



## Camaraderie across LoC

“As a boy, I had this muslim kid as my neighbour. We literally grew up in each other’s places ... that’s when I used to hear stories about their relatives who had to leave the country during partition, about his uncle who “lives beyond the border”. “Why are families broken like this?” I used to wonder. Somehow, those childhood impressions grew into an urge to do something to improve relations between the two countries.

The opportunity to realize the dream came through a global organization of young business heads of which I have been a member for the past five years. We, at the Indian and Pakistani Chapters have formed an Indo-Pak forum to further relations between the two countries. In 2003, to further the peace process, the Pakistani Chapter invited us for a ‘Mohenjadaro Retreat’. We crossed the Wagah border, visited Karachi, Lahore and then Islamabad, where President Musharraf hosted

a lunch for us at his place. I remember asking him during that time, “Why are we not playing cricket matches? And why are there no direct flights between India and Pakistan?” On the spot, the President promised both – and as we know, both have since been actualised.

That trip was memorable. We had a great time, basking in their love and affection. In reciprocation, we invited the Pakistani chapter members to India last year. “Where would you like to go?” we asked them. Their unanimous reply: “Kashmir”. I got into arranging the trip for them. It was very interesting – and challenging – to say the least. Both the Government of India and the J&K government were quite co-operative, and the group (25 couples from either country) finally had a fabulous trip, realizing their dream.

It was during the trip from Srinagar to Gulmarg that I got to meet another person

who had very recently realized his life-long dream of “driving a bus across the Indo-Pak border”. The driver of the Stag Minibus, that took us to Gulmarg, had made 20 trips back and forth between India and Pakistan. He said he volunteered for the job: “I had a dream of driving across to Pakistan. That has been fulfilled”, he told me. Then, I started talking to him about the bus, trying to get some ‘customer feedback’. He spoke to me not knowing I was from Ashok Leyland. “No problem at all ... this bus can go to all those regions where no other bus can go. It navigates perfectly – uphill or downhill”, he said. I repeatedly prodded him for some critical comments – “surely, there must be something that you are not happy with”. He wouldn’t oblige. Finally he said, “if the gear shift is through the bonnet, it will be nice”. (That was one more customer wanting this change. In response, action is well under way).

The driver was also wearing an Ashok Leyland cap. Made me feel really proud. More so because I was also helping my friends in Pakistan see *our* Kashmir from *our* bus”.

- Vinod K Dasari, Chief Operating Officer

P.S: It is ironic that just a week later, a devastating earthquake struck the region ... less than 100kms away from where we had enjoyed the beauty of Kashmir. Last month, our forum organized the staging of ‘*Tumhari Amrita*’, a play featuring Shabana Azmi and Farooque Sheikh, at Karachi which helped raise Rs one crore towards relief measures.



### BITES 2004-2005

Hosur II has won the BITES (Breaking-thresholds Involving Total EmployeeS) shield for the second consecutive time. R Seshasayee, MD gave away the 2004-2005 trophy to P Harihar, GM-Hosur II and M K R Nair, GM-Special Projects. Vinod K Dasari, COO and J N Amrolia, ED-HR were also present.

The award is to recognize the successful creation of an environment that ensures high level of employee participation and involvement, contributing to all-round tangible improvements.

### NEWGEN roll out

A special preview of the NEWGEN of corporate office (colleagues who joined post 2002) was held on New Year’s eve, complete with model introduction. In a closely contested poll, the ‘most energetic’, ‘the best smile’, ‘the coolest person’ et al were elected, followed by some fun team games and a “oh-so-solid” quiz. What with products like ‘Dawood International Bank’ and ‘Black Magic darkness cream’ to be advertised and topics like “should once a week casual dressing be made mandatory?” be debated upon, participants did not mind stretching their ETD. And stay on to sing in 2006.





"To desire and strive to be of some service to the world, to aim at doing something which shall really increase the happiness and welfare and virtue of mankind - this is a choice which is possible for all of us; and surely it is a good haven to sail for." - Henry Van Dyke, Author

## Six inspired colleagues of Hosur have made that choice

**D S Mohan Kumar**, Executive Plant Engineering, Hosur I, relieves stress and depression through spiritual healing techniques. He can even treat migraine and phobias. "Modern medicine fails to heal a person fully, as being healthy would mean keeping both the body and mind in good shape."

A course in hypnosis triggered Mohan Kumar's interest in spiritual healing. He continued with courses in Pranic healing, Reiki, transactional analysis and neuro linguistic programmes. He practises these techniques on friends and relatives, as a service. His ultimate dream however is to set up a home for the elderly.



**K Stephen,**

Operator, CIM Line, Shop I Extension, Hosur I, has conducted personality development, time management courses for more than 5000 school students. His soft skills training workshops are not about lengthy notes or heavy, arduous words. "It is all about watching videos and participating in outdoor activities, as well as experimental learning" he says. His dictum: learning as edutainment.

48-yr-old **G Veeraswamy**, an operator in Pump House, Hosur-I has a passion for scaling new heights. Climbing unknown hills, camping all alone for days at a stretch, tiresome trekking are all his way of spending quality time. Reason also why he founded a youth club of trekking in Hosur, conducting trekking camps for Scouts and Guides. "With proper precautions, mountaineering is not any more unsafe than driving on the National Highway! You feel dead tired. But that apart, the solemn feeling one gets conquering a peak is infinitely rewarding", he says.



Joining the Scouts movement as a schoolboy ensnared him in the arms of the mountains. He has conducted nature camps for teachers and students in Hosur, besides going on treks himself. Veerasamy also instructs on Pranayama and meditation.

**A Ezhil Silamban**, TQM Dept, Hosur I always dreamt of becoming a teacher. Now, he plays wide-ranging roles. Apart from co-ordinating the work of CFTs, QCs and SGAs in the Unit, he dons the role of 'Official photographer' for many a function. As a photographer, faces fascinate him: " I like to capture emotions". Creativity and sensitivity are two attributes that will help a photographer/videographer stand out.



He holds a diploma each in foremanship and HRD, and is also a Licentiate from the Central Institute of Training. In August 2004, he trained over 250 employees of BSNL, Vellore in personality development.

## ... and how!

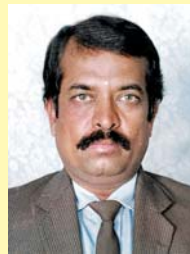
**Lakshmana Theerthagiri**, Sr Exec, Tool Planning, Purchase Dept, Hosur I is a Reiki and Pranic healing expert. A fitness freak since childhood, he wanted to be a physiotherapist. Inspired by a TV interview, Theerthagiri was drawn to Pranic healing and Reiki. He chose these alternative therapies because he was "fascinated by the idea of giving life to lifeless limbs through nature." "Pranic healing involves "drawing energy from the universe and transferring that energy to the affected body part of the patient. After undergoing this treatment, a patient whose right side was once virtually immobile, today walks and climbs stairs unaided", he says. Theerthagiri's determination to surmount seemingly hopeless situations, combined with his sensitivity to those who face them, yields remarkable results.



And he does all this without charging any fees. "My only request to patients is not to view this treatment as a last resort. That would be a costly mistake." A stickler to Yoga and Pranayama himself, he sets aside one hour in the morning daily for practice. Once back from work, the regular Reiki and Pranic healing sessions start.

**M Masilamani**, a driver in Hosur I, runs 'Prem Chaya' - a care centre for stray animals at his residence at Paupparapatti, where injured cats and dogs are given best possible care. Controlling stray animal population, saving them from abuse, offering medical care for injured animals and organising a vet clinic once a week with the help of a local veterinary dispensary are some of the activities.

Masilamani has earmarked one per cent of his salary for charity. "It is mandatory for me to perform some good act every day. Otherwise, I will forgo dinner", he says. Two veterinary stockmen - his schoolmates - help him run the weekly vet clinic totally free of cost. Also, whenever someone goes on vacation, he undertakes to provide temporary shelter for their pets.



# The Constant Gardeners

**C RAMACHANDRAPPA'S** (Sr Exec, Time Office, Hosur I) passion for greenery won his garden the 'Best garden of the year' award from Rotary and Inner Wheel Club, Hosur.

Hundreds of different plants grow in lush abandon in his garden. A thicket of bamboo, a lovely faux waterfall and a stream that trickles

Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia". These are apart from the head horn fern from Brazil and the Australian ferns.

"I come from a family of agriculturists and horticulturists. My love for plants stems from there I guess", he reasons out.

While his garden is a sight for the eye, his colleague C Munisamyappa's (Personnel Dept - Hosur I) garden has some unusual sights. He and his wife Ratna have been successful in growing plants to abnormal heights! And the reason for this is unusual too: No special manure. Just talking to the plants! They coax them " Don't give up. Grow more". And those plants listen too ...

Sample this: the couple planted a Cockscomb plant (*Celosia argentea var cristata*) in June 2004. Normally, these plants grow to a height of 4 to 5 feet. But this particular plant reached 10 feet 7 inches! K Manoharan, Asst Director of Horticulture, Krishnagiri, issued a letter that states, "I personally visited Munisamyappa's house to verify the facts. This is indeed a record".

This is not the only instance. Cosmos plants usually grow to a height of 4 to 5 feet. But in Munisamyappa's garden, one plant grew to 11.5 feet and another to 13 feet. The couple has been advised to forward an entry to the Limca book of Records.



Ramachandrappa

Munisamyappa

down a pebbled walkway add beauty to the 120-year-old house, inherited from his great grandfather. The 25 types of fruit trees - even an Australian fig tree - mean unending supply of fruits through the year. "I am very fond of heliconiums ... have collected varieties from

## He scores!

**K NARAYANAN OF** Chassis Assembly, Ennore, has been part of the 1987 Reliance World Cup Cricket Tournament and the 1996 Wills World Cup Cricket Tournament. With the bat or the ball, you ask? Actually, with the interplay between both. He was AIR's Press Scorer for the two tourneys.

A much-in-demand scorer in the Chennai circuit, Narayanan started in 1973 as a scorer for local cricket matches. "My interest in the game branched out this way. However, I owe my growth in this field to P M Sundaresan, the then sports editor of The Hindu. He was the one who encouraged me", he fondly recalls.



He particularly mentions the 1987 tour of Pakistan to India, when he 'scored' all the five test matches and five ODIs. He has been to Mumbai, Vizag, Ahmedabad, Pune, Kolkata, scoring matches.



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S Venkat Narayanan, DM-Vehicle Sales, has been elected President of Rotary club of Vadapalani, one of the prestigious clubs in Chennai. He is also chairman of Youth Hostels Association of India.