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Best job in India is not on a beach! So what is it?

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The new 'caretaker' of Australia's Hamilton Island on the Great Barrier Reef will live in a beach house, clean the pool there and send weekly blogs to the wider world. But that may not be everyone's idea of heaven. Certainly not in India. Here are some suggestions for the best job in India from Indians who are already in dream jobs. Stand-up comedian Vir Das wants to be Sushmita Sen's personal valet. How else to be close to the smouldering actress 24x7? Das wants to carry Sen's bags, escort her everywhere and be her Man Friday. Filhaal, Das could then say, 'Main Hoon Na', using words that recall the titles of Sen's films. On a more serious note, Das claims he has the best job in India. "I get paid too much for doing too little, get to stay in five-star hotels three times a week, travel the world and meet pretty girls who will talk to me for two hours after my show." Why two hours? "After that, I get boring." R Balakrishnan, film director and chairman of advertising firm Lowe Lintas, says the best job in India would have to be that of cricket commentator. No, Mandira Bedi has nothing to do with it. Balakrishnan wants to rub shoulders with ace cricketers.

"As a commentator, I would get to see every match from the best position, say what I want for 20 minutes at a time and get visas automatically to various countries. And, I don't even need to look fit." But he admits to finding his current job "satisfying" because it marries a creative hobby to a career.

Ronesh Puri, head of Executive Access, one of Asia's leading headhunters, says the best job in the country has got to be that of Union human resources development (HRD) minister because it affects millions. "No job can shape young minds and a young nation like India as much as being HRD minister and leave something for posterity. There is a huge amount of human capital which is unutilized and can be tapped."

Failing the plum cabinet portfolio, Puri says his other dream job is being Lalit Modi, Indian Premier League commissioner. "Nothing can match the thrill of watching a tense match and deciding the fate of various teams. Modi is providing great entertainment in these dismal times." The headhunter admits his job also affects people's lives, but much less than if he were HRD minister. "I am like a marriage broker who gets clients together." Any divorces? Yes, a rare 3%, he says with a laugh.

Ankur Bhatia, executive director of the travel conglomerate Bird Group, fancies Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's job. "Who else has the power to run a country of over a billion people? It's a great management job, coupled with amazing entrepreneurial skills." With great power comes great responsibility, but at the end of the day, you can change a nation. "And Singh has made India immune to the global economic storms that have buffeted even developed countries," says Bhatia. But if he can't be Prime Minister, Bhatia thinks it would be fun to run an airline, even now, when they are losing money. "As long as it's not my money I am playing with, it's fine. I thrive on tension and with my management experience, getting loans from banks won't be a problem." Does he want to be a Vijay Mallya then? No, says Bhatia. "It may seem like Mallya's job is fun, but it isn't. He has limited time to do anything well." Tarun Thakral, chief operating officer of Le Meridien endorses aviation minister Praful Patel's theory that India's best jobs are in the food, hospitality and travel industry because they combine fun with hard work. "Hoteliers get to meet top-of-the-line people, tycoons, film stars...and even drunkards, depending on the time of the day. One can have flexible timings and revolve through jobs at various levels which give one loads of confidence and panache to become quite a man of the world."