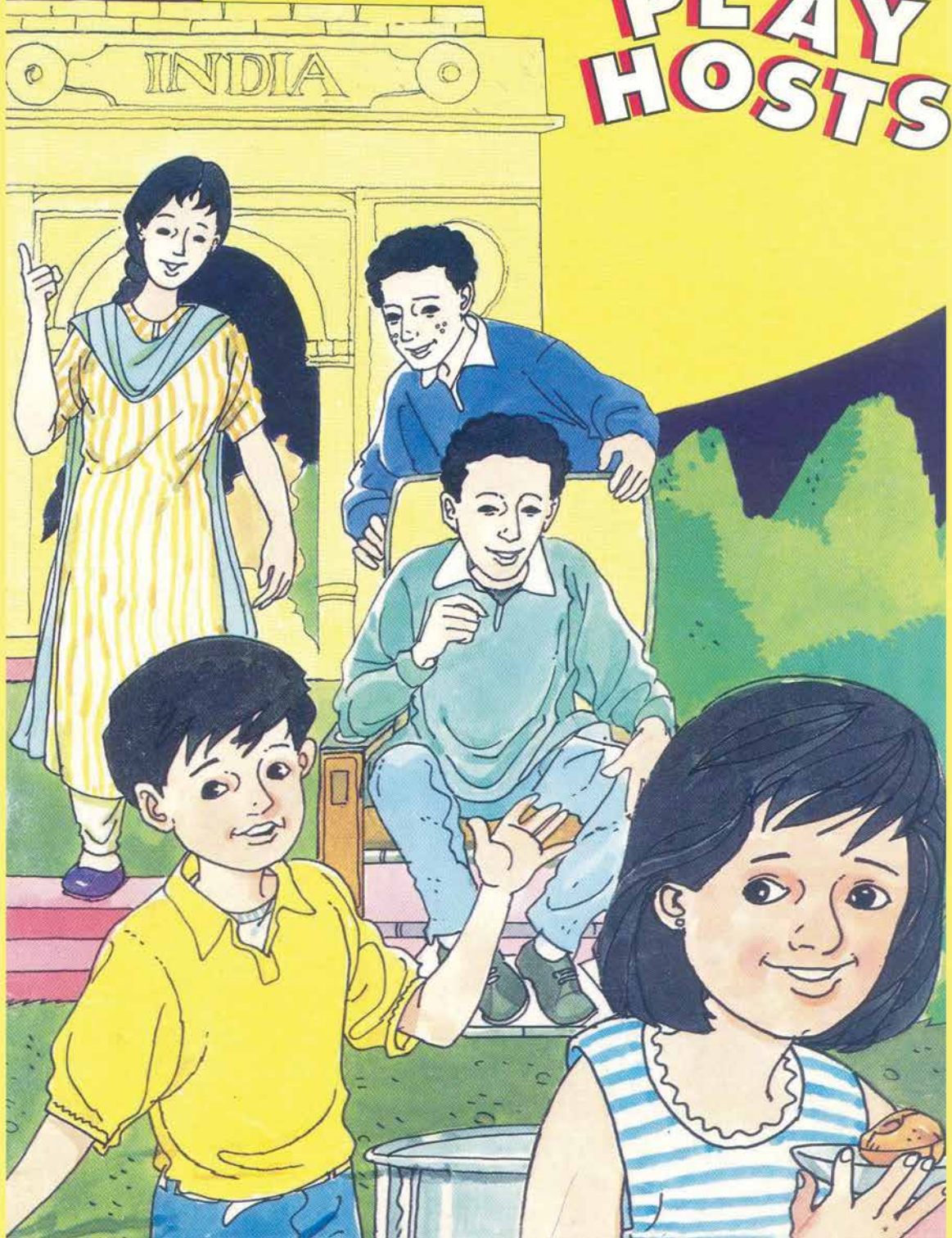


A series on children's rights

TWINS PLAY HOSTS



This is a story about children like you and your friends. Those of you who have read "The Twins in Madurai", "Jolt in Jaipur" and "Scandal in School" the first three comic books of this series of children's rights, will remember Rohan and Saira the two children who lost their parents some years ago and now live with their foster parents Mr. and Mrs. Saran and their dearly loved foster sister Seema didi.

In this story Rohan and Saira, the travelling twins for a change are playing hosts to another pair of twins Vijay and Amar, who are visiting Delhi for the first time. The visit becomes an important learning experience for Rohan and Saira. Join them in this experience.



Acknowledgement

We are grateful to The Spastics Society of Northern India, New Delhi for giving their valuable comments on the draft. We are also grateful to National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People for giving us list of NGOs working with differently abled persons.

It is a hot, muggy afternoon. Rohan and Saira get off their school bus and walk home.



Half an hour later...

Mmm! Lovely.

Just great!

I have news
for the two of you.



On Friday, Rohan,
Saira, we are going to get
some guests. They are closer
to your age, so you will
have to look after them.
They're from Bangalore
and it is their
first visit to Delhi.



Uncle has a very close childhood friend, Suresh Rao,
who he lost touch with. After studies Suresh
settled down in Bangalore.



And...?

Well, Suresh got married
and has a pair of twins. He
was very pleased when he
heard that we too have a pair
of twins.



Are they like us?
A boy and a girl?

No, Saira. They are
two boys-Vijay and
Amar-16 years old.



HURRAY!

What fun. I'm getting a little tired of girl company. A man needs to have some men around, you know, for some heart-to-heart talk.



Rohan, just keep quiet. Aunty, we'll look after them. But you seem to be a little worried. Are you worried about where they will stay?



The parents can stay in the guest room downstairs, Rohan can shift in with Seema didi and me while they are here. Vijay and Amar can be in Rohan's room upstairs.



That's very sweet of you, Saira. And I must say you are very good at organizing and planning.



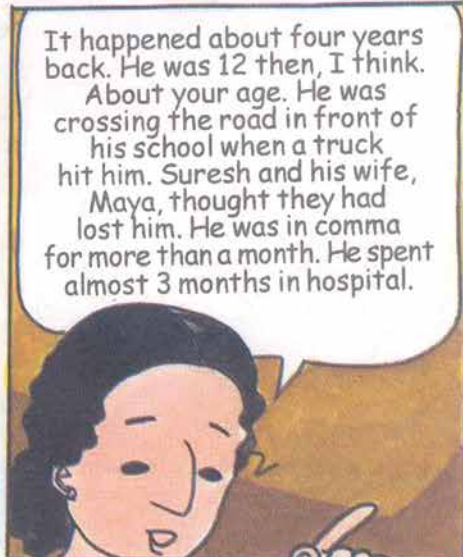
Vijay and Amar are coming without their parents. But, I'm just not sure that I can cope with them.



Huh? Cope? What do you mean?

Remember we had seven people over last year when Sita Mausi and gang came to Delhi. And what about when Manish chacha was leaving for Africa - the whole village stayed over to see him off. Phew...! What a time I had then.





As twins, you can understand how they must have felt to be separated.

I think it's awful for them. No one can separate us.

Yes!

I know that.

They're coming next week - that is, Friday. And I need all your help.

You can depend on us. You know that, Auntie.

How long are they here, Auntie?

Just till Tuesday - less than four days. Monday is August the 15th. They're here to take part in a candlelight procession organized by all the associations for the disabled in the country. They plan to go from India Gate to Parliament House on the eve of Independence Day.

Later, in the night, Saira enters Rohan's room to find him deep in thought.

Hey, what's up? Are you all right?

Saira, have you ever thought how lucky we are? I mean just to be healthy, normal, with hands and legs working well? I can't get Vijay out of my mind. How does he feel tied down to a chair, helpless, dependent on someone all the time?

I know, Rohan. We are so lucky. We too could have been crippled in the accident that took away our real parents. Those days were bad. But at least we survived, and then Aunty and Uncle asked us to live with them. And Seema didi became our sister. Now I cannot imagine what life

would be without Aunty, Uncle, and Seema didi.

Who is talking about me?



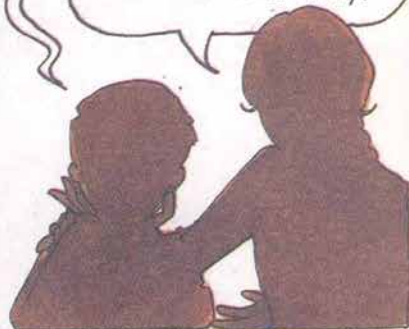
Did you hear about Vijay and Amar's visit next week?

Yes, aren't you excited?



I am. I am a little worried too.

Worried? You? Why?



Well, Vijay and Amar have been through this huge tragedy...what can we talk to them about? Vijay moves about in a wheelchair. And I'm sure if I talk to him about cricket and football and the games we normal boys play, he'll feel bad. Poor Vijay!



Rohan, I'm not sure if Vijay would welcome your attitude. Let me try and explain. You have been in an accident yourself. How would you feel if people never mentioned 'accident' or 'death' or 'parents' or 'foster care' in front of you. How would you react if people treated you as if you were different from others?







Soon they are with them. Mr. Saran shakes hands with Amar and Vijay.

Hello, Amar, Vijay. Good to see you.

Hello, Uncle, thank you for coming to meet us.



Vijay, Amar, both of you look exactly like Suresh come meet my children.
Seema is my eldest.
She's a doctor working with an NGO.

Hello !



Rohan and Saira are my twins : they're in school.



Hi!

HELLO!

Welcome to Delhi!



Let's collect your luggage, Amar.
It may take 10 or 15 minutes.

Yes, Uncle...

But before that, we'd like
to use the toilet. Can you
tell us where it is?

Yes, sure.

Mr. Saran leads Amar and Vijay off to one side.

How awful. Seema didi, ever since I heard
that Vijay and Amar are coming over, I have
been looking at things differently. Wherever
I go, I keep thinking if I were in a wheelchair,
how would I have managed each and every
movement of mine.

Yes, it gives one a
rude jolt while one is
sailing along smoothly
through
life doesn't it?

After collecting the luggage they reach the car park. There are two cars waiting for them.

Seema, you come with me.
Rohan, Saira, you take the
bigger car with Vijay and Amar.



Amar moves the wheelchair as close to the car as possible and helps Vijay into it.



At home...later...

Can I come in?

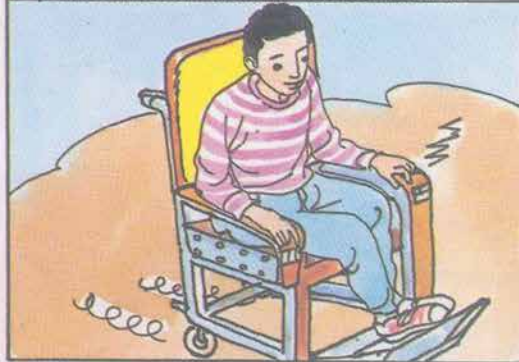
Sure, come in, Rohan we're almost ready.



You have a lovely house, Rohan. The rooms are really spacious...Let me put this away and then we can talk



Rohan is surprised to see Vijay push some buttons and move forward.



Hey, that's quite neat. Will you show me how to manoeuvre it?

Sure, Dad got me this battery - operated wheelchair. It's more expensive but well worth it- because it makes me more independent and mobile. And it eases Amar's work too.



Actually, I'm very fortunate Dad can afford all this. I shudder to think what it would have been like if I couldn't afford a wheelchair.

Can I ask you something?



How did you get into the plane?



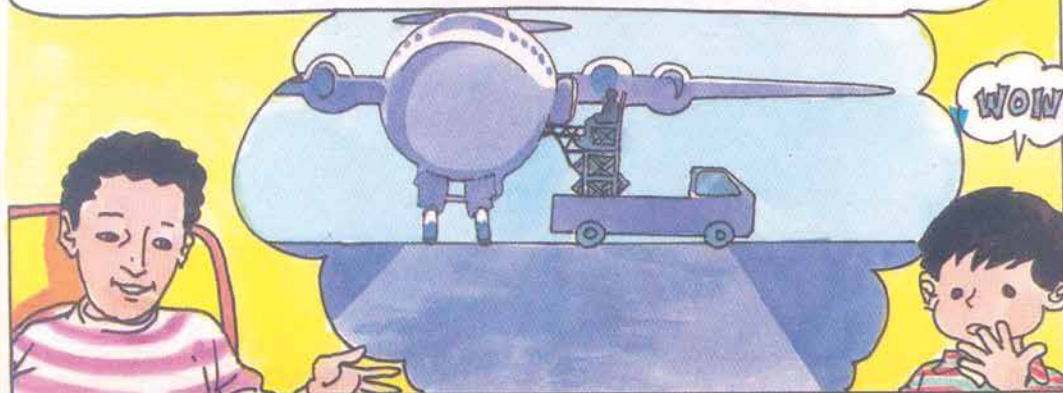
Rohan, you can ask me anything you want to know. People avoid asking anything about my disability. They think that by pretending it doesn't exist, they're saving me pain...or hurt...embarrassment... whatever.



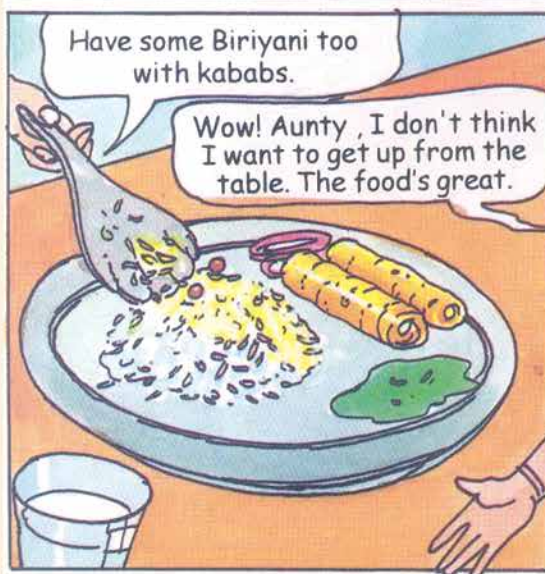
You know, Rohan, when some people see Vijay, they automatically start talking loudly and slowly - as if being unable to walk has made him deaf and limited in the brain as well!



To answer your question : earlier people who couldn't walk, had to be carried up to the plane. But thanks to a legal verdict, major airports in India have "ambulifts" which one can wheel oneself onto and which lift you to the plane.







Thanks to the ramp that Mr. Saran had fixed, Vijay move easily into the living room.



The ramp is a really neat idea. Uncle, Aunty, I'm really grateful that you have taken so much pain to make me feel at home.



Seema serves the kulfi.

This is heavenly ! I guess kulfi is the Indian equivalent of ice creams.



Vijay, I was thinking about the question you asked me earlier.



You mean how many disabled people have you seen on the streets?



Yes! Frankly, in the past six months, apart from a few beggars, I don't remember seeing even one disabled person on the streets.



I'm not surprised. Yet about 70 million Indians - a rough estimate - are disabled.



Wha...a-t? where are they? We hardly see any.

Good question. Shackled to their homes. With almost no facility that will help ease their mobility.



If you can't move out of your home Saira, how can you be seen? The problem is very basic.



Actually, we don't even know for certain what the exact figure is. For the first time when the census is conducted in February 2001, the number of disabled persons in the family will be recorded. At least that's a start. This is after much debate and haranguing by the voluntary agencies working for the disabled in India.



But can't the government do something more?



Well, the Persons with Disability Act was passed in 1995. Its objective is to give equal opportunities to persons with disabilities, to protect their rights and to enable them to have full participation in public life.

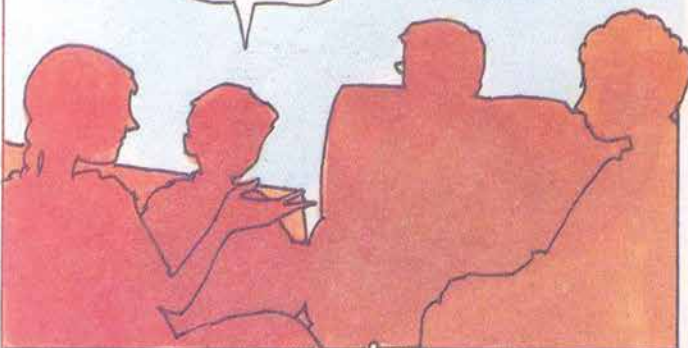


What does it mean in real life terms?



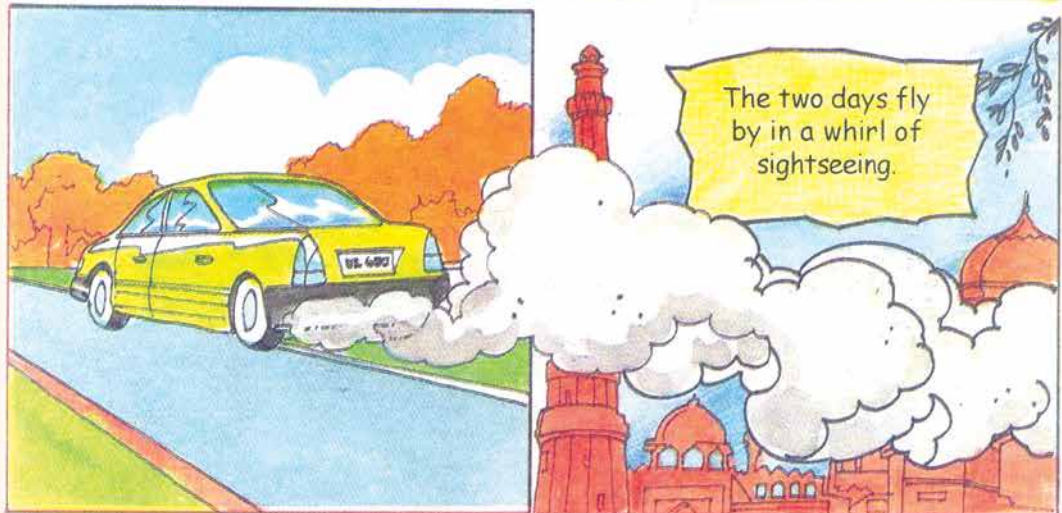
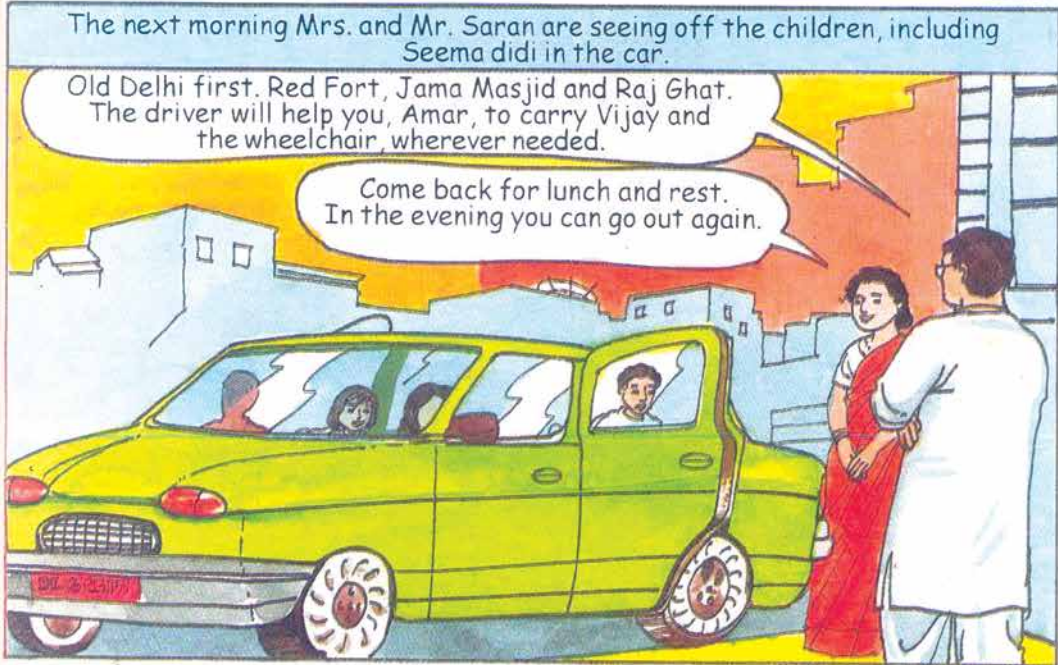
That the government is committed to improve the life of the disabled and help them in every possible way.

How vague



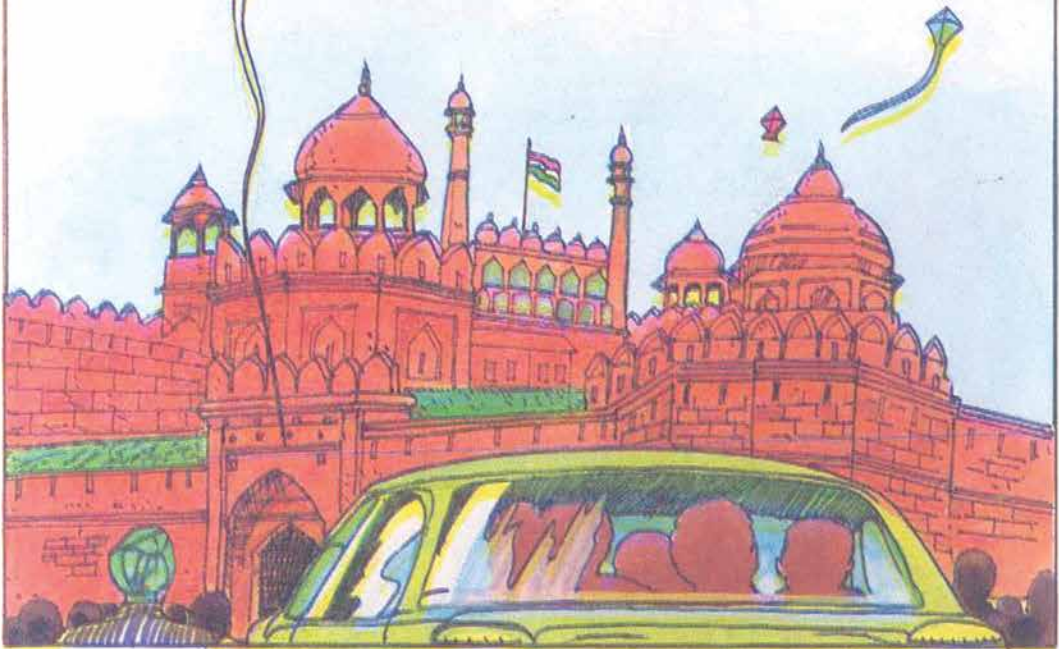
Well, yes, the task is daunting. India is such a vast country, its population so huge.





The imposing Red Fort.

What a man of vision
Shahjehan was!



Yes. Awesome. Isn't it! The Peacock
throne was here before it was carried
off by Nadir Shah to Iran.



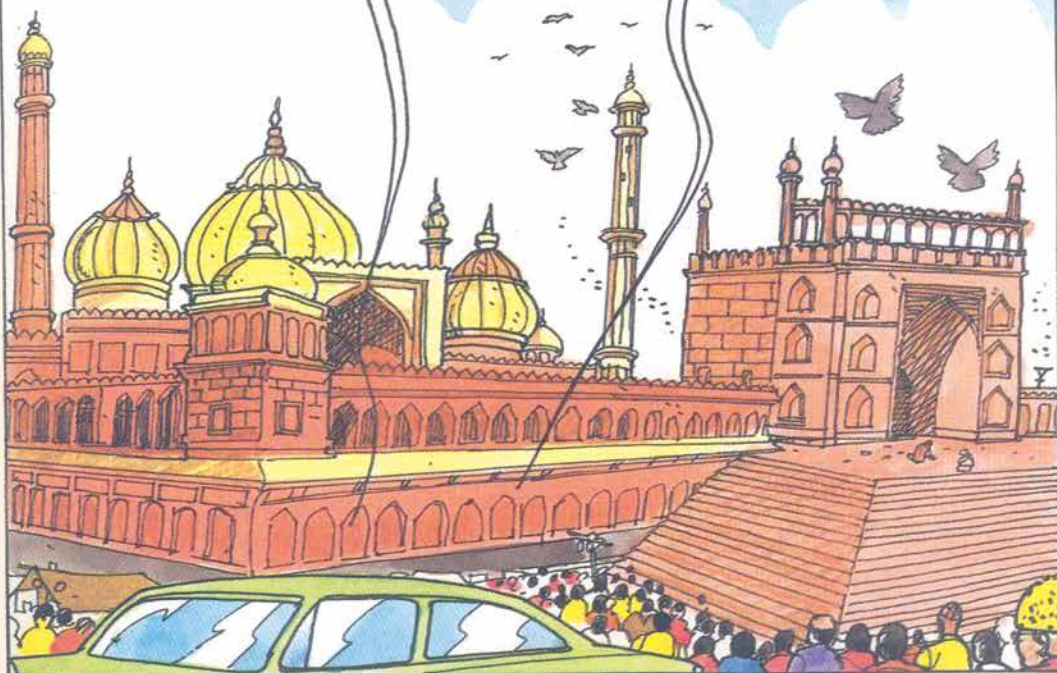
Gosh! I can imagine
what it must have looked
like. The king....his courtiers,
and the hustle bustle.



Jama Masjid the largest mosque in India.
They look at the flight of steps
leading to the mosque.

Oh, well let's not
get down.

That's OK, Saira, I'm used to not
being able to see places. Tell me
more about it however.



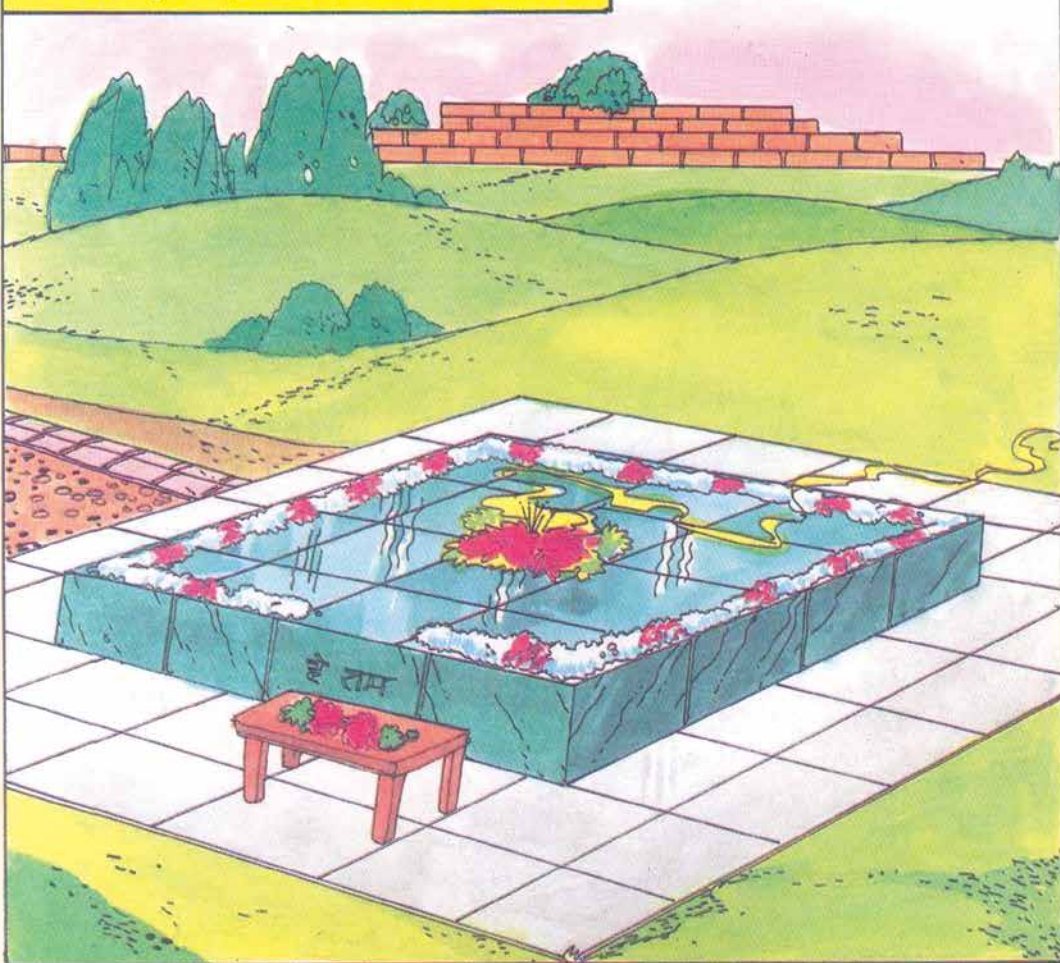
Well, this too was built by Shahjehan,
and took 14 years to complete from
1644-1658. You know, 25,000 people
can participate in prayers here
at the same time.



It must look like a sea of
humanity during Id.



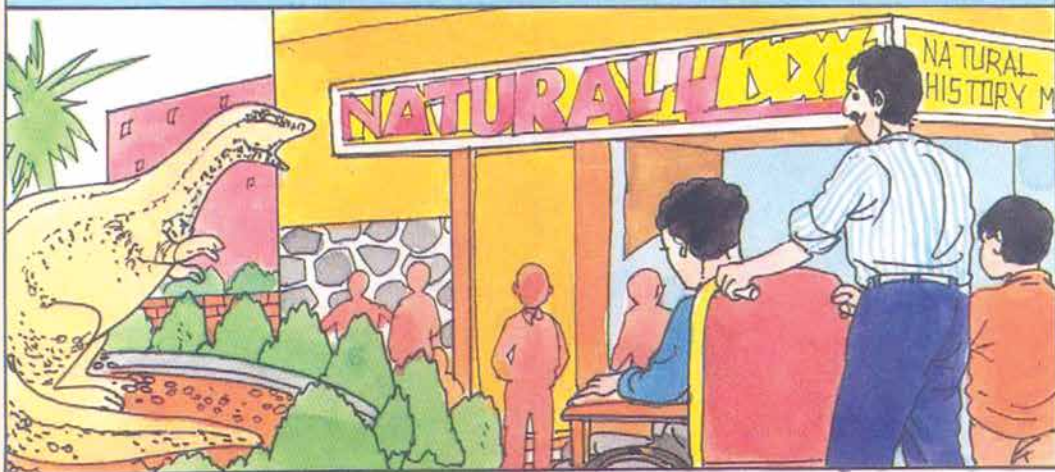
At the Raj Ghat, Mahatma Gandhi's samadhi.



I'm really glad we could come here. There's such a sense of peace, an aura about this place.



In the afternoon they visit the Natural History Museum. They join many other children who look at Vijay with a great deal of curiosity.



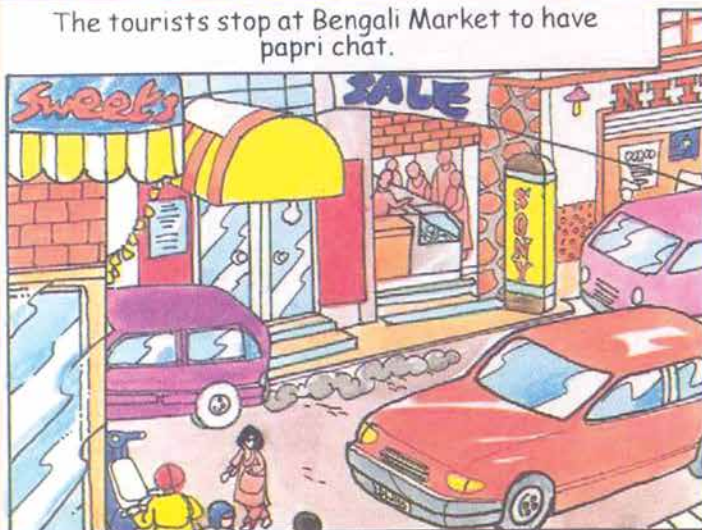
Why are they staring? I am ashamed of their rudeness, Vijay. What must you be feeling?



Oh I'm used to it. And I don't blame them. After all I am an oddity. And most children after the initial curiosity accept me for what I am.



The tourists stop at Bengali Market to have papri chat.

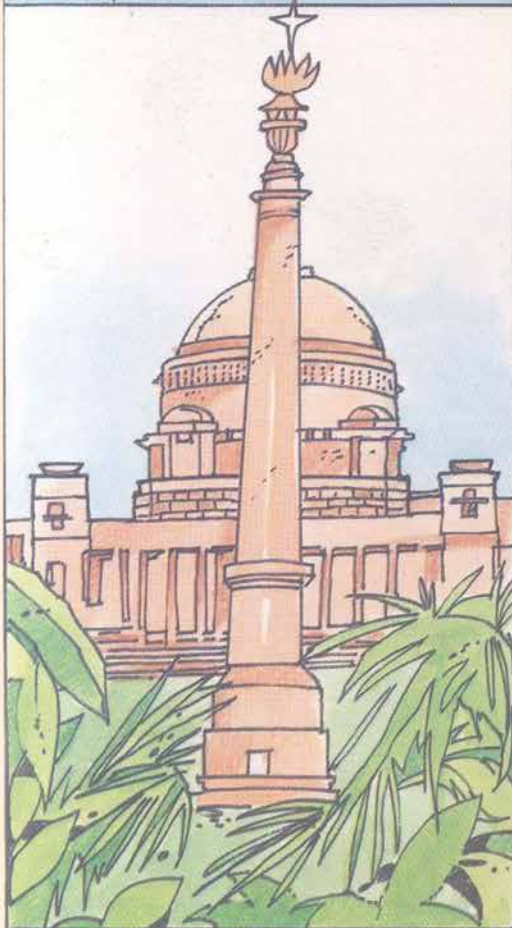


Delicious! it's just like Aunty described.

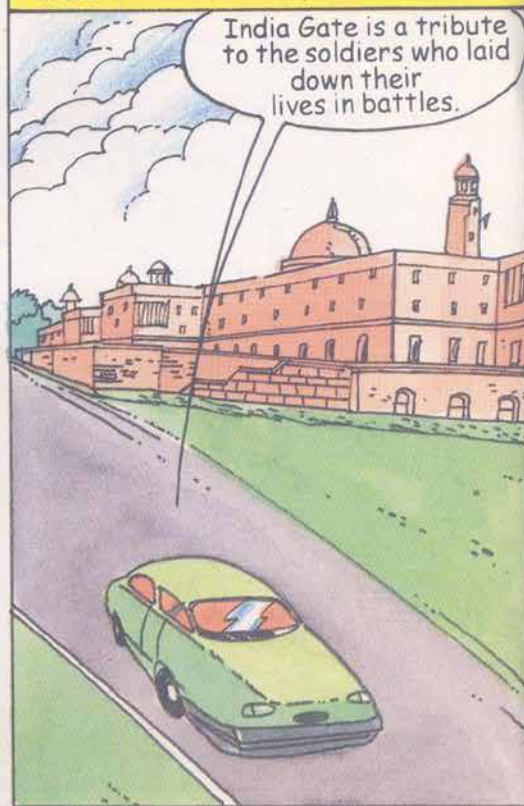
I love the sweet chutney.



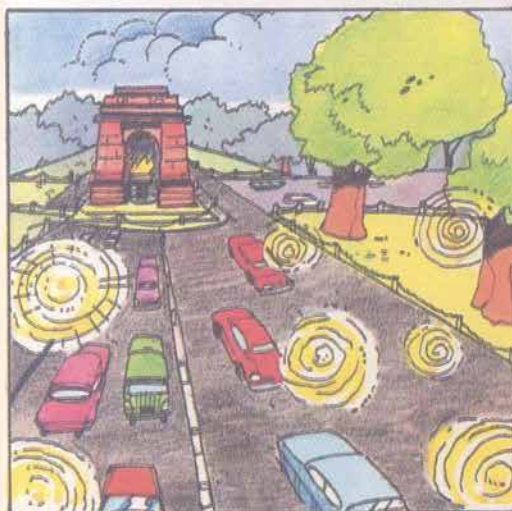
They drive to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the residence of the President of India. Completed in 1929, before independence this was the Viceroy's house.



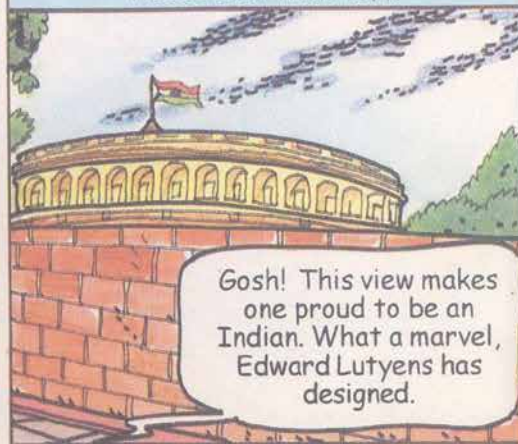
Flanking on the two sides are the North and South Blocks, the seat of the Indian government. India Gate is far away in the distance.



India Gate is a tribute to the soldiers who laid down their lives in battles.

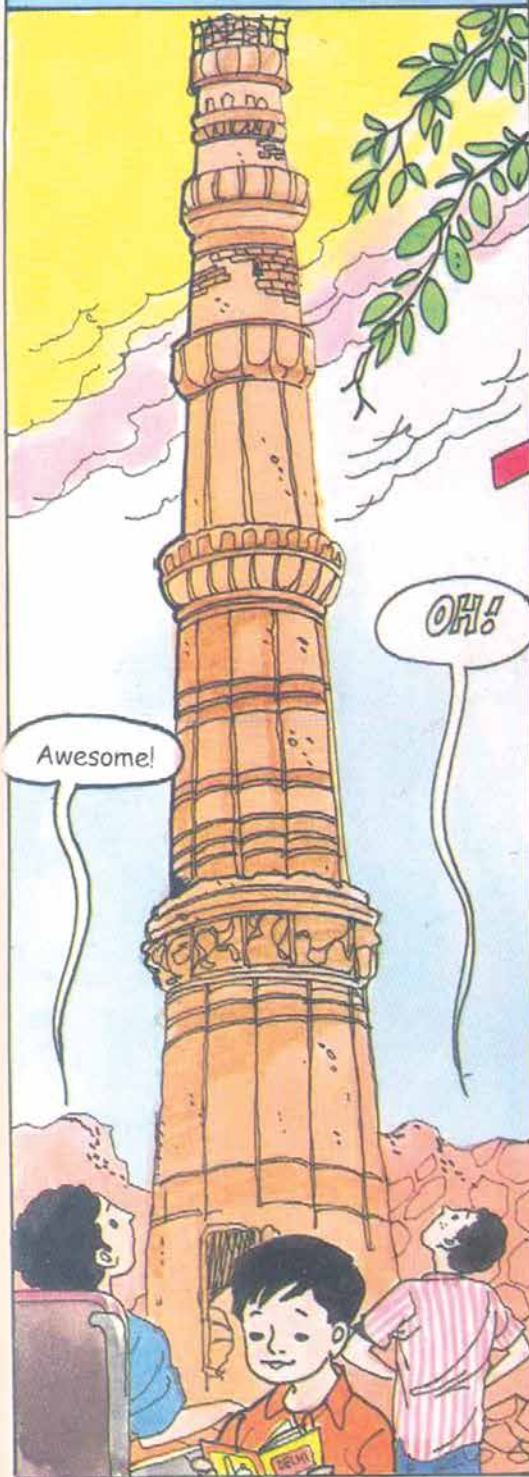


As they drive down, Parliament House is on their left.



Gosh! This view makes one proud to be an Indian. What a marvel, Edward Lutyens has designed.

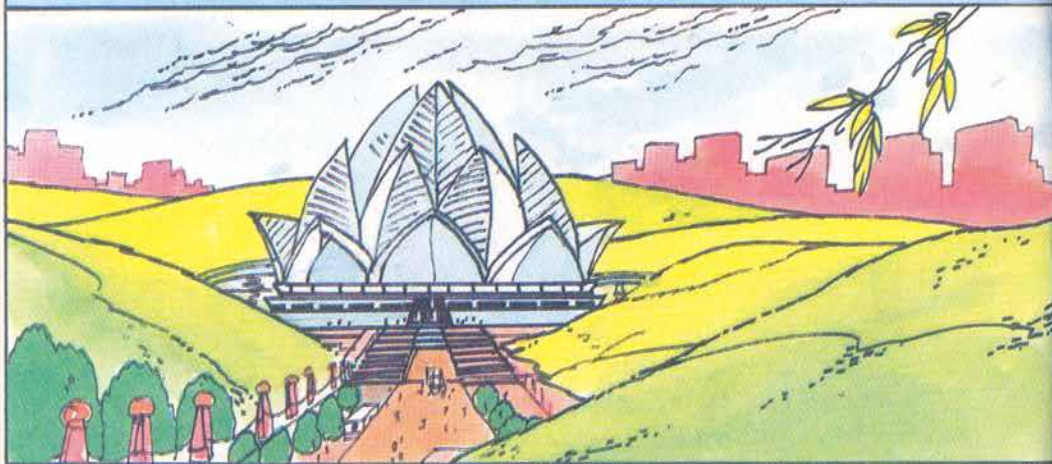
The next day, at the Qutub Minar.



The Qutub Minar was started by Qutb-ud-din Aibak in 1193 and finished by his successors. Ferozeshah Tuglaq built the top storeys and added a cupola to it. But the cupola is no longer on the top now.



At the Bah'ai Temple, there are facilities for disabled to move on chairs.



Amar and the driver have picked and carried Vijay and then wheelchair a countless times in two days.



Vijay, the least the government and private business houses can do is to construct places keeping the disabled too in mind.



Yes, Rohan. It's very frustrating for a disabled person. Being dependent crushes the spirit - but what is worse is that so little is being done to help us to become self-sufficient. I consider myself very fortunate. Because my parents are not poor they provide me with all the support I need. My future doesn't seem dark and frightening as it must be for thousands like me.



And even though the government claims that jobs are reserved for the disabled, it is as if a favour is being bestowed on them. They don't need pity. Just a recognition that they are differently abled and a support system which will help them to tap their potential in whichever area they want to.



A sensitivity about the issue is needed.

So much of construction is going on - subways, overhead bridges, shopping complexes, banks, post offices. Yet how many of these are accessible to a person on a wheelchair? When will we keep such people also in mind?

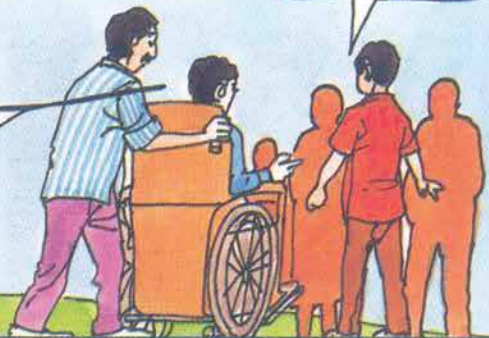


That's why we're here. To take part in a candlelight march to Parliament on August 15.



We want to create awareness in people of our needs and our plight. The disabled too want their independence. The nation is free, but the disabled are tied down - not in spirit, talent or potential, but in their everyday movement, in and out of places. We thought a candlelight procession on August 15th would help focus attention on our needs.

Can we come for the march?



Of course, you can.

Hey! Doesn't the Bah'ai Temple look like the Sydney Opera House?

Yeah, it does!



Back in the car.....

Seema didi, can we go and shop somewhere? We must get something for Mom and Dad.



Hey! Don't you want to get something for Renu?

Shut up!



Who's Renu?

Renu is Vijay's girlfriend.

Amar, will you shut up? Or I'll wallop you.

She's just a good friend.

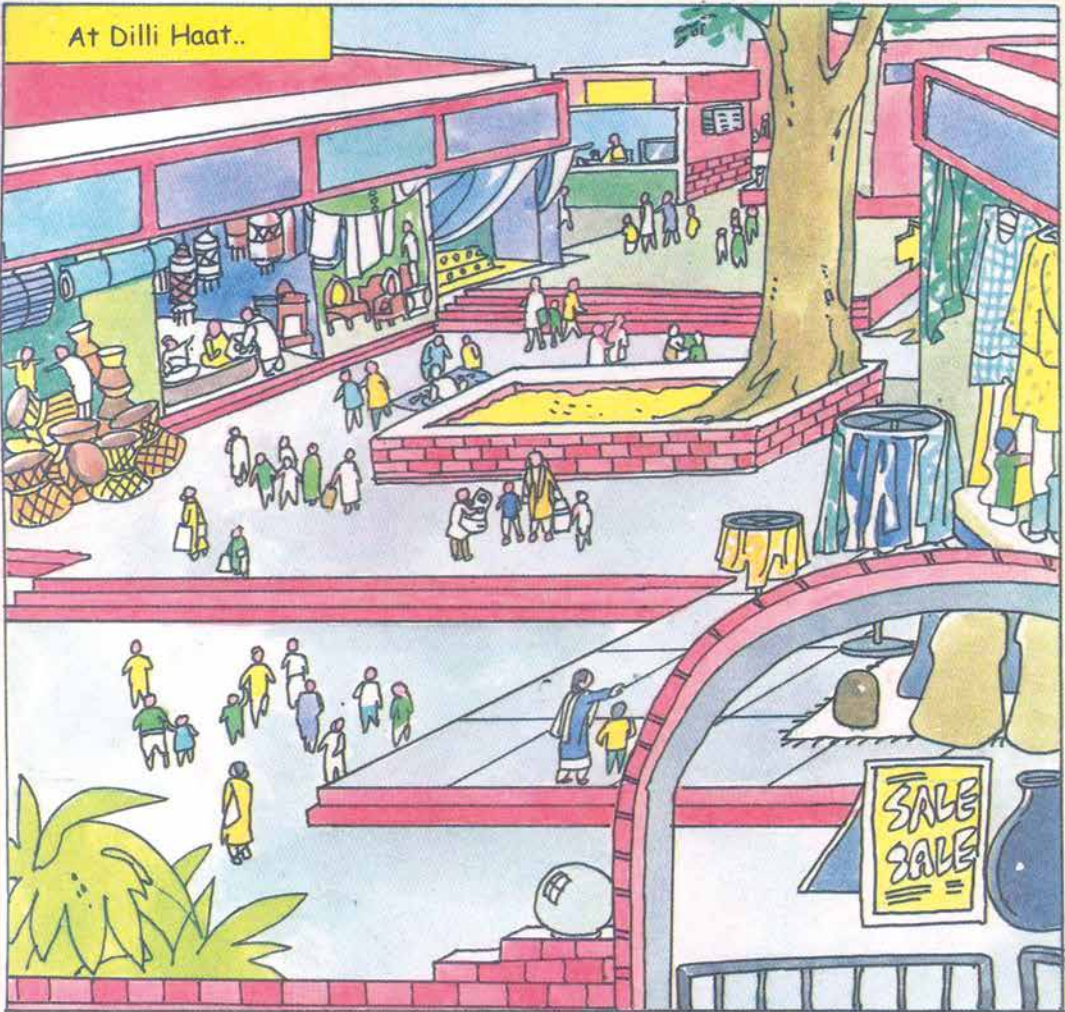


A shopping complex called Dilli Haat is the only place that is accessible. Shall we go there?

Sure, let's go.



At Dilli Haat..



Later, Vijay, Saira and Rohan are playing Scrabble.

Vijay, after your accident, all the attention of your parents must have been on you. How did Amar feel at that time?



Oh it was very tough on Amar. I took a year to recover. And people expected Amar to manage everything on his own; to grow up overnight. He became quite moody and irritable. When Dad realized he spoke to Amar one day.



Dad and Mom told him that they loved him just as before and couldn't do without his help. It took a while, but after that, we got back to how we were before the mishap.



Enter Seema and Amar their faces alight with excitement.



What? You've bought an elephant.

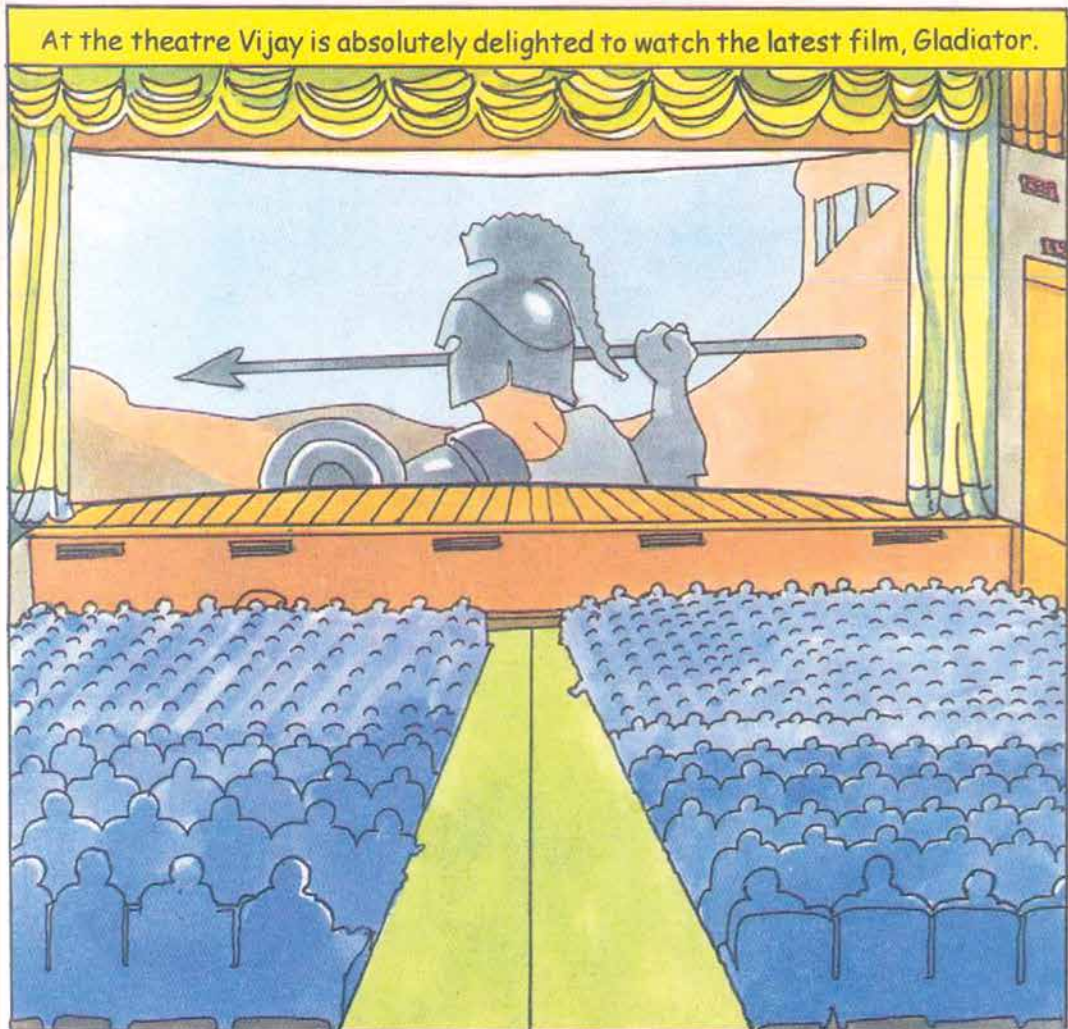


Better than that. We've got tickets for a film. You can take your wheelchair in. Can you imagine that?



A film? In a theatre? I can't believe it. I haven't seen one in a theatre for almost five years. Are you sure, Amar? They won't send me back?





The evening of August 15. Lots of children are assembled on Rajpath near the India Gate. Accompanying the disabled are an equal number of abled people.

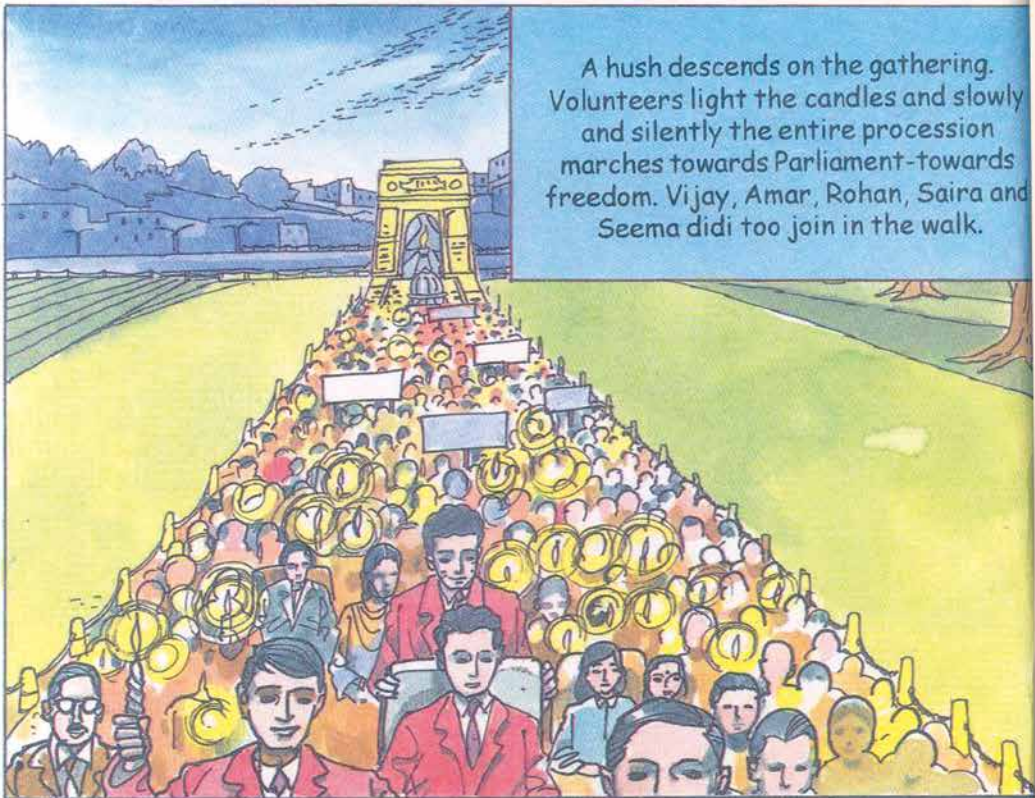
Thank you for the wonderful time we've had here. Thank you for your friendship, for treating me as normal... and most of all, Seema didi, for taking me for the film. It felt so good, so normal, so...so... part of the world, to sit with other people and see a film.



It was great having you with us. We learnt so much from you. Rohan and I have decided that we're going to spend some time every week working with the disabled.



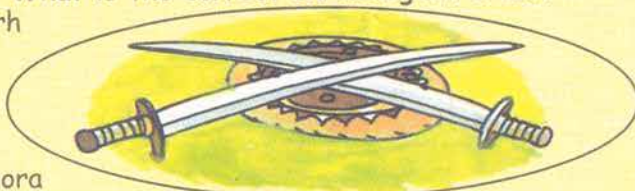
A hush descends on the gathering. Volunteers light the candles and slowly and silently the entire procession marches towards Parliament-towards freedom. Vijay, Amar, Rohan, Saira and Seema didi too join in the walk.



QUIZ

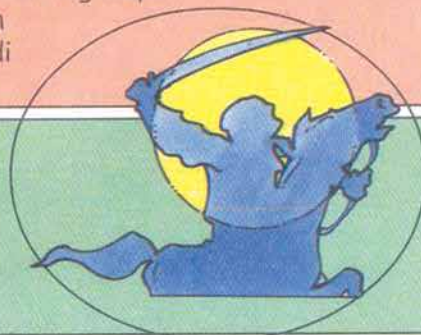
Q. 1. Seven cities of Delhi refers to the various cities (citadel & forts) built over the last 1000 years by different rulers of Delhi. Following are the names of these cities. What is the correct chronological order?

- Purana Qila - Shergarh
- Siri c. Ferozabad
- Tughlaqabad
- Shajhanabad
- Jahanpanah
- Lal Kot - Qila Rai Pithora



Q. 2. Following are the different dynasties and the names of founder rulers who ruled Delhi during (1206-1857). Identify the wrong combination.

- Slave Dynasty (1206-1290) : Qutub-ud-din Aibak
- Khalji Dynasty (1290-1321) : Jalal-ud-din Khalji
- Tughlaq (1321-1414) : Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq
- Sayyid (1414-1451) : Khizr Khan
- Lodi (1451-1526) : Bahlol Lodi
- Mughals (1526-1857) : Humayun



Q. 3. Jantar Mantar was built by :

- Prithvi Raj Chauhan
- Shah Jahan
- Maharaja Jai Singh II
- Jai Prakash
- Rana Pratap

Q. 4. What is the popular name of all India war memorial in Delhi?

- Gateway of India
- Lotus Temple
- Mutiny Memorial
- Flag Staff Tower
- India Gate



Q. 5. Following is the list of Samadhis of famous Indian leaders. Match them with their names:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| a. Raj Ghat | a. Lal Bahadur Shastri |
| b. Shanti Van | b. Rajiv Gandhi |
| c. Vijay Ghat | c. Jawahar Lal Nehru |
| d. Shakti Sthal | d. Mahatma Gandhi |
| e. Vir Bhumi | e. Indira Gandhi |

Answers : Q1 - g, b, d, f, c, a, e, Q2 - f (Babur), Q3 - c, Q4 - e, Q5 - a-d, b-c, c-a, d-e, e-b

BARE FACTS

5-6% of India's population is disabled.

There are over 70 million disabled people in our country.

Less than 1% of children with disability receive education of any kind.

The first Special Employment Exchange for the physically disabled was established in Mumbai in 1959.

In 1977, the Government of India reserved 3% of vacancies in identified jobs in Government and the public sector, in Groups C&D.

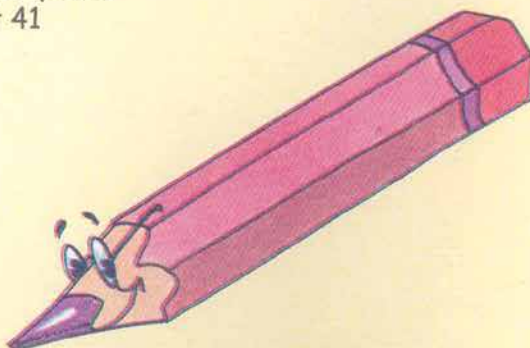
Since the setting up of the first Special Employment Exchange, in almost 41 years, only about 1,00,000 disabled persons have been employed !

According to the National Sample Survey of 1991, there are 7 million employable disabled people waiting to get a job.

A disabled activist had to file a Public Interest Litigation in the Hon'ble Supreme Court in order to make air travel accessible and disabled-friendly. However, our buses and trains continue to be inaccessible for an average disabled person.

Take a look around and see as to how many of our public buildings are accessible?!!

Let's break down these barriers; let's overcome prejudice; let's join hands - the disabled and the non-disabled; let's not worry about disability or be ashamed of it; let's take a confident step forward, as one people - proud citizens of proud nation.



NGOS WORKING WITH DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS.

Action for Autism
C-232, Defence Colony
New Delhi 110 024

Jai Vakeel Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre
Sewri Hill, Sewri Road
Mumbai 400 033

National Thalassemia Welfare Society
KG-1/97, Vikas Puri
New Delhi 110 018

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped
Manovikas Nagar
Secunderabad 500 009

Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust
Karkar Dooma, Vikas Marg
Delhi 110 092

Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy
P.O. Narendrapur 743 508
District South 24 Parganas

Jalpaiguri Welfare Organisation
Centre for Special Education for the Disabled Children
Club Road, Jalpaiguri 735 101

Jan Madhyam
B-43, Kailash Apartments
Lala Lajpatrai Marg
New Delhi 110048

***The Spastics Society of India**
Sion, Trombay Road
Chembur
Mumbai 400 071

Samuha
Jalahalli
Deodurg Taluk
Raichur 584 116

Akshay Pratishthan
Sector D-III
Vasant Kunj
New Delhi 110 070

Mangalam
Mangalam Sadan
A-445, Indira Nagar
Lucknow 226 016

Blind Men's Association
Dr. Vikaram Sarabhai Road
Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380 015

Baroda Citizens Council
Above Health Museum
Sayaji Baug
Vadodara 390 018

Seva-in-Action

#36, S.T. Bed Layout
1st Main, 4th Block, Koramangala
Bangalore 560 034

Handicapped Welfare Federation

14 (LF), Tansen Marg
New Delhi 110 001

**The Helen Keller Institute
of Deaf and Blind**

Municipal Secondary School
South Wing, Ground Floor
Near "S" Bridge, N. M. Joshi Marg
Byculla (W) Mumbai 400 011

**Servants of the People
Society (Delhi)**

Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan
Block EG & H, Masjid Moth
Greater Kailash Part II
New Delhi 110 048

**National Association for
the Blind, India**

11, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan Road
Worli Seaface, Mumbai 400 025

**Ali Yavar Jung National Institute
for the Hearing Handicapped**

K.C. Marg, Bandra Reclamation
Bandra (W) Mumbai 400 050

**Tamana Association
(Tamana Special School)**

D-6 Street, Vasant Vihar
New Delhi 110 057

**National Institute for the
Visually Handicapped**

D-11, 116, Rajpur Road
Dehradun - 248 001

Impact India foundation

At Voltas Limited
6th Floor, Maneckjee Wadia
Building
127, M G Road
Mumbai 400 023

Bihar Viklang Kalyan Parishad

East of Gumti No. - 5,
Adarsh Nagar
Majhauria, P.O. Khabra
Muzaffarpur

**National Institute for
the Orthopaedically
Handicapped**

B.T. Road, Bonhooghly
Kolkata 700 090

Open Learning Systems

275/A, Sahid Nagar
Bhubaneswar 751 007

**Thakur Hari Prasad Institute
of Research and Rehabilitation
for the Mentally Handicapped.**

Vivekananda Nagar
Dilsukh Nagar
Hyderabad

Centre for Special Education

N.V. Gadgil School No. 5
Shaniwar Peth,
Near Dakshin Mukhi Maruti
Pune 411 030

* The Spastics Society of India
are working in Assam, Bangalore,
Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and
Mumbai also.



ABOUT BUTTERFLIES...

Butterflies is a registered voluntary organisation working with the most vulnerable groups of children, especially street and street connected children since 1989. With a rights based, non-institutional approach the organisation endeavours to educate and impart life skills to vulnerable children so that they become self reliant and exit the generational cycle of illiteracy and poverty.



Protecting and empowering children since 1989

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