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'People of Indian origin to play larger role in development'

Batuk Gathani

Brussels , Oct. 7

THESE are eventful days for some 21 million people of Indian origin (the Indian diaspora) spread over 110 countries with an estimated combined income of \$160 billion as GOPIO (Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin) gathers momentum and clout.

This was highlighted at the GOPIO Brussels conference, which was inaugurated by Mr Jagdish Tytler, Indian Minister for Non-Resident Affairs, and Mr R.M. Abhyankar, Ambassador of India to the European Union. The GOPIO conference was organised by Mr Sunil Prasad, President of GOPIO - Belgium and head of unit in ICFTU. Around 200 delegates from Western Europe, West Asia, the US and Africa participated in the one-day conference.

Mr Tytler outlined the current and future strategy of India to ensure a better dialogue and co-operation between overseas Indians and the Indian Government.

It is now realised - on both sides of the Indian fence - that successful overseas Indians could support India's development through investment, trade and in areas of professional expertise like healthcare, medical research, engineering and manufacturing, as the Indian economy is seen gathering new pace and momentum.

Currently, India gets about \$4 billion of foreign investment of which the contribution of overseas Indians varies between 9 and 15 per cent. This is often rated as "very modest" compared to what the overseas Chinese community invests in China. The overseas Chinese, by comparison, are responsible for about 50 per cent of some \$48 billion overseas investment China attracts. The other half of \$48 billion mainly comes from the US, the European Union and Japan. Many European companies are currently using Chinese companies and families living in Singapore, Hong Kong and other parts of Asia as a "piggy-bank" to enter the complex Chinese domestic market.

GOPIO can play a more positive role in this endeavour and also pave way for a more pragmatic dialogue between the European commerce, industry and government institutions. The Indian diaspora presence in Britain is more pronounced with a commendable economic profile but there is still a "lack of dialogue" between both sides of the Indian fence. It is not often realised that second and third generation of Indian immigrants who have been born and brought up in Europe and North America are fast growing up and have no real contact with India except through some Bollywood movies.

The Indian diaspora is rated as affluent and this is evident in the lifestyle of the Indian communities dotted in parts of the European Union, North America and Africa. This does not mean that there are no poor sections of the Indian diaspora, but according to analysts, they are fast catching up. In South Africa, for example, out of nearly one million people of Indian origin, more than a quarter is rated as higher middle-class.

The enlargement of the EU offers both opportunities and challenges for the Indian diaspora and several speakers at the GOPIO conference here echoed these sentiments with varying degree of emphasis. China's trade and investment profile in the EU is roughly six times larger than that of India, but there is also growing awareness about the "Indian potential".

Today, the EU, led by France, is seen playing the "China Card" as the French President, Mr Chirac, travels to China this week, with a huge delegation highlighted by weeks of press coverage. As a French academic and China expert pointed out: "For France, China has become an economic and strategic priority in the global order currently dominated by the US." France is no exception and China fever is gripping Europe with many exchanges of delegations.

As a GOPIO delegates put it: "India is certainly lagging behind."

A recent study by Goldman Sachs projects that China's economy will have surpassed all of today's economic giants by 2050, though it will still lag behind them in terms of per capita wealth. China's economy will hit the \$55-trillion mark by 2050, the US \$33-trillion mark and India \$28-trillion mark. This is the silver lining for second and third generation Indians and GOPIO can play a leading role in paving way for a smoother dialogue between India and its talented and resourceful diaspora. This was the message at the GOPIO conference here.

Sunday, October 17, 2004

NRI Minister Inaugurates GOPIO Conference

Brussels, Belgium; October 7, 2004 - Jagdish Tytler, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs of the Government of India attributed the success of the Indian Diaspora to their traditional ethos, cultural values and their capacity to harmonize and adopt. Mr. Tytler was addressing the GOPIO Conference "NRI/PIO Business Networking for Trade and Investment and Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Europe" on 4th. October 2004 in Brussels as Chief Guest. The Conference was organized in association with the Indian Embassy and in collaboration with the GOPIO International. "Let us work together to involve you in India's growth," said the minister and assured the Indian Diaspora of all help and facilities by his newly-created ministry.

Minister Tytler invited the overseas Indian to contribute ideas in making Indian education, infrastructure, healthcare, financial services, tourism and other service sectors world class. He also invited the Indian Diaspora to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to be held in Mumbai, from 7-9 January 2005.

The Conference was attended by more than 200 PIO/NRI business leaders from 24 countries. This was the largest gathering of the NRIs/PIOs from different nations in recent times and offered an opportunity to the Indian Diaspora to promote trade and investment and reach out to the Indian Diaspora in Europe.

Earlier welcoming the participants, the Chair of the Conference and the President of the GOPIO Belgium, Sunil Prasad said that the Indian Diaspora is an asset for creating a global network and economic bridges that can provide a useful help for both India and the country of Indian origin. He also said that the Conference was aimed to exhibit the great diversity not only in terms of geography and communities, but also in socio-economic status, educational achievements, political participation and power and strengthening of the EU-India relations in order to help trade networks and effectively and strategically link the Diaspora globally.

Ambassador of India to the EU and Belgium, R.M. Abhyankar, noted that it was the first such gathering of the India Diaspora in Europe. "The Indian Diaspora in Europe can play a major role in developing Europe-India ties," he said. Abhyankar hoped that conference would come out with ideas on how to further boost Europe-India economic cooperation.

Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman, GOPIO International, USA, referring to GOPIO's history said it was formed 15 years ago in New York. He called upon

the nations of European Union to adopt an open door immigration policy so as to make it easier for the migration of qualified technologists and scientists from India. "The European Union will not be able to compete well globally in the cutting edge technologies, if the countries still keep closed door immigration policy," said Dr. Abraham.

President of GOPIO International Inder Singh spoke about the sacrifices of the Indian Diaspora in the economic and social integrity of Europe and services rendered by Indian troops in the first and second world wars. Singh further said that GOPIO chapters have been started in several cities of Europe and urged the participants to help in networking with the Diaspora in Europe by opening chapters in all cities of Europe.

Neena Gill, the only Indian-born Member of the European Parliament (MEP), in her speech complimented the 22 million Indians live outside India for their contributions. Gill, a British MEP who hails from the Punjab, advised the Indian community living abroad that "you need to be active participants in the country you live in, and not just active in your business and professional life."

Dr. Charles Tannock, MEP and Chairman, Friends of India Group in the European Parliament, described India as an "awakening giant" which offers enormous opportunities to the EU. "Given its shrinking population, Europe will need to outsource" he said noting that the UK National Health Service, which has a large backlog of lab samples to analyze, is considering flying them out to India for analysis, and getting the results back by email.

In a special presentation MEP Nirj Deva said that the recent successful elections in Indonesia showed to the world that the largest Muslim populated country in the world could successfully adopt a democratic path and hoped that all Muslim nations follow the suite.

Special sessions devoted to business meetings and networking activities gave rare opportunity for entrepreneurs, investors and other key decision makers to form partnerships to benefit from the vast economic opportunities arising from the opening of the Indian economy and also the economy of the countries having the presence of the Indian Diaspora and use GOPIO Belgium for linkages in Europe. Others who addressed the Conference were Dr. Mohan Kaul, Bharat Shah, Malcolm Subhan and Prof. Sid Gautam.

The occasion was marked by the launching of the Europe-India Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Ajit Shetty, Chairman of the Board of Janssen Pharmaceutica in his launching address said that with the strategic partnership being developed between EU and India, the need for such an umbrella organization is the need of the hour. He also stressed that the chamber should aim to provide technical and logistic help to the business groups to promote trade and investment. Mr. Sanjay Dalmia, Chairman of the Dalmia Group of Industries said that the Chamber should look into facilitating better trade relations and help in understanding the various changes in the trade rules. Dr. Karan Billimoria, Chef Executive of the Cobra Beers, UK said that although the EU is India's largest trading partner and biggest foreign investor, yet India

represents a miniscule proportion of its global trade and investment in the EU. In order to institutionalize a proper mechanism to promote trade and commerce, a Europe-India Chamber of Commerce should liaise with different chambers of commerce in the EU and other such business bodies.

The GOPIO in association with the EU-India Media Hub had organized a Media Conclave on October 3rd, which was also addressed by Minister Tytler and was attended by many Brussels based journalists. GOPIO presented several resolutions urging European Union to ease on the migration of qualified people from India, issuing Schengen visa for longer duration as well as as eliminating visas for permanent residents of USA, Canada, Australia and European countries who are not members of European Union. The resolutions were presented to Members of European Parliament present at the conference.

Minister Tytler had some one to one exchanges with GOPIO Executive Council, which brought the issue of Govt. of India's policy of taxing Not-Ordinary Residents (NOR) after two years of stay in India. GOPIO urged the minister to restore it to government's original policy of taxing the global income after nine years. Minister promised that he would take this up with the Prime Minister and Finance Minister before the next budget.

Tytlar invites Diaspora to contribute in India's growth

UK Bureau

London, October 8

Jagdish Tytlar, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs of the Government of India attributed the success of the Indian Diaspora to their traditional ethos, cultural values and their capacity to harmonise and adopt. He expressed his views while delivering his keynote address as chief guest at the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Conference "NRI/PIO Business Networking for Trade and Investment and Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Europe" in Brussels recently.

The conference was organised in association with the Indian Embassy and in collaboration with the GOPIO International. "Let us work together to involve you in India's growth," said the minister and assured the Indian Diaspora of all help and facilities by his newly-created ministry.

Tytlar invited the overseas Indians to contribute ideas in making Indian education, infrastructure, healthcare, financial services, tourism and other service sectors world class. He also invited the Indian Diaspora to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to be held in Mumbai, from January 7-9, 2005.

The Conference was attended by more than 200 PIO/NRI business leaders from 24 countries. This was the largest gathering of the NRIs/PIOs from different nations in recent times and offered an opportunity to the Indian Diaspora to promote trade and investment and reach out to the Indian Diaspora in Europe.

Earlier welcoming the participants, the Chair of the Conference and the President of the GOPIO Belgium, Sunil Prasad said that the Indian Diaspora is an asset for creating a global network and economic bridges that can provide a useful help for both India and people of Indian origin.

He also said that the Conference was aimed to exhibit the great diversity not only in terms of geography and communities, but also in socio-economic status, educational achievements, political participation and power and strengthening of the EU-India relations in order to help trade networks and effectively and strategically link the Diaspora globally.

Ambassador of India to the EU and Belgium, RM Abhyankar, noted that it was the first such gathering of the India Diaspora in Europe. "The Indian Diaspora in Europe can play a major role in developing Europe-India ties," he said. Abhyankar hoped that conference would come out with ideas on how to further boost Europe-India economic cooperation.

Dr Thomas Abraham, Chairman, GOPIO International, USA, referring to GOPIO's history said it was formed 15 years ago in New York. He called upon the nations of European Union to adopt an open door immigration policy so as to make it easier for the migration of qualified technologists and scientists from India. "The European Union will not be able to compete well globally in the cutting edge technologies if the countries still keep closed door immigration policy," said Dr Abraham.

President of GOPIO International Inder Singh spoke about the sacrifices of the Indian Diaspora in the economic and social integrity of Europe and services rendered by Indian troops in the first and second world wars. Singh further said that GOPIO chapters have been started in several cities of Europe and urged the participants to help in networking with the Diaspora in Europe by opening chapters in all cities of Europe.

Neena Gill, the only Indian-born Member of the European Parliament (MEP), in her speech complimented the 22 million Indians live outside India for their contributions. Gill, a British MEP who hails from the Punjab, advised the Indian community living abroad that "you need to be active participants in the country you live in, and not just active in your business and professional life."

Dr Charles Tannock, MEP and Chairman, Friends of India Group in the European Parliament, described India as an "awakening giant" which offers enormous opportunities to the EU. "Given its shrinking population, Europe will need to outsource" he said noting that the UK National Health Service, which has a large backlog of lab samples to analyze, is considering flying them out to India for analysis, and getting the results back by email.

In a special presentation MEP Nirj Deva said that the recent successful elections in Indonesia showed to the world that the largest Muslim populated country in the world could successfully adopt a democratic path and hoped that all Muslim nations follow the suite.

Special sessions devoted to business meetings and networking activities gave rare opportunity for entrepreneurs, investors and other key decision makers to form partnerships to benefit from the vast economic opportunities arising from the opening of the Indian economy and also the economy of the countries having the presence of the Indian Diaspora and use GOPIO Belgium for linkages in Europe. Others who addressed the Conference were Dr Mohan Kaul of Commonwealth Secretariat, Bharat Shah, Malcolm Subhan and Prof Sid Gautam.

The occasion was marked by the launching of the Europe-India Chamber of Commerce. Dr Ajit Shetty, Chairman of the Board of Janssen Pharmaceutica in his address said that with the strategic partnership being developed between EU and India, the need for such an umbrella organisation is the need of the hour. He also stressed that the chamber should aim to provide technical and logistic help to the business groups to promote trade and investment.

Sanjay Dalmia, Chairman of the Dalmia Group of Industries said that the Chamber should look into facilitating better trade relations and help in understanding the various changes in the trade rules.

Karan Billimoria, Chief Executive of the Cobra Beers, UK said that although the EU is India's largest trading partner and biggest foreign investor, yet India represents a miniscule proportion of its global trade and investment in the EU. In order to institutionalize a proper mechanism to promote trade and commerce, a Europe-India Chamber of Commerce should liaise with different chambers of commerce in the EU and other such business bodies.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tytler woos diaspora to invest in India

IANAS[SATURDAY, OCTOBER 09, 2004 05:04:39 AM]

NEW YORK: Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Jagdish Tytler has sought investment and technology from the vast Indian diaspora across the globe to make the country's industry world class and globally competitive.

Addressing some 200 members of the Indian diaspora in Brussels, Belgium, recently, Tytler specifically sought help in areas such as education, healthcare, tourism, financial services and infrastructure.

"Let us work together to involve you in India's growth," he told the event organised by the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), in association with the Indian embassy in Brussels.

He also invited the Indian diaspora to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas , to be held in Mumbai from January 7 to 9 next year, a press release from GOPIO said.

The two-day conference in Brussels also saw the launch of a Europe-India Chamber of Commerce. Ajit Shetty, chairman of Janssen Pharmaceutical, said the strategic ties being forged between the European Union and India required such a chamber.

R M Abhyankar, India's Ambassador to the European Union and Belgium, said the conference, which saw the participation of Indian diaspora from 24 countries, was the first such gathering in Europe.

"The Indian diaspora in Europe can play a major role in developing Europe-India ties," he said.

Thomas Abraham, chairman of GOPIO International, asked European nations to adopt an open door immigration policy to make it easier for the migration of qualified technologists and scientists from India.

"The European Union will not be able to compete well globally in the cutting edge technologies if the countries still keep closed door immigration policy," Abraham said.

Neena Gill, a Punjab-born member of the European Parliament, complimented the 22 million Indians living outside India for their contributions to the world at large.

"You need to be active participants in the country you live in, and not just active in your business and professional life," Gill advised the Indian community living abroad.

Earlier, GOPIO had also organised a media conclave, where Tytler was presented several petitions on easier visa norms in Europe, and eliminating of visa requirements for permanent residents of the US, Canada and Australia.

Minister Tytler Attributes Traditional Ethos and Cultural Values as the Secret of the Success of Indian Diaspora



GOPIO Conference Inauguration on NRI/PIO Business Networking and Trade/Investment, and Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Europe held in Brussels, Belgium on October 4th. From L. to R.: European Member of Parliament Dr. Charles Tannock, Indian Ambassador R.M. Abhyankar, GOPIO Belgium President Sunil Prasad, Minister Jagdish Tytler, GOPIO International President Inder Singh and GOPIO International Chairman Dr. Thomas Abraham

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