

## India, Singapore to set up joint ministerial panel

India and Singapore on June 19 have decided to set up a joint ministerial committee to give further impetus to the rapidly developing bilateral ties, specially in the areas of trade and economy.

After talks between External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Singaporean counterpart George Yeo in Singapore, the two sides also announced setting up of a Nalanda University mentor group to work out the modalities to restore the ancient seat of learning in Bihar. The two leaders held extensive discussions on bilateral and international issues of mutual interest during their talks.

The joint ministerial committee will monitor the progress of cooperation between the two countries in various fields and look into the maturity, depth and range of the rapidly developing bilateral ties, Mukherjee told a joint press conference with Yeo. Describing the agreement as a "landmark" treaty, Yeo noted that it was the first time the two countries had set up a regular forum at ministerial level to discuss and look into the growing bilateral cooperation.

The Indian Minister expressed appreciation for measures taken by Singapore towards creating the international university at Nalanda on Buddhist religion. He said the two countries have decided to set up a "Nalanda mentor group" and that Yeo would be a part of the group to guide the project.

Mukherjee also noted that defence



External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee delivering a lecture on India's Foreign Policy Priorities, during his visit to Singapore.

cooperation was proceeding well between the two countries with joint exercises taking place.

Yeo noted that since the signing of the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement, bilateral trade had grown dramatically and hoped that the Asean-India FTA could be signed by the end of the year. He also said that a research project would be undertaken to examine the heritage of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, whom he described as an important part of history for both countries. Bose had come to Singapore in 1943 and his powerful speech that time calling on people to unite to oust the British out of India had subsequently seen thousands living in Singapore join the Indian National Army.

Mukherjee said: "It is a matter of satisfaction that during my visit here new initiatives have been announced to boost bilateral ties."

He noted that the signing of the com-

prehensive cooperation agreement had had significant "positive impact." He said India's ties with the island republic had evolved into a strong partnership which could be seen by the frequency of high-level visits between the two nations.

Singapore is India's largest trading partner in the Asean with trade figure touching \$13 billion in 2006.

Commenting on the track two strategic dialogue, Mukherjee said bilateral and international issues of mutual interest would be taken up, adding that the dia-

logue would have "some sort of informality in the discussions." He said the potential for bilateral cooperation was immense. On Singapore's Subash Chandra Bose Project, Mukherjee said the researchers would work out Netaji's perspective of contemporary history. Late last year Singapore had shown interest in restoring glory to India's ancient Nalanda University, dating back to fifth century BC, involving several other countries with Buddhist population. Yeo had told a symposium last year that the Nalanda Project was not about the religion but Buddhist values and philosophy which had become an integral part of the East Asian civilisation. President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam had described the project as a "model for evolving a happy, prosperous and peaceful society in our planet".

During its golden days, Nalanda had thousands of students from across Asia studying at its university. It was destroyed in the 12th century by Turkish invaders.

## Utkal University eyes seats on EU cell

The European Union (EU) is likely to set up a seven-member international committee, including representatives from the Orissa-based Utkal University, to work towards the protection of monuments in India and overseas. The committee will also include members from universities of Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan.



Efforts are also on to involve the Mediterranean and tropical countries like Mexico, Peru and Chile. The EU move to set up the committee follows the completion of the global Cyanometric Bacteria Attack Rock (CAT) project.

The CAT project was basically aimed at protecting monuments and structures of ancient Rome and Greece. This was subsequently spread to other countries.

In India, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) plays a leading and premier role in the protection of ancient structures. Utkal University's efforts of bringing in international help would, therefore, also help ASI in its moves of protecting ancient structures and monuments.

Says a senior professor in the Biotechnology department of Utkal University, "We are making our best efforts to rope in international bodies and agencies who would lend their advise in protection of ancient structures in India and abroad. The EU has come forward to help our move."

Utkal recently decided on having a tie-up with the Universities of Florence and Rome in Italy for the protection of monuments in Orissa, especially the ancient Buddhist structures and Hindu temples. The EU move would supplement these efforts.

## At 60, India more stable than ever before

India is ranked 110 in the index of failed states in the world. This means India is one of the stronger nations in the world where a top rank (for Sudan) spells death and disaster and a bottom rank (Norway at 177) means stability and affluence.

India has improved its ranking from 93 to 110 in the 2007 Index of Failed

States issued by *Foreign Policy* magazine, suggesting that in its 60th year of independence, its nation-building abilities and institutional strength have gained recognition.

But the news all around India's isn't good. It is surrounded by some of the most unstable countries in the world, led by Pakistan, which comes in at 12th, Bangladesh at 16th, Nepal at 21st and Sri Lanka at 25th.

In contrast, Scandinavia is a haven of peace and stability with Norway, Sweden and Finland making up the bottom three. The United States is ranked 160th.

The failed state index uses 12 social, economic, political, and military indicators to rank 177 states in order of their vulnerability to violent internal conflict and societal deterioration. The index scores are based on data from more than 12,000 publicly available sources collected from May to December 2006.

India is now considered more stable than

### HOW THEY FARE

NATION	RANKING
Pakistan	12
Myanmar	14
Bangladesh	16
Nepal	21
Sri Lanka	25
Bhutan	47
China	62
Maldives	66
India	110

Source: *Foreign Policy Magazine*

China and Russia. In 2005, India was ranked below China, at 76. In 2007, both China and Russia are ranked at 62, while India's social, economic and military metrics have propelled it to 110.

In a commentary that could well apply to India, *Foreign Policy* said China's economic engine continues to propel the country forward at a breakneck pace, "but the growing divide between urban and rural, as well as continued protests in the countryside, reveals pockets of frailty that the central government is only just beginning to address".

Sudan, Iraq and Somalia are ranked the top three failed states, a situation marked by "rampant corruption, predatory elites who have long monopolised power, an absence of the rule of law, and severe ethnic or religious divisions".

North Korea and Pakistan come in at 13 and 12 respectively, and their instability is compounded by their possession of nuclear weapons, says *Foreign Policy*. "Their profiles could hardly be less similar: the former faces the very real prospect of economic collapse, followed by massive human flight, while the latter presides over a lawless frontier country and a disenchanted Islamist opposition whose ranks grow by the day," *Foreign Policy* observed.

## Biotech exports up 47 percent

The Indian biotechnology industry grew by 30.9 percent during 2006-07 to reach Rs. 85.41 billion, while exports increased by a massive 47 percent to Rs. 49.37 billion. At the current exchange rate, the industry's top line works out to \$2 billion and exports \$1.2 billion. This has given the industry the confidence to set a top line target of \$5 billion for 2010.

For the second year, the Pune-based Serum Institute topped the league with revenues of Rs. 9.51 billion, followed by the Bangalore-headquartered Biocon with Rs. 8.23 billion and New Delhi-based Panacea Biotech with Rs. 6 billion.

The top three companies contributed 27 percent of the industry revenue. The figures are part of a survey by BioSpectrum and the Association of Biotechnology-Led Enterprises (ABLE) released in Bangalore recently.

In an industry hitherto dominated by biopharma, the two bioagriculture companies selling Bt. cotton seeds — Rasi Seeds with Rs. 3.33 billion revenues and Hyderabad-based Nuziveedu Seeds with Rs. 2.26 billion revenues — have come



up to take the fourth and fifth slots respectively.

Of the 325 biotech companies in the country, nearly 40 percent operate in the biopharma sector, followed by bioservices (21 percent), bioagriculture (19 percent), bioinformatics (14 percent) and bioindustrials (5 percent).

The biopharma segment, accounting for over two-thirds of the industry, reported sales of Rs. 59.73 billion, representing a growth of 27 percent. The bioservices sector registered 53 percent growth, the bioagriculture sector grew by 55 percent, and the bioinformatics and bioindustrial sectors by 21 percent and 5 percent respectively.

Home-grown companies led the biotech revenue sweepstakes and for the first time in the five years, the top five companies are all of Indian origin.

According to the BioSpectrum-ABLE survey, 2006 also saw several global alliances, mergers and acquisitions. Merieux Alliance acquired a controlling stake in Shantha Biotechnics. The second largest vaccine producer in India Panacea Biotech signed an agreement with Indonesia's PT Bio Farma to manufacture and market the measles vaccine.