



Dear member,

In recognition of the constructive, economic and philanthropic role played by the Indian diaspora, the Government of India organises Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Indian Diaspora Day) in the first week of January. Individual non-resident Indians and people of Indian origin who excelled in their chosen field or profession are honored and felicitated (Pravasi Bharatiya Samman). The 2008 event (6th) was organised from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> in New Delhi. I attended the event.

Inaugurating the event Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh stated that India as fast growing economy aspires to benefit from the technical, managerial and entrepreneurial skills of overseas Indian communities and seeks to encourage in every possible way its links and relations with such communities. "It is therefore appropriate that the theme of this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is *Engaging the Diaspora: The way forward*" said the Prime Minister.

Key initiatives of this year's meet were social development, knowledge economy, investment and infrastructure, trade and business opportunities, empowerment of women and leadership and cultural issues. A special session on Diaspora Philanthropy with its thrust on empowerment of rural women was the hall mark of the event. The Government expressed its resolve for establishment of an "India Development Foundation" to channel overseas Indian philanthropic capital into social development causes in India. Other significant issues discussed in the meet were setting up of the Global Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin (PIO), to serve as 'think tank'; establishment of a PIO University; implementing a mutually beneficial knowledge transfer program encompassing a variety of disciplines.

The overseas Indian communities were informed that sustainable economic growth is more than a buzz word. It is the reality on which Indian society should be built. The challenge is to balance the rights and needs of the populace with the growing demands of industrialisation. The India-US civil nuclear energy cooperation is aimed at addressing energy security of the country especially in times of spiralling oil prices. The Government is making all possible efforts to build energy stocks, explore alternative avenues of energy, research and produce renewable sources of energy and leverage multilateral and bilateral framework to secure energy supplies over long time.

12 distinguished Pravasi Bharatiyas were honored with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award by the President for outstanding contributions to their home countries and to relations with India. They included among others Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius for nurturing and strengthening the bonds between Mauritius and India.

Addressing the valedictory of the event the President Smt. Pratibha Patil urged the overseas Indian community to join the country in its efforts to keep its *'tryst with destiny'*. Making out a case for the diaspora to engage proactively in contributing to national growth, she said the 25-million – strong community spread across 125-130 countries was a 'significant economic, social and cultural force' in the world. Referring the proposed India Development Foundation, the President said it would provide the diaspora a credible window to contribute to social development causes, including empowerment of women and rural development. Dwelling on the challenges facing the country as it sought to ensure inclusive growth the first citizen said overseas Indians should engage themselves in the national endeavour to provide health and education to all while investing in infrastructure projects.

Thank you for your co-operation.



Atluri Subba Rao