

Circumventing LAN Ban

We may have finally discovered a method that lets you do late-night browsing from your room!
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New all girl IIT

A proposed new IIT at Amravati may rob all seven IITs of their female population

Compulsory NCC training

A new initiative to boost the physical and overall fitness of IITians- not altogether a bad idea.
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The Soviet Connection

In the final part of a series of articles marking the Golden Jubilee of IITB, our reporters reveal a rather obscure chain of events that individually reckoned may not amount to much, but when seen over the scope of half a century, raise some very disturbing questions. Rylan Henriques and Vaibhav Devanathan investigate

We now bring to you the fourth and most revealing part of the Golden Jubilee series, where we take a look back over the fifty years of IIT Bombay - 50 years of history, of tremendous endeavour, of talented but little exploited youth, and the vision of a few great men. Here are some more of very little known, but now revealed and rather disturbing facts about this institute we study in.

The Beginnings

In February 1955, Rene Maheau, Assistant Director General of UNESCO relayed the welcome message that the USSR would assist in setting up the second IIT, at Bombay. The UNSECO effort, accompanied by Indian delegates found surprising encouragement at Moscow, in the form of the charismatic Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A steel worker by profession, Brezhnev was particularly enthusiastic about the setting up of India's first Metallurgy department. IIT Bombay remains the USSR's largest ever non-military endeavor on foreign lands. In 1961, Brezhnev himself paid a six-month long visit to the newly inaugurated IIT Bombay. To amuse him and keep him company on his visit to IIT Bombay was his wife Viktoria (after whom VJTI; Viktoria Jubilee Technological Institute, was named), two children, Galina and Yuri. Also accompanying him were his beloved Russian White Geese (Cygnus atratus), who he would pet whilst having lunch, and before turning into bed. He claimed they helped calm him and rid him of his insomnia.

These swans (or their progeny) can still be seen around the Old Guesthouse area during similar hours. Why they remain here still, is anybody's guess.

At the time of the founding of IIT Bombay, over 80 Soviet experts were posted

through satellite imagery of our campus (courtesy: the IIT Bombay licensed version of GoogleMaps). While we did find much construction work being undertaken, most areas were familiar to us after four years here, leaving few avenues to explore. One

This prompted us to enquire more about this little-known 'institute-within-an-institute'. We were informed that Sameer is not officially a part of IIT Bombay, but rather, is a campus and an institute of its own (it was on these grounds that we, IIT Bombay students were denied entry). It was apparently set up by external agencies to perform cutting-edge research into microwave devices and terawatt lasers (pioneered in Russia). Students from the Engineering Physics department, who briefly allowed in for a Work Visit did add that it was rumoured that classified defense-related activities were being conducted on the premises, and that the high level of security in the place certainly made that seem likely. Further requests for information through official channels were met with silence 'for reasons of national security'. Which nation, we can only wonder.

The Facts that prompted this investigation

- IIT Bombay remains the USSR's largest ever non-military endeavor on foreign lands
- Every Department still maintains strong ties with Russian counterparts
- Sameer pioneers research in microwave technology, a Russian specialty
- Security around Sameer remains extremely tight with IITB students being generally denied entry
- New PT policy: Students will not be allowed foreign internships anywhere except in Russia

locally, via the UNESCO-Soviet assistance program, to assist in the running of the institute in its nascent stages. While the original team of Russian experts has long gone, every department still maintains strong ties with counterparts in the erstwhile USSR, with professors making visits to Russia at least once in a five year period. The institute remains 'considerate' of the help afforded us at our humble beginnings - as reported in the last issue, an interview with the Dean, AP informed us of a new Practical Training policy, where students would not be permitted to undertake foreign university or industry projects, with the exception of those receiving confirmations from Russian institutes.

The Investigation

In an attempt to acquaint ourselves with the lesser known parts of our vast and sometimes confusing campus, we searched

of the few gray areas was the overgrown area beyond Hostel 4 leading to the Virar creek. However, our attempts to visit this area, which clearly is a fairly old installation, were met with failure, as we were informed by security guards at the gate that for reasons of our own safety, they could not allow us to proceed further. Further probing left them surprised and saying things about 'tribals attacking us'. Strangely enough, the IIT Bombay Estate Office denied all knowledge of any 'illegal constructions' on this land, and informed us that trees were planted there, to compensate for all the trees recently felled about campus.

As a follow up to our article on the institute's lack of funds to pay its electricity bills, we invoked the RTI to find out what we could about the electricity consumption profile of the institute. We were shocked to learn that Sameer itself consumed a whopping 29% of the institutes total energy consumption.

An appeal

The intent of this article was to culminate our showcase on IIT Bombay, for its Golden Jubilee. However, some of the facts we have unearthed, are potentially disturbing, and we will definitely dig deeper into areas that remain unsettlingly hazy. This has so far proved to be an uphill task. We urge enthusiastic members of the student community to contact us at insight@iitb.ac.in, and assist us in whatever way possible.

(Rylan Henriques and Vaibhav Devanathan are fourth and third year students, both of the Physics Department. They can be contacted at nalyr14@iitb.ac.in and vaibhavdevanathan@iitb.ac.in)

In what has been a long struggle for women's education in a country still witness to dowry deaths, the first woman President of India, President Pratibha Patel, has pushed for the creation of a woman's only IIT.

To be located in her Lok Sabha constituency of Amravati in the debt-ridden region of Vidharbha, this is seen as giving a boost to the region. In a letter to the human resource development ministry dated March 7, the Rashtrapati Bhavan has asked that the IIT in Amravati be set up as soon as possible. A project proposal was attached with the request.

The proposal is also unique in that it suggests doing away with the BTech courses and instead keeping only five year integrated courses. The reason behind this:

It's a woman's world - Finally!

The newly proposed all girls IIT at Amravati may soon rob the other IITs of their cherished 'non-males'. Rajlakshmi reviews the situation

it has been found that a larger number of graduate students prefer to stay back in India. 'Catch 'em young' - is the motto of the day.

Implications

So what does this imply for the current IIT system? While no official source was willing to be quoted, there are worries afoot that any sort of reservation en masse could bring down the standard of the institution. Since the focus is mainly on post-graduate women in any case, a proposal is to first enroll all women who clear the IIT joint

entrance exams into the new IIT rather than the existing ones. The rationale is that the sum total of these women is enrolled across the other 7 affiliated institutes in any case and the standard at entry would not have to deteriorate as well. Such a move would also please conservative parents, reluctant to send their daughters to a co-ed residential college.

Of course with this comes the added fear that these women might then have to suffer an institute with poor infrastructure and even worse, no experienced faculty. It is hoped that the attachment of the President's name

with this project shall mitigate these fears. Also, more experienced faculty from the other IITs will be shifted in order to ensure high standards of teaching.

A womanless IIT?

With women already in a minority in IIT the possibility of the extinction of the 'non-male' species seems to be imminent. Male IITians will perhaps not feel the loss too greatly, so few are IITian women's numbers anyway, although the few student members we imparted this news to greeted it with tremendous consternation.

(Rajlakshmi Purkashtha is a fourth year student of the MEMS Department. She can be contacted at rajlakshmi@iitb.ac.in)



Are you tired of the little Red Cross that appears over your network connection icon in your notification tray exactly at 11:57 pm every night? Are you tired of that one last mail that you have to, just have to send before tomorrow morning before the LAN connection disappears and the ensuing process of hunting for your I-card to issue the key to your hostel computer room? Or are you in general pained by the umpteen discussions on LAN ban and just want the endless debate to somehow end? If so, we have the answer for you.

A recent attempt at random googling led us to a little known webpage <http://www.networkconcepts.com/lan/connectiondetails.jsp>. The content, first appearing routine run-of-the-mill networking fundaes, very soon made us sit up and take notice. It had the answers to all our problems; it told us how to circumvent the LAN ban. It explained in detail, the concepts behind how a LAN connection can be selectively and temporally blocked, how the timers are set in hubs and most importantly, the steps that need to be taken to safeguard oneself from losing one's net connection. Here's what you need to:

First, let's understand what happens at 11:59 pm. The friendly looking LAN hub in your wing checks the "default

LAN Ban Loopholes

The LAN Ban has been the cause of many student woes. Here, Vivek has finally discovered a method of perhaps circumventing it...

gateway" setting of all the computers it is connected to (which include yours). All computers with 10.x.250.1 as the default gateway, where x is the hostel number housing that hub, are sent a packet locking further transaction from those LAN sockets. The sockets are unblocked the next morning when the hub sends a counter packet.

Now you would be wondering where the loop hole is that can be exploited. It's simple yet not so. A little while before midnight, if you change your default gateway settings to 10.y.250.1 where y is different from your hostel number, the hub will bypass your computer as it won't be able to match y with x, its hostel number. And voila! Your computer is spared for the day. Wait for some time and then safely change your default gateway back to 10.x.250.1 and enjoy the net connection. Remember, the key to the whole loophole is that a hub is nothing but an unintelligent switch. It has a simple identification algorithm which is not exploited because people do not know what the algorithm is.

There's got to be a catch, right? There is. Two of them to be accurate. First, the hub programming is still smart enough to make a note of the fact that it didn't have to send any packets. In other words, an entire wing cannot afford to employ this method simultaneously. So, discuss and chalk out a plan of action where you can take turns at withstanding the LAN ban while others adopt the aforementioned technique. Moreover, the hub also does random sweeps for IP addresses which is present in its so called "ban this IP" list but it has been unable to send a packet to that IP.

The simple solution is not to be too greedy to use this technique very frequently or on more than 2 subsequent nights. Exercise some self-control, use your discretion. We would even recommend resorting to this system only in cases of urgent need to avoid getting pinged by the hub. We say this in earnest because we take no responsibility for the action that the authorities may take when they notice your breach. However, this is a loophole that will continue to exist and can be used to our advantage if we are smart. Remember, play safe.

(Vivek Upadhyay is a final year student of the department of Computer Science. He can be contacted at vivek_u@iitb.ac.in)

Can you imagine having compulsory NCC sessions an average of five times a month? If the institute has its way, this may be just what you'll get. In this article, we explore a proposal to introduce NCC courses for every student in the IITB curriculum.

Reasons

When we approached the authorities to seek possible reasons for this drastic move, the explanations we were given were several. They pointed to the declining physical fitness of the average IITian as the primary cause. A soundbyte: "Since Tumtums were first introduced six years back, we have seen that people cycle and walk less. This is a way to ensure that everyone gets as much exercise as they need."

Also, we were told about a 'Kanpur model', which has been successfully implemented in IITK. There, all students have to report for NCC compulsorily in the mornings. This ensures that they are on time for classes. Our source informed us that 'declining discipline levels are a major driver'.

The Finer details

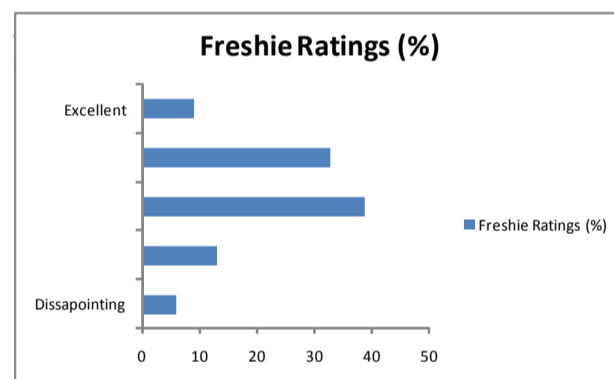
(All rules below are applicable to students currently in the second year and below)

– Every student has to take an NCC course in any two semesters of his/her choice

NCC, compulsory?

InsighT takes a look at a new measure that, if introduced, will affect every student of IITB.

– Attendance on 20 days of the semester is compulsory.



Feedback from the 2007 Freshie Batch. Ratings are on a scale of 1-5, with 5 standing for 'excellent' and 1 standing for 'disappointing'

– At the end of the semester, every class missed will lead to a two class attendance penalty of the course in which the student has least attendance (in addition, of course, to the XX grade being awarded in the NCC course)

A silver lining?

The proposed measures seem severe indeed. But is the NCC really such a bad thing? To find out, we went and spoke to the only people who've actually experienced it – the current freshies and sophies. And we were surprised.

The outlook seems to be almost universally cheerful. We heard many comments like: "My NCC sessions were the second most enjoyable part of the week" (the first was not disclosed) and "I was selected for NSO football, but I took NCC without a second thought." The graph (see left) bears out the fact that the picture is indeed brighter than it seems.

It seems that we will have to wait and watch. If the recommendations are indeed put into effect, there will be discontent. However, as the examples above prove, the NCC can be useful and even interesting.

We feel that the information presented in the graph above is indicative of certain trends, given that freshies can form a very fair approximation of high enthu IITians. We leave the analysis to you, the reader.

(Vaibhav Devanathan is a third year Dual Degree student of the Department of Physics. He can be contacted at vaibhavdevanathan@iitb.ac.in)

InsighT team

Chief Executive Editor
Nithya Subramanian

Chief Editor
Vaibhav Devanathan
THE EXECUTION PANEL

Aaditya Ramdas, Aayesha Ghanekar, Abhinav Mohan, Aditi Goyal, Aishwarya Ramakrishnan, Aishwarya Sharma, Ajanta Akhuly, Archana Raja, Arunabh Sinha, Asgerali Masalawala, Dahlia Nadkarni, Eeshan Malhotra, Gauri Joshi, Gautam Hazari, Gautam Salhotra, Karthik Shekhar, Kumar Aakash, Krishna Ramkumar, Manas Rachh, Miheer Desai, Mohit Sharma, Neha Rambhia, Onkar Dalal, Prachur Goel, Rahul Dash, Rajat Chakraborty, Rajlakshmi Purkayastha, Rohit Vadera, Rylan Henriques, R. Karthik, Shaunak Samvatsar, Siddhartha Das, Srivathsan B., Sudarshan Bhatija, Tannishtha Sanyal, Tarun Mathur, Vivek Upadhyay

If you would like to join the InsighT team and/or give feedback, feel free to mail us at insight@iitb.ac.in or visit our website <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight>.

Announcements

A New System

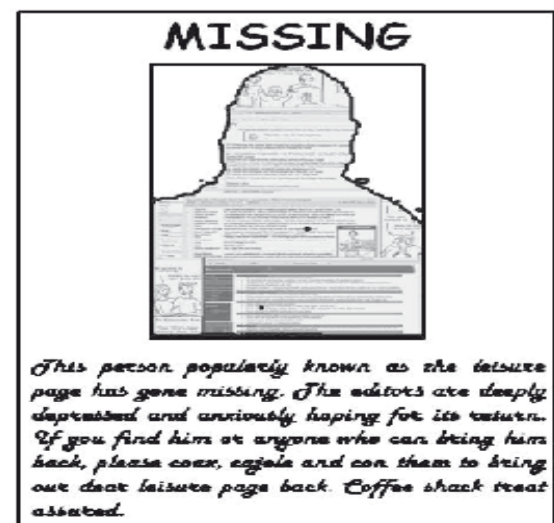
In order to boost InsighT's readership, we have decided to reduce the number of copies printed to 200 per issue, starting from this one. The logic behind this is that since until now InsighT has been very accessible, with most people getting an individual copy, people don't bother to read it, thinking its common news and that someone will have read it and will tell them it's contents over the mess table. But now, you'll have to fight for your copy. We call it our spin on viral marketing.

You will also notice, that the issue you're holding contains only one single sheet, instead of two double. This is another instance of viral marketing. We've randomly distributed InsighT as four different single sheets, each containing two pages of news. You'll have to hunt for the remaining three pages to read all the news. This way, you really fight for your information. Trust us, you'll value it more.

Perfumed Goodness

This major cutdown on the number of copies has given

us leeway to experiment with perfumed ink in InsighT for the first time. The scent used this time is called *summer spice*. We hope it will enhance your reading experience. Do drop us a mail telling us what you think of the idea.



InsighT wishes all its readers a very Happy April Fools day.