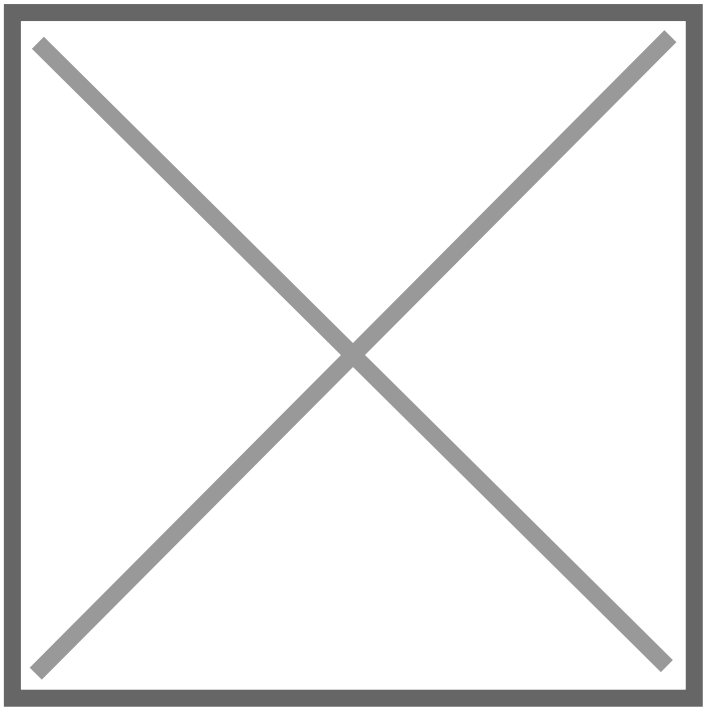
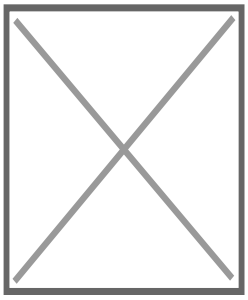
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Bill Gates in India

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Ch. Srinivas Rao
The author is
Editor of BioSpectrum
srinivasch@cybermedia.co.in

Bill Gates, Microsoft founder and co-chairman of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was in India from May 30 to June 1, 2012. Gates visits India once every year to assess the progress made by his Foundation, which has invested over $1 billion in programs to fight diseases and poverty. Ã¢â?¬Å?I am pleased with the results of those investments, and we are going to continue to invest more in the future,Ã¢â?¬? writes Bill Gates. Ã¢â?¬Å?There are two reasons for our commitment to India. First, our mission as an organization is to help all people live a healthy, productive life and also help a huge number of people who are sick and impoverished live on the subcontinent. There are 400 million Indians living in extreme poverty, more than in all 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa combined. The other reason why we invest in India is that we've found that the government can be a very effective partner, especially by scaling up the very best ideas and sustaining them over the long term. India started paying for its own polio eradication program and did a great job running it, which is why the country recently marked an entire year without a single case of polio,Ã¢â?¬? he adds.

A lot of pages can be written about the philanthropy and humanitarianism shown by Bill Gates. However, I take this opportunity to present his experiences which he has recorded on his official blogsite www.thegatesnotes.com.

He is very optimistic about the country's future. Ã¢â?¬Å?If you look at the kinds of things that are going well, such as partnerships between the government and NGOs that focus on a common purpose, India is really a microcosm of the world. The kinds of advances we see there-especially in health-will over time extend to even the poorest countries. I'm always excited to see where India is going, and this recent trip reminded me again why the people and the country are so special,Ã¢â?¬? wrote Gates.

He sites the example of Avahan, an HIV prevention program that's now reaching millions of the people most at-risk for contracting and spreading the virus. The Foundation helped launch the project, supported and guided it and Avahan was taken over by government of India after 10 years.

He truly believes that India is a solid investment for anyone who cares about development. During his visit he met people working on eradicating polio such as Dr Cyrus Poonawalla, CMD, Serum Institute of India, and several others. Gates was impressed with Serum's low-cost vaccines and its facilities.

He spent the last part of his trip meeting business leaders and philanthropists in India. His perception was that Ã¢â?¬Å?While the circumstances for giving are unique in India, it was amazing just how much their discussion sounded like the conversations I've had with wealthy business people and philanthropists in the US and elsewhere. A few common themes emerged. People agreed it was often easier to make the money than to give it away in a thoughtful way. There was a huge feeling of personal satisfaction in their philanthropic work, and a deep sense of societal obligation to give back. With so many problems to address, deciding where to engage and how to do it weighs heavily on their minds.Ã¢â?¬?

These are some of the insights which Gates reflected during the trip.