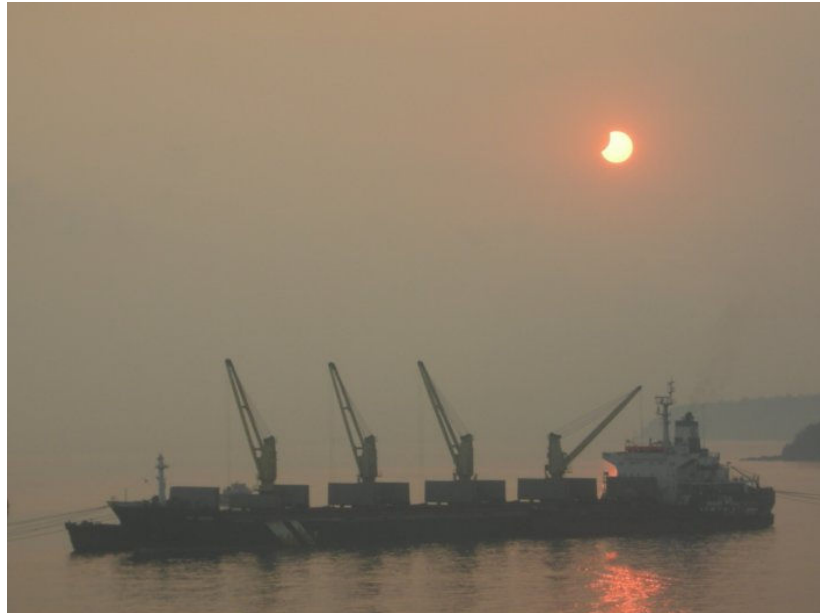


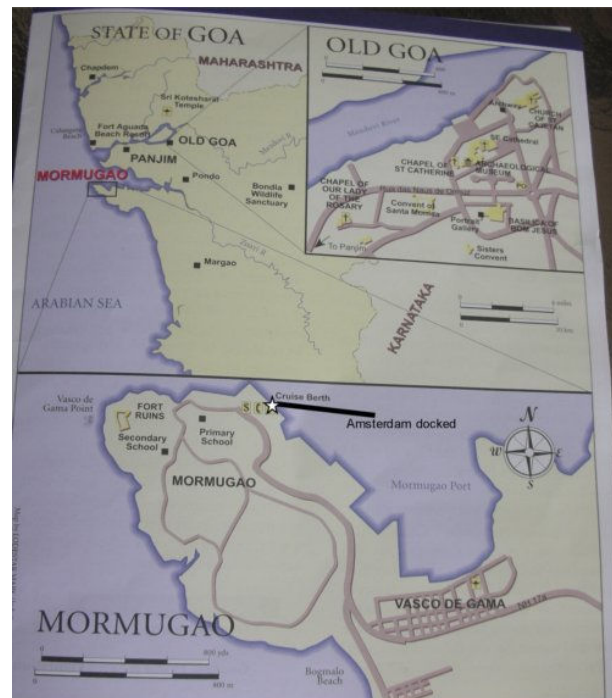
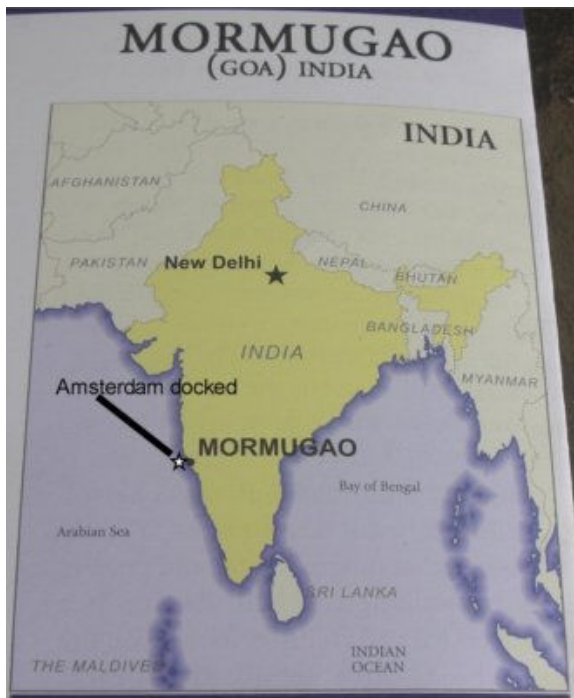
3/19/07 Day 63 –
 Mormugao, India - Monday
 19 March 2007: The day
 started in an unusual way.
 We docked in Mormugao
 Port about 7am and when we
 went out to survey our
 surroundings we saw that
 there was an eclipse of the
 sun underway. It was a very
 hazy morning so we could
 not look directly at the sun.
 We just caught the tail end
 of the eclipse but we got
 the picture of it on the right
 to start off the day.



In addition to the sun eclipse this picture also shows one of several large bulk carrier ships that were moored in the harbor. These ships had cranes with clamshell type buckets that could move iron ore in or out of the storage space below the main deck.

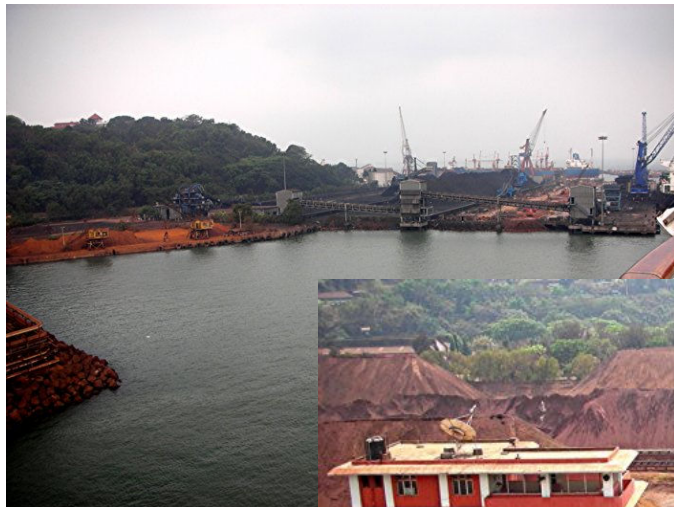
We found several variations for the spelling of the port name, Mormugao. The large maps and globes in the Amsterdam public areas spell it "Marmagoa". Other printed matter put out by the Amsterdam spell the name alternately "Mormugoa" or "Mormugao" sometimes with the different spelling on the same piece of paper. In the 1500s the Portuguese merchants made this region, called Goa, their headquarters for the spice trade. The Portuguese influence shaped the history of Goa from the 1500s up until 1961 when Portugal finally gave up the colony.

The port of Mormugao is located about half way up the west coast of India. These maps show where we were located.



The place where we docked was unusual for a cruise ship. We were located in the middle of a facility for handling iron ore. The ore was in the form of gravel that was moved by large conveyor belts, cranes with buckets, and small boats that plied back and forth between the pier and the large bulk carriers moored in the harbor. Here are some scenes we could see from the ship.

In the view shown on the right the white tour buses and taxis are seen lined up waiting for passengers to leave the ship. Piles of iron ore are located between the pier and the hillside in the background.





In the picture on the left a large bulk carrier is seen removing water from the holds prior to loading up with iron ore. When fully loaded the ship will sink down so the red painted hull will be under water. The ore was being loaded by way of conveyor belt type cranes that can be seen cantilevered over the middle part of the ship.

We recently attended a presentation by the Environmental Officer on the Amsterdam. He said that the tanks of water carried on the Amsterdam as ballast to provide stability may contain organisms that were native to the waters where it was obtained. Because those organisms may be harmful to organisms and structures in other locations the Amsterdam cannot off-load the ballast water except under strictly controlled conditions. We were wondering if strict rules were applied before they started pumping the ballast water out of this bulk carrier into the Mormugao Harbor.

About 9am we decided to go ashore and take a tour on our own without the aid of a professional guide. We were met at the head of the pier by a horde of men all wanting to provide us taxi service. The noise from the nearby conveyor belt and other iron ore handling equipment produced a deafening roar and coupled with the language problem it slowed down the process of contracting for a taxi. We eventually negotiated for a round trip taxi ride to the nearby historical cities of Goa and Panjim over a four hour period. We ended up with a taxi and driver but no air conditioning for a total charge of \$40 USD. The driver's name was Sam and he turned out to be a good driver with enough English capability to answer our questions and do the things we wanted to do. The ability to speak English seemed to be more widespread in the Goa area compared to what we found in Cochin.



Sam first took us through the little town of Vasco da Gama just 2km from the ship. It can be found on the map shown above.

We were on our way to the old city of Goa and then on to Panjim, which is the capital of the state of Goa. The round trip was about 25 miles of narrow but fairly smooth blacktopped road. India is a left hand traffic country but Sam and the other drivers made good use of both sides of the road as we went along.



As we approached the city of Goa Sam took us by some houses. He estimated that some of these homes sell for the equivalent of \$500,000 to \$700,000 USD. It would seem that a very small fraction of the population could afford houses costing that much so he may have over estimated a bit.

Regarding economic comparisons, Sam also said that gasoline costs the equivalent of about \$5 USD per gallon.





Near these substantial homes was a tent city, shown on the right that looked fairly permanent on the shore of the Mandovi River. These were obviously people on the other end of the economic spectrum from people living in the homes we had just seen.

In the city of Old Goa we visited one of the most famous landmarks, the Basilica of Born Jesus which is a beautiful old building. Across the street is the Convent of Jesuits which served as a training center and repository for Jesuit priests who ventured into Asian territories as missionaries. The Basilica and Convent were crowded with tourists so we didn't stay around long.



We got back into the taxi and Sam took us to an upscale carpet store where we were treated to a demonstration of how silk carpets are laboriously made along with a high pressure sales pitch. While we were there we made use of their first class toilet facilities but then



decided that the \$4000 USD price for a 5 by 8 foot silk carpet was too much. With apologies we exited the city of Goa and Sam took us to the larger city of Panjim. Here is an example of a general store in one of the villages along the road to Panjim.

We also ran across a herd of water buffalo being taken down the road to pasture.

We never did see the classical case of the lone sacred cow standing in the road and blocking traffic.

We found Panjim more interesting than the city of Goa. Barbara found a couple cashmere shawls that she liked and we bought those. The store had an exquisite display of a replica of the Taj Mahal made out of white marble. We didn't bother to ask what price they wanted for that.



The sales clerk spoke excellent English which he claimed was learned from English speaking customers. He later posed with Barbara and the uniformed doorman out front.



On the right is a street scene outside the store where we had shopped.

Around the corner we were treated to a wonderful view of a large Catholic Church that we had seen used in tee shirt advertisements for the state of Goa.

About 30 percent of the people in the state of Goa are Christian and most of those are Catholic. Our taxi driver was Catholic as indicated by the Rosary Beads and cross hanging from his rear view mirror.



However, there is some Protestant representation as suggested by this "New Life" highway billboard sign that we saw later.



A park in the middle of Panjim had a beautiful old tree growing along with palm trees and some bougainvillea shrubs. It made a wonderful contrast with the busy commercial district around it.

In Panjim there were several construction sites and modern apartment buildings were visible.

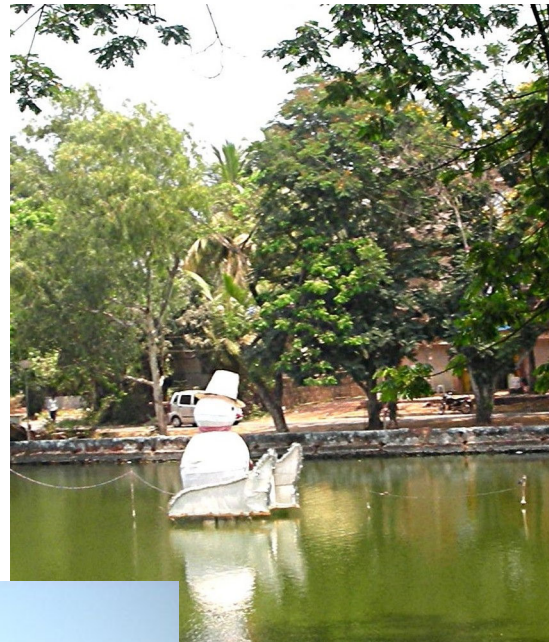


We were surprised by the number of roadside billboard signs like the one shown on the right. They were usually in English and we surmised that the target



audience of the signs was probably the more wealthy people who usually speak English.

Sam took us back to Mormugao and the Amsterdam. The taxi without air conditioning worked out fine because the temperature and humidity was comfortable with the windows partially open so we got a little breeze. On the way back through the village of Vasco da Gama our driver paused so we could get this last photo of a sight that we found curious. There was a lack of any connection with a warm March afternoon in India. In the village park they had placed a snowman in a white sled in the middle of a pond. We thought this demonstrated a light hearted humor that we could identify with in this foreign land.



We said good bye to our driver, Sam, and got back on board the Amsterdam.

The ship got underway for Mumbai, India about 5pm.

