

Tuesday, 3 June 2014

**Subject:** A letter from New Delhi

Dear All:

Waiting for my flight out, I look back to five active days in New Delhi, with temperatures up to 45 degree Celsius outdoors. Summer is in full swing, hot and prone to occasional storms. Yet, New Delhi is a green city, with lots of trees, and shade over its generous roads and streets, different from other Asian towns dominated by concrete and tar. The city with its 20 million inhabitants witnesses a bristling life and traffic despite the heat, and impressing differences and inequalities meet the eye and remain impressive. With a new government impending, the mood is hopeful, and people are hoping for, and expecting changes and improvements in their lives.

Before this backdrop, the first joint summer academy of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, the Center for WTO Studies (a branch of the IIFT, directed by Professor Abhijit Das) and the WTI had a good start. A group of some 25 talented law students from different law schools of the country was selected and it was a pleasure to interact. The courses on WTO law and investment law provided by Krista Nadakavukaren and on non-discrimination by Shalilja Singh and myself were well received. I gave a talk on the India and the Future of Multilateralism stressing the changes from liberalization to regulation of trade, harnessing globalization. The work was excellently prepared by Corinne, and supported by Anirudh and Pallavi and Santanu. We enjoyed the support of Swiss Embassy and an invitation Monday evening, glad to meet MILE alumni in town. Harsh, Bhat and Arpit.

I also gave lecture at Amity University, the vice-chancellor of which expressed strong interest in cooperation. Pierre talked in parallel at the Jindal Law School. The two of us today spoke at Assocham, the Indian association of chambers of commerce, on trade facilitation. Contacts with the Confederation of Indian Industries CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI) showed considerable interest for capacity building on trade policy with the private sector. We met again with the Ministry of Education in order to get MILE on the list of eligible programs for government officials. We look forward to follow up on all these plans. With Anirudh in Berne, a strong alumni network and Corinne being in India we shall be able to succeed. The joint academy is scheduled to run for five years, and WTI could not hope for a better a base in this impressive and important country.

There is a sense that India has to play a more proactive role in trade policy and international diplomacy given that it is the third largest market and also enjoys democratic legitimacy and a free press. The west should appreciate this much more and the Swiss should stop haggling over issues such as extended patent protection EFTA-India negotiations.

Anirudh and Santanu showed me around on Sunday in Delhi, and I was struck by the visit of ancient monuments, learning how often Delhi and India was conquered, civilised and colonised even before the Brits arrived. How much migration there was in this part of the world over centuries! The massive Qutub Minaret and the Moguls tomes in Delhi (less known than Taj Mahal but equally impressive and elegantly using the constant breeze to cool the rooms) are silent witnesses worthwhile a trip.

I particularly should like to thank Corinne for all her work (even during the current baby pause) and to Anirudh for his care and hospitality of his family in his New Delhi home.

With kind regards,

Thomas

*u<sup>b</sup>*