

Section 1

Afghanistan

India remained deeply concerned with the situation in Afghanistan, which directly impacts on our national interests, including our security concerns. The ebb and flow of the civil conflict between the Taliban which was supported and encouraged by Pakistan and the Government of President Rabbani, which we recognise as the legitimate government of Afghanistan was closely monitored by us. The continuation of the civil war principally on account of the intransigence of the Taliban and its foreign mentor, Pakistan, continued to bring great suffering for a people with whom we have historical ties of friendship and cooperation.

The Taliban launched three major campaigns against the forces of the Government of Afghanistan, especially those of Commander Ahmad Shah Masood. These campaigns sought to drive Masood out of Afghanistan. However, Ahmad Shah Masood was able to hold his ground in the Shumali plains as well as north of the Hindukush. During these operations, the Taliban targetted the civilian population, displacing women and children and destroying infrastructure. Such activities can only be completely condemned.

The Taliban controlled areas in Afghanistan emerged as the breeding ground for terrorists and extremist groups and the largest

source of opium production and illegal flow of narcotics in the world, posing a serious threat to the peace and stability of the whole region. For return to peace, normalcy and stable government in Afghanistan which would also help in eliminating these negatives emanating from Afghanistan, it was essential that foreign interference, principally from Afghanistan's southern borders must cease. India remained firm in its belief that there can be no military solution to the Afghan problem and that Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity must be preserved.

India kept in close touch with many countries that have influence and interest in Afghan affairs. It supported the efforts of the UN to bring peace to Afghanistan. However, it was our feeling that the 6+2 format relied upon by the UN as the principal mechanism to bring peace to Afghanistan is inherently flawed on account of its narrow and constricted base.

Notwithstanding our lack of recognition of the Taliban, our strong reservations about its obscurantist ideologies and our opposition to the manner in which it has permitted itself to be manipulated by Pakistan, we established direct contact with the Taliban during the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC-814. The role played by the Taliban during this crisis was noted but we made it clear that the fundamentals of our Afghan policy would not change.

As in previous years, India continued to send humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan both bilaterally and through the UN. To ameliorate the suffering of thousands of Afghan people displaced from the Shumali plains and Takhar province, 1000 tents, 25,500 blankets, 140 tonnes of food items and 15 tonnes of medicines, medical supplies and medical equipment were despatched by eight chartered flights. More consignments of medicines, shelter material and food items will be sent in the coming months.

Iran

India's multifaceted relations with Iran continued to grow. As a part of continuing high-level interaction between the two countries, Minister of External Affairs had a fruitful meeting with Dr. Seyed Kamal Kharrazi, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran at New York on 23 September, 1999 during which all bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest were discussed. Foreign Secretary Shri K. Raghunath paid a visit to Tehran from 31 July-1 August, 1999 to review with his counterpart all bilateral, political, commercial, economic, technical, cultural and consular cooperation. He also exchanged views on regional matters and international issues of common concern.

It was decided that for a more regular and structured consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries, four Working Groups be formed for a more focussed attention on (i) Bilateral, Political and Economic issues; (ii) International & Multilateral Issues; (iii) Research & Sectoral Studies; and (iv) Cultural Cooperation.

was vacated. This was a fact that was well understood by the international community.

The Indian armed forces began Operation Vijay on 26 May 1999 with the objective of completely evicting Pakistan's armed intrusion and aggression. While the Operation was on, the External Affairs Minister also received the Foreign Minister of Pakistan for talks in New Delhi (12 June '99). The Pakistan Foreign Minister was told clearly that Pakistan's armed intrusion and aggression was completely unacceptable, that it constituted a blatant violation of the Line of Control and the Simla Agreement and that there was no question of any talks on this issue without Pakistan first addressing itself to vacating its aggression against India and restoring status quo ante on the LOC. India's outrage at the inhuman and barbaric treatment meted out to our soldiers in Pakistani custody was also conveyed to him. We demanded that those guilty of these atrocities be brought to justice. The Pakistan Foreign Minister was also told that Pakistan's aggression was a grave breach of trust and while its territorial aggression against India would be evicted, it would be extremely difficult to restore the trust and confidence that had been damaged by Pakistan's betrayal.

The international community, while appreciating India's position, also pointed to the irresponsibility of Pakistan's military action and called for the immediate restoration of the LOC. India too emphasised that the LOC was an essential confidence building measure and indispensable for peace and security. Attempts by Pakistan to create doubts about its clarity and validity were not only mischievous, but also extremely dangerous and totally unacceptable to us. We also pointed out that in the 27 years since the LOC had been demarcated and marked on authenticated maps signed by senior military commanders of both India and Pakistan, there had not been single instance of its having been called into question.

The international community was kept continuously briefed of India's position during Operation Vijay. It was a measure of the justness of India's cause that our position found virtually universal

approbation. It also needs to be emphasised that the importance of the inviolability and sanctity of the LOC for maintaining peace and tranquillity was totally accepted by the international community. Pakistan was held as having violated this line and its efforts at terming it as imprecise also failed. The international community also concurred with our assertion that Kargil was a manifestation of the medieval malevolence spilling over from Afghanistan and that there was a need to confront and defeat such impulses, in the interest of not only our region but also of the larger global community.

Throughout its military operations, India acted with unparalleled restraint and scrupulously observed the sanctity of the LOC. In doing so, our armed forces took unusually high casualties, which are a tribute to their discipline and valour. In view of the relentless progress of Indian forces on the ground, Pakistan had no option but to come to an arrangement for withdrawing its troops to its own side of the LOC. In exactly two months' time from the day it had started, Operation Vijay marked one of the great successes in the Indian military history.

Violation of Indian Airspace by Pakistani Aircraft

During the year, Pakistan maintained its pattern of brazen violations of the 1991 Agreement between India and Pakistan on Prevention of Airspace Violations. On 10 August 1999, a Pakistan Navy maritime surveillance-cum-combat Atlantique aircraft intruded repeatedly and deep into Indian territory in the Rann of Kutch area and was shot down by the Indian Air Force fighters when it failed to heed to their signals to land. Part of the wreckage of the aircraft was found inside Indian territory. Pakistan also used missiles on 11 August 1999 to target three Indian helicopters that were ferrying journalists to the crash site. All of these actions are in keeping with Pakistan's wilful violation of confidence building measures.

IC-814 Hijacking

An Indian Airlines aircraft was hijacked to Kandahar by five persons on 24 December, 1999. Government secured the safe release

of passengers, crew and the aircraft in exchange for three terrorists, including a Pakistani national. The hijacking was an example of international terrorism at its worst. There is firm evidence that it was engineered by Pakistan and fundamentalist groups that are based in Pakistan and outside under its command and control. The Indian authorities have also been able to identify the hijackers who are all Pakistanis. Further, the majority of the terrorists whose release was earlier sought by the hijackers were also Pakistanis. The destination of the hijackers as well as of the three released terrorists was Pakistan.

Outlook for Future Relations

It was India that had initiated the composite dialogue process. The Prime Minister's visit to Lahore was a path-breaking attempt to reach out to Pakistan and permanently transform our relations. It was also a manifestation of our desire to take them in a positive and constructive direction. Pakistan embarked on a venture that constituted betrayal of trust and revealed abiding hostility. It would, therefore, be idle to pretend that this experience has not set back India-Pakistan relations. The damage this action has done to mutual relations is compounded by Pakistan's continuing sponsorship of terrorism against India as a matter of state policy.

Pakistan is now effectively under what amounts to martial law following the military coup of 12 October 1999. The coup has implications for our security interests and we have to take this into account. Pakistan needs to restore mutual trust and confidence through concrete and tangible action including the cessation of cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda against India. The sponsorship and instigation of cross-border terrorism by Pakistan in Jammu & Kashmir and elsewhere in India constitutes a violation not only of the LOC but also of the Simla Agreement. It is incumbent upon Pakistan to abjure this brazen encouragement and abetment of terrorism and dismantle the entire network that is set up in Pakistani territory for this purpose. Continuous calls for "jihad" against India can hardly be interpreted as messages for dialogue and peace. The

high-pitched propaganda against India, instances of which are rife in the daily life of Pakistan, do not inspire confidence in Pakistan's interest in dialogue.

These are not preconditions but the very ingredients to foster proper environment for a meaningful interaction between the two countries.

The international community also recognises that all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan should be settled bilaterally in a peaceful manner. There is no place whatsoever for any third-party mediation in this process.

Section 2

Relations with our Eastern and Southern neighbours continued to remain warm and friendly. The thrust of our policy towards this region was to encourage mutually beneficial economic cooperation and contacts at people's level. Several new initiatives were launched to achieve these objectives. Regular contacts were maintained at the political level with a view to strengthening cooperative relations with these countries and to sensitising them on the threat posed to the democratic and social fabric of the region by forces of terrorism and religious extremism.

Bangladesh

India continued to pursue a policy of further expanding and deepening its traditionally close and friendly ties with Bangladesh. There was a regular exchange of high level visits which contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding and goodwill, with an emphasis on economic cooperation.

The Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, accompanied by a delegation which included the External Affairs Minister, Minister for Railways and Surface Transport and Chief Minister of West Bengal visited Dhaka on 19 and 20 June, 1999 on the occasion of the inaugural run of the bus service from Calcutta to Dhaka. The bus service has

been welcomed by the people of the two countries with great joy. It heralds a new dimension in bilateral relations and represents a significant step in facilitating people-to-people interaction between the two countries.

During the visit, Prime Minister held wide ranging discussions with the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh; the discussions covered bilateral, regional and international issues. An Agreement to extend a credit line of Rs.200 crore to Bangladesh, spread over three years was signed. With a view to further enhancing trade, India has agreed in principle to the Bangladeshi request for non-reciprocal duty-free access for select items of export interest to Bangladesh. Both sides also agreed upon the restoration of multi-modal communication links between the two countries which should go a long way in providing the infrastructure necessary to enable economic interaction between India and Bangladesh attain its true potential. Both sides also focussed on the need to provide a framework for border trade. A proposal for the transshipment of Indian goods across Bangladesh by Bangladesh carriers is under the active consideration of the Government of Bangladesh. These issues will be examined by a Joint Group of Experts.

The two Prime Ministers met again on 13 November 1999 on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban.

The Bangladesh Minister for Water Resources, Mr Abdur Razzak, visited India in April 1999 in connection with the 33rd Session of the Joint Rivers Commission. The Joint Committee of Experts on Sharing of Waters of Common Rivers met twice during the year when discussions were held on sharing of Teesta Waters. The Minister for Commerce and Industries of Bangladesh, Mr Tofail Ahmed visited India for bilateral talks on trade issues from 19-24 May 1999. The Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Mr Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, visited India from 9-15 August 1999.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja, visited Dhaka from 20-22 January 2000, when he called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and held fruitful discussions with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Agriculture. His talks with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh covered the entire range of bilateral interactions, with a view to identifying areas for focussed attention in the coming months. An MOU on Agriculture was signed during the visit. An important outcome of the discussions was the decision to start a bus service between Agartala and Dhaka.

Interaction between the armed forces of India and Bangladesh continued with the exchange of a number of high level delegations between the two countries. The Bangladesh Defence Secretary, Mr Mohammed Idris Ali visited India from 12-16 October 1999 along with the Director General (Artillery) of the Bangladesh Army and Assistant Chief of Naval Staff on the occasion of Defexpo-99. The Bangladesh Navy participated in the multilateral exercise MILAN-99 held at Port Blair from 30 March - 4 April 1999. Three Indian Navy ships commanded by Rear Admiral V Bharatan made a goodwill visit to Chittagong from 1-4 November 1999 and carried out a joint exercise for the first time with three Bangladesh Navy ships on 4 November, 1999. As in previous years, a number of armed forces personnel of Bangladesh also received training in India.

As part of the institutional dialogue on various issues relating to border management, the Director General level meeting between the Border Security Force and the Bangladesh Rifles took place in Dhaka from 24-28 October 1999. The Joint Working Group from the respective Home Ministries also met in Dhaka in January 2000.

Secretary level talks on renewal of the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Transit & Trade was held in Dhaka from 26-28 October 1999. The Protocol was renewed upto 3 October 2001. The new Protocol puts in place a framework which will facilitate movement of cargo to the north eastern states. Under the new Protocol, Calcutta,

Haldia, Pandu and Karimganj on the Indian side and Narayanganj, Sirajganj, Khulana and Mongla on the Bangladesh side have been designated as Ports of Call. The Protocol also provides for steps to ensure equal sharing of inter-country and transit cargo by the ships of the two countries to and from ports of call/customs stations including extended places of loading and unloading.

Maintaining the tradition of close and active interaction in the field of education, India provided training facilities and scholarships to Bangladeshi candidates under various schemes. A series of cultural programmes by Indian artistes were also organized in Bangladesh. A number of cultural programmes including film shows, art-exhibitions, music concerts etc. were also organised by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka with the participation of local artistes from Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka

India's relations with Sri Lanka continued to be cordial and friendly. India expressed its consistent support for a peaceful settlement of the ethnic conflict within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. India views the ethnic issue as complicated and best be resolved by Sri Lanka itself.

The Minister of State (EA), Shri A.K. Panja, led an Indian delegation to Colombo in November 1999 to represent India at the State sponsored funeral of late Mr. S. Thondaman, CWC Leader and Minister of Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure. Mr. Thondaman was the leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress and was held in high regard by the Indian Tamil Community in Sri Lanka.

As a follow up to the signing of India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement in December, 1998, an Indian delegation led by the Commerce Secretary visited Colombo in May, 1999 and held discussions with the Sri Lankan delegation led by Secretary to the Treasury. The talks were inconclusive. After a further round of talks in New Delhi in February 2000, letters were exchanged by which all

pending matters were resolved. The operationalisation of the FTA will take place on March 1, 2000.

The Sri Lankan Defence Secretary visited India in August, 1999 and had detailed discussions with the Defence Secretary and the Foreign Secretary. The discussions were focussed on security related matters including training of Sri Lankan defence personnel in India and the problems faced by Indian fishermen in the Palk Straits area.

Lt. Gen. Chandra Sekhar, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Vice Chief of Army Staff, represented India at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Sri Lankan Army held in Colombo from 9-12 October, 1999.

The India-Sri Lanka Foundation was inaugurated by the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar in Colombo on 19 November 1999, in pursuance of the MOU establishing the India-Sri Lanka Foundation signed during the visit of the Sri Lankan President to India in December, 1998. The Foundation would focus on promotion of cultural and educational ties between the two countries.

Maldives

India-Maldives relations have been close and friendly. India attaches the highest importance to its relations with the Maldives and is committed to cooperate with the Maldives in its developmental efforts especially in the human resource development and health sectors. During the year 1999, a number of visits were exchanged between the two countries to strengthen cooperation in various areas including medicine, meteorology and customs cooperation.

A Tripartite Agreement between India, Maldives and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was signed on 22.12.1999, under which IGNOU will launch Distance Education programmes in the Maldives. Another Tripartite Agreement between India, Maldives and the Educational Consultants India Limited has been signed to facilitate tailor-made courses in India for Maldivian students.

A two-member delegation from the Indian Meteorological Department visited Male from 22 - 30 June 1999 in connection with the upgradation of the Meteorological Data Reception Centre at Male. The Centre was commissioned by Hon'ble Abdulla Majeed, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Housing and Environment of the Government of Maldives from June 28, 1999.

The Fourth Joint Indo-Maldives Coast Guard Exercises under the Dosti series was conducted from October 4-8, 1999.

Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Health of Maldives visited India from 22-24 April 1999. During his stay in India, he was called on by the Health Secretary and Foreign Secretary, when ongoing bilateral cooperation in the health sector was discussed.

Myanmar

India continued to pursue a policy of constructive engagement with Myanmar with a view to strengthening the existing ties and broad-basing and diversifying areas of contact and cooperation. General Maunge Aye, Vice Chairman, State Peace and Development Council, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Defence Forces and Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Army, visited Shillong from 7-8 January 2000, at the invitation of our Chief of Army Staff, who visited Myanmar from 6-7 January 2000. He led a high level delegation comprising of Ministers and senior officials. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss a wide range of bilateral issues including control of cross border insurgency, threat posed by religious fundamentalism, trade and economic relations, travel linkages, tourism and cross border projects in areas such as power, mining, etc. The Indian delegation for the talks with General Maunge Aye was led by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Murasoli Maran and included the Minister for Power, Shri R. Kumaramangalam. The two sides have agreed upon specific steps to strengthen economic and security cooperation.

Following a series of exchanges between the scientific

communities of the two countries, an Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science & Technology was concluded during the visit of the Myanmar Minister for Science and Technology to India in June 1999. The Heads of Survey Departments of India and Myanmar met in Yangon (10-13 November), when, besides issues pertaining to maintenance of boundary pillars along the 1643 Km international border between India and Myanmar, the possibilities of cooperation in the field of cartography were also discussed. The first ever visit to India by a Naval Chief from Myanmar (14-20 November) laid the foundation for closer interaction between the Navies of the two countries.

India continued to cooperate with the Government of Myanmar in its developmental efforts, including human resource development. Technical teams from India visited Myanmar to assess the potential for cooperation in areas such as power and to determine road and riverine linkages between the North East and Myanmar. A sustained dialogue on issues relating to border management was maintained between senior civilian and army officials through established institutional mechanisms. The 6th India-Myanmar National Level Meeting, at the level of Home Secretaries was held in New Delhi (July 28-30), and the 9th India-Myanmar Sectoral Level Meeting, at the level of Joint Secretaries, was held in Kohima (11-13, November). These meetings addressed issues such as border management, promotion of trade and travel through land route, etc.

Section 3

India's traditional friendship and cooperation with its northern neighbours, Bhutan and Nepal, has continued to grow over the years. Bhutan and Nepal are our closest neighbours, and this closeness is evident in our common social values, traditions, extensive people to people contacts, and wide ranging economic linkages. Our focus over the year has been on mutually beneficial economic development, which would help to improve the living conditions of people in the three

countries, and particularly of the people living on both sides of the open India-Nepal and India-Bhutan border.

Nepal

Several initiatives were taken to further strengthen our interaction with Nepal, and to consolidate the close and multifaceted cooperation between the two countries.

The Foreign Minister of Nepal, Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, paid an official visit to India from 17-19 August 1999. During the visit, Dr. Mahat called on the President and Prime Minister of India, besides meeting his counterpart, the External Affairs Minister of India. Although the visit was primarily for consultations on matters relating to SAARC, it also provided an opportunity for exchange of views on bilateral issues of mutual interest.

At the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Nepal, the External Affairs Minister, Shri Jaswant Singh paid an official visit to Nepal from 8-11 September 1999. The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of their respective governments not to allow their respective territories to be used for activities prejudicial to the security of the other. They directed their Survey Officials to complete the demarcation of the Boundary in a time bound manner. The visit provided an opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations between Nepal and India. A Joint Press Statement was issued at the conclusion of the visit, announcing the various decisions taken to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries. A decision was taken to revive the India-Nepal Joint Commission and expand cooperation in development of infrastructure, including transportation and communications in the adjoining border districts of Nepal and India, exchange information and experience in the field of socioeconomic development between the Planning Commissions of the two countries, and set up a Joint Task Force on Flood Control and Flood Forecasting.

Two prestigious Government of India-assisted projects in the

health sector in Nepal, the B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) at Dharan and the Maternity & Neo-natal Intensive Care Units at Paropkar Hospital in Kathmandu were inaugurated and formally handed over to the Nepalese authorities.

Other high level visits during the period under review include, the visit of a 6-member Nepalese delegation led by, Mr. Bishwa Man Shrestha, the Election Commissioner of Nepal, from September 29 to October 7, 1999, to observe the last phase of the 13th Lok Sabha elections and meet the Chief Election Commissioner and other senior officials in the Election Commission of India.

The Nepalese Minister of State for Science & Technology of Nepal, Mr. Surendra Prasad Chowdhury visited India from 17-21 November 1999 to attend the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Space Application for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific held in New Delhi. His visit, and meetings with our Minister for Human Resource Development and Science & Technology and Minister of State for Science & Technology of India, has paved the way for bilateral cooperation in the field of Science and Technology.

The Nepalese Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Chakra Prasad Bastola visited New Delhi from 22-24 November, 1999. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss possibilities of mutual cooperation in the field of Agriculture in pursuance of the Bilateral MOU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture.

The 12th Meeting of the Joint Group of Experts on the Pancheshwar Multi-Purpose Project was held in New Delhi from 3-5 August 1999 to finalise the modalities for setting up of a Joint Project Office (JPO) in Kathmandu and other field offices and preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) within a timeframe of two years from the date of opening of the JPO. Both Governments have approved the modalities worked out and the Joint Project Office and field offices are expected to commence work shortly.

The 10th Meeting of the Standing Committee on Inundation Problems between Nepal and India was held in Kathmandu from 1-5 November 1999. The two sides discussed measures to expedite solutions to the recurring problems of inundation along the India-Nepal border. Both sides agreed to expedite the construction of embankments on Lalbakeya, Bagmati, Kamia and Khando rivers and cooperate on preparation of a “Master Plan for Basin- Wise Management of Flood and Inundation Problems” in respect of Kosi and other river basins in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which originate in Nepal.

The 22nd Meeting of the Joint Technical Level India-Nepal Boundary Committee (JTC) was held in Kathmandu from 2-4 November 1998. At the Meeting, the two sides reviewed the progress in the implementation of the decisions taken at the 21st JTC Meeting and finalised the work plan for expeditious completion of re-identification of the India - Nepal Boundary, in a time bound manner, by 2002. Final preparation of strip-maps and finalization of modalities for periodic inspection and maintenance of the India Nepal Boundary would be completed by 2003.

The 4th Director General level talks on Customs Cooperation were held in New Delhi from December 1-3, 1999. The two sides reviewed the implementation of decisions taken at the 3rd DG level meeting and agreed to further enhance the ongoing bilateral cooperation to monitor and effectively combat unauthorised trade across the open India-Nepal Border.

A Joint India Nepal Coordination meeting was held, in Kathmandu from December 9-10, 1999, to finalise the technical modalities for energising the 132 KV Tanakpur-Mahendranagar line to supply 70 million units of energy per annum, free of cost, to Nepal, in accordance with India’s commitment under the Mahakali Treaty. It was agreed to commence the power supply with effect from January 1, 2000.

The Commerce Secretary Level Inter-Governmental Committee Meeting, to review the implementation of the India-Nepal Treaty of Trade, and India -Nepal Treaty of Transit was held from December 9-11, 1999 in New Delhi. The meeting enabled both sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral trade relations and take appropriate measures to ensure smooth implementation of the two Treaties.

India attaches high priority to the development of economic and commercial ties with Nepal. Engagement in Nepal’s economic development in diverse areas has increased over the years. Major projects being funded by the Government of India in Nepal include the construction of 22 bridges on the Kohalpur-Mahakali sector of the East-West Highway, construction of an Emergency and Trauma Centre at Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, construction of Raxaul-Sirsiya Rail Link, construction of Tanakpur-Mahendranagar Link Road and several other projects that form part of India’s commitment under the Mahakali Treaty. A High Level Tasks Force (HLTF) monitors the progress in bilateral relations and oversees Indian assisted projects in Nepal.

Initiatives taken by the Government of India to liberalise the trade and investment regime with Nepal have imparted considerable momentum to bilateral economic exchanges in the recent years. Nepal’s exports to India have tripled in the last three years, since the conclusion of the renewed Treaty of Trade in 1996, and are expected to touch the Rs. 1000 Crores per annum mark in the near future. Indian investments account for over 40% of the total foreign investments in Nepal. Bilateral trade during 1998-99 amounted to Rs. 1225.56 Crores. During the period April-July 1999, the two-way trade was Rs. 461.24 crores, while the figure for the corresponding period in the previous year was Rs. 304.26 Crores.

A large number of Nepalese students continued to avail of academic and training facilities in India. Several scholarship schemes, such as the Silver Jubilee Scholarship, ITEC Scholarships and the

BP Koirala Foundation Scholarships supplemented normal scholarships being provided under 'Aid to Nepal' and TCS of Colombo Plan besides the self-financing opportunities for studies in India offered by the Government of India to Nepalese students in diverse fields, notably engineering, medicine and in the field of advanced and modern technology. Specific professional training and orientation programmes were also conducted for select candidates from Nepal under the Nepal Aid Scheme. A large number of Nepalese students were also admitted to schools and colleges in India as a special concession.

An Indian Airlines flight IC-814 with 178 passengers and 11 crew members on board, which took off from Kathmandu for Delhi on 24th December, was hijacked by 5 armed men at 17.10 hrs. while over-flying Lucknow. All the hostages were released on 31st December in exchange of three jailed militants. There was one casualty during the hijacking. The two countries are in touch with each other to fully investigate the hijacking.

The Third Meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Working Group on Border Management (JWG) was held in Kathmandu from 1-3 Feb, 2000. The two sides reiterated their determination not to permit the use of their respective territories for activities directed against the other. They reviewed the developments since the last meeting of the JWG and had an exchange of views on modalities for more effective management and regulation of the India-Nepal border. They agreed to strengthen cooperation to control undesirable activities and the movement of terrorists, criminals and other undesirable elements across the border. It was reiterated that the privilege of unimpeded access across the open border enjoyed by the nationals of the two countries should not be allowed to be misused by anyone, including third country nationals.

Bhutan

The relations between India and Bhutan are marked by mutual

understanding and respect and warm friendship. The mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the two countries has been steadily growing and continues to provide a firm basis to bilateral relationship.

As part of our close bilateral cooperation, India has been extending assistance to Bhutan's Five-Year Plans since 1961. The VIII Five-Year Plan (1997 - 2002) is under implementation. The Government of India approved Rs. 900 Crores as India's commitment towards Bhutan's VIII Plan. Of this total commitment, Rs.500 Crores is for project-tied assistance and the remaining Rs. 400 Crores would be provided as development subsidy to Bhutan. Separately, besides the regular assistance under the Five-Year Plan, India is also funding three Mega Projects i.e. the Tala Hydroelectric Project (THEP), the Kurichu Hydroelectric Project (KHEP) and the Dungsum Cement Project (DCP). The financing pattern for both the Tala and Kurichu Projects is 60% as grant and 40% as loan.

The last round of bilateral cooperation talks was held in May 1999 in Thimpu. At the conclusion of the bilateral talks, an indicative shelf of projects for disbursement of funds for the year 1999-2000 was formulated. Out of the total Indian assistance of Rs.190 Crores under the Non-Plan category for the year 1999-2000, an amount of Rs. 136 Crores had been released by the end of October.

During the year, various high level visits have marked the continuing close interaction and friendship between India and Bhutan.

Army Staff visited Bhutan in September and met with his counterparts in Bhutan. The 7th Joint Technical Level Meeting on the Bilateral Survey Collaboration Project was held in Thimpu in June 1999. Shri Opak Amang, Minister of State for Tourism visited Bhutan from June 19-25, 1999. Bhutan's Minister of Trade and Industry visited India from October 11-14, 1999 to attend the project authorities meetings held in New Delhi. The Foreign Secretary of Bhutan, Dasho Ugyen Tshering visited India from January 22-27, 2000 to attend an international seminar. The Chief Justice of Bhutan, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye visited India from January 25-31, 2000 to participate in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Supreme Court of India. These regular and high level interactions between the two countries continue to reflect the special and friendly ties between the two countries.

A notable and important internal development during the period under review was that at the instance of His Majesty, the King of Bhutan, the Seventy Seventh Session of the National Assembly of Bhutan re-empowered the King of Bhutan to take all necessary measure to tackle the ULFA-BODO insurgency problem in South Bhutan.

The Indian community in Bhutan is estimated to be around 15000. Many officials from both public and private sector are on deputation to Bhutan and engaged in various development projects. India also extends various facilities to Bhutan in the field of higher education, survey, training and technical assistance.

SAARC

Overview

Regional Cooperation, particularly economic cooperation under the SAARC framework, gained momentum in the first half of the year. Several initiatives, crucial for the success of any regional organisation, were taken in regional economic cooperation. For the first time, intensive consultations amongst the SAARC countries to evolve a common strategy prior to the WTO Meeting in Seattle were

held, and a SAARC Joint Statement issued. The Terms of Reference for a Treaty on the establishment of a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) were finalised by the Committee of Experts set up at the 10th SAARC Summit at Colombo. This initiative was in addition to the tariff concessions granted under the Third Round of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), which covered 3456 tariff lines under concessional tariffs, with India offering more than half the concessions. SAARC also began work on harmonizing Quality and Measurement Standards, which will facilitate intra-regional trade flows. India accords priority to the objectives and ideals of SAARC – promoting and accelerating cooperation in social and economic areas. The quickening of the pace of economic cooperation constitutes a major advance for SAARC and is expected to contribute to the operationalisation of the SAARC Free Trade Area.

India took initiative in offering Distance education scholarships to students from the SAARC countries. NGOs were increasingly involved in undertaking activities in diverse fields under the overall SAARC umbrella, and were supported by the Ministry.

However, events in the second half of the year cast a shadow over the gathering momentum in regional cooperation. The military coup in Pakistan on October 12, 1999 necessitated postponement of the 11th SAARC Summit (scheduled for November 26-28, 1999 in Kathmandu), as SAARC countries expressed their concern at the prospect of holding the Summit after the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of a Member State.

SAARC Foreign Ministers Meeting

SAARC Foreign Ministers met on the margins of the 54th Session of the UNGA in New York on September 28, 1999 and discussed the Report of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP), set up at the Ninth SAARC Summit at Male, in May 1997 to review the functioning of SAARC institutions and provide a Perspective Plan upto the year 2020. These were followed by Ministerial level dialogues with the

EU-Troika and ASEAN where areas for possible cooperation were considered.

SAARC Conference on Intellectual Property Rights

A SAARC Conference on Intellectual Property Rights, held in New Delhi from April 20-21, 1999, discussed regional cooperation in promoting awareness among the SAARC countries of issues relating to the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). The Conference agreed on setting up a Technological Information Network to streamline and improve procedures for disposing of patent applications, and called for the development of model regional IPR regimes and traditional-knowledge databases, and for enhanced protection for traditional knowledge. It also recommended developing

agriculture and food products, should be accorded priority in regional harmonisation of standards. The Quality Council of India was mandated to prepare a draft common format for a Mutual Recognition Agreement for Conformity Assessment, for the consideration of SAARC Member States. The National Physical Laboratory of India would prepare a status report on the Testing, Measurement and Calibration facilities in the region. A draft Regional Action Plan for furthering cooperation was also adopted, to be considered at the next meeting of the SAARC Commerce Secretaries.

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

The First SAARC Meeting on an Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation was held in Islamabad from August 5-7, 1999. The Meeting discussed tax laws of member countries, different variants of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements and possible areas for regional cooperation.

South Asian Development Fund

The Fourth Meeting of the Governing Board of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) took place in Thimpu from May 18-19, 1999. India is the current Chairman of the Fund. The Fund consists of 3 Windows for funding techno-economic feasibility studies, Human Resources Development, and infrastructure sectors. The Meeting discussed mobilisation of funds from regional and multilateral agencies for augmenting the Fund's core capital. The Meeting also established a Technical Committee to examine the proposal for setting up a permanent Secretariat for the SADF. The Fifth Governing Board Meeting of the SADF, which met from September 8-9, 1999 approved the report of the Technical Committee, which has recommended that a Permanent Secretariat would be desirable. Both these proposals – for augmenting the funds and for a permanent Secretariat would now be considered by the higher bodies of SAARC.

Technical Committee Meetings

Communications

The Sixth Meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on

Communications was held in Islamabad from 4-5 May, 1999, and reviewed implementation of the Plan of Action on Telecommunications adopted by the First Meeting of the SAARC Communication Ministers in May, 1998. A Focus Group for consideration of tariffs, accounting rates, traffic patterns, etc. was constituted. The Meeting strongly recommended laying of optical fiber lines for digitalisation and increased band-width. A regional directory of training institutions, course outlines, experts and consultants in the field of telecommunications is to be prepared. India offered to organise a Regional Workshop on Induction of Technology in Postal Services during the current year.

Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare

The 17th Meeting of the SAARC Technical Committee on Health, Population Activities and Child Welfare, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from August 12-14, 1999, discussed a Draft Convention for Children. The National Institute of Communicable Diseases in India would collate and disseminate information about institutions dealing with communicable and non-communicable diseases. India also offered to circulate a list of our Institutes and the courses they offer in dealing with Disaster Management.

SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism

A meeting of Legal Officers on the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism held in Kandy, Sri Lanka from June 17-18, 1999, reviewed the implementation of the Convention. Under its provisions, Member States are committed to extradite or prosecute alleged terrorists, thus preventing them from enjoying safe havens. It was agreed that those Member States which have not yet done so should enact legislation at an early date to give comprehensive effect to the Convention. The Meeting also agreed on the Draft Guidelines for the Annual Liaison Officers' Meeting to review issues relating to the Convention.

Workshop on Follow up Action on the Fourth World Conference on Women

A Workshop on Follow up Action on the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Platform For Action) was held in New Delhi from September 28-29, 1999. The Member countries presented their country position on the areas identified by the Beijing Platform for Action, discussed the situation of the Girl Child and gender related inputs for the proposed SAARC Social Charter, and adopted recommendations for regional cooperation.

Y2K Conference

A two-day Meeting of Senior Officials dealing with Y2K Issues was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from September 25-26, 1999. The Meeting recommended that those members who were prepared for the Y2K problem, especially in the critical area of Power, should offer technical assistance for mitigation of the Y2K impact.

Meeting of the Heads of National TV & Radio Organisations

The First Meeting of the Heads of National TV & Radio organisations of SAARC countries was held on October 14, 1999 in New Delhi against the background of plummeting audience interest in the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange Committee (SAVE) Programmes. The Meeting recommended the introduction of ‘shorts’ on radio (90 second messages on radio) and ‘spots’ (20 second messages on TV) in addition to the existing SAVE format. India offered to host a workshop on the issue. Environment, Social Development, Women’s Empowerment, Health and Education have been chosen as themes for the spots/shorts. It was also agreed to set up a mechanism for daily exchange of news items for both Radio and TV. India had informally offered to prepare a proposal for the Mechanism.

Meeting of SAARC Audio Visual Exchange Committee

The 18th Meeting of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange

Committee, held in New Delhi from October 15-16, 1999 selected Radio and TV Programmes for SAVE broad/telecasts. The Committee previewed the documentary on SAARC to be telecast simultaneously in all countries on the eve of the 11th Summit prepared by the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, India, decided to hold a SAARC Radio Music Festival, and also decided to intensify cooperation in the field of electronic media.

NGO Meetings

A Meeting of South Asian Countries on Tea Cooperation, held in New Delhi from May 6-7, 1999, discussed marketing and production issues, and decided to launch a generic regional tea promotion and to form the Tea Association of South Asia (TASA). The Tea Board of India will host the secretariat of TASA temporarily till permanent arrangements are made.

Workshop on International Conventions on Land Transport Facilitation

A Workshop on “International Conventions on Land Transport Facilitation” was organised by the Asian Institute of Transport Development from May 19 - 21, 1999 in New Delhi. The Workshop deliberated on – the various international, regional and bilateral conventions in the transport sector, the legal framework for transport facilitation, and regional rail logistics. It also considered the various non-physical barriers and issues in cross-border movement of goods and passengers – like customs, visa formalities, regulation of transshipment of goods and vehicles in transit. ESCAP had also submitted a proposal for conducting studies in the Transportation sector for SAARC, including the holding of workshops to sensitize the SAARC member countries about the benefits of acceding to International Conventions. India has acceded to two such conventions.



South East Asia and the Pacific

India's relations with the countries of South East Asia have traditionally been close and warm as we share a common historical and cultural legacy. After the end of the cold war and since the introduction of economic reforms in India, there has been a renewed vigour in our relationship with the countries of the South East Asian region. India's "Look East" policy and country's potential as a major market have contributed significantly towards expanding and diversifying India's relations with the ASEAN region. The closeness of the relationship is reflected in regular exchanges of high level visits, like the recent visit of the President of Vietnam (December 1-5 1999), the visit of the PM of Singapore (January 2000), the President of Indonesia (February 2000) and the PM of Cambodia (February 2000) to India, Joint Commission meetings with Vietnam and Laos, and Foreign Office Consultations with the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia etc.

India became ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partner in 1992 and Full Dialogue Partner as well as a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996. The growing ties with the ASEAN have further developed in the recent years. The dialogue partnership with the ASEAN has enabled India to significantly broaden and diversify its relationship with the ASEAN member countries. The ASEAN countries have recognised the positive role that India can play in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

India has a fundamental interest in the regional security issues as we share maritime boundaries with several ASEAN countries and land and maritime boundary with Myanmar. India sought to promote a wider and deeper contact with the ASEAN countries in the ASEAN and ARF framework, to promote peace, development and security in the region. Shri Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister led an Indian delegation to the 32nd ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) and the 6th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meetings held in Singapore in July 1999, and held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from the ASEAN and the ARF member countries.

Currently, India is closely collaborating with the South East Asian countries in various fields such as trade and investment, science and technology, tourism, human resources and infrastructure development. Such linkages are expected to intensify in the coming years. Through the institution of dialogue partnership with ASEAN, attempts are being made to identify areas for focussed interaction, including formulation of concrete work programmes and action plans.

The total bilateral trade between India and the ASEAN countries has increased from about US\$ 2.5 billion in 1993-94 to US\$ 5.98 bn. in 1997-98 and \$ 5.36 bn in 1998-99. With the regional economic crisis having bottomed out, India hopes to increase trade both in terms of quantity and value with the ASEAN countries and also enhance mutual investments.

Malaysia

India-Malaysia relations were further strengthened with high level political exchanges and initiatives in the defence, commercial economic and cultural fields.

A delegation led by Shri M. Karunanidhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu visited Malaysia (7-10 January, 1999) and called on the Malaysian Prime Minister. A delegation led by Shri Ananth Kumar, Minister of Civil Aviation & Tourism visited Malaysia from 8-10 February 1999. Dr. (Mrs.) Najma Heptullah, Dy. Chairperson, Rajya Sabha, met the Speaker of the Malaysian Parliament and Head of Senate during her visit to Malaysia (August 4-5). The Speakers of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and Punjab Legislative Assembly visited Malaysia from 8-10 August and 3-6 October 1999 respectively. Justice S.B. Majumdar, Judge of Supreme Court and Shri Soli Sorabjee, Attorney General of India participated in the 12th Commonwealth Law Conference (13-16 September).

INS 'Krishna' and INS 'Tir' arrived at Penang Port (26-30 March) on a goodwill visit to Malaysia. India participated in the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition held in the Island of Langkawi from 30 November - 5 December, 1999.

The economic & commercial cooperation between the two countries has been growing. Malaysia has emerged as India's largest trading partner (over US \$ 1891 million two-way trade during 1998-99) among the ASEAN countries as well as a significant foreign direct investor country in India (first among ASEAN countries and eighth globally, in terms of approvals as on 31.12.1998- total approvals from 1991-98 Rs. 54444.74 millions).

An Indian company IRCON was awarded US \$ 121 mn Rail Link Project to Pelabuhan Tanjung Pelepas Johar in July, 99. Another major development (June 1999) was an agreement for purchase by

India of 50,000 barrels per day of crude oil signed between the Indian Oil Corporation and Malaysian company Petronas.

From the Malaysian side, Dato Seri Samy Vellu, Minister for works visited India (19-21 April) at the invitation of the Govt. of Punjab and again in December 1999 to participate in INFRANET 99. Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, Malaysian Primary Industries Minister led an economic and technical mission to India (April, 99)

Singapore

India's existing close and friendly relations with Singapore were further strengthened during the year. External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh had a bilateral meeting with his counterpart Prof. S. Jayakumar in Singapore in July when he led the Indian delegation to the 6th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Post Ministerial Conference. Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Dr. Najma Heptullah visited Singapore in August and had meetings with Singapore Parliament Speaker, Mr. Tan Soo Khoo and Senior Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Arts, Mr. Yatiman Yusof. Minister of Power, Shri PR Kumaramangalam attended the World Economic Forum's East Asia Summit held in Singapore from 18-20 October, 1999. Singapore PM Goh Chok Tong had a meeting with our PM on 15th November, 1999 at Durban, South Africa on the margins of CHOGM.

Official level visits included that of Secretary (ER) Shri S.T. Devare who visited Singapore in May to attend the 6th ARF Senior Officials meeting, the visit of Shri Deepak Chatterjee, Secretary, Ministry of Chemicals and Petrochemicals (May), to discuss with the Jurong Town corporation the structure and operations of the petrochemical complex set up by them on Jurong Island.

Visits from State Governments included that of the Minister for Municipal Affairs of Manipur, Shri I. Hemochandra Singh (April) to attend the World Conference of Model Cities, a business delegation

from Andhra Pradesh led by Shri P. Chandrasekhar, Minister of Major Industries, Commerce & Export Promotion (April) and accompanied by Shri GSS Sivaji, Minister for Tourism, Shri H.D. Revenna, Minister for Housing, Government of Karnataka and Chairman, Karnataka Milk Federation (June).

A Singapore-India Colloquium titled “the Management of Globalisation” was organised in Singapore from August 19-20 by the newly established South Asian Studies Programme of the National University of Singapore in collaboration with India International Centre, New Delhi.

From the Singapore side, the National Science and Technology Board of Singapore sent a delegation to India in September 1999. During their stay in India, the delegation members had useful meetings with various colleges and universities regarding possibilities of long-term collaboration between the Singaporean and Indian companies and institutions.

During the year 1998-99, India-Singapore bilateral trade amounted to US\$ 1884.42 million with a decline of 4.7% over the previous year. Our exports at US \$ 520 million during this period declined by about 33.3% while imports grew by 13.9%. Trends during April-August (1999) indicate a growth of 40.29 per cent in our exports at US \$ 266.64 million whereas imports during this period amounted to US \$ 619.47 million with a marginal decline of 1.26%.

There were also some Defence related visits to Singapore which included the visit of the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar (16-19 October, 1999), the Vice Chief of Naval Staff to participate in the international Maritime Defence Expo (3-8 May, 99) and the Vice-Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen. Chandra Shekhar to attend the first Pacific Army Chiefs Conference co-hosted by Singapore and the US, 5-9 September, 1999).

Singapore Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong visited India from Jan. 17-22, 2000. This was his third visit to India. He had meetings

with the President and the Prime Minister, and addressed a CII meeting in New Delhi. He visited Hyderabad to see the Hitech city, inaugurated the IT Park in Bangalore and also visited Chennai. During the meetings of the Minister of Finance as well as the Minister of Information Technology with PM GCT it was agreed to set up two Joint Task Forces for Finance and IT sectors. Singapore PM's visit to India after five years underlined the renewed interest that Singapore attaches to cooperation with India and it should provide the necessary impetus to further expand India-Singapore relations.

Brunei

Bilateral relations with Brunei Darussalam continued to be cordial and friendly.

Ongoing efforts were sustained for further upgradation of bilateral relations and cooperation. Our External Affairs Minister held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Brunei during ARF/ASEAN PMC meetings in Singapore in July 1999. Brunei's Minister for Education & Health, who is also the Chairperson of the Brunei Investment Agency (BIA), visited India in July. A first ever high technical level visit from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces to India, in November 1999, may lead to initiating tangible bilateral cooperation in the defence field, particularly training.

Bilateral trade remained low, but not insignificant, with US\$ 3.31 million as Brunei's imports from India during 1998-99. In areas like software and IT, civil and electrical projects for construction, supply and consultancy, and in the important petrochemicals sector reputed Indian companies made some further progress towards forging economic and commercial ties with Brunei.

Philippines

The relations between India and the Philippines continued to be cordial and friendly.

The 4th round of the Indo-Philippines Foreign Office consultations were held in New Delhi on 29th June 1999. The Philippine delegation was led by Undersecretary Lauro L. Baja and the Indian delegation was led by Shri S.T. Devare, Secretary (ER). The consultations covered the whole range of bilateral relations besides regional and international issues.

India participated in the CINEMAILA International Film Festival held from July 3-10, 1999. Seven Indian films were screened during the Festival. The Tamil Film "The terrorist" was awarded the grant jury prize. Shri Adoor Gopalakrishnan, the noted film director from India, was a guest of the Festival authorities.

The Defence Secretary (Minister) Mr. Orlando Mercado visited India from October 11-13, 1999. He led the Philippine delegation to DEFEXPO INDIA 1999.

India-Philippines trade continued to show a downward trend during the year. India's exports to the Philippines at US \$ 76.61 million from January to July, 1999 represented a decline of 15.01% in comparison to exports during the same period last year. The decrease is mainly attributed to effects of the regional financial crisis on the Philippines economy.

The India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) in conjunction with the Embassy organised (October 15-November 15, 1999) a promotion of Indian goods at the Rustan's department store and supermarket. A wide variety of Indian goods ranging from handicrafts to processed food had been displayed.

On January 28, 2000 India and the Philippines signed in Manila, a Bilateral Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments. MOS (Finance/Revenue) signed the Agreement, on behalf of India. The Agreement would help in promotion of bilateral investments in the two countries.

Thailand

During the year, relations between India and Thailand were marked by traditional warmth and friendliness. Bilateral cooperation continued at a normal pace in all fields. Besides, relations developed within the framework of India-ASEAN dialogue partnership, India's membership of the ASEAN Regional Forum as well as in the framework of BIMST-EC.

The declining trend seen in the last two years in bilateral trade seemed to have been arrested in 1999 as exports from India during the period January to July already reached a figure of US \$ 253 million and imports from Thailand during the period were in order of US \$ 234 million.

Minister of State for External Affairs Smt. Vasundhara Raje paid an official visit to Thailand from July 6-9, 1999. During her stay, the MOS (VR) held discussions on bilateral as well as other matters of mutual concern, with Dr. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. She also paid a courtesy call on PM Chuan Leekpai.

Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha Dr.(Mrs.) Najma Heputullah also visited Bangkok in July 1999 to seek Thai support for her candidature as the President of the International Parliament Union (IPU).

Vice President of India and his delegation was in transit for a day in Bangkok on its way to Mongolia having arrived in Bangkok on August 24, 1999. During his stay in Bangkok, the Vice-president had a meeting with the Crown Prince of Thailand, at his Palace.

Dr. Gautam Arya, a member of the Election Commission of Thailand visited India from September 1-6, 1999 to see the elections and the work of the Election Commission of India.

HE Dr. Arthit Qurairat, Minister Science, Technology and Environment of Thailand visited India from November 15-20, 1999

to participate in the second Ministerial conference on Space Applications in New Delhi. During his stay, he also held bilateral discussions with the Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, for strengthening cooperation in this field.

A 9-member delegation including five Members of Parliament led by Dr. GMC Balyogi, Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha visited Thailand from November 19-24, 1999 to attend the 7th General Assembly of Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development (APPCED) at Chiangmai.

Shri I.K. Gujral, former PM, visited Thailand (25-27 December 1999) in connection with launching of the Thailand Chapter of World Punjabi Organisation and met the Thai Foreign Minister. Indian participation has been organised in a number of cultural activities held in Thailand during the year including Annual Heritage Festival of Thailand in Buri Ram province in January 1999, First Asian Film Festival in March 1999, Bangkok's First International Festival of music & Dance in August 1999, Second International Bangkok Film Festival in September 1999, and the 44th Asia-Pacific Film Festival in November 1999. The Embassy also organised an exhibition of Indian dolls in Bangkok during November 1999 in cooperation with Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand.

India also provided training to Thai nationals under ITEC, Colombo Plan, Cultural Exchange Programme and General Cultural Scholarship schemes. India continued to maintain a Chair of a Sanskrit Professor at the Sanskrit Study Centre, Silpakorn University.

Indonesia

This period saw major political developments in Indonesia. In the general elections held in June, around 100 million Indonesians exercised their franchise.

Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known Gus Dur was elected

President by the new Parliament in October and Megawati Soekarnoputri was elected as the Vice-President.

President Abdurrahman Wahid publicly expressed a desire to forge closer relations with India.

The people of East Timor in a popular consultation, held on 30 August, rejected the autonomy proposal of the Government of Indonesia, thereby indicating their preference for independence. The Indonesian Parliament in October repealed the law incorporating East Timor in Indonesia, thereby initiating the process of its independence. India donated 500 MT of rice to the Government of Indonesia for the East Timorese people who had moved to West Timor in Indonesia. On the East Timor issue, India's principled position and assistance has been appreciated in Indonesia.

Bilateral relations between India and Indonesia which have been traditionally close and cordial continued to progress satisfactorily.

As part of the ongoing effort in that direction, the First meeting of the India-Indonesia Joint Consultative Forum was held in New Delhi from 12-13 November.

In September Dr. Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha visited Indonesia for a workshop sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Rules of Procedures in the House of Representatives. The Rector of the University of Udayana, Prof Ketut Sukardika visited India for strengthening cooperation between Educational institutions of the two countries. The Deputy Naval Chief of Indonesia visited India for the Defexpo 99.

Bilateral trade between the two countries during 1998-99 amounted to Rs. 5211/- crores as compared to Rs.4322/- crores during 1997-98. With a view to strengthening trade relations with Indonesia, various steps were taken. A trade delegation from CHEMEXCIL visited Indonesia in April for increasing the exports of chemical and pharmaceutical items to Indonesia. The Director-

General of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Indonesia visited India in October with a large business delegation.

As a part of promotion of bilateral cultural relations many cultural programs were organised in Indonesia. In August an Indian Food Festival was organised. In September, a Ramayana Ballet team visited Indonesia.

Over 72 Indonesian candidates received training in India under Colombo Plan, ITEC and other schemes. The Minister of State for Research and Technology of Indonesia, Dr. A.S. Hikam visited India to participate in the Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in New Delhi from 15-20 November.

Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesian President visited India from February 8-9, 2000 along with a delegation which included Indonesian Ministers of Mines and Energy, Industry and Trade and Research and Technology. The President held talks with our President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, EAM, MOS for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

After the delegation level talks, an MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism was signed. FICCI hosted a luncheon meeting where the Indonesian businessmen (about 70) had interaction with the Indian businessmen. Two Agreements were signed – (1) on Counter trade between MMTTC and KADIN (the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce) and (2) on a Railway Project between IRCON International (of India) and Mitra Jaya Group (of Indonesia).

At the bilateral talk between EAM and the Indonesian FM, prospects of (a) establishing a Joint Commission, (b) joint exploitation of gas in Indonesia and transporting it to India, (c) supply of electric locomotives from India and (d) setting up of a vocational training centre in Indonesia were discussed.

Laos

India and Laos continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations. Dr. Siene Saphantong, Lao Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, in his capacity as the President of the Lao-India Friendship Association, along with a four-member delegation visited India from 23-30 May, 1999. During the visit, the delegation met the Minister of Agriculture of India Shri Som Pal. The delegation also visited the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), National Dairy Institute and private companies.

Mr. Soubhan Srithirath, Minister in President's Office attended the India-ASEAN Lecture Series from November 21 to 24, 1999.

In pursuance of a Credit Agreement signed in January, 1999 with Lao PDR, for a soft credit of US \$ 2 million to Laos, the State Bank of India and the Bank of Lao PDR executed a Banking Agreement to establish channels for utilisation of Indian credit.

The Lao-India Friendship Association in cooperation with the Mission, organised a Lecture-Seminar on June 24 on the theme "Prospects of growth in Lao-India Economic Cooperation particularly in the field of Agriculture." It was attended by over 200 people. The keynote address was delivered by the Lao Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Dr. Siene Saphanthong.

For the period April-October 1999, 25 officials from the Lao Government came to India under ITEC and Colombo Plan to attend various training programmes. In addition, five Lao students were sent to India-after a gap of many years, to pursue higher studies under the GCSS of ICCR.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Srivastava, Senior Scientist, Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow was deputed under the ITEC programme for a period of one month to assist the Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to draw up a framework and a plan to enlarge sugarcane production in the country.

Dr. Ramanathan, an Indian expert in Animal Husbandry, would be visiting Laos soon, on a three month deputation under the ITEC programme. An Indian medical team is also likely to be deputed on a three-month assignment to Laos.

An Indian food festival was organised in Vientiane from May 25-28, 1999.

Cambodia

Cambodia consolidated its position at home and abroad with donor countries pledging half a billion dollar in aid to Cambodia in 1999. The World Bank, IMF and other lending institutions, e.g., ADB and bilateral donor countries, resumed loans and grants to Cambodia to improve infrastructure, e.g., roads, power generation, port development, etc. Review meetings were held with international donor agencies to monitor aid and evaluate reforms. On April 30, 1999 Cambodia became a full member of ASEAN.

India continued to maintain friendly, warm and close relations with Cambodia. Cambodia supported India's candidatures to various international bodies. Under the ITEC Programme, 30 seats allotted to Cambodia were fully utilised by them. India also made available the services of two legal experts for two weeks in November this year to Cambodia, to advise on drafting laws to deal with cases of genocide. Cambodia was represented by the Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Telecommunications in the Space Applications Conference held in New Delhi in November. Cambodian PM Hun Sen is expected to pay an official visit to India from the 17th to the 19th of February, 2000. Two important agreements; one on setting up of a Joint Commission on Trade and the second on Cultural Exchange Programme are likely to be signed during the visit.

Our bilateral trade during 1998-99 amounted to US \$ 8 million. The major items of our Exports were drugs and pharmaceuticals,

tobacco, chemicals, cotton yarn, fabrics & made-ups, submersible water pumps, farm implementation, silk, bicycles and parts, generator sets, etc. India imported gems and precious stones, wood and wood products and cashew nuts from Cambodia.

Vietnam

The Indian Business Chamber in Vietnam (INCHAM) received an Associate Membership Card from the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Ho Chi Minh City branch on July 23, 1999.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas exploration wing of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, on April 29, 1999 signed two agreements marking the take off of the \$ 1.5 billion Vietnam Gas production project. Other partners in this projects are BP AMOCO and Statoil. On September 29, 1999 an agreement was signed between ONGC Videsh Ltd and PETROVIETNAM. As per the agreement ONGC Videsh Ltd has assigned 10% of its participation interest to PETROVIETNAM, for off shore gas discovered at Lan Tay and Lan Do coast fields.

In May, medicines worth \$ 12000/- were donated by us to the Red Cross of Vietnam for disaster relief.

Formal presentation of the textile machinery (worth half a million dollars) supplied by Lakshmi Machine Works Coimbatore to the Textile Research Institute, Hanoi took place on 21st of August 1999, under the ITEC programme.

APTECH of India and FPT of Vietnam embarked upon Joint establishment of a series of education centres to train Vietnamese software professionals. The FPT-APTECH Education Centres will train a new generation of software programmers of international standards, making them capable of leading Vietnam's effort to leap

into the information age. Two centres, one each at Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi were inaugurated in October..

President of Vietnam, H.E. Mr. Tran Duc Luong paid a State visit to India from 1st to 5th December. He was accompanied by Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Pham Van Tra, Defence Minister, Mr. Do Nguyen Phuong, Health Minister and Vice Ministers from the Departments of Commerce, Finance, Education, Science & Technology, Environment and Foreign Affairs. During his visit, he held talks with our President, Vice-President and Prime Minister, Minister of Human Resource Development & Science & Technology, Finance Minister and External Affairs Minister, Leader of Opposition and other political leaders. In his discussions, India's consistent support for Vietnam in the past was acknowledged by Vietnam's President, with evident gratitude. In delegation talks with PM, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues of cooperation in various fields, and agreed to enhance it further. South-South cooperation was reiterated as a major plank of our foreign policy. The Vietnamese reaffirmed support to India's candidature as a permanent member in an expanded Security Council and also offered support for our membership of ASEM. Instruments of Ratification of the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement signed in 1997, were exchanged, an MOU on setting up Software Human Resource Development Centres in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and an Agreement on Cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the Institute of Foreign Relations of Vietnam were signed. A soft credit of US \$ 15 million (Rs.600 million) was extended to Vietnam.

Australia

There was less criticism of our nuclear tests, during the above period, as compared to the harsh Australian reaction that followed immediately after Pokhran II. FM Downer acknowledged that

Australia had made some strong statements and had taken some measures, in response to the tests. There was, however, recognition of the fact that it was not a convenient time for signing the CTBT as the election campaign was going on but there was hope that India would sign the CTBT in the not too distant future. There was also appreciation of the current positive signals emanating from the Indian leadership on the CTBT.

On Agni II, there was an expression of regret that India's development of a ballistic missile capability was disturbing to the region and to the world and that this development would have negative reverberations for the strategic environments in South Asia. Australia once again urged India to comply with the conditions laid down in the UN Security Council Resolution 1172 and to ratify the CTBT.

On the Kargil intrusion by Pakistan, Australia at first made no statements. On 1st July, FM Downer said that India had demonstrated admirable restraint in the face of considerable provocation and that it looked to both India and Pakistan to resume the stalled bilateral dialogue, in an effort to secure a resolution of the Kashmir problem, as was agreed to in the Lahore Declaration.

On April 13, 1999 the Rajiv Gandhi Chair of South Asian Economics in the Australia-South Asia Research Centre (ASARC) within the Asia Pacific School of Economics and Management, Australian National University, was inaugurated by the Australian Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Trade, Mr. Tim Fischer. The Chair honoured Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's contribution to India's economic reforms and his vision of the international role of South Asia and links with Australia. The launching of the Chair was the most important recent initiative undertaken in the field of South Asian studies in Australia and will play a key role in strengthening Australia's linkages with the countries of South Asia. It will also act as a catalyst for interactive discussions among academics, business people and bureaucratic communities in Australia and the countries of South

Asia and will assist in the spread of awareness and knowledge of South Asia amongst the wider Australian community.

The 1999 K. R. Narayanan Oration was delivered by Mr. P. Chidambaram, Former Finance Minister, during his visit to Australia from May 23 to June 2, 1999 under DFAT's special visitor's programme. The Oration organised by Dr. Ric Shand, Director of Australia-South Asia Research Centre (ASARC), ANU, was held on 1st June 1999 on the theme "Stronger Branches, Deeper Roots: The Democratization of India's Economic Reforms". President K.R. Narayanan also sent a message of felicitations on the occasion.

On 19 April 1999, a MOU was signed between the two Governments on Exchange of Statistics. Another MOU to foster ties between Universities in the areas of information sharing, staff and student exchanges, mutual recognition of qualification, staff development, research exchange programmes and University Management was signed in June 1999.

A major conference, "Midnight to Millennium - Australia-India Interconnections" was held from 1st to 3rd July 1999. The conference was organised by the University of Canberra along with High Commission of India and other sponsors. It was the most important event of the year 1999 in the India-Australia bilateral relations and was inaugurated by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer. More than 40 speakers, including ten from India, participated in the conference. The deliberations were divided into sections to cover diverse topics such as economic, social, political and cultural topics. One of the most critical sessions was on the nuclear issue. The academics displayed in-depth understanding of India's security concerns and were overwhelmingly critical of Australia's official reaction to our nuclear tests. Tremendous goodwill towards India was also displayed at various sessions.

A bilateral meeting between EAM Shri Jaswant Singh and Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer took place on July

27, 1999 on the sidelines of the ASEAN PMC meetings in Singapore. They discussed India-Australia relations, the next official level talks and the EAM also invited Mr. Downer to visit India.

The Chairperson and the Board Members of Australia - India Council visited India from 15-20 November, 1999 and the Joint Council Meeting between India-Australia Council was held on 15th November 1999 in New Delhi. The council called for improving bilateral relations.

Lok Sabha Speaker, Deputy Chairperson Rajya Sabha, Secretary General Lok Sabha and Secretary General Rajya Sabha attended the 15th Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in Canberra in January 2000.

Mr. Brereton, MP, Labour Party's Shadow Foreign Minister visited India (8-10, Feb) and called on EAM and MOS(EA). Mr. Hendy Cowan, Dy. Premier of Western Australia and Minister for Commerce, Trade and Regional Development accompanied by a business delegation of ten persons also visited India (8-12 Feb) to promote trade with India.

India-Australia Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was held from 22-23 Feb in New Delhi.

Papua New Guinea

India and Papua New Guinea continued to maintain close and friendly relations. To give a further fillip to the relationship, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Mekere Morauta and Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee met, during the retreat at the CHOOGM in Durban and discussed bilateral and international matters.

At the 32nd Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM), at Singapore, on 23rd and 24th July, 1999, Papua New Guinea was given a Special Observer Status. PNG continued to support India's candidature to

various international organisations including the candidature of Smt. Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha for the post of the President of the International Parliamentary Union and Shri V.K. Shunglu, comptroller and Auditor Government of India for external auditorship of World Health Organisation.

India offered five slots under ITEC and six under Colombo Plan for training of PNG nationals in Indian institutions of which all 11 slots have been utilised. Courses utilised related to the fields of agriculture, small scale industries, Foreign Service training and accounts.

The two way trade was to the tune of 12 million US dollars, over half of which was routed through third countries.

About 225 Indian nationals, mostly professionals, continued to be employed in Papua New Guinea.

Fiji

After a gap of nearly nine years, the Indian High Commission was reopened in Suva on 2nd March, 1999. High Commissioner Prof. I.S. Chauhan arrived in the country in the middle of May and presented his credentials to the President Sir Ratu Kamisese Mara on 3rd June, 1999.

General elections were held in Fiji from 8 to 15 May. The previous government led by Sitiveni Rabuka of Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) lost the elections. A people's coalition led by the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) swept the polls. FLP by itself obtained a simple majority in the House of Representative and its leader Mahendra Pal Chaudhry was sworn in as the new Prime Minister. It is the first time in the history of independent Fiji that the Prime Minister is of ethnic Indian origin. His cabinet consists of members from other constituent parties of the coalition.

The new Fiji Government announced its decision to open a resident diplomatic mission in New Delhi and allocated funds for it in the budget for the next year.

The Government of India is desirous of strengthening bilateral relations between India and Fiji and is looking at a number of options to extend areas of assistance to Fiji.

Prof. I.S. Chauhan, our High Commissioner to Fiji presented his credentials for Tonga in February 2000.

New Zealand

Despite its small size and remote geographic location, a number of significant events relating to New Zealand took place during the year.

The Second Protocol to the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) between India and New Zealand was signed in New Delhi on 21st June, 1999. The 2nd Protocol seeks to provide a fresh impetus to the mutual flow of investment, technology, trade and services between the two countries.

The APEC Summit, which was attended among others by the US President Bill Clinton and the Chinese President Jiang Jemin, was successfully concluded in Auckland from September 9-12, 1999. The declaration issued on the occasion called upon the world to match the organization's free trade commitment and adopted a unified position to include industrial tariffs and agriculture in the next WTO negotiations. To take into account the organization's own slow pace for realizing its trade liberalization objectives, the Summit confirmed the shift in the forum's approach to include trade facilitation measures.

New Zealand's commitment of 800 troops to be part of the UN peace keeping force in East Timor constituted its largest overseas defence involvement since World War II. Furthermore, the election

of Mike Moore as WTO's Director General, (as part of a power-sharing compromise with the Thai candidate Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi), further raised the country's international profile.

Bilateral relations were consolidated following New Zealand's strong reaction to Pokhran-II. The country's reaction to the Pakistan-sponsored armed incursion in the Kargil sector demonstrated understanding of India's position in the matter. While New Zealand did not issue any official statement on this subject, it acknowledged in briefings that India had suffered armed incursion and called for restoration of the sanctity of the Line of Control.

While a scheduled visit of NZ Foreign Minister Don McKinnon to India was postponed due to elections in India, Shri H.D. Revanna, Housing Minister of Karnataka Government visited New Zealand from June 1-5, 1999 with a view to enhancing cooperation in the dairy sector.

Rt. Hon. Helen Clark was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of New Zealand on December 10, 1999 [In a coalition of Labour and

Alliance with 59 seats in the 120 member house]. The elections were held on 27th November 1999.

South Pacific Countries

Bilateral relations with Pacific-Islands have been cordial and friendly though there have been minimal contacts. India had co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution admitting Tonga to the membership of the United Nations. A resolution on the admission of Kiribati to the UN was adopted unanimously on 25th June by the UN Security Council. Kiribati became the 186th member and Nauru the 187th member of the United Nations after the General Assembly endorsed the Security Council recommendation. On the reopening of our High Commission in Suva, Fiji, the Administration Division reviewed and shifted the concurrent accreditation of the Cook Islands, Tuvalu and the Kingdom of Tonga to our High Commission in Suva from HCI, New Zealand, and the concurrent accreditation of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to our High Commission in Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) from our High Commission in Canberra (Australia).



3

East Asia

China

We seek friendly, cooperative, good-neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations with China on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, jointly enunciated by India and China. We seek a long-term, stable relationship in which both sides are responsive to each other's concerns. We remain committed to the process of dialogue to resolve outstanding differences and to build a constructive cooperative relationship oriented towards the 21st century.

The External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited China on June 14-15, 1999 at the invitation of the Chinese Foreign Minister (FM), Tang Jiaxuan. This was the first visit at the EAM level in eight years. The EAM met Prime Minister Zhu Rongji and had constructive and useful talks with FM Tang. He interacted with a cross-section of the Chinese society. The two sides agreed to jointly celebrate the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations (April 1, 2000). There was agreement on promoting CBMs, commencing a security dialogue and expanding economic and trade relations. The two Foreign Minister subsequently met on July 25, 1999, during the ASEAN Regional Forum - Post-Ministerial Conference (ARF-PMC) in Singapore.

The Eleventh Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Boundary

Question was held in Beijing from April 26-27, 1999. Apart from boundary-related issues, the two sides also reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international developments of mutual interest. The Seventh Meeting of the India-China Expert Group of Diplomatic & Military Officials, a subgroup of the JWG, was held in New Delhi on November 24, 1999. At these meetings, both sides reiterated their commitment to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in accordance with the Agreement on the Maintenance Peace & Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1993) and the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1996). Both sides noted, during these meetings, that the India-China border areas have remained generally peaceful.

Exchanges at the governmental, parliamentary, non-governmental, people-to-people and other levels continued during the year. Functional exchanges in trade & commerce, environment, industries, power, iron & steel, science & technology, aeronautics, medicine, media, culture and sports took place during the year.

High-level exchanges between the two sides in 1999-2000 include:

- ◆ Visit of Minister for Commerce and Industry to China for the

6th meeting of the Ministerial-level Joint Economic Group (JEG) scheduled to be held from February 21-22, 2000;

- ◆ Visit of Mme. He Luli, Vice Chairperson of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC) to India from November 18-22, 1999 at the invitation of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.

Functional exchanges between the two sides include:

- ◆ The fourth meeting of India-China Sub-Committee on Scientific & Technological Cooperation in Beijing (23-31, May 1999);
- ◆ Visits of Secretary, Department of Steel (September 13-17, 1999), Secretary, Ministry of Industry, (September 20-24, 1999) and Secretary, Ministry of Power, (October 28-30, 1999);
- ◆ Visit of a delegation of the Chinese State Administration for Metallurgical Industry led by its Vice Director General (November 22-26, 1999);
- ◆ Visit of a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Finance led by its Vice Minister (December 22-26, 2000).

Exchanges in the cultural field included:

- ◆ Visit of an Indian cultural troupe led by Pt. Birju Maharaj to China from December 29, 1999-January 8, 2000;
- ◆ Visit of an acrobatic troupe from Gansu Province in China to India from October 17-30, 1999 at the invitation of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The First Lady, Smt. Usha Narayanan, and the Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Ajit Panja attended the inaugural performance in New Delhi.

Exchanges between political parties in India and the Chinese Communist Party continued. A CPI (M) delegation, led by its General Secretary, Shri Sitaram Yechuri, visited China from March 30-April 9, 1999. A Congress (I) Party delegation, led by Shri K. Natwar Singh, visited China from April 7-15 1999.

India-China trade relations have continued to grow in the recent years. The bilateral trade in 1999 amounted to US\$ 1.987 billion, an increase of 3.4% over 1998. India's exports to China decreased by 8.82%. Chinese exports to India increased by 14.29%. In 1999, the border trade across the Lipulekh Pass and the Shipki Pass amounted to Rs. 36.9 lakh and Rs. 27 lakhs respectively.

The India-China Joint Business Council (JBC), a non-governmental association of entrepreneurs of the two sides, is meeting in Beijing on February 22, 2000. The meetings of JEG and JBC contributed to diversification of trade and promotion of investments and joint ventures.

Hong Kong & Macao

EAM visited Hong Kong from November 22-23, 1999. During the visit, EAM interacted with business and media persons and members of the Indian community.

At the joint invitation of the Governments of China and Portugal, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Ajit Panja, visited Macao to represent India at the Macao Handover Ceremonies from December 19-20, 1999 which marked the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Macao. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee sent a congratulatory message to the Chinese Premier on the occasion.

India's trade with Hong Kong increased by 28% during January-November 1999 over the corresponding period last year. Indian exports to Hong Kong increased by 17.5% to US\$ 2.044 billion while imports from Hong Kong jumped by 59% to US\$ 976 million. To give further impetus to bilateral trade, the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and the Consulate General of India, Hong Kong are organising a comprehensive trade promotion event, "India into the New Millennium" in Hong Kong from February 23-27, 2000.

Mongolia

India and Mongolia have traditionally had close spiritual, religious and cultural ties. This year marks the 45th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (December 24). In the past 45 years, our relations have diversified and expanded into new areas further cementing the age-old friendship between the two countries.

Vice President Shri Krishan Kant visited Mongolia from August 25-29, 1999 at the invitation of the Mongolian President, N. Bagabandi. He met President N. Bagabandi, Prime Minister R. Amarjargal, Chairperson of the Mongolian Parliament, Mr. R. Gonchigdorj, Foreign Minister, Mme. N. Tuya, and other state and party leaders. The visit afforded an opportunity to renew the traditional historic and friendly relations between the two countries. During the visit, the two sides agreed to further expand and diversify the relations into new areas of cooperation. The Vice President inaugurated two new faculties - Computer Centre and Gemstone Cutting and Polishing - in the Rajiv Gandhi Vocational Training Centre (RGVTC) and a Monastic Teaching Institute.

The Minister for Agriculture and Industry of Mongolia, Mr. Ch. Sodnomtseren visited India on January 25-30, 2000. Mr. Sodnomtseren called on the Vice President. During the visit, the two sides signed a Work Programme for cooperation in the field of agriculture for year 2000.

Japan

We remain committed to friendly, cooperative, and mutually beneficial relations with Japan with whom we have shared cultural links and values of human freedom, commitment to peace, stability and economic development of the people in Asia and the world.

External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh visited Japan from

November 23 - 26, 1999. He met Prime Minister K. Obuchi and held talks with Japanese FM Yohei Kono, MITI Minister Takashi Fukaya

Exchanges of scientists, engineers and research scholars, collaboration between science institutions and cultural interaction continued.

Functional exchanges during the period included:

- ◆ Investment Promotion Talks (New Delhi, 9-11 August, 1999)
- ◆ Sixth Science & Technology Committee meeting (Tokyo, 6-7 September, 1999).
- ◆ The 30th meeting of the India-Japan Business Cooperation Committees (New Delhi, January 30-February 1, 2000). The Japanese delegation was led by Mr. N. Kawamoto and the Indian delegation by Shri Vikram Thapar. The delegation called on External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh and Deputy Chairperson of Planning Commission Shri K.C. Pant.

From January - October, 1999, our trade with Japan was US \$ 3883 million (exports: US \$ 1882 million & imports: US \$ 2001 million). From January 1999 - August 1999, Japanese investments in India amounted to Rs.13027.7 million or US \$ 310.2 million.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

Relations with the Republic of Korea (ROK) continued to be marked with cordiality and understanding.

High level exchanges/and other important events during the year included:

- ◆ Dr. Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha visited Seoul in July 1999 in connection with her candidature for the presidency of the IPU.
- ◆ Smt. Veena Nayyar, Member National Commission for SC/STs and Shri Prabodh Chandra Sinha, Minister-in-charge, Deptt of Parliamentary Affairs and Vice- President of the West Bengal Federation of United Nations Association, Government of West

Bengal, (October 10-16, 1999) to participate in the International Conference of NGOs.

- ◆ A joint ROK-India Seminar, sponsored by the Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS) and India AP-21, was held from November 21-24 to discuss ways to improve regional cooperation in Asia-Pacific region and bilateral relations.
- ◆ Foreign Office Consultations were held in Seoul from January 24-25, 2000. The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary (East Asia) and the Korean delegation by Director General (Asia).
- ◆ A business & cultural delegation led by the Mayor of Kimhae is scheduled to visit India in the last week of February 2000. The delegation is to visit Ayodhya-Faizabad, Lucknow and Greater Noida to promote cultural and business ties.

During the period January - August 1999, the total volume of trade was US \$ 1.425 billion, registering a growth of 1.11%. Exports were US \$ 539.632 million and imports US \$ 886.319 million. In the period January - June 1999, total investment approvals were of Rs.31,224.26 million (approx. US \$ 726 million).

Exchanges of cultural delegations, students and research scholars continued.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

India's relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continue to be friendly.

Dr. Kim Su Hak, Minister of Public Health, visited India from September 24-28, 1999 at the invitation of WHO to discuss Inter-Country Cooperation in priority areas such as primary health care and health sector reform.

Prof. (Dr.) Ri Kwang Ho, President, Academy of Sciences of

DPRK (Cabinet rank minister) visited New Delhi to attend the ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific from November 15-20, 1999. He also had consultations with the Department of Science & Technology.

On June 25, 1999 a North Korean ship Ku-Wol San was detained in Kandla. It was found to be carrying machinery parts and blueprints

for manufacture of missiles. The DPRK government sent a Special Envoy Mr. Jong Thae Hwa (Vice Foreign Minister level) to India (July 20-August 8, 1999) for discussion on this issue. Appropriate action is being taken under our laws.

Under the Cultural Exchange Programme, a ten-member Kathak group sponsored by ICCR, visited Pyongyang to participate in the Annual Spring Friendship Art Festival in April, 1999.



Section 1

Strategic and economic factors establish the importance and relevance of the Central Asian States (CAS) to India. Their geo-strategic location, both as an ‘Eurasian bridge’ and a close proximity to a number of regional hot spots; abundance of natural resources including hydrocarbons; intense rivalries of, external players over these resources; secularist state policy; close approximation of national security interests and concerns of the CAS and India; attraction of the CAS markets etc., are among these factors.

India’s political relations with the CAS are excellent, underpinned by historic and cultural bonds and, since the independence of these countries, marked by regular high level contacts. The recent incidents of manifestation of cross-border terrorism in a number of these countries illustrated the commonalty of the threat faced by both sides as well as the need for coordinated action to combat the menace.

In the economic sphere, while there is natural justification for, and expectation of, cooperation, given the economic resources of these countries and India’s technological capabilities, transitional difficulties have persisted in the CAS to date, negatively impacting on two-way trade, which remains modest. Efforts are currently being made to encourage Indian investors to enter the manufacturing sector

in these countries through joint ventures, commensurate with their preferred policy. There is ample awareness in the CAS of India’s strength in a number of niche areas, including small and medium industries, and in human resource development. Slots under the ITEC programme have been eagerly sought and utilized by these countries. Drawing upon each other’s areas of expertise, scientific cooperation has been an on-going feature of bilateral relations.

Interactions in the cultural sphere are strong. Apart from events at the two Indian cultural centres in Tashkent and Almaty, as well as activities under the CEP, including reciprocal ‘days of culture’, scholarly exchanges have taken the form of frequent visits, seminars etc.

Section 2

Azerbaijan

Efforts to strengthen relations with Azerbaijan were continued. A resident Indian Mission in Baku started functioning w.e.f. 1st March, 1999 and Shri Dinkar Khullar assumed charge on 8th October, 1999, as the first resident Ambassador. Consular, passport and visa services were started w.e.f., May, 1999. On the economic and commercial side, Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) entered Azerbaijan in September, 1999 by bagging a contract for supply of power generators to Azerenergy. A delegation from RITES visited Baku in October,

1999 for exploring prospects of entry into the, railways and engineering sectors. The Minister for External Affairs Shri Jaswant Singh had a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan in September, 1999 in Almaty during the CICA ministerial conference.

Kazakhstan

Traditionally warm and cordial relations with Kazakhstan progressed smoothly. Indo-Kazakh Joint Commission meeting was held in Almaty in March/April, 1999 for which Shri K. Ramamoorthy, Minister of Petroleum, visited Kazakhstan. Mr. Karibzhanov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, visited New Delhi in March, 1999 in connection with a Kazakh Investment Conference. K. Tokaev, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, came on a bilateral visit in August, 1999. A treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and a protocol on visa free regime for diplomatic and official passports were signed during the visit., Shri Jaswant Singh, Minister for External Affairs, visited Almaty in September, 1999 to attend the CICA ministerial conference. Kazakh intellectuals participated in various international seminars/conferences on Central Asia in New Delhi.

Experts from Kazakhstan participated in the international seminar on 'Asian Security in the 21st Century' being organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi from 24-25 January, 2000.

Kyrgyzstan

Indo-Kyrgyz relations witnessed positive developments. The Kyrgyz President, Askar Akaev paid a state visit to India in April, 1999. An agreement on avoidance of double taxation, treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, cultural exchange programme for the years 1998-2000 and a memorandum of understanding on civil aviation matters were signed during the visit. Vice President, Shri Krishan Kant visited Kyrgyzstan in August/September, 1999 and

also participated as Chief Guest in the Kyrgyz independence celebrations. The Minister for External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh wrote a letter to his Kyrgyz counterpart in September, 1999 conveying Government., of India's support and solidarity on the issue of combating terrorist activities in southern Kyrgyzstan. Educational and cultural contacts remained good. Kyrgyz scholars participated in various international seminars/conferences in India. Ten Indian children from Delhi Public School participated in the international festival "Young Talents, 1999" in Kyrgyzstan. In recognition of considerable potential of tourism for increased cooperation between the two countries, a group of Indian tour operators visited Kyrgyzstan in June, 1999 followed by the visit of Additional Director General of Tourism in October, 1999. Kyrgyzstan fully utilised its slots under the ITEC programme.

Kyrgyzstan condemned the hijacking of the Indian aircraft in December, 1999, in a message that President Askar Akaev sent to the Indian President.

A team of scientists led by Mr. T. Meimanaliev, Kyrgyz Minister of Health, visited India in December, 1999 under the bio-medical research programme between the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS), New Delhi and the National Centre of Cardiology and Internal Medicine (NCCIM), Bishkek. A study team of tour operators led by Deputy Director of the State Agency for Tourism and Sports of the Kyrgyz Republic is scheduled to visit New Delhi in the latter half of January, 2000 under the ITEC programme. Director of International Institute of Strategic Research of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the international seminar on 'Asian Security in the 21st Century in January, 2000.

Tajikistan

Joint Secretary (CA) visited Dushanbe in February, 1999 for foreign office consultations. Foreign Secretary of Tajikistan visited

New Delhi for consultations with Secretary (East) in April, 1999. An Indian company Cosmopolitan Hotels Ltd., is establishing a five star hotel in Dushanbe, the foundation stone of which was laid by President Rakhmanov in September, 1999. India extended humanitarian assistance to Tajikistan. Tajikistan benefited from the ITEC programme by sending nominees for short term technical courses.

Turkmenistan

Relations with Turkmenistan progressed well. The Minister for External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh visited Turkmenistan in May, 1999. During the visit, a protocol on development of cooperation between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan was signed. It was also agreed to set up a joint working group for the energy sector. A national committee for 500th anniversary celebrations of Bairam Khan Turkmen headed by the Vice President of India has been set up. A delegation led by Joint Secretary, Department of Culture, visited Ashgabat in May, 1999 to discuss and chalk out the programme for the celebrations. A joint MEA-MOD team visited Turkmenistan in September to explore opportunities for co-operation in the defence training sector; following which Deputy Minister of Defence of Turkmenistan visited India in October, 1999 to participate in the Defence Expo. A 3-member delegation from the Ministry of Textiles of Turkmenistan visited India in November, 1999. Under the Distinguished Visitors Programme of the ICCR, Grand Mufti of Turkmenistan and President of the Ganga Club visited India in November, 1999. Turkmenistan utilised training slots under the ITEC programme.

Experts from Turkmenistan participated in the international seminar on 'Asian Security in the 21st Century' being organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi from 24-25 January, 2000.

Turkey

H.E. Mr. Korkmaz Haktanir, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey visited New Delhi in November, 1999 for foreign

Scientific and technological cooperation with Uzbekistan remained very good. Uzbekistan gifted a 1.5 kw solar furnace in the framework of S &.T cooperation and a four member team of Uzbek scientists visited India in July, 1999 to install the solar furnace. Uzbek scholars participated in various international seminars/conferences on Central Asia in India. The Rector of the Namangan Engineering Institute

visited India in April, 1999 at the invitation of Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Experts from Uzbekistan participated in the international seminar on 'Asian Security in the 21st Century' being organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi from 24-25 January, 2000.



The Gulf, West Asia & North Africa

Section 1

India deeply values its close historical ties and traditional cultural affinities, with the Gulf countries. Over the years, the mutually-beneficial relations between India and the countries of the Gulf region have become multi-dimensional. The presence of a sizeable Indian community in the Gulf constitutes an important link between the peoples of India and the Gulf.

The tradition of high-level visits was continued, which contributed substantially to further expanding and consolidating bilateral relations particularly in the political, economic and cultural fields. A number of important agreements, aimed at strengthening cooperation in several areas of mutual interest, were concluded during the year.

Section II

Bahrain

The warm and cordial relations between India and Bahrain were further strengthened and diversified, particularly in the economic field.

A delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) visited Bahrain in April 1999 and met the Labour and Social Affairs Minister, the Commerce Minister and senior officials of the Bahrain Chamber

of Commerce and Industry (BCCI). The delegation's visit was aimed at exploring the possibilities of investment from India to Bahrain. Chief Manager, Business Development, Indian Oil Corporation, visited Bahrain on 26 May 1999 to negotiate a \$ 50-70 trillion deal for supply of kerosene. Two high-level representatives of the Punjab National Bank visited Bahrain to study the financial market and explore the prospects of setting up a permanent base in the country. The Birla Institute of Technology has established its first overseas branch in Bahrain. The Institute has generated wide response and interest locally as well as from students in the neighbouring Gulf countries.

Iraq

India's traditional ties with Iraq witnessed an upswing during the year, particularly in the commercial, economic and cultural fields. The 13th Session of the Indo-Iraq Joint Commission was held in Baghdad from 27-29 July 1999. The Indian side was led by Shri V K Ramamurthy, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

A 4-member team of medical specialists covering oncology, orthopaedics, plastic and neuro surgery visited Iraq for 15 days during July 1999 under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs to assist Iraqi doctors in handling critical cases.

An 8-member Manipuri dance troupe “Pung/Dhoi Choiam Martial Art” participated in the Babylon International festival held in Iraq in September 1999.

Dr R S Paroda, Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), visited Iraq, leading a 3-member delegation from 30 September to 5 October 1999 and held extensive discussions with the Iraqi Minister of Agriculture on strengthening cooperation in the field of agriculture. At the end of the visit, Agreed Minutes, providing for training of Iraqi experts in India, and exchange of visits, publications and periodicals on modern agriculture, were signed.

Dr Ilaseeb Y A D Bashi, Director General in the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education, visited India from 25-30 October 1999 under the ITEC Programme.

The number of ITEC slots for training of nominees from Iraq has been increased to 60.

The public sector undertaking, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) was awarded by the Government of Iraq a contract worth (about) 101 million for supply of gas turbines, in the framework of the UN approved ‘Oil for Food Programme’.

India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) participated in the Baghdad International Fair (BIF) with an enhanced display of products which included cars, pick-tip vans, IEEPS, in addition to a wide variety of engineering goods.

Kuwait

India’s relations with Kuwait continued to be marked by warmth and closeness. Shri Saleem Iqbal Sherwani, Member of Parliament and ex-Minister of State for External Affairs visited Kuwait from 3-6 April 1999, when he met several Kuwaiti dignitaries, including the

Speaker of the National Assembly, Shri E K Nayanar, Chief Minister of Kerala, visited Kuwait for two days from 30 April 1999. The Finance Minister of Kerala, accompanied by a financial delegation visited Kuwait on 6 August 1999, and met Kuwait’s Minister for Social Affairs and Labour. A Kuwaiti delegation, representing the National Committee for Missing Persons and POWS Affairs, headed by Dr Sultan AI-Khalaf Deputy Director General, Animal and Fish Resources, visited India from 10-13 August 1999, and called on the Minister of External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh and Shri Nareshwar Dayal, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs. The delegation also met a number of prominent political and social figures, including the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, Dr (Mrs) Najma Heptullah.

Lt General S K Jaitley, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, visited the UNIKOM in Kuwait from 19-21 December 1999, which includes 7 Indian army officers.

An Executive Programme for Cultural Exchanges between India and Kuwait was signed in Kuwait on 22.12.99 by the Indian Ambassador and the Secretary General of the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

Oman

India and Oman have close historical ties and deep cultural affinities. The Extradition Treaty between India and Oman was finalised and initialled on 13 April 1999 in Muscat. Also, the Instruments of Ratification in respect of the Agreement to Combat Terrorism and Organised Crime were exchanged between the two countries in Muscat in May 1999.

Shri E.K. Nayanar, Chief Minister of Kerala, visited Oman on 28 April 1999. A team from the National Remote Sensing Agency visited Oman from 28 April 1999 in connection with a project involving

aerial photography for the AI-Masarrat Water Supply Project in Oman. A 35-member group of travel agents, representing the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), paid a 3-day visit to Oman on 1-3 May 1999 to familiarise themselves with the tourism potential of the country. A high-level delegation from the Government of Pondicherry led by the Health Minister, Shri A M H Nazeem, including the Chief Secretary (Industries) and the Managing Director of Pondicherry Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, visited Muscat on 27 May 1999. Also the Secretary (Fertiliser), Government of India, visited Oman from 5-6 June 1999 to discuss issues pertaining to the Indo-Oman Fertiliser Project.

Defence cooperation between India and Oman entered into a new phase with the official visit of Major General Ali bin Rashid Alkalbani, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, and his six-member delegation to India for five days commencing from 20 June 1999. The Omani Commander met the Minister of Defence, the chief of Naval Staff and other senior military officers. A defence team comprising, 33 members from the Command and Staff College of Oman came to India from 8-15 July 1999 and visited a number of defence establishments in the country.

The public sector company Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) won a power station extension projecting Oman worth about US \$ 27 million.

The Sultanate and India signed on 10th October, 1999, a bilateral agreement for Oman's accession to the WTO. During the 54th session of the UNGA, Smt. Vasundhara Raje, Minister of State for External Affairs met the Oman Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Shri I K Gujral, former Prime Minister, paid a three-day visit to the Sultanate from 31 October to 2 November 1999 in response to

an invitation from the Omani Govt. During the visit, Shri Gujral paid courtesy calls on Sayyid Fahd bin Mohmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers and Mr Yousuf Alawi, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, and reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional & international issues. He also addressed Omani diplomats at the Diplomatic Institute.

Shri Suresh P Prabhu Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers, visited Omani from 21-24 November 1999 at the invitation of the Oman Oil Company, and met Dr Mohammed bin Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of Oil and Gas, and Mr Ahmed bin Abdul Nabi Al Macki, Minister of National Economy, and discussed bilateral relations especially cooperation in the proposed Indo-Omani joint venture Fertiliser Project and the Bharat-Oman Refinery Project.

A high-level sports delegation from Kerala visited the Sultanate from 19-20 November 1999 to promote India's first professional football club, FC Kochin.

For the first time, three Omani companies participated in the two-week long India International "Trade Fair '99 (IITF), which began on 14 November in New Delhi.

The Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers, Shri Suresh Prabhu, visited Oman from 21-25 November 1999. He reviewed with the senior Omani authorities concerning the on-going developments regarding the proposed joint venture fertiliser project to be set up in Oman. He held meetings with the Ministers of Commerce and Industry, National Economy and Oil and Gas.

The MOS for External Affairs is likely to visit Muscat in the second half of February 2000 as leader of the Indian delegation for Annual Political Consultations between India and Oman. Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr Maqbool Ali Sultan is

expected to visit India in February/March 2000 as leader of the Omani delegation to the third session of the India-Oman Joint Commission.

EAM visited Oman from 21-23 January to participate in the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of IOR-ARC. During his stay in Muscat, the EAM called on the Deputy Prime Minister of Oman, Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud bin Mohammed Al Said. He also held discussions with Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah and Minister of Commerce & Industry Maqbool Ali Sultan.

Qatar

The traditionally warm and friendly relations between India and Qatar were given a new dynamism by the State visit of the Emir of Qatar to India from 6-8 April 1999. The Emir's delegation included the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Minister of Energy, Industry, Water & Electricity, health Minister and senior officials from the various ministries. His meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Vice President, External Affairs Minister, Finance Minister and Industry Minister focused oil bilateral relations. During the visit, six bilateral agreements/MOUs were signed which included Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA), Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTFAA), MOU on Foreign Office Consultations, MOU oil Cooperation in the fields of Youth & Sports, Joint Business Council Agreement between FICCI/ASSOCHAM, and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and MOU oil Cooperation between the National Small Industries Corporation and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Chief of Army Staff, General V P Malik, paid an official visit to Qatar from April 3-6, 1999. This was the first visit of the Indian Army Chief to Qatar. He held discussions with the Chief of Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces and also met the Chief of the Qatar Air Force and Navy.

All Indian Cultural Week was organised in Doha by the Indian Embassy from 21-30 April in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and local Indian cultural organisations. The Minister of Health of Pondicherry accompanied by the Chief Secretary, visited Doha on 25 and 26 May 1999. Shri Krishnan Kaniyam Parambil, Kerala's Minister for Agriculture, visited Doha on 5-9 July 1999 to attend the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the MES Indian School and to explore the possibility for export of agricultural products from Kerala to Qatar. Shri T. Sivadasa Menon, Kerala's Minister of Finance & Excise, visited Doha from 2-4 August, 1999.

On 31 July, 1999 Ras Gas of Qatar and Petronet of India signed the final Sale & Purchase Agreement in London for supply of 7.5 metric tons per annum (MTPA) of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to India over a period of 25 years starting from 2003.

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mannai Corporation QSC on 13 October 1999 to cooperate and jointly explore business opportunities in the petroleum industry in the Gulf States in areas such as petroleum exploration, development, production and O&M projects. The MOU was signed by Mr. Subhash C. Jetly, Executive Director (Joint Ventures), on behalf of ONGC and Mr Ahmed Mannai, Chairman of the Mannai Corporation.

A three-member Qatari defence delegation, led by Brig Abdullah al- Hajri, attended the DEFEXPO INDIA '99 field in New Delhi from 28-30 October 1999. A high-level delegation from the Qatar National University, headed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Prof. Abdur Rehman visited Delhi and Mumbai in October 1999, to discuss the possibility of selecting faculty members for the University.

Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Shri

Nareshwar Dayal, accompanied by Shri Talmiz Ahmad, Joint Secretary (Gulf/Haj), visited Doha from 19-20 November 1999. During his meeting with the Qatari Foreign Minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jabor Al-Thani, Shri Dayal handed over to him a letter from the External Affairs Minister. Shri Dayal also had wide ranging discussions with Permanent Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah. The two sides discussed the situation in the region as well as bilateral relations.

The Permanent Under Secretary of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs is likely to visit India in February 2000 for attending the first meeting under the MOU on Foreign Office Consultations signed during the State visit of the Emir of Qatar to India. A meeting of the Joint Higher Committee between India and Qatar is expected to be held in March 2000.

Saudi Arabia

India's traditional relations with Saudi Arabia continued to grow steadily. Saudi Arabia showed understanding of India's viewpoint on a number of issues and signalled a desire to intensify the bilateral relationship.

The Kingdom remained one of the major suppliers of crude oil to India, meeting about 23% of India's import requirements. The Bilateral trade between the two countries during 1998-99 amounted to US \$ 2.6 billion. India's exports to Saudi Arabia during the year were worth US \$ 766 million, an increase of 9% over the previous year.

A 13-member Indian Industrial delegation led by the Managing Director of Tata Iron & Steel Company Ltd., Dr J J Irani, visited the Kingdom from 4-11 April 1999. The Indian delegation was invited by the Council of the Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, with the aim of promoting joint ventures between the two countries.

The Indian delegation visited Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam where it held meetings with prominent members of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The delegation demonstrated India's technological and industrial capabilities, ranging from production of computer chips to automobiles, railways, cars, aircraft and capital goods. There are more than 25 Indo-Saudi joint ventures in different fields in the Kingdom, and Saudi companies are showing interest in seeking partnerships with reputed Indian companies.

Shri V K Ramamurthy, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, inaugurated a seminar "Saudi Arabia in 100 years" organised on 12 May 1999 by the Saudi Embassy in New Delhi.

Owing to the saturation of Saudi labour market for unskilled/semi-skilled workers, the slump in the construction industry, and competition from other countries providing cheap labour, there was a fall in the number of fresh workers recruited from India during 1999-2000 as compared to the previous years. The total Indian population in the Kingdom, however, continues to be in the vicinity of 12 lakhs and remittances of the Indian work-force retained at around \$ 2 billion per annum.

Haj

A total of 98,072 Indian pilgrims performed Haj in March 1999, out of which 62,107 went under the aegis of Haj Committee, Mumbai. The Government deputed 362 deputationists (218 Doctors and Paramedical staff and 144 Administrative staff) to Saudi Arabia to look after the general welfare and medical needs of the Indian pilgrims. Also 13 State Haj committees sent 98 Haj Volunteers to guide and assist Haj pilgrims from their States particularly with regard to living conditions, transport to pilgrimage centres and Haj rituals. A 30-member Haj Goodwill Delegation visited Saudi Arabia during the Haj period.

In connection with Haj-2000, a Government of India delegation visited Saudi Arabia and held a meeting with the Haj Minister on 3 November 1999. The delegation took up the issue of increase in the Indian Haj quota from the present 91,000 to 125,000 on the basis of the present Muslim population in India. (The Government of Saudi Arabia allows one pilgrim per one thousand Muslims in a country.) Following the meeting, India's quota for Haj-2000 has now been fixed by the Saudi Government at 120,000.

Preparations for Haj-2000 are under way. Accommodation is being rented in Makkah and Madinah, while global lenders have been floated for the Air Charter Contract to ferry pilgrims to and from Saudi Arabia. For the first time, a comprehensive Orientation and Training Programme is being organised all over India to educate pilgrims about all aspects of Haj, including religious rituals, living conditions in Saudi Arabia and safety measures.

The Haj Committee, Mumbai was reconstituted by the Government and the new Committee took office and became operational on 16 June 1999.

The preparation of a new Haj Committee Act to replace the Haj Committee Act of 1959 has been taken up by the Ministry. It is expected that a draft Bill will be ready for presentation before Parliament in early 2000.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Bilateral cooperation between India and the UAE, in various fields was further strengthened. India's Minister of External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh, visited the UAE on 5 April 1999 and met the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi. The two ministers discussed issues of mutual interest and stressed the importance of joint efforts to maintain security and stability in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Shri Jaswant Singh welcomed the proposed entry of the UAE into the IOR-ARC.

A delegation of the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) visited the UAE from 1 May 1999 to promote Indian capabilities in the Information Technology (IT) and Software Sectors. NASSCOM organised a seminar which was addressed by the UAE Minister for Higher Education & Scientific Research, Shaikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan. He stressed the importance of partnership between the Indian software industry and the UAE business, industrial and technical institutions. NASSCOM also undertook to submit a proposal to the Dubai Government for setting up UAE's first IT Park.

The first group of five UAE students from the Higher College of Technical Education of Abu Dhabi came to India on 26 June 1999 to participate in a job-oriented on-line training programme. This programme is a pilot project emphasising bilateral cooperation. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is the nodal agency to monitor the training programme in India.

Voltas International Limited was awarded an electrical contract worth Rs.750 million for the Abu Dhabi Trade Centre Project on 15 July 1999.

A 9-member delegation from the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, led by Mr Ahmed Saif Belhasa, Chairman, UAE Contractor's Association, visited New Delhi and Bombay for seven days from 27 October 1999 at the invitation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The delegation called on the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and participated in a business seminar inaugurated by the Minister. The delegation also met Shri Talmiz Ahmad, Joint Secretary (Gulf & Haj) in the Ministry of External Affairs, who spoke to them on the Government of India's policy initiatives to build a long-standing political and economic ties with the UAE. At Mumbai, the delegation visited the Godrej Industrial Complex and held meetings with the EXIM Bank, Indian Merchant's

Chamber and called on the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation organised in October 1999 a jewellery exhibition in Dubai in collaboration with Siroya Jewellers of Dubai. The India Trade Promotion Organisation (IITO) participated in the Arab Jewellery and Watch Show held in Abu Dhabi in October 1999.

The UAE Minister for Justice, Islamic Affairs and Awqaf, Mr. Mohammed Bin Nakhira Al Dhaheri, accompanied by an official delegation, visited India from 25-26 October 1999. During the visit, three Treaties, namely Extradition Treaty, Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Treaty on Juridical and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters were signed. The UAE Minister called on the External Affairs Minister and the Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs.

During his transit halt in UAE on 21 January, External Affairs Minister called on Crown Prince of Dubai and UAE Minister of Defence H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H.H. Sheikh Hamadan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Minister of State of Information & Broadcasting Shri Arun Jaitley visited UAE from 31 January - 1 February. He exchanged views with Minister of Information and Culture of UAE H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Yemen

The ties of friendship and cooperation between India and Yemen continued to grow further during the year. Mr Mohammed Al-Khadem Al-Wajeih, Yemeni Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources led an oil and gas delegation to India in June 1999. The delegation

met the Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and the two sides discussed the possibility of signing an agreement for exporting oil and natural gas to India from Yemen.

The third session of the Indo-Yemen Joint Committee for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation took place in Sana'a from 18-20 July 1999. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Nareshwar Dayal, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Yemeni delegation was led by Mr Abdul Rehman Taramoum, Vice Minister of Planning and Development. A number of areas were identified for cooperation between the two countries. Besides the Agreed Minutes of the Joint Committee, two agreements, namely the Cultural Agreement and the Air Services Agreement were signed. Shri Dayal called on Prime Minister Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Iryani and the Ministers of Planning, Oil, Trade, Communications, Alwqaf and Culture and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Around 3500 pilgrims from the Bohra community, led by its spiritual leader, Dr Burhanuddin TUS, visited Yemen during August 1999 and held a special function at Haraz. The pilgrims included a medical team consisting of 25 doctors from various fields of specialisation who provided free service to patients at the Republican Hospital in Sana'a and the Manakha Hospital.

Special Kuwait Cell

The Special Kuwait Cell has been working since 1991 on the task of obtaining compensation for the Indians who were adversely affected by the Gulf War of 1990-91. After a considerable time, funds are now being transferred by the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), Geneva. Transfer of funds is taking place at almost regular intervals, depending on availability of the same with UNCC.

Disbursement of the compensation money to successful claimants is being done by four designated nationalised Banks. The four Banks, with the active cooperation and guidance of the Special Kuwait Cell, are carrying out the task of locating the successful claimants (many

accompanied by a 26-member delegation visited India from 15-19 June 1999 at the invitation of the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas. A joint working group to oversee cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector was constituted during the visit. The Minister also called on the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for External Affairs. The Algerian Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr Bakhti Belaib, visited India from 17-18 August 1999 to participate in the G-15 Trade Ministers' Conference in Bangalore. An eight-member Algerian Defence delegation led by General Bendimerad Mohamed visited India from 14 - 23 November 1999 to explore possibilities of cooperation in defence field. During its stay, the delegation called on the Defence Minister and visited the headquarters of the Indian Space Research Organization and the Antariksh Corporation in Bangalore, the Defence Research and Development Organization units in Pune and Mumbai, the Ordnance Factory Board in Calcutta and held discussions with the Confederation of Indian Industry representatives in New Delhi.

Egypt

Bilateral relations with Egypt were further diversified and strengthened. The first session of the Indo-Egyptian Joint Business Group was held on 17 May 1999 in Cairo. The Egyptian and Indian delegations comprising businessmen from the private and public sector of both the countries identified several areas for further cooperation. Egypt's Minister of Trade and Supply Dr Ahmed Goweli led the Egyptian delegation to the G-15 Ministerial meeting held in Bangalore from 16-18 August 1999. Minister of External Affairs Shri Jaswant Singh met Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Amre Moussa on the margins of the 54th United Nations General Assembly on 20 September 1999 in New York. They exchanged views on global and regional issues. An 8-member Egyptian delegation led by Major General Mohammed Khalifa Farghaly visited India in connection with DEFEXPO held in New Delhi from 12-16 October 1999. Two Indian

Army Officers participated as Observers in the Exercise 'Bright Star' in Egypt from 26 October to 2 November 1999.

Israel

Relations with Israel continued to grow satisfactorily. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Shri Brajesh Mishra visited Israel from 2-4 September 1999, at the invitation of the Israeli Government. During his stay in Israel, Shri Mishra called on the Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Barak. His visit was part of the ongoing diplomatic dialogue between India and Israel. Deputy Speaker of the Knesset Ms Naomi Chazan visited New Delhi on 23 and 24 November 1999.

Jordan

Relations with Jordan continued to be close and friendly. The Vice President Shri Krishan Kant represented India at the funeral of King Hussein in Amman on 8 February 1999. During his stay in Amman, the Vice President called on King Abdullah II. A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed between India and Jordan on 20 April 1999. Former Foreign Minister of Jordan Dr Kamel Abu Jaber visited India from 22-27 November 1999 under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations distinguished visitor's programme. During his stay, Dr Jaber called on Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Ajit Panja.

Lebanon

Bilateral relations with Lebanon continued to remain cordial. India stands for the restoration of sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon and for extension of the authority of Lebanese State over the entire territory of Lebanon in consonance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 425. An Indian delegation visited Beirut from 9-12 August 1999 to participate in the meeting of the Asian Group of G-77.

Libya

Relations with Libya continued to be marked by understanding

and cooperation. Former Prime Minister Shri Inder Kumar Gujral visited Libya from 10-14 November 1999 at the invitation of the Government of Libya. During his stay in Libya, Shri Gujral called on President Col Muammar Al-Qathafi and Foreign Minister Mr Omar Mustafa Muntassir.

Morocco

Bilateral relations with Morocco were further strengthened and consolidated. Dr Abid Hussain, who is a member of the Moroccan Royal Academy, visited Rabat from 6-9 May 1999 for the spring session of the Academy. During the visit of an 11-member Confederation of Indian Industry mission to Morocco from 23-26 May 1999 a Memorandum of Understanding between the Confederation of Indian Industry and its Moroccan counterpart organisation for creation of a Joint Business Council was initialled. Vice President Shri Krishan Kant visited Morocco from 25-26 July 1999 to represent India at the funeral of late King Hassan II. During his stay in Rabat, Vice President called on King Mohammed VI and conveyed a message of condolence from the President. Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Dr Najma Heptulla visited Morocco from 8-11 September 1999 to attend the Second Preparatory Committee of the Presiding Officers Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Secretary (Economic Relations), Shri S T Devare led the Indian delegation to the 9th G-77 Ministerial meeting held at Marrakesh from 12-16 September 1999. Indo-Moroccan joint venture fertilizer project, one of India's largest joint venture projects abroad, commenced production in August 1999. Minister of State for External Affairs Ms Vasundhara Raje met the Foreign Minister of Morocco Mr Mohamed Benaissa on 29 September 1999 on the sidelines of the 54th United Nations General Assembly and discussed matters of mutual interest. A Memorandum of Understanding has been finalised between the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and Akhawayn University of Morocco.

Prime Minister of Morocco Abderrahmane El Youssoufi paid a State visit to India from 21-25 February. Number of Agreements were signed during his visit. These include – Agreement on Merchant Shipping and Related Maritime Matters, Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Geology and Mining and Agreement between Prasar Bharti, Doordarshan and Radiodiffusion Television Marocaine (RTM). In addition an agreement was initialled between the Confederation of Indian Industry and its Moroccan counterpart organisation to form a Joint Business Council.

Palestine

India continued to extend its consistent and unwavering support to the Palestinian cause. India also continued with its moral, material and technical support to the Palestinian people. Training slots for specialised training courses to Palestinian personnel were provided during the year. High-level political contacts between the Indian and Palestinian leadership were maintained. President Yassir Arafat came to India on a working visit from 9-10 April 1999. He was accompanied by Palestine National Authority Minister for Planning and International Cooperation, Dr Nabeel Sha'ath, Chief Palestinian negotiator Mr Sa'eb Ereket and Advisor to the President Mr Nabeel Abu Radneih. During the visit, President Yassir Arafat called on President and held detailed discussions with the Prime Minister. Additional Secretary (FA) and Joint Secretary (WANA) visited Gaza in May 1999 for a review meeting of Indian aided projects. Advisor to President on Human Rights, Advocate Ibrahim Abu Dagga, visited India from 2-7 November 1999 in connection with an International Conference on Human Rights "Union International Des Advocats". He had a meeting with Member, National Human Rights Commission Shri Virendra Dayal.

Western Sahara/Somalia/Djibouti

On Western Sahara issue, India continues to support "UN

efforts". India continued its support to United Nations efforts to restore peace and normalcy in Somalia. Former President of Djibouti Mr Hassan Gouled Aptiden transited through New Delhi on 24 May 1999, 16 December 1999 and 23 December 1999. Foreign Minister of Djibouti Mr Ali Abdi Farah called on the External Affairs Minister on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 21 September 1999. It was followed by External Affairs Minister's meeting with President of Djibouti Mr Ismail Omar Guelleh who also happened to be in New York at that time. "Sindhuvir" a submarine of the Indian Navy called on Djibouti Port from 4 - 7 October 1999. The Commander of Indian Naval Ship called on the Djibouti Naval Chief Capt Abourahman Adeb Cher.

Sudan

Relations with Sudan were strengthened. India reiterated its support for Sudan's territorial integrity and sovereignty over the whole of Sudan. President of Sudan, Lt Gen Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir transited through Mumbai on 22 July 1999. Registrar of Political Associations of Sudan, Mr Mohammed Ahmed Salim, visited India from 18-23 September 1999 and held discussions with the officials of the Election Commission and Parliament. UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression Dr Abid Hussain visited Sudan from 20-26 September 1999. Amongst others, Dr Abid Hussain met Speaker of National Assembly Mr Hassan Al Turabi. Minister of State for External Affairs Ms Vasundhara Raje met Foreign Minister of Sudan Dr Mustafa Osman Ismail on 29 September 1999 on the sidelines of the 54th United Nations General Assembly and discussed matters of mutual interest during the meeting.

Syria

Relations with Syria continued to remain friendly and warm. Three member Syrian defence delegation led by the Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt General Abdul Rahman Sayad, participated in DEFEXPO INDIA'99 held in New Delhi from 12 - 16 October 1999.

Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, Shri Arun Jaitley visited Syria from 28-30 January 2000. Besides meeting his counterpart, Shri Jaitley exchanged views with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Syria.

Tunisia

Bilateral relations with Tunisia continued to progress satisfactorily. A 25-member Tunisian delegation of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sfax visited India from 20-27 April 1999 to explore avenues for enhancing economic and industrial cooperation. In return, a 10-member Confederation of Indian Industry industrial mission visited Tunisia from 20-23 May 1999. At the invitation of Deputy Minister for Women and Family Affairs Ms Neziha Zarrouk, Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, Dr Najma Heptulla visited Tunisia from 11-14 August 1999 to participate in the celebrations to mark Tunisia's Women's Day. External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh met Foreign Minister of Tunisia Mr Said Ben Mustapha on 24 September 1999 on the margins of the 54th United Nations General Assembly and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues. Former Prime Minister Shri Inder Kumar Gujral visited Tunisia from 3-10 November 1999 to attend an International Symposium on the theme "Third Way: The Emerging Countries", at the invitation of the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique, the ruling party of Tunisia. During his stay in Tunisia, Shri Gujral had meetings with Prime Minister Dr Hamed Karoui, Secretary General of Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique, Mr Adelaziz ben Dhia, Speaker of Tunisian Parliament Mr Foued Mbazaa. President of the Council for Competition of Tunisia Mr Mohamed Chatti visited Delhi from 15-23 November 1999 to represent Tunisia at the India International Trade Fair 1999. The Tunisian Minister of International Cooperation & Foreign Investment, Mr Fethi Merdassi, was in India from 5 - 8 November 1999 to lead a 9-member Tunisian delegation to participate in the India Economic Summit organised jointly by the

Confederation of Indian Industry and World Economic Forum During his stay in Delhi, the Minister called on the Vice-President, Minister of Finance, Minister of Heavy Industry & Public Enterprises, Minister of State for External Affairs, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and the Chief Minister of Delhi. Before concluding the visit, the Tunisian Minister and his delegation visited Bombay on 8 November 1999 where the Export-Import Bank of India signed a memorandum of Understanding with two Tunisian Banks viz. Societe Tunisiene de Banque and Banque International Arabe de Tunisia to

jointly promote trade and industrial collaboration between Tunisian and Indian companies. Shri Abid Hussain visited Tunisia from 5 - 11 December 1999 as a Special Rapporteur to the United Nations on Human Rights and Freedom of Expression.

League of Arab States

The regular dialogue with League of Arab States was maintained in Cairo and in New Delhi.



Introduction

The Government of India continued its policy of consolidating the gains of almost five decades of close ties of friendship with the countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the countries in this region are currently engaged in the simultaneous processes of economic reform and political democratization. These processes, being in line with India's own national priorities, have strengthened our capacity to identify ourselves with the aspirations of the people of Africa and to engage with them in a constructive programme of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Bilateral

Indo-Mauritian relations continued to be excellent, as in the past. Cooperation in the sectors of education, science and technology, defence, commerce and industry was further intensified. There were also several visits of cultural troupes from India. Trade between the two countries grew steadily and India is now the third largest supplier of goods to Mauritius. The India Trade Promotion Organization organized a successful exhibition of Indian products - INDEXPO - which coincided with the Indian Independence Day celebrations. Mr. Sikander Bakht, Minister of Industry, was the chief guest during the exposition.

During this period Telecommunications Consultants (India) Ltd. successfully completed their projects in Madagascar for installation of optic fibre and radio transmission network. The Government of India donated medicines worth Rs. 10 lakhs to check the cholera epidemic in different parts of Madagascar. Two Indian Naval ships, INS Krishna and Sujata, called on Malagasy port of Diego Suarez on a goodwill visit from 20th October to 23rd October 1999.

The close friendship between India and Seychelles saw visible manifestation during the year by the visits by two Naval Ships from India on two occasions in October and November 1999 and a visit to India by a 7-member delegation from the Association of Small Businessmen of Seychelles in July.

India's traditional political relations with Ethiopia continued to consolidate in 1999. The Government of Ethiopia reiterated its interest in our small and medium scale industries and in the fields of dairy, agriculture and agro-industries. In May this year, a Cultural Exchange Programme was signed with Ethiopia. In the near future a ministerial delegation is expected to visit India. The Bilateral trade between India and Ethiopia has also been showing a rising trend, increasing from US\$ 8 million in 1989 to US\$ 70 million in 1999.

In Eastern Africa, a treaty aiming at economic union amongst Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, known as the East African Community

(EAC), was signed by the Presidents of these three countries on the 30th November, 1999 in Arusha (Tanzania). This Treaty will come into effect after it is ratified by their Parliaments. The formation of this Community pledges these countries to work towards a customs union leading ultimately to a political federation. In view of India's excellent political relations and the growing commercial and economic interest with these countries, as also the presence of a large Indian diaspora in this region, it will be our endeavour to intensify our interaction with the individual member countries of the EAC as well as with EAC as a regional organisation.

India's relations with Kenya were further strengthened during the period under review. Kenya showed a constructive understanding of India's position on key global issues like restructuring of the UN Security Council, disarmament and the need for an equitable world economic order. The Government of Kenya has also shown its keen interest to further improve Indo-Kenyan bilateral relations in the fields of small scale industries, dairy, agriculture, tourism etc. A special focus of the year was our efforts to promote bilateral tourism. Seminars to promote tourism were held in Nairobi in March and in Mombasa in October'99. A special seminar focusing on business in the new millennium was also held in Nairobi in association with the Kenya Institute of Management.

India lost a great friend in the death of Tanzania's former President, Julius Nyerere on October 14, 1999. The Vice President, Shri Krishan Kant, led the Indian delegation at the funeral of the departed leader. He was also one of the only six leaders chosen to address the public at the funeral ceremony.

The Confederation of Indian Industry in association with the High Commission of India, organized a 'Made in India' show in Dar-es-Salaam from 26-29 August, 1999. Mr. Ram Jethmalani, Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs inaugurated the show.

Comprising a Ministerial visit, a trade exhibition, five separate business missions and an array of cultural events including fashion shows, a dance drama ballet and a food festival, this was the largest event of its kind to be ever held in Tanzania. A Bilateral Trade Agreement has been finalized and would be signed shortly. India has emerged as Tanzania's largest trading partner. Defence and Cultural Exchange agreements are also under consideration.

Relations between India and Uganda continued to remain cordial. Michael K. Werikhe, Minister of State for Housing, led a delegation to India to participate in the International Exhibition "Build India 99" and "Environment India 99" held in New Delhi between 13-16 April, 1999. Other visits exchanged during this period include that of Mrs. Miria Matembe, Minister for Ethics and Integrity, a 4-member delegation from the Ugandan Ministry of Finance to India and the visits of a delegation from Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd, a 3-member TCIL delegation, a 15-member CII delegation and a 14-member FEII delegation from India to Uganda. As part of its ongoing privatization programme, the government of Uganda sold its 49% shares to the Bank of Baroda (Uganda) Ltd. With this, the Bank of Baroda (Uganda) became a fully owned subsidiary of the Bank of Baroda, India. Gujarat Communications and Electronics Ltd. bagged a US\$ 3.5 million project for setting up a digital Video/Audio Earth Station at Kampala.

Subsequent to signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the SADC, India continued its efforts to improve bilateral relations with the individual member countries of SADC as well as with SADC as a regional organization. Exercise 'Blue Crane' held in April 1999, was a major SADC peace keeping exercise designed to develop cooperative action in peacekeeping amongst the armed forces of SADC countries. India was the only developing country requested for material and technical assistance for this exercise.

market in Botswana. The Botswana Government sponsored two business level delegations to India in May and December, 1999 and a number of projects are under active consideration.

With a long tradition of close and cordial relations, India and Zimbabwe continued to cooperate closely, bilaterally and in multilateral fora. India participated in the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) in April, 1999. In August 1999, National Book Trust, New Delhi and nine other leading Indian publishers participated in the Zimbabwe International Book Fair 99. Zimbabwe Dy. Minister for Industry & Commerce, Mr. Obert M. Mpofu participated in the G-15 Ministerial meeting on WTO at Bangalore in August. He utilized that opportunity to sign an MOU with HMT for setting up a Watch Assembly unit in Zimbabwe as a Joint venture.

Indo-Zambian bilateral relations continued to retain their traditional cordiality during this year. In April, 1999, RITES bagged an important contract in the field of infrastructure. Various Indian companies are also pursuing the possibility of their involvement in the power sector in Zambia. The Zambian Deputy Minister of Finance visited India to discuss the issue of blocked funds (the government of Zambia owes around US\$ 37 million to India towards repayment of GOI's credit line extended to them earlier). The Zambian Army Commander paid an official visit to India at the invitation of our Chief of Army Staff. The Zambian Deputy Minister of Land led a high level Zambian delegation to India to learn from our experiences in the field of land reforms, land laws, etc. In the cultural field, ICCR

Commission has been approved by both sides and is likely to be signed shortly. Similarly, a proposal to convene the first meeting of the Joint Trade Committee under the Indo-Angolan Trade Agreement in New Delhi is under active consideration by the Angolan side.

The return of democracy to Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, was a development of special happiness to India. In April 1999 Nigerian President-elect Mr. Olusengun Obasanjo, visited India. During his brief stay in Delhi he met the President and the PM and held wide ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues. Nigerian Minister of Commerce Mustapha Bello led a 6-member delegation to attend the G-15 Ministerial Meeting on WTO at Bangalore in August, 1999. During this period a 3-member rice delegation, a 5-member TCIL-C.DOT delegation and a 3-member MECON delegation visited Nigeria.

The Minister of Education of Cameroon Charles Etoundi visited India during July 1999. During his visit he met our Minister of Human Resource Development. UNICEF sponsored the visit.

Bilateral relations between India and Ghana remained on an even keel during the period under report. The two countries decided to hold annual bilateral consultations. It has also been agreed to sign a fresh Cultural Exchange Programme. A team from NISIET explored the possibilities of cooperation in the field of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises; their report is awaited. On the economic and commercial front, two-way trade showed a rising trend with Ghanaian companies showing increased interest in doing business with India. A delegation sponsored by the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mumbai visited Accra.

Secretary to the Prime Minister's Cabinet of Cote d' Ivoire, Mr. Jean Claude Brou led a two-member delegation to India in September

1999. During their stay in Delhi they called on Commerce Secretary and Secretary, Food Processing Industries. They also visited National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) headquarters in New Delhi and met some Indian industrialists at a seminar organized by the CII.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, the newly elected President of a Democratic Nigeria was present as the Chief Guest at the 50th Anniversary of India Republic in the first year of the new millennium. President Obasabjo's visit provided a new momentum to the well-established friendly relations between India and Nigeria. The Nigerian President had detailed talks with the President and Prime Minister. Several other key economic Ministers also separately called on him. Nigeria is India's second largest economic partner in Africa. During the visit, both the sides agreed to give a qualitative new dimension to the bilateral economic relationship. Given their membership of several multilateral fora such as G-15, G-77, NAM, Commonwealth and their common endeavour to set up a just and equitable world order, the renewed contact at the highest political level underlined the need for strategic consultations between the two countries.

As part of his travel within India, President Obasanjo visited Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana; HMT, HAL and Infosys in Bangalore and went for lunch to his alma mater, Staff College at Wellington.

The Kenyan Foreign Minister visited India from December 8-12, 1999. This was the first formal visit at FM's level after a decade which resulted in further improvement of Indo-Kenyan relations. An agreement to establish a Joint Commission at ministerial level was signed during the visit and the Kenyan Foreign Minister evinced keen interest in developing cooperation with India in various fields. He lauded the role played by the Indian community in Kenya in the field of economic activities in that country.

India's Assistance to African Countries

Continuing an established tradition, India extended assistance in the form of machinery, manpower and human resource development to the Sub-Saharan countries in various crucial sectors. We have been associated as a partner in Eritrea's agricultural development at the initiative of FAO and would depute nearly 100 Indian agricultural experts to that country to help increase agricultural productivity there. The first batch of experts will be going there soon. As part of a tripartite agreement between India, FAO and Mozambique, an advance team of two agricultural experts from India visited Mozambique in

trial and propagation in Ghana. An Agricultural Development Project with Indian assistance is in an advanced stage of implementation in Senegal. The Indian Project Director is in position and is supervising the remaining part of the project. This project is aimed at providing expertise and equipment to Senegal to develop rice farming and to cultivate better variety of cotton.

India donated medicines worth Rs. 8.5 lakhs, to Mozambique in September. In November, relief supplies (medicines) worth Rupees five lakhs were donated to Ghana to assist the flood-victims in the northern parts of the country.

An Entrepreneurial Training and Development Centre was set up under the Indian technical and financial assistance in Dakar, Senegal to provide technical training in various vocational fields.

Prime Minister visited South Africa from 12-15 November, 1999 to attend the CHOGM Summit meeting held in Durban. This visit provided a useful opportunity to renew contacts with the leadership of South Africa and with several other leaders of Africa as a whole.



7

Europe

Eastern Europe

Section 1

Relations between India and the Russian Federation have been historically close, friendly and time tested. With the countries of East and Central Europe, we have traditionally maintained ties based on goodwill, friendship and close cooperation. The year saw further consolidation and diversification of these ties to mutual benefit. The Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary were admitted into NATO and several of them re-oriented themselves towards joining Euro-Atlantic Security structures and the EU. Despite these developments, the countries of East and Central Europe reiterated that relations their relations with India will continue to develop on the traditional friendly basis. India's cooperation with these countries is multi-dimensional in character and encompasses economic, commercial, defence, scientific and technological and cultural spheres.

Bilateral exchanges at the political level have played a significant role in the consolidation of our ties with these countries. These exchanges provided an opportunity towards creating greater understanding of each others interests and concerns. Efforts were made to renew contacts between the Parliaments of these countries. Specific steps were taken to impart a new thrust towards the expansion

of trade and economic cooperation. Initiatives were taken in diversifying our cultural relations with them.

The President of the Russian Federation, Mr Boris Yeltsin, resigned on 31 December 1999 and nominated Mr Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister, as the Acting President. Mr Putin would also continue to be the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation. Presidential Elections are scheduled to be held on 26 March 2000 to elect a new President of the Russian Federation.

Section 2

One of the main priorities in our foreign policy objectives continued to be the strengthening of our time tested relations with the Russian Federation. Our multi-dimensional relations with the Russian Federation have been developing and expanding in all areas of mutual interest to mutual benefit. We have sought to raise the level of our bilateral ties to that of a strategic partnership. A Declaration on Strategic Partnership will be signed between the two countries during the next Summit meeting. The visit of External Affairs Minister to the Russian Federation in May 1999 was an important milestone. The visit to India by the First Deputy Prime Minister Khristenko and the Deputy Prime Minister Klebanov lent further weight to our interaction. The tradition of bilateral exchange of visits both at all levels, including political and official, continued during the year.

A delegation of Indian parliamentarians led by then MOS for Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, visited the Russian Federation from 5 - 9 April 1999. He led a multi-party delegation comprising seven Members of Parliament from the Lok Sabha and four from the Rajya Sabha. The delegation called on Mr Gennady Seleznyov, Speaker of the State Duma; Mr Yuri Maslyukov, First Deputy Prime Minister; Dr Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs; Dr Anatoly Lukyanov, Chairperson of the State Duma Committee on Legislation, Courts and Legal Reforms and Chairperson of the Group of Parliamentarians on Relations with India; Mr A.V. Selivanov, Deputy Chairperson of the State Duma Committee for Women, Family and Youth Affairs; Dr Gennady Zuganov, Leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation; Mr Sergei Ivanenko, Deputy Leader of the State Duma faction of "Yabloko"; and Mr Vladimir Platonov, Deputy Chairperson of the Federation Council.

Mr Viktor Semenov, Agriculture Minister of the Russian Federation, visited India from 11 - 17 April 1999. He met the then MOS for Agriculture. During this visit, an Agreement on Cooperation in Veterinary Field was signed. The 1st session of the sub-Group on Agriculture under the Indo-Russian Inter Governmental Commission also took place during the visit.

Dr A I Lukyanov, Chairperson of the State Duma Committee on Legislation, Courts and Legal Reforms and Chairman of the Group of Parliamentarians on Relations with India, led a Russian Parliamentary delegation to India from 18 - 22 April 1999. He met the Vice-President, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, then MOS for Parliamentary Affairs, and the then Chairman and Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.

The Chairperson of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Mr V M Lebedev visited India from 3 - 5 May 1999. He called on the Vice-President and had meetings with the Chief Justice of India.

Mr Sergei Prikhodko, Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration, visited India from 15 - 17 May 1999 as Special Envoy

on 27 July 1999. EAM once again had a meeting with Mr Ivanov in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 14 September 1999 on the margins of the Conference on Interaction on Confidence Building Measure (CICA) and on the sidelines of the 54th UNGA in New York. During these meetings, bilateral, regional and international issues were discussed.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, transited through New Delhi on 25 July 1999 and on 28 July 1999 on his way to and from the 6th ASEAN Regional Forum Meeting in Singapore.

A delegation from the Central Election Commission (CEC) of the Russian Federation led by Mr Sergei Bolshakov, Commissioner, paid an official visit to India from 2-7 September 1999. The delegation called on the Chief Election Commissioner of India and visited polling stations in and around Delhi and Haryana during the first phase of the Lok Sabha poll on 5 September 1999. Interaction between the Election Commissions of the two countries has been institutionalised since 1997.

Mr Vladimir Putin, Chairperson of the Government of the Russian Federation, transited through New Delhi on 14 September 1999 on his way back to Moscow from the APEC Summit in Auckland. Principal Secretary to PM had detailed discussions with Mr Putin on issues of mutual interest and concern.

Foreign Secretary visited Moscow on 16 September 1999 for Foreign Office Consultations. He called on Mr Igor Ivanov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation and had detailed discussions with Mr Alexander Avdeev, First Deputy Foreign Minister and with Mr Grigory Karasin, Deputy Foreign Minister.

The Chief of Naval Staff paid an official visit to the Russian Federation from 15 - 20 September 1999

Col Gen Anatoly Kornukov, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air Force, visited India from 4 - 10 October 1999.

The "Days of Delhi" were held in Moscow from 26 October - 2 November 1999. The official delegation from the Government of the NCT of Delhi was led by Dr. Narendra Nath, Minister of Education of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. More than 130 artists from India participated in this event.

The Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation in-charge of military-technical cooperation, atomic energy, space and other subjects, Mr Ilya Klebanov paid an official visit to India from 4 - 8 November 1999. Mr Klebanov was accompanied by a high-powered delegation which included the Minister for Atomic Energy, the First Deputy Defence Minister, the First Deputy Minister of Trade, the Chairperson of the Inter State Aviation Committee and many senior Government representatives. During the visit, Mr Klebanov called on PM and had separate meetings with the External Affairs Minister, Raksha Mantri and Principal Secretary to PM. The 6th Meeting of the Indo-Russian Group on Military-Technical Cooperation was also held, coinciding with the visit. At the conclusion of the visit, a joint statement was issued.

After the hijacking of IC-814, EAM spoke to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr Igor Ivanov on 26 December 1999. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation issued an official statement on 27 December 1999 and two official statements on 28 December 1999 condemning the hijacking.

The Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation and Co-Chairman of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC), Dr Viktor Khristenko, visited India from 14 - 15 January 2000. The 6th session of the IRIGC was held during the visit. It was co-chaired by the Finance Minister (Co-Chairman of the IRIGC) and Dr Khristenko. Dr Khristenko called on the President of India and the Prime Minister

of India and met the Minister of Power, Minister of Civil Aviation and Minister of Surface Transport. A Protocol on the 6th Session of the IRIGC was signed on 15 January 2000.

The Acting President and Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mr Vladimir Putin called the Prime Minister on the hotline on 27 January 2000 to offer felicitations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Republic of India.

The 1st session of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Export Controls took place in Moscow from 2 - 3 February 2000.

The Speaker of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Mr Gennady Seleznyev, is scheduled to visit to India from 1 - 3 March 2000 at the invitation of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

The first Resident Ambassador of India to the Republic of Armenia arrived in the Armenian capital Yerevan in early October 1999 to take up office. At the same time, the first resident Armenian Embassy to India was opened in mid-October 1999 with the arrival of a Charge d' Affaires ad interim in New Delhi.

The Chief of Army Staff paid a goodwill visit to the Czech Republic from 15 - 19 May 1999.

Mr Hynek Kmonicek, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic visited India on 20 August 1999 and had discussions with Secretary (West) on issues of mutual interest.

Secretary, Department of Steel, visited Ukraine from 25 - 29 July 1999. During the visit, he had meetings with Mr Viktor Padalko, First Deputy Minister of Industrial Policy of Ukraine, Mr. Viktor Pantelenko, Deputy Minister of Industrial Policy, and Mr. Olexandr Chalyi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Secretary Steel also visited some industrial sites in the Donetsk region.

EAM and Mr Boris Tarasyuk, Foreign Minister of Ukraine, had a meeting in New York on 28 September 1999 on the margins of the 54th UNGA.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine issued a statement on 30 December 1999 condemning the hijacking of IC-814.

The first session of the Working Group on Electronics and Information Technology under the aegis of the Indo-Bulgarian Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation was held in Sofia from 21 - 23 July 1999. An MOU on the Establishment of the Working Group and a Protocol were signed during this meeting.

Secretary (West) visited Sofia on 23 - 24 September 1999 for Foreign Office Consultations with Bulgaria. Secretary (West) called on Ms Nadezhda Mihailova, Foreign Minister of Bulgaria and Mr Valentin Vassilev, Minister of Trade and Tourism and Co-Chairperson of the Indo-Bulgarian Joint Commission. Detailed discussions were held with Mr Marin Raikov, Deputy Foreign Minister. The Instruments of Ratification of the Indo-Bulgarian Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement were exchanged during this visit.

The Chief of Army Staff paid a goodwill visit to Poland from 11 - 15 May 1999.

MOS (External Affairs) and Mr Janusz Stanczyk, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, met in New York on 28 September 1999 on the margins of the 54th UNGA.

The Institute of Oriental Studies, Warsaw University, in cooperation with our Embassy in Warsaw and ICCR, organised an "International Conference of Sanskrit and Related Studies to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Stanislaw Schayer (1899-1941)" from 7 - 10 October 1999. (Schayer had started Sanskrit studies in Warsaw University in 1926.) Scholars from India, Japan, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Finland and Russia participated in this Conference.

Participation from India was by Dr Satya Vrat Shastri and Shri Kunwar Narayan. The conference was a big success and altogether 38 papers were presented in the conference.

Foreign Office Consultations were held with Hungary during the visit of Secretary (West) to Budapest from 20 - 22 September 1999. Secretary (West) called on Mr Zsolt Nemeth, Political State Secretary and the then Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. Detailed discussions were held with Mr Denis Tomaj, Deputy Foreign Minister of Hungary.

The Foreign Minister of Hungary, Dr Janos Martonyi, accompanied by his wife and a 3-member delegation, paid an official visit to India from 30 October - 1 November 1999. Dr Martonyi called on the President of India. He held detailed discussions with EAM on bilateral, regional and international issues. The Hungarian delegation also visited Agra.

The Chief of Air Staff paid on an official visit to Hungary from 25 - 28 October 1999.

Mr Radu Berceanu, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Romania, visited India from 13 - 17 November 1999. During this visit, the 14th Session of the Indo-Romanian Joint Commission (IRJC) and the 7th Session of the Indo-Romanian Joint Business Council (IRJBC) was simultaneously held in New Delhi from 15-16 November 1999. Shri Murasoli Maran, Minister of Commerce and Industry, co-chaired the meeting of the Joint Commission along with Mr Berceanu. A Protocol of the Joint Commission Meeting and an MOU on Cooperation between the EXIM Banks of India and Romania were signed. Mr Berceanu had separate meetings with Defence Minister, Minister of Petroleum, Minister of Heavy Industry and MOS for Steel. Mr Berceanu also visited Agra.

Mr Marian Tomasik visited India on 12 May 1999 as a Special

Envoy of the Slovak Foreign Minister. He called on Minister of State for External Affairs and Secretary (West).

The President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Mr Jozef Migas, is scheduled to visit India from 13-17 March 2000 at the invitation of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

The 4th session of the Indo-Slovak Joint Committee for trade and economic cooperation is scheduled to be held in New Delhi from 14 - 15 March 2000.

The Government of India has been closely monitoring the developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), specifically in Kosovo since late last year. We issued statements on the issue on 9 October 1998 and on 24 March, 25 March, 11 May and 22 May 1999. We reiterated that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the international borders of the FRY were inviolable and must be fully respected by all States. We urged that the crisis should be resolved through peaceful means; through consultation and dialogue and not through either confrontation or any military action unilateral or otherwise. We called for commitments to the UN Charter by pointing out that no enforcement action should be undertaken under regional developments without UNSC authorisation. Such actions seriously undermined the authority of the entire UN system. We were concerned at the mounting human and material devastation which had among other things led to far reaching ecological and environmental damage. Our statements were made on the basis of well established principles of Indian foreign policy.

We had welcomed all moves which could have led to a diplomatic negotiated solution. We were happy that NATO action was terminated pursuant to adoption of UNSCR 1244 which had the consent of the Government of the FRY.

Secretary (West) visited Bucharest from 9 - 10 December 1999 for Indo-Romanian Foreign Office Consultations. He held detailed

discussions with the Secretary of State in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ion Pascu, on bilateral matters and on regional and international issues. Secretary (West) called on Romanian Foreign Minister, Mr Andrei Plesu, Minister of Culture, Mr Ion Caramitru, Defence Minister, Dr Victor Babiuc and the Chairman of the Romanian Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr Gheorghii Prisacaru. Instruments of Ratification of the Indo-Romanian Agreement on Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments were exchanged during the visit.

Secretary (West) visited Bratislava from 13 - 14 December 1999 for Indo-Slovak Foreign Office Consultations. He held detailed discussions with the Director General in the Slovak Foreign Office, Mr Frantisek Dlhopolcek on bilateral matters and on regional and international issues. Secretary (West) called on Slovak Foreign Minister, Mr Eduard Kukan, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Jaroslav Chlebo and State Secretary in the Ministry of Economy, Mr Peter Brno.

Western Europe

Western Europe is a region of considerable importance to India both politically and economically. The European Union is India's largest trading partner and the second largest source of approved foreign investment. India has traditionally maintained close and friendly relations with the EU as well as with individual countries in the region.

Europe is witnessing rapid moves towards greater integration: economic, political, and strategic. The European single currency 'Euro' was adopted by 11 of the 15 EU member states on January 1, 1999. The decision taken at the EU Cologne summit in June 1999 to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy and to appoint a High Representative for Foreign & Security Policy, marked tangible progress towards the goal of political unity. The related decision to merge the

WEU into the EU marks a major step towards the evolution of a EU collective self-defence. The expansion of the EU is bound to enhance its political influence, although the economic costs will, in the short term, be considerable.

India and the European Union are both addressing themselves to the task of moving forward relations with the EU and its member countries economically, commercially, politically and strategically. During this period, some concrete measures towards the objective of an intensified dialogue on global political and economic issues with the European Union and its member countries have been put into effect. A steady pace of interaction has been maintained at all levels with the Governments in West Europe. The frequency of high-level exchanges between India and the countries of Western Europe is indicative of a mutual recognition of the advantages of, and need for, closer interaction and co-operation.

The dialogue which has been conducted with various West Asian countries, has led to a better understanding of India's position on various issues including on non-proliferation and disarmament. There has also been a considerable growth in bilateral economic ties with these countries as well as an all-round diversification in various fields of co-operation.

The trend of warming and deepening of relations with the EU and its member countries was amply demonstrated in the reaction of these countries to the Kargil intrusions. There was a clear recognition that the situation had been caused by cross-border infiltration and violation of the Line of Control. India's restraint throughout the crisis in not crossing the LOC was also acknowledged and appreciated. Their support and understanding of India's position and concerns was clearly reflected in individual country statements as well as those of the EU.

India's relations with France have gained momentum over the year. The high-level political dialogue which was initiated with the

visit of French President Jacques Chirac in January 1998 continued throughout 1999 as well.

The momentum of the relationship is demonstrated by the numerous ministerial visits from both sides over the year: EAM visited France on May 26-27, 1999 for bilateral talks and to attend the OECD Ministerial Conference held in Paris. He also had meetings with French President Chirac, Foreign Minister Vedrine, National Assembly President Laurent Fabius and Senate President Christian Poncelet during the visit. The visit provided an opportunity to extensively brief the French side and place matters relating to the Kargil developments in perspective. Jean Claude Gayssot, French Minister of Capital Works, Transport and Housing, visited India in February 1999; Mr Claude Allegre, French Minister for Higher Education, Research and Technology in November 1999; Louis Besson, French Minister for Public Works, Housing and Transport in December 1999; and Mr. Francois-Poncet, Co-Chairman, Indo-French Initiative Forum in December 1999.

Two rounds of talks were held under the Indo-French Strategic Dialogue in January and July 1999. The Dialogue was instituted following a high-level decision taken during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Paris in September 1998 and aimed at facilitating structured and regular discussions on issues of core importance to both sides. The Indo-French Initiative Forum, a high-level non-governmental group of eminent personalities set up advise on ways of diversifying and enriching the bilateral relationship, held two meetings in February and September 1999. Foreign Office Consultations were held on June 30, 1999 in Paris. The Indo-French Joint High Committee on Defence, a committee set up to examine the possibilities for defence co-operation, including defence industrial co-operation, held its second meeting on July 5-6, 1999. The Indo-French Joint Working Group on Energy held its first meeting on 15-16 March 1999 in New Delhi. The Indo-French Water Week and the Higher Education in France

Forum were organised in India in November 1999. The France-India

a positive ambience for promoting bilateral exchanges and cooperation. The visits of EAM and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, to the U.K in January and February 1999 respectively were instrumental in an enhanced understanding of our concerns and position on various issues.

Visits of senior British Ministers including Ms. Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Economy (February), Mr. John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Environment and Transport (4-12 MarcTTTGAN4 T4 T4

first Indian origin Minister in the British Cabinet and has responsibility for the UK's relations with Europe and visa/consular matters.

Interaction between India and Germany at the very highest levels, as well as the people-to-people level has been substantial. Germany is India's largest trade partner in Europe and second largest worldwide, with a bilateral trade of around DM9 billion and a major technology and investment source with total approved investment of over Rs 64 billion. However, economic relations witnessed a downturn in the year with a slump in bilateral trade.

Germany was very supportive of India during the Kargil crisis. It was the term President of the EU as the crisis unfolded. The numerous EU statements issued in connection with Kargil clearly acknowledged that the confrontation was triggered off by infiltration into the Indian side of the LOC.

EAM's visit to Germany on September 30- October 1, 1999 facilitated detailed discussions with the German President Rau and Vice-Chancellor & Foreign Minister Fischer on issues of bilateral, regional and multilateral importance. The visits of National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra to Germany in February and again in July 1999 were also marked by substantive and productive meetings. Prof. Dr. Klaus Gretschmann, Director-General, Department of Economic & Financial Affairs, and Personal Representative of Chancellor Schroeder visited India on September 19-21, 1999 and had useful interaction with Indian officials as well as with the Indian business community. Dr. Theo Sommer, co-chairman of the Indo-German Consultative Group and publisher of the influential "Die Zeit", visited in May and November 1999.

Parliamentary exchanges were dynamic with visits by Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee chairman, Mr. Hans Uirich Klose in April 1999 and by Bundesrat President Prof. Dr. Kurt Biedenkopf in December 1999. State level interaction was appreciable with visits to

India of the State Secretary for Economics of Bavaria in February 1999 and of Deputy Minister-President of Baden Wuerttemberg in August 1999 and visits to Germany of the Chief Minister of Kerala and Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

The high-level Indo-German Consultative Group, a Group of eminent personalities which was set up to monitor ongoing developments and trends in Indo-German relations, and suggest policy measures for up-gradation of bilateral relations from a long term perspective, held its eighth meeting on November 13 & 14, 1999 in Bangalore. The meeting generated useful ideas for the further strengthening of bilateral relations, especially in the economic, commercial and technological sectors.

Mr. Sebastian Edathy, Member of the ruling Social Democratic Party and the German Bundestag visited India on February 4-5, 2000. Mr. Gunter Eymael, Vice-Minister for Economics, Transportation, Agriculture & Viniculture from the Germany Federal State of Rheinland also visited India on January 26- February 3, 2000.

The Indo-German Consultative Group was reconstituted in December 1999 and Dr. I.P. Singh, retired Indian diplomat, has taken over as the Indian co-Chairman.

National Security Adviser, Shri Brajesh Mishra would visit Germany on 4-6 February 2000 to participate in the 36th Munich Conference on Security Policy.

Relations with Austria entered into a new phase with the exchange of the first Head of State level visit between India and Austria. Rashtrapatiji visited Austria from 7-11 November 1999 and exchanged views with the Austrian President, Thomas Kiestil and the Federal Chancellor, Viktor Klima. The visit has led to an enhanced understanding of India's position and concerns on various issues.

Rashtrapatiji's visit to Austria coincided with the celebration of

50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Austria, which was marked by a number of cultural events and seminars in both countries. During the visit, the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and the Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement were also signed. The Indo-Austrian Joint Commission met in Vienna from 14-15 October 1999 to renew bilateral trade and commerce. The first round of Foreign Office Consultations is scheduled for the year 2000.

Italy has emerged as India's fourth largest export market in the EU. India's US\$ 2 billion annual bilateral trade with Italy constitutes nearly 3% of India's global trade and Italian investment in India has reached US\$ 700 million. A number of Indo-Italian Joint Ventures are functioning satisfactorily in India.

The Italian Government offered food aid worth US\$1.6 million for the victims of the cyclone, which struck the state of Orissa in November 1999. In November '99, Italy announced a grant of US\$ 1 million for the national programme of eradication of poliomyelitis in India. The project is part of the framework of the Indo-Italian Technical Cooperation Agreement. On the political front, the beginning of the new millennium is likely to see an enhancement of the high-level bilateral dialogue between both countries.

EAM visited Italy from 11-12th January 2000 and held wide-ranging talks with Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini. Besides reviewing bilateral relations in the political and, economic field they discussed international terrorism and other international issues of mutual concern.

We continue to enjoy excellent political relations with Spain. The economic content of our relationship has been on the upswing in recent years. An encouraging element has been the interest shown by regional trade and commercial bodies in Spain in looking at India as a commercial destination. The Minister of Industry, Commerce

and Tourism of the Province of Catalunya, (Spain), Mr, Antoni Subira, visited India from May 13-14 along with a business delegation. The President of Catalunya, Mr. Jordi Pujoi visited India from 6-8 December 1999 to attend the Indian Economic Summit 1999 organised by the World Economic Forum. In an effort to promote bilateral trade, Spain has been chosen as the partner country for India Expo 2001. Although total Spanish investment in India has not exceeded the modest figure of US\$ 28 million, the volume of bilateral trade with Spain has been steadily increasing and annual bilateral trade stands at US\$900 million. Shri Dilip Lahiri has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to Spain.

Our cordial relations with the Vatican were strengthened with the State visit of Pope John Paul II to India from 5-7 November 1999. (This was the Pope's second visit to India. He had earlier visited India in 1986. An earlier Papal visit to India took place in 1964). The main objective of the Pope's visit to India was to sign and release the post-synodal exhortation of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia held in the Vatican last year. During the visit, the Pope expressed an appreciation for India's secularism and religious freedom and for the respect that Indian culture has for all religions. The Pope's visit has contributed to enhancing the international community's understanding of India as a multi-religious, multi-ethnic society which is committed to the maintenance of secularism.

The high-point of our relationship with the Netherlands was the visit of Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok from November 20-25, 1999. This was the first interaction at HOG/HOS level since 1993 and the first important interaction after our nuclear tests in May 1998. The visit facilitated detailed discussions on issues of importance to both sides, including bilateral relations, regional developments and global issues. Co-operation in the economic and commercial field prospered with bilateral trade amounting to US \$ 1.3 billion. The economic restrictions imposed by the Netherlands following the

Indian nuclear tests in May 1998, viz, freeze on government -to - government macro-credit and project assistance have since been lifted. The restrictions on military supplies remain in place.

Mr. Gerrit Ybema, Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade visited India on January 9-13, 2000. Detailed discussions were held with the Commerce Minister and apex industry associations.

The year witnessed steady progress in bilateral relations with Belgium, which is an important economic and political partner for India. EAM's visit to Brussels in September 1999 facilitated useful and cordial discussions on bilateral relations, regional developments in Europe and Asia and multilateral issues with the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Mr. Louis Michel. The discussions lent a fresh impetus to bilateral relations. The need to diversify our commercial relations from the present diamond-dominated trade was emphasised by both sides.

Ambassador De. Ruyt, Director General, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Development Cooperation visited India on February 3-7, 2000. He held extensive discussions at the official level in the MEA.

Our cordial relations with Luxembourg received a boost with the visit of Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker on January 13-15, 1999. This visit carried forward the progress made during Rashtrapatiiji's visit to Luxembourg in September 1998.

The 4th Session of the Indo-Greek Joint Economic Commission was held in Athens on July 8-9, 1999. Negotiations on the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) were also conducted with the concerned Greek authorities. The first meeting of India-Greece JBC Meeting was held in New Delhi on 22nd November, 1999. During the Indo-Greek Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi on October 25, 1999, discussions were held on a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

The Visit of Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou is tentatively scheduled from 9 -14th March 2000. He is likely to be accompanied by a delegation of Greek businessman.

Iceland: Mr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland is expected to visit India from 21-26 March, 2000.

Mr. Thorsteinn Palsson, the (non-resident) Ambassador-designate of Iceland based in London is expected to present credentials to Rashtrapatiiji in February 2000.

The second round of Foreign Office Consultations with Denmark on May 25-26, 1999 in Copenhagen, marked a resumption of political dialogue. Official interaction continued with the visit of Mr. C. N. Pedersen, Head of Asia-Pacific Department of the Royal Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 8th September. The visit provided an opportunity for a review of bilateral relation and for the annual aid negotiations.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament is expected to visit India from 27 February to 2nd March 2000.

The first session of Foreign Office Consultations with Norway in Oslo on July 5-6, 1999 enabled discussions on bilateral relations, developments in Europe, and regional international issues. The consultations represent a movement away from the distortions which had entered into the relationship subsequent to our nuclear tests. Mr. Nirupam Sen was appointed as our Ambassador to Norway.

Mr. Knut Vollebaek, Foreign Minister of Norway visited India on 7-11 January 2000 at our invitation. He was accompanied by senior officials and a 26-member business delegation. Extensive discussions on bilateral linkages as well as on measures for augmenting economic cooperation were held during the visit. The Norwegian Foreign Minister also participated in the CII Partnership Summit while in New Delhi.

Foreign Office Consultations with Sweden in Stockholm on May 27-28, 1999 provided an opportunity for official interaction on many issues of mutual interest global significance. The discussions enabled a resumption of political dialogue, which had been interrupted after our nuclear tests of May 1998.

Finland maintained a neutral position on Kargil crisis and stressed bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan. Seven Finnish soldiers are stationed in J&K and Rawalpindi as part of the UNMOGIP. The second session of Foreign Office Consultations was held in Helsinki on July 8-9, 1999. The discussions which were held at the outset of Finnish Presidency of the European Union from 1st July 1999 covered bilateral relations and developments in Europe.

India-Ireland trade, has shown a consistent growth during this period. A bilateral Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation was initiated in Dublin in October 1999. Mr. Philip Mc Donagh assumed charge as the Irish Ambassador to India in September 1999.

Secretary (West) will lead the Indian delegation to the Foreign Office Consultations with Ireland to be held from 14-15th February in Dublin.

The relationship with Portugal has progressed very well, building on the impetus given by our President's visit to Portugal in September 1998. Bilateral trade stands in favour of India. Prof. Fernando Pacheco, Portugal's Secretary of State for Industry and Energy visited India in March 1999 to explore new avenues for bilateral trade and commerce. Parliamentary exchanges have been initiated with the visit to India by a nine-member parliamentary delegation led by Dr. Almeida Santos, President of the National Assembly of Portugal from 15-22 December 1998. An Indo/E.U Summit in Lisbon is scheduled for mid 2000.

India and Switzerland shared a stable commercial relationship during this period. Mr. Walter Gyger has been nominated as Switzerland's next Ambassador for India.

Mr. Pascal Couchepin, the Minister of Economy of Switzerland would be visiting India from 15 - 21 February 2000. During the visit, both sides are expected to sign the Draft Protocol for amending the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and exchange the Instrument of Ratification for the Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement.

Secretary (West) would be leading the Indian delegation to the Foreign Office Consultations with Switzerland to be held from 14-15th February in Berne. The two sides are expected to discuss matters pertaining to bilateral relations, international terrorism and security, etc.

Mr. Walter Gyger assumed charge as Switzerland's Ambassador to India on 13th January 2000.

During Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban from November 12-15, 1999 India reaffirmed its support for independent, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Republic of Cyprus and emphasised that the demand for recognition of a separate state in the occupied part of Cyprus is unacceptable.

The fourth meeting of the Indo-Cyprus Joint Committee on Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical and Industrial Cooperation is scheduled to be held in New Delhi from 6-7th March 2000.

The EU is India's largest trading partner, with an annual bilateral of US \$ 20 billion in 1998. The balance shifted in India's favour for the first time in 1997 and gap was \$282 million. The EU is also India's largest source of direct foreign investment, an important source of technology and home to a large Indian diaspora.

Bilateral exchanges between India and the EU have been intensive in the past year. The India-EU talks on Export Controls were held in March 1999. The second and third Senior Officials' Meeting were held on May 4 & December 2, 1999 respectively. The second meeting of the Indo-EU Policy Planners dialogue took place from 20-21 June

1999, in Bonn. EAM paid a visit to Brussels on September 30, 1999 and had a highly substantive meeting with Mr. Chris Patten, EC External Relations Commissioner. A direct consequence of this meeting was the India-EU talks which were held prior to the WTO Seattle round in November 1999 to discuss positions on key WTO issues. EAM had a second bilateral meeting with the EC External Relations Commissioner on December 3, 1999, following which a firm decision on launching the India-EU Think Tank Network as well as the India-EU Round Table were taken.

The India-EU Ministerial Troika held its 12th round of talks in Helsinki on December 3, 1999. The Indian delegation for the talks was led by EAM. The reconstituted EU-Troika was represented by Ms. Tarja Hallonen, Finnish Foreign Minister, Mr. Francisco Xeiha de Costa, Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs, Mr. Chris Patten, External Relations Commissioner of the European Commission and Mr. Roland Zinzius, Principal Administrator of the EU Council General Secretariat. The meeting was highly productive and facilitated detailed discussions on issues such as South Asian security and prospects of Europe and Asia in the 21st century. An India-EU summit along the lines of EU Summit meetings with countries like the USA, Canada, China and Russia is proposed to be held at the end of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU in June 1999.

Sir Leon Brittan, the then EC Vice President and Trade Commissioner, paid a visit to India from April 11-12, 1999 as part of the ongoing high-level economic dialogue between India and the EU. The India-EU Joint Commission held its 10th meeting from January 14-15, 1999. Its recommendation that joint working groups be set up to further India-EU relations in specific sectors such as textiles, environment, steel etc. has been acted upon. It is expected that these working groups would hold the first meeting early in the year 2000. The three joint sub-commissions on trade, economic co-operation

and development co-operation met in October-November 1999 and had fruitful discussions on various aspects of India-EU economic relations.

It is expected that certain initiatives taken such as the decision to launch an India-EU Think Tank Network, an India-EU Round Table and an India-EU Summit will further cement India/EU relations.

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth Secretary General, visited India in March and October 1999 for consultations in the run-up to the biennial summit meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) held from 12-15 November 1999, in Durban, South Africa.

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation to the Durban CHOGM, which considered several issues of global significance under the broad framework of the special theme 'People Centred Development: The Challenge of Globalisation'.

Finance Minister led the official delegation to the Commonwealth Business Forum, which preceded the CHOGM.

The Final Communique which was issued at the culmination of the Durban CHOGM reflected the parameters set by our PM during the discussions on the recent political developments in Pakistan. The Durban Communique condemned the unconstitutional overthrow of the Government in Pakistan. It also endorsed Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group's recommendations for suspension of Pakistan from the Councils of the Commonwealth.

India's views and positions on the next round of WTO negotiations were also reflected in the Fancourt Declaration, which called for a full implementation of Uruguay Round commitments and for improved market access for the exports of all countries, particularly developing countries.



USA

There was increased dialogue and engagement with the United States of America on a broad range of bilateral regional and international issues besides the continuation of the ongoing dialogue on security and nonproliferation issues. Regional developments, particularly Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil, the military takeover in Pakistan, the evolving situation in Afghanistan and the problem of terrorism, constituted important elements of constructive dialogue with the US. The US also took steps to increase cooperation in the energy sector. There was also a useful exchange of views on WTO related issues in the context of the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle from 28 November to 3 December 1999. On the other hand, the US continues to maintain many of the unilateral restrictions it imposed under its domestic law in the wake of the nuclear tests in May 1998. India also received broad support from the US Congress on several issues of concern to India.

Following the nuclear tests, India had decided to engage in a more intensive dialogue with the United States. Shri Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister and Mr. Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State were designated as Representatives to conduct this dialogue.

The talks are being conducted on the basis of the comprehensive

proposals that India has put forward on disarmament and nonproliferation matters, our unilateral moratorium on explosive nuclear tests, willingness to discuss converting this moratorium into a *de jure* obligation, our offer to enter into constructive negotiations on FMCT and reaffirming our policies of stringent control on export of sensitive technologies. The dialogue is focussed on four issues. These issues are: The CTBT, the FMCT, Export Controls and Defence posture. On Export Control issues, following the Export Control level meeting in New Delhi from 9 - 10 November 1998, another expert level meeting was held in New Delhi from 29 - 30 March 1999.

There was an extensive exchange of views between July 1998 and January 1999. Following the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, it was decided that the Government that assumes office after the General Elections in September-October 1999 would take a decision on further dialogue with the US on these issues. The dialogue was resumed in a meeting between Shri Jaswant Singh and Mr. Strobe Talbott on November 16-17, 1999 in London.

The dialogue has led to some progress in creating a better understanding of India's security concerns by the US authorities. The two sides have agreed that the dialogue is useful for increasing mutual

understanding and for the purpose of building broad-based relations between India and the US and should continue.

Following Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil and during the Operation Vijay launched to evict the intruders, India kept the US along with our other key interlocutors, informed on the developments and the nature of the intrusion. The US took a forthright position regarding Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil and called for withdrawal of the intruders. The US also expressed appreciation of the restrained and responsible manner in which India conducted Operation Vijay. India's position drew support from the US Congress and the US media.

India and the US also had the opportunity to exchange views on issues of mutual concern during the meetings that Shri Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister, had with Ms. Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, at the margins of the ARF Meeting in Singapore on 24th July 1999 and later on 24th September 1999 in New York during the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly. During these meetings, the US reiterated its desire for better relations with India.

India and the US have also been engaged in consultations on the problem of terrorism. As part of the dialogue on matters relating to terrorism, official level talks were held in Washington from September 2-3, 1999 which was followed by another round of official level talks in New Delhi on 17th September 1999. The two Governments have agreed to intensify cooperation in this area. The Indo-US Extradition Treaty, signed on 25th June 1997 in Washington, came into force after the exchange of the Instruments of Ratification on 21st July 1999 in New Delhi. The Treaty represents an important step in the law enforcement cooperation between India and USA in the area of counter-terrorism.

As part of the process of regular consultations on bilateral, regional and international issues. Shri Brajesh Mishra, National Security Advisor, visited the US from 26-28 October 1999. The US Deputy Trade Representative, Susan Esserman visited India from 1st to 3rd November 1999 for discussion on WTO related issues, in the context of the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle. From 28th November to 3rd December 1999. The US Secretary of Energy, Mr. Bill Richardson visited New Delhi on 26th October 1999. During his visit, the US Secretary of Energy discussed cooperation in the fields of energy and environment. The External Affairs Minister, Shri Jaswant Singh and the US Energy Secretary also signed a Joint Statement on Cooperation in Energy and Related Environmental Aspects. General VP Malik, Chief of the Army Staff, visited the US from 8th to 17th November 1999 to participate in the Conference of the Defence Chiefs of Asia-Pacific Countries in Honolulu hosted by the US Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Command.

Following the nuclear tests in May 1998, the US had imposed certain restrictive measures against India. Effective from 1st December 1998, the US had partially lifted some of these restrictions till 21st October 1999. In partial exercise of the fresh waiver authority given by the Defence Authorisation Act 2000, passed by the US Congress in October 1999, the US Government once again removed some of the economic restrictions with effect from 27th October 1999. However, non-basic humanitarian financing from multilateral financial institutions is still subject to US restrictions. India regards these unilateral restrictive measures as unjustified and counter-productive, which should be lifted in entirety. Several members of the US Congress, including the Chairperson of the House International Relations Committee. Mr. Benjamin Gilman, has written to the US President to remove restrictions on the US support for loans to India by the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

There was a considerable increase in bilateral dialogue between India and the US during the period January to March 2000. The dialogue on Nonproliferation, Security and Disarmament, which was resumed in London in November 1999, was further continued from January 18-19, 2000 in London. Apart from security issues, the two sides also had extensive discussions on counter-terrorism, the hijacking of IC-814, regional developments and President Clinton's visit to India.

At London, the two sides announced the creation of the Indo-US Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism to institutionalise their cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism. The Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism held its first meeting from February 7-8, 2000 in Washington D.C. The two countries agreed to share their expertise, experience, resources and information in countering terrorism and also agreed to work together to bring the perpetrators of the hijacking of IC-814 to justice.

The Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Command, Admiral Dennis Blair, visited India from January 8-12, 2000. This follows the visit of COAS General Malik to Washington and Honolulu in November 1999 and together represents the first steps in revitalising Indo-US Defence contacts.

The US Treasury Secretary, Lawrence Summers, visited India from January 17-19, 2000. Issues relating to trade and investment between the two countries, the unilateral US restrictions imposed after the nuclear tests and the resumption of the dialogue process in WTO, following the collapse of the Ministerial Conference in Seattle, were discussed with Treasury Secretary.

Several US Congressmen visited India in January 2000. These included influential Congressmen such as Senator Tom Daschle, Senate Minority Leader; Representative Sam Gejdenson, Ranking Democrat in the House International Relations Committee; and,

Senator Sam Brownback, Chairman of the Senate Sub Committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

Visit of President Bill Clinton

President Bill Clinton is scheduled to visit India for five days from 20th March 2000. Both sides expect that the visit of the US President will pave the way for qualitatively new and closer relations between the two democracies.

Canada

In the wake of India's nuclear tests in May 1998, Canada had decided to put political contacts with India "on hold". However during the current year. Canada has taken steps to re-establish political contacts with India. A Canadian delegation led by Secretary of State (Asia Pacific), Raymond Chan, visited India from 13-15 May, 1999.

During the ARF meeting held in Singapore in July 1999, EAM had talks with the Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy. The two Foreign Ministers also had the occasion to meet during the Durban CHOGM in November. These meetings were utilised by EAM to put India's views on the question of CTBT and Nuclear Doctrine in the right perspective.

Trade between the two countries has been on the rise. Indian exports during the period January-August 1999 stood at Rs. 1,858 crores registering an increase of 10%. Indian imports from Canada during the same period stood at Rs. 695 crores, up by 21%. A large number of Indian delegations visited Canada during the year. Some business delegations from Canada also visited India. Among the important Indian visits, was that by a 7-member CII delegation in August 1999. The delegation met the Chamber of Commerce besides meeting with various Canadian business houses. These visits are expected to result in further growth in economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

Latin America and the Caribbean

India's relations with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean region have been traditionally problem-free and cordial. The thrust of our policy towards the region is to strengthen and widen the existing relationship and to give more economic content to it. Our interactions and cooperation, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, have been mutually beneficial. India maintains, at present, 13 resident diplomatic missions and one post in the region. Eleven countries from the area have their resident missions in New Delhi.

An important component of our bilateral relations has been the mechanism of Foreign Office level bilateral consultations. Over the years we have signed MOUs on the subject with ten countries from the region and a few more are under consideration. The regular review of bilateral relations has facilitated a better understanding of the potentials and concerns of the dialogue partners and has led to improved coordination on multilateral issues of mutual interest. Other official and technical level visits have complemented the Foreign Office level consultations. In the economic and trade arenas there has been a growing interaction at the private sector level giving depth to our relationships.

As a follow up of the "FOCUS LAC Programme" of the Government of India, participation by Indian Export Promotion Councils and business houses in international exhibitions in the Latin American and Caribbean region as well as visits by trade delegations to the region have helped dissemination of valuable information on Indian commodities and technological advancement. Concerted efforts have been made to overcome the barriers of distance and language. In this context another important element has been the liberalisation of many economies in the region opening up avenues

for enhanced cooperation. We have signed trade and economic agreements with seven countries of the region and set up business councils with some others. As a result of the growing understanding between the private sectors of LAC and India, a number of accords have also been signed between the apex trade and industrial bodies. However, because of the economic difficulties that the region as a whole continued to experience during the year, the actual increase in overall trade with India was marginal and currently stands at US\$ 1.32 billion only.

Culturally India enjoys considerable goodwill in the LAC region. Indian philosophy, yoga and Mahatma Gandhi and his teachings have been a source of inspiration for many in the region. Between them the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have named more than five hundred institutions, schools, libraries, streets and squares after India and its leaders. As a mark of respect to our Father of Nation, his busts and statues have been installed at important places in a number of countries in the region. The latest being the one unveiled at the campus of the University of Londrina in Brazil on November 19 1999. The bust was gifted by the ICCR to the Centre for Afro-Asian Studies of the University. At the institutional level we have cultural agreements and cultural exchange programmes with fourteen countries in the LAC area. Indian artists and academicians have visited the region with the help of ICCR. Another interesting aspect of our cultural relations with the Caribbean region in particular is that some of the countries there have a substantial population of Indian origin that still has a high regard for its cultural heritage. Technical assistance under the ITEC Programme for students, academicians and technical personnel for training and study tours in India is another important mechanism by which we forge mutually beneficial relations with the LAC countries.

The region has witnessed steady progress towards democratisation and economic liberalisation. Presidential elections were held during the reporting period in Antigua and Barbuda, El Salvador, Panama, Argentina and Uruguay. In Guyana, a new President took office due to the ill health of Mrs. Jannet Jagan and in Paraguay, a new President assumed office after Mr. Raul Cubas resigned. The countries in the region are steadfastly promoting regional groupings. There has also been a tendency towards developing a Pan American approach to national and international issues. The opposition of the countries of the region to the US-sponsored economic and trade embargo against Cuba is indicative of this approach. Keeping the above in mind we have established institutional relations with regional organisations. India has observer status with the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Andean Community. Our High Commissioner in Georgetown (Guyana) is concurrently accredited as India's Ambassador to CARICOM. We have been participating regularly in the meetings of these organisations. Mechanism for dialogue with the Rio Group has also been established and we are seeking to set up an institutional relationship with MERCOSUR as well.

The Former Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Vasundhara Raje, led the Indian delegation to the Fourth Session of the Indo-Cuban Joint Commission held in Havana from April 5-7 1999. During her stay in Havana, the Minister called on President Fidel Castro and had meetings with other high dignitaries. The Joint Commission provided an opportunity to review India's overall relations with Cuba and to explore avenues for further cooperation. The meeting of the Trade Revival Committee between India and Cuba was also held along with the Joint Commission. As agreed in the last Joint Commission, the Work Plan of Cooperation for the period 1999-2000 in the field of Agricultural Research and Education was signed in Havana on 13 August 1999. Secretary, Department of Science &

Technology, visited Cuba on 28-29 September 1999. Under the S&T agreement, the Protocol for Cooperation in Science & Technology between India and Cuba for 1999-2000 was signed during the visit.

Mr. Jose Armando Guerra Menchero, Cuban Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by Mr. Miguel Angel Ramirez Ramos, Acting Director of the Asian Affairs Division of the Ministry, visited New Delhi from 24-27 November 1999 for Foreign Office level consultations. During the visit the Cuban Vice-Minister handed over a letter of invitation to our EAM from his Foreign Minister for visiting Cuba. The Vice-Minister also requested for Indian assistance in next year's South Summit to be held in Havana.

The Former Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Vasundhara Raje, visited Paramaribo, Suriname, as the leader of the Indian delegation to the Second Session of Indo- Surinamese Joint Commission from 9-10 April 1999. During the visit, she called on President Jules Wijdenbosch and held discussions with other dignitaries. The Joint Commission identified a number of areas of bilateral cooperation.

Shri Ranjit Singh Kalha, Secretary (West), accompanied by Shri Amitava Tripathi, Joint Secretary (LAC), visited Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina and Brazil from 5-19 June 1999 for bilateral consultations and for briefing these countries on the Kargil situation. During the visit, Secretary (West) handed over to President Andres Pastrana of Colombia a formal invitation from our President to visit India. The Colombian Government also awarded a concession to upgrade the country's Atlantic railway system to an international consortium of which the Indian public sector undertaking RITES is a member.

The Minister of External Affairs held meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Jamaica, Cuba and Guyana in New York during the UNGA in September in tune with our policy of high level

interaction with the region. A meeting between former MOS(EA) and the Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago also took place during the UNGA. These meetings provided an opportunity to review our overall relationship as well as to identify new areas of cooperation. During the discussion the Jamaican Foreign Minister supported India's right to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council .

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group set up between India and Venezuela as a mechanism for bilateral cooperation in the energy sector was held in Caracas from 12-15 July 1999, in which it was agreed that the national oil companies of the two countries will collaborate in R&D, training of personnel and collaboration in engineering services etc..

The second Indo-Brazil Workshop of climatic research under the Bilateral Science and Technology Agreement was held in Brazil from 20-24 September 1999. Both sides had useful interactions and identified areas including climate variability and its impact on agriculture and vegetation, use of parallel processing in meteorology, El Nino phenomenon and its implication on climatic pattern in different parts of the globe and pollution control for joint collaboration.

Dr. A.P. Kulshreshtha, Advisor, Deptt. of Science and Technology, visited Mexican counterpart to discuss the development of cooperation between the two countries in the field of science and technology. He also visited the National Council for Science and Technology of Mexico during which it was agreed that two joint work shops would be organised, one in Mexico and another in India, on Manufacturing Technology with the participation of senior scientists working in different fields.

A Memorandum of Undertaking on establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Dominican Republic was signed in

Santo Domingo on 4 May 1999. For India, High Commissioner to Jamaica with concurrent accreditation to the Dominican Republic, Shri O.P Gupta, and for the Dominican Republic, Foreign Minister Mr. Eduardo Latorre signed the MOU.

A Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) was signed on 20th August 1999 during the visit of Dr. Julio Caceres, Secretary of Cooperation in the Ministry of Economy of Argentina to India. Argentina is the first ever Latin American country with whom we have signed the BIPA. Dr. Caceres has also participated in the G- 15 ministerial meeting in Bangalore on 16-18 August.

The Chairperson and Managing Director of India Trade Promotion Organisation, Shri Yogesh Chandra, visited Santiago, Chile from 25-30 July 1999 in connection with the proposed India Exhibition to be held in Santiago July 2000. During his visit Shri Chandra held discussions with Finance Secretary, officials from the Foreign Office, trade representatives and members of the Indo-Chilean Chambers of Commerce.

A programme to commemorate Gandhi Jayanti was organised in Sao Paulo during the week 2-9 October 1999 in which a number of workshops, lectures, yoga demonstrations etc. were presented. An Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi in Portuguese was also published during the event.

Dr. Felipe Humberto Pachano Rivera, Rector, University of Merida, Venezuela visited India from 18-22 October 1999 under the Distinguished Visitors Programme of the ICCR. Separate MoUs between the University Merida and the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University were signed during the visit.

This year, too, the Central American region was affected by natural calamities in the form of hurricanes and heavy rains. India has offered medical relief worth Rs. 5 lakhs to El Salvador.

Shri Parimal Kumar Das took over as India's High Commission for Trinidad and Tobago on 16 July 1999.

Shri H.K.Singh took over as India's Ambassador to Colombia on 28 September 1999.

Shri Tara Singh presented his credentials to the President of Panama on 11 October 1999 as India's Ambassador to that country.

The new Ambassador of Colombia Her Excellency Marica C Betancur presented her credentials on 7 May 1999.

Her Excellency Mrs. Vera B Machado presented her credentials to the President as the new Ambassador of Mexico to India on 27 August 1999.

The new Venezuela Ambassador His Excellency Mr. Walter Marquez presented his credentials as Ambassador of Venezuela on 23 September 1999.

Dr. Hugo Fernandez Faingold, Vice President of Uruguay visited India from December 5-9, 1999, at the invitation of our Vice President. He was accompanied by an eleven-member official delegation and five businessmen. This was the first high level visit of an Uruguayan dignitary to India. During the visit the Uruguayan Vice President had talks with our Vice President, Prime Minister, EAM and other dignitaries and attended the Rajya Sabha session as well. Two MOUs - one on Foreign Office Level Consultations and another on Cooperation between the diplomatic academies of the two countries and an agreement on doing away with visa requirement for diplomatic

and official passport holders of the two countries were signed. Mr. Faingold also addressed a seminar on "Uruguay and MERCOSUR; Business and Investment Opportunities" organised by CII. The Council of Industries of Uruguay and the National Commercial Council of Uruguay signed MOUs for cooperation with CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM. A street in Chanakya Puri was renamed after Uruguayan national hero, General Jose G. Artigas. During his talks with the Indian dignitaries the Uruguayan Vice President offered his country's assistance to India in establishing an institutional relationship with MERCOSUR.

Venezuela was hit by heavy rains followed by mud and landslides resulting in approximately 30,000 deaths and left over 2,00,000 people homeless. The Government of India sent medical relief worth US\$ 20,000. Separately, more than ten tonnes of relief material meant for the victims of Orissa Cyclone received as donations from the Venezuelan entities and individuals was diverted for the victims of the natural disaster in Venezuela.

Forecast of important events

Visit to India by the Cuban Special Envoy H. E. Alberto Valzco San Jose from 19 to 22 January, 2000.

Visit to India by the Mexican Foreign Minister H. E. Ms. Rosario Green from 15 to 19 February, 2000.

The Fourth Session of the Indo-Mexican Joint Commission from 14-15 February, 2000 in New Delhi.



9

United Nations and International Organisations

Introduction

The year 1999 was an eventful one for the United Nations. The Security Council had before it important matters concerning resolution of conflicts in different parts of the world like Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Congo and Lebanon. Debate on important issues relating to Security Council restructuring and terrorism continued during the year in concerned Committees and Working Groups. India remained actively involved in all these matters and breakthroughs were achieved in the area of terrorism where India's proposal for a comprehensive convention on international terrorism has received approval for initiation of discussions in September 2000. Public support for India's candidature to the Security Council was forthcoming from Russia, Vietnam and Laos.

The General Assembly was held against the backdrop of an ongoing debate on the concept of humanitarian intervention. Kosovo and East Timor had sensitised the world on this matter and India continued to be an active participant in the global debate on the subject.

Political Issues in the UN

Security Council Expansion & India's Candidature

The Open Ended Working Group of the UN General Assembly

on the Restructuring of the Security Council wound up its deliberations for the year on 30.7.99 without making any substantial progress. No decisions were arrived at on any of the key issues including categories to be expanded, size of the expanded Council, the question of veto and review mechanism. The report of the OEWG recommends that the Group would continue its work and submit its report including any agreed recommendation at the end of the next (54th) session of the UNGA in September 2000.

Several countries addressed the subject of UN expansion and restructuring in their plenary speeches at the 54th UNGA. Among these, Vietnam and Laos expressed support for India's candidature to an expanded Security Council. Russia also expressed support for India's candidature earlier during the debate in OEWG.

The question of UN Security Council restructuring was also debated under Agenda Item 38 during the closing days of the session. The debate only revealed the wide differences in opinion and stands that still exist. Support for India's candidature was expressed by Cyprus & Mauritius.

New NonPermanent Members of Security Council Selected

General Assembly on 14th October, 1999 selected five new members who would begin their two-year term as non-permanent members of the Security Council starting 1st January, 2000. These members are :

- a) Asian Group - Bangladesh replaces Bahrain
- b) Latin American Group - Jamaica replaces Brazil.
- c) East European Group - Ukraine replaces Slovenia
- d) African Group- Mali and Tunisia replace Gambia and Gabon

There will be no change in the OEWG Group in the year 2000.

The 54th UN General Assembly

The 54th session of the UN General Assembly officially commenced on 14th September, 1999 with the election of Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia as the President of the Session.

The 54th UNGA had a 172-item agenda dealing with political, economic, social and development issues. An important aspect of the 54th UNGA has been the focus and widespread interest on the question of humanitarian intervention that was sparked off by the Secretary General who led off the general debate by inviting the GA to consider laying down terms and conditions under which humanitarian intervention would be carried out. Opinion on the subject was divided and it was rejected by NAM during the Ministerial meeting on the margins of the GA.

The Indian delegation to the 54th Session of the UN General Assembly was headed by the External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh who addressed the Plenary Session on September 22, 1999. As this was the last UNGA session of the 20th century, his address surveyed the major developments of the century. The dominant themes of the address were the global menace posed by terrorism, including narco-terrorism, recent developments in Indo-Pak relations and global nuclear disarmament. India's interest in a permanent membership of an expanded Security Council was reiterated with EAM mentioning that by any objective criteria India's credentials for permanent membership are persuasive.

Other important developments from India's point of view are

the expression of support for India's candidature by Russia, Laos, Vietnam, Cyprus and Mauritius in spite of the fact that debate on the question of the UN restructuring was conclusive only in once more reflecting the wide differences in opinions and stands that prevail.

India's initiative in the Sixth Committee also resulted in adoption of the Convention for Suppression of Terrorist Financing as well as the resolution on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism which has the provision for discussing India's draft of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism from September 2000.

NAM

NAM Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on the margins of the 54th UNGA on September 24, 1999 to coordinate NAM's approach to issues deliberated during the GA session.

The meeting adopted a statement, which covered political and economic development since the XIIth NAM Summit at Durban. It reiterated NAM position on Security Council restructuring, self-determination and terrorism. It also expressed deep concern at the updating of strategic defence doctrines that set out new rationales for the use of nuclear weapons. It expressed deep concern over the new "Alliance Strategic Concept" adopted by NATO in April, 1999 and the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile system. The statement reiterated the decision of the Durban Summit mandating the Coordinating Bureau to study further the question of mechanism for peaceful settlement of disputes between member states and rejected the so called concept of 'humanitarian intervention'.

EAM in his address to the Meeting emphasised the need for maintaining and reinforcing unity of the movement.

Terrorism

The phenomena of international terrorism was an important area

of attention of the UN during the year. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Sixth Committee had before it drafts of the French sponsored Convention on Suppression of Terrorist Financing which was adopted and the Russian sponsored Convention against Nuclear Terrorism which is still in debate.

The Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly also adopted the resolution on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in November 1999 during the General Assembly session. This resolution contains provision for initiating work on the Indian sponsored draft convention on international terrorism in September 2000. The resolution also refers to the Egyptian proposal for convening a global conference to discuss the issue of terrorism.

Important aspects of the Indian sponsored convention are that they lay emphasis on responsibility of states and also covers terrorist acts in all its aspects. All previous international conventions on terrorism concentrated only on specific acts of terrorism e.g. terrorist bombing, hijacking, etc.

The Convention on Suppression of Terrorist Finance and the resolution on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism were subsequently adopted by the main GA on 9th December, 1999.

UN Security Council on October 19, 1999 adopted resolution No. 1269 condemning all acts of terrorism and calling upon all States to combat terrorism in all its forms. An important element of the resolution is that it calls upon all states to prevent and suppress preparation and financing of any acts of terrorism in their territories and deny safe havens to terrorists. The resolution was adopted at the initiative of Russia.

Peacekeeping

UNIFIL, Lebanon: The UN Security Council on 30.7.99 voted to extend the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months until end January 2000. In its

unanimous resolution the Council reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognised borders. It also stresses the need for urgent implementation of its resolution 425 of 1978 which initially set up the UNIFIL to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist Lebanon to re-establish its authority in the area.

India had contributed the IInd Battalion of the 4th Gorkha Regiment to UNIFIL. The battalion completed its one year term of duty in November 1999 and has been replaced by a battalion from the Madras Regiment.

Democratic Republic of Congo: On 10.7.99 in Lusaka, the Heads of State of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe and the Minister of Defence of Angola signed an agreement for the cessation of hostilities between all the belligerent forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The representatives of the rebel forces The Rally for a Democratic Congo and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo declined to sign.

The agreement contains modalities for implementation of a cease-fire and establishment of a joint military commission comprising two representatives from each party under a neutral Chairperson to be appointed by the OAU in consultation with the parties.

It also contains provisions for the constitution, facilitation and deployment of an "appropriate force" by the UN in collaboration with OAU.

In anticipation of requirement of peacekeeping troops, the UN Department of Peacekeeping operations has initiated contingency planning and approached various countries, including India, to provide troops.

India has already contributed 20 Army officers as Military liaison officers for the UN Mission in Congo.

UNOMSIL, Sierra Leone: A peace agreement was signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone in Lome on 7.7.99.

UN Security Council on October 22, 1999 passed resolution No. 1270 establishing the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The resolution authorises deployment of a 6000-strong UN peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone.

The first group of these peacekeepers arrived in Sierra Leone on 29th November, 1999. Among other tasks, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone will assist the Government in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, and monitor adherence to the cease-fire assistance. The peacekeeping troops will work together with some 220 UN military observers already on the ground in Sierra Leone.

India has confirmed contribution of 2 Infantry battalions (of which one has already been deployed), a level-3 medical unit, a quick reaction company and a medium helicopter transport unit along with an aviation refuelling unit for UNAMSIL. With complete deployment of the above military configuration, India will be the single largest contributor of troops in UNAMSIL. Other major troop contributors are Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana. Maj. Gen. Vijay Kumar Jetley of India has been appointed as the Force Commander of UNAMSIL. Prior to the creation of UNAMSIL, the UN had only an observer mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL).

In a related development, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, a senior diplomat from Nigeria, has been appointed as UNSG's Special Representative and Head of UNAMSIL, on 19th November, 1999.

Bosnia: UN Security Council vide its resolution No. 1247 dated 18.6.99 has extended the mandate of UNMIBH upto 21.2.2000. India has contributed 134 civilian police officers for the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These officers were deployed in various

parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the months of July and October 1999 for an initial period of one year.

KOSOVO: International efforts towards resolving the crisis in Kosovo culminated in an agreement being hammered out and legitimised vide the UN resolution No. 1244 of June 10, 1999 whereby Yugoslav forces would withdraw from Kosovo to make way for the entry of an international force with NATO at its core as well as a parallel civilian interim administration under the UN flag. The UN resolution on Kosovo clearly indicates that the political solution for Kosovo will be based on principles enunciated by the G-8.

The UN presence in Kosovo with the acronym UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo) has four main components, each with a partner agency.

- ◆ Interim civil administration: the United Nations;
- ◆ Humanitarian affairs: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHRR);
- ◆ Institution-building: the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and
- ◆ Reconstruction: the European Union.

India has contributed 88 civilian police officers to UNMIK. The officers were deployed in Kosovo in early December 1999. In addition, two companies of CRPF Rapid Action Force have also been committed for UNMIK by the Indian government.

East Timor

A major breakthrough on the question of East Timor was reached when the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal, in the presence of the UN Secretary General signed two agreements on 5.5.99 concerning details for holding of a ballot to decide the question of autonomy for East Timor.

After some initial delay, consultative balloting was finally held in

East Timor on 30th August, 1999. The exercise saw 438,968 persons or 98% of the registered voters cast their ballot. Results of the ballot announced by the UN Secretary General on 3rd September, 1999 indicated that a total of 344, 580 or 78.5% of the voters had voted against the proposed special autonomy status, thereby indirectly opting for ultimate independence. The balloting was followed by an escalation of violence and fighting between the pro-independence and pro-integration factions in the Island.

In response to widespread international reaction to the killings and the humanitarian crimes which followed, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 1264 on 15th September, 1999 and gave approval for the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force in East Timor. The multinational task force, going by the acronym INTERFET (International Force in East Timor) consists mainly of the Australian troops with contributions in various forms also from Thailand, the UK, France, Canada, the US, Singapore, New Zealand and some others.

This was followed by the Security Council resolution No. 1272 (1999) of 25th October, 1999 which established the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) as a Chapter VII exercise. The resolution empowers UNTAET with the overall responsibility for the administration of East Timor and also gives it legislative and judicial powers. The resolution gives mandate for UNTAET for an initial period until 31st January, 2001.

A Donor's Meet for East Timor was held in Tokyo from 16-17, December, 1999 under the co-chairmanship of World Bank and UNTAET. The donors pledged a total of US\$ 522 million in a three year programme to accelerate the nation building process

Afghanistan

International efforts under the aegis of the UN to find a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem continued through out the year without any success. The group of 6+2 held their last meeting in

Tashkent on 19-20 July, 1999, where they reiterated that negotiations for a peace settlement in Afghanistan must be conducted under the UN auspices in a two-stage manner, the first stage consisting of confidence building measures including immediate and unconditional ceasefire as well as direct negotiations and followed by the second stage where the Afghans would themselves draw up basic principles for a future Afghan State. Almost immediately after 6+2 meeting in Tashkent, the Taliban launched an offensive on July 28, 1999 against other factions.

On 27th August, 1999 the UN held an open debate on Afghanistan in which India also participated. The debate generally saw countries taking tough positions against the Taliban.

Indian statement during the debate noted that the criminal conduct of Taliban had negative implication for peace and security in Afghanistan and the region. India also drew attention to international terrorist groups who find a safe haven in Afghanistan and the dangerous nexus between the Taliban, terrorism and the drug mafias operating in the region. India called upon the Security Council and the international community to take meaningful and effective measures in this regard.

The Security Council on 15.10.99 passed resolution No. 1267 on the situation Afghanistan. The resolution calls upon all States to deny permission to any Taliban owned or leased aircraft to take off from or land in their territory and also freeze funds and other financial resources of the Taliban. This is the first time that elements of sanctions are included in a Security Council resolution on Afghanistan. India played an active role in the formulation of the resolution.

The sanctions on the Taliban came into effect on 14th November, 1999.

Iraq

The UN Security Council remained engaged on the question of

sanctions against Iraq for a considerable part of the year. At the centre of their discussions were two drafts concerning economic sanctions against Iraq. The first, a Russian resolution supported by China, France, Malaysia and Namibia and the second one proposed by Britain with the support of the US. The two drafts, while having common elements on the strengthening of mechanisms for verification of weapons and inspection systems, differed greatly on the question of easing of sanctions.

The Security Council finally adopted Resolution No. 1284 (1999) on 17th December, 1999.

This so-called “Omnibus” or “Comprehensive resolution authorises the creation of a successor body to UNSCOM called UNMOVIC (UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission), for the verification of compliance by Iraq of various resolutions, particularly UNSCR 687(1991).

Once UNMOVIC and the IAEA report that Iraq has been cooperating in all respects with their reinforced monitoring system for a period of 120 days, the sanctions would be suspended for 120 days, renewable by the Council.

Ceiling for the export of Iraqi oil under the “oil for food” programme has been removed.

The United Nations programme of humanitarian assistance to Iraq known as Oil For Food Programme continued to be regularly extended by the Security Council.

Iraq however has given oral notification on 20th November 1999 that it rejects further extension of Oil-for-Food programme and informed the UN that it would not renew the Memorandum of Understanding governing the Council’s Oil-for-Food programme.

South Asia Task Force

The SATF was set up in 1988 following the nuclear tests in South

Asia. Members of the SATF are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, European Union and Ukraine.

The SATF held an official level meeting in Kyiv on 23rd June, 1999. In addition to the expected calls to both India and Pakistan to adhere to the CTBT and expression of concern at the absence of progress in the implementation of UNSCR 1172, reference was also made to the fighting in Kargil.

The SATF also met at the official level in New York on September 7 and November 5, 1999. It is understood that the general sense in New York was that the group had not been able to achieve much and there was no decision on future action except that the members should continue their dialogue with India and Pakistan and exchange views among themselves. It is important to note that France was the only member to insist that SATF should be wound up and that the dialogue should be pursued at bilateral levels. Other members particularly the US, the UK and China, wanted the group to continue.

Indo-Pak Matters

Atlantique Episode: The Secretary General of the UN expressed regrets over the loss of lives following the downing of the Pakistani Atlantique surveillance aircraft by the Indian Airforce and concern at repeated incidents between India and Pakistan. He also urged that differences between the two countries be resolved by peaceful means.

The Security Council did not accept China’s proposal to issue a Presidential Statement on the subject.

Pakistan took the matter to the International Court of Justice, The Hague and the matter is under examination by the ICJ.

Kargil: In his report on the Work of the Organisation, the Secretary General mentioned that the recent upsurge of fighting along

and across the line of control in Kashmir, specially in the Kargil area is a reminder of the fragility of the situation in this region. The SG also stressed the need to put the Lahore Process back on track.

Separately, the Kargil issue was also touched upon in the statement issued at the end of the G-8 Summit on 20th June, 1999, where deep concern was expressed about continuing military confrontation in Kashmir following the infiltration of armed intruders which violated the Line of Control. The G-8 statement also called for restoration, and full respect in future for the Line of Control, thus vindicating India's stand.

Hague Peace Conference

To commemorate the centenary of First Hague Peace Conference of 1899, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation organised an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in The Hague from 17-19 May, 1999 to be followed by the Intergovernmental Conference at St. Petersburg from 22-25 June, 1999.

The two IGCs were preceded by an NGO event at The Hague on May 11-15, 1999. The basic idea was to provide an alternative forum for discussions on matters relating to disarmament, human security, resolution of conflicts, human rights, etc. and ultimately forward the results of the conference to the UN as input during its discussions. The results and suggestions of the meetings are supposed to non-binding.

Disarmament and International Security

India's stand on issues related to disarmament and international security in multilateral and regional forums continues to reflect India's national security interests and the nation's tradition of restraint and engagement with the international community. In particular, India's commitment to non-discriminatory and universal nuclear disarmament continued to be reflected in India's pronouncements and initiatives. At the regional level, India pursued purposeful dialogue

aimed at building confidence, trust and cooperative security structures. The visit undertaken by the Prime Minister to Lahore in Pakistan on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore-Delhi bus service, the agreements signed during the visit as well as the visit of the External Affairs Minister to Beijing demonstrate that given the political will the region is capable of responsibly managing the nuclear dimension of bilateral security equations. This certainly is an important objective for India.

The challenge of Pakistan's aggression in the Kargil sector of Jammu & Kashmir and its attempt to question the sanctity of the Line of Control in violation of the commitments undertaken at Shimla and Lahore was met through a skilful use of diplomacy and military force. The international community has appreciated the restraint shown by India during this conflict.

The series of bilateral dialogues commenced after the nuclear tests of May 1998 were pursued during this year with the objective of harmonising India's security concerns with international concerns on non-proliferation and disarmament. The results of these dialogues are encouraging. In particular there is greater appreciation of India's security concerns and the underpinning of restraint and responsibility in India's conduct and policies post May 1998.

United Nations General Assembly

India participated in the First Committee of the 54th United Nations General Assembly held in New York from October 11-November 12, 1999. India put forward its traditional resolutions on the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons' adopted by the General Assembly by 104 votes in favour, 42 against and 17 abstentions, and on the 'Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security and Disarmament', adopted by the General Assembly 98 votes in favour, 46 against and 19 abstentions. In addition, a new resolution which was introduced by India last year, to highlight the dangers associated with hair-trigger

alert of nuclear Weapons leading to risks of accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons, was adopted by the General Assembly by 104 votes in favour, 43 against and 17 abstentions. India projected its national policy on Nuclear Disarmament and was actively involved in deliberations on a number of resolutions in the First Committee.

Conference on Disarmament

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) could not undertake any substantive negotiations during 1999 in the absence of adoption of its Programme of Work due to lack of consensus on two issues - Nuclear Disarmament and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). The areas on which consensus existed included re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committees on FMCT and Negative Security Assurances, and the reappointment of Special Coordinators dealing with a ban on transfer of Anti Personnel Landmines (APLs), Transparency in Armaments (T1As) and procedural/reform issues relating to the CD. Following the adoption of the traditional agenda early in the 1999 session, the remaining time of the CD was taken up in trying to craft a 'balanced and comprehensive' Programme of Work, an exercise which remained inconclusive. The only important decision adopted by the CD during the year related to the expansion of its membership by admitting five new members - Ecuador, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia. India along with a number of other countries remained actively engaged in the work of the CD and efforts to reach a consensus on its Programme of Work. India remains supportive of a comprehensive and balanced Programme of Work in the CD.

United Nations Disarmament Commission

The 1999 Substantive Session of the UTNDC from April 12-30 in New York addressed three issues, all of which were in the final year of their deliberations in the respective Working Groups: The establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region

concerned (NWFZs); the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV); and Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly Resolution 51/45 N (CD). The UTNDC reached consensus on Guidelines pertaining to NWFZs and CD. No consensus was possible on SSOD-IV due to absence of agreement on the Chairperson's Paper concerning the Objectives and Agenda of SSOD-IV. India's position was that SSOD-IV should 'reaffirm the principles and priorities of SSOD-1', which accord priority to nuclear disarmament.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

As an original state party to the CWC, India has endeavoured to discharge, fully and faithfully, its obligations under the Convention. On 29th April 1999, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands completed two years of its existence. During this period, the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the OPCW has conducted more than 400 inspections at chemical weapons storage and former production facilities, as well as at industrial plant sites in States Parties to the Convention. A number of inspections have taken place in India, and our cooperation with the OPCW in implementing the CWC has been impeccable. As a member of the Executive Council from the entry into force of the Convention, India has been playing an active role in the deliberations of the Council to oversee the implementation of all obligations assumed by States Parties. The lack of progress in implementing some of the provisions of the convention that are of interest to the developing countries, such as those relating to International Cooperation and assistance, casts a shadow on what is otherwise a unique disarmament treaty. It is also a matter of collective concern that some States Parties have not provided full declarations to the OPCW, adversely affecting the inspection schedules.

Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention

India actively participated in the work of Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in Geneva during 1999 to negotiate a Protocol on the basis of the agreed mandate. The Indian delegation continued to support strengthening of BTWC through an effective Protocol for creating a non-discriminatory and transparent compliance regime including the unimpeded exchange of bio-technology for peaceful purposes.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The 43rd General Conference (GC) of the IAEA was held from September 27 - October 1, 1999. The Indian delegation was led by Dr. R. Chidambaram, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. After 25 years a resolution on amendment to Article VI of the IAEA Statute, relating to the membership of the Board of Governors, finally received the approval of the General Conference. The Board of Governors was expanded by 8 seats from the present 35 to 43. The final proposal increases the *seats for* Middle East & South Asia (MESA), the area group India belongs to and is the Chairman of, by 1 elected and 1 designated seat. Presently MESA has 1 designated seat (India) and 3 regular seats as well as 2 floating seats shared between 3 area groups. In the Committee of the Whole, India as the Chairperson of the Group of 77, introduced the resolutions pertaining to Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities, Plan for producing potable water economically, Extensive use of isotope hydrology for water resource management, Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat and Women in the Secretariat.

Third UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-III)

The third UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-III) was held at Vienna in July 1999. Professor U.R. Rao of India was elected as President of the Conference. The Indian presence at the Conference was active and

positive: India participated in the Space Exhibition, the Technical Forum meeting organised workshops, and also supported the Space Generation Forum (*for youth*). The Conference adopted the Vienna Declaration which essentially recognises the need for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of the outer space and outlines definitive recommendations to achieve these objectives.

Anti-Personnel Landmines (APLS) and Small Arms

India remains fully committed to the eventual elimination of Anti-Personnel Mines (APLs). The current humanitarian tragedy of anti-personnel mines has been caused by their illegal and irresponsible exports and indiscriminatory use. India has always refrained from exporting APLs and is of the view that the individual moratoria on exports should be strengthened by developing a universal agreement that would ban such exports and transfers. India is not a party to the Ottawa Convention because our own legitimate security concerns require us, in view of long land border, to make use of APLs in a purely defensive mode. India's responsible use of APLs has been universally acknowledged, including by the ICRC. India is a major contributor to UN demining efforts since its participation in the Congo peace keeping operations in 1963. Experts from the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers have been associated with UN demining efforts in Angola, Rwanda, Mozambique, Somalia and most recently in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

India is a party to the Protocol - II of the Inhumane Weapons Convention and was actively involved in strengthening this Protocol during the 1995-96 negotiations. India's instruments of Ratification on Amended Protocol - II on Anti-Personnel Landmines and Protocol-IV on Blinding Laser Weapons were deposited with the UN Secretary General on 2 September 1999. India put forward the idea of a complete ban on use of APLs in situations other than 'international armed conflict' but this suggestion did not enjoy agreement among all the countries. India had also made suggestions

for banning Remotely Delivered Mines (RDMS) as well as a complete ban on all transfers of APLs and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). These proposals still remain on the table and India hopes that they will enjoy greater support at the forthcoming meeting in mid-December.

The First Annual Conference of States Parties to the Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) was held in Geneva, 15-17 December 1999. The Conference adopted a declaration calling on all States that have not done so to ratify Amended Protocol II as soon as possible. India participated actively in this Conference. While reiterating its commitment to the objective of the total elimination of landmines, India supported a phased approach that would balance the humanitarian considerations arising from an indiscriminate use of landmines on one hand, and their use for legitimate purposes of self-defence by States.

During the past decade, the issue of small arms proliferation has become a major concern. These weapons have become more portable and at the same time more lethal. Non-state actors such as terrorists, drug smugglers and organised crimes syndicates find it easy to procure these weapons and use it against civil societies and law enforcement agencies. India has a strict arms licensing policy with production of small arms and ammunition being undertaken in ordnance factories. Proliferation of these weapons during the Afghanistan war had led to large quantities of such weapons being smuggled into India in order to perpetrate the low intensity conflict and step up acts of terrorism and violence. India has repeatedly called for concerted international efforts to stem illegal manufacturing and trafficking of small arms and explosives. India has welcomed the call for an international conference in 2001 and remain actively engaged in the negotiations of a Firearms Protocol as part of the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime.

Bilateral Dialogue on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs): ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

India's approach to confidence building has unilateral, bilateral and regional aspects. The Bilateral Confidence Building Measures (CBMS) have been negotiated both in the India-Pakistan and the Sino-Indian context. With Pakistan, conventional CBMs were sought to be supplemented with nuclear and missile related CBMs in the framework of the MOU signed between the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries at the February 1999 Lahore Summit. The agreement also envisaged updating of conventional CBMs in the light of new realities. However, Pakistan's aggression in Kargil constitutes a setback to this process.

As regards China, the brief hiatus in dialogue post-May 1998 is now over. India and China have agreed to begin a security dialogue following the visit of the External Affairs Minister to China. India and China have a number of conventional CBMs in place. India would be prepared to enter into bilateral restraint arrangements also in the nuclear field taking into account the unilateral commitment of both countries to no-first-use.

At the Asia-Pacific level, the only arrangement for a regional security dialogue is the ASEAN Regional Forum. ARF has been focussing on building confidence and trust and has built a basket of proposals on CBMS, which can be negotiated. External Affairs Minister led the Indian delegation to the 6th ARF meeting held in Singapore on July 26, 1999. The meeting was followed by Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) with the ASEAN. The ARF/PMC meetings provided an opportunity for a wide range of bilateral contacts including with the US, China, Japan, Russia and some ASEAN countries. Unlike the ARF Meet in Manila last year when nuclear testing by India was in focus, there was no discussion on India-specific issues. There was a general reference in the Chairperson's statement issued at the end of the meeting for states that had tested nuclear

weapons last year to exercise restraint, including by adherence to the CTBT. In our bilateral contacts, India's restraint on Kargil was appreciated and the Chairperson's statement endorsed our stand on bilateralism. Officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Defence continued to participate in the inter-sessional meetings of the Forum.

Environment and Sustainable Development Issues

The Seventh Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), established by the ECOSOC to review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 (Sustainable Development - Earth Summit, 1992), was held from April 19-30, 1999. The main themes were Tourism, Changing Consumption and Production Patterns, Oceans and Seas, and, Small Island Developing States - Programme of Action. The issue of oceans' governance was a major point of discussions in the Oceans and Seas segment. It was agreed that there would be a more comprehensive review of oceans-related matters by the UN General Assembly, which will be the sole forum in which coordination of oceans' issues will take place.

The VIIth Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-VII) of the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was held in San Jose, Costa Rica from May 10 to 18, 1999. Among the issues before the Conference was the question of adoption of guidelines for (a) integrating wetlands conservation and "wise use" into river-basin management and (b) for international cooperation under the Convention. The Indian delegation actively participated in the negotiations and ensured that India's concerns were adequately addressed, including by stipulating that the implementation of these guidelines is to be in accordance with the national plans and priorities.

The meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Convention on Climate Change was held in Bonn from May 29 - June 11, 1999 to discuss the flexibility mechanisms of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the

Convention, available to the developed countries, in order to achieve their legally-binding caps on Green House Gases' emissions. This was preceded by a meeting of the Group of 77 and China on May 29-30, 1999, at which India was appointed as the Coordinator and the Spokesman of the Group on mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol. The meeting agreed that the priority should be accorded to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), one of the three flexibility mechanisms under the Protocol. The Group also agreed on a paper outlining its perspectives on the CDM, which was submitted to the 5th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which met in Bonn from October 25-November 5, 1999.

The 5th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met in Bonn from October 25-November 5, 1999. It considered the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and in this context decided to have additional meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies to help COP VI in arriving at decisions as set out in the Plan of Action. In addition to its position paper on the Mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol, G-77 and China had tabled before COP V, additional papers on two of the Mechanisms, viz , the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Emissions Trading were tabled. India played a leading role in the meeting of G-77 and China in this regard. The Conference also decided to authorise the consolidation of a text for further negotiations on the Mechanisms so as to be ready for adoption at COP VI.

Economic And Social Commission For Asia And The Pacific

The most important event relating to Economic And Social Commission For Asia And The Pacific (ESCAP) from India's point of view was the Second Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific held in New Delhi from November 15-20, 1999.

The Ministerial segment of this important conference was

inaugurated by the Prime Minister. The Conference was attended by 20 ministers from 27 ESCAP member countries participating in it. It served as an excellent exposition of India's achievements in the use of space systems towards sustainable development and showcased India's capabilities for sharing its experience with other countries in the region. The Delhi Declaration on Space Technology Applications in Asia and the Pacific, unanimously adopted at the Conference, is a landmark in regional cooperation with particular emphasis on national capacity building and enhancing the regional capability in space technology applications, through the participation of countries of the Asia Pacific region.

In addition, there was the annual ESCAP Commission Session held in April 1999 and the regular intergovernmental and other Committee meetings, in which the delegations from India participated actively .

Development Issues

The Working Group set up by the 53rd UN General Assembly to prepare for the International Conference on Finance for Development adopted its report at the concluding substantive session on 27th May, 1999. An inclusive agenda list, incorporating issues of interest to India such as, trade and reform of financial architecture was the main feature of the Report in the drafting of which India had a major role to play as one of the two Vice-Chairmen. The 54th session of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the basis of these recommendations. The text of the resolution on financing for Development was satisfactory from India's view point as it preserves the outcome of the preparatory process thus far and sets in place a similar process on substantive matters. The Conference on Financing For Development to be held in 2001 is expected to be a high-level inter-governmental event, with ministerial level participation.

The 54th UN General Assembly adopted by vote the resolution

on international financial stability with the US setting out their position that the UN had no role to play in this area, which should be left to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

United Nations International Narcotics Control Bureau

The 67th session of United Nations International Narcotics Control Bureau was held from November 1-18 ,1999. The meeting was attended from Indian side by Member, International Narcotics Control Bureau. He criticized the UN International Drug Control Programme's policy of maintaining contacts with Taleban government in Afghanistan and for ignoring Taleban complicity in the cultivation of illicit opium crops.

Social, Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues

In the discussions on human rights issues in sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Sub Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, India's participation was substantive and constructive.

The 54th session of the UN General Assembly adopted 250 resolutions , 19 of which were on the strengthening of the machinery for coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance by the UN , with regard to 19 countries either recovering from conflict or devastated by natural and man-made disasters. The Assembly commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and decided to convene a special session in September 2001 to review the implementation of the goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children. Assembly also adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was opened for signature on October 6,1999 and will enter into force, once ratified by 10 states. The resolution on right to development was voted upon.

India participated actively in the 55th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva from March 22 to April 30, 1999 and made significant contribution to the substantive issues, consensus building and decision-making. The session was preceded by meeting of 8 working groups of the Commission on various issues mandated to these working groups, such as indigenous people, migrant workers, children in armed conflict and child prostitution and child pornography. India revived a resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which was adopted by consensus and was the leading sponsor of resolution on Mainstreaming Technical Cooperation which was adopted by vote in the session of UN Commission on Human Rights. India also piloted a resolution on Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific based on the conclusions of the Workshop on Human Rights held in New Delhi in February 1999. The resolution on the Right to Development, cosponsored by India and presented by the group of Non-Aligned countries, was adopted with out a vote in the Commission. India worked with the US on a new resolution on Promotion of Democracy. The resolution on Human Rights and Terrorism moved by Turkey was cosponsored by India and was adopted by vote. The Indian delegation made 36 interventions and statements and cosponsored 22 resolutions during the meeting of UN Commission on Human Rights.

A number of eminent Indians continued to serve with distinction as the members of important human rights mechanisms and treaty bodies. These included Smt. Shanti Sadiq Ali (Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), Sh. Soli Sorabjee (Expert member on the Sub Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights), Sh. Kapil Sibal (Chairman-Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights Working Group on Arbitrary Detention), Sh. P. N. Bhagwati (Vice Chairman of the Human Rights Committee and Regional Adviser for the Asia Pacific Region for promoting technical cooperation in the field of Human

Rights), Sh. Abid Hussien (Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion And Expression). Sh. M. J. Ahmadi was appointed as a Member of the International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor.

The crisis in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)-Kosovo found its reverberations in environment-related bodies e.g. Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat). India argued against the politicisation of these bodies by the introduction of such politically sensitive and divisive issues.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'s Substantive Session was held from July 5-30, 1999 in Geneva. The ECOSOC considered the reports of its various subsidiary bodies in the fields of economic and environmental matters and social and human rights questions. The high level segment during the session focussed on the theme - the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women. The Ministerial Communique issued on the focal theme adequately reflected India's position with regard to sustained economic growth being the key to poverty eradication and employment generation.

India participated in the 21st Special Session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Programme of Action (POA) of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in New York June 30 to July 2, 1999. The Indian Delegation was led by Hon'ble Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Dalit Ezhilmalai. The final documents of the Special Session reflected our concerns with regard to the creation of an enabling environment to achieve sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development and eradicating poverty; empowerment of women, resource mobilization, etc.

The Special Session of the Commission on Human Rights was

held from September 23-27 on East Timor against the background of questionable procedures adopted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Bureau of the Commission. India spoke against the establishment of an international commission of inquiry as steps had been taken by Government of Indonesia to restore normalcy and cooperate with UN and international agencies. Further, such a move may have had the opposite effect of exacerbating tension, leading to further conflict and confrontation.

India was an active participant in the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent held from October 31 to November 6, 1999. India contributed actively to drafting of the Conference Plan of Action both during the preparatory process and the Conference. Besides recalling its age old humanitarian traditions and emphasizing its full commitment to humanitarian causes as also the principles enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, India also stressed the need to keep international humanitarian assistance within the ambit of the principle of state sovereignty.

India played an active role in the 50th Session of the Executive Committee of the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in October, 1999 in Geneva and highlighted issues of concern to developing countries such as economic and social impact of the massive refugee flows into these countries. India's statement on the annual theme of the Executive Committee – "Strengthening Partnership to Ensure Protection, also in relation to Security" – stressed its commitment to the protection of asylum seekers, the significant contributions made by developing countries to refugee issues and the importance of international solidarity and burden sharing. India also emphasized the need to tackle poverty which is the root cause of number of refugee flows. India expressed concern at the growing tendency of a number of signatories to the 1951 convention on the Status of refugees to derogate from its basic principles and provisions.

Specialised Agencies

WHO

The Indian delegation contributed extensively in the deliberations of the World Health Assembly in May 1999. A number of important decisions including adoption of budget 2000-2001, the launching of a campaign to enact a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control", as also on the Roll back Malaria Programme and the revised drug strategy were taken. India outlined its fast track approach to meet the target of eradicating polio by the end of 2000 with an ambitious plan of National Immunisation Days.

ILO

The 87th session of the International Labour Conference held in June 1999 unanimously adopted a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation concerning the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of the child labour. The Indian delegation played a key role in the deliberations and was able to get the poverty dimension of child labour reflected in the text, in emphasizing the need to address this root cause and to strengthen obligations related to international cooperation.

FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organisation Council at its meeting in Rome from 14-19 June, 1999, elected Shri Bhaskar Barua, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture as Chairman of the Commission-II of the Conference. The previous Chairman of Commission-II from India had been Dr. M.S. Swaminathan.

The 30th session of the Food and Agriculture Organisation Conference was held from 12-23 November in Rome. The Indian delegation was led by Shri S.B.P.B.K. Satyanarayana Rao, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture. India was re-elected to the Council as well as to the Finance Committee during the session.

Dr. Jacques Diouf of Senegal was re-elected as the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation at the elections held on November 13, 1999 during the 30th session of the Food and Agriculture Organisation Conference in Rome.

UNESCO

Ambassador Koichiro Matura of Japan was confirmed as the new Director General of United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation on November 15 during the General Conference of the Organisation held in Paris.

Elections and Appointments

During the year, India was elected to the following bodies:

1. Hon'ble Dr.(Mrs.) Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha, was unanimously elected on October 16, 1999 as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the Inter Parliamentary Union. Dr.(Mrs.) Heptullah is the first-ever woman President in the history of the Inter Parliamentary Union.
2. Executive Council of World Meteorological Organization (WMO), for the period 1999-2003.
3. UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, for the period 2000-2003.
4. UN Commission on Human Settlements for the period 2000-2003.
5. Executive Board of UNICEF, for the period 2000-2002.
6. Dr. P.C. Rao was re-elected as Judge of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), for the period 1999-2008.
7. Council of Administration (CA) and Postal Operation Council (UPU), for the period 2000-2004;
8. Council of Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO), for the period 2000-2003.
9. UN Environment Programme (UNEP), for the period 2000-2003.
10. Shri V.K. Shunglu was elected as External Auditor of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), for the period 2000-2004.
11. Council of the International Maritime Organisation, for the period 2000 -2001.
12. Executive Board of WHO for the term 1999-2002.

International Law : Development and Activities

The 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) commenced on 14 September 1999. The report of the International Law Commission (ILC) on the work of its fifty first session was discussed. The discussion centred on the various subjects including: State Liability; State Responsibility; Reservations to Treaties; Nationality in Relations to the Succession of States and; Unilateral Acts of States.

During the session, the Sixth Committee (Legal) considered the following agenda items including: Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property; United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law; United Nations Decade of International Law; Outcome of the action dedicated to the 1999 centennial of the first International Peace Conference; Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-second session; Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country; Establishment of an international criminal court; Report of the Special committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the strengthening of the Role of the Organization; Measures to eliminate international terrorism and; Review of the Statue of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal.

The Legal & Treaties Division prepared briefs on all these topics of ILC as well as Sixth Committee, for the use of the Indian delegation, for making statements in the session.

Also during the session, a Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism was adopted. A resolution condemning terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable was also adopted. The mandate of the Adhoc Committee on Terrorism and to hold its meetings in the year 2000 was also renewed.

The Thirty-second Annual Session of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) was held at Vienna from May 17 to June 4, 1999. During the current session, the major focus was on the Government contract Management and support for privately financed infrastructure project as well as ways of selecting participation companies core terms of project agreement, legal issues of constructing, operating and regulating infrastructure, duration of projects as well as extending or ending them, governing law and settlement of disputes. Legislative guide aims to help the government and legal bodies at the national provincial or local levels, review adequacy of laws regulations, decrees and other legal texts for carrying out privately financed infrastructure projects.

The Commission also discussed the Reports of Working Group on Electronic Commerce of its Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Sessions, preparing uniform rules on digital signatures, other electronic signatures, certification authorities and related legal issues, the report of Working Group on International Contract Practices entrusted with the task of preparing uniform law on assignment in receivables financing. The commission also discussed the possible future work on insolvency law and the prevailing view was that an exploratory session of Commission should be convened to prepare a feasibility proposal for consideration by the Commission at its Thirty-third Session.

Pursuant to Resolutions of the Preparatory Commission of the International Criminal Court, meetings were held at New York in February, August and December 1999. During these Sessions the Elements of Crimes and the Rules of Evidence and Procedure were discussed. A separate working group has also been set up on the definition of aggression.

The Legal & Treaties Division participated in negotiations, held at: Tunis, Tunisia; Muscat, Oman; New Delhi, India, respectively from 8-9 February 1999, 11-12 April 1999, 20-22 October 1999 and 22 November 1999 for concluding extradition treaties with Tunisia, Oman, Poland (second round) and Mangolia. In the 22 November 1999 meeting with Mangolian delegation, discussion also took place on agreements on Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and civil matters. The Division also participated in negotiations held at Astana, Kazakhstan from 26-28 July 1999, for concluding agreements on Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and civil matters. A proposal received from Egypt for concluding an Extradition treaty was also examined and advised upon. Proposals received from Hong Kong, Egypt, Nepal, Bulgaria and Turkmenistan, for agreements on Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters were also so examined.

This Division examined various extradition requests and requests for mutual judicial assistance, received both from domestic as well as foreign jurisdictions and rendered legal advice therein. Various requests prepared by CBI, aimed to seek assistance from foreign countries in ongoing criminal investigations including those with which there exists no formal agreement in this area, were also examined by this Division. Legal advice was rendered in all extradition court cases pending in Indian and foreign courts.

The Division participated in the Meeting of Legal Experts of the member States of Indian Ocean Rim -Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), held in Maputo, Mozambique, from 8-10

December 1999. The important issue, inter alia, that came up for discussion was the finalization of the instrument of acceptance.

Pursuant to a request from the United States, the Division examined the status of 'UN Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners' in respect of India. Also legal issues involved in a case concerning missing Indian war prisoners believed to be in Pakistan were examined in this Division.

This Division attended the Diplomatic Conference on the Adoption of the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property. The Protocol seeks to make the rules regarding grant of special protection to cultural property more liberal. A simplified regime is expected to provide more flexibility regarding the eligibility of cultural property to become specially protected. Once a property is placed under special protection then any violation of such property either by using it for military purposes or making such property an object of attack will be treated as a serious violation. This puts an obligation on the Parties either to try or extradite the offender. The Protocol, also prohibits acts of hostility directed against any cultural property and puts an obligation on states to make such offences punishable. However, the concept of military necessity has been retained and the Protocol lists out the conditions under which the obligations may be waived in case of imperative military necessity.

The 38th Annual Session of the Asian African Legal Consultative Committee was held at Accra from 19-23 April, 1999. Officers of the Division prepared briefs in various subjects that formed agenda of discussion during the session. Those items include: Report on the Work of the International Law Commission at its Fiftieth Session; Status and Treatment of Refugees; Legal Protection of Migrant Workers; Law of the Sea; Extraterritorial Application of National Legislation; Sanctions Imposed Against Third Parties; The United

Nations Decade of International Law; Report of the Expert Group meeting, New Delhi 11-12 February 1999; the Report of the UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court; United National Conference on Environment and Development; Follow-up and; Trade Law matters.

The Division participated in the second to fifth sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a draft convention against Transnational organized Crime held in 1999 in Vienna.

The Division also participated in the negotiations for concluding Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement with Bangladesh, Hungary and Austria.

The 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was held at Geneva from 31st October to 6th November 1999. The Conference adopted a Plan of Action to the coming four years. The Plan of Action is divided into 3 chapters i.e, Protection of Victims of Armed Conflict; Humanitarian Response; and Health Services and Humanitarian Principles. Under these three chapters various goals have been identified and actions which are required to be taken to fulfil those goals are proposed.

The Legal and Treaties Division prepared a note on United States sanctions against India: A Case for Invocation of WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism. It coordinated with Haj Cell in constituting new Haj Committee by clearing legal hurdles created by the members of old Haj Committee by filing writ petitions in the High Courts of Delhi, Allahabad and Jammu & Kashmir and Supreme Court of India. Asia and Africa were represented in the Drafting Committee of the Bio-Safety Protocol. Legal advice was rendered in handling the matter of arrest and seizure of North Korean ship and another similar matter of Vietnamese vessel.

The issue of the WTO requirement of a comprehensive legislation

at the National level on transparency in government procurement was also examined in this Division.

This Division gave legal opinion on Pakistani petition before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on downing of Atlantique and also organized consultation in evolving the litigatory strategy in this connection. Also matter relating to the extent of the legal right of hot pursuit in territorial waters contiguous zone and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) was examined in this Division and the legal opinion rendered.

A seminar on “Issues Relating to the Implementation of Intellectual Property Rights” was held from 15-16 November, 1999 under the auspice of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. This Division along with the Ministry of Industry Coordinated this seminar.

The Division participated in the meetings of the Core group concerning various aspects of intellectual property rights constituted under the HRD Ministry.

India has signed/ratified many bilateral agreements in various fields during the year. A list of treaties/agreements entered into by India with foreign countries during the year is given at Appendix-IX. A list of instruments of Full Powers issued during 1999 for signing treaties/agreements on behalf on India is at Appendix-X and a list of instruments of ratification is at Appendix-XI.

Forecast of important events scheduled for the period of January-February, 2000

In her first official visit of the new century, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General of World Health Organisation, visited India from January 6 to 8, 2000. She called on President, Prime Minister, Health Minister and Chief Justice of Supreme Court. She

participated in the International Conference on Framework Convention on Tobacco held in New Delhi from January 7-9. India participated actively in the Working Group Meetings of the Framework Convention leading to the Conference. The Convention would provide an international instrument to address and steer the global health debate through capacity -building, transfer of resources to the developing countries for developing alternative crops, and for moving the population depending on tobacco-growing to new means of livelihood. Launching the “Final Push for Polio” programme in New Delhi, she paid tributes to India’s phenomenal efforts towards polio eradication .

Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is to be held in New York on January 18. India presented candidature of Sh. R. V. Pillai for the election to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

India’s first Periodic Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child submitted in February, 1997 along with India’s written response to the List of Issues identified from its First periodic Report were discussed at the 23rd session of the Committee on Convention on the Rights of the Child held in Geneva on January 11-12.

India would present its first initial report to CEDAW on January 24 in New York during the meeting of The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Indian delegation would be led by Smt. Kiran Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Women And Child Development.

Juan Somavia, Director General of International Labour Organisation will visit India from February 16 to 22 ,2000. During his visit , he is expected to call on the PM, the EAM and the FM.



10

Foreign Economic Relations

Economic Division

The year 1999-2000 saw a significant improvement in the global economic situation. The financial crisis that plagued the world in 1998 and 1999 definitely bottomed out. The East Asian region came out of recession through disciplined macro-economic policies and structural reforms. The growth in the world economy is set to gain moderate strength in the coming years. It may, however, be necessary for governments to resist pressures from special interest groups to take protectionist measures, as such measures may be counterproductive and undermine a promising economic environment.

The launch of the EURO on 1 January 1999 to replace the national currencies of eleven countries of the European Union (EU) was a major step taken by the EU towards economic integration. The EURO was expected to enable the EU to exert a greater influence over the direction of the world economy.

India's trade and economic relations with other countries continued to expand during the year. Efforts by the Ministry and Indian Missions abroad to promote foreign trade and Indian investment abroad continued. India's total exports amounted to Rs.1416 billion during April 1998 - March 1999 as against Rs.1301

billion during April 1997 - March 1998. The exports from the country during April 1999 - July 1999 stood at Rs.474 billion compared to Rs.417 billion in the corresponding period in 1997-98. The European Union continued to be India's principal trading partner. The other major trading partners were the USA, Japan, China, UAE and Russia. Major commodities of India's exports included agricultural and allied products, marine products, iron ore, leather goods, gems & jewellery, chemicals and related products, engineering goods, electronic goods and textiles.

Export promotion activities such as organizing and participating in trade fairs, exhibitions and seminars both at home and abroad continued. Besides the annual India International Trade Fair held in New Delhi in November 1999, the 13th India Engineering Trade Fair organized by the Confederation of Indian Industries in New Delhi in February 1999 with the Republic of Korea as the partner country, a seminar-cum-exhibition on technology in electronics organized by the Department of Electronics in New Delhi in February 1999 and an India International Maritime Expo in Goa in October 1999 supported by the Ministry of Surface Transport were some of the notable trade promotion events held in India. The Ministry sponsored a Made in India Show along with the Confederation of Indian Industry in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in August 1999. A trade

fair in Panama City in March 1999, an international trade fair in Athens in September 1999, the Israel Agritech Exhibition 1999 in Haifa also in September 1999, and the International Leather Goods Fair at Messe Oftenbach, Germany were some of the exhibitions abroad in which Indian Missions abroad played a very significant role.

India continued to encounter certain problems in the area of exports, such as the European Union's anti-dumping/anti-subsidy cases against Indian products. India has been one of the most targetted countries for trade defence instruments like anti-dumping duties. Anti-dumping/anti-subsidy investigations were mainly directed towards textiles, pharmaceuticals and iron and steel sectors where Indian exports are competitive. India shared the first position with China for the largest number of cases since 1994, with 22 investigations each out of a total of 175. Out of the 29 new investigations initiated in 1998, India shared the top position with South Korea with 7 cases each. Of the provisional measures in 30 cases in 1998, India was again the country affected by the largest number of cases, namely seven.

The Ministry has worked closely with the Ministries of Labour, Commerce and Textiles on the issue of child labour, and in the setting up of the mechanism by the Ministry of Labour for the investigation of complaints relating to the use of illegal child labour in the export consignments of goods such as hand made carpets.

India has also been facing some difficulties in the matter of export of textiles to the countries of the European Union (EU). While the Memorandum of Understanding on Textiles signed by India and the EU on 31 December 1994 provides for the grant of exceptional flexibilities by the EU for better utilisation of quotas, the EU has not granted such flexibilities in 1998 and 1999. The Ministry has been working closely with the Ministry of Textiles on this issue. The matter has been taken up with the European Commission and the EU national governments and is being actively pursued.

The Ministry continued to support and encourage Indian investment abroad with a view to promoting India's economic cooperation with other countries. In 1999-2000, the Ministry cleared 241 proposals for the setting up of Joint Ventures/ Wholly Owned Subsidiaries abroad. The Ministry has been responding positively to the Reserve Bank of India's proposals with regard to simplification of procedures for Indian investment overseas. India's important investment destinations were the USA, UK, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Mauritius. Engineering and construction, software, telecom, textiles and allied produces, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, leather and rubber products, iron and steel, consultancy and trading and marketing were some of the notable areas of collaboration. The Ministry has been working closely with various governmental and other bodies in the matter of promoting overseas exports and investment. It is represented in the Governing Bodies of OCCL, ITPO, IRCON Ltd, WAPCOS and ONGC Videsh Ltd.

Exchanges between India and other countries on economic related matters at official and unofficial levels continued. The Second India-UK Annual Talks on International Economic & Financial issues took place in London in May 1999. The third round of dialogue between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of International Trade & Industry (MITI) of the Government of Japan was held in Tokyo in February 1999. Shri Jaswant Singh, Minister of External Affairs, paid an official visit to Japan from 23-27 November 1999. He had discussions with his counterpart and others in the Japanese Government on several bilateral matters including India-Japan economic relations. An economic commission sponsored by the MITI of Japan proposes to visit India shortly to study and examine the avenues of investment. A meeting of the India-Japan Joint Business Council is also proposed to be held in the near future. There also have been visits of commercial and industrial delegations from India to other countries and from the other countries to India .

Exchanges took place between India and other developing countries in the area of technical training under the Colombo Plan and the Technical Cooperation Programmes. Under these programmes Government of India nominees participated in training programmes in Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore in such fields as health, family planning, environment, urban development, housing, quality control, irrigation and drainage engineering and taxation.

Following India's nuclear tests in May 1998, some countries imposed certain restrictive economic measures against India. The Government of India had explained the rationale behind the nuclear tests and has been continuing the of dialogue with key interlocutors with regard to the withdrawal of the restrictive measures. The USA has recently announced relaxation of a number of restrictive economic measures against India. Exercising the authority given to him under the Defence Appropriation Act passed by the US legislature in October 1999, the US President waived, for an indefinite period, restrictive measures against India in respect of the following:

- i) Activities and programmes of the Export-Import Bank (EXIM Bank)
- ii) Activities and programmes of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)
- iii) Assistance under the International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET)
- iv) The making of any loan or the providing of any credit to the Government of India by any US bank
- v) Assistance to the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund, the Rhinoceros and Tiger conservation Fund, and the Indo-American Environmental Leadership programme and
- vi) Any credit, credit guarantee, or other financial assistance provided by the Department of Agriculture to support the purchase of food or other agricultural commodity.

Multilateral Economic Relations

The year under review witnessed an improvement in the global economic situation. Although still undergoing some post-crisis symptoms, there were definite signs of recovery in South-East Asian countries like Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand where various strict fiscal and economic measures were rigorously implemented. Most multilateral groupings focussed on ways and means to prevent recurrence of crisis-like situations in the future. Besides questioning the validity of blind adherence to globalisation, they also focussed on critical issues like reform of the international financial architecture and containment of social impact of future crises. During such deliberations, it was generally acknowledged that the cure to the economic malaise would require active collaboration between the developed and developing countries.

India played an active role during the deliberations of various multilateral and regional groupings like the Group of 15 (G-15), Group of 77 (G-77), Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). The Ministry of External Affairs monitored such developments and actively participated in all such deliberations in the light of our long-term national interests. Further, the Ministry, through its various Missions abroad, collaborated with other GOI Departments and agencies in promoting foreign business investment and presence in India in important infrastructural sectors like power, information technology, telecom, etc.

Similarly, in various international fora, India pointed out that globalisation has not led to economic growth or increased the per capita incomes in many developing countries. In order for it to become sustainable, the globalization process would have to give due regard to the economic development objectives of developing countries. The shortfall in the flow of official development assistance as also the

inherent shortcomings of private financial flows would have to be remedied. Accordingly, the international community would have to address three fundamental issues - a stable level of financial flows to developing countries, initiatives to reincorporate world economic growth, and consultations for the design of a new financial architecture.

Besides the above issues, during the latter part of 1999, the multilateral circuit was largely dominated by discussions on the World Trade Organization (WTO) issues of mutual concern, which were taken up at the third WTO Ministerial Conference at Seattle. EAM met Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky, United States Trade Representative, in Paris on 26 May 1999. During the meeting, the External Affairs Minister (EAM) reiterated India's principled position on various areas of importance in the context of the WTO, including the proposed Millennium Round, Industrial Tariffs, Agreement on Agriculture and Information Technology Agreement - II.

The Ministry contributed tangibly to the preparatory process for the Seattle Ministerial by ascertaining positions of important WTO members through its Missions. Besides participating in the inter-ministerial exercise to finalise India's strategy for the Seattle Meeting, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also collaborated with the Ministry of Commerce in organizing a G-15 Ministerial Meeting at Bangalore in August 1999 in preparation for the Third WTO Ministerial Conference at Seattle. MEA officials also participated in the G-77 Ministerial Meeting held at Marrakech, Morocco, in September 1999 where a message was issued by the G-77 Ministers to the Third WTO Ministerial Conference about the concerns of developing countries.

At the Seattle Ministerial Conference of WTO, India categorically rejected any attempts to link trade with labour, or trade with environment. India also emphasized the need to take remedial action on implementation issues pertaining to asymmetries and inequities

in Uruguay Round Agreements on Anti-Dumping, Subsidies, TRIPs, operationalization of Special and Differential Treatment provisions, etc. Under the Agreement on Agriculture, India maintained that it was important not only to reduce subsidies on agricultural exports but also to focus on concerns of developing countries in matters such as food security, rural employment, etc. India was however, willing to show flexibility in areas such as e-commerce and information technology.

The ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership received a further fillip with India's participation led by EAM in the 32nd ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Singapore on 27-28 July 1999. Besides participating in the multilateral plenary sessions, EAM also had bilateral meetings with Ministers from some ASEAN and Dialogue Partner countries. In his detailed intervention on the international economic and financial situation, he mentioned that due attention would have to be paid to the specific priorities of each country in order to make globalisation a more "humane" and equitable process.

India's bilateral exchanges with ASEAN were also most rewarding. ASEAN conveyed appreciation for the support given by India to various activities in ongoing areas of cooperation through mechanisms such as the ASEAN-India Fund to which India, contributes to the

Dr. Mohamed Ariff, Executive Director of the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research, Kuala Lumpur and H.E. Mr. Soubanh Srithirath, Minister from Lao People's Democratic Republic, delivered lectures in India in May and November 1999 respectively. Similarly, eminent Indian educationist, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan delivered lectures in Malaysia and Indonesia in September 1999.

India remained an active participant in the 'Group of 15' (G-15). G-15 representatives met at the Senior Officials and the Ministerial level on 22 & 24 September 1999 on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Egypt, current G-15 Chair, led the discussions. During their deliberations, G-15 leaders exchanged views on the prospects of adopting a common G-15 position on matters of mutual interest for the Seattle WTO Ministerial Conference (30 November - 3 December 1999), the 10th G-15 Summit in Cairo in May 2000 and the steps taken for initiating a G-15 - G-8 dialogue as decided at the IX G-15 Summit in Jamaica.

A GOI delegation participated in the meeting of G-15 Experts on the "Financial Crisis and the Reform of the International Financial Architecture" held in Cairo from 23-24 October, 1999. The meeting offered a useful opportunity for interaction on important issues such as capital account liberalization, monetary management and foreign debt, strengthening of the banking system, role of monetary and fiscal policy in financial markets, good governance, social safety nets, early warning mechanisms and review of the role of credit rating agencies. An Indian delegation also participated in the G-15 Symposium on "Globalization and its Economic and Social Impacts – A South Perspective" held at Cairo on 22-23 November 1999, and presented an important paper on 'Globalization and the Trade of Developing Countries'. The discussions focussed on various aspects of globalization such as the world economic and social environment and the process of globalization and liberalization, transnational corporations, capital markets, trade of developing countries, social impact of globalization, etc.

India participated in the South-South forum of G-77 Ministerial Meeting on 24 September 1999 on the margins of UNGA. The G-77 adopted a Ministerial Declaration which covers the global economic situation highlighting issues such as globalization and interdependence, international trade matters as evolving in the WTO, financing for development, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the external debt of developing countries, environment, science and technology, etc. The meeting also adopted a statement on the forthcoming South Summit to be held in Havana, Cuba in April 2000. The G-77 Ministerial Declaration followed up on the G-77 Ministerial Meeting held in Marrakech, Morocco from 14-16 September 1999. The Marrakech Meeting discussed preparatory action for the Tenth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD-X) to be held in Bangkok in February 2000, as well as the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle. Multilateral trade issues, as highlighted in the Marrakech Declaration, were reiterated in the G-77 Ministerial Meeting in New York.

India participated actively in the grouping of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). A high-level Indian delegation, led by External Affairs Minister, participated in the Second IOR-ARC Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Maputo, Mozambique from 30-31 March 1999. The Ministerial Meeting was preceded by a Seminar on Trade & Investment in IOR-ARC Region held on 26-27 March 1999, and a meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials on 28-29 March 1999. Mozambique will chair IOR-ARC meetings until 2001, when, Oman - after convening of the Third IOR-ARC Ministerial meeting in Muscat in 2001 – will assume Chairmanship of the grouping.

The IOR-ARC Ministerial Meeting decided to expand the Association's membership by admitting five new members, namely Bangladesh, Iran, Seychelles, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.

The Ministerial Meeting also decided to extend Dialogue Partner status to Egypt and Japan. The IOR-ARC Ministers met again in New York in September 1999 on the margins of UNGA session for discussions on the IOR-ARC Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers in Oman in January 2000 and other IOR-ARC issues.

A meeting of Experts of IOR-ARC was held at Maputo on 8-10 December 1999 to finalize three draft documents for the grouping - Instrument of Acceptance, Rules of Procedure, and a Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Mauritius and the IOR-ARC Coordinating Secretariat. A clause requiring all new members to extend Non-discriminatory (MFN) trade treatment to all members of the grouping was incorporated in the Instrument of Acceptance. All the three documents were considered and approved by the Special Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers held at Muscat, Oman from 20-23 January 2000. The meeting also considered and approved dialogue partnership status for UK and China. No consensus emerged on the French application for membership. In case of Pakistan, the Council of Ministers decided that membership would be considered upon its adhering to non-discriminatory trade treatment to all members of IOR-ARC and signing the Instrument of Acceptance.

The first meeting of the IOR-ARC Working Group on Trade and Investment was also held on 20 January 2000 at Muscat prior to the CSO meeting to discuss issues of trade facilitation, trade promotion, technical cooperation among members.

India took active interest in the sub-regional grouping called 'Bangladesh – India – Myanmar – Sri Lanka – Thailand Economic Cooperation' (BIMST-EC). A GOI delegation participated in the BIMST-EC Preparatory Meeting for the Establishment of an Economic Forum (8-9 November, 1999) and Trade and Investment Sectoral Committee (10 November 1999) convened by the

Government of Bangladesh at Dhaka. The Economic Forum would provide strategic leadership in initiating economic activities to benefit the group, facilitate implementation of development projects, develop mechanisms for greater private sector involvement in BIMST-EC activities, enhance quality of information flows and promote institutional linkages and networking, and generate increased participation by the business community in the identified sectors of BIMST-EC. India would be participating in the BIMST-EC meeting of Experts in Energy Sector being convened by Myanmar on 28-29 February 2000.

The Sectoral Committee on Trade and Investment discussed the critical role of information flows (on trade and investment matters) within BIMST-EC member countries and the networking of private sector agencies/institutions and investment promotion agencies of member countries. India proposed setting up a BIMSTNet on the Internet.

India also hosted a 'World Intellectual Property Organization' (WIPO) Sub-Regional Forum on Intellectual Property Rights among BIMST-EC Countries in New Delhi on 18-19 November 1999. In order to give greater impetus to cooperation in this area, the meeting proposed that it would be desirable to officially include Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) as a sub-sector of cooperation under the trade and investment sector in BIMST-EC. The meeting stressed the critical role which Information Technology could play in facilitating IPR-related cooperation under BIMST-EC and stressed the need to intensify linkages between IPR-related institutions in member countries.

Besides participating in the deliberations of various regional economic and multilateral groupings, the Ministry also associated itself with various other international economic conferences and seminars. A high-level Indian delegation led by EAM participated in the bilateral

India-United Kingdom (UK) talks on International Economic and Financial Issues held on 24 May 1999 in London. The talks provided an opportunity to both the countries to review the present state of UK and Indian economies, bilateral economic relations, and global economic issues of significance.

EAM visited Paris to participate in a special dialogue between 'Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development' (OECD) Council of Ministers and selected non-member countries, held at Paris on 26 May 1999. Other non-member countries which were invited were Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and South Africa. The meeting provided an opportunity for the 29 member countries of OECD to discuss policy coherence on a range of key economic issues, with important non-member countries, representing a population of over 3 billion people and a rising share of the global GDP.

The Ministry played an active coordinating role in the 'Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific' (ESCAP) Projects of Trans Asian Railway and Asian Highway. A 4-member Indian delegation comprising representatives of the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of External Affairs, and 'Container Corporation of India' (CONCOR) participated in the meeting for development of Trans-Asian Railway - Southern Corridor (TAR-SC), convened by ESCAP in Dhaka on 25-28 May 1999.

In the context of South-South cooperation, a GOI delegation participated in the 11th Session of High Level Committee (HLC) on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), held at New York from 1-4 June 1999. The HLC mechanism, which has been created by the UN General Assembly, pursuant to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) on TCDC in 1978, meets every two years. Participation in the meeting provided an excellent

opportunity for reiterating India's active involvement with the TCDC cause. India's statement was widely circulated within participant countries along with other information booklets on the ITEC programme. India announced the establishment of a specific Trust Fund for beneficiaries in Africa, Latin America and South Pacific countries.

Solidarity with Africa continues to be one of India's main planks of its multilateral economic relations diplomacy. Thus, India participated in the Regional Review Meeting of the Tokyo Agenda for Action - finalized at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) at Tokyo in October 1998 - held in Lusaka, Zambia from 23-25 November 1999. The Indian delegate gave an overview of the initiatives being undertaken by India for the economic development of Africa, both at a bilateral level under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, and in other multilateral fora such as the G-15, Southern African Development Community (SADC), Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan (SCAAP), Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC/TCDC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). During the conference, India conveyed its willingness to partner with developed countries like Japan for developmental initiatives in Africa on a case by case basis. Under such triangular cooperation, Indian experts could collaborate in development-oriented projects funded by developed countries in select areas such as information technology, agriculture, small-scale industries, public health and education. India also highlighted the potential for strengthening some of the Indian institutions and centres of excellence imparting HRD training in various fields to African candidates through assistance by developed countries.

Technical Cooperation

The Technical Cooperation Division offers technical assistance under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan (SCAAP) to 141 developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Pacific. For the purposes of this report, reference to ITEC will also include SCAAP (under which only civil training is provided) as the two programmes are different only in budget heads under which accounts are maintained.

The ITEC assistance takes the following four forms:

- i) Training (both civil and military).
- ii) Projects and project-related assistance such as supply of equipment, consultancy services and feasibility studies.
- iii) Deputation of experts and
- iv) Study visits of senior officials / decision makers to India.

ITEC has created considerable goodwill for India and helped boost her image as a country with indigenous technological skills and capabilities who shares her knowledge and experience with other developing countries without any strings attached. There has been a growing demand for ITEC assistance from partner countries. From actual expenditure of Rs. 22.69 crores in 1997-98, the programme's budget grew to Rs. 34.29 crores in 1998-99. The budget allocation for 1999-2000 has been enhanced to Rs. 36.00 crores.

In 1999-2000, 1967 slots were allotted for Civil training (as against 1485 in 1998-99) in prestigious Training Institutes and Establishments (Annexure-XIII) including 240 slots allotted to 24 Pacific, CARICOM and Central American States under a newly created window for technical cooperation with these countries. Until now 1067 slots have been utilised (Annexure-XIV and XV) and more are expected to be

used by the end of this financial year. The number of Training Institutes has been increased to 51 after empanelling 12 new Institutes in the current financial year in response to needs expressed by our partner countries. The new Institutes cover fields such as Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, Labour Administration and Employment Relations in a global Economy, Hotel Management, Oceanography, Artificial Insemination, Telecommunications, Sugarcane Production Technology, Wildlife Management, Remote Sensing, etc. Regular courses were conducted in the usual fields of Audit and Accounts, Banking, Diplomacy, Manpower Planning, Parliamentary Studies, Rural Development, Small Scale Industries, Information Technology, Food Processing, Textile Technology, News Agency Journalism, Standardisation, Educational Planning and Administration, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, Packaging, International Management, Human Resource Planning and English Language. Under ITEC Civil Training Programme all costs including international travel are borne by the GOI.

For the first time in 1999-2000, neighbouring countries, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Myanmar were allotted slots under ITEC's Civil Training Programme. Utilisation of these slots is, however, uneven; while Sri Lanka and Maldives have utilised the entire allocation, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar have not so far been able to utilise the slots to the extent desired. We expect the utilisation to improve as information about the offer percolates better into the system next year.

Under Military Training, nominees of friendly countries are imparted training in national institutions in all three wings of defence services, including the prestigious National Defence College, New Delhi and National Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. The Training covers fields such as Security and Strategic Studies; Defence Management; Artillery; Electronics, Mechanical, Marine and

Aeronautical Engineering; Anti-marine Warfare; Hydrographic; Logistics and Management and Qualitative Assurance Services.

All Military training costs, including international travel, for ITEC-I category candidates are met by GOI. For ITEC-II category candidates, costs are partially covered under ITEC and partially (international travel) shared with the partner country. During 1999 - 2000, 195 slots for long and short term training courses were offered under ITEC/SAP and 140 slots under Self-Financing Scheme. Some slots were also offered on reciprocal basis. Annexures XVI- XIX contain lists of beneficiary countries of ITEC Military Training Programme.

Projects and project related assistance has helped enhance India's image as a modern economy and technologically and scientifically advanced State. In 1999 - 2000, a project was launched to establish a Plastic Technology Demonstration and Common Facility Centre in the backward area of Ondangwa (located about 800 kms. from Windhoek) in Namibia at a total cost of approximately Rs. 3.40 crores. NSIC is the Implementing Agency for this project. The Centre will provide vocational skills to the youth of Namibia and enhance employment opportunities for them. Another project costing approximately Rs.13 crores for setting up an Entrepreneurship and Technical Development Centre (ETDC) in Senegal, started in 1998 by HMT(I), is expected to be completed in January/February, 2000. Envisaged in the long run as a Regional Centre for all the French speaking West African countries, ETDC provides vocational training to 96 students in selected mechanical and electronic trades. After a midterm review of the project was conducted by Additional Secretary (FA) and Joint Secretary (TC), the Ministry of National Education, Government of Senegal decided to confer National Diploma to each student passing out from the Centre which will be recognised not only in Senegal but also in other franco-phone countries in West Africa.

The Indian Farmers' Project in Burkina Faso aimed at transferring Indian Green Revolution technology, particularly in rice cultivation to Burkina Faso was also launched this year. This is a unique project under which six practical farmers from Punjab have been sent to Burkina Faso for three years to implement the project. Farm machinery, equipment and other inputs have also been supplied by the GOI. In fulfilment of a high-level commitment, equipment for setting up five primary health centres was also supplied this year to Burkina Faso. In Mongolia, where ITEC had set up the Rajiv Gandhi Vocational Training Centre (RGVTC) in September 1996, two additional faculties i.e. Computer Programming and Gem Stone Cutting and Polishing were provided this year, to augment the existing five faculties (auto mechanic, radio and TV repair, plumbing, electrician and machine shop mechanics). These two additional faculties were inaugurated by the Hon'ble Vice President of India during his visit to Mongolia in August 1999. Smaller projects, feasibility studies and consultancy services were undertaken in countries such as Myanmar, Kyrghyzstan, Guyana, Cambodia and Fiji. A list of projects and project-related assistance extended this year so far to different countries may be seen at Annexure XX.

Under the much sought after Study Visits Programme, senior decision makers from various partner countries are invited to India for exchange of views and guided exposure to Indian capacities in fields of interest to them such as small scale industries, agriculture, health, education, foreign-trade, etc. Twenty study visits were planned this year as against 10-11 in previous years. Manpower constraints in TC Division were overcome by engaging the services of retired Deputy Secretary / Director level officers of the Ministry to act as Liaison Officers for the visiting delegations. A 2-member delegation led by Mr. Yura Jigj, Director, Rajiv Gandhi Vocational Training Centre (RGVTC), Ulaanbaatar, visited India from 19 - 25 June, 1999 to see Computer Programming and Gem & Jewellery Processing facilities

in India and to discuss with the officials in the Ministry of Education the possibilities of cooperation in the education field. A 2-member team from Suriname led by Mr. S F Polanen, Chairman of the Electoral Council of Suriname, visited India from 18 - 23 September, 1999 to study India's electoral process. Dr. Haseeb Bashi, Director General, Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, visited India from October 25 - 29, 1999 to select books in engineering, technology, science, etc. which are proposed to be supplied to Iraq under ITEC Programme. A 3-member delegation from Turkmenistan led by H.E. Mr. N U Utamyshev, Deputy Minister of Textiles, visited India from November 14 - 21, 1999 to study and discuss possible cooperation in textile industry. Mr. M. Y. C. Lumbanga, Chief Secretary of Tanzania visited India from December 14-20, 1999 to study the industrial and technological progress made by India. Other study visits are scheduled this year from Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Seychelles.

Indian experts are deputed abroad as advisors in response to requests received from Governments of developing countries for advice on technical and developmental subjects such as health, agriculture, engineering, teaching, accounts, small scale industries and legislation drafting. Over the years Indian experts have effected incremental improvement in vital developmental sectors of the economies of many countries with their well considered advice which is generally respected for being most relevant to the needs and capacities of the developing economies. Expenses on deputing experts are shared with the host country although the larger share is borne by the GOI. The number of experts until 1998-99 was 23 but there

are plans to raise this number to 50 to meet the growing demand. Through the valuable cooperation and support of the Department of Personnel and Training, we have been able to reduce our response time taken to send an expert abroad. At present there are 22 long term and 1 short term experts (Annexure XXI) in Guyana, Laos, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Trinidad & Tobago, Vietnam, Zambia and Zanzibar.

In May, 1999 a documentary video film on ITEC Programme entitled, "The South Imperatives of Cooperation" was prepared and shown at New York during the 11th Session of High Level Committee on TCDC held from June 1-5, 1999. Copies of the video film were also sent to Indian Missions for use on ITEC Day on 15th September, 1999. The film was well received. In some countries the film was shown on local TV network.

Under the Aid for Disaster Relief (ADR) Programme humanitarian assistance for victims of natural disasters in various countries is provided in the form of medicines, food items, tents, blankets etc. Under this programme 92 MT of sugar and 500 MT of rice were supplied to Indonesia/ West Timor while medicines and surgical items were supplied to Madagascar, Mozambique, Ghana and Honduras for the victims of a cholera epidemic and floods. Tents were supplied to Tajikistan in the wake of unseasonal torrential rains and tea, surgical items and medicines were supplied to Turkey for the victims of earthquake. The list containing the details of the relief supplies is at Annexure XXII.



Trade and Investment Promotion

The Central Government and the State Governments took several initiatives and measures during the year aimed at encouraging foreign investment inflows, particularly the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India. The major thrust areas included infrastructure development, particularly energy, power, telecom and information technology. It was the task of the Investment Promotion and Publicity Division to actively undertake effective investment promotion and publicity efforts, particularly through the Indian Missions and Posts abroad for attracting foreign investment into the country. Quite often, Commercial Wings in the Missions are the first point of contact for the foreign investor. It is, therefore, essential that the Missions are given full backup support in their efforts in the form of providing up-to-date information about the economy, the liberalised policies and the procedures, the project and opportunities available in different sectors, the incentives offered by the Central Government and various State Governments etc. Missions are also approached by investors seeking their intervention in case of delays in respect of clearances for their proposals or in respect of other hurdles faced in the implementation of projects. For all these and related matters the Investment Promotion and Publicity (IPP) Division in the Ministry has acted as a nodal point of contact and coordination to serve as an effective channel of communication

between the Missions and the relevant Ministries/State Governments or other agencies, as the case may be.

Policy

The Ministry provides inputs for policy formulations, whenever required, based on investment trends worldwide and based on the need to maintain harmony between foreign policy objectives and our economic policies. Regular feedback was received from the Missions on foreign investor perceptions about India's investment policies or about successful model/policies followed elsewhere for serving as inputs to the evolution of any new policies or to the review of an existing one, if the same was considered necessary in the national interest.

The Ministry also actively participated in the meetings of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) and Foreign Investment Implementation Authority (FIIA) in collaboration with other Ministries and State Governments. In FIPB, the Ministry was represented by Secretary (ER) and investments from NRIs were given particular attention. In FIIA, specific policy measures to speed up the investment already made were taken up with concerned Ministries and State Governments.

Promotional Efforts and Initiatives

The Ministry undertook several initiatives towards suitably projecting the various investment policies and announcements of the Government by coordinating with the Missions on the one hand and various economic Ministries of the Central Government and State Governments on the other. Economic news about India was regularly disseminated to all the Missions highlighting major policy decisions and new opportunities, thus keeping them abreast of the developments. Missions were also encouraged to hold investment promotion seminars and workshops besides extending investment support services, for which suitable publicity material, speaking points etc. were regularly despatched. Such seminars were held by several of our Missions in identified target countries. The Ministry also undertook special efforts to highlight the policies, procedures and opportunities available in the Information Technology sector.

The Missions also provided support to visiting Indian delegations including those sponsored by the State Governments by arranging suitable meetings with potential investors, local Government officials and the local Chamber of Commerce or Products Associations.

The Ministry also assisted, based on information provided by the Missions, visiting foreign investor delegations/groups in having appropriate meetings with concerned Government Departments, the Apex Chambers of Commerce, the State Governments etc. The Ministry also participated in many bilateral or other meetings/conferences involving overseas investor groups.

The Ministry also actively assisted various Departments/organisations in the country in organising investment/trade promotion events in India, including the Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and Pacific organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission

for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in New Delhi from 15-20 November 1999 and hosted by the Government of India. This Division liaised with our Missions/Posts abroad for participation of the ESCAP member countries in the above Conference. Indian and French space agencies have joined hands to launch a scientific satellite, 'Megha Tropiques', which will provide data on atmospheric and oceanic activities to scientists across the world.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the French space agency Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) signed a statement of intent in New Delhi to launch the satellite in an effort to understand weather and climate better.

The Government launched a comprehensive scheme for the persons of Indian origin - called 'PIO' Card Scheme on 30th March. Under this scheme persons of Indian origin upto the fourth generation (great grand parents settled through out the world except citizens of Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries as may be specified by the Central Government from time to time), would be eligible. The Card would be issued to eligible applicants through concerned Indian Embassies/High Commissions/Consulates and for those staying in India on long-term visa (more than one year), the concerned Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai) would do the same. The fee for the Card which will have validity of 20 years, would be US\$ 1000. The Ministry actively participated in the efforts to mobilise good response for the PIO Card.

Publicity

The IPP Division has reprinted 10,000 copies of its brochure "India Means Business - Perspectives" in view of the positive response received from investors in India and abroad. The Division is also bringing out the French, German and Spanish versions of this brochure.

The Division is planning to set up a specialised web site on the internet aimed at foreign business community. It will carry up-to-date information on policies and procedures for investment in India, economic reforms including second generation reforms, economic data covering investment trends, success stories, interactive section for business queries and specific projects on offer, etc.

Agreements

The Ministry participated in the negotiations for drawing up of Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPAs)

and Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) that were held in respect of a number of countries. Such agreements were signed during the year with New Zealand, Trinidad & Tobago, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Indonesia and Zimbabwe.

The Ministry also participated in the negotiations relating to bilateral Civil Aviation matters with other countries. The Ministry provided legal inputs, as required, and also tendered advice based on the need for increased civil aviation links particularly with our neighbouring regions to evolve in consonance with the initiatives being taken on the foreign policy front.



Policy Planning and Research

The Policy Planning and Research Division of the Ministry continued to perform its role of preparing briefs and background papers on important topics and issues on the evolving international situation. These covered issues of long-term relevance to broad foreign policy objectives. The Division prepared analytical position papers for Ministry's interaction with other agencies. An in-depth paper on 'Euro' prepared in the Division was circulated in the Ministry and Missions abroad.

The Division continued to serve as a nodal point for interaction with the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) formerly known as the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), the University Grants Commission (UGC) and its affiliates and the Area Study Centres (ASC) located in various universities and specializing in research on various regions of the world.

The Division extended financial assistance to various academic institutions/think tanks located in different parts of the country for holding conferences, seminars, preparation of research papers, exchange of scholars and support for Track-II programmes on issues related to India's external relations and security.

The subject of these seminars, conferences and research projects covered Indian Foreign Policy, India-Iran Relations, India-Korea

Dialogue, Indo-US Dialogue, Contribution of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) in the development of countries of their-adoption, Conference on South Asia, Regional Cooperation among SAARC Countries. Support was also provided to Indian scholars and experts attending seminars and conferences in Turkey, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, USA, UK and Canada.

The Centre for Advanced Study of India at the University of Pennsylvania, USA is given an annual recurring grant by the Division. A proposal for giving another grant is currently under examination as a part of the continuing Indo-US cooperation in various fields.

The Division took initiative in promoting exchanges with official and non-official visiting experts and projected India's views and perceptions on important issues. In continuation of this interactive role, Joint Secretary (PP) led a delegation to Tehran, Iran for the First Meeting of the Working Group on Research and Study between Iran and India. During the meeting held on 7th and 8th December 1999 in Tehran, the two sides underlined the importance of research and study in increasing bilateral cooperation and better understanding of regional and international issues of mutual interest. It was agreed at the meeting that:

- a) research and study should be carried out on subjects which have

an immediate and direct impact on bilateral relations or issues of common interest to both countries and

- b) experts and scholars from outside the Foreign Ministries should be engaged in research and study. Apart from holding discussions on various political issues, science and technology issues were also discussed under which it was agreed that a dialogue between the scientific organizations and experts of both countries should be held at the earliest convenience of both sides to identify specific areas for cooperation and joint research. Economic and commercial issues were also discussed wherein it was agreed to undertake studies on economic complementarities, strengths in specific sectors, obstacles to trade and economic cooperation and greater rise of transit routes available under existing arrangements. During the visit, the Indian delegation also called on the Deputy Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Sadeq Kharrazi and Deputy Minister for Technology, H.E. Dr. Sayed Ahmad Motamedi. In view of the fruitful discussions at the First Meeting, it was agreed that further meetings would be held alternatively in New Delhi and Tehran at mutually convenient dates.

To further strengthen Ministry's capabilities in research and analyses, the Division prepared a detailed proposal for revival of the Research Cadre as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. The proposal and Cabinet Note are in the last stages of being processed and with the revival of this vital Cadre, it is hoped that our research and analytical capabilities will be further strengthened to face challenges in formulating our foreign policy.

The 'Ambassadors-in-Residence' Programme was also revived with the posting of two Ambassadors – one specializing in Gulf Studies and the other in Euro-Atlantic Studies. Both Ambassadors are now attached to the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal

Nehru University, New Delhi. Agreements have also been obtained from the universities of Mumbai, Goa and Delhi for posting of such 'Ambassadors-in-Residence' and volunteers having the required qualifications and experiences are awaited for filling up these posts.

The Division continued to edit and publish the Annual Report of the Ministry. The Report served as a compendium of India's interaction with the rest of the world in the political, economic and cultural fields, including the views of the government on various facets of international relations.

The Division rendered all possible assistance to the terrorism divisions as well as Indian Missions abroad whenever any specific information or document on international relations was required. The Research Wing examined the depiction of India's international boundaries in foreign publications. Cases of incorrect depiction were taken up with the concerned government or the publisher through Indian Missions abroad for necessary corrective measures. The Division also scrutinized foreign publications containing maps depicting India's external boundaries before these were imported into the country and offered its views to the Ministries dealing with such matters. It coordinated the supply of map-sheets to various Government and semi-Government agencies for use in their official work with the Survey of India and the Ministry of Defence. The Research Wing dealt with requests from research scholars for access to the records of the Ministry. A Committee has been constituted with representatives from the Ministries of External Affairs, Home Affairs and Defence to examine the access of Research Scholars to Pre-Independence 'closed period' records in the National Archives of India.

In support of research, the Ministry's Library has modern information technology equipment and rich resource materials, with over one hundred thousand books and a large collection of maps,

microfilms and official documents. The Library receives and maintains 600 periodical titles. It has in-house computer systems with fifteen terminals, two of which support data entry and retrieval in Hindi. It also has CD-ROM work station and has CD-ROM databases on foreign affairs and current affairs. The Library is also equipped with a CD-writer, a Colour Scanner (with OCR capability as well as facility for storage and retrieval of images), a microfilm/fiche reader printer, a plain paper photocopier, as well as a VTR and colour monitor and a laser printer with Desk Top Publishing (DTP) software. This has enabled better presentation of publications and documents of the Division. The Library has internet and E-mail facilities. These are being gradually made available to visiting users who including former Foreign Service officers, Documentation/bibliographic services as well as other library operations and services have been computerised, using an integrated library software package. Information on all books, maps, documents and selected periodical articles received in the Library since 1986, and pre-1986 publications in active use, are available on-line through each terminal in the as well as in the Ministry's headquarters in South Block and in Akbar Bhawan through network in operation in these buildings. Library's information databases can also be accessed on internet on MEA Library's websites by eligible users including our officials in Missions abroad. All new documents received in the Library – books, maps, microfilms, selected articles from periodicals – are being fed into the in-house computer system to create a database on foreign affairs.

Using this database and CD-ROM Databases, the Library provides Current Awareness Service and Bibliographical and Reference Services. In addition, the Library regularly issues 'Foreign Affairs Documentation Bulletin' – monthly list of selected periodicals,

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External Publicity

As an instrument of foreign policy management, the External Publicity Division discharges several key functions, namely: responding to the citizens' right to information; articulating the policies and responses of the government on foreign policy and international security affairs; projecting a holistic and correct image of the country; playing the role of a catalyst for enhancing contacts between Indian media and their counterparts in foreign countries; dissemination of published information through Indian libraries abroad; maintaining an internet website with a comprehensive database and daily updates; and publishing an in-house monthly India Perspectives in ten languages for wide circulation abroad. A special responsibility was placed on the XP Division in the summer of 1999 to organise and anchor the inter-ministerial daily briefings to the national and international media on political and military developments following Pakistan's aggression against India in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir. These briefings helped galvanise international public opinion in support of India's message that aggression against India would have to be reversed by Pakistan and that the sanctity and inviolability of the Line of Control in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir must be respected.

The official spokesman articulated and projected India's position on various national and international issues through official

statements, press briefings and public relations efforts. Over 200 official statements and press releases were issued by the XP Division during the period 1999-2000 and circulated to Indian media, foreign media resident in India, foreign missions in New Delhi and made available on the ministry's internet website.

The 'Foreign Affairs Record', a compilation of all press releases, agreements, speeches and significant diplomatic developments, was brought out on a monthly basis. Our news dissemination function also includes daily news bulletins and clippings for headquarters and missions and posts abroad; regular feedback to missions and posts on developments concerning India. MEA's internet website serves as a vital tool in the overall effort towards information dissemination.

Efforts were made jointly with Indian missions and posts abroad to enlarge areas of positive perception about India. Some focus areas included: India's foreign policy and international security approach; India's millennial history and civilization; its diverse and profound religious and philosophical traditions; its democratic and secular political culture and institutions, its pluralistic, tolerant and progressive social ethos; its wide experience in nation building; its impressive economic, scientific and technological achievements and its market potential.

Audio visual publicity : Documentary and feature films were used to reinforce the country's positive image. In the year 1999-2000, several documentaries on a variety of themes were completed while others are under various stages of production. These include City Scapes, Foreigners Who have Adopted India as their Home, Heart of the Matter (foreign policy show), India & the UN, Wisdom of India, SAARC in the Next Millennium, Software Frontiers and Coronation of the King of Bhutan.

Documentary films were circulated for non-commercial publicity through Indian missions and posts abroad. These include India in Space, Adoor – A Journey in Frames, Bamboo Flute, Indian Nobel Laureates, Rooted Imagination, Women in Panchayats, Design Classics of India, Healing Tree, Heart of the Matter, Echoes from the Past (Old Monuments of Delhi), Unheard Melodies, Fragrance of Love, Nisbat, Of Melodies Divine, and Abiding Grace. On the occasion of India's Independence Day – 1999, several documentaries were sent abroad for telecast on local TV networks and international channels. A positive feedback was received from Indian missions and posts on these telecasts.

A CD-ROM titled “India-Timeless Civilization....Vibrant Democracy”, was brought out by the ministry and its English version was sent to all missions and posts abroad. The Hindi, Arabic and Chinese versions are in the final stages of completion, while the Russian, Spanish and French language versions are also expected to be completed in the near future. A major exercise was undertaken to procure and distribute audio and video CDs, representative of the best of Indian music and cinema, for reference and information.

Film festivals were organized by various missions and posts abroad and foreign cultural centres in coordination with the ministry. 11 international film festivals, including retrospectives on Ritwik

Ghatak and Adoor Gopalakrishnan, were organized in Paris, Madrid, Hanoi, Damascus, Glasgow, Cairo, Rome, Copenhagen, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico City. 49 prints of feature films were supplied from the XP audio-visual library and other prints were procured from Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF) and other agencies for this purpose. Assistance was also provided in facilitating foreign participation in the 31st International Film Festival in Delhi in January 2000. The division also extended its support in the arrangement of slide shows and photo-exhibitions in missions and posts abroad.

Requests for information infrastructure and audio-video hardware from missions and posts were processed. These included sanctioning of equipment such as satellite antenna, TVs, VCRs, projectors and photocopiers.

Press facilitation: Foreign media, both print and electronic, continued to evince keen interest in India through sustained visits. India's foreign policy and its approach to security issues, the general elections and Pakistan's aggression in Kargil further stimulated the media's interest in India. Various facilities were extended by the Ministry to meet the increased inflow of media persons.

During the year, about 100 journalists, individually or as part of media and TV delegations visited India from Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brunei, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Gaza, Indonesia, Israel, Iran, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Syria, Turkey and Venezuela. These visits led to a balanced coverage of India in foreign media, as well as to a better understanding of the country. Many journalistic visits were unstructured and spontaneous. The division provided assistance to them, including arranging meetings with senior ministers, high-level government officials, academicians, representatives of business houses, industry, etc.

Another important aspect of press facilitation work handled by the division was to provide assistance to foreign media accompanying Heads of State or Government on visits to India, including those from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Uruguay, Vatican and Vietnam. The assistance rendered entailed facilitating media coverage, arranging press briefings and providing other logistical arrangements. Over 200 journalists, both Indian and foreign, covered Prime Minister's historic visit to Lahore in February 1999. Another large media event was the visit by H.H. Pope John Paul II to India in November 1999.

All logistical arrangements were made for coverage by the Indian media persons accompanying the President, Vice President and Prime Minister on their state visits abroad to Jamaica (G-15), Trinidad and Tobago, Morocco, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Kyrgyz Republic, Austria, Tanzania and South Africa. This included the setting up and operation of media centres, media briefings and other facilities and logistical arrangements. Assistance was also provided to Indian journalists travelling abroad on specific assignments.

The making of documentary films by foreign TV channels was encouraged and facilitated through timely clearance and administrative assistance. Around 300 proposals were received from documentary makers all over the world relating to diverse aspects of India including tourism, wildlife, social and cultural issues, travelogues etc. Over 90 per cent of these proposals were cleared, while others are at various stages of clearances awaiting requisite approvals of other central and state government departments.

Supply of print material : The division continued to procure and supply books, magazines, journals and other periodicals for use in the libraries of and for distribution to local dignitaries, opinion

makers and academic institutions abroad. 77 titles of books were purchased and distributed to all Indian missions and posts abroad. Booklets on Prime Minister's speeches at 9th G-15 Summit, brochures on India and UN (in English and French); India's role in UN peace-keeping; biographies of Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers; and India at a Glance (in Portuguese) were some of the projects taken up for implementation. Quarterly compilation of press releases and Spokesman's statements were printed regularly.

Infrastructure : Major renovation and restructuring work, including the construction of a new state-of-the-art auditorium, an audio-visual library and a waiting room for visitors is under implementation.

MEA website : The ministry's website was kept updated on a daily basis to cover all developments relating to foreign policy, nuclear issues, international terrorism, speeches and interviews of dignitaries, official spokesman's statements, bilateral treaties and agreements signed by India, India's political and economic developments, general elections, Parliament questions and answers etc. During the Kargil conflict, a special section was launched which included daily updates by the Armed Forces, statements by the ministry and international and Indian press coverage of the conflict. The website server was also upgraded to incorporate audio-visual contents and a greater volume of textual material. The website received an average of 2.2 million hits per month and was widely appraised and appreciated by the users. The website was also hyper-linked by some of the important organizations like CNN, The Economist, etc. for information relating to India. An e-mail-based media reporting system for feedback from abroad on the local reporting and for retrievable storage of this reporting was started with selected missions abroad. Extensive archival material on India's foreign policy is being loaded on the website for reference and easy retrieval.

India Perspectives, the monthly magazine of the ministry was published every month in ten different languages for distribution through Indian missions and posts abroad. Demand for the publication has been ever-increasing and 55,000 copies were printed during the year for supply to Indian missions and posts. Besides highlighting India's historical and cultural heritage, the journal has been focussing on the impressive progress made by India in the fields

of science and technology and the steps taken to globalize the country's economy. Two special issues of the magazine were brought out in March 1999 to mark the Prime Minister's historic visit to Lahore and to commemorate the celebration of the tricentenary of the establishment of the Khalsa Panth Special Millennium issues, which would carry articles of abiding interest on all facets of India are being produced.



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Protocol

State Visits by Heads of State/Government/Vice Presidents/Crown Prince to India

January 1999

- 10-13 H. E. Mr. Jean Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg
- 24-29 King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Nepal

February 1999

- 3-10 H. E. Mr. Lennart Meri, President of Estonia

April 1999

- 6-8 H. H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar
- 12-16 H. E. Mr. Askar Akaev, President of Kyrgyzstan

July 1999

- 21-24 H. E. Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of Namibia.

November 1999

- 5-8 H. H. Pope John Paul II
- 20-25 H. E. Mr. Wim Kok, PM of Netherlands

December 1999

- 1-5 H. E. Mr. Tran Duc Luong, President of Socialist Republic of Vietnam

February 1999

- 17-19 H. E. Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia

January 2000

- 17-20 H. E. Mr. Gok Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore
- 24-27 H. E. Mr. O. Obasanjo, President of Nigeria

February 2000

- 8-9 H. E. Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, President of Indonesia
21-24 H. E. Mr. Abderrahmane Youssouf, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco

Official Visits by Heads of State/Government/Vice Presidents/Crown Prince to India

January 1999

- 5-8 H. E. Mr. Angadi Chettiar, Vice President of Mauritius
27-29 R. E. Sheikh Hasina, PM of Bangladesh (Calcutta)

February 1999

- 10-12 H. E. Mr. Kim Jong Pil, PM of South Korea

March 1999

- 21-25 H. E. Mr. James Michell, Vice-President of Seychelles

December 1999

- 5-9 H. E. Dr. Hugo Fernandez-Faingold, Vice-President of Uruguay.

Private Visits by Heads of State/Governments/Vice Presidents/First Ladies

January 1999

- 5-10 Mrs A.Oyunbileg, Wife of President of Mongolia

April 1999

- 16-17 H. E. Genl. Obasanio, President-elect Nigeria

May 1999

- 24-27 H H King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuk

August 1999

- 12-14 HRH Don Felipe de Borbon, Crown Prince of Spain (Jaipur/Agra)

November 1999

- 9-17 Mrs Zohra Uteem, First Lady of Mauritius

December 1999

- 25-2 January H. E. Queen Beatrix of Netherlands

January 2000

12-26 H. E. Mr. A. V. Chettiar, Vice President of Mauritius

Transit visits by Heads of State/Government/Vice Presidents/Crown Princes/Foreign Ministers

January 1999

22 H. E. Mr. E. Rakhmanov, President of Tajikistan

March 1999

13-14 H. E. Mr. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of Yemen

20 H. E. Mr. Kwasniewski, President of Poland

24 & 31 H. E. Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, PM of Malaysia (Mumbai)

April 1999

9-10 H. E. Mr. Yasir Arafat, President of Palestine

May 1999

9 Mr. Taha Y. Ramdan, Vice President of Iraq

24-25 H. E. Mr. Harun Aptidon, President of Djibouti (former)

June 1999

19-20 H. E. Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, FM of Sri Lanka

July 1999

1-5 H. E. Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of Namibia (Mumbai)

7-8 H. E. Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, FM of Sri Lanka (New Delhi)

22 & 28 President of Sudan (Mumbai)

25 & 28 H. E. Mr. Igor Ivanov, FM, Russia

August 1999

25 H. E. Mr. R. S. Mahat, FM of Nepal

September 1999

14 H. E. Sheikh Hasina, PM of Bangladesh

14 H. E. Mr. Putin., PM of Russia (Delhi)

October 1999

23 H. E. Mr. Hugo Chavez., President of Venezuela (Mumbai)

December 1999

16 H. E. Mr. Milos Zeman, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

January 2000

5-6 H. E. Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of Iran

February 2000

1 H. E. Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Official Vists by Foreign Ministers or Equivalent and other Dignitaries**January 1999**

Jan 29-Feb 1 Mr. Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secy. of State, USA

Jan 30-Feb.3 H. E. Mr. Nguyen M.Cam, Deputy PM & FM of Socialist Republic of Vietnam

February 1999

13-18 H. E. Mr. Emeka Anyaoku, Secy.Genl, Commonwealth

23-26 H. E. Mr. Kamal Kharrazi, FM of Islamic Republic of Iran

May 1999

15-17 H. E. Mr. Sergei Prikhodko, Special Envoy of Russian President

June 1999

12 H. E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, FM of Pakistan

29 June-1 July H. E. Mr. Theo Ben Gurirab, FM of Namibia

July 1999

28-31 H. E. Mr.V. Khristenko, Deputy PM of Russia

August 1999

16-18 H. E. Mr. Kasimjomart K.Tokaev, FM of Kazakhstan

October 1999

20-23 H. E. Mr.Emeka Anyaoku, Secy.General,Commonwealth

30 Oct.-1 Nov. H. E. Mr. Janos Martonyi, FM of Hungary

December 1999

8-12 H. E. Mr. Bonaya A Godana, FM of Republic of Kenya

January 2000

7-11 H. E. Mr. Vollaback, Foreign Minister of Norway
14-15 H. E. Mr. Viktor Kristenko, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation
29-2 February H. E. Mr. Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka

February 2000

17-19 H. E. Mr. Hubert Vedrine, Foreign Minister of France

Foreign Tours of the President, Vice President and Prime Minister

February 1999

7-14 Shri A. B. Vajpayee, Prime Minister to Trinidad & Tobago, Montego Bay (for G- 15 Summit) and Morocco
8-9 Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to Jordan (for the funeral of King Hussain II)
20-21 Shri A. B. Vajpayee, Prime Minister to Pakistan (Lahore by bus)

March 1999

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Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to Bahrain (for the funeral of Emir)

June 1999

14-18 Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to South Africa (swearing in ceremony of President Mbeki)
19-20 Shri A. B. Vajpayee, PM, to Bangladesh (Dhaka for inauguration of direct bus service)

July 1999

24-27 Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to Morocco

August 1999

24-31 Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to Mongolia and Kryghyzstan

October 1999

20-22 Shri Krishan Kant, Vice President to Tanzania (Dar-es-Salaam) (for the funeral of Dr. Julius K.Nyerere)

November 1999

6-10 Shri K. R. Narayanan, President, State Visit to Austria (Vienna) and Germany (Salzburg)
11-16 Shri A. B. Vajpayee, PM, to South Africa (Durban) (for (CHOGM)



Passport and Consular Services and Indians Overseas

The Passports for Indian nationals, visa for foreign nationals and Consular services encompass the activity in which the Ministry of External Affairs and its subsidiary organisation 'Central Passport Organisation – (CPO)' serve the public directly. In this era of increased foreign travel and globalisation the issue of a passport empowers the individual to become a global citizen. Through its activities the Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division facilitates the export of Indian manpower, expertise and technology abroad. The growing number of Non-Resident Indians and the People of Indian Origin abroad constitute a vital and vibrant link between India and the rest of the world. In the Nineties as the international scene has witnessed momentous changes, the people of Indian Origin abroad have matured politically, prospered economically and have developed socially nurturing their roots and simultaneously integrating fully with the societies of their countries of adoption. In the new millennium communities of people of Indian Origin are well poised to play a significant role in promoting India's interests and in contributing towards the strengthening of India's political and economic relations with their respective countries of residence.

Passport Services

The CPO was imbued with a new dynamism and concerted efforts

were made to fulfil the Government's commitments under the Citizens' Charter through various innovative measures aimed at providing efficient, prompt and transparent service at the 28 Passport Offices. Two new Passport Collection Centres were opened at Vijaywada and Mangalore during the year. The Passport Rules were amended to allow for printing, distribution and sale at a nominal price of passport application forms for convenience of the passport applicants.

A website was launched which carries all the rules, regulations etc. for passport, visa and PIO Cards and allows all kinds of applications forms to be downloaded.

Concerted efforts were made to reduce the pendency of applications in various Passport Offices for which procedures were streamlined. A 'Pendency Clearance Week' was declared in the last week of July and November and December were declared as 'Pendency Clearance Months.' Annual Passport Officers Conference was held on 9-10 November 1999 at which emphasis was placed on reforming and revamping the procedures to make the system more productive and efficient. There was special emphasis on the redressal of public grievances and the practice of periodical 'Passport Adalats' was initiated at eleven Passport Offices.

Several measures were initiated to simplify and streamline various procedures for issuing passports and rendering other miscellaneous services promptly and efficiently in keeping with the commitment under the Citizen' Charter. The Police verification system was comprehensively revised to make it more responsive to public demand.

To meet the public demand a 'Tatkaal' Scheme for out of turn issue of passports was launched. The fee for this scheme was set at a higher level to meet the extra costs involved in interruption of the normal chain and sequence of work in the issue of an out of turn passport.

At most Passport Offices concrete measures were taken to enhance the level of comfort to the applicants/visitors by increasing the number of public counters, augmenting air-conditioning, installation of water coolers, provision of chairs etc.

The computerisation of Passport Offices continued and four more Passport Offices were computerised taking the total of computerised Passport Office to 19. Other Passport Offices are also in the process of being computerised. A proposal for a comprehensive satellite based computerised networking and connectivity as well as creation of a Central Processing Cell has been formulated. The process of tenders for comprehensive computerisation of all Passport Offices has been initiated to take advantage of the latest available technology. Separately machine writing of passports is being started on an experimental basis in the Delhi Passport Office.

It has been the endeavour of the Government of India to house the Passport Office in Government owned properties. At present Passport Offices buildings at four places (Mumbai, Cochin, Kozhikode and Hyderabad) are owned by MEA, at five places are owned by the Central Government/State Government and are rented in 19 places. The Passport Office at Hyderabad was shifted to a new building owned

by MEA during the year. MEA has acquired plots of land/built-up properties in various cities in India and construction work is in progress at five places viz. Ahmedabad for office and residential complex, Cochin (residential complex), Patna (Office complex), Panaji and Kozhikode (residential complex). The process for purchase of land and construction of buildings for Passport Offices has been initiated at seven other places i.e. Bangalore, Lucknow, Jaipur, Thiruvananthapuram, Chandigarh, Tiruchirappalli, Jammu and Calcutta. In Chennai space in an office complex has been purchased and possession would be taken over in a few months.

The number of applications received during the year for grant of passports and other miscellaneous services like renewal, change of name, additional booklets, fresh passports for minors etc. continued to rise in keeping with the overall climate of liberalization and increased travel of Indians overseas. A total number of 25.78 lakh passports were issued and 24.30 lakh miscellaneous services were rendered. During the year 1999, detailed figures of passports issued/ services rendered, including the revenue and expenditure of Passport Offices are at Appendix-IV

A conscious beginning was made to introduce modern management practices in the passport issue system. Services of a private consultancy firm and a management expert were mobilized for a management and process study of Regional Passport Officer, Delhi.

PIO Cards

The six million Indian Citizens and over twenty million People of Indian Origin (PIO) resident abroad have collectively evolved into a major instrument for the furtherance of India's foreign policy. Recognising their significant role in the shaping of the country's destiny, Government launched the PIO Card Scheme for Persons of

Indian Origin, settled in countries specified by the Government, which has, besides introducing a visa free regime, also conferred some special economic, educational, financial and cultural benefits. All preparations, were completed in time for the issue of PIO Cards from Missions and Posts abroad.

Consular Services

All Missions and Posts abroad were sensitised to the consular needs of Overseas Indians and to render them efficient and timely assistance on all days and at all hours. Problems encountered by Non-Resident Indians/workers especially in the Gulf countries, including disputes with their employers/sponsors were sought to be promptly redressed. Government maintained contacts with the Governments of the Gulf countries, including through the institutional mechanism of the Joint Commissions, with the objective of resolving consular problems and ameliorating the conditions of Indian workers in those countries. In cases of deaths of Indians abroad, assistance continued to be arranged by our Missions and Posts for completing the formalities for early dispatch of the mortal remains, maintaining liaison with the local and Indian authorities and keeping the relatives of the deceased informed.

During the year, 8945 Indians were arrested abroad and 3589 deaths of Indian abroad were reported to the Ministry. A summary of the consular data for the year 1999 is at Appendix-V

Visas

India's 157 Missions and Posts abroad provided visa services to over a million foreigners in the period 1 January to 30 September 1999. Over the years the procedure for grant of visa by our Missions and Posts has been streamlined. Many Missions and Posts give visas either across the counter or the same day and most others grant visas within 48 hours.

The Consular Wing at CGI, Birmingham was computerised during the year. It is proposed to computerise the Consular Wings of our Missions and Posts in the Gulf, West Europe and North America. A number of software companies have been short-listed and the process of evaluation of their technical proposals and commercial offers is at an advanced stage. First those Missions and Posts would be computerised where the volume of services rendered is high.

Bilateral Agreements

As part of the global endeavour to combat organized crime, international terrorism and drug trafficking, and acknowledging the growing international dimensions of financial and other crimes, consular agreements are being negotiated with several countries to provide legal and institutional framework. These consular agreements include Extradition Treaties, Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil Matters and Consular Conventions.

During the visit of Kazakh Foreign Minister to India in October, 1999 an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was signed. In November 1999, an Extradition Treaty, an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and an Agreement on Juridical and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial matters were signed during the visit of the Minister of Justice and Aukaf of the UAE. The Extradition Treaty signed with the USA in June 1997 was ratified and instruments of ratification were exchanged in July 1999. During the year, official and technical level consultations were held with Tunisia, Oman, Poland and Mongolia and Extradition Treaties were initialed with all these countries. An Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and an Agreement on Mutual Legal assistance in Civil Matters were also initialed with Mongolia.

The Ministry is actively pursuing requests for extradition and other legal assistance from foreign Governments both for criminal and civil and commercial charges. The requests for extradition emanate from our obligations under the Extradition Treaties or Extradition Arrangements entered into with various countries. During the year 16 requests for extradition and 68 requests for legal assistance were received in addition to the ongoing cases.

During the year, 2,47,731 documents were accorded consular attestation in CPV Division of which 1,55,645 were commercial documents. This service is rendered on the same day, is without any charge and is prompt and efficient.

Renovation of Patiala House

The CPV Division located in Patiala House, visited by a large number of persons who come for attestation of documents as well as by diplomats and staff of foreign Missions in New Delhi. Over the years the building had become dilapidated and shabby in appearance. Comprehensive renovation of the exterior as well as interior of the building was undertaken and completed during the year.

Central Passport Organisation

The personnel of the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) man

the 28 Passport Offices and 15 existing Passport Collection Centres. The current strength of CPO Cadre is 1690 with 173 Officers and 1517 non-gazetted staff. One of the major demands of the employees has been for a comprehensive Cadre Review as there is stagnation at various levels. A proposal for Cadre Review-cum-Creation of Posts was partially approved by the Ministry of Finance in June 1999. A fresh proposal has been prepared for Cadre Review to enhance the number of officials to deal with public grievances and to streamline the supervisory system.

As the volume of work as well as the network of Passport Offices and Passport Collection Centres has been growing over the years, the Ministry is considering a proposal to create a Central Passport Authority with a view to grant greater autonomy to Passport Offices to achieve greater efficiency and higher productivity.

Vision

The Consular, Passport and Visa work constitutes an important public service. The public rightly expects prompt and courteous service with minimal delays. The mission of the Ministry is to meet the public expectations and provide a level of satisfaction of which it can be proud.



Administration and Organisation

Following the General Elections in September-October 1999, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee assumed charge of the office of Prime Minister on October 13, 1999. Shri Jaswant Singh took over as Minister of External Affairs and Shri Ajit Kumar Panja assumed charge as the Minister of State for External Affairs.

At present, the Government of India has 160 Resident Diplomatic Missions/Posts and other offices.

The total strength of the IFS(A), IFS(B), Interpreter and L&T Cadres of the Ministry is 3588 (Appendix I).

A table indicating the appointments to various posts in the Ministry made in 1999-2000, including vacancies filled against reservations is at Appendix II.

The extent of language proficiency in the Ministry can be judged from the list of officers proficient in various foreign languages at Appendix III.

Administrative procedures have been streamlined during the period under review. This includes publication of a Manual of External Affairs Instructions, updating of the IFS (PLCA) Rules and publication of a Compendium of important instructions governing movement of personnel and provision of facilities, etc. Following the Pay Commission recommendations refixing the pay and allowances of

officials and pensioners, the Pension Section has been revamped and computerised. All pension cases are being dealt with in a time bound manner.

Establishment

The Establishment Division was provided an outlay of Rs.90 Crores in BE for 1999-2000 under the Capital Outlay Budget - Major Heads 4059 and 4216 i.e. Capital Outlay for Public Works and Housing respectively. The Establishment Division earmarked these funds towards construction/renovation and purchase of properties abroad and in India.

Accordingly, in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan for the purchase/construction of properties abroad, purchase proposals were pursued and as a result a Chancery building for the Consulate General in Edinburgh (UK), a residential unit in Budapest and 5 residential units in Seoul were acquired. Purchase proposals of properties in Hong Kong, Tehran, Paramaribo and Toronto were followed up.

The on-going construction projects in Abu Dhabi, Mauritius and Berlin were closely monitored and progress achieved. Civil work for the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) complex in Mauritius is virtually complete and the Interior work is on. In Abu Dhabi, the construction of a Chancery-cum-residential complex is to

be completed in the first quarter of year 2000. Major construction work for a Chancery-cum-residential complex in Berlin was awarded in May 1999 and is scheduled to be completed by October, 2000.

Other projects on the anvil are Beijing Residential Project, Moscow Residential/School Project, Cultural Centre in Trinidad and Tobago and renovation/reconstruction of the Embassy Residence in Singapore.

The projects which are also expected to be taken up on priority basis include construction projects for our Missions in Doha, Dhaka, Islamabad, Warsaw, Tashkent and Gaborone. These are to be taken in a staggered manner keeping in view the Budgetary allocations.

The project for renovation of the Embassy Residence in Berlin was completed on schedule, in October, 1999. Cabinet approval for the renovation of the High Commissioner's residence in London was obtained and work has begun. The renovation work of the GOI-owned property in Moscow was approved.

With regard to Construction projects of the Ministry of External Affairs in India, financial approvals for the construction of the ICCR complex in Calcutta and Foreign Service Institute in Delhi were obtained during the year. Work on these is expected to start during the year 2000. The Central Vista Committee has approved the urban built form for Videsh Bhavan, New Delhi. The design competition, selection of architect and preparation of preliminary design will follow. Preliminary plans for the MEA sponsored Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) construction Project were approved for which cost estimates are being prepared by CPWD.

With a view to alleviating the accommodation problems for the officers and staff of MEA, construction projects in Chankaya Puri and Pappan Kalan had been undertaken. The CPWD is presently preparing preliminary financial estimates in respect of the construction of the Chankaya Puri residential quarters, while the construction work for Pappan Kalan residential complex is in progress.

Regional Passport Office project in Hyderabad was completed in July, 99 and Construction work in Cochin, Kozhikode, and Panaji is in progress. The Passport office in Ahmedabad is nearing completion. The interior works in Patna Passport Office is being completed. The new building purchased for Chennai Passport Office is expected to be ready by next year for occupation. Planning work in respect of Passport Offices for Bhuvaneshwar, Bangalore, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Lucknow and Pune is in progress. Foundation Stone for Videsh Bhavan, Calcutta which would house the Branch Secretariat and the RPO was laid by Shri A.K. Panja, MOS(EA) in Calcutta on 24 December, 1999. Proposals for purchase of land in Jaipur, Trichi and Trivandrum are being examined.

The 2nd Review of Indexation of Foreign Allowance was carried out and the system of rationalizing Foreign Allowance was consolidated further. The Indexation of Representational Grant is under active consideration.

In order to upgrade and modernize office facilities, computer hardware in several Divisions of MEA was updated and E-Mail and Internet facilities provided to reduce communication costs, access the myriad websites for relevant information as well as to speed up links within the Ministry and also between the Ministry and the Missions. All out efforts were made to ensure Y2K compliance at the Headquarters and Missions abroad with the help of the National Informatic Centre (NIC).

Several works for maintenance, renovation and beautification of Ministry buildings have been carried out and a system of maintenance Committees for the various buildings owned by MEA was introduced, resulting in overall improvement in office environment.

Procedures for monitoring the purchase and distribution of office equipment were reviewed and further streamlined during the year.



The Foreign Service Institute continued its activities during 1999-2000, as below:

- (1) Professional Course in Diplomacy and International Relations for the Indian Foreign Service Probationers (1998 batch);
- (2) Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats;
- (3) Familiarisation Programme for Resident Foreign Diplomats;
- (4) Basic Professional Course for IFS(B) personnel posted abroad;
- (5) Orientation Course for Non-MEA officers.

The Professional Course on Diplomacy and International Relations for the Probationers of the Indian Foreign Service - the most important part of FSI's work - was conducted for the 1998 batch of Indian Foreign Service Probationers, from January 1999 to December 1999. The 1999 batch of Probationers commenced their training in January 2000 after completing the Foundation Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration.

The basic objective of this Course was to provide comprehensive training to the young Indian Foreign Service Officer-trainees in the traditional areas of diplomacy, international relations, political reporting and protocol and in several related fields that are growing

in importance such as national security, management challenges in a rapidly changing global scenario and investment promotion.

The training programme for the 1998 batch of Indian Foreign Service Probationers comprised of 26 modules which dealt with important areas of work related to foreign policy and diplomacy. The most comprehensive module related to India's foreign policy, covering almost every aspect of our external relations.

In keeping with the special emphasis in recent years on economic diplomacy, the module on 'International Economic Relations and Commercial Diplomacy' was strengthened, with focus on India's economic reforms, the international economic missions abroad, role of Commercial Counsellors in investment promotion, commercial negotiations, management challenges in the changing global scenario and the international finance and capital markets etc. A comprehensive programme was arranged in collaboration with CII and eminent speakers from CII & Indian Industry briefed the Probationers on above matters. CII's active participation was a new feature introduced

The module on “Defence & Security” apart from focusing on vital security issues like nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, also covered India’s defence policy, the state of our armed forces, developments in defence technology and the security of our border areas.

An additional module on “Special Diplomatic Skills” emphasised negotiating skills, communications skills, use of Information Technology, development of leadership skills and “esprit de corps”. Practical mock sessions on negotiation skills were held.

Apart from these modules, there was a good deal of emphasis on field visits to acquaint the Probationers with the ground situation in important areas of the country such as the North-East and Jammu & Kashmir. The Probationers were also attached with the armed forces for training.

The Indian Foreign Service Probationers were given extensive briefing on the role of culture in diplomacy at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. They also visited the National Hydrographic Institute and the Survey of India establishments in Dehradun for briefing on border demarcation on land and sea.

Continuing with the programme of visiting neighbouring countries, Myanmar & Bangladesh were visited by the Indian Foreign Service Probationers for a period of around one week each.

The Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) is one of the most prestigious courses organized by the FSI. 22 PCFDs have been held so far and 483 diplomats from over 94 countries (in Central Europe, Africa, Central Asia, South East Asia, South and West Asia and South and Central America) have participated in them. The 23rd and 24th PCFDs are scheduled to be held in January and March 2000 respectively. The objective of the Course is to provide a

professional orientation in the main categories of activities which diplomats deal with in their professional life. Some of the basic areas covered relate to diplomacy, international relations, international law and international organizations, security, focus on specific regions, diplomatic practice and protocol, representational and media skills. The diplomats are also exposed to presentations on Indian polity, India’s foreign and security policies, Indian economy, science and technology and culture. During the course, PCFD participants are taken on study tours to various centres of economic, industrial and cultural importance to expose them to the diversity in the country and to enable a first hand feel of India’s achievements, capabilities and constraints in different fields of national development.

The FSI expanded its computer training facilities with 16 new stand-alone HCL Pentium II PCs interconnected via a LAN network for internet access. ‘Basic Beginners Courses’ in computers are now on offer on a standing basis to all MEA officials. They are aimed at enabling officials of all levels/ages to overcome hesitancy in using computers and developing felicity in word processing, internet exploring and working on e-mail. Next level courses on MS Word, MS Excel and MS Access are ready and would be commenced once sufficient number of officials are trained in the Basic Beginners Courses.

Three Basic Professional Courses were held in 1999 for officials in the Ministry of External Affairs upto the level of Section Officers prior to their departure on posting to Indian Missions abroad. Emphasis is given in this Course on preparing officials to function effectively in a team in diplomatic environment in various capitals abroad, besides exposure to administrative rules and procedures; finance and accounts work relevant to Indian Missions and passport, visas and consular work. The effort is to co-relate closely with the expected job profile of each participant even while retaining an overall perspective of the functions of each wing in our Missions abroad.

The Institute also organised brief Orientation Programmes for officers from other Ministries of the Government of India proceeding on posting to our Missions abroad on an on-going basis.

The 10th Familiarisation Programme entitled “Introduction to India” for resident foreign diplomats was arranged from Nov. 1st to 5th, 1999. The Programme was designed to impart basic information about India to the newly arrived diplomats and covered topics such as the Constitution of India; organisation of MEA and Government of India; India’s economic policy; historical legacy of India; Indian art, music and culture, etc. Twenty two resident diplomats participated in the Programme.

The Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of Russia visited the Foreign Service Institute and an Agreement for institutional cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute and the Diplomatic Academy of Russia was signed on this occasion. An Agreement for cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute and the Institute of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam was signed during the visit of the President of Vietnam in December 1999. Similar Agreements are due to be signed with the Diplomatic Academies of Uruguay and Croatia.



18

Implementation of Official Language Policy and Propagation of Hindi Abroad

Efforts are being made by the Ministry for the progressive use of Hindi and its propagation in India and abroad. Documents like bilateral treaties, agreements, memorandum of understanding, credentials, speeches of President, PAC paras, Annual Report of the Ministry, Parliament questions and other documents submitted to both the Houses of Parliament are being issued in Hindi and English.

The VI World Hindi Conference was organized in the United Kingdom, the principal venue being in London with some cultural events also being organized in Manchester, Birmingham and York, from September, 14 to 18, 1999. The Conference was organized in association with the following organizations:

- (i) Hindi Samiti, U.K., London
- (ii) Gitanjali Bahubhashiya Sahityik Samudaya, Birmingham
- (iii) Bhartiya Bhasha Sangam, York
- (iv) Other collaborators like the Nehru Centre, London, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, London and SAMPAD, Birmingham

The inauguration of the Conference coincided with the 50th anniversary of declaration of Hindi as Raj Bhasha. This added a special

significance to the event. This was the biggest Conference so far both in participation and scale of activities.

The extensive pre-event publicity both within the UK and in India resulted in a record response in the number of participants and over 700 people participated (350 from India, 150 from other countries and 200 from UK). The above included foreign and Indian scholars from 21 countries.

Apart from the number of participants, it is also significant that the Conference received about 300 papers for the academic sessions. 20 foreign and 13 Indian scholars were honoured at the closing ceremony for their valuable contribution to Hindi language and literature.

The inaugural ceremony held in the prestigious Wembley Conference Centre was inaugurated by the Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Vasundhara Raje. Ms. Patricia Hewitt, Minister of State in the Department of Trade and Industry, British Government was the Chief Guest. Messages from the Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Prime Ministers of Mauritius, Fiji and Nepal were received and read out at the inaugural ceremony.

During the Conference, a book and photo exhibition by DAVP and a computer exhibition by C-DAC and Centre for Computer Learning were organized at the Nehru Centre. Several cultural events including Kavi Sammelans in major UK cities, Hindi play 'Kayakalp' staged by Japanese students of Osaka University and Hindi film shows were also organized to coincide with the Conference. Dance performance by Ms Shovana Narayan and songs by Shri Jagjit Singh and Bhupen Hazarika were the main attractions of the inaugural function.

The discussions during the Conference stressed on the necessity to give equal importance to Hindi Language along with literature so as to make it more popular among the future generations.

The resolution adopted at the Conference congratulated the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India for implementing the two resolutions passed in the last five World Hindi Conferences, namely creation of Mahatma Gandhi International University at Wardha and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Mauritius and Indian Governments for the establishment of a World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius.

Standard Hindi literature, comprising books in Hindi on Indian art, history, literature, language, religion and philosophy will be sent to Indian Missions/Posts abroad for use in libraries and as gifts to educational and voluntary organizations engaged in teaching of Hindi.

Missions/Posts have also been promoting Hindi through special Hindi classes, Hindi film shows, seminars and competitions. Hindi text books, audio cassettes and Hindi dictionaries have been sent to selected Missions/Posts.

Hindi forms an integral part of the FSI training programme. Intensive training about the Government's Official Language Policy and its implementation is given to the trainees.

The Ministry provides liberal financial grants and assistance to the organizations engaged in the promotion and propagation of Hindi abroad.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Hindi Advisory Committee of the Ministry, two officials were detailed to New York during the UNGA Session to assist those members of the Indian delegation who wished to speak in Hindi.

50 slots were allocated to foreign nationals for learning Hindi at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra this year. Hindi teachers were appointed in Indian Missions abroad under a special Ministry scheme to teach Hindi to the children of India-based Embassy and other officials.

Special programmes are being worked for the Celebration of Golden Jubilee Year of Declaration of Hindi as the Official Language.



19

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (hereinafter referred to as the Council or ICCR) was formally set up in 1950, with the primary objective of establishing, reviving and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. The ICCR's report of activities for the month of December, 1999 alongwith the expected activities for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2000 are given below:

- (i) administration of scholarship schemes for overseas students on behalf of the Government of India ;
- (ii) exchange of exhibitions;
- (iii) organisation of and participation in seminars and symposia;
- (iv) exchange of performing arts and groups;
- (v) establishing and maintaining Chairs and Professorships for Indian Studies abroad;

summer and winter camps for foreign students and the publication of the student newsletter "At Home in India".

Indian Cultural Centres Abroad

One of the primary objectives of the Council is to promote greater awareness of India's composite cultural heritage abroad. Towards this end the Council has set up and maintains 14 cultural centres in Cairo (Egypt), Berlin (Germany), Port Louis (Mauritius), Paramaribo (Surinam), Georgetown (Guyana), Jakarta (Indonesia), Moscow (Russian Federation), London (UK), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Durban and Johannesburg (South Africa), Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) and Colombo (Sri Lanka). All these cultural centres are functioning under the administrative control of the Indian Missions in the respective countries.

The activities of these Indian Cultural Centres can broadly be classified under two categories. Several of the Centres have been set up in countries having a sizeable Indian population, like the centres in Trinidad & Tobago, Mauritius, Guyana, Surinam etc. The Centres' activities there reflect the need of the local Indian population to keep in touch with Indian traditions through activities such as regular training in Indian Music, Dance and Yoga.

The Centres' also organise programmes to observe important dates and events in the Indian calendar. Other Centres like those in London, Berlin and Moscow focus more on intellectual activities such as organising lectures, talks, panel discussions and seminars on subjects of contemporary and cultural interest, publications of newsletters etc. These are mainly aimed at increasing an understanding of India through mutual interaction.

Visiting Professors and Chairs of Indian Studies Abroad

The Council deputed Visiting Professors abroad to teach Indian

languages and other related subjects. The deputation of Professors abroad is carried out under Bilateral Cultural Exchange Programmes, and the Scheme of Propagation of Hindi abroad. ICCR presently has on deputation 19 Professors teaching Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Malayalam, Modern Indian History, Indian Civilization, in Helsinki (Finland), Paramaribo (Surinam), Budapest (Hungary), Moscow (Russia), Seoul (South Korea), two in Warsaw (Poland), Brussels (Belgium), two in Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago), Sofia (Bulgaria), Ankara (Turkey), Bucharest (Romania), Beijing (China), Bangkok (Thailand), Paris (France), Osh (Kyrghystan), Moka (Mauritius) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan).

Publications

The Council has a major publication programme which has been growing over the years. The Council brings out seven quarterly journals in different languages - "Indian Horizons" and "Africa Quarterly" (both in English), "Gagananchal" (Hindi), "Papeles de la India" (Spanish), "Rencontre Avec L' Inde" (French), "Thaqaft-ul Hind" (Arabic) and "Indien in der Gegenwart" (German).

In the current year, besides publishing theme-based special issues of Indian Horizons (Literary India), Rencontre Avec L' Inde (La Diaspora Indienne a' Maurice, in two volumes) and Indien in der Gegenwart (on women's issues), the Council also brought out a special issue of Gagananchal on the occasion of the VI World Hindi Conference held in London in September, 1999.

A revised and updated edition of the book entitled "The United States and India 1976-1996" edited by Shri M.V. Kamath was published by the Council and launched in New York in September, 1999 by Shri Jaswant Singh, Minister for External Affairs. A commemorative volume on Dr. Zakir Husain, the third President of India, in English, Hindi and Urdu is expected to come out shortly.

The Council participated in the Australian Book Fair from 2-4 June, 1999 through the National Book Trust.

During the period 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2000 two publications - "Rama Story in South East Asia" by Sh Satyavrat Shastri and "A Treasury of Sanskrit Literature" by Sh A N D Haksar are expected to be brought out by the Council.

Library

The personal collection of books and manuscripts bequeathed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Founder - President of the Council, forms the core of the ICCR Library.

Over the decades the library has grown and presently has approximately 50,846 books, 195 manuscripts and 47 microfilm rolls. For the period under review, the library has purchased around 259 titles in English, 223 in Hindi and 186 in Urdu. The library has received around 55 publications (English, Hindi and Urdu) as gifts and also subscribes to 18 Newspapers, 44 Magazines and 48 Journals.

A catalogue of the manuscripts and personal books of Maulana Azad has been printed in book form in three language - Arabic, Urdu and Persian - and put in circulation.

The Library has joined Delhi Library Network (DELNET) with the prime objective to optimise resource sharing.

The Library has procured approximately eleven English titles, hundred issues of Journals and News Magazines during December 1999. Approximately 155 visitors visited the library and one Inter-library loan request was taken care of during the same period.

The book selection committee meeting is likely to be held during February 2000.

Accounts

ICCR's grant for the general activities for the year 1999-2000 is

Rs. 37.00 crores. Expected receipts of the Council are Rs.0.50 crores.

The expenditure so far booked during the month of December 1999 is Rs.5.49 crores. However, the progressive expenditure so far booked upto December 1999 is Rs.26.38 crores. The expenditure for the month of January 2000 to March 2000 would approximately be Rs.11.00 crores.

Seminars / Symposia / Conferences

ICCR collaborated and provided financial assistance to the Jawaharlal Nehru University towards organising a three-day International Seminar in October to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Russian Poet, A.S. Pushkin.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Indo-Austrian diplomatic relations, ICCR, in collaboration with Austrian Embassy, organised a symposium "India-Austria : Yesterday and Today" on 27 October, 1999 at IIC, New Delhi. Three scholars from India and an equal number from Austria participated in the Seminar.

The Council commissioned a 26-minute video film on various Indian classical dance forms. The major objective is to telecast it through international T.V. networks to explain the subtleties of Indian dance forms to non-Indian viewers.

Agency Work on Behalf of Ministry of External Affairs

The 54th Anniversary of the United Nations was celebrated on 25 October, 1999. Shri Ajit Panja, Minister of State for External Affairs was the chief guest. The message of the UN Secretary-General was read by Mr Feodor Starcevic, Director, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC). Other speakers at the function were Shri H M Haleem, President, World Federation of United Nations Association

(WFUNA)/Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly and Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha, President, Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA). The programme was followed by a Kathak dance recital by Aditi Mangaldas.

A function was organised at Tagore Hall of ICCR to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 7 December 1999. Sh Nareshwar Dayal, Secretary (E), MEA was the Chief Guest at the function. His Excellency, Dr Khalid El Sheikh, Ambassador of the State of Palestine was present on the occasion. Sh Abdul Halim, Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly and President, World Federation of United Nations Association (WFUNA) also spoke on the occasion.

Release of TV Film titled “When the Soul Glows”

A function was organised at the residence of Hon’ble Vice-President of India/President, ICCR on 14 January 2000, at which Sh Krishan Kant, Vice President of India released a film produced by the Council and directed by Ms Anita Pratap titled “When the Soul Glows.” The function was attended by eminent artistes, journalists and public figures.

Maulana Azad Essay Competition 1997-98

The Awardees for the year 1997-98 for the Maulana Azad Essay Competition in Urdu, Hindi and English have been selected by the respective juries.

Performing Arts

During the period April-December, 1999 the Council organised visits to India of 17 cultural delegations from various countries viz. Myanmar, China, Bulgaria, Uganda, Namibia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Germany, France, Austria, Italy and Egypt. The presentations

by these groups included theatre, folk dance & music, western classical music and ballet. The performances were arranged in various cities, viz. Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Dehradun, Mussoorie, Shimla, Lucknow, Pune, Goa, Kullu, Chandigarh and Bhopal. A major visiting group was the 25-member Gansu Acrobatic Group from China. Performances of this group were organised in Calcutta, Delhi and Mumbai.

Under its prestigious series of Indian art forms viz. “Horizon” and “Retrospectives”, the Council continued to present performances by emerging and outstanding artistes in Delhi and other cities. Some of the eminent artistes who performed under the “Retrospectives” series were Ustad Allauddin Khan (Esraj), Madhavi Mudgal (Odissi), Shovana Narayan (Kathak), Ustad Shamim Ahmed Khan (Sitar), Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra (Odissi), Dr. Mustafa Raza (Vichitra Veena), Guru Singhajit Singh, and Charu Mathur (Manipuri), Pt. Rajan & Sajan Mishra (Bhakti Sangeet) and Geeta Chandran (Bharatanatyam).

The Council sponsored visits of 50 cultural groups to 57 countries covering all continents of the world. Some of these group participated in major events/festival, e.g. “Asia in Helsinki” – Festival in Finland; “Marrakesh” - Festival in Morocco; “Tyagaraja” – Festival in South Africa; “Plovdiv” - Festival in Bulgaria; “Bangkok’s International Festival of Dance” in Thailand; “Islamia” – Festival in Egypt; “Edinburgh Festival of India” in the UK; “Bosra International Festival” in Syria; “Cervantes” – Festival in Mexico and the Music Utsav” in Bangladesh. While sponsoring these visits, special emphasis was given to holding workshops and lecture-demonstrations with local artistes in addition to performances. Special emphasis was also given to sponsoring groups to neighbouring countries.

Eminent artistes sponsored to various countries during the period included – Geeta Chandran and Malavika Sarukkai (Bharatanatyam); Pt. Jasraj, Pt. Rajan & Sajan Mishra, Shubha Mudgal and Wasifuddin Dagar (Hindustani Vocal); Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra (Odissi);

Amala Shankar (Modern Dance); Ila Arun (Popular / Folk Music); Shovana Narayan (Kathak); Aruna Sayeeram (Carnatic Music); Ramayana Group of Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra; Theatre Group of United Players Guild; Seraikela Chhau Group of Ashish Kar and Pung & Dhol Cholam Group of Manipur.

During the month of December 1999, the Council hosted five cultural delegations in the field of dance, music and theatre from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, France and Singapore. During the period January-March 2000 cultural groups from the Netherlands, Japan, Austria, South Africa, Israel, Greece, Portugal and the UK are likely to be hosted by the Council. These groups include the 103-member Vienna Symphony Orchestra from Austria, the Gulbenkian Ballet from Portugal and theatre groups from South Africa, Greece and the UK.

Under its prestigious series for Indian art forms viz “Retrospectives”, the Council presented a performance by Shubha Mudgal in December. In January a performance (attended by the Vice-President of India/President, ICCR) by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan was arranged in the lawns of Teen Murti House. Retrospectives presentations during February and March are scheduled to include Kanaka Srinivasan (Bharatanatyam Choreographic presentation), Pt Ram Narayan (Saranghi recital) and Pt Bhajan Sopori (Santoor).

During December 1999, the Council sponsored the visit of eleven cultural groups to five countries. The major events/festivals in which these groups participated were “Sanskrit Theatre Symposium - Natyotsav” in Bangladesh, “China International Year of Ethnic Culture” in China, and “24-hours Raga Concert of Mandapa” in France. Pt. Birju Maharaj (Kathak), Pung & Dhol Cholam (Manipuri), Sh K N Panicker (Theatre) are some of the eminent artistes who participated in the above festivals.

During the period 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2000, following groups are scheduled to be sponsored:

- 1-2 6- member Composite Dance and Music group of Ms Chitra Visweswaran (Bharatanatyam) and Sh R Visweswaran (Santoor) to Germany and UK (20 January - 20 February 2000)
- 3 5-member Kuchipudi Group led by Ms Vanaja Uday to Sri Lanka (22-30 January 2000).
- 4 10-member Rajasthani Folk Dance Group of Sh Kalu Nath Kalbelia to UAE and Turkey (22 January - 8 February 2000).
- 5-6 11-member Composite Dance and Music group of Sh Raja Radha Reddy (Kuchipudi) x 7 and Pt Bhajan Sopori (Santoor) x 4 will be visiting Japan for the concerts arranged by the Min-on Organisation. Thereafter, the Dance group will proceed to Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand (26 January - 19 February 2000); The Music group will visit Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Singapore (26 January - 16 February 2000).
- 7-8 5-member Carnatic Vocal group of Dr Balamurali Krishna and 6-member Bharatanatyam Dance group of Ms Alarmel Valli will be visiting Sri Lanka (30 January - 2 February 2000).
- 9 4-member Music group of Sh Dhrubo Ghosh (Saranghi) to visit Bangladesh in February 2000 to participate in Dance and Music Festival (17-20 February 2000).

Distinguished Visitors Programme

As part of its efforts to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries, the Council facilitates exchanges of scholars, intellectuals, academicians and artists under its Distinguished Visitors Programme. Under this programme, ICCR hosts eminent musicians, dancers, writers, intellectuals, scholars and other eminent personalities from all over

the world. Reciprocally, distinguished Indians from diverse fields of culture are sent to other countries to interact with their counterparts and to participate in international seminars, conferences and workshops or to lecture on various subjects.

During the period, the Council hosted visits of 29 distinguished visitors/experts in different fields from the UK, Argentina, the USA, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Japan, South Africa, Spain, Venezuela, Indonesia, Turkmenistan, Bangladesh, Jordan and Romania. Some of the important visiting personalities were - Mr Antonio T Mendez (renowned sculptor from the USA), Prof. Ana Agud (Sanskritist from the University of Salamanca, Spain) and Justice Kemaluddin Hossain (former Chief Justice of Bangladesh). In addition, the Council on behalf of the Government of India, organised the visit of 10-member team from World Monlam Tshokehem, Bhutan to India to enable them to visit Buddhist shrines in connection with publishing of a book on the subject.

During this period, the Council sponsored visits of 55 eminent personalities from India to various countries. These included - Prof. Zafar Imam (School of International Studies, JNU), Dr Vidya Niwas Mishra (eminent Sanskrit scholar), Prof Sachidanandan Sahai (Department of Ancient Indian & Asian Studies, Magadh University, Bihar), Smt Maya Krishna Rao (Kathakali Dancer), Shri Jatin Das (painter), Shri Kanhaiya Lal Nandan (writer) and Shri Kartar Singh Duggal (scholar and MP [Rajya Sabha]).

Under its Orientation Grant Scheme for foreign scholars/researchers, the Council assisted scholars from Venezuela, the USA and the UK.

During December 1999, the Council hosted the visit to India of 6 distinguished visitors. The eminent personalities among these were Dr George Anca, President of the Indo-Romanian Cultural Association from Romania, Mr A Z M Obaidullah Khan, Chairman of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies.

The Council is also scheduled to host another fifteen eminent personalities under the Programme during the period 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2000. These include Ms Bapsi Sidhwa, eminent writer from Pakistan, Sh Sat Maharaj, Secretary General of Sanatan Dharam Mahasabha from Trinidad & Tobago, Prof Mumtaz Soysal, Former Foreign Minister/Scholar from Turkey, Mr Harold N Clapham, Head of the International Exchanges Division of the Cultural Ministry of Germany, Dr Forrest McGill of Asian Art Museum from San Francisco, USA, Prof Crompton Bourne, Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of the West Indies from Trinidad & Tobago.

During the month of December, 1999, the Council sponsored visits abroad of eight distinguished personalities from India. Among them were Prof Kapila Vatsyayan, Academic Director, IGNC and Dr Ram Gopal Bajaj, Director the National School of Drama to Bangladesh, Prof Veer Bhadra Mishra, Professor & Head, Institute of Technology and Adyaksh of Sankat Mochan Foundation, Varanasi to Sweden.

The Council has also approved the sponsorship of visits of seven eminent Indian scholars/artistes under this programme during the period 1 January 2000 to 31 March 2000. These include: Sh Raghu Rai, eminent photographer to Bangladesh; Smt Sonal Mansingh, artiste to the UK for lectures on Indian dance; and Dr Satyadev Tripathi, Dr Prakash Udai, Dr Aunesh Neerun and Smt Malini Awasthi to Mauritius (to attend a Bhojpuri Convention).

Presentations

Under its Scheme of Presentation of Books and Art Objects, the Council gifted books on Indian art, culture, architecture, cuisine, dance and music to various visiting foreign dignitaries, libraries, institutions and schools in various countries. Additionally, the Council, through its Missions abroad, also gifted Indian music instruments, art objects,

video/audio cassettes, CD-ROMs and CDs (on Indian classical dances and music).

Exhibitions

During the period, exhibitions mounted by the Council in India were the Contemporary Photographic Exhibition of the Indian International Photographic Council; French Avant Garde - The Vollard Collection from Leon Dierx Museum, Reunion Island (France) and works by artists from Brazil and Venezuela.

During the period, the Council commissioned special exhibitions, viz “Contemporary Graphic of India” to Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Peru; “Indian Dolls” to Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand and a “Photo Exhibition” on India to Qatar, UAE and Uganda.

The Council also sent five bronze busts and a statue of Mahatma Gandhi for installation in Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Brazil, Canada, Italy and the USA.

In the month of December 1999, the Council sent a photo exhibition entitled “My Land, My People” to Tanzania. It also sent a bust of Mahatma Gandhi and a Replica of the Ashoka Capital to Myanmar and a bust of Mother Teresa to San Salvador.

During the period January-March 2000, the Council is scheduled to send five exhibitions viz (i) “Contemporary Prints” to Colombia, Panama & Venezuela (ii) “Indian Dolls” to Cambodia (iii) “Photo Exhibition on India” to Sudan & Kenya (iv) “Madhubani Paintings” to Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles and the Reunion Islands and (v) “Cartoons” to Tanzania, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. Busts of Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi are being sent to the Czech Republic, Canada and the USA.

The Council On-Line

The Council maintains three websites on the Internet, which feature extensive archives about the Council’s activities as well as a spectrum of links to topics on Indian Culture and hyperlinks to the websites of several empanelled artistes of the Council :

<http://education.vsnl.com/iccr>

<http://members.tripod.com/~iccr>

<http://iccr.culture.webjump.com>

The first ICCR website has been adjusted “Editor’s Choice” by ‘Rediffusion on-the-Net’.



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