

# India Review

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Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the 7<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Phnom-Penh on November 20.

## India congratulates President Obama

■ 10<sup>TH</sup> INDIA-ASEAN  
SUMMIT CONCLUDES

■ FORMER PM I.K. GUJRAL  
PASSES AWAY

■ WHITE HOUSE  
CELEBRATES DIWALI



## On President Obama's re-election

The shared vision of Prime Minister Singh and President Obama will continue to guide our close relationship to an even deeper and more rewarding engagement

Watching President Barack Obama's re-election last night was inspiring, and in some ways reminiscent of his historic win four years ago to become the 44th President of the United States. The closely fought contest brought to the fore strengths of a political system based on popular will that binds India and the United States — the world's largest and the oldest democracies.

What will President Obama's re-election mean for India-U.S. relations?

The President and the Prime Minister of India sent warm, congratulatory messages to the U.S. President immediately after the elections results were announced. In his message, President Pranab Mukherjee emphasized the shared values and interests between India and the United States, and expressed confidence in the continued progress in our strategic partnership.

In his congratulatory message, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh noted, "Over the last four years, consistent with our vision of a global strategic partnership between India and the United States, ... we have not only advanced cooperation across the full spectrum of our bilateral relationship, but also deepened our engagement in the pursuit of global peace, stability and prosperity. ... I have no doubt that there is much more we can do together to further strengthen the India-U.S. partnership and thereby advance peace and stability, expand mutual economic opportunities, harness the potential of science and technology, innovation and higher education and empower our people to address global challenges." I believe that the leadership that both Prime Minister Singh and President Obama

have imparted over the last four years, has moved India-U.S. strategic partnership from a 'consolidation' phase into one of comprehensive and multifaceted engagement.

Prime Minister Singh was invited by President Obama in November 2009 to be the first State guest of his Presidency. President Obama's own landmark visit to India in November 2010, the first by a U.S. President in his first term, paved the way for many accomplishments in our relationship. I am constantly impressed by the fact that a silent revolution is taking place in the way India and the U.S. engage with each other. The depth and expanse of their mutually rewarding

**“I believe that the leadership that both Prime Minister Singh and President Obama have imparted over the last four years, has moved India-U.S. strategic partnership from a 'consolidation' phase into one of comprehensive and multifaceted engagement.”**

— Ambassador Nirupama Rao

partnership, and the stakes both countries have built in each other's success are unprecedented today. Strong people-to-people exchanges and sterling contributions by the Indian American community are constantly enriching this engagement.

Our trade and economic partnership and collaboration in innovation are new sources of strength to our engagement. Our deepening cooperation in education, energy, health, agriculture and science and technology now touches the lives of millions in both our countries. People, as I have always said, are at the pulsating heart of this relationship.

Our strategic partnership today is rich in content, comfort and candor. It also has an ever-increasing global rele-

vance, making a difference beyond our shores, from Afghanistan to Africa. There is increasing convergence in our foreign policy priorities. We have shared approaches to some of the most complex regional and global challenges of our times.

Our defense partnership, including defense trade, has been strengthened, just as our cooperation in counter-terrorism and other strategic pursuits, including maritime and cyber security. The Obama Administration's commitment to India's membership of the multilateral export control regimes, as well as President Obama's support for India's permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council, has indeed

been encouraging to us. We remain committed to bring our civilian nuclear cooperation to tangible fruition.

There is a rich and textured agenda ahead of us. The shared vision of Prime Minister Singh and President Obama will continue to guide our close relationship to an even deeper and more rewarding engagement, even as it derives strong support from across the political spectrum in both our countries.

**Ambassador Nirupama Rao's blog can also be viewed at:**

<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail2061/ambassadorandrsquo%3Bs-blog-%3A-on-president-obamaandrsquo%3Bs-re-election>

# India congratulates President Barack Obama

On President Barack Obama winning a second mandate, India said it looked forward to strengthening its multifaceted partnerships with the U.S.

India on November 7 congratulated U.S. President Barack Obama on his re-election and said it looked forward to deepening multi-faceted engagement between the two countries in the years ahead.

In his message, President Pranab Mukherjee said, "India and the United States share a bilateral partnership which has deepened and intensified in diverse and critical areas of co-operation during your first term in office. Ours is a relationship based on shared democratic values of individual liberty, pluralism and respect for the rule of law. We have built a strategic partnership in areas of shared interest, including matters relating to international peace and security, technologi-

cal co-operation and in strengthening institutions of global governance. We look forward to the further progress of our co-operation in all these areas during your second term."

Congratulating President Obama, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said, "Your mandate gives you a historic opportunity to continue to work for the welfare of the American people as also for global peace and progress."

In a telephonic conversation with President Obama on November 8, Prime Minister Singh wished the U.S. President success for his second term in office. He added that President Obama's re-election had given the opportunity to the two countries to carry forward and build on the enormous successes that had been

achieved in the bilateral partnership in the last few years. Prime Minister Singh also expressed his appreciation for the personal interest and commitment that President Obama had brought to India-U.S. relationship and said that he looked forward to continuing the close cooperation between the two countries to pursue their shared vision for the India-U.S. strategic partnership.

President Obama thanked the Prime Minister for his wishes and noted that India and the U.S. had an excellent relationship, which had deepened over the last few years. He also expressed appreciation for the Prime Minister's leadership on the world stage and said he looked forward to working together with Prime Minister Singh.

"The government and people of India send their congratulations to President Obama on his winning a second mandate from the people of the U.S. who have expressed their will in the great tradition of democracy in their country," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.



**FOLLOWING IS THE MESSAGE OF PRIME MINISTER DR. MANMOHAN SINGH ON THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT OBAMA**

November 7, New Delhi

Dear Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to convey to you my warmest congratulations on your re-election as the President of the United States. The renewed confidence that the people of your great country have reposed in you is as much a tribute to your qualities of head and heart as it is an indication of the faith that the American people have in your leadership. Your mandate gives you a historic opportunity to continue to work for the welfare of the American people as

also for global peace and progress at an admittedly difficult juncture, not just for the U.S., but indeed for the world at large.

Over the last four years, consistent with our vision of a global strategic partnership between India and the United States, the ties between our two democracies have seen sustained growth. We have not only advanced cooperation across the full spectrum of our bilateral relationship, but also deepened our engagement in the pursuit of global peace, stability and prosperity.

I have personally valued our friendship and I look forward to continuing our rewarding



association in order to build further on the enduring foundations of our shared values and the accomplishments of the past four years. I have no doubt that there is much more we can do together to further strengthen the India-U.S. partnership and thereby advance peace and stability, expand mutual economic opportunities, harness the potential of science and technology, innovation and higher education and empower our people to address global challenges.

My wife joins me in wishing you and Mrs. Obama, as well as Malia and Sasha, good health, success and happiness as you prepare for a new term in office.

# ‘Man of peace’ I.K. Gujral passes away

The former Prime Minister will be remembered for his keen interest in protecting and promoting India’s external interests and the eponymous Gujral Doctrine

**I**nder Kumar Gujral, who was India’s Prime Minister for 11 months in 1997-98, died in New Delhi on November 30 just four days before his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Known as a gentleman politician, Gujral died of lung infection.

He is survived by two sons, Naresh, and Vishal Gujral, and three grandchildren. His younger brother is artist and sculptor Satish Gujral. His wife Sheila predeceased him in July 2011.

The federal Cabinet, at a special session convened to pay homage to Gujral, said in his death India has lost a “great patriot, a visionary leader and a freedom fighter”.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his condolence message said he had lost a friend of long standing and the country “has lost an intellectual, a scholar-statesman and a gentleman politician”.

He described Gujral, as “a man of peace, an idealist who lived by his principles and an intellectual with the human touch.”

He will be remembered primarily for his keen interest in protecting and promoting India’s external interests and the eponymous Gujral Doctrine. The Gujral Doctrine advocates magnanimity toward small neighbors in the interest of regional peace and progress.

Gujral was India’s External Affairs Minister — from 1989-90 and 1996-97 first under Prime Minister V.P. Singh and then H.D. Deve Gowda.

**The text of Prime Minister Singh’s condolence message on the passing away of the former Prime Minister:**

“I am deeply saddened to learn of the passing away of former Prime Minister Shri I.K. Gujral. In his passing, the country has lost an intellectual, a scholar-statesman and a gentleman politician whose liberal and humanist vision was rooted in the teachings of



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur paying their respects to former Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral (inset) in New Delhi on December 1.

the leaders of our freedom movement. I personally have lost a friend of long standing, whose wisdom, idealism and deep concern for social equity left a great impression on me and whose counsel and opinion I often sought and valued greatly.

Shri Gujral was a man of peace, an idealist who lived by his principles and an intellectual with the human touch. His long and distinguished career was marked by diverse political and diplomatic responsibilities. No matter what portfolio he held, what shone through always was his sincerity and warmth, compassion for his fellow human beings and the legacy of strongly held socialist beliefs from his youthful experiences.

These qualities of head and heart enabled him to make his mark in every office he held. He was a diplomat who helped to consolidate India’s ties with Russia and the non-aligned world. As Minister for External Affairs, he restored India-Bangladesh relations with the Ganga Waters Agreement, rebuilt the structure of dialogue with Pakistan and initiated the negotiations on the historic India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement. His vision of a prosperous South Asia at peace with itself constitutes a lasting legacy.

As Prime Minister, he set an example of grace under pressure, of composure in difficult circumstances and of steadfastness to principles. As a largely coalition-based polity adjusted to rapid political and social change, Shri Gujral provided a steady hand at the helm.

We will feel his loss in India, where his long years of public service, starting with political activism and underground activity in the Punjab in his student days culminated in the highest executive office in the land. He will also be missed in South Asia, where his determined quest for a future of peace, friendship and cooperation was epitomized by the eponymous Gujral Doctrine, which is still invoked by men of goodwill in the subcontinent. And he will be missed around the world by the many friends he won through his political and diplomatic activism, his sharp intellect and his warm character. The best tribute to him would be to rededicate ourselves to the principles by which he lived his life.

On behalf of the Government of India and on my own personal behalf, I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Shri Gujral and pray that they be granted the strength and fortitude to face this loss with resolve.”

# White House' date with Diwali

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden spoke of the universal resonance of Diwali and asked the guests to commit themselves to providing for those less fortunate



U.S. Vice President Joe Biden greets Ambassador Nirupama Rao at the Diwali reception in the South Court Auditorium of the White House on November 13. (Official White House Photo by David Lienemann)

**T**he White House celebrated Diwali this year too with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden lighting the traditional *diya* or the lamp as he joined a select group of Indian-American officials, community members and diplomats.

President Barack Obama wished people around the world “Happy Diwali and Saal Mubarak.

In 2009, Barack Obama became the first U.S. President to light the traditional lamp in the East Room of the White House. In 2010, he celebrated Diwali in Mumbai.

Diwali celebrations in the White House were started by former President George W. Bush.

At this year’s celebrations, Vice President Biden spoke of the universal resonance of Diwali and asked the guests to commit themselves to providing for those less fortunate.

“In closing, the Vice President expressed his wishes for a peaceful and prosperous Diwali and that the lights



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Congressman-elect, Ami Bera (D-CA), at the Diwali reception.



Carnatic vocals by Vandana and Vidya Iyer; instrumentals by Jobie George, Shankar and Chhaya Tucker.

## President Obama praises Sikh resilience in Diwali message

**W**ishing people around the world “Happy Diwali and Saal Mubarak”, President Barack Obama has praised the resilience of the Sikh community in the wake of the shooting at a Sikh gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

“Out of a day of sadness, we were reminded that the beauty of America remains our diversity, and our right to religious freedom,” he said on November 13 in a message of greetings to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists celebrating “the holiday of Diwali — the festival of lights”.

“Diwali is a time for gathering with family and friends, often marked with good food and dancing. It is also a time for prayer and reflection about those less fortunate,” said the President. “It is a testament to the compassion of these communities that so many of them have helped those that have been devastated by Hurricane Sandy,” he said, referring to the storm that threw life out of gear in Northeast U.S., particularly New York and New Jersey.

Turning to the Oak Creek tragedy and the “heroic actions of the first responders and the outpouring of support from people across the country”, President Obama said: “In the wake of that horrible tragedy, we saw the resilience of a community that drew strength from their faith and a sense of solidarity with their neighbors, Sikh and non-Sikh alike.”

guide the guests safely home,” wrote an official on the White House blog.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a priest from a local Hindu temple draped a blue shawl around the Vice President’s shoulders as he lit the *diya*.

Attendees at this year’s celebrations included Indian Ambassador Nirupama Rao, the first Hindu



Vice President Joe Biden is presented with a shawl at the Diwali reception. (Official White House photos by David Lienemann)

American to be elected to the U.S. Congress Tulsi Gabbard, and California physician Ami Bera, the third Indian-American to get elected to the House of Representatives, after Dalip Singh Saund in 1952 and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal in 2004.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and former White House Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra also attended the event. 

## US senators bring resolution celebrating Diwali

**T**wo U.S. senators, Democrat Mark R. Warner and Republican John Cornyn, co-chairs of the U.S. Senate's bipartisan India Caucus, have introduced a resolution to honor and celebrate the Indian festival of Diwali.

"As co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, I am pleased to sponsor a resolution celebrating this important holiday for the Indian people and Indian-Americans here at home," Warner said.

"India is the world's largest democracy, which makes our countries and our people natural partners. It's a relationship based on shared values, and it's one I'd like to continue to grow."

"Diwali's message of tolerance, compassion, and the victory of good over evil resonates with the American spirit," said Cornyn. "As Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and others come together

to celebrate this festival of lights, let us all be reminded, as Americans, of one of our most cherished freedoms: the freedom of religion."

The resolution describes Diwali as "a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains throughout India, the United States, and the world."

Outlining the salient features of the "festival of lights" the resolution "recognizes the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali."

"In observance of Diwali, the festival of lights," the senate resolution also "expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, as well as fellow countrymen and diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion." 

## Sunita Williams wishes 'Happy Diwali' from space

**I**ndian American astronaut Sunita Williams has greeted Indians around the world from space on the occasion of Diwali.

"I wish everybody in India and people of Indian origin around the world, Happy Diwali. It is a wonderful day and a wonderful festival and I am happy we are part of it up here at the International Space Station (ISS)," Williams said.

In a conversation with New York based TV host Riti Sunshine Bhalla, made possible with months of planning between Bhalla's production team and NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, Williams thanked the Indian people for their support and hoped to visit India next Diwali and meet them in person.

This was Williams' second appear-



ance as guest on Riti Bhalla Special, a programme named after the teen host, a student of New York University.

Earlier in August, Williams had joined Shah Rukh Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Indian-American Governor Nikki Haley, and others on Bhalla's annual programme to greet the people of India on Independence Day,

displaying the tricolor flag on board the ISS.

"Being the commander of her space mission, Sunita has had tremendous demands on her time, and yet when I proposed to her the idea of joining me for Diwali to greet the people of India, she happily and readily agreed," said Bhalla.

The Riti Bhalla Diwali Special with Williams was telecast in nearly 100 countries around the world, collectively by several TV networks based in India and the U.S., the organizers said in a statement.

Williams who holds the record of the longest spaceflight (195 days) for a female space traveler, left for the ISS aboard a Russian spacecraft on July 15 and returned to Earth on November 19. 



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh (fifth from left) with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders in Phnom-Penh on November 19.

## 10th India-ASEAN Summit concludes

Terming commerce and connectivity as vital areas of India's relations with ASEAN members, India called for greater integration of the Asia Pacific region

Addressing the 10<sup>th</sup> India-ASEAN Summit, in Phnom-Penh, Cambodia, on November 19, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh assured the delegates of India's support to the objectives of an ASEAN Community by 2015, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity. "A future of peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific requires increased cooperation and integration in the region. ASEAN has shown the way in this regard," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of the regional bloc, Prime Minister Singh also said that India believed that ASEAN centrality was essential in the evolving regional architecture for peace, stability, development and prosperity. Calling commerce and connectivity as vital areas of India's relations with ASEAN members and with ASEAN institutionally, Prime Minister Singh said India was ready to ink a free trade agreement on services and investment with the 10-member ASEAN in December, ahead of a commemorative event in New Delhi to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its "Look East" policy and 10 years of summit-level partnership.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the ASEAN summit in Phnom-Penh on November 19. (Photo: AFP/PIB)

"This will be a strong signal of our deepening economic engagement, and will allow for rapid expansion in trade and investment flows in both directions," he added.

India already has a free trade agreement with the grouping on goods that he said has "served us well". India is now working toward making the agreements into a CECA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement).

The Prime Minister said that

concluding the FTA on services and investment in December would be "a strong signal of our deepening economic engagement". It would allow for rapid expansion in trade and investment flows in both directions.

"I am confident that, given our cultural affinity, physical proximity, shared values, convergent worldviews and similarities in our approaches to the region, our relationship will increasingly become more comprehensive and strategic in nature," he said.

Stressing the importance of increased connectivity with ASEAN countries, the Prime Minister said India was holding talks with ASEAN in working groups for land transport, maritime transport and the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee.

India and the Southeast Asian grouping are also building a Trilateral Highway to connect Myanmar, Thailand and India. The roadway is to be completed by 2016 and will help boost road trade in a major way. The Trilateral Highway would connect Moreh (Manipur) in India to Mae Sot in Thailand.

The Prime Minister said the working groups and the highway are "welcome steps in implementing the vision of India-ASEAN connectivity".

# India welcomes East Asia trade deal talks

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh called for creating an open, balanced, inclusive and rule-based architecture in East Asia for collective prosperity

India on November 20 welcomed the launch of negotiations on a mega East Asian trade deal and also emphasized on the need for increased connectivity between the 16 countries of the bloc that comprise more than three billion of the world's population and approximately 40 percent of world GDP.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, in his address at the plenary session of the seventh East Asia Summit in Phnom-Penh, Cambodia, said: "We welcome the launch of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations today."

He said India also supports the Phnom-Penh Declaration on East Asia Summit Development Initiative.

He added that while the EAS was "still new, we have built an impressive agenda for economic cooperation and for addressing some of our common challenges".

Prime Minister Singh said the countries — the 10-member ASEAN bloc and six other countries, including India — should also try and bring to bear the same spirit of cooperation "in addressing our differences".

The Prime Minister, who has been pursuing India's Look East policy, said: "I have no doubt that together we can create an open, balanced, inclusive



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at the plenary session of the 7<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Phnom-Penh on November 20. Minister for Commerce, Industry and Textiles Anand Sharma is also seen. (Photo: AFP)

and rule-based architecture in the region for our collective stability and prosperity".

He said that "connectivity is vital for increased commerce, contact and cooperation between our countries", and called for quick implementation of the EAS Declaration on ASEAN connectivity, adopted at the last summit.

The Prime Minister said India had been happy to carry forward several EAS-related initiatives, including on malaria control and earthquake risk management.

He also said that the Nalanda University project with support from member countries had been gaining

momentum and the first two schools were expected to begin teaching in the academic year 2014-15.

He praised the ASEAN members for their progress in creating an integrated ASEAN community and also their leadership in launching wider regional initiatives like the ASEAN Regional Forum, the EAS and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting.

"For India, ASEAN has been the bridge to the East. It is also central to the evolution of a regional architecture and its different cooperative framework." He stressed that India's security and prosperity were "vitally linked to the Asia Pacific region".

## US attaches special significance to India ties

U.S. President Barack Obama said he attached "special significance" to relations with India during his brief "very friendly and frank" talks with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at Phnom-Penh, Cambodia, on November 20.

During their meeting on the sidelines of the East Asia summit in the Cambodian capital, Prime Minister Singh congratulated president Obama on his re-election.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the 7<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Phnom-Penh on November 20.

"India is a big part of our plans," President Obama said.

Commerce Minister Anand Sharma, who was present at the meeting along with National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon told reporters that "President Obama has great admiration and respect for the Prime Minister.

President Obama's visit to Cambodia marks the growing importance the U.S. attaches to engaging with countries in the Asia Pacific.

# India invites investments from Kentucky

During her three-day visit to Kentucky, Ambassador Nirupama Rao stressed on building closer economic and educational relations between India and the U.S. state

**I**ndian Ambassador Nirupama Rao has invited investments from Kentucky in India's infrastructure and educational sector stressing the mutually beneficial nature of their economic engagement.

Ambassador Rao traveled to Kentucky, also known as the bluegrass state, from November 18-20 to promote exchanges between India and this important state at the intersection of the U.S. midwest and south, well known for its industries, natural resources and educational centers.

Meeting with the Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear at the state capital Frankfort, she laid stress on building closer economic relations between Kentucky and India.

Governor Beshear fondly recalled his three visits to India since taking office in 2007, most recently in September 2012, and described them as "extraordinary experiences both economically and culturally".

The governor highlighted two recent landmark business deals by Indian companies in Kentucky — one, a \$7 billion 25-year contract between India's Abhijeet Group and Kentucky's FJS Energy LLC for import of coal, an important natural resource of Kentucky; and the other, a \$180 million investment by an Indian packaging company, Flex Films in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

At the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky at Lexington, Ambassador Rao was welcomed by its Dean, David Blackwell who hosted a round-table for her with the Kalam Endowment research grant recipients, and some select faculty members from the University's Martin School of Public Policy and the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce.

The Kalam Grant was instituted by



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao meeting with Kentucky's Governor Steve Beshear in Frankfort, Kentucky, on November 19.
2. Ambassador Rao interacting with recipients of the Kalam Endowment Research Grant at the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, on November 19. Standing on her right is Dean David Blackwell.
3. Ambassador Rao addressing the faculty and students of the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky on November 19.
4. Ambassador Rao with the senior faculty and management team of the Bluegrass Community College, Lexington, Kentucky, on November 20.



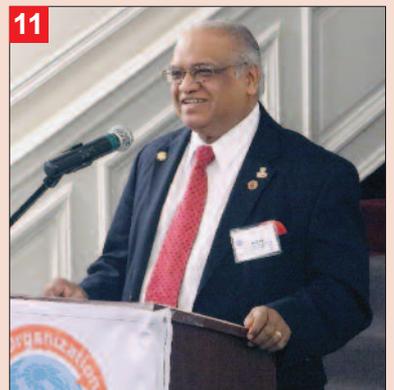
the APJ Kalam India Studies Research Programme named after the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India.

During the visit to the Bluegrass Community College in Lexington, the Ambassador interacted with the senior faculty and management team of the institution and inquired about the various aspects of its functioning. President of the University of Kentucky Dr. Eli Capilouto hosted a dinner in Ambassador Rao's honor, where Mayor of Lexington Jim Gray

was also present. Ambassador Rao also visited the Kentucky Educational TV, one of the pioneers of distance education in the United States, and discussed possible collaboration with Indian TV channels dedicated to distance education.

Noting India's growing need for higher education and vocational skills development, Ambassador Rao highlighted India's interest in learning from the U.S. experience in setting up community colleges during the visit.

## GOPIO launches Gadar centennial celebrations at Embassy of India





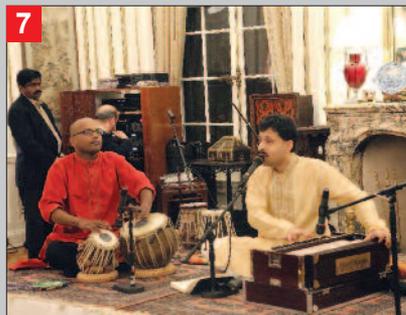
1. Chief Guest Ambassador Nirupama Rao speaking at the launch of the Gadar centennial events in the United States by Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) at the Embassy of India on November 3.
2. Dr. Renuka Misra, GOPIO National Coordinator, welcoming the guests and introducing the event.
3. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, President of GOPIO Metro DC, addressing the gathering.
4. Jay Bhandari, President of GOPIO Virginia, speaking on the occasion.
5. Inder Singh, Vice President, GOPIO Virginia, speaking on 'Role of Gadar Movement for India's Independence'.
6. Prof. Rajen Anand, Secretary, GOPIO Virginia, speaking on the 'Importance of Gadar Movement'.
7. Prof. Kewal Kanda, Treasurer of GOPIO Metro DC, speaking on 'The Gadar Memorial Hall'.
8. Ambassador Nirupama Rao releasing *Global Indian Diaspora*, a book by GOPIO.
9. Ambassador Bayney Karran of Guyana addressing the gathering.
10. Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago to the United States Dr. Neil Parsan addressing the gathering.
11. Ambassador of Suriname to the United States Subhas Chandra Mungra addressing the gathering.
12. Ashook Ramsaran, President, GOPIO International, speaking on 'Plans for GOPIO Gadar Commemoration Worldwide'.
13. Dr. Piyush Agrawal, Senior Vice President, GOPIO, speaking on the 'Plans for GOPIO Gadar Commemoration USA'.
14. Walton Dawson, General Secretary, GOPIO, speaking on the occasion.
15. Guests in attendance.

## Dr. Salman Akhtar at the Embassy



- 1- Dr. Salman Akhtar, Professor of Psychiatry at Jefferson Medical College, delivering a talk on the topic 'Between Fool-hardiness and Cowardice: Some Reflections on the Nature of Courage' at the Embassy on November 9. Dr. Akhtar, author of over 60 books on psychiatry, psychoanalysis, popular non-fiction and Urdu and English poetry, discussed different personality attributes and human emotions, including in the context of the richness and nuances of Urdu poetry.
2. A section of the audience interacting with Dr. Salman Akhtar following his talk.
3. Guests in attendance.

## Embassy celebrates Diwali



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming and addressing the guests.
2. Invocation prayer by Venkatacharyulu Kumanduri, the Priest at Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Maryland, at the Diwali celebrations at the Embassy Residence on November 17.
3. Shri Sadananda, Founding Trustee of Chinmaya Mission Washington Center and Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, speaking on the significance of Diwali.
4. Kumar Barve, Majority Leader, House of Delegates, Maryland, addressing the guests.
5. Sam Arora, Delegate, District 19, Maryland, addressing the guests.
6. Mark Brunner, National Security Adviser to Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), informs guests of the U.S. Senate resolution on recognizing the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali introduced by Senator Warner and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), co-chairs of the U.S. Senate India Caucus.
7. Krushanu Majumdar (harmonium) and percussionist Ganesh Jagtap (tabla) presenting ghazals on the occasion.
8. Tabla player Krishna Ramdas and violinist Nistha Raj presenting 'Raghupati Raghav' and 'Shivranjani Sri Ram'.
9. From left, Shankar Tucker (clarinet) and Krishna Ramdas (tabla) with Vidya and Vandana Iyer presenting 'Vathapi Ganapathim' and 'Ashai Mugam'.
10. Mythili Bachu, President, United Hindu and Jain Temples, proposing the vote of thanks.
11. Guests in attendance.
12. Ambassador Rao (third from left) with members of the community at the Diwali celebrations.

## Embassy hosts Clemson University alumni

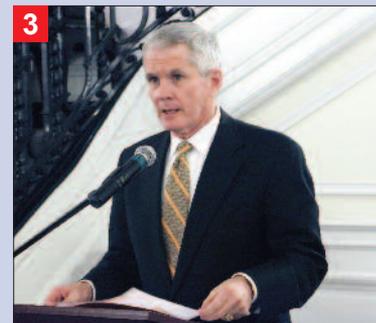
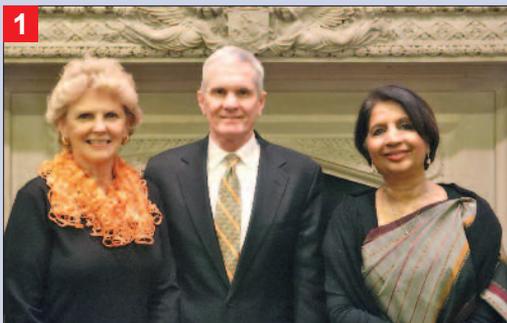
**A**s a follow up of Ambassador Nirupama Rao's official visit to South Carolina in February 2012, the Embassy hosted a reception for the Baltimore and D.C.-based alumni of Clemson University, South Carolina on November 27. Ambassador Rao along with the President of the university Dr. James

Barker addressed the gathering on the occasion.

In her remarks, Ambassador Rao recalled her trip to South Carolina earlier this year, summarizing her excellent impressions of that visit. Speaking of her warm interaction with Clemson University alumnus and the first female governor of the state, Governor Nikki Haley,

Ambassador Rao added that she was highly optimistic about the potential of multifaceted collaboration between India and the state of South Carolina.

Dr. Barker thanked the Embassy for hosting the university alumni, and spoke at length about the contributions of Indians and Indian-American students to Clemson University.



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Dr. James Barker, President of Clemson University and his spouse Marcia Barker at an event for Baltimore and D.C. based alumni of Clemson University at the Embassy on November 27.

2. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming and addressing the gathering.  
3. Dr. Barker speaking at the event.  
4. Dr. Barker presenting his book of hand-drawn architectural sketches of the

university to Ambassador Rao.  
5. Guests in attendance.  
6. Ambassador Rao interacting with members of Clemson University alumni.

## Consulate EVENTS

### Consul General's engagements



Consul General of India in Houston P. Harish attended the signing ceremony of an MOU between the Houston Community College (HCC) system and Foundation for India Studies (FIS) on November 14. (From left, standing) Parul Fernandes, Director of International Studies, University of Houston and Vice-Chair, FIS; Bashist Sharma, General Counsel, FIS; Neeta Sane, Member HCC Board of Trustees and Consul General P. Harish; (from left, sitting) FIS Chairman Krishna Vavilala and HCC President Dr. Zachary Hodges.



Consul General P. Harish attended IACCGH Thought Leadership Series Lecture organized by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) on November 27. Keynote Speaker was Annise Parker, Mayor, City of Houston. (From left) Deepa Thakur, Nandita Parvathaneni, Mayor Annise Parker, Consul General P. Harish and IACCGH President Ajit Thakur.

## 'Reform measures will help boost growth'

The recent reform measures like liberalization of overseas investment norms in retail and aviation sectors and reduction in petroleum subsidies will help cut fiscal deficit and boost economic growth, President Pranab Mukherjee said on November 14.

Inaugurating the 32nd edition of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) in New Delhi, President Mukherjee said the government had unveiled several policy measures designed to put the economy back on a high growth trajectory.

"Important among these have been the decisions to allow foreign direct investment in multi-brand retail and the civil aviation sector and seek legislative approval for increasing the FDI cap in the insurance and pension sectors," he said.

"Simultaneously, measures have also been announced to keep government's subsidy burden in check thereby bringing about a reduction in the fiscal deficit. These measures should help in



President Pranab Mukherjee at the inauguration of the 32<sup>nd</sup> India International Trade Fair in New Delhi on November 14.

restoring the economy's growth momentum."

He said India had diversified its economic engagements with a view to lower the impact of uncertainties in some parts of the world, especially in the developed countries like the U.S. and Europe.

He pointed out that India's foreign trade as a proportion of the country's GDP had more than doubled in the last 10 years. The proportion of foreign

trade to the country's GDP increased to 45 percent in 2011-12 from less than 20 percent in 2000. India's export has increased five times in the last one decade.

The compound annual growth rate of India's exports, which was 8.2 percent in the 1990s, increased to 19.5 percent during 2000-01 to 2008-09.

"India's share in global exports also increased from 0.7 percent in 2000 to 1.5 percent in 2010," he said.

## PM unveils direct cash transfer scheme

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on November 26 announced direct cash payout of subsidies to beneficiaries from January 1, 2013. The subsidy amount would be transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts linked to 'Aadhaar' cards being provided by the Unique Identification Authority.

He asked all ministries "to work in right earnest" for implementation of this pioneering initiative and also asked the departments to work in close coordination to enable poor people to open bank accounts smoothly.

Initially, the government will implement the scheme for cash transfer to the beneficiaries' accounts in 51 districts from January 1, 2013. The scheme would be worked in 18 states from April and in the rest of the



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh chairing the meeting of the National Committee on Direct Cash Transfer in New Delhi on November 26.

country later in 2013, the Prime Minister said.

The scheme will be operationalized by leveraging the Aadhaar platform.

"The funds that are provisioned for direct benefits like pensions, scholarships and health-care benefits must reach the intended beneficiaries without delays and leakages," the Prime Minister said.

"Apart from these direct benefits,

the government also provides an amount of over ₹3000 billion in subsidies," he added.

"Direct Cash Transfers, which are now becoming possible through the innovative use of technology and the spread of modern banking across the country, open the doors for eliminating waste, cutting down leakages and targeting beneficiaries better," the Prime Minister said.

# Bioenergy Road Map Vision 2020 unveiled

The government on November 5 unveiled a road map for the biotechnology sector — The Bioenergy Road Map Vision 2020 — for innovative technologies and policies for biofuels development in India.

Prepared by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the document was released in New Delhi by Science and Technology Minister S. Jaipal Reddy at the inauguration of a two-day international summit on 'Bioenergy: Algae Biofuel and Synthetic Biology 2012' organized by DBT along with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

The objective is to create a biotechnology enterprise equipped with viable clean technologies for achieving bioenergy security.

The premise of the vision document is that environmental and energy secu-



Science and Technology Minister S. Jaipal Reddy

riety concerns are forcing countries to shift to alternatives like bioethanol and biodiesel that can be produced from a diverse set of crops.

Given the limitations to producing hydrocarbons both in India and the world at large, the need for the future is to exploit energy resources in a sustainable manner — the algal route for production of second generation biofuels, which is the DBT's focus.

Delivering his inaugural address, Minister Reddy said: "There is no denying the fact that the country is facing some serious challenges in food and nutrition, healthcare, energy and environment. To meet these mounting challenges, science and technology can play a crucial role in developing an instrumental framework both nationally and internationally."

"The best of modern technology should be harnessed for a sustainable future and ensuring some tangible outcome," he added.

The goals set out in the document include 20 percent blending of fossil fuels by 2020 and installing a cost-efficient system for algal production and a commercial scale technology for producing biofuels from algae. Director General of TERI R.K. Pachauri said algae could play a pivotal role toward ensuring a better future. ■

## India to receive \$70 billion remittance in 2012: World Bank

Remittances to India this year are likely to increase to \$70 billion, the highest in the world, the World Bank said in a report on November 21.

The sharp increase in remittances to India has come from the Gulf countries.

Regions and countries with large numbers of migrants in oil exporting countries continue to see robust growth in inward remittance flows, compared with those whose migrant workers are largely concentrated in the advanced economies, especially Western Europe.

"South Asia, MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and East Asia and Pacific regions, with large numbers of workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, are seeing better-than-expected growth in remittances," the World Bank said.

The total remittance flow to the



developing countries is expected to touch \$406 billion this year, registering an increase of 6.5 percent over the previous year figure.

Remittances to the developing countries are projected to grow by 7.9 percent in 2013, 10.1 percent in 2014 and 10.7 percent in 2015 to reach \$534 billion in 2015, according to the latest World Bank report on global migration and remittances.

For South Asia, remittances in 2012 are expected to total \$109 billion, an increase of 12.5 percent over 2011. ■

### US materials firm opens India research center

Momentive, the U.S.-based world leader in specialty chemicals and materials, has opened its global research and development (R&D) center in Bangalore to create platforms and develop products for diverse applications across industry verticals.

"The global R&D center here is one of its kind outside the U.S., focusing on new technology platforms and products for global and Indian customers unlike our regional research centers, which are business specific," Momentive Performance Materials Chief Technology Officer Pavaneeet Mumick said in Bangalore on November 1.

Leveraging India's technical talent, the \$4.5 million research facility will also work with the company's other research centers across geographies to develop technologies for new applications from its innovative products. The \$7.8 billion Momentive Performance Materials Holdings LLC makes specialty products for industrial and consumer firms in diverse segments.

# Low cost Aakash-2 tablet launched in India

President Pranab Mukherjee unveiled the low-cost Aakash Tablet 2 in New Delhi on November 11.

Priced at ₹1,130, the new version of the tablet is equipped with advanced features for students of engineering colleges and universities. It will also be made available to 10,000 teachers to allow live video interaction with students.

“IIT Bombay, along with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, has created several useful educational applications for the tablet,” said a government statement.

“Teachers and students in the remotest corners of India can join a classroom and benefit from lectures delivered by the best teachers,” it stated.

The President also dedicated to the nation an e-learning platform that would link thousands of teachers and students for virtual classroom lessons.

The latest version of Amrita



President Pranab Mukherjee launching the Aakash Version 2.0 tablet at the National Education Day 2012 in New Delhi. Minister for Human Resource Development M.M. Pallam Raju and Ministers of State for Human Resource Development Jitin Prasada and Shashi Tharoor are also seen.

## ‘Aakash’ maker among *Forbes*’ 15 classroom revolutionaries

The man behind India’s low-cost Aakash tablet and an Indian American professor are listed among *Forbes* 15 “classroom revolutionaries” who are using innovative technologies to reinvent education for students and teachers globally.

Suneet Singh Tuli, the CEO of Datawind,

the maker of Aakash, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Anant Agarwal figure among the education innovators who are “harnessing a slew of disruptive technologies to change everything from the way we teach grade school math to how we train the next generation of teachers”.

University’s e-Learning platform A-VIEW 3.0 (Amrita Virtual Interactive E-Learning World) was launched by President Mukherjee

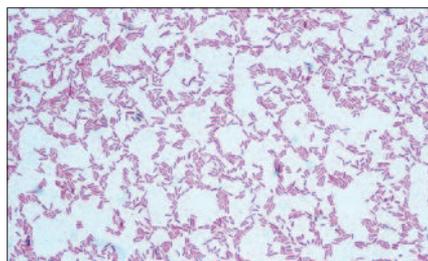
with a click on the Aakash 2. Any institution of higher education can now use A-VIEW free of charge ([www.aview.in](http://www.aview.in)).

# Indian scientists unravel secrets behind hospital infections

Giving an insight into how and why hospital-borne infections spread, scientists at the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology in Kolkata have said bacteria play hide and seek with the human body’s defense cells by surrounding themselves with sugar molecules to fool cells.

Researchers led by scientist Chitra Mandal have unravelled the sinister mechanism by which the bacteria that goes by the name of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, responsible for hospital-borne infections, invades the human body, eludes the neutrophils (immune cells responsible for defense) and establishes infection.

*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is a rod



*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Gram Stain

shaped, airborne disease-causing bacterium, a pathogen commonly found in patients with low immunity and in patients who have been hospitalized.

Besides hospital-borne infections like pneumonia, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is also responsible for urinary tract infections, respiratory infections and other afflictions.

## Advanced typhoid shots in the offing

The first mouse model of typhoid fever, developed by an Indian-American microbiologist and his colleagues, could help in creating more potent vaccines against the deadly pathogen.



Sankar Ghosh

“The two vaccines currently approved for this disease (typhoid) are only modestly effective, so research aimed at improving vaccines is essential,” says senior study author Sankar Ghosh of Columbia University.

“Prior to our work, there was no small animal model for studying immune responses to the bacteria that cause typhoid fever,” says study co-author Matthew Hayden of Columbia.

## Indian American Ami Bera elected to Congress

**A**mi Bera, a Los Angeles-born physician son of Indian immigrants, was elected to the U.S. Congress, repeating a 60-year-old feat by Dalip Singh Saund who was the first Indian-American to win a Congressional election.

Democrat Bera's victory on November 15 over sitting Republican Dan Lungren nine days after the election makes him just the third Indian-American elected to the House of Representatives, after Saund in 1952 and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, who won a House seat in 2004.

Bera, 45, defeated Lungren 51.1 percent to 48.9 percent in his second attempt.

The race was to fill California's 7th District Congressional seat representing the suburbs of Sacramento.

"It will be an honor to serve Sacramento County in Congress," said Bera after his victory.

"Now is the time to find common ground and move forward to rebuild an economy that works for the middle class. Congressman Lungren deserves



Congressman-elect Ami Bera (D-CA)

our appreciation for his long record of public service."

Bera, who was raised in La Palma, California, has a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from the University of California at Irvine, earning his MD there in 1991. He served as Associate Dean for Admissions at the UC Davis School of Medicine and later as the Chief Medical Officer for the County of Sacramento.

Bera had cited health care, education and economic recovery among his top legislative priorities.— IANS

## Vishakha Desai in national museum board

In yet another appointment of an Indian American to a key administration post, President Barack Obama has named former Asia Society President



Vishakha N. Desai

Vishakha N. Desai as member, National Museum and Library Services Board.

Announcing the appointment of Bombay University graduate Desai with nine others, President Obama said: "I am pleased to announce that these experienced and committed individuals have agreed to join this Administration, and I look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead."

Desai is President Emeritus of Asia Society, an organization she led as President and CEO from 2004 to 2012.

From 1977 to 1990, Desai worked at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in a variety of roles, ultimately serving as Assistant Curator of Indian, Southeast Asia, and Islamic collections from 1981 to 1990, and, simultaneously serving as the Head of Academic Programs from 1981 to 1988.

— IANS

## Top cancer center felicitates Madhavan Pillai

**T**he Kimmel Cancer Center at the Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia has received an educational and research endowment for gastric cancer as a tribute to the services of senior oncologist Dr Madhavan V Pillai, clinical professor at the university hospital.

The endowment established by the Jeffrey Kemmerer Foundation led by the family and friends of Jeffrey and Jennifer Ray will support postgraduate education and research in gastric cancer. At a ceremony held at the cancer center, members of the foundation expressed their appreciation of the commitment to excellence and com-



Dr. M V Pillai (center) at a ceremony establishing the endowment at the Kimmel Cancer Center.

passion of care in cancer treatment provided under Pillai's leadership.

Pillai, a writer in Malayalam and an orator, is the principal investigator of

neuroendocrine tumors of the pancreas and was voted as one of the best clinical teachers by the interns and residents of the hospital.

# WEARING ART: NEW METAPHORS FOR INDIAN FASHION

Contemporary art has given Indian designers new metaphors for interpretation and translate art into wearable fashion

**T**emple art was the trademark of traditional Indian clothes and accessories for centuries, setting them apart from western apparel with a distinct color, motif and design scheme. But the arrival of contemporary art has given Indian designers new metaphors for interpretations.

Art and fashion in India have spilled into each other in strange yet harmonious ways. Indian modern art has been unfurling its creativity on the traditional six-yard drape since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bengal. At the Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan, artists paint landscapes and people of the Bengal countryside directly on to cotton drapes and traditional men's shirt (kurta) with natural, fabric and acrylic colors.

Two decades ago, a group of artists, including Manjit Bawa, M.F. Husain and J. Swaminathan scripted new fusion when they painted contemporary prints on apparel in an one-off exposition in Mumbai.

Several sporadic attempts followed till a group of five artists put their heads together for a year to create the 'Ehsaas Project', an art-to-fashion transpose that has produced a collection of 20 saris, 12 bags, 25 ties and 25 stoles with digital fine art prints. A hand-painted range of accessories complements the clothes.

The collection is a selection of abstract and figurative paintings by artists Alka Raghuvanshi, Niren Sen Gupta, Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Sridhar Iyer and Manisha Gawade that have been digitally printed on *tussar* silk from Bhagalpur in Bihar and crepe textiles by a South Delhi ethnic and traditional clothier, Ekaya.

The range, curated by Alka Raghuvanshi, would be displayed in a ramp walk by cultural personalities like dancers Swapna Sundari, Shobhana Narayanan, Sharon Lowen, Prathibha Prahlad and television presenter Suneet Tandon to display the wearability and classic nature of the collection, the curator said.

"This is my second attempt to translate art into wearable fashion," Raghuvanshi said.

Raghuvanshi had earlier tried to transpose one of her solo shows into a collection with the help of designer Nidhi Jain.



A model displaying a 'Pop Art' sari by Satya Paul. The leading designer combines contemporary and spiritual art with fashion in his 'Pop Art' and 'Art of the Tarot' series of clothes and sari drapes.

The color codes in Raghuvanshi's work are striking. The saris are in vibrant shades of yellow, red, green and white with dark abstract and figurative silhouettes. A canvas of nudes painted with Salvador Dali's expressionistic motifs by artist Sanjoy Bhattacharya on a black silk sari draws the viewer with its stunning detail of human anatomy.

"Fashion has always been part of art. But look at the couture we have now — that's hardly the kind of thing people can connect to. What we know as fashion is not very arty, but very crafty. People like you and I can hardly wear the clothes designers make for models on the ramp... We should have a multi-disciplinary approach to art. It can be perceived in isolation," Raghuvanshi said.

Her earliest collections of expensive art, she said, were "S.H. Raza scarves

*Art connoisseur Maneka Gandhi, who has been trying to "move art out of the conventional confines to make it more utilitarian, interactive, fashionable and engaging" created, "Fly Your Carpet to the Walls", a collection of carpets with imprints of paintings by 25 artists, including S.H. Raza and M.F. Husain*

(Left) A 'Pop Art' sari by Satya Paul; (Right) Swapna Sundari in an 'art sari' from Ehsaas Project curated by artist Alka Raghuvanshi.

printed with images of his European paintings" that she purchased in Paris.

Says artist Manisha Gawade: "My works are in three series — Mindscapes, Constant Presence and Threads of life." She paints abstract geometrical patterns in a basic color palette of black and white that prints in bold 3-D images that assimilate from the traditional middle-eastern attires of *abaya*, *kandura* and hijab.

Art connoisseur and animal rights activist Maneka Gandhi, who has been trying to "move art out of the conventional confines to make it more utilitarian, interactive, fashionable and engaging" created, "Fly Your Carpet to the Walls" — a collection of carpets with imprints of paintings by 25 artists, including S.H. Raza and M.F. Husain in 2010.

It is an ongoing project that combines art with lifestyle accessories and fashion to support ethical treatment of animals.

"I love to wear my own art," says artist Anjolie Ela Menon, who often designs necklaces with pendants etched with motifs of her figurative drawings. For Menon, it is "another expression of creative inspiration that puts itself into a more aesthetic use".

Designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee, who manages an art foundation, says he draws his inspiration from the colors of French impressionists like Monet and Henry Matisse in his clothes while leading sari maker Satya Paul has been combining contemporary and spiritual art with fashion in its 'Pop Art' and 'Art of the Tarot' series of clothes and sari drapes.

Revivalist designer Madhu Jain is celebrating her 25<sup>th</sup> year in the fashion industry with a new edition of her textile 'Project M'. It features Raja Ravi Verma's paintings and the art of *kalamkari* weaving from Andhra Pradesh. The project is a collaboration with actor-turned-textile activist Milind Soman.

Art for arts' sake is passe. It's time now to vote in favor of a more practical and human art.



# The pink umbrella

By Smit Zaveri

A final year graduate student of communications in Mount Carmel College, Bangalore, **Smit** takes interest in traveling and photography, besides writing. Books are her biggest inspiration

**R**adha twirled her little umbrella over her head, as she made her way to the mela. Dressed in her favorite yellow salwar kameez, she had plaited her hair with tiny yellow clips. Long dangling earrings with its matching pendent which her aunt had bought for her from the big city nearby sparkled under the sun. Her slippers unearthed the mud below, making the sand dance below her feet.

She hopped from one foot to the other as she made her way past Hari uncle's farm where her father was busy ploughing the field. Her umbrella hopped with her. Made from a pretty pink cloth, it had tiny green *buttas* on it with the mirrors that she

had picked for her mother to put on them. The mirrors made patterns on the ground reflecting the light from the sun, making them sway from side to side. She was Radha, the girl with the beautiful pink umbrella. Her mother made the best ones, and she was going to the mela to help her mother sell them to the tourists.

The mela was bigger than the last time with a lot more people and stalls. She passed the food stalls which sold everything from *bhaakri* and *missal* to ice candy and lime soda. She looked at the boys play at the games stall with the bat and the ball. Stupid boys, she thought, spending all their money on playing games. Unlike them, she had saved up all her money to buy the

golden earrings that she had laid her eyes on last time. Didi had promised her that she would come back this time with her earrings.

Radha looked around for Didi's stall as she walked toward the center of the Sawant Maidan which was where the mela was held once every six months. There was close to a hundred stalls there but Didi's stall was the most elegant of them all. It was decorated with different bells as Didi stood in the middle, sliding bangles on Daksha aunty's fat wrists.

Standing on her tip-toes, Radha looked for her earrings, the perfect circles of gold with the pink stone at the bottom. They weren't among the other earrings or the bangles or the

rings. She couldn't see them anywhere. Didi suddenly came up from behind her with the earrings in her hands. Radha screamed with delight as she started clapping her hands with joy, the bangles on her tiny hands singing with her. Quickly taking out all the money she had saved, 5 rupees and 50 paisa, from her little purse she took the earrings from Didi, thrust them into her bag as she ran to show her mother the treasure.

It was becoming darker as she made her way to the other side of the mela, running as fast her tiny feet could take her. Her mom was talking to some tourists about the umbrellas as Radha ran toward her pushing aside her brother. Mohan was busy packing all the items up. Her mom and Mohan were leaving because it was about to rain and they didn't want the umbrellas to get wet. The umbrellas that they made from cloth were meant to keep the sun away from every one's eyes but were useless during the rains. In a town like theirs it rained very little, probably once or twice a year, never more than that. What a bad time for the mela to come to town!

Radha forgot all about her pretty earring and started picking up the

things that had already been bound in a plastic cover. As she walked toward the scooter to load them, the first drop of rain fell on her face. She started running back and forth trying to help out and gather as much as she could.

As she picked up the bundle that contained the pink umbrellas she realized that she had left her own umbrella at Didi's stall when she bought her earrings. Dropping everything where she stood, she ran back to Didi's stall as the rain got heavier, slowing her down. Why did it have to rain today?

*By the time she reached Didi's stall, she was completely drenched. Her green salwar was muddy, her feet stained and her purse dripping wet. People were heading back home now. She waited for the rush to clear out as she searched for her umbrella*

By the time she reached Didi's stall, she was completely drenched. Her green salwar was muddy, her feet stained and her purse dripping wet. People were heading back home now, pushing their way through the place. She waited for the rush to clear out as she searched for her umbrella.

And then she saw it, lying on the ground.

The rain had washed all the colors away, the mirrors cracked under the feet of the people rushing through. She picked up her tiny umbrella, white in color with spots of pink and stains of mud all over. Her favorite umbrella that everyone envied looked nothing like it had before. It was losing color every minute in the rain.

She dropped it on the ground as she started walking toward the gate. The streets were now empty; everyone was warm at home, sheltered, unlike her. Her hands held nothing; her feet had lost its bounce and mud stuck to the bottom of her slippers as she walked.

When she walked into town from that day onwards she was Radha, the second daughter of Gopal, the girl who used to own a beautiful pink umbrella.



(Left) Cinestar Akshay Kumar inaugurating the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI-2012), in Panaji, Goa, on November 20. The Governor of Goa, Bharat Vir Wanchoo, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Information & Broadcasting, Manish Tewari and Chief Minister of Goa Manohar Parrikar are also seen. (Right) Girish Kasarvalli during a press conference at IFFI-2012 in Panaji, Goa, on November 26.

## Filmmaking is like breathing: Girish Kasarvalli

**K**annada film maker and the director of the film *Kurmavataka*, Girish Kasarvalli has said that there is a thin line between serious and mainstream cinema and that the division of parallel and commercial cinema has been created by the media.

Addressing a press conference at the Special Tribute section at 43<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival of India in Panaji, Goa, on November 26, he said

this division was not demarcated by film makers and they always wanted to make 'good films'.

Asked whether his films had changed over the years, Kasarvalli said, "Film making is like breathing. We don't notice the changing pattern in our breathing while doing different activities in our life; similarly it is not for the film maker to notice the change, if any. It is for the posterity to decide on it."

He also advocated promotion of language films.

Regarding his film *Kurmavataka*, Girish Kasarvalli said, he has deliberately kept the pace of the movie slow to have a feel of the subject.

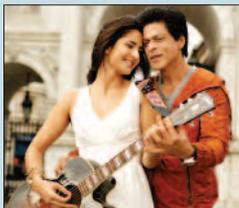
The 43<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI-2012) was declared open in Panaji, Goa on November 20 with a promise to make India an international destination of good cinema.

### 'Storytelling more important than actors'

The quality of storytelling is more important for the success of films than the lead actors, says Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

"Storytelling is more important than one lady or two ladies or two heroes or two actors. Each film has its own specialty," said Shah Rukh at a promotional meet in Kolkata on November 10 for his film *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (JTHJ).

JTHJ is late director Yash Chopra's last directorial venture.



Shah Rukh Khan in a still from *Jab Tak Hai Jaan*

### 'Aamir is a game changer'

Filmmaker Karan Johar says actor-producer Aamir Khan is a game changer in Indian cinema, given his bouquet of unique, yet mainstream films.

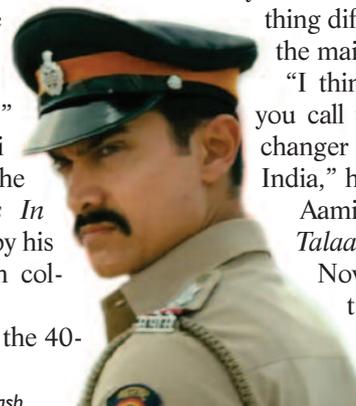
"I think Aamir Khan is a game changer. Many of his decisions have made him pioneer of the movement of great and yet mainstream cinema," Karan said in Mumbai on November 23 at the screening of *Strangers In The Night*, a short film by his Dharma Productions in collaboration with Chivas.

Elucidating his point, the 40-

year-old said: "I think his endeavor starting from 2001 in *Lagaan* going to the urban *Dil Chahta Hai* to the path-breaking *Rang De Basanti* to his own directorial *Taare Zameen Par*, to every film he has made post that, he has always broken ground and done something different and yet catered to the mainstream."

"I think Aamir Khan is what you call the quintessential game changer of the film fraternity in India," he added.

Aamir's latest film is thriller *Talaash*, which released on November 30. It also features Kareena Kapoor and Rani Mukerji. His last film was *Dhobi Ghat* in 2011.



Aamir Khan in a still from *Talaash*.

# A 'mini-Goa', right next to Mumbai

Vasai, a 450-sq km sub-district, barely 40 km from Mumbai, is fast becoming Maharashtra's affordable alternative to Goa

India's first Christian saint, Gonsalo Garcia, was born in a tiny village here, while St. Francis Xavier lived in Vasai, a sub-district of Thane, briefly. Before them, Marco Polo passed through and, prior to that, Lord Gautama Buddha, Emperor Ashoka, the 5<sup>th</sup> Adi Shankaracharya and Lord Parshurama are believed to have visited or lived here.

Vasai, a 450-sq km sub-district of Thane, barely 40 km to the northwest of Mumbai, includes the port of Sopara — now a suburb known as Nala Sopara — which found mention in the Indian Vedas and in ancient Greek writing.

With lush green hills to the east and the Arabian Sea to the west, the place abounds in ancient churches, mosques, temples, a replica of the Sanchi stupa, ashrams, rivers, lakes, ponds, hot water springs and tiny villages, which rub shoulders with some of the most modern townships as space-starved Mumbaikars move north.

"Keeping in mind the changing times and demands, we offer intensive one-to-six-day tour packages aimed at Indian and foreign tourists. We are bringing out the hitherto



unknown charms and historical treasures of Vasai, which is like a 'mini-Goa' right next to Mumbai," Kiran Bhoir, Director, KMC Holidays & Offshore Pvt Ltd., said.

With a cosmopolitan population of 1.25 million, Vasai boasts of nearly half a dozen three-star hotels, over 100 smaller hotels, excellent connectivity and communication, along with swank modern apartments, bungalow complexes and sprawling farm houses dotting the sea-side, rivers, creeks, lakes and hills.

The famous Jivdani Temple atop a steep hill near Virar has already become a major pilgrim center and the government has constructed a cable car to afford quick access there, besides improving the half a dozen beaches dotting the western side.

Citing historical records, Bhoir said that Lord Buddha visited and inaugurated the stupa at Nala Sopara and later sent his disciple Purna to preach Buddhism here.

Nala Sopara has a 5,000-year old history of trade and commerce with northern Africa, the Gulf, Sri Lanka and southern Europe.

Many years after Lord Buddha, Emperor Ashoka came here, the great traveller Marco Polo passed through the region in 1295 AD and St. Francis Xavier in 1548, when a part of the Vasai population converted to Christianity — a dominant religion even today.

Over the centuries, the prosperous Vasai changed hands through various Indian dynasties till the Portuguese warrior Nanho da Cunha captured it from Bahadur Shah, a ruler of Gujarat, in 1534; Portuguese rule continued for the next 204 years.

It was during Portuguese rule that several forts, including the Vasai Fort and Arnala Fort, at least 16 churches and other buildings came up in quick succession.



(Top) A view of the Vasai creek from the fort's watch tower. (Left) The Vasai beach is a major attraction in this sub-district.

## MUST VISIT

**HERITAGE PLACES:** Vasai Fort, Arnala Fort, Holy Cross Church, St. James Church, Vajreshwari Temple Chandika Temple, Tungareshwar Temple, Parshwanath Temple, Samadhi of Parashuram

**WATER GATEWAYS:** Gorai Beach, Vasai-Arnala Beach, Rangaon Beach, Rajodi Beach, Kalam Beach, Suruchi Beach, Bhuigaon Beach

**PICNIC SPOTS:** Chinchoti Waterfalls, Tungareshwar Waterfalls

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## ■ Festival of lights



A view of the illuminated Akshardham Temple in Gandhinagar, some 30 kms from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on the occasion of Diwali on November 13. (Photo: AFP)

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