

News from the land of Sri Radha Krishna Vol:7

Ratnagiri regeneration project resumes at Barsana



The Braj Foundation took up the regeneration of a 150 acre barren tract of a hillock namely Ratnagiri in village Manpur (Barsana) with the financial support of UNDP. The work started in March 07 and continued till July when it was stalled by some members of the local community for various vested interests. Over 420 tree pits of 1 cum capacity were dug up, enriched manure was lifted through mules to the hill top, fresh water pipe got provisioned from Water Supply Scheme of The Braj Foundation sponsored by IOCL & OIIB. The agitating villagers feared, that if the hill is regenerated, they will lose their illegal possessions on the foot hill which they had planned to take over subsequently.

Several parleys and meetings were held but nothing could convince them. At last it was decided to wait for the right time. Recently the Chiksauli-Manpur Water Supply Scheme of The Braj Foundation became successfully operational in both the villages so the people were very pleased with this.

This created a positive wave and they finally relented and agreed to support the regeneration of Ratnagiri Hill. Now this project has also taken off with active community support.

Braj Foundation creates 3 lakh cubic meter of additional water retention capacity in Braj with financial support of Sri Kamal Morarka

From Raja Bir Singh of Orchha to Suraj Mal the Jat king of Bharatpur, from Raja Bhagwan Das to Raja Mansingh; from Gokul Das the treasurer of Scindia State to Rani Laxmi wife of Ranjit Singh of Bharatpur, the royalty and elite of princely states across India have always played a pivotal role in protecting and nurturing the historical, environmental, architectural and cultural heritage of Braj. Through the years, such people have served the holy land of Braj generously through endeavours that have had helped to sustain the exuberance of the rich and variegated heritage of the Holy Land. Today, after years of neglect and decay, when a task as daunting as the restoration of an entire cultural and religious fabric of a region has been successfully taken up by The Braj Foundation, it is as important to look at the people who are silently supporting such a cause from the background.



Mr. Morarka being felicitated at village Chaumuha

Mumbai based industrialist and Chairman of the Gannon Dunkerley Group, Shri Kamal Morarka has emerged as an iconic figure in rekindling this tradition of serving Braj Bhoomi. Inspired by the revolutionary saint of Braj - Sri Ramesh Baba of



Desilted Roop Kund at Barsana

Gahvarvan, Barsana and ably led by the committed professional team, the entire drive for Braj restoration taken

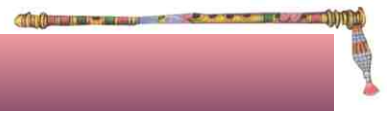
contd. on page 2



Jai Kund, Jaipur after desilting

Inside Stories

- Pg-2** Action in the field
- Pg-2** Forthcoming Events
- Pg-4** Tourism Master Plan
- Pg-4** Media Coverage



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense joy and satisfaction in informing you that The Braj Foundation has completed 3 years of its inception. The Foundation was registered on the auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti on Dec 20th, 2005.

With the grace of Radha Rani and the blessings of empowered spiritual souls, the quanta of accomplishments which have gone to the kitty of the foundation are phenomenal by any standards.

We could highlight, advocate and propound the cause of Braj at all possible forums. The result of which has been that people are now acknowledging the real face of Braj a Braj replete with splashing water bodies, dense groves, lush green hill slopes and thundering Yamuna. A strong Braj consciousness movement is building up all over. The current global crises of Food, Fuel and Finance have also forced people to look around for alternatives and Braj has to offer one.

The Research & Planning Division of the foundation has done some fundamental ground work. It was this homework done for several years that the foundation was able to accomplish the task of preparing a comprehensive tourism master plan for the entire Braj region which has been appreciated and accoladed by the who's who of the country including the Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh State Development Council Mr. Satish Chandra Misra and Secretary, Planning Commission Dr. Subas Pani.

Over 35 water bodies have been excavated and filled in with splashing water during this small timeframe. So far, the variegated traditional rain water harvesting structures have simply been documented and studies, but it has been for the first time that such a major effort of reviving the same has been taken up by a Non-Governmental Agency. All this would have been possible only because of the generous financial support of our Chairman Mr. Kamal Morarka.

The Foundation has also been able to initiate several policy level interventions at the level of Government of Uttar Pradesh. These guidelines are based on the long drawn experience of the foundation pertaining to the restoration of water bodies and forest lands.

We have every reason rejoice and celebrate our third anniversary. We feel the promise of sustaining our mission of decorating Braj Bhoomi for the next 30 years.

Vineet Narain

Write to us at:
vn@brajfoundation.org

Jai Kund, Jait

Work is going-on in full swing at the 12 acre site located right on the national highway popularly known as Jai Kund where Krishna's triumph over the Aghasura demon was celebrated by the Brajwasis. A 2.5 acre water body has been excavated and is being dressed in a serpentine shape. A waste water drain to divert the sewerage of the village is being constructed so that the main water body is not polluted. Murals and dioramas related to the slaying of Aghasur and the subsequent rejoicing by Brajwasis are being designed. The project is being funded by the Chairman of the Foundation Mr. Kamal Morarka.



Restoration plan of Jai Kund, Jait

Chandra Sarovar, Chaumuha

Another majestic site of historic importance at village Chaumuha is nearing completion. It was the place where Brahma Ji begged pardon from Sri Krishna after having doubted His divinity. He offered a heart felt prayer to Sri Krishna and adored him with the salutation of Chandra, due to which the kund came to be known as Chandra Sarovar. The pucca kund has been constructed with the financial support of Mr. Kamal Morarka and is in its finishing stages. The murals depicting the leela of Brahma Ji begging Krishna's forgiveness are being carved at the site itself financed by exporters of Delhi.

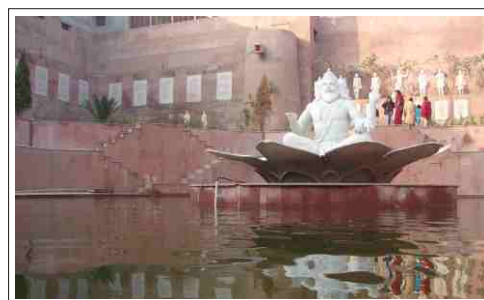


Restoration work at Chandra Sarovar Chaumuha

contd. From page 1



Forthcoming Events



Brahma Kund Inauguration

Brahma Kund which has recently been restored by The Braj Foundation after a span of 400 years is attracting a large crowd without being formally opened to public.

To inaugurate the restored Brahma kund, Govind Dev Ji's sachal vigrah (chitrapat) along with Goswamis of Govind Dev temple Jaipur and several devotees will be coming all the way to Vrindavan from Jaipur. A grand utsav is being planned for this historic occasion titled as Govind Dev Manorath. The utsav is proposed to be celebrated during mid-February.

by the foundation has been receiving a generous financial support from Sri Kamal Morarka.

De-silting of decadent water bodies

800 out of the 1000 odd water bodies of Braj were silted up and had become sludge tanks. They were to be de-silted so that fresh water could be re-filled in them. De-silting of decadent water bodies was a task of top priority and great fundamental importance. Hiring earthmovers was a costly and time-consuming affair. When approached for support, Mr. Morarka readily bought 3 earthmovers costing over Rs 75 lakhs to be used exclusively for de-silting the water bodies of Braj region. He also sanctioned the financial support to bear the operational cost of these earthmovers. Such a blanket support enabled The Braj Foundation to excavate over 35 water bodies spread all over the Braj region in a

contd. on page 3

short span of 5 years. This expediency generated a tremendous public awareness and trust which nevertheless is the most important constituent for any project of such a grand nature to succeed.

As a result of which, the water retention



Desilted Anjani Kund at Bhulwana

capacity has been augmented dramatically for most of the water bodies due to systematic and planned desilting. An additional water retention capacity of over 3 lakh cubic meters has been created so far whose valuation as per market rate is over Rs 2.25 crores. Old dried up water bodies like Anjani Kund, Dohini Kund, Garud Govind Kund, to name a few have been revived with influx of fresh water. The historic renewal of these kunds is rekindling faith among the locals and the environs are vibrating with fresh sound, smell and life.



Restored Dohini Kund at Barsana

Most of the water bodies excavated by the foundation were devoid of water for decades. The augmentation of the water retention capacity coupled by dedicated efforts to bring in water from the nearby sources like canals etc. have resulted in thriving water bodies. Water is now readily available to villagers and in many cases kuchcha kunds have also been created for animals. Locals claim that there had been no water in these kunds for more than three decades and today they are overflowing with water.

After having demonstrated successfully and effectively the fundamental task of de-silting and re-filling the water bodies with fresh water, The Braj Foundation approached Mr. Morarka for the construction of ghats and landscaping, so that these water bodies of immense historical, cultural and mythological importance are reinstated as prominent tourist destinations. He has generously accepted some of these proposals.

Administrative Support to The Braj Foundation

In order to carry out a project of such grand magnitude a technically competent and managerially sound professional team is warranted. Realizing the need for the same, *The Braj Foundation* was conceived with several eminent industrialists of the country and abroad on board. When approached for support, Mr. Morarka generously agreed to bear the administrative expenses of the foundation since its inception in Dec.05. So far he has contributed Rs. 1.08 crores towards the administrative expense of the Foundation.

Due to Mr. Morarka's support, the foundation has been able to accomplish some historic feats. The Foundation's research and planning wing has accumulated a phenomenal amount of ground data and information, much needed for undergoing macro as well as micro planning. The Foundation has therefore been able to forge in institutional research linkages with the premiere institutions of the country like IITs, IIMs and Foreign Universities.

Due to all this, the foundation was selected for preparing a Tourism



Desilting in process at a Kund



Guest Visits

Govindanand Teerth Maharaj



Socially committed prominent saint of Vrindavan HH Sri Govindanand Teerth Maharaj recently visited the

field office of The Braj Foundation and several sites where the restoration work is on. He was very impressed with the work and said, "This kind of work is being done after several centuries." He has instructed our engineering wing to prepare some projects for the restoration of Yamuna Ghats in Vrindavan and also for the restoration of some prominent kunds for which he assured financial support from his disciples.

Dr. Subas Pani, Secretary, Planning



Commission of India, also praised the quality of work being done by The Braj Foundation. He wrote in visitors book "I had the

opportunity to see a renovation/restoration project of heritage site (Brahm Kund) done by The Foundation. It is a commendable work done with great sensitivity."

Director General UP Tourism, Mr.



Sushil Kumar in a recent letter wrote, "I would particularly like to place on record my deep appreciation for the

contribution of The Braj Foundation, who with their enormous research & insights, field survey reports and their understanding of the cultural history, have included many innovative ideas in the Tourism Master Plan. I hope this Master Plan would provide the basis for integrated development of tourism in the Braj region."

Master Plan for the Braj Region by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The UP Govt. authorities have commended the work to be of international standards.

At the onset of the foundation in December 2005, Mr. Morarka had envisioned that within a span of 3 years, The Braj Foundation would become synonymous with Braj. The same has now been realized to a fairly large extent.



Tourism Master Plan prepared by The Braj Foundation gets accolades



Development on various fronts. Several institutional mechanisms were also being seriously discussed with the UP Advisory Council and Senior Officials of UP Government in order to give a definite impetus to the entire drive.

Following the injunction of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, a comprehensive tourism master plan for the entire Braj region was prepared in the record time of 45 days by a consortium of The Braj Foundation and IL&FS IDC, which has been greatly appreciated by the Secretary, Planning Commission of India and Chairman of UP State Advisory Council Mr. Satish Chandra Mishra.

Impressed with the quality and pragmatism of the plan, Mr. Mishra is taking personal interest in the further implementation of the Tourism Master Plan of Braj and is holding discussions with The Braj Foundation to find out ways and means to take it to its logical conclusion.

The Braj Foundation's technical team led by CEO Mr. Vineet Narain recently visited Lucknow to resolve various administrative roadblocks which are hampering the progress of Braj

Giving details of the proposed Tourism Master Plan, Mr. Raghav Mittal, Project Coordinator of The Braj Foundation said, "Over 150 villages of cultural and mythological importance associated with a legend of Sri Krishna have been shortlisted. These are spread all across the region which have been grouped together into five tourism clusters which are subsequently mapped to the various developmental blocks for administrative ease. Over 700 sites of interest comprising of ancient water bodies, sacred groves, hilly terrains, Yamuna banks and heritage structures



New Team Member

Mr. Shivaji Mahan Cairae (Ex Director General Police, Jharkhand) a 1967



batch IPS officer has recently joined The Braj Foundation as its Honorary COO. Mr. Cairae is known for his administrative acumen and great devotion to Sri Radha Krishna. He refused a very lucrative post-retirement job offer from several sectors because he wanted to serve the holy dham. We welcome him and look forward for his guidance and leadership to steer the foundation to further heights.

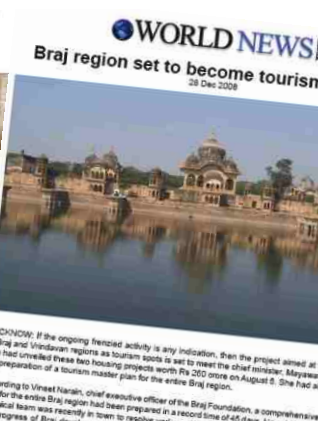
have been identified. The legend of Sri Krishna has been intricately woven amongst these sites of interest and villages to develop unique tourism products of international standards."

The entire tourism master plan is envisaged to be implemented in a Public-Private-People's Partnership whereby the various developmental schemes of the Government will be dovetailed and synergized at the last mile with the bulk of private funding flowing into Braj.

In addition to UP Government, The Braj Foundation is also providing consultancy to the governments of Rajasthan and Haryana for the development of their portions of the Braj region.



Media Coverage



Published by Rajneesh Kapur for limited circulation only. Media colleagues are welcome to use this material for their stories.

Newsletter Sponsored By: