

Goa to host congress of India and Lusophone countries

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PANAJI: An international congress titled 'India and the Lusophone Market' will witness entrepreneurs and industrialists from Portugal and many of its former colonies gathering in Goa on January 14 and 15, and participating in this global common platform for trade and commerce between India and the Lusophone countries.

The event jointly organised by Lusophone Society of Goa, the Confederation of Indian Industry, the Institute of Asian Studies and Friendship Association Portugal-India will be inaugurated by Union Minister for Commerce, Industry and Textiles Anand Sharma in the presence of Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar.

PORTUGUESE CITIZENSHIP ISSUE MAY BE DISCUSSED AT MEETING NT NETWORK

PANAJI: President of the Lusophone Society of Goa Dr Aurobindo Xavier said the 'India and the Lusophone Market' international congress could witness discussion on the Portuguese citizenship issue. "I am very well aware of the Portuguese citizenship controversy in Goa," he added, pointing out, "Since the Portuguese ambassador in India Jorge Roza de Oliveira and the ambassador of India to Portugal (designate) Dr Jitendra Nath Misra will be attending the particular event, there could be a discussion on this aspect too." Goan MLA Caetano Silva has challenged in the Delhi High Court central government's decision to revoke his Indian citizenship. This, it is feared, could result in around one lakh Goans losing their Indian citizenship, as they have also registered their births in Lisbon like Silva.

The event will be held at the Kala Academy complex.

President of the Lusophone Society of Goa Dr Aurobindo Xavier told a press conference that Portugal and its former colonies like Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, and East Timor will attend the event, while there is lesser possibility of other colonies like Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe and Macau attending the international congress.

Dr Xavier said that India already has trade and commerce ties with many Lusophone countries. "The trade between India and Mozambique alone has reached US \$64 million per year, with coal and gas being the major sector of business," he added, pointing out that India-Angola carry trade in the area of coffee as well as diamonds, India-Guinea Bissau has trade in the cashew crop sector, India-Cabo Verde carry business in the oil segment, while India and Brazil had a trade of \$7 billion in 2001, in varied areas.

"However, China has surpassed India in trade with the Lusophone countries, with a business of US \$117 billion in 2010-11, as against business of India with Lusophone countries standing at only US \$15 billion in the same year. "And this has happened after Portugal handed over Macau to China in 1999," he added.

"The delegates of Indian companies and Portuguese-speaking countries have expressed their desire to find business partners in areas such as salt packaging, fishing material, banking and investment, electricity devices and servicing, technical assistance in diesel/ hydraulic oil/ generators/ climatization, refrigeration and air

conditioning, welding and brazing technology, investment and financial products, tires and their recycling, agricultural tractors and spare parts, logistics projects and solutions, assistance in import-export, IT and software, cold chains and so on," Dr Xavier stated.

The international trade and commerce congress, besides plenary session will include major and short presentations and country panel discussions where representatives of some of the Lusophone countries and India will present the economic situation of their country. In addition, a face-to-face business networking will create direct business contacts between attending delegates/ company representatives.

Furthermore, a troupe – Portugoesas Musical Group – of soprano and mezzo soprano accompanied on piano will perform during the occasion. A daylong post-congress excursion has also been planned on January 16 visiting Old Goa, National Institute of Oceanography and some of the companies at Verna industrial estate.

State head of the CII Geetika Goyal speaking on the occasion said the CCI, through this event wants to bring the Indian industry to Goa so that lot of business to business activities can be held during the two days.

"The visiting delegations from the Lusophone countries will interact with the CII to open the doors for bilateral co-operation and investments," she noted.