggle: then, there can be the possibility of dialogue.



Janhit Foundation's brand new retail outlet for organic food in Meerut.

Organic AaharaM for Meerut

Civil Society News•
New Delhi

ON June 12, Meerut got its first retail outlet selling organic food. Called Organic AaharaM, it has been launched by the Janhit Foundation so that local farmers can reach consumers directly.

The outlet is located at DC-7, Shastri Nagar, birthplace of 1857, the First War of Independence. The shop's green billboard advertises chemical free, healthy and tasty food from 'farm to plate'.

The products are all certified. You can buy organic flour, mustard oil, honey, turmeric, wheat dalia, masoor, dal urad (chilka), dal urad, (dhoo).

Organic AaharaM was inaugurated by Satish Chander, joint secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation. He described Janhit Foundation as a 'lighthouse' for spreading knowledge and helping farmers get a good price for their produce. He was hopeful polluted Meerut would be transformed into an organic district. Vasant Saberwal from Ford Foundation, which is supporting the project, was impressed by the many women who turned up to buy the organic products.

Jostling in the

crowd were excited farmers. Ram Chander Singh, an organic farmer from village Kalina, Rohta block, Meerut district said the farming community was solidly backing Janhit and a silent green revolution was taking place.

The scene then shifted to Khandrawali village. Guests listened as farmer Kanti Tyagi explained how he practised organic agriculture. Clearly elated, Tyagi said he was not expecting a 25 per cent premium on his produce during the conversion period. But Janhit paid him and other farmers by cheque. This has established deep faith and trust, he said.

A sacred pledge was taken in Tyagi's mango orchard by Mahendra Singh of Alampur, Virendra Singh of Bhatipura and Munna Lal of Khatki village. They vowed to increase their acreage of organic farming and spread wisdom about it to others.

This entire stretch of Western Uttar Pradesh consisting of 20 districts has been steeped in pesticides and chemicals. Janhit's many investigations showed that there was severe soil degradation and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) had invaded groundwater, soil and crops and were having serious repercussions on health.

Since 2003, the Janhit Foundation has been working assiduously to get farmers in Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Baghpat districts switchover to growing food organically. (See *Civil Society*, April 2007)

"Apart from halting soil and water degradation and safeguarding health, organic farmers will get an excellent price for their organic produce literally on the spot," said Anil Rana, director of Janhit Foundation.

The NGO is now planning to work with the impoverished farmers of Bundelkhand who grow mostly cereals and desi wheat called kathia. Farmers are currently selling their chemical free produce at very low margins of profit. "Our earnest endeavour is to provide organic farmers in this backward district a rich market and help them become independent," said Anil Rana.



Inside Organic AaharaM

E-mail: info@janhitfoundation.org

Slum wins toilet war

Rakesh Agrawal
Hyderabad

IN the vicinity of Old Hyderabad's Charminar a *basti* called Bandi ka Adda recently won a battle against the municipality to hold on to its only toilet, which real estate developers wanted demolished. So successful was the *basti* that it became the role model for another *basti* by the name of Jagdish Huts that has managed to get a drain for itself.

Bandi ka Adda's public toilet was built about four decades ago. The people who live here don't have money or space to build private toilets, though each family would really like to have one. So this public toilet was being used by 280 people in about 52 households.

But the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) had bigger plans in mind. One fine day it announced that it was going to demolish Bandi ka Adda's only toilet.

A petition to tear down the toilet was filed by a wealthy neighbour when he suddenly decided that the toilet was an eyesore. Since the area is being seen as a treasure trove of real estate, the MCH agreed. However, a good samaritan from official circles quietly leaked MCH's demolition plans to the *basti* dwellers.

The news thoroughly rattled them. They started

looking around for help. Assistance came in the form of the People's Union for Civic Action and Rights (Pucaar), a group of the Confederation of Voluntary Organisations (COVA), a Hyderabad-based network of NGOs and civil society groups that energise people to fight for their rights.

"Pucaar told us that it is the government's responsibility to provide us with basic facilities. All we had to do was to unite and fight for our rights, and we did just that," said Shanta Bai, 45, leader of a self-help group (SHG) that COVA had helped to establish.

Soon after the MCH announced its decision to raze the toilet, in April 2006, people of the *basti* formed a united front to save the toilet.

The fight was carried out at two levels: by staging a dharna (sit-in), demonstrating outside the MCH office, and by submitting memos to local MLAs, including the State SC Commissioner. A writ petition was filed in the Hyderabad High Court also. "Our job is to create political awareness among people so that the govern-

ment, whose primary objective is to serve the people, is forced to act," says COVA director Mazher Hussain.

The agitation yielded results. On the day of the demolition the MCH squad turned up to restore the toilet. "See, men can relieve themselves in the open, but not us women," said a visibly relieved Nusrat Khaizer, 32, after the demolition plan was thwarted.

"We realised that it is crucial for the people to come together," says Krishna Madiga, another local leader. People in COVA echo his sentiments. "Collectively, we can make a difference. That's the important message that COVA wants to give to people," says Chandrasekhar, Pucaar coordinator.

This small incident became a precedent for a bigger settlement known as Jagdish Huts.

Comprising of more than 200 households, this slum is situated behind Hussani Alam Government Degree College.

The *basti* near Shahgunj is inside a

bigger enclosure called a *deodi* (palace built by a nobleman). Mostly Dalit servants of the nobleman's descendents live here. They collect sewerage in pots placed in pits which they empty out at night into nearby manholes as there is no drain in the slum.

This created problems since the slum is at a lower height than the manholes. During the rainy season storm water mixed with sewage would flood homes. Residents, especially children, suffered from illnesses like skin infections and stomach ailments.

The *basti* women met officials and political leaders for assistance. "While the politicians (except for local MLA Syed Ahmed Pasha Qadri, who provided Rs 3.70 lakh from his MLA fund) made empty promises, officials claimed that the area being low-lying could not be connected with the main drainage line. "We were helpless," says Khateerja, 55.

"We had heard about Pucaar's work at Bandi ka Adda and decided to contact them for help," said Laiqa Begum.

Pucaar decided to study the problem. "We found a way out. A drainage pipe in the

basti had to be constructed and connected to the drainage pipeline of the college situated behind," said Chandrasekhar.

But when the community women and Pucaar approached the college it did not agree to help. "This didn't dampen our determination. We continued to put pressure on the college authorities and after the 2006 summer vacation they relented on humanitarian grounds and gave us six months time to get the work done," said Noora Ghousia, a local leader.

Work proceeded at snail's pace. Finally, in early 2007 when the actual construction of the drain pipe began the *basti* children jumped with joy, shouting, *Morri agai, Morri agai* (here comes the drain), recalls Iqbal Hussain, 13.

But the college created roadblocks. Soon after construction began, the college authorities refused to give permission to connect the slum's pipeline to the college's drain. They claimed that the construction of the pipeline would damage a staff room and that the people had exceeded the six-month deadline.

"We requested the authorities to have a meeting with the engineer and contractor. On the same day a meeting was organised with all the stakeholders. The college authorities were assured in writing by officials that anything damaged in the premises would be repaired," said Chandrasekhar.

Faced with mounting pressure the college authorities agreed. The role of the college principal is worth a mention. "He persuaded college managers to give permission as it wouldn't cause any harm to the college premises. On the other hand, it would make the college famous," said Chandrasekhar.

"It was such an important day for us. We didn't know how to express our joy," said Laiqa Begum overcome with emotion.

The pipeline's inauguration on April 24 this year was a festive event. Dressed in their best clothes, the residents of Jagdish Huts got together to celebrate.

"We put up a shamiana. Children darted in and out, often breaking into a jig," says Laiqa Begum. The most important outcome is that people do not have to carry sewage on their heads any more. They can live with dignity and cleanliness in one of India's biggest cities.



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100 hawkers make their own mall

Partha Majumdar
Kolkata

It was November 1996. The Left Front government had launched Operation Sunshine to evict hawkers from the city's pavements. A bitter battle was raging between hawkers and a government determined to see the last of them.

Sudeb Pal, a hawker on the Gariahat road pavement, was staying awake night after night with his colleagues to prevent their stalls and goods from being destroyed. The hawkers were desperately hanging on to their share of the pavement.

Pal was tired of the uncertainties of life on the pavement. One night he thought of a solution. He shared it with his colleagues but it sounded like a pipedream. After a few more nights of tension, fellow hawkers began to seriously examine Pal's proposal.

He had suggested that 100 hawkers come together under his leadership and set up a shopping mall for themselves.

How could hawkers with just a few resources build a shopping complex? Pal looks like any other middle class Bengali. But his frail appearance and unassuming demeanor belie his true personality. He proved to be a man with grit and courage who could work his way through very difficult circumstances.

Pal had set up shop on the pavement in 1979. Business was good. As the eldest son, he had responsibilities to shoulder. He got his sister married in the early eighties and was reasonably happy.

"The pavement has given me a lot," he says gratefully. But he would always look for avenues to expand his business. "Ami jantam footpath amar babar sampatti noy, (I knew that I did not inherit the space on the pavement)," he says. That eviction was inevitable was clear to him. He did not want to be caught napping.

In 1986, he set up a lamp factory in partnership with a friend, thinking it would give him an alternative source of livelihood. They still run the factory, but with cheap Chinese products flooding the market, business is down.

In 1996, Suhas Chakrabarty, minister for transport and his lieutenant Kanti Ganguly, then a councillor in Calcutta Municipal Corporation were given charge of carrying out Operation Sunshine.

The government allowed hawkers to continue doing business during the months preceding the Durga Puja festival. Plans were put in place to remove them once the festive season was over.

The hawkers' associations had got a stay order for 21 days from the High Court. Ballygunge Hawkers' Association, one of the oldest hawkers' associations in the city of which Pal was a member, was a petitioner. Pal knew it was a temporary reprieve.

Stray incidents of demolition continued on the sly despite the stay order. Generators belonging to the hawkers that were switched on whenever there was a power cut had also been seized.

Pal told the leaders of his association that he wanted a lasting solution to the problem because he believed hawkers had no permanent rights to shops on the pavements. They would be evicted ultimately, he argued. He was rebuffed. Pal then began to mull over his plan of setting up a shopping complex.

"We had no option left," says Partha Dutta, who now runs a shop of ready-to-wear garments in the complex.

Getting 100 people to back the plan was not really difficult. A committee was set up with Pal as secretary. A fund was raised from members with each



Sudeb Pal inside his shopping complex.



Getting 100 people to back the plan was not really difficult. A committee was set up with Pal as secretary. A fund was raised.

contributing Rs 500. Pal and his friends promised to return the money if the plan fell through.

Search for a piece of suitable land began. After taking a look at a few plots the group zeroed in on a huge building on Gariahat road. It belonged to Chandranath Banik. The property had an empty backyard which caught the attention of the hawkers. This was what they wanted to buy.

Chandranath and his eldest son, Chandrakanta, were both in jail on charges of murdering Chandrakanta's wife. Chandranath's two younger sons were keen to sell the land immediately because there was talk of Chandrakanta being released on parole.

Pal visited the two brothers with a proposal to buy the land. The brothers said: "First show us you have a million rupees at your disposal." They asked for Rs 2 crore. Undaunted by the steep price, Pal replied: "I will show you the funds the day you sign an agreement with us after finalising the price".

The negotiated price came down to Rs 1 crore for the piece of land. One of the shop owners said on condition of anonymity that the negotiated price was actually Rs 1.5 crore.

Meanwhile, the order that allowed hawkers to do business during the Pujas was vacated. While the rest of the hawkers took to the streets, about 100 angry men kept their cool and met every Sunday to

realise their dream.

Registration of a 99-year lease deed was completed on January 2, 1997. Registration was completed in 100 different names so that each hawker became the owner of a plot of land instead of the committee owning it. Every contribution was not equal and the size of ownership varied proportionately.

Now began the endless rounds of various departments in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC). Pal managed to win over two crucial men: Gorachand Mandal and Manoj Kanti Majumdar. Gorachand Mandal was the city architect at the corporation. He

carried the file up and down and got all the requisite signatures. Manoj Kanti Majumdar, was the chief of the planning and development cell.

Mandal drew up the building layout, which was then given final shape by an architect. Pal was clear that they should raise funds for an air-conditioned complex. The building was planned so that it has a lot of empty space for shoppers to walk around. A lottery was held to determine the position of each member's shop. Construction began in April 1997, with a deadline to complete the building in time for Durga Puja, the main shopping season.

Every Sunday, members would be told the amount they needed to submit to keep the construction activity at full steam. By then the hawkers had so much faith in the project that they would beg or borrow to ensure they were ready with the money. To lower costs, committee members would visit wholesalers and buy the stuff directly from them.

In June 1997 the shopping complex became operational. Called Shatadeep, which means a hundred lights, it is located in Gariahat, one of Kolkata's busiest shopping centres.

The complex had 100 separate electricity meters one for each of the 100 hawkers. It had taken grit, togetherness and sacrifice for them to realise their dream.

PIX BY: PRASANTA BISWAS

Displacement in Amnesty report

Séverine Fumoux*
New Delhi

THE Amnesty International Report 2007, an annual assessment of human rights worldwide, compiled by Amnesty International was launched this month.

"Powerful governments and armed groups are fomenting fear to erode human rights and create an increasingly polarised and dangerous world," said Irene Khan, secretary-general of Amnesty International in London.

According to the Report, 2006 was a year of political upheaval and states of emergency. Human rights were abused by industrialisation and development projects in several parts of the world.

In New Delhi, Mukul Sharma, Director of Amnesty International India, introduced the report saying: "India needs a substantive and long-term investment in human rights to build effective systems of justice and accountability, to strengthen the human rights machinery and to protect the rights of women."

A panel comprising A G Noorani, senior advocate and constitutional expert, and Professor Zoya Hasan, member of the National Minority Commission, discussed the Report.

"If India can be seen as a robust and vibrant democracy, it also has its share of insecurity and violence related to economic reforms," said Prof. Hasan. In fact, violence around displacement in the name of development is one of the highlights of the Report.

Protests are taking place in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Pondicherry and other places but the frameworks for economic or resettlement policies fail to address human rights concerns. No one takes the responsibility to ensure prior informed consent of communities likely to be affected by Special Economic Zones.

Socially and economically marginalised groups such as adivasis, Dalits, landless farmers and the urban poor, face systemic discrimination in India. By highlighting the close connection between human rights and economic, cultural and political rights, the Report triggered panel discussions during the launch about long-term challenges that need to be addressed globally.

Globalisation has actually led to what Khan called a "globalisation of human rights violation". In India, this translates into the violation of democratic principles.

India is under threat of growing communalism, echoing international tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims. Gujarat has got extensive mention both in the Report and in panel discussions. Weak institutional structures are unable to protect civilians and women within minority groups, says the Report. India has not yet ratified the International Criminal Court that prosecutes people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Report highlights the ineffectiveness of counter-terrorism laws worldwide, post-9/11. The laws have turned into pretexts for repression in Egypt; such loosely defined laws posed a threat to freedom of speech in the United Kingdom. The Report also gives information on American operations under 'extraordinary renditions'.

"Just as global warming requires global action the human rights meltdown can only be tackled through global solidarity and respect for law," said Khan.

Santhals reject mining for organic farming

Rina Mukherji
Mallarpur (West Bengal)

BIRBHUM district's Mallarpur region is a vast stretch of barren land, unlike the rest of West Bengal which is so green. It is the nucleus of the stone-crushing industry that lies on the borders of West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand.

As you travel along dusty roads, you see massive crushing units and quarries. These have ravaged the environment and the Santhals who belong here. High levels of pollution, cause severe health problems to workers and surrounding villages. The mafia has had a free run bullying labour and fobbing them off with low wages.

But 10 years ago, the local Santhals got together under the guidance of Uthnao, an NGO, to reclaim their rights to common water bodies and a cleaner environment. With Uthnao's help they found the strength to stand up to the mindless quarrying and the mafia-backed crushing units.

Clashes and arguments landed many tribals in jail. In fact, Kunal Deb, the Uthnao coordinator, was framed in a false case and jailed four years ago when he tried to fight corruption in the public distribution system. But Uthnao emerged stronger.

The NGO is planning to lodge a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to clear Mallarpur of each and every crushing and quarrying unit. Santhals are now taking to organic farming and finding that more people benefit from tilling the land than from the quarries.

On paper, the lands here are owned by the tribals and hence cannot be leased or sold.

But these laws don't work on the ground. The Santhal is poor and illiterate and easily taken for a ride by land sharks who have invaded the Birbhum countryside. Land is bought and sold through benami deals, while stone-crushing units multiply under the patronage of the local mafia.

All those tribals who secured pattas but were not provided any money to till the land, transferred their land to "dikku" (outsiders) through "doubtful transactions."

These land transfers are at the root of the proliferating stone-crushing and quarrying units. The government's Land Reforms Department encouraged their growth on short-term leases thinking that mining would provide employment to local youth during the Naxalite movement in the '70s. But the crushing units and quarries do not hold any mining licences or approval from the WBPCB.

The laterite here is so valuable that acres of land are dug by unit-owners. The stones quarried and crushed yield a good amount of silica dust. Water bodies are destroyed, rural roads dug up, and agricultural farmlands spoiled by stone rubble.

The 1995 directive of the State Pollution Control

Board are just rules on paper. In February 1998, the Pollution Control Board observed that of the 105 quarries and 125 stone-crushing units in Mallarpur, none adhered to the Minimum Wages Act. Each worker did a 12-hour shift, 240 days a year with no weekly off. Adults were paid Rs 28 a day at the crushing units, while quarries paid Rs 40 per day. Child labourers were paid Rs 20 per day.

Pressure from the government and the WBPCB improved matters a little but wages still fall short of the Minimum Wages Act and not a single worker wears a mask.

A study by the National Institute of Small Mines in 2002 revealed that 1,000 Santhal women working in stone quarries between Hatgachia and Mallarpur had not conceived. Many villagers were suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumoconiosis and haemoptysis. Premature ageing at 30 is common in both men and women. Even those

who once worked at crushing units feel the after effects years later.

A pilot study on the occupational health problems faced by stone crushers by the Institute for Wetland Management and Ecological Design (IWMED) also found numerous instances of breathlessness, chest pain, musculo-skeletal weakness and osteoarthritis.

Backed by Uthnao, in Dholkata 700 families got together to close

down three quarries that were destroying farmland through indiscriminate blasting. The 35 tribal families in Sholagaria village have prevented quarrying in their village and packed off the units for good. Quarrying is now confined to outside village limits in many villages of Rampurhat and Mohammadbazaar.

In Garia village of Rampurhat I, locals have prevented the setting up of eight crushing units and 10 quarries, while in Dholkata of Mohammadbazaar block, four running quarries and another four crushing units have been closed down. Support from the Tribal Development Authority helped them do this.

The NGO is training villagers in organic farming. The emphasis is on growing vegetables and greens that are difficult to get in these areas. "We found that nutritional imbalances need to be addressed. Skin problems are common. Growing vegetables would teach local people to make them a necessary part of their diet," explains Mohan Mandal, who has been managing the organic farming project. The farm is built on land gifted by the locals in Dholkata and uses recycled water to grow seasonal vegetables.

It is also ensuring employment options for the tribals who have stopped earning a livelihood from the crushing and quarrying units. Kunal Deb is extremely optimistic. "We have many more people benefiting from farming than were employed in the quarries," he says.

Uthnao is planning to lodge a PIL to clear Mallarpur of each and every crushing and quarrying unit. Santhals are now finding that more people benefit from tilling the land than from the quarries.

Teaching women to earn

Rina Mukherji
Kolkata

TO many, the name Ankur Kala suggests empowerment of marginalised women. A brainchild of Annie Joseph, Ankur Kala was set up in 1982. Joseph spent many years in community development. She studied social work at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and worked as a volunteer with Seva Sangha Samiti in Howrah.

Joseph had seen Mother Teresa's work at close quarters. Her parent's home housed Mother Teresa's first Shishu Bhavan in Kolkata. She realised economic self-reliance was most needed.

"Charity is never good enough. Women have to be financially independent if families are to be saved from destitution in the absence of a male earning member," she says.

Ankur Kala started operations when Seva Sangha Samiti arranged a small place for Joseph at Pilkhana in Howrah. "I started with a loan of Rs 900 and just five girls," says Joseph. But the batik and tie-and-dye training and the products that were made caught on. The girls started earning an income and when Ankur Kala managed to move to its present spacious premises at Park Street, many members from its earlier group of trainees joined in.

Ankur Kala has been more than a pillar of strength for many young and destitute women. Hameeda was married off at 13 years of age to a man who had tuberculosis. By the time she was 14, he was completely bedridden and passed away before the year was over. Her father-in-law did not have any steady employment, while her husband's younger brothers were too young to run the family. Her mother-in-law and she would occasionally earn some money by doing domestic errands. The largesse of neighbours in the slum colony kept the family going.

Thankfully for Hameeda, her sister and a relative knew of Ankur Kala. Hameeda broached the subject with her mother-in-law, who refused to let her attend. This made her move over to her relative's place. They encouraged her to train for a vocation. That was how a whole new world opened for Hameeda some 15 years ago.

Although unlettered, Hameeda found it easy to pick up snack-making at the Ankur Kala kitchen that catered to students and staff at the Rani Birla College. In a year's time, her on-the-job training was bringing her an income. She remarried. But her husband deserted her even as she awaited the birth of her daughter. Today, Hameeda earns enough to live independently at a rented place with her 14-year-old school going daughter. She is a senior production hand and can manage accounts,



Girls at Ankur Kala learn skills to earn an income.



thanks to a functional literacy programme that has empowered her with skills to market the products she helps make.

With her effervescent grin, Dilshad, 20, has a lot to feel happy about. She has managed change her elderly father's attitude with her battle for gender

equality and economic independence. "I had to win my mother over to attend a basic course in batik and fabric painting at Secom. My father bitterly opposed this."

Today, Dilshad has graduated to executing designs for the batik production team at Ankur Kala and her income sustains her family comprising her retired father, two brothers and herself.

Ankur Kala also trains women to tailor bags, design wall hangings, stitch kurtas, and catering. Joseph got the support of her former alma mater, Rani Birla College, and Queen of the Missions School to help train the women. Since the institutions insisted on the food being cooked in their kitchens, the trainees and supervisors from Ankur Kala would have to be there every morning to make snacks for the sales counters. Many other institutions followed, and the women were soon earning a monthly income.

To make up for the loss of earnings during the

holiday period when these educational institutions closed, Ankur Kala started a catering service for offices and NGOs. Besides, cooking at the institutions required the staff to be sent there in the wee hours.

"It was unfair for these women, many of whom have very small children to look after," explains Joseph. Hence, cooking at schools and colleges was given up for good. Instead, Ankur Kala moved into making and marketing jams, sauces and preserves.

In subsequent years, pottery work and silk-screen printing for greeting cards were also introduced. Many of the pottery, batik, and tie-and-dye products are exported for sale through organisations like Ten Thousand Villages (US and Canada), Trade Aid (New Zealand), Artisans Du Monde (France), and Global Villages Store (Canada). The remaining items find a ready market through Ankur Kala's showroom on Meher Ali Road, while its dedicated sales team also caters to a loyal clientele door-to-door.

Ankur Kala has also been helping other NGOs with vocational training in tailoring, batik, silk screen printing, dyeing and kitchen gardening as part of its outreach programme. Its showroom is used as a retail outlet for several products made by grassroots NGOs in and around West Bengal.

Ankur Kala is now planning to develop its land in Sonarpur to grow organic fruit and vegetables.

Fruits, farms thrive in Arunachal

Anjali Pathak

Zimthung (Arunachal Pradesh)

ARUNACHAL Pradesh is emerging as India's budding fruit paradise. It is on the threshold of outshining even Himachal Pradesh, long revered as the land of orchards. If the apple was Himachal's money spinner, the kiwi fruit is becoming Arunachal's mascot, fetching much more money than the apple ever did.

Growing fruits and flowers has become such a lucrative business that people from all walks of life – contractors, businessmen, politicians and servicemen – are taking to it.

When R D Thungdok returned to his village in Dirang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh after completing his studies, he was just another educated, unemployed young man. Thungdok did not want to search for a job in some anonymous city. He wanted to be home.

An agricultural development officer from the state government talked him into cultivating tomatoes. Thungdok agreed and unwittingly pioneered tomato cultivation in Rupa. Today, tomatoes are grown in 90 per cent of his area, yielding high returns to farmers.

In Zimthung, Tsering Gyurme and Bodumba are Dirang valley's leading growers of kiwi fruit and apple. Bodumba was a contractor and a small farmer. He used to grow maize, millet and buckwheat. Disappointed with the irregular flow of contract work and payment he chose to grow fruit in 2000. His hard work has paid off and trees in his orchard are groaning with apple and kiwi.

Bodumba and Tsering Gyurme have large nurseries set up with government assistance stocking apple, orange, walnut and kiwi plants. Gyurme is diversifying his garden with peach, persimmon, pear, flowers and orchids for which there is a demand.

Comprising East Kameng, West Kameng and Tawang districts, western Arunachal Pradesh is largely inhabited by the Monpas and the Sherdukpens. They are Buddhists belonging to the Gelugpa sect with a culture and customs very similar to their Bhutanese neighbours to the west and Tibetan neighbours to the north. Their Buddhist background has inculcated a love of nature and respect for all life forms.

Our travels through Kameng gave us an impression of peace, prosperity and contentment amongst the people. There is no scramble to industrialise or to sell their land and environment to MNCs,



Bodumba (extreme left) with his family.

traders and profiteers.

Arunachal announced an organic policy in February 2007. While its details have yet to be spelt out it is clear that the state government is responsive to the needs of the growers. It took advantage of the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States, launched in 2001-2002, and brought an additional area of 13,748 ha under horticultural crops out of which fruits comprised 52 per cent.

In Kameng, the state promoted kiwi, apple, walnut, persimmon and stone fruits like plum, peach and apricot. It helped interested farmers adopt high yielding varieties. It gave them quality planting material and disseminated scientific cultivation practices.

For example, some of the subsidy that Bodumba received included planting material, fencing material, T-bar and wire for making pergolas for the kiwi vines, and creation of water tanks. Of course his business acumen and family support contributed to his success, not to forget his love for nature.

In our meetings with farmers at Bomdila, Dirang and Tawang it became clear that it was those willing to experiment and take a risk who had gone in for fruit cultivation. Apple orchards at Zimthung, Sangthi-Boha Road, Domkho-Morsing area, Chilli Pam area and Jigaon area are flourishing. Zimthung, 8km. from Dirang, has around 60,000

apple trees. Tomato too has taken off. Besides Monpa families many Nepalis cultivate tomato on a lease basis. Around 20 dealers are engaged in tomato marketing. An annual turnover of Rs 3-4 crore takes place. The tomatoes are sold in Arunachal and neighbouring Assam.

But it is the kiwi fruit that is surfacing as a gold mine. Wild kiwi was always a favourite with locals. Kiwi planting material was brought to Arunachal from Himachal and now big nurseries have been set up in the Dirang valley which has emerged as the hub of kiwi cultivation. Rooted cuttings are being sold at Rs 45 per piece and grafted kiwi plants at Rs. 100 per piece.

The investment for starting orchards for kiwis and apples is not very different but the returns are higher for kiwi. The wholesale price of kiwi in 2006 in Arunachal was Rs 40 per kg. This makes it more profitable than apples which merely fetch the Monpa grower Rs 15 per kg.

Bodumba invested Rs 6 lakhs on his kiwi plantation of one hectare. It fetched him Rs 12 lakhs for a crop of 30 tonnes in 2006. He spent Rs 70 lakhs on his apple orchard covering 13 hectares with 14,000 trees. His apple crop of 60 tonnes for 2006 fetched him Rs 9 lakhs. Pema Chiege earned Rs 23 lakhs from his 2006 kiwi crop by selling it at Rs 60 per kg.

The productivity and wholesale price of kiwi is much higher than of apples making it an attractive cash crop for the Monpa growers. But most kiwi growers say they could earn much more if they had a better marketing network. Rinchin Droma complained that wholesalers from Guwahati wanted growers to deliver the fruit to their doorstep which was unviable. She and her husband are soon going to open a fruit preservation unit on their farm in the Dirang valley.

Tsering Gyurme, the former minister for agriculture and horticulture, stated that the government is in the process of setting up a special cell to oversee organic production and marketing.

With an average population density of 13 people per sq km the contribution of 37,035 tonnes of horticultural produce annually by the state is no mean feat. Greater availability of land and the absence of the monkey menace give the state a definite edge over Himachal.

Fruits and flowers are preventing militancy and terrorism in Arunachal by providing meaningful employment to the young. Families are earning a good income and there is generation of farm jobs. Jhum cultivation and soil erosion is tapering off.

Samita's World

by Samita Rathor



microsoft ad

MAKEOVER TIME IN



A woman customer pays her phone bill at a Roshan office.

Photographs by UMESH ANAND

Aga Khan seeks private sector led peace

Umesh Anand
Kabul

AKHTER Rezai is 24 years old. Five years ago all he would have had on his mind was survival and escape from a part of the world so caught up in the turbulence of war that it did not seem to have a future. But now Akhter supervises a call centre at Roshan, Afghanistan's leading mobile phone company. He wears a coat and necktie and speaks with practised formality.

Akhter says his job brings him \$ 1,000 a month, which is a huge jump from the \$175 on which he started as a customer care trainee just a couple of years ago. But much more importantly his professional duties at Roshan give Akhter an idea of how companies run and what technology can do to drive economies.

As a manager, Akhter is a creative participant in the many transactions of a modern marketplace. He learns to handle people, solve problems and hold on to customers.

It is much the same for Shireen Rahmani. She works in Roshan's department for human resources development. If you stupidly ask whether she heads HR, she gets embarrassed and

says with a shy smile that she is just an associate director. But for an Afghan woman in Afghanistan she has come a long way. She doesn't cover her head, dresses in office-wear and can hold her own among men.

Roshan is a key investment made by the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED). A five star hotel and a bottled water company are some of the other ventures where The Aga Khan has put money. For him building a presence in an economy is not only about growing businesses and bottom lines. In Afghanistan, he has simultaneously invested in several social initiatives through the Aga Khan

Development Network (AKDN). The Historic Cities Programme seeks to restore monuments and urban architecture. He also backs voluntary efforts that may seek to rescue children, set up a hospital or build a rural enterprise in medicinal plants.

Typically, an Aga Khan venture takes on high risk by entering a troubled political zone such as Afghanistan, where very few would dare enter. It then seeks to be more socially conscious than other businesses by deferring profitability. For instance, if a normal investor would like to see profits in two years, the Aga Khan will wait for five years. This ensures that the processes of doing business acquire



Roshan means light. The company believes in cheerful branding. Its buildings are painted over in bright colours.

KABUL

deep roots that reach into the community.

An Aga Khan investment is, therefore, a multiplier. It is a catalyst for wider change and clears the way for others to follow. For instance, who would set up a five star hotel in Kabul five years ago? But a five star hotel is needed to bring in businessmen.

Similarly, a bottled water plant. Now Afghanistan has 11 such plants. Including Roshan, there are five telephone companies today as the market booms.

An Aga Khan investment brings in technologies and assets that society needs. Roshan is a good example. Telecom links people, makes small businesses more efficient and in general speeds up economic change. It is also a mood enhancer. When people connect, with each other and the rest of the world, they tend to feel happier about themselves and acquire aspirations from which they were cut off.

Roshan has brought new vigour to the telecom business in Afghanistan with its 1.3 million subscribers. It has created competition in which call and connection prices have come down. Roshan, for instance, goes to 32 of the 34 provinces in Afghanistan. It sets up networks even when they aren't profitable and subsidises them with earnings from other segments in its operations. It invests in people and provides equal employment opportunities to men and women. It pursues cheerful branding in the hope of unleashing other positive energies in the economy.

In 2003, there were only 12,000 fixed-line phones, 50,000 mobile phones and 20,000 satellite phones in Afghanistan. Now there are 2.6 million connections and 50,000 are being added every month. International calls used to be \$ 4 for a minute. Now they are 45 cents. A local call is 10 or 15 cents.

AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

In Afghanistan, the revival effort is complex. The Taliban, and before them socialist governments, destroyed the spirit of enterprise. Today there are awesome backlogs in infrastructure and many social problems to be addressed. There is corruption and poverty. The majority of Afghans are below the age of 19 and scarred by conflict. Much needs to be done to make them employable and keep them healthy.

When President Hamid Karzai came to power five years ago, the Constitution and the Afghan Compact committed itself to private capital and a free market. But the legal and political measures required for implementing growth strategies have yet to be put into place.

The Enabling Environment Conference held by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Kabul in June sought to identify ways forward. There is an urgent need to implement laws, simplify procedures and deliver justice.

The Aga Khan defines the private sector as big and small businesses as well as non-for-profit initiatives in the voluntary sector. An enabling environment is one in which private initiatives can deliver creative and sustainable solutions. The social entrepreneur is as important as the multinational. The craftsman as needed as the assembly line.

It is such an environment that will bring business, government and civil society organisations together to have bottom-up growth. It won't do for money to be just pumped into Afghanistan in pursuit of quick profits. Wealth will have to circulate so that the average Afghan feels empowered and a part of the ride to a new prosperity.

PHONE AS A WALLET

At the end of 2006, Roshan had put \$ 250 million into its networks in Afghanistan, becoming the country's largest single investor and contributing six per cent of the government's total revenues.

But these cold numbers are just a part of the story. Roshan's importance is in being the sponsor for the intangibles of normalcy. It is helping repair a crisis-scarred Afghanistan through a combination of telecom technology, employment opportunities and positive branding.

Roshan means light and its chief slogan is about coming together and remaining

connected: an important message in the fractured and troubled Afghan milieu.

Its networks go all the way up to the borders with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. A subscriber can get roaming connectivity in 106 countries. In the past Afghans living on the border would journey to neighbouring countries to make phone calls.

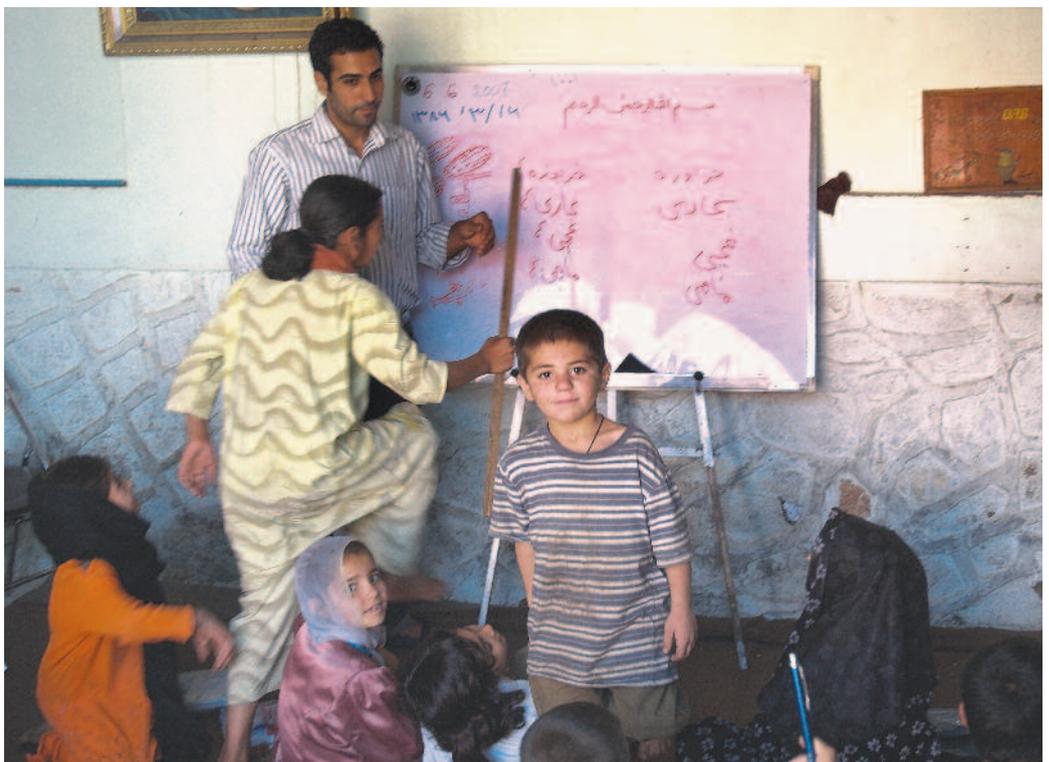
Roshan employs some 895 people whose average age is 23. Women make up 20 per cent of the employees. Its call centres and offices are well-equipped and modern structures where men and women work together on computers.

Even more significantly, Roshan provides indirect employment to 20,000 people. There are 198 dealer outlets and 1,100 PCO businesses. It helps women set up businesses in selling scratch cards and running phone booths from their homes.

A new package called Mpaisha will make it possible to make payments and transfer money on mobile phones in Afghanistan. Cash paid upfront to Roshan serves as a balance from which the subscriber can draw. It is like opening 1.3 million bank accounts in one go with the flick of a telecom switch.

"The mobile phone will become the wallet," says Altaf Ladak, chief operating officer. "Often Afghans have to travel over long distances, which costs them time and money, to make payments. Mpaisha will make such transactions instant."

Roshan is intended to be a bright spot with intimations of hope. Its buildings are painted blue, yellow and red: the louder the better. Its many giant hoardings have pictures of smiling families. Such is the positive effect this



Children in a class at an Aschiana-run centre in Kabul. Aschiana reaches ten thousand children.



Engineer Mohammad Yousef of Aschiana.

The majority of Afghans are below the age of 19 and scarred by conflict. Much needs to be done to make them employable and keep them healthy.

symbolism has that many Afghans have begun using the same extravagant colours on private and community buildings.

Asked whether Roshan ever runs into opposition or whether its towers are sabotaged, Ladak says: "On the contrary there is an ever-increasing demand for us to set up towers. People can't wait for connections. No one damages a tower when it is set up."

Is it too much to see the seeds of a new Afghan identity in the Roshan brand? Perhaps not. Communication technology has been a proven driver of social change. The technology is reinforced by the images that Roshan conjures up through its operations and advertising and its growing presence as a modern company which is an equal opportunity employer. All this put together is a potent mix of commercial strategies and social engineering.

RESTORING MONUMENTS

But a modern economic identity in a traditional and deeply religious society is not enough. It is equally important to preserve history and culture. The historical cities project is therefore a necessary effort because it seeks to imbue

reforms with a respect for the past and takes Afghans to their roots. It gives Afghans a sense of pride in their heritage.

The Babur Garden and Timur Tomb in Kabul were derelict and misused as indeed were other historical sites. It was the legacy of war. Initially, local Afghans saw the restoration effort as a mere beautification programme. But as it matured the restoration process built trust. For instance, it involved slow and gentle negotiation to move people back from the periphery of the monuments. That was tough but it meant having to connect and convince residents of the need to yield.

With the work on the tomb and the garden coming to end and the monuments being opened up to everyone, there is a new sense of public ownership. People go to the Babur Garden with their families.

"Initially, people would say you are only doing this for foreigners, for the tourists," says the soft-spoken Jolyon Leslie, CEO of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. "But now that the monuments have been restored and become accessible people don't think like that any more."

The work done on the Babur Garden and Timur Tomb is a part of the revival of the inner city in Kabul as a heritage location.

So, the Aga Khan's initiatives in Afghanistan are full of nuances that come from seeing development as a patchwork of many sensibilities.

THE ISMAILI WAY

The Aga Khan is the religious head of the Ismailis who are all over the world. There are perhaps a million of them in Afghanistan. Ismailis are known to be nifty businessmen, but they are socially conscious and given to voluntarism. The Ismailis make money to give back to society and fashion a better life for all. It is a part of their culture.

The Aga Khan funds innovative development work and yet he maintains a surprisingly low profile.

A closer look reveals another side to him. The AKDN spends hugely on causes irrespective of the communities that benefit. It makes social investments in companies and sectors that bring far-reaching economic change. Says the Aga Khan: "Sustainable development is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots and given the ways and means to take responsibility for its own future."

It is part of the Aga Khan enormous influence as a Muslim leader and visionary that the Enabling Environment Conference was attended in person by the Pakistani Prime Minister. The Malaysian Prime Minister marked his presence through a satellite connection.

The top leaders of the Afghan government and parliament were all there and even sat through working group sessions.

The conference ended with a statement seeking partnerships between civil society, business and government. It stressed the need for "bold and immediate action" to inspire confidence "in the long-term future of Afghanistan".

The conference called for implementation of key laws and amendments to encourage private sector involvement in the social and economic development of the country. Equally significantly, it proposed independent certification bodies for voluntary entities because of the importance of civil society.

What will the conference really achieve on the ground? Much depends on how President Karzai holds his own.

Even under the Taliban women were running beauty parlours from their homes where women would go in their burqas to be made up. There were similarly sewing schools and bakeries.



Women have begun stepping out, but such street scenes are rare.



A crowded bazaar. Note the mobile phone covers for sale.

At the five-star Serena Hotel (which is the Aga Khan's investment and belongs to a chain by the same name with properties all over the world) on the opening day of the conference helicopter gunships hovered overhead. Dogs sniffed out rooms and special security fell in place everywhere from the main gates to the corridors and the restaurants.

Not only were the Aga Khan and President Karzai going to be at the hotel for the conference's inauguration, but a high-powered American delegation was also around, though for entirely different meetings.

Five years after an elected government came to power in Afghanistan, no one wants to take chances in Kabul. The best guarantors of peace are still the machines of war. The conference of course was intended to send out the mes-



Shireen Rahmani and Akhter Rezaei work for Roshan where the average age of employees is 23.



Shopkeepers on a street: Small businesses are part of the private sector push.



The Timur Tomb which has been restored in the heart of Kabul.



sage that there are ways to end this stress quickly.

ANGEL OF THE STREETS

Engineer Mohammad Yousef is our sensitive guide through Kabul's streets. He is a glowing example of what a vibrant civil society can do. He has been running Aschiana since 1996 and reaches out to 10,000 children. Education and free meals apart, the children find in Aschiana's six centres safe places where they can get off the streets.

Aschiana also provides lessons in music and painting so that children who have only known trauma can seek some balm in creative pursuits. Aschiana hosts a Children's Development Bank, which children manage themselves and use to put away their earnings from the small jobs they do on the street. So if you go to one of Aschiana's centres in Kabul it is likely that you will meet little Adil or Rahim or Mohammad who will show you their passbooks in which they have saved 300 or 400 Afghanis.

As we walk through the streets, we ask Engineer what it is that Afghans want most from their government. "Jobs. Everyone wants a job. Obviously the government cannot give everyone a job. So it must create conditions in which economic activity flourishes and people can earn from their own efforts. It must encourage self-reliance and entrepreneurship. The bureaucracy and corruption is stifling."

And what about the Taliban? Will they ever return? "It is five years and not much has been achieved on the ground. If the government can't make people's lives better, they will lose their patience. Anything can happen," says Engineer.

There are many civil society initiatives like Aschiana in Afghanistan. Documenting their work gives some idea of what private effort can achieve.

THE NEW AFGHAN

Aschiana children, with their precious money saved in the Children's Development Bank, and their wide-eyed search for a normalcy that can save them from Kabul's punishing streets are the new Afghans. Aschiana shows them what they can aspire to and they have high expectations.

Other new Afghans are Fawad Ahmad Muslim and Akram Fazel, who have

SOME DEFINITIONS

Three important building blocks

The Enabling Environment Conference was based on much ground work. It threw up some key definitions worth recording:

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector encompasses the spectrum of private activity that contributes to all aspects of development. It includes private, domestic and international for-profit activity (e.g. multinationals, formally organised companies, small businesses and household-level income generating activities), as well as private, domestic and international not-for-profit activity – civil society.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil Society is committed to the public good and is powered by private voluntary energies. It includes institutions of education, health, science and research which conduct activities and/or provide services on a charitable or non-commercial (but fee-paying) basis. It embraces professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organisations, and others devoted to religion, communication (including media), the environment and the community (e.g. village organisations).

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

An enabling environment is characterised by political stability; confidence in the future; mutual trust, understanding, dialogue and collaboration amongst stakeholders; rule of law; protection of the rights of citizens; a diversity of stable, democratic institutions; and a streamlined legal, fiscal, regulatory and administrative framework governing all spheres of private initiative, which is predictably, consistently and impartially applied.

spent more than a decade living in the West but have returned to build a modern country.

Muslim is a software engineer and Fazel is a biochemist. Muslim has helped bring Internet to Afghanistan and trained government staff in using computers. Fazel is head of the American College in Kabul and has a company that has plans of constructing a new city adjacent to Kabul.

Muslim is 33 and had moved to Virginia in the US when he was very young. Fazel is 58 and has lived in France. Their families will never return except for short visits. But both of them are back to give their homeland modern systems and the best that the world has to offer.

"When the heart is on fire you must obey it," says Fazel, explaining why he left behind a much better life in France to come back.



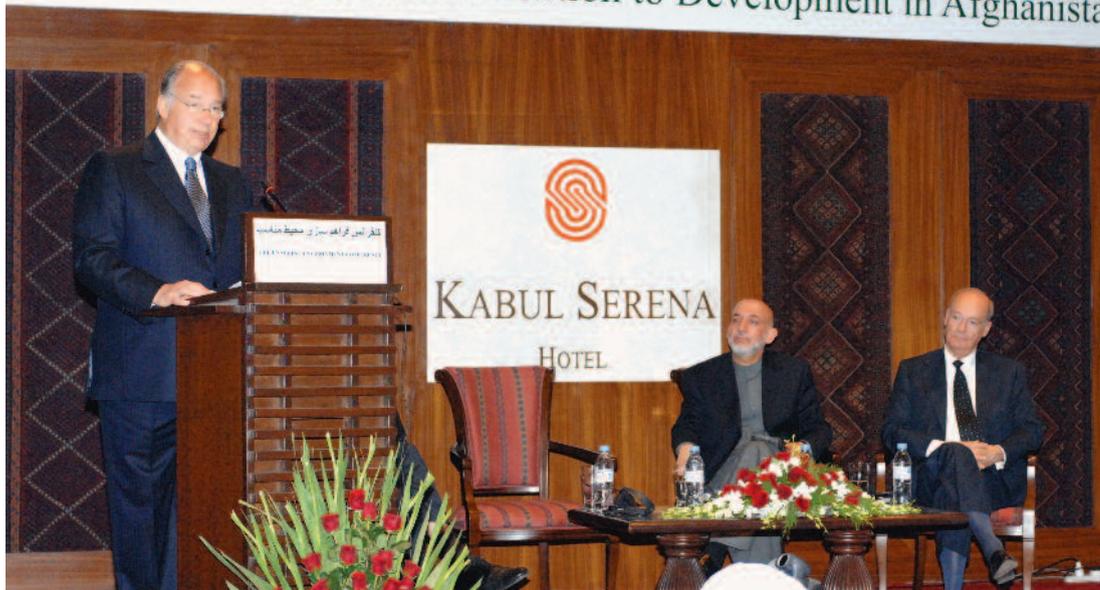
As businesses come back, billboards are up.



A boy sells Coke, Pepsi and bottled water.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE

Effective Private Sector Contribution to Development in Afghanistan



The Aga Khan addresses the conference.



Akram Fazel returned from France.



Shirine Pont of the Peace Dividend Trust.



Nicola Cunningham Armacost of Women's World Banking.



Waiting for flights at Kabul airport.

Muslim similarly was among the first expat Afghans to return when the Taliban were overthrown because he believed that his expertise as a software engineer would be hugely valuable to a modernisation process.

Both worry about excessive bureaucracy, corruption and needless political rivalries. Both seek out a contemporary vision for Afghanistan for only that will hook it on to speedy progress.

Like so many others at the Aga Khan's conference Muslim and Fazel seek an enabling environment in which they can deliver results with their global skills without fear of wasting more years.

LINKING UP WITH THE WORLD

Afghanistan has much to gain from its links with the rest of the world. There are of course the investments that must come in. But there is also the realm of global social concerns.

Shirine Pont, for instance, is the country director of Peace Dividend Trust, an organisation that is committed to getting companies, armed forces and governments to make their purchases locally. Since January 2006, Shirine has already managed to generate \$ 40 million in orders for local businesses.

The kind of orders may vary. They could be for some finely designed garments by Zolaykha Sherzad of Zarif Design. Or they could be the big orders for bottled water from the US military.

The US military spends \$ 58 million a year on bottled water, which it imports into Afghanistan. Of this more than half goes in logistical costs. Thanks to the Peace Dividend Trust the US military now makes \$ 10 million worth of purchases in Afghanistan where there

big projects is another way in which the Peace Dividend Trust wants to insure that spending is soaked up locally.

Nicola Cunningham Armacost is director of Women's World Banking, which is a microfinance provider.

When she first came to Kabul after the Karzai government took over, there was literally nothing. "The Central bank had two computers," she recalls. "The conditions were terrible."

But she found that even under these conditions women were operating small businesses from their homes. Even under the Taliban, they had been running beauty parlours where women would go in their burqas to be made up. There were similarly sewing schools and bakeries.

To run these businesses, the women would borrow from family and friends. The one thing they wanted was an organisation that would lend money. "I decided to facilitate the creation of an organisation for and by Afghan women," recalls Nicola.

She finally helped set up an NGO that now has 10,000 clients in just over four years. Since charging interest is not Islamic, the loans are structured differently to cover transaction costs. But they are loans and not grants and give Afghan women their place beside men in the economy.

Will all these efforts finally put Afghanistan on a new path to peace and prosperity? Or will the Enabling Environment Conference be just another jamboree of people with good intentions? Such questions don't find easy answers. But as we lounged on the grass under the trees at the airport waiting for our flights to arrive, it was certain that Kabul's makeover clock was ticking loudly.

Afghanistan has much to gain from its links with the rest of the world. There are of course the investments that must come in. But there is also the realm of global social concerns.

Business

BEYOND PROFIT

Rethink money with us. What should the entrepreneur of the future be like? How can you get rich and still serve society? Do causes need bottom lines?

Homes for the masses

Vidya Viswanathan
New Delhi

MURALI Srinivas is an entrepreneur who has recently incorporated Tripod Housing, a company that will build houses for lower income groups (LIG) and the economically weak sections (EWS). Tripod will initially construct 400 sq ft apartments adjacent to industrial areas in Hyderabad and Dehradun. Srinivas is raising Rs 4 crore through equity for the project, and is investing Rs 25 lakh. Srinivas claims that he can give a 50 per cent return on the invested amount in two years.

The housing projects will factor in economic and social concerns. Each well-

designed unit will cost Rs 4 lakh. The whole project will be environment-friendly.

Srinivas, who started his career as an LIC officer, has earlier promoted two more businesses. He started Bibo water, a drinking water company based in Hyderabad which has experience in selling water sachets to rural areas. He was the chief operating officer (COO) of Healing Fields Foundation, an organisation set up to make health care affordable to the poor. He then invested in Mimo Finance, a Dehradun-based microfinance company that started operations in November 2006.

Civil Society caught up with Srinivas to find out how he plans to build hous-

(Continued on page 22)

LAKSHMAN ANAND



LAKSHMAN ANAND



We are targeting factory workers and some informal workers like roadside food vendors and vegetable vendors. Our model will be in an 80:20 ratio for formal and informal workers.

es for people with less money. Excerpts:

How did you move from microfinance to housing?

I looked at where the money was going. About 80 per cent of microfinance does not go to livelihood generation. Most of it goes into housing or health.

Where have you acquired land?

That is the foremost and largest problem. A land bank is not available. For our initial projects we have identified industrial areas close to Dehradun and Hyderabad. Selaqui is an industrial area located 20 kms from Dehradun. It has pharmaceutical giants like Biological E, Glaxo and many other small companies. Our business model is an urban one. We are not targeting villagers because apartments are not the model for them. They live in great surroundings and land is available there. They need home improvement.

We are targeting factory workers and some informal workers like roadside food vendors and vegetable vendors. Our model will be in an 80:20 ratio for formal and informal workers. We have spoken to NHB and leading home finance LIC Housing, and they are keen to lend.

How will you fund this? How much land do you need?

We will fund our project through equity and debt. We have to raise enough money to purchase land. We need two acres to build 300 units. We have located land close to a 7,500 acre industrial estate in Hyderabad. Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) developed the estate. They have 2,000 acres for common use. APIIC gives land to industry at Rs 32 lakh an acre. I have also asked them for land at Rs 15 lakh an acre in return for equity. I think it is their responsibility to build housing. As many as 10 workers live in one 200 sq ft room in several areas. The situation is the same in Delhi's Munirka and Lado Sarai areas. Even though the industrial areas are far, they have no option.

How will you fund the informal sector?

We have discussed some methods with National Housing Board and other funding agencies. One is, we get them to save the difference between the EMI (equated monthly instalments) and the rental that they pay. We will then allocate them a unit. If they can save the same exact amount on the exact date for a year, we will allot it to them. We have spoken to people, who will pay somehow.

We are figuring out models. We will combine health and life insurance and see that the person picking up a house is covered, that it is not a risk for us. After we construct, there will be more housing developments in the area in the years to come. After buying the house for Rs 4 lakh it can be sold for Rs 6 lakh. But we don't want the person who bought the house to lose it.

How much money do you need to raise and where is the company now?

We need only Rs 4 crore of equity. Manab and I have invested some money and we have already spoken to high net worth individuals, private equity and venture capitalists. We are in the process of preparing a detailed project report (DPR) that will be done by this month. We will do the *bhoomi puja* by September.

Our money is required for acquiring land and for approvals. Then we get project finance from the banks. We need the DPRs for the banks.

What happens if you don't get land from APIIC?

We have already identified land near the industrial area. But it costs Rs 50 lakh per acre, which is why we are waiting.

Is it viable at Rs 50 lakh an acre?

At that price it will cost Rs 1,000 per sq ft. If we get land at Rs 15 lakh per acre from the government it will come down to Rs 900. Cost of construction is Rs 650 per sq ft. But every little bit counts. The attraction of the land from the government, apart from price, is that the entitlements will be clean.

Will you manage the township? Will it have common areas?

We will manage the township for five years. Otherwise there will be factions based on community, language or caste. We will have common areas but if we construct 300 units in two acres these may not be in open spaces. We might put common spaces in the basement or on top of a building. We may put in prayer places and a dispensary depending on what the community wants. We will identify the needs of the people in the programme which is part of the DPR.

Do you have a design?

We have the design. We have an MoU with Monitor, the consulting group started by Michael Porter, for design and technical assistance. Monitor has World Bank assistance to help low-cost housing companies. They have six or seven other pilot projects.

Will your project have a green cover? Will it be environment-friendly?

We will do whatever we can afford at Rs 100 per sq ft. The project will have solar power for one fan and a tube light. Drinking water and sewage will be treated. Re-cycled water will be used for flushing. We will separate solid waste. We are also looking at biogas. If people want a playground that doesn't have grass but trees around, we will make it.

We have ambitions of building a small community hall for music and for a library. Other than the architects, a team from France is keen to help us. The team consists of an Indian architect who is a friend, a sociologist, landscape planner, urban planner and so on.

How will you prevent this from becoming a speculative project?

We cannot control what people do after they buy.

Will you be doing the construction work?

We are not going to build ourselves. We will outsource it to a contractor. Our onsite engineer will check quality. A programme manager will carry out a survey on customers, talk to business houses and after the project starts, he will be in charge of monitoring. The third role is that of a finance guy and an administrative person. These four people will belong to the JVs.

In Delhi, Tripod Housing will just have a finance guy, a programme manager and me, a team that will remain the same even after 10 years. In a place like Delhi you have to pay a decent salary. I would rather have less and pay more. My father was a civil engineer and he built the Salem and Vizag steel plants as a consultant. He knows the process.

Today, large banks are interested in microfinance. Do you see the same happening in low-cost housing?

Certainly. According to Kumari Selja, the Union Minister for Housing, total housing shortage in the country is 24.71 million units as of 2007. Of this, 17.9 million units will be needed in the EWS category and 6.29 million in the LIG categories. In the middle income group (MIG) category, the shortage will be just 0.45 million units. The housing boards etc., can build only four million.

What is your target for the next 10 years?

In five years we will do 3,600 units. In 15 years we would have built a million. In the first five years, we have to build a relationship with banks, housing finance companies and NHB. Any project takes two and a half years to complete, and we have to build our brand after that.

The project will have solar power for one fan and a tube light. Drinking water and sewage will be treated. Re-cycled water will be used for flushing. We will separate solid waste.

Dr Reddy's LABS goes global

Rakesh Agrawal
Hyderabad

IN 1999, Dr Reddy's Foundation (DRF), the non-profit arm of Dr Reddy's Laboratories, started a Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS) with nine students in Hyderabad, India's cyber capital.

Over the years, the business school's popularity has grown hugely. Today it has 120 centres across 11 states in India. More than 93,000 underprivileged students have learnt the basics of computer science from its many centres and got decent jobs.

Dr Reddy's Laboratories are best known for their Apollo chain of hospitals.

But the aim of DRF, their non-profit, is rather different. Established in June 1996, DRF promotes public-private partnership models that link life, learning and livelihoods. One of its main objectives is to extend the fruits of the cyber revolution to underprivileged youth.

"LABS is a business school exclusively for marginalised youth in the age group 18 to 35 years. It imparts market driven new economy courses across India," says Gopi Krishna of DRF.

LABS is now going global. Centres are opening in Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. "In India too, an MoU is being signed with the Ministry of Rural Development to implement this project in all states," says Krishna.

Students joining LABS undergo a three month course where they learn basic computer skills, Internet, DTP and spoken English. After that they are placed in call centres and computer education centres. "We have over 75 percent success in placements," claims Krishna.

Inspired by the success of LABS, DRF launched Gramin LABS. Its first centre was started in October 2006 in the Old Charminar area of Hyderabad, a largely Muslim locality. Over 140 students joined and around 80 percent were placed. Many girls got jobs as data entry operators.

"Today I earn more than my father and take care of my family," says Pavithra. Her father, a security guard, earns Rs 2,500 per month, while Pavithra, who works in a Hutch call centre, earns Rs 3,000.

For the girls it's like entering a new world. "Initially, it was tough for my parents to let me discard my *burqa* (veil) and work with the boys. But after a lot of cajoling they agreed," says Nusrat Fatima. Money also has a role to play. Fatima earns the same amount as Pavithra and is her colleague in Hutch.

"LABS empowered me in more ways than one," says Sri Devi, another young lady who works as a computer operator in Hyderabad's posh Dara shopping mall. Originally from Guntakal, Sri Devi is the sole bread winner and the eldest in her family of two sisters and one brother. Matters took a downturn when her father remarried and she had to quit studies. Sri Devi persuaded him to let her join LABS.

Boys too are catching up. But they prefer the more 'boyish' kind of jobs, and many are becoming technicians. "We can do jobs that exploit our energies and talents fully," says Murali, 21, a technician with a local computer assembly unit.

It's not always possible to turn rural folk into net savvy geeks. For one, they may not want to since farming continues to be their first preference. DRF therefore decided to start a Micro Entrepreneurship Development Cell (MEDC) and a Livelihood Hub.

MEDC boosts businesses based on agriculture. "These are small-scale livelihood options for youth from marginalised communities. We give them professional training and advice on how to add value to farming, animal rearing and vending," says Krishna.

DRF realised that youth were keen to go into business but were hampered by money and expertise. Through MEDC they are helped to identify and grab entrepreneurial opportunities. They are taught skills like how to draw up a business plan. MEDC also assists with banks and market linkages.

"Now I know how to grow baby corn and where to market my produce. This will surely increase my family's income," says KS Anandraj, 20, the youngest in a family of five. Girls have learnt how to vend sweet corn. "This work suits us girls, and I've found a good shop in Hyderabad that will market my product," says M. Kanmani.

In Hyderabad, most MEDC students are from the adjoining Ranga Reddy district but young people from Bihar and Kashmir have also benefited.

Inspired by the response, DRF has other schemes on the cards. The most important is to establish an Agro Facilitation Centre (AFC) with several branches in villages and districts. The AFC will be run by a full-fledged project management team which will act as a catalyst between agencies and farmers.



For underprivileged girls its like entering a new world.

Students undergo a three month course where they learn basic computer skills, Internet, DTP and spoken English. "LABS is a business school exclusively for marginalised youth in the age group 18-35 years. It imparts market driven new economy courses across India," says Gopi Krishna of DRF. Centres are opening in Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

The AFC will facilitate agriculture and allied services. It will boost animal husbandry, health, education, micro-entrepreneurship and e-governance. It will also help with bank loans. Local enterprise based on the opportunities available in rural markets will be encouraged.

The AFC management team will man outposts for a specific time and teach local entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs) how to manage the local centre. The centre will have a revenue generation model.

DRF is partnering national and international organisations, corporate houses, NGOs, state government and educational institutions in this venture.

A Livelihood Hub is also planned. It will continuously scan job opportunities and inform rural youth about them. The hub will tell economically backward groups about government schemes. It will also have information on private sector employment, skills development, entrepreneurship development support as well as bank linkages. The 'customers' of this service could range from school dropouts and graduates to individuals and self-help groups.

"Education is the foundation for all future skill development," says Krishna. So, ample attention is being paid to improving the education of underprivileged children through classroom intervention, life skills training and by encouraging them to have a positive attitude towards society.

Worldview

LATITUDE MATTERS

Everyone owns a shrinking planet. People count more than governments. Track change before it becomes news.

G8's AIDS smokescreen

Aditi Sharma

Heiligendamm, Germany

WHY are AIDS and public health activists crying foul at the G8's generous pledge of \$60 billion to fight diseases such as AIDS, TB and malaria? Leaders of the eight richest countries meeting in the German seaside resort of Heiligendamm from June 6 to 8, seemed to give considerable thought to the infectious diseases that claim more than six million lives every year and are devastating communities and economies, particularly in Africa.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who chaired the summit, accorded a prominent place to Africa and AIDS on the official agenda even though the leaders had assembled to mainly discuss ways to promote growth and stability in the world economy.

The officials drafting the final declaration churned out a number of paragraphs on HIV/AIDS and even generated an eye-catching 60-billion-dollar headline on the last day of the summit.

Campaigners had wanted the summit to commit additional resources and deliver a long-term comprehensive plan to fight AIDS. They came to Germany to remind the G8 of their past pledges, in particular, those made at the 2005 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. That summit had raised all round expectations about progress in the war against AIDS.

The Gleneagles summit notably introduced a commitment to universal access to HIV treatment, prevention and care by 2010. Two years on the war chest to fight AIDS remains \$10 billion short per year and activists around the world are calling for new funds and real action from the richest nations. They issued this message through their protests and rallies in several countries during the Global AIDS Week at the end of May.

Warships and steel fences ensured that the G8 leaders were not disturbed by activists and their demands. But although protestors did not succeed in reaching the Heiligendamm venue, the world's media made sure that the leaders in the meeting knew of their presence outside.

NEW MONEY FOR HIV/AIDS?

The final G8 declaration on 8 June recognised that "substantial resources" were required in order to meet univer-

sal access and the millennium development goals and strengthen health systems. "We will continue our efforts towards these goals (fighting diseases and strengthening health systems) with at least a projected 60 billion dollars over the coming years..." read the declaration.

While the announcement of 60 billion dollars was designed to impress, the declaration is silent on the specifics such as time-frame, what it covers and how much is new money.

The real value of this promise is thus not easy to assess and campaigners were left calculating the projected gains overnight. We now know that "coming years" means five years to the US, eight years to Germany and ten to Italy. Some estimate that there is no new or additional money on offer. Even the most optimistic estimate pegs the new funds promised by the G8 at approxi-

mately three billion dollars by 2010 – a bit less dramatic than the 60 billion dollars!

Whatever additional money this latest promise delivers, it does not begin to address urgent requirements. Global resources needed for all three diseases – AIDS, TB and malaria – is over \$30 billion in 2008. An additional \$27 billion is needed now for investment in health systems.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN

In the lead up to the summit, the German Chancellor and her Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul made special mention of the need to tackle the feminisation of the AIDS pandemic. The final declaration while lacking in specific financial commitments did make many references to this. For example, the need to "support a gender sensitive response" and for "greater attention and appropriate resources" from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and



Two years on the war chest to fight AIDS remains \$10 billion short per year and activists around the world are calling for new funds and real action from the richest nations. They issued this message through their protests and rallies.

The state of Nepali democracy

Krishna Hachhethu
Kathmandu

AN April 2007 poll conducted by the Nepali team of the South Asia Democracy Study Group in collaboration with International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) explores the state of democracy in Nepal. The first round of the survey was conducted in 2004.

The survey shows that the 250-year-old Shah dynasty is likely to become a victim of the popular aspiration for change – 59 percent of respondents chose a republic over retaining the monarchy. In the 2004 survey, only 15 percent did so. And this increase is not because of the royal massacre, the royal takeovers, or the tarnished image of royalty, but on principle. Two-thirds of the republican respondents wanted a government 'ruled by the people' or believed 'monarchy is not necessary in the modern era'.

People buy the Maoists' agenda, but trust other state and political institutions more.

Two-thirds of the respondents 'believe' the changing ideological position of the CPN-M to varying degrees. This change in popular perception is reflected in responses to other questions too. Only 7 per cent of those surveyed consider the Maoists as a source of insecurity, compared with 42 per cent in 2004. The CPN-M topped the list of those sympathetic to the cause of excluded groups. Respondents were on board with the Maoist proposals to integrate the two armies (74 per cent) and impose a land ceiling (61 per cent).

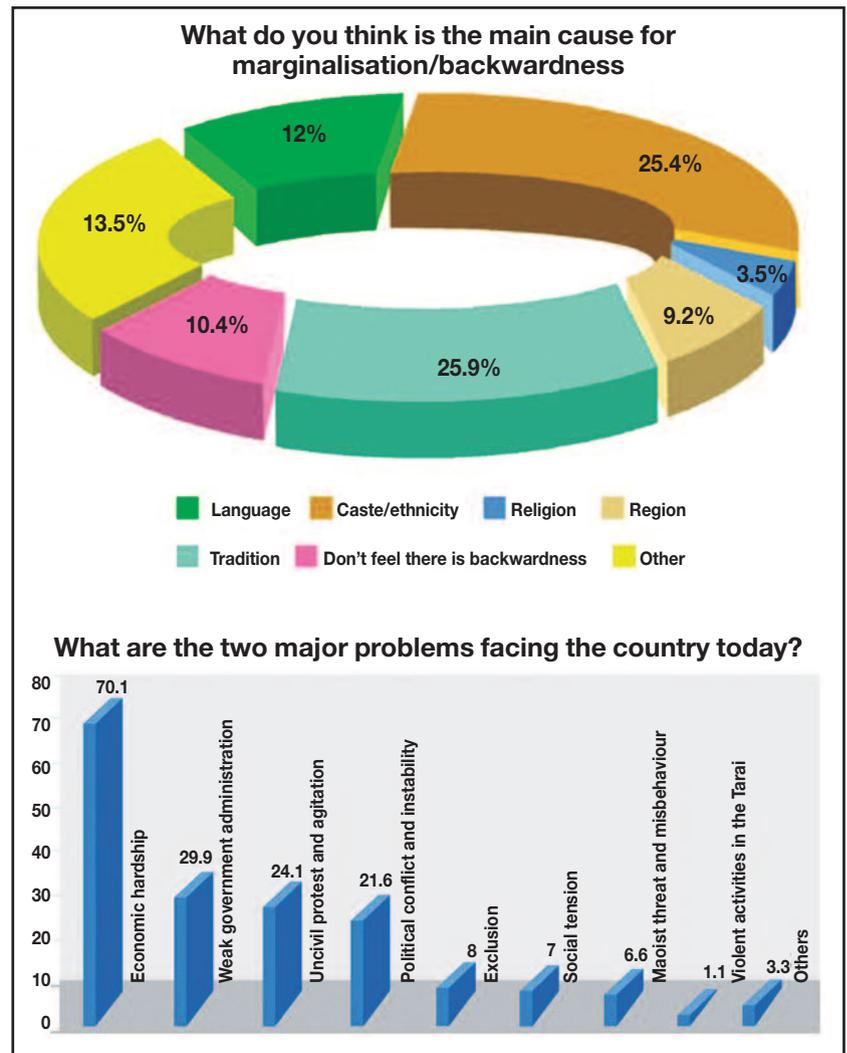
Still, Nepalis trust the other seven political institutions more. Of the 934 respondents (from a total of 4,089) who identified themselves as close to a party, only 15 per cent named the CPN-M, while 34 per cent allied themselves with the NC and 32 per cent with the UML. Over half said they would either decide later for whom they would vote or did not want to tell.

Popular aspirations for change have been manifesting in different forms. The janajati and madhesi movements appear to be genuinely mass-based. Respondents identifying with just national identity dropped sharply to 43 per cent from 59 per cent in 2004. Instead, there has been a shift in favour of equal weight to both national and ethnic or regional identity, from 19 per cent in 2004 to 31.5 per cent. It's different in the Tarai, though. Across caste, ethnicity, and religion, madhesis favoured an ethnic or regional identity (30 per cent on average) over a national identity (18 per cent). The figures were reversed in 2004. But identity politics do not threaten national integration – over 90 per cent of respondents, including madhesis, said they 'are proud' to belong of their own community and also Nepali.

The 'New Nepal' project aims to make fundamental changes to the state – secularism, federalism, and multilingualism. The survey discovered a paradox: support for a secular state, bi/multi-language policy, and federalism has increased by 6.4 and 9.5 per cent respectively since 2004. Yet 61 per cent of respondents favoured retaining the Hindu state and a little less than that wanted a unitary form of government. A bi/multi-language policy, however, is endorsed by over half the respondents.

Hill origin respondents wanted a status quo on language and the nature of government, while most madhesis wanted alternatives. Hill ethnic groups and Muslims wanted a secular state, in contrast to a majority of caste and Dalit hill and Tarai groups.

All these issues will be settled by the new constitution. A large majority of the



respondents (62 per cent) felt the CA elections could be held in a safe atmosphere and 84 per cent said international supervision would ensure free and fair elections. The surveyed citizens credited the eight-party alliance and resolution of the conflict for the improved security environment.

These are the messages from the findings of the State of Democracy 2007 survey:

- Civic education is essential, given the high percentage of 'don't know' responses on key issues such as the meaning of democracy and what the CA is
- Not politics, but economic hardship is at the top of the list of problems and challenges facing Nepalis (70 per cent).
- Uncivil agitation are not the way to get people's support.
- People expect results from the April Uprising and CA elections, notably peace through political reconciliation and stability through governance.
- The democratic transition must be linked to the voices of the people.

Krishna Hachhethu is country coordinator of the South Asia Democracy Study Network, affiliated with CNAS at Tribhuvan University, and associated with NCCS. Courtesy: Nepali Times

malaria to "address the needs of women and girls".

The leaders also reiterated the goal of "providing universal coverage of PMTCT" (preventing mother to child transmission of HIV through anti-retroviral drugs). The G8 leaders agreed to "promote knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health" and support "concerted efforts to stop sexual exploitation and gender-based violence".

PATENTS VS PUBLIC HEALTH

The G8 leaders did not have the fight against HIV/AIDS in mind when they reiterated their determination to strengthen intellectual property rights. This only denies access to affordable drugs.

Despite recognising the "challenge surrounding access to medicines" they stopped short of explicitly supporting the right of developing countries to undertake measures such as issuing of compulsory licences to manufacture or import safe, affordable generic drugs.

However, the five leaders of emerging economies – India, China, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa – who were invited for the last day did win a concession with a change to the final text that includes mention of the need to

India fact file

- **Over 90 per cent of HIV positive people who need treatment still lack access**
- **In rural India, 54 per cent of women have not heard of AIDS**
- **Only 2 per cent of HIV positive pregnant women receive drugs to prevent the transmission of the virus from mother to child**

address public health.

RETREAT FROM UNIVERSAL ACCESS

The biggest let down of the summit however was the erosion of the commitment to provide universal access to HIV treatment by 2010.

Over two days G8 officials drafting the declaration wrangled about how many lives to save by debating the number of people to support with life-saving anti-retroviral treatment. In contrast to the specific UNAIDS target of reaching 9.8 million by the year 2010, the G8 came up with a vague promise to reach approximately five million "over the next few years".

Twenty four thousand people died of AIDS in the three days that G8 leaders met in Heiligendamm. Instead of taking action to save lives, the G8 leaders delivered a smokescreen of 60 million dollars to cover up their retreat on the promise to provide HIV treatment –

not to some but to all those who need it.

This is a huge betrayal of the 40 million people living with HIV around the world whose hopes were raised by the goal the G8 leaders set just two years ago.

G8 and the five upstarts

TEN is a nicely rounded number. Apparently linked to the ten digits of the human hands. Why, then, are we stuck with a G8 while India and China stick out like two sore thumbs in this party of the privileged?

I imagine, like Russia before them, they too have to earn their stripes by going through the motions of being 'observers' for a few years. Tagging not far behind, are Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. These five have a combined population of almost 2.5 billion people, with China and India (in that order) sharing the possibility of surpassing the US economy in the very near future; predicted by no less than the financial institution of Goldman Sachs – and many others.

As invitees, the five upstarts have to learn the rules of the Club. Like many privileged clubs, this one too admits newcomers who were previously among the non-privileged. The paradox in this case, however, is that once the elite is swamped with another 2.5 billion people the very definition of being elite will be severely challenged. In practical terms, the continued development of these five is directly linked to the environmental question which has become one of the dominating issues of this forum (and is predicted to gain in importance in the coming days).

The conundrum posed by this double-helix of growth through industrial development and the consequentially increased carbon emissions and its deteriorating environmental effect, is a hard one to solve. Not only do the Five see development as their inalienable right (an average Indian still produces 20 times less CO₂ than the average American), they are in fact the industrial backyard of the Western nations.

Goods produced in these developing countries are still sold primarily in the privileged countries who have sub-contracted their highly polluting 'dirty work' to them. And a significant portion of the money earned through exports, notwithstanding the growing balance of payment deficits – especially against China – is once again recycled to the West to buy capital goods of advanced technological nature. It is said that a lot of out-of-box thinking is being done to resolve this one.

The leaders of the free world sat down at northern German resort of Heiligendamm with more than five per cent of the German Police Force (the largest security operation undertaken since the World War II) creating a 12 kilometre buffer zone, separating them from the very people they allegedly represent. Even George Orwell wasn't able to predict the utterly bovine political surrender of an entire continent drugged by empty consumerism, their energies focused on how to finance their next bout of purchases, while worrying about how to pay off their current debts, believing they live in the 'free world'; pitying those that haven't yet learnt to pollute, waste and greedily consume like the civilised nations; yet unable to see through the sheer unvarnished hypocrisy of

LETTER FROM EUROPE



Riaz Quadir in Versailles

their own leadership.

Popular issues were ritually addressed with masterly media savvy, pre-empting any politically incorrect faux pas, lest the common man awaken from his stupor and upset their apple carts. Promises to end Africa's misery were repeated, with no one to ask if the pledges of the previous years had been met. The world, listening attentively, wanted to hear those ritual promises, as though to assuage their own guilt of passive acquiescence and were oblivious of all else. Oblivious of the rampant destruction of all that is of lasting value -for fleeting rewards of the so-called 'free market'

economies.

Of course, under the surface, real issues were being subtly negotiated. Real issues being the struggling efforts of the mighty rulers of the world for half a millenium desperately attempting to maintain their stranglehold on the fortunes of the world.

The tectonic plates of civilisation have been sending seismic signals for the imminent changes that are on their way.

The question is how will they be negotiated? Peacefully? If one was to read the telltale signs of history, no one gives up power willingly (Bhutan's King Jigme Singye Wangchuck being that rare exception to prove the rule). We have seen a million times that when the 'free market' rules are applied to the disadvantage of its very proponents they don't hold good anymore. Logic defies the possibility of the wealthy permitting the dissipation of their wealth without resistance – specially when they are backed by formidable military might. Surely, Iraq is a case in point. And there it was merely the threat of being locked out (as in Iran in 1953, Indonesia in 1967 or Chile in 1973).

The head scratching starts when one understands that the five upstarts (add to that the last inductee: Putin's Russia) are no Iraqs and no amount of military might will deter their march to the summit. Current evidence shows that the good old divide and rule policy may not work very well with these upstarts either. The growing cooperation between and among them and their common stand on key issues is evidence of things to come. Even China and India (old enemies) took a common stand on the Kyoto Protocol and are now holding joint naval exercises.

Threatened as we are by the great environmental catastrophe that has been set in motion by human greed and blindness, we are about to witness mighty changes in humanity's pecking order. What will be of great interest to history is whether we will be witnessing a mere change of players while the game remains the same or the new order will bring with it a new ethos, perhaps one tinged with more humane values for which some of these civilisations were known.

Current evidence shows that the good old divide and rule policy may not work very well with these five upstarts either.

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Perspectives

CATCHING TRENDS

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Doha hand in US pocket

MILINDO CHAKRABARTI

AN outcome acceptable to all members of the WTO out of the Doha negotiations that began in November 2001 is in all probability going to be delayed further.

The Doha Declaration committed members to comprehensive negotiations aimed at substantial improvements in market access, reduction of all forms of export subsidies, and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support in respect of trade in agriculture.

Global leaders had all agreed "that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all the elements of negotiations, and shall be embodied in the schedules of concessions and commitments and as appropriate in the rules and disciplines to be negotiated, so as to be operationally effective, and to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development."

Yet six years down the line, no firm negotiated deal is in sight. Rather, if the Chair of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture held on the April 30, is to be believed, "We are at the very end of this exercise one way or the other," and there has been a clarion call, "for honest talk ... to promote a greater seriousness of purpose ... and, thereby, facilitate the decision making we so desperately need now ..." Another instalment followed on May 25, identifying conflicts across nations on issues like special safeguard mechanisms and green box particulars, among others.

Such frustrations result from two proximate factors, one circumstantial and the other factual. The circumstantial obstacle is in the form of imminent expiry. If the agreement is not signed by June, the US President will lose his fast track authority to approve international trade agreements, which means the US Senate/Congress will then oversee them. This is why the US wants to hurry.

To elaborate, the US administration's executive authority to negotiate trade agreements with a guarantee that the Congress would pass them with no amendments and limited debate – no legislative obstacle, to be precise – will expire on June 30.

It is doubtful, given the Democrat dominance in the Congress post-November 2006 elections, if President Bush will be able to actualise an extension. Doubts are strengthened as one recalls, historically, that President Clinton was denied this privilege by the Republican-led Congress, even though the fast track authority had been continuously in force from 1974 till 1994.

On May 23, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives approved a resolution calling on the Congress to defeat the renewal of President Bush's fast track trade authority. Legislatures in Alabama, Hawaii, Maine, Montana and Vermont have approved similar resolutions, and nine other states are considering action to prevent the Congress from renewing the 'fast track' authority when it expires on June 30.

The ranchers and cattlemen, prairie farmers, the

Presbyterian Church – common people from all walks of life – also appear to be against any attempt to extend the tenure of the 'fast track authority', even though there is a simultaneous apprehension about a possible secret deal being struck between the Democrats and the Republicans.

The situation will be crystal clear by the time you read this column as the deadline of June 30 will expire by then. However, the available trends suggest that the US President is all set to lose this authority.

The experience, however, provides an important lesson for the states that constitute federal India – the existence in the US of legislative mechanisms that bind the Union government to accommodate the demands of the state governments through an appropriate consultation process before committing to an international treaty that may have considerable impact on the welfare of the state's citizens. The centre-state commission set up recently to redefine the statutory relationship between states and the union government should take up this issue immediately.

The factual impediments are much more compelling. Between 1994 when the

Uruguay Round was completed and today, several studies have come up that found that the resultant global gains from an agreement on agriculture – portrayed to be very high then – were very insignificant in actuality. We shall concentrate on some such representative studies to find the truth.

A study by Hertel* that models the distributional effects of WTO agricultural reforms begins with an assertion that "trade theory is about whose hand is in whose pocket and trade policy is about who should take it out!"

It observes that the wealthiest of rich country farmers predominantly gain from protection while farm households in poor countries pay the price. Using a Doha Scenario elaborated in the July 2004 Framework Agreement (WTO, 2004) and comparing the results with simulated estimates under a fully liberalised scenario, the exercise reveals the distribution of gains/losses across developed and 15 selected developing countries.

Some stylised features from the findings are worth mentioning:

Australia and New Zealand stand to gain the most among the rich countries under both scenarios in respect of terms of trade, even though Japan derives the highest welfare gain, coupled with the highest terms of trade loss. None of the OECD countries suffer welfare losses under both the scenarios. However, the welfare gain is much higher under an ideal free trade scenario.

Developing countries show mixed results with Brazil, Peru, Malawi, Colombia Thailand and Chile emerging clear winners in respect of terms of trade appreciation – higher in a fully liberalised agricultural trade scenario than that realised through the Doha-2004 framework of agreements. They also maintain a simultaneous appreciation in welfare.

(Continued on page 28)



A study by Hertel observes that the wealthiest of rich country farmers predominantly gain from protection while farm households in poor countries pay the price.

Mumbai port's dirty record

HIMANSHU UPADHAYA

AN audit report of the CAG on autonomous bodies governed by the Union of India has examined environment management at the Mumbai Port Trust and discovered that the crisis goes much beyond non-compliance. Indeed, the audit findings and the rather contemptuous response to the findings from the Port authorities as well as regulatory institutions like Maharashtra Pollution Control Board and Ministry of Environment and Forests as well as Ministry of Surface Transport makes one wonder if the very concept of environmental governance has met with an early death.

The Port that has marked 134 years of its existence has failed miserably to pass the test when the CAG trained its scanners on environmental management at this part-mangrove-lined tidal channel that delineates Mumbai Island from the mainland. The audit findings revealed that it did not have a documented Environment Management Plan (EMP), did not carry out environment management audit despite regulatory requirements, did not monitor air and water quality properly, or ship-breaking activities despite clear directives from the Supreme Court, and basically refused to attend to its responsibilities related to the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan. The port also neglected hazardous waste management, which can be disastrous.

In April 1989, the MoEF had directed the port to develop an EMP. Further, under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for Ports and Harbours issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) under the provisions of EIA Notification 1994, the preparation of EMP was a must, as it "served as a legal commitment on the part of proponents to control environmental impacts. Besides, the audit scrutiny found that till date the port did not have a documented EMP despite the directives of the MoEF. When this was pointed out through audit comments, "the port accepted and stated in May 2006 that the EMP would be developed with the help of a consultant".

Rule 14 of Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 stipulated that "every person carrying on an industry, operation or process requiring consent under section 25 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 or under section 21 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 or both or authorisation under the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 issued under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 shall submit an environmental audit report for the financial year ending with March 31, in prescribed form of the concerned State Pollution Control Board on or before September 30 every year, beginning with 1993". However, it was noticed during the audit scrutiny that the port did not carry out any environmental management audit and therefore had not submitted any such report as of March 31, 2006.

Although, the port did set up a Pollution Control Cell in 1983, as per suggestions it received from MoEF a year ago, on June 1982, shortage of qualified manpower coupled with the failure to maintain mandatory equipments purchased for environmental monitoring, and combating oil spillage etc constrained its purposeful functioning. It was noticed during the audit that the charge of director was being looked after by the Senior Dock Master as additional charge. The post of deputy director, two out of three posts of pollution control officers, three out of five posts of chemists, the only post of cleaner and all five posts of

'lascars' were not filled up till August 2006. The posts of marine biologist and senior executive as stipulated by MoEF were also not filled up.

To comply with the conditions of environmental clearance dated April 1989, the port had procured equipments and facilities to monitor and implement programmes relating to pollution control and environmental conservation. However, audit scrutiny revealed that the same were not properly maintained.

Marine pollution equipment purchased for Rs 114 lakh in 1991 for mitigation of oil spillage was never put to use due to lack of trained staff. Even though the equipment had become unusable in 2002, the same has neither been repaired nor replaced as of August 2006.

- Out of thirty equipments procured during August-September 1991 for the laboratory at a cost of Ra 18 lakh, only ten were in working condition as on August 2006.

- The incinerator plant purchased in 1993 for Rs 14.16 lakh was not in operation from February 1996 due to mechanical snags and was subsequently sold in August 2002, without replacement as of August 2006.

- Two oil separator plants costing Rs 39.90 lakh and Rs 54.60 lakh installed in 1993 and 1995 for treatment of dirty ballast and slop generated by ships were never utilised.

Further, audit scrutiny to check the compliance with several conditions stipulated by MoEF at the time of granting environmental clearance revealed rampant violations:

- The air samples were being collected through gas sampler and analysis made at port hospital at Wadala, as the relevant equipment were not in working condition till September 2006.

- Due to non-availability of incinerator plant, oil sludge has been accumulating at an island in the harbour waters.

The conditions of environmental clearance for the project relating to replacement of submarine pipeline had stipulated that once the new pipelines had been laid, old and disused pipelines would be decommissioned. The audit scrutiny revealed that though the new pipelines had been laid in June 2000, the old and disused pipelines, which approximately run for four kms, had merely been declared as a safety hazard, but were not removed as late as June 2006.

Audit findings on ecological stress on the harbour also present a gloomy picture:

- The port could not furnish the relevant records showing the areas of experimental mangroves at Sewree Mud Flat and monitoring of the health of plants.

- There was no record to show the survey of existing or newly planted mangroves conducted by the port. It was reported by Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS), a government agency, in January 2006, that the mangroves were being extensively harvested for fuel.

The CAG also castigates the role of regulatory authorities like the MoEF who played blind even as the port flouted environmental norms.

On the role of MoEF, the CAG states, "MoEF officials conducted inspection visits but did not monitor and verify the implementation of mitigation measures committed by the port. Further, though periodic reports of air sampling were sent to the Regional Office, MoEF did not comment on the monitoring methodologies, which were not in accordance with relevant CPCB guidelines.

The port that has marked 134 years of its existence failed miserably to pass the test when the CAG trained its scanners on environmental management.

Doha hand in US pocket

(Continued from page 27)

The rest of the countries are clear losers.

An examination of the welfare impacts on rich country farm households clarifies why there is so much opposition to agricultural reforms, especially in the developed world. The average decline of on-farm income in Japan is 16 per cent under the Doha scenario and 28 per cent under the full liberalisation scenario. The corresponding figures for EU are six per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. The average loss in on-farm income is not that significant.

But the welfare impacts on representative households in each of the 11 wealth classes across the five US producer groups are different. The loss to the richest – and most likely influential – producer groups are quite large. In the case of rice producers it is nearly 20 per cent of farm income.

The estimated impact of liberalisation of agriculture by the rich countries, on the change in poverty ratio across the developing countries, reveals a significant

decline in the incidence of agricultural poverty. This revelation encourages Hertel et al to forcibly argue, "Clearly the same reforms that reduce the incomes of the richest farm households in the US and other developed countries boost those of the poorest farm households in some of the poorest countries in the world.

Obviously, the very policies that assist the richest farmers create poverty among poor country farm households. The diversified household strata (both urban and rural) also show substantial poverty reductions in a number of cases – particularly Brazil, Chile and Thailand. On the other hand, higher food prices consistently push more of the non-agriculture, self-employed and the transfer-dependent households into poverty."

Some further interesting studies can be cited to underscore the source of tension vis-à-vis complete global reforms in the agricultural sector. I shall take up some of them in the next issue, by which time it will also be clear if President Bush had succeeded in pushing the agenda for an extension of the fast track authority.

*Reference: Hertel Thomas, W Roman Keeney, Maros Ivanic & L. Alan Winters (2006): *Distributional Effects of WTO*

Agricultural Reforms in Rich and Poor Countries: GTAP Working Paper no. 33: September, 2006.

No need for dog holocaust

SAMITA RATHOR

THE law of the country forbids any form of cruelty towards animals. Under IPC 428 and IPC 429, killing, poisoning and maiming an animal is punishable. The Prevention of Cruelty towards Animals Act was passed in 1960.

Despite our laws, the unofficial way of killing stray animals includes clubbing, electrocuting, burning alive and stabbing, to name a few.

The Hindu belief of the sacredness of animals is a dominant and beautiful aspect of its culture. Hinduism has many animal deities. The religion respects and cherishes life in all its forms. Hinduism does not condemn the animal. Rather it elevates it. After all the dog was Yudhishter's true ally and the only one to make it to heaven!

Islam too views animals as God's creation. The Quran, the Hadith, and the history of Islamic civilisation offer many examples of kindness, mercy and compassion for animals. The Bible says that the soul of every living being is in God's hand. A peaceful person avoids causing unnecessary suffering to any living creature. Such a person does not damage the environment, even if it means financial loss.

Citizens for Animals (CFA), a voluntary group of concerned citizens in Delhi are protesting the killing of stray dogs in Kerala, Karnataka, the north-east and other regions in India. CFA are a pro-animal group who want to spread compassion for animals and create awareness against cruelty.

CFA has been following the story of Kerala's killing spree against dogs. It has kept close track of how Avis Lyons, founder of Animal Rescue Kerala (ARK), set up three years ago in Trivandrum, has been battling to save her dogs. ARK is a member of World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA) and has 25 years of animal welfare to its credit.

Avis Lyons is a 65-year-old British lady who sold all her property in England and settled in Trivandrum with the single mission of caring for stray dogs and other animals. She has sterilised and vaccinated hundreds of dogs in Vizhinjam over the last five years completely eliminating the 'stray dog menace' in that area, apart from taking wounded animals into her shelter.

In other words, the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme was thorough and the incidence of rabies was zero. In fact, she is known as the animal 'madama' and hers is the best known animal shelter in that region.

When the killing pogrom began, she fought for her dogs who were all sterilised and vaccinated. There was no chance of them spreading rabies or multiplying. She has knocked on the doors of the judiciary, the local corporation and the government. When there was no response at all, she contacted India's animal lovers for support. She and her staff have been badly roughed up by the Kerala police. Her life is under threat and so she has contacted the British Ambassador in Delhi for support.

"I strongly wish to register my protest against the state government of Kerala about their decision to begin culling stray dogs despite the government of India's policy of sterilisation," said Avis Lyons.

According to her, the state government of Kerala has decided to start culling dogs despite the Indian government's ruling that this practice is illegal and that dogs should be sterilised in accordance with the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme.

"Dogs are caught with a bare loop of wire and injected with lethal injections like strychnine. This injection is cheap and available in the market. It takes at least five minutes for the dog to die or be choked to death. Either way, death is slow and painful. The internationally recommended cuccinyl choline is not used in India, as it is expensive. Since it is a muscle relaxant death is painless," said Avis Lyons.

The brutal killing of thousands of dogs is going on, pitifully, under the umbrella of the Trivandrum Corporation's 'Suraksha' programme. There is enough evidence to show how dogs, turtles and rabbits are being sawed to death even as they struggle with their lives.

Citizens for Animals asks: "How can any one catch a harmless stray dog and kill it on the roadside by injecting a banned illegal substance into its heart while it convulses in fits and froths from the mouth and gasps while it tries to die? And if that's not enough, dogs are bludgeoned on the head with a shovel if the poison wasn't strong enough and didn't do its job. These poor unsuspecting dogs are trapped in cages while they wait on death row with not a drop of water to drink and not a morsel of food even as they watch their fellow mates being clubbed to death."

This holocaust was seen in Karnataka and is now being witnessed in Kerala. The reason given by the authorities is that they are on this killing spree to control the burgeoning stray dog population. Research shows that such methods are completely ineffective. The only way to control the stray dog population is through a sustained programme of ABC and removal of garbage from roads. Neither of these has happened, so in effect, we willfully allow the dogs to proliferate and then slaughter them like this for no fault of theirs. Is this humane or just?

The WHO says that, first of all, killing dogs is not the answer. Municipalities have been killing dogs for centuries and they have still not eradicated the dog population. Secondly, if cities do not find a way of disposing garbage effectively, the stray dog population will not come down. Thirdly, according to WHO, the only method of reducing the stray dog population is animal birth control.

So if we are to control the stray dog population, let's remove garbage from the streets and launch a massive sterilisation and vaccination programme for the strays dogs instead of brutally massacring them.

An important suggestion is to adopt a dog and bring it indoors. If you can't, then adopt it and keep it outdoors. Keep an eye on it, give it a name, give it a collar, feed it regularly, get it sterilised and vaccinated and if it is in trouble or sick take it to the vet.

Citizens need to be educated that the very nature of a dog is to be friendly and to trust. It is for this reason that a dog is called 'man's best friend'. Most dogs are docile, friendly and long for human attention. Dog is the only animal that actively seeks human attention and connection. Dogs offer loyalty and love. This is not a dog versus human issue.

Dogs, trees and animals are all important for the environment. Being disconnected from the environment is the root cause of most mental, psychological and physical diseases.



Avis Lyons with her dog.

Municipalities have been killing dogs for centuries and they have still not eradicated the dog population. If cities do not find a way of disposing garbage effectively, the stray dog population will not come down. According to WHO, the only method of reducing the stray dog population is animal birth control.

Reviewer

THE FINE PRINT

Get behind the scenes. Books, films, theatre, street plays, posters, music, art shows. The one place to track creative people across the country.

Films hit panchayat box office

Civil Society News
Thrissur

It was a pitch dark night in Mudikkodu village. On one side of the road a makeshift screen had been rigged up. Rural men and women watched in awe as a film began to unfold. To them the movie was not a song and dance fantasy but a slice of cold reality.

The film, titled *'My Migrant Soul'* told the story of Shahjahan Babu who migrates from Kerala to Malaysia. Letters and audio tapes he had sent to his mother over a period of two years piece together his plight. His mother who sold her ancestral land to send him receives his body at the airport.

"Seeing Babu's body at the airport came as a real shock. Shahbuddin, the agent, had promised to send him home," sobbed the grief-stricken mother.

Conned by 'Adam traders' as the agents are called, Shahjahan Babu, like hundreds of desperate men, ended up in a Malaysian jail as he was found carrying

a fake passport.

To the villagers of Mudikkodu, squatting reverentially before the screen, the story had an old, familiar ring. Such situations are not uncommon in Kerala, Punjab, Bangladesh or for that matter any developing country where migration for employment is the catch word. For the first time village women saw their men's plight in the international labour market.

Yasmin, the film's producer and director said: "Never has my film been more luminous. I am honoured that it is being screened by a woman's organisation of the panchayat. Ironically Bangladesh, the largest exporter of labour, has refused to screen my movie, partly filmed in Malaysia. Our governments benefit from the exodus of labour but don't want to take cognizance."

Yasmin's film was one of the 43 screened in villages of Panancherry panchayat. An international documentary film festival was organised by Vibgyor in Thrissur. It was co-sponsored by the Capacity Development for Decentralisation in Kerala (Cap Dek) locally called the Stree Jagratha Samithi, a group set up by the Kerala Women's Commission.

"Confining festivals of good documentaries to urban areas deprives the rural folk, many of whom are involved in such struggles. Women at the grassroots should have access to information. They too need a platform to exchange their experiences," said festival director K P Sasi. His documentaries on people's struggles have won accolades.

The theme of the festival was *Earth* and the films were about globalisation, gender, the global south, indigenous people, human rights, displacement and environmental degradation.

Arifa a retired school teacher spent the whole day watching films. "This is an opportunity I shall never get."

Pananchery is Kerala's largest panchayat. It has 22 members, out of which eight are women. The panchayat spans 145 km with 23 tribal villages, three educational institutions, including the Kerala Forest Institute, a design institute and an agriculture university campus.

It has sanctuaries of elephants and tigers besides rivers and dams. It also has water shortages, rampant sand mining and other curses of environmental degradation. It has seen escalating violence against women.

Anand Patwardhan, while inaugurating the festival, criticised the government's nuclear ambitions and its policies which are causing displacement of thousands of people. Many of his films, dubbed in Malayalam, were screened.

Women were especially enthusiastic about the festival. To popularise the event they had organised street corner meetings in all the villages falling under the panchayat. As a curtain



Many eminent film-makers like Anand Patwardhan (second from left) were present.

For the villagers of Mudikkodu, squatting reverentially before the screen, the story had an old, familiar ring. Such situations are not uncommon in Kerala, Punjab, Bangladesh or for any developing country where people migrate for employment.

Jharia's hellish heat

Severine Fumoux
New Delhi

IN Jharkhand's Jharia township fires of many hues have been burning for several decades. Since the region is rich in minerals and coal, these fires constantly burn underground. Above, powerful mafia groups exploit tribals and Dalits. They mine illegally, supervise organised pilferage, run extortion rackets and make huge profits under the nose of the main mining corporations. Residents of the area live in a veritable inferno. Veteran journalist Paranjoy Guha Thakurta has now made a film, *Hot as Hell* on Jharia's burning issues.

"The idea for the movie originated 25 years back when I was a reporter in Kolkata. What struck me was that this part of India, especially Dhanbad, is so rich in resources yet the people living here were economically backward," recalls Thakurta.

These contradictions recur throughout the documentary. Coal mining has increased, but the economic conditions of those engaged in mining has not improved, despite the nationalisation of the sector in 1971. Excessive and irresponsible coal mining has led to environmental degradation.

Hot as Hell attempts to explain what Thakurta has labeled "Jharia's resource curse."

The film's 150 minutes are divided into five sections: the exposition, the environmental alarm bells, illegal mining (including actual video footage of coal thefts and illegal mining by government officials), profiles of mafia leaders, the dons of Dhanbad (a current trade union leader, presumably one of the mafia leaders, is interviewed, in between conversations with the chief of the local police) and the adivasis left out once more by devel-

opment projects.

The documentary would have dragged had it not been for its numerous interviews. Thakurta has talked to a range of people: the rich and poor, legal and illegal, official and unofficial. Over 40 individuals, from policy experts to movie amateurs, shed light on the situation. Many contradictory elements force the viewer to engage with the analysis. The art of investigation brings together official documents, movie footage, music, traditional songs original to the area, and many shocking facts and numbers on the burning mines of Jharia.

Hot as Hell raises questions that go well beyond the region's borders. Will government officials recognise the unorganised sector of illegal workers surviv-

ing on the mines and include them in their policies? Will mining groups now making a profit actually implement their rehabilitation policy after more than 30 years? On a larger scale, the documentary reminds us of our responsibilities to respect the earth and our environment or face the impact of its loss.

The post-screening debate sparked off some fires of its own in the audience. The discussion revolved mostly around unresolved issues like the plan to rehabilitate four lakh people who have been affected. It has not been implemented. Also, some

mining corporation delegates pointed out that though a few fires are extinct now, a majority of them have still not burnt out.

"I am trying to tell a local story with international parallels. Similar things may be happening in other nations," says Thakurta. His ambitious project will soon be translated into Hindi and Bengali. DVDs of the film, made in collaboration with the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, are available on request.



Lily Francis, member of Pananchery panchayat.

raiser the Vibgyor festival committee had organised a half-day documentary festival on November 25 last year during the week condemning violence against women. At that time films about women were screened in the local community hall to create awareness among them of their rights.

Then on March 17, this year, the Stree Jagratha Samithi organised a video workshop for women. Around 60 women took the video camera and 'called as well as took the shots.' By the time the international documentary film festival got going the women were ready for the big event.

The samithis, set up in 2005, are mandatory in every panchayat, explained Lily Francis, who was elected as a member of the Palancherry panchayat recently. Unable to cope with the number of cases of domestic violence, the state's Women's Commission set up these samithis which are headed by a president and the women members of the panchayat. The samithi is endowed with several powers, and hence has an advocate and a police sub-inspector to assist in handling criminal cases of violence against women.

Cases rarely go to court. They are handled most often locally by the samithi. Sister Lisy, an advocate, was impressed with the work of the samithi as it has helped women to handle domestic violence.

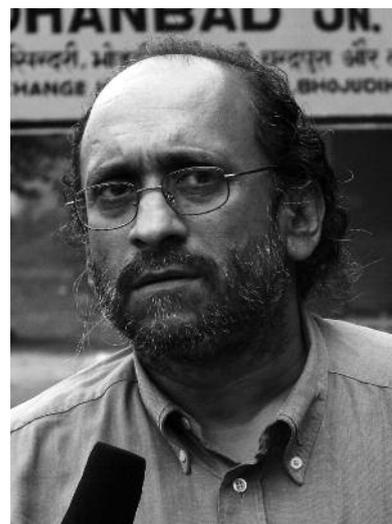
Saramma and Jijo, fulltime employees of the samithi thoroughly enjoyed the festival. "We learnt a lot from the documentaries, which we would never have otherwise. Now we are planning several workshops."

At the same time a silent revolution is taking place in the grassroots in Kerala. The Self-Help Group movement, called Kudumbashree has caught on in villager after villager. Hundreds of Kudumbashrees have sprung up here, providing employment to women who are now making products like soap and paper bags.

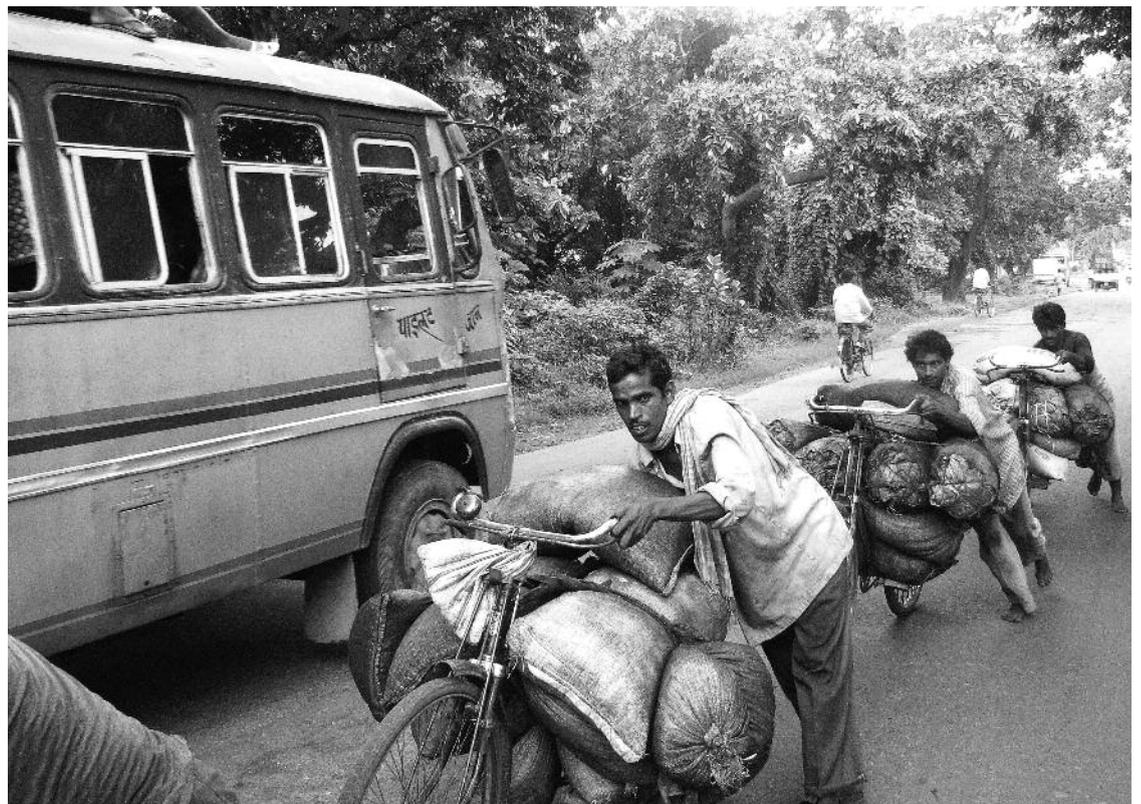
"We wanted to take advantage of the festival," said Lily Francis. "Seeing such films has enhanced our knowledge. Meeting such eminent directors and interacting with them has certainly empowered our women."

She said that Rajaji Mathew Thomas, the MLA of Ollur, who is the chairman of the state's environment committee and a member of the film festival's organising committee helped to bring the festival to Pananchery.

"I recall the paddy field here which has been converted into a cinema hall to organise the festival. This space will soon be gobbled up by the Kochi Express highway," said Lily Francis.



Paranjoy Guha Thakurta



A still from *Hot as Hell*.

Water films on tap

Ashim Jain
Bangalore

ENERGETIC volunteers enthusiastically welcomed hundreds of visitors from India and abroad to the second International Film Festival on Water held in Bangalore from 7 to 11 June. The festival screened three feature films, 27 documentaries and 32 short films from 30 countries. Numerous photographs were displayed on issues ranging from the struggle of people to get drinking water to the threat of destruction by global warming.

The event, sponsored by Arghyam with the help of the Bangalore Film Society, Films for Freedom, FLEFF and Ithaca College-NY, was a passionate attempt to spread awareness on water. Perhaps awareness will initiate action and motivate the government into averting unthinkable calamities.

There were films to engage school children, real-life storytelling by activists from Bihar, Kerala, Rajasthan, Bengal, and other regions of India and post-screening question and answer sessions with film producers and directors.

The festival concluded with a conference on Water Ecology and Water Equity. While the session on water ecology focused on sustainability and preserving the quality of water, the one on water equity was on water for life and livelihoods.

During a tea break, Eklavya Prasad and Prem Kumar Verma narrated how 'forward thinking' politicians and bureaucrats mistakenly consider themselves more knowledgeable than local people.

Prasad said that floods were a way of life, a sign of prosperity and even reason for festivities in parts of Bihar before 1950. Now it is just the opposite. The Kosi River enters Bihar from Nepal and as the Himalayan ice melts during the summer months, the run off spreads in the plains of Bihar causing vast areas to flood for three to four months in a year. In the old days, locals would cultivate crops like paddy that were tall enough to grow in knee-deep water.

But the technocrats surmised that if they created concrete embankments on both sides of the river, the flooding 'problem' would not occur. Embankments were built. The silt carried by the river kept on raising the river bed until the embankment either breached at numerous places or the river overflowed. The

height of the water is not knee deep any more but head deep. The resulting devastation is not hard to imagine.

According to Prasad, the bureaucrat-politician-contractor nexus siphons 80 per cent of public funds allocated for repairing breaches. It has created a lucrative unending cycle of annual breaches and repairs, with the people getting no relief.

Some of the films were outstanding. There was *Swaraj: The Little Republic* made by director-producer Anwal Jamal. Based on a true story, it depicts how four determined women in a desert village of Rajasthan struggle to get drinking water to their village.

There is a tussle between the village panchayat, that wants to spend public funds on building a road with the sarpanch as contractor, and the women who argue that water is more important than the road.

The women succeed in digging a well and persuading the government to link it with pipes to their village. The entire village is overjoyed when the pipes are laid and water flows from the first tap. But how could the water

mafia, that sold water at premium rates to villagers, tolerate this! They destroy the water pipes at night and murder one of the women who wakes up and confronts them. The film shows that the struggle for autonomy and freedom continues as the remaining three women vow that they will not buy water from the mafia even if it means they will get no water at all.

Another film, *The Disappearing of Tuvalu: Trouble in Paradise*, was a documentary by Christopher Horner and Gilliane Le Gallic. It was about Tuvalu, a country comprising of several islands in the South Pacific that faces the possibility of disappearance due to rising sea levels as a result of global warming.

Current data is compared with data dating back several years from a weather station on one of the islands. It is found that water levels are rising and flooding is more prevalent than it used to be. Interviews from local people confirm this trend.

Other attractive films were *Faecal Attraction*, a 32-minute award-winning documentary from the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi on the horrific condition of the drainage system polluting our rivers, and *Shadows of Tehri*, a 45-minute documentary on Tehri town in Garhwal, Uttaranchal, that has disappeared due to the construction of the Tehri dam.



Ghazal king sings for Smile



JOIN Smile Foundation on a musical yatra with the King of Ghazals, Jagjit Singh, on Saturday, 30 June at 7 pm. A live concert- *Sehar...ek nai subha*- of two hours is being held at Siri Fort Auditorium, Khel Gaon Marg, New Delhi. The event is part of Smile Foundation's fund raising efforts. Smile works in 19 states on education and health for underprivileged children and youngsters.

The money raised will help finance its Smile Twin e-learning Programme. Twin e-learning imparts professional training to underprivileged urban youth who have passed Class 12. It teaches them English, Basic Computers including accounting software, management and retail so that they can get decent jobs or start their own enterprises.

The programme also helps the young face the world as confident and respon-

sible adults by conducting sessions on personality development, gender, reproductive and sexual health.

Twin e-Learning aims to cover 50,000 youth in five years through a network of over 100 centres. In the first phase, 40 centres will become operational in 29 cities of 16 states

Each centre is equipped with 10 computers and other accessories. It has a common curriculum. The training duration is for six months and includes an internship with a prospective employer.

Smile Foundation has tied up with BUSY Infotech Pvt Ltd to provide free BUSY accounting software to all its centres. The students will be trained to use the software as part of their course.

Smile is in the process of collaborating with national and international organisations to promote entrepreneurship among youth. It will ignite enterprising youngsters to take up self employment also

Facilitating employment is one of the primary objectives of this project. Smile has already started talks with major retail chains for internship and recruitment. There is an inbuilt flexibility in the course to cater to the needs of individual companies.

An online monitoring system that will connect all 40 centres with Smile's head office in Delhi is underway. A strong network between Smile and students will ensure quality, standardised courses in all centres and provide a platform for knowledge sharing.

So listen to Jagjit Singh's mellifluous voice and make a difference.

Living

BODY & SOUL

Be different, look within. There is always more to life. Reach out to alternatives. Heritage, eco-tourism, green cures, traditional foods, buy from NGOs, spiritual talk, organic counter, where to donate, where to volunteer, web watch.

Streets only a street child knows

Severine Fumoux
New Delhi

THE Salaam Balaak Trust (SBT) started their City Walk programme in April 2005. Their office, a few yards away from New Delhi Railway Station, is an oasis for street children ensuring them safety, education and a vocation.

All the guides for the walks are rescued children. As you stroll around the railway station and through Paharganj's myriad lanes, you get to see the city through the eyes of a lost street child.

The idea of the walk came from John Thompson, a British volunteer. It provided him an excellent excuse for teaching street children spoken English and communication skills.

The children know the station and surrounding neighbourhoods inside out, especially corners to hide, favourite food stalls, wastepaper dealers and the SBT centres. These localities provide reassuring landmarks to them and to other local community members who survive on meagre incomes derived from delivering small services.

The walk begins outside the reservation centre next to the New Delhi Railway Station. After crossing barren yards behind the station, our guide Javed takes us to the 'luxury platform,' where the pusher overnight trains arrive. Nothing uncommon so far, I think: people sleeping on the platforms, coolies waiting for work.

"Let me tell you my story first," says Javed in perfect English. He first points to a vacant field used for a game of cricket by street children before narrating his escape from his home in West Bengal and his months of fear and survival living in the station, before he started to go to the SBT drop-in centre.

Adjusting our eyes, we see street children everywhere on the platforms. Some are lying on tin roofs above the stairs and in small interstices below the overhead corridors that run around the station. Others are taking showers at water pipes. A few are combing the trains and garbage dumps around the station with oversized white bags on their shoulders.

With Javed's guidance, we start noticing invisible places that a regular train passenger would miss. These places are safe for storing recycled goods, resting in the shade, and hiding from the police. Here the children can play, read or smoke.

The station is surprisingly child-friendly, providing water, food, shelter, work and even cricket grounds. The children are an integral part of its micro economy. They have formed a network of solidarity with the platform vendors. Fighting odds, the children improvise to raise their living standards. Javed points to a bedding above a small juice shop, saying: "The children who live here were rescued from the police by the vendor. They would give him leftover fruits for making juice. You have to be really



Javed takes you on the walk

resourceful or you won't survive."

Resourcefulness and resilience unite these children. Their struggle for food forces them to endlessly comb trains, while their efforts to make the station their home often leads to physical abuse from the police.

And then, there is the underworld of gangs. Each platform is owned by a gang leader, usually a street child with the longest tenancy. The leader offers his 20 or so protégés work, protection, and sometimes drugs. Children excluded from the gang are left to their own devices. The leaders' territories are clearly known to the station's little residents. Javed points to the water tank outside the station (a neutral area) where gang leaders live and hold council.

These struggles never seem to diminish the children's ability to dream. Javed describes their unconditional passion for Bollywood movies, mentioning that some of them thought their flight to the city would open the doors to stardom. Their adulation for movie stars translates into a weekly ritual that drains them of all their earnings. Every Friday starts with a shopping trip to a nearby clothes market and ends with repeated viewing of the latest Bollywood movies. The children's proud postures and trimmed hair gives away their

(Continued on page 34)



Children at the Salaam Baalak centre

PIX BY: LAKSHMAN ANAND

GREEN CURES

Ask Dr GG



CanSupport provides palliative care to cancer patients. It has vast experience in dealing with them. Here are a few questions based on its experience:

I am a 32-year-old woman under treatment for lymphoma. I suffer from the side-effects of my chemotherapy treatment, namely nausea and vomiting. The anti-emetics the doctors have prescribed do not help much as I cannot digest anything. Please could you suggest ways to control my nausea?

Nausea and vomiting are expected side effects of chemotherapy. You should take small portions of easily digestible semi-liquid food. Fresh lime juice mixed with boiled and cooled

water, 10 times its quantity, powdered cardamom seeds; honey and juice from pomegranate (3 tablespoons) together, can be taken often to prevent nausea. This is a very good nutrient and cools the system, especially when the body is hot with radiation from the chemotherapy.

Three tablespoons of *Tinospora cordifolia* stem juice, mixed with one tablespoon of honey taken in the morning and evening can help improve your general immunity and reduce the side effects of chemotherapy.

Frequent use of rice water (kanji) of unpolished red variety rice is very good. Just drinking pomegranate juice is also good.

I am a 66-year-old man with advanced cancer of the bladder, which is no longer curable. I have chosen not to go in for toxic and ultimately futile allopathic treatments. The thing that I fear more than anything else is pain. Can you suggest what I can do to help myself in these circumstances?

Collect seeds of big cucumber, grind them with red onion and roots of green chilli, mix and make a paste of these three in equal quantity. Mix this with rice-washed water and make a paste. Slightly warm this and apply regularly on the navel area below the umbilical, that is, just above the anatomical position of the bladder. This can relieve the pain and also improve bowel movement.

A pinch of cumin seeds (jeera) should be added to water, which has to be boiled and taken warm. Pain can also be reduced by intake of natural opium from the poppy tree in a very small quantity but under medical supervision.



Tinospora cordifolia

Since this is a growth it is better to try a decoction made out of the bark of Varuna (*Crataeva religiosa*). Take 60 gms of bark, boil it in one litre of water, reduce to ¼ litre. Filter it to take out the bark and again reduce to half. From this take half in the morning and half in the evening.

Ever since my 70-year-old mother was diagnosed with cancer of the lung, she has gone into depression. She does not leave her room or talk much. We don't know how we can elevate her mood. Could you help?

In this condition, counselling is more important than medicine. However, some mood elevating drugs like one teaspoon of *Aswagantha* root powder boiled with milk, 30 gms of *Bala* roots boiled in one glass of milk and mixed with one glass of water are good. However, she needs counselling and should do yoga.

My 10-year-old son has been diagnosed with leukaemia. The treatment he receives affects his appetite. However, the doctors say it is important for him to maintain his nutrition levels. Please could you suggest natural supplements that he could take that would both improve his appetite as well as add nutritional value to his diet?

Everyday take one glass of pomegranate juice or pomegranate whole fruit. Give fresh lime juice with honey. If you can get puffed rice (*Laja*, not the beaten variety) then boil it in water, add a little sugar and ghee and drink it often.

He can also be given whatever other food he likes.

I am a 56-year-old male who has made a full recovery from oesophageal cancer. Even though my treatment was over two years ago, I continue to feel run down and tired. I am also finding it difficult to put on weight. I would appreciate it, if you could suggest how I could add to my energy levels and put on weight and feel less tired.

In this condition, properly made *Chyawanprash*, one tablespoon in the morning and one tablespoon at bed time, followed by a cup of warm milk is excellent especially

to improve your energy levels. Also, in the evening if your digestion is good take one teaspoon of *Narasimha Rasayanam* mixed with one teaspoon of *Ashta choornam*. Take this for 41 days. Take green gram soup everyday with a teaspoon of pure cow's ghee. Have a head and body massage once a week with *Lakshadi Thailam*. Sleep for 15 minutes to half an hour after lunch. If you are a non-vegetarian, take mutton soup. This will improve your energy levels and help you put on weight.

Dr G G Gangadharan is a Joint Director at FRLHT, Bangalore. E-mail: vaidya.ganga@frlht.org

Streets only a street child knows

(Continued from page 33)

obsession for good looks. They pose happily for our camera. Cynicism vanishes.

We leave behind the blazing heat of the station to visit one of the SBT contact points, situated above the police station outside the waiting room. Javed's joviality is contagious. Then, the latest batch of children, gathered by SBT, sing in our honour. When we return from SBT's medical checkup room situated next to the learning room, we find two SBT workers conducting an improvised science class with all the children gathered around the X-ray of a broken leg.

Later, as we enter Paharganj, other street children salute Javed. The stench emanating from mountains of garbage fills the recycling lane where the children go to drop their daily harvest of plastic and paper. On Pottery Lane, we pass generations of artisans working on their wheels. Food hawkers preparing midday meals call out from behind spicy fumes: "Very cheap... be my guest!" By now we must look quite hungry and drained by the scorching sun.

We finally arrive at an SBT day care centre which is at the back of a small square cramped with two-wheelers, tandoori chicken stalls and decorated mud pots. We enter a dark empty room with tired fans and piles of chairs and tables. About 30 young boys shake our hands. Some point to their art work.

Their smiles don't distract us from their swollen black eyelids and blank gazes- some of these children are former drug addicts. "They really cherish their

freedom. It is not easy to keep them in a building," says Javed. In fact, the girls are kept in other centres in faraway Dwarka to keep them safe.

On our way down Hotel Lane to the bigger SBT residential centre for teenagers and young adults, we encounter decaying haveli facades that used to bear delicate wood carvings. We catch a glimpse of beautiful Mughal courtyards.

At the SBT centre, we notice how the NGO is transforming the lives of street children. In the common room five teenagers are practicing their English with a volunteer. Two others are studying independently, meticulously referring to their textbooks. In an adjacent room, 20 boys are reverently absorbed in a Hindi movie on TV. Beds are stored away for the day and cupboards full of the children's belongings line the walls.

As we shift to the classroom, children relate their stories. Javed mentions the striking success story of Haran, a rescued street child who studied abroad and became a successful photographer. The centre displays many objects of pride, including photographs, medals and cups that are landmarks in these children's lives. SBT is well known as a place to volunteer. In the two hours we have spent with them, a young girl on the walk with us who just recently graduated decided to sign up. Sophie, an American NRI volunteering with SBT is currently making a documentary on the lives of three rescued teenagers. Here, the impact of your actions is immediately visible.

The walk is open to people from all walks of life. With any of SBTs three guides, we can guarantee you an equal mix of sad stories and happy future plans.

Contact Javed on 9810975284, Shekhar on 9873130383, Vikas on 9891845387, or email sbttour@yahoo.com for bookings. Timings: 10:00 am every day. For more information, visit the website www.salaambaalaktrust.com

Mango mania

Vijayalakshmi (Tannie) Baig
New Delhi

DID the Indian mango tickle the taste buds of the Big Apple? We don't know for sure but now that India's mango has arrived in America lets hope it captures hearts, minds and, not to forget, stomachs.

Its not like mangoes are a strange new fruit in the west. The Indian mango was introduced in Florida some time in the 19th Century and that variety continues to be harvested and sold.

It has been a long journey for the king of fruits. The 7th century was especially significant. Hieun Tsang took the mango back home to China where it grew and flourished. The mango also travelled westwards, delighting the Caliphs of Baghdad before proceeding to Africa. But it failed to captivate Europe. The Portugese took the mango to Brazil. In the 18th century it arrived in the West Indies.

Since mango is a summer fruit, it is best relished in the warm weather. You can choose any variety, the taste is always a delight: juicy, sweet, sour and fleshy. The king of fruit is easily the *aam aadmi's*. Nearly every summer a bountiful harvest ensures every one can afford to buy it.

People here argue endlessly about whether the Alphonso from Goa is better than the Langra from Lucknow. Or should the Safaida of Benares be given pride of place?

It's actually a tough choice. India, the home of the mango, has anything between 500 to 1,000 varieties.

All mangoes are healthy. It is the only fruit in the world that has vitamins, proteins, fat, minerals, fibre and carbohydrates. The mango is anti-fungal, has high iron content and prevents colon cancer. It has other sterling qualities. The mango is a rich source of Vitamin C and Vitamin A.

Mangoes fight the heat, keep colds and sinuses at bay and are good for constipation and nausea. In summer when the heat kills your appetite, the tang of a mango is stimulating.

Mangoes are also a major

ingredient in cooking. Raw, ripe and even dried and powdered mangoes add to the zing of chutneys, pickles and curries. Add raw mangoes to vegetables to get a tangy dish. Relish a cool mango raita. And spoil your sweet tooth with a mango kulfi.

Mangoes are so sinfully addictive that it's easy to get carried away. The fruit has more calories than papaya or apple. But then, that is the way of all temptation.

Mango and vegetables



Ingredients

Grated raw mangoes: ½ kg
Chilli powder: 1 tsp
Chopped green chilli: 1 finely cut
Turmeric powder: ¼ tsp
Methi seed powder: ¼ tsp
Grated ginger: ½ inch
Gur/sugar: 4 tsp
Curry leaves: 5or 6
Mustard oil: ½ tbsp
Chopped coriander leaves: 1 tbsp

Salt to taste

Method: Heat the oil and add the methi, turmeric powder and curry leaves. Add the mangoes, chillies and turmeric. Cook till soft then add gur and salt. Cook gently till soft. Add coriander leaves and serve.

Raw mango raita

Ingredients

Fresh curd: 400 gms
Raw mango: One, medium
Oil: 1 tsp
Salt: ½ tsp for sprinkling
Mustard seeds: ¼ tsp
Red chilli: 1 broken
Gur/sugar: 1 small lump
Black salt: 1 pinch
Curry leaves: 4-5 (optional)
Salt to taste

Method: Peel the mango, grate it and sprinkle salt on it. Leave aside for a few minutes. Squeeze out the excess water with your hands.

- Hang the curd till the water drips away.
- Add gur, both the salts and mango to the hung curd.
- Heat oil in a small pan. Add the mustard seeds, chilli, curry leaves till they splutter. Add to the curd mixture and serve.

Tip: One tablespoon roasted and powdered rice will enhance the raita's texture and taste.

Mango kulfi

Ingredients

Full cream milk: 1 litre
Mango pulp: 1 cup
Sugar: ½ cup
Almonds: 10, soaked, skinned, cut in slivers
Method: Boil the milk till only half the quantity remains. Cool.

Add the mango pulp, almonds and cardamom.

Put the mix in kulfi containers and set in the freezer compartment of the fridge.

Mango mousse

Ingredients

Mango pulp: 2 cups
Fresh cream: 200 gms
Powdered sugar: 1 tbsp
Gelatin: 1 level tbsp

Method: Prepare the gelatin by soaking it in 2 tbsp of water for half an hour and then warm it till the crystals dissolve perfectly.

Mix the mango pulp, sugar, cream and gelatine.

Transfer in a glass bowl and set in the fridge for about two hours.

Serve decorated with extra cream or simply with sliced mangoes and a drizzle of cream. Enjoy.

SHOPPING MALL

Sankalp Saksharta Samiti is an NGO based in Noida, UP. Started by a school teacher, Meena Nijhawan, it provides education and livelihood training to underprivileged children. Sankalp means a vow, a determination to reach out to children and bring some light into their lives. Over the years the school's popularity has increased hugely because of the quality education it provides. The handicrafts displayed below are made by the children and funds generated help the NGO to continue doing its good work. There are pretty greeting cards, rakhis, attractive paper bags, envelopes, mobile pouches and bookmarks. So do come and shop.

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SOUL VALUE

Yoga and mental bliss

Samita Rathor
New Delhi

THE word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root Yuj-Yujyate Anena- that literally means to unite or join in harmony.

"Yoga, really, is a practical science to help understand one's true self," says S Sridharan, managing trustee of the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, Chennai. "Today, it is largely perceived as a mainstream therapy which is only a downstream effect of the main purpose of being a spiritual pursuit. One to one is the real approach to be adopted in teaching yoga or, for that matter, any subject of this nature. While it is difficult to pursue, it removes the risk associated with the group class, where there is every possibility of injury and negative results, physically and mentally."

Yoga focuses on the regulation of both mind and body, which then helps the individual to nurture a healthy and meaningful lifestyle or an existence of rectitude and purpose. Yoga keeps its practitioner on the path of moral advancement.

What primarily enthralled me when I got initiated into a tailor made yogic practice was the 'stillness of the mind' I experienced. The idea that yoga is a personal and individualistic practice suited me perfectly. I was never a believer of the 'one size fit all' syndrome.

I would emphasize that yoga is a one to one practice 'if taken seriously and with commitment'. Our body, breath, mind, heart and our very own experiences are different. It's that personal.

No matter how deep our similarities, we are unique in every way. Each individual is only one of its kind and is in a state of continuous change throughout life. Thus the practice of yoga must be adapted to the individual and not the individual to yoga. Can two people have exactly the same body structure, likes or dislikes, eating habits and ailments? Certainly not! Then how can we teach them all the same course? A yogic practice has to be personalised to the individual's needs. If it does not help the mind or is forced beyond an individual's ability, it is not yoga.

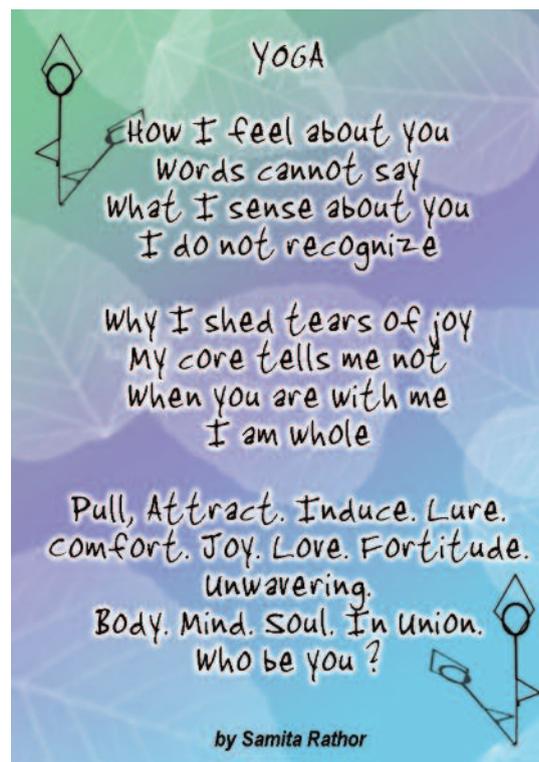
At the outset, we must be aware of what this astonishing individual yoga practice can achieve.

Yoga has asanas/postures that take action on the different joints of the body including those that are never really visible in an X-ray, let alone exercised. This, in turn, increases flexibility.

Yoga is perhaps the only form of activity which massages all the internal glands and organs of the

body in a thorough manner, including those like the prostate, that hardly get externally stimulated during our entire lifetime. Increased lubrication of the joints, ligaments and tendons takes place. This stimulation and massage of the organs benefits us by keeping away disease and providing a forewarning of the onset of disease or disorder.

Yoga positions exercise the different tendons and ligaments of the body. Surprisingly, it has been found that the body, which may have been quite rigid, starts experiencing remarkable flexibility even in those parts which have not been conscious-



ly worked on.

It is here that the remarkable research on yoga positions proves its rationale. Seemingly unrelated 'non strenuous' yoga positions act upon certain parts of the body in an interrelated manner. When done together, they work in harmony to create an easy flexibility.

By gently stretching muscles and joints and massaging various organs, yoga ensures an optimum supply of blood to different parts of the body. This helps to flush out toxins from every nook and cranny of the body and provides nourishment. It leads to benefits such as delayed ageing, a surge in energy and a remarkable zest for life. Muscles that have

become flaccid, weak or sluggish are stirred frequently to shed excess flab and limpness.

But these enormous physical benefits are just a 'spin-off'. What yoga really does is bring the mind into harmony with the body. This is what results in real benefits. It is the determination of the mind that enables a person to accomplish unexpected physical and mental feats. The mind-body connection has been scientifically established.

Soon after I began my personalised practice of yoga I enjoyed increased flexibility and freedom from my knee pain. But, most of all, I appreciated the sense of being able to manage my thoughts.

The peace I felt drew me to yoga like a magnet. I was aware that asana practice was embedded in a larger philosophy but I chose not to learn about it until much later. I was told that one to one practice is the key word. The payback I felt from my personalised regime of yoga was enough.

Even though I am a long way from attaining complete union with myself, I am glad I have made a beginning...you could do the same!

Tiny drops of water make an ocean. Yoga is like an ocean and a few minutes spent everyday practicing yoga are like drops which come together to form a pool of peace. The drops of water grow larger by daily perseverance and practice to become a big ocean of calmness.

Remember that every individual drop of water is different and so are we! That's what a one to one yoga pathway means. Look for a teacher who challenges you but does not push, who offers modifications and who works one to one with students.

Asanas are synonymous with yoga but they form only a part of yogic practice. A lot of people have misconceptions about yoga: that it is something magical, or mere physical exercise, or acrobatics and so on. Yoga is a way of life and experienced differently by different people.

Once a friend of mine who always slept three to four hours after midnight told me: "Oh I heard you are into yoga. So am I. I go thrice a week and learn a lot of asanas from this person who can bend in any direction!" Yoga is not a fad. Even in the circus we see the 'rubber man' attempting amazing body gymnastics and postures. That is not yoga.

"Yoga is the settling of the mind into calm." Calm resides in awareness. The practice of yoga in all its aspects allows us to reconnect with and exist in awareness, through swadhyaya or self-study. An experiential and personalised yogic practice can help you cultivate body, mind and spiritual awareness.

Email: samitarathor@gmail.com

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CAF

Readers who want to volunteer with or donate to the NGOs listed on these pages can get in touch with Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). Please fill up the form at the end of the list. All NGOs have been validated by CAF. So go ahead and choose your cause.

Salaam Baalak Trust

Focus: Support and shelter to street and working children.

Celebrating the spirit of survival among children, the name of the organisation itself sets out its mission: Salaam Baalak means 'Salute the Children'. Inspired by the lives of street children who played an important part in her internationally acclaimed film, Salaam Bombay, filmmaker Mira Nair established the Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) in 1988. Dedicated to the care and protection of neglected street children, regardless of caste, colour, creed or religion, SBT provides for the development of street children through an enabling environment. In doing so, it helps the children regain their self-confidence and return to mainstream society and eventually contribute to its development.

Functioning throughout Central Delhi, Salaam Baalak Trust has a range of activities and programmes: **Shelter homes:** Shelter homes set up by SBT such as AASRA, Apna Ghar, Arushi and a Drop-in Shelter provide a convivial and supportive home-like environment for the street children. **Childline:** This is India's first 24-hour free phone outreach service for children in need of emergency assistance. SBT is in charge of the Central zone of Delhi for this service.

SBT encourages its inmates to engage and participate in the performance of theatre, street plays and puppetry to help them express their emotions and to enable communication and foster teambuilding. SBT also makes available to its inmates various kinds of vocational training as well as income generation and saving schemes to make them economically self-reliant.

Funding is needed for: ARUSHI which is specially designed to address the needs of the girl child.

Rs 28,500 per child per annum will support boarding, lodging, school uniforms, clothing, healthcare, transportation, school fee, educational material and entertainment.

Parikrama

Location: Bangalore

Focus: Parikrama Humanity Foundation is a non-profit with a mission to unleash the potential of under served children in urban India. It provides them with equal opportunities and makes the children valuable contributing members of our society.

At Parikrama, the goal is very clear: the non-profit ensures that every child completes school and undertakes education and training to earn a living- be it special vocational training or higher college education. Parikrama works primarily in the field of education, providing education through centres of

learning. Parikrama runs four centres of learning in Bangalore and serves over 725 children.

Funding needed for: Sponsor a child/class: Parikrama Humanity Foundation runs four schools for street and slum children. We have about 730 children coming to our schools. To ensure that our children come to school regularly Parikrama provides them breakfast, lunch and a glass of protein mix in the evening. It also provides total healthcare and many interventions with the family like de addiction camps, micro funding and vocations skills training for family members. We have had 98 per cent attendance, less than 1 per cent drop out and 100 per cent attendance at parent-teacher meetings.

Sponsor one or more class of 30 children each: The cost of each child per annum is Rs 15,000 which includes education, nutrition, healthcare and community development. It requires Rs 4.5 lakhs to sponsor one class.

Bus for the school: Parikrama's four centres are located in four widely spread areas of Bangalore. To ensure that the children come regularly to school it needs to have them picked up from their homes and dropped back after school hours. Having its own school bus will help it to provide this service to the children thus ensuring that attendance is even greater.

We also need to transport our children across our four centres and to the suburbs of Bangalore to link our children to the outside world and provide them the opportunity for greater exposure and experience through field trips. **Approximate cost: Rs 8 lakhs**

Ananya Trust, Bangalore

Focus: Children and non-formal education

Ananya, established in 1998, is a charitable trust started due to the dearth of schools that provide relevant and meaningful education for underprivileged children in and around Bangalore city. Through Ananya Shikshana Kendra (ASK), it caters to the needs of children who are not admitted to other schools either due to social, physical or academic reasons. Comprising of learning centres, the children are within reach of study material arranged according to learning difficulties they might face. Currently we have 51 children on the rolls, five teaching staff and seven non-teaching staff.

Funding is needed for: Ananya requires computer peripherals, consumables, software and a computer teacher. Ananya is starting

a programme to introduce computer literacy as part of their curriculum. This will enable the children to become familiar with the world of computers, be eligible for further training in computers and join the IT-enabled profession. It will open up other career options for these children who will otherwise have no choice but to follow their parents' profession. *Volunteering Opportunities:*

Mentoring students especially adolescents: If volunteers are Bangalore based they can spend weekends with the children mentoring them and acting as friends and guides. This will help to build a long-term association with the children, boost their self-confidence and instill a sense of belonging in them.

Training children in the use of computers: Employee volunteers can visit the school on weekends to teach children the creative use of computers in different areas of learning. Volunteers can enable them go beyond basic computer usage to discover the magical world of computers so that classroom learning becomes more interesting, (eg, using available software including graphics and even creating their own software.)

Action for Autism

Focus: Supporting the rights of people with autism and multiple disabilities.

Action for Autism works nationally. It has a range of activities and programmes:

- Diagnosis and assessment of children with autism.
- Education through a specialised school for children with autism called Open Door.
- Recognising the lack of trained professionals to teach children with autism and to cater to the increasing demand for its services, AFA started its own Teacher Training Programme, which has today become a one-year diploma in Special Education DSE-ASD under the Rehabilitation Council of India.
- Family and parent skill-building through counselling, early intervention, home management and mother & child programs as well as parent-support groups.
- Training of parents and professionals through training workshops.
- Resource provision through AFA's resource centre, the AFA journal, Autism Network and website.
- Advocacy and awareness.

Funding needed for:

Sponsoring children: Annual cost per child for the mother-child programme is Rs 5,500. This amount sponsors one child, annually. Cost of a professional therapist: Rs 5,000.

Animal India Trust

Focus: Medical care for the street and stray canine population of Delhi.

Animal India Trust was established in March 2002 to help improve the lives of street animals and to promote public awareness of rabies in New Delhi. Its focus is:

- To neuter and provide rabies and vaccination programs.

- Provide assistance to injured or sick animals found on the streets.
- Free medical treatment to pets of economically disadvantaged people.
- Placement of orphaned street puppies in loving homes.

Funding needed for:

Sterilisation of stray dogs: Rs 800.00 per dog.
Anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs: Rs 150 per dog.

Astha

Focus: Providing services to children/persons with disabilities and their families with special focus on communities.

Astha was started in 1993. The rights of individuals with disabilities have been at the core of Astha's belief and work ethics. Astha's aim is to:

- Maximise awareness about the issue.
- Increase the accessibility of people with disability in society.
- Integrate children with disability into the mainstream.

Funding needed for:

Sponsor a child with special needs. It costs just Rs 12,000 per annum. This will cover physiotherapy, speech therapy, special educator, art and craft. Or sponsor an event: One event costs Rs 5,000. This may be for annual picnic/festival celebrations/Sports Day.

Ritinjali

Focus: Education and community development.

Ritinjali was started in 1996 with the aim of working in the field of education and community development.

- Their aim is to provide holistic education towards nurturing empowered, responsible citizens who will be capable of providing not only for themselves but also contributing actively to their local communities through enterprise, self awareness and self induced social responsibility.

Funding needed for:

• Education for slum children: Annual cost per child : Rs.6,300 to support education material, one meal a day, entertainment and healthcare.

Tihar Jail, New Delhi

Ritinjali provides counselling, rehabilitation and legal representation services to juvenile inmates aged 16 to 21. You can volunteer for legal assistance, counseling and advocacy programs.

Ritinjali's Second Chance School, Mahipalpur, New Delhi

A school for youth who did not get the first chance. You can volunteer for youth mentoring, vocational training, placement, employment programs and entrepreneurship programs.

Sahara House

Focus: Support for the Chemical and Alcohol Dependent and HIV/AIDS Infected/Affected Individuals.

Sahara means support, and since 1978, Sahara House has been a refuge, spearheading the provision of effective treatment to drug users, alcoholics, the mentally challenged and those infected/affected by HIV/AIDS.

This residential care facility focuses on counselling with sessions covering

detoxification, medical attention, physical education, self-development, financial and household management.

Other programme areas include:

- Drug awareness and prevention through its street theatre group.
- Income generation opportunities to its beneficiaries.
- A pre and post-kindergarten school in Sahara House for destitute and deprived children.

Funding needed for:

Drug Rehabilitation Programme: Cost per client per month: Rs.4, 290 which will take care of drug de-addiction, food supplies, psycho-social support.

HIV/AIDS Treatment Care & Support Programme:

Cost per bed per day: Rs 475

which will take care of food, medicines, referral, diagnostic cost, medical support, supplies, linen etc.

Individual donors can give any amount they wish. The money can be used by the home to buy dry rations, medicines, computers and for a water cooler at the men's rehabilitation centre.

Vidyarambam Trust, Chennai

Focus: Education for underprivileged children.

Vidyarambam Trust, established in 2002, is a non-profit organisation with a mission to provide basic literacy to children in the age group 3-5 in the villages of Tamil Nadu. The main objectives of the organisation are:

- To provide primary education for underprivileged children irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.
- To run educational institutions, acquire and run existing educational institutions through any media and not for the purpose of profit.
- To provide for endowment lectures, fellowships or chairs in any

TRUE STORY

Healing hands

TWENTY-year-old Prabha is from Rachapura village in Chinthamani Taluk, 100 km from Bangalore. Due to tightness in her left ankle, her mobility was limited. She lost her mother when she was a child and her father too passed away when she was in Class 9. With the support of her sisters, she completed schooling.

When her three sisters got married, Prabha got deeply worried about her future since she was dependent on them. At this time she came to know about a rural project being run by the

Association for People with Disability (APD). Prabha joined and did a course in office management.

Although in the beginning she found it quite difficult, since her speaking and writing skills in English were poor, she soon improved and began to feel more confident. She underwent corrective surgery for her foot and improved her mobility. APD supported her with post-operative care and therapy. Prabha's condition and circumstances have improved tremendously. She now feels able to dream and looks forward to a bright future.

educational institution to encourage, develop and promote study in any field of medical science.

- To establish and assist institutions for the purpose of imparting education of a general or technical nature like arts, science, engineering, medical, sidha, ayurvedic, homeopathy, unani.

Funding needed for:

- Pre- primary education: This programme addresses the basic educational needs of economically underprivileged children in the age group of 3 to 5 years to enable them to get into mainstream schooling with ease. • The method of teaching has been evolved by experts in early child hood education adopting playway methods. The children enjoy learning and would never be averse to education thereafter.
- Remedial courses: The students studying from Class 2 to Class 6 do lack basic knowledge of language and skills of simple arithmetic. Such children are identified by conducting a pre-test. Simple ways are employed in a remedial course, the duration of which is four months,

to develop the skill of rapid reading and basic arithmetic. • Evaluations are made by a post-test and 90 percent of the students reach the desired level.

- Volunteering is very useful in conducting pre-tests and post-tests to gauge the skill levels of children enrolled in the remedial course.
- Volunteers are needed to conduct community surveys to find out areas where these programs will be required to be executed.

Naandi Foundation, Hyderabad

Focus: Eradication of poverty through public-private convergence.

Naandi Foundation, based in Hyderabad, has been impacting the lives of the marginalised through innovative social alliances and entrepreneurship and promoting thought leadership on development issues by building a critical mass of media, academia, polity, corporates, communities and individuals for solving problems.

Location: Hyderabad

Funding needed for:

- Project Nanhi Kali: Only three out of every 10 girls that enrol in school in India complete Class 10. The rest drop out because their families cannot afford to keep them in school. This is the status of girl children in India. Sometimes it's the cost of a book or a pencil that leads to a girl child dropping out. And a girl out of school is more at risk of being exploited, overworked or married off early. Nanhi Kali is fighting to keep the girl child in school.

To begin a movement that assures every girl children her right to education and a life with dignity, Naandi Foundation together with the K C Mahindra Education Trust is jointly managing a project called Nanhi Kali. This is a special project that provides education and other material support to underprivileged girl children in government schools who are at the risk of dropping out from school.

The Nanhi Kali project supports the education of girl children through sponsorships. Naandi Foundation has already reached out to over 20,000 girls. The transformation process of girl child education has begun and now there is no looking back.

- Education: Assist Naandi's Education Activists who conduct academic support classes and academic performance assessments through monthly tests/evaluations at schools. This brings third party involvement in the assessment process.
- Girl children: Orient girls during special cluster meetings where tips on health and hygiene would be given by volunteers. Requirement here is for women volunteers. The volunteers would be provided training on the topics they would address during the health and hygiene meetings.

■■■ committed to effective giving

CAF

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Note: All cheques to be drawn in favour of 'Charities Aid Foundation, India'.

Full information on CAF and other charity matters may be found on our - website: www.cafonline.org

Postal Address : CAF India, Sanskriti Building, C11 Qutab Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 016

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Do you believe in miracles?

We do.

It's not divine presence that we're talking about. It's about small everyday miracles that can transform the humblest lives for the better. A home, a road, drinking water, electricity, drainage, a sewing machine, healthcare, community service. We try to do our bit for the people who live and work around our area of operations and in the city of Jamshedpur. And every time we see a smile – we count it as a small miracle.

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