



Win* a trip to the US on the A380.



Around the World Quiz

Test your knowledge and win*. [play now!](#)

*T&C apply

Search...

Go

Follow us [f](#) [t](#) [b](#) [r](#)

HOT TOPICS: [Mumbai Blasts](#) | [Ind vs Eng](#) | [Noida land acquisition](#) | [Telangana](#) | [Lokpal Bill](#)



Subscribe Now
Issue: Aug 1, 2011

Home Colleges Blogs Photos Videos News India Sport Movies Lifestyle Magazine Supplements **Shopping**

NEWS BUZZER TWEETS

Telecom operator Bharti airtel hikes rates by up to 20 per cent for pre-paid users in certain packages across several circles. - 52 min ago [Comment](#) | [More](#)

India Today >> [Archive](#) >> [NATION](#) >> [July 25, 2011](#) >> [Story](#)

The innovator

The innovator

पूना देखिये

दर्शन पूना करिए सभी चीजों पर छूट
www.LivingSocial.com/Poona

Aditi Pai Edition: July 25, 2011



Anil Rajvanshi

In a "fit of madness", IIT-Kanpur alumnus Anil Rajvanshi did the unthinkable in 1981. He chose a life in rural India over a flourishing research career in the US. Then 31, Rajvanshi quit as energy studies instructor at the University of Florida to join an agricultural research institute in nondescript

Phaltan in Satara, Maharashtra, his wife Nandini's hometown.

"I was the first IITian to quit and move to rural India. I was a rising star in the US. I believed I could change India, especially the parts that still seem like they are stuck in the Stone Age," he says.

Rajvanshi hasn't exactly sparked off The Great Rural Renaissance. What he has done, though, is pull quite a few homes out of darkness with devices he's invented, whether it's the electric rickshaw that consumes 40 per cent less power than the regular three-wheeler, a biomass gasifier to convert agricultural waste into clean energy, or the Lanstove, a lantern-cum-stove.

For the Lucknow-bred son of a freedom fighter, nationalism scored over materialism. He turned his back on a prospective US green card, shopped for lab equipment and headed for India on August 15, 1981.

Offers from premier science institutes across India poured in, but Rajvanshi chose to head the Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), founded by his in-laws in Phaltan. NARI pioneers innovations to boost agriculture and generate efficient energy. Among the institute's successes is a hybrid of the sweet sorghum plant that can be used as food, fodder or converted into ethanol to fuel farm equipment.

Rajvanshi recently developed the Lanstove, a device that can simultaneously produce 100W energy for lighting purposes and cook food for a family of five. "Sixty per cent of the rural population doesn't have electricity. Yet why shouldn't rural India have access to the facilities urban India enjoys?" he asks.

"Pilot tests for Lanstove over the past six months have proven its usefulness in areas with frequent black-outs," he says. But its benefits, he adds, can be availed of by more people only if private manufacturers produce them on a large scale: "NARI runs on government grants, hence our activities are restricted to research and development," he says.

Rajvanshi makes it a point to put up the findings of every nari research study on his website and is only too glad to brief interested manufacturers on innovations. "Knowledge should always be free and available to all," says the author of two popular books-1970s America: An Indian Student's Journey and Nature of Human Thought. He has also filed seven patents for his inventions such as a

UTILITIES

GET SOCIAL

Comment 0 tweets

Like

ADVERTISEMENT

INTRODUCING THE THINKPAD® X1

- 16.5mm thin and weighs just 1.68kg.
- Scratch resistant Corning® Gorilla® Glass.
- Roll cage technology to protect against impacts.

lenovo. FOR THOSE WHO DO.

LEARN MORE

MOST POPULAR

STORIES VIDEOS

[Delhi Belly review](#)

[DU third cut-off list offers little choice](#)

[Katrina kisses Hrithik Roshan](#)

[Aamir's look in Delhi Belly embarrasses his kids](#)

LATEST VIDEOS



Telangana protestors enforce bandh



G. Noida flat buyers file plea in HC



J&K: Students lathicharged, arrested



Return of the action hero in B'wood

Find us on Facebook

India Today

Like

59,059 people like India Today.

Prashant Sonali Nadhir Ajay Raja

Govind Vibes Neetu Trenade Hardik

Facebook social plugin

sugarcane leaves gasifier and solar detoxification of distillery effluent.

When Rajvanshi started, he faced all-round opposition. His radical decision to immerse himself fully in developing renewable energy resources met with censure from family, colleagues and mentors. Even scientist-wife Nandini, president, NARI, asked him to rethink. But he was convinced. "I wanted to do something worthwhile for the country. I just followed my heart," he says. "We are happy that we have spent our lives in our hometown," says Nandini, now 57.

Life in Phaltan in the early '80s had more than its fair share of hiccups—living in a slum, power cuts, poor connectivity. Even an outstation call entailed a four-hour bus ride to Pune. "So I wrote letters to institutes and waited weeks for a reply. Junoon (passion) saw me through," he says.

Today, when he sees faces and village homes light up because of his innovations, Rajvanshi knows that his dream of changing India is being realised. Even if it's bit by bit.

Anil Rajvanshi

61, Innovator

- **Out of India** Seven years. Obtained his PHD from University of Florida and taught there for two years
- **Eye opener** Rode on a steam engine to Phaltan in 1980. Realised India has miles to go.
- **Second opinion** Even wife Nandini asked him to rethink his decision to leave the US
- **Back to roots** Set up base in Phaltan to focus on innovation

[For more news, click here »](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

मुंबई देखिये

दर्शन मुंबई करिए सभी चीजों पर डूट
www.LivingSocial.com/Mumbai

Post comments on this story

Comment:

Name:

Place:

E-mail:

Enter the Code Shown: **7982a**

TOP STORIES FROM NATION

Electric Cool Aid

Loan sharks on prowl

The guru cool

TOP STORIES

India vs England Live: Praveen strikes after Dhoni bowls on Day 2

Delhi's case different from K'taka: Sheila to BJP

Probe Jagan assets further: SC

SUPPLEMENT

Home

Aspire

Spice

Woman

Simply

Delhi

Chennai

Gujarati

Kolkata

Punjabi

Mumbai

Bangalore



London reborn

Five new British brands have recently blossomed on London's streets for men.

ADVERTISEMENT

[Skoda India Celebrations](#) Skoda India Completes 10 Years. Special Offers on all Skoda Cars! www.skoda-auto.co.in

[Health Insurance](#) 1 Lac Health Insurance Cover for Just Rs.60 Per Month. Buy Now! paisabazaar.com/Health-Insurance

[TATA Hiring for July 2011](#) 10,000+ Job Openings across India Upload Resume.Apply to TATA Now! TimesJobs.com/TATA-Hiring

Web: InToday **Publications:** India Today | India Today - Hindi | Business Today | Cosmopolitan | Men's Health | Wonder Woman | Money Today | Prevention | Reader's Digest | Good Housekeeping | Travel Plus | Golf Digest India | Design Today | Time | Harvard Business Review | Scientific American India | Gadgets & Gizmos **Television:** Aaj Tak | Headlines Today
Radio: Oye! 104.8FM **Education:** Vasant Valley | Learn Today **Shopping:** Bag It Today | India Today Diaries **Events:** India Today Conclave | India Today Woman's Summit | India Today Youth Summit **Music:** Music Today **Printing:** Thomson Press **Welfare:** Care Today **Classifieds:** Directories Today **Useful Links:** Partners

[ABOUT US](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [ADVERTISE WITH US](#) | [SUBSCRIPTION](#) | [WE CARE](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

Copyright © 2011 Living Media India Limited. For reprint rights: Syndications Today.