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UK's Glitterati join hands with international children's charity, Pratham



Rashmi Mehta, Lakshmi Mittal, Usha Mittal, GP Hinduja, Sunita Hinduja

Monday 29th June 2009, London : The Pratham Indian Summer Garden Party took place last night at the Chelsea Conservatory to raise vital funds to help provide universal literacy in India by 2010. The event was the first fundraising event of the year to be hosted by Pratham UK - the UK division of India's largest NGO, Pratham - and kick started the campaign to raise £1,000,000 by encouraging 200 people from the UK to pledge £5,000 each this year.

The guest list showcased a who's who of dignitaries, celebrities and VIP's from the UK, Indian Sub Continent and across the globe, with a collective wealth of more than £10 billion including business tycoon, L.N Mittal; renowned artist MF Hussain; British directors Stephen Frears and Gurinder Chadha; writer Hanif Kureshi; presenters John Stapleton, Lynn Faulds Wood, Vanessa Feltz and Suhel Seth; diamond merchant Rashmi Mehta; Head of Global Markets Deutsche Bank Anshu Jain; George Jatania of Lornamead; Lord & Lady Mitchell; and G.P. Hinduja, who opened donations. Among the auction items were a customised Rolex Prohunter men's watch and a Box at Lords for Shilpa Shetty's Rajasthan Royals vs. Middlesex Panthers.



The event line-up included a performance by cutting edge fusion act 'Calmer Karma' and a fashion show presented by Norway's most renowned fashion designer, Tina Hermansen of "TSH", complemented by delectable Indian fusion cuisine prepared by Vama and Rhubarb Caterers.

Speaking at the event G.P. Hinduja said, "What Pratham is doing is a subject at the heart of the Hinduja family and Hinduja Foundation. Our father believed health and education is the birth right of every human being.

Pratham can really help with India's future and economic prosperity. Only through education can we bring India's poorer communities out of poverty. Education breaks through the awful cycle of poverty. It opens new horizons, it brings confidence, knowledge and most importantly, expertise.

The biggest challenge that India faces is educating the masses. If India wants to become a truly global player, it must reach the same figure as the rest of Asia."

Last night's event supported in raising the necessary funds for Pratham's flagship programme, Read India, a nationwide campaign helping children in the age group of 6-14 years, improve their basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills through accelerated learning techniques.

Pratham's aim is to bring literacy to India's 100 million children who cannot read or write and provide primary education to all children by 2010 subject to funding. Their work has so far reached 33 million, primarily children from the slums and those working as labourers. Benefactors to the charity include Bill Gates who, via the Hewlett Foundation, has donated \$9.1 million to date for the charity's outreach work.

Vilas Gadkari, Chairman, Pratham UK comments: "The event was a huge success and we'd like to thank all the guests who attended for their generous support for the cause of Pratham. The funds raised last night will surely help us on our way of reaching the 100 million underprivileged children across India who lack primary education and the basic right to schooling.

To bring literacy is to open an opportunity window to somebody who otherwise would have little chances of succeeding. Increasing literacy amongst the youth should be made a pivotal part of every country's agenda, especially when it provides a way out of conditions of extreme poverty and a path to achieving emotional literacy amongst children."