



The Fourth Estate

Quidquid latine dictum sit, altum videtur

IIT Madras
February 2009

Not a priced magazine

For internal circulation only

The Fourth Estate Best Quote Award goes to...

“ Our girls are not only having fun with your guys but some intelligent exchange takes place too. **”**

- *Dr John B Lourdusamy to a prof from an Engineering department.*

The Fourth Estate wants you to contribute.

Send in articles, poems, short stories, cartoons, photographs, money, etc. to the editors or to festate2008@gmail.com. Amusing or informative forwards or even unforgettable quotes heard on campus, such as the one above, are equally welcome.

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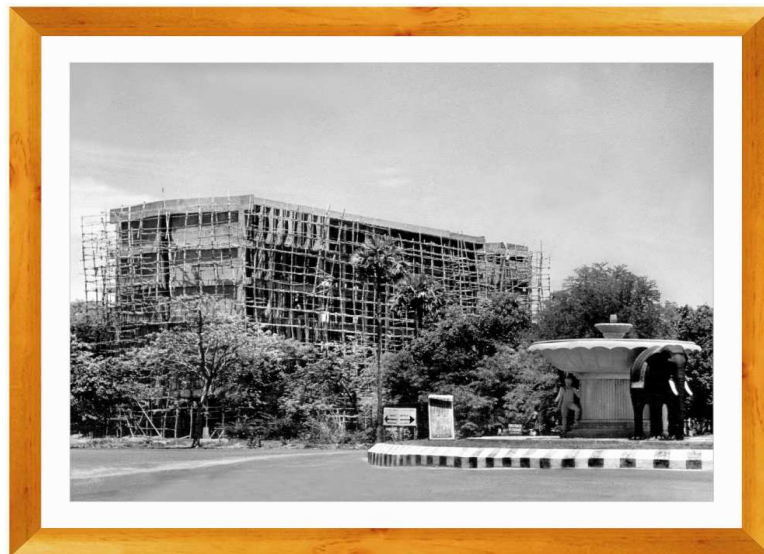
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Dean Students
(A friend in Dean is a friend indeed)
SAC Speaker



Administrative Block under construction.
Note the statue of the human figure in the Gajendra Circle. (1967)

A Word from the Editorial Desk

Congratulations! You've succeeded in getting your hands on one of the few and highly anticipated copies of *The Fourth Estate*. It is with heavy hearts that we key in these words as this edition shall be our last. We've tried to remain true to the core ideals that this magazine stands for, and thus we present to you an issue replete with articles of high timbre.

The article which equates PhD in India and abroad in painstaking detail gives us a glimpse of the ratiocination of our doctoral students who are unfortunately underrepresented in the institute media. Jayaraj opens his heart in an interview with our correspondent and one of our editors takes a look into the all-new barrier-breaking frontier-pushing GCU. IVil and Prakriti also find their voice within these covers.

We continue our association with Lakshmi Gopal which has produced yet another facetious piece. Speaking of old associations, our hardcore witwallah has managed to put pen to paper yet again to flail a topic he holds close to his heart. In the same vein, Sayan takes a break from his job and talks about his *extra-curricular* escapades with the fauna of the campus. To stay in the race, one of our editors pulls out some tongue-in-cheek definitions of insti buzzwords. Ex-editor Satcho provides a retrospective look at college education and the courses that he would have loved the opportunity to enroll for. Our junior correspondent recounts a trip to the island which hosted some of our founding fathers in most exquisite surroundings for no *charge*.

No issue of this mag would be complete without fiction in one form or the other. We've resurrected an old favourite which is guaranteed to tickle your funny bone. Another one of our editors has bulldozed his way into this issue with yet another product off his keyboard. We round off with our WTGW Coord chipping in with a few puzzles for you to chew your pen over.

Finally, we'd like to wish our successors the best of luck, whoever they are. Watch out for our recruitment notice. The Dean of Students, with his inestimable guidance and approval, heads our thank list. The Heritage Centre merits special mention and gratitude for excavating vintage photographs (on pgs. 2 and 41) for this issue. Our committed correspondents with their brilliant inputs and spadework deserve a public thank you. So does our spectacular cover design man Imran Parvez. And with that, we take leave of you. Adios!

The Scissors & Glue Editors

Apoorva Chandra
Nirmal Raj
Sriram Trikutam

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In Conversation with Prakriti

Sunday mornings at 6.20 is probably the time when most of us make ourselves cozy in our beds. But, for Dr. Susy Varughese and fourteen others, this Sunday morning is the fourth and final leg of the bird-watching programme conducted by Prakriti, the Wildlife Club. Today, as Dr. Varughese puts it, is a 'test' day – an opportunity for the participants to test what they have learnt in the past three days within the IIT campus, in the adjoining Guindy National Park. As the group moves into the protected area at GNP, beyond the miniature zoo called Children's Park, Dr. Varughese is at her best. She points out tree pies, magpie robins, forest wagtails, koels, shikras, sunbirds, white-browed bulbuls, parakeets (no parrots in India, please), coucals, pariah kites and partridges. She also points out tigers from pansies (for the uninitiated, these are species of butterflies!) and various species of plants as well.

After the program, Dr. Susy Varughese talks about the campus and the activities of Prakriti. Following are some excerpts:

Her first few years

I came here in 1997 and I was hooked to the campus right from the beginning. It was different from anywhere else. I used to go for walks in Madras Avenue and I decided to start sketching whatever insect or butterfly I saw. Then, I wanted to do more serious study. So, I looked up lots of books and started recording the details. I have myself recorded more than 50 species of butterflies and 80 species of birds. This may vary from an expert's figures.

Prakriti

It was formed in 2002 when a group of like-minded faculty and a few students got together to conserve and create awareness about our diverse flora and fauna. The Prakriti website contains lots of useful information. We have taken a lot of initiatives to help conserve the biodiversity.

One of the first activities we took up was the removal of unnecessary fences from around the IC&SR Building, Admin Block, some faculty housing including wardens' quarters to facilitate easy movement of deer and black buck because I have seen those animals get trapped and killed inside the fences.

Deer deaths

There are two problems here. One is that they get run over by vehicles. I used to get frequent phone calls about injured deer. This problem has been solved to a great extent now by putting up barricades at regular intervals. Nowadays, you don't hear of many deer coming under a car or truck. Though the vehicular traffic has gone up, accidents have certainly come down.

The other one is the attack of deer and black buck by dogs. These dogs basically percolate from Velachery and Taramani. Of course now, we have periodic dog-catching. A cow trap has also been put up in Taramani. Velachery needs a similar one too.

There was also this problem of deer getting killed due to rings. Whenever the deer's leg gets trapped in a ring, the region gets infected and the deer dies a slow, painful death. We have rescued a number of such deer. But, now this has also come down after Prakriti's volunteers have removed and continue to remove

hundreds of rings from near construction sites.

Other Prakriti activities

We also have helped in designing closed dustbins which cannot be opened by monkeys. Monkeys usually open bins and spill everything on the ground and so even the deer start consuming it.

We also screen movies on wildlife and environment and organize an environmental awareness day for campus residents. We help in cleaning the campus and in plastic removal. We help in conducting a deer and black buck census along with the Wildlife Department. We basically use the transect method or the grid method. We also conducted a census of banyan and peepal trees. In fact, a map on the Prakriti website shows all the banyan trees in the campus.

We had a system of 'green cycles'. A few cycles were kept at the in gates and

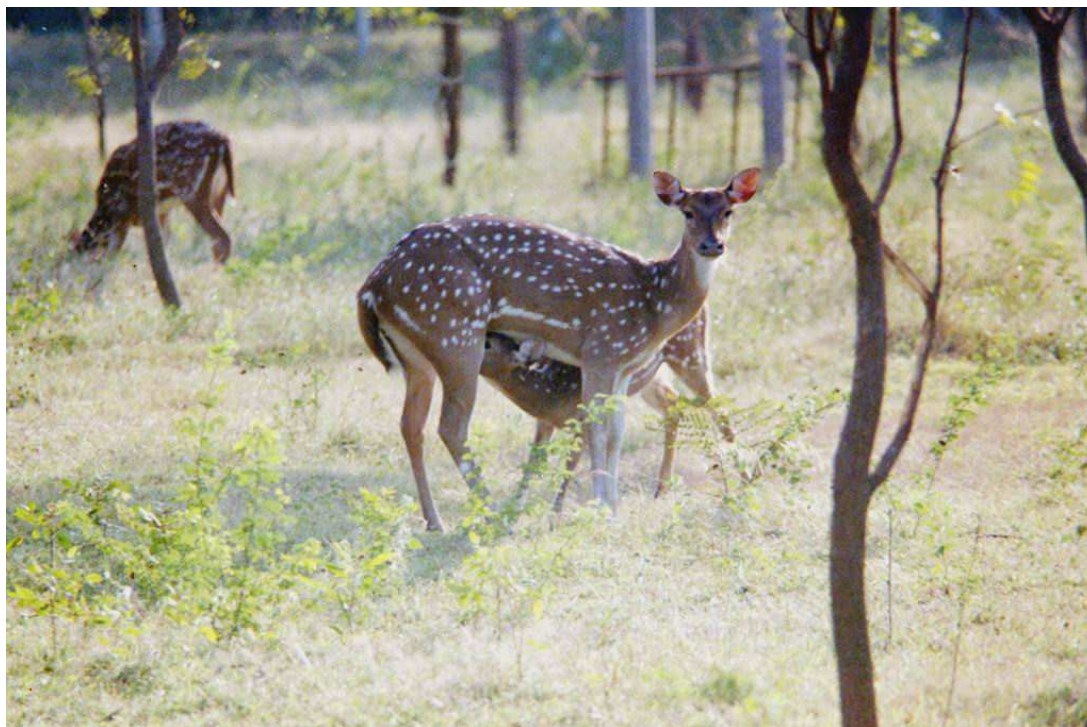
anybody could use them and then return them. Unclaimed and abandoned cycles were used for this purpose. It didn't really work out though. We could have it again.

Future vision

It's time we moved vertical instead of horizontal. We need to reduce the building footprints. In other words, we must not encroach on green spaces. This can be seen in the new hostels and in the BT building. All new buildings must be multi-storied.

We should not concrete open spaces. We should allow the wilderness to remain and not have lawns. Green space is a treasure and we must protect it. Also, we need to manage our food waste effectively. If that is done, then the dog population in the campus can be controlled. This is a major area of concern.

Dr. Susy Varughese of the Chemical Engineering Department is one of the founding faculty members of Prakriti, the wildlife club of IIT Madras. For more info on Prakriti, visit <http://hsb.iitm.ac.in/~prakriti/>



Close Encounters with the Animal Kind

Sayan Ganguly

It's begun raining again. For the fourth time in less than two months a cyclone is going to hit Chennai. It's not the rain which worries me. I actually love rain. It's the effect it has on our wonderful campus that I lose sleep over. My dear hostel Mandakini has already been flooded thrice this season. And I am sure a fourth one is in the offing. But as far as I am concerned this flooding and all the water are but minor problems. What I am worried about is something totally different. It's the Frogs.

Let it rain even for half an hour and it seems the planet has been taken over by a legion of the *Ranidae* family. The numbers are just overwhelming. It appears as if someone had just emptied a mammoth container of small frogs over IITM and sat back to watch how the people deal with it. Suddenly they are just everywhere. A couple under the bed, a few behind the table, a motley crowd in the bathroom and virtually a whole community on the corridors. In diverse colors, sundry sizes and distinctive croaks. They make life awful especially for people who don't consider frogs to be a tender and affectionate species. I personally have had some very bitter encounters with them. Come to think of it, my adventures with the animal kind in the campus have been anything but ordinary. Most cases, actually perhaps all cases resulted in me being the vanquished.

Take the frogs for example. The other day I was taking my bath in the evening after the usual hour long basketball session. It had rained heavily over the weekend and

as usual the frogs were ruling the roost. Now it happens that I always check every nook and cranny of the bathroom every time I enter it. I hate nasty surprises in the middle of a bath which I believe every person has a right to enjoy. But that day, tired from all that ball playing I just forgot and got under the shower. As I poured the shampoo over my head and began thinking how I could have got that one point and hence won the last game of the day I felt something slimy hit my leg. First I thought I had spilled some shampoo. But it happened again. And then again. The soap on my face prevented me from actually seeing what the matter was. I grabbed the towel, wiped my eyes and looked below.

A huge grotesque frog was jumping about and was inadvertently banging into my leg occasionally. The gross sight totally unnerved me. It was not one of those little ones which one had to carefully avoid squishing while on the way to the bogs. It was of whopping dimensions and seemed in a jolly good mood. The immediate reaction was to rush out. But I stopped myself in time. The fact that a guy sprinted out of the bath naked with soap all over because of a bounding frog are stuff hostel night roasts are made of. Nothing would allow me to bring such an embarrassment on myself. So I decided to face it like a man. I closed my eyes and began to think what would an honorable way out be. Endure it, a small voice in the head said. And so I did. With my eyes closed I pretended that nothing was happening. Getting over with the bath as quickly as possible I made a quiet but dignified exit. But those moments with

the slimy creature will remain in memory for quite some time.

The first few months in the campus were the toughest. I had to come to terms with the fact that the creatures down the food chain ought to get a little more respect. Within the first few days I realized that someone else was the boss around here. The *Vanar Sena* was the first to strike. It took me very little time to realize that years of human non-interference had resulted in them becoming totally fearless. If you charge at a monkey with a broom the chances are that he would charge back with something worse. I actually think they enjoying toying with us. After every transgression they sit there with a look as if challenging us to retaliate. I have suffered many losses thanks to their existence. I remember the first time such a thing happened. It was my first week and I had put out some clothes to dry. Among them there was brand new vest which I had worn just once.

I was in the room glancing through the day's paper when the sudden chatter outside forced me to come outside to see what's wrong. A flabbergasting scene greeted me. There on the branch of a tree sat two monkeys and one of them had put on my brand new washed vest. And they were grinning. Yes. They were actually laughing at me. And then in front of my own eyes they bounded from one branch to another and disappeared. That was not the only apparel I lost to the primates. My lab-coat, two shorts and a t-shirt soon followed. This stopped only when I decided that perhaps drying the clothes in the room would be a better option. Inconvenient surely, but definitely a more viable option, from the economic point of view.

The assault of the apes never stopped. Once I had got a brand new pack of glucose and hid it behind the books. The purpose was to keep it out of reach of my overzealous friends. But who knew that glucose was popular even in monkey land? My window happened to be very secure with a strong iron grill preventing any infiltration. The primates used supreme cunning which would have made even al Qaeda proud. As the grills were too close to prevent any grown-up to squeeze through, they sent a baby one to carry out the covert operation. It seemed that I had been under close surveillance and they knew what had been hidden where. Though I wasn't a witness to the actual crime, the detective in me worked out their modus operandi. The villain had come in through a very narrow gap, headed straight for the shelf, grabbed the glucose pack and made a neat exit. Now just visualize the craftiness. Nothing else in the room bothered it. It came with a singular agenda and executed it to perfection. And now that they have a packet of strong glucose to supplement their creative exploits, the mind boggled to even envisage the consequences. The whole wing had to put up with their atrocities the whole year. They would come down in hordes like the Huns and leave a trail of destruction. Sometimes they looted just for fun and after the assault the corridors lay strewn with the spoils of war.

All these incidents made me feel perhaps my presence wasn't liked by the animal folk. For even the docile deer didn't spare me. One evening I was taking the diagonal shortcut through the woods in from of the hostel office. As luck would have it a group of deer was grazing. In the shadows I missed them completely and rammed in to one of them at full speed. The sudden bump gave me the shock of my life. As

my cycle slithered away I flew and fell on a pile of deer dung which proved that these days God is really very quick with his judgments. Another bout of embarrassments followed but the retribution wasn't over. Next week, at around twelve in the night, I was returning from Quark on my cycle. I was happy as I always am after a good meal, and cycling with a very carefree attitude. Who knew that my physical skills were about to undergo its toughest ever trial. All of a sudden a rustling sound attracted my attention. The rustle soon gave way to a thud of hooves and out of the blue a humongous deer with just one massive antler appeared. It was sprinting at a great tempo and was headed straight at me. I understood that to deliberate much on the matter would ensure a ghastly end. There was a time to think and there was time to run. And then it was time to run. Scurry. Scamper. Anything to save the poor intestines from being intertwined in those vicious antlers. Actually I had to cycle. Not run. And did I cycle like hell! I was chased all the way to the hostel main road and then it disappeared as abruptly as it had appeared. It seemed that scaring the lights out of me was its only aim.

No account of my animal misadventures would be complete without the mention of the curious incident of the mating squirrels. We were nearing the end of the first semester when one evening my room-mate opened his long idle drawer. And in it materialized a huge ball of cotton. This inexplicable discovery was

soon followed by a more startling one. Strange squeaking sounds were emanating from the ball and as normally cotton balls do not make strange squeaking sounds, we decided to investigate. It surfaced that the ball happened to be a nest of some squirrel and in it were two baby squirrel-lets or whatever one calls them. Some overenthusiastic chap thought that the drawer would be a good place to find a new dynasty. Well, if you ever land up with a pair of baby squirrels you will know that it is a wretched situation. It always happens that some horrendous animal lover will land up and try to convince you that it is one duty to look after these gifts of god. Gifts of god! My foot. Try being stern and then you end up getting portrayed as a stone-hearted fiend. A tricky state of affairs without doubt. Anyway, it was soon luckily discovered that Mr. I-want-a-large-family Squirrel had carried out its amorous exploits in other rooms too. Hence the moral policemen themselves tasted the bitter medicine and kept quiet about the whole issue. I went and kept it on a window sill. The next day it had vanished. We can only hope that it was safe with the busy mother who surely must have been cursing herself for not taking the concept of family planning more seriously.

Well, I don't know how many more such escapades I will have to live through. Lord give me the patience and the will to face it all in a restrained manner. Amen.

Sayan Prof Ganguly, a Mandakite, is a fifth year student of the Metallurgical & Materials Engineering Department. A connoisseur of fine German beverages, Prof could be seen flailing his arms about during Shaastra and Saarang in some capacity or the other. As an ex-editor, Prof kept up the TFE tradition of gracefully allowing publishing deadlines to win the race. More of his adventures at www.havetimetillwaste.blogspot.com

The ViL Power

Vikas Menghwani



I rubbed my eyes as usual, not in an effort to get up but just to be able to see the time. It was 7:30. I turned my head to have a glimpse of the TOI news lying on the floor under the door. There was a picture to be seen clearly, even without spectacles - the Delhi blast aftermath, a wounded man was being carried by a rescue cop. Unable to contemplate, I closed my eyes again. But that short snap was enough for a long dormant sprout of fear inside my mind to grow into a horrifying dream which eventually threw my eyes wide open. I was sweating, it was 8:30 and the first class had already been missed. Not bothering about that, I opened the door with a bottle dangling from my hand and went to fill it up, and washed my eyes with the chilling water. Staring at an imaginary point with the newspaper on my lap, I sat for a while. The dream I just had was still not completely out of my mind. Looking at the news and then flipping through the pages, I slowly gaining my poise. Shifting all those disturbing thoughts to the back of my mind, I started with the daily chores, with the same morning music and mail checking stuff. Then, on my way to class, I got a call regarding an all IViL meet in the night and another one regarding organization of the village students' visit to the campus. I was thinking nothing, till I found two guys sitting next to me at Guru lamenting about the miserable social issues in India, putting statistics from the Bihar flood and the Delhi blasts. That just made me recall the number of times I had come across such discussions about India. How easily we all can relate to all these discussions

about the social, economic, political miseries of the country and suggesting solutions amongst ourselves. I was just contemplating the same while sipping the sweet lime slowly when a voice came from the side, "Hey, how is your IViL going?" I said to myself - My IViL! How easily we detach ourselves from some things! Am I a different person? I am just the same as you who are trying to do something which we all relate to, feel for and care about, though sometimes we hesitate to accept explicitly.

I just smiled at him, but that smile was a humble surrender to a perceptible myth which had bugged me for months - the belief that to do something socially relevant publicly as we do in IViL (or for that matter anybody else across the globe who cares about the needy), there are "different" sort of people needed, those who feel more strongly towards the society, are extra-compassionate, sacrifice on their lifestyle etc. A humble No to all those who believe so. Why should there be any necessary or sufficient condition to do something your heart wants to? These thoughts of reform, change and compassion can be no alien to the minds of an institute like this. We, IITians, are all part of the same river. Just because some managed to depart to a greener and cleaner place doesn't necessarily imply that we lock ourselves in a new world separated from the soil to which we belong and the millions of others who aren't fortunate enough. There are two islands in India and all of us want to stand where paisa lies. My question is - what in

the whole world stops us from taking an initiative to create a bridge between the two extremes? How long can we act deaf and dumb to the other body-parts of the society which need care and support?

Away from all this randomness, I was strolling down to hostel with a frown, trying to recall hard where I had parked my cycle and then funnily inventing thrilling movie plots with cycle bombs. In the evening, we sat and discussed IViL with different teams pouring in new ideas and updates. We shared the last village trip's experiences, full of funny and embarrassing moments for non Tamil speakers. Then there was a serious discussion on a big project we have been working on for the village. One team, which went to a school in the morning, told us how passionately an 8th class student walked right in front of them, grabbed the microphone and spoke just three lines on how she thought India can transform. She couldn't have been more crisp and clear. The passion spoke more than compassion. Then we discussed the action plan for the coming weeks, including Shaastra. After a few subtle opinions from different people on the current social/rural issues, the meet ended on three intolerable though laughable PJs from one of us.

While on my way back, I mulled over the

Vikas Menghwani is a Mechanical Engineering fifth year student from Jamuna hostel. With 'i'Runway and 'i'Vil. as his profession and avocation, there's no end to his self-love. If you don't believe us, you only have to look at the first word he wrote for this article.

different reasons we all joined IViL for. For some, it made them happier, and for some it made them less guilty. All being not much different, what really mattered was the motivation, the realization of the responsibility we hold towards ourselves. This institute is going to make me an engineer, not a social worker, I believe, and I am more than happy with that. But out of my profession, it behooves me to pursue my hobbies. And if one of those is working for the poor, I have absolutely no qualms. It is that small a thing, no big deal. Just that it feels good to see the enormous impact such a small thing can have. But it would be much better if the number of helping hands goes up. It was 10:30 and I started to trot as it was time to pursue yet another hobby. There was a wing FIFA tournament planned for the night. I got knocked out in the third match itself but enjoyed the time cheering and teasing others in the rest of the matches.

Totally forgetting about my cycle, I fell on the bed with a pen and a stick-it note. I jotted down the agenda for the next day -- one assignment, two meetings and a birthday treat. Closing my eyes, I imagined a possible utopia for the world, smiled, and, feeling the confidence and the assurance of the will inside, dozed off slowly.

The Devil's Glossary

Nirmal Raj

BTP

Stands for Bonded To Professor. The first step towards forgetting your Nobel dream.

DC++

As the name suggests, a programming language. You may sometimes skip compiling: everything is already compiled.

DKC

The ocean where many a freshman starts his voyage of ruin. Hence the name. (A clever homophone of Decay Sea.)

Faculty

A rock band that conducts five-day long concerts every week. Usually their lyrics are unintelligible; if you don't want to make meaning out of it, you may face the music.

Girl

A sparse but particularly deadly species of wolf in the campus. To protect the male population from its danger, access to its lair has been restricted. As further measures of safety, a separate feeding area has been built for them, and the academic zone and Central Library are placed nearest to them so that they don't trample across male territory. Despite these, thanks to statistical laws and peer pressure, by the end of the final year nearly every girl manages to pair up with an unsuspecting lad who had failed to see through the sheep-skin.

Grades

A special alphabet used to write your biography.

Himalaya

The largest tea-shop in the country. It also sells leather, vulcanized rubber, manure and various adhesives. Patrons are frequently seen putting these into their mouth, not unlike the deer that have learnt to swallow polythene.

Hostels

Gas stations that finally supply gas and not petrol. In order to use them to inflate your tyres, you need to enrol for work at one of them, where accommodation will be provided just behind the station. Your job will include generating the gas chiefly through putting fart. Workers with extra gas, usually in their heads, tend to spend more time for their hostel than for themselves.

Internet

Obi-Wan Kenobi put it best -- 'It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together.' Locally, the field is generated by the sun and the field lines curve in space before reaching and partly enveloping Earth. Hence at any given time, seven-twelfths of the planet's surface is not under its influence. This explains its absence in these regions from 0000 to 1400 hrs.

Internship

A commonly misspelt word for internment. The sentence can last upto twelve weeks, which can be reduced to six on grounds of good behaviour.

Open Air Theatre (OAT)

A flying saucer that crash-landed in the campus decades ago. You can hear the hoots and whistles of the aliens trapped in it when you visit it on Saturday nights. During Saarang, the OAT is converted into a circus where the spectator is on the stage and the clowns are all around.

PJ

A term to be uttered in a contemptuous tone when someone cracks a clever joke you didn't think of.

Quark

An elementary particle that, for all its incomplete quality, has abnormal charges.

Sitcom

Stands for 'situational comedy'. Everyone involved tends to make a buffoon out of (him/her)self and tries to

imitate the actions of the rest of the cast. Usually a sitcom is aired in eight seasons, each having several 50-minute episodes followed by a few three-hour ones. The filming takes place before and between the episodes. Also known as 'BTech'.

Treat

A superstitious ritual, passed on by ancestors to the present generation, followed with unquestioning blindness by an otherwise scientific community. It is carried out at the conclusion of feats ranging from putting up a new status message to winning a Fields Medal.

Vindya Mess

Outlet of the drainpipe from Tifany's.

Workshop

A shopping mall constructed over a large area so that everyone can *fit* in it.

Nirmal Raj is a senior who is about to graduate with a degree in Engineering Physics. He is a resident of Saraswathi Hostel, but his ties to the institution end there. It is rumoured that he hasn't been to a single hostel night in Saras. Known to hate men, women, children, green grass, puppies and daylight, Nirmal is not the kind of person one would call a sentimentalist. At www.spelligmitsakes.blogspot.com, he spews his venom right on your eyes. PS: We advise future AAS's from Saras NOT to approach him for contributions of any kind.

On the Advent of Teenage

Beyond any doubt
There came about
In my gastronomical
range
An astronomical
change

Whine and Women

Lakshmi Gopal

Boy Friend?

My soon-to-be-five-year-old daughter exclaims to me this morning " Amma, S (a seven year old friend of hers) is a girl, but she has BOYS as friends, how can she?".

I was speechless. This kid goes to a co-ed school, and I have never discriminated between boys and girls yet. How do I reassure her that it is OK to have boys as friends without sounding defensive?

That said, I secretly told myself that I would be happy to hear her say that in her teens.

Or would I?

Go Back

The Hindu, our most popular newspaper, comes up with a real estate section on Saturdays. Today there was an ad with a picture of a 10-something old girl, with her arms up in the air, in the backdrop of posh homes, and a bubble from her mouth saying

“Yes, dad, Chennai is like New Jersey”

WTF?

Why should Chennai *be* like New Jersey? Go back to New Jersey if you want New Jersey, girl. The only reason your parents brought you back to Chennai was because they are confused about their priorities and can't decide where they belong.

Murphy's Laws for the Indian Homemaker

1. The evening you have snacks and coffee ready for your husband, he will be late.

Corollary 1: The evening you don't, he'll return home early, hungry enough to eat an elephant.

Corollary 2: The day the husband promises to come home early, you may as well put away the snack and coffee, for he is going to be later than usual.

2. The moment you sit down to eat, your 02-year-old toilet-trained kid will require you “urgently”, or the milk man will bring the milk earlier (or later) than usual, or a stranger will knock asking for an address which is in the diametrically opposite end of your colony.

3. The cordless will be completely discharged the day you are waiting for an important call.

Corollary: If a telemarketer calls, the phone would work just fine, despite being discharged.

4. The day you decide to go to the swimming pool will be the day your kid gets a fever.
Corollary: The day you decide to go to the pool, and your child is ok, it will rain.

5. The garbage collector will come exactly 10 seconds before the milk boils over. You cannot wait for the milk to finish boiling, because the garbage collector will traverse the entire stretch of your street in those 10 seconds and will be a mile away. You cannot dash to the frontyard to leave your garbage, because the milk will choose to boil over in exactly that precise moment. You cannot leave out the garbage before the garbage collector arrives, because monkeys will then have a field day, leaving your front yard a dump yard! The only choice is to switch off the stove when you hear the ding dong of the collector, and come back to see your milk boiled over anyway, in the remaining heat of the burner.

6. The day you think you have finished all your work before 10 pm, and are ready to hit the sack, there would be a massive, all-night power failure.

7. The day your maid skips work, would be the day after you and your family changed maximum number of clothes.

8. You would know that your maid is on leave, the minute *after* you soak all the clothes in soap water.

9. The mobile vegetable vendor *always* arrives five minutes after you have finished your shopping for the week at the shop half-an-hour away.

10. The day you wash and dry your husband's jeans out in the sun, it would pour without warning, even if you were in the middle of the Sahara.

Lakshmi Gopal is a science writer at an R & D firm in Chennai and is the spouse of Dr Arunn Narasimhan from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Match wits with her at www.lakshmi.vox.net

Submersed

Amrita V Nair

Beneath the tranquility of the waves,
There are no mermaids singing,
No water nymphs enchanting,
No patron saints of the drowning;
Beneath that calm blue facade,
There is only a quietness;
And the comfort of oblivion.

Amrita Nair is an MA sophomore.

What They Don't Teach You at IIT... But Should

Vipluv Aga

I passed out from IIT Madras about three years ago and in the intervening years, through a great deal of navel-gazing I have divined many truths, chemically induced and otherwise. One goes to college to learn things in a structured manner. However, one cannot but notice that a lot of the learning that goes on in the university happens outside the rigmarole of waking up in the morning and cycling off to classrooms in the jungle. There are many things, which, if taught, would maximize the efficiency of life. This would hasten the process of getting that rubber stamp that is a degree and go on to more fruitful things like talking nonsense for a living (consulting), using macros in excel (investment banking), learning business jargon (business school) or getting paid to enjoy life in the USA while putting up a picture of the hostel *gumbal* together at Times Square on Orkut / Facebook (PhD).

Given below are some of my humble suggestions for courses that would help to make life better for the average IIT chap.

Inter-gender Communications

This course would seek to help the average geek shed his misconceptions about the opposite sex. The first module will elucidate on wooing and courtship. Apart from enlightening the male student about typical *faux pas* like, "I am a Core-group member. You want to be my girlfriend? You will get a free T-shirt," the course will also help ladies fend off would-be suitors. Typically, when a girl says "No," the guy hears "Yes". In order to make the communication more effective, more proactive measures like

putting up notices on all the hostel notice boards declining the advances, scratching out the 'Subbu loves Vijayalaxmi' graffiti from the ESB benches as well as making effective slides saying 'No' to put up during the OAT movie break, will be discussed. The art of the Long Walk will be presented. The Long Walk is the typical walk that IIT couples undertake during cool evenings, walking from the Gajendra Circle to the Main Gate and back, all the while talking sweet nothings. In order to have an effective Long Walk it is imperative to hide when all your friends are passing by, either by acting as if you don't know them or jumping behind the bushes. Basic snake-fighting skills will also be covered for such eventualities. The course would also teach you how to break awkward silences, especially after a sentence like "Should I ask your father/hostel warden for permission?"

Wing Fart Debating Skills

The wing fart debate is typically held in a hostel wing, when a minimum quorum of two semi-naked badly dressed students decide to hold antagonistic opinions and harangue each other, drawing in a multitude of neighbours, each taking a stand until everyone starts insulting each other. Conclusion is typically reached after four to five hours in the middle of the night when everyone realizes they had to study for a quiz. The course will equip students to gain the maximum number of supporters by using phrases like, "Basically I read it in the Hindu/Economist/Wikipedia", thereby increasing credibility. Voice control is also

touched upon. Shouting down your opponent is very important and throat exercises will be presented. The final module is the art of the Irrelevant Insult. A good Wing Farter should be able to insult his co-Fartees with Irrelevant Insults like, "...coming from the guy who ran behind (*random girl with a moustache*) for a year and got nothing," or "...excuse me, but isn't your JEE rank lower than mine?" or the old classic, "...basically you are a Gult/Tam/Bihari/TDC/Mallu/Dig/ (*and so on*)". Often times when the two sides are equally matched a scapegoat must be found in the group to divert attention from a heated discussion. The course will help you detect suitable scapegoats whom everyone can tease and rebuke. These guys are typically those who have done something stupid in the past like, walking around with a large hole in their pants during Saarang, getting beaten up by an auto-driver while haggling over the fare, getting drunk only to wake up in the hospital or having a secret crush on a woman weightlifter called Malleshwari and hence are a source of much mirth. Thus, a wing fart session should produce many hours of solid discourse and result in ever reducing grades in other subjects as the skill improves.

Financial Engineering for College Festivals

Due to the myriad student festivals that abound, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage finances during these times. The once a year expenditure on haircuts, deodorant, un-torn T-shirts and footwear other than Hawaii *chappals* may carve a dent in the average student's wallet. This course would seek to help a student reduce his expenses in the first module. It must be noted that too much work by becoming a volunteer or coordinator is not recommended even for

the free shirts and food as better methods like faking a real persons' identity for a *grub coupon*, are much more efficient. During the festival time a big expense is typically the food and drink lavished on the out of station girls whom the student is trying to impress. Cheaper alternatives like a romantic date in the mess followed by a buttermilk satchet (*moor*) at Taramani will be explored. Of course if one is talented enough to actually be good at some literary or cultural activities besides computer games, then the best way to preserve the prize money should be thought upon. Spending all the money on vodka for pals wanting a treat is bad. Complaining that the "Prize Money Coord cheated me out of my prize as usual..." is good. Eventually it will be shown that most students can never really come out of a festival with a net profit. For those interested in actually making a profit from a festival, the course will continue into a longer elective module: 'How to win elections or a core-group membership'. The dynamics of linguistic and regionalism based vote bank politics will be explained as well as optimization problems on how to best distribute the core group. Once elected it is impossible to not profit from the oodles of cash flowing through the student festivals, be they 'I Ass Sore' certified or not.

Doing a BTech/MTech Project the Easy Way

Towards the end of the fun-filled four or five years one confronts a slight inconvenience known as the final bachelor's or the master's thesis. Actually doing so-called 'research' and preparing a document that no one will ever read seems absurd and diverts attention from important activities like practicing for CAT group discussions or playing the latest strategy game on the computer.

Many simpler ways to do the same will be discussed. For simulation-based projects, making convincing graphs is important. MS Paint generated plots require no data or calculations. Different tools like Photoshop can be used to 'correct' complex data visualizations by changing the colors so that the results match the results of the same work done twenty years ago. After all one only needs to 're' search what has already been searched before. For experimental projects, a list of excuses will be provided as part of the course material, that one can give the advisor for not having any results. One can choose from gems like, 'The workshop guys broke it', 'The chip was destroyed when the rain came through the leaking roof', 'The security guard thought my circuit was a bomb and beat it with a stick' or 'someone from Taramani stole the model last night'. Of course one should only sparingly use the classic, 'Oh...you actually wanted me to make it! I thought it was a simulation...the color pictures are all here...'. The course also includes some practical acting modules on making a sad woebegone face and begging the advisor to pass your incomplete

project since you have already got a job and your family depends on this new income with the sister's marriage coming up.

These four new courses would be a welcome addition to the curriculum as they seek to maximize results with minimum input. Many of you would already be thinking of registering for them next semester. As usual when deciding upon a course, the most important questions you need answers to are: How many classes can we bunk? Is 80% attendance necessary for getting a grade? What happens if I attend only half the classes but submit all the assignments? Can I get an S without attending at all? Is this a Pass/Fail?

In order to answer these questions one will need to attend another course coming soon titled "**Bunking Classes for Dummies**", with special course topics covering proxy attendance, convincing the professor you forgot to answer your roll call for 10 classes although you were present and the old favorite: Medical certificates!

Vipluv 'Satcho' Aga graduated from IITM in 2005 with a Dual Degree in Aerospace Engineering and is currently doing his PhD at ETH Zurich.

Treasure Island

Sharanya Haridas

"Goodness! Be careful, ok?"

It's the kind of reaction one comes to expect upon announcing vacation plans these days. More so if your destination of choice was once a British owned penal hellhole, then a military abode to the Japanese in World War I and if pockets of it continue to be inhabited by a variety of often hostile tribes. It has taken over three years since the 2004 tsunami and a lot of sustained effort on the part of the Government and the people to revive the glory of Andaman that it may once again be perceived in the manner Nicolo Conti, the Italian scholar, once did— "The Island of God". Yet my very first glimpse of the islands (from the window seat as our plane began its descent) was all it took for me to know that if I were ever to be hunted by cannibals or struck by a giant wave this should be the place for me to meet my maker – an exquisite necklace of emeralds against the shimmering turquoise skin of the sea, bathed in the early morning sunshine, veiled in delicate mist of silken cloud...

If there were ever a paradise on earth, it had to be this! The drive from the sleepy Veersarvakar Airport to my dwelling on Marine Hill is luscious. Port Blair, the capital city, is laid-back and oozes with a small-town charm – a place where Time appears to have taken a sabbatical, where terms like 'mall' and 'multiplex' could only enter a Town Rat's consciousness in interrogative form by way of their sheer absence, where traffic jams and instances of crime are rare.

There's something rejuvenating about the place, but it will be a while before I can explore it thoroughly.

Morning blues and the last traces of jet-lag disappear as I – along with a jumble of fellow tourists- board the first boat that ferries us to Ross Island: the former penal establishment of the British, the infamous as 'Kala Pani' which served them as a strategic military location securely cocooned at the mouth of the harbour. Even the Japanese couldn't resist it as is evident from the massive cement bunkers dotting the area.

The erstwhile "Paris of the East" with its cobblestone pathways, stylish architecture - some of which was modeled on Windsor Castle- bakeries, cafes, a cricket ground, a tennis lawn and a well-stocked library now lies in ruins. The once-majestic Presbyterian church that boasted of Italian stain glass windows framed by Burmese teak now fertilizes a tropical foliage, serving only to make one painfully aware of how the place is but a quick stop-by spot on the itineraries of intrepid explorers, migratory birds and the vagrant rain cloud.

But despite bearing the angry scar of decades of war and hatred, or perhaps because of it, the island is a must-visit. The tranquil lotus pond, the secluded cliffs offering an unrestricted view of the ocean and the occasional deer or rabbit scuttling past are hearteningly reminiscent of Kirran Island from Enid Blyton's "The Famous Five" series we've all read as children.

The abundance of open spaces, fresh air and sunshine make it a fabulous picnic spot to while away the afternoon in whether with friends, family or just oneself!

Its afternoon by the time I set out on a tour of Port Blair's museums. My first

stop is the Samudrika museum which houses a modest collection of shells and corals with archives of information on marine archaeology. The chief attraction here is the skeleton of a blue whale that conveniently adorns the front lawn - a magnet for the children of every passer-by. The Fisheries museum, recently renovated, is much larger and is home to a mélange of marine life, breathtaking in its scope.

It is in the Zonal Anthropological museum, however, that I am introduced to the history of the denizens of these islands. They are a rich cultural mosaic – people of varied faiths and myriad tongues from all over the country have made the islands their home. I learn that of the six kinds of tribes here only the Nicobarese have integrated with the mainstream population. The others continue to remain stubbornly hostile towards outsiders which is why the Anthropological museum which houses photos and archives of these tribes along with items from their everyday-life- their clothing and jewellery, weapons, instruments of entertainment and works of art, collected over several decades- is the closest the layman can get to understanding their way of life.

A visit to the Cellular Jail is a must for all those for whom Independence Day is but an excuse to sleep in late. The 3-storey brick building, originally having seven wings arranged like the spokes of a wheel was declared a National Memorial in 1974, but even the cheery bougainvilleas in the front garden fail to shake away the haunting feeling born of the knowledge that this was the cross our valiant freedom fighters had to bear: sanguine men – now mere faces in frames adorning the wall of the memorial photo gallery - squeezed into each of the 689 cells, subjected to instruments of unspeakable torture and hung, often three at a time, in the gallows

for refusing to comply with colonial tyranny.

It was in the windy courtyard that we were treated to a short but compelling *Son et Lumiere*, the saga of the monument narrated as through the eyes of the withered old peepul tree in the courtyard- a mute witness to the atrocities that took place there.

It was Day Three by the time I met Palanisamy, seemingly the only taxi-driver in Port Blair not to fleece you in broad daylight and by mutual consent for a day-long city tour. The emaciated, paan-chewing sixty year old is originally from Salem, Tamil Nadu but has lived in Andaman since he was ten. Fluent now in Hindi and Bengali, his name and the Kollywood music blasting from his cab-radio are the last remaining clues of his origin.

From Chatham- Asia's oldest, largest and admittedly, dustiest sawmill we proceed to check out the Forests Museum – a tangible irony where a wooden sign proclaiming the grave importance of preserving our forests hangs bang opposite a large display of wooden artifacts.

It was only after buying our tickets at the Mini Zoo that we were told that most of the animals were in the process of being transferred to a different milieu. Having never been to a zoo since I was five, I confess to being mildly disappointed. We did take a look at the jaded-looking ones that were still there, though – the saltwater crocodile, the crab-eating macaw and the famed Andaman Dark Serpant eagle, to name a few – before heading off to wolf down a sizzling dosa at one of the many tables d'hote at Aberdeen Bazaar.

To be perfectly honest, cuisine isn't one of Andaman's specialities – it hasn't any distinctive bill of fare but has succeeded in absorbing the diverse cuisines of its denizens.

The seafood here is meant to be pretty good, of course, but being a vegetarian, I hadn't any intention of confirming the fact. For all his years spent here, Palanisamy hadn't, either. The journey from the pristine South Bay – its newly laid out pavements testimony to post-tsunami renovations – to Corbyn's Cove is as arresting a visual treat as the destination itself. As one leaves the city behind, proceeding closer to the countryside, the road narrows to become a long silver serpent winding up a verdant green carpet, slithering ever closer to the edge of the sea. Sleepy water-buffaloes wend their homeward way even as the wild, white waves roar, furiously spraying froth at us from beneath the edge of the cliff.

Palanisamy, sliding effortlessly into the role of freelance guide, points towards the sea, in the direction of a submerged landmass. "Before the tsunami," he said, "That was an island."

A few sharp curves later, the beach comes to view – a gorgeous spread of soft, white sand encrusted with shimmering sea-shells, assorted rocks and stray corals and fringed by tall graceful palm trees swaying in the breeze – the edge of the earth against a lapis lazuli sea and sky. Changing into beach-gear I stand at the edge of the sea with other hesitant looking tourists, there are very few of them and I'm certain we all feel the same way – as though we're encroaching upon a very sacred place. Unlike the commercialized and highly congested beaches that we're all so used to haunting, Corbyn's Cove remains almost untouched; the heart of Mother Nature. But the frothy waves tickle our bare feet, coyly inviting us to play and its only a matter of seconds before the sea has made children of those oldest, grumpiest skeptics; poets, of the prosaic and romantics out of those who've got dog biscuits in place of hearts, as we all

succumb to its power- splashing, playing and shrieking in the water, having the time of our lives! An hour later, I find myself at a chai tapri in the tiny fishing village of Chiriya Tapu, sipping hot elaichi tea and munching on sweet biscuits. The glass-bottomed boat cruise, showcasing a variety of rich, colourful corals and marine-life, has been cancelled owing to the bleak, wet weather, but I'm content digging my feet into the soft, wet sand and observing the pretty snails crawl by. A beautiful white-bellied sea eagle soars overhead and when I close my eyes, I can hear a medley of birds singing to their hearts content in the nearby mangroves.

As in every nook and cranny of the nation that's worth a tourist's while, Andaman too has a Sunset Point, here, in Chiriya Tapu. Of course, the weather-gods' being in a glum mood resulted in the deepening of the sky into a successively more ashen shade being the only sunset offered to us. Here, I meet Wahida Banu – a human right's activist from Bangladesh who was in the island to study the work done by the NGOs here to help the tsunami victims cope. She informs me that the problem spiraling from the disaster is two-fold: Three years since December 2004, not all the victims have been rehabilitated in temporary houses provided by the Government. The pucca houses will take at least two years to build. Secondly, high rates of unemployment have rendered several families almost fully dependent on Government support. "The NGO's are doing a lot to help," she says.

So did the tribes perish in the tsunami? As I find out later, they did not. Experiential knowledge helped them foresee the calamity and they moved onto higher ground with enough time to spare, though they did lose some of their hutments and canoes. Just another reminder to us culture-

sensitive travellers that societies cannot be ranked based on the extent to which they're exposed to modern science and technology; merely judged adequate or inadequate based on how successful they are in withstanding the tests of nature.

Like any tourist worth her salt , I spend my last evening shopping for souvenirs to take back home for friends and relatives. Palanisamy flatly refuses to take me to the Aberdeen Bazaar stating it was too much of a rip off. Instead, I'm dropped off at the less popular and more crowded but decidedly cheaper Bhani Basti and Junglighat, where I haggle shamelessly for souvenir T-shirts, post cards, exotic shell artifacts and beautiful pearl jewellery .

Walking towards the Veersavarkar Park from Aberdeen Bazaar, the same evening,

I stop at the stretch to the right of the road, underneath a Gulmohar tree to take a last generous whiff of the intoxicating scent of the sea that I'd come to love. Beneath me, the Millennium Clock diligently records every second gone by in this place where time seems to move so slowly. In the nearby Netaji stadium, children of all ages and young adults play happily in the bright evening light, oblivious to the tales of violence and shadows of calamities that haunt the place. The Gulmohar dances in the wind showering me with her blessings of crimson and gold. In the distance, I can see the azure sea and sky blent indistinguishably, yet again – into a single, spectacular invitingly unending void of blueness, of the future thrown open to these islands, full of a million promises.

Sharanya Haridas is a first year Master of Arts student and is one of the new correspondents of The Fourth Estate. She once inhaled a diatomic molecule of nitrogen, but realizing that it does not support human life, expelled it at once.

Padma Shri 2009 for Arts

Art today be *ash*,
And artists, trash.
They art sick,
Their art sicker.

The Price of Oil

The world wide web laughed itself dead
After this journalist stood up and said:
'Shameless moron W!
This is gonna trouble you'
And flung his shoes at the president's head.

The Beti* and the Babe

Anand Natarajan

(Adopted from ye olde fairy tale, *The Beauty and the Beast*)

Once upon a time, since well before there were GTalk and Facebook, Orkut, MySpace, Flickr, Hi5, WAYN and LinkedIn (let's call them Snow White and the Seven Fads), people got together in much more social ways than any of the current social networking sites promise to. It was pure and simple and quite efficient as it were. Since it necessitated that there be personal, face-to-face interactions, and that awareness of proximity and hence comfort be developed over a specific period of time, it ensured that all people involved in the social gatherings which eventually led to relationships of some sort being developed, knew beforehand what the score was. To cut a long story short, if both Adam and Eve hadn't been hot, we would not be here.

But, with the advent of Snow White and the Seven Fads, it is now no longer paramount that the above conditions be met. This is markedly noticeable in the kind of interaction between opposite sexes, especially among the age group of 16-24, the period when all of the human species undergoes what is commonly known as Coupling. This background having been provided, we are now able to introduce the protagonists of our tale- the Beti* and even more importantly, the Babe.

The Beti, by very nature of his being, shouldn't be able to occupy too much space by means of a description. And yet, in the classic manner of scientific paradoxes, where emptiness usually gets the most attention (Black Holes, Large

Hadron Colliders, pretty girls' heads**), so too shall we devote considerable time and effort into describing the Beti. Basically, every sentence begins with a Basically. But, basically, the Beti is that everyday person you meet (or just encounter) who makes you realize why the world is so screwed up. Ideally, he wouldn't be there, wasting the resources that would feed other poor families. But he very much is there, with his short shirt, faded jeans, decidedly tawdry sunglasses and pink sneakers. Sometimes the sneakers are brown, but that's usually because it's been raining heavily for the past week and the Beti *has* to ride through puddles at 60kmph, on his silencer-removed Pulsar. Or Gladiator or Karizma or Apache.

The Beti is someone you'd normally associate with the "Hiiii h r u?????" scraps on one of the seven fads mentioned above. These, it turns out, are not random shots thrown at the world but actually enquiries of well-being. Most of the times, the Betis have prodigiously long contact lists, developed carefully from school, college, classes at *Alliance Francais* (due apologies to those who actually went there to learn French) and general friends-of-friends and all such other six degrees of separation meetings. While most others with other things to pursue in life, wouldn't be able to keep track of all the 473 friends gained from such experiences, the Beti, to his credit, does. (This is all the credit I'm going to give him, so there!). Eventually, all other conditions remaining favourable, one of the 473 friends (preferably one from the opposite sex)

becomes interested enough in the Beti that they consent to find time to share a cup of a suitable beverage, depending on the average ages involved. This one interested being, is what has been referred to in the title, as The Babe.

The Babe is... well... a babe. All else is irrelevant.

And thus it is, while sharing this suitable beverage in a suitably public spot in the glare of so many other on-lookers, that

the title of the fable becomes self-evident. As all passersby notice the distinct lack of a match of any kind between the two people sitting together, as the disharmony of the whole arrangement jars in one's ear even in the quietest of places, there is only one constant though running through all their heads- "How did a Beti like him get something like that!"

Well you know what they say, the World, isn't fair.

Anand 'Ducky' Natarajan is a fifth year Dual Degree student in Chemical Engineering residing in Ganga. After Saarang he has realized that life is like an apple – you enjoy the pulp and throw away the Core. Blog URL: www.anandn86.blogspot.com

Flash Reviews

Kramer Vs. Kramer	<i>I bet Kramer wins</i>
Titanic	<i>Icy dead people</i>
Superman	<i>The Great S Cape</i>
Jaws: The Revenge	<i>Fin</i>
Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers	<i>Run Forest, Run!</i>
Tootsie	<i>Hoff-man, hoff-woman</i>
Dead Poets Society	<i>Fate: verse, then death</i>
Fahrenheit 9/11	<i>Iraqnophobia</i>
Back To The Future	<i>A comedy of eras</i>
Tomb Raider	<i>Treasured chest</i>

[source: <http://www.fourwordmoviereview.com>]

PhD – India or Abroad?

Kushal Shah

Eds' note: The following article represents the opinions of the author and must not be construed as TFE's stand.

Most of the brightest undergraduate students from IIT's do their PhD from foreign universities, mostly the U.S. The number of IIT-ians who stay back in India for PhD can be counted on the fingers. No point talking of the percentage. Why is this so? The answer is obvious. US universities have much better facilities and much better environment for research. Also, the name of a US university on the résumé gives a tremendous boost to future prospects. A few years back there was one more reason: the US universities had much better faculty. But this is slowly changing. The past decade has seen many great Indian scientists and engineers coming back to Indian universities as faculty. Still, when compared to America or Europe, India stands nowhere when it comes to research. A sad situation indeed. But who cares? Does it matter to Indian youth that their country is lagging far behind their American counterparts?

As I said earlier, there are a countable few who stay back in India for research. Why do they do so? Are they crazy? Are they incarnations of Bhagat Singh or something? Has the Indian government given them a special status? Are they not good enough to get into foreign universities? None of these is true. The people who stay in India for PhD are as smart as their friends who go to the States and are doing equally good work. The reason for which they continue in India is something different. What is it?

Let us do an analysis of the pros and

cons of doing a theoretical PhD in India. We begin with the negatives.

1) Stipend. Is this really a problem? PhD is not meant for earning money. It is meant for learning and doing research. And what you get as stipend is more than enough to pay your institute fees, messing bill and other expenses. So, unless you are planning a holiday in Switzerland, the stipend you get is enough for you. And even if you plan marrying during PhD, which by itself isn't a good idea, your spouse will most probably have his/her own income. It may be that your family needs financial support from you. In that case, you may like to work for a few years, earn some buck, and then dive into research.

2) Internationally acclaimed faculty. In PhD you seldom have interactions with faculty other than your guide. Even if you are in Berkeley where every other prof you meet is good enough to win the Nobel, you are not going to spend too much time talking to all of them. You will hardly interact with anyone other than your guide. There are many faculty in India who are really good in their research areas. You can convince yourself by going through the faculty profiles of the IIT's, IISc, IMSc, TIFR, CMI, ISI and the like.

3) Research groups. As they say, PhD research is not a group activity. You may be a part of a small team of a few members, but you got to do your own research. Your thesis will be yours and not

a joint team report. And there do exist small research groups in India doing most competent work.

4) Colloquiums and seminars. It's true that the quality of seminars in US Univs is much better. But now-a-days many great lectures are available online. And while in India, one can always plan a trip to some great workshop/internship abroad. This can compensate for the lack of seminars.

5) Standard of life. As for the quality of life in India, I am not sure if that is really a drawback. You may have better apartments and cars in US. But life at the IITM campus is certainly very good. The hostel rooms may not be as big as flats, but for a single person it is more than enough. If someone does not like the mess food, there is Quark/ Tifanys/ Gurunath/ Campus Cafe. One has complete freedom to go out whenever one likes. How many US universities have a campus as beautiful as ours? The same holds for other places as well. The quality of life at IISc, TIFR, etc. is as good as that at IITM, maybe even better. So, I am not sure in what sense India lacks in this respect.

Therefore, it seems that doing PhD in India is not a bad option. It is certainly worth giving a serious thought.

Do you get anything extra in India that you do not get abroad? The answer is a resounding "Yes". What are these extra benefits?

1) Proximity to home, 2) Research freedom

PhD is not a short-term affair. It takes a full 4-5 years. This is not a small amount of time. If you do your PhD in India, you get to meet your parents and friends much more often. If you are in the U.S., you get

to come to India maximum once in a couple of years. But if you are in India, you can visit your family every six months. And if your PhD institute is near home, what more could you ask for? But, certainly, this should not be at the expense of the quality of your research. This is just an extra benefit you get.

In America, PhD is funded from research projects. So, when you are doing PhD there, you are tied to a research project and your whole life revolves around that. If you want to do something else, the chances are meager that you will get the freedom. There are a lucky few who get this freedom, but their numbers are very less. But in India, PhD stipend is funded by the government. You have to do some TA/RA work, but that does not limit you in anyway. And mostly, if you are one of the better IITians, then wherever you join in India, you will mostly be amongst the best students. So, as long as your demands are reasonable, no one would like to say 'No' to you. If you want to try out new things and explore on your own, then India is certainly the place to be in.

Apart from all these things, if you do a PhD in India, you are being a part of the process that will go a long way in improving the research standards of our nation. The quality of any research institute depends on the quality of its research scholars. Faculty does play an important role, but without good students, even they cannot do much. After a certain time in your research career, you cannot do fresh research completely on your own (there may be a few exceptions). It has to be driven by young students. The only way, thus, to improve the standards of our research institutions is to be a part of the process. This does not mean that we have to sacrifice our glorious careers and be martyrs. As I have already

discussed above, doing PhD in India is a very good option and should be seriously considered by one and all.

Why should we care for India? Well, that's easy to answer. Where were you born? India. Where do your parents live? India. Where did you do your schooling & under-graduation? Where do most of your friends and relatives live? Which country's passport do you hold? India. What are you called in the U.S.? IIT-ian. What is IIT? INDIAN Institute of Technology. So, when there are so many things that are

deeply associated with you that are "Indian", there are many reasons why you should think about India. Being "Indian" is the most important part of your identity.

PS: The above is not written with the hope of making every IITian stay back in India for PhD. That is neither possible nor desirable. But it is more to make you think about India, at least once. India is a great place to be in. And in certain ways, it is even the greatest!

Kushal Shah is a PhD Scholar at the Department of Electrical Engineering. He completed his BTech in 2005 from the same department at IITM.

From the IITM Diary...



During the tenure of Prof. B. Sengupto, the first Director of our institute, a batch of students was particularly peeved with the teaching methodology of a Professor of Physics. His lectures would entirely consist of him reading aloud from a textbook with the students serving as props. A few, deciding that enough was enough, brought this matter up with the Director, but returned disappointed when he told them to just get on with it. The next day during Physics class the Diro quietly walked in and sat among the students, with the Prof being too engrossed in his reading to notice. In fact, upon noting the unusual hush, he began reading with more fervour than before, his voice ringing loud and clear. As silently as he had come, the Dr Sengupto slipped out of the side door. For the next Physics lecture, the students were in for a welcome surprise. A different Professor came to teach them, our Mr. Readalouder never to be seen for the remainder of the course.

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You have a quiz tomorrow and have absolutely no idea of what the course is all about. Your preparation is zilch. In other words, you are the quintessential boy next door on the campus. What do you do? You'd say "What we always do. Another night out." But back in the good old days our alumni were a little more resourceful. When there used to be a power cut on the day before a quiz the Profs usually didn't mind postponing it. The result was that a small section of the students devoted their energies to the problem of ensuring power cuts before some of the more difficult quizzes. The modus operandi? Carefully performed short circuits. After all, of what use is learning without practical applications?

Common Ground and Nuts

Sriram Trikutam

Everything had to be perfect. Second chances would be hard to come by. He glanced at the basket for a third time and ran through his list.

On the very top was scribbled, 'Candy' and so he'd included a box of truffles. Nina liked dark chocolate and he thought this would score brownie points with her. The chocolates were conveniently sized for swallowing in one go. And if we are in the mood, we might even have some fun with them, he thought. Next on the list were sandwiches; she loved the grilled chicken ones. He'd made them himself, although 'made' was not exactly apropos. The chicken was from the shop, he couldn't be expected to grill them himself. The Salad was added as a sort of afterthought. The paucity of time had forced him to buy them from the nearby salad bar. The dressing was on the side to ensure the vegetables didn't become soggy. Apple pie was again bought from the store. He'd picked up a tub of vanilla ice-cream to complement the pie. Bottle of wine for later; his limited knowledge of wines had led him to Ashok. Ashok was an expert on two things, alcohol and the stock market. It was handy to have him around in the good times and in the bad ones, he said to himself amusingly. Crystal Glasses were another of Ashok's suggestions. 'Add a touch of class,' he'd said. He was probably right about that, Ashok was almost always right. Paper plates were unnecessary but if he was going to do things the *proper* way, plates were going to be included. Plates, silver cutlery and linen napkins. He'd almost forgotten water. He cursed himself for the oversight and included two bottles of mineral water.

He made his way into the living room and picked up the jar of peanut butter that he'd just bought from the 7-11 around the corner. He didn't keep peanut butter around and for good reason. The recipe for the Smoothie called for some bananas and since they were his favourite fruit, they were always around. He'd been using skimmed milk of late since he had decided to go on a diet a couple of weeks back. It wasn't because of Nina. Nina loved him for who he was. He didn't have to be in perfect shape to be loved. But, he wanted to be. The neighbourhood gym had been a place that repulsed him. It would be filled to the brim with people obsessed with their bodies, looking to lose that extra kilo or inch. He'd taken delight in deriding them, and now, love, which was a very good reason, had transformed him into one of those drones. His mind had meandered and then the milk carton, which was starting to feel cold in his hand, brought him back to the present.

He removed the peel from the banana slowly and then quickly washed his hands. The banana wasn't organic and he was careful about pesticides. He took out a blunt knife from the drawer and then proceeded to dice the banana while dropping the pieces into the blender. A couple of tablespoons of the peanut butter were added to the butchered banana. Milk was then carefully measured and a glass was poured into the blender by Rahul. He was about to turn the blender on when he remembered Nina's sweet tooth. He removed the jar of sugar from the shelf in front of him and drizzled in a tablespoon of it. Then in a quick motion he turned the knob on. The recipe on the Internet called for blending until it

acquired a smooth texture and hence, the Smoothie. After a minute of that annoying whirr which we all love to hate, Rahul turned the power off. He twisted the top open and gazed at the off-white liquid in front of him. A satisfied look appeared on his face and after a quick nod to no one in particular he poured the Banana-Peanut Butter Smoothie into a bottle. The bottle found its place next to the cooler which was currently occupied by the bottle of wine.

Rahul looked at the basket with an almost childlike satisfaction, which indicated his pleasure over a job well done. Trepidation crept in as he contemplated his next task; this was only natural as what was ahead of him was no small feat.

He was going to propose to Nina and she would definitely be caught off-guard.

Now, all that he had to do was to wait for her to come home...

As Rahul was making preparations for the picnic, Nina was making her fortnightly visit to the salon to get her hair done. Ramon, the proprietor was born in Chile but he'd been brought up in India. He loved India and decided to settle down here when his parents went back to Chile. Nina always made it a point to meet Ramon. Ramon, in fact, was one of the reasons why she even frequented this place and not one of the several salons near her house. Earlier, when Ramon was just starting up he used to handle some of the clients himself. He had a very deft touch and this was immediately obvious to everyone. Once his popularity had risen, he'd decided to take on a managerial role and had delegated the operations to one of his several employees. Nina was flipping through the latest issue of *E!*, when Ramon walked in and waved to her. Nina rested the magazine on her lap and

enquired about his business. She then decided to let him know that today was her six month anniversary with Rahul. Ramon's voice suddenly became high-pitched and he congratulated her while waving his hand animatedly. Soon, her hair was looking perfect and she left the salon after generously tipping her hair-dresser.

Nina knew that Rahul had something special planned and she wanted to look her best. Their six month anniversary demanded this and of course, Rahul was not about to let her down. Her relationship with him could be the plot of a romantic comedy starring Hugh Grant and Liz Hurley. Rahul was the archetypical foppish wickedly-funny handsome juvenile guy and Nina, well Nina was someone who couldn't be described in this pithy manner, she mused. She pulled into the parking lot of their apartment building and exited her car. She'd parked next to his SUV; she owned a pink hatchback which was exceedingly effeminate and eye-catching. As she rode the elevator to their flat images of their whirlwind romance came to her mind's eye. She always told her friends that something was missing from their relationship. On the face of it, Rahul and Nina seemed like a perfect couple. They shared similar interests, both were from similar backgrounds and were affluent and they enjoyed spending time together. But, Nina was a little bit superstitious. She read her horoscope every week and even though she knew that they were just fluff pieces added to fill space, she derived a sort of orgasmic pleasure from reading them. Ever since she met him, she was looking for some sort of celestial sign that he was the one. Of course, there were small signs everywhere and all of her friends tried to dissuade her from this foolhardy pursuit, but she resisted. Gradually, love had taken over, but there

was a small part of her brain that was still on the lookout for that go-ahead from the heavens. The elevator stopped on the thirteenth floor and she rang the bell. She could have used her set of keys, but she wanted him to open the door for her, as a sort of grand entrance.

Rahul answered the door dressed, unusually? She had assumed that they would be going out for lunch, but, she didn't realise that Rahul had taken that so literally. A picnic basket lay next to the sofa and it dawned on her that she would need to change. Rahul *had* noticed that her hair was different and made a pithy comment to acknowledge the same. She was secretly smiling to herself at the way he was so obviously fawning over her.

“So, you've noticed the basket? I was thinking we could leave in ten minutes and get there before noon. You would definitely want to change,” he said. She planted a quick kiss on his lips and went into their bedroom for a change. She'd decided to mimic what he was wearing and so she donned a linen shirt. Since it wasn't that hot she'd decided to take a chance by choosing her favourite pair of blue jeans. She was done in two minutes and she glanced at herself in the mirror before walking out.

Rahul's face lit up when he saw what she was attired in. He was turned on by her manly clothes and decided that the traffic could wait. He pulled her close to him and she obliged by sitting on his lap. He placed one arm around her head and brought her next to his lips while simultaneously tilting his head to one side. She had shut her eyes while he stared at her beautiful face with its soft features. He had continued to stare while he kissing her and soon they were out of breath. After a sharp intake of air, the two of them bored holes in each others eyes with

a gentle smile. After a quick peck, the two of them made their way to the door while holding hands. Rahul picked up the basket on his way out and slammed the door shut.

She was surprised when he decided to pull her close, again, and kiss her right in the elevator. It was an indication that the romance was definitely alive in their relationship. They both exited the lift with wide grins on their faces and this continued as they drove out of the building. His SUV served admirably for occasions such as these and even she stopped complaining about its fuel efficiency, or lack of it.

“Beautiful weather we've got today, what do you think?” he asked her as they were reaching the outer fringes of the metropolis.

Nina was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, he could have just been commenting on how the weather would not rain down on their picnic, but, she'd noticed that Rahul had the adorable tendency of bringing up the weather when he was nervous. Obviously, a slight case of nerves was justifiable given that it was their anniversary, but, this seemed slightly out of place. That thought however was quickly shelved when he inserted her favourite CD into the disc player and the both of them, at the same instant, began to hum along.

This promised to be a fun afternoon, Nina decided and sank back into her seat. Rahul was speeding along as he didn't have to contend with much traffic anymore; the landscapes whizzed by as Rahul stepped on the gas after shifting into the fifth. Nina got her cell phone out from her bag and was in the process of texting one of her close friends when Rahul kvetched in an annoyed tone, “I

can't believe you brought that along with you."

"Fine, I'm sorry. I'll leave it in here for the rest of the time", she responded in a low tone while pointing to the glove compartment. She noticed some syringes when she put her cell phone away, which she thought were out of place. But, she didn't want to ruin the mood by questioning their presence and she continued to admire the farms. Each small rectangular patch of land was in view only for a fraction of second before being replaced by the next one. Each of these small bastions of India's past was surrounded by trees which could be passed off as guards to a person with an active imagination. Every once in while, a flower estate would appear to break the monotony of the wheat fields and even the smell. The windows were rolled down to let in the country air and on such occasions, the sweet fragrances.

Soon they arrived at the spot which he'd chosen, which was near nothing in particular. There were open fields in all directions, and trees dotted the landscape. The undergrowth consisted mainly of grass which added a nice yellow to the picture. The multitudes of flowers served their part and were magnificent in bright reds and blues. He pulled over and they both got out and stretched their limbs a little. The ride was long, but, not long enough to merit a stop so they were feeling a bit cramped. He walked over to the rear of the car and removed a blanket and the basket. He visually inspected the site to make sure there weren't any ants or any of their brethren. And, once he was satisfied that they wouldn't be interrupted by any critters, he spread the blanket under the tree. The tree wasn't flowering right now and there were no fruits either which explained the lack of insects. However, the leaves were chock-a-block

in the tree and provided ample shade. He patted on the blanket as a signal for Nina to sit next to him.

For a moment, Rahul considered taking a few snaps, but, then quickly dismissed that in favour of a more enjoyable and intimate idea which also took advantage of the privacy.

They sat for a while listening to the sound of silence and in quiet awe of the scenic beauty which was in front of them. He started kissing Nina with her lying on his chest and him on the blanket. He slowly moved his hand down her blouse and she slapped his hand away. She wasn't comfortable with the idea of being intimate in public yet and hence, Rahul decided to give it a rest.

As a distraction, he began to fish things out of the basket and Nina immediately grabbed the box of chocolates. She bit into one and exclaimed in delight, "Thank you! This is so perfect." Rahul merely smiled in reply.

He removed the Smoothie, the one that he'd gone to great lengths to prepare, and he gave it to her. She took a large sip as she was feeling thirsty and then she just stared at him with a look of affection on her face.

"I actually had a lot of fun preparing for this. I've been planning this for a while and I wanted it to be perfect. I'm hoping it will be, and if all goes well you'll have a great story to tell."

"What do you mean? It's perfect as it is. I love you and I think it's very adorable that you've gone the distance to pull out all stops."

"Good, because I have an important question to ask," he said and then exhaled loudly. He could feel his tongue knotting

up and his throat constricting. What was to come next would change his life forever, hopefully. Nina was suddenly quiet and anxious. Rahul reached into the basket and pulled out a nondescript opaque box. From within, he extracted another box, only this one was covered with velvet. Nina drew in a sharp breath and waited. Rahul was having trouble finding the right words, or any for that matter. He just stared at the jewel box in front of him and at Nina as if he was trying to pantomime a proposal. Then almost as suddenly as Nina went quiet, he burst into laughter and said, "Well, I'm sure you know what comes next."

"But, that is not what how I intend it to be. Nina, you're the love of my life. You've changed me from the immature child I was into the person that I am today. You lend purpose to my existence and I want you around forever and ever. You and I have so much in common. We love the same things and it's almost like, and I know this is incredibly corny, we were made for each other. Nina, will you marry me?"

What followed next was probably the most uncomfortable two minutes of their entire time together. Nina pursed her lips together and then broke the silence by beginning with, "Rahul, I love you. And I know that you're special. Very special. I'd love to say yes right now and almost every part of my brain is telling me to do so. But, I have this nagging feeling which is holding me back. It's almost silly, really, and I'm ashamed that this is the reason why I'm not going to say yes immediately....."

Rahul was about to make the point about how they had so much in common and were so perfectly suited for each other. He was angry that she didn't reply with a yes

immediately. He was gesticulating when Nina trailed off abruptly.

Rahul had turned away once he began to sense a rejection was looming. But now, he could feel her in pain. A different sort of pain. A muted shriek emanated from Nina's throat and Rahul quickly understood that Nina was having an allergic reaction. A particularly strong one at that.

At the same time, Nina was cursing herself for not asking what was in the milk shake that he'd made. She was extremely allergic to peanuts and she'd almost died once before. She frantically searched her purse for a shot of Epinephrine, but there were none to be found. The last time she'd bought a new purse she discarded the syringe because she hadn't used it for a long time. Now she was trying to think of how far the nearest hospital was. It was probably too late....

Rahul quickly ran to the SUV and pulled out one of the syringes. He ran back to her and stuck one into her. She had blacked out by then and didn't notice the injection.

Slowly, Nina opened her eyes and saw that tears were streaming down Rahul's face and he had an empty syringe in his hand. She almost cried in relief when she realised that she'd been given a dose of Epi. Rahul was stuttering that he was allergic to peanuts too, and that he hadn't known that she was. He was almost beside himself and was apologising profusely.

Nina sat up and gazed around. She looked at the car, the tree and all its leaves, the basket, the bottle which housed the Smoothie and closed her eyes. She opened them and picked up the bottle which was lying horizontally beside her.

She swung her arm back and threw the bottle as far as possible.

It was now Nina's turn to walk to the SUV and she fished out her cell phone from the glove compartment. Her tongue was too swollen to speak and so she typed a message and directed his attention to the

display. A few drops of tears fell on the display and then he noticed that she was crying. But, these were tears of joy as was evident by the smile which accompanied them.

"That was one heck of a sign. Yes."

Sriram Trikutam is a third year Metallurgical and Materials Engineering student pursuing his BTech from Ganga Godavari Tamraparani hostel.

**Now that you're here, anagram these phrases to get famous book titles.
Answers are at the end page.**

1. I milk king cobra, dolt! [04 words]
2. A warped cane [03 words]
3. Dwarfism is an end [03 words]
4. A faze to panthers [04 words]
5. He forged that! [02 words]
6. Shirt encase a vest [03 words]
7. Clan is now deadlier [03 words]

Cut-out View: GCU

Apoorva Chandra

An objective analysis of an organization is something so valuable that there exists a billion dollar industry of elitist giants under the umbrella of consulting. Still, there are firms like GE which believe that nobody else knows their firm and their problems as well as they themselves do. This article is a humble attempt (read stunt or feat) to tie a black cloth around my eyes and weigh the Guidance & Counselling Unit in a fair balance (ref: Andha kanoon, Article 420), analyzing its mission and strategies.

The mission of an organization indicates its purpose of existence. All humans on the planet and perhaps even those in the heavens intend to win. Mission defines where the jewel of winning is hidden. GCU's mission says - Provide guidance to students on various academic issues and extra-curricular activities in the campus, and counsel students who are facing any curriculum related or personal problems. Considering the huge market segment this mission appeals to, any entrepreneur would love to imbibe it, if only...

Before we get to the answer, here's a quote resounding in the walls of ESB 127 by a Prof who was quoting his Prof, and whose name connotes peace, quiet oops quite literally so. *Electrical engineers are so smart (that) they will drive themselves out of the business one day.* He was referring to the explosive technological innovations to reduce the size of a chip which will reach the minimum some day when most of the electrical engineers will have nothing to do. They are running to the dead end deliberately fast, and every joker feels like asking them why so serious, go slow man!

...if only the actions of GCU wouldn't be leading it to its own non-existence.

Vision of an organization is something which you like to say when God has transcended after all your *tapasya* and is about to say *tathastu*. Ideally, GCU's vision should be to see all students solving their problems by themselves with perfect timing and effectiveness, which means T for GCU ☺. Unfortunately, not every one is able to stand perfectly stable in all the vicissitudes of life, and sometimes, just a little push is all that is needed to set the vehicle of life on the right course. Incidentally, the organization's vision says - to make student life at IIT Madras enjoyable and productive. The underlying assumption being that there will be speed-breakers, small ditches and *kuchcha* roads in the journey of learning at the campus but, sometimes, with the right set of directions provided at right places at the right time, a back-breaking journey may become a smooth ride while making it to the destination safely and timely. The demand for GCU will exist for sure, but it aims at minimizing it (decreasing exponential?).

Having established that there is a persistent need, it's time to glance through the strategies where the real fun begins. With stands to be taken on issues concerning student life like difficulties with time management, lack of experience with stress management, a sudden spike in freedom and resources viz LAN, lack of visible benefits of hard work coupled with short-cuts to beat the system (which, in turn, is usually a manifestation of short-sightedness and inability to see the tree-

top view), cut-throat competition, and aloofness, GCU has a wide prerogative and is never shy to help other student organizations achieve their goals too, especially the Placement Cell, albeit it believes in maintaining confidentiality and much of the work remains unseen. Cutting the chase to a popular topic, after a series of unfortunate incidents in a hostel which is expected to ask who will win the Schroeter even during tough times in the Dean's Office, ragging is the buzzword for a discourse like this.

GCU takes ragging as part of a bigger issue called senior-fresher interaction. A few days ago, an interesting feedback was received about the organization's standpoint – You guys need to show some power, dude. Despite you being there, if such incidents are taking place, what's the point? Why don't you take action against them before the administration does? Catch hold of a few and the rest will automatically get the lesson.

Let's say we learn the lesson from the gentleman and shed the unassuming tag from GCU. Here we have a new moral police which has an anti-ragging squad catching seniors who dare look into the eyes of tender *chhui-mui* freshies. Just a minute (no, we're not playing JAM) – is that a viable strategy? The incentive for a GCU Coordinator to sack her/his friend on account of ragging is satisfactorily high given the high levels of professionalism she/he has (applause!), albeit doesn't this act inadvertently create a rift between the GCU team and the rest of the student community? This, in turn, will make the whole exercise of establishing the organization futile. Besides, does that solve the problem or create a new one? Won't an anti-raging squad which lives inside a hostel 24x7 kill senior fresher

interaction at all? Won't it burn a lovely chapter of the utopian IIT life of seniors as well as juniors?

GCU's principal tenets are visibility and approachability which means it is available to help 24x7 and lies just a call or shout away. The current strategy on senior-junior interaction is a basic risk management strategy – minimize the risk variables, which are conduct of seniors and reaction of freshers (there is a third variable too – the administration's response, focusing on which is like looking up in the sky and requesting it to bring untimely rains). The principal tool used is awareness, viz, informing all the stakeholders in advance about the trade-off of interactions. The freshers are informed that they belong to a new family from now onwards which means trying to solve problems the way a family does. The contacts of Counsellors, Hostel Coords as well as Chief Coords are provided to enable them to solicit any help any time. They are also informed about the perils of complaining to the administration against a senior which they may regret even if they consider it to be justifiable at the present moment for a year later they will most likely be in the shoes facing them, and therefore they must seek GCU's help which is so very accessible. The sophomores are also shown both the aspects of the issue and are encouraged to interact such that a freshie returns smiling after the session, which is fair from both the sides. Both the participants are clearly informed that when a freshie calls, it quits no matter what. The guidelines are fair and ethical and those violating them are to be held responsible for the consequences which again come from the administration and not from GCU.

We sincerely thank the student community for respecting the guidelines

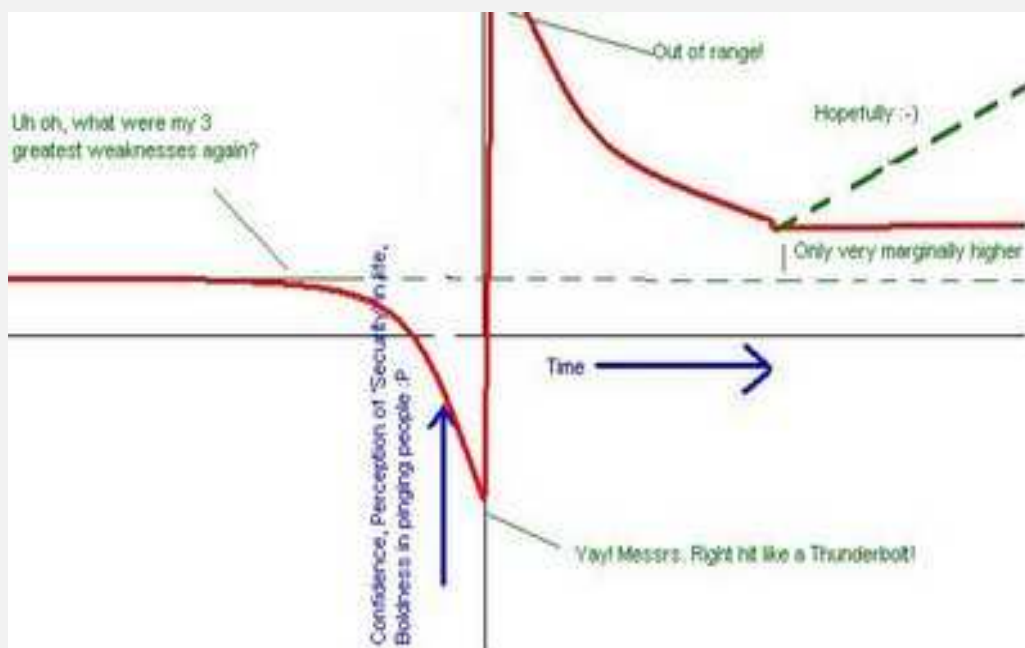
to the extent it did and the palpable improvement in senior-junior interaction this year testifies the increased awareness

and accountability of actions in seniors as well as freshers. Kudos!

Apoorva 'Landu' Chandra, a fourth year BTech in Electrical Engineering from Tapti hostel, has had a long stint with TFE. Landu is good son-in-law material, he's such a momma's boy that we don't have anything to smear him with. Visit his e-workshop at www.virgineer.blogspot.com

Timing and Placement

K V Mohan, Mukund K



Mohan and Mukund are our immediate alumni from the Department of Mechanical Engineering. For more profundity, key www.mobankv.blogspot.com and www.theonlyblogurleftout.blogspot.com in your browser.

The Fourth Estate hopes everyone wanting to get placed has a deserving job on their hands by the time this issue finds print. If not, we wish the yet-to-be-placed all the best.

Jayaraj Speaks

Jayaraj Alavelli is our immediate alumnus from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. He was the Chief Coordinator of National Service Scheme for three years. Last year, he also headed the Guidance and Counselling Unit. In a tete-a-tete during his tenure last year, he discusses about his avocation and what it all really means, with our special correspondent, Anirudh Govind Rajan.

Anirudh: This is your third year as Chief Coordinator of NSS and this year you were also the Chief Coordinator of GCU. Did you ever expect as a freshie that you would head two very important, socially relevant organizations in your final year?

Jayaraj: Honestly, no. I was an NSS teaching volunteer in my first year and a teaching coordinator in my second year. I became attached to the kids at the teaching center. I was away from home and when these kids called me 'anna' and were very affectionate, it moved me a lot.

In my third year, I was asked to become the NSS Chief Coordinator in spite of not applying. It was a challenge because there were hardly 4-5 coordinators. I took managing the 130 volunteers as a challenge and was able to develop a good rapport with them and understand their problems.

As far as GCU is concerned, in my third year, some of my friends were shifted to Jamuna Hostel because of an instance of ragging. I wanted a more healthy interaction between freshies and seniors. So, I decided to do something at least for my hostel Alakananda and became the hostel GCU coordinator.

Basically, there are too many people involved in Shaastra and Saarang because they are all glamorous. But, there are not many people for activities like NSS and GCU. They need people who are ready to spend a good amount of time and energy.

A: Firstly, coming to NSS, the NSS today is one large family with 20 coordinators and over 200 volunteers. You get volunteer applications in excess of what you can take. How do you feel?

J: It feels great and happy. It gives me a great sense of satisfaction that all the hard work has paid off.

When I interact with people from NGOs, they bless us for our contribution. This has made me feel very humble.

A: In many ways, you've redefined NSS. You moved away from conventional areas like teaching in Velachery and Tharamani and started e-learning last year. How did it all begin?

J: Yes, we had teaching programs right from the 1970s. But, our academic calendar is unsuitable for teaching. We have so many breaks in between like quizzes, Shaastra, Saarang and of course the vacation period. So, there is no continuity. But, with e-learning, it is always there and running. In teaching, with the four centers that we have, we are able to cover 150 students at most. But, in e-learning, we are covering 2000 students in Tamil Nadu alone. We have also started this for Karnataka, Gujarat and CBSE Schools now.

A: How does the process work?

J: The TENET group of IITM headed by Prof. Jhunjhunwala prepared the online tutorials. We joined them last year in this

great project. And, there are corporate sponsors. There are kiosks in many districts and the student-users have to pay a nominal fee to the kiosk owner. Our volunteers prepare the interactive modules in maths, science, social science, Hindi, Tamil etc. and even visit the kiosks sometimes. In fact, I feel e-learning is much ahead of its time. Even now, bandwidth connectivity is low in some parts.

A: E-learning is a great leap ahead. But you didn't stop there. You have started many other programs. Earlier, you used to do only teaching and ...

J: Cleaning (laughs). Last, year we started off with English for Communication (EC) with 70 students in a school in Velachery. This year we are doing for 400 students in that school. It's a play-way method of teaching English and now Tamil medium students are able to speak English with correct pronunciation. In fact, the school even asked us to help some of their teachers.

We have also the Science Activities Group. Basically, students are not able to develop a feel for science and we want to endear science to the students by working models and hands-on demos.

SHAPE which stands for Spitting Habit Awareness and Prevention Exercise was started this year. It is funded by the TVS foundation. The main challenge here is that people don't think spitting is bad. We sensitized the public at a few railway stations. But, we still need to work to sensitize people in the campus.

A: You recently successfully organized Health-O-Genix in SAC. Whose brainchild was it?

J: It was a creative idea by the SHAPE team. We organized inter-school painting and quiz competitions on health and hygiene and had a talk by our Chief Medical Officer. And, Tamil medium students who were a part of the EC program performed a skit in English written by us on this topic.

A: You've brought NSS to a peak. Someone else would be stepping into your shoes next year. What hopes do you have? And, if you had one more year, what would you do?

J: The present team of NSS Coordinators has gained a lot of experience in the past two years. I hope they do well and I know they will do well.

There are several organizations that are willing to have an MoU with NSS, IITM. For example, Tamil Nadu Open University is very eager to have an MoU with NSS, IIT Madras. It's a great opportunity because you can reach people across Tamil Nadu. I wish I would have worked on this project. This year, we are doing three radio plays for them.

A: What do you think about student response and participation in socially-relevant activities?

J: In my five years here, I have seen an increase in the participation of the students in the social initiatives. NSS has gone on to achieve so much. Participation in RUTAG has grown. IVIL has come up and is doing well. These are all positive signs.

A: We now move on to the GCU. Two years ago, the GCU was hardly a known entity. Today, everyone in the campus knows GCU. It's become very active.

J: The credit must go to ex-GCU Head, Prof. David Koilpillai. Initially, GCU used to be busy for about a month and was mainly meant for freshies. He was the one who felt that we should cater not only to freshies and we should be proactive. Last year's GCU team worked very hard to gain visibility. And, this year, once we became visible, we tried to gain an approachable image and have been successful. People now come to us for problems regarding interns, academics and even personal problems or depression.

A: So, you really believe that 'Seniors are beautiful people.'?

J: Most are. But, some problems arise because of the seniors. I would say seniors ought to be beautiful people. They should be a bit more responsible. They should lead by example. Freshies tend to imitate seniors.

A: GCU has put up IPs regarding breakfast, sleep and smoking. How well were these received by students?

J: The response was mixed. IPs on sleep and breakfast were well-received. With the smoking one, some felt the GCU was trying to moral police. But, I think GCU must take a clear stand on substance abuse and addiction.

A: Is GCU student body well-equipped to handle 4500 students and varied problems?

J: We are able to handle problems involving time management, stress. Even in case of depression and suicidal tendencies, we have been able to handle it ourselves. But, there are some cases where we feel a professional would be better and in such cases, we direct them to Dr. E.S. Krishnamurthy or Dr. Vasanta Jayaraman

in the institute hospital.

A: Where do you see GCU heading now?

J: The aim of GCU is to make student life in the campus 'comfortable' and more 'enjoyable'. So, GCU will try towards achieving a better student community.

A: Better in the sense?

J: More responsible. Today, involvement in extra-curricular activities is such that the same students are there everywhere and they utilize all the resources. The challenge is to get more students involved.

Also, we crib a lot about institute facilities but we don't obey simple rules like 'No Smoking' within the campus. Students have to feel responsible. And the number of students overstaying after the time of degree is increasing at an increasing rate. This is a serious problem.

A: One very disturbing occurrence is student suicides. It is indeed very distressing. As the GCU Chief Coordinator, what is your take on this?

J: The main reason for this is the "identity crisis". One needs to come out of it. In school, each one was a topper but here you are just "one in a lot". Each one should value himself or herself and realize that he or she is important. This is what I wrote in the March 2008 issue of TFE.

There are some striking similarities among students showing suicidal tendencies. They have poor social skills, no hobbies, sports or extra-curricular activities.

A: Also, we now have curriculum revision going on. As a fifth year DD student, you have seen two curriculums. Now, we will have the third. What should it target?

J: I'll put it briefly for you as

1. Courses like ID120, BT101 and Professional Ethics have not been well-received and should be restructured.
2. Academic load should be evenly distributed across all the semesters of the curriculum. Unfortunately, the 7th Semester, which is so crucial for CAT/APP/JOB, is heavily loaded for all branches.
3. The B.Tech Curriculum should be more flexible just like that of IIT Bombay. Our minors have very few options.

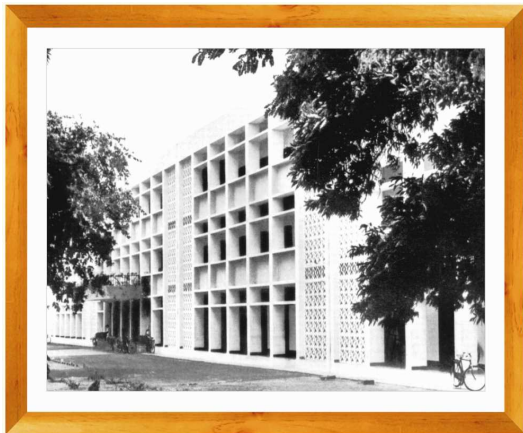
4. A Dual Degree program of B.Tech and MBA can be thought about with many people getting interested in finance/management.

A: It has been a pleasure talking to you.

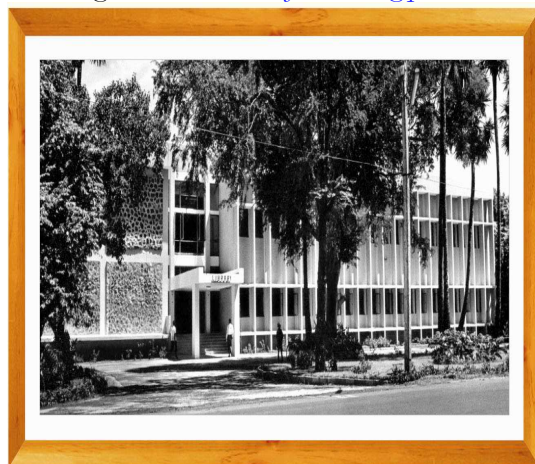
J: Thanks.

The B.Tech. Task Force Report is up on the students' portal and can be downloaded from http://students.iitm.ac.in/recreation/downloads/ctf2008_final.pdf.

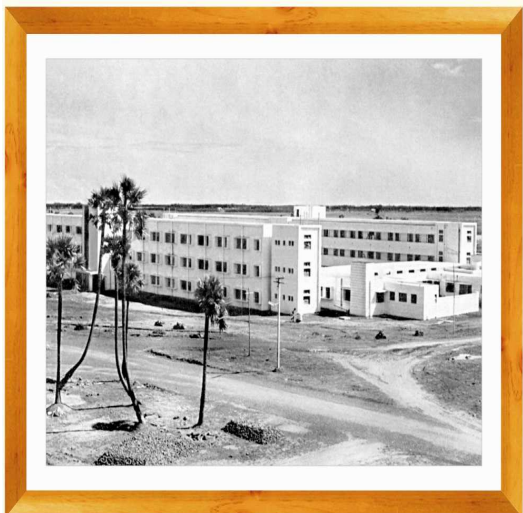
Anirudh G R is a senior Saras-ite about to graduate with a BTech in Chemical Engineering. He blogs at www.anirudhforever.blogspot.com



The **Building Sciences Block**, the first Departmental building completed in August 1961. It housed the Institute Administrative offices, the Director's office and the Senate Hall till 1968. The first classes were also held in this building.



The **Central Library Building**. The newly started Department of Management Studies moved into this building on 2nd February 2006.



The first quadrangle-type **Narmada Hostel** was completed in 1962.



The open-type **Kaveri Hostel**, the first hostel to be completed in 1960. The first hostel to be occupied, **Krishna**, is seen in the right extreme background.

Vetaal and High Funda

Anon

Eds' note: This story was written by an unknown IIT-ian from one of the other IIT's and has appeared in a much earlier edition of TFE. As it seems to be in the public domain and as, in our opinion, it merits a re-print, we have taken the liberty of including it in our GJ issue. We urge you to read it as a piece of satire and to take it at nothing deeper than its face value.

High Funda was determined. Patiently he got the dead body onto his shoulders from the roof of the Ad Block and began climbing down the stairs. Vetaal said, "Hey High Funda! I admire your perseverance, but sometimes I doubt your intentions. I wonder if, after capturing me, you will utilize me for the benefit of others or for yourself. But I want to warn you up front. Do not use me for cogging in quizzes and end-semester exams. God will surely punish you if you do that."

High Funda listened quietly, just as he would listen to a professor preaching in the class about things that students should not do. In his mind, however, he was thinking, "Let me first capture you, buddy! Then I will make you write not only my assignments, but also my B.Tech. project thesis. For small things such as cogging I am an expert myself."

Vetaal continued, "You IITians are used to listening with a plain face. This reminds me of a story. I am telling it to you so that you don't get bored of walking. Listen carefully."

Raja (king) Bhoj was in his darbar as usual. As soon as the daily routine began, the minister notified that a representative of the Director of Bhartiya Takaniki Sansthan (IIT) wanted to speak to him. Raja granted him permission to do so. The representative came into the darbar and bowed to Raja Bhoj. Everybody in the darbar was surprised to see the four

identical persons that followed him, wearing identical Saarang T-Shirts.

The representative said, "Rajan, I am here with a huge problem. The four samples standing in front of you are four distinct individuals, and not four xerox copies of the same person. Out of these, one is a B.Tech student, one is a Research Scholar, one is a Dual Degree student, and one is an M.Tech who has done his B.E. outside somewhere. Their identical looks has caused tremendous confusion. Once the UG stole a name plate from the security department, and the poor fresher M.Tech. was punished. At another time, the Dual Degree student collected the scholarship for all four of them. Hence our Director feels that this would be a nice problem for the intelligent people in your darbar. Using non-destructive tests, you need to determine who is who. For your convenience we have marked their T-shirts with the letters A, B, C and D. If you cannot decide who is who, then you will have to concede defeat, and pay 100 million rupees to IIT in foreign currency.

Bhoj looked at his darbar. Everybody avoided his eye and kept quiet.

Bhoj said angrily, "What is this? Out of all these pandits, isn't there any one who can take this challenge? Is Dharanagari full of fools?"

All darbaris still kept quiet.

"Mantri! Where is Kalidas?" demanded Bhoj angrily.

“Maharaj! He has not arrived yet. He must be on his way,” was the answer.

“This Kalidas is coming later and later everyday,” muttered Bhoj to himself. (In his mind, Bhoj thought Kalidas had become a Head of the Department.) One of the pandits, Varahamihira, gathered his courage. He had done a short course of three weeks in IIT.

“May I try, your Majesty?” he ventured.

“Surely! Surely!” said Bhoj, happy that someone had accepted the challenge. Varahamihira went out for a minute, invited the kingdom’s Gaali-Pandits to the darbar, and whispered some instructions in their ears. A, B, C and D stood in a row, and Varahamihira ordered, “Get set! Go!”

Immediately, the Gaali-Pandits began saying the most obnoxious gaalis known in the land. All the darbaris were stunned. One after one, they began stuffing their ears with their fingers. Bhoj himself stuffed his ears, because he could not stand the disgusting language. Varahamihira was watching the four carefully. He thought, “At least the freshie M.Tech will express resentment.”

But the IITians showed no expressions. These routine gaalis were all too familiar to them in the hostels.

After the Gaali-Pandits were done, Varahamihira was looking down with shame. He tried mumbling some explanation to Bhoj. But Bhoj looked at his hung face, and said comfortingly, “Pandit! This is a matter for Kalidas only. So don’t worry about it.”

Varahamihira did not lose heart altogether. He said, “Maharaj! Let me try

only one more time. I am confident that I will identify at least one of them.”

“OK!” said Bhoj. “But this is your last chance.”

Varahamihira sent a man with some instructions. The darbaris waited curiously for what was to follow.

In the meanwhile, Kalidas entered. Just as an IITian’s face blooms when he gets an intro with a non-IITian girl, Bhoj’s face bloomed with delight when he saw Kalidas coming. Kalidas also understood the matter as soon as he saw the IIT representative with the four identical students with their Saarang T-shirts. Kalidas went and sat right next to Bhoj and observed Varahamihira’s actions.

Varahamihira’s man came back with four staff members from the jail. They had four dishes of food from the jail.

Varahamihira ordered the four students to eat that food. The darbaris, and Bhoj himself, felt sorry to see the guests eating the food meant for prisoners. Some soft-hearted ladies even had tears in their eyes.

But Varahamihira was quiet. He was certain that he would see different reactions to the food. “The freshie M.Tech adjusted himself to the gaalis, but he will surely complain about the food. And the one who eats without cribbing must be the UG,” he thought to himself. “After that, I can think of distinguishing between the other two.”

He began dreaming about defeating Kalidas and winning the king’s favour.

Alas! The four IITians ate the food without any complaints and regrets.

Varahamihira was puzzled. He asked them in a stuttering voice, "How was the food?"

And a unanimous answer came, "Just like the food in our mess!"

The darbar was filled with laughter. The insulted Varahamihira walked out of the darbar, and never showed his face again in Dharanagari. Some people say that he joined IIT. Some say he joined some psychiatric ward. But those who are enlightened know that these are equivalent things.

Now it was Kalidas's responsibility to save Bhoj's face. Kalidas was calm and composed. He said in a confident tone, "Maharaj! I believe that I will be able to take this challenge. But I will need some ten days to do this." Bhoj gladly agreed.

Kalidas arranged for the four students to stay in the splendid guesthouse. He had his spies ready to watch the four. He said to the students, "See, today is Monday. Next Monday I will give you all a quiz at 9:30 AM. Goodbye until then, and best of luck."

On Sunday night Kalidas called his spies to him and asked them for a report.

This is what they said:

1. A began mugging right on Monday night. B, C and D relaxed.
2. B, C and D went to see a movie on Friday night. It seemed that without the movie, they were feeling pretty restless. In the cinema hall they kept making a lot of noise during the film. After the show they ran to the guesthouse and jumped to the food. They were excited to see dry dinner (sandwiches and milk shake). A continued with his mugging.
3. On Saturday B began browsing through his notes. After dinner,

however, he played bridge. He looked like an expert bridge player. A kept on mugging. C and D were enjoying themselves

4. B, C and D were watching TV or playing carroms for most of the day on Sunday. B studied for one hour in the afternoon. After the news at 10:10 pm, they returned to their rooms. B went to bed. C and D began studying for the first time. A continued mugging.

Kalidas ordered to watch C and D more carefully. On Monday evening, he received another report and the results of the test.

1. A was reading during his breakfast.
2. B had stopped his studies on Sunday night, and seemed without any tension.
3. C and D were reading throughout the night. They came late to the breakfast table. They hurried through the breakfast and rushed to the examination hall. They had cog-sheets in their pockets.

Test results were: A and B got a 'C' grade, and C and D got a 'B' grade.

Kalidas had mixed expressions of relief and puzzlement. He had recognized A and B, but could not yet distinguish between C and D. He had to solve the problem by Wednesday. He went back to his room, and thought for about three to four hours. When he came out of the room, he was happy. He gave a few more instructions to his spies.

The next day yet another report was waiting on his desk. The report said this:

"This morning C and D were strolling through the lawn. I went to C and said what you wanted me to say into his ear. He just smiled. When I said the same

thing to D, he got angry and cursed and hit me.”

Kalidas had got his answer. The darbar was full the next day. Everybody was wondering if Kalidas would succeed this time. Bhoj was also concerned. Kalidas came with the IITians at the right time. After seeking Bhoj’s permission, he announced, “A is the freshie M.Tech. who did his B.E. outside of IIT. B is the Research Scholar. C is the UG B.Tech student and D is the Dual Degree student.”

Bhoj looked at the representative of IIT. He was looking down with a quiet face. “Does your silence mean that Kalidas is right?” asked Bhoj.

“Yes!” replied the representative, ashamed. The darbaris applauded. Bhoj hugged Kalidas. The IIT representative went back to IIT and never troubled the king again.

After narrating the story, Vetaal asked, “Hey High-Funda! What logic did Kalidas use to reach the right answers? You probably know the answer, and if you try to avoid answering intentionally, then your body will fall into thousands of pieces and they will fall into the ditch that is going under the name of the swimming pool.”

High-Funda took a deep breath and said, “Vetaal! I knew that you will ask me such

a shady question. So listen. Although A adjusted himself for gaalis and food, he could not escape the tension of a test. That is why, after all his mugging, he got only a ‘C’ grade.

B’s limited mugging was natural, because to keep his scholarship, all he needs is a 6-pointer, and no more. So he utilized his time effectively in playing bridge, and got a comfortable ‘C’ grade.

Despite all the activities of C and D, they got a ‘B’ grade. Thus it is clear that they are good old sinners of IIT, and are expert in cogging and techniques of taking tests. The only problem was to distinguish between the two. So Kalidas applied Varahamihira’s technique in a different form.

When his spy said a certain thing to C he smiled, but D could not stand it, and hit the spy. Clearly, there is only one such gaali, and that was “PG m*****d.” Therefore, C was the UG.”

“Very good!” Vetaal said. But High-Funda’s silence was broken. So Vetaal escaped and flew back to the roof of the main building.

High-Funda cursed, and slowly returned to his hostel. He had to prepare cog sheets for the test the next day. He would try again tomorrow, he said to himself.

And people say IITians are modest!

Uncle π

Aditya Kothari and Tejas Deshmukh

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie in one of the new hostels. Don't get me wrong - by no means am I wishing to convey a message that sounds like "I hate my hostel" - but I am faced with a rather unique problem. I have been allotted a room, on one of the higher floors, vertically above the entrance, and every time that I return after classes I have problems in reaching my room. In fact, I have spent only about 63% of the nights in my room. Anyway, not going into statistics, after I climb out of the lift I realize that I have already lost all sense of direction. Just to regain it I go all the way back to the ground floor to check out where the entrance is. After I climb out of the lift on the ground floor I find that I am at a loss so as to where the entrance was. But then life is not all roses, so I go search for it anyway and keep trying. This method fails often, approximately 37% of the times. Please help.

- The Spanish follow father of the ugly duckling searching for the lost boy (6)

Ah! You are mistaken my young friend. This by no means, is a unique problem and shall undoubtedly be the most read part of the magazine. As for your predicament, I can offer you some options:

- a) - Go buy a magnetic compass.
- b) - Use small white pebbles. Do NOT use bread crumbs

c) - Leave really, REALLY loud music playing in your room, after you leave

d) - Get the window grille removed and use a rope ladder

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie and I have this issue I wanted advice on. The problem is that I never outgrew the habit of sleeping with my teddy, Winnie, beside me in bed. The fact is this is the first time I'm staying away from my parents, and the only support I have here is Winnie. I was expecting my fellow inmates to be understanding and accommodating, after all, they fell in a supposedly high IQ bracket. But all I have got so far are sniggers and bumps. Every time that I tried kicking the habit, the ensuing emotional void become unbearable, making me cling onto Winnie even harder. I can't see any way out of this. Please help.

- Peanatty boy, who hates an xs of Windows (5)

Sleeping with stuffed toys, eh! Kicking any habit in an abrupt manner causes withdrawal pains which make it even harder to, well, kick. A standard approach to be followed in such matters is the gradual metamorphosis of the pernicious habit into a mature, satisfying one. So I advise you to undergo a long term rehabilitation programme which consists of slowly changing from Winnie to Darkwing Duck to Hobbes to Willy and eventually to, what in popular parlance are referred to as, 'Adult Toys'. And you, my boy, will win the admiration of your friends, and shall be held in high esteem

for finding a solution to the Insti sex ratio problem. We also offer you a free TFE subscription for the rest of your stay if you mail us a Before-After.

Of course, shifting to a room in one of the new hostels would provide you with hardly any opportunities to sleep in your room, so that poor Winnie shall slowly and surely be forgotten.

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie and am a little unsure of how I feel about her. She's the most wonderful thing to have happened to me, including IIT. When she walks her hair sways like the most exquisite Laplacian harmonics, her lips are like rich pi clouds, her eyes just like $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and speaking of eyes, I've also observed her to secretively look towards me with those cute sideway glances which girls have. And when she looks at me my heart jumps with joy, I get all dizzy, the breeze brushes against my cheeks and the clouds above fondle my hair, I seem to have lost my sleep and appetite. I've never experienced such a feeling before and therefore thought that maybe I should make sure beforehand - Is it Love? If so, what should I do? Please help.

- What's left of the Bishop of Canterbury, that is, what makes a boy fall in love (6)

Tomber amoureux, what a beautiful feeling monsieur! Yes, YES, **YES!!!** It is Love. That fluttering of the heart - I've felt it too. That graceful walk, those delicate limbs, the alabaster skin...

But then life is not a cakewalk. We shall begin with pointing out that it's $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$. Also, more importantly, she gives you those cute little looks because some joker told her that you are the one

who sleeps with the Winnie. That however would be the least of your troubles. I would also like you to know that half the Insti is also, as you call it, 'in Love' with her, which means that you face stiff competition and, being a freshie, do not stand a chance. Therefore we advise you to get your room changed to one of the new hostels, which shall keep you occupied with more mundane matters such as making it to your room.

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie and I have this little bother. This is the first time I have to stay in a hostel with a roommate and the fact that I didn't know him before makes me very uncomfortable. You can imagine my surprise when I woke up after my first night here to find him sitting beside my bed and staring at me with big glossy eyes. To add to that weird feeling - his room is full of posters of men's lingerie, and he always walks around without a shirt with his one arm upon his chest. I even caught him doing his fingernails once. To make things worse my bed is towards the window, which cuts offs the option of making a run for it in case he assaults me. Not that I have anything against homosexuality, some of my best friends are gay, but a roommate? This is really worrying me - I need to know, in case if he is one of them, what precautions should I take? Please help!

- Bankrupt behind the Oscar winner (9)

Now, why does that sound so familiar to me! As much as I would like to recommend to you "My Roomie Nikhil", which happens to be an excellent guidebook on dealing with situations similar to the one you think you are in, that would be wholly unnecessary. Because in your case, I don't think he is

gay and more importantly because TFE cannot do free advertising. As for the posters, they probably have the men posing with huge biceps, wide chests and infinite other muscles - relax - those are body-builder posters and, as has been observed on innumerable previous occasions, could be a false alarm. Moreover if you wish to ascertain the fact, look for pink things in his wardrobe. If none are present - voila! Yet another proof could be to watch out for him eying the freshie female in 'C' batch, though that could mean another thing... but I think we will leave it at that.

An easy solution to your problems with unknown roommates is to get a room in one of the new hostels - the lack of double rooms and the engrossing journey ensures a meaningful existence!

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie and I don't really see any point in writing to you, I mean how many problems really get solved with agony column advice, but I am still writing to you, though it is highly improbable that you shall reply to this mail given the volume of mail you handle, since I don't want my GCU counsellors to crib later that I didn't even try. The point is nothing good has ever happened to me- my room-neighbour seems to be gay, the other one sleeps with teddies, my room is in unexplored territory, and no one ever publicizes the books I ghost-write (lately I wrote "My Roomie Nikhil"), my parents think I am pessimistic, my brother thinks I am depressed, my dog is too dumb to think... Why am I going on about myself, it is worthless, right? I mean how can I expect you, someone who doesn't even know me <Here the editors wield their editing power and decide to not continue the letter

anymore, after all it *is* worthless, right?>

- *Asian replaces European in disemboweling vermin to bring out the Martian (6)*

I shall try to be very polite about this, but what on earth do you think this column is for!!! We offer invaluable advice to people who come to us with concrete problems such as the inability to find their room (totally unrelated to their IQ). But your letter seems like a lot of cynical garbage. You ought to feel ashamed of wasting our time, paper and ink just to please an insignificant GCU counselor. I would have gone and jumped into the lake with all its crocodiles, after such a regretfully reprehensible letter. Perhaps it can still be done. That is the only advice we can offer you.

Goodbye.

PS: New hostels won't work for you!

Dear Uncle π , I am a freshie and I find it revolting to ask an all-male team for advice regarding a problem that needs sensitive handling and insights into the into the psychology of women. Only the lure of my name appearing in a magazine as illustrious as yours, and the fact that my complaint is male-centric, makes me write this.

What disgusts me is the sick barbarous attitude, a majority of the males here have towards well endowed females. It disturbs me to the extent that I wonder - are these a curse or a boon. I even considered getting them surgically... but I don't have the courage to take a stab at it, rather, them. I really hate it when some of my male acquaintances do not look me in

the eye when they talk. All this full frontal attention is driving me nuts. Please help!

- Blonde finds map confusing (3)

Let me assure you dear, that all reservations you have regarding my capabilities in this domain are misplaced. In fact, delicate issues are my specialty. Moreover your problem does not involve so much female psychology as female attire, which, incidentally, happens to be my forte. So my advice to you goes out as follows - confuse them by wearing frills

and cuts, or try short tees with one-liners on the back (we can help with the one-liners too), divert attention away from your top half by wearing minis, low-waists, etc. A strategically placed tattoo will help. Make sure that it is visible. Loose hair will only add to the overall effect. Paint your nails, wear bangles, sounds and sights are too much for the male mind to handle simultaneously. All in all, you might end up with more attention, but be sure of the fact that it shall not be specifically directed towards those gifts of god. Or shall I call them boons.

(Names have been encrypted not so much to protect identities as to prevent undeserving individuals from gloating over their names appearing in our prestigious magazine.)

Aditya 'DAS' Kothari and Tejas Deshmukh are sophomores pursuing their B.Tech in Biotechnology. Being residents of the testosterone-laden hostel that we know as Ganga and also socially awkward, these two are rumoured to be inseparable at all times. However, due to the strict don't ask-don't tell policy employed at TFE, we haven't asked them anything and they haven't confirmed anything either!

Now unscramble these to get movie titles. Answers -- last page.

1. Bets hike market prices [04 words]
2. Peel stainless steel [03 words]
3. Go drill ma' limousine [02 words]
4. Loneliest lick [03 words]
5. I eat men's flesh to belch (source: Internet) [05 words]
6. My way enthralls her [04 words]
7. Fed cousin's mouth [04 words]

TFE Challenge

Nikhil D Kamath

Palindromes

The answer to each clue (as a whole, or a part of) is a palindrome.
Eg. Push off canine! (2 words) - Go dog!

- 1) I was told that I had seen a jaguar on the way. Wonder what they were referring to...The automobile or the animal? (9 words)
- 2) Launch assault on a boring crowd. (4 words)
- 3) Outcasts drive away journalists to avoid further shame. (2 words)
- 4) "Get up to exercise your franchise, Master." (4 words)
- 5) Prevent acne from appearing. (2 words)

Fracture troubles

The answer to each of these clues is a word, which, when fractured, still fit in to form a meaningful sentence, albeit with a very different meaning.

Eg. The athlete gained popularity through the **new-sprint** rather than jumping hurdles.

- 1) One place where _____ are sent for treatment is the Psychology Ward.
- 2) Those looking for easy word games will find it _____ in this issue.
- 3) You shouldn't always take a _____ for resolving your conflicts.
- 4) University students found that _____ often gives them a sense of joy.

Printer's Devil

We are invited to suppose that, after a sentence had been typeset, a mischievous spirit appeared and removed one word from it. In an attempt to cover up what he had done, he slid the remaining letters back and forth - without changing their order - to make a different sentence (or sentences), as plausible as he could manage. He may have removed punctuation marks, and/or thrown in some new ones of his own. He may even have transformed upper

case letters to lower case, or vice versa; this is within his power, but changing the order of the letters most definitely is not.

All the solver has to do is find out what word the little devil removed in the first place.

Eg: Royal Academy will only display the bet (4) Answer: STAR

Should read: Royal Academy will only display the **best art**.

- 1) With Nessie at my lunch, I feel very uncomfortable. (6)
- 2) As he left, the friend said that he would keep a ping on GTalk more often. (4)
- 3) I took a dip in the lake and felt reed. (5)
- 4) Aspect able enough to be seen with that particular group. (4)

Heteronyms

Heteronyms are two words or phrases with the same spelling but different pronunciations and meanings. The words *onus* and the phrase *on us* are heteronyms because they are spelled the same but have different pronunciations. In each of the following replace two of the words or phrases in the sentence with two heteronyms without changing the meaning of the sentence.

For example: The burden was our responsibility. Answer: The onus was on us.

- (1) Study fair opinion of how one must adapt anew to fit into foreign environs.
- (2) The hub of spies meted out torturing harassment.
- (3) Proceed to gaze at the company site.
- (4) "The Lord controls all the warehouses. We are helpless", said the poor vassals.
- (v) Resolve animosity between the two parties quickly, else it may jeopardize their futures.

Key

Palindromes

- (1) Was it a car or a cat I saw?
- (2) Bombard a drab mob
- (3) Lepers repel
- (4) Rise to vote, sir
- (5) Stop spots

Fracture troubles

- (1) the rapist, therapist
- (2) now here, nowhere
- (3) broad's word, broadsword
- (4) disco very, discovery

Printer's Devil

- (1) Without fitness I eat my lunch, I feel very uncomfortable
- (2) As he left, the friend said that he would keep appearing on GTalk more often.
- (3) I took a dip in the lake and felt refreshed
- (4) Am I respectable enough to be seen with that particular group?

Heteronyms

- (1) Conform, con form
- (2) Molestation, mole station.
- (3) Google, go ogle
- (4) Godowns, god owns
- (5) Endanger, end anger

Nikhil D Kamath is a Metallurgical and Materials Engineering senior residing in Jamuna. Rumour has it that he snarled 'Here's your mamma's box of chocolates, loser!' as he hit his winning smash in a ping-pong match against Forrest Gump. More of his anecdotes @ www.the-have-ideas-but-wont-write-club.blogspot.com

Answers to the title anagrams on pgs. 34 and 49

Books

1. To Kill a Mockingbird
2. War and Peace
3. Swami and Friends
4. Tarzan of the Apes
5. The Godfather
6. The Satanic Verses
7. Alice in Wonderland

Movies

1. The Empire Strikes Back
2. Sleepless in Seattle
3. Slumdog Millionaire
4. License to Kill
5. The Silence of the Lambs
6. When Harry Met Sally
7. The Sound of Music