

Acclaim for our Institute in Florida

■ **On the move** – Despite the smallness of the train station, it was a major event: the departure of the Max Planck Society's Science Express last fall as it began its trip through India. India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel were personally on hand in Delhi as the rolling exhibition with our scientific displays set off on its journey (see also "On Track for Discovery," p. 85). As a member of the German delegation, the visit afforded me the opportunity to learn more about India and, above all, about the research being conducted there. Although the country has thus far played only a limited role in international science, its potential is extraordinary. In recent years, the Max Planck Society has substantially intensified its cooperation with India, with the result that there are now a total of 10 Max Planck Partner Groups working on the subcontinent. A large number of junior scientists from India are also taking part in the "Max Planck India Fellowships" program. Since 2004, this program has been supporting top young Indian researchers who wish to spend time at our institutes. Both initiatives are due to be expanded even further. In addition, we also have plans for new activities in India: research groups and perhaps even a Partner Institute on Indian soil are currently being negotiated.

■ **On the rise** – Our plans for a Max Planck Institute in Florida – as reported in the last issue of MAXPLANCKRESEARCH – are progressively taking more concrete shape. On a visit to Florida shortly before Christmas, our delegation received a very special gift from the state governor: he gave his assurance that the State of Florida would contribute 94 million dollars to help finance the institute. And since Palm Beach County is contributing an equal amount, the project is now definitely under way. The euphoria with which our project is being supported, and even celebrated, in the US is overwhelming. It is a very special feeling when a whole auditorium responds with a standing ovation to the governor's announcement that the Max Planck Institute will indeed be established. A presentation of our research activities and a description of the plans for the Florida institute met with an equally enthusiastic reception. Such recognition, especially in the US, is an indication of just how highly the Max Planck Society, and indeed German research as a whole, is valued far beyond Germany's borders.

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■ **On the mark** – The example of Florida also demonstrates how welcome the Max Planck Institutes are as partners to other scientific institutions and how much they are appreciated as an economic factor. In West Palm Beach we will be working together with the renowned Scripps Institute and the aspiring Florida Atlantic University – both on scientific projects and in the training of doctoral students. In Germany, our Max Planck Institutes have long been recognized as centers of focus for innovative research. Here, too, the magic word is clustering – universi-



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ties, research institutions and industry working closely together in selected fields on a regional basis in order to pool their strengths and achieve greater impact and visibility. International studies have actually shown that such clusters are more likely to prevail in the face of global competition than an overabundance of fragmented individual initiatives. Consequently, these centers are able to attract outstanding talent in their particular field. The variety of participants in a cluster not only provides critical mass, but also offers a broad spectrum of methodologies and specializations. A number of scientific clusters in Germany have developed with the involvement of our institutes. Their success and their resonance speak for themselves. Through activities such as those taking place in Florida, the Max Planck Society is also promoting interaction between the excellence that Germany has to offer and the opportunities that exist internationally – to the benefit of all concerned.

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