



A young APJ Kalam in conversation with, among others, aerospace engineer Satish Dhawan, during SLV-III review meeting.

30 HOURS WITH APJ ABDUL KALAM

ANISA KHAN

It was the mid-afternoon of October 17, 2014, when Indian High Commissioner Pankaj Saran, then MCCI President Rokia Afzal Rahman and I were waiting at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, with keen anticipation, to welcome former Indian President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. This was not his first visit to Dhaka, but, as fate would have it, it was his last one, which left indelible memories in our minds and warm feelings in our hearts.

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry had invited Dr Kalam to be the Guest of Honour at the chamber's 110th anniversary celebration to deliver a keynote speech. The cele-

brated scientist had graciously accepted the invitation, with one condition that he be allowed the opportunity to address science students studying at Bangladeshi universities.

We were happy to oblige, and the simple but giant of a man travelled to Dhaka for a period of just about 30 hours to be in our midst.

The aircraft bearing him landed on time, and he quickly disembarked and walked out on nimble feet with natural aura wafting around him. He smiled and humbly accepted the flower bouquets we had carried for him, and, very businesslike, started to briskly walk towards the exit with us following sharply. This was startling, given that he had just observed his 83rd birthday two

days ago.

He seemed to be a man in a hurry, and that there was little time to waste and he must get going with the work that needed to be done.

His meeting with the science students was early that evening, and as he came into the ballroom of Sonargaon Hotel, where over 700 eager, bubbly and enthusiastic students from 17 universities were assembled, his face became radiant at seeing the young people and he happily greeted all present.

He quickly commenced his address without wasting anytime. He radiated the feeling, again, that time was short and every moment must be optimised. He entranced the students and all oth-

ers present that meaningful evening, electrifying the audience with his unique style of speaking. He related his own humble beginnings as a poor student, and how he went on to study science and aeronautical engineering before ascending to the highest position in India.

His anecdotes included an amazing one of when he was the President of India and how he flew a jet-fighter at the age of 76.

The next day at the celebration of MCCI's anniversary, he was eager to get going and gently prodded me to commence the proceedings.

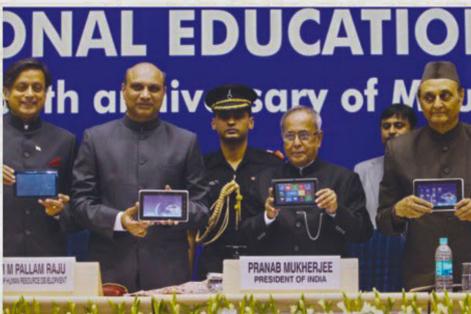
His presentation was well-researched, elaborate, and he spoke about how agricultural processes could

be revolutionised to benefit mankind. Dr Kalam listened with rapt attention to the questions posed to him, and each time he wanted to know the name of the person and what profession s/he was in.

As soon as the Q&A session ended, the vote of thanks delivered, he quickly descended from the stage and made his way to the exit.

That was the last we saw of him. Rest in peace, President Kalam. You have left behind memories which will remain etched in our minds forever. You have touched our hearts with your gentlemanly manner and that incredible smile!

(The writer is managing director of Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.)



From left, the house where Kalam was born, the Kalam-Raju stent for heart patients and President Pranab Mukherjee and others hold Kalam-Raju tablet aimed at arming doctors.

CHASE YOUR DREAMS: APJ's last words to 'I am Kalam' actor

Harsh Mayar grew up in a Delhi slum, dreaming of becoming an actor. And when he finally got his place under the spotlight, Harsh also found the man who gave wings to his dreams.

Harsh played the main role in the critically-acclaimed 2011 Hindi movie 'I Am Kalam' which portrayed the story of a youngster inspired by India's missile man APJ Abdul Kalam.

It was during a meeting with the former president after the release of the film that Harsh found what he calls the true calling of his life.

"He told me, 'keep chasing your dreams, my boy'. It was then that the Kalam sir gave me the true mission for my life," Harsh, 17, told the Hindustan Times on Tuesday.

While the film went on to win several national and international awards, Harsh also jointly bagged the national award for best child artiste in 2011.

"Nobody knew me till then [when the film was made]. I was just another boy who had a passion for theatre," said Harsh.

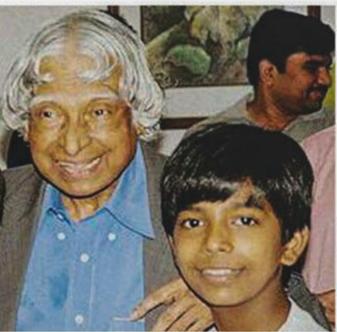
Ever since the news broke about the demise of Kalam, Harsh's phone hasn't stopped ringing. And he has been giving interviews ceaselessly since then.

Born to a poor family in Delhi, Harsh's story isn't much different from the most people's president as Kalam is known. His uncle Sunil Kumar had taken him to a coaching centre in Delhi because his parents could not afford to pay the fees of his acting classes.

"I gave around 200 auditions for singing, dancing and acting, before 'I Am Kalam' director Nila Madhab Panda picked me for the role," recalled Harsh.

After the news of APJ's death broke, he wrote on Twitter: "If people know me, today just because of this great soul thank you so much Sir for giving me Your Name 'Kalam' Rip."

Source: hindustantimes



APJ Kalam with Harsh Mayar, the child actor who played the titular role in 'I Am Kalam'.

WHY MANY HEARTS STILL BEAT FOR HIM

What have missiles got to do with medicine? Everything, if you are a heart patient.

The developing of the Kalam-Raju stent has meant life to thousands of cardiac patients in India who have had India's first intra-coronary stent implanted.

The foundation for the strange fusion of missile technology and medicine was laid when the defence minister's scientific adviser Dr APJ Abdul Kalam asked why

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2010, the United Nations decided to honour this 'great scientist' on his 79th birth anniversary and declared his birthday on October 15 as the World Students' Day. Since then, October 15 is observed as a day for students all around the world. He received honorary doctorates from 40 universities. In 2005, Switzerland declared 26 May as "Science Day" to commemorate Kalam's visit to the country.

the technology could not be used to benefit the medical world.

So what began as a question when Abdul Kalam was working at the Defence Research and Development Laboratory in Hyderabad took shape subsequently as an answer to cardiac health-care in India with cardiologist Dr Soma Raju joining hands with the missile scientist.

The Society for Biomedical Technology, which was established in 1993, took pioneering steps in the direction of a fully indigenous coronary stent being developed in 1998. Kalam's dream was real-

ised, thanks to Arun Tiwari, who actually developed the stent. Tiwari who had worked with Kalam for a decade in the Defence Research and Development Laboratory decided to devote full time to the Society for Biomedical Technology which he had founded to realise Kalam's dream.

Explaining how the Kalam-Raju stent was developed, Tiwari said defence scientists had first developed a variety of stainless steel. The material, originally developed to prevent corrosion of naval ships, was refined and adapted to ensure that while maximum flow of blood would be permitted the stent would not be too weak either.

The development of the Kalam-Raju stent had provided the competition that made international companies promptly drop the prices of their stents.

While the Kalam-Raju stent created waves for its affordability, the Kalam-Raju tablet is aimed at arming healthcare workers at the primary level like doctors, and first responders to an emergency with a 'rugged' tablet capable of performing a host of medical processes.

It helps physicians and certified nurse practitioners in rural areas access patient information, diagnostic tools and new treatment procedures. First-time responders to an emergency can use the tablet to retrieve patients' medical history. The device is valuable with unconscious and incoherent patients who can't provide reliable information about their prescriptions and allergies.

Source: The Hindu, The New Indian Express, rediff.com

THE RAMESWARAM BOY WHO BECAME PRESIDENT

Stories of extreme hardship, braving impossible odds and innumerable sacrifices, abound in the lives of nearly 90 percent of the students in India. But among them, some perform exceptionally well. Their academic laurels are so brilliant, that at times their CV looks intimidating. And each one acknowledges that it's the right education that made them what they are today.

APJ Abdul Kalam, dubbed by many the greatest student Indian ever had, is one of them.

"Perseverance, hard work and patience." This, he once said, was alone the path to progress. And those were the very words he's lived by all through his life. His father Jainulabdeen, a humble boat owner, wasn't educated, but he wanted Kalam to study. Kalam would get up at 4:00am, bathe, and then go for his mathematics class. After his morning class, Kalam along with his cousin Samsuddin went around town distributing the newspaper. As the town had no electricity, kerosene lamps were lit at his home between 7:00pm and 9:00pm. But because Kalam studied until 11:00pm, his mother would save some for him for later use.

THE COLLEGE YEARS

Kalam always had the support of his school-teachers. The flight of birds had fascinated him since he was a boy, but it was years later he realised that he wanted to fly aircraft. After finishing school, he took up physics at St Joseph's College, Trichi, but towards the end he was dissatisfied. When he discovered aeronautical engineering, he regretted having lost three precious years.

At Madras Institute of Technology, where Kalam studied aeronautics, he learnt an important lesson: the value of time. He was leading a project on system design, when one day the principal walked into the class to see his work. He appeared dissatisfied and told Kalam that he wanted the project finished in the next two days; else his scholarship aid would be withdrawn. That unsettled Kalam; years of his father's hardships would come to naught. Kalam worked without food and sleep. On the last day, his professor came to check on his progress. He was impressed and said: "I was putting you under stress and asking you to meet a difficult deadline," recounted Dr Kalam.

HIS PROFESSIONAL PURSUITS

Although Kalam has led several projects in his professional life, he's treated each like his last. Such was his passion.

When Dr Kalam's first major project SLV 3- failed the first time he was almost shattered. But he never thought of quitting after SLV-3. And so, SLV-3 was launched again, this time with success.

Success followed Kalam. Prithvi, Agni, Akash, Trishul and Nag missiles were huge successes. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan and Bharat Ratna, and then he became the President. Because he also came from a poor background, he knew the power of education in changing one's future.

Source: rediff.com