

K P Singh advocates 'collective mission' for youth to change India

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Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, IND, 2008-04-06 13:37:38 (IndiaPRwire.com)

Mr. K P Singh, Chairman of India's largest real estate company DLF, today called upon the youth to embark on a "collective mission" to play a dominant role in the "Indian century" to make the country's living standards the best in the world.

Speaking at the seventh graduation day of the prestigious Indian School of Business at Hyderabad, Mr Singh strongly advocated a national movement to bring about a changes in "education, training and attitudes" to meet challenges as India fast emerges as a land of opportunities. He also made an epoch making suggestion to include Real Estate, Housing and Urban Development in the curriculum at all colleges and universities.

Analysing the reason for this subject being absent from the curriculum, he said: "In the Fifties and Sixties, after urban development had been taken over by the Government, there was a complete absence of industrialists representing the Real Estate and Urban Infrastructure sectors of the economy."

Nationalisation of Urban Development had led to the elimination of professional developers and mushrooming growth of thousands of fly-by-night builders who made rampant unauthorized constructions all over the country. This in turn led to haphazard growth and cities full of unauthorized shanties and slums and a substandard urban infrastructure. "To rectify this situation, we have to make a new beginning. We have to begin again more intelligently," Mr. Singh argued.

He pointed out that the country faces twin challenges of the colossal task of making growth inclusive by bringing about a transformation in the rural economy and revamping the entire housing and urban infrastructure to meet the gigantic future challenges and clear the backlog as well.

It is in this context, he said, there has to be "a change in mindsets". "This is where strategic education comes into play." While India can be proud of its industrial development, "we certainly cannot be proud of Urban Development and Housing," he said. The country also witnessed a strong lobbying solely for industrial development while the plight of urban development and housing was ignored.

"The challenge is not just achieving growth. Growth will take place. The challenge is to manage growth in a manner which makes it truly inclusive. The challenge is to change mindsets so that policy makers, bureaucrats and corporate leaders alike stop Thinking Small and Managing Shortages and, instead, start Thinking Big and Creating Surpluses, so that all sections of society can share the benefits of prosperity," he said.

Calling upon the business captains of tomorrow not to circumvent the law in pursuance of their career, he said: "In my type of business, real estate, which was hemmed in by archaic laws, to operate within the laws required a very unique method of working and I find that even now in India

today, although laws have become much simpler, this approach has not caught on the way it should have."

"So my advice to you, as young people starting your corporate careers, is this: Do not do wrong things. Always try to find solutions, to achieve the objectives, by doing the right things and not by breaking laws," he said and quoted the famous dictum of George Hoddy:: "Two wrongs don't make one right".

Talented young men and women had a major role to play by bringing about a change in mental attitudes, he said pointed out: "As future captains of industry, all of you have the collective responsibility to guide the destiny of this great country along the right path."

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