

## Dr. Tadepalli Murthy, a global Tsunami expert, visits campus

**D**octor Tadepalli Satyanarayana Murthy, popularly known as Tad Murthy, visited the UMD campus to deliver three seminars on the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004. Tad Murthy is a world-renowned expert on tsunamis and was the lead person to develop the Pacific Ocean tsunami warning system for Canada when he served the Canadian Oceanographic Service for 27 years. He was also the Director of Australia's National Tidal Facility for three years. He has been chosen among 10 "super-achievers" of Indian origin to be honored by the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce in 2005. Currently with the Department of Civil Engineering, University of Ottawa, he was part of the delegation who accompanied the Canadian Prime Minister on his tour of tsunami-affected countries of India,

Sri Lanka, and Thailand to initiate a warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean.

Murthy pointed out that though the timing of any major earthquake (and tsunami) is unpredictable, seismologists monitoring the Indian Ocean bed were discerning clear signs of pressure build-up in the tectonic converging plates. He also warned that the hasty installation of a warning system for the Indian Ocean using features of the Pacific Ocean system without understanding the geospatial differences between these two oceans would be a disservice to the citizens of Indian Ocean countries. Murthy also delivered a special lecture to the tsunami-course class (see details on page 2) and a technical seminar at the School of Marine Sciences & Technology.

## Upcoming Events

**February 5–7, 2006**  
**Science & Spirituality in the Indian Context**  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India  
For details contact Prof. Makarand Paranjape  
makarand@mail.jnu.ac.in

## On Campus Events

**February 24**  
The Elder Meditation Project; Bring meditation to those who can use it  
Dr. Jerry Solfvn  
12-1pm  
Library Browsing Area

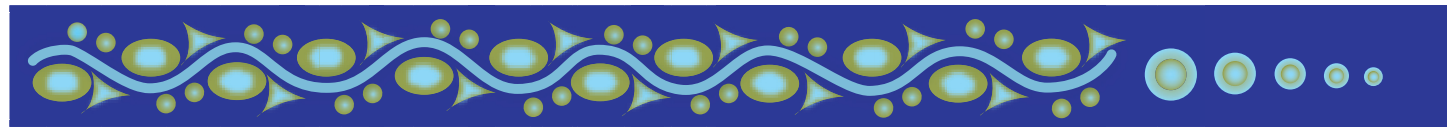
**March 10**  
India's Great Gift: Unity within Diversity  
Swami Yogatmananda  
12-1pm  
Library Browsing Area

**March 17**  
Kavi Sammelan—Poetry Readings  
6:30–9pm  
Group VI, room 153

**March 27**  
Boston Bhangra Dance  
Main Auditorium  
7pm–9pm

## Bhagirathi Staff

Dr. Sukalyan Sengupta  
Editor



## Indic Center develops a course in response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami

**T**he tsunami that hit several countries on December 26, 2004 created unprecedented devastation. The global community quickly responded to this tragedy by helping in the relief and reconstruction activities in the affected countries. However, the disaster also demonstrated that UMass Dartmouth students need to understand the science of tsunamis, and become more informed about the countries and peoples of the Eastern Indian Ocean region.

The faculty affiliated with the Center for Indic Studies, after brainstorming sessions in early January, decided to offer a multidisciplinary course on this topic. The pace of ensuing activities--from deciding on the list of topics to cover, to creating a syllabus and schedule, to introducing this course on the university SIS system [IST 444: Eastern Indian Ocean Region: Before and After the Tsunami], to disseminating information so that interested students could register for this course--was remarkable. A computer search found no similar course offered by any major institution in spring 2005. The class was made possible because of the sincerity and passion of Indic Center faculty.

With Prof. Sukalyan Sengupta of the Civil & Environmental Engineering Department as the lead faculty, this course was taught by a team of faculty: Bal Ram Singh, chemistry/biochemistry; Avijit Gangopadhyay, physics and SMAST; Sankha Bhowmick, mechanical engineering; Madhu Jhaveri, civil and environmental engineering; Tridib Roy, mechanical engine-



image courtesy of The Indian Agricultural Research Institute

ering; Dayalan Kasilingam, electrical and computer Engineering, and Linsun Cheng, history. Each had expertise in individual countries affected by the tsunami, ocean sciences, physical environment of the region, history, economics, cultural exchanges, languages, etc. There were also presentations by guest lecturers such as Dr. Tad Murthy, Prof. V. T. Patil, and Consul-General A. R. Ghanashyam from the Indian Consulate in New York.

The students, an eclectic mix with majors in history, biology, political science, liberal arts undeclared and other subjects enjoyed this course. One course evaluation comment captured it best: "This course opened my eyes to a part of the world I knew little about."



Professor Vishwanath T. Patil was the 2005 Patanjali speaker.

## Noted scholar delivers annual Patanjali lecture

**P**rofessor Vishwanath T. Patil, former vice chancellor of the University of Pondicherry and author of more than 15 books was the 2005 Patanjali speaker. His two talks focused on "Higher Education in India" and "Indo-US Relations: Towards a New Era of Strategic Partnership".

In his first talk, Prof. Patil outlined the significant changes that higher education in India has undergone in the last five decades in terms of its philosophy and practice. He discussed some of the ongoing issues of concern to both policymakers and the public at large such as academic and financial autonomy; the choice between quality and quantity (elitist versus mass education); English versus regional language as medium of instruction; and bureaucratization. He also covered the fundamental issues in higher education in India today, namely, quality, excellence, equity, social justice,





## Indian diplomat speaks on India's role in world politics

A.R. Ghanashyam, minister/consul, press relations and consular, Consulate General of India, New York, was a recent speaker on the topic "The Life of an Indian Diplomat representing the Indian Viewpoint."

Ghanashyam, a career diplomat, has represented the Indian viewpoint to the world for about two and a half decades with the (Indian) Foreign service department. He is currently the press consul (minister) at the Indian consulate in New York city. His experience as a diplomat is diverse and substantial: from the sharing of natural resources between India and its neighboring countries, to negotiating with hijackers of an Indian plane to Afghanistan, organizing partnerships between European Union and India, and being a stand-by Arabic interpreter for the India's prime minister. He has served in Syria, Pakistan, as well as in the western hemisphere. This talk focused on how his individual world view has developed, and what he, from the frontline of the Indian diplomatic core, considered India's place in this world.

Ghanashyam also spoke to the students of the tsunami course (see page 2 for details) on the relief, reconstruction, and diplomatic activities of the India's government in the aftermath of the December 26, 2004 tsunami. In a spirited question-and-answer session, he clarified the position of the Indian government on acceptance of foreign aid and expertise, access of non-governmental organizations to camps in India, India's contribution to international relief efforts, and the establishment of an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system.

and relevance. He concluded by calling for fresh thinking and major changes in higher education to meet the challenges of the globalized world.

His Patanjali lecture on Indo-US relations was presented in two parts. The first part covered the period from 1947 (India's independence), the Cold War and its end in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It covered the major issues of that period: Kashmir, Non-alignment, Sino-Soviet friendship, etc. The second part examined Indo-US relations from early nineties with special focus on the last five years. It dwelt on the many points of convergence that are fundamental in nature to these two democracies though different perspectives, viewpoints and positions that are inevitable in the course of this historical engagement between these two democracies were also discussed.



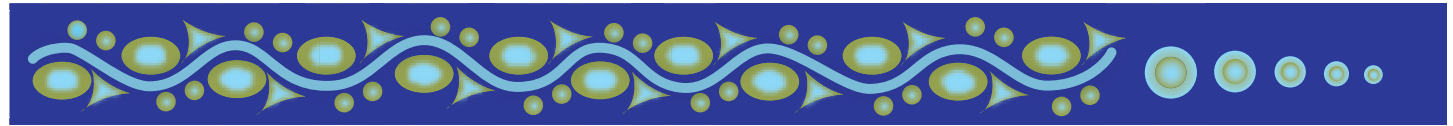
*Pilgrims on River Ganges, Banaras, India*

## Sengupta speaks on India's pilgrimage sites

Dr. Sukalyan Sengupta, faculty member in the Civil & Environmental Engineering Department, delivered a seminar on "Pilgrimage Sites of India." This slide show discussed the history, architecture, and significance of many holy sites in India and one in Tibet.

Sengupta began with the prerequisites for a geographical location to be considered a pilgrimage site. He then focused on the reasons that Indians of many faiths (Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism) decide to undertake a pilgrimage. He also discussed the many pilgrimage locations spread throughout the length and breadth of India.

Starting with the Char dham temples in the Garhwal hills (Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri), the journey covered important sites in Rishikesh/hardwar, Banaras, Allahabad, Sarnath, Bodhgaya, Sanchi, Amritsar, Pushkar, Mt. Abu, Sravanabelagola, Madurai, Rameshwaram, Puri, and Dakshineswar. A video clip of pilgrims circumambulating Mt. Kailash (Tibet) created a wonderful finale to the whole experience.



## Center releases book and video

**T**he Center for Indic Studies organized a two-day conference on “Impact of Swami Vivekananda’s Voyage to the West.” This event facilitated a dialogue among academicians who have studied the Ramakrishna Math and Mission movement in India and in the West, monks of the Ramakrishna order, students, and the general public on the contributions of Vivekananda to the West, and the relevance of his teachings today and in the future.

The overwhelmingly positive response of the audience to the quality of the papers presented was key to the subsequent decision to print most of the papers presented, and several others, in the form of a book. This book, *The Cyclonic Swami: Vivekananda in the West*, is co-edited by Prof. Sukalyan Sengupta of the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth, and Prof. Makarand Paranjape of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. It is now ready for sale.

The center also released its first documentary film, on the colorful festival of Holi. Titled “The Colors of Spring,” it covers the mythological stories that are believed to be the genesis of this festival, and focuses on the differences in the style of celebration in various parts of India and various age groups.

Please contact Maureen Jennings at [mjennings@umassd.edu](mailto:mjennings@umassd.edu) or call 508.999.8588 for copies of the book or the video.



### Bhagirathi

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