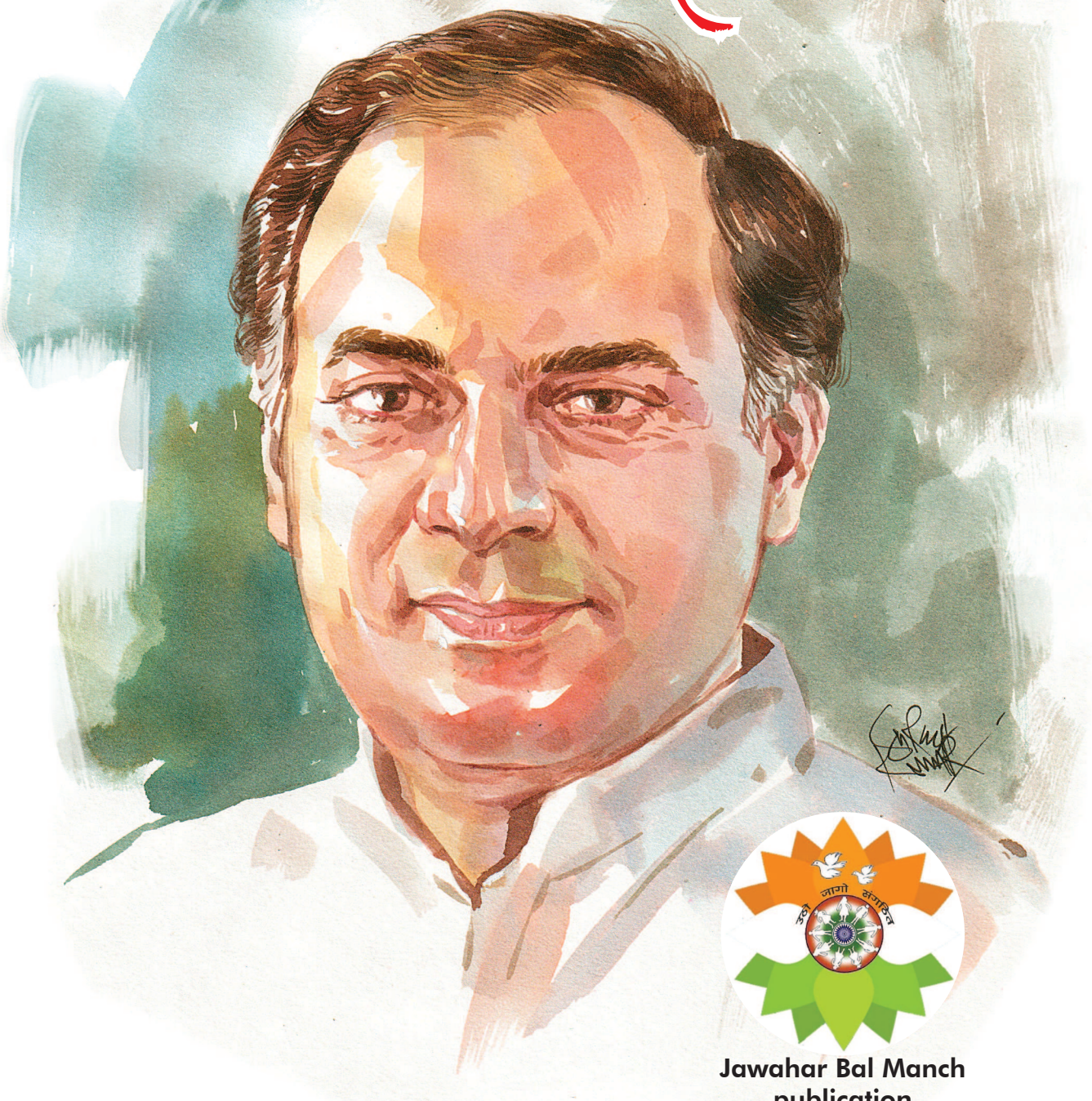


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Dear friends,

The life of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhiji is an awe-inspiring one.

Let us have a glance at that extraordinary life.

He can be described as the maker of modern India. It was under his golden leadership that India walked into modernity, through computerization and the development of the digital realm, thus reshaping the face of the nation forever.

His rise as the undisputed leader of a populace of seven hundred million was indeed commendable.

Though he came from a family which served the Nation both pre and post-independence for four generations, he was least interested in indulging in active politics. But, once he was pressured to involve, we gained a proactive politician, and an able Prime Minister.

He was busy accelerating both India and the INC to the newer age when he unknowingly walked into martyrdom, at Sriperumbudur, in a suicide bombing by the LTTE. With him shattered the dreams and hopes that India held high. He always put his commitment to the nation before his life.

Bowing before the memories of the great soul that the nation missed way too early,

Warmly

Yours truly

G. V. Hari



Rajiv Gandhi: A Great Visionary



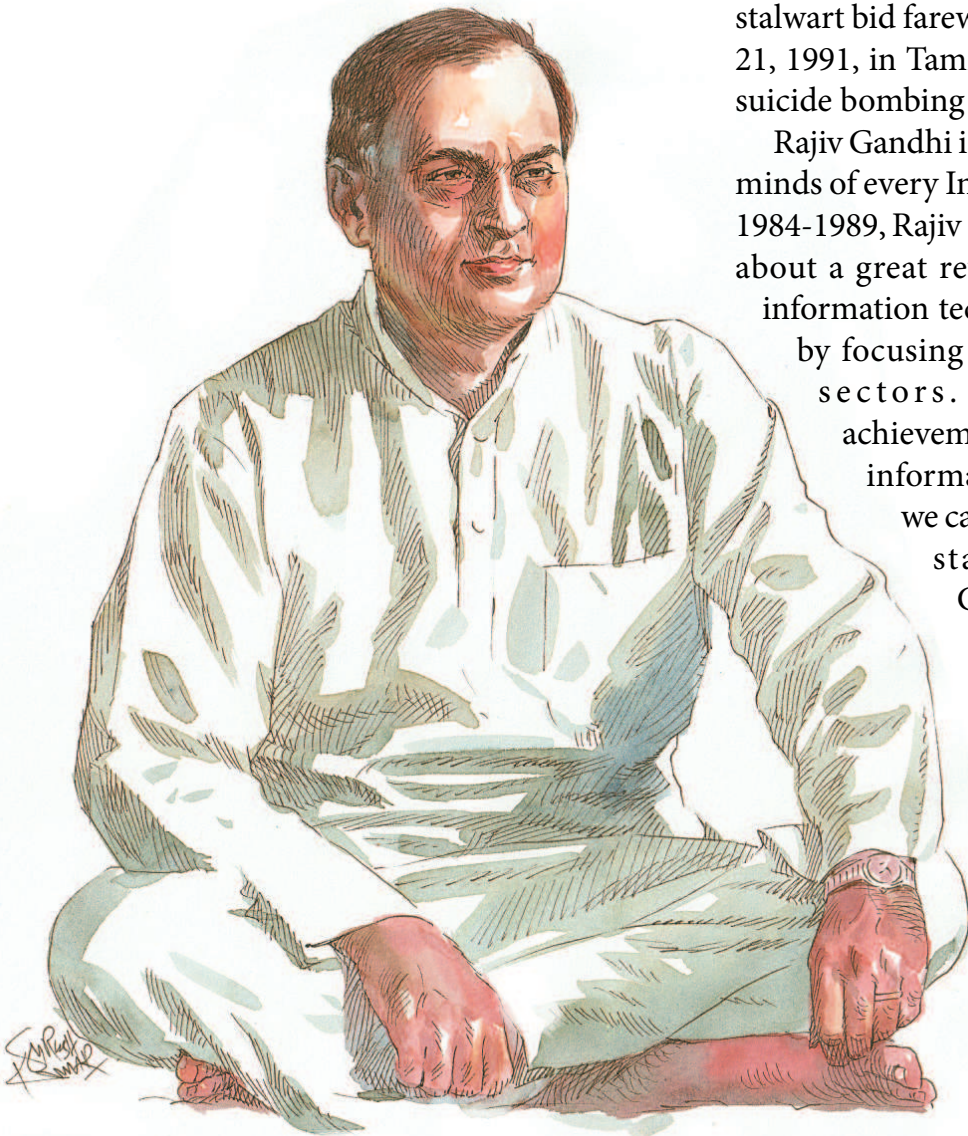
B.V.Srinivas

The India we see today wasn't built overnight ..! Whether it is information technology or food availability, all the facilities we enjoy today were created on the conviction of many former Prime Ministers.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi was a visionary who made great contributions to the growth of India.

Born on August 20, 1944, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in as the youngest Prime Minister of India, at the age of 40. The stalwart bid farewell to this world on May 21, 1991, in Tamil Nadu in the wake of a suicide bombing by the LTTE.

Rajiv Gandhi is a symbol of pride in the minds of every Indian. During the period 1984-1989, Rajiv Gandhi was able to bring about a great revolution in the field of information technology in the country by focusing on the IT and telecom sectors. Considering the achievements made in the field of information technology today, we can see that the far-sighted stance taken by Rajiv Gandhi back then was very beneficial. If India stands high in front of the world, it is because of Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister. In a short period, Rajiv Gandhi was able to complete the revolution in all spheres and lead India to the forefront.



Shri Rajiv Gandhi - the Youngest Prime Minister of India

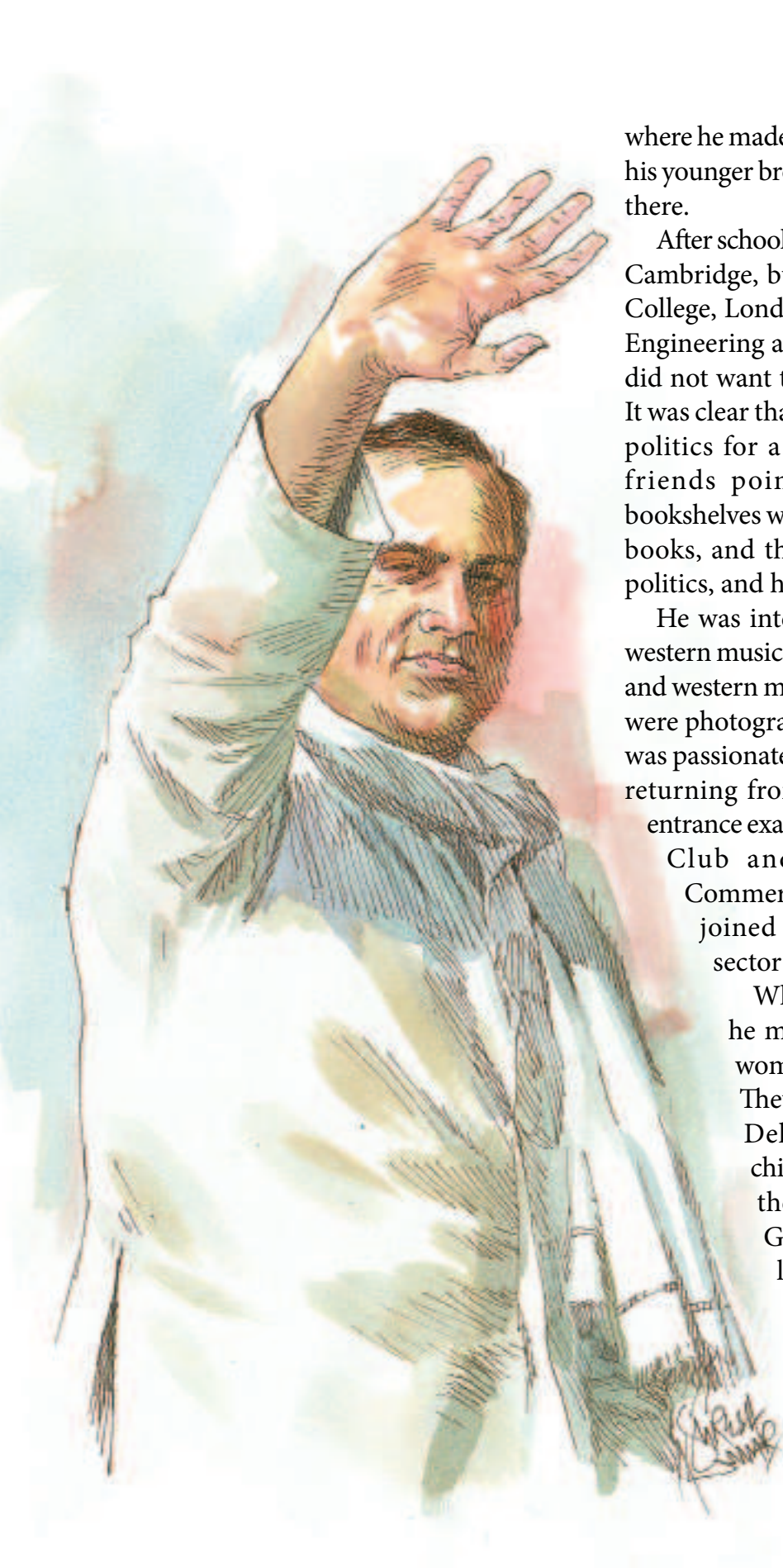
**Prime Minister:
October 31, 1984 - December 2, 1989**

Rajiv Gandhi, who was elected to power at the age of 40, is India's youngest Prime Minister and perhaps the youngest ruler of a republic in the world. He became Prime Minister eight years younger than the age at which his mother was when she was elected. His eminent grandfather, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, became the first Prime Minister of independent India at the age of 58, beginning his 17 years long governing. As a trailblazer, representing new young generation of India, Shri Gandhi received the greatest popular support in the history of the nation. He was ready to face the general election still in grief from his mother's demise. The Congress won a landslide victory in the election, winning 401 of the 508 seats up for grabs. Congress won an unprecedented majority than in the previous seven elections. Undoubtedly, his start as the undisputed leader of seven hundred million Indians was remarkable. It is noteworthy that at a young age, Shri

Gandhi, who was disinterested in politics till then, was accepted immediately. Regardless of being the youngest of the great family that served the country for four generations, during and after the freedom struggle, he had no interest in politics.

Rajiv Gandhi was born on August 20, 1944, in Bombay. He was only three years old when India gained independence and his grandfather became the Prime Minister. Consequentially, his parents moved from Lucknow to Delhi.

Feroze Gandhi, the father of Shri Gandhi, became an MP and earned the reputation of being a fearless and hard-working parliamentarian. Rajiv Gandhi spent his childhood with his grandfather at Thinmurthy House. His mother, Indira Gandhi was the homemaker there. After studying at Welham Prep School in Dehradun for some time, he moved to Doon School in the Himalayan Valley,



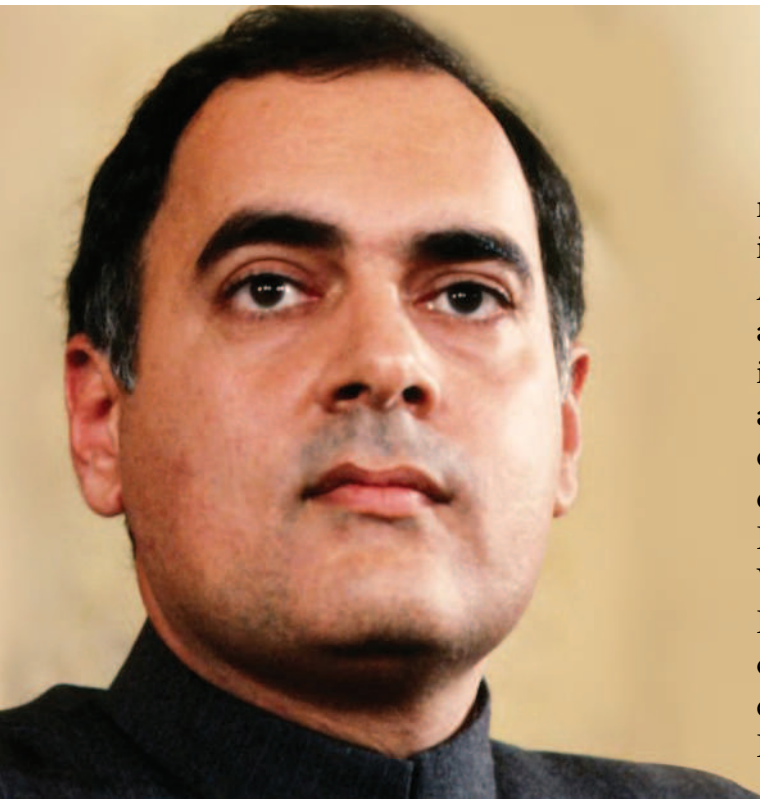
where he made some lifelong friends. Soon his younger brother Sanjay also joined him there.

After school, he attended Trinity College, Cambridge, but soon moved to Imperial College, London. He studied Mechanical Engineering and as he often said later, he did not want to study hard for the exam. It was clear that he did not want to choose politics for a profession. Mr. Gandhi's friends point out that most of his bookshelves were science and engineering books, and those books on philosophy, politics, and history were scarce.

He was interested in music. He loved western music, Hindustani classical music, and western music. The other two interests were photography and amateur radio. He was passionate about air travel. Soon after returning from England, he passed the entrance examination of the Delhi Flying Club and decided to obtain a Commercial Pilot License. He soon joined Indian Airlines, a public sector domestic airline, as a pilot.

While studying in Cambridge, he met Sonia Maino, an Italian woman studying English there. They were married in 1968, in Delhi. She stayed with their children Rahul and Priyanka at the residence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. Their lives were really private, except for the political turmoil going on around them.

Things changed when his brother Sanjay died in a plane crash in 1980. The pressure to get into politics and help



Bharat Ratna

Until 2006, the LTTE did not take responsibility for Rajiv's murder. In an interview in 2006, LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham implicitly acknowledged the LTTE's role. 26 people including Sri Lankan-born LTTE leaders and their aides from Tamil Nadu were convicted for Rajiv's death. After his death, Rajiv Gandhi received the Bharat Ratna, the highest honor in the country. Veerbhoomi is a monument erected at Rajiv's Samadhi in Delhi. The Congress came to power again in India in the 1991 elections amid a wave of sympathy for Rajiv's death.

his mother grew. The situation was further complicated by the challenges from outside and inside. He resisted initially but soon succumbed to the pressure. He was ready to contest the next elections in Amethi, which he represented when his younger brother Sanjay died. And was elected by a good majority.

Lack of enough stadiums and other infrastructure facilities was a big concern. It was Shri Gandhi who was appointed to make sure that the construction work was completed on time and that the Games would be performed without any defects. He proved his ability and coordination skills in doing things by overcoming this challenge. At the same time, as the General Secretary of the Congress, his activism in energizing the party and in perfecting the organizational structure was remarkable. It was these skills that helped him in the later experimental stages.

His mother was assassinated on August

31, 1984, forcing him to serve as Prime Minister and Congress President at the same time. Only he had the misfortune of having to take on high responsibilities in the worst stage of his life. But he showed the courage and self-control to restrain his grief and to fulfill his responsibility to the nation.

During his month-long election campaign, Shri Gandhi traveled tirelessly from one end of the country to the other. Often traveled farther than the circumference of the earth. He addressed millions of people at 250 public meetings. With his modern thinking and timely decision-making, Shri Gandhi was knowledgeable and passionate about high technology. As he reiterates, Sri Gandhi aimed to preserve the integrity of India and to be the driving force behind the country's glorious future into the 21st century.

India to save Mali: Operation CACTUS



Nothing beyond the sound of waves can be heard off the coast of Mali. Suddenly, two fishing boats approached the shore, breaking through the waves. About 100 people jumped out of two boats with rocket launchers, grenades, and AK-47 rifles.

On November 2, the people of Mali woke up to the shocking news.

A coup attempt is underway in Mali. All major government institutions have been

taken over by mercenaries. They have detained several people, including Mali's Minister for Education. They have started violence at the President's residence. They had taken over the airport, news channels, and radio stations.

November 3, 12.30 pm

Urgent discussions are being held at the RAW Office, Parliament House, and Agra Air Force Headquarters in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced on All India Radio: "India to save Mali".

The six-hour cabinet talks came to an end. Six hours ago, countries around the world including India and the United States had received phone calls from the Malian President seeking help. RAW's Delhi headquarters was still receiving information from RAW agents in Mali and Sri Lanka.

November 3 - 3.30pm

An Ilyushin Il-76 aircraft with 50 brigade from the Indian Air Force base at Agra. By this time two Indian Navy warships had left for Mali (INS Batwa, INS Godavari).

Departing from Agra Air Force Headquarters, Ilyushin flew more than 2,500 km and landed paratroopers from the skies near Mali Airport. Within hours of landing, Mali airport was recaptured from the mercenaries, and the Indian Air Force planes landed at the airport with other commandos. After moving President Qayyum to a safer place, the rest of the government institutions were liberated from the clutches of mercenaries. Two

hostages were shot dead by mercenaries during the rescue of Mali's education minister and other captives.

At the same time, the Indian spy agency's investigation revealed that the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Elam (LTTE), an affiliate of the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers (SLTT), was behind the incident and that the mercenaries had come to the coast of Mali from a ship anchored in the Sri Lankan waters. The Indian Navy's warships Batwa and the Godavari captured the Sri Lankan ship and handed it over to the Malian government. Nineteen mercenaries were killed and the rest were captured by the Indian army. Except for a bullet in the leg of a soldier, the Indian Army suffered no casualties.

Abdullah Lufti, a Malian national and Sri Lankan businessman who was a supporter of former Maldivian President Ibrahim Nasir was behind the coup.

The strength of the willful Indian rulers and army thus became known to the world.

This is history ...



Prime Ministers of India

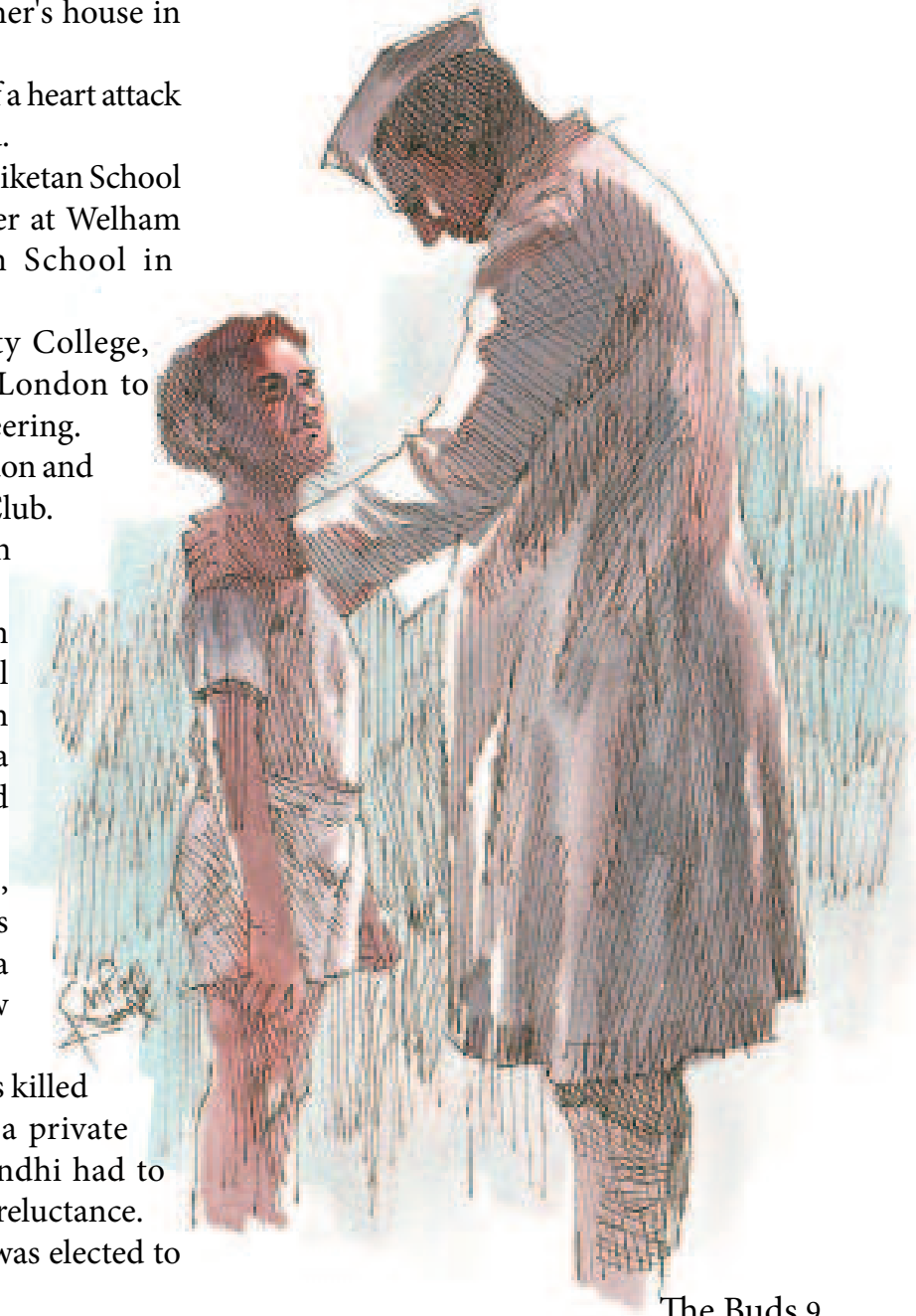
- Jawaharlal Nehru, • Gulzarilal, Nanda • Lal Bahadur Shastri • Indira Gandhi • Morarji Desai • Charan Singh, • Rajiv Gandhi • VP Singh Chandrasekhar • P.V. Narasimha Rao • AB. Vajpayee. • HD Deve Gowda • I.K. Gujral • Manmohan Singh • Narendra Modi

Rajiv Gandhi

History and events

- Born on August 20, 1944, in Bombay, in a prominent Indian political family.
- Grew up in his grandfather's house in Allahabad.
- Rajiv's father Feroz died of a heart attack when he was 16 years old.
- Enrolled in nearby Shivaniketan School for Nursery Classes. Later at Welham Boy School and Doon School in Dehradun.
- Joined in 1962 at Trinity College, Cambridge University, London to study Mechanical Engineering.
- Rajiv returned from London and joined the Delhi Flying Club. Rajeev wanted to be an aviator.
- While studying in Cambridge in London, fell in love with an Italian woman named Sonia Maino. They were married in 1969.
- On his return to India, Rajiv joined Indian Airlines as a pilot. Rajiv, who was a gentle soul, did not show much interest in politics.
- When Sanjay Gandhi was killed in a plane crash, flying a private plane in 1980, Rajiv Gandhi had to enter politics despite his reluctance.
- In February 1981, Rajiv was elected to

the Lok Sabha from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. Amethi was the constituency



"I became a grandfather"

On Rajiv's birthday, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his diary: "Indu has a son today and they are both well. I have become a grandfather."



of Sanjay Gandhi. Shortly afterward, he was elected President of the Youth Congress.

- When Indira Gandhi was shot dead by her bodyguards, the Congress leadership and activists forced Rajiv Gandhi to become the Prime Minister.
- After Indira's death and the Sikh massacre, the Rajiv Gandhi led government came to power with the largest majority in Congress history (405 seats in the 540 - member assembly).
- The BJP won only two seats in that election, which was marred by the shock of Indira's death and the Rajiv wave. The call for the Nehru family was so strong.
- Rajiv warmed up relations with America. Rajiv Gandhi visited the United States from June 11 to 15, 1985. India and the United States have signed an agreement to fight together against planned terrorism, as well as bilateral cooperation in science and technology. The agreement also provides for the development and production of a new vaccine against the growing epidemic in India. Rajiv succeeded in building good diplomatic relations with the United States without compromising India's interests.
- Rajiv Gandhi, the first Indian Prime

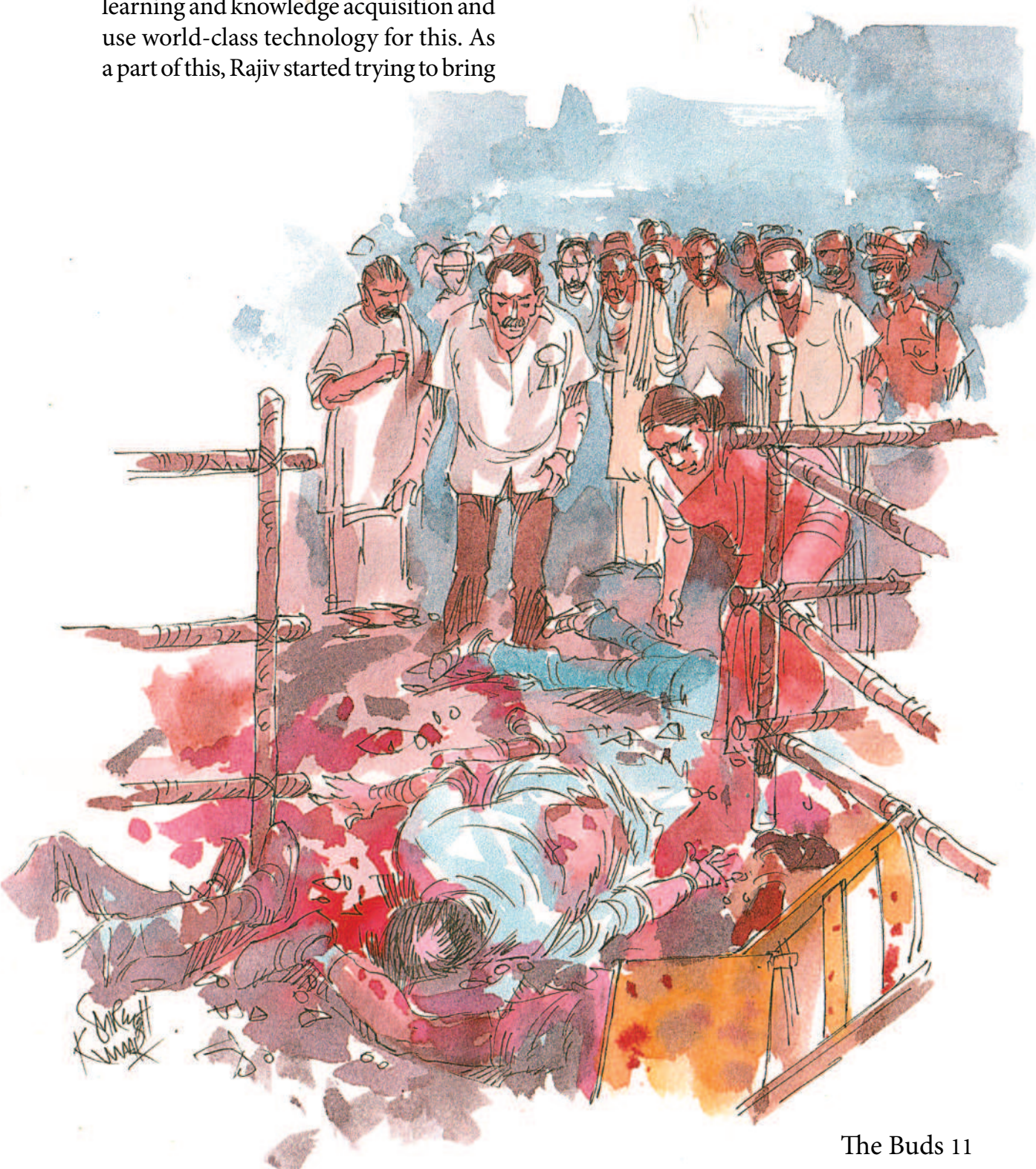
Minister to visit China after Nehru, allayed some doubts and mistrust in India-China relations. Rajiv sought to solve many of the country's long-standing problems. Rajiv Gandhi signed the Mizo Agreement, the Assam Agreement, and the Punjab Agreement. India's foreign policy was very friendly with its neighbors. That is why during the insurgency in Mali, President Abdul Gayoom came to India without relying on the United States for help. Similarly, to counter the Sinhalese attack in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan leadership did not hesitate to contact Rajiv.

- The Indian Army launched a military operation there called Operation Cactus to thwart a rebel attempt to oust the President of Mali. Within hours, the Indian Army regained control of Mali. With this military action, diplomatic relations between India and Mali were strengthened.
- Rajiv enthusiastically promoted the development of science and technology

in India. Rajiv significantly reduced import tariffs on technology industries, including computers, aircraft, and defense and communications equipment. Rajeev wanted the new generation of India to move away from conservative learning and knowledge acquisition and use world-class technology for this. As a part of this, Rajiv started trying to bring

communication technology to the common people.

- C-Dot was freed from government control. Rajeev's goal was to make C-DOT a research and development institution capable of defining and



achieving its own goals.

- Rajiv desired to bring technology to the masses that implemented public call offices, a new concept in the field of communication in India.
- Nation's License Raj - Rajiv Gandhi took steps to roll back India's License Raj and to significantly reduce the red tapism, for starting new businesses. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi announced a new National Education Policy to promote higher education in science and technology throughout India.
- Economic growth increased to 5.6 percent in the Seventh Five Year Plan. Industrial growth was 8 percent. The poverty rate has dropped from 38 percent to 28 percent. The economy was resurgent.
- Navodaya Vidyalayas were started in India in 1986 by Rajiv Gandhi. The first Navodaya was formed in 1985. Navodaya is P. V. Narasimha Rao's brainchild. Navodaya schools were started when Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister. It is a government scheme to provide better educational opportunities to the socially and economically backward students in the villages? Later, on the 100th birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it was renamed Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya.
- The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and the President of Sri Lanka JR Jayewardene on July 30, 1987, in Colombo. The next day, Rajiv Gandhi, who was receiving the 'Guard of Honor' of the Sri Lankan Navy, was shot in the head by a Sri Lankan sailor named Vijitha Rohana. Rajiv barely escaped the assassination attempt with minor injuries.



"Burned like a fireball"

News about Rajiv's murder in Time Magazine: "A woman with a garland in her hand bowed in front of Rajiv to dress him up. Then everything was over as soon as he opened his eyes. The whole hope of a nation burned like a fireball with a deafening roar."

- India agreed to send peacekeeping troops to Sri Lanka at the request of Sri Lankan President Jayewardene, according to the India-Sri Lanka peace agreement. The LTTE peacefully surrendered its weapons in front of the Indian peacekeepers sent by Rajiv. And this paved the way for open war between them.
- Many areas were recaptured from LTTE by the Indian Peace Keeping Force and LTTE-held territory was reduced to very small parts of Jaffna.
- Rajiv's last public meeting was at Thiruthani in Tamil Nadu. Rajiv Gandhi was killed in a bomb blast on May 21, 1991, during an election campaign rally in Sriperumbudur.

Veerbhumi

The attack was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajaratnam alias Tanu, a member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Sri Lankan militant group. She turned herself into a suicide bomber and took the life of Rajiv Gandhi, India's 'Rajya Sevak'.

His assassination during the Lok Sabha elections shook the entire Indian political world.

The suicide bomber waited among those who came to receive him at Sriperumbudur after the May 21, 1991 election campaign in Visakhapatnam. As Rajiv Gandhi walked towards the stage accepting the bouquets and garlands given by the people, the waiting suicide bomber bent over to touch his feet and the bomb placed around her waist exploded. All we saw was the ball of fire.

The mastermind of the assassination was the LTTE leadership who wanted an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka. India had sent troops to assist the Sri Lankan government in the civil war. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord was signed in July 1987 between Rajiv Gandhi and then Sri Lankan President JR Jayewardene. Under the agreement, the LTTE was dissolved and Tamil became one of the official languages of Sri Lanka.

In an interview with the Sunday Magazine on August 21, 1990, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said that if he had returned to power, he would have sent

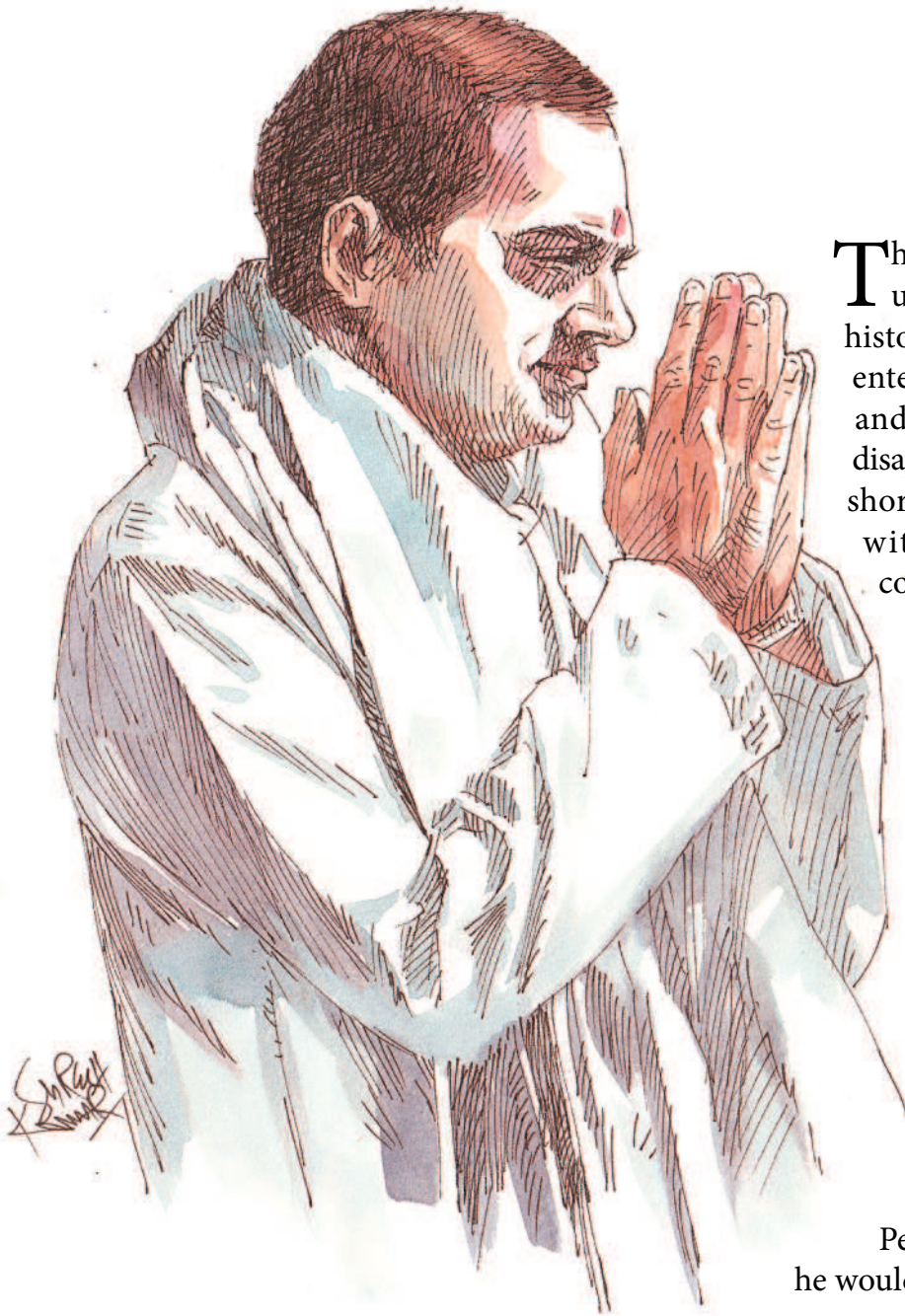
another peacekeeping force to restore peace in Sri Lanka. The assassination was planned by the LTTE to prevent Rajiv Gandhi from returning to power as the militant group feared that India would once again play a role in the Sri Lankan civil war.

The Chandrasekhar government, which came to power after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, has handed over the probe to the CBI. A special investigation team led by DR Karthikeyan was on the case.

The investigation found that the LTTE had planned and carried out the murder and found 26 people guilty in the case. Following this, the special court sentenced all of them to death. It was a verdict that shocked legal experts in the country. Rajiv Gandhi was the sixth Prime Minister. In 1984, at the age of 40, he became the youngest Prime Minister in the country. He was buried on the banks of the Yamuna River in Delhi, near the graveyard of his mother, brother, and grandfather. The ground is known as Veerbhumi.



A Person of Rarity



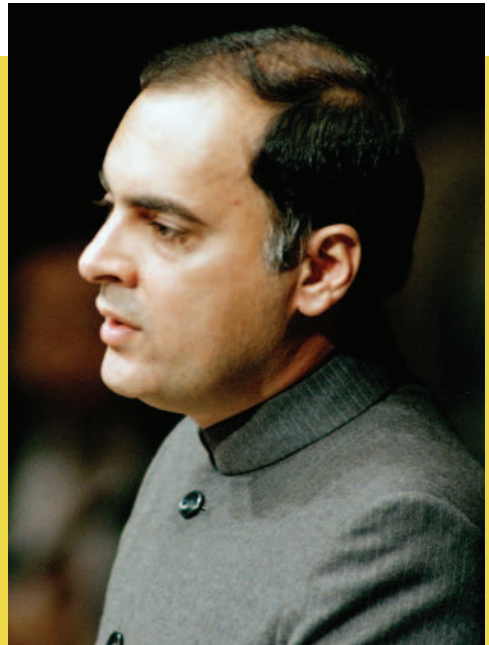
The life of Rajiv Gandhi is unparalleled in Indian political history. A rare personality who entered politics in unexpected and tragic circumstances and disappeared into history in a very short period (just seven years) with many good and bad contributions.

His reign was not long enough to be compared with the lives of political figures (some have likened him to Kennedy), not just in India, but in world history itself, but it was a time of comprehensive change in India's political, social, and economic spheres. Contrary to what is said by the BJP, it was this same man who started the new India we see today.

Perhaps, if he had lived longer, he would have received a little more

Leader of the Opposition

From 1989 to 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was the Leader of the Opposition and President of the Congress. During this period, two governments ruled India under the leadership of VP Singh and Chandrasekhar. Rajiv Gandhi withdrew his short-lived support for the Chandrasekhar cabinet, leading to re-election.



justice in the eyes of history. The remnant of his rule was a wonderful start and a slightly disappointing end. In the small period it lasted, the interesting history had its own ups and downs and hopes and despairs. A kind of a tragedy in Indian politics. In the wave of sympathy caused by the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, Rajiv Gandhi, who came to power with the largest majority in India (50 percent of the vote and more than 80 percent of the seats), was the only hope of the disoriented Indian people at that time. The world called him 'Mr. Clean' and the new age phenomenon leading India to the 21st century.

Rajiv Gandhi was remembered by the people of his time, especially the middle class and youth, who understood the need to integrate India with technology and the economy. At that time, policies were introduced to dismantle the 'license raj' system and deregulate it to increase domestic production and achieve higher economic, industrial growth. Although it was very popular among the middle class, it was a time when the Indian economy as

a whole was experiencing strong growth. For example, the construction sector grew by 8.9 percent. Market capitalization has multiplied. Rajiv Gandhi was a Prime Minister who was shocked by the imaginative changes in the political and social spheres when he came to power. He restored peace in Punjab, Assam, and Mizoram, which had long been a headache, and were milestones in Indian democracy. Rajiv traveled all over the country to learn about India and talked to people about his expectations. It was a time when everyone had faith in the future of India.

The time of Rajiv Gandhi was eventful. Five years of the rise of many progressive policies and activities, the first steps of modern India, the political leadership that gave India confidence, the handsome personality who spoke the language of hope. (Courtesy: Mathrubhumi)

G. Pramod

Former UNDP Asia-Pacific
Consultant and Columnist

Rajiv Gandhi:

A Perfect Professional



Sam Pitroda

My view is that if modernization needs a real path, if a real India is to be built, the country must go back to the era and vision of Rajiv Gandhi.

Rajiv Gandhi was a perfect professional with a clear vision about the future. He grew up in a political family. He was a defender of the idea of India rooted in Gandhian values.

The expectation of young people like me at the time was that he would understand science and technology. The reason for that belief was that Rajiv was a trained pilot. We thought he could bring a scientific attitude to solve the problems of the country. That is the reason behind people like me deciding at that time to

return to their home country from other countries and work. I was not alone. There were many like me.

According to me, the best opportunity that India got was when Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister. Rajiv was a great opportunity for India to accelerate modernization. A symbol of youth. He was not a part of any fundraising system. He was not a corrupt man, as some alleged. All those allegations were false. All the allegations against Bofors were completely fabricated.

When Rajiv Gandhi came to power, the people felt that they had gained power. However, some were concerned that this new approach would undermine the existing structure built on vested interests. For example, the import lobby entered the telecom arena with opposition. The old leaders in politics were confused. With the advent of computers, bureaucracy was exposed. They protested. Thus crises arose in many ways. Unknown fears arose. However, we have tackled all these issues. When some vested interests questioned our actions, we ignored them.

Some have questioned why Rajiv Gandhi brought these people from outside the country. Why bring people like Sam Pitroda. What do they know about India? The question was, What do they know about Indian villages? But they did not know that I was from an Indian village. They did not realize that my father had only a fourth-grade education. After all, you don't have to be poor to include poor Indians. You just have to be more discriminating with the help you render toward other people. They do not realize that you need to be selfless. The romance that built the country, the romance of building a country was in

Recipients of the Bharat Ratna

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1954).
C. Rajagopalachari (1954) • C.V. Raman (1954) • Bhagwan Das (1955) • Visvesvaraya (1955) • Jawaharlal Nehru (1955) • G.B. Ball (1957) • D.K. Karve (1958). B.C. Roy (1961) • Purushottam Das Tandon (1961) • Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1962) • Dr. Zakir Hussain (1963) • Pandurang Waman Kane (1963) • Lal Bahadur Shastri (1966) Indira Gandhi (1971) • V.V. Giri (1975). K. Kamaraj (1976) • Mother Teresa (1980) • Acharya Vinobhabhave (1983) Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1987) • M.G. Ramachandran (1988) • Babasaheb Ambedkar (1990) • Nelson Mandela (1990) • Rajiv Gandhi (1991) • Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1991) • Morarji Desai (1991) Abul Kalam Azad (1992) • J.R.D. Tata (1992) • Satyajit Ray (1992) • APJ Abdul Kalam (1997) • Gulzarilal Nanda (1997) • Aruna Asaf Ali (1997) • MS. Subbalakshmi (1998) • Chidambaram Subramaniam (1998) • Jayaprakash Narayan (1998) Pandit Ravi Shankar (1999) • Amartya Sen (1999) Gopinath Bordoloi (1999) Lata Mangeshkar (2001) • Bismillah Khan (2001) 2008 CNR. Rao (2014) • Sachin Tendulkar (2014) • AB Vajpayee (announced in 2015 - 2014) • Madan Mohan Malaviya (announced in 2015 - 2014) • Bhuphan Hazarika (2019) • Pranab Mukherjee (2019) Nanaji Deshmukh (2019)



the eyes and the minds of everyone around him. The first two or three years of rule were very good. Then came the Shah Bano case. It affected the administration. There is no doubt that he was wrong in his handling of the matter. But if a mistake is made, it can be corrected. However, it did not take long and some people jumped on the bandwagon and created a commotion and confusion. With that, things turned against him. The election failed. With that, India's growth derailed, affecting development, vested interests being the only things that prevailed.

Until then, India was on China's path of growth. In the telecom sector, I can say for sure. When we started the Center for Development of Telematics or C-DOT in India, Huawei did not exist in China. In the telecom sector, we were far ahead of China. If that speed had continued we would have grown like China. Not on the basis of big construction, but of bringing people out of poverty.

Rajiv was able to create the so-called telecom revolution of the day. Rajiv Gandhi believed me. It allowed me to do what I wanted to do. He did not try to take credit for what I did. Extensive and powerful

technology missions were formed during the reign of Rajiv Gandhi. Several plans were formulated for development. The best efforts were made in the fields of defense, industry, pharmaceuticals, automobile industry, and so on. Everyone who was with Rajiv did his best whether it was Rahul Bajaj, Mukesh Ambani, Sam Pitroda, V Krishnamurthy, or Ashok Ganguly. We all followed the same path to build India. But we soon lost that momentum.

The Man Behind the Vaccines

I wonder what Rajiv Gandhi would have done if he had been in power during this period of the COVID Pandemic. Rajiv Gandhi started the Immunization Mission for Vaccination in the country.

I do not know how many people remember that polio was eradicated from the country through this immunization mission; 35 years ago. The field of biotechnology was developed at that time. India has grown into the largest vaccine manufacturer today, thanks to the immunization mission of Rajiv Gandhi, which provided the infrastructure for vaccine production. At that time power was completely decentralized. It was not



ordered from a single-center, the Prime Minister's Office.

In a pandemic situation, The country needs a democratic system similar to the one that existed during Rajiv's rule. We need to build the team. It was learned that a scientist had resigned from the high committee for COVID management the previous day. He resigned after realizing that the scientific attitude did not matter.

Things that are happening today, including forging data, never happened during the rule of Rajiv Gandhi. He would have been anxious and angry about many things. But he would listen to scientists. There was a Scientific Advisory Council then, of which I was also a member. Rajiv used to see us constantly. He would spend hours with us. Those meetings were all about learning, listening, and talking, and listening to the country's voluntary organizations. The whole of civil society would be heard. But in today's India, Civil society is being killed. Income tax raids are

carried out on NGOs for receiving funds. No scientific institute today is independent. The scientific mindset is not encouraged. Some people drink cow urine for healing. Some politicians say that if you bathe in dung, the disease will go away.

Democratic values must return

Today we wish to have a leader like Rajiv Gandhi. He would've brought people together. Real people and their talents would have been found and stopped from leaving the country. He would trust them and strengthen them. My view is that if modernization requires a real path, if a real India is to be built, then the country must go back to the era of Rajiv Gandhi, to his visions.

(Satyanarayana Gangaram Pitroda alias Sam Pitroda, a leading architect of India's IT and telecom leaps, was a friend and advisor to Rajiv Gandhi. Courtesy: <https://www.mathrubhumi.com/features/politics/sam-pitroda-remembers-6>)

