

The Institute Students Activities Reforms Committee (ISARC) has handed in its final recommendations to the Dean of Student Affairs. The report is comprehensive and has in most ways preserved the essential features of our extra-curricular scene. There are, however questions that shall arise time and again with regards to the implementation of the ISARC's recommendations. As we pack our bags and head home, it is essential that we do so with the knowledge that things are changing fast at IIT Bombay. The only way that something concrete can emerge from this initiative is if the student community adopts a more proactive role at this juncture.

A Brief Overview

All institute activities (non academic) have been categorized under five subgroups.

- Technological and Entrepreneurial
- Sports and Adventure
- Cultural
- Welfare
- Journalism

These activities have been organized under the following four societies

- Sports and Adventure Society
- Cultural Society
- Technological & Entrepreneurial Society
- Welfare Society

Journalism shall be treated as an independent activity. Each society shall consist of clubs and festivals. Techfest, Mood I, Avenues and the like will be classified as festivals. The development of activities such as dance, music, fine arts and debating will occur through clubs. Their work shall be presided over by the following:

SHOUTBACK

We NEED Feedback. Help us improve, the way you want us to.

Email - insight@iitb.ac.in

Newsgroup - iitb.insight

Website - <http://insight.iitb.ac.in>

InsIghT team

Executive Editor
Aditya Mittal

Chief Editor
Akshay Saxena

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Anand Mathur, Ankur Kulkarni, Arvind Shastry, S Ram, Sneha Srikrishnan and William Robinson.

THE EXECUTION PANEL

Amrita Mahale, Anasua Chatterjee, Ankur Gupta, Anuj Pradhan, Anup Mudbidri, Arunabh Sinha, Dhruv Arora, Gaurav Sultania, Geetesh Gadkari, Koustubh Vachhani, Krishna Ramkumar, Kush Meshram, Md. Abdul Qavi, Mohit Garg, Mohit Soni, Nishant Patni, P Prashant Pawan, Prashant P, Prateek Agarwal, Raghav Goel, Robin Sharma, Sangram Kadam, Sarmistha Pal, Shamiroh Tikoo, Shouri K, Shweta Shah, Siddharth Dixit, Sriram Emani, Sudhanshu Garg, Udit Parakh, Varun Kanade,

- Chairperson: Dean of Student Affairs (Faculty Member)
- President (Faculty Member)
- General Secretary (Student Rep.)
- Chief Festival Organizer (Student Rep.)
- Club Secretaries, Hostel and Department Representatives (Student Reps.)

The day-to-day running of the societies shall be looked into by the SEC (Society Executive Committee) consisting of student representatives. The faculty members shall retain their advisory role. With regard to the organization of activities a slot system has been proposed (See Interview). The committee has also put in place a corrective mechanism; something that has been sought for a long time now. The struc-

ture proposed in slot is equivalent to asking a General Secretary or a hostel secy. to do work demanded from him only in the allotted slots, this is obviously not intended and is not a purpose of the proposed slot system. Also only activities proposed beforehand for the specified slot may utilize it. Societies may not arbitrarily exchange slots within themselves. Institute venues will not be made available for activities not under their time slot.

InsIghT: Is it realistic for, say a festival to plan all its activities and meetings for the whole semester in 15 days? Are there any guidelines governing the vacation period when most of the work is done?

A: The Minimum 70 percent vote criterion is only for "Team leader Based election". A detailed description shall be provided soon under "Electoral Reforms". As for the specific query:

'Team Leader Elections' are based on preferential voting. A candidate has to secure 70% 'Primary + Secondary' votes. In absence of a clear winner, the candidature of all but the candidates with the most 'Primary Votes' will be cancelled and re-elections will be held.

Despite seeming complicated we believe the scheme can be applied because of following reasons:

1. These elections will have very small Electoral College (40-50 ppl)
2. Because of small Electoral College better interaction between Candidates and electorate is possible.

ISARC: Through the Looking Glass

The final recommendations of the ISARC have been submitted. Harsh Roy and Akshay Saxena raise a few pertinent questions.

ture proposed is in the form of a "House of Commons" and "General Body Meetings". A formal election procedure has been defined with three separate electoral processes:

- Institute Elections: The electorate consists of the entire populace of IIT Bombay
- Team Leader Based Elections: A selected electorate of outgoing team members and other elected members of the Society.
- Representative Based Elections: The electorate consists of elected representatives with similar executive responsibilities. 'General Secretary's (GS's), 'Club Secretaries' and 'Institute Secretaries' will be chosen on the basis of Institute elections. The 'Chief Festival Organizers' and the 'Chief Editors' of the student papers will face 'Team Leader Based Elections' and the 'Club Secretary Representatives' and the 'Hostel and Department Representatives' to the SECs will be elected through Representative based Elections.

InsIghT interviewed ISARC member Saubh Pagaria with regards to some important issues concerning the recommendations. Here is an excerpt. For the complete transcript visit <http://insight.iitb.ac.in>.

InsIghT: What did you base the underlying philosophies governing student activities on?

A: The philosophy is based on certain qualities (Integrity, ability to innovate, desire for quality work, quest for excellence) when imbibed in an IITian, shall enable him to be looked upon as a role model, a class apart individual in our society.

InsIghT: Does the slot system imply that a marketing manager cannot schedule his meetings out of the slot time?

A: The slot system is not meant to govern activities of an individual(s) but of a society, the idea is to ensure that the extra-curricular activities are constrained in the specified time domain, giving an average enthusiastic IITian ample time and opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and yet retain order. However, telling a marketing manager to schedule

A: Meetings, which do not fall under the category of Mass meetings like "House of Commons", will not be and should not be included in these schedules. As far as activities like workshops, lectures, events and competitions are concerned we do not see any problem in planning and developing a schedule of all activities for the coming four months in the first fifteen days. After all, important aspects of the work of any secretary or festival organizer are to plan and set targets for his people and continuously inspire them to achieve them. However provisions can be made for slight changes in schedule.

InsIghT: Given that the attendance in Institute GBMs and election soapboxes is negligible, how do you propose in practical terms for GBMs and "House of Commons" to be an effective tool?

A: The inertia of the old system will take its time to go, however the sanctity of these forums will increase if conscious efforts by various bodies like journalism (bringing out an issue dedicated to forthcoming GBM) and authorities (by ensuring that GBM(S) are conducted on fixed date and everybody is informed well in advance) are made.

InsIghT: What is the incentive for a Chief Festival Organizer to discuss or debate an issue in the SEC when the same can be sorted out within his/her own team?

A: There are two principal conditions in which a CFO will discuss issue in SEC:

1. If the Dean has asked for SEC's opinion on the issue.
2. When any member of SEC raises a debate on it.

We do not foresee SEC of a society discussing petty organizational issues and debating on them, as that is the work of organizing team.

InsIghT: What is the "minimum 70% votes to win" an election based on? Is it feasible if there are more than two candidates standing for the same post? What is the alternative if no one secures 70% vote?

InsIghT: What is the relevance of SAB (Student Advisory Board)? Don't you think that the discussions at the team level, Society level, reviewed by the journalist board and finally referred to the DoSA suffices a final decision or a firm viewpoint? Kindly enumerate specific even if hypothetical scenarios when SAB will be called upon for its services?

A: SAB is as a forum is not meant to be called upon for its services for mundane executive issues. The discussions at all the forums mentioned in the question are pertaining to a specific entity and its functioning. SAB on the other hand is envisioned to possess a "holistic view" about any matter referred to it. Thus SAB's role is in "philosophizing" all the activities, keeping a track of the direction of all the activities and illuminating the masses on various issues. Specific examples of questions which can be posed to the SAB are:

1. Is the 10:00 pm deadline for opposite sex entry in the hostels justifiable?
2. What is the gravity of the drinking and its associated problems?
3. Are the extra-curriculars at IIT hampering the academic growth of the students? These may be just a few reflective questions...

InsIghT: Why is the CPI criterion for eligibility to SAB fixed at 8? Is it based on the inherent assumption that people with lower CPI cannot give valuable contributions?

A: There is no inherent assumption whatsoever. SAB is envisioned to be a body of people who have achieved excellence in a field, people who are respected in student community and people who can be looked upon as unbiased and wise. However, they should be the people who apart from excelling in their field of interest do equal justice to the primary motive for which they are in IIT i.e. academic, and grades in form of CPI become a good reflector of their commitment towards it.

Harsh Roy and Akshay Saxena are fifth year and fourth year dual degree students of the Dept. of Chem. Engg. They may be contacted at harsh@che.iitb.ac.in and asaxena@iitb.ac.in respectively.

The sudden reappearance of inter-hostel competition (not the GC) has left many of us a little perplexed. We present to you reports on the Cultural and Sports scene as it stands at IIT Bombay in an attempt to clarify the "GC or no GC?" question.

Cultural Review

This semester saw a pretty different scene in terms of cultural activities on campus. With less importance being given to inter hostel activities - reducing them to primarily team events, the focus shifted towards having a greater number of open events and club meetings. The following is a brief overview of the cultural activities carried out by the new cultural council so far:

Debating:

The Debating scene received a shot in the arm with the GD workshop conducted by Mr. Javin Bhide. The GDs also found their way into the Speakers Club sessions, and the response to them has been very good so far (especially from the freshies). The open debate and elocution witnessed a good turnout too. The inter-hostel debating saw an interesting event in the form of news reporting.

Literary Arts:

The 2 inter hostel LA events held this semester were Dumb Charades and Wordgames. A 'Scrabble and Snatch Workshop' was conducted by Pramit Kamath and Gautam Hazari. The inter-college Lit scene has also been pretty good for IITB this year. After winning the LA trophy at Malhar (a trophy we did not win last year), we put up some good performances at Kaleidoscope and Umang as well.

Music and Dance:

The music and dance department of IITB jived its way to new heights this semester. The open Antakshari - Hum Tum saw around 130 students singing themselves hoarse in the OAT, with the boys beating the girls (in a tie breaker!). There was also a dandiya workshop which had around 150 students participating. A platform was set-up for the dance enthused punters in the form of In Sync - the dance club. The inter-hostel event conducted was Western Group Vocals. In addition to these events we had 5 classical music and dance performances, through the SPIC MACAY. We also had 4 dandiya nights where we witnessed the

usual medleys of rock and indi pop! The music scene was finally wrapped up with an open air performance organised by the Western Music Club with great support from H8.

video camera. We also had a photography workshop with around 50 participants.

Any feedback or suggestions for next semester's events or structure maybe sent to the GS Cult at ram@chem.iitb.ac.in.

Back From The Dead?

Many see the resumption of inter-hostel events as the revival of the GC. Krishna Ramkumar, Sarmistha Pal, Dhruv Arora and Robin Sharma present an overview.

Fine Arts:

The fine arts events added filled the institute with colour this semester. Mukhauta - the face painting competition highlighted the facial expressions of all the participants. The pot painting event - Crazy Potter had around 60 participants, who were given two themes - Modernity and Tradition. Participants were allowed to keep their pieces of art as mementoes. The fine arts club of the institute - Rang also organised a few workshops. Shades of Black - the sketching workshop was attended by over 50 students. It was conducted by Sahal Merchant. Down to Earth - the clay modelling workshop had over 40 participants and was conducted by Vipul Patole. The Inter Hostel events in FA kicked off with Zindagi, an event which aimed at capturing Life@IITB on canvas. The second FA interhostel event was Best-out-of-waste which involved making a piece by creatively using waste material like twigs, paper cans, straws etc.

Dramatics:

The Dramatics scene of IIT started "acting up" with a good performance at Malhar. On our campus, the open impromptu witnessed 22 teams of 5 each. Another open event conducted was the open situational acting which had 30 teams participating. The Inter hostel Drama Competition saw a series of great performances put up by all the hostels in both Hindi and English. The jewel of the dramatics scene however has to be the Sophies' Production staged in the middle of the semester. A set of 4 plays conceived and developed completely by second year students, were staged in front of a nearly full PC Saxena auditorium.

Photography:

Many of the events of the campus like the dandiyas, SPIC MACAY events etc. were caught on tape with the help of the institute

Sports Review

After quite a long spell of inactivity, the sports scene in IITB is changing gears. The Inter-Hostel GC as was held earlier has been shown the door. The two chief reasons cited were that firstly, people are forced into more activities than they can handle, and this applies to the seniors too and secondly, the contribution of each event to the GC tally is the reason why sports councilors of hostels have to drag participants for some events. Complaints that people, in particular freshers, are forced to come for cheering was also cited as an important reason for putting things on hold. And this is something common to both sports and cultural activities. Therefore, inter-hostel events have been restarted, minus the points system.

At present, every sports activity is either clubbed as an inter-hostel or as an open event. Team games rightly get categorized as inter-hostel events since, the number of teams taking part can only be limited (you can't have 30 teams in an open for a volleyball tournament!), and certain games that many people play at an individual level fall into the open events category. The 2 inter hostel sports events that were held this semester were Water Polo and Aquatics. The next semester is expected to witness many more events.

Since extra-curricular activities had blown up to alarming proportions, it has been decided to allot slots for these activities. For sports, only SAC and SAC premises can be used for the inter-hostel events, and can be conducted by the respective secretaries in the following time slots:

Weekdays:

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm
8:30 pm to 10:30 pm

Weekends:

Friday 5:30 pm to Sunday 10.00 pm

For the second slot, the secretaries have to obtain special permission from the SAC-in-charge. All fundae sessions, workshops will be held in the SAC itself.

The GC is ideally seen as a motivating factor in sports, to increase the competitiveness and bring out the best performances. However in its new avatar of inter-hostel events, the problem of too many activities for an individual or the so called "dragging" of people into many events has been dealt with at the hostel level itself. According to the changed rules, the SAC will send request letters to the respective wardens to send in names for the teams; this way, any complaints regarding participation will be nipped at the bud.

All in all

The cult and sports scene at IIT Bombay has had a very different look to it this semester. The emphasis has shifted from the GCs to open events. There is a school that believes that if implemented properly, this is a step in the right direction.

The open events have hence been better organized and have seen tremendous participation as compared to previous years.

There are however some very pertinent questions to be raised. Inter-Hostel events are not even close to the old GC without an additive points system. The competition will exist but without its old edge. When InsIghT reported the ban on the GCs in August we voiced concerns that the steps might kill the General Championships. The concerns seem to be well founded. Though, the inter hostel events that occurred this semester were well-contested, there was a lack of the passion that has fueled many stunning performances over the years. It is not our place to decide whether this is for the better. Only time will tell. All that can be said with certainty is that there will be a section of us who will look back on our years here and fondly remember 'the good old days'.

Krishna Ramkumar and Dhruv Arora are second year M.Sc Chemistry students. Sarmistha Pal is a third year student from the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering. Robin Sharma is a first year Engineering Physics student. They can be contacted at krishnar@iitb.ac.in, adhruv@iitb.ac.in, sarmistha@iitb.ac.in and robin5@iitb.ac.in respectively.

H12-H13: A Rank Mess!

Soon after the mid-semester exams the H12-13 messes were closed down and the canteen services have only been resumed recently. Ankur Kulkarni presents a report.

building. During the midsem exams the H12-13 wardens and the associate wardens called a council meeting simply informing them that the mess and the canteen will be closed for pest control operations. These pest control operations were to be carried out by the PHO and were to last for one week. H12-13 together, house almost 1000 students. Students were allocated messes in other hostels and were given the option of joining them for a week's duration. The midsems being just over, many opted to fend for themselves, by taking a break from hostel food. But the real shock came when by the end of the week posters got put up saying that the mess will remain closed till the end of the semester. An institute committee was formed to look into the feasibility of 'private messes'. The mess was deemed to resume only when the committee would come to a conclusion. As a result of these radical events, the load

on the other messes increased enormously. Initially some messes refused 'H12-13 refugees' food claiming space and worker problems. But with time these too were settled and life got back to normal. What didn't get settled, was the blaring absurdity of the events. When we spoke to the wardens we uncovered the real story. Sai Kripa workers were agitated for not being given the same status as other institute workers. Mess workers of the institute messes get permanent worker status, housing on campus, and other perks. Sai Kripa workers demanded the same privileges and went on strike. The matter then went to court with the workers lodging a case against IIT. Incidentally the H12-13 mess was in need of pest-control operations. Hence the wardens thought of getting it done while the court case carried on. The wardens also thought it best that the council's opinion be disregarded. A week after the announce-

ment, IIT won the case. The Sai Kripa contractor withdrew from the contract due to independent economic reasons. Hence the mess was left stranded, with no contractor. It was thought necessary to review the very model of a private mess itself. Hence no messing was to resume before the committee report came.

The only entity who seems to have gained from this fiasco is Chhatradhari Caterers - who also run the canteen in hostels 2, 3, 9 & 6. With the H12-13 night canteen closed, a lot of inmates flooded the H6 canteen. Fortunately, now things seem to be getting better. The night canteen in H12-13 has been restarted. And guess who cracks the deal? Chhatradhari Caterers of course! (Applause for the businessman of the semester!!). And there is more good news. According to the latest information, tenders have been drawn afresh for the mess contract. The search once again has begun for the elusive contractor who would be willing to enter this mess. (pun intended!) Ankur Kulkarni is a third year student of the Department of Aerospace Engineering. He may be contacted at ankur@aero.iitb.ac.in.



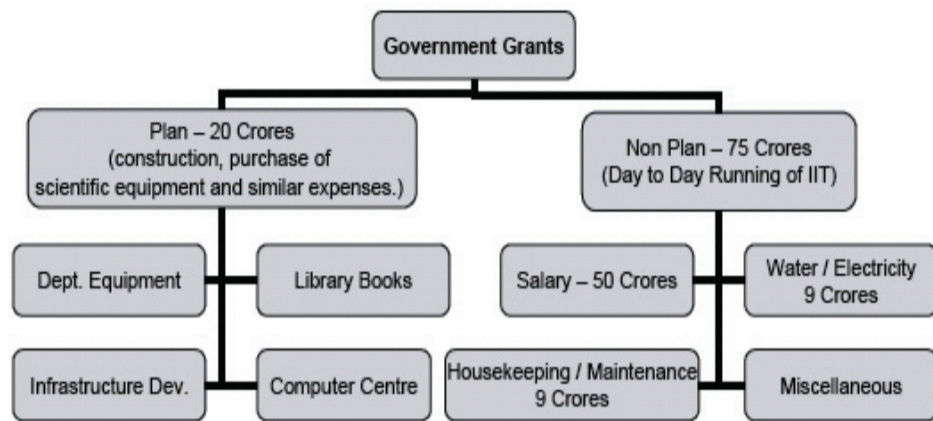
Money Matters

With sky-bridges and concrete footpaths in the campus, people often wonder whether the money could have been used in a better manner. Akshay Saxena and Anasua Chatterjee report how IIT Bombay manages its resource allocation.

Each year IIT Bombay's expenditure runs into approximately 100 crores. A phenomenal amount when compared to other educational institutes across the country. Each year a large fraction of the student community forms (often false) notions of a large fraction of the funds being spent on seemingly superfluous foot-paths and construction. In our investigation of issues such as construction and research expenditure, we've often felt the need for what we

ted to IIT Bombay only 20 crore is really at the disposal of the authorities. Almost all the 75 crores mentioned above are spent on the day to day running of the institute. 50 crores are spent on salaries and the rest on amenities. IIT Bombay pays an annual electricity bill of close to 9 crores. Close to the annual budget of most ordinary colleges. The fees we pay is only sufficient to account for students' scholarships.

A few things become clear when you look



present here. Here in brief is where all the money goes.

The information presented in this article is in accordance with that received from Prof. Dipan K. Ghosh, Dean (RM).

Where do the funds come from?

Contrary to the media's portrayal, we are very much government funded and alumni aided. There are essentially four ways in which IIT Bombay receives funds.

- (i) Government grants
- (ii) Alumni donations
- (iii) Collections by way of Fees
- (iv) Funds towards sponsored research projects and consultancy.

Where the money goes...

The Govt. grants are divided into two categories - Plan and Non-plan. Plan expenditures are those which create assets. Assets include construction, purchase of scientific equipment and similar expenses. Non-Plan expenditures are those which are usually necessary for the running of an organisation.

Our Non-Plan grant per year is currently Rs 75 crores. Our typical plan allotment is about 20 crores per year. Tuition and other Fees contribute around Rs 10 crores. This means that of the 100 crore budget allot-

at the numbers. IIT doesn't really have as much money to spend as many presume. The mere day to day running of this institute is an expensive affair. The 20 crore plan expenditure has to account for expenditure on departmental equipments research equipments on central facilities, the Computer Centre, Library books, hostel renovation and new buildings (addition and alteration to department buildings).

This also brings to the fore the importance of our alumni contributions. The generous donations we receive need to be looked upon in the framework of 20 crores and not 100 crores. All at once they become significant. This is why KreSIT, SOM and H12 and H13 would not have been possible but for alumni support.

As you read through this issue and further issues of InsIght, we'd strongly suggest keeping these numbers in mind. Each time we criticize or analyze how our institute dispenses its resources its important to remember that things often aren't as simple as they seem.

Akshay Saxena is a fourth year student of the Department of Chemical Engineering. Anasua Chatterjee is a third year student of the Department of Civil Engineering. They can be contacted at asaxena@iitb.ac.in and anasua@iitb.ac.in respectively.

NSO: Miles To Go...

Over the years numerous questions have been raised with regards to the effectiveness of the NSO program. Aided by a survey towards evaluating the same Raghav Goel and Gaurav Sultania attempt to present the complete picture.

The National Sports Organisation is a classification in the scheme of education formulated in furtherance of setting a climate of sports consciousness and improvement of physique among the youth during their period of education. So much for a definition, but when looking back, initially it was only the NCC/NSS that were available as activities and that too as a compulsory two year program (for once freshies feel lucky!!!). Quite obviously NCC wasn't quite the kind of course for most of us with its demanding course structure and intense discipline, and had to be replaced by NSO program with a two year curriculum. Thankfully as many would say, it, in its present shape is a one year, least demanding PP/NP course. But here we try to raise concerns on this declining importance of the NSO activities and also on its present structure.

Every year students are admitted into NSO by virtue of their aptitude and abilities in various games and sports. The students undergo training for 3 hours per week and 80% attendance is compulsory. A student is awarded PP grade for this activity in each semester provided minimum requirement of this activity is met during that semester with 80% minimum attendance or is it? Well, accepted that an NP is too much for having low attendance but should not there be a credit system to provide an incentive to strive for the better? IITD has this credit system and the grade obviously doesn't contribute to their GPA calculation. Dr. Reddy, the previous NSO coordinator, sites the present system of giving PP/NP as the main reason for the students as well as the coaches not taking the course seriously. NSO is an institute course. Shouldn't the standards we set for academic instruction apply to the NSOs as well? Over the years concerns have been raised with regard to the quality of instruction and training being provided on field. InsIght conducted an informal course evaluation over a sample space of 200 students and came up with the following results.

68% of the people agree that NSO activity has helped in their all round development and helps in reducing stress and around 80% of the people wish to continue with some kind of sporting activity on a regular basis. A staggering 85% would like to continue with NSO (as a course) in subse-

quent years. As of now NSOs are open only to freshmen. They can still be pursued 'informally' but without the dagger of grades (even if they are just PP/NP) hanging over one's head, it becomes exceedingly difficult to perform. NSO coordinator Dr. Reddy agrees that this would be a step in the right direction. However before this is done a closer look needs to be taken into the quality of teaching being imparted.

The NSOs are a serious affair. It is evident from the sheer quality of IIT Bombay's instructors that NSO is meant to be more than fun and games. Yet, to expect only 6 full time instructors to handle all sporting activities catering to around 5000 students is perhaps too ambitious. The consequence is a growing indifference to the NSOs. 54% of our sample space says that they lost interest in their NSO activity because of the instructor's attitude or the lack of it. Also if we want to open NSO classes for non-freshmen then the load shall further increase. It seems to be a high time to induct some new coaches.

Yet another issue of concern is the induction of non-sporting activities in the NSO program. NSO was essentially meant for physical education and the other activities were included only in the year 2000. 64% of the people feel that various non-sporting activities which are presently a part of the NSO program should not be included under NSO. The SAC needs to take a serious look into the present structure and classify guitar or dramatics as something other than 'sports'.

In all, NSO program urgently needs a revamping. Much can be done to make it more productive. Also its spheres can be broadened to include more number of people. An honest effort from the authorities and the students is required for the same. NSO activity has proved helpful in overall development of an individual, developing qualities like time management, leadership qualities, team spirit, organizational capacities, etc. and hence it should be given the importance it rightly deserves.

Raghav Goel is a third year student of the Department of Metallurgical Engineering. Gaurav Sultania is a fourth year dual degree student of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. They can be contacted at raghav_goel@iitb.ac.in and gk@me.iitb.ac.in respectively.

'These eyes, tho' clear to outward view of blemish or of spot, Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot, Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year, Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not Against Heaven's hand or will, not bate a jot Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer Right onward.'

These words of John Milton might have given some panacea to a blind person in the seventeenth century. Today, it remains merely a limerick, one that will soon be covered by the sands of time.

It wouldn't be too ostentatious to state that research and technology in India has come of age in many fields of development. But at the same time it is appalling to notice that little or no thought has been channeled to improve aids and products for the visually impaired in our country. A group that finds one member among eighty Indians surely deserves to benefit from the time

Drishti - an Eye Opener

Techfest 2005 will be organizing "Drishti" to encourage innovative ideas to help the blind. Here is a brief overview of the event.

and capital we constantly commission to innovate and manufacture. This goal once realized leads to further challenges - to make these products and solutions practical and affordable to the melee which includes the lower economic classes and the bourgeois crowd. Most aids and products for the visually impaired available today in our country are either obsolete on one side or unaffordable to the motley crowd. Here are a few comments from a representative group of this community:

Day-to-day use gadgets like the music system, television, washing machine, kitchenware and the like are sometimes difficult to use, because of the sets of key commands, which might differ from brand to brand.

This is what the visually impaired have to say:

"What is needed is to make a product that is useful and can ensure its widespread availability to the consumers." - Shashi Surana.

"One problem relates to turning the pages of a book while scanning. If I am scanning a book using a flat bed scanner, then there is no automatic way to turn the pages of this book. I could use a document feeder but that would involve removing the binding of the book." - Pranav Lal.

The idea is humble, the dream is obtuse but the mission is clear: To develop practical, affordable and efficient solutions for the visually impaired that would be appreciable and useful to them. With this thought,

Techfest, the annual science and technology festival of IIT Bombay launched DRISHTI in association with The National Association for the Blind (NAB). Drishti is a competition which aims to encourage students to innovate and invent for a noble cause such as this. The participants are expected to come up with workable solutions and models as aids for the visually impaired. What Techfest is looking for is not just a distant mirage on a sheet of paper but a presentation that can be implemented on a larger segment.

Students from all over the country are welcome to participate in DRISHTI. This Techfest hopes that it will initiate a sense of mutual awareness about this sector of technology which holds a tremendous amount of potential to innovate, create and market. For more information log on to <http://www.techfest.org/competitions/drishti.html>

For lesser rules and regulations:

One expert on higher education has described colleges and universities as islands of oppression, in a sea of freedom. While the comment at first sounds frivolous, it deserves more thought. Although, this particular observation has more to do with academics, and to freedom of expression; one must understand the implications on the overall bearing this period bears upon the lives of students. Although 'laissez-faire' may look a distant dream, surely a greater amount of freedom, with rules and regulations merely to deal with more extreme behavior is a more practical option. But is freedom really endangered?

The answers to the above questions are not "obviously yes", especially keeping in mind the situation on other campuses. We here at IIT Bombay definitely enjoy more freedom than say, hostels at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai or the NITs. At the same time, one must not blindly conform to the practices elsewhere. One must appreciate that the chemistry of each University environment is unique in its nature and comparisons to even similar institutions must be taken with a pinch of salt. If a system, in place for many years, has been successful; except for stray mishaps, few and far between; then any amendments to the current rules and regulations must respect this. After all as Dickens rightly points out "Accidents happen in the best regulated families."

It is also very important that the rationale behind a rule must be clear. Rules must to a significant extent improve the quality of activity; safety and convenience. Only then can one justify the curtailment of freedom, to which we all have a right.

One often finds that discussions on freedom very often end up raising questions about the very purpose of educational institutions. As Malcolm Forbes rightly puts it "The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one." This is not easy and a lot of effort goes into achieving this. Rules just help make this process easy.

At the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that the Institute has come up with some serious and stringent rules. A much-talked-about bike ban to time restrictions of entry of opposite sex students to the

Rewriting the Rule Book

The imposition of a new rule has always caused a furor among the students. Sangram Kadam and Zishaan present their contrasting views.

hostels. The quickly changing policy makes the reasoning behind the rules seem very shaky. What seems to be a little harsher is the new phenomenon of time restrictions of entry and exit from the campus. One gets a feeling that we are heading towards the idea of a hostel, where everybody wakes up to a bell at 7:30 am and lights go out at 11 pm.

It is imperative for the authorities to expect some sense of maturity and responsibility from the students. It is a telling tale, if the country's brightest twenty year olds cannot be trusted without a charter of trivial do's and don't's.

Another problem that tends to be ignored is the freedom in exercising one's academic choices. Although the situation varies from program to program; our academic policies are quite rigid when it comes to courses, projects, and the like. Even extra and co-curricular activities which were a great avenue of fun and frolic for students, along with being a learning ground for life skills; are now bogged down by restrictions.

While rules like the ban on drinking and smoking, strict imposition of speed limits for vehicles (mind you not just student vehicles), penalization of academic dishonesty seriously, etc. seem logical; what seems unjustified is completely phasing out vehicles, absurd time restrictions on freedom of movement of students, providing little or almost no option in choice of electives (are there any at all?), etc.

Harvard president Derek Bok's warnings are to be seriously thought about, "What universities can and must resist are deliberate, overt attempts to impose orthodoxy and suppress dissent. In recent years, the threat of orthodoxy has come primarily from within rather than outside the university." At the age of about twenty years, when responsibilities are given, maturity will be shown. One cannot be achieved without the other.

Sangram Kadam is a fifth year dual degree student of the Dept. of Elec. Engg. and can be contacted at sangram@ee.iitb.ac.in

For more rules and regulations

Freedom on college campuses, in my opinion, is a relative term. It is often seen that students in colleges with restrictive policies, may never bicker, because that is what they are used to encountering all their life. On the other hand many a student from the more liberal colleges will vehemently protest the imposition of any new rules, however small it may be. So, where does one draw the line? What exactly does one imply by "being free" and by "freedom"? How much "freedom" is the right amount of "freedom"?

While all of us love freedom, one must bear in mind that rules are in place for a good reason. I remember my cousins asking me if my routine involved waking up at the stroke of 6 in the morning, eating breakfast at 8:00 am on a long table, attending classes at 9:00 am and sleeping at 10:00 pm! For quite a few of us who have never experienced hostel life before joining the IITs, I am sure this was the dominant picture. It was hard for me to explain and difficult for them to digest that there were absolutely no restrictions on time and movement in and out of the hostel/campus. And they were surprised when I told them that my hostel warden wouldn't even know if I left the city!

So much, so good. But how does one justify one's "freedom"? Civil society, runs on the premise, that following the rules is beneficial to all; and that the cost we pay in terms of our freedom benefits in the form of greater security and convenience. One must learn to look at authorities not as demon-figures, trading in the freedom and happiness of the student community for their own ends. The least that is expected is responsible behavior. And in the absence of such responsible behavior, is it wrong for the authorities to implement and enforce newer or modified rules?

Sometimes the imposition of one rule is necessary to prevent the

possibility of people side-stepping or overlooking another rule. The vehicular traffic on campus caused a threat to the resident population, in the form of an increasing number of accidents, in spite of the speed-limits on campus. It became necessary to impose a carpet ban on possession of vehicles. The subsequent phasing out of "vehicle-ownership-rights" shows us how, authorities are keen on making the rules just, acceptable and fair.

Another case that comes to the mind is that of liquor during the valedictory parties a couple of years ago. Its almost a legend now for freshmen and sophomores who haven't witnessed the...well, the barrels of heavenly spirits. This was before the institute authorities decided they had had enough and took concrete steps to address the issue. Of course, the students try and very often find their way to beat the system. But it has surely, to some extent, brought things under control.

The argument that we are old enough to tell the good from the bad, is alright. But then many we-know-whats-good-for-us decisions have known to have led to disasters.

It is also relevant, as an aside, to consider that the protests from the student community when it comes to rules about campus and hostel life are vehement and vociferous. But similar enthusiasm is often lacking in the areas of extra and co-curricular activities and even more in the problems besieging academic work.

It might not be very relevant to an Institute of the likes of IIT. But college authorities in Bombay resorted to rules that included dress-code, language restrictions, restrictions on the usage of electronic gadgetry, etc.

Rules are necessary, when freedom starts to become a menace. Constant moral policing may not be good. But sometimes, its not a very bad idea to have a set of rules in place and accept them. After all, rules separate man from beast.

Zishaan is a fifth year dual degree student of the Department of Civil Engineering and can be contacted at d0znmh@civil.iitb.ac.in

Disclaimer: The views expressed here are purely those of the authors and are not subscribed to by InsIghT.

Black & White

4

Firstly, I would like to appreciate the effort taken to cover the placement scene and at the same time thank InsIghT for writing a positive piece. There are however, a few comments I would like to add. The article had voiced concerns about the poor performance of IIT Bombay with regards to bulk-recruitment. I shall try to address the issue as follows.

Talking about the bulk recruitment the article should have laid a base for comparison. It should have been clear in pointing out that among those who applied how many got recruited in other IITs v/s IIT Bombay as far as bulk recruiters were concerned. I understand that it is difficult to get the enormous amount of data, but then that is what a makes a good investigative piece. Another point intricately linked to bulk recruitment is the issue of joining rate. I have no hesitation in saying that IITB has the best organized process in terms of dates for companies. So bulk recruiters with typically low compensation get the "right" spot i.e. by the time they come the people who apply to those companies are the ones who have a high probability of joining. I cannot say with conviction if this fact is recognized by the companies or not. But the placement cell for sure has tried its

Letter to the Editor

InsIghT presented details of this year's placement scene in the last edition cover story. Institute placement nom Anip Sharma expresses his thoughts over the same.

best to convey this to the companies. There are instances at IITR, ITBHU and other campuses when very good candidates end up taking low profile jobs early and then wait for second round to begin. This happens due to haphazard nature of scheduling and at IITB we have tried our best to avoid such cases.

An important issue is that students here have a totally different perception of jobs and if I can dare say so their aspirations are clouded purely by compensation packages. Work Environment, brand value of a company and HR practices are factors which very few students take into account while signing a Job Application Form. If you ask me to venture a guess I would say that this is because most of the students take a very short term view of their career and see job switching a very near activity which of course has implications in other ways too. One of the ideas in the article was parallel recruitment procedure. Parallel recruitment happens with the basic premise that at the end of the day a student can take a

call whether to join firm A or firm B which have similar job profiles and are very close on all ranking parameters. Sadly at IITB we cannot afford to have the luxury of doing so as we have a huge population to place and the above stated idea will result in job loss. Imagine a situation wherein McKinsey and BCG with their limited number of offers make it to the same people and then the candidates choose the job. In that case I am not too sure whether they would be willing to consider other candidates. However I must confess that I am not exactly aware of how IITs handle this situation. Perhaps the companies keep this in mind and release a buffer list of candidates.

I agree that there are some areas where we can further improve the placement process. Logistics is one of them. It is a very trivial issue which has been made so large because of the endless amount of paper work expected by the authorities and the absence of dedicated facilities exclusively for the placement process.

There was a proposal to have a PPT room

on the 3rd floor of Gulmohar building but the idea was shot down. The placement office is currently left at the mercy of estate office to accommodate the dynamic schedules of company executives which is a must for managing a long term relationship. These are small things which add up in the bigger picture. Scheduling interviews also becomes difficult due to the academic commitments of the candidates. As such, I do not agree that the placement process hinders the academic curriculum but sometimes it becomes difficult to expect the interviewers to wait for classes to get over. There was a proposal to allow students to take a leave for interview (not PPT) against a slip issued by the placement office but again it got rejected. The only obvious solution to the rescue has been scheduling at night and companies are happy with it when the hospitality is good; but the "class A" treatment is absent here. They should be given rooms in the guest house on a preferential basis which does not happen currently.

Conclusively, I would just comment that though few screws need to be tightened, IITB has a good placement process. Let us hope for a great placement round next semester.

The prospect of crossing the seven seas has always been a dream for the average Indian. This seemingly elusive dream however, is no longer utopian with more and more students going abroad for summer projects, internships or for projects after they are placed in MNCs. It's all smooth sailing if the destination is an English speaking nation like the USA or the UK. The going does get tough though if you are bound for say, France or Germany where most of us would be as helpless as a Sikh in a remote village of Tamil Nadu!

The consequence – a spurt in the number of students taking foreign language classes. In fact, as Shriram Shivaraman, Institute Secretary for Alumni and International Relations puts it, “Knowing a foreign language would assist in getting scholarships. It would also help you get posted abroad if you get placed in an MNC.”

Presently in IIT Bombay, French and German classes are conducted under the aegis of the Dean AIR (Alumni and International Relations), Prof. Pradipta Banerji (Dept. of Civil Engineering). A few details:

French Classes:

68 students are presently enrolled for this two-semester long course conducted by Ms. Judith Escallier (Universite Stendhal, Grenoble, France) who is currently doing her internship under the Dean AIR. Divided into 3 batches, the students study French for 5 hours a week and the syllabus and text book followed is the same as that at Alliance Francaise. Of course, the basic course at the Alliance is for 160 hours whereas time constraints have forced the

institute course to last only 100 hours. The fees are Rs. 1600/- (Rs.1000/- refundable).

German Classes:

The German course has 58 students in 2 batches and is conducted by the Goethe-Institut (Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai, <http://www.goethe.de/bombay>). The instructors are Ms. Sujata Rajan and Ms. Minal Chiplunkar. The course is the same as that offered at the Institute, but time constraints have reduced it to 56 units while the Elementary Level 1 at Max Mueller Bhavan has 160 units (Each unit is

As Sujata puts it, “German is amongst the foremost commercial and financial languages spoken in mainland Europe. It is presently the 6th largest trading partner of India and hence ability to fluently converse in German would be a good credential for businessmen and students alike.”

The fact remains that ability to converse in a foreign language is one feather you would definitely want in your cap! Doesn't this highlight the fact that maybe these courses should be a part of the curriculum? In fact, many universities do offer foreign language courses as HSS electives. For instance IIT

languages as HSS electives. As Judith says, “Introducing foreign language courses as part of the syllabus is a very good idea. Students at IITB are generally very competitive in nature and do not have the luxury of time, so unless they have a creditable course, they will not work so hard on it. A basic French course should be at least 60 hours long to acquaint students with basic vocabulary and day-to-day language. Of course, one can't learn to speak the language in such a short duration and hence there should be an option to continue in another semester.” Her words are echoed by Sujata who says, “Teaching this class has been an immense amount of fun...an interesting bunch, very eager to learn. And it is not just about German or about an examination...you should learn to communicate, express yourself, say what you think and feel without fear. Communication is what matters at the end of the day be it English, German or French.”

It has always been chic to intersperse your speech with phrases such as tête-à-tête, faux pas, crème-de-la-crème and so on. Wouldn't it be even better if you could actually converse fluently in a foreign language? So let's hope we get to take our first step in this direction with foreign languages as HSS electives soon. Given that the enthusiasm amongst students for learning foreign languages is very high, implementing this should be tres facile, isn't it? Let's wait and watch...

Sriram Emani is a second year Civil Engg. student. Pradeep Prabhakaran is a third year Aerospace Engg. student. They can be contacted at sriramemani@iitb.ac.in and pradeep@iitb.ac.in respectively.

Parlez-vous Francais?

Sriram Emani and Pradeep Prabhakaran highlight how some among us are making a transition from technologists to linguists.

equivalent to a 45 minute class). The fees are Rs. 2250/- for the 56 units. There is also an option to extend the classes next year, depending on demand by the students. After 100 units, they can appear for an exam “Start Deutsch” for certification, this has just been introduced.

Why French or German over other options?

Judith answers, “Many research and job opportunities are springing up in France owing to recent commercial and technological advancement. It is very essential to acquaint oneself with the French language to live in France because the common man there does not understand English. Moreover, French culture and literature are very rich and many people learn French just for the love of the language and the culture.”

Madras offers German 1 and 2 as HSS electives in the 3rd and 4th semester of undergraduate studies and French in the 8th semester. All these are 3-credit courses (which is equivalent to a 6 credit course at IITB) and the general feedback is that these moderately tough courses are highly interesting and interactive as compared to most other courses in the institute. Apart from such pure language courses, IIT Madras also offer electives such as German Translation and Literature.

So why not at IIT Bombay?

The French and German courses in the institute have been a grand success with students enrolling in large numbers and also giving positive feedback. Shriram (AIR secy) feels that the authorities would not have any problem with introducing foreign

A largely uneventful semester - activity wise, (for reasons we are unable to write about) should have ensured that all of you out there are well prepared for your end sems and thus the need of last minute mugging shall not arise. Assuming that the above is true, all of you will have abundant amounts of free time pre and post end sems. Thus, to help you pass the abundant amounts of free time we spoke of earlier we have decided to sum up the movies of 2004 which stand out from the rest (for reasons both good and bad).

The year has been an exciting one for movie buffs; classics like ‘Torque’ and ‘EuroTrip’ made us stand up and take notice. Finely nuanced performances from uber talented actors like Vin Diesel in ‘The Chronicles of Riddick’; Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck in ‘Jersey Girl’; Ben Affleck again in ‘Surviving Christmas’ also caught our attention albeit for all the wrong reasons. One must not underestimate the intellectually stimulating acting of the Alien and the Predator in the imaginatively titled ‘Alien v/s Predator’; there was some wonderful direction and cinematography in flicks like ‘Anacostas: The Hunt for the Blood Orchid’; and of course some fabulous adaptations like ‘Around the World in 80 Days’, and we don't even want to talk about ‘Garfield’ and ‘Troy’! ‘Van Helsing’ was omitted from this elite list for one reason only – Kate Beckinsale in leather (Disclaimer: We don't subscribe to this! –eds).

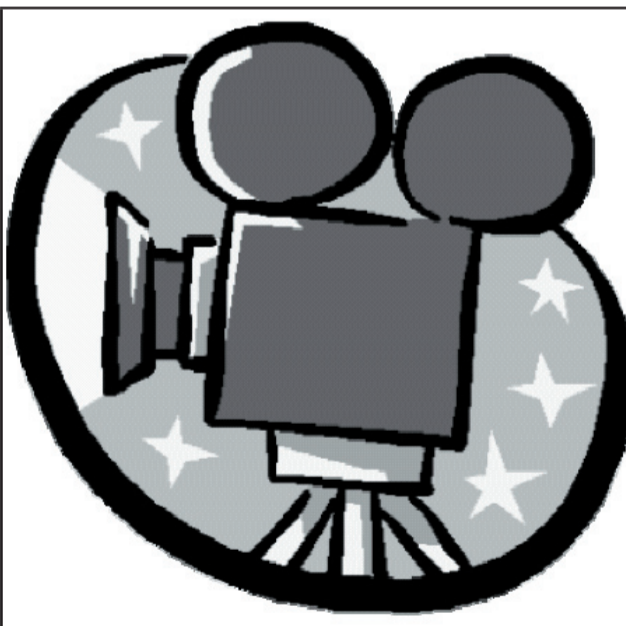
Now that we've put the year in perspective, the year did throw up a few shockers. One of them being that this was the year of the documentary. ‘Fahrenheit 9/11’ (Yes we all loved it because it bashed Bush, but apart from that it was one of the worst excuses for a documentary, taking the term personal vendetta to a whole new level) and the surprise hit ‘Super Size Me’ stole

Udit Parekh and Anuj Pradhan move from books and food to give movie buffs a guide to the good, the bad and the ugly of the latest in cinema.

the thunder from many a film this year. ‘Super Size Me’ is an irreverent look at the dangers of fast food. Director Morgan Spurlock goes on a month long diet of McDonalds’ meals and the results tend not to be very positive, with one doctor pronouncing

him almost indistinguishable from an alcoholic. Heavy metal music fans were not to be left behind with ‘Metallica’ releasing ‘Some Kind of Monster’ about the making of the ‘St. Anger’ album. While some critics gushed, we thought Village Voice got it right when they said, that the idea we should treat rock stars as people is ridiculous!

2004 showed again, how powerful a force animated movies and cartoon adaptations have become. We had the follow up to Shrek, divided between the even-better-than-the-first and nowhere-close-to-Shrek camps, we shall be diplomatic and say that it is at least as good as its predecessor. There was the puppet animation of ‘Team America: World Police’ with its extreme, scatological, gross, puppets’ heads exploding



humour not quite pulling off the political message it tries to deliver and nowhere close to the best that Stone and Parker are capable of. Pixar released the successful ‘Shark Tale’ and just released ‘The Incredibles’, again promising to do

well at the box office. The first PG rated film Pixar has brought out, it has received some critical acclaim for its characterisation and its message of acceptance of those who stray from the norm. ‘Spiderman 2’ released to raves from all over, but it left us cold. The Village Voice line seemed to ring true here as well. The idea that we should treat superheroes as people is ridiculous, unless they're dark and brooding like Val Kilmer's Batman or Hugh Jackman's Wolverine.

Good pop movies seemed a rarity but we did have Quentin Tarantino's ‘Kill Bill: Vol 2’ reminiscent of the ‘Pulp Fiction’ style which had its Tarantino moments but still wasn't anywhere close to his best.

Finally to some of the most beautiful films of the year - ‘Eternal Sunshine of the Spot-

less Mind’ affirmed what a wonderful actor Jim Carrey is and can be. The plot, from a Phillip K. Dick story, is conceptually disturbing while the acting and direction give rise to some of the most poignant scenes of the year. Gael Garcia Bernal was probably the find of the year, with his performances in Pedro Almodovar's ‘Bad Education’ and as the young Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara in ‘The Motorcycle Diaries’, although the movie overly romanticises Che. There was the chilling indie movie, ‘Open Water’ where a scuba-diving couple get left behind in shark infested water. There was the balletesque action of ‘Hero’ directed by Zhang Yimou and strangely starring Jet Li. Astonishingly, for a commercial Hindi movie, there was the wonderfully adapted ‘Maqbool’. We could find almost no fault with the film, the acting of all the lead actors is almost inch-perfect and the direction is slick enough. Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri must make the best witches ever to have been in an adaptation of Macbeth. Another surprise was Lakshya – a slick action movie which is another testament to director Farhan Akhtar's skill. Time Magazine summed it up rather nicely when they said that it holds the potential to give any Hollywood action release a run for its money.

Eventually our faith in cinema was restored by, movies like Main Hoon Na and Mujhse Shaadi Karoge which shattered us with their technical wizardry!

So get set to check out all those you have missed. Good luck with the exams and happy hols.

Anuj Pradhan is a fourth year student of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Udit Parekh is a final year student of the Department of Physics. They can be contacted at anujp@me.iitb.ac.in and udit@phys.iitb.ac.in

IITians: A colloquial term for a rare species called Nerdis definitis. Behavioural patterns include heated lunch/dinner time debates over which solution to the problem was better and not merely the 'correct' solution! Weak eyesight being a defect, 75% wear huge spectacles. Situation is worsened by engaging in lifelong TV watching and burying themselves neck-deep in books. But, come December, and all that just fades into oblivion as the world is witness to the 'bestest' fest that one can imagine. "Mood Indigo" - the name inspired by Duke Ellington's (now who the hell is that!) famous song - a pseud name for an even pseuder fest!

Memories of MI live on years after the spectacle. Very often, you will find insti oldies sitting around in Shack telling people stories of past MIs - about how Zakir Hussain was so amazing, and how there was no place to stand in OAT! Google for Mood Indigo and you will stumble upon loads of websites of alumni with stories and photos from MIs they were part of. One just cannot put down everything about MI in an article. The spirit of MI has to be felt firsthand to be believed. What we've done here is snoop around a bit and put together some genuine MIthology.

It starts

The first 'Mood Indigo' was held in 1973. It was a moderate success. However, MI really took off in 1976. MI 76 was by far the biggest cultural festival of its kind in the country and established MI as the premier cultural event for a long time. As always with MI, the musical nights were the main crowd-pullers. It was a real challenge that year because the country was under 'Emergency' regulations severely limiting the right to assemble. In the 70s and early 80s, MI followed essentially the same format - 4 days and 5 nights. The days saw a host of competitions being held and at night, many high profile musicians left the crowds spellbound. For instance, Asha Bhonsle and RD Burman performed at MI 81 and Zakir Hussain performed continuously from 1976-81.

It stops ... starts ... stops again

For sheer drama, nothing comes close to

Being the latest addition to IIT Bombay's fest scene isn't easy. Ever since its inception Avenues has had to contend with expectations and the obvious comparisons with Mood Indigo or Techfest. October 2004 saw the 3rd edition of Avenues. The fest has grown significantly since its inception in 2003 and this year's edition was significantly more focused in trying to nourish and further the entrepreneurial ambitions of those who were a part of it.

A few competitions were noteworthy. Campeador-Excellence in Human Resource Management, a corporate event kicked off the fest. There were tete-a-tetes with luminaries and entrepreneurs such as the Chairman and Managing Director of Piramal Enterprises (read Crossroads), Mr Ajay Piramal, Avnish Bajaj and Suvir Sujan, the founders of Baazee.com. In a bid to increase hands-on participation competitions such as 'Gladiator' - The Battle of Entrepreneurs and 'Band Clash' - The Adventure Camp were introduced. According to the organizers the events involved thinking and working out of the box while ensuring that the participants had fun.

For stock market enthusiasts there was the "King of Bulls" that aimed to give participants a feel for the nitty-gritties of the stock

MI-THOLOGY

Picking up on the theme for this year's Mood Indigo, Krishna Ramkumar digs up some real MI-thology. Let's hope MI-2004 adds to the legend.

MI 92. In the words of Anand Sivakumaran, the GS Cult in 1992, "It was supposed to happen in December, but Ayodhya happened - so we postponed it to January. Then the Bombay riots happened - even more people wanted to cancel it - so we postponed it to March. Finally we had it in March, believe it or not, one week after the Bombay bomb blasts. The Deputy Director Dr. Kudchadker was a backbone of strength. He arranged for extra security. Never once did he ask us to shut the fest down. LiveWire went on till 5 am. I shall never forget those 5 days - there were ego problems and fights before MI. But those 5 days we just worked and worked. 30 people did the work of 300." MI 98 was the biggest ever MI in terms of the budget, which was 42 lakhs. Last year's budget was around 40 lakhs and saw the largest attendance at MI, so much so that providing accommodation to the hundreds who had come was a thankless task!

Kitne Aadmi the?

In MI's formative years, Amjad Khan took part and won many competitions here. In 1975, a friend of the then GS cult was the assistant director of a play that won the dram competition. He is now one of the biggest names in the entertainment industry - Mani Ratnam. Parikrama (arguably India's best rock band) won LiveWire a few years back and their careers took off from there. Hrishitaa Bhatt won the fashion competition (Vogue) in MI 98.

Here are some interesting snippets from MIs over the past few years

Butchers Strike

LiveWire 2001: Elims taking much longer

market. As in previous editions of the fest this event generated tremendous enthusiasm. GIAB (Great Indian Advertising Bazaar) was floated as an ad-making competition. Participants for the final rounds were chosen after a round of elimination. Other

than expected. Many bands were being especially uncooperative and weren't playing at their allotted time slots. So out of the blue, a coordi announced that if "Butchers Strike" (a fictitious band!) from Madras didn't show up in 5 mints, they would be disqualified. He then promptly made a scene, pretending to disqualify them. Following this, bands rushed up on stage the very moment their names were called out!

Impromptu Judging :P

Picture this - you have a western music event happening in 15 mints and your judge hasn't turned up. What do you do? Simple, all Competitions CG KN did in MI 01 was that he drove down to SAC, found a band that was lazing around and asked them to judge. Not only did they gladly agree to, but they also jammed in front of a hysterical crowd in LT after the event!

Doggy Doo

In MI 01, there was a "dog show" which was a one-of-a-kind event for everyone associated with it. In the words of an organiser "The CG told me - 'See those dogs over there? Go pet them, play with them, pull their cheeks and say so sweet.' It was great fun. This one dog ran into a tunnel and came out the same way. The owner had to coerce him to go through by going through it himself! One dog ran after the judge instead of doing the obstacle course!"

Coercive Coordis

While doing publicity in a girls' college in Pune, 2 coordis were told that the principal hadn't allowed the girls to take part in MI. Our 'knights in shining armour' were

to visitors. The 'Who Moved My Cheese' workshop despite rigorous publicity was eventually cancelled and left a large number of people agitated after having endured a 2 hour wait. More thought also needs to be put into the conducting of the panel dis-



asked to help them convince her to allow them to go. The principal saw the list of competitions and the various artists performing at MI and was so impressed that she sent a huge contingent!

Identity Crisis

Last year, a coordi had phoned Suchitra Krishnamurthy several times, with regards to her compering Antakshari. On many an occasion, the maid had picked up the phone. A few weeks later, he called Shekhar Kapur in connection with judging a dramatics competition. The exasperated maid said 'Haven't you already spoken to Suchitraji?!'. Our friend is in total shock, wondering how the maid knew. That's when he realised that they are husband and wife!

We are pro's wonly

Last year, when a coordi was painting "the wall" in SAC, he was doing it to such perfection that a person from Channel V who was observing him walked up to him and asked him for his business card!

On the cards

This year's MI promises to be bigger and better. The theme is "MIthology" and there is a stunning menu on offer. The main course includes The Colonial Cousins, Remo Fernandes, Parikrama, Hema Malini and Pt Vishwa Mohan Bhat to mention just a few! Zero are performing as a band for the last time at any IIT. The Vogue finals and Classical Night are going to be held in the OAT this year. The hugely successful play 'Heads ya tails' featuring Nandita Das and Sushant Singh is going to be staged. Apart from the wide variety of competitions in music, lit, debating, dramatics and fine arts, look out for the car exterior designing and ball room dancing competitions. Also, don't miss the workshops on art appreciation, archaeology and Ganesh idol making!

I am already smacking my lips in anticipation. And as the old joke goes, what did the cow do when she drank the ink? She moooooood indigo :)

Krishna Ramkumar is a second year student of the Department of Chemistry. He can be contacted at krishnar@iitb.ac.in.

is 5th December 2004.

The teams qualifying the first round would be given extensive mentoring before the second stage submissions. The second round involves the submission of the detailed business plan that covers all details from Vision to Mission, Organization to Ownership, and Marketing to Exit Plan strategies.

The third and final round involves the presentation of your business plan in front of a panel of judges comprising of venture capitalists, industrialists and successful entrepreneurs.

The cash prizes for Eureka! 2005 (conditions apply) are:

First: Rs. 2,00,000

Second: Rs. 1,20,000

Third: Rs. 80,000

There are additional incentives like incubation opportunities and extensive mentoring for teams qualifying the first round. For further details, visit: www.iitbecell.org

Email: eureka@iitb.ac.in

Contact: Anubhav Jain, 9819352967

anubhav@iitb.ac.in

Arunabh Sinha and Siddharth Dixit are second year Metallurgical Engg. students. They can be contacted at arunabhsinha@iitb.ac.in and dsiddharth@iitb.ac.in respectively.

Avenues 2004

Arunabh Sinha and Siddharth Dixit provide an extensive report of IIT Bombay's annual business fest that happened this October

interesting events included 'Paranoia' - A time management competition, Negotiation Games, The Derivatives Workshop and Insomnia that ran all night.

With barons from the industry and political world on show, "Tug of War" drew large audiences. Mr. K. N. Ramachandran (All India General Secretary CPIM (Red Flag)) and Mr. Shettigar, former chief of the BJP's Economic cell debated the 'Disinvestment of Profit making PSU's'. Churning Mills - The Panel Discussion featured Dr. Gupta, IIM Ahmedabad (NIF), Mr. Rajasekhar, CIO-IBD ITC and Mr. Sharat Dhall from HLL.

Feedback gathered from visitors showed that this year the content and planning has been much improved and the events have been more involving. Certain lapses in scheduling however, proved frustrating

discussions which tended to drift in patches. Yet, it is evident from the relative success of the event this year that 'Avenues' will only get better.

Up Next: Eureka!

Eureka! The international business plan competition proceeds in various stages, the first one being the submission of executive summaries by the teams. All you have to do is to describe (in less than 1600 words) the functionality, the potential impact and fundability of your business idea. This Executive Summary should briefly describe the Company, the Product or Service and the Unique Opportunity that your team would be offering. It should also provide a short description of your key management team members and an outline of the investment you are making. The deadline for the submission of the executive summaries

It is the Year 2020. Just imagine a scenario in which your state of the art computer has a problem and you call for tech support. Who turns up at the front door? Your friendly neighbourhood biologist! If you think that is not possible - think again, because scientists are hard at work at this very moment trying to use DNA to power the computers of the future.

The race to build a supercomputer faster than the silicon based supercomputers are already on and the prize for the winner is beyond mere riches. It is a computer so powerful it can simulate the most complex and mysterious aspects of the universe, and that too without breaking into a sweat, it should also leave the best computers of today looking like ageing horses.

The race sees three new technologies - the optical supercomputer - which uses the tremendous speed of light, the quantum supercomputer - uses qubits (instead of the standard binary ones and zeroes) and last but not the least the DNA Computer - the most strangest of all which uses DNA. Now let us delve into the not so distant past to glean an idea of how DNA Computing came about.

In the early 1990's mathematician and biologist Leonard Adelman, the father of DNA Computing became fascinated by the parallels between DNA and computing technology. Computers use binary code which manipulates data as zeros and ones while genes consist of information encoded as strings of the four nucleotides that make up DNA: adenine(A), cytosine(C), guanine(G) and thymine(T). Adelman tested his prototype of the DNA computer using the mathematical challenge known as the Travelling Salesman problem: How can you visit seven cities connected by fourteen roads without passing through the same city twice? Adelman assigned a code for each city and each road. He then mixed snippets of DNA and allowed them to react. The four nucleotides combine according to a hard and fast rule called complimentary base pairing G to C and A to T. Adelman then analyzed the DNA for the shortest routes that contained the codes for each city. The DNA Computer solved the problem faster than any other computer on the first try. And that is just the beginning.

A significant fact is that one pound of DNA can store more information than all the electronic computers ever built and that a DNA chip the size of a droplet would have the processing power of the best supercomputer currently available. It is also the first non electronic device (other than the human mind) which can solve complex logic problems. It is an example of compu-

tation at the molecular level at a size that may never be reached by the semiconductor industry. Consider the information concentration of the DNA. The bases are spaced every 0.35 nanometers along the DNA molecule giving DNA a remarkable

such as a cancer when they are embedded in a cell. When the DNA Computer detects the toxin it will glow enabling early detection and will carry out the necessary computations to save lives. Now let us see an IBM Thinkpad do that!!

Jeans and Computers

InsIghT presents the winning entry of the Tech GC Journalism Contest. Aditya G Parmeswaran talks about when Genes and DNA can be used for computation.

data density of nearly 18Mbits per inch. In two dimensions if you assume one base per square nanometer, the data density is over one million Gbits per square inch. Compare this to the data density of a typical HDD which is about 7G bits per square inch a factor over 100000 smaller. The other important fact is the formation of base pairs which means that every DNA sequence has a natural complement. For example if sequence S is ATTACGTCG, its complement S' is TAATGCAGC. Both S and S' come together to form Double Stranded DNA. This ability makes DNA a unique data structure for computation.

DNA is modified biochemically by a variety of enzymes. Enzymes work to cut DNA or paste them, or as copiers. In a test tube, enzymes do not work sequentially on one DNA at a time but rather many copies of the enzyme can work on many DNA molecules simultaneously thus allowing parallel computing.

DNA computers are today being programmed to react in the presence of a toxin

But then we are faced with two major questions. Firstly, is it true that the DNA Computer can only be used to analyze DNA? So, what can be the future of the DNA computer? Because DNA Computers are still on the research table it is still bulky like the early electronic computers. A problem is that electronic computers have already advanced to a large degree and any new technology is hardly likely to match it at the current juncture. But it is likely that the future may see compact high performance DNA Computers such as microchips with chemical reaction circuits (like a lab on a chip).

Another issue which is currently being addressed is that DNA molecules are not as durable as silicon from which chips are made. However this lack of durability is not a current problem because in principle DNA is used once and discarded in the case of gene analysis. One must remember that the unique characteristic of DNA Computers is its ability to process actual molecules as input and output data.

In fact in the not so distant future I feel we might see a hybrid DNA Computer at every hospital bedside table where the electronic computation can be done by ICs and the DNA Microchips does the molecular computation.

And in the next step the data and programs that are stored in the electronic part would be incorporated into the DNA molecules themselves. Then we would enter the world of nanotechnology using DNA's. Nanotechnology has borrowed a lot from biology since all building blocks like DNA and RNA are nanostructures.

Already such nano devices are being used for gene delivery, or drug delivery, or diagnostics.

Because the DNA computer uses molecular reactions, it is best suited for problems that require direct processing of molecules. In the future it will most certainly be used in the study of logic, encryption, genetic programming, algorithms, language systems and maybe even lots of other interesting things that haven't been developed yet. In accordance with Moore's law the number of electronic devices put on a microprocessor has doubled every 18 months and the microprocessor complexity has doubled every two years. But Moore's law will soon reach its end because of the physical speed and miniaturization limitations of the silicon microprocessor. DNA computers pick up where Moore's Law leaves off.. DNA has a large cheap supply, is a clean resource, and is many times smaller.

Although currently DNA computing cannot replace the silicon chip in a variety of applications, the very concept of injecting DNA Computers in to the cells is intriguing and could very well have revolutionary implications in the future. The possibilities of this research are limitless-we could stop cancer before it begins by repairing the damage, correct defects in DNA, or even increase cellular metabolism to achieve unheard of feats...or a hundred other things. The very idea of having a DNA Computer embedded within me helping me achieve the most impossible feats is fantastic and wonderful. But then I might just turn green and flash "an exception has occurred at cell no 7888855667744....."! But then, risk has been part and parcel of nearly every major technological breakthrough man has achieved. And one day, we may even have a DNA valley!

Aditya G Parmeswaran is a second year student of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. He can be contacted at adityagp@iitb.ac.in

How2 Get your home.iitb.ac.in web page up?

In the first edition of this column, which intends to help you get more out of your computer; we explore the idea of putting your homepage up. The Institute provides you with upto 200MB of space; which you can use to put up your very own homepage.

Here's how you can get started:

1. Build your site with one of the tools listed at the end of this article.

- You can use "client side technologies" - HTML, CSS, Flash, JavaScript.
- You cannot use "server side technologies" - PHP, Java, ASP, Perl/CGI

2. Head to the CC. Login. Create a directory with the name "public_html" in your home directory. Make this world readable. Run the following at the command prompt:

```
#mkdir ~/public_html
#chmod 755 ~/
#chmod -R 755 ~/public_html.
```

3. FTP to bighome.iitb.ac.in using your FTP Client (WS-FTP, SmartFTP, gFTP, ncftp). Put the contents of your website/homepage into the "public_html" directory that you created and can now see in your bighome content.

4. Your homepage can be accessed at:

http://home.iitb.ac.in/~<your_netmon_id>/

(Remember, the page shown by default is the "index.html" in your "public_html" directory)

You are done!

Internet Links:

<http://www.w3schools.com/>

<http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/>

Useful Software:

Novice User --- Microsoft® FrontPage, Mozilla-Composer/nVu.

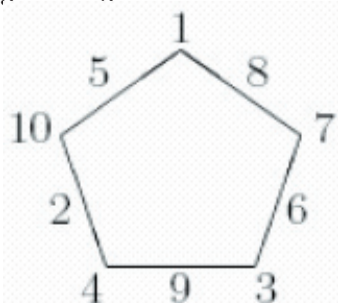
Advanced User --- Macromedia® Dreamweaver, Quanta(KDE)

John Locke once said "LOGIC is the anatomy of thought." Without logic no thought can be justified. Logic is applied to everything, big or small, for subtle decisions or just for fun filled problems.

Another round of questech, another round of LOGICally crackable problems, another round of treats at Shack!

So here you go, only one rule to play this game, think LOGICally!

Magic Pentagon



Questech

Shweta Shah and Varun Kanade present another set of puzzles. So get your grey cells ticking. Coffee shack treats are up for grabs for the early birds.

Some positive integers can be arranged along the vertices and sides of a pentagon (all numbers are different) so that the sum of the three numbers along each side is the same. The diagram on the left shows an arrangement of numbers 1 to 10 with sum 16. Find, with proof, the smallest possible value for a sum and give an example of an arrangement with that sum.

Differ at the base

Take any number in base 7. Rearrange the digits however you like. Subtract the original number from the rearranged number. What is the largest integer that will AL-

WAYS divide the difference? Can you generalize your answer to an arbitrary base?

No pendant to the Necklace?

A necklace is made out of black and white beads, in the shape of a regular polygon. If there are three beads on the necklace, each of the same color and forming an isosceles triangle, then the vertex of the isosceles triangle, can be marked as the pendant of the necklace. Now a necklace may have several such pendants, or none. Show that there

will always be a pendant for a necklace of size 9. Can you say anything about a general necklace made up of n-beads?

Pick your Stick

You are given a set of sticks; each of them has length some natural number. You randomly pick up two sticks. If the two sticks have equal length, you throw out one of them, and put the other back in the bag. If they are unequal, from the longer you cut off the length same as the smaller and throw that away, and put the remaining part and the shorter stick back in the bag. Now will it always be the case, that you have only one stick in the bag, after a while, and what can you say about that stick?

Please mail your queries, suggestions and solutions at vkanade@cse.iitb.ac.in and/or at shweta@iitb.ac.in

Although still small compared to world class universities, IIT Bombay indeed has better networks than many colleges, and even some corporates. The IIT network has become an indispensable part of the IIT community. So, why do we see it being described as "slow and painful" on iitb.general?

We will try to answer some of these questions here.

About the Campus network

The bulk of our network is on a Gigabit backbone which means it should take roughly 2 minutes to download a movie. In order to provide such massive speeds, we have 5 major routers or traffic controllers installed throughout the institute. These are located in H3, H8, CSE Dept., CC and Aerospace. When a problem happens in one of them, more than one hostel loses it's network. These are very expensive too, each one costing from 20-50 lakhs of rupees.

Apart from these big guys, a lot of smaller routers are installed in each of the buildings etc. for controlling the traffic internally. The little fellas join together the wings, the hostels, the building and connect them to the outside world. Each of the sockets in our rooms are connected to these through LAN cables.

Finally, to connect IIT to the rest of the world, we have our proxy servers (one for the departments and the other being Netmon). They are the gatekeepers, guarding all the doors and holding all the keys. What we can see on the Internet is controlled by them.

The Windows disease and the anatomy of an attack

There are many reasons why the authorities seem to be having an anti-windows stand, not the least of which is the excessive virus problems that have plagued our Institute. Why does windows have so many viruses? Why are the authorities so concerned? Let us see.

From it's core windows was designed to be a performance system, allowing all hardware to be directly accessible. In a time when computers were not the speed demons they are today, performance was the key issue for a personal computer.

Although Windows has far outgrown itself from those days, it's original monolithic design and tight integration between the components ensured that any weak spot cripples the system as a whole. But, the coming Internet also changed the world of Viruses. Gone were the days when the damage from virus would be restricted on a single machine. The newer worms like Blaster and Lovegate do a lot more dam-

age to other machines. Take MS Blaster for example. On machines without network it is dormant, but if connected to a network, it "bombards" enormous amount of traffic. On an insecure network the size of IIT, it will take less than 30 minutes to completely infect all machines. IIT itself has suffered a loss of over 1.5 crores due to it's switches getting damaged by Blaster's attack. A network is based on the principle that not everyone will use simultaneously. But if all computers use the network together, the switch becomes heavily loaded with traffic and breaks down due to overheating.

choice when it comes to security. So, Linux has had a pretty clean track record in terms of viruses. Also it is the second most popular system after Windows and it has been getting better in terms of usability.

Consider Yoper Linux, installs in 20 minutes flat and the user can get additional softwares and updates from the Internet automatically.

Additionally let me also debunk a myth that if Linux becomes popular people will write viruses for it. Consider web servers, Apache (Linux based) is used on 95% of all web servers, with <5% being using Micro-

Caught in the Web

Internet and LAN has become a very important part of our lives. Mohit Soni presents the complete details of IIT Bombay network services

Windows also has other painful programs like Real Player, tradeexit etc. which keep bombarding proxy servers. It has been observed that even 1 bad machine can hamper the network severely, 10 machines can bring down Netmon and roughly 100 machines can cripple our whole network like the blaster attack did in 2003. Even the US government issued CERT warnings about windows insecurity and advised people to at least start using Mozilla/Firefox.

So, the main reason authorities are discouraging windows is simply to prevent a case of another blaster attack. The duties of hostel computer secretaries have increased tremendously since the last year, which have managed to just keep our network stable. They now have to create proxy servers for windows users, and run maintenance checks on them. Additionally, they have to run weekly network checks and submit status reports to CC. They are also supposed to find and warn windows users who are bombarding the network.

To quote Prof. Anurag Mehra (HOD CC) "Just like America changed after 9/11, so did the situation in IIT computer scene change because of Blaster".

So if the main building is entirely using Linux for their work, why not students also. The solution of abandoning windows is not being taken by any other university or any other IIT. So are we the trend setters? Or are we fools?

Advantages of Linux

Unlike windows, Linux is a derivative of UNIX which is an old system. Unix was used in military installations on super computers where security was paramount. So from ground up, it was designed with security both of data and of the system. Every user's data was segregated and no process was allowed to go beyond certain limit. Over the years, the model was improved and UNIX is still the obvious

soft IIS. Obviously, with millions of users using Apache, not everyone is extra cautious. Despite that there are many devastating exploits for Microsoft IIS than there are for Apache. So even if it becomes popular Linux shall remain much more secure.

Advantages of Windows

Obviously, we have been unable to control worms like blaster and one solution is to get rid of the network or getting rid of windows. But these would be a primitive solutions, indicating backward progress. After all, one cannot just abandon cars altogether just because pollution is too high. In certain aspects, windows is irreplaceable.

Most of us have been using it for ages and are used to it's features, user interface and functionality. Switching to and getting used to another OS will simply reduce productivity in all day to day tasks.

Microsoft may be useless at security but have spent millions to ensure that interface is comfortable and increases productivity. The students who use windows for productive reasons do produce better output. Certain 'technical-use' softwares are simply not present in Linux. Even non-technical softwares like MS Powerpoint and Yahoo Messenger have considerably poor equivalent variants in Linux. Softwares like GIMP are not even worth considering for graphic professionals using Adobe Photoshop, the loss in productivity is simply too high.

Also, the X-windows system in Linux is simply not as good in performance than the Windows, so desktop in Linux is not up to mark. So lets face it, Linux is still not as user friendly as windows. Switching to windows is a devastating alternative for all, but advanced users.

The Solution?

CC has tried many different solutions to overcome the problems due to windows in the last one year.

In hostel area, windows users are controlled by not allowing them to directly connect to outside network, thereby curtailing any spread of infections. But, not only are many users connecting directly, their infected machines are found causing problems in the network every now and then. For residential area, CC used a Linux computer as a router for routing the traffic. Any bombarding and infected machine is automatically disconnected at the source itself. But, residential areas have much lesser traffic than hostels and departments. The solution is not scalable for the gigabit backbone, it requires specialized hardware like switches worth 40-50 Lakhs. For departments, CC uses two different subnetworks and the windows subnet is disconnected when it bombards. This method requires more hardware and it does not stop the infection.

The dream solution would of course be the one that corporates and foreign univs have adopted, namely buy even more expensive routers which can stop bombarding sources automatically. Unfortunately, each such switch costs 50lakhs and is not viable for us. So, what can be done? So far, the CC has not found a foolproof solution.

CC, MLC and hostel sysads are trying another solution. Most of the problems are due to irresponsible users (recall not more than 10 are needed). While windows is not secure, it can be made secure by individual users. This is not easy, the US government has issued a 120 page article on their website on how to secure Windows XP. Some summaries with some additions are available on the MLC website <http://www.iitb.ac.in/~mlc/beforexp.php> and <http://www.iitb.ac.in/~mlc/winsecure.php>. MLC and hostel sysads have also chalked out a plan to conduct workshops to educate people on windows security. The workshop will be conducted Early next semester.

Unless users become more responsible, we may have to face the consequences. After all freedom is not free.

Mohit Soni is a fifth year dual degree student of the Dept. of Elec. Engg. He can be contacted at soni@ee.iitb.ac.in

From the Editors' Desk

The great migration has begun. It's that time of the year when "Ticket to Jaipur for sale" postings become common on iitb.general. The month long vacation for many of us is a time to sit back and enjoy being force fed home-cooked food. For others its a time of running circles around the SAC. Be it for inter-IIT practice or MI work.

As editors, we hope that the issues we've raised through three editions of InsIghT linger on in your minds. We've often been asked what the purpose of InsIghT is. Past experience has taught us that despite our best efforts, it takes a lot more than the mere reporting of facts to bring about change. As a news paper, our endeavor is to present the facts to you, the reader. The onus to make a difference lies with you.

There are obviously issues that might skip our attention. If you believe that there is something that merits space in InsIghT, do let us know. Also, your views and reactions to the articles we publish are of utmost value to us. Like it says on the front page, WE NEED FEEDBACK. Please mail us at insight@iitb.ac.in.

When we started as editors, we were warned about the dreaded middle-of-the-endsems November issue. Well, here it is :D ! Happy Holidays!

-eds

Baloney- Newtons Laws

-by VVD

