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*The wings of progress are placed permanently on the top with a pair of callipers passing through it, indicating a practical measuring instrument, symbolising control by measurement. The shield is equally divided between the tiger, representing strength and proud leader among all the living creatures of the world and an assembly of shaft running through the boss of a spoked wheel which typifies design, machinery and production. The scroll above the shield carries the motto “Sapientia Et Labor” in latin meaning by wisdom and labour. This free translation would be appropriately through theory and practice.*

*The colours are maroon, white and green. maroon for strength and depth of learning, white for purity and balance of approach and green for nature, realism and practice.*



President S K Yagnik'81

Editors J L Singh'65  
Mayank Tewari'89

#### SAM Representatives

BENGALURU	V Anand '62	CR	Rupesh Kohli '91
CHENNAI	Vashishta Johri '74	ECOR	Gautam Dutta '82
DELHI NCR	Niraj Kumar '70	ECR	A K Misra '83
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NAIR	Sachin Sharma '88	SER	S K Bose '83
RDSO	Samir Lohani '90	SR	P U K reddy '83
		SWR	P K Mishra '83
CLW	Dharmendra Kumar '88	WCR	R S Saxena '83
DLW	Mahesh Kumar '86	WR	Tarun Huria '90
DMW	Rishi Lal '88	KRCL	Saurabh Prasad '88
ICF	Amlan Tirkey '89		
MCF	Alok Kumar '81	CONCOR	Santosh Sinha '86
RCF	Nitin Chowdhary '83	CRIS	P Ananth '86
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IROAF	S K Sagar '86		
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WPO	A K Chandan '96		

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# President's Letter

## Inside out - from ground zero

- S K Yagnik'81

My father migrated to Delhi in the early 60s to settle in a modest government colony. Providing magazines and weeklies being a luxury, he would coax us to go to a nearby Government library which became a favourite reading joint for us children. I had a particular liking for a monthly which featured a never-ending story: Vikram-Betaal. Originating in Indian Mythology, Bialal Pachchis (25 tales of Betaal), about the legendary King Vikramaditya and The Betaal, a spirit analogous to a Vampire. The best thing I liked about the story was that it was never-ending. Twenty five stories based on events of nearly 2,500 years ago, now penned by Mahakavi Somdev Bhatt, went on to become an unending series thanks to fertile imagination of enterprising proprietor of the magazine.

Advance to Jamalpur, 31st March 1982, during my first-day interview by the senior batch on eastern Terrace, I was asked what I read during my past time. I innocently replied, "Vikram-Betaal" and was immediately classified as a Desi, the tag I did not mind for years to come. Gymkhana, after the initial months of torture, became a second home, for the

first time exposing us Desis to Eric Clapton, Pink Floyd, billiards, finger bowls, knives & forks, blazers at dinner, etc. None of it was part of my brief 8-month stay at Delhi University where chappals in the classroom and eating with your hands was normal. While Gymkhana was about class, IRIMEE somehow appeared to be an antiquated piece. It was a place rich in history struggling hard to stare into the future, eternal like Vikram-Betaal, there to last forever.

But would it last forever? Come 2019! I find myself at Jamalpur again, landing up on All Fools Day, this time as the Director. The moment I reached my office, I am informed that the 2015 batch of SCRA's will be passing out on 16th August of this year. My colleagues are kind enough to explain to me the finer points of the formalities required for winding up of the SCRA scheme: remaining exams of the batch, short-closing of MOU with BITS Ranchi, Inventory of souvenirs and various Gymkhana related activities, etc. to be taken over. Outwardly, they look bold, taking care to hide the pain that must have been lurking around for some time. They manage to put up a good show, ensuring that



**Left:** New Auditorium

**Above:** Inauguration by SCAs of the 2015 Batch

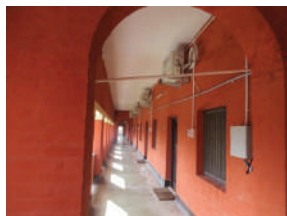
they do not hit the 'Panic Button' for the new Director. While they make all attempts to suppress their agony, the despair is written all over on their faces and in their eyes, the look of a doctor cheering up a terminal patient. Come week two of my stay, all the doomsday fears are out in the open with all guards dropped. The crème-de-la-crème of IRIMEE, those who had been around for many years, have no hesitation in informing me that they have requested the Board for their posting to better stations. They have all my sympathy; it takes men of valour to play the Last Post.

The phone calls that follow from my seniors and well-wishers from outside Jamalpur are more candid. Almost everyone is keen on sending condolences in advance and I am told in no uncertain terms that lest I go down in history as the Director who oversaw the closure of the Grand SCRA scheme, an executioner, a hangman, I should get out quickly before the D-day. 'It is very fine,' I am told, 'For the Captain of the Ship to abandon the vessel before it sinks, unless discretion is to be given a goodbye.'

Come 16th August 2019, the day of the passing out of last batch. Predictions were that the whole world would come to an end, birds would stop chirping, the Sun would not rise from the East. In short: The End.

The 16th of August was a quiet morning. We started the day with a solemn inauguration ceremony of the New Auditorium by the six passing out SCAs. The auditorium had been a mega project for IRIMEE, the shape of an iconic WP steam locomotive exterior. It was sanctioned in 2003 and had been under construction for all these years. This imposing structure too was waiting to see its salvation at the hands of the gritty and very talented 2015 Batch SCAs, real heroes of Gymkhana, who had braved it out as the last batch, the junior-most batch, with no one junior, for nearly four years. As in the closing ceremony of the Olympics, where the host nation brings up the rear, this batch has the distinction of playing hosts four long years. The passing-out ceremony was held in the very same auditorium and since there were not too many outsiders, we had the liberty to let our hair down, all emotions on display without any inhibition, with local officers applauding the





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entry of the youngest members of the IRSME service into the mainstream. (Editor – With no audience while editing this piece, I allowed my emotions and feelings to get the better of me; I have no need to cover up by saying that some dust got into my eyes – there's no shame in shedding a tear for the demise of the SCRA!)

Now with the SCAs actually gone, nothing spectacular of the sort predicted by soothsayers happened. After the storm, the issues of the real consequence descended. Do we keep the bricks and mortar intact and feed our imagination hoping that one day the good old SCRA scheme will be revived or work on what is next? I am reminded of the great Egyptian Pyramids. Builders of these magnificent structures had a strong belief that the Pharaohs who were made to rest in the pyramids would one come alive. On the other hand, the ancient Indian scriptures preach on the eternity of the Soul while the body is sure to decay. Consign the earthly remains to the flames with minimal lapse of time, goes the saying.

What if Soul of Gymkhana and the SCRA's (read Sams) could survive for all times to come, not just in symbolism, but in substance. Over the years, while Gymkhana has established itself as nursery of a great

community, an object of envy amongst fellow railwaymen, IRIMEE has emerged as just another Central Training Institute, one out of seven. What if the new IRIMEE could become a place of excellence, as was Gymkhana. What if the hostels of Jamalpur, Gymkhana included, could become star-rated, the best amongst all training institutes, instead on being an object of pity. What if the animal spirit of the pursuit of the Best, pervading in Gymkhana, also transposes to IRIMEE. Can we become so magnanimous as to accept new alumni of the institute, i.e. IRSME, oops, IRMS probationers, celebrating 14<sup>th</sup> February with same zeal and vigour as did SCAs in their times.

The human mind is strange and however hard we try, it will be unfair to expect that we suddenly start believing in such generous ideas, something for which we were not prepared so far. It needs critical mass to build up and frankly, we are not yet ready to part with the idea of exclusivity of the clan. I am not a pessimist. The scheme can rise from ashes like the legendary phoenix, may be as a new Railway University, completely transformed in appearance. But until then, should we not make an attempt to transplant the spirit of Gymkhana in younger generation of officers who will come here for 78 weeks training, torch bearers of Indian Railway Management Services, IRSME gone too, in quick succession after SCRA.

To come back to where I started, I must admit that I have stopped reading those weeklies of the 70s long back. I keep wondering if the Vikram-Betaal series still continues, may be in some new magazine, a new avatar.

- Sharad K Yagnik'81

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# Editor's Ramblings

- J L Singh'65

Having been launched in 1968, SAM has already scored half a century. In these last five decades, it has not just survived but prospered and thrived. Credit for this goes to S K Chopra 64, who launched the magazine, followed by the long list of illustrious editors of this great magazine and their respective teams who were always actively chasing articles, advertisements and printers to ensure that the rest of us got the magazine. Most of us had started taking the arrival of at least each year's Club Day issue for granted. An Autumn or Monsoon issue was a welcome bonus.

All Editors till now have been SCAs. All Editorials have flowed from the pens of occupants of Jamalpur Gymkhana. All magazines have been the product of the then current apprentices. Alas, no more! For the first time in its long and chequered history, SAM is being cobbled together by ex-SCAs, by the erstwhile occupants of Jamalpur Gymkhana, by past apprentices. It is our privilege that the responsibility of continuing

SAM has fallen on me and the team of editors we have put together. Privilege it is, but it is also a challenging responsibility as we need to maintain the lofty standards that had been set for the publishing of the magazine. It is our endeavour that we give you a magazine that you will look forward to as much as you did in the past.

Of course, SAM is not going to be the same. Missing will be the stories and anecdotes from Gymkhana, stories and anecdotes we all related to even if we were not part of them. Missing too will be the exuberance of youth, as, with the passage of time, the average age of Sams will continue to get higher and higher. Missing too will be descriptions of Club Days at Jamalpur and photographs of Tech Tours. For obvious reasons, this new avatar of SAM will necessarily be different. We would like to get feedback from you as to what we should include in future issues of SAM and what type of magazine you would like to receive.

We will attempt to give you two SAMs a year. We guarantee a Club Day SAM and will do our utmost to have a second issue also around August. For this, we need the same things that the earlier editors of SAM required: articles and ads. We request all of you to continue to support the issue of the magazine by organising these two items. We will take care of the printing and delivery.

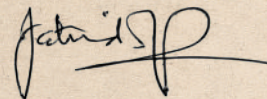


The last issue of SAM included a report on the 2019 Club Day that was organised by SCAs at Jamalpur. In future issues, we will give brief write-ups on Club Days at various locations wherever that may be. Request that SAM reporters from their areas file in such reports. Another feature that we will include each time is a write-up on an eminent Sam. In this issue, we have written of the most eminent of them all, the unforgettable Ban Basu 27. We will also include an interview of a prominent Sam. We begin by an interview of the late Satish Misra 39. The interview was conducted in 2016, when he was still with us and then the oldest member of our tribe. One more regular article we can think of at this stage is a reproduction of a great write-up from 30 years back. In this issue we have included a submission by R Datta 44 that appeared in the Club Day 1990 issue. We also include an iconic photograph of members of the 86 batch posing with the Ek-Do-Teen girl, Madhuri Dixit.

We repeat that we would like suggestions on what type of regular features we can have in future issues.

The first Sam, H V M 'Hal' Stewart, landed up at Jamalpur on the 14th of February 1927. He was followed by 1141 Sams over the next 92 and a half years. It was indeed a sad day, the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2019, thirty three thousand seven

hundred eighty six days after Hal joined as a Special Class Railway Apprentice, that the last Sam, Sujit Kumar Gupta, junior most member of the 2015 batch, completed his apprenticeship and left Jamalpur, left Gymkhana. For the moment, as of now, the Special Class Railway Apprentice scheme has left for its heavenly abode. RIP SCRA, RIP Jamalpur Gymkhana! Perhaps the scheme will see light of day again; perhaps we will witness SCRA's once more. But it is almost certain that the SCRA scheme in the form it had when discontinued is very unlikely to make a comeback. If the catch-them-young slogan is revived on the railways and implemented, we may see once again, an SCRA type scheme, something like the NDA or something entirely different, but it will not be the SCRA scheme of which you and me, all of us, were proud and privileged members.



P.S. I cannot put into words how tough and difficult it has been for me to write the above, write of the closure of, the discontinuance of, the passing away of, the Special Class Railway Apprentice! Now there are only Sams, no SCRA's!!



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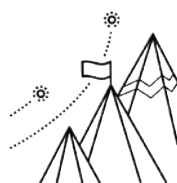
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## Milestones

### Married:

● Alok Kumar Maurya'2k10 married Geetanjali Raj	05/12/2019
● Rohit Meena'2k11 married Bhanupriya	07/07/2019
● Deeksha Chaudhary'2k11 married Abhishek Choudhary	17/04/2019
● Shishir Chandra Shekhar'2k9 married Nitika Tiwari	-
● Mohammad Hasnain Hussain'2k13 married Alina Fatima	-

### Born:

● Aastha Sneha'2k9 blessed with a son, 25/05/2019	25/05/2019
● Aditya Sharma'2k9 blessed with a son, 01/08/2019	01/08/2019
● Vinod Meena'2k9 blessed with a son, 14/12/2019	14/12/2019
● Prasenjeet Kumar'2k9 blessed with a daughter	25/10/2018
● Devesh Sharma'2k9 blessed with a son	12/12/2019
● Abhishek Kumar Singh'2K3 blessed with baby girl, 'Swasti'	22/10/2019
● Saibal Bose'83 blesses with a Grand-daughter Teyasha - nicknamed 'T'	29/10/2019

### Died:

● R C Tandon'42	08.12.2019
● S K Datta'47	27.12.2019
● Raj Kumar Shukla'54	25.09.2019
● G Surya Kumar'57	26.12.2019
● P C Joshi'57	13.11.2019
● Ashok Kumar'58	18.11.2019
● D K Tandon'60	17.12.2019
● Anuj Prakash'80	18.10.2019
● C M Mani'49 (Father of Sudhanshu Mani'75)	04.02.2020



J L Singh'65 recalls  
*Sh. Ramesh C Tandon'42*

*I met Ramesh Tandon last about two years back at his well-kept Defence Colony residence in New Delhi. Wearing an off-white kurta and walking slowly with the help of his man Friday, his appearance belied the 94 years of life he had seen by then. As always, he was very articulate and kept me mesmerised with his stories and anecdotes for well over two hours.*

*Born on the 22nd of October 1923, he came from a railway family. His grandfather worked as a civil engineer on the railways and chose to be posted at Paksey which is now in Bangladesh. His father appeared for an interview for the railways in 1917 but owing to the ongoing war, there was no recruitment. As a result, the father started business in Karachi from where Ramesh Tandon completed his schooling and his Inter-Science. Jamalpur was one of the only options after Inter-Science then and he applied for the SCRA scheme. His interview was conducted by a Britisher who happened to be very fond of cricket and asked him what type of field he would set. Ramesh Tandon responded by asking if the bowler was bowling leg breaks or off-breaks and if the batsman was right-handed or left-handed. The interviewer was duly impressed and Ramesh Tandon entered Jamalpur as a member of the 42 batch.*



*In those days, after four years in Jamalpur, you spent two years in England. He thus went to England in 1946 and would have been there till 1948. However, events overtook him and in November 1947, there was a message that the country had been partitioned and he must return immediately to India. While his father and the family moved from Karachi to Mumbai (then Bombay), he was posted on the East Indian Railway (EIR). By 1951, EIR was cut in two with the area east of Mughalsarai becoming Eastern Railway, the rest being absorbed in Northern Railway (NR). Ramesh Tandon chose to shift to NR and was posted as PA to CME.*

*His career in the railways took him to Bikaner and Jodhpur and as Principal of the Technical School at Charbagh. Also went to ICF for 1½ years. His Jodhpur posting was because the then DS (now DRM) wanted a Club Secretary who played bridge. He took voluntary retirement from the railways in 1976 when he was CME DLW.*

*Apart from indoor games like bridge and billiards, Ramesh Tandon played hockey, cricket, tennis and football. In cricket, he did not lose a single match during his stay at Jamalpur. Always very articulate, he was popular whether at work or at play. After retirement from the railways, he was as successful in business as he had been in railway service.*

*He had another Sam connection. His son is married to Mala, daughter of M M Suri '44 of Suri transmission fame. He was thus the first Sam-samadhi.*

*Senior most living Sam at the time of his death on the 8th of December 2019, he will be missed by one and all.*

## Akhilesh Misra'91 recalls *Sh. Anuj Prakash'80*

*Anuj Prakash, SCA'80, died on 18th of October 2019, a day short of his 57th birthday on 19th October. I had multiple opportunities to work under his command and also shared the common thread of being Army Brats who had joined the Railways as SCA's.*

*He was most excited and thoroughly committed to the project named OneICT. This is where we had worked closely. It was a difficult transformation project which did not have the required traction and support, but he was forever optimistic about it. Despite the official disbanding of the OneICT project team in August 2017, the members remained in close contact, the cherished interactions with him formed the glue.*

*We had been trying to organize a reunion of the group after he had joined at COFMOW, when the news about his illness was received. The gravity of the situation was not apparent until I received a call from the Doctor on the group who dropped the news that he had been diagnosed with GBM.*

*Despite a prolonged and painful battle against the debilitating disease, he was forever optimistic and looked forward to being back on the job. The atmosphere at his rooms at Medanta Medicity or the NR Central Hospital was never sombre but was always picnic-like, powered by his courage and enigmatic enthusiasm.*



*29th September 2019, I got a message from him: "Can we meet?" Meet, I did, the very same evening. Had a long chat, despite problems in speech, he continued the conversation using a scratch pad. He really wanted to be back in the thick of action and wanted to meet the team again. A quick message to the team resulted in a meeting setup for the 6th of October 2019.*

*Six officers out of the total seven met Mr. Anuj Prakash over coffee just like the earlier days at office. He set aside his pain and weakness to actively interact. Each of us were left overawed at the sheer grit of his larger than life persona during this interaction. The very next day we got the news that he had to be shifted into the ICU. Unlike earlier hospital sojourns, this was different; it was his last visit to a medical facility.*

*As I reminisce over the hyperactive, hyper-productive interactions powered by his enthusiasm, guided by his exceptional situation awareness, coupled with his concern for the wellbeing of all who were under his command or were effected by the actions, I realized what an amazing person he has been.*

*While writing this obituary, I flashed through numerous memories of my interactions with him; the casual banters at Club-Days, the tense meetings over pressured timelines for the project of Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli, deep debates over ERP solutions at CRIS and the calmness demonstrated in the never-say-die philosophy for handling the digital transformation at One ICT.*

*His devout feistiness and stubbornness had served him well throughout his life. And even in his waning months, he was a model of strong will and sheer determination right up until the end of his journey here on earth. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by his family and many friends, neighbors, nieces, nephews, and nut heads (like me).*

*I can only just say that with his death, we have lost an outstanding officer and an exceptional gentleman.*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We have no letters to carry this time due to the transition but we would really like to hear from you.

Your feedback and your inputs help us make the magazine more relevant and we hope a more pleasurable read.

Please reach out to us over email on **edsams2020@gmail.com** or through the “Talk to us” section of the SAM Community portal accessible at **jamalpurgymkhana.in** or write to us at “**Editor SAM, P.O. Box 30 New Delhi, 110001**”

Flood us with news, views, ideas, opinions...

- Editors, SAM

## Eminent Sams

# Colonel Ban Basu

- J L Singh'65

For virtually all Sams, the highlight, the high point, of the Jamalpur calendar was the 14<sup>th</sup> of February – Club Day. All the same, few are aware or even recall that till the first two years of the 1950s, Club Day was only a very mild affair and that it was celebrated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, the day the present Gymkhana building was ready in 1929. The celebrations comprised of a high tea at 16.00 hrs. on the lawn in front of the building followed by the usual theatre/drama in the quadrangle and were confined only to people living in Jamalpur. Occasionally a Head of Department like a CME or COPS would be invited. (Editor: For those who have come in late, CME/COPS are the present day PCME/PCOM).

Enter Birupaksha Basu 27, 'Ban' Basu to friends. In 1952, he instructed that the Silver Jubilee of the SCRA scheme ( $1927 + 25 = 1952$ ) should be celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February instead of 9<sup>th</sup> May. Ban was then posted as a DyCME in the East Indian Railway Headquarters and had earlier been the first Indian DyCME (then called DCME and now the CWM) of Jamalpur workshop. The late Raman Rajagopalachari 49 had just taken over as General Secretary and was responsible for the silver jubilee celebrations in 1952. Subsequently, Club Day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February became a regular event with Ban Basu being the prime mover, facilitator and supporter.

A short three years after Club Day in February made a start, Ban came up with the idea of the Jamalpur Association (JA). Not then being called a JA meeting, nevertheless, the 15.00 hrs. meeting was already a part of Club Day lore. In the Club Day 55 meeting, after a lot

of deliberations and opposition from most of the young SCRAs, Ban won the day and the JA was born. The SCRAs wanted the name to be SCA Association but Ban felt that it would look as though the SCAs were forming a union which went against the grain of a railway officer of those days. Hence, the name selected was totally neutral to show that it had nothing to do with SCAs!!

Be that as it may, from 1953 the earlier 15.00 hrs. meeting and subsequent JA meetings were chaired by Ban Basu and the topic of discussion was confined to designing of ties, blazers, lapel badges, etc. and had nothing to do with any problem SCAs were facing. Ban Basu became the Secretary of the JA and held this position till his death in 1980. Thus, Club Day in February and the concept of the JA are entirely due to none other than the most-Sam-of-all-Sams, the inimitable Birupaksha Basu, 1927 batch.

Born on 18th August 1909, Ban Basu was a spritely 17-year old, when he joined as an SCRA, the 4th member of the very first batch – 1927. His leadership qualities were evident even as an apprentice. L T Madnani 28 wrote that “when we shifted to the newly constructed Gymkhana building around November 1929, Ban took the lead and became the Hony. Secretary”. This continued even after he started service. When he became the first DCME of Jamalpur workshop immediately after independence, there were a series of strikes at the workshop owing to non-implementation of new scales of pay. Free from foreign subjugation, expectations of the workers were very high and a lot of persuasion had to be used to keep the atmosphere calm and free from violence. Owing to his handling of the situation, nothing untoward happened, resulting in a great victory for Ban. He preferred to rely on his own strength rather than the police.

P Sahai 31, who worked directly under him on the East Indian Railway in the 1930s, has recorded that in the days of the Raj, the British and Anglo-Indian officers did not like the induction of Indian officers in what



Above: Colonel B Basu

Below: Picture taken at first Club Day in 1952

Ground: V K Laroia'48, S Krishnaswamy'48

On chairs: Not known, M M Khan'27, Ban Basu'27,

Standing 1st row: R N Gupta'46, G S Vithal Rao'47, H S Chatta'47, Gulshan Rai'47, V P Chadda'47 & PS Chaudhuri'47

Last row: G S Kang'49, Suresh Chandra'49, R Rajagopalachari'49, A K Tiwari'49, T N Tandon'49, K V Krishnamurty'50 & A N Wanchoo'50

they felt was their preserve and tried their best to make life as difficult as possible for the likes of Ban Basu. To quote P Sahai, "Basu was a pioneer who never lost an opportunity from winning a point from his British colleagues and making them realize that he was equal, if not better, than them in every way. He came to the help of young officers who were having trouble with their foreign bosses and gave them their fullest support."

Prior to 1947, Ban had risen to the rank of WM JMP after his return from World War II – Iraq theatre. In June 1940, he had volunteered for Railway Military Service. He was sent abroad and rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. Come Independence, he became DCME Jamalpur, the first Indian to make it to this position. Thereafter, he was transferred to the Head Office of the then East Indian Railway in August 1948. Interestingly, East Indian Railway became the Eastern Railway zone on the 14th of February 1952, the same day that we had the first Club Day.

Subsequently, Ban left the railways and joined Indian Standard Wagon Burnpur (under Martin Burn & Co.). While with this company, he would fly from Burnpur to Monghyr (now Munger) Airfield for Club Day and one of the persons who picked him up from the airport was P C Sen 49, one of the few people who had a car in those days. He left ISW sometime in the 70s and set up his own Consultancy Organisation in Calcutta dealing with the Jute Industry. He wound this up in the late 70s and passed away on 14th June 1980. Ban's wife, Mrs. Bina Basu, was also a regular at all Club Days.

Compiled with inputs from:

*"Jamalpur – Cradle of IRSME"*  
and P C Sen'49

Photographs:  
Archives of SAM  
and Suresh Chandra'49

*The article is the first in the series of  
"Eminent Sams" - Eds*

# A station named Crossroad

- Saibal Bose'83



A wise man had said: “Questions you cannot answer are usually far better for you than answers you cannot question”. We live in exciting times of railway management reforms and there are many questions, even challenges confronting us. Indian Railways too is at a crossroad today as I attempt to step out of an all encompassing and ill-founded Luddite hysteria.

It would not be incorrect to say that the imperial Railway organisation was thriving in a Hobbesian state of nature without any moral commitments to the public whom it served. Its march of folly continued post-independence down the road to perdition with a set of antediluvian and archaic rules & regulations. And now we are at the

crossroad with more questions than answers. Psychologically questions arise because, as Daniel Kahneman (awarded the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on the psychology of judgment and decision-making, as well as behavioral economics) postulates that the individual always is unsure of what he wants. In other words, we do not know what we want! Humans always tend to think collectively and therefore generate flawed ideas about their own individual betterment. The topmost structure of the Indian Railway organization is a rather unwieldy and hollow structure through which one can play any music he wants. To give an analogy of cards, the management now holds a particularly bad hand that has been dealt and must try to convince powers-that-be to reshuffle the cards. It cannot lose anything, but it may win everything.

Yet there is an existentialist disillusionment wave sweeping across departments reaching a consensus that the disruptions may empower a few at the expense of the many. This frustration of the entrenched comes from their unwillingness to give up their positional privileges and advantage. But isn't this a time of austerity and abnegation? Looking at reality through jaundiced eyes causes further disorientation as if failure of 'business as usual' can only mean a catastrophic apocalypse.



Yet 'business as usual' is continuously exacerbated by rapidly advancing technological disruptions. The railway management systems were framed during the time of the industrial revolution and cannot cope with the rise of IT revolution where automation and advanced diagnostics transform maintenance practices while peer-to-peer blockchain networks make finance and accountancy irrelevant.

Winds of change are sweeping the globe and institutions after institutions are falling. The vacuum thus created cannot be filled by nostalgic delusions about some golden past. Faced with the Wuhan coronavirus, China constructed a 1000 beds hospital in 10 days. Such are the pressures of global demands and public service which neither their Confucian legacies nor Marxist ideologies could have delivered. Change itself must form the foundation for societal progress in this century. Traditional managerial jobs where decisions were made by mystical hunches must be off-set by ground breaking research data and populist procedures to avoid economic dislocations.

Time to make such a transition is running out. Delay can only find the entire structure crumbling down upon itself. Investment decisions normally made on departmental lines must be stopped to revive the financial health of the whole organisation. Such decisions should not be based on intuition or inspiration but based on evolutionary rationality. And that is a very good place to start.

The management gurus who taught us to run corporations and technical organisations did not dream up such precepts. They sourced the fundamentals from existing institutions of the day- chiefly from military establishments and royal imperial households. The former laid emphasis on competitiveness which the later attended to cooperation (for synergy) among its members. Thus management dogmas came about and contributed to the profitability and welfare of business houses, service providers and manufacturing industries. As times change, we see what these dogmas were about: mostly magic, smoke and mirrors. The stained glass window through which we saw the world is now shattered. Public expectations and aspirations are higher than before and Indian Railways have to build a new understanding by constructing a new reality. The 'business as usual' mode simply did not understand the need and the meaning of a new order to change of traditional systems. Yes, there was a need to change - the older generations were guilty of not doing enough. But it is not the cause for panic, something one does when it is known that Armageddon is upon us. But there is no harm to be puzzled and submit to the unknown future. And though I don't like Churchill, his words ring true now: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

## Club Day, IRSME Day, General Railway Day, or No Day?

- S Manikutty'64

I am privileged to be invited to contribute an article for the first issue of SAM to be published from outside JMP. Just as last year it was our privilege to attend the very last Club Day at the good old Gymkhana and savour its memories. When we started the SAM magazine in 1966 or 67 (actually, it started as a wall paper put up on the Notice Board of Gymkhana), the small team that made it happen: S K Chopra, JL, Anil Madan, Anil Badhwar and myself never imagined that it will endure this long (how I wish I had preserved that first issue!). Thanks to all the editorial teams that struggled year after year to bring out the magazine: The Monsoon Issue, and the Club Day Issue, the magazine survived. And wonder of wonders, even after the closure of Gymkhana and no SCRAs to be its editors, it has now launched itself from outside JMP.

Last Sunday, we were having lunch with Sanjeev Kishore, PCME, RWF, Bangalore. The question came up about what is to be done on this February 14th. It appears that the mostly likely scenario is a day (or, rather, an evening extending into a night) with officers from all disciplines. A Railway Day, sort of.

The options were: the good old Club Day, a get together for SAMs, possibly reminiscing about old times over some drinks and dinner (there is no prohibition in Bangalore, unlike the original Alma Mater). Or the IRISME Day, as in the previous years, emphasizing the unity of everyone in the Mech cadre, no distinction between someone coming from JMP or any other institution. A good opportunity to meet truly nice non SAM people living in Bangalore. Usually accompanied by the all too familiar way to do time pass: party games, songs, antaksharis, quizzes and so on. Could go on very late but oldies would start disappearing by 11 PM at the latest, after the usual reminiscing and dinner (no drinks: this would be an “official” function).

But the third option was the most interesting: make it into an all Railway departments function. Why unity only among Mech folks? Why not among everybody? After all, with the cadre merging and all that likely in a short while, should we not wipe out distinctions among all departments? The likely format: similar to the IRSME get together, with perhaps contributions from many more from other departments. To

the old folks, not much of a difference, so long as dinner is served at a reasonable time.

That set me thinking: why indeed have a “Day” at all? What does it achieve? Why not have dinners at home, and perhaps dig out an old copy of some SAM magazine before going to sleep?

### **Development and Maintenance of an Identity**

The fact is, these get-togethers are an assertion of some sort of identity. Identity seems to be an inborn need among humans, and even among other animals (example, packs of dogs, no doubt with a name for each pack known only to the dogs themselves; lions have their prides). Even from the times of the cavemen, probably it helped to have an identity, to facilitate self defence. Groups can attack or defend against other groups, and it helps if there is some sort of identification, and inclusiveness among some members, a feeling of “we” as against “they”. This serves as a bond, an emotional propellant that can launch attacks with much more vigour, and attribute a meaning to a meaningless activity such as war. There develop positive emotional bonding among the members of this community.

But such an inclusiveness also has an obverse side to it: excluding others. You cannot say we are “we” without also saying that we are NOT “they”. So such a positive bonding cannot develop without also developing an antipathy or even hate towards those not in the group. Tagore pointed this but in his remarkable essay on nationalism.

But as human beings, we evolve into more and more complex forms of society, and then multiple identities result. I am at once a member of the SAM community, the IIMA batch community of those I studied with, our housing community and so on. So long as there is no role conflict among these roles, there is no problem. But at times there could be serious problems that could force me to choose which identity I value more, in a given situation.

As SAMs, we have been accused of being “clannish”. What does this mean? If I come to know that another officer is a SAM, how should it modify my behaviour? Should I just treat him in a more familiar or cordial way, or in a distinctly different way that is obvious to all, or in a positively discriminating way? If I am writing the ACRs, should I write a better CR for a person in my community of identity, as for example, a SAM? If I am a professor in IIM, should I give better grades to a SAM student just because he or she is a SAM? If I should not, and treat each exactly as I would if there were no identity issues, then what purpose does the identity serve? Or should I go out of the way to prove that I am impartial and in the process, discriminate negatively to the “in group people”? Or use my discretion in such a way that there is a positive discrimination, but not one that is too obvious to others?

Thus we need to be members of a community without being too clannish. It goes without question that we treat members of our family

differently than others, but this identity should not prompt a judge to give a judgment in favour of his son merely because he is his son. Everyone accepts that others have identities, and they only complain when it affects them adversely to a significant extent. Developing this sense of balance is vital while maintaining one's identity.

### **Date as a Day**

In order to reinforce the identities, other anchors are useful and almost always needed. One such anchor is a particular date on which some significant event happened, as for example, the Independence Day, or, well, the Club Day. This date is important and has a meaning to the people in the group because an event took place, and precisely for that reason, is of no meaning to those outside the group. Thus it is that Club Day on Feb 14 has a meaning to SAMs but has absolutely no meaning to anyone else. So attempts to create a Day out of a mere date by a mere declaration are not likely to meet with much success. The emotional connect is missing, the date remains just a date.

### **Place as a Symbol**

The Club Day can be celebrated anywhere. There have been local celebrations in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and so on for years, and they will continue. But along with the date, the venue or location has its own meaning, and that is why celebrating it in any place other than JMP is really not the same thing. That is why JMP attracted some people every year, and stalwarts like Mr. B. Basu and Mr. P. Sen made it a point

to come there every year, despite their busy life. To see it happen in the familiar old Gymkhana lawns is not the same thing as its happening in even a posh club in Delhi. To paraphrase Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, we don't go to JMP or anywhere else because we have no food in our homes. We can all eat well at our homes. We do not gather to see the moon because it is a different moon. It is to experience the joy of being together, sharing old memories, and reassert our identities that we gather. Such gatherings are vital to continue the special bonds we have. Central to this is the provision of meaning.

### **The Last Bit**

So we are back to the question, what should Feb 14 be? It will continue as a day to reconnect for us SAMs and equally, of no meaning to anyone else. We do have such a thing as a Railway Week, where the identities as Railway people are reasserted, and share the commonness arising therefrom. That is how it should be. But any date cannot be chosen as a Day for everyone because of a lack of meaning. For others, it will be just a date on the calendar.

Let us maintain our identities and whenever possible, help one another, but without hurting others and giving others a chance to distance themselves from us. SCRA scheme might have been stopped but the last batch will be there for another 70 years or more (long lives to them). The class is alive and kicking, and will continue to be so for a long time. Let us keep celebrating. There is still so much to celebrate.



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## An Interview

### Satish Chandra Misra'39

- J L Singh'65



Satish Misra '39 sat comfortably in the back veranda of his bungalow in the Dalanwala area of Dehradun where he settled after retirement. It was midmorning in early November 2016 and the then oldest living member of the SAM community was enjoying the pleasant weather of the Himalayan foothills. The cooing of spotted doves and the lively call of bulbuls rent the air. A few 5-striped palm squirrels also scurried about. In conversation with him was J L Singh '65.

*"This is my forest Rest House," said Satish Misra, "As the area surrounding the building is abounding with trees and bushes including elephant ear bush".*

In spite of his 95 years, he sat straight in his chair. It was only the softness of his voice that gave away the fact that he was born on the 13th of June 1921. Satish Misra was the first SAM to become what was then called the Principal of his alma mater when he was posted as head of the Indian Railways School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Jamalpur.

His father, originally from the railways, also had a 3-year posting with the UPSC. Several of the father's friends' sons had joined as Special Class Railway Apprentices at Jamalpur. That aroused his father's interest. The rest is history: Satish Misra applied and got through in his first attempt at the age of 18.

During his days as an Apprentice at Jamalpur, he concentrated on tennis although golf was very popular among the British. Love for tennis was a family trait – his younger brother, Sumant Misra, becoming India's No. 1 in tennis at one stage.

Satish Misra's first posting was at Moradabad, which was then part of the erstwhile East Indian Railway (EIR). This is where he was married. Zamindari then had not been abolished and his wife came from one of the two big zamindari families of Moradabad.

*"Of the many postings I had in the course of my career," said the Oldest member when asked which posting he liked the most, "The one I liked most was Chittaranjan. Indian Railways used to buy all their locomotives from UK. Soon after independence, they decided to setup their own manufacturing centre and stop imports. Chittaranjan was a rural area; there was nothing there. This is where they decided to set up a loco factory. The place became very scenic, with lakes and greenery."*

All his life, Misra was a strict disciplinarian. Members of the early 60s batches will confirm that. *"Learnt all our discipline from Grundy, our Principal,"* he said. *"We learnt this and the fact that he was an upright gentleman. I acquired my discipline and being upright from him. I often got up early in the morning and climbed up the hillside to see the sun rise."*

As a sportsman, he always encouraged sports and emphasised building up of the general personality. Apart from being the first SAM Principal of his alma mater, Satish Misra had a number of postings at Jamalpur. These included AWM, WM and the top post,



S C Misra '39 with the late R K Shukla '54 and Mayank Tewari '89

then Dy CME, but referred to as DCME at Jamalpur. Most of the 5-6 machine tools received each year were then purchased from the European continent, primarily Austria and Czechoslovakia. The British were upset over this and finally British machines also began arriving. At Munger (then Monghyr), 10 kilometers from Jamalpur town and the district headquarters, the Ganges goes Northwards. This makes it auspicious. During the rains, the other bank cannot be seen. *"When I took foreigners there," he commented, "They often remarked that this is when they realize why Indians worship the Ganges."*

In the 1930s and early 40s, in the normal course, you spent 4 years at Jamalpur followed by two years in England. Misraji clarified that in the early 40s, Italian submarines used to trouble ships near Gibraltar. Thus, ships could not come through the Mediterranean but had to go round Africa. Owing to such difficulties, sending of apprentices to England was discontinued. Before partition, mechanical engineers dealt with all locos and all crews. Earlier, all the loco drivers were British, followed later by Anglo-Indians. There were separate Rest Houses for Hindus and Muslims. *"We were ordered to protect all Muslims," the oldest Sam told us, "Most of the crews stayed in India; only about 30% went*



The "Forest Rest House"

*to Pakistan. Firemen were mostly Muslim. To protect myself, my in-laws gave me a pistol."*

During his early days, Anglo-Indians were many. They had a weakness to slip out. They had separate toilets which were very good. Since smoking was not allowed in the workshop, they smoked in the toilets. *"One verse you often heard from the Anglos," Misraji said, "Went something like this:*

*"I come here to shit and piss  
And fart like thunder.  
Some come here to read and write  
And some come here to slumber."*

*"What with all this wisdom and wit, one would think that Shakespeare had been here to shit," he continued.*

The oldest member's advice to youngsters: *"Be a gentleman or lady with fine character; physical fitness is the most important thing; participate most in sports and if you cannot, in indoor exercises. The workman is a part of your family. So, with workmen, have brotherly affection. Give the same punishment as you would give to a younger brother."*

Satish Chandra Misra passed away in early 2019.  
May his soul rest in peace.



The Alien teens Alok and Allen hail from different worlds – but are sharing the unhappy task of creating a college project report on the topic ‘Drivers For Life On Planet Earth’.

Secure in their snappy spacecraft high above Earth, they are nonetheless despondent at the prospect of spending several orbital passes thinking up the report and downloading it into the University’s information base. Little do they know that they’ll get a C.

“We’ve got to start somewhere – let’s look at humans first. They consider themselves the highest form of life on Earth,” says Alok.

“That’s debatable, considering that they’ve been around only a couple of lakh years, and there are only 7 billion of them. But they are certainly powerful – they’ve been going around killing many other life forms with amazing alacrity,” said Allen.

Alok didn’t quite understand the word ‘killing’, but he let it pass. He peered through his magnascope. “Let’s look at their babies – to get the first clue to what makes them tick. From what I can see, humans are born quite uninformed (read dumb) – but have been given sensory organs to continuously sample their environment.”

“I think they are supposed to learn what to do by observing their surroundings and trying to make sense of it. They’ve been given heads to do that.”

(“Most of the adults don’t seem to be using their heads much, except to make sounds with their mouths. But we’ll study that later,” said Alok, sotto voce.)

“I think the process they follow is – observe their surroundings – make a simplified model in their heads – keep observing – keep modifying model of surroundings. Over the years, they build pretty sophisticated mental models of their world this way. Adult humans call this ‘learning’ through the ‘scientific method’, as if it were something glorious, although it’s a no-brainer to me,” observed Allen.

“Why are they learning?” asked Alok.

“Well, they want to survive as long as they can. They have to learn to survive.”

(“Survive? What’s that?” “Living things on earth shut down after a while. They conk off. But they want to maximize their time on Earth before shutting down,” explained Allen.)

Understanding began to dawn on Alok. “So that’s why they learn and gain knowledge? To predict the future as best as they can, so that they can

increase their chances of staying out of harm’s way, and maximize their lifespans?”

“Yes, living things seem to love life and living. They have an inner urge to protect and nurture life – for example, they love young animals. The prospect of shutting down scares the s\*\*\* out of them, too,” said Allen laconically, rolling his visual sensors towards the Oort cloud.

A short pause as both the teens peered through their magnascopes. Then Alok announced, “Another important fact for our report is that most living things on Earth, especially humans and other advanced species, exchange

## ALOK AND ALLEN’S REPORT — AN ALIEN VIEW ON COMMON SENSE

- Sharat Sahai Mathur’81



information with each other: that is, they 'communicate'. They make sounds that others can understand. They also condense information into 'books', 'movies', and 'storage media'. It helps them to cooperate with one another, forming groups to counter threats to their collective well-being."

"Of course cooperation works only when correct information is being communicated. Humans call this the 'truth', and make a big deal out of it. Incorrect information is called 'lies,'" supplemented Allen.

"Hmm... what's the point of lying? Its worse than not communicating at all," said Alok thoughtfully, "but then I have observed that sometimes humans are quite stupid – sorry, uninformed."

(You bet / you're darn tootin' / and how! - words to that effect from Allen.)

"In general, I find that all higher life forms on Earth – and particularly humans – live in groups and have a kind of social contract," intoned Alok solemnly. "Babies and young ones are looked after by adults through various social structures..."

"Families..." interjected Allen.

"Yes, families are an example. Adults try to teach the young ones all they know, so that they don't repeat adults' mistakes. The young ones grow into adults in the meantime, and contribute in the form of work that is of value to society. Adults collect tokens for the value they add. The tokens can be encashed for services when they get old and need support from society."

"You're right, Alok. That appears to be, by and large, it. A human incurs a cost when it receives a service from another. In fact, cost is tied to the value their society

attaches to certain objects and ideas. For example, before humans polluted their environment so much, they didn't consider the environmental cost of their activities. But now it has come back to haunt them, so they are finding ways of costing environmental effects into their value system."

"I think we have enough material for our report. Humans seem to have discovered their mojo ever since they realized the value of knowledge and cooperation. They have been able to manage their environment to increase their lifespans and maximize their well-being. They certainly appear to be on the path to progress and prosperity, as long as they can wrap their heads around environmental degradation!" concluded Alok.

So saying, he started up his spacecraft engine, happily anticipating the flight home.

"Hey, wait!" exclaimed Allen. "Back up a bit, will you! I can see a large bunch of humans hitting each other with long pieces of wood, communicating loudly and creating a racket, and firing little pieces of steel into each other! Some of them are shutting down all of a sudden, too!" Alok whizzed to the visor. "Wait, there are more! Over there, and there! Oh, my, that was a loud bang! The entire building fell over and many humans conked off!" he exclaimed.

"Why on Earth should they do that? I think they've all gone what is known as 'crazy' – the circuits in their heads have begun to misfire! What a riotous melee! Well, well, well... back to the drawing board; we have to re-do our entire report," said Allen despairingly.

That's how their report got delayed and they had to be satisfied with a C.

# A Simi's Journey

- Sushma Singh

The considerably better half of  
J L Singh'65



'86 Batch Farewell

I started off as a SAM sister, became a SAM wife and added the designation of Sam Samdhan (Both my sons are married to SAM daughters).

Here is a narration of this journey and my experiences on the way.

The abbreviation SAM was unknown to me, when Mr. Subbiah 29, Mr. Gosain 40, and Mr. Ishwar Saran 37 were our neighbours at BHEL Bhopal, and were instrumental in making my brother, Rajinder Malhan 66, a SAM.

As a young teenager I looked up at these suave SAM officers in BHEL. It was after my brother left Bhopal that I saw their true colours. They came to our house, gleefully rubbing their hands, while narrating the 'fun' my brother would have after reaching Jamalpur. That was the first time I saw my parents fighting; after their departure, my mother demanding to recall her son. Of course, this did not happen. He stayed on and enjoyed his 4 years at Jamalpur. Every time he came home, it was with some other suitcase, etc. (we always wondered why, but now I know).





'86 Batch Farewell

My next encounter with SAMs was when two young handsome Western Railway boys visited our house in Ajmer (it was their junior, Rajinder Malhan's house). One of them was Rohit Vohra and the other Kinty Paintal, both 63. It was only later that I realized how they had hoodwinked us into thinking that sugar could not melt in their mouths, that they were teetotalers and very homely. My parents were totally impressed with thoughts for their daughter, till Rajinder with a straight face said that they were too brilliant for me. During this time I was also fortunate enough to come across other SAMs, like IM Sethi 56, ML Khanna 47, DB Singh 47, RB Mathur 51 – all my father's contemporaries in Ajmer. I remember the time when I met the Godboles

63 for the first time and called them uncle and aunty. They have not forgiven me for this.

My whole vision of SAMs took on a metamorphic change after J L Singh 65 walked into my life by very conveniently 'missing' his train to meet Rajinder's parents and finally walked away with me, converting me into a SIMI!!

Over the years, I was educated by highly intelligent teachers about Jamalpur, SAMS, etc. etc. – J L Singh Deepak Anand 64, VK Verma 66 and many more, who would shamelessly exhort a lot of food on the pretext of 'educating' me. To be honest, I enjoyed it and got



an idea of the fun they had at Jamalpur, as well as the strong bonding that was so evident. This started turning me into a staunch SIMI. I realized that one could walk into a senior or junior's house and always be welcomed. They were SAMs.

The final bonding happened when we were posted to Jamalpur. I had heard so many stories, all of which came alive right from the time we got off at the station to my first welcome visit to Gymkhana.

Since we had two young sons at that time, Gymkhana and all their 'bhaiyas' became part of our extended home and family. The young bhaiyas would extract the Saturday dinner menu or suggest one and come over to spend time with Deepak and Jatin while we were in the club. Most of the boys were firsttees for whom this was where they could let their hair down, eat to their hearts content and make up for their lost sleep (their seniors could not say anything because they had done it too).

The farewell dinners of the passing out batch at our place were great fun. We would spend days planning the menu, games, etc. Here are a few snippets from some of them.

83 batch: Saibal insisted on singing a song which was two pages long. No amount of begging or bribing worked, he just went on and on, not concerned about our weary and bored faces. He refused to hand it over to Kalyani or Gautam who would have been much more welcome.

One guest at most of the batch farewells was Sudhanshu Mani 75, whom my sons doted on, except

for the fact that their helpings of chicken and dessert were much reduced because of him (he preferred boneless chicken because it did not leave behind any evidence).

The 86 batch farewell was great fun too, with bursting the balloon race. Saraswathi was in the batch (I need not say anymore). There was a pudding competition between Mani and P Ananth. It was hilarious, except for the fact that I had a lot of cleaning up to do on the next day. (Evidence attached).

I am sure everyone is familiar with the 7-abbs physique of Sauraabh Endley 86 in those days. Two of the extremely smart ones came upto me with the sad story of Endley having lost a lot of weight and how upset his mother would be when he went home, and could I do something to fatten him up? The mother in me was roused and I readily agreed to do so. He was always escorted by two different boys (I am sure they had made a roster) and enjoyed the extra ghee in their dal and halwas, etc. It was only after a month that I realized that everyone else had put on weight except Endley (his wife has finally managed the unimaginable).

Madhukar Dayal 87 was another of those very "intelligent" boys. Their batch had their tech tour, so they went to each of the SAM officers' houses and quoted another Simi's large heartedness at providing them a big hamper of food, ending up with more than they could eat (I am not sure of that.)

I remember the day when we went to Praveen Kumar 67's house (then PPT). He was extremely upset and grumpy. On being asked for the cause he said, "My whole day got spoilt. I was ready to yell at the boys and

just when I was getting into the right mood, in walked Saraswathi 86. I had to scold them very politely".

88 and 89 batch were notorious for someone or the other always being in trouble.

We lived on Stadium Road which was often used as the bunking route or the 'couples' (any guesses) route. We saw it all, had a quiet smile and turned an amused blind eye.

Club days and preparing for them will always be nostalgic memories as also the after- dinner walks towards the golf course with the likes of the Kansals 73, Ravinder Guptas 79 and the Vij's 62.

Unfortunately, all this has come to an end. We are feeling orphaned, but the bonding will take us through till the last Sam and Simi is there. No one can snatch away the beautiful memories of the red building where our boys became gentlemen and our girls became confident young lady officers.

# Introducing jamalpurgymkhana.in

The portal **of, by and for** the **SAM Community**

- Mayank Tewari'89

Reaching out to friends is becoming faster and easier than ever before. Equally, connecting meaningfully is becoming increasingly harder. The question we posed to ourselves was – **What is it that we can do to further enable the objective of keeping the SAM community connected?**

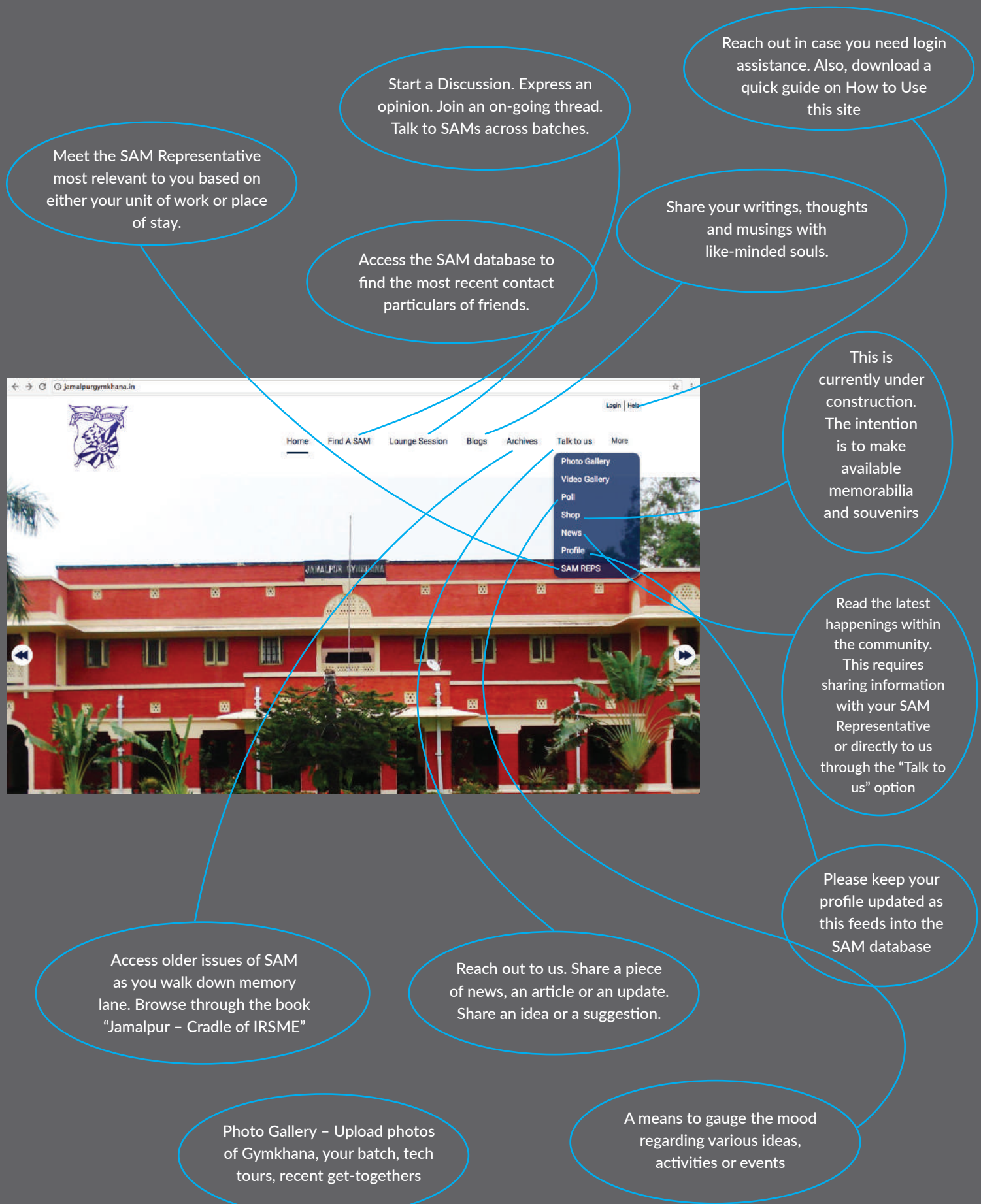
We felt that the solution could lie in a platform that is not intrusive but always there for you - one where you are the master. A space that you can visit at your convenience, yet catch up with all that has transpired. We wanted a space that provides an outlet for your creative juices to flow. We wanted a canvas that you will create and grow. A place to go down memory lane, share happenings of the present and shape the future. A platform that, we hope, becomes your preferred option for staying connected with the SAM Community.

It is with this objective that we have created a virtual space that is of the SAM community, will be created by the SAM community and is for the SAM community. The portal can be accessed on the web by looking for jamalpurgymkhana.in and is designed to have the freedom to be shaped and to grow the way all of us want it to. Some features have already been built in and others can be provided as and when we feel the need. Please remember – it is all of us who are going to provide the content for this platform and any platform is only as good as the content on it.

The screenshot of the Home page on your right, introduces some of the elements of the portal.

As this portal is for the SAM community only, **all access is login based**. Your user name is **SAM + Batch + Batch Seniority** all together. Hence, if you are the batch senior of the 1985 batch, your user name is **SAM198501**. To find out your password please reach out to your SAM Representative or send an email to **samportal2020@gmail.com** Naturally, you can, and ideally must, change this password after your first login.

And finally, always remember that this is the portal of, by and for the SAM community. Visit it, nourish it and care for it by contributing to it and make it grow so that the SAM community remains meaningfully connected always.





# एक भारत श्रेष्ठ भारत

## National Integration and Communal Harmony

- Abhishek Pradhan 2k13

Somewhere at someplace in India a family was busy wrangling among themselves. A joint family indeed, of members with different opinions, different beliefs. The house was beautiful and it's ancestors had glories which echoed in all directions, to skies unseen, to oceans unfathomed. But alas all glory, all name in vain. For what use is the glory if it is losing its melody day by day by regular sound of internal disturbances. For what use is the name if it cannot be heard in the noise of daily brawl. Well to be frank members as individuals had positive belief system but what they lacked was coherence. Each member tried to dominate the other by thrusting and imposing his opinion and beliefs on other. Peace was lost to be found nowhere. Money came inside family but there was no development as there was no collective decision. To summarise a false pride of some unsought opinions was ruining it all. Well we will revisit our story later but first let's talk about India and it's unity in diversity.

There is no doubt about the fact that India's diversity is huge and it's diversity is itself diverse. India is home to almost all religions of the world. With around 1635 languages present in India Majority of them are dialect. There are around 111 dance forms present in our country. Geographically India can be divided into five physiographic regions. There are around 3000 castes present in India. Ethnic diversity of India can we

weighed no less. With such huge diversity and second largest population of the world our country stands tall as the largest democracy of the world today. Our Bharat has seen many highs and lows in that context. There has always been scepticism in many minds as how is this 'Bharat' stayed as 'Bharat' as we know today.

The answer lies in its past. Our Bharat has been genesis of some 'Greats'. Asoka and Akbar are to name a few. Ashoka's ancestor Chandragupta Maurya's political endeavour and Ashoka's policy of Dhamma was like giving body and soul to Bharat. Later in medieval times the integrity of India was again in danger until Mughal rule came in India. Of the Mughals Akbar's policy of Din-e-Ilahi or Sulh-e-Kuhl revived the thought of peaceful coexistence of different communities in India. Abolishment of Jhaziya tax was his noble move. The medieval time also saw the rise of Bhakti and Sufi movements which brought many communities together and reiterated that religions might have different languages but have same meaning. With the advent of British rule the communal scenario started changing. They knew that Divide and Rule was the only golden policy for them to establish themselves in India. And hence they began institutionalising communalism. Be it Partition of Bengal(1905) or separate electorates in reforms of 1909 or 1919, they began dividing India on communal lines. This led to monuments in India like Shuddhie and Sangathan by Hindus and Tablighi and Tanzim movements by Muslims. Later the communal award of 1932 fuelled the communities against each other and rise of Hindu and Islamic Nationalism started taking place. And the rest is history. The impact was so deep that India has been marred by the bruises of communal violence till today. So what is that line of thought that few outsiders came and gave us and we are still struggling to get out of it.

To understand this we should understand what communalism in true sense is and how it is shaped in a country in first place. Communalism is strong sense of loyalty to interests of one particular group rather than society as a whole. This eventually results in rise of false consciousness of which hatred and violence towards others are several outcomes. It is not abrupt process but a flow of change. Historical factors become cause of ideology creation which further results in aspirations and interests. These further result in competition viz. culture, economic resources and political power. This competition gives rise to separate social identity and thus conflict takes place and hence is the genesis of communalism. Gandhi ji said, "Communalism of virulent type is the recent growth. The lawlessness is the monster with many faces. It hurts all, in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it."

The above quote is very much true in Indian context. The diversity of India is like a two sides of the same coin. On one hand it adds to the cultural heritage of India and flourishes Tourism industry. But on the other hand there are problems like Religious Fundamentalism, Communal Fanaticism, Sectarianism, Regionalism and secessionist tendencies, casteism, linguism etc. The list is long but the root cause is one and it is the lack of humanism. Just like rivers, ponds and lakes have different names but all contain the same water in the same way the diversity of India is by the people one should understand that human beings and their welfare should be at the top, above any ideology, above any fundamentalism. However we fail at times to realise this, And this causes huge setback for our nation's prosperity. Let us analyse the various problems caused by such disharmony in our country one by one.

As discussed above already communal disharmony lies at the top. Not only it has affected social arena but political and economical arenas are also not untouched. PostIndependent India has seen many such conflicts. Let's not forget that the journey of independent India started with a Kolkata rights and huge violence and massacres of people involved in transboundary migration due to partition of India. Our country is a Hindu Religion dominated country hence it leaves all other religions to be called as minorities. Safety of minorities is a pertinent issue which has always been existing. The communal riots of Gujarat in 1969, the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, involvement of religious instruments in North East Indian militancy, the Godhra riots of 2002, are the few unfortunate examples to name from a long list. We should know that the battle has never been ideological alone, but economical and political as well. The minorities have often been treated as mere vote banks rather than victims. Since India is a developing country and population is huge, the competition between economic resources is obvious. Often minorities are devoid of their rights. This is the perfect time for some so-called political heroes to swoop in and instigate the mob psychology. The mob psychology is easy to turn around and thus unfortunate events occur. But the results are devastating aftermath. The victims of such events suffer from mental, physical, psychological, societal and economical degradation. The case of Gulberg Society massacre in Ahmedabad and burning of coach of Sabarmati express filled with Karsevaks are such examples. It will be a never ending debate that who and how it started, but no one can check their heads from how it ended. It can be said that it is the best case example of Lose-Lose situation.

However our forefathers who wrote our constitution were visionary enough to see that India is a unique state in context of religion. Hence they shifted from western concept of secularism and introduced secularism of its own kind in India. Secularism in India is a positive concept whereby all religions share equal status i.e. SarvDharma Sambhav. The fundamental rights in our constitution are the major foundation of it especially Article 25 to 28. The true essence of diversity can be only be realised if secularism becomes foundational value. This has been reiterated by Supreme Court in its basic structure doctrine by including secularism in it. However state supported religious reforms have been there in original constitution as well as introduced from time to time as realised. The recent example of Triple Talaq Bill is one such case. However this is not a complete picture. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of Uniform Civil Code is still a distant dream it seems. Some times a political party affiliates itself with a particular religion. If it becomes the ruling party, that particular religion becomes the state religion. This has been said in S.R. Bommai case. The famous Shah Bano Case or debate over all religions except Islam considered under Hindu Civil Code (Article 25(2)) are several bone of contentions.

But then a question arises, when our Constitution guarantees such safeguards then why minorities don't feel safe or remain insecure. The problem lies in less economic empowerment among minorities. Often they fall victim of discrimination because of which educational and skill development is less, hence majority of the minorities are poverty ridden and capability deprived. In the event of any miss happening, it take years to re-establish themselves

in society. But then this is not the case in communal grounds only. Regionalism on basis of Linguistic, Geographic and Ethnic aspirations has echoed its voice from time to time. But when we trace our history we come to know that had it not been for Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel,'Bharat' as we know today would not have existed. Hence Regionalism and Secessionist tendencies are like converting the ideals of our Iron Man to a rust. The very famous case is the Linguistic Reorganisation of states post independence after series of committee formations. Demand for Khalistan is one of many 'istans' which has aspired in India from time to time.

The Government of India has hence realised this and has been rolling out many initiatives since independence. Formation of National Integration Council in 1960s was a major step. Later in 1992 National Foundation for Communal Harmony was formed which been doing wonderful work. It envisages it's objectives through collaborative social action between NGOs and Govt. Not only does it provide financial assistance to the victims but also councils children victims so that they fall out of the trap of communal disharmony.

Educational and Skill Empowerment are some weapons in their arsenal. The latest development is the launching "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Initiative" in 2015 by our hon'ble Prime Minister with the vision of promotion of National Integration and Communal Harmony.

According to various guidelines of Central Government it is clear that this issue should be handled as Preventive rather than Curative. Role of State government in such cases becomes extremely important. They have to be

vigilant, and pre planned in control measures. District administration should do regular assessment of their districts. And sensitive areas should be regularly monitored. In hyper sensitive areas detailed SOPs and contingency plans are needed. The police force of a particular area should comprise of the same social structure as that of residents so that they have confidence and trust in governmental institutions.

The officers which are posted in such areas must have integrity, impartiality and efficiency imbibed in them. Rewards and Recognitions should be given to those who stand out in delivery of duty. Regulation and Regular watch of audio, visual and Social media should be done so that any hateful message is not spread.

Although our country has many examples of communal disharmony there are individuals and group who believe that humanism is the religion of highest order. In a small village in Karnataka Hindus came forward to restore a mosque which was damaged. On the other hand Jama Masjid in Meerut offered the devotees its premises to host a Bhandara dedicated to lord Shiva. Ayodhya, which has always been in news since Babri masjid has also such example. Hindu devotees in Shri Sita Ram temple in Ayodhya hosted Iftar for their Muslim brothers. The list is long for both sides it's upto us which we want to read and follow.

Meanwhile let's get back to that 'somewhere' at 'someplace' in India. The brawl was on. The head of the family came out of the house frustrated. He saw that neighbours were enjoying it like a movie show. He felt helpless and dejected. Seeing his house from outside he recalled in his mind the old glory of his ancestors. But the feeling was heavy enough to tilt his head down.

But suddenly he saw something very common but very unique. A group of ants were carrying rice grains twice their body size together. They were falling together and rising together. Contentment was visible in such small consciousness. Seeing that the man smiled and looked up to his house with hope. He started moving inside to share his delight in hope of a change and positive revolution. I think it's time we do the same. Shall we?





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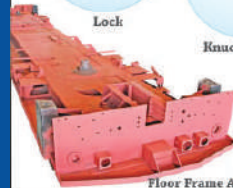
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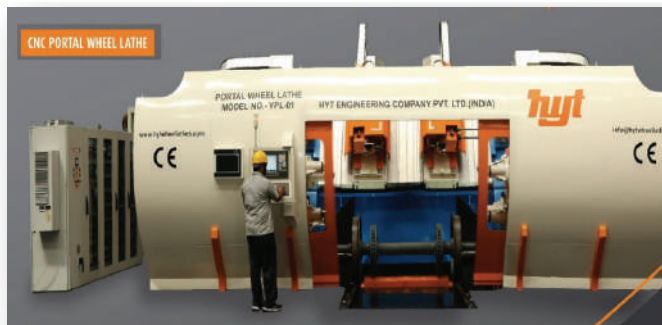
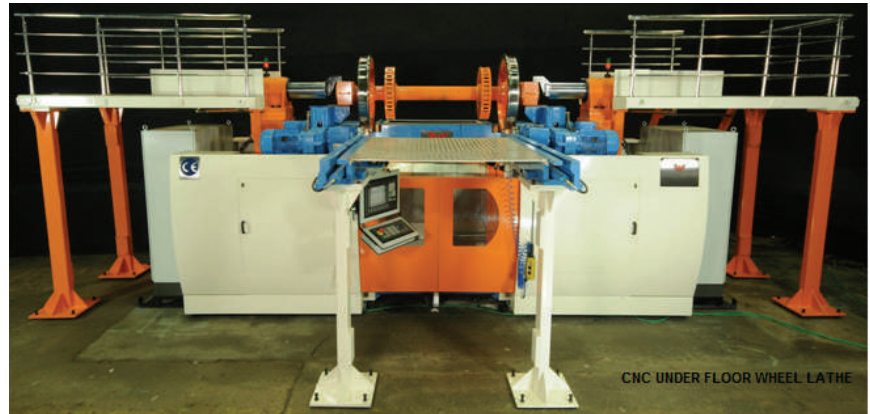
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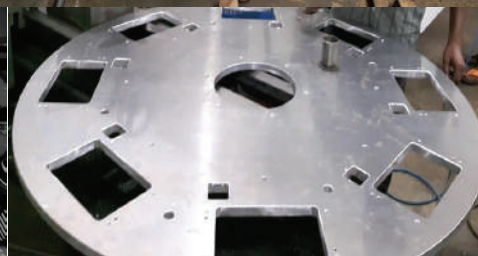
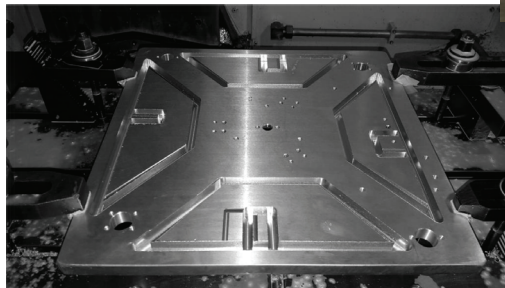
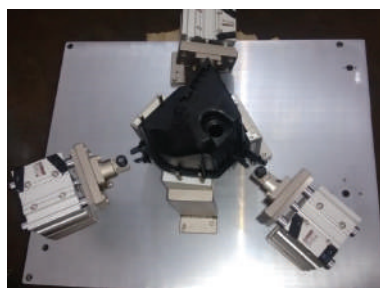
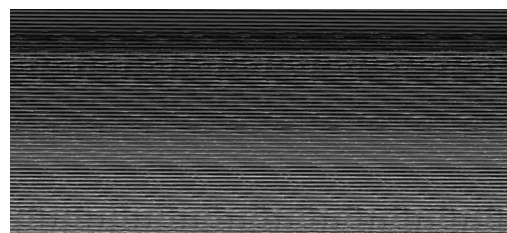
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# *A Trip down memory lane* - Sachin Sharma'88

It was nice to visit Jamalpur Gymkhana, the home of the special class apprentices after over 23 years in February 2018 as the semi-focal batch having completed 25 years of active service. This institution has stood the test of time since 1927 and has churned out great alumni who have earned a name for themselves and the Indian Railways.



The feel of the Jamalpur experience started with the change of trains at Patna. Earlier we used to switch coaches within the same train Magadh-Vikramshila but now it was the Rajdhani/ Garibrath. The difference was that this time we were sure of getting our seat. In apprenticeship days we were sure to find at least 4/5 people already seated on our first-class seat. The conversation in the train though had not changed much. The vendors of “Litti Pani” and “Kharab chai” were still there. Perhaps these were the tested business tricks of the vendors which had stood the test of time.

The traction-change of our train at Kiul station reminded me of an era gone by. The shunting was at a slow pace reminiscent of the earlier times of a entering the branch line. The difference was an

electric to diesel traction change now. Earlier it was mostly diesel to steam- a WP mostly but many times a WG. The drivers were much smarter now but they still respected the Jamalpur name and there I was on a footplate once again. Most of the section had got doubled and of course one could see the OHE masts which were a visual intrusion to the earlier scenic view. Doubling meant that we crossed trains on the run. Two diesels crossing each other at 100 kmph i.e. a relative speed of 200 kmph, something unheard of or beyond imagination, in our apprenticeship days. Another thing missing was the WDM1 locos and the steam engines and bunch of kids waiting for the train to stop so that they could steal some coal.

The stations have become modern, unlike the low-level platforms of the 90's. DUKAMDD was the anagram I had developed for the stations on the route as an apprentice, just to sound like a railwayman to the drivers while foot plating. DUKAMDD of course being- Dhanauri, Uren, Kajra, Abhaipur, Masudan, Dharara, Dashratpur and Jamalpur. The stations still had the same names and the sight of the semaphore signals while entering Jamalpur was the real icing on the cake. If this were not enough the manual system of train announcement was a reminder of the olden days. The romance of the railways still lasted after 29 years including the apprenticeship period.



The visit to the workshop was very nostalgic. The crane shop and the heritage room beside it were very well maintained. The way the steam patterns were thrown in the store hurt a bit as these had been the prime elements of the earlier foundries. The BTC had changed and had been developed as a centre of excellence for welding. The steam engines shunting inside the shop had gone missing having been replaced by diesels. The pass section at the workshop, the punching booth, the BTC and other shops, Pandeyji-the time keepers chamber, the health unit and all the structures which are testimony to the journey of all the batches who have passed over the years were still there. These are now memories and anecdotes for the youngsters who did enjoy our storytelling. Some things had survived the onslaught of change.



The golf course and the grave in between had been fenced all around and looked different. The Workshop stadium and the Act apprentice's hostel though was quite the same. The walk up the hill to the temple was much unlike the earlier days. There was activity and one could see hundreds of devotees on the way and of course small shop owners and E-rickshaws. Earlier it was only the Shaw store but now the place looked different. It was however a great feeling sharing these moments with my batchmates and remembering how we used to run up the hill in our cross-country races and our target always used to be to beat Mr J.L. Singh, though we could never really manage. The welcoming

sight of our Director Late Sh.V.K.Vij and late Mrs Anita Vij at the finishing point is something one can never forget. The whole faculty at Jamalpur would be part of the events and this was a great motivator. We remembered the great times with Sh. Praveen Kumar, Sh. A.K.Singh, Sh. A.K.Tewari, Sh. Shubhranshu, Sh. Ashutosh Gangal, Sh S.Mani(posted in the shop), Sh. Pravesh Mathur and many more.



But living that experience once again was what we wanted and this was possible by being back at our college. So, the 88 batchers were there in full flow playing badminton and squash at 1230 in the night with the first and second year gymmies duly cheered by the simis. Of course, we lost but enjoyed every moment of it. With every shot we remembered some moment from our four years and the innumerable matches we had played. Seeing the board of the sports secretary and the JA award winner and finding my name on it made me feel pleased.

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YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME
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1962	P. C. VERMA	1988	N. CHANDHARY
1963	R. K. PICHARI	1989	S. BANWATH
1964	ARUN PRASADA	1990	KUMAR TUNNI
1965	D.N.TANDON	1991	ASHISH CHANDAN
1966	R.L. GUPTA	1992	MADHUKAR DAYAL
1967	K.B. SRIVASTAVA	1993	S. M. SHARMA
1968	S.C. SAXENA	1994	R. R. MEENA
1969	A.K. GUPTA	1995	A. JAIN
1970	V. BAHAN	1996	VISHAL KAPOOR
1971	S. C. GUPTA	1997	DEEPAK SAPRA
1972	R. P. AGARWAL	1998	S. TRIPATHI
1973	V. K. JOLLY	2000	VINOD KUMAR
1974	KAMAL SHIVPURI	2002	A. MOHAPATRA
1975	NIRAJ KUMAR	2004	DIYA HISHA
1976	A. KUMAR	2005	RITU SAURASHA
1977	SHEKHAR SINHA	2006	HANISH YADAV
1978	R. VISHNOI	2007	ARVIND SHARMA
1979	H. G. RAGHURAMAN	2008	SHADAB JAMAL
1980	S. K. LUTHRA	2011	UJJWAL DEO
1981	A. K. KHOSLA	2013	A. AHMED KHAN
1982	A. K. SRIVASTAVA	2015	P. MEHENDIRATTA
1983	ANIL KHURANA	2016	VIVEK
1984	G. MALLIYA	2017	RISHAB CHUDHARY
1985	SHUBHRANSHU	2018	ADITHYAN PRADHAN
1986	A. SHARMA		

The interaction between alumni from the 1955 batch down to the 2015 batch during the club day 2018 was very cordial and inspite of the generation gap they were able to connect with each other. They shared a common bond. This is what institutions are all about. Some say that institutions are recurring patterns of behaviour from a set of individuals from within a community. They have a bigger purpose and this is above the individual interests and intentions. Jamalpur Gymkhana truly embodies the essence of institutions. Some things don't change and some change for the better. It was enjoyable to be back after 23 years and connect with the present batches. There were many things that still continued and the youngsters felt nice to learn why these traditions had started. It was about sharing my experience of four years at Gymkhana with them and understanding their perspective as well. The State Bank of India, the Notre dame school and the National Institute still stood the test of time. The old staff who still owe allegiance to the Gymkhanites had come and it was a pleasant surprise to meet Rambo the barber, Chedi, the dhobi and Arun's brother. The son of Mr Shaw from the Shaw store from where we bought all our utilities, and the CADS we would earn from our seniors and pick up from Shaw store was there to greet us. The staff of IRIMEE especially Amarjit from the reprographics section, and so on were there with big smiles on their faces. It was nice to see the chambers of the Professors and lecturers and these refreshed many memories -some sweet and some not so sweet.



Each SAM had a story to tell of their times which were known to them alone or officers from close by batches could relate to. Perhaps some of these need to be documented. A digital collection of old artefacts and tales may be of interest to visitors to Jamalpur who come to trace their ancestral history and lineage. Many of the graves in the graveyard are testimony to the same.



A place is made by the people who reside in it. Seeing new faces made it look different but since we still did speak a similar language and could connect with our memories, it was not difficult to connect. The guiding factor of the armorial bearings still maintains their prominent position at gymkhana and with the gymkhanites. It still reads as below:

*The wings of progress are placed prominently on top, with a pair of callipers passing through them, signifying control by measurement. The shield is equally divided amongst a tiger representing strength and a proud leader among the living creatures of the world and an assembly of a shaft passing through the boss of a spoked wheel which typifies design, machinery and production. The scroll above the shield bears the motto "Sapientia et labor"*



In Latin, meaning, “by wisdom and labor”. The colours are **maroon, white & green**; **maroon** for strength and depth of learning; **white** for purity and balance of approach and **green** for nature, realism and practice.

The same code of conduct has been followed over the years:

1. Self-discipline is the most important discipline.
2. Give to others freely and deserve to receive.
3. The most valuable assets one could hope to acquire are the qualities of a gentleman.
4. Traditions of an institution are held in trust by its members.
5. Neglect not a sacred duty.

The scheme may have been closed but the place will remain close to the heart of all the members who have spent four crucial years of their lives at Jamalpur. It is sad that such a great institution could not survive a hundred years since its inception. But the solace is that it has served the purpose with all the members contributing their bit to the progress of the Indian Railways and the Society.



# Arvind Mathur and Shyam Sunder

- V Anand'62

During my four years' apprenticeship I was thrown into the company of people from all over India, with diverse backgrounds of education, language, culture, upbringing and affluence. For most of us, it was the first experience of staying away from home. In the competitive atmosphere that prevailed, it was possible that one's value systems would change. However, my batch mate Arvind Mathur never changed and remained steadfast to his values of truth, fair play, compassion and integrity. His idealistic and straightforward approach may not have endeared him to people used to flattery, but for me he is still a true friend, philosopher and guide.

He taught me a very important principle of management. This was in getting the work done at the lowest competent level. In all organisations- including the Indian Railways-powers to take decisions are vested at different levels. Why take a hammer to squash a mosquito? Find out who can meet with your requirements and let him decide.

His approach paid rich dividends when we were camping at Vadodara, Western Railway, in Gujarat State, to conduct oscillation trials on the broad gauge milk tank vans. I had approached the authorities in the Divisional Office with a request to run the test train from Vadodara to Surat. I was passed from one officer's desk to another's, with no one acceding to my request. "Our day-to-day operations will be affected. Punctuality

will go for a toss. We are busy preparing for a VIP's visit..." were some of the excuses.

Arvind told me that my approach was wrong. He met the Station Master(SM), Vadodara, and made the same request. He did not pull rank or threaten that he would invoke the higher authorities. Instead, he made the Station Master feel very important and convinced him that he was participating in the "White Revolution" (or Operation Flood, as Dr V.Kurien, Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board, put it).

The next morning, despite pouring rain, the SM had marshalled the test special to our requirements and personally flagged it off. Thereafter, Arvind's gentle approach enabled a record number of trial runs to be conducted in a single day between Ranoli and Vasad Junction, on one of the busiest sections of Western Railway.

Arvind also encouraged me to adopt the Principles of Dr Edward Deming. My only regret is that I started to read the books by and on Deming very late in my career. The Gymkhana hostel mess, sports and recreational facilities were managed by the apprentices themselves. While volunteering for such work I often encountered situations where I despaired at the incompetence of the workers like the cooks, gardeners, waiters and sanitation staff.

My batch mate, Shyam Sunder told me after I had given a piece of my mind to one of the waiters, “Anand, today you are lording it over the staff because you had the advantage of a college education and affluent parents. You consider yourself more competent-which may be true- but had that waiter’s parents been affluent and he had graduated in engineering, the boot could have been on the other foot. You will make life easier for yourself and everyone around you if you realise this.”

I came across similar advice from the website of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON):

*Make allowances for incompetence!*

*Regardless of who you are or what you do, you are going to run into (and have to deal with) at least some amount of incompetence in your work life. Why not learn to take it in stride, and not let it bother you so much?*

*This acceptance of the way things really are will probably allow you to say (or think) something like, “Of course it’s going to be like this from time to time.” Rather than focusing on the most dramatic and extreme examples to validate your belief in rampant incompetence, see if you can recognize and appreciate the fact that most people do really well, most of the time. With a little practice and patience, you’ll cease being so upset over things you have very little control over.*

*By simply making allowances in your mind for something that is going to happen anyway, you’ll be able to dramatically improve the quality of your life. I know that dealing with incompetence can be frustrating – especially when the stakes are high. I can virtually guarantee you, however, that losing your cool isn’t going to help very much. The next time you run into incompetence, rather than turning the incompetence into front page news in your mind, see if you can turn it into just another minor story. If you do, you’ll be free from yet another of life’s sources of frustration.”*

This article is an extract from the book “Mentors, Tormentors and Dementors” by V Anand’62. This will be a continuous series where we will bring you more material from this book. - Editors, SAM



A visit to the Oriental Research Institute at Mysuru on 24-01-2020. It has an amazing collection of paper manuscripts, rare printed books as well as palm leaf inscriptions. The 15<sup>th</sup> century palm leaf manuscript of Kautilya’s “Arthashastra” was acquired in 1906. It is in the personal custody of the Director, Professor Shivarajappa PhD.

- As reported by V Anand’62

**In the picture:** Professor Shivarajappa, Ms Manjula Shyam, Professor Shyam Sunder.

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# Thirty Years Ago

## FOR ALL THOSE BORN BEFORE 1944

- R. Datta'44

We are survivors !!! Consider the changes we have witnessed. We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, xerox, contact lenses, frisbees and "The Pill".

We were before ball point pens, radar, credit cards, split atoms and laser beams; before washing machines, air conditioners, drip dry clothes - and before men walked on the moon.

We thought fast food was what Mahatma Gandhi ate after breaking his fast or what some of our friends ate after sundown during the month of Ramzan.

We were before Maggi noodles, test tube babies, computer horoscopes and data processing. We never heard of compact discs, FM radio, tape decks, electronic typewriters, personal computers, artificial hearts, word processors and guys wearing ear-rings. For us time-sharing meant togetherness - not computers; a chip meant a piece of wood; hardware was hardware; and software wasn't even a word !

In 1940, "Made in Japan" meant junk and the term "making out" referred to how you did in your exams. Instant tea (dip-dip-dip and it's ready to sip !) and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when you bought things for one or two annas. For one anna you could ride a tram-car in Calcutta or Bombay from one end of the city to the other, make a phone call or buy enough stamps to mail one letter or two postcards. You could buy a new Baby Austin for about Rs. 2000/-, but who could afford one; a pity, too, because petrol was one rupee two annas an Imperial gallon !

In our days cigarette smoking was not so fashionable, grass was mowed, coke was a cold drink and pot was something you cooked in.



Rock music was a Grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers on our annual Club Day. We were certainly not before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were certainly before the sex change; we made do with what we had. And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby !

No wonder we are confused and there is such a generation gap today.

BUT WE SURVIVED !! What better reason to celebrate ?

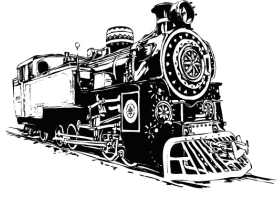
Technical Tour of '86 batch

"...But they sure hit the jackpot when they found themselves face to face with none other than the Ek, Do, Teen girl - Madhuri Dixit. Their joy knew no bounds when she agreed to pose for a photograph with them and ever since these persons have been living in the seventh heaven..."



This article and the photograph above, first featured in SAM Club Day, 1990. Feel free to browse the entire magazine by visiting the SAM Archive hosted on [jamalpurgymkhana.in](http://jamalpurgymkhana.in) - Eds





## Strange tales of construction of Railways in India

- P K Mishra'83

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**England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating - the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western Society in Asia" - Karl Marx**

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Construction of Railways in India was primarily to stamp superior technical prowess of west and to unleash the forces of industrial revolution, which west had mastered in annihilating the distance. Yet, there was romance and legend, too, amidst the dust and smoke raised during civilization mission. "Iron and steam has civilized the mankind, let's give India the benefit of discovery", became the catchphrase during the era.

The transformative power of Railway modernity was reported by the Overland Telegraph and Courier: "the superstition of the ages seemed to melt away as the gigantic reality of steam and mechanism passed before their [the Indians'] eyes."

Paper heralded the first run of the railway as "a triumph, to which, in comparison, all our (British) victories in the East seem tame and commonplace."

It was believed that the Railway system and its motive power of steam had the ability to completely reshape not only locomotion and landscape, not only time and space, but the very nature of humanity itself. Railways opened interior markets to manufactured goods, provided relief for famine victims, and served as a lesson in civilization and progress for the Indians who were lucky enough to build, ride, or even just see it.- Michael Freeman, Railways and the Victorian Imagination

John W. Mitchell, Assistant Traffic Superintendant of BNR, in his book "The Wheels of Ind" published by Thornton Butterworth Ltd London in 1934, citing primary sources, narrates two strange tales which were not in conformity with sharp ideological construct celebrating the European modernism steam-rolling timeless traditions and beliefs of the east.

*"By Nine miles from Bhojudih on the Grand Chord line we come to the little station of Talgaria. As the line approaches the platform it jerks sharply to the right to resume the straight again past the station. In the centre of the long stone platform is a large octagonal-shaped hole, carefully delineated and covered over with movable steel plates. On certain days the centre plates are removed, exposing a hole only a few inches deep. Into this tomb-like vault the pious folk drop offerings of flowers together with their simple prayers."*

Mitchell was quite intrigued at the unusual sight of a shrine on a station platform and asked the Engineer, who had surveyed & constructed these lines.

After the discovery of Jheriah and Bokaro coal fields, there was a mad rush amongst Rail companies to own collieries and grab the share of lucrative coal traffic as EIR had a virtual monopoly over the earlier discovered

Raneegunge coal fields turning it into the lowest cost Rail carrier.

*"But as soon as the East Indian Railway constructed a line into the centre of the field, Coal Companies were formed, sidings applied for faster than they could be put in, and a rush of traffic came which was so sudden that it was almost beyond the power of the railway to carry it. The consequence was that the railway, while making the most strenuous efforts to provide additional facilities, was blamed instead of thanked, and the public, thinking no doubt that competition would lead to further reductions in rates, clamoured for the admission to the field of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. The Government allowed this other line in, to compete for the traffic of the Jherriah collieries, created by the enterprise of the East Indian Railway alone. But after this was accomplished the Bengal-Nagpur Railway found that it could not compete for the important Calcutta traffic because of its longer lead to that port, and because of the fact that the Government would not allow it to quote rates for the traffic below the sanctioned minimum"- The History of the East Indian Railway by George Huddleston.*

In one of earliest recorded case of lobbying by Rail companies, BNR, in association of Bengal chamber of commerce and Bengal coal companies, was successful in getting toe hold in coal fields after intense campaign. Government of India permitted BNR to lay tracks in coal fields of Bengal.

The report of Bengal chamber of commerce 1899-1900 volume 1 page number 29 gives a summary of events.

*"On the 17th June, 1899, the Committee received an intimation from the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India for Railways, that he proposed holding a meeting*

*at Calcutta, on the 14th the question of the best means by which the Railway might be afforded access to the Jherriah Coalfield, having regard to the interests of the public, the mine-owners, and the two Railway Companies concerned.*

*Mr. D. F. Mackenzie, of Messrs. Macneill & Co and Mr. C. W. Gray, of the Bengal Coal Co. Ltd., were elected as representatives of the Chamber. The Indian Mining Association nominated Mr. A. K. Muir, of Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co., and Mr. R. P. Ashton, of Messrs. Kilburn & Co., as their representatives.*

*A meeting was held in the rooms of the Chamber on the 14th July, 1899, when, in addition to the above gentlemen, the following were also present :-Mr. G. V. Martyn, Consulting Engineer to Government of India for Railways, Mr. R. C. Dyson, Junior Consulting Engineer to the Government of India for Railways, Mr. J. Douglas, agent of the East Indian Railway, Mr. W. A. Dring, General Traffic Manager of the East Indian Railway, Mr. T. R. Wynne, Agent of the Bengal Nagpur Railway, and Mr. A. E. P. Graves, Traffic Manager of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway. "*

*"The Consulting Engineer, however, stated that it might be taken as settled, that access to the coalfields would be afforded to the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, and the Chamber would have to decide whether the proposals of the Agent of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, as supported by the Indian Mining Association, would be accepted or, if not, what arrangements could be recommended in regard to the interests of trade generally."*

The Engineer narrated the strange tale of detour and shrine, explaining to Mitchell that little room was available for deviation of line, as on the South the Damooda (Damodar) River defined the limit and on the North an area of soil useless from a permanent-way



point of view likewise hemmed in the proposed route. The few yards' width of remaining ground offered him Hobson's Choice.

The unique geography of the land dictated the alignment and the work commenced. Gang of coolies, guided by their supervisors and contractors, were frantically laying the rail lines. Everything was going as per schedule until the iron way had progressed as far as the site of the present station of Talgaria.

*"There a mysterious calamity' befell the toiling gangs. Coolies sickened from some uncanny, unknown malady whilst those who braved it a little longer bled from the nose and ears as they worked. Finally, even the remnants of the swarming navvies refused to lift a finger and the job stopped."*

Threats, bribes, promise, the universal tools, which had served so well in past in furthering imperialistic mission, were of no avail. Here was something they could not understand and the frightened folk shrank away under the fear of the unknown. The contractors admitted their helplessness with their labour and left the baffled, harassed Engineer at his wits' end.

One morning, a wandering holy man came to his camp. He sought the sahib and informed him he was desecrating holy ground with his iron way which was doomed to disaster. *"Sahib, you'll never put a line through that ground ahead. It is a suttee site and is sacred with the blood of many Hindu widows burnt there in the olden time."*

The Engineer knew of suttee, of course, that act of self-immolation practised voluntarily (and on occasions compulsorily) by Hindu women on the burning pyres of their dead husbands.

The Engineer had been too long in the country not to respect its many strange beliefs and oft-times inexplicable happenings, or to pour the sceptical contempt of Western ignorance upon the mystic knowledge of the East.

He asked the old man's advice, unlearned and unlettered as he was, and what is more, he took it. He diverted his proposed line from the straight in a detour round the hallowed spot, resuming his alignment farther on. He fixed the site of the suttee pyres and walled it round to protect its sacred earth from the tread of alien feet and built his platform round it.

As soon as he detailed to the old fellow his proposals, things seemed to freshen and brighten up. The coolies quickly recovered their normal health & spirits and returned to their task with vigour.

The line took a leap to the right, past the fatal spot, then a leap back to the straight again creating a detour and encompassing a shrine.

The strange tale of Railways does not end at the shrine. After providing detour in the track alignment; the next task was to bridge the eastern bank of the Damooda River which now cut clean across the way.

The mighty Damooda river and its wide sandy bed was a formidable obstacle, a great engineering challenge, but not more so than many others that Railway Engineers had conquered all over India.

But the unknown awaited him, however hard would the Engineer try; he could not get a foundation for his centre pier. Shifting sand and unexpected out-of-season spate of floods mocked his fruitless endeavours.



Perplexed, out of wits, he sent for the local historian and the old man came again. He easily solved the riddle and with his usual simplicity outlined the cure.

*"Sahib, many holy men lie buried on the banks of this water.*

*They resent your seeking to disturb their sleep."*

*I appreciate all you say," replied the builder of bridges, "but if I don't span this river, I won't get any sleep at all."*

*"Sahib, if you are determined, you must propitiate the dead."*

*"How?" "Try again. You will find rock. Build up your masonry to water level; place a layer of silver on the pile, and build on. The bridge will stand and the holy ones sleep."*

Strange as it may sound, he complied with the old man's extraordinary request. He found rock, built up to flood level, placed silver rupees edge to edge on the top of the masonry and carried on.

To-day the heavy freight trains rattle over the silver pier and their rumbling shakes not the pious ones who sleep in the sands below. After writing the article, I contacted DRM ADRA to get the site physically checked and photographed. The division had no idea about its background but the pictures confirmed the strange detour and place of worship. Picture given above.

And, therein lies a strange tale buried in silver coins, sadly forgotten and even banished from folklores, where the twains of East and west had met once.

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# Commuting

- Vivek Sahai Mathur'87



"Today I will break the millimeter barrier," Sykel vowed to himself. "Today is the day. After all, Moore's Law applies to what I'm doing just as much as to silicon!"

"And I will cover more than 10 feet each side. Today. I'm so close! It's just a matter of crossing an imaginary barrier in my head."

"And I will be more agile, work faster, evaluate options faster, change track faster, stop faster, all with even less warning than ever before."

"It's all about learning, the pleasure of gaining knowledge and newer experiences, and being better than anyone else - or even myself from the day before, for that matter. I feel great, I'm really pumped to do this!"

Sykel slowly mounted his bike, said a small prayer, and kick-started the machine. Two deep breaths and he was ready to take on the Bangalore traffic. Adjusting the rear view mirrors to point away from his eyes in case of "flashers" - those who flash their headlights once every

2 or 3 seconds even during the day - he found he could see his feet, and so his own gear changes, he was ready.

Stop and go, filter to the front at every red light. Ease past the people on the left and right. The de-facto rules of the road are simple:

If the front of my vehicle is ahead of yours from my viewpoint, I am ahead of you. Please wait for me, you have lost the battle for right of way.

If you honk at me, you have seen me, and will take care to stop in time and avoid an accident. A miss is as good as a mile, in my book.

Chugging slowly along in the rush hour traffic, 20 minutes by the clock to traverse Silk Board junction. It should be faster on the other side, it always is! Hmm, 150 seconds on the LED countdown. A desultory glance at the car on the right, smiling man, probably listening to something funny on the radio. No radios on the bikes, but nearly everyone has a cellphone stuck up inside a loose helmet, or a hands free set, listening to music or participating in a conference call. Working on the commute - how productive we are! Global citizens of the world!

Ten, nine, eight, seven, flashing now, six, five, four, three, two, one... Finally, the green light! The slow accordion expansion of the vehicles, almost as if we are collectively taking in the air that will soon erupt in a loose symphony of beeps, honks, and the shriek of forbidden air horns. Through the intersection, just in time - the light is amber! So far, so good! Traffic is faster on the other side, time to get busy! Don't have much time to lose!

The happy car driver is coming up from behind, honking repeatedly. As if that will help, Sykel thinks! What's the point in adding to the noise pollution? Doesn't he know de-facto rule number 2? If you honk, yours is the responsibility to avoid me!

Hmm, maybe this is the guy to shadow through Iblur.

Up and down the first Grade Separator, glide past the lake, then the second flyover. And now we're in business!!

Hearing the repeated honking from behind, Sykel realized he was perfectly placed - Happy driver is just behind him.

The merest tiny flick of the wrist, and Sykel swung right sharply! 0.5 milliseconds between thought and action! Great! The first target is achieved! It's the fastest change of direction he has ever managed! No brake lights, no indicators, not even an inclination of the head or pointing with the feet! In the aviation world they call it thrust vectoring, Sykel just calls it COOL!!

The squealing of brakes is the applause!! The honking of horns is the call for an encore! "Yes, Yes," thinks Sykel, "Of course I will do it again! You all need to see the maestro at work!"

One down, 2 more targets to be achieved! Sykel decided to continue further right, to the extreme edge of the fast lane. The bike must sway like a metronome while he remains vertically upright. If the tread wear is not uniform all around the tyre, the biker is stuck in the rut, not really riding the bike! What sort of existence is that? As if the bike was some means of transport!

Flipping through the lanes left to right and back within 5 seconds, passing the rest of the cars and buses with engine racing, Sykel could not help but think of them as sheep! "Follow the rules, follow the flock, live your mundane humdrum lives of lawful safe conformity. I would die of boredom and lack of thrill," he thought. "Let's see, I crossed 2 lanes, each 15 feet wide, and returned. that's 30 feet each way - FANTASTIC!!!"

Two down, just the last target remaining, the one he had promised himself today - Cracking the Millimeter Barrier. To get within a millimeter of another moving vehicle at speed and sustain that for a kilometer! Now

that needed concentration, focus, a oneness with the machine, and a higher plane of consciousness.

Where was the happy driver? Sykel looked around, and found him 3 cars behind, looking frustrated as he tried to negotiate past a slow moving three wheeler sticking to the lane divider. Sykel shook his head. He was running out of space - Sarjapur junction was coming up soon, and before that the road hump, the bus stop, and the mess of people from the service road cutting from extreme left to turn right at the traffic signal. "Come on buddy, I'm waiting for you!" Sykel willed the happy driver to lose his placidity and overtake from the left. When he did so, Sykel quickly took position on his left fender, and started closing in.

Two inches, one inch, one ... centi... meter, now half, three mm, two, ... back to 3 inches!

What happened? Sykel looked at his speedometer - they were both crawling along at 45 KMPH! What the... ? The road is clear ahead, man - everyone has left you far behind! Speed up! Speed Up!! SPEED UP!!!

He looked up and saw the Happy Driver no longer smiling, looking at him, mystified, slowing down the car... Sykel realized that this guy would not help him, and decided to find another car, FAST!

Snap decision, faster execution! He flipped right, in front of Mr. Happy. Oops! He crossed the Millimeter barrier and made contact instantaneously! The bike skidded, involuntarily he changed gears, and shot across the divider into oncoming traffic. Vaguely hearing the shrieks of emergency braking, he felt a warm orange glow, heard the sound of windmills and the rhythm of beating drums...

Peace engulfed him, and a sense of starting afresh.... By his side rode a glowing biker, clad in shining silver. "What happened?" Asked Sykel.

The reply filled his mind - "You went through the cylinders, Turbo and valvetrain of the bus that hit you..."



"How can that be?" Asked Sykel.

"You have reached the next level of existence, Sykel, where bikers who have taken their riding to the extremes find themselves in a place to start learning anew."

'Extreme riding?' thought Sykel, 'I was only trying to spice up my daily commute in the beginning, taking a few shortcuts now and again. I mean, it seems pretty silly to go to the traffic light in order to make a U turn, when all you need to do is turn wherever you need to, and make your way through the shrubs in the middle of the street. There are always little clay ramps to cross the divider!'

"Aah, yes, I have observed you doing the Head Poke maneuver! You never failed to scare oncoming traffic by suddenly appearing from the middle of a tree!"

"How did you know what I was thinking?" asked Sykel.

"My mobile phone is merged into my brain and right shoulder, of course", said the silver rider... turning his head to show the bulge. "and so is yours."

"I see, so you know about the different things I have tried on the road..."

"Of course! I know about the 'Pinch and Cross' when you creep your bike forward into the cross traffic till it has to stop; 'Jet Assist', when you raise yourself from the seat so your emissions enhance your acceleration; 'Dash it All', when you ride on the lane divider, but there were some things that were new to me, and not seen anywhere apart from Bangalore. Maybe you can teach me about those..."

"Such as?", inquired Sykel.

"Well, the way people stay in the extreme left lane, sometimes even the service road, when they have to take a right turn? What do you call that?"

Sykel said gloriously: "Left is my Right, and I will make it!"

"I see, and how about the trick of having 3 on the bike, each one looking in a different direction, and waving their hands to slow down the traffic following?"

"Well, that's Three's Company, or 3Co for short. The heads are on different sides so each can breathe easy!"

"How about the helmet on the arm? That does not make any sense at all!"

"You mean the 'Brains in my elbow', and its variation, 'Precious tank', when the cost of fuel makes you want to protect it instead of your own head..."

"But tell me," asked Sykel, "since I already know this stuff, what am I supposed to learn in this new existence?"

"Well, the cars and buses you see around you have learnt everything new in the previous world. They are all people who lost their lives in accidents caused by an extreme rider like yourself. They all have a chip on their shoulders, and... LOOKOUT!!!!"

Sykel jumped his bike out of the way of a car reversing at high speed, zipping through the traffic, changing lanes as he did so. The funny thing was that the driver was still facing ahead. How could he see where he was going? Was he doing a car MoonWalk? I really have a lot to learn here, he thought to himself.

"Tell me more!", he turned to the silver biker...

"Nothing much to tell," said the wise old silvery gent  
"There is one thing, though, only those who have

caused a fatality make it thus far...."

"Fatality? You mean me?"

"No. Apart from you. And in your case, it seems that may not happen. In any case, it's taking a long time... Perhaps you should return and see what's going on...  
"The silver biker vanished and the conversation was over.

Ouch! the pain! Slowly Sykel opened his eyes. He was lying in the roadside grass, having been flung there by the impact. He was surrounded. His bike, a mangled mess, was stuck in the front teeth of the bus, and the bus was being set ablaze by the furious mob that was beating the bus driver, who, in turn, was protesting him innocence.

Shaking his head slowly, Sykel got up, to gasps of horror and open-mouthed wonder. "Stop!" he said, "it was my fault!"

The mob fled to a safe distance as he approached the bus, peeled off his bike from the bus, and dragged it to the side of the road.

Well, to cut a short story shorter, the mob evaporated and went back to their daily drudgery - 'Commute, office, commute, home to prepare for the next day.'

The Happy Driver shrugged and went on his way. The biker did not seem to be hurt, the bus driver was safe. He'd often wondered about the way people drove, and had concluded that the only thing that made sense was that they were aiming for a higher plane of existence. The current episode had given him an inkling of the truth, he thought.

The police arrived, chasing the source of the 6 Kilometer jam. The fire burned itself out, leaving a scar on the side of the bus, right through the advertisements. Lucky the price of petrol is so high, no-

one could afford enough to get a good fire going.

The bus driver survived with minor bruises. He was talking to his mates later, in the depot: "It's a miracle!"

"That he came back to life?" asked his friend.

"No, that he conceded his fault!"

When the police were getting the names of the parties involved in the incident, Sykel replied "Jonathen Livigzdon Sykel".



# SCA'70

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## The Focal Batch of 2020

Then...

SCA 1970 batch: Group photo 24 February 1975



**L to R:** 1. Niraj Kumar, 2. RB Srivastava, 3. KD Mainrai, 4. AK Upadhyay, 5. Girish Kumar, 6. JP Singh, 7. Keshav Chandra, 8. Varun Bharthuar

## ...Now



Keshav Chandra'70



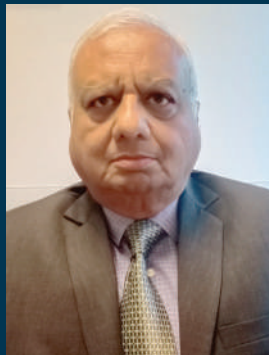
RB Srivastava'70



AK Upadhyay'70



JP Singh'70



Niraj Kumar'70



Girish Kumar'70



Varun Bharthuar'70




KD Mainrai'70



FROM GYMKHANA TO INSTITUTE – AND BACK –DAILY  
MY RENDEZVOUS NEAR NOTRE DAM WITH THE REDEEMING POEM OF LOVE... !


- RB Srivastava '70



*Towards the Institute from Gymkhana and back  
As I cycled down the twilight trail daily, near Notre Dam  
among the familiarity of seasonal bloom.  
Skin swathed in the dimpled air of new rain,  
The perspiring earth sedated, its rustic scent expended,  
Somewhere among the common sights  
I came upon Love, perchance,  
Cloaked in pristine white,  
Glistening in sundown charm,  
Reflecting the elements in its misty eyes,  
Humming to itself  
a mystic tune of love that wet my cheeks,  
wrapped me in its swirl;  
Love that burst with sublime splendour  
Love that consumes the human spirit,  
Beyond the flesh and its earthly demands,  
Love perpetual, all pervading,  
Unifying, inebriating, doused in mirth;  
Amidst the banal prose of life,  
I met with the redeeming poem of Love.*

*I Remember?  
I remember the days  
when my silence and her silence fell in love?  
And it seemed many a times  
The silences were lost in deep embrace.  
I remember the days  
when her quietness responded to my quietness?  
I think it rained quite often  
I can still catch the scent of the earth in my breath.  
And then... It was all lost when I left Gymkhana.*

*Now a memory  
In the humdrum of life – I lost the poem of love  
My life then onwards became a banal prose.  
A missing reality – but a warm memory  
Years have passed  
Today when I reflect on that love  
No face shows in my eyes,  
But deep in my heart I know,  
That facelessness is she .  
Towards the Notre Dam from Gymkhana  
As I cycled down the twilight trail...  
The Memory... !?*



# *My Experiences - Comparisons are odious?*

- Keshav Chandra '70

Sometime in January 2019 I joined my old group of IITians for the 50th anniversary of the 1969 batch re-union of IIT, Kanpur. We had great fun meeting each other and catching up with the old times. There were guys who had invariably done exceptionally well in some field or the other, whether it be academics, business, entrepreneurship, technology or engineering, working their way to the top companies in the world. The underlying theme amongst all the IITians was the undercurrent of bubbling confidence that they could handle any task, almost anything however humungous, anytime and nothing was ever impossible for them!

Here I was the odd-one-out who had left IITK in my 2nd Year of the 5 Year Integrated Course and joined Jamalpur. Mind you, 1970-71 was also an era when plane loads of IITians went to USA for further studies to Harvard, Princeton and the like and the big wide world was their horizon. Leaving IITK at that juncture had not been so very easy for me either. To honestly admit, I had to literally sneak myself out of the hostel one cool evening, because even my room mate was dead against my leaving a hallowed institution like IITK which was the happening place in the world for Engineering. It had professors like CNR Rao (who later on went on to be conferred Bharat Ratna) whose famous Chemistry classes were an unforgettable experience and working in the Campus in the computer labs like no place.

Yet I took the plunge. And when I met my good old IITK friends in 2019, all so well placed, my mind raced to aggregate my experiences versus theirs and checkout my success stories against theirs. It was a great exercise in comparison and absolutely rewarding. In retrospect, what I had gone through, maybe mundane by international score, was nonetheless, just as tough or challenging or more, than any of them had ever faced or gone through.

I had handled staff from as less as a thousand, as a young debutante Assistant Mechanical Engineer to staff of over several tens of thousands as a Divisional Railway Manager or General Manager and literally a few hundred thousand as a Board Member. The numbers are not so foreboding as the Staff Unions, which lead them. To be able to handle all that day in and day out called for honesty of purpose, constant vigil and hard work. Kindly be clear on one thing - the Railway Unions are famous for their articulateness, forcefulness and known for their benign arm-twisting tactics when things don't go their way. Handling them, taught me patience, sharpening my communication and negotiation skills, going the extra mile in doing my homework and above all developing an ice-cool frame of mind in harsh situations.

Optimum utilization of resources was something, which had to be done on a daily basis, whether it is Men or Machines or Materials. You soon learnt that excuses were not to be made, as they were almost never accepted. Infact when it came to outturn and meeting the daily commitments, the targets were sacrosanct and never to be trifled with. No idle boasting-the success story of an average SAM just go on and on.

On another plane, the four formative years taught us a lot. Also the options open for self-development were endless. I come from a College, viz, la Martiniere College, Lucknow (There are two more La Martiniers in the world-at Kolkata and Lyons, France) all of whom have a rich sporting tradition and surprisingly where studies are counted as almost an extra-curricular activity! Notwithstanding the richness of my background, I was able to play my heart-out any game I fancied, team or otherwise at Jamalpur. There was football, hockey and other games on the platter and ofcourse the individual games, like Squash, Badminton, Table Tennis and others. My interest in sports became a passion there and so did it for others in Billiards or Bridge. Infact in later years I could even pen a novel based on the life and times of a young apprentice trying to excel in sports.

Also in the end, I must say that all along I had this queer satisfaction (maybe perhaps a little old fashioned) that whatever I was doing was truly a service to the nation of the highest level, without looking for any fanfare or mention or critical acclaim in the press.

Thank you Jamalpur for whatever I am today.



## The story of a tie-up between IRIMEE and BIT for award of degree in Mechanical Engineering

- Niraj Kumar '70

Writing for SAM is not easy. Memories overwhelm you as you sit down with the laptop to key-in your thoughts making it difficult to decide what to write. Finally I decided to narrate the story of how SCAs started getting degree in Mechanical Engineering from Birla Institute of Technology (BIT) Ranchi. Hopefully this will also be remembered as a part of SCA's history long after the scheme is discontinued.

It was way back in the second half of nineties when Late Mr. LK Sinha, who had taken over as Member Mechanical recently, called me to his chamber in the Board's office and asked me as to why, despite serious efforts made by Late Mr. VK Vij '62 and many others, the IRIMEE could not tie up with any Engineering College of repute for award of a degree in Mechanical Engineering to SCAs. I was then working as Executive Director in-charge of Training & Manpower Planning. Not knowing the accurate answer, I fumbled only to have the next question fired at me. Why has ED (Training & MPP) failed? Not being personally responsible for this perceived failure, I decided against being defensive. My prompt reply was that this has happened perhaps because successive MMs have not been able to make up their mind whether it should be done or not. MM's reply was equally prompt – *"I have made up my mind that it should be done and now you go ahead and realize it."*

Back in my room I made enquiries to understand why actually the earlier efforts had not fructified and realized that approaching IITs for this purpose would be futile and decided to take up this matter with Director BITS Pilani, whom I had met a few times as he had been running some off-campus courses for Group 'B' officers of Mechanical Department leading to award of bachelors degrees to them. This led to a series of meetings between us and later also with Director IRIMEE.

I am particularly reminded of a train journey I undertook to Jamalpur along with the Dean of BITS Pilani. We boarded Vikramshila from Delhi but at Patna the next day the train was terminated due to some operational reasons. Passengers booked to destinations beyond Patna were told to take the following Bramhaputra Express after an hour or so. After some initial commotion among the passengers, we shifted to the platform on which Bramhaputra was to come but when the train arrived we realized that we can not board it as not only all doorways of passenger coaches were invisible – hiding behind a sea of humanity, even the locomotive and the Guard's compartment were no different. The advantage that I could have taken of being a railway man to board the locomotive or the Guard's compartment, therefore did not exist.

It was summer time and heat wave was sweeping the plains of north India. The Station Superintendent was kind enough to organize an AC retiring room for us to wait till we try our luck with the next train. As we were trying to cool ourselves in the air-conditioned retiring room, the power supply failed making it impossible to

be inside the room that had no ventilation – after all it was air-conditioned. The retiring room attendant told us that we should not expect the power supply to resume in anything less than 4 to 6 hours. It was better to stand outside in the corridor and breathe the hot air rather than not breathe at all inside the air-conditioned retiring room.

Soon we heard an announcement about some Danapur - Bhagalpur passenger train reaching Patna and decided to board its unreserved non-AC second class coach which had plenty of space – after all plenty of hot air through the window of the non-AC coach was better than the air-conditioned retiring room without power supply and without any ventilation. It did not take us long to realize that the train would take longer than expected to reach Jamalpur due to what was then a common scene in Bihar – having large number of unauthorized halts that never found place in the railway timetable. The train finally covered the 160 Kms. or so in a little over 13 hours. Though he did not say so, I was sure that the Dean of BITS Pilani would have made up his mind never to come back to Jamalpur again. That, however, was not the reason why the efforts to have a tie up with BITS Pilani did not finally materialize. Despite all efforts, including this and other similar journeys to Jamalpur, the whole thing got stuck on the name of the degree. BITS Pilani agreed to all that we needed or wanted but could not name our degree as Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering for a very strange reason. Their regulations required that the degree awarded through an off campus programme will not have the same name as the one awarded through an on-campus programme despite our adopting the

same syllabus as their on-campus programme and SCAs taking the same examinations as their on-campus students. They suggested the degree be named as B. Tech in Railway Mechanical Engineering or any other name that we wished, except for B. Tech in Mechanical Engineering. This was a big disappointment as it was unacceptable to us.

Then came the suggestion from Director BITS Pilani that we instead tie up with BIT Ranchi, as he had found out for us that they did not have this peculiar regulation about necessarily giving a different name of the degree awarded through an off-campus programme. Rest was simple. A few rounds of discussions with BIT Ranchi followed by processing and obtaining necessary approvals in the Board's office enabled Director IRIMEE entering into an MoU with BIT Ranchi for SCAs training to adopt the same syllabus as followed by them for their on-campus programme in Mechanical Engineering, SCAs taking the same examinations as their regular on-campus students and certain courses being taught at Jamalpur by BIT's faculty based at Jamalpur for agreed durations.

I hope that the two decades for which this arrangement lasted before discontinuation of the Special Class Apprenticeship scheme would have not only enabled our girls and boys obtaining a well recognised degree in Mechanical Engineering but would have also conveyed, through BIT Ranchi, to the academic world the caliber of SCAs as most top ranks in BIT's examinations were being bagged by SCAs.



# Romancing Jamalpur

- Anil K Upadhyay '70

The end of SCRA was a sad news for all of us who had the good fortune of savouring the romance of Jamalpur Gymkhana for four years as SCAs. It was not about the merit of the decision. This was a precious memory and an integral part of our being, of what we are as a person. And the people we grew up with in our formative years became friends forever.

Therefore, we knew that the Club Day 2019 would be the last one as the final batch of SCA would be going out of Gymkhana's portals, which would be end of a history. 1969 was going to be the focal batch for its Golden Jubilee. 1970 batch was a year short of that distinction, but since there was never going to be another one, some of us from the two batches made special efforts to be part of the last celebrations. We co-ordinated our travel plans to take the same flight to Patna, and from there go together in a convoy of cars to Jamalpur. This stopover at a famous roadside eatery at Bakhtiarpur, an hour away from Patna, was the beginning of our reliving the romance of fifty years ago.

(Standing at the back left to right: Sukhminder Singh '69, Sanjeev Handa '69, R Khosla '69, AK Upadhyay '70, Niraj Kumar '70, KD Mainrai '70, R Chandra '69)  
The warmth with which we were received at Jamalpur Gymkhana, in spite of all the constraints the lonely batch of 2014 must have felt in organising the Club Day, gave us goosebumps. It was back to the Gymkhana Days except that now we were with our Good Ladies (one short, that was mine who could not make it). The overwhelming hospitality did not let us

quibble about minor inconveniences like no running water in one room, or the geyser not working in another (these were fixed soon). On the D-Day, i.e. 14 February 2019, we were all set to start for IRIMEE.



And upon reaching there, my batch decided to have this picture in front of IRIMEE for memory sake.



(KD Mainrai, Anita Mainrai, AK Upadhyay, Niraj Kumar, Madhulika Kumar, 14 February 2019)



And some of us could not wait to go back to our classrooms.



The lunch and the cultural programme in the night could not hide the pathos behind the celebrations. Back when we were there in the early 1970s, the old world charm of a cute British-era Railway town was still there. The Railway Colony boasted of some beautiful churches covered with creepers where the Fathers and Nuns in their white robes would silently go about their chores, and which would reverberate on Sundays with congregational prayers; the Anglo-Indian officers who would lovingly tend to their gardens; the manicured

lawns; the well-maintained roads and plantations; the Jamalpur Association Stadium which would resound with the uproar of football fans during the season; the Central Institute with its rich library, variety of activities, including weekly English movies on Sundays where you had to rush early to grab a seat. The golf-course, the waterworks, the pahadi, and a Kali mandir on the top, all added to its quaint charm.

I took time out to drive around Jamalpur. Nothing of the old Jamalpur remains. The Jamalpur Workshop has declined and that has led to the decline of Jamalpur, the Queen of Railway Towns. The DCME, and subsequently SMW, headed the Workshop then and he was the monarch of Jamalpur, being also the ex-officio Chairman of the Jamalpur Municipality. This post, as well as that of the principal, IRIMEE has been upgraded several notches up, but they obviously cannot arrest the forces of history. The Municipality has been democratised; roads are in disrepair; the churches are beyond recognition and are dead places. Jamalpur has lost its soul. All good things come to an end.

But we have kept alive the Jamalpur in our hearts. As we were tossed up in the air with an exuberant "He is a jolly good fellow" by a whole bunch of seniors some fifty years ago, we were on top of the world. But as night fell in Gymkhana we realised it was really not a warm welcome, but the wild roar of a famished cannibal tribe drooling over some strangers straying on their island. Some fearsome ceremonies started, which went by fancy names like 'orientation', 'making us into officers' 'building fellow-feeling' and so on. We were prepared for these ceremonies in the manner of being taken to



**Left:** Sporty A K Upadhyay

**Right:** Testing Darwin's Theory

the sacrificial altar. With cropped hair, Khakis in the Workshop and drab white shirt in Gymkhana, being herded like lambs and shouted upon "Oye Firstie", it hardly sounded like being groomed for some grand objective. The 'ceremony' would continue relentlessly for about a month. A time came when every moment seemed like the end of the world, but suddenly there was an announcement that our 'orientation' was over and henceforth we were equal members of the Brotherhood. We were happy to be alive and in one piece, but the four years after that have been the most fascinating and enjoyable periods of our life.

Where else can you play billiards and snooker, golf, tennis, table tennis, hockey, football, badminton, squash, bridge, do swimming, learn photography and develop prints in dark room (those were the days), and have dedicated bearers for all your troubles? Here are some memories of our four years of training.

The above two pictures were developed by me in the Gymkhana Dark Room.

NCC training was compulsory those days which included mandatory participation in the NCC Camp for three weeks. But you can be sure SCAs will carry Gymkhana wherever they go. Thus it was at the NCC Camp at Deoghar, or Baidyanath Dham, which is the seat of one of the twelve Jyotirlings. After seeking the blessings of Lord Shiva we went on our exploration trip, especially the Marwari Dhaba type eateries, which offered, 'eat as much as you can for a fixed price'. We did find a couple of such restaurants, but unfortunately our joy of eating to our hearts' content lasted only a few days. Our reputation had spread and as soon as we were sighted, they would down their shutters and put up 'Closed' sign.



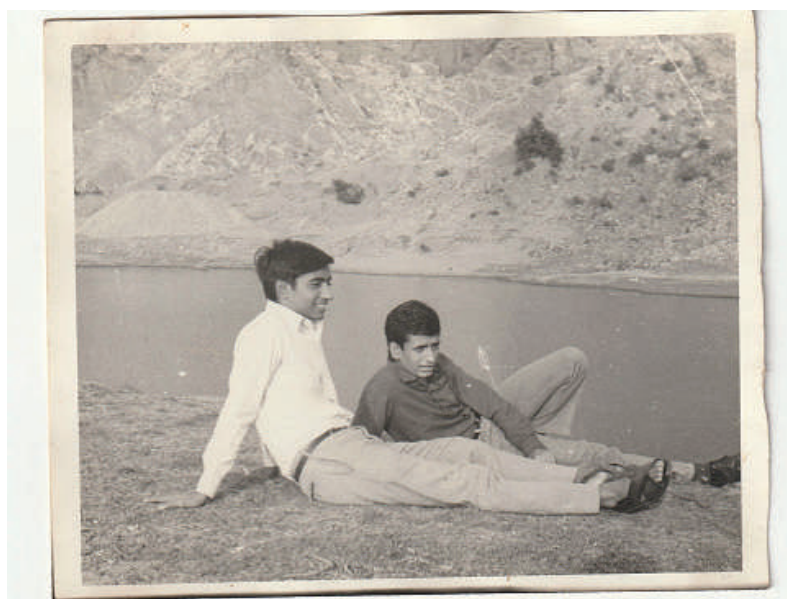


**Rigours of NCC Camp Deoghar**

The fun was interrupted by distractions like exams from time to time, and divine help was needed to overcome these hurdles. This was invoked through a pious collective Aarti the night before the exams in the quadrangle at the top of our voice - Om jai Jagdish Hare, Swami Jai Jagdish Hare, Bhakta janon ke sankat kshan mein door karein. This pious ritual was, however,

immediately followed by a most impious ritual of hurling obscenities at the Professor-in-charge (Training) in whose hands our fate lay. This post was always held by an ex-Jamalpurean, therefore, we understood when he said with a smile, Mujhe sab pata hai, Aap log mere peechhe mere baare mein kya kahte hain, because he must have also observed these long Gymkhana

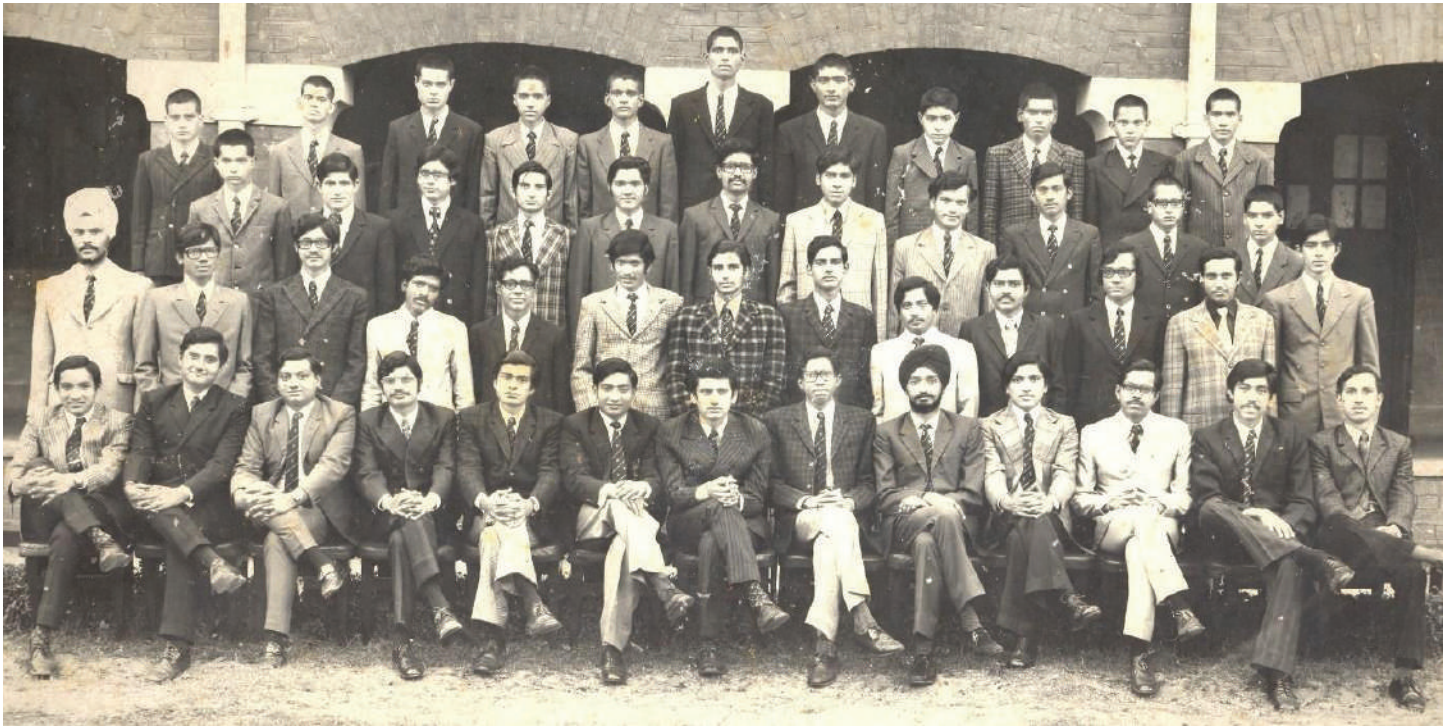




**Dostana continues**

**Top:** AK Upadhyay & Girish Kumar. Bridge partners till today

**Bottom:** AK Upadhyay, Girish Kumar and Niraj Kumar



(SCA 1970 on their farewell in the front row with some others: Niraj Kumar, RB Srivastava, KD Mainrai, AK Upadhyay, Girish Kumar, JP Singh, Keshav Chandra. Varun Bharthuar)

traditions in his time. The Lord Almighty must have been quite indulgent to overlook the sacrilege committed by us, because we managed to pass our exams without much difficulty.

An important part of our training was Technical Tours to different places of tourist interest - in a saloon, with our own bearer to cook hot food as per the menu curated by us. We are still figuring out what was technical about these tours. But yes, at the end of four years of fun we were notified as Class I officers of the Railways. This was solemnised in the Farewell Photograph of our batch below (24 February 1975).

My batch has been lucky to keep in touch over all these years. Though two of us joined the IAS - myself immediately after passing out of Jamalpur, and JP Singh two years later - our paths have been crossing

professionally as well as personally. Post retirement six of us have settled in the NCR, and we have been meeting socially with our families regularly. Here are some pictures of our get-together in recent years.



Left to Right: Niraj Kumar, Madhulika Kumar, Renu Upadhyay, AK Upadhyay

UPSC have not been taking SCRA exams for the last few years. Perhaps it is the end of the scheme forever. Though the Railways have found different uses for Gymkhana as well as the IRIMEE, Jamalpur of Yore can never come back. But the old world Jamalpur and Gymkhana would remain in the hearts of the SCAs till the last one survives on this planet.





In the picture above you can see all the eight of the batch and it should not be difficult to match us with our original in the Farewell Photograph.

## लम्हों

लम्हों में क्यूं जी रहा है इंसान  
 किष्टों में क्यूं जी रहा है इंसान  
 कर्जों में क्यूं जी रहा है इंसान  
 आजादी का सौदा कर क्यूं जी रहा है इंसान

चाह है सबकुछ पाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है अपने सपनों में खो जाने की  
 चाह है दूसरों की उम्मीदों पर खरे उतर जाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है अपने रिश्तों को निभाने की  
 चाह है लोक प्रिय हो जाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है लोगो को गले लगाने की  
 चाह है पैसे वाले हो जाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है अपने काम की ईमानदारी से निभाने की  
 चाह है मशहूर हो जाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है घंटो रियाज निभाने की  
 चाह है या तृष्णा है भोग करते जाने की  
 हिम्मत नहीं है लम्हे को सही मायने में जी जाने की

क्यूं मुस्कुराने के तलाष में,  
 हम गुम हो गए  
 क्यूं जो है अपने पास,  
 हम उससे निराष हो गए  
 क्यूं और पाने की हवस में,  
 हम बेईमान हो गए  
 क्यूं अपनी खुषी के लिए,  
 हम चीजो के मोहताज हो गए  
 क्यूं दूसरों से तुलना कर,  
 हम अपनी जिन्दगी से नाराज हो गए  
 क्यूं सफल होने की होड़ में,  
 हम बेईमान हो गए  
 क्यूं पैसे के लालच में,  
 हम इंसान से हैवान हो गए।

- Nitesh Kumar Gupta'2k11



# OF FLYING CARS, SNARKS, HOPIS, AND TIME

- Rahul Saxena'82

I read in the news today that a flying car is being tested and there's a good chance we'll see it in production. It's going to be an engineering marvel.

That seemed a bit off. Chris had been discussing our software technology vision. It takes a bit of time for awesome insight to penetrate my fuzzy brain. The insinuation of infeasibility seeped in and started gumming up the epicyclic gears.

Isn't it interesting, he went on, that you'll always find a flying car on a magazine cover in a newsstand? Even as the old gears were gumming up, they did a last memory scan and dredged up affirmation. What good, I say, is confirmation bias if you can't invoke it on command. The gears gave up, the ears should have kicked in. Yeah right, as if the heart would defer to those outposts. All of us love fantasies, especially engineers, the profession that plays on the edge between done and not yet. We range out into the feasible, prepared with ropes and tackles to look for the edges of the possible. In teams, we call out to others: feasible? Feasible? Then lines are drawn on documents: virtual and mutable but nonetheless binding as vows. Our project is both practical and lucrative, we're just taking one step away from the pedestrian and into the irresistible. And off we go on the quest ... for, could it be, a flying car? That model of engineering fantasy, sold to excitable backers, beloved of magazine buyers.

Lewis Carrol, of course, knew of the quest. I think that "The Hunting of the Snark" should be required reading. The cast of characters swam into focus, then the project journey, and finally the Boojum.

*"For, although common Snarks do no manner of harm,  
Yet, I feel it my duty to say,  
Some are Boojums-" The Bellman broke off in alarm,  
For the Baker had fainted away.*

Okay, ears, over to you. Receptive at last. Listening to the demolition of the software technology vision and storing away the tale of the flying car. Why couldn't Lewis Carrol just say it straight out? I had found a guru, and I bowed to him. Flying cars could be a general antidote for people who believe in rational investors, practical engineers, and target markets. If only the delusional sought out cures. Was Chris a Mahatma, slicing through delusion, waking people to the light? Rambo, blowing up the delusions of routine life? Both? Flying car (Boojum) avoidance accomplished, Chris joined in the snark hunt. Regular snark hunts are fun. The quest gives you a finer appreciation of the mysteries of time. As people explicate on their progress, you get to remember that the best minds of the human race haven't fully understood the arrow of time. What I hadn't encountered, though, was the debate about how the Hopi, a Native American tribe, think of time. Back in the 1950s, Chris told me, people thought that the Hopi had no concept of time as flowing smoothly into the past. While it was derided to be a product of inept linguistic analysis, Chris showed me the Hopi concept of time was widespread. It may even be the dominant concept that we scrupulously avoid acknowledging, as we love our neat partitioning of past present and future, all nicely organized in an arrow of time.

If linguists want to analyze how people really think about how time flows, they need to look at project status reports. Project time has one big flag: meter on or off. When the meter is on, the project is generally "on track" and will certainly yield great returns. When the meter is off, the project is complete, and it was a great success. At any point of time, therefore, an ongoing

project is either “on track” or about to be in that magical state.

As an ex-railway guy, I wondered about this fetish for tracks. Being derailed was bad, I got that, but being on a track was no guarantee of happy outcomes. It turns out that these little distinctions are the hobgoblins of a small mind. On track is good, derailed is bad, off-road is adventure. The little hobgoblin, it turns out, was the past tense demon that keeps trying to determine what’s done and over with.

This is a long-standing infestation. I used to be pretty confused about exhortations to “live in the present”. As far as I could tell, by the time I determined what’s going on it had slipped into the past. As I fumbled my way through life, the present always eluded me. I could, at best, point to my ability to savor the taste of galawati kebab.

It’s not like I dwell in the past, except to ask other people what’s done. For instance, I make lists of things to do. Those lists belong to the past, of course, so I scrupulously avoid looking at them later. When pressed, I make another list. I wish people understood and appreciated (but never emulated) my disciplined focus on the future. I try to spend all my time in the future, except when cruelly brought back to the present by people anchored in my past ... and that plays like a bloody horror movie. I guess that’s also fun in its way.

It’s not that I’ve not been taught about this time stuff. Tenses are useful. Colleagues have patiently explained that they are working on a task and that it is on track. The present continuous tense stretches and wraps entire sets of tasks. Bars on Gantt charts overlap sensuously, seemingly in voluptuous abandon. If only I could give up on the past, then I would know that many

things are being done and that it’s all good: like God, or a surveillance video control room operator. To ask what is done is to live in the past, a criminal puncture in the bubble of the present.

Chris, becoming a Yogi this time, attempted rescue. Like Musashi’s samurai, his mind actually works in the present. While this was pleasantly congruent in the domain of savoring single malts, which the Yogi also taught, the rest of the teaching eluded me. It’s riveting to see the Master at work, like watching Keanu Reeves in The Matrix or John Wick. The problem is to even think of emulating him. Where, O Master, did you learn such focus? His response still boggles my mind. As a rock climber in his youth, he had to focus to survive. And he enjoyed the stress, extending sessions for hours and then days. Ah, I had a misspent youth, peering into the innards of locomotives, learning about operations, and staring out of trains while Chris climbed and focused on the now to stay alive.

So there we were, me living in the future and past while Chris was in the present. Luckily, Chris took on the role of the Bellman:

*“Just the place for a Snark!” the Bellman cried,  
As he landed his crew with care;  
Supporting each man on the top of the tide  
By a finger entwined in his hair.*

My pate is growing bald now and the tide threatens – how will the Bellman do his job if I have no hair? Chris is far away, and his flying cars start to blend with pigs on the wing. Hopi-ness comes to the rescue, time will take care of itself!

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# Morning walks of Alipurduar

- Sanjeev Kishore'81  
& Vandana Srivastava

Nestled in the foothills of Jayanti hills is a place that dreams are made of. It is the thin strip of land that geographically lies between Bhutan and Bangladesh and is supposed to be one of the "duars" or door-ways to the mountain kingdom of Bhutan. India is just a little over 50 Kms wide here. A land with blue sky, clouds kissed mountains, lush green forests, tea gardens, rivers and streams that emerge out of the mountains, taking us back to our childhood memories of a scenery.



View from the Dima Bridge, Alipurduar

This is Alipurduar, a small town in North Bengal. The first thing that you notice on your first morning here is the smell of fresh air. The Earth here is still as God made it, except the rail line which was built just after independence in the Assam Rail Link Project.

A mere walk of ten minutes in any direction could take you into one of the many tea gardens, that spread out like a thick carpet of green. The thick, inviting and beautifully manicured green tea bushes stretch up to the horizon. Not surprisingly, Vandana, my wife,

invariably described the urge to lie down on the top of the trimmed tea bushes each time we passed them by, every morning leaving us refreshed and far more cognizant than before.



The inviting Tea Garden of Alipurduar

The DRM's house is at the edge of a dense forest of the Buxa Tiger Reserve. It remains perhaps the only DRM's house that has been invaded by a pachyderm. One can walk in any direction from the DRM's house and encounter Himalayan streams flowing through the green and brown terrain, with each stream being only less than ten minutes away from the next one. The best ones are of course the Dodoi, Garam and Nonai rivers. There are plenty of bridge designs used to span the Duar rivers but of course the best bridges are made of bamboos. The bravery and balance of humans are always being tested when crossing a single bamboo bridge, with the prospect of buses travelling across these streams not even being considered.



A Bridge of a different kind!



The Village "Pagdandi"

The beautiful officer's colony has neat and clean, spacious and privileged bungalows, dreams of millions of people in India - to be able to live in Railway Officer's colony! As you move away from the punctuality driven culture of the railway colony the calmness of the village life descends on you.

On a Sunday morning, the walks can be really long. A mere two hundred meters walk takes you to a village trail through small pucca and kutcha houses with thatched roofs and ponds, lined with beautiful betel nut trees standing straight and tall, swaying gently in

the breeze. Ducks, puppies, hens, and, fishes in the "Tal", beckon you to relax and enjoy the morning. As you walk along the unpaved roads or "Pagdandies" of the Bairagudigram, you will be riveted by the mesmerising sound of harmonium and young girls singing, emanating from the tiny huts. Afterall, Bengal is the land of music! Beyond the railway colony, tea gardens and the village across the trail, there is this vast land, the river bed of Garam river that swells every monsoon and gets flooded. For miles there is nothing, just about nothing, but a small rivulet with a bamboo bridge on it! On days when the sun peeks clearly through the silver clouds, one can even see the Kanchenjunga standing proudly only some 200 kilometers away.

The roads are more than often filled with scampering goats. It is fun to observe the behaviour of animals at Alipurduar; dogs and goats sleep on the roads, and refuse to give way to incoming vehicles. It appears as though they have taken the messages of "Animals have the right of way" in the signboards of the neighbouring forest roads in true spirit!! On morning walks it is amusing to watch school buses trying to navigate desperately trying to avoid goats that sit nonchalantly in the middle of the road. Finally, one can hardly forget the elephants near the road to Jayanti. When asked, the Jitpur gateman will always describe his various encounters with the elephants with passion and in vivid details.

There is only one message at the end of it all and that is unequivocally "just, leave us alone" and "simply, let us be".

# Confessions of a Book Hoarder

- Aastha Sneha 2k9

I pride myself at being a prudent shopper. No, those fancy handbags and the glittery shoes are not for me, you Giant Consumer-baiting Corporation. I can enter a mall, an airport or the famous shopping districts of the country and come out not a penny poorer; yes, I am that strong! Or a miser of the highest degree, as my husband likes to put it.

Yet. There has to be a yet, isn't it?

Yet, something inside me gives away when i walk past a bookstore. It need not be a full fledged affair; a street vendor with a pile of second hand/ pirated books spread out on a rag on the footpath gives me the same feels. Instinctively, I slow down. My neck turns around, craning to take a look for as long as I can. I have mastered the art of zoning out of any conversation that I might be having at the moment.

Ohh, the beauty of the volumes arranged one on top of the other, with their spines luring me to stop by and take a look. Ohh those pristine covers, not a wrinkle, not a fold! The perfect alignment, the untouched pages bound into the perfect rectangle the machine pressed them into. Don't get me started on the hardbacks.

They are the royalty, distinct from the paperback masses, glorious in their near-unaffordability. Needless to add, the general smell of the area gives me one of the best non-chemically-induced highs.

It helps if I am in a hurry, or with someone else. Rationality prevails and I move on with a sunken heart. But if i happen to be by myself, the voices in my head gear up for the big debate. Should I stop by for a moment and take a look at the collection? I would only look, nothing else, pinky promise. Maybe sniff at some of them if nobody is looking. Ah! They have got the next one by Mr Famous Author? Hmm.It won't hurt to see what the back cover says. Interesting. Ohh look, the book #1293839 of the endless series is out. I would have major FOMO if i don't get to know what happens next. Gaaah! The price is too high, I should wait till the hoopla has died down and the price comes down, like an in-season cauliflower. Humm. Should take a look at the cookery section. After all, a newbie cook needs her recipe books to line the shelves in the kitchen. Errm, I barely know my saute from my blanch. There is a major discount in the kids section. I already have a kid, so what if he is less than 6 months old. He will grow up and need his share of colouring books (well, this one had started right when the bun was still in the oven!). Okay, one book from the classics-on-sale. That is it. It is a classic, and it is on sale. Darn those attractive small reads near the billing counter; they make me an offer I cannot refuse. The no-purchases deal changes into one-book-please, which morphs into okay-two-more, until the final negotiation ends at I-cannot-carry-more-than-these-six. You get the drift, right?

Pretty soon, I waddle out of the store balancing the weight of the multiple tomes in my hands. As i am

stepping out, i feel triumphant at the real bargain i got the loot for. The next moment, the Scrooge in me who had been sulking in a corner speaks up. "You have spent Rs N, not just saved Rs n". Uncle Scrooge is right as always. "Hakuna matata! You are going to read these wonderful pieces of work and feel your brain expanding!", goes the excited, hopeful Pumba. "Are you? Going to read them are you? Or onto the shelf would they land?". Do i hate the bitterly rational and unnervingly correct Yoda inside my head!

I return home and get down to my second-favourite activity - arranging the books in the cupboard. There is an entire algorithm in place for book arrangement, it is not a task cut out for mere mortals. Largely based on its genre, its date of purchase, and my inclination to read it, each book is designated to a particular shelf. There are further subdivisions. Based on how good a book would look to a visitor, and what impression it might create of me, a more 'intellectual' looking book acquires the glass shelves. The racy thrillers, the soppy romances, the frowned upon, yet bestselling 'sins' go into the deepest parts of the bottom-most layers. Every new purchase leads to a re-evaluation of the status of the existing books. I wonder if the books look at new arrivals with trepidation and apprehension about the possible change in their position in the hierarchy!

And there they rest. Till the end of time.

Yes, i hardly ever pick up the books to actually read them. I used to be a voracious reader, prolific in my count. I used to finish the borrowed ones even faster, knowing that I did not have forever to finish the library books. Then came my own disposable income. The graph of purchases started showing an upward trend,

and so did the curve of unfinished volumes. The advent of smartphones and cheap internet was the final nail in the coffin. I always had one more funny cat video to watch. Today, this hoarding hobby of mine is aided and abetted by a husband who i beguile into buying books for me, by telling him tales of yore when I used to actually read. The poor chap has been happily supplying stuffings for his wife's book cabinets.

Did I mention I am a big non-believer of lending books? I am proud to mention that a similar thought was shared by Charles Lamb when he had vented, "I mean your borrowers of books - those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes." One has to transcend many levels and be in my innermost circle to be able to borrow books from me. To everyone else, I give the most elaborate excuse. I think many around me have come to realise my stinginess. For those who still have not, or pretend not to, my choicest curses and abuses are reserved (by the voices inside the head, of course!)

So yeah, here I am, standing in front of my beautiful, artsy cabinet, admiring my handiwork, every shelf labelled, each book marked with the date and place of purchase. It's easy to shut up Mr Bookworm in me; Mr OCD has had a field day. I notice I am running out of space in my cupboards. I think I should get more storage space, I tell myself, fishing out my phone to check out cabinets online (which I probably won't even buy!)



# What's the Word?

- B C Bhattacharya'75

Murder most foul! No, not the anguished cry  
of the ghost of Hamlet's father, but of the Bard  
himself, had he been around today and seen the  
merciless killing of the English language in schools,  
government offices, TV studios and  
social media everyday.

Sometimes however,  
from such  
gruesome acts  
of linguicide  
emerge  
little  
mercies  
of comic  
relief  
involving  
wrong  
choice of  
words, mixed  
metaphors,  
Spoonerisms and  
so on, some hilarious such

instances in my own experience being narrated  
below. To begin with, my own daughter, during  
that phase of her late teens when mothers start  
delegating to their daughters the task of keeping a  
stern check on their fathers' wayward habits, used to  
be a reincarnation of Mrs. Malaprop. Her one such  
gem I still remember was to chide me at a wedding  
feast for eating like a "dying" pig. To move on to the  
years I spent on the Railways, I was privileged to  
meet many Bengali employees who had developed  
their own brand of literary English, giving hitherto  
unknown meaning of common phrases and rules  
of grammar and composition. They were in high

demand with those wanting to reply to a chargesheet  
or to make a representation. I was once described by  
one such self-styled literateur, in a framed farewell  
memento, as being at the same time a "simpleton"  
and an "artful" person. In my acceptance speech,  
I ruefully remarked that if they had only consulted  
my wife, she could have suggested some more  
appropriate words to describe the various flaws in  
my personality. Of course, the best ones to make the  
drab work of dealing with official documents a bit  
more cheerful were those involving wrong spelling  
of words, whether out of ignorance or carelessness.  
When I was Sr.DME (D) at Bondamunda, one day  
my morning position stated that the "Demoralising  
Plant" was malfunctioning. After reaching office, I  
called the foreman over to my room, hopefully asking  
him about the source of his information, having been  
spoken to at length by my own "Demoralizing Plant" -  
the DRM, only the previous evening, about why I did  
not deserve to be a khalasi. My AME, who was sitting  
with me and to whom I had dutifully passed on the  
uncomplimentary epithets the DRM had used for me,  
muttered under his breath - loud enough for me to  
hear - that probably the report referred to my own  
visit to the doctor the previous day. I remember once  
having received a non-stock requisition from my  
Loco Foreman for stainless steel "bowels". I returned  
it to him with remarks on the margin that it was very  
clever on his part to come up with the idea of such  
a contraption - to make it easier for the drivers to  
digest the kind of food he was dishing out in the  
running room. I also remember having once received  
a note from the Personnel Branch suggesting that  
"menstruation" should be included in the syllabus  
for some exam. Then there was this chap who

proposed a “frock lift” truck in the M&P programme, presumably because he got bored with looking only at the locomotive bogies, and wanted to inspect some more exciting undergear. At another time, a stenographer of mine, the slowness of whose fingers on the typewriter were only matched by just a handful of words that he knew to spell correctly, left me red-faced when I sent a letter without my usual precaution to check every word to “Cumming” Ltd, leading to an indignant phone call from the company representative about such vulgarisation of their company name. The insinuation was made worse by the fact that the letter was about lubricating oil dripping from the exhaust pipe of an engine supplied by them. But my last nostalgic memory is about the time I was CMPE on Eastern Railway. I was responsible for the maintenance of in-motion weighbridges. That was the time Sri Lalu Yadav was firing on all cylinders about this wonder remedy for all our commercial woes. Earlier, I used to be summoned to the GM’s morning operating conference only when something used to go beyond the limits of the usual mess. But, with the discussion on the weighbridges having jumped to the top of the agenda, my place in the pecking order also had risen. I would triumphantly read out the condition of each machine with every other PHOD/HOD listening with bated breath to see who was the next chap I was going to name for not doing his bit. On that particular morning, having finished giving the report on all the other machines, I reached the last one in the list, the one at Sahibganj. I made a dramatic pause and, then told the GM: “Sir, this one at Sahibganj.... I think I will have to go myself to investigate.” “Why?”, asked the old man,

an unlikely Sardar with a languorous appearance, mild disposition and a little slow on the uptake. “Well, Sir, the report says: monitor showing ‘erotic’ display!” Amid the loud chuckles and the GM looking completely at sea, the COM, CSTE and CME were quick to propose that such a serious issue should not be left to be dealt by the CMPE and required a joint inspection by a team of PHODs.



# VIGNETTES FROM THE PAST

- Rahul Tyagi'89

*For members of the 89 batch, it all happened exactly 30 years ago – the decision, the transition, and the initiation. The memories of those early days are perhaps the most enduring, like snatches of a song, forever stuck in your head. It is a shared experience like no other. And while the events are specific to the 89 batch, the themes and emotions are universal to the entire SAM community.*

## Feb 1990

Jain Uncle reached for his third samosa, as Jain Auntie looked on with silent admonishment. He smeared his samosa generously with tamarind chutney and settled back into the sofa, the snack plate tucked under his chin to prevent the crumbs from falling on his rather colossal belly. My father poured some more tea into the now nearly empty cups. He almost revered Jain Saheb. A few years his senior, Jain Uncle was a professor of Mathematics and had been my father's mentor in the sixties. He was instrumental in motivating my father to prepare for and join the University of Roorkee.

Now, a generation later, he was about to be consulted on another important decision. My father had conferred with many others – friends, colleagues and relatives. Most had said yes, but he was still on the fence.

"Jain Saheb, Rahul का SCRA में हो गया है", said my father with all the nonchalance he could muster.

"SCRA...वो जमालपुर वाला"? Jain uncle slurped some more tea as he sought confirmation.

"जी", said my father, his pride now palpable.

"Hmm...अभी तो बेटा तुम IT-BHU में हो न", said Jain Uncle amid burps, indicating that he had had his fill of samosas and tea for the evening.

"जी Uncle", I said sheepishly. Jain Uncle didn't look impressed. What would he say next?

"Hmm", he said again rather thoughtfully and fell silent for a few seconds. Then he exploded! "बहुत बढ़िया बेटा, बहुत बढ़िया...very good! आँख मूँद के join कर लो...बिल्कुल मत सोचो". Rising from his seat, he gave me an affectionate hug and ruffled my hair with his fingers, transferring significant amounts of chutney and samosa crumbs to my scalp in the process.

I mumbled a barely audible "Thank you Uncle" and proceeded to clear the table. Inside, I was bursting with joy. Yesss!! I was going to Jamalpur!!!

## March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1990

I gingerly removed the carefully folded, thin green sheet of paper from my shirt pocket and read it again, for the umpteenth time that day – "Shri Rahul Tyagi only", it said on the first line.



Scrawled across the second line were the words, “Dehradun to Jamalpur, via MGS”. It looked nothing like the Military warrant or the D-Form that my father had used for train travel all our lives. But it was way more powerful! There had been no need to exchange it for a ticket. Computerized reservation hadn’t come to Dehradun yet. The clerk had simply written my name in a register for Dehradun-Howrah express and I had confirmed First Class reservation up to Mughalsarai. My coach and berth number were inked on the pass itself. For my onward journey from MGS to JMP a telegram had been sent to reserve a berth in Tinsukia mail ex MGS. It felt so super-cool!

That evening I boarded the train for Jamalpur. I was seen off at the station by my father and Jain Uncle. They were engrossed in a conversation. “बेटा ध्यान रखना”, are the only words I remember hearing at the platform, when I bent down to touch their feet.

In my compartment, another young man was in the process of settling down. It was Anil Priya Gautam! I remember addressing him as Anil throughout the journey. I do not remember anyone ever call him Anil again. It has always been APG.

### March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 1990

As Tinsukia mail rumbled through the ripened crop fields of Bihar, we discovered and introduced each other – Sarvagya Bairva, Amit Khanna and R. Pradeep. The names were familiar. I had read the list of “successful candidates” announced by the UPSC in Employment News dozens of times. Madhukar Bhagat boarded from Patna. I have no clear memory of it, but it is logical that he should have. Someone was traveling by 2<sup>nd</sup> AC. The first-class pass was valid in 2<sup>nd</sup> AC too! Unbelievable!

We were all going to arrive a day too early. The appointment letter clearly said to report on March 12<sup>th</sup>, “not a day sooner, not a day later”. We wondered where we would put up for the night. But I wasn’t worried. There was reassurance in numbers, plus there were a couple of fathers too. I was sure they would know what to do.

Abhijit Sengupta, 86 was at Jamalpur station to receive the “firsttees”. Everyone bundled into a trekker. Amit Khanna retrieved his bike from the brake van and rode closely behind, so he wouldn’t lose his way. The trekker had a fantastic suspension system. It pitched, rolled and yawed dramatically across the endless string of potholes, punctuated by bits of tarmac. But you didn’t feel rattled. Around Jubilee well we went, then over the bridge; past some shops on the left, a school, and a bank. No one said anything. The golf course came into view, then the hills. One final lurch to the left and we were on Gymkhana Road!

Our batch senior, Partha Pratim Roy, had arrived that morning, by HWH-JMP “Super”. The seven of us that arrived in the afternoon were lined up in the gymnasium to “work out” our batch “seniorities”. Later that evening we did a lounge session for the parents. It included a skit (a mime actually) – “The Park Bench”. It only drew some polite laughter. *Over the years we got*



*much better. The pièce de résistance of 89 batch's skit production and performance prowess came a few years later, during the lounge session organized for our Director, Mr. S.S. Godbole's ('63) farewell. A pre-Internet, pre-social media lexicon, devoid of descriptors such as 'ROFL', had no means to describe the scenes of hilarity witnessed in the Gymkhana lounge that evening!*

On our first night in Gymkhana, some of us slept in room number 57 or 58 in the lower Eastern lobby. The next morning, we discovered that the crocodile agarbatti coil had burned an identically shaped pattern on Amit Khanna's suitcase. The suitcase was ruined, but the pattern was quite remarkable!

Most of the rest of the batch arrived the next day, on March 12<sup>th</sup>. They did their "seniority exercise" on the Western terrace. All the names were familiar. I checked them off against the UPSC list I had in my mind. Sumit Narula was among them! I knew him from Dehradun. He winked at me, but I kept a straight face. Winking back wasn't an option.

During the first couple of days Gymkhana was nowhere near its full strength. Many folks were still out for the Holi vacation. But there were enough seniors to "care" for us and make us feel "at home".

### March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1990 onwards...

Clad in a spotless white, impeccably starched Dhoti and a resplendent Kurta, a heavy-set man nodded and smiled benignly as we filed past with folded hands and scared looks. "प्रणाम पाण्डे जी", one by one we all paid obeisance to the legendary Chief Time Keeper. A couple of hawk-eyed seniors watched closely looking for any deliberate or inadvertent signs of irreverence. All cards were to be punched between 6:45 and 6:47 A.M. – not a minute sooner, not a minute later.

BTC (Basic Training Centre) was an integral part of the early initiation. There we learned to chip, file, weld, and sleep in improbable postures. We also learned to multi-scribe – *the art of writing simultaneously with multiple pens* – the hundreds of lines of "impositions" as atonement for the sins of the previous day. Bindu Mitra was the Yoda of this craft! She could wield up to four pens (in each hand, by some accounts!!) and crank out hundreds of lines with suitable variations of handwriting to give the appearance of original work done by her batchmates.

As with the 72 batches that came before us and the many that came after, our initiation and onboarding continued for an entire year, and even beyond, until we were all steeped in the distinctive ways of Jamalpur Gymkhana and became worthy of joining the hallowed SAM community.

*I'll have more vignettes from the past in the next issue of SAM – the rigors of the first month, the coming together of the 89 batch, the boundless love of our esteemed seniors and the joy of club entry!*

May the tribe of such authors grow! - Eds





## Have you moved?

If so, please share your latest contact particulars with us.

✉ write to us at **“Editor SAM, P.O. Box 30, New Delhi, 110001”**

@ send an email to **edsams2020@gmail.com**

🌐 Reach us at **jamalpurgymkhana.in**

Help us remain connected!

# Katyusha

- Debatra Majumdar'2k13

Fortunate enough to be a group of 50 people going on a study tour to Moscow and Saint Petersburg, I tried to make the most of it. The entire one-week stay was very eventful and tiring. I had a hard time catching up on sleep, but it was probably worth the discomfort.

I haven't written down stuff in a while, so please do not mind the ragged prose.

## PROLOGUE: DELHI

Moscow has only two connections to India, and both of them are Aeroflot flights that depart from New Delhi at very odd timings. My flight was scheduled to depart at 01.25 hrs and would take six hours to Moscow. Most of western Russia including Moscow and St Petersburg follow UTC+3 which means it is two-and-a-half hours behind Indian time.

I was extremely excited about Russia, primarily for two reasons. One, this would be the first time I'd get to get out of India and two, I am a huge sucker for history and the World War II is arguably the most intriguing period in the recent past. Since the Soviet Union played a huge role in the conflict, this trip was going to be extremely rewarding.

Also, I should make it clear that I would be using Leningrad interchangeably for St Petersburg a lot.

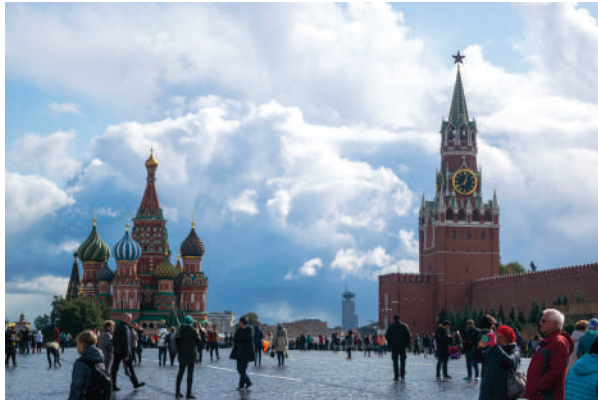
So keep that in mind. The flight was an uncomfortable one, but the girl next to me somehow managed to sleep with her mouth open. I'm sure she needed to catch some sleep before she had to change flights for Frankfurt at our next stop.

## DAY 0: ARRIVAL

The flight SU235 landed at Sheremetyevo International Airport around five-thirty, and the passengers had to be transferred from the airplane to the airport shuttle. That was when the cold wind hit me bluntly in the face. Even though I grew up surviving sub-zero temperatures in the northern plains of India, I wasn't ready for the Muscovite weather yet.

The first order of business was to check into the hotel and then get a local SIM card; the internet is more important than food or some shit, I guess? The internet is cheap but we have it cheaper in India. We did not have anything planned on the first day in the city since it was a Sunday. It was time to take the metro to Red Square.

It started drizzling the moment we got out of Okhotny Ryad, and as a result we ended up finding ourselves inside the State Historical Museum. While it is a grand collection of artifacts from all the documented periods of the regional history, my friends were still visibly unimpressed. Wikipedia says the museum's coin collection alone includes 1.7 million coins, making it the largest in Russia. I did get to see Lenin's Rolls Royce though.



*Red Square houses the St Basil's Cathedral on the left and the Kremlin on the right.*

Unarguably the most visited site in the entirety of Russia, Red Square was a spectacular sight to behold especially with such an overcast sky.

After spending some time in the area, we decided to return. At that moment I spotted an aged guy selling ushanka fur caps; I realised he was mute while bargaining with him. The ushanka with the hammer and sickle symbol on it would make me a centre of attraction among the locals for the next few days.

We would end up coming to Red Square again at night, only for my friend to make someone faint by banging the restroom door on his face at a KFC.

## DAY 1: OKTYABRSKAYA

The first day of the official tour included a visit to the Russian Railways Corporate University. I'll skip most of it because it wasn't particularly interesting. But I did talk to our interpreters about the USSR and communism, and also had lunch in a Soviet-style railway canteen.

Since the interpreters I talked to were around my age (mid 20s), I received mixed reactions. It seems like the public opinion is divided, and most old-timers feel the USSR was better and find it nostalgic. Katerina said that her parents think along the same lines, and she said that people apparently used to work very hard back in the day but were still comparatively happy. I also asked whether there were presently any leftist parties in Russia and if they were popular. She said that communist parties have recently seen a surge in support, and some party members have also been elected in the local government bodies like municipal corporations etc.

Aleksey said the Soviet regime was a great time in their history. When asked about Stalin, he said he was a controversial figure but personally believed that we could only judge him and not really deny his contribution during the Great Patriotic War (as the WWII is known in the post-Soviet states). He even went on to say that he would have probably done the same things that Stalin did.



*Cyberpunk Moscow 2077*

The plan was then to visit Arbat Street, a pedestrian street that has existed since the 15th century and is now famous for housing a tonne of souvenir shops. After getting discounts because the store-owner



thought one of my friends resembled Vivek Oberoi, we decided to roam around the city a bit.

Let's talk about the Moscow Metro a little. Opened in 1935 as the first underground system of the Soviet Union, it is the busiest rapid transit system in Europe. The system is considered a tourist attraction in itself, and the columns and walls of the stations are full of beautiful engravings and murals that are inspired by socialist realism.



*The concourse of Kiyevskaya, which lets you change between Lines 3, 4 and 5.*

The Metro lets you travel anywhere in the city, and a single ride costs fifty-five rubles irrespective of the distance travelled.

On getting out of Oktyabrskaya, a huge statue of Lenin welcomes you. It is a short walk to Gorky Park, where I was approached by a friendly group of five locals who wanted to take a selfie with a brown person wearing an ushanka.

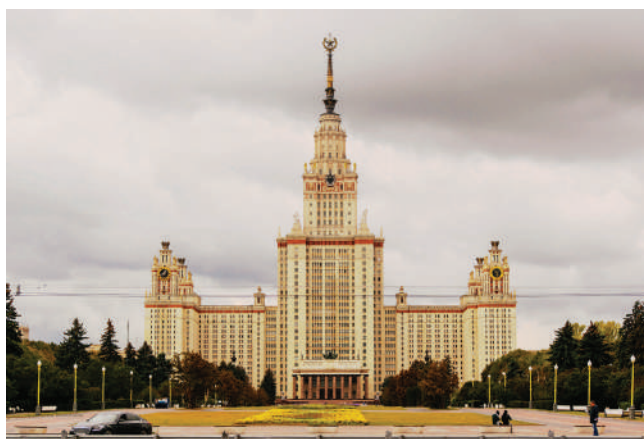
Meanwhile, people struggled so much with the dearth of choices in food and one of us didn't even realise that the Burger King cheeseburger he was happily gorging on contained beef.

## DAY 2: MOSCOW NIGHTS

Before heading 80 km out of Moscow to visit the largest railway marshalling yard in Europe located at Bekasovo, I had to wake up quite early and feed myself on the boring bacon, sausages and eggs routine. The considerable amount of the workforce of the Russian Railways is young and the gender mix is also decently good.

Our interpreters were kind enough to take us to Sparrow Hills before lunch; it wasn't really part of the itinerary. Formerly known as Lenin Hills, it is one of the highest points in Moscow and offers a panoramic view of the city skyline. Moscow State University lies next to the view point.

Moscow State University is arguably the best educational institution in all of Russia. Its building is an architectural masterpiece and is one of Moscow's Seven Sisters, all of which were built in the Stalinist style between 1947-1953.



*Moscow State University remained the tallest building in Europe till 1997.*

After having lunch at a quaint little Russian restaurant, we did a half-circle on Line 14, also known as Moscow Central Circle, from Luzhniki to Lokomotiv. It is operated by a city government-owned company through the Moscow Metro. After getting down at Lokomotiv, some young locals shouted “Pakistani” at our entourage. I shouted back saying “Indiyskiy”.

We went to the Embassy of India in Moscow in the evening; me and my compatriots were happy to finally be able to eat some samosas. It is also adorable that we found ourselves at Red Square (again?) during the night appreciating the floating bridge over the river Moskva at Zaryadye Park.

### DAY 3: LENINGRAD

I barely managed to wake up and drag my half-asleep ass to Leningradsky terminal barely twenty steps away from our hotel. The plan was to take a train to St Petersburg (or Leningrad, or Petrograd).

You could probably call Sapsan the Russian Rajdhani. Running at the maximum speed of 250 kmph between Moscow and St Petersburg, these Siemens-made trainsets are designed to run upto 350 kmph if the tracks permit. The journey was extremely smooth yet uneventful, except the part where I dropped my lens cover on the railway tracks at Moskovsky terminal never to find it again.



*Sapsan at Moskovsky Terminal, St Petersburg.*

Since there was not much to do on the day after arrival in the city, the interpreters took us to Peterhof Palace. The place is huge and is located next to the Gulf of Finland, and was occupied by the Nazis during the siege of Leningrad in the WWII. By the virtue of being an extremely popular tourist spot, I found a lot of Asians (colloquial usage please) and Indians there. I also had a hamburger there which probably is the best burger I have ever had in my entire life.

After visiting the Consulate General of India, we spent the rest of the evening enjoying the famed nightlife of Piter (as the locals like to call it) listening to live bands performing just next to Kazan Cathedral at Nevsky Prospekt.

### DAY 4: VENICE OF RUSSIA

The first “meaningful” day in Leningrad was spent visiting a wagon container depot located at the outskirts of the city, followed by a visit to Sapsan control centre at Moskovsky terminal.

St Petersburg is often referred to as Venice of the North considering the amount of rivers and canals in the city,

and skipping a cruise ride over the river Neva after coming this far would have been similar to committing blasphemy. I mean, I did skip a trip to the Hermitage but meh. It is important to mention that the Hermitage happens to be the second-largest art museum in the world after the Louvre.



*St Isaac's Cathedral against the backdrop of an autumn sunset.*

The cruise offered views to a great number of touristy places in the city like the Hermitage, Peter and Paul Fortress and Saint Isaac's Cathedral. Let's talk about the last one a little: originally a church, St Isaac's Cathedral was converted into a museum by the Soviet government in 1931 and is perhaps one of the most important landmarks of Leningrad.

The penultimate night in St Petersburg meant going off to a shopping spree buying tonnes of locally-made chocolates and some of that smooth Russian vodka.

## DAY 5: KALINKA

Yeah, we would have to wrap up soon now.

After seeing how the Russians maintain their trains at the Sapsan maintenance facility at Shushary, we were taken to the Russian Railway Museum. Considering that Leningrad is a city of museums, it was more than obvious that this one was located here as well. A part of the museum used to be a steam locomotive roundhouse, and currently holds a great number of Soviet-era locomotives and other rolling stock. The tour guide at the museum was an enthusiastic old man who seemed very interested in explaining every nook and cranny of the museum. When I asked him about how he felt about the fall of the Soviet Union, he said it feels like this is his second life now.

At this point, I had a choice to visit the Hermitage but I skipped it in favour of another considerably less popular museum and wandered alone towards Baltiyskaya metro station. As I previously said, the visit to Russia was a great chance to personally witness the lands and events etched in so many memoirs and books, and I was not going to waste it by visiting an art museum, however good it might be.

If Moscow Metro is mesmerising, then Saint Petersburg Metro is breathtaking. Both of them are engineering marvels in their own right. The latter also happens to be one of the deepest metro systems in the world thanks to the city's unique geology (all of it was marshy land) and the deepest by the average depth of the stations.





*The portraits of the generals of the Red Army that took part in the WWII.*

Museum of the Defence and Siege of Leningrad is a small museum which captures the essence of the Great Patriotic War in general and the siege of Leningrad in particular. It had original Nazi flags, badges and books collected during the war by the Red Army after the German troops retreated towards Berlin. The museum speaks about the courage and perseverance shown about the common citizens of Leningrad at the time. Not to forget the helpful babushka who guided me at the museum despite not understanding any of the gibberish I tried to speak.

The only good fascist is a very dead fascist.

The final night was mostly a blur. But I do remember singing Zombie on karaoke followed by dancing with a beautiful Russian woman after drinking a lot of tequila.



# Sir Aap Mahan Hai

- P K Mishra'83

I have seen this tool being used with devastating effect by experts ; raised on the milieu , where calling spade a spade and telling unpleasant truth to others was a sign of bravado and integrity, I had always looked it as basest evil.

After observing a number of such acts, I tried to rationally analyse it, to understand. , what makes it tick. Why it continues to be the second oldest pastime of the mankind.

As the great masters have said, look within, answers are awaiting to be discovered.

We all abhor crude flattery, we detest such acts, when we see, where it is leading to. No one likes to be manipulated by others. Cicero had called it the handmaid of the vices.

Then why flattery succeeds, I realised, I don't get offended by company of certain persons, who occasionally have said good words about the acts, which I had actually done in past.

I realise, I have an innate desire for self-verification, a strong urge for revalidation and positive confirmation

of the actions or course taken by me. I want to be congratulated, praised for good works, I had done in the past.

I want to hear from my people, yes, I care for them, yes, I am passionately working for them and if it comes from genuine, hardworking, sincere people then I have seen the gate of heaven. Deep down, we want to leave a legacy, a legacy worth recognising by all.

I realise affirmation must be in congruence with own sense of reality.

It must be spontaneous, genuine and natural. It should not be based on quid pro quo or immediate expectations of reward.

In order to make it effective, it must chime with your persona, who understates all achievement and is generally reticent in public praise.

A word of genuine praise buoys up the spirit, touches the heart and removes dark clouds, it provides a lovely retreat, an anchor at difficult time to plan, to steer the future course. It raises the self-esteem and allays all

doubts, you come out invigorated, ready to face the tough world again.

Flattery as a tool of manipulation is toolkit of charlatan, which can be used only once but positive praise, to build a bond as emotional coach, a confidant as sounding board, creates a long time relationship based on mutual professional respect that we must develop.

Once you develop the bond, you can highlight traits and impact the decisions which are in overall interest of organisation. All great people want a close knit group, where they can remove the mask and be at ease with themselves.

Praise must be subtly done, it is like lavender water to be diffused judiciously and not to be gulped. It is like honey, just sweeten it, over sweetening makes it bitter.

Recognition of merits and rationale of decision brings you at same page and removes the clouds of distrust and ego battles. It creates harmony at places where it is practiced, be it office or home.

Laboratory experiments have revealed that people with higher self esteem and consistent cognitive behaviour are more amenable to positive reinforcement.

Flattery is like the insidious computer worm, which wriggles its way to the core, if practiced professionally couched in questions laced with opprobrium.

For person with lower self esteem, you have to win their trust first for compliments to be effective.

So long one does not practice equanimity in true spirit and is affected by what others speak about him, praise shall continue to be an effective tool to win friends and influence people.



# SAM Club Day 2020

- Deepak Sapra'92

It's a tough job, writing an article for SAM magazine in 2020. Not that I haven't done it before. I have written for Sam many times in the past, starting from 1993.

I have written on the trials and tribulations of a person in the first year of life at Jamalpur. On the experience of winning an inter batch football match as first years against an overconfident fourth year batch. On the last-minute preparations for the IRIMEE, EC and AMIE exams. On the trends in the Gymkhana of 90s - the What's hot and What's not series. Quizzes on Jamalpur, Gymkhana and the railways. On the arrival of the first computer at Gymkhana. On life as the General Secretary of Gymkhana. On Club Day and interactions with senior Sam s. On receiving a personal, handwritten letter from Mrs Stewart, wife of the first Sam, Mr HVM Stewart. On the rapid disappearance of the stipend every month, leaving me with no savings from the four years at Gymkhana and forcing me to take a 200 rupee loan from a member of my immediate junior batch, the 93 batch on the day of graduating from SCRA and joining probation.

On the excitement and challenges of probation. On life as an AME, struggling to come to terms with a life very different from that at Jamalpur. On life of SAMs in cyberspace, when most of them first got their email

addresses on hotmail and yahoo. On the third year 'Tech Tour', something which was 99 percent tour and 1 percent tech. On meeting SAMs across all ages and batches on my travels all around the world.

These have been in various forms - as articles, as prose, as poetry, as dialogues, as crosswords. In English, in Hindi, in Hinglish.

Yet - I am truly lost today as I try to write an article for Sam 2020.

This is the first time Sam is not getting published from Jamalpur Gymkhana. The last batch has graduated a few months ago, and there are no SCAs living at Jamalpur Gymkhana.

I have always looked at articles as a way to connect with the youngsters living at Jamalpur Gymkhana and with the fraternity of those who have been privileged to pass through its hallowed portals. It's also a way of going back in time, imagining i am the teenager in the mid-90s, and re living that phase of my life through the SCAs at Gymkhana.

So, now, with SCRA closing (at least for now), a question I ask - what do I write about?

I also ask myself the question – What will Gymkhana and Jamalpur mean to me, going forward.

I draw an analogy with my personal situation. It relates to my mother, the person I have loved the most in my life. When she passed away three years ago, suddenly and unexpectedly, I was at a complete loss. It seemed everything had come crashing down. I did not know what to do.

Is my mother relevant to my life today?

Over the painful weeks, then months, and now the years, since her passing away, I realise that my mother continues to be the guiding light of my life, the source of love, and the moral compass I turn to whatever the situation. Physically she's not there with me now, but I can feel her love and strength every single day of my life.

Bringing back the analogy to Jamalpur and Gymkhana, there is no doubt that being in Jamalpur and living in Gymkhana has been one of the most defining experiences of my life. And irrespective of the place shutting down, I believe I will continue to feel the joy and friendship of the place, the people it brought me in contact with, and the experiences it provided. Jamalpur Gymkhana lives on in me, and will continue to do so till I am. And I am sure, for many more like me, the ones privileged to have lived their wonder years out there.



# On Being a Railway Wife

- Subadra Narayanan

better half of V Narayanan '55

*Subadra Narayanan, wife of V Narayanan 55, accompanied the latter to Jamalpur for Club Day 2015 when the Diamond Jubilee batch was none other than 1955. When asked to share her thoughts, she delivered this absorbing address at the end of the variety entertainment programme in the quadrangle...*

I am Subadra Narayanan, wife of V. Narayanan, 1955 batch. I am here to share my thoughts as a railwayman's wife and what all one would have to do to enjoy themselves. We were married in 1964. It was an arranged marriage and we did not know anything about each other. I thought it'd be good to know about each other's family. I'd tell him about my parents, brother, cousins, uncles, etc. etc. I was expecting him to say something about his family. On the other hand, he'd say that I should now realise that I am railwayman's wife and I should know all about railways! He'd say that railways were a big organisation within the Government of India and had many departments such as traffic, commercial, engineering, mechanical, stores, etc. etc. However, I persisted and wanted to know about his family. He'd say that his father worked in the railway audit, another uncle is a civil engineer, and yet another, his inspiration, was also a railway civil engineer who'd eventually become member of the railway board. It

was back to railways and I realised that I cannot escape this. I'd say that I too am interested and wanted to know as to which department does he belong to. He belonged to the mechanical department and he is a SAM. Slightly taken aback I'd say that I thought I had married Narayanan and that my father would be really upset. He assured me that he is indeed Narayanan, but he is also SAM. I wondered if he is playing a double role and said as much. He'd then say that SAM is merely an alias for Special Class Railway Apprentice! He'd then ask me if I know about Jamalpur. I told him that I am poor in Geography but would find out from the map. He'd say that India map would not do but it'd have to be Indian railway map! I thought it'd be a very important place like Kashmir, Kanyakumari or Rameswaram. As a newly married I was also hoping to be taken to places like Kashmir or Simla. He'd say he'd take me to Jamalpur where railway mechanical engineers are moulded and all wives must visit Gymkhana and see for themselves

the room occupied by their respective husbands! More classes followed. I'd have to learn all about running staff, workshops, control office and more than anything else the morning report that was more important than the newspaper! One'd then have to get to know the engine, the magnificent, tremendous black beauty, the WP. God created man; but what did the railwayman do—he created the WP! Nothing can be compared with this. There are of course other engines like WG, X class etc but these do not measure up to WP. One'd have to understand things like ovality of wheels and many other features. It is now the turn of the family. As we enter the railway station we'd all have to go near the engine, admire its size, its gleaming blackness and wonder if anything can be more beautiful than this! Our daughters would be looking to see how as to how they'd get a chocolate but hearing their father they would say (Jing-cha) yes appa (Jing cha). And the louder they say Jing Cha, they would get more chocolates. Without my being observed by my husband I'd study the wheels. As a student of Maths, I do know a thing or 2 about circularity and satisfied that there is no elongation; I would be satisfied that our journey would be trouble free! Gradually this extended to our children. Feeding them at dinner time was his job. Just separated by 18 months they'd rush to him. They would not be told about Ramayan, Mahabharat, Snow White or Cinderella. It'd be all about how the fireman would have to fire the coal in the boiler to raise steam pressure; otherwise the train would slow down. The only difference would be in the name of the driver or fireman. Is it going to be Marthandam, Edward or Stephen? Would the fireman be Thomas or Velan? And in their wide-eyed eagerness they would be wondering as to who'd be driving the engine! Periodically he'd inquire as to what'd happen if the coal is not fired properly. They would not want that

to happen as the trains would slow down! I have many good memories. For the trial run of Brindavan express 2 WPs (black beauties) were employed to study running times. Normally I would hate to remain at home alone; I am scared of everything including the ghost that had entered his room after he left Gymkhana. Therefore, I joined him for the trial run. My husband was in the leading engine. I was the only passenger in the train. When my father heard of this he was immensely proud and told all his friends in the community that his daughter was like Indira Gandhi with her husband driving the engine! This news spread like wildfire and many neighbourhood folks too would inquire if it was indeed true that I was the only passenger in the train.

There was a very forgettable episode too when the official car in which we were travelling in Palakkad was bombed, the country-made bombs striking near the petrol tank cap. All of us were unhurt. It was just as well as Velu our peon was retiring the next day.

The last time I had visited Gymkhana I'd learn that the emphasis was not so much on sports. I was a little disappointed. When my husband joined Gymkhana he was 6' 2" and weighed just 110 pounds. His friends felt that Nadu was just the right person for basketball and all he'd have to do is to stand and drop the ball in the basket. No such thing happened. Much shorter persons like CP Gupta and Lokanathan were much better players. (Laughter in the audience). Please do not laugh. My husband turned out to be an honest, sincere and unbiased umpire. If games are not played where'd be to role for persons who are honest, sincere and unbiased umpires. This time around I was happy to see a lot of young SAMs taking interest in sports. My suggestion is that Gymkhana may consider a shield for honest, sincere and unbiased umpire. Thank you.



# Some Memorable Locomotives

- Atulya Sinha'83

Locomotives are the most human of machines. Having spent most of my life around locomotives of all sorts, I have a store of memories concerning them. Yet, some locomotives, like some people, are especially memorable. Here are my top five (the first is a legendary loco which I have only read about, but I can claim some kind of connection with the rest).

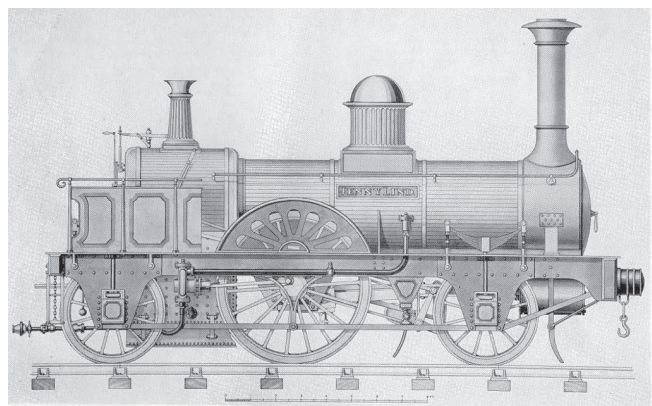
## Thomason – first locomotive on Indian soil

Everyone reading this “knows” that the first train in the Indian sub-continent ran on 16th April 1853 and that it was hauled by a trio of locomotives named Sultan, Sindh and Sahib. In fact, this was not the first train, but the first ceremonial train which carried invited guests - for which preparations had been going on for years earlier. These three locomotives were a part of a batch of eight locomotives supplied by Vulcan Foundry. Earlier, trials had been done with another Vulcan locomotive named Lord Falkland.

The distinction of being the first locomotive to run on Indian soil goes to Thomason, a standard gauge 2-2-2 tank locomotive built in England by E.B.Wilson & Co., which ran for the first time on 22nd December 1851 for hauling a couple of wagons during the building of the Ganges canal at Solani viaduct near Roorkee. Incidentally, the Thomason was part of a batch of ten locomotives built by Wilson known as the Jenny Lind class, named after the Swedish opera singer Johanna Maria “Jenny” Lind (1820-1887).

After just nine months of service, Thomason met with a spectacular end. According to the Report on the Ganges Canal Works, “The water had been drawn off, and it was supposed that the fire had been entirely extinguished. A storm with wind, brought the fire and fuel which were in the furnace, into action, and destroyed the casing together with a number of tubes, placing the locomotive completely out of use” (quoted by Mr Ashwani Lohani '75 in his book Smoking Beauties).

The official history of Indian Railways published in 1953 states: “In 1923, there were over 500 different classes of locomotives in the country, with a wide variation in wheel arrangements, wheel sizes and axle-loadings.



## CS class – the smallest & lightest ones

The deliberate policy of standardisation and rationalisation undertaken between 1923 and 1930, had resulted in a moderate reduction of the classes to 377 by 1952.”

Without going into the details of the other 376 classes, allow me to say that the smallest and lightest of these locomotives were the 2-4-0 side tank type CS class, which ran on the 28km section from Shantipur to Nabadwip Ghat. There were only four of them, of which two were supplied by W.G.Bagnall in 1927 and 1936 respectively; and the other two by Yorkshire Engine Co. in 1933. Their technical specifications are as follows:

CS 773 (W.G.Bagnall)	Jamalpur Gymkhana, Jamalpur
CS 774 (Yorkshire)	Eastern Railway HQ, Kolkata
CA 775 (Yorkshire)	National Rail Museum, New Delhi
CS 776 (W.G.Bagnall)	Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi

Class	CS
Gauge	2ft 6 in (Z gauge)
Type	2-4-0 T
Cylinder dimensions	216x305
Boiler pressure	10.54
Smoke Tubes	28x44
Flue Tubes	12x76
T.H.S.	15.5
G.A.	0.41
C.W.	622
T.W.	11.8
Coal Capacity	0.5
Water Capacity	1180
T.F.	2047
T.L.	5690

Source: Locomotives in Steam (1981) Rail Transport Museum, New Delhi

Fortunately, all the four CS locomotives have been preserved - including one at Jamalpur Gymkhana, which

was installed on a plinth during my apprenticeship days in the late 1980s. According to Railway Board's website, CS class locomotives have been preserved at the following locations:



## WDM-3 – the forgotten ones

The original WDM-3 class is nearly forgotten today, with the subsequent induction of WDM-3A, 3C and 3D series. In fact, WDM-3 was an entirely different species. There were just 8 of them, built in Germany by



The original WDM-3 class is nearly forgotten today, with the subsequent induction of WDM-3A, 3C and 3D series. In fact, WDM-3 was an entirely different species. There were just 8 of them, built in Germany by Henschel in 1970. Unlike the ALCO and the subsequent EMD designs, WDM-3 had a B'-B' wheel arrangement and hydraulic transmission. There were two speed settings known as HSG and LSG. Their detailed technical specifications are as follows:

Class	WDM-3
Gauge	5ft 6 in (Broad gauge)
Wheel arrangement	B'-B'
Suspension	Helical coils primary suspension Flexi-coil secondary suspension
Tractive effort (Max)	HSG 22000 kg, LSG 25080 kg, Adhesion 33%
Tractive effort (Cont)	HSG 14000 kg, LSG 20000 kg
Std Horsepower	2500 at UIC conditions at 1500 rpm
Site Horsepower	2440 at 40°C, 1000m, 100% RH
Engine	20cyl 4-str turbocharged MTU 1080Z
Bore x Stroke	185 x 200 mm
Comp Ratio	16.5:1
RPM	1600 (rated), 600 (idle)
Transmission	K253 Suri type hydraulic transmission (5 units) K252 Mekydro type hydraulic transmission (3 units)
Fuel tank capacity	3200 litres
Engine sump capacity	475 litres
Weight in working order	76 tonnes
Maximum Axle load	20 tonnes
Types of brakes	Air, hand and hydro-dynamic
Speed (Max)	HSG 120 kmph, LSG 80 kmph
Speed (Cont)	HSG 28 kmph, LSG 18.5 kmph

Source: RDSO Diagram Book and others

A glance at these specifications will show that WDM-3 represented the best of German technology of the day. Indeed, WDM-3 had passed oscillation trials upto 136kmph with flying colours – but unfortunately, it could not do well in the prevailing conditions on Indian Railways. As Mr R.R.Bhandari says in Indian Railways: 150 Glorious Years, “A ‘racehorse’ was asked to perform

like a ‘donkey’. When the transmission elements started failing, the awful track which was really responsible was not improved upon and the blame fell most unfairly on the hydraulic transmission. With the advent of large numbers of Diesel Electric Locomotive, the WDM-3 were doomed but not before the Audit Department too had a dig at it.”

By the late 1980s, just one WDM-3 was left for performing shunting duties in Gooty yard. As a probationer on South Central Railway, I had the opportunity to examine it and take a short ride on it – probably the smoothest ride I have ever experienced on any diesel. A few years later, while I was posted as DME (Power) at Vijayawada, the whole lot was prematurely condemned and parked in the famous roundhouse of Bitragunta, another relic of bygone times.

Though the WDM3 class is long gone, its genes were not entirely lost – they lived on in the form of cyclonic air filters on upgraded ALCO locomotives and also elements of bogie design adopted for WDP-1, WDP-2 and WAP-4 locomotives.





## WDM-6 – what my stars foretold

In circa 1982, DLW tried to build a low axle load version of a broad gauge locomotive for shunting and light duties. The key idea was to reduce weight by using 2-axle EMU bogies, instead of the usual WDM-2 type cast steel trucks. This new WDM-6 design was not very successful - only two were manufactured and they were used for the Circular Railway in what was called Calcutta in those days.

Meanwhile, a huge painting of a WDM-6 had found its way to Jamalpur Gymkhana and was lying in a neglected corner. As we began our final year in 1987, I discovered this painting and found it interesting enough to clean up and display in my room in the upper eastern lobby. This painting was the first thing I would see when my alarm clock rang each morning.

Shortly before we passed out, my batchmate Pankaj Sinha conceived a photo shoot covering all members of our batch. My picture was clicked with the WDM-6 painting, which was left behind in Jamalpur. This story would have ended there, but for a quirk of fate... read on.

Ten years after I had put up the WDM-6 picture in my room in Jamalpur, I was working as DyCME Loco in DLW. Puttalam Cement Works, a cement manufacturer in Sri Lanka, was looking for an economical broad gauge locomotive which could move light loads over poorly maintained tracks in their plant. RITES offered them a WDM-6, and it suited their requirements perfectly. So DLW was asked to manufacture a new WDM-6 and I – who had lived with a painting of a WDM-6 for a whole year – had the privilege of digging out 15-year old drawings and putting together the third and last WDM-6 ever built. It was flagged off from DLW by the then Member Mechanical – who happened to be my uncle, the late Mr L.K.Sinha '57.

Over the years, DLW has exported more than a hundred diesel locos to about a dozen different countries, but they have generally been supplied to state owned railways against Indian line of credit. Puttalam's WDM-6 is the first and probably the only DLW-built locomotive supplied to a corporate client located overseas.



## WDG-4 – the golden ones

By now there must be a whole generation who thinks of WDG-4/WDP-4, rather than WDM-2, as “the” diesel locomotive. The advent of General Motors/ ElectroMotive Division (EMD) diesel technology in the late 1990s was the biggest development in the field of diesel traction since the induction of ALCO technology in the shape of WDM-1 fifty years earlier. WDG-4 offered features like ac/ac traction, 4000 hp (later upgraded to 4500 hp), micro-processor based control, 16-cyl 2-str 710 G3B EMD engine, computer controlled brakes and lub oil to fuel oil ratio below 0.5%.

I joined DLW Varanasi in 1996, shortly before the transfer of technology from EMD began. I served as project manager for the PKD project, which consisted of assembling, testing and painting eight WDG-4 locomotives which were received in partly knocked down (PKD) condition from EMD. The most challenging part of the whole exercise was the push-pull test, in which two locomotives are coupled back to back; the leading one pulls while dynamic brakes are applied on the trailing one.

This requires a clear block section, two crews equipped with walkie-talkies and very careful orchestration of the motoring notches of the leading loco with braking notches of the other. It was truly By now there must be a whole generation who thinks of WDG-4/WDP-4, rather than WDM-2, as “the” diesel locomotive. The advent of General Motors/ ElectroMotive Division (EMD) diesel technology in the late 1990s was the biggest development in the field of diesel traction since the induction of ALCO technology in the shape of WDM-1 fifty years earlier.

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USA, Canada, Germany and – of course – India.

No one who has seen the early WDG-4 locomotives in their golden and white livery can forget how they glowed and reflected sunlight on the platforms and yards through which they passed. In a fast changing world, they also marked a golden period in the lives of the men who built them...



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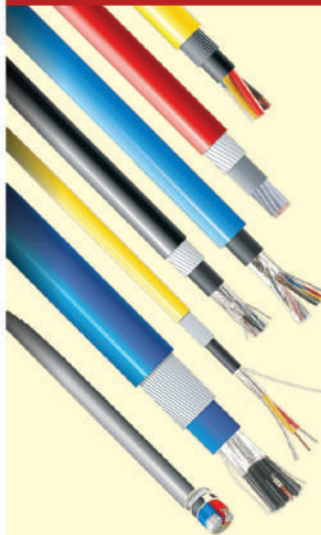
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# The Marine Drive that Drives us to keep going

- Jyotsna Prasad,  
spouse of Shubhanshu'80

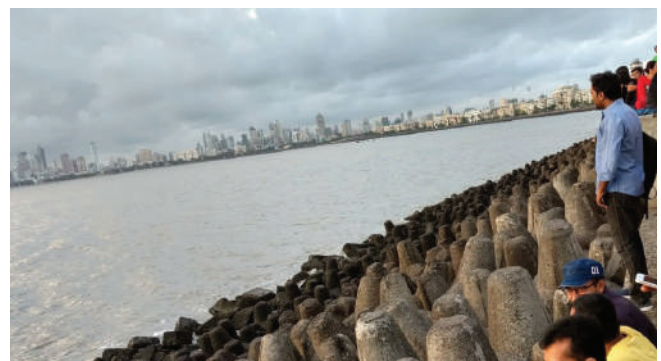
Life in Mumbai is a struggle. People jostle day in, day out to make room for themselves in the 'Maximum City'. Survival is difficult if they do not 'fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run'. With the pressure rising as the day progresses, the race for hitting up the energy points intensifies. The most energising and relaxing is Marine Drive. Large swathes of people sit along its beautiful curvaceous stretch to rejuvenate and recharge themselves.

Marine Drive drives people to keep going. It fills them with happy hormones, the essence of a happy life. The enriching atmosphere ignites human spirits and passions which are otherwise tempered by the humdrum and contrived existence. An ideal place to charge with positive energy of mind, body and soul. It gives a luxurious vista for the eyes to roam about, for the mind to think beyond the horizon, for the imagination to bring out something out-of-the-box.

Be it any time of the day or any season of the year, it is packed with people who come to see the Artist Nature come up with magical compositions in different colour modes that perfectly match the time and mood.

It truly represents the unique character of the city that never sleeps.

At early dawn, the whole atmosphere looks mystical. Just the right time to enhance your spiritual quotient. The pristine water, the fresh morn, the cool sea breeze, the quietude together provide a perfect setting to connect to the Divine. Yoga by the bay in the morning, is a very popular practice to be up and about. Disciplined morning walkers push their way through the throng that is yet to reboot from the leisure mode. Several flocks of white seagulls swarm all over the bay to relish the tranquil moments. If seen from a distance, those look like scattered snowballs. Some of them flutter gleefully in the morning sunshine, others, on the sand, create wonderful art with their paws. There are flights of pigeons too for catching worms. They prance about with crawling waves going back and forth. On the east,





at Nariman Point, small boats silhouette against the vermillion sky. As they glide on the shimmering surface of water, the contours of the ripples get altered. Some enthusiasts cross the fence, perch themselves on the rocks, to get a full view of the red orb. On the west, is a thin line of skyscrapers jutting out as if poking the mighty sea. There are some well equipped serious photographers engrossed in capturing the pristine beauty of nature. The chiming temple bells, the birds' twitter give an extra zing to the heavenly set up. The morning buoyancy fuels amply for the day's action.

At noon, we get a clear view. The sea, the sky, the coastline, all are seen in their pristine colours. The horizon is more pronounced in the brightness of the day. The light of the overhead golden sun reflects on water like golden floating strands. People take a quick respite from their daily rigours. Sometimes they just stand and stare the roaring waves at high tide. If a hot

and dry day gets a torrential rain, people go crazy. They get drenched, eat roasted corn on the cob, probably, to shake off the monsoon blues. The clear skyline of the day turns blurry in the rain-triggered mist. The rainwashed coast line gets a shiny coat.

At dusk, watching the fading sun is a sight to behold. The crowd gathered revels as the afternoon heat mellows down with the sun. The sky, in its orange mode, is giving signs of the inevitable departure. The shy sun is peeping through the branches of the trees. People from all walks of life trickle in to grab the best spot for watching the dusk turn into night. The crows too perch themselves on rails. The night settling in the Arabian Sea turns the skyline into steel grey. The colourful clothes donned by people in the foreground are in stark contrast with the dull grey background. Some tea vendors give the luxury of watching such a beautiful spectacle over a cup of tea and some finger





food. The tetrapods are hanging tough to make the waves curl back with humility. The orange sky gives way to a deep blue, and finally, before we notice, the darkness engulfs the sky and the sea in equal measure causing the thin line that segregated them to disappear. The lights of the skyscrapers at a distance gain sudden prominence. You instantly endorse the aptness of the title, 'the Queen's Necklace', given to this semi circular coastline, Marine Drive. The different colours of glowing lights bejewel the neckline of the Queen City so richly. The rhythmic sound of the waves together with the lights all along the coastline easily qualify for a good light and sound show. At the Nariman Point end of Marine Drive are the tall buildings of NCPA that hold theatre shows, a double bonanza for more people to hangout. As the night falls, you immediately plunge into a pensive mood. The mind gets besieged with many 'whys', that fall in the grey area, with as much intensity

as the buffeting waves. The darkness and stillness of the night is churning out the answers as to who we truly are. The eyes stare at the dark sea to get drowned in the depths of the inner self. The lovebirds exchange glances freely. Some hang around to feel the breeze caressing the cheek, brushing the hair. Despite the gruelling day, one can unwind just soaking in the cool air. It is a perfect set up for evaluating the past, planning the future, contemplating the achievements and failures, introspecting the dos and don'ts, realising the strengths and weaknesses. More than that, watching the surging waves instill hope for a better future. 'Hitting the bay before hitting the hay' is the mantra that keeps Mumbaikers going.

Link to source:

<https://jyotsnaprasad.wordpress.com/2018/10/09/the-marine-drive-that-drives-us-to-keep-going/>



# हे! मिट्टी के कण

- Shivangi Chopra'2k14

हे! मिट्टी के कण  
करूँ नमन प्रतिक्षण द्य  
हे! मिट्टी के कण  
तुझे नतमस्तक मेरा मन द्य  
पहाड़ों की चोटियाँ, नदियों की कल-कलय  
खेतों की हरियाली, हवाओं की खन- खनय  
स्मरण करे हर पल  
इस माटी की समस्त स्वस्तियाँ द्यद्य

हे! मिट्टी के कण  
करूँ नमन प्रतिक्षण द्य  
लागू हुआ जब संविधान  
प्रगति को मिला नया परिधान  
नव चेतना का हुआ संचार  
ऊर्जा, शिक्षा, उद्योग, प्रद्यौगिकी  
नींव थी जिसकी  
नयी चेतना, नए विचारय

खिल उठा जीवन  
झूम उठा सावन  
विष्व में बनी नयी पहचान  
मुख पर एक अद्वितीय मुस्कान द्य  
सच हुई सपनों की सोपान  
संस्कृति की विविधता का हुआ मिलान  
जिससे सर्वस्व हुआ उत्थान द्य

हे! मिट्टी के कण  
लें हम सभी यही प्रण रू  
सुविचारों का करें त्वरण  
चाहे हो जीवन या हो मरण  
कर्तव्यों का करें पालन  
नव स्वपनों का करें लालन  
दुर्बल का करें त्राण  
ताकि सभी जियें ले आन, बान, षान द्य  
रक्त की लालिमा से करते हैं ऐलान रू  
अपने देश को बनाएँ देव स्थान द्यद्य

हे! मिट्टी के कण  
तुझे क्षत- क्षत बार नमन द्यद्य

# The Last of the Species

- Ekansh Gangwar'2k15

Jamalpur Gymkhana is a world of its own and Special Class Apprentices have been finding comfort in this world for over 90 years. As soon as one comes out of the portals of their school lives, preparing for various entrance examination, a chosen few are sent to Jamalpur to gain Officer Like Qualities and to be part of an Elite Race known as the Special Class Railway Apprentices. From being juniors in the first year and running various errands so that Gymkhana could function properly, taking part in various sports activities and following every instruction seniors give, to becoming senior yourself passing on Traditions, Duties and Responsibilities with a sense of pride to their juniors, Jamalpur Gymkhana has seen it all for the past 90 years.

As for us, the SCRA 2015 Batch, we never had juniors to pass on things to. Each one of us has been witness of a strength of 81 SCAs in 1st year to 6 SCAs in the Final Year. We have seen various sports like Badminton, Squash, Tennis, even Football, where people had to wait for their turn to an extent that there are no bounds of space and time for anyone to play. The Gymkhana lobbies, always full of Firsttees performing their duties, changed to Fourthees performing their duty. From 81 in 1st year, 44 in 2nd, 29 in 3rd and 6 in Final year we have seen 4 Club Days, all with some drastic changes in the management side.

Being the Junior most Batch in Gymkhana during whole Apprentice time had its own pros and cons. Each one of us had 12-13 seniors on an average who were more than willing to take care of us. We were so busy that it almost never happened in 1st Year that all of us reached the Sports field together at 16:30, even on the day of our Club Entry. Being the juniors, a lot of senior love to share their experiences with you. The experiences mostly comprise of their days as firsttees. Each senior has a different story which contains some lesson on how you could carry yourself in first year. The first year seems the longest and the most remembered year of your life. The Traditions, Club Rules, Club Entry, Club and the sports field start becoming a part of your daily routine and before you are able to get time for your own, the day vanishes, and the cycle continues.

The first Club Day is the most memorable club day as everyone says. You start feeling important as many seniors ask for your help in various activities to be carried out. You are told that you are an integral part of the team who has to do all the running around and without you the event won't be a success. From sending out invitations, preparing menus, looking after arrangements for our esteemed guests to performing cultural activities. Everywhere, contribution of a firsttee could not be ignored.

Another event where a first-year feels important is the time of Elections. The baton has to be passed on to the next batch every year and for the same purpose Elections are held every year before the final year batch passes out. The juniors are given a lot of love in these days to gain votes by every candidate.

As soon as my second year started, I was approached by the then Editor SAM to be part of the editorial board for SAM. At that time, I didn't know I was going to be part of something that I would remember for a lifetime. Then we used to publish only 1 Club Day Issue with 6 members in the Editorial Board. By the time I passed out of the portals of IRIMEE, I was part of 6 SAM Issues out of which 3 were Edited only by 2 Editor SAMs in our final year.

Gymkhana was very different in our 1st year than what it was in our final year. We had no one with whom we could share our first-year experiences, we could not have long late night "pel" sessions on ET. We did not get the privilege to run with our juniors in their club entry. 6 of us will always remember Club Day 2019 wherein 6 of us worked as a team that stood with each other to make the event a success. We learnt that nothing is impossible if you have people who have faith and trust in you.

Gymkhana became a silent world and the species knew that it's time in the world is limited. It's been 6 months since we have completed our SCA days in Gymkhana and now in Probation wherever we stay, wherever we go it always happens that the comfort, time, hospitality that Gymkhana provides us is sure to be discussed and a few lines which cross my mind are:

*When memories give you tears,  
You sit, there is nowhere to go,  
And you have the worst of fears,  
Can you ever retain your glow?*

*Those nostalgic evening walks,  
Drives in the dark that made crazy,  
Stuck in mind like stubborn plaques,  
Can those pictures ever go hazy?*

*Engraved in marble you can't erase,  
Successive thoughts bound to depress,  
Echoing in ears stays every phrase,  
Alive are memories you must confess,*

*Emotions flow with good old memories,  
As souls dance serene in mind galleries!*



# Beauty and The Beast

- Smt. Jayanthi Mallya  
spouse of Gajanan Mallya '79

Beauty is in beholder's eyes. Each place is beautiful in its own way and it is immaterial whether the place is a big city or a small town. The inherent beauty can be perceived only by oneself and the attitude to appreciate little thing makes all the difference.

Being in a Government job and All India Service Cadre, has taken us to many places on transfer. We together have undergone more than 11 transfers across 6 States and 10 places, and sometimes getting posted to the same place more than once. Both, myself and my husband have beautiful memories of our stay at different places and it has been a learning experience throughout. Though transfers have their own disadvantages, each new place of posting is charming in its own way.

Coming from a business family background, it was a new experience in life for me, when I got married to a boy in Government service. Whereas, transfers provided me an exposure to a new world and environment, posting to a new place gave me an opportunity to learn new things from people, culture, food habits and day to day activities.

It was about three years back that my husband got posted to Jamalpur, for the second time to IRIMEE, and this time as Director/IRIMEE, on promotion.

Jamalpur is a small place in the State of Bihar and a well known Railway township, with two of the important landmarks of Railway, being situated here --- one is IRIMEE ( Centralized Training Institute for Mechanical Engineers of Indian Railways), and the other being the Jamalpur Workshop, one of the biggest workshops on Indian Railways known for its multifarious activities.

Being from the south, the news of getting posted to a far off place like Jamalpur, was bit depressing. But the sour mood didn't last longer, as we took it as a God sent opportunity to serve the 'Alma Mater', which many will hardly get.

Finally, when we started for Jamalpur from Hyderabad, our previous place of posting, it was with a positive mindset and happy mood. The joy of starting our life afresh was clearly visible on our face and in our strides.

As we started our journey, I could feel the change in myself, whether it was my maturity with age or time, I was not sure, but it was for the good.

The train journey was long and tedious. Watching the scenic beauty through the train windows was fascinating and made us feel refreshed once in

a while. As the train moved past, the paddy fields on both the sides of the track, looked like a green carpet spread by Nature. It was refreshing to watch the swaying of paddy to the gentle breeze. The view of Hills, reminded us of approaching Jamalpur and it looked more picturesque.

Finally when we reached our destination, it was a memorable journey par words.

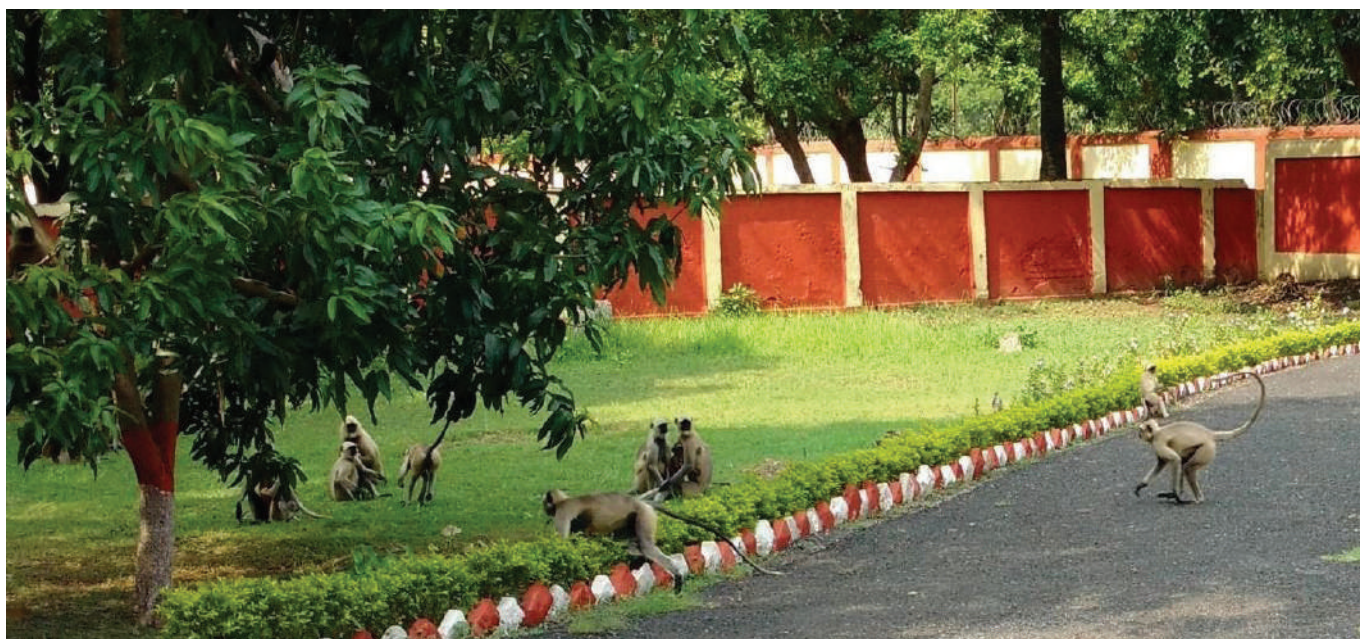
Compared to our last tenure of posting, I could feel that my perception about the place had changed to a large extent and now I could feel the beauty in everything around me. I could also feel the change in my attitude too.

Language and the food habits are the two main constraints to get adjusted to a new place of posting for anybody. Once these two are overcome life becomes easier and more enjoyable. Thanks to my parents and my upbringing, I was able to adapt to new place with ease and could settle down quickly. Whichever place we had stayed, I had loved my house

and had developed a special bond with the same. I still have the sweet memories associated with each place and once in a while when we recollect them, it cheers our mood.

I always feel, Railway colonies and bungalows are a class apart which the normal outsiders do not know. The huge and spacious bungalow with lot of open space and greenery all around is like a farm house of the well to do and a dream house for the ordinary people. The bond is but natural and beyond the imagination for an outsider. The Railway colony in Jamalpur is unique in its own way. The Red brick buildings belonging to British Era, are attractive and look beautiful. The rows of sprawling bungalows on both sides of the road look elegant with unique style of construction. They are structurally strong, cool from inside and have architectural beauty too.

Lot of open space with green foliage and abundance of unpolluted fresh air, has turned the place into a Paradise and a health hub for city dwellers. It is home for variety of birds which is beyond imagination. Watching birds



in their natural habitat is really a pleasure. Natural beauty is only a part of the whole in Jamalpur. Beauty and the Beast always go together. I had the first hand experience of this within days of unpacking my things in Jamalpur.

It was my first experience and the most unforgettable one too. Though, I had heard about monkey gangs and their pranks, I had no idea about the intensity of destruction they could do in one go.

It was a relaxed Sunday morning in the month of December. When we came out on the verandah, we were shocked by the scene in front of our house. The whole battalion of monkeys was having a 'field day' on our lawn. There were monkeys of all sizes, from small to big in countless numbers. The ornamental trees near the boundary wall wore a pathetic look with broken branches, the flowering plants were devoid of flowers and leaves. The garden lights were all broken and damaged beyond repair. The beautiful garden was destroyed beyond recognition. In all aspects, it was a surgical strike with ultimate precision and perfect planning.

It took us many days to bring back the place to normal but was of no use. Within days of revival, there was another attack by the army of Langurs and everything was destroyed once again and it was back to square one.

This game of destruction of the garden by monkeys and revival by us went on for few more times and after many failed attempts, we realized the futility of our efforts.

The frequent visits by Langurs, vandalizing the garden, destruction beyond repair looks maddening at times. It is a blessing that my bungalow is well protected by iron grill on all sides, the absence of which would have given more chances of fatal encounters with this unruly pranksters.

Now I have started accepting the fact that, beauty and the beast are like two sides of a same coin, though with a pinch of salt.

In a lighter vein, it is amusing to watch from a safe distance the free movement of unruly monsters all over the place, they enjoying the swing ride and gleefully vanishing, once the job is done to perfection.

As I pen down my thoughts I realize that we are completing almost two years of our stay at Jamalpur. We live together giving space to each other. We have a kind of unwritten rule between us i.e the beasts happily roaming in the open with full freedom and we on our part living happily inside the house, a bitter lesson learnt with time and hard earned experience. Now I understand, the beauty can be appreciated better only when the opposites are together.





## The SAM Advertisement Order Form

SAM is published bi-annually, every February and August, by the alumni of the Indian Railway Institute of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (IRIM&EE), Jamalpur under the Special Class Railway Apprentice (SCRA) scheme. SAM is established as a Society under the 'Society Registration Act 21, 1860'

SAM has a reader base right from the top policy makers to the front-line officers of Indian Railways. It has a wide circulation network that covers all zones and production units of Railways, including:

- Railway Board, RDSO, All Railway HQs, Divisions, Workshops and Sheds,
- COFMOW, IROAF, ICF, MCF, RCF, DLW, CLW, DMW, RWF and RWP
- RITES, CONCOR, CRIS, RAILTEL, DFCCIL
- Top executives of Various Private and Joint Sector Firms

An advertisement in SAM is a sound marketing strategy to get your product noticed by the both the larger Railway community and the Private Sector.

Quarter Page	15,000	FULL PAGE 11" x 8.5"	HALF PAGE
Half Page	25,000		
Full Page	45,000		QUARTER PAGE
Double Spread	80,000		
Inside Cover	100,000		
Back Cover	150,000		

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Artwork Included (Y/N) .....



## Editor's Acknowledgements

If you are reading this then we have succeeded in our objective to ensure that SAM - the magazine that reaches out to and connects the SAM community - is healthy and well. The fact that it has survived is a tribute to the indomitable spirit of the larger SAM community. Certain individuals within it need to be specifically acknowledged.

The biggest Thank You goes out to Mr. J L Singh'65 for launching this movement and taking on the responsibility to run the magazine from Delhi even as SAM finds a new home. Mr. S K Yagnik'81, as Director IRIMEE and President SAM, was instrumental in creating the consensus around the continued publication and shift, managed to find the funds for this issue and reposed full faith in the motley crew that offered to run the magazine. Incidentally, this is most certainly the first time in the history of this magazine that the seniority of at least one of the Editors of SAM trumps that of the President!

For any successful transition, continuity is key and Mr. Kuldeep Singh 2001 - seated a few rooms away from me in Railway Board, and fresh from his experiences at IRIMEE - provided this vital link; connecting us to Ed SAMs of the twenty-tens while making available the SAM database and SAM Archives. Incidentally, these can now be accessed on the community sourced portal ([jamalpurgymkhana.in](http://jamalpurgymkhana.in)) that we have launched on the 14th of February 2020. In case you have missed it, there is a brief write-up on page 34 and 35 of this issue.

For their enthusiasm and effectiveness in connecting to the millennium batches and beyond when reaching out for articles and updates, we would like to especially thank Ms. Aastha Sneha 2009, Ms. Shivangi Chopra 2014 and Mr. Ekansh Gangwar 2015.

We thank each and every one of the SIMIs and SAMs who have contributed articles to SAM Club Day 2020 - ensuring that the soul and spirit of the magazine remains unchanged and if anything, is further enriched. I urge you to turn to the "Index of Contents" on page 5 and read


these names once again - because their contributions have made this issue what it is. And while you are at it, do take a look at the batches. We have contributions from the forties, the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, the two thousands and the twenty-tens. As Editors of this issue we feel overwhelmed!

1970 is the Focal Batch of Club Day 2020. The articles written by the members of the Focal batch, featuring on pages 62 to 74 of this issue, are hence that much more timely and precious. A special Thank You to Mr. Niraj Kumar '70 for seamlessly coordinating with all the members of his batch and making available to us all the content well in time for publication.

SAM Representatives are key to ensuring effective outreach to the SAM community. Please take a minute to look at the SAM Representatives listed on page 4 of this magazine. A big thank you to each and every member on that list for accepting our invitation to be a SAM Rep. In addition to covering every major working unit of Indian Railways, we have covered, additionally, the five cities that host the largest population of SAMs. Also covered specifically, are the SAMs overseas - a growing community.

SAM survives on and yet is often starved for advertisements. Despite the very small window available for responding, we have a reasonable splattering of advertisements for which, on behalf of the entire community, we wish to thank Mr. Gajanan Mallya'79, Mr. Anil Vij'80 and Mr. Sanjay Gupta'82 for their notable support. For the others, who were stumped by the fairly short notice, please keep the tempo going. The SAM Advertisement Order Form can be found on page 121. We are going to need many more advertisements for Autumn 2020 if this effort is to survive.

Here's to a connected SAM Community!



- Mayank Tewari'89



~ CODE OF CONDUCT ~

*Self discipline is the most important discipline.*

*Give to others freely and deserve to receive.*

*The most valuable assets one could hope to acquire  
Are the qualities of a gentleman.*

*Traditions of an institution are held in trust by its members.*

*Neglect not a sacred duty.*

