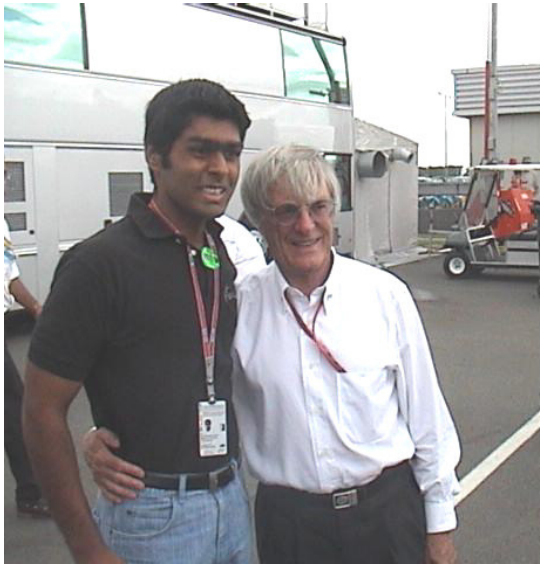


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Bernie Ecclestone impressed with Karun Royal Crown Prince of Bahrain also shows keen interest in youngest Indian whiz kid

A note from Karun Chandhok on his exciting weekend at British Grand Prix

Silverstone, July 21, 2003:



Karun with Mr. Bernie Ecclestone

With all the hype and excitement about the “Indian Grand Prix” no doubt the British Grand Prix weekend was going to be exciting for me. What made things all the more interesting was the interest from **Bernie Ecclestone**, the boss of Formula One, in my career.

Mr. Ecclestone was kind enough to spend time with me on Sunday discussing the future and his desire for drivers from Asia in general and India in particular in Formula 1. As ever his advice and guidance was invaluable and as a driver it's fantastic to know that a man at that level is lending his support to me. He introduced me to some of the drivers, which was great.

I also got to catch up with some people who I had met over the last couple of years here in England. I had met **Mark Webber** a couple months back on a day when I was working at the Silverstone School. It was a real surprise for me that he remembered and actually came up from behind and tapped me on the shoulder !! Mark is one of the most relaxed racing drivers and it's great to see that even being a Formula 1 star, he's still a very down to earth guy. We chatted for a few minutes before his PR girl came charging and whisked him away.

My race engineer Alan Woodhead was there with me and he introduced me to his old driver **Luciano Burti**. Luciano went on from Formula 3 to race with Jaguar and Prost F1 in 2001. In 2002 he got the call to be the Ferrari test driver. I really enjoyed chatting with Luciano. In the half an hour I spent with him, I heard some fantastic stories about his days working with Michael and Rubens last year. He had some great advice on what life is like in F1 and how different things are when you get there – be it good or bad! I also met up with Anthony Davidson (who is BAR's test driver and has recently been

announced at Jaguar's reserve driver) and also Damon Hill – the 1996 F1 World Champion. Damon is my team-mate Steven Kane's mentor and manager. He had obviously heard about me from Steven and said he was pleased to finally put a face to the name !!

Before the start, " Mr. E " called me and asked me to accompany him onto the grid, which I must say I was really excited about since the F1 grid is normally a very very reserved area. The atmosphere was just something unbelievable with the stars in their cars pulling up onto the starting grid for the final half-hour countdown. Once on the grid Bernie introduced me to the one and only terminator - **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (who funnily enough even walks like a robot !!). My whole arm seemed to disappear into "Arnie's" when I shook it – I just didn't realise how big the guy is till I met him !! I also got to meet **Ross Brawn**, the brains of the Ferrari operation. After a quick chat to wish "Webske" in his Jaguar luck, I left to go watch the race itself. I was joined by my two main sponsors, **Dr. Vijay Mallya**, chairman of the UB Group and **Sanjay Sharma** head of JK Tyre Motorsport both of who flew up for the weekend as well as Bollywood star **Raveena Tandon**, and Indian TV anchor guru **Harsha Bhogle**, the latter two were getting their first experience of Formula 1.

After a fantastic Grand Prix, we wandered back to catch up with Mr. Ecclestone. He once again expressed his support before flying off in his chopper. Soon after I had an extraordinary meeting. I was standing outside the Ferrari hospitality unit when a gentleman approached me, saying that if it was ok with me, the Royal Crown Prince of Bahrain wanted to meet me. I didn't really believe my ears but it was true. When I sheepishly asked "why me" his courtier's said that Prince had read about this Indian driver winning races in British F3 this year and also remembered me from watching one of my Formula Asia races on TV !! I spent 20 minutes speaking to his Royal Highness about Bahrain's forthcoming inclusion into the Formula 1 world championship. He said that he was very excited when he read about the possibility of an Indian Grand Prix and said he would be following me more closely in the future purely because he'd love to see more people from our part of the world in Formula 1. As I was speaking to the Prince, **Sir Jackie Stewart** made an appearance and, I was introduced to him by the Prince. With a bit of hinting, " JYS " remembered meeting me at my Silverstone F3 race back in May, which was nice. He even spoke about how he came to India and laid the foundation stones for the Madras Race circuit, something that even I failed to remember !!

It's back to the real world for me now and I'm going to be training hard for the pair of races at Rockingham coming up in two weeks time. With the support of Mr. Ecclestone, as well as of course my sponsors back in India, I do believe that one day being back in that very same paddock as a driver is a realistic possibility. Let's wait and see... !!