



## German-Indian Round Table / Berlin

Gesprächsforum für Handel, Industrie und Mittelstand

### Press Release

## **GIRT: New German-Indian Round Table established in Pune**

### **Second GIRT in India – Ajay Mehta heading first GIRT in Pune**

Berlin/Pune (03.03.2011): Already on February 18th 2011 the German-Indian Round Table (GIRT) in Pune took place for the first time. Ajay Mehta from Crossover Advisors was appointed as the first head of the GIRT chapter in Pune. The kick-off event was hosted at the private residence of Ajay Mehta. More than 20 participants attended and gave the GIRT a warm welcome in Pune.

From now on there will be a GIRT every second month in Pune. Iris Becker the head of the GIRT in the South German city of Freiburg noticed a difference in Indian and German round tables: „In India the round table will be organized in private residencies. In Germany the GIRT take place in restaurants, clubs and hotels.” It was a long search for the right head of the GIRT chapter in Pune. The president of GIRT Dr. Andreas Waldraff pointed out: „We were very happy, that we could finally convince Mr. Mehta to lead the GIRT in Pune. He is a well known personality in Pune. Ajay Mehta is somebody who can really open doors and make things happen here in Pune.”

Ajay Mehta explained in an interview the importance of Pune for the Indo-German business relations: “Pune is India's largest base for German companies and businesses with over 197 German companies have subsidiaries and/or JV's and also a larger number of German-Indian business alliances.” (Please find the text of the complete interview at the end of this press release.)

In Germany GIRT is already a well known organisation where German businessmen can easily get access to information about Indo-German business. The concept of the German-Indian Round Tables was established in 2001. The idea was that businessmen should exchange their experiences directly with other businessmen, who already are in the Indo-German business. Now also Indian businessmen can benefit from the ideas of GIRT. The GIRT in Pune is the second German-Indian Round Table in India. The first one is located in Delhi/Gurgaon and is headed by the well known Dr. Dietrich Keschull (IGEP Foundation).

Meanwhile the GIRT network consists of twelve chapters in Germany and two in India. The GIRT is considered to work in both directions. Indian businessmen shall now be able to get in touch with German members whenever they visit Germany. The organisation of GIRT continues to grow further. 2010 a new round table in Freiburg was added, in February 2011 the chapter in Pune was established and in April 2011 there will be

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opened another new GIRT in Karlsruhe. There are going to be more GIRT in India in the times to come. At the very moment round about 3,000 members are connected through the network of the German-Indian Round Table.

Please find further information and news about GIRT at our bilingual websites [www.girt.de](http://www.girt.de) and [www.girt.in](http://www.girt.in). All GIRT events in Germany and India will be announced there.

### About German-Indian Round Table (GIRT)

The German-Indian Round Table (GIRT) was founded by Rudolf Weiler in 2001 and forms a loose federation of businessmen and entrepreneurs with strong ties and interests in India. GIRT is targeting to inform about India and strengthen Indo-German business relations. Members of GIRT support cultural and social activities related to India. German-Indian Round Tables are organised regularly in Aachen, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hanover, Leipzig/Halle, Munich, Nuremberg, Stuttgart und New Delhi/Gurgaon. GIRT connects about 3,000 people from the Indo-German business community. The head of the local GIRTs and the speakers work on a non-profit basis.

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### Interview mit Ajay Mehta



(Picture: Ajay Mehta)

#### **Indien Aktuell (IA): How did get in contact with the organisation of German-Indian Round Table (GIRT)?**

Ajay Mehta (AM): Dr Andreas Waldruff Chairman GIRT from GIRT Berlin met with me and explained the ethos and structure of GIRT as well as what service the organisation aims to provide for its members

#### **IA: Why does Pune need a GIRT?**

AM: Pune is India's largest base for German companies and businesses with over 197 German companies have subsidiaries and/or JV's and also a larger number of German-Indian business alliances. There are a large number of new German companies looking at opportunities to set up bases in Pune, especially with opportunities in engineering, auto components, mechatronics, biotechnology and many other sectors. Pune is also one of the largest German language speaking base with the Goethe Institute ( Max Mueller Bhavan) and others and also one of the largest base for German music, art, theater, education and other fields. GIRT Pune can help in furthering these ties.

#### **IA: What can GIRT do for Indian and German companies in Pune?**

AM: GIRT can and should provide the right 'people to people' linkages between German leaders and Pune (Indian) leaders connecting them in a confidential, unbiased manner for peer to peer learning and exploring business and social/cultural opportunities. Its is only with these personalized linkages that trust and respect can be built. Business and economic ties can only then be more successful and effective. Most mid size businesses can be best developed among 'friends' and GIRT should aim to build such friendships

#### **IA: What do you expect from the GIRT in Germany for the participants of the Pune chapter?**

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AM: GIRT in Germany should support its 'newest baby' GIRT Pune at least in the following manner:

- a) Whenever GIRT Germany members visit Pune, they should spare an evening to meet with GIRT Pune members and communicate opportunities and learnings on how to do business with German organisation. GIRT Pune can help in how to do business in India.
- b) Create a positive image for Pune and GIRT Pune in Germany.
- c) Create hosting/visit opportunities for Indian/Pune businessmen visiting Germany.
- d) Create 'learning events' and 'social/cultural events' jointly in Germany and Pune for business leaders from both sides.

### **IA: Pune hosts already branch offices of the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce and the Max-Mueller Bhavan. Why does it need a GIRT? Does GIRT compete or complement with them?**

AM: GIRT aims to predominantly be a person to person organisation of the leaders of mid size businesses. GIRT may or may not specifically address a specific assignment or opportunity directly but may deal more on the how's and why's, when's and where's - more strategic issues of a broader generalized nature, without any committed results or expectation.

When specific opportunities are crystallized, Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, GTZ, DEG, KfW, NRW Invest, ISB (the Investment and Economic Development Bank of Rheinland-Pfalz), FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH, BW -Invest, (to name a few) and other such organisations can and do play an exemplary role and on an 'Institution to Institution' basis. All these organizations have made their good presence felt in Pune. Goethe-Institut/ Max Mueller has played a social, cultural and language development role in Pune since a long time and has been a strong integral part of Pune society.

So GIRT members as individuals who lead their businesses, will always work in tandem with and GIRT would in fact complement the role of IGCC, other institutions and other Regional development organization of the Governments.

### **IA: What are your future expectations about Indo-German Business in Pune and for India and Germany in general?**

AM: I believe India and Germany have huge potential of opportunities. Although the processes are different, Germans and Indian in many ways think similar and work towards long term developments and gains and are willing to invest in developing relationships and not just in businesses. India offers huge growing markets and skilled/qualified human resources

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along with western style of business processes and language ease.

Germany on the other hand offers technology, global markets, capital and special skills that India needs. It can be a great win-win for both countries. GIRT can and should aim to foster these opportunities by building people to people linkages between those who can make the difference in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

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