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RWRDC DESIGNERS IGNITE YOUNG MINDS THROUGH A CLASS ACT

Inspired by Rakesh Sharma, HAL tests unique pilot project with wonderkids

Project Aasman a big hit; kids say 'dil maange more'

By Anantha Krishnan Muralidharan Nair

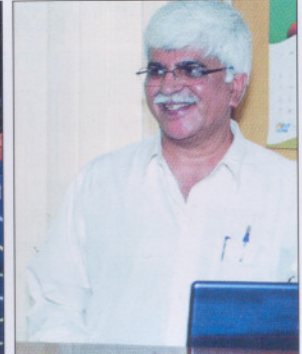
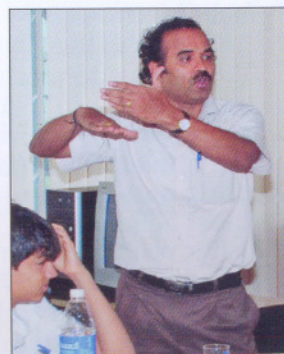
Call it the magic of *Project Aasman*. For the 20-odd Class-VIII students of the Bangalore-based Mallya Aditi International School, September 2009 will be one month and year that they will remember for a long, long time.

The brainchild of India's first man in space and former HAL Test Pilot, Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, *Project Aasman* took off at HAL's RWRDC with a dedicated team of brilliant brains sharing their knowledge in aeronautics with some bright kids.

This pilot project was conceived at CO by Director (HR) Mr Sanjeev Sahi after Wg Cdr Rakesh Sharma expressed his desire to launch this project. Later, the idea was executed to perfection by Managing Director (Helicopter Complex) Mr R. Srinivasan's team. The effort and passion with which Head of HR Ms Aruna Rao and her team propelled this mission were



The excited students of Mallya Aditi International School at RWRDC during the launch of *Project Aasman*.



HAL's aviation experts interact with the students during the project.

Rao and her team propelled this mission were complimented by the Management, parents and students, who were part of *Project Aasman*.

Corporate Communications, the nodal point for this not-much-hyped event, code-named it as *Project Aasman*.

Part of the push for this project came from the group of parents at Mallya Aditi International School who have started an initiative called PASS (Partnership for Appreciation of Science outside School) and taken up the responsibility of taking their wards beyond classrooms to give them exposure to different fields. The PASS initiative is spearheaded by Ms Ramma Basappa, a parent-cum-entrepreneur and daughter of former HAL Chairman Gp Capt B.K. Kapoor.

Here's a gist of what *Project Aasman* was all about:

Session-1, September 5: 'Making of a Helicopter' was the subject of curiosity on Day-1 of the theory session. Dr Prasad Sampath, Chief Designer and Mr D.S.D. Prasad Rao, HOFG (D) donned the role of teachers and explained the basics of flying, the science of flying and the art of flying.

The Prasad-Prasad duo touched on all aspects of a helicopter and the whole session was filled with simple narrations which held the young audience in thrall. The Q&A break gave us a glimpse into the India of tomorrow, as the kids fired a volley of 'whys' and 'hows' at the two experts. The graphic session on how a helicopter flies kept the youngsters on excitement mode and within no time it was just another aeronautics class in progress. Age was no factor.

Session 2, September 12: Having got the basics right in Session-1 and slept over it for a week, the enthused lot couldn't wait any further to hit the shop floor to see the mean machines up close. They visited the machine shop, transmission assembly, final assembly,



Students at the ALH Final Assembly. (Right) MD(HC)

Mr Srinivasan gets a small present from a participant.

ground test centre, systems integration laboratory, design analysis wings and flight test centre. "The whole HAL experience was amazing. We learned a lot, and honestly we are still to recover from the excitement of having dated some unbelievable machines," Karthik Basappa, a participant, wrote to MSM. "This trip to HAL will be in my memories for ever, as something like this happens only once in our lives," wrote Aadit Shah, while Gaurav Reddy said that he was proud to have visited HAL, and saluted all those who had made HAL mighty over the years.

Incidentally, Karthik, Aadit and Gaurav have been selected for the *MSM Special Awards* for winning the essay contest on *Project Aasman*. Said Mr Srinivasan, MD (HC), after interacting with the children on the final day: "It was a refreshing experience, and took me back to my school days. I am confident that these children will have a lot to contribute to future India and I hope we have triggered their imagination to make them good thinkers."

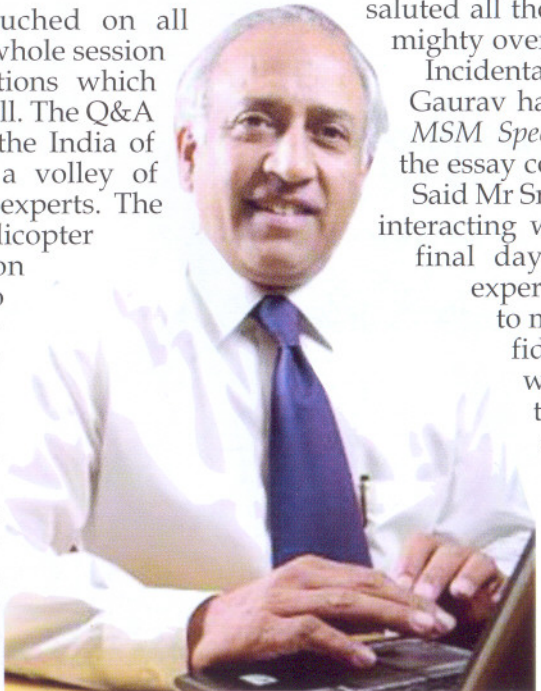


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'Good job, HAL': Wg Cdr Rakesh Sharma was thrilled to hear the news that HAL had executed *Project Aasman* with so much success. Far away from the hustle and bustle of Bangalore, he was all praise for HAL. "When the parents shared their requirement, I had no second thoughts and knew HAL was the ideal place for this initiative. I believe that in India we are fortunate to have a lot of able people. In this line of work, apart from the ability, you need passion. This is the right age, and you must catch them young when they are in school. If you are hooked on to something, you are bound to excel. I am extremely happy that a beginning has been made in HAL through *Project Aasman*," he said.

Wg Cdr Rakesh Sharma has been a great inspiration and motivator for Team CorpCom. All our new ideas have found a great supporter in him, and here's what he had to say some time back on *MSM* and *The Plane*: "I wish to congratulate the Corporate Communication Team of HAL for the change that's being brought about. I want your team to know that ex-HAL guys like me feel really proud to see such high quality stuff coming out of HAL. Keep up the good work — well begun is half done."

Finally, three cheers to RWRDC for making *Project Aasman* a reality! ✨



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