



The Scindia School
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Qila Quotes

volume
30





The Scindians at the Atal Bihari Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, Manali



Our delegation in France

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Mrs. Darshana Jaini (Parents' Representative)

Mr. Ravi Saund (Expert - Infrastructure Development)

Ex officio Member, Principal & Secretary

Dr. Madhav Deo Saraswat

Bursar

Wg Cdr Vivek Saxena

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information printed in this edition of the Qila Quotes. If an error has occurred, please accept our apologies and contact the editor at pujap@scindia.edu.

PRINCIPAL'S DESK



As I write this message the sky is overcast, the monsoon cleansed trees and fields offer a gloriously welcoming sight, the Fort looks resplendent in various hues of green and most satisfyingly, students and teachers are back to the routine of being engaged in enriching activities. Like each year it is wonderful to see all the students return to school refreshed after the summer break and raring to go. The constant buzz around the campus whether it be in lessons or in the many and varied clubs and societies adds to the vibrancy of this unique place of learning.

At the outset let me extend a warm welcome to the new students who have now become a part of the Scindia fraternity. You are now the proud members of an outstanding institution and I assure you of a nurturing and caring environment that will see all of you blossom into empowered and sensitive human beings. My first few interactions with you have shown that each of you has arrived with your own relative strengths and weaknesses, enthusiasms and worries, and most definitely a bag full of expectations. We will equip you with the necessary academic and ethical tools to realise all your dreams. However let me also forewarn you that in the course of your academic journey at school you will encounter many of life's timeless challenges: the need for motivation and perseverance, the values of friendship and the tests of character, the necessity of accommodating individual differences while abiding by community norms. So be prepared...challenge us and be willing to be challenged.

Let me also take this opportunity to reach out to the parents. I would like to reassure you that your ward is a part of an exceptional learning community. As educators we consider it our sacred duty to nurture and develop every student to his maximum potential. We constantly realign pedagogy to serve the needs of tomorrow taking care to educate not just minds but also hearts. While we teach our children to seek excellence over mediocrity yet we also prepare them to take a few knocks with grace and rise up each time. The students are encouraged to care of others by becoming global citizens, and develop a concern and active respect for the environment. In short our endeavour is to prepare our students to flourish in the dynamic, competitive and challenging global environment of the 21st century.

I would also like to welcome our new Bursar Wg Cdr Saxena. He brings with him 30 years of experience in Administration and HRM, both from the Indian Air Force and the Corporate World.

My compliments to the members of the faculty and students who kept the Scindia banner flying high even during vacations. They chose to come out of the comfort zone to attempt new challenges by being a part of educational excursions, mountaineering expedition and the service project. These immersive experiences are the immeasurables which contribute to the formation of a well formed mind as against a well filled one.

The administrative wing also worked all through the vacation sprucing up the campus. Keeping with our endeavour to constantly upgrade our facilities with a view to enhancing the aesthetics, comfort and security of the students several projects have been initiated and are being carried out in full vigour. The one closest to my heart is the renovation of the Junior Houses. We also realise that Gwalior is subject to extreme and prolonged heat conditions which often gets very enervating. Therefore to ensure more student friendly learning spaces we have decided to go for air conditioned classes. The SOBA House is being revitalized as a haven of nostalgia and warmth. Once complete our alumni would love to come and spend time in their familiar environs. All these projects are slated for completion in a year's time.

Our alumni remain our robust pillars of support at all times. I extend my gratitude to the Executive committee of the Kanpur and Banaras Chapters for facilitating our efforts during the road show in the month of April.

I will conclude by urging my dedicated team of teachers to continue to create appropriate, meaningful and participative learning situations for all the impressionable children under their care. Appreciate their smallest efforts with all generosity and broadness of vision. Provide every possible help in their academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual evolution. Empower your students to become innovative thinkers, creative problem solvers and inspired learners.

My wish for each one of you is to surge ahead and make a difference in the world.

Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat
Principal, The Scindia School



Artist's impression of the post renovation look of the Junior House.



Artist's impression of the post renovation look of the Junior House dormitory.



President Board of Governors HH Maharaja Jyotiraditya M Scindia at the prize giving ceremony of HH Cricket Tournament



A still from the English Play during the roadshow.

EDITORIAL

July marks the beginning of the new academic year and like each year we welcomed into our fold a bunch of new entrants to the Scindia family. Our new members are a motley group comprising the thinkers, the quiet ones, the assertive ones and the excitable ones. Some who think they have style and some who believe they are truly special nevertheless they are all prepared to be immersed in a social melting pot, called Scindia, and embrace the unique signature experiences that we will provide them.

It is a matter of great pride that The Scindia School has been recognised as a Global League Institution 2017-18 based on the student satisfaction survey conducted by 'Great Place to Study Research Institute'. Dr Vikram Mathur (Ex Ja-1974) represented the School and received the award from Guest of Honour Baroness Sandip Verma at an award ceremony in the House of Commons, UK.

The Annual General Meeting of the governing body of Scindia Education Society was held at the School on 9th July. The focus of the meeting was the School Development Plan, wherein decisions pertaining to the development of infrastructure and recruitments were taken. The members also went on a round of the School and reviewed the recent changes that have been brought in the infrastructure of the School.

The Scindia School organized two 'Roadshows' in alliance with the SOBA chapters of Kanpur and Benares in the month of April. The School presented a cultural evening entitled – 'An Evening with Scindians: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow'. The purpose of these Roadshows was to connect with the Old Boys of The Scindia School based in Kanpur, Benaras and nearby cities. It provided our boys with a wider platform to showcase their talents. It was also an endeavour of the school to raise awareness about the importance of Boarding schools in the current scenario of education.

Service

Like every year this time too Sonsa day was observed in the true spirit of social service and altruism. Members of the Social Service League of the school along with the other faculty members and boys from the junior school went to Sonsa, the village adopted by the School. The day was celebrated as the 'Sports Day' in which the village boys and girls competed in various sports like kabbadi, gymnastics, tug of war and many more. The students of the local school also displayed their art, craft and science models with palpable pride. Prizes were also awarded to the meritorious students. The School remains firm in its commitment to make a

positive difference in the lives of the village folks.

Visitors

Two GAP students, Mr Sebastian Henry George McCarthy and Mr Joseph Henry Charles from Ellesmere College, UK stayed in school for a month. They contributed very meaningfully to Social studies and English classes as co teachers.

Mr Graham Nurser, former English faculty from Wellington College, England and an honorary member of the Round Square visited school along with his wife Ms Wendy Nurser. Ms Nurser has served at Downe House School, England as a History teacher for 25 years. Mr and Mrs Nurser took English and History Classes which were thoroughly enjoyed by our students.

Round Square

The Scindia School, for the second time in a row, organized the Regional (South Asia & Gulf) Round Square Service Project at Thiksey village in Ladakh. 31 students and 8 adults from 11 schools participated in the service project. Volunteers arrived from the length and breadth of the country and also from a couple of countries in Europe as well. Apart from service, the programme also included a very demanding trekking expedition. Mr Vishesh Sahai from The Scindia school was the Project Leader of both the endeavours. Mr Tony Hyde, honorary member of the Round Square mentored the project. The volunteers worked laboriously for seven days and built two rooms for office usage at the Lamdon Model School in Thiksey village. Volunteers trekked through the Ladakh mountains and stayed for two nights in the tents. The group achieved the commendable feat of trekking through the Kandala Pass which is at a height of slightly above 5000 Meters from the sea level. The visit to the breathtakingly beautiful Pangong lake was a memorable experience for all. The entire group returned with a great sense of fulfilment and with high words of praise for Scindian initiative and leadership.

Workshops

A Workshop on Ceramic Pottery was conducted by Ms Dipti Gupta, who is an accomplished artist in making Ceramic Pottery. Sixty students from classes VI-X participated in the workshop. They learned about ceramic pottery, modelling of artefacts, tile work and the process of preparing clay and glaze work.

Akash Jaini (Ex Ja 2016) and Shantanu Kulshreshtha (Ex Ja 2016) conducted a debating workshop for the students. They drilled children in the Oxford, Cambridge and Parliamentary styles of debating. The participants were familiarised with the minutiae of each format and the debating jargon peculiar to each. The technical terms were simplified for the purpose of effectiveness in developing cogent arguments. One session was devoted exclusively to get children initiated into alternate ways of approaching a motion. Mock drills made all the theoretical knowledge alive for our boys. In addition to active debating the participants were also made to adjudicate so as to get a better understanding of speaker roles and the flow of the debate. The boys of Junior House were introduced to the Oxford format and they too went through a mock session. The workshop threw up some promising and upcoming debaters and three rigorous sessions were held exclusively with them for greater practice. Akash and Shantanu have promised to come again and will also be sharing, debate topics, video links and a reading list for the benefit of students.

Academics

The Scindia School has very clearly defined academic goals and we leave no stone unturned to provide all instructional support to achieve them. Academics being at the core of all our endeavours this year we are planning to further bolster our efforts to bring about scholastic excellence. Keeping the possibility of an early Board exam in mind and also for preparing Class X for the formal Board exam all efforts have started in full earnestness at the very outset. Extra classes, remedials and enrichment sessions have begun in all subjects. The faculty is determined to support each and every student to move progressively toward the desired level of achievement.

The Batch of 2017 did us proud by their result. Three students, namely, Jatin Rai, Jagjeet Jain and Piyush Dinkar scored 100 % in Painting and Abhijeet Nagpal scored 100% in Political Science.

One of our students Harsh Devprakash Gupta has got 25% scholarship at University of Illinois Chicago, USA. Two students Mriganka Ghosh and Satyam Malik will be joining the University of Wisconsin on 50% scholarship.

The Department of Science has revised the textbooks for the Middle School with a view to promoting experiential learning. Strict adherence to the CBSE Board curriculum was borne in mind while making this

change. We are confident that by engaging our young learners in concrete experiences we will be able to ignite their passion for the subject and also lead to better learning outcomes. The Department of English has also done a well calibrated benchmarking of the Grammar and creative writing concepts for the Middle School. The textbook has also been revised so as to have more language activities and greater practice of the functional aspects of language. The students of Class XI are being given structured lessons for preparing them for IELTS and GRE. This training will be a great assistance to our students while preparing for their college admissions.

The students of Classes VI-VIII will also be appearing for Olympiads in all the core subjects. This will not only give our students additional knowledge but they will also get an early exposure to competition. It will give them a bigger platform to showcase their talent and enhance their analytical and reasoning ability, problem-solving skills and boost their confidence.

Career Cell

The Scindia School and the University of Wisconsin, Parkside (UWP) have established a four year educational partnership which will provide an opportunity to our students to complete their bachelor degree from the UWP. The University has established a dedicated academic scholarship for this purpose. Each year, three students will be recommended by the Principal and the amount of sponsorship would be determined on their academic performance in Class XII.

Cogito consultancy conducted a feedback session of the Online Personality test and Subject Choice Test which was held for Classes VIII and X respectively. The findings have helped our students identify their areas of interest so as to opt for the correct subject combinations.

Ms. Meenakshi Sharma representative of New York University – Abu Dhabi Campus visited school and interacted with students of Class XII. The students asked her several questions pertaining to the admission procedure. In addition to answering their queries she gave them pointed guidelines on essay writing. This included tips on how to approach different topics, development of content and the importance of essay writing in the admission process.

Ms Linda Gibson, Senior International Officer, University of St Andrews, UK visited the school. The University, located in Scotland is among the top-5 universities in UK and well-known for leading in the field of Computer Science. She was accompanied by Mr Kurien Joseph and Mr Vir Singh Anand, the University's representatives in India. They interacted with class XI students and shared with them detailed information about the University.

Mr. Rajan Gosain (Ex Md 1989) who has 25 years

of experience of Hospitality sector visited school and interacted with students of Classes XI and XII. He shared his experiences and answered queries concerning career in Hospitality, colleges and admission procedure.

The School Career Counselor Ms Divya Verma attended a workshop on careers in the field of finance at the Indian School of Business and Finance in Delhi. She was apprised of the preferred subject choices for students desirous of making a career in the field of finance. Ms Verma has shared the same with the students of Classes X and XI so that they can make informed choices.

Faculty Enrichment

Mr Raj Kumar Kapoor (Dean of ICT) and Mr Somarajan KS attended a seminar on the topic 'The Self Motivated Boy: Developing 21st century Leadership', Faculty of Humanities). The seminar was held under the aegis of the IBSC (International Boys School Coalition). They gained insight on the latest research findings of neuropsychology and the importance of appreciating the unique qualities of a child. The IBSC team encouraged collective and collaborative research proposals on related topics.

Mr. Kamlesh Singh, faculty of Psychology attended the five week Faculty Development Programme (FDP) held at IIM, Indore from 24 April to 31 May 2017. The programme focused on research methodology and pedagogical skills specifically for teachers teaching management and allied subjects. He, along with other participants, was introduced to a variety of teaching styles and urged to use them on a regular basis to make the classroom atmosphere more engaging. Mr Singh also got an insight into different learning styles and has come back with several strategies to tailor make one's teaching to adapt to these.

Ms Anita Pandey, faculty of English, attended the 'Master Trainer's Training on English Core' at Gyan Ganga International School, Jabalpur. The workshop was conducted by CBSE, New Delhi- Centre of Excellence, Training Centre, Pune. The workshop laid special emphasis on advanced writing skills and the Class XII prescribed text. Mrs Pandey came back with a lot of resource material and shared her learning with other members of the faculty.

Sports

The School hosted the Kishangrah Tournament 2016-17; the triangular series between Mayo College-Ajmer, Daly College-Indore and The Scindia School- Gwalior. The tournament was open for students of Class VI only. Daly College Indore was the winner.

Nine schools participated in the 15th H.H. Maharaja Madhavrao Scindia Memorial Cricket Tournament hosted by school. It was a keen contest for the coveted trophy which was won by Modern School,

New Delhi. The Runner Up team was DPS Mathura Road, Delhi. Over five days we witnessed a brilliant display of cricketing skills with swashbuckling batsmen, outstanding bowlers and gifted fielders keeping spectators riveted. President Board of Governors His Highness Jyotiraditya M Scindia, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. He applauded the players for putting up a stellar show of sportsmanship and camaraderie.

In a weeklong preconditioning and skill camp at Paljor Stadium, Gangtok, Sikkim, 18 students of the School football team met and learnt the finer soccer skills, moves and strategies from the former Indian Soccer captain and former European League player Baichung Bhutia. During the training students played matches with clubs and schools and performed well in the post training IPSC Event held at B.K. Birla Centre for Education Pune. Uttam Rai has been selected for SGFI National Games

The School Hockey team recently participated in the inaugural 'United for Hockey' (UFH) Invitational Cup in New Delhi. The tournament brought together four premier boarding schools namely, The Doon School, Dehradun; Mayo College, Ajmer; Welham Boys' School, Dehradun and The Scindia School, Gwalior. The school team won the Runner Up Trophy and Chopel Bhutia was awarded 'Best Defender of the Tournament'.

Visits

Fifteen students along with Mr Dheeraj Malik went to Paris on a ten day educational trip. They attended a beginner's course at a foreign language school. The students who have opted for French at school feel a lot more proficient in the use of language after this visit. However it was a great learning experience for the other students also. Our boys stayed with host families thereby getting firsthand experience of French culture. Each of the families spoke glowingly of our students for their behaviour and the courtesies they extended. The delegation also went sightseeing and visited all the major tourist attractions like Paris story museum, Grevin wax museum, Eiffel tower, The Defense Mall, National Art Museum Centre George Pompidou and many more.

10 students along with Ms. Sangeeta Jain, HOD Science attended the Career Exploratory Program at East Coast, USA. Some of the places they visited were Kennedy Space Centre, NASA, Rocket Garden, 3D IMAX films on space, Atlantis exhibitions and centers of educational excellence like MIT and Harvard University in Boston. Each of these visits was followed by a talk on the career options that they open before us. Lunch with astronaut, Kem Cameron and attending a Broadway workshop were other highlights of the visit.

OLD BOYS' NEWS

Aditya Sharma (Ex Jp, 2014) has successfully taken admission into University of Oxford to pursue Masters in Social Anthropology. A proud Tata Trust scholar he will be joining St Antony's College at Oxford, which is known for its legacy of producing stalwarts in the field of Journalism.

Dr Shahamat Hussain's (Ex- Rn, 1988) vintage car, a '1932 Fiat Tipo 514' won accolades at The Statesman 51st Vintage Car Rally recently. His car is possibly the only model of its kind in India.

The March 2017 issue of the Reader's digest featured an article entitled, 'The Ultimate High' on Mr Gagan Khosla (Ex - Je, 1974). The article vividly captures his adventurous 'Leh to Kanyakumari' cycling expedition which he successfully completed in the month of October.

Justice Navaniti Prasad Singh (Ex - Je, 1973) has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court. Our heartiest congratulations!

Mr Veer Vikram Singh (Ex - Je, 2005) won the assembly elections in U.P. from Katra constituency. He is a member of the BJP. Heartiest congratulations!

Mr Surjakumar Okram (Ex - Mj, 2005) won the assembly elections in Manipur from Khangabok constituency. He is a member of the INC. Heartiest congratulations!

The legendary radio announcer Padmashree Ameen Sayani (Ex - Ja, 1950), Madhav Awardee (1985) was interviewed at the AIR Nagpur's Vividh Bharti Kendra in the 'Good Morning Nagpur' programme. He shared interesting anecdotes and life-changing experiences from his early life with the people of Nagpur.

Mr Ajay Poonia (Ex-Sh, 2006) the Quizmaster for our Platinum Jubilee Memorial Quiz since 2009 is the host of the CBSE Heritage India Quiz. This is a national level Inter-School quiz in its 16th year with participation from all across the country. The show is telecast every Saturday at 4.30 PM and is repeated on Sunday at 10.30 AM on HistoryTV18. He also has a widely popular quiz app on play store and app store called QuizDesi. Those interested may download it from www.quizdesi.com.

Amit Grover (Ex-Jyotiba, 1992) the Founder /CEO of Able Mind Consulting was featured in silicon India magazine as the founder of one of the most promising companies in the background verification business.

Mr. Harish Bhojwani (Ex- Md, 1995), Industrialist, Member - Board of Governors -The Scindia School, Member

of Board of Governors- Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia Centre for Development has been awarded GWALIOR RATNA ALANKARAN for Outstanding Young Person Award of Gwalior - 2017 for his outstanding achievements in the Category of Business, Economics and Entrepreneurial Accomplishment.

Akash Jaini (Ex Ja, 2016) participated in the Abu Dhabi International Men's Open 2017, and won first place in the tournament. The tournament was held in the Abu Dhabi Golf Club from March - April 2017.

Mr Rajendra Pawar (Ex-Vivekanand, 1967), Vice President of the Board of Governors of The Scindia School visited Nagpur recently and met members of SOBA Nagpur over a cup of tea. Mr Pawar urged the Scindians to participate in all the developmental activities of school. He also exhorted them to volunteer and be a part of various sub-committees of the School Board so as to contribute to the overall progress of their alma Mater.

Akshay Kumar Guruji (Ex Madhav 2011) was awarded the Madhav Institute of Technology and Science (MITS) Gold medal for scoring the highest CGPA in Electronics and Telecommunications. He received the award from Chairman MITS HH Maharaja Jyotiraditya M Scindia during the Gold Award Ceremony.

SOBA Kanpur elected its new Executive Body. The officials are:

President - Mr Sudhir Mehra (Ex - Mj, 1976)
Vice President - Mr Vineet Awasthi (Ex - Mj, 1991)
Vice President - Mr Deepak Khanna (Ex - Sh, 1984)
Secretary - Mr Deepak Agrahari (Ex - Sh, 2004)

We are happy to announce the formation of a new SOBA Chapter, namely SOBA Chhattisgarh.

The office bearers of this new chapter are:

President - Mr Sudip Bachhawat (Ex - Md, 1974)
Vice President - Mr Bhanu Pratap Singh Tyagi (Ex - Rn, 1988)
Secretary - Mr Rajeev Jaswani (Ex - Jp, 2005)
Treasurer - Mr Sumit Bachhawat (Ex - Rn, 1979)
Joint Secretary - Mr Chanveer Singh (Ex - Jp, 2007)

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Eleven students along with Mr Anil Pathania and Dr Pawan Sharma went for a trek to the Everest Base camp at 18,000 feet. The delegation braved unpredictable weather conditions, arduous terrain, and other unexpected developments which made enormous demands on mental and physical robustness. Braving weather and topography the group successfully reached the Base Camp and enjoyed the spectacular view of the vast expanse of white. Apart from the thrill that the expedition offered it taught students survival skills and the ability to live a life sans comforts and luxuries with cheerfulness. Quite understandably our bravehearts recount with pride that they could achieve this through the all powerful tool called Positive Mental Attitude.

16 boys participated in the '21st Excellentia Horse Show' which was held at the Excellentia Equestrian Centre, New Delhi. Our boys bagged performed exceedingly well and won medals in different categories:-

Yash Saharan won 2 Gold medals in Open Hacks & Show Jumping. Ayush Singh won a Gold medal in Show Jumping, a Silver medal in Show Jumping & Open Hacks. Abhinav Gautam won a Bronze medal in Junior Rider's Dressage and a Mini Bronze in Show Jumping. Somansh Girdhar won a Silver medal in Open Hacks. Yuvraj Bhatia won a Silver medal in Junior Rider's Dressage. Kritya Mehra won a Silver medal in Beginner's Hacks. Jazbi Bazmi Yunus won a Silver medal in Beginner's Hacks (Cat-2). Aspandan Sharma won a Silver medal in Pole Bending & Bronze medal in Boot & Hacks. Aakash Kumar won a Bronze medal in Beginner's Hacks. Hiteshwar Sagar won a Mini Bronze medal in Equitation Class.

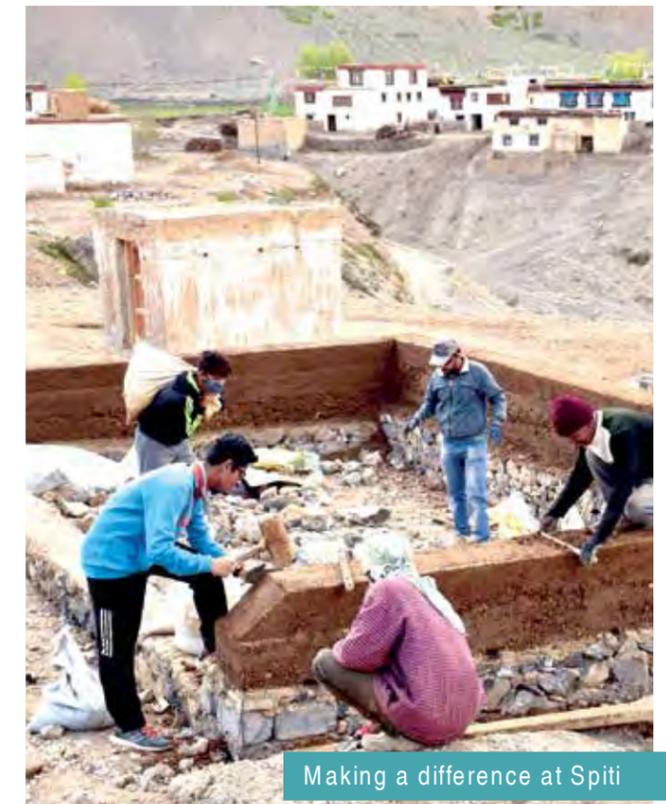
Seven students along with the coach, Mr Chandan Baitha represented the school at the Squash Tournament held at Pathways School, Gurgaon. Pavan Jaini brought laurels to the school by winning the Second place in the Under-19 category.

Six students along with Mr Akash Sharma went for a fifteen day long residential project to Lahaul Spiti in Himachal Pradesh as part of the IAYP Gold Award Programme. In the course of their stay they built a greenhouse for a local family in the village which was later inaugurated by the Head Monk of the local monastery. The project was organized by Ecosphere which is a social enterprise that works on sustainable development in the Spiti Valley. The delegation also went for a trek covering a distance of 25 kilometers through the steep hills in 3 days and had the opportunity to visit the highest motorable village of World named

Komic and the highest post office of the world named Hikkim. The delegation came back with a great sense of accomplishment and were wonderfully rejuvenated by this stay in the lovely environs.

18 students along with Mr Jagdish Joshi went for a ten day adventure course to Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports at Manali during the vacations. After the initial acclimatization they immersed themselves in the grueling routine of the course. Their day would begin very early with a rigorous fitness program. This was followed by training in skills like rock climbing and rappelling under the guidance of trained professionals. They also went on an arduous trek covering a distance of 80 km in six days. The trek culminated at Dhundi which is situated at a height of 11000 feet. It was a challenging yet extremely fulfilling experience for our school team.

Our boys received professional guidance in adventure through participation in courses. Six students participated in an adventure course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute Darjeeling and eight students participated in a course at Nehru Institute of Mountaineering Uttarkashi. During the fourteen day long course they partook in rigorous trekking sessions and learnt rock-climbing and rappelling.



Making a difference at Spiti

THE CAREER EXPLORATORY PROGRAM

Making a decision regarding one's preferred career path is not an easy one. Balancing different factors like one's own interest, natural talent, parental ambition and future possibilities is quite a task and one's mind can get utterly confused. There are far too many factors to be considered, deliberated upon and weighed before one chooses one option over another. How wonderful would it be if someone could give a clear perspective on the different careers, not in a didactic manner but through offering firsthand experience with a fair mix of fun. One such opportunity presented itself before us in the form of the Career Exploratory Program, East Coast, USA. I had the privilege of accompanying ten students for this program from 9th June to 20th June.

Students of Classes VIII-XI were a part of this program. The objective was to take them to various sites and help them get an overview of different organisations and their workplace culture. The students would get an opportunity to connect with professionals and come to understand if the career option they were considering is a good fit for them. In the course of their visits the boys would automatically get to assess which is the career in which their values, skills, interests and goals come together. This would eventually be a great assistance in helping them make an informed choice.

Our delegation flew from New Delhi to New York and then to Orlando. The first stop on our itinerary was a two day visit to the Kennedy Space centre, NASA. Day 1 had us visit the various workstations with our tour guide. This centre uses the latest technology for space research. In addition to this they also conserve wild life. The next day we visited rocket garden, 3D IMAX films on space and Atlantis exhibitions. The best part of this visit was the simulation of Shuttle launching. We were extremely fortunate to have lunch with astronaut, Kem Cameron. He gave a presentation on his journey to the space which was followed by an interaction with the students. It was quite an eye opener that the visitors' section of Kennedy Space Centre is run entirely by visitors' fee. The visit helped students understand about Aerospace engineering.

The next two days we visited the Island of Adventure and Sea World. Here the students enjoyed rides on the roller coasters. The beautiful Dolphin show and the aquariums were the star attractions of the Sea world. The careers under focus during this visit were that of Water conservation specialist, Ecologist and adventure.

Next was the visit to the beautiful natural water Fall – Niagara Falls. While we were mesmerised by the natural beauty of the Falls the students also learnt how USA has harnessed the bounty of its natural resources to promote tourism. The visit to the iconic Statue of Liberty at a later date was also very fascinating. We were told of the various measures adopted by the government for making it tourist friendly and for maximising revenue collection. Travel and Tourism as a career option and its positive impact on economy was explained after both these visits.

Next visit was like a dream come true. We visited centers of academic excellence MIT and Harvard University in Boston. Our student guides from both the universities were Physics students. They apprised the boys about the details of the admission procedure, the various courses on offer and also about the culture of these universities. I also received valuable tips on the right way to approach writing of LORs. I was told that the document must capture the passion of the student and his journey or evolution as observed by the referee. This was a very useful bit of information as LORs have a major role in supporting a student's candidature and back at school we wish to leave no stone unturned in providing the best possible recommendation to support our boys. I have shared the same with my colleagues back in school so that they can give a more data backed personalised account of a student while writing his LOR. I also learnt that both these universities offer only need based scholarship and students often support themselves by picking up part time jobs. A strong student centric approach defines the culture of these institutions and therefore student welfare is given



The Scindians at NASA

its rightful due. To help students cope with examination related stress the Universities plans destressing activities a day prior to the exam. We also went on a round of the various departments which included getting acquainted with the history of the place.

New York had beautiful skyscrapers. While appreciating these architectural marvels the boys were told about Structural designing. Next we visited Madam Tussaud's Wax Museum, where students clicked lot of pictures with the wax statues of celebrities. During this visit students were asked to consider Art as a career option. An exciting workshop at Broadways was another memorable experience for all of us. Broadway theatre represents the highest level of commercial theatre with many accomplished actors putting up their performances at different places. In the course of the workshop the students were trained in the finer nuances of acting like how to improvise one's skill by concentrating on Body, Mind and Voice. The Conveyor made students take part in exercises which make the body and mind active and gave tips on voice modulation which is the prime requisite for a good performance. We also got a chance to interact with the theater actors. The students learnt about film direction and artistic direction in addition to acting.

Our facilitator, Ms. Kriti Chopra gave us indepth knowledge of various careers and subject choices. She also shared information on the various courses and the skills required for each career option. Students were asked to fill a worksheet after the visit to each place to gauge their level of understanding. These were like reflection exercises which helped our boys to maximise the benefit of each visit.

The program enabled our students to explore the possibility of careers in a variety of professions and businesses. They discovered what careers are available in their area of interest. They were also introduced to a few careers they had not known much about and learnt more about those they were interested in while also interacting with professionals.

I am confident that through this experience our students have gained the knowledge and confidence necessary for making future career decisions

Ms Sangeeta Jain
HOD Science

INTERVIEW

Mr Sanjiv Saraf (Ex - Sh, 1975) is the Chairman and principal shareholder of Polyplex Corporation Limited, which is now one of the world's largest producers of PET films. An entrepreneur at heart, he has also incubated businesses such as Renewable hydro-electric energy and Manupatra – India's premier legal information provider. Apart from being a highly successful businessman, Mr Saraf is a humanist, who takes personal interest in the company's community initiatives, including the 1200 student non-profit school. Sanjiv is a voracious reader; passionate about Urdu poetry and a lover of art and music. He is the Founder of 'Rekhta' a non profit organisation for the promotion of Urdu language, literature and culture.

Sir, you have a deep passion for the Urdu language. When and how did you realise your interest and fascination for it?

I have grown up listening to Gazals. My father was very fond of music and I was immersed since childhood in the renditions by various artistes including Mehdi Hasan, Begum Akhtar, Farida Khanum, Mallika Pukhraj and others. Though at that time I did not understand most of what was sung, the little I did understand was extremely charming and the rest seemed melodious and magical to my young sensibilities.

Your organization, 'the Rekhta foundation' is devoted to the preservation and promotion of Urdu language and literature. Please tell us something about its genesis and the meaning of Rekhta.

"Rekhta", as a word and a language, has been defined and understood variously through the last eight centuries. Literally, the word "rekhta" means both "scattered," and "mixed", and as a language it stands for a creative blending of various dialects.

The language we know as Urdu today has in the past been known by several different names: Hindavi, Hindi, Dehlavi, Gujari, Deccani, and Rekhta.

What is your vision for the Rekhta foundation?

Rekhta is a movement to preserve and promote the rich literary and cultural heritage of Urdu by availing technology and social media platforms as well as by celebrating its versatility and splendour through live events and festivals.

My vision for Rekhta foundation is to take Urdu poetry, literature and its various art forms to each and every one in our subcontinent and beyond who knows Urdu or Hindi, and to kindle enthusiasm for this beautiful literary and linguistic heritage.

We wish to make Rekhta a destination for Urdu and Urdu poetry. Through Rekhta, we wish to create an eco-system

where the creations of Urdu/Hindustani poets and writers, past and present are accessible to one and all.

The Rekhta foundation has also been organizing the first-of-its-kind Urdu festival Jashn-e-Rekhta since 2015. What are the different kinds of activities that you organize under its aegis?

Jashn-e-Rekhta is a unique festival, held annually in Delhi, which celebrates the spirit of Urdu language, literature and culture. Spread over three days, the festival hosts distinguished poets, authors and artists from the subcontinent and beyond to bring alive the timeless splendour and rich cultural heritage of Urdu. Reaching out to both Urdu speaking and the non-Urdu speaking audiences, the Jashn curates live performances, recitations, dastangoi, musical renditions, mushaira, dramas, panel discussions, film screenings and interactive sessions.

Audiences are entertained, educated and enriched by the participation of doyens of literature, prominent personalities from theatre and film, popular artists and singers.

An Urdu Bazaar, Book exhibition, Calligraphy workshop, Children's corner, Book launches and multiple Open-air events throughout the Jashn add to the festive atmosphere. A food court, showcasing authentic flavours of India including Kashmiri, Deccani, Hyderabad, Lakhnavi, Mughlai and Purani Delhi cuisines, completes the experience of our Urdu heritage.

The first Jashn-e-Rekhta was held in March 2015 at India International Centre (IIC) and witnessed a footfall of around 18,000 visitors. The second Jashn, having outgrown its previous edition, was held in February 2016 at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) and saw the footfall rise nearly fivefold to 85,000. The 2017 Jashn was even bigger in terms of scale and audience and attracted the footfall of over 1.4 lacs visitors in three days.



Mr Sanjiv Saraf (Ex - Shivaji, 1975)

The Foundation has launched an initiative Rang-e-Rekhta to bring the fragrance and flavour of Urdu to different cities and towns across the country. In addition, various events are organised regularly to generate awareness and appreciation for Urdu poetry and literature especially amongst students and youth.

Are you satisfied with the way the Rekhta foundation and the various initiatives started by it towards the popularization of Urdu are shaping up?

I am very excited about the progress Rekhta Foundation has made in such a short time. I am confident that with participation from writers, poets, artists and scholars and with support from contributors and patrons, there is so much more that can be accomplished in reclaiming our rich heritage.

From a successful businessman to an enthusiast of Urdu poetry. How do you balance these two diverse fields?

Around 4 years back, I completely detached myself from the day-to-day business of all my organizations and have been devoting all my time to Rekhta. I am finding it extremely fulfilling.

Please share with us some of your most unforgettable Scindian memories.

My entire stay of 6.5 years at Scindia is the most unforgettable period of my life. The camaraderie

between students from totally diverse backgrounds was the prime source of mental and emotional development and engendered a spirit of openness and acceptance of differences. The Gurukul-style atmosphere, the stature and multi-disciplinary approach of the teachers and the balance between work and play have been instrumental in the formation of my persona.

What message would you like to give to the Scindians?

- Follow your passion.
- Don't give up.
- Keep good company.
- There are no shortcuts.
- It's never too late to try anything.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL!!

The first time ever that I thought of pursuing a career in wildlife conservation and management was in class XI after I flunked my Physics exam. This tragicomic genesis of my passion for this field might appear rather funny, nevertheless as I look back I am able to trace the entire trajectory. I am able to objectively understand my abiding interest in the field and also reflect more deeply on myself.

My parents have always been very supportive of my decisions but till date I'm unable to decipher why at all did they ask me to opt for Physics in the first place. Thankfully though, I dropped it eventually thereby making a decision which changed me forever. Wildlife, ecology or quite simplistically nature are interesting topics to discuss about provided you know the right people to talk to. Right from the beginning, I was always blessed to be amongst a wonderful circle of people, be it my teachers, my friends, my family and other acquaintances with whom I could freely share my passion for wildlife and ecology.

My story begins in our Biology lab at Scindia where we were taught by Sangeeta Jain ma'am. She was one of those wonderful teachers with whom I felt very confident in sharing my dreams and she always extended her full support. The fact that we discussed about issues such as wildlife management, man animal conflicts, and environment helped me develop a strong interest in this area and today I aspire to successfully establish myself in this field. Here I must also mention my wonderful former Headmaster, Mr. Samik Ghosh who always encouraged me to follow my dreams.

While pursuing my undergrad in London, I often visited different zoological parks and during each of my visits I felt a strong sense of bonding with nature and wildlife. Those visits gave me a sense of direction and I realised that I would get real contentment only if I pursued something that I truly enjoyed. I was extremely fortunate to get an opportunity to volunteer at the London zoo and kick start my career in wildlife on a strong note. During my time there, I was actively involved with visitor interactive activities which helped them to learn about the different animal kingdoms. In addition to that I was also strongly involved with the handling and care of an exquisite collection of reptiles and invertebrates at the zoo. While it sounds dangerous, but believe me, it is exciting and educative in equal measure.

After graduating from the University of Westminster, I have recently joined a wildlife organisation in Kolkata in the role of a research intern. The organisation is called NEWS which stands for Nature Environment and Wildlife Society. It is my proud privilege to share with the readers the experience of my recent visit to one of the largest ecosystems of our country.

Not often does one get to visit the core areas of the Sundarbans tiger reserve so I was very lucky to be picked by my Project Director for a wildlife project in the mangrove jungles which are a home to our Bengal tigers. The Sundarbans with its extensive mangrove plantations and fauna is simply a magical place for someone who loves to be amidst nature. Exploring the restricted areas of the forest where there is no human activity of any sort is in itself a mesmerizing experience. We were in search of a bird called Goliath heron which has a large chestnut coloured neck, grayish-blue body and is fairly large in size (as the name suggests). Till date not much research has been carried out on this bird which is found in some parts of the Sundarbans delta; although majority of its breeding population is found in countries of the Sub-Saharan African region where a lot of wildlife conservationists are constantly monitoring its social behaviour and feeding patterns.

The Sundarbans is a group of 54 islands which extend through India and Bangladesh. This naturally meant that most of our research had to be carried out on a boat and in the company of an armed forest officer for security reasons. The journey aboard the boat through the dense forests was by far one of my best experiences out in the wild. And if you are a fish-lover then perhaps this is one of the best places to visit. In the search of our bird, we were also very lucky to spot a few other species of birds such as Adjutant Stork, Brahmini Kite, Black-capped Kingfisher, Brown Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Green Bee eater, Lesser Egret and also a female Purple Sunbird.

It was quite an interesting sight to see that in areas where there is a village periphery around the jungle, the forest authorities have put fences and nets to avoid any possible human-animal conflicts. This is perhaps a necessity as the tigers, being on the top of the food chain, are known to kill humans for sport. Due to the overfishing and indiscriminate catching of crabs and shrimps by the local fishermen, the ecosystem of Sundarbans is under a lot of stress and our government is working very hard on the implementation of strict laws and regulations to curtail this. It is definitely going to take some time and a considerable degree of strategic reimagining as the needs of the poor have also to be taken into consideration. This remains their sole method of livelihood in these densely covered jungles. My first major wildlife project in a world heritage site has left me with a deep sense of awe. There is a lot of picturesque wilderness in our country and I strongly feel that it is our responsibility to protect it and take pride in promoting it to the rest of the world.

Being able to work in a field such as this, I have come to learn that sometimes it is very important to take the leap of faith into anything and give your heart into it. At the end of the day everyone has to carve his own destiny. Perhaps I'm still learning as I move on with life and will become more mature as I nurture my love for wildlife each day. This wonderful journey of mine impacted me very strongly and hence I had the urge to share it with the readers.

I am blessed to have studied at The Scindia School which I call my second home. Spending my most formative years at the beautiful Fort waking up to the calls of peacocks and parakeets was, I believe, my early initiation into what seems to be my lifelong love. I am glad that I was surrounded by people who believed in me and provided a fertile ground for the nurturing of my dreams.

Thank you all for helping me rediscover myself.

Anubhav Sarkar

Ex – Madhav (Batch of 2013)



Anubhav Sarkar (Ex- Madhav, 2013)

A HIMALAYAN PEAK

A DREAM COME TRUE

Pangarchulla – the name was alien, unknown to me, but it sounded exotic. It was a trek with a twist as it involved summitting a peak at 14,700 ft in the Garhwal Himalayas. The suggestion came from Dr Rajiv Gupta, a friend and Batchmate from my Class of '75 from The Scindia School. More specifically, the suggestion had come from his son Kunal, an avid trekker himself. Both of us had been a part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in school, which was intended to promote the spirit of adventure in youngsters. While I had my initiation in the Subathu Hills in the vicinity of Simla, Rajiv cut his trekking teeth in the idyllic surroundings of Ranikhet, Kumaon, often lugging a heavy rucksack. Those were the days of trekking in Hunter shoes, obsolete now since ages. Both of us had an Army background. We had been talking of going on a trek for 2 years, but the idea had been put on hold by me on account of the vagaries of Government service. Now that I was comparatively settled in my new posting, it was time to finalise the plan.

We registered for the trek with Indiahikes, a professional trekking outfit which organises treks along scenic routes, in the gradations of easy, moderate, moderate to difficult, and difficult treks, while strictly adhering to safety protocols, and actively promoting “green” trekking experiences. Pangarchulla was categorised as a “moderate to difficult” trek. The upper age limit for their treks is 60, and we just about qualified in that regard. Initially, I wondered if I was physically capable of doing the trek, since the final push for the summit would be extremely tough and challenging, but that in itself was alluring enough to take the plunge. I have done high altitude treks earlier, but the last one was 15 years ago, and none of them had involved the thrill of summitting a Himalayan peak. The other pivotal factor was that the staging point of the trek was Joshimath, a place associated with my childhood. I had seen Joshimath as a child of 10 years in 1969 with my family, as Joshimath was part of my father’s operational command in the Army. Little did I know in 1969 that I would return, almost half a century later, to embark upon my most memorable trek.

Rajiv and I almost never made it. The waitlisted train tickets from Delhi to Haridwar did not get confirmed, so a last minute midnight dash to ISBT ensued. The last luxury Volvo bus to Haridwar rolled out before our eyes, leaving us stranded. Very fortunately, another bus was scheduled to depart in half an hour, and while it was not a Volvo, we were only too happy to be on our way.

The pick up Tempo Traveller was waiting for us at Haridwar at the appointed time of 6.30 am, where we met some of our fellow trekkers for the first time. The 10 hour journey to Joshimath was spent in a daze, since I had not slept properly for 2 successive nights. Familiar landmarks flashed by and as a strange coincidence, the Lodge we occupied in Joshimath was just adjacent to the Army camp which I had stayed in, in 1969. The Hathi Pahad, with its distinct shape which gave it its name, stood in front, a silent sentinel through the years gone by. That evening, we met the entire group during the briefing session, and realised that we were by far the oldest in the group. Many of them were even younger than my daughters. There were 23 of us. The youngest was 19, and the average age 25-26. Curious, and slightly sceptical glances were directed at us, probably with some justification!

The trek commenced on 17.4.2017. Joshimath is at an altitude of 6150 ft, Auli at approximately 8000 and Gorson Bugyal, our destination for the first night, at approximately 10500 ft. Gorson is the name of the Englishman who discovered this fabulous spot, and Bugyal in the local dialect means “Meadow”. Therefore, on the first day, the difference in altitude was in excess of 4000 ft and we were officially at high altitude. Since we were not acclimatized, several persons developed headaches with some cases of nausea as well. Preventive medication was required in most cases.

The view was picturesque, with us getting a ringside



Dr Rajiv Gupta and Mr Girish Chandorkar



The seeds of adventure are sown at school

view of a great amphitheatre of 7000 metre peaks encircling the horizon. As we were going up even higher in the next couple of days, the view only promised to get better. What we saw was good, but it was only an appetiser.

The second day saw an early start for our next destination, Chitrakanta, at approximately 11500 ft. It was 7 km away, involving a winding path partly through forested glades, where we came across the occasional Rhododendron tree, resplendent in the forest. Part of the way was along a narrow trail skirting the edge of the hill, with a yawning chasm on the left, several hundred feet down. Along the way, we had our first glimpse of Pangarchulla peak, instantly recognisable from the numerous views on YouTube. The sharp angle of ascent, along a snow covered ridge, was clearly visible. "Yahi hai mera Lakshya" was the statement made by a prankster in our group, an obvious reference to the sentence made famous in a Hindi movie based on the Kargil War.

That evening we went for an acclimatisation walk which offered us a panoramic view of the Kuari Pass, and we saw glimpses of the historic Lord Curzon Trail which was made over 200 years ago. The setting sun bathed the snow capped peaks in an iridescent glow, the colours changing hues in subtle shades. The view was captivating, and soothed our tired limbs.

The next morning we broke camp and descended to Khullara, a meadow with ample water from the melting snows. The angle of descent was sharp, testing our knees. We descended around a 1000ft. This camp was closer to the peak, but the advantage it offered in terms of proximity to the peak was negated by the steep angle of ascent. In Khullara we met the group which had preceded us by a day. They had returned from a smaller peak nicknamed Baby Pangarchulla, some 2 1/1 km away from the main peak, and approximately 600 ft lower. They had to abandon their original plan on account of adverse weather conditions, and they had taken the decision to go for the smaller peak. It was our turn too, to take stock of our situation. There was a debate in our group as the options were only two – to play it safe and go for Baby Pangarchulla which was possible even if the weather was not too good, or to risk it all and go for Pangarchulla, with the knowledge that an aborted attempt halfway due to weather conditions would make it impossible to even make an attempt for the smaller peak as compensation. Our trek leader took the call and it was decided that it was all, or nothing. The evening weather was gloomy, with dark clouds drifting in from the valley behind the campsite, with an occasional flash of distant lightening. A few scattered raindrops fell. The chill in the air knifed through our clothes, doing nothing to alleviate our sagging spirits. A sense of despondency was setting in, the only ray of hope being that weather in the higher altitudes is notoriously fickle and capricious, and that God willing, we would have clear weather. We woke up at 2 am on 21st April since breakfast was scheduled for 2.30 am. I was ecstatic to see an open sky, with the stars

reaching out. The wind was cold but dry. We left camp at 3.20 am, 20 minutes behind schedule, in pitch dark conditions, wearing headlamps. The trek leader had given us an ultimatum – everybody would turn back at 10 am, regardless of whether he / she had summited or not, as staying out in the snow in the sun was asking for trouble. The estimated time for the ascent, some 6 1/2 km in length and some 4000 ft in altitude, was 8 hours. The climb began, foot by painful foot, over stones and boulders, far below the snow line. The line straggled out, the slower ones far behind, their headlamps bobbing up and down, shimmering in the dark of the night. It was a mesmerising sight, reminiscent of fireflies weaving patterns in the night sky. Despite the cold, we worked up a heavy sweat, induced as much by our exertions as by our oxygen starved, laboured breathing. The first 45 minutes had already seen us take 2 or 3 halts as the gradient was very steep. Gradually a pattern was established and we eventually came upon the only level patch, which in fact was the Lord Curzon Trail. The trail traversed the base of the ridge from where the ascent for Pangarchulla would begin, and would extend all the way to the base of the imposing Kuari Pass. The trail led across a windswept ridge, with icy winds offering a cold welcome to those who were foolhardy enough to venture there at the break of dawn. As the first rays of the sun pierced the sky, the peaks in the east were silhouetted and the peaks in the far west reflected the soft orange rays of the sun. It was mystical, a scene so serene and tranquil that it left us speechless. But our tryst with Pangarchulla beckoned, so on we went.

The crampons were placed on our shoes, as we finally hit the snow. There were 4 or 5 snow covered ridges we traversed, and we also on occasion had to scramble on all fours across fields of boulders. We kept gaining height, the campsite no longer visible. The summit was tantalisingly close, which helped in fighting the pain barrier. The peak was in front of us, some 500 metres away, and the ascent was at an angle of 60 to 65 degrees. On either side of the ridge, the slopes of the mountain swept away and the danger of slipping down kept us focussed on the route up ahead. We kept moving up, one foot at a time. I thought I had reached, only to realise that the summit was still another 50 yards away.

I made it at 8.40 am, 5 hours and 20 minutes to the top. In our group of 23, only 1 person unfortunately couldn't make it. Our group's achievement is probably placed in perspective when we learnt that on the next day, the group following us had limited success - 8 out of 20 made it. To return to my group – the first 4 made it by 8.30 am, I came in 5th at 8.40 and 2 young ladies made it a few minutes thereafter. My batchmate Rajiv came in by 9 am and we indulged in what was termed a bro hug by the others. Not bad for two nearly "over the hill" buddies standing on the summit of a peak! The rest came in gradually to loud cheers. The view was magnificent from a vantage point of 14700 ft in the Garhwal Himalayas. The imposing Chaukhamba, the mesmeric symmetry of Neelkanth, the twin Nar Narayan peaks, the Ghoda peak and Hathi Parbat,



The Scindia School team at the Everest Base Camp

the Palkhi, the glimpse of Kamet, the awe inspiring Dronagiri, Changbang, and the majestic Nanda Devi, the oblique view of Trishul - it was a sight fit for the Gods. The serene, almost celestial beauty of these 7000 metre peaks, the wind picking up speed, the unfurling of the Tricolour brought by Abhishek, all the way from Kolkata, and the tired, contented smiles of our group members will be indelibly etched in memory.

After a blissful 45 minutes on the summit, the descent began. The crampons were not quite as effective coming down, leading to some unintended slides and falls, some of them alarming in nature. Going in up to the knees in soft snow was the norm, burning up energy. Twice I went in up to the hips in snow, to be helped out by somebody, since it was now soft and powdery, having been heated up by invisible rocks under the surface. Fortunately, serious injury was averted, more by good fortune than design. Several slides were deliberately taken, which was great fun, and which also considerably reduced the time taken in coming down. Finally the crampons came off.

The walk back was slow and laborious. The sharp descent was hell on the knees and toes. The climb was brutal, followed by a sense of reassurance and quiet satisfaction, while the descent was painfully laborious. We returned to the campsite at 3.30-4 pm, an arduous effort of approximately 13 hours, exhausted but elevated. It was the synergy of the group which made it

possible - the elan and "josh" of Bhandari, our dynamic trek leader, his wonderful support team like Hira, Jamna, Debu, Raka Singh and the rest, as well as the members of our group who bonded well over a short span of time. Several of the group came up to Rajiv and me and told us of the inspiration they derived from us at our age. But it is equally true that their sense of freedom, their unfettered joy, boundless enthusiasm, and their zany sense of humour rubbed off on us, and made it easier for us. Looking back, I realise that the spark was lit in Scindia School 4 decades ago, as we were both part of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. The spirit of adventure that was imbibed in those formative years struck a chord so deep that it reverberates even today. And the spirit forged in Scindia, of not yielding, not giving up, thrives in us even now!

Every moment of the trek was memorable, something which I would happily do all over again. There is something rejuvenating and truly liberating about being in the great outdoors. We were in the land of the Gods and there is an undeniable beauty in the Himalayas which elevates and humbles, captivates as well as liberates any individual who is blessed enough to have spent time in the midst of such mystical beauty. Of one thing I am certain – I shall go back, again and again at the altar of the Himalayas to pay homage to these mountains which first cast their spell over me as a ten year old. Till the next time, then!

Girish Chandorkar (Jayaji 75)

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Let's imagine person A is charged with a bright idea. It consumes his waking and sleeping moments. He is cognizant of the fact that the idea is life changing, unconventional, radical, and extremely challenging nevertheless he is convinced about it and therefore chases it with full determination. But then somewhere in the course of this pursuit he encounters the naysayers, the conformists who crush his spirit of enterprise and his belief in himself. Shadows of doubt engulf him, his confidence starts wavering and he decides to give up. At this crucial juncture what is it that will reaffirm his faith in himself? Quite unequivocally it is the unstinted support of a few people who can back him and everything that he believes in.

Isn't it true that everytime we wish to do something concrete and meaningful we look for validation. We want support from friends, well wishers or sometimes even rank strangers. That my dear readers is the STRENGTH OF NUMBERS. The numbers not only comfort us but they also have the power to make or break us. So if we have a large number trying to pull us down there is a great likelihood that we might just capitulate in the face of such negativity. And on the other hand if we are completely down and out but a majority shows confidence and belief in us we can pull ourselves out of the deepest morass.

All of us derive strength from a collective with each member of the group drawing sustenance from the other. At its best form we find that when a group acts responsibly the positives are reinforced and the negatives eliminated. Each member works for the greater common good leading to progress and general good will. As written in Ecclesiastes one of the 24 books of Tanakh or the Hebrew Bible "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!". There are times when we are fighting personal battles against doubt, indecision, addictions or vices. In such a scenario it helps if we can find someone who is willing to share our fight and bring us out of that pit. For example: if you are an inveterate alcoholic, it may seem impossible to quit as the temptation can get too overwhelming. However if you surround yourself with those who know exactly how you feel, who can understand the impediments that are blocking your chances of coming out of this addiction, they will clear all

hindrances and thereby extend every possible help which you need to kick the habit. The challenge seems so much more surmountable with support.

Now consider an individual working in a solitary capacity on a project. He might be very gifted and do a brilliant job of it. But what if he had a dedicated team of professionals working with him? Each member would bring his talents, ideas and creativity into the same project making chances of its success even brighter. The venture would benefit by the collective intelligence of all and each member of the team would also be enriched by working in a creatively and intellectually charged atmosphere. It is a win win situation for all.

At the national and international level the world is witnessing the strides that India is making on several fronts as we are enjoying the demographic dividend of a swelling number of workers with relatively few dependents to support. We are well on the path to outpacing countries both economically and militarily.

However sometimes the ugly face of numerical strength is visible in the form of mob mentality when people are driven by brute numbers and they suspend their logic and good sense becoming beastly in the bargain. So it is very important to understand that what actually matters is what or rather who are the constituents of the group. As Nobel Laureate John C. Mather very aptly said 'There is strength in numbers but organising those numbers is one of the great challenges'. The bottomline is that adherence to a common set of values and belief systems should be kept in mind while forming a group or showing allegiance to another because these



The triumphant Ladakh Service Project delegation at the summit of Kandala Pass at 5000m.

choices have the power to define our destiny.

However while we discuss the strength of numbers we should not undermine the 'Power of One'. The power of one is above all things the power to believe in yourself, often well beyond any latent ability you may have previously demonstrated. History is replete with examples of leaders who mobilised masses or changed the world for the better or worse in their own individual capacity. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Adolf Hitler, etc, were all individuals who commanded incredible power and had people rallying behind them. In fact going back to the original topic perhaps it would be more reasonable to say that while it is important for one person to come up with revolutionary ideas he would still need the

support of numbers for its effective implementation. As American political columnist and commentator Mark Shields very correctly said, 'There is always strength in numbers. The more individuals or organisations that you can rally to your cause, the better.'

I would conclude by saying that if you wish to do something pathbreaking do believe in yourself but don't go it alone. Surround yourself with like-minded people who want to see you achieve your goal or are desirous of achieving that same goal themselves.

Infect them with your passion, empower them with your zeal and together conquer the world.

Tshering Dadul Bhutia

XII B

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