

Dr. Manmohan Singh: A Profile in Courage

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It is with a sense of thanksgiving and a feeling of righteous pride that we celebrate Dr. Manmohan Singh's one year as the Prime Minister of India. - Ed. SR

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INDIA HAD AN UNPRECEDENTED currency crisis. Just two weeks reserves were left. The country would have gone the route of numerous Latin American countries. It took the genius of Dr. Man Mohan Singh, well there were many notable economicists in India and abroad, who knew the dismal situation, but more than that it needed the courage of Dr. Man Mohan Singh. He turned the economy of India 180 degrees. He embraced completely different ideology, and started steering the mammoth Indian Economic ship around 180 degrees, a course correction, nay it was a revolutionary step.

Dr. Man Mohan Singh with impeccable credential in the field of economics, and in the face of severe warnings by his peer and co-professional, Dr. Friedman, that in the field of economics no major experiments are done. He knew the professional dangers of such a course correction, yet he dared to do it, an unparalleled act of courage in the history of professional economics.

The world's greatest economic engine, USA, took not only a note of it but openly admired Dr. Man Mohan Singh's courageous step. It was amazing to hear and watch his interview on American TV. Dr. Man Mohan Singh showed not only exemplary courage in his professional field, but this courage can be rated ten folds more important because he was fully aware of many other dangers and land mines all around him. He confidently admitted that yes he has created enemies in the strongholds of privileged industrial families; he has now tons of enemies in the most powerful Indian Bureaucratic Machinery (permit raj) and last but not the least in the political set up of the country.

Dr. Man Mohan Singh has now become the Prime Minister of India. In this position he has to lead a multi-dimensional revolution. The strong waves of economic revolution are going to cause earthshaking changes in the centuries old but decaying social structure. India needs ethnic, religious, linguistic, educational, constitutional, administrative, judicial reforms and most needed and long over due, riddance from prevalent corruption all around.

Bharat Mata, after thousand of years of slavery, discarded the yoke of foreign rule in 1947, but still is in agony of many suffocating strong chains. Let us wish him good luck and pray for the blessings from Guru Gobind Singh ji on Dr. Man Mohan Singh, so that he can courageously carry on all these revolutionary reforms. Then only a common citizen of India would be able to joyfully breathe the free air in peace and with dignity.

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**Time Magazine's Tribute:
Dr. Manmohan Singh: Among top ten leaders**

AMARTYA SEN*

** Nobel Laureate and world-famous economist.*

CAN AN ASTUTE ECONOMIST, a famous professor and a superb civil servant also be an outstanding Prime Minister? Can someone without a populist political base be secure as the head of a democratic government? Can a country in which more than 80% of the people are Hindus be comfortable with a blue-turbaned Sikh Prime Minister in addition to a Muslim President and a Christian leader of the ruling party? If the answer to all those questions is yes (as seems plausible enough), that says something not only about the nature of India but also about Manmohan Singh' deep humanity and breadth of vision, which inspire widespread confidence.

As Finance Minister in the early-to-mid 90's, Singh, 72, was pioneering leader of India's economic reforms, which restrained the all-powerful Indian bureaucrat, and sought - and found - a significant place for India in the global economy. And yet, given the asymmetric sharing of the fruits of expansion, the subsequent government's proud but insensitive slogan, "India shining", was a peculiarly divisive theme. Who better, then, than the architect of the pro-market reforms to take the country's reins and emphasize the need for a less unequal distribution, and the urgency of supplementing a flourishing market economy by strengthening social services and the societal infrastructure.

The man in blue turban, despite his great success, has remained approachable and ready to listen and instinctively sympathetic to the underdogs of society.

[Courtesy: *Time Magazine*]

