

# Travels of a Trade Economist

## Chapter 6 India 1994



**Friday December 16, 2:00 AM -- New Delhi**

It's Friday night, I've been gone a little over two days, and as you can see, I can't sleep. I went to bed at 9:30, then woke up after midnight, and I feel like I may be up until morning. Jet lag, I suppose.

I arrived almost exactly 24 hours ago, after uneventful flights to Chicago, Amsterdam, and here. It is always kind of eerie to see a new country first at night, because it feels so unreal. My first

## 6. India 1994

impression of India was in a large hall where we stood in line for immigration. The hall was all gray marble – floor, walls, and ceiling – and it was very austere. There were no signs to tell us what to do, and I changed lines twice trying to find the fastest. In ten minutes or so I was through, with my passport stamped in several places.

I'd wondered if I would find a bank open at this hour to change money, and I found two of them already as I left that room, even before passing through customs. I gave the clerk two hundred-dollar bills, and he handed me a calculator on which he had figured the amount. The exchange rate was posted as Rs 30 (30 rupees) per dollar, so I didn't need the calculator to convince me that 6000 rupees was the right amount. But I did have a hard time, when he started handing me bills, seeing how much I was getting. Bob Stern, who will be here too, has said to get some small bills, but without my asking the clerk gave me about 40 of them, and my wallet was stuffed.

After the bank, it wasn't at all clear where to go. Rajesh Chadha (whom I'd worked with in Ann Arbor earlier in the year) was supposed to meet me, but I didn't know where. Again, there were no signs to direct traffic, and I made several wrong turns before I found the customs officers. They accepted my declaration form without comment, and I passed through double doors into an area lined with a crowd of people standing behind a barrier. Several had signs with names of people or hotels, but I couldn't spot Rajesh. I walked slowly down the line, then through more doors into what I first thought was another room, but it turned out to be outdoors. At night and with the mild temperature, it was hard to tell indoors from out.

I still didn't find Rajesh, so I went back inside and went up and down the line several times hoping I would either spot him or he'd call to me. I began to think we'd missed the connection and that I would have to find my way alone. Plenty of people offered to provide me a taxi, but I still hoped I wouldn't need them.

Then I saw Rajesh. He was standing at the barrier with no sign and not speaking, but gesturing frantically. I greeted him and he directed me outside where we finally got together, shook hands, and took off. I wondered if I had walked past him several times without seeing him. But he told me later that he had just arrived, because he had looked for me first at the baggage claim. I'd bypassed that because I didn't check any luggage.

We walked out into the chaotic parking lot, and he began searching for the taxi that he had come in. He assured me that he had left it right there but that it had probably had to move because of the traffic. Three flights had come in at once, he said, and the airport was jammed. Not to worry, though, because he knew the number of the taxi. Sure enough, in a few minutes he identified it by its license plate, tapped on the window to wake the driver, and we were on our way.

The taxi looked (and felt, and smelled) like a late-40's Plymouth, but it turned out to be one of only three kinds of cars they have in India. It is called an Ambassador, and it is probably fairly new. It's just the design that is old.

## Travels of a Trade Economist

They drive on the left here, like England. We traveled along a highway that was deserted at this time of night, and I noticed that the driver didn't stop for red lights. Rajesh said that at this time of night red lights were only warnings – I wonder how you know. The driver also didn't try to



Hindustan Ambassador, from Wikipedia 2023

stay in a lane, and instead kept the car pretty much centered on the line between lanes. I didn't ask about that; he seemed to avoid hitting what little traffic there was, and that's all that mattered. I later learned that all drivers in India pay little attention to lanes, and they often even drive down the middle of the road if no one is coming the other way.

Rajesh and I chatted about India and Ann Arbor during the half-hour drive. He commented about how interesting and attractive Ann Arbor was, and he mentioned especially our wooden telephone poles. He'd never seen that before; in India they are made of steel.

There was not much to see in the dark, though I noticed that the landscape became gradually more built up. Still, the road remained wide all the way to the India International Centre (the IIC) where I'm staying. I checked in without difficulty, in spite of the hour, and paid my smallest rupee note (Rs 10, or about 30 cents) as a tip – twice what Rajesh said would have been appropriate.

## 6. India 1994

The room was up one flight of stairs and along a curving hallway. My first impression was of something like a room in a dormitory, but I made complimentary noises anyway and thanked Rajesh for the hospitality. We talked about our plans for the day – he would pick me up for lunch – and then we had an awkward moment as he decided that perhaps he should leave. I think we shook hands three times before he left.



India International Center, from Wikipedia 2023

I looked the room over more carefully, then. There's a low single bed, a desk, a chair, and a small TV. The outside wall is all windows, with light beige drapes. One wall is fake wood, with built-in dresser and closet. The ceiling is also fake wood, but shaped as three long curved arches that give the room some personality.

The bathroom has even more personality, but not a pleasant one. Floor, walls, and ceiling are all gray tile, the fixtures old white porcelain. It feels very stark, rather like the immigration hall at the airport. In one corner there is a screen panel, about a foot wide and two feet high, that accesses an air shaft to the outdoors. That handles ventilation. The floor next to the tub has a drain, and on it are four or five small white round balls, like mothballs. A box on a shelf above says that's exactly what they are, though it claims to ward off not just moths, but also cockroaches and mildew.

I set my alarm for 8:00, thinking to get up for breakfast and then explore a nearby park until Rajesh came. I wondered, though, how I would brush my teeth in the morning. I'd been told firmly not to use the water, even for that, and I hadn't seen any bottled water in the bathroom. I

## Travels of a Trade Economist

lay awake for a little while, thinking I'd have to go out and buy water in the morning before doing much else. I didn't, though. First, I slept until almost noon (I'd set the alarm for 8 PM, it turned out), and I found a carafe of water on the desk.

When I finally got up, I had no problem, then, with my morning routine. The tub had a shower that was quite powerful, and a shower curtain. (No washcloth, though. Are we Americans unique in using them?) Even my hair dryer worked.

At 12:30 I went down to the lobby to meet Rajesh. I didn't spot him at first, and then a man I didn't recognize got my attention and came over to me. I thought that it couldn't be me he was addressing, since how would he know me? But it turned out he had met me in Ann Arbor a year ago at our conference. His name is Shashankar Bhide (pronounced like the French bidet, but with the accent on the first syllable), and I was more comfortable with him than with Rajesh. He is more relaxed with me, perhaps because he spent several years getting a Ph.D. at Iowa State.

Rajesh was there after all, trying to phone my room, and soon the three of us were having lunch in the IIC dining room. I ordered a fixed-price Indian meal called Thali – a platter with white rice in the middle and six small dishes of various hot and cold foods around it. I was a little confused how to eat it, and my companions were no example since they both ordered Chinese. But they made suggestions, and I soon got the hang of it. It was all delicious, as was the spinach and mushroom soup that came before it.

We talked about Indian politics and economics through lunch, and about my visit and our project. We also discussed plans for me to sight-see this weekend, with Rajesh accompanying me. He is inscrutable, and I can't tell how he really feels about spending all this time taking care of me. But I'm glad to have the help, since I do find this place hard to deal with alone.

After lunch, Bhide drove us in his car to NCAER. That is the National Council of Applied Economic Research, which is where they work and is our collaborator for the project. Bhide's car was the second of the three brands in India, an Indian-built Japanese brand, Suzuki. It was the size of a minivan but had the feel of a tin can. I sat next to Bhide in the front seat, my feet against the metal front wall and just inches from the traffic that we often were almost touching. There were no seat belts, and there was no obvious reason why we didn't have frequent collisions, since the cars (and motor scooters, and bicycles) behaved like students in a hallway between classes. This time, though, we did stop for red lights, so I guess there was some order to the flow, even though it wasn't obvious. Honking seemed to be an important tool for Bhide and for others, though I couldn't tell what it accomplished.

Along the way they pointed out several nondescript landmarks, plus the Old Fort, which is one of the ancient city walls. Aside from this, the buildings along the route were ordinary, not all that different from Ypsilanti. We did at one point pass an elephant, though, and that got my

## 6. India 1994

attention. They assured me that was not a common sight, and I was sorry that I wasn't quick enough to take its picture. It had two scrawny men riding on it and was decked out with some sort of green branches. (In fact, though elephants are not common, I did see half a dozen more on the streets over the next week.)



NCAER, from Web 2023

The NCAER building had its own courtyard, and we parked there. Construction was going on, and a truck next to a heap of red sand got my attention, because the front of the truck was festooned with some sort of gold and silver tinsel. I expressed surprise, and both of my companions seemed at first unable to grasp what I was seeing. Eventually they did, though, but dismissed it as a normal thing to do if you spend a lot of time in a truck. And I did see trucks decorated like this several more times after that.

In the building, they took me first to an office that they had set aside for Bob's and my use while we are here. It had a desk, a couch, and two chairs, all metal and rather dingy 50's style. They told me proudly that this room had been fixed up for use by the president of NCAER when he visits.

After a few minutes they took me down the hall to the corner office of the director. This was Dr. S. L. Rao, whom I did remember meeting in Ann Arbor. He is an amiable man, and we chatted and drank coffee for half an hour or so. His office had dark wood paneling and was the nicest

## Travels of a Trade Economist

room I'd seen so far, though it still seemed to lack the fit and finish we'd expect of an executive office at home.

Dr. Rao went over the schedule that they've put together for Bob and me. It includes a full day of meetings on Monday, ending with a public seminar that we'll give on regional trade arrangements here at IIC. Before that we'll meet various government people, including the Minister of Finance who was the architect of India's recent economic reforms (which are the subject of our project). We'll also meet the U.S. Ambassador to India, apparently with the purpose of getting him to pressure our government to finance the project. (How we can have come this far – in time, space, and effort – without the funding in place I still don't quite understand.)

At lunch I had mentioned my own one contact in India, my friend Indira Rajaraman from graduate school whom I hadn't seen since, and who I thought lived far away in Bangalore. But they knew her and said she had moved to Delhi eight months ago. Dr. Rao said he would call her and tell her I was here. Later I did speak to her on the phone, and she will come to meet me here at IIC tomorrow morning. That should be interesting.

## 6. India 1994



Purana Qila (Old Fort), from Wikipedia 2023

After Dr. Rao, Rajesh, Bhide, and I returned to "my" office where we talked about modelling for an hour or two. I learned more about what we will be attempting, and they learned more about the capabilities and limitations of our techniques.

When we were done, about 4:30, they turned me over to an NCAER car and driver to return me to IIC. Already the route looked familiar as we passed buildings and signs I'd noticed before, and the Old Fort. There were people everywhere, of course, driving, pedaling, walking, pushing carts, etc. There was even one cart pulled by an ox. When we stopped at lights, beggars came out and tapped on car windows for handouts. One young fellow was on crutches with only the stump of his left leg sticking out in front of him, and I watched as he must have asked two dozen people for money. But he also apparently saw a friend of his, to whom he spoke and smiled like anybody in the middle of a day's work. He was quite business-like, not at all pathetic.

Back at IIC, I was ready to have dinner and crash, but they don't serve until 7:30. So I read for a while. I also phoned home, catching Pat in the early morning. India is ten and a half hours later than Ann Arbor. The connection was good, but there was a long delay that made it hard to feel close. We took turns speaking at length without pausing much for interchange.



## Travels of a Trade Economist

For dinner I ordered sweet corn soup and the Chinese chicken noodle dish that Rajesh had had for lunch. It was very good. I followed it with coffee, which may have been a mistake. For here I am, now 5:00 in the morning, and still awake. I guess I'll try again to sleep.

### **Saturday, December 17, 6:30 PM**

I got to sleep, finally, then had a hard time waking up at the alarm. I made it, though, eventually, and went for breakfast. There were three breakfasts offered – continental, American, and Indian. I asked for Indian, thinking that would suffice, but then I had to choose from several options. I asked the waiter's advice, and he suggested masala dosa, which I ordered with no idea what it was.

As I waited, I looked up and here came Caroline Stern, Bob's daughter. I knew she'd arrived late the night before, but I hadn't expected to see her so soon. She joined me and ordered two scrambled eggs and tea. Presently the waiter brought me a plate of food and a metal pot that I assumed was my coffee. But when I poured, it was her tea. I gave it to her, then tasted my food, which looked like some sort of thick, gray porridge heaped on a piece of toast. I recognized the taste, though: scrambled eggs. I passed them over to Caroline. My food, when it finally arrived, was a kind of big crisp pancake, folded in half and stuffed with a spicy potato mixture. It was very good, as was the bowl of Indian soup that came with it.

As we were finishing, I looked up and there was Bob coming in. We didn't expect him and Lucetta [his wife] until later in the morning, but it turned out that his travel agent had gotten the time wrong, and his last flight had left five hours earlier than he expected. Fortunately, he had learned that in time to catch it. We visited for a few minutes, and then it was time for me to meet Indira.

She arrived looking very much as she did in graduate school – dressed the same way and even wearing the very same coat she used to wear at Cornell. I took her up to the dining room for coffee, introduced her to the Sterns, and then we sat at our own table for two hours telling each other of our lives. The dining room eventually closed and they threw us out, so we went to my room until housekeeping threw us out of there too. Then we walked in the large park that is behind the IIC, then through a nearby residential neighborhood, and finally stopped for a sandwich at a cafe back in the park. All this time, we were exchanging information and memories. Of course, my own memory is so bad that I didn't contribute a lot of the latter.

She remembered picnicking with my parents when they visited Cornell. She asked about them, was sorry to hear that my mom had died, and was amazed to learn how old she had been. She also remembered going to a Simon and Garfunkle concert, supposedly also with my parents in tow. I remember the concert, but I can't believe I took them. She remembered the fourth of July fireworks that we went to together two years running. And finally, she remembered *not* inviting

## 6. India 1994

me to her wedding, when she left Cornell after our second summer. All of this I had forgotten, but it comes back.

She also told me things about her perception of me back then – things I didn't realize. She said I was politically very conservative, and that I was a nice, safe guy with whom she could feel comfortable because I wouldn't hit on her. She used to visit me the summer I lived next to my friend Rick (I'd make her Kraft macaroni and cheese), and she sometimes wondered if Rick and I were gay. That surprises me, and it would have appalled Rick, who thought he was such an obvious stud.

She also said that she would never have picked me to be the one to become a "famous economist," as she put it, because I didn't seem to care that much about economics. She asked if I am still as lazy as I used to be, recalling how I spent all of my time reading mystery novels.

She told me of her own life after graduate school, which included tuberculosis, hepatitis, and an ectopic pregnancy in the 70's, personal problems in the 80's, and now a much better life in the 90's. She loved the U.S. but felt rejected by it (and me?) when she couldn't find a job there and when she experienced the racism of American students when she taught there. Now she is settled in Delhi until her daughter, now 12, finishes school, but she hopes to move to the U.S. then so that her daughter can attend college there when the time comes. And she is determined that she and I will collaborate someday, or she will personally strangle me when she is seventy. [I'd forgotten that. She and I did publish a paper in 2009, when I was 65, so I guess that's why I'm still alive.] It was quite a visit!

I left her at her car about 2:00 and returned to the IIC. Rajesh arrived with a car and driver and took all the Sterns and me out for an afternoon of sightseeing. The car, another Ambassador, was big by Indian standards, but barely held the six of us. I was squeezed against the front-left door, and I held on for dear life in case it popped open. It didn't. In fact, Rajesh had to reach across and open it every time we stopped, because I couldn't reach the handle.

## Travels of a Trade Economist

Our first visit was to an ancient Muslim tomb and an ornate stone tower, the tallest in India. We were besieged by men selling postcards, calendars, etc., whom it was very hard to shake. Outside the tomb there was a snake charmer. I took a picture and gave him Rs 5, carefully avoiding the snake.



Qutb Minar, from Web 2023

Our second stop was the Lotus Temple, a Bahai temple that was built very recently in the shape of a lotus blossom. It was wonderful. We padded around in our bare feet, as was required, on the cold marble floors, reading inscriptions and admiring the architecture. Before entering we were told to remain silent inside, and I soon saw an attendant planted in front of Lucetta with his finger to his lips.

## 6. India 1994



Lotus Temple, from Wikipedia 2023

Our third and last stop was another Muslim tomb. It was large and beautiful. Rajesh bought us each a ticket for admission for half a rupee (about 1.5 cents) each. They closed the door after us as we entered, since they were just closing for the day. We took our time looking at it anyway. The sun was setting, and I tried to get some shots of it over the trees.



Tomb of Humayun, from Wikipedia 2023

As we left, we walked down a long walkway with trees on either side. There was an amazing din being made by birds in these trees. Apparently, they had just returned after the sunset to

## Travels of a Trade Economist

settle in for the night, and they were greeting each other after the day. I could only see a few of the birds. It was dusk and they were hidden in the trees anyway. I was told that they were mostly parrots, and I saw a few that apparently were. They weren't particularly large or colorful, though, that I could see.

At the top of one tree that didn't have many leaves I could see two very large birds perched. They had a distinctive shape, with what looked like hunched shoulders and long crooked necks. They were vultures. They just sat there as a flock of smaller birds, parrots I guess, took off and landed around them, making constant noise and trying to get them to leave. They didn't.

### **Tuesday, December 20, 9:00 AM**

Saturday evening, we went to dinner at Dr. Rao's home. He is the director of NCAER, and a perk of the job is an apartment in the NCAER building. Since the building is not in a very attractive part of Delhi, I'm not sure why this is so appealing. He lives across the street from a power plant, for example, and the smog is especially bad there.

A year ago, when Bob was here, he and his family went to dinner at Rao's, only to find that it was a large, elaborate dinner party with everyone very dressed up. The Sterns had not brought dressy clothes, however. Bob didn't even have a tie, and Lucetta says she was wearing her Birkenstocks. They were evidently very embarrassed by the occasion. So this time they brought better clothes, and Caroline even shopped specially on Saturday for an outfit to wear that evening. Of course, with all that preparation, it turned out there were only two other guests at this dinner, and Dr. Rao himself was wearing a sweater. No doubt he too was responding to the embarrassment of a year before.

The evening was a typical small dinner party among academics. We sat around the living room before dinner making conversation, which was dominated by one of the other guests. She was a middle-aged Indian woman, the recent widow of the previous president of NCAER. We talked about religion, culture, politics, caste, and even movies. I sat to one side next to the other guest, a Thai economist whom I'd met in Chiang Mai two years ago. I had little to say, but he had even less.

At dinner, I was placed between Dr. Rao, at the head of the table, and the widow. I'd read that in India one should eat only with one's right hand, and I noticed that the widow had her left hand firmly planted in her lap. We each had a small plate to our left with a piece of nam (Indian pita-like bread), and she was reaching over with her right hand, tearing her bread. I therefore tried to do the same. It was impossible. I could tear the bread part way through, but not all the way, using only one hand. Fortunately, as I struggled with this, Dr. Rao sat down and immediately picked up his bread in both hands to tear it. Relieved, I followed his example.

## 6. India 1994

The meal included half a dozen different dishes, and all were delicious. I liked best a "kebab" that looked like a sausage, about six inches long. It was made of ground meat – I don't know what kind – and had apparently been cooked on a skewer, though that had been removed.

We talked throughout the meal. I'm sure I must have learned many interesting things, but they escape me now. Most interesting, perhaps, was a question posed by the widow that nobody could answer. India was ruled for about a thousand years by Muslims. In other countries where Muslims have ruled (Indonesia, Malaysia) their religion, Islam, has completely replaced the local religions, and Muslims are not known for being tolerant. But in India, the majority of the population is still Hindu. Why? We don't know.

After dinner we went back to our places in the living room and coffee was served. (I notice that alcohol was never offered.) After sleeping so little the night before, I wondered if I should have any, but I couldn't resist. Coffee here is pretty good, in my opinion, though Bob says he doesn't like it. We left about 10:30 and were driven back to the IIC.

Back in my room, I found I had a headache, but I just wanted to crash, so I went to bed without taking anything. An hour later I was still awake, and the headache was worse, so I took two Excedrin. Back in bed waiting for the headache to subside, I began to wonder what Excedrin is. I'd assumed it was just aspirin, but if so, why wasn't it called that? Finally, I turned on the light and read the label. Sure enough: aspirin plus caffeine! I lay awake until close to 4:00, the headache gone, but my body slowly vibrating.

At 4:30 my alarm went off. That was intentional, because Rajesh was to pick me up at 5:00 to take the train to Agra. Fortunately, I had not gotten into deep sleep, so it was actually easy to get up.

The streets were deserted as we drove (down the middle of the road) to the train station. The station itself was mobbed. Rajesh says that train stations are the safest places in India because they are always busy.

The train was waiting. We got on and found our reserved seats. Like so much else, the train had a dingy feel to it, but the seats (gray, again) were well padded and comfortable, if a little cramped. Like airplane seats, they tilted back a bit, and there was a tray that folded down in front of you. That was for a hot breakfast that they brought on a tray during the trip.

For some reason, it was impossible to see out of the windows of this train. They appeared to be clear glass, but they were either dirty or fogged over, I couldn't tell which. Light came in, but we couldn't see anything outside. This was disappointing since I had hoped to see the countryside. I did my best to doze through most of the two-hour trip. I don't know whether I succeeded.

In Agra, Rajesh hired a car and driver, to stay with us all day and take us to the sights. He drove a few blocks, then stopped to pick up another fellow whom we also hired as a guide. Rajesh negotiated the prices for all of this, and the guide told us which places he would show us in

## Travels of a Trade Economist

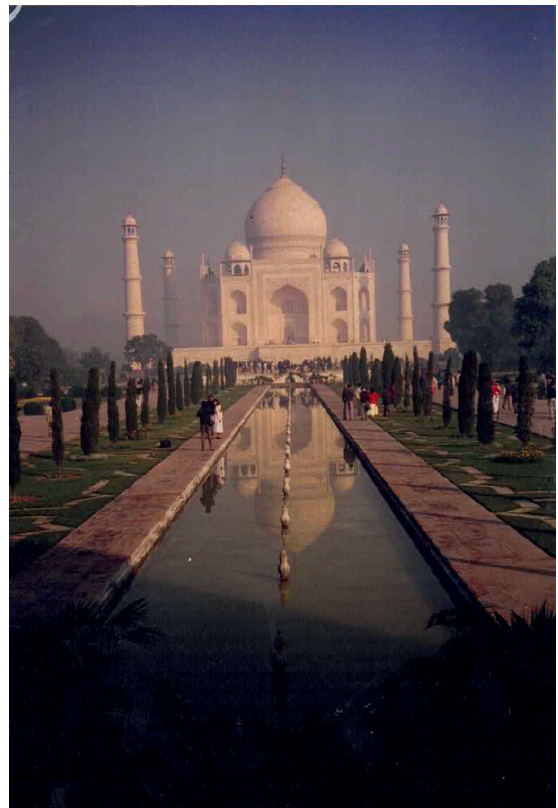
return. Later it turned out that a visit that day by the "chief minister" would cause roads to be blocked and prevent us from seeing some of this with him. Rajesh was irritated with the fellow then, for he was sure that he knew all this when we hired him, and that he should have charged us less because of that. He paid the promised price anyway, but let him know of his unhappiness.

We drove first through the narrow, crowded city streets to the entrance to the Taj Mahal. Through the gate we entered a gigantic open space and walked down an avenue toward a large reddish building. There we turned right, and now faced an even larger space with the Taj Mahal in the middle of it. Reflecting pools and rows of trees stretched out before us on the approach, and we worked our way toward it stopping occasionally to take pictures. The guide kept up a running commentary as he took us to several spots where the pictures would be especially good.

The Taj Mahal (they just call it the Taj) is a tomb, built by a Muslim king in the 1600's in loving memory of his wife after she died bearing him his 12th child. It is built entirely of white Indian marble, inside and out, inlaid with semi-precious stones making intricate flower designs. There is a central domed building, containing on a lower level the tomb of the wife in its center and that of the king himself next to her. On the main level above, there are exact replicas of both tombs, intended for public viewing, though today we are allowed to see both sets.

Separate from the domed building are four identical towers. These appear to be vertical, but in fact they angle three degrees away from vertical, pointing slightly outward from the main building. This is so that, in case of an earthquake, they will fall away from it and leave it untouched.

There is only one Taj Mahal. The story is that the architect, after it was built, had his hands cut off so that he could never duplicate it. However, we were also told that the same king started to build an identical but black Taj Mahal directly opposite this one across the river, to house his own remains. He died before much of it was built, however, and the next king, his son, didn't complete it. That is why the first king's body is entombed as an afterthought, off-center, in the original Taj.



Taj Postcard

## 6. India 1994

The carving of the white marble and the decorative inlays of the colored stones are amazing. They are equally beautiful up close and from a distance. Up close, there are flower patterns made of bits of stone no bigger than a thin grain of rice. One typical carved marble screen, about three feet square, was pointed out that took an artisan seven years to make, during which a single error could ruin the whole thing. The entire Taj took 21 years to complete, which seems a short time under the circumstances. People certainly had patience back then.

It is dark inside the Taj, so our guide brought a flashlight to show it to us. He described the wonders of the Indian white marble, which is harder than European marble and won't leave a mark if you set a glass on it. Why this was important for the Taj was not obvious to me, but it became clear later when he took us to a shop to buy coasters made of it. The marble is also translucent. He placed his flashlight against a corner of a wall, and the light shown through.

We left the Taj and, after a short visit to the shop where we saw craftsmen making the same sorts of marble inlays as were in the Taj, our guide tried to take us to our next stop – another tomb or mosque in Agra. We drove again through the narrow, crowded streets, barely missing other cars, auto-rickshaws, motor scooters, carts, and pedestrians as we sped through the crowd. As is routinely done in India, the driver aims for any opening that may be big enough to pass through, guns the engine and honks the horn to make the opening large enough, and goes through without slowing down. Amazingly we never hit anything or anybody.

But the path we take is hardly straight. We weave back and forth on both sides of the road, darting in and out. The images of people, vehicles, and animals change constantly as we look through the windshield. And then, at occasional intersections, we find traffic policemen. These are dressed in white uniforms with white helmets that come to a point in front and back. They seldom stop us, but instead gesture with arms and hands to direct us to turn one way or another. All this turning, it turns out, is to clear the way for the visit of the chief minister, and the effect, apparently, is to take us further and further from the place we are trying to visit.

We stopped, eventually, and got out of the car while the driver, the guide, and Rajesh tried to decide what to do. At this point the street we'd have liked to go down was blocked by one of these policemen, who was doing his best to turn back all motorized traffic. Rajesh and others were talking to him, trying to find out what was happening, and he attempted to answer them civilly without letting anyone go by. It wasn't easy, but he succeeded, and eventually we all gave up. We decided to change our plans and go instead for lunch, even though it was early for that.

On the way, Rajesh was concerned that I may have found the ride unpleasant. On the contrary, I'd loved it. There was a scene in one of the rides at Disneyworld that was much like this, and I'm sure it was inspired by this sort of Indian traffic. It even had the white-coated policeman.

The guide took us to a restaurant that he recommended, called Sonar, on the outskirts of town. Rajesh seemed a little suspicious as he checked it out, but decided it seemed OK. We ate at a table on the lawn, out of sight of other buildings. It was sunny and very pleasant, and the food was good.



## Travels of a Trade Economist

From there we headed out through the countryside, toward another mosque and palace that was 15 miles away in another town. We traveled along a country road with fields on both sides, but we passed through villages every couple of miles. Beside the road the fields were set back twenty or thirty feet, wide spaces being planted with trees and set aside for public use. Much of it was in use, by animals and people in all kinds of activities. Even though we were in the country, we were hardly alone.



Children on the road out of Agra, from trip

We passed through a couple of villages without stopping, but there was so much to see, and we moved so fast, that in the next village I asked to stop. Out of the car I was immediately surrounded by small children, smiling happily, and chattering at me. I didn't understand much of what they said, though some seemed to say "baksheesh." I assumed they wanted money, and I was so entranced that I'd have given them some if I'd had enough coins or small bills to give to all of them. But there must have been twenty of them, at least, and there was no way. Back in the car, Rajesh learned from the driver that one thing they were asking for was pencils. If I ever come again, I will bring a huge quantity of pencils to distribute to the kids. (Bob told me later that he once brought pens for that purpose, but he never had enough and it didn't work well.)

## 6. India 1994

At another place along the road Rajesh pointed out a gypsy encampment. I was looking back at some straw huts, which I guess were theirs, when I realized there was a bear just outside my window. The gypsies have black bears on leashes, with their mouths in muzzles, and they have them stand on their hind legs as though to dance for the tourists. I started to get out of the car for a closer look, but Rajesh restrained me. He said it was dangerous – and I'm pretty sure he meant the gypsies, not the bears.

These weren't the only animals we saw along the way. I'd already seen elephants walking the boulevards of Delhi, and of course cows everywhere. Here in the country, we also saw donkeys and camels carrying loads. In the villages the livestock – chickens, pigs, sheep, goats – were everywhere, including on the road. There were also stray dogs everywhere. At one point the driver stopped next to a place by the road where several carcasses had been dumped, and there must have been two dozen vultures standing around the remains. They weren't eating, though; only watching as several dogs tore meat off the bones.



Bear by the road, from trip

Cows, of course, are sacred to Hindus, so you don't see much beef on the menus. The cows wander freely in the roads, but apparently each one does belong to someone. The owners milk them; I'm not sure who feeds them. They seem to eat whatever they come across. Some of them look pretty wretched, since, I was told, they can't be killed even when they get old and sick. But along this road we also passed a herd of them being driven the opposite direction, and the driver



Cows on the road out of Agra, from trip

said they were being taken to another place where they would be killed. So I don't know.

Travels of a Trade Economist



Animals on the road out of Agra, from trip



Animals on the road out of Agra, from trip

## 6. India 1994

When we reached our destination Fatehpur Sikri, we picked up another guide (our first one had left us at lunch). It turned out that this one was a college student who was studying, among other things, economics. He was very nice, but he was singularly unimpressed by our occupations.



Panoramic view of Fatehpur Sikri Palace, from Wikipedia 2023

What we were visiting was the first royal complex built in the late 1500's by India's greatest king, Akbar the Great. He had three wives – a Muslim, a Hindu, and a Christian – none of whom had borne him a son. He heard of a "saint" (apparently a multi-denominational wise man) who lived in this place and went to him for his blessing. After that the Hindu wife did bear him a son, so Akbar built this mosque and moved here to honor the saint.

In the midst of a large complex built of red sandstone, there is a white marble tomb to honor the saint. Inside, pilgrims (like us) are given a red piece of string. They make a wish, then tie the string to a carved marble screen. If the wish comes true, they return later and untie one of these strings. Our guide assured us that 99 of 100 wishes come true.

At the entrance to this whole complex is a huge stone "gate" – actually an arch. We were told that it is the highest in Asia (exceeded only by the Arc de Triomphe in Paris) and the widest in the world. It was built of red sandstone, however, and not therefore as pretty as it might have been. Also, under the top of the arch it was encrusted with large beehives, surrounded by swarms of flying bees. According to our guide, these are harmless in winter when it is cold (like now), but in summer the bees sting viciously in the heat. So, there is a man whose job it is to go up there and knock down the hives to remove them. Supposedly he does this without any protective gear.

Near the mosque is also the palace that Akbar built. It is also red sandstone, but I found it more appealing. It is more like a fort than a palace, with several rather small buildings connected by walls, walkways, and stairs. Three of the buildings were the homes of his three wives, each of whom apparently lived in a single room. There were also places for his 200 concubines and their many children. We climbed to the top of a five-story tower, on top of which Rajesh and I told each other of our fears of heights. Staying well to the center of the top platform, we looked out at the vista of the Indian countryside. It was beautiful, but also rather ordinary from this distance.

## Travels of a Trade Economist



Tomb of Salim Chishti, Fatehpur Sikri, from Wikipedia 2023



Hall of Private Audience in Fatehpur Sikri, from Wikipedia 2023

## 6. India 1994

The trip back to Agra was as interesting as the trip out, but I don't have that much more to report, since we saw much the same sights. We stopped once to watch a peacock dance. It was nice, but I was not amazed. Rajesh was, though, for he said that peacocks normally dance only under the clouds, before a rain. This was news to me.

Back in Agra we visited yet another mosque – the one we couldn't get to earlier. It was late, and I don't remember much about the mosque itself. But the grounds were fun. There was a herd of deer (or maybe not – one had long spiral horns) not far away. And up close there were monkeys that let us feed them. (A guide insisted they were safe, though I was later told that they were probably rabid.) We were told repeatedly that the colony of monkeys included 199 females and one male. The latter was evident, and he looked smug. Every year several males are brought in, and they fight to the death until one remains.



Monkeys, from a postcard

We finished our visit by going to a fancy hotel – the Moghul Sheraton – where we had coffee and a snack. It was kind of nice to experience a truly comfortable environment for a change, though it was not all that interesting.

Back at the train station, Rajesh checked on our reservation but didn't find us listed. He had pulled strings with a friend at the Railroad Ministry to get us seats on the full train, and

## Travels of a Trade Economist

eventually he was able to find the right person at the station to confirm them. Sure enough, we'd been given seats 1 and 2 on the best car, reserved for VIPs.

The train was late, and we waited an hour for it on the crowded platform. This too was full of things to see, though. There were several carts where vendors were cooking and selling food (one sold omelets, for example). Others were selling toys and other things. The people were of all sorts. Even the best dressed seemed to think nothing of littering. One gentleman was eating peanuts and tossing the shells down onto the tracks. This bothered Rajesh more than me, especially after a station employee came through with a broom, carefully sweeping all the trash onto the tracks. Yet the tracks themselves weren't very dirty, so there must be someone who also cleans them at some point.

Attitudes toward sanitation seem a little different here than at home. Men routinely pee by the side of the road, for example, even in town. Someone I spoke to, who took a different train to Agra and could see out the windows, saw groups of people shitting in the fields in the early morning. (I'd been told not to eat raw vegetables in India, because they still fertilize with "night soil," human excrement. Perhaps this is how they get it there.) And the same person, waiting for the train, saw an old woman hoist her clothes and crouch at the edge of the platform to relieve herself on the tracks.

While waiting for the train, Rajesh ran into a man he had known when they were schoolboys together but hadn't seen since. They talked amiably for a while in Hindi (the friend, though in business, had trouble with English), as I stood by. Looking around, however, I saw a large black man who looked vaguely familiar. I figured he was an American. This was confirmed when he looked at me and said, "Deardorff?" I said, "Loury?" It was Glenn Loury, who used to be in our department. I hadn't seen him in years – he is now at Boston University. He is spending about two weeks in Delhi giving lectures, staying just down the hall from me at the IIC, and he had spent the weekend in Agra.

The train soon came, and we returned to Delhi. Another meal was served on the train – good but greasy and hard to eat as the train bounced along. Back at IIC, avoiding coffee and Excedrin, I slept soundly until morning.

### **Wednesday, December 21, 6:00 PM**

Monday, we got to work. I went to breakfast at 8:00 and ordered the same thing I'd had before. This time they had no juice, however, and they brought a large slice of fresh papaya instead. It was wonderful, and I've ordered it every day since. Bob appeared shortly after and ordered porridge (oatmeal) and bananas. Then Glenn showed up and joined us too.

## 6. India 1994

A car picked us up at 10 and took us to NCAER, where we began discussions of our work that have continued intermittently ever since. A little after 11:00 we set out for our meeting with the Finance Minister, Mr. Monmohan Singh. The Finance Ministry was in one of several large and somewhat impressive buildings that were built early in the century by the British. Inside they are rather dingy, but not very much more so than some U.S. government buildings I've been in.

Minister Singh is said to be very smart, a former economist who was the architect of India's recent economic reforms. Bob had an appointment with him last year, but he became involved in a scandal and resigned the day before their meeting. The resignation was not accepted, but Bob didn't see him until we met him this year. This year there is another scandal, but it doesn't involve him quite so directly.

Singh was a small man, dressed in Indian clothes with a turban and a net on his gray beard. We sat in his office, and he listened dourly as Bob described our work. His legs were crossed, and one of his small feet, wearing what looked like Florsheims, was nervously moving up and down. I thought he must be impatient to be done with us, and I was very uncomfortable. But when Bob finished, the Minister plunged in with questions and we had quite a stimulating conversation. In fact, we stayed longer than intended, and left later than we should have for our next appointment – with the U.S. Ambassador.

Our driver took us to the embassy but tried several entrances before finding the right one for us. We were expected and passed through the gate into the grounds, where the embassy itself stood in the center, surrounded by reflecting pools. It was a modern building with lots of windows and open areas. A woman met us and took us to the Ambassador's office, where we waited fifteen minutes before he saw us.



## Travels of a Trade Economist



US Embassy New Delhi, from Wikipedia 2023

He was smiling and profuse with his welcome, but also apologetic that he could only stay a moment. We had hoped to get his help securing funding from USAID, and we did manage in a short time to get that across. He seemed very positive and instructed an aide to look into it. Then he left and, after a few more minutes with his aides, so did we.

Bob and I lunched alone at the IIC, then were taken for an appointment with the Commerce Secretary. After only a short delay he sat down with us and was very friendly. But then the phone at his elbow rang, and he picked it up and learned that he was summoned by his superior, the Commerce Minister, to Parliament. He rang a bell, ordered coffee for us, apologized, and left. An easy meeting.

At 3:45 we went down the hall to the office of Dr. Mohan, an economic advisor in the Commerce Ministry. He had us join him on one side of a table in his office, while on the other side he finished meeting with two of his staff. He was going over a report they had written and flagging the errors. It sounded like quite a chewing out, and I was surprised he did it in front of us.

Our meeting with him, and another a bit later back at the Finance Ministry, were uneventful. Coming out of the building, however, I decided to take a picture. I looked up and saw a large monkey working its way along a narrow ledge at the top of the building's first floor. I watched,

## 6. India 1994

fascinated. At one point, the monkey stopped, looked down at me, raised his butt and scratched it. Then he moved on.

Back at the IIC, Bob and I were to present our seminar at 6:00, having a drink beforehand with Dr. Rao. I went over my notes briefly, then went for a walk in the park. It was dusk and very pretty in an eerie way. I went over my talk in my mind and took a couple of pictures.

The talk was well attended and seemed to go well. I spoke first, then Bob, followed by questions. Indira and Glenn both attended, but both left before the questions were over. The questions included several from cranks – regulars at these gatherings, apparently – but some were very good.

On Tuesday we had only one meeting, with an economic advisor at the Finance Ministry again. He was smart and pleasant, and he said to give his regards to our Michigan colleague Tom Weisskopf. The rest of the day was spent at NCAER working on the model.

Today, Wednesday, we met with assorted staff at NCAER, worked more on the model, and gave another seminar. This was more technical, and the audience vastly different from Monday night. There were economists here with perception and insight, and they asked penetrating questions. It was useful.

Before I forget, I should say more about the smog. In Delhi especially, the air is thick with it. Power plants spew smoke into the air, black smoke pours from the exhaust of most trucks, and there are many open fires where people are burning trash. The result is a constant haze, and a smoky, slightly rancid smell that is inescapable. For some reason it seems to be worst at night, just after dusk. The grounds of the IIC seemed to be in a light fog every evening, as people came and went to the various functions there, and with lights glowing in the haze and reflecting off it, this gave it an air of unreality, like something being staged.

### **Friday, December 23, 7:00 AM – Amsterdam**

I'm almost home. I landed an hour ago in Amsterdam and am settled comfortably in the KLM version of the World Club. My flight to Detroit doesn't board until 2:00 PM, so I will probably go into the city for a while a little later, though it looks dark and uninviting out the window right now.

On Wednesday evening Dr. Rao again entertained us for dinner. This time he took Bob and me to a restaurant, along with Bhide and one other Indian guest. The restaurant was in a hotel (the best restaurants in Delhi all are, we're told), the hotel being Claridge's. This is a hotel built by the British and is the oldest in Delhi. Bob and I both expected it to be both old and impressive looking. In fact it was built after World War II and is architecturally pretty plain.

Bhide drove us there and we arrived before Dr. Rao, and also before the restaurant was to open, at 8:00 PM (they eat late here). We took seats in the hotel lounge, near where a man was playing

## Travels of a Trade Economist

music on what appeared and sounded like an electric Hammond organ from the 50's. I later saw that it was a more modern flat electric keyboard that they had disguised with a wooden cabinet. He was playing a tune that took me a minute to recognize: "Itzy-bitzy, teeny-weeny, yellow polka dot bikini."

The restaurant was a "truck stop," according to Dr. Rao. That is, it was modeled, in both decor and cuisine, after small inexpensive restaurants that used to cater to truckers back in the 50's, rather like diners. This was apparently conveyed in part by having the side of an actual truck constituting the back wall of the kitchen area, which one faced as one entered. In front of it was a huge stove with eight or ten very large pots simmering. I suppose our food came out of those pots.

The food was the best yet. Dr. Rao ordered many dishes that we all sampled. The best were Tandoori prawns and Tandoori chicken, both of which were amazingly tender, juicy, and tasty. I've had Tandoori at home, but it has always seemed just dry and spicy. I learned that Tandoori is prepared by marinating overnight in yoghurt and spices, before cooking on the grill.

After dinner we tried to order coffee and tea, but they didn't serve either in the truck stop. Dr. Rao was astonished. He took us therefore to another hotel, the Taj Mahal, for that. This was a much more modern and luxurious place, all done in the same white marble (even carved) as the real Taj.

Thursday morning, I had breakfast at the IIC with Bob and Glenn. Glenn and I were both to be flying home that night, I at 1:00 AM, he at 4:00 AM, so I offered him a ride if by any chance he wanted to get there early. With some embarrassment he said no, that he was supposed to be waiting in his room at 1:00 AM for a phone call from Vice President Al Gore. He had no idea why. Glenn left Michigan in the early 80's in hopes that he could have more influence on public policy if he were based in the Boston area (initially Harvard). I guess it worked.

For breakfast I had iddlies, something I'd seen on the menu but hadn't tried yet. It had been recommended by someone the night before. It was my first disappointment in food in India, perhaps because I didn't know how to deal with it. (Glenn and Bob were no help, of course). There were two iddlies on the plate, each a round disk, about 3 inches across and a half inch thick, tapered at the edge, with the appearance of a white sponge. It tasted like white bread with the crust removed. It didn't taste like much on its own, and I never figured out how to combine it with the spoonful of gray relish that came with it, or the bowl of spicy red soup that was also served.

We spent a last couple of hours that morning working at NCAER, then had lunch for the third day in a row in a room there marked "Distinguished Visitors." Like so many other rooms, it was

## 6. India 1994

furnished in garage sale rejects – a broken down stuffed couch and chair and a frayed piece of carpet. But the food was again outstanding.

They always serve "something sweet" for dessert, and most of these have been a bit too sweet for my taste. But that day they served Carrot Halwa, a concoction of grated carrots cooked in milk, sugar, dried fruit, and peanuts. I liked it well enough to have seconds and to ask for the recipe.

I had planned for the afternoon to visit the Crafts Museum, which many had recommended, and where I would see craftsman working and be able to buy their wares. There was some confusion about cars after lunch, and when that was sorted out Bhide himself took me in his own car to the museum, where we looked at the collection together. I doubt that he wanted to be there, and frankly I didn't either once I saw it. I quickly tired of the museum part, and the few working craftsmen didn't seem particularly skilled. One, for example, was painting designs on plates, but he was just filling in between lines that had already been drawn. It was like painting by numbers.

I picked one thing that I thought I might buy, but it cost way too much and Bhide and I were both helpless when it came to bargaining. He suggested that he send me instead to the Central Cottage Industries Emporium, where there would be more variety and fixed prices. That sounded good to me. So we returned to NCAER where the car and driver were now available for me. I said goodbye to Bhide and took off for the Emporium.

We'd guessed that an hour there would be enough, so I told the driver to return for me at 5:00. I began to find several small things that I liked, then looked around for some way to carry them. There wasn't any, and pretty soon I was juggling several items in my arms when a middle-aged woman in a sari came up to explain how things worked. As you select merchandise, you take it to separate counters in each department where they write a "bill" in triplicate. You take two copies of the bill, and they keep the third with the merchandise. You accumulate these bills, and when you are done you present them to a cashier and pay, then collect the merchandise, all packed and bagged, at a delivery station. It worked quite smoothly, and I remembered now meeting a similar arrangement in some other country.

All of this took more time than I'd expected, however, and it was close to 5:00 before I'd even finished visiting all the parts of the store. So I met the driver at the entrance and asked him to come back at 5:45, if that was OK. I had a very hard time telling if it *was* OK, however, since he, like some other Indians, had a way of shaking his head in agreement that looked a lot like disagreement. Anyhow, it seemed to be OK, and I just hoped he wouldn't disappear on me. He didn't. When I finished at about 5:30 he was there waiting.

I think the idea had been for him to bring the car to the door of the store, but of course he hadn't yet. I couldn't see the point of waiting while he brought the car, and I said I would walk with him to it. He shrugged, but I soon saw the point.

## Travels of a Trade Economist

The moment we left the store, I was besieged by "hawkers" trying to sell me things. They were persistent and, what's worse, they had things to sell that I really liked. I ended up buying several things and spending much more than I'm sure I should have. My efforts to bargain accomplished little – I've done better with Big George in Ann Arbor. But I got an idea of what I could have accomplished from the whip.

The whip – a black leather bullwhip – was being sold by a man who had seen me buy other things from other hawkers. I had absolutely no interest in the whip, so I just said no. (My apologies to any reader who wishes I had brought them a whip.) He started by asking Rs 500 for it (about \$17), and he stayed with me through the whole long walk to the car. He never stopped talking, but his price came gradually down. By the time I reached the car it was Rs 100. I got in the car and tried to close the door, but he was in the way, and I couldn't. Instead, he stuck the whip in my hand and said fifty rupees. I still said no, managed to get it back in his hand, and finally got the door closed. So, I now figure that the things I did buy I probably could have gotten for a tenth of what I paid.

Speaking of people trying to get attention, I haven't said much about the beggars. There have been fewer than I expected, but the few are also incredibly persistent. Typical was when Bhide and I stopped at a traffic light and a woman (perhaps a leper, I didn't look carefully) came to my window, tapped on the glass, and spoke. I was turned toward Bhide, so after shaking my head at her once I kept my back to her and we continued our conversation. But she kept tapping and talking, then eventually (it was a long light) walked around to Bhide's window where I would see her. After a while, and without pausing in his own conversation, Bhide took a coin off the dashboard and slipped it to her through the window, which he opened just a crack. She left immediately.

Thursday evening Rajesh had invited Bob and me to dinner. He'd have preferred to take us to his home, but he lives more than an hour's drive from the IIC and was afraid there wouldn't be time. So instead, he brought his wife and 13-year-old son along and took us to a South Indian restaurant in yet another hotel very near the IIC.

It was very near, but the drive there was long, because the main road by the hotel didn't have an exit for the direction we were going. These are not expressways, by any means, but apparently they do have very limited access. We drove way past the hotel before Rajesh was able to make a U-turn. Then he had trouble finding the hotel on the way back, and he had to get out of the car twice to ask directions. I'm sure he was embarrassed. It also crossed my mind that the neighborhood looked like the sort that one wouldn't want to stop in, in America. But of course here everything is safe.

At the restaurant, Rajesh ordered far more food than we could eat, and refused to let us pay. I've been feeling uncomfortable with both the time and money he has been spending on me, but aside

## 6. India 1994

from buying him lunch on Sunday in Agra, I haven't been able to do anything about it. And Bob added to my concern when he asked Rajesh what he is paid. His take home pay is Rs 7000 a month, about \$230! This for a Ph.D.! Of course, some things here are very, very cheap, but certainly not all. He has a car, for example, and I'm told that gas costs more in India than in the U.S. And he supports his wife, his son, and his invalid father whom his wife spends most of her time caring for. It is hard to see how they live, and yet I'm sure they are far better off than most in India.

### **Friday, December 23, 12:30 PM – Amsterdam**

This will finish it, I'm sure. I'm just back to the airport after visiting the Van Gogh Museum. I'll be boarding at 2:00.

To finish with last night, Rajesh and his family drove us back to the IIC, where my car and driver were already waiting. I asked Rajesh to tell the driver that I'd be little while and to be patient. Then Bob, Lucetta (did I mention, she returned a day early from her travels and joined us for dinner?), and I said our goodbyes to them. I also cashed a rather large check for Bob, since the IIC doesn't take credit cards as he had hoped. Fortunately, I'd brought much more money than I'd needed, what with the cheap room and food and so many other people paying my way. (When I checked out, my bill for food was just \$15, covering five breakfasts, two dinners, and one lunch.) I gave him almost all my rupees and also cashed most of my travelers checks for him.

When I was ready to go, I went outside but my car and driver were gone. No problem: they can't park there and they wait instead in a nearby lot where we can page them over the "car hailer" – a loudspeaker system we had used many times before. I paged him, but he didn't come. I decided maybe he'd gotten the message that I would not be ready for a while, and he'd gone off somewhere (for a drink?). Or maybe he'd gotten the message totally screwed up and left for good. I paged him several more times and began to think about how I would get to the airport without him. I'd have to buy some more rupees, certainly. Finally, after fifteen minutes or so, he appeared. It was just 10:30, so I'd guess he thought he wouldn't be needed until then.

At the airport, I had no problem checking in, but then they wanted Rs 300 for an airport tax. Of course, I didn't have that much. I went to a bank and changed a \$50 travelers check. That left me with Rs 1200, which I figured I'd change later. Going through security, however, I set off the alarm, and the guard who then frisked me looked in my wallet, saw the money, and said I couldn't take more than Rs 1000 out of the country. I thought he was going to confiscate it, but in the end he let me through.

I left India as I'd arrived, in the dead of night.

### **Amsterdam Postscript**

## Travels of a Trade Economist

Following advice from a Dutch student, I did take the train, then the tram, to the Van Gogh Museum in downtown Amsterdam. This was all very easy, as he said it would be, but it made me nervous to leave the airport knowing the problems I'd have if I somehow missed getting back in time.

Before I left, I could see it was foggy out, and the attendant here said it was also cold and snowing, and that I should dress warmly. I got my trench coat out of my bag, but she still wanted to lend me her scarf. I declined. From the train I saw trees all covered with frost. But in Amsterdam itself, it was dry and not too cold.

I found my way to the correct tram, then began to wonder, as I rode, how I'd know where to get off. The driver was a big black man, and I asked him how I would know when I got to the Van Gogh Museum. "You won't," he said, and then laughed a hearty Caribbean laugh, like the guy in the old 7-Up commercials. I said, "Could you tell me?" He said, "Sure," and laughed again. He did in fact, and after I got off, he pulled the tram up next to me, opened his window, and pointed out the museum a block away.

The Van Gogh Museum was what you'd probably expect, a modern building filled mostly with his paintings. They didn't seem as stunning as some I'd remembered in Paris, but maybe they need the contrast with other painters in order to stand out. Also, they weren't as light and bright as I'd expected. I wonder if the museum may have opted to keep the lights somewhat dim to give an atmosphere that would match Van Gogh's personality.

I didn't take my camera along because of the fog and because I'd packed it at the bottom of my suitcase. It turned out that, though it wasn't sunny, there were certainly pictures I'd have taken.

Amsterdam has a wonderful feel to it, especially after a week in Delhi. It is so much cleaner, more attractive, so civilized, and without being at all modern. The part I visited is all old buildings, but beautifully maintained. And the people, of course, are prosperous. It got me to thinking again about how it can be that people in different places live such very different lives.

## 6. India 1994