



# First Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

January 9-11, 2003

## Executive Summary

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the first of its kind involving the Indian Diaspora, was held in New Delhi, India from January 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003. It was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and created a successful consciousness of global Indian family among most participants and a message of togetherness of India and its Diaspora came out loud and clear.

This was the largest gathering of the global Indian family with 1,904 foreign delegates and 1,200 domestic delegates – a truly remarkable figure by any yardstick. The most satisfying feature was the representation from across 61 countries, including advanced and developing world, which indicated the wide reach of the message of the conference among Indian community worldwide.

No less impressive was the quality of panellists and speakers at the Conference. The three Plenary Sessions, the 10 Parallel Sessions and the 7 Parallel Sessions with the State Governments attracted some of the best minds of the global Indian family. The distinctive feature of the panellists was that they were drawn not just from the advanced countries but equally from the developing countries wherever Diaspora is found in noticeable numbers. Undoubtedly, it formulated a large number of action points to be taken up by the various ministries and the need for forming FICCI Diaspora Division emerged during the conference. If implemented, these will open new dimensions in India's ties with its Diaspora.

One of the main highlights of the conference was action on the L M Singhvi Committee's Report and significant policy announcements including that of dual citizenship by the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and other Cabinet Ministers.

The conferment of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards on 10 prominent members of the Diaspora, added a new and historic dimension to the event.

Organizationally, the event symbolized a successful multi-ministerial effort put forward by the Government of India and also a unique example of public-private partnership in which the MEA and the private sector represented by FICCI joined hands to successfully host the event. Apart from the MEA, which along with FICCI was the official host of the event, some of the notable contributions from the Government came from the Prime Minister's Office, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Home Ministry, Finance Ministry, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the national Airports Authority of India, the Ministries of Health, Education, HRD, and Science & Technology. Several other government agencies like Doordarshan, Press Information Bureau, the India Trade Promotion Organization and the Sports Authority of India, SPG and Delhi Police also made noticeable contributions to the event.

Private sector capability was also mobilized across a broad spectrum and substantial sponsorship enabled the Government to keep its expenses of the event within the allocated budget.

To an extent, the conduct and outcome of the event has already been noted in the overwhelmingly impressive coverage accorded to it by both the print and electronic media. Virtually, all-important newspapers of India and TV channels gave the event extensive and intensive coverage before, during and after the event. A preliminary appraisal of the voluminous media coverage shows that well over 90 per cent of the reportage was positive and appreciative of the event as well as the historic initiative taken by the Government of India.

## Inaugural Session

The conference was inaugurated by Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, during which he enthralled the audience with his poetry. The Prime Minister invited the NRIs and PIOs to not only share the vision of India in the new millennium but also help us shape its contours. A landmark announcement was made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Government's decision to grant dual citizenship for the people of Indian origin in select countries.

Nostalgia, warmth and love, all this was blended with the music of Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar and Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan which mesmerized the audience at the inaugural session.

The unforgettable invocation by the Bharat Ratnas was followed by the Welcome Address by Mr Yashwant Sinha, Minister of External Affairs, and a Theme Presentation by Dr L M Singhvi, Chairman, Organizing Committee of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, highlighting the role of the Indian Diaspora. Dr Singhvi marked this congregation of Indian Diaspora as an auspicious beginning and Global Diaspora network of bridges or what was called in the Indian antiquity "Setubndhanam". Setubandhanam, as a metaphor, sums up the vision, which ought to be the heart of this festival of India and of the Indian Diaspora.

To recognize the goodwill and contribution of our Indian Diaspora, the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, presented Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to 10 members of the Indian Diaspora. The list included Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, The Lord Dholakia of UK, Freedom Fighter Professor Fatima Meer of South Africa, Dr Hari N Harilela of Honk Kong, Mr Ujjal Dosanjh of Canada, Mr Rajat Gupta of USA, Mr Shridath Ramphal of UK, H E Dato' S Samy Vellu of Malaysia, Dr Manu Chandaria of Kenya and Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji of Oman.

Mr Nazir Mohammad, one of the oldest original migrants to leave the shores of India, was also honoured.

This was followed by a Special Address by Rt Hon Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, who said that this first of its kind gathering was truly a homecoming. This was followed by a vote of thanks given by Dr A C Muthiah, President, FICCI, to conclude the Inaugural Session.

The inaugural session was followed by three plenary sessions.

The First Plenary Session was held with Hon'ble Mr Yashwant Sinha, Minister of External Affairs, on the theme "India and the Diaspora - Forging a Constructive Relationship".

Mr Sinha commented on India's relations with its Diaspora over the last 55 years. Chaired by Dr L M Singhvi, the session had a number of prominent panellists like Sir Shridath Ramphal (UK), Prof Lord Bhikhu Parekh (UK), H E Dato' S Samy Vellu (Malaysia), Sir Mewa Ramgobin (South Africa), Mr Mahendra P Choudhry (Fiji), Mr Ernest Moutousamy (Guadeloupe), Mr B K Agnihotri (USA), Mr Ujjal Dosanjh (Canada),

Prof Deepak Jain (USA), Prof C K Prahalad (USA), Prof Devesh Kapur (USA), Justice Ebrahim (Zimbabwe), Mr Rajat Gupta (USA), Ms Fatima Meer (South Africa), Mr Thomas Abraham (USA), Mr Bharat Kumar Shah (Dubai), Mr Dhandeo Bahadoor (Mauritius) and a Special Address by Nobel Laureate Prof Amartya Sen. Speaking on the theme "India and the Diaspora - Forging a Constructive Relationship", Prof Amartya Sen warned Indians against adopting a "frog-in-the-well" attitude and made out a strong case for valuing, defending and fighting for the spirit of openness in which the Indian civilization has blossomed.

## Emerging Issues

- Like India, a high level of diversity characterizes the Indian Diaspora. The diversity of the Diaspora has resulted in the emergence of different social groupings within the Diaspora based on culture, language, religion and region. This has perhaps prevented the establishment of apan-Indian unity amongst the Indian Diaspora.
- The Indian Diaspora is more organized and influential than anytime before.
- Rather than just forging a constructive relationship, we should think on a higher plane-a plane which endows the Indian Diaspora with renewed pride in India's achievements, achievements across the border in the economic, social and cultural spheres, in the civil and political world.
- The Indian Diaspora has the technical and business skills, commercial relationships and financial capital that can be harnessed. It is a network which can be used to gather intelligence on global opportunities which can provide insights into India's executive boardrooms while strengthening the raison d'etre of new government policy on deregulation and investment attraction.
- The material circumstances of India, as well as the Indian Diaspora have substantially changed over the last 55 years. India is now a strong and powerful nation which has emerged on the world stage. In fact, the pace and intensity of diplomatic activity that India is engaged in is itself a good indicator of our status in the world.

The Second Plenary Session was held with Hon'ble Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Science & Technology and Ocean Development, and was based on the theme "Science and Technology in India - Networking for Excellence".

The Session was co-chaired by Dr George Sudarshan, Professor, Department of Physics, University of Texas, USA and Dr R Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. They spoke of the rich traditions of science, education, medicine and maritime science and navigation in India and of the history of scientific temper and experimentation. They invited the participation of the Indians worldwide in supporting endeavours and programmes in this area.

## Emerging Issues

- In physics, mathematics, chemistry, metallurgy, medicine, and astronomy, we are the pioneers. Let us first have this confidence that India had a long history of scientific tradition. Today, India can compete in terms of space and atomic energy with the rest of the world.
- We need a constructive interaction between science and technology. The best of scientists help technology and best of technologies come to the aid of science. Science

is not necessarily the lead horse and the technology is the cart that follows.

- Since Independence, India has made impressive strides in the field of education. The literacy rate, which was just 16.67 per cent in 1951, has risen to 65.38 per cent in 2001. The number of educational institutions, the enrollment of boys and girls and the number of teachers have all registered similar increases over the years.
- In space, India has indigenous capability for satellite design, launch and ground segment instrumentation, remote sensing technology for development, applications specific satellite such as Metset for your meteorological observation.
- In ocean development, India has the first indigenous ocean thermal energy plant nearing completion, special materials from polymetallic nodules from the sea and an Indian station in Antarctica. We are also now attempting to have another station for programme on exploration and use of gas hydrates.
- It is our own talent. Mostly, our materials. Mostly, our own designs. And, now we can compete in terms of space and atomic energy with the rest of the world. We have, in terms of nuclear technology, a fully self-reliant and globally-competitive technology, fully indigenous designs, fabrications, installation and commissioning of power plants, strategy for thorium utilization, which is unique to India, R&D in emerging nuclear systems such as accelerator-based power plants.
- Now, the Indian experience can be shared by several of those countries where the Indian Diaspora is in large numbers participating in R&D and their experiences can be shared by us. Now, we, and what we are doing that can be shared by others can share that experience. So, India can become a platform where we can receive from one end and can transfer it to the other end.

The Third Plenary Session was held with Hon'ble Mr Jaswant Singh, Finance Minister of India, on the theme: The Global Business Matrix and the Indian Diaspora.

In his Keynote Address, Mr Jaswant Singh recognized globalization as being irreversible and foresaw in it, a great future for both India and for Pravasi Bharatiyas. The announcement of relaxation of some important policy parameters governing the flow of funds and investments by the Finance Minister were greatly appreciated by the visiting delegates and panellists. The Chairman of the session, Singapore's Senior Minister of State Tharman Shanmugaratnam, focussed on the merging of a new network of global influence in which China, India and South-East Asia would be the driving forces. Session's Co-Chair, Mr Manu Chandaria, a leading industrialist from Kenya, urged that the Pravasi Bharatiyas should be seen as ambassadors of goodwill for the Indian way of life. Eminent Indian industrialist, Mr Rahul Bajaj, pointed out that we need to focus on Indians who live on less than one dollar a day. This was followed by presentations by eminent NRI and PIO panellists highlighting some of the key issues, which were perhaps best summed up by Mr K Sital of Honk Kong with the words, "India is not our destination but our destiny".

## Emerging Issues

- South-East Asia was not just an economic nexus but a cultural nexus between China and India.
- ASEAN-China trade is growing by 30 to 50 per cent per annum depending on which country you look at. ASEAN-India trade is growing by 30 per cent per annum. India-China trade has grown 52 times in the last ten years, 52-fold increase from a very low base, of course.

- For every one billion dollars of Chinese exports, there is a half billion dollars of intermediate inputs into China that supplies the process leading to those exports. Thus, the manufacturing corridor largely, so far, between South-East Asia and China, defines one set of supply chains. There is also a services corridor between India and East Asia that is flourishing, particularly founded on IT and IT-enabled services.

- Investments only flow where there is peace, law and order, predictability, where investors have freedom to operate, where there is little harassment. Any country which creates these, such environments reap the benefit. Investments see no colour, see no creed. It goes where it is wanted, it is honoured, it is cuddled and it is protected. This is a pre-requirement.

- Technology is a great social leveller. It puts two unequal human beings on an equal footing. It cuts across cost, race and religion. Special programmes are urgently needed to take technology to the masses in rural areas. Unfortunately, in India technology is something urban, elite, exotic, fancy, intimidating and sexy. It is not problem-solving.

The second day featured a Special Interactive Session with Hon'ble Mr L K Advani, Deputy Prime Minister of India.

The session was chaired by The Lord Navnit Dholakia (UK) and co-chaired by Senator Hon'ble Dr Linda Baboola (Trinidad & Tobago). Mr Advani inaugurated a web site on Indian Diaspora and released a Hindi translation of "*Beyond Belief*" a book by Nobel Laureate Sir V S Naipaul. This was followed by the Keynote Address by Mr Advani and a Special Address by Sir V S Naipaul.

## Parallel Breakout Sessions

Parallel Breakout Sessions were held during the second half-day of 10th January, covering various fields. A large number of eminent NRI and PIO panellists shared the dais and set the tone for fruitful discussions with lively question-and-answer sessions in each of the above parallel sessions. Panellists included experts in their areas from both within India and the Diaspora.

## Science and Technology

The Session on Science and Technology was based on two themes.

The first theme was -- Advancing Indian Research in Partnership with STIOs Abroad

The discussion on this theme was presided over by Dr R Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and Prof E C G Sudershan, Department of Physics, University of Texas.

The session was co-chaired by Prof V S Ramamurthy, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, and Dr Bhakta B Rath, Head, Materials Science & Component Technology Directorate, and Associate Director of Research, Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), Washington, DC

Many eminent speakers and about 30 scientists, technologists, government officials, industrialists and entrepreneurs participated in this discussion.

The second theme was -- Enlarging Technological & Business Opportunities in Partnership with STIOs Abroad.

The discussion was co-chaired by Dr R A Mashelkar, Director General, Council of Scientific

and Industrial Research, and Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and Dr Praveen Chaudhari, IBM Research Division, Thomas J Watson Research Centre, New York.

## Emerging Issues

Indian universities should get more funds by endowments from individuals and corporates (from Diaspora) for scientific research.

India's participation in megascience programmes like CERN, rice genomes sequencing, international megascience and technologies projects, etc. to be explored in future, jointly by Indians and STIOs (Scientists and Technologists of Indian Origin).

Involvement of STIOs in upgrading teaching and research in Indian institutions to share their rich and invaluable experiences and organizing bilateral and other exchange programmes.

The participation by the STIOs in the Indian R&D Centres and Technology Parks was recognized as an important area of collaboration between STIOs and Indian institutions. STIOs can promote India as a R&D hub for new-generation products and technologies (outsourcing research, product design, etc.).

Contribution by STIOs in the biotech sector with special emphasis on validation, packaging & commercialization of biotech results from India was recognized as a key area of cooperation

STIOs should create forums for establishing and enhancing institution-alumni relations.

The Department of Science & Technology (DST), as a nodal agency, needs to catalyze interface of STIOs with Indian research institutions and industry. The Indian missions abroad and other concerned agencies will be actively interacting with the nodal agency to strengthen the task. A communication channel could be immediately established as web site for soliciting interests of STIOs' participation in the realization of the above opportunities in science & technology.

## Voluntary Sector and Development

The Session on Voluntary Sector and Development: Diaspora and the Emerging Challenges in India's Social Development – Role of Pravasi Bharatiyas was held with Mr I K Gujral, former Prime Minister of India.

Ms Ela Bhatt, Founder and General Secretary, SEWA, chaired the session.

Ms Priya Viswanath, Director & CEO, Catalyst India, gave the theme address.

This session witnessed two panel discussions, Regulatory Framework and Reforms and Networking for Effectiveness.

The session was conducted with a view that PIOs/NRIs are eager to donate generously for worthy development causes in India like the Chinese Diaspora has done. However, in India a plethora of rules and regulations, indifference and even hostility of the government machinery frustrate the efforts of the genuine PIO/NRI philanthropists.

## Emerging Issues

Urgent need to simplify rules and regulations that govern the setting up of voluntary agencies/trusts by NRIs/PIOs. Creation of a single-window mechanism for clearances from agencies like the Home Ministry, Central Excise, Income Tax and RBI.

Setting up of a Working Group comprising representatives from RBI, Home Ministry, CBTD, CBEC and active voluntary agencies of the Diaspora to submit a proposal to the Government within three months on a draft policy for facilitating speedier inflow of Diaspora donor money.

Simplification of FCRA, 1976 to enable India to receive more remittances from PIOs for philanthropic activities.

Awareness to be created by Indian Missions regarding government procedures and clearances required in this sector. Multimedia CD-ROMs and brochures can be developed and distributed for this.

Creating interactive modules for Diaspora's voluntary agency networks.

The Planning Commission should come out with an indicative action plan, stating priority areas where voluntary work is needed the most and outline the appropriate action by the Diaspora agencies to speed up India's development.

Work with the Government to facilitate easy transfer of funds by registered NGOs for activities anywhere in the country with only a reporting requirement to the RBI/Ministry of Home Affairs.

With the help of MEA, it shall organize programmes to encourage idealistic NRI/PIO students to come to India for voluntary work.

## Education

The education sector can play a vital role in strengthening linkages between the NRIs/PIOs and India. India has to adopt a multi-pronged strategy in meeting the aspirations of the Diaspora and its own policy objectives in this crucial sector, especially to meet the demand for quality school education in India, which emanates from the Diaspora in the Gulf region.

The Session on Education – Developing Human Capital: Advantage India was held with Prof Y K Alagh, former Union Minister, Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Vice-Chairman of Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, Ahmedabad.

Dr Kavita Sharma, Principal, Hindu College, New Delhi, chaired the session.

A number of eminent educationists from India and abroad spoke at this session.

## Emerging Issues

Strengthening of ties between NRIs/PIOs and educational institutions in India.

Privatization of education sector in India to enable NRIs/PIOs to become investors in educational institutions.

Standardization in terms of teaching practices, syllabus, etc. in India to ensure recognition of Indian degrees abroad.

Special attention to be paid to children of Gulf NRIs, keeping in view their special needs. There should be no discrimination in the fee structures in India. More Indian schools to be opened in the Gulf.

Provision of seats in Navodaya Schools and good private schools in India for less-privileged sections, which can neither afford to take their children abroad nor have the financial resources to send them to the residential schools in India. Moreover, increasing the number of seats in other existing colleges and universities.

Institutions like IGNOU should expand its tele-education facilities for the benefit of the Diaspora.

IITs and other specialized institutions should forge stronger networks with NRIs/PIOs to enhance the quality of its research programmes.

NRIs should be encouraged to support schools for primary and basic education by adopting villages and townships.

Educational fairs and exhibitions can be co-organized by the Ministry, State Governments and other organizations to promote India as a destination for education and HRD facilities.

Various educational institutions should be assisted to launch student exchange programmes during vacations and offshore campuses of Indian universities like IIMs, IITs and medical colleges in collaboration with governments in the host countries should be launched.

## Hospitality and Tourism

Tourism, long seen as a panacea for economic development, and for spurring the growth of related infrastructure in India, came in for its share of accolades and criticism at a session which was co-chaired by Mr Inder Sharma, Chairman, Select Holiday Resorts Ltd, Delhi and Mr Mukesh Mike Patel, President, Diplomat Hotel Corp, USA. The Minister of State for Tourism and Culture, Mr Vinod Khanna, delivered the keynote address and brought some cheer with his statement that a Tourism Policy is now in place, and that a five-fold increase in the tourism budget in the Tenth Five-Year Plan has been provided for taking it up to a sizeable Rs.2, 900 crore.

A Special Address was given by Mr Jagmohan, Minister for Tourism and Culture.

## Emerging Issues

Develop focussed programmes to promote tourism within the Diaspora by leveraging their inclination to rediscover their roots.

Reduction in taxes on tourism by the Central and State Governments. Presently, on an average, a visitor to India spends US\$250 on taxes alone, requiring a considerable review of the tax infrastructure.

Relaxation of visa rules in eight countries where dual citizenship has been offered.

The Civil Aviation Ministry must increase seat capacity, especially during the peak

season and develop smaller airports at tourist destinations away from major metros. Creation of separate immigration and customs counters for NRIs and PIOs, special in-service orientation courses and training of officials and manning these counters at international airports.

Creation of networks among the Indian community abroad to counter the adverse effect of travel advisories against India.

Organizing an annual convention of PIO tour operators and travel agents in India and dovetailing into the larger programme of Diaspora-related events around the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. This will motivate PIO travel agents to promote tourism to India.

## Healthcare and Pharma

The Session on Healthcare and Pharma was held with Mr Shatrughan Sinha, Minister for Health of India.

This session witnessed two themes, Healthcare Sector in India: The Road Ahead and Emerging Areas in Healthcare: Developing Partnerships and Exploring New Business Opportunities. The former part of the session was chaired by Mr D B Gupta, CMD, Lupin Laboratories, Mumbai and co-chaired by Dr Kiran Patel, AAPI, USA and Dr Naresh Trehan, Director, Escorts Heart Institute and Research Centre. The second part of this session was co-chaired by Dr Navin Patel, AAPI, USA and Smt Suneeta Reddy, Apollo Hospitals, India.

This session witnessed interesting interaction about healthcare in India among the panellists and participants.

## Emerging Issues

A concerted effort by the Government to promote Indian systems of medicine abroad is required like Ayurveda, Yoga and traditional and herbal products.

Facilitation of inflow of private investment from the Diaspora in the health sector, especially in medical education and research. Government should create an investor-friendly environment, act as a facilitator for investments and remove procedural delays inhibiting FDI in the health sector.

Conferment of infrastructure status on this sector could attract large doses of foreign investment.

Promotion of India as a cost-competitive healthcare destination of the world. The FICCI Diaspora Division could prepare promotional material and take business delegations to Indian communities abroad.

Exploring new areas of cooperation between the Diaspora and Indian healthcare institutions like genetic research, pharmacogeomics, stem cell research, etc.

Network with appropriate Diaspora organizations and encourage them to adopt villages around their native places to promote healthcare

Formation of a Working Group comprising representatives from government agencies and public and private sectors to carry forward the recommendations made in the Health Session.

Utilize the NRI/PIO doctor database and develop an institutional mechanism for interaction with them and the scientific organizations in India. An international advisory committee with NRI/PIO members and their Indian counterparts to be formed, and the Government of India should extend its full support to projects recommended by this committee.

Prepare promotional material and take business delegations to Indian communities abroad and promote India as a cost-competitive healthcare destination of the world.

Explore new areas of cooperation between the Diaspora and Indian healthcare institutions like genetic research, pharmacogenomics, stem cell research, etc.

## Culture, Language, Literature and Diasporic Identity

It was felt that the members of the Indian Diaspora are keen to pass on their value systems, which have been an essential part of their success to the coming generations, and they would welcome mother country's support in this endeavour. Therefore, there is a need for greater cultural exchanges between expatriate Indians and resident Indians and forward-and-backward linkages between them.

The Session on Culture, Language, Literature and Diasporic Identity was held with Mr Jagmohan, Minister for Tourism and Culture of India.

Ms Najma Heptullah, Vice-Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, President of ICCR and a Member of Parliament from Maharashtra, chaired the session.

One of the interesting features of this session was the interaction between Mr Jagmohan and members of the panel and the audience. Mr Jagmohan also released a book "*Indians Abroad*" brought out by the Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Calcutta.

## Emerging Issues

The need for greater cultural exchanges between expatriate Indians and resident Indians and the need for both forward-and-backward linkages. This can be supplemented by educational programmes focussed on the younger generation aimed at creating awareness among them.

ICCR and the Ministry of Tourism and Culture should work out a detailed action plan to increase cultural cooperation between India and its Diaspora.

Help increase the scope and activities of the cultural centres in the countries with a substantial Indian presence.

Study successful models for promoting cultural interaction such as the British Council and the Alliance Francaise model, which could be appropriately adapted and emulated.

Examine and draw lessons from the Birthright Israel Programme, which assists the younger generation of the Jewish Diaspora to visit Israel and learn about their cultural roots.

Ensure greater interaction with the French - and Dutch-speaking Diaspora by leveraging its database.

Evolve a mechanism to assist a large number of religious institutions and other institutions like the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Chinmaya



Mission, and institutions of performing arts run by NRIs/PIOs to organize programmes on Indian culture and languages abroad.

Pursue with the Government the possibility of recognizing achievements of eminent cultural, literary, and sports personalities by organizations like the Jnanpeeth, the Sahitya Akademi, and by the conferment of the Arjuna awards.

Work towards launching specially tailored, high quality courses on Indian culture and languages through the Distance Learning Programmes (like through IGNOU) and other means and revive the practice of Festivals of India.

## **Financial Services (Trade, Investment and Economic Development)**

The Session on Financial Services – Emerging Global Trends and Learnings for India was chaired by Dr Bimal Jalan, Governor, Reserve Bank of India.

The two co-chairs were Mr K V Kamath, CMD, ICICI Bank Ltd and Ms Naina Lal Kidwai, MD, HSBC Securities Ltd.

Special addresses were delivered by Mr G N Bajpai, Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Mr N Rangachary, Chairman, Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDA), and Mr R S Lodha, former President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

## **Emerging Issues**

The Finance Ministry must re-examine the Kelkar Committee's recommendations on abolishing tax concessions for those who have NOR status.

Follow up on IRDA's offer to support private entrepreneurs who take the initiative to motivate members of the Diaspora to provide life insurance cover to their relatives in India.

Formation of networks amongst NRIs/PIOs along with the key ministries for regular brainstorming and exchange of ideas on global trends in the financial sector.

As regards corporate governance, the real problem is with implementation and not with the quality of the regulations themselves.

Indian banks should open more branches in the Gulf region.

RBI must post, on the first of each month, updated information (like rules and regulations applicable to Diaspora etc.) on their web site.

The fundamentals of Indian economy are in good shape with foreign reserves going up, external debt going down. In fact, no short-term debt - and inflation remains low. Nevertheless, problems in areas such as efficiency remain. In efficiency, we need to strengthen each link of the value chain, at the individual, corporate, regulatory and national levels.

## **Entertainment Ethnic Media and the Diaspora**

The Session on Entertainment, Ethnic Media and the Diaspora was held with Ms Sushma Swaraj, Minister for Information & Broadcasting of India.

The session was co-chaired by Mr Yash Chopra, winner of the Dada Sahib Phalke Award for 2001, Chairman, FICCI Entertainment Committee and Chairman, Yash Raj Films Pvt Ltd, and Dr Ved Pratap Vaidik, Chairman, Council of Indian Foreign Policy.

## Emerging Issues

The popularity of Indian films, music and other forms of entertainment abroad with the ethnic Indian population is not only a source of keeping Indian culture alive, but also in the present context can be a major area for FDI inflow from the Diaspora.

Develop an action plan for popularizing Indian films, media and marketing Indian entertainment products among the Diaspora by forming a Working Group.

Organize regular workshops to bring together ethnic Indian media from the Diaspora and the Indian media.

Market investment and export opportunities offered by the Indian entertainment industry (by preparing and disseminating appropriate promotional material) among the relevant sections of the Diaspora.

Government to promote Indian languages in countries where the Diaspora is strong.

Promote FDI from the Diaspora into publishing specialized magazines and journals, newspapers, film advertising, cable advertising, DTH and FM radio.

Maintain a strong data bank on ethnic media and ensure regular interactions and build links with associations like the US-based South Asia Journalists' Association (SAJA) and the UK Association of Indian Journalists.

## Knowledge-based Industry – Synergizing for Growth

The Session on Knowledge-based Industry – Synergizing for Growth was co-chaired by Mr Saurabh Srivastava, Chairman, FICCI IT Committee, and Mr Kiran Karnik, President, NASSCOM, and witnessed remarks by many eminent panellists. This was truly an important session as it is widely accepted now that the knowledge-based industry is really going to be the key to how we do as a country and the time is not far when the people will not talk of GNP or GDP, but GKP for gross knowledge product.

## Emerging Issues

The country is all poised to emerge not only as a dominant IT power, but has the potential to develop India as a brand. The large pool of NRIs can play a vital role in this brand building by allaying the fears regarding geopolitical situation, job loss and security in their adopted countries.

Investment in the biotech sector is growing at the rate of 35 per cent per annum. Joint ventures with NRIs can be of great help in filling the technology gaps. The need of the hour was the transfer of commercial technology. India has set the ball rolling by aligning the need of the SME sector with the R & D institutes.

The bioinformatics sector and the biotechnology sector should be brought at par with the software industry sector. Bioinformatics is inextricably linked to the fortunes of new drug research and new crop research. It has great relevance for India because we are also an agricultural country.

The world is moving from computational economy to knowledge economy. With its intellectual capital, India has great opportunity to bridge the digital and social divides by taking technology to the masses. In this context, NRIs can help India become a knowledge partner rather than a mere service provider.

India has to take advantage of its unique labour- and knowledge-intensive Internet. Government should take the lead in increasing the use of IT in the country.

In telecommunications, what we really need to do is to give broadband connectivity so that you can give data connectivity to an average Indian.

If you look at 2008, firstly IT will be contributing as much as 30 per cent of the foreign exchange that comes into this country. Secondly, on the basis of today's projections of an average of 6 to 7 per cent GDP growth for the country as a whole, the software industry will be a contributor to as much as 10 per cent of India's GDP.

Other issues that were raised included:

Corporate governance.

Need for networking the call centres to take on the challenges posed by bigwigs.  
Last-mile problems in terms of connectivity.

Need of customer relationship management in order to position strategically by taking care of the sales and marketing aspects.

The participation of NRIs and local audience threw up a number of issues including best project management practices, one-stop shop for IT companies, attention to cross-cultural issues in the host countries.

## **Workshop on Opportunities in Defence and Internal Security Research and Development**

The Session on Opportunities in Defence and Internal Security Research and Development was chaired by Mr Sharad M Marathe, President & CEO, Universal Technical Systems Inc, USA, who referred to potential partners, potential areas, technology component and projects ideas and set the tone for the meeting.

The session was co-chaired by Dr V K Aatre, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister and Secretary, Department of Defence, Research and Development, Ministry of Defence, GOI, Mr K Santhanam, Director, IDSA, and Mr K G Ramachandran, CMD, BHEL, New Delhi and Chairman, FICCI Defence Committee.

Dr Shailendra Raj Mehta, Director, Krannert School of Management, Purdue University, and Dr Alok R Chaturvedi, Director, Purdue E-Business Research Centre, USA, made the final panel presentation wherein they presented a simulation exercise on the theme "measured response". The purpose of such a simulation was to enable participants to make mistakes and learn from them in the virtual world and not the real world.

The session featured a lively question-and-answer session. Mr Sharad Marathe said that a detailed report would be submitted to the Government for follow-up action.

## Emerging Issues

The Indian Diaspora could help by contributing new ideas and funds, promoting India as a preferred destination for sourcing of components and using India as a development base. It was mentioned that three private companies have been given licences for defence production.

The possible areas of assistance could be systems simulation and optimization, systems engineering, techniques related to systems integration and check out; and testing and evaluation.

India seeks expertise related to understanding the nuances of transiting from a development phase into engineering for production phase and finally thereon to a regular production phase.

The Chairman, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, after apprising the audience about the activities of HAL, made two specific requests to the Indian Diaspora. He asked them to bring in the latest technology in the country and to provide marketing support for HAL products in their host countries.

The long-term aims of countries facing terrorist threats were bringing them together. Defence technological development is a nascent area of partnership between India and USA driven by common needs to meet similar threats. A spur to technological co-operation between India and developed countries can be provided through the development of mutual stakes in defence and internal security related supplies. Here, it was mentioned that for a high-tech cooperation group, a framework has been set up recently to address these matters.

Defence authorities in India should try to become niche producers and act as facilitators and enablers to the defence industry.

Organizations in India are looking for positive marketing partnerships and are open to technology in missile and torpedo development projects.

It was mentioned that there was a need to know and improve what the opponent possessed. There was a need to be one step ahead of the opponent.

## Sessions with the State Governments of India

Since India achieved independence, overseas Indians have been returning to seek their roots and contributing to the welfare of States where they belong. Keeping this fact in view, the third day of the conference was dedicated to interactions of the Indian Diaspora with the State Governments of India. Seven parallel sessions were organized for Government delegations from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan. For Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana, keynote addresses were delivered by the Chief Ministers, Mr Ashok Gehlot, Mr Narinder Modi and Mr Om Prakash Chautala, respectively and by the senior ministers for the other four sessions.

The Chief Ministers extended a warm welcome to all the Diaspora members of their respective States and invited them for a meaningful interaction and association with a common agenda of development. Presentations revolved around the theme: "Leveraging the Indian Diaspora". The presentations focussed on the issues important to the development of their States and areas where the Diaspora can contribute effectively.

The sessions concluded with a lively discussion between the panellists and the participants.