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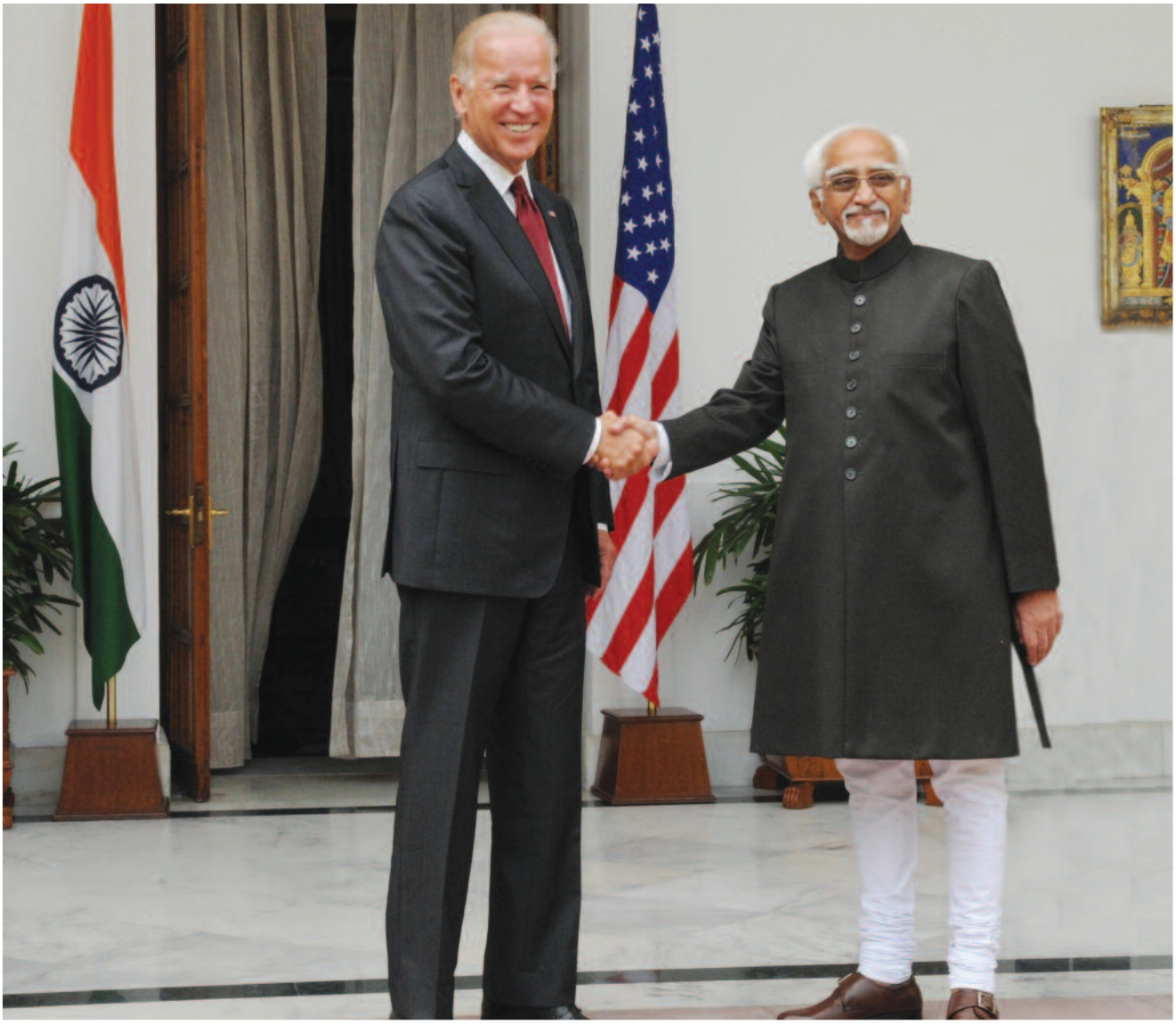

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari with Vice President of the United States Joseph R. Biden Jr. in New Delhi on July 23.

India, US ties get strategic boost

- India committed to fair investment environment: FM
- India ready to discuss bilateral investment treaty with US
- Power Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia visits U.S.

Vignettes of Vice President Biden's visit

U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s four-day visit to India (July 22-25) provided a valuable opportunity to renew the high-level political contact between the two countries. He was accompanied by his wife, U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden, their daughter Ashley and son-in-law Howard D. Crein. The essence of his message contained in his remarks in Mumbai where he noted: "I would ask you to consider the historic opportunity that we have here...imagine what our two countries can achieve together, not only for one another but for the economic and political stability of the region."

Vice President of the United States Joseph R. Biden Jr., with India's then Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai at Air Force Station, Palam, in New Delhi on July 22.

Vice President Biden with Tara Gandhi, grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, at the Gandhi Smriti, in New Delhi on July 22. *(Photo:Shivraj)*

Vice President Biden interacts with students during his visit to the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, on July 25.

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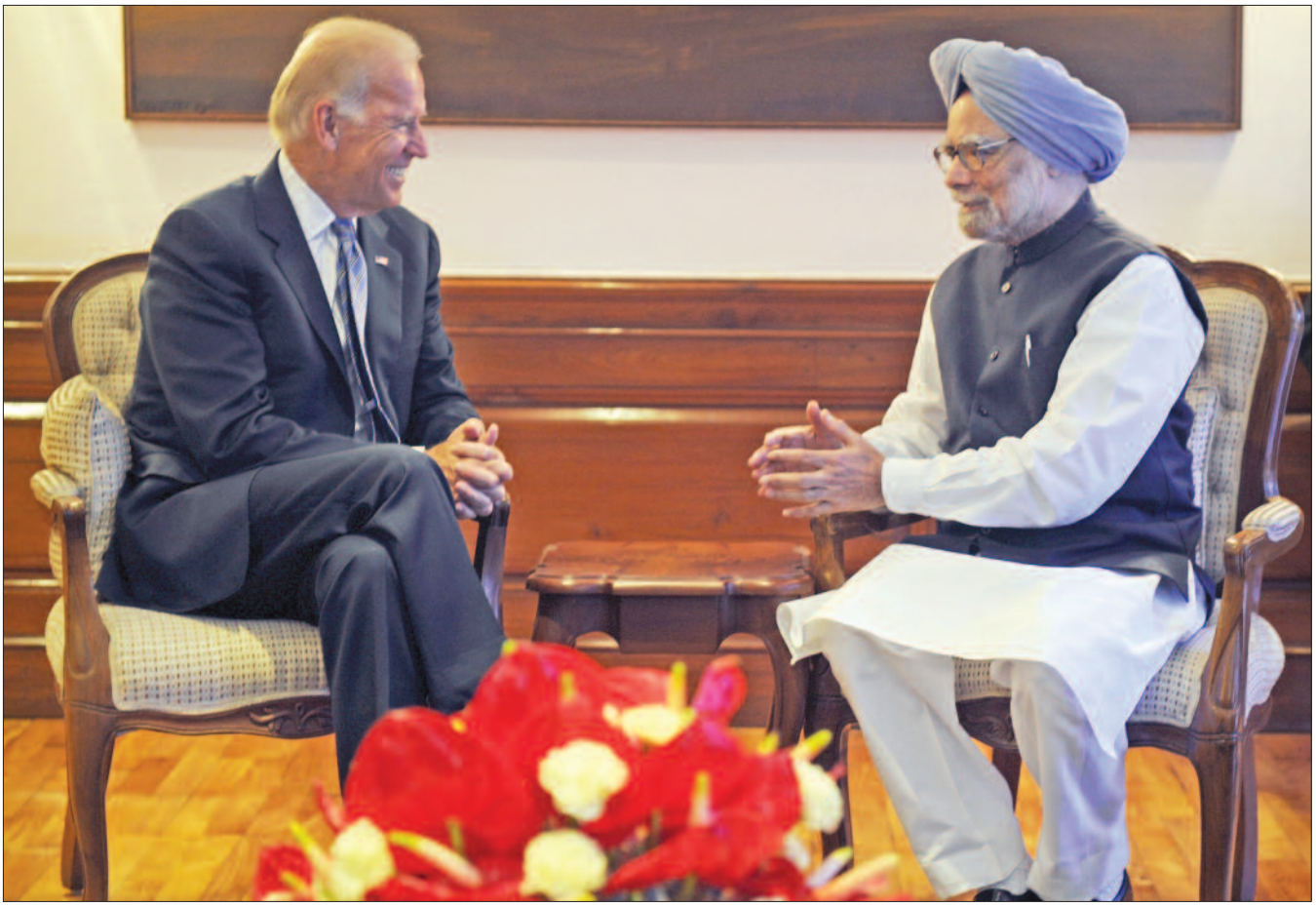

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with Vice President of the United States Joseph R. Biden Jr. in New Delhi on July 23.

India, US ties get strategic boost

India and the U.S. emphasized on the synergies between the two countries and vowed to take forward their cooperation in areas ranging from trade, security, energy, innovation, implementation of civil nuclear deal to regional issues such as Afghanistan and the neighborhood during U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s visit to India

India and the U.S. discussed ways to enhance economic cooperation and implementation of the civil nuclear deal, among other issues, as visiting U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met in New Delhi on July 23. Vice President Biden, who arrived in New Delhi on July 22 on a four-day visit, held discussion with Prime Minister Singh for around an hour at the Prime Minister's official residence —7, Race Course Road.

The Prime Minister "underlined the significance of economic exchange between the two countries in helping India to tackle the host of issues relating to enhancement of the well-being of the Indian people". Both sides held discussions on energy, innovation as well as on regional issues such as Afghanistan and the neighborhood. They also discussed on how to take forward the commercial aspects of the civil nuclear agreement between the two countries. Afghanistan, the drawdown of the U.S.-led international forces in 2014 and the new regime in Pakistan were also touched upon during discussions on regional issues.

National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai, Ambassador Nirupama Rao and Foreign Secretary-

designate Sujatha Singh were present during the talks.

Earlier, the U.S. Vice President called on Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari where he outlined President Barack Obama's and his "personal commitment and interest" in expansion of India-U.S. relations and said India's Look East policy was complementary to America's "re-balancing towards Asia".

Vice President Ansari emphasized on the vibrancy of the bilateral relationship which, he said, indicated that relations have "grown from strength to strength". He said the areas of agreement between the two sides were considerable and expanding and highlighted that "huge segments of the Indian population were extremely supportive of improved relations".

The Indian Vice President also spoke of the need for continuous attention to building the partnership that is based on shared values of liberty, constitutionality, democracy and tolerance.

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari underscored the need for continuous attention to building the India-U.S. partnership that is based on shared values of liberty, constitutionality, democracy and tolerance

Ahead of his trip, Biden had said his visit to India and Singapore was intended to reinforce the White House strategy of 'rebalancing' towards Asia and the Pacific.

The U.S. Democratic Party politician, who visited India with his wife Jill Biden, their daughter Ashley and son-in-law Howard D. Crein, also called on President Pranab Mukherjee, and met United Progressive Alliance Chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

Keeping up the momentum in their ties, Prime Minister Singh is to visit the U.S. in September for a bilateral meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama.

This was discussed during talks between Vice President Biden and Prime Minister Singh.

The Prime Minister would attend the UN General Assembly in New York and then visit Washington for a bilateral summit with President Obama. This will be President Obama's first bilateral meeting with the Indian Prime Minister in his second term.

Following is the text of Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari's speech at the banquet hosted in honor of U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in New Delhi on July 23:

U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. called on President Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi on July 23.

"A visit to India by the Vice President of the United States of America is a rarity and, therefore, all the more meaningful. Its significance is enhanced many fold when the visitor happens to be Joseph Biden, a legendry figure in the Senate of United States, known to the world long before he came to occupy, and re-occupy for a second term, this august office.

Your reputation, Vice President, traveled ahead of your arrival last evening. You have been described as a moderate pragmatist and a fundamentally happy person. These are invaluable traits in our troubled times when the effort is to contain the levels of unhappiness that surround us.

Relations between nations, Excellencies, are mostly reflective of a complex set of considerations pertaining to values and interests. The two do not always converge; they may at times even diverge. The challenge to the statesmen, as someone once put it, is to steer on the stream of time with "more or less skill and experience." The endeavor should be to seek points of convergence and build upon them.

Wishing to be friends, it is said, is quick work but friendship is a slow ripening fruit that requires diligent tending.

Happily for our two countries, the areas of agreement are considerable and expanding. They are premised on shared values of liberty, constitutionalism, rule of law, democracy, tolerance and promotion of diversity. We both believe that discussion is an indispensable preliminary to wise action.

Remarkable progress, Vice President, has been registered in our bilateral cooperation. We now have a tradition of political engagement at the highest level. Your visit today adds to the edifice.

From an Indian perspective we have with the United States more defense cooperation, more strategic dialogues, more economic exchanges and more science and technology partnerships than with any other country. Our cooperation in education and health is particularly noteworthy, as is the prospect of even stronger ties in trade, investment, and energy. Each of these furthers our own national effort for inclusive development.

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari hosted a banquet in honor of U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., in New Delhi on July 23.

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>
> *— Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari*

Vice President of the United States Joseph R. Biden Jr. meeting with Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari in New Delhi on July 23.

Peace in the world and in our own region is a pre-requisite for sustained and sustainable development. Threats to peace, many in India's immediate region, are the greatest impediments to progress. They emanate from terrorism, extremism, intolerance, injustice and misuse of the benefits of science and technology. It is incumbent on our two nations to counter these threats, jointly and individually, with a realistic perspective of the dangers they pose.

Countering threat to peace is one aspect of our cooperation; equally important and inseparable from it is promotion of stability and widening the global arc of prosperity.

- Both necessitate a deeper understanding of each other's essential interests and legitimate aspirations.
- Both make incumbent an on-going, no-holds barred dialogue.
- Both call for focused cooperation and even more intensive people-to-people contacts in which, I presume, language is not an impediment.

As vibrant democracies we cherish, as you do, the right to disagree without losing sight of our endeavor for the common good. Your visit and your own long-standing personal commitment, Vice President, has contributed to this endeavor.

It has been a pleasure meeting you. I wish you a pleasant and fruitful stay in Mumbai."

'India-US trade can grow five-fold'

Welcoming India's efforts to develop new trade and transportation links by land and by sea, visiting U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. said India and the U.S. were 'not at odds on any strategic objective'

Speaking on 'U.S.-India Partnership' at the Bombay Stock Exchange in Mumbai on July 24, U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. called for further expanding the growing economic cooperation with India and expressed hope that, if right choices were made, bilateral trade could grow five-fold. Lauding India as "a rising power", the U.S. Vice President praised India's plans for future growth, saying the country had risen exponentially during the past decade mainly due to bold steps toward liberalization it took in 1991. He underlined that trade between India and the U.S. grew five-fold to touch $100 billion in the past 13 years. "We see tremendous opportunity and there is no reason, that if our countries make the right choices, the trade cannot grow five-fold or more," the Vice President said.

U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. addressing at BSE in Mumbai on July 24.

The first U.S. Vice President to visit India in over three decades, Biden appreciated India's regional role and welcomed its engagement and efforts to develop new trade and transportation links by land and by sea. He also acknowledged the role of the Indian community in America's growth story saying the U.S. had benefitted due to the "Indian human capital".

Showering praise on Indian democracy and conveying the admiration of the American people, the Vice President said, "I bring with me the admiration of the American people and the good wishes of President Obama. We admire the way you've melded ethnicities, faiths and tongues into a single, proud nation; the way entrepreneurship seems almost hard-wired into Indian society, from rickshawwallas to web programmers; and may be most of all, we admire your democracy and the message that your democracy sends to people everywhere in the world. And that message is: No nation need to choose between development and freedom. They are not inconsistent."

Drawing attention to the common challenges that two of the world's largest democracies face, the U.S. Vice President said both the U.S. and India have been targeted by terrorists. He said that the U.S. has been sharing intelligence with India on terror in order to avoid situations like 9/11 and 26/11, and support India's claim for a permanent seat in a revamped UN Security Council.

Meeting with Indian business honchos

Vice President Biden met with top Indian business leaders as he discussed ways to enhance bilateral trade "exponentially over time" and address issues hindering trade on July 24.

He held discussions with Ratan Tata, former head of Tata Group, Azim Premji, Chief of Wipro, Pratyush Kumar, President of Boeing in India, and other business leaders at the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai.

"There was an honest discussion about how both governments — the Indian government as well as US — could be productive in reducing trade barriers," the U.S. Vice President said.

After the meeting with business heads, Vice President Biden said India and the United States were "not at odds on any strategic objective", but needed to find ways to take the India-U.S. relationship forward.

"We mean what we say when we say that the relationship between India and the U.S. has unlimited potential and there is no reason why trade, commerce and intercourse between our countries can't increase exponentially over time," he said.

Vignettes of Vice President Biden's visit

Continued from Page 2

Vice President Biden's wife, U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden, interacts with students during her visit to Anjuman-I-Islam Girls High School in Mumbai on July 25.

U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden at the Taj Mahal in Agra on July 23.

U.S. Second Lady Jill Biden at the Kachchpura village opposite the Taj Mahal in Agra on July 23. She interacted with children and office bearers of the Adarsh Mahila Arogya Samiti.

'India's power sector has enormous growth potential'

India has launched a $25 billion financial re-structuring plan (FRP) aimed at improving the viability of the state power utilities

Speaking of great potential for U.S. investments and cooperation in the Indian power sector, India's Minister of State for Power Jyotiraditya Scindia stated the potential areas of such cooperation include transmission technologies, development of large scale hydro power, supercritical technology development for efficient energy production, smart grids and energy efficiency improvement programs.

Minister Scindia, who was in Washington, D.C. on a visit at the invitation of the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C. think tank, said India had launched a $25 billion financial re-structuring plan (FRP) aimed at improving the viability of the state power utilities.

Delivering a talk on "Indian Energy Security in the context of the Power Sector," he said thanks to various energy efficiency measures there had been a savings equivalent of 11,000 MW of avoided capacity in the past 5 years. Addressing the issues of growth of the Indian power sector, the Minister said it was especially significant in the Indian context, since apart from meeting India's energy requirement, it also drives capital investment and resultant growth.

He explained about the initiatives taken by India in the recent months to address the challenges of growth in power sector and how these impact the framework of India-U.S. cooperation in power sector in general and renewable energy as well as energy efficiency matters in the context of overarching strategy for low carbon growth and clean energy adopted by India.

He emphasized that the policy of the government in the power sector was structured around the 3A strategy: Availability, Accessibility and Affordability. In this context, he stated that India has performed admirably in terms of capacity addition in generation, having added about 50 GW over the period 2007-2012, and expected to add another 118 GW over the next five years, of which renewable capacity would be 30 GW.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power Jyotiraditya Scindia delivering a talk at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. on July 2.

He informed that important steps have been taken in the past seven months to improve fuel availability — coal and natural gas — to the power sector. The addition of 200 GW of total transmission capacity including 66 GW in inter-regional capacity and the crucial integration of the Southern grid with the rest of the country by January 2014, would make it the largest integrated transmission network globally. This would ensure secure operation of the grid.

The Indian power sector has added about 50 GW over the period 2007-2012, and is expected to add another 118 GW over the next five years

The Minister also spoke of the institutional mechanisms set up by the Ministry comprising private and public sector experts — Bankers' group, Inter-Ministerial groups — for coal and environment. In order to ensure time bound follow up of the decisions taken in these groups, a Dashboard Mechanism had been set up at the Minister's level.

He said that India had taken several important decisions with regard to competitive procurement of power, issues of financing and environment clearance of hydro projects. Regular interactions with the Forum of Regulators and the Central and State regulatory agencies is also undertaken to ensure timely regulatory intervention to address various matters such as tariff, grid security and power procurement, the Minister pointed out.

Earlier, at a power roundtable organized by the US India Business Council at the Harvard Club New York on July 1, Minister Scindia assured that an institutional framework had been put in place to attract potential investors in the power sector. He also addressed members of industry at a dinner reception hosted by the Indian Consul General.

The Minister stressed on the bilateral ties between India and the U.S. which have developed into a global strategic partnership based on convergence on global issues.

'India committed to transparent, fair investment environment'

To address concerns of the U.S. investors in India, showcase the investor-friendly steps that India has taken in recent times and the huge business opportunity that the country offers, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma held meetings with U.S. lawmakers and business leaders

From left, Co-Chair of House India Caucus Congressman Joe Crowley from New York, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, Congressman Ami Bera from California and Congressman Erik Paulsen from Minnesota during a meeting, in Washington, D.C. on July 11.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram has assured U.S. corporate leaders and lawmakers that India is committed to ensuring a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory investment environment for foreign investors.

While some concerns have been expressed about the current business environment in India, the policies adopted by India are pro-growth and compliant with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, he told Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus on July 10.

As they exchanged views on the global economic situation, Chairman Baucus, fondly recalled his first visit to India as a young student in the 1960s and his meeting with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Minister Chidambaram, who was on a four-day visit to the U.S., also met with CEOs and top management officials of a number of U.S. companies, including Microsoft, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and International Lease Finance Corporation (ILFC).

He emphasized the need for U.S. companies to set up local manufacturing bases in India, saying "it is in the mutual interest of both countries for India to become a large manufacturing economy".

In discussions focused on the current business and investment environment in India, the issues highlighted by the U.S. companies included transfer pricing relating to profit allocation and taxation.

The impact of the comprehensive immigration reforms recently passed by the U.S. Senate on future business prospects of Indian Information Technology (IT) companies operating in the U.S. was also discussed. Minister Chidambaram underscored Indian concerns about the bill's provisions relating to skilled non-immigrant visas.

The representatives of the U.S. companies were appreciative of the measures taken by India to address concerns relating to transfer pricing.

He also met with the Chairman of the U.S. Ex-Im Bank, Fred Hochberg and other senior officials of the Ex-Im Bank on July 10.

India-US ties: Untapped potential

Finance Minister Chidambaram, Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia were the keynote speakers at the 38th anniversary leadership summit of the US-India Business Council (USIBC) on July 11. The three top government leaders in-charge of the economy assured potential U.S. investors that India continued to offer huge business opportunities.

Addressing the U.S. corporate leaders' concerns about the business environment in India, Finance Minister said the two countries have a great opportunity to work together.

Noting that the two way trade between India and the U.S. had topped $100 billion, yet seemed far below potential, the Minister said "there is huge opportunity for U.S. to invest in India and a good opportunity for India to invest in U.S.".

"Today Indian companies have grown in size, stature and capacity. They work with U.S. companies and sometimes compete with U.S. companies," he said, but they should not let "a few cases of business rivalry" stand in the way of good relations.

"Our two countries have a great opportunity to work together not only for the benefit of our people but the world," he noted. "We are a country where we are building our economy brick by brick, and in that process we seek your help."

India as the largest country with the greatest challenge of poverty advocated free trade, end of barriers and end of poverty, Minister Chidambaram said noting that India had demonstrated its capacity to meet the challenge with high growth rates of up to 9 percent during the global financial crisis.

Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma, on the other hand, reiterating that India had a strong and abiding commitment to take the India-U.S. relationship to greater heights, dilated on a series of steps taken by the Indian government to improve the business and investment climate in India.

Minister for Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma addressing the 38th Anniversary Leadership Summit of US India Business Council, in Washington, D.C. on July 11.

He spoke about a national manufacturing policy and creation of single-window clearance "self-governing" national investment and manufacturing zones to assure U.S. businesses that India was committed to liberal policies with a welcoming environment for Foreign Direct Investment.

India had demonstrated its capacity to meet the challenge with high growth rates of up to 9 percent during the global financial crisis, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said at the USIBC leadership summit

India respects IPRs

Seeking to allay U.S. concerns about business climate in India, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram told U.S. lawmakers that India respects intellectual property rights (IPRs) and its laws were compliant with World Trade Organization rules. "The Indian law affirms intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the process of granting compulsory license and patent registration are WTO compliant and subject to judicial review".

He also stressed the importance of India becoming a manufacturing hub for meeting its own domestic needs and for re-balancing the global economy.

In a meeting with members of the U.S. House of Representatives on July 11, the Finance Minister also expressed India's "discomfort" with the comprehensive immigration bill now moving through U.S. Congress as it would make it harder and more expensive for Indian technocrats to get H1B visas to work in the US.

This was especially so "because the issue of temporary relocation of knowledge workers, which is not 'immigration' by any definition, has

been linked to the larger issue of immigration". The restrictions sought to be placed on knowledge workers amount to non-tariff barriers, he said.

Those present during the hour-long meeting were Democrat Co-Chair of House India Caucus Joe Crowley and House members Sandy Levin, Erik Paulsen, John Larson and the India-American member of the House Ami Bera. India's Economic Affairs Secretary Arvind Mayaram and the Indian Ambassador to U.S. Nirupama Rao also attended.

There was a wide ranging discussion that covered the gamut of India-U.S. relations. More specifically, issues such as compulsory licensing, patent protection, preferential market access, immigration bill in the U.S. Congress and increase in FDI in areas such as defense and financial services were discussed.

Minister Chidambaram underscored that there was close cooperation between the two countries in areas such as security, defense etc. and the civil nuclear agreement between the two countries was a path-breaking landmark.

The U.S. lawmakers spoke of their deep interest in promoting India-U.S. relations and advancing mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. They appreciated the opportunity to exchange views with the Finance Minister and stressed the value of continuing such dialogues and engagement to accelerate the deepening of the India-U.S. strategic partnership.

Minister Chidambaram also had "useful discussions" with Co-Chairs of the Senate India Caucus Mark Warner and John Cornyn of Texas.

The road ahead

Indian and U.S. business and government leaders reviewed how they could together further enhance India-U.S. economic engagement, including an expansion in opportunities for private sectors in trade, investment, and innovation at a meeting of the India-U.S. CEO Forum in Washington, D.C. on July 12.

India set to become world's manufacturing hub: Minister Anand Sharma

With India committed to making itself a manufacturing hub of the world, Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma has said that India offers a long-term business and investment opportunity. Minister Sharma was addressing the U.S. business leaders at a conversation hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the US India Business Council (USIBC) in New York on July 10.

He outlined the various policies undertaken by the Indian government to invigorate manufacturing and to create the right conditions for inviting investments into the country.

Highlighting the steps taken by the government to spur business and investments in the country, Minister Sharma spoke about the National Investment and Manufacturing Zones (NIMZ) being set up across India and the single window approval mechanism for investments.

He also mentioned the fast-tracking of critical infrastructure projects, use of technology to minimize paperwork for investment proposals, the efforts to tackle the emotive issue of land and the establishment of a cabinet committee on investments chaired by the Prime Minister.

Saying that 2012 was a difficult economic year for India, the Commerce & Industry Minister pointed to the country's strong fundamentals such as thriving domestic demand, a high national investment rate (35 percent) and a high savings rate (31 percent) as factors that would continue to drive economic growth.

The Minister particularly emphasized that India and the U.S. share a larger, strategic relationship with deep and growing engagements in sectors such as aerospace, nuclear, defense, agriculture, information technology, communications, science and technology.

Joint collaborations in science and technology, innovation, research and development have further strengthened the bilateral partnership.

He pointed to strong two-way investment flows, with U.S. FDI in India pegged at $32 billion and Indian investments into the U.S. projected to stand at $13 billion.

At the same time, the Minister stressed that partnership was a two-way process and that the imperative of free movement of skilled professionals was an aspect that needed to be recognized and respected.

To highlight the myriad business opportunities open to the U.S. and Indian companies, a high-powered Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) CEOs delegation was accompanying the Minister during his U.S. visit.

Led by Ajay Shriram, President-designate, CII & Senior Managing Director and Chairman, DCM Shriram Consolidated Ltd., the delegation included Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII; Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman and Group CEO, Bharti Enterprises Limited; Analjit Singh, Chairman, Max India Limited; Rajan Navani, Managing Director, Jetline Group of Companies; and Som Mittal, President, NASSCOM.

Minister for Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma addressing at the US-India CEO Forum Meeting, in Washington, D.C. on July 12. Ambassador Nirupama Rao and industrialist Ratan Tata are also seen.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, Minister for Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia and other dignitaries during the US-India CEO Forum Meeting, in Washington, D.C., on July 12.

"There was lot of positivity in our exchange," Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma said. "Both sides are taking steps to ensure that this partnership not only remains robust, but is also consolidated," said Minister Sharma, who attended the meeting along with Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

Deputy National Security Advisor Caroline Atkinson, Trade Representative Michael Froman, Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, and Under Secretary for Economics, Energy, and Agricultural Affairs Robert D. Hormats represented the U.S. side.

CEO co-chairs Ratan Tata of Tata Group and David Cote of Honeywell led CEOs from seven U.S. and six Indian companies for a five-hour long session of the US-India CEO Forum at the State Department.

India-U.S. bilateral trade is nearing $100 billion, and the CEO Forum "reviewed our very robust public-private cooperation in support of that and how we can further enhance U.S.-India economic engagement, including how our governments can expand opportunities for our private sectors in trade, investment, and innovation," State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki, said.

"The participants also enjoyed very productive conversations anew as well as ongoing collaborations on water and energy efficiency, agricultural technology, aviation, security, health, and more, underscoring the true depth and breadth of the US-India partnership," she said.

The US-India CEO Forum is a key element in the broad India-U.S. economic engagement following up on their conversations at the June 24 Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi, Psaki said.

The U.S. lawmakers spoke of their deep interest in promoting India-U.S. relations and advancing mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. They appreciated the opportunity to exchange views with Finance Minister P. Chidambaram

"Obviously the fact that the US-India CEO Forum happened today, that there were robust conversations about the trade relationship, the importance of that, and continuing to expand on it speaks to how much we value the India partnership," she said in response to a question.

Earlier opening the forum meeting, Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns asked it to focus on four key areas of FDI, defense trade, nuclear power and people as they work out ways to boost India-U.S. business relationship.

"The full participation of the private sector is indispensable to a sustainable long-term partnership," he said.

"That's why this Forum is so important," Deputy Secretary Burns said suggesting "a number of specific areas where I believe we can achieve near-term progress and deliver a solid return on the investment in our relationship."

Launched in July 2005, the forum is mandated to develop a road map for increased partnership and cooperation between the two countries at a business level.

India ready to discuss bilateral investment treaty with US

The two countries have agreed to have an uninterrupted dialogue on BIT at the ministerial level

Minister for Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma with the United States Trade Representative Michael Froman in Washington, D.C. on July 11.

With a view to enhancing economic partnership with the U.S., New Delhi has signaled a readiness to begin talks with the U.S. on a bilateral investment treaty.

"We have said that 'yes, we are ready to be in talks'. We have signalled our acceptance," Indian Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma said after meetings with U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman and other U.S. officials on July 12.

"We would be definitely in favor of enhancing our economic partnership," through a bilateral investment treaty (BIT) or a free trade agreement, the Commerce & Industry Minister said at the end of a four-day U.S. visit during which he and Finance Minister P. Chidambaram addressed U.S. concerns about Indian policies in meetings with U.S. lawmakers, officials and business groups.

Though two-way trade between the two countries had risen to $106 billion annually, there was clear recognition on both sides that "our economic engagement though robust was still below potential"

Minister Sharma said while no date had been set for the first round of talks on the BIT outlining the terms and conditions for U.S. and Indian investment in each other's country, he and Froman had "agreed to have an uninterrupted dialogue at the ministerial level" on economic issues.

The India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum, the premier bilateral forum for the discussion and resolution of trade and investment issues between them, would meet in New Delhi later this year.

Asked if the US-India Business Council's goal of boosting bilateral trade in goods and services to $500 billion annually in the next five years was a realistic target, Minister Sharma said "if we make a real effort, we can reach it by 2020."

Though two-way trade between the two countries had risen to $106 billion annually, he said there was clear recognition on both sides that "our economic engagement though robust was still below potential."

India was far more welcoming of American business than believed in Washington, Minister Sharma said, and "we are doing everything to correct the perception."

To get that message across about ease of doing business in India, the National Manufacturing Policy proposes to raise the share of manufacturing from 16 percent of GDP to 25 percent of GDP in a decade.

India and the U.S., he said, had also agreed to work together to ensure that the December meeting of the World Trade Organization in Bali was a success.

"We have agreed to put together a work programme. We will work very closely with all our partners to get a broad consensus around the key issues of trade facilitation and food security," he said.

"We are for a healthy, positive and balanced outcome."

In a separate meeting USTR Froman and Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram too "discussed the value of strengthening cooperation between the United States and India on strategic economic issues, including through a potential US-India Bilateral Investment Treaty."

USTR Froman expressed appreciation for Minister Chidambaram's efforts to address concerns about the investment climate in India, including through proposed reforms to lift foreign direct investment restrictions in several sectors of the economy.

The U.S. Trade Representative underscored the importance of avoiding policies that disadvantage foreign goods and services, and reiterated the U.S. welcoming of news that India's Preferential Market Access Policy was to be reviewed and modified.

Minister Sharma calls on US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker

Commerce & Industry Minister Anand Sharma met with U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker in Washington, D.C. on July 12 and congratulated Pritzker on her appointment as the new Commerce Secretary.

Sharing India's concerns with regard to inclusion of restrictive provisions on mobility of skilled professionals in the U.S. immigration legislation currently under consideration in the U.S. Congress, Minister Sharma conveyed Secretary Pritzker that the movement of highly trained professionals delivering technology services should not be mistaken with the immigrants. During the meeting, the Commerce & Industry Minister also briefed Secretary Pritzker on India's patent regime which is based on law; is fully TRIPS compliant and is backed by strong enforcement mechanisms.

Underlining the need for a frank exchange of views on various bilateral issues, Minister Sharma emphasized the importance of approaching these issues from the perspective of enhancing India-U.S. trade and economic engagement.

He highlighted the opportunities for the U.S. businesses in India's National Manufacturing Policy and informed the U.S. Commerce Secretary that India had approved setting up of 13 National Investment and Manufacturing Zones of which eight have been approved along Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

Minister for Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma with the U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker in Washington, D.C. on July 12.

Minister Sharma and Commerce Secretary Pritzker agreed to maintain high-level communication between them on various bilateral issues

Minister Sharma and Commerce Secretary Pritzker also agreed to maintain high-level communication between them and strengthen functional dialogue mechanisms between the officials on both sides.

Secretary Pritzker accepted Minister Sharma's invitation to visit India on mutually convenient dates.

The Commerce & Industry Minister also met with the President and CEO of Walmart Asia Scott Price to discuss issues related to multi-brand retail trading. He also held meeting with Amazon.com's Vice President for Global Public Policy Paul Misener to discuss issues pertaining to e-commerce.

How India discovered Vasco Da Gama: A talk by historian Dr. Sanjay Subrahmanyam

1. Counselor M. Sridharan welcoming the guests and introducing noted historian Dr. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Professor and Doshi Chair of Indian History at UCLA, to the audience at a talk on "How India discovered Vasco Da Gama", at the Embassy on July 8.
2. Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing the gathering.
3. Talk on "How India discovered Vasco Da Gama" by Professor Subrahmanyam.
4. Interactive session with Professor Subrahmanyam.
5. Guests in attendance.

Talk by Prof. Pawan Dhingra on 'Entrepreneurship in America: Indian Americans' Contributions and Challenges'

1. Counselor M. Sridharan welcoming and introducing Prof. Pawan Dhingra, Professor and Chair of Department of Sociology at Tufts University, to the audience, at a talk on "Entrepreneurship in America: Indian Americans' Contributions and Challenges", at the Embassy on July 30.
2. Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing the gathering.
3. Fred Schwartz, President, Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA), speaking on the occasion.
4. Professor Dhingra delivering his talk on "Entrepreneurship in America: Indian Americans' Contributions and Challenges".
5. Interactive Q&A session with Professor Dhingra,
6. Guests in attendance.

Showcasing Indian classical dance

1. Counselor M. Sridharan welcoming the guests at an event showcasing Indian classical dance hosted by the Embassy in collaboration with 'Things To Do DC' on July 25.
2. Gregory Bland, CEO, Things To Do, speaking on the occasion.
3. A presentation of Indian classical dance by Kasi Aysola from Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company.
4. Guests in attendance.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu takes charge as the new Deputy Chief of Mission

Senior officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Taranjit Singh Sandhu assumed his new assignment as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India, Washington D.C. on July 29. A 1988 batch IFS officer, 50-year-old Sandhu previously served as the Consul General of India in Frankfurt from September 2011 to July 2013.

Sandhu served in the former Soviet Union (Russia) as the Third Secretary (Political)/Second Secretary (Commercial) from 1990-1992. Following the break up of Soviet Union, he was sent to open a new Embassy in Ukraine. He served as Head of Political and Administration in Embassy from 1992 to 1994.

On his return to India, Sandhu served as OSD (Press Relations), Ministry of External Affairs from 1994 to March 1997. He was responsible for liaison with foreign media in India.

In April 1997, Sandhu joined Embassy of India, Washington, as First

Secretary (Political) responsible for liaison with the U.S. Congress. He spearheaded India's successful efforts to obtain congressional waiver of sanctions imposed on India following its nuclear tests in 1998.

He served as Counselor (Political) in the High Commission of India, Colombo from December 2000 to September 2004. He also served as Director (BSM) from September 2004 to July 2005 looking after Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Myanmar in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

In July 2005, Sandhu joined Permanent Mission of India to United Nations, New York, where he was India's delegate to UN Committee on Peacekeeping; UN Committee on Information; UN Committee on Decolonization and Fourth Committee of UN General Assembly.

Sandhu returned to the UN headquarters in March 2009 and held charge of Joint Secretary (United Nations). He later served as Joint Secretary (Administration), heading the Human Resource Department Division of Ministry of External Affairs till August 2011.

Born on January 23, 1963, Sandhu graduated with History (Hons) from St. Stephens' college in New Delhi. He is married to Reenat Sandhu, who is also an IFS officer (1989 batch).

Consulate EVENTS

Consulate General of Houston

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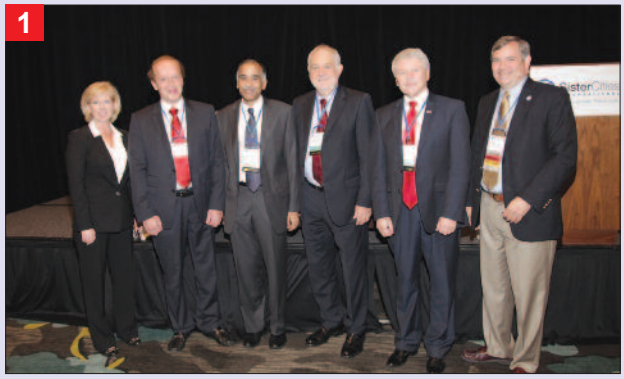

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1. During his visit to San Antonio, Consul General P. Harish participated as a panelist in the 2013 Sister Cities International Conference Foreign Diplomatic Panel with the theme "The Power of Exchange: Creating Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Relationships" on July 13. In photo, from left, Mary Kane, President & CEO, Sister Cities International (SCI); Alexander Zakharov, Consul General of Russia; P. Harish, Consul General of India; Klaus-Jochen Ghlcke, Consul General of Germany; Dr. Jostein Mykletun, Consul General of Norway and Thomas Lisk, Chairman, SCI Board of Directors.
2. Consul General P. Harish attended as a Guest of Honor at the 2013 Hindu Youth Awards Gala with Chief Guest Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI, 2nd District) organized by Hindus of Greater Houston on July 13. In photo, Consul General P. Harish and Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard with Garima Doshi, an awardee.

Catalyzing social and economic change

Through its programs on education, livelihoods, public health and leadership development, a U.S.-based organization has created opportunities for India's poor

For Sunita Koli, child of a seasonal migrant worker, forming the habit of studying was not an easy task as her parents were constantly on the move. Now, with the American India Foundation's Learning and Migration Program (LAMP), Sunita has understood the value of education. "Now that I'm about to join Class XII, I understand the value of education. No matter what anyone says, I am going to go to college and get a job that will help me, my family and my community to improve our lives," says a determined and confident Sunita. She is among over 280,000 children in migration-prone regions of India who have benefited from the LAMP program of AIF. Established in 2003, LAMP addresses the deficiencies in education among children of seasonal migrant workers through the promotion of hostels, school learning support, and stable home and educational environments to ensure that the children stay in school.

LAMP now also facilitates school governance to empower communities so they can take ownership of their children's education.

The journey of AIF started in 2001, at the time when a tragic earthquake devastated large areas of Gujarat. A small group of like-minded philanthropists spearheaded by President Bill Clinton, Victor Menezes of Citigroup and Lata Krishnan, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, channelized the collective spirit and energies of the Indian diaspora, traveled to the site, funneling desperately needed funds and support to people who had lost their homes and livelihoods. Amid the reconstruction efforts, they recognized the need for a philanthropy platform that would connect the world's two largest democracies and provide a trusted bridge for meaningful participation in India's democratic and economic growth for both Americans and Indians. Thus AIF was born and incorporated as a 501(C)(3) non-profit institution.

Over 280,000 children in migration-prone regions of India have benefited from the LAMP program of AIF.

AIF has since built a nationwide platform in the U.S. and India that focuses on five distinct programmatic areas in education, livelihoods, public health and leadership development. Through these programs, AIF has created countless opportunities for India's poor to live successful, productive lives while creating impactful change at an unprecedented scale, changing the lives of more than 1.7 million of India's less fortunate.

Bridging the educational and digital divide

AIF's Digital Equalizer (DE) program is a computer-aided learning program that bridges the educational and digital divides in India by preparing children in government schools to compete in the digital economy. Targeting children in grades six and above, DE provides computer and Internet education to teachers and students and helps teachers to be more effective by implementing project-based learning methodologies. To date, DE has trained over 29,000 teachers in over 3000 schools across 78 districts, reaching 870,000 students.

Harnessing the potential of youth

AIF's MAST provides marginalized, unemployed youth with a comprehensive skills training program that equips them with the knowledge and skills needed to secure employment as well as to succeed on the job in India's high-growth industries. So far, the program has trained over 105,000 youth across 20 states with a job placement rate of 74 percent.

Empowering the urban poor

AIF facilitates access to asset-based micro-credit and social services, and helps to improve the livelihoods of rickshaw drivers and their families. In the past three years, AIF has enabled over 47,000 rickshaw drivers in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam to become owners of their vehicles, thereby creating a life-changing asset.

William J. Clinton Fellowship

The William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India is named in honor of President Clinton for his commitment to India and citizen service. Since 2001, AIF has sent 297 Fellows to India to work with 137 NGOs and social enterprises.

— M.A. Ravi Kumar, CEO, American India Foundation

Indian scientists use neem protein to fight cancer

The medicinal power of the humble neem, widely used in India as an insecticide and germicide, is now being channelized by a group of Kolkata scientists to wage a war against cancer.

The team of researchers at the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute (CNCI) here has shown (in its two successive papers) how a purified protein from neem leaves inhibits growth of tumor cells in mice.

Instead of targeting the cancer cells directly, the protein — Neem Leaf Glycoprotein or NLGP — modulates the immune cells (cells that are responsible for providing immunity to the body against harmful agents) present within the tumor environment and also in the peripheral system like blood.

Immune cells are normally hostile to cells that are dangerous to the body including cancer cells. However, in a unique role-reversal during tumor development, these crucial defense

elements are enslaved by the cancerous cells to promote their growth and proliferation. Therefore, instead of destroying the lethal cells, the guard cells actually favor their growth.

What makes NLGP special is that the extract modifies the milieu of cells surrounding the tumor (called tumor microenvironment or TME) and spurs these cells towards a normal state that is debilitating for toxic cells like cancer cells.

"In our recent study we have seen that NLGP has the potency to normalize tumor micro-environment consisting of tumor cells and tumor associated non-transformed cells that help in tumor progression. Basically, NLGP modulates the tumor microenvironment in such a way that it restricts further growth of the tumor," Rathindranath Baral, Head of the Department of Immunoregulation and Immunodiagnostics, CNCI, said.

Besides the immune cells (that infiltrate the tumor site from the bloodstream) the TME consists of a variety of other cells (fibroblast and endothelial cells) in addition to a range of growth factors that activate and promote growth of tumor cells.

Among the immune cells is a group of cancer-killing cells called CD8+T cells.

As the microenvironment returns to the tumor-directed hostile state, triggered by NLGP, the population of T cells shoots up, thereby aiding in restriction of the cancer. NLGP also shields the T cells from developing a non-reactive state (called anergy).

133 new species of fauna discovered in India

Scientists have discovered 133 new species of fauna in India and among the most significant is a bird — yet to be named — found in the Great Nicobar Island.

Scientists have also discovered new species of spiders, reptiles, insects and fish in various parts of the country that have been compiled by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Animal Discoveries 2012.

Releasing the book recently, Environment Minister Jayanthi Natarajan said India has only about two percent of the world's land surface, but is known to have over 7.52 percent of the total animal species in the world.

"I am indeed happy to know that 133 species which are new to science were discovered by scientists from ZSI and other universities and colleges across the country. This shows the extent of biodiversity our country holds within it," Natarajan said.

"I am sure that by exploring the various remote and isolated places within the 10 major biogeographic zones of our country, we can discover many more species," she added.

Elaborating on the important discoveries, ZSI director K. Venkataraman said, "A significant one would be that of a yet to be named bird in the Great Nicobar Island."

"Though our researchers have taken a picture of this elusive bird during one of their surveys in the island, efforts are on to gather more information on this bird, including netting one for proper description," he said.

TERI tops global think-tank list

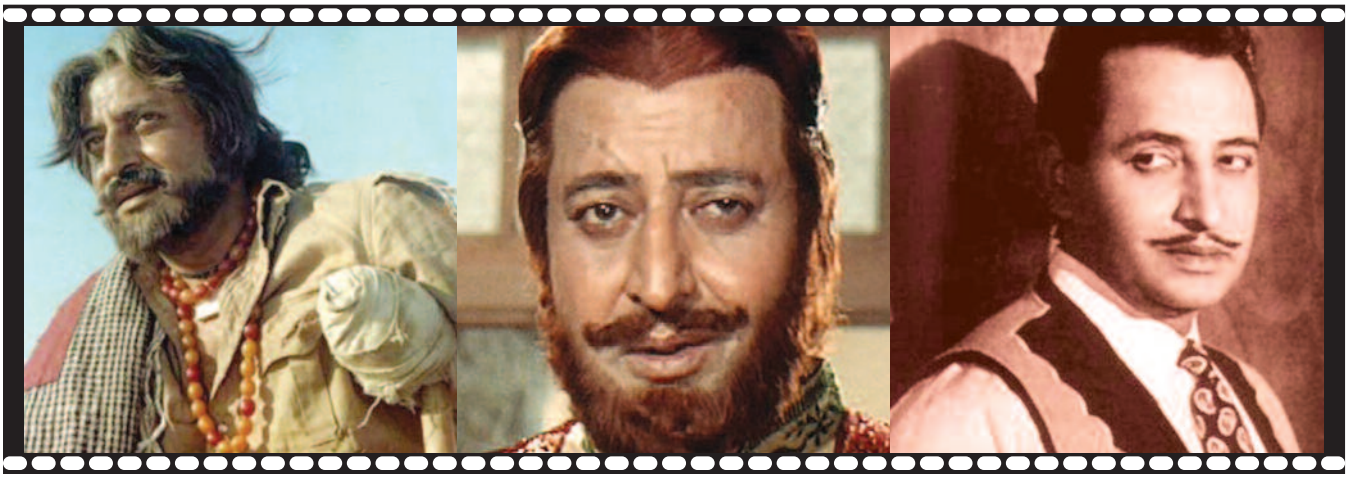
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) of India has been ranked the top climate think-tank globally by the International Centre for Climate Governance (ICCG), a statement said recently.

TERI won under the category 'Absolute Global Rankings' and all its activity outputs produced in 2012 were taken into consideration.

"It is particularly relevant and a matter of great pride for India to see that TERI has been ranked right at the top in the ICCG Climate Think Tank Ranking," said Dr. R.K. Pachauri, Director General, TERI.

Pran: The gentleman villain

Veteran Bollywood actor Pran acted in more than 400 movies in a career spanning over six decades and made smooth, seamless transitions from a hero to a villain to a character artist, playing each role with rare finesse



Recognized by that drawled 'barkhurdaar' in his steely voice, Indian film industry's most hated reel life villain, Pran Krishan Sikand — or Pran as movie credits and fans always called him — bid his final goodbye on July 12 to all the onscreen heroes who happily bashed him up and the heroines who dreaded him.

Born into a wealthy family in Delhi on February 12, 1920, Pran lived and was educated in Lahore, Kapurthala, Meerut, Dehradun, Rampur, Unnao and finally Mumbai as his father, Lala Kewal Krishan Sikand, was a government contractor building bridges and roads.

Though he seemed interested in and pursued a course in photography in Lahore, a chance meeting with a movie producer got Pran a role in Yamla Jat in 1940 when he was 20.

After the partition of India, Pran, who had married Shukla in 1945, decided to leave the Lahore film industry and shift to then Bombay.

But, unlike his smooth entry in Lahore, it was the start of a brief period of struggle to get a foothold in Bollywood. Though he managed to get the role of a lead hero in some movies, his personality and natural acting talents came to the fore only as a villain in those early days of the black-and-white era. His piercing, intense and unwavering deadly eyes made him a tailor-made villain for the romantic heroes of that era, including Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Rajendra Kumar, Raj Kumar, and later Dharmendra, Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan and many others.

"Throughout an estimable career, (Pran) used his eyes, voice, diction, facial mobility and body language to powerful effect," was how the legendary Amitabh Bachchan described him a few years ago.

Pran acted in over 400 movies in a career spanning over six decades and made smooth, seamless transitions from a hero to a villain to a character artist, playing each role with rare finesse, his 'extra touch' ensuring that each was different from the other. The roles ranged from being the domineering, cruel brother-in-law in *Ram Aur Shyam*, the limping and loveable Malang Chacha in *Upkar*, the streetsmart fraud in *Victoria No. 203*, and the brother of the character played by Dev Anand who reforms after learning his true identity in *Johny Mera Naam* to the rough but kind Pathan in *Zanjeer*, the evil lame Uncle Kaido in *Heer Ranjha* and the stern jailer in *Kaalia*, among many others.

Pran's filmography mirror of his versatility

Here is a list of some of his films:

- Khandan (1942)
- Ziddi (1948)
- Barsaat Ki Ek Raat (1948)
- Bari Behen (1949)
- Sheesh Mahal (1950)
- Azaad (1955)
- Chori Chori (1955)
- Halaku (1956)
- Devdas (1956)
- Tumsa Nahin Dekha (1957)
- Madhumati (1958)
- Chhalia (1960)
- Jis Desh Men Ganga Behti Hai (1960)
- Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai (1961)
- Half Ticket" (1962)
- Kashmir Ki Kali (1964)
- Dil Diya Dard Liya (1966)
- Love in Tokyo (1966)
- An Evening in Paris (1967)

Tastes of the Northeast

A Northeastern meal is always balanced; for every spicy dish there is a bland one

By Atul Lahkar

The culinary canvas of India's Northeastern region is as vast as the lifestyles of the people inhabiting this beautiful land of blue hills and green valleys. Every ethnic community has its own distinguishing dishes, and the preparation method of a dish is hardly the same in the kitchens of two different communities. Yet, there is also an underlying unity in the food habits of the Northeastern people that distinguishes them from communities in the rest of the country.

A Northeastern meal is always balanced — and for every spicy dish, there is a bland one. Among the hill tribes, no meal is complete without plain boiled vegetables that go with the more spicy dishes. It is the soup of these boiled vegetables that gives the tribesmen the strength to climb the lofty mountains and walk the miles to their fields.

Vegetable stew, vegetable stern with needles, tender bamboo shoot with chilies, fish cooked in bamboo stem, pork stew with ginger, pork stew with bamboo shoot, dried pork and bamboo pickle, fish with colocasia leaves, fish with bottle gourd, fermented fish chutney, fish barbecued in banana leaves, chicken with ginger, pork with mustard, boiled rice, sweet rice pan cakes, stir fried duck, etc., are some of the popular dishes of the region.

The main ingredients used in the Northeastern dishes should be recorded first, as without those a note on the subject would be quite incomplete. These ingredients are prepared by the tribes of the region on their own. The most common ingredients used by most of the tribes are fermented bamboo shoot, chili, khar (alkaline), dry fish, different kinds of herbs and rice powder, besides common spices such as ginger, garlic and turmeric powder. Cane sprouts, tender part of the cane trees, banana stem, green banana, *ou tenga* (elephant apple) and various

species of rice are also commonly used in Northeastern food.

To prepare *kharisa tenga* or *banhgaj* (fermented bamboo shoot), as they are called in Assamese, bamboo shoots are collected and fermented for about four days. *Kharisa* can be of different types such dry bamboo shoot, pickle, liquid bamboo shoot. The Naga people prepare their delicious dry pork with bamboo shoot and serve it with steamed rice. *Kharisa* juice is also used with different herbs in the Naga cuisines. Fish roasted in bamboo stem with *kharisa*, known as *pongsen* in the local language, is one of the favorite dishes of the Nagas. The same process is used in other states like Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

Bamboo shoot is also used widely in Assamese dishes. Various pork, fish and duck dishes are prepared with bamboo shoots in the region. Raw bamboo shoot is also used as chutney or pickle. Most of the oil-free foods in Assam bear a taste of bamboo shoot. The wide use of bamboo shoot among the cuisines of the Northeastern tribes can be attributed to their lineage to South Asian Mongoloid tribes.

Another important ingredient used in the region is *khar*. It is popular among most of the tribes, especially in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura. *Khar* is particularly used in preparation of pork, dry fish, and dishes of different herbs. *Khar* is prepared with a key ingredient, also called *khar*. The traditional ingredient is made by filtering water through the ashes of a banana stem, which is then called *kola khar* (derived from the local term for banana, *kol* or *kola*). A traditional Assamese meal invariably begins with a *khar* dish, prepared with raw papaya, pulses or any other main ingredient. However, the combination of *khar* and sour taste is not recommended. The Bodo, Rabha and Kachari people of Assam are fond of *khar*. Pork prepared with rice powder and *khar* is a mouthwateringly unique dish of the region.

Chilies, in both green and red varieties, are widely used in Northeastern food. In Tripura and Manipur, dry chili powder is used more. Different varieties of chilies are available in the region. It is specifically used in chutneys such as *akhuni* of the Nagas, *irumba* of the Manipuris, *nagakhamkapa* of the Khasis, and *ekung* of the Arunachalis. In Tripura and in Manipur, chili powder is used in the preparation of various dishes. The use of Naga Bhut Jolokia (ghost pepper), also known as *raj jolokia*, is quite popular.

(Above) A fish curry preparation with medicinal herbs; (Bottom) *Khar* collected in a bowl.

An important ingredient used in the food of the region is khar. *It is popular among most of the tribes, especially in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura*

A Naga dry pork dish prepared with chilies, ginger, garlic and *mesenga* (a kind of herb) powder is now relished and appreciated in various countries outside India. In Assam, too, pork with *kharisa* and *bhut jolokia* is very popular. Chutneys made with bamboo shoot and ghost pepper are very well known. Pickles from this variety of chili is a favorite in the region.

Green herbs are also widely used in the cuisines of the Northeastern region. Some of these herbs have medicinal value. Some tribes roast them in bamboo stem after wrapping them in green leaves. This is especially true of *mesenga* herbs. *Lai, lengmasor, manimuni, vedailota,* and *dimorupat* are some of the popular herbs relished in the region. *Oying* in Arunachal, *voksa* in Manipur, *wak pura* in Meghalaya and *maian bai* in Mizoram are some special dishes prepared with herbs.

Rice is the staple food of the region. Both the indicia as well as the japonica varieties are grown in Assam. The most popular species of rice is *joha* (an aromatic rice). As a staple diet, rice is eaten either steam boiled (*ukhua*) or sundried (*aaroi*). Some fine varieties of rice such as *karaballam* or *kauribadam*, etc., are available only in Assam.

Rice is also taken as snacks in many different forms: roasted and ground (*xandoh*), boiled in its husk and flattened and puffed (*akhoi*). There also grows a variety of rice that can be just soaked in water and relished with milk and molasses. *Kumol saul* is one such variety found in Assam.

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