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Programme: - FRIDAY – APRIL 25, 2008

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Chocolate Quiz

Quiz Master – PP Rtn Pallav Mukherjee - **Loads of Prizes for Every One**

Venue: President Hotel , Sector 26, Chandigarh

Time: 7.00 PM

Genetic Engineering May Eliminate Human Hunger at the Cost of Human Health

Rtn Atul Grover, a Midtowner, spoke on the gains and perils of genetically modified (GM) foods, in our weekly meeting of April 18, 2008. He had his schooling in Yadindra Public School, SAS Nagar, completed the B.Com course from Government College for Men, Sector 11, Chandigarh in 1989, earned LLB from Punjab University in 1993, and completed MBA, again from Punjab university, in 1997. He spent more than three years in USA, New Jersey, working on software systems on law and legal processes, and returned to

India in 2003 to join family business of auto dealership, KLG Hyundai. Recently, he has diversified into the fast growing hospitality business and started the establishment of RIO Hotels in Sector 35-C, Chandigarh.

He started the talk by giving some startling facts on food and population, such as, 90% of the food requirements of the world are met from fewer than 30 plant varieties, only 10 multinational companies account for over half the sales of all food and drinks in



All on Genetic Engineering

Milk without Fat is like Non-Alcoholic Scotch

- **Andy Rooney**, Broadcaster



All the Happy Cakes



Robust Interaction

the US, top 20% of the world's population consumes 86% of what is produced in the world and the poorest 20% consume only 1% of the total produce.

The world has faced famines in the twentieth century in many countries, and any technology that helps to feed the billions is welcome. The green revolution solved the hunger problems of the world to a large extent and it has also brought in some perils like the pollution by pesticides in the drinking water and the lowering of the underground water table. The world population has multiplied after the green revolution and there is shortage of food expected in the world. The scare of food shortage has spurred the companies in the developed world to design new technologies in the field of genetic engineering to increase the yield of edible crops and make them immune to diseases and the pest attacks. This is now being drummed as the gene revolution.

He, further, elaborated that the green revolution resulted in low water tables, pesticide toxicity, wide spread cancer, and many diseases. There are fears that the gene revolution may result in weakening antibiotic protection, allergies, toxicities and mutant bugs. Countries are announcing new tests on GM crops. There are health hazards and there is the possibility to increase the yields to feed the hungry. The world is polarized on these two issues.

Rtn Atul Grover explained that the farmers and agricultural scientists have used selective breeding to improve the livestock and the crops. Genetic Engineering techniques target manipulation of genes to produce plants and animals with characteristics that yield higher returns. BT corn and BT cotton are two examples of such engineering. Golden Rice has enhanced vitamins that add to its nutritional quality.

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Memento for the Speaker



Gift for Punctuality Draw Winner

There are also possibilities that the technology may generate new allergens and toxins that may affect human health by affecting the regulatory regions of the human body. Crops, engineered to produce built-in toxins have resulted in many species of moths, beetles, flies and pests developing resistance to BT toxins. There are some cases of recall of BT Corn in USA based on consumption feed back. Germany has banned cultivation of GM corn fearing that it could reduce the effectiveness of some antibiotics on the diseases in humans. GM Canola has turned into a weed that is resistant to all herbicides.

He added that some countries are carrying out extensive trials before allowing the introduction of GM crops and animals. This is necessary to safeguard the human health. Labeling of GM products is compulsory in Europe and North America. GM seeds have the terminator technology that prevents propagation, thus

making the farmers dependent on the companies to supply the seeds year after year. The effect of this possibility on the economic health of the farmers needs to be addressed.

There was extensive interaction during the question time. Feeding the hungry verses the human health were the two conflicting topics that generated a useful discussion. The consensus that emerged was the balanced consideration of the two aspects of hunger and health after field trials of the GM crops. There are reports from Australia that the agricultural scientists are working on bringing the durability of the grasses from which wheat and rice plants emanated to the developed grasses of these two grains so that they become disease and pest resistant and also develop drought resistance requiring lesser amounts of water. If the research is successful, it will solve the hunger and the health problems of the world.

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