



‘Democracy is the Core Strength that will Propel India’

LONDON, July 8 -- British-Indians will have a new role to play in propelling India to a position of dominance on the world stage, senior leaders in the United Kingdom said here today. Speaking at **an exclusive event in the Attlee Room of the House of Lords, the upper house of the British Parliament**, a distinguished gathering heard from the High Commissioner of India in Britain, Ranjan Mathai and other dignitaries gathered here to celebrate the momentous election results which were hailed as a triumph of democracy.

“The new Indian Government has much to prove in executing its developmental agenda and the large population of British Indians will have a much wider role to play in this transformation,” High Commissioner said, addressing a gathering of Lords, British Indian businessmen and other prominent Indians. **The meeting was organized by the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and British Organisation of People of Indian Origin (BOPIO) and hosted by Lord Diljit Rana, MBE, a British politician and member of the House of Lords.**

Lord Rana in his opening address urged the gathering to mobilise the new Indian Government to work towards equal opportunity for all and bring an end to the equivocal system of reservations and quotas that have not delivered on their goals. Lord Rana has himself been instrumental in working towards educating the poor in India and his charitable trust manages the Sanghol Educational Complex in Punjab.

The meeting also featured Lord Bhikhu Parekh, renowned educationist and a Professor at the University of Hull in the north of England who pointed out that India was unique in being a democracy born in extreme poverty, a product of colonial legacy, riven by partition and still having thrived to become one of the bellwethers of development and a member of the BRICS countries. Lord Parekh emphasised how the onus rests on the new government of proving that the decisive majority that resulted from the recent elections now translates into decisive action. “The world,” Lord Parekh said, “is watching!”

Baroness Usha Prashar, CBE and board member of The British Council as well as a member of the House Lords, asserted that a strong democracy needs the support of the Rule of Law to uphold and execute upon goals. This, she said, has been an area that India needs to improve its record in and incorporate ideas from across the rich Indian diaspora in the UK.

The meeting also featured a captivating talk on the ‘Soft Power’ that India now wields and which should now be put into effective use to make the Indian position felt more forcefully in political forums such as the United Nations and in world affairs. Dr Daya Thusu, celebrated author of the book, “Communicating India’s Soft Power: from Buddha to Bollywood” and also Professor of



International Communication and Co-Director of the India Media Centre at the University of Westminster in London said India's global influence, from the origin of Buddhism centuries ago right up to the more recent reach of Bollywood and Indian cinema are tangible examples of how India's Soft Power permeates the world and can be harnessed to push India's development agenda through the power of democracy.

BOPIO's Chairman, Chan Chowdhry, who presided over the evening, said the organisations will be calling upon the millions of British Indians to participate in this momentous victory for the largest and the most effective democracy in the world. This will include a ceremony on August 24, 2014 to celebrate India's Independence Day in London as well as the 25th Anniversary of BOPIO in November 2014, both of which will help rally the many resources available in the UK for the cause of India's democratic development.

The host of the event Lord Rana, thanked the speakers and the guests and expressed acknowledgement of the efforts by the Committee Members.