

Main Feature

New Haven Project, Bengaluru

Safety

Environment Management Initiatives

Happening

e-learning competition- A Republic
Day Special



editorial

Our intriguing cover tells the whole story: our children are building structures using 'Prefabricated LEGO' blocks.

At our Tata Housing Project, we are building a huge housing complex with prefabricated components manufactured by us in a state-of-the-art plant. Increasingly, precast fabrication and erection is going to be deployed in mass housing projects, and we are all geared up to be the front-runners. We have carried an exhaustive report on the actual manufacture of the precast panels, apart from a brief background on the project.

We are a caring company. We care for the community, the environment and our employees. Not many of you would know that SP Foundation has adopted and developed an ashramshala in Raigad District, Maharashtra, with which we have brought a visible change in the lives of the children there. Read about this noble gesture and other laudable initiatives in our CSR section.

We have also initiated several measures such as bio-toilets, gray water treatment, solar lighting, bio-stoves and food waste composters at our labour camps. These initiatives, aimed at managing and recycling waste, will go a long way in preserving our environment. They have been talked about in detail in our 'Safety' section.

Recognition and accolades for our good work, as usual, have been pouring in. The challenging SABIC project in Bangalore has won two awards, while the MCA Stadium near Pune has won the Sarvamangala Award 2013, under 'Excellence in Construction' category. SPRE further has bagged the 'Best Project' award for its SP Residency Project in Pune. Talking about the winners, we congratulate those intrepid eleven SPites from all over India who won the Republic Day e-learning Competition. It is a herculean endeavor to pass 48 e-courses in the midst of your regular duties. All this and more in our 'Happening' section...

We also travel to the ends of the world. Rukhsana Haque has made a fascinating trip to the top of the world and met Santa and his reindeer in Finland. Read her well-illustrated travelogue in 'Your Space'. On the other end of the world, Ravi Shankar (of SP Armada Oil Exploration) has planted the company's flag on the South Pole. We salute you Mr. Ravi Shankar!



new projects

- 1) Construction of Residential Apartments- The Village Project for Phoenix HODU Developers Pvt. Ltd at Chennai
- 2) Enabling works in Emporia at DLF-Horizon for DLF Ltd. at Gurgaon, Haryana
- 3) Construction of High-end Residential Towers at Halcyon Project for Phoenix Residences Pvt. Ltd at Hyderabad
- 4) Design and Construct Multi-speciality Hospital and Tertiary Healthcare Hospital for West Bengal Medical Services Corporation Ltd – Package A & B - in West Bengal
- 5) Construction and Infrastructure works of Cable stayed bridge for Roads and buildings Department (Govt. of Gujarat) at Mahatma Mandir Project, Gujarat
- 6) Construction of Residential Multistoried Building – Pashmina Lotus for Pashmina Builders and Develpoers Pvt.Ltd at Powai, Mumbai
- 7) Construction of Paper Board Machine Complex for Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd at Trichy, Tamil Nadu
- 8) Construction of Hospital Complex for Bombay Hospital Trust at Jaipur, Rajasthan
- 9) Civil works for proposed Commercial Building – Forum Mall for Thomsun Realtors Pvt.Ltd at Cochin, Kerala
- 10) Construction of 300 rooms 5 star hotel development for Fomento Resorts and Hotels Ltd at Goa
- 11) Construction of Campus for Indian Institute of Management at Kashipur
- 12) Design & Build Cape Sierra Hilton Hotel for Cape Sierra Holding Company Ltd at Ghana
- 13) Construction of Marriot Hotel for Empire World Company in Erbil, Iraq
- 14) Construction of New College of Pharmacy Building for Qatar university at Doha, Qatar
- 15) Construction of 37 storied office building with 7-storied Carpark for Al AbdulKarim Holding Co., at Dammam
- 16) Construction of Al Maktoum Hospital Site Redevelopment at Dubai
- 17) Construction of Road & Infrastructure works for Mayasem Fund at Riyadh (KSA)
- 18) Construction of Tower for AMESCO Tower JLT at Dubai
- 19) Construction of Altair Residential Building for Indooccean Developers (Pvt) Ltd at Sri Lanka
- 20) Enhancement of the Walk & Podiums at Jumairah Beach Residencies for Dubai Properties LLC at Dubai
- 21) Redevelopment of Nityanand Nagar Society for Bajaj International Realty Pvt. Ltd. at Andheri, Mumbai

Meanwhile, we hope the new government will revitalise the economy and bring growth and cheer to the nation.

We are in the midst of the summer season. It's hot and sweaty at times. May the gods grant a good monsoon and bumper harvests. Till then, we wish all of you a wonderful time with your families during the summer holidays.

— The Editorial Team



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{Main Feature} **2-9**

{Safety} **10-11**

{Happenings}

e-learning competition- A Republic
Day special **12**

SABIC Project wins prestigious
Award **14**

SPCL's MCA project, Pune bags
award **15**

SP Residency Triumphs at National Real
Estate Awards **15**

SP Qatar WLL **16**

BAI Convention in Dubai **17**

SP at APREDA, Hyderabad **18**

Educational Excursion **19**

Service on time...All the time **19**

Milestones on Jammu Udhampur
Highway **20**

SP creates stir at HBII conference **21**

A walk for health **22**

Gambhar: Celebrating Philanthropy **22**

Annual Day Celebrations at Hyderabad,
Pune & Nashik **24-25**

Gautamendu Sarkar does it again **25**

SP Sports at HO **26**

Cricket Tournament held in Hyderabad **26**

{Focus on SP Group Companies} **33-34**

{Cognition} **35**

Inauguration of Precast plant, BENGALURU

Inauguration of the precast plant: (L to R) Sebastine, Dirke – Ebawe German Team, Pranav Parikh, S.C. Dixit (cutting ribbon), M. Sathyanarayanan



January 31, 2014 marked the beginning of a new era of precast construction in India with the inauguration of the first automated carousel precast plant at the New Haven Peenya Project site, Bengaluru, by SP E&C.

The plant was inaugurated by S.C. Dixit (President, Operations), in the presence of Sathyanarayanan (Regional Head, Bengaluru & Chennai) and the department heads of the Bengaluru regional team. Client representatives from TATA Housing- Smart Value Homes were also present at the event.

Along with the plant manufacturer, M/s Ebawe, our trained team at the site demonstrated how the plant operated, as regards the Cleaning, Plotting, Shuttering, Reinforcement, Concrete, Stacking and Curing functions. Commending the entire team for its efforts in setting up the precast plant, Mr. S.C. Dixit added that though the uniqueness of the project was a challenge to all, he was confident that the team would achieve the required targets.

A puja was held and snacks distributed to all. The event concluded with a detailed site visit to all areas like the master control room, stacking area, cast in-situ project area and site offices. This was followed by a meeting to review the status of the project and



Demonstrations in progress



Overview of the precast plant with control room

progress made. A team building event along with dinner was also organised the next day for the entire site and the regional team.



Bird's-eye view of New Haven Project
(Architect's Perspective)

Pre-cast Residential towers

NEW HAVEN, BENGALURU

The New Haven project, developed by Smart Value Homes Limited, is the first green township off Tumkur Road, one of Bengaluru's fastest developing corridors. Close to the Golden Palms Resort, it is surrounded by lush greenery and designed by internationally acclaimed architects, Callison, USA.

The project offers all amenities essential for modern living, including a swimming pool, a well-equipped gymnasium, retail outlets and an indoor games room. The project will follow an integrated sustainable township approach and has been conceptualised and developed with a vision to create a positive ecosystem for the neighbourhood and the community.

The New Haven project involves construction of seven types of residential buildings, having an approximate built-up area of 1.7 million Sq ft of 'precast technology' for the superstructure and 0.88 million Sq ft of RCC framed structures for the substructure. The project has a total of 35 towers. Design will be provided by the client. However, precast detailing is to be carried out by Shapoorji Pallonji E&C.

Our scope includes construction of the substructure and the superstructure. Towers are of G+10 to G+14 floors, with two levels and a common

basement. Each floor comprises four units per floor and the maximum floor-to-floor height is 2.9 m, with a maximum height of 43.5 m above ground level for the towers. Shapoorji Pallonji E&C, as the principal contractor, is all geared for the project, with due observance of all quality and safety standards.

Highlights of project

- Commenced on February 19, 2013
- Project Duration: 36 Months
- Item Rate Contract
- Contract Value: ₹290 Crores
- Precast Work Value: ₹180 Crores
- 0.88 Million Sq ft Cast In-situ Works
Consisting of Two Basements
- 1.7 Million Sq ft of Precast Works
- 35 Towers of G+10 to G+14 Floors





New Haven Project (Top) with Amenity Complex (Architect's View)

The substructure comprises two basements, supported on a raft foundation. The scope comprises rafts, shear walls, slabs and beams in all the 35 towers, as well as footings, the grade slab, columns, slabs and beams in the podium.

The total number of precast elements in the project is 65,848, out of which 41,126 are wall panels, 21,529 are slab panels and 3,193 stair modules.

SPCL has set up the precast plant on the designated 3–4 acre site adjacent to the project site.

The plant has been set up keeping in mind the required speed of construction which approximates to 10,00,000 Sq ft of built-up area per annum. The 'Plant and Machinery' set-up for the precast production include the Carousal Plant, Curing Chambers, and Tilting Devices. For transportation of elements, gantry cranes of suitable capacities as well as trailers are available. Five tower cranes have been erected for the purpose of erection of the precast panels. Auxiliaries to the plant include installation and commissioning of the batching plant in close proximity, sufficient storage area for precast elements, a concrete testing laboratory and a workshop as well as full-time diesel generator to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the precast plant.

As of date, substructure works for Phase 1 have been completed as per schedule. Raft foundations for all the 35 towers have been completed and 4 slabs are in progress for Phase II of the project. Some 200+ elements have been casted and one level of the two towers has been completed.



PROJECT	New Haven - Peenya
CLIENT	Smart Value Homes Peenya Project Private Limited
ARCHITECTS	Kembhavi Architecture Foundation
STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT	Chetana Engineering Services Pvt Ltd
MEP CONSULTANT	Maple Services Consultants
PRECAST DESIGN CONSULTANT	Innovela Building Solutions Pvt Ltd
PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR	Shapoorji Pallonji Engineering & Construction

Precast construction at NEW HAVEN PROJECT BENGALURU



India's first carousel precast plant has been set up by SP E&C at its New Haven project site in Bengaluru. The plant boasts of state-of-the-art precast equipment supplied by M/s EBAWE, Germany, towards production of precast wall and slab panels required for the construction of towers. This article explains in detail the processes for the planned production and erection of the panels.

The project comprises 35 towers comprising G+10, G+12 and G+14 floor high-rises. In total there are seven types of buildings with combinations of 1 BHK, 1.5 BHK, 2 BHK and 3 BHK flats. Overall, 1892 residential units are being planned in this project.

PRODUCTION

The precast plant with its machinery is housed in a pre-engineered building. Elements are produced on horizontal pallets of size 12 m x 4m, moving on rollers.

Precast elements are produced based on the production cycle as mentioned below:

1. Pallets are cleaned and neatly oiled
2. Plotting is done on the pallet through the EBOS system
3. Shuttering and reinforcement are placed
4. Accessories like lifting anchors and MEP are fixed
5. Pre-pour checks are carried out at dedicated quality check stations prior to pouring.

Production

Handling and
storage

Transportation
and Erection

6. Concreting is carried out using mechanised buckets, and mechanical finishing is done for surfaces
7. The pallet is then lifted by stackers to the curing chamber till it achieves early strength for handling the panels
8. The pallet is shifted to the tilting station after curing, which in turn is stored in the yard by using gantry cranes

Production Planning

The planning for precast production and erection has been done considering the timelines set in the contract. A detailed report of the precast plan is explained below. Care has been taken to ensure that all precast panels are produced much ahead of the erection date. A storage time of 15 days has been considered while planning the erection of the precast elements. Due to criticality of erection and non-availability of slack in the erection of precast

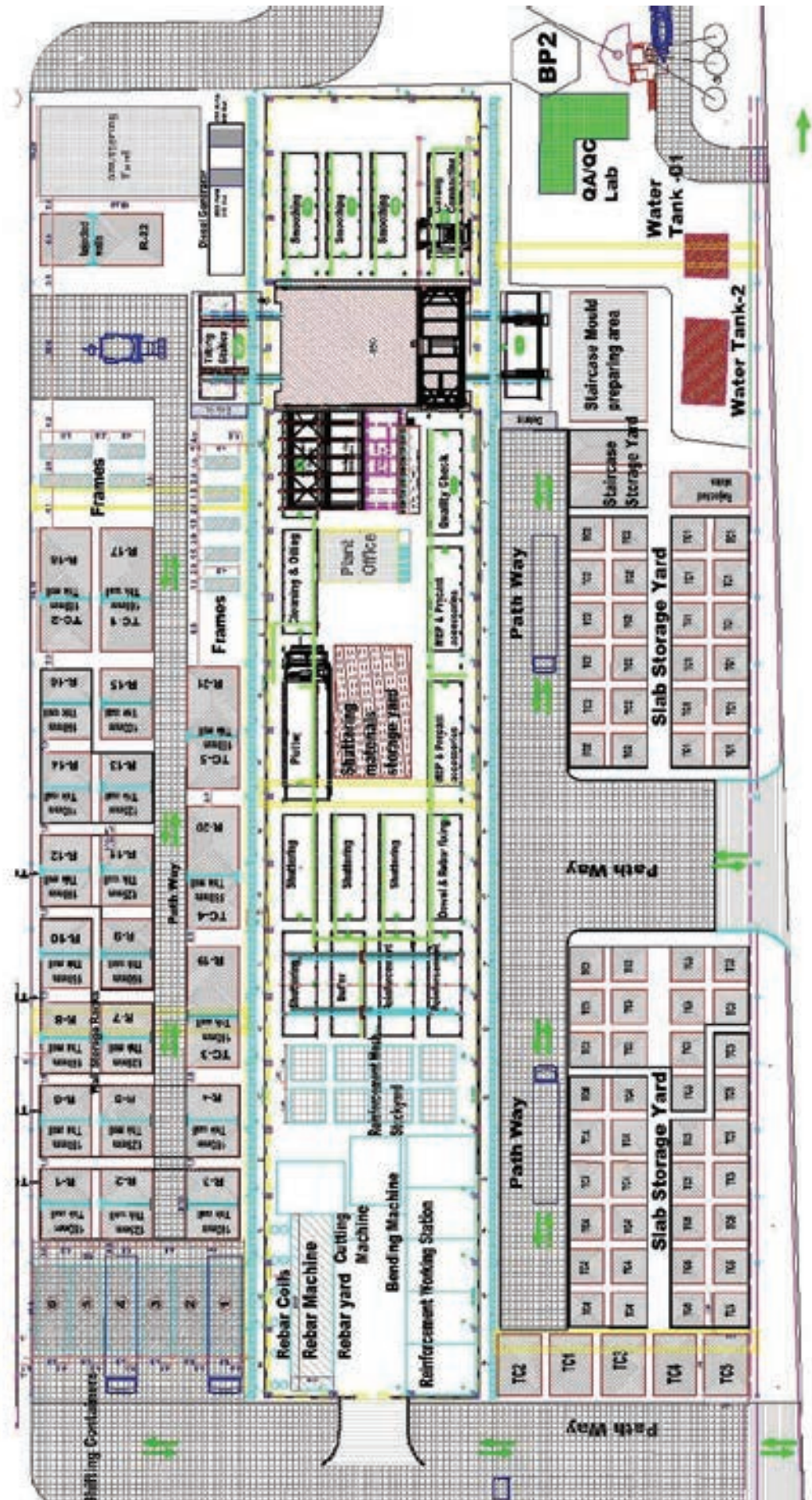
**Fig.1: Production process of elements
(Pallet Circulation Plant with the actual photographs)**



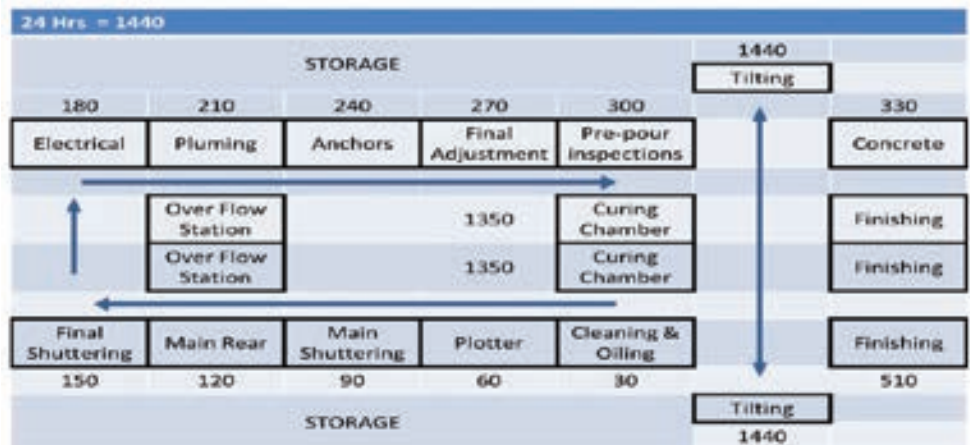
- Five heavy-duty tower cranes located strategically will be used to erect these panels.

The strict timelines of the project dictate that 66,998 Nos of precast slabs and walls must be produced and erected over a time span of 25 months. Based on the above data, the precast planning for the project has been done. Five heavy-duty tower cranes located strategically will be used to erect these panels.

The production capacity is around 1,000 Sq m, or 100 panels on a daily basis, and three million Sq ft of precast elements can be produced annually. On average, 115+ elements shall be erected, using 5 tower cranes as mentioned earlier, which amounts to approximately 15,000 tons. In terms of built-up-area, about 70 flats will be erected on a monthly basis.



Precast Production Cycle Analysis:



Timelines stated in the figure indicate the cumulative time lapsed at each station. Considering the same, the entire process from 'Cleaning' to 'Placing' in the storage yard would take 1,440 minutes, i.e., 24 hours.

EBOS software, integrated with TEKLA modelling, enables greater efficiency and nullifies the errors in plotting. The EBOS storage management procedure is used to track the precast elements from storage to 'dispatch for erection' stages.

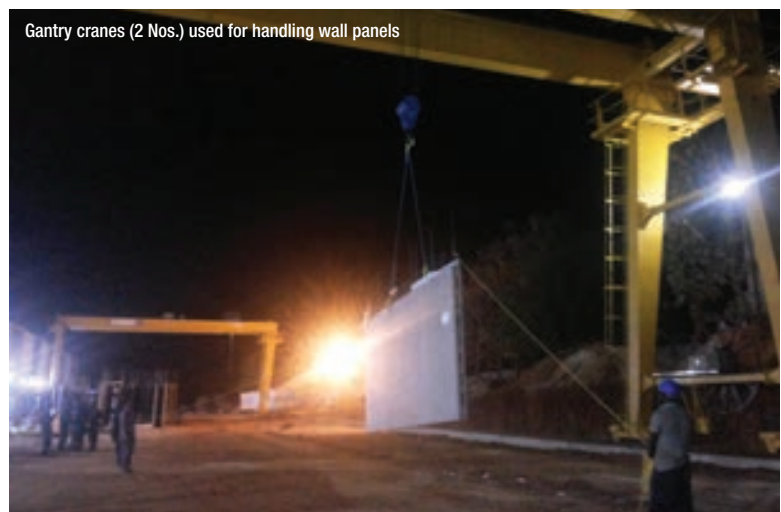
HANDLING AND STORAGE

Once the concrete panels have achieved their desired lifting strength, they are shifted by the stacker from the curing chamber to the lifting point of the slab storage yard.

Each precast slab or wall is given a unique ID which contains all the details of its utilisation in the project. In case of large openings, ties or temporary supports are provided for safe handling. The slabs/walls are lifted from the lifting point using a gantry crane by clamping the hook of the gantry to the lifting anchors and placed at the location in the storage yard, as decided by the yard in charge.

There are four gantries in the project. Gantry 1, 2 – Double Girder Goliath Gantry Crane of 30 m span is used for lifting the walls off the lifting station and stacking them in the storage racks. It is also used to load the element on the trailer. Gantry 3, 4 - Double Girder Goliath Gantry Crane of 25 m span is used to lift the slabs from the stacker and stacking them in the storage yard. It is also used to load the element on the trailer. The EOT crane is provided in the precast plant for the transfer of material to the pallet beds. The EOT crane is of 5T capacity.

Storage beds are constructed on either side of the precast plant to enable storage of elements before erection at the site. In order to have continuous supply of panels for erection at the site and as a contingency, a 15-day lead time is considered for storage. All vertical elements are stacked vertically in the storage racks and constructed in such a way that



Gantry cranes (2 Nos.) used for handling wall panels



EOT crane in the plant handling materials

they support their own weight. All horizontal elements are stacked horizontally in the storage yard.

The plant has just started round-the-clock operations, over two shifts. The team is striving to achieve plant optimisation and full capacity production in the coming months.

In the meantime, preparations for the erection of the wall in the cast in-situ portion are being carried out simultaneously. Dowel bars provided in the cast in-situ element shall serve as a medium to accept the precast wall element. Subsequent wall panels will have dowel bars embedded to suit upper floor erection.

A typical erection sequence includes:

- Erection of walls into the dowel bars
- Grouting of walls and connections between the elements
- Erection of slab
- Stich concrete

TRANSPORTATION AND ERECTION

Site logistics have been planned keeping in mind the phase-wise construction of the superstructure.

Transportation of elements from the storage yard is done via trailers. The trailers pick the element from the storage yard and transport them to the project location by moving on the 'Podium', which is designed to withstand the load of the trailer along with the element. Each panel is given a unique code for identification, and panels are transported after a detailed post-pour check. Colour coding system is adopted for quality assurance prior to erection of panels. Each work shift of the crane, for safety reasons, has been limited to 12 hours (day time). A 30-minute hook time of the crane has been considered for operations, i.e., the total time involved in lifting the element from the trailer to lifting the element and placing the same in position on ground.

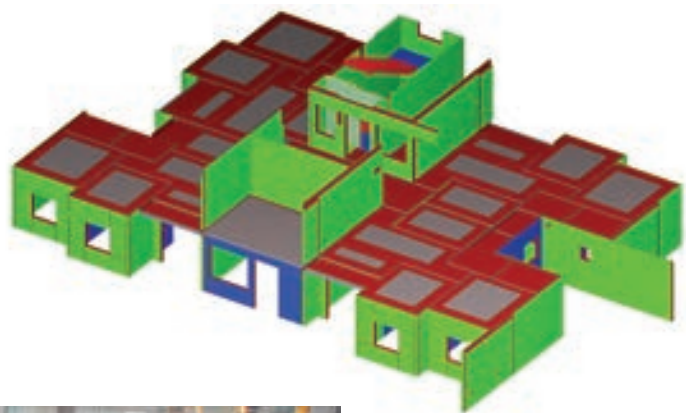
Unique Features in Our Precast Process

- Automated carousel precast plant is first of its kind in India
- EBOS software integrated along with TEKLA modelling enables a greater efficiency and nullifies errors in plotting.



- Shop drawings have been generated from 3D BIM model, which in turn are used for precast production.
- Four gantry cranes used to store and handle the wall/slab panels; one EOT crane used for transferring materials on to the pallet beds.
- Five Nos tower cranes remote controlled for precision erection.
- Automatic rebar cutting machine and automatic rebar tying machine.

- Pranav Parikh, Bengaluru Region



Site logistics have been planned keeping in mind the phase-wise construction of the superstructure.

As an ongoing process, SP has been striving towards greater operational excellence through various environment management initiatives. Here are a few that have been implemented.

A. BIO TOILET

Technology: Designed and developed by the DRDO, bio-toilets employ a technology where human waste is completely digested by bacterial culture present in ‘biodigester tanks’, eliminating the possibility of solid waste being discharged into the ground. They convert night soil into water, thus keeping the environment clean. Bio-toilets come as ready-to-use portable units and can be very effective in high-rise buildings, big sites and far-flung areas, where conventional toilets cannot be constructed easily. Based on our experience at a few of our sites, we table the pros and cons of these toilets:

ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
Biological toilets make septic tanks, sewage lines and the need for any periodic sludge removal redundant	The number of users per unit cannot exceed the designed capacity. In general, a single bio-toilet unit is designed for 30 users
Can be reused and mobilised from one site to another; has a life of 2- 3 years	Unwanted material like plastic, pouches, bidis and cigarettes can deteriorate or stall the unit.
Water outputted from toilet can be used for flushing/ gardening/ dust suppression, etc.	A rigorous awareness campaign amongst labourers is necessary
Regular chemicals (phenyl, etc.) can be used for cleaning	It takes three months to stabilise the complete system

THE ECONOMICS

- Maintenance, cleaning and repair of a conventional toilet unit that caters to 50 users costs approximately ₹90,000 per year.



- Bio-toilets (of 30 users/unit capacity) are available on rental basis or can be purchased outright

Rental: ₹4,000 per unit per month, or ₹48,000 per unit per year
Purchase: Approx. ₹1,00,000 which includes cost of unit, bacterial culture and maintenance (can be reused). Therefore, considering a minimum of two users, the cost would be ₹50,000 per year.

Implementation at SP E&C

- Labour camp and site office of Salarpuria site, Hyderabad region
- Labour camps at TCS & Nazrul Tirth sites, Kolkata region

B. GREY WATER TREATMENT

Background and Technology - Wastewater generated from bathing, washing and kitchens is termed ‘grey water’; it can be treated chemically and by multigrade filter media.

ADVANTAGES:

- The treatment unit is mobile and the life span of the treatment plant is 15 years;
- Huge potential: Most of the wastewater generated (80%) at labour camps is grey water.

THE ECONOMICS WITH AN EXAMPLE -

- The average grey water generation by 600 labourers is 50,000 litres/day;
- The same volume of water (50,000 litres) if purchased would cost approximately ₹5,000 (@₹500 / tanker), implying a yearly expenditure of ₹18 lakhs. This treated water can be used for dust suppression, gardening, wheel washing, cleaning of vehicles and plants, flushing of toilets, etc.
- Cost of treating 50,000 litres of grey water per day is 10 lakhs, i.e., the ROI is less than one year.

C. SOLAR LIGHTING

Background and Technology: At sites where there is sunlight throughout the year, labour camps and site offices can be powered by solar lighting systems, i.e., use of solar cells or photovoltaic cells (PV) which convert sunlight into electric current through the photoelectric effect and energy bank.

ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
Clean source of energy; no dependency on grid or diesel generator (DG) sets.	Dependent on sunlight, so use during rainy/ cloudy weather is limited
Site offices can be directly started without waiting for DG / electricity connection	Require battery bank for storage of energy
Reduced electric shock hazard	Expensive and might require DG backup in case of emergency





Implementation at SP E&C Sites (Currently)

1. Labour camp at HCL site, Bengaluru region (street lighting and power for labour hutments);
2. Salarpuria (DRPL) site, Hyderabad region (street lighting)

COST IMPLICATIONS

Cost per unit is ₹1,45,000. Provides for home lighting (5 hours) + fan (8 hours) + mobile (8 hours) at 6 labour hutments, offering autonomy for two days;

Cost per unit for street lights is ₹25,000.

D. COMPOSTER FOR FOOD WASTE

Background and Technology: Food waste is a nuisance at our labour camps; it leads to unhygienic, malodorous environment that soon turns into a breeding ground for flies, mosquitoes, etc. This food waste can be converted to organic manure using a mechanised composter. Only bio-degradable waste can be treated though. The process involves two stages of five minutes each. In the first stage, the machine crushes the waste and mixes it homogeneously with the bio-decomposition culture. In the second stage, this homogeneous mixture is further mixed and churned with saw dust/bagasse to soak the excess water content from the biomass, which ultimately deodorises it. Later this pre-composted mass is kept for curing in the curing bays for about 12 days. Optimum irrigation has to be observed for the curing system. After the twelfth day, the container is ready with compost and can be used for field applications..

Advantages:

- Helps maintain more hygienic conditions at labour camps;
- Waste is converted to wealth (WoW) in that the compost produced can be sold to nurseries/forest departments/private users.

THE ECONOMICS OF IT

- Cost of machine (of 100kg/day capacity): ₹5–6 lakhs;
- Market value of manure: ₹10–12 per kg
- Daily waste disposal cost (actuals likely to vary from site to site)



E. BIO-STOVE

Background & Technology: At labour camps, wood is used for cooking which causes smoke (a health hazard) as well as leads to loss of natural resources. Bio-stoves use briquettes (compressed fuel made from agro waste and saw dust) which are ideal for labour camps, as they are less smoky (because they ensure proper combustion of the fuel) and also help cook food quicker.

Implementation at SP E&C

- Bio-stoves are being used at the labour camp of the Salarpuria (DRPL) site, Hyderabad.

THE ECONOMICS OF IT (ACTUAL FIGURES FROM THE SALARPURIA SITE)

- Average fuel consumption by 120 labourers using firewood chulhas – ₹650/day
- Average fuel consumption by 120 labourers using bio-stoves – ₹675/day
- Cost of bio-stove is very nominal.

F. SP FOREST

This scheme has already been covered in a previous issue of WE@SP. Just to update on the progress made so far, we have 15 SP Forests now across various regions, and in general the survival rate of trees is more than 90% after demobilisation of SP E&C teams from the sites.

- Jaideep Rathore. SP HO

e-Learning Competition

A REPUBLIC DAY SPECIAL



The e-Learning Competition, held on January 26, 2014, was a rare achievement with over a hundred e-learners actively participating in the month-long contest and completing more than 500 e-Courses. The overwhelming response was a testimony of our employees' voracious learning appetites. Govindasamy Velmurugan of the Chennai RO completed 48 e-Courses and was crowned the 'e-Learning Champion'. The organisation takes pride in these outstanding employees who have gone the extra mile to complete the maximum number of e-courses they could—absolutely on their own! Such exemplary endeavour not only helps participants reap the benefits of gaining additional knowledge and skills but also helps the organisation stand out in the marketplace.

The management has decided to reward these outstanding employees who have exemplified boundless spirit and unwavering dedication by participating and excelling at the e-learning competition.

In recognition of their meritorious effort, each winner will also receive a 'Certificate of Appreciation', in addition to the prize money (in the form of a gift voucher).

Our congratulations to all the e-Learners for successfully participating and contributing to the success of the contest!

- Sohan Mohanty, SP HO

The toppers in the competition

Rank	Name	Designation, Place	No. of e-Courses completed	Prize (Gift Voucher)
1	Govindasamy Velmurugan	Deputy Manager, Chennai RO	48	₹10,000/-
2	Flavia Lobo	Executive Secretary, Group Centre	37	₹7,500/-
3	Mahim Lal	Senior Deputy GM , Pune RO	35	₹7,500/-
4	Eliyas Anthuraj	Senior Officer, Chennai RO	27	₹5,000/-
	Joby George	Officer, HOMP - TCS Hyderabad	27	₹5,000/-
5	Manojkumar Nair	Officer, SP Centre HO	22	₹5,000/-
6	Reny Satish	Officer, Mumbai RO	15	₹3,000/-
7	Anupama Mahabaleshwar	Deputy Manager, Bengaluru RO	14	₹3,000/-
8	Balkrishna Vithal Parab	Manager, Mumbai RO	13	₹3,000/-
9	Devender Singh	Manager, Delhi RO	11	₹3,000/-
	Sivarama Anemu	Senior Engineer, Hyderabad RO	11	₹3,000/-



Govindasamy Velmurugan



Flavia Lobo



Mahim Lal



Eliyas Anthuraj



Joby George



Manojkumar Nair



Reny Satish



Anupama Mahabaleshwar



Balkrishna Vithal Parab



Devender Singh



Sivarama Anemu

'SkillSoft' is a user-friendly knowledge pool which helps us develop our skills in all fields.

GOVINDASAMY VELMURUGAN
Chennai RO

Training boosts our growth rate; and SkillSoft makes this feasible from anywhere.

A SIVA RAMA KRISHNA
Hyderabad RO

Course contents were engaging, interesting and stimulating. Learning this way is really a delightful experience!

MAHIM LAL
Pune RO



ALDEP – Batch II Attend 3rd Year Technical Session at IIT-Madras

ALDEP - Batch II (Class of 2015), comprising thirty-five candidates, have attended their 3rd Year Technical Sessions at IIT-Madras from March 6–14 this year. On the evening of March 11, a special session was organised wherein the Aldepers had the opportunity to interact with the senior management. Important feedback pertaining to the curriculum and their careers has been collected for suitable modification.

We hope the Aldepers will be able to successfully implement their learning at the workplace. Our best wishes to them!

- Sohan Mohanty, SP HO



March 11, 2014: ALDEPers' interactive session with the senior management.



The 5th Batch of 15 Junior Supervisors graduated from the Supervisor Training Centre (STC) at CII Skill Training Park, Chhindwara, on successful completion of their training programme in Finishing stream

Batch 7B of 35 Junior Supervisors graduated from the Supervisor Training Centre (STC), Kolkata, on successful completion of their 15-week training programme in Finishing, Steel Fixing and Formwork streams.



	Finishing	Steel Fixing	Formwork
1st Position	Shouvik Laha	Pradeep Kr Gupta	Partha Karmakar
2nd Position	Harimangal Mourya	Pritam Naskar	Mrinal Kanti Bhowmick



SABIC Project Wins Prestigious Award

Our SABIC Project at Bengaluru has recently bagged two prestigious awards: one from the Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) and another from the Association of Consulting Civil Engineers (ACCE).

The SABIC Research & Technology Campus near Sarjapura, Bengaluru was chosen the winner in the 'Best Construction Projects' category by the CIDC, at its 6th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2014. The Vishwakarma Awards are given in recognition and honour of significant contributions from the construction fraternity towards the growth and development of the Indian construction industry.

The award was presented during a special awards ceremony held on March 7, 2014, in New Delhi. SABIC Research & Technology Centre is a research facility for polymers, innovative plastics, performance chemicals and fertilisers. SPCL was appointed the general contractor for the project. The project was



commissioned in August 2013.

The second award was conferred at Coimbatore by the Association of Consulting Civil Engineers (India), on March 8, 2014, when, based on the recommendations forwarded by its Awards Committee, the ACCE(I) Governing Council selected our Coimbatore project for the ACCE(I) L&T Endowment Award 2013, under the 'Excellence in Construction of Industrial Structures' category.

- Prashant Mahajan , Bengaluru Region



Trophy being handed over by Alok Kumar Singh, Plant Head, Tata Motors, to SPCL's Tata Motors site, Pantnagar, for achieving the 'Zero Accident' goal for three consecutive years (2011-13). A certificate of appreciation was also given for being a safety conscious contractor. The awards were handed over on March 8, 2014, during the National Safety Week.

SPCL's MCA Pune Project Bags Award



The Association of Consulting Civil Engineers (India) Governing Council, based on the recommendations forwarded by its Awards Committee, has selected the SPCL's 'Subrata Ray Sahara Stadium for MCA Pune' project for the ACCE(I) - Sarvamangala Award 2013, under 'Excellence in Construction' category. The project has been executed by SPCL, Pune Region. The award was presented at the ACCE (I) Awards Convention, held in Coimbatore on March 8, 2014. The state-of-art stadium has earlier won SP E&C division's 'Best Project' award in 2012.

- The SPRE Team

Shapoorji Pallonji Residency Triumphs at NATIONAL REAL ESTATE ANNUAL AWARDS

SP Residency, a Pune-based project by Shapoorji Pallonji Real Estate, has bagged the 'Best Project of the Year – Pune' award at the 28th National Real Estate Awards, held at Nehru Centre in Mumbai, on March 7, 2014.

SP Residency is a part of the SP Infocity IT Park. The project is located amidst lush greenery on the Pune-Saswad Road, offering breathtaking views from the apartments, apart from a glorious feeling of space, positivity and superiority. The second phase of the project (Phase II) is expected to be completed by the third quarter this year.

The award was handed over to Praveen Shetty (AVP – Marketing, SPRE) by Niranjani Hiranandani and Anil Harish. On receiving the award, an ecstatic Mr. Shetty said, "We are truly humbled by this felicitation. SP Residency is a unique project that exemplifies quality residential apartments and a high standard of living. Such awards motivate us to continue our focus on delivering spaces that enhance the quality of life of our customers."



The project reflects healthier, greener tomorrows with solutions for sustainable development. All the apartments open out to greenery and natural light on three sides. The 'green solutions' include rainwater harvesting facility, an in-house reverse osmosis plant and an eco-friendly sewage treatment plant.

The National Real Estate Awards, which is among the oldest in the country, honours and felicitates realtors from the Indian real estate sector, based on their performance, transparency

and innovation. Instituted by the Accommodation Times, the initiative is supported by renowned organisations like The Practising Engineers, Architects, and Town Planners Association (India) or PEATA; the Pune wing of Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, or CREDAI-Pune; the Maharashtra Chamber of Housing Industry (MCHI); and Builders Association of India (BAI).

- The SPRE Team

Shapoorji Pallonji Qatar WLL



Shapoorji Pallonji operates in Qatar as Shapoorji Pallonji Qatar WLL (SPQ). The company was established in July 2008 with local partnership.

SPQ is classified as a 'Grade 'A' Company' by the Central Tender Committee, Doha, Qatar (since January 2014) and also holds EN ISO: 9001: 2008, BS OHSAS 18001: 2007 and DIN EN ISO 14001: 2004 certifications for buildings, constructions and operations in Qatar since April 2010.

The company provides contracting services for residential, commercial and industrial structures, including stadiums, hospitals, hotels, institutions, infrastructural projects, power projects, and healthcare facilities through different contract management systems, including joint ventures.

SPQ has assembled a professional team from the Middle East in order to provide clients with a complete and professional package towards execution of the works, its fundamental aim and guiding motto being 'to exceed in excellence in everything we do'. The company has a current strength of about 350 staff in addition to over 2,000 workers and equipment worth QAR 60 million which includes plant and machinery, formwork and vehicles.

SPQ had commenced business with the following three prestigious projects (worth US \$372.80 million) which were completed successfully:

- Barwa Commercial Avenue (Type 3, Turnkey Construction under M/s. Hochtief) – Value: US \$170.30 million
- Barwa City Amenities (Design & Build) – Value: US \$199.18 million
- Seaside Pavilion Restaurant – Hilton Hotel.

SPQ is currently engaged in three prestigious projects worth US \$259.38 million:

- South East Car Park (SECP) for Qatar Foundation (Value: US \$129.12 million, BUA – 1.7 million Sq ft);

- New Port Project – NPP/0032 (Design & Build) for New Port Project Steering Committee (Value: US \$67.58 million, BUA – 0.36 million Sq ft); and
- Le Boulevard for Commercial Bank of Qatar (Value: US \$62.68 million & BUA – 0.50 million Sq ft)

Other achievements include:

- Overall safe man-hours without LTA: 22.7 million
- Total built-up area: 2.5 million Sq ft
- Infrastructure area: 1.3 million Sq ft
- Roads: 6.5 km
- Underground services: 16.5 km

SPQ has been continuously participating in Qatar's construction bids for the FIFA 2022 event and Qatar National Vision 2030.

SPQ COMPANY ATTRIBUTES:

- Strong management with proven track record
- In-house resources with major project experience in Qatar and around the world
- Familiarity with all project types, including infrastructural, residential, commercial and industrial projects such as hotels, healthcare facilities, institutions and power projects
- Familiarity with contract types such as Fixed Price, Cost Plus and Joint Ventures
- Extensive in-country resources and familiarity with local work practices, regulations and cultures
- Resource mobilising capability in a timely and cost-efficient manner
- Strong commitment and integrity in all undertakings
- Building, respecting and upholding long-term relationships with major clients and consultants
- Ensuring SPQ is the first choice in the construction space given its steadfast commitment to customer satisfaction.

LIST OF ONGOING PROJECTS - QATAR

Client	Project Name	Description of Contracts Currently Being Executed & Completed	Contract Value (In Million QR)	Start Date	End Date	Status
New Port Project Steering Committee	NEW PORT PROJECT – CONTRACT No. NPP/0032 – Commercial Terminals Infrastructure and Buildings (Collaboration with HBK-AFCONS)	Fifteen (15) buildings located on the Commercial Terminals will be executed on a Design and Construct basis from design briefs issued by the Employer.	820.00	Aug-13	Feb-16	Ongoing
Commercial Bank of Qatar	Le Boulevard, Al Sadd (Collaboration with HBK)	"Construction of Le Boulevard which consists of 4B+G+M+7 upper floors and a full-height central atrium.	240.00	Nov-13	Mar-16	Ongoing
Qatar Foundation	Construction of South East Car Park for Qatar Foundation - Education City	"Construction of the South East Car Park and associated PMS Station and surrounding infrastructure. Car park consists 3,160 car parking spaces over four floors	469.60	Nov-13	Dec-15	Ongoing

- Prabal Kansal, SP HO

BAI Convention in DUBAI

Builders' Association of India (BAI), the apex body of the Indian engineering and construction industry, conducted the XXVI All India Builders' Convention (AIBC) from February 6–9, 2014 in Dubai, UAE. The theme of the convention was 'Indian Construction - A Paradigm Shift'..

Shapoorji Pallonji was one of the main sponsors of the event.

More than 300 delegates from different Indian construction companies gathered to discuss the challenges and opportunities in the Indian construction industry at the three-day event. The Ambassador of India to the UAE, T. P. Seetharam; Mirza Hussain Al Sayegh (Deputy Chairman, Oilfields Supply Centre and Engr.); and Mohamed Al Noori (Director, Environmental Centre for Arab Towns at Dubai Municipality) addressed the convention at the inauguration ceremony.



L-R: Rohit Chourasia, Biju Oommachan, Nigel Eckersall, C.D. Patel

The undersigned [Prabal Kansal, Head – Corporate Strategy] together with Nigel Eckersall (Design Studio, Dubai) represented SPCL at the technical sessions where he briefed the audience about Shapoorji Pallonji's journey in Indian as well as International construction markets, presenting the company's credentials in different segments. This was followed by a technical presentation by Nigel Eckersall on 'Sustainable Construction'.

The event was also attended by Biju Oommachan (Head – Design Studio, Dubai), C. D. Patel (Business Development Representative – International) and Rohit Chourasia (Corporate Strategy Team).



Prabal Kansal addressing the audience

- Prabal Kansal, SP HO



SP Representatives with Mohan Jashanmal

SP at APREDA, Hyderabad

The Andhra Pradesh Real Estate Developers Association Conference 2013 (or APREDA Conference 2013) was recently held in Hyderabad. The theme of the conference was 'Staying Ahead in Real Estate: Innovative Construction and Understanding Taxation'. There were discussions on innovative construction techniques and taxation which are two critical aspects for developers to stay competitive and be ahead in the real estate market. The conference provided deep insights on these aspects to various stakeholders for enhancing the growth of the Indian realty sector. Industry experts were invited to share their knowledge and expertise with the delegates.

It is extremely challenging for developers to meet these requirements with ever-rising construction costs (because of escalating raw material costs and rising labour wages). Therefore, new innovative construction technologies are being envisaged to equip developers to stay ahead. Mr. Sridhar was one of the guest speakers at this year's APREDA conference. He threw light on the following projects:

1. Major Real Estate Projects (Imperial/Pinnacle)
2. Sukhobrishti – Affordable Housing
3. New Haven Bengaluru – Precast Construction

- Aziz Tayyaba, Hyderabad Region



Joseph Kurien addressing the gathering

A programme for labourers was organised on March 4, 2014, at the Pashmina site, to create awareness about 'Child Labour' and the various benefits due to labourers under the BOCW Act. Somanna (Asst. Labour Commissioner) and other officers of the labour department highlighted the benefits accruing to labourers under the provisions of the Act. Officers from the client's side, who also were present, offered support to the

initiatives. Mahesh Konapur (Project Manager), Prasad M. R. (Admin) and Joseph Kurien (HR Head, Bengaluru)—all from SP E&C—spoke on the occasion, offering guidance and support for registration of labourers towards availing the various benefits.

- Joseph Kurien, Bengaluru Region

Educational Excursion, Delhi

As part of Shapoorji Pallonji's childcare programme, 25 children from the Godrej Frontier Centre in Delhi were taken for an educational outing to Bal Bhavan and the National Museum. Prior consent was taken for the outing from the children's parents and site personnel. The staff as well as one parent from the site accompanied the children to ensure smooth management. The children's transportation, food and tickets/fares were arranged for by 'mobile cheches'. The children enjoyed a lot at both the Bal Bhavan and the National Museum, where they had the opportunity to know about our national leaders, see colourful fish in an aquarium and see myriad other animal species, historical coins, paintings, toys made from clay, among other things of interest. *"Maine pehli bar itni rang birangi machliya dekhi,"* said one enthused child, Sameer, who seemed quite delighted to see the colourful fish. For Chandni, the toys made of clay were fascinating. She now wants to make them at home. *"Mai pehli baar ghar se itni door gaya... mujhe bahot achcha laga,"* said Sadrul, who had never experienced such an outing in a group before.

Children made beautiful drawings and performed group songs as a part of the trip.

After the outing, they were dropped at their homes, escorted by the staff and parents.

- Rukhsana Haque, Delhi Region



Service on Time... All the Time!



Can you think of an institution that provides 'customer delight' day in and out, irrespective of the scorching heat, pouring rain and the frustrating traffic snarls of Mumbai? Mumbai's 'Dabbawallas' have been doing this for the last 125 years! The 5000-strong team delivers an incredible two lakh *dabbas* (lunch boxes) across the length and breadth of the city, everyday without fail, within the stipulated time and with zero error—all to ensure that no office-goer remains hungry. Thanks to their unmatched sense of responsibility, zeal, dedication and logistics, lakhs of office-goers who have opted for their services are able to enjoy home-cooked food at their offices everyday 'On Time—All the Time'.

As part of its knowledge sharing initiative, Enlightened Minds Forum (EMF), the HR wing of SP Infra, had invited Mumbai's Dabbawalla Management Group on February 20 this year for a talk to its employees. Invitees from SD Corp, SP EPC and

the Group Centre attended and listened with fascination to the lessons that the dabbawalla management had to share, though in their own simplistic way.

To heighten the curiosity of the group, the HR department had kept the theme and presenter anonymous. Finally the curtains went up to present the dramatic entry of a dabbawalla (Dabbawalla Mukadam) on a bicycle that took the agog viewers by surprise. Mr. Subodh Sangle, who made the presentation on behalf of the dabbawallas, shared with us the entire process of delivery and coding and the many challenges faced by the dabbawallas and how they successfully overcome them. He also shared the dabbawallas' time-honoured motto: '*Grahaak Bhuka Na Rahe*' (The Customer Should Not Remain Hungry).

After the presentation, it became clear as to why Harvard Business Review (2005) had found the reliability of the dabbawallas' operations conforming to the Six Sigma and why *Time Magazine* had extolled them as one of the most notable, globally recognised and system oriented organisations.

All in all, it was a very educative, engaging and interactive session, with the audience raising several queries on their processes. They were impressed by the way the dabbawallas clarified them: with ease and in detail. What was also touching was their ANNADAN initiative, where leftover food is marked by the customer with a red sticker which is then distributed by the dabbawallas to the needy.



The two-hour session ended with the dabbawallas presenting all those present in the audience with a Gandhi cap which has come to symbolise this simple but efficient community.

S. Mukundan (MD & CEO of SP Infra), who also had attended the session, complimented HR for their initiative to impart useful management lessons in the simplistic and unconventional way of Mumbai's Dabbawallas who are a very novel and very unique faculty indeed!

- Prasanna Rao, SP HO



Milestones on JAMMU UDHAMPUR HIGHWAY

The SP JUHi and AFCONS teams have been doing SP proud as they race to complete the 'four-laning' of the 65-km Jammu-Udhampur Highway in J&K. Along the way, they have achieved several milestones, including a recent one—albeit one away from the highway—where an experiential workshop and brain storming session on 'Achieving Together' was conducted.

The two-day workshop, from 28–29 November 2013, was organised especially for the JUHi team and was aimed at 'Team Building and Achieving Excellence'. It was facilitated by SP Infra HR.

The workshop highlighted the need for self-awareness, a collaborative work culture and the need to place the organisation and the team above oneself. It also emphasised how imperative team work and conflict management were

in building a cohesive, productive and harmonious work environment.

The participants, drawn from the Jammu and Udhampur project sites, participated actively and bonded well. The team members, based at project sites in Jammu and Udhampur, were highly appreciative of the initiative and were glad to actually meet and interact with each other in a different forum. They also enjoyed meeting colleagues from other units with whom they often interacted but rarely met. In typical military style, team leader Col. Puri summarised the day's proceedings with these words: "... Most importantly, the squadron has appreciated the need to 'Fly in Formation'."

All in all, the participants left on a high note, motivated and all geared-up to achieve many more milestones in the quest for excellence.

- Prasanna Rao, SP HO

SP Creates Stir at HBII CONFERENCE



Barun Pal Chowdhury emphasising the core strengths of 'Design & Build' delivery systems to Dr.(Ms.) Syeda Saiyidain Hameed (Member, Planning Commission, Govt. of India)



Distinguished members and speakers from the industry at the conference



Industry Leaders Interested in SP E&C Delivery Mechanism

Healthcare as a genre has existed since the dawn of mankind, but its prominence as an industry has only reached prominence in the recent past. A fast-growing concept of free enterprise has allowed healthcare to reach developing nations, and India as a developing country, has large scope for healthcare facilities. (As per the goals of the 12th Plan, India needs another 5,96,589 hospital beds to reach the target of 500 beds per 10,00,000 people.). Hence, it's imperative that dialogue towards planning of healthcare facilities, etc., be initiated.

In a crucial step, to facilitate creation of a platform for such debate, the Association of Healthcare Providers (India) (AHP) had organised the HBII (Hospital Build Infrastructure India) 2013, a conference-cum-exhibition held in Delhi from December 12–14, 2013. Key members of the healthcare industry participated in the show to display their expertise in their respective fields, and a dialogue was created between various interdisciplinary agencies. The SP E&C stall made its presence felt distinctively at the event and even hosted a debate that was extremely well-received.

The exhibition was perfectly complemented by a conference which allowed distinguished personalities from the industry to enlighten the audience about the state, the progress made and opportunities associated with the subject. Sharing the dais with esteemed personalities such as Dr. (Ms.) Syeda Saiyidain Hameed (Member, Planning Commission, Govt. of India), our director, Barun Pal Chowdhury, set the tone for the audience to have a holistic view of the situation.

Rather than laying unnecessary stress on individual aspects of healthcare-related design and construction, Mr. Chowdhury appealed for a "larger view of enabling healthcare 'delivery' through Design & Build as a single point solution"—a view that was endorsed by all including Dr. Ms. Syeda.

Barun Pal Chowdhury's presentation was so well received that questions from the audience had to be limited by the organisers for want of time. However, the interest in D&B spiralled into our stall, where our staff team, headed by our healthcare head, Vijay Chaudhary, and our director, Barun Pal Chowdhury, responded to enthused queries related to D&B and SP E&C's expertise in delivery.

As evident through the SP E&C stall presentation, D&B as a concept allows for integrated delivery across industries, especially through its use in specialist industries such as healthcare. It further adds great value for the client through value engineering, co-ordination, cost control and timely delivery, while maintaining quality control.

SP E&C's participation at the HBII event could mark the beginning of a successful journey that addresses the interests of our clients and the industry regarding our expertise and delivery.

- Kedarnath Phatarphod, SP HO



The Research Society for Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI) had organised a two-kilometre walk on November 10, 2013, in Greater Noida, to raise awareness about diabetes, as a part of its 41st Annual Conference. The staff of the AWHO Site, Delhi Region, took part in the event and walked for 'Health', as a first step towards fighting diabetes. They walked with enthusiasm, enjoying the winter chill, carrying a banner that read 'UNITE FOR DIABETES'.

The walk was organised to challenge diabetes by making walking a regular habit, thereby decreasing instances of diabetes which is said to be currently affecting 63 million people in India—the second highest number in the world.

The event inspired us to make walking a regular habit. The experience filled us with joy, and it was so positively vibrant that we actually are looking forward to more such walks in the future.

- Keeta Naveena, Delhi Region

GAMBHAR: Celebrating Philanthropy

The Gambhar function, held from January 24–25, 2014, in Pune, was a grand success and was the talk of the town for days after. The programme was attended by about 5,000 members of the Parsi community who belonged to all walks of life, including underprivileged children from the PETTITE School/Orphanage, to whom a special invitation had been extended. The outpouring of appreciation, gratitude and blessings—of which we were the recipients on behalf of the Mistry family—was overwhelming, as attendees relished delicious and authentic delicacies served by Darayus Dorabjee and his able crew from Dorabjee Caterers, the most reputed caterers for Parsi cuisine in Pune. As could be expected, the caterers had to be assisted by volunteers from the Pune Parsi community, who ran tirelessly back and forth, serving food and drinks to the huge number of invitees. Our beloved chairman, Mr. Pallonji Mistry, together with Mrs. Patsy Mistry graced the occasion, making the event even more special. Their humility and graciousness, as they personally met and blessed each child from the orphanage/school, was especially touching. They also generously distributed gifts among the children, much to their delight, their faces lighting up with joy as if Christmas had come early in 2014.

Though our team in Pune had put their heart and soul into preparing the venue with beautiful decorations, lighting and a host of amenities, we did receive a scare when dark rain-bearing clouds hovered over the SEZ grounds just the evening prior to the event, and much to our chagrin, played spoilsport. It rained cats and



dogs, drenching the entire venue and pushing months of planning and hard work down the drain. As we looked on helplessly in disbelief, we were pleasantly surprised and touched by the resilience and determination of our entire Pune staff, who worked tirelessly through the night to repair the damages. The setback had not dampened their spirits at all! Thanks to their indomitable will and unflinching support, we were collectively able to rebuild all that was destroyed, as well as prepare a contingency plan, in case the rain showers were to return. This dedicated and devoted group included people like Sachin Bhatkande, Vijay Jagtap, Manohar Ahuja, Viraj Berde and their team.

Others who helped make the event a success included

Mr. Kermam Master, Jair D'Souza and our land procurement team. At the head office, the guidance and cooperation extended by Firoz Bhatena and Adil Daruvala was admirable. Thanks also to Savio Rego and Meherwan

Daruvala, whose creative abilities transformed initial concepts to solid tangible reality.

And finally thanks to Mr. Shapoor Mistry for his faith in us and giving us the opportunity to organise the event. We are

deeply honoured to be a part of his philanthropic gesture and goodwill towards the entire Parsi community of Pune.

- Arzan Daruvala, SP RE



DELHI RO Gets a New Address

The much-awaited shifting of the Delhi regional office finally happened on the occasion of Diwali (on November 3, 2013). A sense of pride prevailed as we moved into our new office which is located at the iconic Videocon Tower, in the heart of Delhi.

The new office was inaugurated by the president, Mr. S. C. Dixit, whose thoughts and views motivated the employees. An elaborate puja was conducted for the success of the new office.

Last but not the least, a cake was cut to celebrate the event and snacks were distributed to all. Enthused employees were seen exploring their new cubicles and other facilities, capturing every moment on their cameras.

- Rukhsana Haque, Delhi Region





Annual Day Celebration HYDRABAD REGION

The Annual day at Hyderabad was celebrated with a difference this year - the theme was 'Save the earth, protect the environment'. Every activity was related to the theme. Staff and their families were dressed in green as this was the dress code to depict the nature. Best dressed families were also given prizes at the end. A painting competition for children on 'Save the environment and protect the earth' was also conducted.

Staff and their children presented a ballet showing how the environment is being degraded by us. The stage decoration was also depicting "Go Green" and handicrafts hung around were environment friendly. These handicrafts were also distributed / used as gifts for the participants. There by, we also saved the cost of decoration. Fresh flower arrangements were avoided intentionally, as it was not befitting the theme.

The participant gifts were all environment friendly, made out of recycled paper / waste material. These gifts



were handed over in newspaper bags. Mr. Saini, gave away the long service awards.

Audience enjoyed the event and it makes us proud that we have raised the bar of performances this year with more innovative ideas.

Annual Day Celebration PUNE REGION



The Pune region celebrated its Annual Day on January 31, 2014, at Siddhi Gardens, Pune. The highlight of the day was the gracious presence of Mr. Shapoor Mistry , who had especially come for the event to spend quality time with the

team. Varghese Mathew (CPO), also graced the occasion.

This year, awards were presented for special contributions towards adoption of safety and quality measures. The selection of nominees was done jointly



by project managers and HODs on certain preset parameters. Everyone enjoyed the performances by staff members which included dances, songs, short plays, etc.



Annual Day Celebration NASHIK REGION

Annual Day was celebrated in Nashik on February 21, 2014, at the Marygold Gardens, Nashik. About 200 employees from Nashik and Aurangabad project sites attended the event. It was a fun-filled occasion with karaoke performances and orchestra. Everybody enjoyed the music, dance and food.



GAUTAMENDU SARKAR DOES IT AGAIN!

In the Brufurt International Marathon, held at Banjul, Gambia, on January 18, 2014, Gautamendu Sarkar (AGM, Accts & Admin), has stood 14th in the 'Mens Open' category of the Half Marathon. Gautam was the sole Indian and the oldest competitor to take part in the strenuous event. He received a medal and certificate for his outstanding effort.

SP SPORTS@HO

We congratulate the combined SPCL and SPRE women's cricket team 'Veera Warriors' for winning the SD Winter Fun Fiesta Women's Cricket League, 2014. This team was led by Anju Jhawar.

The 'Best Batsman' award was given to Liny Rajendran (SPCL-Operations), while the 'Best Bowler' award went to Anjali Sumant (SPCL- Costing). Both of them also scored a hat trick while they were bowling. The team's highest score was 52 runs in 4 overs. It won all the three matches.

At the other end, team 'Spartans' of SPRE were runners-up in the SD Winter Fun Fiesta Men's Cricket League, 2014. Bhiva Tamanekar was declared 'Man of the Series' for his excellent batting.



TEAM
Anju Jhawar (Captain), Anjali Sumant, Liny Rajendran, Paromita Baidya, Megha Bishnoi, Vijisha Menon, Rashmi Juman, Seetal Deshmukh, Unnati Bhadra, Jagruti Raut, Prachi Kelkar, Rachana Ghadi, Kshama Dabke



Liny Rajendran

Cricket Tournament held in HYDERABAD



MAN OF THE SERIES
SUDHAKAR REDDY

BEST BOWLER OF THE SERIES
KRANTHI KIRAN

BEST BATSMAN OF THE SERIES
AKSHAY MUDALI

A six-week inter-site staff cricket tournament, commencing from January 25, 2014, was held in Hyderabad. All matches were held on Saturdays.

Five teams were formed after clubbing sites, as no individual site was in a position to field a team independently. It was quite an effort though to have mixed site teams. The tournament was held on a round-robin league format. Each team played four league matches which were followed by the semi-finals. All project heads took active part in the tournament and

motivated their teams.

Almost all matches were closely contested with the winners emerging only in the last over. After the tough competition, the ITCK+ IRL+ MANTRI+ EMAAR (IIME) and DRPL + CMC + AKES (DCA) teams moved to the finals. After an interesting final, the rolling trophy for the fifth year was bagged by the DRPL + CMC + AKES (DCA) team, led by Mr. P.M. Pillai.

All employees were happy about sports being encouraged which they felt inculcated a sporting spirit. By conducting these tournaments

every year, we are trying to bring in a balance between work, employee engagement and team building. Indeed it was Cricket T 16 in the truest sense.

We eagerly await the next season.

- Viswanath Penmetsa, Hyderabad Region

SHAPOORJI PALLONJI FOUNDATION

Creating a Sustainable, Responsible Business

When the Hills Come Alive with the Laughter of Children

Nestled in the Western Ghats, deep inside the forested lands of the Raigad district in Maharashtra, lies the tiny hamlet of Padsare. The typical nondescript Indian village, Padsare has intermittent electricity, poor roads and thatched roof houses inhabited by a largely tribal population, consisting of migrant workers who are mostly illiterate farmhands. In this rural backdrop stands a school for tribal children. Set up in the mid-1990s by a forward-thinking family, the Matoshree Limaye Ashramshala is home to 320 tribal children aged 6 – 13.

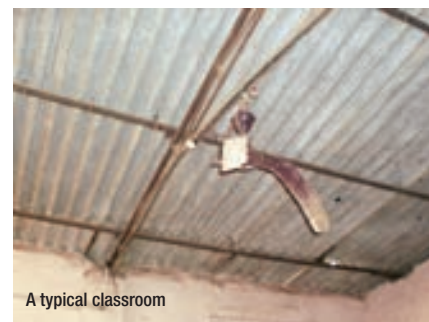
The Shapoorji Pallonji CSR team chanced upon this school a few years ago and was struck by the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff and the children, who despite the odds were eager to learn and grow. The school, though government aided, was abysmally short on funds and could not afford basic infrastructure like a proper approach road, boarding facility for the children, clean washrooms, safe drinking water and nutritious and hygienic food for the children.

A year ago, SP Foundation approached the management with an offer to work together with it to introduce a 'School Improvement Programme' and adopt the ashramshala under its wing, its vision being to empower, educate and develop the institution as a 'model tribal school' in the district. Guided by this aim, it first conducted a 'needs' analysis to understand the priorities for development. This was done through various interactions with the stakeholders, the trustees, the children and their parents and community members which called for personal site visits and a series of meetings. Accordingly, Mrs. Rohiqa Mistry has personally visited and met with the concerned authorities many times, she being a passionate champion of the School Improvement Project. Her vision is to provide equal opportunity for the tribal children studying in the school so that they would be ensured of an education and an environment that was as good as in any urban school. Why should these wonderfully gifted children be any different, questions Mrs. Mistry who is deeply committed to providing quality infrastructure, education, health and nutrition to the children.

With the support and contribution of many of our SP-ites and group companies, the school is slowly and steadily witnessing a transformation. Classrooms have been remodeled and now look bright and airy; desks and benches have been provided (earlier the children sat on the floor); the flooring and the roof have been redone; a computer room and a library and doctor's



The verandah (the way it was) at the Matoshree Limaye Ashramshala



A typical classroom



Cooking area

BEFORE



The dining hall

room have been added; and additional classrooms have been built, so that the school can accommodate more children in higher grades. Further, a clean, independent sanitation wing with separate facilities for boys and girls has been added and a separate hostel block is being constructed. Also, the school kitchen has been entirely remodeled with a professional steam cooking system and a drinking water filtration system in place. Since the area is prone to power cuts, in addition to conventional lights and fans, a solar-powered

system has been installed, and now every classroom and the school grounds has conventional lighting cum solar-powered lights.

The children were earlier following a conventional school-curriculum-based teaching which was not producing satisfactory results, because, being tribals, their exposure and understanding of even Marathi was limited. SP Foundation consequently interacted with a premier education development NGO, Pratham Education Foundation, and devised a unique methodology of teaching and learning, through a participative and interactive model. In the past one year, children have been exposed to new ways of imbibition of basic subjects like the languages, maths and science; they have participated in science workshops and astronomy camps; and also have had the opportunity to understand the human anatomy. To ensure that the children get equal opportunity, English has also been introduced. One of the challenges faced earlier was to ensure sustained attention from the children, since most of them were found to be malnourished and unwell. To overcome this, SP Foundation, in consultation with a doctor and nutritionist, devised a meal supplement plan for the children—keeping in mind their eating habits—and nutritious items like groundnut, jaggery, eggs and fruits were introduced in their daily diet. Now, a doctor visits

the school every month to monitor the children's height and weight and treat illnesses/infections if any. The children are also being advised on hygiene, cleanliness and safety. To involve and educate the parents (most children are first generation learners), regular parent-teacher meetings and interactions are held. A School Annual Day is also held in March every year. Speaking about the improved facilities in the school, the school principal, Jadhav Baliram Pithya, had this to say on one occasion: "As a tribal myself, I understand the odds that these children face, but thanks to companies like yours, today we see a ray of hope. The school has better facilities, children are healthier and they are even learning English."

This project enjoys a true partnership of all our group companies and SP Foundation is indebted to the senior management of Afcons, Sterling Wilson, Eureka Forbes, SP Real Estate, SP Construction and Engineering and their teams for their unstinted support and contribution, despite very challenging surroundings. The project has also won over the hearts of some of our employees. SP RE employees, for example, hosted a 'Sports Day' in October for the school children and actually visited and spent a day at the school. The Afcons Communications team visited the school in February and interacted with the children,

Classroom bursting with eager students



Doctor teaching dental hygiene



Students taking part in science camp



NOW

Fruits to start the day



Interacting with a student





Packed hall on PTA Day



Mrs. Mistry interacting with school teachers



Outdoor work

teachers and the principal to understand the impact we were making and find out how we could extend further support. Further, Afcons has wholeheartedly supported the 'Education Transformation' and 'Health and Nutrition' initiatives in the school, including the teacher training and English training sessions. A team from SP Constructions comprising Uppendra Rawal and Prashant Bandekar and team leader Nozer Tarapore has tirelessly worked at the school site for the past 14 months. The design and layout of the school was guided by Mohan Jacob and his team from SP RE, while the electrical, wiring and solar lighting was commissioned by the Sterling Wilson team, led by Mr. Soman and Mr. Kailas. Eureka Forbes' contribution ensured that children got safe drinking water through a state-of-the-art water filtration plant. Sharing his feelings about the company's contribution, Mr. S. L. Goklaney said, "In keeping with EFL's vision of a happy, healthy world for future generations, we are delighted to partner in ensuring the health of these students." The company has also trained the school staff in the upkeep and maintenance (hygienically) of various school facilities. Last but not the least, the SP RE land procurement team—comprising Adil Daruwala, Philip Joseph, Mr. Meherwan and Mr. Arzan—deserves mention and special thanks for helping identify and support the school.

This status of the project will always read 'Work in Progress' as there is so much that still needs to be done. In the coming year, we would like to introduce computer learning, encourage sports, teach vocational skills and crafts, open a library and take the children on educational trips and excursions, among other plans. Mrs. Rohiqa Mistry sums it up thus: "My long-term goal is to create a model school that is as good as any, a happy environment where the children can meet their

potential and get a chance to live their dreams and exercise their right to a first class education."

Talking about the entire effort, our chairman, Mr. Shapoor Mistry's has said, "Like this project, which is a group initiative, I would urge all our group companies to support similar programmes under the 'SP Foundation' banner. While today the Companies Bill makes CSR mandatory, our group has always been involved in environmental and social development, and we should continue to do so. Group supported projects should be large in terms of coverage and impact."

Making a Wish Come True

As children, all of us had dreams. We wondered what we would be when we grew up, and now we encourage our children to do likewise. We talk to them, guide them on their preferred vocations in life, we expose them to books, to videos and movies, so that they become aware of all possible opportunities. But what



At the Kidzania info-entertainment park



Children learning how to dance the Bollywood way at SP Picnic



Happy faces...

about orphans? What about children who live in the streets? Should they never get the opportunity for self development?

Shapoorji Pallonji provided 70 children with such opportunity from the Sanjeevani Orphanage and the Voice shelter homes in Mumbai. Voice is an organisation that works with street children in Mumbai. They have set up shelters in various neighbourhoods where street children, who either beg or are seen loitering about, get a safe place to spend their days. They are encouraged to study and are enrolled in a municipal school. The shelter also makes sure that they study after school, get some decent food to eat and are taken care of. Though they live in one of the biggest and busiest metropolises in the country, these children have never been inside a bank—they do not know what a restaurant or a mall looks like.

These children—the ones that Shapoorji Pallonji has taken under its wing—had a day out when they were taken to Kidzania, an 'info-edutainment park' in Mumbai, where they got first-hand opportunity to visit a bank, use an ATM, understand how the police and fire departments work, work in an office, learn a skill like Bollywood-like dancing and participate in a fashion show— but everything in a child-friendly manner.

The children were initially overwhelmed by the theme park, the facilities and the thronging crowds, but soon they mingled and participated with gusto. Sweta (name changed), for example, exclaimed, "I never knew what it feels like to earn money after doing a honest day's work! Today I understand. I want to work very hard when I grow up and become somebody big." And an awe-struck Hardeep (name changed) had this to say: "I have only seen these big malls from outside, dreaming what they look like. Today I got to visit one. I want to earn lots of money when I grow up so I can visit the mall every day."

The children were all given a small hamper at the end of the day with stationery items and books with the message that if they studied well and worked hard, the world could be theirs.

Urban Gardening: Growing Your Own Vegetables from Waste

As a part of Sustainability@SP Projects, environmental sustainability is addressed with a dedicated theme every quarter, and our theme this quarter was 'Waste Not... Reuse, Reduce'.

To engage and involve SP-ites in this, a workshop was conducted at SP Center on February 27, 2014 on growing vegetables in your kitchen garden.

Conducted by an expert team of naturalists, The Earthoholics, the workshop demonstrated how plants and herbs can be grown in small pots and containers. The workshop saw huge participation with the SD Canteen premises overflowing with eager 'Greenies'. We are thankful to SD Corporation for sharing their premises to make the workshop a big success.

Wish all SP-ites 'Happy Growing and Healthy Eating'!

(We encourage all regions to similarly identify local organisations that can provide simple information and tips on working towards a sustainable environment. Let them come across to the office and share their knowledge/methods with the staff.)

SP Centre Observes Blood Donation Day

After the healthy turnout in the first blood donation drive in June 2013, SP Center had organised a second drive on February 28, 2014, in collaboration with the Masina Hospital, Mumbai. Masina Hospital is a charitable hospital that caters mainly to the lower middle class and poor patients. They also have a blood bank which caters to the underprivileged and the SP blood donation drive was organised in support of this. Posters were put up and e-mail updates sent to all employees, encouraging them to support the drive. We collected 100 units of blood in this second drive which was much appreciated by Masina Hospital authorities.

Special thanks go out to the Forbes Facilities team which had organised refreshments and tea for all volunteers.

our theme
this quarter
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Not...
Reuse,
Reduce

Showcasing SP's CSR Efforts



SP at CII Southern Region Seminar, Chennai

Being pioneers and trendsetters in the construction industry, Shapoorji Pallonji was invited to share its efforts in labour welfare, especially protection of migrant workers' children in the construction trade, at the CII Southern Region Seminar, Chennai. SP is among the few construction houses that provide for and ensure that its workers and their family members, especially children, are taken care of well. The seminar was on the theme 'Conscious Competitiveness in Business' and had speakers and panel members who were senior business leaders, including Mukund Rajan from the Tata Group, Vinita Bali from Britannia Industries, Prasad Menon from Tata-SIA, Lakshmi Narayanan from Cognizant, Dr Cherian from Cherian Heart Institute and Dr Satish Kumar, who is State Head, UNICEF. The audience appreciated SP's philosophy of caring for the community and the environment, especially the welfare initiatives adopted at our sites for migrant workers and the daycare-cum-school for their children.

Caring for the Community and Our Workers

Annual Camp of Tara Mobile Creche, SP Infocity, Pune

An NGO, Tara Mobile, has been working for construction workers rights and children's welfare. Tara Mobile also helps run the daycare centre and school at our own SP Infocity premises. An 'Annual Camp' that had been organised for the centre had the participation of over 300 children and 160 parents and staff members. SP Infocity has been playing host to these annual camps for over 3–4 years now. The Tara Mobile Creche team expressed their gratitude for allowing this programme to continue.

Oral Polio Vaccine Drive

An 'Oral Polio Vaccine' drive, together with routine immunisation programme was organised at the BECL site, Bhavnagar to ensure good health for workers' children.

Blood Donation Camp

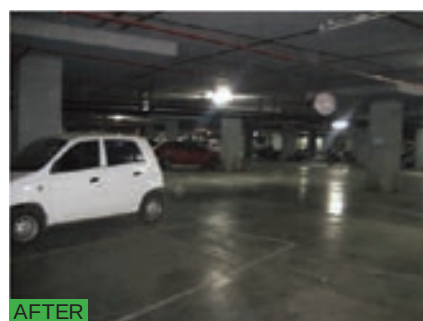
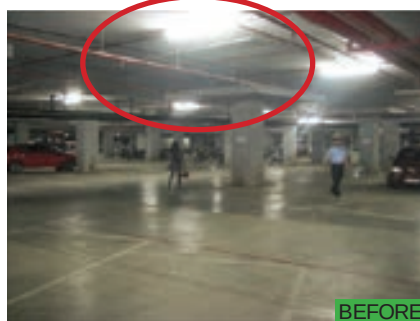
At a blood donation camp organised in association with Lions Blood Bank at the Metrozone project site, Chennai, 59 units of blood were donated by our site staff and workers. The blood was for needy patients.

Donation Drive in Aid of NGO

SPCL, Kolkata Region had organised a drive to donate clothes and teaching materials for the Ramakrishna Mission, an NGO. The Data Ware House and Assam sites took part in the drive by donating blankets.

SP Properties Observes 'Earth Hour'

Our mission is to be environmentally sustainable and to that end we observed 'Earth Hour' on March 29, 2014 along with the rest of the world. To express our solidarity with the worldwide movement, homes and establishments at SP Properties sites across the country had kept all lights and electrical appliances (barring emergency services and essentials) switched off for an hour, in order to conserve energy and improve the world carbon footprint. Kudos to Mr. Raj Gandhi and his team for this excellent initiative!



SP Group's Caring Philosophy Spills Over to Group Companies

Forbes Charitable Trust Supports 'Safe Drinking Water' Project

The Forbes Charitable Trust has extended its support to a 'Safe Drinking Water' project at Poothurai, a village near Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu. Working in association with the Sri Aurobindo Rural Village and Action Movement (SARVAM)—the body has been active in the area for the past nine years, working towards uplifting the community by addressing health



Forbes Water purification plant being inaugurated by Mr. Ashok Barat

Forbes water purification plant at Poothurai village



Responding to the emergency, the senior management immediately started organising aid and support for the affected employees and their families.

and education needs—the trust hopes to both educate and provide safe drinking water through the ‘Safe Drinking Water’ project and thereby ensure good health for the people. The water quality in the village and its surrounding areas is extremely poor and has affected people’s health and livelihoods. Expressing his views at the inauguration, Ashok Barat, who is the MD & CEO of Forbes & Company Ltd., said, “For us it was the joy of giving that was perhaps more overwhelming than the villagers’ joy of receiving.”

Forbes Lux International, Eureka Forbes, SP Group Reach Out in Aid of Typhoon Victims in Philippines

On November 8, a super typhoon struck Philippines wreaking havoc and destruction that affected close

to 14 million people. Our group company Forbes Philippines’ branch office was also affected with some employees and families losing their homes and belongings. Many people in Philippines were rendered homeless and were devoid of shelter, food and water. Responding to the emergency, the senior management immediately started organising aid and support for the affected employees, their families and the public at large. Hundreds of ‘Aquaguard Personal Purifiers’ were dispatched from India, while the Philippines team put together ‘Relief Good Packages’ containing food, medicines, clothes and blankets. A personal donation was also made by the Von Der Becke family towards relief efforts.



Forbes Philippines staff helping victims



Forbes Philippines’ donation for typhoon victims

(If you have a suggestion on how you can make your business/project sustainable, do email on csr@shapoorji.com or zarine.commissariat@shapoorji.com)

Accolades for FORBES TECHNOSYS



Forbes Technosys Awarded for Use of IT in Wholesale Banking

Forbes Technosys Ltd. (FTL) has been awarded at the Financial Inclusion & Payment Systems Conference, held at Hotel Eros Hilton, in New Delhi, from October 25–26, 2014, for its project 'Self Service Solutions for Transactional Banking Including Cash Deposit Kiosks and e-Lobbies' in the category 'Use of IT in Wholesale Banking'. The award was handed over to Ajay Singh (CEO, Forbes Technosys) by Shri Jesudasu Seelam (Honourable Minister of State for Finance, Government of India), Chandrashekhar R. (President Nasscom & Former Secretary to Government of India for IT & Telecom) and Mr. Mehboob Chowdhury (CEO, CITYCELL, Bangladesh).

Forbes Technosys Receives ASSOCHAM-ICAI SME Excellence Award

Forbes Technosys also received the ASSOCHAM-ICAI SME Excellence Award (Runners-up) for innovation. The award was presented by Shri K.H. Muniyappa (Hon'ble Minister of State for MSME, Government of India). Ajay Singh received the award on behalf of Forbes Technosys.



Forbes Technosys Honoured at International Sales Volume Leadership Awards - 2013

Digital Check Corporation (DCC) of USA has honoured Forbes Technosys with their International Sales Volume Leadership Award - 2013 for achieving the distinction of 'Top Country in the World' in the sale of scanners.

Forbes Technosys Wins IMC Excellence Award for Emerging Technologies

Forbes Technosys has emerged the winner at the Indian Merchants Chamber - IT Awards for its exemplary solutions in emerging technology in the 'Cloud' and 'Mobility' spaces. The awards were given by the Indian Merchants Chamber, under the banner IMC-IT awards. The award winners were selected by an eminent jury comprising the former chairmen of Nasscom and other dignitaries from the technology space. The Indian Merchants Chamber (IMC) - IT awards is an initiative that acknowledges significant contributions by companies in the technology space, setting a benchmark for others. The award recognises technological discoveries and initiatives that have not only benefited mass users but also sparked business transformation and growth. In the very first year of the inception of these awards, Forbes Technosys was amongst the few companies to be selected from close to 150 nominations. The award was presented by Mr. P. S. Deodhar (Former Chairman of the Electronic



Commission, Government of India) to Ajay Singh (Chief Executive Officer, Forbes Technosys Limited), at a function attended by eminent dignitaries from various fields. Indian Merchants Chamber (IMC) is a premier chamber of trade, commerce and industry in India, set up in 1907. Headquartered in Mumbai, it has more than 3,000 members, comprising various sections of the business community.



SP at the SOUTH POLE

Antarctica is a cold and dark continent. But in spite of that, a few countries have scientific research stations in Antarctica, mainly in the coastal areas.

Ravi Shankar (Director – SP Armada Oil Exploration Pvt. Ltd.) braved a 170-km trek to reach the South Pole, walking almost 24 kms a day at times. A 12-member team ably supported by three support teams undertook this adventure that calls for strength, tenacity and courage.

The average temperature encountered by them was between -17 to -40°C with wind speeds averaging 12 – 18 miles per hour.

About 25 to 30 adventurers undertake this trip annually, given the short window available for expeditions, i.e., between end-November and end-January.

On returning, Ravi Shankar made a presentation on his trip to our young leadership team at SP center offering insights on planning, execution and willingness to take risks.

He had carried the flags of Shapoorji Pallonji, Afcons and Eureka Forbes with him to the South Pole.



SP Fabricator has been awarded 'Certificate of Commendable Health Safety & Environment Achievement' for its remarkable performance in health safety and environment at TRIL Info Park, Block – A, Ramanujan IT City Project, Chennai. Photo shows Mr. C. Nethaji (Chennai Regional Head) receiving the certificate from Mr. Darren, Alliance Manager.



Mr. Dilip Thomas, Mr. Sarosh H Mody & trainer Bezan Chenoy leading Nefyn (J Fortune Up), winner of The Sprinters Cup (Gr.1) Nefyn won for the second successive year at Hyderabad beating last year's adversary speed six in identical fashion. Nefyn was bred at Manjri Stud. The chestnut gelding sported the silks of Mr. Dilip Thomas who jointly owns Nefyn with Mr. & Mrs. Shapoor Mistry. The feat of two consecutive sprinters Cup Gr.1 was earlier performed by Oasis Star also bred at Manjri Stud Farm.

Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks

INNOVATION ADDS NEW DIMENSION TO CONVENTIONAL BRICKS



Engineers and researchers are focusing on effective waste utilisation methods, as it not only solves disposal problems but also controls environmental pollution and provides suitable substitutes for construction materials which are getting scarce. Fly ash, slag and other industrial waste, as also agricultural waste, are being increasingly used in making construction materials. Consequently clay bricks—an essential construction material—are being replaced by fly ash bricks.

One waste material that merits consideration is excavated soil. Often, such soil cannot be used to fill low lying areas due to compaction constraints. It can be used to manufacture bricks, however, but the process requires a large tract of land for moulding, drying and burning the bricks, for which coal is required as fuel. The smoke generated in the process pollutes the air and, therefore, civic authorities do not encourage setting up of such facilities.

One effective method of utilising the soil—which has been adopted at the Mindtree site, Bhubaneshwar—is the manufacture of compressed stabilized earth blocks (CSEB) which are a composite of soil and cement (up to 10%).

The Mindtree site was generating 50,000 Cu m of soil which needed to be disposed. They also had a requirement of 9,00,000 bricks for masonry walls. So they came up with the idea of utilising the soil to manufacture CSEB blocks.

The soil was sent to the KIIT Engineering Laboratory to check for suitability. After it was found to meet IS requirements, confirmatory tests were carried out in Bengaluru. With inputs from the domain experts, M/s Mahijaa Consultants, the project to manufacture the blocks was taken up and a unit was set up near the

site. The composition—as per guidelines laid down by Auroville Earth Institute and Mrinmaye, Bengaluru—was 296 kg soil + 24 kg OPC Cement Grade 53 (8% by weight) and 32 L water (10–12% by weight). The compacted blocks were manufactured in 300*200*100 mm size and with a compression ratio of 1.85. They were cured for 7 days before use.

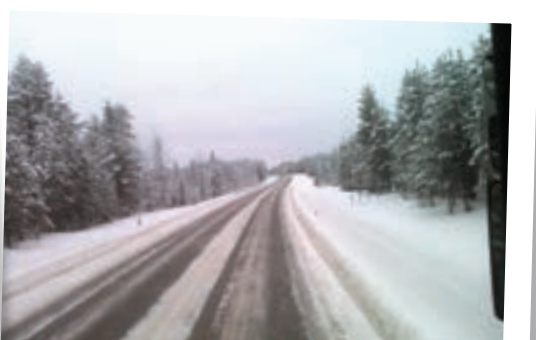
Samples were tested for compressive strength and results showed they had strength of 9.5 MPa in dry condition and 4.5 MPa in wet condition. Routine tests on dry samples were carried out for compressive strength daily at the site laboratory and they were found to conform to IS 1725 and IS 3495 specifications.

These blocks are cheaper than conventional bricks, as the blocks are produced locally with available material and semi-skilled labour. Each CSEB block replaces 2.5 conventional bricks (of size 250*125*75 mm).

- Binayak Raut, Hyderabad Region



To the Arctic Circle and Beyond



As I signed for the 'Arctic Wonderland' trip, I couldn't help but think to myself that one of my idiosyncrasies—and a very peculiar one at that—could be best described by the German word 'fernweh' which means 'an ache for distant places'. More loosely, it means 'farsickness'—which is ironical indeed, given that most people usually suffer from 'homesickness'.

The Arctic Continent appears to be the end of the world on the globe—at least to me it does. So, it was going to be one long flight, I mused: Delhi to Rovaniemi via Helsinki.

The group I was travelling with was an all-woman group. There were fifteen of them in all, and the exciting part was that I had neither met nor seen them before. So, it was going to be a voyage of discovery—both in terms of people and places. I couldn't help but smile to myself at the thought of it.

And so for Helsinki I found myself bound and with that began possibly the most exciting holiday I have had in a long, long time. Here's a day-by-day account on how we made the most of our weeklong trip.

DAY1

We began from Rovaniemi which is the capital and commercial hub of Finland's northernmost province, Lapland. It is situated about five kilometres south of the Arctic Circle. A contrasting landscape created by the white of the snow against a dark background of bare trees that seemed to be slipping into twilight greeted us from the aeroplane window. We checked into the hotel and wound up the day with salmon for dinner and then went looking around for mementos at local shops. Soon it started freezing and we ran for the shelter and warmth of our cosy rooms.

DAY2

We were at the Safari Club. We collected our thermal clothing and headed straight for the reindeer farm where we learnt about Lappish culture and reindeer husbandry. I successfully passed a reindeer-driving test and was issued an 'International Reindeer Driver's License'. Reindeer herding has thrived in Lapland for centuries and even today over 7,000 herders depend on it as their main occupation. We also participated in a special Lapp ceremony of crossing the Arctic Circle and were awarded a diploma for it. In between we enjoyed a refreshing cup of hot berry juice.

We next took a guided tour of the Arktikum Museum and took part in a 'Snow Mobile Safari'—motor-biking on snow that is—which turned out to be an exhilarating experience. We then set off for Santa Claus Village. In Rovaniemi, one experiences Christmas throughout the year. Rovaniemi is said to be the hometown of Santa Claus and we had the pleasure of meeting him at the Santa Claus Office on the Arctic Circle.

DAY3

The next day was spent at the Ranua Wildlife Park in Lapland, the world's northernmost zoo. It was an awesome experience with snow crunching under

our feet, as we slipped and slid on the icy slopes, pulling our gloves off from time to time to take photographs, even if that had our fingers begin to ache within seconds. But the experience was fun, and the wildlife was fantastic!

In the evening, we hunted for the Northern Lights. Also known as The Aurora Borealis, they are bands of swaying, dancing lights of the aurorae along the earth's magnetic lines of force, caused by collisions of electrically charged particles from the sun as they enter the earth's atmosphere. The lights are seen above the earth's magnetic poles in both the northern and southern hemispheres. Alas! I think we blinked and missed them (sob! sob!), although they were spotted at Ivalo, 40 km away from where we were.

DAY4

We were at Saariselkä which is a winter sports centre nestled in a valley high up in Finnish Lapland. Saariselkä is a compact strip of a village. It has the nearby Kaunispää Falls that are equipped with ski lifts. We took a ride in one of them and indulged in a thrilling 15-km husky safari with a team of six huskies (breed of wild dogs). It transported us back to the caveman era when our ancestors went hunting on these sleds, driven by wild dogs. It was an exhilarating feeling indeed! Here we also had a glimpse of the Russian International Border.

DAY5

We visited the Igloo Village at Kakslautanen and spent the evening in a 'Glass Igloo', marvelling at the millions of stars in the sky. The experience was unforgettable, even as we kept our fingers crossed to catch a glimpse of the amazing Northern Lights. Glass igloos are built from a very special type of thermo glass which helps maintain normal room temperature inside the igloo constantly. It also prevents the glass from getting white frosted, thereby keeping the view clear, even if the temperature drops below -30°C .

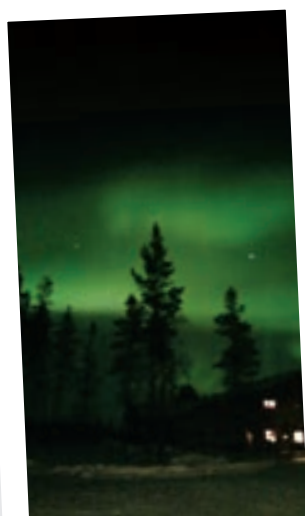
DAY6

We are back in Santa Village to meet him again, this time up and closer. We took personal gifts from him, fed the reindeer, made wishes with snow balls and threw them down a bridge. We next visited the Pixie House and the Elves Tower and had a steaming cup of tea at the Celebration House. We walked around and explored the many sites of Saariselkä and headed for Ivalo to catch our flight to Helsinki.

DAY7

We explored the sights and sounds of Finland's capital, Helsinki. Founded in 1550, the city is also called "Daughter of the Baltic" and has been the Finnish capital since 1812, when it was rebuilt by the tsars of Russia along the lines of St. Petersburg—a miniature one though—a role it has played in many a Cold War movie. Today, Helsinki pulls off the trick of being something of an international metropolis while still retaining a small-town feel. To make the most of our last day, we toured around the Helsinki City Centre and Market Hall, tried the local delicacies—reindeer meat, turkey, freshwater crayfish, et al—which suffused a new high in us as we got ready for our marathon flight back home.

- Rukhsana Haque, Delhi Region



Magazines of some SP Group companies



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