MI 2005: A Review

MI shows us yet again why its the best. It did have its own share of highs and lows though. While some events ended up as crowd favourites, some were not quite up there.
Page 4

An Outsider's View Of IITB

Is IIT next only to MIT and Stanford? Certainly not, according to this Harvard student.
Page 6

MARS!

The winning entry at the Science Journalism contest talks about our extraterrestrial neighbour.
Page 7

Placements@IITB 2005-06

The campus placements this year, took off on December 21st and has already proved to be quite an eventful process. B Vinod, Priyanka Jain and Pranav Chowdhary take a look at the proceedings.

THE administration across all the IITs, decided unanimously to disallow any placement activity before the end of the autumn semester. The decision is said to have been taken so as to curb the adverse impact that campus placements have on the academic performance of the final year students. After a little disapproval from the student community and the allowance made for the Inter-IIT Sports Meet contingent members, the final date after which hiring processes could be started was pegged at 21st December.

This imposed delay in the hiring activities has had its own pros and cons. While it was possible to prepare more comprehensively for interviews, and explore options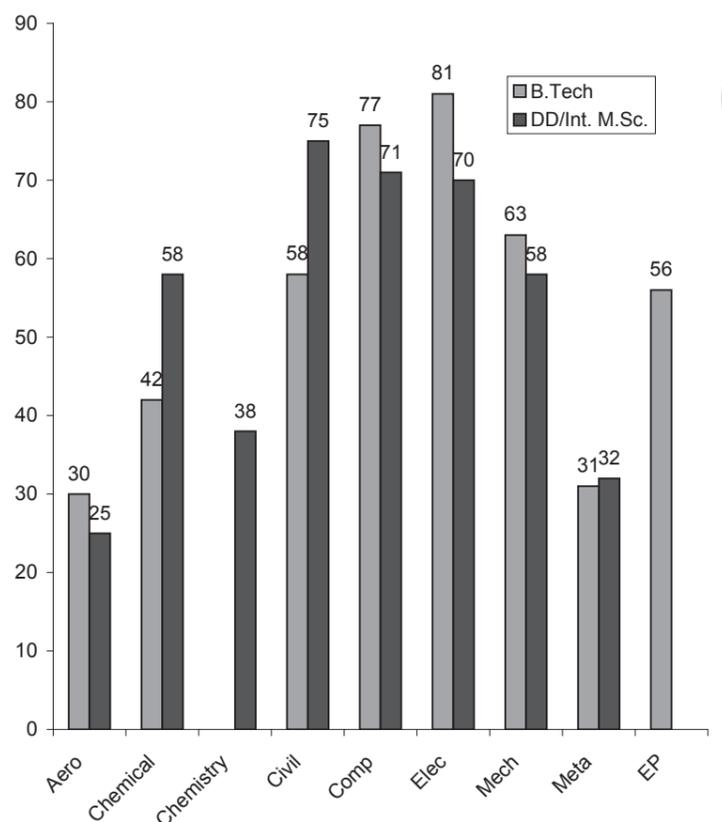, it was frustrating to have to attend a large number of pre-placement talks. Ad hoc procedures when it came to the attendance in these presentations, compounded matters for students. The long drawn pre-placement process also meant that people had more comprehensive information, before having to make a choice. However at the same time, a lot of people who would otherwise have been satisfied with their job offers, now felt the need to appear for the management entrance exams or apply to universities overseas, so as to not take a risk with their prospects. This increased competition, is playing spoilsport, with redundant job offers to people, who will eventually be either taking up the admissions in management schools or universities abroad.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the update of academic records, as displayed on the official student resumes. As far as the students' sid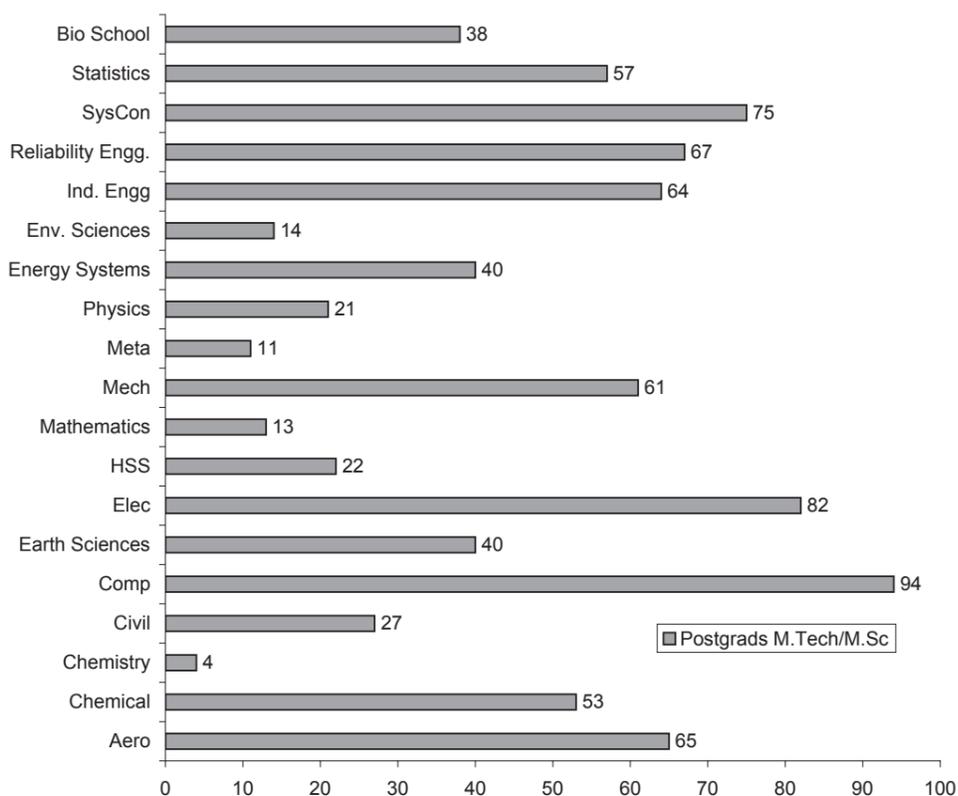e is concerned, the official CPI was not updated for quite a few days after the deadline for grades to be submitted. The Academic Section was under duress as well, because the official procedure for approval of grades by the UGAPEC takes about 45-60 days, and this delay in updating records was unacceptable to the student community. In the case of the M.Tech students, there is the additional problem of the project grades not being included in their CPI at all. All these issues need to be addressed in the future if the delayed placement process is to go on smoothly and in fairness to everybody.

On the companies' side of the game, there was greater competition to take up early slots, and even amongst the IITs to see that the more popular companies came to their campuses first. This was further fueled, by the fact that it was now possible to make a tight and organized schedule of the companies' visits to the campus. The salaries offered, have also shown a marked rise over the previous years' figures, for some companies, in addition to the number of companies' visiting the campus for placements itself having gone up.

The number of job offers made in the first 25 odd days is about 350, viz. more than 10 offers a day. And more students are getting placed as you read. This figure is quite commendable, although there is quite a bit of ground yet to be covered, with another 600 odd people still in the fray. One must also keep in mind that almost all these offers have been in the A category.

An actual look at the figures and comparisons throws light on a few more facts. Contrary to popular belief the number of engineering companies is quite large, both in terms of the number of jobs offered and the number of companies in the sector. Most of them, however, belong to the Computer Science and Electrical Engineering segments. Also, the fraction of companies, and consequently jobs, in the consulting/analytics and banking sector has risen sharply. The Computer Science and Electrical Engineering departments seem to have a lead in both the number of jobs and the percentage of people placed. Part of this difference between the placements' scene in these disciplines, is due to the large number of engineering companies in this discipline, amongst the companies which have visited the campus so far. The number of students hired so far is nicely split among the different programs of the Institute, with nearly the same fraction of the undergraduates and the post-graduates being placed in the first 25 days.

The hiring process has also had its own share of incidents. The simultaneous selection processes of companies have resulted in a few cases of horse trading, with

Statistics as on 30th January 2006
Percentage of Undergraduate Students Placed

Statistics as on 30th January 2006
Percentage of M.Tech Students Placed

01

Disclaimer: This is an article in light vein. The views expressed belong to the authors alone and are not meant to offend the sentiments of readers.

Bun-Aamlet

Akshay Saxena and Rylan Henriques bring you snapshots from IIT Roorkee's first attempt at organizing the inter-IIT sports meet.

The Setting

Roorkee, a bazillion kilometers away from any form of human civilization. The closest railway station is Saharanpur which is also, a bazillion kilometers away from anywhere on earth. We were greeted by shawl covered, muffler-hooded men with suspect intentions, in the middle of the night and of course the token sardarji from Roorkee to 'guide' us.

Roorkee is incidentally full of Sardarjis and Jains (refer to the Food section). Our poor guides were bombarded with rather interesting questions

"Is there electricity in Roorkee?"

"Do you have toilets <innocent face>?"

"Do you have refrigerators?"

"Yes"

"WHY???!!??"

The Hosts

IIT Roorkee, the new kids on the block outdid themselves. Most secretaries were courteous, competent and cooperative. The sports facilities were excellent and spanking new.

Roorkee is an institute of discipline. There are rules for everything including an impassioned plea for people not to 'bang' their 'tennis racquets' on the basketball court. In addition to numerous signs, the authorities have followed a passive-aggressive 'grade based' policy. Students of IIT Roorkee have credits allocated to discipline. Showing up scruffily dressed to the mess hall, being seen near the 'Old and New' Ganga river channel, violating the werewolf curfew (see 'The Women') etc. can result in a 'GRADE PENALTY'. There is also a 'reward scheme' consisting of free coffee for 9 pointers.

The referees were a mixed bag. Some sports such as basketball had excellent officiating. Some of the refereeing decisions in the football and hockey matches however, were dubious to say the least.

The Surroundings

-Not Applicable-

The Marches-Past

Our pride and joy. The suit-clad host of the opening ceremony had been given strict instructions: "Discipline the IIT Bombay Contingent! Or else…" We shudder to think what might have happened to him. IIT Bombay honored tradition by doing what we do best. Innovating.

For more (extremely interesting) details contact your nearest sportsperson.

The Food

Despicable, Appalling, Disgusting, Loathsome, Contemptible, Putrid, VEGETARIAN.

No non-vegetarian food can be cooked on campus in IITR. This is the last real stronghold of the Jain Mafia (in good humor please). Most members of the IIT Bom-

bay contingent survived on 'Bun-Omelet' and 'chai', which we got at surprisingly low prices at a place called Cautley Mess.

The spread in IIT Bombay's famed messes seemed lavish in comparison. Breakfast was perhaps the most intolerable, especially with Roorkee's 'toast your own bread' policy that involved 20 people attempting to toast bread on a common plate. Getting the plate up was an achievement in itself, requiring more than an hour of coaxing, pleading and threatening the Mess manager, who was bureaucracy personified when he told us that with everyone being an unaccountable govt servant, this was the best we could have: take it or leave it.

The Computers

The *Pros*:

No netmon. No security. No accounts. No firewall. No download restrictions.

The *Cons*:

No computers anywhere. The hostels are supposed to have 'Cyber Cafés' that have working hours. No LAN connection in rooms. There is an air conditioned Computer Center with 15 computers.

2

Hall of Fame

Gold

Teams Clockwise from Top Left: Basketball, Hockey, Cricket, Weightlifting, Tennis, Badminton (Girls). Bottom Right: Table-Tennis

Silver

Bronze

Clubbed to Death

Rajlakshmi, Devasheesh Mathur and Taranjot Singh look into to tremendous ambiguity surrounding the post of club convenor.

THERE was a time when people would meet up regularly to pursue a particular activity they all enjoyed. Then yahoo happened. Groups were formed. Members grew in number. Clubs grew into organisations. And thus convenorship was born.

IIT Bombay has the distinction of having over 25+ organisations out of which 15+ are clubs. If that's hard to believe count the number of clubs you're a 'member' of .

Why so many Clubs? Originally Inter Hotel competitions were conducted by Insti–secys as a part of the extra curricular routine. But it was found that in the name of 'hostel spirit' freshers were being forcibly made to participate. At the same time seniors, including talented people were not participating. In order to encourage participation and development of Cultural activities, clubs were started. These Clubs include BONDA, Insync, Rang, Stacatto etc. Similarly in order to foster technical activities, the Science Club was started which include the HAM club, aero-modelling, papers club etc.

Clubs are meant to be platforms for talent recognition and development. In this regard the Club must conduct several meetings for its members, hold workshops, and as is being done in the recent past, conduct events/performances such as VooDoo or Kaladarshan.

On the surface of it the hierarchy of the clubs is pretty well drawn. The official head of the club is the respective Institute Secretary. He/She is in charge of planning out all events, organising them, taking permissions for venues, budgeting etc. However, due to other duties which the secretary has to fulfil, a convenor is 'nominated' by the secretary. This person's sole job is to, you guessed it, 'convene' meetings. This is where things begin to get blurred.

In order to convene meetings, a convenor must go around organising it as well. Posters must be put up, permission taken, members informed. He is only supposed to assist the Institute secretary in planning out the meetings as well, but usually ends up doing the planning himself. In doing

this the convenor almost invariably ends up becoming the secretary's Man Friday. Unofficially, his help is sought out in planning institute wide events as well, and soon convenors may even become deputy secretaries themselves. When questioned in this regard, GS Cult Aniruddha Choudhary has said, 'There is some ambiguity in the role of the convenor which has to be clarified'.

Blurb

-There are more than 15 clubs at IIT Bombay.
-The club convenor is nominated. He receives NO official recognition.
-There are no clear guidelines with regard to the convenor's responsibilities
-According to most sources, all he/she is supposed to do is convene meetings
-Most secretaries now use convenors as their 'Man Friday'.
-There is probably a need to scrap either the secy or convenor's post if status quo remains. There should atleast be a clear allocation of reponsibilities.

The cultural nominee, in e-mails regarding certain clubs like BONDA, has clearly mentioned that the club is NOT supposed to conduct inter-hostel competitions and choose teams for inter-college competitions. The cult council in a meeting also supported this stand by stating that 'Clubs are a supplement to Hostel Culture' and hence must aid hostel secretaries in nurturing talent. The philosophy behind this is that clubs are meant for people who want to pursue some skill or activity, and come for the love of it. Consequently, whoever becomes the convenor should also pursue these activities purely out of his/her love for that activity.

The final 'success' of the club, in terms of meetings and turnout solely depends on the will of the secretary/convenor. If both of them decide to be lax then the club dies

(Dead Poets Society?). Of course the GS Cult has said 'Finally it is the Secretary who is responsible and he/she must take action if the club is not functioning on a regular basis'. However, in most cases the secretary's leave it solely to the clubs to conduct all the activity. All this work for no recognition? If people are standing for the post of secretary let them bear the burden of all the work that goes with it.

Which brings us to the reality of the situation, any person who wishes to hold posts or get into the higher echelons of the cultural council invariably ends up being nominated for convenor. It is sometimes a convenient relationship, with convenors hoping for support later on in lieu of services rendered. Most of the time however, they are forced, sometimes against their wishes, to do the work of the secretary as well.

Why this overlap? Some say that it is an outcome of our system, where posts are given prime importance. Perhaps an adaptation of the IITM system is in order, in which separate societies akin to clubs are constituted. Members are recognised only upon attending a certain number of meetings, and closed body elections are held within the club to nominate the head. The crucial difference is that this person also sits on the cultural council and is solely responsible for all events related to that activity. Anshul Jain, former MAD secretary says, 'All clubs need some senior to help guide the club's activities. The convenor in any case does not do his duties singly, he his helped by members of his club. Why have the post of a convenor at all?'Institute wide elections for secretaries are still a contentious issue and open to debate. Yet, one would hope that more guidelines are brought in the future, to resolve further ambiguities about the nature and duties of the convenor of any club. This will ensure that we can finally get down to our original aim: pursuing an activity we love.

(Rajlakshmi and Devasheesh are 2nd yr. students in the Dept. of Met. Engg. and Taranjot is a 2nd yr. student in the Dept. of Chem Engg. They can be contacted at rajlakshmi@iitb. ac.in, devasheesh_mathur@iitb.ac.in and taranj@iitb.ac.in respectively)

The Startling *Truth*:
IIT Roorkee-ians still manage to download 'objectionable material' and chat for hours on end. They even have online placement interfaces, and managed to maintain updated match results of inter-IIT online.

The Women :(
The girls' hostel is a fortress. The only way in is through the front gate. The other three sides have high walls covered with glass shards and barbed wire at the top, plus an additional 4 ft of inclined corrugation to make catapulting into the premises impossible. Male visitors are obliged to make a 4km trek only to be allowed as far as the 'waiting area' (five stools under the watchman's eye) of these hallowed halls. After numerous thwarted efforts, these diligent pilgrims are said to prefer the journey to nearby Haridwar (a mere 20km) and a subsequent life of forced celibacy.
There are rumors of these women transforming into werewolves after 10pm. The authorities have hence decided to enforce their return to the fortress by this damned hour.

The Watchmen
Plenty, stern, hidden. There was a thulla at almost every corner, and during the night they would take up positions occluded by the plentiful shrubs in campus. They would spring out on unsuspecting members of visiting contingents who were out for night walks and ensure that they were not jehadis plotting the next explosion. The ones at the girls hostel took extra pride in guarding their precious wards. The outer and inner gates used to be locked, and two watchmen would actually sleep right in front of the inner gate to this walled fortress!

The Teams
The same old faces from the 7 contingents. The senior members exchanging Hi-Byes and the occasional embrace. The usual excited freshies debating whether to show friendliness or mock aggression. The psyching up and sizing up of the teams, ending with the usual conclusion 'is baar to medal apna hai'.

Thomso
IIT Roorkee's answer to MI. (IITR's MI-wannabe) So much so that the sports

contingents were expected to stay back in Roorkee to attend (Why God, Why?!). Priceless Jewels from the Thomso posters on display:
'WARGASM – The rock night'
'Youthanasia – We forgot what it was'
'Xhileration – The professional (sic) Night'
etc
For more details visit http://www.iitr.ernet.in/thomso/index.html

The Cheers
Bombay: "Mista Lova Lova.. Hey Ho.. Teri Aankhon ka jaadoo.."
Delhi: "#$% teri &^^$"
Madras: "Mumble Mumble Mumble Mumble.. hoo haa hoo haa"
Roorkee (priceles): "Ek do teen chaar... IIT R IIT R
Kharagpur: "KGP ka tempo.. hai hai"
Kanpur: "Kanpur Kanpur!" <yuk!>
Guwahati: Ordinarily cheer other contingents.

What went wrong?
Yet another year when IIT Bombay 'almost' won the GC. We lost it by 2 points. Each team that hadn't turned in a gold medal

was left wondering 'What if we'd gotten one position higher'. Many if-but scenarios were replayed over and over again, lots of remorse and some finger-pointing ensued. Senior members of the contingent feel that this time around, the 'contingent feel' was perhaps not very high. We cheered and we enjoyed, but as different teams. The absence of any team meeting throughout the meet did not help matters. Teams hardly knew of the progress in games other than their own. We cheered a one-sided basketball win when egging on the concurrently losing volleyball team would have probably improved our overall chances. We had the arguably the tournament's best player in badminton, yet the absence of a coach in IITB for over 6 months showed in our below-par doubles performances, leading to a knockout from the leagues. These were only some of the stumbling blocks. All in all, it was an exciting fight to the finish. Sadly, we have to once again, settle for second best.

The authors are members of the IIT Bombay Basketball team that won a gold medal after 7 years and may hence be forgiven for any indiscretion.

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the third eye

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4

5

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MI'05 : a review!

Pronites

Highs :
- Overall, this year's Pronites were organised in a very professional manner.
- The hugely popular Indian Ocean once again enthralled the crowd with their unique brand of music.
- Scintillating performances on the classical night by were savoured by the professors and students alike.
- Mantra, the Hindi band competition was a runaway success. The idea of having student bands perform in front of a packed OAT paid off.
- The popular night featuring Shaan started off in typical Bollywood fashion with a traffic jam and the subsequent rescue act by a CG on his bike. In the end his lively performance was greatly appreciated by most quarters.
- The return of the amateur rock band competition Livewire was a welcome move. And to add to the euphoria was the success of IIT-B's very own band, 'Access Denied'.

Lows :
- The bands on show and the genre of music are getting a little repetitive.
- Sagarika's performance was avoidable.
- Blink and miss performances by HFC, Sceptre and Vayu thanks to the 10 pm rule. The late starts didn't help either.

Junta speak : "Amazing fun! But the shows finished even before they had started. We hate the 10 pm rule!"
Rating: ★★★☆

PAF

Highs :
- Performing a PAF was a novel idea and with a little bit of luck, things could have turned out very different.

Lows :
- The energy that one associates with PAFs was lacking. Execution was ordinary, to put it lightly. The script seemed out of place for a PAF. Some of the voice-overs and acting were also not up to scratch. Did the absence of the hostel spirit element pull the quality down?

Junta speak : "PAF was a good idea but hmm..it was not a good idea"
Rating: ★★☆☆

Informals

Highs :
- Bollywood Housie was a huge success.
- Dalal Street, Informals' share market, was greatly appreciated by the participants.
- Hysteria, the amateur DJing competition was well organised. Though the number of participants dropped from last year, due to its proximity to Christmas, the quality didn't suffer.

Lows :
- The conceptualization of most events was quite good, but the execution was poor. Informals this year was not as much fun as it normally is.
- Mr. and Ms. MI was more like a personality contest. The final rounds were a little too serious for the audience's liking.
- Fortune 99, a flagship event, was poorly organised. It started off well, but failed to keep the crowd interested for too long.
- Aquagames were also a massive disappointment this year.

Junta speak : "Aquagames were umm..very dry"
Rating : ★★★☆☆

Web:

The MI 05 website was up extremely early. It was well-maintained, had a host of fancy graphics and depicted the theme well. It was also comprehensive in its content, on the various events and competitions, and had regular updates. A few colleges, however, complained about the absence of an HTML website.
Rating : ★★★★☆

Competitions

Highs :
- There were around 20 new and innovative competitions. Standard events like gyrations and radio play were replaced with fresh events like street dance and RJ hunt.
- For the first time, Competitions was brought in to stage as the opening act to a Pronite with Mantra.
- The audience response was overwhelming. Events like solo impromptu dance, one-act play, classical evening, qawwali, JAM and dance drama had venues packed beyond capacity. The quality of performance in most events was also extremely good.
- Almost all events started on time and went off smoothly.
- Quite a few celebrities judged and hosted events this year. Raageshwari hosted Antakshari.
- In addition to more than 2 lakhs of cash prizes, there were some attractive kind prizes such as guitars, dance courses and a wild card entry to Radio Mirchi's RJ hunt.

Lows :
- Some people felt that the fun element was missing in a few of the competitions. In some events, the organisers failed to think out of the box.
- A few of the new events did not attract too many entries.

Junta speak : "Events were organised with clockwork precision"
Rating : ★★★★☆

Horizons

Highs :
- Horizons was much bigger this MI. The events were widely considered to be novel and more than made up for the absence of Vogue.
- The hypnotism show by Dr. Nagesh was a huge crowd puller and was the crowd satisfied!
- The turnout at various workshops was overwhelmingly large, so much so that repeats had to be organised to accommodate the crowds. Unconventional themes like dreams interpretation, eating with chopsticks and grooming were well received.
- The highly entertaining Canadian jazz band, Shuffle Demons whetted the appetite of all jazz lovers and ensured that the crowd had a good time.
- As always, the dance workshops were a huge hit.

Lows :
- The much publicised panel debate featuring Mahesh Bhatt, Sreenivasan Jain and Ayaz Memon was cancelled because the high profile panelists had last minute scheduling problems.
- P.C. Sorcar's magic show failed to live up to expectations. Some of the magic on display was a little too kiddish to capture the imagination of a college festival crowd.

Junta speak : "Dr. Nagesh was freaking scary! He had people reciting rhymes like programmed robots."
Rating : ★★★★☆

Crowds and Publicity

The crowds this year were lesser than normal. One can only speculate on the reasons for this. However, the general feeling was that publicity could have been better. Posters were sent out late and were boring in content. There was also hardly any internal publicity. MI Times didnt come out and there wasn't any buzz about MI in the campus during the semester. Besides this, the theme of the fest, 'Aqua' wasn't portrayed too well.
Rating : ★★☆☆☆

Night-outs by :
Krishna Ramkumar
&
Nishant Patni

A Misty Eyed View from the North-East

I am visiting IIT Guwahati for a semester. On my way to work, thinking of Mumbai, I become misty eyed. That's because the temperature here is 10 deg in cloudy conditions, not because I'm missing IIT Bombay. Not so soon, anyway. To add to the spice of coincidence, there is a Powai in Assam, one of the easternmost stations on Indian Railways, near the Myanmar border, past Tinsukia.

The neat thing about the IIT campus here is that you can take the ferry across the great Brahmaputra from a point 2 km or so away from the hostel gate and 15 mins later, you are in the heart of Guwahati city. The river is just 200 m or so from one of the gates. The IIT G campus sits on the banks of some lakes, nestling between some hills and all that, quite like the IIT-B campus. (Nestling is a cosy sort of word, but it is quite cold here. Did I mention that?). During this season, exotic migratory birds flit on the surfaces of the aforementioned lakes and less exotic migratory faculty cycle to work. The admin building canteen here beats the IIT B staff canteen hands down, I think. Except on Fridays, I almost never miss the Staff C.

The IIT atmosphere is quite the same. Lots of facilities, lots of qualified faculty, many bright students, and everyone trying to optimize! I'm teaching the optimization course here, so no complaints, and in fact,

I drew a spark of recognition when I said that even deciding what time to get up is an optimization problem for many students. Too early and you reluctantly feel that you might as well catch the last morning lecture, and we all know that the surgeon gen-

NR eye
by
Prof. Narayan Rangaraj

eral has determined that too many lectures could have a detrimental effect on one's outlook. Too late, and you have missed lunch in the mess, and have to troop to the canteen in the admin building or go to the idli man outside, to keep body and soul together. 12:00 noon seems to be the optimal solution to this particular problem. Faculty at any IIT feel a little Jekyll & Hydeish. When we occasionally meet outsiders, like the press, or visitors from Taiwan, we are proud of our students, (mainly because they got the top 0.04% rank in a competitive exam, as all statements of purpose start off with, more about which later). In classes and labs, faculty and students are mostly like two sets of ships that pass at night, without too many interactions. However, with insiders (like other faculty), they discuss

draconian measures like attendance (here it is 75%), which certainly does not reflect a high opinion of the judgement of the same people that we are so proud of. This is all highly stressful, as you would imagine. Some (faculty) crack under the strain.

Some other tightropes that faculty walk on. Reco letters. Here are some dilemmas and how they are resolved. The task is to write neutral or vaguely positive statements without letting cats out of bags.

Reco statement: PQR is an excellent team worker and gets along well with others.
Translation: PQR does nothing himself and gets someone else to work and takes the credit to an amazing extent.

Reco statement: PQR works independently and does not require any supervision.
Translation: I have no idea where PQR is and what he is doing, but he must be doing well, based on placement records. He must not be needing supervision. I certainly don't know what he is up to. In fact, let me ask you this. Where do I come in to this whole business of PQR's career? The only time I have met PQR in recent times is when he dropped in with his packet of reco letters.

Reco statement : PQR works well in areas of her interest.
Translation : PQR is a smart student, but

works only if highly motivated by some whim. She liked two (or three) of the 30 odd courses we were able to provide for her perusal, and she did well in those, I guess.

Reco statement : PQR is enterprising and persevering.
Translation : Look how he got me to write this thing. With his record and what I could tell you about him … But then I would have to admit to a lot of things which I don't want to get into. PQR also guesses that this is the case. He's smart too, apart from enterprising and persevering.

I ask for statements of purpose from students who want recos, but I think I'm going to stop doing this. Reading those, you get the feeling of being in this temple of learning, where this keen, focused student PQR comes in, goes through an exhilarating set of stimulating course-work and research, with exciting projects, independent explorations into interesting by-lanes, finally culminating in this next step leading to further excellence in some esteemed school or other. Sound familiar? Are we talking about the same PQR who attends so few lectures that we have senate meetings (where about 200 senior people with Ph.D.s sometimes attend), specifically to discuss him?

All the best for 2006, from a far-off but not so distant part of the world.

IIT Bombay - An outsider's perspective

(Rishi Jajoo, a Junior at Harvard University, studied at IIT this fall in the Physics Department through a study abroad program. He is an American of Indian origin, living in Houston, Texas. At IIT he stayed in Hostel 13.)

AMONG Indian-Americans like myself, IIT holds a deified position on the altar of education. A good number of Americans, even those not of Indian heritage know about IIT and its academic prowess. When I first thought about studying at IIT, I was told that it would be even harder and better than MIT or Harvard. Therefore, little prepared me for the fact that IIT is just a second-rate technical college. Yes, IIT graduates occupy good positions in both industry and academia in both America and India and some of the CEO's and engineers of Fortune 500 companies have come from IIT. However, I would safely say that these people succeeded in spite of IIT and not because of it.

The ultimate let down of IIT was the teaching. I purport wholeheartedly that the professors know their subjects well; however they don't know how to communicate their knowledge in an effective way. Professors are supposed

to educate, inspire and above all – with the amazing capability of IIT students – to challenge them to think harder, deeper and with more creativity than they have thought before. However, what I found at IIT was a teaching style that was lackluster, soporific and just plain unchallenging. The only way to learn science and engineering well is to figure out a lot of hard problems; somehow the professors just don't understand this. They rarely gave out of class assignments that took time and effort to do.

What was even more frustrating is that any problems that were assigned were done by a few people and then copied by the rest of the class. Most students expressed surprise at my incredulity in observing this process. IIT likes to compare itself to some of the best colleges around the world, but this kind of rampant academic dishonesty would - at any reputable college - elicit the prompt suspension and expulsion of the entire class. I quickly became sick of professors who did little more than regurgitate material they have read from a book. I honestly felt myself getting stupider sitting in some of the classes. The only things worse than the classes were the labs, which

> *"...any problems that were assigned were done by a few people and then copied by the rest of the class; this kind of rampant academic dishonesty would - at any reputable college - elicit the prompt suspension and expulsion of the entire class."*

were mind-numbingly boring, poorly written and poorly explained by inane TF's. I know for a fact that many of the TF's did not actually know how the experiments

worked, they had just mugged the procedure.

What bugs me about the academic system at IIT is that only a very few students and professors have any passion, any heart, for real learning. All the rest don't do nearly a thing during the year and just mug for the exams and quizzes. To tell the truth, the classes were so badly taught that I was ready to go back home after just two weeks of being at IIT. However, I stuck it out, and resolved myself to focus more upon the cultural and personal aspects of my time in India.

As I indicated before, I found the level of intelligence of students to be extremely high, comparable to the level of students I found at Harvard but decidedly not as diverse in their interests. However, I really enjoyed being part of the junta for a semester. There is a sense of camaraderie at IIT that I have not found at Harvard. It seems as if everyone is in IIT together, trying to help each other out and commiserating with the ubiquitous, "Dayaa."

As a case in point, as an American, I had a habit of saying, "Thank you" for almost every little thing anyone did for me. After I said this to one of my friends, he gave me

a strange look and asked me why I always said, "thank you" for everything. I stumbled through some mumbled explanation about courtesy and American customs, but what I realize now is that no thanks were needed. The culture of IIT students is that everyone will need help with something at some time or another and that it was

> *"The culture of IIT students is that everyone will need help with something at some time or another and that it was your duty as a friend to assist your fellow student. That sense of community and of brotherhood is something that all students of IIT should cherish, for the world is not so fraternal."*

your duty as a friend to assist your fellow student. That sense of community and of brotherhood is something that all students of IIT should cherish, for the world is not so fraternal.

However, something that disturbs me is that a good part of the student body at IITB does not do anything outside of class besides sit at their computers and listen to music, watch movies or play games. To put it succinctly in IIT lingo, there is no enthu. Bas, chalta hei.

I retrospect, I'm not sure I would have come to IIT to study if I knew then what I know now. However, I am extremely fortunate to have made some amazing friendships and experienced my culture in its native land. Without a doubt, I'll be back in India very soon and look forward to being reunited with all IITians I've met.

For eons it was only a blood-red dot among the starry host. Sometimes, when it veered close to the earth and shone like a burning coal in the darkness, it must have roused terror among the primitive sky-watchers, only to fade away into relative obscurity and be forgotten once more.

OVER the centuries, the planet Mars has lodged itself in the human imagination as a locus of hope, fascination and fear. As science has progressed, myths have been shattered, to be replaced by cold, hard facts. Yet, Mars has lost none of its allure. It shines brighter than ever, gleaming, beckoning. Mars calls us, inviting us to set up camp, explore its mysteries, and make it ours.

Mars is undoubtedly the best target for colonization in the solar system because of its potential for self-sufficiency. With the discovery of water on Mars, we know that it has all the elements needed to support life. Its near 24-hr day and earth-like seasons will make adjusting even easier.

Although the trip to Mars is a thousand times longer than that to the moon, current technology can easily get us there in a reasonable amount of time. The (traditional) minimum energy route takes about 250 days. Spending a little more fuel can easily bring this down to 150 days. Besides, the living conditions on board were a lot worse than on modern spaceships.

The Interplanetary Superhighway (a recent discovery based on chaos theory) allows even lower energy costs. It takes too long to be practical for humans, but will be the perfect way to transport cargo cheaply.

Survival on Mars will not be easy. Mars is cold and dry, with a thin atmosphere that allows a lot of harmful radiation through. Thankfully, space suits can take care of all these problems. These suits can be a lot lighter and thinner than the ones used on the moon. Material science has progressed a lot since then, and besides, Mars is not as inhospitable as the moon.

Off to Mars!

In his winning entry at Science Journalism Shaleen Harlalka explores the possibilities of colonialising Mars

Although initial supplies can be shipped from earth, Martian colonists are going to have an extremely tough time unless they learn to live off the land, using local resources to fulfil their needs. Closed ecosystems can be designed to minimize food and water requirements, but one major need that cannot be compromised on is the need for fuel. Luckily, Mars is known to have water and carbon dioxide in large quantities, allowing the production of a variety of fuels. In fact, since hydrogen can burn in the Martian atmosphere, existing research on hydrogen engines can be used to design air-breathing engines for Mars.

As soon as the technology for fusion is perfected, Mars becomes an even more attractive destination. Deuterium, the fuel for fusion, is 5 times more common on Mars than on Earth. With deuterium-based fusion reactors powering their vehicles, the whole of Mars will be open to colonists.

The very first people on Mars would be living in their spaceships, connecting them with inflatable tunnels to ease interaction. But, as more people arrive, this starts to get impractical. The best option is one that has been thoroughly explored in science fiction: Pressurised domes. They will be easy and quick to set up, and will allow people to make areas habitable quickly.

However, transportation of large ready-to-set-up domes from earth will be quite a problem. In keeping with the philosophy of living off the land, brick will be the ideal construction material on Mars. The Martian soil can easily be baked into bricks, and this can be used to make extremely strong structures, similar to classical Roman architecture.

The final step in the conquest of Mars will be to terraform it, to make the entire planet suitable for human habitation. The main tasks that need to be accomplished are to give it a breathable atmosphere, and to increase the temperature.

The best place to start will be at the south pole, which is covered in frozen carbon-dioxide. Melting it will not only thicken the atmosphere, it will also help heat the planet due to the greenhouse effect. In fact, a mere 40 C rise will lead to a cascading effect, raising temperatures all over Mars.

There are many ways to provide this initial impetus. Orbiting mirrors could be used to concentrate sunlight onto the pole. Or, we could set up industries on Mars to produce potent greenhouse gases like CFCs. Once the environment has become a bit more agreeable, specially designed bacteria can be introduced to accelerate the process.

A thicker atmosphere will also protect the surface from radiation. People will be able to walk about unprotected on the surface of Mars, assisted by only a small breathing device. To shed that last burden, the atmosphere must be made breathable. Once again, microbes can lend a hand, tirelessly converting carbon-dioxide to oxygen.

It may be hundreds of years before Mars is truly ours, but that is a small time on cosmological scales. H. G. Wells once said, "The choice is the Universe, or nothing." Mars is but the first rung of the infinite ladder of cosmic exploration. It is inevitable that a colony be established on Mars, a dynamic new frontier of human society. So then, forward to Mars.

07

(Science Journalism is a contest held by Technic, the institute's technical club)

Questech - that grey cell tickler!

How often were your random thoughts given a jolt by the sudden discovery that you have hardly been using that thinking facility in your head we call the brain? So wait no further, pick up a pencil and a piece of paper and have a go at yet another- Questech.

The bad number
13 is considered as a bad omen in many cases. In ancient Rome, witches reportedly gathered in groups of 12. The 13th was believed to be the devil. This is just one of the many myths about the bad omen 13. Mr. X, a believer in bad omens, once got a payment order for N articles. It so happened that he needed to turn down the order for the number showed the bad omen. The 50 digit number N, which consisted of all the 1s except the 26th digit from the left, was a multiple of 13. What was this 26th digit?

The Archie Jughead Game
Archie and Jughead once get a chocolate bar with 3x9 squares. It's difficult to decide then who will have the larger half of the chocolate. They decide to play a game. They decide to break the chocolate in the 3x9 = 27 squares, with one break at a time. Each break is made only along the rims of the squares, and the breaks are made alternately. Whoever makes the last break will get the larger half of the chocolate. If Jughead is the one who got more chocolate (he had to!), who started the game?

Colourful numbers
Shweta : Varun, write three numbers on three different colored cards, and tell me something about them.
Varun : Their product is 36.
Shweta : I can't guess them from that !
Varun : I'll write their sum on your hand.
Shweta : Still, I can't say what they are ?
Varun : The largest one is written on a red card !
Shweta : Ah! Now I know

What number did Varun write on Shweta's hand?

The ball game
You have 8 balls, out of which 7 are identical and one is heavier. Can you find the heavier ball using a balance only twice? How?

Send in your answers, queries and suggestions to vkanade@cse.iitb.ac.in and/or shweta@iitb.ac.in. Winners names to be put up in the next issue.

"IITs are among the best in science as well" - David Gross

-a report by Prashant Pawan

IT is not often that you get to attend a lecture by a nobel laureate. And when the lecture is held in your own institute, you just can not afford to miss it. IIT Bombay had the honour of organising a talk by the winner of the Physics Nobel Prize for 2004, David Gross. As expected, a packed PCSA auditorium welcomed the great scientist. The Director, Prof. Ashok Misra, started the proceedings of what turned out to be a fabulous and insightful lecture on the world of fundamental physics. The lecture was primarily about the revolutions in present day physics and those that are expected in the coming years. Dr. Gross talked about his team's contribution to the field of fundamental physics and in particular the science of strong forces and asymptotic freedom. " It is possible that string theory is the 'Theory of Everything' that we have been looking for. And I assure you that whoever finds it is sure to win a Nobel prize", said Dr. Gross. He also added that present day physics is so challenging that new mathematics had to be invented inorder to understand it and work with it. "We have numbers that do not commute. But that's not very odd . If you are comfortable with talking about the square root of minus 1, you should have no problem with this either." Later when asked about the IITs, Dr. Gross said that he considered the IITs to be among the best science schools. "Most Indian Physicists I know are from the IITs. And after coming here to interact with you people, I am pretty certain that you are among the best." The lecture was enjoyed by both students and professors alike. Prof. Yajnik of the Physics Department appreciated the leture andsaid that it was highly inspiring to faculty and students alike. IIT Bombay will surely be looking forward to more such talks in the future.

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february 5 . 2006

8

Security Check

After the recent attack at IISc security concerns have grown at major educational institutes across the country. Palak, Ankur Kulkarni and Ruchir take a look at security in our campus.

LAST semester brought to light the insufficiency of the security measures in IITB. Four girls were robbed of their money and belongings worth Rs. 25000 near Sameer. Two laptops were stolen from a conference. An LCD projector was stolen from the Chemical Engineering Department. In mid-December, an Emac and two CPUs were stolen from the H13 computer room. Investigations are on for the missing electronic equipments but the authorities are still unable to comment about the culprits or how the H13 incident took place. Though the institute lacks the new-age security resources to combat or prevent such incidents, the recent attack has come as a big shock to the authorities and essential measures are being taken quickly.

In keeping up with the aim to stop 'infiltration' from parts of the campus that are not walled, the institute was building a wall near the hill-side residential area. While the masons were at work, they were attacked by sword and stick wielding men. The masons scooted for their lives and returned after a few days but with nearly 10 security men keeping a close eye around them. It is high time we took a look at the security inside our campus.

Let us first see the structure of the formal security mechanism that the institute has. IIT Bombay has a Standing Advisory Committee for Security to look into all the security issues on campus. It is the main body deciding the measures to be taken, the areas to be guarded, organizing additional security measures during festivals and conferences and to attend to security related problems of all residents of the campus. Next in the organizational hierarchy comes the Security Office headed by the Security Officer, currently Mr. Vijay Kumar, who has the responsibility of implementing all the policies of safeguarding the campus and its residents, including regulating the inflow and outflow of goods, supervising investigations for lost or stolen articles etc. The Committee has two representatives each of students, staff and faculty to give their feedback on the security measures and bring forth their problems and suggestions to the Security Officer. All hostels are guarded by private personnel of the SPS Security Agency and have nearly 85 men on guard in three shifts. Given this security setup let us look at the various security hot-spots.

Hostels - Private security guards: The theft of a computer in H13 has shown that the security in Hostels 12 and 13 is not sufficient. Guarding two hostels with three wings each and a common interconnecting mess is not an easy job. According to Mr. Kumar, shifting the security of these two hostels from their respective entrances to the common main entrance of these hostels will prove to be a better solution. Keeping in mind this theft and other such incidents, the Security Advisory Committee is planning to employ only institute trained guards in the whole institute.

Sameer: Giving his comments on the Sameer incident, Mr. Kumar expressed his displeasure at students going to unsafe and prohibited areas in and around the institute such as the Boathouse, Hill-top, Vihar Lake, although a common pastime for the students but is an additional nuisance for the security office. He also revealed a plan to construct a fence and footpath around Sameer and have proper lighting and night patrolling to make the place safe(r).

Main Gate: The security at the main gate has become the most talked about issue since the last semester. The challenge the authorities face is to maintain balance between convenience of inmates and efficiency of preventive measures. The Institute gives a sticker to all the vehicles owned by institute residents. Such sticker-bearing vehicles undergo only minor checking at the gate whereas tourist vehicles are thoroughly checked.

Wall: With the extension of the Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road, the institute is soon going to give away a certain part of its land. This would mean that more of the already crumbling main wall would be taken down implying a two-fold problem. Firstly, there would be no sense in employing any new technology immediately. Also, a significant temporary setup would be needed while the new gate is being constructed. But it seems that the part of the wall that has fallen off now, might be reconstructed before the entire wall is taken down depending on MMRDA plans.

Labs: Other issues include security of labs. Depending on the research going on in a particular lab, some labs are also provided special security if demanded by the HoD or lab in-charge. The Security Office as such does not classify labs as high-security or normal security zones. In case of a national level research, labs are provided with national security by the government.

Security during fests: The most sensitive time for security office is during festivals in the institute. Though the security guards keep a special vigil at such times and the Security Officer is present in plain clothes at the OAT entrance, Mr. Vijay Kumar congratulated the student volunteers the for their efficient frisking at the SAC. He said that organizers and coordinators share more than half their burden during

JUST LIKE THAT! - by Pawan & Sandhya
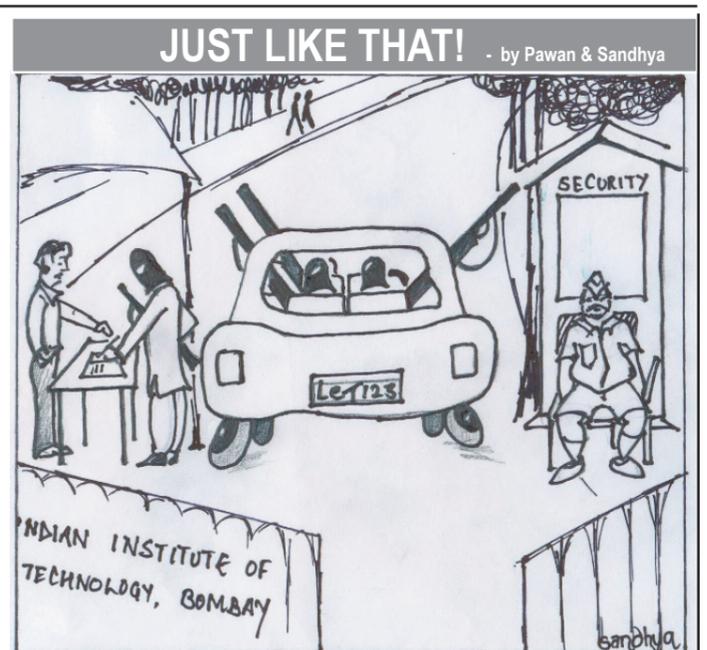
"Alright! Any computers/electronic gadgets in the car?"

Dr. S.S. Mahant Shetti

ANY discussion on the contribution of the IITs to India's technological progress invariably focusses on the oft-debated issue of the 'Brain Drain'. For years, IIT graduates have been accused of failing to repay to the country the cost of its best education facilities. There have, however, still been a few instances of people who have returned to India after pursuing their higher studies abroad and made a big difference. One such person is Dr. S.S. Mahant Shetti, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, whose story is proof of what a motivated and intelligent mind can achieve.

Dr. Mahant Shetti passed out of IIT-Bombay in 1972 with a B Tech degree in Electrical Engineering. He then did his Masters and PhD at Brown University, Rhode Island. Following this, he worked in the research laboratories of Texas Instruments in Dallas for 16 years and then in Test Chip Technologies for 3 years. He also started the Linear Design Centre in Texas Instruments India, the first commercial design group in India. The group is considered a premier design group in India. Dr. Shetti has authored or co-authored more than 30 papers in varied fields and holds 63 patents. For his research in the US industry, he is a widely respected personality in the field of microelectronics.
After 19 years of experience in the US industry, Dr. Shetti returned to India with the goal of setting up a highly efficient design company. He launched Karnataka Microelectronic Design Centre Pvt Ltd (KarMic), a highly entrepreneurial design services organization that develops and markets high performance semiconductor design solutions. KarMic's primary goals are two-fold: 1) To be able to participate in the international market, by staying close to home and doing challenging work. 2) To spawn new centers in small towns throughout the country with a view of providing high skill employment to people close to their homes.

I had an opportunity to meet Dr. Shetti at his home in picturesque Manipal and spoke to him on a wide range of issues including the IITs, India's stature in the global technological arena and his future plans. "IITians", he says, "are by definition, highly intelligent and so have a huge responsibility in the progress of the country, both technological and otherwise. Unfortunately, many IITians live under the illusion of being elitist and their ears are clogged. Getting into an IIT is not a prize and one just can't afford to get caught in a comfort zone. You need focussed minds to do high risk research in industry." On the academic culture prevalent in the IITs, Dr. Shetti stressed on the fact that it is critical to learn one's subject in depth and also perpetually discuss problems of current

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Entrepreneurship@ SINE
- a report by Nishant Patni

SINE or the Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is an initiative for encouragement and furtherance of entrepreneurship at IIT Bombay. It administers a business incubator to provide support and aid for technology based entrepreneurship.

Located behind the Electrical Dept. Annex., is the new SINE – CSRE building which plays a nursery to a host of young entrepreneurial saplings, called Startups. Come on to the second floor and you can see an array of cubicles, housing these startups, each buzzing with energy and enthusiasm. In an attempt to spot the next Indian multinational in the making, we spoke to one such startup called 'Quantum Phynance' about SINE and entrepreneurship in general.

Quantum Phynance (QP) - as the name suggests, is a provider of cutting-edge financial software solutions and sophisticated quantitative modeling and computational methods in finance. It began as a result of concerted efforts by Mr. Vidya Nathan (an IITK- IIMA alumnus) and Pushpraj Singh (an IITB grad.) in September 2004.

But, having begun just a year and half ago, the firm has bagged quite a number of high profile projects. Their clientele includes the likes of banks and financial institutions such as ICICI, HDFC in India, DBS Bank, Singapore and a couple of clients in the US.
(Despite the rather influential list of corporate-customers, the promoters are modest enough to call themselves doing just OK!)

Also, in spite of the high grade work they do for large corporate/financial institutions, the work culture seemed pretty informal (In fact one of the promoters was even found trotting around with a football in their 10'x 20' office space!).

When asked for their views on SINE and how it has benefited them, the promoters say, "SINE is a wonderful initiative. We think it is just perfect. Being associated with IITB, helps a lot in the initial phase of getting your first step into the door of a client." "Besides, working in an eco-system of startups definitely helps. Whenever you feel a bit depressed, you can always look around to see others slogging even more and cheer yourself up!", adds Vidya.

(Nishant Patni is a third year student in the Dept. of EE and can be contacted at np@ee. iitb.ac.in)

IN the wake of the tragic suicide of Vijay Kiran Nukala last semester, the gravity of the problem of student depression came to the fore. While the IIT community initially voiced its anguish by pointing fingers at each other, it was soon apparent that checking student depression is the need of the hour. InsIghT attempts to find answers to some of the uncomfortable questions that were raised by this unfortunate incident.

Everybody Hurts?
Student depression might not exactly be a new phenomenon, but the days of pushing it under the carpet are clearly over. As more and more students seem to suffer from varying degrees of depression, one clearly needs to look into this alarming trend. In an interview with InsIghT, the student counselor, Mrs. Amita Tagare, said, "Depression is not as rare as is perceived. Though students visit me throughout the year, a larger number meets me at the beginning of the academic year, mostly freshmen with problems like homesickness, peer adjustment and hostel adjustment." She also said that almost half the students she counsels have had a history of problems even before coming to IIT. She added that academic failure, followed by family problems appeared to be the two most common causes of depression. Not too surprisingly, a large number of IITians are also afflicted by heartbreak. A small fraction of students suffer from clinical depression too. As expected, a perceptible change in the level of competition inside IIT takes a heavy toll on students used to being the best at their respective schools.

Academic failure and family problems appear to be two of the most common causes of depression among IIT Bombay students.

The Blame Game
Given that the academic workload is a major cause of depression, the students and the authorities seem to be on opposite sides of the battle lines here. So does the onus of measuring up lie squarely on the shoulder of students, or has the institute set the bar too high? Most parties seem to be unanimous in the verdict that IIT cannot lower its standards. "If students learn to use the innumerable available facilities judiciously, academics would definitely not be a trouble zone. Some students don't seem to have their priorities in life right", says Mrs. Tagare without mincing words. The Dean of Student Affairs (DoSA) Prof. Prakash Gopalan adds, "The Institute has not really changed its stand in recent years. Yes, there is tighter implementation of rules within the existing framework, but this has been done primarily to redress the loss of equilibrium over the last couple of years. It is ridiculous to even contemplate lowering academic standards. If one starts this exercise, it could go and on. Where does one stop?" However, if a student has trouble coping with the system, can the institute look the other way? Prof. Gopalan concedes that while the institute must maintain its high academic standards, it should not come at the cost of its students and their well-being. "Rules must be enforced, but one surely cannot disregard other factors such as personal problems", he adds. Does that mean that the institute

is going to adopt a more holistic approach towards students with a poor academic record? Only time will tell.

The DoSA seems to be getting the bigger picture when he says, "I think we should stop playing the blame game. What is more important is that we identify and address cases of depression."

Identification – How do we fit in?
The student counselor is available to tackle the case once identified but it is not humanly possible for the counselor to carry out real-time screening or scout around for cases of depression. This is where the faculty advisors come in. The faculty advisor is expected to monitor the academic performance of his batch and identify cases of poor performance. A mentorship program for non-freshmen can facilitate easy identification of troubled individuals." The institute is also planning to carry out a study of the backlog cases. The aspects of maladjustment, socio-economic issues, regional issues and personality related issues shall be studied. The institute hopes to get better insight into some aspects of student depression through this study. The counselor has also recommended a workshop to sensitize professors, faculty advisors, wardens and associate wardens to adolescent problems. A caller helpline might also be in the offing. A caller is encouraged to speak more with little or no interference or probing. The caller does not have to identify himself either. A 7-day training programme will be conducted by the UK based organization Samaritans (which provides helplines) for volunteers for these 12/24 hour lines.

The Institute does appear to have adopted a proactive stand with regards to the problem of student depression. Can the same be said of the student community?

If friends and wingmates can keep an eye out for any unusual change in someone's behaviour or lifestyle, many a problem can be nipped in the bud.

The Temptations – The Latent Evils ?
No discussion on poor academic performance or student depression in IIT is complete without treading controversial ground: extra-curricular activities and more importantly, LAN. Reams of newspaper space have been devoted to the internet and gaming addiction of IITians. Distraction from academics is the least of the accusations against the LAN culture. Irregular sleep cycles and dietary habits and sedentary lifestyles do as much harm to the mind as to the body. The DoSA safely takes a democratic stand on this issue, "There has been no initiative from the student body with regards to this issue, the student representatives were supposed to come up with a solution to the problem by beginning of January but they haven't responded so far. We will not force a stand on the students; we have left the decision to the student representatives because this is an issue that should concern the students more than anyone else."

There are still some unanswered questions that we need to ask ourselves. Are we turning into a tech savvy but socially inept lot? How long before the rat race makes complete rats out of us? Stress and depression seem to be natural by-products of the competitive times that we live in. However, student depression is not merely something that can be wished away, but it can be surmounted with the right professional and personal help. If the entire IIT community joins hands to grapple with depression, help will never be more than a hand away.

(Amrita Mahale is a fouth year student from the Dept. of Aerospace Engineering. Sriram Emani is a third year student of the Dept. of Civil Engineering. Vivek Upadhyay is a second year student from the Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering. They can be contacted at amrita@aero.iitb.ac.in, sriramemani@iitb.ac.in and vivek_u@iitb.ac.in, respectively)

Turn That Frown Around!

Amrita Mahale, Sriram Emani and Vivek Upadhyay look at the various facets of the problem of student depression and possible initiatives to curb this growing menace

unsatisfactory performance. Proactive faculty advisors have done much more than what is required of them on paper. Good advice from a faculty member is often exactly what a confused student needs, and the faculty advisor would almost always be the one who knows a student's academic record best. As of now, faculty advisors seem to be using ad hoc approaches. Formal guidelines, including some directions from the student counselor, could facilitate better interaction between students and the faculty advisor.

Not all cases of depression, however, stem from academic problems. This is where the hostel fabric comes in. If wingmates and friends can keep an eye out for unusual changes in someone's behaviour/lifestyle, many a problem can be nipped in the bud. If you notice an unusual change in someone's social interaction or eating and sleeping habits, bring this to the notice of a friend of the concerned person. Similarly, a sudden drop in attendance could be brought to the attention of the faculty advisor. Under no circumstances should one make fun of someone with such problems: it will make them withdraw into their shell further. Sometimes, a student can sense signs of depression in his/her own life. In all these cases, it is important not to brush off these signs as trivial or embarrassing. Mrs. Tagare sums up the sentiment when she says, "Stereotypes associated with psychological problems must be done away with. Take the analogy of diseases. If we suffer from a disease, we make our way to a doctor. Similarly, one shouldn't hesitate to approach the authorities for help. Mental health must be given top priority."

" Stereotypes associated with psychological problems must be done away with "
- Mrs Tagare, Institute Student Counselor

Tackling the Problem
On an individual level, the solution is obviously to visit a counselor. In some serious cases, medication might be required too. However, one cannot afford to be myopic. To check this problem at the roots long-term solutions are required. The institute is currently discussing mentorship programs for students of all years. Faculty-in-charge of the Student Mentor Program, Prof. Gadre explains, "Through their interaction with freshmen, mentors are sensitized towards issues such as maladjustment and

the night shows at OAT and he was very impressed by their work in this regard. Solutions? Currently, the main focus of the Security Office is the security inside the campus. For this purpose, three armed guards will patrol the campus on motorbikes all the time. Security Jeeps also patrol the campus at night and look out for any tress-passers on campus. Prof. Gopalan admitted, "It's a tough decision to have armed personnel in an academic institute. We can not arm all the guards at the Main Gate. But since we require a little more security presently, we are deploying three armed guards for night-patrolling." Regarding the case of armed security, a recent newspaper report claimed that the CISF may be deployed in the institute. Quite surprisingly, neither Mr. Kumar, nor Prof. Gopalan had heard about this barring through the press.

It may be sometime before we can feel absolutely secure regarding our stay on campus and as thefts of mobiles and cycles and personal valuables have not been making into the newsgroups lately, we can only hope the situation gets better at the earliest, seemingly hoping against hope, at any rate for the next few months.

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Dr. S. S. Mahant Shetti

(...continued from page 8)

science with friends. In a period of just 6 years, KarMic has emerged as a team with in-depth acumen in Memory, High Performance Digital, Analog, RF and Mixed Signal domains. A unique feature of the Design Centre is that its members are drawn exclusively from KarMic Training Centre after a year of postgraduate training emphasizing the practical aspects of IC design. Dr. Shetti says "To build a company from scratch requires unconditional commitment from a core group of members for atleast a period of 10 years. Today, innovation from India in the global technical arena is minimal. Leave aside the Western countries, we face stiff competition from even the likes of Korea, Israel and Finland."

Prof. A.N. Chandorkar and Prof. Vasi, professors in the Electrical Engineering department, who are friends of Dr. Shetti are stake-holders in the company. Prof. Chandorkar says of KarMic "It is a wonderful venture. Mahant and his colleagues lecture the students on design subjects and they have hands down experience. Students who join the training centre are guaranteed a job in KarMic or Texas Instruments. Mahant is truly a great personality. Even today, he lives a modest life and devotes all his time to KarMic. The atmosphere that prevails in the company is similar to that in a Gurukul."

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february 5 . 2006

10

the companies competing to attract the more promising hires to their own stables. Shadows of doubt have also been cast over the placement process and the student placement body; with cases of companies announcing walk-in interviews, bizarre and very short interview procedures, problems with information not reaching students in time. Allegations of the placement representatives' unwarranted influence on the companies' process of short-listing candidates are also flying thick and fast. There have also been discussions about alumni influencing the short listing for a lot of companies. At the same time, it has been generally accepted that the placement body of the institute has done a good job, considering the fact that the organization here has been much better than that at other IITs. The body has ensured proper scheduling and students was spared the worry of having companies with lesser pay scales coming to recruit earlier than those with higher pay. If managing this sounds trivial, it should be noted that such a problem actually occured in a few IITs. They have also ensured that the companies which recruit students from the CS and Electrical Engineering departments came to the campus before many other A1 companies.

On the whole, there are many things to learn from this placement season. It has been an exciting period, in a new scheme of things, and our record so far has been very promising. There is some way to go and a sizable number of students to be offered jobs, before we can say that the IIT Bombay placement process has been a success.

Eyebrow Raisers

Lehmann
· 6 people on the shortlist did not get interviewed, because a panelist did not turn up.
· Walk-in interviews on the basis of recommendations from students – even one member from the placement team; people who weren't on the initial shortlist got jobs!

Schlumberger
· Students clamoring leads to consideration of a few resumes.
· People not on the initial shortlist get interviewed – one of them gets a job.

CapitalOne
· Company decides to contact people off-campus after finishing their on-campus process.
· Decides not to give anyone an offer after flying people to Delhi – "suspects" that people had found out about the cases to be used in the interviews from people who had already been interviewed.
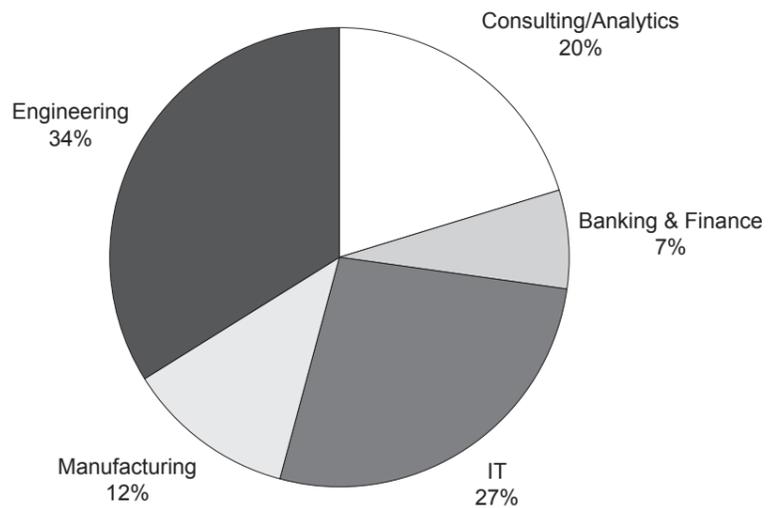
Deutsche Post
· Company decides to take help from the Placement Team on the short-listing procedure – furor in the Institute.
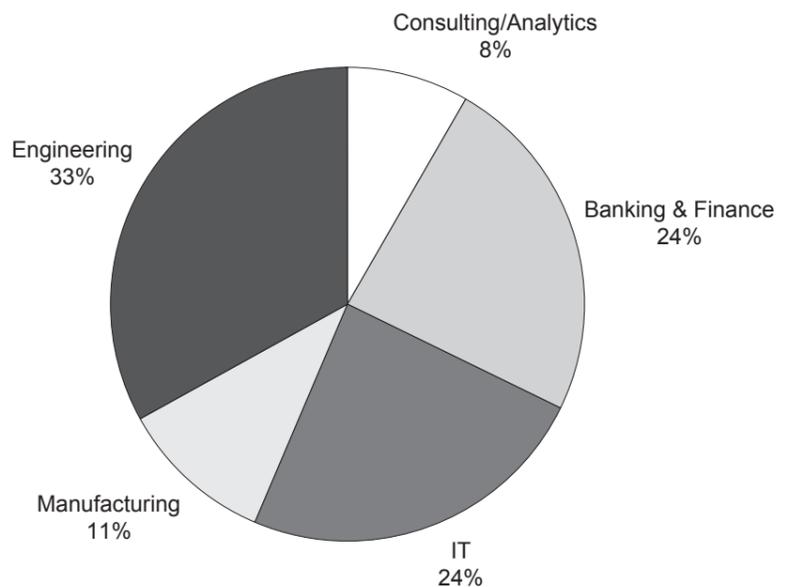· Student raises complaint – company ticked off – decides not to have anything to do with placements.

TCS
· Decides to pull strings to come earlier on Campus.
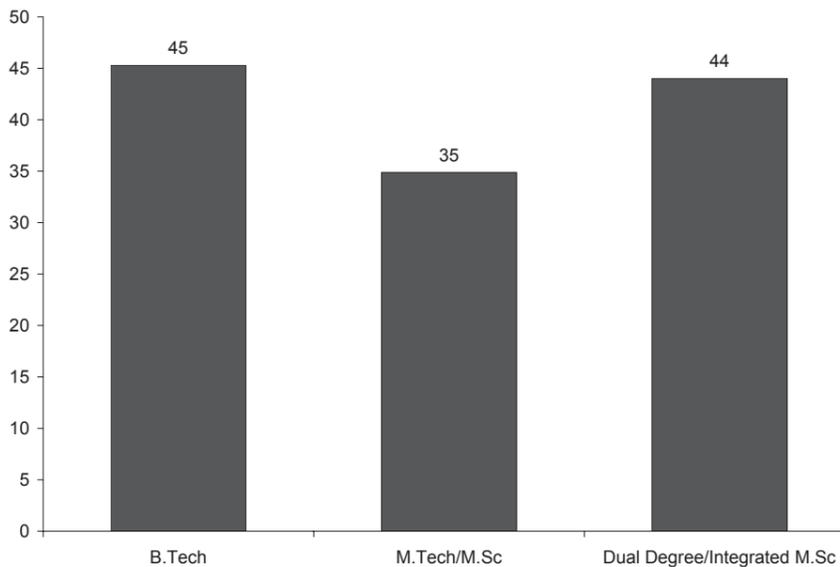· Hires 3 people – is known to have hired 80 in IIT Roorkee.
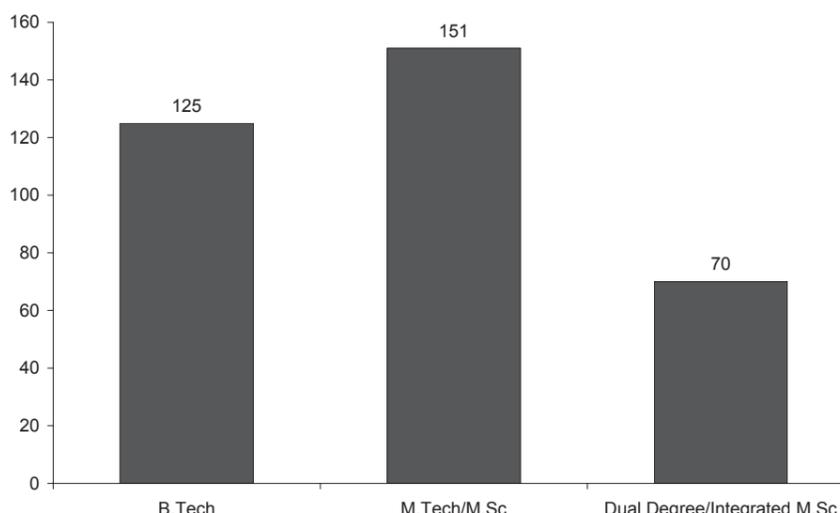
Statistics on 15th January 2006
Distribution of Companies

- Consulting/Analytics 20%
- Engineering 34%
- Banking & Finance 7%
- IT 27%
- Manufacturing 12%

Statistics on 15th January 2006
Distribution of Jobs

- Consulting/Analytics 8%
- Engineering 33%
- Banking & Finance 24%
- IT 24%
- Manufacturing 11%

Statistics on 15th January 2006
Percentage Placed

- B.Tech: 45
- M.Tech/M.Sc: 35
- Dual Degree/Integrated M.Sc: 44

Statistics on 15th January 2006
Number Placed

- B.Tech: 125
- M.Tech/M.Sc: 151
- Dual Degree/Integrated M.Sc: 70

OBITUARY

Vijay Kiran Nukala
(July 22, 1984 - November 16, 2005)

This is to honor the memory of our web administrator Vijay Kiran Nukala. Known for his skills with the computer, Vijay had carved a niche for himself with his website umang. When we asked him to put up the long defunct InsIghT website, he replied with a casual air, "Do teen din me ho jayega". Thats all it took him, three days to put up an excellent site. With time we came to know him as a trustworthy friend, shy and outspoken at once, motivated and well informed. Vijay was an invaluable asset to our team. His presence is sorely missed by us all.