

A Sibling Affair



Azad Shrivastav / ADC

Nowhere near as high profile as their cousin in Matoshri, two people at the press conference held by their father, MNS leader Raj Thackeray at his residence Krishna Kunj in Shivaji Park on Tuesday were the cynosure of all eyes as they stood unobtrusively to one side, watching the proceedings. Or at least, as unobtrusive as one is allowed to be if one carries a famous surname. It helps of course, that both the youngsters are also very easy on the eye with a refreshing unawareness of the sort of effect they have on people. And as some people watched, an amusing tableau unfolded, just reminding us that these are typical collegians with typical collegian interests, mainly centered around mobile phones. And there you have it. (1) There's a bit of curiosity as Urvashi sees something going on in brother Amit's cell phone. (2) Let's have a look, she seems to say as she sidles a little closer. (3) Oh, that's funny, she seems to say as she takes the instrument over and settles her glares a little more firmly on her head. (4) Give it back, he seems to say now, except that she's determined she will return it when she's good and ready! Just two normal kids studying at Ruparel and Ruia, still with a bit of time to decide whether the cut and thrust and sheer scrum of politicking is for them. Or not!

Around the world without moving

This Saturday and Sunday, the Don Bosco Institute of Technology (DBIT) kicks off its annual online tech festival appropriately titled TekNack, with the theme 'Around the World in 48 hours', and an invitation to everyone to participate. And that's everyone, from ages 8 to 80 and grasp of the internet in between.

All you need to do is buy a Registration card, containing a Unique Identification Code, which you use to register online at www.teknack.in or do it all online under the Contact Us section of the website.

Here is, of course, a serious side to the whole thing, as the head of the Computer Science department,

Professor Imran Ali says. "TekNack is a platform for students to become smart professionals, encourages the spirit of competitiveness and accelerates learning through extra-curricular activities. It helps students foster problem solving and algorithmic thinking abilities."

The other side is pretty much fun, and this seems to be well-known, judging by the way the festival has grown since inception in 2007. "Slated to rise above the concept of a technical event, to a fun event that can be enjoyed by an audience from all age groups, and anywhere in the world", is how it is being described.

The theme for TekNack this year

– Around the World – was inspired by the designing team's dream to make TekNack an annual global phenomenon. Accordingly, every event is designed around a different country, and participants will be led on a journey around the world, as they move across events like the Virtual Stock Market (VSM), Online Treasure Hunt, Acoustica and Logo Design. Another event, Text Adventure, involves a terror scenario where a plane has been hijacked and the participant has to write his way out of his otherwise grim fate, and save all the other passengers on the ill-fated plane.

This year, registrations have come in from the USA, Canada and Australia. There are still a few days left for numbers to swell, and in the World Wide Web, a day can stretch to eternity, or be compressed into a

minute. It's all about code, after all, and 55 dedicated coders are working day and night to take TekNack to a whole new level in 2014. A dedicated server that can handle 500,000 queries a minute has been pressed into service.

And since it is a missionary organisation, can social awareness ever be far behind any initiative involving people? This year, the primary issue being targeted is Cyber Safety.

Striking back!

We came across this little piece in the January issue of the 'Span' magazine and thought it interesting enough to use. Cricket mad India might yet get a taste of American professional basketball when Mumbai-born technology

entrepreneur (is there any other kind?) Vivek Ranadive brings the Sacramento Kings to this land of the IPL via broadcast, live showcasing the team's opening home game of 2013-14. Plus there will be exhibition games when the team travels here.

Apparently, Ranadive is a majority shareholder in the Sacramento Kings and to emphasise his background perhaps, the Kings have created a Hindi language website, www.kings.com/hindi

Last summer, the Kings' dancers traveled to India and picked up Bollywood moves which they showed at one of last year's games.

Seems only fair – we give them Bollywood, they give us basketball. Now if only the Sacramento Kings don't turn out like the Blackburn Rovers.

Air conditioned local? Really

We are trying to figure it, doing our best to imagine it. Mumbai is going to have an air-conditioned local train this year. So how exactly does that work?

Will it be nine coaches, 12 coaches or 15 coaches? Will people stop getting in once the compartments are filled? Will we be able to travel on the footboard? Will we be able to lean out of the running train and jeer at the one on the neighbouring tracks, or make cat calls and obscene gestures at the women's compartments?

Will we be able to climb on the roof and do stunts? Will the air-conditioning work in peak summer conditions? Will we be able to bear the stink of the blood, sweat and tears that characterises too many local train commutes these days?

If the answer to these questions is largely yes, there is a chance it will work. Currently, with trains of capacity 1,700 passengers carrying upwards of 5,000 people at crush load capacity, we think not. So it's a nice dream, and if the air-conditioned local is introduced at any point this year, we will stand on the platform and admire it as it goes past.

We're willing to bet it will not operate for too long!



Go ahead, air-condition this as a gift to Mumbaiers who travel in near sub-human conditions to get to and from work every day. To be fair, the Railways are struggling with the numbers too, but don't give us the promise of air-conditioned local trains in the Budget. The part of that promise that is not absurd is just plain bizarre.