

# V connect

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## Health and Wellness Special





# V connect

## From the Editor

You know I have a beautiful heart.

Now it's official.

My doctor told me that I have a cute coronary syndrome.

I survived a heart attack last December. I read up a lot about heart and attacks during recovery and like most survivors had this urge to share my newfound wisdom with everyone. Well, this issue is not about that...

7 April was World Health Day which marked the founding of World Health Organisation. The theme for 2026 celebrations - 'Together for health. Stand with science' - highlights the power of scientific collaboration to protect the health of people, plants and the planet.

Inspired by WHD26, V-connect Health and Wellness Special is the first step in our journey towards meaningful conversations and engagement about health and wellness. Our plan is to make health-related topics a regular feature of V-connect and look forward to your active participation and patronage.

I wish you good health and happiness.

Thanks,  
**Babu**

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# Message from the Chief Executive

Dear Colleague,

We completed our financial year with a record revenue, and this happened due to the tremendous efforts, focus and hard work by each one of you. Thank you!

We plan to keep growing and aiming higher every year. When we achieve one milestone, the next one begins from there. To keep performing consistently, we need to stay healthy and fit. Targets and results matter and reaching them becomes easier when we take care of ourselves. Wellness is about being prepared, staying strong and building the ability to handle challenges.

As we move into the new year, I encourage everyone to focus on your work - life balance. Play, run, paint, sing, take a long drive, do whatever helps you feel refreshed. These aren't distractions but key to improving both physical and mental health and achieving long-term success.



Even small changes can make a big difference as we saw at VGT. We came together as colleagues and at Utsav, we celebrated as friends reminding us that some bonds transcend teams and departments and enrich our life at work and beyond.

Let us SOAR to new heights - together, healthier, happier.

Regards,



**Venkatesh S**

# Wellness Rising

## When Health Became More Than Medicine

*What does it really mean to be healthy today? Once defined simply as the absence of illness, health has transformed into something far more complex - intertwined with longevity, lifestyle and a relentless pursuit of optimisation. As wellness trends flood our feeds and ancient practices resurface with modern appeal, we find ourselves at a curious intersection: Looking forward to innovation while circling back to wisdom we've long known.*



Been hearing about health statistics, rising incident of lifestyle disorders, tips for health eating and preventive medicine from all corners? This is no coincidence or single occurrence. Truth is that India is witnessing a rapid rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the last couple of decades - a worrying trend largely attributed to improper dietary habits, reduced physical activity and increased stress levels. All these together are responsible for the commonly said term 'lifestyle disorders', which predominantly includes obesity, diabetes, hypertension etc. and are responsible for various diseases including coronary artery disease, thyroid disorders, malignancies and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

India's burden of NCDs is escalating and contributes to around 65% of all deaths. NCDs are typically present in individuals aged 55 years or older in many developed countries, but in India their onset occurs decades earlier (less than 45 years of age). The country also has the second highest number of adults with diabetes in the world, with an estimated 89.8 million Indian adults aged 20 to 79 diagnosed with diabetes in 2024. This translates to a 10.5% prevalence rate, making India one of the most affected countries globally. More alarmingly, 43% of these individuals are unaware of their condition.

This rise in health crises, globally and particularly in our own country, coupled with a commodified fixation with longevity, has reshaped how we as a people think about health and its relation to well-being. No longer is it defined as the simple need to avoid illness, but rather a serpentine pursuit for extended life, both in time and quality. And what were used to be interchangeable words had moved further away from each other - with health holding a physiological connotation and wellness being viewed as a holistic impression of one's standard of life. However, the latter was often seen as an extended form of the prior. The reason is that across time, cultures and economics, the concept of health has also shifted depending on societal needs.

### **Ancient Systems and the Roots of Holistic Health**

In contrast to Western medicine, health was deeply connected to the natural rhythms within a person, as well as around them, with a strong emphasis on long-term habits rooted in preventive care. Ancient Eastern systems of treatment, such as Ayurveda and traditional Chinese Medicine explained health as a harmony between mind, body and environment - making it much closer to today's understanding of wellness. Although present-day advertising positions its concepts of wellness as original and alternative, ancient medicine had already placed factors such as lifestyle, diet, and daily routines as scientifically observed pillars to maintaining optimal health and longevity.

### **The Rise of Reductionist Medicine**

It was with the rise of industrialisation that the idea of health and wellness began to drift apart dramatically. In an increasingly capitalist world, the human body was perceived more as a machine with various parts that needed to be treated symptomatically - transforming a previously holistic science into a reductionist one. This ultimately led to the new definition of health as the absence of disease. Institutional and systemic treatment focused on this line of thought, redirecting hospitals and medical institutional efforts into diagnosis and care, rather than inclusive therapy and early prevention. While this model gave rise to crucial medical advancements, this approach to supporting one's health frequently overlooked the emotional, social and environmental dimensions, focusing exclusively on sickness. Additionally, it created a rift between the concepts of wellness and health, placing the former as an indulgence rather than a necessity.

### **The Burnout Era and the Rise of Mental Health Awareness**

But just like a circle, the furthest point from the start is also the closest. The onset of the 20th century marked a turning point in the study of health beyond optimum physical function. With the genesis of 'burnout', a person's well-being and health started expanding outside their visible anatomy and into their psychological and emotional states. This furthermore helped legitimise mental health as an essential component of having 'good health'. Simultaneously, it helped open previously closed doors for lifestyle medicine and care, which concentrated on the role of day-to-day habits such as nutrition, exercise and stress management in deterring chronic illness.

In modern discourse, health and wellness are making a slow return to their initial synonymy, with the boundary between





Mental health conversations gained significance as isolation and uncertainty contoured everyone's reality of the pandemic. Practices such as therapy, community welfare and stress management gained mainstream acceptance in both domestic and work environments. Mental health was no longer seen as secondary, instead a central theme to overall wellness and health. Consequently, organisations and governments began promoting the need for work-life balance, flexible schedules, and slower living as necessary elements to one's resistance against illness. Society at large began to view wellness as a foundation in ensuring the steady stream of life.

However, the concept of wellness still held more subjectivity compared to that of health, which could be assessed through certain degrees of scientific research and standards. On the other hand, wellness was an active and ongoing process that was more vulnerable to misinformation. The dawn of the internet and influencer led to the co-option of 'wellness' as an industry for product and service endorsements that often hold no credibility or healthcare expertise. The explosion of online content and commodification has resulted in increased distress and scepticism amongst individuals, albeit making them more cautious of their healthcare choices.

the two blurring. Wellness adheres to the early practices of health: pro-active behaviours that support the quality and condition of life. These days, instead of waiting for illness to occur, individuals are motivated to take charge of their health through daily practices that enhance both physical and mental resilience. The convergence of the two terms and their intentions reflects a broader cultural shift: healthcare is no longer a purely reactive practice but returning to its roots of a preventive and lifestyle-centric science. As a result, people's medical choices are also diversifying. No longer is the only approach to one's health a single visit to the doctor when they fall sick. People are increasingly investing in holistic treatment and self-care routines that aim to promote balance and pre-emptive protection. Ensuring a nutritious diet, active lifestyle, regular sleep and nimble cognitive function are components of what counts as being healthy and well.

### The Pandemic That Changed Everything

Another seismic shift that aided the convergence of health and wellness was the 2020 Covid pandemic. Global concerns for safety brought the relationship between hygiene and immunity to centre stage. Individuals and institutions alike became aware of their vulnerabilities and began seeking solutions that responded to an increasingly unstable external world through internal strengthening. It meant resorting to preventive medicine and lifestyle practices that fortified one's defence against newer diseases. This re-evaluation of priorities also prompted the normalisation of slower and mindful living.



## Data-Driven Living

Technology has also provided a new array of methods to practice wellness in one's life. While the concept still includes the familiar trifecta of physical activity, mindful health and nutrition, people can monitor, and explore their health through wearable devices and apps that can track everything from sleep cycles, heart rates to metabolism. These developments helped bring in a data-driven approach to wellness, making it more accessible and measurable like physical health.

Nevertheless, the digital era is also one that holds similarities to its predecessor and often highlights the need to optimise. Organisations and individuals are not only chasing peak performance, but ways to push the threshold even further. In response, practices such as supplement use, plastic surgery, and biohacking have skyrocketed, reflecting an increasing obsession with testing the parameter of what the human body and mind can achieve.

Have we come full circle? Truly, the ideas of health and wellness have undergone a remarkable evolution and reunion. Particularly in recent years, wellness has leaned into the discussion of longevity. There are many that are dissatisfied with maintaining a quality life and have begun pushing the boundaries of existence itself. Innovators and wealthy individuals are heavily investing in research and technologies that aim to resolve aging as if it were a problem and not a natural process. Such methods include cryogenic freezing or the preservation of human bodies at extremely low temperatures after death, based on the hope that future science will enable revival. These ambitions suggest that wellness may no longer be confined to improving life but instead redefine its limits.

Traversing from bare survival to bodily optimisation, the two overlapping pillars of human life have emerged as a dynamic and lifelong pursuit. Yet, the future of health and wellness depends entirely on finding a balance between ensuring that the pursuit of longevity does not come at the expense of quality and fulfilment.



## Digital Health Bytes

In India, health information consumption is increasingly mediated by social and messaging platforms, with WhatsApp at the centre due to its vast scale - over 500 million users in the country - making it one of the most pervasive channels for sharing health-related content. Surveys indicate that more than 70% of Indian internet users rely on social media platforms, including WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram, for health information, while studies of message flows suggest 20-30% of widely shared health content on WhatsApp may be misleading or unverified. This reliance is driven by convenience and trust in peer networks, with nearly 60% of users reporting that they prefer information shared within family or community groups over official medical sources. At the same time, a generational shift is evident: Among younger Indians (aged 18-30), over 80% report using AI-powered platforms such as chatbots or search assistants for health-related queries, and around 30-40% say they have used these tools for preliminary self-diagnosis before consulting a doctor. Additional surveys suggest that as many as 1 in 3 urban youth have delayed seeking professional medical advice after consulting AI tools, while nearly 50% use AI for mental health support or stress-related concerns. Together, these figures illustrate a rapidly evolving digital health landscape in India, where high-volume, peer-driven information flows on platforms like WhatsApp intersect with growing dependence on AI tools as first points of consultation - particularly among younger, digitally native populations.

# Everything you wanted know about **SLEEP**

*Sleep, says Dr Ramakrishnan, is not a luxury, it is a biological necessity. The founder of Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences, he is drawing our attention to why the requisite hours of uninterrupted, sound sleep is one of the most critical elements for good health.*

When Dr Nagarajan Ramakrishnan returned to India from the United States in 2003, he observed a troubling pattern in critical care: young patients - 40, 45 years old - arriving in the ICU with heart attacks and strokes. When he traced the thread of their case histories, it consistently led to the same overlooked culprit: Disordered sleep. Sleep apnea. Insomnia.

'There was a lot of connection with sleep', I thought to myself, 'I should learn to prevent that', says Dr Ramakrishnan.

It was a conviction that would reshape his career. A specialist in internal medicine, critical care medicine, sleep medicine and obesity medicine, Dr Ramakrishnan established in 2004, the first-of-its-kind freestanding comprehensive sleep centre. The Institute prides itself on being the first to offer a university-affiliated post-doctoral fellowship in sleep medicine and is also the first sleep centre to be accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Hospitals and Healthcare Organizations (NABH).

Dr Ramakrishnan has spent the years since building awareness around a discipline that India was - and still is - only just beginning to take seriously. From one patient a week in the early days, his clinic now sees 10 to 15 patients within half a day. Even with growing awareness about the importance of good sleep, the need for clinical intervention, he says, has never been greater. As the Head of ICU at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, he says the problem will only grow if we don't address it immediately and constructively.

We have a quick chat with him about why sleep is so important, the nexus between non-communicable diseases and sleep and one critical thing you should avoid for sound slumber.

## **There's a great deal of conversation now around what we call 'sleep hygiene'. Why is it so important that sleep follows a certain pattern?**

Sleep is not merely a period of rest. There are a lot of changes happening in our body during those hours - hormonal changes, tissue repair, restoration. After a good night's sleep, you wake up fresher, with better memory and better attention to detail, because the brain has had time to become more functional.

The first question people always ask me is: How many hours should I sleep? The honest answer is that it varies across stages of life. An infant sleeps 18 to 20 hours. Most adults need somewhere between 6 and 8. But what I want to emphasise is that it is not just the quantity that matters - it is also the quality.

Our body has an internal clock called the circadian rhythm. And this internal clock has to stay in sync with the external world. The body naturally wants to sleep somewhere between 9 and 11 pm and wake between 5 and 7 am. Personally, I sleep at 10 pm and wake at 5 am - and if someone wakes me at 4.30 am, I end up feeling exhausted, because the stages of sleep haven't completed their full course. That's what I mean when I say timing matters.

This is the foundation of sleep hygiene. Just as we have habits for keeping the body clean or the teeth healthy, we need habits that protect the quality and timing of sleep. Morning sunlight is one of the most underrated - exposure to natural light early in the day helps set the body clock. Meals should



be timed and dinner finished at least two to two-and-a-half hours before bedtime, by no later than 8 pm. Stimulants like coffee, tea, alcohol, carbonated drinks should be avoided for at least four to five hours before sleep. In the evening, start to unwind - dim the lights, step away from screens at least an hour before bed. And the bedroom should be reserved for sleep and intimacy alone, not for reading on your phone, not for watching TV, not for scrolling. Once in a while, a late night for a film or an event is fine. But erratic sleep, night after night, takes a real toll.

### What are the most common sleep problems you see in adults today?

Phone addiction is one of the biggest issues we are encountering - it is consistently delaying onset of sleep and disrupting the body clock. Beyond that, we are seeing a significant number of young adults in cities like Chennai who work for BPOs or IT companies, which operate in international time zones. Lifestyle-driven disruption to the circadian rhythm is also extremely common. We are also seeing a great deal of insomnia. People sleep late but have early morning commitments, so they simply compress their sleep hours. Among older adults, loneliness has become a meaningful contributor to sleep disorders. As joint families give way to nuclear ones, and as children move to the US, UK or Australia, many elderly people find themselves alone, sometimes with a genuine fear of being alone.

The third major issue is sleep apnea, which manifests as snoring, which is strongly connected to obesity. What many people don't realise is that snoring is not simply a noise problem. In sleep apnea, the airway collapses during deeper sleep, oxygen levels drop and though the person may clock 7 or 8 hours in bed, they wake feeling exhausted. Daytime sleepiness follows - and in some cases, people are falling asleep at work or even while driving. These are real, serious consequences.

### How does lack of proper sleep impact our health?

Sleep disorders are themselves a significant category of non-communicable disease. We talk about obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer - and rightly so - but sleep disorders belong in that same conversation.

Insomnia and sleep apnea can cause or worsen high blood pressure and diabetes. I recently saw a doctor who came to me for uncontrolled blood pressure. We investigated, found sleep apnea, began treating it - and his blood pressure became far easier to manage. Heart disease, stroke, infertility, menstrual irregularities in women related to shift work - all of these are linked. Hormones are secreted on a schedule. When

our sleep is out of sync with that schedule, the entire system is disrupted.

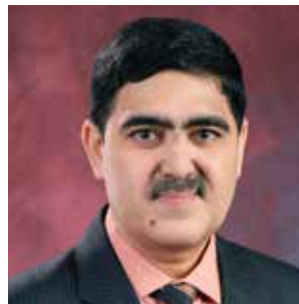
### So, it becomes a Catch 22 - the health problems worsen sleep, and poor sleep worsens the health problems.

Exactly. And breaking that cycle is precisely what we focus on. It may not be possible to restore a perfect sleep pattern - particularly for people who work in shifts and are unable to change their jobs or timings - but we can teach people how to adapt. We work on their eating windows, their light exposure, when to avoid caffeine. We remind night-shift workers returning home in the morning: This is your night. The world around you may be having breakfast but you are having dinner. We tell them to sleep continuously and to protect those hours the way anyone else would protect their deep sleep at midnight.

### One final question - between coffee, excess sugar, and the mobile phone, which is the most harmful to sleep?

Without a doubt, the mobile phone. Coffee and sugar are close behind, but they can be managed - avoid them in the hours before bed, and most people do reasonably well. The phone is a different problem entirely. I have patients who tell me they check their likes every hour through the night, or who lie awake watching WhatsApp messages come in, wanting to respond but unable to. It has become a genuine cyber addiction and it is very scary.

My advice: If you need an alarm, use a proper clock - the good old kind that rings and has a button on top. The less reason you have to reach for your phone in the bedroom, the better.



**Dr. Ramakrishnan**

*Founder - Nithra Institute of Sleep Sciences, Senior Consultant in Critical Care & Sleep Medicine and Director, Critical Care Services at Apollo Hospitals*

# Small Changes, **Big Impact**

*Presenting stories of small changes in everyday life that had a big impact on health and wellness.*

## What Began as a Trial Became a Routine

After almost 10 years away from badminton, I made a small decision. Just one month before Valves Got Talent (VGT), I decided, "Let's go try badminton again!"

Confidence level: High. Fitness level: Questionable. So, I joined a shuttle court for some serious practice. On the first day itself, reality hit hard.

I was swinging like I knew what I was doing, but the shuttle had other plans. I was either hitting the frame, missing completely, or flying off in directions no one expected. Even my legs seemed surprised, "We didn't sign up for this!"

But slowly things started getting better. And the real highlight? The people!

The court had all kinds of players - kids running around like rockets, college players smashing like pros, office guys like me trying to survive rallies, and seniors casually playing better than all of us. Somewhere between all the missed shots and lucky points, we ended up becoming friends.

What began as a one-month plan slowly turned into a routine.

Now it feels like a mini community with teasing, cheering, random doubles matches and lots of laughter.

Honestly, even if I play badly, I still enjoy it because of the people.

Then came VGT. I walked in thinking, "I've had one month of practice! I have a decent chance at winning!"

I somehow pushed through and won the first match but it was not easy.



Then came the quarterfinals against a tough young pair. The first set slipped away, we fought back and took the second, but in the final set, we just couldn't finish it off and missed out on the win. Gave it my best, but clearly, I wasn't there yet.

But I have no regrets. It was fun, a great experience and a solid reality check.

The biggest win wasn't the tournament. It was what happened after. I didn't stop. That one-month practice has now turned into a regular habit.

Now I go to the court regularly, not just to play, but to improve, to sweat and of course, to meet my shuttle gang for those post-session banter.

Next season of VGT? Let's say I will try to make better contact with the birdie and hopefully step up my game.

**Arun Kumar S**  
SCM

# What My Body Was Trying to Tell Me

“Did you know your posture could be causing pain?”

I didn’t!

For a long time, I lived with a dull, nagging pain in my right thigh. At first, it was easy to ignore. But slowly, it began to affect my sleep. It wasn’t just the physical discomfort, it was frustration. I kept wondering why this was happening to me.

At home, I noticed something similar. My wife often complained about discomfort in her arm. The cause? Something as simple as holding her phone in an awkward position for long hours.

We weren’t injured. We weren’t doing anything extreme. Yet something wasn’t right.

That’s when I discovered the Alexander Technique, which a simple, educational method that helps you move with less strain and more easily in your everyday life.

## The Problem I Didn’t See

Like most people, I assumed my habits were harmless. But when I began observing, the truth was surprisingly simple and a bit uncomfortable to admit.

I had the habit of crossing my legs for long periods. I felt comfortable and relaxed. But in reality, it was creating an imbalance, straining my hip and spine.

Then came another eye-opener. I always carried my wallet in my back pocket. Every time I sat down, it slightly tilted my posture.

Nothing dramatic. Just small, everyday habits repeated without thinking.

## The Moment of Realization

The real change didn’t come from any treatment. It came from awareness.

I started noticing how often I slouched, leaned or tensed up without realizing it. Once I noticed, I could change it.

I became more cautious about how I stood and sat. I started standing with my weight balanced and sitting with both feet on the floor.

At first, it felt a bit unusual, like I was “trying too hard.”

But gradually, my body began to feel lighter, more stable and less strained.

No force. No tension. Just awareness.

## Small Changes That Made a Big Difference

- Stopped sitting cross-legged for long periods
- Moved my wallet to my front pocket
- Maintained balance while standing and sitting

Individually, these seemed insignificant. But together, they created a powerful shift.

My thigh pain, which once felt constant, gradually faded. More importantly, I felt more at ease both physically and mentally.

## A Simple, Powerful Realization

We often look for big solutions. But sometimes, the answers are already present in the smallest habits we overlook every day.

This isn’t about treatment. It is about awareness.

For me, the starting point was simple: paying attention!

And honestly? I sleep better. I feel better.

If my body could talk, it would probably say:

“Finally, you’re listening!”



**Sundar S**  
PED



I was listening to the FM on my way to the office when the RJ said, “You are listening to 98.3 Mirchi... ithu semma hot machi”. She went on to warn that the weather was going to be unusually hot in the coming days, advising people to avoid stepping out from 11 am to 3 pm. That simple announcement struck a chord. I had already been feeling the effects of the rising heat with dehydration, constant fatigue and low energy. One of the easiest yet most effective changes I made was drinking tender coconut water every day. What started as a refreshing alternative to sugary drinks soon became a daily ritual. It helped me stay hydrated and energetic throughout the day.

Along with this, I started eating more seasonal fruits like watermelon, mango, papaya and muskmelon. They help me stay hydrated and feel lighter during the heat.

This made me realize that wellness doesn't always come from big changes. Introducing small healthy habits into our everyday routine can make a big difference to how we feel, both physically and mentally.

**Sumith S**  
*Design*



This year, I restarted my cycling routine after a two-year break, which, in reality, was a well-maintained phase of inactivity. My mountain bike (MTB), once underestimated, has now become a surprisingly effective trainer of both fitness and discipline, far more consistent than my motivation.

What began as casual rides exploring offbeat routes, trails and ghats has quietly evolved into a structured fitness routine I now treat with suspicious seriousness. I typically aim for a 35 to 55 kilometre early-morning ride, which doubles as cardio training and a curated experience of sunrise views and empty roads.

Somewhere along the way, I also started servicing my bike myself, partly for maintenance and partly to convince myself I understand the engineering of these bikes.

Interestingly, this routine has improved my focus and concentration at work more effectively than most productivity hacks I've tried. My thinking is clearer and more structured, especially on days I've already finished a ride. As an added bonus, my sick leaves have noticeably reduced.

Overall, cycling has become a disciplined habit that enhances my fitness, sharpens my work performance and politely reminds me that consistency works better than motivation.

**Thirunesan N**  
*Design*

# 10 Health & Wellness Questions

1. What is the largest organ of the human body?
2. In strength training, what does "hypertrophy" refer to?
3. Which type of exercise uses oxygen to meet energy demands during performance, typically through activities like jogging or swimming?
4. Which vitamin is often called the "sunshine vitamin" because the body produces it in response to sunlight?
5. Scurvy is a disease caused by a severe deficiency of which vitamin?
6. What is the medical term for high blood pressure?
7. How many hours of sleep per night do experts generally recommend for the average adult?
8. What does the acronym "BMI" stand for in health assessments?
9. What is the name of the stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands that triggers the "fight or flight" response?
10. Which practice involves the intentional regulation of breathing to calm the nervous system?

Email answers to [v-connect@Lntvalves.com](mailto:v-connect@Lntvalves.com)

## Answers to January 2026 Quiz

1. Yamayobi (Mountain Calling), 2. Marjastus (Berry Foraging), 3. Gongbang (Study-with-Me hobby), 4. Geocaching, 5. Ocean Swimming (Open-Water Route Swimming)

# Did you know...

**Your brain grows smaller:** Did you know that severe stress shrinks the hippocampus (the part of your brain that is responsible for memory)? So, when you are stressed, you keep looking for the keys when they may be in your pocket, or the glasses that are on your head. Relax - and keep your brain from shrinking!

**Our body is a mini furnace:** You are hot! Literally. Our bodies produce up to 80 to 100 watts, even while sitting, and up to 1000 watts when exercising vigorously. This is why a room filled with people feels like a furnace when air is not circulated well.

**Sleep to good heath:** Good sound sleep impacts your health in almost every way. All the vital functions, like the health of the heart, your digestive system, and hormone secretions are impacted by sleep. Average sleep time of 7 to 8 hours a day helps in building immunity, good appetite and health breathing. But, don't sleep beyond 8 hours or you may miss the best part of living your life.

**Gender bias:** Have you noticed that women are marginally more sensitive? Truth is, women's heart beats faster than men, because the former's hearts are slightly smaller. So, be kinder to women, yes?

**How many is too many:** Most people say that you should drink 2 litres to 4 litres, or 8 to 10 glasses of water. Truth is, how much water is actually needed depends on each individual, their weight and activity for the day. Simple: Drink whenever you are thirsty. Your body knows how much it needs.

**Gene Match:** Humans and banana plant genes match over 60%. This is why some scientists are trying to test new medicines and therapies on banana cells. Maybe this is also why the banana plant is considered sacred in India and is featured at every festive celebration in Indian homes.

**Hand transmitters:** Our hands are hot plates for transferring germs. Our hands come in contact over a million germs in a day, so think twice before you shake hands with people. Isn't it better to greet with folded hands? In any case, hand hygiene is a healthy practice, and we must surely teach our children as well.

**Stomach, the miracle:** The stomach produces enough acid to dissolve itself, but thanks to our body's intelligence, it also produces a thick layer of mucus which is alkaline and is capable of neutralizing the acid before the damage can happen. Beware of what you eat - acid refluxes can be very painful!

**Role reversal:** The arteries normally carry blood (which is rich in oxygen) away from the heart, and the veins carry blood (which is poor in oxygen) to the heart. A role reversal happens when it comes to the pulmonary artery and pulmonary vein. The pulmonary artery carries oxygen-poor blood to the lungs, while the pulmonary vein carries oxygen-rich blood back to the heart. Sometimes, role reversal is healthy!

**Relax to float:** Our lungs are the only organ that can help us float in water. Lungs have over 500 small air sacs called alveoli. Even after you exhale, they help our lungs retain air for up to a litre. Remember to relax, fill your lungs with air and float without fear of drowning.



# Ultimate Utsav

VGT and Utsav 2026 were upgraded and enhanced versions compared to last year's, with significant improvements across many activities. From the initial planning stages to the final execution, everything was organised and carried out very meticulously. This year featured several new cultural and sports events, which helped increase participation and provided a platform to identify more talented individuals.

VGT cultural competitions were especially enjoyable. Events like Connection, dance, mimicry and comedy events received great enthusiasm and engagement from participants and the audience alike.

On the sports side, many matches were highly competitive and concluded with very close results. Notably, the women's badminton final and the basketball match between Prithvi and Agni were intense and thrilling, reflecting the overall competitive spirit of the tournament. The players truly gave their 100% effort to secure victory for their teams.

Team Jal was crowned the overall champs in a nail-biting photo finish.



**Ravichandran S**  
F&A



# Retro to Metro

The idea seemed simple. A ramp walk cum fashion show set to nine iconic Indian songs spanning the decades from the fifties to today. What seemed simple on paper had various challenges during execution. With most of the participants being from Kancheepuram, the Chennai-based choreographer had to train them mostly through practice videos and video calls. Designing a look that was appropriate to the era and what the dancers were comfortable with was another challenge. Juggling work and practice was tough, but the team stayed committed and enthusiastic.

The live show was pure magic. Our colleagues didn't simply walk the ramp, they transformed into the characters in the song. The crowd went gaga over every single performance. There was clapping, shouting and whistling that just wouldn't stop. Watching our concept turn into something that brought the whole room alive was deeply rewarding.

This is one experience we will genuinely treasure.



**Nisha K**  
*Legal*



# And the winner is...



**Volleyball**  
Jal



**Carrom**  
Jal



**Throwball**  
Prithvi



**Stand-up/ Mimicry**  
Jal



**Basketball**  
Agni



**Connection**  
Prithvi



**Singing**  
Agni



**Badminton - Women**  
Prithvi



**Badminton - Men**  
Jal



**Tug of War - Women**  
Jal



**Chess**  
Agni



**Tug of War - Men**  
Prithvi



**Dance**  
Jal



**Cricket**  
Prithvi



**Table Tennis**  
Agni



**Creative Writing - English**  
Jal



**Creative Writing - Tamil**  
Jal



**Painting**  
Vayu

# The Last Bell

*Mohd Athar Zaid won the VGT Creative Writing competition the theme of which was Nostalgia.*

*The response was overwhelming.  
Thank you!*

For the 5th time, I am looking towards her. There she is. Running with three hands and a yellow face, working day and night for this exact moment, beautiful as ever. And here it goes, she hits 1, and the bell goes off.

Last day at school. I am officially an adult. With a mixed feeling of joy, freedom, fear and hope. Joy of starting college, fear of missing school and a hope that all friends will get into the same college and freedom from uniforms. This is the first time I have dealt with these many feelings, all at once. Behind all the cheers and tears of people crying and hugging each other, I zone out for a quick recap. The first day I joined here. The first time I cried here. The last time I am about to cry here. All the feelings settled, but the memories started to flood my mind.

That's the thing about exclusive films. Limited viewers, limited shows and limited reviews. This is my movie. I was directing it. I was filming it. I was living it. Standing in a corner with four other kids sharpening pencils simultaneously, as the teacher demanded pin-drop silence; coming back to class with both hands and pockets full of water bottles; begging the class monitor to erase our names from the board before the teacher entered.

Suddenly, a hand rested on my shoulder. Aah! The first friend I ever made in school. His shirt covered with ink and signatures, his heart overwhelmed and his eyes wet. "Chalein", and that was my cue. It was the end. I got up from my seat.

Was this supposed to feel this bad?

Aren't we leaving this place?

Why am I numb?



The feeling started to make a comeback as I started congratulating everybody for making it to this day. Farewells are not my thing. Our class teacher came and gave a speech, of which I only remembered, 'You will miss this'. Miss this? THIS? Exams, class tests, homework? Of all the good things I thought as important and worthy, school was not one. Why would I miss this? I was silly and too young to comprehend. Newton was right: a body at rest wants to stay at rest, at peace. My peace was disturbed by a dream I had always wanted to achieve.

The speech part ended and we moved out of the classroom. A lot of shouting and hooting kept the theme of the event cheerful, but there was a heavy feeling I couldn't shake off. Everybody was laughing, but it didn't look real. Too many things were happening and in between, I could hear someone calling me.

'Athar! Time aachu! It's 7:30! Wake up, raa.'

Yes, it's time. Time to wake up. It's Monday again and it was all a dream. It's time to leave for work.

Days like these are hardest to wake up to. But here I am, living another dream.



Nothing is  
permanent,  
but the love  
that cast  
this shadow  
comes close

*'Shadow' was the theme for VGT drawing competition and we received over 30 entries in a variety of formats and media.*

*Our thanks to all participants and congrats to Ahin Honymon, Design*



**Shameela M**



Utsav was a truly vibrant and memorable experience that brought everyone together in a wonderful way. The cultural performances, especially the dances and ramp walk showcasing cinema from the 1950s to 2020, were incredibly creative and engaging. I really enjoyed the lively atmosphere with activities like face painting, mehendi, and the DJ adding so much energy to the day. It was a perfect blend of fun, talent and teamwork. Overall, Utsav was a fantastic celebration that created lasting memories for all of us.

**Praveena M**



It was an overwhelming and heartening moment when I was announced as Team Captain of Prithvi. This was a journey that brought out my sportsmanship and leadership traits; uplifted my inner talents in sports as well as in cultural. An event which made me realise that success is not just of winning games, but about winning the respect, resilience and exhibiting women empowerment.

Interaction with the wide range of talents, building the unity in the team was a new experiment. Despite finishing second, I feel elated that I have accomplished my vision to an extent.

I am thankful to my team who has always been with me to pull tighter and together for the team's victory in all the sports and events. I thank the management for making me realise the leadership quality in me and motivating me to do better.

**Bharath Kumar Badari**



Utsav - It was the moment where weeks of sweat, competition, chaos and crazy team spirit came together. From nail-biting finishes to unexpected underdog wins, from 'we've got this' confidence to 'how did that just happen?!' surprises. This was the grand wrap-up that had it all.

It wasn't just about trophies.

It was about teammates turning into friends, colleagues turning into competitors (and back again) and inside jokes, sideline cheers and unforgettable energy. Every sprint, every match, every cheer led to this - Utsav will be remembered not just as event, but as an experience.

**Vijaya kumar K**



What started as normal corporate event turned out to be a real fun event. With friends and colleagues, Utsav became a new way to have fun and relax. We played games, danced and knocked all our stress the moment the event started. Our team won and the joy was inexpressible. As we lift the trophy the sense of belonging and team spirit was all time high.

## Attada Sanjana



I had a wonderful time participating in VGT and Utsav - it truly took me back to my college days. Almost 2 months passed by in what felt like no time at all. The energy throughout the event was amazing, and it was heartening to see everyone so enthusiastic and involved. It brought back so many cherished memories and made the experience even more special.

## Suriyanarayanan S



Two months filled with numerous VGT events, culminating into Utsav 2026 celebrations, has been a truly refreshing experience. The events were thoughtfully organized, highly engaging and showcased the enthusiasm and strong team spirit of everyone involved. Laughter, active participation and friendly competition created a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere. The experience was especially meaningful for me as I had the opportunity to serve as a team champion, closely collaborating with colleagues to identify and bring out their best talents. Utsav 2026 was a memorable evening where everyone relaxed, socialized and connected more closely than before, ultimately strengthening our bonds and leaving us with lasting happy memories.

## Pamarthi Gnana Saranya



Utsav 2.0 was an incredibly vibrant and engaging event that brought together energy, creativity and strong team spirit across all participants. Being part of Team Jal, I had the opportunity to participate in throwball, tug of war, creative writing and dance competitions, which made the experience even more enriching and memorable.

The event was very well-organized, with a great balance of physical, cultural, and creative activities. The enthusiasm shown by all four teams was truly commendable. Each competition was highly competitive, and the continuous shifts in scores kept everyone on edge, adding excitement and anticipation throughout the event.

Overall, Utsav 2.0 was a wonderful initiative that fostered teamwork, creativity, and healthy competition. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the organizers and look forward to participating in future editions with even more enthusiasm.

## Gunavathi Devupalli



I belong to the Agni team, and I found it really interesting that all the team names were based on the the Five elements of nature.

VGT began with the men's tug of war, where our team secured the runner-up position. It was a great start and filled us with enthusiasm and team spirit. Throughout the event, many games and activities were conducted, and I actively participated in throwball, Tug of war (Women) and painting. These activities gave me a wonderful opportunity to enjoy, learn new things and spend quality time with everyone.

The final day, Utsav 2.0, was the most special and unforgettable part of the entire event. I performed a classical dance for the first time, which was both a new and exciting experience for me. Despite it being my debut performance, I truly enjoyed it and felt happy and confident on stage.

Apart from the activities, the food and overall arrangements were excellent, making the entire experience even more enjoyable. Even though our team didn't win the overall trophy, the journey, participation, and memories we created made it all worthwhile.

Overall, VGT and Utsav were fun-filled, enriching, and unforgettable experiences for me. I am sincerely thankful to everyone who organized such a wonderful event.

## D Gopinath



Utsav 2.0 celebrations were truly energizing and inspiring, covering a wide range of activities that brought together employees from across the organization. It was heartening to see maximum participation, with many employees showing great interest, enthusiasm, and team spirit. The event also helped in identifying talented individuals who actively participated and contributed to making the event a grand success.

Such initiatives serve as excellent stress busters, promoting physical well-being, positivity and collaboration among employees. The enthusiasm and sportsmanship displayed by everyone reflected the strong culture of engagement and unity within our organization.

# Long Service Awards

## Our Congratulations to the Awardees



Arumugam K



Pugazhenth N



Sankar K



Srinivasan S



Sankar P, GGC



Ravichandran S, F&A



Ramesh S, PLED



Muruganandhan V, Design

# Engineering Excellence

*From the early days of limited technology to today's era of digital transformation, Srinivasa Kannan K.'s journey reflects both personal dedication and organisational evolution. We speak to him about testing moments, landmark changes and why L&T Valves' quality has endured for over six decades.*



Srinivasa Kannan's journey reflects both personal dedication and organisational evolution. We speak to him about testing moments, landmark changes and why L&T Valves has excelled for over six decades.

Srinivasa Kannan K, during his 33 years of unbroken service, first at AIL, then L&T Valves, has seen the organisation grow from a time when computers were a rarity to an era of digital transformation and automation. Armed with a diploma in electronics and communication engineering, Kannan joined AIL in 1993 and over the years built a knowledge base, mentored teams and travelled extensively to gain competencies the company needed.

We share some snippets from a conversation about his storied career.

## **Tell us about your journey with L&T Valves.**

I joined AIL in July 1993. Prior to that, I was at Krishna Electronics, where I was taking care of their Bangalore branch, doing CNC machine servicing and related work. My core responsibility at AIL was plant engineering. I joined as a supervisor and grew from there. From 1993 to 2015, I was based at Manapakkam. Over the years, I retrofitted around 20 CNC machines across KPM and other plants. I was also deputed to the UK, Italy, and China - to gain knowledge on automation and to inspect machines.

## **From your early days at AIL to L&T Valves today, what are some of the major changes you've seen?**

In 1993, computers were barely in the picture; we were not even allowed to touch them. The digital transformation, email, the shift in the way we share and access information - that has been a phenomenon and it is a big reason the company has been able to thrive and grow the way it has.

On the product side, I speak more from a plant engineering perspective, I have seen the company's capabilities grow enormously. R&D has come a long way. In the earlier days, there were challenges in product development. Now, a new generation of engineers is taking on highly complex valve development and competing strongly.

## **Do you feel that the way today's younger engineers' way of working is significantly different from your generation?**

Yes, of course - and I say that with appreciation. In our time, approaching a senior or a boss was something we did with great hesitation. Today, even the EVP and senior leadership are accessible to young engineers. That openness is a real strength.

Youngsters today have platforms to showcase their skills that we simply did not have. They come from strong academic backgrounds and they are well-informed and quick to develop.

One thing I have noticed is the number of women now contributing across functions: QC, sales, even the shop floor. During my time at AIL, there was perhaps one lady at the reception and one in HR. This move towards diversity is a great development.

### **Tell us about the Manapakkam flood - and other major milestones in your career.**

The Manapakkam flood of December 2015 was a major calamity I faced during my career. That night, the Chembambakkam lake was opened, and Manapakkam office was flooded suddenly and without warning. I was on the second shift - it was just myself and the security officer, along with around 40 contractors.

Water rose to 11 feet inside the shop. Everything went under - the generators, the switchboards, all the electrical and electronic assets. As plant engineering, we are the asset owners. Watching everything we were responsible for disappear under water, with no power, no way out...It was a nightmare.

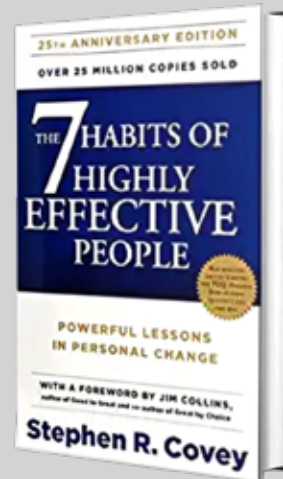
By morning, the rain had eased, and we managed to swim out. Within a week, we were back. The water had drained, and we set about restoring the entire plant to operation - sourcing generators from MIOT Hospital nearby, rebuilding the electrical systems and getting the company back on track. While other neighbouring companies took much longer to recover we had the plant operational within a week. The management appreciated the effort, and I am proud of what the team achieved under those circumstances.

Another milestone event was the integration of Coimbatore and Kancheepuram plants. Around 1200 assets had to be relocated - from small instruments to large machining centres weighing 30 to 50 tonnes. Our plant is not on the highway; it is around 200 metres inside, through residential areas. Moving heavy machinery through those corridors, coordinating heights precisely so that we didn't damage the domestic power lines, working through the nights to ensure every asset arrived safely - it was a complex, demanding operation. We completed it in a record time of six months.

### **L&T Valves' quality is something that distributors and vendors mention with great respect. What, in your view, sustains that commitment across six decades?**

Quality is very much a part of the culture at L&T Valves. Previously, at Manapakkam, we manufactured almost everything in-house, with very high-skilled workers. Today, our R&D team has the knowledge to identify and correct problems before they get out of hand. Our quality management

### **Top Shelf**



I am a great believer in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and three habits stand out for me.

First: be proactive. Anticipate what is coming, rather than waiting for problems to arrive at your door. Second: begin with the end in mind. Whatever project or responsibility you take on, know what completion looks like from the start. Every time I took on a project, that was the first question - when will you complete it? And third: sharpen the saw. Continuously improve yourself. Never stop learning.

systems are robust - ISO, API and other standards are not just certificates but part of our DNA. Our vendor base is strong, and vendor quality is monitored carefully. Then, there are our experienced, long-serving dedicated employees who carry deep knowledge and pass it on to the younger generation every day.

### **Tell us about your family.**

My wife is a homemaker, and she is very deeply involved in spiritual activities. We have one son. He completed his engineering degree in Mechanical Engineering and then a postgraduate programme in Productivity Management at Symbiosis, specialising in Supply Chain Management. He is now with Michelin in Pune.

### **And what do you look forward to in your time outside of work?**

I am very interested in spiritual activities, like my wife. My Guru is Muralidhara Swamiji, who is based in Chennai and runs various activities and service initiatives. After retirement, I intend to dedicate myself to that work. I want to stay healthy so I can be of service for as long as possible.



# Team HR

*In this issue, we turn the spotlight on the HR team: The people who work behind the scenes, to ensure that every individual in the organisation is supported, developed and valued. Here is a closer look at the folks who put the people in people management.*

## **Srihari A**

Srihari Annaiah leverages over 30 years of experience in diverse industries plus qualifications from NIT Tiruchirappalli, Bharathidasan Institute of Management and IIM Bangalore to lead HR transformation at L&T Valves. As Head of HR & IR at L&T Valves for three years, Srihari has helped the company achieve GPTW certification for two consecutive years, received recognition through the HREM Awards and rolled out Parivartan, a cultural and behavioural transformation programme that has brought employees closer to the organisation's five core values. He also oversaw the achievement of ISO 30414:2025 Human Capital Reporting certification.

**Motto:** To position HR as a strategic business enabler, build a performance-driven workplace and foster an environment that is engaging, inclusive and a truly great place to work.

## **Govindarajan A**

Govindarajan brings with him fifteen years of HR experience and an MBA in Human Resources from Anna University, Chennai. Over the last four years at L&T Valves, he has managed payroll processing for permanent workmen and handled time office and administrative functions for KPM staff. Notably, he managed the end-to-end execution of Parivartan sessions for over 360 staff members.

**Motto:** People - the foundation of every organisation.

## **Malinidevi M**

Malinidevi M brings nine years of experience and a Master of Social Work in HR from Madras Christian College. Before joining L&T Valves, she executed pan-India Leadership Development Programs for high-potential talent in the automotive industry. She was also selected as a participant in the Hyundai Happy Move Global Youth Volunteers Program.

**Motto:** Grow through what you go through.

### Arun Kumar BV

Arun, equipped with an MSc, MBA in HR, PGDHRM from XLRI and a Post Graduate Diploma in Labour Law and Administrative Law, has over 20 years of HR experience. Career highlights include managing two greenfield projects from the ground up, handling a workforce of over 4,500 and implementing robust SOPs across HR functions to bring structure and consistency to operations.

**Motto:** Maintain good relationships with people and support as much as possible.

### Tamilan P

With 10 years at L&T Valves and 16 years in HR overall, Tamilan, an MBA in Human Resource Management from Madras University, focuses on keeping the engine running smoothly. During peak production periods, his ability to fulfil manpower requirements on time has helped sustain uninterrupted operations. Through proactive tracking and close coordination with supervisors, he has significantly lowered absenteeism.

**Motto:** Plan effectively, execute efficiently, and deliver consistently.

### Sudhan B

Sudhan has played a vital role in greenfield project set-ups, the HREM excellence journey and executed approximately three Long-Term Settlements over his five-year tenure at L&T Valves. With a BTech foundation and a Post Graduate Programme in HR Management from Gemba School of HR, he is keen on improving efficiency and accuracy in day-to-day HR operations.

**Motto:** Stay humble, lead with efficiency, build harmoniously, and accelerate organisational growth through AI transformation.

### Kiruthiga S

With six years at L&T Valves and 19 years of HR experience, Kiruthiga was instrumental in securing the ISO 30414 Human Capital Reporting certification for L&T Valves. She played a key role in HREM recognition across Talent Acquisition and Talent Management and developed the Employee Handbook and strengthened the organisation's HR policy frameworks.

**Motto:** The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams.

### Vasanth G

With a Post Graduate Certificate in Strategic HRM from IIM Tiruchirappalli, an Executive MBA from IFMR Graduate School of Business at Krea University and a Bachelor's in Labour Management from Tamil Nadu Institute of Labour Studies, Vasanth brings analytical rigour to his role. At L&T Valves, he has designed a workforce model that accounts for compliance, requirements and budget across different contexts and helped bring workforce costs year-on-year.

**Motto:** Going high up in his career by growing the business.

### G. Saket Kumar

With an MBA in Human Resources at Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, Saket Kumar has contributed to designing and communicating employee benefits through LEAD, the employee handbook at Larsen & Toubro. In a previous role, he successfully managed over 4,000 RHEL-based servers for One NZ.

**Motto:** Keep building depth over noise.

### Gopikannan

With 17 years of experience in safety and engineering, an MTech in Thermal Engineering from Government College of Engineering, Salem and a Diploma in Industrial Safety from the Regional Labour Institute, Chennai, Gopikannan's work is more than just compliance. In one of his most significant achievements, he achieved zero lost time injuries during a 14-day mega shutdown and revamping project involving 600 personnel.

**Motto:** Live for everyone, whether they love you or not.

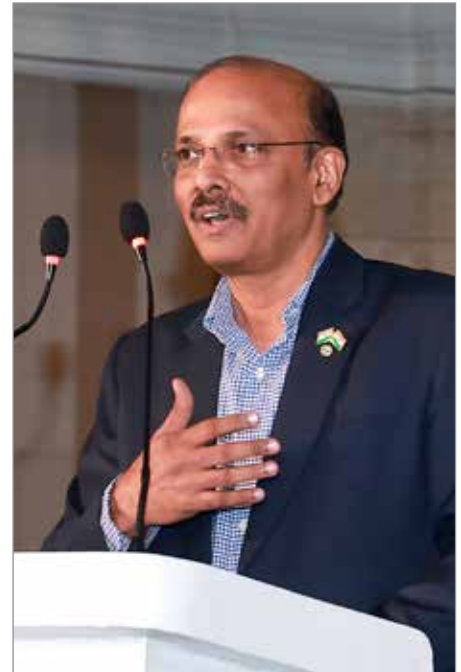


# PARTSUM2026

On 10 April, one year and one day after PartSum 2025, L&T Valves distribution fraternity got together at Chennai for a day of deliberations and celebrations.

The highlight of the day was the launch of Series Seven ASME B16.34 Gate, Globe and Check Valves - a product range that addresses the long-standing demand from the channel for valves for utilities and general services.

A motivational address by the legendary cricketer Mr K Srikanth made the day unforgettable.



#### Key insights:

##### **Soar Beyond Boundaries**

Leadership shared key priorities aimed at building a resilient, future-ready growth engine across markets and channels.

##### **Expanding Market Reach**

Accelerating penetration across existing markets while extending footprint into new territories and emerging segments, supported by sharper go-to-market strategies and stronger on-ground execution.

##### **Driving Growth Through New Product Innovation**

Leveraging the launch of Series Seven, to open new applications and customer segments, reinforcing the role of innovation as a key growth catalyst and differentiation lever in competitive markets.

##### **Digital Experience of Tomorrow**

Laying the foundation for future digital initiatives aimed at enhancing distributor effectiveness, improving customer engagement, and enabling data-driven decision-making across the value chain.

##### **Exploring New Frontiers Together**

Deepening partnerships with distributors to collaboratively unlock new business frontiers, strengthen market responsiveness, and drive sustainable, shared growth through aligned goals and execution focus.

# And the winner is...



# Series Seven

## Gate, Globe & Check Valves

- ASME B16.34
- 2" (50mm) to 12" (300mm)
- Class 150 and 300
- WCB
- API Trim 5 and 8
- Flanged Ends



# Built on Trust, Driven by Legacy



*Nearly a century after Mr Manibhai H Amin first began Manilal & Bros, the company continues to live by the values of trust and transparency. We speak to father-and-son duo, Mr Mukesh Amin and Mr Nikhil Amin, who run the business today.*

Founded in 1935 by Mr. Manibhai H. Amin, Manilal & Bros. carved out a reputation as a dependable importer and supplier of industrial products, stocking valves from prestigious brands as well as industrial essentials. In 1969, Manilal & Bros. entered the L&T fold as a stockist for Audco's plug valves.

Today, the company is steered by Mr. Mukesh T. Amin, who joined the company in 1980. Mr. Mukesh's son, Mr. Nikhil Amin, brought a fresh entrepreneurial perspective to the table in 2016-17. Together, they run a lean but effective team of 13 from their Delhi office.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

### Tell us about the early days of the company.

**Mukesh:** The company was established by my grandfather and his brother, in 1935, in Delhi. We had branches back then. In 1973, my father became the lead partner. Then my father, my brother, and I were all involved. After my brother parted ways, it's me and Nikhil as working partners.

### Post-independence, it was notoriously difficult for businesses to operate because of the sheer number of licenses and registrations required. Did that impact your business?

**Mukesh:** I can give you a small instance. A revenue official once told me that a businessman had suffered downfall in his sales. When the official asked him, 'Why did you face this downfall?', the man replied, 'Because I was sweating around your office for the past two years! I didn't get time to attend to my business.'

Then reforms came. They were slow, but they did good. Now, you can give more time to your business.

### When did your relationship with L&T first begin?

**Mukesh:** We have been working with them since 1969. That developed into a relationship, and they kept adding range to their products. Today, if anyone wants to set up a factory, they can get quality and assurance under one roof - and that matters.

### What are some aspects of the way L&T works that you particularly appreciate?

**Mukesh:** L&T is a professional company; they are very transparent. They insist on your growth. Most importantly, they have zero tolerance when it comes to quality issues. And if problems arise, they solve them. If there is a deviation in quality, it is an error that they admit to, sort out, and rectify. And they are known for transparency - whatever they commit, they honour.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

### Multi-generational family businesses often see each generation bringing fresh ideas to the table. Has that impacted your relationship?

**Nikhil:** For the most part, my father has always been supportive. He's been a great mentor to follow, and I've been doing that since I joined the business - following in his footsteps and trying to add whatever I can on my own. That could be creating a more professional work environment



within our organisation to enhance alignment with L&T's principles.

### As AI increasingly transforms the way businesses are run, do the values Mr Mukesh spoke of - transparency, quality, trust - still hold in the economies ahead?

**Nikhil:** Brand loyalty, trust - these hold great weightage. They make the backbone, the pillars of every establishment. With AI coming in, it will disrupt some parts of business, some parts of the world, some economies. But on the flip side, it's also going to aid and make things easier for a lot of businesses and a lot of people.

## BEYOND BUSINESS

### Can you tell us a little about your family?

**Mukesh:** My brother is running a separate business. My sister is settled in US. My daughter is in England. Nikhil is with me. My wife, Dipika, is a housewife, and Nikhil's wife, Devika, is a fashion designer.

### And outside of business, what do you do together as a family - for fun, for holidays?

**Nikhil:** We take an annual trip, where all of us meet. My sister, Khyati, makes her way from England with her husband; my father, my mother, my wife and I, and our three-year-old. We all make it a point to meet at a common location once a year.

# Stepping into Forgings

## - Step Forgings

### When Constraints Trigger Capability

Most changes in manufacturing do not begin by choice. They begin when the situation demands it. Most of the time, it begins when timelines become tight and decisions cannot be delayed anymore. These situations may not be planned, but they often lead to necessary improvements.

Our transition into forgings was one such moment.

It did not start as a strategic initiative or a long-term roadmap. It began with a situation that demanded immediate clarity. Delivery commitments were under pressure, conventional manufacturing routes were reaching their limits and the cost of inaction was becoming visible. What followed was not just a change in process, but a shift in thinking.

Investment casting has been a reliable process for us. It offered design flexibility, near-net shape advantages and had a stable supplier base. For complex valve designs, it worked well and has been successfully used for many years.

Challenges appeared as volume increased and delivery deadlines became tighter. Sample approvals were getting delayed. Rework, which was earlier manageable, started increasing.

Shifting partial load to sand casting felt like a safe move, which helped briefly, especially for stainless steel valves. But this had limitations too. What started as a backup plan turned into a bottleneck itself.

Customers were expecting delivery, but our room to adapt kept narrowing. It became obvious that doing the same was not feasible anymore.

### A Different Question

This begged the question, 'Can this be solved instead of being managed every now and then?'

That is when forgings entered the discussion. Why not consider this an alternative instead of a replacement for castings?

Forging, as a process, has always carried a certain reputation. It offers predictability, an important advantage in modern manufacturing.

Unlike casting, which depends heavily on solidification behaviour and mold conditions, forging shapes material in its solid state. This results in a structure that is dense, continuous and more reliable.

### The Practical Constraint

However, switching to forgings was not a simple decision.

The conventional approach within the industry, particularly for valve bodies, relies on multi-piece forging assemblies, typically a three-piece design. This works well technically but the practical approach has a few complications like additional welding, more material and higher costs.

Going mainstream would have solved the manufacturing challenges but created a cost problem, especially for orders at hand.

This led to a more focused line of thinking. Was there a way to get the benefits of forgings without additional costs?

### Finding a Practical Solution

The answer did not come from a single method, but from a combination of ideas.

Closed die forging was considered but it needs dedicated tooling and takes time. Neither of which we had. A hybrid approach started taking shape drawing from open forging, controlled deformation and techniques similar to ring rolling.

What emerged from this exploration was step forging.

At its core, step forging is a process of progression. Rather than shaping the component in a single operation, it evolves the geometry through multiple controlled steps. Each stage refines the material, distributes mass, and moves closer to the final form.

This approach offered several advantages:

- Reduced need for expensive dies
- Flexibility to form valve bodies and connectors
- Near-net shape with better material usage

Most importantly, it allowed us to move forward within our time and cost limits.

### The Real Challenge: The Valve Body

In any valve, not all components are equally demanding. Connectors, stems and rings can often be adapted to alternative manufacturing routes with relative ease.

The body is different.

It defines the integrity of the valve, interfaces with multiple components and demands critical geometry. Achieving this through a new process is not just a technical challenge. It is a test of confidence in the process itself.

The development of a forged valve body through step forging became the defining moment in this journey.

It required careful control of material flow, consideration of machining allowances and validation through real production conditions. But once it came together it established something more important than just feasibility. It proved that the process could be repeated without bottlenecks.

And in manufacturing, repeatability is the foundation of trust.

### Beyond Process: Design Evolution with Strong Technical Support

As the forging route stabilized, it opened the door to another important shift. The simplification of design.

Traditional forging approaches often rely on closed die or open die.

By rethinking the design, it became possible to move toward a two-piece design, reducing the number of joints and simplifying the structure.

This was more than a design improvement. It was a reduction of material and process cost and able to match the existing cost of the valve. This combination was not easy to achieve and it mattered enormously for the orders already in hand.

Careful and precise design work made sure things were done right in the beginning rather than corrected later. That discipline turned a process idea into something that could actually scale.

### What Changed on the Shop Floor

The impact of this transition was not theoretical. It was visible in day-to-day operations.

Rework, which had been an accepted part of casting processes has been eliminated. The need for repeated inspection diminished. Machining became more consistent.

Even concerns around cost, particularly in machining, found practical solutions.

By optimizing batch sizes and leveraging material recovery, machining costs were maintained at existing levels.

At the same time, process improvements addressed functional challenges. More controlled machining of critical profiles meant proper seating, alignment and smooth assembly, eliminating issues such as ball fouling.

These were not isolated improvements. They were connected outcomes of a more stable input.

### A Balanced View of Constraints

Every solution has its limits.

At present, the step forging approach has been successfully applied to carbon steel components. Extending it to stainless steel and special alloys presents additional challenges, both in terms of process control and material behaviour.

However, this limitation also gives us an advantage.

By moving carbon steel parts to forgings, we reduce dependency on foundries. This allows foundries to focus on more complex materials like stainless steel and special alloy.

In that sense, the limitation becomes a lever and not a barrier.

### Looking Ahead

The journey into forgings does not suggest abandoning casting. Each process has its place, and the goal is not replacement, but highlights the importance of adaptability.

What this journey highlights is something simple. The ability to respond to constraints with structured thinking and engineering discipline is what ultimately defines capability.

The transition to step forgings did not happen through a single decision. It unfolded through a series of steps, each driven by a real need and proven through execution on the shopfloor.

What started as an alternate solution to delivery pressure has evolved into a more predictable way of manufacturing. This shift is the real takeaway from this experience.

**Arunkumar S - SCM**  
**Jeyasankar P - TMBV**

# Chalooo Pondi

## My First Adventure Ride





packed our things, hopped on our bikes, and were like 'Chalooo Pondi!' Halfway through, exhaustion hit - 110 kilometers and stretched into three long hours. Yet those hours were unforgettable.

I had never even ridden a bicycle before, but there I was, riding a Hunter 350, shifting gears like the road was made for me. That moment filled me with pride - the bike suddenly felt like it belonged to me.

Like any traveller, we wandered through streets, exploring every corner. At one point, I stumbled into an old church - I still don't know its name - but stepping inside felt like being transported to another city. The ancient walls whispered stories, and I stood there, soaking in history.

This was just the beginning. But this adventure will always remain special - the ride that turned a homebound girl into an explorer.

**Shaik Buvvaji Sheeba Anjum**  
SCM

Never thought I would become this adventurous. As a child, I hardly traveled - the girl who stayed home was me. But now, it feels different. Roads and places seem to call me, urging me to explore and chase adventures.

One night, we planned a trip to Pondicherry. Thinking it was nearby, we

7 Friends, 4 Days, 1 Crazy Road Trip

# Bangalore to Gokarna!

*A four-day adventure with questionable decisions and great outcomes*

**Abhirami P**  
CMT



It all began with seven of us - an overly enthusiastic group of travel lovers - cramming ourselves (and our luggage, snacks and unrealistic expectations of comfort) into a bus to Bangalore and later into a car, on what we confidently called an 'unforgettable four-day trip'. Our destination: the mighty Kuringal Peak, about 350 km away, promising adventure, thrill... and a serious test of our fitness levels.

We reached our basecamp homestay around 9 am, looking far less fresh than we'd like to admit. After a quick cleanup, breakfast and some last-minute 'Are we sure about this?' thoughts, we geared up. Trek slots were open only until 11, so obviously panic mode on.

With our guide - who seemed both excited and mildly concerned about our energy - we began the 14 km trek through the lush forests of Kudremukh National Park.

The trail was a perfect mix of adventure and endurance: steep climbs that made us question our life choices, dense forests straight out of a movie and rain that started off cute and Instagram-worthy. The monsoon added charm and chaos - slippery rocks, thick mist, and leeches...yes, leeches. Let's just say we didn't just see them - we formed very personal relationships with them.

Our guide, meanwhile, casually walked ahead like this was a Sunday stroll, occasionally turning back to check if we were still alive.

But every struggle faded the moment we reached the summit. The view? Absolutely mesmerising. The wind was so strong it literally pushed the rain upward - something none of us had ever seen before. For a brief moment, we felt like explorers... until someone pointed out how we all looked like drenched, confused penguins.

After soaking in the views (and the rain), we descended via a different trail - equally tough, but by then we had accepted our fate. We returned to the homestay with tired legs, muddy shoes, stains of blood given by our very own friends (leeches) and the kind of happiness that only comes after surviving something mildly traumatic together. Good food and deep sleep followed - no one even pretended to stay awake.

The next morning, we had ambitiously planned a 4:00 am start. Based on how we looked the previous night, this felt like a joke. Yet somehow, against all odds (and alarms snoozed multiple times), we made it and hit the road toward Murudeshwar, reaching around 11 am.

Murudeshwar greeted us with calm vibes, ocean waves, and a much-needed sense of peace. The towering 249-foot Raja Gopuram and the massive 123-foot Shiva statue left us in awe - and also slightly wondering how something so huge even gets built. The temple, surrounded by the Arabian Sea on three sides, was both spiritual and incredibly scenic...and for once, we were all quiet (a rare moment).

Next stop: Jog Falls, India's second-highest plunge waterfall. The four cascades - Raja, Rani, Roarer and Rocket - were powerful, majestic and dramatically enhanced by the mist drifting through the valley. We took approximately 500 photos...all of which look exactly the same.



By evening, we headed to Gokarna, with a sunset drive that felt straight out of a travel reel. Our beachside stay set the tone for the next phase: doing absolutely nothing (but in a very satisfying way).

The following day was all about slow travel - Om Beach, Kudle Beach, Paradise Beach, seafood that we definitely deserved after the trek, and soaking in Gokarna's chill, bohemian vibe. No alarms, no rush - just vibes, food and the occasional debate on where to eat next.

That night, sitting by the beach, we laughed about the trek, the leeches, the near slips and all the chaos that somehow turned into our favourite memories. Naturally, we also started planning the 'next trip' as if we hadn't just survived this one.

The next morning, we began our 13-hour drive back to Bangalore - a journey that felt surprisingly shorter thanks to nonstop conversations, music, and reliving every moment (including dramatic retellings of who suffered the most on the trek).

And of course, no trip is complete without a grand food finale - so we wrapped it up with a plate of Meghana Biryani in Bangalore, because, priorities.

Tired, slightly sunburnt, and completely fulfilled, we headed home - already missing the chaos and secretly ready to do it all over again.



## Barefoot Broken Blessed

After coming to Kancheepuram, it was a pleasure to visit all the sacred temples. Among all those sacred temples, we felt that Tiruvannamalai is one of the most prestigious ones.

We believe that visiting Tiruvannamalai is not easy. It happens only when Annamalaiyaar allows and blesses us. We thought it would be just a normal temple visit like any other, but it turned out to be a truly unforgettable experience.

It was an unexpected one-day trip. My friends and I started early in the morning from Kancheepuram. It was a sunny day, and we decided to complete the 14-kilometre giripradakshina

enjoying each other's company. But after some time, one by one, we started experiencing leg pain. Walking a 14-kilometre stretch might be easy for those who practice regularly, but for us, it became quite tiring. Even though it was challenging, we managed to complete it.

Along the Moksha Margam, one of our friends' mobile phones fell and shattered completely, as it didn't have tempered glass or a case. This accident was our second setback during the journey. She was upset that her phone broke, so we tried to cheer her up by saying that her mobile had attained "moksham."

Completing the giripradhakshina, we finally took darshan after 7 hours of waiting. By the time we came out, it was already 10:40 PM in the temple. We had to catch the last bus at 11:00 PM. In a hurry, a few of us took an auto to the bus stand and waited for the others. But some of them went in a different direction, which delayed us further. Adding to our disappointment, we missed the last bus back home with no charge on our phones.

We checked for all other options to reach Kancheepuram. Asked around at the bus stand, but no one could guide us properly. In the end, we had no choice but to wait for the next bus, which was at 1:00 AM. We spent nearly two hours at the bus stand, tired, hungry, but still holding on to the feeling of the darshan and the satisfaction of completing the 14-kilometre girivalam. Somehow, we made it back to our rooms the next morning.

It wasn't an easy journey, but a blessed one. It gave us more than what we expected. Somewhere between the waiting and the weariness, we found something divine.

**Pinnintla Lakshmi Trilokya**  
*Design*

# காஞ்சி Connect

V-connect Kancheepuram Special

April 2026

## Ready to



Transcend kicked off with an uplifting theme video powered by Lynyrd Skynyrd's Free Bird.

S Venkatesh, Chief Executive, in his address complimented the team on the record-breaking performance and highlighted the contributions of various breakout acts. SVH summarised his vision for 2026-27 using the acronym SOAR.

**Systems**

Strong systems help good people do great work. Automation and technology will continue to be a priority.

**Optimisation**

Remove friction. Reduce waste >> More focus. Faster responses. Every activity should result in satisfying our customers.

**Alignment**

When teams are aligned around a shared purpose - decisions become easier, priorities become clearer, conflicts reduce.

**Results**

Results matter. Meet commitments. Deliver on time. Get it right the first time. Excellence is not about dramatic wins. It's about being dependable.

S Kalyanaraman, Executive Vice President and Head - Industrial Machinery Business, provided the audience an overview of the key strategies behind the historic turnaround at Valves. The event concluded with Valves Xcellence Awards, which had over 150 nominations in the fray for 18 awards.

# Congrats to winners of Valves Xcellence Awards 2026



**Best Pravya Presenters**  
*Stepping into Forgings - Step Forgings*



**Contribution to Sustainability**  
*800 kW Solar Power Plant,  
Exceeding Tree Plantation Targets*



**Significant Quality Improvement**  
*TMBV*



**Outstanding Support Function**  
*Warehouse Reorganisation,  
Space Optimisation*



**Outstanding Service Function**  
*Zero Overdue Supplier Payments*



**New Product Development or Product Enhancement**  
*Developments for DMDE Projects*



**Supplier Performance Improvement**  
*Global Supply Chain Development and  
Scaling Up Volumes*



**Cost Reduction**  
*Gear Unit Optimisation*



**Best Digital Initiative**  
*Team Track & Trace*



**Best People Initiative**  
Team VGT



**Manufacturing Process Improvement**  
Innovative Process for SEPCO Project



**Best Product Group**  
On Time Delivery Performance  
GGC



**Consistent Performance**  
Achievement vs Budget  
CMG



**Voice of Customer Champion**  
Team LTVA



**Exceeding Customer Expectations**  
Large Size Valve Order Execution



**Increase in Order Inflow**  
Team Reliance



**Best Sales Region**  
Achievement vs Budget  
WRO 1



**Best Product Group**  
Achievement vs Budget  
TMBV

# Congrats to Achievers

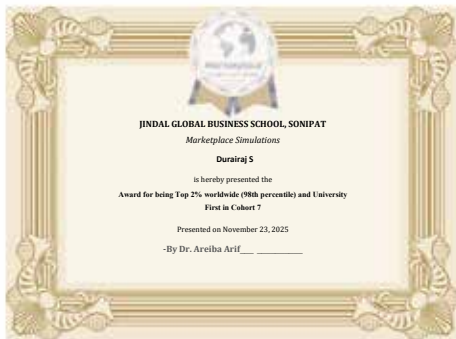
BE



**Revanth Kumar K**  
S/o Karunakaran P



Thrizenyaa A, daughter of Arul S, won the silver award in Innovation Challenge Category at the International Creativity and Innovation Award (ICIA), Vietnam.



**Durairaj S**  
IT & Digitalisation



**Kumaravel P**  
FG Stores



**Prakash.P**  
FG Stores