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TRADE MISSION WOULD BE SECOND TO ASIA THIS YEAR

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**BODY:**

SILVER SPRING - -Gov. Martin O'Malley is planning to lead a trade mission to India, he said Tuesday, in what would be his second international trip this year.

O'Malley said the purpose of the trip is jobs and that he hopes to go "before the year's end."

"We're working on it," O'Malley said. "We promote the competitive strengths of Maryland." He listed life sciences, biotech, information technology and health care as among those strengths.

India is Maryland's 12th-largest trading partner, and the state is host to offices of five Indian companies, according to the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. About 50 Maryland companies have offices in India.

In June, O'Malley led nearly 70 business leaders, educators and officials on a trade mission to China, South Korea and Vietnam. The 10-day trip cost taxpayers \$164,000. The governor said it netted \$85 million in deals between companies in Maryland and Asia.

O'Malley did not provide details on the India trip, which he said is still in the planning phase. He spoke of the trip after an event at Montgomery College designed to promote a new link between the school and Discovery Communications in Silver Spring. The company is launching an ad campaign to persuade midcareer workers to enroll in community colleges.

"This is clearly a challenging time in our country with high unemployment," Duncan said U.S. Education Secretary

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Arne Duncan, who attended the event. He said 2 million jobs in the U.S. are unfilled because employers are unable to find workers with the needed skills.

He said the "skills gap" could be addressed by community colleges, institutions that he said are nimble enough to adjust their curriculums to meet training needs for high-skills jobs such as nursing.

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