

Whose 'Business Is Happiness'

By Irene Hell

COIMBATORE/ NEW DELHI - It is not unusual to see a smiling chief executive in New Delhi - the Indian economy is booming. But the white-bearded top manager with the saffron turban, escorted by three women in red and blue saris at last week's Indian Summit of the World Economic Forum, seemed somewhat different.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's business is happiness. Unlike other managers, he does not have to worry about high wages, union strikes or quarterly reports. The 250,000 people who staff his Isha Foundation work for free and wherever he goes he has his followers. Even at the summit, attended by the likes of VVIPs Sir Martin Sorrell, Nandan Nilekani of Infosys and the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, some top chief executives had joyful tears in their eyes and they do not mind bending their knees for and before the guru.

"I don't need any money. I travel around the world without a dollar in my pocket," says Sadhguru, a modern mystic who is probably the only chief executive in the world who never needs a credit card. "Whichever part of the world I land, the US, Australia, Lebanon, Germany, England and wherever I go, there are always people who arrange everything for me. When you live for everybody, everybody lives for you."

During the New Delhi summit held last week, his followers arranged a session called Inner Engineering: Mastering your Destiny. The conference room was packed with wisdom-seeking managers and politicians. For some managers, it was quite unusual to hear messages such as: "No matter how big a chief executive you are, you are never in full control. Not even dictators are in full control." This lack of control creates fear, and fear creates wrong decisions and wrong decisions create disasters - a vicious circle.

According to Sadhguru, "If you cannot manage your own mind, how can you manage the world? If you



At the feet of the business guru in a saffron turban, top executives listen to Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev preaching about happiness and the power of inner energy.

A FLIGHT FROM RELIGION TO BUSINESS

By Our Special Correspondent

COIMBATORE - Sadhguru has now been invited to address in the upcoming annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos which is considered as a significant step in furthering the cause of human upliftment. In the meantime, he will have another opportunity to address the business leaders at the Bombay Stock Exchange in the middle of this month. His desire is that the Governments and societies should make an investment on the inner well-being of the people which alone will bring peace and happiness.

In an exclusive interview to **CHERAN TIMES**, he noted that there will be no respite from rains for another four to five years. The natural calamities playing a havoc during the course of the year, right from the tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004 to the present fury of floods as well as earthquakes and the flurry of hurricane, are the net result of global warming, melting of ice and rising of ocean level.

According to him, these are bound to happen and the disasters and sufferings of people are due to poor planning and lack of infrastructure facilities like proper

drainage, construction of unplanned concrete buildings leaving no vacant space for water to percolate, encroachment of ponds and lakes instead of desilting them and obstruction of free flow of storm water into the sea. In this regard, he sought the creation of massive green cover which would help conserve rainfall to a larger extent.

When asked why Hindus flock to his magnetic field even while he is not for one particular religion or advocating a no-religion theory, he retorted India is a country with 80 % Hindus; when you walk along the roads, you meet more number of Hindus than any others and hence it is natural that they outnumber.

To a query as to how he is able to answer the questions of millions of people from different religions around the world and from all walks of life, he simply laughed and replied 'I get the correct answer from the question itself and that it emanates from the inner self which is constantly and continuously responded by yoga.'

I have been giving fitting replies to doctors, engineers and the like, though I have not been reading any book during the past 25 years or so'.

master your inner energy, you are 100 per cent in control of your life." Sadhguru, 48, who was a coconut farmer in his "former life", offers a technique he calls inner engineering. He shows ways to channel and

activate the inner energy with yoga and contemplation. "Karma is the software of God, but you can change it," he says.

Some of the chief executives who attended the summit have booked to

visit the guru's ashram in Coimbatore. "I can work twice as productively after I have spent time with him in the peaceful ashram," says Sammy Modi, the young Managing Director of the Modi Group, India's seventh-largest

conglomerate. He booked a seven-day retreat in order to gain energy for a major expansion of the 110bn rupee (£1.4bn) family business. Now, Mr Modi adds: "It is better to make 100 people happy than to make \$100m."

Robert Davies, the chief executive of the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, also showed great interest in the yogi. Companies such as Time Warner, Toyota and Daimler Chrysler have already booked the guru to talk to their managers. His critics in India call him a "jet-set guru". But, he counters: "If the rich people are happy, the poor people in the world would not have a problem. When you do not feel happy, everything is coming at an enormous cost. We are burning our planet."

A lack of inner happiness is often compensated for with aggressive economical and political wars and an excessive consumption. The guru warns:

"The economic engine which is driving the world right now is just based on more and more and more, not understanding that every little thing that you sell or buy is being dug out of the limited planet. If we go on like this, we are committing global mass suicide."

A shift in perception could solve all problems: "Every human being is in pursuit of his well-being. It is just the methods of seeking. One you call a spiritual person, another a chief executive and another a criminal. All business started with the intent of human well-being, but somewhere on the way we got lost."

In order to fix this, Sadhguru and his globally operating philanthropic Isha Foundation, which provides medical care for poor rural Indians, builds houses for tsunami victims and maintains environmental projects, wants to reach as many people as possible.

"Everybody can be absolutely ecstatic and blissful every moment of their lives," he says.

(Irene Hell is a Roving Correspondent from Germany)