



Jaswant Singh Visit: Continuing the Momentum

India's Minister for External Affairs and Defence, Mr. Jaswant Singh, visited Washington, DC on April 6, 2001. Besides meeting President Bush in the Oval Office, Mr. Jaswant Singh held talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

Visit of Minister of External Affairs and Defence



Mr. Jaswant Singh received by U.S. Defence Secretary Rumsfeld at the Pentagon.



Addressing the press at the State Department along with Secretary Powell.

Mr. Jaswant Singh, Minister of External Affairs and Defence, visited Washington, DC on April 6 to hold talks with key members of the new U.S. Administration. During his packed one-day visit, Mr. Singh met President Bush and held discussions with key members of the Administration – Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. Commenting on the President’s gesture of inviting him to the Oval Office for discussions, Mr. Jaswant Singh said: “the meeting showed that he attaches the highest importance to India not just for the region but as a factor of stability and peace”.

A wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues was covered during the talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell and discussions between the two delegations over lunch at the State Department. Speaking to the members after the meeting, Secretary Powell said: “we would be engaging between our two governments and our two departments at every level in order to make sure that we keep moving this relationship in a very positive and powerful direction”.

As Defence Minister of India, Mr. Jaswant Singh was received with full honours at the Pentagon by Defence Secretary Rumsfeld. This was the first contact between the two countries at that level since 1995. The substantive discussions held on this occasion are expected to lead to regular dialogue between the U.S. Defence Secretary and India’s Defence Minister similar to the one existing between the two foreign offices. An exchange of visits between the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the two sides is also planned. Mr. Singh also addressed a press conference at the Indian Embassy after the day’s meetings.

Transcript of remarks by Secretary Powell and Mr. Jaswant Singh at the press conference at the State Department is on page 2.

Lalit Mansingh, India's New Ambassador to the United States



MR. Lalit Mansingh assumed the position of India's Ambassador to the United States on March 15, 2001. Prior to his appointment as the Ambassador of India to the United States, Mr. Mansingh has served as India's Foreign Secretary and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. He was earlier in Washington, DC as Deputy Chief of Mission during 1989-92.

Ambassador Mansingh has had a distinguished career in the Indian Foreign Service since June, 1963. He has been High Commissioner to Nigeria (1993-95) and Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (1980-83). He has also served in various diplomatic capacities in Geneva, Afghanistan and Belgium.

At headquarters, Mr. Mansingh was Dean of the Foreign Service Institute and has served as Director-General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and in the Ministry of Finance.

Born on April 29, 1941, Mr. Mansingh graduated

with honours in History and obtained his Master Degree in Political Science. He is married to Indira, a senior media professional. The Mansinghs have two children.



April 6, 2001 - Press Transcript: Secretary of State Colin L. Powell at the Press Conference Following his Meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh

SECRETARY POWELL: *Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Noisy location. But I've just had a very, very fine meeting with the Foreign Minister of India, who is also the Defense Minister of India. And he earlier met with President Bush. I think the fact that he met with President Bush, with National Security Advisor Rice, the conversations we have had — and he is going off to meet with his other counterpart, Secretary Rumsfeld — is indicative of the importance with which we view our relationship with India.*

A lot has been done in recent years. We look forward to building on all that has been accomplished. Our discussions covered economic issues, proliferation issues, trade issues, the issues applicable to the region, and I assured the Minister that we would be engaging between our two governments and our two departments at every level in order to make sure that we keep moving this relationship in a very positive and powerful direction.

So, Mr. Minister, it has been a great pleasure to have you with us. Would you like to say a word?

FOREIGN MINISTER SINGH: *Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen of the press, I fully and totally endorse what my distinguished counterpart, the Secretary of State, has said. It has been a fruitful and a very rewarding series of meetings and discussions.*

I am honored that President Bush himself was gracious enough to find time to meet me and spend time with me. I am delighted that I had an opportunity to spend time with the National Security Advisor, and now with the Secretary of State. And he has very accurately covered the range of discussions, the direction in which India-U.S. relations are set and to which the government, the Prime Minister and I are fully committed.

Thank you.

(end transcript)

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Prime Minister Vajpayee's statement in Lok Sabha regarding Jammu & Kashmir peace initiative

February 22, 2001

AS Hon'ble Members would recollect, Rashtrapatiji during his address to the Joint Sitting of both the Houses of Parliament had given voice to the Government's approach to the whole question of Jammu & Kashmir. He had then, amongst other things, shared with the Hon'ble Members of Parliament that:

"The Government is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to bring peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. As part of this, it launched a major peace mission on November 19, 2000, by announcing a unilateral non-initiation of combat operations in the State during the holy month of Ramzan. This bold initiative was extended twice up to February 26, 2001. As anticipated, this was warmly welcomed by the people of Jammu & Kashmir, who are longing for an end to militancy and violence in their beautiful State. The international community has also given overwhelming support, because it sees in it yet another demonstration of India's sincere commitment to a peaceful and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue."

Rashthrapatiji had also then informed the Hon'ble Members that:

"Militancy in Jammu & Kashmir is now increasingly confined to foreign mercenary groups. This has widened the scope for democratic activity in the State. The people of the State participated enthusiastically in the recent Panchayat elections. I reiterate the Government's readiness to have talks with every group in the State that abjures violence."

The Government has decided to pursue this path by initiating talks with various groups in J & K.

The Government has seriously addressed the question of continuing with the peace process and further extending the period of non-initiation of combat operation by our security forces. In this regard, the Government has benefited by the detailed briefing of and consultations with all political parties that it had on February 21, 2001.

Having examined all aspects of the question in its totality, the Government has decided to further extend the period up till the end of May. Let this

opportunity not be missed by all those that desire peace, for our patience is not infinite.

I wish to make it abundantly clear that the peace process is only for those that wish to benefit from it. We will not let this process be derailed, diluted or misused. For such organisations or elements, as have vowed to disrupt the peace process, or intend to continue with violence and the killing of innocents in J & K, my message is unequivocal and clear. If you inflict injury on any Indian citizen in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, or elsewhere, or commit any act of violence or terrorism then the security forces have clear instructions to act decisively and

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Mr. Alok Prasad assumes post of Deputy Chief of Mission



Mr. Alok Prasad assumed his duties as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in December 2000. He was formerly the Joint Secretary for Americas Division for five years in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. During this period, he played a key role in expanding bilateral relations between India and the United States.

Mr. Prasad joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1974. During the course of next 26 years, he has represented India in various capacities in Germany, U.N.-New York, Netherlands, Nepal, Burma and Botswana.

He has also worked in the Office of Prime Minister, where he was closely involved with India's economic liberalization and structural reform program.

Mr. Prasad earned a B.A. and a Masters degree in Economics from the Delhi University.

He is a Fellow of the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.

He is married to Nandini and they have two children.



Excerpts from President K. R. Narayanan's address to both houses of Parliament

February 19, 2001

Gujarat Earthquake

"The Union Government and the Government of Gujarat have been working closely in the relief and rehabilitation operations throughout the State. I compliment the jawans and officers of the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy for their outstanding role in this effort. The Governments of all the other States have also come to the aid of Gujarat. Indeed, it is a tribute to the coordinated effort of all Central and State agencies that power, telecommunication, rail, air, and road links were restored with such remarkable speed. The commendable contribution of a wide range of voluntary organizations have greatly supplemented and strengthened these efforts. Thousands of volunteers have been working tirelessly to bring succour to the survivors. On behalf of this august House, I applaud them for their devoted and untiring activities. In times of crises, external or internal, our countrymen have always shown exemplary unity and voluntary activism. We should nurture these virtuous qualities, so that they influence all aspects of our national life at all times."

Jammu & Kashmir peace initiative

"The Government is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to bring peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. As part of this, it launched a major peace mission on November 19, 2000, by announcing a unilateral non-initiation of combat operations in the State during the holy month of Ramzan. This bold initiative was extended twice up to February 26, 2001. As anticipated, this was warmly welcomed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are longing for an end to militancy and violence in their beautiful State. The international community has also given overwhelming support, because it sees in it yet another demonstration of India's sincere commitment to a peaceful and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue."

"Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is now increasingly confined to foreign mercenary groups. This has widened the scope for democratic activity in the State. The people of the State participated enthusiastically in the recent Panchayat elections. I reiterate the Government's readiness to have talks with every group in the State that abjures violence."

Economic Reforms

"India is among the ten fastest growing economies in the world. Our economy has grown at impressive annual rates of between 6 and 7 percent during the past three years. This, despite formidable challenges on the external front, as well as droughts, floods, and other natural calamities in several parts of the country. However, we need to set an ambitious target of 9 percent annual growth for the next ten years to double our per capita income and halve poverty. Today's problems can be turned into opportunities for a big surge forward, if the Centre and State Governments, all political parties, and the people adopt "Faster and More Balanced Development" as the common Mantra of the Decade."

Foreign Policy

"India's foreign policy, resting on a strong foundation of continuity and national consensus, has responded creatively to the changing global scenario. The international community is beginning to recognize that a resurgent India — peace loving, prosperous, and strong — is a reliable factor for peace, stability, and balance in Asia and in the world. The principal thrust of our foreign policy is to promote an external network of peaceful and friendly relations, which would enable us to focus on our internal task of nation-building. Central to this objective is our consistent pursuit of friendly relations with all our neighbours. Indeed, our ties with all of them, barring Pakistan, have continued to grow both in substance and in scope."

India-U.S. Relations

"The steadily growing strength of India's interaction with the United States of America forms an important new dimension of our external relations. President Clinton's visit to India, and the Prime Minister's visit to the U.S. last year, laid a firm foundation for this new phase in our relationship. I compliment Indian IT professionals in Silicon Valley and, indeed, the entire Indian-American community, for their shining successes. They have changed the American perception — in fact, the world's perception — of India. We continue to engage with the Administration of

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Reception for U.S. State Governors at Embassy Residence

Washington, DC

Before his departure from Washington, DC, the then Ambassador of India, Mr. Naresh Chandra hosted a reception at the embassy residence on February 24, 2001 for the Governors attending the annual conference of the National Governors Association in Washington, DC. Members of the Cabinet and U.S. Administration also attended the reception.

Speaking on the occasion Parris Glendening, Governor of Maryland and currently the Chairman of the National Governors Association, announced that the Association would be making a contribution to the Prime Minister's relief fund for the victims of the Gujarat earthquake. The Governor also called for a moment of silence in memory of those who had lost their lives in the calamity. Commenting on the strong bilateral relations between the United States and India, the Governor highlighted the contribution made by Indian Americans particularly in strengthening the relations between the people of the two countries.



From left to right: Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services; former Ambassador Naresh Chandra and Parris Glendening, Governor of Maryland.



From left to right: Jim Geringer, Governor of Wyoming, his wife Sharyn; and Parris Glendening, Governor of Maryland with the host.

Ambassador Chandra in his remarks highlighted the tremendous improvement in bilateral relations that had taken place during the last year after the successful visits of President Clinton to India and of Prime Minister Vajpayee to the U.S. and the significant contribution made by the Indian American community in this process. The Ambassador pointed to the role that the different States could play in further exploiting the potential of the bilateral relationship. Towards this end, he invited the Governors to lead delegations to India to explore new opportunities for expanding trade and business relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to the UN and India's four Consul Generals in the United States were also present on the occasion.

Empowering Women

March 8, 2001: International Women's Day

WOMEN'S rights are human rights and should be treated as such. To quote President K. R. Narayanan from a speech he made at the Convention on Liberal Values in New Delhi on January 6, 1996 "... It would be seen that in the evolution of human civilization, economic, cultural, social, civil and political aspects have come together to produce what are now called human rights. At the heart of the human rights lie rights and values associated with the individual human being, which in modern parlance or rather western parlance, are called liberal values, but which are inherent in every civilization of the world". Recently, the war crimes tribunal at the Hague, Netherlands in a landmark judgment in a case involving three former Bosnian Serb commanders declared rape to be a crime against humanity.

The fact that women's rights need to be safeguarded in every country of the world cannot be overemphasized. In a historic decision, the Rajasthan government is changing the service rules to punish employees who are found guilty of torturing their wives. As reported in a national daily, the punishment could involve sacking and action would correspond the crime, with punishments including suspension and stoppage of increments.

It is the duty of the State to remove inequities in the personal laws of various religions. Recently it has been made compulsory to include the mother's name along with that of the father in various forms required to be filled for an Indian child while seeking admission in a school and otherwise. A small step forward in terms of marriage was taken when the Hindu Marriage Act was enacted in 1955. The term Hindu in this case includes Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and their denominations. Several laws have been enacted including the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 and the current Special Marriage Act, 1954 which governs civil marriages. In this Act, for a boy and girl to get married they must have completed 21 and 18 years of age respectively. Bigamy is prohibited in this Act and each party is expected to give consent to the marriage. For a civil marriage, three witnesses are necessary. Progressive laws such as these protect the woman. Under the Islamic law, marriage is considered a contract and a nikah is performed with several dos and don'ts. The Parsis

are governed by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936. Christians are governed by the Christian Marriage Act, 1872 and the marriage usually takes place in a church.

The report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) released by the Government recently mentions the steps taken by it to contain the negative impact of restructuring of the economy that India has embarked upon. "The new economic policies consist of macro-economic stabilization processes aimed at restoring greater fiscal discipline and efficiency, deregulation and de-licensing policies aimed at propelling industrial growth ... these adjustment processes also hold out considerable challenges for the country, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as poor women, whose interests the market seldom reflects..." It enumerates the steps that have been taken to protect women. The Government of India made special efforts to increase its support for social sectors and started a number of schemes aimed at the poor, particularly poor women and women in the informal sector. These include the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh and the Mahila Samakhya programs.

The Integrated Child Development Program (ICDS) run by the Government is the largest in the world. Government figures show that ICDS has brought down infant mortality rate (IMR) from 55.1 in 1970 to 28.2 in 1992 and for female babies from 131 in 1978 to 80 in 1992. Life expectancy of women has risen sharply according to the report and stands at 58.1 years, which is higher than that for men at 57.7 years. Statistically speaking, at the beginning of the century, women were not expected to survive beyond 23.96 years. They have, however, still to catch up on the literacy front which now stands at 39.29 per cent for women as opposed to 64 per cent for men.

Keeping in line with the government's policy on equal opportunity, there are 65 women in senior positions in the Indian Foreign Service around the world. For the first time after Independence the highest post in the Foreign Service, is to be occupied by a female foreign secretary, Chokila Iyer. It is commendable that despite various hurdles and mindsets, the Government has managed to ensure equal career opportunities for women.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN

(Continued from page 6)

The National Literacy Mission through the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) has played a key role in raising awareness on issues of gender equity as have the Women's Development Program, "Mahila Samakhya" and several other programs. The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) was drawn up in 1988 as an important strategy to change social attitudes.

The government has taken a number of steps and enacted a number of legislations to protect and safeguard women and ensure that their rights are not abused. One such measure is the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961. Before the enactment of this law, the grant of maternity leave and cash benefits were included in the Factories Act, 1948, Mines Act 1952 and Bidi and Cigar Workers' (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 amongst others. Under the Central Service (Leave) Rules 1972, "female Government employees are at present entitled to maternity leave for a period of 135 days from the date of commencement. During such period, the employee is paid leave salary equal to the pay drawn immediately before proceeding on leave". The Government has, therefore, tried to protect women wherever

possible. Laws unless enforced, however, tend to be ignored and abused.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1993 mark historic events in the advancement of Indian women as they ensure one-third of total seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies, in rural areas and urban areas. In the rural areas, above one million women are going to emerge as leaders/decision makers at the grassroots level and enter public life through the existing 0.25 million bodies. Of these, about 75,000 will be the chairpersons of local institutions at the village, block and district levels, as per the Act. India still has some way to go as mentioned by President K.R. Narayanan in his Republic Day speech this year. He said women had made an impact on democracy (Indian) at the grassroots and remarked, "It is only logical to carry forward this process of empowerment of women to state legislatures and Parliament". Women's empowerment in politics might well be a decisive factor that will purify and save the democratic politics of India from the deterioration of standards and values it is experiencing today." That is the message that should be remembered while celebrating the International Women's day in the year of Women's Empowerment.

U.S. Trade with India: 2000

All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars

MONTH	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	BALANCE
January	286.80	790.40	-503.60
February	351.90	824.10	-472.20
March	373.20	1,084.80	-711.60
April	259.80	924.10	-664.30
May	261.90	914.50	-652.60
June	253.10	845.90	-592.80
July	241.30	929.10	-687.80
August	284.20	1,071.20	-787.00
September	400.90	931.30	-530.40
October	302.80	985.90	-683.10
November	293.50	701.20	-407.70
December	353.50	684.10	-330.60
TOTAL	3,662.80	10,686.50	-7,023.70



American Institute of Indian Studies

(First in the series of India programmes in the U.S. Colleges & Universities)

General Information

American knowledge of India is shaped by the American Institute of Indian Studies, a consortium of universities and colleges in the United States at which scholars actively engage in teaching and research about India. For more than thirty years, the Institute has provided fellow ship support for senior American scholars and Ph.D. candidates. It has offered on-site training in Indian languages through the superb facilities of its Language Centers. And it has extended knowledge of Indian culture through its two research centers.

More than 3,500 scholars have received AIIS support. Their work has spanned fields ranging from anthropology to zoology. The results of their work has resulted in literally hundreds of books and thousands of articles, the basis of America's knowledge about India. Collections of some 2700 books directly or indirectly resulting from AIIS-sponsored research have been given to major libraries in India, including the National Library of India in Calcutta, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Delhi and the Adyar Library in Madras.

Background:

The Institute was established in 1961 by a group of American scholars involved in programs of Indian studies at leading American universities. They were led by W. Norman Brown, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania, who brought a long-held dream to reality with the creation of a non-governmental academic consortium to facilitate research on Indian culture and history. Funding came from various public and private sources. Under the leadership of five presidents, the Institute has flourished and is today recognized as the leading proponent of Indian studies in the United States. Its operations rely heavily on volunteer help from countless scholars in the United States and India and on a small, dedicated staff at the American headquarters in Chicago and the Indian headquarters in Delhi as well as at regional offices in important Indian cities.

In the first decades of the Institute's existence, the operation has grown from the small fellowship-granting agency that initially it was. The addition of active regional offices, an internationally regarded Language

Program, two major research centers, and facilities for short-term accommodation of scholars have made the Institute indispensable to American knowledge about India. Financial support for the Institute has come from a wide variety of sources. Originally, it was funded by private foundations. Prominent amount them were the Ford, Mellon, Old Dominion, Carnegie, Rockefeller Foundations and the JDR 3rd Fund.

Today the Institute receives primary funding from the Smithsonian Institution, the United States Information Agency, the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Research Centers in India

Archive and Research Center for Ethnomusicology

Post Bag No. 67

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Main Contact: Dr. Shubha Chaudhury, Director
(Research)

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Telephone: 91-124-381424 or 91-124-381536

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e-mail: aiiscaagaon@sapta.com

Main Contact: Dr. U. S. Moorti, Deputy Director
(Research)

Fellowship Programs

Founded to assist scholars in their study of all aspects of Indian history, culture and contemporary life, the Institute brings about 35 scholars to India every year. These are both American citizens as well as non-American citizens resident in the United States. Of the latter group, many are Indian graduate students studying for Ph.D. degrees at American universities. Many of them return to India, where they

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INDIAN STUDIES

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assume faculty positions at Indian institutions. In turn, many Indian scholars are invited by member institutions of the American Institute of Indian Studies to lecture or participate in conferences. The Institute then facilitates their travel arrangements and can use its network of scholars across the United States to organize programs of lectures.

Fellowships are granted by the American Institute of Indian Studies in the following categories: Senior

Research Fellowships, Senior Short-Term Fellowships, Fellowships for Scholarly Development, Junior Fellowships.

For applications and further information, please contact:

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INDIAN STUDIES
1130 EAST 59TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637
telephone: 773/702-8638
or contact via email at aiis@uchicago.edu

Books about India published in the United States

Touching My Father's Soul: A Sherpa's Journey to the Top of Everest
Jamling Tenzing Norgay with Broughton Coburn
ISBN: 0062516876
Publisher: Harper San Francisco

Philosophy in Classical India: An Introduction and Analysis
Jonardon Ganeri
ISBN: 0415240344
Publisher: Routledge

First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland and England
Michael H. Fisher
ISBN: 019565238X
Publisher: Oxford University Press

India Britannica: A Vivid Introduction to the History of British India
Geoffrey Moorhouse
ISBN: 0-89733-482-5
Publisher: Academy Chicago

India: A History
by John Keay
Atlantic Monthly Press; **ISBN:** 087113800X

India through the Lens: Photography 1840-1911
Vidya Dehejia (Editor)
ISBN: 379132408X
Publisher: Prestel Publishing

Honorable Company: A Novel of India before the Raj
Allan Mallinson & Allan Mallison
ISBN: 0553111345
Publisher: Bantam Books, Incorporated
The Making of India: A Historical Survey
Ranbir Vohra
ISBN: 0765607123
Publisher: Sharpe Inc.

The Indian Imagination: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English
K. D. Verma
ISBN: 0312211392
Publisher: St. Martin's Press, Inc.

The Character of Logic in India
Bimal Krishna, Matilal Jonardon Ganeri (Editor) & Heeraman Tiwari (Editor)
ISBN: 019564896X
Publisher: Oxford University Press, Incorporated

Selected Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore
Sukanta Chaudhuri (Editor)
ISBN: 0195638875
Publisher: Oxford University Press, Incorporated

The Great ARC: The Dramatic Tale Of How India Was Mapped And Everest Was Named
John Keay
ISBN: 0060195185
Publisher: HarperTrade



Highlights of the Union Budget, 2001-02

FISCAL deficit is 5.1 per cent of the gross domestic product in 2000-01; combined fiscal deficit of Center and state at 10 per cent.

Center targets Rs. 120,000 million through Public Sector Unit disinvestment during 2001-02; privatization to be accelerated.

Postal rates to be revised to contain deficit.

The 40% limit of investment in a company under the portfolio investment by FIIs is increased to 49%.

Indian companies can invest abroad up to \$50 million annually through the automatic route.

Indian companies that had issued ADRs/GDRs may acquire shares of foreign companies up to an amount of \$100 million or an amount equivalent to 10 times of their exports in a year.

Foreign investors bringing in a minimum of \$50 million FDI in non-banking financial companies need not to be accompanied with a divestment of minimum of 25 per cent of their holdings in the domestic market.

Banking service recruitment boards to be abolished by July 31, 2001. Banks to do all future recruitments themselves.

RBI to set up an electronic negotiated dealing system by June 2001 to facilitate transparent electronic bidding in auctions and dealing in government security on a real-time basis.

Public Debt Act to be replaced by Government Security Act.

Government to set up seven more debt recovery tribunals in 2001-02.

Recommendations of the expenditure reforms commission to be implemented by July 31, 2001 and identified surplus staff transferred to surplus pool.

In the agricultural sector, the Center proposes to remove inter-state movement of food grains; Essential Commodities Act, 1995 to be reviewed; the number of commodities declared as essential under the Act are reduced.

Technology mission for integrated development of horticulture in the north-eastern states with the corpus of Rs. 380 million.

Center proposes Rs. 7500 million for rural electrification to be completed within next six years.

Plan allocation for ministry of health and family welfare goes up to Rs. 57,800 million from Rs. 49,200 million; Rs. 1800 million provided for HIV/AIDS control program.

All existing and on-going schemes on elementary education to converge into an integrated national education program.

Income and corporate tax rates remain unchanged.

Center reduces three rates of special excise duty to a single rate of 16 per cent.

Proposes a surcharge of 15 per cent on cigarettes

Excise duty on high-speed diesel and motor spirit to be increased to 16 per cent.

Special excise duty on aerated soft drinks, soft drink concentrates for vending machines and motorcars to be reduced to 16 per cent from 24 per cent; total duty now stands at 32 per cent.

Customs duty on tea, coffee, copra and coconut goes up from 35 per cent to 70 per cent.

Customs duty on crude edible oils to be increased to a uniform rate of 75 per cent from the existing range of 35 to 55 per cent and on refined oils to 85 per cent from 45-65 per cent.

Duty in it and telecom products reduced to 15 per cent.

Basic Customs duty on second-hand cars to be increased to 105 per cent; total duty rate will be more than 180 per cent.

Customs duty on soda ash to be reduced to 20 per cent.

Duty on rough diamond to be reduced to 5 per cent.

Ten-year tax holiday for core sector of infrastructure.

Airports, ports, inland ports, industrial parks and generation and distribution of power which may become commercially viable in the long run will also have a tax-holiday of 10 years.

Five-year tax holiday available to telecom sector till March 31, 2000, is being reintroduced for units commencing their operations on or before March 31, 2003. These concessions to be extended to internet service-providers and broad band networks.



Information on earthquake in India

A devastating earthquake hit India in the early morning of January 26, 2001, killing more than 20,000 (based on news reports) and injuring 200,000 people as it toppled buildings and houses. The quake, measuring 7.9 on the Richter Scale with epicenter around 20 km north-east of Bhuj in Gujarat, occurred at 08:46 IST (Indian Standard Time) according to the Indian Seismological Department.

The quake struck as many cities were celebrating India's 51st Republic Day. The tremble caused high-rise buildings to shake from New Delhi to Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Reports of aftershocks came in from around the country.

Prime Minister Vajpayee visiting some of the earthquake ravaged areas, described the devastation as "a massive tragedy." Prime Minister said that the need of the hour was that everyone should join hands to save the people. Indian armed forces have been playing key role in all aspects of relief work in Gujarat. Preliminary estimates indicate that about 40 million people have been affected.

Many non-governmental organizations are involved in relief and rehabilitation efforts. International organizations have also rushed relief materials and medical personnel to Gujarat.

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

Government of India and Embassy of India continue to receive a number of offers for contributions to the earthquake relief activities in Gujarat, India. Those who wish to make voluntary contributions may do so by sending checks in dollars or rupees to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

Checks/Money Orders should be drawn in favor of "**Prime Minister's National Relief Fund**" can be sent to any one of the following addresses:

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

Embassy of India
Attn: Head of Chancery
2107 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Donors can also wire transfer to "Prime Minister's National Relief Fund" account that has been set up by the Embassy.

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

Riggs Bank
1913 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
Account Number - 08115910
Route Number - 054000030

(OR)

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

Prime Minister's Office
South Block, New Delhi 110011
India

India Centre Inc., a non-profit organization, which recently constructed the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial in Washington, D.C. is accepting tax-deductible donations for the Gujarat earthquake victims (Tax ID 52-2135483). Checks in favor of "**Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gujarat Earthquake Relief**" should be sent to

India Centre Inc.
2107 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008.

Donors can also wire transfer with following information:

Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gujarat Earthquake Relief

India Centre
Riggs Bank
1913 Massachusetts Ave., NW
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VAJPAYEE'S STATEMENT

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to defeat such intentions. Law and order shall be maintained. Those who think that our security forces are less determined today to put an end to terrorism are only deluding themselves.

It is my hope that Pakistan will act, even now, and adjure violence, give up their continuous hostile propaganda against India, stop promoting and aiding cross-border terrorism, take the path of peace through bilateral talks as enshrined in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, thus creating a conducive atmosphere so that the comprehensive dialogue process can be resumed resulting in a lasting solution to the problems.

The process of peace is to enable our citizens in Jammu & Kashmir to live peacefully. It is their voice that has to be heard, not of the militants or foreign mercenaries.

Peace is our objective, to peace and dialogue we remain committed because that, above all, is what the people of Jammu & Kashmir need most.

EXCERPTS

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President George W. Bush to foster a stronger and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship.”

Global Terrorism

“The international community agreed at the UN Millennium Summit that the globalization process should be inclusive and equitable. It condemned international terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, trafficking in illicit arms and drugs, religious fanaticism, and military adventurism. India's call for an early international conference against terrorism was endorsed. An increasing number of countries have joined the demand for making the United Nations Security Council to be more representative and responsive. India's candidature for the permanent membership of an expanded Security Council is also finding increasing support. We reiterate our call for global, comprehensive and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. At the same time, our security imperatives compel us to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent until this objective is achieved.”

Embassy Events

In the ongoing series of book readings and talks at the Embassy, the noted author and senior UN official, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, spoke on Democracy and Identity in India today on April 3, 2001. Addressing a packed hall, Mr. Tharoor highlighted the diversities of India's political, social and cultural milieu and the commonalities that bind the mosaic together. Mr. Tharoor is author of several books including 'India: Midnight to Millennium'. His new novel 'Riot' is expected in the fall this year.

Noted filmmaker Muzaffar Ali was present at a showing of his film 'Rumi in the land of Khusro' at the Embassy on April 25. The film is based on the poetry, music and the lives of two Sufi poets, Maulana Jalaludin Rumi of Iran and Hazrat Amir Khusrau of India, and relives the essence of their message of love in a montage of a music and dance.

Resolution adopted by both Houses of Parliament on Taliban's decree to destroy all religious statues in Afghanistan

New Delhi, March 2, 2001

Today, in this new millennium, when all civilizations are coming together through dialogue and shared values, we are shocked by the *Taliban* announcements of intended acts of religious fundamentalism and terrorism against human culture and civilization. They have moved tanks and guns to destroy one of the greatest examples of human creativity. This intent of destroying the two thousand year old statues of Buddha and the Buddhist shrines in *Bamiyan* would constitute an appalling act of cultural vandalism.

This House unanimously condemns the barbarism and anti-civilisational intent of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the strongest possible terms. We hope the world community and especially the United Nations will take note of this and prevail upon the Taliban regime in Afghanistan to desist from this senseless, destructive act.





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