

## City of London joins UKIBC as institutional member

The UK India Business Council (UKIBC), formerly Indo-British Partnership Network, is the lead organisation supporting the promotion of bilateral trade, and business and investment opportunities between the two countries. On December 5, UKIBC announced that the City of London had expanded direct links with India's growing financial services sector thanks to a partnership between UKIBC and the City.

The City of London's institutional membership is another step towards creating an extensive network of influential corporate and individual members. UKIBC will provide the resource, knowledge and infrastructure support that are vital for British companies to make the most of emerging opportunities in India's financial services sector and for Indian companies to invest in Britain.

Sharon Bamford, chief executive of UKIBC, said: "We believe UKIBC's interests are closely aligned with the City of London's objective to work closely with India to capitalise on our extensive knowledge and experience of



Karan Bilimoria, chairman, UKIBC, Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor Alderman David Lewis, City of London, and Sharon Bamford, chief executive, UKIBC.

building a global financial centre through genuine partnership and sharing of knowledge. With the opening of an office in Mumbai and partnership with UKIBC, the City of London recognises the tremendous scope for both financial services and all other service sector institutions to develop business and investment interests in India." The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman David Lewis, said it was fitting that the City of London be the first institutional member of UKIBC. "Financial services are one of the Britain's key strengths and we regard India as a priority market for our international work. Together, we will promote greater trade and investment between the two nations," he said. Lord Bilimoria, chairman of UKIBC, said: "The UKIBC has worked closely with the City of London and the Lord Mayor and I am delighted that City is the first of what I am sure will be the many institutional members joining the UKIBC. I look forward to building our relationship in order to enable the City to strengthen its place as the world's leading financial centre."

## House of Lords congratulates Kamalesh Sharma



The House of Lords has "greatly welcomed" the appointment of India's High Commissioner to Britain Kamalesh Sharma as the new Secretary-General of the

Commonwealth. In a statement supported by the Foreign Office Minister, Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, the Conservative Party's foreign affairs spokesman in the Upper House said Sharma was the right man to lead the 53-nation group in the coming years.

"Obviously, we recognise that (outgoing Secretary-General) Don McKinnon did an excellent job, but clearly the Commonwealth is moving into an entirely new situation in which its potential will be very great," Lord David Howell said. In

his reply, Malloch-Brown said the comments made by Howell were "shared entirely" by the ruling Labour Party.

Sharma takes over in his new job on April 1, 2008.

The House of Lords also noted the contribution made to the Commonwealth summit by Indian economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, who presented a report on 'Civil Paths to Peace' — effectively, a Commonwealth response to the problems of terrorism, religious strife and conflict.

Malloch-Brown said the "theme of community reconciliation ran strongly through the discussions both at the Foreign Ministers' level and subsequently at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, where Professor Sen presented a report over lunch to Commonwealth members.

"In the aftermath, we need to look at how we can promote advancement on these issues of reconciliation," he added.

The election of Sharma as Commonwealth Secretary-General was a welcome development at various levels. First of all, because it placed an able Indian at the helm of an important international institution. Second, it marked the successful culmination of a skilful and focused diplomatic electoral campaign by the government. And finally, because it demonstrates to the world that India is ready and willing to assume additional responsibilities on the global stage, the House noted.

The world as a whole now looks to India to provide global leadership on the multi-lateral stage, it said.

Few developments across the world have received as much attention in the chanceries of influential governments as India's rise to economic strength in the last 15 years, and with that new-found prosperity and progress has come a revised set of expectations of the country, the House further observed.

## Hassle-free entry for Indian immigrants

Highly-skilled immigrants from India and other countries outside Europe will be given a hassle-free entry into Britain under a points-based immigration system that a senior minister of Britain described on December 5 as the "the biggest shake-up of the immigration system in our history".

Under the scheme, which kicks off next year, highly skilled immigrants will be able to enter Britain without a job offer, bring their families and have the right to settle down permanently within five years. The five-tier scheme for non-EU migrants places doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs and IT experts in the Tier-I.

Tier-II workers include nurses, teachers and plumbers, who will be able to come to Britain only if there is a shortfall in the workforce. People applying for low skilled work — in a restaurant or domestic service — will be granted entry to fill specific job vacancies for fixed periods, after which they have to leave.

### NEHRU CENTRE EVENTS

#### Expressions of India



On November 27, Biddu Appaiah, an Indian-British music producer, composer and songwriter, inaugurated an exhibition of paintings, 'Expressions of India' by Anna De Polnay, at the Nehru Centre. Anna de Polnay, a painter, illustrator and muralist fell in love with India while painting a mural in 2004-05 when she spent seven months in rural Maharashtra, painting a 22-ft mural in the new Meher Baba Pilgrim Retreat at Meherabad, Ahmednagar. It was here that with her daily contact and friendship with the villagers working alongside her, she began a series of drawings and paintings that are a part of this exhibition. She admired the grace, toughness and humour, and as an artist loved the brilliant colours that the women adorned themselves with. From Kerala to Rajasthan, she found the intense light she had been looking for since her early childhood.

#### Darlingji: The True Love Story of Nargis & Sunil Dutt



On November 28, Professor Lord Desai of St. Clement Danes launched the recently published book, 'Darlingji: The True Love Story of Nargis and Sunil Dutt', written by his wife and television anchor and producer, Kishwar Desai.

Based on the diaries and letters of Nargis, Sunil Dutt and Priya Dutt, as well as conversations and interviews with family and friends, 'Darlingji', the name by which the couple often addressed each other, is a probing yet affectionate biography of two extraordinary people. The book traces the love story of Nargis and Sunil Dutt which started from March 1, 1957, during the making of 'Mother India'. At the same time, travelling as it does from the 19th century to the present, the book tells the larger story of the evolution of Hindi cinema, and of a society and a nation in the process of change.

Lord Patel, Baroness Prashar, Lord Karan Bilimoria and several eminent media and corporate personalities were present at the launch. Kishwar Desai, an eminent journalist, has worked with NDTV, TV Today and Doordarshan. She has scripted an award-winning play, 'Manto!', besides producing several documentaries.

#### Kathak Dance by Mansi Dabral



On November 27, Mansi Dabral, a classical danseuse, rendered an admirable kathak performance at the Nehru Centre. A scholarship holder from Kathak Kendra, New Delhi, she is also a recipient of a Ministry of Tourism & Culture scholarship. Dabral's performances are characterised by a lively stage presence, graceful and swift hand movements, command over rhythm and felicity of expression. She performed Ganapati Stuti (invocation of Ganesha) followed by the traditional nritya nritya — a presentation in teen-taal (Indian rhythmic form), reflecting execution of different rhythmic compositions based on compositional peculiarities of mnemonic syllables.