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The International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) Governors in a group photo at the IMF Headquarters in Washington, D.C., on April 21. (Photo: IMF Photograph/Stephen Jaffe)

## India cautions against slowdown in IMF quota reforms

■ **POWER MINISTER  
SUSHILKUMAR  
SHINDE VISITS U.S.**

■ **EDUCATION MINISTERS  
OF FIVE INDIAN STATES  
VISIT U.S.**

■ **THIRD US-INDIA  
ENERGY PARTNERSHIP  
SUMMIT HELD**



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee (extreme right) at the meeting of the G-24 Finance Ministers during the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank group in Washington, D.C., on April 19. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

## 'G-24 must enhance its effectiveness'

The group's meeting of Ministers and Governors calls for concerted action to check price volatilities, reforms in international financial institutions, and for strategies to enhance the grouping's effectiveness in the global policy-making process

**T**he global economy, though stabilizing steadily in the wake of the recent Eurozone crisis, continues to be fraught with uncertainty, Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said. Addressing the 87<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Ministers and Governors at the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty Four (G-24) meeting in Washington, D.C., on April 19, the Finance Minister said that in the current global economic context, the G-24 was uniquely positioned to "devise strategies to enhance its effectiveness in the global policy-making process".

"All international organizations today recognize the fact that none of them can be an active participant in the global economy unless and until Emerging Market and Developing Countries (EMDCs) are taken on board and given a greater role," the Finance Minister said.

On the agenda were three broad areas: 'Global Economy', 'Reform of International Financial Institutions' and 'Infrastructure Financing and Sustainable Development'.

"We are meeting at a time when the global economy appears to be strengthening gradually after suffering a setback. Although actions by Eurozone countries and the European Central Bank have stabi-

lized the situation and calmed the market somewhat, underlying structural problems remain and downside risks remain significant as manifest in recent movements in bond yields," Mukherjee, who is the Chairman of the G-24 Bureau, observed in his opening remarks.

Recent trends in commodity prices also held out considerable hazards, he pointed out. "Volatility in commodity prices, threats of disruptions to supply chains and high oil prices have impacted businesses across the globe, slowing the recovery in both advanced and emerging economies," he said.

On the positive side, developing countries and emerging economies would continue to helm growth for the world economy. "But, even here growth has decelerated," he cautioned.

### Concerted action

Calling for "concerted action" among nations to face up to the "volatility in the global economy", he said, "Many of us who are gathered here represent the voice of the masses of the poor and vulnerable populations who are adversely affected by the lack of jobs, infrastructure, food and finance and for whom we need to do more together."

Referring to the role of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), Finance Minister Mukherjee sounded a note of caution. "There are serious apprehensions regarding the governance structure of these IFIs. These apprehensions have strengthened the trend of setting up new and regional financial mechanisms and institutions where the voices of these nations are heard, and adequate finance is forthcoming."

### Common ground

Later, addressing a press conference after the G-24 meeting, Mukherjee said that "despite the diversity of the Group", member countries were able to "find common ground".

While member countries had common concerns about the global economy, he, however, said that recent policy actions had minimized threats from the Euro area, though the "downside risks remain high, including from high and uncertain oil prices".

The member countries resolved to "focus on job creation and on effective and affordable social safety nets that protect the poor and vulnerable", the Finance Minister said in his remarks.

Referring to the management of capital flows, Mukherjee said member countries expressed "strong reservations about the integrated approach proposed by the IMF".

# 'Developing world hub of investments'

Reviving global growth through developing and emerging economies will help rebalance global demand and redirect savings, says Minister Pranab Mukherjee



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in a group photo with the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors, in Washington, D.C., on April 20.

Calling upon G-20 nations, the world's top economies, to work out a "credible and ambitious" action plan to put the global economy firmly on the path of recovery, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said such a plan "should pay greater attention to three important issues" to help promote "strong, sustainable and balanced growth" across the world.

The proposed plan of action is expected to be adopted by G-20 leaders at their summit at La Cabos in Mexico in June later this year. The three areas that should form part of the plan, he said, were — developing a framework

to assess the progress made on G-20 commitments, mainstreaming jobs and employment issues into the framework exercise and stepping up efforts to support investment in the real sector, and especially in infrastructure.

Finance Minister Mukherjee was addressing a meeting of G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on "Global Economy and Framework" on the sidelines of the annual World Bank-IMF spring meetings in Washington, D.C., on April 19.

"This route to reviving global growth has not received the attention that it merits," Minister Mukherjee said, adding, "to the extent that much of this

investment, including in infrastructure, will occur in developing countries, it would also help rebalance global demand, as also, redirect savings."

Noting that the world has "witnessed a great amount of economic and political turmoil over the past year", the Finance Minister said while near-term economic data was unexpectedly encouraging, economic conditions overall remained weak, and unemployment reached at politically unacceptable levels.

As far as India was concerned, despite adverse conditions prevailing in its external environment, it was reasonably confident that the underlying growth fundamentals remain firm, he said. The Finance Minister said, "We are intent on ensuring that the process of fiscal consolidation gains further momentum, with monetary policy remaining vigilant in dealing with inflationary pressures."

Minister Mukherjee said he expected India's real GDP growth in 2011-12 to be around 7.0 percent, and to gain further strength in the ensuing fiscal.

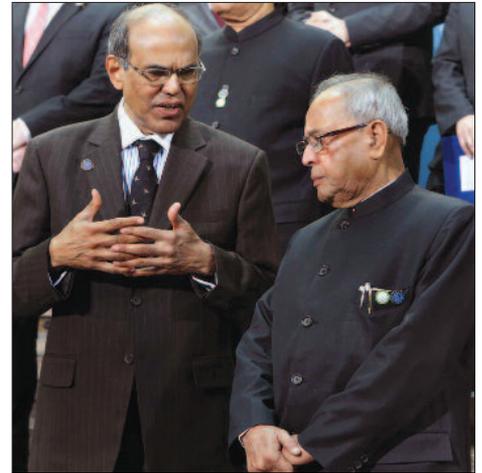
## Energy and Commodities

In his intervention on 'Energy and Commodities', Finance Minister Mukherjee said India, as a major commodity importer, was "concerned about the increase and volatility of commodity, and especially oil prices in recent times that seem to be not aligned with underlying economic fundamentals". These distortions were adding to "inflationary pressures in a number of developing countries, including India", he cautioned.

He said that despite many studies, including one done by G-20 itself, "it is still not very clear as to what is driving this heightened volatility, which seems to be a mix of financialization of commodity markets, monetary policy actions, political uncertainties



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in a group photo with IMF Governors during IMF and World Banks' spring meetings, in Washington, D.C., on April 21. (Photo: Jay Mandal)



Reserve Bank of India Governor D. Subba Rao with Finance Minister Mukherjee at IMF Headquarters in Washington, D.C., on April 21. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

and demand-supply imbalances.”

Minister Mukherjee said that under the circumstances, commodity markets called for better information and transparency. “There is an urgent need for countries to put in place a mechanism for gathering commodity market information and creating a publicly accessible comprehensive data base on production, price, inventories, demand and supply forecasts, etc,” adding, that “unfettered access to vital information on the commodity markets would discourage excessive speculation and exaggerated price movements”.

### Financial Regulation

At the second session, which dwelt on ‘Financial Regulation’, the Finance Minister pointed out that the global financial system continued to “face a complex set of challenges”.

“While some countries and regions are recovering from the crisis of 2008, others are confronting renewed turbulence. The uncertain and uneven recovery has led to calls in some quarters to weaken financial reform initiatives,” he cautioned.

Pointing out that there could be a

case for “some back loading of difficult adjustments” to help bolster recovery in the financial sector, he, however, warned that “any weakness shown in our resolve and commitment to reform will sow the seeds of fresh crises down the line”.

Pointing out that there was concern that unless the same standards were applied “in all jurisdictions simultaneously”, there could be room for “regulatory arbitrage”, resulting in “financial activity migrating to less regulated jurisdictions elsewhere, as well as into shadow banking”. Referring to the

*Extracts from the Final Communique issued after the two-days Meeting of G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in Washington, D.C.:*

- Recent economic developments point to the continuation of a modest global recovery, supported by some significant policy actions that have taken place since our last meeting. The tail risks facing the global economy only months ago have started to recede. However, growth expectations for 2012 remain moderate, de-leveraging is constraining consumption and investment growth, volatility remains high, partly reflecting financial market pressures in Europe and downside risks still persist.
- In the context of high unemployment and indebtedness in many countries, supporting growth and job creation, structural reforms, restoring medium-term fiscal sustainability

### G-20 Communique

- and promoting global rebalancing remain at the core of our commitments.
- Vigilant of high oil prices, G-20 members stand ready to carry out additional actions as needed and welcome the commitments by producing countries to ensure adequate supply.
- We remain committed to taking the necessary actions to secure global financial stability. We welcome the euro area members' decisions in March to strengthen European firewalls as part of broader reform efforts and the availability of central bank swap lines.
- Together with the IMFC, we have reached agreement to enhance IMF resources for crisis prevention and resolution. There are firm commitments to increase resources made available to the IMF by over \$430 billion in

addition to the quota increase under the 2010 Reform.

- We reaffirmed our commitment to fully implement the 2010 Governance and Quota Reform by the 2012 IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting. We will continue to contribute towards a comprehensive review of the IMF quota formula by January 2013 and the completion of the next general review of quotas by January 2014, fulfilling the commitments made in Seoul and Cannes.
- We welcome recent initiatives on IMF surveillance, and agree that the current surveillance framework should be significantly enhanced.

**The full text of the Communique is available at:** <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1922/final-communique-issued-after-meeting-of-g-20-finance-ministers-and-central-bank-governors-in-washington-d.c>

## India cautions against slowdown in IMF quota reforms

Expressing concern at the pace of reform on quota and governance issues in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India has said that a dynamic reform process was necessary to ensure IMF's legitimacy and effectiveness. "The best possible means to improve governance and legitimacy is by ensuring that there is no slippage on crucial reforms," Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said at a joint session of the policy making International Monetary and Financial

Committee (IMFC) and G-20 on April 20.

Underlining the importance of quotas as the main determinant of the voting power of members, he said there should not be any slippage in the January 2013 target date for quota formula review.

For the emerging and developing countries, GDP was the most important variable in the quota formula and the weight of the blended GDP variable should be substantially increased in the formula, Minister Mukherjee said.

"Our objective is a simple formula with GDP blend as either the sole or predominant variable and with a higher share of GDP-PPP," he said. The Minister pointed out that India had already ratified the 2010 quota increase and also confirmed that it would maintain its relative share of the new arrangements to borrow.

"India will continue to play its role to assist the IMF in its efforts to augment permanent resources. However, governance issues are also linked with this," he said.

importance of collaboration between financial authorities, Mukherjee asserted that it has "never been so testing and yet never has collaboration been so important". He pointed out that collaboration was difficult when it meant "profound structural change in the face of volatile financial markets and anemic growth prospects worldwide". Therefore, these challenges make "it so vital that the regulatory response should be well coordinated internationally to ensure that the new regulatory framework is effectively and globally implemented", he added. The way forward lay in implementing the reform agenda "to update the global financial regulatory frame-

work". However, it should "incorporate the main lessons from the crisis", he concluded.

### Green growth and climate finance

In his remarks at the session on 'Green Growth and Climate Change', Finance Minister Mukherjee said the G-20 could contribute in this area by identifying "best practices for sustainable development, provide researched inputs, sharing of technology and suggesting ways of raising resources to go forward".

Pointing out that there was currently no "internationally agreed

definition of green growth", he said that the "deliberations must strike a balance between all the three pillars of sustainable development, that is: economic development, social development and environmental sustainability". Minister Mukherjee said that any definition should "be consistent with the objectives, provisions and principles, including common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change". He said that Climate Finance Commitments report by a proposed new group of study should reflect the views and interests of all the G-20 countries.

## 'Set up working group for BRICS bank'

India has suggested setting up a working group comprising officials from finance ministries and central banks of the five BRICS countries for the formation of a development bank to increase trade within the grouping.

"I propose that a working group be set up comprising representatives from our Finance Ministries, central banks and other experts co-chaired by India, as the current BRICS chair, and South Africa, as the next BRICS chair," said Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

He was addressing a meeting of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Finance Ministers in Washington, D.C., on April 19, on the sidelines of the annual spring meetings

of IMF and World Bank group.

Minister Mukherjee said the working group should be asked to submit its report by November this year and that would form the basis for formation of the proposed development bank.

"The working group may decide on its own composition, work plan and processes and report back to us by our next meeting in November 2012, so that we are in a position to report back to the leaders by the next BRICS Summit," he said.

Leaders of the five emerging economies had agreed to set up a development bank to boost intra-group trade at a recent summit in New Delhi.

Stressing on the importance of



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Chinese counterpart Xie Xuren at the BRICS Finance Ministers meeting on the sidelines of IMF's spring meetings in Washington, D.C. on April 19. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

strengthening global financial safety nets, the Finance Minister also drew attention of the BRICS leaders to the slow pace of governance reforms at the International Monetary Fund.

# ‘India-U.S. relations on strong footing’

**F**inance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said that the relations between India and the United States had evolved in recent years into a global strategic partnership across a broad range of areas. Minister Mukherjee was speaking during a bilateral meeting with U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner in the latter's office in Washington, D.C., on April 19. The Finance Minister observed that political and strategic engagement between the two countries was at an unprecedented level. Cooperation between India and the U.S. were growing in all areas, including defense, counter-terrorism, trade, investment, science and technology, education and energy, he pointed out.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed bilateral economic and financial cooperation as well as the



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee with U.S. Secretary of Treasury Timothy Geithner in Washington, D.C., on April 19. (Photo: U.S. Department of Treasury)

recent developments in the global economy. They deliberated on a wide range of global and bilateral macro-economic and financial issues relat-

ing to foreign investment and tax matters. While discussing tax issues, Treasury Secretary Geithner mentioned about certain amendments proposed in tax provisions of India's Income Tax Act with retrospective effect. In this regard, Finance Minister Mukherjee informed that the tax changes proposed were not substantive but clarificatory in nature as the changes reiterated only the intent of the legislation. He pointed out that as per Section 149 of the Income Tax Act, no tax cases can be opened beyond six years.

He clarified that tax cases which had already been assessed and finalized up to April 1, 2012 cannot be reopened.

## ‘India good for investment, has stable tax regime’

**A**llaying a “misapprehension” about some retroactive changes in Indian tax laws, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has assured corporate America that India was a good investment destination with a clear and stable tax regime.

“There is some sense of despondency amongst a section of U.S. businessmen, particularly because of their apprehension — and I would say misapprehension — about certain legislative amendments which we have proposed,” he said in Washington, D.C., on April 20. “There is no uncertainty and the changes have been made to bring certainty to the tax law, that was the intention from the beginning,” Minister Mukherjee said during a talk at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Washington-based think-tank.

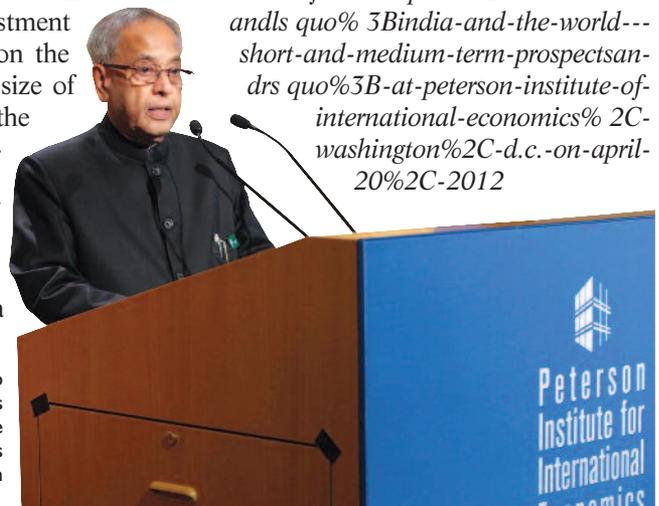
The proposed changes to impose retroactive tax on some international

mergers that exchange Indian assets announced in the budget couldn't be used to reopen tax cases more than six years old as other legislation existed to prevent this, he said.

“There is no uncertainty,” he said, adding that India would hold transparent, open discussions with those who have complaints about the law. Secondly, investment decisions are taken on the basis of “what's the size of the market, whether the systems are transparent and what's the purchasing power of people.” “From all these standpoints, India appears to be a

good investment destination. There should not be any apprehension,” Minister Mukherjee said.

**The full text of the Finance Minister's speech can be viewed at:**  
<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail/1920/finance-minister-Pranab-mukherjeeandrsquo%3Bs-address-on-andls%3BIndia-and-the-world---short-and-medium-term-prospectsandrsquo%3B-at-peterson-institute-of-international-economics%2C-washington%2C-d.c.-on-april-20%2C-2012>



Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee delivering his address at Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, D.C., on April 20. (Photo: Jay Mandal).

# 'Opportunities galore in power sector'

Addressing the US-India Business Council in Washington, D.C., on April 16, Minister for Power Sushilkumar Shinde called upon the U.S. industry to explore emerging investment opportunities in India's power sector and consolidate existing partnerships and projects between the two countries.

Giving an outline of the growth of Indian power sector, Minister Shinde said that the present installed generation capacity of India was about 200 GW of which 55 GW had been added during the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2007-12). He underlined that this addition was about 2.5 times of what was done during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan and more than the combined capacity generated during the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Plans. Stating that the share of the private sector in the capacity expansion had gone up substantially from 10 percent during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan to 33 percent during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, Minister Shinde added that 50 percent of the capacity in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan would come from the private sector. He said that total investment in power generation segment during the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan would be around \$120 billion.

The Minister observed that by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> Plan, inter-regional transmission capacity would be more than 38 GW. He also shared that the highest voltage level in the world, 1200kV UHVAC Test Station had been test charged at Bina in Madhya Pradesh while the world's longest „b800kV HVDC multi-terminal bi-pole link of 2,000 kms from Biswanath Chariali in the northeast region to Agra in the northern region was undergoing implementation. He added that the transmission sector had also been opened for private sector which is expected to have an investment of \$36 billion during the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan.

Addressing concerns of the investors, Minister Shinde said that the Government was taking various steps



1. Minister for Power Sushilkumar Shinde at a meeting with U.S. Secretary of Energy Dr. Steven Chu in Washington, D.C., on April 16. Ambassador Nirupama Rao was also present at the meeting.
2. Minister Shinde with Energy Secretary Chu in Washington, D.C., on April 16.
3. Minister Shinde and Ambassador Nirupama Rao at the Round Table on Power Sector hosted by the United States-India Business Council (USIBC) in Washington, D.C., on April 16.

to facilitate reforms in the power sector. He said the Electricity Act 2003 allowed the sector to align itself with market dynamics and facilitate greater participation by the private sector. He made a special mention of the budget proposals of 2012 that could help stimulate investments in the power sector.

The Minister said that the rate of withholding tax on interest payment on External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) was proposed to be reduced from 20 percent to 5 percent for 3 years. He added that the ECB had also been allowed to partly finance the debt of existing power projects.

Minister Shinde shared with the delegates that as far as fuel was concerned, Coal India Limited was likely

to sign fuel supply agreements with power plants having long-term PPAs with distribution companies and getting commissioned on or before March 31, 2015.

He also touched upon health of discoms. Minister Shinde said the total investment estimated in distribution sector in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan was \$60 billion.

The Minister appreciated the emphasis given to the use of environmentally clean renewable, hydro and nuclear energy in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan. He discussed the low-carbon growth strategy to ensure sustainable development of the power sector. Minister Shinde said that he would seek increased use of super critical technology in the 13<sup>th</sup> Plan and would encourage initiatives on energy conservation.

# 'Innovation key to achieve energy security'



Ambassador Nirupama Rao and Dr R. Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India, at the inaugural session of the third US-India Energy Partnership Summit.



Inaugural Session, titled 'Policy Insights to Foster US-India Energy Cooperation,' in progress.



Ambassador Rao with Ambassador Karl F. Inderfurth, Senior Advisor and Wadhvani Chair at the US-India Policy Studies, CSIS.

**A**t the third US-India Energy Partnership Summit in Washington, D.C., on April 24-25, experts and policy makers from both the countries emphasized on enhancing innovation to address the challenges of energy security. Themed, 'Fostering Innovations for a Sustainable Future', the Summit attracted over 200 participants from government, industry, think tanks, academia, and financial institutions who deliberated on strategies and activities for India-U.S. collaboration on energy security. The Summit was organized by The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) North America in collaboration with Yale University.

Melanne S. Verveer, Ambassador-at-Large, Office of Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State; Dr. John P. Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President of the United States; Dr. R Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Advisor, Government of India; Prof Jagdish N. Bhagwati, Professor, Economics and Law, Columbia University; and Nirupama Rao, Indian Ambassador to the U.S. attended the Summit. Al Gore, Nobel Laureate and former U.S. Vice-President, called for cooperation between the two countries to address health-related problems, arising due to climate change, in a video address.

For the first time, a high-level CEO Dialogue was also held on the sidelines of the Summit. Attended by top corporate leaders from both the countries, the dialogue was moderated by Prof Jeffrey A. Sonnenfeld of Yale University. The 'triple bottom line' of people, planet and profit was the focus and through their deliberations, the business leaders envisioned lasting solutions to current critical challenges facing the two countries. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Department of Interior, David J Hayes, delivered the keynote address on the occasion.

It was noted that the 'Dinner of Hope,' held as a curtain-raiser to the Summit, had been successful in illuminating 450 un-electrified households in the remote corners of India through TERI's 'Lighting a Billion Lives' campaign — a sustainability initiative for the 1.4 billion global population that has no access to electricity.

## Addressing global health challenges

**D**uring a meeting with U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in Washington, D.C., on April 9, Ambassador Nirupama Rao said that vibrant India-U.S. health cooperation was important for strengthening their strategic dialogue and addressing the challenges of global health such as Rotavirus vaccine development, solution for HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases containment. They agreed to strengthen cooperation in the area of public health by sharing information and best practices, identify and address policy concerns and establish new technologies. Ambassador Rao also underscored the opportunity for development of cooperation in the field of traditional medicine.



Ambassador Rao with Secretary for Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius on April 9.

## 'Partnership with U.S. key to India's growth'

**I**n a meeting with Senator Dianne Feinstein from California at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on April 23, Ambassador Nirupama Rao described the United States as a key partner in India's quest for socio-economic development and inclusive growth, and highlighted sectors like education and health as important pillars of this partnership. Appreciating the Senator's contributions in deepening India-US partnership, she noted the recent developments in bilateral relations, and the shared values and interests of the two countries. Discussing the regional situation, including the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in East Asia, Ambassador Rao and Senator Feinstein 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 US.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao presenting a book on India to Senator Dianne Feinstein during their meeting at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on April 23.

## 'India committed to promoting strategic partnership with U.S.'

**A**mbassador Nirupama Rao reaffirmed India's commitment to promote India-U.S. strategic partnership in a meeting with Senator Ron Wyden at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on April 19. Noting the multi-faceted cooperation between India and the United States, Senator Wyden, who is a senior Senator representing the state of Oregon in the U.S. Senate, expressed his keen interest in developing closer relations between the state of Oregon and India, particularly in the field of business, trade and people-to-people relations.

Recalling his recent visit to India, the Senator described his discussions with Government of India officials on a range of issues of common interest, as very useful.

Senator Wyden is a member of several important Senate Committees, including the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Budget Committee.

## Ambassador Nirupama Rao briefs Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

**I**n a meeting with Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen from Florida at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on April 17. Ambassador Rao briefed the U.S. lawmaker on India's perspective on regional and global issues of common interest. Discussing the current state of India-U.S. relations, and the global strategic partnership between the two countries, she also gave an overview of trade and business ties and the prospects for economic cooperation that existed in the partnership.

Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, who is the senior-most House Republican woman, welcomed India's contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction, saying India-U.S. partnership had an important role in contributing to the war-torn nation's progress and well-



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen from Florida at Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., on April 17.

being. She also spoke of the broad spectrum of opportunities for the two countries to collaborate.

## **'Horizon for what we can do together is limitless'**

**S**peaking at the inaugural dinner on the establishment of India Chair in Democracy and Civil Society at L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond on April 2, Ambassador Nirupama Rao noted the immense scope of partnership between India and the US. She stressed the need to constantly nurture the bonds of friendship, including through building partnerships, especially in the field of education, and between research institutions of the two countries. Ambassador Rao emphasized that democracy, freedom from fear, respect for civil liberties and the rule of law provided essential foundations to the edifice of India-U.S. strategic partnership. Governor of Virginia Robert McDonnell also addressed the audience on the occasion.

In a separate meeting, Ambassador Rao and Governor McDonnell agreed to take concrete follow up measures to forge greater trade and investment ties between India and the State of Virginia.

On April 3, Ambassador Rao addressed an International Business Summit at the VCU on the theme 'The Rise of India in the Global Business Arena'. She said that rapidly growing commercial elements of India-U.S. business ties, including trade in goods and services; technology partnerships; two-way capital flows; research based tie-ups in the field of agriculture, energy, health-care, etc., provided a key underpinning to the bilateral strategic relationship. She also underscored that fundamentals of India's economic growth remain sound. India's strong domestic consumption; a growing middle class of about 300 million people; India's focus on manufacturing and innovation; and its skilled human resource base would continue to provide new opportunities for commercial ties between the two countries, she said.

In a meeting with a cross-section of business leaders in Richmond, hosted at the headquarters of Mead West Vaco on the same day, Ambassador Rao underlined that India's economic reforms were progressive and investor-friendly.

### **Ambassador Rao at Washington Adventist University**



Ambassador Nirupama Rao addressing graduates of Washington Adventist University, Takoma Park, Maryland, on April 29.

### **Ambassador Rao visits Indiana University**



Ambassador Nirupama Rao giving a lecture on 'India-U.S. Relations' at Whittenberger Auditorium, Indiana University Bloomington, on April 10.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with President of Indiana University, Michael McRobbie.

# 'Take India-U.S. business ties to next level'

**W**ith India focused on developing itself as a global hub for innovation, New Delhi would like the business community to explore new ways to advance India-U.S. trade and investment ties to the next level, Ambassador Nirupama Rao said at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual India Business Conference at Columbia Business School in New York on April 14.

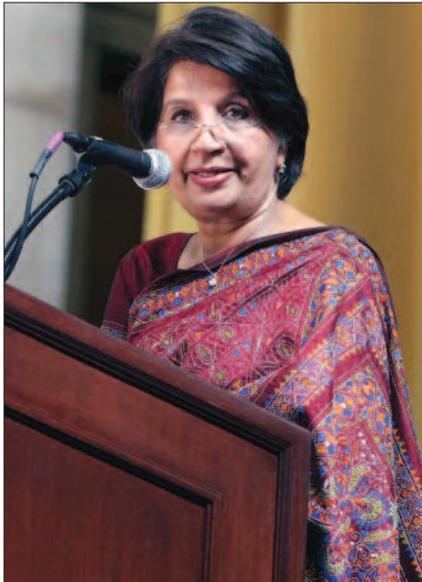
"I think, now, more than ever before, in the U.S., as in India, there is a clear recognition in advancing the India-U.S. relationship to a new level of higher engagement fully befitting of our strategic partnership," Ambassador Rao said, addressing the conference on the theme 'India: Maintaining Momentum.'

Among others, GP Hinduja of Hinduja Group and Columbia University Professor Jagdish N. Bhagwati were present on the occasion.

One central aspect of the wide-ranging India-U.S. business ties had been their mutually beneficial nature, Ambassador Rao said noting the Indian IT industry, for one, had helped build competitiveness for U.S. companies and facilitated increased access to emerging markets.

Businesses between the two countries, across a range of sectors of economic activity, were more integrated than ever before, she said. "Clearly, it is a mutually complementary framework of ties. "Going forward, among important factors in forging bilateral trade and investment links would be India's focus on developing itself as a global hub for innovation and India's commitment to modernize its manufacturing and increase its share in the GDP to 25 percent by 2022," she added.

The Indian infrastructure sector with financing requirements of about \$1 trillion in the next five years, also represented a clear set of opportunities for investment and partnerships by U.S. companies, she said.



Ambassador Nirupama Rao delivering her Keynote address at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual India Business Conference at Columbia Business School, New York, on April 14. (Photo credit: Jay Mandal)

Other factors for the attractiveness of the Indian market included its strong consumption economy; skilled human resource base; strengths in knowledge economy; rapidly growing middle class; and strong trends in urbanization, Ambassador Rao added.

### **Abstract from Ambassador Nirupama Rao's speech on the occasion:**

"Infrastructure development in new townships is the focus of investment now and would remain so for the foreseeable future. A recent study by McKinsey estimates that by 2030, 65 cities will have a population of more than one million and would account for 600 million of India's population. The share of GDP from these cities could rise to 70 percent. Over the next 20 years, cities would require a capital expenditure of \$1.2 trillion. This urbanization process offers huge opportunities for investment for foreign investors and capital equipment manufacturers.

Generation, transmission and distribution of uninterrupted quality

power is a critical input to sustain a high growth rate. The installed power capacity is expected to increase by five times over the next two decades and electricity production is expected to expand six fold by 2030. To meet the growing need for public services, huge investment is required both in urban and rural areas, including public infrastructure, development of new educational and training facilities for skill-building and upgrading health care systems. Development of infrastructure, including new roads, building ports, airports and augmenting power generation capacities, offers opportunities for an investment of close to \$1.7 trillion over the next decade. I believe that a substantial portion of investments in infrastructure in the future would come from the private sector. India's growing market and the particular focus on modernization of the infrastructure sector therefore opens up exciting opportunities for US companies in the coming years.

India's economic progress is not only a key factor of stability in the global economy but also a source of immense economic opportunity for the world. As the growth trajectory is sustained, and with a steady increase in the disposable incomes from an expanding work force, India is expected to emerge as one of the world's largest consumer markets by 2030. Moving beyond numbers, we are observing a transformative change in India across almost all sectors of an economy that is infused with entrepreneurial energy and driven by a young working population." 

**The full text of Ambassador Rao's speech can be viewed at:** <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1909/address-by-ambassador-nirupama-rao-at-the-8th-annual-india-business-conference-at-columbia-business-school%2C-andquot%3Bindia%3A-maintaining-momentumandquot%3B>

# 'Use education to make a difference'

**D**elivering a commencement address at the University of Florida, Gainesville, on April 27, Ambassador Nirupama Rao urged the students to make use of their education in providing solution to the challenges of the 21st century. She especially drew attention of the students to the discontents of globalization, especially inequality, that seemed to divide the world. She said that in an increasingly integrated world, where borders were becoming more and more porous, the world must be alert to the stifling effects of protectionism.

*Excerpts from Ambassador Rao's speech on the occasion:*

"Change is not easy in any society. The convenient way out is to adopt ways that have been in place for countless years. All of you, whose education has taught you to ask questions, to seek cogent answers, know that knowledge must constantly multiply and not divide, or become restrictive, "cribbed, cabinn'd and confined" .

I know that all of you look to the future with dreams, hope and anticipation. You are no doubt receiving a lot of advice from your near and dear ones. Let me also weigh in with my thoughts.

science without humanity, no worship without sacrifice, and no politics without principle.

From this, we can deduce relevant inspirations for a youth or an artiste or a manager or politician, or if I may add, for Ph.Ds, because these principles apply to all of humanity.

Gandhi also said, "Nothing that is violent can be of lasting benefit to mankind." This is a powerful message for a world wracked by sectarian strife, proxy wars, terrorism and conflict within and between nations. His global vision could be understood by his thought that "Once we recognize the



Ambassador Nirupama Rao delivering the commencement address at the University of Florida on April 27. (Photo: UF Photography/Ray Carson)



Ambassador Nirupama Rao with University of Florida President Machen (Photo: UF Photography/Ray Carson)

"Protectionism in such a situation becomes a hindrance to economic growth and development because it seeks to cap the flow of people, of goods and services, of ideas and technologies. It builds walls and is thus retrogressive," she said. Ambassador Rao pointed out that unhindered flow of capital and technology across borders was key to inclusive development.

"May the education you have received make you the best of human beings, confident, leading by example, followers of the rule of law, good citizens, giving and compassionate," she said. She advised the students to help make the world a better place and urged them to "follow the paths of peace and forbearance." She expressed hope that the students would help build a better and high yielding partnership between India and the US.

Many years ago, during India's freedom struggle, the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi said to our young people, "Become the change you want to see". That was a powerful exhortation, an inspirational clarion call, which continues to ring clear and powerful, even today.

The Mahatma took his inspiration from the simple and poor people who populate the countryside of many countries in our world — he rightly said that all our actions become meaningful only when we gauge them by a simple test — do they help the poorest and the weakest among us?

And, he sought to instill profound values in the people around him. For him there could be no wealth without work, no pleasure without conscience, no knowledge without character, no commerce without morality, no

common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the basic unity of the human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition."

This cross pollination of minds, ideas, the freedom of debate, the jousting of ideas — that should be our goal. Let your lives be lived in what has been rightly called, the Open University of Human Experience, with its rich curriculum. Do not build fortresses, rather, dismantle them." 

**The full text of Ambassador Nirupama Rao's speech can be**

**viewed at:** <http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1934/ambassador-nirupama-raoandrsquo%3Bs-commencement-address-at-university-of-florida%2C-gainesville-on-april-27%2C-2012>

# 'Indian industry key to India-U.S. partnerships'

**A**mbassador Nirupama Rao has said that through job creation in the local economy and their interaction with local communities in the United States, Indian industry has contributed immensely toward “building mutually beneficial commercial partnerships with the United States”. She was speaking at an event jointly organized by the CII-India Business Forum and the Embassy of India at the U.S. Capitol Hill on April 25.

The event provided an opportunity to the top representatives of Indian companies in the U.S. to have interaction with U.S. Congressmen. Over 20 Members of the U.S. Congress, including Senators John Cornyn, Mark Warner, Jeanne Shaheen, Michael Bennet, Robert Menendez, John Boozman, and House Representatives Ed Royce, Steve Chabot, Silvestre Reyes, Ted Deutch, Leonard Lance, Alan Nunnelee, Tim Griffin, Bill Pascrell, Hansen Clarke, Michael Turner, Rush Holt, Jim Costa, Jean Schmidt, Sheila Jackson Lee and Jan Schakowsky participated at the event.

Ambassador Rao drew attention to the fact that the interaction between Indian industry and the U.S. legislators was an expression of the strong belief and commitment of the Indian private sector to promote India-U.S. commercial ties and to work with the U.S. Congress and other institutional stakeholders to further this objective. Ambassador Rao praised the Indian private sector for providing crucial support in expansion of India-U.S. business ties. She expressed confidence that the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Administration would offer full support toward strengthening the bilateral relationships, in recognition of the constructive contribution of Indian businesses in the US.

Underlining that India's strong economic growth had been a key driver in forging a strong India-U.S. strategic partnership, Ambassador Rao said that



Ambassador Nirupama Rao delivering her address at the CII-India Business Forum reception at Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., on April 25. (Photo: CII-IBF)



Senator Mark Warner, Co-chair of the Senate India Caucus (left), releases the CII-IBF report titled 'Indian Roots, American Soil: Adding Value to U.S. Economy and Society,' on the occasion. (Photo: CII-IBF)



The video can be viewed at: <http://youtu.be/bGI-vxGbtYs>

despite global economic uncertainties, the fundamentals of the Indian economy were strong.

The Members of the Congress were unanimous in their support for a strong India-U.S. strategic partnership, in particular on issues of global concern, including counter-terrorism and security, and the rapidly growing

bilateral trade and investment linkages. They highly appreciated the role of the Indian companies and Indian investments in the United States. They also recognized the opportunities that India's growth offered for the U.S. businesses.

While Senator John Cornyn called it a “special relationship”, Senator Warner termed India-U.S. ties as “the most defining relationship of the 21st century”. Senator Bennet said that he supported open immigration for movement of professionals between the two countries. Senator Menendez said he favored a liberal visa regime for highly skilled applicants. Congresswomen Sheila Jackson Lee praised India's important role and partnership with the U.S. on international security and stability. Congressman Ed Royce said that India-U.S. trade had seen 400 percent increase since 2000. Congressman Pascrell called India a “proper and positive ally” of the United States.

At the event, Senator Mark Warner, Co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, released the CII-IBF report, “Indian Roots, American Soil: Adding Value to U.S. Economy and Society”.

**The full text of the report can be viewed at:**

<http://www.cii.in/PublicationDetail.aspx?id=317>

# 'Strengthen Innovation partnership'

**D**elivering his keynote address at the U.S.-India Business Summit-West at Menlo Park, California, on April 26, Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh said that technology and innovation partnerships between India and the U.S. would have a major bearing on their future economic and strategic relations.

"The intensity and potential of our partnership for innovation will be impacted by, and, in turn, impact upon the political, economic and people-to-people dimension of our relationship," he said. DCM Singh said that innovation partnerships would offer businesses opportunities to both India and the US.

He said that for a country like India commercially viable and socially relevant innovation was the need of the hour 'to drive growth, competitiveness and employment opportunities'.



Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh delivering his Keynote address at the US-India Business Summit-West on April 26. (Photo: Jay Mandal)

Highlighting the primacy that India accords to innovation, DCM Singh said that the President of India had declared the present decade as the

'Decade of Innovation' in India.

"In terms of specifics, India is working to create a complete framework that includes setting up of State and Sectoral Innovation Councils; Innovation Centers within industry specific clusters; a \$1 billion India Innovation Fund has been proposed that will drive and catalyze enterprise, entrepreneurship, and venture capital, targeted at innovative solutions for the bottom of the pyramid. It will also be listed on India's stock exchange. Overall work will be supervised by the National Innovation Council," he said.

**The full text of DCM Singh's speech on the occasion can be viewed at:**  
<http://www.indianembassy.org/prdetail1936/speech-by-deputy-chief-of-mission-arun-k.-singh-at-us-india-business-summit-west-building-bridges%2C-fostering-innovation-april-26-27-2012-menlo-park%2C-ca>

## Maryland Governor hosts Baisakhi celebrations



Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh addressing the gathering at a reception hosted by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley at the Government House, Annapolis, MD, on the occasion of Baisakhi on April 23. Governor Martin O'Malley is also seen. (Photo: Suresh K. Gupta, MD)

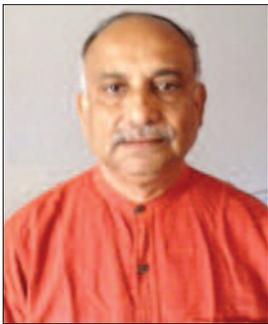
## Maryland-India Business Forum meeting held



Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh addressing at the Maryland-India Business Forum organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, on April 24. (Photo: Suresh K. Gupta, MD)

Deputy Chief of Mission Arun K. Singh with Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley in Baltimore, MD, on the occasion. (Photo: Suresh K. Gupta, MD)





Pratap Das

## Steps of harmony...

*An unstoppable voice in the promotion of Indian arts and culture, Pratap Das has consistently pursued his belief in Indian classical dance as an international art form. His dream of staging the largest ever performance by Odissi exponents from different corners of the world has not only come true, but has also been entered in the Guinness Book of World Records. More about it...*

*Excerpts from an interview with Pratap Das:*

**Q:**The large-scale International Odissi Dance Festival held in India in December, 2011 has attracted considerable attention. How did you conceive the idea?

This festival was thus far the largest dance performance organized by Indian Performing Arts Promotions Inc. (IPAP-USA) ever since we came into being in 1996. The idea of organizing a Guinness Book of World Record for the largest Odissi event by engaging more than 500 dancers and 50 gurus was a wild dream to take Odissi to a higher international dance platform. The idea was conceived from many previous world records or mass presentations. My inspiration comes from the soil of India and Odissi dance lovers.

**Q:** Could you describe the event and a few interesting highlights?

It was a lifetime experience. There were thousands to witness Odissi dancers from India and the rest of the world, including little boys and girls, making history at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The most dramatic moment was the entrance by over 500 dancers to the arena. It was spectacular to see them all dance to Odissi music for 29 minutes, which was composed specifically for the event by Guru Ramahari Das. The dance was choreographed by Guru Ratikanta Mohapatra, son of the legendary Kelu Charan Mohapatra with the assistance of Odissi Research Center and the 50 other gurus.



(Top) Artists from Russia performing Odissi. (Left) Guru Rahul Acharya of India performing at the festival. (Right) Artist Pallavi Das from Washington, D.C., performing at the festival.

**Q:** Did the festival match your own expectations?

The event went beyond my expectations. I conceptualized the event as a dreamer. But it could not have been possible without the support of the Department of Culture & Tourism, Government of Odisha. The festival was also assisted by the Ministry of Culture, Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Sangeet Natak Akademi. This event was a joint venture of Government of Odisha and the IPAP-USA.

There were over 200 Odissi dancers

participating from 18 countries, including the United States, UK, Australia, France, Italy, Russia, Japan, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Brazil, Spain, Canada, Trinidad & Tobago and Singapore. More than 1000 dancers, musicians, journalists and scholars participated in the festival programs that started from 10 am and went till midnight from December 23 through December 30, 2011 at three different auditoriums. So far, this is the largest Odissi dance festival ever held!

**Q:** Do you plan to host another festival again?

Every time, I complete one festival, I promise myself not to do it again! But the desire to explore and promote

the artists is born again. I may do a dance festival of all disciplines such as Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Manipuri, Mohinattam, etc., together or a summit of young Indian-American musicians, or an Indian folk dance festival at the National Mall.

**Q:** What advice would you give to upcoming classical dancers in the US who want to pursue dance as a hobby or career?

I have always advised the classical dancers not to forget their roots. Any performing art demands sincerity, hard work, perseverance, and dedication. Finding a good teacher (Guru) to teach him/her methodically and correctly is also important.

## Embassy welcomes Minister Sushilkumar Shinde



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming India's Minister for Power Sushilkumar Shinde at the community reception hosted in his honor at the Embassy on April 16.
2. Minister Shinde addressing the guests.
3. Guests in attendance.

## Education Ministers of five Indian states visit US



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests at a reception hosted at the Embassy on April 19, on the occasion of the visit of a delegation of Education Ministers of five Indian states.
2. Head of the delegation Archana Chitnis, Minister of School Education, Madhya Pradesh, addressing the gathering.
3. Ambassador Nirupama Rao with representatives of the U.S. Community Colleges on the occasion.
4. A section of the guests in attendance. (Photo: Sanjay Suchak)

## Baisakhi Celebrations



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests on the occasion of Baisakhi celebrations at the Embassy Residence on April 22.
2. Rajan Natarajan, Deputy Secretary of State for Policy and External Affairs, Maryland, addressing the gathering.
3. Sam Arora, Member of the Maryland House of Delegates, addressing the guests.
4. Aruna Miller, Member of the Maryland House of Delegates, addressing the gathering.
5. Gurcharanjit Singh Lamba speaking on the significance of Baisakhi.

6. Mohan Singh Bains rendering Punjabi folk songs on the occasion.
7. Surekha Vihh reciting poetry on the occasion.
8. Devotional rendition by Hari Singh, Chattar Singh and Mehtab Singh from Baltimore Gurudwara.
9. Punjabi folk songs rendition by Alka Batra (left), Jasbir Kaur and Bishen Singh (Tabla).
10. Prabhjot Singh Kohli, Guru Nanak Federation of America, proposing the vote of thanks.
11. Guests in attendance.

## Embassy hosts University of Buffalo alumni



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests at a reception hosted for the University of Buffalo alumni at the Embassy on April 18.
2. Jim Smist, University of Buffalo alumni representative, introducing Dr. Satish Tripathi, President of the University of Buffalo.
3. Dr. Tripathi speaking on the occasion.
4. Ashok Kaveeshwar, University of Buffalo alumni, proposing the vote of thanks.
5. A section of the audience.

## Cleveland Park Historical society at Embassy Residence



1. Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcoming the guests.
2. Ambassador Rao welcomes Henry Flood Schoellkopf and Ann Schoellkopf, whose grandfather Walter Schoellkopf got the residence renovated and restored in the 1930s.
3. Tersh Boasberg, former Chairman of the Historic Preservation Review Board, briefing the guests on the history of the Cleveland Park Historic District.
4. Gwen Wright, Co-Chair of the Cleveland Park Historical Society, speaking on the architecture and history of the residence and the neighbourhood.
5. Danny Ince (right), President of the Cleveland Park Historical Society, presenting a plaque to Ambassador Rao.
6. Members of the Cleveland Park Historical Society attending the event.

To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cleveland Park Historic District, that has the Embassy Residence listed as one of its grand estates, Ambassador Nirupama Rao welcomed the members of the Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS) on April 30. Around seventy members of CPHS attended the event.

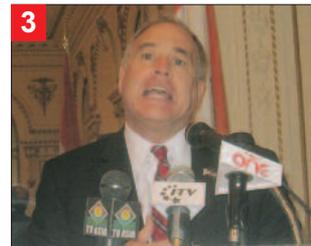
Ambassador Rao informed that the building, originally built in 1914 and then renovated in the 1930s by the Schoellkopf family, was acquired by the Government of India in 1945. Henry Schoellkopf and Ann Schoellkopf, grandchildren of Walter Schoellkopf, the previous owner of the property, were also present.

# Baisakhi celebration at CGI New York

**T**he Consulate General of India in New York, in association with the Sikh Art and Film Foundation, organized a function to celebrate Baisakhi on April 19.

Consul-General Prabhu Dayal, while welcoming the guests, said that though Baisakhi was celebrated all over India, it was particularly significant for the Sikh community as it was on this day that Guru Gobind Singh had founded the Sikh Khalsa. He thanked the community members for their attendance.

Sir Mota Singh, the United Kingdom's first Sikh and Asian judge to be Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his services to the administration of justice and community relations; Nassau County Comptroller Tom Napioli and Dr. Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, Assistant Professor of Medicine & Associate Neuroscientist,



1. Consul-General Prabhu Dayal welcoming the guests.
2. Sir Mota Singh addressing the guests on the occasion.
3. Tom Napioli addressing the gathering.
4. Dr. Khalsa addressing the audience.
5. Tejinder Bindra addressing the gathering.
6. A Bhangra Troupe performance on the occasion.

Division of Sleep Medicine, Harvard Medical School, were the special guests on the occasion. Explaining the significance of Baisakhi in the Sikh community, Sir Mota Singh dwelt at

length the establishment and rise of Khalsa Panth. Conveying his greetings, Tom Napioli highlighted the valuable contribution made by the Sikh community in the US.



## 'East Meets West' concert held at the Consulate

**T**he Consulate General of India and Chandini Dayal, in association with Salon de Virtuosi and Citibank NRI Business, organized a concert 'East Meets West' at the Consulate Ball Room on April 24.

The first part of the concert, representing the West, featured the Amphion String Quartet (ASQ) artistes — Katie Hyunand David Southorn on Violin, Wei-Yang Lin on Viola and Mihai Marica on Cello.

Hailed by the *New York Times* for their "precision, assertiveness and vigor", the ASQ won the '2011 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition' and was awarded the First Prize in both Hugo Kauder and Plowman Competitions. The Quartet has recently been selected to join for a three-year residence at the Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society.

The East was represented by Anirban Dasgupta on Sarod and



(Top) Amphion String Quartet (ASQ) artistes performing on the occasion.  
(Above) Anirban Dasgupta on Sarod and Dibyarka Chatterjee on Tabla.  
(Left) Kathak dance performance by Brinda Anonya Guha.

Dibyarka Chatterjee on Tabla. The duo performed Hindustani Ragas.

Anirban Dasgupta is the youngest son and disciple of renowned musician Pt. Buddhadev Dasgupta. He has performed widely in India, UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and the United States.

Dibyarka Chatterjee, the young Tabla player from the Farrukhabad Gharana, is the son and disciple of Pandit Samir Chatterjee. He has performed with many renowned musicians, including Pandit Jasraj, Lakshmi Shankar, Mashkoor Ali Khan, to name a few, besides collaborating with several renowned music groups.

The concert came to an end with a Kathak dance performance by Brinda Anonya Guha, who has been learning this classical north Indian dance form for 17 years under the guidance of her mother Malabika Guha.



# Consul-General's engagements



Consul-General Sanjiv Arora with Indian Institute of Technology Alumni of Greater Houston (IITAGH) President Witty Bindra (second from right), past President Prabhu Murugan (right) and Swati Sachdev of CRY America (left), at a musical event "Rock for Charity" organized by IIT Alumni of Greater Houston (IITAGH) at University of Houston on April 7.



Consul-General Sanjiv Arora with Dr. Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of Oceanic History and Affairs at Harvard University, at a Gala organized by Tagore Society of Houston (TSH) on April 14 as a part of the continuing celebrations marking Gurudev Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary in 2011.



A 20-over cricket match was played between Consulate General of India, Houston and India House, a prominent community center in Houston on April 29. Consul-General Sanjiv Arora had proposed the match as a part of the Consulate's pro-active outreach to the Indian community. The photo shows the team captains CG Arora and India House President Jugal Malani with the team members.



At a business event "Miami's Asia Summit: Addressing the Dynamics of the Relationship between the United States, Latin America and Asia" organized by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce in Miami on April 17, Consul-General Sanjiv Arora (extreme left) with other panelists for the session on India, Kapil Sharma (center), Sr. General Manager – North America, Tata Sons, Ltd. and Mauricio Mesquita Moreira (extreme right), Principal Economist and Research Coordinator, Integration and Trade Sector, Inter-American Development Bank.

# MasterCard's Ajay Banga to head USIBC

**A**jay Banga, President & CEO of MasterCard Worldwide, has been elected next Chairman of the US-India Business Council (USIBC), a trade association made of 350 top American and Indian companies.

Banga, who became the President and CEO of global payments and technology company in July, 2010, takes over from Harold "Terry" McGraw III, President, Chairman, and CEO of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

"As a long time supporter and member of USIBC, I have witnessed the Council's stature and influence rise dramatically as a direct result of the iconic leadership provided by former chairs Chip Kaye, Indra Nooyi, and Terry McGraw," said Banga.



Ajay Banga

"It is an exceptional honor to be entrusted with such a legacy and I look forward to building on their successes."

Banga currently serves on the board of Kraft Foods and is a member of several prestigious groups.

Banga's "deep business experience in India, as well his global business acumen and leadership, will be enormously helpful as we move forward to realize the full potential of closer US-India relations," said McGraw.

"By expanding the partnership between our two nations over the next several years, including passage of a bilateral investment treaty, we can move from \$100 billion in two-way trade to \$500 billion by the end of the decade," he added.

"MasterCard's activities in India empowering people via financial inclusion and making available to every segment of Indian society innovative payment solutions are central to the future US-India growth story," said USIBC President, Ron Somers. — IANS

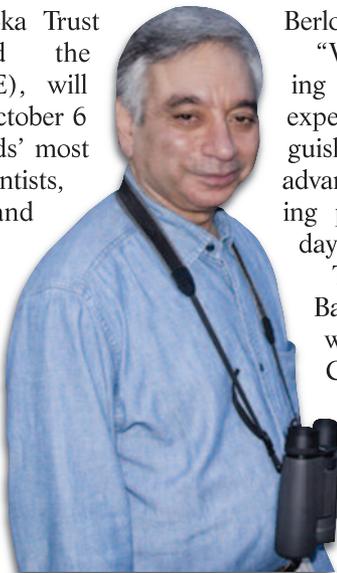
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## Indian-born scientist elected to prestigious US academy

**I**ndian-born Kamaljit Singh Bawa, a distinguished Professor of Biology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, has been elected a member of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Bawa, founder and president of Bangalore based Ashoka Trust for Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), will join the academy on October 6 with some of the worlds' most influential artists, scientists, scholars, authors and leaders.

Besides sustainability expert Bawa, others elected to the Academy in public affairs and journalism category are: US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former Tennessee



Kamaljit Singh Bawa

Governor Phil Bredesen, Jr, veteran diplomat R. Nicholas Burns, television journalist Judy Woodruff and *Boston Globe* editor Martin Baron.

"Election to the Academy is both an honor for extraordinary accomplishment and a call to serve," said Academy President Leslie C. Berlowitz.

"We look forward to drawing on the knowledge and expertise of these distinguished men and women to advance solutions to the pressing policy challenges of the day."

The announcement of Bawa's election came as he was receiving the Gunnerus Sustainability Award, world's first major award for sustainability, awarded by the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters. — IANS

## Indian-American linguist wins US academic award

**A**n Indian-American professor, Mohammad Jahangeer Warsi, has been selected as a 2011-12 recipient of the James E. McLeod Faculty Recognition Award by the students of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Previously called the Faculty Awards, this year the ArtSci Council decided to rename the event in honor of one of their biggest supporters James E. McLeod.



Mohammad Jahangeer Warsi

Viewed as a very prestigious honor in academics, the award is given to those who have positively and profoundly influenced the educational experiences of the students at Washington University.

Warsi, a gold medalist linguist from Aligarh Muslim University and a West Bengal Academy award holder, will receive the honor on April 16 at a Recognition Ceremony hosted by the School Council, the undergraduate organization and executive governing body for the College of Arts & Sciences. — IANS

# Heaviest satellite using PSLV launched

**O**n April 26, an Indian rocket successfully launched into orbit a microwave Radar Imaging Satellite (Risat-1) from the spaceport at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. With the launch of Risat-1, India has now joined a select group of nations having such a technology. The indigenously built Risat-1, with a life span of five years, will be used for disaster prediction and agriculture forestry. The high resolution pictures and microwave imaging from Risat-1 could also be used for defense purposes as it can look through the clouds and fog.

At 5.47 a.m., the rocket — Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C19 (PSLV-C19) — standing 44.5 meters tall and weighing 321 tonnes and with a one-way ticket, hurtled toward the skies ferrying the 1,858 kg Risat-1.

The ISRO-made Risat-1 is the heaviest luggage so far ferried by a PSLV since 1993. At around 17 minutes into the flight, PSLV-C19 delivered Risat-1 into a polar circular orbit at an altitude of 480 km and an orbital inclination of 97.552 degrees.

ISRO, with its network of ground stations, monitored its health.

“PSLV-C19 mission is a grand success. This is the 20th successive successful flight of PSLV. India’s first radar imaging satellite was injected precisely into orbit,” ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan said after the launch.

With this launch India joins a select group of nations like the US, Canada, Europe and others to have such an advanced technology. It is a 30 year effort, he added. “With Risat-1 we can now forecast Kharif season,” Radhakrishnan said.

According to Satellite Director N. Valarmathi, Risat-1 can take images in all weather conditions and during day and night. “The satellite has high storage device and other several unique features,” she added.

For ISRO, this is the first launch this fiscal as well as in the calendar year.



The Risat-1 satellite. (Photo: ISRO)

According to Radhakrishnan, the Indian space agency is planning couple of more communication and remote sensing satellites this year.

The ISRO Chairman said the space agency would launch a communication satellite weighing 3.5 tonnes through the Ariane rocket from French Guiana and two PSLV mission later this year.

He said ISRO will send SARAL satellite — an Indo-French initiative — using its PSLV rocket. There will also be the launch of first Indian regional navigational satellite this fiscal.

Speaking about the status of the space agency’s heavy rocket — Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)— that can carry communication satellites, Radhakrishnan said the advanced rocket GSLV Mark III has crossed several milestones and an experimental flight will be made in an year from now.

He said the experimental flight will be to test the rocket systems in the atmospheric flight phase.

The Indian made cryogenic engine is also undergoing several tests.

Meanwhile, the solar panes of

Risat-1 were deployed successfully soon after it was injected into the orbit. According to Radhakrishnan, in three days time the satellite will be taken up to its intended orbit at an altitude of 536 km by firing the on-board motors.

Remote sensing satellites send back pictures and other data for use. India has the largest constellation of remote sensing satellites in the world providing imagery in a variety of spatial resolutions, from more than a meter ranging up to 500 meters, and is a major player in vending such data in the global market.

With 11 remote sensing/earth observation satellites orbiting in the space, India is a world leader in the remote sensing data market. The 11 satellites are TES, Resourcesat-1, Cartosat-1, 2, 2A and 2B, IMS-1, Risat-2, Oceansat-2, Resourcesat-2 and Megha-Tropiques.

Risat-1’s synthetic aperture radar (SAR) can acquire data in C-band and would orbit the earth 14 times a day.

In 2009, ISRO had launched 300 kg Risat-2 with an Israeli built SAR enabling earth observation in all weather, day and night conditions.

With Risat-1, the PSLV rocket has successfully launched 53 satellites out of 54 it carried — majorly remote sensing/earth observation satellites both Indian and foreign.

The rocket that delivered Risat-1 in the space is ISRO’s four stage PSLV’s upgraded variant called PSLV-XL.

The letters XL stand for extra large as the six strap-on motors hugging the rocket at the bottom can carry 12 tonnes of solid fuel as against the base version that has a fuel capacity of nine tonnes.

The PSLV’s four stages are fuelled with solid and liquid propellants. The first and third stages are fuelled by solid fuel, while the second and fourth stages are powered by liquid fuel.

ISRO had used the PSLV-XL variant for its Chandrayaan-1 moon mission in 2008 and for launching the GSAT-12 communications satellite in 2011.

# Chhattisgarh caves: In nature's womb



## Kanger Valley National Park



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**L**ocated near Jagdalpur, in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh and close to the Kutumsar Caves is the Kanger Valley National Park, a biosphere reserve spread over an area of approximately 200 sq km. It derives its name from the Kanger river that flows through it. The park is known for its rich fauna and flora. While touring the Park, there are two other well-known caves one can visit — Kailash Caves and Dandak Caves. Kanger Dhara (seen in the pic), Tirathgarh Waterfalls and Bhaimsa Dhara (a Crocodile Park) are other key attractions.

The best time to visit is during the months of November-June.

### How to reach

**BY ROAD:** Kanger Valley can be approached from Jagdalpur, the district headquarters of Bastar. It is at a distance of about 27 km from Jagdalpur on the Jagdalpur-Konta road. One can also approach the park via Jagdalpur-Sargipal-Jatam-Nianar-Bodal road.

**BY AIR:** Raipur (330 km) is the nearest airport.

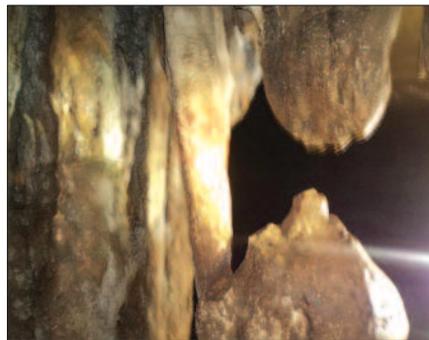
**BY RAIL:** Jagdalpur (27 km) is the nearest railhead and bus stand for the Kanger Valley National Park.

**W**alking down the narrow, steep staircase in a rock crevice surrounded by dense foliage, one enters through a small iron door the pitch dark and intimidating Kutumsar caves. Considered one of the longest caves in the world, the exhilarating journey, which lasts for about an hour, is a must for those seeking an adrenaline rush.

Situated in the Kanger Valley National Park in Bastar, which is around 350 km from the Chhattisgarh capital Raipur, in central India, the caves have been named after the nearby village and are 40 feet deep and an amazing 4,500 feet in length.

The entrance of the cave is extremely narrow and big enough only to crawl through. However, a couple of feet down via the man-made iron staircase the caves open up to be explored with the help of guides equipped with solar lanterns. Once inside, the enigmatic setting will help you play out your Indiana Jones of Hardy Boys fantasies as you walk on the uneven and treacherous rocky surface thrilled by the fear of the unknown. However, breathing in the damp air amidst pitch darkness and echoing sounds does make it a spooky adventure and a strict no-no for the faint-hearted or claustrophobic.

As the torchlight falls on the rocks around, mystifying and vivid stalactite and stalagmite formations on the roofs



(Top) The Kutumsar Cave. (Above) Exquisite stalactite and stalagmite formations on the rocks.

and walls are a visual treat powerful enough to trigger your imagination.

The natural patterns have formed over hundreds of years due to rainwater percolating through small crevices in the rocks. While a pattern on the roof may resemble the eyes of goddess Durga another on the wall may look like an elephant's trunk or a peacock's feathers.

As you move ahead, small water pockets are inhabited by a unique species of fish and frogs which according to the locals are genetically blind.

There are several chambers inside the caves in all directions and in 2011 a new chamber believed to be 410 meters deep was discovered.

However, the guided tour passes through one main cave and venturing into the other chambers is prohibited. Access to the main cave too is limited

to a point owing to lack of oxygen.

At the very end of the main cave lies the naturally formed *Shiva ling* and every year on Maha Shivratri hordes of locals climb down to offer prayers.

According to local folklore, the caves were first discovered in 1951 by tribals who were hunting a porcupine and followed it inside the caves. However, as per the official version, the caves were discovered around 1958 by geographer Shankar Prasad Tiwari.

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## ■ Celebrating Baisakhi



A devotee takes a holy dip at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab to mark the Baisakhi festival on April 13. The festival heralds the Punjabi New Year and the beginning of the harvest season. (AFP Photo)

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