



# Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute

Predeparture  
Orientation



# General Tips

- **Visa**
  - Apply for a Visa now (if you'll need one and haven't already)!
  - Carry passport photos (if you need them at the border)
  - Know your status when at the immigration counter
- **Holidays**
  - Religious, regional and national
- **Converter** for electronics
  - Hairdryers require specific voltage
- **Money**
  - Call your credit card company. Ask about your debit card.
- **Pack smart!**
  - Pack in carry-on: medications, valuable items and laptop





# Clothing Tips

- Clothing should be:
  - **Weather appropriate (look up the seasonal climate in advance!)**
  - **Worth ruining**
- Consider buying **local** items
  - May get items tailored and made to fit
- Bring good **walking** shoes & sandals
- Bring layers for cooler nights
- For women:
  - May wish to travel with a light **scarf** or **dupatta**





# Food

- Always **wash hands** before eating or use hand sanitizer
- **Don't** eat street food!
- Be prepared to eat with your **right hand**. Give and receive with your right hand; not your left (this includes money!).
- Hosts will often offer more than you can eat.
- Tipping a small amount in restaurants is standard –**round up!**





# Hygiene

- Baby wipes
  - May be used as toilet paper, hand or body cleanser and for wiping down surfaces
- Hand sanitizer
  - For traveling and when soap is unavailable
- General washroom etiquette
  - Some toilets are **squat style**
  - Unless in tourist areas, toilet paper may be scarce (most bathrooms have water instead). Have **toilet paper** on hand while traveling (on trains, etc.).
- Feminine products
  - Ability to buy tampons may be limited



# Water

- Check **bottle caps** to make sure bottles are sealed (bottles are often re-filled due to expense)
- Boil or purify at *ALL* times.
- Beware of ice cubes!
  - When in doubt, check with restaurant owners and friends to see where water for the ice came from – or stick to hot beverages.



# Gender and Sexuality

- In some areas, **gender relations** may be restricted
  - Restaurants may have family sections
  - Transport may have women-only cars
  - Hotels may have women-only floors
- Students of both genders should **avoid traveling alone**
  - Respect local dress and customs
  - Avoid taking public transport alone after dark
- Be prepared for **unwanted attention**
  - Staring & comments
  - Crowded spaces
- **Global Support Services**
  - [elizabeth\\_esparza@harvard.edu](mailto:elizabeth_esparza@harvard.edu) - Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives, GSS
    - Elizabeth is responsible for the operational management of global safety and security programs, with a particular emphasis on sex- and gender-based threats and violent environments.



# Transportation

## Busses and Trains

- Don't travel at night!
- Try to avoid traveling alone.

## Overview of \$ and Types

- Cycle-rickshaws -\$\$
  - Better for shorter distances
- Auto-rickshaws (rickshaws, trishaws) -\$\$\$\$
  - Sometimes find “shared auto rickshaws” which are even cheaper.
- Private – Cabs - \$\$\$\$\$\$
  - Can often be expensive but avoids crowds.
- Uber and Ola





# Health

- Use **preventative measures** when possible!
  - Vaccinations as needed at least 6-8 weeks ahead of travel.
- Do your research!
  - Go onto [internationalsos.com](http://internationalsos.com) and review your country report to **see** what diseases are endemic
- In most parts of South Asia, malaria and dengue are risks.
  - Be vigilant with mosquito repellent in these areas.
- Exercise care around stray animals
  - Rabies is a present in-region risk!
- Medications
  - Bring or purchase **oral rehydration salts (ORS)**
  - Pack prescribed **antibiotics**
  - If you forget to bring regular medications, procure these abroad working with International SOS and GSS



## Emergency Resources

- Know the emergency number for your country of travel (equivalent to “911”)
- **If a medical or safety incident happens to you, seek help. Call ISOS at +1-617-998-0000. This is a 24/7 number and they will report back to Harvard.**



# Safety

- Check for fire extinguishers and working fire alarms;  
Always know where emergency exits are.
- Be aware of standard and extreme weather phenomena
  - Pack a “go” bag
- Pickpocketing
  - Try to blend in when possible (don’t act like a tourist)
  - Keep expensive items (cameras, laptops) out of view, when possible

# In-Region Contacts and Resources

## Mittal Institute India (Delhi)

- The Mittal Institute maintains an office in Delhi. The contacts below can be great resources
- **Contacts:**
  - **SANJAY KUMAR**, Country Director  
([sanjay\\_kumar@harvard.edu](mailto:sanjay_kumar@harvard.edu))
  - **FARHANA SIDDIQUI**, Staff Assistant  
([farhana@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:farhana@fas.harvard.edu))

## Other Resources:

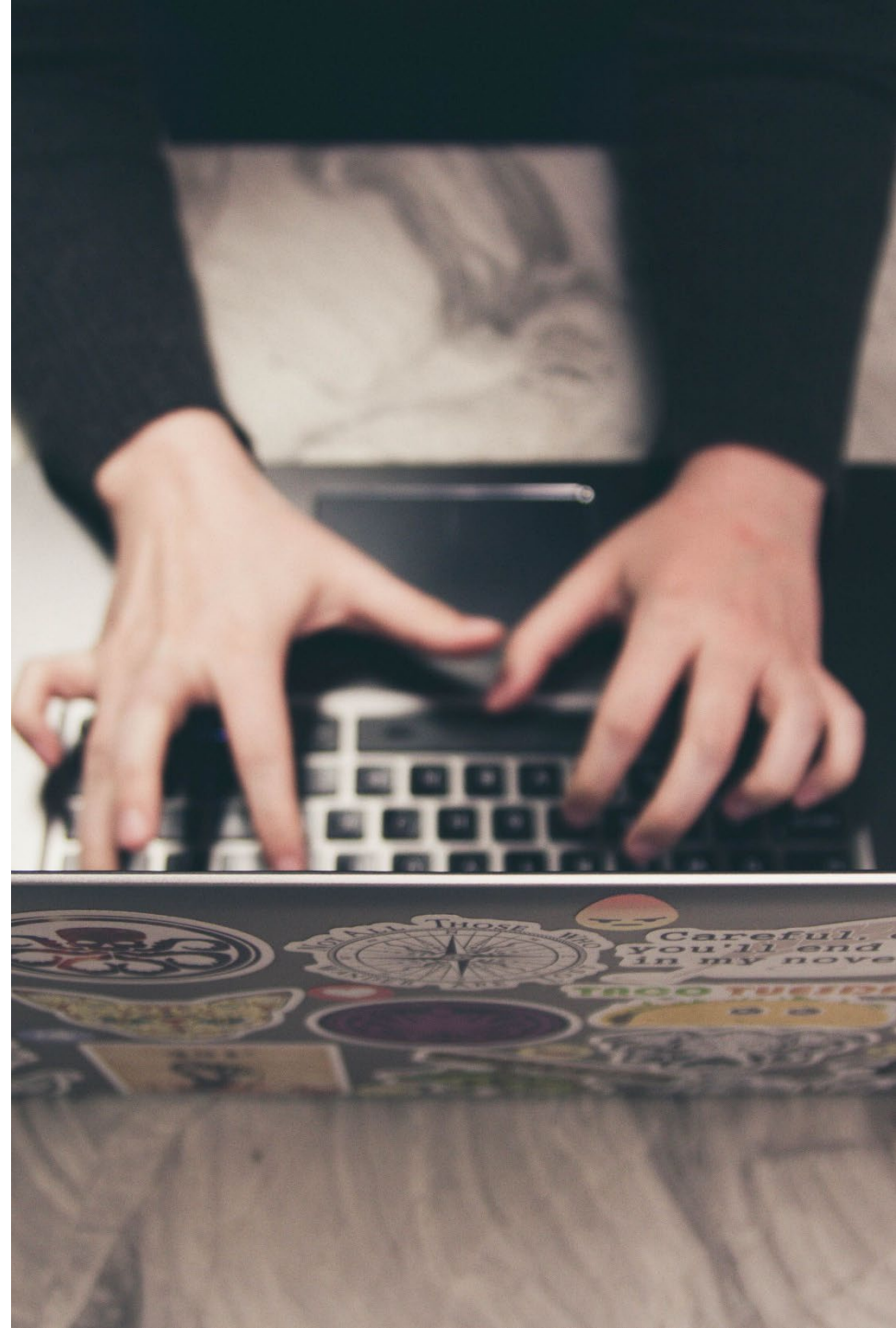
- **Amazon.in/flipkart.com** for online shopping
- **IRCTC.co.in** for national railways tickets
- **Cleartrip.com and goibibo.com** for flight bookings
- **Zomato** for restaurant reviews
- **Bookmyshow.com** for movies, plays, event bookings





# Keep in Touch with MI

- Check out our Facebook Page!
- Submit posts for our newsletter!
- **Contact MI** with any questions or concerns
  - Selmon Rafey, Program Coordinator  
[srafey@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:srafey@fas.harvard.edu)  
(617) 496-4289
- Stay up to date with **in-region events**
- Follow the Mittal Institute on Twitter and Instagram: [@mittalinstitute](https://twitter.com/mittalinstitute)



# Travel Requirements



- Check **US State Department** website for security updates
- Update **Harvard Travel Registry** for independent trips
- Refer to **Harvard Travel Assist** for medical and safety emergencies and non-emergency help and advice
  - +1-617-998-0000
  - [www.globalsupport.harvard.edu](http://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu)



# After the grant...

You are required to submit the following to **Selmon Rafey** ([srafey@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:srafey@fas.harvard.edu)) after your trip:

- A **reflective report** of 2-3 pages detailing your experiences
- Photos of your experiences
- An approximate **expense report**



**Questions?**