

Wharton India Forum to Feature Leaders from Different Fields

FROM NEWS DISPATCHES

Organizers of the annual conference on the Indian economy at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Business School had to change their plans for a videoconference with Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi following a petition drive opposing it.

Modi was supposed to deliver the keynote address at the 17th Wharton India Economic Forum March 23, via video, but according to Press Trust of India, a petition drive initiated by several UPenn professors and signed by more than 250 people, resulted in WIEF organizers canceling the chief minister's talk.

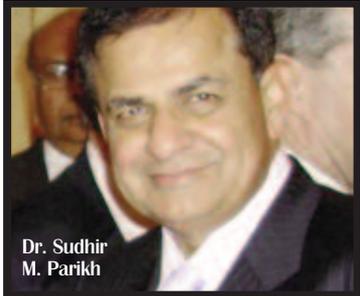
Over the last 16 years, students at Wharton have organized the annual Wharton India Economic Forum which brings in heavyweights in industry and academics from around the world to UPenn. This year's guests include India's Deputy Planning Commissioner Montek Ahluwalia,



Montek Ahluwalia



Milind Deora



Dr. Sudhir M. Parikh



Ron Somers

(via live videoconference); Milind Deora, India's minister of state for IT and communication; and Ron Somers, chair of the U.S.-India Business Council, among others. The theme of the 2013 conference is "Changing Seas: Steering for

Growth". Among other distinguished speakers to address the forum will be Dr. Sudhir M. Parikh, Padma Shri award winner and publisher of Desi Talk, who will participate in a panel on NRIs. In 2005, the State Department

refused Modi a visa on grounds of alleged human rights violations in Gujarat in 2002 where some 2,000 people, majority of them Muslim, were killed in riots. Rights activists said Modi did nothing to stop the killing and burning. Washington continues to deny him the visa even as other countries, including U.K. have met with Modi in a bid to explore investment opportunities in Gujarat. He has been hailed as an economic leader and is successfully positioned as a strong contender for the Prime Ministerial candidate of the

Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2014 general elections in India.

Wharton India organizers said that while they still hold to their position of having Modi as a speaker, they would bow to the strong opposition generated in the wider UPenn community. PTI also reported March 4, that Gautam Adani of the Adani Group of companies had pulled out as the keynote speaker following the uproar. The Adani Group is the main sponsor of the Wharton event, according to the website dedicated to the WIEF.

Conference to Offer Mentoring and Networking Platform for South Asian Women

BY A STAFF WRITER

The South Asian Women's Leadership Forum will mark its 10th anniversary and Women's History Month by hosting the SAWLF Congress on March 9 in New York City. Described by SAWLF as the country's premier forum for South Asian women, the day-long event is expected to attract more than 400 women.

Established in 2003, SAWLF is the first national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of South Asian women and girls in the marketplace. SAWLF serves as a primary networking and mentoring platform for South Asian women and girls.

Featured speakers include Ann Mukherjee, SVP and chief marketing officer, Frito-Lay North America; Anika Rahman, executive director, Ms. Foundation for Women; Rachel Roy, designer, mother and philanthropist; Ranji Nagaswami, Bridgewater Associates; Savita Subramanian, head of US Equity and US Quantitative Strategy, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Vrinda Menon, managing director, Goldman Sachs; Mukta Farooq, senior technical staff member and Master Inventor, IBM; Abha Kumar, principal, Vanguard; Radhika Venkatraman, Verizon Jagruti Bhika; and Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology.

Panel presentations will be held on "Women and Philanthropy"

with Lata Reddy, vice president, Corporate Social Responsibility and president, The Prudential Foundation; Penny Abeywardena, head of Girls and Women and associate director of Commitments, Clinton Global Initiative; Sayu Bhojwani, The New American Leaders Project and Sarita Gupta, president, Indico.

Also included is Speed Mentoring with Ruma Bose, Laura Brightsen and Umber Ahmad

The event is presented by PricewaterhouseCoopers and will take place at their offices in Midtown Manhattan, 300 Madison Avenue (SW corner of 42nd Street).

On-line registration now open: <http://www.ersvp.com/r/event8829/regmain>

Edison Group to Host International Women's Day Celebrations

BY A STAFF WRITER

The Edison Visionary Lions Club will celebrate International Women's Day on March 16 at North Brunswick High School. A symposium on "Entrepreneurship for Women" will be followed by New Jersey premiere of critically acclaimed documentary "It's a Girl." Shot on location in India and China, the documentary explores the question of why are 200 million girls missing.

India, China and many other parts of the world today, girls are killed, aborted and abandoned simply because they are girls, the film's website says. The United

Nations estimates as many as 200 million girls are missing in the world today because of this so-called "gendercide."

According to a press release by the organizers, the March 16 celebration is an attempt to initiate a conversation on the importance of rights for women in families and society in general. The symposium is open to the registered participants and speakers include prominent entrepreneurs and policy makers. Attendees are invited to participate in discussions on entrepreneurship among women.

The club spends 100% of the raised funds for their service activities like supporting children victims of Woodbridge apartment fire, individuals with special needs

and helped victims of super storm Sandy along with many other community service projects. Part of the proceeds from this event will go to the family of the New Delhi rape victim, who has become a symbol of safety for women. A suggested donation for attending the event is \$10. Tickets can be purchased online using following link:

https://donations.sulekha.com/donate-to_donate-to-edison-visionary-lions-club_1118

For more information or to get involved with the Edison Visionary Lions Club, contact Lion Mahesh Chitnis at (732-800-2273) / mahesh.chitnis@visionarylions.org or visit <http://visionarylions.org>.

Stony Brook University's Firing of Indian Director Draws Public Protest

BY BHARGAVI KULKARNI

— NEW YORK

Scholars, artists, writers, activists and students have come together to support Sunita Mukhi, who was fired last month as the director of the Charles B. Wang Center's Asian/American Programming at the State University of New York in Stony Brook. With a growing population of Asian and Asian American students, many view Mukhi's abrupt dismissal as a case of racial discrimination since Mukhi is the only administrator whose contract was not renewed. She is of Indian

descent, born in the Philippines, and has served as director for 10 years.

According to Mukhi the electronic petition, demanding her reinstatement as the director, has so far garnered 1,300 signatures. The petition deplores the university's downgrading of Asian programming, she said., adding that the petition drive had "made an impact."

Mukhi said the news of her firing came as a surprise to her. "I feel rather blind-sided by this unexpected change in my career," Mukhi told Desi Talk. According to her the programs were doing well and had a good response and audience. She was informed Feb. 12, that her position had been discontinued and her term ended Feb. 28. The new season began March 1.

The Stony Brook University website credits Mukhi with producing innovative programming to promote a multi-faceted, intellectually sound and humane understanding of Asianness; of having presented artists of international caliber such as Eiko and Koma, Nyrtyagram, Roksonaki, Kadri

Gopalnath, Kenny Endo, and Niyaz; edgy contemporary performers like D'Lo, Christina Wong, Rizwan Mirza; popular comedians like Russell Peters, Eliot Chang, Dean Obedallah and Maysoon Zahid amongst others; and has curating a number of exhibitions.

"I feel my work is not done," Mukhi said, noting she had a great line-up for the new season, had she been allowed to

continue her position. "I wanted to take the program to the next level, make it more visible nationally and maybe internationally," she said.

Mukhi feels the program has been "compromised" even though the

statement issued by the university says programming will not be affected and that it is looking for a full-time associate director. She concedes however, that the statement shows the university's concern for Asian-American programming.

A Ph.D. in performance studies from New York University, Mukhi was recently awarded the Stony Brook University Provost's award as a senior lecturer. She also received an award from the Organization of Chinese Americans - Long Island (OCA-LI) for her "outstanding" contributions to the Asian American communities of Long Island, New York. Mukhi also teaches performing arts at Stony Brook.

She is looking for other options she says as her teaching assignment at the university ends when the academic year comes to a close. She is looking forward to a "more creative career", one which includes continuing her work at Wang if they reinstate her, or perhaps even open an institute of her own, she said.



Sunita Mukhi