



WHAT MAKETH AN ENTREPRENEUR

Professor K Kumar PGP 81, FPM 90 needs no introduction. We've heard the experiences of our alumni and the lessons they learnt the hard way in entrepreneurship. Let's now get another perspective from an expert. Here we take answers from Prof. K Kumar, who has been at the helm of affairs at the NSRCEL until this year, mentoring and nurturing start ups through their initial years and setting them on sail.

The 'never say die' spirit of entrepreneurs: Going solo would have meant having to face certain difficulties. How do they manage to steer the rough waters to keep the sail flying high?

Most often, it is the passion of the entrepreneur which helps her to persist despite obstacles along the way. Entrepreneurs also rely on their social capital - the relationships they build over the years with other individuals- to derive not only

tangible resources in kind but also intangible support in the form of encouragement and inspiration.

Doing Homework: Creating a commercial venture that can be sustained over a period of time requires immense homework. How does studying in one of the best B Schools help? Does it help to understand and create a framework for a sustainable business model?

Studying in a B school will help entrepreneurs to understand business in general, and the familiarity with different tools of analysis will be of specific value depending on the type of business being attempted. Those B School students who turn to entrepreneurship after a few years of working in an industry will also benefit from the deep industry knowledge, managerial experience and the business networks, apart from being able to save up some start-up capital. However, all these

advantages will prove to be valuable only when combined with the creativity and innovation that every new venture situation demands.

The drive and passion to win-without having the backing of a big corporate or a cushy job, facing the vagaries of market, sourcing of resources, reaching out to the target audience sounds like a tough task. How can the aspiring entrepreneur surge ahead?

Initially, entrepreneurs rely on their own skills and knowledge to get started on the process of converting their ideas into viable propositions. They usually rely on techniques like bootstrapping to quickly shape their ventures into revenue earning activities, and use that as a lever to garner further resources, refine their product offerings and make them more acceptable to the market. As mentioned earlier, their social capital also helps them a lot along the way.

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Professor K Kumar



Overcoming the fear of failure: Having minimal support can be daunting, as would be the constant question of 'will I be able to make it?'. Before overcoming tangible failures, how can one overcome the psychology of fear?

The best way to overcome the fear of failure is to attempt the

entrepreneurial venture as a process of discovery that involves multiple stages. At each stage, the entrepreneur should just focus on what it takes to move to the next stage - resources, time etc. If she can find a creative way of managing these resources with the help of key stakeholders - be it customers, suppliers, investors or employees

and team members, the cost of failure will decrease and along with it, the fear of failure.

Course Correction: When faced with insurmountable difficulties how do people make course correction? How does one reset and re-plan and what are the glaring mistakes they could avoid?

Course correction is inevitable often happens through feedback from the market, sometimes helped along by mentors and advisors. Not clearly underestimating the customer pains, overstating the value proposition, ignoring competition are some of the common mistakes that entrepreneurs make which undermine their position in the market. Making investments before establishing the business viability, not bringing on board the right team and stakeholders are some of the mistakes that entrepreneurs make which limit their ability to make course corrections.



“ At each stage, the entrepreneur should just focus on what it takes to move to the next stage - resources, time etc ”

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SALON Ranjini Sivaswamy

THE GREEN WARRIOR

JYOTSNA SITTLING PGPPM 11

A An entire mountain region would have been left to deteriorate into a plastic garbage dump. A National Park would have been shamefully left to degenerate, unable to gain the recognition worth its value. A hill range would have lost an unbelievable amount of soil cover and destroyed the livelihood of thousands of people. All this if Jyotsna Sittling PGPPM '11 had not done some of the most admirable jobs in public service!

She's India's first female tribal IFS officer, genuinely passionate about environment, who carried her spirit for work over the years to become the recipient of the paramount honour for environment conservation in India - the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar. Not many would have expected Jyotsna, hailing from a nondescript village in Bengal, to move the mountains. And she indeed did move the range of Himalayas in Uttarakhand away from the course its fate was fast running into.

It was back in 2002 that Jyotsna joined the Nanda Devi Biosphere in Uttarakhand, as its Director. 5800 acres of land with two national parks and a sanctuary to revive and a closely intertwined livelihood of people - a short and sweet Jyotsna saw challenges hurled at her in abundance. She had the toughest of jobs in the most beautiful of lands.

The Valley of Flowers National Park, an unmatched landscape with the rarest of flora and fauna, hosts a buffer zone with 19 km trail that leads to Hemkund Sahib, the highest

Gurdwara in the world. The breathtaking trail was literally breathtaking, stinking as it was, with plastic and other dumps that the pilgrims left behind guiltlessly for three decades. Jyotsna decided to start vigorous campaigns by involving the local community. She called for a garbage collection initiative by the community and to her surprise they collected 15 truckloads of garbage weighing up to 50 tonnes! The entire mass was sent for recycling and the valley started getting rid of its pollutants.

Now redemption for the past mistakes was achieved, but sustaining this achievement for the future needed some more things to change. The next task was to regulate the 400 odd unorganized shops that massively contributed to polluting the trek trail to the Gurdwara. But the shops couldn't be ruthlessly removed. And environment conservation is not the easiest of things to speak about when the livelihoods are at stake. Adding to it, the forest officials and the local community were not the best of friends. So there Jyotsna was - at the task of crossing the animosity to build a relationship with the people, working out the reversal of the damage done to the environment and helping develop the quality of lives of people.

Jyotsna studied the issue with putting both the environmental conservation and the livelihood of the people at equal priority. And when she combined both, the result was economic gain for the people and conscious and sustainable conservation for the environment.





She sat down with the shop owners convincing them to reduce the number of shops to one each per family. She explained that their incomes were getting grossly divided and the environment was also suffering. She literally spent six to seven continuous days and nights to explain, convince and take people into confidence to finally agree to her plan. There was tremendous difficulty in deciding who gets which land. But at the end of it all, the number of shops came down from 400 to 76 - a huge relief for the Valley of Flowers, and people were happy to see that Jyotsna's idea worked well for them. Notably, Jyotsna was successful in making the hostility between the forest officials and the people fade away.

Jyotsna put in many checks so that what was achieved was not lost in the years to come. She put the systems into place for responsible tourism through an Eco Development Committee (EDC) of the local stakeholder villagers. The Eco fee that she introduced helped in bringing funds for cleaning operations and for building systems on green value chain for services to the pilgrims without depending on government funds. She worked out insurance policies for the pilgrims. This generated a continuous influx of money for the sustenance and development of the region. Many small businesses for the service of pilgrims, like renting plastic coats, were introduced such that more income

generating opportunities were created thus linking livelihood concerns of locals with the conservation realities of the area.

Jyotsna distilled her experience on the effect of mountaineering activity on the environment during her tenure as Director, Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (2002 to 2004) and put together an entire guideline for mountaineering in Uttarakhand in 2004. This guideline is first of its kind in any state in India. She says it's all about making the markets work for environment and making the community the real stakeholders.

Concurrently, she also carried out many other activities to rejuvenate the face of the Valley of Flowers National Park. The crowning glory came when all these efforts led to the declaration of the Park as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2005.

Another of Jyotsna's major initiatives between 1997 and 2000 was in the erosion prone zone of the Shivalik range near the Doon Valley. She mobilized a community of nearly eleven thousand people across 82 villages to spend at least 1 day in a year for the restoration of their villages. Together they planted 3,82,000 plants and sowed over 70 kgs of seeds of various plant species, saving the fate of the villages that lay close to 358 strategic erosion prone locations. What could be said about the impact of this incredible act of service?

She's done some of the most incredible works ever for the environment in our country. But she's not the one who'd take her successes to her head. She's a powerhouse of unstoppable energy who constantly traverses that extra mile to do extraordinary work. Jyotsna today is the Project Director, Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas, Uttarakhand. She is 49 and chose to stay single. She has adopted the family of her caretaker maid. The family lives with her and Jyotsna takes great interest in the education of their son.

Last year Jyotsna met with an accident causing her head injuries that left her with 16 stitches and many months for recovery. But listen to what she says - 'it was actually an enriching experience to go through the after effects of the accident and recovering from it!' She's unbelievably awesome!



WHAT'S UP @IIMB

They are known for their business acumen, strategic thinking, manoeuvring market upheavals but definitely not for their paintings or photography or even Rangoli skills! Niram - the first ever art exhibition of the Alumni of IIMB – did make a different statement. For the first time ever, 12 alumni, 2 alumni spouses and a student displayed their art to a very surprised audience.

Held on the day of Convocation, March 30, Niram added more colour to the graduation excitement. Near the amphitheatre, in the wide corridors, came up this rather amusing riot of colours. Photographs, paintings, cartoons, rangoli and ceramic art - our alumni transformed the corridors.

PARTICIPANTS: M V SHREERAM PGP 04 | RAVI RAJ EGMP 1 |
MONISH MATHIAS GMITE 11 | SRIDHAR
PARTHASARATHY PGSEM 05 | HIMANSHU JOSHI EPGP 12 |
MARINA GEORGE PGPPM 12 | ANURADHA CHATTERJEE EEP 09 |
BISWARANJAN SASMAL PGPPM 13 | FARHAT HUSSAIN EGMP 9B |
SHIRUPA GUPTA MPWE 11 | MAINAK CHAKRABORTHY PGP 10
RUPA KRISHNA KUMAR | VASANTHI GOPAL RAO |
VISWANANTH GOPALAKRISHNAN PGP 84 |
ANURADHA NADKARNI PGP 84



Happy 37th Dear IIMB

IIMB celebrated its 37th convocation day on March 30. This year, 570 students graduated from the Institute in the presence of IIMB Chairman, Mukesh D Ambani and Dr D Subbarao, Governor, Reserve Bank of India, who was the Chief Guest. Professor Chandra took the opportunity to also congratulate

Career Development Services team for winning 'Best Placement Cell' in India Today Aspire Education Summit 2012.



CPP and CSR tie up for unique project

In an endeavour to strengthen the capabilities and leadership skills of aspiring women politicians, the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) of IIMB in collaboration with New Delhi-based Centre for Social Research (CSR), an NGO working on gender empowerment, has launched India's first certificate course for women in politics. The course is named India-Women in Leadership (i-WIL) programme. The course is spread across three months which includes lectures, field visits, as well as a week each of intensive exposure visits in Delhi and Singapore. The first i-WIL programme will be inaugurated on July 16, 2012.

Meeting of the Titans:

IISC and IIMB signed an MoU April 28, 2012 to bring each other closer and create joint programs that benefit the society. This relationship will allow students from either institutes to take courses in either colleges as part of their curriculum and get credits, bring faculty and alumni together to exchange ideas, do joint research, incubate entrepreneurs and bring rich alumni and industry partnerships in the programs. Healthcare innovation and entrepreneurship is one of the top areas of focus for this partnership.



IIMB signs MoU with SMU

The Singapore Management University (SMU) and IIMB entered into a MoU in management research and education on May 28. The MoU will facilitate joint research and publication by faculty of SMU and IIMB, the organization of research seminars and workshops, and support for research projects in research centers at both institutions in areas of mutual interest.



IIMB ties up for Real Estate Research

IIMB has signed an MoU with Century Real Estate to set up a research institute. The tie-up that was initiated by P. Ravindra Pai PGP 02, MD Century Group will focus on collecting data and conducting cross-disciplinary research on the Indian real estate sector that will be published in academic and practitioner journals. The initiative will seek to provide guidance and policy prescriptions to government and industry stakeholders on major issues relating to the real estate sector.

Thank you!

PGP 86 came together to make a pledge of Rs. 1 crore to IIMB. This is the first time an entire batch has come together for such a pledge. This gesture is the outcome of a decision made by the batch when they came together to celebrate their 25th year reunion "Dhamaal 86" at IIMB in December 2011.

PGP 01 also made a pledge to collect a sum of money, which will be utilised for an annual scholarship for a needy student who is the child of an IIMB staff member.



PGP '86



PGPPM celebrates 10 years!

The Batch of 2011 – 13 marks the 10th Anniversary of Post-graduate Programme in Public Policy and Management. PGPPM was started with support from UNDP and DOPT with a view to provide mid career training programme to senior bureaucrats.

PGPPM has gone through important transformations and evolutions to become an important programme in public policy in India. Initially, the programme was started for officers in their mid career from the All India Services and Central Services. Subsequently, it was extended to open candidates from private and non-government sectors such as infrastructure, telecom and communication, banking and

healthcare, regulatory agencies. PGPPM has also started several

Biswaranjan Sasmal of the 10th PGPPM batch, says "journey of life" brought me to PGPPM. I have been searching for a bigger canvas, for a bigger role, and for carving out new paths. Apart from the class room learning, sharing of the rich experience of the participants from diverse background provided rare learning opportunities. The community living in the MHU and life in the IIMB campus has been a tremendous source of inspiration for all of us.

initiatives to mark its tenth year. It launched Decennium Speaker Series with Mr Sivanandan on January 23,

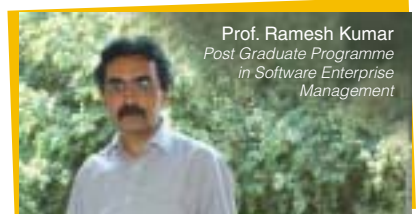
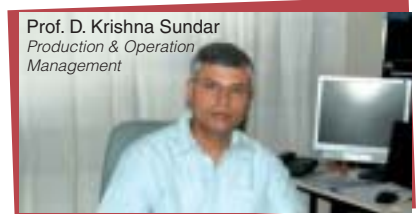
2012. We also started the Policy Folio Series which will bring out papers based on dissertations selected from each year.

Now in 2012, we prepare ourselves for the next ten years. We expect our Alumni to play bigger role and make greater impact. We will be fine tuning the curriculum with time, and will make it more relevant to the future needs. We expect greater participation from private sector and NGOs also in the times to come.

With best wishes,

Prof. Ramesh G
Public Policy, Associate Professor,
Centre for Public Policy,
Chairperson, PGPPM

Congratulations to our new Chairpersons



POSTCARDS FROM MY CAMERA

Monish Matthias GMITE 11

At the Devikere Lake, one could spend hours during sunset watching the world retire and prepare for the night. Here, the beautiful sunset has been captured along with the birds returning for the nightly roost.

Location: Hunsur

The remains of a leaf after being artistically eaten by a bug.

Location: BR Hills



I was born in the land where both sunrise and sunset is spectacular - Cape Comorin. Grew up in the land of engineers & Masala Dosas - Chennai in the company of several pets-dogs, parakeets, pigeons, fishes, rabbits & cats. My pet mania was just a manifestation of my love for nature, wildlife. About eight years ago my dad made the mistake of gifting me a 3 megapixel camera

and like a fish to water I started shooting wildlife and nature and for the longest period used a 6 megapixel point and shoot camera and have recently shifted to the SLR world. I work as a product development manager which is my day time job while my primary financier for most of my wildlife trips is my wife Anu, she gets easily conned to sponsor me. My highs in my short journey - Getty Images Contributor, National Geographic Stock Contributor, Special Mention Winner in the National Level Wildlife Photographer of the Year ABN AMRO - Sanctuary Asia – 2007. Here are some clicks that are close to my heart.

Monish blogs at

www.wow-wonderworks.blogspot.in/2010/03/journal-summary.html



The Indian Bull Frog immersed in water and looking at the world above. You can see the world it sees by the reflection in its eyes.

Location: Agumbe



A wonder of the insect kingdom, the Tiger Bettlem, shot at a tiny grass blade level.

Location: Hunsur



The milky smooth flow of streams and rivulets of Agumbe. You can easily find hundreds of such streams here - the lifeline and an integral part of the ecosystem of the rainforests.

Location: Agumbe

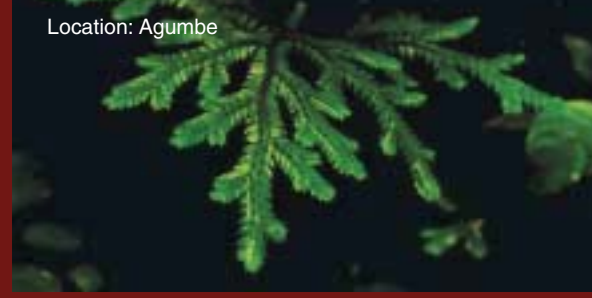


A life time opportunity of sighting a Tigress within 15 feet presented itself at the BR Forest Reserve. The injury mark could have been caused while fighting a Stag Deer.

Location: BR Hills

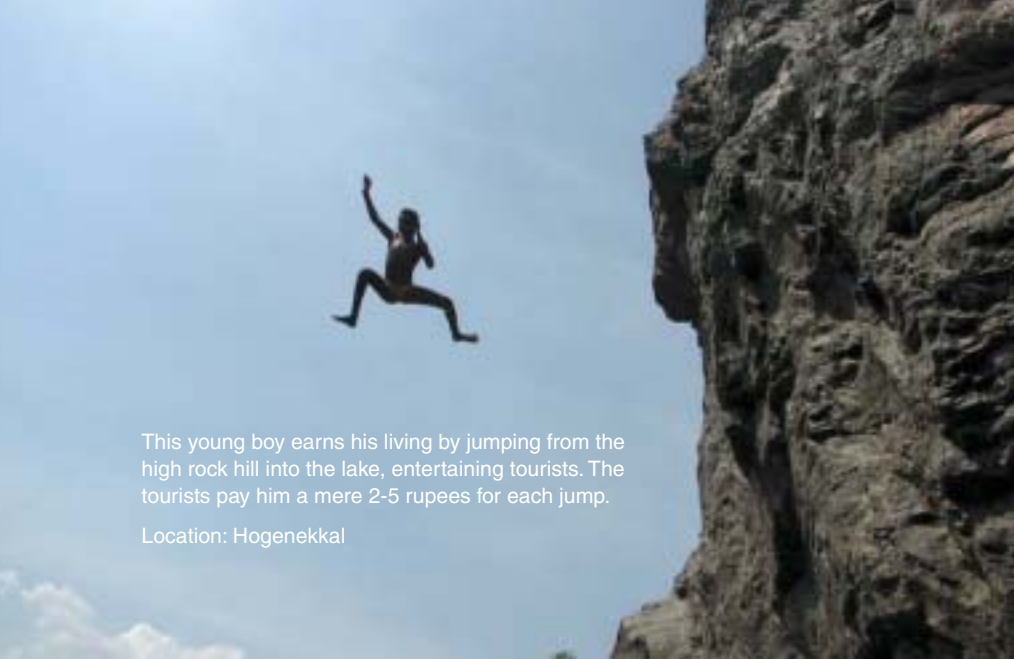
Selaginella - the plant plays a critical role in the ecosystem of the rainforest.

Location: Agumbe



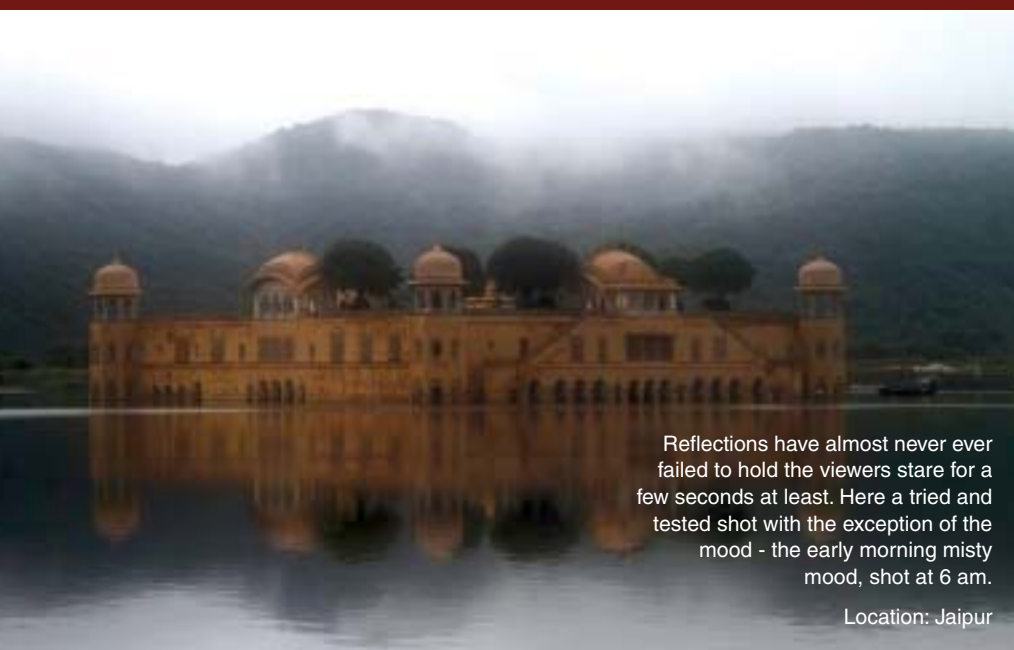
Scorpions are known to glow when exposed to certain wavelengths of ultraviolet light such as that produced by a black light, due to the presence of fluorescent chemicals in the cuticle.

Location: Hunsur



This young boy earns his living by jumping from the high rock hill into the lake, entertaining tourists. The tourists pay him a mere 2-5 rupees for each jump.

Location: Hogenekkal



Reflections have almost never ever failed to hold the viewers stare for a few seconds at least. Here a tried and tested shot with the exception of the mood - the early morning misty mood - shot at 6 am.

Location: Jaipur



A different world very close to Bangalore - here the Shepherdess poses for a minute before she starts speaking with her sheep.

Location: Hessaraghata



Three times two is six, been able to fool many a viewer even with the photograph inverted.

Location: Guildford



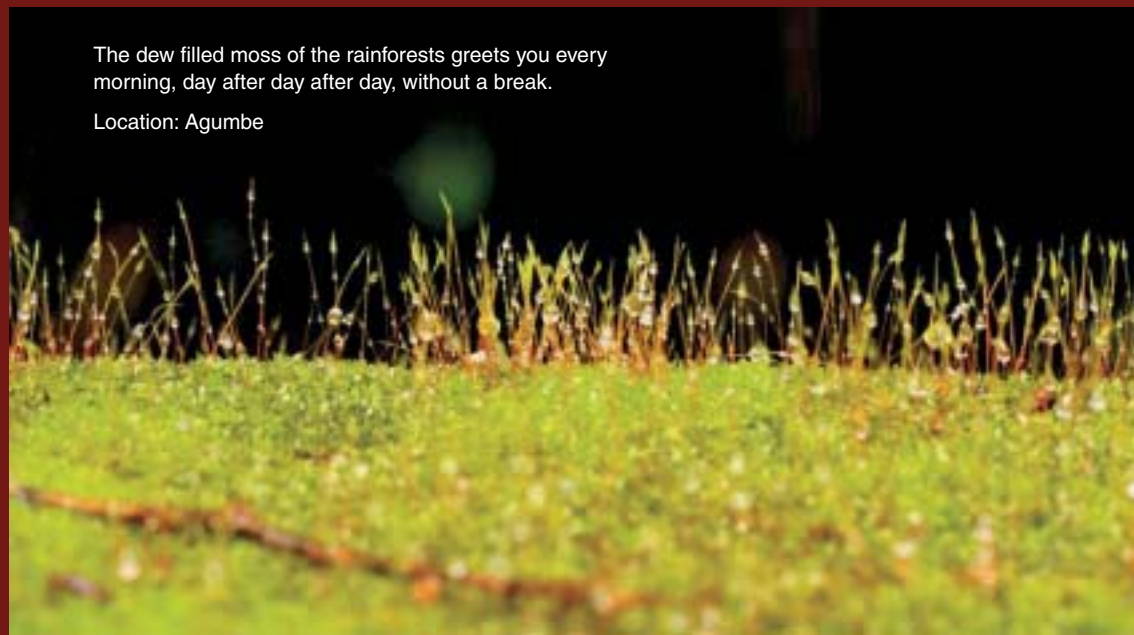
Rat Snake scanning the environment - to look for a prey or the existence of any threat.

Location: Hunsur



Grains, agriculture the backbone of our economy, slowly waning away.

Location: Bangalore



The dew filled moss of the rainforests greets you every morning, day after day after day, without a break.

Location: Agumbe



This picture reminds me of the song, 'I lead a lonely life', a shot taken during a frosty dull evening on a lovely hillock called Mountside. I used to rent a one bedroom and live here with an English Family. As I write this I remember the tough times I have had ferrying groceries to my room up the hill... phew!!!

Location: Guildford

Class notes



Badrish Prakash Verma GMP 06 and his wife Nishidha were blessed with a baby boy, Etaash Kiran Verma on April 6, 2012.

Congratulations!

Hitesh Tak PGP 09 was blessed with a baby boy, Vihaan Tak on May 22.



Shirupa Gupta MPWE 11 and Karthikeyan Ravichandran, residing in Texas, were visited by the stork in April. Their bundle of joy is called Prithvi Karthikeyan.



Varun Girilal MPEFB 12 a former Ranji Trophy cricketer, tied the knot with Priyanka Sajeendran on May 5, 2012 at Kannur in North Kerala. We wish you a very happy married life!



Our authors

Sandeep Das PGP 09 released book - "Yours Sarcastically", a campus tale. The book is a 'not-so-diplomatic' take on the life of a 20-something person in contemporary India.



Badrinath Nuggehali PGP 82 released thriller Clear Line of Fire. Clear Line of Fire is a fast-paced thriller, with the action moving across Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Washington, Moscow & the cold mountains of the Kumaon range.



Pareekh Jain PGP 04 released fiction "Who's that lady?" - a business fiction of a billion dollar company incubated in IIMB.



Quick catch up



Sriram Kilambi PGP 99 joined BloombergUTV as President.

Piyush Singh PGP 89 started Shikshadeep Foundation, a trust to support education for underprivileged children.



Sushil Dugar EEP 03, Director at Shrey Electro, launched an exclusive showroom for Vespa in Secunderabad.

Santhosh AR PGSEM 08 started website www.shoutout.com for consumers to air their complaints against products and services.

Shiva Jyothi Asthana GMITE IV started 'JaaSh', a fashion service outfit.

Devarao PGP 87 - Kavya, daughter of Deva Rao PGP '87, joins IIMB



Monish Mahurkar PGP 86 joined IFC (World Bank Group) based in Washington as Director - Treasury Client Solutions.

Gundeep Singh PGP 06 started his new company SimpLease.

Naga Anuradha AMPM 07 is all set to release her short film - Cup of Coffee – this June.

Sridhar Pabbisetty PGSEM 08 joined Center for Public Policy at IIMB as COO.

Satya Narayanan R PGP 93 released his collection of Urdu Poetry - 'Shayad, Yaheen se ho'.



The IIM USA meet at Houston. IIM USA is the umbrella alumni organization of all the 13 IIM more than 6000 alumni based in the Americas.

Anusmaran



Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, London,



Cometh May
Cometh
Anusmaran,
our month long
alumni
reconnect
celebrations!
The

participation was outstanding
with more than 1,400 members
from the alumni, students, staff
and faculty joining in. Here,
we bring you a glimpse of
the celebrations. For
more pics please visit
our Facebook page.



Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, NYC, Switzerland, Sydney and San Francisco.

ACROSS THE WORLD Bhaskar Sambamurthy PGP 92



JOURNEY TO THE ORIENT & AFRICA

The Far East and the African Continent have always been shrouded in culture, rich history, exotic food, difficult languages. The West has lured us all, but the East and Africa lurked somewhere in the corner of our minds, waiting for its turn to amaze. Its time has surely come! Our alumni Manoj Mittal PGP 85, Bhaskar Sambamurthy PGP 92 and Pradeep Vedula PGP 05 happily turn guides to give a quick tour. Enjoy!

THE SHANGHAI KNIGHT



Bhaskar Sambamurthy PGP 92, or as his Chinese friends call him, Sun Bo takes us through the streets of the ever growing metropolis of Shanghai. He brings to us a glimpse of the beautiful Chinese city peppered with 'Face Masks', competitiveness, clean environs.

Although I had repeatedly visited Shanghai over the last 12 years, the two year period between 2010 and 2011 was our first true experience of actually living in Shanghai. Our stay coincided with one of the most important periods in the history of Shanghai. The city

hosted the Expo 2010, the 90th year anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party meeting, and was also supervising the fast-tracked implementation of the city's underground metro rail network.

Shifting to Shanghai was by itself a big adventure! When shipping our belongings to Shanghai, the first thing that the relocation company told us was to remove items that were of "politically subversive nature". A couple of books, including the biography of former Premier Zhao Zhiyang, had to be hastily removed! Whilst moving out of Shanghai and

returning to Hong Kong, we again had to remove DVDs from the boxes as the government seizes fake DVDs being taken out of the country by foreigners. Later in Hong Kong, it took me six hours to place the right DVDs in the right boxes!

Foreigners are required to undergo a formal medical examination in a government facility, in addition to registering themselves at the local police station. An elderly nurse who took my blood samples asked me "who is richer - Indians or Chinese?" This conversation showed their competitiveness and it was great to know that even taxi drivers and not-so-well educated people watch Indian television serials (sadly I have not watched one for more than 15 years!).

The element of competitiveness was highlighted through another incident. On a flight, the General Manager of a factory at YiWu was seated next to me, and we started a conversation on various topics. This gentleman had half day off in Bombay after finishing his business meeting, and the only place he went to is the new house of Mr. Ambani! He showed me the picture of himself standing in front of Ambani's house, but he also mentioned that he could never live in Bombay as it is very dirty compared to Shanghai.

Xiantiandi, where we lived, aptly captures the inherent paradox in

the Chinese system. At the heart of a shrine to capitalism and western culture, stands the monument where the first meeting of the Chinese Communist Party took place in 1921.

One Another striking feature was The Expo 2010. It was a proud moment for Shanghai. The Expo was historically useful for local people in one country to understand about the achievements of other countries without embarking on an arduous sea voyage. In recent times, Expo has really lost significance as many people travel widely across the globe and hence can experience a country's culture and achievements by themselves. Even the famous South China Morning Post blasted the authorities for organizing such a wasteful event. However the underlying truth is that this Expo was organized as a pre-cursor to liberalizing the overseas travel rules for PRC citizens - only people from 6 provinces at the time of the event

could travel abroad on their own, the rest had to join an entourage and go as a tour group.

Despite the disruptive Cultural Revolution, some age old cultural traditions have remained popular in China, one of the most famous being the Bian Lian (Face Mask Changing Dance). When two of my friends from Hong Kong visited Shanghai, we went to a Sichuan restaurant where they host live performances every evening. It was simply fascinating, in spite of the fact that I have witnessed this at least 3 other times in the last 12 years - difficult to get bored!

Overall, it was a great experience to interact closely with Mainland Chinese, and live in Shanghai. Be it the friends, or the walks, or the fabulous Chinese vegetarian food or the amazing pace of change in the city, it was an exciting period and one that we would be eager to experience again.



Bhaskar Sambamurthy PGP 92





A VIETNAMESE SOJOURN ★

Vietnam is known for US intervention, Napalm attacks, but definitely not for being a tourist attraction, right? Apparently wrong! Manoj Mithal PGP 85 busts some myths.

Let's go to Vietnam!! It was late evening in December 1997, when after dinner in my house in Faridabad, just when I was about to sleep that I told this to my wife. I was 37 then and not doing too well in my career. But in Oct. 2005 I joined Kirby India as Vice-President. A wholly owned subsidiary of Alghanim Industries with Headquarters in Kuwait, Kirby was the pioneer in bringing and popularizing the concept of Pre Engineered Steel Buildings in India. And in September 2007, I was deputed as Chief Operating Officer with the objective to set up a Green field Project of Pre Engineered Steel Buildings in Vietnam.

Our Factory was set up in Dongnai Province, about an hour and a half drive from Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), a major City in Southern

Vietnam formerly known as Saigon. HCMC is a vibrant business center of Vietnam and is of the likes of Mumbai in India. Hanoi, the capital is up north and about two hours flight from HCMC. Vietnamese is the language of communication amongst locals. Limited understanding of English amongst the locals, including the educated class, is the first major challenge any expatriate faces if he has to

interview and hire people to build an organization. To understand and communicate requires patience. However, availability of skilled and educated workforce is not a major issue in Vietnam. Since Vietnam opened up its economy in late 1990s and formally became a member of WTO in 2007, many FDIs have taken place and is viewed as a favored Manufacturing Destination by many Foreign Multinationals.



Vietnam laws call for mandatory Trade Unions who support the management in their initiatives. Vietnam has well defined labor laws which though protective in nature are nonetheless progressive and supportive to the cause of industry. During my tenure in Vietnam, we weathered the economic crisis of 2008 successfully.

Warm, welcoming and reasonably priced, Vietnam is emerging as a major tourist destination for many foreigners. They are treated with lot of respect, especially Indians who are viewed as intelligent, hardworking and good looking. It's one of the safest places to live in and one can find young girls moving in public places late at night without any fear. Today most of the girls and boys can be seen wearing smart western outfits. To any foodie's delight, the local Vietnamese cuisine is healthy and tasty, especially the



fresh seafood, hotpots etc., which uses lot of herbs, greens and sauces. HCMC has a large expat population from different parts of the world and offers almost every type of cuisine, with pubs and nightlife. It offers much exotic food and I have

had the pleasure to savor some of these. My developing a liking for the local food helped me create a bond with the local employees.

While Vietnamese society is traditional like most Asian societies, the impact and influence of western culture is quite evident. With education levels rising, income levels going up, and even distribution of wealth, one hardly comes across very poor people or beggars. You don't get to see slums. Cleanliness levels are high. There is lot of emphasis on beautification and aesthetics in all walks of private and public life. Most of the women take up jobs outside their households. Vietnam boasts of one of the highest working women population. Women can be seen holding high positions and are very hard working and efficient. Siesta during the lunch time is a common practice and employees take a quick nap in their workplaces.

My wife and I have been living in Vietnam for about 5 years now and we have had an enjoyable stay here. My stay in Vietnam has been fulfilling, enriching and given me a lot of exposure. This is one sojourn, my wife and I will always remember with lots of fondness and nostalgia. ★





A ZIMBABWEAN AFFAIR



Planning to relocate? Try Zimbabwe. Pradeep Vedula PGP 05 tells why.

I wondered whether I should write about the staggering natural beauty of Zimbabwe – its plateaus and its game parks, the numbing yet exhilarating experience of the mighty Zambezi, the thrill of watching a rhino in the wild from about 10 paces, the tender yet sinuous neck-rubbing caresses of giraffes in love.

Then I thought maybe I should write how life is surprisingly comfortable for an Indian in Zimbabwe. Perhaps I should write about the large Indian population in Zimbabwe – settled over generations – the beer guzzling, chicken splitting, overwhelmingly welcoming Gujaratis spread all over the country and the beautiful Hindu temple in Harare. Maybe I should include a small description of how they are a very significant cog in the Zimbabwean economy through their chains of retail stores, and draw a few colourful sketches of successful Indian businessmen – such as my dear friend Harry Bhai who rebelled against his tailor-father to set up one

of the largest truck fleets in the cotton belt. Indeed, Harry Bhai's stories would make for some very interesting telling – such as the time when he was still trying to learn to be a good tailor and this mother got her son's suit back to Harry Bhai, cribbing "a-little-loose-here-a-little-tight-there"; Harry Bhai promptly ripped off the entire sleeve from the suit and said "See if it fits better now".



Or perhaps, an article on the economic conditions in Zimbabwe would find an interested audience. Stories about the mind-boggling inflation, the frequent stock outs of basic things such as bread and milk and sugar and vegetables from supermarket shelves, the scary conditions of big hospitals that would run out of bandage gauze and antibiotics.

On a midnight return journey from one of my field visits to the interiors of Zimbabwe, I was in my car with my driver, and occasional thoughts of being car-jacked kept flickering like a candle flame. It was then that I saw these women, with big bundles of vegetable produce, sitting in a row on the road – there must have been six or seven of them – with no man to accompany them. I asked my driver and he explained that they were all waiting to catch the earliest bus in the morning to the nearest town. They were all farmers and had come from nearby villages, having walked several miles. He calmly said, "It's perfectly safe, Mr. Pradeep they will wait here all night long, and they will be safe".

In a country racked by economic and political collapse, there was still enough safety for women to travel in the night with goods that can be sold (hence, worth enough to be stolen too).

To this day, I don't have the same level of confidence in Delhi or Noida or Gurgaon.





Yashodhara Lal's USP is in taking the ordinary - and making it hilarious. She began her journey in writing in 2006 with her blog, described as 'a serious attempt to take life less seriously' - now at Yashodharalal.com. She has over 10 years of experience in the Marketing Domain and also has 10 years of experience in the Marriage Domain. She lives in Gurgaon with her husband Vijay- and the three small children they call Peanut, Pickle and Papad. 'Just Married, Please Excuse' is her first book. A fresh and honest take on marriage and parenthood, and all the chaos that comes with it. This is a story of self-discovery that will have you laughing out loud - and sympathizing wholeheartedly with its quirky and likeable cast of characters. Yashodhara, a quick-tempered gal from the big city is hitched to Vijay, a laidback desi boy from a small town - in one word, Trouble! The young couple must learn to adjust to married life and to each other - whether it is Yashodhara's 'tamper tantrums' or Vijay's foot-in-mouth syndrome. We bring you excerpts from the book:



CHAPTER 2: THE FIRST DATE

When Vijay had first suggested that we go out that fateful evening, he had done so in a deliberately casual manner. Determined to outdo him, I had accepted in a manner bordering on careless indifference.

'Oh sure. Whatever. I mean, I don't care.' For good measure, I even added something along the lines of 'I go out with anyone who asks me.'

He looked at me appraisingly and I realized this hadn't sounded too good, so I deftly changed the subject to 'So where do you think we should go?' He thought for a while and then, with a gleam in his brown eyes, he asked me

'Would you like to see ducks?' This was a question I had never been asked before, but I decided to just go with the flow and said in the same casual manner 'Yes, of course.'

That afternoon, I found myself getting a little worried. I had no idea what to expect and was vaguely apprehensive that 'seeing ducks' was perhaps in fact some sort of secret code for acts I was not yet ready for - or even worse, that he might be planning to take me to the Bangalore zoo.

That evening he picked me up from my guest house. I walked up to his car, a dark-green Hyundai Accent.

As I got in next to him, he said 'Hey, you're looking nice.' I was congratulating myself for the wise but unusual decision of wearing a skirt and applying some lipstick when he added 'Nicer than you usually look.' My smile froze on my face, but he looked like he hadn't noticed anything amiss. I would learn later that Vijay usually said whatever popped into his head. This was always without any malice whatsoever, but still difficult for a slightly over sensitive person like me to digest. But right now, he appeared to be in a very happy, conversational mood, and I melted as it dawned on me that he was talking about making this a very special first date - he was planning to drive us two hours out of Bangalore to 'see ducks' at a little resort right on the Cauveri river. I settled back in my seat with a delicious feeling of anticipation, put on my seat belt and we zoomed off.



Yashodhara Lal PGP 02

Vijay was a very skilled driver, at least as far I could tell with my own limited knowledge of the matter. He negotiated the city traffic with great speed and nonchalance, humming tunelessly to himself when he wasn't keeping the conversation going with me and swerving out of the way of oncoming buses just in the nick of time. I tried to play it cool too, and restricted my display of horror to a few sharp intakes of breath whenever it looked like we were going to perish, which he did not seem to notice. Thankfully, we were soon out of the city and headed along some quieter country roads leading towards Mysore. Our destination was about mid-way to Mysore, a resort called Amblee.

We finally reached and I was quite delighted by my first glimpse of the quiet, scenic place. It did give the impression of being rather dilapidated and I was dimly aware that at least part of its charm at the moment was the mere lack of sunlight, but for now, it was quite perfect.

The promised ducks were indeed there - all four of them - in a murky little pond in the resort gardens, and after paying our respects to them, we proceeded to a table set right by the river that sparkled in the moonlight. There was absolutely nobody else

around and we were having a pleasant, quiet conversation and getting to know each other better. Naturally, I was therefore taken aback when after a comfortable lull, Vijay leaned over, looked me in the eye and said, 'Naam hai Vijay... Deenanath... Chauhan. Maalum?'

I'd not had the slightest interest in Hindi cinema till I met Vijay. Obviously, therefore, I did not know that this was a dialogue from the movie, Agneepath, and that

Vijay was trying to impress me with what he thought was an uncanny imitation of Amitabh. I only wondered why he was suddenly whispering in a voice two octaves lower than his regular voice. Out loud I just politely remarked that I had always thought his last name was Sharma, not Chauhan, adding that Deenanath was a very interesting middle name, if a bit old-fashioned. He was a bit demoralized by my

I was dimly aware that at least part of its charm at the moment was the mere lack of sunlight, but for now, it was quite perfect.

reaction, but when he explained to me what he had been trying to do, I pretended that I had just been kidding and praised him for his unmistakable impression of Amitabh, possibly overdoing it a bit by saying he 'actually sounded more like Amitabh than Amitabh himself.'

After we finished our otherwise uneventful, peaceful dinner, Vijay announced that he had organized for us to do some fishing, a thought that I was quite excited by. We settled ourselves comfortably on the cool stone steps leading into the river, and a friendly resort employee handed us our extremely make-shift

fishing rods - which were actually just two thin bamboo sticks with strings, at the end of which dangled little hooks wrapped in bits of atta.

There we sat, the two of us, holding our charming and only slightly sad little fishing rods, and the conversation now took a more serious turn as we quietly exchanged our many divergent views on the world at large.

It was clear that despite our mutual attraction, we had too many differences - he referred to himself as a 'simple man' and was easy-going, good-humoured, and even-tempered. He also was a small-town boy, had been brought up as part of a conservative family in Jaipur and had a distinctly desi flavour. I on the other hand, was a 'modern', Delhi girl who had always had a bit of a hot temper and clearly favored Alanis over Amitabh.

He had just finished telling me about how he had always been told that he was one of the calmest and most centred people around, when he suddenly felt a tug on the bamboo stick. He stared at it in amazement while I excitedly cried that it looked like he had actually managed to hook a fish.

'BHAIYA! BHAIYA!' his sudden panicked screams shattered the stillness of the night. I asked him to calm down but he went on rather incoherently about being a Brahmin and a Vegetarian and how he had never thought these sticks would ever catch a fish and that he wanted to throw it back but couldn't bring himself to touch it and anyway he was afraid it would bite him and it looked so awful struggling there like that and so on. The friendly resort Bhaiya came back and laughingly rescued Vijay from the fish, tossing the latter back into the river whereupon it indignantly swam away. Vijay shuddered and said we should head back into town now.

And that was our first date.

