CONVERSATIONS WITH SHYAM BABU

Shyam Babu (our Chief Reporter) suffers from cerebral palsy, poor balance and coordination and weakness in his lower limbs. He is almost twelve years old with a thin physique and a face from which shine two mischievous eyes.

Shyam has a great deal to say for himself – with speech difficulties it is often a big effort for him to shape words, but talking to him is always enlightening.

I was sitting in my room when Shyam Babu with his shaky hands opened the door and came in. We had a conversation as follows:

SHYAM BABU: Tabish Sir! You have promised to teach me to ride your motorbike. Please also teach me how to drive your laptop.

ME: When you’re a little older I’ll teach you how to drive both.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, Aslam the newspaper-wallah has already taught me how to ride a bike. The thing is Sir, that you drive quite slowly. I prefer to drive in a hup-hup-grr-farrrak-phat-a-phat sort of style. (meaning fast.)

ME: What you would like to be when you grow up?

SHYAM BABU: Police sir.

ME: Why police?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would arrest all the moonshine drinkers.

ME: Why?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, they create a lot of chilli chot (hullabaloo).

ME: Does your papa drink?

SHYAM BABU: Sometimes.

ME: And you don’t like it.

SHYAM BABU: No, I don’t because he uses gali galoch (bad language) with my mother.

ME: How many members are there in your family?

SHYAM BABU: Loads. And in yours, sir?

ME: Fourteen or fifteen.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I will come to your house.

ME: Sure. You are welcome.

At this point the caretaker, Rani Didi, came to find Shyam Babu to tell him that he needed to go for his therapy.

He went off, leaving me with many questions unanswered in my heart. How difficult life is for that poor kid, who is physically disabled, lives in acute poverty (in a crude shack with no proper flooring and roofing and no toilets or bathroom).

Yet there’s always a mischievous smile on his face as if, his eyes are saying to me ‘Jeena isi Ka Naam Hai’ (Oh yes, this is how to live life).

INTERVIEWED BY TABISH

I prefer to drive in a hup-hup-grr-farrrak-phat-a-phat sort of style. (meaning fast.)
SHIFON RUES LACK OF NON-VEG TREATS

Today I am going to a marriage in my neighbourhood. However, I am not going to eat anything there because there is going to be a vegetarian buffet with things like roast peas which I don’t like. I wish they’d serve kebabs or chicken biryani instead. But never mind, I will have the chance to wear some nice clothes and enjoy being with my friends.

-MAY 22, 2013

MINAKSHI VISITS BANK WITH HER MUM

Today Minakshi did not come to Chingari, as she had gone to take money from the bank. Yesterday, I went with my mum to withdraw Rs. 2,000 from my account from a bank at Karondh. We plan to use the money to buy things for my sister’s wedding.

-C.R. SHYAM BABU

CALL FOR BAZOOKA HINDI EDITION

I asked Tabish Sir, ‘Sir, where will we be selling our newspaper? He replied ‘In England’.

‘So I asked ‘Sir, why can’t we sell it here?’ So he explained that the paper is in English.

‘Sir, why can’t we make it in Hindi and sell it here?’ Tabish Sir said that he’d think about it.

-CHIEF REPORTER SHYAM BABU

KASHEESH SWEEPS HOUSE, MOTHER AMAZED

Yesterday while my mother was washing the pots and pans outside our house I took a broom and cleaned the whole place. Kalpana Madam (the physiotherapist) said it was a very great achievement considering my disability.

-MAY 20, 2013
**GUDDI WEDS GUDDA**

Yesterday we celebrated the happy wedding of my girl doll Guddi to boy doll Gudda.

Gudda was wearing a sherwani looking very smart and Guddi wore a frock with a lovely necklace, earrings and a teeka.

We had a big party in and ate some chips, Dum dum pastries and samosas.

—ALISHA

**SAD DEATH OF A GOAT AT ORIYA BASTI**

Yesterday in Oriya Basti people were feeding a black goat from a basket full of chapattis. Later on the goat was killed for a big feast. I will make a picture to show you.

—SACHIN

**CHIEF REPORTER WITNESSES KNIFE FIGHT**

While telling my reporting to Tabish Sir, who writes it all down, I told him that a few days ago, there was a fight at a wedding ceremony.

Some stranger from outside misbehaved and there was a fight. A boy was attacked by a knife and the ambulance came to take him to hospital.

‘Did this happen at your sister’s marriage,’ asked Tabish Sir.

‘No Sir,’ I said, ‘I was in the DD vehicle.’

‘What were you doing there?’

‘Sir, I was with my brother, he does that work and this is his card.’

So I will give him the yellow colour card of my brother so it can be shown in the BaJooka.

—CHIEF REPORTER SHYAM BABU

**WE PLAY CHILAK CHAI ON THE ROOF**

I played Chilak Chai on my roof with my friends. (A game like tag, see right.)

—KAUSAR
MINAKSHI MISSES OUT ON JEWELLERY

Shyam Babu has gone away to his Jijaji's sister's wedding and so he will not be coming to Chingari for a few days.

I went with my mum and we took Rs. 2,000 (£22) from my bank account and I wanted to buy a lovely necklace, earrings and a nose pin but my mum would not let me. She said we needed the money for important things. I have made a picture of the things I liked —————>

—MINAKSHI

OUR HOUSES GET WATER PIPES AT LAST

New water connections were made in the houses of Oriya Basti. Many marriages were celebrated at Dusshera Maidan and Shivraj Singh Chauhan (the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh) gave the couples sofa-sets, beds, bedding, chairs etc.

—CHIEF REPORTER SHYAM BABU

O-AID’S CRICKET PITCH

I was really disappointed when Royal Challengers Bangalore did not qualify for the Premier League playoffs. (Don’t listen to my mother when she says I cried N she makes up stuff.)

I did get cross when Tabish Sir said that A. B. Devilliers is the best batsman in the RCB team. So I replied that he does get good runs in the last overs and plays outrageous strokes but I prefer Gayle because he hits big sixes.

Huma Madam was listening to my discussion with Tabish Sir and she said to me ‘When you are grown up your girlfriend will be really bored if you are interested only in cricket.’

I replied that when I grow up I won’t have time for a girlfriend because I will be busy playing in big matches for Royal Challengers Bangalore. —O-AID

EARLY RAIN HITS BHOPAL, LEAKS THROUGH MINAKSHI’S ROOF

Yesterday, it rained in Bhopal, and because of that water filled up in front of my house. With the help of a drinking water glass, I cleared the water from the front of my house and poured it into the nearby drain. Then drops of water started pouring in through the roof. We placed buckets and other utensils to collect the water and then we threw it out.

While I was clearing the water from front of my house, my sister was cooking food, and my mother was at the shop. My father is away for a few days on a visit to his native village. —MINAKSHI
Because of rain, water has filled both inside and outside (she call it aagan) our house. Inside our house water has filled till the ankle of the legs. Yesterday we had got a new water connection and today they are going to put a tap over it. Water was also deep outside Shyam Babu’s house.

-MINAKSHI

Yesterday I saw on the news that a boy with an abnormal shaped head has been born in Delhi.

-SACHIN
ALISHA'S AUNT GETS MARRIED

Last week was my aunty's (mum's younger sister) marriage at Bag Farhat Afza. My Uncle is from Abbas Nagar, which is far away. Baraat (arrival of the groom's procession) was on Thursday and Walima on Friday.

I wore my best shalwaar kurtaa and also put turmeric on my aunty.

-ALISHA

SHYAM BABU ATTENDS A WEDDING SOMEWHERE IN THE JUNGLE

My hair is coloured because I have just attended a wedding. It was my Jijaji's sister's marriage at Alvasa, somewhere in the jungle with big-big hills.

My legs were hurting because of walking so much. It is about 2km away from here. I danced at the marriage. And when Baraat arrived, I served water, snacks and mango juice along with the other boys.

I was crying at the time of Vidaai (ceremony in which Bride leaves her father's home), as I was not feeling well.

-SHYAM BABU
**BUS RUNS OVER CYCLIST**

It's all muddy in Oriya Basti at present because of the rain. There's an accident near the bridge between a cycle and a bus. The bus driver had given the horn, but the cyclist did not listen to him and the bus ran over him. Also two boys on bikes collided at 30 feet road.

—CHIEF REPORTER SHYAM BABU

**CONVERSATION WITH ALISHA**

ALISHA: Sir, yesterday we cooked food using toys.

TABISH SIR: What did you cook?

ALISHA: Nothing. I have your phone number and called you yesterday, but you did not come.

TABISH SIR: I am afraid your call didn't reach me.

ALISHA: Can I tell you a story?

TABISH SIR: Yes.

ALISHA: While drinking tea a hair came into my mouth. I looked behind and a new year had come.

TABISH SIR: Who taught you this?

ALISHA: Sanya Phuppi. (Her aunt)

TABISH SIR: How many aunts have you?

ALISHA: Six.

TABISH SIR: So many. And thus you trouble your aunts?

ALISHA: No, but Salman one of my cousins, he is small and troubles us a lot, his mind is slightly different, and he beats and pinches others.

TABISH SIR: So he troubles you too.

ALISHA: Yes.

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**NEIGHBOURS FIGHT OVER WATER**

Yesterday two people fought each other over filling their pots with water. We have got the new water pipes now (see May 11) but they have not put taps on them.

It was raining heavily and water filled up both inside and outside my house. I swept the water out my house with a broom. We can't sleep on the floor when its all watery, so we sleep on two beds off the ground N my father, M mother, me, my sister, younger brother and elder brother Arjun - all sleep on two beds.

My father isn't here right now - he has gone to his village.

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**JUNE 11, 2013**

**KASHEESH MAKES HER MOTHER CROSS**

Yesterday I got dressed, ate my breakfast and went back to sleep.

My mother told me to get up and go to Jehangirabad with her to attend my uncle’s marriage.

I said no because I don't like attending weddings. —KASHEESH

**DEATH OF A COW**

Yesterday while returning from Indranagar, I saw a dead cow by the side of the road.

She died because an electric wire had fallen onto her and everything was wet so she died from the electric current.

Her whole body was blown up like a balloon. —SHIRAO

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**JUNE 12, 2013**

**ALISHA’S AUNT GOES HOME, EVERYONE SAD**

Yesterday, I was sad as my Aunty has gone back to Shobhapur. I have tried to stop them, but Naaj appi i.e. my Aunt’s daughter told me that her School would be getting started. So, she needs to go. Naaj appi told me that she would be coming back next year.

My Aunt gave me Rs.50 when she left. When I go to market to buy clothes for eid, I’ll use her gift to buy them. Sir, the plastering of my house has started. My father has getting the house made at Bagh Farhat Afzal.

—ALISHA

**ZAID COMMENTARY ON THE INDIA-SRI LANKA TEST MATCH**

Yesterday, I saw the test match and played snake and ladders with my Papa and I won. I know that West Indies have lost the match, but feel that they would be able to reach the semi final, if they win one more match. I support West Indies because of Gayle. Yesterday Gayle scored 21 run and he was caught out.
West Indies scored 233 runs and India scored 236 runs in 39.1 overs. Shikhar Dhawan performed best. He scored 102 runs and I feel that his performance was better than Ravindra Jadeja who took five wickets, because he had hit two back to back centuries. From west Indies Dwayne Bravo’s brother Darren Bravo performed best. Tabish Sir asked me whether I had seen Lara playing. I said no. He told me that Darren Bravo looks very similar to legendary batsman Brian Lara and he told me about Lara’s record of hitting 400 runs in one inning.

-MOAI

MORE RAIN, SHYAM GETS A NEW CAP, MINAKSHI UNWELL

Sir, its all muddy in Oriya Basti because of rain. As roads have been made in my area, Chingari is able to come. During rain water droplets also fall inside my house and we use utensils to collect them (so, that they do not make the floor wet). Water leaks from the roof from around ten places. In the night we sleep by putting a plastic cover over the bed. At 10 am when the bus came to my house, I sat in it and came to Chingari. First I went to speech, then therapy and after that class. After that I played Cricket. My mother bought this cap for me for Rs. 50, which I am wearing. Today, Minakshi has not come to Chingari because of fever. Today she would be taken to doctor.

-CHIEF REPORTER SHYAM BABU

ROOFS BLOW OFF HOUSES IN ORIYA BASTI

Today after taking a bath and completing my puja (prayer), when I came out of my house, I saw two brothers fighting with each other and one of them have gone to police station. I don’t know the reason why they were fighting with each other. Sir, at Oriya Basti because of wind, iron sheets, which forms the roofs of the houses has blown up off them and a few of them have fallen on my house. Water also leaks from a few places at my house during rain, but it does not cause much trouble.

-SACHIN

JUNE 13, 2013

FAMILY SHELTER UNDER BED TO ESCAPE RAIN

Last night the wind was blowing hard and iron sheets off other people houses blew away and the polythene sheet on our roof also flew off. It had rained heavily because of which ditches were
filled with water. It has become muddy everywhere. Me, mummy, papa and bhaiya (brother) slept under the bed because of rain. We covered the bed with a polythene sheet to avoid water and slept under it. Other people have pukka houses (of brick) but mine is kachcha (mud). Minakshi also lives in a kachcha house, which is better than mine. Yesterday, I played cricket at Chingari and did batting. I like batting in cricket and don’t know how to do bowling. Tabish Sir asked why I don’t learn bowling from Narendra Sir, Sports Coach at Chingari so I told him that I played Bocce.

SHYAM BABU

ZAID’S BIRTHDAY PLANS AND MORE CRICKET

Yesterday my younger brother Hamza had gone to Yard Club (a tourist spot) and I will go there on my birthday to have a good time. My birthday is on 26th June. I would ask everyone on my birthday. Yesterday the test cricket was abandoned because of rain. Before rain Australia had scored 243 runs, Vogues made maximum 71 runs from Australia in 50 balls, New Zealand has scored 51 runs for the fall of wickets, after which the rain came. I was supporting New Zealand because Warner was not playing for Australia, if Warner had been playing for Australia then I’d have supported Australia. David Warner won’t play any more matches in the series because he had beaten Root (an English cricketer). These days Hafiz Sahab does not come as he is studying doctor studies. He will start coming after he is free. These days I watch match, have my supper and then sleep.

ZAID

ALISHA PROMISES TO DO HER HOMEWORK

I helped my father to clean the garlic. He sells onion and garlic. Yesterday, a vehicle ran over the leg of a caretaker in a nearby building. She received injuries to her knee and leg. The doctor has said that she would be alright in 2-4 days. I don’t know her name. Today, I forgot to do my homework, but will do it regularly from tomorrow onwards. I was asked to write four in my homework.

ALISHA

JUNE 00, 2000

MINAKSHI STILL UNWELL, MORE ROAD ACCIDENTS

Sir it rained heavily last night. Minakshi’s mother made her drink the medicine (maybe a syrup), but did not make her take the tablets. Today, one boy had met with an accident at Oriya Basti, in front of a shop. A bike rider hit the boy in front of the shop and did not stop. The boy’s hands were scratched. Afterwards, when I was coming to Chingari, I saw a boy and girl on a bike fall down. The boy had suddenly applied his brakes. Sura: Bhaiya (the DJ) has gone to Ujjain to provide DJ in a baraat. Sura: Bhaiya is not my real brother, he is a friend of my elder brother and I also call him Bhaiya. Yesterday, I played table tennis with Aay Sir at Chingari. Someone asked if his hand can reach the table, because I am short, but it can, of course, yes.

SHYAM BABU

INJECTIONS AND A TEDDY BEAR

Yesterday, doctor gave me an injection and some medicine. In
the night I ate a chapati with milk then took my medicine. Yesterday Shankar Sir, Vidya Didi and Waseem Sir (Community health workers of Chingari) took me to Chingari, as I was not well because of fever and boils. Now I am alright. Waseem Sir has bought a soap for me and then I took a bath and went to see the doctor. I saw the doctor today again. I cried when I had the injection. At Chingari I coloured in the drawing of a teddy bear. It is called gudda.

-MINAKSHI

FIGHTING FOR DON'T KNOW WHAT REASON

Yesterday there was a fight near my Bade Papa (Father's elder brother) shop. Today, I coloured at Chingari. I have coloured an elephant white a purse a sort of red colour.

-NIKHIL

ALISHA DOES HER HOMEWORK

Yesterday, I and my younger sister Alina played with toys along with my younger sister Alina. Yesterday I had watched a Baraat procession (part of a marriage), it was good. Today, I have done my home work on my own. I was asked to write P O Q. and I did it. Today, I did lots of colouring at Chingari. I made a brown clay water pot and a black fish of paper to keep in it.

-ALISHA

ALISHA’S ROOM IS PAINTED PINK

Today the plaster of the small room in my house is completed. Now the plaster of the bigger room will be done and then the whole house will be painted pink. I chose the colours pink and purple.

-ALISHA

O AID ON ENGLAND-SRI LANKA MATCH

Yesterday, a student studying in my father's college came to meet us. She is from Nagda and had come to Bhopal to collect her examination result. Yesterday at last the drainage lines were cleaned up in my area. Anyway, the important thing was that Lanka won the match. I didn’t watch the whole thing as it went on till 1:30 in the night and I have to go to sleep at midnight at the latest. I heard about the result of the match from my grandfather next day.

Yesterday, I was supporting Sri Lanka.

-ZAID
GAMBLERS AND BYSTANDERS ARRESTED, FORCED TO PAY BRIBE

Sir, yesterday near my Uncle’s shop, few people were caught by police. They were gambling at SATTA, hiding behind a bus and playing. Policeman came and grabbed their collars and took them away. There was one boy who was not playing but standing near the bus. The police took him also to the police station and he also unfortunately was forced to give the police money even though he was not playing, just standing there. My uncle’s shop is at Basod Mohalla. I asked my uncle what is Satta. He replied that it is gambling and that we should not talk about it, because it is not a good thing.

- SHIRAO

QUARREL BREAKS OUT NEAR ALISHA’S HOUSE

I was playing with my toys. My badi mummy (wife of father’s elder brother) was visiting our house. I have a younger brother and I was playing with him when a fight started between some people living in the area behind my house. I heard them shouting at each other.

Later I heard the sound of drums and other instruments when a procession went past the back of my house on Saturday and Sunday. There were people with clothes, shoes and flowers. On Friday Ahmed (a special child at Chingari) was jumping about, when Sir has played the same song. Ahmed is the twin brother of AAub.

- ALISHA

FIght 0, ER WATER NEAR MANOHAR DAIRY

Yesterday there was a fight between Keraji Bai and Reeshan over filling water pots. Keraji Bai slapped Reeshan. I live near Manohar Dairy. Later I watched Anandi’s serial on T., There too, I saw fighting. Yesterday I went out to play with my younger brother Alfaraz in the rain. I was scolded by papa for playing in the rain. There are cracks in the skin on my leg. I am applying ointment. Shadab Sir (Community health worker) took me to the doctor.

- AFREEN

FIght 0, ER CLEAN WATER IN ORIYA BASTI

Today two women fought with each other near the water tank in Oriya Basti for water. They were pulling each other’s hair and slapping. Sir, I like getting wet in rain and dancing while it rains. I sing the taki taki song and dance during rain.

However, my mother does not like me getting wet in the rain and she tries to stop me.

- SHYAM BABU

NO MORE INJECTIONS FOR MINAKSHI

Today, I was not given any more injections by the doctor. But he did give one yesterday and the day before yesterday. Because of rain water has filled both inside and outside my house (she called it angana, meaning compound) and the water comes in everyday, but I wrote ABCD at Chingari and ate Kheer (rice pudding).

- MINAKSHI

SACHIN’S HOPES FOR HIS, ESTABLABLE BUSINESS

Sir, yesterday I have gone to bank to collect the pension. I receive Rs. 150 per month as a pension for my handicap. I had not collected it for two months. When I got there, they told me that no one had received any money yet and we’d be getting it after 20th June. From there I went to the wholesale vegetable market. I thought of buying corn to sell but there wasn’t any. I didn’t buy cucumber because of the rain. I collected cauliflower leaves for the goat and returned home getting wet in the rain. It’s no use trying to sell cucumber in rainy weather because it is a cold vegetable and people don’t buy it much on rainy days. Whatever we can get cheap in the market we buy for selling. I would really like a cycle so that I can sell corn on my own. I want to save money for my younger sister’s marriage. She will be getting married next year. Her name is Aarti and she is 18. Last Sunday, the boy and his family came to see us to arrange the marriage. His mother has passed on so his father came. He lives in Chandbad and does light fitting work. He earns Rs. 8,000 per month and has a wheatish complexion. I liked the boy and they all liked my sister. We have suggested next year for the marriage. I don’t remember the name of the boy.

- SACHIN
WATER UP TO WAIST NEAR LAKHAN’S HOUSE

Outside Lakhan’s house (another special child coming to Chingari, living at Oriya Basti) the water was up to his knees and my waist. His legs were all wet when he got to his house. He had to change his clothes. I took my medicine today so the boils on my body will get healed up. I had studied at Chingari and also made a drawing of a house with water all round it. There was another fight in Oriya Basti over water. They were shouting and swearing at each other. One of them hit the one with a stick on stomach and made blood come. They took him to hospital. I don’t know the names of the people fighting. Tomorrow we will be provided with a tap (she called it totti) for our new water connection.

MINAKSHI

ARMAN BRAVES RAIN TO HAVE HIS THERAPY

Yesterday, it rained heavily because of which my mother had not allowed me to come to Chingari. Even today it’s raining, but I thought that I should get the therapy done. So, I have come today wearing this raincoat Papa bought for me ages ago.

ARMAAN PARVEZ

20TH JUNE 2013

LEg PROBLEM STOPS SHIFON ATTENDING FAMILY WEDDING

Yesterday our neighbours came back to their house at 3AM after attending a marriage. When they opened their door, we all woke up. They had gone to Mahu (a small town near Indore) for the marriage. My mother’s brother got married on 8 June and on 16th June my mother went to attend his JUMA (Small ceremony with reception after marriage on Friday). I didn’t go because of rain, as I have problems walking when it gets muddy.

SHIFON

KASHEESH TO VISIT SAI BABA TEMPLE

This evening I am going to be visiting a big temple of Sai Babi with my Papa. We will be going in a vehicle. I don’t know where the temple is but we visit it every Thursday. My father break the coconut in the temple and I distribute the Prasaad (some small items of food used during prayers and distributed after it, which are thought of as a holy food).

KASHEESH
ALISHA DRAWS BRIDE AND GROOM PICTURE
Yesterday you did not come to Chingari. I saw in the news that a flood drowned somewhere, I don't know the name of the place. Yesterday, we made a drawing of Dulha Dulhan (bride and bridegroom) and Tarique Sir (special educator at Chingari) says that tomorrow we will be filling in colours.

-ALISHA

MINAKSHI’S DAD CRIES AS HER ELDER SISTER LEA, ES HOME
Yesterday, the father in law of my sister arrived. And today when he and my sister sat in the autorickshaw and were going away, My father was crying. Her engagement will be celebrated in her native village. It’s raining daily. I cried, because they have not taken me.

-MINAKSHI

A CRUEL STORY OF RAPE AND CORRUPTION
My mum works at a government hospital where her job is to make chappatis. There a doctor looted the honour of a woman who had come for her medicine and an injection. Later on the police came with sticks and and beat the doctor. Somebody took the woman's daughter in a van and left her in the jungle. Later on police asked the two of them to get married.

-ISHRAT

MINAKSHI’S ELDER SISTER GETS ENGAGED
Sir, Minakshi’s elder sister got engaged and they have killed a cockerel (in preparation for a feast) in the morning.

-SHYAM BABU

JUNE 21, 2013
RAIN CAUSES MORE PROBLEMS
It rained again last night. I saw on a T, that in one village houses and bridges were broken. A bus fell into a trench.

-SHYAM BABU

STILL NO TAP FOR MINAKSHI’S FAMILY
Water has filled up outside our houses and it has also come inside. We sleep on two beds i.e. both of my brothers, mummy, papa and me. I sleep with mummy. As water has not come, there is one neighbour she has water connection, but she does not allow us to fill our pots and speaks badly. We have the water pipe but not the tap. We will buy a tap of our own and then won’t allow others to fill their pots from it. Me and my mother had gone to the hospital to get an injection, while coming back we bought a banana and a black school bag. I ate the banana. The bag cost Rs. 50. My mother got it for me as I was crying for it after my red bag was lost. my sister in law's son, whose name is Sachin had mislaid it somewhere. He is small like me. My mother has also bought two hair clips for me, one of them got broken.

-MINAKSHI

JUNE 26, 2013
CATCHING UP WITH TABISH SIR
Yesterday a heavy rain fell and in front of my house the water was up to my waist and it was flowing over the road. Yesterday I saw on the T, that a truck was submerged in the flood. It was on the news.
You (Tabish Sir) didn’t come to Chingari for two days so we were asking Thomas Sir where you were. He said you weren’t well and would come the next day. I had the yellow DJ card for you but now it is at home. I played football with Sufiyan, Lakhan and ArbaJ.

Today I came in the bus and said ‘Good Morning’ to everyone, then I went to speech therapy and physiotherapy then I went to class. Yesterday we had daal and rice, it was magic. I like the fruit meal best of all.

Today I wrote my times tables. I copied them, but one day I will learn them. —SHYAM BABU

LIGHTNING DOESN’T FRIGHTEN ME: ALISHA

Last night it rained a lot. Lightning was flashing. I wasn’t afraid of the lightning. I went to my Nana’s house and played with toys. —ALISHA

FAMILY PROBLEMS FOR SACHIN AND SIBLINGS

Saturday was a day off, so in the morning I had tea and breakfast and bathed then went to the bank and waited. Filled in a form. They said 300 rupees had come. (L.00, being two months worth of his disability pension) So I withdrew it. I went to the vegetable market and roamed around there a while. On the way home I saw Satyhu and Rachna they were with a rally about the gas disaster. I watched the rally. There were lots of people there. They were saying, until you give us proper compensation we are certainly not going to vote for you. Lots of people from Kainchi Chhola were there.

After this I went home and when my mum came home in the evening I gave her the money. And then, Sir, well you see the thing is that every morning my father quarrels with me - if mum sticks up for me she gets an earful as well. He says things like you two go away out of this house. If I read in front of him and make a mistake he starts shouting and hits me. That’s why I don’t read in front of him. You see, my Hindi spelling isn’t so good. My little brother, if he goes off roaming with his friends and comes back a little late then he too gets shouted at and my father hits him too.

I came here to Chingari yesterday which was Tuesday. When I went home he hadn’t been to work. He hasn’t gone for eight days. Mum went, but he didn’t, so she refuses to give him money for moonshine.

We have a goat at my home, which my mother bought for Rs. 1,200. When we don’t give him money to drink alcohol, he starts selling the things from our house. He had recently mortgaged the patta (deeds of the house) of our house for Rs. 2,000 (L00), but we did not say anything. He has done it before and we could only get the papers back by paying the money. Last time when I have received the cheque from school, I bought back the vegetable trolley which he had sold. When he announced that he was going to sell the goat all four of us siblings quarrelled with him and would not allow him to take the goat. He is always behaving like this. —SACHIN

MY VISIT TO PACHORE

By SHYAM BABU

I went to my village, which is Pachore, to attend the Mundan (ceremony of getting child’s head shaved) of my cousin. There two brothers Jitendra and Rakesh got drunk and fought with each other. My father is their Jeeja Ji (sister’s husband).

While returning from Pachore, there was a river on the way, in which water was flowing up to my knees. My sister’s husband picked me up and helped me to cross the river. After walking for 10 km, at last we reached the road, where we boarded an auto and everyone got inside. I sat with my Papa on the back seat of the auto. In this way we reached the bus stand and went on to the railway station. We bought our rail tickets and boarded the train. In the train I ate samosa and bhel. It was delicious. I like going on the trains. When we got to Bhopal station, we hired an auto and went home. Today, it had rained heavily in Oriya Basti. —SHYAM BABU
ALISHA'S MUM INJURED BY SOUP
Sir, a few days ago hot soup fell over my mother and burned her hand and leg. I would have told you before, Sir, but last week you did not collect news from me on Thursday and Friday.

The plastering of our house has been finished and we even have a toilet and bathroom. They just need to put a seat in the toilet. A while back my grandfather had fallen over while he was reading Tasbih (his rosary). He was not able to eat or pick up a spoon with his right hand. We took him to the hospital at Nariyal Kheda, to get him treated by the best doctor available there.

SACHIN STANDS IN FOR SHYAM BABU
Shyam Babu, Rachna and Lakhan did not come to Chingari today. Shyam has gone to his village. Rachna is hurt, and I don't know the reason why Lakhan has not come. The van went to Lakhan's house and they waited for a while, but he did not come out.

HOW MANY SIXES MAKE SHIFONTY-SI.??
Usually I am not able to score runs but yesterday I hit six sixes in ten balls. No one could believe it and all asked to check again, but it was true! I was playing in a ground close to the temple in our neighbourhood.

My Aunt's brother suddenly fell ill at around 2am last night.

-SHIFON

JULY 3, 2013
ALISHA IN THE PINK
ALISHA: My mother bought a new pencil box for me last Saturday.
ME: What is the cost of the box?
ALISHA: Sir, everything combined cost Rs. 95.
ME: From where did you buy it?
ALISHA: From Jehangirabad.
ME: It is pink, do you like the colour pink?
ALISHA: Yes.
ME: And what else did you buy?
ALISHA: Sir, we bought an orange pencil box, lunch box and water bottle for my sister. And a lunch box for me.
ME: Pink?
ALISHA: Pink.

-SACHIN

SHYAM BABU IS AN EXPERT CAR THIEF
SHYAM BABU: Sir yesterday, I went to play at Shivnagar and there was water everywhere.
ME: What did you play?
SHYAM BABU: Sir it's called Car Chor (Car thief).
ME: How do you play it?
SHYAM BABU: Sir, we need to steal the car and drive it using remote control. Sir, I am an expert at stealing and driving the cars.
ME: And what else happened yesterday?
SHYAM BABU: Sir, nothing much.

-SHIFON

ALISHA SCOLDED FOR NOT DOING THERAPY EXERCISES
I have been scolded for not doing my therapy exercises. I like doing the exercises, but some of them are quite painful.

-ALISHA
SARA LEARNS HOW TO MAKE A RAKHI

Today I learned to make rakhis for the Rakshabandhan festival. Kanchan Madam taught me how to do it.

—SARA

ZAID MISSES INDIAN INNINGS

Sir for the last two days, it has been quite muddy in our area, water is deep everywhere.

Yesterday, I watched the match, Sri Lanka scored 348 runs, but I missed the Indian innings since it started around midnight which is the time I go to sleep.

—ZAID

SHYAM BABU PLANS TO VISIT THE STARS AND SEE THE OCEAN

SHYAM BABU: Sir, Yesterday I saw on T, that it has rained heavily in Delhi, houses were broken. Sir, vehicles were drowning in water.

TABISH: You saw this on T,?

SHYAM BABU: Yes, it had rained heavily in Bambai (Bombay) also.

TABISH: Do you like Bambai?

SHYAM BABU: I have not seen it.

TABISH: I was born in Bombay, my mother is from Bombay but my father is from Bhopal. The one who will be receiving this news was also born in Bombay. Would you like to say something to him? He will publish it.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, ask him to take me to Bambai.

TABISH: What will you do there?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I want to meet Shahrukh Khan (a film star).

TABISH: You like Shahrukh? Which movie of his have you watched?

SHYAM BABU: Chennai Express.

TABISH: Chennai Express is not yet released, you might have seen the trailer, who else would you like to meet there.

SHYAM BABU: Salman Khan and Amitabh Bachchan (film stars).

TABISH: Amitabh is quite old.

SHYAM BABU: He might be old, but he brings out good movies.

TABISH: Who else?

SHYAM BABU: These three only.

TABISH: Where would you like to visit in Bombay. Do you know the ocean is there.

SHYAM BABU: Swimming pools too.

TABISH: There are swimming pools in Bhopal.

SHYAM BABU: I have not seen them. I would also watch a movie in a big Talkies.

TABISH: You have not watched a movie in a talkies at Bhopal?

SHYAM BABU: I have.

TABISH: Which one?

SHYAM BABU: ABCD.

TABISH: The one which we showed to all the children of Chingari. Was it the first time you had seen talkies?

SHYAM BABU: Yes.

TABISH: What else will you do in Bombay?

SHYAM BABU: Get the autograph of Amitabh Bachchan.

TABISH: Wouldn’t you like to meet any heroines?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, heroines are bad.

TABISH: Grow up a little and you’ll start liking heroines more.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would like to meet Sonakshi Sinha (actress).

TABISH: Which movies of hers have you have watched?

SHYAM BABU: Rani tu main Ra: i.e. Son of Sardar and Rowdy Rathore. You’re ‘queen I’m King.

TABISH: Would you go to the beach?

SHYAM BABU: Yes, I would play in the water. You take a photograph, I would enjoy myself.

TABISH: Why must I take pictures, I should also enjoy myself.

SHYAM BABU: You also enjoy, Sir, we will hire a photographer.

TABISH: Do you know there is a house in Bombay shaped like a shoe?

SHYAM BABU: I would like to visit that.
TABISH: Ok, you said you like Sonakshi Sinha, what do you like about her?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I like her smile.

TABISH: And what do you like in Shahrukh Khan?

SHYAM BABU: He acts well and his movies are good.

TABISH: Which movie of his have you seen, as Chennai Express is not yet released?

SHYAM BABU: Jab tak hai Jaan. I like the songs i.e. Challa ki Labda phire and Isha Shawa.

TABISH: Katrina Kaif was also in that movie, don't you like her?

SHYAM BABU: No.

TABISH: Why.

SHYAM BABU: Sir I don't like her.

TABISH: What do you like in Amitabh Bachchan?

SHYAM BABU: His style and his way of speaking.

TABISH: Do you watch Kaun Banega Crorepati? (Who Wants To Be A Millionaire in its Indian form, that inspired Slumdog Millionaire.)

SHYAM BABU: Yes.

TABISH: What happens in it?

SHYAM BABU: They've stopped showing it.

TABISH: If you win a crore of rupees (10,000,000), what would you do with it?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, first I would make my house.

TABISH: Where.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, just where I live at present, but a house of cement, and bricks.

TABISH: So, that you don't have problems in the rain. What else?

SHYAM BABU: I'd get a water pipe.

TABISH: Why, is the government not providing a water pipe?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, they have given water to many nearby houses but not to my house.

TABISH: What else?

SHYAM BABU: I'd give everyone at Chingari with a toy vehicle.

TABISH: Very good. And?

SHYAM BABU: And clothes and dolls for the girls.

TABISH: Ok, so toy car for boys and dolls for girls, what about giving them something to eat?

SHYAM BABU: Yes sir, I will make a feast of samosas, poha and mithai (sweets).

TABISH: There'd still be a lot of money left.

SHYAM BABU: I would distribute it to Chingari.

TABISH: Won't you buy anything for yourself?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would buy a laptop for myself. Sir, I will download songs from internet and would play it as a DJ.

TABISH: You have not brought Sura: Bhaiya's DJ card? (see p.9)

SHYAM BABU: Sir, water is filled near Sura: bhai's house.

MINAKSHI: You could have worn slippers and gone there.

SHYAM BABU: It is quite muddy also.

MINAKSHI: So, I would have gone.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, her house is near to Sura: Bhaiya's house.

TABISH: You are both next door neighbours. Sura: Bhaiya's house would almost be equidistant from your houses. Do bring his card. We need to send it to England to show them.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would make a DJ vehicle and would also buy horses and lights (he call it batti, basically they are portable lights used in marriage processions).

TABISH: What will you do with it?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would use it during marriage season and hire boys to assist in this work.

TABISH: You have a full business plan.

SHYAM BABU: Yes.

MINAKSHI: You should hire both boys and girls.

SHYAM BABU: No, girls won't be hired.

TABISH: Why?

SHYAM BABU: Sir, boys tease them.

TABISH: So, what. Don't you know it's a crime to tease a girl? If you find someone teasing a girl, you can give him to the police.

SHYAM BABU: Sir, when I start the DJ, I will call you first and foremost to download the songs.
TABISH: Would you pay me?
SHYAM BABU: Yes.
TABISH: How much?
SHYAM BABU: Thousand rupees no, however much you ask.
TABISH: You were saying you'd give me a thousand rupees.
SHYAM BABU: No, sir two lakhs (two hundred thousand) rupees. No, two thousand rupees.
TABISH: You have taken my pay to two lakhs and directly lowered it to two thousand rupees.
SHYAM BABU: Sir, I would give you two thousand rupees.
TABISH: What else will you do?
SHYAM BABU: I would play the speakers at such a volume that the whole vehicle would start shaking. I would also put in a machine and a generator.
TABISH: What for?
SHYAM BABU: Sir, don't you know, a DJ runs on a generator.
TABISH: What else is needed?
SHYAM BABU: A machine is used along with a big electric board with a pointer in it. And we need to press the button and start the laptop. They play half-half songs.
TABISH: Which song do you like most?
SHYAM BABU: Ishq Shawa.
TABISH: What do you like most in that song?
SHYAM BABU: Katrina has danced well in that song.
TABISH: Just now you were saying that you don't like Katrina and now you are saying that you like her dance. I have a recording of your voice saying this. These two statements are contradictory.
SHYAM BABU: Sir, I like her dance but not her personality.
TABISH: You just like the smile of Sonakshi?
SHYAM BABU: She also dances well.
TABISH: You have seen her song. Chintana chita chita, what are your views on that?
SHYAM BABU: I like that also.
TABISH: Which other heroine, do you like except Sonakshi?
SHYAM BABU: Karishma
TABISH: Karishma? Is it Karishma or Kareena?
SHYAM BABU: Sir, Kareena.
TABISH: Karishma Kapoor is the elder sister of Kareena Kapoor. She used to do movies during our time. Ok, even after making a house, distributing the toy car in Chingari and doing other things, still money would be left. What would you do with that money?
SHYAM BABU: Sir, we would buy a loading vehicle. We will load material in it and will do that business. And also buy two bikes and a car for me.
TABISH: For whom would you buy the two bikes?
SHYAM BABU: For my two brothers.
TABISH: So, your brothers would be riding bikes and you alone would be moving around in a car?
SHYAM BABU: No, Mummy and Papa would accompany me.
TABISH: I feel this investment would spend all the money.
SHYAM BABU: Yes.
TABISH: Ok, now I feel you should go to class for your studies.