New Delhi

In May and June of 2008 I gave a DLT in India. The tour covered three cities, New Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai.

I arrived in Delhi on May 29, in the early hours of the morning. Dr. Ram Gupta had sent his driver to pick me up at the airport and take me to stay at a private club, which is a large, beautiful location with many restaurants and art galleries. After flying overnight for most of 2 nights, I had requested no events on the first day. Therefore the only thing I did on the 29th was to have lunch with Dr. Gupta, and a previous IEEE director Harbans Bajaj. We had a wonderful Indian buffet in the club.

On May 30 I gave a talk in the morning at Asia Pacific Management Institute. The talk was well received and people engaged in some lively discussion. Ram Gupta had some good insights to share as well. Some of us who have been active ComSoc volunteers for the past years have followed the activities in Delhi thanks to information forwarded on from time to time by Ram. He is as active as he seems to us, looking at him from across the ocean. Vikas Kumar attended this talk, and he also arranged for the afternoon visit. Ram is the India Council Chapter Chair, and Vikas works with the Delhi Chapter.

That afternoon we also visited Delhi Business School, and I gave the talk to people there. They were mainly students, who all stood when I walked into the room, and said in unison “Good afternoon, Ma’am”. They also presented very good questions, again triggering some debate, which was interesting.

At both locations Dr. Gupta and I were presented with bouquets of flowers, as well as a gift. In fact, wonderful gifts were presented at every location throughout the tour. I was very flattered.

For those who know Dr. Gupta, we have been calling him Ram, which he says is perfectly fine, but here people call him Gupta R.G. (sounds almost like Archie). He seems to know everyone everywhere, and they all respect and listen to him.

In the evening Dr Gupta picked me up and we joined IEEE senior people (R. Kasturi, Providence More and Angela Burgess) at a meeting to promote IEEE to the local sections, and to get their input on what IEEE can do for them.

The following two days, which were weekend days, were spent touring. The local people suggested that I visit old Delhi and also the Taj Mahal of course. What absolutely awesome places! I have seen much of the world, but even so I was extremely impressed with the buildings and the history in these locations!
Monday they gave me some time to do my own work, which had been piling up, and in the afternoon a driver arrived to take me to see some local handicrafts. In the evening I was invited to dinner with Ram and his wife at another beautiful club nearby.

Tuesday morning we visited IIT. Here I heard repeated a complaint that came up during the meeting with IEEE. That is that it is very difficult for people to pay in dollars, and if they could pay in rupees, they could increase membership by a huge number. This same complaint came reflected at almost every meeting during this tour. In general people estimate that they could bring in 5000 more members if they could only avoid the need for the payer to have to go through the issues of bank drafts or wiring money in foreign currency.

In Delhi I learned that because there are now so many cars on the road, but there is not enough space for all of these, parking could be a serious problem. The solution is that people just park behind already parked cars, blocking them in. But, they leave their car in neutral, so that if the blocked drivers return first, they can just push the blocking car out of the way. (Can we use this as a routing algorithm? Just push the blocked packets out of the way! Of course we would not want to have packets experience the traffic that is prevalent everywhere in Indian cities.)

**Bangaluru**

The second stop was in Bangalore, now officially called Bangaluru. This city is more like the business city, while Delhi is the government city. Here I met another really dynamic IEEE volunteer, Ravi Kiran. Ravi is very dedicated to IEEE and an excellent salesman for the organization. If anyone can pull in the members, it will be him. Of course, he is the Section Membership Development chair. He first helped me to get my internet connection working, which was far from a small task because the problem was pretty obscure. So I know first hand that when he decides to get something done, it will happen. After that work, we had a really nice lunch near the hotel, which was located very conveniently in the center of the city.

That evening I was invited to dinner by Priyank Taparia, from GIST, who has been contracted to sell IEL and other IEEE benefits in Bangalore. We walked a little to see some of the local area near the hotel, and then ate at an American restaurant. Priyank is also able to sell ComSoc products, especially the WCET certification, if we authorize this.

On Thursday we all went to visit Sasken, an Industry Now partner. They were quite interested in hearing about IEEE and about what they can get from IEEE.

Friday there were initially 3 talks scheduled, two on IEEE and one DL talk. We went first to Wipro, a fast growing company that has 70,000 employees. They brought about 45 people to hear the DL talk, in 5 locations. We broadcast to their other 4 locations, but did not take questions from them. Then we had a 2 hour drive through the traffic to try to get to Texas Instruments on time. They also had in the order of 40 attendees for the talk –
both IEEE and the DL – again in a few locations, connected via WebEx. Here I also met the Chapter Chair for Bangalore, K. Ramakrishna.

Initially we had also planned to go to Samsung, but they had to cancel at the last minute.

However, it was wonderful to see the huge support and interest from so many companies. Bangalore has a huge high tech presence. People were very interested in IEEE, although it was clear that the prices for membership and the conferences were very high for them to consider. This same message had been brought out in Delhi, where they mentioned that ever buying a member pin is a significant expense.

Saturday was the big talk. I was met by a student member (who had earlier been faculty but had gone back to school to complete her PhD) and her 7 year old son. We had lunch, then travelled through the traffic (It was Saturday, but there were probably more people on the roads than on a weekday, if that is possible) to the university site for the Section executive meeting and the talk. This Section has a very active and involved executive.

A few points came out at the Section meeting, including:
- there needs to be some business advantage for someone in India to get people to consider taking notice and spending money. In particular, if someone local can do the selling, so they see something coming back financially to India, others would be more receptive to joining. There was a strong feeling that they did not see much benefit for all the money they fed into IEEE
- they were supportive of the WCET certification initiative, but again found that it was expensive, and felt that someone who understood their local business would have to go in and pitch it to local businesses. Again they believed that this would be more effective if done by someone commissioned to sell the program, rather than by volunteers.
- it is very difficult in terms of time, effort and bureaucracy for an individual or a company to pay in foreign currency. If they could be allowed to pay in rupees, fewer interested people would just walk away.
- they want to know what happened to all the recommendations that were made at the last Sections Congress because they have not seen anything implemented from those recommendations, other than maybe the two 2-3

One impressive thing about this Section is that every year they try to hold something for disabled people or to help Society. They held a seminar last year for the blind and next they will have one for physically challenged people. Congratulations to them!

Sunday was a day off, and two GOLD people took me to see many things in Mysore. That is another awesome place to visit. In fact, Saturday night we also visited a huge, very historic temple in Bangalore. And while stopping outside to meet with another GOLD member, we found a group of people taking their camels to bed for the night.

Throughout the trip, I also learned a little about the gods – the initial one Brahma, is the creator. He created Vishnu who is the protector and Shiva who is the destroyer. There is actually only one god, in Hinduism, who is everywhere, with these others being forms in
which he appears. The energy from the initial three forms combined to also create Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. From here the stories start to get complicated. There are two others who are very common – Ganesh, for good luck, has the head of an elephant – another story I can tell in person to anyone interested, and Hanuman, who looks like a monkey. Most people have a Ganesh in their cars, and maybe one or two others as well. And they also have them at home. In some temples people offer food and flowers to the gods. In others you do this through someone at the temple. There are some really amazing temples, and each has its own character.

In Mysore we saw lovely scenery. We visited a large 100 year old dam on the way, and also a reservoir where many people were enjoying swimming. We visited a huge old palace and a temple. We also visited a bird sanctuary, and took a small boat tour around the lake to see the birds in different locations.

I learned in Bangalore that getting a drivers license is quite easy. You just need to show the inspector that you know how to manoeuvre the car. There is no written or oral test, although tests are being implemented now.

**Mumbai**

Monday morning I left for Mumbai (Bombay). The plane was a bit late, because it is now monsoon season. The rains had started 3 or 4 days earlier, and some parts of the road were 1-3 feet deep in water. I didn’t see this flooding in person, but we saw it on TV in Bangalore and it did rain at some point every day that I was in Mumbai, except for Friday, which was a touring day with two students. People just continued on through it, but it did cause some delays. Traffic in Mumbai was similar to that in Bangalore.

Monday evening I had a pleasant dinner with Ashok Jagatia, the Chapter Chair, Pitke, the previous Chapter Chair, and Murali who is looking after Industry Now in India for ComSoc. These are again three dedicated and active IEEE volunteers. Here the point was made that businesses in India are very interested in IEEE material, but they don’t see the value in paying for membership for their people.

Tuesday we visited two companies to give the talk. Both are huge telcos in Mumbai and both are very active in wireless of course. In the morning we went to Reliance, visiting a beautiful campus and meeting with many of their senior managers. About 45 people attended the talk, and they had good comments afterwards. We had a tour of their very impressive facilities and saw many of the leading edge services they offer. They hosted us for lunch, and we then went on to a building provided by MTNL, the original government telco in Mumbai. Here the talk was open to IEEE and IETE (The Indian association) members. Again we had a good meeting and discussion. We left there about 6:30 or 7 pm, and it took till almost 10 to reach the hotel due to the traffic (and a stop to pick up some supplies for me).

I stayed on the IIT campus, which is a huge and very gorgeous location. However, their guest house is not equipped for international guests really (for one thing I was blocked
out of my email by their computer center until Ashok kindly provided a data card that allowed me to work for the remaining time there.) The location and the local scenery are well worth visiting.

Wednesday we visited Tata Consulting Services to give the talk, and again meet many of their management. The particular location is a Nortel lab, and the people who attended the talk were again very knowledgeable communications engineers and managers.

Thursday two students picked me up early (7:30 am) to drive to Pune, another city about 150 km away, which has a Sub-section. The drive took 3 hours due to the roads and the traffic, so we had a good talk, and captured some pictures of monkeys we saw along the road. Did I mention that there are cows everywhere throughout the cities, and people just drive around them. There are also some goats, chickens and many dogs.

In Pune we visited IIIT, an institute that has MBA and telecom management programs. They hope to become accredited as a university within the next two weeks. Here we met many IEEE volunteers as well as the staff from I²IT. Some of the Chapters in the Mumbai Section have been formed by people from Pune. After lunch we returned to Mumbai, again arriving well into the evening.

Friday I managed to do a little of my work before two students arrived to take me sightseeing. I had two classes each week while on this trip, as well as proposals to make for my company, so it was a challenge to keep up with everything. My classes ran from 4 to 7 am before the day out. The two students were friends of the two Thursday hosts, all from a women’s university. All four are the leaders of their student branch, and I heard about many of the activities that they run. They all had many questions about what they can do for the students, and almost everything I suggested, they are already doing. Their big request was how they can get industry to give them real, worthwhile projects to work on so that they can learn something while making a contribution. We talked about IEEE, about engineering, about the history of their city, about what it was like in India vs other countries, about Hinduism and the gods, and many other topics. They were all 20 years old. They all felt very strongly that IEEE had been good to them. They talked about the great experience they have had organizing events and meeting people. They were very honoured to have the opportunity to host an international visitor.

The girls had planned some lovely locations to visit, and we had quite a busy day. We visited first an art gallery with modern Indian art, then a museum which had many excellent old items. We looked at the interesting architecture in the center of Mumbai. We drove to the Gateway to India, and also saw a few lovely beaches. We went shopping for clothes, and then we stopped at a church and a temple. We had lunch at a multi-cuisine vegetarian restaurant where we all shared two wonderful veg dishes, and smelled the hot chocolate (and I mean actually boiling in the serving dish) with ice cream that almost every other table had. We could not manage that rich dessert. Although we did not arrive there till 3:30 we had to wait for a table for lunch, since lunch in India is generally from 1 to 3:30 and dinner starts about 8.
I learned that universities in India have many students from the local city, as expected, and also many from other cities who stay on campus. They stay in hostels and are therefore called hostelites.

All four students had experienced some serious flooding, and in one notable recent flood, all had been trapped somewhere till the water cleared. One had to walk in neck deep water, which was very dirty, and another was worried about her school administrative papers getting wet. And if walking through neck deep dirty water doesn’t sound unappetising enough, there’s more. People apparently steal the covers off the manholes sometimes, and when one group was walking in this deep water, they were very afraid of stepping into one of these. A man ahead did so, and that was the last they saw of him.

Friday night I had dinner at the hotel, and on the way to the restaurant as well as in the restaurant, I found some little lizards. The walk from the rooms to the dining room is outside, so there were often different interesting creatures there. The main server in the restaurant had set a place with a reserved sign for me, because I arrived late. I showed him the lizard on the wall, and he very happily explained – although he did not speak English - that the little guy had come in to get out of the rain. It was really pouring outside at that point.

Saturday I walked a little before the driver arrived at 10 am to take me to the airport, in order to get a last little bit of cash from an ATM (the ones on campus did not work for outside India) and to have one last look for the monkeys which reportedly come to the campus often. I did not find the monkeys, but I did see a lovely new area of town which was located close by.

All in all the trip was a very interesting one, where I met many active IEEE people who are running meetings and other programs for the members and potential members in India. They have huge leading industry there, with excellent potential for membership growth. There are a number of recommendations in this report, and IEEE needs to take note of these, taking action to find some workable solutions.