

MED 2102 Clerkship Elective

International Clinical Senior Elective Opportunities in Global Health

Course: General Medicine in a Developing Nation- Hyderabad, India

Course Number: MED 2102

Department: Office of Global Health

Faculty Coordinator:

Nilum Rajora, MD

Department of Internal Medicine

Division of Nephrology

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Email: Nilum.Rajora@UTSouthwestern.edu

Assistant Faculty Coordinators:

Rasha Babikir, MBBS

Education Program Coordinator

Office of Global Health

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Email: Rasha.Babikir@UTSouthwestern.edu

Faculty Coordinators in India:

- *Dr. Dilip Mathai*
Dean of the hospital
Email: deanaimsr@apolloimsr.edu.in
deanaimsr@apolloschoolofmedicine.edu.in
mathai.dilip@gmail.com
dilipmathai@yahoo.com
- *Dr. Padma Madala*
Email: drpadma_m@apollohospital.com
- *Dr. Ashwin Kandula*
Responsible for booking student housing
Email: drashwin_k@medvarsity.com
Phone: +91-779-984-4552.

Hospital: (Location of rotation)

Apollo Hospital Hyderabad

Jubilee Hills

Hyderabad, India 500033

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Periods Offered: All **Length:** 4 weeks

Max # of Students: Four students per 4-week rotation

First Day Contact: Dr. Padma Madala and Dr. Ashwin Kandula

First Contact Time: students must contact Dr. Nilum Rajora 4 months before anticipated rotation start date to plan rotation and for logistical planning.

Dr. Rajora will meet with enrolled students prior to start of rotation to review course objectives and safety information.

Prerequisites: Completion of Core Clerkships

Course Description:

This rotation will expose the student to medical care at a world-class facility in a developing country. The primary focus will be on teaching the student to rely on clinical skills and judgment in addition to technology available in that setting. Students will participate in all aspects of care of medical patients at Apollo Hospital. This will include daily inpatient ward rounds and outpatient clinics, ICU and emergency room management of medical patients, and medical emergencies. There will be hospital-wide didactic teaching sessions involving all attendings and residents in the Department of Internal Medicine, didactic conferences, case presentations, and interactive sessions with attendings. Students may be exposed to disease problems not seen in the USA such as malaria, hydatid disease, typhoid, and tetanus.

Goals & Objectives: To provide students with practice-oriented learning opportunities related to international health.	Assessment methods:
Patient Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach students to gather accurate and essential information in a system without modern technological equipment.• Enhance students' ability to make diagnostic plans for patients in a system of limited technology and financial resources.• Teach students to recognize acute diseases that are rare in the United States.• Teach students to develop management options for treatment of diseases rare in the United States.• Teach students to develop management options for treatment of diseases common in the United States but with limited resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Medical Records entries• Skills evaluation from direct observation.
Medical knowledge:	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach students about acute medical diseases in developing world countries.• Enhance students' ability to integrate and apply their basic science knowledge to these uncommon diseases.• Expose students through reading and clinical experience to parasite infestations and infectious diseases not usually seen in the USA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Case presentations</i>
Interpersonal and communication skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expose the student to the challenges of cross-cultural communication in a multilingual context.• Guide students in forming healthy cross-cultural relationships.• Teach students the practical and ethical challenges of interpretation services in a clinical setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Observations of faculty and staff</i>
Practice Based learning and Improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expose the students to the local patient population, helping them to observe how local health practices and superstition affect the patient• Demonstrate to students how to analyze and improve the quality of hospital and clinic practice in a developing country with limited technological and financial resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observations of faculty and staff
Professionalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate to the students a respect and compassion for each individual patient• Expose the students to the ethical dilemmas posed in an overseas clinic or hospital such as limited resources, needs of poor patients, a competitive local medical community, maintaining the ethos of the hospital or clinic practice• Demonstrate integrity in all aspects of medical practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Observations of faculty and staff</i>
Systems based practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expose students to the various health care systems available in the international medical community• Expose the student to specific ways in which the specific hospital or clinic experienced relates to the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Observations of faculty and staff</i>• <i>Reflection essay</i>

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health care community so far as consultants, referrals, and partnerships

- Expose students to medical mission life and possible career in international health.

Methods of Instruction:

A. Didactic:

- Hospital-wide sessions with all attendings and residents 3-5 days per week, sometimes once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- Sessions with medicine faculty 3-4 days per week.
- Case presentations on ward rounds and in outpatient clinics.

B. Clinical:

- Daily rounds with residents, 3-4 days/week with attendings
- Outpatient clinics Monday – Saturday mornings
- Night duty possible depending on specialty service
- Participation in multiple specialties (student preference)

C. Student Duties:

- Admit new inpatient, develop treatment plan, present to attending, follow-up patient.
- Evaluate outpatients and present to attending.
- Perform procedures under direct guidance of attending or senior resident.
- Keep a log of all patient care activities in which the student participated.
- Submit a summary (500 words or less) of the experience and results.

Overview of student responsibilities at UTSW:

- Students must receive approval to complete an international rotation from a corresponding UTSW Department Official by completing and signing the Off-Campus Approval Form. Students must then receive approval from the Dean in the Office of Student Affairs.
- Students must submit GH applications for Global Health Student Affairs Committee (GHSAC) review and approval.
All trip applications should demonstrate that the specified program will strive to accomplish the above mentioned course goals and objectives.
- Students must complete pre- and post- trip requirements to receive a passing grade.

Pre-Trip Requirements:

- Students must complete a pre-trip orientation before the proposed travel date.

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- Students must provide the Office of Global Health with signed and other requested pre-trip forms (including Release and Indemnification Agreement, Stipend Agreement, and proof of enrollment in International SOS) at least 3 weeks prior to travel.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all materials should be emailed to Global.Health@UTSouthwestern.edu

Post-Trip Requirements:

Upon returning, all students must complete the following items *within 15 days* of completing the experience.

1. Online experience review in the UT Southwestern Global Health Data System.
2. Reflection essay:

Reflection Essay should address *at least one* of the following topics:

- Discuss an example of cross-cultural differences that did (or could have) impeded patient care. How did this situation impact the patient/doctor relationship?
- Discuss a catalyst that helped you discover your personal weaknesses and limitations.
- What level of patient care you were able to provide compared with what is generally considered acceptable in the United States for medical students? Discuss these differences in terms of ethics.
- How were communications issues between you and patients resolved? Was the level of care you were able to provide affected by language limitations?
- NOTE: The reflection essay must be of publishable quality and may be distributed to the UT Southwestern administration or donors.
- Include a picture of you in the field learning in the healthcare setting! If your essay is selected to be featured, we will publish this photo with your essay. Do not include patient faces unless you have their permission.
- One page minimum.
- Formatting: Word (.doc or .docx); double spaced, and 11-point Times New Roman font. ***Include your UT Southwestern approved logo, student name, course number, Name and address of the organization at which the rotation was completed and the dates of rotation in the header.***
- Document must be saved as: ***“LastName_FirstName_CountryVisted_Date of Rotation”*** (example: Smith_John_Haiti_02May2016.docx).

3. PowerPoint Presentation on two (2) medical or public health cases encountered in the host country. Students are to submit the PowerPoint upon completion of the experience.

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They may be contacted by their UTSW course director to discuss presentation details and logistics.

4. The International Senior Clinical Elective Student Evaluation Form must be submitted to the Office of Global Health **within 15 days** of completing the experience. The form should be made available to the onsite preceptor at the beginning of the rotation.

All post trip requirements are due within 15 days of completing the experience or you will not receive credit for this elective.

Evaluations:

- The supervising faculty at Apollo will evaluate the student with the university-approved International Senior Clinical Elective Student Evaluation Form.
- Pass or Fail grade assigned based on completion of pre and post trip requirements as well as completion of the international senior elective student evaluation form.

Course Evaluation:

An online course evaluation must be completed ***within 15days*** of completing the elective.

Application Process:

Application Deadlines:

The deadlines for **IMED 2102- General Medicine Rotation in a Developing Nation** are:

- **November 15:** for all spring rotations
- **August 15:** for all fall and winter rotations
- **April 15:** for summer rotations (Periods 1 & 2)

Early application submissions are encouraged for the benefit of the student; however, final funding decisions are not released on a rolling basis. Students will receive notifications within one month of the application deadline.

Submit the following items by one of the deadlines before your anticipated departure date (**earlier application submissions** for countries appearing on the State Department Travel Warning List*) for approval by the Global Health Student Advisory Committee:

- Submit a Student Opportunities in Global Health Application.
- Identify a physician mentor (preceptor at international site) and UTSW mentor who will supervise your elective experience and research.
- Submit the in-country physician's CV and Global Health Preceptor Form documenting their agreement to provide on-site mentorship and direct supervision of the student.

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- Submit the UTSW physician's CV and Global Health Preceptor Form documenting their agreement to provide mentorship and supervision of the research.
- Complete a pre-trip orientation in person and/or on-line.
- Provide the Office of Global Health with all requested forms (including Release and Indemnification Agreement, Stipend Agreement, proof of enrollment in International SOS, IRB approval) at least one month prior to travel.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all documents should be emailed to Global.Health@UTSouthwestern.edu

Applications will be evaluated and approved by the Global Health Student Advisory Committee.

- Features of prior successful applications include:
 - Meaningful preparation plan that is linked to the proposed experience
 - Completion of the Pre-clinical Global Health elective

***Travel to Countries on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning List**

Travel Warnings are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. A list of these countries is available through the following link:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Approval for travel to these countries on UT Southwestern sponsored or endorsed programs (with or without stipend funding) is not guaranteed and will require the submission of additional information and have a separate approval process. If you are planning travel to one of these countries, you should submit your application at least **three (3) months** before your planned

travel and at least 8 weeks before you plan to buy plane tickets. You should also be aware that the **likelihood of approval is low.**

Stipends:

Submitting an application for the **IMED- General Medicine Rotation in a Developing Nation** will be considered a request for a stipend. All applications will be reviewed and funding provided to the most competitive proposals.

Funding – The stipend will be disbursed shortly after approval and fulfilment of Pre-departure requirements through Financial Aid office.

Conditions – Stipends will only be awarded to students who are enrolled for the current academic year. Students on an approved leave of absence are not eligible to receive a stipend.

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Should a student not complete the specified requirements or fulfill the approved activities, the stipend must be repaid in full. Students will sign an agreement to this effect.

Travel Requirements:

- Valid Passport
- Tourist Visa to India from the Indian Consulate nearest to you.

Logistics:

1. ***Transportation:*** The student will arrange for his/her own airfare, which may range from \$1400 to \$2000. Transportation provided from airport to hospital.
2. ***City of Arrival:*** Hyderabad, India.
3. ***Room and Board:*** The hospital guest facilities are near the campus and include meals. Cost for room and board is about \$800/month and will be borne by the student. There is also a hospital administrative fee of \$500. Total expenses for one month should be about \$1300-1500.
4. ***Document requirements:***
 - Valid passport
 - Tourist visa to enter India (no mention of work or study) available on application to Travisa Outsourcing. Form can be downloaded from the Travisa web site, which will process form through Indian Consulate in Houston, TX. Cost for a 6-month tourist visa is \$76. Apply 1-2 months in advance.

Language requirement: None. English language spoken by staff who can translate. Many patients also speak English in addition to Hindi, Telugu, or other regional languages.

Immunizations recommended: Hepatitis A and B; polio; tetanus; typhoid (effectiveness limited). Malaria prophylaxis also suggested during warmer months in Hyderabad.

Things to bring: white coat and stethoscope.

Attachments (see below): *Description of Apollo Hospital Hyderabad India- Country specific Information.*

Apollo Hospital Hyderabad Hyderabad, India

Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad has risen to be on par with the best in the world, in terms of technical expertise, deliverables and outcomes. It has now evolved into a one of a kind institution, the Apollo Health City, Hyderabad, which is the first health city in Asia and a perfect example of an integrated healthcare system offering solutions across the healthcare space. A 350-bed multi-specialty hospital with over 50 specialties and super-specialties, 10 Centers of Excellence, education, research, information technology, all in one sprawling campus creates an environment dedicated to healing.

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Apollo Health City, Hyderabad covers the entire spectrum from illness to wellness and is thus a health city and not a medical city. Institutes for Heart Diseases, Cancer, Joint Diseases, Emergency, Renal Diseases, Neurosciences, Eye and Cosmetic Surgery are all centers of excellence and are positioned to offer the best care in the safest manner to every patient.

Apart from patient care, each of these Centers of Excellence spends a significant amount of time in training and research essentially aimed at preventing disease and improving outcomes when the disease does occur.

Most of the consultants at the Health city have international experience either educational, work experience - related or observational. The average staff to patient ratio for the hospital is 3:1 with a 1:1 ratio prevailing in priority areas like the Intensive Care Unit and the Cardiac Care Unit.

Apollo Health city, Hyderabad handles close to 100,000 patients a year. International patients from Tanzania, the USA, UAE, Kenya, Oman and neighboring Asian countries are treated by the hospital every year.

More information may be found on the hospital web site:
<http://www.apollohealthcity.com/>

India
Country Specific Information



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COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: India, the world's largest democracy, has a very diverse population, geography, and climate. India is the world's second most populous country, as well as the seventh largest in area. Tourist facilities offer varying degrees of comfort. Amenities are widely available in large cities and tourist areas. Read the Department of State's Fact Sheet on India for additional information.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP) / EMBASSY LOCATION:

If you are traveling to India, please take the time to tell our Embassy and/or Consulate about your trip so we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. We can also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Link to the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/step.html/>

Local Embassy and Consulates information:

The U.S. Consulate General in Hyderabad is located at Paigah Palace, 1-8-323 Chiran Fort Lane, Begumpet, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh, 500003; telephone 91-40-4033-8300;

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Fax 91-40-4033-8301. In case of an emergency involving a U.S.citizen, please call the 24-hour operator at (91-40) 4033-8300 and ask for American Citizen Services.

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is located at Shanti Path, Chanakya Puri 110021. Telephone +91-11-2419-8000; fax 91-11-2419-8407. In case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen, please call the 24-hour operator at (91-11) 2419-8000 and ask for American Citizen Services.

The U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai (Bombay) is located at C-49, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai 400051, telephone 91-22-2672-4000. In case of an emergency involving a U.S. citizen, please call the 24-hour operator at (91-22) 2672-4000 and ask for American Citizens Services.

The U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata (Calcutta) is located at 5/1 Ho Chi Minh Sarani, 700071; telephone 91-33-3984-2400; fax 91-33-2282-2335. If you are a U.S.citizen with an afterhoursemergency (arrest, death,or loss of passport), please call our primary hotline cell phone (91) 99030 42956. If unable to reach the cell phone, please call (91) (33) 3984-2400 and dial "0" and ask for Duty Officer.

The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai (Madras) is located at 220 Anna Salai, Gemini Circle, 600006; telephone 91-44-2857-4000; fax 91-44-2857-4443. In case of an emergency involving a U.S.citizen, please call the 24-hour operator at (91-44) 2857-4000 and ask for American Citizen Services.

ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS: All U.S. citizens need a valid passport and valid Indian visa to enter and exit India for any purpose (also see Special Circumstances below).Visitors, including those on official U.S. government business, must apply for visas at an Indian Embassy or Consulate abroad before entering the country. Visas are not available upon arrival for U.S. citizens. If you don't have a valid passport and visa you may be immediately deported. The

U.S. Embassy and Consulates General in India cannot assist you if you arrive without proper documentation. Please carry photocopies of the bio-data page of your U.S. passport and the pages containing the Indian visa and Indian immigration stamps. If your passport is lost or stolen, copies will help you apply for a replacement passport and an exit visa from the Indian Government. Replacing a lost visa, which is required in order to exit the country, may take three to four business days.

U.S. citizens wishing to visit India are responsible for requesting the correct type of visa from the Indian Embassy or Consulate. There are generally no provisions for changing your immigration category (e.g., from tourist to work visa) once you have entered the country. Indian visa regulations change frequently, often with little advance notice, and changes may be poorly

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advertised and inconsistently enforced. Travelers are urged to check the website of the **Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C.** before any travel to India to review the most current information. If you travel on a tourist visa, you are generally given six months of legal stay upon entering India; extensions are rarely granted. Indian visas may be obtained in the United States through **Travisa Visa Outsourcing (www.travisa.com)**, the Government of India's visa contractor. Diplomatic and Official visa applications, however, are accepted directly at the Indian Embassy and Consulates.

Please review the information on the Travisa website to determine your purpose for travel and the most appropriate visa category. All U.S. government employees, including military personnel, must obtain country clearance for travel to India.

U.S. citizens of Pakistani origin should expect additional delays when applying for Indian visas due to administrative processing.

Foreign citizens who visit India to study, do research, work, or act as missionaries, as well as all travelers and residents planning to stay more than 180 days, are required to register their visit to India within 14 days of arrival with the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) closest to where they will be staying. The FRRO maintains offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai (known as the "Bureau of Immigration"), Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Amritsar. District Superintendents of Police serve as Foreigners Registration Officers (FROs) in all states. If you are traveling to India on a tourist visa, you may not be allowed re-entry to India within two months of departure without specific permission from an Indian embassy or consulate abroad. For more information on this requirement, please review the **Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)** section on the Indian Bureau of Immigration website. Travelers have reported that enforcement of this rule at ports of entry may be inconsistent.

If you overstay your Indian visa, or otherwise violate Indian visa regulations, you may require a clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs in order to leave the country. Generally, you will be fined, and in some cases may be jailed, until deportation can be arranged. Visa violators seeking an exit clearance are requested to schedule an online appointment at the Ministry of Home

Affairs website before visiting the Visa Facilitation Center at The Ministry of Home Affairs, Foreigners Division, Jaisalmer House, 26 Man Singh Road, New Delhi 110 011 (tel. 91-11-2338-5748).

Processing of an exit visa under these circumstances may take up to 60 days.

For the most current information on entry and exit requirements, please contact the **Embassy of India** at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 939-9806 or

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the Indian Consulates in [Chicago](#), [New York](#), [San Francisco](#), [Atlanta](#), or [Houston](#). Outside the United States, inquiries should be made at the nearest Indian embassy or consulate.

There are no disclosure requirements or restrictions for HIV/AIDS patients who enter India on a tourist visa. Disclosure regarding HIV/AIDS is required of anyone seeking a resident permit in India. Foreign residents found to be suffering from HIV/AIDS will be deported. Please verify this information with the [Embassy of India](#) before you travel.

General information regarding Indian visa and immigration rules, including the addresses and telephone numbers for the FRRO offices, can be found at the [Indian Ministry of Home Affairs Bureau of Immigration website](#). Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on the website. For information about customs regulations, please read the [Customs Information page](#).

THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY: India continues to experience terrorist and insurgent activities, which may affect U.S. citizens directly or indirectly. Anti-Western terrorist groups, some on the U.S. government's list of foreign terrorist organizations, are active in India, including Islamist extremist groups such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Indian Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba. The U.S. government continually monitors information received concerning terrorist threats to determine credibility and will advise U.S. citizens accordingly.

Past attacks have targeted public places, including some frequented by Westerners, such as luxury and other hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, and restaurants in large urban areas. Attacks have taken place during the busy evening hours in markets and other crowded places, but could occur at any time. Past incidents include the February 13, 2012 bombing of an Israeli diplomatic vehicle near the diplomatic enclave in New Delhi that injured four persons. The September 7, 2011 bomb blast at New Delhi's High Court that killed 12 people; and the July 13, 2011 bombings in crowded areas in Mumbai, where three separate explosions killed 21 people and injured more than 100. The Maoists (also known as "Naxalites") are the most active insurgent group in India. The Naxalites typically attack Indian government officials, but have also derailed rail lines, targeted other government buildings such as police stations, and kidnapped foreigners. They operate mostly in the more remote areas of the country.

U.S. citizens should always practice good security. Be aware of your surroundings and keep a low profile. Monitor local news reports, vary your routes and times in carrying out daily activities, and consider the level of security present when you visit public places, including religious sites, or choosing hotels, restaurants, and entertainment and recreation venues.

Beyond the threat from terrorism and insurgencies, demonstrations and general strikes, or "bandh," often cause inconvenience. Large religious gatherings that attract hundreds of thousands of people can result in dangerous and often life-threatening stampedes. Local

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demonstrations can begin spontaneously and escalate with little warning, disrupting transportation systems and city services and posing risks to travelers. In response to such events, Indian authorities occasionally impose curfews and/or restrict travel. You are urged to obey such curfews and travel restrictions and to avoid demonstrations and rallies as they have the potential for violence, especially immediately preceding and following elections and religious festivals (particularly when Hindu and Muslim festivals coincide). Tensions between castes and religious groups can also result in disruptions and violence. In some cases, demonstrators specifically block roads near popular tourist sites and disrupt train operations in order to gain the attention of Indian authorities; occasionally vehicles transporting tourists are attacked in these incidents. India generally goes on “High Alert” status prior to major holidays or events. You should monitor local television, print media, Mission India’s Facebook page, and enroll with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program for further information about the current situation in areas where you will travel.

The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulates General in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Mumbai will no longer send out security messages regarding routine demonstrations taking place in India.

Instead, information about routine demonstrations will be posted on the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulates General websites, under the heading “Demonstration Notices.” Please monitor our websites regularly for information about protest activities in the country. Please note that the Embassy and Consulates General will continue to issue emergency/security messages for other purposes, as necessary.

Religious violence occasionally occurs in India, especially when tensions between different religious communities are purposefully exacerbated by groups pushing religiously chauvinistic agendas.

There are active “anti-conversion” laws in some Indian states, and acts of conversion sometimes elicit violent reactions from Hindu extremists. Foreigners suspected of proselytizing Hindus have been attacked and killed in conservative, rural areas in India in the past.

Swimming in India: You should exercise caution if you intend to swim in open waters along the Indian coastline, particularly during the monsoon season. Every year, several people in Goa, Mumbai, Puri (Odisha), off the Eastern Coast in the Bay of Bengal, and other areas drown due to strong undertows. It is important to heed warnings posted at beaches and to avoid swimming in the ocean during the monsoon season. Trained lifeguards are very rare along beaches.

If you visit the Andaman Islands, be aware that there have been 24 reports of salt-water crocodile attacks in the past 25 years in the islands. Four have resulted in fatalities, including a U.S. citizen tourist in April 2010. Ask local residents about dangerous sea life before swimming and keep a safe distance from animals at all times.

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Wildlife safaris: India offers opportunities for observation of wildlife in its natural habitat and many tour operators and lodges advertise structured, safe excursions into parks and other wildlife viewing areas for close observation of flora and fauna. However, safety standards and training vary, and it is a good idea to ascertain whether operators are trained and licensed. Even animals marketed as “tame” should be respected as wild and extremely dangerous. Keep a safe distance from animals at all times, remaining in vehicles or other protected enclosures when venturing into game parks.

Trekking in India: Trekking expeditions should be limited to routes identified for this purpose by local authorities. Use only registered trekking agencies, porters, and guides, suspend trekking after dark, camp at designated camping places, and travel in groups rather than individually or with one or two companions. Altitudes in popular trekking spots can be as high as 25,170 feet (7,672 m); please make sure that you have had a recent medical checkup to ensure that you are fit to trek at these altitudes and carry sufficient medical insurance that includes medical evacuation coverage.

Areas of Instability:

Jammu & Kashmir: The Department of State strongly recommends that you avoid travel to the state of Jammu & Kashmir (with the exception of visits to the eastern Ladakh region and its capital, Leh) because of the potential for terrorist incidents, as well as violent public unrest. U.S. government employees are prohibited from traveling to Jammu & Kashmir (except for Ladakh) without permission, which is only granted by the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi in exceptional circumstances. A number of terrorist groups operate in the state, targeting security forces in the region, particularly along the Line of Control (LOC) separating Indian and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, and those stationed in primary tourist destinations in the Kashmir Valley: Srinagar, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam. Since 1989, as many as 60,000 people (terrorists, security forces, and civilians) have been killed in the Kashmir conflict. Foreigners are particularly visible, vulnerable, and at risk. In the past, serious communal violence left the state mostly paralyzed due to massive strikes and business shut downs, and U.S. citizens have had to be evacuated by local police. The Indian government prohibits foreign tourists from visiting certain areas along the LOC (see the section on Restricted Areas, below).

India-Pakistan Border: The State Department recommends that you avoid travel to areas within ten kilometers of the border between India and Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan maintain a strong military presence on both sides of the border. The only official India-Pakistan border crossing point for persons who are not citizens of India or Pakistan is in the state of Punjab between Atari, India, and Wagah, Pakistan. The border crossing is usually open, but you are advised to confirm the current status of the border crossing prior to commencing travel. A Pakistani visa is required to enter Pakistan. Only U.S. citizens residing in India may apply for a Pakistani visa in India. Otherwise you should apply for a Pakistani visa in your country of

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residence before traveling to India. The Pakistani government requires that U.S. citizen residents of India must first come to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi to sign an affidavit of intent to apply for the Pakistani visa before submitting their application.

Both India and Pakistan claim an area of the Karakoram mountain range that includes the Siachen glacier. Travel or mountain climbing in this area is highly dangerous. The disputed area includes the following peaks: Rimo Peak; Apsarasas I, II, and III; Tegam Kangri I, II and III; Suingri Kangri; Ghiant I and II; Indira Col; and Sia Kangri. Check with the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi for information on current conditions. (Please see the section on “Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)/Embassy Location” above.)

Northeastern states: Incidents of violence by ethnic insurgent groups, including bombings of buses, trains, rail lines, and markets, occur with some frequency in the northeast. While U.S. citizens have not been specifically targeted, it is possible that you could be affected as a bystander. If you travel to the northeast, you should avoid travel by train at night, travel outside major cities at night, and crowds. Security laws are in force in the region, in recognition that these areas have a higher level of instability, and the central government has deployed security personnel. U.S. government employees are prohibited from traveling to the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Manipur without permission from the U.S. Consulate in Kolkata. Restricted Area Permits are required for foreigners to visit certain Northeastern states (see the section on Restricted Areas, below.) Contact the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata for information on current conditions. (Please see the section on Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)/Embassy Location, above.)

East Central and Southern India: Maoist extremist groups, or “Naxalites,” are active in East Central India primarily in rural areas. The Naxalites have a long history of conflict with state and national authorities, including frequent attacks on local police, paramilitary forces, and government officials, and are responsible for more attacks in the country than any other organization through an ongoing campaign of violence and intimidation. In February 2012, four officers of the Border Security Force (BSF) were killed in an ambush by Communist Party of India-Maoist rebels in the Malkangiri district of Odisha. In March 2012 Naxalite guerrillas abducted four persons including two Italian nationals from a remote area of southern Odisha. Naxalites have not specifically targeted U.S. citizens but have attacked symbolic targets that have included Western companies and rail lines. While Naxalite violence does not normally occur in places frequented by foreigners, there is a risk that visitors could become victims of violence.

Naxalites are active in a large swath of India from eastern Maharashtra and northern Andhra Pradesh through western West Bengal, particularly in rural parts of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and on the borders of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Odisha. Due to the fluid nature of the threat, all U.S. government travelers to

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states with Naxalite activity must receive prior authorization from the Regional Security Officer responsible for the area to be visited. U.S. officials traveling only to the capital cities in these states do not need prior authorization from the Regional Security Officer.

Civil unrest continues in the south-central Indian state of Andhra Pradesh over the contentious issue of creating a separate state called Telangana within Andhra Pradesh. Until the issue is resolved definitively, there may continue to be tension, especially in the Telangana Region of Andhra Pradesh, which includes the city of Hyderabad and the districts of Rangareddi, Warangal, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Khammam, Nalgonda, and Mahbubnagar. You should avoid political rallies, demonstrations, and large crowds of any kind. The campus of Osmania University in Hyderabad has been the site of recurring civil disturbances regarding the Telangana statehood issue. Also, organized demonstrations are often held at Indira Park, located on Lower Tank Bund Road, and adjacent areas surrounding Hussain Sagar Lake. Other locations where protests have occurred are at the State Legislative Assembly, Gun Park, and Nizam College in Bashir Bagh. Use caution when visiting these sites, and avoid them altogether during periods of unrest or demonstrations. If you are residing or traveling in Andhra Pradesh you should monitor the situation via media sources, including TV, radio and via the internet, enroll in the STEP program to receive updated security information from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General and check the U.S. Embassy and Consulates General webpages regularly for demonstration notices.

Restricted/Protected areas: Certain parts of India are designated as "restricted areas" by the Indian government and require special advance permission to visit. These areas include:

- The state of Arunachal Pradesh
- The state of Sikkim
- Portions of the state of Himachal Pradesh near the Chinese border
- Portions of the state of Uttarakhand (Uttaranchal) near the Chinese border
- Portions of the state of Rajasthan near the Pakistani border
- Portions of the state of Jammu & Kashmir near the Line of Control with Pakistan and certain portions of Ladakh
- The Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- The Union Territory of the Laccadives Islands (Lakshadweep)
- The Tibetan colony in Mundgod, Karnataka

More information on travel to/in restricted/protected areas can be found at India's **Bureau of Immigration**. "Restricted Area Permits" are available outside India at Indian embassies and consulates abroad, or in India from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Foreigners Division) at Jaisalmer House, 26 Man Singh Road, New Delhi. The states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim

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maintain official guesthouses in New Delhi, which can also issue Restricted Area Permits for their respective states for certain travelers. You should exercise caution while visiting Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) in Tamil Nadu as the Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Center, Kalpakkam, is located just south of the site and is not clearly marked as a restricted and dangerous area.

For the latest security information, travelers should enroll in the STEP program to receive updated security information and regularly monitor travel information available from the [U.S. Embassy in New Delhi](#) as well as the U.S. Consulates General in [Mumbai](#) (Bombay), [Chennai](#) (Madras), [Hyderabad](#), and [Kolkata](#) (Calcutta).

Stay up to date by:

- Bookmarking the [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).
- Following up on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well.
- Download the free Smart Traveler App available through iTunes and the Android market to have travel information readily available.
- Calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.
- Take some time before travel to consider your personal security.

CRIME: Petty crime, especially theft of personal property, is common, particularly on trains or buses. Pickpockets can be very adept and women have reported having their bags snatched, purse-straps cut, or the bottom of their purses slit without their knowledge. Theft of U.S. passports is common, particularly in major tourist areas, on overnight trains, and at airports and train stations. If you are traveling by train, lock your sleeping compartments and take your valuables with you when leaving your berth. If you travel by air, be careful with your bags in the arrival and departure areas outside airports. Violent crime, especially directed against foreigners, has traditionally been uncommon, although in recent years there has been a modest increase. Be cautious about displaying cash or expensive items to reduce the chance of being a target for robbery or other crime, and be aware of your surroundings when you use ATMs. Gangs and criminal elements operate in major cities and have sometimes targeted unsuspecting business travelers and their family members for kidnapping or extortion.

U.S. citizens, particularly women, are cautioned not to travel alone in India. Western women, especially those of African descent, continue to report incidents of verbal and physical harassment by groups of men. Known locally as “Eve-teasing,” these incidents constitute sexual harassment and can be quite frightening. Eve-teasing can occur anytime or anywhere, but most frequently has happened in crowded areas such as in market places, train stations, buses, and public streets. The harassment can range from sexually suggestive or lewd comments to catcalls to outright groping. Southern India is very distinct from the other major cities and has a strong reputation for being very traditional. If you are a woman traveling in India, you are advised to

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respect local dress and customs. While India is generally safe for foreign visitors, according to the latest figures by Indian authorities, rape is the fastest growing crime in India. Among large cities, Delhi experienced the highest number of crimes against women. Although most victims have been local residents, recent sexual attacks against female visitors in tourist areas underline the fact that foreign women are at risk and should exercise vigilance.

Women should observe stringent security precautions, including avoiding use of public transport after dark without the company of known and trustworthy companions, restricting evening entertainment to well-known venues, and avoiding isolated areas when alone at any time of day. If you are a woman traveling in India, you are advised to respect conservative local dress and customs. Keep your hotel room number confidential and make sure hotel room doors have chains, deadlocks, and spy-holes. In addition, only hire reliable cars and drivers and avoid traveling alone in hired taxis, especially at night. Use taxis from hotels and pre-paid taxis at airports rather than hailing them on the street. If you encounter threatening situations, call "100" for police assistance("112" from mobile phones).

SCAMS: Major airports, train stations, popular restaurants, and tourist sites are often used by scam artists looking to prey on visitors, often by creating a distraction. Beware of taxi drivers and others, including train porters, who solicit travelers with "come-on" offers of cheap transportation and/or hotels. Travelers accepting such offers have frequently found themselves the victims of scams, including offers to assist with "necessary" transfers to the domestic airport, disproportionately expensive hotel rooms, unwanted "tours," unwelcome "purchases," extended cab rides, substandard hotel rooms at overly expensive rates and even threats of violence against family members.

You should exercise care when hiring transportation and/or guides and use only well-known travel agents to book trips. Some scam artists have lured travelers by displaying their name on a sign when they leave the airport. Another popular scam is to drop money or to squirt something on the clothing of an unsuspecting traveler and during the distraction to rob them of their valuables.

Tourists have also been given drugged drinks or tainted food to make them more vulnerable to theft, particularly at train stations. Even food or drink purchased in front of the traveler from a canteen or vendor could be tainted.

Some vendors sell carpets, jewelry, gemstones, or other expensive items that may not be of the quality promised. Deal only with reputable businesses and do not hand over your credit cards or money unless you are certain that goods being shipped are the goods you purchased. If a deal sounds too good to be true, it is best avoided. Most Indian states have official tourism bureaus set up to handle complaints.

There have been a number of other scams perpetrated against foreign travelers, particularly in Goa, Jaipur, and Agra that target younger travelers and involve suggestions that money can be made by privately transporting gems or gold (both of which can result in arrest) or by taking delivery abroad of expensive carpets, supposedly while avoiding customs duties. The scam

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artists describe profits that can be made upon delivery of the goods, and require the traveler to pay a "deposit" as part of the transaction.

U.S. citizens have had problems with business partners, usually involving property investments. You may wish to seek professional legal advice in reviewing any contracts for business or services offered in India. A list of attorneys is available on the Embassy and Consulate General websites.

In another common scam, family members in the U.S., particularly older people, are approached for funds to help grandchildren or relatives who claim to be in jail or without money to return home. Do not send money without contacting the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General to confirm the caller's situation. You can also call our office of Overseas Citizens Services at 888-407-4747 (from overseas: 202-501-4444). Review our information on Emergency Assistance to Americans Abroad.

Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, if you purchase them you may also be breaking local law.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

We can:

- Replace a stolen passport.
- Help you find appropriate medical care if you are the victim of violent crimes such as assault or rape.
- Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and if you want us to, we can contact family members or friends.
- Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to local attorneys, although it is important to remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting the crime.
- If your passport is stolen you should immediately report the theft or loss to the police in the location where your passport was stolen. A police report, called an FIR (First Information Report) is required by the Indian government in order to obtain an exit visa to leave India if the lost passport contained your Indian visa. Although the Embassy or Consulate General is able to replace a stolen or lost passport, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) are responsible for approving an exit permit. This process can take three to four working days.

You will need to obtain a copy of the police report (FIR) from local police when you report any incident, such as a lost or stolen passport. Local authorities generally are unable to take any meaningful action without the filing of a police report.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in India is "100." An additional emergency number, "112," can be accessed from mobile phones.

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CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in another country, you are subject to its laws even though you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. In some places, you may be taken in for questioning if you do not have your passport with you. In some places, it is illegal to take pictures of certain buildings. In some places, driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. These criminal penalties will vary from country to country. If you do something illegal in your host country, your U.S. passport won't help. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are going. It is also important to note that there are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States. For example, you can be prosecuted in the United States if you buy pirated goods, engage in sexual conduct with children, or use or disseminate child pornography in a foreign country even if those activities are not illegal in that country.

Each of India's states has independent regulations concerning alcohol purchase and consumption. Legal drinking ages range from 18 to 25 and can vary by beverage type. Some states permit alcohol use only for medicinal purposes, others require you to hold a permit to buy, transport, or consume alcohol. Penalties for violation can be harsh, so travelers are advised to check with Indian authorities in the states they plan to visit.

While some countries will automatically notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested in a foreign country, that might not always be the case. To ensure that the United States is aware of your circumstances, request that the police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you are arrested or detained overseas.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Dual nationality: India does not permit its citizens to hold dual nationality. In 2006, India launched the "Overseas Citizens of India" (OCI) program, which has often been mischaracterized as a dual nationality program. It does not grant Indian citizenship. If you are a U.S. citizen and obtain an OCI card you will not become a citizen of India; you will remain a citizen of the United States. An OCI card is similar to a U.S. "green card" in that a holder can travel to and from India indefinitely, work in India, study in India, and own property in India (except for certain agricultural and plantation properties). An OCI card holder, however, does not receive an Indian passport, cannot vote in Indian elections, and is not eligible for Indian government employment. The OCI program is similar to the Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card introduced by the Indian government several years ago, except that PIO holders must still register with Indian immigration authorities, and PIO cards are not issued for an indefinite period. U.S. citizens of Indian descent can apply for PIO or OCI cards at the Indian Embassy in Washington, or at the Indian Consulates in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Houston. Inside India, U.S. citizens can apply at the nearest FRRO office (please see "Entry/Exit Requirements" section above for more information on the FRRO). U.S. citizens are required to travel on U.S. passport when traveling in and out of the United States.

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Religious activities: If you plan to engage in religious proselytizing, you are required by Indian law to have a "missionary" visa. Immigration authorities have determined that certain activities, including speaking at religious meetings to which the general public is invited, may violate immigration law if the traveler does not hold a missionary visa. Foreigners with tourist visas who engage in missionary activity are subject to deportation and possible criminal prosecution. The states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh have active "anti- conversion" legislation regulating conversion from one religious faith to another. Arunachal Pradesh currently has an inactive "anti-conversion" law awaiting accompanying regulations needed for enforcement. If you intend to engage in missionary activity, you may wish to seek legal advice to determine whether the activities you intend to pursue are permitted under Indian law.

Tourists should also be mindful of restrictions and observances when planning to visit any religious establishment, whether Hindu temples, mosques, churches, or other locations considered sacred by the local population. Many individual temples and mosques do not permit non-members to enter all or parts of the facilities, and may require the removal of shoes, headwear or have other specific requirements for appropriate attire.

Customs restrictions: Before traveling to or from India, you are urged to thoroughly inspect all bags and clothing that might inadvertently contain prohibited items. Since January 2010, at least seven U.S. citizens have been arrested or detained when airport security officials discovered loose ammunition and weapons in their luggage. If you are found to have loose ammunition or bullets on your person, you could be charged with violation of the Indian Arms Act, incarcerated, and/or deported from India. In addition to firearms and ammunition, Indian customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from India of such items as, antiquities, electronic equipment, currency, ivory, gold objects, and other prohibited materials.

Permission from the Government of India is required to bring in restricted items, even if you are only transiting through India. If you do not comply with these regulations, you risk arrest or fine or both and confiscation of these items. If you are charged with any alleged legal violations by Indian law enforcement, have an attorney review any document before you sign it. The Government of India requires the registration of antique items with the local police along with a photograph of the item. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of India in Washington or one of India's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. More information is available from the [Indian Central Board of Excise and Customs](#).

Indian customs authorities encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet for the temporary admission of professional equipment, commercial samples, and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. ATA Carnet Headquarters, located at the [U.S. Council for International Business](#), 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA Carnet in the United States. For additional information call (212) 354-4480, or [email USCIB](#) for details. Please see our Customs Information.

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MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: The quality of medical care in India varies considerably. Medical care in the major population centers approaches and occasionally meets Western standards, but adequate medical care is usually very limited or unavailable in rural areas.

If you are arriving in India from Sub-Saharan Africa or other yellow-fever areas, Indian health regulations require that you present evidence of vaccination against yellow fever. If you do not have such proof, you could be subjected to immediate deportation or a six-day detention in the yellow-fever quarantine center. If you transit through any part of sub-Saharan Africa, even for one day, you are advised to carry proof of yellow fever immunization.

Good information on vaccinations and other health precautions is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or by calling the hotline for international travelers at 1-877- FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747). Some vaccines such as Typhoid, Influenza, and Hepatitis A are recommended for all travelers and other vaccines such as Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, and Rabies are recommended for high-risk travelers.

A high risk of rabies transmission exists in most of India with dogs and bats posing the most common threat. Vaccination is recommended for all prolonged stays with a priority for young children and travelers in rural areas. It is also recommended for shorter stays that involve occupational exposure; locations more than 24 hours' travel from a reliable source of human rabies immune globulin and rabies vaccine for post-exposure treatment; adventure travelers, hikers, cave explorers, and backpackers. Monkeys also can transmit rabies and herpes B, among other diseases, to human victims. Avoid feeding monkeys. If bitten, you should immediately soak and scrub the bite for at least 15 minutes and seek urgent medical attention.

Influenza is transmitted from November to April in areas north of the Tropic of Cancer, and from June through November (the rainy season) in areas south of the Tropic of Cancer, with a smaller peak from February through April; off-season transmission can also occur. All travelers are at increased risk. Influenza vaccine is recommended for all travelers during the flu season.

Outbreaks of Avian Influenza (H5N1 virus) occur intermittently in eastern India, including West Bengal, Manipur, Sikkim, and Assam. For further information on avian influenza (bird flu), please refer to the Department of State's [Avian Influenza Fact Sheet](#).

Malaria prophylaxis depends on time of year and area the traveler is going visiting. Please consult the CDC website for more information.

For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#). These websites provide useful information, such as suggested vaccinations for visitors to India, safe food and water precautions, appropriate measures to avoid contraction of mosquito-borne diseases (such as malaria and Japanese B encephalitis), suggestions to avoid altitude sickness, etc. Further, these sites provide information on disease outbreaks that may arise from time to time. Outbreaks of mosquito-borne viral diseases such as dengue fever and chikungunya occur in various parts of India each year.

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You should check these sites shortly before traveling to India. [Further health information](#) for travelers is available from the WHO.

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in India. For further information, please consult the [CDC's Travel Notice on TB](#).

For emergency services, dial 112 from a cell phone; from a land line, dial 100 for police, 102 for ambulance, and 101 for fire. Ambulances are not equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, and traffic does not yield to emergency vehicles. Injured or seriously ill travelers may prefer to take a taxi or private vehicle to the nearest major hospital rather than wait for an ambulance.

Most hospitals require advance payment or confirmation of insurance prior to treatment. There is not clear information as to payment practices or whether credit cards are accepted for medical care.

Dengue fever presents significant risk in urban and rural areas including the major cities in India. The highest number of cases is reported from July to December with cases peaking from September to October. Daytime insect precautions are recommended.

Medical tourism is a rapidly growing industry. Companies offering vacation packages bundled with medical consultations and financing options provide direct-to-consumer advertising over the internet. Such medical packages often claim to provide high quality care, but the quality of health care in India is highly variable. People seeking health care in India should understand that medical systems operate differently from those in the United States and are not subject to the same rules and regulations. Anyone interested in traveling for medical purposes should consult with their local physician before traveling and [refer to the information from CDC](#). Persons traveling to India for medical purposes require the proper "medical" visa. Please check with the nearest Indian Embassy or consulate for more information.

Despite reports of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in hospitals, in general travelers should not delay or avoid treatment for urgent or emergent medical situations. However, health tourists and other travelers who may be contemplating elective procedures in this country should carefully research individual hospital infection control practices.

Rh-negative blood may be difficult to obtain as it is not common in Asia.

Commercial surrogacy, a growing industry in India, remains unregulated, operating solely under non-binding government guidelines. There are concerns that the interests and rights of commissioning parents, surrogates, egg donors, and the resulting children may not always be adequately protected.

In order for a child born of surrogacy to acquire U.S. citizenship and obtain a U.S. passport, sufficient proof must be submitted showing a genetic relationship between the newborn child and a U.S.-citizen parent. This is best accomplished through DNA testing. Newborns found not to have acquired U.S. citizenship at birth risk being stateless persons unable to obtain travel

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documents as Indian law prohibits the issuance of Indian passports to children born of surrogacy. With no right to other citizenship, infants may find themselves stranded in India.

If you are considering traveling to India for assisted reproductive technology (ART) procedures, please contact the Embassy or one of the Consulates General well in advance and review the available information to learn if your child born from ART would likely be documented as a U.S. citizen.

After the birth of your child, you should count on staying in India at least two weeks to complete the Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a U.S. Citizen (CRBA) and passport application and to obtain an Indian exit visa.

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates General in India maintain lists of local doctors and hospitals, all of which are published on their respective websites under "U.S. Citizen Services." We cannot endorse or recommend any specific medical provider or clinic.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: You cannot assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy apply when I am out of the United States?
- Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy does not go with you when you travel, it is a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. For more information, please see the medical insurance overseas page.

Medical evacuation coverage is strongly advised.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: Travel by road in India is dangerous. India leads the world in traffic-related deaths and a number of U.S. citizens have suffered fatal traffic accidents in recent years. You should exercise extreme caution when crossing streets, even in marked pedestrian areas, and try to use only cars that have seatbelts. Seat belts are not common in taxis. Helmets should always be worn on motorcycles and bicycles.

Travel at night is particularly hazardous. Buses, patronized by hundreds of millions of Indians, are convenient in that they serve almost every city of any size. However, they are usually driven fast, recklessly, and without consideration for the rules of the road. Accidents are quite common. Trains are safer than buses, but train accidents still occur more frequently than in other countries. In order to drive in India, you must have either a valid Indian driver's license or a valid international driver's license. Because of difficult road and traffic conditions, you may wish to consider hiring a local driver.

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On Indian roads, the safest driving policy is to always assume that other drivers will not respond to a traffic situation in the same way you would in the United States. On Indian roads, might makes right, and buses and trucks epitomize this fact. Buses and trucks often run red lights and merge directly into traffic at yield points and traffic circles. Cars, auto-rickshaws, bicycles, and pedestrians behave only slightly more cautiously. Use your horn or flash your headlights frequently to announce your presence. It is both customary and wise.

Outside major cities, roads are often poorly maintained and congested. Even main roads frequently have only two lanes, with poor visibility and inadequate warning markers. On the few divided highways, one can expect to meet local transportation traveling in the wrong direction, often without lights. Heavy traffic is the norm and includes (but is not limited to) overloaded trucks and buses, scooters, pedestrians, bullock and camel carts, horse or elephant riders en route to weddings, bicycles, and free-roaming livestock. Traffic in India moves on the left. It is important to be alert while crossing streets and intersections, especially after dark as traffic is coming in the "wrong" direction. Travelers should remember to use seatbelts in both rear and front seats where available, and to ask their drivers to maintain a safe speed.

If a driver hits a pedestrian or a cow, the vehicle and its occupants are at risk of being attacked by passersby. Such attacks pose significant risk of injury or death to the vehicle's occupants or at least of incineration of the vehicle. It is unsafe to remain at the scene of an accident of this nature, and drivers may instead wish to seek out the nearest police station.

Protestors often use road blockage as a means of publicizing their grievances, causing severe inconvenience to travelers. Visitors should monitor local news reports for any reports of road disturbances.

Please refer to our Road Safety page for more information.

Emergency Numbers: The following emergency numbers work in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata:

Police 100

Fire Brigade 101

Ambulance 102

