

LETTER OF THE DAY

National Post, July 23, 2005

India's meritocracy

Re: Blame Castes, Not Missionaries, letter, July 23.

Kenneth Tellis perpetuates false stereotypes of India and the caste system. He states that India is the "only country to allow the caste system to continue," and even stoops to compare India today to South Africa's noxious apartheid system. In India, the vast majority of public sector positions at every level are reserved for lower castes and minorities. The Prime Minister is Sikh, and minorities dominate the press and the entertainment industry. High caste Hindus in India enjoy no special privileges: in fact, they are often discriminated against by affirmative action policies. In the private sector, pure meritocracy rather than affirmative action is the rule, which explains why India is a global leader in IT, pharmaceutical and other cutting edge industries. The super-charged Indian economy is fuelled by merit and ability, and there is no place for any "illegal profits from indentured slavery." The "caste system" is as irrelevant to modern India as serfdom and nobility are to modern Europe.

Ron Banerjee, director, Hindu Conference of Canada, Toronto.



INDRANIL MUKHERJEE / AFP / GETTY IMAGES Researchers at British pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca's Bangalore, India, research facility.