

AIIA Victoria - India Study Tour February - March 2025



The AIIA Vic India Study Tour participants assembled at the Ambassador Hotel in New Delhi on Tuesday 25 February for a tour briefing and an opening dinner. The group consisted of Michael, Prakash, Helen, Leah, Kathy, Manisha, Paul, Jeff and John.



The tour officially started on Wednesday 26 February. The first appointment was at the Australian High Commission in Chanakyapuri. The group met with the Deputy High Commissioner, Nick McCaffery and staff of the High Commission, who gave us a high - level briefing of the Indo-Australian trade and political relationship.



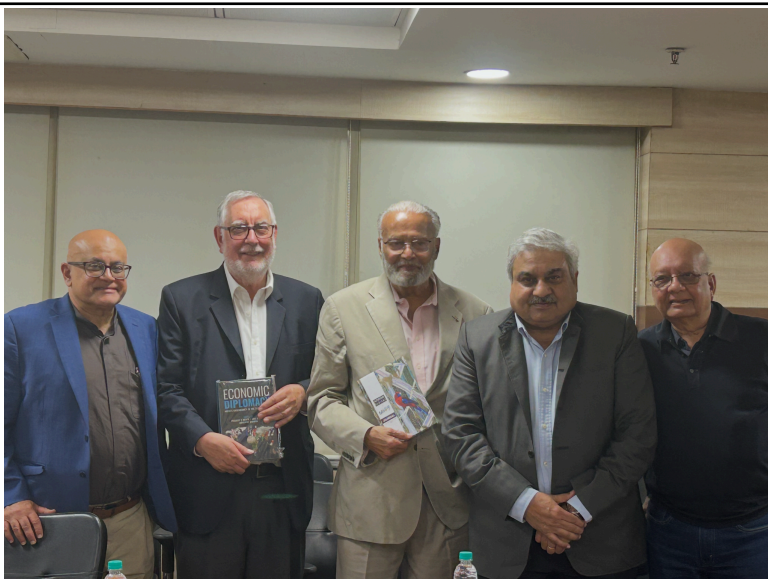
A visit to Humayun's Tomb and the step well (Baoli) in Old Delhi before lunch - a fascinating immersion into Mughal-era Delhi, and a precursor to the Taj Mahal.



Meeting with Ravneet Pahwa, CEO of Deakin University in India. Deakin's program now includes the first foreign campus in India (Gujarat). They have been in India since 1994, but now have a fully fledged Deakin Campus in India. This meeting gave the participants a keen insight into the Indian growth potential for a key Australian service export.



On Thursday morning, 27 February we met with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), where maritime security, the Australia-India Free Trade Agreement and the Indian economy were discussed. We were hosted by Vivek Mishra, Deputy Director Strategic Studies Program, ORF.



Our next meeting was with CUTS International (Consumer Unity and Trust Society) chaired by Mr Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General. Invited guests included Ambassador Anil Wadhwa, Ambassador Amit Das Gupta, and Tom Sandeford, Australian High Commission. Trade and investment issues were discussed. Photo shows Mr Mehta, Amb Wadhwa, Amb Das Gupta with Mike Moignard and Prakash Mirchandani.



We travelled to Merauhli on Friday 28 February to meet the Institute of South Asian Studies, South Asian University, led by Professor Sanjay Chaturvedi, Director. This University is unique in that it is funded by the various SAARC countries and attempts to draw students and faculty from across South Asia.



Across town to the next meeting with Geostrata, a group of students and young professionals. It provided a refreshing view of India from the next generation



Our final meeting of the day was with the Confederation of Indian Industry. We were hosted by Ms Rakhee Gupta, Director who gave us CII's view on the current state and future direction of the larger Indian corporates.



On the weekend the group travelled to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort. Returned to New Delhi on Sunday.



Monday 3 March the group flew to Mumbai early in the morning. A short tour of Mumbai in the afternoon, beginning with lunch at the famous Leopold Café (pictured) and then with a visit to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum of Indian Art. The final stop was the Mumbai Train Station- one of the busiest in the world



Tuesday morning 4 March began with a meeting with Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations. We discussed the Australia – India FTA and had a lively discussion about Chinese investment in India. Our host was Ms Manjeet Kripalani, Executive Director, Gateway House.



In the afternoon, we were given a briefing by the Deputy Consul-General and Austrade's Trade and Investment Commissioner at the Australian Consulate



Wednesday 5 March began with a tour to Elephanta Island, beginning from the Gateway to India. Superb carvings of Shiva in a cave setting. It is a 45-minute boat ride from Mumbai.



Our final meeting for the day was with the National Stock exchange where we had an excellent briefing on the Indian economy by the Chief Economist.



Our final dinner was at the Goa Portuguesa restaurant in Mumbai – a fitting end to this rushed but comprehensive tour of New Delhi, Agra and Mumbai.