


BUSINESS KNIGHTS OF MEERUT

A COFFEE TABLE BOOK ON THE ENTREPRENEURS OF MEERUT



**BUSINESS
KNIGHTS OF
MEERUT**



Shailesh Gupta

PROLOGUE

BUSINESS
KNIGHTS OF
MEERUT

I must say, Jagran Group has yet again brought out a very well-conceived and thought provoking coffee table book. The book is a reiteration of an old adage by the famous American broadcast journalist, Walter Cronkite- 'Success is more permanent when you achieve it without destroying your principles'. Being successful is not easy; but what is more difficult, is to carry one's success; that too gracefully and with humility.

Meerut has always been the fountainhead of the spirit of entrepreneurship. There is this good old tradition of family businesses in Meerut, where businessmen still swear by the family values and leadership. The distinguished entrepreneurs featured in the book are from different domains like education, hospitality, sports, paper manufacturing, publishing, jewellery, etc, but one thing unites them- they all have

overcome odds to emerge as winners. The gems in the book are brilliant reflections of this spirit and therefore worthy of appreciation and acknowledgement, which we seek to do with 'The Business Knights of Meerut'. Our perpetual endeavour through JCTB is to bring our more and more success stories which inspire our future generations and make people believe that anything is possible.

With this, the 26th book from Jagran Prakashan Ltd., we are once again, proud to present a repertoire that includes books on entrepreneurs under the Gems series, and domains like temples, dargahs, great cities and cinema, etc. Today having covered the far flung states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar, Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bengal, Punjab and the NCR for different genres of books.

JPL is now all geared up to take up projects on wider range of issues, also the ones that have so far not been touched upon by the industry, in this respect.

Coming back to the book, I am happy that 'Business Knights of Meerut' also briefly touches upon the history, heritage, culture and industry in an elegant way. I am sure that it will serve as a fine repository and a credible testament to the never-say-die spirit of the city. Again, I congratulate every member of the JCTB team, for bringing about this wonderful book! We look forward to some astonishing books in the future as well.





Taruun Gupta

It gives us immense pleasure to present to you this coffee table book featuring distinguished entrepreneurs of the city of Meerut. This is the 26th such compendium in our odyssey across India. Speaking of our state Uttar Pradesh, this is the 10th book in the series. From the Ghats of Banaras to the City of Taj; exporters of Moradabad to the industrial heavy weights of Kanpur, all have graced the pages of our previous editions. But how can the journey of UP be complete without a Meerut sojourn?

Meerut has been the nucleus of the western part of the largest state of India; an ancient town that can pride itself for being the seat of administration since as far back as the Mahabharata era. A town best remembered for being the pioneer of India's first freedom struggle in 1857, it has been a pioneer in several other respects. The land in this region has been fecund both in terms of agricultural

produce and also in terms of the people whose gumption has been second to none!

Despite the inherent privileges, has the city evolved to reasonable expectations? Taking into account the rich historical heritage and immense geographical and demographic potential, leave aside any stratospheric expectations, today's Meerut is way short even on basic parameters of progress and development. A fair barometer of success is whether the accomplishments commensurate with the potential? It is this binary that makes one cringe. Meerut of course, has so much more potential and possibility to prosper and evolve than where it is posited as of now. While we could generalize to indict all stakeholders including the citizenry for the below par performance, in any democracy, the buck has to stop with the political masters.

PREFACE

BUSINESS
KNIGHTS OF
MEERUT

However, the purpose of this book is not to bemoan the administrative or political apathy. As a responsible media organization, while we are committed to focus on governance neglect or inefficiency, at the same time, it is incumbent upon us to contribute towards a salubrious environment where civil society can flourish. In congruence with this vantage point, we are featuring some eminent citizens of our city who have built or nurtured institutions that are held in deference. They are the ones who have succeeded not because, but despite the governance.

The journey of their lives is inspirational and we felt that their story deserved a rendition, their success a celebration. Through this book, we have attempted to chronicle the engaging tale of entrepreneurs across the spectrum.

This book is a humble homage to some of the outstanding leaders of their fields. We laud them, commend them and hope to motivate others through their story. There has been a change in the ruling regime only recently. After a decade and a half, our city and state can expect to reap the undeniable benefits of a common ruling dispensation in both the state and centre. Let's believe our trust is not belied. We have reason to be sanguine that the hope we harbor will not yet again turn out to be an exercise in self-delusion. There has to be light at the end of the tunnel.

As with people in relationship, so is the relation of a city with its residents, give them wings to fly, roots to return and reasons to stay.



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Meerut, to whichever category of cities do we put it in, is a part of mythological folklores. Talk of myths and you will have numerous of them. It definitely has its place in history engraved, since it laid the foundation of Indian Independence. Though it also has its share of notoriety for crime & infamous riots, it surely is one of the promising mega cities of the country with booming industrial units (some exclusive to the city only). Like all great cities, Meerut has endured dents in its legacy, there is a part of its patchy past in its every nook and corner. But equally importantly today, the city has to wake up to its place and significance in the pages of history, as also in future.

The name Meerut comes from 'Mayarashtra', the capital city of Mayasura, father-in-law of mighty Ravana (Mandodri's father), where the idyllic Hastinapur stands today (believed to be once the capital of Kauravas & Pandavas). There have been enough

archaeological evidences of Meerut being part of Harappan & Indus Valley civilization. Historians believe it once buzzed with Buddhism during Ashoka's reign. The walled city as it once was during the Mughal era, what catapulted it into national heritage was the revolt of 1857. Once the Marathas ceded it to East India Company in 1803, it was the largest cantonment of the country and the revolt that shook the company paved the way for British Empire to take over from East India Company. Many sacrifices city made can never be erased from history.

Meerut standing at nearly 140 square kms is the second largest city in National Capital Region (NCR), with aggressive plans of connecting it through Metro and four line expressways with the capital. At 35 sq. kms, Meerut Cantonment is the second largest in the country. The total population of Meerut district today is estimated to be 34 lakh, making it 26th most populous city in the country.

OUR PHOTOGRAPHER

Atul Hundoo, a Master of Fine Arts in photography from College of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, is a photographic artist with an experience of more than 15 years in this craft. With journalistic photography being his forte, he has worked with some of the top-notch newspapers, distinguished media houses and has been a part of some prestigious projects.

Atul ascribes much of his accomplishments to his guru, photographer of international repute, Late PC Little. He has earned distinction in different genres of photography, like fashion, product and sports and visual arts along with commercial & lifestyle photo shoots. In 2010, he began photography as a travel photographer. The famous and much applauded Devalaya series of Jagran Coffee Table Books was photographed by Atul across four states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. Besides Atul has been an indigenous part of more than 12 Jagran Coffee Table Books.

Atul's concern for the environment is strongly evident in his images. The nature stretches in his landscape shots are perfect in terms of angle and frame. His photographs of people reveal a compassionate understanding of his subjects. When taking a shot, Atul stops at nothing to make it the very best. In fact at times he is almost stubborn in his efforts and takes huge risks while executing a particular shot exactly as he has envisioned it. The results thereof are there for all to see.

Working as a photojournalist Atul Hundoo frequently reinvents his creative approach to his work with the use of pioneering digital techniques. Atul's work is exhibited at many national & international exhibitions. He has held two solo exhibitions and three group shows of his photographs. He is also invited as a guest lecturer at various institutes from time to time and has also conducted photography workshops for budding photographers.



Meerut that is singularly responsible for feeding the ever rising demand of the game through its famously mammoth sports industry, which supplies world class cricket equipments. Not only cricket, but Meerut today is synonymous with international quality sports goods. Be it International sports festivals such as Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games or Hollywood Movie projects, the factories across Meerut are churning out equipment that not only brings many sports legend to the historic city but also puts Meerut at the center of world sports map. With over 1000 crore turnover, sports industry of Meerut is the jewel in its crown.

A feather in Meerut's economy-cap is its

booming gold market. With a daily earning of Rs. 10 crore, Meerut is UP's largest and India's 10th largest gold market, with over 40,000 artisans and 2000 jewellery shops in the city. The three centuries old tradition of scissors making has put Meerut at an enviable pedestal of Asia's largest scissors manufacturing city with scissors being exported worldwide. In the words of Shri Sharif Ahmad, Vice President- Scissor Clusters Meerut- "The manufacturing of scissors goes back 360 years with my ancestor Akhun Ji being the first scissor manufacturer.

It is encouraging that under the aegis of Govt. of India, the scissors industry is getting much needed impetus with MDA approving

setting up of 300 units to boost scissors industry in Lohia Nagar, Meerut, named Akhun Ji Nagar. The industry has an annual turnover of over 30 crore.

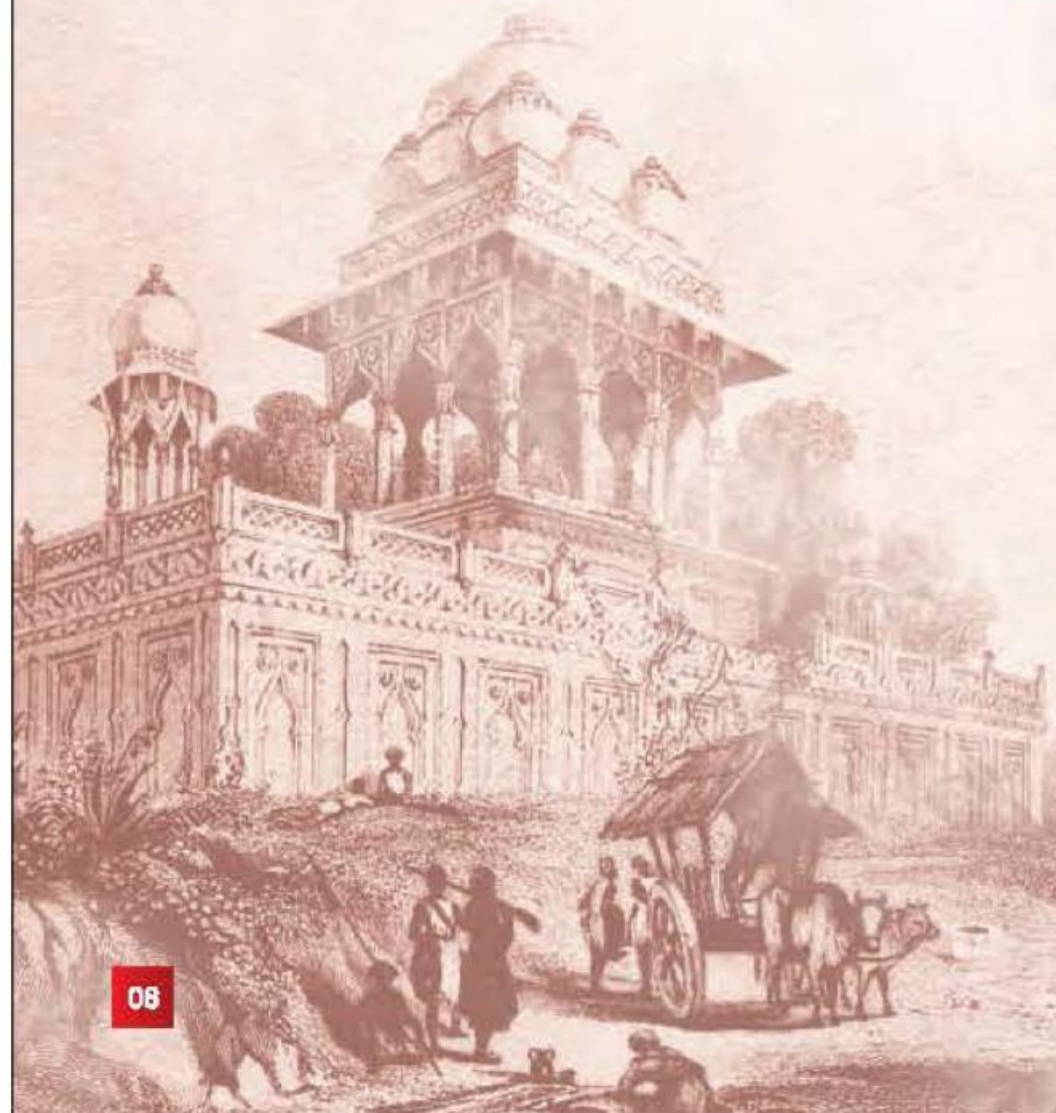
If we talk about famous personalities from Meerut, then too its contribution is enormous; be it film stars like Bharat Bhushan, Naseerudin Shah, Chintranga Singh, Director, music composer-Vishal Bharadwaj, sportspersons like Jyoti Randhawa, Bhuvnesh Kumar, Karan Sharma, Praveen Kumar or iconic pulp fiction novelists like Ved Prakash Sharma.

मेरठ नगरजं
MEERUT CITY J



MEERUT

Mythology
Martyrdom &
More...





Inheritance of Innovation

Two young men, two time frames, two unique circumstances but yet what binds them is their sheer commitment to innovation and passion for the future of the Group. Speak to the owners of Sanspareils Greenlands, the power house of sports manufacturing in the country, perfectionist Kailash Anand & modernist Paras Anand, you are left spell bound by anecdotes that become stuff of legends.

One at a young age, straight out of school, still recovering from the scars of partition, trying to rebuild what was a flourishing export business in Sialkot (Pakistan). Having lost all his savings in a shoe venture in Agra, he saw the resurgence of group divided and merged yet again in 1965 to form Sanspareils Greenlands. The other had a bright promising Tennis career, doing well at ATP tours, leaving it in the middle in early 2000s. But what these two young men in different eras had common was- vision for innovation & going the uncharted way. As we speak to firm yet gentle soul Kailash Anand, who in his commanding baritone, tells us- "I joined the family business in 1961 just after my intermediate at the behest of my elder brother who was himself a Class I officer in Punjab government. We had a arrangement that he too will join us in two years. I straight away was given charge of production.

**"Today we have more than 400 machines,
1190 employees and a handsome annual turnover"**

Meerut Cantonment has had a glorious past right from its inception in the colonial era. The valor of its soldiers is part of military folklores, be it their participation in Battle of Ypres, 1st & 2nd battle of El Alamein and France, Indo Pak wars, Burma Campaign, Bangladesh Liberation and most recently the Kargil War. A part of Western Command of Army, it harbours Jat, Dogra, Sikh Regiments and Punjab Regiment Corps of Signals. The 9th and 22nd Infantry Divisions are also headquartered at Meerut.

Take the road from Delhi to Dehradun and you will witness, how Meerut is hub of educational institutions in Western UP. With four universities, two medical colleges, premier law colleges, 67 professional colleges, 148 academic and more than 400

schools, undoubtedly Meerut is proving to be the epicenter of excellence in education in Western UP.

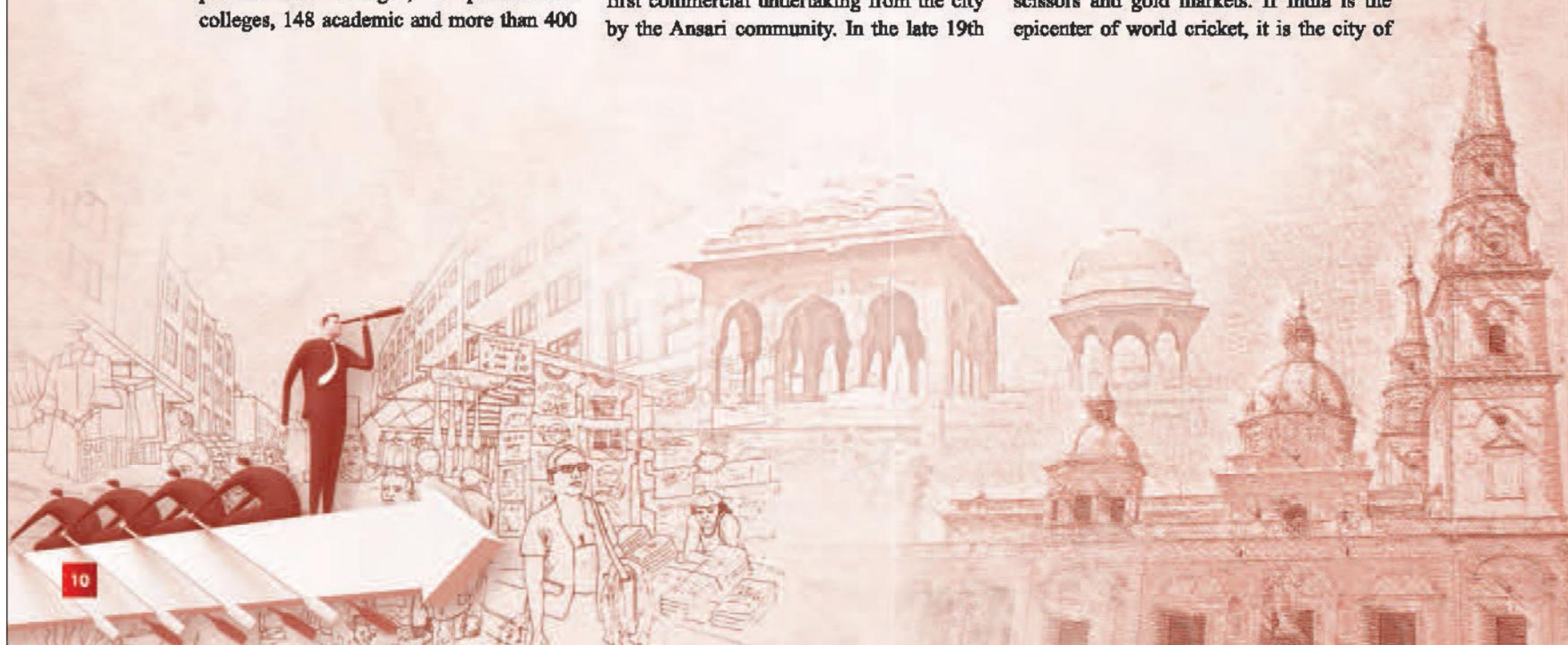
Formerly known as Meerut University, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, established in 1965, today is one of the premier educational institutions of the country attracting students from all across the country. Spanning over 222 acres of land, the university offers 22 UGC sponsored, 35 self-financed courses at its campus. Believe it or not, but over 252 professional colleges and 109 colleges are affiliated to CCS.

Though Meerut has always had the agrarian based economy, if you dig deep in history, it was the traditional 'Hasthkari' that was the first commercial undertaking from the city by the Ansari community. In the late 19th

century, it became the major centre for commercial publishing (that even today is one of the booming sector with several nationally famed publishing houses based out of the city, like- Vidya, Chitra, Arihant, G R Bathla, etc. to name a few). With time, rubber, distillery, sugar, transformer industries became vibrant contributors to its economy.

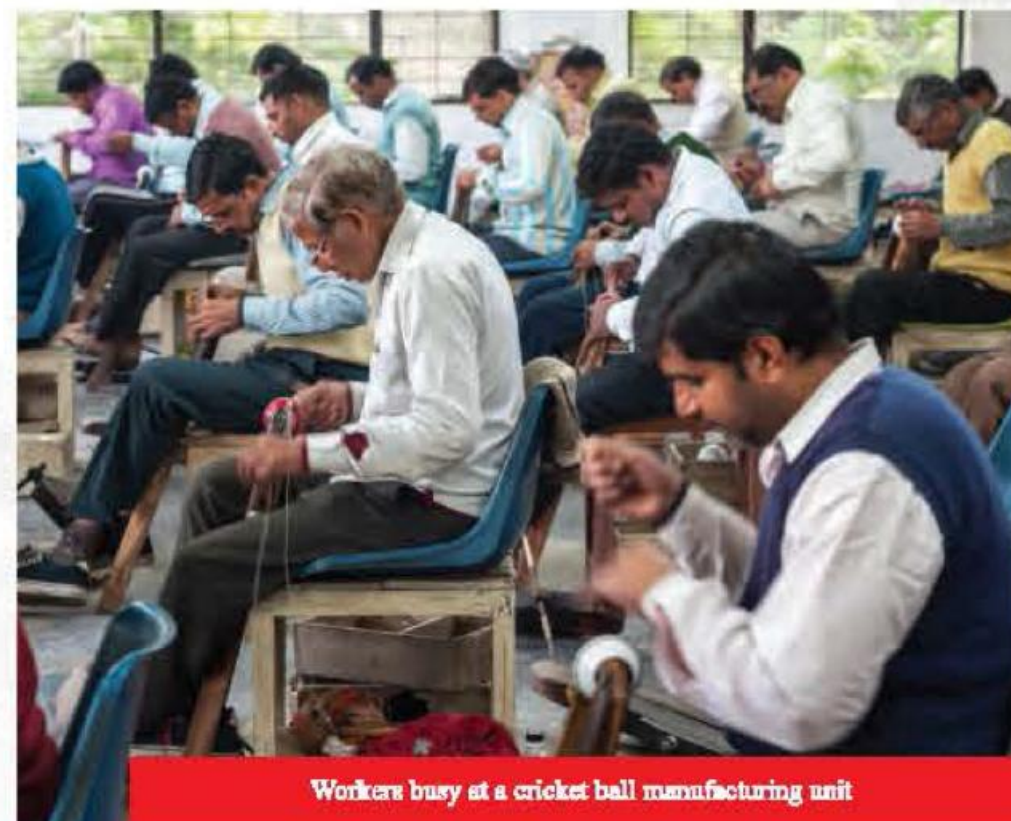
If one goes by the government figures, presently there are nearly 530 small & medium scale and micro industries in the city. According to latest figures, there are over 30,000 units of industries of which 85% are small scale and cottage industries.

But what gives it exclusivity are its sports, scissors and gold markets. If India is the epicenter of world cricket, it is the city of





In the august company: Trilok, Paras & Ksilesh Anand



Workers busy at a cricket ball manufacturing unit

“To never sit on my laurels and always reinvent, innovate is my raison d’être,

“I do get temperamental at times, for I like to do everything with perfection, but am open to criticism as well. If today I have to leave this world, believe me I want to leave it by giving another new product.” He smiles fervently.

We are joined by this suave, tall, Director of the company Paras Anand. we ask him does the towering SG brand legacy burdened him once he decided to take up the mantle, he replies- “As a kid I was a very serious Tennis player, playing on the national and international circuit. So much so, that I defeated then far above ranked player K V Ganesh to qualify for the ATP tournament. But somehow for me it was too uphill a task to go for professional career, hence I decided to pursue my Masters in UK.”

KAILASH ANAND

Chairman & Director

PARAS ANAND

Marketing Director

SG Group





A worker manually stitching the ball

On his evolution as a businessman he shares- "See DNA is not destiny. It helps you enter a company that is 86 years old and I knew when I joined the family business in 2001, that I am not going to be allowed to run the company as I want. Coming from UK and straight away working in the production, observing finer nuances was tough at times, but today I see that as the necessary learning phase of my life."

Like his uncle Kailash, Paras too is a firm believer of innovation and family businesses. It is important that the inheritor has his individual vision. "I realized it early that we need to strike a balance between tradition and modernity for we were only doing cricket hardware and considering cricket is limited to say least 10 test playing nations with Australia, England and India the only prime markets, we had to diversify into categories like apparels, footwear, accessories, bags, etc. So in 2005-06, I spearheaded

that diversification," asserts the dynamic Director.

If recovering from partition phase was one chapter, withstanding the onslaught of international brands post IPL, like Adidas, NIKE, Puma and Reebok was another tough phase the young scion bravely weathered. "It was challenging to match their deep pockets, but we kept it simple, and worked on our basics," reveals Paras.

So how does he rate himself as an entrepreneur? The loving dad of three smiles, "I haven't even started yet. If you ask me, channeling our resources in more productive manner, breaking our targets in achievable quarters and reinventing and identifying new products and markets, are the key ingredients and focus areas. Yes I have made my humble contributions but my uncle and my dad are my true role models."

**"I haven't even started yet,
DNA is not destiny"**



A routine boardroom discussion



Bats in godown ready; waiting to be delivered



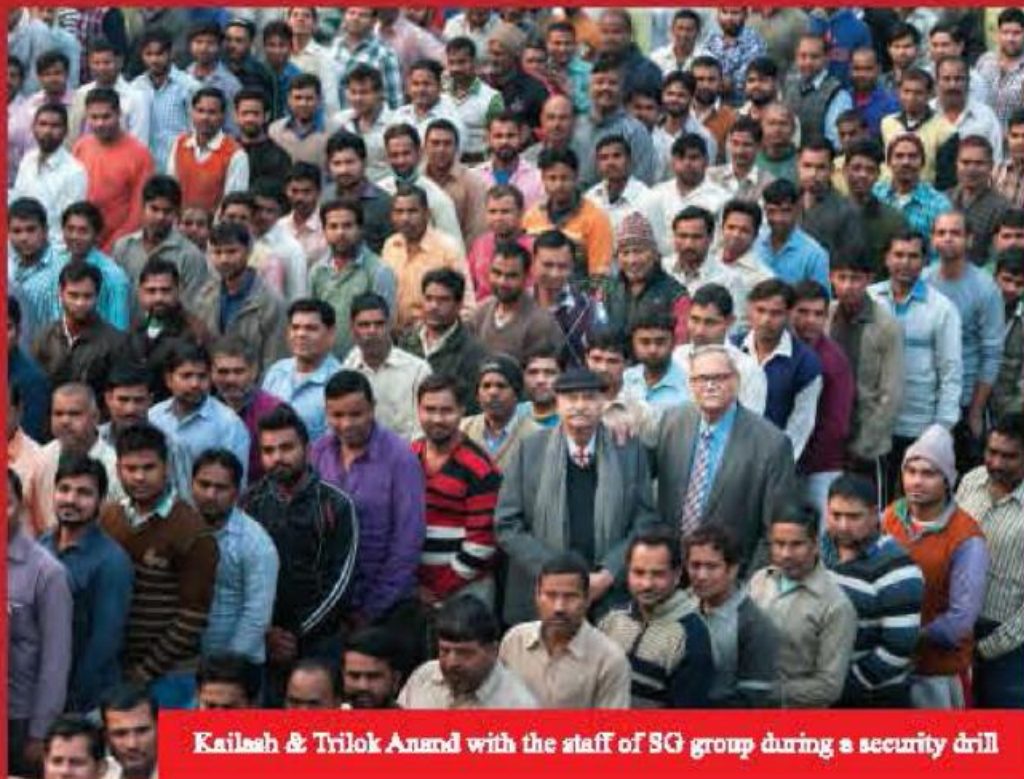
Cricket balls being examined before the delivery, by the Production Director

If you ask me, before 1966 it was all struggle, with our turnover being meager 2 lakh or less than that." He goes on to add- "The major breakthrough came in 1966 when we collaborated with Frank Bryan Limited. Although we started off on a small note but gradually ended up producing each and every product."

At one point of time SG products were being used by every player of repute in one way or the other, but ask Kailash Anand and he will tell you a different story. "We were predominantly exporting cricket equipment to England and gradually the players also started liking the product. We were not selling them in the domestic market initially. It was much later when the dealers started requesting us to give them some products, that we launched SG in India in 1982." Post 1983, Sunil Gavaskar started using SG bats and then SG was used by many Indian greats such as Mohd. Azharudin, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, etc., to name a few. Ask of Gavaskar and he has lot of interesting anecdotes that he shares with alacrity. Even after

having been associated with him for so many years, it was only last year that he got a picture with Gavaskar, while having lunch together in London, he laughs.

Asked him of the journey so far and he sounds as humble as he can. "You know when we started our new venture back in 60s and we had this Hawan, where my mother said I wish you will have 100s of machines some day. So in jest I told her to wish for something that is achievable, and not for the unthinkable. Today we have more than 400 machines, 1190 employees and a handsome annual turnover." A die-hard Hindi movie fan, particularly of Sholay, his all-time favourite, and Akshay Kumar, his favourite actor, is a doting dad to four daughters, and has six grand kids. Being an ardent family man that he is, he has never carried work home. So what drives him at the age of 75? The fire and panache oozes out. "To never sit on my laurels and always reinvent, innovate, is my raison d'être. I don't compromise on quality even though it might conflict with pricing, but that is where the real challenge is," he adds.



Kailash & Trilok Anand with the staff of SG group during a security drill



A worker giving finishing touch to the cricket bats





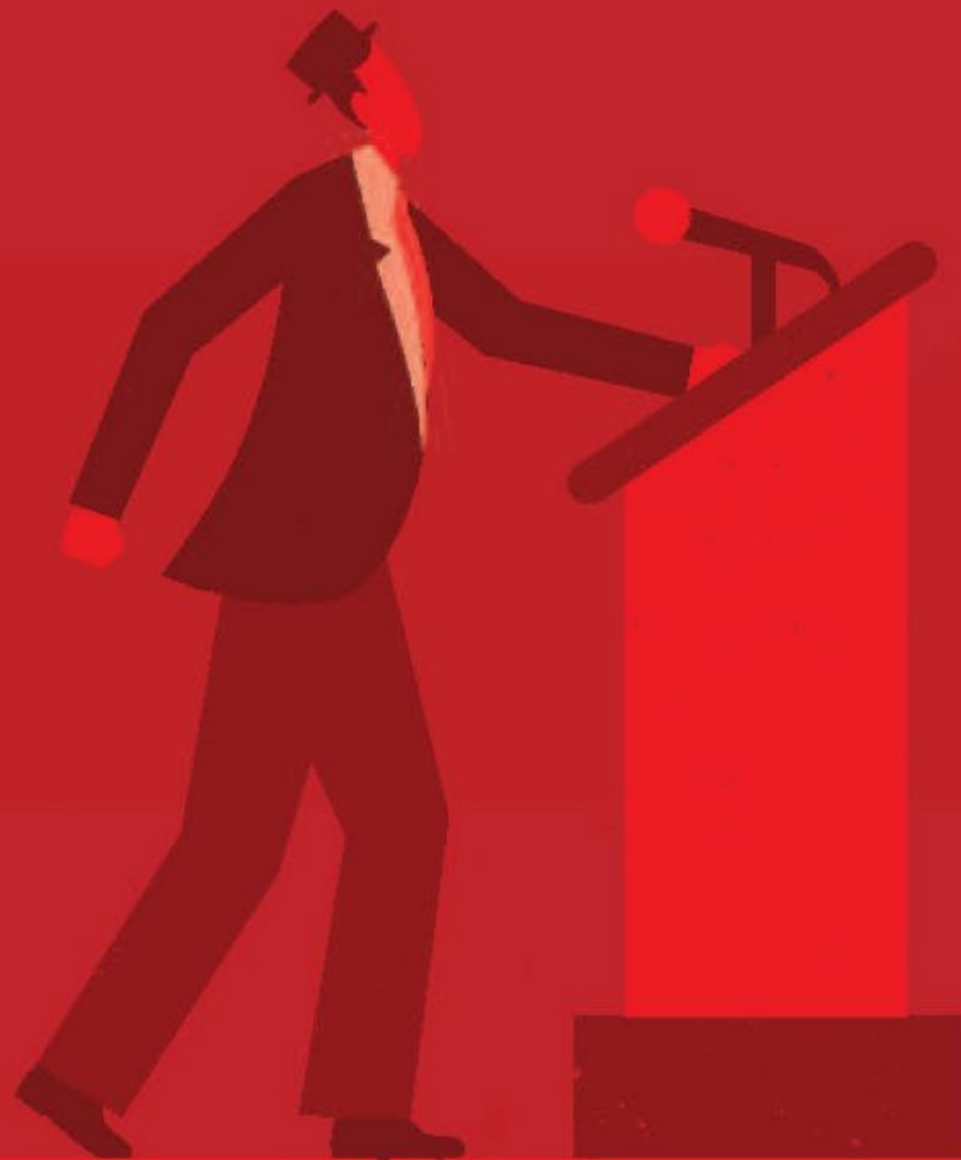
That doesn't mean you need to be good in English or an able communicator, but more importantly, your team should trust your decisions. Each and every member of the team is equally important. No nepotism."

As we ask him to sum up how has life turned up for him lately, he muses- "Life is hectic, work-life balance has to be maintained, but as I said we have just started; long way to go!" We sign off on that positive note for a photo session among the excited SG employees, brimming with confidence & pride.

Born to love: One happy family: Trilok & Usha with Paras, Smriti, Arav, Jayanti & Arham



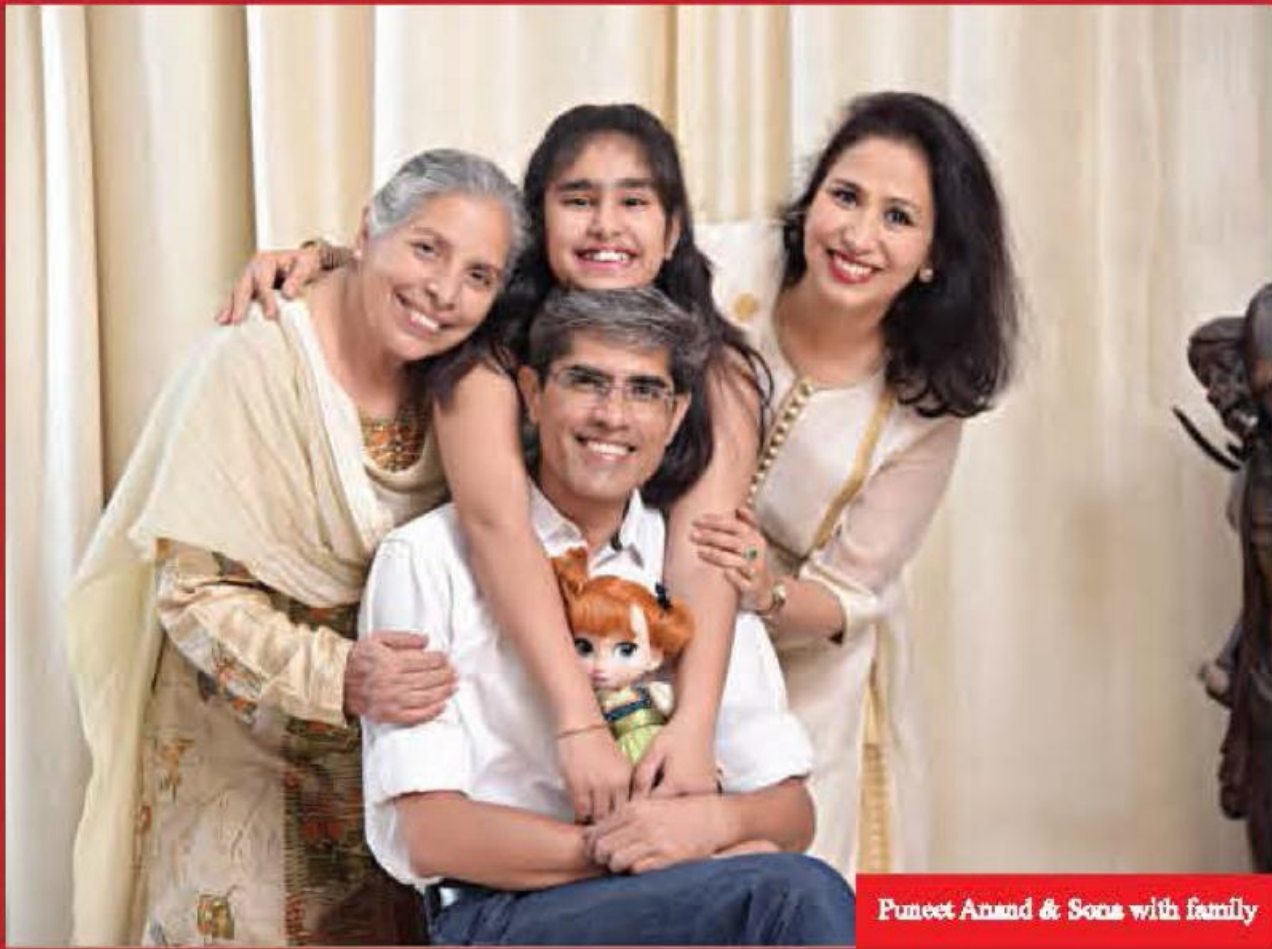
A massive view of cricket accessories manufacturing unit



The Legacy of Excellence

In the coterie of famous business families, the name of Dev Priya Group of Industries is much extolled. The steady rise of Gupta family from a humble timber business to the vast empire it holds today, is nothing less than awe-inspiring. The three generations of Gupta family today are ingeniously running eight paper machines, turbine houses, polyester industries, construction business, add to it trading house for mobile phones, with a turnover of almost 2000 crore and 4000 direct and indirect employees; it is not a surprise that entrepreneurship is engrained in the DNA of the Gupta family. What further marvels us is the strong emphasis on education in the highly qualified family. "Education is imperative in our family, business comes later and post-graduation is a must. While our elders were lawyers, engineers and post graduates from top institutions, our generation is full of engineers," shares Mr. Amit Gupta, MD as we walk along.

"Education is imperative; business can follow"



Puneet Anand & Sora with family

“Life is hectic, therefore work-family time balance has to be maintained ”

He too, like his uncle, is a Hindi Movie fan particularly of Amitabh Bachchan and Aamir Khan, but can hardly find time to follow movies now a days. A holiday is strictly for kids. “Thankfully they too like sports so I take them out and we play together.” If 10 years back, SG was merely about cricket hardware, today SG is identified with a diverse bouquet of products. What is the one mantra he would give to young entrepreneurs? He replies with conviction- “Work on man management skills. You should be able to translate what you want from your team members.



Shirene Anand, daughter of Puneet Anand in candid mood



Kailash Anand & wife Maya & family



“Respect your elders, for once you stop doing it, success will elude you”

Yes being young they are aggressive so you have to calm them down at times but through the experience they inculcate the respect for what you have done and achieved and follow your footsteps,” says Rajeev Gupta.

Dev Priya Group of Industries is modest about its charitable initiatives. Apart from funding education of the girl child, they recently have built an auditorium in a girl's school in their native village. They also sponsored the entire Physics department of DN Inter College, Meerut.

**MAHENDRA KUMAR
GUPTA** Chairman

RAJEEV GUPTA
Managing Director

Dev Priya Group of Industries





While it is hard to take time out of work but when they do get times, what is it they like to do? "I still hang out with my close set of friends; we meet and chat and at times we play cards," says Mr. Mahendra Gupta. On the other hand, Mr. Rajeev is fond of traveling, with BMW 7 being his favourite car. He shares one anecdote with us. "My wife and I went to Triambkeshwar once, and on the way to Nasik, we saw a grape field. It was a fascinating sight. So we got down to have a look around and click some pictures, which the guards objected to. Fortunately the owner was there; once he came and enquired, I introduced myself. He at once reprimanded the entire security team saying 'do you know who they are?' That was the day I had the first hand realization of our Group's reputation."

As other members of the family join in, we could see what Mr. Rajeev was stressing upon, the Guptas are one big happy family with each member treasuring the legacy and not taking it for granted. The family led by Mr. Mahendra Gupta after the demise of his elder brother Late Shri Rajendra Prasad Gupta along with his brothers Mr. Suresh Gupta and Mr. Ashok Gupta, is a true example of togetherness and value system. The reins are ably shared by their sons Rajeev, Sanjeev, Manish, Amit, Sumit, Anahul and Chinmay. What is striking is that views of every member of the family are respected and not subdued. The ladies of the house ensure that family cats together, and as the famous saying goes- 'family who eats together, stays together'; they are indeed together!

"I was sure I'm not going to work for anyone, so I started and led my own venture"



Different units of Devpats Group

Mr. Mahendra Kumar Gupta, Chairman, Dev Priya Group of Industries, shares the group's story. "It is the hard work and ideals of my father Late Shri Devikaran Das Gupta Ji (the group is named after him) to which I would attribute the group's success. He was in timber business initially, but in 1975 I decided to delve into cardboard and sunrise paper business. Later we expanded it with sugar crushing business while my elder brother had a brick kiln. It was in 1989 when we started our first paper mill." Mr. Rajeev Gupta, Director, Dev Priya Group, joins us; who, along with his uncle were instrumental in the entire set up. He adds, "It was a well thought move to install the paper mill. Earlier we were in unorganised sectors and sectors that had little future, so to streamline and get into organised sector, paper mill was our first step."

It was the vision of Late Shri Rajendra Prasad Gupta and synergy between invaluable experience of Mr. Mahendra Kumar Gupta, who looked after financial and administrative aspects, and the young technological expertise of Mr. Rajeev, who led the core tech team and development aspect that created magic. But were there any glitches? "Comparatively I guess we were lucky and our plans

fructified just the way we formalised them. We met 90 per cent of our production targets right on very first day. I would say it was during the establishment of second and fourth mill that we faced problems in terms of stabilisation, engineering and suppliers," says Mr. Rajeev Gupta.

It must have not been as easy as the gentlemen made it sound. We asked the core strength of group's success. "Hard work and honesty. We might have earned less in terms of finances but in terms of reputation, we have earned a lot," says Mr. Mahendra Gupta. Meticulous planning and working hard towards it is also Mr. Rajeev's mantra but he adds, "Respect your elders, for once you stop doing it, success will elude you. Our strength lies in our family bonding and the fact that we take good care of each other."

Now with the third generation also involved actively in the business, the ethos remain unchanged and thought process aligned. "You know when you study and come back to join the business, you realize that the business world is far different from what you have been taught in the classrooms. So for initial one or two years, they all are like trainees, learning the nuances of the trade hands on."



Members of Gupta family in the office



Administrative and technical staff at one of the units



All Group Directors

“We have earned our reputation, through hard work and honesty; money matters little, when it comes to personal branding”

Where Dev Priya Group of Industries stands today, did Guptas think of these heights when they started off? “I never could have imagined; I just kept on working and god has been kind,” says Mr. Mahendra Gupta. Mr. Rajeev Gupta was sure that he will make a mark, “When I was studying engineering, one thing I was sure of- I am not going to work for anyone or serve in any other company but shall carve my own niche. You can say I never imagined these heights, but that I will be leading a team of 500 members, I was confident about,” he signs off with a smile.



Family couples posing together
From Left: Manish, Sanjeev, Amit, Rajeev, Sumit and Anshul
Parul, Benu, Richa, Kalpana, Garima and Mallika



One of the manufacturing units of the Group



Customizing Their Way to Success

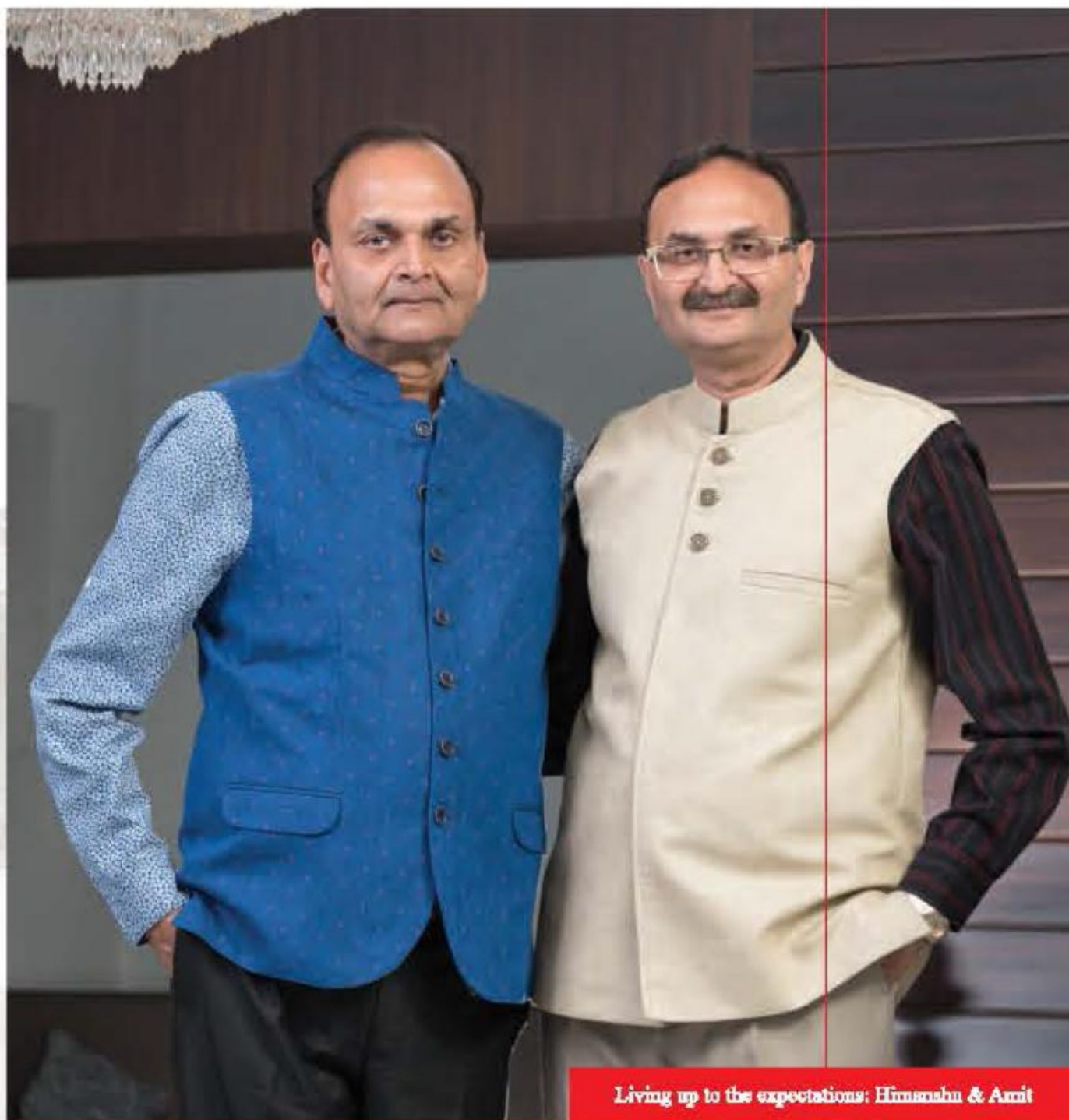
The requisites for being a winner are the same in all classes of business: good judgment, application, diplomacy, executive ability, nerve, push, integrity, thick skin, and a pleasant smile. This quote from famous American writer CA Morse, sums up the life and personality of Mr. Himanshu Sangal, Managing Director, Sangal Papers Ltd., who has been a great personal example to be followed by progressive, successful entrepreneurs. The hard work and clarity of thought is what makes him impeccable. And as they say- as you climb the ladder of success, be sure it's leaning against the right building! Mr Himanshu did just that!

It is quite easy to be one among many, but an altogether different proposition to be on the top, while others try to catch up. Sangal Papers Ltd. is one such company that stands envionally at the top when it comes to customized & colour paper category. With ever expanding global presence and virtually zero competition in their segment, the company has achieved what other companies just dream of. Mr. Himanshu Sangal talks about its inception with a sense of pride. "We conceived Sangal Papers Ltd. in 1980 with an investment of just over a crore.

**"When you are not left with an alternate path;
all you have to do is- keep walking"**



Made for each other. One big happy family



Living up to the expectations: Himanshu & Amit



Himanshu and Amit in a candid conversation

“If there are no conflicts, it means the business is not flourishing”

With the young generation joining the business, Sangal Papers Ltd. today is all set to achieve greater glories. While Mr. Tammy Sangal, Director (son of Mr. Himanshu) joined the business in 2011, post his MBA in finance and a stint with global finance giant Deloitte. Mr. Vinayak Sangal, Director (son of Mr. Amit), has recently joined the company after his MBA in operations and a stint at Godrej. What made both of them start in corporate houses? “That was always the plan to have an outside perspective of business. When you work at corporate houses and come back to join your own business, you bring a lot of new perspectives and aspects along with you,” asserts Tammy.

AMIT SANGAL

Executive Director

HIMANSHU SANGAL

Managing Director

Sangal Papers Limited





Paper production machine

“Also it is extremely necessary for developing a good work ethic,” adds Vinayak.

With Tanmay assisting his uncle Mr. Amit in sales & marketing, Vinayak assisting his uncle Mr. Himanshu in production and operations, are there any conflicts between the exuberance of the young and experience of the old? “If there are no clashes in different points of views, it means the business is not flourishing! We discuss everything and if the one who brings the idea, justifies it, then everybody backs it. This candour helps evolving the best ideas for the company through consensus, which I believe, is the hallmark of any successful enterprise. Flexibility is everything. Could we change our attitude, we would

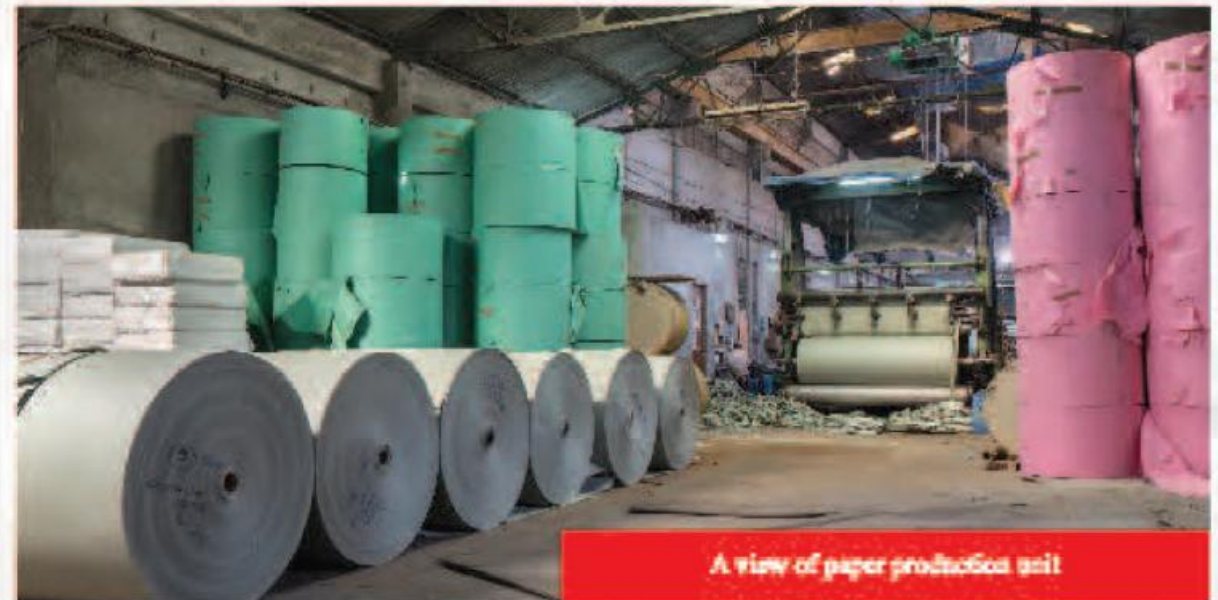
not only see life differently, but life itself would come to be different,” philosophises Mr. Amit.

The Sangals now are all set to diversify under young leadership. “We are going for forward integration now. Right now we are just supplying paper, what we want to do is to develop a commodity, a finished product. For example, we produce lot of paper for the envelope segment; what we are thinking, is to produce envelopes on our own and other such products,” says Tanmay. “Our aim is to grow in terms of brand image. We want that when it comes to coloured paper, people should only talk about Sangal Papers,” he adds. With Sangal Papers going to more than 13 countries, they aim to conquer untouched global markets in days to come.

“When people speak highly of you and praise you behind your back, that is real reputation”



Amit and Himanshu checking sample papers



A view of paper production unit



Workers engaged in the unit

Those were the days when the pulp and paper industry was an upcoming segment and many second hand small paper machines (waste and recycle paper based) were being imported. We got one from Sweden and in 1984, technically our production started. By 1996, we had two more machines added to our production capacity and today, by god's grace, we have a global presence with a turnover of over 150 crores and have practically no competition in the customized colour paper segment; hence the logo- 'Manufacturing paper based on customer needs'. Mr Himanshu candidly sums up his journey to the zenith.

Being market leaders comes naturally to the Sangal family. Their father, Late Shri Ved Prakash, was in the film distribution business and was the owner of two iconic theaters of the city. Anyone who is born in Meerut will tell you about the legends of Apeara and Eves Cinemas, the theaters that was once thronged by the who's who of film industry. "That was an era, I still remember, how the top stars used to visit our house. In fact Jectendra, Rishi Kapoor and Rakesh Roshan attended my brother's wedding. I used to

help my father in the film distribution business. We eventually gave up the ownership of both cinema halls," says Mr. Amit Sangal, Executive Director, Sangal Papers Ltd. So, what prompted the transition? "Every industry has its own charm. While my father was taking care of that business, he wanted us to chart our own paths," he shares.


Like a Bollywood movie, the journey of Sangal Papers Ltd. too has seen its share of ups and downs, so much so that it almost touched rock bottom. But backing out was never an option for the gritty businessmen. "It was in 1996, our second machine, installed in a partnership, somehow fell apart. We bore heavy losses. But our father always taught us to never avoid problems, but face them bravely. The lenders used to call us way past midnight but we made sure we attended each one of them personally and never showed our back. We worked towards repaying every single penny and by 2005 we achieved that," shares Himanshu Sangal. When asked what drove them in those extreme times, Amit Sangal muses- "When you are not left with an alternate path; all you need to do is, keep walking!"



Tammy and Vinayak at a production site



A worker checking the paper roll

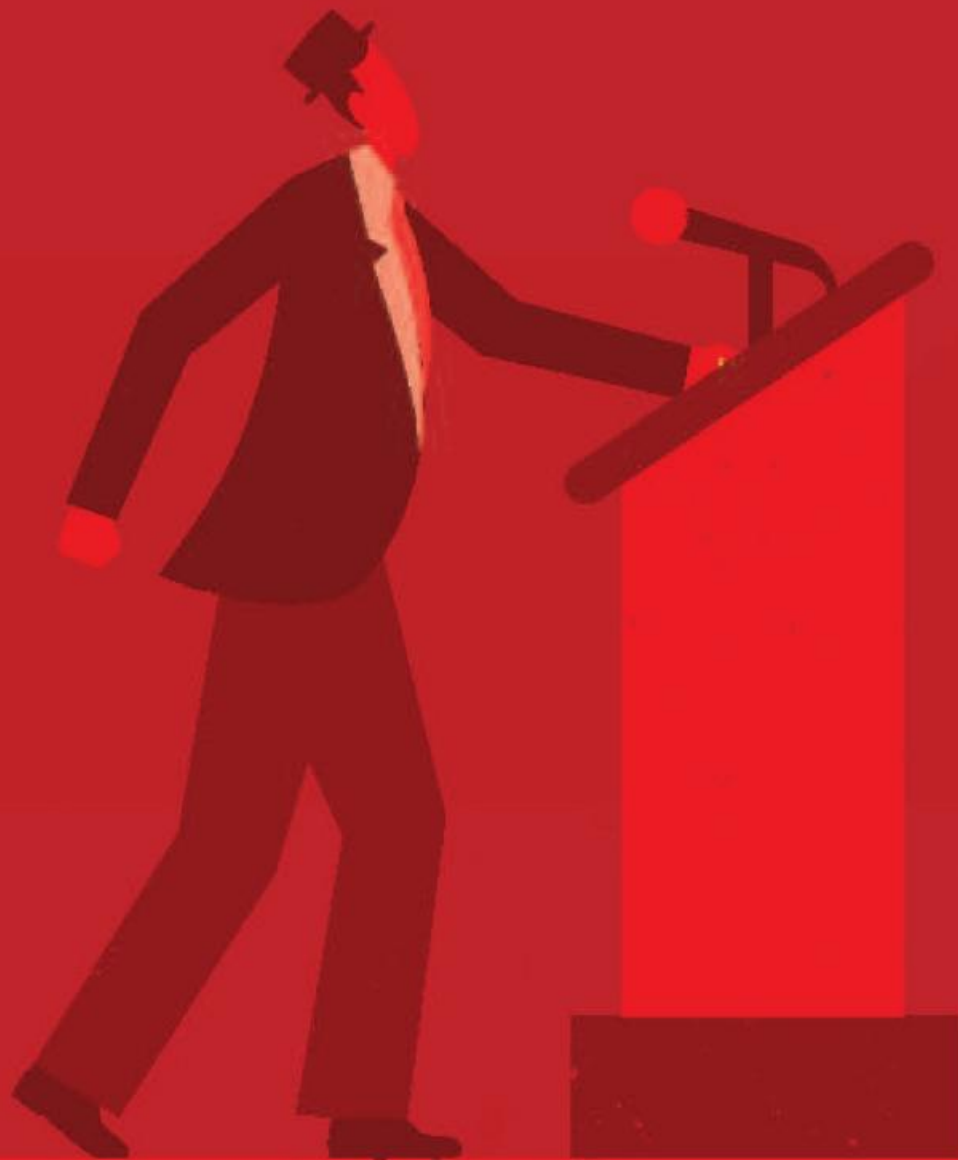


The synergy in the thoughts of everyone is worth admiring. Mr. Himanshu takes utmost pride in the cohesiveness. He says, "The fact that we live together, share our kitchen and respect each other, keeps us strong and afloat even in the toughest of times. Also we are living by our father's ideal of honesty and honouring our commitments- each one of us." Though Sangal Papers Ltd. wants to expand in the paper and pulp industry only for now, they are open to diversification. We end our conversation on a lighter note asking about any plans of going back to the glamour of cinema. "I don't think that is going to happen, no Bollywood for sure," says Vinsyak with a smile. It was indeed very inspiring and heartening to see a family which has garnered such robust traction in both business and family fronts. We sign off with an inspired and fulfilled heart.

Family portrait: Puavni, Ishita, Tammy, Renu, Himanshu, Amit, Charu and Vinsyak



Amit, Hirrendra and Vinayak engrossed in a discussion at the office



The Monk who Wears a Business Suit

As we walk into the huge campus of MIET (Mewar Institute of Engineering & Technology), we can feel this infectious exuberance in the air, as hundreds of cheerful faces walk besides us. Today is the last exam and students are on cloud nine. The happiness of taking one step further towards their ambitions is visible on their gleaming faces. The walk from the gates to the administrative block is long and the enormity of the campus and its claim towards being one of the best in the state, appeared palpable. As we walk towards the Chairman's office, we see him quietly working on his laptop; his simplicity written all over the cabin. There is this calmness in his persona that resonates on to every employee working with him. Sri Vikram Sarda, Chairman (MIET Group of Institutions) looks more like a monk, than the Chairman of an extremely successful education conglomerate.

"I never intended to reach for the sky, I always believed in taking one step at a time," he poetically sums up his journey. From being Director of Bidders in Uttar Pradesh Government, to realizing his father's dream of starting a school, to now chairing one of region's best engineering college, his journey has indeed been one giant step at a time.

**"I never intended to reach for the sky;
I always believed in taking one step at a time"**



Virayak, Paavni, Ishita and Tanmay

“Our family bond keeps us strong and afloat even in the toughest of times”

When we ask both the generations to assess each other's strengths and weaknesses, Mr. Amit modestly confesses. “I can say I have learned a lot from Tanmay. I was highly unorganized and after watching him work, I have imbibed a lot of his organizational skills.” Tanmay says- “When people speak highly of you and praise you behind your back, that is real reputation. And how people have the highest amount of regards for my uncle and my dad is extremely commendable. We are really fortunate to have such elders as our torch bearers.”



Amit and Himanshu



Topic Champs: Vishal Sarin and Gaurav Agarwal



Student hooked to her instruments in the Electronics lab

“There are no shortcuts for success, each day is new day and every achievement is your inspiration for the next one”

We ask them about their strengths and weakness as we walk towards the plush canteen. Sarin shares that Gaurav has always been extremely focused as a kid towards his studies, and he maintained it all through his academic and professional journey.

Gaurav, who honestly admits that he is a bit temperamental at times adds, “My father’s calmness of mind is what I intend to imbibe in myself, to influence people in much better manner.”

Both Shri Sarin and Gaurav Agarwal are leaders who try to lead from the front and like true leaders, are aware of the challenges ahead.

VISHNU SARAN

Chairman

GAURAV AGARWAL

Vice-Chairman

MIET Group of Institutions





MIET Public School

Talk of future and promptly comes the reply- "These are challenging times and with the aim to keep up the employability factor of our students, we like to push the envelope beyond the prescribed university curriculum. We have introduced innovative measures in unison with India's top brands in our institution," says the confident Shri Saran. With plans to emulate IIT-Kharagpur of having their own satellite and commencing operations of two more branches of MIET Public School in coming years, the father son duo is not planning to sit on their laurels. "If one doesn't find new challenges, life becomes boring. For me it is always about what next can I do and how good I can do that with the objective of what is good for our students," explains Gaurav.

With more than 700 employees, more than 1000 students in their school and looking to expand to 2000

in two years, currently more than 5000 students studying in their institutions and a strong alumni base of over 15,000 students -life is literally round the clock and taking time out of the hectic schedule is in itself a task.

As we drive towards Agarwal house, we ask Gaurav of how work has changed him personally, he confesses that he had to cut down on his personal passions on occasions. "I used to go out on trekking and camping that I generally don't get time for now." He is fan of fantasy genre when it comes to reading, with Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings trilogy his favourites. Ask him of his favourite authors and that will be PG Wodehouse & Jeffery Archer all the way. At home, his wife Barkha Agarwal, personally attends her guests.

"We have introduced innovative measures in unison with India's top brands in our institutions"



Deputying big: Gaurav Agarwal



Students engaged in the Bio-technology lab

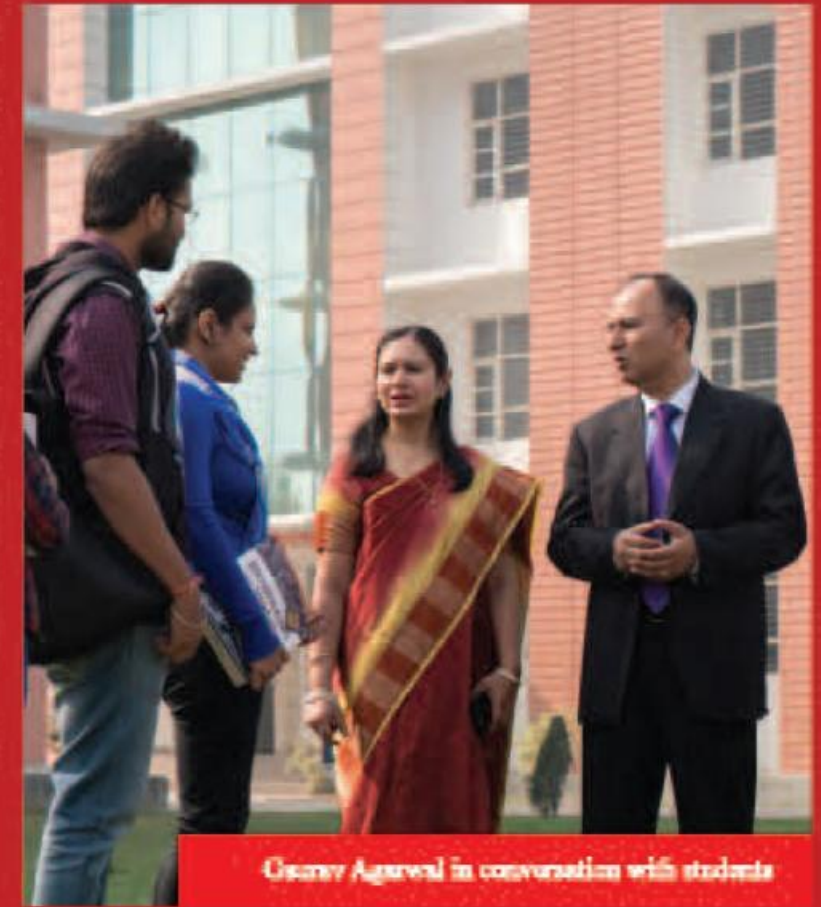
We are joined by his dynamic son, who like his father is grace personified, with no air about him being a proud IIT Karpur & IIM Bangalore alumna and having worked with Barclays UK at an enviable package- Gaurav Agarwal, Vice Chairman. He echoes the same sentiments, "I still remember my first day at the Institute and my father telling me to work for the fun of working and that everything else will follow."

The Journey of Shri Vishnu Saran is inspirational at each step, but given the modest man that he is, you have to prod him to talk about his success. "I believe there are no shortcuts for success. Each day is a new day and every achievement is your inspiration for the next one," asserts Shri Saran, something even Gaurav Agarwal believes in whole heartedly. "If you ask me about being successful, I will disagree. I have had academic achievements, but other than that, I don't have much. Whatever I am doing here is continuation of what my previous generations have done. Now if this college can transform from state level to national level or international level, then it would be an achievement!"

The passion for excellence and the cherished desire of

Vishnu Saran to dedicate a school in his father Shri Chandra Sen Agarwal's memory, is what led the group to lay the foundations of now blossoming school chain MITT Public Schools. "Having closely observed the staff we were getting in the engineering college, I strongly felt the need to come up with schools that stand firm on value education. And by value education I mean that not only should the students have respect for their Gurus but also parents and motherland," explains Saran. Gaurav adds, "See this is not really a business for us; the amount of money I personally earn here is fraction of what I was earning in my previous company- Barclays Bank. I came back in 2009 and it was a decision purely based on trying to make a difference to the society in terms of whatever good we could do. As a banker you can do a lot of good for a limited few, but the difference you can bring about through education is incalculable. A good educationist can reform generations. And the Institutes and schools are our way of humbly contributing for the greater good of the society."

We move out of the cabin to take a tour around the campus and we are astonished by the accessibility of students to their Chairman and Vice Chairman.



Gaurav Agarwal in conversation with students



Vishnu Saran in a meeting with his officials



Vishnu Saran and Gaurav with I.T. Gen. JM Garga

"I never dreamt of having achieved whatever I have today, if I look back"

The fact that she too is actively part of the organization, taking care of the day to day running of MIET Public Schools, doesn't seem to come in her way of being an able homemaker.

Barkha too comes from a strong academic background, having worked as an Electronics lecturer at IIT Lucknow. They had an arranged marriage and having lived a good part of their early marriage in UK, yet, behind the simple and quiet persons, is an extremely romantic person at heart. "This beautiful journey today has made me read his gestures. He doesn't need to tell me if he is down or he is happy," she smiles big. Ask him of what he likes to do post a hard day at work, he shares, "I like to sleep! If I don't get a good night sleep, I can get cranky."

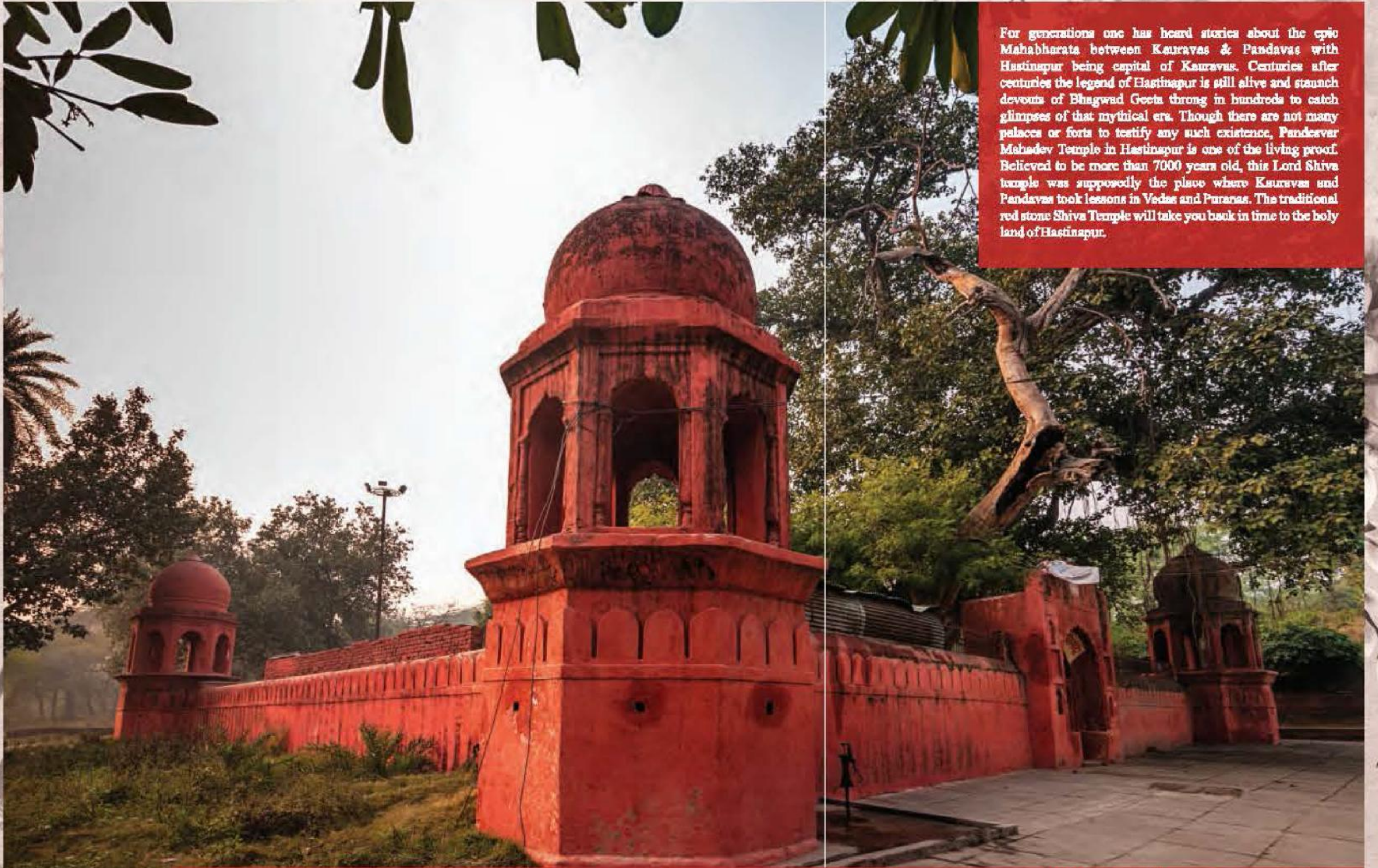
Shri Saran who is an avid morning walker, likes to unwind with his family. Going out for family dinners is something he enjoys. Mrs. Saran tells us about him being the same humble man as he was in his younger days, though she smiles and adds, "He has mellowed down a lot when it comes to losing his temper." Though Shri Saran believes in destiny and stars, he insists, "I never dreamt of having achieved what all I have, if I look back. I always used to work like a private job employee even during my long stint with the government." Punctuality is his one quality everyone swears by, and his daily Puja is one routine he never misses out on. Honesty and drawing satisfaction out of his work have been the driving forces of his life, something beautifully imbibed by his family. As we walk out, we truly could say that we met monks who wear business suits!



Vishnu Saran with wife Usha, Gaurav, Barkha, Purnika & Aniket



Ajmer Project Block in the campus




For generations one has heard stories about the epic Mahabharata between Kauravas & Pandavas with Hastinapur being capital of Kauravas. Centuries after centuries the legend of Hastinapur is still alive and staunch devotees of Bhagwad Geeta throng in hundreds to catch glimpses of that mythical era. Though there are not many palaces or forts to testify any such existence, Pandaveswar Mahadev Temple in Hastinapur is one of the living proof. Believed to be more than 7000 years old, this Lord Shiva temple was supposedly the place where Kauravas and Pandavas took lessons in Vedas and Puranas. The traditional red stone Shiva Temple will take you back in time to the holy land of Hastinapur.

Pandaveswar Mahadev Temple



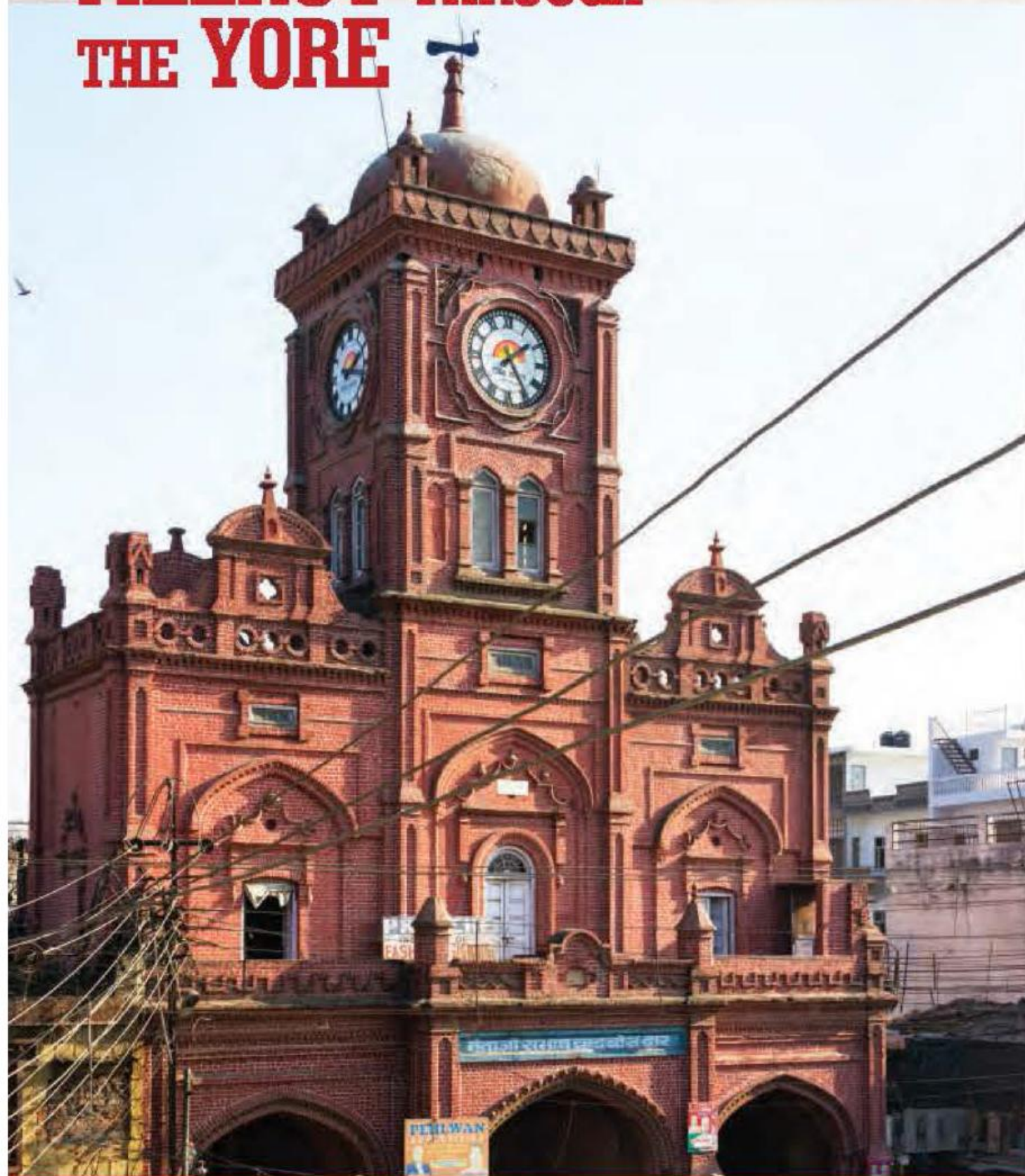
Vishnu Saran & wife Usha in playful mood with Parnika & Aniket



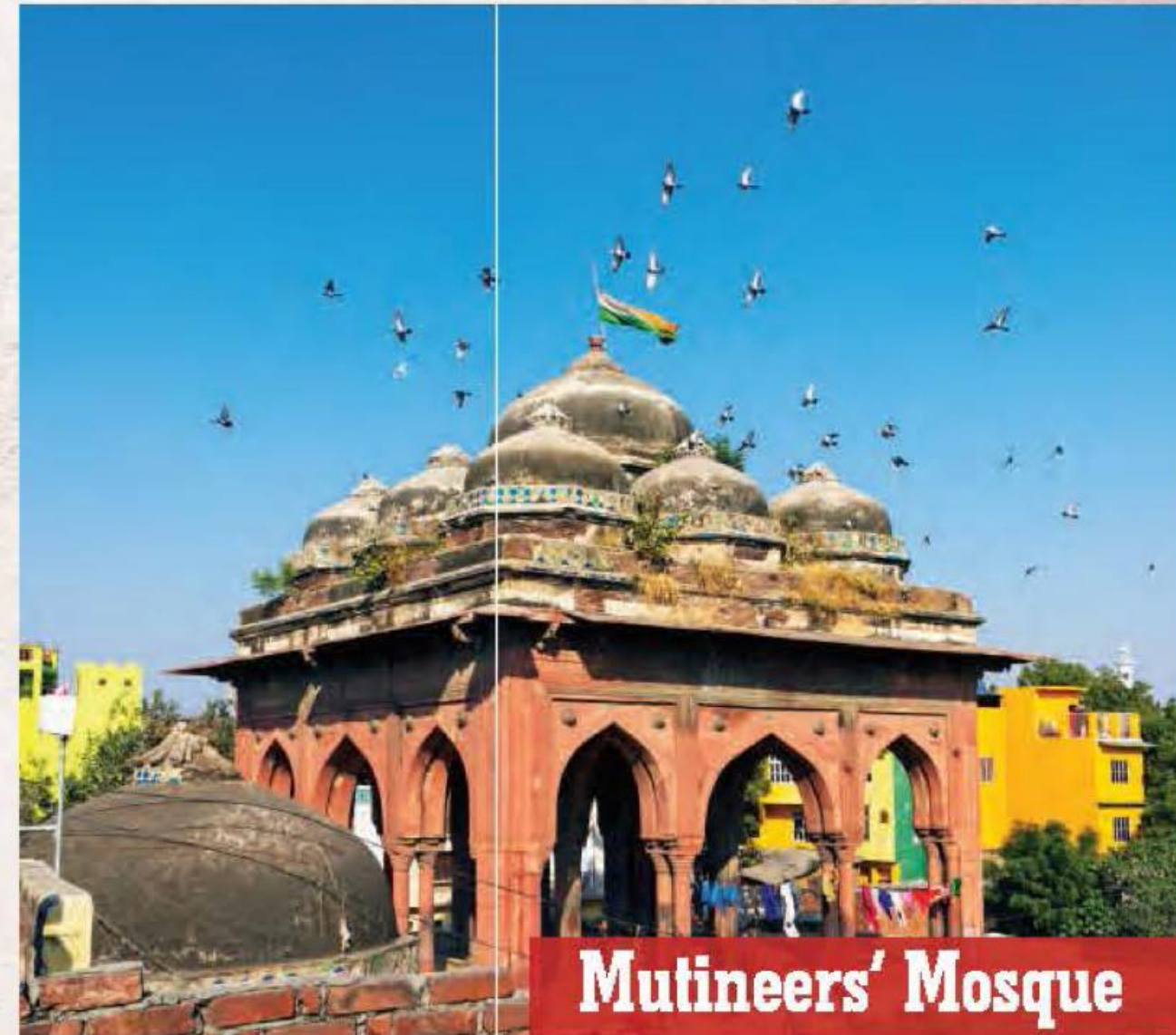
The majestic Jain Temple of Hastinapur attracts thousands of awestruck visitors every year and the breathtaking architectural designs of the complex does full justice to the glorious history of Hastinapur. The city as per legends was the capital city of Mighty Kautavas who gave the city of Indraprastha to their cousins Pandava. For centuries the city stood in ruins, the dilapidated state of city is believed to have transformed by Raja Harakh Rai in early 19th century. Today, this Jain shrine is revered by people of all faith. The principal deity of Jambudweep, as the temple is famously called, is of 16th Jain Thirthankar, Shri Shantinath.

Jain Temple (Jambudweep)

MEERUT THROUGH THE YORE



Where Time Stands Still: Ghanta Ghar



Mutineers' Mosque

Mutineers' Mosque at Meerut said to be the principal resort of the mutineers, during the historic mutiny of 1857 against the British Empire. The revolt, which catapulted Meerut into international prominence, started in March, 1857 at Barrackpore, Bengal. Sepoy Mangal Pandey shot and missed two Europeans, failed to kill himself, and was hanged. By April, the fire of Pandey's Uprising scorched north India and reached Meerut, the then second-largest East India Company garrison.

Go back in history and one would know that Meerut was a walled city, confined within gates (9 in total) out of which today only three stands; rest have fallen to city's apathy. The iconic Ghanta Ghar in the heart of the city is not one of them, built where once stood the decrepit Kambohi Gate in 1914, made by the Britishers. Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower) was one in the series of many built by them in cities like Dehradun, Gwalior, Indore etc. The buzz around Ghanta Ghar all through the night is the highlight of Meerut's religious harmony.

The tomb of Shahpeer is one of the popular monuments in Meerut and is considered to be the oldest tomb in North India. It was constructed by Noor Jahan, who was the wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, in solemn memory of the local Muslim Hazrat Shahpeer, the teacher of Jahangir. It is made of red stone, and is intricately carved with design and motifs. This open-to-sky structure has no roof, inspite of which the rain water does not fall on the main tomb.



Shahpeer ka Maqbara

Kailash Parvat is a nearly 130 feet high temple near Meerut, constructed under the aegis of Shri Digamber Jain Mandir Hastinapur. It has three stages with 72 temples. Each stage has 24 temples that represent the Jain Tirthankaras. It is dedicated to the first Tirthankara- Rishabhmalha. The temple, with its carved ceilings, long pillars, doorways and panels presents an enormous, serene and spiritual view.



Kailash Parvat



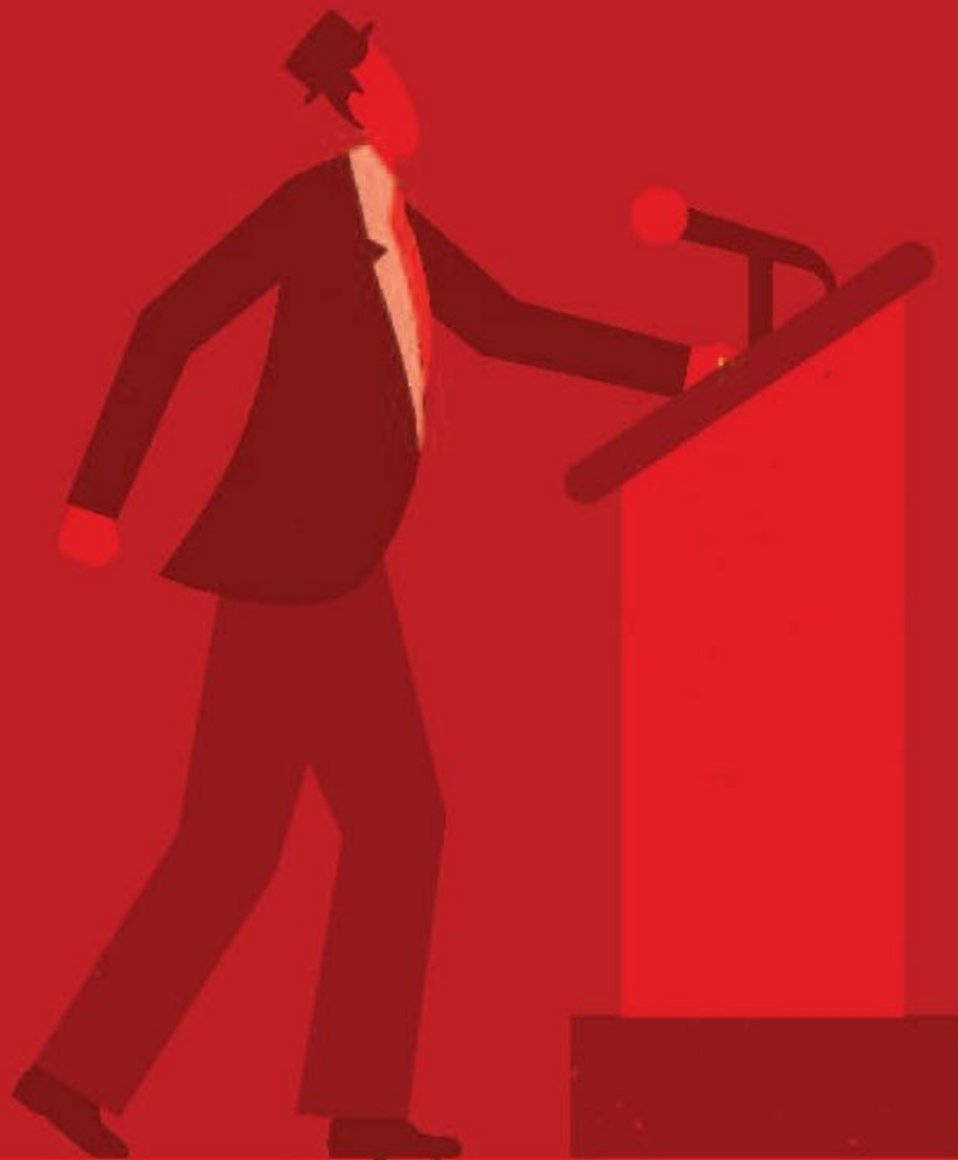
Amidst the heart of the historic city of Meerut, stands the imposing edifice, a befitting introduction to its visitors – Shaheed Smarak. It was this great city that laid the foundation of Indian independence with the first war in 1857 and to commemorate the numerous sacrifices in that struggle, Shaheed Smarak (locally also known as Ashok ki Laast) was established in 1957. The inauguration was done by none other than India's first Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. The beatific memorial of glistening white marble is of 98 feet with Ashok's four lions, our national emblem atop.

Shaheed Smarak

The imperial Minor Basilica of our Lady Grace (a Roman Catholic Church, largest in North India) leaves you awestruck. Built by Begum Samru, the church is a pilgrimage for Christians around the region. The Church took 11 years to be built, spearheaded by Italian architect- Anthony Reghini, with an approximate budget of four crores, and is an amalgamation of Greek, Roman and British art, especially the dome, veranda and the pillars. Ironically Begum's Muslim antecedents barred her from a place in the church after her death. There is this 16 feet high tomb of Begum painstakingly crafted by Adamo Tomilini, next to the church. Where her palace was, now stands St. Charles Inter College.



Begum Samru Church



Dreams are lived through hard work

There are those who just dream, and there are those who through their sheer tenacity and grit, in the face of thousand obstacles, work their way up to realizing them. Shri K.D. Sharma, Founder & Owner (Motherhood University & Mahaveer Educational Park) is a man of few words but his achievements in a short span of time speak volumes about his character. We have been with him for few hours now and one can't help but notice how conscientious and methodical he is. How else could one who started with a college in 2004, take it to a full-fledged university in just about a decade? In the words of Mr. Dharmendra Bhardwaj, Chancellor (Motherhood University) & Chairman (Mahaveer Educational Park): "I am yet to meet a more hard working man than Shri K.D. Sharma Ji. The ability to take risks and to back it up with 24x7 hard-work is something I haven't seen in anyone else."

"The company you keep when you are young can make or break your career path"



It was the year 1803, fall of Delhi and the Marathas (Daulat Rao Scindia) ceded the territory to British and hence Meerut Cantonment was established (largest at that point of time in the county). Historically, every cantonment had a temple, maintained religiously by the soldiers. The native soldiers thus worshipped at the Shiva Temple in Cantonment, that went on to be known as Kali Palatan (present day Angurmath Temple). The modern beatific avatar of the temple dates back to 1968, with the architectural marvel— its hall, built in 1987. Later, adjacent to it came the Radha Krishna Temple and a gold plated Kalash atop.

Kali Palatan Mandir



Students during practices in the Chemistry lab



Student carrying out experiment in the lab of Mahaveer Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital



Students trying hands at Mechanise

“Education is not about quality of infrastructure, it is about the quality of your faculty”

“The folly most commit is to invest too much in swanky buildings and luxurious classrooms and ignore the quality of faculty they hire.” With an aim to harness a pool of ethical, qualified and highly trained human resources, the group is well-known for taking great care of its faculty members, not only in terms of salaries but perks as well. “If you want best mentors, you will have to pay them their worth as well. We are fortunate to have well known academicians in our institutions”. So does he involve himself in day to day working?

K.D. SHARMA

(Founder & Owner)

Motherhood University

Mahaveer Educational Park

Dharmendra Bhardwaj

(Chancellor & Chairman)

Motherhood University

Mahaveer Educational Park





Teacher-Students' interaction in the computer lab

"Not at all! I trust my team and never interfere in their work; if you do, it will eventually lead to chaos. I believe in giving a complete freeband to my team members. Yes it might back fire sometimes, and that is why when we select any candidate, we do a thorough background check, apart from required qualifications." says Mr. Bhardwaj.

Besides this, the university is also extensively involved in conducting researches and other scholarly activities that could generate new pastures of knowledge and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for all. Mr. Bhardwaj places a lot of premium on fostering self-reliance and

empowerment among the marginalized community and the underprivileged. The university is founded on the core values of relevance, integrity, truth and excellence, which serve as the leading light in instruction, research, extension and production at the institution.

As we drive towards his home, we ask him if he has any special interests besides profession. He doesn't disappoint. "My day begins with four newspapers and there isn't a second when I am not working, but yes if I ever can spare time, I like to play badminton." Dharmendra Bhardwaj dabbled into active politics but lost the election by a whisker.

"Trust your team to do the job, too much interference would eventually lead to chaos"



Dharmendra Bhardwaj with his team



Tejinder Khurana and Principal S. Shekhar in conversation with the students

His passion towards education reflects in his thoughts when he speaks them out. "Even as a kid when my peers used to invent ways to bunk school, I made a point never to miss out on a single class. The passion to open a school was somewhere burning deep down within me. For want of funds, I was reluctant and that was when I discussed it with my uncle who is an NRI and was keen on investing in India. And there it was, in 2003, we started KL International School."

Mr. Khurana's role model in life is his uncle, Mr. Kuldeep Lamba. "It is because of him that I could realize my dream and pursue my passion. As a mark of respect, the school is named after him." When asked about building a school in the outskirts of the city and not in the vicinity of other schools, he replies, "I always wanted to prove my mettle by standing away from the herd. What's the point of being one among the crowd! Also if you see, I had no experience of running a school, but there was fire within me to do it and do it like none has ever done before. Numbers don't interest me. It matters little to me whether I am number one in the industry

or number two. For me, quality and satisfaction is doing the work to the best of my ability. I have never emulated anyone, rather I wanted to create a template that others would follow," asserts Mr. Khurana.

More than 350 employees, over 5000 students in the campus, and year after year tremendous results tell a compelling story of how KL International School is redefining the standards of quality education. Every successful process of transition requires a healthy mix of experience and exuberance. We were joined by his elder son, the young and dynamic Director Manmeet Khurana. "I joined business in 2008, and have always aspired to be like my dad. We have judiciously divided roles and responsibilities. Dad is involved in the most intricate of details while I take care of all external engagements. My tech-savviness comes in handy as it complements my managerial skills. It has helped me introduce technical innovations for the betterment of academics and administration," he shares.



Tejinder, Manmeet and S. Shekhar in conversation



Tejinder and Manmeet with the teaching staff

“My day begins with prayers and planning for the day”

On being asked how does he enjoy family time, he shares, “I am an active member of my big joint family, but I enjoy strong bonds amongst every family member. I have realized to be successful in any area, strong family values play very important role and I am privileged to have joint family of strong values and principles.

We are welcomed in the house by Ms. Manika Sharma, his daughter whose excellent gestures lighten up the room. “I have always been a strong family advocate and I had a wonderful family growing up.” My family consists of my wife Vinla Sharma, three sons namely, Ashok Sharma, Mukesh Sharma & Rakesh Sharma, with their wives namely Poojam Sharma, Archana Sharma & Priya Sharma respectively, and two daughters Manika Sharma, Sonika Sharma, Son-in-law Mr. Ruchir, grandsons Yash, Saksham, Vaibhav, Kartikey and granddaughters Kirti, Sneha.

“Family members strengthen each other during crises. They help us to be strong. After all it is a family tradition. Our roots are deeper. Our hearts are stronger. We never give up.”



K.D. Sharma with his family

Left to Right

1st Row – Yash, Saksham, Kirti, Sneha, Kartikey, Vaibhav

2nd Row – Mukesh, K.D. Sharma, Ruchir, Sonika, Vinla

3rd Row – Archana, Rakesh, Priya, Manika, Ashok, Poojam



KD Sharma and Dharmendra Bhambhani with their management colleagues



The Temple of Learning

How often you come across men who have taken the righteous route to greatness? Success more often than not leaves one conceited, very few can tame the sin of perceived superiority! As an answer, we got a chance to meet these 'Men of Principles' who left us overwhelmed with their unimaginable modesty.

You walk around Vidya Prakashan Mandir Pvt. Ltd. or Vidya Knowledge Park and you find inspiration all around. How sheer hard work and dedication can take you from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of success; Vidya Group epitomizes it. "If you have clean conscience and you work with unswerving dedication, God himself will pave the way for you," is how the modest Emeritus Chairman Mr. Surendra Kumar Jain, Vidya Group, summarizes the group's success mantra.

"If you have clean conscience,
God himself will pave the way for you"





Dharmendra with his mother, wife Priyanka, son Tejasv and daughter Manya



“Our elders were true visionary; they could foresee what’s going to happen 10 years later”

“The high standards of integrity, quality and the goodwill our elders have earned, to maintain it and in my own humble way me taking it forward, is what has been driving me to work every day since I joined the group post my MBA in 2003,” asserts Mr. Saurabh Jain, MD.

Behind the scenes at the publication's facility, the state of the art machines are employed, which are equipped with one colour, two colour and four colour arrangement capacity and are operated by experienced manpower who have the 24X7 production ability.

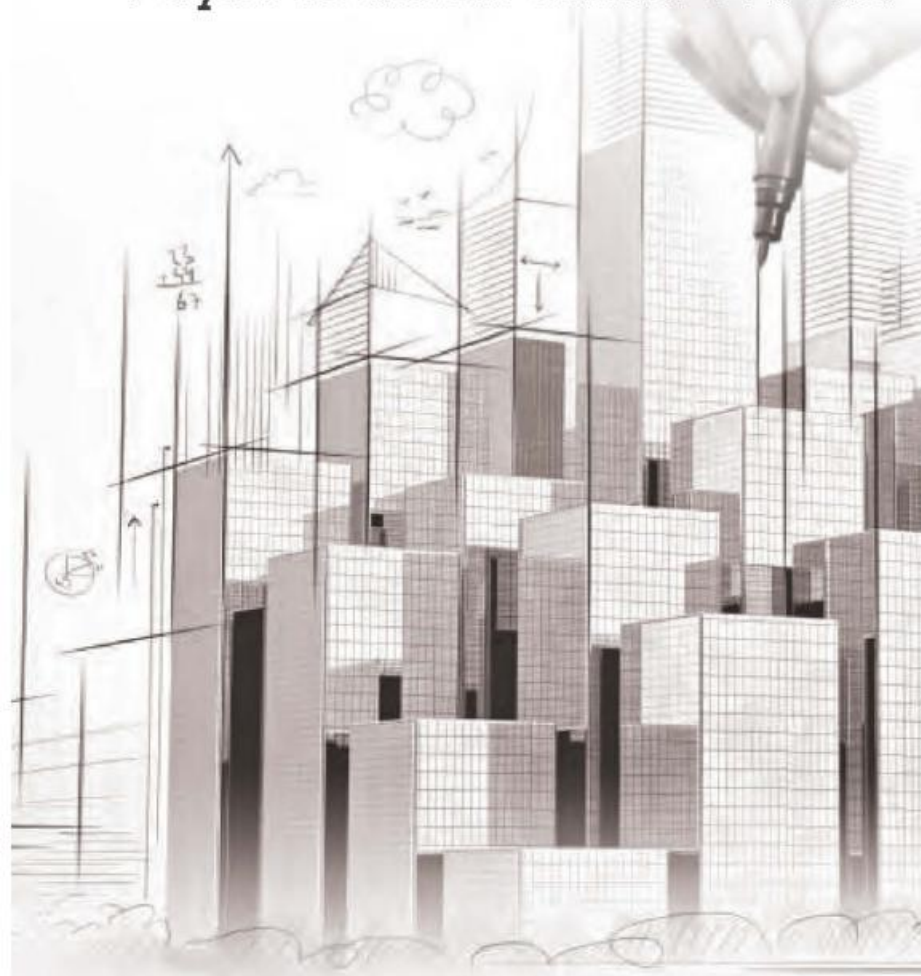
**PRADEEP
KUMAR JAIN**

Chairman

**SURENDRA
KUMAR JAIN**

Emeritus Chairman

Vidya Prakashan Mandir Pvt. Ltd.





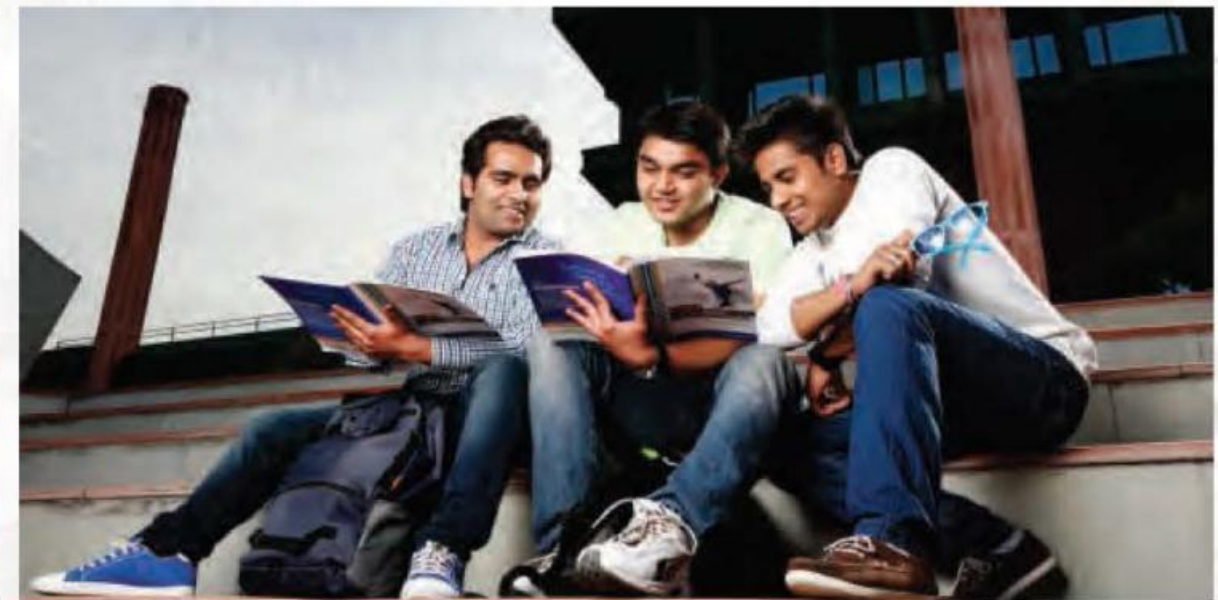
All the facilities for plate making, cutting, binding and printing are in-house and under one roof.

Vidya Group today has more than 1000 employees with the publication's books being read all across the country and being exported as well. Whereas Knowledge Park is consistently being featured as 'one of the best' in all professional rankings, the young generation is determined to further take the group to insurmountable heights. "Our elders are true visionaries. They could foresee what's going to happen 10 years later and it is incumbent upon me to follow in their footsteps. I want every single student who joins us to be a success story, ingrained in true

values of Vidya Group and believe me we are on the right track," he adds confidently.

As we take a walk with the management colleagues for a photo-shoot, we see how easily the team members can approach them. The cordial way each query is met and answered, the attention to minutest of details, leave us surprised. "Even today we are involved in the day to day proceedings, right from keeping an eye on each student's performance to making sure they are provided with best of amenities and latest of technologies. You have to interact with each and every member of the team and lead by example."

"A brand can only become great when it is synonymous with excellence"



Winning ways: Students at Vidya Knowledge park

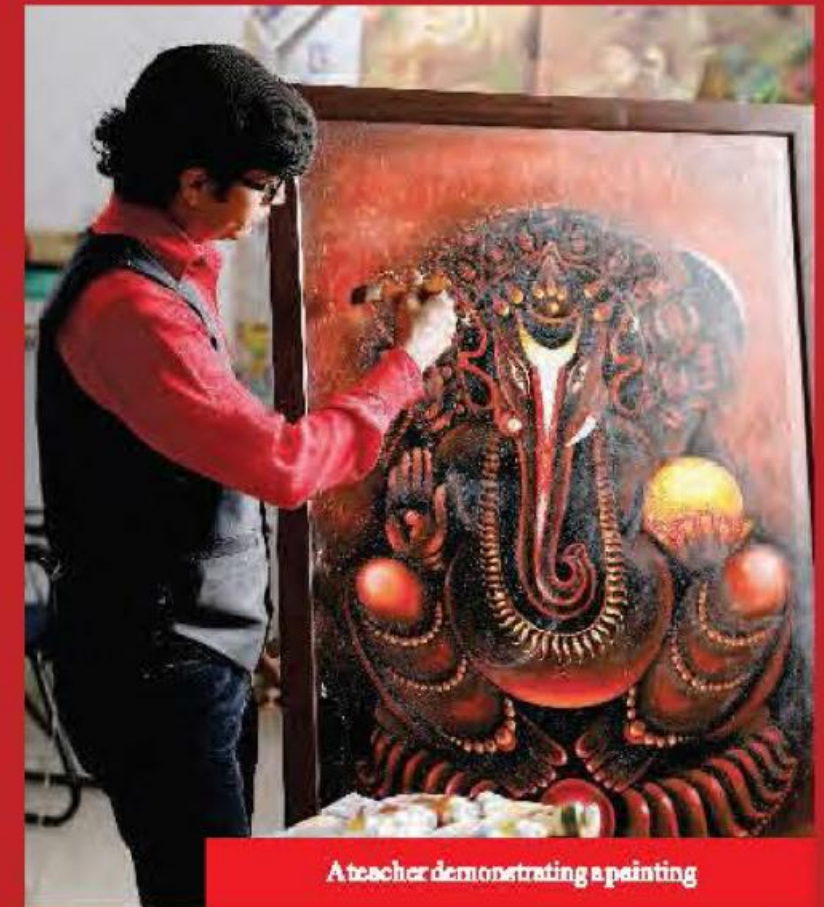
The national award for excellence in education that he received at the hands of former President Dr Abdul Kalam is a huge testimony to the immense credentials of the veteran educationist.

But there are only 24 hours in a day and it seems work never stops for them. "It is because work is our hobby," adds Mr. Pradeep Kumar Jain, Chairman. Although Vidya Prakashan Mandir Pvt. Ltd. is 35 years old, its inception goes 50 years back. "I was born in Village Hilwari and we came to Baraut where we started trading in books. My father Shri Sukhbir Singh Jain's desire to publish books for children brought us to Meerut where he laid the foundation of Vidya Prakashan. It is his vision to bring a paradigm shift in education for children and his insistence on values, is where the genesis of Vidya Group lies," says Mr. Surender Jain.

Did they dream of reaching the heights they have, back then? "We slogged day in and day out but as in cricket, you never go to crease thinking that you are going to score a double hundred. You build your innings taking a single at a time and so did we. Faith in God, perseverance and living up to the family values and reputation is what I think made things work for us," adds Mr. Pradeep Jain.

The Group has been active for the last three decades and is very upbeat for publishing books of excellence catering to all levels of education in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Sanskrit. The products are very well distinguished from the competitors in terms of innovation, quality & content. No wonder they are so well received and appreciated by the students' fraternity as well as educators, institutions and educational authorities throughout the country and abroad. 'Leadership is the ability of a single individual through his/her actions to motivate others to higher levels of achievement', is what Pradeep Jain staunchly believes in.

The commitment towards bringing transformation in education, and persistence on incomparable quality led to the birth of Vidya Knowledge Park in 2006, which soon will be a full-fledged private university. The first of its kind global school in Western UP, the most technologically advanced Institutions offering wide bouquet of professional courses, and add to it a team of industry's most respected mentors, all within the parameters of same premises, puts Vidya Group in the highest echelons of excellence in education. "A brand can only become great when it is synonymous with excellence."



A teacher demonstrating a painting



Vishal & Saurabh Jain at a facility



Vishal and Saurabh on a quick tour of the press

“For our family, staying together and spending time take priority over anything else”

“We don't believe in half-measures and differentiation on the basis of positions,” says Mr. Pradeep Jain as we share a cup of tea.

“The mindset needs to be changed,” adds Mr. Vishal Jain, BD and youngest in the family. “People tend to work proportional to their salary. What they forget is that it is the other way round.” He is the techno brain behind the group and has been to various countries trying to blend the best of technologies being used abroad with their existing setup. “When we will show the eagerness to learn and adapt new technologies, it is imperative our team members will follow us. I was in Dubai a few months back and the only thought in my mind was- if they can do it, why can't we,” says Mr. Vishal.

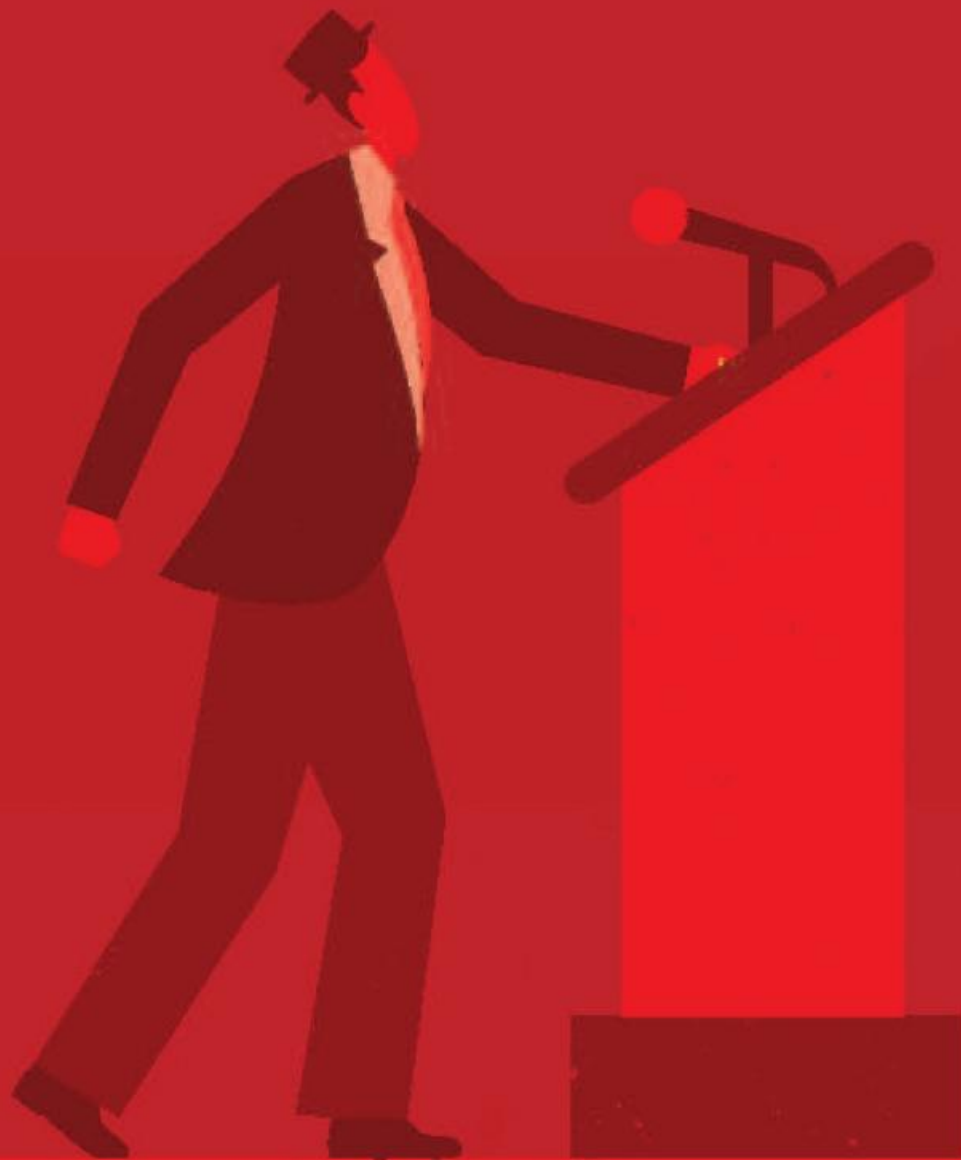
We now drive to their astonishingly beautiful house yet simplicity defining each part of it. “Like any family, we also are fond of luxuries but not overindulgence; for us staying together and spending time together takes priority over anything else. God has been kind towards us and we try to give back to the society as a medium of his blessings over us,” says Mr. Surender Jain. The entire family comes together for a group photo, the smiles and happiness around is what words can't describe. What's next for the group, we ask. “To be the best university in the region,” a unanimous and confident reply comes forth. Truly believable!



Women power: The Jain family



A panoramic view of Vidya Knowledge Park



No Guts, No Glory

As we enter into this recently bought lavish bungalow of Ahlawat family, we can't help but stand mesmerized by its sheer opulence. Considering the avid swimmer that he is, the head of the family Brijvir Singh lays calm in his in-house chic pool, surrounded by a lush green garden that is personally tended to by the man himself. The top floor is under renovation to match the classy taste Ahlawat household has. Once synonymous with construction business, the Ahlawats now have diversified into rapidly expanding education brand owning Neelkanth Group of Institutions and an upcoming school. The man responsible for the meteoric rise from the humble backgrounds to the top echelons of the renowned names in Meerut's business circle, is the 63-year-old patriarch Mr. Brijvir Singh. The gentle giant greets us with his family in his aesthetically designed drawing room. Born in the hinterlands of Deoria (that till now only boasts of its sugar mill), in a humble farming family, he did his initial schooling and college there only. "I started off with a transport company. Later, I forayed into finance & construction businesses that finally led to my dream of establishing the college in 2007."

"Everyday do something that will take you closer to a better tomorrow"



Surendra & Pradeep Jain with Madhur, Ritu, Saumabh, Vishal, Stulpi, Shreya, Preeti & children of the family .



A confident and poised Brijvir Singh



Waiting in the wings: Students in the campus

“I have been the highest tax payer and still am among the top tax payers of the region”

We enter into their spartan conference room with all senior staff members waiting for him, all unanimously agreeing to one quality of both Chairman & MD- they being true team players and never imposing their ideas on anyone. Mr. Singh is livid about education standards being compromised for greed. “The fact today is that rat race for numbers in absence of quality checks on mushrooming colleges, is eventually hampering the employability factor of students.”

BRIJVIR SINGH

Chairman

Neelkanth Group of Institutions





“What’s the point of parents investing so much money into students’ education if they can’t get decent starting salary and we are painstakingly working towards crafting able professionals than mere batches passing out of the institutions.” He agrees that getting good able faculty members and retaining them is also challenging but they are committed to have a pool of technocrats who will shape the budding engineers, with or without support from governing bodies. Amar adds, “Education is a serious business that can’t flourish without passion; and attitude matters. When I hire anyone today, I look for the right attitude. It is our passion for quality education only that we are coming up with world class school – there is this glaring space in schooling that we want to fill with our ambitious international school – Wisdom Global School.” When

it comes to challenges, both have hands on approach. Mr. Singh tells us how he never believes in passing the buck. “When we were coming up with the institution, I used to sit in the makeshift tents personally taking note of each and every thing. I was working under scorching heat at times with no food or water and today you can see the result.”

Like Amar, Mr Singh’s daughters, Aarti Singh & Sonia Mahajan, too were never given things on a platter. Both married. They tell us how they had a very normal childhood like their peers, with no luxuries provided to them. Also giving us company is Amar’s gorgeous wife Shweta Singh. They got married last year and coming from Indore, she says that it was not a culture shock for her to come from what is called Mini Mumbai, to Meerut.

“The best quality of a professional is his ability to maintain work – life balance”



Raising to go: United colours of students at Neelearnth

"Education has been very close to my heart because running after money has never been my raison d'être. I, in my own limited ways, wanted to contribute to our society. I have been the highest tax payer and still am among the top tax payers of the region. The simple logic is the dichotomy that we want all the facilities from government, but when it comes to paying our due we come up with fabrications," says a proud Brijvir Singh. Born into a family of four brothers and two sisters, passing away of his father at 19 left an indelible imprint on young Brijvir and he made sure that his kids value education & honesty.

We are joined by his tall and dashing, IMT Ghaziabad pass out son Amar Ahlawat, who is now MD of the Group. He is like a normal MBA student, who had a stint with Nerolac paints and once he proved his mettle, he was taken into construction business and in 2009, started over seeing the institution. "My management background helped a lot and I first joined as a faculty in our institution. It is not because he is my father am saying this, but believe me I was pleasantly surprised by the quality & standards the institution had maintained- the faculty, the infrastructure, the quality of students, I knew that there is something great happening here and started getting involved passionately giving more than 12 to 14 hours daily," says Amar with a smile. Ask him

about his father and he sounds enamored. "I am always left astonished by his decision making powers. He has to interact with all sorts of people from fourth class employees to top bureaucrats, but the ease with which he handles everyone and takes prompt decisions, at times in a fraction of second that invariably proves to be perfect. This is something I want to imbibe."

Everyone smiles when he adds that at times, father-son relationship takes over in the business and he gets a mild scolding (for their difference of opinion on certain of his father's decisions) but eventually it is for the greater good of the organization. But the proud father adds that Amar is very down to earth & unlike his generation, is quite obedient and quite capable to take over the mantle all by himself.

We now drive towards their colossal group of institutions that gives employment to over 300 people with more than 2500 students studying. On our way, we ask about Mr. Singh being much loved social man, if he has intentions of joining politics? "No, I don't think I will ever join politics, though I have got many offers personally by stalwarts, I believe in contributing to the society in my own humble way rather getting into the trouble and bustle of politics," denies Mr. Singh though Amar says with age being on his side he is not sure and might think about it in future.



Teacher instructing the students in the lab



Brijvir & Amar with Institution Heads



Leading from the front: Brijvir Singh with his team

“Fortunately I have got a lovely family; I am loving every moment”

“Though there is difference in both the cities, but fortunately the lovely family I have got now, I am loving every moment here.

She reticently adds that the journey has been extremely romantic and beautiful, while praising Amar. “One of his best qualities is his ability to maintain work-life balance. I have never seen him bring work home or being irritated or worked up for things happening at work place.” At this point, Mrs. Madhu Singh who till now is busy attending to us, joins us and adds that her husband’s discipline, his precision & punctuality has stayed with him forever and that he sees these traits in her son as well.

Sonia Mahajan, the youngest of three siblings has been blessed with a baby girl and Aarti too has a cute little girl Aadya, who is studying in a primary school. Sonia adds, “What I love about my father is that he keeps everyone in the family together, even our extended families, be it any function or event, he takes care of minutest of preparations and Sundays are strictly for the family.”

The fitness freak Mr. Singh likes to unwind with good music & television, his favourite being The Kapil Sharma Show. He is a voracious reader who doesn’t miss out on weekly dose of magazines. While Amar is a die-hard Martin Scorsese fan and never misses out on Leonardo-Scorsese combination. While Mr. Brijvir is quite a social person, Amar is a reluctant extrovert, who keeps his circle close and limited. The family here adds that both father and son are fond of brands and shopping. While Mr. Singh’s favourite is Hugo Boss with him being extremely particular about shoes, Amar is CK & Gang enthusiast. Amar also likes his mean machines, he presently drives a BMW but his eyes are on Porsche.

As we capture them in candid moments, Amar beautifully sums up the day for us. “I never give up on things and I will keep fighting till I don’t overcome the obstacles. Remember- there is no glory if you don’t have the guts!”



Women in the family having a nice time in the garden



Grand campus of Neelkanti Group of Institutions



Inspire, Ignite, Achieve

We are sitting in this rich urbane drawing room and each and every artifact or piece of furniture is telling a story of its own, as if was personally attended to, or contains a slice of its owners in them. "I went through over 12 shades of white before finalizing this one," smiles the proud owner Tejinder Khurana, Vice Chairman, K L International School, one of the leading schools of Meerut city. He adds, "Being the only son, I was pampered a lot. I am an alumnus of St. John's. My father was in the milk business. During my last year of schooling, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. She was in the last stage and was hospitalized in Delhi. I used to go to Delhi to take care of my ailing mother and would return back to Meerut for college. Shuttling between Meerut and Delhi was a daily chore for me in those days. Unfortunately she left for her heavenly abode soon after. We were all devastated. After some time, I married and that was when I joined the family business."

"Even as a kid when my peers used to invent ways to bunk school, I made a point to never miss out on a single class"



Brijvir and Amar with Sonia, Ari, Madhu and Shweta



Standing tall: Tejinder Khurana



Mr. Kuldeep Lamba, Mentor & Chairman, KLI



Tejinder Khurana receiving award from hon'ble Governor, UP

“You will find me attending school with as much interest today, as you will find after 5 years, 10 years down the line”

Ask them about each other, and Manmeet replies, “Dad is extremely patient, practical and down to earth. His infectious zeal to be the best makes him a perfect role model not only for me but for the entire staff at KLI. Till date, he is the first person to reach school and the last to leave.” When asked about his father’s first advice when he decided to join the school post his stint at Microsoft, he says, “He told me to be a man of my own mind. He said whatever I decide will impact everybody around me. He taught me the values of team-work and responsibility.”

TEJINDER KHURANA

Vice Chairman

K L International School





Orphanage kids being fed in the school premises

Mr. Khurana adds, "Manmeet has an untiring desire to learn. He is always ready to grab something new. He has been instrumental in organizing path breaking workshops and integrating technology with academics. He is a true blue technocrat. He was the one who brought SMS alert system to KLI; every minor detail about a student is sent to his parents via SMS."

Manmeet is also an avid photographer. His wife Parnet smiles and shares, "He has all the latest gadgets and likes to keep himself updated with technology. When he is not occupied, he can be seen clicking pictures of Karman, our son."

Does the father son relationship ever come in the line of work? Manmeet smiles, "Many times he has given me a piece of his mind, and when I sit back and analyse 10 out of 10 times he is correct."

The younger son Harneet Khurana recalls his days at KLI International and testifies that the institution stands firmly on the values that are its foundation. "I was a student of KLI and believe me it was never easy for me. Contrary to what many may think, my teachers were more strict towards me as compared to my classmates. My parents used to attend Parent Teacher Meetings like any other parent."

"Number one or two doesn't matter, whatever I do, I do it in the best possible way"



An Academic session going on in the school auditorium



Kids frolicking in the school campus



Tejinder Khurana and Principal S. Shekhar in conversation with the students

His passion towards education reflects in his thoughts when he speaks them out. "Even as a kid when my peers used to invent ways to bunk school, I made a point never to miss out on a single class. The passion to open a school was somewhere burning deep down within me. For want of funds, I was reluctant and that was when I discussed it with my uncle who is an NRI and was keen on investing in India. And there it was, in 2003, we started KL International School."

Mr. Khurana's role model in life is his uncle, Mr. Kuldeep Lamba. "It is because of him that I could realize my dream and pursue my passion. As a mark of respect, the school is named after him." When asked about building a school in the outskirts of the city and not in the vicinity of other schools, he replies, "I always wanted to prove my mettle by standing away from the herd. What's the point of being one among the crowd! Also if you see, I had no experience of running a school, but there was fire within me to do it and do it like none has ever done before. Numbers don't interest me. It matters little to me whether I am number one in the industry

or number two. For me, quality and satisfaction is doing the work to the best of my ability. I have never emulated anyone, rather I wanted to create a template that others would follow," asserts Mr. Khurana.


More than 350 employees, over 5000 students in the campus, and year after year tremendous results tell a compelling story of how KL International School is redefining the standards of quality education. Every successful process of transition requires a healthy mix of experience and exuberance. We were joined by his elder son, the young and dynamic Director Manmeet Khurana. "I joined business in 2008, and have always aspired to be like my dad. We have judiciously divided roles and responsibilities. Dad is involved in the most intricate of details while I take care of all external engagements. My tech-savviness comes in handy as it complements my managerial skills. It has helped me introduce technical innovations for the betterment of academics and administration," he shares.



Tejinder, Manmeet and S. Shekhar in conversation



Tejinder and Manmeet with the teaching staff



"I get zillion requests for admissions; people want me to open up branches. I am not saying I don't have plans but I will reiterate that first I want to establish KLI as the best school in the entire region on all parameters and then I will think about further expansion," shares Mr. Khurana.

The family is also quite modest about their philanthropy. They love to give back to the society. Under their charitable program, the Khurana family regularly goes to slum areas and gives them the necessary amenities of life sustenance, medicine, food, clothes among others. They invite children from the deprived sections of the society to their school and try to make them feel special for a day by gifting them toys, feeding them and celebrating their birthdays.

As we walk towards the dining table for lunch, Mr. Khurana muses, "Believe in God, surrender yourself to Him. If you are ready to take the leap of faith, He will pave the way for you. Always keep your mind open and learn from everyone." Where does he see himself five years down the line? "You will find me looking after the school with as much interest as today even if you meet me five or ten years down the line."

Mammeet concludes our amazing conversation with a beautiful thought. "As educationists, we should strive to steer the society on the ethical path of virtue as well as perfection. And that will only happen if we treat education as a service towards humanity."

Tejinder Khurana & Neeti, Harneet, Parmeet & Mammeet



Beautiful facade of the K.L. International School

The fertile land of Western UP contributes colossally to the Indian agriculture, especially sugarcane, which is the staple crop in this region. Traditionally when it comes to sugarcane and sugar mills, it is yet again Meerut that one points out on the agricultural landscape of the country. If you see in and around Meerut city, there are six major sugar mills, completely operational, adding sweetness to Indian Kitchens year after year. The noteworthy sugar mills around the region are in Nanglamal, Kinauni, Mohiuddinpur, Mawana, Sakauti and Daurala. With neighbouring city Bijnore having two of India's top five sugar producing mills, the Western UP sugar belt has been called the 'Sugar Bowl of India', for good reasons.





Tejinder Khurana enjoying a strumming session with Harnet & wife Neeti

"I never emulated anyone; rather I wanted to create a template that others would follow"

"But at the hindsight, strictness has made me disciplined in life. I was selected as the most disciplined student in school and what made me proud was that my father gave me the award," Harnet is pursuing his graduation in business administration.

Mr. Khurana's wife Neeti Khurana is an enthusiast Botanist and has received numerous awards for her work on flowers and gardening. She vividly remembers, "I still remember the inaugural day of the school. Tejinderji was so excited. Fourteen years have passed and today also, he has that same passion in his eyes towards KLI."

When not working, Mr. Khurana likes to hook up with old songs of Lata, Rafi and Kishore. He never misses out on opportunities to spend time with his family. Painting is one passion he had to let go for want of time. Ask them about their future plans and they are unanimous in putting KLI as the top school in not only the region but also in the country.



Tejinder Khurana with sons Manmeet & Harnet





Scissors Manufacturing Unit

The three centuries old tradition of scissors manufacturing has put Meerut at on an enviable pedestal of Asia's largest scissors manufacturing city with scissors from the city being exported largely to Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. The manufacturing of scissors in the city goes back 360 years. At present, nearly 75 active units are manufacturing scissors in the city with annual turnover of more than 30 crore.

MEERUT AT A GLANCE



Sugar Mill



Armoury equipment manufacturing is a thriving industry in Meerut. The weapons and armour of Russell Crowe in *Gladiator* and Gerard Butler in *300* came from here, making a growing number of Hollywood producers source ancient arms, ammunition, attire, furniture, books, leather goods and household items from Meerut. Going with the scale at which period films, serials and documentaries are being made around in India and abroad, Meerut has its hands full. One of the biggest challenges for the industry, however, is the shortage of skilled workers.



Men at Work: Armoury Manufacturing

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology, with its inception on Oct 2, 2000, stands on an enviable pedestal. The university has to its credit, the unique honour of being first Indian agriculture university of the third millennium. Much to the benefit of this agro-rich region, the university today has brought paradigm shift in agricultural research and optimum utilization of technology, helping the local farmers in adopting best practices and agricultural scientists in conducting researches. Situated in Modipuram, Meerut, the university attracts students not only from the adjoining rich agricultural belt, but students from all corners of the country.



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture

If India is the epicenter of world cricket, it is the city of Meerut that is singularly responsible for feeding the ever rising demand of the game through its mammoth cricket goods manufacturing industry. Not only cricket, but Meerut is synonymous with international quality sports goods. Be it international sports festivals such as Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games or Hollywood Movie projects, the factories across Meerut are churning out equipment that not only brings sports legends to historic city, but also puts Meerut in the center of world sports map.



Team Work: Cricket Equipment Manufacturing



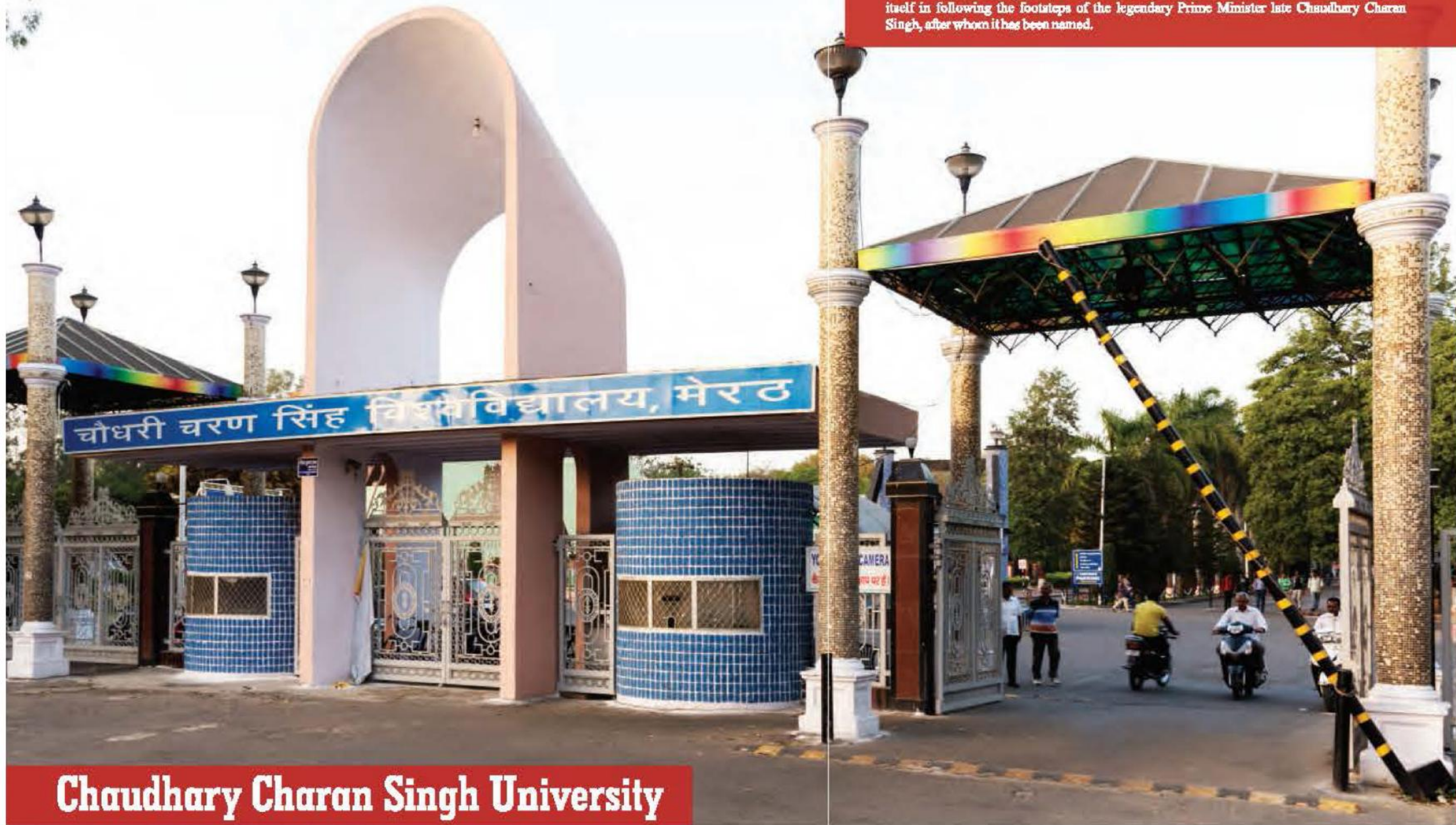
The Torchbearers of Indian Values

The sense of bewilderment engulfs us, as we walk down the pastures of The Adhyayan School, and we ask ourselves, "Is it really a school?" The grandiose and most contemporary architecture of the school towers over the tranquil surroundings but as we step in to the building we realize there is more to it than what meets the eye. Contrary to our perception, the school comes out as an embodiment of Indian values, culture and tradition.

As we are greeted we find one virtue that binds everyone we meet here - humility. "The school is born out of the vision of our grandfather Shri Ram Niwas Ji, who wanted to provide quality education to children with the latest of technological innovation yet keeping them rooted in the true Indian ideals," shares the young 23 year old entrepreneur and the grandson of the family patriarch Ram Niwas, Priyanshu Agarwal.

"If you won't learn to lose, you will never win the final race"

This institution is the pride of the city and makes Meerut the capital of education in Western UP. Formerly known as Meerut University, CCS University established in 1965, today is counted as India's premier institution for higher education. The beautiful campus sprawls over 222 acres of land with country's best educationists as the faculty members. The university offers 22 UGC sponsored, 35 self-financed courses at the campus, with another 252 professional colleges/institutions and 109 colleges affiliated to it. The university prides itself in following the footsteps of the legendary Prime Minister late Chaudhary Charan Singh, after whom it has been named.



Chaudhary Charan Singh University



Ram Niwas: confident and optimistic



Ladders of learning: Students in Chemistry lab

“What's money, if you can't give it back to the society?”

think this infinite love of his becomes his weakness as well,” adds Mr. Priyanshu.

You can sense the pride in his voice when Mr Ram Niwas talks about his son and grandsons. “I am proud of them and when I look how calm and composed Priyanshu is, I feel extremely satisfied. The idea of starting a school was propounded by Priyanshu, when he was just 18.” He shares. Priyanshu explains where it came from, and why. “I always used to ask too many questions as a student and I think my teachers used to dislike me for that inquisitiveness. I had decided that I will create an environment where students are given the space to be themselves. As a society I think we are more inclined towards finding problems but not solutions.”

RAM NIWAS

Founder

The Adhyayan School





Ram Niwas in a jovial tele-e-tete with grandsons Priyanshu and Ishan

"The Adhyayan School aims to create aware and informed citizens who will bring a paradigm shift in the society through wisdom and intellect." One can't help but admire the clarity of vision of the young entrepreneur.

The Adhyayan School, started with 652 students in the year 2013, today has more than 1700 students availing holistic education in its premises. The school is known in the city for its path breaking events. There is hardly any month when the school is not in news and the events are not only focused on their students but they have a far reaching social context. The positive school environment at The Adhyayan School

enhances motivation, increases educational aspirations and improves attendance and retention. Sanjay explains the philosophy of the institution. "We work on four critical components to maintain an outstanding school climate: caring, safety and structure, academic rigor and support, and participation. All our efforts aim to evolve our students into better professionals and even better human beings. The Adhyayan School aims at enriching the lives of its students, their families and community through dedication to principles of learning, discipline, service and education with values."

"Never have expectations and you will never be disheartened"



Priyanshu taking tour of the campus



Ram Niwas in an official meeting with the school staff



Students attending computer class

As we meet the three generations of the Agarwal family, we see amazing similarities and we know from where the school gets its soul.

Mr. Ram Niwas looks suave and the way he has dressed up shows that he is a man of fine taste and humility. His journey is nothing less than an inspiration. "I came to Meerut with just Rs. 100, leaving everything behind in Hapur (where he was born) in 1977; though I started with a small unit, I had worked hard enough to set up a petrol pump in Meerut in 1980, and in Ghaziabad by 1990. Even today, I go every day to my Ghaziabad office," he asserts. "Never have over expectations and you will never be disappointed. There is no elevator to success, you have to climb each step at a time; success lies in your mind" he muses.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, son of Mr Ram Niwas, and Director, The Adhyayan School, who is a renowned name in the city, leading several cultural societies, on the board of many business consortiums and was also once member of

Indian Censor Board, also open up. "Traditionally our family has been into petro-chemical business by the name of M/s Rati Ram Khur Chand. We have four petrol pumps and have ventured into petroleum exploration as well. School is our humble way of giving back to society and will never be a business interest for us. We look forward to the day when we can provide free education to everyone who is financially underprivileged." Sanjay always has a smile on his face and manages all his engagements in business and social work with aplomb. Even as we talk, he has to leave for a social commitment. "I think it is the blessings of my elders and love of everyone that has brought us to the pedestals on we stand today and what kind of love is that, which is not shared. I in my own humble way try to give back to the people around me, whenever I can," asserts Sanjay with a genial smile.

"If you ask me, his compassion for everyone is his strength. His family is not only us, but his colleagues, staff and even ordinary workers, of which he takes care of, and sometimes I



A basketball session in the school



Ram Niwas with Principal Sharmila Basu Roy & others

While Sanjay's daughter Divya Agrawal is happily married in a renowned Delhi family, all eyes are now set on getting Priyanshu married. "We would like him to get married as soon as possible; obviously final decision will be his. But I am sure in a year or two, I look forward to see him tying the knot," says Priyanshu's mother Mrs. Priya Agarwal with a dotting smile.

When asked about the future plans, the modest young entrepreneur says, "I think we have just begun. I don't see business as my only true calling. I think beyond that and want to utilize my time to do much more than running business. But since you asked, right now I am reading a lot about how chemicals have entered into our lives, so perhaps investing in herbal and natural products would be my next venture."



Rani Niwas and family: Ishaan, Priya, Sanjay, Divya, Shashi & Priyanshu (Left to Right)



An amazing view of the Adhyan Public School campus



Keep it Simple and Success will Follow

It is a Sunday afternoon; usually the busiest period at Raghurandan Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. The glistening showroom is filled with customers as we are greeted by the affable Mr. Rakesh Agarwal, Director, Raghurandan Jewellers, we can see he is busy attending to a peppy customer. Watching Mr. Agarwal at work is like a live classroom session for young entrepreneurs. The way he attends to each customer with a genteel smile, while keeping a hawk eye view on the frenzied activities around him effortlessly, is worth imbibing. No wonder the proud alumnus of prestigious HBTI Kanpur, Mr. Rakesh Agarwal is a much respected name in the business echelons of Meerut city. Today Raghurandan Jewellers has four plush showrooms in the city and Delhi NCR. The group also has left indelible imprints on educational map of the region with him helming BIT Institutions (Bharat Institute of Technology), BIT Global School and Indian Film and Television Institute.

“Our brand in itself is a hallmark of quality for our customers”



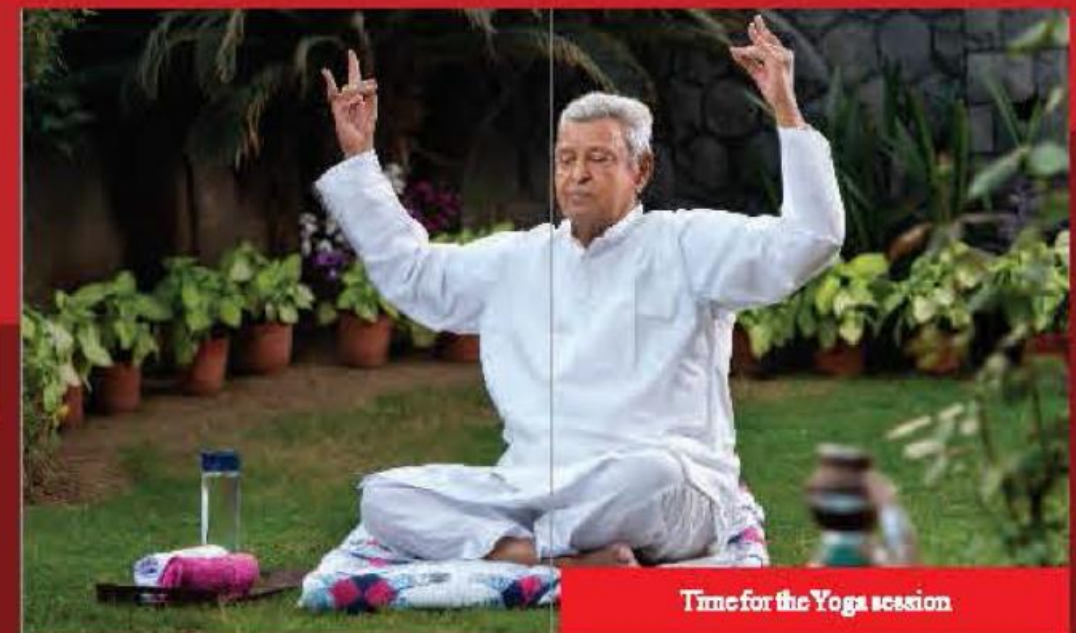
Ram Niwas serving fried rice to his wife and Granddaughter

"Priyanshu is extremely self-critical and always works on improving himself"

"Our endeavour is to set lofty benchmarks when it comes to education with Indian values." He adds.

We are now joined by the youngest member of the family Ishaan Agarwal, who is studying in 12th, and is planning to go to US for further studies. He has special praise for his elder brother Priyanshu. "He is extremely self-critical and always works to improve himself. Whenever I am down he backs me up by saying you will have to lose at times to win the final race eventually."

The family lives by the rule of contentment and shared happiness. Their simplicity is worth admiring.



Time for the Yoga session



Rakesh Agarwal at Abu Lane, Meerut showroom

Although the business was started by his father Late Shri Raghunandan Prasad Ji. The heights it has reached is undoubtedly credited to Mr. Agarwal, who took the reins of the business in 1974 post his B. Tech. "While I was pursuing engineering, I knew I will have to join family business only, as the family was going through a crisis. It was daunting and a tough phase and somebody had to stand up and take the responsibility. I was confident I will steer it through," shares Mr. Rakesh Agarwal. Right from the first day, he was focused on what needs to be done. "The firm was doing business in more of a traditional way as in case with most establishments in the old Saraffi Bazar (where the showroom still functions). I could

foresee that soon these ways will be obsolete. I was sure that if we need to grow, we must modernize our operations and management. The name Raghunandan Jewellers is synonymous with purity of product. Hallmark for gold has recent origins; prior to that our brand name was a hallmark in itself for the customers! So it was imperative that we maintain these high standards as well," he adds confidently.

Like any successful man, Mr. Agarwal credits his success to the rock-solid support of his wife Mrs. Mala Agarwal, Director, Raghunandan Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. whom he married in 1979. "Her contribution is 100 per cent in my success, throughout my journey."



Striking interiors of the New Delhi showroom



Rakesh and Tammy in Abulane showroom

RAKESH AGARWAL

Director

Raghunandan Jewellers





Miles to go: Rakesh Agarwal




Rakesh in a tête-à-tête with the IFTI students

“If you give best quality and earn goodwill among your customers, that is the key to success”

On knowing the reason he said- ‘There are more than 250 jewellers in the city, why do you think we come only to you?’ And then went on to reply- ‘Goodwill! If you deliver the best and have goodwill, why will students go anywhere else?’ This gave me immense confidence,” shares Mr. Agarwal.

Mr. Rakesh Agarwal did not stop at BII, he also came up with his passionate project- IFTI (Indian Film and Television Institute) in 2009. “I realized the lack of quality training institute for creative arts in the region, hence I started IFTI. And I am backing it up with conviction,” he says.





"Any customer who interacts with him, speaks highly of his temperament. I am just here now to support his endeavors," smiles Mr. Agarwal, who is fond of classic old music of Rafi and Mukesh and unwinds with it. "If not music, we like to indulge in few card games," says Mrs. Agarwal. In spite of busy schedules the family makes sure that once a year they all go out for a holiday. Last destination they visited was Sri Lanka.

Looking back, anything left to achieve or any regrets? "Contentment is the key to success. I don't like to overanalyze success or failure. If you ask me I feel whatever I have achieved is all God's grace and my father's blessings, whose presence I feel all around me," an emotional Mr. Agarwal asserts, as we sign off, Mrs. Agarwal quickly adds- "In future I want him to write his autobiography." Amen.

Rakesh, Male with Shikha and Tennay



Students of Indian Film and Television Institute (IFTI) in an enactment

"She stood beside me in toughest of times, and has been involved in the business actively, especially since the inception of our second showroom." Mrs. Mala joins us and modestly returns the compliment. "It is all his effort; he is 24*7 thinking of business. I have never seen a more hard working man than him," she says. When we ask for any chinks in Mr. Agarwal's armour, she says he is extremely emotional and people misuse it; to which Mr. Agarwal replies- "There might have been instances where people might have played with my emotions, but if I look back, I have earned a lot of loyal customers and lifelong friendships also, because of it."

Raghunandan Jewellers expansion in Delhi NCR, according to Mr. Agarwal, was extremely well thought of and a calculated move. "We already had a strong clientele in Ghaziabad. For any new venture if there is an established customer base, it does half the job. Opening a showroom in Noida in 2011 was a natural extension, as it is close to both Ghaziabad and Delhi. Further, in 2013, we opened another

showroom in Pitampura, Delhi." He takes great pride in the fact that all his showrooms are in partnerships with his brothers. "I am a firm believer in the concept of joint family businesses."

"In business, there are times when you might see a slump, and if you have more than one establishment, all in partnership with your family members, then the other establishments can support you in the scenario of crisis."

The extension wasn't limited to jewellery business. Mr. Agarwal decided to spread his wings in education sector as well, with Bharat Institute of Technology (along with partners). He shares an interesting anecdote. "When we were planning BIT, one of our family friends too was coming up with an institution in Muzaffarnagar. So much so that he had deposited the security amount with AICTE, but he decided not to go ahead. I must confess I was a little scared for he had deeper pockets and experience than me. One day a customer observed I am worried.



Campuses of IFTI and BIT Global School



Rakesh and Tammy in business discussions



The Art of Living Together

It is way past 11 at night and the kids are running all around the house, the young ones are playing with their grandfather. The exuberance in the air is palpable. In those days, when families disintegrate on pretext of issues, a family sitting together, living together happily under one roof is a stuff of fairy tales. But not for the Jain family, owner of Jaina Jewellers, which poses a perfect example of an ideal joint family. As the family comes together for a photo, the beaming smile on everyone's face and their solidarity gives you goose bumps. "This is our everyday routine, none of the kids goes to bed till he has spent time with us, and you instantly forget about work or stress. What else you work for but contentment & happiness," says Mr. Naveen Jain, Chairman, Jaina Jewellers and head of the family. He is an extremely religious man who hardly misses office, and also is the head of Jain Housing Board Society taking care of six establishments under it.

"The customer is your best teacher"



Aditya, Iti, Rakesh, Mala (with granddaughter), Shikha and Tanmay

"Contentment is the hallmark of a happy family"

IFTI is under his sole ownership and it inspired the opening of BIT Global School, which according to Agarwal family is their most cherished venture. "The school gives us immense satisfaction. In the initial year we had 400 students; today in just three years we have more than 650. The fact that students talk highly of the school and are increasing with each year, is in itself commendable," says Mrs. Mala Agarwal. Is the approach towards both businesses different? "Not at all, if you give the best quality and earn goodwill among your customers, that is the key to success for any business venture," adds Mr. Agarwal.

Now with his son Tanmay Agarwal taking the business forward and daughter Iti Agarwal happily married, Mr. Rakesh Agarwal is in zen state of mind. "My son Tanmay is an extremely soft and humble man."



Rakesh and Mala with their granddaughter



“You compromise on purity and you are compromising with your reputation”

“Customer is our best teacher, although these days they are too demanding, but if you catch their pulse and can give them what they want, they will come back to you. We take pride in the fact that none can match the designing prowess of Jaina Jewellers,” Vardiman Jain, Director and youngest sibling, says with a confident smile.

But does giving the best proves to be difficult while maintaining the high standards of purity (group's philosophy)?

NAVEEN JAIN

Chairman

ATUL JAIN

Managing Director

Jaina Jewellers





"It does. If we stop doing it, perhaps we can earn much more than what we do, but once you lose integrity, the very soul of Jaina Jewellers will be compromised. Quality comes at a price. No doubt you can lose some customers in the process, but then you will earn lifelong patrons who value your ethics," answers Mr. Naveen Jain.

We ask the stalwarts of gold business in Meerut city, Naveen Jain and Atul Jain about their plans of retirement. "We are enjoying life post retirement right now," smiles Naveen as he goes on, "I go to office just to oversee things, rest I like to spend time

with my family and grandkids. I like old movies so whenever I get time I try to catch them on TV." Atul Jain from last many years had dedicated his life to research and practice of Ayurvedic medicines. "I have been studying about Ayurvedic medicines and I provide free consultations and medicines to people at camps. I really feel that the science is deep and impactful and one life time is not enough to master all of it."

The third generation of Jain family too is following the high ideals and standards already set by their elders.

"We are not a family of 20 people; our family is of 1200 group members who are working towards a common goal"



Smiles galore: Keeping customers happy and content is the mantra at Jaina Jewellers

The foundation of Jaina Jewellers was laid around 90 years back (though Jaina Jewellers was established in 1979) on the strong principles of honesty and transparency. "Our father taught us if you sell anything, be prepared to refund the money to the customer if he is not satisfied. Never compromise on purity of your product for if you will, you are compromising with your reputation. We have worked round the clock, traveled non-stop across the country to reach where we are but never have we budged from that lesson to this date," summarizes Mr. Atal Jain, MD. He further adds, "When the Gold Act of 1968 came into being, you could sell 14 carat gold rather than 24 but my grandfather refused, so much so that he asked to shut down the business but did not compromise on quality. While we tried to convince him, he first stopped eating saying it is coming from unethical means and later left the house, eventually he took Samadhi. These values and commitment to purity is what separates us from the rest. Today people from all around the country come to us only for the quest of purity, which is the soul of our business."

Today Jaina Jewellers have two state of the art showrooms of which now the sons have taken over the reins- Rohit & Ankur (Sons of Mr. Navon Jain) and Varun & Verdman

(Sons of Mr. Atal Jain). When we asked what magic binds everyone, put came the reply from Mr. Rohit Jain, Director, who joined the business at the age of 14. "Our unflinching love for each other! Yes there are compromises, yes there are adjustments but never have we reached a decision until each and every member of the family is in agreement. Let me also add that we are not a family of only 20 members, we are a family of 1200 individuals (Jaina Jewellers team & their families) working towards a common goal. This in itself is a motivation to work hard every day, for you are aware one misstep would affect so many who look up to you." He further adds, "Right from the childhood we were groomed for the business, though I joined business because my uncle was sick in 1986 but I was determined to get it organized, which I then felt, was missing. Having said that, education was never compromised, each one of us had to study hard, and in extra hours, learn the nuances of the business."

In this ferociously competitive market and unforgiving troubled periods such as demonetization, the Jain family takes pride in being prepared and thinking ahead of times. "You have to think beyond the present and keep in tune with changing trends," says Rohit.



Jain brothers managing a client



Navon and Atal enquiring about a product



Atal, Navon and others in a conversation

"There are still further heights to reach; miles to go before I sleep!"

Will they be motivated to join the business? "It is hard to predict. Like I said, we lay extra stress on education, hence each kid is extremely focused about studies. Times have changed and I think eventually these kids will take their own call," answers Mr. Rohit, whose daughter Sanchi Jain is currently in DU and has achieved VISHARAD Degree in Bharat Natyarn from Gandharva Mahavidyala, Mumbai.

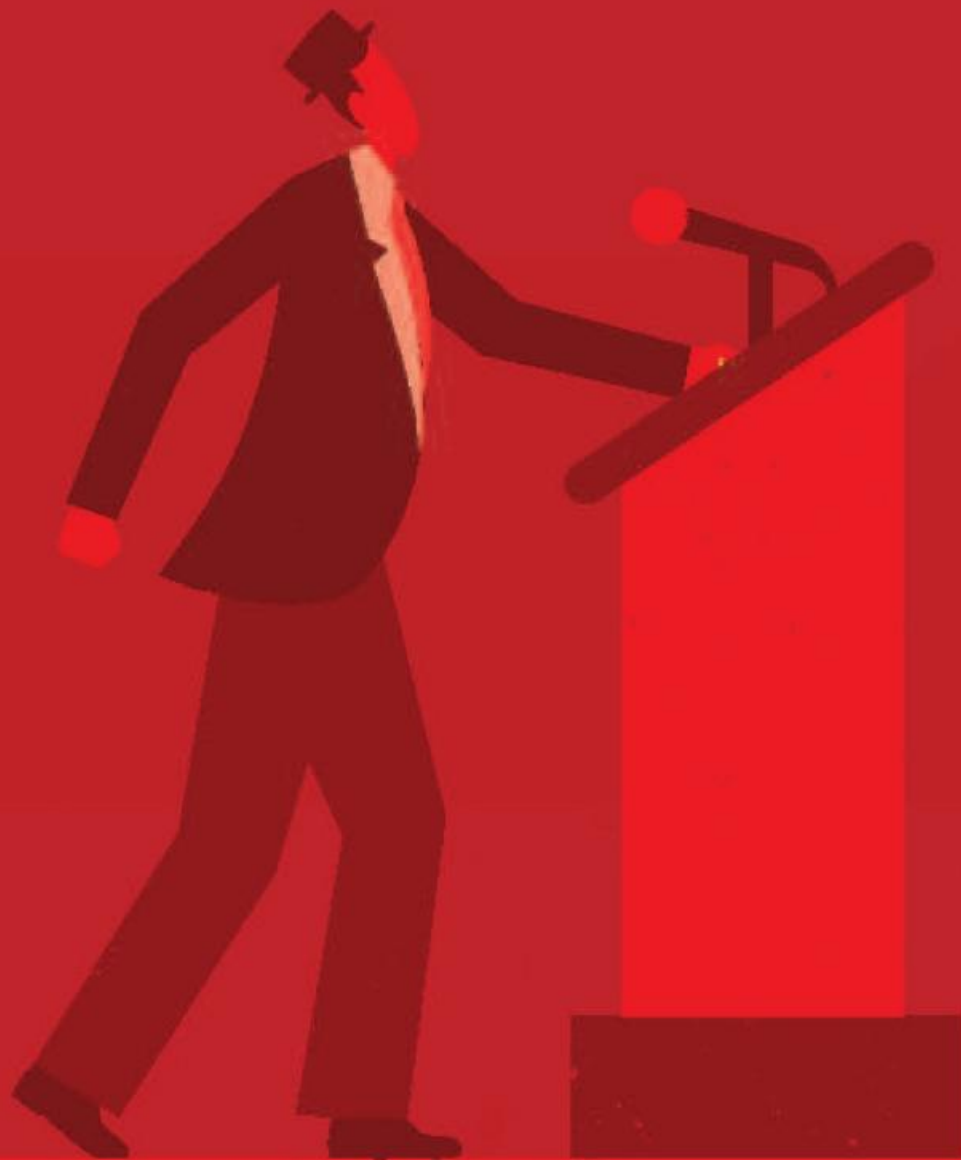
Is there anything left to achieve, we ask. "Honestly, we still are not where we would have wanted to be, there is still a lot to accomplish and further heights to reach," affirms Mr. Atul Jain. Indeed, 'miles to go before I sleep'!



Atul & Navveen with grandchildren Sanchi, Atishay, Vansh, Ojas, Vardan, Riddhi, Samay and Khyati



Memorizing interiors of the Jaisa Jewellers showroom



Expressway to Delicacies

Getting into the business of food is notoriously tough. The merciless competition, exorbitant running expenses, constant innovation and establishing a loyal clientele make it a venture not meant for faint hearted. Despite all the odds, one man Mr. Vijay Garg, Director, SF Express is determined to stamp his authority in the restaurant business, believe it or not, that too with his strictly 'Pure Veg' fast food chain. It might sound audacious but once you meet the man, his assiduousness and the fact that he already has two successful SF Express outlets in Meerut with another two shortly opening up in Delhi NCR, four in western UP and a well carved out plan of reaching 50 outlets in two to three years, you know that the man means serious business. "Eating is a necessity and to make someone eat your food is an art. We at SF Express take pride in knowing the pulse of our customers well," says Mr. Vijay Garg.

"Eating is a necessity and to make someone eat your food is an art"



All in the family: The Jains



“My father always said, there is nothing in this world that one can't do”

The fact that every member of SF Express has a sense of ownership for the brand, comes from the libertarian way of Vijay Garg. “I believe in designating responsibilities and backing it up with trust on my each employee. Even the lowest rank employee can walk up to me and give a suggestion and it has happened where I have heard their suggestions and actually implemented them.” He is right. The staff of the SF Express vouch for their leader in his pursuit for perfection. “Director Sahab doesn't tolerate casualness. Each one of us has been trained and told to serve our guests in the most endearing way.”

VIJAY GARG

Director

SF Express





Vijay with his officials

"Our personal problems and anxieties should never hinder the quality of service. We try to be as helpful and friendly to the guests as we can. This is what we do daily-serve with verve." One of the officials beams with conviction. GTC's restaurants are being liked a lot by the people; the fact gives an authentic high to his brands. But what is his fulfillment? "Their satisfaction is my fulfillment!" He quips!

The complete family man rarely gets time out of his grilling schedule. With his two daughters Kritika and Radhika Garg studying in Dehradun, his youngest son Shivansh is studying in their own school AHPS,

that also has a play school (Bachpan), in the same premise, both being run by his wife Mrs. Shikha Garg.

He surely has come a long way. At any point of time during the journey, did he ever doubt himself? "Before taking my first step, I think of all the positives and negatives of the track I am treading on. Yes there are glitches but you keep on walking. If something is beyond repair, I put a stop. I can say i am not attached to any of my business or property, I am attached to those business interests that are on right track."

"Dreams are not meant for night; dreams are those that you live during day time"



SF Express and Sagar Ratna at the Food Court of Superstar Mall, Meerut



Kids' section at SF Express

Although the flagship company, Garg Trading Company dabbles into varied business interests from food franchises to distributorship of cables and wires, from education to petro-chemical businesses, but SF Express is the complete brainchild of Mr. Vijay Garg, right from conceptualization to its execution. He shares his journey with alacrity. "My father Late Shri Shyam Sunder Garg was a government servant, but I always wanted to get into business, I told my father that whatever you will invest in my engineering, I would make more than that in four years of my own business. My father backed my ambitions unconditionally and he always said- 'there is nothing in this world that one can't do'. He adds, "Hence I started off with the dealership of Hindustan Levers in 1992; later, I established a refinery in Gujratia, started my own tea packaging business, and set up a petrol station. Initial eight to ten years were really tough. I barely made money but my father's strong support and his belief in me kept me going. The idea to design my own food chain model came after I took Sagar Rains's franchisee."

Mr. Garg is confident of his model. What other thought would prove to be a weakness, he thinks has been the USP of SF Express. "It is a fallacy that only non-veg food drives a successful restaurant. Rather, I think the vegetarians avoid

going to them, so why not come up with a fast food chain format that caters to pure vegetarians? There is a huge gap in Indian food led chain format; SF Express will fill that. Also let me add the name SF comes from Devi Shaktumbbasi, so non-veg was always a nonstarter." The expansion model is also unique where the stress is on partnership than the traditional franchisee models. "We won't just give the name but involve ourselves completely in the running of the franchisee on day to day basis," says Mr. Garg.

With plethora of options available, dedicated food applications on smart phones and instant reviews that go viral on internet, customer loyalties are unpredictable and ever changing. How does the group plan to tackle it? "There has to be a synergy of taste and pricing. Hence selection of right team was imperative. We have experienced and renowned team of chefs. We visited lot of restaurants and food chains to learn and compare and then we worked towards creating a menu that not only boasts of unique and delicious food, but also is available at prices that won't dig a hole in your pocket. I personally use to visit every customer taking live feedbacks and constantly work for betterment," asserts Mr. Vijay Garg.



Sitting area of SF Express



Vijay Garg having a conversation with his staff



Push interiors of Sagar Rains

"Don't think what you have to take from others, but what you have to give others"

While his confidence and trust on people, he thinks, is his strength, being overcautious at time, he considers is his weakness. "It might sound clichéd but it is a reality. Dreams are not meant for night; dreams are those that you live during daytime. I am not setting out with a set target but I am confident to take SF Express brand not only to each and every corner of our country but make it a worldwide success."

He signs off on a philosophical note. "I don't seek anything material for me. I only seek peace and happiness for my family and people who are associated with me in any way. I always believe that when you wake up in the morning don't think what you have to take from others but what you have to give them."



Shikha in joyful mood with the children



Vijay Garg with his proud staff!



Vijay with wife Shikha, mother Vimla garg, daughters Kritika & Radhika and son Shivansh

