

# 7:30pm - Time to wrap up!

*With the formation of new rules relating to the interaction of girls and boys in hostel premises, the institute seems to be setting precedents of a new variety. Is the student community prepared to accept these changes? A collection of opinions, by the InsIghT team.*

We are a conservative society. We respect the sanctity of womanhood. We don't believe in the western-world doctrines of liberalism and equality of the sexes in all spheres. We are all parent-respecting, convention-abiding and tradition-maintaining religious individuals who take pride in the principles passed down to us from our forefathers. We are...

Do we hear someone say - "What crap!?" Ah! Relax. That was only for rhetoric sake. And now that we've got you all agitated, lets start off on the main course of the article. Here goes..

A new rule relating to the interaction of the sexes in hostel premises is being slapped upon all the student hostels of IIT Bombay. Specifically, this rule lays down more stringent restrictions on the entry of guests of the opposite sex into the hostels and is meant to replace the current stipulation of no-entry timings (from 11pm to 7am) which has been in existence for over five years now. From now on, girls are not allowed inside boys' hostels after 7:30pm though they may interact with them in public places like hostel lounges and mess halls (the same holds for boys in girls' hostels as well). The other limit (of 7am) remains unchanged. This decision was taken in an HCC meeting which took place in the last week of March and its implementation is to kick off very soon.

## **The Why's**

The first question that comes to most of our minds upon reading this is -Why such a rule at all? Well, let us assure you that the intention of imposing this rule was not to impair the already-strained relations between boys and girls on campus (Refer to article "Communication Breakdown" in the October 10th, 2001 issue of InsIghT). The reason for initiating it are actually less absurd than you would assume to be at first thought. It was felt by many faculty members in the HGSC that due to the occurrence of a few "untowardly incidents" [We'll be using this phrase quite frequently from now on in order to reduce the vividness of the article] in the recent past in a few boys' hostels, it had become necessary to curb the interaction of girls and boys in non-public areas like hostel rooms.

Says Prof. Patwardhan (Warden, H10 and member of the HGSC), "I don't mind boys and girls spending time together in public places though the idea of allowing boys to go into girls' rooms (and vice versa) is very unfair, in my opinion." Prof. Patwardhan feels that since the girls and boys in hostels are just past their adolescent stages, there is the strong possibility of sexual attractions overriding moral responsibilities and thus the chances of

"untowardly incidents" occurring stands increased. "Even if one untowardly incident takes place in a thousand cases, the whole image of the institute could be tarnished. The institute should have the courage to take the responsibility and blame for any problems, which it doesn't at present."

Also, there have been complaints from girls (and more infrequently from boys) that at times, the presence of a male (female) guest makes them feel uncomfortable. This may be due to their being informally clothed when inside the hostel or even owing to some misconduct on the part of the guest.

So we see that the fears of the proponents of the new policy are not without reason. All of us care for the image and reputation of the institute and they are surely no exception to the rule. According to Prof. P.Gopalan (Head, HCU) enforcement is the key to the problem (of untowardly incidents, that is) and by laying down restrictions as in the new rule, the institute is taking parental responsibility of all its students.

### The Why Not's

The natural question to ask in order to counter the above argument would be - "Can just changing the clause of 11pm to 7:30pm in the current rule really prevent any untowardly incident from occurring? Can't such an incident happen in the day time itself?". Most of the "untowardly incidents" cited during the meeting of the HCC took place in the boys' hostels only and during the day time. Isn't the occurrence of such events a direct pointer to the inefficacy of our security department? Should administrative incapacity give way to enforcement of such a draconian rule? And shouldn't enforcement first apply to eliminate the incapacity itself?

"Restricting the freedom of the students in this manner restricts the gradual learning process they undergo at this stage of their lives", say Anusha Sharma (ex-GSec, H10). "Many of us step into a world with absolutely no restrictions and rules after life in IIT and if this transition is made too sudden, we might not know how to handle, comprehend and exercise our freedom correctly."

If the problem is with respect to the complaints of a few inmates who feel "uncomfortable" about the idea of guests of the opposite sex coming to their wings late at night, then pray count us the number of people who are really opposed to the idea. In the words of Shruti Mahajan (GSec, H10), "It's certainly better to implement a scheme supported by, say 98%, of the whole population, rather than placing undue emphasis on the opinion of the small minority, which is anyway for cases which are extremely rare. We can surely impose a code of conduct which everyone is made to follow and with which the majority agrees."

### **The bottomline is..**

..that whether the new rule can really bring about any change in the discipline and sexual morality of the students is not clear yet. But the general perception among the student

body seems to be that it is a hopeless attempt at curbing what can never really be curbed and that even though the fears of the institute authorities are justifiable, the means being deployed to allay them are not. The rare cases to which the authorities are so vehemently reacting will still continue unabated and there's little reason why the majority should be made to suffer for the minority's mistakes.

We would like to end on a thoughtful note: a discussion in which the students have to accept the decision of the faculty members without any choice, is not really a discussion at all.

# The Festival of IIT Bombay

- *Zishaan M. Hayath*

PAF. One word for passion, zeal, enthusiasm, hard work and talent. One thing that IIT Bombay prides itself of. PAFs are the peak of the cultural talent and excellence we boast of. This year IIT Bombay had its PAFs from the 17th of March to the 4th of April.

The themes of this year's PAFs were quite radical and it seemed that many hostel pairs were open to experimentation. H6-H7 and H4-H5 came up with innovative scripts and H2-H10-Tansa experimented with a musical. H1-H3-H11 had a female centred PAF. H8-H9 presented some very unique concepts interspersed with more humour than we've seen in any of the PAFs in the last four years. Many of the themes this year dwelled on the good-evil, man-god funda as compared to the socio-political themes prevalent last year. However, there has been a general feeling among the students that the overall quality of the PAFs has been slightly on the low as compared to PAFs in the previous 3-4 years.

When it comes to judging, time and again, there have been suggestions from the students regarding changes and increased transparency in the judging process. Being the integral part of the PAFs, students generally feel that they are in a better position to appreciate the effort that goes into making a PAF. This year the judges were professors who have had either an experience with PAFs in a personal capacity or as a member of the audience for a sustained period or who have had some cultural accomplishments to their credit. The judging as a whole has had fewer criticisms than in the previous years.

## **Is it all really worth it ?**

On the night of the PAF, thousands of eager eyes are glued to the centre-stage expecting to see a great show. Once people are inside the OAT to watch a PAF, the atmosphere slowly transforms with feelings of hostility (or, at times, envy) creeping in more often than not. Very few of those who gather in the OAT on that evening can fully appreciate the kind of effort that goes into putting up such a tremendous show. Ironically, all of them, especially the fence-sitters, find it rather easy to criticise and laugh at the most inconspicuous mistake possible. No wonder you get thundering applause when you accidentally switch on the OAT lights and just a mild appreciation when an impactful scene gets successfully executed.

This is, as a matter of fact, a consequence of the love and spirit for one's own hostel... people out there in the OAT are so desperate to see their hostels win that the entire notion of appreciating a good piece of "art" (it's a Performing "Arts" Festival, right ?) takes a backseat. None of the PAFs this year got a whole-hearted ovation, let alone a standing ovation. The best that the winning PAF 'Avshesh' could get after the show was a silent admiration. Other Pafs got, from a section of the people, appeals for 'dayaa' with people on their knees and bowing their heads.

There is more to PAFs than just competition and winning. It's the most looked-forward-to event in the entire cult calendar of IIT Bombay : looked forward to not only by the students but even by hordes of other campusites and even guests from outside. It's one event which makes our GC unique in comparison to similar competitions in all other institutes and colleges. It's one event where the best of the talent on campus gets showcased in the most neatly integrated fashion. No other cult event in the calendar has such a huge audience, participation or effort. However, at times, the attitude of people on the other side of the fence is appalling. People who might never have worked for a PAF or have hardly seen more than four PAFs take the liberty to make comments such as "This hostel pair should be banned from doing PAFs for 5 years for putting up such a disgusting show" on public fora. Let us realise that PAFs are more than just a GC event. It shouldn't spell 'Passion' for some, 'Agony' for few and 'Fury' for most.

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# It's not a privilege, it's my right!

*The issue of privacy in virtual communication has never been discussed or debated at length by us before. With the enhancement in computer services and the drift towards the network paradigm, it becomes extremely critical to safeguard the rights to privacy of every individual on campus. **Saurabh Panjwani** presents pointers to help support this argument and provide a framework upon which a privacy policy can be built for IIT Bombay.*

It was 1:42:58 am in the morning. An email was posted to the batch's students' mail alias by one of the students. At 1:52:35 am, precisely 8 minutes and 37 seconds later comes a reply. The reply was from, hold your breath, a professor who also happens to be one of the sysads of the department mail server, someone that mail was never intended for. In the professor's reply, the student is accused of attempting to practice academic dishonesty since his mail contained objectionable references. He is later warned of being under watch forever.

Academic dishonesty is something no one would endorse but there are other things which need to be considered here. "It's an unethical deviation from the moral responsibilities of a system administrator," claimed some students. This, not surprisingly, led to a state of chaos in the student community as well. Finding themselves in a situation where they could not even discuss the unfolding of these events over department mail servers, lest they be monitored, students decided to switch over to mailing list services like yahoogroups. And even then, the fears of personal emails being read were not allayed.. What could have led to the current impasse?

## **Of public aliases and private information**

The department in question is the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Bombay. The computational facilities in this department are indeed in a pitiable and resource-starved state. There are no student sysads. Three faculty members (along with one RA student and another temporary employee) are entirely responsible for managing and monitoring all important servers of the department. Time and again, attempts have been made to hire people from outside to help in the system administration process but the efforts have all gone in vain. Thus, these three faculty members are the know-alls and the do-alls with respect to all virtual communication in the department.

Prof. Anurag Mehra, computer I/C of the dept. and member of this administrative group, says "As far as storage and email policy is concerned, by default the dept does not snoop into anyone's account or mails. However, we do not guarantee privacy in the sense that we, as system administrators, cannot be held responsible for anyone snooping into your accounts and you are expected to be careful and alert about security concerns while using the dept facilities. There is only one exception when privacy can be violated, which is if some one complains (with evidence)." Upon severe complaints from various students regarding email abuse and account hacking three years back, it was decided that one copy of every mail sent to all public aliases would go to the sysads' accounts. This practice has

been maintained ever since though it was not publicly announced for all the batches who came into the department later on. Also, these mails have never really been screened or read in practice.

When asked about the reason for not having made such a policy known to everyone, Prof. Mehra said, "If students know so much about the system they work on, they know all the loopholes, all the shortcuts..then how come they are not aware of the existence of such a policy?" He agreed though that ideally the students should have been informed.

"Root/administrator owned public aliases (for all to use) have been given by the department for some reasonable purposes, most importantly for academic batchwide announcements, The only restriction is that there should be no unethical things being done using these aliases (cogging for example) and ideally they should be used for issues that concern the whole batch. A public alias should be used for a public purpose (like a notice board). We recently stumbled on to some instances of misuse like mass bunking/non-submission, soliciting assignments, even requesting reserving a seat to cog! This in unethical and flagrant abuse of facilities given by the department."

One cannot agree more to the simple idea of preventing misuse/abuse of any facility, let alone a computational facility, but the important question here is - can ends justify means ? The sysad group claims that only in cases where a) there is too much volume of mails being generated on any batch alias or b) when the subject matter of the emails is suggestive of some illegal activity do they go through the respective emails. Interestingly, the mail that sparked it all off was the first one of its kind, that too with a subject "computational lab" !

### **Privacy in IT information**

Let us now consider a wider and much more pervasive issue : that of privacy of personal information in IIT Bombay and still greater, the requirement of a comprehensive and universal Computer Policy in IIT Bombay. But we'll digress a little for now. Let's start off with an interesting game. Have you ever wanted to know how your friend's performance has been this semester, or in the previous semester or in any semester for that matter? Or would you just want to calculate your DR?

Try visiting the link'

[http://perfect.admin.iitb.ac.in/online/MoreDetail?roll=\[rollnumber\]&acayr=\[Year\]](http://perfect.admin.iitb.ac.in/online/MoreDetail?roll=[rollnumber]&acayr=[Year])' Here, replace [rollnumber] with the roll number of your choice and [year] with year in the format YYYY. Say Abracadabra and presto, your wish comes true. All the grades come out rumbling!

Alternatively, try visiting the link

[http://perfect.admin.iitb.ac.in/~online/\[admissionyear\]\[program\]\[DeptID\]\[last3-digitsofrollno\]\[digit\].html](http://perfect.admin.iitb.ac.in/~online/[admissionyear][program][DeptID][last3-digitsofrollno][digit].html) Here, replace [admissionyear] with the year of your admission of the form [YY] [program] with 0 for Btech, 9 for DualDegree, [DeptID] from your rollnumber eg 01 for aero, 02 for chemical etc. and [digit] with 1 (this would definitely work!) or 2. It seems digit indicates the number of times you modified your course registration. Woosh, now you directly get the CPI's !

This flaw was brought to the notice of the system administrators by mail in the very beginning of this semester. There was no reply to that mail and apparently, nothing has been done as yet to rectify it.

So the question we raise is - Is there a formal policy of confidentiality of Academic Records in IIT Bombay ? Is it implemented ? Is there any accountability? The second question is - Is there a formal policy of use of IT Services in IIT Bombay ? We all know about individuals being taken to task for deviations from expected behavior but does a formal guideline exist as to what is expected/unexpected behavior?

Hence, what is also important here is that the framed policies are such that they complement the law of the land, respect individual privacy and also do not stifle individual freedom.

So, we once again come back to the initial issue of discussion, the right to mail privacy. There are a few points here that need to be shed light on :

Q. Does any educational institute/univ treat email and computer files as private?

A. Yes. MIT, University of Illinois, University of California (Los Angeles), University of Michigan, Purdue University to name just a few. And mind you, they have formal policy statements stating the same [<http://www.eff.org/CAF/policies/>]

Q: Can (should) my university monitor my email?

A: A U.S. government task force says "[Email] monitoring of actual communications and communicators may impinge on the Constitutional rights as set forth in both the Privacy Act and the ECPA." Hence, it would be unwise for any university employee to tap email communications without authorization from the university legal counsel.

Q: If a state university calls computer or network access a "privilege", can they remove an individual's access arbitrarily?

A: The Fourteenth Amendment(US) requires due process before a governmental entity, such as a public institution, may deprive one of life, liberty, or property. This in case of the department accounts, which are given to any students who meet some set of requirements. This makes it an entitlement for the students who qualify and hence some modicum of due process is necessary. [Ref: <http://www.eff.org/CAF/faq/just-a-privilege.html>]

The paradox with computer systems is that there always will be a Super User or the Root who will have unlimited access to the entire system. In such a situation, one will have to bank on the integrity and ethics of the root. "But at times when some investigation is required sysads should be allowed to access private information. In any other case if they are found reading others' mails, they should also be equally punished", says Kapil Bajaj, Sysad, CSE Dept.

Technically too, the decentralization of mail servers to departments in IIT has proved to be problematic and unreliable. Lack of expertise in form of able sysads has continuously



plagued various departments. Mail servers like those of Aero, Civil, Chemical etc. are a source of continuous trouble for maintainers and a reason for almost weekly despair for their users.

One may get tempted to reject some of the above arguments saying that they are specific to the US. But this very fact vests even greater responsibility with the IITs. Indian legislations still lag far behind with respect to technological advances. It should not come as a surprise if Indian Government, while formulating new laws in this direction, take the IITian framework of policies as benchmarks. The time is ripe now to start off the work towards a policy of privacy and IT services management for the IITB network. And the initiative's got to come from all sides - students, faculty and staff, equally.

References: 1.Computers and Academic Freedom Archives (<http://www.eff.org/CAF>)  
2.Student Information System :: MIT WebSIS  
(<http://registrar.mit.edu/usepolicies/usepolicies.html>) 3.Foundation for Individual Rights  
in

# Let's talk business (schools)

*Saurabh Garg and Kislay Thakur take a look at the performance of the SJM-SOM over the past six years and draw comparisons with other B-schools of the country.*

With the industry feeling the need for having leaders with a technology background and a training in management, was born the Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management, IIT-Bombay. Since its inception in 1995, SJM-SOM has come a long way. There have been plaudits earned and commendations received. In its student emphasis space, SJM-SOM is arguably the best in the country. However, as with any evolution process, the lacunae have to be identified and dealt with at each stage. In this article, we attempt to look at some of the pertinent issues, some raised by members of the student community and some arising out of discussion with concerned faculty and students.

**Semester Scheduling** Unlike other B-schools in India, which have a trimester system, the SJM-SOM follows the IIT timetable and has a semester. Each semester is split into two terms with 5-6 courses in each term. The average working year at SOM is of 8 months as compared to 10 months in other schools. As a result of this, what is natural is, to achieve the same amount of classroom teaching, the schedule will have to be more packed. However, the faculty feels that asking students do 5-6 courses per term isn't too much. Also, the number of hours worked here is 20-23 per week as compared to 21 at IIM-Ahmedabad. The pace in the opinion of the faculty is not really breakneck. We need to note here, being a part of the IIT framework, it is important for our School of Management to also live upto the IIT name and be the best in the country. Also, the intake of the students is directed towards taking better and brighter students. In the words of Prof. Korgaonker, (HoD), "when the brightest students are being taken a little bit of extra burden should not really be a problem."

The last term at SJM-SOM is a three and a half months' industry project which gives students a real time experience of day-to-day working of the industry and an opportunity to apply whatever they have learnt in the last two years just before they step into the real world. This should give the SOM students an edge over their contemporaries in other B-schools.

The students strongly feel that the trimester system is the better way for a B-school, a scheme that has worked very well for other schools in India and abroad. This is a view quite categorically accepted by Prof. Korgaonker who says, "If the possibility had been there, we would have introduced a trimester system". However, the fact that the SOM is in IITB, makes it very difficult to shift to a trimester system. The problems:

1. Need for compatibility due to organisational reasons: At a first glance, there can be problems related to the working of the academic office, the starting time of the semester,

compromising on the holidays in December and shortening of the summer break among other things.

2. Faculty vacation rules would need to be looked at and made different from the rules for other IIT faculty which might face opposition. This also has the complication of reducing the time available to the faculty members to do their own research work etc.

3. Logistics problems arising out of cross-departmental electives. The Dean of Academic Programs, Prof. N.L. Sarda, was not aware of such ideas, however, he felt that if there is such a view then thought should definitely be given to the matter and it should not be dismissed just because it looks difficult.

**Assessment Rules** The program at SJM-SOM was conceived as another PG program by the administration. This is evident in the assessment rules, which are the same as the other departmental PG programs. A student is expelled from the program if he/she has greater than or equal to 2 FF grades at any time in his stay or his/her CPI is below 6. The MBA program is highly course intensive and not comparable to an M.Tech. program. These strict rules have led to the expulsion of 4 students in the present batch since the commencement of the program in July 2001 !

The faculty believes that they have the best assessment record and rigorous assessment is imperative for an MBA program. There should be no compromise on this front and they expect the students to be the best. The assessment in other top B-schools is very similar and steps are being taken to further close on the gap. The program is continuously evolving and the Senate has given a new proposal for assessment which would be introduced shortly.

**New proposal:** At the end of sem one, a student is allowed to carry forward at most 1 FF. However, in subsequent semesters, upto two FF's will be allowed to accumulate. At the end of 4 semesters, the maximum of 2 FF's accumulated thus have to be passed. The CPI requirement is perfectly fine and the cut-off is essentially a C-level performance.

The faculty feels that the expulsion of a few students on academic grounds has sent a good message to the student community and has put them on alert. They have realised that continuous, sustained work is required and there can be no relaxation.

**Placements Support** The placements at SJM-SOM this year were phenomenal inspite of the recession. The average salary was Rs. 5.45 lakhs which was up by Rs. 50 thousand as compared to last year. The same figure stands at Rs. 7.3 lakhs in IIM Bangalore. In IIM Calcutta, the average pays have been Rs. 6.4 lakhs and Rs. 6.1 lakhs in the Finance and Marketing sectors respectively. Thus, our SOM is not lagging far behind the IIMs in the placement scenario.

What's surprising is the fact that placements are completely an initiative of the students in SJM-SOM (though they do get tremendous support from the school and leads from the faculty members as well). The placement facilities lack infrastructural support from the

institute's side. There is no staff and management to co-ordinate the placements and SOM cannot appoint its own placement incharge. The Training and Placement office has a minimal role in the SOM placements and it is highly desirable that the placement cell should be strengthened so that it can provide support to SOM. The students have to shell out money from their own pockets to prepare brochures and CDs that are sent to the companies, which has been refunded later against bills. Some funding should be provided to SOM for their placements.

**Accommodation** One of the biggest problems that SOM students are facing is that of inappropriate accommodation. These people have to share a room between two and with computers in the room being inevitable the situation has become even worse. Though the hostel rent is the same, they are the people who are paying the highest fees on the campus and there's nothing outrageous about their expecting better hostel facilities than the rest of us. We also need to note that a large number of students come here after some work experience, which makes their case all the more different. There are also many married students but there is no facility of married accommodation for them.

The administration is carrying out efforts in this direction and with new hostels coming up, the problem might be soon resolved. There are expansion plans in which the need for married accommodation would be seriously considered specially for doctorate students.

The SJM-SOM has now grown from its stage of infancy to an established and probably the best institute in its league. But to keep pace with the incessant and rapid changing patterns in the requirements of the industry and to provide the best and appropriate environment to the students, SOM has to put in a lot of efforts in terms of restructuring and infrastructural requirements. A continuous evaluation and rethinking has to be done to ameliorate the program and eradicate the shortcomings at each stage. The students are also expected to put in an extra effort and take this program to the heights of excellence that the engineering programs of the parent institute have achieved.

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# Reform School - a report on the proposed academic restructuring

*A lot of developments have taken place on the academic front recently. **Karthik Narayanaswamy** and **Karthik Ramkumari** take a peek at the new proposals which have been made for the restructuring of curriculum. (We would like to emphasize that currently the ideas are still in the proposal stage. We do hope, however, that they come through)*

We talked to the Dean of Academic Programs, Professor N.L. Sarda about the changes in the curriculum. The primary focus so far has been the improvement of the UG course. The two main proposals are provision of research opportunities to the UGs and the UG Student Exchange programs.

## **Research Opportunities**

There are a number of academically excellent students, especially among the freshmen and sophomores, who might be very capable of research but do not have the avenue. The UG Research Opportunity Program aims to change this once and for all. Through this program, students will be made aware of the research work being done in their fields. Eligibility will be decided based on their academic record. Those selected will be given R&D projects under faculty members. These will not be like course projects, which unfortunately are just results of last minute night-outs. The projects will be more comprehensive, so that the students have a chance to figure out if they have the potential for research.

In the long run, it is hoped that the projects can be credited. A stipend may also be given to the students in the initial stages.

## **Student Exchange Program**

Ever wanted to escape the extremely loaded 6th semester in your department? Ever wanted to explore another culture first hand while doing your undergraduate studies? Ever wondered about the lifestyle of students in other universities? Fret not dear friends. The UG Exchange Program will provide students with the chance to do a period of study (preferably sometime in the third year) in a different university. The courses will be credited towards the student's degree but not towards the CPI. That means that even if you crack a perfect score, it will make no difference to your CPI. There will be a minimum academic level to be achieved at the concerned university. The exchange program will last for one semester and the courses which are to be studied will be decided under the guidance of the faculty advisor. At present, talks are underway with some universities like Northwestern University, etc.

The faculty has taken a strong initiative to promote UG opportunities. Let us hope it all works out in the year to come.

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# CC - the net tightens..!

*From punch cards and tapes being the mainstay just a decade back to hordes of students flocking the CC vying for a precious terminal at critical submission junctures, cool terms with huge screens and wires running up and down our own rooms, our institute has done well to keep pace with what has been the fastest advancing arena of the century: the computing and networking facilities. Premal Shah and Setu Chokshi review the changes in virtual communication that have taken place on our campus over the past one year.*

In collaboration with the telephone exchange, CC is planning to introduce an IP softphone facility on campus. Plans to initiate Internet telephony are also underway.

Some interesting stuff for you :

- \* CC has kicked off the e-collaboration tool called TWIKI (Hawaiian for "quick") (check out <http://twiki.iitb.ac.in> !), a step towards knowledge sharing.
- \* A new problem reporting mechanism with a web-based interface called Gnats has been started (Visit <http://gnats.iitb.ac.in>).
- Yet another software installation which is expected to have a major impact in the coming days is the webct ([webct.iitb.ac.in](http://webct.iitb.ac.in)). WebCt is a course management tool and will help organise and distribute course materials, conduct online quizzes and other course-related activities.

Web-based learning has arrived on campus. And is here to stay as well. Our Computer Center has set up an electronic classroom with around 50 terminals (located in the KReSIT) to facilitate online lectures, quizzes and evaluation. The electronic classroom will greatly aid teaching of many topics such as molecular biology.

So, after hostel networking, what's next in CC's agenda ? More facilities, more speed, more comps ? Has it decided to turn full force, wield its power, crack the whip and bring all the illicit transfers under check ? There are a few things we have heard of, a few things we fear but there are several exciting things which we are not aware of and which are going to happen pretty soon, hopefully. InsIghT had a chat with Prof. Sivakumar (Head, CC) and Amberish (staff, CC), based on which we provide you with a glimpse of the goodies that our Computer Center is planning to dole out in the near future.

To start of with, the big hyped thing, the fiber optic 1 GB - LAN, which all of us have been hearing of for quite some time now. Oh Cool ! But when? And why? As to the when, the answer's pretty soon - in the summers. CC expects it to take less than 6 weeks and positively be up before the next semester. For those who are wondering why (as in, we already have a 100 Mbps LAN what's going to become of them ?) the answer is : although the hostels now have high speed 100 Mbps LANs, several links of the backbone (links including those connecting main servers in hostels and departments and others

connecting various hostels to H8) have a capacity of only 10 Mbps and are, thus, a severe bottleneck to the network. The institute plans to upgrade them to the fast Fiber Optic 1 Gbps link. This would involve some major revamping of the backbone including the replacement of core ATM switches and moving the H-1 power hub to H-3. Why not have everything at 1 Gbps? 1 Gbps LAN Cards are not a small buy and not affordable and will be installed in only a few critical servers. Thus, the 100 Mbps switches recently installed are here to stay and so are the hostel internal networks. Only, the main switch and the media converters will be replaced to provide a direct fiber connection. These switches will be reused elsewhere in departments.

The next big thing is the new IP addressing scheme. The 'ERNET' project which gave us the public domain 144.16.\*.\* addresses is defunct and its unclear as to how long can we continue to have these addresses, which in any case are proving to be inadequate. So, to brace itself against this, the institute has decided to switch over to a private addressing scheme where all addresses would begin with 10.\*.\*.\*. What this means, is we are no longer visible outside the LAN. The transition has already started with KReSIT having the new IP scheme and the new naming scheme will gradually encompass the whole campus and all the external traffic will be using a masquerading gateway IP address. The whole process is expected to be over before the next semester. This is expected to raise a few problems with software licensed to IP addresses. CC is however in a process of acquiring fresh licenses for most of the important software such as Matlab (latest versions of which are for use on both Linux and Windows platforms will be made available very soon) to counter such problems. For the uninitiated, CC has started the e-collaboration tool called TWIKI (Hawaiian for "quick") <http://twiki.iitb.ac.in>, which is a very positive step towards knowledge sharing and solving. The idea is that users can post in queries and findings and ultimately build up a knowledge base which would be a forum of great utility to resolve doubts and queries. The disadvantage with newsgroups, that of information getting lost with time, is thus eliminated.

TWIKI, as a tool has its own share of problems. The biggest one is that there is no obvious way to log into it, other than through user registration, editing of a page, or performing some other action that requires you to login. If you create your TWIKI account at one machine, but wish to use the same TWIKI from another machine, you have no way to login again as the same user. Also adding the web page is less than intuitive; it's a several step process that is more difficult than it appears to be. It also requires access to a server, which can be inconvenient at times. Creating a new topic is dead easy, so its disappointing to have to jump through so many hoops to create a new web. But in general we believe that using TWIKI and seeing content online will be very satisfying for non-techy users who don't have the slightest clue about HTML or web designing.

A new problem reporting mechanism with a web based interface called Gnats, <http://gnats.iitb.ac.in> has been started. This is to improve the information exchange regarding problems and bugs between the users and the maintainers i.e. the CC staff. Yet another software installation which is expected to have a major impact in the coming days is the webct ([webct.iitb.ac.in](http://webct.iitb.ac.in)). WebCt is a course management tool and will help

organise and distribute course materials, conduct online quizzes, hold discussions and maintain bulletins of important course-related announcements. Faculty and students both can considerably benefit through its use.

Despite the great hue and cry that followed the decision of giving CC-logins to freshie's, thanks to increase in the computing facilities in the departments and hostels, and the surge in the trend of using PCs, the load on CC has reduced considerably. CC has ordered another 15-20 Sun Ray terminals to further relieve the load. The Sun terminals were known to give problems earlier with sessions crashing and hanging at their will. However, the administrators claim that it had been chiefly due to a low speed network, low-end servers and some buggy first generation software. All these problems are claimed to have been fixed with a 4-GB RAM and a 2-processor server capable of handling a load of 70-80 after being deployed. The Sun terminals are considered amenable to easy control and administration, as they eliminate virus threats and the need for separately upgrading packages on networked PCs. Besides the main facility, the hostel computing facilities will also receive a boost with an addition of 3-4 computers per hostel in the next 3 months.

The institute has also procured another 4Mbps link expected to be activated soon in addition to the existing 4Mbps VSNL and 2 MBps STPI link. Among the long term plans is the idea to have a centralized reliable web-based email system as exists in many IIT's and IIM's instead of the current multi-server based system. This would be an IMAP-based server, allowing any email client like outlook express to read email without downloading and will be accessible from outside the campus too. The hardware for this would need to be procured and configured and the work might take upto 6 months to get finished. Another facility being planned is a 50-200 MB of backed up disk-space mountable on any UNIX/windows platform PCs inside the campus. The authorities are also planning to adapt the jabber to have an institute-wide chat server and also a central authentication system. CC welcomes volunteers who have the enthu to develop these projects.

Plans of putting up a programmer's club and of contributing actively to the open source projects are also being chalked out. Prof. Sivakumar suggests this could be taken up as a self-study course by the students or worked out as a part of other courses with the aid of seminars and projects, the exact framework for which will be worked out soon.

So what's that for the normal non-computer buffs? Here's something that should interest all. In collaboration with the telephone exchange, CC is planning to introduce the IP softphone facility on campus ! With this, a PC which is in your hostel room can function as a phone and be used to place and receive calls. An announcement giving further details will be made early next semester. The call rates, however, would be same as the telephone exchange rates. As regards the much cheaper internet telephony option, now legitimate, Prof. Sivakumar assured that it will be explored but there could be hurdles in the procee due to the new private addressing space.



This was all about goodies ! What about all the restrictions which exist and which one hears are going to be imposed ? Prof. G. Sivakumar assured that there will be no more restrictions on web access than those that already exist, though policing cannot be altogether eliminated as there have been enough cases of misuse demanding a vigil on the use of the institute's resources. One of the first things, CC would like to do, he said, would be to provide for "monitoring, awareness and transparency". Each user should be able to monitor information pertaining to his and even the overall use of the net. 'Access denied' sites and the reasons for giving them that label will be listed and will be made open to argument. Prof. Sivakumar also promised a 2-3 month review of the net policy and open sessions for CC staff and employees as well.

Finally, what about the rumors about coming down heavily on mp3 trading and using unlicensed software ? All a smiling Prof. Sivakumar says is, "IIT will not officially encourage such activities." It's unlikely that the authorities would take proactive steps in this direction and the policies would most probably be left to the respective depts. As regards the hosts running on windows Prof. Sivakumar said there were no plans to kick them out although there was a need to renegotiate the campus licenses for windows which is both inadequate and pertain to outdated versions. At the same time, he emphatically added that the institute would also like to encourage the use of free software.

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# The need for peace, sanity and secularism

- by *Prof. Kushal Deb*

I write this article with a deep sense of anguish and sadness as I see my country torn apart by the senseless, inhuman, communal violence, which erupted and is still simmering in Gujarat and which I fear may erupt at any moment in other parts of the country. It is just last year that the whole country got galvanized to rush massive amounts of humanitarian aid to earthquake ravaged Gujarat. We at IITB had not lagged behind and the response from students, faculty and staff had been overwhelming and spontaneous. But now when members of a minority community were being systematically butchered, their households and property burnt down and looted, the response across the country has been very mute. We all agreed in public and in private that the violence and killing that took place was sad and senseless but somewhere deep inside we did justify and ratify it. The implicit rationale was - Who after all started it? Didn't a horde of people belonging to the minority community roast members of the majority community alive in the train at Godhra? How dare they be barbarous and expect us to take it lying down? They therefore deserve what happened later.

This kind of rationale and hatred become dominant during communal holocausts. We all become faceless members of respective communities who are fighting, killing, raping, looting to redeem our pride (read -masculinity), for protecting our home turf, and revenging the misdeeds/ dishonor done to our forefathers and ancestors. It becomes a matter of numbers. These are the times when we forget that the persons we are killing, raping or looting are just other human being with their own families, struggling just like us to make ends meet, having the same ambitions, fear and apprehensions and who just like us want to just lead their own simple daily life.

I have this gnawing feeling that these modes of thought and rationalizations are increasingly shaping the sensibilities of large sections of the population of all communities even during normal and peaceful times. We are increasingly identifying one another in terms of our religious identities. I am therefore deeply concerned and worried after reading carefully the debates being engaged in by some students on iitb.discuss on issues with captions such as :Indianisation of Islam, Social work by Santa Claus, The price of stone-walling Hindus, R we living in Hindustan, Correcting the anti-VHP stand, Frustrating, pseudo-secular reporting by TOI, Conspiracy theory, Marxist engineering history, Some Pseudo-secular matters, Why conversions? etc. This is because all that the Marxist and pseudo-secularist bashing, glorification of Hinduism, pointing out of historical wrong doings and sacrileges by other communities, finally ends up doing is to convey a lot of negative feelings, prejudice and hatred against the minority communities.

I am disheartened and worried because such hatred and prejudice against the minority communities is not a sign of patriotism as seems to be the belief of some of these students

Accusations of 'pseudo secularism' and 'pampering of minorities' simply reveal the biases which are there among certain sections of the majority community and as will be shown later in this essay are accusations without substance. But let me first try and explain as to why people tend to identify so strongly with their religious communities, which in situations of conflict may either galvanize them to commit heinous acts or to implicitly support and rationalize such acts.

Every human being needs a sense of identity which answers existential questions like - "Who am I? What are my needs? How I am different from others? This identity we do not get in isolation but through dialogue with significant others, i.e. our family, neighborhood, caste, ethnic group or religion. So religion often plays a major role in our identity formation as it provides some of the core values, which guide us in our life. But we should simultaneously remember that this notion of an individual's identity is a modern notion, which arose in the 18th century along with the rise of modernism. It is intimately related to our sense of being a human being and a citizen of a nation-state. In the medieval ages our identity was fixed and was related to the position of our community within a hierarchical society. In a modern nation-state every individual citizen is equal and has the same rights and privileges. The important point here is that in a modern democratic nation state, an individual's rights as citizen gets predominance over his/her collective right of belonging to a caste, sect or religious group.

The second sense of identity, which is important in every modern nation-state, is our 'national identity'. Every nation-state wants to have its own distinct identity, which separates it from its neighbors. There is often a tendency to define the national identity of a country in terms of the cultural idioms of the majority community. This process is often implicit, unreflective and taken for granted by the majority community but usually alienates the members of the different minority communities. This happens even in the U.S.A, a country of immigrants that is proud of its cosmopolitanism, and liberal democratic values. It took several decades of struggle for the Afro-Americans, the Latin Americans and the other immigrant groups to make the government realize that the so-called 'American way of life' was in fact the culture of the dominant majority i.e. the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP). Such attempts at defining the identity of a country in terms of the cultural idioms and values of the majority community can lead to lot of political turmoil, communal riots or ethnic strife, especially in countries which are multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual. There can be irreconcilable differences between the values of various religious communities. It is for these very reasons that modern nation-states try to keep religion out of politics and try to define their national identity in terms of basic values like equality, liberty, freedom and democracy and gives priority to citizenship rights over community rights.

It should therefore become clear why attempts by certain majoritarian groups (Hindutva brigade) to define Indian national culture in terms of 'the Hindu way of life' (read an upper-caste tradition based on certain religious texts and scriptures) could be highly disastrous. First, there is no single Hindu way of life as there are marked differences in cultural practices between sects, denominations, ethnic, linguistic and caste groups and across regions. Second, most of the minority communities in India have long and rich

cultural roots. Many syncretic traditions and sects such as the Bhakti cults and Sufi saints have emerged from the confluence of the various religions. The needs and distinct identities of the various religious groups cannot be simply wished away and nor can they be forcefully assimilated (for example the debate on iitb.discuss on "Indianisation of Islam"). The quest for a national identity has to be woven around the basic tenets of the Indian Constitution, which are based on values such as justice (social, economic and political), liberty (of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship), equality (of status and opportunity) and fraternity (assuring the dignity of individual and unity and integrity of the nation).

This brings me to the very important issue of secularism, which is a much-maligned concept today as every one now talks of "pseudo secularism and pampering of minorities". In India, there have been three main objections to the doctrine of secularism and to the state guided by it. First, that it is unsuited to Indian conditions by virtue of its profoundly Christian and therefore Western character. Second, that it is deeply insensitive to religious people and forces people to think of religion as a private affair thus uncoupling the link between religion and community and depriving people of their sense of identity. Third, that a secular state pretends to be neutral but is partial to either the unbeliever or to the minority community. These critics claim that the state with the aid of a series of legislative acts has attempted to neutralize the communal identity of Hindus while encouraging Muslims to frame their identity purely in terms of their religion.

One has to concede that given the sub-continental culture, it is impossible to strictly separate every religious from every non-religious practice. Secondly it is important to differentiate "religion as a way of life" (a tradition, which is essentially non-monolithic and operationally plural) from "religion as an ideology" (where religion is being used as a sub-national, national or cross-national identifier of populations for political or socio-economic interests). Most of our present problems stem from the attempts being made by fundamentalist groups from among both the Hindu and Muslim communities to convert the large majority of people who practice 'religion as faith' into practitioners of 'religious as ideology' so that the communities can be projected as homogenous and communal conflicts as "clash between civilizations". Therefore there is this needs for stressing the necessity for separating some religious and non-religious institutions especially those that may lead to irreconcilable differences and internecine violence. A duty of every state is to ensure 'ordinary life' which involves an acceptable minimum standard of human interaction, below which things become barbaric as is now happening in Gujarat.

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I strongly feel that the doctrine of secularism has been subjected to unfair criticism by the 'Hindu right' and its purpose largely misunderstood by sections of the Indian population. One needs to understand the circumstances, which shaped the government's policies on secularism. First, the formation of the Indian nation-state was an outcome of the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. During the partition, there were extremely violent communal riots in which about half a million people were killed. Secondly, a

sizeable portion of the Muslim population, mostly from the poorer sections, chose to stay back in India. Third, the Hindu community had for centuries suffered from caste and gender based discriminations and injustice and reform of these practices was in the agenda of the nationalist leaders even during the struggle against British colonial rule. Given these circumstances, it is evident that secularism had to be implemented in a certain manner. In a situation marked by communal holocaust and deteriorating relationship between the communities, protection of the minority community was the foremost need. Interventions in the form of reform of personal laws would have enhanced the minority community's sense of insecurity.

On the question of reforms brought out within Hindu religion, given the caste and gender discriminations rampant within the majority community, it became imperative on the nationalist leaders to bring out reforms in areas which denied basic human dignity and self esteem such as denial of temple entry to untouchable castes, early marriage of female children, pollution rites impinging on lower castes and women. So it is highly unfair to criticize the Indian state for not remaining neutral. The kind of secularism which emerged in India is therefore not a Christian or western model but a "contextual model" in which the relation between religion and politics requires neither fusion nor complete disengagement but principled distance.

Finally, let me take up very briefly the issue of Uniform Civil Code and the question of reform of Muslim personal laws because the issue has been hijacked and utilized by Hindu fundamentalist groups to project themselves as champions of gender justice and citizenship rights. One needs to first point out that the personal laws (which deal with issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption) of all religious communities go against the basic individual rights of women. They are unfortunately utilized for marking out group boundaries. Any interference is therefore perceived as a threat to a community's identity. The issue of Uniform Civil Code has therefore been an important agenda of the women's movement. It needs to be pointed out that the first women's organization in India was a Muslim women's organization named Anjuman-i-Khavatin-i-Islam, formed in 1913. In 1937 onwards, the demand for U.C.C. was first aired by the All India Women's Conference. The turning point in the debate was the famous Shah Bano case of 1985 in which the Supreme Court gave a landmark judgment regarding maintenance for divorced Muslim women but the Congress government buckled to the pressures of the Muslim conservative leadership. In this case the government didn't really act in a secular manner but that doesn't negate the very principles of secularism. The issue of Uniform Civil Code remains essentially a feminist issue (the actual losers being Muslim women) hijacked by Hindu fundamentalist groups to embarrass both the Muslim leadership and the government.

One cannot however deny the urgent need for reforms and reflexivity among Indian Muslims so that they do not become soft targets for Hindu fundamentalist groups. A large section of the Muslim community, who are moderates, need to become more vocal, thereby strengthening the hands of the liberal leadership, who remain marginalized. But as pointed out by the political theorist Akeel Bilgrami, the commitment to Islam of a large section of moderate Muslim population remains to a large extent highly defensive

and this leaves them susceptible for exploitation by absolutist movements. The systematic extermination of Muslims in Gujarat is bound to make the Muslim community all the more sensitive and defensive, and is definitely a setback to the liberal Muslim leadership that is pressing for reforms.

I would like to end this article by reiterating my plea for peace, sanity and secularism.

We have to realize that the India of today is a modern nation-state where our identity and rights as citizen should over-rule all our other identities however important they are in our day-to-day life. The national identity has to be forged around the values enshrined in our Constitution. Digging out of historical and archival documents to prove the historical wrong doings of respective communities and for gaining moral one-upmanship is an exercise in futility because past wrong doings do not in anyway justify present acts of revenge. Systematic pogroms would only deepen the chasm between communities and make our country more vulnerable.

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# An IITian in Tokyo

*"Abraham Thomas graduated with a B.Tech. (Engg. Phy.) in 1998, and currently works as a trader for a hedge fund based in Tokyo, where he sits in front of a screen and looks intelligent. In this article he gives fundaes on various topics which he confesses to knowing nothing about, mostly related to Wall Street, the work ethic, and Life with a capital L."*

Alumni have an irritating tendency to moralize, and reformed 6-pointers are the worst of the lot. For some reason they feel compelled to hold forth on life, the universe and everything, spewing reams of sage advice on how hard work and sincerity invariably lead to success, ad nauseam. Ha! Don't fall for their tricks - after all, it's not as if any of these sorry specimens ever actually behaved the way they want you to behave, back when they were undergraduates.

Unfortunately for you, Gentle Reader, the Insight article that you're currently reading was written by one such sorry specimen, and he's not going to let you go without imparting his share of fundaes. Furthermore, (being too lazy to bother with such pseud concepts as structure and organization), he has arranged these fundaes in the form of a straightforward FAQ: several hypothetical questions, and the answers thereto. Who knows, some of these answers may even turn out to be useful, so read on.

Q1. Oye sidey, intro de! My name is Abraham Thomas. I'm from Trivandrum in Malluland; my AIR was 650 (JEE '94). This lowly hawa enabled me to get my first choice branch, EP at IIT Bombay. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Q2. What does that mean? It means it happened a long time ago. Anyway, after getting into IITB and H2, I spent 4 years dabbling in cult, sports and the occasional organizational misadventure, while strenuously avoiding the physics dept's attempts to give me an education. I almost succeeded; it was somewhat to my surprise that I ended up with a BTech, back in '98.

Q3. What happened next? To be honest, at the end of my 3rd year at IIT I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do in life. I knew that a career in physics research was not for me (I decided somewhere in the middle of my 4th sem that I didn't have the focus or the dedication to be an academic). I wasn't very excited by the jobs on offer on campus. I toyed with the idea of doing an MBA at one of the IIMs, although I didn't have a clue what I'd do afterwards (I didn't even know what the post-MBA options were!). And then I had a stroke of luck - out of the blue, I got an offer to join a hedge fund in Japan, in the position of quantitative analyst. Naturally, I jumped at it, and I've been here ever since.

Q4. Hedge fund, huh? That sounds cool. What do hedge funds actually do? The short answer is that we use sophisticated mathematical models to predict the behaviour of

various markets; we then enter positions (i.e., trade stocks and bonds and derivatives) so as to take advantage of these predictions.

Q5. And where do you fit in to this? What does your job involve, on a day-to-day basis? I started out as an analytical programmer - my job was to convert raw equations into useful trading systems. This process usually had several stages - understanding (and if necessary, extending) the theory, designing a solution, implementing, calibrating and back-testing this solution, then supporting the traders who actually used it. I spent a year and a half doing this, during which time I learned a lot about capital markets in general and analytical finance in particular. I then crossed over to the trading desk; for the last two and a half years I've been taking positions in the world's interest-rate markets, buying and selling bonds, swaps, futures, options and other derivatives. It's been fun - intellectually stimulating and mentally challenging, high risk, but also high reward. When the markets are closed, I spend my working hours reading economic research reports, developing new models, analyzing trade ideas and writing tedious reports (yes, every job has its share of boring but necessary tasks).

Q6. It's been 5 years since you took the GMAT, but you haven't started on your MBA yet. How come? People generally do MBAs for three (related) reasons. First, to get entry into an otherwise restricted field (engineers who want to become managers or consultants or financiers often fall into this category). Second, to ease their upward progress in a given career (it's difficult to get into a senior management position at most multinational companies without an MBA from a top school). Third, to network. The actual academic learning that takes place during the MBA course is less important than these factors; while business schools have a tendency to hype the intellectual content of their degrees, quite frankly nothing can compare with the experience you get actually doing a job. In my case, I felt that none of the three usual reasons applied: I'm already in the field I want to be in, I don't plan to stay in this field long enough to be in the running for a senior management position, and I don't think the lure of networking is sufficiently enticing to justify the time and expense required by an MBA. In short, I don't need the degree, so I'm not gonna do it.

Q7. So what are you going to do? I don't know. I've decided that it's not worth planning my life to the nth decimal place for decades to come, so I'm taking matters one year at a time. Right now I'm having fun in my job, and earning a more-than-comfortable living. What more could one ask for? In any case, traders have a limited lifetime (most burn out or retire by the age of 35); I'll decide what I want to do after that when I get there.

Q8. I admire your confidence. But what if you can't get a job at 35? What if you don't earn enough money to provide yourself a safety net? What if you get married and want to raise a family? Isn't it irresponsible to just "live for the moment" as you suggest? What if, what if, what if. See, it all comes down to priorities. Some people want to make a lot of money in a very short time. Some people want to have a guaranteed job for life. Some people want social standing. Some people want to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, irrespective of the monetary rewards. While these are all understandable ambitions, they are unfortunately incompatible most of the time (two or three out of four is about the best



you can hope for - and that's if you're lucky). So you have to choose between them. Personally, I don't want to fall into the trap of chasing the chimeras of fame and success and money and power, at the expense of my present-day happiness, hence my choice: I'll continue doing what I'm currently doing, for as long as I'm happy doing it. If I stop enjoying my work, I'll stop working and look for another job. And that's that.

Q9. Phew! That's quite a strong stance. Okay, let's change the subject. How are IITians perceived on Wall Street? Wall Street is full of IITians, and by and large we're thought highly of. Nobody questions our analytical skills or the speed with which we learn new stuff. One area where we do fall short, though, is communication skills: IITians often have difficulty putting ideas into words, and doing so diplomatically. We tend to blurt, and even rude. And we can be terribly impatient with those who aren't as quick as us. As a result we tend to do better in those areas that don't require much human interaction (IT is an obvious example) than in those that do (for instance, sales and marketing).

Q10. Are there any other ways in which you think IITians should change? IITians have a tremendous capacity for focus. We're extremely good at doing whatever task we set out to do, and we're competitive to the hilt. These qualities are not surprising, especially given the selection mechanism (JEE) and the structure of campus life. Unfortunately, this kind of single-minded determination is not always a good thing; it often leads to the loss of a sense of proportion. This manifests itself, not just in the PGM hopeful who knows nothing outside his tute sheets and assignments, but also in the Cult/Sports god whose life is ruled by the GC points table, and the MI/Techfest/SAC organizer who cannot think beyond the success of his own project. And the problem persists after we graduate and leave campus; hence the legions of confused IITians doing MBAs they don't need and PhDs they're not interested in and jobs they don't like. We're so caught up in the 'how' of doing things that we lose sight of the 'why'; we miss the forest for the trees. This should change.

Q11. What are the most important things you learned at IIT? As far as coursework is concerned, I have to admit I was (pleasantly) surprised to find that I actually use a fair bit of the stuff that I covered as a UG - especially in the math core courses - almost every day. Specific course material aside, I find the general analytical approach that was drummed into us in IIT very useful, both for general problem-solving and for grasping intangible concepts such as 'elegance' and 'correctness'. And of course, there's the immense amount that's learned outside the classroom, especially the ability to balance multiple demands on one's time - that's an invaluable skill.

Q12. What is the most important thing you've learnt after leaving IIT? Hmm. 'Professionalism', I guess. I know this is a somewhat vague concept, so let me try to clarify. IITians have a habit of looking for short-cuts - they're always trying to maximize their results with a minimum of labour. They're masters of the last-minute gheese. Now, this may work most of the time, but there are occasions when it won't, occasions when a little perfectionism is called for. This is what I mean by being professional. You have to cultivate a sense of pride in your work, a sense that you're doing the best that you can, because you can. You have to be honest with yourself. You have to be unemotional; you

cannot allow ego to get in the way of results. You have to pay attention to detail. You have to be fair, and frank. Above all, you have to inspire confidence in your ability to achieve results, and you must live up to that confidence.

Q13. Do you have any final pearls of wisdom to share? Of course I do. I'd like to talk about three important words. First, discipline. An interesting paradox that I've observed, both in my own career and in the careers of my contemporaries, is that it's actually very easy to work hard. What's not so easy is to know when to stop. To be able to say "Okay, I've slogged my butt off all week, now I'm going to go home early so that I can spend some time on myself" requires a lot of discipline, but it's essential. Nobody will ever tell you not to work too hard - your boss will love you for it, and you yourself will feel a sense of accomplishment - but after some time you'll look back and wonder where the years have gone. So don't be afraid (or ashamed) to take some time for your self, for family and friends. These are the things that are important. Second, humility. There are a lot of smart people in the world. Not all of them went to IIT. Just because you did, doesn't make you better than them, or any more likely to succeed. Without dedication, without hard work, without sincerity, you'll get absolutely nowhere. And if you do happen to get somewhere, I hope that you'll try to give something back to the system that produced you. Always remember how fortunate you are to be where you are. Ours is a poor country; we are the lucky few. It's our responsibility to make that luck count for something. Third, enthusiasm. No matter what you do, do it with enth. If not, ask yourself why you're doing it in the first place. The unexamined life is not worth living.

# Politics, n: Poly "many" + tics "blood-sucking parasites"

*Lakshmi Narain takes one parting look at the system infested by teeming parasites*

IIT has often waxed eloquent about being immune to the culture outside and being trend-setters. The next time you put on a superior air and audaciously claim to be the "creme' de la creme", do a rethink. There is very "little" to you than meets the eye. Deep down there you are as human as the next guy coming down the street.

Politics or poltugiri as we reverently call it has caught IIT by its achilles' heel and willfully buffeted it about since time immemorial. From something seemingly insignificant as a hostel activity to a much-hyped institute event, poltugiri is rampant in all forms that defy imagination. And it's more appalling to note that no one ever made a conscious effort to eliminate it. "If you are not into it, close your eyes to it" seems to be a widely prevalent attitude. And this sucks, more than these parasites.

Propelled by Pericles' thought, "Just because you are not interested in politics, does not mean that politics is not interested in you", let's take a bird's-eye view of the events that have caused a thousand tongues wag and a million heads roll. It really can be difficult to find a starting point, with so many issues vying for attention, especially when you have been faced with Hobson's choices all along. So, with the toss of an unbiased coin, we proceed.

Every election, brings it in its wake a myriad of possibilities to indulge in the sleaziest of professions. (Five years is long enough a time to generalize, I hope). The very same horse-trading, mudslinging, defaming (and a host of other "activities" that have made it to poltu-jargon) which you detested and deplored when exposed by the media, could very well be happening next door to you! The people who you thought were "friends" yesterday are frantically trying to unearth each other's dark secrets or fabricate new ones. And they give new meaning to washing dirty linen in public. Favours are sold, power literally bought. People with clout, the ones whom freshies idolized, are now in the news for the wrong reasons. A major chunk of MI marketing takes place. Whatever happens is not a one night stand, it is more of a disturbing trend.

Ethics and morals are set aside, at least for the election period. They can no longer see each other eye-to-eye, and any form professional contact is marked by underlying discomfort. All for nothing, yeah nothing. The resume' may boast that you conquered the seven seas and scaled an equal number of skies, but your morals have plummeted to abysmally low depths. Low enough not to see sunlight ever again. And these are the people who are "Technocrats for Tomorrow's World", "Engineers that make India Proud" (add a range of flowery adjectives for enhanced effect). And all the while the non-players do nothing about it. A spurt of emails on iitb.general or stray articles like this one shall

not change the system much, but if it sets a section of the creme' thinking, I'll consider my job done.

If you thought elections were the only medium for the poltu exercise, rest assured you have more opportunities coming your way in the form of institute honours. Oligarchy plagues the supposedly democratic means of choosing the "best" of the institute. Though people raise a hue and cry over the esoteric sharing of awards, you feel nothing can be done about it-Tomorrow will be a new day. Unfortunately when tomorrow comes, you find "History repeats itself". So, is there no end to this? Will not true merit ever win? The answer lies in attitude. When you are down, people don't hit you, they kick you! It requires a voice in unison against such happenings and the use of proper media, to bring to light the injustice committed. The ball, however bumpy the road ahead may be, has been set rolling. MI for the first time in its history witnessed poltu-less elections (or at least it appears) owing to welcome changes in the procedure. And it was the brainchild of the ones duly concerned about what has been happening. And they made their mark.

When a sincere and concerted effort from a few people has been able to set a few things straight, we can do wonders with numbers on our side. Then maybe, we can be the IIT which people outside think we are. Russel Baker once said, "Reporters thrive on the world's misfortune. For this reason they often take an indecent pleasure in events that dismay the rest of humanity." And don't give us an opportunity to do that again! On that high note, I end my glorious period of association with InsIghT. Au Revoir.

The author is a fifth year Dual Degree student of the Chem. Engg. Department and has been a part of the InsIghT team for the past 5 years (Contact lakme7dl@ccs)

# Results of the PAF Survey

*The InsIghT team conducted a survey among the students on the day of the last PAF to get their opinions of this year's PAFs. The survey was conducted in the OAT immediately after the H2-H10-Tansa PAF and before the results were announced. About 1000 people participated in the survey and rated the PAFs on a scale of 1-5. Number of valid votes polled were 602. A normalisation process was adopted to obtain the results. The opinion of each hostel pair was considered for the PAFs other than their own to avoid biasing of the results. After normalization, scores on a scale of 10 were computed.*

## GRAPH

*[Compare the above with the judges' decision (1. H8-H9; 2 - H2-H10-Tansa; 3. - H1-H3-H11).]*

**Viewership of the PAF's this year:** 73% of the students watched ALL the PAFs; 15% watched 4; 9% watched 3; 2% watched 2 and 1% watched only one PAF.

**Question:** Do you think PAF's should be judged by the student community instead of faculty and special invitees?(Results alongside)

# Cracks in the wall

*Despite the tremendous effort put into the first phase of mess renovation, flaws in the construction are beginning to appear in a few places. A report cum interview by Amrit Kallar.*

About four months ago, the extensive plan of hostel renovation was undertaken by the institute to utilize the flux of alumini funds. After about a semester of dining in makeshift messes and working in dingy compy rooms, mess renovation was finally over in three hostels. The new messes became the greatest examples of metamorphosis : pseud, spacious interiors with curvy designs and equipment(!) for cooking, not to mention the vivid colours on the walls and tiles. We were a MESSm erised lot !

In this euphoria of the new mess it may be easy to overlook the problems in mess design and equipment which have surfaced recently. Considering the massive amount of money spent on such projects one expects utility and durability in the deal. But is this the case with our messes? Of late, complaints about the dissatisfactory working of mess equipment have been lodged. Prof. Patwardhan, warden H10, has been drawing attention to proper usage of alumini funds and the problems faced by the student community due to messing issues. Excerpts from an interview with him :

Ques: Please tell us how the mess renovation started.

Ans: After the H8 mess renovation, plans for renovating all other hostel messes were ready on paper. Considering that funds were at an all time high, it was decided that no compromise will be made on quality of work delivered. Consequently, Hafeez contractor, India's leading contractor, was signed for the project.

Ques: What are your views about the work done?

Ans: The construction was done in time. The structures are all well-made and impressive. But problems with equipments and design have come up which have caused discomfort to students.

Ques: Can you please cite specific problems?

Ans: The equipment used in the new messes is of a poor quality. Many equipments stopped working within a month of operation. Before installing equipments it was categorically stated that the people handling these equipments will be unskilled workers. Despite this, proper safety measures were not taken. The heaters did not have a cut-off mechanism and the coil and food often burnt. The cold storage, too, did not have a temperature control mechanism. The computer rooms don't have ventilation and it becomes unbearably hot in summers.

Ques: How have these problems been taken up?

Ans: If an equipment stops working in so short a period of time it should be replaced. As of now the dealers have agreed to repair the equipments in all the hostels.

Ques: Colossal amounts of money are being spent for construction and beautification of the campus. What are your views about this?

Ans: IIT has always strived to provide the best to its students. In doing this, it is necessary to place utility above show. The primary purpose should be the proper utilization of funds.

Ques: With regard to this what are your views about the proposed 20-crore international gymkhana?

Ans: Will our students really utilize the facilities the new gymkhana will provide, considering that they have such packed schedules? In my view the present gymkhana can be improved to cater to the needs of the students. Amrit Kallar is a second year dual degree student in the Chemical Engg. Dept. (contact [amrit0dl@ccs.iitb.ac.in](mailto:amrit0dl@ccs.iitb.ac.in))

# Generations of service to IITB

*Prateek Singh talks to one of the oldest members of the IITB community who's about to leave us and go off to her homeland.*

She's been rendering her services to the students of IIT for 34 years now; selflessly, tirelessly and, most important, lovingly. She has seen students cry with disappointment, jump with joy, pray nervously to God. She has seen them transform from commoners to Kanwal Rekhis and reach the pinnacle of success in life... Still, not surprisingly, you wouldn't know her.

Mrs. Aleyamma Mammen, educated and married in Alleppy, happened to come to IIT purely by chance. A contractor working in IIT informed her about the vacancy in the Placement Office. Very soon, she was working as a permanent employee of our institute. That was way back in 1967. The placement office then was just a very small office on the third floor of the Main Building. The interviews used to take place in the Director's Conference Room. The placement office was more involved with practical training then. Still placement was 100% ! (Doesn't this make us wish that those good old days be back ?)

Mrs. Mammen started off with a meager salary of Rs.200 per month. But the job has always been demanding. When you have the future of an entire batch depending on you, you have to be responsible. "It is this sense of responsibility that has made her the disciplinarian force in the placement office," say her co-workers. With her present, a job can never remain undone. Always the first one in the office, she believes, in her own words, "there is no limit to work".

But the workload has never been able to suppress the compassionate woman in her. "When Shantanu and I used to work at odd hours in the placement office, she was the person always worried as to whether we had eaten something or not," says Nishchaya Gera, the outgoing TnP Nominee. But be it them or any student at the TnP office, with worry in his eyes, she has always given him "Apne ladke jaisa pyaar".

Now, as she nears the dusk of her career at IIT, tranquil backwaters of Alleppy can be seen in her eyes. "I need rest now. My family back home needs me, too. I am going back to Kerela". We'd love her to stop but, unfortunately, all good things invariably come to an end. She is taking back tons of memories with her, and Ma'am, it goes without saying, we'll miss you, too !

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# CLONE :THE TIME SEPARATED TWIN

*InsIghT presents one of the winning entries of the Journalism Contest organised by  
Tech. GC. Author : Ashish Mahajan.*

"Billions of clones could be produced each year to supply chicken farms with birds that all grow at the same rate, have the same amount of meat and taste the same." (An ambitious poultry owner in America)

Imagine one of the mornings in your later years. You wake up and are greeted by a teenager at the door, such that on the first sight you feel nostalgic, hey! That was me in yesteryears, at the second thought you raise your hand to check whether you are still asleep. To your astonishment the thing turns out to be real, breathing like any living being would do and staring at you as if trying to make you realize that "you rode a time machine last night and went back to times you relished the most" ! Cloning, as many other scientific developments has its bagful of prospects for human life to be made less chaotic and disease free. The gene therapy and laboratory organ growth will help in saving human lives from incurable diseases and to regenerate lost limbs and produce vital organs for transplant. Infertile people and singles who wish to have children of their own could have their wishes fulfilled. Cloning might produce a greater understanding of the cause of miscarriages, which might lead to a treatment to prevent spontaneous abortions. Cloning could also be used for parents who risk passing a defect to a child. But cloning has a negative side that might outweigh all of its advantages and the gift it might prove for humans. Cloning appears to be a powerful force that can be exploited to produce horrendous results. Human cloning is unethical as per religious diktats; it defies and challenges the authority of god who is perceived to be the harbinger of life on earth. Cloning may reduce genetic variability; producing many clones runs the risk of creating a population that is entirely the same. This population would be susceptible to the same diseases, and one disease could devastate the entire population. The whole concept of producing offspring through cloning gives way to customization of child, you can have a child according to your desires, you could have Clint Eastwood, Harrison Ford, Madhuri or even Osama at your house, all genetically tailored to have the qualities that are above normal strength and intelligence. People can use cloning to produce future labourers. Cloning a person for the use of his/her organs may involve the murder of the clone for the benefit of the original. If the technique becomes easily available it might lead to overpopulation of the world. Twins or triplets would become so common to cause mass hysteria. Genetic mutants those featured in movies like SPECIES, UNIVERSAL SOLDIER, GODZILLA would become a reality. Cloning could lead to an imbalance of sexes in the world and adoption rate of orphans would decrease which would have a negative impact on the society. I wonder how a man would feel when he sees a person identical to him but younger in age? The other one or his younger form would be his Time Separated twin. People who talk of regulating the process and making it available to a selected few should realize that we have anti-terrorism, anti-narcotics, anti-smuggling laws which are ineffective - how could you control illegal cloning?

Let's accept originality and shed away the idea of banality. When we have such a large population of orphans waiting for some people to adopt them, isn't it insane to make their chance of getting adopted bleak by accepting cloning? The whole concept of male-female requirement for reproduction would fail; men would become unwanted and a neglected class. "Change" is what nature follows, but at least on earth it would cease : everything would become repetitive and duplicate.

# Tech GC - A Look Ahead

- by *Subramanyam V.*

It's two years since TechGC was started at IIT and we can say with pride that it has come a long way. It may not enjoy the popularity of Cult or the participation of Sports, but it has carved a niche for itself and found an enthusiastic group of participants.

One of the most promising signs is the tremendous enthusiasm shown by freshies in all events. This was borne out by the fact that of the six colours awarded this year, four went to freshies. However it was disheartening to note the low turnout for events such as Original Idea Presentation Contest.

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Competitions have proved reasonably successful in this regard. However, we plan to expand the scope of events next year. We will ensure the smooth running of the Science Club and similar Special Interest Groups and Clubs. Informal lectures given by students have proved to be very popular and we would like to see them occur more frequently.

Workshops on topics of general interest, similar to the ones held at Techfest, will be organized during the year. Over the course of a weekend a participant can start from the basics and reach a good level of understanding on a given subject and can then use this knowledge to pursue further studies on the subject. If that sounds highly studious, fear not, for the subjects we have in mind range from Hacking to Quantum Computing...

Questech has proved to be popular and will definitely be a part of the future InsIghT issues. Moreover events like Exposition Contest and Freshtech will continue to form a part of the Technical Calendar. Logic Quizzes, Science Trivia Quizzes too will be held on an informal basis. The faculty too is enthusiastic about holding crash courses on various subjects. Efforts are underway to collaborate with NIF (National Innovation Foundation), which promotes grass-root innovation in India

What we need is an encouraging response from all students. We would like your views on how we can improve Tech GC. Please feel free to mail us your suggestions and comments, right from events you would like to see to an offer to help set up a hobby club.

Subramanyam V. (subbu@ee.iitb.ac.in), Vibhu M. (vibhu@ee.iitb.ac.in).

***Tech GC Colors:*** Surhud More, Nirmesh Mehta, Ameya Potdar, Parag Agarwal, H. Narayan, Setu C.

***Hostel Tally:***H3(1st),H5(2nd),H4(3rd).

# Drowned in the "spirit" of celebration

*A group of close to seventy students have been held up for having indulged in uncontrolled consumption of alcohol within hostel premises and a heavy fine imposed on all of them. Excerpts of the events that led up to this occurrence, by Ashish Goel.*

**11th of April, 2002** : It was party time that night in hostel seven. Hundreds of merry-makers from all over the insti had gathered to bid goodbye to the passing out batch of undergrads of the hostel. When the party began, there was so much of excitement and expectation in the minds of all those assembled there. Little did they know what kind of memories that evening had in store for them.

Around 10:00 pm that night, the professors who had been invited to the H7 Valfi moved towards the dinner area. At that moment some students were spotted by these professors roaming about in the hostel wings and corridors holding glasses full of spirit in hands and revelling away to glory. The H7 GSec. was summoned and given strict instructions to tell the students who were drinking to desist. More warnings followed, without any effect on the activities taking place around the eating area. Starters were being taken up to all the wings of the hostel and you could find students busy gulping down peg after peg of the spirit.

About half an hour later a plate came flying down from the second floor of one of the wings and landed near some of the professors in the dinner area. It is alleged that the plate was thrown by a student. However, the students who were in the vicinity of the area from where the plate fell claim that this is baseless and the plate was kept on the parapet and got knocked down accidentally. The fact that it fell very close to the wall does seem to lend credence to the latter argument.

It was then that a group of profs including Prof. U.B.Desai (Dean, SA), Prof. P.Gopalan (Head, HCU), Prof.Major (Warden, H7) and Prof.Samajhdar (Ass. Warden, H7), decided to take steps to put an end to the highly objectionable activity they were witnessing around them. Wing after wing was ransacked for liquor bottles and the G.Sec., the ex-GSec and other senior students (who appeared to be in their full senses) were ordered to take down names of all those who had consumed alcohol in the wings. Some students were caught red-handed carrying bags full of alcoholic stuff sneakily to their floors. There were others who were held up for lying to the profs by claiming that they were not drunk even though their breath reeked of alcohol. A series of confrontations between the profs and groups of students was also witnessed. People were even running here and there trying to dodge the profs. Upto twenty bottles of neat alcohol were carefully emptied and drained off. At the end of all this hungama, a long list of names was readied and the profs left the hostel promising the students that strict action would be taken against all those people whose names appeared on that list.

After the profs left, the Valfi carried on but the events of the evening continued to form the central topic of almost every discussion in the hostel. News spread around the campus

- a group of over 100 students are going to be punished for having indulged in excess alcohol consumption during the H7 Valfi.

The current status on the matter is thus: from the initial list of about 80 names, around 10-12 have been removed upon sincere requests of senior and responsible students who certified that those people were absolutely innocent. The people on the list will be fined a sum of Rs. 1000/- and be made to undertake some activity of the form of painting two rooms (either in H7 itself or elsewhere). Besides this, a heavy fine is going to be imposed on H-7.

All in all, the incident has left an ugly mark on the minds of not only the students who're being punished, but also on the minds of all the people who were witness to the incidents that took place in H7 that day. The excitement level of the students in all the ensuing Valfis suffered a serious fall as a result of warnings of heavier and more stringent fines and surprise-check squads that were sent out after H7's Valfi. What's sad is that several people who were actually a part of the drunken revelry, seem to have gotten away scot-free. It was only because of this small fraction of people that the entire crowd had to suffer. The incident has been equally unwelcome and depressing for the members of the faculty as well. "Do you think it's very pleasant for us to go about punishing so many students for this?", says Prof. Gopalan. According to him, it was extremely heart-breaking for the professors to have had to interfere in that manner on that evening in order to handle the situation. "Even we wanted to stay for a long time with our students and enjoy listening to their profiles. Even we wanted to be a part of the fun. If drinking is the only source of enjoyment for our students then there's something seriously wrong with their notion of enjoyment itself. My sincere request to all students - please let all Valfis be dry from now on." Indeed, isn't it true that many a time in the process of enjoying ourselves thoroughly, we overdo so many things and end up subjecting ourselves to more harm and displeasure than we could in ordinary circumstances? Food for thought for all of us, maybe.

According to Prof. Gopalan, such activity as was witnessed in H7 on the evening of April 11th, borders only upon lawlessness and could lead to nothing less than anarchy if allowed to carry on. "Should an institute like IIT accept such behaviour from the students?", says he. "Aren't these simply pointers to a general lack of discipline among our students?". He also commented that the objective of fine imposition was not to collect money from the students but to ensure that people who indulge in such unacceptable activities should be punished. If this is not enough, he is willing to graduate to higher levels of punishment to see that such activities are not repeated in the future.

# Eureka! 2002 - the "bare" truth

*Karthik Ramkumari and Zishaan M. Hayath present a snapshot of our business competition and discuss the feedback we received from several of our visitors during the show.*

We all know what Eureka is. We know the rules. We know what is expected. We know what the rewards are- an incubation program (for the uninitiated that means office space and help, both Venture Capitalist funds and more importantly Venture Capitalist fundaes) and a lot of cash.

But how many of us go for the gold? Pointless rhetoric. Well read on. We hope we can change your mind. This year Eureka saw 135 teams from all over the world. Through a rather comprehensive selection procedure, this number was cut down to 6. The judging panel numbered a whopping twenty five. These final 6 teams presented their Business Plans on the 23rd of March.

Interestingly, the team which walked away with the jackpot this year was Theranova Inc. from Duke University. Theranova conducted their presentation of their product, a device to reduce arthritic pain by tele-conference. That gives you some idea of the facilities provided. The 2nd prize went to XCentric (IIM-B) and the third prize to an IITB team, eRT, from the KRESIT Incubator.

Eureka winners have built the reputation of a good track record. Myzus.com, the winners of Eureka 2000 was listed in Business Today's "Top 10 for tomorrow" (net worth - 6 million dollars !). Tibraw, Winners of Eureka 2001 are starting up in the Silicon Valley.

This year, with the economic slowdown, the Eureka prizes were a step down from last year. But the DOSA, Prof. UB Desai put it perfectly when he said, "Prize money is nothing but pocket money. A free trip to the US. Eureka's aim is to start companies." With this as the focus, Incubation programs will be provided to the top 3 teams. The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) and TEN in the Silicon Valley have offered their services. This includes Quality Testing, Web Services, advice from a Chartered Accountant, Legal Consultancy, Consultancy from venture...associates all for free. Truly, a competition with a purpose !

But more than the money, the undisclosed plans, what we enjoyed the most that day was meeting this rather eclectic bunch of "entrepreneurs" - from professors to businessmen - and hearing them speak about their passion.

Rahul Patwardhan, CEO of Indiaco Incubator (Pune) was the Chief Guest. The prizes were sponsored by him and he said that he looked forward to working with the

young and innovative lot of this competition. Mahesh, founder of Passionfund.com was here as well. After making it big in the US, he has returned to India. A hard core

entrepreneur, he feels that though a lot of business plans come up, very few actually convert into a successful start up. He felt that although the 'business' plans were technologically very good, very few of them actually understood business from an entrepreneurial point of view. He was rather disappointed that we, the best brains in the country, lag behind in the race when it comes to business (The IITian team could manage only the 3rd place in Eureka 2002). When told that the students from technological institutes would not be able to match the skills of business school students, he dismissed it as a lame excuse and said that people in IIT Bombay had the advantage of living in the commercial capital of India and emphasised the potential of the e-cell here.

Rajiv Vaishnav, the Director of TiE-Mumbai was on the judging panel. He was rather impressed by the initiative taken by our e-cell in taking entrepreneurship to new levels and said that much more can be done on the same lines, while reassuring that IIT Bombay and e-cell have support of TiE in all such activities. On the note of participation and the level of business plans, he said that although there were very innovative and technologically sophisticated plans, they lagged in the way they could convince the consumer to buy their product. He also suggested that the students here can be given exposure to business by holding some courses on entrepreneurship. Rather than just writing a business plan, according to him, we should first learn to write a business plan.

Mr. Rajeev Bhatia (CEO, Beemanagement) also had some interesting remarks to make regarding the competition. He said that the younger lot was the best to work with as they can bring about dynamic changes in any company. On ideas for business, he said that rather going for 'Pain decreasing product' and playing safe, we should give a shot at 'Pleasure increasing products' for they have no boundaries to the amount of profits they have in store.

Professor Lagu, one of the backbones of the e-drive on campus, points out that we IITians very rarely tend to look beyond our closed areas of interest and believes that the role of E-cell is to encourage students (and to a lesser extent faculty) to set up their own companies. Towards this goal Eureka acts as a launching pad helping us get feedback about the feasibility of our ideas. Prof Lagu is playing a pivotal role in conducting the lecture series on entrepreneurship for students and faculty of IIT Bombay.

But, all is not well with entrepreneurship in IIT. To quote Pravin Gandhi (Infinity Ventures), "One of the teams came up to us and said we have a project, but we don't know who will buy it. Considering that Eureka is a Business plan competition, that is appalling."

At the risk of sounding preachy, we'll ask you this. People from all over come to Bombay to take part in our fests. They unanimously agree that we conduct great competitions. But. Are we great competition?

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# The new kid on the grub block

For a very long time the unavailability of enough variety of foodstuff on the campus and the poor quality of the grub in our food joints had been pricking and plaguing most of the campusites (read students). The opening of "Srushti Kahe Vah" at the SAC gates on the 8th of April was a major step towards giving a vent to some of this dissatisfaction by making both healthy and tasty food available to all of us.

The new joint aims at replacing junk food with natural health foods. It has started on a 45-day experimental basis (kindly visit them in this period and help them experiment better) and currently provides mouth-watering fruit juices like "Panha (raw mango juice)", "Kokam Shurbut", and "Lime Juice" along with tempting fruit chats, wheat bread sandwiches and green bhel. The plan is to keep shuffling some of the dishes according to season while others will be made available throughout the year. Besides, they are thinking of adding some more items to the menu and increasing the working hours. Currently, the timings are based on the timings of breaker in the hostels, swimming times, gym times etc.

In order to make it an eco-friendly effort attempts are being made to ensure that all the waste produced is bio-degradable and hence can be used for forming compost. For a few months now, the NGO Srushti has been working towards ecological improvement in our campus, initiating activities like reducing usage of plastic bags. This is how their association with IIT really began.

Since long, students have felt a need for health food. Moreover, we had very little variety in the drinks available at Chinks, StaffC and in our canteens: Very little besides tea, coffee and cold drinks. No wonder all students associated with the new venture feel that it's bound to become very popular on the campus. These students first approached Mrs. Lata (an environmentalist) and Mrs. Suniti (a food and nutrition expert) and it was due to the combined efforts of several volunteers that this idea got materialized. Mrs. Lata and Mrs. Suniti are currently running the stall. Convincing the authorities wasn't a difficult job at all and people like Dr.Appaji, concerned faculty members and Director himself were very much impressed by the idea. They made all the necessary resources (like space for the food stall in front of the SAC) readily available and even showed willingness to share the costs of the first day's supplies!

After coffee-vending machines and "Taste Buds" this is a giant step "towards utopia". Srushti Kahe-Vah is not only providing us with better quality of food stuff but has also increased the choices available by a wide margin. IITD already has such a food stall which runs in good profit. It's only proper feed-back and good wishes required for this experiment to convert into a full fledged food corner." All we need is support from the students", says Mrs. Lata.

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# Rumble in the Jungle

*MI team selection has always created a bustle on the campus. This year the news of elections in MI created waves with people fighting both for and against the concept. Karthik N. presents a report.*

It started in 1973. In its latest "wild" version, it once again did not fail to enthrall one and all. It still continues to be one of the most promising and enjoyable student activities on campus. Mood Indigo this year witnessed a major change in the selection process of the Overall Co-ordinators (OCs) and Core Group Members (CGs).

After weeks of debate and discussion among various student representatives and past and present MI core team members (refer to the article "The Mood Point" in InsIghT's February issue) the Dean of Student Affairs decided that the OCs and CGs would be elected this year, as opposed to the nomination process which has been followed consistently in the past. The main motivation behind this exercise was to separate the selection of the MI team from the process of institute elections and, more specifically, from the election of the GS Cult. The election for the OC's took place on the 26th of March and those for the CG's took place on the 27th of March.

All Core Group members of MI 2001 were eligible for the posts of the OC's. The electorate comprised of people who had worked for the fest. The old and the new GS Cult, the outgoing OCs and CGs formed Block A whereas the coordinators and organizers of the previous team formed Block B. Block A was given 40% weightage and Block B, the rest. The electorate was required to pick two choices for the OCs from the list of competing CGs. A visible flaw in this method was that certain departments, that had a large number of co-ordinators and organizers, were weighed at par with the other departments. Perhaps, weighing their votes accordingly would have been a better idea.

For the election of the CGs, the two elected OC's, the old OC's, the GS Cult, both old and new, and the outgoing CGs of the respective departments formed Block A. The coordinators and organizers of a department formed Block B for that department. The weights were 40% to Block A and 60% to Block B. This percentage of weights works fine for departments with a larger number of Block B members, but with departments with number of Block B members comparable to that of Block A members, the weights of an organizer and the concerned past CG may be the same. This flaw also needs to be taken care of in any future formulation.

The debate still rages on as to whether this process of MI team formation is an improvement over the previous one and whether elections in MI should be made a permanent feature. The newly elected OCs - Gaurav Rathore and Adarsh Joshi, while commenting about the appointment procedure, stated that a committee, of which the OCs would be a part, would be formed to review the procedure. They were also very pleased with the new team and hope to put up a rocking Mood Indigo 2002. We wish them all the best in their efforts !

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# Questech

*by Setu Chokshi*

*Solve the following number crossword & send in your entries to [techgc@mitra](mailto:techgc@mitra). Results will be put up on TechGC's website by the 30th. of April*

**Across:** A.- cube; E - square; G.- cube; H - square; I - square; L - square; M - cube; P - cube; Q - cube;

**Down:** A - cube; B - cube; C - square; D - cube; E - cube; F - cube/square; J - cube; K - cube; L - square; R - square; N - square; O - square.