



From the Director's Desk

Indian agriculture has made great strides since the launching of the Green Revolution. It is introducing improved agricultural technology, expanding the areas under irrigated cultivation, diversifying cropping patterns and producing food surpluses. India is ranked second in the world in terms of agricultural output. The total output of food grains in 2007-2008 was 219.32 million tons, which is an all-time record. Yet, the country's present performance in agriculture is unsatisfactory. Agriculture growth rate for the year 2007-2008 was a disappointing 2.6 per cent. Low crop productivity, high cost of food, low purchasing power, lack of markets, low water productivity, excessive use of chemicals, under-utilised rain-fed and wastelands are some of the reasons for this. Increasing instances of farmers' suicides, particularly in the last decade, has demanded attention from everybody. As a result, 'Farmers Empowerment' has become an integral part of Government policies and implementing agencies. Since the last budget, the Government has formulated and announced the National Policy for Farmers. Besides, the Government has launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana with an outlay of Rs 25,000 crore and the National Food Security Mission with an outlay of Rs 4,882 crore. Both schemes will be implemented during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Under the Debt Waiver and Debt Relief package announced in the Budget 2008-09 for small and marginal farmers (with holdings up to two hectares), a complete waiver of all loans overdue on 31 December 2007 (which remained unpaid until 29 February 2008) has been proposed. For other farmers, there will be a One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme.

However, packages such as these do not result in farmers' empowerment. It demands an integrated strategic approach, which, ideally, should be a combination of technology, entrepreneurship and resource management. Today's technology can give farmers information on how to receive ample water,

seed and fertiliser to maximise yield. By adopting modern agriculture technology, farmers could raise the productivity of irrigated and rain-fed agriculture, combined with rainwater harvesting and water conservation techniques. Agro-based entrepreneurship would increase employment in rural areas as well as encourage rural youth in further strengthening their agro-based income. The management of natural resources in rural areas could help in the efficient utilisation and conservation of India's natural resources, especially water bodies and forests.

The link between agriculture and food continually evolves. Commodity traders, processors, manufacturers who convert produce into food items and retailers, among others, are interposed between the producer and consumer. A more recently introduced link into the chain is the scientist. Scientists as breeders, plant biologists, nutritionists and chemists have made an immeasurable contribution to the development of agricultural production and food manufacture over the past 50 years. It appears that after passing through the age of machines and the age of chemicals in agriculture we are now on to the age of biotechnology. Biotechnology has great potential for developing countries since it is likely to be less capital intensive and more research and know-how intensive. Its benefits can flow faster into those who do not have the capital and its impact could be faster, more widespread and more significant.

It is high time that the Government, policy makers, researchers, social thinkers, national and international NGOs and implementing bodies join hands and start working with a systematic approach so that farmers' empowerment becomes a reality.



Suresh Ambekar
Director

Breakthrough Technologies

Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development Programme
West Bengal, 8-12 January 2008

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra organised a five-day training programme on Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development at Purulia, West Bengal, in collaboration with Kalyan Krishi Vigyan Kendra, from 8-12 January 2008. The programme was sponsored by Ford Foundation.

The focus of the training programme was on increasing the yield of the farmers through the latest technological breakthroughs, that is, adopting newer high

yielding variety crops, crop protection techniques, use of IEC in agriculture, use of vermi and Nadep compost and allied areas such as animal husbandry, composite pisciculture and poultry farming with the aim to raise their income and hence their standard of living.

The inaugural session began at 10 am. A.K. Pati, President, Kalyan, welcomed the participants. He boosted their morale by making them realise their contributions towards the development of the

Topics Covered

- Second generation problem after the Green Revolution.
- Use of various fertilisers and its role in crop growth.
- Package of practices for commercial vegetable cultivation.
- Integrated pest management strategies in important vegetables with special reference to available bio-control strategies.
- Integrated pest management strategies in paddy.
- Role of micronutrients in enhancing crop production.
- Integrated pest management strategies in important fruit crops of Purulia with special reference to available bio-control strategies.
- Integrated nutrient management strategies.



Ground reality

The focus of the training programme was on increasing the yield of the farmers through the latest technological breakthroughs

country. The programme was formally inaugurated with the lighting of the lamp in the presence of Ajit Mondal, Principal Agriculture Officer, Purulia; Dr K.K. Pal, Deputy Director, Animal Resource Development, Purulia; S. Mahato, Assistant Secretary, Kalyan; Swami Bhaskarananda; Tapan Choudhury, Senior Programme Officer, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra and

- Different kinds of seeds and its production technology.
- Banks' role in agricultural development.
- Information and communication technology in agricultural extension.
- Improved agricultural implements suitable for Purulia.
- Integrated pest management strategies in important pulses with special reference to available bio-control strategies.
- Vermi and Nadep composting techniques.
- Disease management in backyard poultry.
- Disease management in goat and sheep.
- Concept of composite farming.
- Composite pisciculture.



Session in progress

The plenary and interactive session aimed to cover major queries of the farmers and to highlight the farmers' determination to adopt the things learned during the training programme

S.K. Bhattacharya, Programme Co-ordinator, Kalyan, KVK. Ajit Mondal saluted the farmers' determination and spirit. Tapan Choudhury was cheered by the

crowd when he expressed his best wishes for the success of more such programmes in the future. He earnestly hoped that the Kendra would continue to work for the upliftment of the farmers. Fifty farmers from 26 villages participated in the programme. The resource persons were from the Department of Fishery, Department of Animal Resource Development, Government of West Bengal; Kalyan Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Purulia and Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi. Each resource person shared his expertise with the participants and clarified their doubts.

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The five-day training programme concluded on 12 January. A.K. Pati gave the valedictory speech. Ajit Mondal presented the vote of thanks.

The programme ended with the distribution of certificates to all the participants.

During the special session, as an impact of the training programme, the following initiatives that farmers decided to take emerged:

- To start cultivating vegetables, including high yielding variety of paddy, tomato, etc.
- To start goat and sheep rearing as a profession.
- To start preparing vermicompost and then using it in their fields.
- To adopt poultry farming of ducks and chickens as a profession.
- To start the production of seeds for commercial purposes.
- To construct nursery of plants, especially flowers, for commercial purposes.
- To form Kisan clubs for experience sharing and problem solving as well as for the purpose of agriculture extension work.



Future Progression

National Youth Day, 12 January 2008



Lighting the thoughts

To commemorate the National Youth Day, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra organised an Inter-School Debate on 12 January 2008. The topic for the debate was, “Do parents have any right in deciding their child’s future?”

Bani Bora, Programme Officer, VYK, welcomed the participants, teachers, judges and audience.

In 1985, the Government of India declared 12 January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, as National Youth Day. The Kendra, a pioneering organisation working in the field of youth development, decided to celebrate the day this year by organising an inter-school debate competition.

Suresh Ambekar, Director, VYK, inaugurated the programme by lighting the lamp and invited the

“Do parents have any right in deciding their child’s future?” is not only an interesting topic but also a thought-provoking issue for social thinkers

judges to join him. He then introduced the judges and the chief guest to the audience.

Bani Bora read out the rules for the competition and conducted the competition.

“Do parents have any right in deciding their child’s future?” is not only an interesting topic but also a thought-provoking issue for social thinkers. Each participant, whether speaking for or against the motion, handled the topic very efficiently, with forceful presentation and confidence. Movies such as *Tare Zameen Par* and *Iqbal*, quotations, stories and life sketches of Einstein, George Bernard Shaw and Narendra Modi were aptly referred to support views. The interjectors were also in competition with their on-the-spot queries. It was a tough task for the judges.

The judges were:

- Pragma Chaturvedi, Education Consultant
 - Br. M.B. Finn, Vice Principal, St. Columba’s School
 - Suresh Ambekar, Director, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra
- After the competition, Professor S.V. Eswaran was invited to take over. Professor Eswaran is the Head, Department of Chemistry,



Reinforcing views

St Stephen's College, New Delhi. As he spoke, the chemistry developed between the audience and the speaker. His inimitable style of presentation on 'The Wandering Monk' was very enlightening and presented a vivid summary of Swami Vivekananda's life and philosophy.

Upon the prompting of Professor Eswaran, the audience began to read along Swami Vivekananda's sayings, and the resultant reverberation created a highly charged atmosphere.

Br. M.B. Finn presented his observations regarding the competition and announced the winners. Brother Finn, Irish by birth, has been serving in India for the past 40 years in the field of

The Players

- Air Force Golden Jubilee Institute
- Blue Bells International School
- Kerala Education Society Senior Secondary School
- Sadhu Vaswani International School
- Kalka Public School

Accolades

Best Team Blue Bells International School.

Second Best Air Force Golden Jubilee Institute

Best Speaker Natasha Sharma, Blue Bells International School

First Runner-up Ekta Dwivedy, Blue Bells International School

Second Runner-up Sanchi Chandna, Sadhu Vaswani International School

Best Interjector 1 Shazma Iqbal, Air Force Golden Jubilee Institute

Best Interjector 2 Pavitra Kaur, Sadhu Vaswani International School

Brother Finn pointed out that, irrespective of the participants' views for and against the topic, the greatest asset of Indian culture is the respect for parents and elders

education. He pointed out that, irrespective of the participants' views for and against the topic, the greatest asset of Indian culture is the respect for parents and elders.

Trophies, certificates and cash prizes of Rs 1,000 for the Best Speaker, Rs 700 for the First Runner-up, Rs 500 for the Second Runner-up and Rs 200 each for the two best interjectors were presented to the winners. A certificate of participation and a memento were presented to the rest.

Suresh Ambekar thanked the schools and participants for making it convenient to participate on a day, which was otherwise a holiday for schools. He especially conveyed thanks to the principals for their participation and for making the programme a success. Suresh Ambekar also thanked the judges Pragya Chaturvedi and Br. M.B. Finn for sparing so much of their time and helping in deciding the winners. Professor Eswaran's style of presentation and interactive session was highly appreciated by Suresh Ambekar who thanked him for making it convenient to attend the function, despite his busy schedule.

The winners with Professor S. V. Eswaran



Women on the Agenda

Training for the Organisers of the AGP
6-15 February 2008

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, in collaboration with the Delhi Social Welfare Board, organised a training for the organisers of the Awareness Generation Programme from 6-15 February 2008. The programme is implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board and aims at creating awareness in the community on issues relating to the status, rights and problems of

participation in decision-making in the family and in society and to deal with social issues, including atrocities on women and children.

The training programme commenced with lighting of the lamp and a welcome address by Suresh Ambekar, Director, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. Motiya Garg, Chairperson, Delhi Social Welfare Board, also addressed the participants on the inaugural day



Motiya Garg, Chairperson, Delhi Social Welfare Board, addresses the participants

women. The programme provides a platform for the rural and poor women to come together, exchange their experiences and ideas, and in the process, develop the ways and means to tackle their problems and fulfil their needs. The programme also enables women to organise themselves and strengthen their



Rajni Patil, Chairperson, Central Social Welfare Board (extreme right) with the participants

Topics Covered

- Primary education and adult education—its importance
Bani Bora, VYK
- HIV/AIDS and take-home messages on its prevention
Dr Deepanjan Roy, US Embassy
- Reproductive health and female foeticide: effect on health and society
Dr Samiksha, LNJP Hospital
- Population explosion: how it affects the life of an individual and society
Dr Gyanender, Mahila Vikas Sansthan
- Self Help Groups: Concept and formation
A.N. Singhal, Chetanalaya
- Vocational training for women
Shashi Pathak, Jan Shikshan Sansthan
- Legal rights of women
Bani Bora, VYK
- Right to Information Act, 2005
Ajit Kumar Rai, VYK
- First aid, immunisation and health care
Dr Praveen, AIIMS

and expressed what an important role the trainees play in the life of the numbers of deprived downtrodden people of their community. She also hoped that this training would further strengthen them in working for the cause of women empowerment.

There were discussions on low cost balanced diets, personal hygiene and sanitation and environment protection for healthy living. These were facilitated by VYK faculty Vikas Kumar and Ajit Kumar Rai. A film show on women empowerment was also organised.

The programme provides a platform for the rural and poor women to come together to exchange their experiences and ideas

A field visit to Kalyanam Stree Kosh Kendra, an NGO working for the promotion of income generation among poor women, was very much appreciated by the participants.

Rajni Patil, Chairperson, Central Social Welfare Board, also visited Vishwa Yuvak Kendra and encouraged the participants of 46 voluntary organisations. She told the participants that they are the real change agents of society and, therefore, they would know better what is happening around them and should fight against all evils.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by the Director, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra and Khursheed Bano, Secretary, DSWB. This was followed by the distribution of certificates to the participants.

Doing the Basics

Entrepreneurship Development Programme
7-11 February 2008



Initiating development from the grass-root

Kashi-ka-Bas, a village in the district of Sikar in Rajasthan, was the venue for the Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development Programme, held from 7-11 February 2008. Sixty-five farmers from Kashi-ka-Bas and nearby villages actively participated in the programme. Resource persons from leading NGOs, the Khadi & Village Industries Board, NABARD, Lead Bank, District Forest Office and the Agriculture Department facilitated the discussions and shared valuable information on various relevant topics. The doctor from the Government veterinary hospital also held sessions on animal care and breed improvement.

Topics Covered

- Schemes of the Khadi & Village Industries Board for farmers.
- Role of NABARD for the development of farmers.
- Tree plantation and protection of the environment.
- Organic farming.
- Introducing new crops such as aloe vera, sunflower, etc. for better income.
- Crop insurance.
- How Drip irrigation helps?
- How banks contribute to the development of farmers?

Future Course

- To form Kisan clubs in all the villages represented by the farmers in the training programme in association with NABARD.
- To grow some new crops (non-traditional) as an experiment.
- To allocate some areas of land for organic farming.
- To keep regular contact with the concerned Government departments as well as the Jamnalal Kaniram Bajaj Trust for updated information on agriculture and avail the benefits of various schemes.
- To visit the nearby model agriculture farms raised by progressive farmers for drawing inspiration.
- To plant trees every year with the help of the Forest Department.
- To prepare vermi compost.



Looking Ahead

Budget 2008

Overdue loans to be waived; a National Food Security Mission to be set up; 16 Central Universities and three IITs; health spending to rise by 15 per cent; the Government to create a national fund for power transmission and distribution—these were just some of the highlights of this year's Budget

Agriculture

- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana with an outlay of Rs 25,000 crore.
- National Food Security Mission with an outlay of Rs 4,882 crore.
- All agricultural loans disbursed by scheduled commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative credit institutions up to 31 March 2007 and overdue as on 31 December 2007 will be covered under the scheme.
- For marginal farmers (that is, holding up to one hectare) and small farmers (one to two hectares), there will be a complete waiver of all loans that were overdue on 31 December 2007 and which remained unpaid until 29 February 2008. In respect of other farmers, there will be a one time settlement (OTS) scheme for all loans that were overdue on 31 December 2007 and which remained unpaid until 29 February 2008. Under the OTS, a rebate of 25 per cent will be given against the payment of the balance of 75 per cent.
- Agricultural loans were restructured and rescheduled by banks in 2004 and 2006 through special packages. These rescheduled loans, and other loans rescheduled in the normal course as per RBI guidelines, will also be eligible either for a waiver or an OTS on the same pattern.
- The implementation of the debt waiver and debt relief scheme will be completed by 30 June 2008. Upon being granted a debt waiver or on signing an agreement for debt relief under the OTS, the farmer would be entitled to fresh agricultural loans from the banks in accordance with normal rules.
- The Government estimates that about three crore small and marginal farmers and about one crore other farmers will benefit from the scheme. The total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs 50,000 crore and the OTS relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs 10,000 crore.
 - A Rs 280,000 crore target has been set to farm credit in FY 2009.



Education

- Sixteen new Central Universities.
- Three new IITs.
- Education gets 20 per cent more—Rs 34,400 crore from Rs 28,674 crore.
- Mid-day meal scheme to get Rs 8,000 crore.
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to get Rs 13,100 crore.
- Navodaya Vidyalayas in 20 districts with large concentration of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes—Rs 130 crore allocated.
- Set up additional 410 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas.
- National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship will be implemented by awarding 100,000 scholarships beginning 2008-09, to enable students to continue their education beyond Class VIII and up to Class XII.
- Nehru Yuva Kendras in 123 districts which do not have Kendras at present—Rs 10 crore allocated.
- Mid-day Meal Scheme will be extended to upper primary classes in Government and Government-aided schools in all blocks of the country—total beneficiaries 13.9 crore.



Health and Employment

- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) extended to all 596 rural districts.
- Two major interventions—Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana and National Programme—for the Elderly.
- Health spending to rise by 15 per cent to Rs 16,534 crore.
- National Rural Health Mission to get Rs 12,050 crore.



Power and Infrastructure

- Rural infrastructure scheme, Bharat Nirman, to get Rs 31,280 crore.
- Additional 10,000 MW power generation by March 2009.
- The Government to create a national fund for power transmission and distribution.
- National highways to get Rs 12,966 crore.
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) to improve urban infrastructure to get Rs 6,866 crore.
- Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission to supply safe drinking water—allocation Rs 7,300 crore.
- Total Sanitation Campaign to get Rs 1,200 crore.



Know the Day

Republic Day Celebration

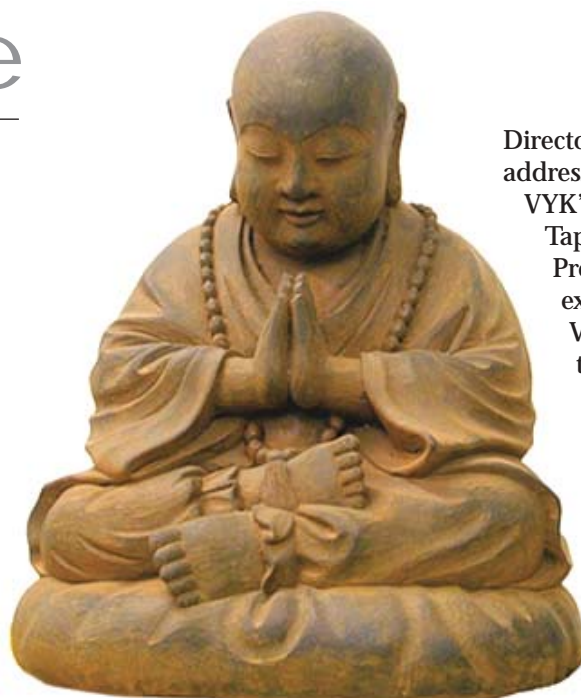
On the occasion of Republic Day, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra organised a programme at Netaji Nagar on 25 January 2008. The main objective of the programme was to share the significance of Republic Day with the people of Netaji Nagar. The programme commenced with a flag march around the community. Around 100 children took part in the march. The Programme Officer, Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, presented a brief summary on the significance of the Republic Day. Children performed cultural programmes by singing patriotic songs, dancing and acting on the theme of National Integration. The programme concluded with prizes being distributed to the participants of literacy classes and sports activities.



welcome

Students' Visit

A group of 39 MSW students comprising 8 girls and 31 boys from Vishwa Hindu College, Gulbarga, Karnataka, visited VYK on 22 February 2008 as a part of their educational visit to Delhi. The purpose of this visit was to have an exposure of the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra set-up and its functioning. Suresh Ambekar,



Director, VYK, gave the welcome address and briefed them about VYK's vision and objectives.

Tapan Choudhury, Senior Programme Officer, explained the activities of VYK. The students visited the VYK Resource Centre and Community Development Project at Netaji Nagar in Delhi. They described their visit as informative and fruitful.





Taking Stock

Additions to the Library, October 2007-March 2008

8 Types of Leaders: Every Leader Should Know
Del Pe: 2006

Affective Communities: Anti-colonial Thought and the Politics of Friendship
Gandhi, Leela: 2006

Autobiography of a Sex Worker
Jameela, Nalini: 2007

Childhood and Youth Studies
Zwozdiak-Mayers, Paula: 2007

Community, Gender and Violence
Chatterjee, Partha: 2007

Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship
Viramgami, Hitesh S.: 2007

Epicentre of Violence: Partition Voices and Memories from Amritsar
Talbot, Ian: 2006

Idea of Poverty
Spicker, Paul: 2007

Immolating Women
Fisch, Jorg: 2005

India's Economic Transition: The Politics of Reform
Mukherji, Rahul: 2007

Indian Microfinance: The Challenges of Rapid Growth
Ghate, Prabhu: 2007

Inequality, Cooperation and Environmental Sustainability
Baland, Jean-Marie: 2007

Law Relating to Sexual Harassment of Working Women
Bhasin, Alok: 2007

Moral Education
Venkataiah, N.: 2007

Political Violence and Politics in India
Subramanian, K.S.: 2007

Poverty and Deprivation in Urban India
Sabir Ali: 2007

Rural Transformation in India
Nayyar, Rohini: 2005

SEZs: Massacre Human Rights with Special Reference to Singur and Nandigram
Jai, Jenak Raj: 2007

Social Security for the Elderly
Rajan, S. Irudaya: 2008

Sustainability of NGO and Globalisation
Ravichandran, N.: 2007

Sustainable Development at Risk: Ignoring the Past
Hulse, Joseph H.: 2007

Thirsty Planet: Strategies for Sustainable Water Management
Hunt, Constance Elizabeth: 2007

Towards Water Wisdom: Limits, Justice, Harmony
Iyer, Ramaswamy R.: 2007

Urban Women in Contemporary India
Ghadially, Rehana: 2007

Voluntary Sector and Rural Development
Misra, Rajeeb: 2008

What Ails Governance?
Bhure Lal: 2007

What is Professional Social Work?
Payne, Malcolm: 2006

What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Terrorist Threat
Richardson, Louise: 2006

When a Tree Shook Delhi: The 1984 Carnage and its Aftermath
Mitta, Manoj and Phoolka, H.S.: 2007





Express Yourself

This is your page, appropriately called 'Voices'. We invite all our readers to be a part of this interactive page. Here, we feature a contest that can win you some exciting prizes. There is a column called 'Talking Pictures' that gives you a chance to participate in another exclusive activity. An inspiring quotation and a joke complete the page. So go ahead, express your thoughts, share your visions and enjoy yourself. Send us your pictures/ anecdotes/jokes at the address given below.



Talking Pictures


Here, you do the talking as well as the 'taking'. This is your chance to click! Send us your favourite photographs, and we will invite our readers to send interesting captions for them. Best entries will be suitably rewarded.

Happiness will spread everywhere, if citizens of our country decide to give. Giving gives happiness

APJ Abdul Kalam
Former President of India

BEST MEDICINE

Nobel Nitwit



A man is driving down a country road when he spots a farmer standing in the middle of a huge field of grass. He pulls the car over to the side of the road and notices that the farmer is just standing there, doing nothing, looking at nothing. The man gets out of the car, walks all the way out to the farmer and asks him, "Ah, excuse me mister, but what are you doing?" The farmer replies, "I'm trying to win a Nobel Prize." "How?" asks the man, puzzled. "Well I heard they give the Nobel Prize to people who are out standing in their field."

iQ

- What is India's rank in the world in terms of agricultural output?**

 - first
 - second
 - tenth
- The training programme on Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development for the farmers of District Purulia was sponsored by:**

 - Ford Foundation
 - PHDCCI
 - CREATE
- Which recently conducted training programme provides a platform for the rural and poor women to come together?**

 - Agro-based Entrepreneurship Development
 - Entrepreneurship Development Programme
 - Awareness Generation Programme
- The birthday of Swami Vivekananda, 12 January, is also celebrated as:**

 - National Youth Day
 - Women's Day
 - Lohri
- VYK organised a programme on the occasion of Republic Day at:**

 - Sarojini Nagar
 - Prem Nagar
 - Netaji Nagar

Readers, here are five questions taken from this newsletter. All you have to do is select the right option and send it to us at vyk@vykonline.org. The winner gets an exciting prize!

