

# SAM

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Autumn 2020



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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

<b>BENGALURU</b>	V Anand ‘62	<b>CR</b>	Rupesh Kohli ‘91
<b>CHENNAI</b>	Vashishta Johri ‘74	<b>ECOR</b>	Gautam Dutta ‘82
<b>DELHI NCR</b>	Niraj Kumar ‘70	<b>ECR</b>	Rajesh Kumar ‘98
<b>KOLKATA</b>	J K Saha ‘78	<b>ER</b>	Shekhar Ghoshal ‘82
<b>LUCKNOW</b>	Rakesh Misra ‘72	<b>NCR</b>	Prashant Kumar Singh ‘96
<b>MUMBAI</b>	S N Chakravarty ‘68	<b>NER</b>	Yogesh Mohan ‘88
<b>OVERSEAS</b>	Deepak Sapra ‘92	<b>NFR</b>	Kapil Jambhulkar ‘2k1
<b>USA</b>	Rahul Tyagi ‘89	<b>NR</b>	Archana Mittal ‘92
<b>RAILWAY BOARD</b>	Kuldeep Singh ‘2k1	<b>NWR</b>	Inderjit Dihana ‘93
<b>IRIMEE</b>	M K Roy ‘94	<b>SCR</b>	B Sinku ‘86
<b>NAIR</b>	Swayambhu Arya ‘94	<b>SECR</b>	Amitava Chaudhary ‘90
<b>RDSO</b>	Samir Lohani ‘90	<b>SER</b>	S K Bose ‘83
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SAM is bi-annual magazine of Jamalpur Gymkhana. It is distributed free of cost to all alumni of Gymkhana and honorary members of the Jamalpur Association. All enquiries regarding SAM may be addressed to:

- ✉ write to us at “**Editor SAM, P.O. Box 30, New Delhi, 110001**”
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# President's Letter

S K Yagnik '81



The year began with considerable uncertainty concerning the future of the magazine itself and more importantly the institution of Gymkhana. The scare on SAM publication ended even before it was raised in the form of J L Singh'65, supported by Mayank Tewari'89 and the entire team of youngsters came forward to take up the baton. The Centre of Gravity for SAM publication has now shifted northwards. The transition from Jamalpur has been as expected, a pleasant exercise which has not only ensured uninterrupted publication of this important connector but also witnessed a quantum jump in quality of content and the layout. Club Day edition was a treat for connoisseurs to relish due not only to good content but also to good layout, design and fine printing. The experiment has proved a resounding success and there is no doubt that the publication will gain from strength to strength in years to come.

Financially also, the magazine has been able to manage its sustenance with liberal inputs in the

form of advertisements, which speaks volumes for the efforts made by all members working in Zonal Railways, Production Units and others for mobilisation of resources. Strictly though, in terms of revenue alone, the 2019 edition had seen higher earnings but a look at the Operating Ratio shows that 2020 has been the best, with least expenditure for every rupee earned. Hope the same holds true for our mother organisation also. It is also a matter of some satisfaction that recognising our legal obligations as an Association of Persons (AOP), SAM magazine got its accounts of FY 2018-19 audited by a CA, paid Income Tax of Rs. 1.61 Lakhs (including interest) and duly filed Tax Returns for the first time as a Tax compliant entity. The same exercise is underway for FY 2019-20. This important milestone was made possible with inspiration from K Narayan '88 who guided us while a lot of ground work was done by G Venkatesh 2K3 for which I am thankful. This exercise was long overdue and any non-compliance of our tax liabilities would have shown us in bad light, besides threatening the

very existence of the Association.

A subtle change in the methodology of fund management of SAM that has been introduced recently, is also intended to be placed in the public domain at this stage. In 2016, both Jamalpur Association (JA) and SAM had separate bank accounts. However, with strict checks in place on monetary transactions and KYC, registration of both the bodies under the Societies Act was processed. For some procedural reasons, JA was denied registration as a society, while SAM got registered as an Association of Persons under the Societies Act and also succeeded in and obtained a Permanent Account Number (PAN). Deposits of JA were, therefore, transferred to SAM to avoid legal complications. Hence, the funds of JA have been subsumed in the SAM account. We continue to maintain an accounting partition internally between the two, whereas to the tax authorities, SAM is the sole Society out of the two existing on record. This segregation needs to be taken note of by all future managers of SAM as well as members of the JA. SAM funds in books are not entirely that of magazine alone.

The COVID crisis brought down the hostel occupancy to nil after the 2nd week of March 2020 and this state of affairs continues to haunt our minds as on date. Hostel without Trainees, whether SCAs or others, is like body without its soul. Two of IRIMEE hostels, 'Queens Road' and 'Yantrik Niwas' were first taken over as quarantine centres by the District Administration and later converted to Isolation facilities as no suitable

Hospital could be found in the district to fight the dreaded pandemic. Gymkhana was also sought to be taken over by the State Government for this purpose but somehow escaped the axe and remains mostly unoccupied. This has meant very difficult times for mess workers and private staff who were relying on hostel occupants for their subsistence. About 20 workers who were surviving by serving the trainee occupants in hostels have lost their jobs. Efforts of IRIMEE faculty to help out these workers could not sustain them beyond the second month of April 2020. All forces in the heaven came together to send us help in the form of 'Gymkhana Benevolent Trust', a group of volunteers that was formed in 2019 with the noble cause of helping private members of staff with support for medical, education of their wards and miscellaneous contingencies. The combined force of K Narayan '88, Manish Thaplyal '89 and Nitin Kulshreshtha '88, which had founded this group earlier, came forward to help the poor mess workers in these difficult times. Through voluntary contributions, the Group has been extending assistance in the form of a monthly stipend of Rs. 3K per worker since the end of April 2020 that has permitted survival in these testing time for 20 families. Kudos to the Trust founders and all generous contributors for reaching the sky for humanitarian outreach. Your magnanimity in this hour of crisis will be remembered forever. The objective of this Trust are much broader, beyond giving a social cover against COVID and need sustained efforts and generous contribution from all of us. I urge the group members to help the Trust in its efforts which will sustain underprivileged groups of



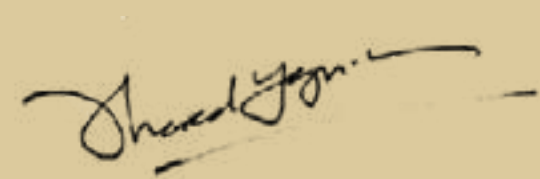
people who made our stay at Gymkhana comfortable and moments to cherish forever. An appeal in this regard is enclosed in a subsequent section for your kind perusal please.

Some time back, we were brooding over the closure of the SCA scheme which in our thoughts happened to be a colossal disaster of the highest order. Now we are witnessing a phase which is the redefining of the entire training pedagogy. Not only SCRA, but all schemes of Entry to the Railways are under review. Situation demands that for survival, an entity like SAM/JA has to compulsorily create an in-built flexibility that will permit our Association to flourish. Recognising this fact, an emergency meeting of the General Body was convened on 2nd August 2020 on a virtual platform, which has permitted the Governing body of SAM to be located outside Jamalpur in a dynamic mode.

This entails permitting adequate flexibility for a change in HQ in terms of the location of a willing group of working SAMs, either at the Railway Board, Northern Railway, Eastern Railway or South Eastern Railway, the list being extendable for future contingencies. This paradigm shift recognizes the need for SAM(including JA) to grow beyond the brick and mortar realms of Pin code 811214 and formalises a working mechanism for the same. I thank all seniors and members for supporting this decision taken under most unusual circumstances.

Something similar happened with the institution of IRIMEE which was forced to discontinue classroom training in the aftermath of COVID. While other institutes came up with Technology intervention at very elemental levels by switching over to web conferencing Tools for live classes, the young faculty at IRIMEE decided to raise the bar and created Training contents on an e-learning open source - MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). The use of the Moodle platform has made it possible for IRIMEE to technologically come at par with various IITs and other institutes of repute, though content remains the same. Although this address is not the right occasion to talk about IRIMEE, exciting grounds covered by the IRIMEE faculty compel me to share the news with the fraternity. It may also be noted that there are a number of this fraternity of ours who are now part of the IRIMEE faculty.

As we shift from hard copy to cyber space, I am not sure what form the next Club Day at Jamalpur will take. But I have a strong belief that we are surely heading for better times.



- Sharad K Yagnik '81

# Editor's Ramblings

J L Singh '65 and Mayank Tewari '89

At the outset, we would like to thank all Sams and Simis for the phenomenal and encouraging response we got to the Club Day 2020 issue of SAM. We have been overwhelmed and humbled. It will be our effort in this issue and all issues that follow that we give you the kind of magazine that you would like, the kind that you can relate to, and one that you look forward to.

We would also like to thank all contributors who flooded us with material including articles and photographs that we could and did publish. The trend has continued with this issue as well. As long as this continues, we are sure that SAM will not only live on but thrive and flourish. We are also very thankful to those who organised advertisements so that we have had no financial headaches.

Since we received such a heartening and stimulating response to the Club Day 2020 issue, we are retaining the same basic structure. Thus, you will find a President's Letter, an article on an Eminent Sam, an Interview and Milestones, as before. It will not be out of place to record that Sharad Yagnik '81 has been transferred from Jamalpur between the time he wrote the

President's Letter and the time of publishing of this magazine. However, the President's Letter that he penned is still relevant and appropriate and we have published it as recorded by him in his capacity as the then President of SAM.

In the last issue, we had given coverage of the Golden Jubilee Batch. In this issue, we are focusing on the Diamond Jubilee Batch (1960) and the Silver Jubilee Batch (1991). For some inexplicable reason, the Diamond and Golden Jubilee batches are based on the year of their exam while the Silver Jubilee Batch is based on the year of passing out from Jamalpur.

Once again, we carry contributions from across batches. So you will find in here an interview with K G Belliappa '43 – the seniormost surviving SAM, and an article by Nandadya Roy, the 10 year old daughter of Mahesh Kumar Roy '94. We believe that all of us have stories to share, so we have started with this issue a section named “Written by One of Us” where we invite you to share with us books that you have published. While reaching published works to like minded souls we also hope this inspires and nudges the latent author within you to published status.

After publication of the Club Day issue and getting the current one ready, we are reasonably confident that we will be able to sustain SAM as long as even one Sam is still around. However, what has still not taken concrete shape is the future form, nature and profile of the Jamalpur Association. As a step to reach a conclusion, the then Director at IRIMEE, Sharad Yagnik '81,

convened an emergency General Body Meeting of the Association. Owing to the onslaught of Covid-19, the meeting had to be virtual and took place on the 2nd of August 2020. Kudos to Mr. Yagnik for initiating auditing of SAM accounts (which includes JA funds), payment of Income Tax and filing of Income Tax Returns. The President's Letter outlines the decisions that had been taken. It is now for the Sam community to implement these conclusions so that the Jamalpur Association is put on a sound footing. Just as SAM magazine will remain as long as there is a single Sam, so should the Jamalpur Association.

We continue to pursue our larger objective of creating an always connected Sam community. Our efforts to update contact particulars resulted in an overwhelming 575 responses including 41 responses from Sams now based overseas. This contact information will soon be accessible on [jamalpurgymkhana.in](http://jamalpurgymkhana.in) except where the option of not sharing the information has been exercised. As before, access to the portal remains login based. We will send to everyone who has shared their email with us, the password for accessing the portal. By creating the portal [jamalpurgymkhana.in](http://jamalpurgymkhana.in) for all of us, we have taken the first steps in buliding a space that we hope will become the definite repository of all things dear to the Sam Community.

The on-going COVID pandemic has been the trigger for ensuring that this issue of SAM magazine shall be a digital version only. As part of our outreach, we had asked you how you would like to receive SAM – Printed, Digital or

Both? The results of the poll are in this magazine, for you to find!

SAM magazine has been a faithful and engaging raconteur of the life and times of Jamalpur Gymkhana and all things Sam. As things stand today, we have copies or have located copies of many old issues of SAM and continue our quest to complete the collection. PDF versions of all copies found have been made available on [jamalpurgymkhana.in](http://jamalpurgymkhana.in) for all to read. However, the first two issues are not available in our archives. It would be great if any Sam having a copy of these two issues either gives these copies to us or, if he or she would like to retain them, scans the entire magazine and sends to us. A collection in which the most historically interesting items are missing is not just incomplete but is like an orphaned group of siblings.

We hope that you will like this issue of SAM as much as you liked SAM Club Day 2020. Whether your expectations are met or not, please do write to us and give us your reaction. After all, this is your magazine and we would like to give you what you would want, like and appreciate.

Happy Reading!

  
J L Singh '65

  
Mayank Tewari '89

# Milestones

## Engaged:

- Devendra Kushwaha'2k9 to Monika 08/12/2019

## Married:

- Rajat Purwar'2k9 to Deepshikha 12/03/2020

## Died:

- S C Gupta '49 23/07/2019
- R K Pachuari'58 13/02/2020
- Mohan Lal Gill '65 12/05/2020
- M S Mathur '73 22/08/2020
- Pradeep Kumar '82 27/07/2020
- Ravindra Karketta '85 17/09/2020
- Anil Priya Gautam '89 24/06/2020

# LETTERS

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## TO THE

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# EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I must congratulate you and your entire team of dedicated SAMS for bringing out the Club day 2020 issue of SAM- the first issue published out side Jamalpur.

The quality of the magazine is of excellent quality, perhaps better than the earlier issues. Thanks for putting a lot of hard work in the project.

If I may, I would like to point out one or two things.

One page 19, in the article "Eminent Sams- Colonel Ban Basu" by Mr. J.L.Singh, an old photograph has been published of the first club day celebrated in 1952. In the photograph out of the three gentleman shown sitting in the first row (all of 1927 batch) the first person shown has been captioned as "Not Known". Well he is Mr. K.C.Lal, who was one of the three who were able to join the first club day out of the Seven in their batch. Perhaps you would like to clarify in the next issue or so.

A great initiative has been taken in creating a portal for the SAM community (jamalpurgymkhana.in). The entry to the portal has been kept, very rightly, through login. The username of each has been very cleverly synthesized to give an unique ID. Well done.

However for password, each one is required to send a separate request. I suggest initial password may be sent to at least those who have given their e-mail addresses without any request with instructions to change it on the first login.

-- Mahesh Chandra, '60 Batch

*Mr. K C Lal has now been captioned in the photograph in the digital version of the magazine. And yes, we will be happy to send by email the password for logging into your account on jamalpurgymkhana.in in all cases where we have the emails. Please do provide us with inputs like this in the future as well - Eds*

Dear Editor,

I received the SAM a few days ago. I must compliment you and the entire SAM team for bringing out the magazine to its usual high standard despite almost insurmountable odds.

With the passing away of Shri R.C.Tandon, Shri K.B.Belliappa '43 has become the senior-most SAM. Though he is in frail health, he attended the Club Day celebrations at RWF on 14th February 2020. He was also a regular at our retired railway officers meetings. The tragic loss of his wife and daughter in quick succession a few years ago did not break his spirit. Many years ago he lost his young son-in-law, Sqn. Leader Ganapathy, who had shot down a PAF plane during the 1971 war.

I spoke to him and requested that he gives a telephonic interview. He was quite enthusiastic and said he had a number of juicy anecdotes to relate. I plan to call on him as soon as things return to normal.

Shri KGB, though a Kodava clansman whose hereditary vocation was farming or the army (like Cariappa and Thimayya), joined the railways. The only other Kodava Sam I can recall is KP Aiana '30, who designed the Gymkhana crest.

KGB is a straight shooter and faced many obstacles in his career due to his probity. Though I have not had the privilege of working under him, I used to seek his advice both on professional matters as well as personal problems. When I was about to retire, I sought his advice on where I should settle down. I told him I had a tiny apartment in Navi Mumbai and a tiny plot of land in Katni.

He said, "Settle down where your wife's people are!"

His reasoning was that I being older than my wife, was likely to pop off earlier and an Indian wife is always more comfortable in her "maika".

Best Wishes,  
V.Anand '62  
15.03.2020

PS: If SAM magazine can be registered as a Newspaper/Periodical, the postal charges are very low. For a magazine like SAM it may be only a couple of rupees.

*This issue of SAM carries an interview with Mr. K G Belliappa '43 by none other than Mr. V Anand '62 - Eds*



Dear Editor,

I have just received the Club Day 2020 copy of SAM magazine.

The issue is really out of the world – an excellent masterpiece. It somehow sounded to me like a swan song which I hope it is not – maybe it is in my mind only. I am one of those who believe in “Never Say Die”. I am of the firm belief that the SCRA will come back again in another avatar. The efforts of a handful of us for the last four years cannot go in vain.

I noted what you wrote in the editorial regarding SCRA. My views as would be seen are the same. You see the articles are only reminiscing the past – I know there is nothing to write about the present or the future. However, as all SAMs are railwaymen or women, some articles like the type you publish in your other magazine, “The Rail Enthusiast”, would be welcome including articles on what the railways are doing about combining the cadres and things like that.

Love and best wishes,  
P C Sen '49  
11.03.2020

Dear Editor,

The magazine arrived this morning.

I have so far just thumbed through it and must compliment the Editorial team. You took up the challenge and in the limited time have done an excellent job to keep SAM alive.

I would like to make a few observations/suggestions as immediate reactions:

1. Printing is of good quality. However, for aged pair of eyes like mine (I have had cataract operation in both the eyes) inadequate contrast between white paper and grey print makes reading a little difficult. As an example, the Autumn 2019 SAM issue print presents no problem. It is printed on slightly tinted(pinkish) paper and the print is black.
2. In the list of deaths perhaps there is one missing. When I met D B Singh of '47 batch at S K Datta's condolence meeting he mentioned that S C Gupta of my batch is no more. He did not give me more details. Please check with him. SCG's address of 2019, as with me is 74/2 Vasant Vihar, Dehradun 248006. Mrs Gupta's name is Asha. You could write to her and check the date etc. but after DBS reconfirms to you.

With regards  
Suresh Chandra '49  
06.03.2020

*We regret to confirm that S C Gupta '49 did pass away on the 23rd of July, 2019 -Eds*

*We would like to hear a lot more from you*

✉ 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

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

- Eds

# Sharda Shankar Kochak '36

J L Singh '65

It comes as a surprise to many that among the leading lights of railway electrification in the 1950s were alumni from Jamalpur. When the SCRA scheme was first visualised, there was no separate electrical department and till the 1936 batch, the scheme included electrical engineers as well as mechanical. One of the members of the last batch with electrical engineers, i.e. the 1936, was none other than Sharda Shankar Kochak, better known as S S Kochak.

An electrifying personality, S S Kochak was a trail blazer in everything he did. The record he still holds is that of becoming the youngest Head of Department on the Indian Railways at the age of 38 in the year 1954. In those days, there was only one Chief per department, so that in today's parlance, he was the Principal CEE.

The fourth child of Tej Shankar and Kailash Kochak, S S Kochak was born on the 24th of December 1916 at Kanpur. By the time he started schooling, his family had shifted to Bulandshahr. It was at school that apart from academics, he honed his sporting skills, particularly in hockey. After completing his

schooling, he joined the DAV College at Khurja for his Intermediate and subsequently was admitted in Allahabad University for his BSc. It was during his stay at Allahabad University that he was selected as a Special Class Railway Apprentice, arriving at Jamalpur on the 31st of March 1936 as a member of the 1936 batch. Apart from topping his batch at the end of the 4-year training, Kochak excelled in games, including hockey, tennis, badminton, golf and billiards. Particularly in hockey, he was selected for the Eastern Railway team in his first year itself. In addition, he played for Mohan Bagan, the giant club of Calcutta, in hockey from 1939 to 1941, including matches in the prestigious Beighton Cup. Many generations of Sams will vouch for his hockey skills as they vividly recall his 'sprint', wearing a suit, across half the hockey field in Gymkhana during various Club Days, balancing a hockey ball on the blade of the hockey stick as if the ball was glued to the stick. Some stalwarts of the later batches tried hard to emulate this feat surreptitiously but without any success.



S S Kochak as a young officer



First electric loco in Eastern India leaving Howrah with SS Kochak manning the controls

Although the British had introduced the first electric train in Mumbai (then Bombay) in 1925, further progress was hampered, first by the Depression in the thirties followed by the 2nd World War and finally by the British leaving India in 1947. After independence, suburban services around Kolkata (then Calcutta) were the first to be considered for electrification. The first electric loco in Eastern India was flagged off from Howrah station on the 1st of December 1957. It was a memorable inaugural run with Kochak predictably deciding to drive the locomotive himself for a considerable distance.

S S Kochak was gregarious by nature. For years,



The Silver Elephant award With the Silver Elephant

he was a permanent fixture at every Club Day at Jamalpur. Perhaps only Ban Basu '27 and P C Sen '50 have been more regular. He had the uncanny knack of making the most junior apprentice feel at ease. He would saunter up to the first year batch, inquire about their activities, particularly their prowess in athletics and games. He was much sought after as the chief guest at



Kochak played for the veterans\_ hockey team of Mohan Bagan in 1964 when the Club completed 75 years

many cultural functions where he displayed his ability of being a motivated public speaker. His inimitable style and story telling would keep the audience in splits. One of the stories that this chronicler remembers is that of a light steam engine, somewhere in the Nilgiris, running over a sambhar. The cow catcher knocked the sambhar off the track and the engine crew decided to pick up the carcass and give themselves a venison treat as well as an antlered trophy. However, the sambhar is a big animal and they could not lift it onto the loco. They therefore decided to place it on the track and run the loco



over it to cut the body in two. Since there is a cow catcher in the front, the loco was backed onto the animal. And..ouch! The loco derailed. You can well imagine the rest of the story. Apart from being a top-notch sportsman, excelling in hockey, tennis, golf and indoor games like Bridge (he represented NER, CR and NEFR in all four), S S Kochak won the "The Silver Elephant", the highest National award for Scouting. The award was presented by no less than Lady Baden Powell, who together with Lord Baden Powell, founded the worldwide Scouts and Guides Movement. At the time of the award, he was State Chief Commissioner of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Maharashtra. He was awarded the British Council Fellowship in 1956 to Halifax, Canada, to study setting up of a power plant from the first brick. But then, winning awards and accolades came naturally to him. It was a quirk of railway service that at the time he was in service, there were no avenues of promotion for him beyond a Chief Electrical Engineer. In spite of an excellent record of service, his last 20 years with the Indian Railways were in the same grade.



Mr. and Mrs. Kochak

He was very concerned about nurturing traditions, which he felt separate a normal engineering college graduate from one who aspires to be the best in the field. Values of inculcating loyalty, kinship and bonding, which would help sustain a cadre during challenging times, was his theme which he would repeat at every forum. He contributed a number of articles which revealed his passion and deep commitment in motivating youngsters for joining as SCRAs to strive for the highest standards of excellence and professional competence. S S Kochak is part of Jamalpur folklore. He breathed his last on the 4th of March 1993, but we will always remember him. We will also remember his wife, Renuka Kochak, who accompanied him on every visit he made to Jamalpur.

S S Kochak's memory lives on with his son, Ravi Kochak '74, following in his footsteps to join as an SCRA. Ravi retired from the railways as Additional Member (Production Units) but did not retire from an active life. Currently, he is the Vice Chairman of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, London, for the Southern Asia Region.

*"He was a man so gentle  
And the elements so mixed up in him  
That Nature may stand up  
And say to the world  
- This was a Man!"  
  
- William Shakespeare*

# What Is Your Life Worth?

S Manikutty '64

The tiny Covid virus has made philosophers of us all. It does many wonderful things that even the most tyrannical dictator cannot dream of doing: making everyone stay put at home, wearing a masks on our face (now may be designer masks, but masks, all the same), stopped children from playing, going to school, and doing all those countless pranks that make a childhood, stopped people from shaking hands, from even speaking unless absolutely necessary, travelling on trains, plane, metros, buses and even bicycles, and organizing social functions. It has made living tough, and dying, even more tough. But you must concede that it has given us plenty of time to think about all kinds of things, mostly I suspect, not in a too cheerful fashion. It may have forced us to think, what is all this life worth? And the corollary question: How would you measure your life?

Steve Jobs once said, when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given only a few months to survive, that there is nothing like the prospect of imminent death that enables one to focus on the essential essentials, and leave out everything else. Seeing all what is happening, the question may arise: what meaning does so many things we have taken for granted as important

have? We had a few lakhs and were taking the advice of financial experts on how to make them into a few crores. We were looking at investments that would yield a quarter percent extra and were calculating how much more we would have after twenty years. We were working hard at our promotions, calculating the chances of becoming a Member of the Board or CRB, and were figuring out how to manage the postings to enhance the CV's value. We were planning the future education and career of our children. Suddenly, one who was your bridge partner the other day, and with whom you had shared many a dinner and drink, is suddenly "positive". He goes to the isolation centre, then hospital, then oxygen, then ventilator, and at the end, just a body whom even his closest relatives cannot see, touch and do the last rites for. It is just a body wrapped in a plastic sheet and got rid of by the Corporation. All in a period of six to fifteen days. This has happened to those who were a little careless for a moment, or who knew the risks (such as doctors and healthcare workers, policemen, municipal employees, railway workers, so many), and even to those who were very, very careful and did not know where it came from. So the question that might arise is: At the end of the day, what is life worth? Is it just the cost of that plastic sheet?

The existentialistic answer is, it is worth as much as you make it. In his masterpiece, Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl was sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz as a prisoner, and being a psychotherapist, observed how different prisoners took it when life was stripped of all dignity and reduced to its barest form where even thinking about a purpose was a luxury. Thinking of even the evening of the day seemed to be so unrealistic, what with the random shootings, torture and simply collapsing due to sheer exhaustion. Yet he observed that there were many people who took all this as merely a passing phase, and were even planning to do when all this would be over. They were the likeliest survivors.

We are in no way under a similar fate. Still, seeing death so close at hand and so unpredictably, many of us may ask, what meaning life has, when it is so fragile. What meaning does it have? Life says, don't ask me what the meaning of life is. Ask yourself what meaning you give to your life. Life urges you to think of what meaning you can give to your life, whether you are a probationer just launching one's career, or a retired old man in the seventies who has managed to acquire all the diseases of old age, the so called comorbidities.

To me, it appears that one can attach meaning to one's life at four different levels: at one's personal level, next at the level of one's family, next to one's colleagues and friends, and lastly to the larger society.

**To Oneself**

At the basic level, there is a responsibility one has

to oneself. This has nothing to do with how much money you are going to earn, invest and what luxuries in life are at your command. It has to do with the extent to which you are investing in yourself to grow, to attain one's full potential. Non fulfilment of this potential is a betrayal of the trust God has given you. Attainment of one's potential is one way to find meaning in one's life.

**One's Family**

Next comes one's family. What exactly is one's responsibility to one's family and how is it related to the worth of his/ her life? Of course, in terms of material needs, there is a need to provide them with a comfortable life, adequate to live a comfortable life, and nothing more. In Arthur Miller's play, All My Sons, the protagonist, Joe Keller builds a business for the sake of his children, and does a major mistake in deliberately sending some defective cylinder heads for fighter planes, and many pilots die. His own son, serving in the US Air Force. Is unable to face the reality of his father merrily doing business and making money, while his colleagues die. He takes his own life, and Keller's work of a life time mean nothing to him now. Leaving a business or an inheritance may not be the best thing one may do to ne's family; making them good persons may be. This is one thing you alone (with your spouse can do): to bring up your children with the right values, attitudes and ethical sense that will enable them to lead their own life and fulfilling their own potential in their own way, rather than making them do what you wanted to do

and failed. Clayton Christensen, in his lovely book, How Would You Measure Your Life, makes the point that this is an awesome responsibility, where every word and action of yours go a little in building the character of your children. If you are beyond that stage in life to mould your children, your grandchildren, may be. This is what will stand them in good stead.

**One's Colleagues and Friends**

Is one's ability to trample over one's colleagues and put down those under him/ her one way to measure one's life's worth? Here again, being in an organization like Railways gives one a great opportunity to develop not only oneself but also those who work under him/ her. Konosuke Matsushita, the legendary founder of Matsushita Electric, once said that he judges his managers by how they can "create a work environment of

peace and harmony, and make work meaningful".

So how many and what kind of people one has groomed may be a good measure of how much one's life has been worth. Have you given them opportunities to develop? For them to attain their full potential? Do you create an atmosphere where when they see you in the morning, they greet you with a genuine smile? Do they come to you not when you summon them, but because they just want to?

It has been said that the ability to listen is one of the hardest to have, especially when one climbs up the hierarchy. Many people in organizations do not necessarily come to their boss to solve their problems; they just want a shoulder to weep on. Are you that shoulder? Or you have no time for all this sentimental nonsense?





**To the Larger Society**

Most Railwaypersons do not know of any world outside the Railways. Even after retirement, they continue to have their own conclaves, their clubs, and talk exactly as they would talk while in service, even inter departmental quarrels! Nothing wrong with that, of course, but one could just step out and see what the world outside looks like, and how one can contribute to that world. That is where one can create a meaning for one's your existence. One of my batchmates runs a home for poor old people without support, another person seven years senior to me is still active in improving the lives of the blind, and yet another runs a school. This is how they create a meaning for their lives. It can never be done by doing something to yourself. It is measured only by what you do to others. And there is so much you can do!

**So, What Is Your Life Worth?**

Covid only provides an opportunity to do what we

have to do anyway. Now most of us who have retired have plenty of opportunities to think about it. Others would have less time but still can find some time to see what you would say when you have to give an account of yourself. Paul Kalanathi, a brilliant neurosurgeon who died at the age of 36 due to lung cancer has written this among his final words to his 8 months old baby girl, in his wonderful book, When Breath Turns into Air.

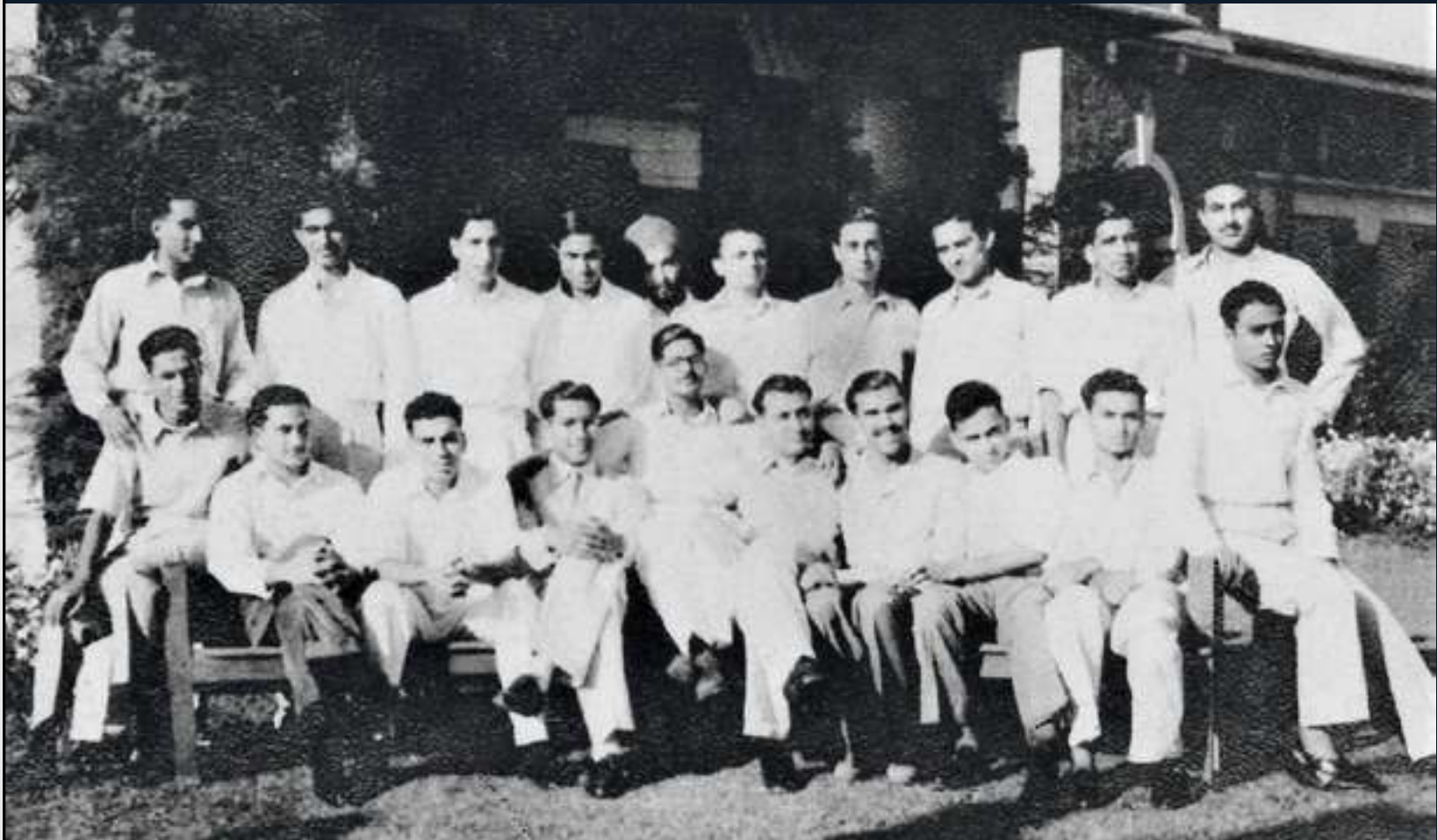
"When you come to one of the many moments in life where you must give an account of yourself, provide a ledger of what you have been, and done, and meant to the world, do not, I pray, discount that you filled a dying man's days with a sated joy, a joy unknown to me in all my prior years, a joy that does not hunger for more and more but rests, satisfied. In this time, right now, that is an enormous thing".

After quoting this sentence, I find I have nothing more to say. Words fail me.

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*A rare 1945 batch photo*



Sitting L to R

M Lal, G S Kodikal, S S Dugal, M Philip, M K Modwell, K L Khorana,  
A C Puri, R Kochar, A K Srivastava, R S Sarma

Standing L to R

T P S Kent, A S Nangia, V L Khanna, A Sen, J M Singh, P P Sarangpani,  
E J Kingham, C M Malik, S C Vadera, M M Suri

A rare picture of the 1945 batch. The batch had 29 members, including 9 muslims. This picture includes all 20 non-muslims but no muslim at all. Obviously, it must have been shot after 1947 by when all the muslims had migrated to Pakistan. It must have been shot before the batch left Jamalpur as it is in front of the main porch of Gymkhana. Note the kind of greenery the front of the porch had then (perhaps 1948).



# Jamalapur Hills on 21st March 2020 Just before the Lockdown



Contributed by Mahesh Kumar Roy '94  
currently posted at IRIMEE

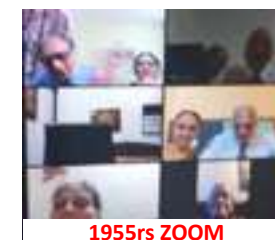


## Inimitable 1955 SAMs

V. Narayanan  
(vednarayan@gmail.com)

The title is in green to symbolise the evergreen spirit of 1955 SAMs. The batch had 22 members. In 2019 there were, sadly, only 12 surviving members. However, all responded with gusto to getting our photos with our better halves half century apart to get a collage ready. In addition we got some lovely ladies whose husbands had left this world, in what seemed to us in unseemly hurry, to also share the photos. In what could be termed as a lucky development, Rajni, w/o of CP Gupta could be tracked in NJ with Masih's assistance to get the required photos. And when Rajni visited Pune a print was mailed to her! In all we managed to get 16 to participate with great enthusiasm.

The foregoing brief account belies weeks of frenetic exchanges of mails, WhatsApp messages to get the right collage composition. The first effort with fewer contributions turned to be not so attractive with large empty spaces. The final effort is at the top. Thanks to current technology, Bando (AK Banerji), my batch fellow has been able to tweak it to his taste and get one made for himself, keeping the photos intact.



1955rs ZOOM

August 9 is our batch day, the day our batch senior Chiranjiv Singh reported to Gymkhana. This year we celebrated it with a ZOOM call, orchestrated by Bando, with participation from Canada, USA and all over India with family youngsters assisting seniors to enjoy the interaction. It was indeed most enjoyable. The meeting concluded with calls for more such dialogue.



# Resurrection of a Giant



by  
Saibal Bose  
Subhasis Ganguly  
Publisher: CPRO, S.E.R.  
Price: Rs.200  
Pages: 100

D.H.Lawrence wrote "The identifying ourselves with the visual image of ourselves has become an instinct; the habit is already old. The picture of me, the me that is seen, is me." Saibal Bose tries to break out of this mould of a career railway bureaucrat (as he sees himself) and metamorphose into an industrial archaeologist, nay historian. He is one of the few Indian authors on railway history who has overtaken the western steam loco buffs in their own game of harvesting and dissemination of vintage knowledge.

Historically and empirically, RENOVATIO makes a watershed contribution to the legacy of colonial railways and widens our horizon, from the birthplace of industrial revolution to the far away lands of subsequent beneficiaries.

If the name of the book is enigmatic, the subject is even more so. The preserve of steam loco buffs has always been 'oligarchic' that is, of the few, for the few and by the few. Again the narrative, in contrast with books of its ilk, reaches out to the masses by its simplicity and steadfast purpose. It attempts a rare peep into Indian Railway's colonial past through archival information and, in the process, records the chequered history of this mighty force of India's advancement. It brings the railways closer to the readers and holds up the joyous saga to an entire new generation, whose late arrival in this world passed up those wondrous black beauties; the iron horses; the steam locomotives.....

The contribution of Subhasis Ganguly (co-author) in archival research is praiseworthy. Such a portrait of a steam locomotive could not be knit graphically and textually without sound insight into the tenets of the men and their work of a bygone era. There are some excellent cameos – little known legacies of our humdrum and busy lives

that help to spruce up the tale of Herbert William Garratt and his design of articulated locomotives. Garratt had brought back only the bare idea from Australia, where he was engaged in an inspectorial capacity. Soon the railway industry that flourished at Manchester (in the wake of the industrial revolution) pounced upon the principle of a maneuverable railroad vehicle. The famous locomotive builders Beyer & Peacock of Gorton were quick to seize this opportunity and the rest is history. Locomotives with Garratts' designs, built by Beyer & Peacock became famous and were known the world over as Beyer-Garratts.

One such Beyer-Garratt was decommissioned in 1966 when the charge of the Diesels and Electrics wound up the uneconomical operations of steam locomotives. This Beyer-Garratt, a giant

by proportions and a powerful machine by profession stood quietly on a pedestal, decaying bit by bit since then. In an unprecedented move, South Eastern Railway decided to revive her, although the process itself was time consuming and expensive, requiring a large number of components to be made individually from old engineering drawings.

An important part of this restoration was the Heritage Run. The ambience of a misty November morning of 1929 was recreated to welcome the sleeping giant back on steam! All these activities and more is captured vividly with a deft touch by Saibal Bose making the book a Pointillist painting in words and pictures. It leaves the readers with a riff of music and a whiff of steam.



Saibal Bose with his Beyer Garratt along with late Animesh Ganguly.



# Re-union

Smt Jayanthi Mallya  
Better half of Gajanan Mallya '79

*The dawn of bright sun, marked the beginning of a 'New Day'  
A day of enthusiasm and eagerness, and ending the  
nervousness,*

*That was hiding at the corner of our mind.  
And finally the D- DAY had arrived*

*It was the union of three Focal batches, Diamond, Golden and  
Silver jubilee*

*A day of joy and celebration*

*Paving the way for happiness and togetherness*

*It is a day of Re- union, union of past, present and future*

*The gap though is more than six decades*

*Has woven them together, through thick and thin*

*The journey which they started together*

*From the land of 'Fairy Tales', with stars in their eyes*

*That is still shining bright.*

*The love of fraternity has bonded them together*

*Through the length and breadth of the universe*

*And the respect for each other, being far far higher*

*Rising to the 'Himalayan heights'.*

*Though divided by years, are united by the bond*

*The bond of togetherness, holding them together*

*Like a string of pearls.*

*The bond being thicker than blood, no way one can go astray.*

*Being woven together with one cord*

*The energy and the vigour in their strides*

*Happiness and joy on their faces, making one and all*

*Dancing to the tunes, that is in the air.*

*'GYMKHANA', the grand old lady of 90*

*Welcomed her children with open arms*

*A warm hug that is so soothing took them back in time*

*And made them feel young once again.*

*Holding them in her soft hands, guiding them along the corridors*

*Down the memory lane, each one becoming 'Nostalgic'.*

*Recollecting the days they spent together*

*Which was their 'Home away from home' for years*

*Reverberating once again, the good old days*

*The love, play, the fights, the days and the nights*

*That are gone by, gone forever from one's life.*

*The memories, the sweet memories*

*That were good and bad, got refreshed*

*While making their eyes moist, didn't make them feel sad*

*They were all feeling happy, happy on that momentous occasion*

*Which has brought them together, once again*

*Watching them together, happy and nostalgic once again*

*I pray quietly, from the bottom of my heart*

*A silent prayer to ' Almighty', let the saga of ' Brotherhood'*

*continue*

*Keeping the 'Spirit of Gymkhana', ever so HIGH.*





# Strange Tales: Commandeering of a Train

P.K.Mishra '83

The strategic importance and military benefits were major objectives while deciding issue of introduction of Railways in India. The Governor-General Lord Dalhousie had recorded in famous minutes, that introduction of Railways would be of incalculable value as it would connect all existing military stations from Calcutta to Sutlej with the arsenal of fort William and Government of India would be able to move men & materials within days in case of emergency which presently took months to move. "Immeasurable" advantages would accrue to a colonial administration composed of a "comparative handful" of British administrators and soldiers scattered over the subcontinent.

The Governor-General stated, "It cannot be necessary for me to insist upon the importance of a speedy and wide introduction of railway communication throughout the length and breadth of India. A single glance cast upon the map recalling to mind the vast extent of the Empire we hold; the various classes and interests it includes; the wide distances which separate the several points at which hostile attack may at any time be expected; the perpetual risk of such hostility appearing in quarters where it is the least expected; the expenditure of time, of treasure,

and of life, that are involved in even the ordinary routine of military movements over such a tract".

Immeasurable political advantages could be derived from a system of internal communication which would admit of full intelligence of every event being transmitted to the Government under all circumstances, at a speed exceeding five-fold its present rate; and would enable the Government to bring the main bulk of its military strength to bear upon any given point, in as many days as it would now require months, and to an extent which at present is physically impossible.- The Railway Engineer 1883

It was expected that Railway would not only increase the effective strength of the army, by saving the time employed in marches and quickly dispatching troops on a sudden emergency but would also avoid the need of concentration of troops all over the country.- Railway times, Volume 9

The experimental line to Raneegunge played a very critical role during Santhal revolution-the first war of independence, by rushing reinforcements, meeting military objectives of introducing Railway in India.

*"The railway open for 120 miles' was the first effort of the great East Indian' Railway Company, and ran as far as Raneegunge, 121 miles from Calcutta ; this morsel of line, tapping the neighbouring collieries, was opened with great eclat by Lord Dalhousie, and up it came all our Mutiny reinforcements"-*

Within five months of laying of Rail lines to Raneegunge, troops were carried by Railways from Calcutta to Raneegunge during Santhal uprising. This was the first ever instance in the country in which the Rail has been used for the conveyance of troops. Had it not been for the recently opened experimental line to Raneegunge facilitating quick dispatch of troops, Santhal uprising could not have been contained so easily.

*"Letter from Raneegunge, dated 24th July, 1855 says: — About 500 troops arrived by Saturday's train at Raneegunge, under command of Major Hampton, partly of the 37th and 50th B. N. I. One hundred were despatched yesterday to Taldanga."— The Indian news and chronicle September 19, 1855*

*"Three companies of the fith N.I. have gone by railway to Raneegunge ; two will remain to protect the railway terminus, which is threatened ; the third will move onwards to Sooree",-- August 1855 Allen's mail*

The first ever mobilization of troops has been recorded in The Courier (Tuesday 20, November 1855):  
*"It would appear that one body of the rebels*

*approached Raneegunge some days ago, which induced the ladies at the station to return to Calcutta. A body of troops was immediately sent up by train, and they will at once remove all anxiety regarding the safety of the station. This is the first instance in which the Rail has been used for the conveyance of troops, and we are thus enabled to estimate the immense advantage which it confers on the country in a military point of view. The troops could not have marched to Ranegunge in less than ten days, and before that time all the establishments at the Collieries would have been completely destroyed by the insurgents."*—The Courier , 20th November 1855

An interesting story of commandeering a train during military movement, and threatening to take Station Master of Howrah into custody by Colonel Vandeleur of sixth battalion, who had to quickly reach Allahabad via Raneegunge during mutiny of 1857, has been reported in South Australian Weekly Chronicle ( Saturday 5 Jan 1889 Edition).

Earlier, before construction of Railway, infantry regiments were moved from one end of India to the other at the rate of ten and a half miles a day, with six days' halt in a month. It took six weeks to travel at this rate from Calcutta to Benares. – *"Indian Railways as connected with British Empire in the east"*- By Sir William P. Andrew, C.I.E.,

*"I heard the old man say we had to reach Raneegunge tonight, and that the regiment was due at Allahabad in three days. Why should we*

stop?’ said Anak, half to himself. ‘There’s only 120 miles by rail, and it will require quick steps to reach Allahabad by road if we have to foot it.’

After opening of the experimental Howrah-Raneegunge line on 3rd February 1855, it was possible to travel by rail to Raneegnge, and there meet the carriages to travel further up the Grand Trunk road to all puts of the north-west. This was a metalled road, running up from Calcutta to Meerut and Delhi, from which stations onward progress was in palanquins.

“It used to be said in those early days that if we were then turned out of India, the Grand Trunk road would be the only monument we should, leave, behind us; and this was true until 1854, when the mighty Ganges, Canal and Railways was opened,”-- correspondent’s letter to chamber’s journal (31st March 1855).

Movement of military train was planned by Railway after passing the scheduled coaching trains. Colonel Vandeleur who had overheard the orders for movement of military special, sprang upon the platform where the station master was standing and an interesting conversation ensued.

‘Did I hear aright, Sir,’ he said, ‘ that you ordered this train to stop and wait for another?’

Station master stated that there would be slight delay of only three hours and military special would run after passing scheduled trains.

Such were my orders,’ said the civilian, promptly.

‘You must wait here — a matter of three hours—for the other trains to pass through.’

Colonel Vandeleur explained that he had to reach Raneegunge tonight and his orders were imperative.

‘ I must be in Raneegunge tonight,’ said Vandeleur.  
Can’t help it, Sir. You cannot proceed.  
My orders are imperative,’ said the colonel.  
‘So are mine,’ said the other rudely, ‘and I will carry them out.’

Colonel Vandeleur whispered to an officer standing near him and in a few minutes, a couple of the privates of the Sixth had jumped on to the engine, and another pair stood on either side of the astonished Station- Master.

‘I mean to proceed without further delay,’ said the colonel, ‘if I have to take you with me to force the passage through. “You cannot, and shall not!” said the official firmly.

‘Corporal Sims ;A corporal came up to the colonel, and stood respectfully at the salute. ‘Take charge of this man and hold him safely. You will join the regiment with your men at the earliest probable moment. It may be you will have to wait for a day or two.’

Station master was appalled at this outrage and threatened to report the matter to his superiors.

‘I will report this outrage at Calcutta!’ said the irate

station master, who seemed inclined to assault the colonel, and was held back by the two privates. ‘Quite right,’ said that officer coolly, and marched away to the engineer.

Train driver, who was wearily watching the fiery exchange decided to follow the common sense rather than the orders of Station Master. Train conductor also followed the suit.

‘Is there any reason why you cannot proceed, engineer?’ he said. The man touched his cap respectfully. ‘None, Sir.’ Then go on to the terminus, and delay for nothing except my orders, unless there is reason to fear collision with other trains. And I shall hold you to strict account for any delay, and require a sufficient explanation.’

The engineer glanced at the colonel, and then at the station-master, who was struggling in the grasp of the two privates. The conductor or guard of the train now approached, and the colonel repeated his questions in order.

Colonel then turned to the station master once more. ‘This train will stop nowhere this side of

Raneegunge,’ he said, sternly. ‘ Must I leave you under guard ?’  
‘You shall answer for this !’ said the other, sulkily. ‘You have the power, and I must submit now.’

‘That will do. Corporal, take your man to the carriage.’

A moment after the train rolled out of the station leaving the irate station master and bemused spectators on the platform adding an episode to strange tales of Railways.

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# My Kanpur Crusade

## JP Singh '70

I still vividly recall that cold morning in early January 1977 when I was ushered into the office of the CME/ N. Rly in Baroda House, Delhi. I had recently completed my 2-year probation after Jamalpur and had come to N. Rly headquarters to report for my first posting orders as an AME. The benevolent looking and gray haired CME peered over his glasses as he asked me to be seated. "Son, I am sending you on a challenging assignment. We have created a new post of AME (Kanpur) in the Allahabad Division and I am putting you in direct charge of two of the largest steam loco sheds in our Railway- Kanpur and Tundla loco sheds. Their operation has become a major headache for us and we continue to receive lots of complaints about late outage, loco failures, theft of coal etc. from our Traffic counterparts. I want you to station yourself at Kanpur and put systems in place to ensure smooth operation of the sheds."

As I walked out of his office, I was overcome by a mixed bag of feelings. It was indeed an honour to be chosen for a challenging job but there was also a sense of foreboding at being parachuted into the heart of the UP badlands. Nevertheless, putting aside all my foreboding, I took the first train to Kanpur. My posting news had travelled fast and a large reception crowd led by the

General Foreman (GF) was present at the station to receive me with flowers and bouquets. They may just as well have hidden daggers in the bouquets, considering the misgivings some of them harboured at my arrival.

A decent bungalow adjacent to the Kanpur loco shed had been vacated for my residence and the GF had vacated his large office room in the shed for my use. Both the GF and his deputy - Foreman Operations (FOR) kept assuring me that except for some recent instances of loco failures and delayed outage of locos, all was well in the shed functioning. I found the GF to be a genial old pious man who was looking forward to his retirement in a year's time. The FOR, however, was a relatively young man with a marked limp in one of his legs. He came across as a loud and foul-mouthed crafty player who showed little respect for the GF and was equally contemptuous of the rest of staff who opposed his authoritarian ways.

I had hardly taken stock of the situation and studied some daily reports when I received a phone call from the Asstt, Operating Superintendent (AOS) Kanpur, a smart promotee officer who started off with a litany of complaints about shed functioning and how nobody was responding to him. I assured him that I was now available on call at any time of the day. He evidently took that assurance literally because what followed over time was a barrage of calls, mostly at night when the outturn of locos to the main line was maximum.

As I started reviewing maintenance schedules and operating formats, it became clear that for

all practical purposes the shed was being run by the No. 2 - FOR. The GF was content to let him lead and not cross swords with him for reasons that started becoming clear as I delved deeper into the process of slotting both maintenance staff and the loco drivers for duty. The FOR functioned as a mini satrap, fixing arbitrary schedules and threatening anybody who dared to oppose him. This led to considerable resentment among some of the staff who quietly resented his playing favourites with both the maintenance staff and loco drivers, evidently for a consideration. I started insisting on a regular roster planned well in advance for the maintenance staff and a system, which ensured equality of hard and soft duties. Among the loco drivers, I tried to systematise a fair roster so that all drivers got an opportunity to operate passenger train locos as well as freight locos. The FOR started off by protesting vigorously at his ad-hoc rosters being set aside and then proceeded to allege favouritism on my part. He stopped coming to my meetings and I started receiving reports of his instigating the staff against me.

I stood my ground and with regular monitoring through the GF, complaints of late outages and loco failures started decreasing. At the same time, the FOR accelerated his belligerence against me and after about 4 months in April '77, he organised the first gate meeting against me, complete with a large microphone blaring allegations and expletives asking me to go home. I contacted the local DSP and got his help for keeping the protests within bounds and not allowing them to affect shed operations. All this

activity soon reached the ears of the Sr, DME in Allahabad and the CME. They were appreciative of my efforts but advised caution and restraint so that shed operations were not adversely affected. The FOR was apparently a Union man as well as a leader among his community.

The FOR, however, refused to give up because I had apparently disrupted a well-oiled system that was ensuring he made a tidy monthly sum of money. He now started recruiting unsavoury elements in Kanpur for his Gate meetings. This was confirmed by the DSP who advised me to somehow arrive at a working relationship with him because the criminal elements could cause me harm. As the temperatures rose both within and outside the shed, a fortuitous development saved me from any further trouble.

Before joining my post in early January'77, I had already appeared for the Civil Services examination and the result was announced in late June '77. When news spread in the shed that I was going to become an IAS officer and could return as DM, Kanpur (rumour spread by me), there was a dramatic change in the FOR's deportment. The gate meetings suddenly stopped and short of apologising for his unsavoury conduct, he congratulated me and offered an olive branch of peace.

As I said my final goodbyes to the shed staff in early July '77, I was saddened to see some of them cry at my farewell party, probably fearing a return to the old repressive regime. As my train chugged out of Kanpur station, I wondered

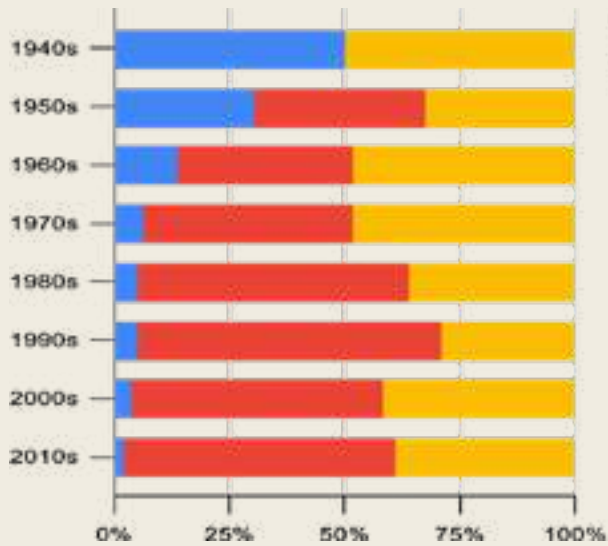
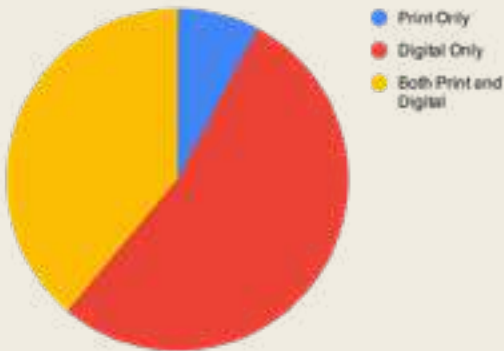
wistfully whether my short 6-month stint As AME/ Kanpur would lead to a change for the better. I never did get to know the answer except for the fact that no other officer was posted in my place and the post allowed to lapse. The charge of the shed reverted to the AME/ HQs at Allahabad. Evidently a crusader was the last person anybody in charge wanted in a sensitive operating facility.

POLL RESULTS

In which FORMAT would you like to Receive and Read SAM Magazine?

This is what you had to say

OPTION	RESPONSE	%
Print Only	45	8%
Digital Only	307	53%
Both Print and Digital	224	39%



BATCHES	SAMPLE SIZE*
1940s	7%
1950s	61%
1960s	46%
1970s	61%
1980s	77%
1990s	76%
2000s	99%
2010s	99%

\*SAMPLE SIZE refers to the % of eligible persons who have responded to the Poll

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# Tattle

M M Lal '44

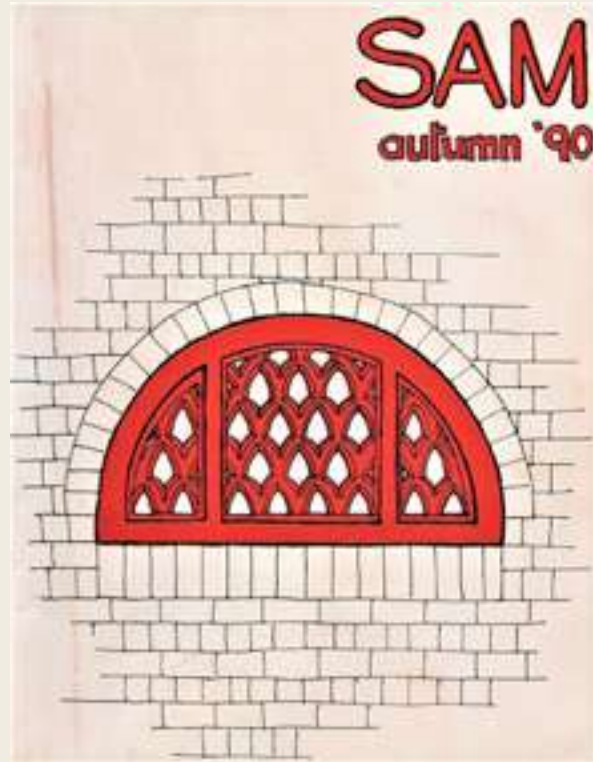
(This article appeared in the Autumn '90 issue of SAM)

I was standing in the Principal's office. Mr. Bailey had been Principal of the Technical Institute\* that trained officers for the Mechanical Department of the railways in India for many years. I should not have replied like that. But, I could not resist the temptation. Earlier, Bailey had walked upto the classroom in the Technical Institute and had called Mahadevan\*\* out to have a word with him. On coming back into the room, Mahadevan smiled at me and said, "Mister Lal, you see, Mr. Bailey would like to see you in his office," and continued teaching steam and steam engines.

*"When you asked for my permission to bring the car into the workshop and school premises, you had promised to keep it under a tree and not in the front porch. Then, why have you parked it in the porch?"*

*"Because it is raining very heavily; but I have taken care to put it right in front leaving enough space in the big porch for your car, Sir."*

*"I leave half an hour before you at lunch break, and don't you know I drive the car right through the porch. Take it out right now!"*



SAM Cover 1990

I almost asked if his car was not fitted with a reversing gear. But seeing that he was already angry and I had misbehaved in keeping my car where even Mahadevan did not dare to park his Wolseley, I quietly left with a "Yes, Sir" and did the needful. When I returned to the classroom, there were knowing smirks all around. I had been advised not to commit the blunder but I had remarked to my friends that after all Bailey owns a car and knowing what damage may be done by heavy rain to an old Baby Standard, he would not mind for just this one day.

This was in the mid-40s soon after the war and my brother was Assistant Engineer in Hardoi. He needed a car very badly and it was not very easy to pick one up. No cars were being made in the country at that time and there had been no imports during the war. To help him out, I

had bought the Standard Eight of 1934 from an Assistant Works Manager returning from the Works at Jamalpur and going home to England. I had paid him two thousand three hundred rupees since the car, though twelve years old, was in good condition. I was waiting to send it to Hardoi by rail in a four-wheeler car van. The allotment was likely to take time and, therefore, I was using it to keep it in running condition. Naturally, it was better to go in a car than to cycle up and down four times a day and it also gave an opportunity to oblige friends selectively. I was being offered an extra double omelette now and then by the hopefuls!

One night, soon after the above incident, we went to the pictures. Normally, I used to keep the car for the night in the garage of Mr. Gupta, Assistant Electrical Engineer, living in a house close to the hostel, within hundred yards from the gate on the main road. That night when we returned, it was rather late and I thought it would not be fair to disturb the Guptas at that time of night, and parked the car in the porch of the hostel. The next morning, for some reason or the other, the car would not start. There was not enough time to push it onto a side and we quickly jumped onto our bicycles and went to school. This was a Saturday morning and the day of Bailey's weekly visits for inspection on the narrow circular road of the hostel. This had completely slipped my mind. If there is a car standing in the porch, another car cannot go through and would have to be backed all the way to the gate. When I came back to at twelve, Lorry Car, the Hostel Superintendent, was waiting for me, and with the greatest annoyance

he could muster, he said, *"Do what you like, man, but don't leave that damned car in the porch on Saturday mornings."*

This was the second time that Bailey had occasion to take up a personal matter with me. About one year earlier, one morning I had left a note for Lorry Car along with a bedsheet, asking for it to be changed since it was patched up in the middle and I had not been able to get good sleep. Lorry had passed on the note and bedsheet to Bailey in the afternoon. I got the summons and as I entered the Principal's room and saw the bedsheet.

Bailey said, *"What's wrong? I have slept on patched up bedsheets. Don't you know there is a war on?"*

I replied, *"You, Sir, may be used to sleeping on patched up bedsheets, but I am not. If the railways are not in a position to supply un-patched bedsheets for the time being, I may be told so and I can arrange my own."*

The only answer to that was, *"Get out!"*

\*IRIM&EE was called the Technical Institute then. Later it was referred to as the Technical School. It was only in the early 1970s that it became IRIMEE. Prior to that it was officially IRSM&EE, where the 'S' stood for 'School' It was only at this juncture that the Principal became the Director.

\*\*Mahadevan was then on the faculty and was later Principal of the School for 10 years in the 1950s.

# Istanbul's Railway Heritage

Atulya Sinha '83

Istanbul - 2700 years of history

*“If the Earth were a single state,” said Napoleon Bonaparte, “Istanbul would be its capital.”*

The legendary city of Istanbul (earlier called Constantinople) embodies over 2700 years of history; and well-preserved relics of different eras can be seen in close proximity to each other. During a recent vacation at Istanbul, the author and his family experienced many different facets of Istanbul's railway heritage – although there were no long distance trains connecting the city.



Istanbul - 2700 years of history - Panoramic view of Istanbul

The Orient Express

The railway network was spreading rapidly throughout the world in the second half of the nineteenth century. Turkey was being mocked as *“Sick man of Europe”* in the declining years of the Ottoman empire. Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-76) undertook many reforms; he was so keen on railroads that he proclaimed that he would run tracks through his own body if necessary to bring trains to Istanbul! Eventually, a railway station was set up at Sirkeci (pronounced sir-kay-jee) in the

heart of the ancient city, carved out of the garden of the Sultan's Topkapi Palace.

In the words of historian Thomas Madden: *“Suddenly the air was filled with whistles and the clatter of steel as the new iron visitor ground to a halt. Applause and cheers arose, accompanied by a small brass band to welcome the first arrival of this modern marvel. And it was a marvel. For, just sixty-eight hours earlier, this train had lurched out of Paris's Gare de l'Est, sped across Europe, and now deposited its passengers in Constantinople's newly built Sirkeci Station... At long last, the Orient Express had arrived.”*

In June 1889, Sirkeci station became the eastern terminus of the Orient Express, which originated in Paris and reached Istanbul via Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. *“From the beginning,”* says railway historian Christian Wolmar, “a high standard



Cutlery and souvenirs of the Orient Express

of comfort was assured. The first coaches accommodated twenty people each, and had a salon for the ladies and a smoking room for the gentlemen with red plush armchairs.” This train was patronized by the rich and the famous; and it also provided a dramatic setting for books, plays and movies, including Agatha Christie's bestselling novel Murder on the Orient Express.

When the Orient Express ran for the last time in 1977, the following “obituary” was published in The Times: “In affectionate remembrance of the Direct Orient Express which passed away quietly in Paris last night. Deeply lamented by a large circle of friends and acquaintances at the Raleigh Club. Ride on! Ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die!”

Sirkeci Railway Station

In 1890, the temporary wooden building of Sirkeci station was replaced by a magnificent Oriental-Gothic masonry structure designed by German architect August Jasmund. After a long and glorious history, Sirkeci has no intercity trains now, but it continues to serve Istanbul's Metro network. The iconic station building – with its twin clock towers and round stained glass windows – still stands facing the placid waters of the Golden Horn. The original Orient Express platforms are well preserved, but their length seems inadequate. Rail travel specialist Andrew Martin explains, “One thinks of the Orient Express as a long train, because it went a long way, but it seldom involved more than half a dozen carriages.”

The station concourse, which still attracts many



visitors, is kept spick and span. Besides some souvenir stalls, there are at least three halls which are in use. One is maintained as a waiting room, where the visitor can appreciate the beauty of the high ceiling and the stained glass windows. Another hall houses a railway museum (described in the next section).

Yet another hall is the venue of the “Spirit of Dervishes” performance each evening. First, a quartet of musicians appear with traditional instruments. Soon after they begin their ritual chants, the dervishes enter in traditional costumes. They move slowly across the floor, and gradually the tempo builds up till they

are whirling in their places – a deeply spiritual experience for the audience, enhanced by the fading natural light as well as the magnificence of the hall.

Like most stations of the era, Sirkeci occupies prime land. There is a bustling market around the station, with eateries to suit all tastes and pockets. One can also find chemists, souvenir shops and fruit stalls. In addition, there are utilities like a taxi stand, a tram halt and a row of ATMs towards the waterfront of the Golden Horn. The entrance of the picturesque Gulhane Park is just a short walk away.



*Waiting room at Sirkeci Railway Station*



*Traditional music before the performance*



*Whirling Dervishes poster*



*Whirling dervishes performance*

### **Sirkeci Railway Museum**

“Our railway experiences are not confined to railway journeys. They work through associations,” writes travel writer Arup Chatterjee. “These associations may come through commodities such as food, cutlery, furniture, upholstery...

chains, locks, keys, suitcases, newspapers... characters such as in romantic plots, fruit or tea vendors, ticket inspectors, uniforms, lavatories, vestibules, railway tracks and so on.”

Not many tourists know about the small, but well-stocked, railway museum at Sirkeci station,



where one can relive the grandeur of the Railway Era. There is a variety of exhibits, including a mannequin in a conductor's uniform, old furniture, a piano, typewriters, documents, timetables and a drawing board with a large brass drafter. In addition, there are model trains, rails, track fittings, signalling equipment, field telephones, control charts, and so on, which will delight the

heart of professional railwaymen. There is also the cut section of a cab, with the controls still intact, which is very popular with children.

A kindly old lady – who might have seen off the last Orient Express – presides over the museum, while a fluffy cat dozes on a cabinet, oblivious to the surroundings.



*A berth and a conductor's uniform*



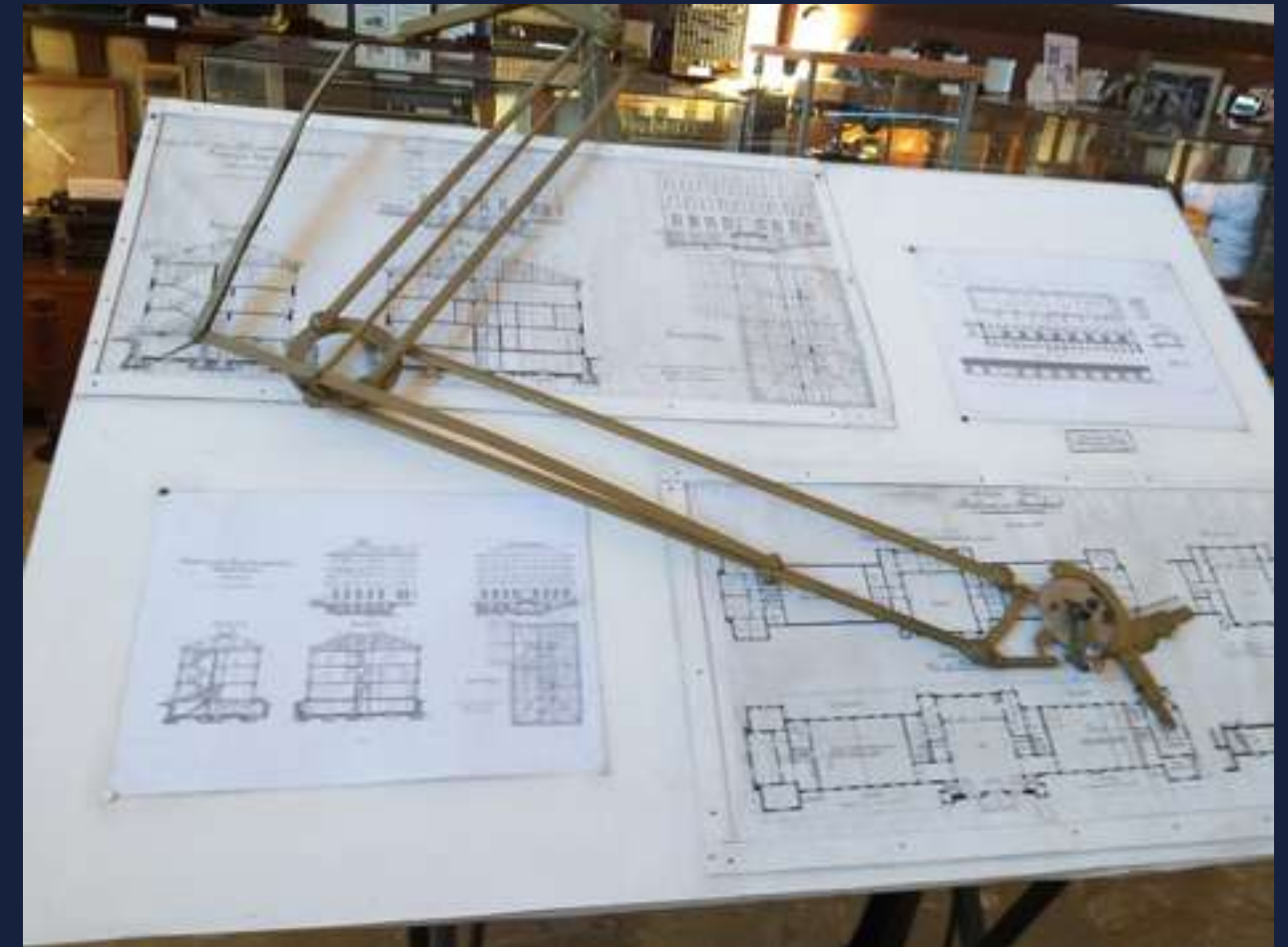
*A cat dozing in Sirkeci Railway Museum*



*A young visitor trying his hand at driving a train in the Sirkeci Railway Museum*



*Antique furniture on display in Sirkeci Railway Museum*



*Brass drafter with drawings in Sirkeci Railway Museum*

### **The Tünel**

In the late nineteenth century, Istanbul's business and commercial district was evolving in Pera, north of the Golden Horn. However, after crossing the waters, visitors had to tackle a steep climb to reach Grand Rue de Pera, the main street (now a premier shopping destination known as Istiklal Caddesi). A few years before the railway reached Sirkeci, an enterprising Frenchman named Eugene Henri Gavand offered an innovative solution to the Sultan – a funicular railway rising 573 metres from Korakoy on the bank of the Golden Horn to the southern end of Pera district. The Tünel, as it came to be called, was

constructed at a cost of TL 180,000. When it opened in 1875, it was the world's second subterranean rail line, after London's Metropolitan Railway. Initially it was powered by 150hp steam engines and the carriages were illuminated by gas lamps. Electric trains were introduced during the second decade of the twentieth century. This service still exists and operates at a frequency of 5 minutes from 0700 to 2245 hrs. At just TL4 (approx. Rs. 50) per ride, it provides a quick and economical connection for both residents and tourists.





Tünel, the old funicular railway



History of Tünel

Tram Services

Horse-drawn tram services had started in Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century, which were gradually electrified from 1912 onwards. The network continued to grow, hitting a peak of 270 tramcars running on 56 lines in the 1950s. Meanwhile, automobile population was growing and trams were increasingly regarded as impediments to smooth traffic. Consequently, tram services declined till they completely stopped in 1966.

With increasing congestion and pollution in Istanbul in the following decades, trams staged a comeback in the 1990s. New lines were built

on the European as well as the Asian sides, which were eventually joined in 2011, providing seamless transfer from Bagcilar to Kabatas, a distance of 18.5 km.

Meanwhile, heritage tram services along the historic Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue)

were revived in 1990, with a single tramcar connecting the Tünel with Taksim Square 1.64 km away. This little red tramcar, with its loud bell and three intermediate halts, is extremely popular with tourists. While the seating capacity is quite low, it gets immortalized in the form of pictures, models and fridge magnets.



Model of heritage tram running on Istiklal Caddesi

Pera Palace Hotel

With the arrival of the Orient Express, several new hotels were built in Istanbul for wealthy European and American travellers. The most luxurious accommodation was provided by the Pera Palace Hotel, established in 1892 by Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lit, the operator of the

Orient Express. It is claimed that Agatha Christie wrote Murder on the Orient Express while staying in one of the rooms, which is preserved in her name. Other rooms are dedicated to other celebrity guests, ranging from Kamal Pasha Atatürk to Alfred Hitchcock. Several antiques are preserved in the hotel, including the oldest elevator in Istanbul and a handsome sedan chair



used for bringing guests from Sirkeci station.

On the last day of our vacation, we visited Pera Palace Hotel. Though it has been extensively renovated in recent years, it retains its aura of luxury of a bygone era, with fresh flowers and gracious service. The grand tea lounge has

a high ceiling, antique furniture and shelves stocked with lavishly illustrated books. Sipping tea served in fine bone china with silver-plated cutlery and starched white napkins seems the best way to experience the lasting legacy of the Orient Express...



*Grand tea lounge at Pera Palace*



*Interior of Pera Palace Hotel*



*Pera Palace Hotel*



*Logo of Wagons Lit at Pera Palace*



*Teatime at Pera Palace*



*Sedan chair used by Orient Express passengers displayed at Pera Palace Hotel*

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# Silver Jubilee Batch 1991

## Au Revoir

### AKHILESH MISRA

The batch senior, he had an eventful first year, when he liked neither Pepsi nor Cola but chilla sauce. He is a wiz at electronics and is the main force behind the two lakh Railway Museum contract sought after by IRIMEE. He is the batch topper. He was the Mess Treasurer and had a glass, sorry, class term as J.A. Treasurer. Coming from an army background, has an inherent tidiness. He has an elaborate wardrobe. He converses brilliantly when the topic is computers. His booming voice will be missed in Gym. He plays squash and tennis and doesn't like hockey.



### LALIT MOHAN PANDEY

Short and stocky, **Pandu** hails from Dehradun. In his second year he started fiddling with the synth and now no musical programme can be conducted without him. Exuding a quiet confidence he always has a smile on his face. An avid bodybuilder, you can find him sweating it out with dumb bells and weights each evening. Has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Hindi film songs. He never forgets a turn you have done for him. He is the holder of a unique award - Best Cheer Leader Award. He is the outgoing CMC.



### ANIRUDH KUMAR UPADHYAY

Paddy is one of his kind. An organiser beyond par, he had extremely successful terms as Sports Secretary and Movie Secretary. He believes in getting things done and is direct about all matters of business. New acquaintances have to be forewarned not to be alarmed by his elaborate gestures and style of speech. Good at sketching, his artistic pieces have to be first explained by him to be appreciated fully. His taste for music is varied and his formidable knowledge of film songs make him a much sought for partner at antakshari. A very stylish basketball player, it is entertaining to watch him play.



### ARUN DEVRAJ

Debu, a Delhi-ite, but in actuality a Tamilian, is a tough nut to crack. Life never be dull with him around. His philosophy of life is - say what you feel, what you feel, without fear. People will remember his term as General Secretary for long times to come. Extremely cost conscious his term as J.G. Secretary was marked with heavy economising. He is the outgoing Captain and was dedicated to his job; one could always find him giving free advice on the finer points of building. He is very hard working and a very good at heart.



### VISHAL KAPOOR

Tall, fair and handsome, this chap's charms are being wasted in Jamalpur. His elegant dressing and careful walk are a treat to the eyes. Generally a mild natured chap, he comes in strongly and confidently in times of need. His cool and calm attitude and sensible logic have come in handy in resolving many a controversies. He has held the posts of Junior and Senior Auditors. Dedicated to shops, he has good command on technical subjects and is ever ready to share the same with any interested party. He started plucking at guitar strings in his third year and is now an essential part of the music team. Also plays the flute and the mouth organ. His choice of tunes however meet with raised eyebrows. He hates things that are not cricket and is a very good batsman at the game. He is a good conversationalist.





### ANGSHUMALI RASTOGI

During semester exams you can find this gentleman poring over his books and this has earned him the sobriquet *maggu*. A neatly trimmed moustache, sober look and bespectacled face make him look mature and above pranks. His thin, wiry frame may deceive one, but he is Gymkhana's best defender in football. Capable of great histrionics, he is always the key character in the English play on Club Day. Has



travelled far and wide, a few places being Singapore, England and France. Has a very unique and interesting hobby - *ban sai*. Watches business related programmes on TV and is positively into shares. He generally keeps out of trouble and does not have a single controversy or skirmish to his name. His battle with pimples is still on.

### RAHUL GOSAIN

his towering 6' 3" tall guy lives in a world of his own. The number of times he has surprised people with his weirdo hair styles, side burns, french cuts and fashionable attire are infinite. *Goosi* wanted very badly to become the Technical Society Secretary and his obvious sincerity of *intention* won him the election. His hobbies include photography and modelling. At any party you can find him swaying and dancing without control. He accentuated style of speaking English *mirrors* his passion for elegance and finesse. He is very good at hockey.

### RAVI JAIN

The outgoing president of the 'banyas' society, this chappie is a remnant of the traditions respecting breed of Gymmies. He truly has a multi-faceted personality and is one of the batch's few all rounders. With a right balance of sincerity, and frivolity he is an interesting person to have around. Has done well in everything - semesters, Snookers, Billiards, athletics - at least once. He is the outgoing Bridge



captain. He has an elegant style of playing badminton but falls short on stamina. Served a good term as Badminton captain. Is very fond of driving cars, breaking bricks, saving princes - all this on the computer screen. He is culturally active, lending himself to plays and serving as an accompanying instrumentalist. A complete person with almost no shortcomings.

### K.VINITA RAO

Our chief ed is a smartie. She is a confident person and knows her mind. She is the first choice on everyone's list for anything literary in nature and was the editor of the pioneering issue of the IRIMEE journal. Greatly talented at 'rangoli', she can generally be found making colourful designs during SPIC-MACAY programmes. Her innovative ideas give a new lease of life to Club Day fillers. A smooth talker she effortlessly convinces everyone about her point of view. She has considerable knowledge about formatting packages and printing and has a high general awareness. She is a good orator. Jamalpur roads will be much safer without her whizzing past on her Keweenaw Honda.



### JAYANT KUMAR

red not be told that Jayant hails from Delhi, it's obvious. Slim, dark and he is an unassuming johnny. An expert cueist good at both Billiards and Snooker. One generally find him on the front seat of the TV commenting on whatever the idiot box has to and sending himself and others into fits of laughter. One of the great bats of Gym, he served as the captain. He has taken up tennis in his final year and is emerging into a good player. He is the outgoing Club Treasurer.



### ANURAG GUPTA

The only Sanson of the batch, this guy is a 'kaam ka naadmi'. He has the knack of getting things done and puts it to full use in dealing with the various responsibilities thrust upon him. With a very good command on English he is the natural choice for any compering to be done and for any English play to be enacted. Not very athletic in physique, he has however a keen game sense enabling him to perform above average in any game he takes up. A good defender at hockey and football he will atleast stop the man if not the ball. Can be generally found chugging around the sports field in an attempt to shed calories. An ardent golfer he won the ITC tournament in his category. Also good at billiards he won the Billiard handicap in his second year. His term as the Indoor Games Secretary was very well managed.





### **RUPESH KOHLI**

Kohli, as he is widely known, is a quiet guy with a strong and innovative mind. He keeps himself away from trouble and remains busy in reading something or the other. His term papers and shop projects are products of high standard and he slogs hard to make them so. His evenings are spent in playing a few games of squash and then an hour of serious body building in the gym. He actively participates in cultural activities organising fillers and choruses. With great affinity towards audio and video entertainment he generally throngs the TV room.



### **DHARMENDRA SANWAL**

Cute with wavy hair and a pointed chin, you might be tempted to take sunno for granted. But this guy's deadly combination of talent and a will to win will prove you wrong. He emerged out of his cocoon in his third year and from then on there was no stopping him - Billiards Champ, twice, Snooker Champ, Table Tennis Champ, topper in semesters - are a few of his achievements. Has a very competitive spirit and is always looking for a challenge be it in sports, studies or even computer games. He plays squash and took to gymming for a short stint. Has a taste for English songs and spends a lot of time in front of the Club music system. Careful about not getting involved with other people's business he generally remains free and happy.



### **ATUL KUMAR SINGH**

He is a living image of Sabu. His huge body and gentle nature are an endearing combination. He faces everyone ranging from his seniors to the Senior PPT with a soft smile. His favourite place is no secret - his bed. He puts his height and weight to full use in games like volleyball and basketball. He will go to any lengths and even spend sleepless nights for not missing out on any entertainment especially movie shows. He has served as the Cultural Secretary. In his spare time he prepares for IAS.



### **NIKHIL AMIT**

Jamalpur is almost home for this Bihari. He comes from Munger hardly seven kilometers away. He will shortly achieve the distinction of being a married man. The best singer in Gymkhana, he has enthralled many a lounge session with his modulating voice. He received the Best Incoming Sportsman Award and the Most Culturally Active Award in his first year. He is a very good hockey player. He practises yoga regularly. He generally wins gold medals at athletics meets and has bagged the Best Athlete Award in the IRIMEE Athletic Meet on two occasions. With other games played less in Gym he resorts to tennis to sooth his sportsman instincts. He is the outgoing Tennis captain.



### **AMIT SARAN**

The batch junior, this chappie, it is said, had a tough time in his first year. field of excellence lies in computer programming and he is a maestro of C, and what-not. This lanky chap, having teleph contacts is a very useful person to have around. He used to pay regular visits to the gym but age has blunted his ardor. The role of a hench of a Bihari MLA that he played on Club Day is remembered in the cultural circles of Gymkhana.





# “The Lords of 91 Batch”



The CAST...then and now

वक्त ने किया क्या हसीन सितम ...  
तुम रहे न तुम, हम रहे न हम .....



*Batch Senior...the Pentium*

**Famous lines:**

*“Sir, all efforts to wake up Mr. Rahul Gosain have failed”*

**Also famous for:**

The Chilli Sauce

मेंडक जैसी आँखें  
हिरण जैसी चाल



Priya, Gauri, Anmol & Akhilesh



*Lampat (LMP)...aka  
Lalit Mohan Pandey*

**Famous lines:**

फौलादी शरीर  
कोमल दिल ...

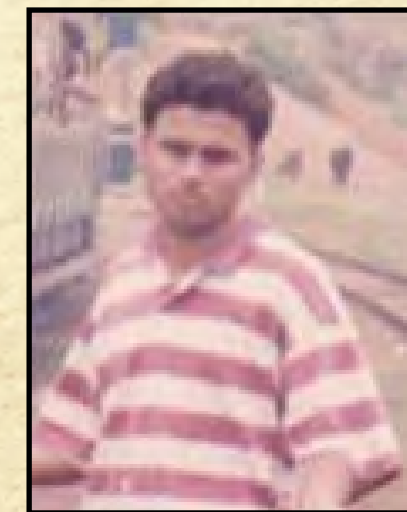
**Also famous for:**

THUD.....Classroom..Pandeyji ka sar..  
aur Desk...

तकियाकलप्म-- जब किस्मत ही हो



Raghav, Meethi, Lalit , Sudha



*Vishal...The Debhil Chop Man..  
Setting fashion  
trends in JMP catwalks*

**Famous for:**

Eau De Cologne  
Suspenders

In-depth knowledge of Body Language  
‘BAKRI’ in Munger





*Paddy..  
the original Rasik, छैला बाबू*

**Famous for:**

The 'Point Blank' man

**Also lines:**

"Never say no to \_\_\_\_  
Always say yes to \_\_\_\_"

**Paddy has 3 passions in life:**

B..ze, Basketball & Mathematics



Anirudh, Aditi, Aditya, Jaya



*Arun Devraj..  
The health Freak*

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE  
..SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

**Famous for:**

THREPTIN  
KALI PAHADI  
POTHOLE RIDE  
...and many more



*Maggu, the most studious  
one, D...rogi*

**Famous Line:**

Bonsai are plants grown in shallow pots...

**Famous for:**

The 'holy dip' outside Nikhil's house  
in Munger



Sunaina, Devyani, Angshumali



*Rahul Gosain  
उर्फ Goosi*

**Famous Lines:**

"Back off!! She's my girl!"

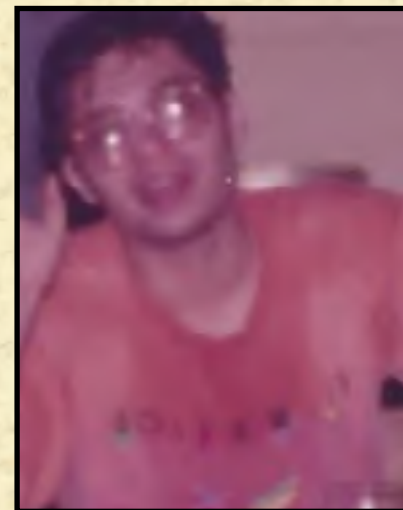




*Ravi Jain ....ladies favourite,  
centre pivot for the batch,  
the oh-so-cool one*

**Famous Line:**

उठे सब के कदम.....



Ekta, Ravi, Arundhati, Aisha

*K. Vinita Rao....the lone war-  
rior....trying to maintain  
sanity in the batch*

**Famous for:**

The Nook  
Ed SAM  
The traffic stopper.. Kinetic  
Honda on the JMP highways

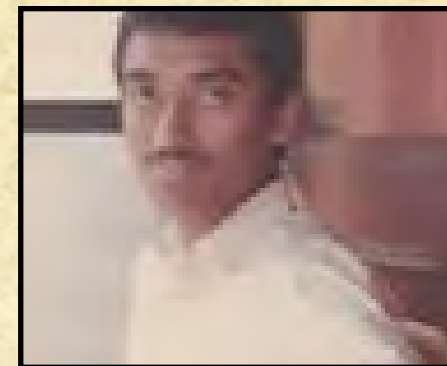


Jashoda Priya, Vinay, Vinita, Adwita

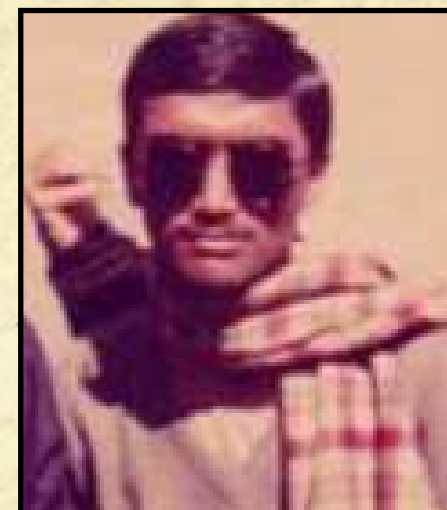


*JK....10 नंबरी  
the cool guy, ever  
fit, ever slim*

always dressed to kill



Jayaditya, Anjali, Prajit, Jayant



*Anurag Gupta...the Paunchy,  
the Railway Sahib,  
suave face of the batch*

**Famous for:**

The Red Jacket  
पंजे Laal..  
Project AC Cab

All his efforts to save his hair have  
failed...



Iryna, Sofia, Anurag, Vasu





रूपेश कोहली  
*Budhao....शरीर से बुद्धा, दिल  
 से जवान, Banarasi babu..  
 the most sincere one*

**Famous Words:**

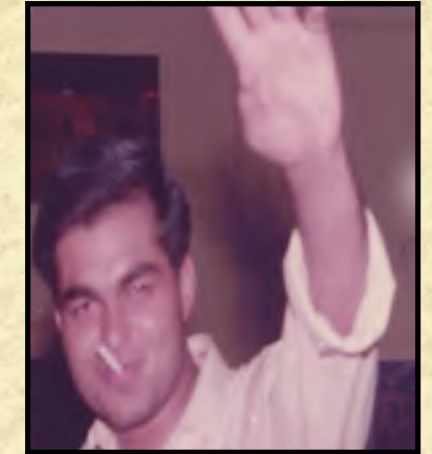
"Tarun Hurr..Hurr..Hurr.."  
 Escapades to Munger to watch mov-  
 ies like KOHRAAM, JALAA DALOON-  
 GA ETC.



*A K Singh.....  
 A Sleeping and gentle  
 Giant... Muski...*

**Famous and Daily Lines:**

'Bhola ji, mera khaan  
 Room pe le aana...ZZZZ'



Arav, Atul, Kavita



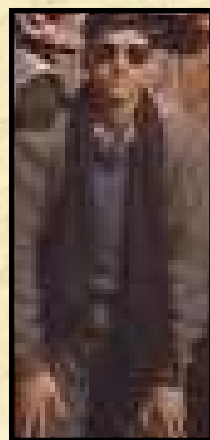
Preeti, Gulnaar, Rupesh, Noor

*Dharmendra Sanwal.....  
 बहती हवा सा था वो, कहाँ  
 गया उसे दूँदो*

**Famous Lines:**

'जब जब जो जो होना है ...  
 तब तब सो सो होगा '

...imagine such wisdom... at 18 !!



*Amit 'the चूजा'  
 Saran...Batchju*

**Famous for:**

923, 924, 925,,,956..hee hee..  
 957..hee hee  
 .Saalon !...RESET !!!



Amit, Dhruv, Nidhi, Jhanvi





*Nikhil Amit...the सुल्तान,  
Mungeri Babu, Aashiq,  
Gaayak and Dulhe Raja*

**Famous for never figuring out the  
gender of things:**

"Mera Shaadi Ho Raha Hai"  
"Meri Scooter nahi chal rahi hai"  
"Mera padai nahin ho raha hai"

**Also Famous for :**

Recurrent fungal issues  
Nocturnal visits for telephonic chats  
with JK as pillion rider



*Avantika, Akhilesh, Nikhil, Devyani*



*This is where  
it all started*



*Amit, Dhruv, Nidhi, Jhanvi*



# The "Formative" Years



The headless  
chicken days...  
हे भगवान तेरी  
दुनिया में ये क्या  
हो रहा है

Learning the  
new 'Chaal'  
Chalan of  
the bad, bad  
World...



Dekho Mummy  
main Superman  
ban gaya..

The fun started  
after dark ...  
on the eastern  
terrace "Health  
banane ko  
Tatpar"

Allah...

मेघ दे





*The dancing  
queens..*

*Pl notice the glass  
in Jk's hands  
and the look of  
Bewilderment on  
Baiju's face.*



## *Fun Time*

*हम तुम एक  
Coupe मे बंद हो*

*Aur Maheep aa  
jaaye*



*वो  
शाम  
मस्तानी  
मदहोश  
किए जाए*



*Galyat  
Saankli  
Sonyaachi*

*...Go go Goa..*





सुहाना सफर और  
ये मौसम हसीन

*Darjeeling*



*Ye railway  
Engineering  
meri samajh se  
bahar ki  
cheez hai*



*'Tech tour'*  
में गहन अध्ययन  
करते हुए कुछ  
प्रशिक्षु



*Ye Galiyan ..ye  
Chaubara*

*Ye milega na  
dobara*



*Yaay...ab main Fourthee  
Ban gaya !!*



# Parents Day

## Dec-1995





# *Time to say Farewell*

March 1996



# *Jamalpur Gymkhana*

Farewell to batch of 1991  
18th March 1996



# In conversation with Shri K.G. Belliappa '43

Venkateswaran Anand '62

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

*Not gold, but only man can make  
A people great and strong;  
Men who, for truth and honour's sake,  
Stand fast and suffer long.*

*Brave men who work while others sleep,  
Who dare while others fly--  
They build a nation's pillars deep  
And lift them to the sky.*

Shri K.G.Belliappa '43, born on 3rd December 1924, is 95 years old and the oldest and senior most living SAM. He is a legend of his times as one "who stood fast and suffered long". Though I have never had the privilege of working under him, I have had the pleasure of meeting him for official work when he was in the Southern Railway Headquarters in Chennai and I was in Integral Coach Factory.

After retirement I moved to Bengaluru, where I was able to renew my ties with the Belliappas through the Retired Railway Officers Association.

Shri Belliappa passed the Senior Cambridge Examination from the Bishop Cotton Boys' School, Bengaluru, and graduated in science from the Loyola College, Chennai. He was the youngest in his batch and stood sixth out of fourteen in the merit list. With his age advantage, he should have reached the apex of the department. He retired as Director General, RDSO.

Shri Belliappa has had more than his share of personal tragedies including the passing away of his son-in-law, wife and daughter. He has, however, never lost his joie de vivre and retains his sharp wit and sense of humour.

Due to the COVID 19 restrictions on movement I could not meet him personally but he gladly answered all my queries on 30 July 2020 over the telephone.

**Anand '62:** Sir, as a Coorgi, whose chosen profession is the Armed Forces, why did you opt for the Railways? Traditionally, Coorgis either run farms or join the military.

**K.G.Belliappa:** My father was employed in the Madras Government in a transferable job. I was the only son, so he felt that I should join Government.

**A:** As far as I know, there are only three Coorgi SAMs: Shri K.M.Aiana '30, C.G.Devayya '39 and yourself.

KGB: Yes, that's right.

**A:** Wasn't Shri R. Subbiah '29 a Coorgi?

KGB: (laughs) No, he was a Tambrahm like you!

**A:** Sir, I find from the Gymkhana Souvenir that when you were in your final year, Gymkhana had 30 apprentices from 1944 batch, 29 from 1945 batch and 26 from 1946 batch. Your batch had 14 apprentices, making a total of 99 apprentices. I suppose you had to double up.

KGB: Yes, that's right.

**A:** But the all-time high was when 1947 batch joined with 26 apprentices, taking the total to 111 apprentices. This was highest ever. With 30 apprentices of 1988 batch, 22 in 1986 batch, 19 in 1987 batch and 24 in 1989 batch, Gymkhana was again house full with 95 apprentices.

**A:** Was there any reservation for Muslims and Anglo Indians?

KGB: No. Very few Anglo Indians were recruited. M.A.Plunkett, H.G.T.Woodward and E.J Kingham were my contemporaries.

**A:** I believe there was no guarantee of employment by the Indian Railways and a few apprentices in every batch had to fend for themselves even after they graduated.

KGB: Yes, till 1938 batch, there was no guarantee. Even after completing the course and clearing the I.Mech.E exams, one or two apprentices were "let go". However, they were eagerly snapped up by the private sector. M.Philip, A.C.Puri and S.S.Duggal, all of 1945 batch joined the private sector.

**A:** Were any apprentices recruited for the electrical department?

KGB: Yes. D.S. Mehta, S.K. Kanjilal and S.S. Kochak, all of the 1936 batch, as far as I can remember.

**A:** Did they get any special training.?

KGB: Yes, they received training at the Jamalpur Power House and studied generation, transmission and distribution of electricity.

**A:** I believe the final year apprentices were sent to UK for training.

KGB: Yes, they were trained either at Doncaster Locomotive Works or Lancing Carriage Workshop.



However, due to the second world war, this was stopped. After Independence, the apprentices were not sent abroad.

*A: Were you allowed choice of railways?*

KGB: Yes, we were allowed three choices. I asked for GIP, BB&CI and East Indian - but I got SIR (laughs).

*A: Where were you posted?*

KGB: My first posting was in the Golden Rock Workshop. After that I was posted at Villupuram, Erode, Podanur and Madurai. Then I was suddenly whisked off to CLW and served for 11 years there. (1952-1963).

A: Must have been a challenging assignment.

KGB: Yes, indeed, those were exciting times. CLW built the DC Electric Locomotives and subsequently the AC electric locomotives. The DC locomotives had massive welded underframes and we had to arrive at the correct welding sequence by trial and error. We finally solved the problem by additional welding at some critical locations.

After CLW I returned to Southern Railway and thereafter I spent four years in South Central Railway.

From SC Railway, I went to BHEL Tiruchy on deputation. We were able to increase the production and turnover to record levels. It was a very satisfying tenure from a professional angle. Though I became immensely popular with the workers and had excellent rapport with my colleagues, my boss, a very senior SAM, was not happy. He tried to downplay my achievements. He would set informers to spy on me and issue commendation letters directly to my subordinates to create the impression that I had no role to play in the sterling performance of BHEL.

I confronted him and we had a heated argument. I felt it was no longer possible for me to work in BHEL, so I got myself repatriated to Southern Railway. I did not realise at that time that my boss in BHEL had thoroughly wrecked my ACRs. Though my batchmates were getting promoted, I was overlooked and continued as Superintendent, Mechanical Workshops, or Additional CME.

To add insult to injury I was transferred to North Eastern Railway, where I had to work under K.C. Bansal '44, who was a year junior to me.

While I was in Gorakhpur, my son-in-law, Sqn Leader Ganapathy IAF passed away.

*A: Was he the pilot who scored the first “kill” in the Bangladesh war? Was he at Kalai Kunda?*

<sup>1</sup> P.N.Murthy ‘28 pioneered the electrification of Indian Railways at 25 kV 50 Hz. It was a relatively new technology.

<sup>2</sup> Such famous locomotives as “The Flying Scotsman”, “The Silver Link” and the world record breaking “Mallard” — names which were once on every schoolboys’ lips — have borne testimony to the unsurpassed skill and craftsmanship of the Doncaster engineers

KGB: No, he was based at Hasimara. The IAF led sorties deep into East Pakistan. Sqn Leader Ganapathy scored the second kill. He was decorated with the Vir Chakra.

Anyway, I asked for a transfer to Southern Railway to rehabilitate my daughter.

At Chennai I had to work under K.Raman CME, a direct recruit junior to me.

Thereafter, I was promoted as General Manager in the Wheel and Axle Plant. This was an exciting and challenging job as the plant was in its infancy.

While at Bengaluru, I had a row with C.K.Jaffer Shareif, who was the Minister of State for Railways. I was summarily transferred to RDSO Lucknow. Professionally, this was also a very satisfying job.

*A: What was the most memorable incident during your tenure at RDSO?*

KGB: Well, there used to be an annual auction of mangoes from the railway’s orchards. On the day of the auction one of the bidders fired a shot in the air and asked all the other bidders to leave.

I rushed to the scene and fired my gun. I announced that the auction would proceed as announced.

*A: What type of gun was it?*

KGB: It was a twelve bore double-barreled shot gun. As you know, Coorgis do not require a gun licence.

*A: Did you fire this gun on any other occasion?*

KGB: When I was in CLW, I got a telephone call from Mrs Krishnaswamy, the General Manager’s wife. The GM had gone out on tour. As you know, the bungalows in CLW had verandahs with were covered by chicks (screens). Mrs. Krishnaswamy had spotted the snake and pointed out that it was a cobra and had its hood raised. I took aim and fired. I was sure I had killed the snake. However, a thorough search of the verandah and the surrounding land yielded no results.

Mrs. Krishnaswamy concluded that it must be sign from Lord Shiva, who is worshipped as Nagendra Hara.” I must have displeased him,” she said.

*A: Sir, did you ever consider joining the private sector?*

KGB: Yes, indeed. There were many offers, particularly from machine tool manufacturers and wagon builders. However, my wife dissuaded me.

“You can get away by defying the boss in the Railways, but not in the private sector,” she said.

<sup>3</sup> WCM5 class was depicted in a special postage stamp

<sup>4</sup> R.Subbiah of 1929 batch was Managing Director BHEL Bhopal and was instrumental in getting five SCAs recruited in 1962 batch for BHEL



*A: Thanks Sir, for your patience and razor-sharp memory. I have to submit the transcript today. Hope to hear more interesting anecdotes and words of advice from you.*

KGB: Anytime, Anand. (laughs). Next time you may like to hear about the seamier side of life.

Convey my best wishes to all the SAMs.

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**Editor: The above conversation whetted Shri Belliappa’s appetite to share more of his experiences with the younger generations of Sams. He requested for another conversation with Anand. Excerpts below...**

*A: Sir, you were in your final year at Jamalpur on Independence Day 1947. What are your recollections?*

KGB: During our final year, the Muslim SAMs, with whom we had the most cordial relations - H.C. Srivastava ‘45 and mess manager going to the extent of fasting during Ramzan - started deteriorating. The events leading up to direct action day in August 1946 split Gymkhana into Muslim and Hindu camps.

It was a particularly trying period for me as I was the G.Sec. (My batch mate V.A. Khan and I garnered equal number of votes. The Principal, Mr. Bailey, suggested that the outcome should be based on the toss of a coin. I won the toss and became G. Sec.). The Muslims started reading Namaz loudly and in retaliation, P.P. Sarangapani ‘45, organized Ram Bhajans.

The very same people with whom we shared meals, rooms and the playing field, shunned us. It was shocking the way our best friends suddenly became enemies.

There were civil disturbances also, with Muslim mobs attacking Hindus. A mob entered the Indian Apprentices Hostel (the Rampur Hostel across the Railway Line) and thrashed the inmates. Fearing for the safety of the Muslim apprentices, they were hustled off to the power house which was guarded round the clock. Muhammad Ashfaque ‘42 was shot at.

Fortunately, the rampaging mobs left Gymkhana alone.

The East Indian Railway administration gathered all the Anglo Indians into vigilante groups and gave them fire arms to guard vital installations.

There were hardly any scenes of rejoicing on 15-8-1947. The Muslim apprentices, after shouting pro Pakistan slogans, left on 14-7-1947 itself.

We were waiting for orders to proceed to UK for further training. However, we were sent off to the GIP and BB&CI for “intensive training”.

Most of the railway staff, especially running staff opted to go to East Pakistan. The workshop strength also diminished and apprentices who had availed themselves of leave in excess had to make up the gap. However, the Biharis who went to West Pakistan were treated as second class citizens.

All the Muslim SAMs opted for Pakistan. Abdul Kalam ‘41 rose to become Chairman of the Pakistan Railway Board. He was made Vice Chancellor of Karachi University when he was ninety years old!

Muhammad Ashfaque was shot dead by the Mukti Bahini during the Bangladesh uprising.

Only one Hindu (M.K. Gamkhar ‘44) temporarily opted for Pakistan. This left him in limbo when final orders came for posting. So, he changed his mind and opted for India.

S.A. Khan of my batch, who belonged to Hyderabad left the Railways. A.A. Rahman, also of my batch, was an expert card player and reportedly made it a lucrative profession.

*A: Sir, how did you find the British Officers?*

KGB: When I was DME Madurai, there was a rule that two persons had to supervise the turning of steam locomotives. Madurai was the largest Metre Gauge shed on the South Indian Railway. The Railway administration was afraid that communists may sabotage the turntable and thereby bring trains to a halt. I reversed this rule and legislated that only one person should supervise the turn table.

It so happened that soon thereafter, a locomotive fell into the turntable pit and my boss, the DyCME in SIR Tiruchy a Britisher called Mr. Head (yes, that was his name!), was asked to conduct an inquiry. Meanwhile, I had to rush to Kodaikanal Road to attend to an accident. I saw the DyCME's inspection carriage going towards Madurai.

I boarded the carriage and told Mr. Head that I take full responsibility for the locomotive falling into the turntable. I do not know whether Mr. Head conducted an inquiry; I did not hear anything from him, either. However, Just before leaving for UK, Mr. Head showed me the file in CME's office. He said, “I liked the way you stood up for your subordinates. Similarly, I have to stand up for you. The case is closed.” Throughout my career I have always stood up for my subordinates and they have never let me down.

What a contrast to my experience in North Eastern Railway! For some unfathomable reason the Railway Board ordered that Gorakhpur Workshop should build YL locomotives. Gorakhpur Workshop had never built steam locomotives, whereas Ajmer had. All the 263 YL locomotives were imported. Hence, manufacturing drawings were not available. Gorakhpur workshop out turn of POH fell from 10 to one! Shri Himmat Singh from Railway Board landed up in Gorakhpur to inquire. The CME blamed me. I protested, saying that a workshop should not be judged by one moth’s performance. The workshop was performing quite well in the past few months. The Railway Board wanted to fix responsibility on Ajay Johri, a fine officer who was doing his best. I defended Ajay strongly and that was that. The crazy idea to build YL locomotives was dropped.

*A: Sir, there was a one-day general strike in 1968 and again a prolonged one in 1974. What are your memories?*

KGB: I was in SCRLy in 1968 and I have no recollection. As far as the strike in 1974, I was the Superintendent, Mechanical Workshops (SMW) at Perambur, Southern Railway. There is very little that the local administration could do to break the strike. Of course, one has to be on guard that there is no violence or damage to property.

However, I did break up some flash strikes.

In 1952-1953, the workers of the iron foundry in Perambur Workshop downed tools. I was asked by the CME, Mr. Batliwala, to break the strike. The workers only grievance was that the Senior Supervisor



routinely used abusive language. A simple and sincere apology by the Supervisor solved the problem. When I was in SCRI headquarters, the CME, Shri H.R. Chopra asked me sort out a strike in Lallaguda Workshop. The workers complained about the rude behaviour of the Works Manager. Again, a simple apology solved the problem.

As SMW Perambur I faced the challenge of out turn from Wagon Shop at Perambur. It appeared that newly turned out wagons were located in the traffic yard and brought back to Workshop and again dispatched, thus boosting the out turn. I put a stop to this malpractice. The resultant drop in out turn could not be explained. The workers started losing their incentive bonus. It appeared that this malpractice had been going on for years. Matters reached the ears of GM Southern Railway and he asked me to explain. He agreed that the malpractice has to stop. I ordered a fresh work study and permitted some increase in the allowed timings. Thus, the workers were enabled to earn an honest living, and the fudging of out turn figures stopped.

*A: Sir, soon after the strike, the Railways started on a campaign to clear “dead wood”. Did you have to invoke the codal provisions to weed out ineffective/dishonest officers?*

Well, I made no such recommendations.

*A: Sometime in the 1960’s there was an incident of an SCA resigning soon after he joined Jamalpur. There were allegations of harassment by his seniors. Was there any such incident in your times?*

KGB: Yes, an apprentice of 1944 batch left without any warning after reaching Jamalpur. He complained that he was harassed. An inquiry was ordered by Railway Board. Shri H. Ahmed ‘29 was visiting Jamalpur. We sought his advice. He said, “The deposition of the 1944 batch is crucial.”

To our great relief, the entire 1944 batch deposed that there was no harassment whatsoever. Nevertheless, the SCA who fled did not report back.

*A: You are famous for your forthright and no-nonsense approach. Did you really reject a boiler when you were Inspecting Officer at CLW?*

KGB: A crucial component of the boiler is the joint ring which connects the smoke box to the barrel. It is a one-piece rolled component - something like a steel tyre. The item was in short supply. The DyCME ordered that the ring should be fabricated in sections. I came to know of this. I rushed to the workshop late at night and took a blowtorch and cut the ring into pieces.

There was an uproar and the CME was upset. Matters reached the ears of the GM. I was summarily transferred to the Technical School. This suited me very well - the teaching allowance of Rs 150/- per mensem was most welcome!

*A: Sir, A final bit of advice?*

KGB: As I said earlier, look after your subordinates.

<sup>5</sup> The builders were Hitachi of Japan, Mavag of Hungary, Henschel of Germany and Robert Hawthorn of Britain

When I was kicked out of BHEL Tiruchy, a delegation of workers appealed to my boss to allow me to stay and complete the process of rationalization of trades which I had started. BHEL, with a workforce of 6000 odd, had 130 different trade designations. The workers had no idea what their future would be. I reduced the number of trades to 20, and formed four streams of advancement.

Again, when I was ousted from WAP, the officers and workers appealed to the Railway Board that I should be allowed to continue. To this day I cherish the memories of my days with BHEL and WAP for the loyalty and affection of my co-workers.



KG Belliappa and V Anand '62



K G Belliappa with Mrs. Subramanyam



# Re-discovering the spirit of Gymkhana

S.M.Sharma '88

All railroads lead to Baroda. Being posted at the Railway academy as Senior Professor Management in Baroda provided an excellent opportunity to interact with so many young officers especially the last five batches of Jamalpur. As they say that all good things come in small packages, and the small bunch of SAM's would stand out during the Foundation Course introductory session itself. They made their presence felt with their energy levels and each one was talented in his or her own way. This was expected of them as that is the way the World still views a Gymmie. As an alum, it was a wonderful feeling when other faculty praised them for their overall performance in all fields. As I reflect on the time spent with them and watching them grow from apprentices to bright officers, I ponder at what is the true essence of being a Gymkhanite.



With the officers of 2k14 batch- Shikhar, Nikhil and Rohit



Yeah Dil mage More (medals)-Jyoti sahu

And indeed, it is about the "Being". What was it that made them stand out? What was it that they did which was common across the batches, and something I too could connect with? Managing the Sports logistics at NAIR, I realized that although most probationers played some sport or the other, sports medals were as if made for Gymmie and it was at times embarrassing to see that they had taken the lions share in all events. Normally at NAIR we had the best sportsman award but I recollect two ladies who forced me to rename it as the "best sportsperson award", something which we should have done earlier. Jyoti Sahu and Shilpa Poonia who performed exceedingly well and won these awards during the Foundation day. After this we started to award the best sportsman and sportswoman during the foundation and induction programmes' but one sportsperson overall during the foundation day.

In the words of Billie Jean King, " Sports teaches you character, it teaches you to play by the rules, it teaches you to know what it feels like to win and lose – it teaches you all about life." But winning is not everything, wanting to win is. (Vince Lombard)



Weekend Cycling with the probationers of 2K11 batch- Priyanshu, Sivanand Dash, Azimuddin and Durgesh Singh

What was nice that sports were about participating and competing and giving their best. Even though many didn't win medals they surely won a lot of hearts. With these boys and girls around the sports management team was under pressure to add more events to the competition and soon we started long jump, shot put, swimming and many more. They were willing to dream big, think out of the box and be flexible in their approach. The weekend cycling trips or the cricket matches were very popular with them around. Late risers but always on time for the class, some still excelled in different forms of fanki. Some missed the PT and had very innovative excuses but not surprisingly were the first ones on the sports field. It just made me smile, remembering my time as a probationer. They would however compete hard in the cross-country race and were amongst the fittest during the high-altitude treks to Roopkund

and Beaskund. **The spirit of Gymkhana is all about inclusion, diversity and sportsmanship and this these youngsters exhibited.**



With officers of 2K13 and 14 batches-Abhishek Pratihari, Sunil Kumar, . Mudit Kumar, Obaid Ahmad and Abhinav (Famous as Mr. Yours Truly)

I found these officers humble inspite of their achievements. Cultivating the correct attitude is what is more important. Each batch would share about the next batch apprentices and so on and before they arrived, we at NAIR knew something about the officers. One good thing was that batches praised the officers from the younger batch and also the senior batches. Billiards and pool and activity after dinner sky rocketed in their presence. The sports trainer Hardik was all praise for their skills in the Cue ball sports. Bridge was played once in a while and one batch was particularly active and we did played tournaments at the Baroda Bridge Association, something our Profs had facilitated in our probation days. The keenness was there to learn, contribute and do well and this quality will go a long way in their journey in the Railways. **The spirit of gymkhana is in being open to new learnings and praising others who did better.**

During the cultural events we could find many of the items repeated and instantly the comparison would start. The lazy dance, the puppet dance



etc. to name a few. But they were quick learners and had good communication as the repetitions reduced in subsequent years. One thing that stood out was the English music and the band performances which were of high quality. It was never difficult to organize a cultural event when the SCRA batch was in town as they always had many items in their kitty. What I however missed was poetry and drama, which was less in number. This all was more than compensated by the hooting during the cultural events and at times the lights of the Sabhagraha had to be kept on to keep the hooting in check. They would add spark and vitality to the dance and DJ in front of the palace or during the Garbha season.

***The spirit of Gymkhana is about being quick learners, respecting institutions and traditions and being enthusiastic.***

Another habit that distinguished them was their mannerisms especially greeting faculty, ladies and the staff in the Academy. This was appreciated by one and all especially the sports boys who would become their fans and remember their names long after they had left the campus. The probationers of course would make it a point to meet the posted SAM's and it was nice to see that some traditions had been passed on down the batches. It was nice to share the nostalgia and reflect on the times spent in Jamalpur. From batchmates falling sick and going to the hospital, special diet in the hospital, sports, FLS and also the informal ones, Allah megh de, birthday celebrations in the quad, managing the mess, stories of Rambo, chedi and so on. Of course, the shop sessions and the training at IRIMEE. I realized that these youngsters had utilized their



Final session in the class at NAIR during Induction- Abhinav, Diptesh, Ubaid, Abhishek and Shilpa Poonia 2k14

time better than us seeing the varied talent they had developed in music and culture. It always feels nice to see the youngsters far more talented than what we were in our times. Surprisingly a lot of names starting with Alphabet A - Abhisheikh, Aditya, Anil, Akash Gangarwal, Alok Bhatt, Azimuddin, Abhinav, Alok Maurya- I wonder why. The non-A's like Krishna, Priyanshu, Shikhar, Shubham, Gaurav, Gaurav Raj and Diptesh to name a few were equally talented. Infact it was difficult to find one officer who had not excelled in some sphere or the other. They would always volunteer for compeering events, managing cultural events, India day celebrations, social service initiatives, trek related and sports events.

***The spirit of Gymkhana is about Giving respect and getting respect.***

Even though they had a degree from Mesra Ranchi, unlike our days, these officers had the desire to excel and achieve even more. They did very well in the Foundation and Induction programmes and the other modules. Some went the IAS way, some for IIMs and many for the MEXT scholarship to Japan. They always had questions on higher studies and it was nice to see that wherever a Gymmie ventured others followed. I had the opportunity to celebrate Club day and the IRSME day with the officers in Vadodara and they showed great comradery with all. Indeed, the four formative years at Jamalpur Gymkhana is a great learning experience and attitude reserved for the fortunate. ***The spirit is still alive.***

As I look back at all the interactions that helped me relive my four years at Jamalpur and the association of 31 plus years, I am reminded of the armorial bearings which indeed reflected the true spirit of Gymkhana read as below reminding us what we should strive to inculcate:

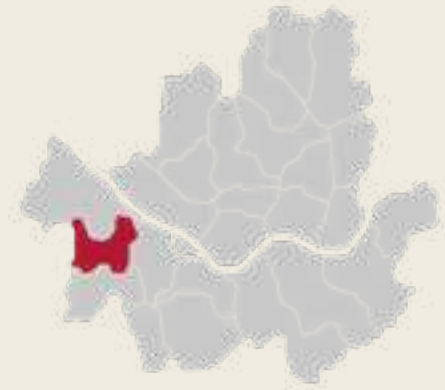
- ***Self-discipline is the most important discipline***
- ***Give to others freely and deserve to receive***
- ***The most valuable assets one could hope to acquire are the qualities of a gentleman***
- ***Traditions of an institution are held in trust by its members***
- ***Neglect not a sacred duty.***

This is perhaps the mantra of life which I tried to inculcate in all the officers at NAIR irrespective of service. If practiced by all the officers in the right spirit it will make Indian Railways a great organization.





# Our Last day in Seoul



Paras Mehendiratta '2k9

It was the March of 2019 when I was told by my professor that I had to present my research at East Asia Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Workshop which was being held in Seoul this time. For me, it was a chance to visit another country after Indonesia, China and obviously Japan where I was studying my Masters since the last one and a half years. This was just before my wife was about to join me in Japan after taking long leave from her job and the prospect of this holiday gave her yet another excuse to buy some more dresses for this trip.

Let me now take you directly to our trip which was scheduled from 29th of May to 2nd of June. As usual, I planned it right up to the last

minute and fitted all my dream destinations in our itinerary along with my presentation. The most exciting part for me was visiting the most dangerous border in the world – DMZ. We were also lucky enough to cross the border and be in North Korea (albeit momentarily! I mean how many people can boast of that!). But that is a story for another time.

The conference went well and it was our last day in Seoul i.e. 1st of June, for which I booked the tour of most famous places in Seoul i.e. Gyeongbok Palace and Jogye Temple. If you ever want to visit Japan, South Korea or East Asia I highly recommend “Veltra”. It organizes awesome tours at a very affordable price. Coming back to

the tour which I booked, it was a half day tour as we wanted to explore Seoul by ourselves in the other half.

The tour started with people from various countries introducing themselves in the Tour Bus after which we visited Jogye Temple. It's a very famous temple of Korean Buddhism. Although original temple is supposed to be very old, the current form took shape in 1910. Passing through the canopy of paper lanterns, we entered the “Main Buddha Hall”. It had three enormous statues of Buddha with large number of devotees chanting hymns. Hearing those soothing chants makes one feel very tranquil and makes you believe that there may be a higher power existing at this place.

Coming to the next leg of the journey, we walked down to Gyeongbok Palace. It was during this ‘fateful’ walk that things got heated up. For reasons that neither of us can recollect now, I and my wife had an argument which was quite evident to our fellow tourists! As a result, we got a lot of awkward looks! The palace was enormous with huge entry gate and structures dating back to 1395. Although the structures were badly damaged in 16th Century and again by imperial Japan in 20th Century but has been beautifully restored into its original form. Despite both of us trying to keep our tempers under control we ended up touring the whole of the palace with long faces, which you may be able to make out if you saw all the pictures we took there. But the missus managed to find a picture that was not completely ruined! By the way, we did patch up

by the end of the tour. We never fight for that long.



*Gyeongbok Palace*



*Gwanghwamun Gate*

After the tour ended at around 12:15, instead of heading back to the original place where we all gathered, we decided to take a cab to an Indian Restaurant. And that was the decision that changed the course of the next couple of hours of our last day in Seoul and is the reason why I'm writing this article today. While deboarding the cab, I paid the driver using cash in Wons (KRW) and guess what, I forgot my wallet on the



*Paper Lantern Sky*



*Grand Buddha*



rear seat of cab. Immediately after getting down I realized the blunder and tried to run behind the cab which was obviously useless. Lucky for us (or so I thought) I managed to see the last four numbers of the number plate of the cab. All my credit cards, Japanese resident card, cash and other identity cards were in that wallet without which it was impossible to enter back into Japan and our Korean Visa was expiring the very next day. It was a classic filmy situation.

We immediately thought of many solutions as my wife's wallet was still in hotel (our only consolation). We could go to the Indian Embassy or Japanese embassy. OR we could go to the local police and report our situation. But we had to pick our option as soon as possible because otherwise we would run out of options by night. Our panic-stricken faces were noticed by a young Korean couple who also happened to be fluent in English (which let me be honest with you, is very rare in South Korea). We immediately told them the whole story and they asked us about the details of the car and the driver. I told them the color of car and last four numbers. They called the cab company and asked about the car with that number and Gyeongbok Palace Gwanghwamun Gate to our horror, there were over a hundred cars with those last four numbers.

There were only 2 ways of tracking down the car. Either we track payment done via credit card (which was not possible in our case) or we somehow access CCTV footage. So basically, we only had one option left.

The couple had some place to go but decided to stick with us and took us to nearest police station (God bless them for that!). The Seoul Police was highly professional and immediately registered our FIR and started investigation. They put request for CCTV footage to the concerned department and it was told to us that it will take at least 24 hours for that footage to be accessible which was definitely after our scheduled departure to Japan. This made it very clear that chances of getting wallet back were bleak. On the top of all this, the police told that if someone else took that cab and saw the wallet, it is possible that even if somehow, they were able to locate the cab, we may never get my wallet. I lost all my hope and started finding numbers of my credit card companies to block them. However, the police kept going with the investigation. They asked us about the looks and age of driver, color of car, which direction it went after dropping us. The time passed by and it was around 13:15 that they narrowed down to 4 drivers as per our description and started calling them one by one.

Despite such low chances, they never left hope and seeing their dedication I was also hanging in there albeit with thin thread. But God was gracious and our luck didn't run out.

We found our cab driver (or rather he found us!) and he was not on the roads, the good Samaritan was in another police station, close by. He was there to return the wallet in question. Suddenly the air in my lungs came back and I took a sigh of relief. The police took us in their car to that station and we met the driver there along with my wallet- in same condition as it was left,

untouched. We could never thank or repay that couple, Seoul Police or that cab driver enough. Without all of them, we could never have got that wallet back. And we might have remained stuck in South Korea for next few days, with more unsavory experiences. It was a chilling experience for us but it no matter how big the city is or how adverse the crisis, even in today's world you can still hope for small miracles. You never know when you would meet your good Samaritan. Even if chances are bleak, don't lose hope.

It was an unforgettable experience, the memories of which we shall cherish for a lifetime. The sense of respect for South Korea and its people will always be there in our hearts and whenever we get a chance to repay their act of kindness, we will do so for anyone. Our last day in Seoul gave us more unforgettable and dearer memories than we had ever hoped for.

P.S. We did end up enjoying that awesome lunch at Jyoti Restaurant and unparalleled experience at the famous "Trick-Eye" Museum of Seoul.

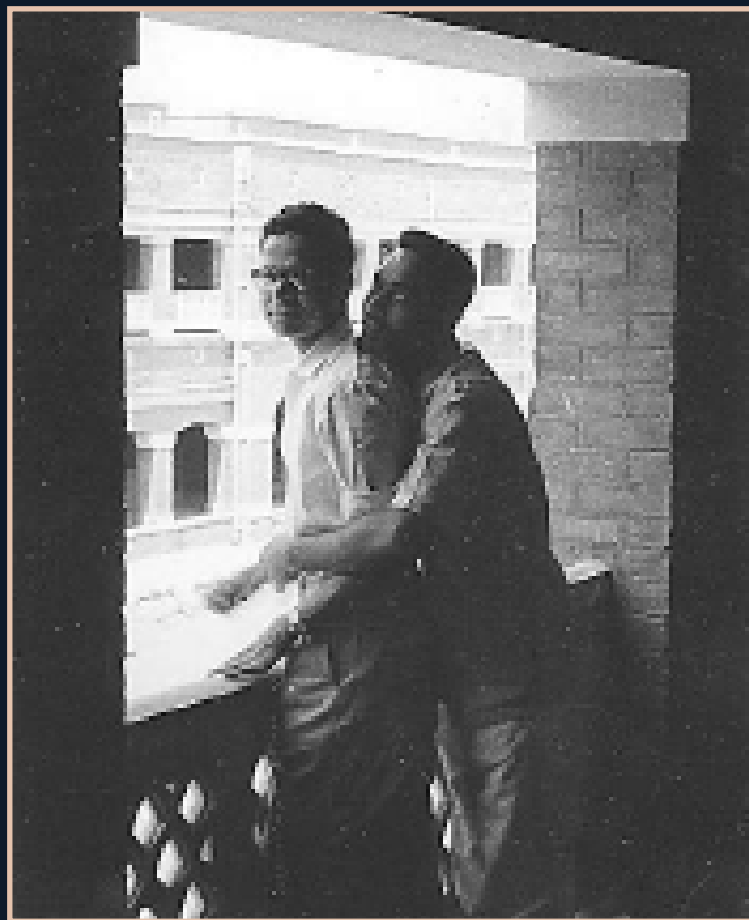


*Our photo taken at Trick-Eye Museum, Seoul*





## *The Diamond Jubilee Batch 1960*



*Biplab Sarkar (on the left), known for his lively spirit and quiet humour*

The Diamond Jubilee batch – Batch of 1960 – completes 60 years of their association with the SCRA scheme. Our congratulations and best wishes for being a part of this great fraternity for six decades.

With a strength of 13, this was roughly the size of an average batch till that date. Of course, following two small batches of 8 each, this would appear to be a large intake. The 13 newcomers were:

1. B M Shyam Singh, the batch senior
2. Vikram Jerath
3. Mahesh Chandra
4. Suresh Kumar Malhotra
5. Jnan Ranjan Biswas
6. Biplab Priya Sarkar
7. Norbert Toppo
8. Rajesh Khosla
9. Ashok Kumar Sehgal
10. Dinesh Kumar Tandon
11. Chandra Prakash Agarwal
12. Vijay Kumar Mathur
13. Suresh Ramakrishna Moon

Unfortunately, V Jerath, J R Biswas, B P Sarkar, D K Tandon and S R Moon are no more with us and have left for their heavenly abodes. Apart from this, Norbert Toppo is untraceable, and no one appears to have any idea of his whereabouts. If any person has any information on him, SAM would be obliged to know.



# Memories of the Sixties

## Vijay Mathur '60

As a residential club, and certainly not a hostel, Gymkhana was a unique institution. With only traditions and the senior batches responsible for running it, and a very small population, it naturally evolved the special culture and camaraderie that all of us celebrate so enthusiastically.

An interesting facet of this brotherhood was the ragging of 'firsties'.

Five of us freshers landed up at Gymkhana on a hot mid-May afternoon and were met in the Billiard Room by two illustrious seniors. We were directed to another Senior's room; he was lounging in his wrap-around towel, and on our being ushered in, was promptly joined by two batchmates. They began by politely asking us to sing. With true 'firsty' naivete, we said, "Yes Sir, but please give us the beat." The 'beat' was immediately and enthusiastically delivered, and we sang loud and clear thereafter. Importantly, it taught us respect.

As per usual practice, all of us were also assigned our 'Gymkhana' names which were colourful and certainly not kosher. While all this had its downsides and darker moments, it was also very educative for all newcomers - some of whom were delightfully innocent as they had

stepped out of their homes for the first time, as well as for others coming from school and college hostels, who were rarely 'innocent'.

Two days later, the batch was lined up in the Billiard Room around tea time, to be introduced to a young SAM officer and his newly wedded wife. She took one look at my then very cute batchmate (still cute but now silver haired) and wondered aloud how his mother could let such a sweet kid come to such a tough place. Interestingly, the object of her gushing sympathy, anything but an innocent, was muttering imprecations under his breath at her for expressing such unwanted opinions.

In contrast, in another instance, the fresh batch was lined up in the courtyard before a formal lunch was served, to be introduced to the resident SAM officers and their wives. When asked to introduce themselves, one innocent loudly and clearly repeated his Gymkhana name, to much embarrassment all round. When a red faced senior asked him to give his real name, he repeated his Gymkhana name in all sincerity and with great clarity. Just illustrates my point about the innocents and the not-so-innocents.

For energetic youngsters, Jamalpur in the early sixties provided few opportunities to live it up. Adding fuel to our angst, were the vivid pages of the Saturday Evening Post, an avidly read US magazine in the Billiard Room. From the fascinating literature on Jamalpur in the 1890s, as well as from stories related with gusto by earlier batches, we wistfully learnt about the very active CI as well. By the time we arrived, however, the

Anglo Indian community was almost all gone, leaving the CI a pale shadow of itself. That left the PT Factory (now ITC) and Guest nights at Gymkhana as the only source of extra-Gymkhana entertainment. Lesser mortals like me were limited to occasional tennis matches at the PT Factory, but the then social lions of Gymkhana had many tales to regale us with about the colourful goings on there.

Guest Dinners, on the other hand, frequently brought charming young ladies to Gymkhana with their parents. That was when one saw the hilarious competition between 3-4 Gymmie gallants vying to teach them billiards, or show them the Tech Soc and the Swimming Pool.

All of us doubtless have many much more colourful tales to tell, but for propriety's sake, this sanitised version is the best I can offer.

One benevolent tradition that added much fun during our senior years was the practice of sending boys from the senior batches ORS to ER HQ in Calcutta on minor errands. Apart from the passes, this favour also got you free

accommodation in the Officers' Rest House at Howrah Station. Linked with the weekend, it gave you two evenings on Chowringhee and Park Street.

Apart from the culinary delights in the many restaurants there, there was the allure of the pretty young ladies at Loreto House. The Loreto nuns were wonderfully open minded, so some enterprising guys were able to invite their friends in the hostel there, for a coffee at Flury's next door. One particularly enterprising senior, seeking a quiet venue for a tryst safe from any curious eyes, took his young lady to the Botanical Gardens instead. Imagine his dismay when he met a batch mate at the main entrance. Unlike him, the batchmate was showing his younger brother around!

Many of our batch left IR within a few years for opportunities elsewhere, but our emotional links with Gymkhana and IR remain strong. The many close friendships that we made then have only grown deeper and warmer over the years, and are today our best assets.



*'60 batch at Dinesh 'Tangy' Tandon's 50th wedding anniversary. Unfortunately, Tangy is no more with us, having expired on the 17th of December 2019.*

*From left to right: Rajesh Khosla, Vijay Mathur, Dinesh Tandon, Chander Agrawal, Ashok Sehgal*



# An Ode to Jamalpur Gymkhana

Rajesh Khosla '60

Time.....like an ever flowing stream.....

**Luck by chance:**

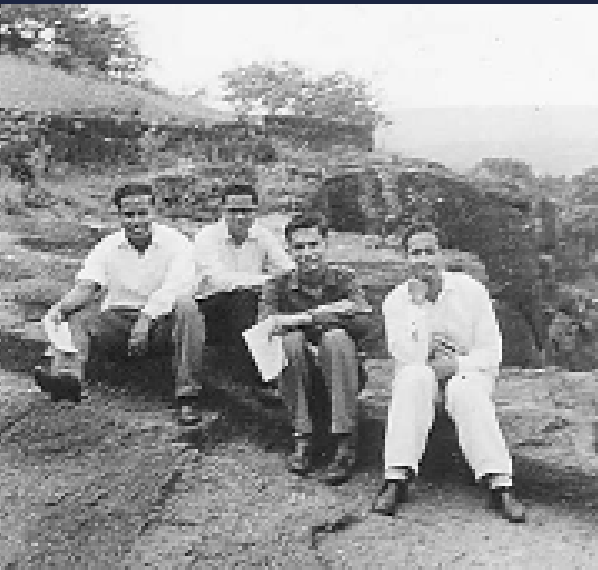
So, beta, what do you plan to do, asked a benevolent relative just when I (and possibly most of us) was/were nearing the final years of university undergrad life. Those days job options were limited: defence services, engineering, medical and/or government service. Aunt, I will opt for Government service and plan accordingly. UPSC's SCRA Indian Railways (aka Jamalpur) was the first such competitive exam, many sat for it, few qualified to become members of this exclusive fraternity.

**A warm welcome:**

Jamalpur Railway Station on a hot summer's day, a cycle rickshaw ride to the portals of this hallowed institution. Innocent lambs (some, not all) facing an array of senior batches, like a pride of hungry lions sizing their hapless prey. You must be hungry, come let's have lunch. Almost like one's last supper, with a menu of lychees with the skin on, the seemingly innocuous bel fruit that a batchmate's loving parents had given him and the exotic parmal vegetable unpeeled as Mother Nature intended to be consumed.

**Cooling off in the hot summer:**

Tackling the Jamalpur summer of June was quite simple; the seniors demonstrated a practical approach from head to toe. The barber was called, and presto, in a matter of a few minutes, we were sporting extreme crew cuts that may well have left Buddhist monks wondering how their ilk increased overnight. Then, as night set in, the command Ho Chi Minh launched a post dinner dress code strictly "au naturelle", which served us thru to the early hours of the morning. How considerate; avoid a body tan, unlike basking in the sun-kissed beaches of the South of France.



Checked the roof of Daulatabad Fort

**Introduction to Basic Training:**

Not to be found wanting, the first-month introduction activity in Jamalpur workshop was equally demanding and challenged our ingenuity. Morning PT at the Basic Training Center was conducted by our most vociferous and agile batchmate, whose audible similarity of commands Bain (left) and Dain (right) created endless opportunity for mayhem, partially compensating for the ensuing cruel duel between hammer and chisel, with the fingers of one's hand bearing the brunt of the outcome.

**Camaraderie par excellence:**

The first month over, life returned to a modicum of respectability. Over time, inter-batch and intra-batch friendships blossomed, an extraordinary camaraderie developed, built on the bedrock of humor and understanding, overlooking the occasional youthful, light-hearted transgressions without which life would be sheer boredom. This may perhaps help explain batch incidents like hoisting a batchmate's bicycle to the highest point in Gymkhana, the nocturnal once-a-week stealthy climb via-the-sunshade-and thru-the window for a do-not-disturb entry to borrow a batchmate's transistor radio to listen to the ever-popular 'Date With You' radio program (and returning it likewise), till lo-and-behold, one Friday evening, transistor in hand, he knocks on my door and says keep it and give it back to me tomorrow morning; later realizing this gesture was not due to misplaced concern over a batchmate's safety but simply to ensure his

precious transistor did not get damaged during the nocturnal escapade. Discovering the rural hinterland of Bihar when many of our batch were appointed polling booth Presiding Officers to conduct the 1962 general election; reaching the location meant a two-day bullock-cart ride to a remote village, no electricity, thatched huts, layers of straw as bedding, open fields to attend to nature's calls, bathing by the village well, etc. Experiencing extreme poverty of village life at close quarters: this once-in-a-lifetime experience making us more aware of the many conveniences Jamalpur Gymkhana had to offer. An over-zealous Principal who had strategically positioned full-length mirrors near the dining room with the caption "Am I properly dressed", learning to his dismay that all it needed was for the Jamalpur gang to strategically position the letters "un" to demolish his intent. Ah, the exuberance of youth!



Went on Tech Tour



Collaborated with the ladies of PT Factory to take a full length play to Calcutta



**The Oasis:**

Our dull and drab khaki dress code brought with it a yearning for outings more colorful. One such was the assiduously cultivated institutional interaction with what was then called P T Factory at Monghyr, encompassing sports like cricket and tennis thru to inter-club social cultural interaction, the ever-reliable Ambassador taxi safely transporting twenty-plus passengers (front seat/back seat/the boot). During our time this institutional interaction blossomed into the Gymkhana staging Sheridan's play "Angels in Love" in Calcutta, kind courtesy Eastern Railway. Play rehearsals were intense, relationships equally so, yet reality was we had a sparse audience while performing in Calcutta. How quickly we had moved from being big fish in a small pond to small fish in a big pond; lesson well-learnt.

**Oh Calcutta of the swinging sixties!**

Wistful memories of numerous outings for extended "paisa vasool" brunch/jam sessions at Trincas from 11 am thru to 4 pm, being entertained by the inimitable Usha Iyer (née Uthup), listening to Pam Crain at Mocambo/The Blue Fox and to the stunning, heart stopping Shirley Meyers at El-Morocco. Park Street was endowed with an energy comparable to no other city in India - Christmas had the vivacity of a transplanted custom that had flowered spontaneously, its beauty and atmosphere derived not only from the Anglo-Indians, or the last of the English living and working in Calcutta,

but also from a certain kind of Bengali who had embraced the festival.

**Epilogue:**

Gymkhana and Jamalpur Workshop, joined at the hip, so to speak. A sight permanently etched in one's memory is that of two EOTs in tandem carrying a steam loco across the Erecting Shop. Workshop technology was at the core of the training regime. How can one but not recall batch annual tech tours, being transported all over India, majestically ensconced in a private carriage, taking in India's cultural beauty and diversity and finally understanding that Indian Railways was the vital thread that stitched together this magnificent nation.

Gymkhana with its idyllic surroundings, strategically located at the foothills of a mountain-range, nearby golf course, the lower & upper water reservoirs, self-managed sharing and caring institution, the inimitable one-per-six rooms man Friday, Baleshwar, our local Jeeves handling our house-keeping chores, a stipend and free travel to boot, creative freedom, many ups and some downs,..... all these and more made the stay memorable.

*... lies forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.*



# Yaaddein...Kuch Khatti, Ziada Meethi...

**Chander P Agrawal '60**

**The Surprise**

Cracking SCRA was a challenge in the family. An elder cousin, brilliant to adorn the Roll of Honour of St. Columba's School and St. Stephens College, couldn't make it. Perhaps lady luck did not help him. Came my turn in 1960. Armed with hordes of Trigonometry/Calculus books, to solve, and a 500-page SCRA guide, I set out to crack SCRA, only to be told by UPSC: NOT SELECTED. Much ego hassles between by uncle and my father were rested. I too was happy to pursue my wish to study Masters in Mathematics and try for Civil Services. All was well with the world.

Around April '61, arrived a surprising GOI letter asking me to report to the Central Hospital for my medical examination. Those days career choices were made by parents. So, the die was cast.

On D-Day, I was the early one. A handsome tall guy walked in with a swagger. He took one look at me and his expression said, "Aise aise log select ho jaate hai". We got talking and he has been my bestie ever since. We were shortly joined by four more of our batch and soon bonded like long lost friends – the 60 batch



*A lazy afternoon on the lawn*

was born, and we decided to travel together to Jamalpur.

On the 30th of May 1961, Vijay (Mathur) and I boarded the Toofan Mail. We were joined by Dinesh (Tandon) and Ashok (Sehgal) at Allahabad. Vijay was friends with Raju (P Ramachandran '59) at BITS Pilani, and briefed us about what to expect at Gymkhana. Consequently, we freshened up and fed ourselves at Jamalpur station before setting out to Gymkhana, to become SCRA's.

The imposing Gymkhana, with its manicured lawns and tennis courts in sight, gave one goose bumps at the thought of the grandeur of our future home.



### The Initiation

On arrival in the portico, we were greeted by a “Future Nobel” and a “Future Member Mechanical”. Their broad grins said it all. Our batch seniority decided (my bestie still contests how he became junior to me), we were ushered into a 58 batch guy’s room, who was lounging in his wrap-around towel. Thus began our initiation. Rooms assigned, we dumped our belongings, changed into sportswear and were soon racing to match a Senior Sprinter. Rajesh (Khosla, who had joined the previous day), joined us in our racing efforts.

The first lesson was to ensure that we address all with “AAP” and “JI” words thrown in. Our hair was cropped, Gymkhana names and Batch Anthem assigned, and new meaning of Ho Chi Minh assimilated and demonstrated. We quickly learnt to answer questions “to the point” and never to “volunteer information”. After late night sessions,



*During a batch meeting, the missing person was represented by his bike*

while in deep slumber, you dreamt of floods only to discover that the floods were for real. Mental alertness demanded that your ability to be able

to remember contents of line ‘x’ on page ‘y’ of ‘Thank You, Jeeves’/‘Carry On, Jeeves’. Seniors were considerate. They took you to movies to catch up with your sleep, only to face a barrage of questions on return. You were allowed to relax on ‘Easy Chairs’. The ritual over, we merged with 60A batch (They had joined five months earlier) to complete our batch of 13 future officers of METP.

### The Training

Much of the “Officer Like Qualities” were inculcated by tradition and practice, in the very first month and honed in the years ahead. These years of fun and adventure in Gymkhana filled the knowledge gaps and prepared one to face the tough world out there.

The huge workshop, covering all the manufacturing and maintenance mechanical engineering technologies of the day, offered immense learning opportunities without any stress. One learnt through observation and interaction with the rank and file on the shop floor, with seniors, and even batch mates!

One fine morning, Ashok and me were absorbed in the Rolling Mill, when we were summoned by “Maaji” (DCME - S C MIsra ’39). Elated at the thought of getting “Shaabashi” for our early morning dedication, only to discover that we were dressed in ‘Loafers, that too without socks’. Duly admonished, we were directed to “Maadi” (U Mahadevan – the Principal): “Go tell him to deduct 10 marks from your personality assessment”. We were received by “Maadi”, who listened to us with a smile and told us to “Go tell him that the

marks have been deducted”. We cycled back to Gymkhana and stopped to enjoy patties and pastries at ‘Majids’. But we did promise (like New Year Resolutions) to view ourselves in a large mirror kept near the Gymkhana Dining Room asking, “Am I properly dressed?”

On the academic front, we did our Bevans/ Ryders/Cottons...et al, Night classes and Schools. Midnight oil was burnt preparing for I.Mech.E. Exams, with coffee/fags/gup-shup breaks. And, of course, went for dinner stroll to the I.Mech.E. Pole to seek Divine Blessings.



*Ready to raise the bike on the flagpole*

### The Irrepressible US

Gymkhana was a sportsman’s paradise. One could play tennis, hockey, football, cricket, badminton, golf, billiards, table tennis and more. One could indulge in photography, learn to develop prints, and make locomotive models. The weekend bridge sessions stretched to 24 hours or more.

Reminisces of those youthful days could fill volumes. I can’t resist remembering ‘The Mango

Tree’ on the bungalow side of our common wall. One dark night, our champs, suitably attired in JAANGs (Briefs for uninitiated) ventured up the tree and down came the juiciest fruit one by one collected by the chain in tow. ‘Kaun hai, kaun hai,’ voices interrupted the goings on. Our champs were quick to jump back to the L-lobby of Western Highland, savouring the fruits of their labour. The Major Sahib of the bungalow, reported the matter to the authorities, who enquired about the ‘Taste of the fruit’ and Size of the collection’, made suggestions about doing ‘Proper Recce’ and warned us not to get caught playing such games.

One probationer – a future Cabinet Minister – was flooded with lime water(Gymkhana was being white-washed). All senior batches were away on Tech Tour. We, the Firstees, were ruling the roost. The operation over, we rejoiced including the ‘Sporting Prob’ and though this as the end of the matter. Next morning, in walked ‘Maadi’ in his impeccable summer suit (he was held in great awe) and thundered, “Who has done it, better own up or you all go home.” A hurriedly summoned batch meeting decided it was a combined operation, but then some weak-hearted souls began backing out. Our heroes decided to walk up to ‘Maadi’. While the rest of us were debating the future of the ‘Four Poor Souls’, in walked our heroes, all smiles. Their narration: “We were received with Maadi’s back towards us. He dramatically turned around, smiled and complemented us for having the courage to own up.”

A lesson was learnt.



Our Support

No memories of Life in Gymkhana would be complete without remembering the 'trio of our Chefs', M/s Azghar, Rameshwar and Hanif. They fed us with gourmet cuisines on 'Special Dineers'. 'Half stuffed chicken' per head (or per skull as my friend Ashok would say), could be any 'Foodies Delight'.

To compensate the rut of normal meals they could offer "Eggs to order" in a jiffy – though the thought of signing the 'Extra Chits' was an irritant, but who cares when you are hungry and we were hungry all the time.

Baleshwar was our 'Man Friday', who made life easy taking care of our mundane needs so assiduously. NO to be forgotten 'Shakoor' was our major domo, so indispensable to Gymkhana. I remember having lost my bike. Shakoor had

perfected the art of cannibalisation. He could create a new bike for you every day. You could depend on Shakoor from cycle rickshaws to elephants and donkeys on Club Day.

Takeaways from Gymkhana

In December 1964, amidst exuberant cries of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow", we were tossed in the air and bid adieu to the glorious days spent in Gymkhana, with promises to return. I did go back for my I.Mech.E. (Part III) exam and for Diesel Training (when my wife accompanied me). My regret is that I could not do it more often. Gymkhana blessed us with all that we have achieved in our careers and more. What stand out are "Our abilities to develop relationships and make friends". Thanks to Gymkhana, I have my four GOLD COINS, kept safe for 60 years now.

*"Money is a Small coin  
Health is a Big coin  
Relationship is a sweet coin  
Friendship is a Gold Coin – Keep it safe"*

*- Dr. Abdul Kalam*

# Elephant and Donkey Races

S K Malhotra '60

For Club Day 1962, an elephant race had been organized at the suggestion of Maaji (S C Misra '39 - DCME). Inimitable Shakoor arranged these elephants from Monghyr (now Munger). So, it made sense to make him win the elephant race. Paid mahawats managing elephants duly complied with that mandate.

Although very happy at his winning the elephants' race, Maaji reckoned that he could not claim much credit for that win that had been mainly attributable to mahawat's and/or the elephant's skills. Encouraged by



The Donkey Race

his win in Club day 1962, Maaji ordained that in the 1963 Club day, a donkey race be organized - wherein he could legitimately claim the credit if he won the race. So it had been Maaji only, who in 1963 had suggested down-gradation to the donkey race. Inimitable Shakoor arranged donkeys also. By this time, Maaji may have been the Principal. Making a donkey run requires specialized skills. Donkeys in the race just refused to budge. Maaji was certainly one of the participants in the donkey race. Ordinarily, a lightweight rider would have won the race. On that criteria, Maaji had a significant disadvantage. To increase his marks in 'personality', one of our enterprising seniors, with all his weight and strength at his command, literally dragged Maaji's donkey to the winning post. This had been much against the resistance offered by the donkey to carry his distinguished heavyweight rider to the winning post.

# Marrying for Wealth

S K Malhotra '60

As everyone knows Maharishi Narad is famous for the fact that the most active part of his anatomy was the first as well as the longest fingers of his right hand. In one of his round the world tours, he meets Lord Vishnu and manages to convince him that with the advancing age, he is likely to lose all his influence to lesser gods. He apprised Vishnu that his supremacy was



under threat. Shivji had been keen to usurp his throne. He advises him that the latter must acquire wealth. Perplexed, Vishnu looks at him for further guidance. Narad frankly tells him that having not inherited wealth, he could only hope to acquire wealth through marriage. Vishnu obviously lacked skills to earn wealth. Marrying wealth was the only option left with him, tells Narad.

Lakshmi was the obvious choice. Before Vishnu could propose to Lakshmi, Narad forewarns her that Vishnu was after her wealth and she better be careful. Sure enough, when later he did propose to her, Lakshmi told Vishnu that he was after her wealth. He strongly refutes the suggestion. It is ultimately decided that Vishnu must prove that he has substantial wealth to be able to provide her a standard of living commensurate with her status and background.

Back to square one, Vishnu again seeks Narad's advice. With begging and stealing totally ruled out, borrowing was Vishnu's only option left. Narad promises that he would plead Vishnu's case with Kuber for grant of a hefty loan. As a shrewd banker, the first question that Kuber asks the duo is regarding the purpose of the loan. When apprised of the real reason for seeking loan, Kuber tells them that his guidelines did not permit him to extend loan for a purpose, which was purely for consumption, i. e. marriage with Lakshmi. Kuber wanted also to be convinced about his repayment plans. After a hurried short conference, the duo went back to Kuber. Kuber was told that Vishnu has skills to be able to dispense good luck, success, etc. to anyone

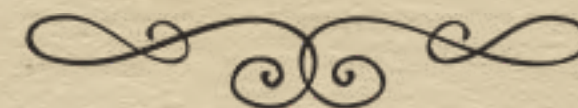
who makes the prescribed offerings. With those skills already there with him, Vishnu only needs a marketing forum to dispense those skills. From borrowings, a temple would be first built, from where people could seek good luck, success and other worldly and material comforts in consideration of a proportionately much lesser offering. Kuber's EMLs would be the first charge on these offerings. The loan would get paid leaving enough surplus for Vishnu to meet his marriage commitments. In consideration of the fact that Vishnu was in a position to get married to Lakshmi after disbursal of loan, Kuber had waived off the requirement of a separate collateral.

The temple in Tirupathi had been built precisely for the said purpose!

It appears that Kuber had inserted in the agreement an extortionately high rate of interest and continuous compounding. It was only by repeated rescheduling of debt that Vishnu could somehow take out enough surplus to meet his commitments towards Lakshmi to provide her a standard of living commensurate with her status and background. The loan is continuing to be repaid even till date.



# Poems By B.M. Shyam Singh '60



## Void Sounds

silence after deluge, total annihilation  
 ..nature starts to rebuild..  
 dawn .dusk.. make fruitful alliance....  
 bright flash alternate blinding  
 ..deafening...beyond hither unknown..  
 life and death crossing limits set by heavenly bodies.  
 targets set by depths of oceans abyss where none have reached  
 every atom nucleus there exists a void fathomless.  
 energy hidden ...in the midst of tornados, tsunami  
 there appear voids of silence calm serenity  
 in the eyes of all storms.  
 dusty winds engulf in its cyclone  
 rise to the sky...approach of eclipse  
 makes life to experience numbness  
 inaction so deep inside of which lies void....  
 death that marks end of relationship...  
 leaving behind deathless void in the rhythm of music  
 silence marks a pause deep inside dwells the void  
 which knows not advent past..present and future  
 void is there here and everywhere  
 manifestation of which is beyond all knowledge put together....  
 blessed are those who perceive void in everything  
 in all around.. can u make it what is void?????



### *Tight Corners*

many a time u reach end of the road  
 Unable to move forward or backward  
 you can reach dead end  
 sight hazy...mind gets blocked...  
 you know not,,, what to do,, or what not to do,,,  
 you may faint or balance on shaky legs.  
 cry for help,,, tears roll down the cheeks.  
 self guilt blaming others helps a little  
 ..in the midst of turmoil suddenly an idea flashes  
 you reach for a tree branch a twig.  
 overhanging the cliff by the side where road ends..  
 desperately cling or hang on to it,  
 it breaks ..bringing you down  
 you find a new road get bruised legs  
 yet such is the grace of god ..  
 it never leaves your belief strong  
 such miracles keep on happening  
 and help you keep clinging on to your life.  
 As no one leaves before his time is up.

### *Time and Tide*

Time and tide waits for none...,,  
 Happening..., Happened.  
 Will it happen again,,, may be  
 New bottle tastes better with old wine..  
 Friends and foes seldom meet and dine,,,  
 Weather cock turns rain or shine,,,  
 River flows, glides glistens whatever the terrain,,  
 Love and hate change, never mine or thine ...  
 Glory or blasphemy in life no loss or gain,,,  
 Life is but an experience no sympathy no empathy,  
 Nor even apathy is there,, What you sow ,,  
 So you will reap harvest or famine ..  
 Know these little things to make life sublime , divine...

### *Innocence*

Ignorance is no excuse for misdeeds..  
 acts done in innocence can get  
 relief...unawareness of cause & effect ..  
 where angels fear to tread ..  
 fools dash and dare...  
 lessons once learnt ,benefits in many ways...  
 court of law no rehab for innocence  
 nor for ignorance..prudence  
 conventions expand chances of escape..  
 fright ,, fight,, flight can be instinct,,,  
 many siblings do act out of innocence..  
 nature is unkind ,, inflicts reprimands at times  
 journey of life is but experiences of sorts...  
 acts done inadvertently do not invite  
 reprisals'. lest done with intent of selfish gains...  
 treading on unseen insects  
 while walking..inhaling bacteria ,, immune system  
 wiping them out..are an acts of innocence and ignorance  
 where jurisprudence has no binding..

### *Mirages... Illusions... Deceptions*

mirages do not create blurred images...  
 echoes do not confuse or confound,,,,,  
 rainbows fleeting through show true colours....  
 illusions are deceptions that change our perceptions pretense  
 perhaps top the list of deceptions...  
 magicians artful excel in creating illusions....  
 ghosts ,,angels defeat our senses....  
 one moment they are there next they vanish...  
 vivid for those gifted with esp.-  
 ..focused on particular sense ,,in smell.  
 taste..vision,, hearing... even hair raising....  
 perhaps our senses combine deception and illusion...  
 unmatched in nature... one who becomes aware  
 are really blessed ones



## Fragrance

flavour, fragrance, aroma....  
 conjures up an image of ambience  
 and attraction...flowers,, buds,, leaves..sublime..memories  
 flashback...some unto solitude..and melancholy  
 as many into happy memories into ecstasy..  
 reliving moments gone by..or reminding  
 saddest songs..canine breeds have smelling prowess ..  
 many mysteries unravelling ,, culprits caught...  
 by whiff of smell of sweat or stains  
 culinary added attraction with matching flavour  
 and fragrance,taste buds react with saliva,,  
 recalling many a banquet ,, buffet...dine  
 dinner dance and what not...flirting ,, romance,,  
 friends foes..leading to interludes many duels..  
 smell rotten obnoxious fumes distract..  
 decay death result... smells aroma therapy manifests  
 perception .. mind body smell  
 and spirit merge into one...  
 can u recall any smell long forgotten..  
 develop memory bank of smells aromas  
 pungent pleasant.. sublime smells will take you to heavenly heights

## My Birth

I was born when my dad was away to uk..  
 I was born breach legs first  
 mother unaware when she was reciting a letter to neighbors.....  
 I was born when sun did not shine...  
 mother squatting on edge of door ledge..  
 reciting letter from dad mailed ex London..  
 sky was overcast occasional thunder amidst flashing lightening...  
 letter painted scenes london burning..  
 bombs dropping from skies by drooping fighter planes...  
 yet it depicted london alive busy with war defense and preparations..  
 factories belching smoke anti air craft guns booming vomiting fire to skies ..  
 every craft brought down ,, loud cheers all around...  
 Thames gently flowing ,, sailing ships going round and round..  
 reading reciting mother so engrossed..  
 never knew pains when my legs appeared first as in breach babies..  
 until audience pronounced my dawn onto the earth  
 kicking legs I made life start..never uttered cry..  
 kicking buckets is said to an end was my life beginning..  
 I know not my end how and when my ending..  
 I can feel fear, anxiety ,exhilaration.. wonder..happiness all around  
 when my avatar dawned on this blessed place  
 I do visit the site recall afore said on my birth days



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# Mechanical Department: A Future Possible

Sarabjit A Singh '61

*SAM was a magazine of the young, run by the young for building a link with those who passed out of the portals of this great institute. Alas, there are no more youngsters to carry on and J L has taken on the mantle to keep the spirit of the fraternity alive: I salute him.*

It seems to be a time of troubles for the fraternity as its influence within the railway organisation appears to be declining. It is of some importance to understand what led to the SCRA scheme closing the way it closed. And more importantly, it is time to script a path that leads the department to new heights. It would be simplistic to attribute the present problems solely to the machinations of a sister department. The springs of the difficulties are embedded in the inability of the Indian Railways in general, and mechanical department in particular, to effectively respond to the challenges brought forth by a rapidly evolving technical, economic and social environment.

The high noon of the Mechanical Department was when it reigned supreme as custodian of all mobile assets - steam locomotives, coaches and wagons. Indian Railways were proud to adopt the steam locomotive as its logo. By establishing PUs, the department achieved new heights as

providers of rolling stock. Diesel locomotive and ICF coaches were seen to be harbingers of an even brighter future for the department. Then fell a shadow. The shadow began when electric locomotives were handed over to the electrical department; thereby creating a new claimant for mobile assets who in time would endeavour to become the sole custodian. The shadow deepened when the department failed to jettison the steam locomotive paradigm of operation and maintenance and developing a paradigm suitable for diesel traction.

Diesel locomotives made existing systems of open-line operation and maintenance obsolete and rendered large part of the workshop infrastructure redundant. The Transportation (Power) role of the mechanical department got diminished and was recently transferred to the electrical department, leaving the mechanical department essentially as providers of rolling stock both as maintainers and manufacturers. The department failed to appreciate that focus had to shift from open-line to transforming PUs as full-fledged rolling stock manufacturers, in the process making India into a global rolling stock manufacturing hub.

With establishment of the Diesel Locomotive Factory at Marhowrah and the Electric Locomotive Factory at Madhepura as joint ventures with GE Global Sourcing India Pvt. Limited of the US and Alstom SA of France respectively, Indian Railways have outsourced maintenance to the manufacturer for 13 years. It is most likely this will become the norm once PUs are corporatised. This will marginalise the role of both mechanical and electrical departments as maintainers and providers of rolling stock. The scenario is, however, some years away.

A likely consequence of this development is that the Indian Railway rolling stock market space, hitherto controlled by the production units, will be thrown open to multinational companies. If this leads to India developing into a place where new designs of rolling stock are innovated and developed then it may be a correct thing to do. It is most unlikely this will happen for the reason that no Indian company capable of taking on multinationals exists: such companies have to be developed by using the leverage of market space to get access to key technologies and understanding the technologies and use the understanding to develop new platforms. The Chinese have shown how this can be done and we could follow a very similar path.

I reproduce below an extract of my article published in the Economic Times on 29 th July, 2019 on corporatisation of PUs:

*China has realised that its growing economy and large investments in railways and high-speed*

*train network and infrastructure has created an opportunity for moving the rolling stock industry up the industrial value chain. Its explicit goal has been to assist companies to build internationally recognisable brands commensurate with China's growing global clout — by focusing on getting technology and using state-owned enterprises for structural change of the economy.*

*For rolling stock, China fashioned an oligopolistic industry by creating two rolling stock producers — CSR & CNR (since 2015, merged as CRRC) — and leveraged the market for acquiring technology. China requires MNCs to surrender their technology and form a joint venture with a Chinese company to obtain access to the Chinese rolling stock market. The technology so obtained is absorbed by understanding its critical elements, and then developed.*

*This is not some simple 'jugaad'. It requires large investments and the involvement of universities, research institutes and national laboratories. For developing high-speed train technology, 25 national first-class key universities, 11 first-class research institutes and 51 national level laboratories and research centres were involved in China's R&D and production. So, it's little wonder that China rapidly caught up and became a strong competitor of the MNCs.*

*It is difficult to say how much of the Chinese approach the Indian Railways can adopt to build a globally competitive rolling stock industry. But it can establish two rolling stock*



companies rather than one. The seven PUs can be divided between these two companies, allowing competition. For obtaining technology, rolling stock companies should be authorised to establish joint ventures with MNCs by offering them a slice of the Indian Railways rolling stock market.

As has been the Chinese case, obtaining technology is not sufficient to build a global-level industry, unless large investments are made in understanding critical elements and then by developing globally competitive indigenous design. Before the Indian rolling stock industry can take on global competition, it will have to be protected for a limited time by adequate regulatory systems and governance laws.

Ministry of Railways focus should shift from immediately corporatising PUs to evolving a strategy that will lead to a world-class rolling stock industry. This will require new policies for technology procurement and linkages with universities and research institutions. A key question that will have to be decided is the size of R&D investment in new technology. Without this, India cannot go up the value chain.

This is the challenge that the Mechanical Department must creatively respond to: for ensuring its future. Ultimately success will depend upon how effectively it can manage interests, actions, lucidity and relative strength of the various forces at play.

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# Japan: A once in a lifetime opportunity

Smriti Rao '2k9

Morning of April 3rd, 2018, 8 hours into the journey. Onboard the Boeing 777, I wondered if leaving the home behind for two good years was a wise move after all? Breakfast was being served when I looked down below through the window. Conical mountains topped with snow were standing tall among smaller mountain ranges, besides them were scattered densely

my Japanese language lecture, I learned that it translates to, well, the main island!

Ashish Gupta '2k9, Paras Mehendiratta '2k9 and Rakshita Bagherwal '2k9 were already enrolled in Hokkaido University when the notification for the MEXT Scholarship program for Indian Railway officers, 2018 came from the Railway Board.



Participants at the HSR Exchange Program, Tokyo

packed cities and flat plains. I looked far enough and could see the vast stretch of the Sea of Japan. My apprehension turned into excitement. I figured it was a beautiful country, and that we were flying over the main island of Japan (called Honshu in Japanese). Months later in

The program offered a master's degree from Japanese Universities in the field of High-Speed Rail technology and related subjects to 20 officers of Indian Railways. On our batchmates' recommendation, Silabhadra Das '2k9 and I decided to apply for the program. The previous



batches had requested and succeeded in bringing down the study leave criterion from 5 years of service to 2 years, as the upper age limit for application is set to 35 years by the Japanese Government.

The application process was a lengthy one. It involved submitting a detailed research proposal, the application form, and other documents. The documents were sent through the Railway Board to the Japanese Embassy. They eliminated some of the candidates in this preliminary step. The ones who got through were called into the University of Tokyo office, Delhi for an interview. Based on the interview performance and placement preference, candidates were assigned different Universities. We opted for Hokkaido University, named after the island we never had heard of six months ago.



*Hokkaido University's Gingko Avenue during summer, autumn and winters*

Hokkaido happens to be the northernmost and the most beautiful of Japan's main islands. Hokkaido University was no different. situated in the capital city of Sapporo, it boasted of ponds, vast fields and even a river in the campus. During spring season and peak autumn, tourists from all over the country would flock

down to soak in the natural beauty of the institute. The alluring cherry blossoms could melt the toughest of hearts. During the 7-month long winter, it would become the winter wonderland for the students to revel in every day. Although living in a snowy region does come with its own challenges, such as falling down in the snow every now and then or learning to walk as penguins with snow boots on.



*With our degrees on graduation day, March 2020*

After completing the initial paperwork within a week, we met with our respective supervisors. Supervisors were the professors guiding us during the entire course duration. The professor, specific to the laboratory, was responsible for monitoring students' research progress and for 33% of the final grading points. Rest of the grades had to be obtained through the coursework. The lectures were conducted in English for International students. One of the basic requirements for the degree was publishing a paper in a reputed journal or a symposium, for which the coffee machine in the cafeteria came in very handy. To work under a Japanese professor and to know the basics of conducting independent research was a learning experience in itself.



*With my supervisor and lab mates in an Izakaya*

Apart from the academics, the course provided multiple opportunities for High-speed Rail related training. In the summer of 2018, we received an invitation for the Shinkansen Summer Seminar for International students and immediately signed up for it. The 3-day long program was jointly organized by the University of Tokyo, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan Railway Technical Service, JR East and JR Central. The highlights of the training included lectures on Shinkansen high-speed stability and its future strategy, Shinkansen Inspection and Repair Workshop tour, Hamamatsu and Super Conducting MAGLEV and Railway Park tour, Nagoya.

We visited JR Hokkaido repair workshop twice during the course. We learned about maintenance practices of EMU and DMU coaches running over the network of JR Hokkaido. The impeccable shop floors, the courteous staff and the orderly arranged tools and machinery were the biggest takeaways for us.

In December 2019, HSR Exchange Program for Students from Ministry of Railways, India was



*Pitching our business idea at HULT Campus finals*

hosted by JICA, JR East and RTRI (Regional Railway Research Institute, Japan). It included a visit to different labs of RTRI where we learned about the research activities of Japanese Railways. A visit to the Shinkansen Control room and lectures about the operation of Shinkansen was also included.



*With RTRI officials and University professors*

Ashish, Paras and Silabhadra '2k9 attended the conference on Spill over Effects of High-Speed Rail and quality of life, ADBI, Tokyo. Silabhadra Das '2k9 got selected in World congress on Railway Research (WCRR, Tokyo) to discuss the impact of vertical vibration of Railway car body on ride comfort using multimode vibration damping. I presented in the 57th Japanese Combustion Symposium in November 2019





*The ruins of Hiroshima and a traditional temple, Kyoto*  
on the topic of thermal runaway prevention in Lithium-ion batteries using fire retardants. Silabhadra Das '2k9, Saurav Modi '2k12 and I participated in the HULT Prize on campus competition with the business pitch of an e-waste recycler start up.

During our semester breaks, we visited the Geisha district of Kyoto, the bombing sites of Hiroshima, the Universal Studios in Osaka, the beaches of Fukuoka and busy neon districts of Tokyo. On relatively free weekends, sleepy towns of Hokkaido were our destination. Roaming on the safe and clean Japanese streets, riding in punctual to the second trains, an interacting with professional and courteous citizens was always a delight. The cherry on the cake was the rife tourist amenities which were ultra-modern and just a couple of blocks away.

Besides, the University life provided ample occasions to interact with the locals. With my Japanese gibberish and their basic English ability, we could strike reasonable conversations. Through these interaction programs, we got to know what goes on inside the minds of Japanese teenagers. Getting a chance to be dolled up



*During a cultural exchange program in Sapporo*  
in the traditional Japanese attire, Kimono by affectionate grandmothers was another exclusive perk.

The two years in Japan provided a fresh perspective of the world. It was an opportunity to learn new things, acquire a new set of skills, make new friends, learn a different language, and immerse in an entirely different culture. I still mistakenly bow to my friends over video calls sometimes, all thanks to the etiquettes we instinctively followed with everyone, including the mailman and the random person on the road.

The world became a whole lot bigger for us and we would be forever grateful to the Indian Railways for this fulfilling experience.



*"Japan never considers time together as time wasted. Rather, it is time invested." -Donald Richie*

# Tales from the South

V Anand '62

## Allotment of Parent Railway

One cannot choose one's parents, but an SCA can choose his "parent" railway.

In our days, SCAs were allowed to choose their "parent" railway. We were asked to give three preferences. The actual allotment depended on one's position in the batch and availability of vacancies.

Some "influence" could also be exercised. For instance, an SCRA had some influence through the Rashtrapati Bhavan and was allotted Northern Railway, even though his position was lower. Because of this all the SCAS senior to him were also allotted Northern Railway.

One of my batch mates was allotted Central Railway despite his position being quite low in the merit list, supplanting another SCA who was allotted North Eastern Railway. Despite this manipulation another SCA got Central Railway allotted, and the SCA who had reported to Central Railway was transferred to South Eastern Railway



Earlier, the allotment was done according to the vacancies available, with one caveat- no one will be allotted the railway of their home town as given in the original application form. It is for this reason that V. Narayanan (1955) found himself in Northern Railway and K.K. Mathur (1955), Ashok Kumar (1958) and G.B. Singh (1958) found themselves in Southern Railway.

So, when I filled out my application form, my father advised me to show his office address at Shimla as the home town address. This, he felt, would ensure that I was allotted Southern Railway, and hopefully get posted to Mysore, where he planned to settle down after retirement.

When we left Jamalpur, there were just eight zonal railways and the ninth, namely South-Central Railway was in its infancy.

Most of the SCAs came from towns north of the Vindhyas, and the preferences were 1. Northern. 2. Central 3. Western. The canner SCRA's gave North Eastern as the second or third choice, hoping for a posting in Lucknow or Bareilly (Izzatnagar)



Meanwhile, the “No Hometown Railway” principle was abandoned, and as I was high up in the merit list, I got Southern Railway. The Director IRIMEE was upset. Why are you asking for Kaala Paani? You deserve better- East Indian or Great Indian Peninsula.

My batch mate Shri D.D. Gulhati who was also allotted Southern Railway, was particularly upset. “Kithhey aa ke phas gaye” he would lament.

**Training in Integral Coach Factory. a.k.a “Iyer Coach Factory”**

All of us had to undergo training in ICF. As there were no slots specifically allotted by ICF, there was no control on the number of officers that would land up.

The ICF had only a small Officers Rest House with four rooms. When I reached ICF for training, some of my batch mates were already there. In addition, there was one officer of 1961 batch and a few from 1963 batch as well. Some of us had to move into the abandoned building of the ICF Secondary School. We moved some furniture from the Apprentice Mechanics’ Hostel, the Secretary to GM, Shri Ashok Pradhan 1957 arranged for an attendant to look after our belongings.

We of course, missed our morning cuppa. The hardy souls walked to the Officers Rest House-a distance of about 200 metres. Lunch, tea and dinner was no problem. The rest house cook-attendant-bearer called Raju used to dish out

rich, high cholesterol food.

As he put it, “Master I give you one chubzee, one doll, one chicken dish and parathas twice a day and pakodas at tea time-all for Rs 8/- only.

**Dr Padmashri Thayil John Cherian, the legendary CMO of Perambur.**

Dr T.J. Cherian never married. He was so dedicated to the patients that he virtually lived in the hospital. He had a penchant for cutting red tape and scant regard for office procedures. He started Open Heart Surgery in India for the first time. He trained renowned surgeons like Dr K.M. Cherian. He was very approachable and used to hold his own OPD clinic.

One member of the 1964 batch used to suffer from dyspepsia, indigestion and acidity. He shunned the rich fare offered by Raju and demanded plain phulka rotis and boiled vegetables. His batchmates felt that he was a hypochondriac and advised him to consult Dr T.J. Cherian

Dr Cherian gave him a patient hearing. Then he abruptly said, “Get yourself admitted>”

For the next few days various doctors examined him and a battery of tests was carried out.

Dr Cherian also examined him every day with cheerful words like “How do you feel? Would some fried chicken and baked vegetables with stuffed parathas be OK?”.

The patient would groan – “Doctor, the very thought is nauseating.”

Dr Cherian’s response was, “Nurse, give him an enema”

After a couple of days of this routine and several enemas later, Dr Cherian pronounced that he was cured. We were all secretly amused.

However, the ultimate compliment came from the patient himself.

“Dr Cherian has cured me without any medication”

**The Parrot’s Prophecy**

Since most of the SAMs were from Northern India, the preferred choice of railways was between Northern, Central and Western.

We were in our final year at Jamalpur and expecting our orders with eager anticipation. My batchmates PKD Lee and DD Gulhati and myself were undergoing training at the Asansol Electric Locomotive Shed.

Asansol was a dusty, smoke filled town with very few options for amusement. There was Atwal’s restaurant which had a crooner and live music and where our instructor, a Mr. Beale used to play the saxophone. The only cinema hall was bed bug infested. It did not help that large geckos flitted across the screen, seemingly crawling out of the heroine’s nose. One redeeming feature

was a restaurant in GT Road serving the best dahi wadas this side of the Suez.

There was, of course, the Durand Institute which had been reduced to a sorry state due to the bar having been closed. We had one look and decided that it is not worth a second

We were in the so-called officers rest house which consisted of a large dormitory on the first floor of the last platform of Asansol railway station. Our creature comforts were looked after by a cheerful youngster called Prasadi.He cooked for us, washed our clothes, polished our shoes and ran other errands. He would also watch the running trains and buy milk at throwaway prices from the cattle trains. One morning while we waited impatiently for bed tea, Prasadi announced that we would have to do with black tea as the cattle train had not arrived. We assumed he was a Railway employee. It was much later, when we thankfully left Asansol that we came to know that Prasadi was a vagrant unemployed youth.

Amongst the other occupants was an ASO (Assistant Security Officer/RPF). He used to “regale” us with his rendition of popular ditties on his flute. At the end of the performance he would stand up solemnly and play what sounded like assorted cats having their tails pulled, but which he assured us was the National Anthem. While he eagerly waited for applause, he would shake the flute vigorously to remove his spittle. It was Hobson’s choice-whether to withstand the sprinkling of holy water from his flute or go outside to brave the assorted flying insects.



We used to take a short cut to the GT Road where Atwal's was situated. Under one of the railway bridges, there used to be a gathering of beggars, many of them afflicted with leprosy and/or filaria. That area came to be known as “Kaudiyon ka Pul” or “Leprosy Bridge”. While walking past the bridge one day we found a roadside astrologer with a parrot. On receiving a fee of one rupee the parrot with clipped wings would scurry out and pick card. The astrologer would read out the prophecy.

We were permitted one question. We asked the astrologer what the future was regarding our posting. The astrologer correctly predicted that all of us would be heading south. PKD Lee and I were happy that we would be getting Southern or South-Central Railway, but Gulhati was crestfallen as he was hoping to get posted to Northern Railway

Post Script: I placed heavy bets on the outcome of the FIFA World cup, relying on the prophecy of Mani, the Malaysian Parrot. I lost heavily to my friends who depended on the clairvoyance of Paul the Octopus

**The Maharaja of Mysore's Saloon**

The Southern Railway, formed out of the Merger of MSMR (Mails in Slow Motion Railway) SIR (Saambar-Idli Railway or Srirangam Iyengar's Railway) and Mysore State Railway was very poorly provided with Officers' Rest Houses. Trainees and newly posted junior officers were the worst hit.

My batchmate, Desh Deepak Gulhati, and I had our training in Olavakkot, Guntakal, and Tiruchy divisions.

Trichy had a barracks style of rest house very near the Railway Station. There was no catering arrangement but we faced no problems as there were reasonably good restaurants nearby including the refreshments rooms at the railway station. However, most of our training was in the Villupuram Steam Locomotive shed. The DME, V.Narayanan '55, managed to get an overaged Metre Gauge four-wheeler Inspection carriage for our stay.

Guntakal had no rest house, but Shri B.M Shyam Singh '60 allowed us to stay in his bungalow as his wife had gone to her “maika” for her confinement. BMS took keen interest in our training. He was very particular that we should never fail to reach a train accident site before anyone else. On one occasion he whizzed off with Gulhati on the pillion of his JAWA bike. I followed in the Accident Relief Train. The accident was very minor-two wheels of the diesel locomotive had derailed on the newly constructed Guntakal-Bellary Hospet BG line.

Having re-railed the locomotive quickly and leaving the Civil Engineering (open line) and Construction Branch to bicker about the cause of the derailment, we celebrated the event at a wayside eatery calling itself the “THE DISNEY MOTEL”.

After some unpleasant exchange of views

about the price of beer, and with the manager threatening to throw us out, we returned in somewhat high spirits.

Gulhati convinced us that the Motel owner had poisoned us, as evidenced by the highly spiced food. We woke up the Railway doctor at Bellary and explained our apprehensions.

“Get out, you are all drunk!” he said.

The return journey was by the Metre Gauge Passenger train. BMS boarded the First-class compartment and gently reminded us, “Your duty card passes are not valid on this line as it is in South Central Railway. However, as the engine is from Southern Railway, I authorise you to travel on the footplate and count the number of shovels of coal.”

Olavakkot had only two rooms - both occupied by officers on transfer. We dumped our luggage in one room and spent the rest of our training foot plating by day and travelling at night. Our favourite haunt was the mess at INS Venduruthy, a Naval Base at Cochin, where the ever

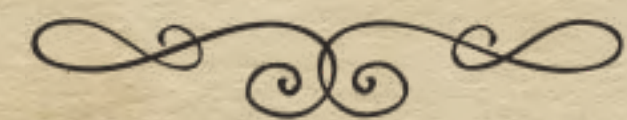
hospitable Surendra Sharma (brother of Devendra Sharma '63), of the Indian Navy was posted.

Gulhati and I were posted at Chennai - he was AME Madras Division and I was Assistant Locomotive Works Manager at Perambur. Neither of us was allotted railway quarters. I moved my personal effects to Gulhati's four-wheeler inspection carriage. I used to sleep in any First-Class Coach which was undergoing repair at Egmore Coaching Depot. Incredibly enough, one evening I found that no first-class coach was available. I went to Chennai Central Station only to find that Gulhati had taken his carriage to Jolarpettai. I do not wish to bore you with the details of how I spent the night and how I got ready the next morning.

That was the day I decided to stay in Maharaja of Mysore's Saloon which was usually parked in Egmore. This saloon was built to travel on Metre Gauge as well as Broad Gauge. The body could be transferred from the metre gauge underframe to a broad-gauge underframe. Shortly thereafter, Gulhati also moved in.



# Madhubani Paintings



Renu Kumar  
Better half of Mahesh Kumar Roy '94



If you would like to share your creations with us, please send us an email at [edsams2020@gmail.com](mailto:edsams2020@gmail.com) - Eds





# Gymkhana: through a millennial's eyes

Astha Sneha '2k9

It was the 20th century when feminist wave had taken the world by a storm. And then was the year 1983, when the proverbial glass ceiling was broken at the hitherto male bastion of Jamalpur Gymkhana. The path created by Ms Kalyani Chadha nee Lal, and laid down over the years by leading ladies spread across batches in the 80's, 90's and the year 2000, was bereft of travelers for a long part of the first decade of the new millennium. Then came the year 2010, when news of not one but multiple ladies joining the Gym trickled in. I can only imagine the flutter it must have caused in the larger community, and in the current incumbents themselves. When the 4 of us in 2009 batch arrived, the system went all out of its way to ensure we never left! And leave we never did, nor did anyone from the steady stream which ensued after our batch. The fairer gender had arrived, and how.



Aastha Sneha, Smriti Rao, Anshu Priya, Rakshita Bagherwal, 'The Four'



The advent brought its share of adventure of a different kind. Gymkhana residents are rumoured to have become much better dressed even while lounging around in PJs. A sense of 'civility' came over conversations on encountering a lady gymmie in the lobby/club/dining room/sports field.

The terracotta red building too underwent changes. Rooms for the ladies acquired their own charm, apart from the attached loos. Every room of the building bore a mark of its occupant. While the other rooms and their occupants too left behind legacy, but there was something distinctly feminine about the 'girls' rooms'. Cleaner, to begin with! Many a room beheld a pretty sight inside, apart from that of its occupant.

Mess menu came to acquire a variety of flavors under the stewardship of diligent Joint General secys, and the ladies were leading from the front at this post. The menu would spring up gastronomical delights time and again, at times the initiative of those who had a flair for culinary arts.

How can one talk about Gymkhana and not mention the parties! Glamour quotient went up several notches, and ET/dining hall could give big city pubs a run for their money. Gym ladies matched the gents step for step in many a memorable soirees. Club day cultural too got a makeover with duets, female solos, all-girls qawwali, and actual ladies playing the female characters in the flagship skits!



2k9 batch during one of the parties



Ladies of 2k9, with Priyamvada Dev '2k10, Club Day 2012



Qawwali at Club Day 2014, all female lead!

Meanwhile, I must confess the attention received by the us girl gymmies was more than what we could have imagined in the world outside Gymkhana, more so for the 4 of us. Our batch came to be identified as the one with so many girls for the first time. I can safely speak for my girl batchmates when I say we had developed some sort of expertise in hosting guests and socializing at formal events!

Speaking of attention, I shouldn't skip the individual attention we have received over the course of our stay at JMP. To prevent feathers from ruffling, let us just say that Cupid had a field day, with some in-house marriages being the happy culmination of his efforts!

Heartbreaking as it is to see no more SCA batches in Gymkhana, this also means a sudden brake to the rising trend of girls who took, and cleared, the prestigious exam. This was a sure sign of the changing times, one that bode very well for the society around us. We all were examples and inspiring stories for young girls back in our families and societies. As the last of the female gymmies has stepped out into the world, the path created in 1983 has come a full circle. We, the lady gymmies of the millennium batches, continue to learn and be inspired by our seniors in service. I hope the female collective of Gymkhana inspires the rest of the community and beyond, not just with broken glass ceilings, but with everything else about us.

For she is a jolly good fellow!





*Ladies across 6 batches (well, most of them)*

One of the biggest buzzes in the Gymkhana lobbies around the later half of Naughts decade was the impending collaboration of IRIMEE with some European university. The efforts of many seniors and IRIMEE authorities culminated in the MoU with Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland. While the noble intentions behind it was to get international exposure for the Gymmies, it did bring in its wake an interesting scenario – the arrival of North Irish exchange students at Jamalpur. One can easily say that the high point of the year 2011 was when 6 students from QUB arrived at our hallowed portals.

And what a time did they choose to visit in! The sweltering heat of Bihar in the month of June greeted the guests from cool temperate zone of Western Europe. No amount of sunscreen was helping their obvious sunburn. While they had all their shots in place before they had dared to venture into India, they were not spared their share of mosquito bites, while the bugs had a field day feasting on west European blood. Quite a welcome change in their diet from the usual Gymmie stuff.

Talking of food, utmost care was taken to make

our guests feel at home (atithi devo bhava? Caucasian atithi even more so?). Raw material suited to European palates was shipped in from Delhi and Kolkata. Spice usage was at an all-time low, even for the regular Gymkhana inhabitants. I must add this did cause some heartburn, despite the low masala usage.



*The way to a European guest's heart is through bland food!*

While we are at the topic of hearts and masalas, we must not forget the sheer joy many Gymmies had felt at the prospect of hosting two ladies in the group of videshi visitors. Let's just say that due to the lack of spices, kisi ki daal nahi gali.

Our guests were also subject to the horrors of consuming locally available spirits. Yet, they were sporty and did indulge us with some bottoms-up chugging contests. Proud to say India chugged it down way better! Chug de, India?

Mid-June brought had brought rains and much needed relief. There were football matches in the rain, and some mud splashing, which had delighted our mehmaans no end. Ohh, and they were dismayed at not having encountered tigers and elephants while in the land of sadhus and snake charmers; stray dogs and cows of Jamalpur had tried to make it up for them.



*Jamalpur rains and football*

Colonialism is dead to the younger generation, and our guests were living proof of it. They were horrified at the idea of using the services of washermen! They couldn't believe why anyone else would do their laundry, that too by hands. Thankfully, Gymkhana had been equipped with a washing machine and an iron board, just before their arrival, with one of the unused rooms converted into a makeshift laundry area. Needless to add, our dear old Rambo couldn't get his hands on the angrez sahibs for a massage!

With an active time at Gymkhana (and not-so-active time at IRIMEE!), our guests went back with 2 weeks full of memories and hard drives full of photos. Soon it was time to bid them goodbye. As they were seen off at the station for the next leg of their India trip, they were amused at the prospect of spending over a day inside a train, on berths which one could sleep on!

A month later, six of us joined them in their home ground. That is a story for another day!



*Jamalpur rains and football*

The millennium years were marked by giant technological strides the world over. Entities like Facebook, Youtube, Google and Iphones, which we consider as virtual 'extensions' of ourselves now, were taking birth. Naturally, Gymkhana too was not untouched by these advancements. While Gym residents had always been an enterprising lot with an inclination to get their hands on anything new in the tech market, these years brought distinctive changes to the Gymmie's life.

Apart from the computer centre of course, there was hardly anyone without a personal laptop. High speed internet had entered the old red building, heralding an era of fast downloads. There were patterns to the speed of the internet, which was observed by keen minds. Those time slots were used to get the latest movies and games. Regular film screenings became common, and TV room too got an upgradation with a swanky giant screen and HD recording dish connection.





Almost every alternate room came to be equipped with the latest speaker systems by its occupant, causing an inadvertent cacophony of sounds. One was treated to a never-heard-before medley of Talat Mehmood-meets-David Gilmour-meets- Honey Singh every time one stepped into the lobbies!

Over the course of our time spent at JMP, phones got bigger, Android moved on to newer confections for names, notes were shared as PDFs, social media posts became huge, cameras became fancier, ebooks too made their appearance. Line follower robots and

photography tips became topics of dinner table conversations. But the more things change, the more they remain the same. Evenings were still spent with tea and snacks in the dining hall, lobbies, or Quad; Nishant, the library, still had patrons (if anything, online shopping used to bring book consignments every other day); the best quality HD movie was enjoyed in the company of friends and maggi; and the fanciest DSLR cameras were used to capture the beauty of the terracotta red building.

Who would have known those pictures would one day be the only reminders of the time gone by, of lives lived, of bonds forged? Who would have known that one day, those lobbies would be bereft of loud music and even louder laughter? Who would have known that the rooms which had sheltered many a occupant for years, would be hollow one day, not long after?

Gymkhana has stood several storms. The old guardian still stands strong, waiting for its lobbies to be filled with light, laughter and loud sounds, even if it is for only one day every year!



Pic credits: Jamalpur Gymkhana Photography Club, Smriti Rao' 2k9, Catriona McKluskey, yours truly

# Vignettes from The Past

Rahul Tyagi '89

*The first edition of Vignettes from The Past included fond memories of my batchmate Anil Priya Gautam or APG as he was endearingly called. Who could have imagined that APG would not be in our midst just six short months later. A gentleman to the core, APG has left us too soon. We grieve together as a batch and as a community, hoping his soul finds peace and his family the strength to bear the loss.*

**Mid-March 1990**

Sachinder Mohan Sharma and Atul Singh, '88, conferred at the top of the stairs, while I leaned for support against the red brick corridor wall which transferred copious amounts of red blush to the khaki sleeve of my shop dress. The evening before I had been “injured” on the sports field, in a most dramatic fashion. A speeding hockey ball had struck the back of my knee and locked it, preventing motion in my tibiofemoral and patellofemoral articulations. I collapsed to the ground and had to be carried away on a scaffolding of hockey sticks. In the melee and confusion, I forgot which knee had been struck but quickly decided on one before I was brought to rest at the edge of the field. I was careful not to change the “injured” knee through the rest of the charade!

I was pampered to no end. No “appointments”, no dressing up for dinner, no morning rounds, breakfast in bed! And to top it all, two doting 88'ers – Sachin and Atul moved me to their room

for closer care and monitoring. The IRIM&EE van was summoned to transport me to the hospital the next day. I hobbled from the upper eastern L-lobby to the top of the main staircase and stopped. How would I cross the club area in slippers? While Sachin and Atul discussed options, Rajiv Aggarwal '86, who was passing by asked what the matter was. Upon learning of our predicament, he smiled benignly. “No problem gentlemen”, he continued to smile, and in flash scooped me up. In mere moments he carried me down the stairs and deposited me in the waiting IRIM&EE van. Problem solved!

**Late March 1990**

Ankur Agrawal continued to fidget audibly as we stood lined up for our 2200 hours General Secretary appointment. A visibly irritated Vivek Khare '86 asked for the third time, “What is the matter? Can’t you stand still? And what are you hiding? Show me your hands. Ankur tried desperately to extricate his right index finger from the round hole of at the bottom of a plastic pin



holder on the G' Sec's desk behind him. Some of us shot furtive glances to see what was going on. Ankur's finger was well and truly stuck! Sheepishly, he brought his right hand forward and held it up for all to see. The room exploded with laughter. Even the usually serious Vivek Khare laughed. Then he lectured us on the perils of sticking our fingers in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Sometime during the first year

*The technique of inducing hypothermia through loud and passionate verbal invocation had been invented and perfected in Gymkhana long before our time. Known as “thand lagana” in Gymkhana lexicon, it began with a respectful salutation for the intended target and proceeded to enclose the victim in a basket. Thereafter, the chant descended rapidly into a powerful, invective laden mantra that rippled across the night sky delivering bone chilling bursts of cold to*



The 89 Batch After 25 Rounds for Club Entry

*the victim, crippling them for the next several hours. While the practice was usually reserved for esteemed faculty members before exams, occasionally, it was used on an errant Gymkhanite too.*

Manish Agarwal '89 had been hogging one of the shower stalls for too long, while several of us waited impatiently for our turn. We were getting late for dinner, but Manish Agarwal continued to shower and sing tunelessly.

Then suddenly, “Manish Agarwal ko lage thand”, bellowed someone.

“...Tokri mein band”, came the spontaneous response.

The powerful, operative lines followed as we all cried in unison. The words reverberated across Gymkhana. Our esteemed senior, Manish Agarwal '86 heard them too. He absorbed their bone

chilling effects, protecting the junior Manish Agarwal from harm. But he was livid! The 89 batch was summoned to the eastern terrace after dinner to conduct endurance exercises late into the night. In the batch huddle that followed, Manish Agarwal '89 was re-christened “Major” – M.A. Jr. The name has stuck to this day!

Club Entry, April 1990

Perhaps the most disingenuous pretense all firsttees are expected to keep up is the



Some orange squash?

ignorance of the space between the lounge and the mess. In the fashion of a Barmecide feast, everyone plays along “cheerfully” until the much-vaunted club entry happens.



Gentle but(t) powerful!

After the mandatory 25 rounds, sundry pre- club entry rituals were conducted on the eastern terrace. These included the guzzling of insane amounts of an orange flavored (non-alcoholic) drink and a “butt-fight”. Then we showered and got dressed. One by one we were pushed or kicked into the club, the impetus being necessary to impart adequate energy to go through the “wormhole” portal!

First Year Dining

One of the most memorable highlights of the first year was the heartwarmingly spectacular dining experience afforded by the legendary Jwala Prasad! A mess bearer of extraordinary efficiency, Jwala listened carefully, until all the Sahebs on his table had asked him to bring “extras”. He then discarded the first five requests and proceeded to fulfill only the last one. When the indignant Sahebs with unappeased appetites questioned him about the egg bhujia, and the slices they had ordered, the unflappable Jwala would confidently tell them - “Nay hai saheb”. Vignettes from the past will continue in the next issue of SAM.





# Player One Vs. The DDD



V S Mathur '87

So what did the COVID-19 lockdown do for you?

Was it an unexpected holiday? Allowed late morning wake up? Enabled binge watching OTT serials? Finally got your 'singer' to come out of the bathroom? Let you finally do that pivot to a New & Better You (NBU)? Or did it pass by in an unwashed haze?

The on again, off again nature of the enforced home stay was disorienting, weekdays merging into weekends, hope mixing with fatalism, the virus approaching and receding on Aarogya Setu, but inching ever closer.....

We started with the Batmemes from Wuhan  
("वहाँ से ही आया है।")

- What did she do when she got COVID?  
Nothing, she didn't even bat an eyelid.
- Bat and Ball make Cricket. Bat in Bowl makes COVID.
- "I say, that's not cricket old chap, we've had a Batswoman Bowl the world into the Soup!"

Then newspapers went into hyperdrive about

bowlers not licking balls to swing them



Figure 1: Mucus Rules!

Sing:

*'All the cricketing FANZ ("Saliva!")*

*Don't give up the CHANZ ("Saliva!")'*

(with sincere apologies to all aspiring Lungi Dancers)

My WA groups went nutsier than ever: COVID snake oil abounded, with instructions to breathe from your hair dryer; and more famously drink and inject disinfectants.

A lot of smoke and mirrors. Denial, with the

numbers racing up and then staying put, everyone putting a spin and defining a trend based on 2 days' digits. Home remedies (just stay home), remedies at home (Pot and Jelly's nostrums), homely remedies (wash everything with soap for 2 'Happy Birthdays').

Everyone shying away from the fact that the long incubation time and the lack of a good count of infected population made everything into pure speculative Wishful Thinking.

Masks were the focus of a lot of speculation, with different people favouring different locations: In the pocket, under the chin, under the nose, fully covered face. Many different materials were also used, from nylon sock DIY to designer chic.

All of these memes merged with the repeated and earnest entreaties to stay drunk. Since life is short and unpredictable, we are urged to eschew sobriety. We don't need to experience it with our full senses, just tipsy, albeit with friends.

COVID became personal when a neighbour got hit positively, and we got locked down for a week. Uncertainty and the need to avoid the unseeable, unknowable, incognito agent of infection pushes one into semi-paranoia. What to disinfect first, where to sequence the MEN (Mouth, Eyes, Nose)?

For me, lockdown was a sweeping change in lifestyle, a lifestyle change in sweeping, and a change in sweeping style.

I got low down and dirty with the jhadu. And did

research on the causes and effects of cleaning floors. In fact, I wrote an anonymous monograph.

Reproduced here for your benefit:



## An Instructive Analysis into the Reasons for Failure to Clean up.

Parthi Pam Padmi, MBA, NA  
(Please call me Pam Padmi Parthi. MBA, NA is pronounced Hum Bhi Hain, Na)

An assessment of the cleanliness program launched with much fanfare was conducted by the author to identify the reasons for its less than sweeping success.

Taking meticulous notes and observations of the processes in use for the implementation of the program pointed directly to the implements used for its implementation. The lacunae in the design, and the consequent gaps in coverage have led to a situation wherein the claims of success are arbitrary and biased. Negative results are being swept under the carpet. The opportunity for improvement is wasted for lack of a systematic study into the practical use and manual manipulation of the broom.

A little consideration will shew the following gaps in design of the Indian jhadu:

1. Coverage is greater when used sideways.



There is little or no floor coverage when used by a standing person.

2. The tips spread widely away from the handle. Dirt capture at the ends is limited to large items. The small fry is only bycatch.

3. There is no Obverse or Reverse. All sides are the same.

Design Deficiencies lead to challenges in use that effectively make the broom a Dirt Distribution Device (DDD).

1. Speed vs. effectiveness: Stand up to go fast, but then you deploy the narrow face of the broom and end up creating a Japanese Garden. Stoop to increase coverage per stroke, but you will slow down, and faster fatigue follows from the stooped stance.

2. Spread and gathering: It is not easy to pull together the identified dirt as one sweeps, due to the influence of three different forces. Please see the Figure:

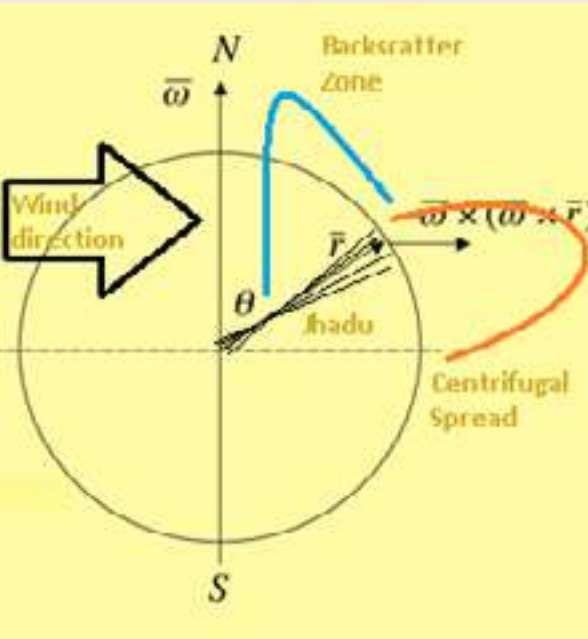


Figure 2: Dirt Distribution Details

a). Centrifugal impulses – you are basically pushing things away from you at a tangent to

the strokes your DDD makes. So the unswept space is constantly increasing exponentially.

b) . BackScatter – the return stroke will carry some of the dirt backwards, ensuring that you always leave proof of your passing

c). Windage Losses – any breeze will spill your collected loot back out of control and onto Square 1.

3. Chirality (Left vs. right) – One handed use pushes the payload in a particular direction – in front of your right hand side neighbours' house. BUT, If your neighbour is a lefty, the same payload will end up back in front of your house, soon.

The correct solution seems to be one that relies on the resilience of the broom material, and a stance that addresses the dirt specifically. Something like this:



Figure 3 Correct stance for Addressing the waste

So, is the best bet to teach our cleaning staff golf? Any volunteers?



# Visit to an active Volcano

Shivani Kochak  
The better half of Ravi Kochak '74

Our 30 Th anniversary was fast approaching on 7 th July 2013. It was time to escape for a quick holiday. My husband loves islands in the Pacific. In his last life he must have been born somewhere there. We had already ticked off the six islands of Hawaii to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. That is Polynesia. Next obviously had to be Melanasia. That is when the idea of visiting Vanuatu came up, as per the recommendation of our kids. It is a small nation in the South Pacific, consisting of some eighty islands between Australia and Fiji, spreading along some 1300 km.



After other activities like canoeing down the thin river to the vast waves of the Pacific Ocean, and an island tour of Port Villa, Vanuatu, we planned a two-day trip to Mount Yasur, an active volcano on Tanna island. While booking our flights for Tanna, the airlines website said that we could carry

maximum of five kg check-in baggage Accordingly, we packed two sets of our lightest clothes. The D-day dawned for our take-off for our next flight. At the airport, we saw a bi-plane whirr off and leave the ground after a short take-off of fifty metres, on way to Tanna island. They fly just above the waves so that tourists can feel the spary on their face. A whale could lunge for the wings & gobble them. Some tourists enjoy this risk. It was then our turn, down the runway in a small aircraft with 'phatphatia-propellers' and Vanuatu painted in red alongside. Our wheels struggled to leave the airstrip, inspite of only just five kg luggage each. After an hour we spotted wispy smoke from the fuming volcano on the island, but no airstrip was visible. Our plane did a low swoop like a falcon, and bypassed the airstrip without landing, and nosed up. We wondered what had happened. The pilot casually said that as per standard operating procedure, they swoop down and rev up their engines to chase away wild animals from the airstrip before they come in to land. On second approach, we landed. The plane screeched to a halt, so that we didn't enter the shrubs.

A jet-black minstrel band at the air-hut received us. They garlanded us. Locals welcomed all the



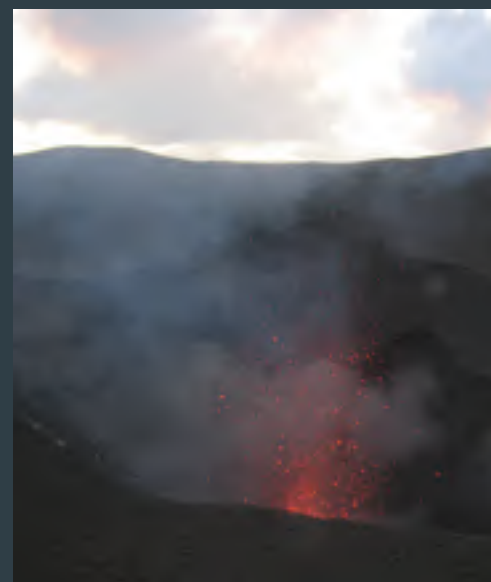
tourists. The road to the resort was an excavated effort by some JCB. Hot steam and fire vented out from several small locations along the roadside. There was volcanic ash in the air. We were advised to wear sunglasses and cover our face, eyes and nose with a scarf. The pandemic masks of today would have been useful then. There were no mobile towers, no tele-network, no electricity, no roads and very little drinking water. There were no schools, and no education system. There was no currency for the locals at Tanna island and they used barter system for trade. It turned dark quickly. The Pacific is a place for sunrises, so darkness approaches fast. We were some seven tourists in a jeep type vehicle. We were a little worried as there were no lights all along the mud-road. The whites of the eyes of some locals were visible. They were all carrying machetes, from youngest to eldest.



*whitegrass airport tanna*

After an hour and a half ride on the bumpy road, which had deep ditches and high peaks, we reached our resort. We were in for a surprise as our cottage was made of only wood and grass. There were no latches on the door. No permission had been granted for built up construction on the beach. The floor of our cottage was made up of

strewn pebble stones, without any cement. There was an arrangement for water storage from a running brook. Electricity was solar, available from 6 pm, which would last till 2 am or so in the morning. Thereafter, a few candles and solar torches added sparkle to the night. Of course dinner was by candlelight too. The semi-raw meat in the burgher was what the locals enjoyed ripping apart. Till 1980, the entire population was full of cannibals. So anyone more than 35 years age in 2013 was a cannibal. Luckily the Brits, Americans and French introduced fruit trees, vegetables, cattle and poultry to the islanders, so the locals stopped killing each other for food. Our guide told us that now nobody on the island goes hungry, as there is an abundance of fruit trees and anybody who says he is hungry is a lazy person, as he has to merely climb a tree to get fruits. There was a large pot in the middle of the village square, about five feet high. We asked what that was for. We were told that in the past they literally used to boil people in that. Luckily, we did not go there forty years ago. Anyway, we stepped into the pot, and peeped over the rim, so that a local guy could take our snap.



Next morning we were driven to Mount Yasur. Steam was hissing out from every vent in the mountainous road, excavated from volcanic hardened ash. We reached the top after an hour of being driven in circles. Ash of every hue was on our faces. A tribal dance troupe received us who had colors of Vanuatu flag painted on their cheeks with dry volcanic ash. After the dance they shook hands with us and pressed their cheeks with ours, transferring the flag colors to our cheeks, which was quite a surprise for all the tourists. While going towards the volcano, the terrain looked spectacularly beautiful, as if we were a part of some National Geographic magazine photograph. We were very excited and at the same time there was anxiety of the unknown. We were driving towards the volcano on a flat untouched terrain of ash.



*volcanic ash Mt Yasur*

The drive to the mountain grew hotter as the evening wore on. Our guide stopped the jeep at a short distance from the volcano. There was a sign, which read "THINK SAFETY". From there we walked up to the rim, with no defined pathway. After a hard climb we reached the top of the volcano. Going closer toward the rim, we didn't realize that we were actually standing on hardened ash, while viewing the

hot red lava some two thousand feet below. It was a mesmerizing sight. We were in some other world. It was a huge double volcano. On one side, fury lava was jumping up and down. On the other side, wispy ash and smoke was coming out. I had only read about volcanoes and seen their pictures. Standing on top at the rim of the volcano was like a dream come true. At that point of time, there was no fear in us. About every three minutes, fiery volcanic red-hot small stones at temperatures exceeding three thousand degrees centigrade would blast upwards into the air, and then would fall back inside the volcano. We took our videos and photos, clinging to each other on the rims edge. We were later told that in the past, two tourists had slipped down a thousand feet, never to come back. After about an hour on the rim, the sun had set and it was becoming dark. The sight of lava erupting into the night sky was something which shall remain in my memory forever. After we had taken several more snaps and videos of the volcanic bursts, it was time that we bade goodbye to mount Yasur. We left all our worries of our lifetime in the lava. Walking down the mountainside, the air was cool. There were no trees, just ash all around in different colors. The mountain continued to erupt safely.



*Two rainbows vanuatu*



The next day we left for the airport on Tanna island. Our trip to visit blue caves was cancelled due to high tide and choppy waters. The drive back took us through a village where everything was bartered, from cane items, fruits to pigs and chicken. Time stands still on Tanna island. On reaching the airport, we found the fire- fighting squad playing football on the airstrip, versus the Security personnel. They invited us tourists to join in. The incoming plane did a low swoop to shoo away the so-called footballers, tourists and any other cattle.

We were a total of forty tourists, taking pictures alongside the propeller plane with the footballers. The baggage handlers started loading our bags. The co-pilot came by and said that there were too many passengers so they would have to unload some luggage, though only five kg per person was allowed. We asked how could there be too many passengers? Did they book standing room in the aisle? We were told that the plane was full, the airstrip was too small and the captain of our flight was new to the island airstrip. Then he said safety is important as the wheels of the plane must leave the ground before the end of the airstrip. We saw our baggage being off-loaded. We told the baggage attendant that we had an early morning flight from Port Villa to Auckland. They said don't worry as another plane would come in to pick up the unloaded baggage for Port Villa. The sun was setting and there were no lights on the runway. We told them that we needed to take along our luggage and luckily for us, they very nicely agreed. My husband ran to get our bag put back into the hold of the plane, before they changed their mind.

We boarded the pickup ramp of the plane. Suddenly we realized that in our frenzy to load our bag in the hold, we forgot a small backpack with all personal stuff including our passports etc. in the air-hut, which was used as the airport lounge. We tried desperately to scramble out of the aircraft, while others were trying to board the same. My husband ran to the air-hut. Luckily, the passports and other stuff were untouched and our bag was lying on the same seat where we had kept them. The tribals were honest. The airhostess started raising the stepladder of the plane, as it was getting dark. We ran and stopped her in the nick of time to board; otherwise we would have become permanent residents of that ancient civilization. We prayed that the novice pilot would succeed in getting his wheels off the airstrip in time and as luck would have it, we were air-borne.

On landing at Port Villa, we were told that our confirmed and paid-up hotel reservations were given to another group of tourists. How could they do this to us? Where were we to spend the night, we asked? They promptly put us on a speedboat and upgraded our stay to Iririki island, located in Mele Bay. It was a beautiful island resort. Check it out on google. Dinner was red wine and crab for my husband, whereas I had to contend with boiled veggies, peas and fruit pinacolada.

The early morning sunrise was a picturesque sight above turquoise blue waters. Before we departed for Auckland, we passed by the smoky Mount Yasur of Tanna island. I had already thrown all my worries into the volcano. This trip was a once in a lifetime experience. Although this place was never in my bucket list, I don't repent this surprising wild

trip, where we entered a different time zone of life. It is probably still not over-run with tourists, nor is it fully commercialized. The ozone produced from the sea surrounding the islands gives one a very happy sense of being. It is still a quiet recommended getaway.



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# Club Day 2020 at Lucknow

Jitendra Singh '81

Club Day '2020 was celebrated at Lucknow on 14th February 2020 with lots of fun and frolic.

Second largest outstation gathering of SAM fraternity took place at Lucknow and spirit of Gymkhana completely overshadowed the unusual severe winter spell at Lucknow this year.

Mrs and Mr HN Lal'56, Mrs and Mr Rakesh Misra'72 and Mrs and Mr Kabeer Ahmad'74 were the first to arrive to kick start Club Day 2020 celebrations.

Mrs and Mr HN Lal'56 were the senior most SAM to grace the occasion. Mrs and Mr AK Singh'75 and Mrs and Mr SM Verma'80 also joined the Club Day celebrations at Lucknow.

Celebration started with drinks and snacks followed by number of games and group activities.

The couple dancing game and draping the saree game need a special mention where, the sheer energy and enthusiasm of Mrs and Mr Mathur'57 and Mrs and Mr Pannu'67 gave junior SAMs some serious thinking to do!

Mrs Rao'64 and Mrs Misra'75 stole the show in couple dancing game after which everyone joined the dance floor.

Dance was briefly paused for the cake cutting by Mrs Lal &#39;56. Mr Lal &#39;56 gave a heartfelt message to keep the Gym spirit alive and to keep on celebrating this great day! Feelings of long-lasting Gymkhana traditions overwhelm you when you see the senior most SAM and SIMI cutting the cake. It makes the bonding among SAM fraternity which continue to only strengthen and grow over the years.

This was followed by dinner and another brief dance session where everyone came on the floor to bid this great event a final good bye, with a promise to celebrate the next with Club Day with even more vigour and zing!

The spirit of Gymkhana was maintained high with events. It was truly in the spirit of what Mr HN Lal said - our fraternity will truly live on forever. Cheers to that.

Long live Jamalpur Gymkhana and SAM fraternity.

## List of SAMs attended the Club Day 2020 at Lucknow.

### Retired SAMs:

Mrs & Mr H.N. Lal '56  
Mrs & Mr Rajneesh '56  
Mrs & Mr A.S. Mathur '57  
Mrs & Mr A.K. Rao '64  
Mr Pratap Srivastava '65  
Mrs & Mr H.S. Pannu '67  
Mrs & Mr Praveen Kumar '67  
Mr Keshav Deo '67  
Mrs & Mr Alok Johri '72  
Mrs & Mr Rakesh Misra '72  
Mrs & Mr Rajeev Vishnoi '73  
Mr K.K. Bajpai '73  
Mrs & Mr P.K. Bajpai '74  
Mrs & Mr Syed Kabeer Ahmad '74  
Mrs & Mr P.K. Agarwal '74  
Mrs & Mr Rajiv Mishra '74  
Mr B.C. Bhattacharya '75  
Mrs & Mr R.N. Mishra '75  
Mr S.K. Pathak '75  
Mrs & Mr Ashok Kumar Gupta '76  
Mrs & Mr AK Singh '75  
Mrs & Mr SM Verma '80

### Working SAMs:

Mrs & Mr Jitendra Singh '8 (RDSO)  
Mr Gopal Kumar '82 (RDSO)  
Mrs & Mr Vivek Khare '86 (NR CB)  
Mrs & Mr Neeraj Srivastav '93 (NR STC)  
Mrs & Mr A.N. Siddiqui '99 (RDSO)  
Mr S.S. Chauhan '2k01 (RDSO)  
Mr Amit Kumar Singh '2k05 (MCF)  
Mr Shishir Chandra Shekhar '2k09 (MCF)  
Mrs & Mr Devesh Sharma '2k09 (NR)



# Club Day 2020

# at Lucknow



Mr Praveen Kumar' 67, Mrs & Mr PK Bajpai' 74 and Mr BC Bhattacharya' 75 enjoying the party.



Mrs & Mr HN Lal'56 the senior most SAM with Mrs & Mr Alok Johri'72, and Mr PK Agarwal'75 in Club Day 2020



Ball Dance by SAMs and SIMIs



Mrs & Mr AS Mathur' 57, Mrs & Mr Alok Johri'72 enjoying Ball Dance.



Mr Rakesh Misra'72, Mr HN Lal'56 looking for their partners



Outstation SAMs -SM Verma'80 and AK Singh'75 joined Club Day



Mr Pratap Srivastava' 65 and Mr Rajnish' 56 having exclusive discussion on table and Mr Keshav Dev' 57 with Jitendra singh' 81





Senior Ladies expressing satisfaction over the arrangements made for them. On the left see the Mr Rakesh Mishra instrumental in making any party lively and full of fun.



Mr AS Mathur'57 - is looking like Julius Caesar; just needs a crown of laurels to complete the look.



Wearing a Sari is fun and Junior SAMs learning fast



SIMs enjoying soup after having rounds of Dance and Games



Mr PK Bajpai' 74, Mr AK Singh'75, and Mr HS Pannu' 67 convincing their partners that they can also wear Sari though not taught in Mechanical Engineering at Jamalpur.



Mrs & Mr HN Lal'57 Senior most SAM cutting the Cake -Clubday 2020 designed by Anjana & Vivek Khare' 86



# Club Day 2020 at New Delhi

Aishvairya Sachan '2k7

We have very little to celebrate and remember 2020 by, but remembering the Club Day at New Delhi might offer some solace. Apart from the usual challenges in organizing a Club Day, there were also philosophical debates as to the significance of organizing 14th February as Club Day, in today's time and age. Many expressed their apprehensions over attendance, and cast a shadow over the program. But the ghosts of doubt were forcefully, and thankfully so, cast aside and it was decided to put up the festivities with aplomb. A special thanks to the organizers Mr. Atul Agarwal '81 and Mr. Prashant Kumar '93 for being the change makers here.

The function started with the flying-off of 'welcome balloons' by Senior SIMIs, and cake cutting following afterwards. The EMCEEs for the night, Mrs. And Mr. Rahul Bharti'2K9, took charge and coordinated the evening's activities with a smile. Dumb charades, 'identify the movie' and scavenger hunt games complimented the high spirits of the occasion. The unveiling of SAM Club Day 2020 edition completed the evening's activities. The magazine could be made a reality, thanks to the vision and efforts of Mr. J. L. Singh '65 and Mr. Mayank Tewari '89. All in all, it was an evening which we would reminisce for a long time to come!

This Club Day was a day which shipped us back in time to being Gymmie boys. Meeting so many of our tribe at one place made one feel if it really is Gymkhana's tennis court where a 'Fete-de-la-fete' is sweeping us off our feet. Kudos to the spirit and the Gymmie living within us! May he never get old and may we never forget what the Club Day stands for. After all, the traditions of our institution are held in trust by us members.



Start of the festivities at Club Day 2020



The seniors pose for the camera



# Club Day 2020



Cake cutting! – the senior-most SIMIs following the tradition



All smiles, all around

# at New Delhi



The emcees take the stage



Senior SIMIs grace the occasion





Reminiscing the good ol' times



Through the ages!



88 Batch Brigade: There are never few of them



Souvenir presentation



Celebrating Club Day '2020 the traditional way!



# The Simi Factor...

Kakoli Ghoshal  
 Better half of Shekhar Ghoshal '82

It was a bustling, busy, noisy dining hall in a Delhi University Hostel, almost 34 years ago... across me sat a petite attractive young lady by the name of Shalini Lal. Shalini was wrapping up her B.Ed studies and I was in the last leg of my Civil Service preparations....both extremely busy souls with hardly any time to barely wolf down our meals! In one such snatched meal time conversation I learnt that Shalini's Dad was the Director of IRIMEE in Jamalpur. As I sheepishly confessed to Shalini that I had a very vague idea about the geographical location of Jamalpur and none whatsoever of IRIMEE, she smiled and said that this often happens but she proudly mentioned that some of the brightest brains and minds in the country study at IRIMEE, training be blue blooded Railway Engineers...! Aha SCRA, it clicked as I had heard about this exam being touted as one of the toughest in the country. Point Noted.! Soon thereafter we both parted ways. While Shalini, herself the daughter of a SAM married Amithab another SAM and went ahead to pursue her career in the field of education I qualified the Civil Services and joined the IRAS....

Shortly thereafter in the majestic Pratap Vilas Palace premises, also known as the erstwhile Railway Staff College, I met this strikingly attractive handsome young man sporting a

French beard, who decided to sweep me off my feet with his rich baritone voice belting out soulful gazals!. In a class room full of raw Probationers this precocious brat (with a background of four years of Jamalpur rigor!) seemingly had all the knowledge relating to Railway systems.... Locomotives, Coaches, Wagons, Tracks, Signaling.....!!! While I struggled with the basic nomenclatures of the Railways this lanky man in the last row seemed to have all the answers. Very soon he assumed the role of my tutor and thereafter in natural progression followed the dating, a whirlwind romance and we were



married within the next one year.! Truth they say is stranger than fiction and barely within two years of my epic conversation with Shalini Lal I was actually married to a Jamalu myself!

Soon after my marriage one of the first sentences that my freshly minted husband uttered was “now you have become a SIMI” ....his tone and tenor implied that I had been accorded the highest and most exalted title in the land...! I watched incredulously as a plethora of emotions flitted across his face as he uttered the word SIMI...awe, love, respect almost reverence, joy, wonderment. What is this SIMI factor that is making my husband go almost delirious with happiness I wondered ?

Well I discovered soon enough..... and how! From the minute I was inducted into the club of the SIMIS...I was taken under the protective and caring wings of the senior Mother Hen SIMIS who enveloped me in a warm cocoon of their love and affection. My sense of belonging to this great Jamalpur family came early enough in remote Sabarmati in Western Railway, when the warm, effervescent couple Deepak and Deepa Gupta showed me what Jamalpur hospitality and grace was all about. Newly married and in the family way, they were the family away from home, showering me with abundant care and affection at every stage. They were the first couple to be by my bedside in the nursing home, when our son Shubhayan was born, laden with gifts and blessings for the newly born.

The bond established so lovingly at such an early

stage with the Jamalpur family, strengthened manifold when we moved to Mumbai. My glorious association with a host of wonderful SAMS and SIMIS spread across a span of more than a decade in Mumbai can neither be captured nor encapsulated within the limited scope of an article, or a few sheafs of paper...it is far beyond such facile summation. However, I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention a few who truly stood out with their exemplary Brand Jamalpur hospitality. It was Mr and Mrs Nanda who taught us what keeping an open house for youngsters meant in the truest sense of the word... where the doors of their home would be always open even for the junior most SAM & SIMI, 24x7. In his inimitable style and booming voice Mr Nanda would not only regale the “young Jimmy boys” with hilarious anecdotes but would also invariably lend them a patient ear ...hallmark of a true leader.! Mrs Nanda in turn would fuss around the wives like mother hen, solicitous and nurturing, at the same fiercely protective of her brood.! Both food and conversation flowed freely in this largehearted household ...a far cry from the hierarchical structured social mingling, commonly found in Government gatherings.!

Another senior couple whom I would like to respectfully remember is Mr and Mrs Godbole who even till this day continue to be our mentor “friend, philosopher and guide”. What bonded us even more was our common love and passion for music. Many beautiful melodious evenings were spent in the gracious home of this loving couple enjoying a classical musical soiree ....



the icing on the cake being the delectable home cooked Maharashtrian spread served lovingly by Ma'am after the event.

I cannot refrain from making a special mention of the dashing, suave and stylish Mr. Nikhileh Jain and Mrs Jain... hosts par-excellence, adept at throwing grand lavish parties with finesse, class and elan...representing another aspect of Brand Jamalpur....! I still have vivid memories of receiving Madam's hand crafted beautiful elegant card for one such evening inviting us to come in 'Shades of Red' to inaugurate the newly renovated sleek gleaming wooden dance floor in their 5 Cuffe Parade House.....! We of course did full justice to the shining dance floor literally letting our hair down and dancing till the wee hours of the morning on a happening

and happy Saturday evening! Classiness at its best! By day I was the quintessential IRAS donning my professional garb to the hilt but by evening I would be rearing to go...to soak in all the bonhomie, fun, laughter, music, dance (not to forget good food) with my extended family for 12 years in Mumbai.

The filial family feeling has continued in much the same manner now in Kolkata also under the banyan tree like father figure, the illustrious Mr and Mrs PC Sen, Mr Sunil Sengupta (madam sadly is no more), Mr and Mrs Banerji and other worthy stalwarts. It is my ardent prayer that we continue to receive their bountiful benevolence, affection and blessings in the years to come.

These are but only a few of the representative



Mrs Rajeev Kumar, Mr Rajeev Kumar DyCME-Wagon , SR Ghoshal PCME , Author, S Vijay CWM-JMP , Mrs Vijay ..

numerous kind, loving and generous SIMIs whom I have known over a span of 31 years and who have repeatedly enriched my life. It will indeed be an onerous task to sum up a lifetime of precious memories of all those wonderful people and what my association with each one of them have meant to me. I can only bow my head in gratitude and thankfulness to each one of them for their bountiful affection and blessings.

It had been my long-cherished desire that I should visit Gymkhana at least once on the occasion of Club day, which in the initial years was not possible due to geographical and other constraints. After Shekhar's posting on ER this item on my "Bucket list" suddenly seemed 'doable'. However, it took a few more false starts before we could finally make it to the Club Day of 2013. And it was a magical Club Day all the way.! All the oft repeated, oft heard, 'Jamalpur tales' came alive in front of my eyes. We were whisked off from Jamalpur Station with pomp and ceremony by a sweet, smiling Shivangi who had taken over the role of our 'Guide" with great enthusiasm. We were put up in the Grand Red Heritage building, which had Raj written all over, beginning from the impressive drive down the Gymkhana Road, the imposing driveway of Gym itself, the freshly painted stately façade, perfectly manicured Lawns, bright seasonal flower beds, spotlessly clean long corridors, right up to the uniformed smartly turned out Bearers!. As the daughter of an army Officer I could sense that the Institute was steeped in history, tradition, values and discipline. The Honours Board in the Front Corridor and Billiards Room was as impressive

as the names themselves some of them being Padamshri and Nobel Prize recipients which can make any Institute glow with pride.

The "Raj Effect" continued in the Golf Course and the Golf Club taking me almost 150 years back to a bygone era of grandeur and regalia!. The tea was served by Turbaned Bearers in exquisite fine crockery and cutlery, complete with spotless napkins accompanied by dainty cutlets and pastries on the verdant green lawns of the Golf course. The beautiful, charming and elegant Simis gracing the lawns, made a perfect picture of the quintessential Victorian period recreating the era of a Jane Austen novel, to be experienced only here in Jamalpur!

In the evening, in the beautifully lit front lawn of Gym, with strains of soft mellifluous music in the background the signature cake cutting ceremony by the Senior most SIMI took place to a thunderous applause. I was proudly informed that the cake was from Jamalpur Bakery itself though In the same breath tales of Cakes being lovingly ferried from Flurys' and Nahoms from distant Calcutta in the past, for the grand occasion were also narrated !! The cake cutting was followed by speeches, mostly dripping with nostalgia, which went well with the European style delicious savories laid out in a stylish and elegant manner, continuing in the same Raj vein. (Cutlets being the constant fixture...!!!)

The show stopper of course was the cultural extravaganza presented by a bunch of brilliant kids in the quadrangle.... whacky, intelligent,



musical and artistic .. a powerhouse of talent and creativity wrapped up in their love and respect for all the SAMS and SIMIS gathered from across the country.

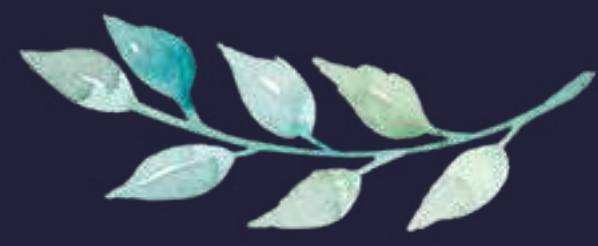
As the last bugle sounds for this iconic heritage Red Building I can sense the aching pain and deep sorrow in the heart of every SAM & SIMI. For it was not just an Institute to which they were bidding adieu...but to a way of life .. rather to a significant chunk of their life itself. During my last visit on Club Day this February, 2020 I found the atmosphere shrouded in a pall of somberness. The bubbly enthusiastic youngsters were missing ...as was missing the joy de vivre, the sentimental back slapping which invariably accompanied this occasion in the past. As I stood in the lawns of Gymkhana besides Mrs Namrata Yagnik who was to cut the cake as Senior most SIMI I could see films of unshed tears glistening around me .... for what can be more painful than to see your Alma Mater wither away and die in front of your eyes.... An Alma Mater where you have spent the most impressionable, formative four years of your life united and bonded intimately, within the precincts and confines of this ochre colored Heritage Gymkhana...a bond which remains unbroken, even when they are in their 80s and 90s....their eyes still shining and faces lighting up as they share their unforgettable memories..

The dye is cast and as the Day of Reckoning draws close it is for us all SAMS and SIMIS now to either face this closure in perennial pain, dejection, negativity, with a grieving heart or

to accept it with solemn stoicism, grace and equanimity and move on. As I have known my fellow SAMs and SIMIS for over more than 30 years, they are a tenacious lot endowed with a rare steely resolve and fortitude. The 4 years spent in the “Red Building’ has not only taught them the brass-tacks, the Nuts and Bolt of the Railways but has given them the rare “Brit” grit and resilience to be a Champion and march ahead.

The last batch has passed out in 2019. The Red Building is empty for the first time in 90 years. The last SAM shall be superannuating on 2057. While we will we dead and gone, it is these youngsters who shall be the torch bearers, taking forward the legacy of GYM, of SAM and of SIMIs .... It is my belief, my conviction, my faith that till there is even a single SAM left, there shall be many more evenings of mirth, laughter and fun. This brotherly bonhomie shall continue along with the necessary steel on the job, the professional wherewithal for which they are known... THEN THERE SHALL BE NONE .....

But I am sure whenever, wherever an honest IR history shall be written, a footnote of this Red Building and it's contribution towards IR shall find its rightful place.



# Monomorium Indicum and Homo Sapiens – A Tale of Two Stories

S S Mathur '81

## An ant’s eye view of life

I narrate this story while undertaking the most difficult journey of my life. As I and my small band of loyal ants stumble over the rough ground, we can scarcely believe that only a few days ago, we lived happily in the ant colony, that we have now, under cover of darkness, slipped out of.

Okay, maybe not happily. My thoughts go back to the events of the last few days...But enough! We have our young Queen with us, whom we will protect with our lives. For we are Monomorium workers – loyalty, fealty, and hard work define our lives.

A day is a long time for us workers – we’ll see about sixty of them in our lives. I have already put in thirty, so I am not a spring chicken any more. Old timers used to tell me that our lifespans have been increasing, so we may be lucky enough to see seventy days. The younger workers, and their numbers had been increasing, would probably see many more... But that was before the White Death struck, and decimated the colony.

But I am getting ahead of myself – let’s start from the beginning.

I metamorphosed into an adult worker ant in a small colony built on a moist plain. The colony was full of beautiful pathways and chambers. The most opulent ones were of course built for our Queen, and her eggs and larvae. There was a vast pupal chamber, comfortable living quarters for males and workers, and storage space for food. As the colony thrived, the Queen laid increasing numbers of eggs, which hatched into more larvae and pupae, and which metamorphosed into more adults. More workers meant fast expansion of the colony.

Life was good, the pace of work relaxed. In my free time, I began to hang out with a group of like-minded workers. We communicated through our antennae, and discussed the purpose of our lives and our work. A few old timers joined us, and told us of the hard times in their previous home, before they migrated to the present colony. There would be no moisture for days on end, the ground would become hard and cold, ants died for lack of food... Then we moved to this moist plain, and life became good, because we had moist, fertile soil to build our homes in, succulent plants right outside our door for an unlimited supply of food...

The life of plenty began to disturb me. Something was wrong – each day, before it became dark outside, it rained copiously, moistening the soil.



The plants outside our colony grew taller, with soft flowers and fruit. This pattern was unnatural – it was not what traditional knowledge, handed down from old-timers to the generations below, had taught us. I discussed it within our group, and we determined to find out the cause of such good fortune.

We Monomoriiums pride ourselves on our intelligence and tradition of wisdom. We are not like the stupid Camponotus – five times our size and ten times dumber – whom we sometimes use to drag around heavy stuff for us. And the Paratrechina – oh my! There are a few living outside our colony, and you have to see them to believe them – running around like crazy, with not a logical thought in their heads.

Anyway, we kept our antennae up, trying to find patterns that would help us explain the present and forecast the future. It was a period of great intellectual ferment in the colony – different philosophies had emerged – and we realized that the group of Worshippers was growing larger each day. The Worshippers had discerned the same pattern of watering as us, but their reaction was to propitiate the rainmaker through arcane rituals, that grew more and more fanciful as days passed.

An old timer in our group had told me about our Queen. She lived in a sequestered chamber, and many considered her a divine being since she had been living since time immemorial, longer than even the oldest worker. She had lived through migrations, trials and tribulations,

and her wisdom was considered unparalleled. I resolved to meet her at an appropriate juncture.

But then something happened that changed the even tenor of our lives forever. The White Death came upon us. One day, after the fresh rain, when many of the workers were outside the colony enjoying the open air, a haze of white dust fell from the sky. Big chunks of white material created a noxious cloud where they fell, right outside one of the main doorways of the colony.

It was literally white powder from hell. I scurried outside to see what had happened, and found that the affected workers had sickened and died, creating piles of corpses. I could see other workers clearing the piles; I jostled through crowds of panicked ants to reach the exit – outside there was a wasteland of white: the few living ants struggled drunkenly through the morass before collapsing on the ground.

When the dust settled, a fifth of the colony’s residents were gone.

Going back down into the colony, shaken to the core, I found masses of Worshippers carrying out their rituals in the passageway squares. They were convinced that they could stop the damage by intensifying their rituals. I realized that many more ants were buying into their philosophy... I feared collective paralysis as a result.

There was only one thing to do. I had to meet the Queen.

I was an outdoor worker - I had no idea where she lived. A few in our group knew of the nurseries and their location; with their help, I managed to work out the likely path to the Queen's chamber.

As I said, Monomoriiums are high on loyalty. The Queen's guards had tightened their surveillance, and were ready to give up their lives rather than allow unauthorized ants to reach her. I had to resort to all the pretense, bluster, physical violence, and stealth that I could muster, to reach her chamber, but I finally found myself in her presence.

I bowed. “My Queen, I come to you with an unusual request. We are a group of rationalists. We believe that we must migrate from our colony forthwith, since we fear another attack of the White Death.”

Contrary to my fears, the Queen was an empathetic listener. She took in all I said with a grave expression. “You do not believe me to be a Divine Being, like some others do? Good, I like that, because I am not always right. I understand what you are saying, but I am too big and heavy now to migrate.”

“But we have to move out of here, and soon. Without a Queen, we cannot migrate,” I pleaded. We wouldn’t be able to have young ones without a Queen.

She was wise beyond her days. “Not many know it, but we are a polygyne colony now. We have younger Queens too.” So saying, she sent a

worker to summon a young Queen, who came to the chamber without wasting any time.

I bowed again, this time to the young Queen, dazzled by her beauty and grace.

“You have to go tonight, under cover of darkness. Take your band of loyal workers, and set up a colony of your own, far from this place. May good fortune go with you!” said the old Queen somberly.

And so we are travelling, a little group of worker ants, with our gracious young Queen alongside, on a quest for a new home. The way will be difficult, our resolve will be tested, but in our hearts we know that we will triumph!

**A view from higher up**

Having lived in a first floor flat all our lives, the opportunity to set up a small vegetable patch in our new garden was a godsend. We planned out the patch meticulously, pored through the internet for the best suited plants, and finally decided to plant okra – bhindi.

We watered the patch regularly, each evening. The soil was fertile and moist. While some of the seedlings fell by the wayside, we soon had a thriving patch of 9 okra plants, flowering with the promise of future pods.

We did not notice the ants at first. Their colony grew insidiously – at first it was a small ant hole, then the holes multiplied. After a few days, the



ants got into the okra plants and pods and even began attacking the flowers. I tolerated them as best as I could, but they got worse. They swarmed over my feet and stung me every time I went to water the garden, driving me crazy.

At last I had had enough. I rummaged through my tool store and found a small quantity of white powder, marked 'BHC' in faded handwriting. It smelt like pesticide. One evening, I scattered this on the ants wherever I could. The next day, the corresponding areas were ant-free. Though it was satisfying to see this, I felt a twinge of remorse for killing the little critters. After all, they were just going on with the business of life the same way I was. I was torn between the desire to preserve life, and the need to buy more of the stuff and finish off the ant colony.

My daughter is my adviser in such matters. She said it's not a big deal: death happens all the time. But then, she studies Biomedical science – she works in a lab where she has to sacrifice mice, freeze their brains, and then slice them into microscope slides ("its tiring - it takes hours, and your fingers freeze through the gloves

because of the liquid nitrogen").

After some dithering, I took her advice. I went down to the hardware shop, and asked the shopkeeper for BHC ("hexachlorocyclohexane, actually" had said the offspring, "and you won't get it anywhere because it is a banned pesticide"), which he reluctantly produced.

I took the powder home and scattered it wherever I could find an ant-hole – I found they had expanded their range immensely and had managed to cover almost the entire patch in the last few days.

But the BHC did the trick. While the ants didn't vanish entirely, their numbers came down considerably and they never regained their former hegemony.

"Dad (Dad? What happened to plain old Papa?) – Dad, you write as if a robot got your keyboard – and your articles are full of non-sequiturs! – who's going to read this? how did you ever get to be Ed Sam?" (... well, that was a long time ago, in a galaxy far far away...)

# Sam Sons

J L Singh '65

*The first Sam landed up at Jamalpur on the 14th of February 1927. As things stand today, the last Sam left Jamalpur on the 17th of August 2019. In between about 1150 Sams have been through the portals of this institution that binds us all together. Over this period of time, there have been many interesting relationships between members of this exclusive group. One of these relationships has been that of father and son.*

*Interestingly, there have been as many as ten such instances when the son of a Sam has become a Sam himself. Equally interestingly, there has been no case of a Sam daughter. Unfortunately, women Sams are a recent phenomenon; there is thus no case of a Sam mother either. Among the 10 Sam fathers, there is one grandfather and one with two Sam sons.*

*We bring you a brief note on the Sams and their Sam sons.*

**1. P S Venkatraman '28 and Subramanian Venketaraman '55**

Unfortunately, both father and son are no more with us. To add to the misfortune, Mrs. Junior Venketaraman has also expired. Since the younger Venketaramans had no children, we have not been able to get detailed information on the father-son duo. However, the son's batch mates have given us some interesting titbits that we would like to share with you.

Subramanian Venketaraman's friends fondly nick-named him Kat Kat. This was the result of his wearing wooden bathroom slippers that made a 'Kat Kat' sound as he plodded through the corridors of Gymkhana. The late G S Kang '49 referred to him as the fairest person he had dealt with, but quickly added that he was not referring to his complexion. His fairness can be gauged from the fact that on one occasion on Kharagpur platform, he was seen stoutly defending a young traffic officer who was besieged by an irate group of persons for no obvious fault or negligence.

Venketaraman's memory was phenomenal, virtually photographic. His responses were incredible. He was instrumental in setting up the Gwalior Spring Factory.



Farewell of 55 batch. Venketaramn is standing 2nd from left behind the sitting row.



2. Ramanathan Rajagopalan '31 and Rajagopalan Chandrasekhar '65

The father was born on March 21, 1913 and expired on 6 October 1990. After graduation from Jamalpur as a member of the 31 batch, he had a distinguished career on the railways, retiring as General Manager of ICF. In his earlier posting as CME at ICF, he had the privilege of escorting our then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, around the plant. The latter was so impressed that he wanted him at Delhi in the Railway Board. He was posted as Director in the Board (what we would call an Additional Member today) but his health gave way and he had a heart attack. On his request, he was posted back at Chennai, this time as the GM, from which position he super-annuated.

Married to Seetha Rajagopalan, he had three children, Indira, Chandra and our own Chandrasekhar.

Born on December 20, 1947, the son, Rajagopalan Chandrasekhar, joined as a member of the 65 batch and went through seven months of apprenticeship at Jamalpur. He did not find the training or the prospect of work on the railways challenging and interesting enough and left the SCRA scheme to return to IIT Madras (now Chennai), losing a year in the process. Subsequently, he worked in various fields as a mechanical design engineer, finally retiring as a Structural Design Engineer at Aviation Partners Boeing, Seattle, USA, where he worked as a contract engineer for winglet repairs.

He is married to Praveena Chandrasekhar and resides at Secunderabad (Telengana). They have no children.

Although he spent less than a year at Jamalpur and none on the railways, he has been in touch with his batch on a regular basis.



The Father



The Son

3. Sharda Shankar Kochak '36 and Ravi Shankar Kochak '74

The next Sam son arrived at Jamalpur nine years later. This was Ravi Kochak of the 74 batch, son of the legendary S S Kochak '36. We have carried an article on the latter in this issue in our series, "Eminent Sams" on Page 16.

Sharda Shankar Kochak needs no introduction to Sams. His permanent presence at the Club Day at Jamalpur endeared him to one and all. Born on 24th December 1916, he was with us till 4th March 1993. He would have been most happy if his grandson had also become an SCRA but that was not to be. His meteoric rise in the rail hierarchy, his sporting prowess, his story-telling ability, his affable nature, it took all these and more to enchant one and all.

Ravi Kochak '74, the son, was born at the BR Singh hospital of the Eastern Railway at Kolkata on the 2nd of July 1956. Growing up in a railway family, he would have had no difficulty in adjusting to a career in the railways. To add to his Sam connection, on the 7th of July 1983, he married Shivani, sister in law of Arun Kumar Rao '64. The happy couple has two children, Sarvagya, born in September 84 and Tushita, following in May 86. Ravi retired from the railways as Additional Member of the Railway Board and has kept himself busy after retirement as the Vice Chairman of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, London, for the South Asian region.

Like his father , Ravi was good at games, Particularly table tennis. He reads atleast 20 recently published books each year. Sometimes, he strums on the guitar or hits the piano keyboard. His interests include computer modelling and simulation software.



Ravi Kochak



SS Kochak

4. C M Mani '49 and Sudhanshu Mani '75

The next Sam son followed a year later in the form of Sudhanshu Mani '75. His father, Chandra Mauli Mani was a member of the 49 batch. It is unfortunate that he expired recently on the 4th of February earlier this year.

5. Raghuraj Singh Sachan '54 and Rajendra Singh '76 as well as Pradip Singh Sachan '82

We have had only one case of not just one but two Sam sons. The proud father was Raghuraj Singh Sachan '54. His elder son, Rajendra Singh, joined as a member of the '76 batch while the second son, Pradip Singh Sachan, is '82 batch. Raghuraj Singh, the patriarch, is no more with us, having passed away on the 14th of July 2012. Married to Shanti, the couple had three children, the two Sam sons and a daughter, Asha, who is a doctor. He did not super-annuate from the railways, his last posting being at New Jalpaiguri.

The eldest of the siblings, Rajendra was born at Kanpur on the 18th of June 1958. Married to Navita on the 24th of November 1985, both their children, Pakhar and Pragya, are working overseas. Like his father and his brother, Rajendra did not retire from the railways but while he was Dy.CME at ICF, he quit the railways and worked in the private sector, finally retiring as Director, Elgi Equipments Ltd. He is now settled in Bhopal. Of course, he may have retired from a job, but not from life: he keeps himself engrossed in his hobbies that include amateur photography, electronic circuit design and model making. He has developed and made aquariums from scratch.

Pradip, the youngest of the Sachan siblings was born at Kharagpur on the 10th of June 1964. Working on the Central Railway, he was married to Sandhya on the 9th of December 1990. He has a son, Anurag,



who is pursuing an MBA and the world-renowned ESSEC, Paris, while the daughter, Neha, is a student of Class XI. He left the railways early in life while he was Dy.CME at Matunga Workshop of Central Railway.

Currently in Mumbai, he is the Managing Director of SPAN Innovations Pvt. Ltd. Like his brother, he is also fond of photography and loves to travel. He is a foodie although that is not saying much as almost all Sams are foodies.



Pradip with wife



Rajendra with family



The dad

**6. Gyanendra Kumar Khare '55 and Vivek Khare '86**

Gyanendra Kumar Khare was born on the 25th of June 1938 at Allahabad (now Prayagraj). His batch was a massive 22, while their three senior batches were less than 20 put together. Married during his probation to Maya on the 24th of November 1962, the couple had three children, Shalini, our own Vivek and Gaurav. He had an illustrious career in the railways, rising to the very top, i.e. Chairman of the Railway Board, from where he retired from service.

Fond of badminton and tennis in his younger days, Gyanendra also played bridge and chess. Now settled in Lucknow, he has taken to spiritual studies, reading and social work. A homemaker, his wife loves painting, music and gardening.

Currently posted as the CWM of Charbagh Workshop of the Northern Railway, Vivek, the son, member of the 86 batch, was born on the 1st of June 1968 at what was then Calcutta. On the 21st of April 1995, he hitched himself to Anjana, and the couple now has two children, 23 year old Vinayak and 17 year old Raunak. Vivek spends his spare time in reading and music and still plays badminton. His doctor better half has added dancing, painting and gardening to the family repertoire.



Mr. & Mrs. G K Khare



Vivek and his better half

**7. Anirudh Mithal '56 and Rahul Mithal '85**

The 56 batch is interesting as it had two Sam fathers, one of whom is also a Sam grandfather. More of the grandfather later, but the first father is the late Anirudh Mithal. The son joined as a member of the '85 batch.

Born on the 10th of June 1938, the senior Mithal passed out of Jamalpur in 1961 and worked primarily on Eastern Railway where he had the reputation of a person who gets things done. After an active career, he finally retired as General Manager of RCF and settled in Lucknow. He was married on the 2nd of December 1965 to Manju Mithal and apart from Rahul, had a second child, Salone Ghosh. Unfortunately, he breathed his last on the 9th of November 2016.

Born on the 2nd of June 1967, Rahul followed in his father's footsteps to become a member of the 85 batch. He married Shruti on the 5th of July 1994 and they now have two children, Akshat and Aaryan, born in August 1996 and October 2001. Rahul did not continue in the railways and migrated to CONCOR where he is currently the Director (P&S).



Anirudh Mithal



Rahul Mithal

**8. Harendra Nath Gupta '56, Anurag Gupta '91 and Shashwat Gupta '10**

Harendra Nath Gupta '56 has the distinction of being not only a Sam father, but also a Sam grandfather. His son, Anurag Gupta is a member of the 91 batch, while his daughter's son, Shashwat Gupta, joined the 2010 batch.

The senior of the trio was born on the 14th of December at Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh. The large steam shed at the city may have kindled a love for the railways but be that as it may, he joined at Jamalpur as a member of the 56 batch. After an illustrious career, he retired as CAO at DMW Patiala. Married to Pramila, they have a son and a daughter, both of whom have an additional Sam connection, the son himself being a Sam while the daughter is the mother of a Sam. H N Gupta has settled in Lucknow and has been a regular contributor to SAM. A brief write-up by him appears in this issue of SAM as well.

Anurag, the son, followed a series of Sam sons (in 82, 85, 86, 88 and 90 batches), so that another son was not a novelty any more, but it just happens that he was also the last, there being no Sam sons after him. Born at Kanpur on 28.09.1972, he did not stay long in the railways and quit for greener and more interesting pastures. Today, he lives in London, UK, with is wife, Iryna. His last posting on the railways was



as Production Engineer at the Alambagh Workshop of Northern Railway.

The only Sam grandson, Shashwat, was born at Agra on the 24th of August 1992 and showed his management skills by becoming the G.Sec. while at Gymkhana. He was posted at Izzatnagar Workshops of NE Railway, when he took study leave and is today at the Tokyo Institute of Technology in Japan for completing an M.Tech.



*Guptas-Three generations*

**9. Rana Pratap Madan '62 and Anmol Madan '90**

After a flurry of Sam fathers covering the 54, 55 and 56 batches, we had a lull before the next future Sam father landed up at Jamalpur. This was Rana Pratap Madan, joining as a member of the 62 batch. Born in Quetta on the 1st of July 1945 in what is now the turbulent Pakistani province of Baluchistan, he did not super-annuate from the railways but took voluntary retirement when he was CME (Planning) on the Western Railway. Married to Dr. (Mrs.) Aruna, the couple has settled in Navi Mumbai. They have a two children, a Sam son, Anmol of the 90 batch, and daughter, Anisha. Both the kids have done their MBA in the USA and are now in senior management positions in that country.

Rana Pratap is now indulging in his hobbies - Golf, Bridge and Music.

As already recorded, the son, Anmol, a member of the 90 batch, did not stay long in the railways. Born at New Delhi on the 29th of January 1973, he was DME (Diesel) at Ludhiana when he decided to quit the railways and study further in the USA. He is now working there. While inheriting his father's love for golf and music, he has added a multitude of other interests that cover a vast canvas of possible hobbies. These include adventure sports, skiing, mountaineering, making documentary movies, photography, international travel, learning foreign languages, etc.

As we know well, Sams have always been an adventurous lot, and Anmol is no exception.



*Anmol*



*Rana Pratap with wife*

**10. Vijay Kumar Bhargav '63 and Rajat Bhargav '88**

The youngest of the Sam fathers, Vijay Bhargav is unfortunately no more. He breathed his last in 2015. Born at Meerut in 1945, his early life was spent all over Western and Central India owing to his father's transferable P&T job. When he landed up at Jamalpur as a member of the 63 batch, he was located at Jaipur. He married Sarita in 1969 and the couple had two children, our very own Rajat, born in 1970 and a daughter, born four years later.

After a successful career in the railways, he settled in NCR following his retirement as Advisor(PU). He began his career at the diesel shed at Abu Road, but liked his posting as a Professor at what was then the Railway Staff College (now NAIR) as that suited his temperament. A lover of Urdu and Hindi poetry, he excelled in painting, gardening and music. These loves, particularly painting and gardening were apparent even at Jamalpur during his apprenticeship. The Indian Steam Railway Society had displayed some of his paintings at one of their National Steam Congresses.

One attribute that the son, Rajat, inherited was drawing and painting. Like the dad, this was obvious at even at Jamalpur and any artwork required in his time at the alma mater was given to him. He was born in 1970 when his dad was posted at Abu Road. Rajat has another Sam connection as he is married to Sarasvani, daughter of S C Vadhera of the 45 batch. They have two boys, Siddharth and Angad, both Texan natives would like to be identified as Californians, where Rajat is now residing in the San Fransisco Bay area.

Rajat was DME Vadodara when he quit the railways to work with business software. His MBA was in finance but today his work is in supply chains. Apart from occasional art work, he tinkers with computers and enjoys hobby programming, which he had picked up at Jamalpur. His art work can be seen at <https://flic.kr/s/aHskRPN0a5>



*Father and son*



*The Father*



*The son*



# Change of Profession

H N Gupta '56

When I was a child 7 or 8 years old, a tutor was engaged to teach Hindi and Arithmetic to my younger sister and me. One day he asked me to show my right palm and to mention my date of birth. After a few minutes, I heard him mutter to himself that my future profession had something to do with iron and fire and that I would become a railway engineer. He further said that in my middle age, a change in the profession was indicated.

Now in my extended family, no one had ever worked for the railways. My elder brothers were either in civil service or in the armed forces. However, later I joined my family college at Agra. Our English teacher was one Mr. G I David. He was an M.Phil. from Oxford. One day he told the class about the SCRA examination and added that it was the toughest examination conducted by the UPSC. Did anyone had the gumption to take it? Well, I accepted the challenge and that is how I joined the Railways in IRSME as an engineer.

Now to the second part of the prediction. After serving for five years in CLW, which was considered as a punishment posting, I grabbed at a chance of deputation to India Government Mint, Calcutta (now Kolkata). I was the General Manager of the Mint from July 1980 for a little more than 5 years. I naturally thought of it as a change in my profession as predicted. But I could not have been more wrong. The real

change in profession occurred as soon as I retired from railways in December 1996 when I was offered a chair professorship at the Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), Patiala (a deemed university). After teaching there until May 2000, I had to shift to Lucknow. Here I continued to teach at the Institute of Engineering and Technology, a UP Government college in the capacity of a visiting professor. So, this was the change in profession foreseen by my childhood tutor. Astounding!

**Editor:** *Reading the above, we are reminded of a story told by H N Gupta '56 when he was General Manager at the India Government Mint in Calcutta. This was the time when Jyoti Basu was the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the Chief Minister's wife was paying a visit to the Mint. While sitting in the office of the General Manager, the First Lady of West Bengal noted a brick of gold lying on the table. Very conversationally, she asked if she could take it with her.*

*"Of course," our GM told her, "The only condition is that you carry it in one hand with your arm stretched out in front of you and walk out of the door."*

*Not realizing that the density of gold is about 3 times that of iron, there was no way a lady could do that. In fact, it is very tough even for a strong man to carry a gold brick at arm's length in front of himself.*

# The summer of 2020

Deepak Sapra '92

The summer of 2020 saw India battle a long and harsh lockdown, in the backdrop of an unpredictable disease. In the months of April, May and June 2020, India experienced the peak of COVID + Lockdown + economy related migration.

In this period, I personally interacted with many of India's internal migrants. This was during the process of trying to work with a few like-minded friends to facilitate a safe passage home.

I want to share my experience on these interactions. I will broadly try to answer three questions - Why people wanted to leave , the experience during the process of leaving, what next on reaching ? And finally, on the role that Railways played.

## 1) Why did people want to leave ?

Most people wanted to leave because they didn't see an end to the situation. Initially people thought the lockdown would be for three weeks. However, it just kept going on and on. No one could predict the amount of time it might take for things to normalise . No one had any semblance of certainty on the question of time. This uncertainty had an overbearing effect on the decision to leave.

Most of the migrants are daily wagers. They eat at night by working in the day. A large number of them lost their source of daily income. These included construction workers, factory workers, domestic helps, office housekeeping staff, service sector workers, brick kiln workers, and many more.

Many others, even those who are not daily wagers, exhausted all their savings. Payment of rent became a challenge for many. Many had to repay loans.

Added to it all was a feeling of being left out. The lack of a support structure. The lack of social insurance. The lack of social security. All these stood as big gaps. Most fundamentally, there was an erosion of trust.

## 2) What was the experience in the process of leaving?

The closure of most modes of public transportation was a big challenge. People resorted to all modes, mostly ad hoc. A lot of people started walking home. Even though home was hundreds of kilometres away. There were a lot of women, children and elderly people who were taking unsafe modes of transport to go home.



At a personal level, this was the trigger to action. We worked to facilitate safe transportation. We sent people by bus, by train, by car, by plane. We organized 45+ buses which took about 1800 people from Hyderabad to nearby states such as Chhattisgarh, Orissa Maharashtra and also to states which are far away, such as Jharkhand, Bihar, UP and West Bengal.

In addition to buses, we also facilitated the movement of people by train. The moment we realised trains will start running , I was thrilled. Afterall, trains represent hope, trains represent connection, trains represent the ability to connect people in India in a way no other mode of transport can.

The process of getting people on to the train, however, was a different ball game. The reservation forms, the tickets, the state government clearances, the apps, the captchas, the OTPs, the permissions, it was an ocean of bureaucracy that we had to endure. Great help from supportive officials, especially the highly empathetic Mr Gajanan Mallya, GM at Secunderabad, was a big support in making some of these things happen.

As the number of trains was not too many, nor were tickets being made available for intermediate stations, and the number of people wanting to go was almost unending, the rail option by itself was inadequate.

Buses were also having their own share of challenges. Permits, police permissions,

inter-state permissions, RTO clearances, driver and helper credentials, pollution checks, to name a few.

The procedures that were put in place across states were not aligned and consistent . Each state followed different procedures and that created a challenge in wading through the permissions , paper work , approvals.

Many of the migrants were digital illiterates, so things like captcha, upload jpg images within a certain file size , etc presented insurmountable hurdles. The inconsistency of procedures at the origin states and also at the destination states made it appear that we were dealing with not one, but many nations.

We had to get a simpler, and smarter, way to do it. Especially for the vulnerable within the vulnerable. The situation had made most internal migrants vulnerable. Even within them, there was a subset of extreme vulnerability. The elderly, women with children, people with disabilities. One person who stood out for me was a 35-40 year old man from Malda district in West Bengal- abandoned by his brick kiln owner near Secunderabad railway station , with two different kinds of slippers on his feet , having a difficulty in speaking, with no money, no phone. And there was just so many like him. Pushed to the brink of destitution. The overwhelming nature of the situation got a very large number of people on the edge.

This situation also took me back to some of the stories that I have heard from my parents,

grandparents and family elders. My mother's family, and my father's, migrated from Lahore to the Indian side in the partition of 1947. I had heard from them stories of horror, pain and misery that accompanies when people are forced to leave home because they are left with no option. The situation in the summer of 2020, in vastly different circumstances, appeared to be similar from at least one dimension.

It was at this point of time that I thought that the only other option left was to put them on flights and put them out of the misery of journeys in the summer heat much faster than road or rail. I started putting out posts on social media, and reaching out to the CXOs of all airlines in India. Also helped by SAM contacts (Angshumali Rastogi '91) in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, I could converse with decision makers in most major airlines. Negotiations with them often came down to Turkish bazar levels. I came down to negotiating with them on pricing plane seats, discussing with them about their variable costs, and asking them to charge us around their variable cost. Some airlines responded favourably, some thought of it as a business, and thought they could make good money through this.

Since the cost of all this was being borne by some of us from our personal funds, we had this obvious limitation of numbers. Fortunately, with help from crowd funding, we were able to transport a large number of the vulnerable migrant population from Hyderabad to Raipur, from Hyderabad to Lucknow, Hyderabad to

Patna, from Bangalore to Visakhapatnam, from Coimbatore to Guwahati and from Hyderabad to Ranchi.

The experience of navigating the airports had its own share of unexpected events. A lot of people were travelling with their entire belongings, some with their stove, vegetables, kitchen knives. Airport security rules meant they had to part with these. Then the entire procedure of check-in, luggage booking, Aarogya setu app, health declarations, all of this we managed to get through due to the goodness of people all around us.

There was the thrill as well. Almost everyone experienced their first plane journey, some children were really excited, some elderly ladies, too, savoured the novel experience. One image that stood out for me was that of a 62 year old lady, who used to work as a daily wager in the Gachibowli area in Hyderabad, walking confidently from the flight to the bus, carrying her jhola, with a person carrying a laptop bag next to her. I loved the symbolism of India and Bharat marching step by step.

**3) What was the experience when people reached their home?**

On reaching back, some common things were quarantine, a slow process of getting adjusted to the new reality and emotional relief. This was the experience for a few weeks on reaching home. I remained in touch with quite a few people who would narrate the experience from their 'new' life,



from the place they had left some time ago for a better life in the city.

In some time , the need for economic activity started cropping up. Some contemplated a return to the city, some thought that till the pandemic eases, they would be better off on home turf. Some of the people I am in touch with have set up small businesses - one of them has set up a tea shop, one of them is selling chappals, one has taken up work under MGNREGA . In short, the struggle continues, albeit in a different form.

Some villages have got a large number of people with specific skill sets. A lot of zari workers working in Hyderabad have now gone back to their villages in West Bengal, and these villages are full of this skill set. In a small way, some of

us facilitated online connections with people who might give them some money for their skills. If rightly done, this can help in enhancement of productivity and creation of meaningful opportunities, and possibly create several rural clap versions of the well used UrbanClap.

While there were a lot of challenges , what stood out for me was the immense potential that the goodness of people can bring in. The goodness of people stood out - people from the government , citizens from all walks of life, students, different kinds of organizations and corporate entities . This gives me hope that there is a way forward and if we are able to galvanise the energy and goodness that is inherent in all of us of to create opportunities , it can bring about a greater , more equitable, and more progressive convergence between India and Bharat.

“Always Connected” SAM community

In our effort to enable an “Always Connected” SAM community,  
we are seeking some information from you.

In case you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to fill out  
this form, accessible through the link below

<https://forms.gle/GSypZPTfXQkN5PBk6>

This will also enable us to send to you your login based access to the portal jamalpurgymkana.in

In case you have already responded earlier, you need not so anything now.

Imaginary Writings



Nandadya Roy  
Daughter of M K Roy '94

If I Could Travel Through Time!

My kid brother is seven years younger to me and keeps pestering me to play with him. But you see I just don't have any interest in playing with dolls the way he has. So, one day I made a wish to travel through Time with him. And whoa, both of us went seven years back in Time. I went to my house, where I, seven years younger one, was playing with my dolls on the Tree House. This Tree House was nestled within the branches of a mango tree in front of my house and had a ladder for climbing onto it. My kid brother climbed the ladder and started playing with Nandadya Junior in the Tree House while I watched them. After sometime I went inside the house. There in the kitchen my mother was making lemonade. I helped her with it and brought three glasses for us – Nandadya Junior, mi kid brother and I. I climbed on the tree House and served them inside the Tree House. While we were enjoying the lemonade suddenly the winds started blowing very fast. It seemed a storm was brewing. I called to my brother, “Got to go, Neeom. A storm is coming.” But he wasn't listening. The storm grew stronger and stronger. Nandadya Junior cried, quickly climbed down the ladder and ran inside the house. But we couldn't run away. I held my kid brother in my arms and simply closed my eyes. The winds seemed to slow down. When I opened eyes I found myself in my bedroom where I made the wish.





### If I Were A Flower!

I was the most beautiful flower in the world, my petals made of pure gold and fragrance so enchanting that it would draw bees and birds from miles away. I would not wilt till I was plucked away from my mother plant. I was born to a magical plant, which was gifted by the Queen of Flowerlands to Snow White. Snow White was so fond of my mother that she got her planted in her garden on a spot where she could have the first glimpse in the morning from her bedroom window. She nurtured her well and she grew to become the most ornamental shrub of the garden. The wind would whistle through her tender twigs. The clouds would shower her with silver drops of water. The sunshine would fall over her leaves sparkling like pearls and humming birds would sing beautiful songs for her. And then one day she bore a little bud. That was me! Everyday Snow White would gaze at me and admire my growing beauty. And then one day I bloomed and became the most beautiful flower in the world.

### If I Woke Up As An Animal!

It was 12 o' clock early in my morning! Suddenly a loud voice pierced my ears, "Nandadya, wake up! It's 12 in the noon and you are still sleeping." I tried to shout back that I was awake, but only a 'woof woof' sound came out of my mouth. I was shocked. A puppy in my room! But we don't have any pet dogs in our house. Had I turned into a puppy? I opened my eyes and tried to get out of my bed, but could only jump out and stood on the floor on my all four limbs. I ran to the mirror to see myself, but it seemed so high. I barely balanced myself on my hinds to have a look. Oh God! I had really turned into a puppy. I was so shocked that I just there. I was about to burst into tears just then I heard another shout, "Are you still sleeping?" I woke up. To my relief I was still a human. So, that was a dream, was it really?

### If I Were A Toad!

If I were a frog I would have lived in a Toad City – a city full of high rise buildings, offices, hospitals, malls, gardens, pools, etc – all for toads only. I would have lived in a spacious apartment of one high rise building with my parents, brother and extended family. My parents and uncles would go to work everyday while my aunts would stay at home to cook food and take care of us. My cousins and I would go to Toad Academy where we would be taught how to croak songs, how to leap dance and off course how to eat a Toad's Balanced Diet. Sometimes in the evening we would go to a mall to buy beautiful clothes, berries, yoghurt, soup, etc and eat Toad's Pizza. I would be a vegetarian. So, my pizza would have lots of cheese, olives and jalapenos. Sometimes we would go to a theatre to watch Toad's Rock. In the weekends we would go to a Water Park, created amidst a beautiful lake. There we would play all day in the cool water, leaping all the way to the top and then sliding down the stream, splashing in the pool below. And when I got tired I would have rested on a green lotus leaf, soaking the Sun and sipping lemonade.



# Voice of Reason



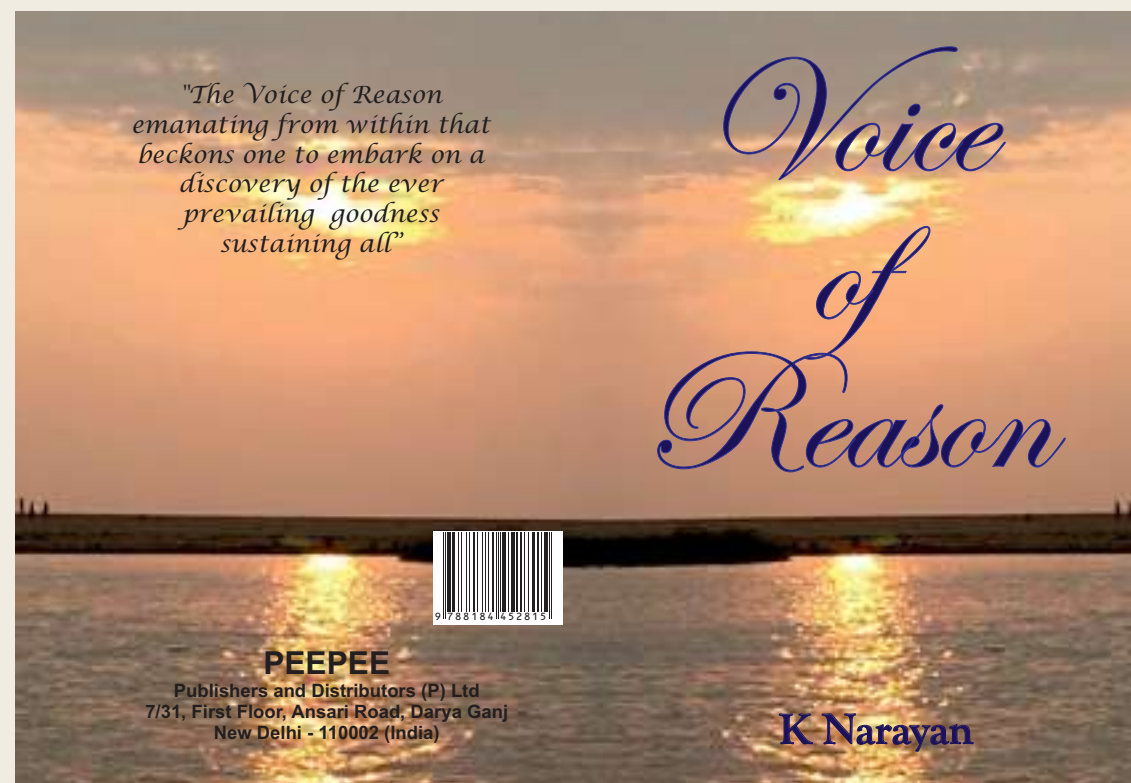
A Book by K.Narayan '88

Voice of Reason, a collection of poems written by K Narayan, is a humble endeavor to ponder on some of the great Gurus who have blessed this land, their teachings, Mother Nature - her children, their celebrations, past & present events and finally the Voice of Reason emanating from all of them. The Voice, which should help mold us into not only good but also great human beings.

It is a dedication to all the Great Gurus – from the ancient unknown to our well-known Bapu and the Voices of Reasons which have emanated from them to goad mankind into a better state of mind.

The book is divided into three sections - 'GUIDING GURUS', 'MOTHER NATURE - THEIR CHILDREN, LIFE & TIMES' and 'VOICE OF REASON'. The Foreword of the book has written by well-known Gandhian – Dr Y P Anand, Retd Chairman Railway Board and ex Director – National Gandhi Museum, who also mentored the author in the exercise of compilation.

**The book is available in Amazon in both paperback and Kindle Version**



## Oh Humility

*Oh humility thou art not a virtue but my direst need,  
For Didn't thou manifest in the Sufi saint, daily thousands he did feed*

*And in the mid-eastern messiah who while tending to sheep,  
Preached the gospel of love, benefit of which till date millions reap*

*The bearded Guru whose followers in langars serve and cook,  
He too advised them to bow not to his image but to the holy book*

*What about the prince, who for knowledge, royal glory he did drop,  
And on gaining wisdom under Bodhi tree roamed a Bhikshu without stop*

*The father of great King Bharat, who transformed from ruler to a monk,  
Thence this first of Jain gurus faced ridicule so his ego be fully sunk*

*The cowherd boy who before battle taught the famed archer his life's goal, Enduring  
thence curse of the rightly wronged, playing a mere charioteer's role*

*Sankara, the monk who enunciating the paths of knowledge, devotion & service,  
Tirelessly wandered the entire country preaching these ways of divine release*

*Mahatma, preacher of Dakshineswar, Maharashi of Arunachalam down south,  
Preached and performed God's work banishing self-praise off their mouth*

*Unknown yogis atop the house of ice compose texts igniting energies latent,  
Charging a fee that this wisdom be spread for free without patent*

*When you thus sprout from such masters as a sapling does from a seed,  
Oh humility don't become my virtue, thence me into darkness you will lead*

*Why just the great ones, see that labourer lady working on buildings grand,  
Never heard her say she carried its bricks, her infant in the other hand*

*So pray stay in me unnoticed such that to you I pay no heed,  
Lest I see you as a virtue and my ego you begin to feed*



## *The Teacher*

*Teacher the Mom who brings music to infant's lip sweet  
Who jerks away the toddler's run to touch a vessel in heat*

*Teacher the father who drives to show his son the way around town  
Who can admonish & restrain with nothing more than a frown*

*Teacher the elder sister who for her kid bro sets the limit  
So too the younger sibling who into elder's dress doth joyously fit*

*Teacher the naughty neighbour who apes his way up the tree  
And his granny ever ready with stories much to your glee*

*Teacher the TEACHER who enters class to a phonetic 'Good Morning Maam'  
Who sets rules, explains logic or simply tells you what to cram*

*Teacher the bosom buddy to whose intelligence you enviously bow  
Teacher the avowed enemy, who defines the act really low*

*Teacher the boss whose firings helps you pick tricks of the trade  
As also the faithful subordinate, with whose flattery your day is made*

*Teacher the teenage offspring who argues more than he can  
Thereby making true the dictum – 'Child is the father of man'*

*But great indeed is the teacher who shows 'tis love that sustains all  
Who makes one look inward amidst life's rise and fall?*

*Whose silent selfless acts is the light amidst the dark & din  
Who unites the Almighty above the clouds to the one breathing within*

## *O Social Media...*

*Thou were made to help old friends connect,  
Then why in you a rabble rouser do I detect?*

*Sending greetings, sharing memories, dispelling loneliness was your use,  
Replaced now by calls of lynching unconfirmed suspects of child abuse*

*As an infant you helped mobilise voices of sanity for which credit is due  
But how did it all degrade into 'There's nothing more than my point of view'*

*You have created doctors of those who flunked science in high school,  
And historians who once endured the subject standing hands up on a stool*

*Your sense of humour created childish laughter clutching stomachs we did roll,  
Less humour more rumour, laughter replaced by calls of slaughter,  
heard they call this the science of troll*

*But why blame you O Social Media, you're but an expression of my innermost thought  
With the sword of silence against an intolerant demon within, the battle has to be fought*

## *Saluting All My Martyrs*

*An apostle of peace silenced amidst dark days of violent hate,  
Adjectives to describe whose persona will belittle the word 'Great'*

*In poignant remembrance of whose sweat and blood we observe Martyrs Day  
To pay tribute to others like him who trudged the selfless pathway*

*So a silent prayer for the soldier who guarded my freedom till his end,  
His was a supreme sacrifice, but to others too I need to humbly bend*

*For a martyr too is the once bubbling youth who from height fell to his doom,  
While erecting the tall pillar over which my metro ride does vroom*

*Martyr the comforting doc who cured me of infection by a deadly virus,  
Which clipped the days of her life, so too of her valiant fellow nurse*

*Martyr the humble scavenger who cleared my sewer's block,  
Smelling and swimming in toxic drains, his life definitely in the dock*

*Martyr the aging cycle cart puller who delivered my costly fridge last year,  
Pulling load beyond his years till his muscle got a fatal tear*

*Martyr the silent mess worker, who in hostel unfailingly served my bed tea,  
Who lost his fight to a curable disease for he couldn't afford the medical fee*

*Martyrs the aged parents of my friend who seem to die a bit each day  
They gave it their all to send sonny abroad, he now rarely comes their way*

*Martyrs like these and many more on who my eyes don't seem to lay  
For busy I am securing my life lest I too like them fade away*

*To all these Martyrs I fervently bow on this pious day,  
With a prayer to acknowledge their toils which I can never hope to repay*

*A Salute to My Martyrs on Martyrs Day*



# The Chronicler of the Hooghly



A soon to be published Book by Shakti Ghosal '74

## *How was the Chronicler of the Hooghly born?*

In our lives, we at times get confronted with intense and traumatic events which force us to question who we are, what really matters to us and what we believe in. In some ways these events alter our sense of reality.

Each of the four stories in my book , 'The Chronicler of the Hooghly' draws inspiration from such crucible events that I have had to face. The protagonists in that sense carry a bit of my own 'experience and thought' genes. As I see them now within the larger fabric of the stories, I do notice shades of myself and others who have been part of my life. Writing the stories has been a personal journey in that sense. At times the stories seemed to write themselves.

The four stories portray five crucible experiences.

As Samir embarks on a sunset cruise on the Hooghly, he meets the enigmatic Chronicler who takes him on a two and a half centuries journey surrounding the curse of a fabled pearl necklace, as mentioned by his dying mother. The Chronicler asks, "What could be behind you taking this trip today and me telling you this tale?"

Spanning a century between the pandemics of 1919 and 2020, Dipen and Indranil are confronted by tragedies under vastly different societal conditioning and development. What is their link spanning four generations which arises from an old and dilapidated palace and its massive Shiva linga?

As the capital of the British Raj shifts to Delhi in 1912, Junior Clerk Sujit with wife Bina is forced to migrate from Calcutta to distant and dusty Civil Lines in Delhi. Shanti, born of a forcep delivery gone horribly wrong, comes into their lives. A tale of evolving relationships against the backdrop of momentous events in the nation's history.

Suffering severe injuries from a gas explosion, Anjan meets Savio who brings him face to face with the private demons from his past. But past demons do have a way to come into one's present with life changing consequences. Who is Savio?

The Chronicler of the Hooghly is currently under publication and is expected to be available by the end of the year.



## About Author

A Railway mechanical engineer, an IIM Bangalore postgraduate, a coach, a leadership incubator, Shakti considers himself a maverick. Having lived close to four decades of corporate life in India and abroad, he brings in a wide angle narrative style in his writings. He loves to explore relationships within emergent situations.

Shakti currently resides with his wife Sanchita in the city of Kolkata in India. Together, they are the proud parents of two lovely daughters.

The Chronicler of the Hooghly has an address.

Do visit him at <https://www.shaktighosal.com/>

The Chronicler also encourages you to follow him through the rabbit hole of the Social Media links featured. Accompany him on a wondrous journey through interesting tidbits, background information and insights.

Come, join the Chronicler of the Hooghly movement.

I would greatly appreciate your support to spread the word of my forthcoming book 'The Chronicler of the Hooghly and other stories' by sharing this in your groups and to your contacts.

Thank you.

Shakti Ghosal

**If you have published a book or, are about to,  
Reach out to the SAM community through these pages**

**Email us at [edsam2020@gmail.com](mailto:edsam2020@gmail.com)**



# Those were the Days – a Journey Down Memory Lane



Asha Gupta  
Wife of S C Gupta '49

The year was 1947. A young man, studying at the Allahabad University, would stand by the railway tracks which ran near his home in Udaipur, totally fascinated, not by the train but by the steam locomotive that lead the carriages - wondering would he one day become an engineer to manage hundreds of these machines?

His dream became a reality when in 1949, he was chosen along with a handful of young men, after a tough exam and interview amongst "The Jamalpurian of 1949 batch!"

He was inducted to the central Railways, and on the 5 th of May 1955, he along with his bride boarded the Punjab Mail, enroute to Mumbai at the New Delhi station. On the long journey he introduced his bride to Jamalpur Gymkhana, which was his pride. He told me the horror stories of ragging at the institute by the seniors, essential he claimed, to make men out of the young lads who joined, to the hard life of the shop floor, to the foot-plate duty on the locomotive itself, where along with the fireman he'd shovel coal into the pit of the engine, to the job of blowing the whistle as the train approached the station, and an occasional tiny one at the pretty girl working in the fields, as the train rolled along.

He spoke of the glamour of the institute itself, where not only did he have a room to himself but also a personal grooming to the handling of knife and fork and manners for a social gathering! Evenings were spent mingling with each other, dressed in their formal attire, and listening to music. He was introduced to Western Classical music and Beethoven remained his favourite all his life.

Incidentally, on all the train journeys we took at that time, meals on the dinning car were served by gloved bearers on tables spread with white table-cloth and napkins, on crockery and with cutlery! I often wondered, as a young girl, if this was for just "us" – but that only evoked a smile in response.

After a few months in Bhusaval, Suresh was posted as AME to Jhansi. We were allotted a lovely bungalow, and life in the colony began. A friendly, joyful, carefree life of making life-long friends. During the day, ladies would gather together for coffee mornings or Mahila Samiti meetings, and the evenings were fun and frolic at the railway club.



Suresh Gupta '49 just before joining JMP



Suresh Gupta in his final year at Gymkhana

A 4-wheeler carriage was allotted to us in which we travelled on tour, along with Lachman, our carriage attendant. He always knew which station had the running room, which cooked the best layered parathas and omlette and which the best chicken or mutton curry, which platform had the vendor who sold the delicious samosas and khasta kachoris. And how they all landed on our saloon's dinning table remains a mystery to me! We would have steaming buckets of hot water from the engine for our baths and aromas from his cooking in our tiny carriage kitchen would waft across to us as we sat in the tiny balcony (our carriage was always the last one on the train) watching the world roll by, the linemen saluting and the children of the villages we passed smiling and waving. A charmed life.

A CME's visit to a division is always a great event. Such an occasion arose when we hosted our first official dinner. Fresh from Lady Irwin College in Delhi, I decided to put my best foot forward, and planned an exotic meal to be interestingly served. Since I did not own an oven or a fridge, mango ice-cream in a hand churned ice-cream wooden bucket ice-cream maker was agreed upon. Before I go any further, let me describe a typical railway bungalow kitchen. A cemented table, with a built in tank of water on one side and another shelved box with a lid on the other and in between 2 chullahas which burnt coal day and night- thus providing hot water and hot box to us. The top of the table served as a hotplate. On the party evening, our bachelor neighbor Mr.H.S.Dhaliwal'48 arrived an hour earlier, to offer assistance and support. Having peeped into the kitchen and assured that all was going on well, both he and Suresh settled down to chat, while I went in to get ready. Ten minutes before the guests arrived, I saw sheepish smiles on their faces, to discover, to my horror and tear-filled eyes, that in sampling the Ice-cream, they had licked the container clean! A Jamalpurian can never resist the tear-filled eyes of a damsel in distress. I was assured by our neighbor that he will ensure a dessert on the table. To this day I do not know if the devouring of delectable and beautifully decorated fruit and cream was pre-planned, and the rest was just to rag me?

Our posting to Jabalpur was perhaps the most memorable one. With moonlight boating on the Narmada river with marble rocks shimmering like silver on either side, or the picnic dinner laid by our staff on the rocks, as we sang into the night.

Mumbai saw us living on the 6 th floor, in A block of Bhadwar Park, with Cuffe Parade across the road. Many an evenings were spent strolling there enjoying bhelpuri from our favorite vendor. We awoke each morning to the shouts from the fisherwomen selling freshly caught pomfret at Rs 5/- a pair. Many memories of Mumbai are as fresh in my mind as if they happened just yesterday e.g. the time when dashing Mr V.K.Laroia'48 returned with a ravishingly beautiful bride, all eager to catch a glimpse of her; or a walk away to Jahangir Art Gallery, which we visited as much to view the exhibits as to partake of the cold coffee with wafer thin sandwiches - our outing complete if we spied a Nargis or a Dev Anand enjoying the same

Once a year the "Inspection Special" would be announced - an entire train of 8-wheeler and 4- wheeler carriages. We would then be parked on the saloon sidings in exotic places like Khajuraho, Pachmarhi etc. While the officers held their meetings, the wives went sightseeing, and the evenings saw the sidings converted with mini clubs, where we sat together and wined and dined in comradeship.



Mrs & Mr Suresh Gupta'49 on his 90th B'day



Mrs Asha Gupta (now) with grandson



We dreaded the siren that would go off if there was an accident on the division and the men would rush off to catch the accident special and be away for many hours or days.

His stint with the Territorial Army not only added to any “spit and polish” that may have escaped the institute but also earned him a gold medal, during the Bangladesh war, for clearing the tracks of the grenades left behind by the retreating Pakistan Army.

So life went by. Our daughters grew up in this carefree and happy world. We enjoyed postings in Jhasi, Jabalpur and Mumbai until in 1970, Suresh took premature retirement as his father, now seriously ill, needed him. He joined the private sector and we lived in Delhi for 24 years.

We finally moved to our own home in Dehradun which he designed in 1995. Jamalpur not only taught him to be a brilliant engineer but also an architect, a plumber, a carpenter and an electrician! His home was featured in the Inside Outside magazine and I have never needed anyone to service our home.

Suresh's fascination for the Railways never faded. Years after he left its service, the highlight of his European trip was the visit to the Moscow Railway station. Well into his 80 th year, his 3 months sojourn, when we visited our daughter and son-in-law at Shanghai, was his many hours spent alone at the Shanghai Railway Station and his few minutes ride on the Magnetic Levitation train (the MagLev) as its called.

He looked back with pride and joy at his life in the railways, and the fortitude and grace with which he battled for 3 months, the dreaded cancer, which finally claimed him, soon after he celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I am privileged, as his wife, to have penned down these words. Thank you for the opportunity to relive these magical moments of years gone by.



Entire family (minus the granddaughter) that Mr Gupta left behind

# Remembering R.K.Shukla '54



V Anand '62

Shri Raj Kumar Shukla was in charge of the manufacture of steam operated cranes at Jamalpur when I was an apprentice. His competence on the shop floor was matched by his prowess on the playing field. while he excelled in Hockey and Golf, he was proficient in all sports and games. As we were at the opposite ends of the spectrum as far as sporting activities were concerned, we did not interact much.

He was posted as DRM at Bhusaval after Kranti Kumar. Having managed difficult assignments such as CWM (Chief Works Manager) Liluah in Eastern Railway and CWM, Charbagh Workshop in Northern Railway, Bhusaval Division was a cinch.

He concentrated his energy on improving passenger amenities. The Railway Board had called for a comprehensive review of passenger amenities at all the Railway stations. The rules for opening a new railway stipulate the minimum acceptable levels of passenger amenities such as platforms, shelters, drinking water, lighting, waiting halls, shady trees, toilets etc. Unless the minimum specified amenities are provided, the railway cannot be opened for passenger traffic.

Over the years, these amenities had been neglected, and many of the railway stations, especially the smaller ones where only slow passenger trains halted, did not have even the minimum amenities. Under Shukla's direction, Bhusaval Division was amongst the first to complete this survey. The results were quite revealing. While many stations lacked basic amenities, others had been over provided, because their demands, though unjustified, were more stridently ventilated, probably with political support.

Shukla's instructions were very clear. The Railway Stations are meant for the passengers, and any encroachment of the moving space on the platforms even by the railways themselves would not be allowed. The same principle was applied to the stalls selling snacks, beverages, magazines and what was quaintly termed as “curios” All these stalls were re positioned and moved back, away from the railway tracks.

His directions riled all the departments. The commercial department had built huge cages right in the middle of the platforms. These were meant for keeping parcels being transhipped from one train to another. With the introduction of new trains, almost all the originating and destination stations were covered and these cages were no longer required. The mechanical department had large rooms at the platform level where the train examining staff were required to wait. These were shifted to the first floor of the station building. The Unions had their offices on the station platforms. These were shifted to other locations.

He then turned his attention to the waiting and retiring rooms. “Put yourself in the shoes of the traveller” he would say, “You have a baby in arms. Where do you put her?” The waiting rooms were therefore provided with cradles .Shukla had all these changes duly documented with “before” and “after” photographs. He also managed to borrow a video camera and shoot a film on the subject of passenger amenities.

No detail escaped his eagle eye. Without raising his voice, he could shame people into doing their work properly. Occasionally he would stroll into the railway station at odd hours, chat with the employees and make their work easier by improving the environment. The carriage watering staff, he found, had no pathway. He got gangways made out of scrap steel tie bars to ease their task.



Being a keen sportsman himself, it was but natural that sports and games received a fillip. The inter-divisional athletics were held at Bhusaval. The employees and their families were encouraged to play low cost games like volleyball and basketball.

Shukla's concern for the welfare of the female employees was admirable. He had set up the armature re-winding section in Charbagh workshops entirely staffed by female workers. Charbagh is in Lucknow and the area was notorious for its lawlessness. The society is male dominated. The Railway administration was also sceptic whether this arrangement would work. They were silenced by the productivity and quality of workmanship (or should I say workwomanship?) of this section.

"How did you achieve this?" I asked.

He replied, "I appealed to the nobler instincts of my male workers. I told them they should protect these females like their own sisters. I also sent the message down the line that anyone harassing these girls would be summarily dismissed. I told them I'll shoot first and ask questions later!"

As General Manager, Southern Railway he set up a cafeteria run by hearing-and-speech impaired women. This cafeteria was a great success. Here again, Shukla's faith in the innate goodness of human nature was redeemed. The customers behaved much more politely than they would have with able bodied persons.

Under Shri R.K.Shukla, I savoured the joy of serving railway's customers as well as its employees.



## Remembering Rajendra Kumar Pachauri '58



(This obituary has been sent by Mr Pachauri's family)

Born 20<sup>th</sup> August 1940 at Naini Tal, Rajendra Kumar Pachauri joined as a member of the 58 batch at Jamalpur. He was educated at La Martiniere College in Lucknow and at IRSM&EE, Jamalpur (Editor-for those who came in late, till the early 1970s, IRIMEE was called IRSMEE, where the 'S' stood for 'School'). He began his career with the Indian Railways at the Diesel Locomotive Works in Varanasi. Thereafter, he resigned from the railways and joined North Carolina State University in Raleigh, United States, where he obtained an MS in Industrial Engineering in 1972, and a PhD with co-majors in Industrial Engineering and Economics in 1974. His doctoral thesis was on energy demand forecasting.



Dr. Pachauri joined the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) as Director in 1982. His efforts and dedication ensured that TERI grew from a small documentation centre to a multi-dimensional research institute with impeccable reputation over the world. Under his leadership, TERI undertook pioneering work in the field of climate change and sustainable development, with over 1200 employees. Dr. Pachauri was the chairman of IPCC, a post he held from April 2002 until February 2015, during which time the organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. At the Nobel Peace Prize Awards ceremony in Oslo, Norway, Pachauri referenced his belief that the Hindu philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which means 'the whole universe is one family' in the context of international efforts to protect the global commons. He served as Assistant Professor (August 1974 – May 1975) and Visiting Faculty Member (Summer 1976 and 1977) in the Department of Economics and Business at North Carolina State University. He was a Visiting Professor of Resource Economics at the College of Mineral and Energy Resources, West Virginia University. On his return to India, he joined the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad, as Member Senior Faculty (June 1975 – June 1979) and went on to become Director, Consulting and Applied Research Division (July 1979 – March 1981).

In January 2008, the President of India awarded him the "Padma Vibhushan", India's second highest civilian honor, for his services in the field of science and engineering. He was also bestowed the 'Officier De La Légion D'Honneur II' by the Government of France in 2006; the 'Commander of the Order of Leopold' by the King of Belgium in July 2009; the 'Commander of the Order of the White Rose of Finland' by the Prime Minister of Finland in February 2010, 'The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star' by His Majesty Akihito, Emperor of





Japan in April 2010 and Mexican Order of the 'Aztec Eagle' by the President of Mexico in June, 2012. In July 2013, he was conferred with the Pico della Mirandola Prize by the Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Mirandola. Dr. Pachauri has twenty five honorary doctoral degrees and distinguished awards from the various governments.

Prior to his death, Dr. Pachauri had been enduring a lot of hardships, mental and physical. Thus, unfortunately, his health took a turn for the worse. He had dedicated his entire life to the cause of the environment and sustainable development. His vision to establish 'Protect Our Planet' was that it would be the youth who would be at the forefront of climate ambition and climate action. He envisaged that the World Sustainable Development Forum would serve a constructive function of deliberations and outreach involving government, political representatives, business sector, celebrities, civil society, youth and thought leaders. The family calls upon well-wishers and like-minded people to support these efforts and help take his vision forward.

Dr. Pachauri, a leading voice on climate change and environment, passed away peacefully in New Delhi at his residence on the evening of 13th February 2020. His courageous leadership allowed climate change to be recognized the world over as the most pressing issue confronting the world and launched a new era of international deliberations and action.

The former head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Tata Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) recently underwent a major cardiac surgery. Before his health deteriorated, he was directing efforts towards two organizations which he recently founded: Protect Our Planet Movement and the World Sustainable Development Forum. Preparations were in full swing for the Second Edition of the World Sustainable Development Forum which was scheduled to be held in Durango, Mexico in March 2020.

**Post Script by Venkateshwaran Anand '62:**

I first met Dr Pachauri in 1962 when he had come to Shimla for training in the RDSO. I was preparing for the SCRA examination and asked him,"What is the special quality that you have which enabled your selection as an SCRA?"

To which he replied, "You will come to know when you come to Jamalpur." I was greatly encouraged by his using the word "when."

When our batch joined in January 1963, the 1958 batch to which he belonged were leaving. I was overawed by his sheer brilliance. The quality of scholarship, intellectual honesty, diligence and eloquent communication would have propelled him to the post of Chairman Railway Board, but he chose a different avenue. He has brought honour and glory to India. I had no doubt in my mind that he would come out of the court case like Sita coming out of the Agni Pariksha and he would shine like twice burnished gold.



# Remembering Mohan Lal Gill '65



Post-retirement, Mohan Lal Gill settled down with his daughter in Chennai. However, he made regular forays into Gurugram, where his son works and where he had a house in the first IRWO colony in Sector 15. On each visit, he made it a point to call on me and we spent an evening or two together. A man of simple living, right thinking and few aspirations, he was devoted to his family comprising of his wife and two children. It was always a pleasure to have him around and I looked forward to his visits whenever he travelled North.



Although born on the 10 th of July 1945 at Jullundur, he spent his childhood in New Delhi where his father worked. He completed his B.Sc. from Delhi University before he got selected for Jamalpur as a member of the 1965 batch. It was one of those co-incidences that we had our UPSC interview on the same date and went in to face the Board following one another. Our association thus started even before we landed up at Jamalpur.

Even while he was at Chennai, I normally maintained telephonic contact. My last conversation with him was towards the end of April earlier this year. It therefore came as a complete shock when I learnt, not more than about 10 days since I last conversed with him, that he was no more. On the 5 th of May 2020, soon after he had had his breakfast, a massive heart attack overtook him and he was no more. It took me a long time to get over his sudden and untimely death. There was no indication that anything was amiss when we had last conversed.

While most of our batch (1965) had joined at Jamalpur by the end of January 1966, Mohan Lal came in late. Having completed his B.Sc., he was among the older members of our batch. From the day he arrived at Jamalpur, I was attracted by his straight-forwardness and lack of complexity. I recall an incident when we had a guest lecturer from IIT Kharagpur. At the end of three days of teaching, the lecturer asked if there was anything we did not understand. Where most of us would have hesitated in pointing out what we had not discerned, Mohan Lal asked almost immediately, "Sir, everything you have taught, I have not understood."

For a slightly built person, he played a fairly aggressive game of football.

Towards the end of his career, he was posted as CWE at ICF. During one of his morning walks, an elderly stranger approached him, hoping that he would speak Hindi. Upon interaction, Mohan Lal learnt that this gentleman had come to Chennai for getting his 25 year old son's open-heart surgery of done. He was in need of help, assistance and blood, which he could not arrange as he did not know anybody and also he could not speak Tamil. The kind-hearted person that he was, he went out of the way to have blood arranged for his son and saw to it that their stay was comfortable and successful. All this for a complete stranger.

Another incident illustrates how seriously he took his work. During his tenure at Mumbai on Central Railway, he was staying at Badhwar Park on the 16th floor. One day, when he came back after his morning walk, he found the lifts were not working. Since climbing 16 flights of stairs was not feasible and he did not want to be late to work, he actually went to office in his kurta-pyjama and came home at lunch to get into his office clothes.

Perhaps it was his straight-forward nature that was his undoing. He took everything seriously and even a casual remark could set him thinking. Rest in peace, my friend, I will always miss the conversations that we used to have.



## Remembering M S Mathur '73



Rakesh Misra '72

My dear friend Mukesh Sahai Mathur has left us. Manjula and I are overcome with sadness which, with the passage of time, might reduce but may not ever go away.

My younger brother was in Muir Hostel in Allahabad University and therefore had known Mukesh as a highly diligent student. He informed me about a very *शरीफ* person having got selected in SCRA, and we find Mukesh to be true to my brother's description when he joined Gymkhana. In fact, he lived up to this description throughout his life.

Unfortunately, physical pain was Mukesh's constant companion. I recall that as early as our final year (Mukesh's third year) he had to be admitted to JMP hospital with severe knee pain. But he battled the pain gamely and remained cheerful in spite of all his problems.

He joined me in Central Railway and got posted to Itarsi where I was already working. Once I had gone to Jabalpur for some work and when I came back three-four days later I was told that Mukesh had been admitted to Divisional Hospital Bhusawal. I caught the next train to Bhusawal and found Mukesh lying in his hospital bed with his leg in traction. There was a lady sitting in the room with a beatific smile and some knitting in her lap. Mukesh said, "This is my wife, Kumkum". That was the first time that I met her and ever since then she has been very close to us - more about her later.

Apart from getting posted together in Itarsi and later in Parel, we kept meeting each other frequently, both of us being in Central Railway. We were together in Bombay for about ten years and our friendship grew steadily and continuously. He was hardly a friend, he was more like family to us.

Throughout his physical pain and suffering he managed to remain brave, cheerful and smiling, forever willing to help someone and forever *शरीफ*. But constant use of painkillers took a heavy toll of his kidneys, and now, alas, he is no more. It has come as a body blow to Manjula and I, but then such is life.....particularly cruel to good people, I wonder why.

A word about Kumkum - although a full chapter would also perhaps not be enough. I have yet to meet a more selfless, tireless, brave, dedicated and helpful person as Kumkum. A doctor par excellence, she has dedicated her whole life to the service of others. Her own relatives and even children of her friends have stayed in their house for long durations. Apart from rendering all possible medical and wifely help to Mukesh, she has managed her strenuous job as a doctor and is managing her 94 year old father, her son and her grandson. A truly remarkable person.

I am sure '73 batch is devastated. They have been a particularly unfortunate batch, having lost five of their batchmates - Angshumali Ghosh, Deepak Gupta, Pankaj Kumar, Himanshu Sanwal and now Mathur Sa'ab. What a tragedy!

May the Lord grant Mukesh a permanent place by His side and may Kumkum find the strength to come to terms with this colossal loss. Hopefully, time, the best healer, will come to her aid.



## Remembering Pradeep Kumar '82



P Ananth '86

A pinkish face always smiling, laughing eyes, an ever-ready strong hand shake, with lots of positive energy at any time during the day, a quick jump up from his chair coming towards the door to pull you in. First instructions are to provide water, followed by tea/coffee and snacks/ *savouries*.

My head would start shaking in the negative and his immediate response is why 'illa' (tamil word for no) and then would offer south Indian snacks like Idli, Vada, Dosa and the like. No doubt he was completely fond of food. He was passing out when we joined Jamalpur in 1987, but I don't recollect much interaction with him at that time. The first time I met him was as a probationer, in 1992, when he was DyCME/Carriage Works) KGPW. I was moving into the hostel for my lunch and he had got down from his vehicle to go to his transit adjoining the hostel.

A hand on my back propelling me towards the house, and at the same time telling me that he is alone, so I would have to manage 'bachelor' food. Menu was simple – Khichdi and aloo Chokkha. As a South Indian I have had pongal, but the north Indian Khichdi was limited to the Jamalpur mess. But that Khichdi and the Chokkha was heavenly. During the course of the meal I would learn that he had made it himself. I also realised that good food was the thing which raised him to extreme levels of happiness and joy.

He then moved out of South Eastern. Sometime later I heard that he was very critical, but later on he recovered after having a successful kidney transplant.

The next time sometime in 2005, he called and asked me if I was interested in re-attending the TA camp at Adra. We had been both in Adra unit but had never spent much time together/ interacted in the unit before the disbandment. I then learnt later that due to his transplant he had given up the idea of reattending the Annual Training Camps. After re-raising in 2005, the new Administrative Officer had convinced him to reattend after undergoing the required medical exam etc. In 2005 he was in Delhi and so was I.

We then used to plan to attend Adra so that we could have some time together. Later, he also became the Commanding officer of the Unit - a full Colonel. He was always up early and ready in time in proper PT dress for the PT parade at 0600/0615 in the morning. The Adra winters are very similar to Delhi winters so this early after shaving and freshening up on a daily basis is not to easy. Needless to say, I had no other option but then I had always been an early riser. Then we used to go for a long walk at least an hour and a half minimum to 2 sometimes even 3 hrs. on Sundays. The Kang forest or the lanes of the Adra railway colony was the regular haunt.





Everything under the Sun would be discussed. He had a strong memory. I felt Maths was his favourite subject. He would also reminisce about his teachers and their style and way of teaching which allowed him to retain the concepts for long. Two things were close to his heart Service before Self and Wasteful Expenditure. As an army man he tried to be as close to his men as possible, remembering the TA soldiers and their exploits in the ATCs during his earlier camps. His attachment to his operating Coy (company) was visible but he tried to be as fair as possible sometimes even tilting his favour to the other side. His strong slogan was Army Marches on its stomach. He was meticulous in checking the rations for the jawans, ensuring the ration allocation was proper and the food cooked was proper and hygienic. Every explanation was elucidated with an example and these were the times I could see his irritation and exasperation as to why a simple 2 + 2 could not be understood by all. He was worried about their welfare - their food, their living and their careers in the army. We spent close to 10 days on 2 separate ATCs to work out the promotions for the rly TA personnel with regard to the army ranks. When he got transferred to Chandigarh Unit as CO, he alone spent 9 hrs at a trot to sort out and ease the promotions of the jawans in the unit.

Easily approachable, he would first offer a seat to anyone and everyone coming to meet him. People would come to him with stories some happy some sad. He would listen patiently. Sometimes he would simply ask “Muddha batao”. I have been at the receiving end quite a few times on this aspect. Focus on issues, leave out the emotions and concentrate on the outcome desired was his style of working. He would say there is no problem which cannot have a solution and hence the reason for his spending long hours wherever he worked.

It was probably in his psyche that he would not feel satisfied if he did not use his intelligence and his knowledge to find a solution. Sometimes he would have a brainstorming session with me. He would often wonder how people working in the government do not care for the well-being of the citizen and the same to achieved at a reasonable cost. A subset of this was that people who worked with him were actually part of his extended family. After he left Adra and Joined Chandigarh, a rly. TA personnel from Adra was always welcome at his house with the normal hospitality ‘synchronous’ with Shri Pradeep Kumar. And if I had been writing in his presence, he would this word does not suit here and he would mark it to correct it later. (hospitality associated?) His command over the written language was tremendous allowing him to generate appeals, statement of cases etc. for numerous grieved personnel in Indian railways and probably beyond. Moving back to the issue of hospitality, during his daughter's marriage, 4 staff from KGPW joined, 2 of whom had retired. A carpenter in KGP who had made his first furniture for him also came to the marriage. I am quite sure he would have sent invitations to all the people who were associated with him during his work or otherwise. That was the extent of his heart and the compassion within. Grieved people could always expect some succor from him.

When I left Delhi and went to Varanasi our meetings in Adra TA camp continued. He was very ndevout and would not missy his Puja anyday. He visited Varanasi with maám and availed of our hospitality at DLW. The first time my mother, wife and children met him, they could not believe someone could be so simple and direct and spoke his heart. He was a gentleman, and even in the unit while having parties was a true gracious host and highly respectful of the ladies irrespective of seniority.

I thought he was straightjacketed, but realised his spontaneous self, when during an embodiment in NF rly. Witht eh Adra unit, we had a visit to the upper reaches of Assam, Murkong Selek (still under construction) and Dibrugarh, ostensibly to inspect the areas of jusridiction for the Rly. TA units if required in future! But then even in this, he was meticulous with his planning – minute to minute schedule even for personal visits on leave or duty. Back up plans and contingencies were always kept ready

Last few years there were some happenings in his official life in Rlys and TA which upset him. One could see that it was irking him in the back of his mind. When he discussed some of them would me, the anguish was visible. A few of the times when he would discuss setbacks with his colleagues and a junior. Sorry, over the years I felt that he considered me as his younger brother – the feeling was mutual. Nevertheless, he would put these disappointments aside and focus his energy on the work at hand. Every small achievement was a big milestone and he cherished each one ready to go ahead. In spite of the setbacks, his determination to help others and the organisation only grew. His aim was to see everyone smiled, probably the reason why the Higher authority decided he would be of greater assistance to HIM at the apex level and took him away from the physical world.

# Remembering Anil Priya Gautam '89



Rahul Tyagi '89

Anil Priya Gautam, or APG, as he was endearingly called, was the first batch mate I met after our selection to JMP. On 9th March 1990 he and I traveled in the same first class compartment of DDN- HWH Express from Dehradun to MGS. We were incredibly formal with each other during that journey. We checked into the waiting room at MGS and I wondered if it would be okay to leave APG alone for a few hours while I went to IT-BHU to pickup my belongings. He was very gracious and offered to stay back and watch over my luggage while I made the trip. At the time we had known each other for less than 24 hours. We spent that night in the waiting room at MGS. We talked about many things and APG came across as mild mannered and easygoing. He would end a lot of his sentences with a gentle upbeat chuckle and a faint, barely perceptible, twinkle in his eyes. The next morning we caught Tinsukia mail to Jamalpur.



During the first year, I would often sneak into his room after dinner for a clandestine smoke. Once I tried to give him a pack to compensate for all the cigarettes I had pinched from him. APG was livid (as livid as a gentle person like him could be)."चार कर दी न छोटी बात! सुढ़े में हिसाब थोड़ा ही होता ह"। APG was a man of many talents. Among the best in the batch in billiards, he once taught me a few basics, so I could start enjoying the game. And yes, he could strum the guitar and hum a tune. He was a regular at club day musical performances and was much sought after during informal inter-lobby competitions.

Obsessed with refining the acoustics and sound quality of the music he played in his room, APG experimented a lot - from the optimal placement of speakers to creating echo chambers with earthen pots (matkas).

Eventually, he successfully bid for the auction of the club's Woodstock speakers towards the end of our first year and paid quite a fortune! He also had a theft in his room around the same time and lost about 2,400 rupees. He was almost broke but never dispirited.

Over the years we spent many late nights in the mess, eating Maggi, drinking cold coffee and arguing over lyrics of songs, sometimes singing together while APG drummed a beat on the mess dining table.

I regret that I didn't get a chance, nor made an effort to meet with him in recent years. Now, I never will. RIP APG. You will always live in my heart.





## ~ 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.