



Belgian News - May 2013 - Number 6

*Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in New Delhi
and the Consulate General of Belgium in Mumbai*

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Belgian diplomatic network in India

New Brussels Trade and Investment Office opens in Chennai



On January 31st, Ambassador Pierre Vaesen officially inaugurated the office of Brussels Invest & Export (BI&E) and AWEX in Chennai. Tamil Nadu is one of the fastest growing States in India. The ceremony took place in the presence of Consul General of Belgium in Mumbai, Mr. Karl Van Den Bossche, and Mr. Jacques Evrard, General Manager-International Relations BI&E.

The [Chennai office](#) is headed by Mrs. [Kathlijn Fruithof](#), who organised at this occasion a press conference, followed by a Gala dinner with the participation of more than 100 businessmen and officials.

Ambassador Vaesen said: *"The opening of the Brussels Trade Office in Chennai is a clear signal that Belgium and India mean business. It will help expand opportunities for Indian investors to*

Belgium and increase support given to Belgian businesses to explore the Indian market’.

More info:

www.investinbrussels.com

kathlijn.fruihof@brussels-india.com

Ambassador addresses St. Joseph’s College in Bangalore



In February, the Ambassador of Belgium Pierre Vaesen gave an address to 150 students in political science of the St. Joseph’s College in Bangalore. The Ambassador gave an overview of Belgium, its foreign policy and its wide range of possibilities to pursue higher studies. The interest of the audience was reflected in the numerous questions which followed during the Q&A session after the speech. The Ambassador’s visit to St. Joseph’s was organised by the India Platform of the Ghent University, which is very active in the state of Karnataka.

Belgian volunteers contribute to polio eradication in India



In February, Charly Poppe, First Secretary at the Embassy, together with 10 Belgian members of Rotary International on a special visit to India, participated in the National Immunization Day (NID) for polio eradication. This annual campaign has achieved tremendous success since it first took off in the mid-1990s. For two years now, not a single new polio case was reported in India. Provided no new polio case is reported this year (third consecutive year), then India will be officially considered as polio-free.

To reach people on the move, mobile vaccination teams immunize children at railway stations, inside running trains, at bus stands, market places, construction sites, etc. Around 5 million children are immunized by transit and mobile teams during every round in UP, Bihar and Mumbai alone.

The numbers are impressive: during each NID, nearly 2.3 million vaccinators under the direction of 155,000 supervisors visit 209 million houses to administer oral polio vaccine to around 172 million children under 5 years of age across the country.

Our colleague was stationed at a booth at Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi, a particularly good location as it reaches out some of most vulnerable populations: people on the move, less privileged and less likely to be reached through “classical” channels (doctors, vaccination centres, hospitals...).

The campaign in India is supported by Rotary International, the WHO, UNICEF, USAID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other local partners such as Indian Railways, temples, religious communities, etc. It is coordinated by the Government of India.



More info:
[End Polio Now](#)
[India's polio strategy](#)

Ambassador discusses social dimensions of EU-India FTA



Ambassador Pierre Vaesen gave the opening speech on the occasion of the Seminar '*Social Dimensions of EU-India Trade*' held on 29 January 2013 in Delhi. This Seminar was organised by the Brussels-based European Institute for Asian Studies in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union in India and PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Discussions focussed on the impact on human and social rights of the currently negotiated Free Trade Agreement between the EU and India.

More info:
www.eias.org

Political Highlights

Belgian and Indian Foreign Ministers meet in Brussels



In January, Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders met with Indian counterpart Salman Khurshid in Brussels. Both ministers discussed issues of mutual interest and the development of bilateral relations, in particular the busy agenda for 2013: large economic mission in India led by Belgium's Crown Prince scheduled on 23-29 November, State visit of India's president Pranab Mukherjee scheduled early October and europalia.india cultural festival to be held between October 2013 and January 2014.

Minister Khurshid also met with members of the EU executive in Brussels as well as with the vibrant Indian community in Antwerp where he inaugurated a bust of Mahatma Gandhi.

See pictures of the visit [here](#) and [here](#)

Business News

Belgian company IBA to install first proton therapy centre in India



With approximately three million people suffering from cancer and one million new cases detected every year, India has a growing need for high quality treatment. IBA (Ion Beam Applications S.A.), a global high-tech leader in next generation radiation therapy and diagnostics for the treatment of cancer, has signed a contract with Apollo Hospitals to establish the first proton therapy centre in the country.

More info:
<http://www.iba-asiapacific.com/hi/india>

Proton therapy is increasingly considered the most advanced and targeted cancer treatment due to its superior dose distribution and fewer side effects. Protons deposit the majority of their effective energy within a precisely controlled range, directly within the tumor and sparing healthy surrounding tissue.

Building bridges between Gujarat and Wallonia



The economic development agency of Wallonia – AWEX – participated in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show 2013, which was held in Ahmedabad from 8 to 13 January. Vibrant Gujarat is a biannual event aimed at bringing together business leaders, investors, companies, thought leaders and opinion makers. The 2013 edition was attended by delegates from 120 countries.

AWEX held a joint stand with Logistics in Wallonia. The stand attracted many Indian industrialists and allowed the organization of several meetings with the public sector in Gujarat, with professional associations, as well as with companies looking for technological or commercial partnerships.

AWEX was invited to participate in a meeting at the highest level with the Ministry of Agriculture and to moderate two roundtable discussions with representatives of the pharmaceutical and automotive sectors. The first bridges between these two areas of the State of Gujarat and Wallonia were thus traced.

More info:

www.awex.in/awex-vibrant-gujarat-2013

Belgian aerospace companies showcase know-how at Aero India



Belgium participated in the Aero India exhibition on 6-8 February in Bangalore with the Belgian Aerospace Pavilion.

The pavilion was a joint initiative of Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), Wallonia's Trade Agency (AWEX) and the Flemish (Flag) and Walloon (Skywin) Aerospace Groups. With 12 Belgian companies showcasing their expertise, the Belgian aerospace industry has demonstrated its state of the art know-how in the sector. The Ambassador underlined once more these Belgian skills during a speech at the Belgian Networking Reception, which provided an excellent platform for Belgian and Indian companies to interact with each other.

Belgium's Aliaxis to buy majority stake in Indian Ashirvad Pipes



On 20 February 2013, Belgian Aliaxis Group, a leading global manufacturer and distributor of plastic fluid handling systems and Bangalore-based Ashirvad Pipes, a leader in the Indian plastic pipe and fittings market, announced a joint venture.

The joint venture will expand the product offering of Ashirvad in the building and sanitary segments in India through a combination of Ashirvad's strong manufacturing setup and market presence and Aliaxis's portfolio and technical knowhow.



More info: www.aliaxis.com

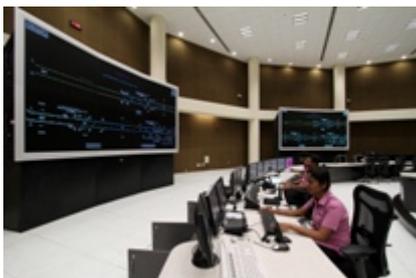
Doing business with Belgium: seminars in Chandigarh and Delhi



On 7th and 9th May, the Belgium-Luxembourg Business Association (BLBA) along with the Walloon Export Agency (AWEX), Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), Brussels Invest & Export (BI&E) and PHD Chambers of Commerce & Industry, organised two Seminars in Chandigarh and Delhi on *“Doing business with Belgium: Your Gateway to Europe”*. Led by the Ambassador of Belgium to India, H.E. Pierre Vaesen, the event focused on presenting what makes Belgium an ideal location for doing business, not only in Belgium itself, but with the entire European Union. More than 60 participants comprising of various Indian companies had registered for the event, both in Chandigarh and Delhi.

More info: <http://blbanewdelhi.org>

Barco installs video walls for Bangalore metro



Belgian company Barco installed two large video walls for the control room of the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation. Each video wall consists of six projection modules, offering outstanding quality and user-friendliness. This new system optimises the current monitoring of train movements and ensures the control room is ready for the future expansion of the metro network. Barco has a strong presence in India, including a factory in Noida.

[More about this project](#)

Cultural News

Belgian students world champions in diplomacy



In March, the Belgian team of [Model United Nations Society Belgium](#) took home its fourth gold medal in five years at the 22nd edition of the [World Model United Nations \(MUN\) Conference](#). A total of 2,000 students from more than 65 countries participated in this official world championship in diplomacy organised by the prestigious university Harvard, this year in Melbourne, Australia. Debates and negotiations were held on major international events, according to the UN rules, in an international setting with delegations from all around the world.

The Belgian team was made up of skilled members from various Belgian universities. A long and thorough preparation period preceded the Belgians' participation in this prestigious model UN conference. They won gold thanks to their sound reasoning talents, their in-depth dossier knowledge and language skills and the quality and structure of their arguments.

MUN Society Belgium is the world's greatest winning team: they also won the [Oxford International MUN](#) five times in a row and the [London International MUN](#) four consecutive times.

More info:

www.munsocietybelgium.org

<https://www.facebook.com/MUN.Society.Belgium>

www.worldmun.org

Tasher Desh: a Belgian-Indian production



More info:
<http://overdosejoint.in>

An exiled prince spends his days in a castle, surrounded by games, toys, women, food and drink. But something is gnawing away at him, a... Desire. Together with his best friend, he embarks on a journey to the Land of Cards, where every person represents a playing card. It is a fascist society, situated at the Indian seaside. With humour, music and passion, the prince brings out human emotions in the 'cards', and one by one they start questioning the purpose of the prison in which they live. A prison of Culture, Morality and Tradition.

Tasher Desh isn't your average fairytale. In the beginning of the film we see an unnamed narrator wandering through contemporary Calcutta with a copy of Rabindranath Tagore's eponymous play. His vision on the piece translates into the political allegory the film actually is. But above all, Tasher Desh provides a hallucinatory sensory experience. What director Q (Quashiq Mukherjee) achieves here with light, framing, editing, creative use of subtitles, costumes and sound, many other fantasy films don't even manage to pull off with expensive CGI.

Tasher Desh is a co production between NFDC (National Film Development Corporation), Overdose Art, AKFPL, Dream Digital and Entre Chien Et Loup (Belgian Production House). Producers: Celine Loop / Nina Lath Gupta / Guneet Monga. Coming soon to theaters.

Antwerp: MAS, a landmark of modern museum architecture made of red sandstone from Rajasthan



More info: www.mas.be

The Museum Aan de Stroom (MAS) has been built in Hanzestedenplaats, in the centre of the Eilandje district, the interface of city and port. It has been opened in May 2011. The MAS is a cultural heritage forum for those interested to learn more about the past, the present and the future of the city of Antwerp and in the world. The museum presents stories about the city, the river, the port and the world. The outer walls of the radiant red round MAS are composed of sand stone slabs coming from Rajasthan and hand-cut. This magnificent building is the work of famous architects Neutelings and Riedijk.

Belgian post launches chocolate stamps



Belgian postal company Bpost launches a new series of stamps, thereby taking the tradition of putting the country's specialties in the spotlights to a new level. The new stamps focus on the world famous Belgian chocolate. Not only is chocolate pictured, the stamps also smell and taste like chocolate! It is a first in Belgian postal history. This limited edition of 538.000 stamps is available from March 25. So go ahead and have a taste of Belgium!

More info: www.bpost.be

Consular News

Belgium and VFS Global extend visa service delivery to six new locations across India



Catering to the growing demand of Belgium bound travellers in the region, this strategic move is aimed at offering new services, facilities and benefits to visa applicants, and boost tourism, trade and investments, and bilateral ties with India.

[Belgian visa counters in India](#)

The Embassy of Belgium in New Delhi has signed a new agreement with its commercial partner VFS Global, the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for diplomatic missions and governments.

Belgian Foreign Affairs have decided to extend their Visa Application Centre services to Chandigarh and Kolkata in Northern India, Chennai and Hyderabad in Southern India, and Ahmedabad and Pune in Western India. With the existing counters in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, Belgium will then be present in 9 Visa Application Centres of VFS.

New Belgian Nationality Law



[More info on Belgian nationality](#)

The Belgian Parliament adopted an important and profound modification of the Belgian Nationality Law. The main amendments came into force on 01/01/2013.

Persons not residing in Belgium will no longer have the possibility to acquire the Belgian nationality. The term “residence in Belgium” means the registration in the population register, the foreigners’ register or the waiting register.

As a consequence, as of 01/01/2013:

- The naturalisation of persons not residing in Belgium is no longer possible;
- The option declaration (i.a. option of nationality on the basis of the spouse’s Belgian nationality and the option of nationality between 18 and 22 years) is no longer possible for persons not residing in Belgium;
- The declaration of possession of status is discontinued;
- The re-acquisition of the Belgian nationality is no longer possible from abroad.
- The attribution of the Belgian nationality to a child and the declaration of conservation of nationality remain unchanged and consequently can still be recorded at the Embassies or Consulates General abroad.

Belgians in India

Masala: Much More Than Just an Indian Cookery Book



The Indian word Masala means a “roasted mixture of herbs and spices”. This cookery book is a delicious mix of traditional recipes from India, Indian recipes with a Western touch, European regional dishes with an Indian twist, and new creations that combine the best of both cuisines. Seasoned to taste with atmospheric sketches and snippets of information on India.

Belgian chef Alain Vanden Abeele has been familiar with India for years and has been fascinated not only by the country, but also by its cuisine. This gave him the idea of publishing, together with chef Biju of Malabar House in Cochin, a book of recipes that would make Indian cuisine accessible to every devotee.

More info:
[Official publisher's page](#)
[Discover the book](#)
[Read an article from The Hindu](#)



Belgian doctor: Acupuncture For India's Poor



Walter Fischer has been working in the slums of Mumbai for the last 5 years.

In 2001, this Belgian entrepreneur gave up a standard lifestyle to study acupuncture. It appeared clearly to him that this particularly low-cost and efficient medicine was an outstanding tool to fight poverty. It came undoubtedly to his mind that something worthy for society could be done with those thin therapeutic needles. Walter Fischer opened the first “Barefoot Acupuncturists” clinic in a slum of Mumbai in 2008, with Ujwala Patil, an Indian social worker.

Now it is five street clinics that the Belgian non-profit organisation has opened and managed in India, both in urban and rural areas. The clinics, great contrast of hygiene, cleanness and hospitality, are like tiny islands of humanity in the middle of slums environment. Today the clinics are handled by Walter Fischer, Ujwala Patil and 7 local acupuncturists, and employ a team of twenty people in total.



They offer 300 acupuncture treatments per week, about 12.000 treatments in 2012. Volunteers from all over the world regularly join the barefoot team in Mumbai.

Their new challenge is to train local communities in order to support them in building more autonomy in healthcare. "Barefoot Acupuncturists" will slowly be transformed into an international and mobile training centre, active in India but also anywhere people in the world have insufficient or sometimes no access to health facilities.

Walter Fischer lives in Mumbai, but travels frequently to Europe and China where he works on consolidating collaborations and fundraising.

More info:

[The website](#)

[The movie](#)

[The article on WSJ India blog](#)

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