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***Coming up Trumps
Down Under***



NEW MEDIA

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CORRIGENDUM

The AIBC (Australia-India Business Council) logo has been used inadvertently in the first announcement of the Indo-Australian Business Excellence Award along with those of other facilitators. We regret the inconvenience caused. - Ed



Dear Readers,

Greetings. It's summer time in India, with students across the country keenly looking for a higher education that offers them better careers, a promising future and possible immigration. It's not surprising that Australian universities offer such an education to bright Indian students. The current issue of Indo-Australian Business focuses on education, the most sought-after asset by the middle classes in India today. We present a Road Show by the Planet Group, which has been in the business of guiding students seeking an entry into Australian educational institutions. Counseling does not mean decision-making, says Planet's Sanket Shah. We also carry an interview with Matchindra Chate, of the popular Chate Coaching Classes, who talks about an ambitious study tour he is organizing for his students in Australia. Besides, have a detailed write-up on the leading Australian universities and the courses they offer. We foresee the strengthening of bonds between India and Australia in the field of education in the near future. Indo-Australian Business is keen on promoting educational tie-ups between the two countries. We believe knowledge has always been India's forte. The country's ancient wisdom has its roots in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the epics of Ramayana and the Mahabharata and countless puranas and shastras. If India is an acknowledged global leader in the knowledge industry of Information Technology, it is because of the country's strong foundations in scholarship, dating back to several thousands of years. So India has a lot to share with other countries in this field. One area in which the Australian companies are keen on having joint ventures with India is infrastructure. Doroty Mehta discusses India's infrastructure needs and the Australian capability to meet them. Logistics is in a sense, part of infrastructure. Pegasus Shipping MD Dilip Mehta talks about the tough times the logistics people face in meeting their demanding schedules against all bureaucratic odds. In an interaction with New Media journalists, members of the Mumbai-based Trade Commissioners' Forum say that India is moving along the right reform path. Which is also why some visiting delegates from Australian retail companies recently went sniffing around for joint ventures with Indian stores. In our High Spirits section, we throw you to the Australian wolves to enjoy their howling. We believe, as a write-up says that wine is big business, not just a glass of the bubbly. In real estate, we have Shashank Paranjape passionately talking about Athashri, a housing project for the senior citizens. In the same section, we highlight the objectives of PLM India, which includes facility management. In tourism, we have a write-up on Tourism Australia showcasing a basket of colours Down Under. We also present you the unexplored and yet beautiful Northern Territory, plus some 'capital' stuff on Canberra.

Wish you happy reading.

Satya Swaroop
Managing Editor
satya@newmediacomm.biz

Shopping has never been so much fun...

Australian firms keen to enter Indian retail trade

The retail revolution in India is at its peak with the mushrooming of malls and stores selling apparel, fashion products, cosmetics and groceries in metros such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai and cities like Bangalore, Pune and Hyderabad. The big shopping malls have become an indispensable part of our holidays where we spend hours, not necessarily buying things but keeping ourselves updated with the latest cosmetics range launched by Lakme or the in-thing in the apparel segment. Shoppers' Stop, Big Bazaar, Globus, the Crossroads, Pantaloon, Westside, Life Style, etc., have all grabbed a place in our lives. But surprisingly, the retail trade did not even have recognition of any sort a few years back, not to talk about FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) being allowed into this sector.

Keeping a pace with India's retail boom is the retail segment in Australia that comprises around 3,21,000 establishments, \$215 billion annual turnover and employs more than 1.5 million people. The annual export growth in the retail segment in Australia is around 15 per cent. Currently when both India and Australia are partners in every sector, then how can retail trade be far behind?

With a principal objective to be the voice of the retail sector in India, the major retailers came together and

launched the Retailers Association of India (**rai**) in 2004. The CEO of **rai** Gibson G. Vedamani in association with Austrade had organized a presentation and an interactive session for the Australian retail delegation that has visited Mumbai on the 21st of February.

The presentation started with the address of the CEO, Gibson Vedamani followed by the brief idea given by the Australian Consul General about the growing potential of India as a retail business destination. He quoted that the trade between India and Australia by 30th of June 2004 had reached A\$4.86 billion which was 40 per cent higher than the previous year and this year the rise is expected to be more than 30 per cent. There are 300 new malls coming up in India with 1500 super markets. Hence, this visit was the first step towards exploring possibilities of trading with Australian companies.

"We in Austrade are confident that with the rapid development of the organised retail sector in India there will be many opportunities for Australian manufacturers to supply high quality products to the malls and supermarkets. This could be processed food and beverages, confectionery, wine, cosmetics, fashion clothing and consumer products of all kinds from toys to spa baths", said Don Cairns, the Australian Consul General while making the presentation.



Consul General Don Cairns, talking to a member of the retail delegation. (R) **rai**, CEO, Gibson Vedamani listens to them.

Vedamani agreed to what Don said and he highlighted the modern retailing in India. Food only accounts for 15 per cent of the entire retail segment. There are ways for the foreign retailers to venture into Indian market, may be through franchisees, just like Marks and Spencer, Shoppers' Stop etc., said Vedamani. "The capability to co-exist is the uniqueness of the retail market in India, with a diverse customer base,



On the Australian side, the delegation seemed satisfied. The representative from Quest, Australia, Leigh Colley said that he is positive about doing business with India. "With a broader market, fast food chains coming up, I see a tremendous scope", said Colley, whose company deals in intelligent computer peripherals and point of sale terminals.

Apart from Quest, the delegation comprised Australian companies like Quicksilver,

dealing with adventure wear (apparel's sector), TDC, solution providers to retail and whole businesses, Golden Boronia, dealing with nougats, Sax, dealing with cosmetics and personal care products and fashion accessories and Classis that is the International Master Franchiser for premium ice-cream café.

different food habit and scope for transformation", he said. In tune with the growth of the industry, there are proposals to create one million jobs in the modern retail sector with a broad scope for highway malls.

Apart from the Australian delegation, from the Indian side, there were the CEOs from Shoppers' Stop, Globus, and Crossroads with other representatives from the retail industry present at the presentation. K. N. Iyer, the CEO, Crossroads, gave a backgrounder about the organization and its future plans of conceptualizing the Food retail project that involves **Trumart** of 8000 square feet including **Trumart Daily** and **Trumart Hyper**. The group has plans of opening 25 clusters in Mumbai and 10 in Pune. The fourth proposal is the Family Entertainment Center (FEC) of Crossroads, which will be called **Zamin**. He also announced that Crossroad would be keen to tie up with any of the Australian companies showing interest in these projects. "India is a virgin market for consumer durables, food products", said Iyer.

The CEO, Globus, Vinay Natkarni talked about the challenges that any foreign player would have to face while entering in the Indian retail segment. While interacting with Indo-Australian Business, he said that there is a possibility of a tie-up with Australian companies, provided there would be some value addition to the existing establishment.

In October this year, Shoppers Stop will be sponsoring an "Australia Fest" for one month in all its stores in ten cities across India. This will feature Australian products of all kinds plus singers, musicians, academicians, tourist bodies, education institutes and chefs preparing Australian food. This will give a huge boost to Australia's profile in India."

- Don Cairns

The Australian group also attended a presentation from ICICI Bank, Corporate Property Services Group who told them of the vast expansion in retailing in India and details of foreign involvement.

Then the delegation visited the shops in Phoenix Mills including the Big Bazaar and Pantaloons. At the end of the day, they also drove to Inorbit Mall in Malad for a presentation by the Shoppers Stop management on their retail development plans in India and an inspection of many of the stores in the mall.

By Rojita Padhy



The members of **rai**, Australian retail delegation with the Consul General and others.

Australian ICT - In Pursuit of the Best & the Brightest



Australia's peak industry agencies representing companies and professionals in the ICT industry, the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) and the Australian Computer Society (ACS) have shown their determination to attract the best students to the sector by reaching agreement to jointly back the ACS Foundation.

Established in 2001 by the ACS, the ACS Foundation is a leading provider of scholarship and research funding for the ICT sector. To date, the ACS Foundation has raised more than \$5 million in cash and in kind contributions, which has funded more than 400 scholarships and research grants for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Those students have studied or are studying in higher education institutes in all the states and territories of Australia.

ACS Foundation Executive Director John Ridge said obtaining AIIA endorsement is a "huge step forward" and reflects the determination of the ICT sector to seek out, encourage and develop tomorrow's industry leaders.

"The opportunity for the Foundation and AIIA, with its many hundreds of successful member companies, to work together is one of the most exciting developments in the ICT sector in 2005, and will be warmly received by the whole industry," he said.

Ridge's remarks followed moves by AIIA's two senior executives - Chairman, John Price, and Chief Executive Officer, Rob Durie - to recognise and affirm the work of the Foundation.

"AIIA has a strong commitment to promoting education, skills and training in the Australian ICT industry," said Price. "The ACS Foundation has an important role to play in advancing our industry. We hope, with AIIA's endorsement, the Foundation will be able to further its vital contribution through sponsorship for industry-specific training and research projects."

Similar comments were echoed by Durie, who said AIIA, the ACS and the ACS Foundation share a common vision in the education and skills space.

"All three organisations place a strong emphasis on the importance of a highly-skilled workforce in the growth of Australia's ICT industry. This new partnership will ensure that we are all working together to achieve the same goal," Durie said.

The unity of purpose apparent between the ICT industry's professional association and the leading industry body ensures a bright future for the Foundation, which has so far exceeded all expectations in terms of the number and value of scholarships awarded.

ACS Chief Executive Officer, Dennis Furini, is pleased with AIIA's involvement and said, "The ACS is happy to see the progress of the Foundation over the years and its contribution to the ICT industry since the ACS helped to establish it in 2001. The ACS will continue to support the ACS Foundation financially, in kind as well as whatever the ACS can afford to ensure the continuous success of the Foundation."

Since its formation, the ACS Foundation has attracted an impressive level of support from leading industry players like Compuware, Altirus, Intersystems, IBM, Microsoft, Sun, Motorola and many more. It has also attracted funding from outside the industry with organisations like Wesfarmers, American Express, Cadbury Schweppes, Target and the Graphic Arts and Merchants Association of Australia (GAMAA), playing an active role.

"These and other sponsoring organisations all have a significant investment in ICT and recognise that nearly 70 per cent of the people employed in ICT work outside the 'industry'," Ridge said.

"We are currently seeing a huge uptake in support for the Foundation's scholarship programs, with more companies looking to integrate or augment their graduate programs through the ACS Foundation," Ridge said.

'Work Integrated Learning' scholarships are proving especially popular, since they represent a great opportunity for students to gain valuable work experience as well as obtaining their degree.

"As the ACS Foundation continues to expand its range of programs we're delighted to have the formal backing of AIIA. With the ICT industry acting as one on education, research and skills issues we will be in a better position to ensure governments also play their part in ensuring that the education system is aligned to meeting the sector's future needs," Ridge said.

ACS President, Edward Mandla said he is excited by the joint announcement and the closer ties that the ACS and the AIIA are building. "We welcome the AIIA involvement in the ACS Foundation, and congratulate the ACS Foundation for their foresight in bringing about this terrific partnership. The ACS will continue to

examine opportunities for the ACS and the AIIA to work together for the mutual benefit of the industry," Mandla said.

The ACS Foundation is an initiative of the Australian Computer Society. It was established in August 2001 to encourage both private and public sponsorship of ICT education and research projects, for the benefit of the professionals working in ICT, and ultimately the industry itself. By increasing the funding opportunities for contributions to education programs, the ACS Foundation seeks to create a highly skilled workforce, and more ability to effectively access research and industry-specific training. The only national scholarship facilitator focused exclusively on supporting the ICT industry, the ACS Foundation receives funding from ICT & non-ICT companies,



industry associations, government bodies, individuals and the ACS itself.

The Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) on its part assists the ICT industry to meet its business objectives, locally

and globally in corporate and government markets. Together, the ACS Foundation and AIIA set the strategic direction of the industry. The two bodies influence public policy, engage industry stakeholders and provide our members with business productivity tools, advisory services and market intelligence to accelerate their business growth.

The Australian Computer Society (ACS) is the recognised professional association for those working in Information and Communications Technology, seeking to raise the standing of ICT professionals and represent their views to government, industry and the community. A member of the Australian Council of Professions, the ACS is the guardian of professional ethics and standards in the ICT sector, committed to ensuring the beneficial use of ICT for all Australians. It provides both members and non-members with opportunities for professional education, networking and certification, as well as enabling them to contribute to the development of their profession.



The Road to Australian Universities

The Show must go on ...

During A roadshow organized by the Planet Group on March 2, 2005, in Mumbai, Indo-Australian Business interacted with the representatives from the various Universities of Australia present there to conduct direct admission tests and interviews. Following is an account of what they had to say about the Indian students visiting Australia for higher education and popular courses offered by these universities. Also, carried is the view from an aspiring student who is a professional model and actress in India looking for a Masters degree from one of the Universities in Australia.

Monash University

I have been coming here for some years now. Traditionally the courses like IT and some management courses are of interest to Indian students. This time I have seen a lot of students interested in accounting, finance, and engineering. In addition, we are seeing some interest in bio-medical science, engineering. The other development has been a shift towards some interest for the under graduate courses. Traditionally, it used to be only for the postgraduate courses so now it is good news for us is that there is a more diversity at the level of studies as well as the areas of interest to the students. We do not have any quotas for the international or especially for Indian students. It is based on eligibility only. Entry to the university is based on the academic performance. Monash has about roughly 20 per cent international students.



Blue Mountain Hotel School

It is a hotel management school and we offer undergraduate and post graduate courses in Hotel and Tourism Management. It is very much like a Swiss school. We offer Swiss qualification as well as Australian. The school is a hotel and the students can live in the campus. We have students from around the world.

We have been coming to India to recruit

students for the last 12 years. Probably 10 per cent students of our campus are from India. The performance of the Indian students in our school has been great. Some of them have gone around the world. Some are working in reputed places in Australia. Some have come back to India. Indian students generally have a very good service attitude. They have very good people skills. Therefore, they are good in the hospitality sector and they tend to get good jobs because of their good attitude.



La Trobe University

The popular courses in demand by the Indian students in La Trobe University are predominantly engineering and information technology because we have specialized course called biotechnology and bio-informatics, which is very popular as well. Apart from this, we have courses on normal MBAs and undergraduate courses. For Indian market IT and engineering courses. Since last two years, I have been coming here. The number of Indian students studying in La



Trobe University is increasing. Between 2001 and 2005, it has increased almost by 70 per cent. I have studied in New Zealand and migrated to Australia. I am born and brought up in India. To talk about the recent generations' interest towards Australia as a next study destination, surely they are looking at a different lifestyle. Australia is much more relaxed. It is one country where you can really concentrate on studies.

Wollongong University

It has all postgraduate courses to IT, Engineering and telecommunications. So, that is what we are teaching along with environment science. We have nearly 4000 international students. Total student population in IT is 1000.

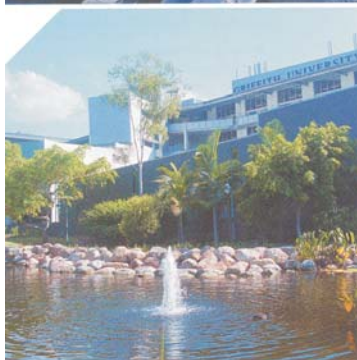
USQ University (University of Southern Queensland)

It offers a different kind of experience as one of the major cities in Australia. The cost of leaving is lower and generally, the programme cost is lower. We have an international campus in Sydney. I have been coming to India for the last four years now and we had some 800 students from India studying in our university and another 700 we expect this year. It will be interesting to see this happening. The programme of interest in our campus is engineering particularly electrical engineering, another area is MBA, and one that is emerging is Masters of Professional Accounting. This is one of the popular programs in Australia. We will be coming back next year also.



Griffith University

We are a comprehensive university so we offer over 400 courses. As far as the Indian choice goes, it is mainly in the areas of business, engineering, and science. The programs that perhaps lacks infrastructure in India for research, very specialized thing are there in Griffith University. However, India is increasingly getting conscious about ranking which we do not have in India. As people are becoming aware of the offerings by Australian institutions, there is increasing demand for courses like Mass Communication, Journalism, animation, film and television in which Australia is world class. There is a shift as you say but it is not a major one. Secondly, one has to accept the fact that Australia is fairly a new player in the market; it remains a destination by default. Students' first preference remains the US, then UK and then Australia. Obviously, the other two countries have a much longer history than what we have. I am here in India every month regularly. India is a large country to cover. We have a number of agents to support the activity. We also have 700 students from India. Our agents are also IDP education, IAEC and others in other cities. The country is large and we need a wider network to cover so we have involved a number of agents.



A student's perspective:

I am Zinnia. I am currently a model and an actress working with a serial in MTV called "Kitni Maast Hai Zindagi". The reason I have chosen Australia for higher studies is because, I read in the Consul General's interview that there is only five per cent unemployment there. This is very good. The other reason is, Australia is not one of those over crowded places. There is still lot of scope for studying, working. In addition, Australia is a beautiful country. Therefore, I have chosen Australia. I am going for the Masters in Hotel Management, in the Gold Coast Region with the Griffith University. I got the information through, advertisement and research. My initial preference was the US, but I opted for Australia because it is a bigger country, lesser number of people, and more opportunities. Griffith University is my choice because it is on Gold Coast, which is one of the best tourist spots in Australia. My study area is also linked with tourism, so Gold Coast and Griffith suits me the best.

A Ready Reckoner of Australian universities & courses

Knowledge Knows No Boundaries

An international education degree in hand has become more of a need than a status symbol for Indians these days. With globalization making its presence felt in every sector, education is not left behind. The number of Indian students enrolling themselves for study in the US, the UK, Australia or Canada every year is rising remarkably. One more benefit, which comes with education, is immigration. However, deciding on the country, the university and the course is not easy for a student.

Australia, emerging as a preferred destination for Indian students, has registered 13,000-20,000 students opting for study in that country until March 2005, according to Rohit Shah, who heads the Mumbai division of the Planet Group that provides counseling to student-aspirants.

Planet group, which has been providing counseling services since 1999, finds a justifiable reason behind this shift. With the US sitting at Level One as a study destination for foreign students, the UK and Australia fall at Level Two. So, what makes Australia so popular, apart from its scenic beauty, its educational infrastructure, world-class teaching techniques, are the recognized universities and the 'working while studying' culture.

Here are some interesting facts registered, by the organizations supporting Indian students to go to Australia prepared by Rojita Padhy.

Courses in demand:

Australia, with 39 Universities, all recognized by the government, provides a varied range of courses. But the courses, which have been in demand for some years, are IT, Engineering, MBA & Human Resources Management. In the past one year, Marketing Management and Bio-technology have taken the front seat.

Some emerging areas of higher studies that are gaining popularity among Indian students are Sports Management, Golf Management, and Master's in Accounting. Griffith University offers courses in Sports and Event Management.

Popular Australian Universities among Indian students:

Among the universities of Australia, the popular ones are Swinburne University for MBA, MIT and Master's in Accounting, Monash University, RMIT College for IT, Engineering, Telecommunication, Griffith University for MBA, IT, HR, Communication courses, University of Technology Sydney

(UTS), University of Western Sydney (UWS), University of Ballrate for MBA course and Central Queensland University.

The universities in Australia have been given a high rating with campuses in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Total expenditure (Tuition Fee, Cost of Living, etc)

It is cheaper to study in Australia compared to the US and UK. That is where the major advantage lies for

Average total cost for a Masters Degree in US\$ including tuition fees and living costs:

| <u>MBA</u> | <u>ARTS</u> | <u>SCIENCE</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Australia 23,518 (1.8 yrs) | 25,718 (2 yrs) | 29,342 (2 yrs) |
| UK 23,119 (1 yr) | 19,071 (1 yr) | 22,220 (1 yr) |
| US Public 41,600 (2 yrs) | 37,593 (2 yrs) | 37,915 (2 yrs) |
| US Private 48,204 (2 yrs) | 68,073 (2 yrs) | 67,574 (2 yrs) |

Average total cost for a Bachelors Degree in US\$ including tuition fees and living costs:

| <u>Business</u> | <u>Arts</u> | <u>Science</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Australia 37,006 (3 yrs) | 36,989 (3 yrs) | 41,890 (3 yrs) |
| UK 56,961 (3 yrs) | 57,300 (3 yrs) | 66,660 (3 yrs) |
| US Public 80,872 (4 yrs) | 80,148 (4 yrs) | 80,872 (4 yrs) |
| US Private 1,37,010 (4 yrs) | 1,37,000 (4 yrs) | 1,02,758 (3 yrs) |

Indian students. Given below is the cost chart.

So, how to go about your studies in Australia?

There are three ways of exploring possibilities of studying in Australia.

I. The Australian Education Center, located at the Australian High Commission in New Delhi. It is a government body, which provides information on the varieties of universities available in Australia and guides the students aspiring to study in Australia.

For further information e-mail to www.aec.India.dfat.gov.au

II. You can get in touch with the Australian institutions directly through AEC or you could visit the website www.studyinaustralia.gov.au, the official site of the Australian government.

III. You could contact the education agents affiliated to AAERI (the Association of Australian Education Representatives in India). The 70 members of AAERI provide counseling to the students and help them in understanding what actually the student want and accordingly they suggest the universities suitable for them. The list of the members could be seen in www.aaeri.org

Of course, the students who are not interested to go through such processes could directly apply at any of the six visa collection centers operated on behalf of the Australian Visa Office called TT Services. The offices are located at New Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad. The website to look at is www.ttsaustraliavisas.com



After deciding which University to go for and what course to study the next step is to arrange your student visa

To process a student visa, the Australian Visa Office takes six to eight weeks. So, let's check some guidelines necessary while applying for an Australian Student Visa:

The estimated cost of living for a student per annum is AUD 12,000.

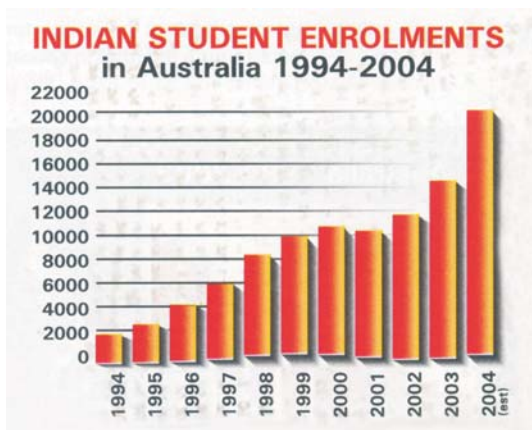
The blood relations are accepted as financial sponsors for the

students.

Students who have dependents with them additional finances need to be shown.

Finances in the form of fixed deposits, provident funds, post office deposits, savings bank accounts etc.

The English language test IELTS score is necessary to be submitted with the visa application. TOEFL is not accepted. The two authorized testing agencies for IELTS are IDP Education Australia and the British Council. The cost of taking an



IELTS test is around Rs.6000 and the test score is valid for a period of two years. The IELTS test cannot be repeated within three months of the previous test.

Apart from all these other requirements that needs to be cleared up are medical checkups, bonafides, tuition fees paid and then the e-COE i.e., electronic Confirmation of Enrolment which comes directly to the Australian visa office along with the student's passport.

Scholarships and Fellowships offered by Australian Universities

The scholarships and fellowships in Australia are generally offered through the government or through education institutes for foreign students though it is limited to post graduate studies only. There are a few organisations, which offers scholarships to international study. With limited scholarships available for international students, there is intense competition for these awards. Australian universities offer a range of postgraduate scholarships to international students predominantly targeting Doctoral and Masters Degrees by research. The course of study and financial support is determined by the university. However, scholarships are not available for international students undertaking English language training in Australia.

The following are the avenues provided for funding, by the Australian Government.

I) Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

ii) Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) is given to the international students from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region to study at Australian universities, vocational education, training institutions and to gain knowledge and skills that will help the development of their home country when they return.

Some other sources of scholarship are:

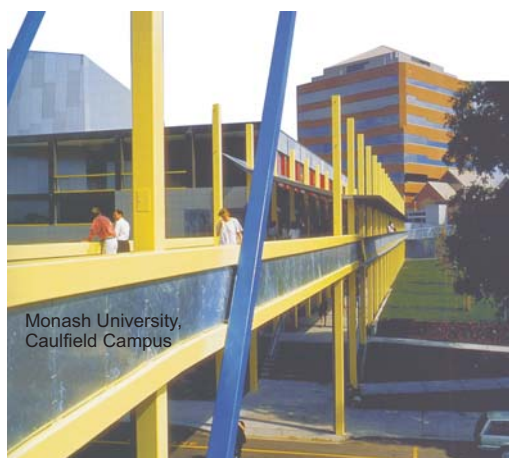
There are certain International and charitable organisations which offer scholarships for international study. If you are interested in this then the application for these scholarships could be made to the representatives of these agencies in the student's home country and not in Australia. The Association of Commonwealth Universities website provides a scholarships guide for Commonwealth postgraduate students offered by governments, Rotary International, World Bank, World Health Organisation, Asian Development Bank, United Nations, Rockefeller Foundation etc.

Working while studying:

The Australian visa allows you to work while studying i.e., as a part time for 20 hours per week during semester and full time during semester vacations. You can apply to the Australian Department of Immigration, Multicultural, Indigenous and Ethnic Affairs for a work permit once you are in Australia. Generally, the part time jobs are usually available in the hospitality, services and retail industries. However, this additional income is never counted as a financial support while you apply for a student visa.

Foreign students are as safe in Australia as they would be in their native countries. The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act remains unique. Any institute offering courses to international students must be registered with the Australian Government's CRICOS system, (the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students). Apart from the safeguards followed by the Australian universities and the government for the security of the international students, it is the people and the place, which gives students a sense of security.

What more do you want...come and step on to the land of Kangaroos...you never know you might discover one in your Australian university campus....



Overseas Consultants of Kolkata, which deals with TAFE, the Government of South Australia, organized this programme with the Mizoram government. I was in Aizwal, the state capital for a month on Teachers Training programme. I was teaching them English. The participants were all High school teachers, and the purpose of the programme was to show them the correct way to teach English in their classrooms and to use various extra aids.

It was a fantastic opportunity for me because it was my first visit to India and the first ever opportunity to meet the Indian people. This came about due to Ashis Pandit of Overseas Consultants who visited Mizoram a number of times, spoke to the key persons in the

bunch of closed flower buds that blossomed into beautiful flowers at the end of the programme. I made a mention of this in the closing session.

The most burning problem, which I can realize through my conversation with the participants, is the size of the class. A teacher is required to manage in between 70 and 100 students which is very high. Hence, making any kind of close communication and interaction between teacher and students is almost impossible. This lack of communication between teacher and student is reflected on the impact of teaching with both teachers as well as student who remain shy and hesitant. Ideal classroom size in my opinion never exceeds 30.

Teaching in Mizoram: An Australian perspective

Following are the impressions of Rhondda McMullan from the Regal Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Adelaide, who spent some time teaching in the Indian state of Mizoram.



government and initiated such a programme.

Mizoram being a 100 per cent mountainous terrain and very remote and landlocked; there I saw a very different culture set. Christianity is the main religion and so their life revolves around the Church in Mizoram. As regards my classroom experiences, there were 34 teachers under the programme coming from high school all over the state. I was told this programme was the first of its kind and the participants naturally were timid, shy and non-communicating.

Mizoram people were so warm, open and friendly and always smiling, it took just a couple of days to breakthrough and to make them responsive and interactive. English is not the spoken language by the localities. The dialect is also somewhat different from that of other major cities in India (a little of which I experienced during my brief stay in Kolkata). As a result, the participants were initially shy and hesitant to speak in case they say the wrong thing.

During the course of the programme they were familiarized with different teaching aids which they were not used to using them, were enlightened on the importance of close interaction and intermingling between teachers and the student and finally to develop and demonstrate the confidence and active body language through their movement and speeches in the classroom. I myself tried to demonstrate by intermingling with them from desk to desk and stand tall to show the manner of exuding confidence. At the end of the programme, this positive characteristics and attitude started reflecting in them and I found them responding, interacting and friendly. As if they were a

Other areas where you feel Indian education system has to learn from Australia...

Due to the enormity of student population in India, the classroom environment in Mizoram and Australia can hardly be compared with each other. The basic principle of small manageable size of classroom could not be over emphasized. This in turn means more number of classes. This is a subject to be considered by the education administrators. Otherwise, there is scope for more frequent interactions and interface between the Australian education system and Indian students to organize more such programmes as well as various other exchange programmes. I would particularly mention the role of Overseas Consultants for promoting projects and programmes for organizing higher studies of Indian students in Australia, bringing Australian education to India through setting up offshore campuses of Australian Institution and Universities in various parts of India, organizing Study Tours for Indian students and last but not the least, organising interactive and teaching programme like one I attended in Mizoram.

Keeping track of the number of Indian students studying in Australia, which are the subjects you feel they have maximum interest in?

A large number of Indian student are already studying in Australia. In recent years, Australia has emerged as one of the most favoured destinations for Indian students to study Hospitality, Hotel Management, Information Technology, Commercial Cookery, Aviation as well as Engineering and English.



Counseling via Road Shows about Australian Universities

The 'Planet' that revolves around education

Not all institutions are created with such a mission as the Planet Group. This educational institution, which provides guidance to Indian students aspiring to study abroad, justifies the reason as to why Australia is considered to be at Level Two among the study destinations in the world. After the US, Australia and the UK now stand at the second level. A world-class infrastructure and teaching techniques, new courses to experiment with, lower cost of education and opportunities of migration after studies are certain aspects that make Australia the latest students' paradise. The Planet Group has helped the Indian students take advantage of these Australian benefits. It has sent as many as 4,500 students to Australia in last six years for further education. So, what is so special about the counseling given to the students at planet group? Apart from being affiliated to AAERI (Association of Australian Education Representatives in India), the Planet Group has designed a few steps for students to make them understand every aspect of an international education. In an interview with **Rojita Padhy**, the MD of the Planet Group, **Sanket Shah**, says that counseling is not decision making. It is the right way of providing guidance to the Indian students to study abroad. It is to show the students a clear perspective rather than convince them to go for a country or course they never wanted to. Excerpts:

Why do you recommend Australia as a study destination for Indian students?

If Australia is looked at as a study destination from an Indian's perspective, the emphasis is on good education and part-time jobs while studying. I think of my days of studying in Australia between 1994-98. My classmates had come from rich families. Most of them wanted to come back to India after finishing their courses to start something on their own. Now if you see the number of Indian students going abroad, on an average 97 per cent are going with the purpose of not coming back. Probably 60 to 70 per cent from upper middle class and middle class families are heavily dependent on part time jobs. Therefore, when you talk about studying in Australia considering education, part-time jobs, socializing, exposure, permanent residency and employment, it is undoubtedly one of the best two. The US and Australia are two countries, where at the end of your education, the opportunities of migration are enormous, were as in the case of Europe it is not like that.

Australia is a very friendly country. I lived there for four years. I never had a single problem. Indians are very



safe. Australia has been marketing its education in India for the last nine years and they have an aggressive approach, which has brought them to the level of the UK in getting students from India. So, Australia is a destination for the younger generation. Australia has done tremendously well.

Apart from the students who want to migrate, what are the job prospects for those students who want to come back to India?

All MNCs who are present in India love appointing students who are born and brought up in India and studied internationally. Apart from that, there are 39 government-recognized universities in Australia, which are allowed to offer Bachelors and Masters. The performance of all these universities are assessed by the government in terms of their quality of education, how old they are and number of faculties they have. So here, you have the best possible education and exposure. That is why Indians, specially the students who are from business background and who intend to come back after studying abroad, prefer Australia. The best part of Australia is, if they cannot invent something, they

import it the next day. I went to Australia back in 1995, when not many had heard of it. There were no universities coming to India to take direct admissions, no advertisements and I just went there through correspondence. However, the reason I chose Australia was because it was a new destination, young destination and it is a country, which belongs to no one, but still it belongs to everyone.

From an Indian prospective I rate Australia as one of the top two, because of its top class education; all universities work in a group. The competition is very healthy. Infrastructure-wise, they are the best. The books and CD ROMs, practical education and on top of that, the availability of part-time jobs on and off campuses, with 20 hours a week, all these count. Besides, Indians are well respected in that country.

Along with education, money, exposure, something, which matters the most, is respect. If you are not respected in a country, where you are studying or planning to settle down, there is no point being there. And Australia is one country where every one is respected. The road show organized by Planet Group has representatives from various universities of Australia. They are Indians and they are doing international marketing for Australian education now. This is a proof of their welcoming nature.

I am yet to get any complaint from the students of not being treated well.

When a student comes to you with an open mind, which country do you suggest?

Frankly speaking, I always feel that, counseling is not decision making, it is navigating. In my presentations, first, I discuss the entire international education scenario, and then I prove every point of mine when I compare the education of the US at Level One, the UK and Australia at level two and Canada, New Zealand and Ireland at Level Three and all others at Level Four. Similarly, I have done comparison of education leading to immigration. So these have to be understood first. Whether the student wants to come back or wants to use education, as a step to migrate has to be addressed first then accordingly I suggest to him or her which country he should go to. Then the US and Australia come first as they take students as immigrants.

What is the purpose of organizing a road show?

We put up six major events to promote Australian education. We have two events, which we call **Australia week**. One in January to promote the July intake and again in the month of June-July to promote the February intake. These two events are the events

where we take permission from the Australian universities to waive off the application fees and then we always put up our event in four steps. First, general presentation on Australian education. Step two is one and one counseling, step three-course presentation and step four is the actual event.

In the road show, we bring a group of popular Australian universities to India and we travel from one place to the other. All universities come from international student offices. They have the authority to issue admissions on the spot to the students and they have an authority to waive off application fees. They all are instructed by different faculties to access the



requirements set by them before recruiting an international student. Students save money because the universities waive off money. Most of the applications cost A\$50 to A\$100 and if the Indian student is applying to two or more universities then they save that money. In addition, they save time because if you apply by post it takes up to eight weeks for your application forms to be processed. And you get to meet the representatives on a one-to-one basis.

What kind of preparation does the student have to do before coming to the road show?

Most of the students who have come for the road show have already attended a presentation; they have gone through counseling sessions, they have also attended course presentations and they are told about the universities they are applying to. After their academic research, they have short-listed two to three universities where they want to launch the application with all the documents.

The homework for attending the road show begins...

At least a month before the actual event starts. We give enough time to the students to do their research to

prepare their documents before coming for the road show. This road show is for the June-July 2005 intake. **Australia has three intakes. February is the principle intake, July is the mid-year intake and November is the summer intake.** However, most of the students go in February and July as just five or six universities are there for summer intakes.

Do you think there is a concentrated interest of students for few particular courses like IT or engineering?

About 85 per cent of Indian students are opting for either business management, computing or



engineering courses. These are the most popular courses among Indian students. Australian universities together are offering more than 1500 to 2000 courses but Indians choosing among such courses have always been very typical and selective. There is a reason behind it. Indian students coming from the middle class families cannot take a risk of experimenting with new courses like sports management or golf management. Their approach has to be very protective. Indians do not have exposure to those courses also because half of them are not there in India. Sports management is very expensive but there are also universities in Australia offering courses in music and DJing, MBA with limited work experience, Masters of computing with Information system management, networking, software development, e-business, and e-commerce. In engineering, it is telecommunication, computer integrated manufacturing and biotech. As far as science is concerned these are the main areas. Accounting area is booming in Australia now. MODL (Major Occupation on Demand List) shows accounting on top. However, the trend changes.

How many takers are for these unconventional

courses like disaster management or sports management?

It is five percent. It depends on the topics, which are in demand. Recycling industries is one of the biggest industries in Australia. There are opportunities in that sector.

Could you tell us more about the point system?

Indian or International student, who wants a permanent residence visa, has to have 110 points for regional immigration and 120 points for Australian immigration. There are 30 points for age (between 18-29), if you have studied in Australia, 20 points for English, 5, 10 or 15 bonus points for Australian education depending upon what you are studying. 60 points are for qualification. If you have relatives in Australia, extra points. For jobs, MODL also you get extra points. If you are a good translator you get extra 5 points for Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu. If you put A\$100,000 with the Australian government then you get 5 points. You get married and your husband or wife is between 18-29 and has done graduation in Australia, you get 5 points.

What about scholarships?

Australian universities provide scholarships including the universities present in our road show. Mainly the scholarships are given to the research students. However, they are taught bachelors and masters before they are given research work. However, you have to be exceptionally good. There are students who get scholarships after one year or two years of their studies in Australia. Frankly speaking, I would not recommend any student who is not financially sound and just relying on the scholarship to study abroad. The student has to show money to the Australian High Commissioner in order to get the visas. On top of that, if he or she is getting a benefit then take it as a huge bonus. However, one should not rely only on scholarships.

What are your plans?

Planet is getting very strong. Last year Australia got 9,000 Indian students, of which planet has sent 1,100. We are one of the top two performing companies. We want to try helping students as much as we can. We want to send good quality students to that country who would become an asset for Australia if they stay back and an asset for India if they come back. We are expanding our network in western India and southern India. We are opening new offices in cities like Anand, Jaipur, and Coimbatore. As far as universities are concerned, our portfolio is complete.



Imparting Education of International Standard

CHATE - A Byword for The Best Of Coaching

Chate Coaching Classes needs no introduction. A quality education, an affordable fee structure and personal attention given to the students make it special among its competitors in Maharashtra. Always in the news because of the shining performance of its students, Chate Coaching Classes has now another feather to add to its hat. **Prof. Matchindra H. Chate**, the man behind Chate Coaching Classes has broader visions for his students. For the first time ever, a coaching class is organizing a study tour abroad for its students to make them aware of the educational opportunities that await them in other countries.

So, the first time this is happening that a coaching institute is sending students abroad on a study tour. How has been the response from the Australian government?

The Australian government and Regal Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Adelaide, have been very co-operative in all matters. The educational institutions in Australia are also quite co-operative. We hope that there will be no hurdle in sending a minimum 30 students to Australia every month. They will go there, visit the place, meet people and develop self-confidence. If the parents can afford this tour, all other things will be available at a subsidized rate for the students. In the later stages, we will be definitely doing this with other institutions in Australia as well.

What benefit will this study tour bring to the students?

Definitely, it will give them international exposure, they will have a broad vision, they will see for themselves the maturity of civic sense among the people in developed countries and I hope this will be a lifetime experience for them. They will understand that education should not be learnt only within the four walls of the classroom. Unless they mix with the outside world, other people and see their lifestyles, they won't know anything. Even in my film Bindass, I had shown that education has to go beyond the classrooms. We are trying to go beyond that.

History of Chate coaching classes:

I started the classes in 1987, in Aurangabad, when I was studying Engineering second year. By the end of my

course, the coaching classes had become quite successful. About 100 students were enrolled. Hence, after my engineering course, I gave up further studies and joined the coaching classes. My brother also helped me. In 1989, we introduced professional way of teaching in Aurangabad. The center progressed rapidly. In 1990 we came with the concept of special batches, which meant teaching all subjects, systematic planning of the entire year, and completion of the syllabus in proper schedule and taking Sunday unit tests regularly. At the end, revision and revision tests. Preliminary exams as per the board pattern, which we call as the special batches.

This has increased our strength largely in Aurangabad. We started one more branch in Aurangabad. The classes were successful and our students' remarkable performance was visible until 1996 when the students were shining in merit lists

and several students were gaining admissions in engineering and medical colleges.

So, one of my friends requested me to start one such branch in Jalgaon and therefore in 1996, I started one more branch in Jalgaon. Then I published some notes and books in 1996 for SSC and 12th Science. These were distributed all over Maharashtra on a large sale. In Mumbai, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Nashik the sale of Chate's Perfect Notes and Model question set had generated tremendous interest. When I went to Nagpur for some work, I thought of starting up a branch in Nagpur in 1997. The response was quite encouraging. We established the center in just six months and we opened four branches in Nagpur very shortly. Then all other centers were opened around Maharashtra. At the end of



1997, I was on a visit to Mumbai. I spoke to a few people. The same year I decided to open some branches in Mumbai and within just seven days, we finalized 10 places in Mumbai. In January 1998 the Mumbai branches were started. By the end of May 1998, we completed our expansion across Maharashtra. We have a presence in more than 100 branches and 40,000 thousand students are benefited from them every year. We conduct coaching classes for standard 8th, 9th and 10th in English and Marathi medium. 11th and 12th Science for Medical and Engineering entrance tests (MSCET and CET).

Any limit for the number of admissions.

In Chate Coaching Classes, we do not say no to any student who wants to join us. Initially I had only one branch in Dadar west. Then I started coaching classes at Lower Parel, Dadar east, Sion and in this way, we have

The qualities of teachers are also checked. We train them. We have our study systems and perfect notes which make it easier for the students to understand and remember.

The cost of the coaching classes...

The fees vary from center to center. We make it a point to see that the charges are affordable. The overall change among the students because of Chate Coaching Classes is amazing.

What made you think about this initiative of sending students from your coaching classes to Australia on a study tour?

We have accepted globalization and in the era of globalization, Indian students have strong opportunities to enter the developed countries, do their service, do business, earn good money and make India

proud. However, it is possible only when the students visit these countries during their student lives. Today, Chate Coaching Classes is also thinking in the same lines. Our classes should not be limited to Maharashtra; we should spread branches in entire India and abroad. We will do this in the coming years. Our classes will be global providing services to students all over the world.

Your plans of expanding into Australia.

I am thinking about it and definitely, I would be doing it in future.

Any message to the students and parents?

They should not see education as a casual activity. There should be some seriousness towards it. The affluent people with their monetary power forget the importance education has to play in their children's lives. Money cannot buy knowledge and only education remains with you throughout life. Therefore, a proper education, quality education, correct education, confidence-building education is necessary today. Chate Coaching Classes is trying to give this education. We are not boasting our own success. We believe that our quality of teaching should increase. Our students should have the benefit of a new vision in their lives and for that they should do hard work, hard work and hard work.

For further information about the Study Tour and Chate Coaching Classes please call up on 022-56608968 or visit the Dadar (East) branch office.



expanded to Andheri east, Andheri west, Khar, Borivali, Malad, Kandivali and Goregaon. I have kept no percentage limit or any financial background for the students. I even had one branch in Dharavi for almost five years, which is closed now.

Specialty of Chate Coaching Classes.

Teachers working in Chate classes are extremely hardworking. We have control over all the branches from the division office in Dadar. The sincere effort and hard work is the base of Chate Coaching Classes. Though we are heading around 50,000 students in the entire Maharashtra, not even a single student is left out from personal attention. The irregularities in studies, missing of unit tests, scoring less marks, all these are regulated and checked by the teachers regularly. We train the teachers at the divisional office in Dadar (east).



AUSTRALIA-INDIA FOCUS

India bestows prestigious civilian honour on Australian Gladys Staines

India has bestowed a prestigious civilian honour, the *Padmashree* (India's fourth highest civilian award) on Australian Gladys Staines, for her distinguished social work in India. The *Padmashree* awarded to Staines for "distinguished service to the nation" was one of the 27 awards announced by the Government of India on the occasion of India's Republic Day, 26 January 2005. The awards were presented on 29 March. The Hindu reported: the loudest applause, however, went for Padma Shri recipient Gladys June Staines who "remained steadfast in her devotion to care for people affected by leprosy, despite her personal tragedy".

Mrs Staines is the widow of Australian missionary Graham Staines who was killed by a mob along with the couple's two sons in 1999. Staines, 54, said she was overwhelmed to have been honoured by the Indian government. "This is an honour not for me but for Graham and all the staff at the leprosy home", she said on hearing she had been awarded the *Padmashree*. Staines and her husband Graham had spent more than 30 years working with leprosy patients in Baripada district in the eastern state of Orissa. After her husband's death Staines stayed on in India with her daughter, Esther, overseeing the completion of a hospital for leprosy patients in Orissa. She returned to Australia in 2004.

Victoria's Opening Doors to Export Plan focuses on India

The Victorian Government is building a new export culture in Victoria, matching its strengths to capitalise on emerging market opportunities to ensure continuing job growth and prosperity for the long term. To continue to drive export, the Victorian Government has developed the *Opening Doors to Export Plan*. The Plan includes promoting exports in three regions that offer opportunity for growth:

North Asia, India and the Middle East. A Special Trade Envoy works in each of these regions. The most recent mission to India - a Building, Infrastructure and Related Services Industry Capability Mission to New Delhi and Chennai - was led by Darren Gribble, Special Trade Envoy for India. A major focus of the mission was the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in 2010. Eleven companies participated, promoting their expertise and services in project and event management, engineering, environment services, water treatment, infrastructure

and other specialised services that are in demand in the Indian market. In New Delhi and Chennai, the participants met with key public sector organisations and a number of private sector companies. Participants were well received and are hopeful that potential export opportunities will flow with Indian organisations and companies, in particular in the area of infrastructure and related services. Regional Development Victoria which is part of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, sponsored this mission and worked with the Indian Consul General, Australian Industry Group, the Australia India Business Council and Austrade to make it a success.

For further information contact: Mr Don Fitzgerald, Industry Specialist, Building Products and Furniture, Tel: 03 9651 8127, Fax: 03 9651 7652, www.rdv.vic.gov.au

Roads infrastructure officials visit Australia

The Government of India is pursuing a USD 30 billion rural roads program to connect all Indian villages to India's major roads. The Rural Roads Program, together with the National Highway Development Program, will implement the Government of India's key roads infrastructure objectives. Key rural roads officials from India's national and state governments visited Australia to assess Australian best practice in policy formulation, planning and management of rural road networks, information technology adoption, and technical issues. The delegation to Australia comprised National Rural Roads Development Agency officials responsible for policy and high-level management of India's rural roads programs and officials from state implementing agencies. The visit was hosted and organised by RMIT University. Participants held working

dialogue with the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services, state and local government agencies (Vic Roads, NSW Road Transport Authority, Austroads and Shoalhaven Council), and private sector engineering consultancy companies. The visit "exceeded expectations" according to Mr Sushant Baliga, a Director of India's National Rural Roads Development Agency. "As a result of the visit we plan to explore with our Australian colleagues a more extensive use of GIS systems, as well as the development of a comprehensive maintenance policy and asset management system for rural roads." Mr Baliga expressed his appreciation to Mr David Jellie of RMIT University, Ms Harriet Richards and Mr Suresh Iyer of Indialink Australia.

Macknight's prescription for Infrastructure Growth

Matching India's needs with Australian investment tie-ups



The Indian Infrastructure Vision for 2005 demands constant change linked to solid growth. The development of India's infrastructure is critical to the growth of every sector. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said India can absorb foreign investment of up to \$150 billion in the infrastructure sector over the next 10 years.

Doroty B. Mehta, MD, Macknight Infrastructure, discusses the Indian infrastructure sector in the light of the Budget 2005-06. She also identifies the areas in infrastructure where Australia and India could collaborate and the role of Macknight as an organization handling big infrastructure projects in India and abroad.

Roads

India's road system is approximately three million km, which from a functional and safety point of view offers little to passengers or transportation of goods. The value of the contracts awarded is in the region of \$1 billion, pending contracts are in the region of \$500 million. Road projects have been aggressively tackled by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on a Build Operate Transfer BOT basis has moved full steam ahead after the Annuity Scheme factor was incorporated to make the BOT a safe and practical format. Recently projects have been structured in a toll road format, where the tolls are pre-defined and investors are required to bid for the subsidy, which is provided by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (NORTH) in a Model Concession Agreement. Major investment has been by Indian and Malaysian contractors. The issues that are presently on line are the Operation & Maintenance factors and construction of rural roads.

Ports

The first major port to be privatized was the container Terminal at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) Mumbai. This was awarded to P&O in 1997. The traffic predictions were expected to reach half its capacity over a 10-year period. But within three years of operations, it reached its full capacity. Anticipated port privatizations are Ennore, JNPT, MbPT and Goa.

Minor ports such as Pipavav, Mundra, Hazira (Shell) Dahej (Petronet LNG) and Kakinada have attracted successful investment giving a considerable comfort zone to potential future investors.

Ports yet to start their operations are Gangavaram (Andhra Pradesh) Krishnapatnam and Gopalpur (Orissa), and Vizhinjam (Kerala).

Steps are being taken by the Maritime Board to upgrade and expand the Major and Minor Ports of India situated along 7515 kms of coastline. This will be to separate and expand activities within coal, steel, iron ore, minerals in general and containerisation. All this activity includes re-planning of the ports and its connectivity in road and rail, design of material handling activities along with the appropriate design and supply of machinery to facilitate, safety, maintenance and cost effectiveness. Connectivity and containerization are key issues as the need for more of India's ports to fit into the global scene from a trade and investment point of view.

Rural Electrification

This is a comprehensive electrification programme which emphasis the utilisation of relevant technologies (conventional and non conventional), involving finance and multiple delivery mechanisms. The programme has

attracted a commitment from the Indian Government of Rs 50 billion to be spent over the first two years, 90 per cent in the form of grants. The immediate focus will be on grid extension and stand alone distribution systems.

Airports

The airports are controlled by the Federal Government and the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which have divided the facilities into International, Domestic, Customs and Civil. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) handled in the region of 40 million passengers and has a growth rate of approx 5.0 per cent per annum. The funding formula proposed by the Central Government is that a special passenger fee be implemented with a new Civil Aviation Policy and new regulatory system to cover private sector investments, market borrowing and government equity. The airports awaiting implementation of the above policies that have already attracted bidders/investors are Bangalore and Hyderabad.

To improve facilities the Federal Government has invited Expression of Interest for the privatization of Delhi and Mumbai. Expansion of corporate and private sector facilities, within the area of light aircraft, boats, technology and equipment will be a major requirement in the near future.

Water

The per capita availability of fresh water in the country has reduced from 5,177 cubic metres in 1950 to 1,869 cu.m in 2001. It is estimated that by 2050 a further reduction will take place and the decline will be in the region of 1, 140 cu.m. As the threshold of per capita value of water stress is 1, 000 cu.m you will see that the prevailing situation is very worrying.

The water sector in India is controlled by the state governments which are inefficient not because of the lack of highly trained personnel, but by the high distribution losses caused by poor O & M and zero commercial focus. Along with the subsidies and cross subsidies for various sectors of the community this produces deficits that run into un-estimable losses for the country and the people as India holds 4.0 per cent of the world's fresh water resources.

Overview

The global market has realized that India has large intellectual manpower, and to achieve competitive prices within a competitive market, these facilities have to be built up into a useable and sustainable model. Inter-country interaction for consumables is

at a boom, whereas usage of technical manpower is at a minimum except in the IT sector.

The Budget for Financial Year 2005-2006

The Union Budget 2005-06, presented by P. Chidambaram on 28 February 2005 has a beneficial list of major activities, but without the financial support of the center, state government will find difficulty in pursuing due to financial constraints this includes projects such as "The Bharat Nirman Urban Renewal Mission," backward regions grant fund, agricultural marketing infrastructure, rural credit, micro finance/insurance, rural knowledge centers, investment commission, national manufacturing competitiveness council and capital market reforms.

The Budget has some specific provisions for telecommunications and the National Highway Development Program and Rural Electrification.

Potential for Indo-Australian Interaction

Australia's GDP on PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) basis is estimated to be USD\$ 71 Billions (2003 est.) and its per capita GDP is around USD\$ 29,000. The country has enormous natural and agriculture resources. Main products are wheat, sugarcane, barley, fruit, cattle, sheep and poultry, with great strengths in mining, Transportation, bulk handling equipment, food processing, chemicals and steel.

Therefore significant potential exists for cooperation and interaction in agri products, minerals and extraction and other fields.

The Role of Macknight

Macknight Infrastructure P Ltd (MIPL) are a consulting engineering group with technical and professional expertise in Infrastructure projects in ports, marine works, highways, road & rail, power, water, waste water sewage. We source, progress, secure and handle complex infrastructure projects from project sourcing, manpower, tax, project overview, viability for international companies wishing to enter the Indian market, or, for Indian companies to explore opportunities outside India. We are conversant with Indian and foreign work ethics and procedures. Our client base is out of Australia, America, South Africa, Russia, Romania, Middle East. Etc.,

Recently we have taken on contracts for the marketing of components and technologies within the infrastructure field, which cover a fast and effective building technology along with heavy machinery within the areas of Oil & Gas and Chemicals Plants.

Going round pools & spas with Evergreen Technologies

There is a growing market for the pool and spa industry with an existing demand in resorts, clubs and elite high-end clients. Nitin V. Thakkar, COO and Rahul Agarwal, Director of Evergreen Water Technologies Pvt. Ltd, India, who visited Australia in October 2004 to formalize agreements with their counterparts, say their trip was very fruitful. In an interaction with Indo-Australian Business magazine, they discuss the market for the pool and spa industry in India, the product line of Evergreen Water Technologies and the kind of clients they are handling now.

Ever Green Water Technologies

Reconstituted from Evergreen Décor Pvt. Ltd. to Evergreen Water Technologies Pvt. Ltd. in 1999, the company is engaged in the activities like handling the sole distribution of Clearwater Enviro Technologies Inc. (USA) for their Pool Ionization Systems and 'Scaleblaster' Electronic de-scaling systems.

In a span of three years the company has introduced specialised 'niche' products such as Pool Ionization systems for residential and commercial pools and 'Scaleblaster' for Industrial applications. The name is now synonymously linked for the want of the above two products. The distribution of swimming pool and spa equipment from Australian companies, currently sourcing equipments from Waterco, Monarch, Lanark Spas & Signature Spas. The organisation introduced India with the concept of Spa (In-ground and Portable), and sold four spas so far, but is en route finding avenues for mass marketing this concept.

The groups is also selling Waterco Pool products to discerning clients and hotel and club projects that demand standard and best quality goods. It has down-line dealer base in Western and Northern Indian states and segments, covering the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. It is also educating the down line dealer base with the technical and commercial aspects of the product range is a continual endeavor.

Some of the company's noted clients are:

- The Bombay Gymkhana Club
- The Breach Candy Swimming Club
- Taj Group of Hotels
- J. W. Marriott & The Marriott Chain of Hotels
- Club Millennium
- Club Link
- Several Industrialists such as:

Tata Group, J.K. Group, Essar group, Birla Group,

The company turnover (in Indian Rupees) as per year of operation; currently is at Rs 6.0 million in the first six months and projected to reach 17 million by the end of this year.

About the products and services...

Swimming Pool & Spa Equipments & Accessories such as filters, pumps, pool basin equipment, purifiers, underwater lights, etc. Drinking Water Filtration & Purification systems for Projects. Spa Pools (Outdoor-Above ground & Indoor Models) from two seaters to 12 seaters. We are on a continual exercise of product profile enhancement.

So, how has been the companies operation so far?

Our prime focus has been the Western Zone of India and now we are focusing our networking to cover all reaches of India. After using European made equipments & accessories we found the same not suitable for Indian Environmental & handling conditions, our focus went to Australian made Pool & Spa goods. An extensive post installation information gathering took place, and we found that Australian made products were not only were suitable for our environmental but also our handling conditions as well.

Hence, we have taken up the distribution & dealership of:

1. Waterco Pool & Spa Equipments
(www.waterco.com.au) for their pool filtration & other equipments & accessories.
2. Monarch Pool Systems
(www.monarchpoolsystems.com.au) for Ozonation & Salt Water Chlorination Systems.
3. Lanark Spa
4. Signature Spa, both for Spa Pools.

What supports do you seek from the govt to facilitate trade between India and Australia?

The biggest mitigating factor has been relatively high customs duties even today. If some agreement could come about between India & Australia, which could lead to negligizing the duty factor, the demand of the products could soar, based on lower price element. Hitherto, dormat channels could be then effectively tapped.

Pegasus journey through the Labyrinth of Rules

It's delivery just in time!



During a cricket match between India and Australia in Chennai, the famous Australian spin wizard Shane Warne, suddenly developed dark circles under his eyes and couldn't bowl to the best of his ability. The reason cited was the bad "baked beans and spaghetti" that he ate. The Australian media hyped up the issue. Heinz Company, which had sent 963 kg of baked beans and spaghetti, faced the flak. The crisis had to be managed before the situation got worse. Intel-Cargo, the company handling the shipment of Heinz products was called to replenish the same quantity of baked beans and spaghetti. Intel's partner in India, Pegasus Shipping Agencies had to take the delivery in Mumbai and send it to the hotel in Chennai where the Australian team was staying. Taking it as a challenge, the entire shipment from Australia to Chennai was completed within a record time of 48 hours. Warne thanked Pegasus Managing Director Dilip Mehta for making his favourite breakfast available on time the next day. Needless to say Warne's deliveries to the Indians were devastating!

Handling logistics is not easy and wrought with facing hurdles one after the other, says, Dilip Mehta. "Hurdles are a part of our trade and to sustain in this business we have to be a "PERFORMER " all the time. Apart from competition, we do face difficulties at times with port, customs and other related authorities in achieving our target." Mehta interacts with Indo-Australian Business about the Pegasus journey through the labyrinth of logistics.

Excerpts:

With more than 23 years of experience of being in shipping, Pegasus Shipping Agencies are a leading player among the freight forwarders and custom brokers in India. "Companies like Thermax, Kilburn Engineering Ltd, Piaggio from Italy and Indrox Global Ltd, the Indian part of this US based company are amongst few large clients of Pegasus", says, Managing Director Dilip Mehta.

So, what makes his company so special?

Mehta says, "It is the wide range of services provided to the customer and the personal care given to each consignment that we deal with. Pegasus Shipping Agencies Pvt.Ltd is NVOCC, International Freight Forwarders and the registered customs agents since 1982, which offers, total integrated logistics support services to large international trade players. The broad based services of the company include,

- **Surface transportation for container and project cargo**
- **Customs clearance and documentation**
- **Project cargo shipment including Charter party**
- **Warehousing and Distribution services.**
- **Groupage and consolidation including buyer's consolidation**
- **Insurance and packaging for few selected client base**
- **Organising incentives offered by govt. of India against "Exports".**

With the head office in Mumbai, Pegasus has branches in New Delhi, Chennai and Kolkatta. Its Australian counterpart, Grame Sparks is the President of Intel-Cargo Australia Pty.Ltd, which has clients like Heinz and Coke. Starting from packaging, insurance, Pegasus is involved in the entire process. Then the Australian counterpart takes the delivery and takes care of the warehousing and distribution system. Believing in the " door-to-door " service concept, Pegasus is all set to meet the clients' requirements in solving all queries related to logistics.

Hence, the exact role of Pegasus is very wide in nature. It begins from the time of submitting a Quote by Exporter to prospective Buyer up to delivery at the doorstep including packaging. Insurance, surface transport, customs / port procedure / documentation, shipping as well as warehousing and distribution in buyer's country is a part of the responsibility of Pegasus.

What kind of support the company expects from the government of India or the respective countries?

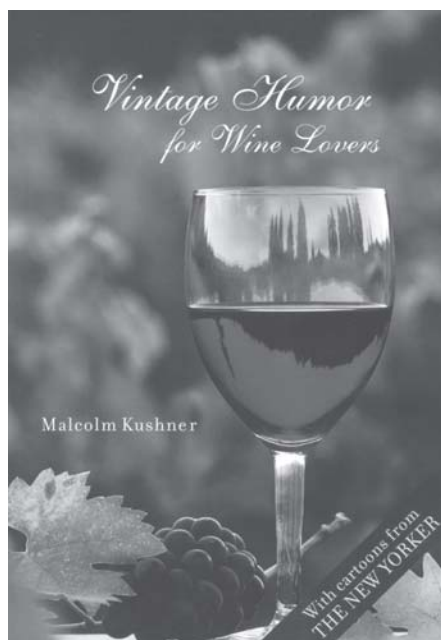
At present, we do not expect support from the Indian Government. From the Australian front if Pegasus's name is registered as "LOGISTICS SERVICE PROVIDER " with various trade bodies and Chamber of Commerce, it will surely assist in developing the business with existing as well as prospective buyers who regularly source merchandise from India.

So, what are the plans for the future...

Pegasus's plans are to achieve a minimum 20 per cent growth in revenue generation from new business opportunities in the field of "GLOBAL LOGISTICS SERVICES ".

In conclusion, Mehta expresses his interest towards venturing into other countries and explore opportunities in South Africa, USA, China, UK, Germany, Thailand, Canada, Japan, and South Korea apart from Australia.

Does wine make Oscar wild?



MARK TWAIN ONCE SAID, "The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not." That might have been true in Twain's time, but it is not anymore. Recent scientific research suggests that people who drink moderate amounts of wine each day are healthier and live longer than teetotalers. Of course, the definition of 'moderate' is open to interpretation. It is probably somewhat less than the amount consumed by Frances Rabelais. He is the classical French writer who said, "I drink no more than a sponge."

And it is definitely less than the consumption of legendary filmmaker Orson Welles. He once said, "My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four. Unless there are three other people."

In this chapter, we will examine the humorous aspects of wine and health - both mental and physical. Because wine drinking has been credited with everything from improving mood to longevity. And as George Burns observed, "If you live to be one hundred, you've got it made. Very few people die past that age."

Four Facts About Food, Wine & Health

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
2. The French eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
3. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.
4. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Observations on Wine & Health

"I have made an important discovery...that alcohol, taken in sufficient quantities, produces all the effects of intoxication."

Oscar Wilde

"Health is what my friends are always drinking to before they fall down."

Phyllis Diller

"I'm like old wine. They don't bring me out very often, but I'm well preserved."

Rose Kennedy on her 100th birthday

"It seems that researchers at Colorado University say wine may help people lose weight. It's not the wine directly that causes the weight loss, it's all the walking around you do trying to find your car."

Jay Leno

"What is man, when you come to think upon him, but a minutely set, ingenious machine for turning, with infinite artfulness, the red wine of Shiraz into urine?"

Sak Dinesen

"Never accept a drink from a urologist."

Erma Bombeck

"All wines have nutritional value. If you don't buy, we don't eat."

Sign in a restaurant

"A mind of the calibre of mine cannot derive its nutriment from cows."

George Bernard Shaw

"A well-balanced person has a drink in each hand."

Billy Connolly

"The secret to a long life is to stay busy, get plenty of exercise and don't drink too much. Then again, don't drink too little."

Hermann Smith-Johannson,

103-year-old cross-country skier

"A psychologist once said that we know little about the conscience-except that it is soluble in alcohol."

Thomas Blackburn

"Alcohol is necessary for a man so that he can have a good opinion of himself, undisturbed by the facts."

Finley Peter Dunne

Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. It is speaking English that kills you.

(An extract from the book *Vintage Humor for Wine Lovers* by Mr. Malcolm Kushner)

More than just a glass of wine... It's Big Business

Echidna Wines, the Australian wine company with an office in Mumbai, has recently entered the Indian market. In the write-up below, Andrew McLoughney, CEO of Echidna Wines, talks about how the Australian wines have carved a niche here. With more and more Indians developing a taste for the Australian wine, it is the right time for the wine makers to establish a base in India. Australia with its famous wineries across the country like the Margaret River, McLaren Vale, the Barossa Valley, Coonawarra and the Adelaide Hills, produces some of the best wines in the world.

Andrew throws some light upon the demand for Australian wines in India, the performance of Echidna Wines and the future of the Indian wine market.

The Australian wine scene in India

Australian wine in India has historically come in two major forms: lower priced and bulk wines targeted at the mid-priced segment (INR 500-900) and super premium wine targeted at the upper end of the market. Australian vineries overall have been cautious about entering the Indian market due to the small size of the market coupled with the twin difficulties of logistics and bureaucracy. It will take a significant change in the competitive landscape before Indian consumers will truly have the benefit of the diversity of wines produced not only in Australia but also around the world.

The Echidna Wines portfolio

Echidna Wine Traders Pvt Ltd has deliberately chosen a portfolio that is suitable for both the climate and food of India. The diversity and use of the fabulous spices in

food means that wine needs to play a different role than in the West, taking a more complementary position to the food. In the more westernised restaurants, matches that are more traditional are possible but not for the majority of the food consumed in India. We have initially selected a range of wines from Victoria, which fit into the premium to upper premium segments in Australia. These wines are from producers with a strong record of accomplishment and good international acceptance. Brands such as Tahbilk and Four Sisters are available across the world.

Changes in the Indian wine market

My initial contact with the Indian wine market was some five years ago. Our company sent some wine to India through a person who made contact with us and asked if he could import the wine. The volumes were very small and there was not any follow up order. This



encapsulates one of the problems that the market has had with wines coming into India - continuity of supply. The hotel and restaurant staff can work very well with a brand only to see that work essentially wasted when the wine does not continue being imported on an ongoing basis. This point was regularly raised with me as we started Echidna.

There is a new breed of distributors who are not taking the position of traders looking to generate a quick profit but are rather looking to develop the market. We have actively looked to associate with distributors with this perspective as they represent the future of the market.

Australian wine operates in competitive markets all across the world. In many ways, the most competitive market is our home market as Australia produces more than twice the amount of wine it consumes. People are choosing Australian wine preferentially all across the world because they like it. Echidna Wine Traders has been in the enviable position of being able to select some of the best producers from Australia for our portfolio. We are very confident that the Indian consumers will rapidly develop a taste for our wine, as has the rest of the world.

Drivers of consumption

In many ways, the rapid increase in social acceptability of wine consumption in India has been driven by women. A glass of wine is an enjoyable thing in its own right and is much more acceptable for women than a glass of beer or a Scotch. Brands do not have to be specifically targeted at women to work in this manner. However, we have in our portfolio a brand named 'Four Sisters', which carries an image of four women on the label. This is an extremely successful brand in Australia and increasingly across the world. It has been strongly adopted by the female demographic and while the first bottle is generally sold by the label, the second and subsequent bottles are invariably sold by the contents.

We feel it is more important to ensure barriers are not raised to inhibit wine consumption by women. The most important barrier to consumption is the element of fear that many consumers feel when they see a wide selection of wines. Our wines have been chosen to ensure that the consumers can feel confident that any wine under our portfolio can be selected and enjoyed.

Affordability of wine

One of the difficulties in growing the Indian wine market is the artificially high price that wine commands in the marketplace due to the prohibitive and complex tax structure. People in India are currently paying four to six times the price of a bottle of wine in the home market, simply due to the tax structure.

I do not have any doubt that the affordability of wine will increase in the future for a number of reasons. Indians are increasingly mobile internationally and these mismatches are glaringly obvious. Such

disparities will become less sustainable as a result. Similarly, tourists do not enjoy feeling they are being fleeced. I am regularly having conversations with people who have bought Australian wine in India and cannot believe the price differential between India and other markets across the world.

The wine market is being artificially limited by the affordability issue. Rabobank indicated (Wine is Business, 2003) that they felt that 70 per cent of wine sales in Europe were at a price point of less than the equivalent of INR300 per bottle, 20 per cent between INR 300 and 600 and 10 per cent at a price point beyond INR600. Australia has a similar structure in its sales figures - while still having a tax rate of 43 per cent!. While not directly comparable for a number of reasons, it is clear that wine is much less affordable in India and that the market is being constrained as a result. This leads to the unfortunate perception that wine is a drink solely for the rich. In much of the western world, this is far from the truth. Rather wine is an everyday part of life.

Impediments to market growth

There are a number of substantial impediments to growth in the Indian wine market. The major ones are the complex and differential tax regime at both State and Federal level, in particular the exorbitant levels of duty, the cascading effect of the various taxes and cesses, the need for label registration and the consequent complications which result in significant amounts of discretion at the level of the individual bureaucrat. The need for the institutions to provide their licence also is manifestly inefficient. In most countries, the provision of a purchase order is sufficient for this purpose. Again, this requirement seems to be driven by a fear of loss of stock into the grey market, something that can be readily reduced by a reduction in the headline rate of duty.

The introduction of the DEC scheme is a welcome move in the right direction. However, the bewildering implementation has simply increased the paperwork required, provided an additional cashflow problem with the requirement of Bank Guarantees for the movement of stock, entrenched the position of the major players and worked against the creation of a diverse wine culture. Restaurants and stand alone winebars, as found in many cities across the world, simply cannot compete with the purchase price of the five star hotels who make up the majority of the current market for wine. It does not appear to be understood from the development and the implementation of the DEC policy that most tourists enjoy mixing with locals and partaking of the experiences that travelling to India provides in such large numbers. There seems an implicit belief that tourism stops at the door of the hotels. I would suggest that such a perspective penalises both the locals and the tourists in equal measure.

The differing laws between states, the issues in relation to the physical shipment of stock (transfer documentation, difficulties in interstate transfer of product and the differing mechanisms under which the stock is sold) also conspire to rob the average Indian consumer of their right to enjoy one of the worlds finest products. I believe that the system must continue to be reformed for the good of the market.

The future of the wine market in India

I feel there are exciting times ahead for the wine market in India, for both indigenous producers and wineries from nations such as Australia. The current market is small - a good comparison is that the total Indian wine market is approximately 1.25 per cent of the size of the Australian wine domestic market by volume with over 50 times the population. There is good growth in the market with reported growth rates of 20 per cent per annum and such growth rates are easily sustainable in the next three to five years. There are good reasons for governments to encourage the consumption of wine with the well-documented health benefits of moderate red wine (and to a lesser extent, white wine) consumption. Similarly, consumers of wine tend not to consume to excess, a potential problem with harder liquor.

One of the wonderful things about wine is that once a person develops a taste for it, they rarely lose it. Again,

Australia provides an excellent example here. From the early to mid 1980s, the development of wine culture paralleled development in food culture and an understanding that there is an incredible amount of enjoyment in the simple mix of good wine, good food and good company. Consequently, Australia enjoyed the wine boom and it is indisputable that this has been a positive thing for the country. Now, India certainly has the food and the company. I look forward to seeing the addition of the third member to this pair over the next five years. I know there are many people who will enjoy the results.

Discussing the prospects of Echidna Wines doing business in India, Andrew says, "I have developed the base in India because of the impressive opportunities I see here in the medium term. Currently, the Indian wine market is in a nascent phase as there are inordinately high duties and overly bureaucratic structures in place. A significant reduction in duty would give the market a significant push, bringing the world of wine to a much wider cross section of the Indian population."

While concluding, Andrew says, running a company in India from Australia is not a simple exercise. However, the good team in place, ably headed by Hans Raj Ahuja makes the task easier for him.

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When the Wolves Come Howling from Australia ...



A study shows that in India, while the consumption of whiskey and other hard drinks is growing at the rate of five to six per cent, the consumption of wine is growing at a rate of 25 per cent every year. Hence, the Indian liquor manufacturers are now adding a variety of international wines to their product basket by including different wine brands from around the world. Apart from the US, European Union and South America there lies a huge potential wine-exporting base in Australia. Australian wines have created a place for themselves in the international market in recent years. When Harshawardhan and his colleague went to Singapore to attend the Wine for Asia Expo in October last year, they had never thought that they would be distributing the Howling Wolves Wines from the world renowned Margaret River appellation in India. He agrees that the market for wine in India has come of age.



In an interaction with Indo-Australian Business, Harshawardhan Apte, MD of Baumgarten and Wallia Ltd., discusses how his company got into this deal, the potential of the wine market in India and the launch of the Howling Wolves brand in India in May this year under their banner.

What attracted you to Australian wines?

We were in Singapore to attend the Wine for Asia Expo in October, which is a major wine exhibition for Asia region. There were more than 30 wine companies from different countries from South America to entire Europe, the US (California), Australia, New Zealand showcasing their products. After an in-depth tour of all the stalls, and sampling most of the wines, what we liked about Howling Wolves was the unique brand name and the excellent taste of the wines. Of the three partners of Howling Wolves, two were at the Expo. We found an infectious enthusiasm at the Howling Wolves enclosure, they were very interactive, full of fun and energy that attracted us towards them. We have our own liquor company in India. We have our distillery and we have been in this business for 70 years but spirits have been our forte. I am convinced that wine is a beverage whose time has now come in India. Since we already have the necessary infrastructure, staff, offices, it is a sort of an allied field for us where we hope to leverage our strengths and achieve maximum synergy. After our first meeting in Singapore, we went to Perth, Australia in the first week of January this year and from there, we went to the winery in Margaret River. There we familiarized ourselves with the entire wine making process at the ultra modern Howling Wolves winery, which has been set up at an investment of more than \$8 million. We met with their distributors and marketing

managers and understood how they sell their wines in the local Australian market. Howling Wolves also has a strong distribution base in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and soon they will be "howling" their way into China and US. However, India was never on their agenda until our meeting at the Singapore Expo. At the end of our Australia tour we invited Damien, one of the partners of Howling Wolves to India. We took him around our distilleries, showed him our strengths, made him meet restaurateurs, hoteliers and gave him a real time feel of the potential for wines in India. Interaction with F & B managers of five star hotels, and wine shop owners in Mumbai and Pune, potential customers in the retail outlets made him understand how promising the Indian market is. On his way back to Australia he carried with him a MoU. That is the story so far and the first container of Howling Wolves Wines from Australia is on its way now and you should soon see the bottles on the shelf.

So, what would be the product line of Howling Wolves, which will be distributed in India?

There are three varieties. The entry level, Eight Vineyards brand would be priced at about Rs.600 per bottle. Howling Wolves, which is the premium brand would be between Rs.900 to Rs.950 for a bottle. And the Small Batch, which is a super exclusive, limited bottling brand, would be priced at Rs.1300 to Rs.1400 per bottle.

Is there a difference in pricing of the same products in Australia and India?

In India, we have very high rates of customs duty, which works out to nearly 180 percent. Then each state has its independent excise duty. Giving you an idea about how the costing in India works, a bottle of wine, costing unit 1 in any currency FOB Australia, by the time it reaches a retail shop in Mumbai or Pune, it costs unit 11 to 12, which is quite a rise. It is because of the huge customs duty, the freight and insurance; the carriage, the Octroi in Mumbai, the Maharashtra excise duty, the distributor margin, and the retailers' margin and at the end, there is a 23 per cent sales tax. All these things have a cascading effect. These are very good wines, priced reasonably in Australia. In India, when we did a small study of the available imported wines, including the Australian wines, the outcome was interesting. There lies a huge untapped potential for wines in India. However, the pricing strategy will play a crucial role and should more or less remain the way I have mentioned. Our target audience would be the young and the upcoming middle class and basically everyone who would like to enjoy good wines that go well with good food and happy times.

What kind of a tie-up Baumgarten and Wallia Group has with Howling Wolves?

We have a mutually exclusive arrangement with Howling Wolves Wine Group and the importing company in India is going to be Baumgarten and Wallia Ltd. There is no cross holding of equity between the Australian and Indian partners. Howling Wolves and Baumgarten and Wallia are and will remain separate entities. We have exclusive rights for India, which means Howling Wolves will sell their wines in India only through us. In return, we will not to sell any other Australian wines in India under our patronage. And all promotional activities would be done time to time along with visits by the partners of Howling Wolves to India.

Are you also looking for a market for your products in Australia to be distributed through Howling Wolves?

We are talking about it currently and we might get into such a deal in future. We have been thinking of RTDs (Ready to Drink) beverages like Bacardi Breezers, Smirnoff Ice and other pre mixed alcoholic drinks, which are a huge success in Australia. Howling Wolves is very keen on launching co-branded RTDs in Australia, which will be manufactured by us in India. It could be pre mixed rum, vodka or whiskey or brandy.

What about your 70-year-old company?

Brihan Maharashtra Sugar Syndicate Limited was established in 1934 primarily as a sugar factory as the

name suggest. It is a public limited company closely held by the Agashe family. However, in the early 70s itself we had started our own distillery to manufacture potable as well as industrial alcohol along with that we had also put up our own bottling lines and registered our brands under excise. Today we have our own distillery, which manufactures around 35,000 liters of alcohol per day, which can go up to 40,000 liters per day. We have our own IMFL bottling in Shreepur where the distillery is at about three hours' drive from Pune. We bottle about 100,000 cases a month of IMFL i.e., (Indian Made Foreign Liquor). We have four whiskeys, couple of Rums, 2 very good Napoleon Brandy's, White Rums, Gins and we also have country liquor license and our own country liquor unit at Nasik which produces 200,000 cases every month. Apart from this we have



bottling tie-ups with companies in Chennai with EMPEE distilleries producing Premium whiskey and Napoleon brandy with sales close to 50,000 cases a month. We have bottling tie-ups in Kerala, Rajasthan, UP and Punjab. It is quite ironic that in spite of such hot climatic conditions, India is pre dominantly a whiskey and rum market.

But all this is set to change in the coming years. With rising incomes and aspirations, a rapidly growing class of "global" Indians, the so called urban yuppies or metrosexuals, increasing health consciousness and social acceptance of wines as everyday beverages, I am confident that wines are the toast of tomorrow on the Indian beverage scene and that a bottle of Howling Wolves Wine would definitely occupy a proud place in every wine loving Indian's heart. ◉

Paranjape's Athashri Housing Project For Senior Citizens

At harmony in the autumn of life

They have a right to dream, they want to live life to the fullest and they deserve to live with dignity. Giving a new meaning to life is the motto of the Senior Citizens Project of the Paranjape Schemes. Named Athashri, the project is very close to the heart of **Shashank Paranjape**, Managing Director of the Pune-based Paranjape Construction Company. Shashank shares his thoughts with **Rojita Padhy** and **Tripti Chakravorty** on Athashri, the company's third project, which is on the verge of completion at Bawdhan in Pune and his plans for the future.



Tell us in detail about the Senior Citizens Project

We started this ATHASHRI concept three years ago and we have now completed more than 600 flats specially designed for Senior Citizens. Out of which 400 flats have been occupied for the last two and half years. People are staying in them. In total, we will be completing 800 flats in Pune itself. In April this year, we will be starting our ATHASHRI Bangalore near Whitefield. It is an excellent project where we are constructing around 200 more apartments in an area of around four acres. Apart from that, this year we intend to start Senior Citizen housing in Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad in a big way.

What is the thought behind such a unique project?

Due to various reasons, the senior citizens are staying all alone. Either the children are staying abroad or daughters are married and no other issues are there. The number of senior citizens wanting to stay alone is increasing. A recently conducted survey shows that in the next 15 years the population of senior citizens would grow to around 22 per cent. We have large cities, which are absolutely congested, and seniors now a days even find it difficult to cross the road. So, as they grow old, the houses where they stay are not necessarily convenient for them. So this ATHASHRI concept was designed to give them that convenience. The entire project is wheel chair enabled, very specifically designed for senior citizens. The amenities are also like that including the inside layout. We have a gym, which is a physiotherapeutic center, swimming pool, doctors on call, ambulance 24 hours, alarm facility is there with resident manager always present in the campus. Apart from that, we have our own canteen which serves starting from breakfast to dinner. At the same time, no things are like the typical old age home where you have

to obey the rules and regulation at the cost of your freedom. But there are some compulsions like one of you should be a senior citizen and the age of the senior citizen should be above 55 years. You can buy this flat, you can sell it, could take it in your children's name.

How affordable are these flats?

The basic design of the flat is small. So, we have one-room kitchen, one bedroom-hall- kitchen, two bedroom-hall-kitchen, which are also quite tight (900 sq.ft). Here in Pune, it costs you around Rs.1200 per sq.ft but in Bangalore, it is Rs.1700 per sq.ft. Traditionally in western countries, also when you grow old you downsize your living space. The same way you can do here. If you are staying in costly apartments, you can sell it off once you are old and personally come to stay there. So, you save substantial money. Due to lower interest rates, in case your income has come down and if you have little saving through selling that big flat then purchase of these flats become cost effective. The other charges include a 10-year charge for society maintenance, for couples it comes to around Rs.5000 to Rs.6000, which is inclusive of food. We have a common kitchen, where people can choose to cook or else can cook at home. We have nice waiting areas, halls, and hobby rooms. This Bawdhan Athashri project is the third in line of such projects in Pune.

The cost of a one-bedroom flat would be around Rs. 7 to 8 lakhs. The interiors have used typically American concepts. Therefore, in case you are not well and cannot go outside, bearing that in mind, we have designed terrace gardens for these flats. It adds joy to the life and enjoyment.

This seems to be a foreign concept. What kind of response have you got for this project?

We have tremendous response from people. In fact we

have people lined up on our waiting list for all these flats. It is a successful concept. For this Bawdhan project, 40 people are in the waiting list. Looking at the lessening of the joint family system in India, this has become a social necessity. They get here the dignity that they hardly find outside when they grow old. They expect world-class service. The biggest problem for them is how to spend time. So, the moment they enter inside Athashri, they leave the past behind and they become a part of a big family where everyone is of their age. Our resident manager organizes outings for them. They travel by our in-house bus through arranged mass booking. We conduct at least two big functions every month. We have larger amphitheatres as well.

Which are the global markets you are looking at ?

The first generation of Indians who have gone to US are very lonely. Their next generation has become typically westernized. Nobody from their age group is in touch with them. In the last 40 to 50 years they have settled in the US. Therefore, they are hardly in touch with India but still somewhere, they are Indians. Once they retire from their jobs, they feel lonely. This made us realise the importance of such projects for the Indians in the US. Apart from the design and lesser size, the concept would be similar. We have started our own construction in Melbourne, Australia but we would also like to tie up with any US construction company involved in similar projects to make a start. Anyways, when you are an Indian by heart and birth, it is hard for you to forget that. So, it is a tribute for them. Conceiving the idea or creating it is not that difficult but the most difficult part is maintaining that spirit in them. As now we are fairly

equipped and experienced, I feel we can venture into the US. We intend to start this in West Coast probably in San Jose. We intend to construct in those areas where there is a larger Indian population.

How do you take care of the extreme health cases and what are the provisions for them in the project?

The projects we have in hand are for the able senior citizens. So, here the hospitalization is not required. But for emergency cases we have all provisions. We are tied up with major hospitals in Pune to provide medical help within few minutes. But gradually we will be getting into all other types. In the US we have five types of projects. In India we intend to start the Continuous Care Unit type because the senior citizens are in need of such assistance everyday. These units will also have a doctor and nursing staff available 24 hours.

As you mentioned that you have an office in Melbourne, Australia, is this the same kind of project happening there as well?

We are always gaining experience constructing project after project in these countries, because in all these countries the terminology, the material, everything is different. In Australia, things are very different but it is quite interesting as well. There, we are putting 43 independent bungalows, which are designed by an Australian architect. Melbourne is one of the best livable places in the world. We feel Tasmania could be our next target because it is one of the beautiful places I would like to start construction.

With Australia, I have some other plans as well.



Education is one sector I have great expectation from. My family has been involved in education since 1927. We have created suburbs, large housing colonies, townships that also require schooling facility. My Grand Father had started the Parle Tilak Vidyalaya Associations, which is one of the esteemed schools in Mumbai. Our trust has three colleges and three schools. However, the international standard education system is required now. When we talk about brain drain, I feel this is the right time for brain gain. So three things are important when considering why people migrate; one is to get great jobs, avail of good lifestyles, and get quality education for their children and younger generations to come. So, all these three needs are now getting satisfied in our country only. We also aim to create such international education system in India as well. We have acquired a substantial area in Hinjewadi, which is on the outskirts of Pune, around 100 acres. We have a place where we intend to start a project with any of the Australian universities who would be interested in such a project.

How do you propose to maintain a balance between the construction work and the environment, keeping intact the eco-friendliness of the place?

I am aware and involved in the eco-friendly environment. I am also involved in the green building concept. In October last year, for 15 days I was in the US specially reviewing their green building and how to make those concepts comfortable in India. I also plan to introduce the rainwater harvesting, STPs where water could be reused for flushing and gardening. We have sewage treatment plants to provide water for gardening including plantations around the building.

Concerning the Budget 2005-06, what are your views on the introduction of FDI in the real estate sector? How useful it is going to be?

There are three types of real estate projects. Infrastructure, commercial and housing projects. Foreign investors might be interested in big infrastructure and commercial projects where the investment as well as the return is substantial. However, if you look at residential housing the profit margin is not that attractive. In comparison to the technology and the construction costs, it is much more expensive abroad than it is here. If the houses are not going to be cheaper then I do not find a reason why people will buy more flats. But of course there are some good points of such a move. Corporate ethics would be far better in the real estate field. The customer is going to be the focus and the systems that probably which very few builders have will come into India. Hence, these are the positive things. Therefore, I welcome such a move. ◉

15



According to a latest report, a new species of crocodile, which had existence 40 million years ago, has been discovered in tropical Australia. Two nearly complete skulls and a lower jaw of a new species of crocodile that belonged to a group called Mekosuchinae were unearthed by miners in the northern state of Queensland, said Australia's Monash University researcher Lucas Buchanan.

Buchanan said the new species of crocodile was living in the early Tertiary period, from 65 million years ago until five million years ago, during which time climate change possibly had a major impact on the evolution of the modern-day crocodile. During the period, Australia and Antarctica broke apart and most of eastern Australia became warmer, leading to an increase in rainforests -- an ideal environment for crocodiles.

Buchanan said the new species of crocodile was very similar to the modern-day freshwater crocodile, suggesting the modern crocodile had changed little in millions of years of evolution. Buchanan said researchers were examining more crocodile fossils and hoped to add to the crocodile evolution puzzle.

Exporting Culture Worldwide

The Australia International Cultural Council has proposed a five-year plan as a part of Australia's major cultural promotional activities to be undertaken around the world in various countries.

The activity aims to project a contemporary image of Australia and enhance exports of cultural products says the Foreign Minister of Australia, Alexander Downer. The Council established in 1998 to promote Australia and its cultural assets overseas aims to showcase Australia's quality and diversity in major markets through this project.

To begin with, a celebration of Australian arts and design in Singapore from May to September will feature design, film, literature and performing arts. In July, the Australian Ballet will launch a two-year program in Britain costing \$1 million with a performance. Further promotions in the next five years will be in France, India, Malaysia, the United States, Indonesia, China and Germany.



The mining company, Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) and traditional owners of the abandoned Jabiluka uranium mine site have signed an agreement. The Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation representing the Mirarr people has described the signing as a "sweet victory".

This gives right to the traditional owners to decide on the future operations at the site. In a case filed in 2003 by ERA in the Jabiluka site at Kakadu National Park, it was being assured that there won't be any mining activity without Aboriginal consent. ◉

PLM

The One-Stop Property Shop

PLM India is controlled by its Australian parent company. The Australian company has been in the Facilities Management industry providing a comprehensive range of services including; Energy Auditing, Electrical, Mechanical, HVAC and also Soft Services including Grounds Maintenance and General Building repairs for the last thirty years. The company is a one-stop shop for the entire management of a diverse portfolio of clients including; Hospitals, Bank networks, BPO's and a host of many large commercial facilities. It employs more than 2,500 employees, consultants and vendors; Commonwealth Bank of Australia has renewed its contracts with PLM consecutively for the last thirty years.

The group now provides a comprehensive range of Facility Management and Property Maintenance Services throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific region and in the process provide strategic support to an industrial, commercial and retail client property portfolio totalling some one million square metres.

The Indian subsidiary has established its initial operations in Mumbai and has since taken up facilities management contracts at the Hiranandani Hospital, (the state-of-the-art hospital in Bombay), Galleria Shopping Plaza, Delphi (a prestigious commercial property) and several other commercial properties. It plans to expand nationally to meet the demands of its customer base. It has its COO Haridas Menon who has more than 15 years experience in leading edge Facility Management services throughout India, China, Singapore, Mexico and Australia.

In line with the company's own goals, its FM team also has expertise in energy audits (which can reduce costs for facilities owners), and each are supported by the company's established training programmes and management information and control systems and by an ever-growing team of Asset Specialists who provide an in-house hands-on support structure.

The business is structured to provide a single point of contact for our customers no matter where they are located and we do this from our centralized Helpdesk providing customers with one point of contact to report service faults, enquire about accounts, and for general management or technical support.

Our helpdesk is supported by the latest technology in Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS), and this enables our customer service team to maintain a high level of communication throughout the entire work request process and to provide regular and on-going reports to our customers.

We believe our company's continued growth has been a direct result of the commitment from our team of dedicated people, our focus on delivering innovative solutions, and by understanding our customers business so that we can offer value-added services.

Our Customers

Our business exists because of our customers. Our entire team understand this fact, and this has been the main driver behind our people constantly searching for better ways to deliver our value-added services and for our business to provide a more comprehensive range of services as we endeavour to learn more about our customers business and their specific requirements.

An excellent example of this is the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, one of Australia's leading financial sector businesses. The Essential Services contract we have with the bank commenced more than thirty years ago, providing a simple lamp replacement service to their 1500 strong branch network along the Eastern Seaboard of Australia. Over the years, this contract has expanded to include Exit & Emergency Lighting, Residual Current Device Testing, Appliance Testing & Tagging and Microwave Oven Leak Detection Services and we believe this is a testament to our resolve to be the industry leader.

The list provided below, indicates some of the high calibre customers we partner with and currently provide our services to;

- Dr. L.H. Hiranandani Hospital • Melbourne Airport
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia • Salvation Army
- State Transit Authority (NSW) • Woolworth's Supermarkets • McDonalds Restaurants • Safeway

Supermarkets • Hiranandani Construction • Dep. of Employment & Workplace Relations • Apollo Hospital (Lanka) • Hiranandani Headquarters (Bombay)

Capabilities

PLM Property Services is a diversified operation with a strategically located network of offices, workshop facilities and sub-agency representation.

Our team provides a comprehensive range of on-demand, proactive / predictive and routine maintenance services to ensure your assets are maintained and running at optimum level.

At PLM, we believe we're the only company with the in-house capability to provide an entire range of support services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. We have an on-going commitment in working towards achieving excellence in the management, maintenance, upgrade, repair and modification of all building services, safety and protection systems.

The key deliverables of our services provide:

- A partnership approach where we share the risk and the reward
- A value for money financial proposal;
- An extensive network of international operating locations focused on quality service outcomes;
- A client support system with a dedicated Account Management team;
- Peace of mind in the provision of timely routine maintenance services and repairs; and
- Risk management in certifying that all related statutory requirements under our management are adhered to.
- 24x7 back-up support from an in-house technical team based in Australia and throughout the Asia-Pacific region.



With many local companies continuing to outsource their non-core business functions, many are turning to international companies to provide services, which may include property, or Facilities Management services. To meet this demand, PLM Property Services an Australia-based organization has identified huge growth potential and decided to establish a local company in 2004.

The company provides Facilities Management service, which unfortunately in India says the GROUP CEO, Paul Cox, can be taken to mean providing cleaning or housekeeping services. However, the company understands that the customer requires some education as to the benefits that can be achieved when collaborating with a true Facility Management Company and not just a cleaning company that can coordinate other services for the customer.

PLM has established itself in the local market and proven that it can provide the high quality services for which it has been renowned for in Australia for the past thirty years and is now confident that with the on-going support from its Australian parent company it can grow its business nationally and benefit many large corporates along the way.

Cox said that while there are many other companies in India that promote themselves as Facility Managers this was not usually their core business activity and tended to be more of an add-on whereas for PLM, Facility Management is their core business and has been for more than thirty years.

In addition to training systems, the company has invested into leading edge software that is used by their centralized helpdesk operations to assist the customer in cost effectively managing their facility. The PLM Helpdesk provides one point of contact for the customer, whether it's for technical advice, management support, billing enquiries, or reporting non-routine faults, the helpdesk is their whenever the customer needs help.

As it has done in Australia for the past thirty years, PLM has not set out to be the biggest but the best at what it does. As Cox points out, there's only a small segment of the total market that is made up of what we call quality customers and these are people and organizations that recognize the value in what we do so we are happy to dominate just that sector. For us, it's always been customer share not market share.

From the outset, PLM recognized the need to improve fundamental skills amongst on-site staff and has established a regular training program which includes many of its clients external vendors which they say will benefit their customers by employing better skilled people, particularly in regards to some of the softer skills such as Customer Service, Quality and Environmentally friendly and safe work practices.

By PLM continuing to increase awareness amongst its target, customers on how it will save operating costs and bring about overall efficiency to a facility will ensure they meet their turnover target. When asked about this Mr. Cox said he did not want to give too much away to the competition but did say as a result of their lean management structure and back end support from Australia the company will break even in its first year.

Tourism Australia; Showcasing a Basket of Colours Down Under



Greig McAllan

Here comes Australia with a different light *Down Under*. Showcasing its colourful wonders through the new marketing campaign that targets Indians aspiring for an extraordinary holidaying experience, Australian Tourist Commission now relaunches itself with the name suggesting Tourism Australia. On 17 March 2005, Tourism Australia got its official birth with a press conference at the Hilton Towers, Mumbai. The promotional activity including a co-operative print advertisement campaign with Qantas airlines, consumer promotion with Barista Coffee and a project with NDTV is going to be the main focus of TA this year, said, Maggie White, Regional Manager, South and South east Asia, Tourism Australia, while addressing the press meet.



Maggie White

Greig McAllan, the General Manager, Asia spoke about the difficulty being faced while increasing awareness among Indians for outbound travel and specially to Australia. He also said that this is an exciting time for the Australian tourism industry, and the launch of this new campaign will create the platform to drive the success of tourism to Australia in future. According to San Chan, the Regional Marketing Manager, Asia, this new marketing approach using the signature line "Australia. A different Light", will position Australia as a country brand rather than just a holiday destination.





(TO ADD SOME MORE ACTIVITIES OF TOURISM AUSTRALIA)

Another attraction of the Press Meet was the announcement of the launch of a coffee table book named *Bazaars Down Under*, written by Abhijit Majumdar. The book captures the marketplaces, shopping arcades and bazaars of Australia.

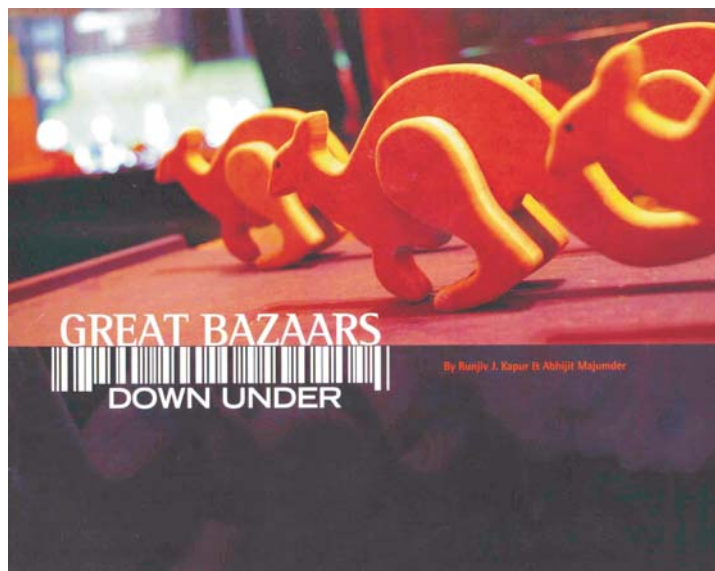
*During an exclusive interaction with **Rojita Padhy**, **Abhijit** spoke about the purpose of choosing *Bazaars* as a concept to write on and his personal views and experience about Australia.*

Over to Abhijit:

Bazaars are a fascinating topic to deal with probably because a strong element of routine as well as magic co-exists. We go to the bazaar every day, but it never ceases to capture our imagination. Bazaars in an alien land often hold the key to our understanding to its culture and lifestyle, tastes, artistic expressions and that what instigated me to capture Australian bazaars in a book.

What I think about Australia!!!

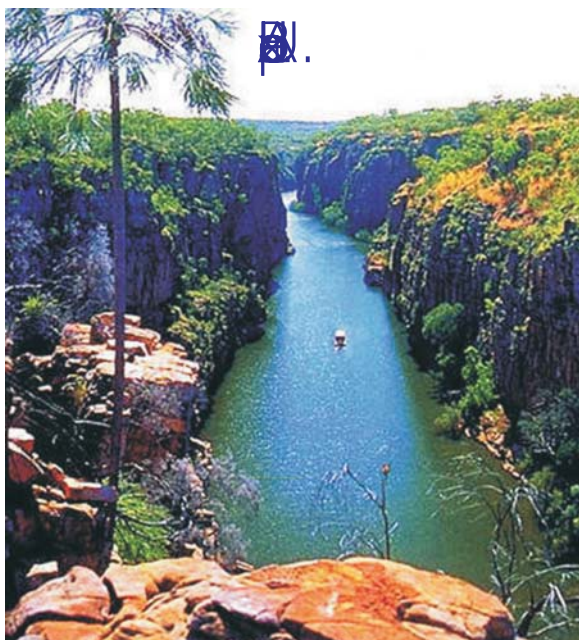
Australia is an amazing nation in terms of its energy, optimism, passion for outdoors, quirky humour, streak of innovation, a healthy irreverence things that place outside the island are slowly losing out. This spirit is reflected in the Australian marketplace, which is why the bazaars there are so special. The colours, for instance, which Aussie fashion designer Julie Tengdahl uses in her creations is so influenced by the weather and sunlight. The toy witches on sale on South bank, the handcrafted lamps at Paddington, the luxury pen and antique shops in Queen Victoria Building every shop, bazaar, arcade in Australia offers something special.



And without Tourism Australia's patronage, the project would not have happened. It has sponsored the book (including travel, accommodation, meals, and fees) up to the production stage. But more specifically, the human help, beginning from quick sanctioning of the project to the excellent and extremely patient and knowledgeable guides that TA put us on to, was remarkable.

So, what do I think of such activities and their role in enhancing the Indo-Australian relations?

We all know that Indians love Aussie cricket, but activities like this, takes the understanding of Australia here beyond kangaroo and cricket. I guess it makes one want to know more about the nation, may be just pack up and go...



Among the unexplored regions in Australia, the small province Northern Territory stands out, as it engulfs beautiful locations with a preserved natural heritage of its own. Some attractions in this region are Alice Springs, the city of Darwin,


Katherine, Kings Canyon and a lot more. In this special issue, we bring to you the territory of Kakadu and Ayers Rock, a land of delights.

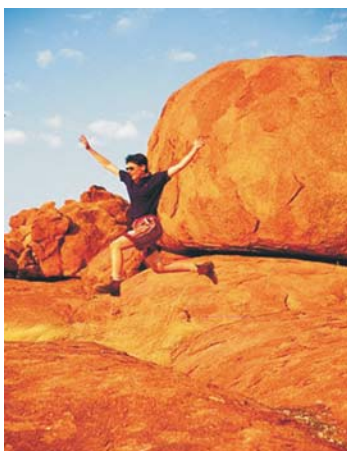
Enjoy the discovery into nature's wonders in the north of Australia...

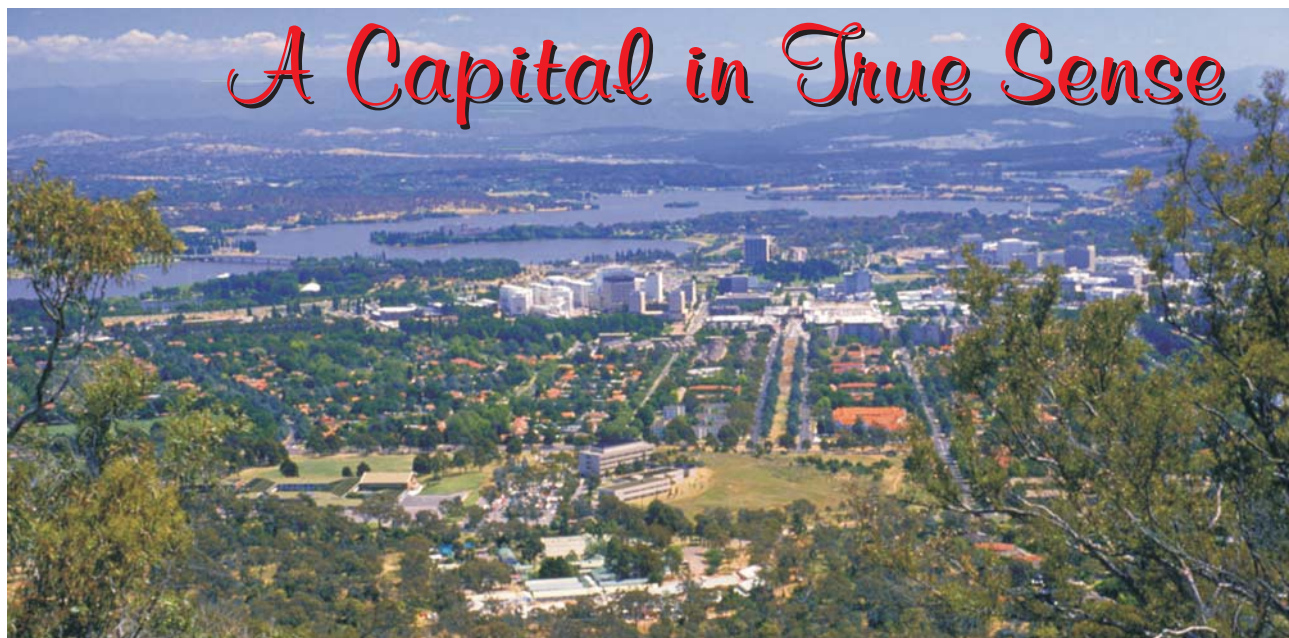
May be this time when you think of visiting Australia, you could start up with the Northern Territory which has some of the best-known tourist icons in Australia. These are Ayers Rock or Uluru, as it is known by the aboriginal people and Kakadu National Park. Access can be via air from Asia into Darwin by Qantas, Garuda Indonesia or Royal Brunei and from other Australian cities by Qantas or Virgin Blue. If you fancy the train, **the Ghan** leaves Adelaide for Alice Springs twice a week. The Ghan will go through to Darwin from February 2004. There are Express Coaches from all capital cities that go to Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin. They also do a loop out to Kakadu. Kakadu and Ayers Rock present a wide range of hotels, resorts and tours ranging from day tours by coach to adventure safaris by 4WD that offer overnight camping to multi day adventure tours sleeping under the stars. If you are looking for an outback adventure holiday, you cannot go past the Northern Territory. With wide-open roads, self-driving in a car, 4WD or camper van (motor home) is easy. We can assist with ideas and itineraries as well as helping choose and book the car, 4WD or camper to suit your style. It is around 1800 kms from top to bottom of the Northern Territory and if you take 7 to 10 days, you will have plenty of time to explore some of the sights along the way. You can also tour by private tour with your own vehicle and driver guide.

Closely linked with Darwin and Kakadu is Katherine Gorge or Nitmiluk National Park its aboriginal name. It is 400 kms

south of Darwin and the town of Katherine has a range of hotels, family apartments and some great B&B's. With Katherine Gorge, Cutta Cutta Caves, Mataranka and the aboriginal experience at Manyalluk all easy distances it makes Katherine a great spot to spend a few days. There is excellent fishing in the rivers in the Top End but you must be wary of the salt-water crocodiles or estuarine crocodiles as they are often called. These crocodiles can grow in excess of five meters and weigh around a tonne so they have the potential to be dangerous. The fishing is good for barramundi in the rivers and estuaries. There are many fishing tour operators to choose from, they are very experienced and must be licensed to take out visitors. Variety of eco tours feature the outback red center desert regions and equally as many offering tropical holidays into the national parks in Katherine, Litchfield and of course Kakadu.

You can choose from bird watching tours, wildlife tours, and tours featuring aboriginal culture and many others. Hence, make a wish. 





Tourism is the most growing industry in the ACT(Australian Capital Territory). More than 1.25 million visitors every year have been visiting ACT. The Namadgi National Park covers about 40 per cent of the Australian Capital Territory. It reaches to the border of the New South Wales Kosciusko National Park, and together with parks in Victoria is part of a series of reserves which protect most of Australia's alpine and sub alpine areas. Attractions outside Canberra include Cockington Green Miniature Village, Mount Stromo Observatory, Canberra Space Center and Cotter Dam. ACT offers some beautiful natural landscape and excellent bush walking tracks, which can be found, close to the city.

The capital city...

Canberra

In order of popularity, the most visited attractions are Parliament House, the War Memorial, the National Gallery, Telecom Tower, and the Science and Technology Museum. Parliament House alone receives more than 1.25 million visitors annually and the Old Parliament House, re-opened at the beginning of 1993, is a very popular attraction. The Australian National Botanic Gardens, on the slopes of Canberra's Black Mountain, are planted entirely with native trees and plants. An area of rainforest also has been developed. Welcome to the capital Territory of Australia and our parliamentary hub. Canberra is a small but very exciting city. Home to wonderful restaurants, art galleries and Australia's history. A quick drive out of the city visitors will find themselves in the country surrounded by sheep, wheat or cattle farms. You can choose from a vast range of accommodation types from B&B's, 5-star hotels, to farm stays. With everything grown and caught locally, the food is amazing. Indulge in some shopping adventures starting in the city and working your way outwards to some of the local country craft shops. Depending on your idea of

adventure visitors can abseil, rock climb, take a hot air balloon flight, cycle, go caving or bush walking, alternatively there is also ice-skating, go-karting, horse riding and fishing. Canberra has a range of activities for all the family. Not to be outdone by the other winemaking regions, Canberra's cool climate also makes it perfect for growing those award-winning grapes that make those award-winning wines.

The city with a historic value...

Gundaroo

Most of the older buildings were constructed in the period 1860-1890 and are generally in good condition. There is a range of building styles and materials including slab huts, wattle and daub, stone and locally fired brick. There are now several newer buildings scattered throughout the village many of which complement the historic character of the township. There are also pleasing open spaces and a town common bordering the village on the eastern side. This is one of the towns providing an area for villagers to graze cattle.

India moving on the right path of reforms - TCF

The Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA) organized the Pune Expo 2005, a business exhibition, on March 10 at the Agriculture College grounds. A senior MCCIA official has summed up the objectives of the exhibition. He says the Expo will unearth opportunities that different countries offer. He looks forward to joint ventures, investment partners and sourcing of products from Pune. The time is right for globalizing and projecting Pune as an emerging IT city, he says.

At a luncheon hosted at the Le Meridien, in honour of the members of Mumbai-based Trade Commissioners' Forum (TCF) visiting the Expo, a New Media team interacted with them informally. During the conversation the trade commissioners spoke on different topics ranging from the focus of their Forum, their assessment of the Indian economic scenario. Following are the excerpts.

On being asked about the Trade Commissioners' Forum and the role it is expected to play, the participants made the same point and each of them emphasised on the need for such a forum to facilitate better business, though the manner in which it was put across, differed.

For **Helen Deas, First Secretary (Trade and Investments)& Deputy Head of Mission, UK** "The TCF is a new entity and I have a very open mind and open expectations out of it. I am also keen to have closer links particularly with my European colleagues who are members of this forum because EU is the largest supplier of goods and services to India. It is a very important relationship. Apart from the regular sectors we are looking at sectors like financial services, legal services depending on the WTO legalization, chemicals, food stuff, packaging. Hence, a lot of joint ventures, technology transfers and tie-ups are possible between India and UK.

Deepak Shikarpur, Director National Sales, Dimensions Engineering Software Services Pvt. Ltd., feels that the forum is a body where all the consulates can come together and one can expect a greater level of activity in the context of trade and commerce.

For **Pieter Coetzee, Consul In-charge, South African Consulate General,** "The Trade Commissioners' Forum should and would facilitate only business." Very appreciative of the reforms in India, he felt that the present Prime Minister is indeed doing a good job. The reforms have helped India emerge as a global village that is well aware of its responsibility towards its social and economic needs.

Maarten D. Reuchlin, Consul General of The

Netherlands, believes,

"Although we are a part of this Trade Commissioners' Forum, we are here in our very bilateral capacity. I am from Holland, so I am truly looking at all the chances for Dutch business tie-ups, exports, imports and we all use the vehicle of the Trade Commissioners' Forum because it gives just a little bit more exposure. We are all competitors, but we know that although we are competitors, coming here as a group does have a win-win situation for all of us. I am not expecting any Trade Commissioners' Forum other than this win-win vehicle that we all see.

Irena Krasnická, Consul General of the Czech Republic, sees the forum meeting her expectations in a way that she thus explains. "The Trade Commissioners' Forum is a very useful organisation. We work together with other countries and we also go to some other places in Mumbai, other communities and chambers and we have a lot in common and we help each other. It is great to work with Indian companies, the government and the states we are posted at. This is the third time I think the Trade Commissioners' Forum is present at the Pune Expo. This time we have Australia's presence and Poland has set up its stall. We are considering emerging as a European Union team and also focusing on the other European countries. I feel that as the years go by, international presence is all set to increase."

Irena also spoke about the trade ties between India and the Czech Republic.

"I must say that the last three years the trade between India and the Czech Republic doubled. There is more than \$30 crore and it has an equal balance. There have

been a lot of imports and exports. And it has been very pleasant for both sides. It is machinery, and automobile industries in particular where the exports have been to India. Other areas are pharmaceuticals, jewellery, and glass beads. Our imports include machinery, some jewels and agricultural products from India as well. We also have representatives of Czech trade promotion agencies at our consulate. We have learnt to be more active and we conduct trade within the framework of the European Union and some trade bilaterally."

To **Mr Harshit Desai, Director, Marketing and Information Systems, Emboss Technopreneurs**, "Such forums bring different industries on one platform. People could be coming together and finding out what could be the thing between 2 industries and then move ahead in that direction."

The **budget** was yet another topic that elicited various reactions from the commissioners. While some of them spoke directly about the budget, others also incorporated their perceptions on the present government in India and the on-going reforms.

For **Helen Deas**, "In the last few years, we have seen a two-way trade between India and UK growing substantially. We are now at 6 billion pounds that is over \$10 billion a year between our countries with goods and services and not just trade. We are also receiving a lot of Indian investment into UK. We have now over 40 companies who have set up their base in UK from India. We are encouraging more and more to come in. UK is interested in building long-term partnerships and relationships. We have in fact an open trade system and taxes are very low. We encourage entrepreneurship. We would love to work with India. We have a lot in common in the education and entrepreneurial fields. There are over 50,000 Indian

upon the role of the government in treating the industry as a customer and giving greater importance to infrastructure.

Raj Khalid, Trade Commissioner of Flanders, Economic Representation of Flanders, put forth his views, "The ones who formalise the reforms are actually carrying the respect of every individual who votes respecting the constitutional rights of everybody and moving forward which is a very challenging task. I personally think successive governments and finance ministers have done a very good job. Today even the inclusion of the left party in the government has been a very positive step because it is able to respect a lot of people who cannot speak like us such as the homeless people, people in the villages etc. Growth has to go to them as well and there I think the government has done a good job. In fact even if you think of the patenting in the pharmaceutical sector, I will say that the government always has the right to declare a particular situation as an emergency, and make sure that the rules do not apply. So I do not think there will come a day when somebody would not get the medication because it is too expensive.

Maarten D. Reuchlin, commends the Indian government's emphasis on infrastructure but also feels that it should concentrate on manufacturing than IT as the former would be able to provide for more jobs than the latter for the Indian population.

Harshit Desai, touches a different aspect when he comments upon the budget. "The budget has been pretty positive but some of the sectors where perks have been taxed might appear different but then in budgets these ups and downs have to be balanced. Overall I think that it has been quite a positive budget."

Mr Hyo-Choon Yoon, Director General, Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, says that he having come to the forum as a representative of all kinds of industries, his role is primarily to encourage interaction between countries that could be over a particular product or may be even services in different industries.

He feels that the reforms have done well to the Indian economy. "As far as India's reforms are concerned, the open policy started in 1991. This is the 15th year of this policy and a lot of the reforms and open policy as can be seen in bringing down of the customs duty by 5% and the FDI in TELELCOMM that has been liberalized. I am quite satisfied with this rapidity. Yet certain areas need attention. eg. FDI, it is said is welcome a lot. Yet we find that at times the procedures need a little more simplification. So I feel that the need is to change the attitude as well."



The Australian Consul General, Don Cairns, says that the Australian Consulate has entered into an agreement with the MCCIA. The nature of this tie-up is intended to inform the consulate of new opportunities in Pune. Mr Cairns seems positive when he says, "We hope to get a good response from the session. The agenda of the talk would be to discuss on what Australia has to offer to India. And a little bit about what the consulate does in general."

students studying in the UK now. Hence, we are very keen to have exchange in the field of education. We are an Indo-British partnership and there are over 400 projects that are underway over a ten-year period. We launched the Joint Economic Trade Committee in January with the Secretary State for trade and industry visiting India this year. I am looking at all practical aspects to improve our very good trade relations."

When asked about the budget, **Mr Shikarpur**, stressed



Rupa Trivedi

Back to the Nature: Adiv Rediscovered Beauty



pashmina



Eri stole

Sometimes I feel technology, modernization and the desire to fly high; all these have taken us away from our roots. Is that the truth? Some might not agree with me because what we see today was never imagined a hundred years ago and technology has made it possible. No animosity against the fast moving society.

But have we ever thought of going back to the nature and tried to understand what potential it holds! My answer is yes, in India, we have.

With a glorious past of the Vedas and sages, India's cultural heritage is admired universally for its richness and depth. In fact, the ancient Indians lived closer to the nature, with the nature and by preserving it. Aroma oils, herbal products and clothing patterns formed an inseparable part of the Indian past, a varied range of products directly coming from the Nature. Today, the under stressful schedules of alternative lifestyles, the cosmopolitan circuits are showing unprecedented interest in the Ayurveda.

Things like camphor, neem, mustard and castor, powdered herbs, nuts and the barks of trees have all regained a place in our lives. But very few have actually tried to understand, research and succeeded in bringing back the nature to us and have done justice to its inherent potential.

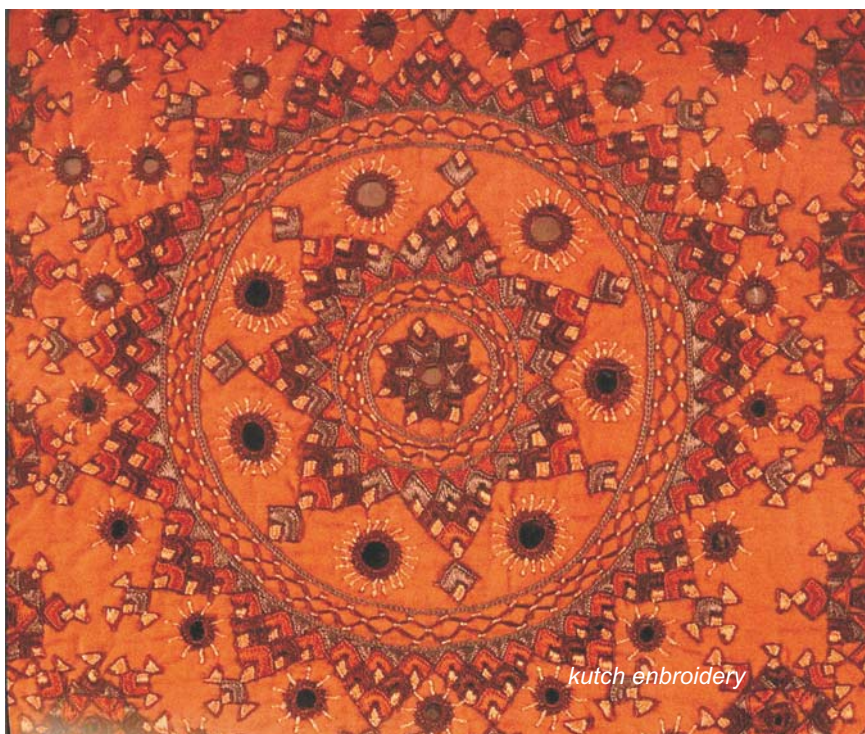
Rupa Trivedi, Director of Adiv Exports, aims to give her clients a sense of tranquility through use of the natural and hand-made products, such as delicate fabrics and aromatic oils. Currently dealing with the textile sector, she had never thought of such a concept until she heard a westerner discussing about India as a country of snake charmers and herbal products and the Ayurveda.

"I did not realise this till I met this lady a year ago, but yes, when I understood how rich a traditional past we have, I thought of doing justice to it by creating awareness the way which will also be beneficial for the present carriers of this tradition", says Rupa. That's how Adiv is born. It is a wholesome Company that offers the unique fabrics and textiles plain, woven or embroidered, as well as aromatic essential oils for sense provocation and for therapeutic use. "Adiv's business is based upon coordination and synthesis of all natural senses. The nature-based product aspires to promote a social cause such as environmental protection, help the poor artisans, women artisans from the earthquake stricken areas of Bhuj in Gujarat and other remote villages around India", says Rupa. Each selective product tells a story. Rupa takes the heavy embroidered bags in her hand and starts explaining, "these bags have a great significance among the artisans of the Kutch region because they are a symbol of Dowry and they are called dowry bags, for the bride groom and for the bride. The artisans do not prefer to make these designs because it is a symbol of dowry, but I was quite impressed with the pattern and concerned to keep the

art alive. So, I had to convince them to design few more for me". From Neran patterns which signifies the eyebrows of a girl to the Square and Geometric patterns of the Jat Muslim artisans in Gujarat, each product's design involves minute precision techniques which is rarely seen these days.

The heart pouring involvement of them also sometimes forces you to realise how sensitive they are. "It requires tremendous convincing power and persuasion to make them understand what exactly you want because they are so attracted towards the modern styles that they are gradually loosing their originality", says a concerned Rupa. Her experience in a small village called Pulicot in Tamil Nadu has been inspiring. Rupa explains how she got the idea of palm leave from this place. "It was not easy to make those group of ladies understand that the traditional pattern of making boxes out of palm leaves could also be used for packaging". However, the Self Help Group was convinced and the result was a fine packaging style to carry the products.

Rupa continues, the product range of Adiv has its own stories to tell, from weavers, block printers to ladies making palm leave products, saris made of wild silk and domestically woven silk and specially designed Pashmina Shawls. The variety of Peace silk offered by Adiv include Mulberry silk, Eri Peace silk made in a process where the Moth is not killed. Use of natural cotton whose objective is to keep alive the soul of



kutch embroidery

Indian handloom industry, use of herbal dyes as living colours has its own uniqueness and eco friendly nature. To add to its feather Adiv has Aroma sense essential oils engulfing three exotic blends of Ps (Power, Passion and Peace) for tranquility and serenity and based on the Indian Chakra system, Adiv has Vedasence Chakra Oil. The last product in the basket of Adiv is the Sense coordinated Sets, a compilation of aromas of earth, trees, leaves, flowers and seed. The box includes fabrics, aromatic candles and essential oils, which will ignite all your senses.

"We have a long way to go. Westerners think of India as a vibrant culture. Hence, we have to maintain that. There is a huge appreciation for such products abroad", says Rupa. She has marked a demand for the natural products in Switzerland, US and may be Australia. "Even Australians have done a lot in sandalwood and other aromatic oils, I might need sometime to research on that." says Rupa.

The essence of India lies in the small villages of Bhuj, Pulicot or a small place in Assam and Adiv's efforts to revamp these hidden treasures definitely is a tribute to those poor artisans who are rich enough to preserve the true Indian spirit in them.

My interaction with Rupa concluded with her last spiritual words, "we have to go back to the roots to understand what we have been blessed with. Just look, feel, listen, touch, smell and we will achieve the peace that we are looking for."

By Rojita Padhy



Kothali

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