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A vibrant photograph of a tropical beach. In the foreground, a white hammock is strung between two palm trees. The beach is sandy with some low-lying vegetation. In the background, there are more palm trees, a small thatched-roof hut, and a clear blue ocean under a bright sky. The overall scene is idyllic and relaxing.

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NEW MEDIA

In This Issue

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Dear Readers,

Greetings. Latin America fascinates us, especially the Caribbean islands. They have fascinated countless admirers for centuries, including the legendary discoverer of continents, Christopher Columbus, who found them on his second voyage in 1493. The European colonists have fought over them, battling with each other for their control. As a result the islands have acquired a unique global culture of their own. The breath-taking, pristine beauty of the islands, draws tourists in droves. Some of the islands, like Grand Cayman offer them unmatched tax concessions. We run the cover page article on these heavenly abodes. While on the subject of tourism, Caribbean countries, with their great flair for sports, are keen on promoting Sports tourism and adventure tourism. We carry an article. Latin America has always been a boiling cauldron of political movements and electoral surprises. The victories of the Left and Left-of-Centre parties in Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Chile and Argentina open the doors for India, which can provide them with cost-effective services and products. We run an enlightening article by R. Viswanathan, Head of the Latin American Division in the Ministry of External Affairs, who argues that the rise of the Left is right for India. We also carry an article by the same author about the so-called Banana Republics of Central America, which have become havens of business growth through implementation of economic reforms. Then we have a fascinating study of the encounters that entrepreneurs face as they try to overcome cultural and language barriers while setting up business abroad. Ana Gabriela Garcia Murillo of Exim Bank of India, provides a guide to cross-cultural behaviour that is useful to businessmen. Nations have been in search of alternative energy sources, to reduce dependence on petrol. There is an article on Praj Industries Ltd, which has successfully developed a process for the manufacture of fuel ethanol as petrol additive. We have an article on ecology and India's bio-diversity and how India is expected to play a key role in preserving it. In the Spanish section of the magazine, we offer an in-depth study on Business Process Outsourcing, in which the author Prabhuu Sinha argues that BPO is more of a business strategy than a mere cost-cutting exercise. Plus we have all other regular features that you enjoy reading regularly.

Wish you happy reading.

Satya Swaroop

Managing Editor

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India, Venezuela sign pact on diplomatic training

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jesus Perez headed a high-level delegation, including two officials from the President's Secretariat that spent three days in New Delhi. In the Foreign Ministry's first visit to India in seven years, Perez met with his counterpart, Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh, Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, as well as the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), India's largest Chamber of Commerce. Perez also met with Minister of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation Ghulam Nabi Azad

A highlight of Perez's visit was Venezuela's offer to India of five oil fields, three for discovery, and two for exploration. The ONGC Videsh Ltd, the overseas arm of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), an Indian state-owned company, will send representatives to Venezuela later this month to evaluate the fields and make a final decision on the investment.

MOU on diplomatic ties

India and Venezuela have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for co-operation between their diplomatic institutes, aimed at promoting the training of foreign-service personnel of both countries.

Considering the need to establish links between diplomatic institutions of India and Venezuela through mechanisms of direct consultation and action to benefit the training of Foreign Service Officers of both countries.

The two countries have agreed to actively exchange information about their respective study programs, courses, seminars and the rest of academic activities which both of them develop.

The two countries shall commit themselves to information on public international law, diplomatic law and other subjects related to the diplomatic service and to political, economic and cultural relations.

Both countries will carry out regular consultations and will work towards a mutual agreement on courses, seminars, and other events, for which the dates and place will be appropriately timed. Likewise, they will do their best to facilitate the exchange of teachers, specialists and researchers to attend conferences related to the subjects of their competence.

The two countries will facilitate the exchange of specialized publications and magazines, which they or any other public and private entities of either country may publish. In this respect, the libraries and documentation centers of the two countries shall determine the best ways to efficiently communicate.

The two countries shall exchange information on activities of mutual interest, specially with regard to their participation in meetings of regional and world organizations gathering academics and institutes aimed at training diplomats and universities giving courses in international relations.

For the coordination, monitoring and execution of the activities laid down in the MOU, Venezuela, designates the Institute of Higher Diplomatic Studies "Pedro Gual" and the The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India, designates the Foreign Service Institute.

The MOU will remain in force for a period of three years. Thereafter, it can be extended for the same period of time unless one of the two countries informs the other of its desire to terminate the agreement by giving at least 90 days notice before its expiration date.

The MOU was signed on September 2, 2004 by **Jesus Arnaldo Perez** for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela and **Dean Santosh Kumar** for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, India.



DIPLOMACY

INDO-LAC BUSINESS



R. Viswanathan

Sweeping Political Changes in Latin America

Rise of the Left is Right for India

In the last week of October, the Left won a historic victory in Uruguay when Tabare Vazquez became the President. The two traditional political parties, which ruled alternately for 170 years, were voted out for the first time. The new coalition includes former Tupamaro guerrillas who won impressive victories despite the criticism that their ideologies were outdated. Uruguay, considered the Switzerland of Latin America with its small and relatively affluent population, has gone through economic crisis in the past three years and one-third of its population has been pushed below the poverty line. It is these people who caused the change.

What has happened in Uruguay forms part of an emerging pattern of historic shift in South America. The Leftist, Hugo Chavez, who came to power in Venezuela in 1999, won a thumping majority in state elections held in October 2004 on top of his resounding win in August's recall referendum. He has consigned to near oblivion the two parties that had held political power these past 50 years.

In November 2002, Lucio Gutierrez, a leftist military man, won the elections in Ecuador, defeating his opponent, Alvaro Noboa, richest man in the country. Gutierrez won despite the stigma attached to his unsuccessful bid to overthrow the elected government through a coup in January 2000, in the same way as Chavez did in Venezuela. The election of Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva from the Workers party in October 2002

in Brazil was the defining moment for the Latin American Left. He was almost written off after having lost the previous three elections. Vested interests both inside and outside Brazil carried out a vicious campaign before the elections predicting doom and scaring voters and foreign investors. Lula disproved all these predictions and proved that it is possible to achieve a balance between the inclusive development agenda for the poor in the streets of Rio and the fiscal and monetary discipline demanded by the Wall Street. The example of Brazil has boosted the confidence of the Left in South America, neutralised the Left-baiters and laid the foundation for the new Left. The new Finance Minister of Uruguay announced that he plans "to follow the example of Lula" as part of his Government's assurance to investors.

Chile and Argentina also have left-of-centre Governments. The centre-right Government of De la Rúa in Argentina had a premature exit in December 2001, unable to continue amidst popular uprisings caused by the socioeconomic crisis. His Government lasted only two years. The Leftist leaders have come to power riding the wave of anti-neoliberalism. In the 1980s and 1990s, South American countries opened up their economies, undertook privatisation and followed the line advised by the "Washington consensus." Argentina went to the extreme of privatising its petroleum company. But these measures have not helped solve the socio-economic



problems. On the contrary, the problems were aggravated. The voters were disenchanted with neoliberalism and wanted to give a chance to the Left. They rejected those traditional political elites who stood for "business as usual."

The most telling example is Venezuela, which has the potential to be one of the richest countries in Latin America. It exports three million barrels of oil a day and is called the Saudi Arabia of the continent. If the earnings were simply distributed, each of its 24 million people would get over \$10,000 a year. Besides petroleum, Venezuela has huge reserves of minerals and large and inexpensive hydroelectric power capacity. Despite these riches, 50 per cent of the population is below the poverty line. Mr. Chavez is a product of this incredible situation.

The rise to power of the Left has reconfigured power equations in the Americas. The Leftist Governments attach importance to collective strength through formation and strengthening of regional groups such as Mercosur and the Andean Community. They signed a Free Trade Agreement in October 2004 between the two groupings, bringing about a South American Free Trade Area. These countries also decided last month to create a South American Community of Nations, which plans to include Chile, Guyana and Suriname later. These Governments try to reduce the dependence on North America and diversify their trade partners. The trendsetter for this is Chile, which does more trade with Asia than with NAFTA or Europe.

The emergence of the Left has coincided with the aggressive penetration of South American markets by China, which has become a major buyer of their commodities and an important supplier of goods. Chinese exports to Latin America in 2003 were \$17 billion, 10 times the exports of India. China is the second largest trading partner of Chile.

The Leftist wave in South America has opened a



VIEW-POINT

window of opportunity for Indian business. These Governments want to reduce the cost of healthcare and provide affordable medicines to the poor by importing pharmaceuticals from India. They are impressed by the IT success of India and want to follow our example in human resource development to prepare their societies for the emerging knowledge era. Importers look to countries such as China and India for less expensive products for lower middle-class consumers. Mercosur and Chile are keen on concluding a PTA with India. Indian business should seize this opportunity and intensify its export promotion to South America.

(R. Viswanathan, Head, of the Latin America Division in the Ministry of External Affairs. The writer is. The views expressed here are personal.)



A Guide To Cross-Cultural Behaviour

How to Win Friends & Influence Businessmen



If doing business in one's own country is tough enough, then imagine pursuing it abroad. It'll be tougher, especially, where the barriers of language, culture, manners and mores need to be surmounted before one could strike a cord of communication with the people. **Ana Gabriela Garcia Murillo, AIESEC, EXIM BANK of India**, in the following well-researched and fascinating article explains what the cross-cultural barriers are and how one has to overcome while doing business abroad in order to succeed.

How plenty of times there are miscommunication issues while doing business within the domestic or national markets? Therefore, imagine the situation in case of international transactions, where cultural gaps and human behaviour affect the fate of negotiations.

But what happens when we are able to understand and take advantage of those cross-cultural differences? Nowadays, global market requires business managers who have developed cross-cultural competence in order to succeed in international negotiations. It is naïve to venture into international negotiations thinking that people are pretty much the same everywhere.

Cross-cultural business behaviour has been studied for more than 40 years by personalities such as Emeritus Professor Geert Hofstede from Maastricht University and Mr. Richard Lewis from Richard Lewis Communications. The word cross-cultural behaviour comes from a compound meaning: a) comparing or dealing with two or more different cultures¹ b) a conspicuous difference or imbalance; disparity; problematic situation resulting from such as disparity.²

There is a human instinct where we believe all people to be the same- which is not true. Therefore, if we go to other countries and make decisions based on how we operate in our own home country, the chances of success reduces.

"Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy.

*Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster."*³

CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

There are two basic rules we shouldn't forget while doing international negotiations:

- In international business the seller is expected to adapt according to the buyer.
- In international business the visitor is expected to observe local customs.

Cross-cultural differences are divided in four major branches: Business cultures, nonverbal business behaviour, formal vs informal business cultures & orientation to time and scheduling.

BUSINESS CULTURES: RF VS DF

Business cultures are broadly categorized under the relationship focus (RF) and the deal focus (DF). A third group of culture falls in between RF and DF, which is called moderately deal-focused.

The kind of culture affects the way we conduct business from the beginning to the end of any commercial relationship.

Table 1

BUSINESS CULTURE	REGION
Deal - focused	Nordic and Germanic Europe, Great Britain, North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
Moderately deal - focused	Latin speaking Europe, Eastern Europe, The Mediterranean Region, Hong Kong, Singapore
Relationship focused	The Arab World Most of Africa, Latin America, Most of Asia

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

As seen in the previous chart, Relationship-focused cultures make up the vast majority of the world's

1) The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

2) The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

3) Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University.

markets. In contrast, the deal-focused approach is common primary in the developed countries.

RF people prefer to deal with persons or groups well known to them - people who can be trusted. Therefore, doing business with strangers, especially strangers who also happen to be foreigners seem to be not very common. It is precisely for this reason that it is worthwhile to spend more time upfront to get to understand your partner better, which most commonly known as a “warmer” culture. Because of this key cultural value, relationship-oriented firms typically want to know their prospective business partners very well before talking business with them through an indirect approach. (A third-party introduction)

Due to this form of business negotiations and because of the long-term objective business relationships usually last much longer than in DF cultures.

Communication and interpretation is the clue through negotiation, which leads us to two basic concepts: low and highcontext. For DF cultures, lowcontext is more commonly used (where meaning is contained in the words themselves) where listener is able to understand what they are saying at a business meeting without following the context. On the other hand, high- context refers to RF negotiators which tend to be circumspect in the use of language in order to avoid conflict and confrontation. The polite communication of Asians, Arabs, Africans and Latins helps maintain harmony. The meaning of what they are saying is implicit. That is, the meaning is found more in the context surrounding the words rather than in the words themselves.

ORIENTATION TO TIME: RIGID TIME VS FLUID

People around the world have different opinion towards scheduling and timing. In rigid-time societies punctuality is a critical factor, schedules are set in concrete, agendas are fixed, business meetings are rarely interrupted and deadlines can barely be removed (monochronic cultures).⁴ Where being late for 5 minutes can determine whether being or not the suppliers or loosing a customer because polychronic culture find rude the way monochronic business culture overreact.

In direct contrast polychronic cultures (PC) are those where people place less emphasis on strict

punctuality and are not particularly obsessed with deadlines. Polychronic cultures value loose scheduling as well as business meetings where many several meetings-within-meetings may be taking place simultaneously. (multi-task)

Table 2

BUSINESS CULTURE	REGION
Monochronic business culture	Nordic and Germanic Europe, North America, Japan
Moderately - Monochronic business culture	Australia/New Zealand, Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea
Polychronic business culture	Arab World, Africa, Latin America, South and Southeast Asia

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

FORMAL VS INFORMAL BUSINESS CULTURES

Many promising international negotiations have fallen through when informal culture negotiators unconsciously offend their counterparts from formal cultures. Formal cultures tend to be organized in steep hierarchies, they reflect major differences in status and power. In contrast, informal cultures value more egalitarian organizations with smaller differences in status and power.

Why does this matter when we are doing business abroad? Because contrasting values sometimes cause conflict at the conference table. Being aware of the different business behaviours such offenses can be avoided. For example, knowing the formal ways of addressing people, showing respect to persons of high status, higher age, being aware of local sensitivities, habits and traditions.

Table 3

BUSINESS CULTURE	REGION
Very informal	Australia, USA
Moderately informal	Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway
Formal cultures	Most of Europe, Mediterranean Region, Arab World, Latin America, Most of Asia

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

NONVERBAL BUSINESS BEHAVIOUR: EXPRESSIVE VS RESERVED

Non verbal business behaviour refers on how different cultures act while communicating. Some trend to act in a more expressive way involving vocal volume, inflection (known as paraverbal negotiation) and even

4) Term invented by Edward T. Hall

the eye contact fact as well as physical distance between negotiators, due it can make the environment uncomfortable for someone with a reserved culture. For example an approximate range of same-gender space-sizes across cultures in a reserved culture is 16 to 24 inches, by the other hand expressive cultures are close-distance culture with a 8 to 14 inches average. The more expressive your culture, the smaller your space tends to be.

Table 4

BUSINESS CULTURE	REGION
Very expressive cultures	The Mediterranean Region, Latin speaking Europe, Latin America
Moderately expressive cultures	USA and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Eastern Europe, South Asia
Reserved cultures	East and Southeast Asia, Nordic and Germanic Europe

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

The susceptibility of nonverbal language gestures to misinterpretation underlines a major challenge for people trying to do business across cultures: Behaviour which is polite and quite proper in our culture may be rude and highly offensive for another.

INDIA AND LATIN-AMERICA: SIMILAR BUSINESS CULTURES

The first impression of our customer or supplier can determine the signing or not of a contract for opening of a new business, joint venture or expanding our products towards new markets. As seen before the difference of cultural gap between India and Latin America while doing business is less than against other parts of the world such as U.S.A. or Europe. These two cultures have the same time orientation and time schedule (polychronic), while most of European countries use middle monochronic culture. Monochronic culture is performed in U.S.A. Way of communication through nonverbal gestures differs since Latin-American region uses an expressive behaviour while India belongs to the moderately expressive cultures. However, the way to behave towards different hierarchies, showing respect for status is easier to handle due the fact that both cultures belong to the formal business culture. Understanding the context and the business itself, being comfortable with the environment are key factors to achieve good results during negotiations avoiding in advance focus misunderstandings. Not representing a cross-cultural issue since both business behaviours are relationship focus. Latin- Americans and India are ranked high on the collectivism side; giving more value on the group (family, company, etc.)

Both India and Latin-America have to their credit a long history, a rich culture and a society reflecting common values and yet the geography seems to have kept them apart.

Table 5: Cultural dimensions.

Country	Power Distance ⁵	Individualism ⁶	Uncertainty Avoidance ⁷	Long term orientation ⁸
Europe	41	66	66	33
LAC	69	22	86	65
India	77	48	40	61
U.S.A. & Canada	39	80	48	23

Source: Study made by Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University.

*Scale to 100

decode the significance of ordinary things, as long as you take the signs of your culture at face value, you will continue to be mastered by them and by those who have constructed them.”⁹

These similarities and differences are explained as a result of history, values and priorities each culture assigns as well as other factors such as social frame, economic development, etc. It doesn't say a culture is wrong or right or better than other just different.

“As long as you are unable to

5) Power Distance Index (PDI) Se enfoca en el grado de igualdad entre las personas de una sociedad. Un alto PDI indica la desigualdad entre poder y bienestar permitida por una sociedad entre las diferentes jerarquías. Estas sociedades tienden a seguir un sistema de castas que no permiten gran movilidad entre los ciudadanos.

6) Individualism (IDV) Grado en que la sociedad enfatiza el individualismo o colectivismo en las relaciones interpersonales. Un alto grado de individualismo indica la posición que el individuo adquiere frente a la sociedad, dichos individuos tienden a formar un mayor número de relaciones fallidas.

7) Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) Nivel de tolerancia frente a la incertidumbre en una sociedad así como a las situaciones no estructuradas. Un elevado grado de UAI indica la baja tolerancia creando una sociedad con mayor número de leyes, reglas, regulaciones, y controles buscando reducir dicha incertidumbre.

8) Long-Term Orientation (LTO) Enfoque a largo plazo, valor de las tradiciones. Sociedades con alto grado de LTO son sociedades con prioridad en los valores y compromiso con sus tradiciones. Sin embargo, la realización de negocios toma más tiempo para ser desarrollados.

9) Jack Solomon states in his book, Signs of our Time,

Ethanol: Praj Sows it Right with Sweet Sorghum



Fuel ethanol as a petrol additive for reduction of transport fuel emissions is gaining increasing importance. To plunge into an area of business, which is nascent and not tried and tested by any player needs guts, confidence and a will to succeed against all odds. Pune-based **Praj Industries Limited' (Praj)** was the first company to anticipate and initiate a programme for alternate energy crops. Sweet Sorghum provided the answer. Here is a success story.

Praj has achieved success with a high yielding variety of seeds as well as a technological breakthrough for production of ethanol from Sweet Sorghum following extensive R & D at laboratory and industrial levels. Praj announced the launch of the technology at a seminar hosted in Chennai recently.

Praj has been conducting research into viable alternate feedstock for ethanol production at its R & D and Engineering Center in Pune.

Sweet Sorghum, Sorgo or Sweet Jowar is a crop whose stem contains sugar, much like sugarcane. However, it requires much less water to cultivate and process for ethanol production. Sweet Sorghum is also a short season crop and can be cultivated twice a year. Every part of Sweet Sorghum can be reused, including the waste as animal feed and bagasse as boiler feed.

“Innovation has been the cornerstone of Praj. Our R & D facilities called Matrix The Innovation Center - was expanded in 2002 to focus on more productive processes and energy crops for fuel ethanol

production,” said Praj Chairman Pramod Chaudhari.

Praj technology works right from identification of high yielding seed varieties. After cultivating sweet sorghum based on various seeds in different regions of India, Praj has successfully identified appropriate varieties of seeds and cultivation practices which will lead to maximum ethanol yields in different environments. Praj will shortly commence coordination of regular supply of these seed varieties to ensure higher yields.



"The findings we share with our customers today are a result of this body of work. We are very proud that the Government of Tamil Nadu is encouraging the Sweet Sorghum to Ethanol production programme," Chaudhari said.

"Fuel Ethanol has been accepted globally as one of the ways of reducing environmental pollution. We are glad to be at the forefront of this movement. Today, Praj has customers all over the world. We will continue to take the company forward through innovation and knowledge that lead to Future Perfect technologies." He added.

"We have achieved sweet sorghum (stalk) yields as high as 20 tonnes per acre in just three and a half months, having a sugar content in excess of 10.5 per cent," said Chaudhari.

Not only this, Matrix at Praj has also introduced innovative processing technology for which a patent has been filed by the Company. The special 'Thermopermeation Process' developed by Praj ensures higher extraction of sugars from stock leading up to a 3-4 per cent increase in fermentable sugar extraction efficiency. This means an additional ethanol production of 4-5 liters per tonne. This is indeed an achievement which will make sweet sorghum a very viable alternate feedstock for ethanol production.

Sweet Sorghum is beneficial not just for sugar millers who can extend their production cycle beyond the crushing season where crushing season is 180 days or when sugarcane availability is lower, it also means that distilleries which are not attached to sugar mills can now use sweet sorghum for production of alcohol. Sweet Sorghum-based distilleries generate far less wastewater than a molasses-based distilleries.

Chaudhari also spoke of Praj technology for grain based alcohol plants. With high prices of molasses and availability becoming a problem for consistent production of alcohol, grain alcohol is found to be a good alternative in many states. There are presently eight-grain based distilleries in India of which Praj has supplied materials to six.

Praj has also developed the dual route (switching between molasses and grain) distillery model, the first of its kind. This model helps distilleries overcome the shortage of feedstock thereby operating round-the-year without a hitch. One of the distilleries which have benefited from this technology is the Gwalior Distillery in Central India. Praj's grain distillery technology is accepted widely. Recently, Praj has contracted an order to design and supply a grain based distillery for a company in Australia. The project is underway.

Praj is the only company worldwide, which offers a range of technologies for distilleries, based on a variety of feedstock.



Venezuela Offers OVL A Share In 5 Oilfields

Venezuela has offered Oil Videsh Limited (OVL) a share in five oil fields for exploration and production. This is the first time it has offered oil concessions to a foreign company, outside the international tendering procedure.

OVL, a subsidiary of ONGC, is likely to sign an agreement with Venezuelan state oil firm PDVSA for joint investment in oil and gas projects, sources said. "They have been offered two exploration blocks and three development blocks. An OVL team will visit Venezuela in near future to evaluate the data before deciding on investments," a source added.



BREAKTHROUGH

Venezuela has emerged as India's newest oil supplier. Between the Athabasca sands and Venezuelan Orinoco basin, there is more recoverable oil (with current technology) than all of the Middle East.

The petroleum sector has emerged as a focus area of co-operation between India and Venezuela in recent years. A joint working group was set up in 1999 which identified a number of areas for collaboration, sources said.

The largest single Indian investment in Latin America, the \$50 million project is the result of an MoU signed between OVL and PDVSA last December in Caracas.

India, which imports 70 percent of its crude oil requirement, is expected to seek investment opportunities in foreign oil and gas projects to enhance oil security in the energy-deficient country, according to officials.



INDO-LAC BUSINESS

Transformation of Central America From Banana Republics to Business Havens

“Banana Republics!”. This was the old image of Central America. But the region has undergone fundamental and irreversible transformation in recent years, becoming politically stable with vibrant economies and confident people. Indian businessmen need to change their mindset and look at the opportunities for exports and business being offered by the new Central America.

The importance of this region was highlighted by Robert Zoellick, the US Trade Representative, while justifying before the US congress, the need for signing a Free Trade Area Agreement. He said “exports of USA to Central America are more than the combined total exports of USA to India, Indonesia and Russia put together.”

Individual countries may appear small but they have become collectively a sizeable market and a strong entity through the formation of a regional group known as SICA (Central American Integration System). This consists of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador Guatemala, Panama and Belize. Dominican Republic is an associate member of SICA.

The eight SICA countries (including Associate Member Dominican Republic) have a combined GDP of 94 billion Dollars, a population of 44 million and total imports of 34 billion Dollars. The annual remittances from non-resident Central Americans is over 5 billion Dollars.

Country	Population (million)	GDP (billion \$)	Imports in 2003 (billion \$)	India's Exports 2002 -03 (million \$)
Costa Rica	3.9	16.9	7.4	11
El Salvador	6.5	14.3	4.4	3.7
Guatemala	12	23.3	6.7	18
Honduras	6.8	6.6	2.9	21.6
Nicaragua	5.3	4.0	1.8	5.2
Belize	0.2	0.5	0.2	2
Panama	2.9	12.3	3.1	58.2
Dominican Republic	8.9	16.0	7.9	16
Total	43.5	93.9	34.4	135.7

Five of the SICA countries (except Belize and Panama) have established Central American Common Market (CACM) which has Common External Tariff ranging

from 1 to 15 per cent.

Under the Panama-Puebla Plan, Central American countries are being physically integrated (roads, railways, power transmission etc) connecting Mexico in the north up to Colombia in the south. A Central American Bank for integration has been established to finance infrastructure projects. The SICA countries are seeking integration by harmonizing macroeconomic and other policies.

The Common Market, the growing integration and the fact that they speak one language i.e. Spanish means that our companies can formulate a common strategy for the region. Another plus factor is that Panama and El Salvador have dollarised their economies.

In 2003, India's exports to the eight SICA countries were \$136 million. There is scope to increase this to \$300 million in the next three years and to \$600 million in the next five years, if our exporters target his market seriously and systematically.

This is the right time for Indian businessmen to target this region. The business and political leaders of this region have started looking at India more seriously for affordable imports, appropriate technologies and inspiration as a role model for development in agriculture, rural development, small scale industries and information technology.

The main exports from India are pharmaceuticals, chemicals, two- wheelers, auto-parts, textiles, engineering products and consumer items. Since manufacturing industries of this region are very limited because of the small volume of individual markets, there is scope to export a large variety of finished products. The FTA of SICA countries with USA and Canada provides opportunities for investment and production for exports to North America. Exports to USA by SICA countries in 2003 were \$17 billion.

Panama provides the natural hub for entry to the region with its shipping and air connectivity, banking and logistical facilities and the largest Free Trade Zone in the western hemisphere.

Indian companies could consider establishing warehouse facilities in Panama for distribution to markets in the region. Two other countries namely

Guatemala and Dominican Republic which are the largest markets with the largest imports merit special attention from Indian exporters. Many MNCs use Guatemala as a distribution point for northern central America. Dominican Republic aspires to become a bridge between Caribbean and the Central American regions.

The Indian business organizations, Export Promotion Councils and exporters could make use of the support being given by the Ministry of Commerce under the 'Focus-LAC' programme, to explore this new market.

India has started engaging this region in recent years. A Framework Agreement for cooperation with SICA was signed in February 2004. Exchange of visits and

interaction with individual Central American countries have increased. India has been giving every year seventy ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) scholarships for training to candidates of these countries. EXIM Bank of India has extended a Line of Credit to the Central American Bank for integration. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian embassies would be happy to facilitate and promote the entry of Indian companies into this new region of opportunities.

Author R. Viswanathan, is head of the Latin America Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. Views expressed are personal.



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India Plays A Key Role In Bio-diversity Conservation

India holds a unique distinction in the world in so far as it accounts for 7-8 per cent of the earth's total biodiversity. India is also one of the 18 mega diverse countries, which together possess 60-70 per cent of the world's biodiversity. Of these 18 countries, Brazil, China, India, Zaire, Indonesia, Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Kenya, Peru, Congo and the Madagascar, which are rich in biological diversity and associated traditional knowledge, have formed a group known as Like Minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC). India took over the chairmanship of LMMC in February 2004.

"Biological diversity" means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. Biodiversity is the source of the essential goods and ecological services that constitute the source of life for all and it has direct consumptive value in food, agriculture, medicine, and in industry.

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) took the landmark step by reaffirming the sovereign rights of states over their biological resources. The CBD is an international legal instrument for promoting conservation and sustainable use of Biological Diversity taking into account "the need to share cost and benefit between developed and developing countries and the ways and means to support innovation by local people".

The CBD, which came into force on 29th December 2003, thus aims at conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from utilization of biological resources. It has been ratified so far by 188 countries including India.

Among the signatories to the CBD, India is one of the first few countries to have enacted an appropriate comprehensive legislation to achieve the objectives of

the convention.

For the conservation of its biodiversity, the important steps taken by India include enactment of the Biological Diversity Act 2002, formation of the Biological Diversity rules, 2004, and notification of main operational sections of the Act. The Biological Diversity Act of 2002 provides necessary statutory and administrative mechanism at the national level to realize the above objective. The main intent of the legislation is to protect India's rich biodiversity and associated knowledge against their use by foreign individuals and organization without sharing the benefits arising out of such use, and to check bio-piracy.

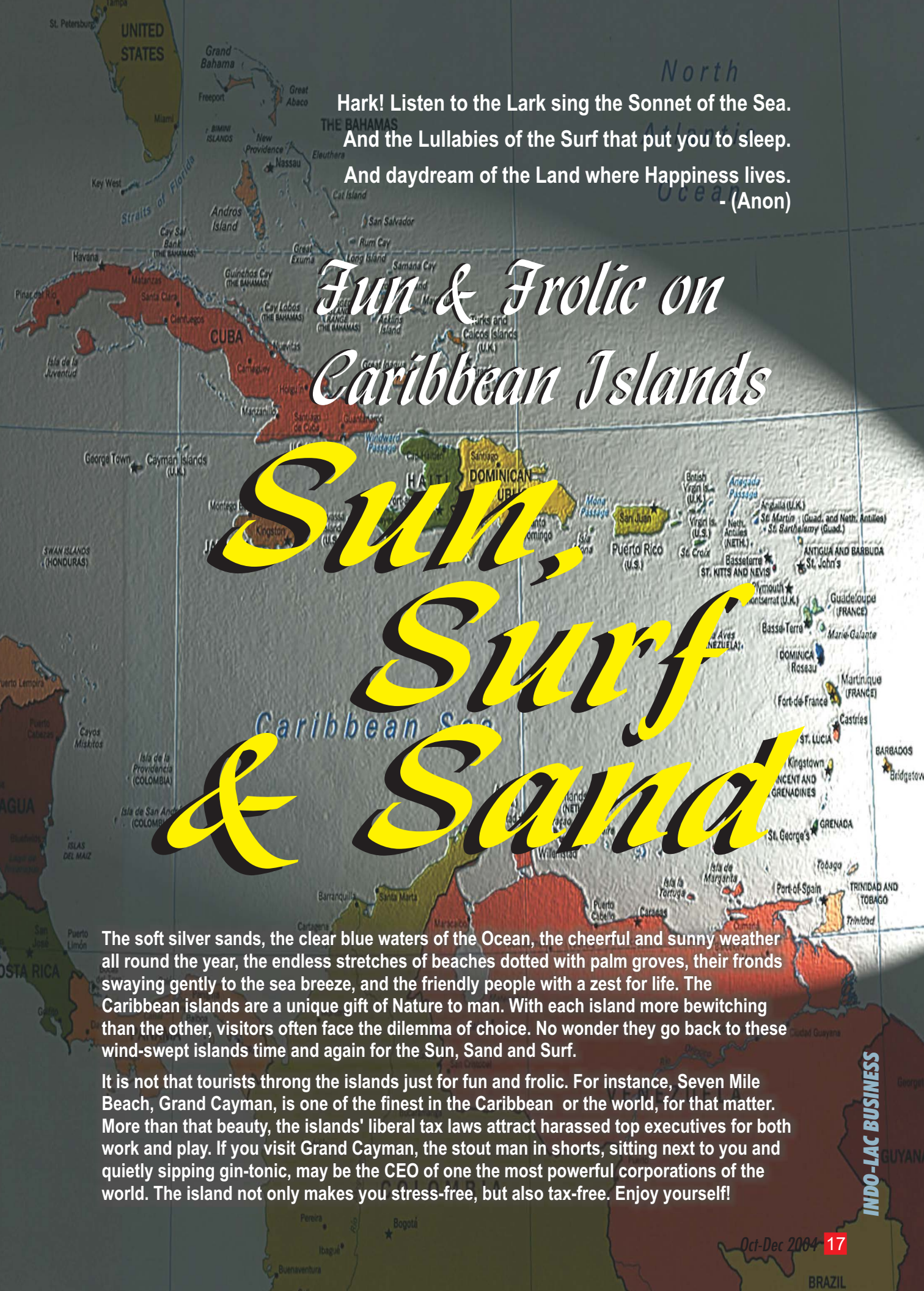
The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), established at Chennai, is the key mechanism at the national level for implementing the provisions of the Biodiversity Act, 2002. There is provision for a Chairperson, 10, ex-officio Central Government members and 5 non-official specialists and experts. The Chairperson is the Chief Executive of the NBA.

Main functions of the Authority are to lay down procedures and guidelines to govern the activities such as granting permission to foreign companies for obtaining any biological resource and for transferring the results of any research. It advises the government on specific areas such as notifications of threatened species, designation of institutions as repositories for different categories of biological resources and exemption of certain biological resources, normally traded as commodities. It also encourages setting up State Biodiversity Boards.

The Biological Diversity Act 2002 provides for constitution of State Biodiversity Boards. Their main functions are to regulate requests for utilization of biological resources by Indian nationals, to assist the State Government in notification of areas of biodiversity importance as biodiversity heritage sites and in framing of rules for their management and conservations.

The Act also provides for the constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) by local bodies such as Panchayats and Municipalities. Besides a Chairperson, it would have not more than six persons nominated by the local body. Their main role is to prepare People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) in consultation with the local people, which will include comprehensive information on availability of local biological resources and traditional knowledge associated with them.



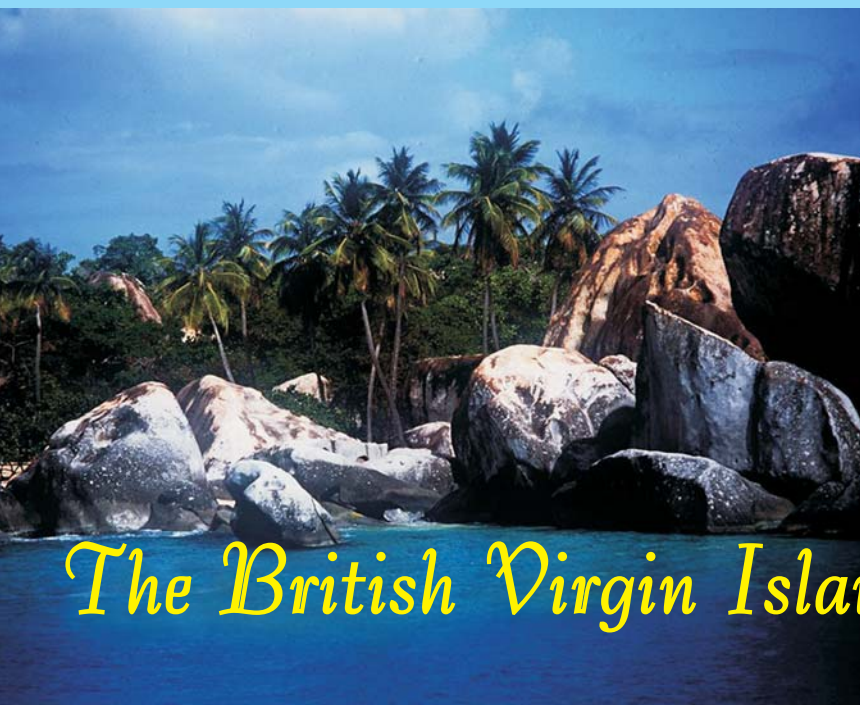


Hark! Listen to the Lark sing the Sonnet of the Sea.
And the Lullabies of the Surf that put you to sleep.
And daydream of the Land where Happiness lives.
- (Anon)

Fun & Frolic on Caribbean Islands Sun, Surf & Sand

The soft silver sands, the clear blue waters of the Ocean, the cheerful and sunny weather all round the year, the endless stretches of beaches dotted with palm groves, their fronds swaying gently to the sea breeze, and the friendly people with a zest for life. The Caribbean islands are a unique gift of Nature to man. With each island more bewitching than the other, visitors often face the dilemma of choice. No wonder they go back to these wind-swept islands time and again for the Sun, Sand and Surf.

It is not that tourists throng the islands just for fun and frolic. For instance, Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, is one of the finest in the Caribbean or the world, for that matter. More than that beauty, the islands' liberal tax laws attract harassed top executives for both work and play. If you visit Grand Cayman, the stout man in shorts, sitting next to you and quietly sipping gin-tonic, may be the CEO of one the most powerful corporations of the world. The island not only makes you stress-free, but also tax-free. Enjoy yourself!



The British Virgin Islands

Three hundred years ago, the 50-plus islands of the British Virgin Islands swarmed with pirates, who took refuge in the protected waters and kept guard from secluded mountain look-outs. Some say they left buried treasure that is still there.

The BVI has only 17,000 inhabitants, and more than 30 of the islets are unoccupied. Most of the population of Tortola live in and around the capital, Road Town. The other principal islands are Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost van Dyke. They can be reached by light aircraft, although the islands are also well served by ferries.

Throughout the islands, beaches are splendid and the beach bars exceptional. Gourmet cuisine can be found, along with background music from steel pans and guitars. But don't expect early-hours entertainment except at summer festival time, when parades and parties rule Tortola.



Dominica Nature's Gift

This 290 square mile island is a must for eco-tourists, nature-lovers, botanists, divers and visitors seeking holiday adventure. Dominica is one of the few Caribbean islands that has truly changed very little since Columbus visited and named it 500 years ago.

Known as the Nature Island of the Caribbean, Dominica has a unique micro-climate lush rainforests, volcanic peaks, 365 rivers, cloud-covered hills, sulphur springs, pools of bubbling therapeutic mud, hot mineral streams. The exotic animals and plants that have become extinct on nearby islands thrive here. Nature is spectacularly and uncontrollably rampant.

Rich in ferns, wild orchids and flowering trees, the mountain forests and hills house bats, iguanas, stick insects, blacksmith beetles so big they can be heard moving about on the forest floor. There are five species of snakes none of them poisonous and more than 160 bird species, including two endemic but endangered parrots.

Some of the island's most dramatic sights can be seen in the 69sq km Morne Trois Pitons National Park, a designated World Natural Heritage Site. Here you'll see mist-veiled peaks looming over the rainforest, thundering waterfalls and the Boiling Lake, where sulphurous springs sizzle and steam at up to 197°F (92°C).

Sea life off the island is equally awe-inspiring. There are excellent dive sites with peaks, sheer walls, valleys and hot springs on the seabed. In the winter breeding season, sperm whales and their calves can be seen in the deep off-shore waters.

Another vital aspect of Dominica is that it is now the home of 3,000 surviving descendants of the Caribs, the pre-Columbian people who gave the Caribbean its name. Although the Carib language has perished, they have their own territory, where their baskets and wood-carvings are sold to visitors and some of their traditions are maintained.



Grand Cayman

Sunset on Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman, is one of the finest in the Caribbean or the world. That beauty and the islands' liberal tax laws attract harassed executives for both work and play.

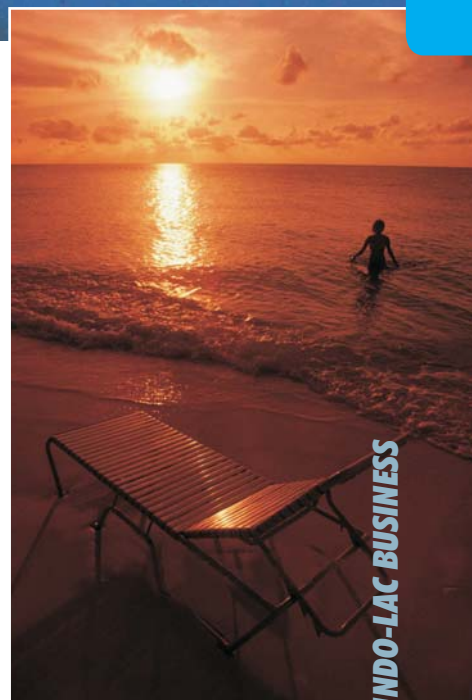
The tax-free status of the Cayman Islands, the British Crown Colony of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, is said to have been granted by King George III of England in gratitude to the islanders after they saved the crews of 10 merchant ships wrecked off the coast in 1788.

These islands that were home to pirates in the 17th century are now virtually crime-free, and a wonderful place to vacation or holiday, with scores of restaurants, fine hotels and excellent shopping. There is still Pirate Week to celebrate the swashbuckling past, but the island's financial affairs are now conducted by more than 500 banks and 30,000 companies registered there.

There is still treasure underwater, but the islands also offer spectacular diving. Off Little Cayman you can dive to explore the coral and sponges on Bloody Bay Wall, where the sea beds drop almost a sheer 20,000ft (600 m) and visibility is up to 150ft (46 m).

On Grand Cayman, you can enjoy the quaint charm of George Town, the capital, which has a distinct mixture of British and West Indian flavour.

When Columbus landed there on his last voyage in 1503 he named the islands 'Las Tortugas' after the vast numbers of turtles he found. Sadly they are now found rarely in the wild, but you can see them at the Turtle Farm on Grand Cayman. The islands now take their name from the Amerindian word for crocodiles. These fierce animals are no longer there, but you can still have a taste of Hell, and send a postcard from there - a small village named after its strange coral formations.



Antigua & Barbuda

The two Leeward islands of Antigua and Barbuda form a single nation state but offer attractive contrasts. Antigua is the largest of the Leewards, with a population of 67,000 living on its 279 sq km. Just 45 km to the north, Barbuda (160 sq km) has 1,500 people living in the island's only town, Codrington, which is really a village. Together, the islands offer everything a holiday-maker could want. Most of the beaches never get crowded, and all are protected by reefs.

Fought over by the French and the Spanish, Antigua was eventually won by the British. It became one of the Caribbean's largest sugar cane producers and a major transport hub.

They left a lot of history for today's visitors, many of whom arrive

in Antigua on cruise ships sailing into the capital, St. John's. The island is littered with sail-less stone windmills and 18th century forts.

Some are romantic ruins, some have been preserved. At English Harbour on the island's south coast, Nelson's Dockyard named after the great admiral, who was stationed there for three years has been restored as a yachting center and a lively focus of visitor activity.

Barbuda, too, has huge, magnificent white (and pink) sand beaches and thriving marine life. Divers can see forests of coral or visit some of the 200 wrecks in the waters around this idyllic isle, while nature lovers can take a boat out into the mangroves to see thousands of frigate birds. ♦♦♦

Aruba

- Island National Park



Welcome to the Dutch island of Aruba, just 24 km from Venezuela. Comfortably warm with a year-round temperature staying steady at 28°C as the trade winds bring cool breezes and very little rain.

Arubans are gracious hosts, proud of their mixed cultural heritage Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and South American Indian. Aruba has long, powder-white beaches Palm Beach and Eagle Beach, 30 yards deep and miles long are considered two of the finest in the Caribbean. For nightlife, there's no shortage of cabarets, cocktail bars and restaurants serving local and world dishes. For gamblers, there are 11 casinos, some of them open day and night.

The island, 32 km long and by 10 km wide, is a magnet for those in search of natural wonders. The waters of Aruba are always warm, usually 25-26C, clear and swarming with life. You'll see manta rays, barracuda and the rare green moray.

There are 42 major dive sites around Aruba, including Second World War wrecks at depths of 8-122m. There are stunningly beautiful coral formations please look, but don't touch. If you're less adventurous, see the underwater sights by submarine or glass-bottomed boat. There are watersports for every taste; the island's trade wind has made it one of the world's surfing and windsurfing centres.

More than 20 per cent of the island is a national park, with nature trails showcasing Aruba's great variety of plants and animals exotic cacti, aloe, tropical flowers, iguanas and more than 200 species of birds.

On Aruba's world-class, 18-hole golf course, designed by Robert Trent Jones II to take full advantage of its rugged natural surroundings, you'll see wild burros grazing by the fifth hole and burrowing owls perched on top of the small coral caves near the sixth.



The Bahamas - the Best

The 700 beautiful islands and 2,000 chunks of coral and limestone outcrop that form The Bahamas are playgrounds for sailors, anglers, divers, nature lovers, eco-tourists and those vacationers in search of the more glitzy pleasures.

The islands are visited by more than three million people each year. You will find great enthusiasm for American culture, combined with a strong flavour of Britain, swinging to a distinctly Caribbean beat.

Just 30 of the islands are populated and, together, they are

among the most inations for cruise passengers every year.

Just 30 of the islands are populated and, together, they are among the most inations for cruise passengers every year. favored destination ship New Providence has almost 60 per cent of the population and in the capital, Nassau, you can go on a horse-drawn carriage tour of a vibrant city filled with history's reminders in its Victorian buildings and fortresses - and a library that used to be a prison.

Cross a bridge and you are in Paradise Island, a modern dream resort tailor-made for fun-seekers,

featuring a 4,650 sq m casino, a marina for large yachts, the world's biggest aquarium, and palatial hotels -- or you might prefer the casinos of Cable Beach. And that's just the beginning.

Island-hop to Grand Bahama and try your luck at the slot machines or the gaming tables in Freeport, second largest city in The Bahamas, and in Lucaya. Then spend your winnings at Port Lucaya or in the International Bazaar during the day.

Beyond these best-known vacation destinations are many serene island gems, known as the Out Islands. You can sail into 30 marinas on the Abacos Islands; dive in the 1,828 m Tongue of the Ocean trench off the Berry Islands and Andros; fish for the biggest and best marlin and tuna in Hemingway's haunts off Bimini; admire the cliffs on Cat Island; surf in the giant waves of Eleuthera and discover picturesque Harbour Island; explore The Exumas by sail or with snorkel; swim in the clear waters of Long Island, and catch the spectacular view from Dixon Hill lighthouse on San Salvador. And these are just the beginning.

You will need many more trips just to scratch the surface of the possible activities and sights in The Bahamas.



The Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the Caribbean, largely because it has the largest all-inclusive resort industry in the world.

This form of vacation, based on set rates for airfare, hotel, food and drinks and providing carefree vacationing on idyllic beaches, within the protection of a tourist compound, now brings about two million visitors to the Dominican Republic a year.

For the more adventurous, the Dominican Republic has just as much to offer. It has a great variety of terrain rain forests, lowlands, coastal swamps, desert and the highest mountains in the Caribbean, rising to more than 10,000ft (3,000m). Luckily for visitors, there is little variation in temperature between summer and winter. In July, the warmest month, the average temperature is about 82°F (28°C) and it falls to 73°F (23°C) in January.

The warmth of the water attracts many birds and marine animals and has made Bahia de Samaná, located in one of the most beautiful parts of the island, world-famous as a breeding ground. The most spectacular of these regular visitors are 3,000 humpback whales, who come to mate, give birth and play with their young not far offshore.

The Dominican Republic is about the size of Scotland, but contains no less than seven international airports. It shares Hispaniola, the second largest island in the Caribbean, with its smaller neighbour, Haiti. Its capital, Santo Domingo, is the oldest city in the Americas, a cosmopolitan city with much of historic interest and lively nights.

Belize

- The Maya Land

Belize is very old it was once a part of the Maya kingdom before being colonized by the Spanish and the British. Today, it offers visitors the very best combination of the Central American and Caribbean worlds.

On the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula, it's a holiday destination whose tropical treasures have yet to be discovered by mass tourism. Whether you're searching for the sun, nature, adventure or history or all four you'll find them in Belize.

Nature lovers can explore the wonders of the land and the sea. One of the country's most stunning features is an un-named barrier reef, stretching virtually uninterrupted for 19-40 km offshore along

the coast.

The world's second-longest reef, its breakwater effect provides superb diving, ensures calm, clear waters for sailors and snorkelers and protects the country's vast, unspoiled beaches for swimmers and sun worshippers.

At Lighthouse Reef, there's the Blue Hole, a perfect circle of blue water nearly 300m in diameter and 122 m deep, surrounded by an atoll and containing a cavern with the largest underwater dripstones stone formations created by dripping water ever discovered.

Ambergris Cay, the largest of Belize's many offshore resort islands, is 40 km long and 2 km wide. It has 40 diving sites, including wrecks and coral. In Shark-Ray Alley, you'll see sharks and stingrays in less than eight feet of water.

There's no better place to go fishing than Belize. Fishing permits must be bought.

Inland, adventurers and nature lovers can explore swamps, lagoons, rainforests and mountains, watching out for iguanas, crocodiles, jaguars, turtles and monkeys and spotting some 540 species of birds.

In a land as old as Belize, you can't escape history. Maya Indians settled in what is now Belize 3,000 years ago. The relics of their civilization are being found, protected and opened to visitors, who now have access to more than 15 Maya sites.



Bonaire

The Island of Peace

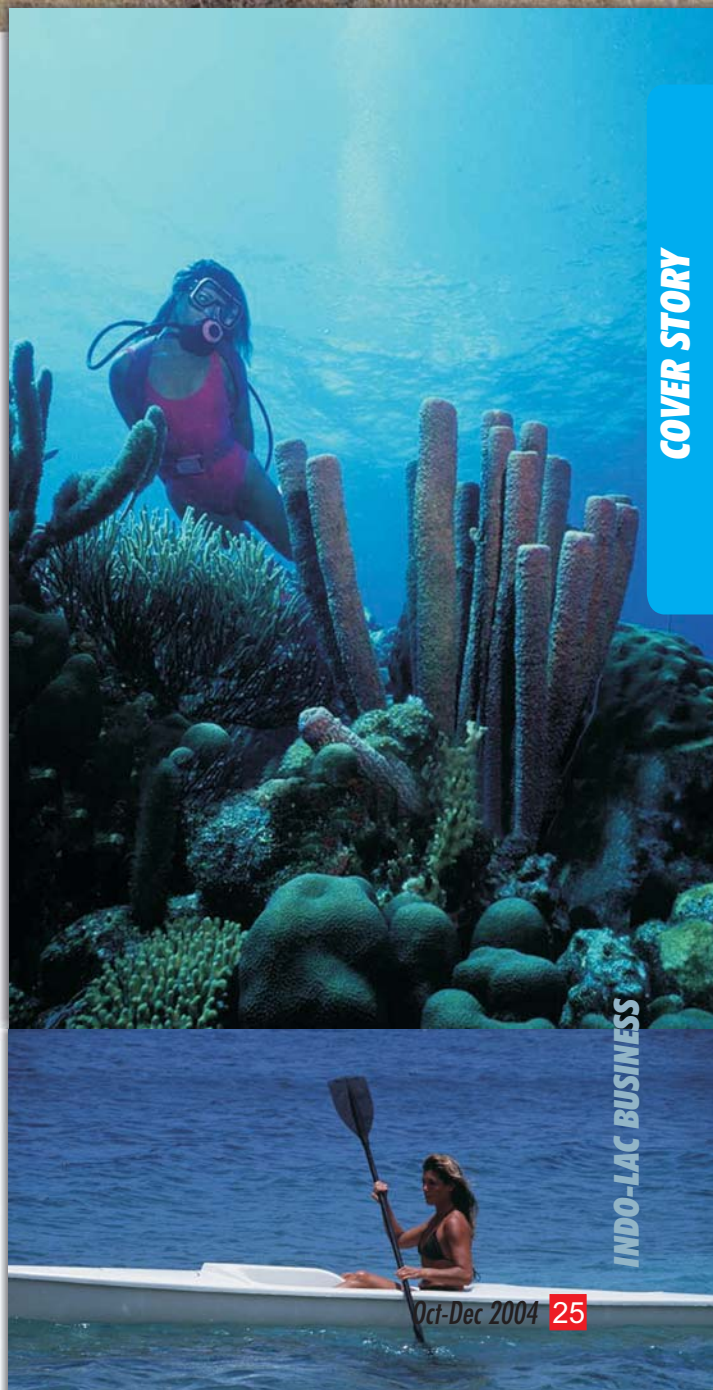
The delightful, intimate Dutch island is an ideal getaway for visitors in pursuit of peace and nature, especially the peace and nature to be found below the surface of calm waters where divers can count on visibility of 100ft or 30 m.

Bonaire is one of the world's premiere scuba-diving destinations. There are more than 80 marked sites attracting divers from all over the world. The multi-colored coral forests that start just 20 ft or 6 m from the shore and often lie only a few inches from the surface are bewitching and strictly protected.

The island's reefs are part of the Bonaire Marine Park, and there are tough laws to conserve all sea life both the corals and the fish in the offshore waters. Further out, the sea is rich in bonefish, tarpon, permit, snook and marlin. These can be fished. Ashore, beaches are white, pink, and perfect.

Bonaire's passion for protecting the island's ecology extends to the land, where a 13,500-acre (55 sq km) national park was created in 1969 to preserve more than 180 species of birds and unique flora and fauna.

You can see some of the island's salt lakes, which were worked until the 1860s, and end up at flamingo-filled Goto Lake. It is thought there are 15,000 flamingoes on Bonaire roughly one for every inhabitant. Tiny stone cabins near the beach are stark testimony to the time when slavery supplied the island with cheap labor. Bonaire does have its lively moments such as Carnival Week in February.



COVER STORY

INDO-LAC BUSINESS



Cuba

The Land of Music

Travel can be an adventure. Transport is cheap and convivial. Cuba is the only place on earth where hitchhiking is regulated by the state in the nicest possible way. Each town has a hitchhiking point manned by an official in yellow trousers who supervises the hitchers, registers their destinations and loads them on to any state or private car that happens to be heading in the right direction. Tourists are absolved from the obligation to take on hitch-hikers.



There are few more fascinating destinations in the Caribbean than its largest and most populous island, Cuba not least because it has been a socialist republic since the 1959 revolution, when Fidel Castro seized power. This last remaining vestige of state socialism, 90 miles south of Key West, Florida, was once the last stronghold of Spanish power in the region.

Cuba's rich artistic heritage ranges from pre-Columbian cultures to the splendors of Spanish colonialism and the internationally-acclaimed art of today. It is also a place of great natural beauty, with three magnificent mountain ranges and fertile plains where sugarcane and tobacco grow. And it has some of the best beaches in the world.

A quarter of Cuba's 11 million people live in and around Havana, which lays claim to being the most beautiful city in the Caribbean. Old Havana, with its square mile of colonial palaces, handsome plazas and charming cobbled alleys was, along with Mexico City and Lima, one of the three richest Spanish cities outside Spain. It has been designated by UNESCO as a city of world heritage.

Cuba has an easy-going, multi-racial population whose greatest enthusiasm is reserved for music. It is the home of the modern rumba, actually of African origin, the mamba, the cha-cha-cha and the salsa. Cuban jazz is also excellent. Wherever you go on the island, music will go with you.



If you value traditional courtesies combined with a warm welcome from people who know how to have a good time, then Barbados is the place for you.

Come find an island steeped in history, with beaches that seem to never end, and discover some of the finest watersport opportunities in the Caribbean.

The island has its very own gold coast for swimmers, named after the fabulous sands. Visitors come from all over the world to take part in windsurfing, surfing and sailboarding competitions. Sports fans can also play golf and tennis and watch some of the world's best cricketers.

Visitors from Britain will find other reminders of home, from the wigs and robes worn in parliament, to the statue of Nelson in Trafalgar Square. The architecture in the capital of Bridgetown and second largest town, Sleighs town, and names such as Brighton beach also offer many reminders of links between the two nations.



The Golden Sands of Barbados



Crop Over Festival

The biggest annual event in Barbados is the Crop Over Festival, celebrating the harvest of sugarcane, formerly the island's main industry. The five-week summer celebration is a fiesta of colourful floats, parades and people in costume dancing and enjoying themselves to the background of music and fireworks. It also offers the opportunity to taste the finest island cuisine, including the national dish of Flyingfish and Cou-cou. Everyone is encouraged to join in. Music

lovers can hear the world's best artists at the annual Paint it Jazz festival.

Many of the grand homes built by the sugar kings are open to the public. Plantation mansions such as Sam Lord's Castle contain many of their original gilt and mahogany fittings. You can still see a working sugar plantation on Arbib Nature and Heritage trail and all over the island you will find rolling green fields for a relaxed stroll.

If you prefer formal settings, there are the famous cliff-set Andromeda Gardens. The finest hotels are also positioned in beautifully-planned tropical landscapes.

And if you're still raring to go when evening comes there is another Barbados of waterfront restaurants, night-life, music, gaming and more than 1,000 rum shops to consider.

Jamaica

Every year over one million visitors come to Jamaica, the Caribbean's third-largest island and it's not hard to see why.

It's a self-contained holiday universe offering unsurpassed tropical beauty, excellent water sports, the most vibrant of music scenes, and a sophisticated tourism industry.

There's Kingston the Caribbean's largest English-speaking city south of Miami; Montego Bay with its stretches of white sand and more hotels and holiday villas than anywhere else on the island; Negril with seven miles (11 km) of white beach and the famous Green Flash at sunset; and Ocho Rios, where the main beach is a spectacular band of gleaming sand right in the center of town.

It's also the centre of the island's cultural and business life, where you'll find markets, art galleries, museums, theatres, nightclubs and, of course, the Bob Marley Museum, the recording studio in which the reggae star worked and lived.

In nearby Port Royal once the island's capital you can see where pirates such as Sir Henry Morgan and other buccaneers lurked when they weren't carrying out raids across the Caribbean.

History-seekers can visit great colonial country houses and plantations, while visitors searching for natural wonders can see waterfalls, exotic flowers, the 550 native Jamaican ferns and 250 species of birds. Port Antonio on the east coast is known for its lush vegetation. Much of the plant life indigenous to Jamaica is found here.

The Blue Mountains National Park is another superb spot for nature lovers, home to a vast variety of rare flora and fauna but with 200,000 acres (800 sq km) to cover, you'd best take a guide.





Martinique

Martinique is one of the showcases of the French Caribbean. The capital, Fort de France, fully lives up to that description, celebrating every aspect of the island's all-encompassing French culture with style and panache.

What's fashionable in Paris today is à la mode here very swiftly. Shops sell the latest goods from France. Art galleries, theatres and museums showcase French culture. Street names celebrate French military and literary heroes, while old men play boules in the dusty squares and crowds sit at the pavement cafés watching the Citroens and Renaults inching through the narrow streets.

If it weren't for the tropical climate, it could almost be Paris and in some ways it actually is. The city's Schoelcher Library, a 19th century Romanesque-Byzantine masterpiece, was built in the French capital, dismantled and shipped to Martinique, where the entire building was re-assembled, down to the mosaics.

There are flawless beaches – white sand on the south coast, black in the north; secluded coves for swimming and reefs for snorkelling; unspoiled fishing villages; hot springs, lush rainforests and woods; rugged peaks and gorges; and everywhere flowers and fruit – bougainvillea, orchids, lilies, bananas, pineapples, papaya and coconut palms.

The island's large harbour and its many marinas have made Martinique a major sailing centre in the southern Caribbean. The June Regatta is a four-day sailing festival attracting crews from throughout the Americas and Europe, while the five-day Tour des Yoles Rondes in August celebrates the traditional Caribbean sailing boats used by the island's fishermen.

Other annual events adding to Martinique's year-round joie de vivre include a round-the-island version of the Tour de France, an international half marathon, a rum festival, and guitar and jazz festivals which are held in alternate years.



COVER STORY



INDO-LAC BUSINESS

St Kitts and Nevis

Write out a list of everything anyone could want from a Caribbean vacation. Start with beaches, duty-free shopping, casinos and ecology, then go through discos, golf and history and end up with sailing and diving.

If you choose to visit St Kitts and Nevis, you'll end up with every box checked. These twin, but not identical, islands in the Eastern Caribbean have it all, making them the ideal destinations for a two-center holiday.

Look first at what the islands have in common. They're green and lush, with rain forests and tropical flower gardens. They have unspoiled and uncrowded beaches for safe swimming, and they're great vacation spots for divers and snorkelers.

Their two historic capital towns, colonial settlements built by the British, are among the prettiest and best-conserved in the Leeward Islands group. Both islands have plantation houses and 18th century forts. Both have an enormous respect for their common Caribbean heritage and put a special emphasis on offering the highest standards of hospitality and service.

But although they form one country, the islands have quite different characters.

At 68 square miles (175 sq km), St Kitts is the larger of the two and offers most of the opportunities for sports, nightlife and entertainment. The year is packed with music and arts festivals, pageants, carnivals and sporting events. The island's 18-hole golf course is bounded by the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, and has ponds and palm trees.

The 36 square mile (90 sq km) Nevis, too, has plenty to keep sportsmen and women busy its 18-hole championship course, often voted the Caribbean's best, was designed by Robert Trent Jones II but the pace of life is even more relaxed.



Puerto Rico

There's only one problem when you visit Puerto Rico on this fascinating, 3,350 square mile (8,670 sq km) island, you can't see everything in a single visit. Sorry, you'll have to keep coming back and next time bring the kids. It's one of the Caribbean's most child-friendly destinations.

There's all the sun, fun and sporting activity you'd expect. The 272-mile (437 km) coastline has world-class beaches for sun-bathing, swimming and snorkeling. Nightlife is among the liveliest in the Americas, and there's a full range of accommodation, from rustic campsites to luxury hotels.

Away from the popular resort zones, you can taste the high-octane cocktail of cultures and traditions Caribbean, Spanish, Amerindian, African and North American that makes Puerto Rico a unique island experience.

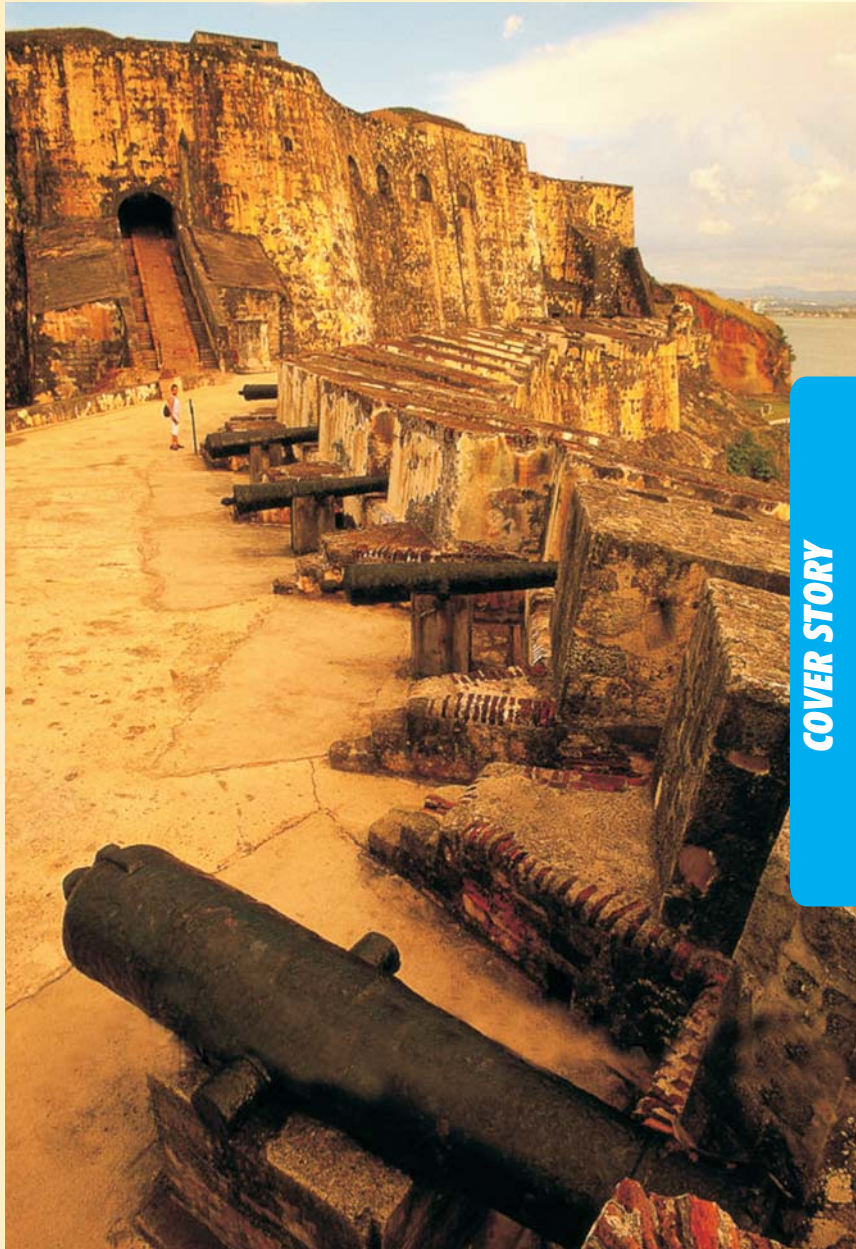
Puerto Rico is proud of its status as a Commonwealth of the United States of America its inhabitants have been US citizens since 1917. It also cherishes its 500-year heritage as a Latin American and Caribbean island, celebrated in the food and drink, art and entertainment, dress and architecture.

In the National Historic Zone of Old San Juan, there are ornate Spanish houses, churches and forts, elegant plazas, cobblestoned courtyards and museums. Visit Ponce, the island's second city, founded in 1692 and a showcase of Spanish Colonial, Art Deco and Creole architecture and art. The art museum has work by the island's best painters, and the nearby Tibes Indian Ceremonial Centre is the oldest Indian burial ground in the Antilles.

Eco-tourists could easily spend a year in Puerto Rico. Its rain-forested mountains have the full, exuberant range of Caribbean vegetation and wildlife. The 28,000 acre (11,300 sq km) El Yunque is the only tropical rainforest in the US National Parks system. Taking the hiker's trail through the park, you'll see four distinct types of forest, which are home to 240 species of wildlife, flowers and trees. The Rio Abajo Forest Preserve can be explored easily on 70 walking trails.

If you want to get away from it all, visit one of Puerto Rico's three satellite islands. Vieques has 40 wonderful beaches on a 60 mile (97 km) coastline, including three phosphorescent bays that glow in the dark. Sleepy Culebra also has faultless beaches, while Mona, 50 miles from its mother island, is an uninhabited, 25-square mile (65 sq km) nature reserve encircled by pristine coral and perfect dives.

Whatever vacation you feel you deserve, Puerto Rico offers the variety to keep you busy enough for several lifetimes





St Lucia

- Helen of West Indies

Come to St Lucia and it will not take you long to see why the island became known as the Helen of the West Indies and why the French and British empires spent almost two centuries fighting to possess her.

The island's French legacy can still be heard in the local patois, seen in the many Gallic place-names and enjoyed in the irresistible French Creole cuisine to be found in hotels, restaurants and bistros.

Now St Lucia, its lush peaks shooting up from the sea in between St Vincent and Martinique, attracts sun-seekers instead of war fleets many of them honey-mooners, who find a natural and unspoiled island that more than lives up to all of their Caribbean dreams. At 238-square miles (616 sq km), St Lucia is large enough to provide visitors with breathtaking contrasts and small enough to ensure that those who want to laze their days away in peace and quiet can do just that.

These are found mostly on the north coast where the sand is as white as talcum powder, the sunsets are unforgettable and most of the sports action, nightlife and entertainment is found.

In the nature reserves, rain forests, botanical gardens and coastal mangroves you'll see exotic trees and flowers, magnificent tropical birds and marine life. Between March and August, you might be sharing a beach with turtles which have clambered out of the sea to lay their eggs.

You'll see banana and cocoa plantations, the crater of a dormant volcano, bubbling sulphur springs, mineral springs where visitors can bathe, 18th century forts and sleepy coastal villages. And could you really leave St Lucia without seeing the Pitons, the massive twin volcanic cones that have become the island's signature image?

Lovers will search out secluded beaches, night-owls will find entertainment in the hotels and bars, and yacht crews will find dozens of safe harbours, from small coves to an 83-acre (336,000 sq m) marina and the large natural harbour, once the world's 14th busiest port, which is overlooked by Castries, the lively capital town where French Creole houses can still be seen. Divers, snorkelers, hikers and golfers will all find happiness on St Lucia.



Trinidad & Tobago

The carnival land of Trinidad is the larger part of this twin-island nation, and its inhabitants move at a fast pace, especially in the capital, Port of Spain, whose 500,000 inhabitants live in the tightly-packed corridors of downtown. This is where the action is; the streets are a cacophony of bars and businesses, markets and maxi-taxis booming music. The home of limbo, calypso and the steel band, it has a hectic nightlife, and if you have to eat, the choice will overwhelm you; but there's no time to sit down, especially when it's Carnival time.

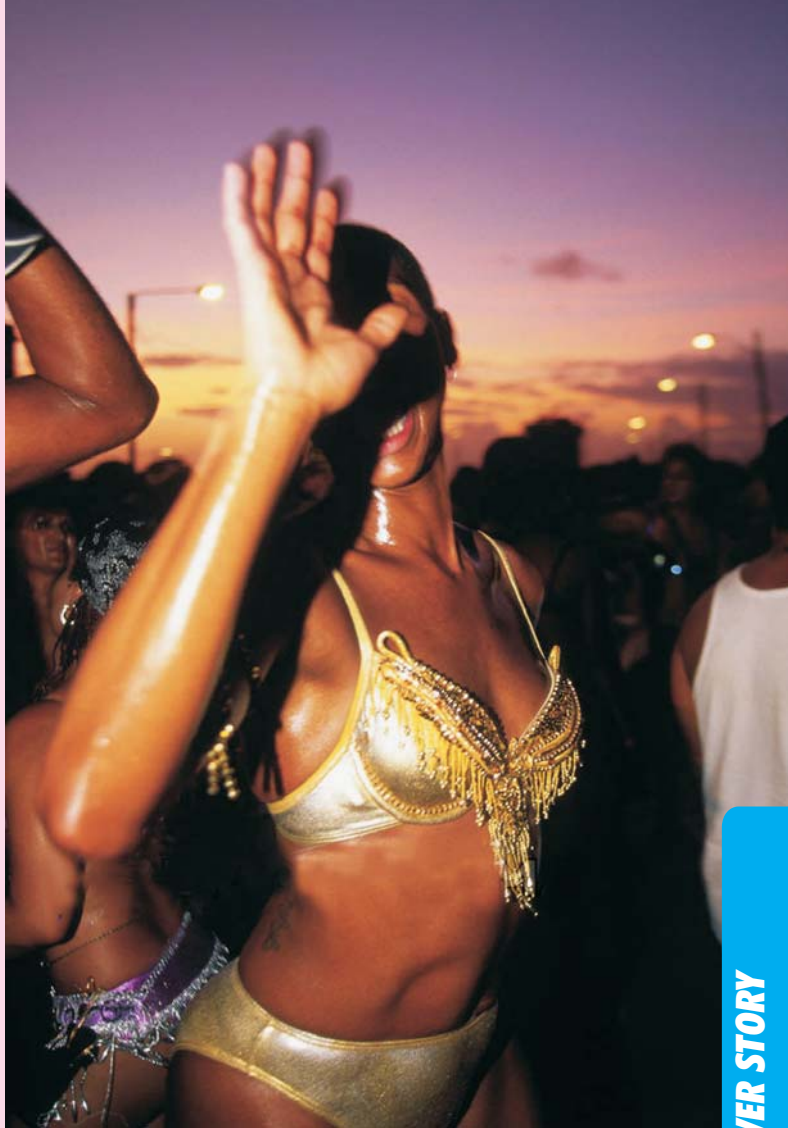
Away from the city one finds oases of peace and calm and the beauty of Mother Nature. The island lies close to the South American mainland, to which it was once joined and with which it shares much of its wildlife. In the national swamp reservations in the west of the island there are cayman alligators and the elegant scarlet ibis. Trinidad's most amazing natural feature, however, is the Pitch Lake 100 acres (400,000 sq m) of tar soft enough to swallow you, should you spend too long standing on it.

Twenty-two miles, or 35 km, away, Trinidad's small sister island of Tobago offers a striking contrast in landscapes and people. Tobago provides a much more relaxed introduction to the Caribbean. The pace of life here is slower; away from the established, but not crowded, resorts at the western end of the island are plenty of secluded coves and bays where you can idle away the hours in the water and the sun in classic Caribbean fashion.

Water sports feature strongly in Tobago's attractions: divers, windsurfers and fishing enthusiasts will love its coral reefs, beautiful beaches, clear waters and smart hotels. Eco-tourists will find rivers, waterfalls and natural reserves and a rich bird life, as well as underwater dives to see the mysteriously beautiful manta-rays.

Its main towns, Scarborough and Plymouth, are really large villages where there's always a friendly smile for visitors.

The unique blend of people of African, Indian, European and Chinese descent have given this twin-island republic a diversity of cuisine, culture, sights, perspectives and traditions that bewilders the visitor. These two islands are as alike as chalk and cheese so try both! It's quite a mixture!



COVER STORY



INDO-LAC BUSINESS

Venezuela



Venezuela is a country of dramatic contrasts. Its unique geography ranges from the long Caribbean coastline in the north to the dense Amazon Forest in the south. To the east lies the stunning Gran Sabana plateau, while the snowy peaks of the Andes dominate the west.

Not surprisingly, there's an equally wide range of holiday options, from the sophistication and striking architecture of the capital, Caracas, to the demands of trekking and climbing in the rugged interior, and the ultimate relaxation of balmy beaches edged by coconut palms.

The country has no railway system, but possesses an excellent modern road network and well-developed tourist infrastructure, although rural communities in the interior live in a way that has been not changed for many generations.

Caracas boasts some of the most impressive modern architecture in South America; it's a bustling city with modern hotels, fine restaurants, sophisticated shops and excellent sports facilities. Historic sites include the Plaza Bolivar, with its 17th century cathedral and the Casa Natal de Bolivar, the birthplace of national hero Simon Bolivar who liberated the country from Spanish rule. The city named after him, Ciudad Bolivar, on the lower Orinoco, retains much of its colonial charm.

Between the huge Orinoco delta and Maracaibo, the oil capital of Venezuela, stretch 1,100 miles of magnificent, white beaches. Isla Margarita, 25 miles off the coast, is a popular destination for foreign visitors and Venezuelans alike. Further west, the 150 islands of the Los Roques National Park offer excellent sailing, snorkeling and scuba diving.

Venezuela's breathtaking panoramas include Angel Falls, at more than 3,200 feet the highest waterfall in the world. The country is host to a wide variety of exotic plants and animals, including the jaguar, the great condor and the anaconda, the longest snake in the world. It is paradise for bird-watchers, who can see 15 percent of the entire world's species of birds right here.



Grand Turk

Some historians now believe that Christopher Columbus made his original landfall in the New World on Grand Turk and not on San Salvador. If this went unreported for rather a long time, it may be because the obvious attractions of the Turks & Caicos Islands have drawn remarkably little attention until recently.

Once the Arawak Indians who lived here in Columbus's time had been rounded up and shipped away, the islands were left uninhabited until pirates used them as a stopping off point and Bermudians arrived to rake up salt to sell as a preservative.

Refining salt from the sea remained the main industry until 20 years ago. Since then, tourism and offshore finance have taken over as the main sources of revenue. Today, the islands' status as both an international tax haven and a desirable holiday destination is growing steadily.

The Turks & Caicos Islands are a British Crown Colony at the south-eastern tip of the Bahamas that became internally self-governing in 1976. Only five of the 30-plus islands are inhabited so if you want sun, sea and tranquility, with 200 miles of almost deserted ivory sands and fabulous snorkeling and diving, this is the destination of your dreams.

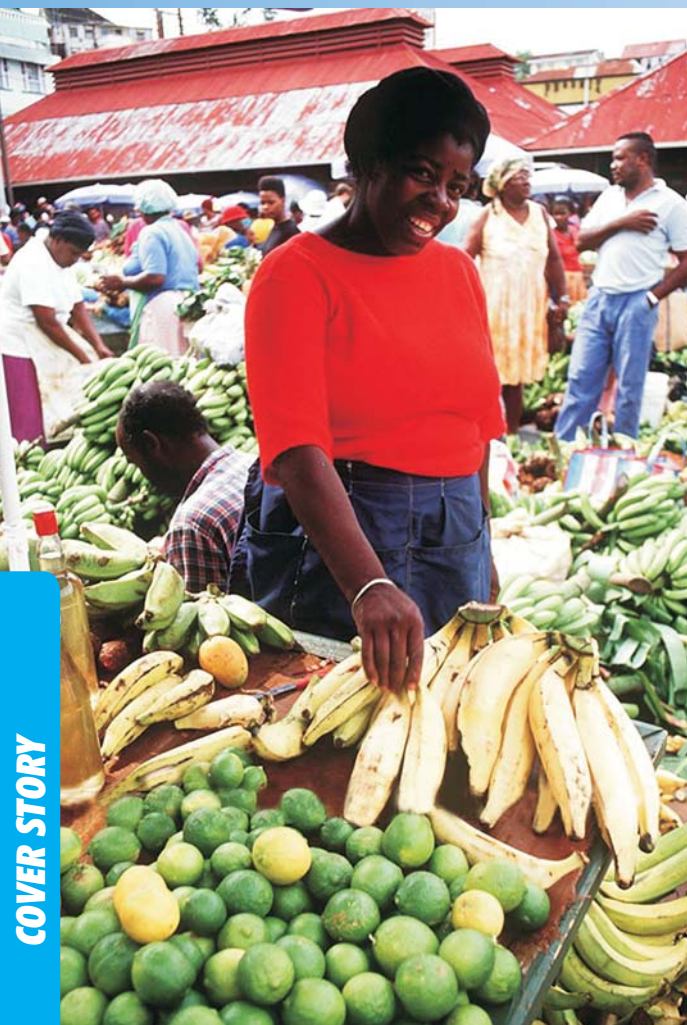
The capital, Cockburn Town, is on Grand Turk, a favorite haunt of anglers and scuba divers. Just off Grand Turk, the 20-mile wide Turks Island Passage that separates the Turks from the Caicos plunges to great depths.

Most recent development has taken place on Providenciales ('Provo' for short). This charming island, with a fantastic beach, has grown from an almost uninhabited backwater to a resort island with a population of almost 10,000. At Grace Bay, for instance, there are luxury resort hotels, a casino, a variety of restaurants and a tourist-oriented shopping complex. There is also a golf course.

The island also has the unique Caicos Conch Farm, established in 1984 to grow conch commercially from eggs to adult, which takes four years. It currently has one and a half million conch. The shells provide gifts and souvenirs, while conch meat has long been a staple food in the Caribbean.



Grenada - The Spice Island



Known as the Spice Island, Grenada is indisputably everyone's idea of tropical splendor.

The 120 square mile (310 sq km) island is a microcosm of all that's best in the Caribbean. There are silky white beaches, unspoiled rain forests, hills and waterfalls, a breathtakingly beautiful colonial capital town, warm, clear bays for swimming and diving, a passion for food that's a lasting legacy of the early French settlers, peace and quiet for lovers of solitude and a lively nightlife if you want it all wrapped up in a perfect climate. It's no wonder that the British and the French fought over it so many times.

With its smaller sister islands Carriacou (13 square miles, or 34 sq km) and Petit Martinique (just 486 acres, or two sq km) Grenada rests at the foot of the Windward Island chain in the Caribbean's deep south. If you can drag yourself away from its idyllic beaches and bays, take an eco-trip into the interior to see the spice plantations that have kept the world supplied with nutmeg. Cinnamon, cloves, pimento, ginger and vanilla are grown here, as are cocoa trees.

Back in the capital of St. George's, you can't fail to admire this harbour town, often voted the most attractive in the Caribbean. Spread around the busy working port like an amphitheatre, its pastel-coloured French villas line cobbled streets. Visit its forts and churches and, for a full history of this fascinating island, call in at the National Museum, housed in an old French army barracks. It has a marble bath that once belonged to Empress Josephine Bonaparte.



Grande-Terre & Basse-Terre

A fusion of two landscapes and Creole and French cultures, Grande-Terre, the butterfly-shaped island has the commercial capital and the main port, while Basse-Terre has the administrative capital and is a vast, fertile, nature reserve.

On Grand-Terre you can enjoy the classic Caribbean beach holiday on white coral sands; on Basse-Terre you find yourself in a green dreamland of tropical rainforest and mountainous slopes.

The 74,000 acre (30,000 sq hec) Parc Naturel on Basse-Terre contains the Soufriere volcano, the beautiful 350ft (107 m) Carbet Falls, and marked nature trails with information centres through the

island's magnificent tropical rain forest.

Don't miss the Musée Saint-John Perse dedicated to the 1960 Nobel Prize-winning poet, who was born in Guadeloupe.

If all that activity works up your appetite, you will find an excellent cuisine heavily influenced by Gallic flavors, and you can dance it all off to the loud and lively sounds of zouk in the discos.

When Christopher Columbus sailed to this beautiful island in 1493, he only stayed long enough to name it before moving on. Today, it offers those on vacation a much more rewarding break. There is almost too much to enjoy.





Haiti

This land of vivid contrasts is at the heart of the Caribbean. Echoes of distant Africa act as a counterpoint to the familiar landmarks of Caribbean life. In fact, the description 'Afro-Caribbean' could have been coined for Haiti.

It is the region's third largest island state, and a gem that has yet to be discovered by mass tourism. Almost all of Haiti's 7.5 million people are of African origin and it shows in their art, their passion for music and their undaunted optimism.

Haiti has a range of accessible beaches both the classic white sand and volcanic varieties and many are served by hotels, cafés and water sports operators.

There are also many secluded, sandy coves that can only be reached by rowboat and are ideal for swimming and snorkeling. At Labadie on quiet Pointe Ste-Honoré, you'll find more than 200 acres (800,000 sq m) of Caribbean perfection, with undulating hills, nature walks and flawless beaches for sun-bathing, swimming and snorkeling.



There's much rugged natural beauty, much of it in protected national parks, in Haiti, but perhaps the most awesome spectacle is man-made. The Citadelle LaFerriere, at the top of a 3,000ft (915m) mountain near the town of Milot, is the largest fortress in the Caribbean, if not the Western hemisphere.

Built on the orders of Haiti's self-appointed king, Henri Christophe, its vital statistics are as daunting as its terrifying appearance the walls are more than 100ft (30m) high and, in some places, 45ft thick. It took 200,000 people from 1804 to 1817 to build it, and the 10,000 soldiers the fortress housed were defended by 365 five-ton cannon. Visitors don't have to make the journey up on foot they can get to within half a mile in a car, or right to the top on a horse.



Tranquil Anguilla

Anguilla is a tiny island with a big heart. Smiling comes naturally to Anguillians there are only 12,000 to make the visitors to feel relaxed.

Anguilla is most famous for its beaches along the island's 68-km coastline. There are 33 beaches, many of which are among the best in the Caribbean. Their soft white sands slope into shallow blue waters as calm, soothing and warm as the islanders' gracious welcome and easy-going attitude.

Many beaches are secluded, unspoiled, spectacular and quiet. While a few are a little busier, some are perfect for gentle walking and others are coves that could have been designed for diving, snorkeling and romantic picnics. Inland, you'll see saltwater ponds that are home to great blue herons and snowy egrets.

Visitors to Anguilla savor its carefully-preserved tranquility and serenity. The islanders on this self-governing British colony are determined to preserve its relaxed, stress-free atmosphere – and those magnificent beaches.

Accommodation standards are high and so is the quality of the gourmet cuisine.

Visitors find it hard to get lost on Anguilla and there's only one road called, aptly, the Main Road, with tracks branching off to the superb beaches and bays that sun worshippers, swimmers, divers and nature lovers never want to leave.



Caribbean Nations Urged To Boost Sports Tourism

The Caribbean should continue to vigorously promote sports as an important sector of the tourism industry which contributes significantly to the socio-economic development of the region, Pamela Richards, Chairman of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has said.

And Karen Ford-Warner, CTO's acting secretary-general believes the region must design appropriate plans and garner resources to develop an effective programme for sport tourism.

The two delivered separate messages to observe Caribbean Tourism Day on November 2, 2004. The theme for Caribbean Tourism Day this year was, ***Sports and Tourism: Powerful Driving Forces for the Sustainable Development of the Caribbean.***

"Because sports involves a considerable amount of travel--not just for the competitors but for thousands of fans as well, these events are compelling tourism attractions," Ms. Richards noted. "The many sporting events that are held in our member states contribute to the image of our destinations and to the economies of these countries and by extension, the region."

The CTO chairman stated that what made the theme especially relevant was the fact that "for those of us in the Caribbean region, sports is a way of life, while in many instances, tourism is our lifeline."

"This theme demonstrates that CTO has recognized and acknowledged the immense opportunity that sports tourism presents as a growing niche market," added Mrs. Ford-Warner. "Sports is often a cultural manifestation of the most profound nature, as evidenced by the phenomenon of cricket. Sports, as you fully appreciate, has a legitimate and inherent importance and plays a crucial role in the development of all communities. Undoubtedly and additionally, sports has the potential to enrich our tourism product, and boost our competitiveness."

The two top CTO officials also recognized the potential benefits to the entire Caribbean of cricket's World Cup to be staged in the region in 2007.

"It will provide an unparalleled opportunity to showcase the region and its people and will generate much needed revenues to the economies of our member states," Ms. Richards said.

"The economic impact is expected to be considerable," concluded Mrs. Ford-Warner.

World Cup Cricket 2007 galvanizes Caribbean Hosts

The UK travel trade got updates on a number of areas of interest to them relating to the 2007 Cricket World Cup in the Caribbean.

Over 120 attendees from all industry sectors, including tour operators, cruise lines, and hotel representation companies turned up for a meeting organized by Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) World Travel Market in London.

They heard from Chris Dehring, CEO of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Inc, the company that has been set up to run the event in the Caribbean. Visiting delegations and ministers and directors of tourism from the region joined the group to listen to Mr. Dehring's presentation on the tender process for a tour & travel partner, how CWC 2007 Inc. will work with the existing distribution system and other issues surrounding the event.

"The meeting generated an energetic and lively debate following Mr. Dehring's presentation," said Julia Hendry, CTO's director of marketing for Europe. "Our travel trade partners asked a number of questions relating to the allocation of tickets, appointment of a global tour operator partner, development of facilities, sponsorship rights and the impact on matters affecting tourism in the region as a result of hosting the World Cup," she added.

This meeting was the second such event organized by CTO to give industry players in the UK an opportunity to

provide feedback to the event planners. The first meeting, held at WTM in 2003, attracted around 35 attendees.



COMO LA CULTURA INFLUECIA NUESTROS VALORES EN EL TRABAJO

Por: **Ana Gabriela Garcia Murillo**, AIESEC, EXIM BANK of India



El objetivo de este artículo es sen?alar las barreras interculturales que enfrentamos al

momento de realizar negocios en el extranjero. Buscando tener un mejor desempe?o evitando que dichas diferencias limiten las relaciones y oportunidades en el extranjero.

Cuántas veces existen malentendidos al realizar negociaciones con empresas locales ? Imagínes como ocurre en la negociaciones que se llevan acabo con empresas internacionales en donde el destino de las mismas, depende en gran parte de nuestro comportamiento. Pero que ocurre cuando somos capaces de entender esas diferencias y tomar ventaja de ellas? . Debido a la globalización que vivimos hoy en día, las empresas necesitan de personal capacitado en desarrollar relaciones interculturales. Es arriesgado aventurarse pensando que los empresarios son los mismos alrededor del mundo.

El comportamiento en las diferentes culturas ha sido estudiado por personalidades como el Profesor Emérito Geert Hofstede de la Universida de Maastricht, así como por el Sr. Richard Lewis de Lewis Communications . La palabra comportamiento intercultural se deriva de aquella en inglés denominada "cross-cultural behaviour " la cual, consta de un significado compuesto: a) Comparar o tratar con dos o más culturas¹ b) Diferencia; disparidad; problemática derivada de dicha disparidad.²

El ser humano tiene el instinto de cree que el comportamiento de los demás tiende a ser el mismo lo cual no es verdad. Es por ésto que al entrar en otras culturas, nuestras probabilidades de éxito se reducen si tomamos las desiciones con base en el mercado local.

"Cultura es frecuentemente

una fuente de conflicto mas que de sinergia.

Las diferencias culturales son un fastidio en el mejor de los casos, seguido de un desastre"³

DIFERENCIAS CULTURALES

Existen dos reglas básicas que debemos recordar en las negociaciones internacionales:

- El vendedor debe de adaptarse al comprador.
- El agente extranjero debe de observar las costumbres locales.

Existen 4 divisiones referente al comportamiento inter-cultural: Cultura en los negocios, comportamiento no verbal, cultura formal vs informal y tiempos & agendas.

CULTURA EN LOS NEGOCIOS: RF VS DF

Deacuerdo al tipo de cultura durante la negociación se clasifican en dos; "relationship focus (RF)" cultura enfocada a las relaciones y "deal focus (DF)" aquella que se enfoca a la negociación. Existe una tercera clasificación "moderately deal-focused". Intermedia entre RF y DF.

El tipo de cultura afecta la manera en que las negociaciones deben de ser conducidas así como en cualquier relación comercial.

Tabla 1

CULTURA LABORAL	REGION
Deal - focused	Europa Germánica , Países Nórdicos, Gran Bretan?a, Norte América, Australia, Nueva Zelanda y SudAfrica.
Moderately deal - focused	Europa de habla Latina, Europa del Este Región del Mediterráneo Honk Kong y Singapur.
Relationship focused	Arabia, mayor par te de Africa, Latinoamérica y la mayor parte de Asia.

Fuente: Freiburg University, Handelshojkskolens Forlag

1) The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

2) The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

3) Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University.

Como mencionamos en la tabla anterior, las culturas RF cubren la vasta mayoría del mercado. Por el contrario sólo existe una pequeña porción de DF (en su mayoría países desarrollados).

Cultura RF prefiere negociar con personas que le resultan familiares. Por lo tanto, hacer negocios con extranjeros especialmente aquellos que resultan ser extranjeros, no es tan común. Debido a esto, vale la pena pasar tiempo con la contraparte para tener un mejor entendimiento de la persona y crear las bases de una relación, generalmente este tipo de culturas son conocidas como “cálidas”. En donde antes de cualquier cierre de negocio lo que se busca es conocer a fondo los socios potenciales muchas veces, introducidos por una tercera persona (acercamiento indirecto).

Debido al enfoque de largo plazo, relaciones comerciales tienden a durar más que en la cultura DF.

La comunicación así como interpretación de la misma es un elemento clave que nos lleva a dos conceptos básicos: bajo y alto-contexto. El concepto de bajo-contexto es más utilizado en las culturas DF en donde el significado se encuentra explícitamente en las palabras mientras que las culturas RF, quienes tienden a llevar una negociación sin tantas confrontaciones, utilizan una negociación de alto-contexto (el significado es implícito y se requiere seguir el contenido de la negociación para un mejor entendimiento).

ORIENTACION A TIEMPOS Y AGENDAS: RIGIDO VS FLEXIBLES

La opinión que se tiene del tiempo alrededor del mundo es distinta encontrándonos con sociedades en donde la puntualidad es un factor crítico, así como contar con un itinerario fijo e inflexible en donde interrupciones no son bien vistas y las fechas límites difícilmente son cambiadas. (monochronic cultures)⁴. 5 minutos pueden determinar si se es proveedor o la pérdida de algún cliente. En contraste la cultura policrónica (polychronic cultures PC) hace menos énfasis en el sentido estricto de puntualidad, valorando en mayor medida la flexibilidad. En donde varios asuntos se pueden discutir dentro de una misma junta. (multi-task).

Tabla 2

CULTURA LABORAL	REGION
Monochronic	Europa Germánica, Países Nórdicos, Norte América y Japón.
Moderately - Monochronic	Australia, Nueva Zelanda, Europa del Este, Sur de Europa, Singapur, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China y Corea del Sur.
Polychronic	Arabia, Africa, Latinoamérica, Sur y Sureste de Asia.

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

CULTURAS FORMALES VS CULTURAS INFORMALES

Gran número de negociaciones han fallado debido a que culturas informales inconscientemente tienden a ofender a su contraparte en las culturas formales. Jerarquías tienen gran importancia en las culturas informales denotando status y poder dentro de la empresa. Por el contrario las culturas informales valoran mas organizaciones con menor diferencia de status y jerarquía.

Por qué es tan importante al realizar negocios en el extranjero? Muchas veces el contraste de los diferentes valores se ven reflejados como conflictos en la mesa de negociaciones. Al estar consciente de los diversos comportamientos tales ofensas pueden ser evitadas con tan sólo conocer la manera adecuada de dirigirse a las personas, mostrar respeto a altas jerarquías, conociendo los hábitos y tradiciones.

Tabla 3

CULTURA LABORAL	REGION
Informal	Australia, Estados Unidos.
Moderately informal	Canadá, Nueva Zelandia, Dinamarca, Noruega.
Formal	Mayor parte de Europa, Region Mediterránea, Arabia, Latinoamérica, mayor parte de Asia.

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojskolens Forlag

COMPORTAMIENTO NO VERBAL: CULTURAS EXPRESIVAS VS RESERVADAS

El comportamiento no verbal se refiere a los malentendidos sucedidos como consecuencia de la forma de expresarnos; algunos tienden a actuar de una manera más expresiva envolviendo tono de voz, inflección (conocida como negociación para-verbal), el contacto visual e inclusive la distancia que existe entre los negociantes. Por ejemplo un promedio de 16 a 24 pulgadas de distancia se utiliza en las culturas reservadas (cuando los negociantes son del mismo género). Mientras que para las culturas expresivas la distancia disminuye a un rango de 8 a 14 pulgadas. Mayor expresividad menor la distancia..

4) Term invented by Edward T. Hall

Tabla 4

CULTURA LABORAL	REGION
Culturas expresivas	Región Mediterránea, Europs de habla Latina, Latinoamérica.
Culturas moderadamente expresivas	Estados Unidos y Canadá, Australia, Nueva Zelanda, Europa del Este,Sur de Asia.
Culturas reservadas	Este y Sureste de Asia, Europa Germánica y países Nórdicos.

Source: Freiburg University, Handelshojkskolens Forlag

La suceptibilidad de malinterpretar los ademanes de las culturas con mayor expresividad representa un mayor desafío en el extranjero. El comportamiento amable y adecuado para una cultura puede ser rudo y ofensivo en otra.

INDIA Y LATINOAMERICA: SIMILITUD CULTURAL EN LAS NEGOCIACIONES

La primera impresión puede determinar firmar un contrato para la apertura de un nuevo negocio, joint venture o introducir nuestro producto a nuevos mercados . Como lo vimos en la tabla anterior, la brecha cultural entre India y Latinoamérica es menor en comparación con otras partes del mundo tales como Estados Unidos o Europa.

Encontramos que tanto India como Latinoamérica tienen la misma orientación en cuanto al tiempo y flexibilidad de horarios y agendas (policrónicos) mientras que la mayoría de los países Europeos cuentan con una cultura semi -monocrónica. Estados Unidos se encuentran en el lado contrario con una cultura completamente monocrónica. La forma no verbal de comunicación difiere entre ambas naciones. Mientras que la región de Latinoamérica utiliza un comportamiento expresivo, India pertenece a las culturas con una expresión moderada.

Sin embargo, el trato que se da a las diferentes jerarquías dentro de las organizaciones , mostrando respeto por estatus o rango es similar,

haciendo la negociación fácil de manejar debido a que ambas culturas tienen un enfoque formal. Entender el contexto y el negocio mismo así como encontrarse confortable en el ambiente, son factores claves para alcanzar buenos resultados buscando por adelantado evitar los malentendidos; Esto no representa un problema inter-cultural dado que

tanto India como Latinoamérica tienen un enfoque RF, teniendo un alto grado de colectivismo dando mayor valor al grupo vs el individuo (tanto familiar como dentro de la empresa).

Enriquecedora cultura, raíces históricas y una sociedad que refleja valores comunes, hacen de India y Latinoamérica sociedades similares mas sin embargo dada su situación geográfica parecen mantenerse distantes entre si.

Tabla 5 : Dimensiones Culturales.

País	Poder de Distancia ⁵	Individualismo ⁶	Evasión de Incertidumbre ⁷	Orientación a largo plazo ⁸
Europe	41	66	66	33
LAC	69	22	86	65
India	77	48	40	61
U.S.A. & Canada	39	80	48	23

Fuente: Estudio realizado por Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University.

Las similitudes y diferencias son explicadas como un resultado de la historia, valores y prioridades que cada cultura asigna, así como otros factores tales como, marco social, desarrollo económico, etc. Esto no quiere decir que una cultura sea mejor que la otra que esté bien o mal; tan sólo que son diferentes.

“Hasta que no seamos capaces de decifrar la importancia de las cosas ordinarias y mantengamos los símbolos de nuestra cultura como únicos, seremos dominados por los mismos y por aquellos que los impusieron”⁹

5) Power Distance Index (PDI) Se enfoca en el grado de igualdad entre las personas de una sociedad. Un alto PDI indica la desigualdad entre poder y bienestar permitida por una sociedad entre las diferentes jerarquías. Estas sociedades tienden a seguir un sistema de castas que no permiten gran movilidad entre los ciudadanos.

6) Individualism (IDV) Grado en que la sociedad enfatiza el individualismo o colectivismo en las relaciones interpersonales. Un alto grado de individualismo indica la posición que el individuo adquiere frente a la sociedad , dichos individuos tienden a formar un mayor número de relaciones fallidas.

7) Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) Nivel de tolerancia frente a la incertidumbre en una sociedad así como a las situaciones no estructuradas. Un elevado grado de UAI indica la baja tolerancia creando una sociedad con mayor número de leyes, reglas, regulaciones, y controles buscando reducir dicha incertidumbre.

8) Long-Term Orientation (LTO) Enfoque a largo plazo, valor de las tradiciones . Sociedades con alto grado de LTO son sociedades con prioridad en los valores y compromiso con sus tradiciones. Sin embargo, la realización de negocios toma más tiempo para ser desarrollados.

9) Jack Solomon states in his book, Signs of our Time,

EVENTOS COMERCIALES

En la India

FERIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA CONFECCIÓN DE LA INDIA

34^{ta} Edición 23 - 25 de enero, Nueva Delhi

El próximo enero unos de los nombres principales en la industria de moda y ropa, del mundo entero, acudirán a Nueva Delhi para asistir a una de las ferias más grandes y más populares de ropa del mundo Treinta y cuarta Feria Internacional India de Confección. Este super mega acontecimiento se celebrará a partir del 23 al 25 de enero de 2005 en Pragati Maidan, el campo de exposición más destacado de Nueva Delhi. Una fusión perfecta de moda, diseño y cualidad, la Treinta y Cuarta Feria Internacional India de Confección (IIGF) es el destino final de los aficionados globales de moda y los gigantes de la industria de textil. Esta feria extraordinaria ofrece una colección alucinante de confección, letas y accesorios de moda confeccionados por algunas de las empresas indias más importantes de moda y exportación. Junto con la exposición encantadora habrán muestras temáticas y un desfile de

moda ultra moderna que desplegarán todas las creaciones en colores y diseños, más que nunca!

La IIGF es el mejor destino para compradores y agentes que buscan textiles y confección que es una fusión de color, diseño creatividad exquisita. La trigésimo cuarta IIGF expondrá una gran variedad de letas para varones, mujeres e infantiles. La trigésimo cuarta IIGF le ofrece :

- Últimas tendencias de moda y previsión.
- Explorar el Mercado Indo de confección.
- Oportunidades de negocio sin límites.
- Valorar colecciones de principales Expresas Indias de Exportación.
- Encontrar con Nuevos Suministradores para sus necesidades de negocios.

Fechas de la feria	23 al 25 de enero de 2005
Frecuencia	Dos veces cada año
Organizador	Asociación Feria Internacional de Confección
Co organizadores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asociación de Exportadores y Fabricantes de Ropa • Asociación de Fabricantes de India • Asociación de Exportadores de Confección y Tela manual • Asociación de Exportadores de Prenda • Asociación de Feria Internacional de Confección
Dirección de contacto	Consejo de Promoción de Exportación de Ropa 15 NBCC Tower, Bhikaji Cama Place, Nueva Delhi -110066, India.
Gerente de la feria	Sr. Vijaya Mathur, Gerente
Teléfono	91-11-26187630
Fax	91-11-26106683
E-Mail	vijaymathur@indiaapparelfair.com
Perfil de Expositor	<p>ROPA INFORMAL Y ROPA DE CIUDAD : Blazeres, Blusas, Chaquetas, Productos Cachemiras, Ropa informal, Ropa de niños, Conjuntos, Ropa de tela vaquera, Ropa de infantiles, chaquetas, Ropa de punto, Ropa de mujeres, Ropa de varones, Pulóver, Camisas, Pantalones cortos, Confección de seda, Faldas, Trajes, Suéter, Sudadera, Camiseta, Pantalones, Chalecos, Confección de lana.</p> <p>ROPA MUY DE MODA Y PARA OCASIONES : Etiquetas de modistas – moda, Etiquetas privadas – moda, Traje de novia, Traje de cóctel Traje de fiesta.</p> <p>LECERÍA : Sostén, Diminuto, Ropa da casa, Ropa interior de varones, Ropa de noche y pijamas</p> <p>ESPECIALIDAD : Ropa de Cuero, Prenda de piel Ropa de embarazada, Uniforme, Ropa de trabajo</p> <p>ROPA DE SPORT : Ropa exterior, Traje de niño Chaleco Sobretudo, Impermeable, Chándales</p>

India Stonemart 2005 Exposición Internacional de la Industria de la Piedra Enero 28 a Febrero 1, 2005. Jaipur - India

INDIA STONEMART es una exposición internacional de la industria de la piedra organizada con regularidad por el Centro para Desarrollo de Piedras (CDOS), organización autónoma promovida por el Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd. (Corporación del Estado de Rajasthan para el Desarrollo Industrial y la Inversión) y el Gobierno de Rajasthan.

India Stonemart 2005 en el Export Promotional Industrial Park, Jaipur, del 28 de enero al 1ro de febrero 2005

La India es un productor importante de piedras y con su fenomenal tasa de crecimiento está emergiendo como un importante consumidor igualmente. Por lo tanto, existe un potencial inmenso para el incremento del comercio de piedras entre Venezuela y la India.

Para mayor información favor contactar:

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La Organización para la Promoción del Comercio de la India (**ITPO**), alentada por el éxito de la MIFCG 04, organiza en la ciudad de Mumbai la **Feria Internacional de Productos de Consumo de Mumbai(MIFCG 05)** en el Cuffe Parade WTC, Mumbai, del 19 al 27 de febrero 2005.

Esta es una oportunidad única de negocios y una excelente plataforma para las organizaciones de fabricantes/comerciantes de productos de consumos.

Profiles:

Artículos de electrónica y electrodomésticos, utensilios de cocina, textiles, prendas de vestir y mobiliarios del hogar, yute y artículos de yute, decoración del hogar y de interior, muebles, productos para mascotas, productos para la salud y cosméticos, productos de higiene, regalos, mercancía diversa.

Para mayor información favor contactar:

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(Feria Internacional
de Productos de
Consumo de Mumbai)
(MIFCG 05)
MUMBAI ,
19 - 27 febrero 2005