

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Persons violating Indian laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. For example, certain comments or gestures towards women or about religion that are legal in the United States may be considered a criminal violation in India, subjecting the accused to possible fines or imprisonment. Furthermore, since the police may arrest anyone who is accused of committing a crime (even if the allegation is frivolous in nature), the Indian criminal justice system is often used to escalate personal disagreements into criminal charges. This practice has been increasingly exploited by dissatisfied business partners, contractors, estranged spouses, or other persons with whom the U.S. citizen has a disagreement, occasionally resulting in the jailing of U.S. citizens pending resolution of their disputes. At the very least, such circumstances can delay the U.S. citizen's timely departure from India, and may result in an unintended long-term stay in the country. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in India are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in India is a crime, and is prosecutable in the United States. Please see our information on [Criminal Penalties](#).