

# એનઆરજી ટાઈમ્સ

પાશ્ચિમ

પ્રકાશક: એનઆરજી ફાઉન્ડેશન, ગાંધીનગર

તા. ૨૯ ફેબ્રુઆરી, ૨૦૦૮ • મહા વદ આઠમ, સંવત ૨૦૬૪

## Gujarat to give religious tourism a fillip

Gujarat with the core strength in different components of tourism sector such as religious tourism, heritage tourism, monumental tourism, adventure tourism, medical tourism, beach tourism, etc. is now planning to promote the religious theme

in a big way, through which a large number of tourists can be attracted. The State plans to develop five places of religious significance at a cost of Rs. 380 million. These include the places like Sidhpur, Koteswar, Junagadh, Patan and Narayan Sarovar in

Kutch. State Government has so far invested Rs. 1,000 million for various tourism projects. The Government has also come up with promotional policies on eco-tourism and medical tourism to boost the tourist's flow. (source: www.gujaratindustry.gov.in)

## Indian-American gets Sardar Patel award

Ahmedabad: Rajesh Bhagat, a New Jersey-based Indian-American and President of Indian Diamonds and Colorstone Association, USA, was recently conferred with the Sardar Patel Award 2007 for rendering services to NRIs.

The award, instituted by New Delhi-based Sardar Patel Foundation, was presented to him by Dr Karan Singh, a press release here said. Bhagat who is also CEO of Kashish Diamonds, US, has been actively helping elder immigrants coming from India.

He has also come out with a multicolour book on Sardar Patel, conceptualised and designed by Dr Dinesh Sharma and Mukesh Kasliwal. He is also an active board member of Jewellery for Charity (JFC)

(Source: www.ibef.org)

## Vasantotsav in Gandhinagar

The annual vasantotsav, spring festival, will begin at Sanskruti kunj in Gandhinagar. The ten day festival has 183 artists from 11 states showcasing their arts and crafts.

Giving details of the festival, Youth and Culture Minister Fakirbhai Vaghela said that this time 180 stalls had been set up in the ravines of the Sabarmati river which have been given the name of Sanskruti Kunj.

The festival is being organised for the last ten years and has become a star attraction for the people of Ahmedabad.

(www.gujaratglobal.com)

## Gujarat participates at the 6th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India and CII jointly organized 6th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Celebrations in New Delhi during January 8-9, 2008 with a view to associating the NRIs in the development process of India.

Government of Gujarat was invited to participate in this event by the Ministry. Since a large number of NRIs of Gujarat origin are settled in major countries overseas, the State Government decided to participate actively in this event, like all the previous five celebrations.

A high-level delegation led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi,

comprising Shri Jay Narayan Vyas, Hon'ble Minister for Health, Tourism & NRG and Shri D Rajagopalan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary (Ind. & Mines) along with other senior officers of the Government attended this event.

Addressing all the delegates of the 6th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas along with other state chief ministers in the Plenary Session on 9th January, Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister, Gujarat made an impressive presentation giving a brief account on the progressive work done in Gujarat in different spheres of activities, leading to the well-being of the people of the state. His speech was very well received by the participants of the event.

There was also an exclusive State Session on Gujarat in the afternoon on 9th January, attended by more than 250 NRI delegates. Hon'ble Chief Minister, while addressing the gathering urged the NRIs to get a feel of the investor-friendly environment created in Gujarat. He in fact asked them to henceforth reckon Gujarat as their new

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## 43% of Hindus in US earn above USD100,000 per yr: Survey

SILICON VALLEY: Hindus in the US are better educated, most likely to be married and earn more than the members of most other faiths, reveals a new survey.

Nearly half (48 per cent) of Hindus in the country have obtained post-graduate education, compared with only 11 per cent of the adult population overall, according to the extensive survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Jews were the next highest with 35 per cent of the population with post-graduate degree.

The survey based on interviews with more than 35,000 Americans, aged 18 and more, also shows that Hindus and Jews are also much more likely than other groups to report high income levels, with 46 per cent of

Jews earning more than USD100,000 a year and 43 per cent of Hindus earning above USD100,000. In the overall US population, only 18 per cent of the adult population earns USD100,000-plus a year.

The survey also finds that Hindus and Mormons are the

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## વતનની વાટે...



બિન-નીવાસી ગુજરાતીઓ તરફથી સુરત જિલ્લાના લોટરવા ગામમાં સ્વામીનારાયણ સંસ્કાર ધામ બનાવવા માટે રૂપિયા ૫૦ લાખનું દાન આપવામાં આવેલું છે.

## The BHAVNATH MAHADEV



The city of Junagadh, situated at the foot of Mount Girnar, is famous as the site of many historical events, dating from the remote past. The Edicts of Asoka (3rd Century B.C.) are inscribed on a rock at Junagadh. The peaks of Girnar, the highest of which is the Gorakhnath (3,666 ft), are dotted with numerous Jain temples. The Bhavnath Mahadev Temple, located at the foot of Girnar, is so ancient that its precise origins are unknown. The Bhavnath temple is surrounded by many equally ancient and holy places. Buddhist caves are also found in and around at Upperkot, Junagadh.

### MAHASHIVARATRI AT BHAVNATH MAHADEV

The fair during Mahashivaratri is held for five days and takes place during February, and the events associated with it are colourful indeed. The *mahapuja* of Lord Shiva takes place at midnight, in this temple, on the 14th day of the dark half of the month of Magh. When the puja starts, *naga bavas* (naked sages) living nearby move towards the fair seated on elephants, holding flags, and blowing conch shells, sounding *tungis* and *turis*. It is firmly believed that Lord Shiva himself visits the shrine on this occasion. Girnar is said to be the abode of the nine Nathas, who are immortal and eighty-four *siddhas* or spiritually elevated souls all of whom also visit the temple, in their invisible spiritual bodies.

Visitors are served free meals by the organisers. Special stalls sell idols, rosaries brought by vendors from Ayodhya and Mathura, utensils of brass and copper, sweets and fruits.

### EXCURSIONS

From Junagadh one can journey easily to nearby Porbandar (112 kms away) on the West Coast, where Mahatma Gandhi was born. Equally close by (88 kms) is Veraval, where the rebuilt temple of Somnath, stands proudly. Further along the coast is the former Portuguese colony of Diu. Sasan Gir, the last habitat of the Asiatic lion is only 60 kms from Junagadh.

(Source: www.ahmedabad.com)

## Gujarat participates...

address of prosperity.

He emphasized that infrastructure and congenial environment would be the key for long term sustainable investments and therefore, Gujarat has gone beyond the traditional contours of infrastructure components and decided to develop its infrastructure in tune with the requirements of 21st century.

He invited the participants to associate with the development process of the state in appropriate manner. Earlier, Shri Jay Narayan Vyas, Hon'ble Minister for Health, Tourism & NRG addressed the gathering and informed of the steps being planned

specifically to establish close linkages with the Gujaratis overseas as also to promote tourism. He also invited the NRIs to visit various attractive tourist destinations in Gujarat. He also appealed the NRGs to come forward and associate themselves actively in the progressive march of their motherland – Gujarat.

Earlier on 8th January, 2008, Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurated Gujarat Pavilion in the exhibition area which described the all-round progress of Gujarat with the help of colourful panels and scrollers covering the sectors like economy, infrastructure, social development schemes, vatan seva schemes and the

## Measures for Safeguard of Overseas Indian Workers

A large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers are working overseas.

A statement of annual outflow of workers based on the ECR clearance granted by the offices of the POEs from India during the years 2005 to 2007 is given in Annexure.

Complaints are received regarding non-payment/delayed payment of wages and other forms of harassment.

The following measures are taken to safeguard the interests of Indian workers abroad:

1. In case involvement of Registered Recruiting Agents is found, action is taken under Emigration Act like suspension/cancellation of license and forfeiture of Bank Guarantee etc.
2. If Unregistered Agents are involved, cases are referred to State Police Authorities for legal action.
3. In case of Foreign Employers' involvement, they are black listed and placed under prior approval category.

observations made by leading opinion makers in different forums on the conducive environment outlining favourable growth parameters, with Chief Minister extending invitation to the NRIs to join the progressive march of Gujarat

(www.gujaratindustry.gov.in)

## 43% of Hindus...

most likely to be married; and to be married to someone of the same religion.

The national survey conducted in English and Spanish also shows that although the country is overwhelmingly Christian, just 51 percent of Americans are Protestant compared with two-thirds in 1980s. (Source: www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

4. The age restriction of 30 years has been made mandatory in respect of all women emigrants with ECR passports irrespective of the nature / category of employment.

5. The attestation of documents by the concerned Indian Missions has been made mandatory in respect of vulnerable categories i.e. all women emigrants and unskilled labours for all Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries.

6. It has been decided that every foreign employer directly recruiting an Indian emigrant must deposit a security of US \$ 2500 in the form of Bank Guarantee with the Indian Mission.

7. It has been decided that minimum wage for Household Service Workers (HSW) will be fixed by the Indian diplomatic Missions in the ECR countries in the range of US \$ 300-350 with due regard to the market wage.

8. A massive publicity campaign has been launched to create awareness amongst the emigrant workers.

9. Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been opened to provide a 24x7 helpline service for emigrant workers.

10. In order to ensure protection & welfare of workers, this Ministry has also signed bilateral agreement with major labour receiving countries. Such MOUs have been signed with UAE, Qatar & Kuwait. MOUs have been finalized with Malaysia and Oman.

This information was given by the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Shri Vayalar Ravi in a written reply in Lok Sabha (Source: www.moia.gov.in)