This issue of **InsIghT** was delayed due to **4** *plus* a few other reasons. Sincere apologies for the same. The next issue of **InsIghT** shall be on stands only in **January, 2003**. Needless to say, we'll miss bringing out the November issue as much as you will miss reading it!

- The InsIghT Team

Established in 1958, IIT Bombay like the other IITs has achieved and maintained a position of the very best in engineering training and research in India. Many batches have graduated and produced the likes of Arun Netravali, Kanwal Rekhi, Nandan Nilekani, Bharat Balasubramanian who are at the very acme of success in their respective fields which are as diverse as they could be. No surprise then that the expectations to perform and deliver have soared, both from the Institute and her students who are touted as, to use a term clichéd to death, the "crème de la crème" of the nation.

But since 1958, much waste has been dumped into the waters of the Powai and Vihar lakes. Over the years, the institute has grown in size and refined its functioning. The world outside too has undergone a sea change. With the accelerating pace of technology, the institute has constantly adapted its academic structure to the requirements of the industry. The ways we get in – the GATE and the JEE have over the years become more competitive and challenging in order to select the best brains and maintain an exceptionally high quality of students trained at the institute.

But is that the whole picture? Can we boast of being good enough and living up to the proud heritage we have inherited? A curious question, because there seem to be no direct and objective measures to assess and monitor, to use a loose term, the 'quality' of students, as years go by, vis-à-vis the world. A relevant question too, because of late, worries have been expressed in concerned corners, in faculty and industry about the state of affairs.

In order to try and answer this probing question, we, at Insight, decided to approach the faculty, speak to some distinguished faculty members and seek their views on the present

Quality Check
Are We Crème Enough?

Are we really a class apart? Or are we riding on the waves created by successful IITians of yesteryears? The question is very complex and the absence of any objective measure to assess the quality of students makes it all the more difficult to understand. **Premal Shah** and **Anshuk Gandhi** talk to some distinguished faculty members about the same.

quality of students at IIT and its comparison against that in earlier years.

Prof. V. M. Gadre, **Associate Professor**, **Department of Electrical Engineering (B.Tech and Ph.D. from IIT Delhi)** has been a faculty member with IIT Bombay since 1994 and has been teaching departmental courses to students in almost every year of their stay in IIT Bombay. Prof. Gadre feels that there hasn't been any regress in the basic calibre of the students over the years and it continues to be of a 'very high degree'.

Prof. U. N. Gaitonde, Head, Department of Mechanical Engineering (B. Tech and Ph.D. from IIT Bombay) also essentially agrees with these observations about consistently good class participation. An average

batch has still the same ratios of highly active and interested students, the slightly withdrawn ones and the "back benchers". Quality of research, according to Prof. Gaitonde, has improved considerably, a point corroborated by Prof. Gadre who also finds a greater aptitude for research in current students.

On the whole he has found the teaching experience not only satisfying but also rewarding, helping him to enhance his own insights into the basic subjects, as he observed that no matter how many times he taught a course, students have always managed to come up with new meaningful questions. The performances in exams and quizzes have, more or less, maintained their distributions over these years, nor has he detected any fall in attendance levels of students on the whole. However, he does notice a very distressing fall of attendance in the final year of the Undergraduate Programme among students.

But that is one side of the story. Apparently, as it often is, all might not be quite well.

Prof. G. K. Suraishkumar, Department of Chemical Engineering (B.Tech. from IIT Madras), however, differs from the views of his colleagues, noting that the percentage of students with really *outstanding* intellectual ability has decreased over the years.

Also missing from the scene, in his opinion, are the exceptionally brilliant all-rounders. Prof. Suraishkumar elaborates, "High-performers, in general, are often distinguished not only by their intellectual ability, but also by their approach to things. Over the years, a class of such students performed exceedingly well in academics as well as in many extra-curricular activities. Such people are, however, becoming ever harder to notice amongst us each year." According to him, a major reason for this is the proliferation of JEE coaching centres where students engage only in exam-centric studies.

A similar point is also raised by Prof. Gaitonde who observes that, more than ever, the IITs have become a means of building a career rather than a match of aptitude and keen interest, as it used to be. The success stories of the earlier IITians and the not-so-bright career prospects after a Bachelor's degree from other institutes have made the IITs the most coveted "career-launchers" in the country. A student with a studious inclination at school is pushed by peers, pressurized by

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InsIghT team

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Vidya is a NGO whose one of the aims is educating IIT campus children and providing basic education and opportunities to those deprived of it. On Dussera, the old Canara Bank room in SAC was inaugurated as "Sanganak Kendra" (*Computer Centre*), a project of *Vidya* which aims at exposing children to computers.

A Noble intention indeed, but *Vidya* seems to have broken more hearts than it attempts to heal. The reason? It has just hogged up a room, which was initially meant to be used as the Institute Music room, an aspiration of IIT student community for a very long period now.

The SAC or **Students' Activity Centre** is meant strictly for IIT students, yet from the above incident, it is clear that the times have changed. The current so called "Music Room", which incidentally is very active, has been surviving in temporary locations for quite some time now. The promises of a permanent room have been made by every successive G.S. Cult's. The ideal location for the same would have been the old Canara Bank room considering it is sound proof and already has the basic infrastructure such has air-conditioning and furniture etc. In fact, the music room layouts were been prepared time and again with this room in mind and costs estimated for setting everything up.

With the current "developments", all those plans seem to have fallen into disarray. On being questioned over this issue, the GS Cult Ravi Kakkad said, "Right now, we don't have a space for the music room. No more efforts are on at the moment simply because we don't have a room in

behind
CLOSED
DOORS

by Srikantan Selvamani

SAC. There is a plan of renovating SAC but this may take 2-3 years. So unless we see a possible music room, promises cannot be made".*

How did a NGO even enter the SAC? The NSS is a students' activity and has been operating from SAC for quite some time. They also have a room in SAC (other than the Canara Bank room recently allotted to them i.e.). As Prof. A.K. Verma, NSS faculty coordinator puts it, "NSS and *Vidya*

had intersecting field of work so we decided to join hands to reach out to more people". This also resulted in NSS students getting exposed to *Vidya's* activities and hence acting as helping hands there as well. Some of the recent well publicized activities of *Vidya* include the *Aahar Mela* which was, again, held in SAC.

As it is, students' clubs and organizations in IIT have to face tough competition amongst themselves for a room and space in SAC. Even **InsIghT** had to wait for 4 years after its inception to get an office! But we see a situation here where the genuine needs of IIT students were overlooked and their long standing plans shot down just to accommodate *Vidya* and provide a **Second** room to NSS! If this flow of events is not checked, a time might come when students' events in SAC will have to take a back seat to *Aahar Mela's*.

We are not trying to over shadow the noble cause that NSS or *Vidya* is working towards and surely they might be using these facilities in SAC to the maximum and one of the best possible use, but surely other provisions could have been made for them. Why a room in **Students' Activity Center**? Especially considering the fact that the authorities are well aware of the jam packed situation of room allocation.

It took a little awakening by InsIghT but now the GS's are aware of this situation and are working towards a remedial action. The matter cannot be tucked away especially when it may have far reaching consequences in terms of room allotment and space allocation policies of SAC. And of course, the hopes of the entire student community rely on a final decision that needs be taken at the earliest on this matter ∎

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* read the complete interviews of the Institute General Secretaries on the inside pages of this issue of InsIghT.

Letters to the editor

Another day at Canara Bank

A month back, I and Karthik Narayanswamy had gone to the Canara Bank to talk to the manager about the problems we, as students, face at Canara Bank - primarily the quality of service and the fact that we are treated as "students" and not at all as "customers". We were mollified by the manager with assurances of immediate improvements in service, but a recent visit to the bank has left me with the impression that things are definitely very much the same.

It started with what has become a ritual at the bank - a student asked about the delay of encashment of his cheque. What followed was utter chaos. The cashier shouted that the cheque was not with him. This lead to a heated exchange of words between the student and the bank staff about the "way to treat a customer" and "how long the student had been at IIT".

To compound matters, the security guard appeared out of nowhere to take down the student's account number and warn him that he would "personally" ensure that his account is khatched. If that was not enough, another cashier came out (while he was chomping away on his lunch) and gestured for the student to come over to where he was and talk to him if he had a problem. Luckily, the bank manager stepped in to bring things relatively back to normal, but not before irreparable damage had been done to the already soiled reputation of Canara Bank.

A senior official of the Canara Bank Main Office happened to be at the bank that afternoon. He agreed with most of what we said especially about the "student versus customer" issue and promised to look into it seriously. He said that the major problem was the attitude of the staff. He seemed truly concerned although he did accept that it wasn't a problem which could be easily solved. At least he didn't promise magic.

As the ruckus died down I looked over back to the cash counter where this newbie to Canara Bank, IIT was desperately trying to convince the cashier to give him five 100 - rupee notes instead of a 500. Too much to ask from a financial institution?? The cashier replies,"We'll run out of 100 rupee notes for the customers who are yet to come". A pile of 100 rupee notes lies in plain sight. The freshie gives up. To rub salt into his wounds the cashier closes down the counter, the freshie is the last customer for the day. Who were those notes being saved for?

Is it just me or does this happen to everyone? Is someone listening or are complaints falling on deaf ears? Why don't the concerned authorities respond? Will something be done to improve the service or will status quo be maintained?

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Message from The Blonde

As some people agreed with me, the article about us, the foreign students, just gave the feeling that we are completely homesick. I wanted to make it clear. Of course, it is hard to adjust to a lot of things, but I am very glad to be here, discovering a bright-coloured, joyful country where you can stay at the doors of the local train!

Oriane

Books books everywhere, but not a book to read!

Ajeet Kumar and **Saumya Gupta** outline the major problems students have with the Central Library and find the things done to improve the current state of affairs.

Proud as we are, being in one of the premier institutes of technology, do we really endeavour to pursue the once cherished and long yearned dreams? Let us face it, most of us royally adopt a lax attitude towards our academics once having earned the title of an IITian. While it would be a tall claim that merely visiting the library will assure us of good grades or give us a markedly better edge over the rest, one thing is for sure, it will at least be reflective of our academic bent of mind. But the current state of library kills even that iota of enthusiasm one has towards academics.

Since long we have been hearing about the proposed changes to take place in the library, to make it more "student-friendly". Yet, not much seems to have been done. Let us first analyse the problems students are confronted with in this regard:

1. The decision of allowing library to shut down at 5 pm on weekends appears extremely preposterous, considering the fact that all the weekdays are packed with an assortment of lectures, labs, tutorials, etc. and weekend is the only time one gets to study with a relaxed mind. Also, if one looks at the work/study pattern of IITians (studying late in the night), closing the library even at 11 pm on working days would seem rather arbitrary. It should be understood that libraries, as storehouses of knowledge, are meant to benefit student. Relaxation in time, not only on weekends, but weekdays as well, should go a long way meeting our requirements.

The library nominee, Sanket Mehta and GSAA when asked about the same, seek protection under the pretext that maintenance calls for extra man-hours and they do not want to overload the existing staff. The recruitment of new people is a lengthy process which is still pending. These stories have been in the air since ages. The most awaited change seems highly improbable unless things are pushed forward. Nevertheless, they say, they are proposing a new idea of extending the closing time of library in the semester and cutting down the time during vacations, when relatively fewer people use the library. It will be initially run on experimental basis. However, they were not definitive when this idea will see the light of the day.

2. The books are never issued on Saturdays and Sundays. Ours are the souls that get activated on weekends (for the reasons cited above) and need to issue books then. The authorities should keep some time slot for issuing books on weekends as well.

3. Quite often, especially during semesters loaded with seminars, projects and assignments, the upper limit set by the authorities on the number of books that can be issued (presently five for first, second and third year students), seems constraining. Such a limit should be set keeping in mind the number of courses, projects that the students are required to take.

The library nominee, despite these problems, seemed hopeful and listed some provisions and additional facilities provided to students that they should make best use of.

1. If ever the library is found lacking a book recommended by one's instructor, one can bring this to the notice of the library staff, in which case the book will be made available within 2-3 days of recommendation by the instructor, provided the price of the

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parents, early, often too early in his education, to prepare hard for the JEE and join the IITs. His choice of branch of engineering is largely decided by the mob mentality.

Next comes the shock and surprise when he realizes that engineering is not quite the same as the physics, the math and the chemistry that he thought he liked, when he encounters the nitty-gritty of engineering in his 3rd year. This is sometimes accompanied by a drop in motivation and therefore in academic involvement.

As Prof. Gadre points out, although over the years there have been no strong signs of any differences in the overall calibre of students of different batches, he has observed, with disturbing consistency over the years, the tendency of declining interest in course work and lectures in the students of the same batch as the years go by - a point that has been almost unanimously observed, acknowledged and fretted upon. Attendance levels tend to drop; class participation changes from high-pitched enthusiasm in the 2nd year, to measured mature responses in the 3rd year to a marked decline in involvement in the 4th year. While there could be several factors to this evolution, he felt that two things play a crucial role. First is the cynical, a rather defeatist attitude that students seem to develop. They seem to take a below par performance too strongly, often losing interest, feeling the subject isn't there for them. The intense competition doesn't help, nor do the high standards and expectations the student sets for self. The result is a few bunked lectures, which only aggravates the problem, and sets into motion a vicious circle where a student finds it increasingly useless to attend lectures. By the end of the fourth year we would find most of the students highly polarized; some are still highly motivated but most others do not seem to care much any longer. The other factor is that the students tend to become

futuristic and result oriented. They lose interest when they feel not all courses and studies are in line with their aspired careers which might lie in different areas or at times in an altogether different field. They see no tangible benefits to be gained in pursuing 'mundane' coursework.

Prof. Suraishkumar also feels that the motivation towards academics at present is certainly lower than 8 years ago. He attributes this decline largely to the Information Technology wave that began in the year 1995-96. Due to a shift in career orientation towards the IT segment, students lost commitment towards their chosen engineering fields. During this period, the academic involvement, and hence performance went down. But he notes that now, students are showing an increased interest in the core technical field. This, he illustrates, is also reflected in greater student involvement in academically relevant activities such as the 'CHEA Symposium'. Student participation in the event has been low in previous years. This year's programme, however, attracted large participation by students.

A decrease in involvement of the average student, according to Prof. Gaitonde, has also to do with the increase in the class sizes in the last seven or eight years. The sheer effect of numbers has adversely affected individual attention towards the students. Increasingly larger numbers cannot get actively involved in the class proceedings. He chuckles, "In our times, even the weakest student had no option but to be attentive because he knew that the teacher would be watching him."

The other factors are the changes that have been going on around us in the non-academic scene off-campus or on-campus. Good students have made best use of them by selectively participating in these activities. But involvement in too many activities can harm a student by creating unmanageable distractions.

He adds, "Earlier, a student had nothing more to do than studies and they didn't even mind long contact hours. With the advent of the TV and the Internet, the present students have many more distractions than the students earlier. If the student is not careful and strong-willed, he has plenty of escape routes to while away his time."

All things said, none of the faculty members feel that we lack any of the basic ingredients that the former batches possessed as a whole neither are we wasting them away in any concerning way. But it never hurts to be cautious and protective of these assets that we have and go on to envelop them as well as make good on our deficits. At the same time, a positive outlook and sincere attitude correlate very highly with above average performances.

Prof. Suraishkumar strongly feels that if students are committed to core technical areas, the overall quality would be greater. Therefore, efforts should be made to make first and second year students realize that, whether by choice or chance, they have chosen a profession and must perform well in it. It is possible that they may get a chance to change their choice after four years, but it is prudent to try to perform well in the core field during their studies at the institute.

At the same time, he adds that the nation needs well-rounded professionals, rather than "studs" in specific areas – a view upheld by Prof. Gaitonde, who believes that the quality of a student as an engineer-in-making has multi dimensional attributes, of which academic performance is just one factor. Indeed, he said we have examples from amongst our own alumni, toppers having lack luster careers and some average students excelling in their careers which have comprised of diverse fields as tech, business, movies and even (yes!) spirituality.

Prof. Suraishkumar concludes by saying, "The nation holds high expectations from the IITs, and their students should be a class apart - students who don't follow things. They must create new ideas and have the courage and strength to realize those ideas and create new things. They must, in essence, become leaders. There are very few "leaders" amongst us. At present, very few are willing to take the required risk. This number should increase."

Prof. Gadre says, "Most IITians have great assets in terms of interaction with their peers, an ability to look into any matter with a lot of depth and incisiveness, and above all a courage and independence to not to be restrained by conventions, resist stagnation and evoke dynamic movements towards creativity and productivity." At the same time he warns us that we might be carrying the so-called tag of being the crème de la crème too far. A little humility, respect and recognition of the abilities of others will help, especially in a professional environment. With the burden of high airs and expectations, he pointed out, we in fact might be thwarting our own progress.

Prof. Gaitonde concludes, "What students must realize is that their years at IIT are the steeping stones to success, and unless they step on them right, they may not reach their goals" ■

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WHY DON'T I GET A JOB ?!!

This is what every final year student has been crying out loud for the last three months - be it the class topper or the last. The situation is grim, the tide is low and the mood is gloomy. According to the statistics, only 225 or 27% people have been placed until now. Out of this lucky lot, there lie only about 20-25 dream jobs. These are the companies which are the most hyped in the campus and jobs which everyone craves for (irrespective of the department he/she is in). In this article, we attempt to convey "what does it take" to be one of those 20-25 students. We have taken specific companies into account which are McKinsey, ITC, HLL Sales and Marketing, Capital One and Inductis. What follow are views of students that have made it through these companies in the last 2-3 years.

Big Mac McKinsey:

One of the world's best management consultancies. McKinsey has been coming to campus for the last few years. The typical number of students recruited is 3. There has been a general feeling that McKinsey & Co. India has a bias towards Elec. and Comp junta - although this has been denied by the Company. This year too, all three students who got through were from Elec.

How can I get into McKinsey & Co.? - a million dollar question with an answer as simple as work hard and slog throughout your stay IITB. Hard working students having a good business sense, who can present themselves well, have a good chance of getting recruited.

Almost everybody who gets short-listed has the above mentioned qualities and most of them solve the case-studies successfully. The most important thing McKinsey looks for is how well you approach the case studies, your ingenuity, understanding of the situation, how well you segment the problem and your solution strategy; of course you should have good grades to back all that up. Since McKinsey is in the client service business, another very important thing is your communication skills. One should be able to articulately express his/her own views, back them up with clear reasoning and should be confident enough to put them across the table and discuss the same with the interviewer.

Case-studies are just a subset of the many things which help them understand whether the candidate has business sense or not. You have to present yourself as if McKinsey is your client and you are selling yourself to them, trying to convince them that you are the most suitable candidate for the job. Take coloured print-outs, snaps, etc. of your projects, business plans, publications, etc. Remember that CPI, projects, publications, etc are also ways to show credentials - apart from being a Manager, CG or a GS. Getting into McKinsey in not a one day job, so start working towards it through your academics as soon as you finish reading this article.

ITC - India's second largest FMCG:

ITC and HLL are arguably any chem or mech student's dream jobs. People have been known to cram the whole of McCabe Smith for their interviews with ITC and HLL (for the uninitiated, McCabe Smith is a bible for chemical engineers). This year ITC recruited 3 students.

The ITC recruitment process typically starts with filling of a longish form which has a wide variety of questions ranging from career goals to what are you best and worst at? Each of your answers would reflect the type of person you are and hence it becomes very important to be consistent. If in one of the questions you have portrayed yourself as good at building and maintaining relations then you should write down the same when they ask you questions like what are you good at, about your skill-set et al.

Many of us do not take the business of filling forms seriously. Not only is this form going to be a major criterion for the short-listing but the questions in the interview will also be based on it. Bluffing does not help. Try describing situations from your recent past and structure your answers in a way that they should not only describe the problem but also your approach and the final outcome. How aggressive should one be while writing his/her answers? That's a highly subjective issue. If you feel that you can do justice to an answer like "In the long run I want to be a CEO of a Fortune 500 company", go ahead! - but then you should know what it takes to achieve that professional status.

What does it take to crack the dream jobs of the institute? Want to find out? Then read what **Maninder Gulati** and **Karthik Narayanswamy** have discovered.

What are the kind of people ITC is looking for? Your grades are important BUT if you can show them that you have done a lot of "organizational" work and have "performed", they might cut you a little slack. They are looking for people who are aggressive, people who exhibit authority, people who can manage people and people who empathize with their subordinates. The single most important word for an ITC aspirant should be "PEOPLE". Your answers should reflect these traits.

Once you are down to the interview stage, all you have to do is "KNOW YOURSELF". Easier said then done. Here again, don't try to put on a facade. Try to lead the interview by telling what you want them to know about you. It is always advisable to take a copy of your resume. Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet. Ask them for some extra time if you want to tell them something important that you couldn't mention during the course of the interview.

As mentioned earlier, ITC is looking for guys/gals who follow a people oriented approach to problem solving. As far as technical aspect is concerned, you should know your basics well. No need to cram up every equation/formula in the book.

HLL Sales and Marketing - an impossible Dream? :

Unfortunately, no students were taken aboard this year. The GD topics were mainly a rehash of the topics given the year before - abstract topics which involve wild, creative and sometimes lateral thinking. Students with the best ideas, who brought out a different and unique interpretation of the topic got through.

The interviews are Stress Interviews. One has to be absolutely convinced that he/she wants to get into Sales and Marketing. A more difficult proposition is to convince the panel why you want the job. Every answer is tested and another question is promptly shot back at you. They want to know if you can handle pressure situations at a young age and with maturity. At the end of the day - only the ones with conviction are sent forth to the next round of interview - The Board Interview - where once again a similar sort of interview is held. Only when they are absolutely certain that you are Marketing Material - do they give you the job. It is very difficult to get through

Sales and Marketing, especially considering the trends at IIT Bombay over the past couple of years.

Capital One - Uncle Sam beckons :

Capital One is a financial Services Company - which promises a nice dollar pay package and a placement in one of their US offices. This year, 2 students were given job offers, 2 less than the offers made last year. Capital One initially has a written test. It comprises of two sections - Data Interpretation (DI) and Behavioural. For DI, it is strongly recommended that one does a little of the CAT DI sections. The behavioural sections demand consistency in one's answers. This year a CPI cut off was also introduced. Capital One is looking for people with a business sense and who are very good with data analysis.

What follows if you are short-listed? A long interview process, four to five interviews, behavioural and case-studies and sometimes an HR (human resources) interview. The Cases are long and are a mix of qualitative and quantitative. A typical case study lasts for about an hour. Since one has so much time, one can proceed at his/her own pace. Thinking aloud helps - more so does doing your calculations neatly and indicating why you made certain choices. At times rudimentary knowledge of graphs and lines is required.

The behavioural interview consists of very standard behavioural questions - "Give me an instance of where you worked in a team". Prior preparation is absolutely essential and so is conviction in your statements. Answers which are different from the obvious also help. The panel tends to pry deep into the incident you mention to verify its authenticity and also to find out why you did what you did. It pays to go through the site and find out exactly what kind of qualities Capital One is looking for and then fine tune your replies to highlight those qualities.

Ask them a question if they ask you "Do you want to ask anything about the company?". This question is very important since it shows inquisitiveness, aggression and your interest in the company. The question can be about their products, a particular strategy, business sector or something from their annual finance report - anything.

With a little luck, you may end up running around campus screaming about your new job later that night.

Inductis - A McKinsey in the making? :

This one is again a consultancy. It's only the second year that Inductis is coming to campus and is already one of the most talked about companies. Why? A package of around half a million rupees, they'll give you a laptop, slap a suit on you and there you are - ready to talk your way through to their US clients. But there's much more to it because it's not only your communication skills they are looking at. This time Inductis hired people only for the Data Analyst position. The job mainly entails application of statistical tools to data and devising strategies and solutions for their clients. This year only EE and CS guys made it through.

Inductis had asked the aspirants to answer 4 questions which were the most standard but the most difficult to answer- "Why do you want to be a consultant? Why do you want to join Inductis?" Playing with words won't help you here. Even a simple answer like "consulting provides a good mix of utilizing my analytical, problem solving and communication skills" is enough but it should be convincing.

Inductis looked for problem solving skills, teamwork and leadership traits. They laid stress on how sincerity and commitment, apart from the normal dose of behavioural questions and some interesting puzzles. Most of the questions in the interviews were about majors (projects) and related to the stuff taught in class. They wanted to see how well you can perform when you are on what should be your home turf. A few things were apparent - they were not looking for business concepts, they even asked some Math Puzzles. Apart from the interview procedures they studied the resumes in detail and gave considerable importance to past performance. The thing a candidate can do is that in the interview rather than trying to project himself/herself as somebody, be himself/herself, emphasize his/her strong points and show an interest and a desire for the job. Play to your strengths, occasionally it might fail - but that way you have the best chance to succeed.

All said and done - as mentioned during a PPT, "Placement is a very flawed and inefficient process and one requires a large slice of luck". Then again, some people say - One creates his own luck. We wish all the students the very best for the rest of the placement season and next year as well ■

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(...contd. from pg.2, Library)

book is below Rs. 1000. If not, quotations have to be asked from the book sellers, which makes the process too long. The library nominee plans to do away with this practice to hasten affairs.

2. The Library also has a Technology Lending Library (TLL) and special collection for the SC/ST students. Students can suggest new books for these sections through their faculty advisor. The librarian, Mr. H S Waydande is, however, worried, seeing the lack of enthusiasm and active participation from students, which renders most of the funds unutilised.

3. The Library Books Order Section holds four book exhibitions every year where book sellers display latest books, theses, cassettes, CDs, etc. The library welcomes any suggestions from the faculty regarding this list of articles.

4. Recently it was decided to construct a bigger reading room which can accommodate approximately 120 students, near the current reading room, the construction of which is likely to initiate in December.

The Library Nominee and GSAA have decided to conduct a referendum on the above written issues so that the students' views can be presented more strongly to the authorities. Let us make the most of our library and actively propose measures to enable it acquire a more student friendly profile ■

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Paparazzi. Popularly hated. But we pity them. They do for a living what we had to do for 7 full days -- wait. Only after one gruelling week of sending scores of mails, making phonecalls, living with broken promises, ruined weekends and near breakoffs, did we manage to get what you are about to read. Ladies and Gentlemen, we give to you, your elected representatives, the 4 and only, Institute General Secretaries in...

Hello, main G.S. bol raha hoon, IIT se...

GS CULTURAL AFFAIRS
Ravi Kakkad

(*Zishaan M. Hyath* and *Prateek Singh* talked to him)

So Ravi, how has the ride been so far as the GS Cult?
We've just completed seven months as of today. The ride has been good so far. There are 5 more months to go. So let's see how it goes.

What do the following words mean to you — Cult Newsgroup, Cult Notice Board, Radio Play, Open Events, New clubs? To give you the context, they were all mentioned by either you or one of your secys at the time of the elections…
Yeah, they are all part of the cult scene. It's difficult to pass a general statement on all of them. Let's take them up one by one. *Cult Newsgroup:* We discussed this amongst the secys and decided that instead of having an open discussion, we could have it through mails and we would later put up posters for public information. It was left at that. *Cult Notice Boards:* This has not been worked on as yet. We shall get it done by the end of our tenure. *Radio Play:* We are gonna try and go ahead with it next sem. Again, next sem, we are trying to plan a weekend of *Open Events* as well.

There have been problems with some of the cult events with regards to selection of judges, judging criteria, scheduling of events and timely flow of information about the same. Any comments?
I can think of only one specific incident. If there are more then you may bring them to my notice and I can tell you. There was this incident regarding the H5 Dram which was taken up with the Chairman of cult, the HGSC, the DOSA and it has been sorted out now.

Judging criteria for various events can be declared well in advance, yes I do think so, but judges cannot be since often, judges are not finalized until the very last day. So even though it looks good ideologically, it is difficult from a practical point of view. We, on our part, try to finalize the judges as quickly as possible and we never conceal the names of the judges once they are finalized.

What is the status of the music room? A lot of promises have been made in the past on this front and we are yet to see any of them being fulfilled.
The music room was promised by every past GS because the CANARA bank premises was supposed to be allotted for that. We did put up a proposal for that last summer but it was shot down. I have been told that the Canara bank premises in the SAC has been handed over to an NGO *, to set up a computer center to be used by street children. Right now, we don't have a space for the music room. No more efforts are on at the moment simply because we don't have a room in SAC. There is a plan of renovating SAC but this may take 2-3 years. So unless we see a possible music room, promises cannot be made.
* refer to the article on the frontpage about the SAC room, NSS and the NGO -- ed's

There was an incident recently where an old MI team member was fined by the Gymkhana for misplacing a particular file from last year's MI. It's also being alleged that some rules were made overnight to ensure that the loss could be termed finable and the person fined. Are you aware of the incident? Would you look into the allegations?
I am aware that there was a loss of a file but I was not aware that there was a fine. So I cannot really comment on that. I will look into it only if I receive some complaint, or if I feel that there is something amiss.

What is the status of the MI Constitution? Can we have some assurance if it will be formalized before the institute elections?
Currently, the status of MI is changing everyday with the new administration that we have. So I think that it is not feasible to have a constitution before this year's MI is over. We will see how MI shapes up under the new circumstances and only then can we frame a constitution. The time frame you mentioned is a reasonable target to set and I don't see why it can't be done.

The Dean made it clear in the very beginning of his tenure that he wanted you to cut down on events. Perhaps his warnings were not taken too seriously. And this seems to have given him an opportunity to swing his axe arbitrarily on some of the most popular and hugely liked events? Can this be called a failure on your part?
You as InsIghT have to get your facts right before you frame such questions. The Dean did ask us to cut down on events. Last time there were 6 per trophy and this year we have only 4. There were 3 Sophies' GC events per trophy last year which were not held this year. And the number of *SPICMACAY* concerts was also reduced to 5, from the 9 held last year. The Socials was initially approved by the institute authorities but later, it was cancelled four days before without any reasons being given.

The Dean Students' Affairs has taken a rigid stand of what and how much of cultural activities should be allowed in the institute. How much do you concur with his views? Do you have a restructuring strategy in mind?
Yes we feel that the dean maybe right in saying that more attention should be paid to the academics and perhaps we've been too frivolous in the past few years. But until now, we've had rough weather when it has come to discussing the possible solutions to this problem with him. But we are working on it and hope that things would be sorted out in the cult scene and for the rest of the institute.

It was observed that the student community was not united with regards to its stand on various issues recently under discussion? How do you propose to handle this?
An HGSC meeting was held and the matter was discussed and we believe that we'll be able to tackle such issues in the future . We can't give a guarantee that there will be a united front till eternity but whenever such issues crop up, we will try to settle them internally.

A question with just one word – PAF?
We have got a scaled down version of PAF sanctioned and the rules have been discussed with the Cult Co's of the hostels and we are going ahead as approved by the institute.

The PAF would happen in the OAT. There would only be a center stage, no side stages, there would not be live publicity stints, budgets would be cut down, the number of days of occupying the SAC is cut down from 4 to 3, and we are working towards getting the infrastructure from outside sources instead of relying on the hostel furniture.

What plans are there for the Annual Prod? Is it happening?
The Dram society has been launched and they are taking over these activities. They have a number of projects lined up, one of them being representation in street play and english dram at *MoodI*. We have two smaller productions going on, instead of one, to ensure a larger participation. The work is going on nicely and I'd like to applaud the efforts of the people in charge of the dram society for that.

What would you call your achievements as GS Cult till date? What bottlenecks have you identified? How do you plan to remove them? Any future plans you would like to share with our readers?
Firstly, I would like to state that due to the administration problems we are having with the institute, we haven't managed to get as many things done as we would have liked. We have got the *NSO Dramatics* launched this year with about 15 freshies enrolled in that. We have been involved in proposals for the new gymkhana. Outside IIT, we have been performing pretty well. We won the lit and debating trophy by a huge margin at *Malhar*, and gave our best ever performance in Dram, Music and Fine Arts. And then we won the lit and debating trophy at *Kaleidoscope*. We won the debating tournament at the *Father Agnel's Engineering College* involving 16 medical and engineering colleges from Mumbai.

We have submitted a proposal to reactivate the Students' Activity Council. It is a senate body consisting of 25 members ranging from the Deputy Director, Dean AP, Dean SA, Cultural Chairman, Sports Chairman, Sports nominees, Cultural nominees, Four GSs and a few other faculty and student nominees. They shall meet once a semester and discuss all the student body related issues.

A formal contingent is being sent for *MoodI* and the CL has been appointed. The work on that front is starting. Also the *SPIC MACAY* has been successfully completed. Originally, 5 events were scheduled out of which 2 got cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances but it is more or less completed.

There are bottlenecks which I have already mentioned and we are working on them and are hopeful that a solution will come out pretty soon.

Can you enumerate your efforts as a "General Secretary"?
Like I mentioned, all the institute General Secretaries and office bearers have been involved in constant meetings with the authorities to revamp all the events and programs. I'd like to treat it as a group effort and would not like to see it as an individual effort with regards to what I have done or not done. But as a team, yes, we have been working together.

One last question. You gave your "heart and soul" to see that IITB's participation in *Malhar* won more than just prizes… Can we expect to see such whole hearted participation, and of course the prize winning streak, in other college fests as well?
(*Blushes Red!*) Definitely… Yes ∎

GS ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Manan Chauhan

(*Manan talked to* **Harsh Roy** *and* **Sachin Sancheti**)

What have been your achievements till now?
Most of my work is not directly related to the student body, but I've been motivating students towards academics and proposing things that can motivate students towards academics. We sent our first contingent for the technology fest at IITM. Tech GC and Science Club have been revamped. We're in the process of getting new furniture and books for SAC library. Many other proposals are in the pipeline. A lot has been done on the placement front. We've gone completely online, which is a new system. We've shifted to the new placement office. We're trying to call more core-tech companies than just IT related companies. The placement noms have worked very hard for all this.

How do you ensure that your reach is comprehensive (for tech companies) across all depts.?
We asked the Dept Reps, who have been elected by the students, to send us contacts of core-tech companies in their dept We expect the dept reps to do their jobs with as much diligence as the placement nominees. Our main strategy is to contact as many tech companies as possible through these contacts. They sent us a list in summers and now we're asking for more contacts.

Has the placement scene been better than last year?
I can't really judge , since the numbers are still low and the season is still on.. Last year it was 45%. But I'm very hopeful this time that scenario will take a turn for better.

The placement nominees suggested a complete revamp of the Placement Advisory Committee. What have been your efforts in this regard?
Yes, we've talked to the Director, but since the placement has already started this year, nothing can be done right now, but definitely next year we'll have a new PAC. We'll recommend more profs with good industrial contacts.

Do you think something needs to be done about changing the curriculum?
Last GSAA had a few proposals that I am carrying forward, that have been already sent to the UGAPEC (*Undergraduate* Academic Performance Evaluation Committee), some of which will be implemented by the next semester. UROP is one thing that has already been put forth and being implemented. But here we are not talking about changes in a particular course, these are at the organization level. For dealing with more specific problems we're going to form a committee comprising of class representatives, DGsec's, and four professors

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(...continued from page 4, GSAA)

which will meet at least once in two months and will discuss things like attendance, lack of academic inclination, course changes. It is proposed to act as an advisory and not a decision making committee.

Does it mean that you're doing away with the concept of open houses?
Over the years, open houses have pretty much failed in their objectives, but still it is the discretion of the DGSec to hold open houses. Probably at the end of this sem, we'll have open houses in depts. But this proposed committee can really be effective. The minutes of the meetings can be sent to the final decision making body that can consult them before taking decisions.

What is the current status of the UROP?
On my part, I have made efforts so that people are informed about UROP. The Dean(AP) has also informed the depts about the same. We're also going to have a official UROP site soon which will host information about the whole programme and the projects offered. By the end of this sem, definitely the site will be up. We're also in the process of revamping the institute website. Another thing that I would like people to know is that the library website has been changed, it contains links of online journals and has become more comprehensive.

What will be your efforts to improve the apping scene in the institute?
We sent forms to DGSecs by the end of the last semester, that were forwarded to the passing out junta. Many depts have the database of univs ready. Some depts. are slow but will catch up with time. About the official apping cell, we've not formed anything of that sort. But we're definitely going to have a more co-ordinated

apping this time around. DGsecs have been asked to organize meetings among people who are apping and provide them with information like rankings/database.

There have been complaints from a lot of DD students about stipend related issues. They feel that MTech students pay a lower fee and yet most of them get a stipend. Why this discrimination?
The stipend given to the MTech students is decided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Director has already taken up the issue of stipend allotment to DD students with the ministry. He is also trying to raise funds from IITBHF regarding the same. On that note, the Dean AP has assured that all the HOD's will try their level best to get sponsored projects, in which case, any DD can get a stipend. The HOD's have been asked officially to get sponsored projects for the DD students. About the difference in the fee structure, the Dean AP is going to take it up in the Deans' Committee. Let's see what happens.

People feel that the DD programme is not well publicized and projected to the industry. Take for instance the Intel case, when it came for recruitment. Your comments.
I don't know why the Intel case happened, because the brochures we send out to the companies have a clear mention of the DD programme. Moreover, Intel recruited last year as well, so there's no reason why they should not know about the DD programme. Nobody could explain when I asked them about the same. About publicizing the DD programme, I don't think we have left any stone unturned. In fact, last year DD's had the highest recruitment ratio.

Are there any plans for new certificate courses this year?

Yes. Normally we start the language courses in February. I wanted to start it in this semester itself. We got a bit late, but the German course is starting shortly. A French course is also being thought of. These are the courses conducted by other universities. About our own CEP C++ course, there was this unwillingness shown by the people who had organized it last time, because they think it wasn't a success. But around January we should definitely have something more coming up.

Don't you think the companies that come for recruitment can be asked to take students for practical training as well? Also, shouldn't there be uniform rules regarding PT across all departments?
Of course, we ask the companies if they're interested in taking student interns, but it is very company specific whether students are taken for internship or not. About uniform rules, yes, there was some problem last year where some departments did not allow research PTs. The matter was taken up at the UGAPEC and we're planning to have generalized rules across all disciplines regarding PTs, dates for BTP submission, etc.

Do you think the cut in extra-curricular activities will improve academic performance?
As far as my personal opinion is concerned, I don't think this is going to make any difference. But the Dean is also right to some extent, there are too many things happening in the institute and we needed to check that. We tried our best whatever we could do.

What are your views on the banning of vehicles on campus?
It is still not decided. But if we're having something of that sort, we should have

adequate transportation in the institute. Also, we should have a small shopping complex in the student area so that students don't have to go out for every small thing. I personally don't like the idea of banning vehicles.

What is the status of the SAC constitution?
Till now, there is nothing in hand though there were some recommendations made by the previous GS's. It is only now that we've got completely involved in the student activity centre. But we've already started jotting down the points to be discussed. The SAC executive committee, which comprises of the Deputy Director, the Dean SA, Dean AP, Chairman (Cult and Sports), student reps, two other profs has been dead for the last two years. We've already sent an application to the Dean SA regarding this and as soon as the committee is formed, we're start working on the constitution.

Is there anything else you would like to say?
There are a few things on my mind, like the recent workshop held in the aerospace department where speakers were called and students were asked to give poster presentations. It was a very nice way to increase interaction between students and faculty members and also to acquaint students with the latest technology in their discipline. I'm thinking of taking this up with the Director so that it is made mandatory for all the departments.

Also, I would like to say that students should not jump to conclusions based on rumours. Take for instance the unnecessary hype created about the 12-5 am rule. Students should get it confirmed by the GS's before believing such things ∎

GS HOSTEL AFFAIRS
Gaurav Munjal

(As far as the GSHA is concerned, he was interrogated by **Sachin Sancheti** *and* **Prateek Singh**...*)*

If we are not wrong, the GSHA just turned 7 months old this week. How's the journey been so far for you?
I have seen one change of Dean so obviously it was different from a normal GSHA. The first stage had the previous Dean leaving and in the second stage, the new Dean settling down. So as such, it was somewhat difficult. Let's see what the future holds.

Let's begin in a mess... Would you agree that the quality of food is a big problem in IIT. What steps have you taken to overcome the problem?
Quality of food *as far as* procurement of goods is concerned is not bad. But cooking definitely has a lot of scope for improvement. Maybe, we will have to change our attitude; the attitude of students as well as the attitude of mess workers. This is the only thing that is going to help. We just cannot force a person to make good food.

This probably is the first time we have had very regular mess coms. We have tried to implement some new policies and you will definitely be seeing some more uniform policies coming up in messes from this year.

What about the centralized delivery of commodities to all hostels?
We are working on procurement of goods in a more centralized fashion. The first consignment has been delivered to the hostels but it was our sheer hard luck that there was a shortage of that particular good with that dealer. As such, it didn't work out properly this time but we definitely hope

it will settle down. Right now, we would be going ahead with 3 or 4 goods/ commodities.

Non-messing is something that a fraction of IIT students have been demanding. What is your stand on this issue?
Non-messing should obviously be there. There is no question or doubt about it. All the hostels' GSecs agree that non-messing should be there. But we have to come up with a fool proof plan to tackle the problems that come up with its implementation. There were many reasons why non-messing had to be stopped. And to a large extent, they were very valid reasons. First, wastage was a big problem. Secondly, there would be *geezing*. That is the major problem that has to be solved. Fining of people is not going to help. And it is simply not possible for the mess manager as well as the mess co to take care of these things so precisely.

I am trying to work out a fool proof plan. We'd probably see some of them in the vacation and then we will try to implement it on the regular basis. *As far as* students of hostels under renovation are concerned, non-messing is definitely being allowed.

The renovation work in the messes of H5, H6 and H9 was supposed to begin long time back. What has been the cause of delay?
Delay hasn't been entirely from the side of authorities. We (as in the GSecs and myself) along with the wardens and the task force wanted to see the problems that arose in H4, H7 and H10 before going ahead with any further renovations. The contractors have been changed. Many more students have been included in the committee. The task force is functioning in a much better way now. We want to have everything worked out on paper before we go ahead with anything. Renovations are starting by the end of October.

What is the progress of setting up of the juice and snack bar on campus? Has the work started yet? Where is the bottleneck? According to what we've heard, the main problem is that of space allocation. But we have also seen a beauty parlour come up recently. Do we have space for a beauty parlor and not for a juice center?
As far as the juice centre goes, I have been trying very hard for a shack or a makeshift place till a proper concrete structure comes up. I am also trying for some space in the Gulmohar cafeteria. Although I am on the committee for Gulmohar, I do not have much of a say, hence I can only try my best. But, with the infrastructure for new cafeterias and SAC Gymkhana coming up, the authorities feel that we can probably wait for a year or two and have proper buildings instead of shacks. The up coming H12 - H13 cafeteria will be under the GSHA to a large extent so I can have a better say in that.

Bottle necks have been the same *as far as* the long term planning goes. Once a shack is set up and starts running, it is very difficult later to remove it. But the simple problem of having a shack near H8 is that of removing it 5 years hence. I have proposed designs for removable shacks. The juice center can be ready as soon as the permission is given.

From what everyone makes of the Student Activity Centre, it is primarily meant for student activities. But we've heard that an NGO also operates from/in the SAC. Also, the room to be allotted as music room is being used by that NGO to teach computers to campus children. We understand that the NGO is working for a noble cause, but shouldn't students' interest get priority over anything else in SAC?
Although the SAC should be used for student activities only, we sometimes have to consider the

interests of the campusites also. But we (the 4 GSs) along with Dean and SAC in-charge Dr. Appaji are chalking out a priority list of what should happen in SAC. *As far as* my personal opinion goes, anything that is not related directly to the students should not be allowed. The 4 GSs have already given an application asking for the space for a music room.

As far as the NGO goes, we are not directly against it. They are woking for a noble cause and some students are also involved with it. We don't want to discourage these activities but we definitely need to work out if they need to be done from students' gymkhana or in an independent way.

You mentioned in your manifesto – "HGSC meetings will be held more frequently". How many HGSC meetings were organized in this semester? How was the participation? PG Hostels' participation? What happened to the minutes?
12 or 13. Frankly, I have lost track. Participation in the HGSCs has been good this year and we have had a good rapport with the hostel G.Secs. There has been no hostel that has been missing the meetings regularly.

Most of the HGSC meetings held this year were related with the Cult scene. The meetings were discussions of rather qualitative in nature. In fact it was a common meeting for all representatives. And we felt that unless a concrete decision was made, we could wait to making the minutes of these meetings public.

Leaving the cult part, *as far as* the hostel issues were concerned, there were about 6 HGSCs. I have the minutes with me which I intend to make public by putting up notices by the end of this semester.

(...continued from page 4, GSHA)

About the new security TRIG on campus, what is your evaluation of them so far? There have been cases of theft in hostels even after the new security was instituted. Any comments?

Privatization of security had been going on for quite a long time and the plans were in the pipeline. The new security was to come up from the 1st of May itself. However, due to some problems, they started functioning from 1st July. The security has been better than the previous one. Very soon, we will be having the security patrolling the area behind the hostels. There is lot of scope for the improvement of security and we can definitely hope to see a safer campus.

What are your views on the ban on vehicles on campus?

There is no question of doubt that the traffic sense (including that of the pedestrians) in the campus is bad. People drive very rashly. But ban of vehicles cannot be imposed right away. We have no proper infrastructure/adequate transport facilities. The main problem is that the number of bikes in the campus is growing exponentially. If we have adequate transportation, I think a limit on the number of bikes per hostel can be imposed.

As I see it, we can have a limit of 50 - 60 bikes per hostel and seniors would be given preference. It has been discussed that we need to improve the traffic sense and that the vehicles will

be phased out slowly. But this will happen only when things are properly in place. And I seriously emphasize on adequate infrastructure like shopping complex in hostel area and mass transport facilities before going ahead with any such plans.

What are your priorities with respect to allocation of funds? Do you have something in mind that you would push the institute to divert funds toward?

As far as allocation of funds is concerned everything has to be worked out in tandem. The thing that we are talking about right now is very qualitative. You cannot decide the ratio in which the funds should go to such and such a thing. We have to take care of the academic part, the hostels part, gymkhana, security, hospital etc. They have to be decided keeping in view the long term requirements and the short term needs. These are taken care of at a very high level and I have very little say on it. I can only propose what the students require.

A lot of students have been complaining about the futility and the problems arising out of the 7:30 rule. InsIghT has taken it up repeatedly. Are you doing something about it?

As far as my personal opinion is concerned, I am definitely against it. Whatever "problems" arose were not because of the timing "11:00" but because

of the faulty implementation of the old rule. If the students are convinced that any given rule should exist, they won't really require any policing for it and that I guess was there with the 11:00 pm rule to a very large extent. This is entirely missing with the new 7:30 rule, besides of course the new problems it has raised. When this rule was made in the HCC in March, we mentioned about the futility of the rule and we were told that it could be discussed in the next HCC. We are going to take up this matter again at the next HCC and definitely refute it.

When is the Insititute GBM scheduled?

We are planning to hold it at the end of October. Another one will be held at the end of the tenure.

What is the status of the SAC Constitution?

As far as the precise constitution is concerned, we along with the guidance of the previous GSecs are trying to formulate it. We (the 4 GSecs) along with DOSA are working on it. The Dean will be involved only with crucial aspects and it is the students who will be working out the intricacies.

What are your views on the recent cut in cult activities?

It definitely needed a cut. There was a need of restructuring. We had 7 GC events year before last and 3 GCs last year. A restructuring was required so that we pass on a better cult scene/calendar to

the next year. But at the same time it must be ensured that we do not lose whatever we have entirely. We need to improve, identify the redundant things and slowly phase them out.

How approachable are you to common students as a GSHA? Even we had problems approaching you…

I feel I am very approachable. Email id is known to everybody, the internal number is there…and I have received many complaints and I have tried to attend to even the most smallest of them.

Tell us about your main achievements as GSHA.

I will be in a better position to talk about it at the end of my tenure.

What are the bottlenecks that you have faced in carrying out your responsibilities as GSHA and what are your plans to remove them?

The only problem I have faced is the attitude of the people. Be it the students or the authorities. You just cannot have a plan which is agreeable to every student and all the authorities. The only thing that stops us from improving is that everyone resists change. Again, this is true for both the students and the authorities. I am trying to change it. It has to be done at an individual level ■

GS SPORTS
Kishor Bhalerao

(Kishor talked to Kislay Thakur and Sachin Sancheti)

What have been your main achievements since you became the GSSports?

I think I was successful in spacing the inter-hostel events; we've managed to shift basketball to this sem as the next sem is extremely crowded; we did not anticipate the loss of time during diwali, else we could have had Kho-Kho in the same sem. Then the Inter-IIT swimming team was given all the stuff (track suits, etc) on time, though we could not win the event due to absence of our main players. Other than that, I helped in giving ideas for the new SAC that is coming up. We are also hosting the inter university basketball; the work is going well though we had some initial problems. There was a misunderstanding regarding the finances but we sorted that out. Now, we are in the process of getting sponsorship for the events and we hope that the infrastructure would be in place when the event starts. Regarding the web sites, even after repeated requests to various secy's, they are not coming up with material for the site .So we hope to get over this by finding the names of those secy's who have faltered in their job. It would be kept internal to the sports com for a week and if we don't see any developments in that period, the names would be displayed.

What is the status of the proposed 20 crore Gymkhana?

Initially I and Kakkad made some designs keeping in view the basic requirements and the space constraints. We had given the designs to Appaji sir. Later we found that the administration no longer wanted our designs, they were just interested in our basic requirements, since the actual design would be done by professional architects. They have some plan in mind but here **I must say that the role of students in the building of the new gymkhana has been minimal**, confined only to giving our needs. Work is expected to start fairly soon and as far as I know, quite a bit of work is supposed to be completed by next December.

It was observed that the cricket pitch was used for the KV school tournament, but when the IIT cricket team wanted the pitch, they were

Institute Gymkhana Ground: Practice Field or A Park? With ladies taking evening walks on the tracks while sprinters whiz by and with kids around as matches go on, its an accident waiting to happen. And never mind the prominent notice board which clearly says "small children are not allowed during practice hours" ie between 5:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

told that it was not ready by then. Why was it given for the KV tournament? Also, the cricket secy said that the pitch would not survive after the tournament. Don't you think this would affect the practice of our cricket team?

Well actually I was clueless about this KV tournament, infact Edwin Sir, who is in-charge of the ground maintenance, came to know that pitch had to be made ready only a day or two earlier. The approval had come from director himself. Though it is true that the pitches wouldn't be as good as the freshly laid ones, but now that we have a roller I think it should not be much of a problem to develop a reasonably good pitch on time.

We also had some annual fests of schools happening on the ground. Are u intimated by the authorities before such approvals are made? Don't you think that this may affect the condition of the grounds?

I would say that I am not even intimated about such happenings in the institute. It was just by chance that I happened to be there and hence knew about this particular event. Things like these are never passed on to us by the administration. Appaji sir must have been consulted but we never get even a notification. A part of it probably comes from the director.

Coming to the gym that has been recently set up, which was supposed to be for the basky, footer and volley teams, it is seen that outsiders

are using it more than the students. Any comments?

Students are the top priority any day and if you see any outsider working out in that gym, you have the right to ask him to leave. I myself have seen Edwin Sir asking some outsiders to leave the gym.

Coming to Inter IIT, what is the status of tracksuits, the sports equipment, etc?

Here I would like to say that the swimming team had got the track suits and everything that they asked for, well in time and for the rest of the contingent, the design and the material of the track suit has been decided and we are waiting for the final teams to be announced. I think the track suits should be available before the camp .We would be placing the order in about 2 week's time and they should be ready in a month after that. This time we would get them before the camp begins. About the other kits we already had a meeting in which we discussed the immediate requirements and secys were informed about the same and we are soon to have them ready.

What do you think is happening with the SAC constitution, there was this talk about bringing in a new constitution last summer?

As far as I know, there was no new significant attempt made on this front, but hopefully we'll be having it soon.

Can u give a time frame within which we can

expect a new constitution, knowing that the elections would be up soon and last minute changes are really not encouraged?

Frankly, I am not aware as to what time it takes to make a fool proof constitution because as soon as you begin to put rules on the paper u see that there are a lot of loop-holes and it also has to be approved by the senate , so its going to take some time.

What are your views on canceling of some of the prominent extra-curricular activities?

I feel that cutting down activities would in no way improve the academic performance of students. Infact, I think that there is a need for reforms on the academic front. IIT is result oriented, so as long as you get good grades it really shouldn't make any difference. I strongly denounce the banning of socials.

What do you think about the ban that is being talked about with regards to vehicles?

Well, I reiterate that banning is no solution, instead we could have better foot paths and roads. Simply banning vehicles due to accidents is wrong. I'm against it. Even if the rule is implemented it should be uniform, there may be other campusites who are rash drivers, you can't put the entire blame on students.

What is your comment on the swimming team's performance in Delhi?

Disappointing. We had been winning for the last 16 years and this time too we had some new stars who rose to the occasion. Still, we were disappointed in water polo where we missed two of our front line players Sheikh and Sikandar. From whatever I have heard, other IIT's had got some excellent swimmers (Madras especially went away with all the points)

Would you like to say something that would help your work as a GS become more hassle free?

Well what I felt is that student representatives are more concerned with their own interests and some times fail to look at the overall view. If I reduce the number of players in some department, it does not mean I have anything against it. Since these people can influence the sentiments of a large number of people, there is a negative feeling creeping up into the ranks. So what I wish to say is — **have a bigger perspective** ■

.sports

The Inter IIT Games

- P. N. Raju

Come December nearly 100 of the best sportsmen and women of the institute will be braving the cold winter and the tiring workouts, for nearly 20 days, with just one objective in mind – to bring glory to the institute, to bring home the coveted Inter IIT General Championship.

For the uninitiated, a sports meet is organised every year, for the students of all the IITs, and involves the sports of Athletics, Aquatics, Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis, Volleyball and Weightlifting for men and Athletics, Basketball, Badminton and Table Tennis for women. The swimming events are usually organised in October and the other sports in the second or third week of December.

Started in 1961 at IIT Bombay, the main aim of the meets is to promote goodwill and solidarity among the IITians, and to provide them a platform to exhibit their excellence in competitive sports and an opportunity to develop their organisational capabilities, leadership qualities and inter-personal skills. The Inter IIT Sports Meets, where nearly 700 people from all across the country compete, are probably the closest an IITian can get to experience the spirit of Olympism.

If the daunting task of enduring the treacherous weather weren't enough, the atmosphere gets equally intimidating and competition intense. But, it is in these adverse conditions that winning becomes extra special. Like one Inter IIT veteran puts it: "Nothing is more satisfying and exhilarating than the realisation of having successfully overcome an unsparing weather, a hostile home crowd and a determined opponent".

Although things haven't always been as rosy and cheerful, IITB has dominated most of the proceedings post-1980 with 7 GC victories out of

"It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat."

-Teddy Roosevelt
Citizenship in a Republic

the 18 completed meets (2 were washed out). But, pre-1980 was another story, with IIT Madras having an amazing run of 11 consecutive victories (from 1970 to 1980).

Although figures reveal a lot, what probably goes unnoticed by someone unaccustomed, is the fact that all of the meets are closely fought encounters, with the GC being decided, more often than not, by the last event. Add

that to the amount of preparation and expectations that go into each of the meet, and it leaves a few hearts broken in the end.

"It is how you take the heart-breaking defeat in your stride and come back, to at least, perform better, that reveals your character" points another senior Inter IIT member. And, the 37 Inter IIT meets are rich with stories of people overcoming adversity and performing beyond belief, beyond expectations and beyond "possibility". Sometimes such performances act as inspiration to the teams that follow, and winning becomes a habit; just ask our Men's Volleyball (they have won Gold for the last 10 years) and Athletics (have never finished lesser than 2nd since 1975, barring twice when they finished 3rd) teams!

Winning, losing and competing apart, what sets these meets apart is the amount of interaction it facilitates not only among members of different contingents, but also among the same contingent. The 12 day camp, where the entire contingent spends a chunk of the day together be it on the field or the mess, the long train journey, the endless cack and cheering sessions remain the most nostalgic. Who would probably ever forget the Football team's, later the entire contingent's, "Mr. Lova Lova" sessions!

"Although the contingent comprises of 16 teams, the amount of time they spend together, and the fact that the outcome of the GC is related to how each team fares in their own discipline, it is like one closely-knit family and the relations endure the test of time. When you are a part of the Inter IIT contingent, you cease to be a fresher, a sophomore or a PG" points out a senior member.

Into its 38th edition, the Inter IIT will be hosted by IIT Delhi this year. Although they put up a spirited show, the Inter IIT Swimming team came back empty handed. Trailing IIT Madras and IIT Kharagpur by 16 points, the Inter IIT contingent will have to perform out of its skin to stage one of the greatest comebacks of recent time. But knowing that the IIT Bombay contingent characterises true grit and determination, that achievement is in the realm of the possible. The women's team however has somewhat of a luxury, having to start on equal footing with the other teams, but the task of winning the Women's GC won't be any easier!

"But that'd require meticulous planning and preparation! It's really sad that, with the proliferation of PCs, people do not find time to spend on the field. Although many teams have been practicing since January, this is the time when the selections for the Inter IIT teams actually take place, and if people can't find time to spend the next couple of months practicing and training together it'll be difficult to stage that comeback!" points a justifiably disappointed member.

So, if you'd like to be a part of a community that has symbolised passion, commitment and perseverance, and if you'd like to experience some ecstasy, some agony that comes from being a part of the Inter IIT team, what are you waiting for? Put on those shoes and take to the field!

■

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07

Inter University Basketball Tournament

- P.N. Raju

IIT-BOMBAY
2002-2003

Compare the measly annual expenditure of Rs. 5 crores, on all the collegiate sports events in India, with the average annual budget of $27 million of all the Big 12 schools in USA, and you'll probably understand why there's a big difference between the two countries in terms of sporting prowess.

So what's the way out? More money? "Not necessarily! What we need is a marked change in people's attitudes towards college sports as a whole!" says an organiser of the West Zone Inter University Basketball Tournament, which IIT Bombay has been selected to host this year. "This event marks an end to a near 10 year drought, in which time IIT managed to organise only two sports events of note - the two Inter IITs in 1993 and 1998. This event will put IIT Bombay back on the sporting destinations map, and maybe we could do something to change people's attitude."

Wondering what this tournament is all about? A few facts: the Sports Division of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), offers its members the opportunity to organise major Inter University sports events, at present these include 14 games for Men, 10 games for Women and 14

games for both Men and Women at 66 university centers. IIT Bombay has been selected to organise the West Zone Inter University Men's Basketball Tournament for the year 2002-03.

"One of the most popular events on the Inter University Sports calendar, the West Zone Men's Basketball Tournament will see nearly 40 AIU members from 5 states - Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan - and 2 Union Territories - Daman & Diu and Dadar & Nagar Haveli - vying for the top honours. The top two teams will earn berths to the Inter Zonals to be held at Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu" points out an excited organiser.

"We plan to make it a unique event, much more than a simple knockout basketball tournament, not only for the participants but everyone involved. Our only aim is to send everyone back satisfied no matter what the outcome of the tournament" he continues. "Although this event is not something IIT will get a chance to organise every year, we want it to be about the sport we enjoy and love so much. It'll be about sharing our passion for sports, in general, and basketball, in particular. But most importantly, it'll be about giving something back to the sport from which we have derived and continue to derive so much pleasure."

We hope that'll certainly be how things work out! ■

For further details about the tournament you can visit www.varsityhoops.com or drop a line at queries@varsityhoops.com

Inter-IIT :: Table of Honour

Sl. No.	Year	Host	Champ		Sl. No.	Year	Host	Champ
1	1961	BMB	KGP		20	1983	MDS	not comp.
2	1963	KGP	KGP		21	1984	KNP	BMB
3	1964	MDS	KGP		22	1985	DLI	BMB&KGP
4	1966	BMB	BMB		23	1986	KGP	KGP
5	1967	DLI	KGP		24	1987	BMB	BMB
6	1968	KNP	KGP		25	1988	MDS	MDS
7	1969	KGP	KGP		26	1989	KNP	KGP
8	1970	MDS	MDS		27	1990	DLI	DLI
9	1972	KGP	MDS		28	1991	KGP	KGP
10	1973	BMB	MDS		29	1993	BMB	BMB
11	1974	DLI	MDS		30	1994	MDS	Washed out
12	1975	KGP	MDS		31	1995	KNP	BMB
13	1976	KNP	MDS		32	1996	DLI	MDS
14	1977	MDS	MDS		33	1997	KGP	KGP
15	1978	BMB	MDS		34	1998	BMB	BMB
16	1979	DLI	MDS		35	1999	MDS	MDS
17	1980	KNP	MDS		36	2000	KNP	BMB
18	1981	KGP	BMB		37	2001	KGP	KGP
19	1982	BMB	MDS		38	2002	DLI	???

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.tech

"The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas but in escaping the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds"

- John Maynard Keynes

Get high on techno-dope

- Shamiroh Tikoo

For all those who are in awe of all the interesting and fascinating events at Techfest, Yantriki, ChemSplash and LaSTraw and open competitions are the treasure troves. We try to provide a ringside view of the most sought after competitions at Techfest.

YANTRIKI

IIT Bombay's annual national robotics competition is now in its ninth edition. "We create world out of nothing" has been the mantra of this most declamatory Robotics competition in the country. As Yantriki enters into the ninth consecutive year of its proud existence, it once again presents the perfect opportunity for the techno savvy on the campus and elsewhere to swank their wares. This year, with the introduction of many new events to its kitty, this festival of techno games promises bring to you more thrilling tournaments in grand feather.

The Prelude

For the benefit of freshmen, here is a brief introduction to this highly competitive and exciting event. Started in 1994, Yantriki has been designed to give enterprising students an opportunity to innovate and develop novel products and demonstrate their technical skills. When Yantriki was first organized, it attracted just eight teams from IIT and was a simple tug-of-war between robots. Over the years, however, students have cooked up more accomplished characters, using bottle caps, plastic pencil boxes, aluminium scrap et al. Each year participants create machines that play a pre-defined game against each other in a knock-out tournament, viz. Basketball ('96), Bunny Wars ('97), Carromines ('98), SumoWresling ('99), Water Polo(2000), Xterra (2002). One student even fashioned a gear out of a pink plastic comb. Another used Coke cans to create a basketball playing wonder. Still another used a Gillette razor as a robot arm.

Yantriki - 2003 , The Challenges before you

Level 1: Two machines compete in this game. They start from opposite ends of a rectangular game board cross over obstacles and try to get hold of the cloth kept in the centre, inside a circle. The machine which is able to catch hold of the cloth and return to its home, wins.

Level 2 : Two machines play a game of Table -Tennis.

Level 3: To Make a Micromouse . Micromouse is an autonomous vehicle designed to get to the centre of a maze in the shortest possible time. A micromouse is a device with a chassis, a drive motor or motors to move it, a steering and turning method, sensors to detect the presence or absence of maze walls, sensors or control logic (a computer and peripheral circuits) to oversee the action of the rest and keep the vehicle 'on track' or to solve the maze and batteries to provide power.

CHEMSPLASH

ChEA SYMPOSIUM and CHEMSPLASH are the annual symposium and student festival respectively, hosted by the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Bombay and Chemical Engineering Association (ChEA). It provides a forum to advance the theory and practice of the profession and supports excellence in education. ChEA Symposium endeavours to capture the dynamic world of chemical technology and to keep the future chemical engineers abreast with the latest trend in the profession.

ChemSplash boasts of highly popular events. Chemisoft, the open software contest opens a doorway for you to imagine beyond the horizon, and exhibit your innovations. This is the contest where you could present your works related to chemical engineering or related disciplines, conceptualized by you. TECHnum Opus, the Poster Presentation Contest and Hest Exchange, the debate are the events that has been appreciated by junta a lot and that is not all. Toeing the line with international standards for elating the event the newest feather in the cap is:

Chem-E-Car Contest: The objective of this competition is to design and construct a car that is powered with a chemical energy source that will carry a load to a given distance and stop by exhausting the power source or cutting of the power without the application of brakes or electronic mechanism (so here you need to trust those whimsical chemicals!!!!). The car will be Judged based on the combination of completion of a defined task and a judging of the most creative design.

LASTRAW

Ready to build lasting heavy-duty structures (that can take more than 48 times its own weight!!) out of infirm and sapless straws, are you? Then LaStraw is your mecca! It all started with a brainstorm in the mind of a couple of innovative people and soon bloomed into an institute level event. The aim was to generate enthusiasm in the field of Civil Engineering. And what better way of doing it other than letting the students fight it out in a design contest and test their creative abilities.

The problem statements over the years have included a Tower ('99), a Bridge (2000 and 2001) with a load carrying truck moving over the span of the fragile (??) structure and a Boat(2002). 99' was its debut year. It started off as a contest, open only to students of Civil Engineering Department of IIT Bombay. The interest shown by the participants was overwhelming. The task was to build a tower which was loaded laterally after fixing its base. Believe it or not! The ratio of load taken by these structure made of drinking straws has been in excess of 3000% on an average! Y2k witnessed exuberant participation and recognition. The contestants had to build a bridge to which a panel would be attached and a truck carrying the load would run over the panel. In 2001 the numbers mushroomed to 150 teams from colleges all over Mumbai. 2002's challenge was to build a 'boat of straws'! The idea of the competition was to keep it simple for the layman to participate and at the same time be stimulating enough. The problem statement for Lastraw 2003 has been put up on www.techfest.org

Sim City

A dream city of your own.. A reflection of your strategic and artistic dexterity .The event comprises of a competition that takes each participant to the fundamentals of planning and designs of a community area. The complexity varies with nature of the problem. The objective of this new born event is encouraging participants to come up with innovative designs, which optimizes the provided inputs and with due regards to the constraints and ensuring high efficiency.

Besides, the event will also feature panel discussions with the aim of bringing out a comparison between the city planning of the ancient, the medieval and the contemporary times and discussing about the prospective cities of the future. Under the auspices of eminent architects, archeologists, structure designers and geologists this event is set to the stepping stone for a large number of event to come. Giving flavour of the future is the aim.

IDP

The Industry-defined problem (IDP) competition fulfills the requirement of a healthy interaction between the students of today and the industry that they are likely to enter into tomorrow. Students have come out with some really ingenious solutions to confounding problems, which have been part of this competition in the past.

A few examples from the previous Techfests, which give an insight into the structure and potential of the competition, are:
Cadbury's 'Cool Dispenser Contest' required a refrigerated chocolate dispenser that can be used in retail outlets as a tabletop display. The i2Technologies Business Forecasting software contest, using neural networking, was a great success. It saw participation from about 70 teams from all over India and the company for further analysis after which they could be put into actual use then took the programs developed.

October's upon us, and anticipation is building up as the biggest fest in the calendar starts approaching, where colleges begin to look out for the pre-invites, and people start wondering who the star pronites performers will be, which bands will rock the night sky in the OAT, etc, etc. IIT is beginning to gear up for the four magical days of December. The days when, as always, collegians from all over throng the institute, and have a blast they can talk about a whole year, until it's Mood I time again. It's amazing, when one's friends from faraway places like Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata - all of them suggest reuniting in Bombay at Mood I time... it's only then that one realises the hold that Mood I has over the young crowd all over the nation!

Ask a random punter of this young crowd five things about MI (s)he likes, and chances are, along with LiveWire, competitions, Pronites, Fashcomp, they'll say the MI Theme selection. The amount of thought which goes into selecting a theme, and then integrating it into the overall annual vision for MI, using it as the central point for deciding upon events and their names, the layout for the pre-invites and invites, the look-and-feel of the institute during MI - the whole theme machinery is awe-inspiring!

A trip down memory lane, to the hallowed bygone eras of MI, to the golden olden days of yore, is instructive. Okay okay, that was mild exaggeration - this article only covers MIs after 1997 - we couldn't find any elephants who visited previous MIs in order to interview them!

So, 1997. That was the year of the 25th Mood Indigo, and also the 50th year of Indian

Dream for a Theme

B. Vinod (with inputs from Gautam Hazari)

mood indigo

independence. Hence the theme - Freedom. And MI'97 offered just what the theme suggested - that was the year of the youth exulting with the whole nation, on the heady feeling of freedom. And what better way of celebrating freedom than in the unrestrictive environs of the SAC lawns, jiving to the all-night performances at the Great Indian Rock live concerts. And for those who liked their music more classic 70's, and less live, there were the all-night screenings of Pink Floyd's Pulse and bands like the Doors and Deep Purple. That was freedom at its best!!

For 1998 the theme selected for MI was "Bombayed". That MI was a paean to the everlasting spirit of this overcrowded, bustling, chaotic, multi-ethnic, variegated, cluttered, VIBRANT city we live in. The logo for MI that year was a source of puzzlement to many - a map of Bombay projected thrice in different colours and orientations. And the motif for Bombayed has been one of the most popular ever -a hand clutching a hand-support of the kind seen in local trains – at once symbolising Bombay - stability in speed, perseverance in the face of huge pressures, steadfast resolution against all odds - truly, what could symbolise the ethos of Bombay better than this?

That year also saw the birth of the department, Horizons. Horizons '98 included a huge exhibition of all things Bombay. A gallery of photographs depicting the evolution of this megapolis from a small fishing community took pride of place. Photographs of vintage cars proudly plying empty roads, the Bombay skyline of those days and even photographs of good ol' Powai hill from that time... it was all there in that exhibition. MI '98 also had theme-based naming of institute areas - no prizes for guessing where Marine Drive was chosen to be!

1999, and the theme was En'trans. This must have been the most debated-upon theme of all time - every cack session would throw up a new interpretation for this theme! The primary interpretations concerned how MI '99 would end just before 2000 dawned upon us – an entrance to a new era, and about how the magic sub-theme to MI '99 would entrance and enchant all visitors. This sub-theme saw a number of magic workshops and demos in institute during MI '99. The theme based event this time around was the "Millennium Village", a place with dim lighting, computer game kiosks, jukeboxes and gave the fest a totally techno-futuristic feel. And despite a number of fears circulating at the time, trance music couldn't dislodge rock from its supreme position in the MI junta's hearts!

2000 - the third millennium of the Earth's history, after Christ. And where would humanity go in this millennium - Towards Utopia. Hence came the theme for MI 2000. A grandiose and lavish Mood I and perhaps the first to go big on the moolah. Mood I was all for a social cause what with its association with CRY, that brought Mood I to the fore as a festival that is not just about the fun and the hoopla, but also reflects the responsible organization that IIT bombay is. Best described as an Idealist Mood I.

Finally 2001 - And the jungle is all over us. The Theme, "Welcome to the Jungle". The theme that focuses on the pristine surroundings of the IIT campus - the lakes, the trees, the birds, the leopards and the reptiles. Respite from the rush of the city, the melee of everyday life. Mood I 2001 truly represented the free, wild spirit that embodies the youth today. MI 2001 saw a star gazing session, a bonfire that went into the night, a dog show, the rain dance, workshops in Warli painting and the like all embodying the free spirit.

2002 - ?

What will the theme be this year ?
Will we go techno and hip hop ?
Or will we go retro ?
Will we dream up an earth-shattering stance ?
Or will we put up a save-the-earth face ?
Or (and perhaps, most likely) will it be something totally out of this world...?

Keep Guessing...!!! ∎

Pavvo Nurmi -Kuldeep N. Dixit

.freelance

THE CROSS-COUNTRY

On July 12th, 1924, 39 athletes took part in the Paris Olympics cross-country run. The race turned out to be the toughest test of human endurance, as the temperature rose to 45 degrees Centigrade. The competitors had to run 10,650 meters along the bank of the Seine amidst thick weeds and the fumes of a nearby energy plant. The merciless heat took its toll; of the 39 starters 24 collapsed unconscious on the way, and of the 15 who completed, eight were carried away on stretchers. The man to finish first earned his 5th Olympic gold. On the following day, while many athletes were still in hospitals recovering, he again enjoyed a victory in the 3000m, in which mainly fresh men were participating. This athlete was Paavo Nurmi, who got 9 Olympic golds and set over 25 world records in his time.

NURMI : THE BECOMING

Nurmi was born in Turku in 1897 to a carpenter. The family, already familiar with poverty and need, suffered a major blow when Nurmi's father died of haemoptysis in 1910. Paavo's mother's earnings as a cleaner were inadequate, and he was forced at the early age of twelve to drop his studies and to work for his family's upkeep. The terrible loss had a deep effect on him and in his own life after that, he was not known to smile often, even at the most successful times of his athletics career.

All these early hardships could have crushed any other human being, but not Nurmi. The straitened circumstances helped him by toughening the future runner's willpower. He had to work as an errand boy for a bakery and later as a filer. That role, which involved pushing heavy goods carts up and down steep hills, contributed to the development of his leg muscles that would carry him to fame later in life. In fact Nurmi started feeling this power in his legs, and saw a ray of promise in running that he enjoyed alone through the woods. In 1912, at Stockholm Olympics, Hannes Kolehmainen "ran Finland onto the map of the world", winning three gold medals in long-distance events. His races inspired 15-year-old Nurmi, who decided to dedicate his life to running. Soon enough, Paavo got his first pair of running shoes and began serious training. He joined the Turku Sports Association in 1914. In the same year he won his first competitive victory in 3000m. Nurmi was drafted to military service in 1919 - 20 and attracted attention by coming first in marches with a rifle and a sand-filled pack by such a wide margin that he was suspected of having strayed from the route. Actually he ran the whole way instead of marching. He found favour in higher quarters and better training was arranged for him. Records on the running track came thick and fast, and inclusion in the training squad for the Olympics soon became a reality.

THE DAZZLING CAREER

At the Antwerp Games, 1920, Nurmi missed the gold medal in his first race - 5000m - due to lack of experience. On the advice of Hannes Kolehmainen he changed his pacing tactics and defeated Joseph Guillemot in the 10,000m. He also won the eight-kilometers cross-country race, and received another gold medal for the same race as a team event.

In the three years following Antwerp Paavo Nurmi reigned supreme in long-distance

running. He broke world records in most distances from 1500m to 10,000m, meticulously executing his carefully planned time schedules with not much fear from competition. He once put his guiding principle to words: "*When you race against time, you don't have to sprint. Others can't hold the pace if it is steady and hard all through to the tape.*" In the end of 1923 Paavo Nurmi held the world records in three prestige track events: the mile, 5000 meters and 10,000 meters. No one has ever done that before or since.

At Paris he shone brighter than ever. Just under an hour after scoring an overwhelming victory in the 1500 metres he won 5000m. The tremendous achievement was not unexpected: before the Games, Nurmi had already tested this tight programme at home, setting world records in both distances with just an hour gap between the two runs. The French magazine *Miroir des Sports* wrote: "Paavo Nurmi goes beyond the limits of humanity." There were huge celebrations in Finland for his achievements, and the government initiated a project to immortalize the sporting hero in bronze.

In top condition, Nurmi went to the United States after Paris. There he achieved legendary results in the 1924/1925 winter season. He ran in 55 races, losing only one and breaking one off because of a stitch. The trip caused a sensation in the New World and he even got to meet President Calvin Coolidge. Financial experts believed that Nurmi had won a 400-million-mark loan for Finland with his running.

While he did set one or two world records in 1926/1927, a gradual decline had started. At the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam he was once more in splendid form, narrowly defeating Ritola to win gold in the 10,000 metres. Ritola won in 5000m, and a stiff Nurmi very narrowly wrested silver. Spectators were treated to the unusual sight of Nurmi slumping exhausted to the ground after reaching the finishing line.

In early 1932 Nurmi trained hard for his fourth Olympic Games, maybe more determined than ever before. He wanted to defend his title in the 10,000 meters, but his greatest ambition was to crown his career with a gold medal in the Olympic marathon, as Hannes Kolehmainen had done in 1920. At the Olympic trials his overwhelming victory in the short marathon (40,200 meters) set an unofficial world record. His experienced rivals attempted to tire out the first-timer Nurmi by setting a brisk pace at the start. But when Nurmi reached the finishing line, the second runner was almost two kilometers behind, and most of the starters had dropped out exhausted. But Nurmi - who described the run as "kids' stuff", though he had not previously run a distance of more than ten kilometers even in practice sessions - was fated to attend the next Olympics in Los Angeles as a lame tourist. In that spring, Nurmi was suspended from international competition by the *International Amateur Athletic Federation*, following accusations of professionalism. Nurmi did go to Los Angeles and kept training at the Olympic Village, in spite of the ban and a foot injury. Despite pleas from all the entrants of the Olympic marathon, Paavo Nurmi was never allowed to run at the Los Angeles Games. His Olympic suspension robbed him of the chance to exceed Ray Ewry's record of ten gold medals.

LIFE AFTER ATHLETICS

After retiring, he ran a construction business and a shop selling men's clothes and sports goods. In the war years his fame was put in use to rally support for the Finnish cause. In 1940 Nurmi went to the US to raise funds for his country, currently waging an uneven war against the Soviet Union. Having recovered from coronary thrombosis in the late 1950's he worked hard until 1967 when he suffered another attack. In 1968 Nurmi set up a research foundation for coronary diseases and public health and provided it with two multi-storey buildings and a substantial amount of money.

The XVth Olympics opened at Helsinki, Finland, on July 19th, 1952. The identity of the last runner of the Olympic torch relay was a well-kept secret. When the electric scoreboard flashed the text, "The Olympic torch will be brought into the Stadium by Paavo Nurmi", at first there was a frozen silence. Then 70,000 people began to roar. The public at large had their last chance to see Nurmi himself on the field. Chaos broke out even among the athletes lined up on the field, as people wanted to get as close a look as possible at the world-famous runner, now 55, still striding splendidly past his own bronze statue. Many of those present burst into tears.

NURMI'S APPROACH TO RUNNING

Of medium height, Nurmi was just an average athlete in terms of physiological characteristics. His phenomenal rise was helped by iron determination, an excellent tactical intelligence and a total method of training that he himself developed and tested. He was an avid reader, for example he acquainted himself with the interval tables for Shrubb's famous world-record-breaking run in Glasgow in 1904. His training was at its peak during 1924, when from April to September he did three sessions per day. First a ten-kilometer morning walk with sprints, then a wash and exercises. During the day he did about five kilometers of training by the clock, and in the evening a further 4-7 kilometers of running. Nurmi also had a supremely professional capacity for a psychological preparation. He hated losing above all else, and as a younger man he used to unnerve his opponents with a cracking pace at the start.

Nurmi was an introvert and kept away from media. When he won the last of his gold medals, he did not smile, refused to be photographed and walked off the track without a word. He seemed remote, interested only in his running and ultimately dissatisfied with his achievements. He wanted to leave behind something permanent and clearly did not share the view that records, as today's saying goes, are meant to be broken.

Nurmi died on October 2, 1973, aged 76. Marjatta Väänänen, the Finnish Minister of Education, said in her commemoration speech: "Records will be broken, gold medals lose their lustre, winners find their victors. As historical concept, Paavo Nurmi will never be beaten." At his funeral, six Olympic gold medalists served as pallbearers ∎

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.Questech

By Jatin Mamtani

One of the most enjoyable parts of writing a column has to be the mails and feedback you receive. Right from a meta punter trying to nearly threaten me into using the name of a guy in his dept (like I did last time), to really interesting (read howlarious) interpretations of the "9.99...= 10" question, it was great fun replying to all that. (And yes, 9.999.… IS 10; good to see quite a few of you sending the right answer). Also, tried the unsolved problem (brass and gold rings)... doesn't seem like there's an answer existing (or is there, readers?)

To make **Questech** more interactive, questions as well as interesting answers to the printed questions are invited from readers, as also is feedback as to how your favourite column can be improved, maybe some mathematical anecdotes, etc. (Basically anything under the sun that's worthy enough for this column :-) and who knows, we may print it! No need mentioning your favourite columnist's email add, you must have heard it so many times by now. (yes, that's right. Its **jam@ee.iitb.ac.in**). Anyway, let's cut to the chase...

1 .The Roads less travelled?
Intriguing problem, this one, with a remarkable solution...

There exist 4 roads on a plane, each road being a straight line, so that no two are parallel and no three pass through the same point. Along each road a traveller walks at a constant speed. Their speeds, however, may not be the same. It's known that Traveler#1 met with Travelers#2, #3, and #4. #2, in turn, met #3 and #4 and, of course, #1. Show that #3 and #4 have also met. (Its like proving an associative property of the type a=c; b=c therefore a=b... but as classic problems are, it only looks easy to prove !)

2.Hard problem!
If the problem you solved before you solved the problem you solved after you solved the problem you solved before you solved this one, was harder than the problem you solved after you solved the problem you solved before you solved this one, was the problem you solved before you solved this one harder than this one?

3.Kid stuff.
Transform the text below into a language that you and I understand:
- Scintillating, radiating luminous spheres of highly compressed light particles fusing into heavier isotopes.
- My neural networks keep triggering electrical signals through the molecules of my neurotransmitters and gray matter about your physical and chemical characteristics.
- Millions of light years from the centre of mass of the third rock from the sun into the highly distant fabric of space and time .
- Like a high brinell number, tetrahedral network of carbon atoms visible in the region of space enveloping planet earth.
(Hint: Even kids will understand this one ;-)
For the information of all my *fans*, my personal favourites are number games... although this one's not that tough (by my standards , of course)

4. Judging a number by its cover?
Find a 10-digit number that describes itself. The first digit will be the numbers of 1's in the number, the second digit will be the number of 2's, and so forth, through the ninth digit. The tenth digit will be the number of 0's.

Before signing off, an easy one for the beginners...

5. True Lies
Which of the statements are true ?
Exactly one of these ten statements is false.
Exactly two of these ten statements are false.
....
Exactly ten of these ten statements are false.
Also, what if 'exactly' was removed from each of the above statements ?

(contd. from pg.8,Get High...)

Blue Planet
This competition is the appropriate technology contest which aims at uplifting social standards through technological reforms.Some of the entries for previous years have been automatic page turner, keyboard for blind, bionic arm, fully automatic wheel-chair, technology to prevent ozone layer depletion, insect monitoring radar and land mine detection and disarming device. A

blueprint of the innovative technology is to be developed and should be in a noticeable way relate to Environment,Small scale industries and rural enterprise, and Quality of life.

Contraption
As whacky as it can get, the competition is to build an intricate and knotty device to do a Lilliputian job, which gets done anyway or does not need to be done at all. Efficiency is not the objective of this competition. The emphasis is on creativity, novelty

and complexity.

Some of the previous year problems for Contraption building have been 'bursting a balloon' and 'pouring water in a beaker'. This year the nature of the trivial task to be done has been trivially complicated to make the complication even more complex. Bring your wild and whacky ideas to reality and build a contraption "to turn a page and put a rubber stamp on the next page".

Oh loook, an IITian !

Ever wondered about an outsider's perception of IIT and IITians? **Karthik Ramkumar** finds out what IIT is, in the eyes of an outsider.

Most of us are proud to be at IIT. We love the people, the atmosphere, the lukkhagiri and wouldn't dream of exchanging it for anything in the world. Often, our obsession with IIT borders on absolute fanaticism and this is often construed by a non-IITian as pig-headed pride beyond all reason. We thought we'd get opinions on what people think of us IITians. Some of the descriptions were so candid and perfect that they left us shocked. Here are snippets of some of the best of what we garnered. Yenjoy!

I took part in this creative writing competition at Mood I a few years back. The guy in charge of the competition lands up with a bunch of papers, reads out the rules in front of a hundred people - bleary-eyed and in pyjamas without a care in the world. The look on the faces of ultra-pseud arties trying to come to terms with the culture shock was hilarious.

Fashion. Bah. Who needs it? The way to live your life is in Hostel/department T-shirts and chappals. Although personally, I've never come close to wearing pyjamas. Well, that's probably because I don't own any.

My only exposure to IITians was when I attended IITB's Mood I festival. However, I must say that, as a rule, IITB guys tend to try too hard. I mean to say, they mean well, but I suppose they are just not used to talking to girls, and the effort they make is pretty obvious.

The girls, I rarely met. But I think that was good, because I would have been really intimidated. How intelligent they must be, and how lucky, to live in a campus with such an amazing boy-girl ratio! (Got to get the opinions of some of the women in IIT on that. Somehow, I don't think they'd quite agree.)

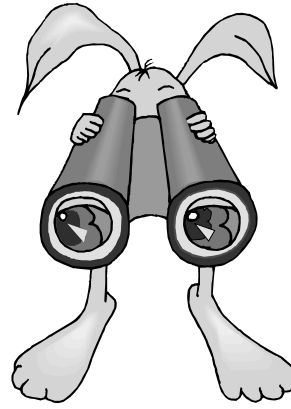People talked about us being blissfully lost in our own worlds and unaware of what was going on around us. People said we were great company. People thought we were terribly lucky for our pollution-free campus and absolute lack of curfews which we so totally take for granted. People also thought we were self-centred and egoistic (I have to agree with that. I, most definitely, am!). But no one put it better than this Stephanian who was so brutally honest that it hit the nail on the head. We decided to reproduce it in its entirety. Happy reading.

IIT. You might love it, you might hate it, but you sure as hell can't ignore it. A month in IIT - still not enough. Be it the lingo, the frustoos, the fundaes, the pains, or my all time favourite - the way they say "DAYAAA" (Its fun to see the look of utter disbelief on the faces of my friends when they hear me use this word I picked up and couldn't drop!

Be it their pride and joy - the OAT, the LT, the Staff C (which I loathed for the food and the smoke), Chinks (the most laidback place EVER). The male population so terribly attentive to the meager female population.. You can never get enough.

On the other hand, there are the lechers, never making a move but perpetually staring at you with an inexplicable smirk on their faces. Not to mention the 'I'm so cool gang' (the founding members of the smoke/dope clubs) who seem to believe that they totally excel in refinement and sophistication. It's almost sad to see them in what's considered to be the premier education institute in India.

There were things about IIT I just failed to understand. The H-7 guys kicking us (a bunch of girls) out for a harmless game of Table-Tennis on the unused table in their lounge. The unbelievable TV watching in H 11, where girls who would want to watch the extra-maritals and infidelities in "Kahaani ghar ghar ki", would inexplicably, be thoroughly scandalised to watch an episode of 'Friends'.

But of course there were things I fell in love with. The joie de vivre during a football match, the spirit in the LT (never mind the incessant use of expletives), females making sure you ate well no matter how bad the food, the adorable guard and his invitation to his place so he could narrate his leopard catching conquests, coffee 4 times a day at the 'shack', the spooky lakeside and the haunted tree, even the dogs escorting you at any time of the night barking their heads off. The place sure as hell does leave its mark.

Unfortunately however, as far as the hordes of eligible bachelors are concerned, as luck would have it, the only male I found was one who walked on all fours and licked my feet.

Ah well, that's all we've got for you. Friends spouted out the vaguest of stories whenever we asked them "What is your experience with IITians?" Try it next time your conversation has dried up and marvel at the vague, tangential detours you will take ∎

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Open Hardware & Open software contest

Open competitions at techfest offer you a stage to exhibit your innovation. 'Originality' is the mantra here . They aim at providing a healthy platform for competition of radical and unconventional hardware and software developments.

Some of the worthwhile entries in previous contests were a wheel chair, which could climb stairs, Oscar: a robot which maps rooms, Popeye: a multifunctional robot, a STD monitoring and locking system for a hostel-like environment, Dexter : an automation navigation and surveillance robot with features like Ultra Radar Mapping System, Infrared Positioning System, voice activated control, zero turning radius and optical fibers for security and high speed data acquisition systems, Bionic Arm: an attempt to simulate human hands, Keyboard for Blind.

Some of the winning entries of previous Open software contests were Virtual Robot - an animator using 3-d mouse, Picture Perfect - software for picture enhancement, Sanchay - a globally distributed file system, Engineering Crack - a user friendly package for engineering drawing, Network RAM, ContraBAND - inscription software and Simulator of an IC engines.

For detailed & latest info regarding rules of the competitions and the games boards for Yantriki check out www.techfest.org ∎

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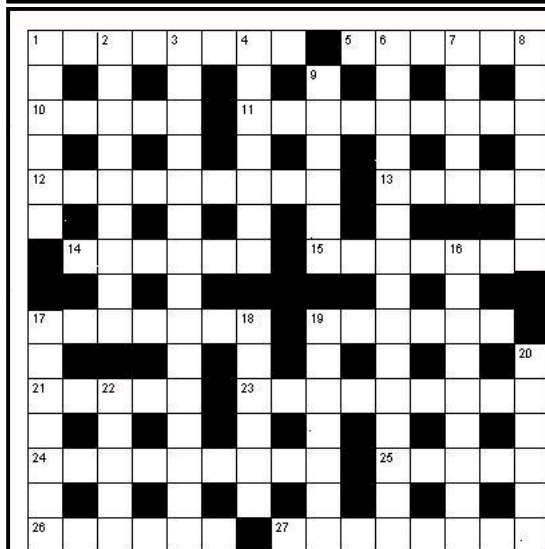IIT Bombay's Academic Calendar for Spring Semester Says...

Instructions begin **31st Dec. 2002** *(Tue)*

Now either someone in the acad office has an enviable sense of humour or IIT Bombay is stretching its "stress on academics" a bit too far...

Are the "Authorities" Listening ?!!

CROSSWORD — Deeparnab Chakraborty

(crossword grid)

DOWN :
1. He escapes and does with an empty dog in ! (6)
2. Immaturity as in seven probably (9)
3. Get it for free if in dire straits ? (5,3,7)
4. They fall while a number nips around. (7)
6. This is not as difficult as it seems :) (9,6)
7. Is it still the neighbour's envy ? (5)
8. You can see it in front of you eyes. (7)
9. He comes to reality when he is in need. (6)
16. Pearls are found where toys breed perhaps. (9)
17. Vessels having almost full measure of quantity. (7)
18. Confidential news out of Cretes. (6)
19. Extend over some distance. (6)
20. Constantly confuse dates with the Yogi leader. (6)
22. Girl from a Bulgarian city ? (5)

ACROSS :
1. Boy in the force of explosive. (8)
5. They have more than eight legs ? (6)
10. Disc Jockey goes to a bar for spirit. (5)
11. Drugs under confused Cairn's cot. (9)
12. Each boy gets a point always. (9)
13. Point in junk colloquial speech. (5)
14. Loves nothing. (6)
15. Don't fall in if you want to leave college (7)
17. Chartered Accountants in big gambling dens. (7)
19. He tortures first, after being in gloom. (6)
21. The basis for argument is in opposite corners. (5)
23. Uncle port may be fat ! (9)
24. He is the darkest one, and the most mean. (9)
25. Beast in the German underwear. (5)
26. Dirty rap singer !!! (6)
27. Wise and quiet, but without tact I hear. (8)

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.freelance

Hi Folks ! A lot of you might have seen those yellow notices calling for freelance articles. And we are sure you have read the calls for freelancers in InsIghT since the last two issues.

We got a good response to that and would have loved to publish them all, space and budget permitting. Though in a few cases, the response wasn't sufficient enough to publish it the way we desired. Still, a select few articles are being published in this issue though not necessarily under the heading "freelance".

Please keep sending in the articles & feedback. We are trying to work out a way where all articles sent to us are published on the InsIghT website. Letters to the editors on your pet peeves are most welcome as well. *Do write back to us at...*

insight@iitb.ac.in

This is where we got tired of writing. The END...