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INDIA NEWS

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Excerpts from Prime Minister's Address to the Nation

The Prime Minister Mr. I. K. Gujral in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of our Independence called upon the people to work hard unitedly to bring in an era of peace, prosperity, leadership and social justice. Paying homage to the millions of men and women who made freedom possible, the Prime Minister said that the country is moving forward with its ancient heritage intact. "Our greatest achievement is

our democratic Republic which has over 500 million voters who elect their representatives from Panchayats to Parliament. Our country's unity in diversity is the result of sacrifice, patriotism and faith in her future." Mr. Gujral said that in this Golden Jubilee year we have been able to fulfil Gandhi's dream of making a Dalit the President of India who has created a niche for himself as an intellectual. Stating that an equal status of women is a must for a country's

progress Mr. Gujral reiterated the urgent need for empowerment of women. Expressing concern at the lot of the girl child, the Prime Minister said that legally, the doctors have been barred from conducting pregnancy test and disclosing the sex of the fetus. He announced that scheme will be started to give financial assistance to a girl child born in a family living below the poverty line. A Bill has already been introduced for re-

(Continued on page 2)



Ambassador Naresh Chandra unfurled the national flag and read President Narayanan's message on India's 50th Independence Day at the Embassy Residence

President Clinton's Message on 50th Anniversary of India's Independence

Tonight we mark the 50th anniversary of one of the pivotal events of the 20th century; the independence of a democratic India. At midnight on this day in 1947, the colonial era ended and a new birth of freedom came to one of the world's great peoples. It was a moment of joy for India — and for men and women everywhere inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's vision and by India's quest for independence. It was a moment, as Prime Minister Nehru, said, "when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

In the decades since, the world's largest democracy has grown into one of its most resilient and vibrant. India has preserved for one-fifth of humanity that most precious gift: freedom. It has forged a strong, modern state for an ancient and rich

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Prime Minister's Address to the Nation . . . (Continued from page 1)

removal of child labor. Our future will be bright only if every child below the age of 14 goes to school, he said. Coming down heavily on corruption in public life, the Prime Minister called upon the people to launch a crusade. Our Armed Forces are well equipped to face any outside aggression but to fight the cancer of corruption which is corroding our public life, we all must work unitedly and start a mass Satyagrah movement against it. The people should promise to themselves that they will not give bribes no matter what it may cost them. He asked the political parties also to look within them and put a stop to criminalisation of politics and work for electoral reforms.

The Prime Minister pledged before the nation his commitment for removal of corruption in the political life. He also said that Committees consisting of people with unimpeachable integrity will be set up in all the Departments to finalize purchases and contracts, to make all deals transparent.

A Bill on Right to Information will be introduced in the next Parliament Session which will entitle every citizen to get all information on a contract or a deal. Mr. Gujral assured the countrymen that if anybody brings to his notice the proof of a Minister's involvement in corruption, he will have the matter investigated and take legal action without any hesitation.

Mr. Gujral said that a commission has been set up to review redundant laws and suggest reforms. He said that Lok Pal Bill will be enacted in the next session of Parliament. Every effort will be made to curb extravagance in government spending. The Prime Minister said that India is becoming an economic power to reckon with. Under the common minimum

program of the United Front the Government is taking steps to remove stagnation in the economy and is paying special attention to the public sector. He said that ten companies on the verge of closure have been revived. Agriculturally our foodgrain production has increased four times in the last 50 years and stood at 200 million tones in 1996-97. Hailing the farmers as a strength of the country he said that the Government will pay greater attention to the agricultural labor, specially the landless labor. He announced that legislation will be introduced in the next session of Parliament for the farm labor and top priority will be given to dry farming. The States have been asked to quicken the pace of land reforms.

Stating that illiteracy is the root cause of poverty, over population and unemployment, Mr. Gujral made special mention to the States like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu where the increase in the literacy rate has brought down the birth rate. He said that his government will work for removal of poverty and illiteracy. A national population policy will be announced shortly.

Expressing concern at the growing levels of pollution in the air and river waters, he said that we all must participate in the fight against pollution and dirt and work for cleaning of rivers. Priority is being given to provide clean potable water to all during the Ninth Plan.

Mr. Gujral referring to the creation of a new State of Uttarakhand, reiterated the Government's resolve to bring about legislation for its creation. The Prime Minister announced that the Government will pay greater attention to improve the lot of Safai Karamcharies. Along with this, measures will be taken to give OBCs,

SCs and STs a place in the social life of the country. The Prime Minister announced the doubling of pensions to freedom fighters and linking it with the DA index. He expressed the hope that the freedom fighters would accept this token of a nation's gratitude to them.

On foreign policy, Mr. Gujral said India and Pakistan should not interfere in each others' internal affairs and respect their borders. He said we want to have friendly relations but there will be no compromise on sovereignty, on terrorism and secular unity of our nation. Mr. Gujral said positive developments have taken place in Indo-Pak relations and the next round of Secretary level talks are likely to be held soon. The Prime Minister said the situation in Kashmir had improved mainly because of the people, especially youth and women who were strongly opposed to terrorism. He said Nagaland was also moving towards normalcy. No compromise on terrorism would be made. However, misguided youth wanting to give up the gun, would be welcomed back into the mainstream.

Referring to SAARC, he said regional cooperation has flourished and a strong foundation had been laid. The Prime Minister said relations with China have improved substantially. Ties with European countries had also improved and substantial investments are coming in from these nations. Indo-US relations, he said, are age-old and the economic relationship has been further strengthened.

He assured the Nation that the resource crunch would not stand in the way of defense preparedness and the armed forces would be equipped with the latest weaponry and technology.

Krishan Kant Sworn in As Vice President

Mr. Krishan Kant was sworn in as India's tenth Vice-President. Mr. Krishan Kant's 93-year-old mother, Mrs. Satyavati Devi, witnessed the ceremony sitting in the front row. "I can't express my feelings. It is beyond expression," said Mrs. Satyavati Devi, who was imprisoned during the British rule. Mr. Krishan Kant was born on February 28, 1927, at village Kot Mohammed Khan, Tehsil Taran, district Amritsar, Punjab in a family of freedom fighters. His father, Lala Achint Ram was a member of the Constituent Assembly and later Member of Parliament.

He was a prominent Congress leader of Punjab and a true Gandhian — a pillar of Bhoodan Movement in Punjab. He was one of the first three life members of the servants of the People Society, an order of life members, founded by Lala Lajpat Rai in 1921 and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. After completing M.Sc., (Technology) from the Banaras

Hindu University, Mr. Kant worked as a scientist with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi. Mr. Krishan Kant took active part in "Quit India Movement" of 1942, while he was a student at Lahore. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1966 to 1977 and subsequently Member of the Lok Sabha till 1980.

He has been a member of the Executive Council of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis. He is a connoisseur of Urdu poetry which he has inherited from his upbringing at Lahore. Mr. Krishan Kant is a prolific writer and has contributed profusely to prominent dailies and periodicals on issues relating to national and international politics, culture and science policy. His wife, Mrs. Suman Kant, is a prominent social worker. She is a champion of women's rights and is the general secretary of the Mahila Dakshita Samiti.

Pandit Ravi Shankar Dedicates New Composition

The golden jubilee of independence was ushered in Mumbai early August 16 to the mellifluous tunes of a new composition "Swarna Raag-Jayanti Taal" dedicated to the nation by renowned musician Pandit Ravi Shankar who then led a mass prayer to "take India out of turmoil and make her great".

A packed audience at the National Center for Performing Arts (NCPA) gave a standing ovation to the maestro as he weaved magic with his "swarna" Mag on "jayanti" taal comprising 50 "mates", signifying the 50th anniversary. "Let us pray that negative things go away, making the country great, which it innately is", he said.

During the two-hour performance with his 16-year-old daughter Anoushka and table wizard Zakir Hussain, the sitar maestro, improvised a variety of sounds and explained the mathematical ratios of the notes and the division of 50 "mates" into two equal parts.

Ragas "Vihar" and "Kirvani" by Panditji, followed by solo and tandem performances by Anoushka and Zakir Hussain, symbolically representing the younger generation of musical talent, thrilled the audience. The event closed with Panditji rendering Iqbal's great song "Sare Jahan se Accha, Hindusta hamara", which he had set to tune in 1945.

President Clinton's Message . . . (Continued from page 1)

civilization, and built a thriving economy. And India has become an influential voice in the world community an example to peoples everywhere striving for human dignity and the right to determine their own future.

A free and independent India has given America many gifts — above all the 1 million sons and daughters who have come to our nation and enriched it beyond any measure. And our two nations have come together frequently in common cause. Now, in a world that is growing closer with every passing day, we must redouble our efforts to strengthen peace, stability and democracy in South Asia and around the world...to bring the benefits of the global economy to all our people...to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction. For India and the United States, Nehru's words from 50 years ago ring true today. He said, "The achievement we celebrate...is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us."

When the First Lady visited India two years ago, she was struck by the warmth of her reception and the remarkable diversity and dynamism of India's people. I very much hope to visit India during this term of office. For today, let me simply say, on behalf of the American people: happy Independence Day, India. May your next 50 years be even brighter than the half century of freedom we celebrate tonight.

NEWS BRIEFS

Bommaï Calls for Investment by NRIs in Social Sector

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Mr. S.R. Bommai has called for the need for NRI investment in the social sector of education, health and rural development. Speaking at a Conference organized by the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin in New York, the Minister assured the overseas Indians that the Government will further liberalize rules and regulations to cut down the red-tapism and facilitate foreign investment in the core sectors. He further added that he would suggest to the Prime Minister to set up a special cell to deal with NRI investment in India.

On behalf of the Organization, the Minister handed over Freedom-50 Awards to Mr. Basu Devo Padey, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and posthumously to the late Dr. Chetti Jagan, former President, Republic of Guyana. These awards were received by the Ambassadors of their respective countries in the U.S.A. on behalf of their leaders.

The Minister also highlighted the achievements of India for the last 50 years especially in the fields of Food Production, Science and Technology, Space and Atomic Energy, Industries and Higher Education. However, he stressed the need for giving priority to Elementary Education, Health and Sanitation, and Rural Development in the coming years.

The Minister also had special inter-active sessions with office bearers of various organizations of Indian origin in the U.S.A. He clarified many of their doubts regarding Government policies and political stability in India. He solicited their participation in India's development into the next millenium and assured them all of help from the Government in this regard.

Philippines, India Have Best Labor Force in Asia: Poll

The Philippines and India have the best labor pool in Asia, an annual survey of business leaders said yesterday. Four hundred executives polled by Hong Kong-based Political & Economic Risk Consultancy rated workers in the Philippines most highly in the region, praising their high quality and low cost. "After losing its top position to India in our 1996 survey, the Philippines has regained its lead ranking as having the best balanced labor situation of all countries covered by this report," the survey said. India was rated a close second in the survey and was valued for its depth and abundance of high quality technical skills.

(The Economic Times, New Delhi, 3/9)

Booming Electronic Medical Equipment Market in India

NEW DELHI, AUG 11 (PTI) — Hewlett Packard (HP), the 40 Billion Dollar U.S. Information Technology Major, is now strategizing for capturing the booming medical electronic equipment market in India.

The company, which divested 26 per cent stake in the HCL-HP joint venture as part of its 'relationship restructuring,' is confident of garnering a larger share of revenues from its medical business in India.

"We expect 'dramatic' growth in the share of revenues coming from the medical business," the president of Hewlett Packard (India), Suresh C. Rajpal, told PTI in an interview.

About 75 percent of the 150 million dollars revenue of Hewlett Packard (India) in 1996-97 came from the core business of computer products, service and support, with the best coming from its other business of information management systems for chemical analysis, test and measurement systems for electronic equipment, electronic components and medical electronics.

For the current year, Rajpal predicted 'flat growth' in its core computer sector and increasing sales of its patient care monitoring systems, diagnostic cardiology and ultrasound imaging equipment, as more modern medical centers open up in the country.

Elaborating the reasons for the slowdown in the computer hardware industry, Rajpal said "the credit squeeze and the consequent slowdown in the economy has prompted most corporates to postpone their

information technology investment decisions”.

He denied any ‘contradiction’ cropping up between the marketing of HP’s personal computers and RISC/UNIX servers and workstations, which will be marketed through HCL.

“The Buzzword in the industry today is competition — that is competition and cooperation, and there is nothing contradictory in that”, he said.

HP’s personal computers and HCL’s computers, sold under the HCL-HP brand, were creating confusion in the market place, which will end now, he added.

Globally, 82 per cent of HP’s revenues come from computer products, services and support, 10 per cent from electronic measurement instrumentation systems, about four per cent from medical electronic equipment and the rest from electronic components.

Apollo Hospitals and escorts are some of HP’s medical products clients.

Funding of Infrastructure Projects Liberalized

In a significant move, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has enabled the banks and Financial Institutions (FIs) to fund the infrastructure projects in an big way by releasing the prudential exposure norms. The RBI has lifted the upper ceiling of Rs. 10,000 million beyond which the banks and FIs were barred from taking exposure in a power generation project. The premier bank has also lifted the removed the exposure limit of Rs. 5000 million for non-power projects promoted by corporates and State owned companies. (*The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 3/9*)

Promoting Sensitivity to Human Rights

The integration of human rights related subjects into school curriculum at various levels is central to promoting human rights education in schools in India. Some of the human rights concerns have over the years become an integral part of school education, as they are reflected in India’s National Policy on Education (NPE) and the National Curricular Framework. Many of the core curriculum areas specified in the APE are particularly relevant to human rights education. These goals and objectives are sought to be reflected in the school curricula, syllabi and textbooks, in varying degrees in different states.

Consequently, curriculum and textbooks generally carry references to major historical documents such as:

- the declarations on the rights of man and citizen
- the United Nations Charter
- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- the Indian Constitution
- major events in the history of India and the world relating to the struggles for political and civil rights, as well as economic and social rights.
- literary works which reflect human rights concerns and the quest for freedom and rights, etc.
- focus on human rights situation in the world, gross violation in the form of racism, etc.
- popularizing international documents on human rights
- promoting awareness about oppressive systems such as apartheid.

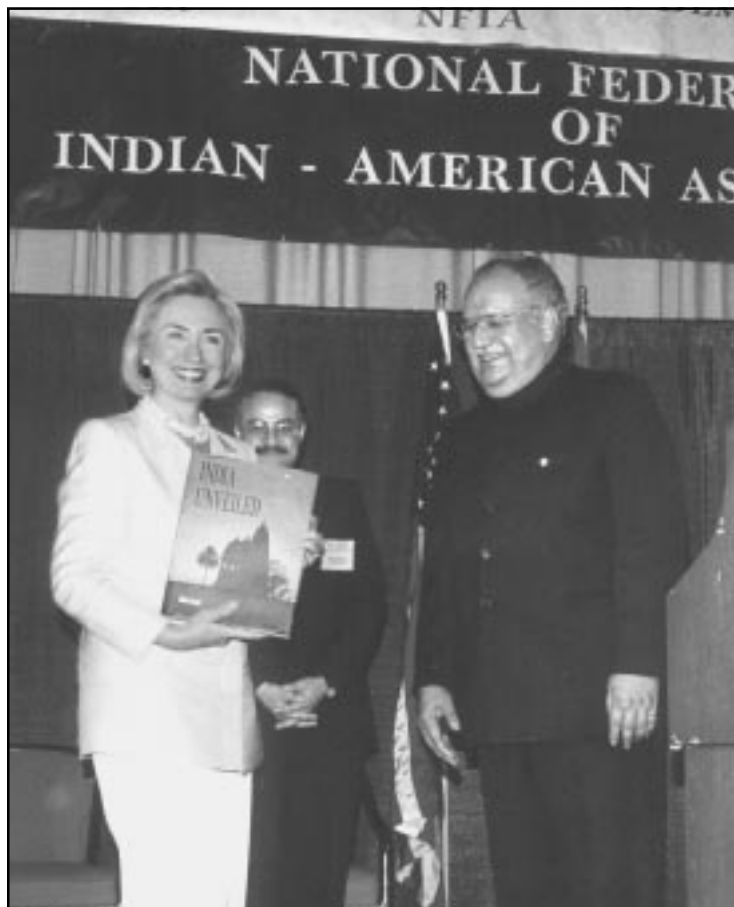
An area which is being given special attention for promoting human rights education is related to co-curricular, out of class and out of school activities, programmes and projects. This area is crucial to developing not only knowledge of but also sensitivity to human rights issues, besides promoting interventions by the student community in certain situations of violation of human rights in their neighborhood.

Written by S. C. Gupta, Secretary, Central Board for Secondary Education

Independence Day Celebrations in Washington, DC



The ceremonial lighting of the lamp by the First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of India's Independence. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is with the First Lady. This event was organized by the Embassy of India and National Federation of Indian-American Associations. During the event the First Lady announced that President Clinton plans to visit India in 1998.



In the same event, the First Lady emphasized the similarity between the U. S. and India and how the golden anniversary of India's independence represents a triumph of democratic values and aspirations that the two nations share. She also said that the President feels deeply that the United States and India share goals and values and that our nations must work together to meet the challenges of the coming century.

Speaking at the function, Ambassador Chandra noted how Indo-U.S. relations have improved and strengthened considerably, in recent years, making the U.S. the largest trading partner, and leading foreign investor, in India. He recalled the visit of the First Lady to India, in 1995, and how people were charmed and impressed by her graciousness and her compassion for the disadvantaged. The Ambassador also acknowledged the achievements of Indian-Americans and how their meaningful interaction with elected representatives had led to the formation of a Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans.

Ali Akbar Khan Performs in Washington, DC



Maestro Ali Akbar Khan played in the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater. On the tabla was the renowned Swapan Chandhuri. The concert was presented by the Embassy of India to commemorate the 50th anniversary of India's independence and was sponsored by the Chubb Corporation. Ambassador Chandra called Khan an all time legend in India. He also noted that the Maestro will receive the National Heritage Fellowship Award, America's highest cultural award, at the White House in September 1997.



Ambassador Naresh Chandra was greeted by children of the Indian-American community at the Embassy Residence during the Independence day celebrations.

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Information & Broadcasting Minister Releases Books on Freedom Movement

The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi would be soon available on multimedia interactive CD. The Minister of I&B Mr. Jaipal Reddy gave this information while releasing Books brought out by the Publications Division containing Memoirs of Living Freedom Fighters and Letter of Martyrs here today. He asked Publications Division to be more aggressive in sales and began export of books. Indian Art books are very popular abroad.

Interviews with living freedom fighters have been compiled in two books: Freedom Fighters Remember in English and Yaadon Ke Jharokhe in Hindi. He said it is hoped that the memoirs of freedom fighters will bring the fervor of freedom struggle to the youth of today. The Publications Division has also compiled 'Shaheedon Ke Khat' - letters of the martyrs — into the 'Yaad Kar Lena Kabhi' in Hindi. It contains letter written by, among others Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Jhansi Ki Rani. He said he has asked the Publications Division to translate this book into English for wider readership. These books have been brought out by the Division as part of the celebrations of 50 years of India's Independence.

The Director, Publications Division said that DPD has also brought out four volumes of History of Freedom Struggle by Tara Chand in Hindi. Some other books like 1857 — A Pictorial Presentation and Children's History of India by Shiela Dhar in English and Hindi have been reprinted. DPD is also planning to bring out Complete Works of Netaji in Hindi and in nine volumes. Out of these, four volumes have already been published.

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