Students' Gymkhana   IIT Bombay

Mid Tenure GS Review

In a bid to make the institute GSs more accountable to the student community, we conduct a review of the work done thus far.

General Secretary, Sports - Kuppa Vijay Krishna

Achievements

● A **taekwondo centre** has been established, as well as workshops held in swimming, tennis, volleyball and football.

● A proper **sports orientation** was held for UG and PG freshmen unlike in previous years when it was clubbed with orientations of other activities.

● Screening of the **football World Cup**.

● **Inter-IIT**

1. Part-time coaches have been appointed to train some teams before Inter-IIT - badminton, weightlifting and swimming.

2. The daily allowance during Inter-IIT has been increased from Rs.110 to Rs.150.

3. The cost of messing per day during Inter-IIT (borne by the institute, for all members attending Inter-IIT camp) has been increased from Rs.110 to Rs.130 in the hope that quality of food will increase.

Shortcomings

● **Sponsors** for Inter-IIT track suits could not be acquired though mentioned in the manifesto.

● Basic tasks such as updating the sports section of the **gymkhana website** have not been completed.

Manifesto-related issues

An issue that irks us at InsIghT is the bloating up of manifestos. The manifestos of all the GS Sports candidates looked similar last year with many promises of unachievable goals. Kuppa's manifesto had points such as the organisation of a **Sports Festival**, restructuring of NSO and formation of **a Sports Club**. It is high time the GSs showed some accountability with respect to what is proposed in their manifestos.

Other issues

● **Publicity**: The publicity of sports (and cultural) events is highly dependent on institute funding and approval, unlike that of the self-funded independent bodies. As a result, there is not much knowledge about these events; this issue has been taken up with the concerned authorities.

● **Inter-IIT contingent:** The strength has been increased to 130, but the number of girls has been reduced to 15 (from 20), meaning that some Women's teams will not be represented, in order to bolster the chances of the Men's contingent.

● **Inter-IIT travel:** Campus placements this year begin on Dec 1st, halt on Dec 9th for Inter-IIT and resume on Dec 22nd. A lot of effort went into arranging partial air-travel for the final year students, with some subsidy from the institute and a contribution from the rest of the team. However, this contribution worked out to be too much and unaffordable to some; hence, finally all members will be going by train.

● Though all attending Inter-IIT camp will have to pay Rs.530 for track suits, an increase of Rs.80 over last year, this is to ensure that those who make it for camp, but not to the final team, are still rewarded.

To conclude, while several new initiatives have been taken thus far, an actual idea of the progress made in the sports scene will only be possible next semester, which will see most Sports GC events taking place.

(Groundwork by Rohit Hippalgaonkar)

General Secretary, Hostel Affairs - Vinay Sharma

Achievements

● A proposal for the setting up of a **Student Welfare Society** has been approved in principle by the Director. The Society is aimed at addressing student problems directly and not via the Estate Office. Funds for this are expected from the institute with contributions from alumni.

● A **Hostel Maintenance Committee** is in the process of being set up. It aims to plan ahead for maintenance work, set deadlines and have someone accountable for the execution of work within these deadlines. For e.g., every year there are complaints regarding leakage in hostels, but after the monsoons the issue is forgotten. The job of the committee is to ensure that such complaints are followed up by timely action.

● The **geyser problems** of all hostels have been resolved by the purchase of sufficient numbers.

Shortcomings

● **Poor internal transportation**: This issue was covered extensively in our previous issue ('Tum-tum tamasha'). However, the problem has still not been completely resolved. Vinay clarifies that to rectify this, 8 tum-tums will be purchased early next semester. The institute will take care of the costs for now, but the Student Welfare Society would be involved in future payments.

● Vinay's Manifesto proposed a host of issues that would be addressed such as discounted mobile phone services, publicising of minutes of various meetings, proper maintenance of the hostel affairs website, etc. However, only a few of them have been delivered so far. Since the GSHA's work is directly related to the problems of students regarding institute infrastructural facilities, it is imperative that he be in constant communication with the students. At the same time, it must be said that he has put in a lot of effort to pursue the particular issues that he has taken up thus far.

Manifesto-related issues

● A **24-hour** Printing and Xerox shop as well as a **Late Night Canteen**: The proposals for these two have already been accepted. The delay is being caused by the unavailability of suitable venues; the building near H 8 (old Chinks) is now occupied by NCC.

● **Cheaper call rates** for campus dwellers: Vinay is due for a meeting with Hutch sometime soon, to discuss this further.

● **Centralised Distribution of Raw Materials**: The old system of central procurement of rations (operative till last semester) has fallen apart, and now hostels procure these commodities individually. The bottleneck however at present is the fact that the wardens are against this system.

Other issues

● **Wireless network** will be pursued in the next semester; initial cost-estimates suggest that this is quite feasible. However, this proposal is still in the pipeline.

● Dr. S. N. Jha, NSO coach, has proposed an idea of having a **Doctor in SAC** beyond 5 P.M. This will be further pushed from the side of the students in the next semester.

(Groundwork by Ruchir and Nithya)

General Secretary, Cultural Affairs - Sai Krishna Thota

Achievements:

● '**Theatre Fest**' as a 6-day extravaganza: The event was sponsored by LIC (which gave around Rs.30,000) and the institute had to only spend an additional amount of Rs.15,000.

● **Hasya Kavi Sammelan**: Students' Council took over the responsibility from the Hindi Cell and conducted it more professionally, thus receiving a much better response.

● **Spic Macay** events were held in a special 4-day format to arouse interest and then capitalise on this on the latter days.

● Revival of **Gyrations** and introduction of Photography as a GC event for the first time.

● Active functioning of the **Lit Club.**

Shortcomings and Sai's responses

● **Cult Calendar** was overloaded with 4 major events happening back to back - Hindi Band Event, Street Play, Gyrations and Socials. As a result, many believe that the quality of entries was sacrificed. Since some of these events required the same set of people, it resulted in burn-out as is evident from the fact that 3 hostels backed out of Gyrations. Also, it must be noted that the week immediately after the midsems didn't have any major event.

- Sai clarifies that they had to keep the inter-hostel events on hold because of the delay in the formation of new councils in most hostels.

- Expecting the Diwali break to be only 2-3 days long, the council had not foreseen a 9-10 day lull in cultural events. It resulted in over-crowding on the other available days.

- His plan was to give people some time to come out of the midsems' state of mind. So the week just after saw simpler events and workshops.

● A two-tier **point system** was announced for group and individual events but this is still very nebulous unless one clearly defines what comprises a group or individual event. And the decision as to what a particular event should be classified under was left till very late, even after the event in some cases.

- Sai admits that the issue wasn't clarified completely and that there was confusion regarding the classification of events. But the council promises to remedy this situation immediately after the winter break.

● The attempt to draft a Cult Calendar (though tentative) was well appreciated by one and all. But a lot of **rescheduling** was done and in some cases, events were even cancelled. Towards the end of the semester, Ad Film Making and Entertainment Quiz had to be postponed to the next semester.

- The Cult Council attributes the need for rescheduling to lots of unforeseen events like the NASI Convention as well as the quiz weeks of sophies in particular. So, they chose to try to ensure maximum participation by holding the events on more convenient dates.

Manifesto-related issues

● **Freshie GC:** Why is it not happening? The DoSA is not in favour of a Freshie GC, not even a weekend event like last year and wants all freshie interaction and participation to be through clubs and open events.

● **GBM** (one per semester proposed): When is it happening?

A GBM had been tentatively decided to be held in early November. But it didn't materialise. The 4 GSecs have now decided to hold a common GBM in the first/second week of January.

● **Open House:** When is it happening and what are the plans?

The council has planned to have a muli-session Open House early next semester. The hostels would be divided into pools of 3-4 and the council would visit each pool separately and interact directly with the hostel councils and other students for any doubts/complaints that they might have.

● **SAC library:** What is its current status and future plans?

The severe budget constraint that the council is facing this year as compared to last year is the reason why nothing has been done so far. Sai promises a revival of the library next semester, within the constraints of the budget and will also publicise the work done in this regard.

Other issues

● Why are so many **hostel fests** mushrooming in spite of the fact that they are found lacking in many respects?

Sai clearly states that he is not particularly in favour of hostel fests. He expresses doubts as to how profitable they are for the hostels and is concerned about the wastage of both paper and time resulting from the extensive publicity done for such fests.

(Groundwork by Vivek and Nithya)

It's that time of the year again when one finds final year students engaged in earnest discussions and never-ending cack sessions with ex-students in solitude. Speculation and paranoia enjoy an all-time high, and words like resumé, PPT, short-list, package make the laziest of final year students perk up their ears. A time when the most 'cool-dude' senior in your hostel scandalises you by worrying about his CPI! It's placement season again!

The Prologue

Last semester itself, there were rumours flying around about the advancement of the placement season. As expected, this year placements begin on Dec. 1st, the day of BTP/DDP presentations for many and almost three weeks earlier than last year. The first phase of placements from 1st to around 9th Dec. promises to be a roller-coaster ride with over 40 companies expected to come in, packed in 6-a-day sachets. The cherry on the cake (or is it?) is the fact that this semester's grades will not be updated in the CPI for the first phase, they shall matter only in the second phase of placements which begin around 20th Dec., after Inter IIT.

The term 'Resumé' entered daily jargon and enjoyed demi-god status for the first

Placements Hungama

Sriram Emani and Saurabh Das give a complete round-up of what to expect this placements season.

thrice, the resumés were finally uploaded, flush with extravagantly worded tales of achievements. One wonders why a PDF format won't suffice, considering that half the batch has no HTML fundae!

PPT (Un)culture

PPTs (Pre-Placement Talks) this year got their fair share of bouquets and brickbats. Leading corporate firms leveraged brand image and high pay packets to tether people to their seats, but others had students walking out midway (after the announcement of a low package) and refusing to maintain decorum. The pizzas however as always got the most attention. Malnourished IITians literally jumped and made a dash for the pizzas the moment a PPT ended, leaving senior management personnel of the companies totally dumbstruck. Those who managed to recover soon enough contributed feedback like:

"Do these people really want to take up the job? From their behaviour it seems they do not actually want this. Is it that the profile is bad or is it always the case with all companies?"

"We go to various campuses across the world like MIT, Carnegie besides other IITs. You are now competing against such other campuses. But let me make this very clear: if this is the kind of response students give in PPTs, we might have to reconsider our decision to recruit from here…"

"We go to top management institutes around the country and they treat us nothing short of rolling out red carpets. Evidently from today's behaviour, IIT Bombay thinks they are the smart ones. And then you guys ask us why we don't hire from your institute!"

So what's new this year?

Going by the PPTs so far, it's apparent that there are many new firms coming in. Both consulting and investment banking firms have increased in number. Foreign placements will also almost certainly see a rise with firms like Mercer Oliver, Opera Solutions, Merrill Lynch debuting in IITB. The average salary is expected to go up. Firms are exploring various means of making their presence felt. Some firms have even con-

ducted workshops on resumé writing, case solving, derivatives and so on, to acquaint aspiring candidates with some essential basics.

For the first time ever, the placement team conducted an opinion poll amongst those registered for placements to find out their preferences (about order of companies, etc.). The placement team went about the final scheduling by considering various criteria, the major ones being company profile, job profile, past history with IITB and remuneration offered. There has been an organised profile-based slotting of companies this year, with consulting kick-start-

ing the placement season. There is also some serious infrastructure revamp on its way - an increase in interview rooms in the placement office from the present 7 to 15, video conferencing and ISD facilities. For this year, venues being considered are the placement office, KReSIT building, SOM, Physics Dept and GG.

After a very encouraging placement season last year, expectations are high. But gearing up for placements is not trivial and the random, last minute preparation we are used to will get one nowhere. In addition to some general reading material, the placement team has sent in a well-compiled 'Be Prepared' document, listing interview experiences of last year's students. For those who are still clueless where to start, we offer some tips (see Box).

What people want in a job

Company Profile: 21%
Location: 6%
Remuneration: 16%
Job Profile: 57%

Where people want to be placed

- Abroad
- India

UGs   PGs

Sample surveyed : 343 UGs + 269 PGs   Courtesy: Placement team

half of the semester, with junta fishing out all their credentials, right from posts held in IITB to that freshie year elocution where they finished 3rd and a district level athletics bronze in 8th standard! After fiercely wrestling with the HTML format and having the deadline being postponed

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How to Prepare for Interviews

We spoke to a few seniors about how they went about preparing last year and what they learnt from their experiences. What follows is a fusion of their comments.

THE COMPANY:
● Do you homework to understand how it would be to work in the company
● Speak to seniors and use the website to learn about the work profile, growth opportunities, lifestyle and exit options.

THE INTERVIEW:
● Study your resumé. You should have at least 5 minutes of gyaan on every bullet in your resumé. Something as insignificant as your interest in movies could be a topic of conversation.
● Understand yourself in terms of your core skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses, career aspirations, expectations, hobbies, etc.; you should be able to project yourself strongly and consistently

WHAT TO CARRY INTO THE INTERVIEW
● Copies of resume, basic stationery (pen, pencil, eraser) and most of all a bright, enthusiastic, well dressed you.
● Additionally, you could carry something unique to you that might interest the interviewer. For e.g., a copy of the newspaper you are the editor of or some press clippings that are relevant to your achievements. This is very situational and you should be comfortable doing it.

THE LOOK AND ATTIRE
● Wear a suit for consulting firms, I-banks and foreign companies.
● For Indian companies especially tech ones, suit might be a little intimidating

since tech companies typically have casual dress codes.
● Be super confident. As long as you are in control, composed and full of self belief, the job is yours for the taking. Just believe strongly that you were always meant to be in this company.
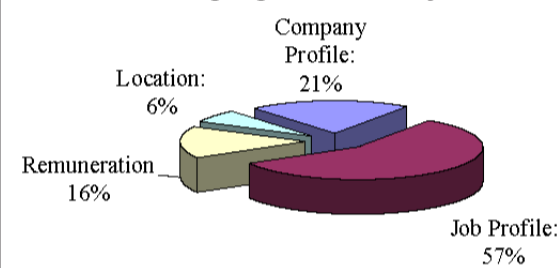
COMMON DOS
● Turn up bright for the interview.
● Have clothes and other material in place one night before (clothes ironed, shoes polished etc.).
● Get up early and have a good breakfast.
● Speak to a few people outside IIT and calm yourself before the interview.
● Shut your ears and eyes to what others are doing/achieving. A job that is good for one can be disastrous for another.
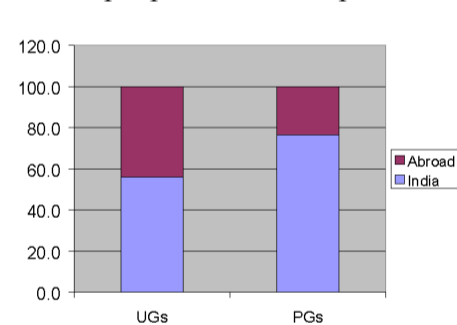
COMMON DON'TS
● Take too much NBD, especially when
- you are not short listed in any company coming on the first day/week and all your wingmates/ friends are.
- you don't make it in your first interview.
● Look at the shortlist and start rating your chances against others. Avoid all gossip in insti about who has a good chance and who has a stud resume. Just focus on yourself, your strengths and be positive.
● Prepare for interviews on the last day

(Inputs from Amit Ghorawat, Priyanka Jain and Salim Dewani. Amit, Priyanka and Salim are all alumni of the 2006 batch and are placed with BCG, ZS Associates and McKinsey respectively.)

General Secretary, Academic Affairs - Rohit Kumar

Achievements

● The **Biswas Committee** is dealing with the very important issues of flexibility in the course structure, overall reduction in the number of credits, possibilities of the major-minor program etc. Recently, elaborate feedback forms were distributed in various departments to collect student opinions on academic issues. Rohit has addressed the issue of restructuring of the Environmental Science Course in the Civil and Metallurgy departments to the Committee.
● For the first time, an **academic orientation** was organised to familiarise freshmen with the institute's academic scene.
● The institute **library** has remained open

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till 1 A.M. during examinations.
● A **uniform PT policy** has been drafted for all departments so as to benefit maximum number of students. This will be implemented next year.
● **Academic assistance program** for 2nd and 3rd year UG students across all departments has been implemented. The final policies are being framed.
● A MoU has been signed with **Hutch** to extend their bulk messaging service *Campus-Connect* to IIT Bombay. The service would be available shortly.
● The **Placement Body** has been functioning smoothly with all the department placement nominees working in close tandem.

Shortcomings
● Better coordination with TechniC and

Science Club is required to ensure that events are organised regularly.
● The persistent problem of **stipend delay** needs to be addressed.
● The promise of reducing the minimum number of students needed to run a summer course has still not materialised. However, Rohit confirms that the Dean has agreed to make an exception if this rule comes in the way of a student getting his/her degree.
● Nothing concrete has been done yet regarding the issue of basic criteria for the registration of B.Techs for M.Tech courses.

Other Issues
● Information has been collected from all departments regarding the laboratory facilities/infrastructure. The logistics and economics are currently being worked out.

● A presentation was made in the Institute Faculty Meeting held on Nov. 1st to point out the need to improve the **teaching environment** by including more visual aids, ensuring greater stress on practical applications, and inviting guest lecturers from the industry and academia.

Vox Populi

On the whole, most people are happy with the way the current GSAA has gone about discharging his duties. Several issues have been addressed and dealt with satisfactorily. The concerned authorities have also voiced their satisfaction with his functioning. But there still are a few areas where some work needs to be done. All said and done though, the GSAA has achieved a fair amount in the first half of his tenure. We hope that he continues the good work.

(Groundwork by Arunabh Sinha)

As a follow-up to our article on career choices in the previous issue, we preview two other hot career options available to IITians. Lakshmi Narayanswamy and Akshay Saxena, both passed out of IIT Bombay in 2006. Lakshmi is currently pursuing her MBA at IIM Calcutta. Akshay is employed as an Associate with the Boston Consulting Group.

Lakshmi Narayanswamy (LN)

"Why do you want to do an MBA?" – I must have practiced the answer to this question a million times earlier this year. Something must have sounded right, because here I am – five months into an MBA and absolutely loving it.

I came to this B-school simply because everybody thought it was a brilliant plan. Because I did not like any of the other alternatives I had. Yes, because of the money too. (Of course, in the interview I called the first reason 'a brilliant opportunity', the second 'a best-fit to my skill-set' and the third 'career-growth'.) The bottom-line being I really didn't have a clue.

So has anything changed now? Well, no and yes. I still am undecided about being an investment banker. But I do like what I am learning here and now know the myths from the facts. And in retrospect, a lot of other things that I would have liked to know when making my decision about an MBA. Of course, I give these fundae with all standard disclaimers attached!

Yes, you stay up late working. You are surrounded by all sorts of assignments and projects. You will have to work in groups that are randomly and differently assigned for different courses. The scheduling of each day becomes a task that probably explains why Personal Organisers and similar gadgets make so much money. And the whining about already pressing deadlines just doesn't work. But one can still make it all fall neatly into place. The secret is not working hard – it is working smart. Prioritise, plan and split work. Master the art of speed-reading and whipping up a good presentation within minutes. Time management is not just another phrase – it is the skill that is essential to survive.

Another important fact to remember about a B-school *is* that it actually is the Great Indian Pit-stop for a vast majority of students. It is a two-year rollercoaster with one goal in mind – placements. Even the cultural clubs have a formal structure and strict membership criteria – after all, it is a CV point. The amount of preparation one does for the summer and final placements is equivalent to two courses. And for good reason – the big global firms that come to

At the Crossroads II

recruit us seem to value us very highly!

In spite of the hectic lifestyle, I am quite at home here. Contrary to popular belief, there is barely any RGgiri. In fact, people are extremely helpful – be it quick fundae sessions by the student who knows most before an exam or the chap with a motorcycle who wanders the campus ready to pick up anyone walking to submit an assignment seconds before the deadline. You are always looking out for each other and in the process, become friends for life. The network doesn't stop at your batch-mates and seniors. It also grows into the influential alumni circle which still keeps in touch with the campus using an electronic discussion board. Finally, needless to say, the learning - both in the classroom and outside - is a truly invaluable experience.

So how do you decide you are MBA material? It would be really easy if you knew exactly what you wanted to do in life. Since that never happens, one could follow these guidelines instead. First, know what opportunities an MBA will give you – openings in big investment banks and consulting firms, designing marketing strategies for products, focusing on technical aspects like operations and systems, knowledge as well as contacts in industry to help you run your own business. It could even be an initial step to becoming a PhD in economics. If any of these appeal to you, that is reason enough! Next, determine where and when you would want to do your MBA. Doing an MBA abroad would require work experience. In India, doing an MBA without experience has its own pros and cons. I chose the direct MBA path because I was certain that I would not come back to academics once I started working. Finally, should you zero in on your choice immediately after IIT, make sure you are aware of and ready to deal with the pace of the program.

The bottom-line is – make sure you know why you want the MBA. If it is for the money, so be it. To quote an Investment banker who was selling his line of work - "There are three kinds of people who make loads of money – sport stars, top Hollywood actors and investment bankers. And the first two need some talent!"

Akshay Saxena (Saxy)

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this article are based on four months of work experience at BCG. Generalisations may or may not apply to all consulting firms.

At IIT Bombay, we tend to tire of clichés. Over the time we spend on campus we learn enough about the 'IITian' to take the compliments showered upon us with a pinch of salt. What, then, does one make of the world's best consulting firms showing up at the LT, showering praise upon us and (miracle of miracles) actually hiring a few of us in 'consulting' roles.

Given the long list of recruiters on campus this year, consulting is one of the many options you have. Opinions on the consulting job range from extremely cynical ("*arre they just do excelgiri*") to outrageously optimistic ("*five years from now… I am going to take over the world!*"). The following paragraphs attempt to help a large number of you give careful consideration to consulting as a career choice in the short term based on the life of an Associate at the Boston Consulting Group.

The toughest question you have to answer is, "Will I really like consulting?" There are, and have been myths on campus classifying consulting as a 'lifestyle career'. Consulting is not the 'work hard, party harder' model that consulting firms would have you believe. Enjoying consulting is most importantly about enjoying the job and its challenges. The partying is there but largely incidental. As a consultant you'll always have enough money to splurge, it is time that will be at a premium. Put simply, you will love consulting if you're meant for consulting and if it meets your goals and aspirations. As an IITian, you will always love the partying.

The biggest adjustment one makes in the initial months is from rubber slippers to leather shoes. The rest tends to fall in place. The core work is not too different from your BTP (assuming you actually did some work). Just replace the "Heat Exchanger Network Optimization" with "International Growth Strategy" and you should get the picture. It's a lot of thinking and a lot of analysis. As an associate

you'd be expected to handle both in equal measure. Contrary to widespread opinion, IITians are hired for their contribution to the thought process rather than analysis. Analysis in consulting, as in research, is an offshoot of thought.

Consulting gives you the unique advantage of looking at businesses from a detached point of view. Your work will not revolve around day to day process. You will work with a new company and possibly even a new industry every four months, avoiding the monotony that tends to set in with most other jobs.

However, contrary to campus life, as a consultant you will have to prioritize everything; your work, your personal life, your friends, partying (not necessarily in this order). Time, at times, comes at a premium and needs to be managed. You will begin to appreciate the value of planners and Outlook and secretaries (no kidding!). The average Associate work day stretches up to 10 hours. What you do with the time might vary dramatically from meetings with CEOs (who will promptly ask you how old you are) to calls to car dealers in Brazil ("Hallo, you speak English?") to re-phrasing presentations and engaging in involved analysis. You will have to use every skill you've learnt over the years and you'll have to learn more in what can only be described as a 'vertical learning curve'. If you believe that you can perform in these situations and also enjoy them (as opposed to just living through them) you are meant for consulting.

The peer group at consulting firms is unique. The diverse backgrounds of people around you (ranging from double doctorates to economics graduates and from artists to lawyers) will help you put your abilities in perspective and keep you in touch with reality. Among the biggest advantages of working with a global consulting firm is that you can use the expertise available in international offices (from nations as distant as Brazil or as culturally differentiated as China) on your work in India and also meet some interesting people and visit some unusual places in the process

A large part of what has been put down will seem distant to you. However, ten months from now you might just be writing the next version of this article. As a last word of advice, make your choices carefully and like everything that you will hear through recruiting season, take this article with a pinch of salt. Many among us look at a career in consulting as a shortcut to an Ivy League business school. Consulting is a career choice and in more ways than one, a way of life.

Bulletin Board
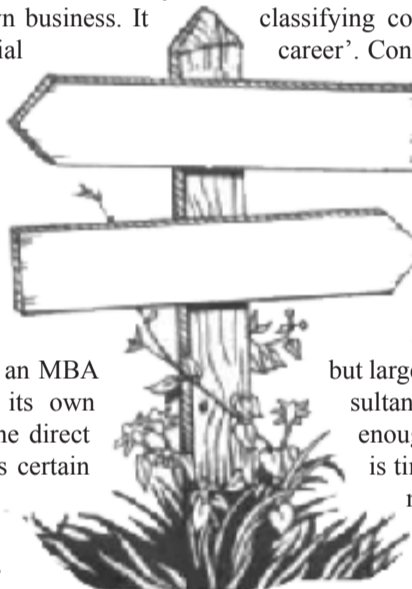
PanIIT Alumni Conference 2006
A record 5,000 IITians (many of whom from overseas) are expected to participate in the Global PanIIT Alumni Conference 2006 to be held in Mumbai from December 23rd to 25th. In a bid to encourage entrepreneurship and the contributions of IITians towards nation building, the theme of the conference is 'IIT: Inspire, Involve & Transform India.' President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam will inaugurate the event and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh will give an address. There will be discussions held on how to develop India as a knowledge economy, how to bring professionalism in governance and how to improve the standard of living in Indian cities. The importance of entrepreneurship will also be stressed upon. In this regard, the work done by IIT-Bombay's Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE) will also be highlighted.

IITB monopolises Inter-IIT Aquatics records
The annual Inter-IIT Aquatics meet was held at IIT Guwahati from October 1st to 4th. The performance of the IIT Bombay swimming contingent this year was exceptional, even with regards to its high standards. Besides bagging

all the swimming gold medals and placing second in water polo, two meet records were set. The end result – all the 15 Inter IIT Swimming records are now in the name of IIT Bombay. Talk about a whitewash!

Dr. Karmarkar visits campus
Dr. Narendra K. Karmarkar, the renowned scientist and alumnus of IIT Bombay, visited the campus last month to give a talk on 'New Direction in High Performance Computing', in the Aagomani lecture series organised by EESA, Electrical Engg Dept. He is best known for his algorithm, 'Karmarkar's algorithm', meant for solving linear programming problems in polynomial time. Of late, Dr. Karmarkar has been in the news for leading a team of scientists involved in an ambitious project to create the world's first petaflop supercomputer at Computational Research Labs, Pune. Millions of dollars are being spent currently by superpowers like the US and Japan to crack this problem. This new breed of supercomputers could have a wide range of applications in biotechnology, defense and even weather forecasting.

Accommodation Woes

With an eye on the severe space crunch facing the institute, Siddhartha Bagaria and Gautam Salhotra take a look at what lies ahead.

The lush green campus of IIT Bombay is home to over 10,000 residents. Over the years, the campus has seen an increasingly large number of people pouring in. And it has accepted all of them, generously, with open arms. Building and developing slowly from the once sparsely populated region, it has grown into the now harmonious spread of human co-existence with nature. However in recent times, the institute infrastructure has been under tremendous pressure.

While the student intake has been on the rise in the past few years, the infrastructure with regards to accommodation has failed to come up to the mark. The arrival of hostels 12 and 13 in 2003 brought some much needed relief back then. However, as expected all along, the issue has reared its head yet again. This year saw the pairing up of sophomores. This decision invited some juvenile action last year on the part of the then freshmen, primarily because the move was unanticipated. We take a look at what the scenario will be in the near future.

The present scenario
Currently, there are 3,486 single rooms and 130 double rooms in the boys' hostels (excluding Tansa), which totals to a capacity of 3,746 male students. For girls, the numbers are 315 single rooms and 66 double rooms, thus providing residence for a total of 447 girl students. Thus, the total capacity of the institute hostels is 4,193. Also, all these rooms are not necessarily used by students, as a few are used for non-residential purposes (wardens' offices, Xerox shops etc.) As of July 2006, the institute had 4,505 students residing in the hostels, 3,951 boys and 554 girls.

At present, freshmen and sophomores live in double rooms in all hostels except H 13. In addition, some H 11 residents also share rooms. H 11 rooms are however, of a reasonably large size - three girls are accommodated in the flatlets and two in a room. Some girls are also staying in the CPWD-B building behind H-10. PGs mostly live in single rooms except for a few who have been given double room accommodation in those hostels having more spacious rooms.

What lies in store next year?
IIT being a research institute, it is difficult to predict the exact figure of vacant or occupied rooms at any given time. However, we talked to the Dean SA, Prof. P. Gopalan regarding the most probable scenario next year and this is what he revealed. First year PG students will be paired up in all hostels except H 12. There is a reasonably good chance that third year UG students will not be paired up. However because of the seemingly comfortable floor space in hostels 2 and 3, there is a possibility that these students will have to wait for a year more to avail the luxury of having a room all for themselves. As far as H 11 is concerned, a provision of residence in the Staff Hostel and Staff Hostel Annexure is being considered, although this is only a tentative plan. Three persons will have to share in the more spacious Staff Hostel rooms and four will have to share a flatlet type accommodation in Staff Hostel Annexure. The exact number of rooms available and other details will be finalised by December.

A ray of hope
The institute is extremely serious about expanding the present infrastructure, keeping in mind the ongoing speculations of affirmative action regarding the OBC reservations. We spoke at length to the Dean Planning, Prof. R.K. Malik regarding this. Among the immediate plans are the construction of new wings in hostels 10, 12 and 13. Besides these, plans for Hostels 14 and 15 have been in the pipeline for four years now (See Box).

The addition of two new wings each in hostels 12 and 13 will add approximately 750 rooms to the sprawling 12-13 complex. Currently in the design phase, negotia-tions are going on with the same architect, Hafeez Contractor. The basic architecture will be the same but the sky-bridge will be given a skip, due to maintenance-related costs. Instead, a floor (or half a floor) may be built as a recreational area in each of these wings. Some other issues involved are cost escalation (to rectify problems faced earlier in 12 and 13), proximity to the lake (for H 13) and hilly terrain (for H 12). On an optimistic note, it is expected that these new wings will be ready for occupation by the academic year 2008. This will increase the total male student capacity of the hostels to around 4,500.

Moving on towards the heart of the campus (pun intended), a major facelift will soon be evident in the form of a new G+7 (Ground+7) structure as a new wing of H 10. The demolition of the existing CPWD-C building is being considered to make space for this new wing. Board approvals for the same have been obtained. On completion, this will add about 200 rooms to H 10. The additional wing is again expected to be available from the academic year 2008.

But is this enough?
The current UG intake in the institute is around 600 per year and the PG intake about 1,000. Earlier this year, the Government announced a 54% increase in the total number of seats which will be implemented in a phased manner over three years. The current shortage of rooms is estimated to be around 200. We conducted an analysis of the projected shortage of rooms that will result from the increase in seats of only the UG students (involves fewer variables than that for PGs). Assuming the construction goes on as planned, the shortage will still rise to 1,750 rooms in the year 2014, by when the population will stabilise (see website for detailed analysi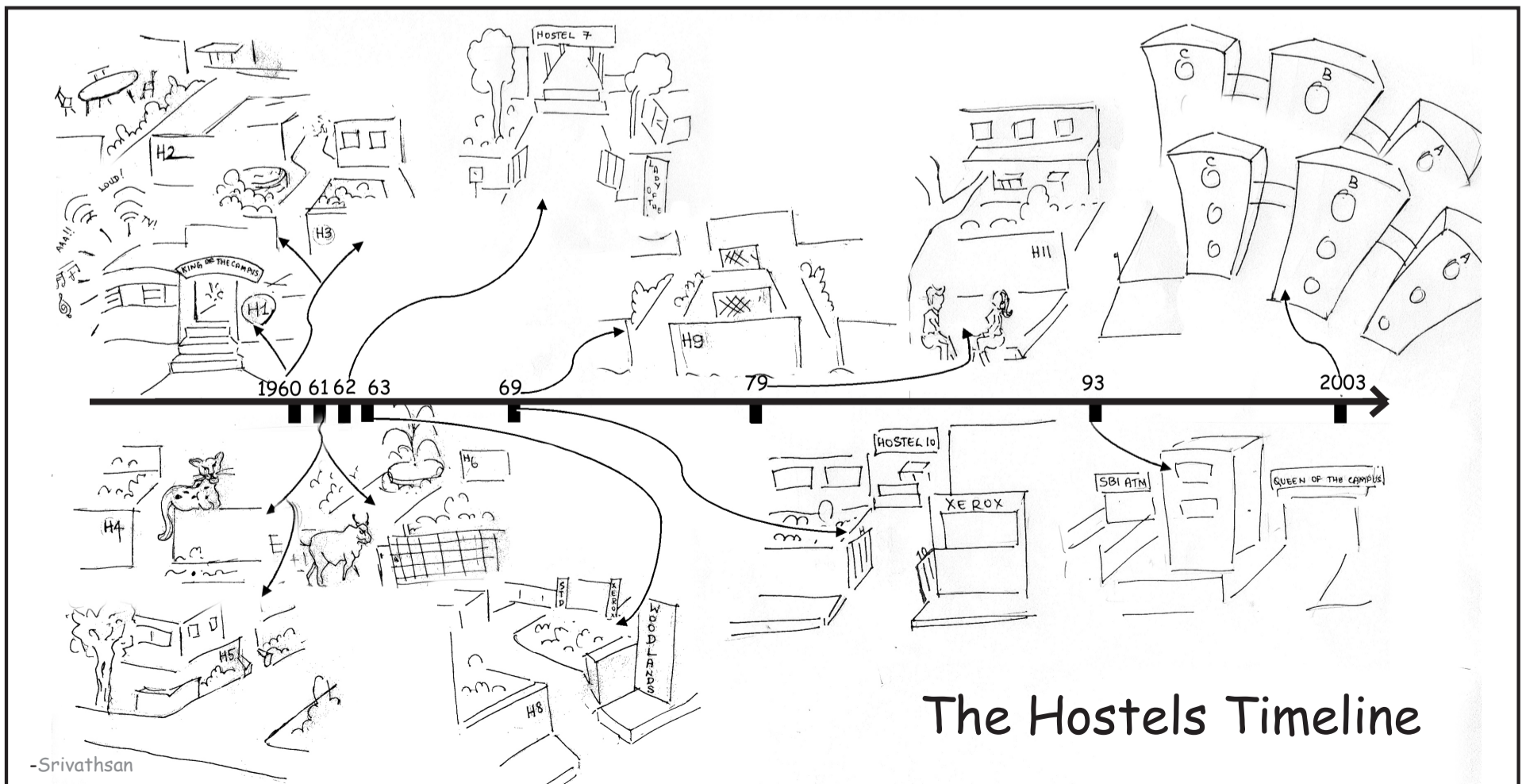s). The timely construction of the proposed new wings (an addition of only around 950 rooms) would be sufficient to only temporarily make up for the shortage. It is obvious that speedy progress towards hostels 14 and 15 is now a necessity which cannot be ignored.

In the long run
Firstly, one needs to understand that upgrades to the infrastructure in a government-aided institute like ours are bound to take time amidst the protocol that needs to be followed vis-à-vis board approvals, fund allocation, design selection, BMC approval, tenders, etc. Extensions of existing hostels are also only feasible if the land available around them is sufficient. The area behind H 3 is a possible location for a new wing provided the nursery is shifted. We might even see a phased demolition of the H 10 wings to replace them with G+7 structures. Keeping in mind the land resource scarcity of the campus, all new structures in the future will be G+7. Of course, proposals for a satellite campus are also under consideration. Possible locations are Gujarat, Goa and Vashi.

Hostels 14 and 15

Board approvals for Hostels 14 and 15 to be built on the other side of the pipeline were granted as early as 2002. However, connectivity to the campus land behind the pipeline is a problem since a subway or an over-bridge for heavy traffic needs to be built across the pipeline. Only then can the area be developed for residential purposes. The pipeline is a strategic organ of Mumbai city. Due to the sensitivity involved, a specialist international agency, IRCON was consulted which evaluated and confirmed the feasibility of building a subway. Paperwork for the same is in progress. When the actual ground work for the hostels will begin is however, still uncertain. Meanwhile, BMC approval has been obtained. The hostels have not yet been designed but the targeted capacity would be about 800 each with both being G+7 structures. Nothing much can be said about the tentative time of completion.

The Hostels Timeline

-Srivathsan

For all it's worth...

Tarun Mathur and Parasvil Patel use the power of the Right to Information to analyse the budgets pertaining to student activities.

Every year, huge sums of money are spent on student activities in the institute – both by the institute and through funds generated through sponsors for student festivals. InsIghT attempts to give you a bird's eye-view of these expenditures.

Budget Structures

As regards IIT Bombay's student festivals Mood Indigo, Techfest and E-Cell, it is the sole responsibility of the festival organisers to find the monetary resources requisite for the materialisation of their ideas. The institute neither supports these festivals monetarily, nor provides the available infrastructure free of cost. The institute, in fact, has been taking a 30% cut from all sponsorship money (for the details of which, see The Final Cut). The Institute Cultural, Sports and Technical Bodies are however, given sizeable grants for their smooth operations.

The enormous funds that the festivals are able to conjure up, are clearly accounted for by various departments within - namely Events, Infrastructure/Logistics, Publicity, Prize Money, Payments to the Institute and Miscellaneous. Although on the face of it, Events might seem to be the only department black-holing all the money, Infrastructure, comprising equipment for these Events, and the various other nitty-gritties; as well as Publicity, are heavy-spending departments. Miscellaneous expenses would include travelling, phone bills and various other forms of "petty cash" expenditure.

The festivals also pay for the lodging and bookings at the Guest House, Staff Quarters and the like. Both the festivals and the Institute Bodies pay heavy amounts for

booking the IRCC auditorium, KReSIT hall, SOM classrooms/foyer and so on. The Institute does not charge for all the facilities however, Convocation Hall being free to use. The 30% that the institute takes regardless of anything else, does not specifically cater to these infrastructural requirements, as we shall see.

The Cultural Body presents its budgetary requirements to the institute in the form of a break-up among various cultural activities, namely Dramatics, Music, Dance, Literary Arts, Debating, Fine Arts and Photography. The major expenditure of the Sports Body is in the name of the Inter-IIT Sports Meet. Here, the travel and sports equipment expenses take the cake. The boundaries for the distribution of budget as far as the Sports Budget is concerned are hazy, since "the same equipment could be used for more than one event". TechniC and Science Club, the two technical clubs of IIT Bombay have meagre budgets, but the work they put in is considerable. In fact, in many cases, Hostel funds or personal money are also used by those involved in the Technical Scene in the Institute. Also, the Science Club has an annual budget of Rs. 40,000; divided equally among its five member Clubs – Aero-modelling, Astronomy, Papers, HAM & Radio and the Electronic Clubs.

The Final Cut

For some years now, the institute has been claiming a sizeable 30% chunk from the sponsorship money earned by Mood In-

digo and Techfest, the annual cultural and technical festivals of IIT Bombay respectively, as well as the Entrepreneurship Cell. This money, unlike what skeptics might assume, does not go towards any Institute Fund. Instead, it goes towards a "Student's Space", as emphasised by the Dean, SA. The same could be utilised for various purposes, catering to the general student population. These may include infrastructural requirements like computers, internal transport and the like. Events like the Manna Dey show held last year are also held using money from this collection.
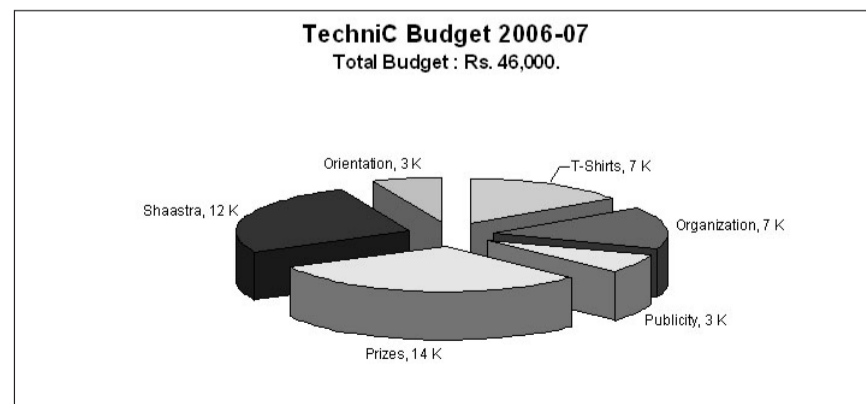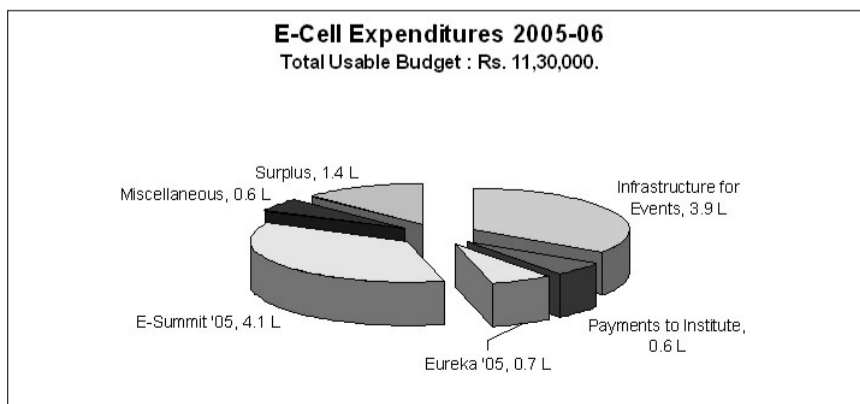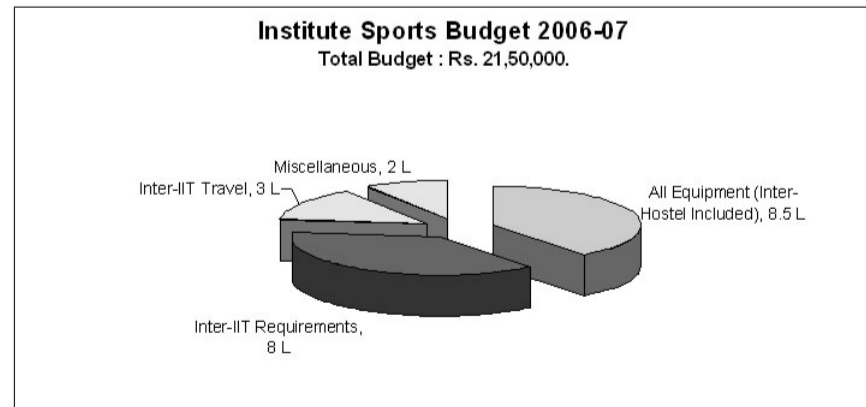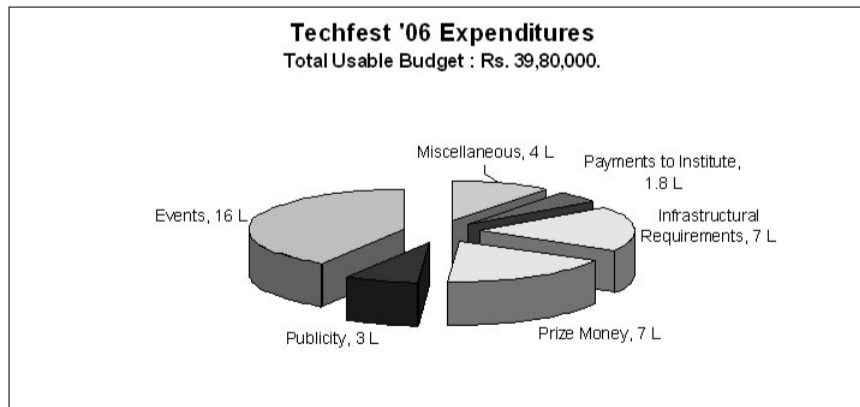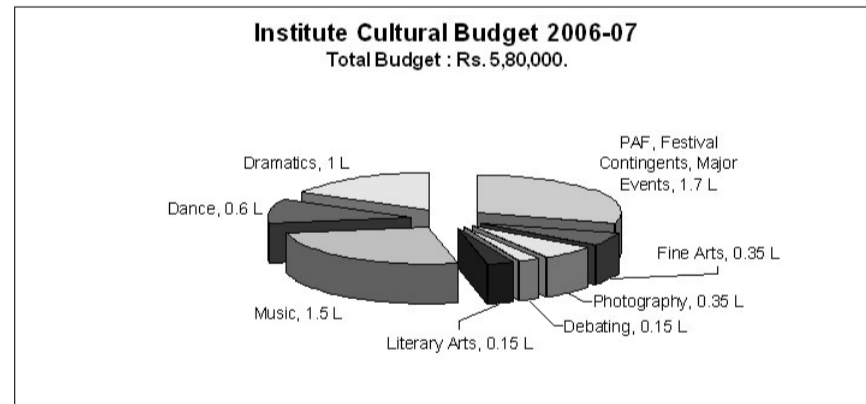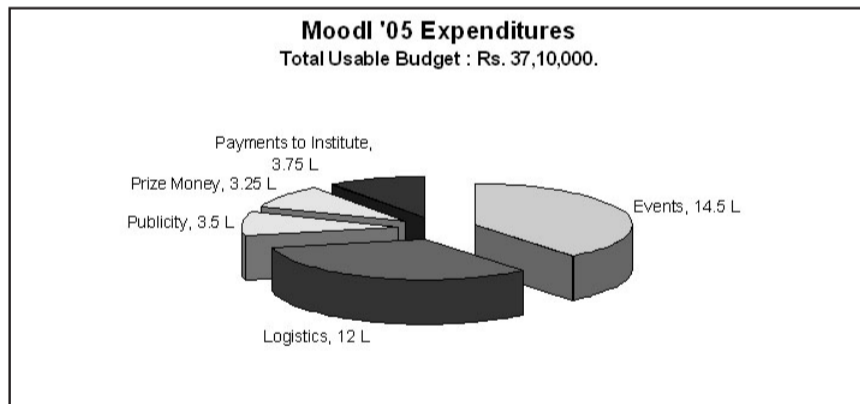
Although the hard-earned money may not be directly routed back towards the festivals, certain infrastructure that the institute invests in is indirectly put to use in the organisation and/or implementation of the festivals themselves. It is, however, the institute's every intention to give all of it back to the students - one way or the other. And the festival organisers have no complaints either. It is important to remember that Mood Indigo, Techfest and E-Cell are after all student bodies; and the cash inflow seen inside the institute walls because of these is unparalleled. Hence, this money must be put to optimum use, given the opportunity. As a valid analogy, certain professors who get grants also have to spare a share of their income towards an Institute fund, which aids the maintenance of laboratories etc. Besides, the institute overlooks various unthinkable expenditures such as the enormous electricity bills during these festivals, and the use of in-

stitute space. The system is quite clearly well thought out, with a sharp eye on the bigger picture. The Dean, SA adds, "These are still early days for this practice."

This year, however, the institute has decided to reduce this cut from 30% to 20%. And no, it is not an incentive for the festivals to become bigger and better than ever. In fact, in view of the sudden imposition of the Service Tax of 12.25%, the institute, recognising the paucity of time for festival organisers to conjure up enough funds to maintain a usable budget comparable to that of previous years, has decided to reduce this margin to 20%. This still means that Mood Indigo, for example can only use 67.75% of the sponsorship money it conjures up this year. However, there is worse news. From next year onwards, the institute would resume taking its legitimate 30% cut from all sponsorship money collected. That means a whopping 42.25% of festival funds would simply be useless for the festivals. However, on the brighter side, the 30% would, in most likelihood, be given back to the students.

If one compares the scenarios in IIT Bombay and IIT Madras, the IIT Madras budgets for Saarang (cult) and Shaastra (tech) are higher as they are enriched by Institute funds. However, this is not too valid a comparison, because these festivals sell tickets to patrons and participants; whereas IIT Bombay's fests have a strict zero entry fees policy, with the aim of not appearing commercial and encouraging patronage.

*The opinions in this article are a combination of those expressed by the Dean, SA, the General Secretaries of the concerned Institute Body and the Overall Coordinators of the concerned festival.

05

Moodl '05 Expenditures
Total Usable Budget : Rs. 37,10,000.

Payments to Institute, 3.75 L
Prize Money, 3.25 L
Publicity, 3.5 L
Events, 14.5 L
Logistics, 12 L

Institute Cultural Budget 2006-07
Total Budget : Rs.5,80,000.

Dramatics, 1 L
Dance, 0.6 L
PAF, Festival Contingents, Major Events, 1.7 L
Fine Arts, 0.35 L
Photography, 0.35 L
Debating, 0.15 L
Music, 1.5 L
Literary Arts, 0.15 L

Techfest '06 Expenditures
Total Usable Budget : Rs. 39,80,000.

Miscellaneous, 4 L
Payments to Institute, 1.8 L
Events, 16 L
Infrastructural Requirements, 7 L
Publicity, 3 L
Prize Money, 7 L

Institute Sports Budget 2006-07
Total Budget : Rs. 21,50,000.

Miscellaneous, 2 L
Inter-IIT Travel, 3 L
All Equipment (Inter-Hostel Included), 8.5 L
Inter-IIT Requirements, 8 L

E-Cell Expenditures 2005-06
Total Usable Budget : Rs. 11,30,000.

Surplus, 1.4 L
Miscellaneous, 0.6 L
Infrastructure for Events, 3.9 L
E-Summit '05, 4.1 L
Payments to Institute, 0.6 L
Eureka '05, 0.7 L

TechniC Budget 2006-07
Total Budget : Rs. 46,000.

Orientation, 3 K
T-Shirts, 7 K
Shaastra, 12 K
Organization, 7 K
Publicity, 3 K
Prizes, 14 K

About two years ago, a friend from IIT Delhi had come to visit me. I welcomed him with the customary stroll around the campus, to let him admire the famous lakes and the picturesque scenery. But, unlike any other person I have taken around campus, his reaction was most animated when he saw the multitude of unused cycles lying in a heap near the Main Gate. His reason - these cycles would have been ideal for the 'alternative campus transport system using community bicycles' project he was working on. That was when I first heard of this idea and given the similar situations of the no-bike policy in both institutes, it made a lot of sense to me. Somehow I chose to ignore it back then.

Now, feeling the pinch of the no-bike policy coupled with the sudden vanishing act of the tum-tums and further compounded by the fact that I live in Hostel 13, the time was just right for me to ponder over feasible alternatives. The community bicycle program that I shall describe perfectly fit the bill.

A community bicycle program is not an entirely new concept. It has been successfully implemented in several countries and university campuses. In all these places, the basic idea is the same. Old and unused cycles are collected and painted for recognition. These are then placed at various hubs inside the operation area. Users can issue cycles from these hubs, via a manual or electronic interface, against their names for free or a nominal fee required for maintenance. The cycles can then be deposited at any hub inside the area, which makes it very helpful for short-term users.

Re-Cycling Transport!

In the last issue, we covered the inadequacy of the institute's internal transport system. Nikhil Chandra Jha offers an alternative solution to this problem.

Given the pathetic state of internal transport in the institute, this program could be adapted to work as an excellent environment-friendly alternative transport system. Here's what could be done:

1. The old and unused cycles, so many of them, at the Main Gate, hostel basements and other areas could be collected and repaired. In addition, a pool of people willing to donate their cycles when they leave the campus could be made to refresh the cycle bank every year. The good thing with cycles is that the cost of repair would be minimal.
2. These cycles should be painted with a uniform colour to facilitate recognition. As a result, even if one is stolen, it will have little or no resale value and it will become easier to track lost or stolen cycles.
3. Hubs would be chalked out at major activity points and a fixed number of cycles

kept at each hub for issue.
4. The cycles would be issued against ID cards, in a similar manner as library books are. Card readers, if possible, could be used at the hubs by security guards who could double up as hub caretakers. This will also ensure round-the-clock operation.
5. The issuing process could also be automated, as the IIT Delhi students have mentioned in their proposal. The cycles would be locked by magnetic locks which would open once the ID card validation takes place. The validation process would involve magnetic strips, like ATM cards. This automated process, although better, could take time and much more investment.
6. The cycles would be issued for use only within the campus for a fixed amount of time, failing which a suitable fine would be imposed on the offenders. This fine

could be used for their maintenance.
7. A separate hub for cycle maintenance could also be made for users to deposit defective bikes. Small repairs like punctures etc. should be the user's responsibility while bigger damages with justifiable causes could be looked into at the maintenance hub.

Some might argue that once in operation, certain issues are bound to crop up with this system.

1. The peak hour traffic, when all students will move between the hostel and academic areas, could create an imbalance in the hub pools.
2. Estimating the extent of damage to a bike and subsequently holding a person responsible for it could prove to be a roadblock.
3. Even though ID card validation and uniform paints of the cycles would deter theft, it is difficult to eliminate it altogether.

However, solutions to these are by no means impossible. Putting everything in perspective, it would be a nice initiative if this alternative transport arrangement could be started on a trial basis. All issues regarding operation could then be identified and possibly rectified. Who knows, we could have a long-term solution to all our commuting woes in the future.

To read more about the proposal and feasibility reports of the IIT Delhi students, please visit http://www.cse.iitd.ernet.in/~csu02127/CS315P/index.htm

(With inputs from Vikranth Audi)

Culture Shock:
How it really isn't

Srinath Perur examines some misconceptions regarding the health of the cultural scene in the campus.

In the years I have been on campus, I have occasionally being involved in its cultural activities as participant or judge. Now, as I am close to leaving, I have been asked to write about how the 'insti cult scene has become pathetic' in recent years. I would, except that I do not share the perception. Instead, I'll write about how I believe the cultural activities on campus might actually have matured and gone on to a new level.

Participation in the traditional inter-hostel cultural events does seem to have dropped. This is the kind of event where, as the event draws closer, a hapless hostel office-bearer coaxes the able and willing to put something up to salvage hostel pride. It's likely that some students have been drawn away by other events: technical competitions have grown in stature and participation, and business plan competitions seem to be on all the time. But I believe some of the rest have been involving themselves in cultural activities that go beyond the inter-hostel competitions.

Dramatics is a conspicuous example. In the last four of five years, the annual dramatics production has been reinstated, giving the campus some excellent plays. The Sophies' productions, where teams of students formed across hostels conceive, script, direct and perform plays, have helped identify and nurture some fine talents. At least one play born on campus has been performed outside professionally.

Non-competitive cultural activities are do-

ing well in other areas too. Music events such as Surbahaar and Surmaii Shaam have always been popular. Acoustic Dusk, once practically a jam session, now coordinates in advance the playlists of several enthusiastic bands, and produces quality performances. There are more bands on campus than ever before, playing a variety of music, singing both in Hindi and English. Several other examples: the rag you hold becomes more, well, insightful with every issue; Aawaaz, the Hindi campus newsletter, came into being a couple of years back and is going strong; Speakers' Club and the Lit Club meet regularly; the Dead Poets Society gathers to read from writers they like; Kaladarshan, the institute fine arts show, sees entries from students and campus residents. Surely, these are not signs of a pathetic cultural scene.

While inter-hostel competitions encourage participation by appealing to hostel spirit, they also limit possibilities. Why should two musicians with different inclinations have to play together just because they are from the same hostel? Why should a boys' hostel have to perform plays with all or mostly male characters? (One reason: So we need not witness the spectacle of young

men with shaven legs and disproportionate assets squealing out their lines.) As tastes mature, it is natural for people with similar interests to want to work together across hostels. If some of the inter-hostel competitions continue to be moribund, maybe it is time to think of replacing them with open or non-competitive events. But one event I would hate to see go is the PAF.

The PAF is more than just a synthesis of several creative arts. Imagine, if you will, the moments leading up to the performance of a PAF: the run-through has just ended in shambles; hurried corrections are being made to the script; untried props are being installed; botched cues are being reiterated. Amidst this disorder, the performers are told that it is time. They take positions behind lights, microphones, instruments, and backdrops, and the crowds begin to mill in. Then, something magical happens. The tumble of instructions and apprehension in the minds of the performers is replaced by a desperate calm. Each one knows that he can only be in that moment and do his best. And done together, this results in something beyond expectations. Any PAF that does not collapse is a miracle. And if those involved jump and dance at the end of a

seemingly ordinary performance, it is in affirmation of this. A PAF is a parable on a military scale, and that is reason enough to keep it going. It is also gratifying that the PAF as a form is coming into its own - both this year and last, the winning performances were outstanding, and used the framework of the PAF to make sensitive points about our world.

There is also a cultural life on campus that we barely acknowledge as a community. People on campus - students, faculty and other residents - write stories, scripts and poems; they sketch, paint and create artwork; they write songs; they take photographs and make short films. Most of this is only seen or heard by a few people who happen to be in the direct orbit of those creating them. Art created in a community needs to be accessible to the rest of it. One way to facilitate this could be by creating an online multimedia magazine for the campus. Perhaps this could spin-off from InsIghT and Aawaaz, both of which have some experience in the matter. As I see it, cultural activity on campus is stronger than ever. We could only benefit by recognising the direction of its evolution and supporting it.

(Srinath Perur is pursuing his PhD at KReSIT. He has been actively involved in various cultural activities in the institute, for the last five years.)

May the Games Resumé

Tannishtha & Rajlakshmi take a sneak peek at the making of a CV.

You wake up one fine morning and decide it is *finally* time. So you drag yourself to your computer and begin typing out…**The Resume.**

Note: The time of the dawning of this realisation covers a wide spectrum. At whose ends are those who realise in their first semester since they are concerned about their prospects of getting a sophie summer PT so that they can get a super thirdie summer PT so that they can land an awesome job/app; and people who have to be reminded and coaxed to make a resumé halfway through their final year.

You can't be bothered to start from scratch, so you manage to lay hands on a few sample resumés from your benevolent friends and seniors, even the odd over-enthusiastic junior. You start jotting down points that strike you in particular as being indicators of one's ingenuity.

"● Worked on System-level Design and Integration Studies with focus on Mini Aerial Vehicles in my sophomore year summer in the Department Laboratory under the assistant TA of the assistant prof…"

Hmm… after all, he did spend long hours in the lab, got the TA tea occasionally, and kept out of people's way by busying himself with Orkut.

Lesson 1: An idle mind is the researcher's workshop.

"● Single handedly ensured that department magazine came out on time…"

And you know for a fact for that he was the last to submit his article and the magazine had to be delayed till he did so, so he isn't saying one bit an untruth. A man after your own heart.

Lesson 2: Procrastination is like a dam of time. You must know exactly when to release it strictly-on-need basis.

"● Was the organiser of the English parody song event in Mood Indigo, the biggest, grandest student cultural fest in India. The event had participation from over a hundred colleges, and an audience of over 500 and went on for almost 5 hours."

These orgies… the time spent sitting at the desk registering those infinite people is used in thinking up these grand lines.

Lesson 3: Should learn from the orgies. Time's money and bigger is better.

"● Professionally trained in flute and drums…"

As long as you're sure no one's going to ask you to exhibit your proficiency, you're fine. If an NSO flute and attending 3 workshops on drums is professional training, you've been a singer all your life.

Lesson 4: Never underestimate yourself. Overestimate.

"● Editor of newsletter and head of committee concerning the welfare of the wildlife in the institute - The Bovine Intervention…"

To think of it, the cows are looking happier these days and one did hear of the return of the panther, but the cows remained happy. The committee must be doing excellent work.

Lesson 5: Take up causes you feel for. And blow your trumpet too.

"● My final year B. Tech. project on 'Performance enhancement of CNG vehicles in Delhi to reduce pollution and increase fuel efficiency' was selected for the gold medal."

Now one doesn't fake such a thing. But no one was as shocked as him when he came to know about this because it was a Ctrl+C Ctrl+V job completed in three days and two nights.

Lesson 6: You can fool some people all the time. You can fool all people sometimes. But with four years of experience in this place, you can fool all people all the time.

"● Won the women's swimming, women's carrom and women's badminton tournaments four years in a row."

The swimming tournament had 5 participants, the carrom tournament 10 and badminton 16. So?

Lesson 7: A victory is a victory is a victory.

"● Captained the winning team of Woodlands Wonder League, the most renowned football league in the institute."

It's high time the guys started taking their football seriously. We shall soon be the best footballing wing of them all!

Lesson 8: Football is life. Life is football. That is all there is and all there will ever be.

"● Was the over all in-charge of the hostel fest, *Farsical Festunanza* - the smaller sibling of Mood Indigo - which made more profit than ever before and had an attendance of over 3000."

Hahaha. Hahahaha. Hahahahaha.

Lesson 9: Make more noise, apparently people don't think of empty vessels when you do so anymore.

"● Was leading actress in the winning PAF '05- the biggest inter-hostel event in the institute."

Ah…that 30 second part sure was a leading role.

Lesson 10: Limelight is limelight, every bit of your 15 seconds of fame counts.

You think of all you've done so far, sit with dictionary.com open and type away. In sometime though, you begin to worry. You have done only one vague project, in which almost all the work was done by your teammates. You haven't really done too much for the cultural scene except the time when you painted posters in freshie year for PAF. The last sporting achievement you remember is running in the freshie crossie because you had to.

So you re-read the resumés you have. You smile and write in summary.

"I am an active, assertive and athletic all-rounder with technological, academic, cultural and sporting inclinations and blessed with invaluable research experience as well as organisational skills."

A Messy Affair

Aakash & Vivek discover the treasures of the insti messes.

He would have been a valiant man who adventured to eat the variety of food that *all* the messes in our institute have to offer. After all, a mess isn't called so for no reason. When we set out on our arduous journey, we were pessimistic determinists who believed that some bland, yet non-toxic material is all we would come across. However after having made it through unscathed, we have discovered that hidden beneath the wide variety of junk food are a few bright spots. So if you ever thought the institute was on a mission to starve you to death, fear no more. We present to you a list of the best food on campus.

Hostel 1: In H 1, they sure eat breakfast like a king (pun intended), lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper. With bread and butter being the daily best, there wasn't much to satisfy our taste buds in any given meal. However their daal could be featured for a consolation prize at those 'cook-if-you-can' competitions, where most of our chefs have had podium finishes at some point in time.

Hostel 2: After having tasted (or rather distasted) failure at the royal farmhouse, we moved on to the second in line. Pretty much the usual fare awaited us at H 2 though, with the saving grace being the paranthas and ice cream. The 7-dish menu on Sundays including biryani and cutlets was also reasonably popular. The star though is their very own super-hero, the 'Egg-man', who is well-known for his extreme eagerness to serve more than one's quota of eggs, of all shapes and forms.

Hostel 3: The H 3 mess is historically one of the more popular messes on campus. One item that is full tadka and masala is their chhole bhature. Sizzling hot, crispy bhature served with few grams of grams to the host of eagerly awaiting freshies, this dish is sinful in every sense of the word! Another favourite is the bread toast with potato filling. Perfect, with a cup of steaming tea, for those winter evenings.

Hostel 4: Worries go down better with soup, and there is no better place than H4 for this. For some strange reason though, their mess secies have ensured that it is served for tiffin and not dinner! One wonders what the secret behind this surprise move is. Without cooking up any facts though, we might safely claim that only one of every four people in this institute has one good meal on a given day in the mess, and there is at least one meal of the four served on a given day in H 4 which is not enjoyed by more than four people.

Hostel 5: To say that their cooks are the fastest in the world would be an understatement. How many chefs can cook something up in less than 5 minutes and still live to tell the story even after having had it tasted? H 5 junta sure have great levels of tolerance, and the rewards are sweet. The kheer tastes better than milk from a rice-loving cow and of the rasmalai, all we can say is "Stop after just one and you are a brave man!"

Hostel 6: Great eaters and great sleepers are incapable of doing anything else that is great, and thus food might just be the reason where they have an edge over all their other sleep-deprived mates. The choice for the best on offer here was unanimous: Di Hydrogen Oxide! Clear, pure and undiluted, this is supposedly the only thing their cooks have not yet been able to mess around with. Not surprisingly, inmates of H6 are well-renowned for their superior knowledge of the 'Daily Special' at *Subway.*

Hostel 7: The H 7 mess is presently dysfunctional, but as we discovered, they haven't lost out on too much. Their menu was once ruled by the king of vegetables, the Aloo. Well demonstrated by their graffiti board, their menu went something like this: Bada Aloo, Chhota Aloo, Ek Aloo, Gobi Aloo, Masala Aloo, Ganda Aloo, Achchha Aloo. Another anecdote from the hallowed halls of the Lady features the 'emergency bhaji'. This bhaji was once prepared at a short notice to make up for a shortage of the regular dish. Its unprecedented success resulted in it becoming a regular feature of the menu. Now who's heard of a scheduled 'emergency bhaji'!

Hostel 8: Search no more my fellow men, lay down the anchors, we have found Charlie's chocolate factory. The runaway winners of this year's best-of-the-worst hostel mess contest. With an extensive list of mouth-watering delicacies, they sure know how to feed the 'needy'. We shall say no more because the only thing we could manage while having their food was silent consumption. With so much on the platter, we could not choose *The One*, but for the sake of completeness we'd go for the malai kofta and chocolate shake.

Hostel 9: The H 9 mess is also pretty good and on its day can give H 8 a run for its money. The palak paneer that is dished out is the closest that one can get to home food on campus. Once in a while though, dishes such as their paneer capsicum are a let down, with the paneer pieces being harder than the capsicum. But we connoisseurs, being kind generous souls, shall ignore such small trivialities.

Hostel 10: (snigger) What can we say, they get the best of almost everything, don't they? It makes us believe that it is this balanced diet of theirs that makes them fare better than most of us at acads. Whether it be the starch-rich aloo tikki, the tomato rice or sweets, they've got it all, sugar, spice and everything nice! And they have weird rules too; no guests can be entertained to meals till the last 15 minutes of meal hours.

Hostel 11: An entry into the mess of H 11 is easily gained if you decide to stand for the institute elections. All candidates, in their valiant attempts to convince the lovely ladies of H 11 to exercise their franchise with great care, have braved the meals here with very little complaints to make either.

Hostels 12, 13: The institute's only underground mess with arguably the best ambience also serves some top-class food. Though it is more known for its night canteen that is open till 4 A.M., the mess isn't too far behind either. The shahi paneer served on Thursdays is a huge hit, and there are unofficial estimates of the number of people visiting the mess doubling every Thursday night. With separate counters for boiled food and spicy food, everyone's happy. Not to mention the rasam, sambhar and dosa that form a life-line for many a South Indian who frequents the mess.

We are out of space now, both on paper and in our tummies. So for now, so long fellas! Go indulge.

Déjà vu: the Movie

Abhinav, Nithya and Saurabh write about what has gone behind the making of IIT Bombay's first student movie.

Last year, the institute witnessed arguably one of the all-time great PAFs – 'Déjà vu'. It was a PAF that dared to talk about IITians and the problems they face, struggling against a hostile system that does not brook failure. The story was centered on *Dumdum*, a typical IITian who believes he is a failure in life because of his three backlogs. He sees no way out of his problems and is on the verge of committing suicide when he finds out that one of his closest friends has done the same to himself. This leaves him thoroughly shaken. As he delves into the reasons behind his friend's final fatal action, he realises that the thoughts he thinks aren't just his; that everyone around him has a few secret fears that they never talk about. The story concludes by urging the students and the system to work together to make the institute a *mandir* for learning.

The response to the PAF was overwhelming. The director, Anshul Singhal received several anonymous mails from people thanking him for the PAF and for speaking out about what they had felt inside for so long. It was the audience's response in the OAT on the night of the PAF that gave Prof. Kundu, one of the judges, the idea of making Déjà vu into a movie. He wished for the students to have a platform to voice their views and for it to be seen not just by other students but also by professors and parents. Thus, in the beginning of May with a budget of approx. Rs.2 lakhs, a team of students, several among them pass-outs about to begin their jobs, got together to make 'Déjà vu: the Movie'.

Making the movie during the summer holidays proved to be no joke. The cast and crew still speak with wry smiles of the lessons they learnt in those three months. Sound, lights, camera, infrastructure – each of these departments had their own Heads. People missed treats, classes, even exams for this movie. A few missed their PTs. Some people worked through the holidays even though they didn't have even a single scene to act in.

There were lessons of punctuality and dedication to be learnt from many of the non-IITians involved in the movie too. On the first day, the cameraman arrived at 7 A.M. and had to wake up the Director and Production In-charge. The brother of a lights-man committed suicide during this period. Still, he showed up for work the next morning

The institute proved to be extremely helpful, with even watchmen volunteering to act in the movie. With the aim of producing the best possible quality given budget constraints, it was decided to wrap up shooting in as short a time as possible, so as to afford the best quality of camera and crew. In fact one of the cameramen hired was also on the *Nakshatra* ad with Aishwarya Rai. The story writers had a minor tussle with this particular cameraman as he wanted to shoot the entire movie like a Hindi soap, with long close-ups and very few angles. The students being inspired by English movies had other ideas though and it took them a few days to get that across. So while watching the movie, one can ap-

parently see this transition. The first few scenes look like your standard Indian soap, then the movie takes on a Bollywood style and finally Hollywood.

A few interesting anecdotes

In order to finish shooting as fast as possible, the cast was extremely well-prepared. Jikku Abraham, the Infrastructure In-charge, had the particularly difficult task of getting all the sets ready in time for shooting. So professional was the cast that they once managed to shoot an entire 9-minute sequence continuously, without a single retake. Then again, in a particular scene, the lead actor, Ankur Gulati was made to brush his teeth for 2.5 hours without a break. He ended up bruising his tongue pretty badly and didn't recover completely till almost two weeks later!

In another scene, an actor playing the role of a professor is shown a script for a PAF that Ankur Gulati's character has written. During the shooting of the scene, this actor could not remember his lines. Hence, in the final take of the scene, the script Ankur handed him contained his lines and he read them out in front of the camera.

Then there was the suicide scene in Hostel 13 that had to have an actor playing dead and the body to be lifted and carried away in the hospital's ambulance. The first time they tried to film it, the ambulance door refused to close. The second time, the ambulance itself wouldn't start. And all this time the actor was forced to lie motionless while being chewed alive by mosquitoes. For the same scene, blood was required. They tried several substitutes including *Close up* toothpaste, but nothing looked realistic enough. So finally, one of the crew members raced to the hospital and had a bottleful of his own blood extracted! They actually used *real* blood in that scene.

Power connections for lights in outdoor locales were hard to come by. Often the crew had to wait hours for the lights to be set up. Also, the power supply in IIT wasn't optimal for the kind of lights they were using, so lights sometimes blew up, further delaying the shoots. Rains too caused the postponement of shooting on two or three occasions. However at the end of the day, the cameraman was really fascinated with IIT as a shooting venue. He felt that IIT, with its enticing scenery and natural beauty, was a perfect venue for shooting a movie.

So what is status quo?

Déjà vu is presently in the post-production stage and is almost complete. Many news channels such as CNBC, NDTV, Zee and Times Now have already approached the students regarding the film but Prof. Kundu intends that the movie be shown in all the IITs to begin with and then depending upon people's reaction, be publicised further.

The movie is like an art film, and raises several important questions for every IITian. It looks at matters from the perspectives of people with different characters and discusses their varied problems out in the open. The film doesn't give any false promises or artificial endings. While refusing to fix blame upon anybody, the film emphasises the need for quick changes in our system. In the words of Anshul, "One thing that will come out during the screening of the movie is that irrespective of whether a person likes it or not, he/she would think, 'This is *my* story'. And as for every IITian, it would bring a smile on their face."

The other people involved in the core production team of the movie were Vipul Goel, Ankit Aggarwal, Amit Golani, Jikku Abraham, Sudarshan Wadkar, Ravali Prasad, Rajat Sharma, Nikhil Pandey, Vineet Bansal, Suneet, Sumit Parmar, Akhil Aggarwal.

An Interview with Anshul Singhal (Director)

Q: What was the inspiration behind the script of the PAF?

A: After H 4's PAF the previous year, the only idea in my mind when PAF season arrived was to win this time. To do that, I wanted to do something different. At that time, a lot was going on in my head and after discussions with my friends and seniors I found that my problems weren't unique. I realised that almost inadvertently, I had stumbled upon something very important.

Q: What were your reactions immediately after Déjà vu, the PAF?

A: The first thing we all felt when we swarmed the OAT stage was "Boss, jeet gaye."
Then, several people came up to me and said, "Thank you for this PAF." After the jubilation wore off a little, we all realized how much this PAF meant. We realised that it wasn't about winning anymore; that it hadn't been about winning for at least the last 25 days before the PAF. It was far more important than that. It was a story that had to be told.

Q: How different was making the movie, from directing a PAF?

A: In a movie, there's no prod to make. Also, there's no dearth of volunteers to help out. While a PAF has about 75 people working on it, our movie had close to 300. However a great disadvantage in a movie is that here, there's a screen between the actors and the audience. That's why you can never achieve the same degree of realism in a movie that a PAF does.

Book: Midnight's Children

Widely considered to be Salman Rushdie's best work so far, Midnight's Children has several awards to its name, most notably the Booker Prize in 1981 and the 'Booker of Bookers' in 1993. The book is narrated by Saleem Sinai, who was born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947. Saleem is one of Midnight's Children, a group of children who have magical powers; some can teleport, some have enchanting beauty, while some can turn metal into gold. Saleem has the greatest power of all, the ability to look inside the hearts and minds of humans.

Constant parallels are drawn between Saleem's life and the changing fortunes of India. The story gets darker as it progresses and ends with the Emergency, which Rushdie considers the triumph of violence over democracy. Rushdie delves in detail into the various atrocities that were committed during the Emergency - the Delhi slum clearance scheme, forced vasectomies performed as a part of Sanjay Gandhi's family planning programme and the imprisonment of Indira Gandhi's political opponents. In fact, the book ran into quite a bit of controversy, with Indira Gandhi (who is frequently referred to as *'The Widow'* in the book) suing Rushdie for libel, and winning her case, all over one sentence in the novel.

The style of narration is uniquely Indian.

Punctuation and grammar are occasionally forgotten in the excitement of telling the story. Very rich in allegories and symbolism, there are constant tongue-in-cheek references to the superstition and fanatical religious beliefs that are an integral part of India. A quite noticeable technique used in the narration is the sidelining of the significant, and the highlighting of unimportant events. There are also several instances of information obtained on the sly, through peepholes, and much credence is given by the narrator to rumour. This is done deliberately, in what Saleem Sinai refers to as *chutnification*, the spicing up of the story to give it a unique flavour.

The linguistic pyrotechnics in the novel are quite daunting, and the plotline occasionally confusing, with numerous references to events long past, as well as events that are yet to happen. However, for its brilliant political and religious satire, and Rushdie's simple but effective demonstrations of the significance of perspective, *Midnight's Children* comes strongly recommended as a very good read.
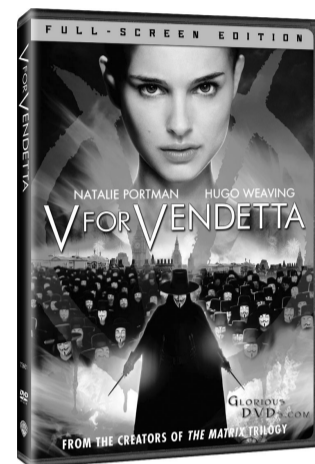
ESOTERICA!

Our renowned critics, Maddy and Karthik review a snooty book and a snootier movie
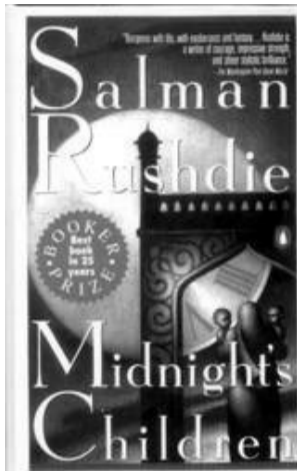
Movie: V for Vendetta

There are but a few films that can stimulate engaging thoughts about the hypothetical, transcending the limits of banal entertainment. There are fewer films that can mesmerise and at the same time disintegrate your mind causing intense ferment. The Wachowski Brothers' *V for Vendetta* is tour de force that, by virtue of its rich cinematic texture, swashbuckling execution and flawless script (adapted from the graphic novel series of the same name by Alan Moore) translates into an unparalleled experience.

The movie commences in England 40 years into the future, a dystopian society governed by a totalitarian 'party' represented by an iron-handed dictator and his unscrupulous henchmen. Succumbing to media manipulations and propaganda, the common citizens have lost all capacity to even comprehend the abuse of their rights to justice and freedom. It is in this hopeless Orwellian state of perdition that a masked man who calls himself 'V' (Hugo Weaving) challenges to single-handedly overthrow the government and remind the citizens that "'Fairness', 'Justice' and 'Freedom' are more than words – they are perspectives". He promises the citizens on national television on the 5th of November (a day historically remembered in England as 'Guy Fawkes Day' to commemorate a foiled revolutionary attempt in the 1600s) that in exactly one year he would blow up the parliament, thus openly throwing down the gauntlet to the dictator.

What follows in the movie is more than just a slick cat and mouse game. The historical and political premise of the society simultaneously unfolds as we witness revelations throughout the story of the betrayal of a country by a ruthless bigot and its subsequent battle towards emancipation. This is one film in which the dialogues are absolutely fantastic from start to end - the scene where 'V' introduces himself to the female protagonist 'Evey' (Natalie Portman) in an alliterative soliloquy of words starting with the letter 'V', the scene when he speaks to the citizens on national television making a pledge, etc.

Though many critics have deemed the movie as "George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* meets *Robin Hood*", I assert with full conviction that there is much more to this film than such a platitude. To introduce a little affable suggestion in lieu of a critic's verdict resulting from a boring argumentative analysis, I suggest that you beg, borrow or steal to watch this one.

The stinking truth about the sleepy gamers

Ashish Goel reveals the inside story of a few IITian traits through science.

There are quite a few bad habits that one regularly associates with the IITian way of life. Normally, one shrugs these off with the standard 'Oh well, they are just absent-minded' justification. However maybe, just maybe, there are clear scientific explanations to justify them.

Irregular bathing and shabby rooms:
The immune system of the human body is always in a hyperactive state. If it doesn't find harmful external agents to fight with, it starts attacking its own cells and tissues. This can be attributed to the loss of 'immunological tolerance' or the ability to distinguish self from non-self; and it leads to several auto-immune diseases like multiple sclerosis and diabetes mellitus. Around 80 such chronic diseases which effect different parts of the human body have been identified so far.

These diseases have some interesting characteristics. Most of the known auto-immune diseases tend to show a female predominance, spondylitis being the only exception. Further, auto-immunity being genetic in nature, the genetic inheritance of a person plays a big role in the susceptibility of the individual to these diseases. But strangely enough, auto-immunity has been found to manifest among the members of the same family in the form of different diseases.

Of late, so much has come to light about these diseases that in several European countries like Denmark and some parts of Switzerland (where Indians haven't yet set foot), some people actually consume small dozes of harmful bacteria and other microorganisms to keep their immune systems from attacking the very organs they are designed to protect. However, these diseases still form one of the most poorly understood and poorly recognised categories of illnesses.

So then, cleanliness is not really next to godliness. It is apparently good for your body to skip the odd bath and it isn't really a matter of shame to have a filthy room. After all, you are keeping your immune system busy with the work it is designed for!

Caution: This hypothesis is valid only for places which have extremely pure and hygienic environments. No place in India, leave alone an IIT in a place like Mumbai, qualifies for this status.

Sleeping during lectures:
Sleeping during lectures results in a kind of sleep pattern that closely resembles what is known as the 'Da Vinci sleep'. This comes from the fact that Da Vinci used to sleep for 15 minutes, every 2 hours. Technically, this is known as 'polyphasic sleep' and colloquially, it is often referred to as a 'power nap' or a 'cat nap'.

Sleeping in short bursts of 20-30 min ensures that one doesn't enter the phase of 'sleep inertia' (the feeling of sloth and fatigue that one has on waking up after a deep sleep). Moreover the kind of sleep that one gets during these power naps is the very important Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. This phase of sleep, apart from being the phase when one dreams, is also responsible for the mental rejuvenation effects of sleep. Having several such stages in a day can be beneficial to the human body. Recent studies have shown that people following polyphasic sleeping patterns experience a decrease in the total number of hours of sleep required by the body per day accompanied by an increase in performance of the memory by 12%. In fact, NASA trains its astronauts with schedules of polyphasic sleep, because every extra minute spent in space corresponds to an additional expenditure of millions of dollars. Further, they can't afford to have their astronauts entering the phase of sleep inertia in space.

Caution: These findings are controversial and are still under investigation. It has been proved that the patterns of polyphasic sleep, if followed, have to be extremely rigid and rigorous. Also, people are generally advised to have a power nap during their lunch breaks or while travelling in local trains and buses. So think twice before you use this as an excuse in one of those 8.30 lectures.

Gaming:
Scientists certainly don't need to come up with justifications in this case. People who are into gaming have their own set of explanations - from increased concentration and hand-eye coordination to better cooperation and mutual understanding among batchmates/wingmates. People even cite an increase in general knowledge about the culture of various civilisations in the world and the geography of USA.

On a serious note, collaborations are being formed between the gaming industry and various branches of science and engineering and one such conspicuous development has taken place in the field of medical sciences. Surgeons in several leading medical institutions around the world are being trained in the skills of delicate surgeries through games, specifically designed for this purpose. This is particularly useful for modern surgeries where the surgeon isn't present in the surgical chamber at the time of operation, in order to maintain a sterile environment. The movements of the surgeon's hands outside the chamber are transferred to the robotic machine that performs the actual operation.

Several victims of vertigo have shown tremendous improvement through carefully monitored, deliberate gaming experiences. The military of several advanced countries has incorporated gaming and simulation techniques in its training program as well.

Caution: All the instances mentioned above are cases where some games have been deliberately designed to meet specific requirements.

Freaky Science

Freshie Journalism Competition: First Prize entry

I've never maintained a journal in my life. I might never, for fear of that habit and its products becoming a liability in the future. Remember the number of people undone by their diaries? This is the closest I might get to recounting my experiences. My experiences here come under the "novel" category. Maybe you'd think life's been very placid until now; well, I can't challenge that fact.

Until now, all my education had been taken care of in the same little school, half an hour from home. I knew most people there and their idiosyncrasies (a euphemism for quirky behaviour) and most people knew similar details about me. To be thrown into a totally new city where the above fact of life ceased to hold, created this whole feeling of a dream; not necessarily the sweet one people insincerely wish you before going to bed at nine. And then there were minor changes in the landscape, from a concrete jungle to a real one, a couple of lakes thrown in and a lot of dogs and cows (and hence minefields of cow dung), along with the seniors, taking your intros. I also need to make a special mention of the panthers lurking in the bushes.

I had entered the room allotted to me, only to discover it's already been occupied - the fungi and termites are tough tenants to get rid of. They don't seem to mind the two girls living along with them in one corner of the room anymore. The room itself, by general consensus, is nothing more than a corner.

A few weeks into staying at the hostel, I came to know how much of a termite I had become. After the supposed "anti-termite" operation, the only living things left in the room were the termites.

The first time I came across "the golden word" was the day before classes were to begin. A batchmate of mine dragged me off to a particular physics lab "orientation"; I didn't really mind being dragged because the other option was being dragged to some place else for some errand by another amiable few-hours-old batchmate.

For the first few weeks "orientation" filled my conversations with my parents back home. So frequent and varied (from washing-machine orientations to those of Techfest) were my descriptions, that my parents thought I was thoroughly disoriented in life. Or was it some IIO they'd dropped their daughter off at by mistake?

My close encounters with the panthers of IIT Bombay seem to take place mostly between 0830 and 1230 hours, when we all know what happens. These hours are also when I had to accept the fact that my childhood ambition to perform mass hypnosis, especially of those in their adrenalin rushing years, is not much of an ambition at all.

It's been two and a half months of reinventing and creating an identity for someone whom you thought you already knew and that it'd be a cinch to explain to strangers who that person is. I guess this is the part of the freshie experience I'll never be able to explain or forget.

Five years down the line, I see myself knowing most people here and their idiosyncrasies (a euphemism for quirky behaviour) and most people knowing similar details about me. To be thrown, again, into a new set up where the soon-to-be fact of life will cease to hold is something I can't quite imagine yet.

(Archana Raja is a first year undergraduate student of the Chemistry Department.)

InsIghT conducted a limerick writing competition last month. We present here the top 4 entries in no specific order!

Limericks

**Mohit Gidwani,
Fourth Year, MEMS**

In the evening, at four-thirty,
The sportsmen out there get dirty,
But I end classes,
And clink those glasses,
With all my mates, say Aye Aye Tea.

**Varun Verma,
Fourth Year, MEMS**

He started off with a mighty ton,
He was called the Rising Son.
Mahendra Singh Dhoni,
Then grew a pony,
And now he can't score a single run.

**Chetana Baliga,
Second Year, Biotech Dept.**

Welcome to the Jungle, our entrance sign should read,
As within this vast Insti, vicious creatures do breed.
Panthers, snake and crocodiles,
We battle mosquitoes most vile,
But to fight them that teach us, the bravest go knock-kneed!

**Eeshan Malhotra,
First Year, Civil Engg.**

Arnie was walking; it was pitch black,
Stepped on a manhole (he strayed off-track).
What could he do?
He just fell through,
And managed to shout, "I'll be back".

SHOUTBACK

We NEED Feedback.
Help us improve, the way you want us to.
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and Letters to the Editor, to be published in
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Questech

1. Got the time?

John has a small hourglass and a large one. The small one can measure 5 minutes and the large one can measure 7 minutes. How can he measure 16 minutes with 2 hourglasses running together?
The rule is when any one of the hourglasses finishes leaking, that hourglass must be flipped over immediately to keep it running.
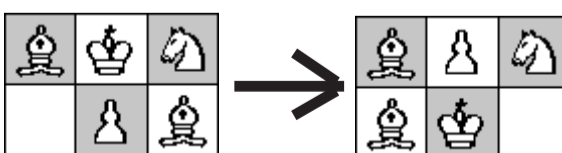
2. Misbehaved Derivatives

The derivative of x^2, with respect to x, is 2x. However, suppose we write x^2 as the sum of x's, and then take the derivative:

Let $f(x) = x + x + ... + x$ (x times)

Then $f'(x) = d/dx[x + x + ... + x]$ (x times)

$= d/dx[x] + d/dx[x] + ... + d/dx[x]$ (x times)

$= 1 + 1 + ... + 1$ (x times)

$= x$

This argument appears to show that the derivative of x^2 with respect to x is actually x. Where is the fallacy?

3. Chess time

You are expected to go from configuration A to configuration B above on the selected area of chess board in minimum number of moves. What is the minimum number and what is the sequence of moves?
Note: you are not allowed to move outside these 6 squares for any move.

4. Wild card entry

Two magicians, Aabra and Cadabra, perform a trick with a shuffled deck of cards, jokers removed. Aabra asks a member of the audience to select five cards at random from the deck. The audience member passes the five cards to Aabra, who examines them, and hands one back. Aabra then arranges the remaining four cards in some way and places them face down, in a neat pile.
Cadabra, who has not witnessed these proceedings, then enters the room, looks at the four cards, and determines the missing fifth card, held by the audience member. How is this trick done?
Note: The only communication between Aabra and Cadabra is via the arrangement of the four cards. There are no encoded speech or hand signals or expressions, no bent or marked cards, no clue in the orientation of the pile of four cards.

Please mail your suggestions, queries and solutions to shweta@iitb.ac.in and/or onkardalal@iitb.ac.in