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(Top) India's Labor & Employment Minister Mallikarjun Kharge with U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis after signing an India-U.S. Memorandum of Understanding in Washington D.C. on February 2. (Above) India's Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Washington D.C. on February 7.

Labor Minister, Foreign Secretary visit U.S.

■ NEW NATIONAL COMPETITION POLICY SOON

■ AMBASSADOR NIRUPAMA RAO VISITS BOSTON, SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA

■ TCS OPENS SILICON VALLEY CUSTOMER COLLABORATION CENTER

India signs MoU with U.S. on labor and employment

Pact to help develop appropriate employment strategies for inclusive growth in India and build strong bonds between the two countries

Bringing about improvements in the life of workers and their working conditions is of utmost importance,” said India’s Minister for Labor & Employment Mallikarjun Kharge. Speaking after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) along with U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis on February 2 in Washington D.C., Minister Kharge said the MoU would facilitate close cooperation and interaction between the two countries.

Minister Kharge expressed satisfaction that the MoU would cover the areas of skills development, youth employment, occupational safety and health, and mines safety. He further expressed hope that the MoU would help India expand its know-how in the domains of accreditation systems and self-regulation/auditing.

Minister Kharge said that India looked forward to potential tie-ups in training and information exchange in the areas of underground and open-cast mining, disaster control, emergency management, statistical analysis and development of data banks.

Minister Kharge also reiterated Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh’s vision of skill development for 500 million people by the year 2022. He stated that collaboration with the U.S. would help enrich India in the areas of delivery methods, certification, preparation of instructional materials, curriculum development and expanding outreach.

In his remarks, Labor Minister Kharge stressed the need for according mutual recognition to certain qualifications granted in both India and the United States.

Through collaboration in labor practices, India could also gain from



(Above) Labor Minister Mallikarjun Kharge and U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis signing an India-U.S. bilateral Memorandum of Understanding in Washington D.C. on February 2. (L) Minister Kharge with Labor Secretary Solis. Ambassador Nirupama Rao and other delegation members are also seen. (Photo credit: U.S. Dept of Labor)

the American experience in providing vocational guidance for unemployed youth and rehabilitating the differently abled, the Minister pointed out.

This MoU was another milestone and testimony to the deepening cooperation between India and the U.S. in various strategic areas, Minister Kharge observed.

In addition, the MoU would also help India in “developing an appropriate employment strategy for inclusive growth in India and building upon the

strong bonds between the people of two great nations”, the Minister said.

Hailing the structured bilateral engagement between India’s Ministry of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor, Secretary Solis, in her address on the occasion, appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Labor under Minister Kharge’s leadership to help address the critical challenges of skills development, youth welfare, occupational safety and health.

Foreign Secretary holds meetings in U.S. Administration and Congress

India's Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai visited Washington D.C. from February 6-8. In addition to co-chairing the annual Foreign Office Consultations with U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, he called on Deputy Secretary of State William Burns. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also joined the meeting briefly.

Secretary Mathai also met the Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough; Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economic Affairs Michael Froman; Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman; Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Robert Hormats; Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Maria Otero, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Ellen Tauscher; and Under Secretary for Commerce Eric Hirschhorn.

The Foreign Secretary also had wide-ranging meetings in the U.S. Congress, including with Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Howard Berman, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee; Representative Mike Rogers, Chairman, House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee; Senator Richard Lugar, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Senator John McCain, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee; and, Senator Joseph Lieberman, Chairman, Senate Homeland Security Committee. Rep Steve Chabot, Chairman, and Rep Gary Ackerman, Ranking Member, of the House Sub-committee on Middle East and South Asia. Representative Dana Rohrabacher also joined the meeting with HFAC Chair.



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton receiving Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai at a meeting in Washington D.C. on February 7. Also seen is Ambassador Nirupama Rao.

On February 6, the Foreign Secretary delivered an address on 'Building on Convergences: Deepening India-U.S. Strategic Partnership' in the Statesmen's Forum at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

During the Foreign Secretary's visit, the two sides reaffirmed the India-U.S. global strategic partnership and reiterated the commitment of their governments to further strengthen and expand the relationship. They reviewed bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction with progress in their engagement across the full spectrum of the bilateral agenda, including political and strategic consultations; defense, counter-terrorism, intelli-

gence and homeland security; trade and investment; energy, including civil nuclear energy; science, technology and innovation; higher education; high technology trade; and, people-to-people ties. The two sides discussed ways to further deepen bilateral ties and plan for the third round of India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, which is to be held in Washington D.C. in the summer of 2012.

The Foreign Secretary's meetings in the U.S. Administration and Congress also provided an opportunity for discussions on multilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.



Foreign Secretary Mathai at his meeting with Senator Richard Lugar, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on February 8.

‘Our ties one of exceptional convergence’

Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai says India-U.S. relationship can have ‘considerable impact on the shape of the world in the 21st century’

India’s transformation and the emerging India-U.S. relationship can significantly impact on the course of the 21st century, said Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai. He was speaking on the theme of ‘Building on Convergences: Deepening India-U.S. Strategic Partnership’ at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. on February 6. India and the U.S. continue to “sustain an unprecedented level of bilateral engagement”, he pointed out.

Excerpts of the speech:

“While change is a constant companion of time, it is also true that since the mid-eighties, the world has seen more profound political, economic, technological and strategic changes

than we would normally expect in a period of two or three decades. Yet through these changes the significance of the U.S. has not altered. But India’s ongoing transformation and the new India-U.S. relationship are both part of what has changed, and both can have a considerable impact on the shape of the world in the 21st century.

In the year since President Obama’s visit to India in November 2010, we have sustained an unprecedented level of bilateral engagement, launched new strategic consultations that cover key regions of the world; begun our first trilateral consultation with Japan; advanced our cooperation on non-proliferation and nuclear security; deepened counter-terrorism

and intelligence cooperation; launched a new Homeland Security Dialogue; made steady progress in our partnership on export controls, non-proliferation and nuclear security; concluded the largest defense deal yet in our bilateral relations, sustained exercises and broadened defense strategic dialogue; taken forward the incipient cooperation for development in third countries, especially Africa; held a very successful Higher Education Summit in Washington DC; and, made innovation driven progress in areas such as clean energy, food security and health care. We resumed negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty and expanded opportunities for economic cooperation through measures like

the Infrastructure Debt Fund and tariff reductions on products with potential for bilateral trade.

Indeed, I do not think that we have had as much convergence, or spoken more transparently and extensively with each other, as we do now on some of the most important issues in our engagement: terrorism, and key regional issues, Afghanistan, Myanmar and the future of Asia Pacific.

As Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said, the India-U.S. civil nuclear initiative is a symbol, instrument and platform of a transformed India-U.S. relationship. We are committed to translating the success of our diplomatic partnership in changing the global nuclear order into an equally productive commercial cooperation in civil nuclear energy.

We continue to be guided by the larger vision for our strategic partnership and the value of all that our two sides have built together. Let me highlight the priorities.

India and the U.S. can and must strengthen their economic partnership. The flow of trade in goods and services, and investments in both directions has grown several times in the past two decades. Today we have almost \$40 billion of U.S. imports, both goods and services. Indian businesses have invested perhaps \$26 billion in the U.S. in five years. India's planned infrastructure spending of \$1 trillion in the next five years; the modernization of our agriculture sector; our shift to clean energy; the implementation of the civil nuclear agreement; the burgeoning defense trade; cooperation in higher education; and, the growing ability of the Indian companies to compete in the U.S. market could take our economic ties to an entirely new level.

We remain committed to pursuing economic reforms in India in their broadest sense. The debate in India is not a question only about economic growth, efficiency and openness, but about equity, empowerment and opportunities for a large section of the population. As our economic ties



Foreign Secretary Mathai along with Ambassador Rao at his meeting with U.S. Congressman Howard Berman, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee, on February 8.

deepen, we will obviously have a growing range of policy and regulatory concerns with each other. But, we have in place an elaborate set of bilateral mechanisms to address them.

Terrorism remains a major security challenge for India and the U.S. Our convergence on the source and the nature of the threat, emanating from India's neighborhood, has never been greater; and, our cooperation on combating terrorism has never been stronger than today.

We should continue to further strengthen our growing partnership in leading international efforts on non-proliferation, disarmament and pursuing the goals of Nuclear Security Summit. India was pleased to host the Sherpas meeting of the Nuclear Security Summit in January.

We must also continue to work together to reform and adapt the global architecture of governance,

security and non-proliferation to reflect contemporary realities and enable our two countries to work together more effectively for our shared interests.

Taken together, this is a rich and broad canvas of priorities that also address some of the core interests of India and the United States. The question that is often asked is whether our two sides can translate our shared goals into a sustained and effective strategy of engagement and cooperation.

We must remember that while we may have occasionally different perspectives, we are also united by a fundamental stake in each other's success, because in succeeding individually, we can advance our common interests and inspire a world mirrored in our ideals.

The full text of the Foreign Secretary's speech can be viewed at:
<http://www.indianembassy.org>

Ambassador Rao meets with Sen. Chris Coons

In a meeting with Senator Chris Coons on February 13 at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., Ambassador Nirupama Rao hailed the multifaceted relationship India and the United States have built over the years with its focus on development and empowerment, covering such diverse fields as education, energy, health, agriculture, skills development and poverty alleviation.

In the context, Ambassador Rao and Senator Coons noted the “positive trajectory” the India-U.S. relationship had taken over the years.

Ambassador Rao also discussed the partnerships that both India and the United States have with Africa, with Senator Coons who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

In her remarks, Ambassador Rao outlined India’s deepening engagement with Africa, where she said India had made considerable investments in the continent’s development programs. Besides, India has been engaged in regular dialogue with African leaders under the aegis of the Africa-India Forum Summit. In his observations, Senator Coons described the India-U.S. relationship as “a partnership seeking solutions to real problems in people’s lives”.

Naming India as one of “America’s most important partners”, he welcomed the deepening of the India-U.S. strategic partnership.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Senator Chris Coons at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on February 13.

Senator Coons, who represents the state of Delaware in the United States Senate, is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Central Affairs, which deals with U.S. relations with India.

India a shining example of democracy: Sen. Rubio

India is a shining example of democracy in its region and the world,” said Senator Marco Rubio from Florida in a meeting with Ambassador Nirupama Rao on February 14 at Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. “India is one of the countries that people in America often cited to describe the new world,” Senator Rubio observed.

In her remarks, Ambassador Rao pointed out that “India’s key priority is to ensure inclusive development and deliver the fruits of economic growth to all its people”. To help achieve these goals, India looks to leverage its relations with the United States, which was an indispensable partner, she said.

Senator Rubio, who is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, described the India-U.S. relationship as an “extremely important one based on shared values and



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Senator Marco Rubio at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on February 14.

synergies”. India’s development was in the interest of the United States, Senator Rubio said, adding that there was “political commitment on both sides to invest in the relationship”.

Ambassador Rao also briefed Senator Rubio about recent develop-

ments in bilateral cooperation across a wide spectrum of shared endeavors. They agreed that the “emergence of an open, balanced and inclusive architecture in the Asia-Pacific region was in the interest of both India and the United States”.

Ambassador Rao discusses bilateral relations with Attorney-General

Ambassador Nirupama Rao met with U.S. Attorney-General Eric H. Holder Jr. on February 21 at the U.S. Department of Justice, Washington DC.

Extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Rao, Attorney-General Holder referred to the “excellent relations” between India and the U.S. and hoped that these would further improve during the tenure of the Ambassador.

Attorney-General Holder and Ambassador Rao discussed the growing India-U.S. cooperation in diverse fields, including counter-terrorism and mutual legal assistance in crime-related matters. Emphasizing the importance of cooperation in the investigations into the Mumbai terror attacks, Ambassador Rao expressed hope that the U.S. would extend cooperation in a few critical areas where India had requested help. This would help investigators bring the main culprits to book without delay, Ambassador Rao said.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with the U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington D.C. on February 21.

Attorney-General Holder assured Ambassador Rao of all possible assistance within the framework of U.S. law and underscored the importance the U.S. attached to counter-terrorism cooperation with India.

Attorney-General Holder and

Ambassador Rao also discussed issues relating to cooperation in combating piracy on the high seas. Both sides also laid emphasis on the importance of dialogue in all areas of mutual interest, and resolved to deepen cooperation in this regard.

Private Sector Advisory Group delegation briefs Ambassador Rao

AU.S. delegation of the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) of the Trade Policy Forum (TPF), led by Co-Chair Dr. Fred Bergsten, called on Ambassador Nirupama Rao on February 23.

The delegation briefed the Ambassador about PSAG’s activities and the follow-up action taken on its last report submitted to the Trade Policy Forum (TPF) leadership in January 2011. The delegation also shared its thoughts with Ambassador Rao on propelling India-U.S. bilateral trade and economic engagement to the next level. In her remarks, Ambassador



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with a PSAG delegation of the Trade Policy Forum on February 23.

Rao appreciated the “constructive role” that the PSAG had played in strengthening the TPF process through its “detailed and progressive

recommendations”. She emphasized the need to focus on the “big picture of the relationship”, adding that the Ministerial Trade Policy Forum was an important platform where PSAG’s recommendations on strengthening bilateral trade and commercial cooperation could be discussed.

Robert Vastine, President, Coalition of Service Industries; Ron Somers, President, U.S. India Business Council (USIBC); Charlene Barshefsky, former Deputy USTR; Arvind Subramanian of the Peterson Institute of International Economics; and Anku Nath of USIBC were also part of the delegation.

'People-to-people connectivity advancing India-U.S. Global Strategic Partnership'

In her first visit to Boston/Cambridge after assuming responsibility as the Ambassador of India to the United States, Ambassador Rao visited Harvard University, MIT, Emmanuel College and met with a section of the Indian-American community in the Greater Boston Area.

At Emmanuel College on February 15, Ambassador Rao delivered the prestigious Wyant Lecture on 'India's Role in a Changing Landscape in the 21st Century', which was attended by a large number of students, faculty members and scholars at the College.

On February 16, Ambassador Rao met with the President of Harvard University, Prof. Drew Gilpin Faust, who had returned from India after a successful visit. Ambassador Rao outlined the initiatives being taken by the Indian Government to strengthen the education infrastructure in India and opportunities thus generated for enhancing collaboration between India and the U.S. Ambassador Rao also referred to the successful outcomes of the inaugural India-U.S. Higher Education Summit held in October 2011 and invited Harvard University to forge newer links in education, research and innovation with academic institutions in India. President Faust shared impressions of her recent visit to India and said that Harvard looks forward to deepening its engagement with India.

At Harvard, Ambassador Rao addressed the Kennedy School of Government on the 'people-centric' dimension of the India-U.S. Partnership and how this "extraordinary people-to-people connectivity was helping the India-U.S. Global Strategic Partnership to grow from strength to strength". Ambassador Rao also addressed the Middle East Seminar on India's foreign policy and interests in West Asia and the Gulf region, jointly organized by the



Ambassador Nirupama Rao

Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, where Ambassador Rao had earlier served as a Fellow during 1993-94, and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the Harvard.

Ambassador Rao began her visit to MIT on February 16 with a meeting with MIT President, Prof Susan Hockfield, who recalled MIT's long-standing partnership with India, beginning with the setting up of IIT Kanpur and IIM Kolkata, and a number of ongoing programs at MIT to strengthen institutional and educational linkages with India. Prof Hockfield briefed Ambassador Rao on the initiative taken by MIT of providing online access to several of its courses and how students across the world were benefitting from it. Recalling the Singh-Obama 21st Century Knowledge Initiative announced in 2009, Ambassador Rao referred to a number of bilateral initiatives taken recently to deepen university linkages, junior faculty development and encouraging partnerships in the area of S&T, innovation and skill development, and hoped that MIT would continue to expand its collaborative ventures with India.

Ambassador Rao also met with a number of students, interns, faculty members and scholars associated with MIT's India Initiative and MIT's Center for International Studies.

On February 17, the Indian

Association of Greater Boston hosted a community reception in honor of Ambassador Rao.

Wyant Lecture at Emmanuel College, Boston

Following is an excerpt of Ambassador Nirupama Rao's Wyant Lecture on 'India's Role in a Changing Landscape in the 21st Century':

"India today represents a unique model of development in the world. Our policy choices for development have been a product of a healthy debate resulting in a broad political consensus. Even though at times the pace of development might seem slow, the overall trend and direction remain clear. Indeed, as Larry Summers, former Chairman of National Economic Council noted, India's growth reflects the idea of a democratic developmental state, driven not by a mercantilist emphasis on exports, but a people-centered emphasis on growing levels of consumption and a widening middle class. And uniquely, India's emergence is not regarded as a threat, but, rather, welcomed by the vast majority of nations.

Sixty five years into India's journey as a vibrant democracy, I would say that it is the Indian model of democratic governance, its acceptance of pluralism, its emphasis on inclusive, sustainable growth, together with its economic strength, resilience and dynamism of its people that propels the promise and the potential of India's role on the global stage. Additionally, we have always relied on diplomacy and statecraft in building relations and addressing problem issues, and have never been protagonists for the first use of force in settling outstanding problems.

Let me first turn to our economy. Our sustained economic growth, particularly in the last two decades, has led to a dramatic transformation in India. It has lifted millions of people out of

poverty and led to the rise of a large middle class. Despite some slowdown in economic growth in the first half of 2011-12 which stood at 7.3 percent as against 8.5 per cent in 2010-11, we have been able to keep the adverse impact of global slowdown and uncertainty on our economy to the minimum... Our relationship with the United States is in fact built on our shared values and converging interests. It is based on our fundamental belief that we have mutually beneficial stakes in each other's success.

We have in the last decade, set up a comprehensive architecture of engagement based on broad political support in each of our country, strong people to people linkages, and a growing habit of cooperation. Over the past ten years, the two governments have put in place a very robust agenda for cooperation for our partnership that is, to quote Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, founded on both "principles and pragmatism". As the late K. Subrahmanyam, the doyen of India's strategic thinkers said, this relationship should not be measured by the number of successful transactions.

He said, presciently, that the "relationship must be assessed on its progress in setting up structures that make it more effective in countering the challenges of the 21st century. Global governance must rely upon networks of bilateral strategic partnerships among democratic powers that manage rather than impose outcomes, and provide a powerful response to the challenges they face".

In the months ahead, as we plan for the third meeting of the Strategic Dialogue in Washington later this summer, it would be our joint endeavor to build on this foundation, consolidate on the work that had already been done and to implement the initiatives that have been agreed upon to qualitatively improve the relationship.

Indeed in India, we attach importance to our strategic partnership with the U.S. both for advancing global peace, stability and progress as well as in the pursuit of India's national development goals..."

The full text of the speech can be viewed at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1867/wyant-lecture-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-emmanuel-college%2C-boston---andquot%3Brole-of-india-in-the-changing-landscape-in-the-21st-centuryandquot%3B>

Speech at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Following is an excerpt from Ambassador Rao's speech on 'An India-U.S. Partnership with People at its Core'

I am often asked the question — what is the central idea that propels the India-US partnership? While there are multiple factors that make this relationship so enduring — our shared values of democracy, respect for individual freedoms and diversity, rule of law, converging interests on a number of regional and global issues, I believe the foremost among them are our excellent people-to-people connections that anchor our partnership and provide vitality to our relations. And, it is this 'people centric' dimension of our partnership that I would like to focus on in my remarks today.

Links between our scientists, researchers, academics, entrepreneurs, art and culture enthusiasts, have always been an important component of such people-to-people ties. A key element in the relationship between India and the U.S. has been that it responds to popular aspirations going beyond the calculations of political expediency. It is precisely for this reason that our relations enjoy such wide-ranging support across the full political spectrum in both our countries.

You are well aware of the fact that U.S. universities helped set up institutions of excellence such as the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and the Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata, institutions which are global brand names now.

The U.S. was an early partner in helping to establish agricultural universities and research institutions in India in the 1960s. It was an American scientist, Nobel Laureate Norman

Borlaug, who developed high yielding varieties of wheat in Mexico, which were then adapted to Indian conditions in the institutions that U.S. scientists helped establish... The U.S. remains a preferred destination for Indian students to pursue their advanced degrees. Nearly 100,000 students from India are benefiting from the higher education system in the U.S. And we would like to see more and more American students coming to India in the future to study India...

And, the stellar role that the Indian-American Diaspora has been playing in deepening people-to-people linkages cannot be underestimated. They have created jobs and prosperity in this country and participated in the development of cutting edge and frontier technologies that have helped improve the lives of people...

The steady growth of the Indian economy has not only helped improve the living standards of our people, but has also opened up new opportunities to expand our mutually beneficial economic and commercial ties with the U.S. Two-way trade in goods and services continues to grow steadily reaching over \$100 billion last year. The U.S. businesses are becoming strong partners in India's economic growth story; and Indian businesses are creating value, wealth and jobs in the United States... I see a future full of hope, promise and opportunities for deepening our strategic partnership guided by our long-term objectives and shared ideals of democratic functioning in order to meet the important challenges of our times and to advance peace and prosperity in our increasingly interdependent and interconnected world. And, in consolidating this important enterprise, the Indian and American people have a leading role.

The full text of Ambassador Rao's speech can be viewed at: <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1868/andquot%3Baddress-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-kennedy-school-of-government%2C-harvard-university%3A-an-india-us-partnership-with-people-at-its-coreandquot%3B>

Ambassador Rao visits South Carolina

On a visit to South Carolina, Ambassador Nirupama Rao held extensive discussions with Governor Nikki Haley and Commerce Secretary Robert Hitt on future cooperation between India and South Carolina. Ambassador Rao, who visited the State from February 28 to March 1, was hosted by Governor Haley and her spouse at the Governor's Mansion in Columbia.

The Governor, who praised the role of the Indian-American community in promoting relations between India and the United States, was keen on expanding trade contacts with India.

Highlighting the business-friendly atmosphere in the state and the presence of major companies, such as Boeing, BMW and Michelin, a well-developed information technology sector and R&D centers, renowned institutes of higher education, and the major port of Charleston, Governor Haley said that South Carolina would welcome Indian companies and offer any infrastructural assistance they might require to establish themselves in the state.

The Governor also expressed her willingness to host any Indian business delegation visiting the United States for consultations.

The Ambassador apprised the Governor of the state of bilateral relations between India and the United States and expressed the desire to expand the relationship between India and South Carolina.

India would like to avail of the experience of the state in the field of infrastructure development, education, and R&D, she added.

Informing the Governor of her "popularity in India", Ambassador Rao invited her to visit India. She said it could pave the way for Indian businesses, already present in 43 states of the United States, to also look at South Carolina as an investment and business destination.

Later on February 29, the



Ambassador Rao with Governor of South Carolina Nikki R. Haley and her spouse Michael Haley at the Governor's Mansion in Columbia.



Ambassador Rao at the BMW plant in Greenville, South Carolina, on March 1.

Ambassador and the Governor held a joint press conference.

During her trip, the Ambassador also visited Charleston Port and held discussions with the port authorities on prospects of cooperation. She also met with President Benson of Charleston College and interacted with the faculty and the students. She also met with President Pastides of the University of South Carolina and addressed faculty and students. Present in the audience was a large number of Indian-origin students as well as members of the Indian-American community.

She also addressed business leaders and members of various think tanks at the World Affairs Council of Columbia on February 29, on the topic, 'India Today', outlining the opportunities available in India for business development.

On March 1, the Ambassador toured the BMW factory in Greenville and visited the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research, also in Greenville, where officials expressed keen interest in building collaborative relationships with Indian automotive companies. ■

Ambassador Rao visits Georgia

In her first visit to Georgia, Ambassador Nirupama Rao toured Emory University, met with Congressmen from Georgia, visited the King Center, attended a reception by the Indian-American community and gave several interviews to the local media.

On March 2, the Ambassador also delivered a lecture on 'Indo-U.S. Commercial Engagements' at a meeting of senior business executives at the United Parcel Service (UPS), organized by the Kettering Executive Network (KEN) and supported by the Georgia Indo-American Chamber of Commerce and The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE). The Mayor of Sandy Springs, Dr. Eva Galambos, presented the Key to the City to the Ambassador. Earlier, she met the top management of UPS.

The Ambassador also met with the Provost of Emory University, Dr. Earl Lewis, and other members of the faculty. She delivered the keynote address at the prestigious India Summit on 'India-US Strategic Relations', focussing on the role of innovation and science & technology.

At a dinner reception in her honor at Emory University, she met with students and Atlanta's business and community leaders.

On March 3, she paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King at a public reception at the King Center. She garlanded Gandhi's statue and toured the Visitor's Center and laid wreaths at the crypts of Dr. King and Coretta Scott King.

The same afternoon, she met with Congressmen Thomas E. Price and Hank Johnson and exchanged views on several issues of bilateral, regional and global interest from the perspective of the partnership between India and the United States.

In the evening, the Indian-American community, represented by over 80 organizations in Greater Atlanta, held a well-attended welcome banquet in the honor of the Ambassador.



Ambassador Rao with Congressman Tom Price after a luncheon meeting in Atlanta.

Lecture at the Emory University, Atlanta

Following is an excerpt of Ambassador Nirupama Rao's address at Emory University on India-U.S. Strategic Relations on March 2

"It is a great honor for me to have this opportunity to address the India Summit organized by the Emory University. In the last three years since its inception, the Summit has already become an important event in the annual calendars of events related to India, and has helped to promote a greater understanding about India not just in the greater Atlanta region but across the entire South Eastern board of the United States.

I am also really happy to see the initiatives that Emory has taken to strengthen its ties with India, through its various programs whose numbers continue to rise, and also by its linkages with Indian institutions. The impact of these initiatives is not limited to the immediate academic field but more importantly they help foster a better understanding and create bonds of friendship between the Indian and American peoples.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing leaders of the Indian-American community at Global Mall in Atlanta on March 3.

While there are several factors which make our relationship enduring, including the values that both our countries cherish, and the convergence of interests that we have as we both work toward greater peace and prosperity for our peoples, in my view it is these bonds, or people-to-people linkages, in diplo-speak, that create the rich mosaic of our multifaceted relationship, add to its vibrancy and resilience and provide an anchor which goes beyond any immediate political expediency.

Therefore, I would like to thank the leadership of Emory University and all the faculty members here for their commitment and untiring efforts to



Ambassador Rao with members of the Indian-American community in Atlanta at a public reception at the King Center after garlanding Mahatma Gandhi's statue.

expand connections with India and the Indian people.

Ours is a partnership that seeks to meet common aspirations for mutual prosperity and for peace and security. Today, India and the U.S. are true partners — in strategic terms, in economic terms, and in the development context. As India continues on its path of inclusive social and economic development, mobilizing the immense creativity and energy of its people, we see the U.S. as an important partner in this journey. It is with this objective in mind that we are working to expand our relations across the entire spectrum of our bilateral agenda.

The India-U.S. Strategic Dialogue initiated in 2009, and whose third meeting will be held in Washington in a few months, had therefore identified the following principal areas for expanding cooperation for mutual benefit: strategic cooperation, energy and climate change; education and development, economy, trade and agriculture, science and technology, health and innovation. And, as an important part of these efforts, just as the U.S. is partnering in India's development, Indian businesses have been investing in the U.S. economy.

It is in this overall context that I would like to share my thoughts with you this evening specifically on how I see our partnership evolving at a time when technology and innovation



Ambassador Rao with the Mayor of Sandy Springs, Eva Galambos (C), and other participants of the business conference at UPS on March 2.

have emerged as a driving force for growth. I am happy to note that the India Summit this year focuses on some of these aspects.

When I talk of innovation it is not just high technology that I am thinking of, though that too is important, but innovation in its broadest sense, innovation that encompasses energy, food security, higher education, vocational training, R&D, and entrepreneurship.

In India we have placed a particular emphasis on innovation. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh declared in 2010 that for India, the present decade is to be the 'Decade of Innovation'. India has established a National Innovation Council to provide recommendations on how we could bridge unmet needs and access gaps in vital sectors such as agriculture, education, energy, health, skills,

urban and rural development, and others; and to drive growth, competitiveness, employment, and opportunity for the country. In India, we are determined to use innovation not only as an engine of economic growth but also as a tool to address national development challenges.

Already, India's economic transformation is utilizing innovation in its broadest sense. India has become the hub for developments in design, processes and systems to create products that suit the Indian circumstances and context. Information Technology and Communications have been the catalysts as well as beneficiaries of this unprecedented growth. Our industry is setting new standards in cost-effective manufacturing and service delivery. The once protected manufacturing sector has today become modern and is able to hold its own. In India, in

developing the innovation economy the key focus has been on its relevance and scalability. The result has been grassroots acceptability and easy commercialization of new technologies.

In pursuing our desire to be a major global hub for innovation and creativity, the Indian corporate sector has played an important role. From indigenous designing and manufacturing of the Nano to effective e-governance models; from inclusive banking to accessible public healthcare, Indian industry has contributed to the development of need-based and cost-effective innovative solutions that have scalability and global relevance.

I recall what my friend and the distinguished USAID Administrator, Rajiv Shah said a few months ago: “India is now a pioneer of game-changing innovations that are pushing the boundaries of what is possible in development.”

The U.S. has led the world when it comes to innovation. Both our governments realize the critical importance of innovation to address new challenges and generate economic growth. As both India and the U.S. work toward becoming truly knowledge societies they are also working together to translate these immense opportunities into practical cooperation: forging new links, creating ecosystems together to foster creativity that would lead to solutions for the problems that we face, both immediate and in the long term. Let me enumerate some of these.

Energy security and the supply of clean and sustainable sources of energy are a common challenge for both our countries. In order to continue on our high growth path, India will need to invest in building a world-class infrastructure that could cater to the demands of a billion-plus population and ensure the availability of abundant supplies of clean sources of energy to fuel such growth. In both these areas we are working to build mutually beneficial ties. With the U.S., we are now engaged in a broad array of clean energy solutions. Through our Partnership to Advance



Ambassador Rao with Congressman Hank Johnson in Atlanta on March 3. Also seen in the picture is Consul-General Ajit Kumar.



Ambassador Rao receiving the Kettering Executive Network memento after addressing a business conference on March 2.

Clean Energy (PACE) and the Joint Clean Energy Research & Development Center (JCERDC) we are working on Public-Private partnership for Joint R&D in three areas — solar energy; second generation bio-fuels; and energy-efficient buildings. The center will mobilize up to \$100 million in public and private sector funds to facilitate research and development in breakthrough technologies over five years. Several proposals have been received by the center, and the first awards are likely to be announced within this month.

When it comes to energy, while we import a large part of our crude requirements, one source where we are not short of supply is solar energy. Most of you, who have had the

opportunity to travel to India, would testify to that I am sure. We are therefore working on an ambitious plan to tap the potential of available solar energy and launched a national solar mission a few years ago to increase its share in our energy mix. And the U.S. Export-Import Bank, OPIC and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency have joined together in this endeavor. In the U.S., the tapping of shale gas, has dramatically altered your energy supply scenario.”

The full text of Ambassador Rao's speech can be viewed at:
<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1878/address-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-emory-university-on-india-us-strategic-relations-%282-march-2012%29>

Embassy hosts presentation on 'HomeSpun'

The Embassy hosted a public event on February 23 on the theme of the contributions made by Indian-Americans to the advancement of India-U.S. relations. It included a presentation on an exhibition titled 'HomeSpun', which chronicles the story of immigrants from India and their descendants in America. HomeSpun is an initiative of the Asian Pacific American Program of the Smithsonian Institution.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Nirupama Rao highlighted the "people-centric dimension" of the India-U.S. partnership and how it had, over the years, helped

strengthen the "mutually beneficial character of cooperation" between India and the U.S. "India takes pride in the achievements of the three million-strong India-origin community in the United States," she said.

Referring to the areas where Indian-Americans had excelled and their contributions widely recognized, Ambassador Rao said, "To say that the Indian-American community has truly come of age is no exaggeration."

HomeSpun was, therefore, "a celebration of the accomplishments and success of Indian-Americans", she said. She expressed confidence that the exhibition would be an effective demonstration of the potential and

capabilities of Indian-Americans in contributing to American society and economy as well as to the India-U.S. partnership.

Richard Kurin, Undersecretary for History, Art and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution, and Konrad Ng, Director of Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program, and HomeSpun's curator Dr. Pawan Dhingra were present on the occasion. Other attendees included Smithsonian officials, India-origin businesspersons, scholars of Indian-American studies, journalists, arts and culture enthusiasts and a number of prominent members of the Indian-American community.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing the guests.



Richard Kurin, Undersecretary for History, Art and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, speaking at the event. (Photo: Sandra Vuong, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program)



Konrad Ng, Director of Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program, speaking at the event.



Pawan Dhingra, Curator of the 'HomeSpun' exhibition making a presentation on the project. (Photo: Sandra Vuong, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program)



Gautam Chandra, Member of the Advisory Council of 'HomeSpun', proposing a vote of thanks.



A cross-section of the guests in attendance at the 'HomeSpun' event.

'India to transform sporting culture'

The Consulate-General of India, New York, organized a reception on February 10 at New India House in honor of the visiting Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs (Independent Charge) Ajay Maken. Prominent members of the Indian-American community, which included professionals, community leaders, sporting personalities, notably Vijay Amritraj, and mediapersons from the Tri-State Area attended the function.

Introducing Minister Maken to the distinguished gathering, Consul-General Prabhu Dayal paid tribute to his vision for the sporting future of India. The Minister had initiated many pioneering projects to help develop India's sports infrastructure, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, former Indian tennis star Vijay Amritraj hailed



India's Minister of State for Sports & Youth Affairs Ajay Maken

Minister Maken's endeavor to help improve India's sporting facilities was commendable, he added.

In his address, the Minister said that his Ministry was working toward transforming India's sporting culture and to make available to Indian athletes

"world-class trainers to ensure that the country doubles its medal tally in the forthcoming Olympic Games". "We have already engaged 29 foreign trainers and have arranged nearly 100 high-quality training camps abroad for the purpose," he pointed out.

The Ministry has also decided to set up sporting facilities in nearly 2,50,000 villages in India. In collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Ministry has put in place an action plan to ensure that "every elementary school in the country has one good playground and a physical training instructor", the Minister said. Schools will also incorporate sport as a discipline into their curriculum.

He also appreciated the role played by people of Indian origin in helping to "cement the growing bonds between India and the United States".

Mahatma's 'Punya Tithi'

The Consulate General of India, New York, in association with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), observed the 64th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Punya Tithi' (death anniversary) on January 30. About 50 guests, including teachers, students, journalists and BVB office-bearers attended the event. The program began with a recital of Gandhi's favorite bhajans by Sanjukta Sen and students of BVB.

Speaking on the occasion, Consul-General Prabhu Dayal briefly touched upon various aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and its relevance to the contemporary world. Quoting Gandhi's famous exhortation "Be the change you want to see in the world", he urged the audience to practise his precept. Dr. Navin Mehta, a trustee of the Bhavan, also spoke about the relevance of Gandhi's teachings.

MoS External Affairs visits Texas



India's Minister of State for External Affairs and Human Resource Development E. Ahamed being presented a memento by the President of the Texas Chapter of Indian American Friendship Council (IAFC), Prasad Thotakura, and, President of the India Association of North Texas (IANT), Dr. Sridhar Reddy Korsapati, in recognition of his service to the nation and the Diaspora. Also seen is Consul-General Sanjiv Arora.



Minister Ahamed with guests at an Indian-American community reception hosted by IANT and IAFC in cooperation with other community fora and the Consulate General of India, Houston. Consul-General Arora is on the extreme right.

PM hails all-time record in farm yield

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on February 20 said India's farm yield had touched a new high with food production expected to exceed 250 million tonnes, "an all-time record", at the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan ending March 31.

Addressing the golden jubilee convocation of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi, the Prime Minister emphasized that "a prosperous, productive and sustainable farm economy was the cornerstone of equitable and inclusive growth".

Dr. Singh said the Government was seeking to reform and revitalize the agrarian economy and had adopted a multi-pronged strategy to improve returns to farming and step up investment in rural infrastructure.

The Prime Minister said the Government's flagship agricultural plans like Bharat Nirman, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the Rashtriya Krishi



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh addressing the golden jubilee celebrations of IARI.

Vikas Yojana and the Rainfed Areas Development Programme and other agrarian policies had begun to pay off. "Food production at the end of the Eleventh Plan will exceed 250 million tons, an all time record. Our pulse production, at 18 million tons, is well above the previous barrier of 15 million tons," he said.

"We are today producing more milk, more fruits, more vegetables,

more sugarcane, more oilseeds and more cotton than ever before. Last year, production of vegetables went up by 9.57 percent and nearly two million tons of cold storage capacity was created," Dr. Singh added.

He said the agricultural growth was "likely to be about 3.5 percent per annum during the Eleventh Five Year Plan which is much better than in the 10th". The Prime Minister added that the achievement was "commendable" but "we must improve upon it in the Twelfth Plan to reach four percent growth or even higher".

Referring to the need for greater technological intervention in the farm sector, the Prime Minister said, "Our farm economy needs much greater injection of science and a knowledge-based approach to increasing incomes and productivity. Both land and water are limited and it is vital that we make progress in agricultural technology, which raises land productivity while also allowing a significant reduction in water use per unit of agricultural output."

New policy to curb narco drugs

India on February 6 introduced a comprehensive national policy to help curb trafficking in narcotic drugs. "The policy presents evidence of India's strong commitment and intent to rise to the challenges posed by the drug menace," Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said.

"It also reflects the country's willingness to shoulder the responsibility which is cast upon it because of its strategic position, sandwiched between two major regions of the world producing illicit narcotics," Minister Mukherjee said.

The policy attempts to curb the menace of drug abuse and contains provisions for treatment, rehabilitation and social re-integration of victims of drug abuse.

"Implementation of the provisions of



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee

the policy will lead to reduction in crime, improvement in public health and uplift of the social milieu," the Finance Minister said.

According to a United Nations report released in 2011, between 149 and 272 million people or 3.3 to 6.1 percent of the world's population aged 15-64 have used illicit substances at least once in the previous year.

Govt notifies direct fuel import by airlines

The Government of India on February 22 issued a notification, empowering airline companies to directly import jet fuel.

"Indian carriers interested in importing air turbine fuel directly, without going through the state trading enterprises, may apply to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade for licenses," the Ministry of Commerce announced.

Earlier, jet fuel was a restricted commodity that could only be imported by public sector oil marketing companies, such as Indian Oil Corporation and others.

Direct imports will enable airlines to cut operating costs by about 10-15 percent and save on the sales tax levied by state governments. The sales tax ranges from three to 35 percent.

Jet fuel now comprises about 50 percent of the total operating cost of airlines in India.

New competition policy to help bring down prices: Moily

The proposed National Competition Policy, scheduled for Cabinet approval by March, would help usher in a financial revolution in the country and combat inflation, Corporate Affairs Minister M. Veerappa Moily has said.

“The National Competition Policy is going to be the second biggest financial revolution in the country after 1991. A draft version of the policy is being circulated among all the ministries and hopefully it will be approved by the Cabinet by March,” he said.

Referring to the positive impact expected from the National Competition Policy on the economy, he said: “The policy will help dismantle monopolies and anti-competitive forces.”

Referring to a comparable policy in existence in the United States, Minister Moily said it had helped in halving the price of petroleum products there. “It is an excellent way to combat inflation,” he pointed out.

The Minister said in India the pro-



Corporate Affairs Minister M. Veerappa Moily

posed policy would also help bring down foodgrain prices substantially. “Without affecting the productivity of a company, the prices can be brought down. The Competition Policy is not a one-time thing or a one-slot thing, it has a lot of cascading effect. Therefore, seen in the larger context, the prices of foodgrains, for example, will come down appreciably,” Moily said.

The Minister added that amendments were likely to be made to the Competition Act in the light of the upcoming competition policy. ■

TCS opens Silicon Valley customer collaboration center

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), one of the world’s leading IT services, consulting and business solutions company, on January 31 announced the official opening of its Silicon Valley Customer Collaboration Center in Santa Clara, California. Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, the collaboration center is designed to provide an open, innovative and collaborative workspace that adopts the entrepreneurial spirit and best practices employed by the world’s leading startup companies in the Valley.

The center will serve as the worldwide headquarters of TCS’s Mobility Solutions Unit, which aims to bring the benefits of emerging technologies like big data, analytics and mobility to enterprises across all industries. The center will serve as the base for TCS’s Next Gen Solutions Unit, which applies the latest advances in software technology to real-world business problems that customers may face. This center features several innovative collaborative workplace features designed to enable effective collaboration between TCS and its customers from around the world.

“Silicon Valley is the perfect place for this new TCS customer collaboration center, given the match between the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of TCS and that of the Valley,” said N. Chandrasekaran, TCS CEO and Managing Director. “The convergence of the innovation in the Valley with the highly scalable, high quality and cost-effective engineering strength of TCS will help jumpstart the powerful new phenomenon of the democratization of innovation.”

“California is the global leader in high-tech employment and our office looks forward to working closely with TCS as they create valuable job opportunities for our citizens,” said Brook Taylor, Deputy Director at the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development.

The launch of the new TCS collaboration center was attended by local officials, including U.S. Congressman Mike Honda and over 65 customers from the U.S., Canada and Europe. The Santa Clara center is the latest addition to TCS’s growing operations across North America where it has been operating since 1979 when it established its first office in New York City. TCS now has more than twenty offices across the region.

Growth revised upward to 7.1 pc

The Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.1 percent in the financial year ending March 31, slightly higher than the 6.9 percent growth projected in the advance estimate early this month, the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council has said.

The growth in the agriculture and construction sectors is likely to remain higher than the estimates released recently by the Central Statistical Organization, C. Rangarajan, Chairman of the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, says in the Economic Review for 2011-12.

The council has pegged farm sector growth at three percent as compared to

2.5 percent growth projected in the advance estimate. A record output of rice and wheat on the back of good monsoon and strong growth in horticulture and animal husbandry are likely to push upward the agricultural sector growth.

The manufacturing sector is expected to grow by 3.9 percent while construction segment is expected to expand by 6.2 percent.

Strong growth in the services sector will continue, with overall growth estimated at 9.4 percent for the fiscal ending March 31, 2012. Inflation is estimated to come down to 6.5 percent by the end of the current financial year, according to the review. ■

Pune teacher joins US space program

Over 1,100 students and teachers of Vidya Valley School in Pune shouted with joy when Vandana Suryavanshi became the first foreign teacher to be chosen for a U.S. space program in April 2013.

A thrilled Vandana, who teaches at the school, said: "I had submitted a project entitled — 'The effect of atmospheric pressure and gravity on human beings and plants, on earth and in micro-gravity', which was approved. I got a congratulatory message on January 24, followed by the announcement."

An excited trustee-principal, Nalini Sengupta, said: "Our biology and



Vandana Suryavanshi (3rd from left) with some teachers of Vidya Valley School where she teaches.

earth sciences teacher is the first foreigner and only Indian to be selected for the US-based Space Foundation's National Flight of Teacher Liaison program."

A non-profit organization, the Space Foundation encourages and supports space activities, space professionals

and education about space.

"Each year, 20 Liaison Teachers are selected based on various criteria and they attend workshops, learn how to teach about space, essentially using the 'thrill of outer space' to teach science," Vandana, 48, explained, adding she would travel to Colorado Springs in mid-April for the training program.

For the first time in 10 years, the Space Foundation experts panel, comprising experts and military and space, has chosen a teacher from outside the U.S.

Vandana will join 19 American educators who have been selected for their active promotion of space and science education.

Use space technology for food security: Former ISRO chief

India must embark on a "new evergreen revolution" with the extensive use of appropriate bio- and space technology inputs to ensure food security for all and enable the country to compete successfully in a globalized economy, says renowned space scientist U.R. Rao.

application of science and technology.

Rao was a member of an expert committee headed by economist A. Vaidyanathan which in a recent report to the Agriculture Ministry suggested using remote sensing technology in the development of agriculture. The committee has also recommended setting up of a National Crop Statistics Centre to deal with all aspects of crop area and yield estimation.

Rao said, "Improvement and posting of satellites in space are meant for development of agriculture, education, health and medical treatment, forest and environment, communication, resource assessment and banking business."

He said India's remote sensing satellites were being used to monitor and manage agricultural practices. These include analysis of cropping system (satellites provide valuable inputs for diversification and intensification of crops), mapping of sodic and *usar* soils, assessing the impact of droughts and floods, weather forecasting and monsoon prediction.



India's population is likely to cross 1.6-billion mark by 2050, which will mean doubling foodgrain production to ensure food security to all Indians, according to him.

The solution, the former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said, lay in the

Trilateral Research in Partnership Awards instituted

Under the second phase of the U.K. India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), a new Trilateral Research in Partnership (TRIP) Awards was recently instituted in partnership with the United States.

Ten awards of up to \$75,000 in funds will be available to support multidisciplinary research projects between the UK, U.S. and Indian higher education institutions.

This trilateral award aims to support the increase of mobility of PhD and post-doctoral students in all three countries, and develop sustainable institutional links. Proposals have been invited across subject areas, including the humanities, social sciences, science and technology, and multidisciplinary research projects for the awards.

The last date for submission of proposal is April 13, 2012. The UKIERI was established in April 2006 with the aim of enhancing educational links between India and the UK. In recognition of its substantial achievements and building on the success of this initiative in the first five years, the program has been extended for another five years from 2011 to 2016.

Building South Asian American leaders

Sam Arora is a Maryland state Delegate, Aaron “Ronnie” Chatterji served on President Barack Obama’s Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) and Hari Kondabolu is a rising comedy star just back from an India tour.

The three Indian-Americans could not be more different from each other. Yet they have one thing in common. They are alumni of the Washington Leadership Programme (WLP) dedicated to building the next generation of Indian and South Asian American leaders.

The organization was founded in August 2008 in memory of pioneering Indian-American philanthropist Gopal Raju, who sponsored a program that placed over 170 students in eight-week summer Congressional internships over 15 years through his Indian American Centre for Political



Hari Kondabolu

Sam Arora

Aaron “Ronnie” Chatterji

Awareness. The list of over a hundred students who have applied for the program this summer would be whittled down to about ten after a three stage “very intense” selection process, said Harin Contractor, who serves on the board of the program.

“We actually just used to do exclusively Capitol Hill,” he said, “but with

a lot of South Asians being appointed to the administration, where they need quality interns, we have extended the opportunity to government agencies.”

Looking to grow in the next five years, WLP now plans to raise the number of interns to 20 and to make it a year round program.

Indian-born Kamal Bawa wins award for sustainability work

Kamal Bawa, an Indian-born Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts Boston, is the 2012 winner of the Gunnerus Sustainability Award, the world’s first major international award for work on sustainability.

Bawa will receive the Gunnerus Gold Medal and the award of 1 million Norwegian Kronor (about \$190,000) at a ceremony in Trondheim on April 17. The Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters (DKNVS) will bestow the award.

“We are very pleased to have selected such a worthy winner of the first Gunnerus award” said Professor Kristian Fossheim, President of DKNVS.”



Kamal Bawa

Bawa, also a faculty fellow at the Centre for Governance and Sustainability, home of the Global Environmental Governance Project, is

known for his research on population biology in rain-forest areas. His span of work includes biological discoveries made in Central America, the Western Ghats, and the Himalayas in India. He is also noted for founding, and serving as President, of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), a non-profit conservation and development research think tank in Bangalore.

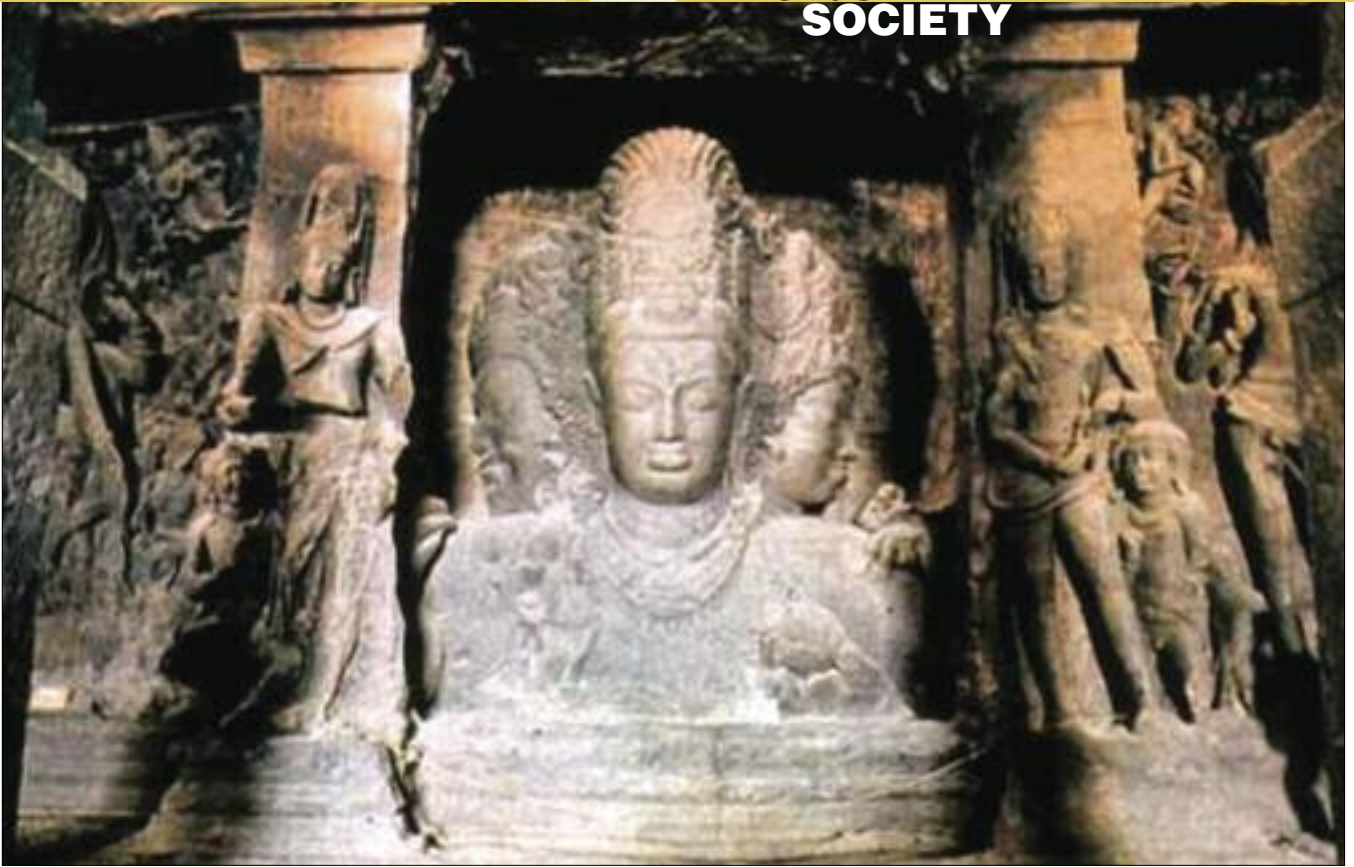
“I am very pleased over the recognition that our work has received,” Bawa was quoted as saying in an interview with a Norwegian newspaper.

Preet Bharara on *Time* cover

Indian-American attorney Preet Bharara, nicknamed the ‘Sheriff of Wall Street’ for prosecuting the likes of Rajat Gupta, the poster boy of Indian business in America, has made it to the cover of *Time* magazine.



“This man is busting Wall Street” screams the cover of the magazine hitting the stands on February 3 detailing Ferozepur-born Bharara’s anti-corruption crusade as the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. “US Attorney Preet Bharara has already taken down some of the financial world’s most prominent figures. He’s just getting started,” notes the cover story written by Bill Saporito and Massimo Calabresi. After successfully winning the conviction of Sri Lankan-American hedge fund tycoon Raj Rajaratnam for insider trading, he is now prosecuting Gupta, former McKinsey head and a former Goldman Sachs director, for allegedly giving tips to Rajaratnam.



TOURISM & HOSPITALITY – AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

India's tourism and hospitality industry is the country's largest service-provider. Today, increasing foreign tourists' arrivals and a healthy overall growth rate promises an even brighter future for the industry

Driven by a flourishing Indian middle-class and significant spending by foreign tourists, in addition to the efforts made by the Government of India to promote the 'Incredible India' brand, the Indian tourism sector is experiencing a remarkable phase of growth. With a variety of attractions on offer, the country is fast becoming a major international destination.

Tourism has, in fact, become one of the most lucrative businesses in the country, contributing a considerable volume of foreign exchange to the country's reserves.

A number of reasons are cited to

explain the growth and success of India's travel and tourism sector. Economic growth has added millions annually to India's middle-class, a group that has traditionally driven domestic tourism.

Thanks in part to India's booming IT and outsourcing industry, foreigners visit India in large numbers, often adding a weekend break or a longer holiday to their trip. In fact, foreign tourists spend more in India than almost in any other country.

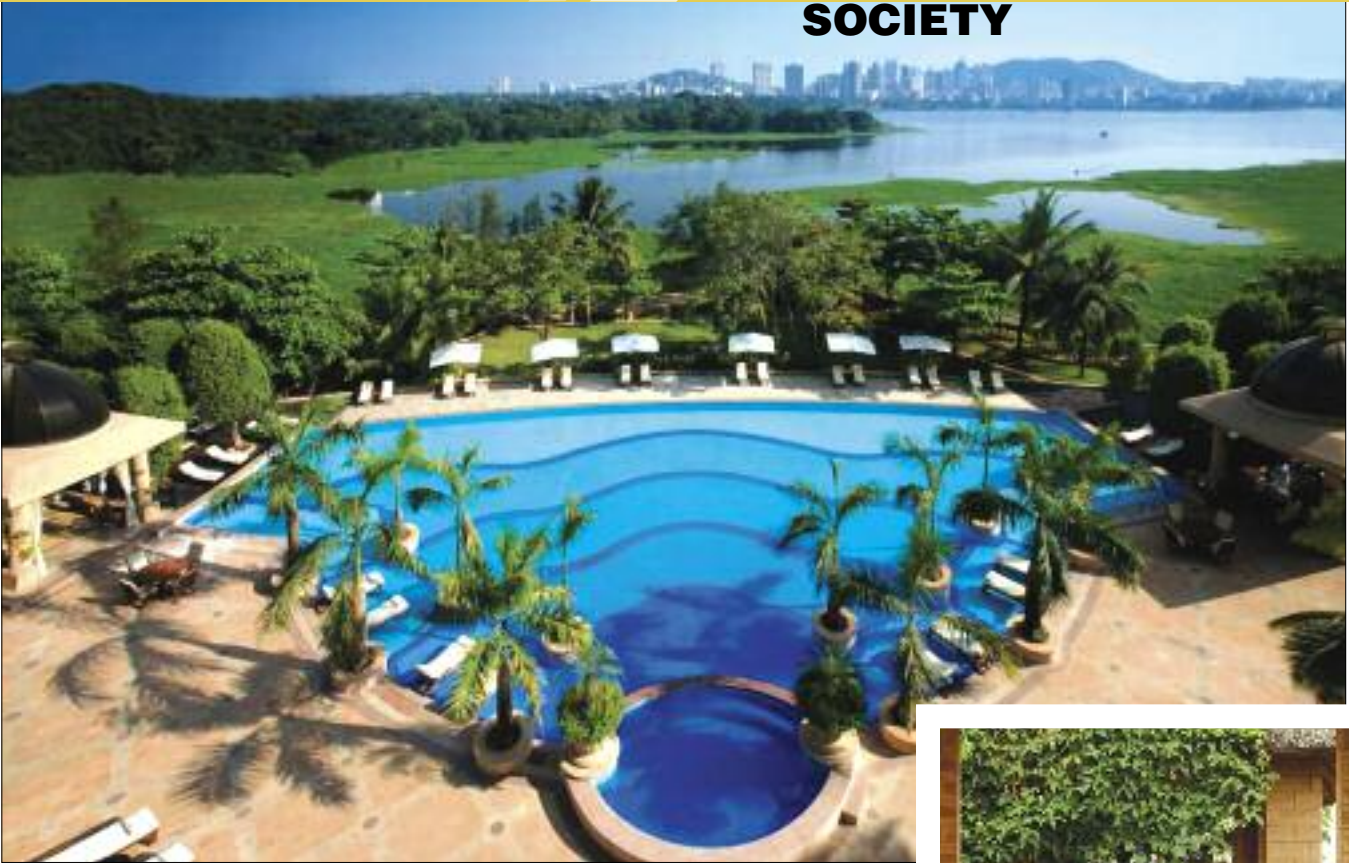
Growth Trends

Being the largest service sector in the country, the tourism and hospitality industry contributes around 6.23 per-

cent to the national GDP and accounts for nearly 8.78 percent of total employment in the country.

During January-September, 2011, the total Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) stood at 4.22 million with a growth of 10 per cent, as compared to the FTAs of 3.84 million with a growth of 8 per cent during January-September 2010 over the corresponding period of 2009.

A report by the Ministry of External Affairs expects the Indian hospitality sector to have a projected investment of \$12 billion within the next two years. According to a report by the Ministry of Tourism, Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) during January-



September 2011 stood at \$10.25 billion with a growth of 16.6 percent, as compared to an FEE of \$8.79 billion with a growth of 22.7 percent during January-September 2010 over the corresponding period of 2009.

Government Initiatives

The Indian Government has allowed 100 percent foreign investment under the automatic route in the hotel and tourism industry. Moreover, to encourage more foreign tourist arrivals, the Government has introduced a scheme that permits tourists from Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Singapore to travel on Tourist Visa on Arrival (T-VoA) in the country for a period of 30 days.

Medical Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism has already included the Medical Tourism segment under the Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme. Following this, the Ministry of Tourism has approved \$27,742 as MDA to 10 Medical Tourism Service Providers during 2011.

According to a report by market



research firm RNCOS, 'Booming Medical Tourism in India', the country's share in the international medical tourism business will be three percent by the end of 2013 and is expected to generate revenue worth \$3 billion, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 26 percent during 2011-2013. The number of medical tourists is expected to grow at a CAGR of over 19 percent during this period to reach 1.3 million by 2013.

The domestic segment of India's medical tourism sector has also seen growth in recent years with a number of domestic tourists travelling to states like Kerala, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh for therapeutic purposes.



Further, to encourage more foreign tourists to undertake medical trips to India, the Government has introduced a new category of visa, 'Medical Visa' ('M'-Visa) for easier processing and facilitation.

The Road Ahead

The Indian tourism and hospitality business in the country is set for faster growth and holds out enormous prospects for a number of other allied segments of the trade.

Government initiatives, coupled with industry ventures, are expected to help the sector continue its incredible journey into the future.

(Courtesy: India Brand Equity Foundation)

A wax statue for Dadasaheb Phalke on Indian cinema's centenary

To mark the centenary of the Indian film industry on May 3, a fitting tribute will be paid to its legendary founding father, Dhundiraj G. Phalke, better known as Dadasaheb Phalke, an official of Dadasaheb Phalke Academy said on February 17.

A life-size wax statue of Dadasaheb Phalke will be created and installed at the Celebrity Wax Museum (CWM) in Lonavala, according to a trustee of the academy. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with CWM's Managing Director Sunil Kandallloor. The statue is expected to be ready by May 3.

Born on April 30, 1870, at Trimbakeshwar, near Nashik, Dadasaheb Phalke made his debut with India's first feature-length silent movie *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913.

In a career of nearly 25 years, he made 95 movies and 26 short movies, including classics like *Mohini Bhasmasur* (1913), *Satyavan Savitri* (1914), *Lanka Dahan* (1917), *Shri Krishna Janma* (1918) and *Kaliya*



Dadasaheb Phalke. (R) A still from *Raja Harishchandra*, India's first silent film released in 1913.

Mardan (1919). However, he was unable to cope with the competition posed by the 'talkies', and found few takers for his later films. This compelled him to make his last silent movie *Setubandhan* (1932) with dubbed voices. Later, in 1937, he attempted his last movie, *Gangavatara*, before giving up and retiring to his home district. He passed away there on

February 16, 1944.

Acknowledging his immense contribution to the growth and development of the Indian film industry and cinema in general, the government instituted the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1969.

Each year, the prestigious award is conferred on an outstanding film personality who has dedicated his or her life to cinema.



'There's only Indian Cinema, no regional variants'

Do not to divide the movie industry on the basis of regions, urges multilingual actress Shriya Saran and requests people to refer to filmhood as "Indian cinema". "I feel films can be used as cultural instincts, so let's call it Indian cinema... Dividing it into north, south, east and west will also divide the industry. We are one big family and let's be like that," Shriya said.

The 29-year-old, who has worked in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam movies, said: "I have been part of every industry and I believe that it is nice to know different languages and cultures because it opens up your window to life."

"I understand all the languages,



Shriya Saran

whether it's Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam or Hindi. For me, every language is important and they have their own charm. The same holds true for the film industry," she added.

Shriya made her acting debut in

2001 with the Telugu film *Ishtam* and tasted her first commercial success with 2002 Telugu hit *Santhosham*. However, it was the unprecedented box-office success of Rajinikanth starrer Tamil film *Shivaji: The Boss* that gave her acting career a boost.

In 2007, she stepped into Bollywood with *Awarapan* and did films like *Mission Istanbul* and *Na Ghar Ke Na Ghaat Ke*. Her latest Hindi film, *Gali Gali Chor Hai*, is a political satire about a common man's fight against corruption.

Shriya is also doing Deepa Mehta's *Midnight's Children*. "I appreciate her work. She is one woman who has followed her heart and is a winner," she said.





Adventure in Solang

Winter sport is no longer confined to the breathtaking locales of Jammu and Kashmir. Solang Valley in Himachal Pradesh is fast turning into a popular destination for skiers and comes alive when much of northern India retreats into the warmth of well-heated homes.

Snuggling between Beas Kund and Solang village, at an altitude of over 8,000 feet, sits Solang Valley — India’s newest destination for adventure sports. The daunting Himalayan ranges and the fresh powdery snow of the valley provide the kind of perfect setting that an adventure sport enthusiast is always looking for.

The valley, which is 13 km north of the popular hill resort of Manali in the state of Himachal Pradesh, is fast turning into a popular destination for skiers. The white slopes here come alive when most of the north India settles for the warmth of the home. As snow begins to cover the picturesque valley, tourists from across the country and abroad throng Solang for skiing, snowboarding and sliding.

Although a new sport for most of them, youngsters in Solang are taking to skiing as ducks take to water. Enthusiastic bunch of boys keenly



(Left) Snow scooters at Solang; (Right) Foreign tourists trying their hand at rock climbing in the valley.

await their turn to mount the Gondola, a sort of cable car, to take them up the slope from where they ski down.

“Conditions here are perfect for winter sports. Himachal is becoming a hub of adventure sport in the country. However, there is a need to dedicate separate space for different events. The slopes are a little bumpy but the standards will improve with time,” says Shiva Keshavan, 30, India’s new star adventure sportsman. In December, he set an Asian record in luge, sliding at 134.3 kmph, in the Asia Cup in Nagano, Japan. Keshavan is a native of Vashist village near Manali. Solang, his home turf, also hosted a first of its kind skiing event, the Alpine Premier League, in February. The event attracted over 350 skiers.

The event saw teams from Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir; there were even 24 competitors from abroad. The Indian Army skiers, however, dominated the tournament, winning most of the medals.

To help make winter sports activities accessible to the general public in Solang, the Directorate of Mountaineering and Allied Sports in Manali, along with several private companies, has stepped in providing skiing equipment free for training.

“Youngsters here are taking to the sport in a big way, which is great news. The government should start a training programme so that they can make it to the international stage,” Kesavan, a four-time Winter Olympian, says.

Peter Tobler, a snowboard instructor from Switzerland, first came to Manali 16 years ago. Since then, the Durham-born Tobler has been a regular here. He finds Solang to be one of the best places in the world when it comes to snowboarding. “Snow conditions here are fantastic and the slope is a great challenge. Solang is a paradise for winter sport. The valley has great potential and is as good a place as any in the world.”

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■ Festival of colors



Youth in Bangalore putting *gulal* (colored powder) on each other as they celebrate Holi on March 8. The festival of colors marks the onset of spring across India. (AFP)

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2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20008

Tel: 202-939-7000; Fax: 202-462-7276

E-mail: indembwash@indiagov.org



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CONSULATES

Consulate General of India
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N.Y. 10065

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Fax: 415-668-2073
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Consulate General of India
455 North Cityfront Plaza Drive
(NBC Tower Building)
Suite #850 Chicago, IL 60611

Tel. 312-595-0405 to 0410
Fax. 312-595-0416
E-mail:
cg@indianconsulate.com
Website:
www.chicago.indianconsulate.com

Consulate General of India
4300 Scotland Street
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Texas 77007

Tel. 713-626-2148/49
Fax. 713-626-2450
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