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**Thursday, June 15,
2006, Chandigarh,
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THE TRIBUNE SPECIALS

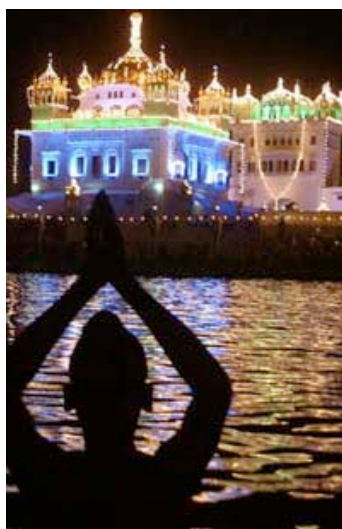
50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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Whither devotion to heritage ?

Historical buildings in Tarn Taran stand in mute testimony to the destruction of irreplaceable heritage in the town founded by Guru Arjan Dev, whose 400 years of martyrdom are being marked by devotees all over. **Varinder Walia** takes a look at reckless destruction of heritage sites and asks why can't religious bodies show devotion for our priceless heritage.



A devotee pays obeisance at the illuminated Darbar Sahib at Tarn Taran ahead of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom day, which falls on June 16.
— Photo by Rajiv Sharma

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Sikh gallery at Smithsonian museum draws big crowds

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- **Terror victims want to meet PM**

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Former Indian hockey captain Pargat Singh gives tips to young budding players at the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Hockey Academy at Amritsar. — Photo by Rajiv Sharma

Another ode to Sufi music

Bakhtawar Singh, the famous lyricist, said Sufiana Qalam should be sung in a traditional way and pop beats should not be introduced into Sufi music as it killed the real essence of the songs. He was speaking at the release of Barkat Sidhu's new cassette, "Tere Sang Sang" at the Punjab Naatshala here recently.



Barkat Sidhu (3rd from left) at the release of his new cassette, "Tere Sang Sang" at the Punjab Naatshala. — A Tribune photograph

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'Anakh' to take up farmers' issues

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A seminar on "Emerging Trends – an Indian Perspective" was organised by the ICFAI University here recently to highlight the economic growth of India.

Rotary Club sets up eye operation theatre

The Rotary Club, Midtown, has established an eye operation theatre under the aegis of Ganesh Das Chadha Rotary Centre at Bombay Wala Khoo here.

Yoga classes in city club

Mr Subash Suman, a yoga teacher from Patanjli Yog Peeth, Haridwar, founded

by Swami Ramdev, conducted yoga classes at the Service Club here recently.



Whither devotion to heritage ?

Historical buildings in Tarn Taran stand in mute testimony to the destruction of irreplaceable heritage in the town founded by Guru Arjan Dev, whose 400 years of martyrdom are being marked by devotees all over. Varinder Walia takes a look at reckless destruction of heritage sites and asks why can't religious bodies show devotion for our priceless heritage.

WHILE hundreds of devotees poured into the town of Tarn Taran to mark the 400th year of the martyrdom of the fifth Sikh master, Guru Arjan Dev, many historical sites simply stood in mute testimony to the unusual fervour and emotion. Heads bowed with devotion towards Darbar Sahib (Tarn Taran), the Sikh shrine, and the Guru, who founded the town that was illuminated by the guiding principles, contained in the Guru Granth Sahib.

However, hardly any devotee noticed the wanton destruction of the rich Sikh heritage in this ancient town. Founded in 1596 AD, the town has already lost many sites of antiquity.

A large number of nagar kirtans, langars, kirtan darbars are an obvious index of the religious fervour of the devotees at display during the celebrations, however, the intent to revive the heritage associated with the Guru is missing.

Of the total 105 bungas, constructed around Darbar Sahib, especially during the Sikh rule, at least 85 have already fallen prey to insensitive residents. Many of them have either been demolished to construct modern dwellings or encroachments built by unscrupulous persons. Rest of the dilapidated bungas are not even on the priority list of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) or other Sikh organisations, who are on the forefront of celebrations to milk maximum political



The fast vanishing frescoes (mohrakshi) at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore, Pakistan. — Photo by Balvinder Singh

The word 'bunga' is derived from Persian, meaning a hospice, or a dwelling place. Akharas and bungas served as centres of elementary Sikh education for a long time.

Tarn Taran is an important religious centre in the heart of the Majha tract. Various derivations of the name Tarn Taran have been given.

According to one, it means 'salvation', according to another, 'cleansing water', whereas the third and most appropriate and probable meaning is, 'to swim or helping to swim across'.

mileage out of the functions.

Owing to callousness by all concerned, the surroundings of Darbar Sahib are fast turning into a cultural desert. Reckless destruction of heritage sites is so far gone that some bungas are up for sale while bungas of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, founder of The Tribune, and many bungas from Majitha town have lost their existence.

Taran originally belonged to sarovar, a name given by Guru Arjun Dev. Literally it means 'the boat that takes one across' (the ocean of existence). 'Tarana', in Sanskrit, is a raft or a boat.

In the booklet, 'History of Sri Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran', written by Shamsheer Singh Ashok and published by the SGPC, it has been 'gracefully' admitted that due to the callousness of the Sikhs, the historical bunga of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and the 32 acres of land attached to it could not be protected. Hari Singh was one of the greatest commanders-in-chief of the Sikh army. The British had also showered praises on him for his military skills and went as far as to conclude that he was the greatest.

The two bungas in the name of Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh – two of the five 'pyaras' of Guru Gobind Singh, are also in ruins. The pertinent question is can't the SGPC or babas of Kar Sewa Wale purchase such sites and restore them?

The babas of Kar Sewa Wale', while constructing memorial gates, also overlooked the heritage sites of Tarn Taran, which are in danger.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited Tarn Taran several times between 1802 and 1837 AD. The gold plating of Darbar Sahib and beautiful frescoes were done at his behest. According to historian Sohan Lal Suri, the boundary wall of the town was constructed on the orders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the year 1836 AD to protect the town from foreign invaders. The 14 gates were constructed to enable elephants and their riders to have a hassle-free entry.

However, with the passage of time, the big wall and its gates have disappeared. Maharaja's grandson, Kanwar Naunihal Singh also evinced keen interest to give Tarn Taran a new look. Maharaja's grandson had ordered construction of a three-storey minaret in the gurdwara premises in 1839 AD, which is still in good condition. Rest of the minarets could not be completed due to the decline of the Sikh empire.

It is almost the same story elsewhere. No site at the Gurdwara Pipli Sahib (Putligarh), Amritsar, where Bhai Gurdas guided the Sikh sangat, has been protected by the SGPC. Gurdwara Pipli Sahib stands as a sacred memorial on the spot where the sangat, from Afghanistan and north-western districts of the Punjab who came to take part in the excavation of the holy at Amritsar, was welcomed by Guru Arjan Dev. The cutting of trees around the marbled heritage structure comes as great shock to devotees.

Guru Arjan Dev also founded other towns, like Kartarpur in Jalandhar district. Hundreds of old trees, mute witness to history, have been cut at Guru Ka Bagh in the name of kar seva, causing concern among environmentalists and the sangat alike. A visit to the site shows stumps of old trees outside the gurdwara premises. Jathedar Dalip Singh, a former vice-president of the SGPC, says it is shocking on the part of the SGPC to have turned a blind eye to the destruction of old trees by babas of Kar Sewa Wale.



A view of one of the dilapidated bungas surrounding Darbar Sahib, Tarn Taran. — A Tribune photograph

Guru ka Bagh (the garden of the Guru) is 20 km from Amritsar, built to commemorate Guru Arjan Dev's visit. This gurdwara has also been witness to important events in the last century. During the freedom struggle the Sikhs launched a morcha (agitation) against a corrupt mahant from its premises. When the British government bowed to the pressure of the Akalis, who had held a peaceful agitation, Mahatma Gandhi sent a telegram, congratulating the community with a one-liner: "First decisive battle for India's freedom won."

The Guru Ka Bagh massacre is widely recognised as the turning point in India's struggle for Independence. Salutations followed from all around.

Moti Lal Nehru, father of Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, said: "I salute the Sikhs who are fighting for freedom." Dr Saffudin Kitchlu commented: "Our Sikh brothers have taught us the way to achieve freedom. No power can stop us now, from becoming a free nation."

Though the twin gurdwaras of Guru Ka Bagh are under the direct control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, no function has been planned to mark the 400th martyrdom anniversary of the fifth Guru. Similarly, no function has been arranged at Mallu Nangal, once a Pathan dominated village near Amritsar to commemorate Guru Arjan Dev's visit.

In the centre of Tarn Taran, stands the gurdwara founded by Guru Arjan Dev, who also arranged for the digging of the tank. The site of the gurdwara and the tank was an open place at that time. However, the structure of main Sikh shrine was altered. Maharaja Ranjit Singh renovated the gurdwara with golden plates. He also got the pavement around the gurdwara constructed. The gurdwara stands on the edge of the tank. At the north corner of the tank, a little away from the gurdwara, is a lofty column or minar, with white stucco-covered top, reached by a winding staircase inside the column.

Several wells in the gurdwara premises and adjoining bungas have either been filled up with earth or are in disuse.

Another historical well, known as Guru-ka-Khuh, has been covered with marble slabs and the SGPC has installed taps adjoining to it following depletion of water.

Bibi Bhani da Khuh, situated on the western side of the town, has also not been preserved.

The 'baoli' (well with steps) at Goindwal Sahib — the birth place of Guru Arjan Dev — is a fine structure and has 84 steps leading to the surface of the water.

However, the old Nanakshahi bricks of the baoli have been covered with ornate marble.

The gold plating of Darbar Sahib and the gold palanquin required more than 55kg of gold, worth more than Rs 4 crore to mark the 400th year of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. The Sikh shrine had earlier been gold-plated at the behest of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

However, heritage lovers allege that rich edifices and murals of Darbar Sahib suffered colossal damage during 'kar sewa'. Wall paintings of Hindu Gods, including Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, which were unique specimens of the Sikh School of Art, have disappeared from the upper storey of Sri Darbar Sahib. The frescos were completed in the year 1824, during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

However, babas of kar sewa wale have denied that old frescoes were replaced. He claimed that the wall paintings were damaged in 1980s and hence some of them were beyond recognition and difficult to restore.

Balvinder Singh Reader (Conservation Planner), Guru Ramdas School of Planning, Guru Nanak Dev University, emphasised upon the need to identify

spiritual memorials related to the fifth Guru during his lifetime.

He conducted a survey and spent time at places such as Goindwal Sahib, the birth place of the Guru; Kartarpur in Jalandhar district; Ram Sar, the place where Sukhmani Sahib was compiled; Guru Ke Mahal, where Guru Arjun spent many years and is also the birthplace of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib; and finally Dera Sahib in Lahore, Pakistan, where Guru Arjan, who was tortured by Mughal Emperor Jahangir, attained martyrdom. He says the real tribute would be to conserve all the places related to the Guru.

The Pakistan Evacuee Property Trust Board has also failed to conserve the rich heritage relating to Guru Arjan Dev in Pakistan.

Mr Balvinder Singh says the condition of the mohrakshi (frescoes made by using natural pigments on wet lime) work in Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, needs immediate care.

Most of the frescoes are vanishing. Documentation with latest scientific techniques is required and then practical conservation to save them from further decay.

In addition, the traditional entry should also be highlighted so that pilgrims can have glimpses of spiritual moment of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev.



Sikh gallery at Smithsonian museum draws big crowds

Our Correspondent

The Sikh Gallery at the National Museum of Natural History of Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, draws about eight million visitors annually.

Mr Paul Michael Taylor, Director, Asian Cultural History Program of the institution, said this here recently.

Mr Taylor, heading a 10-member delegation of experts in museum science, is on a tour of Punjab studying how objects related to Sikh history and heritage are being preserved. For this purpose, they also visited Khadoor Sahib, Goindwal Sahib and Harmandar Sahib.

While talking to this correspondent, Mr Taylor said he was "impressed" with the level of awareness in the state on preserving monuments, cultural sites and heritage. He emphasised that even then there was a need to conserve old books, frescos and architecture.

"It can be done either by employing professionals or getting their own men trained in the work," he said. They would also visit Anandpur Sahib and Quila Mubarak.

Accompanying them was Dr Sohan Singh Chaudhary, an US-based NRI. He said that the Washington-based Sikh Heritage Foundation, whose trustee he was, paid dollars 1.5 million to establish the gallery in the museum.

He added that it helped in educating people about the separate identity of the Sikhs from the Muslims, which had become vital following the hate crimes after 9/11.

Mr Taylor said the Smithsonian Institution comprised of 17 museums and the National Zoo in Washington DC, and two museums in New York City. Its exhibitions offer visitors a glimpse into the staggering collection over 136 million objects which provide endless opportunities to stimulate the imagination. He added that the admission was free to all.

Mr Taylor said the National Museum of Natural History also focused on the earth and its evolution, with displays of animals, plants, fossils, rocks, minerals and cultural artifacts.

He added that the assemblage on exhibit under "Sikhs: Legacy of the Punjab", besides illustrating the Sikhism from Guru Nanak Dev till date, also showcased intricacies of various religious ceremonies.

The visitors also went to the Guru Nanak Dev University and met the Vice-Chancellor, Dr S.P Singh, and other professors.



Victims of Operation Bluestar seek compensation from Centre

Tribune News Service

The Bluestar Tenants Merchants Sufferers Association urged the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Kirandeep Singh Bhullar, here recently for compensation from the Centre.

Mr Mohan Singh Gandhi, General Secretary, talking to The Tribune, said in 22 years, they have not got any respite and were going through unjust sufferings, as their shops were "unduly" acquired by the government and included into the Golden Temple Complex.

He said although their shops were part of the Galiara Scheme (Phase I), they (133 shopkeepers) were yet to receive any compensation, as in the case of other shopkeepers who were affected by the beautification scheme of the Harmandir Sahib.

The dilemma of the Bluestar victims of 1984, whose shops were reduced to rubble for being in the direct line of fire of the Army operation, were the worst sufferers.

As many as 133 shops, 15 godowns and nine stores, were enlisted to have been completely damaged during the operation.

None of these tenants and merchants was given alternative shops or compensation.

Hefty files of correspondence with the higher authorities carried by the association bear testimony to their sorry state.

Numerous meetings with Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors since then have provided no respite to their grievances.

Most of these victims have reached their 70s, but life for them has stood still since that fateful day on June 6, 22 years back. Many are barely able to fend for their families today.

Two of the victims even committed suicide eight years ago back.



Terror victims want to meet PM

A five-member delegation of the All India Terrorist Victim Association has urged for a meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh. They would put forward demands for relief to terror-affected persons in Punjab on the pattern of the relief announced by the Centre for victims of the 1984 riot victims.

Stating this at a press conference here this week, Dr B.R Hastir, President of the association, said they were in touch with Mr Shamsher Singh Dullo, the Punjab Congress President, to get an appointment with the Prime Minister as soon as possible.

He said their other demands included enrolling of about 5000 more names to the list of 32,514 terrorist victim families with the Punjab government. Besides, he said the security personnel killed on duty during terrorism must be granted the status of war heroes.

Terming their recent meeting with Ms Sonia Gandhi, President, All India Congress Committee, as a successful one, Mr Hastir said Ms Gandhi had assured of forwarding their demands to the Prime Minister's Office for consideration on a priority basis. — OC



Ranjit academy's impetus to hockey

Neeraj Bagga

Following the new age mantra of 'catch them young', the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Hockey Academy (MRSHA) was formed about two years ago to provide conducive environment in order to prepare class players.

The effort to provide impetus to our national game has shown results in this short period. Being trained under the watchful eyes of former players who have experience of playing in the rigorous arena of the Olympics and other international events, the youngsters are being given adequate exposure of playing on the Astro-turf. The grooming on the artificial grass is of paramount importance if they are to take on the best in the game in the coming future.

Recently, academy players, who fall in the sub-junior category, made a maiden appearance in the senior category for the Bombay Hockey Gold Cup at Mumbai. They earned the distinction of being the best youngest team and were awarded with Rs 25,000.

The academy team had also managed to reach the semifinal of the Sub-Junior Nehru Hockey Tournament last year. It was adjudged the best-disciplined and youngest team in the prestigious tournament.

Olympian Balwinder Singh Shammi, who is a founder of the academy along with other enthusiasts of the game, said 12 players from the academy had been chosen to attend the sub-junior India camp to be held next month.

The Maharaja Ranjit Singh Hockey Academy is working as a catalyst for promotion of the game and budding players in the border belt. Former hockey veterans of the Majha region, along with businessmen and religious leaders, had joined hands last year to set up the academy.

Shammi approached two affluent persons of the city and they agreed to support him. Dr Shivinder Singh Sandhu, chairman of the Amritsar Hockey Club (AHC), decided to provide education to all players of the academy at his Spring Dale School. Dr Avtar Singh chipped in with financial assistance.

The academy is being run under the aegis of the AHC. Finally 26 players out of 500 were chosen from across Punjab at its inception. All players were selected in the under-14 age group and would be imparted education till matriculation.

Baba Gurdev Singh Kulliwale is providing boarding and lodging to the budding players at his village, Pathan Nangal, 12 km from Amritsar.

Guru Nanak Dev University have also chipped in for the cause and allowed the

youngsters to play thrice a week on its Astro-Turf, to give them enough exposure. The aim of the academy is to catch talented youths and groom them. They are imparted training to play under pressure and trying conditions without losing their composure.

The services of experts are solicited from time to time and they are invited to visit the academy. Shammi says the encouragement helps boost the morale of the players.

They gain knowledge about trends and requirements of the sport at the international level. K. Jothikumaran, secretary, Indian Hockey Federation, visited the academy in April and spoke to the players.

The results are for all to see. The academy team clinched the CBSE national championship in New Delhi last year. One of its players, Navjot Singh, has been selected for the camp for the Indian under-16 team.

The academy also holds the annual Maharaja Ranjit Singh Junior Hockey Gold Cup, which is telecast on DD Sports.

The team coach, Dev Raj, a former international player, is confident that the academy would achieve its goals and prove instrumental in honing the best available talent into quality players.

Apart from the coach, noted players of the region, who played a vital role in setting up the academy, provide tips to youngsters to develop their skills further. They include internationals Balbir Singh Randhawa and Nirmal Singh.



Another ode to Sufi music

Tribune News Service

Bakhtawar Singh, the famous lyricist, said Sufiana Qalam should be sung in a traditional way and pop beats should not be introduced into Sufi music as it killed the real essence of the songs.

He was speaking at the release of Barkat Sidhu's new cassette, "Tere Sang Sang" at the Punjab Naatshala here recently.

Bakhtawar Singh, who is also the SDM of Shahkot, said Sufi music had evolved after trading a thorny path in India. He said initially it did not find many takers and was mostly heard at dargahs of Ajmer Sharif and Nizamuddin Auliya. "But now there has been upsurge in Sufi music," he added.

Mr Bakhtawar Singh said it has a market share of 5 to 10 per cent and was growing at a phenomenal rate. "The genre is popular because it's closer to the soul".

He said the government and organisations should sponsor programmes to promote Sufi music because it talked of peace and love. Barkat Sidhu, who specialises in Sufiana Qalam, also gave live performance.

Mr G.S Sahota, IG , PAP, Jalandhar, while releasing the cassette said Sufism, one of the legacies of composite culture had found its best expression in Sufi poetry of Shah Hussain, Waris Shah, Sultan Bahu, Mian Mohammad Baksh and others and had been a popular musical form since ages.

He said that in Punjab, due to the dedication of generations of singers like Barkat Sidhu, Sufiana Qalam has acquired the status of folk music.

He was full praise for the simple yet profound lyrics in the cassette.





Residents accuse mill of pollution

Sanjay Bumbroo
Tribune News Service

Residents of several colonies on the Fatehgarh Churian bypass here this week protested against the Khanna Paper Mills for allegedly spreading pollution.

Mr Jagtar Singh Karampura, District Secretary of the Communist Party (Marxist), Punjab, while addressing the protesters, alleged that the mill was not using neither electrostatic precipitator, vacuum bags nor lime-band techniques, resulting in the spreading of coal dust through the chimneys and making life difficult for the residents.

He said the company was using underground water for processing paper which was leading to water contamination.

Slogans were also raised by the protesters against the district administration and the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) for allegedly failing to taken action against the mill owners.

When contacted, Mr Suneet Kochchar, the spokesman of the company, claimed that some vested interests were out to defame the mill owners. He claimed that the mill had installed an electrostatic precipitator, which prevented the coal dust from coming out of the chimneys.

He also claimed that the mill had been granted an No Objection Certificate by the PPCB. Mr Kochchar claimed that the mill was the only one in Punjab, which had a green cover within the premises and outside.



WEEKLY ROUND-UP

'Anakh' to take up farmers' issues

Mr Atinder Pal Singh, President, Shiromani Akali Dal (International) and a former MP, released a monthly magazine titled "Anakh" here this week. Speaking on the occasion, he said the magazine, simultaneously released in Canada, would bring forth social, economical and the agricultural problems being faced by the farmers in the state. He said it would also expose the political parties responsible for the downhill economic progress of the state. He said Dr Kamajit Singh and Ms Kanwaljit Kaur would be responsible for the publication of the magazine in India while Mr Lakhwinder Singh and Mr Randhir Singh would publish it from Canada. Mr Rajwinder Singh would be the editor.

Punjabi Kahani Utsav

Punjabi writers, Kendri Punjabi Lekhak Sabha, and a local literary organisation would organise a two-day "Vishav Punjabi Kahani Utsav" here on July 22 where writers and scholars from India, Pakistan and other European countries would participate. On the first day, Dr Dhanwant Kaur (Punjabi University, Patiala), Dr Rajnish Bahadur Singh and Dr Jaswinder Kaur Bindra would read papers. The evening session would dedicated to poetical recitation in which Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu poets would participate. The second day would focus on Pakistani Punjabi, in which Dr Baldev Singh Dhaliwal, Professor Afzal Toseef and Professor Aashiq Raheel would read papers.

New I-T Commissioner

Mr B. S. Rattan has joined as the new Commissioner, Income Tax-II. His has been transferred from Ahmedabad, a press release said.

Environment Day rally

In an effort to create awareness amongst the masses about the degeneration of environmental, students of the DAV International School held a rally on the "World Environment Day" in the city last week. Holding placards containing slogans against the use plastic and planting of saplings, students carried out an awareness march. Ms Anjana Gupta, Principal of the school, said that a seminar on "Water— The Elixir of Life" was also organised on the occasion. Ms Saroj Arora, a zoologist from the Guru Nanak Dev University, conducted the seminar and answered queries of the students.

Folk song competition

A Lok Geet Competition was organised at Jagat Jyoti High School, Mahan Singh Gate, here. Folk singer Gurmit Bawa and Mr Jugal Kishore Sharma, Chairman, Amritsar Improvement Trust, were the chief guests. Nearly 100 students participated in the competition.

In another event, Kavita, Princi and Priti of Shiv-Om Public School, Batala Road, stood first, second and third, respectively, in the "Geeta Gyan" competition organised by the school. Nearly 60 students participated in the competition.

Launch

Rittal Impex Limited launched its range of juices called "Coco Joos" and namkeens called "Coco Shriram" in the city. Mr Rajay Kumar, vice-president of the company said their products contained natural ingredients and low-sugar content. — **OC**



Seminar held on economic turnaround **Tribune News Service**

A seminar on "Emerging Trends – an Indian Perspective" was organised by the ICFAI University here recently to highlight the economic growth of India.

Senior Manager of the ICFAI University, Hyderabad, Mr Abhijit Bhattacharya, delivered a keynote lecture on the economic front of India giving insight on the initial economic development after Partition and the slow economic growth of India.

He praised liberalisation, which he said had transformed the country into a visible economic power and had made the international community to take a close look at India.

Mr Bhattacharya explained how the economy was fast achieving an annual GDP growth rate of eight per cent. He said the new economic scenario had given a lot of opportunity to educated youth in make advances in career.

Mr Sandeep Punj, in-charge, HDFC Standard Life, Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir, gave an insight to the opportunity lying ahead of youth in different fields of finance and investment in the present global economy.

He also stressed on the importance of international investment, particularly the insurance sector that hitherto was in government domain.



Rotary Club sets up eye operation theatre **Ashok Sethi**

The Rotary Club, Midtown, has established an eye operation theatre under the aegis of Ganesh Das Chadha Rotary Centre at Bombay Wala Khoo here.

The Project Director of the Centre, Mr Sunil Kapoor, said the theatre was set up as a joint venture project with the Rotary Club of La Jolla Golden Triangle district 5340 of the USA.

He said cataract operations were being performed at a nominal cost of Rs 1,500, including the cost of lens along with pre-operative and post-operative treatment.

He also lauded the free services being rendered by eye surgeon Dr K.K. Bhalla.

All the lens being used in operations were being donated by a leading philanthropist along with funds for the dental care unit.

He said the centre also ran a vocational training centre. The BJP MP, Mr Navjot Singh Sidhu donated a computerised ECG machine to the centre.



Yoga classes in city club

Mr Subash Suman, a yoga teacher from Patanjli Yog Peeth, Haridwar, founded by Swami Ramdev, conducted yoga classes at the Service Club here recently.

The other yoga teachers present were Mr Baldev Raj, Dr Gulshan and Mr Baldev Singh (from Punjab Police). They explained the methods and benefits of the exercises.

Acharya Viranch Brahmchari from Ananda Marga Aashram was also present. He explained "Aushtang Yoga" first taught by Maharishi Patanjli.



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