Moving together into a new century

By Timothy J. Roemer, U.S. Ambassador to India

Historian and author H. G. Wells once wrote, "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history ... the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone, as a star." On my first morning in Orissa, I can already see how easy it would be to get lost in its vibrant history, in its exquisite temples and ancient monuments. But equally clear to me is Orissa's focus on the future. It is a forward-looking state, with a booming economy and rich human and natural resources. The colorful Orissan culture dates back more than 3,000 years, but like all of India today the state is striding quickly and powerfully into the future. During the past few years, Orissa has ranked above so many other states in average annual per capita income growth rates, and is actively seeking to boost its economy through investments in the mining, power, steel, and port sectors.

Just as Orissa looks to the future, the United States and India forge ahead into a bright future through our strong partnership based on mutual interests, shared values, and a warm friendship. Together, our two great democracies will shape the 21st century and meet the most pressing global challenges confronting our planet. We have pledged to work together to protect our citizens from terrorism, to develop trade and economic opportunities for Americans and Indians, to educate our future generations so they can solve the global challenges facing the world, and to invest in new technologies which will provide us with a sustainable and economically bright future.

To build this promising future, as the American Ambassador to India, I am particularly focused on education. This bilateral strategic partnership on education between the United States and India has never been stronger or more promising. Our governments are working to implement the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative, which will further strengthen bonds between American and Indian universities, with a special focus on community colleges. We are also improving student scholarship programs and teacher training initiatives. And