

# SA delegation in India to study Constitution

**By A Staff Reporter**

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**S**outh Africa will forge links in forming a rim of Indian Ocean countries so that there is much more interaction with India and the other surrounding nations. This was stated by Frene Ginwala, speaker of the national assembly of South Africa.

She said the previous government developed nuclear weapons in secret. "But after that, South Africa did something unique in destroying all its nuclear weapons. At present, we do not have a nuclear power station. So now, we speak with moral responsibility," she said.

Ms Ginwala led a nine-member delegation to India to study how the Constitution had helped democracy here to thrive. Right now, a draft Constitution for South Africa is ready, according to some of the delegates. This interim Constitution will be valid for another two years. The final Constitution will be ready within the next five years.

Elaborating on what Ms Ginwala said, the other delegates said the Constitution stipulated that South Africa would be a unitary state. There are 13 ethnic groups having their own separate language. The other delegates said they were preparing certain principles regarding the Afrikaner's right to self-determination within a certain territory. This report would be ready in January.

"I came here to find out how and why democracy works. Disparities of caste and religion are present in your country, still democracy has worked for 50 years. But I have been overwhelmed by the enormity of this task. South Africa has a population of 42 million against India's 900 million," Ms Ginwala said.

"There are several areas (in the draft Constitution) which are still being negotiated. Since there is no way to find out exactly what the South African people wanted, one has to compromise. One area which

has still to be determined is whether political parties who were not represented in the elections have a right to have their views recorded in the Constitution," the speaker added.

The question of the relationship between the country's provinces and the Centre has still to be determined. "For example, which powers should be exclusive to the state, which areas should be deemed to be concurrent between the Centre and the states and where should the Centre have overriding powers," were still to be thrashed out, the delegates clarified.

There were no fundamental differences on the bill of rights. The extent of minority rights were yet to be determined. Another point of view was "do we need minority rights? Rights are for all citizens irrespective of the group they belong to," said some of the delegate members.