

Bhagalpur to Singapore

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8 PM, 25th April Hongkong Airport Transit lounge. Was waiting to board the flight to SFA on my first ever overseas tour. And just thinking of last 24 hours of my life. Will like to share what was my experience for the last 24 hours or so.

9 Pm HAL Airport, bangalore. I was all set to go. My friends were with me. But still I was waiting for two of my friends. After all it was a much awaited trip and how can I leave without meeting them. But then it proved to be a long wait. In the mean time Minhaz panicked us so much that I felt as, if I am not going to get into the lounge, I am going to miss my flight. So I called them and bid adieu to them. I went inside the lounge only to find that I could have waited for another half an hour more for them at the airport. Any way, I was set to start. And I was aware of the amount of "English" I had to speak on my one month trip. So i decided to practice it right from the bangalore airport. And I started it off with the PCO operator at the lounge. After a call to my friend, I asked that guy with a 100rs note in my hand, "How much?". He destroyed all my enthu with his reply "Change Yelle madi" (No change) or something like that. Ooooooppps, he was the wrong guy for practicing my english. Anyway I was determined to put myself into American Environment, so I just gave him a 100 Rs Note, a firm look and said "keep the change" with a nod like Clinton. And I felt really satisfied after leaving a change of Rs 3.50 with him.

By this time, something went wrong with my physiological system and body temperature sooted up. I realised that I was in fever. May be last minute hastes while packing things or the excitement has started showing its effect. And it was like my dreams to break Gopal's record of 33 coke on his trip to US was at a threat. (U can find more about Gopal in Inscrutable Americans, The - Anurag Mathur).

In the lounge I met three more junta from Oracle who were also coming for the meeting at HQ from different groups. There were more in total 22 people coming from the same flight but I managed to familiarise with these three only.

I boarded the flight with fever. The moment I entered the flight, the lady at the gate gave me a beautiful smile as if she was knowing me from my college days. I was about to ask her "Have we met before? Was it at Roby's party?" but soon I found that she was doing this to all other persons. I took my seat and said "hello, how u doing?" to my fellow passenger. He replied "fine, Aap kaise hai?" God...am i on a flight to US. This guy is speaking hindi. I said "I am doing ok". He again came up with "Aapka naaam?". This was too much. I was missing my chance to practice my english. Anyway I reverted back to Hindi with him and found that he was Afroz, working in Brunie. In the meantime I managed to find the airhostess who greeted me with a good beautiful smile, and asked her for some warm water. And then I asked her not to disturb me anymore, even for my meal. I skipped my supper to avoid the risk of vomiting it back on Afroz's shirt as I

was really feeling terrible. I went for a sleep.

Morning

6:00 clock (S'pore time, 3::30 IST) , "Excuse me sir. Can u please make your seat upright please?. We are going to land", and I was awake.

Out to singapore airport. We got out at Terminal 2. waited for Shiva, Sathish and Rama whom I met at b'lore. Outside the aerobridge, I saw elevator short of thing with a difference that it was moving horizontally. It was new for me and I hid my surprise to myself. Then I came to know that its called travellator. I was wondering do we really need them in india, at Indian airport with laborious Indians willing to walk a few hundred meters? I guess the government answer is no and thats why we dont have it.

As we crossed the lounge, I saw an "ORACLE, powers the singapore." hoarding. Hmmm the name is still with me. The moment I saw the Oracle Hoarding, I started searching for infy, wipro hoarding saying "INFY/WIPRO supports the Singapore". But I was disappointed.

The feeling at S'pore airport was awesome. Skytrains running between one terminal to other, the infrastructure, free internet stops, shopping malls. The homogenous beauty of polynesian people was adding to the beauty of airport. These malaya girls look so alike and beautiful that I wonder, guys here must be having tough time to find who is the most beautiful one. We took snaps. In india we are not allowed to take snaps inside airport. Now the question is, "Is it really because of security reasons or we have nothing to be photographed at airport and so its better to ban it?".

We all went to Rain Forest transit resort, as we all had the voucher of the same hotel. The lady said you have the voucher for the common bathrooms/toilets. Noooo not the common one. The moment I heard of the common toilet, I imagined of all such places in Bangalore, managed very well by Sulabh and Infosys (Yes, they are into this business also.!! How do u think they made a billion \$)

I looked out for the common place, but I was surprised to see it was all dry. You can't find water spilled anywhere. Surprises again. How they manage to keep it dry. Anyway, I looked out for the toilet, went inside and then I came to know how come they managed it so "DRY". And there, inside the toilet, I relly felt, "India is the best."

I quickly came out and went for a bath. Thank god, I found water here. ;-). And then I tried to recollect, if I missed anything backhome as I am into this habit of forgetting things. I can only recall my cap being

missed at home. Then I found that I missed calling Rajiv and Narendra before leaving and at least Danda must be cursing me for not doing that.

I came out, put my sunglasses (no smiles please) looked myself into big mirror and I was looking good.

We left the resort, as we were all planning to go for free city trip to S'pre. Before the start of the trip, we met four more guys from oracle. We left for Sentosa Island at 10:am. I was telling one of my colleagues, what a difference between Bhagalpur and Singapore. He was quick to correct me..Hey "its not singapur its Singapore with a stress on 'pore."

I thought can any one tell him that Singapore was originally "Singha - pur" meaning place of Lion and was named by an Indian king. Any way I was not in mood to discuss.

I was more interested in seeing the city as I remember once our then chief minister Laaloo ji said "I am going to make Bihar like Singapore". I was interested to know how is our Bihar going to look like. Amazing city. With so much of development, flyovers, vehicles, skyscrapers and still no sign of dust, pollution and traffic jams??

In Bangalore, we have touched the nerves of every Bangaloreans (and that's the case with all other cities also), in building just 3 flyovers. We have to face jams, since flyovers are being made. Till the flyovers are made just "Feel Good".

It seems S'pore has not allowed the development at the cost of green canopy cover. I wonder how we call our city a garden city?

We came back to airport from the tour at 12:00 noon. Rama had idea of an Indian hotel here at airport. It was Kavery restaurant and it was nice. Naaan was good enough to be better than most of the hotels at Bangalore.

I had my lunch quickly, as I had to leave for city again for shopping. I had got the visa for that. I left the group. Went out to city, got my handycam, went for a cable car ride, skytower ride and came back. On the return trip to airport, I found that the cab man was a Malaayaa muslim. When he knew that I am also a Muslim and that too from India, the only question he asked me was "Were you people really murdered in Gujrat?". Surprise again. How come he is aware of it?. I cleared his misconception (?) and said that it was not the case like that.

I came back to airport on time. Before boarding the flight, I saw a notice "Upgradation in process, sorry for inconvenience." Surprise again. What they are upgrading to? And inconvenience to whom? Please come to our airports and then you will find that you people don't need upgradation for another 100 years.

I forgot my fever in the conducive environment of S'pore.