



## **CRITERION 6**

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENT**

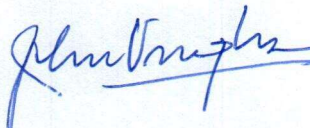
#### **6.2.1 The Institutional Strategic/ Perspective Plan is Effectively Deployed**





**Successfully Implemented**  
**activity:**

**Alumni Association**

  
PRINCIPAL  
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE  
DELHI-110007







Members of Core Committee, Alumni Association:

1. Prof. John Varghese, Principal and Patron
2. Mr. Philip Mathew, President
3. Mr. Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, Secretary
4. Dr. Chinkhalun Guite, Bursar
5. Dr. Sudipto Mundle
6. Mr. Raman Sidhu
7. Mr. Sanjeev Meston
8. Dr. Priya Ranjan Jha
9. Mr. Rajesh Kumar
10. Mr. Akash Mohapatra
11. Dr. Mukesh Williams
12. Dr. Shachi Gurumayum
13. Ms. Shweta Menon
14. Mr. Srijit Seal

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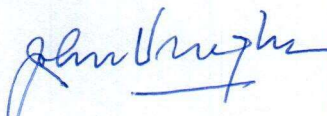
## **The Inauguration of the St. Stephen's College Alumni Association on 4th October, 2017**

The inauguration of the St. Stephen's College Alumni Association was conducted on 4th October 2017 in the College Hall. The inauguration featured the institution and introduction of the Alumni Core Committee members, a discussion between Amitabh Kant (CEO of NITI Aayog) and Ajay Banga, Executive Chairman of Master Card--both alumni of the College and a tree planting session.

Video link of the Inauguration Ceremony:

<https://www.ststephens.edu/alumni-function-2017/>



  
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## **Activities of Alumni Association**

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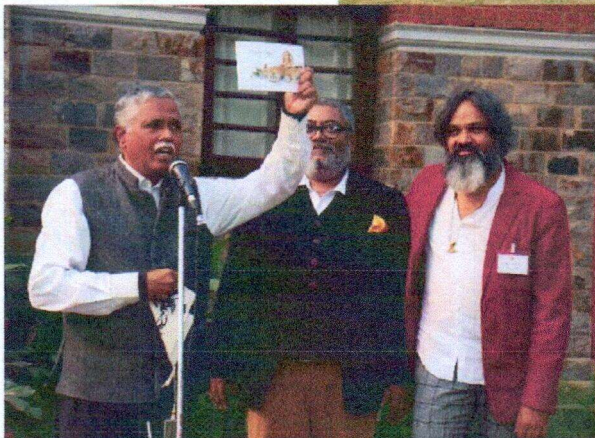
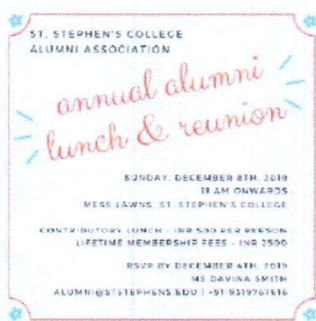






### The Annual Alumni Reunion & Lunch, 2019

This Annual Alumni Reunion Lunch was conducted on December 8th, 2019. The reunion lunch was a huge success with over 300 alumni members attending the lunch from different parts of the globe. The lunch began with a prayer by Revd Monodeep Daniel, Chaplain and Dean of Residence of St. Stephen's College, followed by two minutes of silence for departed Stephanians. This was subsequently followed by various introductions of and award delivery to batches as well as the felicitation of the graduating batch of 1994. The reunion ended with lunch served in the Dining Hall of the College.







### **Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Graduating Batch 1991-94**

The batch of 1994 celebrated their 25th year of graduation followed by a closed event in the College Hall which featured a throwback video, performances by some of the batchmates, and sharing of their best memories in College. This alumni batch also conducted a massive fundraising drive for the College and on 6th February 2020 presented a cheque of INR 50,00,000/- to the Principal, Prof John Varghese.



*John Varghese*  
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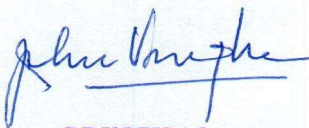


### **The Annual Alumni Reunion& Lunch, 2020**

The Annual Alumni Reunion was conducted in virtual mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak on 13th December 2020 at 4 PM (IST) on Zoom conversation. The alumni reunion saw a few segments including the 'Kooler Talks' panel discussion featuring Dr Amrita Cheema (Batch of 1978), Mr Piyush Gupta (Batch of 1980), and Amb Jawed Ashraf (Batch of 1984). This session also included a photography presentation – 'A Trip Down Memory Lane' which featured snapshots from the 1950s to 2010s shared by alumni members. This was followed by a special message from former senior members of the College—Prof David Gosling, Prof K Roy Choudhury and Dr Giti Chandra. The event went on for an overall duration of 3 hours.



**Kooler Talks with Dr Amrita Cheema, Mr Piyush Gupta and Amb. Jawed Ashraf**

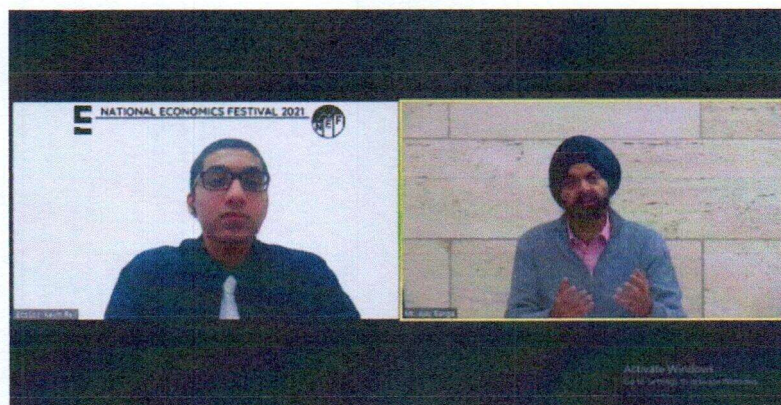
  
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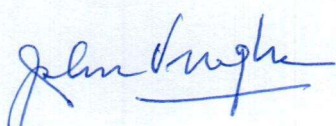




**Mani Shanker Iyer addressed students of the Leadership Cell at their Symposium on 27th Feb 2021**

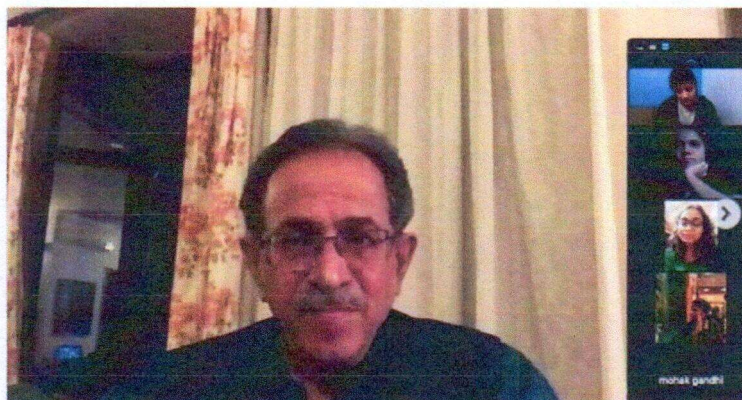


The Economics Society hosted Mr. Ajay Banga for an Interactive Question-and-Answer Session on 12th February 2021 as part of their flagship event, the National Economics Festival 2021. currently serves as the Executive Chairman at Mastercard, having previously served as President and CEO of the company. He is also a Padma Shri awardee. The interaction was based on the topic 'The Role of Business in Society'.

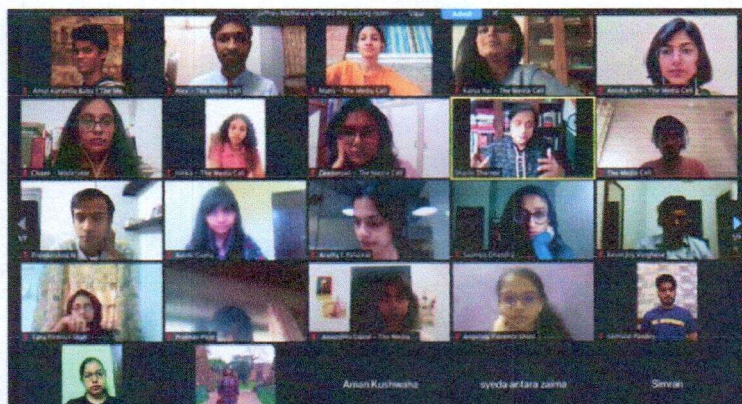
  
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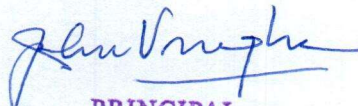




A workshop was conducted by Feisal Alkazi, alumni and a renowned theatre director and activist on the topic 'Understanding and Making a Play' on 9th November, 2020.



A student interaction with Dr Shashi Tharoor which was a part of our annual fest- Fourth Estate. The fest was from 2nd to 4th March, 2020. This session was held on 4th March 2020.

  
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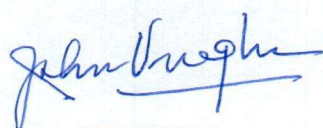




### 'Forever in Our Hearts' Memorial Service

The memorial service was conducted on May 30th, 2021 to honour the departed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a hybrid memorial service conducted by the Alumni Association of College with many of our current faculty members and students in participation. The memorial service had an overall participation of over 500 people from across the world.





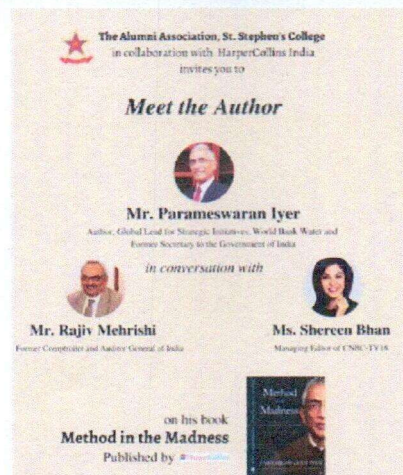
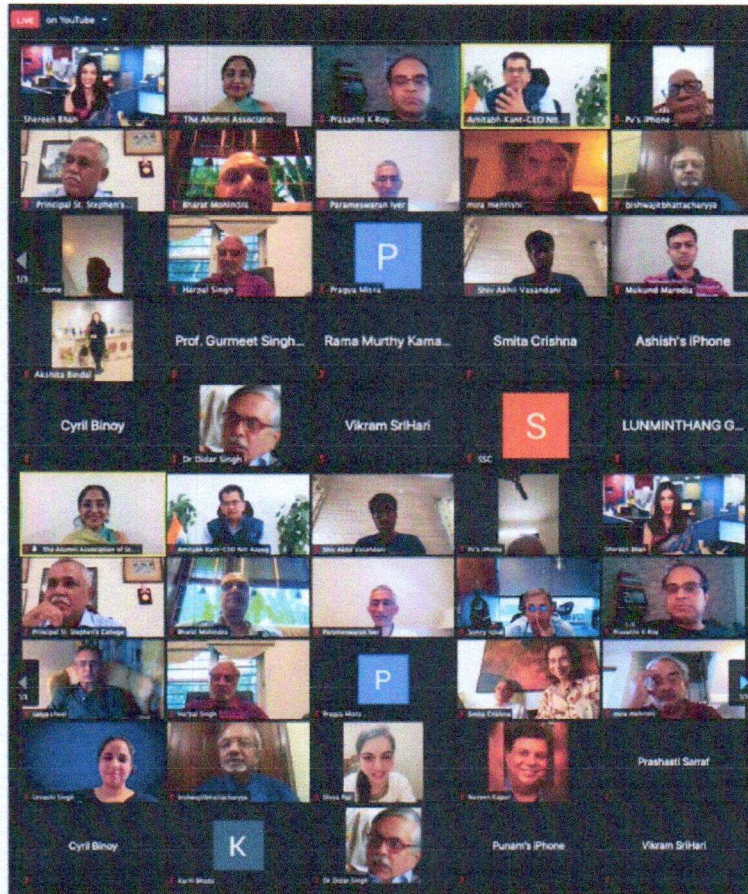
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An alumni book panel discussion with Parameswaran Iyer, Rajiv Mehrishi, Shereen Bhan virtually organized on 18th June, 2021 at 5 p.m. (IST)







## **Newsletters**

  
PRINCIPAL  
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DELHI-110007







Jan - March 2020

# THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Vol I Issue 1

*Inaugural Edition*



*Inside this Issue*

## REINVENTING THE ALUMNI

The College officially introduced the Alumni Office last year, with Ms. Davina Smith appointed as the Secretary.

## IN COLLEGE: RINGING IN THE 140TH YEAR

3 Campuses, 13 Principals, and 139 years later...

## WHAT'S ON IN STEPHANIA

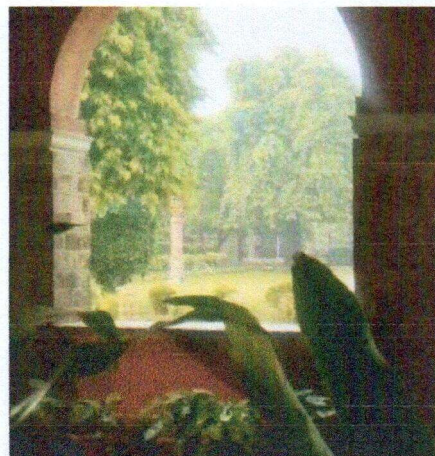
Alumni reunions, events, opportunities, accomplishments and more.

## TRENDING:

The Alumni Newsletter is seeking a befitting title. And as our first Alumni digital engagement activity, here's something exciting. Send us your most creative suggestions, and a surprise awaits the winning entry!

The College Café is now offering an all new range of College Memorabilia and Merchandise. From t-shirts and sweatshirts to lapel pins and luggage tags, there's something for everyone. Simply walk-in to the Café or drop us an email at [alumni@ststephens.edu](mailto:alumni@ststephens.edu) and we shall process your requests. We are also delivering items across India.

The Alumni Cards, as promised, are now being issued. The Café is now fully digitised and the Alumni Cards will facilitate a new cashless way of spending in College.



  
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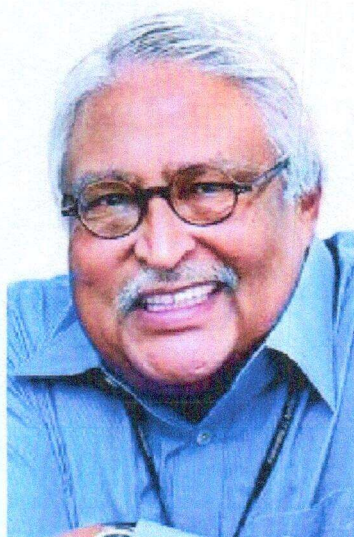






## **WELCOME NOTE**

**Mr Philip Mathew,  
President, St. Stephen's College Alumni Association**



I am delighted that St Stephen's alumni have conceived a newsletter to keep us all connected ever more closely with our beloved alma mater. The need for a newsletter was long felt, and I am happy that it has at last been met, just when the college is making resolute efforts to emerge as an institution of world class excellence. The newsletter, I am sure, will enable Stephanians of all ages to exchange ideas to stimulate the growth of the institution as well as strengthen the tendrils of affection binding all of us together.

Affection grows on memories, so let me recount a few of mine, hoping that these will nudge fellow Stephanians to unfold memorable anecdotes from their college days in the forthcoming editions of the newsletter. I joined St Stephen's in 1966 and left it five years later, by which time I had graduated from gawky teenage to goofy adulthood. I did BA History Honours and then MA. The college nourished my body and soul, and did what it could with my intellect. I have revisited the college many times in the last fifty years, sometimes to hand over my sons, nephews and nieces to my alma mater, but more often just to look at my old classrooms and residence. Every time I make a visit, I feel something surging in my heart. It is as if I had come home, to rest my head in my mother's lap.

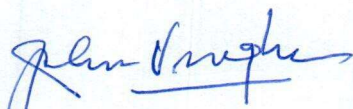
I had a whale of a time at St Stephen's while pursuing the degree course. I lived in D3 Allnutt South, where many of the students were from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bhutan, Sikkim and Kerala. We forged friendships that have lasted a lifetime. I remember playing cricket in the corridors during lunchtime, occasionally breaking a tube light. In winter a few of us sneaked out at three in the morning and went duck shooting on the banks of the Yamuna. The ducks had keen eyesight and flew off at the sight of man or gun. So we covered ourselves with leaves and bushes as we sneaked upon them. We took the kill to the Tare-Pyare dhaba run by Tara Singh and Pyara Singh. They plucked the ducks and marinated the meat and roasted it later in the evening. We would eat it hot from the oven, sitting on a charpoy and gulping liquid fireballs.

The college cafe offered tasty food. Scrambled eggs, toast and mince cost only a rupee and ten paise. This was the best breakfast one could get in the vicinity, in fact anywhere in Delhi. Even so, we frequented the university cafe, which had other attractions. Birds from Miranda House used to flock there.

I was quite popular in Allnutt South because I had a scooter. All my friends took their girlfriends on long rides on my scooter. Lucky scooter, unlucky me. I had no girlfriend, and often I sat pining for one. Perhaps it is because I pined so much that Allnutt South later became a girls hostel.

The scooter, however, was faithful to me. I made many adventurous rides on it. The hills around Dehradun were a favourite destination. Once we were caught in a landslide at Mohan Pass in the Siwalik mountains. The road lay blocked with mud and rock. So we lifted the scooter upon the protective half-wall along the road and pushed it for miles till we crossed the landslide area.

The college had some oddballs. One of them was a compounder called Kapur Singh. He was a gyp who preened about like a doctor. He sat massaging his beard and checked the temperature of everyone who went to him, no matter what the ailment. He had an uncanny ability to pull up his trousers with his elbows! Of just the opposite disposition was Robert Saab, the college secretary. He was a man of unblemished character and totally dedicated to the institution. He knew each and every student by name. If you needed to get anything done, you only had to ask Robert Saab. He was so committed to his job that he did not take leave even on the day he got married--he came to the college straight from the wedding reception!

  
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My tutor, the reverend Ian Shankland, was an extremely nice man, but he got very angry if anyone walked across the lawns. He had an old Austin car, which he parked at Allnutt South from morning till evening every Sunday. He loved it more than his wife, who was active in theatre. I can never forget him. He was the one who sought me out and informed me that I had qualified for History Honours, having managed a first class in the first year BA Pass examination.

Our principal was the legendary S.C. Sircar. The dean, William Rajpal, who succeeded him had an asthmatic daughter. After my graduation, I enrolled for MA History but failed to get residence. So I met Rajpal and told him that dust on Delhi roads was aggravating my asthma. I wheezed for effect. He immediately allotted me V 14 Mukarji West.

The most fascinating teacher was Mohammad Amin Saab, who taught mediaeval Indian History. He wore sherwani and pyjamas, and as he lectured he kept one foot on the table, looking regal like a Mughal emperor. He later became vice chancellor of Hamdard University.

These were wonderful teachers, but it was the barfi man Sukhiya who introduced me to the mysteries of accountancy. He sat under a tree with his mouthwatering merchandise. Whenever I went to him, he would open his account book and claim that I owed him money. I revisited him two years after leaving college. Unfailingly, Sukhiya opened his account book and asked me to pay up an imaginary debt of twenty-five rupees. His son Rohtas inherited the business and ran it until his death three years ago. The tree is still there, but no barfi man. Hopefully, the Principal, Professor John Varghese, will heed my request to find a relative of Sukhiya to fill the vacuum.

The Principal is a man of mettle who is making systematic efforts to burnish the image of the college and striving hard to elevate it as a premium institution. I have no doubt that he will succeed in his lofty mission. He has inspired the faculty and introduced farsighted initiatives, besides constituting the Alumni Association to tap the intellectual and other resources of old students' network. I thank him for his resolute persistence and admirable dedication.

The launch of St Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning was one of his laudable initiatives earlier this year, and a Chair in Public Policy was established at the centre, thanks to a generous endowment made by Mr Reji Abraham, Managing Director of ABAN. The Chair will guide the college, as well as the centre, to run courses in policy, governance and international relations. Let me express the heartfelt gratitude of all the alumni to Mr Reji Abraham.

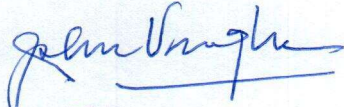
I am happy to note that the Core Committee of the Alumni Association is assisting the Principal wholeheartedly in his efforts to take the institution to new heights. I wish to thank each and every member of the Core Committee. I am proud to mention their names as they are all eminent achievers - Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, Dr Sudipto Mundle, Mr Raman Sidhu, Mr Rajesh Kumar, Prof Mukesh Williams, Mr Akash Mohapatra, Mr Sanjeev Meston, Dr Shachi Gurumayum and Dr Priya Ranjan. This is a brilliant constellation, no less!

I am immensely grateful to Ms Davina Smith, secretary of the Alumni Office, who has been the moving force behind the newsletter. The newsletter would not have seen the light of day but for her unflagging enthusiasm, creative energy and unceasing hard work. This bright young Stephanian, who graduated in 2014 with English Honours and took an MSc in HR Management and Work Psychology from the University of Sheffield, has seized the moment to make a difference. Thank you, Davina.

The newsletter will energise all of us to strive towards pre-eminence of our alma mater in the world of education.

Ad Dei Gloriam!

philipmathew@mm.co.in

  
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## REINVENTING THE ALUMNI

*Who says that life doesn't offer second chances? With the Alumni Office now in place, we wish to offer each and every member of the familia the opportunity to re-connect with and experience the College not just once, but over and over again.*

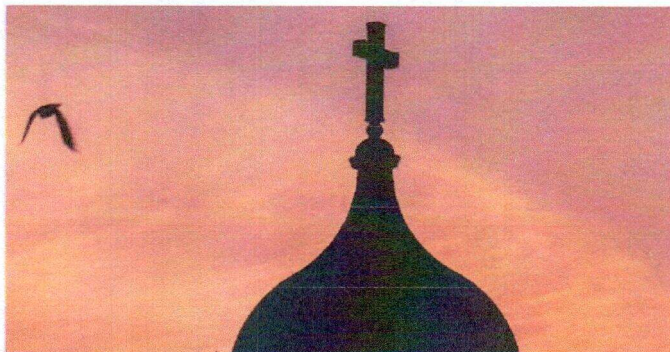
As I inch towards completing a year in office as the Secretary of the Alumni Office, the most arduous task that I have carried out so far, without an iota of doubt, is that of the "Mince Manager"!

Besides raising the sales of the quintessential Mince and Scrambled on normal days, the last six months, especially, have seen a significant rise in the footfall of alumni members visiting College. We have hosted a variety of events, from musical evenings to Golden and Silver Jubilee reunions, society engagements, and the Annual Alumni Lunch, which was a roaring success. Moreover, we have done some serious fundraising in these past few months, which has inspired many more Stephanians to give back to College in some form or the other.

Through the Alumni Office, we aim to reach out to the Global Stephanian Fraternity not only for reunions and get-togethers, but for some value adding engagements, mentorship programmes, lecture series, and networking events to name a few. We also seek to initiate and empower the interaction between the Alumni Members and the current Junior Members of College.

So far, in order to re-ignite the connections, I've been trying to create a social media presence for the College. We are now officially active on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. At this point, I would like to seek your suggestions, expectations, and also welcome recommendations for the kind of activities you would like to see the College conduct to engage with its alumni. We look forward to strengthening this tradition as we strive towards creating a robust alumni association.

*-Davina Smith*



## IN COLLEGE: RINGING IN THE 140TH YEAR

1st February 2020 - College Day.

As the institution enters its 140th year, there's a plethora of things to be thankful for, to ponder upon, to strive towards, and to initiate. Here we enlist one of each.

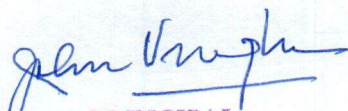
From a humble beginning in Katra Kaushal Rai in Chandni Chowk with 5 pupils in 1881, we are now at some 1200 Junior Members walking the hallowed corridors each year. Although, what might seem as a meagre number to most people outside the four walls of College, Stephanians consider it to be a lot! Ask any of the "old boys" and they would categorise this number as a "crowd". And more so, one with a lot of "screaming women!"

Over the years, or may be decades, no wait... century, no change has been as significant as that of making St. Stephen's College co-ed (AGAIN) in 1975. And if the truth be told, that's the best thing to have happened to College. They say the future is female, but we would like to believe that the College has attained greater heights with the combined efforts of men and women. After all, we are #1 in the country as per India Today! That's one thing we are definitely thankful for.

In the last 139 years, while we may have shifted campuses and grown in numbers, what we haven't done is increased the number of courses offered. Minimalism is good, but not in this sense. We still remain an institution offering a selection of total 10 courses only, when we have the potential to do much more. That's what we ponder upon and aim to strive towards spreading our reach and resources. While we may not be able to do so instantly, but baby steps towards the goal cannot harm anyone.

Earlier this year, the College launched its newest centre of Excellence, the St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) which hosted its flagship programme in Public Policy and International Relations. This 6-week programme not only saw a massive interest amongst the applicants, but also saw a host of alumni members returning to college as participants, and more importantly as lecturers and facilitators. This initiative was something that was conjured up as a simple idea by Mr Blesson Mathew (batch of 2013), but was implemented under the guidance of Principal John Varghese, and with assistance from Ms Davina Smith (batch of 2014) and Ms Joanna David (batch of 2018). If four people can bring an idea into fruition, imagine what an army of Stephanians together can do to take their alma mater to newer heights in realms yet to be explored by the institution.

So SCAL is a prelude and we hope that the 140th year will help College become increasingly relevant to the world.

  
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## WHAT'S ON IN STEPHANIA

### Golden Jubilees



1st Nov 2019: The Graduating Batch of 1969 celebrated their Golden Jubilee in College. A special lunch in the Dining Hall was followed by a short presentation by current Junior Members in the Dining Hall Lawns. Most of the guests who attended the re-union returned to college after 49 years, but mentioned that the College still looked the same after half a century! It was a refreshing afternoon of reliving the 'golden' years.

4th Nov 2019: The Freshman Physics Batch of 1969 organised a get together to commemorate 50 years of their joining the College. The batch as a token of gratitude presented a plaque to the Principal. Café hog which featured Mince and Scrambled was the highlight, along with a tour of the Science Block that did not exist during their time. This was followed by an interactive session with the current Third Year Physics students. This exercise was very much appreciated by the current Junior Members as they got to interact with the Alumni directly.

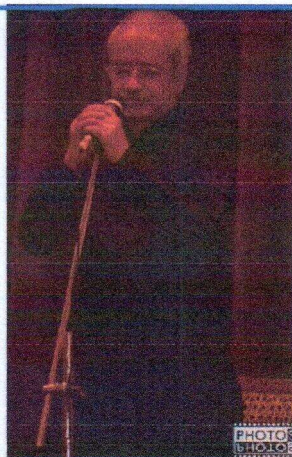


### Singing Sensations

The St. Stephen's College Alumni Association hosted two Musical Evenings in College.

Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya (left) [batch of 1971, 73], former Additional Solicitor General of India, performed golden melodies of the yesteryears, earlier in October 2019.

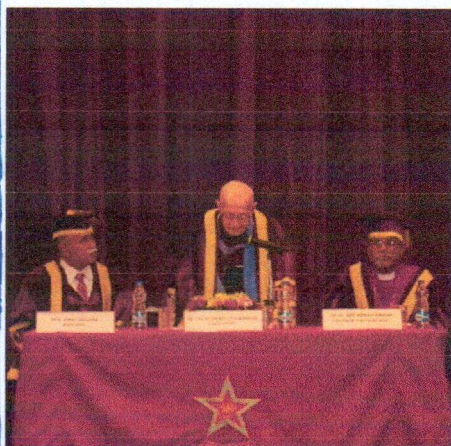
And later, in February 2020, a Leap Day musical performance was put up by Dr Charu Kapoor (right) [batch of 1988, 91], Associate Professor, Physics DU, in the College Hall, who also sang the greatest hits accompanied with piano. While both the events were a success, we'd like to mention that both our guests took great pains and incurred considerable financial expenses for their performances. Hence, we'd like to encourage our alumni to further support such efforts with greater attendance.



*San Vrogh*  
PRINCIPAL







7th Dec 2019: In memory of our founder principal Rev. Samuel Scott Allnutt, The Founder's Day Ceremony took place in the College Hall, and our very own and beloved Dr. David E. U. Baker was the Chief Guest.

Dr Baker joined College in 1969 and, as every Stephanian who has graduated in the last fifty years would agree, is a living legend. He has influenced the lives of a myriad of young people who've walked the corridors of the College, and especially of those Junior Members who've had the privilege of having him as their Block Tutor.

Be it the alumni, his former colleagues or the current Senior Members of College, each and every Stephanian has a treasure trove of memories of conversations held with "Baker Sahab" over his famous "Teas", examples of his disciplinarian routine, anecdotes of his unbeatable spirit, and above everything else, his humility. It was the Principal's conscious decision to have Dr Baker as our Chief Guest, thereby making the Founder's Day 2019 a very special and memorable one.

7th Dec 2019: The batch of 1994 celebrated their 25th year of graduation with the quintessential Cafe Hog session, followed by a closed event in the College Hall which featured a throwback video, performances by some of the batchmates, and sharing of their best memories in College. They also did a massive fundraising drive for the College and on 6th February 2020 presented a cheque of INR 50,00,000/- to the Principal, Prof John Varghese.

This very initiative has been one of a kind and has inspired the upcoming batches to do the same.

The amount received will be put to a specific use in College which shall be shared with the Stephanian Community very soon.



8th Dec 2019: The year 2019 ended on a high note for the Alumni of College, when the Annual Alumni Reunion and Lunch saw a record turnout in the recent history. Over 300 members joined in and made the event a roaring success. Based on the pre-event confirmations, we had to change the venue at the last minute, from the Dining Hall Lawns to the Allnutt Court! We had over 25 College Societies put up stalls, and many of them secured funding from the Alumni for their upcoming events and annual fests. It was an afternoon to remember, and we look forward to a much larger gathering in 2020! Link to all photographs: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mAmbMuFmNNOdhcPOCqovApp\\_PFEJ\\_gZIf?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mAmbMuFmNNOdhcPOCqovApp_PFEJ_gZIf?usp=sharing)

*John Varghese*  
**PRINCIPAL**







All throughout December 2019, Stephanian Alumni Chapters across the world were super active. Stephanians in the UAE, Singapore, Rajasthan, Lucknow, and the Southern Stephanian Society hosted their independent reunion events locally.



Here photographed are the Stephanians in the UAE (top), Stephanians in Rajasthan (middle), and the Southern Stephanian Society [based out of Bangalore] (bottom).

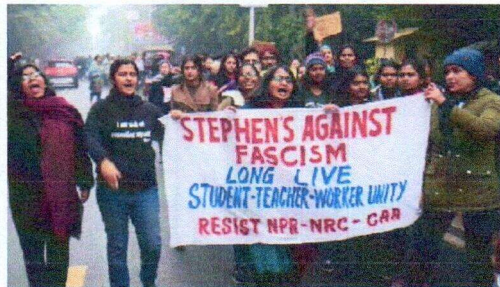


The Batch of 1980 hosted an independent closed event at the Delhi Golf Club, wherein the College Café had put up a Merchandise Stall.

In January 2020, another Stephanians' Lunch hosted by Mr Amardeep Singh Ahluwalia (Batch of 1986) and Mr Parul Soni (Batch of 1996) was organised at the India International Centre, Delhi which also witnessed a huge turnout.

Lastly, the Mumbai Chapter organised their reunion also in January 2020. And, upon prior notification to us, the Café had arranged for select merchandise to be couriered to Mumbai.

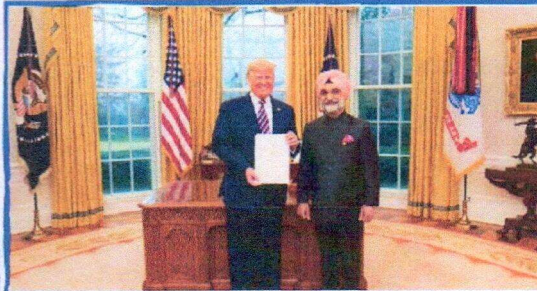
## JANUARY - MARCH 2020



A first in 30 years - The Junior members of College boycotted classes in support of JMI & JNU, and to oppose the CAA-NRC. The students went around the campus and read the Preamble amidst heavy rains. The last time such protests happened in College were during the Mandal Commission in the 1990s. This very initiative had been widely applauded by the Alumni members of College on Social Media.

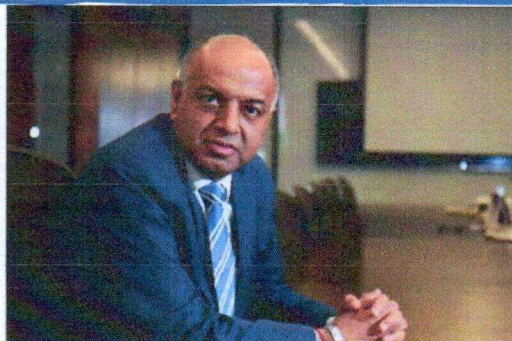


Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla (Batch of 1982) took over as the 33rd Foreign Secretary of India. Here pictured with and welcomed by Dr S. Jaishankar (Batch of 1976) the current Minister of External Affairs.



Amb Taranjit Singh Sandhu (Batch of 1982) replaces his batchmate Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla as the Indian Ambassador to the United States of America. Here pictured with and welcomed by President Donald Trump.





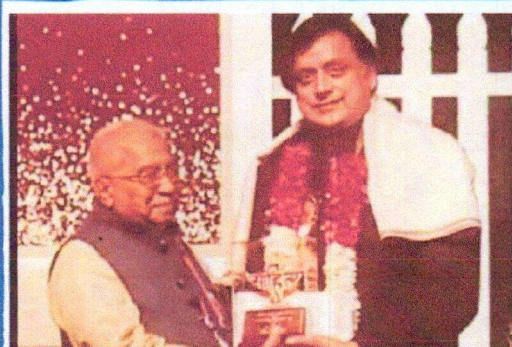
Mr Sanjeev Bikhchandani (Batch of 1984) Co-founder of Info Edge (naukri.com, jeevansathi.com, 99acres.com, shiksha.com, naukrigulf.com) awarded the Padma Shri - India's fourth-highest civilian honour.



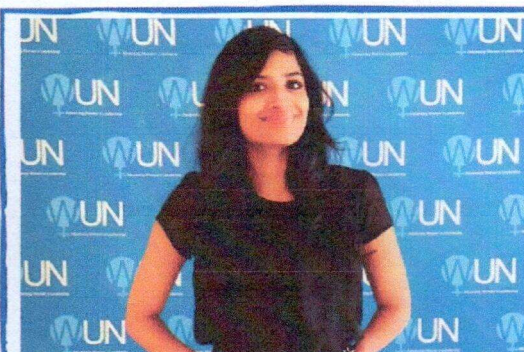
Ms Atishi Marlena (Batch of 2001) gets elected as a Member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly after winning the constituency of Kalkaji by a difference of over 10000 votes.



Amb Rakesh Sood (Batch of 1972) conferred the Commander of the National Order of Merit, France for helping shape the steadfast Indo-French bilateral relations into a distinct strategic partnership. We had the pleasure of hosting Amb Sood and his batchmates in College as part of the Freshman Physics Batch of 1969's 50 years of joining College reunion.



Dr Shashi Tharoor (Batch of 1975), Member of Parliament - Thiruvananthapuram, won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 (Category: Creative non-fiction in English language) for his book An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India.



Dr Malvika Iyer (Batch of 2009), a bomb blast survivor, a motivational speaker, a disability rights activist, and a model striving to make fashion accessible to all, was one of the seven women achievers who took over PM Narendra Modi's Twitter Handle on Women's Day 2020.





## ST. STEPHEN'S CENTRE FOR ADVANCED LEARNING

The College Launched its newest Centre of Excellence - St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) which offered the flagship 6-week executive programme in Public Policy and International Relations. The first cohort ran from 11th January 2020 to 23rd February 2020.

The programme received over 400 applications, out of which 80 candidates were shortlisted and invited for interviews (in true Stephanian style!). The interviews were conducted by Prof John Varghese, Principal, Dr Ajay Dua (Batch of 1967, 69), Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI, Mr Deepak Mukarji (Batch of 1983) Former Director & Country Head - Corporate Affairs at Shell, India, and Mr Blesson Mathew (Batch of 2013) Chevening Scholar and Director - International Partnerships & Development, Project DEFY. A total of 85 candidates from backgrounds as diverse as banking, corporate, law, and government were selected for the programme.

The inaugural ceremony saw the launch of the Centre and the establishment of a Chair in Public Policy through a generous endowment by Mr Reji Abraham, MD, ABAN. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Dr Shashi Tharoor, and the subsequent lectures saw a host of eminent and experienced Stephanian policy practitioners, government officials, and civil servants. Below are the members who lectured, in the order of their sessions delivered:

Mr Sanjay Sahay (Batch of 1985, 87), ADGP Karnataka Police; Dr Alwyn Didar Singh (Batch of 1972, 74), Former Secretary General - FICCI, and Former Secretary, GoI; Dr Jaimini Bhagwati (Batch of 1972), Former Indian High Commissioner to the UK; Mr Swashpawan Singh (Batch of 1969), Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations; Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar (Batch of 1961), Former MP Rajya Sabha & Lok Sabha and Diplomat; Mr J.K. Dadoo (Batch of 1978), Former Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; Dr Ajay Dua (Batch of 1967, 69), Former Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; Mr Mohan Menon (Batch of 1968, 70), Former Additional Secretary, GoI; Mr Ajay Singha (Batch of 1979), Former ED - American Chambers of Commerce in India (AmCham); Mr Ajay Bisaria (Batch of 1983), High Commissioner of India to Canada; Justice Manmohan Sarin (Batch of 1966), Former Chief Justice, High Court, J&K and Former Lokayukta, Delhi; Mr Rajesh Kumar, IRS (Batch of 1994), Senior Joint Director of Customs and Central Excise at National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN); Dr K.P. Krishnan (Batch of 1979), Former Secretary, Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship; Dr Sudipto Mundle (Batch of 1969), Former Director, Policy and Strategy, Asian Development Bank. The final lecture was delivered by Mr Amitabh Kant (Batch of 1976), CEO - NITI Aayog. To make this initiative memorable for our distinguished speakers, they received a special memento as a token of gratitude on behalf of College.

All our candidates received a Certificate of Merit upon successful completion of the programme. The College hopes to conduct this programme thrice a year.



*John Varghese*  
PRINCIPAL







## SPECIAL FEATURE

In these times of uncertainty, when everyone is being advised to practice self-isolation, let's pick up all those hobbies and interests that we let go of, a long time ago.

At least to solve the 'what to read' conundrum, we are recommending here some of the latest and recent works published by fellow Stephanians. And we would like to start with the 2019 Sahitya Akademi Award winning work.

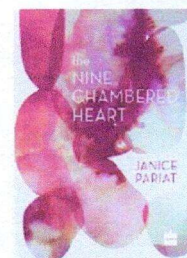
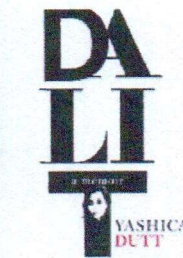
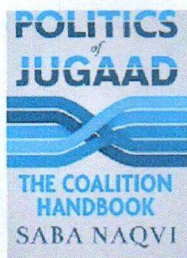
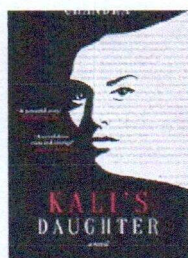
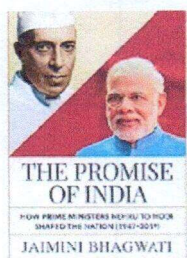
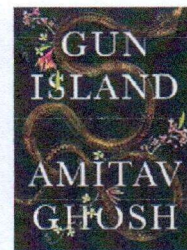
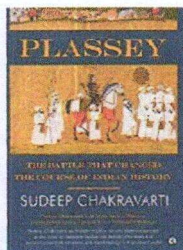
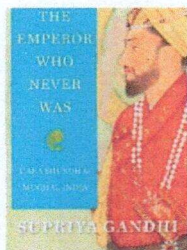
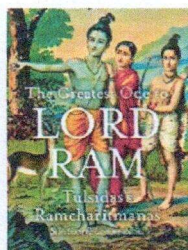
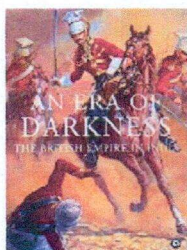
1. An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India - *Shashi Tharoor*
2. The Greatest Ode to Lord Ram: Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas; Selections & Commentaries - *Pavan K Varma*
3. The Emperor Who Never Was: Dara Shukoh in Mughal India - *Supriya Gandhi*
4. Plassey: The Battle that Changed the Course of Indian History - *Sudeep Chakravarti*
5. Gun Island - *Amitav Ghosh*
6. The Promise of India: How Prime Ministers Nehru to Modi Shaped the Nation (1947-2019) - *Jaimini Bhagwati*
7. Kali's Daughter - *Raghav Chandra*
8. Politics of Jugaad: The Coalition Handbook - *Saba Naqvi*
9. Coming Out as Dalit - *Yashica Dutt*
10. The Nine Chambered Heart - *Janice Pariat*

Of course, a list of Stephanian recommended reads can never be complete without the mention of certain authors. Hence, here are some all-time must reads.

1. Train to Pakistan - *Khuswant Singh*
2. India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy - *Ramchandra Guha*
3. English, August: An Indian Story - *Upamanyu Chatterjee*

Dr Sudipto Mundle (batch of 1969), Former Director at Asian Development Bank, has been regularly sharing with us his latest published articles. Readers are invited to check out his, as well as other alumni members' articles on the alumni website: <https://alumni.ststephens.edu/articles>

We hope all our readers and the near and dear ones of the greater Stephanian family are safe and healthy in these times that we are living in. Proper care, hygiene, and self-isolation are the best things we can practice. Let's all stay safe, not panic, and be cautious at all times.







## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by putting on record that my return to my alma mater has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I feel blessed to be in the position that I am today.

This newsletter would not have been possible if the Principal, Prof John Varghese would not have given me the opportunity to come back to College as the Alumni Office Secretary. No amount of thanks would ever be enough for the support and guidance that he has provided me for every task that I have undertaken and at every step of the way.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr Philip Mathew and the Core Committee for being so hands on with the Alumni Association and for driving the Regional Chapters' involvement and engagement with the College. I would especially like to thank Mr Mathew for sharing such a heartwarming message for our readers.

And lastly, a huge thank you is in order to each and every one of our Alumni member and the greater Stephanian family for tirelessly working towards upholding the spirit of Stephanian, and for the greater welfare of the people and societies they serve. They are the ones who not just raise the bar, but also are the constant source of inspiration for all the Stephanian generations that follow.

Once again, I most humbly request all our Alumni Members to make this initiative a success by touching base with College in whichever way is suitable to them. Please share your stories, contributions, and ideas with us, as we look forward to making this newsletter as engaging and interactive as possible. That will be all for this issue. We plan on making this a quarterly publication. We'll be back, soon!


## CONNECT WITH US


For all inquiries, suggestions, event updates, publication requests, and everything else, please write to:




Ms. Davina Smith  
Secretary - Alumni Office  
E: alumni@ststephens.edu  
M: +91-9319767618

Please also visit the official Social Media pages for more updates: St. Stephen's College, Delhi -

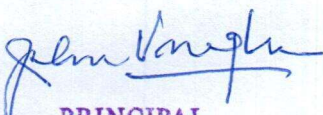
 <https://www.linkedin.com/school/st-stephens-college-delhi>

 <https://www.twitter.com/ststephensclg>

 <https://www.instagram.com/ststephensclg>



**AD DEI GLORIAM**

  
**PRINCIPAL  
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE**







APRIL - JUNE 2020

VOL 1 ISSUE 2

# MINCED & SCRAMBLED

*The Stephanian Alumni Newsletter*



## The Colours of Stephania

### IN THIS ISSUE

CORONATIMES: ST. STEPHEN'S IN ISOLATION

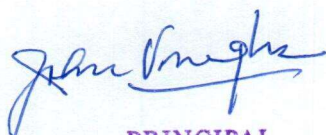
ALUMNI CHRONICLES: WHAT'S ON IN STEPHANIA

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR DAVID L. GOSLING

REMEMBERING THE ONES WE LOST

The cover picture is part of the St. Stephen's Sketchbook illustrated by Mr Allen Shaw (Batch of 1994), and the project is coordinated and managed by Mr Kenneth Khalkho (Batch of 1993).

The Sketchbook was first launched in College on Founder's Day 2019.

  
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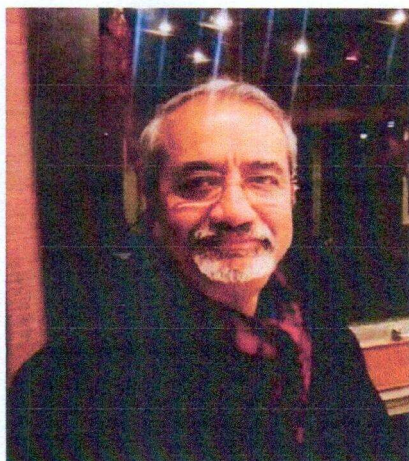




## **Welcome Note**

*Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya*

*Secretary, St. Stephen's College Alumni Association*



Dear fellow Stephanians,

Greetings !

This is pandemic time. The world is facing a severe challenge to save lives. In this crisis, we the Alumni of our College, are silently rendering services to humanity, in various capacities. The battle goes on. By God's grace, the virus will soon be destroyed, I am sanguine.

I am happy to inform you that our Alumni Association Office, spearheaded by the redoubtable Ms Davina Smith, a Stephanian herself, and with the inspirations from our President, Mr Philip Mathew, and the College Principal, Prof John Varghese, is bringing out our next newsletter. I hope you find the same interesting.

Exactly 52 years ago, in July, 1968, I joined College, and heard the then Principal, Prof Satish Chandra Sircar in the College Hall. Prof Sircar's welcome message was ringing: It is character, love for fellow beings, knowledge and ethics that cleave every barrier towards achieving perfection. These words continue to reverberate. Such is the power of righteousness!

Five years in College (including PG) elapsed in no time. This was the best phase of my life. We exchanged ideas thoughts and imaginations freely, and liberally. India's composite culture was epitomised in our College. Students from every part of India joined. Friendship and camaraderie pervaded all around. The environment was inspiring.

As I write this and reminisce my college memories, I recall, ragging was intense in those days. Two of my seniors, Pulok Chatterjee and Banbit Anthony Roy, dragged me to hostel room and ragged me severely. Whilst Banbit was active, a suave Pulok came to my rescue when he noticed tears in my eyes! I was then barely 16. It is another matter that we became the best of friends subsequently.

Our College produced the best in every field including sports. I was determined to get into the cricket team but in net practice invariably my middle stump got uprooted. So, my cricketing dreams were dashed. I then requested Ashok Gandotra, two years my senior, to permit me to carry drinks on the field during interval. Ashok and Sunil Dev, both great cricketers, agreed. This was the pinnacle of my cricketing career! But my friendship with these two great human beings, like all our College friends, has risen above time. That's the beauty of College education, I continue to realise. The bond and camaraderie is immutable.

In the meanwhile, may I respectfully wish you all the very best, happy reading and please stay safe.

I remain, ever yours in the Lord,

Bishwajit Bhattacharyya  
AD DEI GLORIAM.

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## **#StStephensInIsolation**

*A glimpse into a never before seen or experienced College*



It all started with a man in China who ate a bat, and here we are now, most of us pining to return to our natural much loved habitat, College. Many of us took college for granted and now realisation hits hard. But there were a few left in the college, the lucky ones, the ones who still got to roam around this great campus, loiter in those brick laden walls and sunbath in the plush green lawns.

With classes suspended, some rejoiced, Finally! Redemption! Excited first years left for home as soon as the news spread. But another section of the college was down, for they had lost the last few days of their lives in their Utopia. For those who stayed, it was going to be an opportunity of a life time. To be a part of History. But realistically it was going to be like a never ending series of Sundays, days with No Professors, No Societies, No Students and most importantly, No friends!

Measures were taken to tackle the spread of the corona disease and hence the entire campus was closed until further notice. No one was allowed to go out or come back. If anyone needed anything, the college would get it for you. Body temperatures substituted the signatures on the Attendance registers. And to the agony of most Junior Members on campus, no more ordering food! But the amazing part had been that the Café was open throughout quarantine, and JP ji and Sonu bhai were always there to make Anda Maggi with Chicken Patty. An emergency response team consisting of Prof John Varghese, Rev Monodeep Daniel, Dr. Chinkhanlun Guite, Mr Thomas, and Rev Samuel Shekhar, met once every three days to discuss the progress of everything in College.

The ones who stayed were indeed becoming a part of history. Movie screenings in the College Hall, beginning with 'Home Alone', to complement the occasion, Badminton sessions in the gym, with the Principal, Bursar and a select Senior Members as spectators and sometimes participants, Hide and Seek with the children of the Karamcharis had become a routine. The Corona Cup was introduced - Football matches with faculty members, (where Dr Chinkhanlun Guite - Professor, Department of Physics, won the Golden Glove). But what took the sports scene to the next level was the auction of the Corona Cricket League. The Junior Common Room (JCR) was buzzing that night. The hosts were all set in their formal attires (presuming that they got it for their Grad D which sadly they missed).

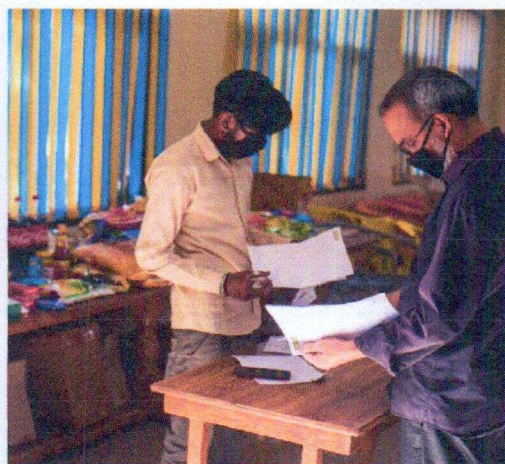
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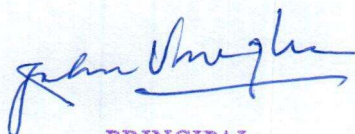


The four owners looked sharp and were given makeshift paddles using the table tennis rackets available there for bidding and Sourav, the host, came with his own hammer, to hammer down the prices for each of the bidders. There were 29 players and each team had 2 crores to spend on a team of eight. The bidding was aggressive and the four teams: The Winning Team, The Eight Snipers, Topsy Yorkers and The Jokers, all tactically approached the auction. In the end, Syed became the most valuable player for 6 million rupees. Followed by none other than, our Café manager, Mr Mohit Gandhi for 5.8 million. The tournament was enjoyed by all and was an experience in itself.



Shopping for items and bare necessities became an interesting and exciting task. Every week a Google Sheet would be released where students could place orders. A systematic team of junior members called 'Team Retailers' (A Sub Committee of the self-proclaimed Go Corona Welfare committee) was set in place. The order lists would be too diverse and complicated that the team were always on their toes to work on these orders. The fun segment of ordering was called 'fastest finger first'. A notice would be sent before hand and as soon as the clock struck nine, Rev Samuel would start uploading the pictures of items he saw in a local supermarket and would give students a time, ranging from 2 to 10 minutes, to order these items. This was quite eventful because even those night owls who woke up only for lunch were found eagerly alert on their phones. A team would be sitting inside the café to receive orders and the first to order would get what they needed. And for those who were at the 'Retail Centre' aka The Café, their phones would be blasting with messages. Feels like stock exchange, doesn't it? Well it actually looked like it, each one would be calling out for a stock while one of them would be entering the same it into an excel sheet, simultaneously sending the consolidated list to Rev Samuel. Once they were delivered, another round of sorting would come in and again 'The Team Retailers' would start consolidating each item, find its cost and distribute it to those who placed the orders.

Desperate times call for desperate measures. While many tried to spend this lockdown in the most productive way possible, by learning to play an instrument, enrolling in language courses or maybe finally learning how to make a cup of tea; a few in college tried to master a life skill that only very few dare to do. Learning to cut one's own hair. A lot of questions would pop up about the large number of bald humans walking around in college. But the truth was many of them didn't go bald intentionally. Practice makes one perfect and hence after loads of practice, going bald seemed to be their final solution. But after almost 10 weeks, many had mastered the art of barbering that they were confident enough to give anyone a trim when they needed it. They had become so good at it that they earned praises from Rev Samuel, who was amazed to see such clean trims around him.

  
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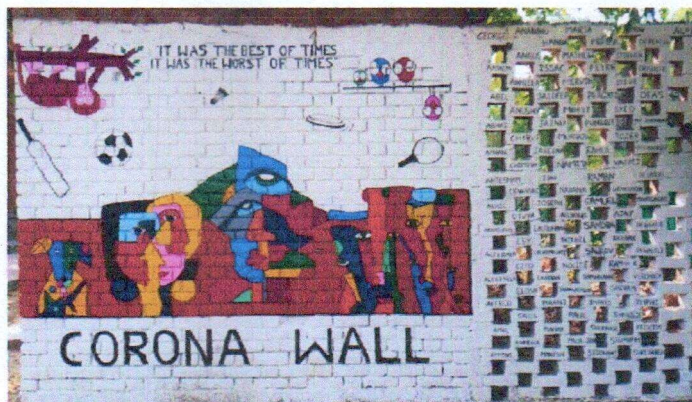






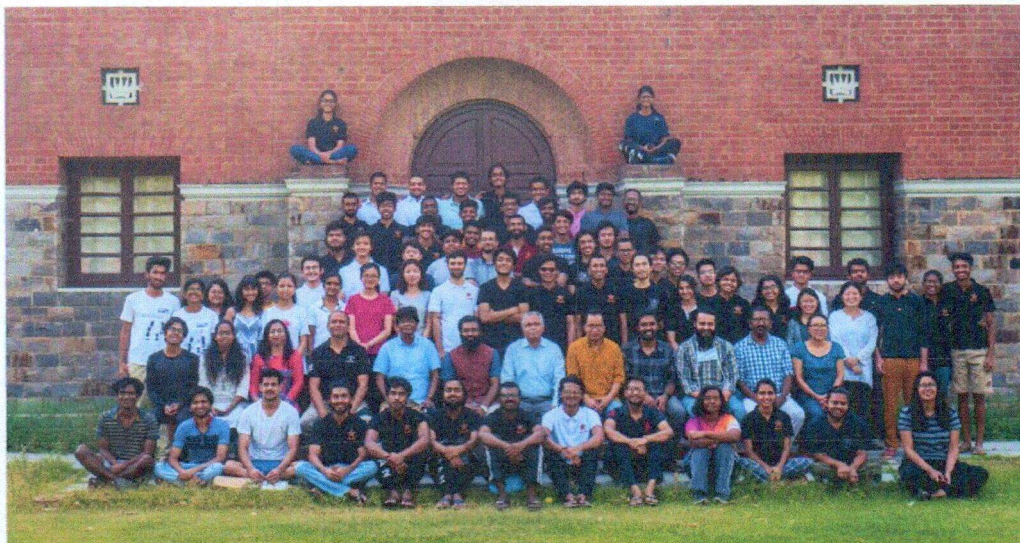
When speaking of Rev Samuel and the other members of the administration, they have done their best in these unforgiving times. The mess is currently working on just 7 staff members and they are not working in shifts, while earlier they had a team of 21 working in two shifts each day. Students who were on campus said, "They have sacrificed so much for us and we are extremely grateful for the same." A junior member who stayed back in college was not shy to show their gratitude towards them. One day Rev Samuel came across an anonymous note in his office along with few toffees. The note was a token of gratitude directed towards the administration and the staff for the efforts they were taking to give the students the best they could.

These uncertain times have unravelled a whole new way of living and appreciating things, people and circumstances. No one would've ever imagined in the wildest of their dreams how the past few months have been for everyone in general, and for those who've experienced College in a new and unique light.



It is now a shared sentiment that although we are far apart, and that a select section of the College, the third years' have missed their quintessential rites of passage - The Dismissal Service and the Graduation Dinner, this social isolation has actually brought everyone close together and we've never felt more happier and contented during these disillusioning days.

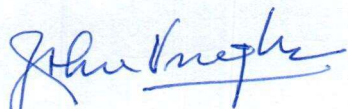
And to treasure all these memories, the artists on campus painted the Corona Wall with the names of 'Those Who Stayed Back'.



Article written by:

Amal Kuruvilla Babu (BSc Programme, I Year) & Anisha Alex (BA Hons. History, II Year)

Photographs provided by: The team of [@notsostephanian](https://www.instagram.com/notsostephanian). Follow them on Instagram

  
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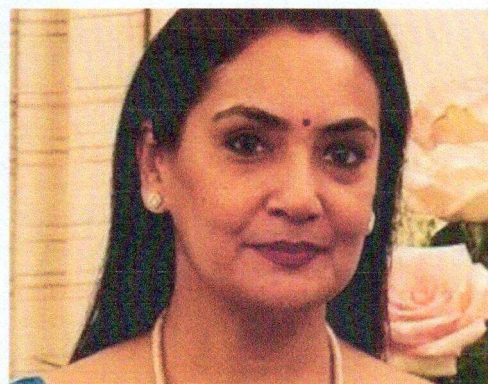
## What's on in Stephania



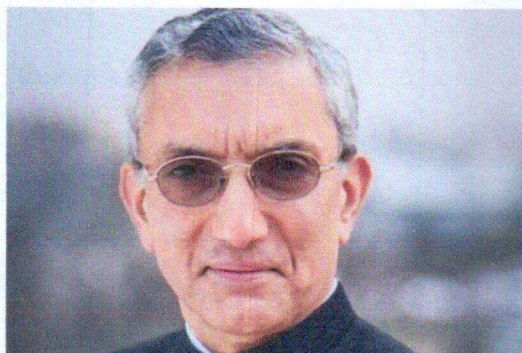
Amb Ajay Bisaria, IFS (Batch of 1983) appointed as the Indian High Commissioner to Canada. Prior to assuming Office in Ottawa, Amb Bisaria visited College and addressed the students of St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) as part of the Public Policy and International Relations course, where he spoke about India-Pakistan contemporary relations and his tenure as the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan.



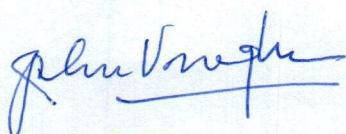
Amb Jawed Ashraf, IFS (Batch of 1989) has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to France. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly. Presently he is the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Singapore.



Amb Monika Kapil Mohta, IFS (Batch of 1984) has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Switzerland. She is expected to take up the assignment shortly. Presently she is serving as the Ambassador of India to Sweden and Latvia.



Amb Rahul Chhabra, IFS (Batch of 1986) has been appointed as the Economic Relations Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. Prior to taking over his current post, Mr. Chhabra was High Commissioner to Kenya, Ambassador to Somalia and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) & the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), based in Nairobi.



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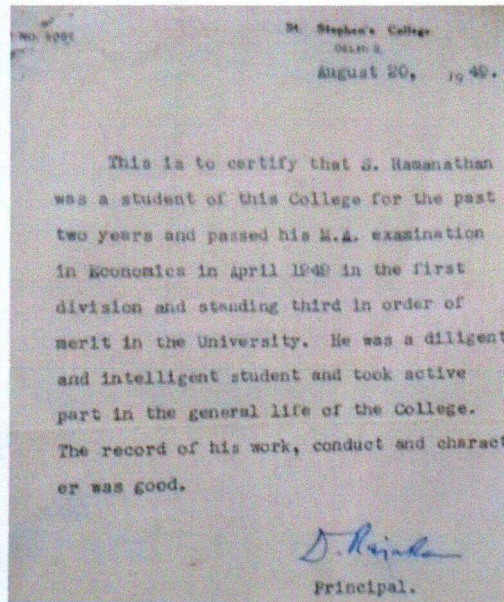
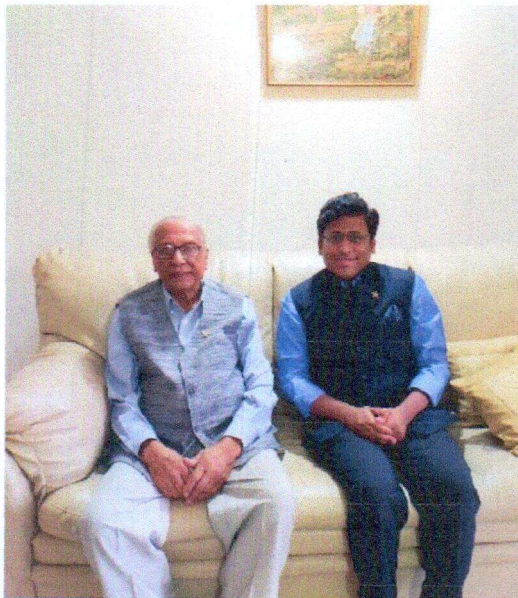


Mr Vijay Chhibber, retd IAS (Batch of 1975, 77) has been appointed as the Director General of Electric Power Transmission Association (EPTA).

Mr Chhibber was formerly the Union Secretary of Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways (MORTH) with an additional charge of Chairman, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

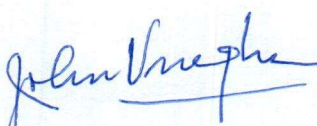


Mr Dasho Ugyen Tsechup Dorji (Batch of 1988) has been re-elected as the President of The Bhutan Football Federation for another four years. In 2019 Mr Dorji became the first Bhutanese to be elected as the executive committee member of the Asian Football Confederation.



Just a few weeks prior to the lockdown, our alumnus Mr Blesson Mathew (Batch of 2013) paid a visit to one of our most senior alumni members, based out of Bangalore - Mr S Ramanathan.

Mr Ramanathan, a retired IAS Officer, graduated from College in the year 1949, and soon after was appointed as a lecturer in Economics in college for a brief period, starting November 1949. He shared stories of College during Principal David Raja Ram's time, and said the memories were as fresh as ever.

  
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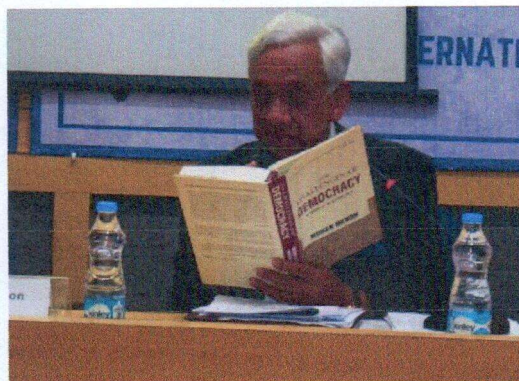






THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY: A WORLD IN CONFLICT' by Mr Mohan Menon retd IPS, (Batch of 1968, 70) has entered the hallowed shelves of the prestigious US Library of Congress (LOC). Originally published in March 2019, the book has received this honour within a year of its first publication.

Mr Menon also elucidated on chapters from his book when he lectured in College on International Security as part of the Public Policy and International Relations Course offered by SCAL.



Stephanians on Ground Report: Mr Rai Mahimapat Ray, IAS (left) [Batch of 2005] and Mr Priyank Mishra, IAS (right) [Batch of 2009]

Mr Ray is currently the District Magistrate for Ranchi, Jharkand and Mr Mishra is presently the CEO, Zila Parishad in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Their work and administration especially in tackling the Covid19 situation has been commendable and an inspiration for many. Follow the reports as published by The Print here:

<https://theprint.in/opinion/districts-fight-covid/ranchis-covid-success-story-helplines-for-stranded-workers-and-one-lakh-meals-a-day/446663/>

[https://theprint.in/opinion/jabalpur-is-a-success-story-in-the-covid-mess-of-madhya-pradesh/405771/?amp\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://theprint.in/opinion/jabalpur-is-a-success-story-in-the-covid-mess-of-madhya-pradesh/405771/?amp_twitter_impression=true)

(This article has been written by Ms Falguni Tewari (Batch of 2015))

We would like to know about and cover more such stories featuring our alumni. Get in touch with us via our social media handles or write to us at [alumni@ststephens.edu](mailto:alumni@ststephens.edu).



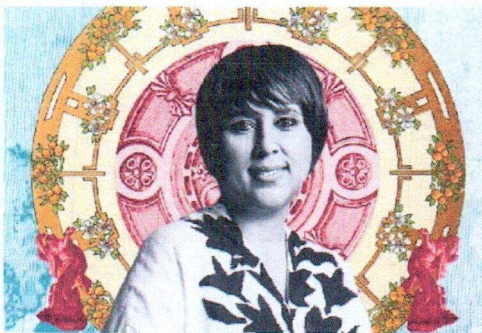


Mr Ashu Rathor (Batch of 1995), Global Delivery Tax Leader and US Partner at Ernst & Young, hosted an e-mentoring session in association with the Alumni Office and the College's Campus Placement Cell (CPC), on Post Covid19 Careers.

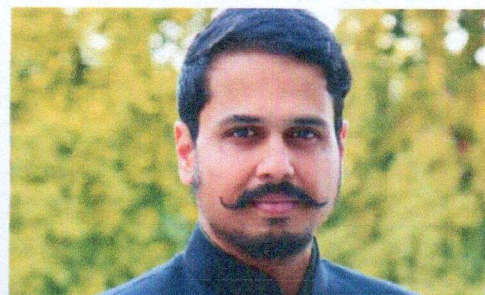
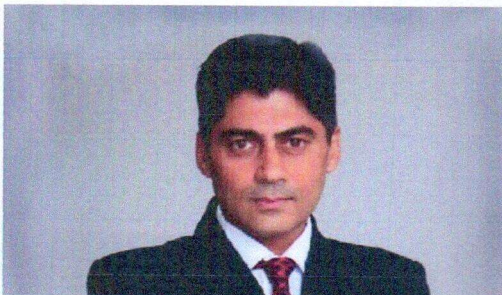
In this first of its kind initiative, we had over 80 current third year junior members join the session which was thoroughly insightful and informative for students looking at joining multi national consulting firms post graduation. Mr Rathor also shared other possible Corporate Career Options after graduating from courses like Economics and Mathematics.

**ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE, DELHI**  
THE ALUMNI OFFICE IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
THE CAMPUS PLACEMENT CELL IS HOSTING AN  
**E-MENTORING SESSION**  
ON  
Post Covid19 World: Careers in the Social Distancing Era  
BY  
**MR ASHU RATHOR**  
STEPHANIAN, BATCH OF 1995  
GLOBAL DELIVERY SERVICES TAX LEADER,  
MEMBER BY GLOBAL TAX EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE,  
& US PARTNER  
ERNST & YOUNG  
Day & Date: Friday, 15th May 2020  
Time: 2 pm to 4 pm  
OPEN TO STEPHANIANS ONLY  
Registrations via Google Forms

We would like to host more such sessions and invite ideas and suggestions from our alumni members for the same. Members can also collaborate with College Societies for such events.



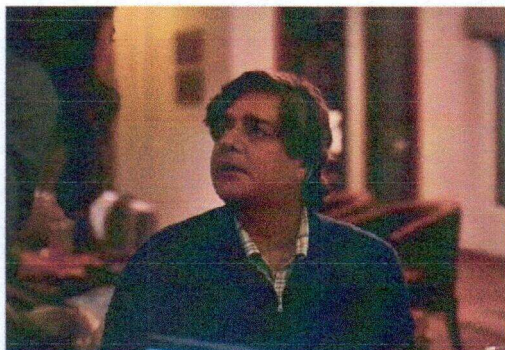
Ms Barkha Dutt (Batch of 1992) has been setting the highest standards in the realm of journalism through her initiative The MoJo, mobile journalism. She has been on the road for over 100 days and still counting, has covered over 23000 kms while tirelessly reporting issues including the migrant crisis, Covid19 updates and Indo-China border tensions, from ground zero across borders within the country. She's been an inspiration for many, and there's nothing stopping her!



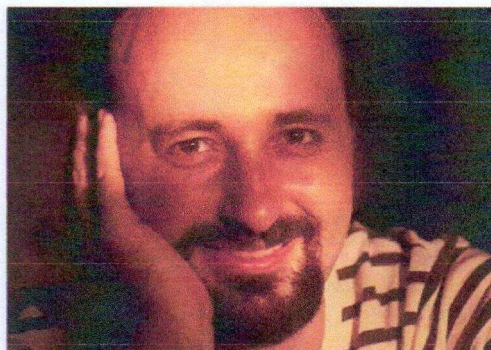
While speaking of excellence in Journalism by Stephanians, Mr Gaurav Sawant (left) [Batch of 1994, 96] and Mr Shiv Aroor (right) [Batch of 2001] have showcased exemplary reportage in the field of defence journalism. Their coverage of the Indo-China Border Tensions have been top notch with exclusive analysis. Follow them on the India Today Network.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all our Stephanian journalists across regions, both nationally and internationally, for upholding the ethos of the discipline, setting high benchmarks, and being an inspiration to all our current and prospective Stephanian junior members.



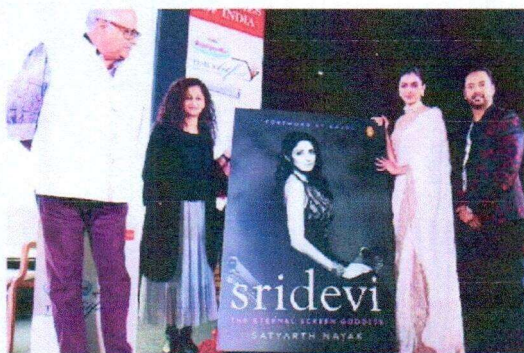


Mr Chandrachur Singh (Batch of 1989) makes a comeback and stars in the new hit web-series Aarya, opposite Ms Sushmita Sen. The show is an intense crime thriller which has been receiving rave reviews for its story and action. It is now being aired on Disney+ Hotstar.

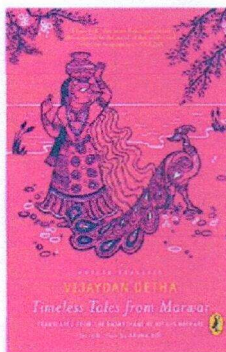


The online YouTube global film festival 'We Are One' featured four Indian movies, out of which two - 'Nasir' and 'Eeb Allay Ooo', showcased Mr Saumyanand Sahi's (Batch of 2008) extraordinary cinematographic brilliance.

## Stephanian Literary News and Recommendations

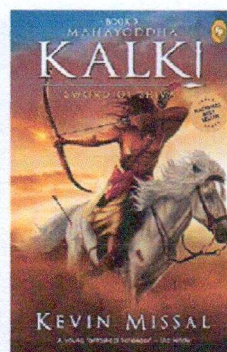
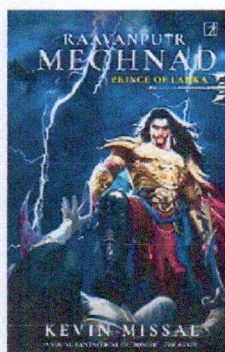
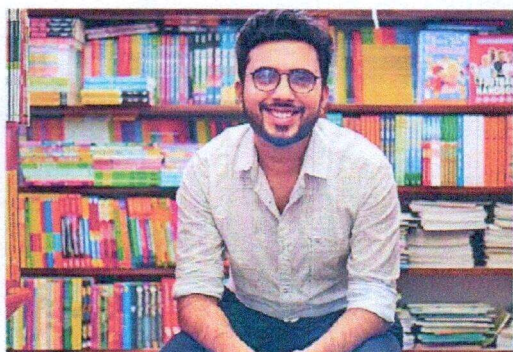


Mr Satyarth Nayak (Batch of 2003), author and screenwriter, launched his latest book, 'Sridevi: The Eternal Screen Goddess', which is a retelling of the life of Sridevi, the actress who remained an enigma till the end. Mr Nayak has remained an ardent admirer of her works, which led him to write this biography. Mr Nayak's other popular works are The Emperor's Riddles (2014), and he scripted historical television epic - Porus.

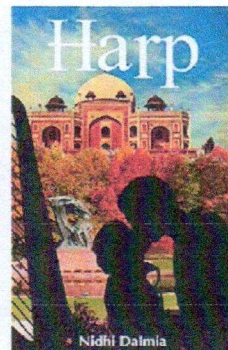
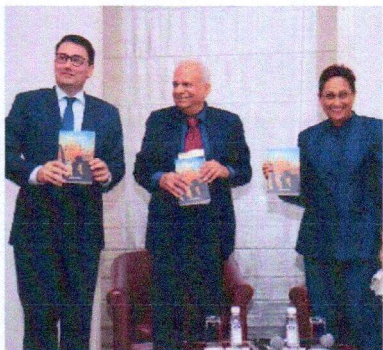


Mr Vishes Kothari (Batch of 2010), a financial consultant by profession, with a keen interest in the oral and musical traditions of Rajasthan, has translated the works of Padma Shri & Sahitya Akademi Awardee Mr Vijaydan Detha. "Timeless Tales from Marwar" is a handpicked collection of folk tales from the everlasting works of Detha's celebrated 'Batan ri Phulwari' meaning 'Garden of Tales'.

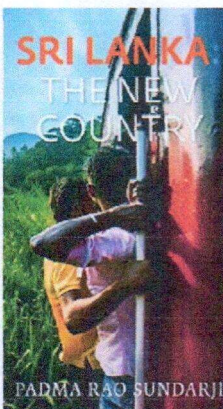




Mr Kevin Missal (Batch of 2017) is in the league of the top mythology and fantastical fiction authors, and has been writing since the age of 14. His latest book 'Raavanputr Meghnad' is a standalone book, which comes after his bestselling 'Kalki Trilogy'.



'Harp', a romantic fiction novel set in Paris and India, by entrepreneur Mr Nidhi Dalmia (Batch of 1968) was launched by the former French Ambassador to India, H.E. Alexandre Ziegler at the French Embassy Residence. Mr. Ziegler said that the evocative impressions of Paris in the book was a significant step in highlighting the friendship between India and France as well as the affection and admiration of the two peoples for each other.



Ms Padma Rao Sundarji (Batch of 1979) is a veteran foreign correspondent. Her book 'Sri Lanka: The New Country' is based on her reportage as a war correspondent in the Sri Lankan civil war for 16 years. The book has received excellent reviews both nationally and internationally. Ms Sundarji had been the South Asia bureau chief of German news magazine Der Spiegel till 2012, besides being associated with leading media houses in Germany, New York, and India.





## **An Interview with Dr David Lagourie Gosling**

*Interviewed by: Davina Smith*

*Dr David Lagourie Gosling taught in College from 1965-69 and 1995-98.*

**DS: Good Morning, Sir. How are you doing?**

DG: Good Morning, Davina. Very well, thank you.

**DS: Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I would like to begin by asking you, how do you remember St. Stephen's College?**

DG: A very life changing experience. When I first went there in the mid 1960's, it changed my views about a lot of things that I had previously believed. And I think I have never quite gone back to where I was before that experience. I was there for four years, which is enough to understand a lot about what's going on around you.

**DS: How did you get to know about College in the first place?**

DG: There is an ongoing programme between Cambridge University where I've been studying. (I'm a physicist by profession), and St. Stephen's College in Delhi. It goes back to the people who founded the college, the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. And there's still a link which pays the airfares of people who go out there from Cambridge for a period of a year or two. And I took advantage of that. I thought I was doing something new and different. And although I was only supposed to go for one year, I enjoyed it so much that I stayed for four.

**DS: That's lovely to know. So when you came to College, what was your assignment then and how did your one year term become that of four years?**

DG: Well, my job was to teach physics as that had been my main qualification. So that was the main reason why I came to College. But after I got here, I found there were other things that I needed to do. One was to be the resident tutor of a block of very lively students, Mukarji Court. Of course I can't tell you all the things that went on there, but they were very interesting and brought me close to the students and some of the younger teaching staff. The other thing, partly through one of the teaching staff and Suman Dubey, who was a recent graduate from college, I believe, and Ranjit Bhatia, may I call them young Turks, were very much involved in the press and they involved me in science writing for a couple of the national newspapers and for broadcasting on science topics for All India Radio. And I found that that was very much appreciated. I don't think there were many science writers at that time. And I was able to make, I think, quite a useful contribution through science writing. I even met the president of India, Dr Zakir Hussain, on some occasion. So my original brief teaching physics broadened to include other things as well.

**DS: When the time came for you to return back to the UK, did you ever think then that you would be coming back to College?**

DG: Well, at that point, No. They were four wonderful years. It was only 25 years later that I was invited back. I was doing research. I got a fellowship at Cambridge University College, which involved Religion and Culture in South Asia. And I found that the same scheme that took me out to Delhi originally was still operative. And so I went back to teach in the college, but also to do this research. I found myself back again as the resident tutor of a block of lively students and some of the same young and enthusiastic teaching staff, Ranjit Bhatia, Brij Raj Singh and all of the others who were still there. And of course, things had changed quite a lot at the college. And I was back in the same college again for three years, this time.

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**DS: When you came back to College in the 90's what changes did you notice 25 years later?**

DG: Well, first of all, the fact that the college was coeducational was the most obvious difference and a very good one, of course. The women students increased the college's academic standing in the universities and beyond. I still think that Lady Sriam College probably got the best exam results, but St. Stephen's College certainly benefited from its students enormously. And of course, socially as well. The first time I was in College, we had women students from Miranda House taking part in the plays. That was about all. So it was a very male fellowship with the kind of weaknesses of that kind of society.

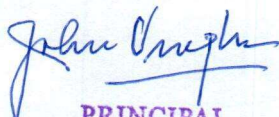
The second time, though, I found another thing different. You see, I went back to teach in the college a new course called Environmental Chemistry, because there was a lot of interest by then in environmental issues. People like Indira Gandhi and her sons and so on were very committed to all of these projects like the Project Tiger, and Mrs. Gandhi was, I think, the only head of state who went to the first United Nations conference on Environment and Development. The only one in the world, apart from the Swedish prime minister, who had to be there as it was in Uppsala, in Sweden. So environmental issues were very strong. I went to teach this new course of environmental chemistry because there was nobody in the college willing to teach it, except me. And at the same time I was invited to the other colleges as well, to help set up centres on energy and environment. So when I went into the other colleges, which in my first visit, I never went anywhere near Hindu College, Kirorimal, Daulat Ram, Khalsa College and so on, and Ramjas college, which I came to appreciate very much because of its social origin, and because of one particular member of the teaching staff, Dilip Simeon. And I found that these colleges were very much better and very interested in these issues. And that I found very encouraging. Delhi University was really coming to life as a sort of total entity without this one college - St. Stephen's. The College still was on top, I'm not denying that, but it was more, the first among equals.

**DS: That's really something new to know, because, sadly, most of the people who have been associated with college would not look at their neighbouring colleges as equal to St. Stephen's College. But it's really nice to see that, how your perspective towards the university was so different and yet so binding in a way. And I'm sure, a lot of people must have benefitted from this, during your visits to other colleges.**

My next question to you is, in terms of administration, it is often said that the principals of St. Stephen's are the ones who define the era for College. During the 60's it was Dr Sircar and then in the 90's Dr Wilson. What would you say were the differences in both the principals' outlook towards college? Or just your thoughts on both the principals?

DG: I very much admired Satish Sircar. And I think he hasn't been appreciated enough. He was at Cambridge University and he was a 'Senior Wrangler' in mathematics, which is a very high honour in Cambridge University and in Britain. And for St. Stephen's College to perhaps have such a brilliant mathematician at that stage was quite remarkable. We didn't appreciate him enough. And I'd like to say on record that he was an outstanding principal. I really think we should have given him more appreciation, and his wife as well. I recall, the day I arrived in India in September 1965, the war between India and Pakistan had just ended the day before. So everybody at St. Stephen's said, "Oh, you have brought us luck!" But the very next day, you see, Alice Sircar, the principal's wife was at the Nizamuddin train station giving out chai and samosas to the returning Jawans. And with her was another close friend of hers. Another woman who became rather famous. Guess who it was?

**DS: No idea, sir.**

  
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DG: It was Indira Gandhi! Alice Sircar and Indira Gandhi, the best of friends, giving out chai and samosas to the Jawans coming back from the frontier, Pakistan. So that was an early memory of those days. You see why they were rather special days. Those memories are very, very important to me now.

When I came back in the 90's Dr. Wilson was very kind to me. The difficulty for him was because he suddenly got a terminal illness, I think this affected him towards the end. But, he was a very good principal as well, very progressive in his thinking and in many other ways. And of course, he also did a lot of work at the Himachal University where he was a pro vice chancellor.

**DS: What would you say about the prevalent ideologies in College during your time? I'd like to know your thoughts on that.**

DG: Well, I think that, um, let me put it like this. It's very interesting that Zia ul Haq was a student at St. Stephen's College who became the president of Pakistan. That and a lot of other things tell you that St. Stephen's College was always a college which was open to people of all religious faiths and communities and of none. Now that kind of ideology, at present, to my opinion, might be at risk in India, seeing some of the things that have been happening recently. But I think that all Stephanians will want to oppose that kind of ideological fanaticism. This reminds me and I'd like to mention another political group in college, the first time I was there, the so-called Naxalites. High ideals with brilliant intelligence. Controversial they were, but they believed passionately in justice. And they had a very high profile for a time. But I think that movement has now disappeared.

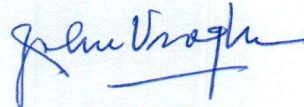
**DS: In terms of your contemporaries, I would like to know how were the Professors, and what were the students, and the community like?**

DG: Very varied and very impressive people. In the teaching staff, we had people like Ranjit Bhatia, an all India athlete, wonderful person who is now deceased. We had Prem Sagar Dwivedi, who is probably the best historian of the whole of Delhi, he became a personal friend and helped me a lot with two books I published about India, about my time, both Routledge books, about Indian culture and what about ecology and the other about science. (Prem) Sagar Dwivedi helped me a lot with those books. Brij Raj Singh and Suman Dubey were there. Suman led an expedition in 1967 to help with the Bihar famine. And on that visit, I met Jayaprakash Narayan, who I admired very much. And this visit opened my eyes to some of the suffering of famine and drought, how it can be in India.

The students are still sending me emails and I reconnected with them about three years ago, when I made a short visit back to India. And I stayed in Kerala with a person you know very well. Philip Mathew, you see, I remember he was an undergraduate when I was there for the first time. And he used to take me around all over Delhi on his motor scooter. He has been a very fine and impressive person and a good friend. So people like that and others around him. I don't know how to pick out the others. When I came back three years ago, I had a book launch. I wrote a book about my time in Pakistan. And I thought, I'll try a book launch in Delhi. It was well attended. So people like Shahid Amin came to that. Shahid, of course, is the son of Mohammed Amin, who was there the first time I was in College, another very fine and impressive gentleman who became the vice chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University. Shahid, Alok Sinha, Sudipto Mundle, Dilip Simeon and several others I met up with.

But that galaxy of Stephanians was stellar, both from the first and the second visit. They are people who I'm really grateful to be in touch with, partly through this network, and partly because they seemed to value these long term contacts both with me and with one another. And I've also got to know their wives and their families.

**DS: I've been in touch with so many other alumni members, especially from the 60s and 70s, and every one of them has mentioned Reverend Ian Shankland. Do you recall him?**

  
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DG: Shanky! We used to call him Shanky and his wife Elizabeth, who taught at the British School in Delhi, she too was around college. I remember she was involved in the College plays quite a lot, as was the chaplain Rev Daniel O'Connor's wife Juliette Connor. Chaplain Dan O'Connor was a very significant person in college and very much loved by everybody. But Ian Shankland was, well, he was a personality. He was quite eccentric. But he loved college and basically gave his life to it. He was very keen on the plays, but more importantly, he was also very good at getting students into the IAS and the IFS. I guess he used to have his own tuitions especially for the IAS and IFS aspirants, which were very successful, as you well know, a lot of Stephanians have ended up in the civil services. Looking back, I'd have liked to see a few more directly in politics. Yes.

**DS: And, why would you say so?**

DG: Because I think India needs strong political leadership. It is practically possible to be a strong political leader in countries so vast and so varied. What I think is impossible is for a central government to really govern the whole country. I know there have been some significant people, some as chief ministers now, perhaps a few governors, never mind mentioning the names and so on. But I would have liked to see more Stephanians in active politics. IAS and the IFS are good and very important, but politics matter as well. And if you don't take it seriously, you can get the kind of excesses which I believe I see at present in India.

**DS: Absolutely, sir. I know we are running short of time, so my final question to you would be, how would you sum up your time in College?**

DG: Fun. It was fun. Yes, it was. There was a lot of warmth and goodness that was happening there. We had a sense of humour. And that is very, very important. Perhaps more important than people realise. The lifestyle and the entire experience was fun.

**DS: Thank you so very much sir for your time. It has been a pleasure speaking with you.**

DG: Same here as well, thank you for having me.

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*Dr David Lagourie Gosling speaking to Ms Davina Smith.*

*A special thank you to Prof Prabhu Gupta (Batch of 1968, 70), Taught in College (1970-73)  
who facilitated the interview.*





## Tech Talk: SCAL goes Online



"Change is the end result of all true learning." - Leo Buscaglia.

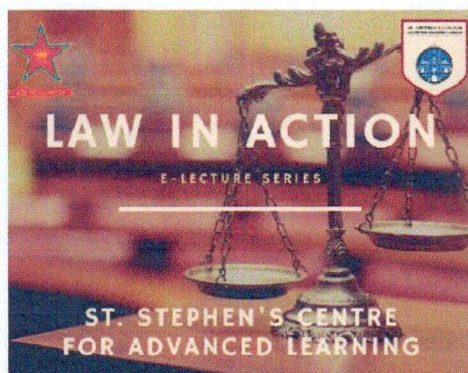
Our valuable learning from our first cohort reflected in SCAL changing its status from offline course to online, thus accepting applications from across the world for its second course on Public Policy, inaugurated by the Honourable Minister of Health, Social Justice and Woman and Child Development, Government of Kerala - Ms K. K. Shailaja Teacher. "The idea behind this course was to invite and involve young minds from around the world, which would facilitate better exchange of ideas, thoughts, innovation and national integration of information and intellect. I am grateful to God for having enabled everyone on the team to conduct this course. My special thanks to Principal, Prof John Varghese, and to the College for all support and encouragement", said Mr Blesson Mathew (Batch of 2013), the Course Coordinator.

Other Stephanian facilitators for The Practice of Public Policy and Administration: A 6-day intensive e-course were:

- Mr JK Dadoo (Batch of 1978) - Former Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India
- Dr KP Krishnan (Batch of 1979) - Former Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India
- Mr Sanjay Sahay (Batch of 1985, 87) - Former ADGP, Karnataka Police



**Mr Blesson Mathew**  
Course Coordinator (SCAL)



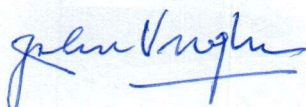
SCAL also launched the Law in Action Online Lecture Series, which has been featuring Stephanians who are the doyens of the Law Fraternity. The opening lecture was delivered by Mr Jyoti Sagar (Batch of 1972), Chairman & Founder, J Sagar Associates, Advocates & Solicitors; Managing Partner, K&S Partners, Intellectual Property Attorneys.

Other lectures delivered so far:

- Constitutional Law by Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharyya (Batch of 1971, 73), Senior Supreme Court Advocate & Former Additional Solicitor General of India.
- International Law by Mr Baljit Singh Kalha (Batch of 1996), Senior Partner at Titus & Co. Advocates.

Lectures scheduled to happen soon:

- Contracts and Commercial Law by Mr Amir Singh Pasrich (Batch of 1989), Managing Partner at ILA Pasrich & Co.
- Arbitration by Ms Payal Chawla (Batch of 1990), Founder, JusContractus

  
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**National Institutional Ranking Framework**  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
Government of India



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IP-C-C-6315	Lady Shri Ram College For Women	More Details	New Delhi	72.08	2
IP-C-C-6377	Hindu College	More Details	Delhi	70.66	3
IP-C-C-22470	St. Stephen's College	More Details	Delhi	69.67	4
IP-C-C-43921	Presidency College	More Details	Chennai	68.89	5
IP-C-C-44006	Loyola College	More Details	Chennai	68.03	6
IP-C-C-11881	St. Xavier's College	More Details	Kolkata	67.99	7
IP-C-C-11926	Ramkrishna Mission Vidyamandira	More Details	Howrah	67.89	7
IP-C-C-6422	Hans Raj College	More Details	Delhi	67.23	9

St. Stephen's College was ranked at # 4 this year in the NIRF 'College' category by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

While we've always been a class apart, the majority of us would insist that if we aren't # 1, we aren't good enough. And right, they are! This is a wake-up call for each one of us - faculty, students, staff and alumni. It's true that while we, as alumni, cannot bring a change directly, we can however, certainly adopt practices and implement ideas which can significantly improve the current Student Experience in College.

One of the criteria in the NIRF, and in fact any other ranking scheme, is the involvement of alumni in the life of the institution. Alumni have the power to influence future generations and most ranking schemes take this into consideration. There is much importance and value attached to this. There is no denying that you, as alumni, have, and are, setting examples for the world, but a personal involvement with your alma mater and current students will go a long way in helping us get to # 1. The College alumni office is your facilitator for just this and we are geared up for a greater involvement of the alumni in College life.

Your TIME is the single most valuable contribution that we ask of you. Imagine the good it will do to our current young people if you can share with them the experiences that took you to where you are now! Imagine the good it will do them if you guide them on what courses lie open to them as future careers! Imagine how much the College will benefit from your expertise and support to make it better! Imagine us as # 1, again. With your help and support we can make it happen. **#AlumniForNo1**. That should be our slogan and practice henceforth.

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## **In Memoriam**

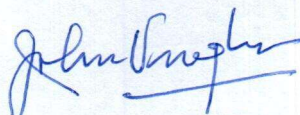


### **Ved Marwah - A Stephanian to the Core: Excellence and Service by Dr S.Y. Quraishi**

My association with Mr Ved Marwah goes back nearly forty years. I first met him in Gurgaon in 1982 where I was posted as the Deputy Commissioner. He was the Joint Secretary Women's Development in the Ministry of Social Welfare. The moment conversation came to the college I went to, the equation underwent a dramatic change, a phenomenon which is almost universally predictable. Our instant rapport later proved to be the beginning of a lifelong association.

A few months later I was abruptly transferred out of Gurgaon to Chandigarh. Since it was January, close to the end of the academic year of my children, I was keen to be posted in Delhi where my daughter (later a Stephanian herself) was studying in Loreto Delhi. Mr Marwah got to know of it and sent me a message through a Haryana cadre officer (my cadre) that he has a job for me as Deputy Secretary Ministry of Social Welfare. The officer hid this information from me. I got to know about the vacancy from someone else and went to see him as he was the boss of administration. Marwah sahab was visibly angry that I took one month to respond to his message. He calmed down when I told him that I never received his message. Fortunately, a panel of names which had come from the Department of Personnel had been turned down and a new one sought and was expected in a couple of days. He asked me to rush to the concerned Desk Officer and ask him to include my name in the panel which I did. My name was recommended by Marwah sahab and Secretary to the Minister. After a month-long delay caused by some office intrigue, the minister finally cleared my name and I joined the post directly under him.

He was an affectionate boss, especially to me, always supportive of my ideas and initiatives. When I told him that the ministry needed a media division, as knowledge and attitude change was the most critical requirement for women and child care programs, he immediately asked me to prepare a proposal for the erstwhile Planning Commission. He fought his way through the obstructions of the Planning Commission to get the proposal through.

  
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The media division came into the act immediately. Getting documentaries made was a priority. Mr Marwah came with an offbeat - and bold - idea that instead of inviting tenders, we should scout for new talented producers at the Film and Television Institute, Pune. He and I personally went to FTII on this mission and got great insights and some good names. This kind of giving contracts without tenders today would have led to vigilance inquiries, if not CBI visitation. But those were good old days. Marwah Sahab's innovative idea had instant rewards. We got two national awards for best documentaries in quick succession in the very first two years.

Mr Marwah was Joint Secretary of women's development, besides administration. We used to watch with envy pretty and cerebral women constantly in and out of his room!

The ostensible reason was that he was after all the head of the women's bureau, but the real secret that we suspected was his blue eyes and stunning good looks! Though popular with women, he was not known as the 'ladies man' as he was a family man to the core.

The conversations in his room were my first lessons in gender sensitisation which inspired me for the rest of my life. The culmination was in the Election Commission where we introduced gender audits of the electoral rolls which helped us trace millions of missing women. Even the turnout of women on the poll day which was 10 percentage points behind men was completely bridged.

For several years Mr Marwah was the President of the Alumni Association of the College and I was appointed the Vice President. His mentorship, and also the association with the then Principals Dr Wilson and Rev Thampu and the legendary Amin Sahab and Shankar Ghosh was strong and personal.

I recall as early as the 1980s he had made a plan to buy a house around Lodi garden and close to IIC. His life revolved around these two places. Both Mr Marwah and I were members of Saturday lunch cum lecture club called Discussion Group at India International Centre. Although he had become very feeble with age but with the help of his walking stick he wouldn't miss any session, or other events at IIC. Surprisingly, he never asked a question nor made any comment even when the subject was of his expertise. Typical of his modesty and the trait of never throwing his weight around. Normally, in old age people become talkative, esp bureaucrats who never tire of repeating their achievements - of 'the days in the district'! But Marwah Sahab was different. Always unassuming. Always quiet. A patient listener.

He was known for being extremely helpful to everyone who went to him for advice or help, especially bureaucrats. He was large hearted as a king. I remember with pride that my application for IIC membership was recommended by him long after I had ceased to work with him.

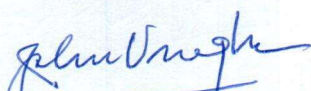
The most vivid memory I have of him dates back to the day after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination when there were bloody anti Sikh riots in different parts of the country, particularly Delhi. When most non-Sikhs were openly or secretly rejoicing the genocide, Mr Marwah's anguish was to be seen to be believed. He was extremely upset with the government, especially Delhi police, and kept saying 'how the hell can this be allowed to happen?' No wonder he was described as a gentleman cop.

We love you Marwah Sahab and pray for peace to your noble soul! We will miss you.

\*\*\*



Dr Quraishi read History (1964-69), joined the IAS and went on to become Chief Election Commissioner of India. He is the author of 'An Undocumented Wonder - The Making of the Great Indian Election'.

  
**PRINCIPAL**







## **Those Whom We Lost**

*Time takes away the edge of grief,  
but memories turn back every leaf.*

*In loving memory of  
The lives so beautifully lived  
and hearts so deeply loved.*

*May the Almighty grant unto them Eternal Peace.  
Amen.*



**Shri Ved Marwah**  
1932 - 2020  
Former Commissioner of  
Police, Delhi  
Former Governor, Manipur,  
Mizoram, Jharkhand  
In College: 1950-55



**Shri Nagendra Nath Jha**  
1935 - 2020  
Former Lt. Gov. of Andaman &  
Nicobar Islands, and Puducherry  
Former Indian Ambassador to  
Ireland, Turkey, Yugoslavia  
In College: 1952-55



**Shri Anwar Khan Babi**  
1944 - 2020  
Former Secretary, Forest  
Department, Gov. of Gujarat  
In College: 1962-65



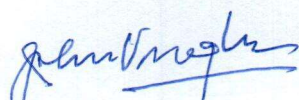
**Shri Ajay Singh**  
1950 - 2020  
Former Member of  
Parliament, Lok Sabha  
Former Indian Ambassador  
to Suva, Fiji  
In College: 1968-71



**Shri Vinay Sheel Oberoi**  
1957 - 2020  
Former Secretary, MHRD, Gov.  
of India  
Former Permanent Secretary  
of India to UNESCO  
In College: 1974-77



**Mr Bhaskar Rochak**  
1994 - 2020  
Former Associate, Chief  
Minister's Good Governance,  
Gov. of Haryana  
In College: 2011-14

  
**PRINCIPAL**







## College Updates

### Update #1: College Café

Just in case you thought the College Café is also under lockdown, think again! The Café has been doing a wonderful job of feeding our junior members. Mohit our ever-smiling Café Manager says that they now have an all new range of College Memorabilia and Merchandise. Contact him at [cafe@ststephens.edu](mailto:cafe@ststephens.edu) and get your College stuff delivered to your local Alumni Chapter. From t-shirts and sweatshirts to lapel pins and luggage tags, mugs and plaques there's something for every occasion and something for everyone. Go on, contact him.

Did you know that the Café is now fully digitised? And that the new Alumni Cards will facilitate a cashless way of spending in College. While we did issue the first set of cards earlier this year, the process of issuing the next set Alumni Cards will begin once the alumni start visiting the Café again. So go and get your unique College Alumni Card from the Café. And of course, your mince and veg cutlets, scrambled eggs, a range of special teas, coffee concoctions and other daily delicacies that Mohit can cook up for you. The College Café is there to feed you through the lockdown.

### Update #2: Roads and pathways

Our College roads were a sight and an unbearable experience with potholes and chunks of dangerous, uneven paths for pedestrians. Work is underway to make the roads better and provide pathways for pedestrians. Vehicular traffic is temporarily restricted to a new gate, opened up on the Allnutt side. You may park your vehicle there and walk up to the Café or College or Alumni office - wherever your stomach or your work leads you! Mind you, this is only till the time we can reopen the Rudra and Allnutt gates for regular traffic. You'll agree that all good things take a little time and effort and this is certainly worth the wait. And yes, don't believe those rumours which say that we've cut down trees and demolished buildings. We haven't!







## Editor's Note

Dear Stephanians,

I cannot thank you enough for the most wonderful response that was received from each and every one of you, as we launched the Inaugural edition of the quarterly alumni newsletter. I am truly humbled by your kind words of appreciation and the suggestions that were sent to me. It was heartening to see so many of you reaching out to join our Alumni database, and for me, those were the moments which reassured that the newsletter struck a chord with so many of our readers.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this second edition as well. Our aim is to reach as far and wide as possible, reconnecting with our super-extended family and (re)igniting the spirit of Stephanian. With this, I request you all to help us achieve this goal, by connecting with us and keeping us updated. Let this newsletter not just be a simple means of communication, but help us make it personal for everyone; a letter that comes bearing emotions, sentiments, memories, inspirations, and the power to start new initiatives and a renewed and stronger bond with our Stephanian family.

Thank you, once again.

Until next time, with all my regards and best wishes,

*Davina Smith*

## Connect with us

For all inquiries, suggestions, event updates, publication requests, and everything else, please write to:



Ms. Davina Smith  
Secretary - Alumni Office  
E: [alumni@ststephens.edu](mailto:alumni@ststephens.edu)  
M: +91-9319767618 (O)

Please also follow our official Social Media pages for more updates and happenings: **St. Stephen's College, Delhi**



<https://www.linkedin.com/school/st-stephens-college-delhi>



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<https://www.instagram.com/ststephensclg>



**AD DEI GLORIAM**

*John Varghese*  
PRINCIPAL





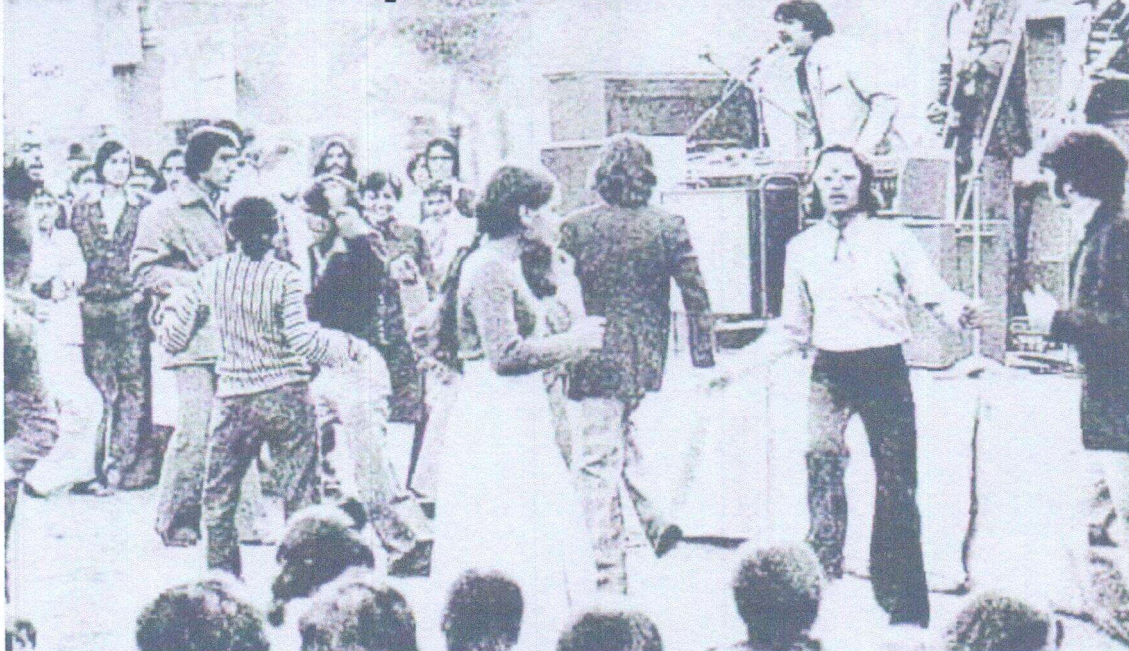


JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

VOL 1 ISSUE 3

# MINCED & SCRAMBLED

*The Stephanian Alumni Newsletter*



## TAKE A LOOK BACK...

### IN THIS ISSUE

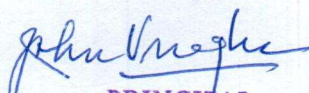
THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'  
QUARTERLY ALUMNI CHRONICLES

THE M DOCUMENT

IN COVERSATION WITH: MR MANDIP SINGH SOIN, FRGS  
REMEMBRANCE

Cover photo by the acclaimed photojournalist Mr Pablo Bartholomew of a Band playing in the Allnutt Court during Winterfest 1974.

While Mr Bartholomew isn't a Stephanian, both his parents were in College in the 1940s.

  
PRINCIPAL  
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE







## WELCOME NOTE

**Mr Raman Sidhu, FCA**

**Member, Core Committee, St. Stephen's College Alumni Association**

Dear fellow Stephanians,



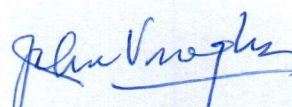
I extend a very warm welcome to the Members of the alumni of St. Stephen's College to the third edition of our Newsletter. Our Core Committee continues to interact regularly with you all, Covid-19 notwithstanding, to assiduously work on bringing together more and more of our globally dispersed alumni together.

Our world was earlier this year struck by the Covid-19 pandemic, the likes of which have never been imagined or seen by today's world. It has hugely impacted and inflicted human peace, welfare and lives not only adversely, but also battered the economic theories and tools which underpinned the world economic edifice and left us all with some legitimate apprehensions in carrying on their tasks. It carries on unabated. However, responsibilities remain and tasks we must carry on and endeavour to achieve our pre-set goals. I remain an eternal optimist.

It's now - years later, but we are then the same teenagers who shared a common experience, who journeyed together during a time when we thought we knew it all, when we were full of optimism and rebellion, easygoing and harboured few fears. Today we continue to meet, share our memories, mourn those who left us way too early and reconnect with others. We knew each other before you became a father or a mother, who knew each other before you had a profession or a career, when you were still young and beginning a process of advanced self discovery.

It is also my great pleasure to welcome among us newly joined alumni of this great institution. Not only is it a moment of happiness and nostalgia for us all, but also an opportunity to reflect on our learning and achievements. Our alumni have established themselves as successful individuals in almost every field of their lives, and we could not be prouder of them and their achievements.

Nostalgia is a tricky business. It makes us laugh and cry at the same time. We yearn to go back to those happy days and we also feel very blessed to have experienced such wonderful feelings.

  
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DELHI-110007**





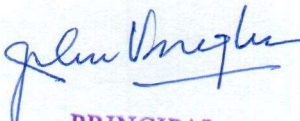


My three years in mission college rank as one of the best phases of my life. My one regret was not being in Residence as my father was then posted in Delhi and living in a bungalow in New Delhi! My late father Dr S. S. Sidhu read Economics (Hons.) in College and was College and University blues. He was the SSC Hockey Captain and in the university team. He played in the 'right in' and Natwar Singh was his 'centre half'. He was instrumental in making my mind pivot away from reading Commerce elsewhere and plumbing for Economics (Hons.) at SSC instead. For that I am eternally grateful to him. He would not have it any other way. Normally he was not given to interfere in my studies or later in life, in my choice of a career. However, in ensuring I joined SSC as against any other institution, he had his way - "there is no Commerce in Stephen's" was his cryptic comment when I had initially voiced my choice of subject I wished to pursue as an undergraduate. I also had 4 first cousins and 2 second cousins in College including Amrita Cheema, of the first batch of girls students in 1975 and subsequently a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford.

A typical day in College entailed at least one visit to the cafe for Mince and Scrambled eggs, gently peppered with inane conversations. There were the usual 2 - 3 visits to Sukhiya's Dhaba to partake of savoury samosas in buttered bread and swallowed down with Nimbu Pani dished out by Rohtas along with his usual few caustic comments on matters of national importance. One thing I made sure of - availed no credit from Rohtas and paid full dues on each occasion in cash. What I didn't wish to happen was to find out later on, to wrongly borrow an army term, 'a mention in despatches' in Rohtas' notebook.

I fondly recall one of the many interactions with the inveterate College Secretary - Robert Saab. I was clean shaven when I joined SSC and in my first meeting with him. On the second occasion I was sporting a moustache, on the third the moustache had gone and on the fourth it had reappeared with a beard! At the very next occasion, when I was back to being clean shaven, I was accosted by him in the corridor, when he popped his head out of his office window, gave me one piercing but benevolent look and remarked - "Master Sidhu, tumhe chehre badalne ka bahut shauk hai, kya?" The essence of his comment dawned on me and we shared a hearty laugh in the corridor, much to the bewilderment of the passers by.

Walking aimlessly in the corridor, a problem many of us beset by, brings me to ragging. As I had many senior cousins and older friends in College over the years, I escaped most of the ragging. The moment I used to be summoned by a 2nd or 3rd year student - "futchu, come here" on a double, an even higher decibel, a bellow "NO futchu, you come over here" by an even more senior friend, saved me from ragging on innumerable occasions. These caring seniors had asked me to always remain in their 'sight' during ragging season. On two occasions, when I went against that advice and wandered off aimlessly, I got caught for short periods. Once to be asked about the music I liked, and upon giving some names of bands like Led Zeppelin, Uriah Heep etc. I was asked to perform a couple of Uriah Heep numbers and to move around like their lead guitarist! On the second occasion, on divulging the name of a sport I was relatively good at in school - aquatics, I was asked to demonstrate a breaststroke movement in a monsoon puddle - not for long though as a senior passing by came to my rescue a couple of minutes into my act!

  
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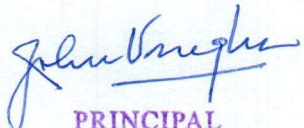
Escapades were many, but alas most unmentionable, although funny in retrospect. A 2 wheeler was destined to have a limited time association with me. Much as I desired to be a proud owner of a Yezdi motorbike, I had to settle for a safer, read: slower, version of a scooter after many rounds of entreaties and pestering of my mother. My tryst with this lesser mode of transport was also short-lived. On just my third ride out traversing the then quieter roads of Kamla Nagar, a Tour de France intrepid young cyclist just completing his final lap of inner lanes of Kamla Nagar market ploughed into my 2 wheeler at full speed from my left side sending both the scooter and me the rider for a toss. To cut a long story short, the scooter was repossessed by my ever eager mom, locked up overnight and sold the next morning. Since that episode my never relenting itch to ride bigger proper bikes, translated to whenever possible 'borrowing' bikes from mates like Yuvraj Narain. On one sultry and hot July afternoon I took charge of Yuvraj's bike whose brakes were faulty as he had then counselled me., After much hopeless protests I also had to take charge of and wear his new helmet and visor on that miserable afternoon. However, in retrospect that helmet proved to be my saviour. That afternoon on my ride back to DU, to avoid hitting a truck ahead which took an unexpected right turn, I dived off the bike in a split second decision and landed on my head. I was knocked out for nearly a minute or more and was finally helped to my feet by a motley crowd which had gathered and had given up on me as told me later. Looking for the bike, I spotted it right under the truck and miraculously erect on its 2 wheels, with a hole punched in its fuel tank. The cracked helmet and a damaged bike were handed to a not so happy Yuvraj later that afternoon.

My few words would remain incomplete without a mention of my comrade in arms who undertook the perilous journey to and from DU everyday for 3 years. They are Geetika Narang (Bittoo) and Vibha Arya from Miranda House and Rajeev Talwar from College. We had individually and collectively convinced our parents that the most safe and time efficient way for their wards to undertake this daily voyage was in a carpool. And a carpool it was, great fun inked with many stories around it. We were a riot on most days except on the occasional days when Dimpy, Rajeev's younger sister decided to accompany us. We were on those days an incarnation of absolute virtue and she used to swear seeing halos around our head. Bittoo and Rajeev were to join the IAS later and Vibha pursued a legal career.

The St Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning was a great initiative of Principal John Varghese and is amply justifying its existence and growing from strength to strength. I wish it all success. I remain immensely grateful to my colleagues from the Alumni Core Committee who continue to work on many initiatives to grow our Alumni. A big thank you to the committed and ever smiling Davina Smith, Secretary of the Alumni Office for her untiring work.

I wish all the very best to our Alumni Members across the globe and implore them to work for the good and betterment of SSC and its facilities.

AD DEI GLORIAM.

  
**PRINCIPAL  
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE  
DELHI-110007**







## THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN'



by @notsostephanian

There was a time when we could follow Bob Dylan's words - "Come gather 'round, people, wherever you roam...". Today, the very idea of "gathering around" seems impossible and to some even appalling! They also say that distance makes the heart grow fonder. That much, I know, is true. Distance and fondness share a unique relationship. It urges you to stop and think. In this busy life, distance can push you to put yourself first, only if you let it. The longer you pause, the more you realise to look back at your journey so far and reminisce the years gone by and the life well lived. These unpredictable times have forced us to take quite a long pause. Something that none of us ever imagined would happen.

The year 2020 started on a high note. A new decade to look forward to with stronger New Year resolutions, improved five-year plans, and a renewed enthusiasm to make the new year and the new decade as best as possible. January came, then February, followed by March... and since then the idea and purpose of the calendar remains lost. Time not only is a-changin', it also ain't waitin' for no one!

Little did the graduating class of 1970 know that in fifty years' time, their fate and lifestyle will be similar to that of the class of 2020 - possibly in solitude, or distancing from people, behind a screen, and uttering the words "Am I audible?" every few minutes while trying to have a conversation. That's the new normal. While physicality may evade us today, our memories come alive and together with technology, we are closer to our people more than ever. It may sound sad, and not so long ago, it would've been considered pathetic, to resign yourself behind your screen for social interactions, but this pandemic has made us realise that distance is just a construct of our minds.





In these past few months, I received the opportunity to interact with alumni members across years and decades. The conversations I had mostly featured similar bits and bobs and stories about the quintessential Mince, Scrambled eggs, Toast and Nimbu Pani, the glorious Rez life, the much anticipated Kooler Talk issues, the greatest accountant ever – Sukhiya, the oh-so caustic Rohtas, the institution in himself – Robert Saab, the famous teas of Dr Baker, and of course the women of MH! However, the single most significant observation made was that the quotidian lives of most Stephanians now featured frequent online chats, batch reunions and virtual get-togethers, which has led to renewed friendships, and new acquaintances. This issue of the newsletter featuring alumni anecdotes will surely take you down memory lane. For some or rather most, it will seem that these experiences happened only yesterday, yet for others the anecdotes will be unrelatable, which will put College in a completely different spectrum for them. A College and a life they only wish they would have witnessed and lived. I, for one, would like to get a time turner and travel across decades to witness first hand the changing times featuring the once institutionalised traditions of St. Stephen's.



by Dr Vinod Thomas (1969)



Yearbook 1994

Mr Ravi Agarwal from the Class of 1969 recalls, not without a sense of pride and wistfulness, the image of the one and only Mukarji Court – the solitary building unlike Allnutt and Rudra Courts with their North-South variants – until its upstart counterpart christened “Mukarji West” burst forth onto the scene like an “accidental” baby brother. Whoever said one’s past cannot be changed, Mukarji Court was now called Mukarji East!

The sixties abounded in practical jokes and pranks – harmless, imaginative, witty, even pioneering! I guess being an exclusively men's college had something to do with such matters. Our resident tutor in Mukarji Court was Dr. David Gosling. Looking back, I wonder how he could discharge his duties as resident tutor impeccably, and yet be part of the pranks and adventures!

We were the fortunate ones, and led a simpler and uncomplicated life without cell/ mobile/ smartphones. There used to be a coin operated public phone near the water cooler. As we gathered near the cooler post dinner to fill up our water bottles for the night, the gathering would naturally become a great social occasion giving rise to the “Kooler Talk”. It was also the time to use the public phone – often to assure our parents of our ‘best behaviour’ and ‘hard work’, but more often for that all important ‘chat’ with female friends. Some ingenious guys amongst us had managed to discover and devise a way to operate the coin operated phone without a coin! This was done with a clever device called a “tickler”, a piece of wire cleverly shaped, a veritable marvel of engineering.





Mr Agarwal fondly remembers Kundan Singh, the Gyp assigned to Mukarji Court. "Gyps" were assigned to each residential block to help, support, and take care of junior members' needs. Kundan Singh was a caring and elderly person, more so a guardian. He was a man of few words, yet his disapproval was palpable, in his eyes, if he caught any of us doing something our own parents would disapprove of. Another Gyp in Mukarji Court was Gulzar, a little more talkative, prefacing every statement with the word "Saabji". One of their vital functions, and for which we all felt so thankful, was to give us hot water in buckets during winter months - water heated in coal fired boilers, called "garma".

He further adds that walking on the grass was a strict no no - a rule drummed into us by no less a person than the venerable Col. Pierson. So much so that even now after 50 years of passing out, I feels some kind of a pang of guilt even if the grassy patch happens to be a public park or in my own house! If memory serves me right we were allowed to sit on the grass in Andrew's Court, but we of Mukarji "East" would regularly and ritually walk (or "cut across") in defiance, on what passed for the lawn of Mukarji Court, especially to the JCR! The lawn of Mukarji Court was rather unkempt if you ask me.



by Mr Mandip Singh Soin (1979)



The Photographic Society

Mr Vikram Srihari, also from the batch of 1969 reminisces and shares that during his time it was Raymond's alloo's in the Mess that was the fashionable complaint of the day! Not that they weren't good - but every day!

He also mentions that the Gyps used to serve during meals in the Mess, and your Gyp always looked out for you - made sure you got the best cuts; and on Wednesdays the largest chicken breast. Dolly and Sebastian (Allnutt and Mukarji East Gyps) were the Master Chefs, who came up with Mince and Scramble in the College Café. A meal of Scramble with toast; and Mince plus a Coca-Cola cost just Rs. 2.50! Rs 1.25 for the Scramble spread over 2 toasts, plus Rs 1.00 for 2 Mince and Rs 0.25 for a Coke! Sounds quite unbelievable today! If you were flush with funds (which was rare), then Sukhiya sat outside on the veranda and his Besan ki Mithai (for Rs 0.40 a piece) just melted in your mouth. Alternatively, he offered Burfi as well as Samosas. Years later Rohtas, Sukhiya's son did carry on the tradition, but owing to extension of the Cafe was permitted by Dr. Wilson to set up a kiosk under the Café tree. His nimbu paani which I tried years later, was pretty good - but nothing like his father's!

Raiding MH and painting their Public phones pink, and converting the Dean's car into a taxi were just some of the kinds of shenanigans people during that time would get up to.





Dr Mohan Gopinath from the class of 1966 shares that "Life in college slowly took on myriad colors and became an inseparable part of my existence – even now after the passage of over half a century. And that, indeed, is a long time in anyone's life." He remembers Colonel Stephen Pierson, who taught English and was a stickler for the correct use of language. Faculty members sitting at the high table had to say grace before dinner (supper?) at 8 pm. One of the Colonel's favorites was:

For this delicious gift of food  
We lift our hearts in gratitude.  
Lunch was awful but I've a hunch  
That dinner will be worse than lunch.



(On the Right)  
Department of English, 1993

Another alumnus, Mr Ashwani Kumar Aggarwal, from his treasure trove of stories from his time in College between 1975 and 1980 shares:

Our Ancient Indian History teacher, Mr. Prem Sagar Dwivedi, used to hold tutorials for one batch of Resident students at his home. These were held in the evening after dinner. The atmosphere of evening tutorial classes at Mr. Dwivedi's residence was highly informal and a very welcome change from the serious classroom formalities. Tea, prepared by Mrs. Dwivedi, was offered to us. I distinctly remember, Dwivedi children were young and playful and Mr. Dwivedi would often call out to Mrs. Dwivedi to take care of them as "the children are distracting us".

Mr. Dwivedi's residence was near the Science Block and its main gate opened towards the Rudra Gate side road. The house also had a small picket gate towards Mukarji West. He maintained a well groomed kitchen garden in the open ground of his home (Next to it was the parking place for his Ambassador car). He told us to be very careful and never to leave the small gate unlatched. There was, usually, a stray cow lurking around in search of an opportunity for a delicious meal. One evening going through our tutorials Mr. Dwivedi heard an ominous munching sound emanating from his kitchen garden. Going out confirmed his worst fears. The stray cow had inflicted a heavy damage on his hard worked vegetable garden before it was driven out.

Mr Aggarwal adds that he was responsible for this serious lapse! "Mr. Dwivedi was generous in not scolding me. But, even 45 years later, I deeply regret having been careless."

Another instance he recalls is - During our time cigarette smoking was not considered a health hazard. In fact it was a trendy thing. Once in college, a prominent cigarette company (probably Godfrey Phillips) sponsored an event for a day in the College Hall. One of their terms was that the cigarette company be allowed, for that day, to put up a cigarette selling counter. This was done by them at a prominent place between the Main building and Andrew's Court (towards Allnutt South Extension side of the Porch). They gave a discount too.

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Now, Rohtas, who was the official year round supplier of cigarettes was not happy with this, even for a day. Rohtas was no easy push over. He decided to take the MNC head on. He set up a simple counter, on a mat put on the ground. Any Stephanian he found patronizing the MNC's wares, Rohtas would simply give him silent looks that seemed to convey a somewhat warning message: "This neighbouring competitor is only for a day. Tomorrow again you will have to come to me. I give you credit (and it may be pending as on date)."

Many who had hoped for a discount found the odds in favour of Rohtas and simply backed out and turned to Rohtas!

\*\*\*

The harmless ragging, Wodehouse Society pranks and the practical Joke Week (where faculty too wouldn't be spared), SPICE, Anda-Tamatar, Freshers' Orientation, Winterfest (which would be open to outsiders as well), Hindu-Stephen's matches with loud cheerings "Jeetega bhai jeetega, Laal Sitara jeetega!" all this and much more were institutionalised until the turn of the century. Today, most of these traditions have almost bid us farewell.

We now have Harmony in place of Winterfest, which is exclusive to Stephanians only. Until a few years ago, we also had a mid-term fest called Capriccio! Andrew's Court is hallowed ground. Except during the Dismissal Service batch photograph, no individual can otherwise walk on it (of course the gardeners are exempted from this!). SPICE has become a very rare sighting. But "Jeetega bhai jeetega, Laal Sitara jeetega" remains evergreen!

And keeping with the title - The Times They Are A Changin', one only wonders and looks forward to how the current and upcoming batches innovate and reinvent themselves to stay relevant in this age of digitisation. With a limited number of people on campus, social distancing, and no mass gatherings, it will be interesting to look out for the new traditions they will come up with while holding on to the essence of the old ones. The efforts are already underway and we await the outcomes.

After all, in Bob Dylan's words "The line it is drawn, the curse it is cast... As the present now, will later be past. The order is rapidly fadin'...For the times they are a-changin'."



*Rags Looking for Riches*



*The corridors of power*

Yearbook 1994





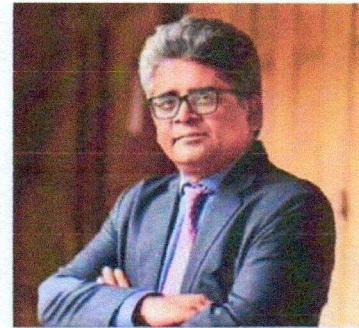
## QUARTERLY ALUMNI CHRONICLES



Ms Priyanka Das Rajkakati (Batch of 2013) Systems engineer and doctoral student, Safran, ISAE-Supaéro featured on the #1MWIS list curated by the international campaign - One Million Women in STEM.



Mr Neelakantha Bhanu Prakash (Batch of 2020) becomes the fastest human calculator in the world after winning the first-ever Gold for India in the Mental Calculation World Championship at Mind Sports Olympiad in London.



Dr Rathin Roy (Batch of 1986) appointed as the Overseas Development Institute's (ODI) Managing Director - Research and Policy. He was previously the Director of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) since 2013.



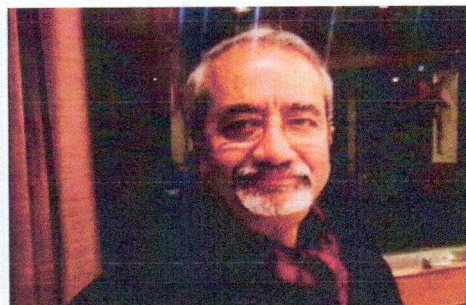
Visa India appoints Mr Sujai Raina (Batch of 1996) as the Vice President & Head of Business Development for India.



Citi appoints Mr Arjun Chowdhry (Batch of 1992) as the Acting Head of Consumer Banking Business in India.



Filmmaker Mr Shekhar Kapur (Batch of 1966) has been appointed as the President of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and the Chairman of the institute's governing council.



Daughters will now have equal birthright to inherit property: Supreme Court of India.  
The landmark judgment was agreed and passed with lead arguments made by senior advocate and former Additional Solicitor General of India, Mr Bishwajit Bhattacharya (Batch of 1972).

*John D. Smith*







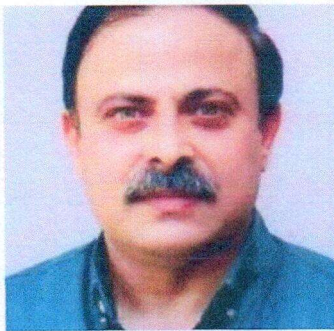
Ms Karuna Nundy (Batch of 1996) [left] and Ms Abanti Sankarnarayanan (Batch of 1990) [right] have been featured in Business Today's list of "India's Most Powerful Women 2020".

Ms Karuna Nundy is an Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. She is a champion of human rights and an expert on commercial litigation. She played a key role in drafting the anti-rape bill after the 2012 Delhi Gangrape case.

Ms Abanti Sankarnarayanan is the Chief Strategy and Corporate Affairs Office of Diageo, India. She is steering Diageo's transformation in India in the face of multiple regulatory and other challenges. She is also the first woman to Co-Chair the International Wine and Spirits Association on India.



Mr Gourangalal Das (Batch of 1996) appointed as the Indian Envoy to Taiwan. Mr Das was previously Joint Secretary (Americas) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and served in Beijing from 2001 to 2004.



Mr Rajeeva Swarup (Batch of 1983) [left] appointed as the Chief Secretary of Rajasthan.



Mr Kumar Krishna Sanjay (Batch of 1981, 83) [right] took over as the Chief Secretary of Assam. He previously was with the Ministry of Finance and the PMO.

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PRINCIPAL







## LITERARY NEWS & RECOMMENDATIONS

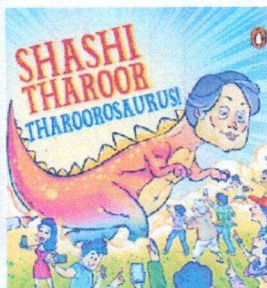
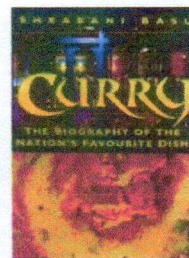
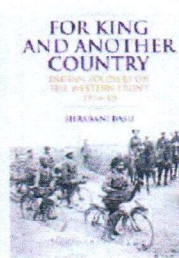
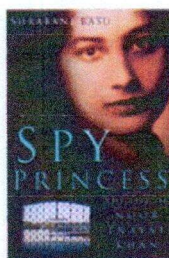


Authoress and Historian Ms Shrabani Basu (Batch of 1981) unveiled the English Heritage Blue Plaque for the Second World War Spy - Noor Inayat Khan in Bloomsbury, London. Khan is the first Anglo-Indian woman to receive the plaque honour.

Noor Inayat Khan was a descendant of Tipu Sultan, the 18th-century Muslim ruler of Mysore, and spent the majority of her life in France. She was also the first female radio operator who worked in occupied France before being executed by the Nazis. Read more [here](#).

Ms Basu penned Khan's biography - *'Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan'* published in 2006, and actively campaigned for almost 14 years to get Khan the due recognition.

Other books by Ms Shrabani Basu include *Victoria and Abdul*, which was made into a major feature film starring Dame Judy Dench, *For King and Another Country*, and *Curry*.



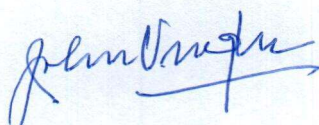
**Tharoorosaurus**  
Dr Shashi Tharoor (Batch of 1975)

The Wizard of Words' Grimoire is now available for (if we may use the term) Muggles! We won't say much about the book, except that it is bound to be *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*!

#ICYMI:

The idea of the book and the title *'Tharoorosaurus'* was pitched by Ms Meru Gokhale (Batch of 2000) who is currently the Editor-in-Chief of Penguin Random House, India.



  
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Prof Prabhu Guptara (Batch of 1968) launched Pippa Rann Books and Media this summer.

The imprint focuses entirely and exclusively on publishing material that nurtures the values of democracy, liberty, equality and fraternity in India - as well as among people abroad who are connected with India or have an interest in India.

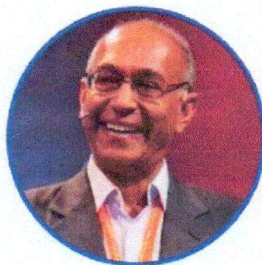
That means PRBM publishes:

(a) Books and media by authors of Indian origin, on any subject that serves the purpose mentioned above - broadly interpreted and

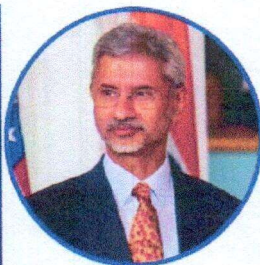
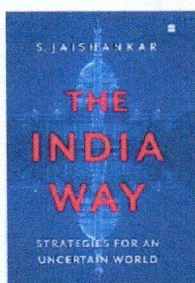
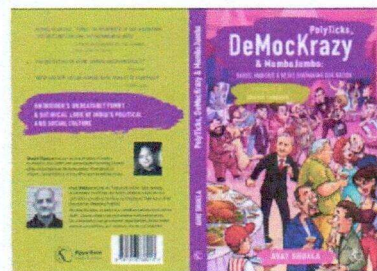
(b) Books and media by authors of non-Indian origin, on any subject connected with India or with the Indian diaspora, which serves the purpose mentioned above - again, broadly interpreted.

The imprint is one of several that are conceived of, and will be launched in time, by Salt Desert Media Group Ltd., UK. For more details visit, <https://pipparannbooks.com>.

The first title released by Pippa Rann Books and Media is '**PolyTicks, DeMocKrazy & MumboJumbo**' by Avay Shukla with a foreword by Dr Shashi Tharoor.



Pippa Rann  
books & media



#### The India Way

Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (Batch of 1975)

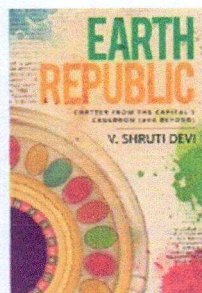
**The India Way** analyses the nature of India's International Relations, the challenges associated, and the possible policy responses. Dr Jaishankar, in his book, places this thinking in the context of history and tradition, appropriate for a civilizational power that seeks to reclaim its place on the world stage.

#### Earth Republic: Chatter from the Capital's Cauldron (and Beyond)

Ms V. Shruti Devi (Batch of 1993)

Ms Devi has authored four books, and **Earth Chatter** is a potpourri of 10 free-wheeling articles written in conversational style on theatre, sport, food, world politics, Bruce Springsteen, women's rights, and more... all with the flavour of New Delhi.

Her latest book **Ad Altiora Nitimur** is a collection of politico-legal and other poetry with specialized footnotes, which will be featured at Frankfurter Buchmesse in October 2020.



  
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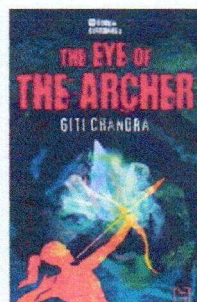
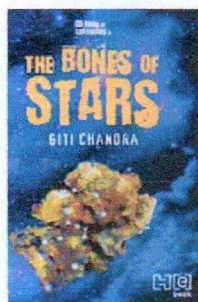
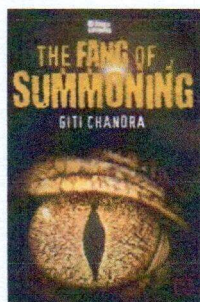






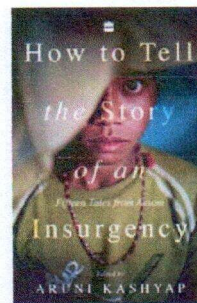
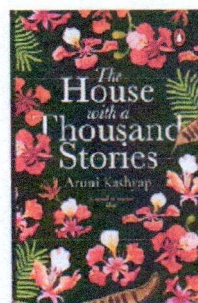
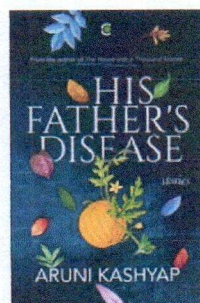
**The Eye of the Archer**  
Dr Giti Chandra (Batch of 1986, 88)

Dr Chandra is a writer of Young Adult fantasy, a Conductor of choirs and an academic. She is the authoress of **The Book of Guardians Trilogy**, and the third and final book in the series: **The Eye of the Archer** is out now. The first two books in the series are: the best selling **The Fang of Summoning** and the **Bones of Stars**. She was formerly an Associate Professor of English in College for over 25 years.



**His Father's Disease**  
Mr Aruni Kashyap (Batch of 2007, 09)

A writer and translator, Mr Kashyap has authored and edited four books and numerous short stories, poems, and essays which have appeared in The Boston Review, The Oxford Anthology of Writings from Northeast, The Kenyon Review, The New York Times, The Guardian UK, the Hindu and more. His latest book **His Father's Disease** is a collection of stories where he appears to ask: what are the stories about a place that are told, which ones are worth telling, what do we really want to say?



*John Varghese*  
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ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

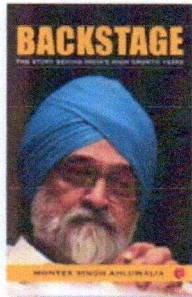






## BOOK REVIEW

# The M document



Backstage: The Story behind India's High  
Growth Years

By Montek Singh Ahluwalia

Rupa Publications India, New Delhi, 2020, 434 pp., Rs 595 (HB)

ISBN 978-93-5333-821-3

SUDIPTO MUNDLE

Ever since the reforms of 1991, I had hoped that someone, preferably an insider, would give us an account of that remarkable transformation of India's economic policy regime, perhaps comparable to Deng Zao Ping's liberalisation reforms in China. In Montek Singh Ahluwalia's *Backstage* we have finally got a blow by blow account of that reform process by one of its key architects. However, *Backstage* is much more than "The Story of India's High Growth Years". Running through it are three separate narratives skillfully braided together in a very enjoyable read: the author's personal journey, change management in government and the rationale and consequences of economic reforms.

### His personal journey

The author's personal story features most prominently in the first part of the volume, which deals with his early years. Born in Rawalpindi in 1943, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, or Montek as he is universally known, spent his early years in Saharanpur, Ambala and Hyderabad. His father was with the Department of Defence Accounts and was posted to these places. Eventually, in 1957, the family moved to Delhi where Montek finished his schooling. Clearly an outstanding student, he passed the Senior Cambridge examination at the top of his class with a distinction in all six subjects. That, plus an All India Merit Scholarship ensured Montek's admission to St Stephen's College in Delhi University. A Rhodes scholarship then took him to Oxford where he graduated with a Congratulatory First, a rare distinction. He was also elected president of the Oxford Union Society, sometimes described as the world's most famous debating society.

Montek then joined the World Bank where he spent the next ten years in numerous assignments gathering experience in the designing and implementation of development policies in many countries around the world. As the first head of the newly created Income Distribution Division Montek played a key role in helping Chief Economist Hollis Chenery re-orient the Bank towards poverty reduction as its dominant mission. Poverty reduction through high growth with re-distribution, their basic approach, is also the overarching strategy that has informed all of Montek's policy work on poverty reduction over the years. He

mentions that Chenery acknowledged their intellectual debt to the Indian Planning Commission which had spelt out this approach ten years earlier in a paper entitled "Perspective's on Development: Planning for a Minimum Level of Living".

Instead of pursuing a promising, and materially very rewarding, career at the World Bank, Montek returned to India in 1979 to take up a job as economic adviser in the Ministry of Finance. As finance secretary, Manmohan Singh was indirectly his boss. Montek's long career in government ended some 35

calls this one of the two most important decisions in his life, the other being his decision to return to India. Clearly as his life partner Isher would have shared in that crucial decision as in every other major decision in their lives. As a well-known economist in her own right, she would also have been his most trusted sounding board for many of Montek's ideas on economic policy and reform. We can learn more about their 50-year partnership in Isher's own autobiography *Breaking Through* which has just been published by Rupa Publications.

Montek Singh Ahluwalia has always been known as an economic policy reformer *par excellence* and much of this book is indeed about the 1991 reforms which mark India's transformation from a dirigiste system to a more liberalised, market-oriented open economy. However *Backstage* is not just about those landmark reforms specifically but the story of reforms over a 35-year period starting with Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 and culminating in 2014 when the BJP-led NDA government came back to power. Montek served under seven prime ministers during this period and *Backstage* gives a detailed account of the main economic policy reforms attempted under each, the rationale, the process followed and the outcome. To the best of my knowledge there is no other book which offers such a comprehensive, in depth account of economic policy reforms over such a long period by an insider

### Managing change in government

years later when he resigned as deputy chairman of the Planning Commission after the Congress-led coalition lost the elections in 2014. He was still reporting to Manmohan Singh who was himself then ending a ten-year stint as prime minister and chairman of the Planning Commission.

Manmohan Singh is one of the two persons who loom large in the author's narrative of his personal journey as Montek worked closely with him through most of his career in government. Manmohan Singh was his role model, as Montek mentions, and also his mentor. The other person is Montek's wife Isher Judge Ahluwalia. They met in Washington in 1972, when Montek was at the World Bank and Isher was visiting the International Monetary Fund on a summer job, and got married the following year. Montek

One of the most engaging aspects of this volume is the account of how professional economists can influence policy decisions in a system dominated by generalist career bureaucrats by building a consensus around a proposed reform. On joining the Ministry of Finance Montek found that the main task of the chief economic adviser's team in the Economic Division was to prepare the annual Economic Survey. They also drafted replies and prepared briefs for the minister to respond to questions in Parliament and attended inter-ministerial meetings on various matters. Montek realised that though the Economic Survey reviewed the previous year's economic performance in great detail and made policy suggestions based on that, it had little

operational significance. Replies to Parliament questions gave a good idea of the issues that mattered for Members of Parliament. It was through the inter-ministerial meetings that he was able to best understand the operational problems and occasionally contribute to change.

His boss, the Chief Economic Adviser who belonged to the Indian Economic Service, told him that all important decisions would be taken by senior civil servants, mostly generalist IAS officers who believed that economic policymaking required only a broad familiarity with the subject, sound common sense and a capacity to take quick decisions. By way of illustration, Montek cites the case of former Chief Economic Adviser VK Ramaswami, who had acquired global recognition for his brilliant technical papers in professional journals on trade policy distortions, but who had little influence in reforming the highly distorted trade policies which his own government was pursuing.

Montek realised that beyond just articulating the required direction of policy change it was necessary to get embedded in the policymaking process itself, persuade those in key positions about the required change and build a momentum towards it. He explains that while there was little appetite for listening to technical expositions, senior civil servants were quite prepared to listen to ideas put across unobtrusively and non-technically by a member of the team. Besides building strong inter-personal relations with his IAS colleagues, and being accepted as 'one of the boys', he found it useful to float an idea for discussion with a senior colleague, share it with a wider group as an idea that came out of the discussions, thereby sharing the credit for it, and let it evolve towards a consensus on the required policy change.

This is valuable advice for all young economists aspiring for a career in government, but two other factors would also have greatly enhanced his effectiveness as a policy reformer. One factor which he mentions is his appointment to high level operational positions usually reserved for IAS officers. LK Jha, Manmohan Singh, Bimal Jalan and Vijay Kelkar are among the small handful of economists who had this opportunity. The other factor he could have mentioned is the support of his mentor, Manmohan Singh, who was usually there somewhere higher up in the pecking order to lend a helping hand as finance secretary, member secretary and later deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Reserve Bank governor, finance minister and finally prime minister.

### Thirty five years of reforms

Montek has always been known as an economic policy reformer *par excellence* and much of this book is indeed about the 1991 reforms which mark India's transformation from a dirigiste system to a more liberalised, market-oriented open economy. However it is not just about those reforms specifically but the story of reforms over a 35-year period starting with Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 and culminating in 2014 when the BJP-led NDA government came back to power. Montek served under seven prime ministers during this period and gives a detailed account of the main economic policy reforms





attempted under each, the rationale, the process followed and the outcome. To the best of my knowledge there is no other book which offers such a comprehensive, in depth account of policy reforms over such a long period by an insider.

Central to this story are of course the landmark reforms of 1991 which were triggered by the balance of payments crisis earlier that year. What is remarkable about those reforms is the breathtaking speed with which they were implemented by a hitherto elephantine government. The new Congress-led coalition came to power on 21 June 1991 and a comprehensive programme of economic liberalisation had already been launched before the end of July. The swift implementation was only possible because a blueprint already existed in the so called 'M document'.

This is a paper on "Restructuring India's Industrial, Trade and Fiscal Policies" that Prime Minister VP Singh had circulated for inter-ministerial discussion in June 1990. It included proposals for fiscal consolidation, public sector reforms, industrial decontrol, trade liberalisation and foreign direct investment (FDI). The paper emphasised the need for a clear medium-term road map for implementing reforms across a broad front because of the inter-linkages between the different components of reforms. Known as the 'M document' since it was correctly assumed that Montek had drafted it, the document spelt out for the first time an agenda for comprehensive economic policy reform. Moreover, the M Document itself drew on the recommendations of several policy reform committees

that had been constituted since Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980. Thus it could be said that the 1991 reforms were swiftly implemented but were based on long preparation.

At the Aid India Consortium meeting in 1992 the World Bank president remarked that if the established pace of reforms could be maintained India could become one of the world's most dynamic economies by the late 1990s. The balance of payments crisis was over by early 1994 and by the turn of the century India had indeed become one of the fastest growing major economies in the world.

But this was not the end of the reform story. Successive governments under Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh during UPA 1 and UPA 2 stayed the course on reforms till mega scams stymied the UPA 2 government during its last two years. The book brings us up to date with detailed accounts of the reforms undertaken during these 20 years.

India's plummeting growth during the past six years, which started long before the present Covid-19 shock, and the weakening of some of the initiatives of the previous two decades will have been disheartening for a policymaker so closely engaged with those initiatives. This includes the winding up of the Planning Commission which Montek had re-purposed in his last assignment as an institution to support a private sector-led, market-friendly path of development.

While presenting a detailed, evidence-based critique of the Modi government's performance in the Epilogue, Montek also recognises its achievements, such as digitisation of the economy, the bankruptcy code and

the re-branded extension of several inclusive economic programmes of the UPA government. Ever the optimist, he also presents in the last chapter and Epilogue a very down to earth agenda for reforms going forward, including ways of handling some of the key tasks of the Planning Commission that have been in limbo since its abolition.

As one of the main architects of liberalisation in India, Montek Singh Ahluwalia has generally been viewed, especially by his leftist critics, as a pro-business, pro-market, neoliberal economist with little concern for the poor citizens of India, inequality or social exclusion. I would like to conclude with quotations from the book that should motivate a more nuanced characterisation.

#### On India's development challenge:

It was clear to me that the central challenge for India was how to break out of the low-growth trajectory and ensure that higher growth would benefit lower-income groups in sufficient measure. (p. 40)

#### On planning and markets:

There were some who believed that there was no role for planning in a market-driven economy: the Government just had to get out of the way and the market would do the rest. I never subscribed to this laissez-faire fantasy, which did not hold even in the developed economies. They did not have Planning Commissions but they all recognised that the government had an important role to play in achieving national goals. (p. 249)

#### On industrialists:

Indian industry's attitude to liberalisation was self-serving. They wanted reduced controls over private investment but were ambivalent on import liberalisation. They wanted liberalisation of imports of machinery and inputs for their production but not of imports that would compete with what they produced. (p. 81)

#### On his disappointment on returning to Washington in 2001 after 20 years:

...but Washington DC felt very different from the Washington of our youth in the late 1960s and 1970s. Our memories were of the anti-Vietnam war protests, impeachment proceedings, and the progressive anti-establishment songs of Joan Baez, Tom Lehrer and others. All this had changed in the post 9/11 atmosphere of the 2000s with the ascendancy of neoconservatives. (p. xii)

#### On his idea of India:

To create an environment conducive to the revival of investment it is necessary for the government to hear these voices [of students, youth and activists protesting against Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) who have faced repressive measures of the state] and bring a healing touch. The need to create an environment of social harmony and peace is also vital for the survival of the idea of India. (p. 392)



Dr Sudipto Mundle (Batch of 1969), Distinguished Fellow at NCAER reviews 'Backstage: The Story Behind India's High Growth Years', by Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia (Batch of 1963), in the literary magazine Biblio.

The above review has been reproduced from the literary magazine Biblio's July - September 2020 issue.

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**PRINCIPAL  
ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE  
DELHI-110007**







## **IN CONVERSATION WITH...**

**MR MANDIP SINGH SOIN, FRGS**

**SPEAKING TO MS DAVINA SMITH**



*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."*

*-Robert Frost*

**DS:** Welcome sir, and thank you so much for speaking with me today.

**MSS:** Thank you for having me.

**DS:** I would like to begin with some historical context. What was your first ever outdoor adventure, and how do you remember it?

**MSS:** I think I started with simple rock climbing, rappelling and Tyrolean traverses between two mountains. I must have been 13 at that time. My first trip was to Nainital and we were sent by a college alumnus, a person called Hari Dang, who was then my school principal at the Air Force School. And because he came from Doon, he had got all these outdoor holidays as part of our curriculum, more or less. On that first trip we did some rock climbing challenging ourselves, and at that point in time, obviously, even if you were trembling in your boots, you were going to do it because, you know, that was the whole fun of adventure.

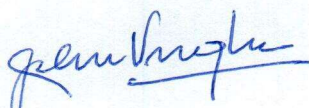
So I guess that was the first one. And then I was very lucky, when our school launched an Inter-Public school expedition to climb a mountain. By the time I was 15, still in school in my last year, I took part in an expedition to a mountain called Black Peak which is around 31000 feet.

So once I got involved with the outdoors and trekking, the nature of the whole thing, of seeing all the pristine areas, you'd feel like you're the first one there. Furthermore, it was about challenging your own physical and mental powers, whether you could do something or do you have limitations, how do you get over it? So it was a wonderful sort of overall experience. It was like a learning of life, basically in one expedition story each time. So I guess that was my addiction. And yeah, those were the early, early memories.

**DS:** And, how did this addiction transform in College?

**MSS:** When I joined college, I think I was very lucky because there was the Hiking Club. My affiliation and association with the Club is still strong and that is one of the reasons I mentioned separately that we must raise money, to get our kids doing something much, much bigger in the near future than what they're doing at the moment, because we've had a legacy of guys who have been going on big mountain expeditions like 21, 22, 23 thousand feet, and those are some serious expeditions.

In my time, through HC, we were always operating on a shoestring budget. But the enthusiasm, the spirit and the legacy, you know, that our seniors had gone on that mountain, and what could we do to get there, that kept us pushing. I was also lucky in college days because we convinced the Indian Mountaineering Foundation to allow students for the first time in history to go as liaison officers with foreign expeditions. So that was a game changer, because basically only Army, Air Force, and Navy officers were allowed by the government when these foreign expeditions came.

  
**PRINCIPAL**







So that was a game changer, because basically only Army, Air Force, and Navy officers were allowed by the government when these foreign expeditions came. So we became the first guys who were allowed from St. Stephen's to go as liaison officers, and that was a big honour! Also, monetarily we were going absolutely carefree, because we wouldn't be spending anything as we were going on government duty. Hence those expeditions became all about learning all these amazing skills and getting an insight into different cultures and climbing techniques and all. So for me, I guess I managed to clock something like seven or eight expeditions during my time in college, which normally one could probably do only one a year.

So, the joke I used to make was - I found that my studies were getting in the way of my expeditions!

**DS: That sounds about right, sir! So, what were your College days like?**

**MSS:** One would imagine that with all the hiking and trekking, my academics would take a hit. But, you know, the funny thing is that I didn't actually let my studies down because when I joined college, I didn't get my subject. I wanted to do history and I couldn't get history. Then I tried for English, which was supposed to be my next choice. But, instead I got BA Pass course. And BA Pass in those days was like a really bad word, because it was assumed that it was for people who were really not very enthusiastic about their studies. So in the spirit of a good adventure I took up the challenge. And I also knew that I wanted to continue with an MA in History, but they don't let you come to an MA if you don't get a first division in your BA Pass. Whereas, if you were in BA History, you could get a second and still do MA in the discipline. So, I said abhi dikhte hain and banged my fist against the table! And in my first year, I broke the record of Delhi University, I came first and even made a new record for History by getting 82 percent. Then in my third year I finished with a first and got a national merit scholarship. And that's how I was able to do an MA. But as I said, I was smirking on the side and saying that, that means I can do three or four more expeditions!

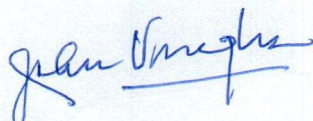
There you go. I mean, college days were just amazing because I was active in the Hiking Club and later became the President of the Club. And at the same time, I used to do rifle shooting and was the college cap at some point. And then I probably shot a few straight bullets, and they made me university captain as well. We also were able to qualify for Nationals and secured some positions or the other. So, yeah, it was super fun. And we even did like expeditions, which weren't just mountain oriented.

**DS: Can you recollect one such expedition for us?**

**MSS:** I remember two of my friends and I went to the Andaman Islands, to study remote tribes over there essentially and do some deep sea fishing, and of course, everything was on a shoestring. So I'll tell you a story here. Basically we went from Calcutta to Port Blair in a ship, and we spent the princely sum of 50 rupees because we bought the cheapest ticket as students and we were given the bunk space, which is right down in the hole. And we thought pachas rupay wasn't bad, and our total budget must have been some 500 bucks or something. So anyway, we take the ship and we go into the hole and suddenly we realize there are also cattles and bakris (goats) over there. We had a really hard time the one night we spent there and then we, of course, hung out on the top decks.

So we reach Andamans. We do an amazing expedition. We are helped by the local government because there was a college guy who was the DC there. And he helped us a little bit with meeting the right people and doing the right stuff. Eventually we ran out of money towards the end and had to borrow some from the DC. When we came back to Delhi, we printed a huge article criticizing the government because they were not looking after the tribals very well, and were asking them to move from their grass huts into cement blocks, which was completely the wrong thing to do, because there'd be so much wastage of resources, and they weren't being sensitive to that culture at all, so we couldn't help it, you know. We did apologize to the DC, after all he helped us immensely. And we said to him, we are so sorry to call for your help and everything, but we had to speak up about this. And our report made headlines in the news.

There's another funny incident I remember. The two guys who came with me were Dhananjay Date and Shumit Banerji. Dhananjay was in my class, while Shumit was a year junior to us. Both these guys retired as heads of their companies. Dhananjay was heading Swiss Re in India, and Shumit, who now lives in London, became head of Booz Allen Hamilton.

  
**PRINCIPAL**







Now, my take to them was that while we were on this expedition, we went into the sea, skinny dipping. And of course, somebody had to play a prank. So I came back earlier, gathered their clothes and hid them in the bushes and asked them to come in. I took photographs, and of course, they winced and they cursed at that moment. Fast-forward to 30 years later, when they were both CEOs, I said to them, that was a character defining moment. And the character building that I did for you, that's why you two are CEOs now!

**DS: This indeed is the best way you can define college with all the fun and the memories, however, besides these expeditions, what else were you involved in at College? Were you even left with spare time after all the studying and travelling?**

**MSS:** Oh yes! So of course the outdoors was very important to me. So even on weekends, I didn't do any regular sport like hockey or football. But because of the college spirit, I and my friends were there whenever we were needed to be the cheering squad for cricket, hockey or basketball. In fact, somebody just shared this amazing black and white photo the other day in our group of all of us cheering the basketball team, and so we did all of those. But I remember we also went rock climbing on weekends. So we did manage as students to make a lot of first ascents around the rocks of Delhi, and I am sure they are cataloged in some books now. But apart from that, I was also involved with the Informal Discussion Group. There were some amazing talks and great speakers that used to come. Then I was also with the Photo Soc and at times I was even helping with the Shakespeare Society on the sidelines with the organisational part, and of course, we always joke that that was because we wanted to get to the cast party. But that's another story!

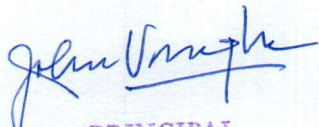
We used to be fully engaged in college. So whether it was the Winterfest or, you know, doing your tutorials or doing classes outside. I mean, I, for example, remember, Philosophy as being one of my favourite subjects apart from the fact that I got more marks in History. But, we used to have these informal things in the college tutors' homes, like every Thursday you could go, you would have a barfi and a chai and then you would discuss anything from Marx to Wittgenstein to Nietzsche or whatever. So, you know, it was all such a growing kind of activity. And of course, unfortunately, being in the Hiking Club and being the tradition that we had to keep up, we also used to raid the Café once every year, and no one would complain or catch us because they knew it was the Hiking Club. But now, when I last visited College, like 30 or 40 years later, I noticed there were bars at the ventilator. So that can't be done now.

I'd also like to add one more thing here. So, I joined College in 1974 and we had our ragging done in all its glory. But the following year in 1975, with the girls coming in we couldn't rag as much, and the whole ragging standards went down, which in hindsight, really was not all that bad.

Another fun fact I remembered is, so during my years in College I was a Rezi, and lived in Rudra North initially and later in Allnutt South. Funnily, in my first year in Rudra North, my one neighbor was Rukun Advani and my other neighbor was Amitav Ghosh. So, you know, I used to get a lot of my English help from them.

**DS: Wow! So that brings me to my next question. During your years, who would you say, was your go-to person in College?**

**MSS:** When I joined, I was one of the youngest guys to be included in the rifle shooting team and also, of course, in the Hiking Club as well, so amongst the older lot with whom I particularly connected was, someone you know as well - Ravi Singh of World Wide Fund. And I'll give you a story on that separately. But there were other guys as well like, Suvir Kaul, who's now teaching in the US. And in fact, a lot of these guys were with me on my first year trek as well. So you become very bonded, and the first year college trek was also amazing because one of the reasons why it stands out is that we were only two first year guys who were selected for the trek. All the others were seniors, people like Bobby Kewalramani, whom you'd know, and also Parminder Brar, who is now with the World Bank and he's also a climber buddy. So you tend to obviously interact a lot more with seniors as well. And then I had my own gang of my batch and juniors where we were very, very active hiking club people. So in a way, they were all my go-to people.

  
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**DS: Were there any regrets you harboured right after graduating from College?**

**MSS:** No, I think, if anything, my initial regret would have been that I didn't get the subject of my choice, but then I didn't do too well in my school. And I ended up getting a second because I was getting so very messed up with my outdoor game. So I didn't pay attention. But then I think I got over that very soon because I realized that really, whether it's a big program or whether it's anything, if you really put your heart and soul, you actually enjoy your academics and you can excel in whichever area you know. So once that was behind me, I have to say very, very few regrets. I mean, maybe I think I should have had a few more girlfriends than I had. I was a shy guy. Maybe that. But apart from that, nothing.

**DS: What were your plans after finishing College? Did you always know that a career in the great outdoors awaited you?**

**MSS:** What many people don't know about me is that when I finished my MA, I was at a crossroad, obviously, because, you know, my parents expected me to join the IAS, which is what I had come to college, knowing that either it would be the IAS or the IFS. And unfortunately for myself, I did reasonably good and studied. So they thought I was capable of easily passing the exam. And we have a typical story there. But what they didn't realize was that I was so involved with the adventure scene that I wanted to give it a shot as a profession. So I took a year off and I went to Europe and I backpacked and learnt my climbing skills, honed up more skiing and all of that. Then I started teaching in the UK in North Wales at one of the national mountaineering schools there and later went to Scotland, did some teaching there as well in the Outward Bound. And then I realized, my God, ek saal ho gaya! I think I really want to take this up as a profession. When I returned back to India, I did apply for some jobs in the booming private sector. I even got one or two job offers in Calcutta in some Tea garden with a British company called Gillanders, I still remember. But those were not my calling because I knew that I couldn't really see myself in an office system in the private sector. Not having the ability to go away or travel and be closeted is what was hassling me in my mind. And at the same time, I realized that this is a big risk. I mean, it could fall flat, and you know, how the hell were we going to survive? Because there were just one or two random adventure companies in those days. And ours was going to be the first serious sort of attempt in trying to do this. I think then that's when I mention Ravi Singh, why he also played a role in my life, like with some others. I wrote him a letter because as a senior person, as a mentor, I wrote to him and I said, you know, I'm at this crossroad and don't know what to do. And because he was my rifle shooting captain when I was a junior, I would take a lot of his advice. We had gone to many rifle shooting competitions outside of Delhi. We would travel together to Ajmer to shoot against Mayo College and others, so I had a nice feeling about it. Plus, he was a wildlifer and in the outdoors. So yeah, fortunately I received a reply. He's the only guy who actually wrote me back a letter of four pages. And in that he said, in essence, that just follow your heart and if you do the stuff with all your heart, you're bound to succeed. And that was such a nice little lift in the, you know, the wind in the sails, as it were.

Yes. So with all that risk taking, which is also a part of the mountaineering and adventure, I said let's take a risk here as well. And, I along with some friends at that time, we got together and we put up a company with a thousand rupees each or some meagre amount like that. And the rest is history, as they say. So we were lucky to get that journey going.

**DS: Risk is really what makes the difference. When you started Ibex Expeditions, what was the response like in the initial days? Was there a good market?**

**MSS:** Yeah. I mean, so luckily, again, because I traveled abroad and I spent a lot of time and met a lot of people, so I marketed our idea to them. A lot of them came. And in fact, our first expedition or our first client was from Italy. And they were all so happy that they came back eight times with us in the Indian Himalayas, and for us, it was great because you know that the joy of being able to convert somebody else's dream into a reality in India was wonderful. And the other very important thing was like we always used to joke that the outdoors is the office really. I mean when we were traveling, we were working, we were organizing everything. So it was super fun. It was like being on a holiday, with all the rewards!





**DS: That's great definitely! So my penultimate question to you sir is, if you had to choose a trek, one that left the greatest impact during your college years, which one would it be?**

**MSS:** Oh, that's a tough call. But anyway, I think it was probably my first year trek, actually, the one that I just mentioned, because two things happened. Firstly, I was one of the only two first years on that trip. And in such a company, whether it's a second or third year or beyond, you tend to always be a little bit in awe of your seniors and their skills and their knowledge and everything. And it was a great learning experience because you have this tremendous gang of people. Our staff advisor was another wonderful person - Ashok Bamzai, who's now no more. He was a philosophy prof and an absolutely delightful fellow. And secondly, on that trip, some very freaky things happened. Our journey was to go from somewhere near Manali all the way to Kargil, through a trekking path, and normally you would drive from Manali to a point and then start your trek and finish in Zaskar, and then drive back to Kargil. But because the snow had come earlier, we had to start trekking from Manali itself. So in essence, what was supposed to be a 25 day trek, became closer to 35 or 40 days. We had run out of food. And then, we also lost two of our mules. The first one was killed on the third day of our trek by a snow leopard. And then we lost another that fell down a cliff. We were walking on a trail that was very treacherous and that poor mule, when he fell he took our provisions also. So we were living off the land between potatoes and rice. And finally when we reached Kargil, I remember, Bobby Kewalramani's father was in some big shot cops thing and Parminder's uncle was a general, etc. so they managed to host us in an Army mess. And you will not believe it, because it was the first decent Khana we were having after four or five days of the last seven days of virtually living on only aloo and chawal, we just cleaned out the mess. I mean they just ran out of food because we ate like mad. So yeah, that was a very historic expedition.

We were still one of the earlier guys from College in 1975 to finish this route. So there weren't too many people who had done this trail earlier. And it was an absolutely fantastic experience with great guys on the team and super adventures on the side. So, yeah, that probably would be the ace one.

**DS: And here comes my final question, if you could go back in time and relive your college days, would there be something that you would like to do differently? Or this is it like, you know, the life that you have had in college, that's the best that you could've imagined.**

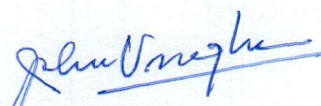
**MSS:** Wow! That's an exciting one to end on. I'll have to scratch my head on that. What would I do? I guess we were all brought up in a way that we all wanted to do and taste everything, because you wanted to experience life full on. And I guess if there's one thing I would have probably got involved with a little more, it would have been something like theatre and dramatics. Because in theatre, you automatically also feel a little shy as a sardar, you know, as in, where the hell are you going to go with a beard? I remember we had a friend, I think a batch or two senior, Preet Singh Bedi, he used to read the news at some point. Yeah, I remember, he was quite involved with ShakeSoc. He was reading English and I think the best role that he got was as a Roman soldier holding a spear. That's all, because he had a full beard and a turban! But I have to say it was such a fully immersive experience already, so there's not too much that I'd like to change. Of course, one always wished that one had a bike in college, for example. The motorcycle was a big asset at that time. Or perhaps, one could have had a few more dates with girls from Miranda House or maybe LSR. But in general, I mean, life in College, it was just fabulous!

**DS: It has been amazing speaking with you, sir. Our conversation does bring back my memories of the only Hiking Club trip I was associated with - a Rafting Trip to Rishikesh, in my second year! And I remember I hadn't even told my parents before buying the tickets. So that in itself was quite an adventure for me!**

**MSS:** Really! You know, talking about it now, I think that's the only way you can do it. I remember my mother when I went on my first expedition. She made me promise that that was my first and last trip. And I promised her. And on every expedition after that, I promised her. And then I kept doing it for the next four years in College. And look where's it got me. It's been a wonderful life after all.

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Mr Soin is an ardent advocate of responsible and sustainable tourism. Check out this short video to know more about the Responsible Traveller Campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJYPkfbBUxE>

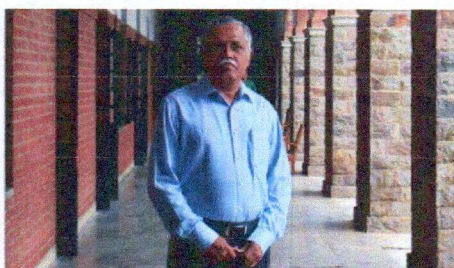
  
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DELHI-110007**







## COLLEGE TALK



### *Perfection is always achieved only tomorrow*

Our Principal, Prof John Varghese speaks to The Week about College and the New Education Policy 2020.

Read the full interview [here](#).

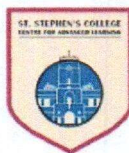
College released its Undergraduate Admissions Cut-off for the academic session 2020 - 2021.

The highest percentage requirement was 99.25% for BA (Hons) Economics, followed by BA (Hons) English and BA (Hons) History at 99%.

**CATEGORY-WISE CUT-OFFS**

Admission to the college is subject to the following conditions: (i) candidates must have secured the minimum marks in the entrance examination as specified in the following table; (ii) candidates must have secured the minimum marks in the entrance examination as specified in the following table; (iii) candidates must have secured the minimum marks in the entrance examination as specified in the following table.

Category	Minimum Marks	Maximum Marks	Percentage	Notes
General	80.00	100.00	80.00	Minimum Marks
SC	40.00	100.00	40.00	Minimum Marks
ST	20.00	100.00	20.00	Minimum Marks
OBC	60.00	100.00	60.00	Minimum Marks
NT	70.00	100.00	70.00	Minimum Marks
Other	80.00	100.00	80.00	Minimum Marks



**St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL)** launched two online programmes this quarter; one on Entrepreneurship and the other on International Relations. The latter was launched in association with the Global Dialogue Forum, and was inaugurated by Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Hon'ble Foreign Secretary of India.

Some of the alumni members who joined us were:



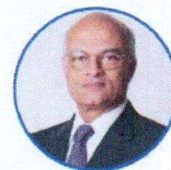
**Mr Harsh Vardhan Shringla**  
Batch of 1982  
Foreign Secretary of India



**Mr Rajiv Kumar**  
Batch of 1971  
Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog



**Amb Vikram Doraiswami**  
Batch of 1989  
High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh



**Mr Shivshankar Menon**  
Batch of 1968, 70  
Former NSA, India



**Mr Salman Khurshid**  
Batch of 1973  
Former Minister of External Affairs



**Ms Atishi Marlena**  
Batch of 2001  
MLA, Delhi



**Mr Gopalkrishna Gandhi**  
Batch of 1964, 66  
Former Governor, West Bengal



**Mr Raman Sidhu**  
Batch of 1977  
CEO,  
European Business Group, India



**Prof Priya Ranjan Jha**  
Batch of 1989  
Professor, Dept. of Economics  
University of California, Irvine

*John Varghese*  
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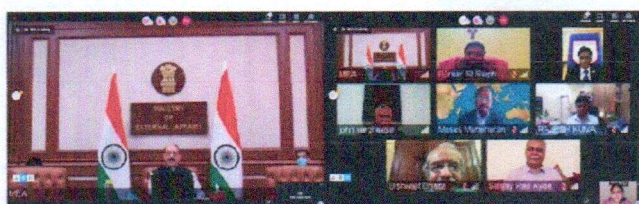




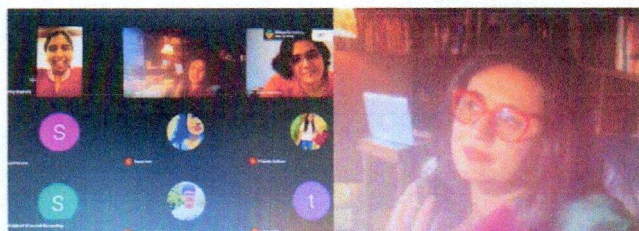


## DIGITAL DIARIES

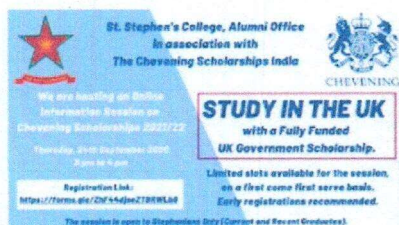
It's not only SCAL that has gone digital. The Second and Third Year Junior Members have begun their classes online, and so have they initiated multiple society engagements over Zoom and other online platforms. From announcing Executive Council, hosting interactive sessions, generating online quizzes and other competitions, to even starting new initiatives and leadership chapters, the current batches of Stephanians are leaving no stone unturned to prove themselves and staying creative in these uncertain times. Here we share a few glimpses of the College and Society initiatives.



Foreign Secretary, Mr Shringla delivering the Inaugural Address of the International Relations Programme.



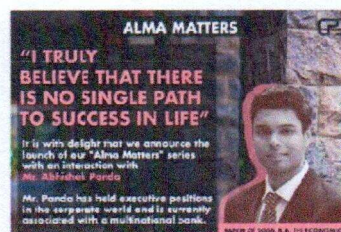
The College launched its own GirlUp Chapter and welcomed Ms Sagarika Ghose (Batch of 1986) as the inaugural speaker, speaking on 'Gendered Perspectives of Journalism'.



The Alumni Office collaborated with Chevening Scholarships India for an online Information Session for current students and recent graduates. The session also welcomed Ms Sonakshi Chaudhry (Batch of 2014) as a facilitator.

The Choir of St. Stephen's College paid a tribute to everyone who felt and continues to feel the effects of COVID-19 by recording the hymn Abide With Me.

Link to the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=14&v=A\\_1a2UDlyg&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=A_1a2UDlyg&feature=emb_logo)



The Campus Placement Cell launched "Alma Matters": a series of short conversations with Alumni members in the Corporate sector.



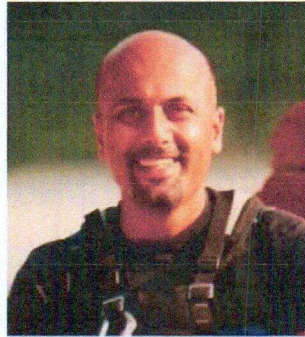
The Debating Society holds an interactive session with DebSoc Alumna Ms Ilma Afroz, IPS (Batch of 2011).







## IN MEMORIAM



**Mr Akshay Kumar**

**1969-2020**

In College: 1987 - 1990

*(With excerpts from ET Travel World and inputs from Mr Mandip Singh Soin.)*

Mr Akshay Kumar, CEO of Mercury Himalayan Expedition and former President of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), passed away on 16th September 2020 in Delhi due to cardiac arrest. The travel and tourism industry in the country has lost a great leader and a visionary.

Son of a legendary and most celebrated mountain climber and a decorated soldier, Col. Narinder (Bull) Kumar, best known for securing the Siachen Glacier for India, Mr Kumar was also a passionate and professional skier, trekker and rafting guide. He joined Mercury Himalayan Expedition, India's largest adventure travel company, offering luxury camps, white-water rafting, self-drive tours, skiing trips and trekking and climbing expeditions, set up by his father, and was its CEO.

After doing his white-water rafting course in Canada at the age of 15, he got hooked to adventure in his life. As a professional rafter, he rafted in over 30 rivers in India and Canada. A skiing enthusiast, he was also a national champion for two consecutive years.

A true leader, Mr Kumar was President of the ATOAI for two terms and Vice President of the Federation of Associations in India Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), an umbrella organisation of Indian tourism trade and industry associations.

His close friend and fellow Stephanian Mr Mandip Singh Soin, MD of Ibex Expeditions, said that Mr Kumar was a genial person at heart and had the quality of getting along with everybody. "I first met Akshay when I went for a ski course in Gulmarg where his celebrated mountaineer father Col N Kumar was the Principal. Akshay and his sister were young kids coming barely up to my belt. But they skied faster and more skillfully as naturals. Years later, he was to join St Stephen's College, Delhi and kept the legacy alive of our active Hiking Club there, and later took on the reins of Mercury Himalayan Expeditions from his dad. Supported by his wonderful wife, Dilshad, they ran a great adventure travel operation along with a rafting lodge in Rishikesh called Bulls Retreat. A qualified mountaineer and a rock climber and biker, he was most comfortable in a raft navigating skillfully through rapids.

"That we lost him whilst he was cycling is a small consolation in at least he was doing what he was passionate about but the shock in our adventure fraternity is like a tsunami that has left us all shattered. Also a campfire singer - one feels that the song may have ended, but the melody lives on..."

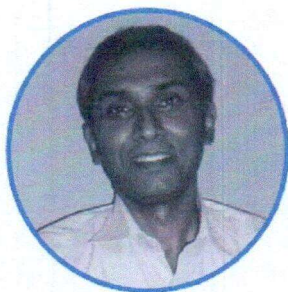




## REMEMBRANCE

*For the memories will be eternal  
and silently kept  
Of those whom we loved  
and shall never forget.*

*May the Almighty grant unto them Eternal Peace.  
Amen.*



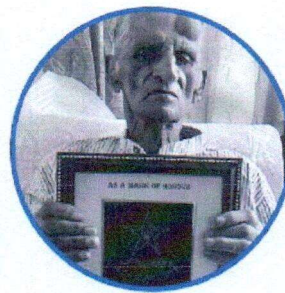
**Mr Dibyendu Das**  
Was associated with  
F&B Industry  
In College: 1984-87



**Mr V Bhaskar**  
Former Joint Secretary,  
13th Finance Commission  
In College: 1967-72



**Mr Akshay Kumar**  
CEO, Mercury Himalayan  
Expeditions  
In College: 1987-90



**Mr C.L. Rampal**  
Served in College as  
Section Officer  
July 1951 - October 1992





## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Stephanians,

Editing this issue of the newsletter, opened a Pandora's Box for me. Of moments, of memories, of the utmost joys and even of the disappointments... yes, disappointments! that the College bestowed on me. Not only was I overwhelmed while sorting through the stories and editing the content, but every bit of emotion made me compare and contrast the time and experiences I had in College. Surely, they were different, and sadly not as great as well. Nonetheless, I feel privileged to have experienced it all and the fact that I can relate to it all. Like they say, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." And that's what matters at the end of the day. Right?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed their wonderful stories and photographs. I can only hope this newsletter does to you what it did to me - help you pause and take a look back. You may think that your memories of College are like fingerprints on an abandoned handrail, but you'll be surprised to know, how rejuvenating and even detoxifying, looking back in time can be. So, relive your memories through this issue, and share them with us, if you'd like to, for our next one.

I look forward to reading your stories.

Until next time, with all my thanks and warm regards,

*Davina Smith* ..

## CONNECT WITH US

**For all inquiries, suggestions, event updates, publication requests, and everything else,  
please write to:**



**Ms. Davina Smith**  
Secretary - Alumni Office  
E: [alumni@ststephens.edu](mailto:alumni@ststephens.edu)  
M: +91-9319767618 (O)

Please also follow our official Social Media pages  
for more updates and happenings:  
**St. Stephen's College, Delhi**



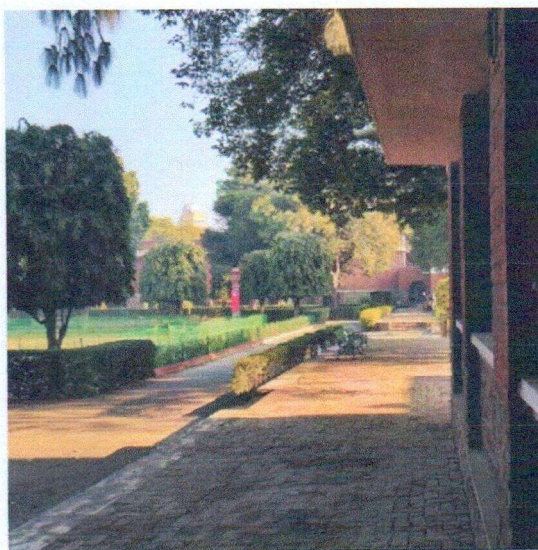
<https://www.linkedin.com/school/st-stephens-college-delhi>



<https://www.twitter.com/ststephensclg>



<https://www.instagram.com/ststephensclg>



by @notsostephanian

To receive direct updates, register with us here.

**AD DEI GLORIAM**

*Principal's Signature*  
**PRINCIPAL**

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE



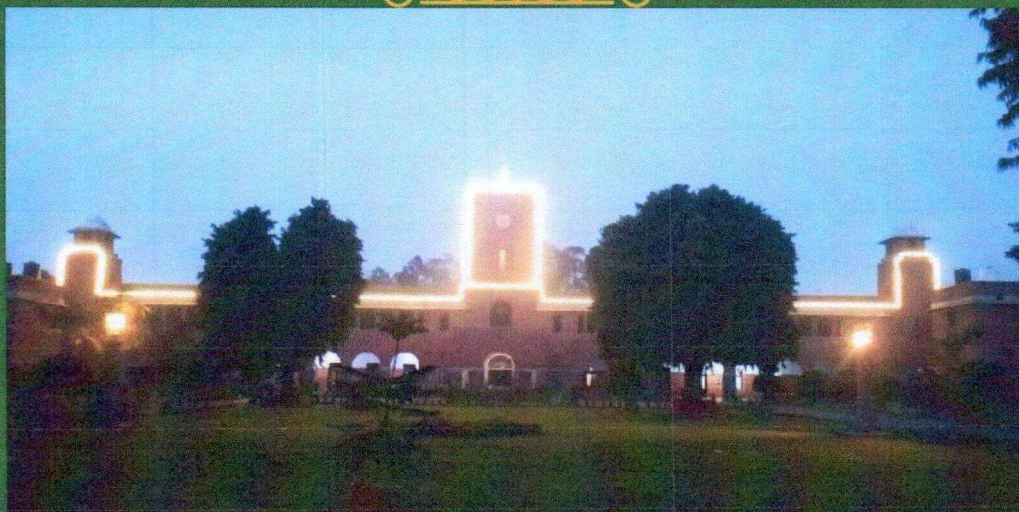




OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020 | VOL 1 ISSUE 4

# Minced & Scrambled

*The Stephanian Alumni Newsletter*



PC: Mr George Thomas (Estate Officer)

## All Wrapped Up

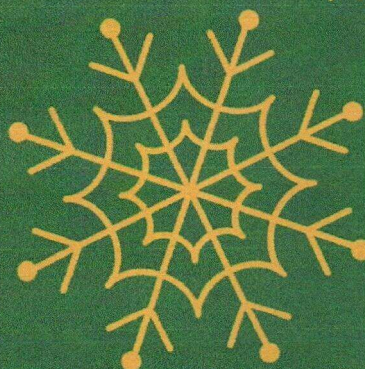
### IN THIS ISSUE:

Flashback 2020	05
Quarterly Alumni Chronicles	08
Alumni Reunion - 2020	14
Stephanian Trivia	17
In Memoriam	18

*Latest:*

For all things Alumni, visit our newly launched website

[www.alumnissc.com](http://www.alumnissc.com)







## Editor's Note

Dear Stephanians,



Greetings for the New Year! May the year 2021 bring hope, healing, and happiness to all your near and dear ones, and may you find peace and prosperity throughout the year.

They say good things come in small packages. With this edition of the newsletter, we complete the first volume comprising of four issues. Who'd have thought that this pandemic and lockdown would bring College and its memories to the fore. It's been an absolute honour and a privilege to bring you these snippets, full of Stephanian love, energy, and sense of belonging.

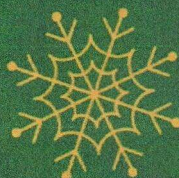


Stephanian stories are no less than oral literature, that help us carry forward our traditions and heritage. The collective sense of Stephanian needs to be a roaring flame that continues to burn as the years go by. 2020 has only helped us scratch the surface of what an alumni network such as ours, when connected with College, can do, and there's a whole lot that we can and have to achieve.

Until next time, with all my thanks and warm regards,



*Davina Smith*



## Special Announcement

2021 comes bearing some excellent news!

The St. Stephen's College Alumni Association is proud to announce the launch of The Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series starting this year.

What is this? How did it come about?

Read more about this exciting new initiative on Page #12.



*Pha Veng*







## Welcome Note

**Mr Akash Mohapatra**

**Member, Core Committee, St. Stephen's College Alumni Association**



Dear fellow Stephanians,

It is with immense pleasure and great pride that I pen this welcome note for our fourth alumni newsletter. This follows the first ever Global Alumni Reunion hosted on Zoom. It was wonderful to see a truly global panel comprising of H.E Jawed Ashraf (Batch of 1984), the Indian Ambassador at France, Mr Piyush Gupta (Batch of 1980), CEO of DBS Bank in Singapore and Dr Amrita Cheema (Batch of 1978), Bureau Chief - Delhi at Deutsche Welle.

They were reminiscing about their awesome days in College and talking about how we Alumni can make a difference. Jawed and Piyush highlighted how the over 150 alumni in Singapore had gone beyond the twice a year dinner catch ups to supporting students for internships, hosting three Stephanians in alumni homes to attend the India-Singapore Inspreneur Summit 2019, and instituting the Singapore Stephanian merit cum need scholarship. Nearly 300 Stephanians attended the reunion from all across the world which made it a truly global experience.

A special thanks to Ms Davina Smith, a Stephanian from the batch of 2014 and the secretary of the Alumni Office in College, who organized the reunion despite herself being down with COVID at the time. And Principal John Varghese, who has been actively trying to bring in the Alumni across the globe into the fabric of college life, he too was recovering from COVID at the time of the Reunion.

This has shown us how the pandemic has actually brought us closer and connected us more than ever before. I see Stephanians supporting each other, in small informal support groups, across geographical boundaries and many batchmates making plans for making their retirement homes in proximity in different parts of the world. Whether it is people stuck in a different country looking to go home, or an Alumni trying to set up a new company or find a job as they got retrenched - we have come together as one and showed the true Stephanian spirit and camaraderie. We also see many alumni contributing to college in many ways, visiting as guest speakers, engaging with the students and giving financial support. The amazing response to the recent call for burserships/scholarships for some students going through financial difficulty during the COVID times is one such example and truly heart-warming.





The five years in College from 1986 to 1991 were some of the best years of my life, and the time when I made some of my best friends for life!! I fondly remember my interview with Hala Saab, KRC, Malhan Saab, and VC, and the excitement when I saw my name on the list. I shall refrain from penning down the numerous pranks we pulled in college, that is for face-to-face banter after a couple of drinks. But the college was our home and the friends, the gyps, the office staff and faculty were our family! During festivities we would throng to Arya Saab's and other faculty members' homes for some awesome delicacies which would be waiting for us. Of course we would be soaked in the remnants of the Holi 'Mud Pit' and intoxicated with a delicious drink of milk, various dry fruits and some other natural herbal ingredients!

We had our share of ups and downs during those five years. On one hand, the fun and joy of Harmony and Winterfest, the IDG talks after dinner, the Spic-Macay cultural evenings, having the Army and Police Band play for us on Allnutt Lawns for our Graduation Dinner, campaigning and making alliances for college elections, midnight trips to Hindu Rao for 'bun-anda', having G-Jam eating competitions at Rohtas Dhaba or sipping tea at Jai Singh Dhaba (of Hindu college fame) and quite important at that time – finding a cheaper supplier for broiler chicken so we could be served chicken in the Dining Hall every week, instead of alternate weeks, and still save college some money!!! On the other end, various campaigns to bring about change, such as the protest march where we all blockaded the Mall Road in our fight for a cause, and became jailbirds for a day!

Coming back to more recent times, I was fortunate to spend a night in the Principal's house last year when I was visiting Delhi for a flying visit. Principal John was extremely hospitable, drove down himself to pick me up at the airport on a rainy Delhi late night, a nice walk all over college early morning before I ran off for my meetings and flew back to Singapore the same day. It was so wonderful to meet Dr. Baker – who was frail, but the wit was sharp. However, it was sad to hear that Mrs Lakshmi in the college office passed away, and Ramu from the office was down with throat cancer. I could not meet Ramu that day, but we managed to speak on the phone, and it broke my heart, as he could barely speak. However, my best Christmas present this year was when I called Ramu's daughter a few days before Christmas and Ramu is 80% recovered and spoke with me so cheerfully. It is these bonds and love from our professors, staff and friends that make the memories of college so fresh in our minds.

In closing I wish to thank my fellow members of the Alumni Core Committee, Ms Davina Smith, the secretary of the Alumni Office and Principal John for his untiring efforts to bring about change in college, and engaging with Alumni around the world. Wishing all of you the very best in health and happiness and urging your ever more active engagement with College for its betterment in these difficult times.

AD DEI GLORIAM

*Akash Mohapatra*

*phulvra*







## Flashback 2020



If ever there was a *Time Machine* as introduced by HG Wells, or a possibility to go *Back to the Future*, I believe, we all would agree in unison that the year 2020 could simply be skipped.

What started with a bang full of excitement and grand welcomes to the new decade of the 21st century, quickly turned into a nightmare. It holds true for almost everyone across the world, that we have been in more number of lockdowns than dinner parties and night outs in the past year! Calendar pages were flipped - dates after a new month started, weekends merged with weekdays, office hours became nap time and late nights became the new work hours. Out of the 366 days, almost 275 of them felt like *Groundhog Day*, and all the waiting for 2021, turned the sublime into the ridiculous! In short, 2020 felt like Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful..."

However, with its almost nothingness, 2020 brought with itself lessons that otherwise went unnoticed or were taken for granted. The Covidian era despite proposing social distancing, was a harbinger of kindness and togetherness in the most unique ways. *Zoom* zoomed into our lives and in no time, was burgeoning creativity online amongst all its users. From simple lectures to international festivals everything went digital, thereby making almost every event an inclusive one. Borders and boundaries were shattered, opportunities arose, experiences were gained, learning happened, and so did a lot of fun (and all from the comfort of one's home!). The virus allowed the world to see the good in almost everything. People across the world rose up to the challenge to not just raise funds and help one another, but to bring a change for good.

The greatest example of humanistic spirit was seen as the front-line workers across the world served mankind selflessly. Pharmaceutical companies became the greatest innovators of all times with the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. In the run-up to Christmas, when Pfizer, Moderna, and Oxford-AstraZeneca were pitching 90% to 95% effectiveness of their vaccines during trials, here in Delhi, we were aiming for higher.

*Blue Vignette*  
PRINCIPAL







The general sentiment was that these vaccines didn't match the cut-off for St. Stephen's and other Delhi University Colleges, because we believe in 100 percenters only!

Closer to home, our College too innovated tremendously. For the first time in the history, from admissions, to examinations, and even events like the orientation, Founder's Day, and the Annual Alumni Reunion, all happened online. This year's Founder's Day welcomed Justice Kurian Joseph, retired Judge, Supreme Court of India, as the Chief Guest, and the online service was attended by all the current Senior Members of College.

While the classes and the corridors longed for occupancy, cohorts continued to flourish and we saw another batch of Stephanians graduate and 'fuchhas' join in. Besides the regular online classes, the College has been successfully delivering multiple short-term online courses on Public Policy, Governance, International Relations, and Entrepreneurship through St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning. SCAL has also been enabling a greater engagement of the Alumni with its alma mater, as we welcomed twenty-seven alumni members this year to deliver lectures both offline and online.



In all these difficult times, the Stephanian Spirit has been the gift that keeps on giving. As the College initiated the Covid-19 Resilience Fund to support the current junior members with their fees and other expenses, our alumni came forth and donated most generously. The fundraising started by Dr Shachi Gurumayum (Batch of 1998), Maolkeki Foundation, and Mr Amit Kumar (Batch of 1997) saw alumni members from across the globe pitch in for the cause. It was during the Annual Alumni Reunion, when a surprise announcement got everyone cheered up, as Mr Arjun Gupta (Batch of 1980) pledged a donation of INR 25 lacs for the fund, in honour of his mother.

The goodwill doesn't end here. Thanks to the proactive and untiring efforts of Mr Prasanto K Roy (Batch of 1988) with the help of a current junior member Ms Evita Rodrigues and Prof Ashley NP, we also saw members providing for laptops to help students with the online classes. Our heartfelt gratitude extends to -





Mr Sanjay Saigal (Batch of 1984), Ms Abhilasha Padhy (Batch of 2000), Mr Arbinder Dua (Batch of 1983), Prof Amartya Lahiri (Batch of 1988), Ms Poorvi Shukla (Batch of 2010), Ms Konkona Sen Sharma (Batch of 2001), Mr Arindam Mukherjee (Batch of 2002), Ms Neha Aggarwal (Batch of 2011), Ms Meenu Handa (Batch of 1988), Mr Samuel Jesuratnam (Batch of 1988), and Mr Dony Kuriakose (Batch of 1987). The complete list of donors (monetary and otherwise) will soon be made available on the College Website.

It is this stellar Stephanian spirit that makes us a great institution that prides itself on the values of kindness, togetherness, and welfare of every single individual, no matter the circumstances.



St. Stephen's College

Covid-19 Resilience Fund  
to support tuition fees

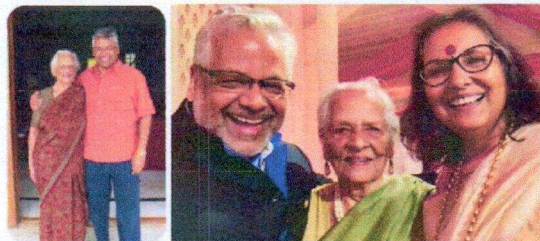
Covid-19 has hit us all hard! Between 50 – 100 Stephanians currently enrolled in different courses are struggling to finance their tuition fees due to changes in family circumstances because of Covid.

We are appealing to all Stephanians to partially or fully support the tuition fees of these affected students. Your contributions will be recognized on the College website, and the beneficiaries will be made known to you.

These are extraordinary times, let's do the extraordinary! Please write to [bursar@ststephens.edu](mailto:bursar@ststephens.edu) to make a donation to this fund.

AD DEI GLORIAM

St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, North Campus, Delhi - 110007, India



Mr Arjun Gupta with his mother.

Irrespective of what people may say about 2020, with all the doom and gloom, there definitely was a lot of positivity around, and I don't mean the Covid positives! (please excuse the dark humour.) While nothingness did prevail, with jobs, commerce, and economy taking a hit, the greatest achievement for all of us has been that we've overcome and come out of 2020, and I hope and pray unscathed.

A year that almost wasn't, has only made us stronger and a believer in all things good. 2020 may have gone, but perseverance remains still as we enter 2021. Like all difficulties, this too shall pass. After all, as P. B. Shelley writes, "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

John Hughes  
Principal







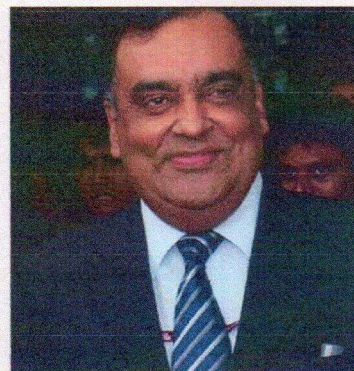
## Quarterly Alumni Chronicles



Moët Hennessy (LVMH) appoints Ms Ipsita Das (Batch of 2006) as Managing Director in India. Ms Das joined Moët Hennessy India as the Commercial Director and has been instrumental in leading the commercial team through the challenging period of 2020.



**Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli, (Batch of 1979) appointed as the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court. Previously she served as Judge of Delhi High Court.**



Mr Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha, IFS (Batch of 1979) appointed as the next Chief Information Commissioner of India.

Mr Sinha has also served as the High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom from 2016 - 2018.



**Mr Miguel Queah (Batch of 2008) wins The NorthEast Young Heroes Award in the Social Entrepreneurship category.**

Mr Queah is one of the youngest crusaders of child protection in Northeast India. Founder of UTSAH, a Guwahati based non-profit that works on "justice for children", especially those who are affected by sexual violence, he has provided end-to-end psychosocial and legal assistance to over 300 child survivors.

Besides, he has been instrumental in designing and rolling out the 'Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme', one of the largest Child Friendly Policing and Police Reform initiatives in the country. He has mentored and trained over 500 police personnel in child protection across the state of Assam.



Mr Mohit Joshi (Batch of 1994) President, Infosys appointed as independent non-executive director of Aviva Plc.



**Mr Sudarshan Suchi (Batch of 1986) appointed as the CEO of Save the Children India.**





Mr Vikram Doraiswami IFS (Batch of 1989) takes up his new role as the High Commissioner to Bangladesh.



Dr Aparna Vaidik (Batch of 1996) is awarded a grant worth £50,000 (about Rs.50 lacs) for the project 'The Ownership of Public History in India' (TOPHI) by The British Academy, UK.



Mr Jishnu Barua, IAS (Batch of 1982, 84) appointed as the Chief Secretary of Assam.

Mr Barua was previously on central deputation, until 2017, as Joint Secretary, Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India.



## Recently Published Articles

A proposed fiscal strategy for a sustainable economic recovery - Dr Sudipto Mundle  
<<https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/a-proposed-fiscal-strategy-for-a-sustainable-economic-recovery-11608218716712.html>>

Vaccinating Bharat: The nuts and bolts of an effective rollout - Dr Ajay Dua  
<<https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/vaccinating-bharat-nuts-bolts-effective-rollout>>

Delhi, the world's most air polluted capital fights back - Dr Vinod Thomas  
<<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/11/25/delhi-the-worlds-most-air-polluted-capital-fights-back/>>

The European Union, CAI, and the abyss - Dr Amrita Narlikar  
<<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-european-union-cai-and-abyss/>>

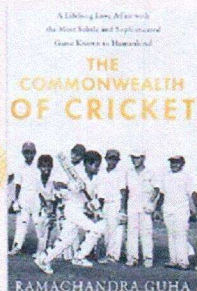
A pandemic-era tale of worlds within worlds - Ms Janice Pariat  
<<https://www.hindustantimes.com/art-and-culture/wknd-exclusive-a-pandemic-era-tale-of-worlds-within-worlds-by-janice-pariat/story-PuqQKRMeGkumTdNW4NuK7J.html>>







## Literary Recommendations



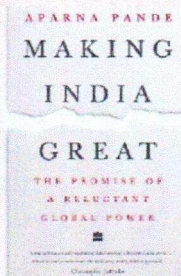
**The Commonwealth of Cricket**  
Dr Ramachandra Guha (Batch of 1977)

*The Commonwealth of Cricket* offers both a brilliantly charming memoir and a charter of the life of cricket in India. Dr Guha traces the game across every level at which it is played: school, college, club, state and country, and he offers vivid portraits of local heroes, provincial icons and international stars.

**Making India Great: The Promise of a Reluctant Global Power**

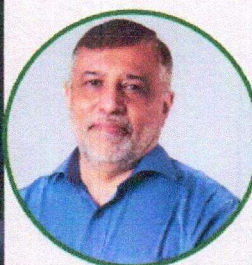
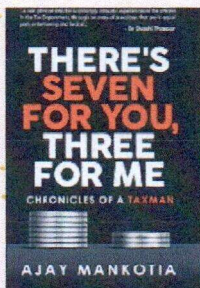
Dr Aparna Pande (Batch of 1993, 95)

In *Making India Great*, Dr Pande examines the challenges we face in the areas of social, economic, military and foreign policy and strategy. She points to the dichotomy that lies at the heart of the nation: our belief in becoming a global power and the reluctance to implement policies and take actions that would help us achieve that goal.



**There's Seven For You, Three For Me**  
Mr Ajay Mankotia (Batch of 1977)

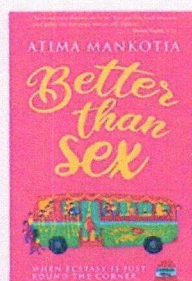
Do you want a sneak-peek into the workings of the income Tax Department, and the lives of the taxmen? How are tax raids organised? What happens when a politician or a film star is raided? Do they threaten the taxmen? In what unique ways is cash hidden? How do taxmen deal with the unpopularity of their job? What is the training that is imparted to them? Mr Mankotia brings to you many insider stories, based on his varied experiences during his career in the Tax Department.



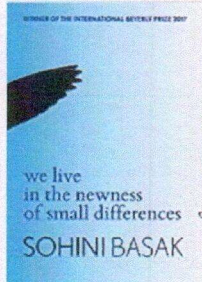
**Better Than Sex**

Ms Antima Mankotia (Batch of 1984, 86)

An entertaining yet thought provoking social satire that raises many pertinent questions. A book about a relatable middle-class family, it peeks into the minds of ordinary Indians; it grapples with complex relationships and it restores faith in the family and the bonds of sisterhood. The book will take readers on an interesting journey where they would be compelled to question many of the common everyday societal norms that we accept as normal part of life and never think of questioning. It's a raucous read that entertains but is at the same time socially conscious and thought provoking.







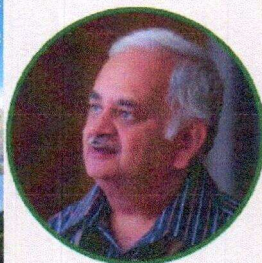
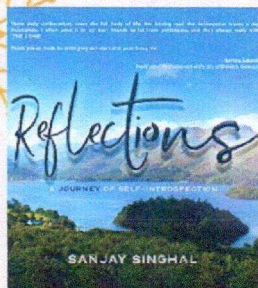
**We Live in the Newness of Small Differences**  
Ms Sohini Basak (Batch of 2013)

Ms Basak's intricately woven, exquisite debut collection breaks boundaries with form and gently collapses reality, dream and folklore into each other. There is a sense of endlessness in the interactions of poems with each other and with their sources – which range from Bangla children's classics to contemporary writers and ecological events. This is a collection that doesn't stand still, despite its elegance and charm, somehow continually recreating its own time and space beyond the page.

**Third Best**

Mr Arjun Rao (Batch of 2002)

A coming-of-age novel with an amazing ability to capture the tone and nuances of its young protagonist's speech, **Third Best** is a story about school, friendship, loyalty, love and a fascinating portrayal of life in an Indian boarding school - minus the sugar-coating.



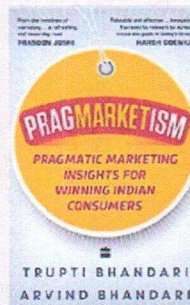
**Reflections : A Journey of Self-Introspection**  
Mr Sanjay Singhal (Batch of 1980)

Life is only what we choose to make it. Our mind is the most valuable possession that we have. The quality of our lives is and will be, a reflection of how well we develop, train, and utilize this precious gift. The true path to success is to deliberate daily and take determined actions accordingly. This Book will ensure you never stop learning. If you learn one new thing every day, you will overcome 99% insecurity of your inner self and mind.

**Pragmarketism: Pragmatic Marketing Insights for Winning Indian Consumers**

Mr Arvind Bhandari (Batch of 1990, 92)

Understanding the Indian consumer is a tricky business. In a country where language and culture vary every few kilometres, the conventional rules of marketing and selling don't apply. It's a market where successful international brands had to shut shop while many smaller, lesser-known brands made fortunes by decoding the Indian consumer. So, what does it really take to succeed in the great Indian mela and win consumers?







## The Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series

New year calls for new resolutions. However, we go one step ahead and call it new initiatives. Last year we brought forth the St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL). This year, we have another exciting initiative coming up, and exclusively for all our alumni members - ***The Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series.***

The Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series has been a long standing idea which is now finally coming into fruition. With heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Principal Prof John Varghese, President of the Alumni Association - Mr Philip Mathew, and Mr Rahul Mammen Mappillai (Batch of 1998), Managing Director, MRF Limited, this initiative, God willing, will take place this year, in College.



Mr Rahul Mammen, an alumnus and Managing Director of MRF Limited has been the driving force behind this initiative.

He pursued B.A. Economics Honours in College and graduated in 1998. Mr Mammen recalls his three years in College, and says they were the best years of his life. The College had an ecosystem which was unique in the way that everyone was smart and intellectual, and at the same time a lot of fun! As someone who had never left Chennai, coming to College and to Mukarji West, was like coming home to a family one never met but always knew!

Below is an excerpt from the conversation between Mr Rahul Mammen and Ms Davina Smith:

DS: Please tell us about the upcoming Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series and how did this idea come into being?

RM: The idea and discussions about such a lecture series already existed, but bringing it into action was what was needed. My uncle, Mr Philip Mathew reached out to me saying we have to do something exciting and valuable for College, in order to give back. If we want our alma mater to continue being the leading institution, a lot needs to be done. We have to support the College in making sure that it has adequate funds to invest in the required infrastructure to be a top Institution going forward. However, besides infrastructural developments, there's a need for carrying forward the intellectual thoughts, heritage, and traditions of College. And for this reason, after having a conversation with Principal Varghese, we decided to launch an Annual Distinguished Alumni Lecture Series.

I think such an event would be a celebration of Stephania, simply because we are so fortunate to have an alumni who have done so well across different fields, and it would be an occasion to come together as a community and celebrate each and everyone's successes.







DS: That sounds wonderful! What has been your contribution to College for this very initiative?

RM: So, we have given an endowment of INR 30 lacs to College, and the interest generated from this will be used to fund the lecture series each year.

DS: That's most generous, sir! Our heartfelt gratitude to you and your family. So, do you have any initial plans as to how would you like to see this event happening?

RM: You're most welcome, Davina. Like I said, we are doing this for College, because College has brought us where we are today.

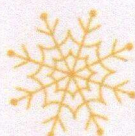
So yeah, as of now, we haven't gotten down to the nitty-gritties of the event. There's a committee comprising of the Principal, Mr Philip Mathew, a few other members and myself, and this committee will be deciding on the guests and timeline of the proposed lecture series. But we are sure, if all goes well, God willing, we will be launching it this year itself.

DS: So, there isn't a proposed/ tentative timeline yet?

RM: Well, the plan is to have the event in College, because let's be honest, there's no better place than our Hall and Courts for such an event, and then the College is at its best during the Winter months! So, ideally, we are looking forward to having this event towards the end of this year, but the plannings for the same can begin from now itself. Also, in the light of this pandemic, having it before that makes no point. Ensuring a safe environment will be crucial and we will have to wait before the situation normalises.

DS: Absolutely. That goes without saying. So, amidst everything to look forward to in 2021, I believe this is going to be the most awaited event. Before we close, something that you'd like to share with our readers?

RM: So like I said, I think anybody who's been to Stephen's, knows what it means to us Stephanians and the sentimental value it carries in our lives. I think most people would agree that the three or five years spent here were the best ones. But, the association must not end after graduation. I think it's our duty to give back to College, whenever and in whichever way possible. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful principal, Prof Varghese who has been instrumental and proactive in bringing together the alumni community, and there's a lot we can do as alumni, no matter how big or small that contribution might be, because every little effort brings a change!



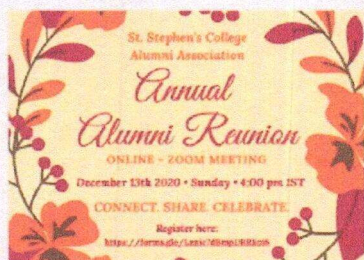




## Annual Alumni Reunion - 2020

Since long there's been a tradition in College that the first Sunday after Founder's Day (December 7th) is celebrated as the Reunion Sunday. An afternoon spent in the sprawling Allnutt Court or Dining Hall Lawns amidst the company of old friends and new, followed by a splendid lunch in the Dining Hall which features the quintessential Mince and Scrambled amongst other delicacies. Alas, this year, thanks to COVID-19, the crisp winter Sun, the walks in the hallowed corridors, and the reminiscences of days in the Rez, were sorely missed. However, that didn't stop us from finding an alternative. While nothing beats the atmospheric intoxication the Stephanian air produces, but at the same time we also realised that it's the company that makes all the difference. Hence, we decided to go digital, for the very first time. And voilà! What a spectacular event it proved to be. We were joined by almost 300 members from across the world, making it the first ever global connect.

Some of the oldest member who joined us were from the batch of 1950's, which only reassured us that the spirit of Stephanian never dampens, no matter how much time has passed since one was in College. There was a host of segments that featured on the day including stories and anecdotes shared by our guests, the key highlight being one shared by the veteran actor and alumnus Mr Kabir Bedi (Batch of 1967), who reminisced that in his time, during the Shakespeare Society's production of Julius Caesar, Kooler Talk featured that "Caesar was killed twice, once by Brutus, and the second time by Kapil Sibal!"



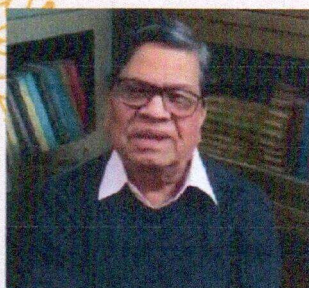
The 'Kooler Talks' panel discussion was the showstopper of the evening which featured Dr Amrita Cheema (Batch of 1978), Mr Piyush Gupta (Batch of 1980) and Amb. Jawed Ashraf (Batch of 1984). They discussed what makes College special, the idea of St. Stephen's, recalled the pranks that went around during the Practical Jokes Week, the bonds they formed during their years in College, and the connections that still remain strong and keep growing each year.

Nostalgia struck hard during the photography presentation - A Trip Down Memory Lane that featured snapshots from 1950s to 2010s shared by alumni members. This was followed by special messages sent by former Senior Members of College - Dr David Gosling, Prof K Roy Choudhury, and Dr Giti Chandra.





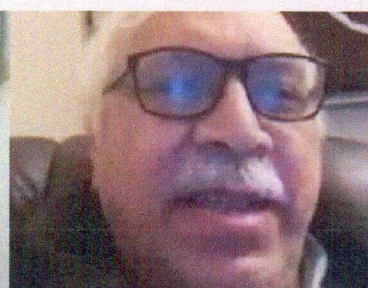
**Kooler Talks with Dr Amrita Cheema, Mr Piyush Gupta and Amb. Jawed Ashraf**



**Prof K Roy Choudhury**



**Prof Gurmeet Singh**



**Dr S. Y. Quraishi**

The event which was scheduled for 100 minutes lasted for 3 hours and could've gone for even longer had there been no technological reservations.

My sincerest thanks goes out to each and every member who joined us on the day and made it a success. Suggestions and recommendations have been flowing in since then to make the virtual reunion a bi-annual affair. With this spirit of excitement, we look forward to hosting similar events more frequently starting this year.

Select videos from the event, and the 'Kooler Talks' -  
Panel Discussion is now available to view on our  
Alumni Website. Please visit  
<https://www.alumnissc.com/gallery>.





## Snapshots from A Trip Down Memory Lane



All old photographs used in this issue have been provided by the alumni members.

Vol 1 Issue 4 | #16

*Ravi Vengal*







## Stephanian Trivia Quiz

Put your Stephanian knowledge to the test!

For more questions, [click here](#).

- Who amongst them was not an international swimmer?  
a. A S Brar   b. Kiran Seth   c. Ranjit Bhatia
- In 2017, Mr Srijit Seal (then a junior member) came up with the idea of a TIME CAPSULE to commemorate Foundation day. In which year will the TIME CAPSULE be retrieved?  
a. 2037   b. 2042   c. 2067
- Who said "We learnt formally from our lecturers but we learnt much more from each other. That is the secret of a good College; one simply learns by breathing its air."?  
a. Mr Nirupam Sen   b. Dr Shashi Tharoor   c. Mr Natwar Singh
- Which principal helped establish the University of Delhi?  
a. Principal SK Rudra   b. Principal SN Mukarji   c. Principal SC Sircar
- What was Sudhir Bose Marg earlier known as?  
a. Cavalry Lane   b. Chelmsford Road   c. Imperial Avenue
- Who was the first woman to be appointed on the College faculty?  
a. Miss E Elton   b. Ms Sucheta Kriplani   c. Mrs Alice Sircar
- Mr Salim Ahmed Salim served as the head of state of which country?  
a. Fiji   b. Tanzania   c. Malaysia



1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (a) 7. (b)

Answers:

Vol 1 Issue 4 | #17





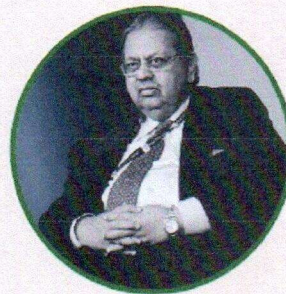
## **In Memoriam**

*The world changes from year to year,  
Our lives from day to day.  
But the love and memories of you,  
Shall never pass away.*

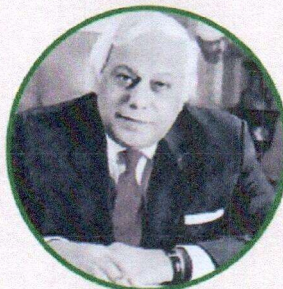
*May the Almighty grant unto them Eternal Peace.  
Amen.*



**Mr Amitabh Joshi**  
IAS  
In College: 1980-84



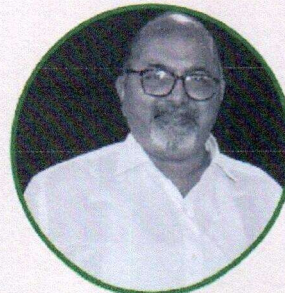
**Mr Prem Prakash Sharma**  
Former Chief Secretary of  
Jharkhand  
In College: 1965-68



**Mr Brahm Vasudeva**  
Chairman, Hawkins Cookers  
In College: 1953-56



**Mr Nitin Puri**  
CEO, Bates Pan Gulf Group  
In College: 1978-81



**Mr Thomas Philip**  
Tata Tea Limited  
In College: 1979-82





## Connect with us

For all inquiries, suggestions, event updates, publication requests, and everything else,  
please write to:



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Please also visit our official social media handles:  
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Links provided below.



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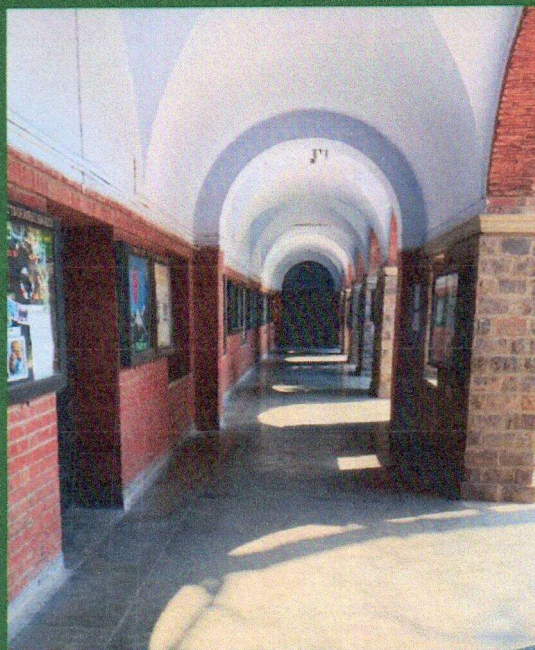


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Visit [www.alumnissc.com](http://www.alumnissc.com) to access more information, select segments and videos from the  
Virtual Alumni Reunion Event 2020, and much more.

Register with us on the portal to stay in touch with College and be updated with the Alumni  
Events happening near you, by engaging with our Regional Chapters.

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Vol 1 Issue 4 | #19





JANUARY - MARCH 2021

VOL 2 ISSUE 1

# Mince and Scrambled

The Stephanian Alumni Newsletter

140 years of Excellence and Service

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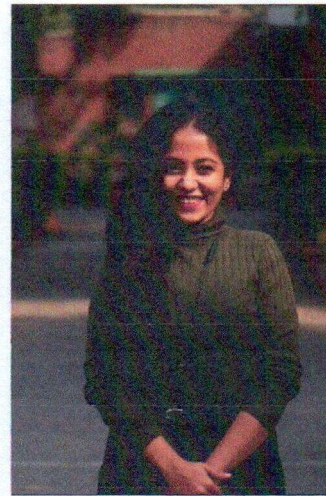




## Letter from the editor

Dear Fellow Stephanians,

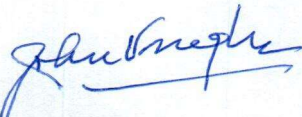
Warm greetings to you from College! I am thrilled to bring to you the new volume of our newsletter 'Mince and Scrambled'. We are super grateful for the overwhelming support you have sent our way in the past, without which this new issue would not have been possible. As we move ahead, we hope to bring to you more news from College and even more from our extended alumni family. In this volume, apart from the regular dash of love, you will see an increased involvement from our current junior members in College, who are ever so enthusiastic about meeting and learning from the College alumni. Additionally, we've carefully wrapped up a few other delightful surprises for you as well!



Though Hartely's novel opens up with, "The past is a foreign country here: they do things differently there", that is quite not the case here in Stephanian. The past walks with us into the present as we celebrate our yesteryears today, and ourselves together as a community. I hope you will enjoy reading this issue, as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you, and do remember that your inputs are warmly welcome.

Much love, many regards,

Ann Susan Aleyas

  
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*Mince and Scrambled*

JANUARY - MARCH 2021

## Welcome Note

This issue marks two very different kinds of anniversaries, one a joyful celebration the other a painful tragedy.

On 1 February we celebrated the 140th anniversary of the foundation of college. A striking feature of this remarkable journey is the exceptional success of the alumni in so many different fields. Generations of college alumni have held the highest positions in the judiciary and in academia, in the civil services and in the diplomatic corps. They have led some of the largest companies in India and abroad and held the highest positions in multi-lateral institutions. They have also established an amazing track record in voluntary organisations and in politics. We had much to celebrate on 1st February 2021.



The other anniversary marked one of the darkest years in recent human history. The Covid 19 pandemic has killed hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. However, even in the midst of this tragedy there is much to be hopeful about. Several vaccines have been rolled out and India, as the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world, is at the forefront of this battle against the pandemic. We have also learned much about how to contain the spread of the virus and how to treat those who have tested positive. We can dare to hope that this year will be a year of return to normalcy.

But the new normal will not be the same as the old normal. From classrooms to Board rooms, virtual interaction through platforms like Zoom is the new norm as is working from home. One of my happiest experiences during this difficult year has been the much greater engagement with friends from college, mostly through chat groups like Senior Kooler-talk, which bring together Stephanians across several generations, but also physically in small, socially distanced groups. I trust that has been your experience too. Wishing you all the best for this year of recovery.

*Dr. Sudipto Mundle*  
Economics 1966-69 & Member  
Alumni Core Committee

*John Hughes*  
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DELHI







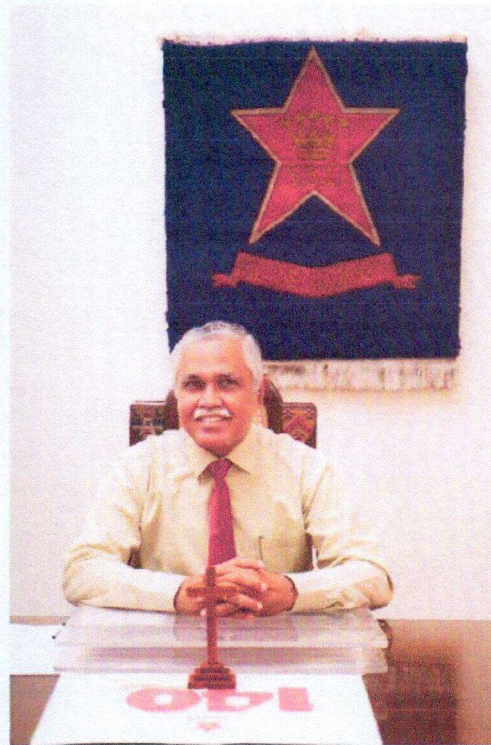
JANUARY- MARCH 2021

*Mince and Scrambled*

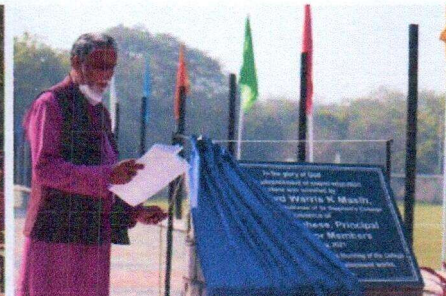
## A note from the Principal

Dear Stephanians,

St Stephen's College turned 140 on the 1st of February this year. While Founder's Day (7th December) is more recognised, it is only recently that College Foundation Day has been given prominence. Over the past few years we have had simple but formal ceremonies - a tree planting drive, burying of a time capsule, visit and speech by the Lamaji of the Spiti Munsel Ling School and this year to mark the 140th year, a stone tabled was unveiled by the Bishop of Delhi and Chairman of the College, Rt Revd Waris K Masih on the newly laid road on the Rudra side. The stone also records the inauguration of campus development works. Along with this we had the unveiling of a special, 140th year logo designed by Mr Prashant, former student of the College, for the occasion. The logo was unveiled by Prof Rupin W Desai, retired professor of English and scholar of global repute in Shakespearean studies. All communication from College will carry this special logo for this current year.



Prof. John Varghese  
Principal



*John Varghese*  
PRINCIPAL







Mince and Scrambled

JANUARY- MARCH 2021

## Celebrating 140 years

On 1st February each year, we gratefully remember and celebrate the foundation of our College in 1881 by the Cambridge Mission. St. Stephen's College was founded with a vision towards spreading the Christian mission, providing an excellent model of education, and to ultimately groom individuals of strong and upright character. The humble beginning of our College was in a small house in Katra Kushal Rai near Kinari Bazar in Chandni Chowk, with only five students and three teachers. About a decade later, College was moved to a new building designed by Col (later Sir) Swinton Jacob, Chief Engineer of Jaipur State, near St. James' Church at Kashmere Gate. Eventually, with the shift of the capital of the British Indian Empire to Delhi, it was decided that a new city was to be found. Our fathers rightly understood the important role St. Stephen's College would carry in this new capital city. Consequently, it was decided that a new site would be identified to house College. The original site marked off for the same was at a prime location in the new city, at the angle enclosed by what is now Barakhamba road and Hailey road. However, due to difficulties posed by the World War and other considerations, this plan was discarded and a new location for College was allotted in 1934 in the Old Viceregal Lodge Estate, which continues to be its present site.



If you are curious enough to further turn the leaves of history, you'll find that the present University site was previously a cantonment area. Roots to the early Stephanian myths —of a graveyard site on campus or the legend of the 'Bloody Mayor' in Rudra South— can all be traced back to this. Now trivia aside, a few years later, under the visionary leadership of the young Cambridge Mathematics scholar and later Principal of College, Satyanand Mukarji and other upright individuals, the current College building came to be occupied on 1st October, 1941. As you may know, many of the present buildings in College were designed by the distinguished British architect, Walter Sykes George who was at the time Edwin Lutyens' assistant. The brick on stone buildings with subtle Mughal motifs and four spacious courts of College continue to be one fine piece of architecture. However for us, as former students and bearers of this great tradition, the red brick walls, the long corridors, the sonorous chapel dome and the noisy classrooms are also very personal. They harbor the warmth of our youth, the color of our dreams and the revolt of our memories together.

As we now stand together at the cusp of the 140th anniversary of this great tradition of Stephanian, let us take a moment to read the words of C.F. Andrews, as he laid the foundation of College in 1939, in an impressive ceremony attended by Kunwar Singh Jagdish

  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

*Mince and Scrambled*

Prasad, Pro-Chancellor, Sir Maurice Gwyer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others. After laying the foundation stone, C.F. Andrews said:

*"The world has been through a crisis in the last few days no less terrible than that of September last year. Day after day our fair hopes of world freedom and world peace have seemed to be crumbling into dust. Brute force appears still to prevail on God's earth. At such a time, it is not easy to lift up our eyes to the future and be absolutely certain that, in the long run, the free spirit of man may prevail. Yet that is what we have been called upon to accomplish as we have laid this foundation-stone on the new site of St. Stephen's College. For our hopes and beliefs are firmly fixed in God Himself and we are sure that the house of learning which we are building today will stand erect amid all the new ravages of time. We remember the words of the Psalm:*

*Except the Lord build the house,  
Their labour is but lost that built it.  
Except the Lord keep the city  
The watchman waketh but in vain.*

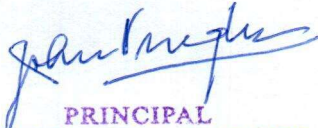
*Only those who have such faith are able to endure to the end. Only a faith like that can gain the victory which overcomes the world...."*

*(as reported by The Statesman, March 28, 1939)*

We may also recall Epilogue from 'The St. Stephen's Campus: An Informal History':

*As we complete the building project begun more than fifty years ago, it might be appropriate to remember how it was launched by people of different faiths. Mukarji and George were Christians; R.N. Mathur, a Hindu; Nawab Ali, the main contractor for the initial phase, a Muslim; Nand Singh, the Clerk of Works, a Sik.... As it was said of Christopher Wren, whose architecture inspired Edwin Lutyen, and by extension, Walter George: "if you require a monument, look around you".*

*From the college Archives*

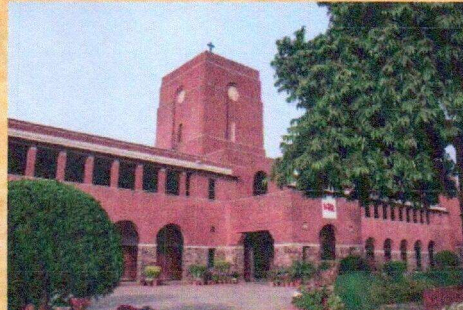
  
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Country  
Road, Take  
Me Home :  
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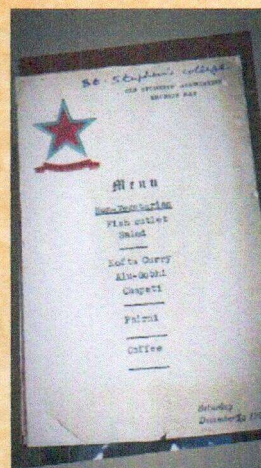
'Truth without fear' –  
standing proud upon its  
140th.

(Photo courtesy: Amaal  
Abraham Shaji)



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Menu from the Reunion Day  
of the Old Students' As-  
sociation, dated 20th De-  
cember, 1952. This photo  
was lovingly shared by  
Mr. S. Ramanathan (Batch  
of 1932).



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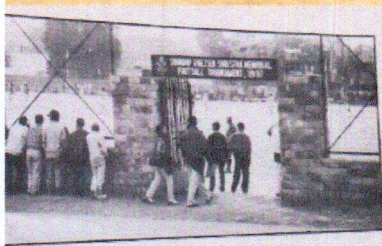




Recent aerial view of college football ground and recently renovated driveway (Photo courtesy: Ishwanath Kothapalli)



The photograph was shot by Mr. Vivek Singh after Holi celebrations in 1995. You can spot Dr. David Baker in the far left in the frame. This photograph was kindly shared by Mr. Manjoy Kumar Basumatary (1992-95, Maths).



Produced from the Year-book 1996-1997  
Dondup Gyaltsen (6th April 1976- 29th July 1997)



Photo of SSC Hockey Team of 1950-51. The photo has Mr. Natwar Singh, standing in the first row extreme right, and Mr. R.D. Jaiman in the extreme left top row. This photograph was warmly shared by Mr. Ishwardayal Jaiman (1952-56, Maths).





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JANUARY - MARCH 2021

## A True Teacher That was Ranjit Bhatia

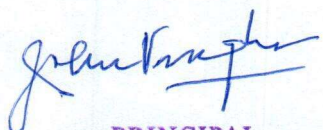
A kingpin in the education system is the teacher. To a large extent she/he is responsible for shaping the personality and character of a student. Ranjit Bhatia was one such teacher. I had joined College in July 1959 as a student in BSc (Hons.) Mathematics. Ranjit came back from Oxford (he had gone as a Rhodes scholar) and joined the faculty in 1960. While studying at Oxford, Ranjit had obviously continued pursuing his other passion- athletics, and had represented India at the Rome Olympics in 1960.

Two incidents come to mind. Sometime in class, I must have asked a question to which Ranjit did not have had an answer at that time. A few months later while he was at Jabalpur participating in an athletic meet, possibly still searching for an answer to that question, he found the answer. I attach a copy of the post card he wrote to his colleague Satish Mathur on 11th February 1962 giving the solution to that problem and asking Satish to share it with me. How many teachers today would keep thinking about solutions to problems posed by their students months earlier, particularly when they were themselves out participating in a sports activity which was a passion to them? Certainly, a rarity.

The other aspect, if I can call it so, was Ranjit's sincerity and dedication to his work and the institution. A little more than 30 years later in 1996, I had visited the College in connection with the admission formalities of my daughter. I was surprised and thrilled to find that 3 of the 5 teachers who taught me between 1959 and 1964 were still teaching in College. Any one of them could have easily gone to a University abroad for much better financial gains. However, they chose to continue to work in College. Ranjit was one of them, the other two being S.R. Nagpal (a PhD from Harvard where he had gone in 1963) and Satish Mathur. These were rare specimens in a vocation which society today does not look up to in any great measure. Ranjit was certainly one such rare specimen.



By Shri. Inderjit Khanna  
(Batch of 1962, Mathematics)

  
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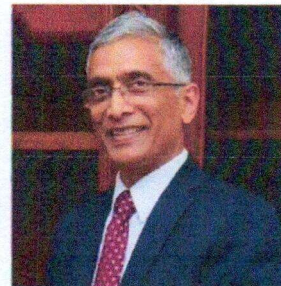


JANUARY- MARCH 2021

*Mince and Scrambled*

## Once Upon a Time : In Conversation with Mr Parameswaran Iyer

Mr Parameswaran Iyer is former Secretary to the Government of India and from the IAS batch of 1981. He pursued B.A English Honours in College from 1975-78 and was an avid tennis player during his college years. He is best known for spearheading the implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission, Prime Minister Modi's flagship programme. His newly published memoir, "Method in the Madness", chronicles his journey through professional tennis, the IAS, and the World Bank.

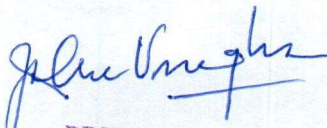


Ms Ammini Paul is a bright and enthusiastic third-year junior member from the Department of English. Ms Paul enjoys writing- especially poetry and short stories- and aspires to be an educator someday.

AP: Mr Iyer, thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. Let's start off with your memories from College. Could you share a few memorable experiences with us?

PI: Sure, Ammini! One of them was from my first year in 1975 when I won a Wodehouse Society quiz. One of the questions in it was about a very well-known "character" from the Blandings series called the Empress of Blandings- the gigantic pig which was the pride of the Earl of Emsworth. The key question in the quiz demanded the number of calories the Empress consumed daily. I got the answer right - it was 55,000 plus calories! I won the quiz, and the prize was, appropriately, a café hog!

Another nice memory was my making it to the college tennis team and playing at the inter-College and University levels. One of the advantages of being on the tennis team was that you got a free café meal after tennis practice. My teammates, Captain Sanjeev Kassal and Shekhar Menon and I practiced in the afternoons on the tennis courts behind Allnutt North, and then treat ourselves to mince cutlets, scrambled egg and nimbu pani at the

  
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*Mince and Scrambled*

JANUARY- MARCH 2021

café.

I was also awarded the Davidson College Scholarship offering a year's study at Davidson College, North Carolina, USA, where I spent most of my time playing tennis.

**AP:** It was in your first year of College that women started coming into College. What was that like?

**PI:** I think it was a good experience because it changed in many ways the dynamics of the College. Diversity is always good, and I think a lot of different perspectives and new ideas come in when a traditionally male college opens up to redress the gender balance. The English Honours class had the most girls in it. The number of girls in college increased significantly in succeeding years and many of them have gone on to join the civil services as well. In fact, I was recently interviewed about my book at the Mussoorie Academy by a young lady IAS officer and fellow-Stephanian, Chandrajyoti Singh.

**AP:** You also mentioned that you were in Allnutt North. Could you tell us more about that experience?

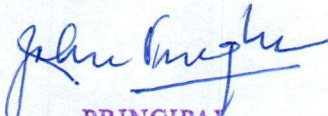
**PI:** I stayed at Allnutt North in my third year and the Block Tutor was Mr David Baker. I think my room was H-9. It was very conveniently located as the tennis courts were nearby and I could also drop into the nearby chapel and play the piano. It was a nice experience and I'm very happy to hear that Mr Baker is still in College and doing well!

**AP:** Mr. Iyer, you've recently launched your memoir *Method in the Madness: Insights from My Career as an Insider-Outsider-Insider*. You use an interesting hyphenated term here to refer to yourself, which is "insider-outsider-insider". What exactly does this mean?

**PI:** The subtitle of my book refers to my tenure working inside government, then outside it in the World Bank and as a road manager cum coach to my tennis professional daughter, and then returning to government as an insider in 2016 as Secretary to the Government of India. It was my wife, Indira's, idea to write the book and she also suggested the title of the book, reflecting the topsy turvy and unpredictable nature of my career. In a sense I've now become an outsider again, because I'm back in the World Bank in Washington DC.

**AP:** You mention in your book that one of the reasons you were called to become Secretary of the MDWS was because you were a domain expert and had years of experience in the water and sanitation sector. How important is specialization in one's career through the years, especially with respect to the Indian Civil Services?

**PI:** I'm increasingly coming around to the view that it is quite important, especially after the first 10-15 years of one's career. The IAS was conceived of as a generalist service, and later on in your career, based on one's field experience, you got into the policy-making domain either in the state government or in the Government of India. There is no question

  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

*Mince and Scrambled*

that the first ten or fifteen years of one's service gives the young IAS officer phenomenal exposure to general district and development administration. But after this period, in an increasingly complex world, I think that it is important that an IAS officer gets into a broad area of expertise, such as the social sector, economic management sector, infrastructure sector or a regulatory sector. As I describe in my book, I "stumbled into a specialization" (water and sanitation sector) and that expertise certainly helped me in my role as Secretary in the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

AP: "Method in the Madness" is full of practical pro-tips and hands-on advice. And I think it's very helpful for students who are looking to 'go out into the world' with our undergraduate degrees. You mentioned in your book that once your scholarship ended, you were a bit uncertain about what to do next, and a lot of us also find ourselves in the same situation. In this light, what message or advice would you give to Stephanians who are currently pursuing their higher education?

PI: I wouldn't worry too much. Of course, the world is more complex now- it was relatively straightforward in our times. But the first thing is to not be too worried about deciding where you want to go, or whether you'll make it or not make it with respect to a particular career. It is definitely worthwhile following your passion and even trying out a few careers to see what clicks.

Some people have a very clear idea of what they want to do and that's great. But if you are an undergrad and you feel like you don't have a very clear idea, that is also fine. If you don't get what you want at the first shot, you should keep trying and eventually I believe everyone will find their niche one way or another. The Civil Services, of course are a fabulous career! Although there are many opportunities in the private sector now, being a civil servant remains one of the most satisfying jobs, where you can actually create impact on the ground. I don't think anyone will ever regret choosing this path. If you get in, great. If you don't, there many other career paths.

AP: Some of the lessons we learn in our college years tend to stay with us forever- whether it is in everyday life, or one's professional career. Could you share with us such an experience or lesson from your undergrad years in St Stephen's that helped you later on?

PI: Looking back, I think that one of the most important lessons I learned from College was the discipline of balancing studies and sports and trying to do equally well in both. Acquiring the ability to "multitask" (in those days, the word wasn't very common!), to make sure I was on top of studies as well as sports, was extremely useful. That lesson has stood me in good stead throughout my career, especially in my role as Secretary to the Government of India, when there were multiple challenges we had to address at the same time.

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*Mince and Scrambled*

JANUARY - MARCH 2021

## From Stephen's with Love...

*In this new volume of the newsletter, we are delighted to bring you snapshots of our senior non-teaching staff*

### *Ms. Sabyia Jafri, Accounts Section*



Ms. Sabyia Jafri has been weaving magic with numbers in the Accounts section of College for close to four decades now. Sabyia ma'am, as she is dearly addressed, joined college in her late twenties on 2nd March, 1985. She retired from College on 30th June, 2017 and was awarded the Best Worker of the Year. Though retired, Sabyia ma'am continues to serve College as a special assignment. When asked for

an opportunity to speak with her for the Alumni Newsletter, she gladly agreed with her quintessential gentle smile. Following is a quick chat with Sabyia ma'am the next day, during lunch hour when she was still working her way through the many receipts and ledgers piled up on the table.

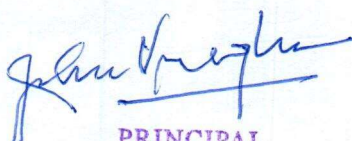
ASA: Hello Ma'am! Thank you again for agreeing to do this. Please tell me, what are you most attached in College?

SJ: I am not attached to things or places particularly but I am attached to people, especially my colleagues from the accounts section. I keep in touch with my dear colleagues who have retired too. I speak with Vasantha every week. Do you remember Vasantha?

ASA: Ofcourse! Vasantha ma'am just cannot be forgotten, especially her voice. She was the voice of the Principal's Office for the longest time, calling us with information and instruction.

SJ: Yes, yes. We still speak every Wednesday. Few of my ex-colleagues passed away recently. I still think of them every now and then. Yes, so basically people are what I remember most in college.

(A colleague who was there at the time pointed out the peculiarity of these Wednesday calls with Ms. Vasantha. When asked why Wednesday, Sabyia ma'am laughed and said that it was just a matter of habit.)

  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

*Mince and Scrambled*

ASA: How about a place? Anything you are particularly attached to?

SJ: Ha... no, not really. I like sitting here at my table only. Infact, in all these years I've only been to the Café or the Mess just a handful of times. There was this one time when Vasantha and I got lost at the Science gate but thankfully we found our way to the main block. Speaking of which, the Principal recently invited me to have lunch with him at the Café. We had lunch there a couple of times after that. That was my latest visit to the Café.

ASA: This is very interesting. Ma'am, you handle a lot of student and staff accounts but you may not see very many of us in-person. Have you ever been able to put names to people?

SJ: Yes, that's true. I do not see many people directly, but I do remember few students who have graduated. In fact, few of our current faculty members were students here. You know, I remember the Principal as a teacher here many years ago. I was in college at the time.

This short exchange with Sabyia ma'am soon meandered into conversations about numbers, names and other things. Ms. Sabyia Jafri is a hidden treasure of our College.

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**Mr. Kundan Lal (Senior Lab Assistant, Department of Physics).**



Mr. Kundan Lal joined College on 1ST November, 1981. Having worked in College for the past thirty-nine years, Mr. Lal is due to retire on 31st May, 2021. He was warm and welcoming about this interview, and was found in happy conversations with one of his colleagues from the Chemistry Department at the time.

ASA: Thankyou for agreeing to this interview. Let me begin by asking what you think the best aspect about our College is?

KL: Well, I think the best aspect of our College is its discipline. Everyone follows this in their day to day lives- may it be students, teachers or karamcharis. I would also like to add that there is another aspect which sets our College apart: the respect we have for each other, irrespective of our different roles here.

ASA: True, Kundan Lal ji. I think so too. Please tell me, which is a place that is close to your heart here in College?

KL: Science Department to me obviously. I have worked my whole life here.

ASA: True. Is there a day or event which is most memorable to you in all these years of

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*Mince and Scrambled*

JANUARY - MARCH 2021

service?

KL: Oh yes! I received an opportunity to sing at the Rudra Dinner; that would have to be the most memorable event for me. My family and I staged a Qawwali performance, it was such an experience! I received many felicitations from teachers and students.

ASA: Oh, so you are a trained musician?

KL: No, I'm God-gifted!! (Kundan Lal ji heartily laughed as he responded)

ASA: Have you been in touch with any past students?

KL: Science students usually come by. Whenever they come, they meet us. You know our students are very different from students of other colleges. Our students regard and respect us. I tell you this is what our college be remembered for: the regard for one another and its discipline.

There was this time when we met one former student in Aksharadham. She had graduated in 1980's and was then working as the DCP. Even after 10 to 12 years, she remembered us and greeted us. It was so wonderful!

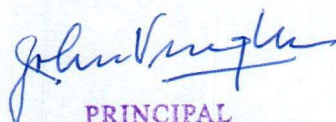
(Kundal Lal ji's colleague from the Chemistry Department added a few words here, which the former wholeheartedly agreed with)

Our students showed immense care and respect especially during the time of pandemic. They called each and every one of us asking if we were alright. They even called the cobbler who used to sit on campus and provided help. We have a wonderful community of students here. It is truly remarkable.

ASA: I absolutely agree, Kundan Lal ji. Are there any changes that you have noticed in College over the years?

See, evolution is the rule of nature. Everything changes, and what may seem good to you may not be good to me etc. Everything changes.

*This short interview with Mr. Kundan Lal merrily ended with him agreeing to pose for the photograph you see reproduced above.*

  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

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## Back to Roots, Back to Societies

College could not and would not have been what is without a ShakesSoc production or an outreach programme by the Social Service League (SSL). While it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a whole host of student societies to bring the Stephanian experience a full circle. Our alumni, in ways more than one, continue to encourage and participate student activities. Here are a few snapshots of these from the many.

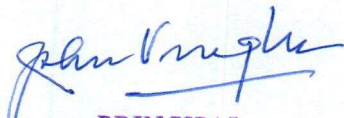
Mr. Mani Shankar Iyer (Batch of 1961), Indian politician and former diplomat, here with the Leadership Cell on "Secularism and Stephanian". This was one of the very few in-person society events this semester; the session was held on our lovely SCR Lawns.



Mr. Shashi Tharoor (Batch of 1975), Member of Parliament and former diplomat, spoke on "Cajoling or Cudgeling" at the Media Cell's Annual Fest 'The Fourth Estate'

Enactus hosted Mr. Miguel Das Queah (Batch of 2008), child protection activist in Northeast India and Founder of UTAH, who spoke on socially driven business ideas



  
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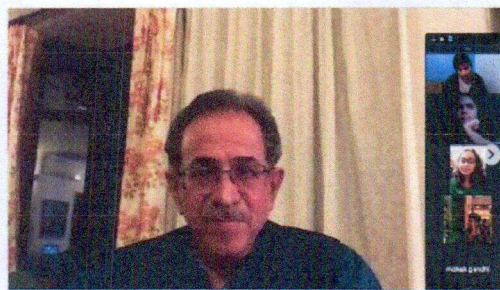
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021



The Economics Society hosted Mr. Ajay Banga (Batch of 1979), Executive Chairman at Mastercard and Padma Shri recipient in 2016, who interacted with our junior members on the topic 'The Role of Business in Society'

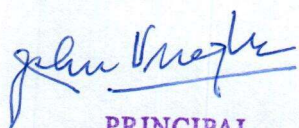
Mr. Feisal Alkazi alumnus, renowned theatre director, educationist and activist conducted a workshop for our junior members from ShakesSoc on 'Understanding and Making a Play'



Mr. Rahul Chhabra (Batch of 1982), Secretary (Economic Relations) at Ministry of External Affairs, India, served as the Honorary Secretary-General for St. Stephen's Model United Nations Conference organized by the Planning Forum

Dr. Giti Chandra (Batch of 1986), alumna and former faculty member of St. Stephen's College, was a panellist in the discussion on Children's Literature: Fantasy World Building as part of Logos 2021, the annual festival of the English Literary Society.



  
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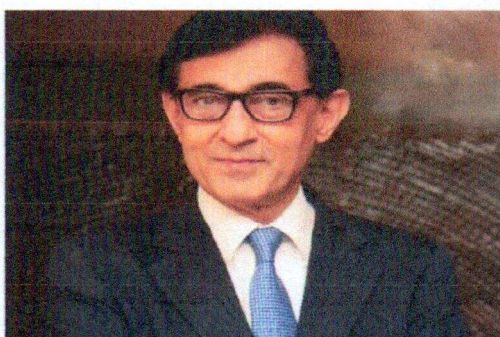
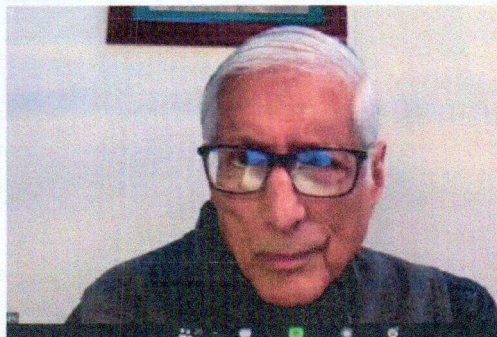





JANUARY- MARCH 2021

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Professor Rajmohan Gandhi (Batch of 1956, Masters), Indian historian and academician, delivered the keynote lecture on "Many ideas of India" in the annual fest of the Gandhi Ambedkar Study Circle.



One of the panelists of the esteemed Padley Memorial Discussion from ShakesSoc this year was Mr. Sunit Tandon (Batch of 1979), Director of Indian Habitat Centre

  
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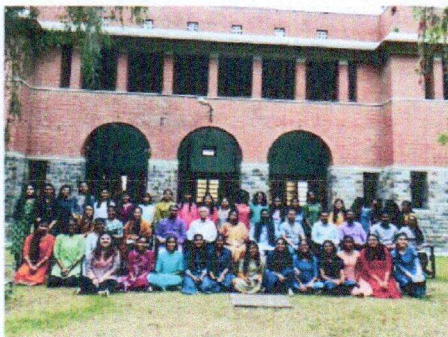






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JANUARY- MARCH 2021



We are also proud and happy to inform that St. Stephens College was one of the first colleges in Delhi University to selectively open up its gates for resident scholars, during these unprecedented times of the pandemic. The safety of all resident junior members on campus continues to carefully and systematically maintained. Thanks to this, a few of first year junior members who were eagerly waiting to come to the campus finally did. In a recent exchange with one of our bright first year students from English, Muham-

mad Khalid, he writes "Some of the uncertainty of online learning was ameliorated by being in Residence, which was partially opened. Hallways ring with laughter after every meal. Resident Junior Members flock to the Science Dhaba after dinner to savour tea-drinking while they still can. It is here that discussions on every topic under the sun takes place. Until I came here I had never imagined that one day I would be having a conversation with an Assamese about rap music. But if such a discussion with such a person is possible anywhere, for me at least, it is now and here in St Stephen's..."

This excitement distilled into some wonderful activities in College this time around.



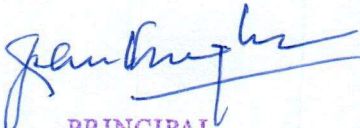
Gentlemen- and Ladies-in-Residence from all blocks also celebrated Block Teas, freshers welcome, and football matches amongst other activities.

Do reach out to us and let us know which resident blocks you are secretly (or not so secretly) rooting for!



### *The Choral Evensong*

The solemn service of the Choral Evensong was celebrated this year as well. Rev. W.A.W. Jarvis, former English professor and Chaplain, used to organize the Choral Evensong with regularity and the tradition continues till date, even as we celebrate the 140th Anniversary of our foundation

  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

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## Quarterly Alumni Chronicles



Mr. Arindam Bagchi (Batch of 1992) assumes charge as Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs

Kaushik Barua (Batch of 2002, Economics) was conferred the national medal by the Cambodian Government, under the Royal Order of Sahametrei, for services towards poverty reduction and rural development. He will be receiving this award on behalf of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Mr. Baruah was the President of Student's Union in 2001-02.



Dr. Indermit Gill (Batch of 1981) appointed World Bank Vice President for Equitable growth, Finance and Institutions (EFI) Global Practice Group

Two of our Alumni, Harmeet Singh, IPS (History, 89) aka Hardi, who is currently ADGP, Assam Police and Diganta Baruah, IPS (Physics, 96), currently DIG, Assam Police were conferred the 'Chief Minister's Special Service Medal for Outstanding Work in a Crisis Situation' for their exemplary work done in service of the citizens during the Pandemic.







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Ms. Yashica Dutt (Batch of 2007) wins the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2020 for her work 'Coming Out As Dalit: A Memoir'

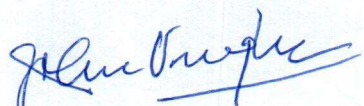


## St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) and our Alumni

The Intensive Programme on Public Policy and Governance was hosted by St. Stephen's Centre for Advanced Learning (SCAL) from 5th November – 13th November 2020.

The programme featured young Stephanians, some for the first time including Shri Krishan Bishnoi IPS, Ms. Merin Joseph IPS and Ms. Ilma Afroz IPS. The programme was inaugurated by Shri CK Mishra, IAS, Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Government of India.

SCAL organised the second programme on Public Policy and International Relations (PPIR-2) from January from 23rd January 2021- 28th February 2021 which was inaugurated by Shri Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha IFS, Chief Information Commissioner of India. The session also witnessed the presence of prominent Stephanians like Dr. Jamini Bhagwati, Former High Commissioner of India to The United Kingdom, Rear Admiral Antony George Chief of Staff, Southern Command Indian Navy, Shri Asim Arun IPS, Additional Director General of Police and previously Head-UP-112 and Shri Swashpawan Singh IFS (Retd.)

  
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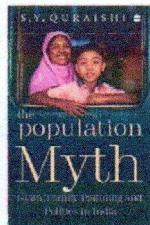




JANUARY- MARCH 2021

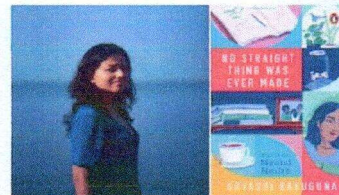
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# Alumni Reading Recommendations



Dr. S.Y. Quraishi (Batch of 64-69, History ) recently published 'The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India' (2021) published by HarperCollins Publishers India.

Ms. Urvashi Bahuguna (Batch of 2013) authors 'No Straight Thing Was Ever Made: Essays on Mental Health' (2021) published by Penguin Random House India.



Dr. Sudipto Mundle (Batch of 1969) writes on the entangled economics and politics of the ongoing farmers' agitation in India, and the Union Budget 2021-22:

- <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/the-entangled-economics-and-politics-of-india-s-farm-agitation-11616086749615.html>
- <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/a-bet-on-reforms-driven-growth-despite-india-s-fiscal-compression-11613663154783.html>

Dr. Ajay Dua (Batch 1967) reflects on subsidies extended by the Government of India in the Union Budget 2020-21:

- <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/subsidies-for-whom>
- <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/rationalise-subsidies-explore-alternatives>
- <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/will-budget-revive-jobs-incomes-bottom-pyramid>





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JANUARY - MARCH 2021

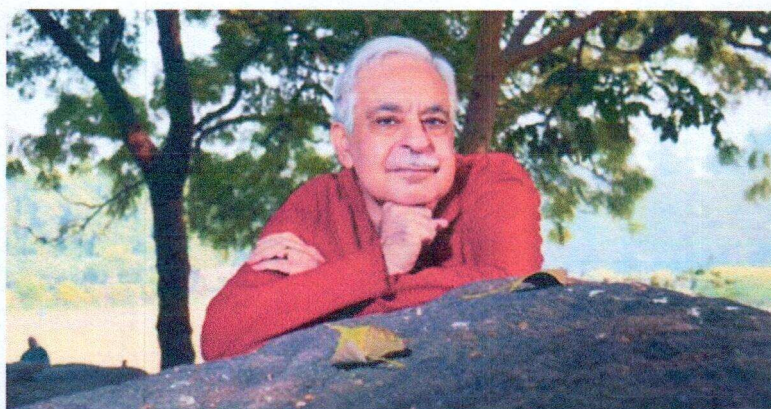
## *In Memoriam*

*Strong Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;*

*Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.*

*– From 'In Memoriam A. H. H.'*  
*by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

*Dr. Rahul Khullar*  
*(IAS 1975, UT Cadre)*



*Rahul Khullar*  
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JANUARY- MARCH 2021

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## Upcoming Events

Launch Discussion on Pr. Parameswaran Iyer's  
'Method in the Madness: Insights from my Career  
as Insider-Outsider-Insider'

17  
April

Silver Jubilee Celebration of Batch 1996

Register here: <https://forms.gle/JCihjavvuLaHVg55A>

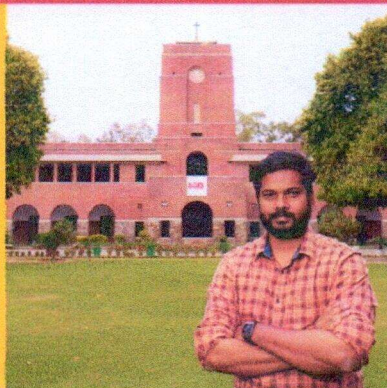
Golden Jubilee Celebration of Batch 1971

Register here: <https://forms.gle/yVwMdaHci5z1GPej8>

### SPECIAL UPDATE:

Something exciting is brewing here in Stephania with our alumnus Mr. Vishwanath Kothapalli (Batch of 2012)

Follow our social media handles for more information in the coming days.



*[Signature]*

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