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Business spirit of Mumbai survives attack

BY DR. ATUL VARADACHARY AND JAGDIP AHLUWALIA

All Houstonians were shocked by events in Mumbai, and people of Indian origin were especially comforted by the outpouring of support and sympathy. Some view this Thanksgiving weekend massacre as a wake-up call much like 9/11. New York and the World Trade Centers were important targets in the 9/11 outrage as a global commercial center and a symbol of the world's oldest democracy. Similarly, Mumbai is India's commercial capital and the city epitomizes the openness, inclusiveness and the spirit of the world's largest democracy. We cannot let this spirit be destroyed, otherwise the terrorists win. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the people affected; all those whose family members were killed, wounded or held hostage. These have been difficult days for those of us with friends or family in Mumbai, but the outpouring of love and support from the United States was overwhelming. But the anguish of those personally impacted by these events can only be amplified by a hit on commerce which is Mumbai's and India's lifeblood. In the past weeks, the indirect economic toll on Mumbai has been substantial. December is a peak month for tourism in India and, understandably, there has been a sharp drop in people wishing to travel to India. Similarly a number of trade conventions scheduled for December have been canceled and businesses in a broad range of industries are seeing a decline in sales.

ing an abrupt slowdown. The United States is India's largest trading partner and Houston itself has extensive trade, commercial and educational linkages with India. This is driven in part by the 100,000-plus population of Indo-Americans in the greater Houston area and the 300-plus Houston-based firms with operations in India. Harish Katharani is a board member of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston (IACCGH) and a founder of Southside group of companies. Katharani, who is based in Houston, has a medical billing and collection company in Mumbai serving physicians, emergency rooms and hospitals. When the Mumbai incident happened, Southside employees in Mumbai kept working to keep serving their customers in the state of Texas. Southside employees represent the true spirit of Mumbai. Katharani does not feel threatened by the terrorists and the attacks have not changed his travel plans or his investment plans. His partner flies to Mumbai this week and he is himself planning a trip later this month. It is business leaders like Katharani who represent the true resilience of the people of Mumbai. The IACCGH is totally committed to respond to the terrorist attack by working toward enhancing bilateral trade between Houston and Mumbai even further. The IACCGH joins local and world leaders in condemning this recent act of cowardice and is determined to build a recovery process as soon as possible. In the wake of the recent killings, businesses from around the world including American companies may be tempted to suspend or pull back trade operations and visits to India. This will be giving in to the terrorists and giving them the victory they seek. The IACCGH will be encouraging local businesses to join the chamber in the first week of January on a trade mission to Mumbai and Delhi to attend the fifth annual Indo US economic summit in Delhi on Jan 7-8, 2009. Terrorism is a global scourge that threatens free societies everywhere. The United States and its allies have been repeatedly confronted by this threat. India has faced its own series of terrorist attacks, planned and coordinated from outside its borders, culminating in this latest outrage in Mumbai. Mumbai may have been chosen for this attack for two reasons. As India's commercial capital, Mumbai represents India's economic growth and successes and as India's most cosmopolitan city, it epitomizes India's tolerant and multiethnic society. These are precisely the values which the terrorists would like to destroy and we must not let that happen. Although we need to get to the bottom of this latest terrorist outrage, it is equally important that these attacks do not undermine India's uniquely open society, its confidence in itself or the economic vitality that is making India an important contributor to global growth — if not, the terrorists will have won. The chamber is committed to facilitate the return to normalcy in the relations between the two of the great democracies in the world and we will offer all of our capabilities and relationships in both countries to make this happen.

DR. ATUL VARADACHARY is a president and JAGDIP AHLUWALIA is executive director of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston.

COMMENTARY
Houston Business Journal welcomes contributions to the Commentary section. Submissions should be no more than 1,000 words in length. All submissions become the property of Houston Business Journal and will not be returned. Submissions will be edited and may be published or otherwise reused in any medium.

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HARRIS COUNTY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MISSION TO INDIA: APRIL 2008

Harris County Business Development Mission to India

Judge Emmett Announced Trade Delegation to India in April 2008 at the State of the County Address

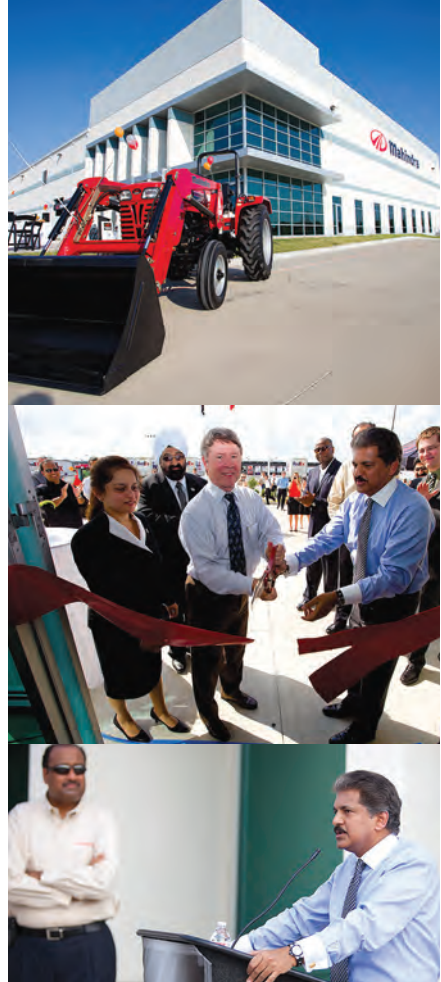
"With the Port of Houston, the Texas Medical Center, and the headquarters for so many international companies located here, Harris County is a major player on the global stage. While the City of Houston and the convention and visitors bureau have done much to raise the area's profile, Harris County is getting more directly involved. The first week of April, my office, working with the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Houston Partnership, and organizations and companies in both countries, will sponsor a trade mission to Mumbai and Pune, India."



Greater Houston Partnership President Jeff Moseley, IACCGH Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia, Harris County Judge the Honorable Ed Emmett and IACCGH President Dr. Atul Varadachary at the State of the County annual address hosted by GHP. (Photo Courtesy of Greater Houston Partnership)



The seeds sown by the 2008 delegation resulted in Mahindra USA, Inc. (MUSA) choosing Harris County to expand their US presence as part of the US \$ 14.4 billion Mahindra Group's Automotive and Farm Sector. "On behalf of Mahindra USA, I would personally like to thank the Honorable Judge Ed Emmett and the Indo- American Chamber of Commerce, for their guidance, wisdom and support in helping bring Harris County to the forefront of international trade and more specifically, for helping Mahindra USA set the stage for Our Rise to the Future. Thank you." MANI IYER



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Dear Jagdip,
I would like to thank Ms. Parikh and you for representing the IACCGH at the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new North American corporate headquarters of Mahindra USA in Houston, TX. Mahindra USA is proud to relocate its Corporate Headquarters, Parts Department and Production into a single Class A facility that will provide working environment that truly commensurate with being the #1 selling tractor in the world. The move signifies Mahindra USA's commitment to the North American market and also serves to further strengthen Mahindra USA's relationship with its home city of Houston and with Harris County Texas.

Mahindra - IACCGH relationship played a pivotal role in our decision to expand our presence in Harris County. In 2008, an IACCGH Mission led by Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, visited Mumbai and set forth the cornerstone for this relationship. The delegation's business experience, leadership and community involvement validated our belief that Houston and Harris County were truly global entities which could provide the foundation, resources and support to help the Mahindra brand "Rise" in the North American market.

We look forward to a long and promising relationship with the IACCGH as we both drive positive change for our respective organizations and communities.

Best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Mani Iyer
Mani G. Mahindra

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HARRIS COUNTY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MISSION TO INDIA TRANSLATES TO INBOUND INVESTMENT

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett led an IACCGH delegation to India in 2008. Accompanied by GHP President Jeff Moseley, Port Commissioner Jim Fonteno and IACCGH leadership, the Judge met with and encouraged leaders of Indian industry in Mumbai and Pune to consider Harris County as a destination for investment and expansion.

Breakfast Meeting in Honor of the Harris County Business Development Mission to India

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACCGH) organized a Breakfast Meeting in honor of the visiting Harris County Business Development Mission to India 2008 at the Taj President, Mumbai on April 30, 2008.

The Harris County Delegation was led by Judge Ed Emmett and supported by Harris County, Greater Houston Partnership, and Indo-American Chamber



Harris County, Houston Seeks Long Standing Business Partnerships with India

Mumbai, 30 April, 2008 - FICCI organized an Interactive Meeting with Trade Mission from Harris County and Houston USA, led by Mr. Edward M. Emmet, Harris County Judge, in the city today. The trade mission is in India to promote business cooperation, investments and trade between India and Harris County, Houston.

Mr. Edward M. Emmett, Hon'ble Judge, Harris County, USA, said that Harris County, home to largest number of Fortune 500 company Headquarters (Rank 4); provider of world class infrastructure including multi-modal transportation and distribution; innovation capital of the world in healthcare, nanotechnology and space research; and Energy Capital of the World having more than 400 chemical plants and petroleum refineries accounting for 40-5% of USA's base petrochemicals manufacturing capacity, was an ideal place for business investment and long term partnerships with India.

He saw great potential for growth of trade with India. It may be noted that Houston's trade with India is over US\$2.6 billion, both

of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH). The Breakfast Meeting commenced with a welcome address from Mr. R.K. Chopra, Secretary General, IACC, who highlighted the trends in Indo-US trade and the opportunity it presents. He expressed hope that more delegations like this are organized since they help build mutual partnership between Indian and American companies. Mr. Hemant Sonawala in his speech welcomed the delegates from the Harris County and remembered the long-standing relationship that the businesses in the two countries share. Judge Emmett recalled his numerous visits to the state of Maharashtra and how meetings with businessmen have convinced him of the underlying commonality of the businesses in India & USA. He invited Indian businesses to Harris County and offered all help that they may need to conduct business there. Mr Jagdip

electrical machinery, equipment and parts, organic chemicals, iron and steel. Major exports to India include organic chemicals, industrial equipment and computers, plastics and plastic articles, mineral fuel, oils and waxes, iron and steel.

Mr. Jeff Moseley, President and CEO, Greater Houston Partnership, USA, outlined Greater Houston Partnership's 10 year Strategic Plan to create 600,000 net regional jobs, attract \$50 billion in capital investment and increase foreign trade by \$120 billion for the greater Houston area. He sought long standing partnerships with Indian companies in Aerospace and aviation, Energy and Petrochemicals, Information Technology, Medical and Biotechnology and Nanotechnology.

Mr. Jim Fonteno, Port Commissioner, Port of Houston Authority, endorsed Indian shippers to take full advantage of the sea port facilities offered by Port of Houston Authority and benefit from Houston's central location to serve the USA market. He said POHA trade with India had increased significantly during the past five

Ahluwalia of the IACCGH mentioned the enthusiastic response he received from businesses in India for this delegation.

Mr. Jeff Moseley, President & CEO, Greater Houston Partnership, USA, noted that trade between India and Houston totaled more than \$2.6 billion in 2007, placing India among Houston's top 25 trading partners. He added that Houston also has the ninth-largest Asian population in the U.S., with the Indian community totaling 74,000. Also spoke on the occasion were Mr. Jim Fonteno, commissioner, Port of Houston and Mr. Sanjay Ram.

Members of the Chamber also utilized the breakfast meeting for one-on-one business meetings with the visiting business delegation. The representatives of Indian industries from all quarters were in full attendance for the breakfast meeting.

container trade has increased nearly 145% and break-bulk traded between India and POHA has grown almost 180%.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Mr. Dilip Dandekar, Chairman, FICCI- MSC and Camlin Ltd., said that India was looking for investments and technologies in Energy, Biotechnology, Healthcare/ Medicine, Electronics, Information Technology, Food Processing and Metal Manufacturing from Houston and Harris County. He saw a lot of potential for cooperation in these areas. He was confident that bilateral trade between India and Houston which was worth US\$2.5 billion in 2007 would get a further impetus with the visit of the distinguished Houston Trade Mission.

Mr. Jagdip Ahluwalia, Executive Director, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston, USA and the distin-

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce Pune Branch Celebrates 'Annual Fellowship Nite' at Hotel Le Meridien, Pune

Earlier, Mr. Ashutosh Parasnis, Chairman, Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Pune explained the various initiatives the Chamber has taken during last few months in fulfilling its objectives of enabling SMEs for globalization, in his welcome address. He projected Chamber's plans to expand its services to other cities of Maharashtra such as Ahmednagar, Nashik, Kolhapur etc.

The American Consulate General, Mumbai obliged the Chamber with the presence of guest of Honour Michael Newbill, Consul, Economic & Political Affairs. Earlier in the day he paid visit to 'Suzlon Energy's facilities in Pune.

The event was sponsored by the City Bank and the IACC, Greater Houston. The participants included Pune business leaders such as John Deere, Finolex, American Axles, Compulink, Neilsoft, Sugard, Tata Autocomp etc.

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Pune while playing host to a high powered business delegation from Greater Houston, Texas, celebrated its 'Annual Fellowship Nite' at the Le Meridien, Pune on 28th April 2008.

The delegation led by the Harris County Judge (CEO of the county) Ed Emmett and Greater Houston Partnership President Jeff Moseley was part together by the IACC, Greater Houston Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia and his colleagues. The delegation comprised of six industries from Houston representing diverse sectors such as energy, environment, engineering services, pharma etc. The Chamber was instrumental in setting up site visits and high level business meetings for the Delegation leaders with important members such as 'Bharat Forge', 'Finolex', 'Suzlon' etc. One-on-one business meetings for the delegation members were, also, set up by the Chamber with Pune members. However, the 'Annual Fellowship Nite' offered all the Pune members, on one hand, the business opportunities with Greater Houston, US while a great networking opportunity on the other. Judge

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett presenting memento to the guest of honour Michael Newbill, Consul, Economic & Political Affairs, US Consulate General, Mumbai. He is flanked by BMC Software President Pankaj Dhume and Greater Houston Partnership President Jeff Moseley.

