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President Kalam at the launch of the Indo-U.S. Universities Edusat Network, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on December 7.

President Kalam launches Indo-U.S. Universities Network



■ Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran on 2-day visit to Washington, D.C.; meets Rice, Burns, Lugar, among others

■ The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, attends the first East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur

■ Microsoft chief Bill Gates unveils plans to invest \$1.7 billion in India, collaborate on e-governance

Foreign Secretary Saran on 2-day visit to Washington

India and the United States are poised to make a “significant advance” on civilian nuclear energy cooperation before the “landmark” visit to India by U.S. President George W. Bush this year, according to Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, who was in Washington, D.C., on a two-day visit.

“We had a very positive exchange of views on civilian nuclear energy cooperation and we also came to the conclusion that we should be in a position to make a significant advance on this initiative before President Bush’s visit to India,” Foreign Secretary Saran said at a press conference at the Embassy of India after his meeting with Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns.

In his meetings with Under Secretary Burns, Saran exchanged views on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues. According to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy, the two sides “expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in taking the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership forward and agreed that President Bush’s forthcoming visit to India would be a landmark event in India-U.S. ties”.

“This meeting we had produced very positive forward movement on a whole range of issues. We have exchanged views on the implementation of our respective commitments as contained in the July 18 joint statement,” Saran said.

“Significant progress was achieved in developing a mutual understanding of the steps needed to advance the early implementation of the agreement,” the statement issued by the Embassy at the end of Saran’s visit said.

The finer details of implementing the agreement were discussed during the second meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on civil nuclear energy cooperation. The JWG was co-chaired by Saran and Burns.

The next JWG meeting is likely to be held in January 2006 in New Delhi.

Foreign Secretary Saran’s visit also laid the groundwork for President Bush’s visit to India, expected early this year. “It was conveyed to me that President Bush and the First Lady are very much looking forward to the forthcoming visit to India,” he said. “I, in turn, assured the Secretary of State (Condoleezza Rice), the National Security Advisor (Stephen Hadley) and my interlocutor at the State Department, Nicholas Burns, that a very warm welcome awaits President Bush in India and that we would like this visit not only to be a demonstration of the transformation which has taken place in India-U.S. relations during the past year, but would also have a lot of substance in that relationship.”

The Foreign Secretary called on Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley on December 21, and had a meeting, on Capitol Hill, with Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-IN), Chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the following day.

In addition, he joined his counterpart in the Department of Energy, David Garman, to co-chair the first meeting of the Indo-U.S. Steering Committee on Energy Cooperation, which



PHOTO ABOVE, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, right, with Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns, in Washington, D.C., on December 21. PHOTO BELOW, Saran with Ambassador Ronen Sen during a press conference at the Embassy on December 22. (Photos: Kiran Jagga)



is being pursued through five different working groups on coal; petroleum and natural gas; non- and new-conventional sources of energy; power and energy efficiency; and civil nuclear energy cooperation (in areas not covered by the Joint Working Group). He also met Eric S. Edelman, the Under Secretary in the Department of Defense at the Pentagon, the Embassy statement said.

“It was a very crowded agenda. And I go back very satisfied with the progress that has been achieved... We have a very good foundation for taking our relations to a much higher level,” the Foreign Secretary stressed. ■

(For full text of the Foreign Secretary’s remarks, the press release issued at the end of the FS’s visit, and transcript of the press conference, visit www.indianembassy.org)

Saran's speech at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has said that India has a credible plan for separation of the country's civilian and military nuclear facilities that will help make the historic July 18 India-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement a reality.

"Yes, I've come with certain ideas about separating civilian and nuclear facilities," Saran said, addressing an audience of U.S. business leaders, academics and policymakers at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., on December 21.

He, however, did not divulge details and said the proper forum for discussing the nitty-gritty was the high-level working group established by the two countries. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had stated a week earlier that India was in an advanced stage of separating the military and civilian nuclear installations and was coordinating with the U.S. on this.

Foreign Secretary Saran, who was on a two-day visit to hammer out the finer aspects of the nuclear cooperation agreement signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Singh last year, made a strong pitch for the deal, saying it would not only help India's energy needs but open the doors to American business.

"Civil nuclear energy is currently limited precisely because of technology denial. If freed from current restrictions, there is little doubt that it will rapidly move into percentages of double digits," he said in his Carnegie address, titled 'Transforming India-U.S. Relations: Building a Strategic Partnership'.

"To believe that civil nuclear energy is unimportant because it constitutes only 3 percent of India's current energy production betrays a lack of understanding of our energy requirements and their emission implications," asserted Saran.

Saran was critical of opponents of the India-U.S. nuclear deal who claimed India had not been held to any commitments in the July 18 pact struck by the Bush administration. He pointed out that India was partnering the U.S. in almost every international initiative on various aspects of energy. While in most areas market forces were operating, "regulatory restrictions are blocking normal commerce in civil nuclear energy and must be addressed if India is to be a long-term partner," he noted.

"Ironically, continued technology denial targets the very reform-minded and forward-thinking constituency in India that is in the forefront of advocating a closer Indo-U.S. partnership," he said. Critics, he added, were "missing the woods for the trees" if they believed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was being harmed by giving a non-signatory the rights to civilian nuclear technology.

"Bringing India into the fold is not



Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran speaking on Indo-U.S. relations at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in Washington, D.C., on December 21. (Photo: Kiran Jaggia)

only a gain for international non-proliferation efforts but indispensable for the emergence of a new global consensus on non-proliferation in response to current challenges. Any objective assessment of efforts to counter WMD proliferation would surely put a high value on Indian participation," he argued.

For those that criticised the safeguard terms in the July 18 agreement, he said: "India would take into account the concerns of its partners. The objective of safeguards is not to address India's strategic programmes. It is to give our partners the assurance they legitimately expect: That, one, civil nuclear cooperation with India would not be diverted to assist India's strategic programme; and two, it would not result in diversion to third countries."

Saran concluded by saying: "Indo-U.S. relations are at a crossroads. We have two clear choices before us. One is the road that we have travelled before — one that will maintain

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the status quo and the distance between our two democracies. The other, not without its challenges, recognises the enormous changes of the last decade, appreciates the resulting opportunities, and is prepared to depart from established positions to realise a genuine strategic partnership. Its realisation could make Indo-U.S. ties one of the principal relationships of the international system. I am confident that this positive view of our ties will prevail and will be reflected in the outcome of the landmark visit of President Bush to India early next year." ■

(For full text of the Foreign Secretary's speech and transcript of the Q&A session, visit www.indianembassy.org)

India's involvement in East Asia Summit important: PM

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh, who attended the first East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur, has said it was important for India to be in a group that had the "potential to play a major role in global affairs".

"Its composition, its evolving agenda and format give it the potential to play a major role in global affairs. India's presence in this group from its very outset is an opportunity we value," the Prime Minister said.

He said he was happy to hear from Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi that this group "represents a desire for engagement and not containment" and added that in an evolving global balance, East Asia carries ever-increasing weight and lends significance to India's participation in it.

The 16-member grouping includes the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), besides India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Earlier, meeting at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, the leaders of the 16 countries came out with a Kuala Lumpur Declaration that termed it a "forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political and economic issues" and said it would promote multifarious linkages in the region from trade to technology transfer, prevention of infectious diseases and to natural disaster mitigation.

Among the resolutions agreed upon was one that it would be an "open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum in which we strive to strengthen global norms and universally recognized values".

India was invited as its remarkable economic growth and



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, seated left, signing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration at the end of the first East Asia Summit held from Dec. 12-14 at the Malaysian capital. At center is Australian Prime Minister John Howard and at right is Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

rising global status made it, in the words of Badawi, a "country to watch" and with which the region had much to gain from trade and technology linkages.

Besides having their annual dialogue, the declaration said the EAS would promote development, financial stability, energy security, economic integration and growth, and narrow the development differential through technology transfer, good governance, trade, financial links and investment expansion, among other things. ■

Following are excerpts of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other heads of state and government at the end of the East Asia Summit on December 14:

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand, on the occasion of the historic First East Asia Summit on 14 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

...ACKNOWLEDGING that in a rapidly changing international environment, our economies and societies have becoming increasingly interlinked and interdependent;...

RECOGNISING our shared interests in achieving peace, security and prosperity in East Asia and the world at large;...

CONVINCED of the importance of strengthening bilateral and multilateral... cooperation among the participating countries of the East Asia Summit and the world at large...

REITERATING the conviction that the effective functioning of multilateral systems will continue to be indispensable for advancing economic development;

Kuala Lumpur Declaration

RECOGNISING that this region is today a source of dynamism for the world economy;...

DO HEREBY DECLARE:

FIRST, that we have established the East Asia Summit as a forum for dialogue on broad, strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability, economic prosperity in East Asia.

SECOND, that the efforts of the East Asia Summit to promote community building in this region will be consistent with and reinforce the realisation of the ASEAN Community...

THIRD, that the East Asia Summit will be an open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum in which we strive to strengthen global norms and universally recognized values with ASEAN as the driving force working in partnership with the other participants...

FOURTH, we will focus, among other things, on the following: a) Fostering strategic dialogue and promoting cooperation... b) Promoting development, financial stability, energy security, economic integration and growth... c) Promoting deeper cultural understanding people-to-people contact...

FIFTH, Participation in the East Asia Summit will be based on the criteria for participation established by ASEAN...

(For full text of the Declaration, visit <http://meaindia.nic.in>)

President Kalam launches India-U.S. universities network

President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has said India's educational system should "realign" itself to meet present-day challenges and societal changes taking place. Maintaining that "the whole purpose" of education "is to develop and enhance the potential of our human resource and progressively transform it into a knowledge society," the President said the system "should realign itself at the earliest and be fully geared to participate in the societal transformation" that is occurring.

President Kalam was speaking at the launch of the India-U.S. Universities EDUSAT Network that he hoped would soon create a "virtual university system". He inaugurated the network on December 8 through video conferencing at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Noting that the network would be working toward "creating a new wave of synergy amongst our educational institutions", the President said: "It has to be a win-win situation for both nations."

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Amrita Vishva Vidyapeetham, five U.S. universities, Microsoft Corporation, QUALCOMM Inc. and Cadence Design Systems Inc. have put together the network.

The network "is the first step towards creating universities that could meet the demands of the knowledge era — an era that was born out of convergence of technologies," the President noted.

"Knowledge connectivity is essential for networking and providing seamless access between the knowledge creator — the universities and R&D institutions that convert this knowledge into products — and the knowledge consumer, that is, industry and the people," he added.

President Kalam also suggested possible R&D areas for the universities to work on: Earthquake forecasting, infrastructure development, ICT, nano science and technology, computer aided design and engineering, computational fluid dynamics, and computer aided manufacturing.

A day earlier, 15 leading American Universities — including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and the Universities of Massachusetts, Washington, Texas, Illinois and University of California at Los Angeles — joined hands with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and AMRITA Vishva Vidyapeetham to enhance higher education and research in India.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed in New Delhi on December 7.

The U.S. signatories in this MOU will depute their faculty to teach and



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam at the launch of the India-U.S. Universities EDUSAT Network in Rashtrapati Bhavan on December 8. The launch was done through video-conferencing.

lead research programmes that will be accessible to a wide cross-section of colleges and universities in India via AMRITA's e-Learning facility and ISRO's Edusat. The programme will focus initially on engineering and computer science, information and communication technologies, but courses will also include materials science, biotechnology and bioinformatics, nanotechnology, medical sciences and management sciences.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. V.S. Ramamurthy, Secretary, DST, said the biggest challenge in the education sector is quality education which will prepare scientists for tomorrow. Producing good quality students and properly trained teachers is the need of the hour, he said, and should be made a part of the nation's long-term strategy. For this, uniformity of training across the world is a must, Ramamurthy said, adding that the signing of the MOU was a step forward in that direction. ■

"Knowledge connectivity is essential for networking and providing seamless access between the knowledge creator — the universities and R&D institutions that convert this knowledge into products — and the knowledge consumer, i.e., industry and the people," President Kalam said.

1st meeting of U.S.-India ICT Working Group held in D.C.

The first meeting of a U.S.-India Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Working Group was held in Washington, D.C. on December 7 and 8 to chalk out future bilateral cooperation, including ways to boost development of the ICT sector, following the initiative launched during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's July visit.

The inaugural U.S.-India ICT Working Group was co-chaired by Ambassador David Gross, the State Department's U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, and M. Madhavan Nambiar, Additional Secretary in the Department of Information Technology.

The meeting of the Working Group is part of the U.S.-India Economic Dialogue.

According to a press note, the Working Group discussed developments in the IT sectors in both countries. It focused on discussion of approaches the governments can take to create an investment and regulatory environment that can maximise the development of the ICT sector.

The dialogue addressed outstanding issues as well as opportunities for collaboration in the areas of universal ser-

vice, liberalisation of the ICT sector, the appropriate government role in the adoption of new technology, and facilitation for cooperation among centres of excellence in the two countries. The participants also discussed future cooperation on enhancing "cyber trust" to facilitate e-commerce and e-governance, complementing the work of the existing bilateral High-Technology Cooperation Group and Cyber Security Forum.

The Working Group reviewed the recent World Summit on the Information Society and discussed issues of mutual importance in multilateral organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union. It also identified the need for more structured collaboration with the private sector, through the creation of public-private sector groups on telecommunications and IT.

U.S. participants were from the State and Commerce Departments, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the National Science Foundation. Indian officials were from the Departments of IT and Telecommunications of the Ministry of Communications and IT, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the Embassy of India. ■

India to participate in international nuclear fusion project

India's efforts to seek global cooperation for civil nuclear energy received a boost on December 6 with its acceptance as a full partner in an international project to develop a reactor that uses controlled nuclear fusion.

The decision to accept India into the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project was taken unanimously by the partners — the U.S., China, Japan, European Union, South Korea and Russia — at a meeting at Jeju in South Korea.

The ambitious project is aimed at demonstrating the feasibility of controlled nuclear fusion as a source of cheap and clean energy.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) hailed the move and saw it as a recognition of the country's status as a responsible nuclear state and its impeccable credentials in nuclear non-proliferation. "India's acceptance as a full partner is an acknowledgement of India as a responsible nuclear state with advanced nuclear technology, including in the field of fusion research," the MEA said on December 7. "It also recognizes that India can significantly contribute to such endeavours. As a full partner, Indian contribution to the ITER project shall be on the same basis as that of other partners."

ITER, which means "the way" in Latin, plans to build the experimental reactor at Cadarache near Aix-en-Provence in France.

India's inclusion in ITER is likely to provide leverage to efforts by the U.S. administration to sell the civil nuclear deal to the Congress. It also reflects a softening on the part of the international nuclear non-proliferation lobby, specially the influential Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), to accommodate



The site where the ITER will be built, in Cadarache, France.

India's aspirations to harness nuclear energy for its energy security.

India is expected to pick up about 10 percent of ITER's costs as China and South Korea have done. This could mean India will invest about \$50 million a year for the next 10 years or so for the building of ITER.

Early this month, EU had cleared India's inclusion in the ITER project that is estimated to cost about \$12 billion. ITER research, which aims to produce unlimited energy through nuclear fusion, is at a preliminary stage.

India had first expressed interest in joining ITER through a letter by Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, a week before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed the historic civil nuclear deal with US President George W. Bush in Washington, D.C., on July 18. ■

Microsoft unveils \$1.7 billion investment plan for India

Microsoft, the U.S. information technology (IT) major, is to invest \$1.7 billion in India and also partner the government in pushing e-governance and help add value to the manufacturing sector.

"The investment will be made over a four-year period. It is meant to create a digitally inclusive society, strengthen the local knowledge economy and make India a major hub for our research," Microsoft chief Bill Gates announced at a press conference in New Delhi on December 7 that was attended also by IT and Communications Minister Dayanidhi Maran.

Microsoft has also signed agreements with the government's Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) and the National Institute for Smart Governance (NISG), Gates said. The software giant will also collaborate with the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) to launch a competitiveness enhancement programme for India's manufacturing sector, he added.

Welcoming the initiatives, Maran said India regarded these as indicative of "the value Microsoft attaches to its development and R&D activities in the country as well as its recognition of the accelerating pace of growth of the ICT (information and communication technology) sector here".

Earlier, while delivering a lecture on 'Realising India's Potential', Gates held that "a lot of amazing and fantastic things" had happened in India since his visit three years ago, and presented a four-point mantra to enable the country to consolidate its place in the global arena.



Microsoft chief Bill Gates, left, and Melinda Gates join Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, right, in calling on world leaders to promote vaccines to save the lives of children, in New Delhi on December 7.

"India has a huge role to play on the world stage. For this, you need to focus on four key areas: Literacy, productivity, digital inclusion and innovation," he said.

During his visit, Gates met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss and ruling United Progressive Alliance chairperson Sonia Gandhi. He also visited Chennai and Bangalore. "We are extremely bullish on India," Gates said at the press conference. "Over the next three years, we will see our employees rising from 4,000 to 7,000." ■

Intel to invest \$1 billion

INTEL CORP. will invest more than \$1 billion in India, signaling the importance of this emerging technology power as a source of revenue and engineering talent, Chairman Craig Barrett said. About \$800 million will be used to expand Intel's operations, including a research and development (R&D) center in Bangalore that employs 2,800 workers.

Intel Capital, the chipmaker's venture capital arm, will invest an additional \$250 million in local companies, Barrett told reporters in New Delhi.

"We will grow our local operations, boost venture capital investments and work closely with the government, industry and educators to increase the impact of the country's ICT industry," he said. "What you're seeing is our conviction and commitment to emerging markets," said Arvind Sodhani, president of Intel Capital. ■

Infotech to hire 200 IT professionals in the U.S.

IN THE biggest such initiative by an Indian firm, Infotech Enterprises will hire 200 professionals in the U.S. to capture the global market for high-end solutions related to engineering, manufacturing and industries.

All the professionals will be U.S. citizens and domain experts, who will man the company's operations that mainly cater to the United Technologies Corp. (UTC), especially in aerospace. UTC, a \$40-billion group, is an equity partner in Infotech, a global design engineering, geospatial and IT Services company.

"This will help us move up the value chain," Rajeev Lal, president (Strategic and New Business Initiatives), Infotech, said. With more companies opting for engineering outsourcing, Infotech has made engineering, manufacturing and industrial products (EMI) a focus area. ■

Cisco's \$1.1 billion plan

CISCO SYSTEMS has announced enormous strategic developments in India, including a \$1.1 billion investment in the country over the next three years and an agreement with the Indian government to support its National E-Governance Plan, according to reports.

Dan Scheinman, senior vice president of Corporate Development, was quoted as saying that the investment has been planned because, "over the past 10 years, we've seen an enormous evolution of the Indian market. The government has rolled back the state-controlled economy and created a competitive environment, and because of that — combined with the incredible talent that exists in India we see opportunities not only to be part of this great awakening in India but also to make our business even more globally competitive going forward." ■

POSCO finalises plans for \$12 bn steel project in Orissa

South Korean steel major POSCO said it had finalised plans to invest \$12 billion to build a 12 million tonne plant in Orissa by 2016. "Not only is the Korean investment the largest of its kind in India, it is the largest of its kind in the world. It is our biggest overseas venture and the Indian government has given its full support," a POSCO statement said. POSCO is the world's fifth-largest steel maker.

POSCO plans to establish the plant as an "integrated steel works" capable of producing four million tonnes a year by 2010 and increase this in phases of three million tonnes each to 12 million tonnes by 2016. The final completion of the plant will be ahead of schedule, the company statement said.

In the "integrated steel works" concept, the entire process of melting, steel making and rolling occur together. The facility will also employ the innovative FINEX steel making method. This is a revolutionary process of skipping sintering

and coke making — essential in blast furnace methods — to cut costs and reduce hazardous emissions.

POSCO will also develop a mine to provide 600 million tonnes of iron ore, or 20 million tonnes a year for 30 years, in Orissa's Keonjhar and Sundargarh areas.

The company is setting up a new port for transporting the plant's products as Orissa's lone port of Paradip will not be able to cope with the high volumes to be generated.

"India is expected to post the world's highest economic growth rate by 2020. Its growth potential is so high that the demand for steel is also expected to soar," the company statement said.

POSCO had on June 22 signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Orissa government to set up the plant in Orissa. Since signing the MoU and setting up its Indian subsidiary in August 2005, POSCO has invested \$51.3 million in the project. ■

Motorola's testing facility in Madurai

A local engineering college in Madurai will help U.S.-based telecom company Motorola to set up its wireless testing facilities for rural connectivity. According to reports, the Thiagarajar College of Engineering (TCE) will sign an MoU with Motorola which would provide equipment for testing and providing wireless connectivity in and around Madurai.

The college's Advanced Research Centre will help Motorola in the trial operation. The tests would be carried in pilot village and, based on the results, they would be replicated in other villages, the reports said.

TCE is already playing a role as Technology, Information, Forecasting Assessment Council (TIFAC)-Centre of Relevance and Excellence in the area of wireless technologies. ■

Mahindra's JV with U.S. firm Navistar

Mahindra & Mahindra has set up a joint venture with U.S. manufacturer Navistar International to produce and market light, medium and heavy commercial vehicles for Indian and export markets, reports said. The new venture will be known as Mahindra International, the company said in a statement.

Mahindra & Mahindra will have 51 percent ownership in the joint venture with Navistar accounting for 49 percent, and the combined investments of the two companies will be more than \$80 million over a two-to-three year period, it said.

Daniel C. Ustian, Navistar chairman, said the joint venture gives the company "the opportunity to participate in the economic growth of India and the surrounding region, working with a partner of proven capabilities and reputation." ■

GM's India R&D facility is its strategic centre for global operations

The India Science Lab (ISL), the research and development (R&D) facility of General Motors Corporation (GM) in Bangalore, has emerged as a strategic centre for the global operations of the world's largest automaker. "Some of its programmes have helped us in optimising maintenance and reducing operational costs significantly," GM vice president for R&D and strategic planning Lawrence D. Burns said.

Set up in 2003 with an upfront investment of \$20 million, the lab has started contributing to the advances GM has been making in product innovation and automotive technologies, he said.

"We have a cross section of researchers from different nationalities, education and experience levels with inter-disciplinary skills. The lab has been selected for the GM R&D McCuen awards in recognition of its contribution to product innovation and automotive research," Burns said.

IPR for commercialising lab research strengthened

INDIA HAS strengthened its intellectual property rights (IPR) regime with the Cabinet granting the government's premier scientific body Rs. 1.45 billion (\$32 million) to put in place a patent management system to enable it to commercialise the research conducted by its laboratories. "This will create an intangible intellectual property asset for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the nation," Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said. The creation of an Intellectual Property and Technology Management System "will help reassure the Indian R&D community of the importance of protecting their IP and enable Indian industry to bargain for and secure access to hitherto closely held strategic technologies", the minister added. ■

Betting on some of the world's best scientific and engineering talent in the subcontinent, GM Corp. plans to ramp up its headcount at the ISL to over 100 from the present level of 75 during the next 12 months so as to widen its scope and collaborate with the company's global research network. ■

India's IT and BPO industry to grow 10-fold by 2010

The Indian information technology (IT) and business process outsourcing (BPO) industry is poised to grow 10-fold by 2010, according to a report by the Indian software trade association Nasscom and global consulting firm McKinsey.

While Indian companies will continue to maintain their 46 percent share of the global BPO market and 65 percent share of the IT outsourcing market through 2010, the combined market is estimated to grow from the current level of \$30 billion to \$300 billion by 2010, tech magazine *Red Herring* wrote, quoting the report.

These two sectors of the Indian economy will earn \$60 billion in exports by March 2010, an increase from 3 percent of gross domestic product to about 7 percent, said the report, the third by the two organizations in the last six years.

The report projects that the BPO industry will grow from \$11.6 billion today to \$150 billion by 2010, while IT outsourcing will increase from \$18.4 billion to \$150 billion over the next five years.

The Indian industry is in a strong position to leverage the global software opportunity, but extensive innovation by industry stakeholders could further accelerate growth in export revenues.

"Sustaining industry leadership will require Indian players to continue driving the frontiers of operational excellence," Subramanian Ramadorai, chairman of Nasscom and chief executive of Tata Consultancy Services, was quoted as saying by *Red Herring*.

Nasscom and McKinsey have jointly developed a BPO benchmarking framework called Process360 to help providers identify key operational gaps by analyzing 14 different operational areas. The projected growth of the Indian IT and BPO industry will directly employ approximately 2.3 million people, provide indirect employment to another 6.5 million workers, and pay for a massive infrastructure build-out by 2010,

McKinsey partner Noshir Kaka was quoted as saying.

The IT and BPO industry could account for over 44 percent of India's export growth over the next five years.

Highlighting businesses that had not seen significant penetration by Indian companies but could nonetheless become potential growth areas, Kaka told the magazine that Indian companies had captured a tiny segment of the outsourcing pie in several verticals.

Indian software companies only garnered 10 percent of the market in the banking-services business and only 9 percent of the auto manufacturing business. ■

Internet users base up by 54% in India

Indians are increasingly becoming Net savvy with the Internet users base registering a 54 percent growth, with 38.5 million people using the medium in 2005.

According to a survey by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), more and more people are using the Internet. Against 25 million users in 2004, the year 2005 had recorded 38.5 million users till November.

Internet penetration has been facilitated by low rates for broadband connections, now available for Rs. 199 (\$4) per month, and introduction of affordable PCs priced at Rs. 10,000 (\$216), which enables the common man to overcome the first obstacle of accessing the Net.

The widespread use of Internet and its associated applications like e-governance, e-commerce, e-banking and e-learning will play a crucial role in the growth of the economy, the survey said. Currently the total e-commerce market in India is estimated at Rs.11.8 billion. ■

IT services provider Patni Computers is listed on NYSE

Leading IT services provider Patni Computers Ltd. (PCL) on December 8 listed itself on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), becoming the eighth Indian firm to do so. Patni Computers, which entered the U.S. stock market at 9.30 US Eastern Time, was listed with the ticker symbol "PTI". Earlier, the company had announced the fixing of its American Depositary Shares (ADS) at \$20.34 on the NYSE.

"It is a proud moment for us at Patni to have achieved this landmark. We look forward to achieving several more in the future," Mrinal Sattawala, executive vice president of Patni, told reporters.

Talking to the media via teleconferencing from New York immediately after the listing, Suratwala said being publicly listed in the U.S. would augur well for his company's standing among the North American public with regard to corporate governance and financial credibility. "The listing is a big step for us towards creating a global brand. It is the next step in creating a global footprint," Suratwala said.

Patni Computers, which trades on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange, will have 6,875,000 ADS on its initial public offering and listing.

According to a company statement, the ADS offering comprises 5.125 million primary ADS, 1.75 million secondary ADS and up to an additional 1.03125 million primary ADS under the over-allotment option given to the underwriters.

Suratwala said: "Patni has shown strong growth in the past year with revenues increasing by nearly 30 percent. We look forward to continue on the same trajectory. We have consistently demonstrated how to maintain a win-win relation with our clients. We have developed strong relationships with top clients like GE, Metlife and several leading business process outsourcing firms in India and abroad."

Patni Computer Systems offers its services through industry-focused practices, including insurance, manufacturing, financial services, and telecommunications and through technology-focused practices. ■

Prime Minister promises 'new deal' for rural India

Promising a new deal for rural India, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on December 16 said the challenge before his government was to balance the urban-rural divide that posed a threat to social and political stability.

Launching Bharat Nirman, the government's flagship Rs. 1.74 trillion (\$38.34 billion) programme for rural infrastructure at a conference organised in New Delhi by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), he admitted that the divide between urban areas and the rural hinterland had widened.

Manmohan Singh promised a time-bound plan to unlock rural India's growth potential.

"As I look at the history of India in the last 50 years, this gap has widened. It has not become narrower and there lies the great danger for social, economic and political stability. We have to reverse this trend," he said.

Conceived as a four-year business plan for achieving identified goals in six selected areas of rural infrastructure — irrigation, water supply, housing, roads, telephony and electrification — Bharat Nirman's goals are

critical for unleashing the process of growth in rural areas, he said.

In four of these areas, Manmohan Singh said, the government wanted universal coverage whereby every village with a population of over 1,000 people would have an all-weather road, a telephone, water supply and electricity.

In addition, he said that the government intended to build six million houses to address rural homelessness and add 10 million hectares of irrigation capacity.

"The targets are ambitious but with active participation of



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

the state governments, we hope to deliver on time and within 2009, the time our tenure in government expires," Manmohan Singh remarked. Taken together with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the National Rural Health Mission, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the prime minister said this would signal a "new deal to rural India." ■

PM launches ambitious 'urban renewal mission'

Prim e Minister Manmohan Singh on December 3 launched a major scheme to radically improve urban life in the country, even while ensuring basic services for the poor in cities.

Unveiling the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, the Prime Minister said: "The urban economy is the bridge between the domestic economy and the global economy. It is a bridge we must strengthen."

He stressed the need to improve quality of living in cities and the need to have "an integrated framework in which spatial development of cities goes hand in hand with improvement in the quality of living of ordinary people".

The Mission is the government's single-largest initiative for planned development of cities. Slum improvement and providing housing for the poor will form a key part on the initiative.

The prime minister expressed concern over the inability to address the needs of the poor and non-availability of basic services like drinking water supply, sanitation, housing and social services in urban areas. ■

Cabinet nod for anti-corruption convention

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing the United Nations Convention against Corruption at the United Nations headquarters in New York and also for initiating the process of enactment of requisite enabling legislation by the concerned Ministries/Departments before approval for ratification of the Convention.

The U.N. Convention against Corruption was opened to all States for signature from December 9-11, 2003, in Merida, Mexico, and was open for signature at the U.N. headquarters until December 9, 2005. The Convention has been already signed by 118 countries, including India's neighbours like China, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, besides countries like the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, South Africa and Brazil. It has since also been ratified by 19 countries.

India seeks to project its objective of zero tolerance against corruption internationally which would promote international relations and trade development. ■

Anti-money laundering guidelines are issued

The Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines for Authorized Money Changers (AMCs) so as to prevent them being misused for money-laundering activities.

AMCs must now formulate customer identification procedures; they must have norms for recognition, handling and disclosure of suspicious transactions; they must appoint a Money Laundering Reporting Officer; they must train their staff on anti-money-laundering procedures; maintain proper records; and audit all transactions.

AMCs have been asked to formulate these guidelines with the approval of their respective boards of directors and put them in place before March 31, 2006. The AMCs have also been told to inform all their constituents about the coming into force of the guidelines.

The guidelines would be applicable to all franchisees of AMCs and it will be the sole responsibility of the AMC concerned to ensure that their franchisees also adhere to the guidelines. ■

Ambassador Sen's address at U. Penn's India center

Ronen Sen, Ambassador of India to the United States, delivered a special lecture titled 'Indo-US Relations: Where Are They Headed?' at the Center for the Advanced Study of India (CAST) at the University of Pennsylvania.

Addressing what he described as an "informed gathering", Ambassador Sen sought to dispel the "misperception" that India-U.S. relations only started to develop after the break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

While admitting that the India-U.S. engagement prior to the Cold War was "often episodic" and sometimes even hostile, Sen said this "does not alter the fact that relations were often very close previously... for instance, after (India's) 1962 conflict with China".

Sen said it was in the 1980s, during the Reagan Administration, that some of the most important steps in India-U.S. relations were taken.

"For instance, a Memorandum of Understanding on technology transfer, including dual-use technologies, was signed as far back as 1984. This is a precursor actually of the more recent agreement, what's referred to as the 'Next Steps in Strategic Partnership'... Also the supply of U.S. engines for the light combat aircraft we were developing. The deal was signed in 1986," Sen recalled, adding that India was one of the first non-NATO recipients of a U.S. super computer in 1987.

Even during the Gulf War in 1991, Sen said, "for the first time in its history, India allowed its air space to be used by military aircraft overflying its territory. Not only overflying its territory, but using its territory to make refueling stops."

The relationship, however, went into a slump thereafter and engagement began again only after India's 1998 nuclear tests. "You might say that the Kargil episode was the turning point and it culminated in an understanding reflective of a change in the viewpoint of the United States, which was manifested in President Clinton's visit to India... Thereafter, the relationship has flourished and has taken off very rapidly."

A "new impetus" was provided by President Bush, Ambassador Sen said, and the U.S., "rather than viewing India in a sub-regional context (viewed it) 'as an emerging global power with which it was in the interest of the United States to develop a strategic partnership'", Sen said.

Today, he said, "there is a realization that it is not what the U.S. can do for India, nor what India can do for the United States, but what both countries can do together bilaterally for their mutual benefit and for making the world a safer and more secure place."

Describing the current areas of widespread engagement between the two countries, Ambassador Sen spoke of subjects such as the ongoing civilian nuclear and space cooperation and cooperation in dual-use technologies and missile defense; the India-U.S. Economic Dialogue; cooperation in the field of agriculture; infrastructure development; growing bilateral trade; and the important India-U.S. Energy Dialogue

Noting that there is a change of perception in the U.S. about India, Ambassador Sen said it was "basically a result of bridging the gap between reality and perception" and had a lot to do with the country's entrenched democratic system and its rapidly growing economy.

He also spoke of areas where India-U.S. interests converged, such as the war against terrorism and nonproliferation.

In a lively question and answer session after his address, Ambassador Sen dismissed a suggestion that the U.S. was using India as a buffer against China. "We have a vital stake in the stability and prosperity of China," he said, adding: "Our bilateral trade with China is growing rapidly. Very soon it's become our second largest trading partner, and if it continues to grow at this rate, it might, in the next four years or so, well become our largest trading partner."

He also fielded several questions on India-Pakistan relations, India's role in the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, nonproliferation, the gas deal with Iran and the separation of civilian and nuclear facilities.

Earlier, Ambassador Sen was introduced by Dr. Francine R. Frankel, Director, Center for the Advanced Study of India, who described him as "India's most distinguished diplomat

and active participant in ongoing discussions of the potential for changing the direction of India-U.S. relations and potentially the future great power balance in Asia." He added that "Ambassador Sen has a deep knowledge, not only of foreign affairs but of defense and science and technology, having previously been secretary to the Atomic Energy Commission of India."



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Ambassador's Journal

Ronen Sen visited Columbus, Ohio, from December 1 to 3. During his visit, he met Governor Bob Taft and the Mayor of Columbus, Michael Coleman. Sen visited the Ohio State University where President Karen Holbrook, who is scheduled to visit India in early 2006, hosted a luncheon meeting with senior members of the faculty and student representatives.

The Indian envoy had extensive discussions with the senior faculty members of Ohio State University, which was closely involved in the past with India's Green Revolution. The University will now be associated, together with other premier research institutes in both countries, in implementing the India-U.S. Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture taken during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the U.S. in July 2005.

The Ambassador also addressed business and community leaders during an inter-active session with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Ambassador Sen gave a luncheon address to the Global Business Forum in end-November at the Georgetown Club, Washington, D.C. The address focused on the strategic partnership between India and the U.S. and the current investment climate and business prospects in India.

The Ambassador addressed the the Neuroscience Division of the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America (ASIOA) at their Annual Awards Banquet held in Washington, D.C., in November. The function was presided over by Dr. Ghanshyam Pandey, President of ASIOA and well-known neuroscientist. Referring to extensive cooperation between India and the United States in the fields of science and technology, Sen urged the neuroscientists of Indian origin in the U.S. to promote and facilitate greater direct linkages between the institutions and scientists in the U.S. with their Indian counterparts. He congratulated the neuroscientists of Indian origin for their achievements and professionalism.



PHOTO ABOVE, From left, Roman Fedkiw, Director of Multicultural Affairs in the Office of the Governor of Ohio; Nirmal Sinha, Ohio Civil Rights Commissioner; Governor Bob Taft; Ambassador Ronen Sen; Nirranjan Patel, Federation of Indian Association (FIA), Central Ohio; and, Amar Pandey, Chairman, FIA, Central Ohio, at the Governor's office in Ohio on December 1. PHOTO RIGHT, Ambassador Ronen Sen with Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman on December 1.



PHOTO LEFT, the *India Abroad* Event of the Year 2005, instituted this year, was conferred on the blossoming Indo-U.S. ties. Ambassador Ronen Sen received the award on behalf of India, while U.S. Under Secretary for Commerce David McCormick received it on behalf of the United States government. The newly confirmed McCormick recently led a high-powered delegation to India for a meeting of the U.S.-India High Technology Consultative Group meeting. PHOTO RIGHT, the first batch of four Indian Navy pilots currently undergoing Carrier Flight Training in Pensacola, Florida.

Events Around the U.S.



HANUKKAH CELEBRATIONS AT THE EMBASSY RESIDENCE

PHOTO ABOVE, Cantor Romiel Daniel, President of Rego Park Synagogue, New York, at the Hanukkah celebrations at the Embassy Residence on December 29, 2005. To the left of Cantor Daniel are Ambassador Ronen Sen, Deputy Chief of Mission Ambassador R.S. Jassal, and Nissim B. Reuben, Program Officer at The American Jewish Committee. PHOTO LEFT, Ambassador Ronen Sen lighting the Menorah at the Embassy Residence on December 29, 2005.
(Photos: Kiran Jagga)

CHRISTMAS AT THE EMBASSY

Christmas celebrations at the Indian Embassy on December 18. Seen in the photo are a group of Indian Community members with the Deputy Chief of mission Ambassador R.S. Jassal at the center and Dr. Smita Tewari Jassal.
(Photo: Mathew Karmel)



INDIA'S Churches



The Church of Immaculate Conception in Ernakulam, Kerala.

Christianity has had a long and glorious relation with India. And Christmas is almost a pan-Indian religion today, although Christians account for only about 2 percent of the country's over a billion population. And the last week of the year, when the celebrations begin with Christmas and wind up with the New Year, is a good time to visit India's numerous churches, some of them dating back more than a millennium.

According to legend, St. Thomas, one of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ, first brought Christianity to India when he sailed to the Malabar coast in 52 A.D. — much before Christianity made its entry into Europe. St. Thomas is said to

have spent 12 years in India, the last eight of his them in Mylapore in Madras (now Chennai), where he was buried and his tomb is to this day visited by thousands.

Apart from this, the advent of Europeans in India from the 15th century onwards led to an influx of Christians and subsequent development of Christian worship places.

Today, there are about 23 millions Christians in India. Christianity ranks third in terms of religious affiliation after Hinduism and Islam and there are Christian congregations in all the major towns of India.

The great majority of the Protestant Christians in India are now members of the Church of South India, formed from

the major Protestant denominations in 1947, or the Church of North India, which followed suit in 1970. Together they account for approximately half the total number of Christians.

Roman Catholics make up the majority of the rest. Many of the church congregations, both in towns and villages, are active centers of Christian worship.

Some of the churches owe their origin either to the modern missionary movement of the late 18th century onwards, or to the colonial presence of the European powers. There are four major Christians sects in India.

■ Thomas Christians in Kerala: It is believed St Thomas reached India in 52 A.D., and initially settled in Malabar. He

expanded the missionary work to China. A church still exists of Thomas Christian in Kerala.

■ **The Syrian Church:** The Syrian Christians, who arrived from West Asia by sea to the Malabar coast in Kerala, embarked on a major missionary movement from the third to sixth century A.D. They are mostly located in Kerala.

■ **Roman Catholicism:** The Jesuit St. Francis Xavier landed in Goa in 1542 and Goa was made an Archbishopric, and it still bears rich testimony to the Portuguese influence on community life and on churches in India.

■ **Northern missions:** There are far fewer Christians in North India than in the South, but Protestant missions in Bengal from the end of the 18th century had a profound influence on the local cultural and religious development. The Christian populations of the tribal hill areas of Nagaland and Assam stem from such late missionary efforts.

Church architecture was first introduced in India by Portuguese, till then the structures were rather rudimentary. India has Churches of all kinds, depicting different forms of Christianity.

Some of the churches of India are comparable to the best in the world and are as much a part of the heritage of the country.

One must visit these churches and explore the fascinating world of Christianity in India.

Here is a list of Christianity's most religious places in India:

Andhra Pradesh: Gundala Church, St. Joseph's Cathedral, St. Mary's Church, Medak Church.

Delhi: Church of the Sacred Heart, Cathedral Church of the Redemption.

Goa: Ruis of St. Augustine's Tower Se Cathedral, The Chapel of Our Lady of The Mount, The Chapel of St. Catherine, The Church and Convent of St. Monica, The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, The Church of St. Cajetan, The Church of St. Francis of Assisi, The Church of The Carmelites, The Convent and Church of St. John of God, The Convent and The Church of the Cross Miracles, The Professed House and The Basilica of Bom Jesus, The Royal Chapel of St. Anthony, and dozens of others.

Himachal Pradesh: Christ Church and St. Michael's Cathedral, The Catholic



The famous Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa, where the body of St. Francis Xavier, who died in 1552, is kept. Photo below, the well-known Vailankanni Church in Tamil Nadu.

Church of St. Francis, St. John's Church-In-Wilderness, The Christ Church.

Karnataka: St. Philomena's Church.

Kerala: Malayatoor Church, Valiya Palli Church, Santa Cruz Basilica, St. Francis Church, The Church of Immaculate Conception. These are but some of the more important churches of Kerala, a state with almost a 20 percent Christian population and is dotted with churches, especially in the districts of Ernakulam, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta.

Maharashtra: Afghan Memorial Church, Cathedral Church of St. Thomas, Holy Christ Church, Mount Mary Church.

Tamil Nadu: Christ The King Church, Kandal Cross Shrine, Luz Church, Manappad Church, Santhome Cathedral Basilica, St. Andrew's Church, St. Mary's Church in The Fort, St. Thomas Mount, Vailankanni Church.

Uttar Pradesh: All Saints Cathedral, Christ Church, Holy Trinity Church, Jamuna Church, Kanpur Memorial Church, Sardhana, St. George's Church, St. John's Church, St. Joseph's Church, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic, St. Mary's Church, St. Peter's Church.

For more on India tourism,
www.tourindia.com
www.tourismofindia.com



■ A Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year!



A flower seller wearing a Santa cap at a wholesale flower market in New Delhi. Business increased several-fold during the Christmas and New Year week as buyers flocked to the market that supplies not only the capital, but adjoining areas. (AFP)

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