



NEWSLETTER

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DATE: APR-JUN 2014

AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES United States Consulate General. Chennai, India

Americans Traveling Abroad

Traveling abroad doesn't have to be confusing if you know the right things before you go. The link below provides country information and requirements for Americans traveling abroad.

http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html

Follow Us

[U.S. Consulate, Chennai website](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Flickr](#)

**Check out the new Consular
Team India ACS Facebook page
[here.](#)**

American Citizen Service Hours:

9:00am to 12:30pm
(appointments),
9:00am-4:30pm (telephone
hours); Monday through Friday,
excluding holidays



Happy Earth Day! A Message from the Consul General

This April marks the 44th anniversary of Earth Day, a truly international holiday, and one which the United States and India have played a significant role in developing.

On April 22, 1970, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson organized a national "teach-in" on the environment in which 20 million Americans participated in rallies across the United States in the name of a healthy, safe environment. Since that time, Earth Day has expanded quickly, and is now celebrated by over 190 countries worldwide.

A significant contribution to Earth Day has been the "Earth Anthem," which was written by Indian diplomat Abhay Kumar, which includes lyrics in eight different languages. Truly an anthem for the Earth, it is an important addition to this international holiday.

Our countries' mutual promotion of Earth Day activities is one of several points of cooperation between the U.S. and India in addressing the world's environmental concerns. I wish you a happy Earth Day!

-Jennifer McIntyre

Thanks for joining our American Citizen Happy Hour in Chennai!

On April 2nd, the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit at the U.S. Consulate in Chennai hosted its first happy hour for U.S. citizens in the city of Chennai. The event was held at the city's iconic Hard Rock Café and attracted over 270 guests. Chennai ACS distributed information about the range of services provided to American citizens living in India, EducationUSA representatives distributed promotional material and fielded questions about higher education opportunities in the United States, and the Foreign Commercial Service also provided information about their services and facilities. Guests enjoyed the event's casual atmosphere, which included American rock music, discounts on food and beverages, and an opportunity to network and mingle with fellow Americans. Chennai ACS will keep all of its registrants posted on our next event!

US Consulate, Chennai; 220 Anna Salai; Chennai 600 006; India | Tel: [91](44)2857-4000
<http://chennai.usconsulate.gov>

We Need Your Help!

The warden program is a system for maintaining communications with the American community and providing important, timely safety or security information to U.S. citizens living or traveling in our consular district. If you live in Chennai's consular district and want to help, please email us at chennaics@state.gov.

Districts Where We Need Wardens:

Karnataka

Chamrajpet
Chandra Layout
Davanagere
Gulbarga
Hassan
Kolar
Manipal
Museum Road
Anand Nagar
Nandhini Layout
Electronic City
HSR Layout

Bangalore Rural

Bidadi
Channapatna
Devanahalli
Doddaballapur
Dodda Gubbi
Hoskote
Magadi
Neelamangala
Ramnagara

Kerala

Kollam
Kozhikode

Tamil Nadu

Ambattur
Chrompet
Cuddalore
Kanchipuram
Kanyakumari
Kodambakkam
Nagapattinam
Padi
Park Town
Perambur
Porur
Pudukottai
Red Hills
Salem
Thiruvavur
Tirunelveli
Tirupur
Tiruvannamalai
Trichy
Vellore
Villupuram
Washermanpet

Safety Corner: Earthquakes!

Did you know that part of our consular district (namely, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands) lies close to a fault line? As recently as March 2014, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 struck only 70 miles East of Mohean, India.

To stay informed of any geological activity of concern (especially earthquakes!) feel free to check out the links below, which include a sign-up for the Earthquake Notification Service, which will keep you informed of any significant earthquakes worldwide.

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/>

National Earthquake Information Center
U.S. Geological Survey

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/neic/>

United States-India Educational Foundation

The United States – India Educational Foundation (USIEF) promotes mutual understanding between the nationals of India and the United States through the educational exchange of outstanding scholars, professionals and students.

The EducationUSA advising office in Chennai hosts regularly scheduled events for students, parents, teachers and institutions. Please click [here](#) to see a list of upcoming events. You may also follow the office's Facebook [page](#).

Contact information:

American Consulate Building
220 Anna Salai
Chennai-600 006
Tel.: +91-44-28574423 / 28574131
Fax: +91-44-2811-2075
E-mail: usiefchennai@usief.org.in



Victim's Assistance

If you or your U.S. citizen relative or friend has been a victim of crime while in India, please contact the U.S. Consulate in Chennai (or closest Embassy or consulate if not in Chennai's consular district) at 044-2857-4000.

You should file and request a copy of a local police report, called a First Information Report (FIR), as soon as possible. You should request the FIR from the police station closest to the scene of the crime.

[U.S. Embassy, New Delhi](#)
[U.S. Consulate, Hyderabad](#)
[U.S. Consulate, Kolkata](#)
[U.S. Consulate, Mumbai](#)

Emergency Services:

We can assist when a U.S. citizen in India is arrested, missing, is a victim of violent crime, becomes ill or dies, or when there is otherwise a need for immediate help.

- 24-hour duty officer for emergencies involving American citizens in the Chennai consular district: call **(+91-44) 2857-4000**
- Updates about crisis situations
- Information on local resources
- Contacting family members in the United States

U.S. Visa Inquiries

The American Citizen Services unit is unable to assist with information regarding visas to the United States. For visa information, please visit the [visa](#) page or send an inquiry to support-india@ustraveldocs.com. Please visit <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/in> for questions about visa appointments.

Leaving India?

If you are departing from India after a long stay and you notified the Embassy or closest U.S. consulate of your presence in India through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), please be sure to "cancel" your registration when you leave. You can cancel your registration on this [website](#).

Selective Service

All U.S. citizens who are subject to Selective Service Registration should register with that agency if they have not already done so. Current information on registration is available in the ACS section . All males must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. For more information, you may contact the Selective Service System, P.O. Box 818, North Chicago, U.S.A. 60197-4638. Or you may register on-line at the [Selective Service Web Page](#).

Passport Renewal

Adult passport holders may renew their 10-year U.S. passports in person or by mail. We reserve the right to request an interview with respect to any passport application. If choosing to apply in person, appointments are

required.

Please visit our [website](#) for more information.



Join the American Library!

The American Library at the US Consulate Chennai offers over 14,000 fiction and non-fiction books, 140 scholarly journals, online research resources and much, much more. Visit the [Library website](#) for Library hours and membership information to enjoy the many resources available!

The Library also offers The Saturday Matinee, showing American movies for your enjoyment. Check the [Library website](#) for show times and procedures for entry to the Consulate.

STEP - Smart Travelers' Enrollment Program

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

You can enroll in STEP online in a few easy steps. Visit <https://step.state.gov/step/> for more information



Social Security Information

The Consulate does not process claims for Social Security but can assist you with forms and other information. The [Social Security Office](#) at the American Embassy in Manila, Philippines, provides direct services to Social Security beneficiaries living in India.

For more detailed assistance, please contact the Social Security Administration directly using one of the methods listed below.

General Enquiries:

05-632-301-2000, ext.: 5 then ext.: 2
Mondays to Fridays 5:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Indian Standard Time (08:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Manila Time)

Email: FBU.Manila@ssa.gov

Mail: Social Security Division
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office
American Embassy
1131 Roxas Boulevard

Social Security Information (Continued)

Benefit Checks

The Consulate distributes Social Security and other Federal Benefit checks to eligible recipients living in India. We usually receive the checks from the Department of Treasury between the 10th and 15th of each month. Although Social Security checks are typically distributed to beneficiaries by mail, you can request to pick up your check by hand. If you have not received or lost a Social Security check, please inform the American Citizen Services Unit of the Consular Section. We will work with the Department of Treasury to track down the check. E-mail us at chennaics@state.gov or call (0)44-2857-4000. (When dialing from the U.S. remember to dial 011-91-44-2857-4000.)

To ensure that you receive your benefits as soon as possible, we encourage you to consider signing up for Direct Deposit of your benefits into a U.S. bank account. It is currently not possible to directly deposit your benefits into an Indian bank account.

For up-to-date information from the Social Security Administration, please visit the SSA [website](#).

Other Benefit Information

For additional information on Federal Benefits overseas, please visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/living_1234.html

For Department of Labor benefits, please visit <http://www.dol.gov/>

For Railroad benefits, please visit <http://www.rrb.gov/>
For other Federal Employee benefits, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/retire/index.aspx>



April:

Celebrating Earth Day

Earth Day was established on April 22, 1970 as the beginning of the modern environmental movement. It came at a time when Americans were pumping fully-leaded gasoline into their cars, air pollution was rampant, and industries were not governed by strict regulations.

The day was founded by then-U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of the state of Wisconsin, after a massive oil spill in California. Nelson was inspired by the energy of students' anti-Vietnam War protests and thought that kind of enthusiasm could be channeled toward environmental issues.

Nelson organized a national "teach-in" on the environment and on April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans participated in rallies across the United States in the name of a healthy, safe environment.

Earth Day is celebrated every year with tree plantings, recycling programs, rallies and other activities.

May:

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

People of all ages and body types can benefit from regular physical activity. National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is a great time to spread the word about the benefits of getting active.

Here are just a few benefits of physical activity:

Children and adolescents – Physical activity can improve muscular fitness and bone and heart health.

Adults – Physical activity can lower risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer.

Older adults – Physical activity can lower the risk of falls and improve cognitive functioning (like learning and judgment skills). Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to create opportunities for everyone to get more physical activity.

(from: <http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/MayToolkit.aspx>)

June:

LGBT Pride Month

The month of June was chosen for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Pride Month to commemorate the Stonewall riots, which occurred at the end of June 1969. As a result, many pride events are held during this month to recognize the impact LGBT people have had in the world. Brenda Howard is known as the "*Mother of Pride*", for her work in coordinating the first LGBT Pride march, and she also originated the idea for a week-long series of events around Pride Day which became the genesis of the annual LGBT Pride celebrations that are now held around the world every June. Additionally, Howard along with fellow LGBT rights activists Robert A. Martin (aka Donny the Punk) and L. Craig Schoonmaker are credited with popularizing the word "Pride" to describe these festivities. As LGBT rights activist Tom Limoncelli put it, "The next time someone asks you why LGBT Pride marches exist or why [LGBT] Pride Month is in June tell them 'A bisexual woman named Brenda Howard thought it should be.'"

On six occasions, the President of the United States has officially declared a Pride Month. First, President Bill Clinton declared June "Gay & Lesbian Pride Month" on June 2, 2000. Then, in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, President Barack Obama declared June Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month.

(from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_Pride_Month#LGBT_Pride_Month)

"I call upon all Americans to observe this month by fighting prejudice and discrimination in their own lives and everywhere it exists." – Proclamation by U.S. President Barack Obama, May 31, 2011





NEWSLETTER YOUTH SECTION

AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

United States Consulate General. Chennai, India

Do you know your state capitals?



USA Trivia Quiz

- 1) What is the capital city of the most populous state in the USA?
- 2) Which state's capital is known as the "Mile High City"?
- 3) What is the capital city of the smallest state in the USA by area?
- 4) What is the capital of the least populated state?
- 5) What is the capital of the largest state by area?
- 6) What is the capital of the only U.S. state that is made up of a group of islands?
- 7) What is the capital of the U.S. state known as the "Empire State"?
- 8) Which state's capital city is actually a French word meaning "from the monks"?

ANSWERS: 1) Sacramento (California); 2) Colorado (Denver); 3) Providence (Rhode Island); 4) Cheyenne (Wyoming); 5) Juneau (Alaska); 6) Honolulu (Hawaii); 7) Albany (New York); 8) Iowa (Des Moines)