

# India Review

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President Bush signing the condolence book for the tsunami victims at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., on January 3. (Photo: Rajan Devadas)

## President Bush Condoles Tsunami Deaths

- 2 Indian Americans among 15 honoured at 3rd Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
- India and the U.S. finalise new Air Services Agreement

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# ‘We had the largest delegation to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas from the U.S. — over 175 people’

The Manmohan Singh Government, which was inaugurated on May 22 last year, created for the first time a separate ministry to look into the affairs of an estimated 25 million members of the Indian diaspora spread over more than 110 countries. Congress Party leader from New Delhi, Jagdish Tytler, was named Minister of State with Independent Charge of the new office — called Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. From Jan 7-9, the ministry organised the third edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, or Indian Diaspora Day, in Mumbai that attracted a record 1,500 members of the Indian diaspora from United States and Britain to Guadalupe and the Reunion Islands. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inaugurated the three-day event, while the concluding session saw President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam honouring 15 members of the diaspora with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman. Tytler spoke to *India Review* about the success of the three-day event, and his plans over the next few months to help India connect better with its vast diaspora.



Jagdish Tytler

**Q: How would you assess the Third Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in terms of participation by overseas Indians and the issues discussed?**

**A:** We were able to attract over 1,500 members of our diaspora from over 60 countries. That itself shows the kind of interest we evoked. And this, despite calling off all entertainment and cultural programmes because of the tsunami disaster. Some of participants either came for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas after visiting the tsunami-affected areas or went there immediately after to assess how they could help in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. That shows the humane nature of our people.

**Q: How was the response from the members of the Indian diaspora from the United States?**

**A:** We had the largest delegation from the United States — more than 175 people. The quality of representation from there can also be assessed from the fact that there were successful physicians, hoteliers, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, software professionals, attorneys — the representation was across the spectrum. We also ensured that the sessions were structured in such a manner that we had meaningful exchanges.

**Q: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced the extension of dual citizenship to all members of the diaspora who became nationals of other countries after Jan 26, 1950. But there are still some doubts on how they should proceed in this regard. What is the way forward?**

**A:** The registrations for dual citizenship have already started. We have a simple one-page document that can be filed online. The countries from where members of the diaspora want to apply for dual citizenship must also permit dual citizenship. Also, the cut-off date is Jan 26, 1950 — that is the date when our Constitution came into being — and only those who became foreign nationals after that date are eligible. At our end, there are some lacunae in the earlier notification by the previous government. The law department and experts are examining this. Once we have a clear picture on what needs to be done, we will start issuing dual citizenship. I hope to finish the process of fine-tuning the procedural and legal aspects of dual citizenship very fast — say three months, within the budget session.

**Q: What plans do you have for the young members of the Indian diaspora?**

**A:** Last month, just ahead of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, we had around 30 youth interns from around 12-15 countries here to understand India and help us organise the event. I want to increase this to 100 interns from next year. Emphasis will be on those who have never visited India. I also want to start an exchange programme where a youth is sort of adopted by families here for a holiday so that they can learn about various facets of our culture and heritage.

**Q: Your ministry also wants to address some grievances brought to your notice by the members of the diaspora from time to time. What are these issues and how do you propose to address them?**

**A:** We have been receiving complaints from time-to-time about the ill treatment meted out on our brides. Our ministry will have offices in countries where there is a presence of our diaspora. Using these offices, we will provide information — of course, for a fee — about prospective bridegrooms. Non-resident Indian grooms have left thousands of our brides in the lurch after marriage. We will give information on the basis of which they can decide whether to marry their girls there or not.

**Q: How do you propose to facilitate investments by people of Indian origin and non-resident Indians?**

**A:** We will be the one-stop shop to facilitate such investments. The government also proposes to establish an economic forum of overseas Indians, which will interact with the prime minister, finance minister and myself, to look into such areas. I have invitations from several forums — like hoteliers, doctors and entrepreneurs in the U.S. — who have plans to invest in India. I will make a personal visit after the budget session and see how the process can be expedited. ■

The registrations for dual citizenship have already started. We have a simple one-page document that can be filed online. The countries from where members of the diaspora want to apply for dual citizenship must also permit dual citizenship.

## From The Ambassador's Desk

## Refusal of aid a pragmatic decision, reflecting realities



Ambassador  
Ronen Sen

**M**y wife and I had just returned to our residence from the Christmas-eve Midnight Mass at the Washington National Cathedral, when we started receiving initial reports of the tsunami disaster in India and some of our neighbouring countries. It was, however, over the next couple of days that the extent of the death and devastation caused by the tsunamis became evident. Subsequently, the toll of those who perished or remained missing continued to rise with each passing day, and

the enormity of the challenges of relief and rehabilitation gained increasing recognition.

In the wake of this natural disaster, there were spontaneous expressions of concern and sympathy from people from all parts of this great country. President Bush sent an immediate letter of condolence to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and also had a telephonic conversation with him. Thereafter, my wife and I had the honour to receive at the Embassy, President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush, accompanied by former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. I also received letters of condolence or visits by former President Carter, Governors of States, Cabinet Secretaries, Senators and Congressmen, as well as doctors, teachers, school children and people from all walks of life. The Indian-American community was of course active in expressing its solidarity and support for the victims of this natural disaster. These sentiments are a great source of solace and strength for us.

The U.S. media also provided me several opportunities to appear in national television and radio programmes and in press interviews. This enabled me to address some issues relating to India's positions after the tsunami disaster, which had become unnecessarily controversial. Most questions raised were, in all probability, in good faith, but they revealed extraordinary lack of knowledge of contemporary India.

There was initial incomprehension and even righteous indignation about what was perceived to be an arrogant and insensitive decision by our Government to decline inter-governmental or international assistance in coping with the immediate aftermath of the natural disaster. Our reasons were not ideological or political, but pragmatic and reflective of realities. First, our past experiences showed that, despite publicity to the contrary, around 90% to 95% of relief and rehabilitation work after past natural disasters was carried out with Indian expertise and resources. In fact, large foreign consignments of clothes and medicines to one of the world's largest producers of textiles and pharmaceuticals often created logistical problems which diverted attention from relief efforts. Second, we were confident of our ability to attend to the immediate challenges on our own. In search and rescue operations the probability of survival declines in hours and days, and not weeks or months. Even with the best of intentions, no other government, let alone non-governmental organizations, had the means to respond as quickly as our Armed Forces did to these rescue and relief requirements, not just in our own country but also in our

neighbouring countries. Third, people from all over India are united in their support, not just financially but as active and qualified volunteers, in the relief and rehabilitation effort. Within a period of just three weeks, around US \$120 million was contributed by our citizens to our Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, apart from substantial contributions to a number of other private and non-governmental institutions. As usual, the poorest were the most generous in their contributions, involving the greatest sacrifice and with no expectation of recognition. Fourth, we did not want well-meaning foreign or Indian NGOs to rush to the Nicobar Islands which are home to declining and vulnerable tribes whose ways of life have remained unchanged for centuries and millennia, and for whom such humanitarian intrusions could possibly be as traumatic as the tsunami itself! Finally, we remain convinced that the immediate needs of our neighbours, particularly Indonesia and Sri Lanka, were greater than ours.

While meeting the formidable challenges posed by relief and rehabilitation efforts covering 1400 miles of our coastline and hundreds of islands about 850 nautical miles from our mainland, we were the first to arrive with relief assistance in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Apart from search and rescue missions, 14 Indian naval vessels and numerous aircraft and helicopters maintained a continuous flow of relief assistance to these countries, while over 1,700 Indian personnel provided medical treatment for thousands of patients daily, helped to clear debris and open ports, restore communications, etc. Some assistance was extended to Indonesia as well, with the deployment of a hospital ship and another naval ship with supplies. In addition, about \$25 million is being provided to these countries. I know of no precedent of a country which, while coping on its own with a massive natural disaster, has extended timely and significant assistance to its neighbouring countries.

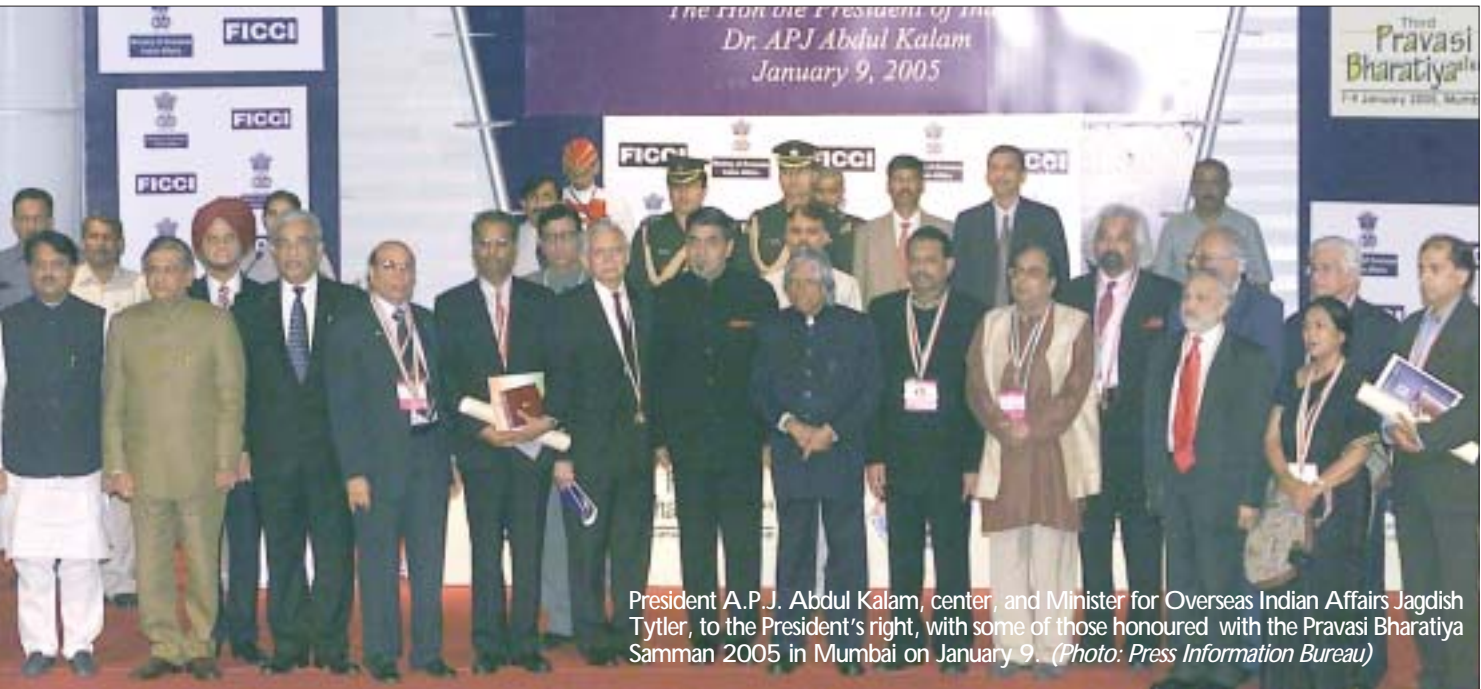
Others who failed to understand why we did not accept the offer of developed countries on a moratorium of debt repayments, were also obviously oblivious of the fact that India has been paying off its debts before these were due, that we are a creditor to the International Monetary Fund, that we extend hundreds of millions of dollars of overseas assistance and have written off debts of some African countries.

At the same time, we have not hindered but tried our best to facilitate the excellent work being done in India by some Indian and foreign NGOs and U.N. and international agencies. We will also, at the appropriate time, favourably consider international cooperation in the medium- to longer-term programmes of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It was in recognition of India's capabilities and contributions, that the U.S. Administration suggested our participation, together with that of Australia and Japan, in the "core group" of countries to coordinate relief work in the immediate aftermath of the tsunamis. This group has been wound up, but the Navies of India and the United States are continuing coordination to avoid duplication of efforts in the Indian Ocean. This cooperation, in the wake of the tsunami tragedy, has added yet another dimension to U.S.-India partnership.

Ronen Sen

# 3rd Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held in Mumbai



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, center, and Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Jagdish Tytler, to the President's right, with some of those honoured with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman 2005 in Mumbai on January 9. (Photo: Press Information Bureau)

**T**he sun never sets on the Indian empire," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said somewhat rhetorically, drawing from what was once said of the country's British colonial rulers a little over half-a-century ago, to highlight the geographical spread of its growing diaspora. As he inaugurated the third edition of India's annual three-day event to engage with its diaspora in Mumbai on January 7, Manmohan Singh proudly detailed how some 25 million persons of Indian origin were today living in 110 countries.

Sitting next to Manmohan Singh at the dais was Vice President Jules Rattankumar Ajodhia of the South American nation of Suriname, who represented another facet of the Indian diaspora — that of its growing clout after decades of trials and tribulations.

For Ajodhia is a progeny of that phase of migration in the 19th century when Indians were forced by their European masters to serve as plantation coolies, or indentured labourers, in the other lands they colonised.

In fact, each of the 1,500-odd persons of Indian origin and non-resident Indians from 60 countries assembled for the inaugural ceremony of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the Indian Diaspora Day, had a story to tell.

Not only among them were white and blue-collar workers from the Gulf countries who dominate the services sector there, but also politicians, entrepreneurs, lawmakers, academics, scientists, artists and software professionals.

From Mauritius Vice President A.R. Bundhun to Malaysian Works Minister Samy Vellu, from Indian American tele-

com crusader Sam Pitroda to former tennis ace Vijay Amritraj, all spoke of a new meaning that has come to be associated with being Indian.

"For too long it was felt that the country where Indians cannot succeed was India," said Shashi Tharoor, a novelist and under secretary general of the United Nations who is touted to take the top job at the world body one day. "This is clearly changing since the 1970s."

Today, 38 percent of doctors in the United States are of Indian origin. Twelve percent of scientists and 36 percent of the staff at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the U.S. trace their roots to India.

Thirty-four percent of Microsoft employees are Indians. And in Britain, Indian curry shops employ more workers than its iron, steel, coal, shipping and mining industries combined, says Tharoor.

In the sciences, California-based Vinod Dham, an alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, invented the original Pentium chip. Pitroda, who makes his home in Chicago and revolutionised India's telecom sector, had the patent for the once ubiquitous digital diary in his name.

Lakshmi N. Mittal is not only among the richest persons in Britain, but his companies across the globe produce the maximum steel. Sahara Air president Rono Dutta once headed the world's largest carrier, United Airlines. Indian Americans make 50 percent more money than the national average of the United States.

Even in terms of the diaspora's diversity, the Shahi Imam of the landlocked Southeast Asian country, Laos, is of

Today, there are some 25 million people of Indian origin living in 110 countries across the globe.

Indian origin. The oldest gurdwaras in the United States and Canada were built over a century ago by the first immigrants from India.

Minister of State for Overseas Indian Affairs Jagdish Tytler said this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has diaspora delegates from countries like Guadeloupe, Reunion Islands, Zambia, Uzbekistan and the Seychelles.

"Wherever you go, there is this DNA which can trace us back to Bharat (India)," said Navnit Dholakia, the deputy leader of Britain's House of Lords, at a session. "The British ruled over us in the past. Now we are reversing the process."

Much of this change, delegates said, is also visible globally because of India's recent economic dynamism. "Malaysians feel there is great future in the world's largest democracy," said the country's Works Minister Vellu, who led a 168-strong delegation to the event.

Malaysia, which has 2.3 million people of Indian origin, is involved in highway projects worth \$1.8 billion in India

**"Wherever you go, there is this DNA which can trace us back to Bharat (India)," said Navnit Dholakia, the deputy leader of Britain's House of Lords, at a session.**

with more in the pipeline, he added.

Others had an eye on the country's booming software, information technology and biotechnology sectors. This is reversing the process of "brain drain" since the 1960s, during which India lost some of its best and the brightest to the West.

Professionals like India-born American Kunal Bajaj — who spent his childhood in the U.S. and studied in Wharton School and worked for McKinsey — are today lured by India's strides in technology, relaxed guidelines and increased prosperity.

"When I announced my decision to shift to India, after returning to the U.S. from one of those family trips, no one, not even my parents, took me seriously," said Bajaj, who migrated to New Jersey from Kanpur when he

was all of six. "But it was difficult for me to ignore the changes in India, especially in the technology field. I was pleasantly surprised and just wanted to associate myself with that," Bajaj said.

"The knowledge economy is a very good area to connect with India," said Saurav Srivastava, chief executive of British outsourcing firm Xansa. "Opportunities in the sector are phenomenal. We have just scratched the surface," he added. "Overseas Indians have established the credentials of our manpower in different parts of the globe. We must take advantage of this to further boost the presence of Indian companies overseas."

Held in the backdrop of the Tsunami disaster, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a scientist himself, told the concluding session that India was also interested in the intellectual capabilities of overseas Indians.

"Your prosperity is our happiness," said Kalam, who wanted the the diaspora to come together and establish an India International Research Centre

with a corpus of \$100 million dedicated to earthquake research.

"There is more to the Indian diaspora than the dollars they can remit or the investments they can make," said Pitroda. "What India needs is their knowledge in addressing some basic issues like disaster mitigation, healthcare, drinking water, sanitation, and administrative, judicial and political reforms."

In the end, as the three day-event drew to a close, it was the sentiment of coming to a land of their origin that stood out for most delegates. As Basdeo Panday, former prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago, summed it up: "We need to know that we are a part of a culture and race, preferably a great race, even if we have to create a fiction to feel that way." ■

Indian American Honorees

**Manoj Night Shyamalan:** The biggest name of Indian origin in Hollywood, Shyamalan was only 10 when he began making films on his father's 8mm camera. His third directorial effort, 'The Sixth Sense,' released in 1999, was one of Hollywood's biggest box office hits ever, earning six Academy Awards nominations. His recent film, 'The Village,' was also a big success, as was the earlier 'Signs.' Shyamalan has been recognized for enhancing the image and understanding of India through his films.



Manoj Night Shyamalan



Jagdish Bhagwati

**Jagdish Bhagwati:** A globally respected economist, Bhagwati is currently university professor at Columbia University and senior fellow in international economics at the Council on Foreign Relations. A champion of globalisation, he has published over 300 articles and 50 volumes — the most recent being 'In Defense of Globalisation' — and is among the most creative international trade theorists of his generation. at Bhagwati has served as an advisor to the U.N. as well as the World Trade Organisation.

**Sam Pitroda:** He is widely credited with helping to bring about the telecom revolution in India when, in 1987, he was appointed chief technology advisor to the Indian prime minister and was given the responsibility of spearheading several technology missions to enhance the quality of life, basic amenities and connectivity in the rural sector.



Sam Pitroda

Pitroda is recognized for his contributions to addressing India's causes and concerns and his services to the diaspora through his many activities, particularly in the field of telecom and entrepreneurship.

## India, U.S. all set to sign new Air Services Agreement

India and the U.S. will soon be inking a new, more liberal Air Services Agreement that will remove several restrictions on the number of airline seats and destinations between the two countries. The agreement, expected to be signed in February or March, will also dramatically increase the options of air travellers to and from the U.S.

"We have to finalise details of the new agreement. Once that is done, we expect to sign it in February or March when U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta is likely to visit India," visiting Indian Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel said after a meeting with Mineta on January 13.

"Broadly we feel the new agreement will favour us rather than the U.S. since no major airline flies to that part of the world," Patel, who met with Mineta in Washington on Jan 13, said.

Patel said historically aviation has been seen as "elitist" in India, but for any developing economy "air services are vital and should be given the importance they deserve."

"We need more connectivity in a country of a billion people, which is a sixth of the humanity. We need to progress from Generation X to Generation Next," he said.

The U.S. has signed similar agreements with 66 other countries.

Once the agreement is signed, airlines of both countries can fly to any city in each other's territory, without restrictions on flights, airlines and charters. There will be more direct flights to serve the approximately two million passengers a year travelling between the two countries.

While details are still being worked out, India has been seeking to be allowed to fly to more American cities besides the existing destinations of New York, Newark, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Secretary Mineta said: "We have before us the opportunity to give the people of India and the U.S. a modern Open Skies agreement that will deliver tremendous benefits for the aviation industry and for consumers in both countries, building ties between our people and creating new jobs and opportunities."

He noted that India and the U.S. are the world's two largest democracies and two of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Trade between the two nations totalled \$18 billion in 2003, a 13.5 percent increase from the previous year, and was growing at an even faster pace in 2004, said Mineta.

"Our goal is to do more than shake the cobwebs off a half-century old agreement," the secretary said. "We seek to usher in a new era where consumers, rather than governments, determine what markets air carriers serve and what fare and service options they provide."

On the Indian aviation sector, Patel said he expected a compounded annual growth of 25 percent, which would mean the need for anywhere between 200 and 250 new aircraft in the coming three to five years. ■



## Private carriers are allowed to fly overseas, except to the Gulf

Private Indian carriers with a minimum fleet strength of 20 aircraft and operational experience of at least five years have been permitted to fly overseas — except to the Gulf region.

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on December 29 reserved the Gulf region exclusively for the state-run Air-India and Indian Airlines for three years.

The decision comes as a boon for private sector players like Air Sahara and Jet Airways, but the eligibility criterion of a minimum operational experience of five years keeps out low-cost airlines like Air Deccan and the soon-to-be-launched Kingfisher.

"The guidelines for allowing private carriers to fly overseas will be framed in a few days," Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

"Private airlines will be allowed in the Gulf region after three years."

Both the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have welcomed the government's decision, saying it would give a boost to the country's tourism industry.

The cabinet took note of the fact that most of the operational revenue and profits of Air-India and Indian Airlines on international routes accrue from the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Accordingly, a calibrated approach was adopted so that the national carriers get sufficient time to adjust to the new competitive environment and do not suffer losses in the short term. ■

### 3 U.S. Congressional delegations visit India

Three high-powered Congressional delegations visited India during the month of January, indicating the higher profile India is receiving in the United States Congress.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN), led a delegation comprising the Senate Majority Whip, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN) and Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH).

The delegation met with the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on January 10 and also with the External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh.

The delegation had excellent discussions with both in which the entire range of issues in bilateral relations were discussed, as also the situation in the region.

A second delegation led by Congressman Jim Leach (R-IA), the Chairman of the Asia Pacific Affairs Sub Committee of the House International Relations Committee, comprising Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ), Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Congresswoman Diane Watson (D-CA) and Congressman Scott Garrett (R-NJ) visited India on January 12-13.

The delegation had meetings with the Prime Minister, the External Affairs Minister and the Finance Minister, among others. The delegation also received briefings on India's relief and rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of the tsunami that struck parts of South and Southeast Asia, not only on its own territory but also in its neighbourhood.

The Ranking Member of the Asia Pacific Affairs Sub Committee, Congressman Eni Faleomavaega (D-AS), who was also part of this delegation, met separately with the Home Minister on January 6 and traveled to Mumbai to participate in the Third Pravasi Bharatiya Divas [a gathering of the Indian diaspora held in Mumbai].

Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-MN) led a delegation of science and technology professionals on a visit to India from January 5-15. He met with officials of the science and technology establishment in India and visited scientific research and development institutes as well as academic institutions.



PHOTO TOP: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with the Congressional delegation headed by Senate Majority Leader Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN). PHOTO CENTRE: External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh with the Congressional Delegation headed by Rep. Jim Leach (R-IA). PHOTO ABOVE: Rep. Leach's delegation meeting the Prime Minister. (Photos: Press Information Bureau)

# President George Bush signs tsunami condolence book

**P**resident George W. Bush, accompanied by First Lady Laura Bush and former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, visited the Embassy of India in Washington on January 3, 2005, to sign the condolence book for tsunami victims.

The guests were received at the entrance by Ambassador Ronen Sen and Smt. Kalpana Sen. Mrs. Bush placed a bouquet of white roses at a small statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the main foyer of the Embassy.

The high dignitaries were escorted to a room, accompanied by Ambassador and Mrs. Sen, for an informal conversation over tea. During the course of this conversation, Ambassador Sen briefed the distinguished guests about the impact of the tsunami in different parts of Indian coastal areas and its island territories near the epicenter of the earthquake which set off the tsunamis.

He also gave a brief account of India's search and rescue as well as relief and rehabilitation efforts within the country and also in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia.

President Bush said that earlier the same morning he had decided to request President Clinton and Bush Sr. to raise private sector funds and assistance within the United States for the victims of this terrible disaster. He appreciated India's role in the region in the wake of the tsunami disaster, and reiterated his

desire to visit India.

The guests were then led to an adjacent room, where in the presence of a large print and visual media group, President Bush wrote the following words in the condolence book:

"We pray for the victims of this terrible disaster, and we

"We pray for the victims of this terrible disaster, and we stand firmly with the people of India as she recovers," President Bush wrote in the condolence book.



stand firmly with the people of India as she recovers."

After affixing his own signature, he handed over the pen to First Lady Laura Bush and, thereafter, to President Bill Clinton and President George H.W. Bush, who signed the condolence book.

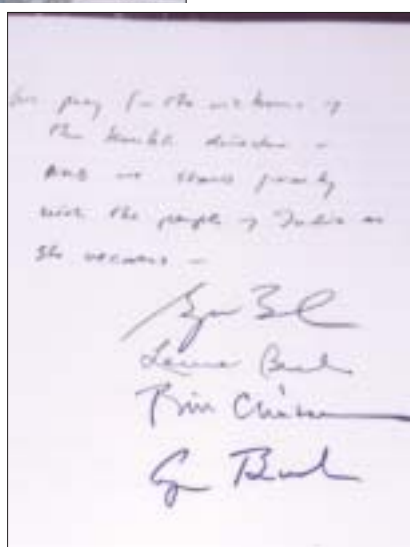


Mrs. Kalpana Sen with First Lady Laura Bush after the First Lady placed a bouquet of flowers at a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the foyer of the Indian Embassy. (Photo: Rajan Devadas)



2005. He went on to add that “in the meantime, though our country stands with the people who have suffered, we want the Indian Government, the Indian people to know that we will help in any way we can.” Referring to the immediate assistance given by India to some of its neighbouring countries, President Bush thanked “the Indian Government for taking the lead on this issue. One of the first things we did was to put together a core group of nations, nations that are capable of organizing relief efforts around the region, and the Indian Government has been especially strong, as a part of this core group. And I told the Ambassador to thank the Prime Minister for his very strong leadership.”

The previous occasion on which a President of the United States had visited the Indian Embassy was in 1991, when President George H.W. Bush, accompanied by some Cabinet Secretaries, had signed the condolence book following the assassination of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The then U.S. Vice President had led the U.S. delegation for the funeral ceremonies of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, who held no official position at the time of his assassination during an election campaign. When Hon'ble George H. W. Bush was Vice President, he had accompanied the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on a visit to Texas, becoming the first U.S. Vice President to accompany a foreign Head of Government on a visit outside Washington, D.C. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had signed the condolence book at the U.S. Ambassador's residence following the demise of President Reagan in 2004. Earlier, the then President Bill Clinton had unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi outside the Indian Embassy in 2000. ■



An Indian journalist present asked President Bush if his visit to Indian territory (referring to the Indian Embassy) would be extended to a visit to India itself? The President remarked that he had told the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, that he intended to visit India in

ing the demise of President Reagan in 2004. Earlier, the then President Bill Clinton had unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi outside the Indian Embassy in 2000. ■

Ambassador Ronen Sen with President George W. Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, former Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush Sr., and Mrs. Sen during an informal discussion at the Embassy of India, Washington, D.C., on January 3. (Photo: Rajan Devadas)



## Ordinance introduces product patent protection

India on January 1 achieved the major milestone of recognising product patents. An ordinance issued by the government on December 26 paved the way for introducing product patent protection — instead of recognising only process patents — for inventions in the fields of food, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

“The law effectively balances and calibrates intellectual property protection with public health concerns and national security,” Commerce Minister Kamal Nath said in a statement.

It has provisions to ensure availability of products at reasonable price through compulsory licence, revoke patents in public interest, use inventions for public good and import products for their availability at the cheapest price.

Kamal Nath said the requirements of the public in regard to the availability and affordability were taken care of and public interest, particularly public health and nutrition, was fully protected.

As a signatory to a pact in 1994 establishing the World Trade Organisation and the agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights, India’s patent regime required amendment after a 10-year transition period.

The ordinance on Patent (Third) Amendment promulgated on December 26 also provides for deleting provisions relating to exclusive marketing rights and streamlines the system by having both pre-grant and post-grant opposition to patents.

Meanwhile, V.S. Ramamurthy, secretary in the Department

of Science and Technology, said India’s patent offices were being modernised to ensure that the system becomes efficient enough to identify and extend protections.

“The government has already taken steps to modernise the patent offices with automatic databases across the wall so that the patent examiner can immediately know what has been patented elsewhere and what has not been patented,” he said.

The government, he said, has also been making efforts to let people know about what needs to be done once a new patent regime comes into force.

“Today, an average scientist knows that if his or her research is leading to some patent, he must go ahead and patent it and protect the intellectual property rights,” he said.

Another aspect of the new patent regime, he said, was for a mechanism to prevent violations.

“In case of violations, is our legal process adequate enough to handle it in a reasonable timeframe? In case there is a violation and a case is filed and it is going to take 20 years to settle, then it will not work,” he said.

“And last but not the least, there must be a large number of people — attorneys as well as scientists — with the domain knowledge who understand patenting, who know how to analyse and can advise the scientific and the business community,” Kamal Nath added.

**(The full text of ordinance is available at the following link: [http://ipindia.nic.in/ipr/patent/The%20Patents%20\(Amendments\)%20Rules%202005%20\(ENGLISH\).pdf](http://ipindia.nic.in/ipr/patent/The%20Patents%20(Amendments)%20Rules%202005%20(ENGLISH).pdf))**



Kamal Nath

### Bill on Special Economic Zones soon: Commerce Minister Kamal Nath

A bill on Special Economic Zones would be tabled in the next session of Parliament and include biotechnology parks and warehousing zones, Commerce Minister Kamal Nath has said in a statement.

Export-oriented units and special economic zones have exceeded their export growth target of 20 percent in the first six months of the current fiscal to register a growth of 31 percent.

The government now expects exports from these units to cross Rs. 500 million (over \$11 billion) during the current fiscal year. ■

### 1st Asian Roundtable of oil producers, consumers

India hosted the first-ever first Asian roundtable of major oil producers and consumers on January 6 in a bid to devise a price benchmark for the region and to support the ongoing dialogue and interdependence through investments.

The roundtable concluded with participating countries and industry lobbies “cementing the first step towards an Asian oil consumer and producers dialogue,” said Yousuf Al-Ibrahim, co-chairman and special economic advisor to Kuwait’s prime minister, at the close of the daylong deliberations.

On India’s demand for an Asian marker or price benchmark, Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said there was no unanimity among participating countries. “The marker has to be globally acceptable. In the process of acquiring that we need to improve the market, the oil producing countries felt,” Aiyar said after the close of the roundtable.

The meeting was joined by representatives from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Iran, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and China, with India, Kuwait and the International Energy Forum (IEF) as co-hosts. Indonesia, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and International Energy Agency (IEA), too, were represented at the conclave to find solutions to ensure security, stability and sustainability of oil and gas supplies and to promote economic development through regional interdependence.

Both consumer and oil producing countries have decided to consult market experts in framing a marker suited to Asian needs, Aiyar said. “The fundamental of such cooperation between oil producers and consumers must include moderation, dialogue, mutual understanding and respect, security of international supply, demand-supply equilibrium and strategic partnership based on reciprocity of interest,” said Aiyar on resolutions. ■

## Press Note 18 goes: More open, less restrictive economy

**P** rime Minister Manmohan Singh on January 12 assured investors across the globe that India would continue to move on the path of liberalisation by eliminating “restrictive provisions” of a trade regulation known as Press Note 18.

Allaying apprehensions that his United Progressive Alliance government backed by Left parties would go slow on key reforms issues, Manmohan Singh said there was consensus on integrating India with the world economy.

“I commit our government to an open, caring economy, an economy where the marginalised are empowered so that they become partners in development and share the benefits of growth,” he said.

Manmohan Singh was addressing the inaugural session of the three-day Partnership Summit 2005 organised here by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) when he announced the abolition of the “restrictive provisions” of what is known as Press Note 18, opening the way for additional investments by foreign companies in new areas.

“I commit our government to an open, caring economy, an economy where the marginalised are empowered so that they become partners in development and share the benefits of growth,” Manmohan Singh said.

“I am happy to inform you that we will be doing away with the restrictive provisions of Press Note 18 for all future joint ventures with foreign partners,” Manmohan Singh told business delegates.

Press Note 18 required a foreign partner in an Indian joint venture to get a no-objection certificate from the Indian partner to start a new venture in the same field or in an allied area.

“This is a regulatory provision that has been a source of some discomfort to investors,” the prime minister said,



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh speaking at the inaugural session of the CII Partnership Summit 2005, in Kolkata on January 12. (Photo: pmindia.nic.in)

noting measures like Press Note 18 are “anachronisms” in the prevailing industrial scenario. He said existing joint ventures in the new dispensation would continue to be protected by a few provisions of Press Note 18.

Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath said Press Note 18 would not apply to any joint ventures entered into after January 12. Future joint ventures were advised to include a “conflict of interest” clause in their agreements to protect interests of the parties concerned.

Kamal Nath said the decision had been taken after wide consultations with industry associations and all sections of domestic industry. “A perception has grown that Press Note 18 is standing in the way of foreign direct investment,” he said.

Old or existing joint ventures, sick or defunct joint ventures and joint ventures in which either of the partners has less than 3 percent stake have been excluded from the purview of Press Note 18. Venture capital funds registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) too have been excluded. ■

(For the full text of the Prime Minister’s speech, visit <http://www.pmindia.nic.in/speeches.htm>)

## Registrations for India-specific domain name extension ‘.in’ to open Feb. 16

**A** round 350 applicants have registered for the India-specific domain name address on the World Wide Web with a ‘.in’ (called ‘dot in’) extension during the sunrise period offered by the registrars up to January 21.

The sunrise period, which commenced January 1, is available to registered companies and trademark owners to select their World Wide Web addresses in their names.

Open registrations for all categories of applicants begin on February 16 for selecting domain addresses from the remaining permutations and combinations.

The government has named six accredited registrars for ‘.in’ — Directi, Net4India, Good Luck Domains, OnlineNIC, SGS Technologies and Sify.

In addition, state-run network operator Ernet India is registering academic and research institutions covering the domains such as ‘edu.in’, ‘ac.in’ and ‘res.in’.

At present, the National Informatics Centre serves as the designated registrar for government organisations under the domain name ‘.gov.in’. Eventually, the government intends to appoint more registrars as the process is expected to be open and continuous, officials said. ■

# 'My meeting with President George Bush was very positive': PM

*Excerpts from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement on his foreign visits to the two houses of Parliament on December 21:*

I addressed the U.N. General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2004. The broad themes covered in my address were: The global and transnational character of the challenges confronting the world, the need for a global response based on consensus, and the need to impart substance and credibility to the global war against terrorism. I emphasised India's commitment to multilateralism and to its embodiment — the U.N., the imperative of reforms to enable the United Nations to refashion itself to become relevant to our times. I outlined the reasons why we believe India should be a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

We welcomed the recent implementation of Phase I of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership. We agreed on the need for expanded economic and defence cooperation. We recognized the importance of working closely in the war against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In this context, a Summit of the leaders of what is now being termed as the 'Group of Four aspirants' — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — was held on September 21, 2004 in New York. This was a significant statement of our intent to participate in the U.N. reform process on the basis of a mutual understanding to support each other for permanent membership of the Security Council. We also highlighted the need to reform the Security Council to make it more representative and effective.

While in New York, I also had bilateral meetings with the Presidents of USA, South Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

My meeting with President George Bush was very positive in setting the direction for further development of India-U.S. Strategic Partnership. We welcomed the

recent implementation of Phase I of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership. We agreed on the need for expanded economic and defence cooperation. We recognized the importance of working closely in the war against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

During my meeting with President (Pervez) Musharraf, I conveyed our sincere desire to pursue the dialogue with Pakistan systematically and on a sustained basis. I emphasised to President Musharraf the criticality of his fulfilling the reassurance of January 6, 2004, that any territory under Pakistan's control would not be used to support terrorism in any manner.

We agreed that confidence-building measures (CBMs) of all categories under discussion between the two governments should be implemented. This should be done keeping in mind practical possibilities, as these will contribute to generating an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding so necessary for the well being of the peoples of both countries.

We also discussed bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. We agreed that possible options for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the issue of Jammu & Kashmir should be explored in a sincere spirit and a purposeful manner. I made it clear to President Musharraf that while we are willing to look at various options, we would not agree to any redrawing of boundaries, or another partition of the country. The possibility of a gas pipeline via Pakistan to India was also discussed in context of the bilateral economic and commercial relationship. We feel such a project would have considerable mutual benefits... ■

**For full text of the Prime Minister's statement to both Houses of Parliament, visit <http://pmindia.nic.in/parl.htm>**

## Obituary

### J.N. Dixit dies; 'irreparable loss,' says Mamohan Singh

J.N. Dixit, India's super strategist who powered peace and reconciliation with Pakistan and China in his capacity as National Security Advisor to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, died here suddenly on January 3. He was 69.



His son Ashok said that Dixit, who was foreign secretary during 1992-94 and was handpicked in May 2004 by Manmohan Singh to be his closest aide on strategic affairs, collapsed in the bathroom early in the morning.

He was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, where he was declared dead on arrival. He is survived by his wife, two sons, two daughters and two stepdaughters.

The prime minister expressed "deep shock" at his death, describing it as an "irreparable loss."

"I have lost a close friend, a valued colleague and a great source of support and advice. The nation has lost a true patriot, a great diplomat and a wise strategist. The loss is irreparable," he said.

Dixit's death comes at a time when dialogues with Pakistan and China for the resolution of all outstanding issues are at a crucial stage. He was the key interlocutor in the ongoing dialogues with both countries and also the brain behind the government's nuclear and strategic postures.

## INDIA: BASIC INDICATORS

		2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
<b>GDP at Current Prices</b> (Rs. Crore) * Apr-Jun, 2004		647421*	2523872	2249493	2090957	1902998
<b>GDP as per World Bank</b> (US \$ bln.)			603.3	510.2		
<b>GDP Growth Rate</b> (%) * Apr-Jun, 2004-05		7.4 *	8.2	4.0	5.8	4.4
**RBI projection for the full FY 2004		6 to 6.5**				
<b>Structure of GDP</b>						
% share of Agriculture			22.2	22.0	24.1	23.9
% share of Industry			26.8	27.2	26.6	27.2
% share of Services			51.0	50.8	49.3	48.9
<b>Gross Domestic Capital formation as % of GDP</b>				22.8	23.5	23.7
<b>Gross Domestic Savings as % of GDP</b>				24.2	23.1	23.4
<b>Per Capita Net National Income</b> (Rs.) at current prices			20862	18912	17947	16563
<b>Inflation Rate</b>						
WPI * for the week ended Nov. 20, 2004		7.3*	5.5	3.4	3.6	7.2
CPI-IW *Apr-Aug, 2004		3.6*	3.9	4.0	4.3	3.8
<b>External Trade</b>						
Exports (US \$ mln. ) * Apr-Sept, 2004		33750*	63455	51702	48796	48796
Growth rate of Exports (%) * Apr-Sept, 2004		24.4*	20.36	18.1	-1.2	19.8
Exports to USA (US \$ mln) * Apr-Sept, 2004		7765*	11490	10896	8513	9305
Growth rate of Exports to USA(%) * Apr-Sept, 2004		15.66*	5.45	27.98	-8.51	10.83
Imports ( US \$ mln. ) *Apr-Sept, 2004		46404*	77033	59387	50746	49975
Growth Rate of Imports (%) * Apr-Sept, 2004		34.3*	25.44	17.0	2.2	0.5
Imports from USA(US \$ Mln) * Apr-Sept, 2004		3171*	5035	4444	3150	3015
Growth Rate of Imports from USA(%) * Apr-Sept, 2004		29.24*	13.31	41.08	4.46	-15.31
Trade Balance (US \$ Mln) * Apr-Sept, 2004		-12654*	-13578	-7685	-6950	-5899
Trade Balance with USA(US \$ Mln) * Apr-Sept, 2004		4594*	6455	6452	5364	6290
<b>Balance of Payments</b> (US \$ mln.) *Apr-Jun, 2004		7524*	31421	16985	11757	5868
CURRENT ACCOUNT (US \$ mln.) *Apr-Jun, 2004		1904*	10561	6345	3400	-2666
Invisibles (US \$ mln.) *Apr-Jun, 2004		8178*	26015	17035	14974	9794
Services Exports (US \$ mln.) *Apr-Jun, 2004		10553*	24949	20763	17140	16268
Services Imports (US \$ mln.) *Apr-Jun, 2004		7360*	18358	17120	13816	14576
Invisible Net Transfers from abroad other than services and income (US \$ Mln) *Apr-Jun, 2004		5339*	23396	16838	15856	13106
CAPITAL ACCOUNT BALANCE (US \$ mln) *Apr-Jun, 2004		5561*	20542	10840	8551	8840
<b>Foreign Exchange Reserves</b> (US \$ mln) @ on Nov 26,2004		126923@	112959	75428	54106	42281
<b>Exchange Rate</b> (Re/US \$) @ on Dec.7, 2004		43.7@	45.95	48.39	47.69	45.68
<b>Debt Position</b>						
External Debt (US \$ million) * on end December 2003		112,130*	10487	9876	10113	9826
External Debt as % of GDP			20.20	21.10	22.60	22.10
Internal Debt as % of GDP			40.90	41.30	40.00	38.50
<b>FDI Inflow</b> (US \$ Miliion) * Jan-Aug, 2004		3468.0*	3109.0	4434.5	4281.1	4498.1
**Cumulative total July 1991 to August 2004		38989.1**				
<b>FDI Inflow from USA</b> (US \$ Miliion) * Jan-Aug, 2004**		344.4*	396.3	282.8	367.6	418.4
Cumulative total ( July 1991 to August 2004)		4132.8**				
<b>Net Portfolio Investment</b> inflow (US \$ million ) * Apr-Nov, 2004		7133.9*	8630	525	1702	2222
**Cumulative Total (1993 to Nov. 30, 2004)		29858**				
<b>Portfolio Investment from USA</b> (US \$ million) * Apr-Jun, 2004		109*	2863	174	533	1174
**Cumulative Total (1993 to Jun. 30, 2004)		10240**				
<b>FDI Outflow from India</b> (US \$ Mln.) * Apr-July, 2004		476.09*	1257.02	1782.85	974.89	1211.85
** (1996 to July 2004) in US \$ Miliion		6369.66**				

GOA

Carnival  
TIME!

The Goan carnival festivities



**F**ebruary heralds the carnival in Goa — India's best-known beach resort. For three days and nights the streets come alive with colour. To be held from February 5-8, the event is a time for lively processions, floats, the strumming of guitars, graceful dances and non-stop festivity.

One of the more famous Indian carnivals, the Goa festival is a complete sell-out in terms of tourism capacities.

It is Goa's most famous cultural event and has been celebrated since the 18th century, and is meant to be a festival of feasting, drinking and merrymaking just before the 40 days of Lent — the Christian period of abstinence, penance and spirituality.

The origins of carnival lie apparently in the hedonistic feasts of ancient Rome and Greece. It made its appearance in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, where it metamor-

phosed into the very Latin singing-dancing-drinking bouts.

The Goa Carnival is an integral part of the Portuguese heritage of the state, which was a dominion of Portugal till 1961. The carnival epitomizes the fun-loving culture that is characteristic of Goa.

It was introduced by the erstwhile rulers as a rowdy celebration in which flour, eggs, oranges, lemons, mud, sand-filled gloves along with dirty water, various liquids and glue were aimed at passersby. Used pots, pans, and other kitchen utensils were also thrown out of windows. Perhaps this was done to discard the old and the dirty before the Lenten fast.

Fierce battles were waged in the streets, with plaster-of-Paris eggs, wax lemons, corncobs and beans. Blows were dealt out liberally, with brooms and wooden spoons. It was also an occasion for unchecked eating. People gorged on rich food at lavish feasts, and convents distributed cakes and pas-

## THREE MILLION!

The tourism sector had a great 2004 with the number of foreign tourist visiting India going up by over 23.5 per cent to cross the three-million mark for the first time.

The total number of foreign tourists visiting the country in 2004 was 3.36 million, according to the annual tourist arrival numbers released by the government.

The increase in tourist arrivals can be attributed to the massive government-sponsored Incredible India! promotion campaign undertaken in key overseas markets. Steps taken by the government to develop new markets were also a factor.

Tourist arrivals in 2003 was 2.7 million, a growth of 14.3 per cent over 2002. The industry estimates that tourist arrivals to India can grow by 30 per cent in 2005.

tries. Though celebrated for only three days, the preparations for the festival would take many days, and build up to a frenetic pitch by the eve of the carnival. The carnival in Goa still retains the core of the original.

The highlight of the exotic frenzy of merriment is the appointment and arrival of a King of Chaos, called King Momo, and his arrival in the capital city Panaji on "Fat Saturday," the eve of carnival. They form the head of a parade of colorful floats and troupes of masked revelers attired in gorgeous costumes, singing and dancing in gay abandon to lively music that is usually performed live. The best floats — most of them commercially sponsored today — are given handsome prizes.

Through the three days of the festivities — from Sunday through to "Fat Tuesday," the day before Ask Wednesday, which marks the beginning to Lent — parades are held in the city and dances and balls are organized in the evenings. The final day is marked by the famous Red-and-Black dance by the Clube Nacional in Panjim.

The Carnival is also celebrated in the Goan countryside by the Christian populace and is called Intruz. It assumes a unique form of creative spontaneity wherein folk songs/Cantars are sung from door to door in villages by troupes of mainly Christian peasants — inviting everyone to join in the celebration.

The beauty of the modern carnival, however, is that it has evolved into a completely secular event in which all Goans participate with gusto. It is celebrated as a cultural highlight of the state rather than a religious function.

The word carnival is said to be derived from the Latin "Carne," meaning meat, and "Vale," which translates to "good-bye." Some also link the word to "Carnislevamen" or "the pleasures of meat," focusing on the enjoyment of meat during the festivities, before the abstinence that follows during Lent.

Whatever the origins of the carnival, it is today a uniquely Goan festival that attracts thousands of tourists. It clearly marks one of the high points of the tourist calendar of a state whose sun-kissed beaches are internationally renowned. ■



## TOURIST INFORMATION

### How To Get There

**By Air:** You can fly to Goa from Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram. For overseas travellers, Mumbai has the most well-connected airport.

**By Rail:** Goa is connected to Mumbai (490 km), Bangalore (430 km) and Delhi (1,874 km).

**By Road:** Driving down by road from Mumbai (582 km) is a pleasant experience.

**By Ship:** There is a catamaran service between Mumbai and Goa, from October to May.

### Where to Stay

Accommodation in Goa is plentiful with a variety of hotels, resorts and guest houses to suit every budget and every taste. There are simple and bare rooms available for the thriftiest of back-packers and five-star deluxe luxury suites for those that want to indulge their fancies. Almost all round the year, travellers are assured of finding a room — if not in a hotel, then at least in a private house. However, come the peak season of December and January, you are likely to experience problems, unless you book your rooms well in advance.

### When to Visit

Best time to visit is between September and March, though Goa in the rains — that is, during the Southwest monsoon (from June to September) — is also catching the imagination of domestic as well as international tourists.

For more, visit:

[www.goatourism.org](http://www.goatourism.org)

[www.indiatouristoffice.org](http://www.indiatouristoffice.org)

[www.tourindia.com](http://www.tourindia.com)

[www.tourismofindia.com](http://www.tourismofindia.com)

[www.all-indiatravel.com](http://www.all-indiatravel.com)



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