



Celebrating the Human Spirit, Twelve Stories of Untold Possibilities

Anniversaries and birthdays resonate with significance. They are opportunities to celebrate, mark progress and provide a frame to gauge future potential. The birth of a nation is even more significant, it provides an occasion for an appraisal of larger issues – the state of the economy, polity, future directions, past follies. As India marks her 64th year as an independent country there will be no shortage of tributes, souvenirs, specially designed programmes and unravelling of exhilarating statistics.

But far away from the debates and events is a universe in which a number of individuals are transforming the way we think about ourselves as a nation. They are certainly not household names nor do they follow any set formula but given their passion and pragmatism they have become a vital part of the India story, perhaps a key to her future. Representing diverse fields, they are innovative, dynamic, hearts and heads perfectly matched; all working towards making India a better place. They are proof that you don't have to be supported by the government or large institutions to make a difference.

These are not standard-issue heroes but ground-level activists, entrepreneurs, cultural figures reacquainting us with the indomitable will of the human spirit.

India Perspectives showcases some of these icons-in-the-making. This selection is not a celebrity circus nor is it the result of a popularity contest. It is also not a complete list by any means nor is it a balanced regional or professional representation.

What it is, is an attempt to highlight

performance-based, result-oriented individuals who are in the business of shaking things up by bringing important and serious issues into the national mainstream. Often unsung and unnoticed, these crusaders are so sure of what they want to do that they have happily left greener pastures to follow their convictions. The 12 committed and compassionate people profiled in this special issue represent a slice of India.

Like Harivansh, who took a leap of faith when he shifted from the life of a high profile metro journalist to become the editor and guiding force of the widely-circulated, multi-edition *Prabhat Khabar* by determinedly sticking to the basic principles of journalism – in spite of the prevailing belief that nothing succeeds like sensationalism. For many consumers of news Harivansh has changed how people feel about the media. Then there is 34 year-old Saima Iqbal, an architect who has brought conservation and preserving one's architectural heritage into the discourse of Jammu and Kashmir. See what Anshu Gupta has accomplished when he left a blue chip company to set up a professionally-managed distribution network that gives clothes to the needy all over India. Or Chhavi Rajawat, a peppy MBA, who as the village head of Soda in Rajasthan has taken charge of the area's development. Among the stories are also those of individuals realising their potential. One such is about the rise of the Prince Dance Group, run by Krishna Mohan Reddy and made up of 25 illiterate daily wagers, whose only aim in life is to dance, dance, dance.

These then are inspiring stories of untold possibilities. Many happy returns, India. ■