



Jungle Book

Explore the wilderness within...

July 2014

"Birds flying high/You know how I feel/Sun in the sky/You know how I feel/Breeze driftin' on by/You know how I feel/It's a new dawn/It's a new day/It's a new life/For me/And I'm feeling good..."

Michael Bublé from the cover song of "Feeling Good"

To rise up early in the morning may not be on the menu for most of us, especially when the raindrops rhythmically pitter and patter on the rooftops. After all, with a 24x7 power supply backed up with high-speed-internet-access, what reason do we possibly have not to stay up late at night. I mean, give us some good entertainment and a constant food supply, and life's good! See, our generation requires so little to make us happy. Simplicity is our fashion statement! Yeah, right.

You see, we are a generation who believes in the power of "group mails", the authority of "Wikipedia", the contentment derived from "online shopping", the fidelity of "Google", the likes of "Facebook", the cementation with our "cell phones", the absolute respect to "cut-copy-and-paste", the tranquility of loud music in our "headphones", the pleasure of "fast food". We are a generation who believes in having everything "at our fingertips".

But we are also a generation who believes in the power of "networking", the authority of "free knowledge", the contentment derived from "having infinite choices", the fidelity of "making informed decisions", the likes of "keeping in touch", the cementation with our "connections", the absolute respect of "living life in the fast lane", the tranquility of "pepping up our moods", the pleasure of "eating on the go". We are a generation who believes in the power of knowledge and in "sharing that knowledge". Simplicity indeed is our fashion statement!

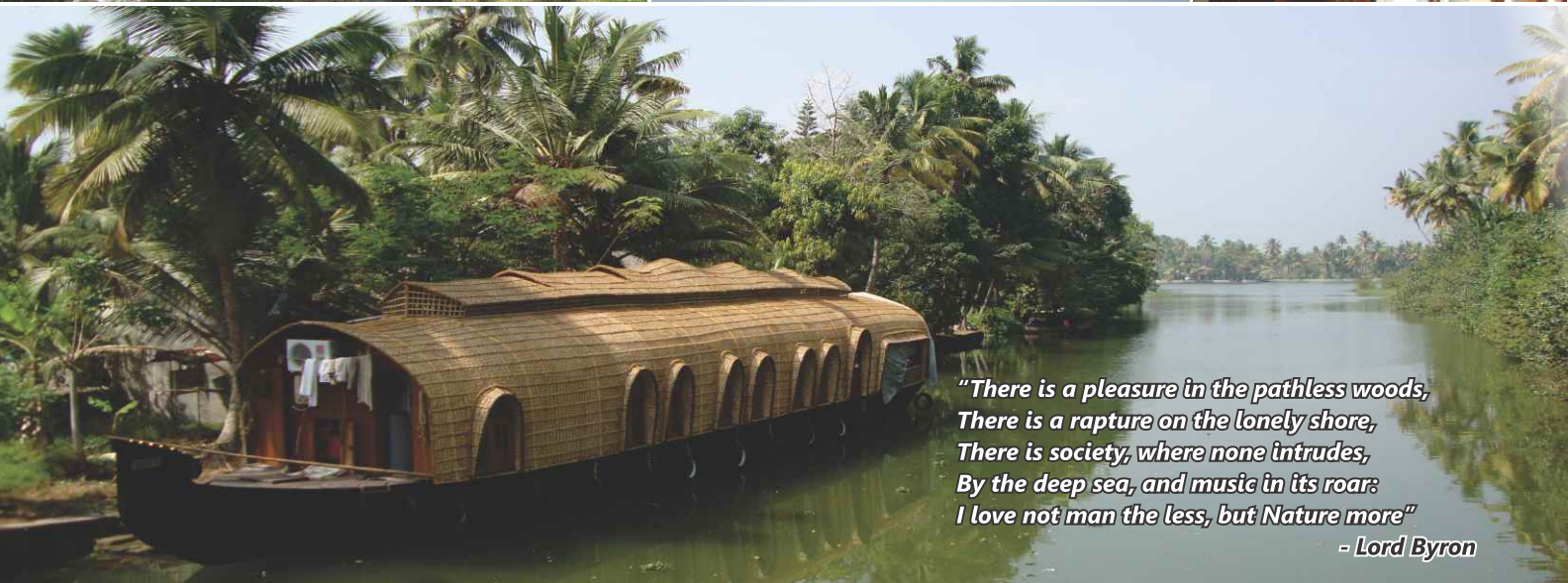
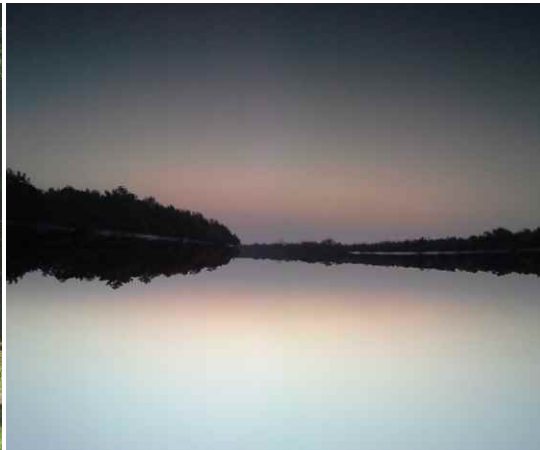
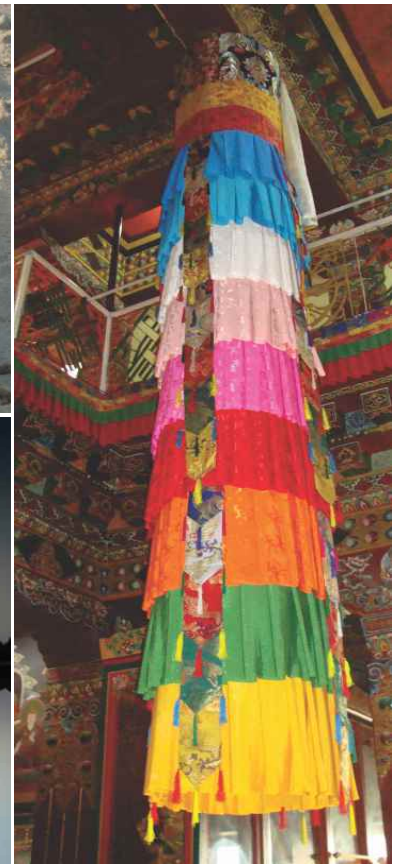
In this carnival called life where we are often left to our means to celebrate ourselves, we are second to none. This issue simply celebrates us and our days spent here in our Academy. After all, we believe in the goodness of life and also, in living the "good life". And for that, we make no apologies!

Flip along and enjoy the Third Issue of the "Jungle Book".



Director's Cut

Photographs by Shri R.K. Goel



*"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more"*
- Lord Byron



The Idea of Promise

- Alok Yadav

Venue: Harvard's Sanders Theatre

Date: 24th September, 2014

The crowd werescratching their heads. Air tense. Cameras weird. The big question "Who will win the gala award"? The winner for this years, **Ig Nobel Prize** in literature is "How to sell dreams?".

The **Ig Nobel Prizes** honor achievements that first make people **laugh**, and then makes them **think**. The prizes are awarded for honoring unusual hypothesis like, '*the longer a cow has been lying down, the more likely that cow will soon stand up; and that once a cow stands up, you cannot easily predict how soon that cow will lie down again*'; Physicist hypothesis, '*I think, I have all the powers and I can send you anywhere at my own*'; Sportspersons hypothesis, '*Participation is important but winning is always winning*';

In this prize winning book, the author has talked of '**Improbable research**'. It is the research that makes people laugh and then think. Improbable means "*Not likely to be true or to happen*". This word is very close to the residents of an unknown place, in the well known locality of Dehradun – IGNFA. I often feel, as if this small place is so full of talent and it must have been especially pulled into together by the gods themselves, so as to preserve the anthropological diversity.

"My memory is like a sieve, through which most pass easily, save a few. I could pick remnants of Robert Frost's poetry. These are some of the first pieces of grown up poetry that I was exposed to during my schooling.

*".....The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep....."*

The "Idea of promise" reminds me of those promising days, when I could not even dream in my sleep, while my friends dreamt with their eyes wide open. We had to get up at 6:00 A.M. in December to fulfill the collective dream. We all ran from pillar to post, like a rabid dog to kiss a potential companion. In all this, we could save 5 minutes per day in the morning and thus 30 minutes a week, which would fetch us an extra class a week and thus, some odd extra days are added. In this whole exercise of merry-go-round, we were often reminded of the 'Promised land'.

The "Idea of promise" also reminds me of the bows of our heroes in holy literature, who are desperate to make, The Earth & The Sky meet, if they once bowed. Tragically, it also reminds me of our contemporary, self claimed heroes, for whom, 'promises are kept, to be broken'.

The most talked, debated and battled topic in our whole stay was the sacrosanct, ascetic word '**On-Job-Training**'. The enthusiast and staunch supporters even do not want to waste time, and thus abbreviated it 'OJT'. Many of my friends and colleagues, even planned the sites where to land. But, I was skeptical about the entire thing, though I never dared reveal it in the open, save my confidantes. As I believe that thoughts are a form of energy, and are energetic enough to change the course of our events sometimes.

On-Job-Training is not a new idea. It was earlier in a different 'Avatar' in our system only. But since then, the 'Corporate model of governance', has eclipsed our imagination. There is a rat race to cut short training to save both time and money, though to waste it later. The irony of it! The day is not far when there will be only 'Orientation training'. This approach may be good for corporate houses, as their decisions are solely profit driven and balance sheet centric. Even the so hyped 'Corporate social responsibility' or 'CSR' is more about brand building.

Governance is a complex process through which, government by its extended arm and ears, extend support and listen to the voices of the voiceless. These issues are often so complex that we may have to unlearn and learn simultaneously. Training at any academy, is an attempt to facilitate this process."





Q. Life as a faculty has been...

A. Challenging as well as exciting; busy as well as rejuvenating; learning as well as nurturing talent; and above all an opportunity to relive the past in a different way.

Q. Looking back, what would you say you miss the most about your Probation years?

A. The sweet and sour moments and the company of my batch mates.

Q. How, according to you, has Training in the Academy, evolved since your times?

A. Much improved facilities, technological advancement and preparedness to tackle newer challenges.

Q. In your run as a faculty in the Academy, which subject have you enjoyed teaching the most? How so?

A. Of course, Forest Law! As it gives ample opportunity to involve everyone through real and lively case studies.

Q. What qualities do you seek into a Probationer as a faculty?

A. Discipline, sincerity, persuasiveness and the passion for learning

Q. A book you think is a must read? (Non technical and non-academic)

A. "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho.

Q. The most amazing thing about Tennis is...

A. That two equally "bad" players could enjoy it at the cost of spectators.

Q. The magic mantra of keeping Probationers awake in the class is...?

A. To involve them in discussions through real - life case situations.

Q. Your most memorable/challenging posting?

A. Being the Course Director of the 2011-13 Batch at the Academy.

Q. An animal/bird/plant that has intrigued you throughout your career and how?

A. The intelligence of an elephant.

Q. What would make for a "Dabangg" forester?

A. Uprightness, support and care for the staff and the love for humanity.

Q. Which aspect of nature inspires you?

A. Resilience to the greatest of shocks and the ability to rise every time, with a new vigor.

Q. I love the Academy because.....

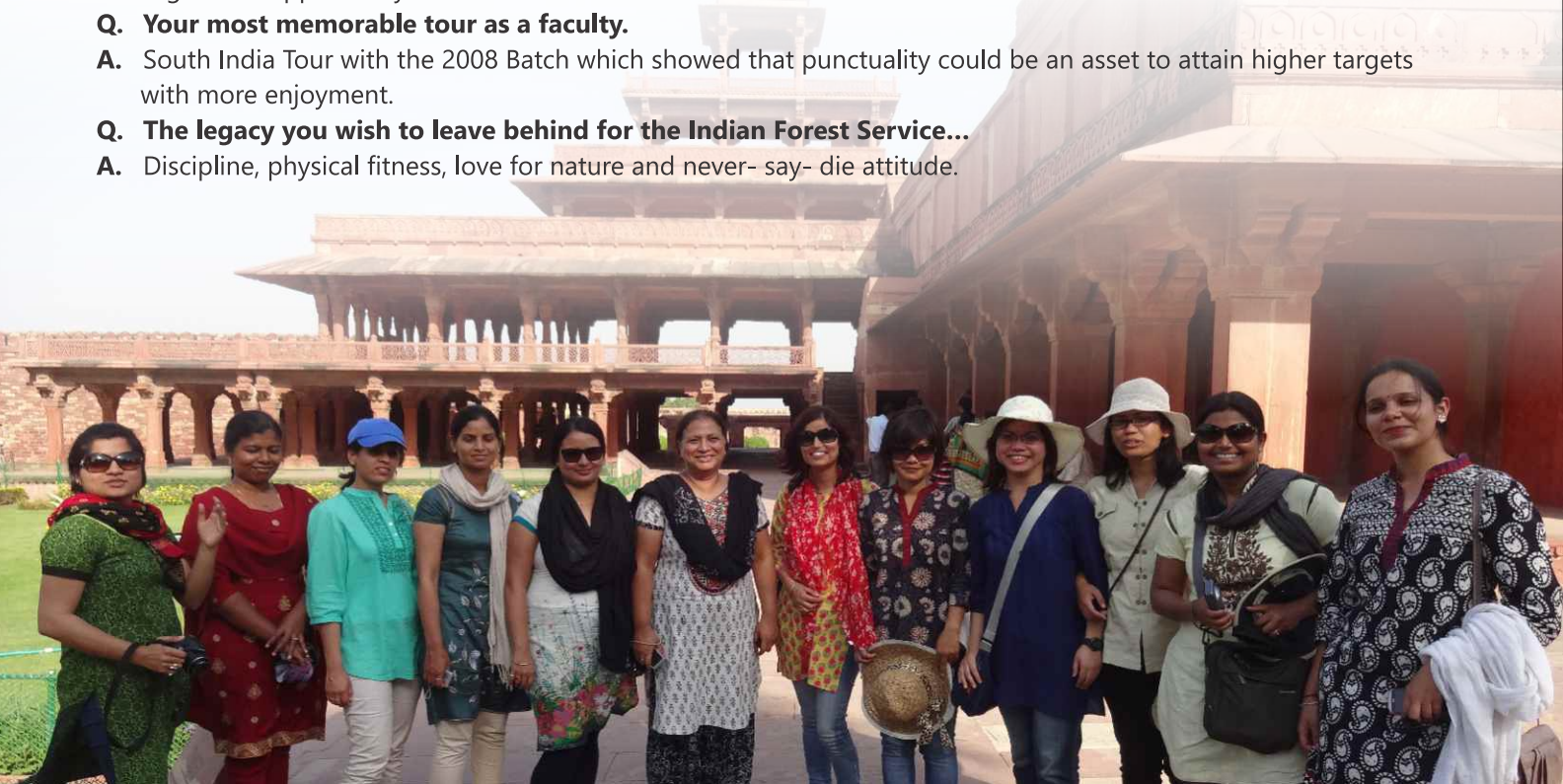
A. It gives an opportunity and nurtures us so that we could contribute towards the future of mankind.

Q. Your most memorable tour as a faculty.

A. South India Tour with the 2008 Batch which showed that punctuality could be an asset to attain higher targets with more enjoyment.

Q. The legacy you wish to leave behind for the Indian Forest Service...

A. Discipline, physical fitness, love for nature and never- say- die attitude.



Some say it's hard work, some say it's luck. But I believe it is because of some mysterious celestial force, that we happen to be together in the service. 'Time' is a strange thing. It has the power to completely transform, almost everything. For instance, there was a time in our lives when getting into the service was of prime concern. But now, many more things have cropped up which matter a lot, right from the "better life" to the "better half". The word 'cadre' is one such thing that is enough to create excitement, panic (or whatever!) in the minds of probationers. While observing it, describing it or even thinking about it, I got a chance to unearth hidden human behaviour.

It started immediately after the declaration of the results. We created our own 'secret' facebook group and started bombarding each other with those nasty questions about cadre preferences. The obvious question after initial ASL enquiry was, "Hey, what are your cadre preferences?" Probationers at ease were those up above in the list and those lingering down in the bottom. They were least bothered till the end. The typical mediocre would enquire everything about those who were up above him/her and cared little about those who were lying below. As if they did not exist. Few such mediocre probationers gathered a load of 'valuable' info, transformed themselves into an 'asset' and were seen to be moving around with a witty smile, vomiting that info on FB, whenever asked (or with a suo motu intention). There were many debates and words of wisdom on the nature of service and superiority/inferiority of the cadres. The chaos went on for quite some time, when at last, we joined the Foundation Course. Again, amidst all this halla-gulla, the least bothered were the UALs and the DBLs (scratch your head for the meaning!). Maybe this was a time which paved the way to new outcomes. With the grace of Lord Cupid, we saw few of us blooming and emitting sweet fragrance of friendship (or whatever!).

Fast forwarding the story, the preference list was declared en route Lachhiwala excursion. The impact was greater than that of two atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the wave was even mightier than that of a tsunami. Lachhiwala excursion was shattered into innumerable nanoscopic pieces. Faces...yes, faces were interesting to see. They reflected an inner emotional outburst. Some exhibiting rabbit-like incisors and some, like that of a 'cheeka pug' which appears in those Hutch advertisements. Once again, the least bothered were the UALs and the DBLs. I asked a random DBL about his expectations. He shot back with, "Mai-baap, we are like scavengers. We will feed on whatever is left by you people." Some were seen offering words of sympathy to those "unfortunate", explaining them the minute secrets of cadre allocation rules..., "Hey, don't worry. This seat will get converted into that one...and that one to yet another one...blah.. blah."

First cadre pundit to declare his 'findings' was His Holiness Mr. Gorakh. His committee came to be known as the 'Gorakh committee'. He was the lone member in that committee. Findings of the Gorakh committee were circulated on whatsapp group. It got many accolades and appreciations from those who were allotted their expected cadres. Few were unhappy. They questioned the methodology followed by the Gorakh committee. They also pointed out that the Gorakh committee came to an abrupt halt after Shri Gorakh allocated his own cadre. Soon, it was found that the Gorakh committee's report was based on simple mathematics and common sense. No rule was religiously followed. It was done away with, rejected and declared null & void.

Many of us started modifying Gorakh committee's report in our own way. In the process we saw many short-lived ephemeral committees like Hemant committee, Surya committee etc. I was sitting idle, staring at the preference list, when someone rushed-in and said, "Hey, don't waste your time. Jiss and his team have cracked the code". Enquiring further, the person told me that Jiss was using Excel application to arrive at the conclusion. I was like...wow...excel sheet...hmm..It was a rare nexus between technology and excitement. In order to extinguish the fire of our curiosity, we went to Jiss's room. We saw Jiss and his fellow companion Vikas silently working on the puzzle. I imagined them to be like those sci-fi crazy scientists clad in white aprons. Many people had gathered already and were silently observing Jiss and the computer screen. There was absolute silence in the room. There were few Malayali words being exchanged between Jiss and Vikas. The Excel sheet was hard to understand though. Someone asked us to leave them alone and wait till the report is finalized. The report was soon published on whatsapp, with a smiling picture of Jiss and Vikas. Yes, they had achieved it. The committee came to be known as 'Jiss et al committee', its members being Jiss and Vikas. This committee too stopped abruptly after a certain rank, saying that it was getting complicated in the end (as expected). Their report was largely accepted, given, the use of Excel sheet and detailed input of the rules. I was thrown to Gujarat cadre. Jiss assured me that it was cent percent correct. I spent next 2-3 days surfing Gujarat forest department's website.

As the saying goes, "necessity is the mother of inventions", some DBLs could not control an inner urge to know their cadres. Neither did they wish to go through the apathy of reading the rules. It was a mentos moment (dimag ki batti jal gai!), when Neeraj's 'fertile' brain came up with an idea of 'outsourcing' the task to cadre pundits in the senior batch. The task was conducted in the night and the report was ready by the dawn. Name of the senior was avoided and the report came to be known as 'Neeraj committee report'. Surprisingly, I was placed in my home cadre! It once again shattered the mental picture that I had built. With a strange feeling of discomfort, I did not care to find out whether the report was accepted or not. With a firm sense of determination, I decided to do it myself. People had no right to make a ping-pong ball out of me.

It is said that destiny has its way, no matter what. Ministry of Environment and Forest had a last laugh and declared official allocation while we were in Mumbai. It was a great wave of tsunami which washed away predictions of every blah-blah committee. Every cadre pundit was proved wrong. After a week-long enjoyment in Mumbai, there was an eerie silence in the whatsapp group. Finally, I landed in Himachal Pradesh cadre. I laughed hard in solitude and opened Himachal Pradesh forest department's website.



Sketch by Janyang

Should someone ask me what I realized and learnt most from my two year long training at the premier Academy for forestry training, I would say "To take things as they come".

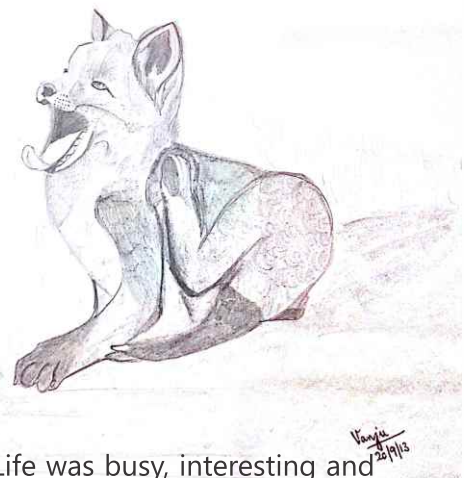
School to college to clearing UPSC, it has always been a hectic way of life. I was mistaken to think that my probationary period at the Academy was going to be the much deserved honeymoon phase before we all get into serious business. For starters, we did not have any joining break from the 100 day long Foundation Course. As soon as we landed here, things were not very different. All the attachments, modules, the many long and short tours, field visits, presentations and the long hours spent in the classroom followed by exams. Life was busy, interesting and tough. The many issues about the running of the mess, accommodation in the two hostels and what it did not do to bring us closer, regional and cultural differences are all in the list of those resolved and some still in the pipeline. The myriad moods of your batch mates on a Monday morning – some happy, some dull and some lost! The term break once in six months for a meager 14 days. I lose 2 days travelling and another 2 in just planning what to do. The ups and downs in our friends' lives as we try to halve the sorrow and double the joy. Occasions of weddings, birth of children, achievements and all the happy birthdays!!

What I understand is the possibility that the Academy is THE honeymoon phase since it might be the last opportunity for us to make real friends – ones that will last a lifetime. It might be the last time I would go out with such a diverse group and listen to their many perspectives of the same thing. To learn and unlearn. To laugh, share and just be. To have time for an evening out with friends, the many dinners and movies, bike rides and birding. This might be it! Although we all had different expectations from the training and some of us are happier than others, this is what we have learnt. To take things as they come and to do what is expected of us no matter the situation we might be in. To cater to our expectations and deliver at least that.

In the less than 100 days ahead of us in this academy, what we can do is try and maximize the time with each other for we are all going to 80 different places afterward. There will be no PT or early morning tea or even a compulsion to wake up at the wee hours of the day, and that is when we are going to miss it all. The noise, the company, the colors of the classroom, the many perspectives and each other's warmth. We will also face that as it comes but I can only hope it doesn't take away cherished memories of our happiness all this while.

"To keep in touch" is easier said than done and "to try" would be a better resolution. To deliver what we are here for and to serve those who need us. We have enjoyed the wedding party and now off to work out our marriages to the Govt. of India.

This honeymoon was a real pleasure!



A Man's Dreams

- Sanjay Biswal

I went mad in your sea of eyes
purposefully mad, so you would
give me an asylum.

I went mad to undergo a
Therapy of sleeping and having dreams.

But you prescribed puzzles
for sleeping pills.
That didn't work.

You brought a spectacle
I juggled it from one eye to other
may be a hundred times
But still I couldn't go
through your eyes.

When you look up again
My eyes turned blank
I couldn't see you smile.

Shadows never evade you

you can build anything.
You can build a whole building
with only blinking of your eyes.

Framed with eyelashes,
we resumed play,
with my heart being
in the centre of the building.
I saw you do wonders with your eyes.

Let's give up! I said,
because nobody can defeat
you with your eyes.

You challenged me for the last time.
I agreed. This would be my last
chance to redeem.
And I lost.
No chance from you insane.

Now I wanted you to be mad
so that I could cure you.
Please, please go mad,
so that I can build you an asylum.

Finally Free

- Isha Tiwari

Today again	Eyes like old times
It feels like spring	Smile still undefined
Feels like old times	I feel like crazy
Feels like lost joy	Little elated, little lazy
No hurt, no cry	Laughing hard, bit greedy
	Life, so breezy

Today its bliss again	Flying colors
No reason, nothing new	Feeling am I to grab it
Day seems different	Softening sounds
Simple words	Feeling am I to embrace it

I wish	Being who I am
To live this smile	Flying high
To feel free	
To love and be loved	Feeling fire
To laugh and feel alive	Feeling loved
	Feeling finally free.

So, here is spring again
And I am here
Like old times
With shiny eyes

Photos by R S Bharti

City Lights



Howrah Bridge, Kolkata

It's OK!



Scuba Diving, Andamans

Sailboat



Foreign Delegates!



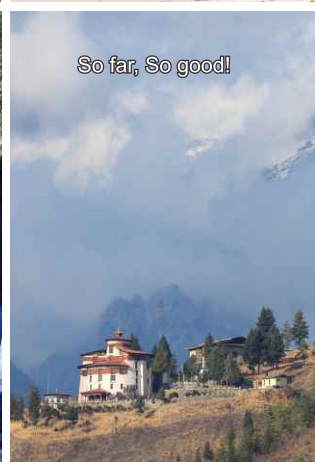
Thimphu, Bhutan

No 'S'kidding!



Sela Pass, Arunachal

So far, So good!

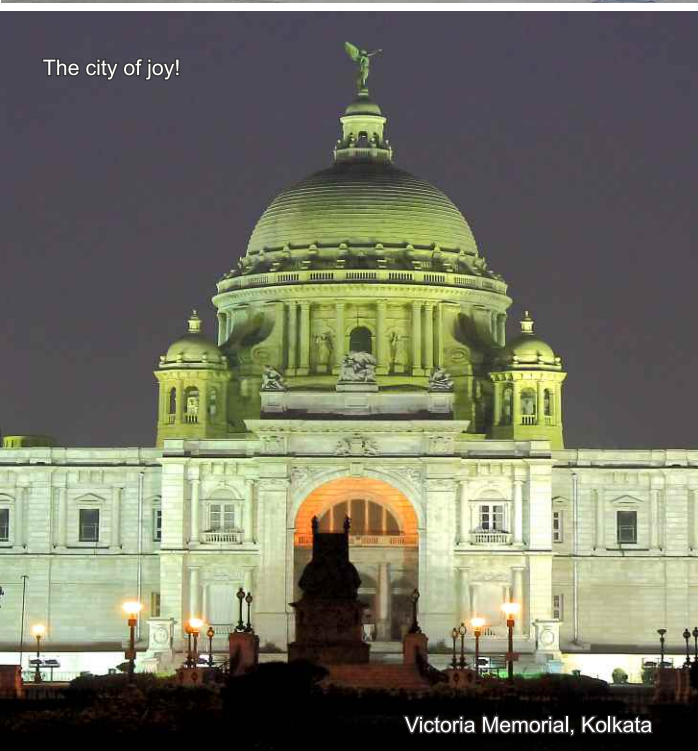


The Royal Airlines



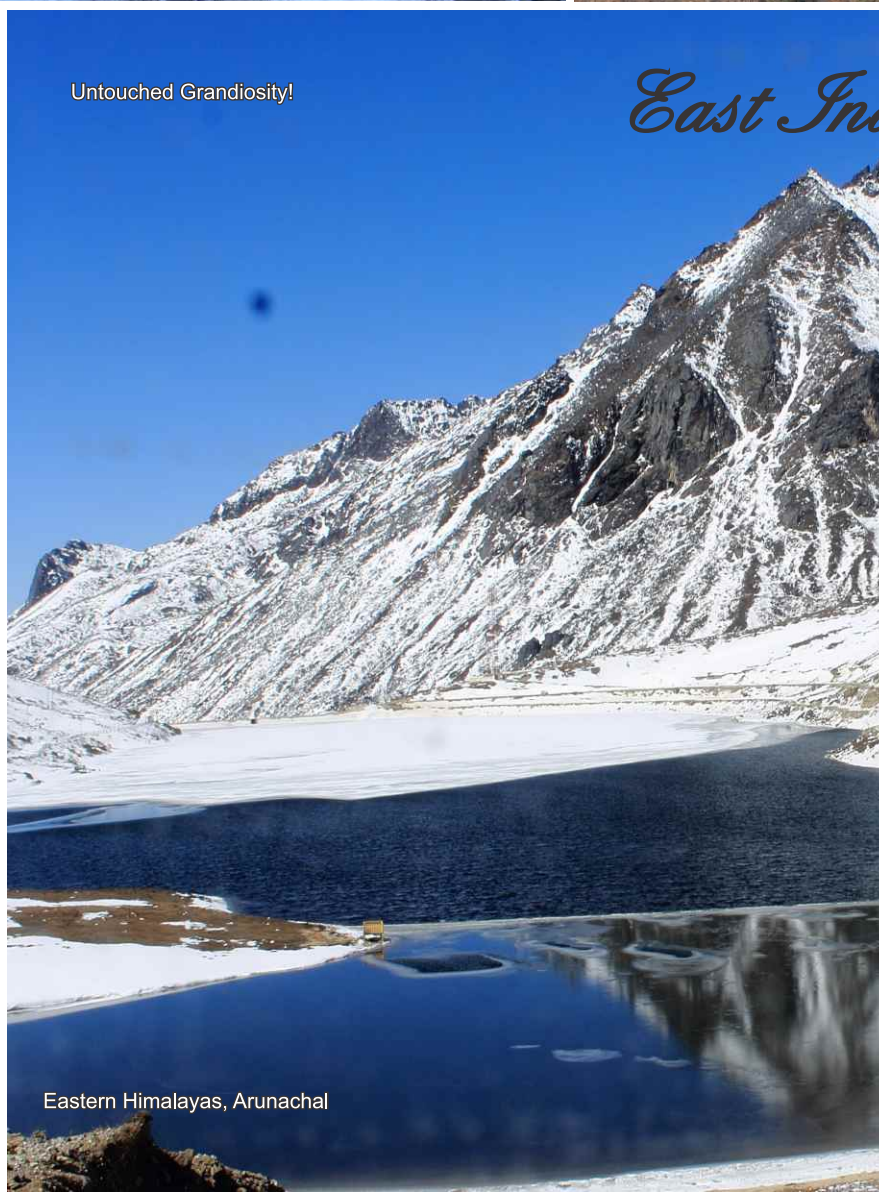
Thimphu, Bhutan

The city of joy!



Victoria Memorial, Kolkata

Untouched Grandiosity!



Eastern Himalayas, Arunachal

East India

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Vanju, Sunil Sharma & Mohan Ram



Havelock, Andamans

Follow the Baby!



Kaziranga, Assam



Inner Peace!

Tawang, Arunachal



Tigers Nest, Bhutan

Come Meet My Friend JK



Tawang, Arunachal

Spot the Rhino



Kaziranga, Assam



India Tour

Enter the Dragon



Tawang, Arunachal

Hide n Seek



Scuba Diving, Andamans



I am appropriately tagged as the “most photographed person in the batch” but what others don't know is that, it is rather hard work to get yourself photographed by others. It has almost been more than one and a half years since I left Bhutan and joined the IFS training in India. The training has reached its final phase and when I travel back in time, the fleetingness of my sojourn becomes so apparent. The chaotic memories are all blended together. That's when I seek the help of my selfish motive “my photos”. When I flip through the photos, the whole time line of my sojourn is so vividly displayed. It is so astounding to see those breathtaking moments captured and frozen in time forever. India has given me so much!

Foundation Course in NADT, Nagpur, was short and sweet. It was more of an acclimatization period for me. I am already smiling when I remember how I used to sweat for hours trying to drape a sari, speaking broken Hindi and never giving up to improve it, relishing the food so vibrant, so varied with tsunami of flavors lashing against my taste buds. The adventure sports in Manali, with spine chilling rock climbing, wrappling, almost crawling while trekking, rafting and river crossing in chilled crystal clear water of the Beas river is so close to my heart.

My first encounter with my alma mater, IGNFA, is so engraved in my heart. The spaciousness of the campus, its panoramic view, the greenery and the majestic FRI building was all very captivating. Everything about IGNFA is dear to me. The rush hour in the morning, running half asleep in PT, religiously attending the classes to master the forestry techniques and unconsciously dozing off in between; rushing between mess and hostel is so funny, yet so dear.

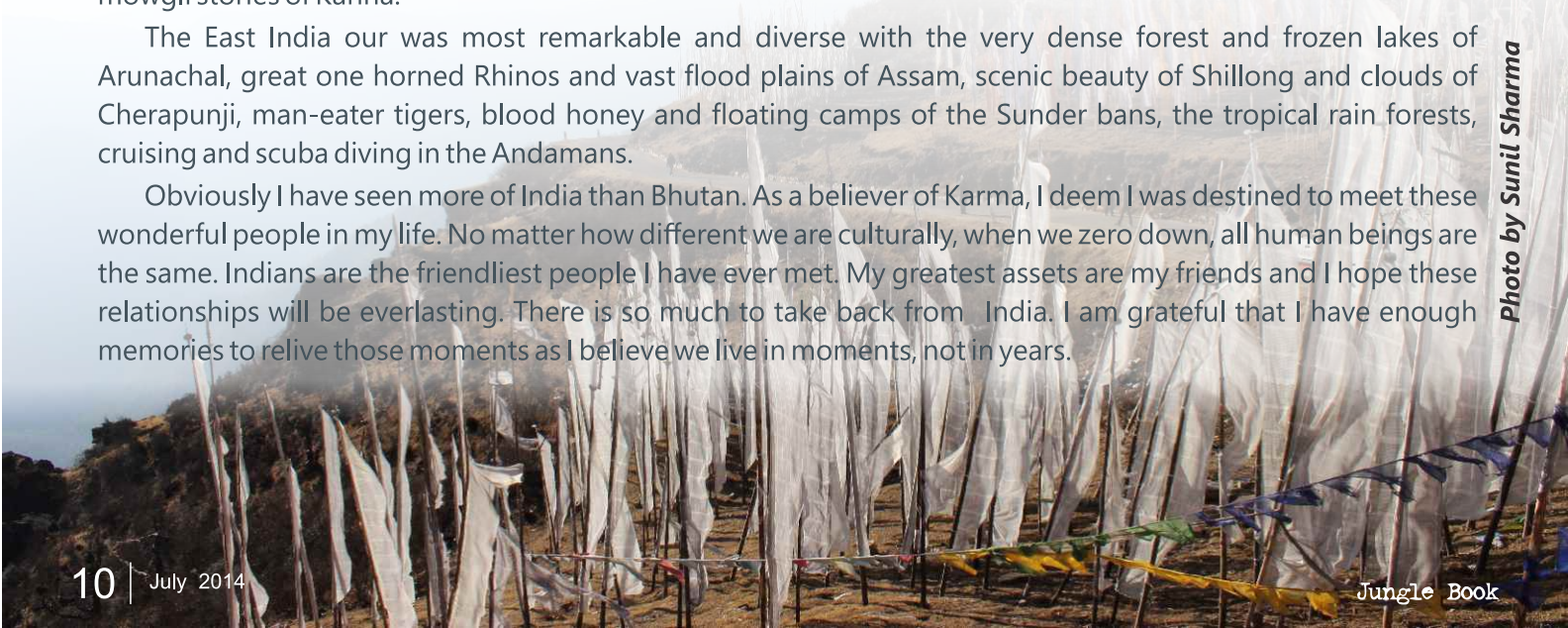
My most desired part of the training in IGNFA is the tours. West India tour was so fascinating. The flamboyant dresses, regal forts, stunning lakes, the breath taking sand dunes, the amazing camel rides, refreshing jungle safaris and of course, the most talked about, the Gir lions and the tigers. The Hill tour was spectacular with soothing view of snow clad mountains, the dizzy winding roads, the whispering of conifer forests, the serenity of the moon land (Leh, Ladakh). I had never seen in my life the sky more clearer and water so blue (Pangong Tsho), the beautiful flower carpeted valleys of Kashmir, the boathouse and shikaras of Dal lake and the mouth watering taste of wazwan of Kashmir still clings to my taste buds.

South and Central India tour was grand with the regal and magnificent temples of Tirupati, and Meenakshi, the salty sea breeze of Rameshwaram, the peacefulness of Periyar, the serenity of the Shola forest, the wilderness of the Western Ghats, the handsome Teak forests of MP and the Sal forests, tigers, barahsingha and mowgli stories of Kanha.

The East India tour was most remarkable and diverse with the very dense forest and frozen lakes of Arunachal, great one horned Rhinos and vast flood plains of Assam, scenic beauty of Shillong and clouds of Cherapunji, man-eater tigers, blood honey and floating camps of the Sunderbans, the tropical rain forests, cruising and scuba diving in the Andamans.

Obviously I have seen more of India than Bhutan. As a believer of Karma, I deem I was destined to meet these wonderful people in my life. No matter how different we are culturally, when we zero down, all human beings are the same. Indians are the friendliest people I have ever met. My greatest assets are my friends and I hope these relationships will be everlasting. There is so much to take back from India. I am grateful that I have enough memories to relive those moments as I believe we live in moments, not in years.

Photo by Sunil Sharma



Homesickness and Cadre sickness for me are typically caused by an emotional trigger, which can literally be anything. I think that is what makes homesickness, for me, such an overwhelming and intimidating hurdle. I am constantly on guard lest an emotional breakdown occurs. Sometimes, the trigger makes sense, like missing a holiday or a friend's wedding and sometimes cadre sickness, can put my happiness on hold, temporarily.

The folders in my desktop are like bombshells. I am literally afraid to open it. Memories, happy memories and moments captured make me go nostalgic, taking me back once again to my home, family, friends, and well wishers. . But what is homesickness? It can't be just the lack of familiar things that makes me homesick because after almost two years in the Academy, everything familiar is now here. But that does not, in any way, drive away that strong feeling of homesickness; instead I knew it was going to intensify the feeling. So does homesickness have to do with seeing familiar things in unfamiliar places like Dehradun? Or is it just these so called memories accompanied by nostalgia? If so, why do i tend to bring things from home to set around me in a new place? Surely to make i feel more at home, not homesick?

Indeed we speak of homesickness as a kind of illness. It does seem to come with a type of pain; perhaps it can even become debilitating. And if it is a sickness, it must also have a cause [Kerala], or a beginning [Tripura], it must have symptoms and most probably, a cure. In my case, dreams about school days, one sided love for 5 years, bookworm college days,[5years-gents only], were all an introspection to the person that I am today.

IGNFA, yah...that's my new home. I have spent almost 2 years in this heaven which has transformed me both with the good and the bad . And of course, Cadre sickness which I thought would remain an unhealed wound has now almost healed .

Where Do You Come From?

The answer to the question requires a response which involves an awareness of the place to which I belong, the place where I feel bodily, spatially, temporally, and socially "fit" to the details of the "human" world.

What Are You Doing Here at IGNFA?

There must be some good reason for me to be here. This 2 year training may be the way towards my destiny or the pinnacle in my career from a businessman to a teacher and as a Professional forester.

How Long Have You Been Here?

3 month is not the exact answer because of MCT and Deputation in future. And shift from Kerala to Tripura is like sylviculture transplantation and it takes time for transplanted roots to become established.

But one thing I am confident about is my compatibility to my dear probationer friends. I would like to assume that I am one among the few/many with the least conflicts and numerous close friends from all states and all languages. That's why I am surviving in the devbhoomi even if I am a sensitive and an emotional OT who carried all varieties of stress during the beginning.

My friends in IGNFA are always my friends and I am sure if anything special/good has imbibed in my personality, they are all actually emanated from them only. Relations with all 78 of 2012 batch are the best medicine for throwing out all my home sickness and cadre sickness. As an ordinary probationer I am a blessed man to get this outstanding family of 78. Without this totality of well-being i may become sick, homesick/cadre sick.



Painting by Sudha Ramen

Photo by R S Bharti



Night at the Sports Complex

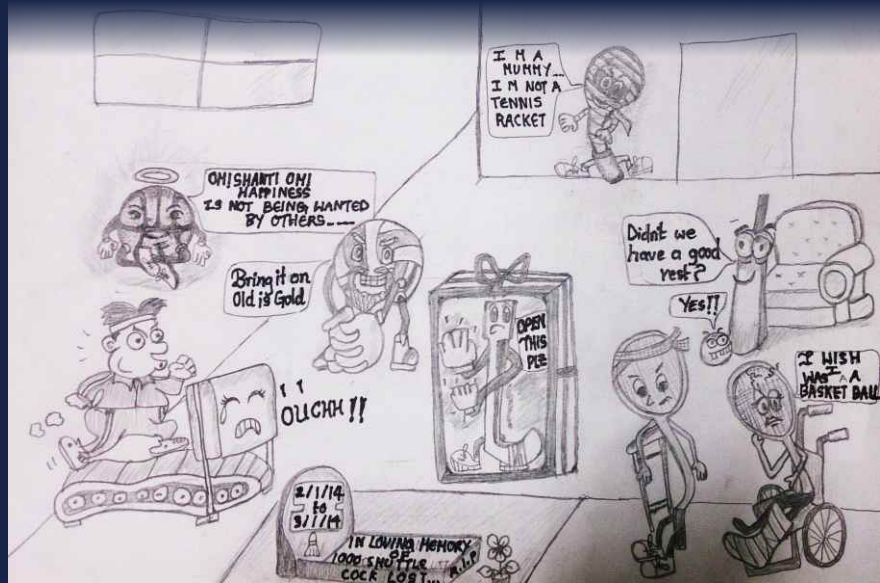
- Surya Sen

Ha.... Ha.... Ha.... the Poor treadmill, crying the whole night, after being overexploited in the evenings by the super heavy probationers who are afraid of the green ground. Getting bruised all over after continuous punching and kicking by the highly spirited beautiful lady skippers for more than an hour, the volleyball is tired and sleeping soundly in the corner. The Basketball has become old now and it is time for his retirement. Neither he nor his court is happy with the probationers. His court is used only for the roll call and he comes out in the evening with great hopes. To his disappointment, everyone throws him back into the store leaving him the oldest man amongst all.

Badminton rackets are the seasonal visitors to the store, struggling a lot in the hands of the couple amateurs and national players sleeping in the hostel rooms. Oh.... then there are the tennis rackets. They are in boastful mood these because a few hi-fi probationers have finally started using them. Your fame won't last long, buddy!

Monsoon days are here. Macho men have devastated my gym friends. They have to take rest for the next day's heavy work. To their misery, they are shockingly surprised to see the increasing number of macho women in the recent past. Cricket kits are the most fortunate amongst us. They get a hell lot of rest and few hours of play whenever few kids challenge the academy. Now how can I forget the condemned list of people? They are the hockey sticks, the nation's pride.... Have you ever seen them out? It's because the nation's pride should be maintained and not taken into play.

Who am I now? The proud and highly satisfied man of the complex having the greatest fan following, sought for, even during the holidays, season no bar, gender no bar, time no bar and weather no bar, first person to come out and the last person to go in enjoying the freshness of the air of freedom. Happy to be in this company... A busy month ahead.... Uff.... Good night....



Sketch by Janyang

Photo by R S Bharti

It was a winter that i was not prepared for. Winters in the South are mild. As the joke goes, there are only three seasons in Tamilnadu, hot, very hot and very very hot. The coldest month of the coldest year minimum at my home would be 18oC and I used to wear woolens. Here I had to face real winters. Days were more difficult than the night. But the cold that made me shiver all through the day was not without benefit. This damned cold was the catalyst that brought me close to my lifelong companion, the Sun. I had grown to take the Sun for granted and we could reestablish our ties over the morning basks. I used to wonder how when all of us put on layer after layer of clothing these trees shed leaf after leaf and face the winter naked. What grit and show of strength! We humans are not the only ones who struggle with winter. Every being struggle with the cold but they always wake up greeting the warmth that the morning sun brings. They bask for hours before starting their day. A wonderful sight on some winter days are the basking swallows, lined up in hundreds, along the cornice on the east facing walls of FRI. I had to come to Dehra to understand why the Garden Lizard at my home takes the risk to come out into the open in winter.

There is no poet who had not sung spring. If he had not then he is no poet. Spring is poetic by its nature. As the cold wanes, one week is all it takes to see green everywhere, and one more week to have the rest of the colours. The colours are not just of the flowers. The birds bring in unparalleled diversity. The privilege of being in FRI is 'you don't have to go in search of birds, they come to your doorstep'. Waking up to a Crimson Sunbird is priceless. Outside the Old Hostel, in the Bauhinia one can find all classes of Himalayan birds. The morning air is clear and chill. It is the best time of the year for any pursuit. After the cold and frost, It is a time of bounty and plenty.

The summer is hot as it should be. The days are long. Daylight extends till 0730 PM and night descends immediately. The day is over before one realises. The long days give us a spectacle, the Flying Foxes, which are missed during other seasons. During summers, Fruit bats rule the sky. Bats reside in lakhs in the Bambusetum and adjoining woodlots. They start their day at around 0715 PM. They move out as two major streams towards South and West, mainly to Rajaji NP as can be guessed. They are the enemies for the right holders/harvesters of FRI fruit trees. The outsiders coming for collecting litchi keep a constant vigil by drumming and shouting till the harvest. But it is unfair that the bats does not have any right over the fruits of their own garden. Around the same time in the summers, if one is lucky enough as bats come out of their lair the resident leopard too may be seen along the densely forested, less disturbed parts of FRI.

Monsoons are heavy in Dehra. The aura is hazy and dreamy all through the day because of the high humidity. Where I come from the annual rainfall is 40–60 cm. Dehra receives 250-300 cm. Last year the rain didn't stop a second for over 48 hours. The consistent drumming overhead (Old Hostel) pushed me into timelessness. The thirsty vegetation getting their drink after the long wait respond in kind. The grass growth is fiery quick filling every speck of soil. The spirit of life is seen in every nook and corner in all shades of green. The insects multiply. The birds prepare the nests for the young. Frogs sing their hearts out. Snakes follow the jumping toads. The owlets have their feast. The fireflies light the darkest corners where even the sun can't do the trick. The cycle is complete. Its time to start afresh without any complaints. What a wonderful world!

Photo by R S Bharti

We all start something with the hope of a possibility. And we pray and wish that the possibility turns into a reality. We end up hardly believing that reality when those wishes actually come true. This is the short story of how this Newsletter, the "Jungle Book" began.

Back when I was assigned the position of the Joint Secretary of "Forest Gupp" magazine somewhere in times I can hardly recall now, I was impressed by the fact and assured by well wishers alike, that the actual work for this position was "No work!" which, I must admit, relieved my nerves immensely. How was I to know the guilt would one day weigh me down. And this guilt presented itself in the form of ChandrasekaranBala, the admirable Cultural Secretary, whose penchant for organizing something fun can only be matched by his ability to live up to that fun. He approached me way back in August 2013 as he very nicely put it, "We are touring some of the best places, organizing and participating in so many activities in our Academy. We need to record it! ASAP!" I did try my best to excuse myself and give him my best wishes in his new venture. But I guess I couldn't run too far. The next thing I knew, I was requesting people to be on the Editorial Team.

Dheeraj Mittal was a natural choice and my respect for him only increased when he agreed to be a part of the team almost instantly, no questions asked. He has that unique ability to research and understand something to the core and analyse it with various "what ifs". His writings and speeches reeks of wit and knowledge. Today, he somehow represents the nucleus of the "Creative Section" of this Newsletter.

Md. Sajid Sultan, as always, was already super excited and enthusiastic about the entire affair. Possessing the makings of a fine diplomat, I guess I saw in him the Negotiator who would manage the affairs of the Newsletter and go all the way to ensure the Newsletter of the proper backings that would sustain it. And my premonitions have only been confirmed beyond all expectations. Plus, he also writes.

RavikiranTirumala, you can say, is a wild card entry. But then, you can hardly ignore the man. His sense of humour is loud. The pun he can throw in his lines shows lethal sarcasm and unconventional genius. His "Forestory" is standing proof! The best bit about him is the fact that he has a realistic idea of what might work and what might not. A well read individual, he completed the team in a very wholesome way.

One thing common to all was the fact that we were passionate about the very idea of the "Newsletter" and were eager to see it materialize. And work we did, relentlessly, towards realizing it. Meetings followed, countless mail exchanges were made, pleadings were made with potential contributors, offers were placed with requests to write, draw or sketch something for the maiden venture.



Sketch by Divya



By God, we literally ran behind people to favour us and give us something... anything! And boy, did we enjoy it! The thrill of something you dream of, shaping right in front of your eyes is a feeling unmatched. And we were blessed to experience this. People contributed, lots of them. But we already knew something. The fodder for the first issue was inescapably going to come from our Editorial stable. And it did.

All said and done, the most crucial and challenging task for us came in the form of the brainstorming ideas that found residence in the New Hostel Lounge during all that time we sat with the "Printer Guy". Besides the fact that we were busy giving a skeletal framework to our Newsletter when every soul in the hostel was locked inside their rooms preparing for exams, I never realized we were so divergent in our opinions and in this diversity, so strongly opinionated. Each one of us stands guilty of not budging from his/her ground. And thank God we did not.

The 2 days of formatting was more than hectic. It was mad! We had creative differences and you know, that was the best part of everything. Because that reaffirmed my faith that I had approached the right people who would bring in the vigour to the initiative, diverse vigour. No compromises! And that's how the first issue shaped up. And here we are, on the third one, still going strong.

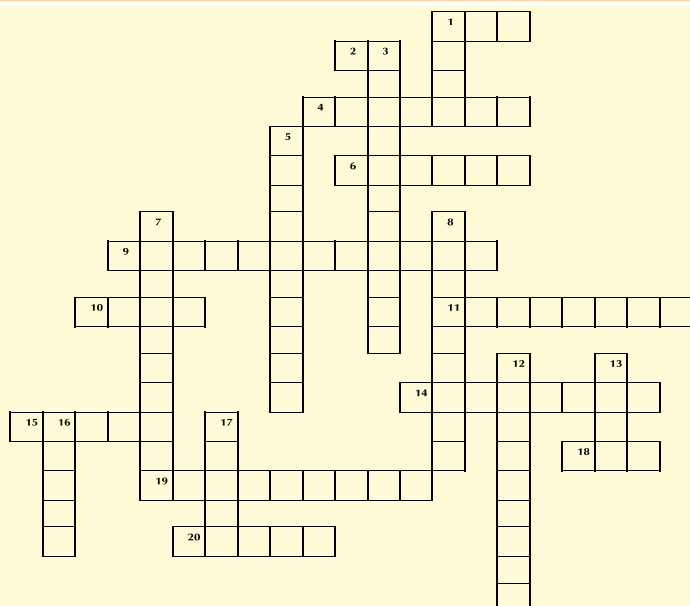
As we hang up our boots and hand over things to the 2013 Batch, we wish to thank you for the warmth that you have always received us with, for your contributions, for making "us and you", a possibility. It started off with just a possibility and you gave us the wings to let our imaginations fly. All it needed was a shot of curiosity, a pinch of enthusiasm, a bowlful of hardwork, a well prescribed dosage of subscribing talent, a band of craftspeople and Voilá! Before you know it, you're already holding the Newsletter in your hands.

Really, thank you.



CROSSWORD

by Ravikiran



Across

1. SOMETHING WHICH EVERY PROBATIONER LOOKS FORWARD TO (3)
2. EARLIER TOGETHER, NOW SEPARATE HOPE TO BE TOGETHER SOON (2)
4. SOME COUNT THE RINGS, SOME MAKE GRAPHS, EVERYBODY ENJOYS (7)
6. OLD IS GOLD, NEW IS ALSO VERY OLD (6)
9. WHAT YOU PRACTICE ARE USED IN THE SYSTEMS (12)
10. DEODAR, SHOREA, PINUS (4)
11. I AM A BLACK BEAUTY WHO WILL CHOKER YOU (8)
14. THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON OF THE MOVIE 'FOREST GUMP' (8)
15. MARRIAGE HAS CHANGED MY _____ (5)
18. AN IDEA THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES (3)
19. THE WORST PART OF ANY TOUR (9)
20. SIGHTED A LOT IN THE INTRODUCTION, MIGHT NOT BE SEEN LATER (5)

Down

1. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE DRESSED NEATLY HERE! (4)
3. WHEN YOU FEEL SAD, THAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING WONDERFUL (11)
5. WHEN I AM THERE, PROBATIONERS STAY OUT OF THE ACADEMY (10)
7. LOTS OF OLIVES, LOTS OF GREENERY IS WHAT WE SEE DURING THE TOURS (5,5)
8. MANDATORY BEFORE YOU TAKE CHARGE AND START DELIVERING (9)
12. ENGINEER'S ENVY BOTANIST'S PRIDE (9)
13. MOUNTAIN OF ENTIRE FORESTRY IN INDIA (7)
16. I SHARE A BOUNDARY WITH CHINA, I AM AN ISLAND AND ALSO A CAPITAL (5)
17. TRY HAVING CHAI WITH TAMARIND, ITS DAMN GOOD TO WRITE A WORKING PLAN (5)



Ajay Gosain

Mr. Gosain is the most visible face on the football ground of IGNFA and we all know him as one of the PTIs who are there everyday for our morning PT and evening sports. A native of Dehradun, he has been a national level football player from Uttar Pradesh but could not unfortunately pursue his professional career as a footballer due to an injury on the field. He is a full-time coach with Kendriya Vidyalaya and has a part-time association with IGNFA since 2005, just for his sheer passion for football. He has got 2 sons, his wife and his parents in his family and has playing and coaching football and swimming as his favorite pastimes.

On asking about past IGNFA days, he fondly remembers Mr. Kazmi and the strict discipline and the active interest of faculty members in probationer's physical fitness.

Sir is working with IGNFA on a very modest honorarium basis and derives his motivation and confidence from the fact that he is coaching IFS (P) rather than the monetary factor.

In his opinion, the physical infrastructure present needs to be supplemented by more dedication on the part of probationers, regular visits of faculty and a zeal to make best use of our time in academy.



Parshuram Saklani

We know him as a lean man in his fifties and must have interacted with him as Mess Duty Officer. He has been working here since 1984 and has been a supervisor since 1991. He has 2 daughters who are M.A. & M.Sc and a son who is doing B.Com and is trying to become a Chartered Accountant.

Parshuram Ji describes his duty as a 24X7 job and he & his kitchen crew used to accompany probationers during the field tours and has covered almost all of India. He is fond of tea and likes to eat Rasam-rice. He likes to watch Life OK! Channels, especially Mahabharat serial.

Talking of his and his staff's working conditions, he told us that kitchen staff used to be earlier government employees unlike being on contract these days and getting a meager salary of Rs. 4000 to 6000/-. When seniors come for Mid Career Training (MCT) and meet them, he is really thrilled.

HE also mentions that younger generations of probationers are more well-behaved and respect them and for them, the most memorable person of the batch is the Mess-Secy.



Tek Bahadur Thapa

Mr. Thapa is one of the 3 supervisors of the total 29 guards of our academy and has been here since 1996. His 4 generations have worked for Indian military including himself (Nayab Tehsildar) and his 2 daughters. He has worked in the tough terrains of Leh, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh and had a close encounter with terrorists many times in Poonchh region. His hobbies include playing football while he was in military, reading newspaper and agricultural activities.

His job, though purely contractual in nature, is truly 24X7 in nature with not a single holiday entitlement in a year, with no extra payment for working on gazette holidays. His only regret is that he did not have many promotions while serving in army.

He feels that security situation can be improved by making the control-room more functional and providing walkies-talkies to the guards on duty, as there is only one guard in whole hostel at a time.



Ashish Kumar Nautiyal

Mr. Nautiyal has been working as a caretaker in FRI campus 1987 onwards and belongs to Dehradun only and has been working in store of IGNFA for past 2 years. He has earlier worked as a care-taker of New Hostel for many years and had a severe backbone injury while being on work. Further, he had two other accidents wherein he just took few days leaves and resumed duty.

His utmost dedication to help in providing probationers comfort is clearly visible, by the urgent manner he handled a phone call asking for an attendant during a lecture in New Hostel auditorium and followed through. He mentioned that when need arises, he has not shied away from working from 8a.m to 10 p.m also.

He is happy with his contact with faculty members and probationers, but feels that more instruments are required to be procured. He also suggests a better liaison with CPWD department as they are very slow in addressing our complaints related to maintenance work in campus or hostels.

His hobbies include listening to old Hindi songs and reading

