

HARMONY

Connecting the IAS Community

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Withering of the IAS?

While most of us will shudder even to think of leaving the comforts and protective walls of the IAS, Rajiv Sinha (1976) quitting the premier service to enter the corporate world is thought-provoking. It was not purely the lure of lucre that tempted him to take voluntary retirement and join the private sector. He was guided more by the dictates his mind to take up a calling beyond the routine than by the allurements in the form of many creature comforts available in a profit-making company. More precisely, it was the uncontrollable urge that had welled in him over the years that compelled him to take the crucial decision so that he would give vent to his professional core competence, much to the dismay and annoyance of his better half, who had always dreamt of remaining wedded to the service. That brings us to a question some may ask: Does this mark the beginning of an exodus?

Editorially yours

Hailed to be an outstanding officer, Rajiv is sure to earn success, good name and reputation in his new venture. He may have shown a path for others to follow. But a closer scrutiny will show that many would not actually take a similar plunge. For, Rajiv's case is unique. He had long worked systematically and assiduously towards acquisition of a specialization, unthinkable for an IAS officer. His professional qualification in the shipping sector, coupled with long experience in the same line made him a strong force to reckon with. With such devastating combination, he soon became a formidable candidate for the area that was hungry for professionals and administrative skills. Many others, who have not seen beyond the IAS and never looked for career opportunities in the vast outside world, will stay on. We thank them because the Government too must run efficiently. ■

Rameshchandra Kanade

Premkumar passes on his bat to DK Sankaran

Chief Secretary RM Premkumar (1968), on completion of his second extension of three months, hung up his boots on February 28 after putting in about 38 years of outstanding service. Secretary (Border Management), Government of India, DK Sankaran (1970) took over from Mr Premkumar as the new Chief Secretary on the same day. We wish the outgoing CS RM Premkumar and his family a healthy and happy retirement life. We also wish Mr DK Sankaran every success and a memorable tenure as the new CS. ■

Who's gone where?

■ JS Saharia (1978): Principal Secretary (Water Conservation & EGS). ■ Rameshchandra Kanade (1978): Principal Secretary (GAD) & Chief Protocol Officer. ■ Mukesh Khullar (1985): Secretary (Agriculture). **Contd on P 8**



By VS GOPALAKRISHNAN

"I've 8000 staff under me! I spend my whole office time in the year writing their Annual Confidential Reports" ■

[Our inimitable cartoonist VS Gopalakrishnan (1962), former Director General World Trade Centre, Mumbai, can be contacted on: 022-24936429; vsgopal2000@yahoo.com]. ■

Geese Flying in the Sky

Why do geese fly in a 'V' formation? The scientific explanation for this reveals that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 per cent greater flying range than if each bird flew its own.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go through it alone, and quickly gets back into the formation to take advantage of the power of the flock.

When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose takes over.

The geese honk from behind, to encourage those up front to keep their speed.

When a goose gets sick or is wounded by a gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of the formation and follow the injured one down, to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly or until he is dead, and then they launch out with another formation to catch up with their group.

People, who are part of a team and share a common direction, get where they are going, quicker and easier, because they travel on the trust of one another.

If we have as much sense as goose, we should share information with those who are headed the same way that we are going.

It pays to share leadership and take turns, doing the hard jobs. Words of support and inspiration help energise those on our frontline, helping them to keep pace in spite of the day-to-day pressures and fatigue.

The message for us is that we should stand by each other when things get rough. So, the next time you see a formation of geese, remember that it is a reward, a challenge and privilege to be contributing as a member of a team!

■ (Source unknown)

Functions to remember

THEY were no ordinary functions that were specially organized recently. The first was held on the eve of February 28 to bid farewell to retiring Chief Secretary Premkumar and former Principal Secretary Rajiv Sinha who took voluntary retirement to join the corporate. It was also an occasion to welcome new Chief Secretary DK Sankaran. The committee room on the sixth floor of Mantralaya was flooded with officers who had come not only from Mantralaya but from offices in Mumbai and around.



The second took place at the Government Rest House *Sahyadri* in the evening of 10 March 2006. It was a virtual get-together of the IAS officers in the State. A farewell to the Premkumars and welcome to the Sankarans provided the long-awaited opportunity. The response was so overwhelming that the organizers had to put up a 'House Full' board outside the Rest House.

The first function witnessed speeches by Association Hon General Secretary Satish Tripathi, Treasurer Govind Swarup, Principal Secretary (GAD) SS Dodd, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) AP Sinha, Sales Tax Commissioner BC Khatua, CIDCO MD Ashok Sinha, BMC Commissioner Johny Joseph, Principal Secretary (Revenue) SS Hussain, and Additional Chief Secretary (Personnel) Navin Kumar. They all eulogised Mr Premkumar and extolled his qualities of head and heart and thanked him for his leadership. They complimented Mr Rajiv Sinha and welcomed Mr Sankaran assuring him of full cooperation.

Mr Hussain, expressed his feelings through Urdu couplets: *Yeh jo zindagi ki kitaab hain, yeh keetab bhee kya kitaab hai / Kahin ek haseen sa khwab hain, kahi jaan leva ajaab hai / Kahin kho diya kahin pa liya, kahin ro liya kahin ga liya / Kabhi chhen leti hain hur khushi, kahin meherban behisaab hain.*

Viraan hain maikaba, khushra vo sagar udas hain / tum kya gaye ke ruth gaye din baharke.

Mr Navin Kumar gave an extra touch and regaled the audience with his speech full of mirth and humour. Welcoming Mr Sankaran he said: Dispel that we are going to protest. As for myself I have decided to look less senior, and for that, for the first time, I visited a barber shop to dye my hair well and have no white patches at all. Another thing I did was to go to an optician and buy this trendy spectacle with a blue tinge.

Thirdly, I started using the 'wet set' lotion, which if you apply will attracts at least three girls to you and kiss you. Well though no girl has done that to me so far, I think I look less senior that Mr



Sankaran. So *Sankaran aage badho, Hum tumhare saath hain!*

Mr Sinha said he had left the service with complete happiness and that there was no frustration. "I thought I could serve in the area of my specialization. Therefore I decided to call it a day", he said. Talking about the IAS he said, "No service can match the IAS in its competency and strength. In the IAS we do not acquire good domain knowledge and systematic methods. In the private sector important matters get priority and time limit, objectives are set and strategies are devised. As a group we are very effective though individuals may not be. I learnt



a lot from my bosses Anil Gokak, AP Sinha, PV Nayak, and DM Sukthankar. Mr Gokak never said: Do this or don't do that. He would never dictate. Mr Sukthankar taught me to trust people unless they prove otherwise. PV Nayak was a perfectionist. It is not difficult to work in the private sector. It respects the IAS. Though I am not in the IAS today, I continue to be a part of you all."

The get-together at *Sahyadri* will long remain in memory of those who could attend it. Apart from officers in Mumbai there were all CEOs of Zilla Parishads and many Collectors who brought a larger meaning and sense to the function. The cultural function saw huge singing talent of Additional Municipal Commissioner Manu Kumar Srivastava and Maya Bhalerao, daughter of former civil servant PR Bhalerao.

The biggest surprise item came from the Navin Kumars who danced expertly to the tune of an old number from film *Albela*. His harmonica playing was simply superb.

Mr Premkumar spoke, and while he spoke all others listened with rapt attention, fully mesmerized by the effortless flow of most apt words. Such diction to clothe good thoughts is something only a few like Mr Premkumar can have. And that's not possible without tons of love in your heart when words come gushing out to give expression to deeper thoughts.

Mr Sankaran spoke equally effectively. He said he would have an open door policy. His speech, short and sweet, brought to all the much needed relief, reassurance, and confidence.

Then came the grand finale. The food was delicious and delectable, and therefore nobody minded shelling out money for it. The annual membership came as a bonus to the Association. ■ (Rameshchandra Kanade)

Whenever there is 'selection' to the post of chief secretary it is preceded by wildest speculation. This time was no exception, even as the mantle finally fell on the broad shoulders of DR DESAMANGALAM KRISHNAN SANKARAN (970).

But perhaps, the die was cast about a decade ago when Mr Sankaran proved his mettle by successfully organizing the first ever campaign to provide voters' photo identity cards and by conducting the most peaceful and fair elections as the State's Chief Electoral Officer, under the leadership of very exacting, tough, much dreaded, but highly

Constables, Ward Officers, and others directly coming in contact with people have a bigger responsibility. It will be my endeavour to enthuse them for the public good. I shall pay more attention to the grassroots administration.

RK: But then wouldn't that need a change from Mantralaya itself?

DKS: Yes. The Mantralaya needs to set an example by bringing the pendency to an absolute minimum. There is really no reason why files should remain pending here when it is the final decision-making body. I am of the opinion that most of the disposal must be done at the level of deputy secretaries and

IN THE HOT SEA

NEW CHIEF SECRETARY DK SANKARAN OPENS HIS HEART

ebullient Chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan. From then on there was no looking back for him.

But it will be churlish and preposterous to take such a simplistic view. For, Mr Sankaran was not made in a day. An MA in Economics and PhD in Political Science, he has come up a hard and long way, which is a hallmark of every civil servant who has made to the top post. Today he brings with him rich experience of Collector of Nagpur and Chandrapur, Member Secretary of MSEB, Director in the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Thane Municipal Commissioner, Principal Secretary (Revenue), Additional Secretary in the Department of Atomic Energy, and Additional Chief Secretary (Planning). He was Secretary, Border Management in Delhi before taking the hot seat here.

While it must be the cherished dream of every IAS officer to be a Chief Secretary, of late there is nothing enviable about the post, mainly because the role has got eroded. And yet there are officers like the new incumbent who do not refuse to take up the gauntlet and deem it their duty to take the bull by the horn. That's why Harmony Editor Rameshchandra Kanade decided to explore the mind of the new CS.

Here are excerpts of the engrossing discussion that ensued:

RK: How do you react to the charge of there being supersession (super-Seshan) (pun intended)?

DKS: (Laughs) It is the Government's prerogative to select a Chief Secretary. As CS I regard myself only as a leader of the team and nothing more.

RK: Will you be able to get cooperation from the ones passed over?

DKS: I don't see any problem. After all, the officers of this cadre are among the best anywhere. They believe in team work. They all have wished me well. I too look forward to working with them closely as a team. I am sure shall get full cooperation from them as we all believe in the welfare of the common man.

RK: What have you thought for the common man?

DKS: I am deeply concerned about the common man, whether in a village or town. It is the quality of service that he gets at the cutting edge which ultimately decides whether the government works or not. There is no reason why the common man should not get the best service. He pays taxes, and therefore he has the right to have good roads, clean water and hassle-free life. In that sense, our Talathis, Gramsevaks, Police

only those files which need intervention of secretaries should be marked to them. What is the point in sending files upward routinely even when no major decisions are involved or when policies have already been laid down in GRs? I agree that files will need to be marked up when the decision is required to be taken at a higher level. But if approval is sought even for obtaining a report from outside, it amounts to an unpardonable waste of precious time of all above. Secretaries including the chief secretary should be allowed to have more time to study real problems, analyse them and propose solutions which can then become government policies. Mantralaya is essentially for policy making, and therefore, I would like secretaries to take full responsibility for their departments, work professionally and follow the rules of business.

RK: But then aren't there too many meetings which take away lot of time?

DKS: Some meetings are a must. But I am not in favour of meetings if the same decision can be reached by circulating notes. Richard Cohen has described bureaucrats as those who do nothing individually and meet to decide that nothing can be done. Let's change that image. I would expect departments

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