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### GATEWAY TO DREAMS

The campus of the staff college spread across many acres, and was quite imposing. The atmosphere was quite awe-inspiring and in total 'agreement' with the status of the bank. The campus was picturesque, as it stood elegantly with tall pine trees all around. The weather was very pleasant compared to the teeth-chattering chill that my native place was experiencing. People had landed from all over India, from all walks of life – men and women, MBAs & CAs, Engineers & Ph.Ds, Ranji Trophy winners & State Hockey players. *Grown-up yet not so grown-up*, . . . And of course, all were vibrant, bubbling with energy and expectation.

'Hello! I am Jajjo, chief public relations officer. A very-very hearty welcome to all of you to PBI and the Staff College,' a six-feet plus, well built man with a French-cut beard and a British accent, wearing a huge smile on his face, welcomed

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lobby by a stocky fellow who introduced himself in a very gruff voice, 'I am Ramaniah, hostel superintendent. If you have any problems, please get in touch with me.' He had a totally impersonal and blank look – it was the most 'unwelcoming' welcome that we received after the enthusiastic welcome by Jajjo. What an anticlimax it was! I wondered which was the real face of the bank – was it that of Jajjo or Ramaniah? At that time I thought, perhaps both. (Of course, now it could be said that the real face of bank was mostly that of Ramaniah and just a minuscule fraction that of Jajjo.)

On reaching our rooms, we were immediately served with morning-tea as it was already half-past-seven in the morning



us in the reception lounge of the college. Every inch of him looked so well groomed, chiselled and charming that it would have left anyone mesmerised and wonderstruck for a moment. 'If you have any problems or you want anything in Hyderabad, just remember me. I am always there at your disposal,' he said; after a little pause, winking an eye with a bit of naughtiness, he continued, 'Anyway, I will be meeting you again in the inaugural session and would tell you about the things you can do here. . . . Wish you a very-very happy stay here,' saying this he departed. I got totally stumped. Was it because of his warm welcome or because of his pleasing and impressive personality? I could not decide.

After completion of certain formalities at the reception, we were directed to the hostel rooms. The hostels were located just behind the reception lounge and had a huge quadrangle in the middle, surrounded by double-storey wings on both its sides. The wings were very well spaced, and allowed the sunlight to enter from all the sides. Wide corridors ran in front of the rooms. Certain other amenities, including a very large dining-hall and a gym-cum-relaxation lounge, were also located in the quadrangle. The hostel-block was situated at the centre of the campus. The campus spread over longitudinally and ran deep inside and had a long driveway all along the boundary wall down the campus. The administrative and academic blocks were located in front of it. The college had the capacity to run many programmes simultaneously and catered to all the apex-level training needs of not only PBI but also of its associate banks like PBT (Premier Bank of Travancore), PBP (Premier Bank of Patiala), etc. On reaching the male wing of the hostel, we were received in the



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