

# WATCH OUT !



# MISSION IMPLAUSIBLE

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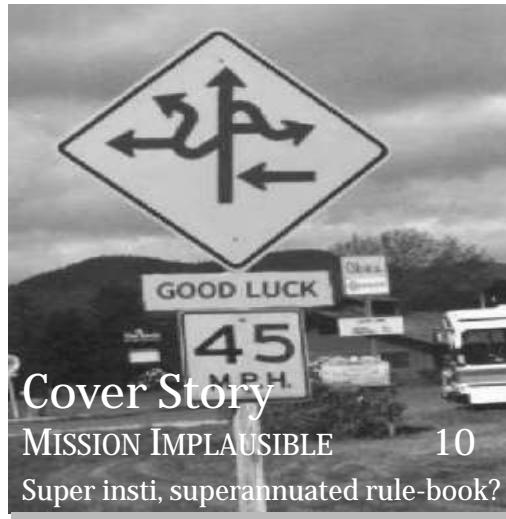
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## Regular Features

Purple Cow	2
Verbatim	2
Sci-Tech	3
Editorial	3
News Notes	4
Special Economic Zone	8
Face-Off	8
WORC	13
Cartoon Strip	16
Almost Famous	18
Rank	18
Agony Aunt	19
Mostly Harmless	20
 Issue Special	
Thomso Page	9
 Debutante	
COTOC	19



## PHANTASMAGORIA

One of the few perquisites of an Electrical Engg. student here is an unusually lax third year time-table. With few over a score contact hours, a post-lunch siesta is no longer a luxury restricted to the more fortunate denizens of departments on the other side of the dreaded slope. It was during one such *free afti* that I shrugged myself away from the ever-welcoming embrace of Lady Slumber and sat down to watch *A Wednesday*. Fifteen minutes into the movie, I was convinced that the sacrifice was worth it. It's hard to imagine that it's barely been a decade since the days of the *Raja Hindustanis* and the ubiquitous 'poor guy, rich girl, bad dad' routine. Even the *sarson-ke-khet* loving Yash Chopra has retired his gaggle of giggly *sahelis* and replaced them with hotties on the beaches of Sydney and Rio. Bollywood has come of age, and it's about time too. Later the same evening, I happened to chance upon a decade-old copy of the Economic Times. '*Incoming calls on mobiles now free*', ran one headline. '*DDI and 2 to become 24 hour channels*' read another. A decade, in historic terms, is generally considered an inconsequential span of time. Yet, the same time-frame has changed the world around us beyond any semblance of recognition.

The wave of change hasn't spared Roorkee either. In my own two years here, I've seen a new library spring out of nothingness. The once-magnificent Cautley Bhawan is now a mere dwarf flanked by a skyscraper twice its size. Nescafe's monopoly over the madly-in-love and the wannabe-madly-in-love crowd is fast becoming a thing of the past, with the arrival of fresh competition in the form of Café Coffee Day (albeit two miles away). Rumours are rife that a McDonald's outlet is on its way further down the highway.

While the changes in concrete have been vast, the intangibles seem bent on following Newton's first law (or was it the second?) tooth and nail. Eight years into the IIT system, one would have expected a good many of the long redundant rules and regulations in the insti to have been done away with. Yet, they have stood the tests of time and criticism and continue to annoy and torment us. This issue, we take a look at a few such norms and question their persistence despite defying all forms of reason. Elsewhere, we take a dig at our own lack of manners and wonder how this wonderful village we call home saps us of whatever little civility we happen to possess. The usual suspects are all back with tales of their own, spiced by our unusual (and often lame) sense of humour.

In the meantime, Thomso returns in a little over a week, reassuringly titled, '*It's Happening(?)*'. In the wise words of Billie Joe Armstrong, '*Hope you have the time of your life....!*'

-Ed

One fine sunny morning, in the isolated land of Roorkee, Purple Cow stared at his mirror admiring his visage.



To his horror, he found His Purpleness

was becoming yellower by the minute. Looking for a wiser being for advice, he began to leave the room when all of a sudden the world began to spin around him. Concerned, his roomie, Pink Monkey, dialled 101 and summoned the ambulance. Soon it was there; PC checked his eyes, but men in red jackets with hose-pipes rushed out of the fire-engine. Assuring them that there was no cause for alarm, PC and PM were soon in the fire-engine, headed for the hospital.

After waiting in a long queue, full of what felt like the entire families - right from the new-born baby to the octogenarian granny - of all the workers in IITR, PC was finally allotted slot no. 555 and was then dispatched to the queue outside the doctor's room. The board read 'Doctor Max Pain, BA Economics'. Neither the name nor the credentials dismayed PC half as much as the queue outside the door did. PC had nearly given up hope, when, to his pleasant surprise, he noticed the rapid rate at which the patients were being disposed by the doctor. Finally it was PC's turn.

The doctor, conveniently seated with his back to PC, told him to not only explain his symptoms, but also to come up with possible remedies himself. PC's responses ranged from fever to pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis. While they conversed, PC looked at the computer screen - "Press 1 for common cold; 2 for stomach ailment; Press 3 if neither of the above." Soon the doctor came up with the solution, the miracle drug for all diseases - 'Come-be-flame', also recommending a blood test, X-Ray, MRI scan and an ECG. By this time PC's condition had worsened and he was convinced that his end was near. The unrelenting 'doctor', though, reminded him that dying without the Hospital Book would lead to dire consequences. The gasping PC, who had forgotten it, dispatched an anxious PM to fetch it.

Once the book arrived, the procedures began. The electrodes were placed on his head, the other ends of which were connected to a machine embossed with the words, 'Made in 1848'. Just as things started looking bright again, the bell rang and the doctor left for his lunch break, leaving PC on the machine. Many amperes through the brain later, PM peeped in only to find PC with his hide aflame. Horrified, PM rushed to save PC, but the machine had gone out of control. Just when PC's hopes seemed to fade away, all the lights went off. Saved by a power failure, PC dragged himself out of the chair, and thanking IITR's power policy, walked out of the hospital vowing never to step in again.

# Verbatim



*The most "happening" event of the semester is just round the corner, as the Thomso Organizing Committee fights an unending battle with time. The million-dollar question, though, is why then the delay in the formation of the TOC. We talked to Dr. M.J. Nigam, Staff Advisor for Thomso for more.*

WONA: *Why has there been a delay in the preparations for Thomso?*

MJ: There was a delay in the passing of information from the students' side. From what I could understand the students weren't willing to work at that time. As such process has been delayed but now the students are working very hard.

WONA: *So, there is no real reason for the delay?*

MJ: There is no real reason. As soon as I was informed that I was in-charge, I called up a meeting of the 9 students. One of them represents the cultural society. There is a team to gather the sponsorships. They are all doing very well.

WONA: *You have been associated with Thomso before. How do you compare the preparations for this year in vis-a-vis those of the last 2 Thomso's?*

MJ: Everything depends on finances. If we want someone like Sonu Nigam to perform we must have that much money for it. The quality of the fest is ultimately decided by the funds we are able to generate. I have been associated with many events and responsibilities in the past but it is still very difficult to predict. We are hoping for the best.

WONA: *So is there a possibility of having sponsors from Civil Lines too?*

MJ: I don't think so. The IIT reputation should be maintained. Sponsorship can't go to civil lines.

WONA: *Thomso is scheduled to be held just a day before Diwali. Won't that affect the turnout, especially among the first years?*

MJ: The Diwali holidays are only for 2 days. The semester break is already going to start from the 4th. If students still go then we might think of some measures. First years might go out of home-sickness. I can understand that.

WONA: *Finally, what do you expect from this year's Thomso?*

MJ: I cannot comment right now as there are problems of money but we have good hopes. Abhishek is very sincere and has really put his mind and energy into it. Ultimately we just have to hope for the best.



The Large Hadron Collider

Frequenting the newspapers for quite a while now, the Large Hadron Collider or LHC is not just any machine - it is *the* machine. Costing a whopping £3.5 million, the LHC is basically a particle accelerator which collides two opposing beams of protons or lead ions at up to 99.99% the speed of light!

The collider lies 50 to 75 meters underground and has a circumference of 27 kilometers, with a width of 3.8 meters. The protons are accelerated from 450 GeV to 7 TeV per beam and it takes less than 90 nanoseconds to finish one revolution around the circumference. The beams move around the LHC ring inside a continuous vacuum guided by magnets. It consists of four major detectors: ATLAS (A Toroidal LHC Apparatus), CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid), ALICE (A Large Ion Collider Experiment) and LHCb (LHC-beauty).

The LHC was constructed to prove the existence of particles predicted by the Standard Model, and hopefully some that haven't been predicted yet. It will answer many of the existing questions and might lead us one step further towards the Holy Grail of Modern Physics, the Grand Unified Theory (GUT). Another major question expected to be laid to rest is why gravity is so many orders less than the other three fundamental forces, and whether the 'super symmetry' of matter and anti-matter predicted by the Standard Model exists? At a very basic level it will answer how our universe came into existence and why and how the 'Big Bang' took place, or whether it did at all?

In an event viewed worldwide by an estimated 1 billion audience, the LHC was started after 25 years of construction on 10th September, 2008, and the first beam of protons was accelerated successfully. But like every major worldwide event, it was accompanied by very elaborate rumours and hoaxes. Some suggested that these high speed collisions might create a mini-black hole and destroy the earth. Some said that it would create a temperature of over 3 trillion degrees centigrade; others said it would result in an earthquake of catastrophic proportions. These rumors were laid to rest by CERN, and till last information, the inaugural acceleration proceeded without any catastrophes.

The Large Hadron Collider at CERN could be the most ambitious scientific undertaking ever. The results of LHC experiments will change our fundamental knowledge of the universe (and not the universe itself, as some prophets of doom feared!) 

## The (Im)Perfect World

Humans, with each passing day, strive for perfection. Attempts are made to sort out the disorder and smoothen out the irregularities. The aim, it seems, is to create an ideal world where we may get everything served on a platter just the way we want it. Simply put, a world where there would be no conflicts of either thoughts or actions and everything would be synchronized and in perfect harmony with each other.

In the world that entwines chaos and flaws within its very fabric, our relentless search for perfection appears as yet another anomaly. A good many of us spend our entire lives on this wild goose chase. To imagine this perfect world is close to impossible; to create one, even more so. The real challenge, though, is to survive in such a world where things are so apt, so precise that any deviation of thought or action will be considered an absurdity.

Entropy is the natural tendency of the universe. The human nature is designed in a fashion such that it cannot survive in a state of perfection. It seeks free-will; opportunities to express oneself and hence the freedom to guide one's own life. A life of perfection will be a life that lacks alternatives as well as one without options, owing to the fact that there will only be one perfect way of leading it. There will be neither curiosity nor enjoyment. The pleasures of exploration, the excitement of taking risks and self experimentation will be destroyed. Life is full of challenges and it is these which make life a delight. The endeavour of accomplishing your objectives and the thrill of victory that ensues after overcoming the obstacles on the way, will be lost. What then would be the difference between a human being and a machine? It is our ability to think and our conscience that distinguishes us from the rest of the animal world. Every individual has his own personal choices and tastes and this is what makes one human stand apart from the other.

In our blind chase for perfection have we ever paused to reflect on the consequences of a perfect world? It is understandable that we wish to eliminate the disorder that pervades all parts of our life, but do we wish to do it to such an extent so as to kill all the fun in life. Try and reflect on the best moments of your life and you'll realize that the ones that stand out aren't only the ones where you succeeded but those when you did so against all odds. The day you had to chase the last bus home or the one when you got the thrill of having a near death experience; not the boring day to day perfect life.

The closer we are to realizing our dream of a 'perfect world' the more absurd appears our quest of seeking it. To use the analogy used by the Joker in the latest instalment of the Batman series, we're all dogs chasing cars; we wouldn't know what to do with one, if we caught it.

# NEWS NOTES



## DOMS-organized National Symposium gets a good response

Confluencia was a National Level Symposium hosted by Department of Management Studies on 6th, 7th, 16th and 17th Sept. 2008. It aimed at bringing together luminaries from industry and academia on one platform to share their views on the latest trends in the industry.

The showcase event of DOMS-Confluencia saw an active participation from students of

Management and Technology alike. The event provided students an opportunity to learn from the experts and augment their knowledge on contemporary industrial issues.

Each day had a different theme  
 Sept 6: Finance  
 Sept 7: IT & Consultancy  
 Sept 16: Marketing  
 Sept 17: Operations



## Deferred Placement Program gathering momentum

DPP or Deferred Placement Program, initiated by Entrepreneurship Development Cell (DPP) is a scheme which gives an opportunity to the budding entrepreneurs to defer their placement for two years. All candidates selected for DPP can opt out of placements in

their final year and come back to IIT Roorkee within 2 years of their graduation to sit for the campus placements in case their venture fails. IIT Roorkee is the third college in the country to implement such a program, after IIT Kharagpur and IIM Ahmedabad. It has

already been welcomed with immense enthusiasm. Gaurav Singh of Chemical has already applied for DPP. The interested candidates should submit the executive summary of their B-Plan to STEP office latest by 20th October 2008. Their plan would be judged on the

grounds of viability and seriousness. Five candidates would be finally short-listed to be enrolled for DPP. It is a one-of-its-kind program that offers you freedom and peace of mind. Wherever you may stand, you'll always find plenty of roads to take.

## IITR Opening & Closing JEE Ranks

CS Engg	340	767
E&C Engg	784	1209
CSE Dual	808	1174
Electrical	811	1701
E&C Dual	1106	1370

Mech	1030	1942
Electrical Dual	1540	1829
Civil	1894	2845
Chemical	1915	2448
P&I	2153	2822
Chem dual	2236	2831

## Pehla Nasha: The hangover continues

## Confluencia: Gyaan Gurus unite

## DPP: Entrepreneurs rejoice

### Pehla Nasha attracts huge crowds

Music Section's first event in this academic year Pehla Nasha was held on September 25th in the New Convocation Hall. Rajesh Agrawal (Bio Tech 1st yr) gave the show a good start with 'Aashayein'. The confidence of the singers was reflected in their performances. Singers showed a lot more spirit while rendering their songs this time which was a new thing for the IITR junta. Highlights of the event were Padmini (MBA II yr) dancing to the tunes of 'Whenever Wherever', and Vasudha (Biotech 1 yr) and Indraneel Basu (Meta IV yr) performing 'Bring me to life'. 'FLAT' an original composition by Hemant Saggad, Udit Singh and Y. Atulya also received a good



response from the audience. The event was one of the biggest this sem in terms of audience turnout, with the Hangar nearly packed to capacity. Musically weak performances like 'Jaane Ja', 'Kajra Mohabbat Wala' and 'Socha Hai' were able to save their grace thanks to the songs' popularity, good instrumentals and, quite surprisingly, audience support. Audio section pulled off a good job but due to lack of proper equipments and the excessive cheering, those on the last few rows were left lip-reading. The music was complimented by a good display of lights by the Lights Section, albeit with some lag. On the whole, a

### Institute Lecture Series Michel Danino

Shri Michel Danino delivered a Special Lecture under the Institute Lecture Series on 9th September. Michel Danino is a French author who has spent the last 25 years in Tamil Nadu. He convened the International Forum for India's Heritage. Apart from translating existing works, he has authored 'The Invasion That Never Was' - a brief study of the Aryan Invasion Theory. During the lecture, he spoke about the Harappan civilization, its cities, art, culture and technology. He spoke about India's rich cultural heritage and condemned our current obsession with the West. A small but well-read audience gruelled him with questions on the Aryan Invasion Theory.

### IITR Opening & Closing JEE Ranks

Meta	2918	3559
Process Engg with MBA	2981	3975
Biotech	3163	3658
Paper Pulp	3199	4999
App Maths	3455	4879

Geophysics	3493	4522
Geotech	3681	4635
Polymer	4005	4493
Achitecture	4041	6513
Chemistry	5072	5386
Physics	4706	5128

## SPIC MACAY: On a Cultural Spree

## STIKFI: Projects anyone ??



### SPIC MACAY scores twice already



SPIC MACAY has had two events so far in this semester. The first was SAAZ- The Shehnai Concert by Ustaad Mumtaz Hussain Khan in Prof O P Jain Auditorium on 6th August. Ustaad Mumtaz Hussain Khan happens to be the nephew and disciple of legendary Shehnai player , Bharat Ratna ( late ) Ustaad Bismallah Khan and this clearly showed in his performance. The event attracted a decent crowd.

The second event was PANDAVANI - a vocal concert by Padma Bhushan Teejan Bai organized at DOMS on 20th September. Six co-artists accompanied Smt. Teejan Bai.

Smt. Teejan Bai gave her first public performance in a

neighboring village, Chandrakhuri (Durg) for Rs 10, singing in the Kapalik shaili (style) of 'Pandavani', a first time for a woman, as traditionally women used to sing in the Vedamati, the sitting style. Contrary to the tradition, Teejan Bai performed standing, singing out loud in her typical guttural voice and unmistakable verve, entering what was until then a male bastion. There was no turning back from then on, in-time she received national and international recognition, a Padma Shri in 1988, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995, and Padma Bhushan in 2003. The event attracted a audience of around 300 in strength which included a large number of professors.

### STIFKI gives UG students hope

The inaugural seminar of STIFKI (Student Teacher Interaction Forum for Knowledge and Innovation) was held on 22nd Aug in the DoMS. The seminar started with Prof. S Ray chairing the session. Prof. Ray briefed the students about the basic motive of STIFKI. He said that though PG students and research scholars are associated with faculties for research work, the idea of involving undergraduate students with them is novel and highly appreciable. The speech was followed by presentations were made by Dr. Amalendu Patnaik and Prof. H.K. Verma on their

research areas, followed by an open interaction session during which students got their doubts cleared about the projects. The students and the faculties then had an informal interaction over a refreshment session. The event saw decent footfall with head count of over a hundred. Prof. Vinod Kumar and Prof. V. K. Nangia were also present as team members of Prof. H. K. Verma's project on "e-governance in Uttarakhand". They also took part in the interactive session. More STIFKI seminars are in the pipeline. Just wait and watch.

### The Strike



Students



Authorities



Non Teaching Staff

The students enjoyed the cancellation of practicals while the non teaching staff sweated it out in the afternoon sun, adding a new dimension to the idiom: Make hay while the sun shines.

## SPORTS

## Udghosh: Just missed yet again

### IITR lags at IITK sports fest

Udghosh, the sports meet hosted by IIT-Kanpur from 18th to 21st Sept saw participation from all over the country. It was attended by teams from IIT Roorkee, IIT Delhi, NIT Trichy, IT-BHU, SMIT Sikkim, JIITU and JSS Noida. Sports events included Football, Cricket, Hockey, Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton, Table-Tennis and Judo, though IIT Roorkee sent only Football, Hockey, Basketball, Cricket and Judo teams. Most matches were washed out. In Hockey, IIT Roorkee lost to IIT Kanpur in the finals and managed to win a silver

medal. In Basketball IIT Roorkee lost in the semi finals to NIT Trichy by 2 points. In cricket, we won a match and lost another, while in football we won one match, lost one and drew one. The impartiality of referees was questioned during some matches and there was some controversy due to which SMIT walked out during a semifinal. Most participants, however, were more peeved by the poor lodging facilities as 60 participants had to sleep in a single TV room.

### Annual Aquatic Meet held

The Annual Aquatic Meet was held from 20th August onwards with the finals on 24th August. Dr. Roshan Lal was the chief guest for the event. Events like 50m freestyle for women, 100m freestyle, 200m freestyle, 50m butterfly, Sheelpriya race, 4x100m relay, medley, and 1500m and many more were held in the meet. Sheelpriya race is a hybrid of all the different style of swimming, which is 20m

underwater, 30m freestyle, 20m backstroke and 30m breaststroke.

Himanshu Gupta was crowned the Best Swimmer of the year. Ravindra Bhawan's team consisting of Tanuj Punia, Keshav Meena, Swaraj Singh Bhagel and G.Pradeep won the 4x100m relay.

After the prize distribution ceremony, the guests and students were invited for refreshments.

## SNIPPETS

**Blood Donation Camp:** NSS organized blood donation camp on 27th September. The camp followed a motivational lecture to encourage and inspire students to donate blood. The camp saw enthusiastic response with a total of 421 units being donated - a 40% increase over last year.

**Hindi Divas:** The Hindi Divas celebrations were organized on 16<sup>th</sup> September by the Humanities and Social Sciences department and was convened by Dr Nagendra Kumar. The chief guest on the occasion was Hindi litterateur Som Thakur who shared his views about Hindi being a national language that links people from every section of the society from all states in the country. He also commented that there is a need to make Hindi more job-oriented. Dr S.C. Saxena also spoke a few words about how to make Hindi more popular without violating its original character. The function was attended by many faculty members and students besides VIPs from the city.

**EnClub:** Entrepreneurship Development Cell organized the first of many EnClub sessions on 26th September. It is an open-for-all forum for students to interact and share their entrepreneurial ideas, refine them and find partners in the process.

**Accident:** An accident occurred right outside the Cultural Section Office on 5th July, during the summer vacation. A car coming from CBRI and an Army man on a scooter had a side-on collision. The car driver then crashed into Rahul Parmar and Lalit Mohan, both second year students of Production and Industrial Engineering. Rahul Parmar had to be hospitalised outside the institute for a fortnight and was advised complete bed-rest for one and a half months.

**Fresher's Meet:** The Annual Fresher's Athletic Meet was held on 24th and 25th September. The meet included 100 m, 200m, 800 m races and long jump for boys and 100m and 800m races for girls. The meet saw enthusiastic response from the first year with many outside NSO also trying their hands at the events. The athletic team selection from the first year was based on the results from the events held.

# Special Economic Zone

## The Sub-Prime Crisis

On July 19, 2007, the Dow Jones Industrial Average hit a record high. By August 15, stock market indices had plummeted all around the world, with Asian markets among the severest casualties. With losses of over \$435 billion in a year, the sub-prime mortgage crisis was at its peak.

In a nutshell, sub-prime lending is the concept of lending at a higher expectation of risk generally accompanied by higher interest rates. Borrowers having a bad financial record, be it their credit status, income or job history, become 'marked men' and conventionally, they are not issued loans out of fear that they may default. Here comes Sub-prime lending to the rescue – they issue loans to these marked people at higher rates of interest than the normal fixed rate loans or adjustable (floating) rates.

In the 90s, the US saw a rapid development in the housing sector with land appreciating steadily. Many people decided to borrow at sub-prime rates, thinking that with the rising rates of lands, they would be able to repay the debt in more favourable terms. Unfortunately, the 'Housing Bubble' popped and since 2005, it has been on the decline and hasn't stopped falling yet. The mortgage crisis soon followed, caused by the inability of a large number of borrowers to pay their mortgage.

The stock markets plummeted as a result of the panic created in financial markets encouraging investors to take their money out of stock markets and put it into more stable commodities. Banks, mortgage lenders and real estate investment trusts were the worst hit due to mortgage payment defaults or mortgage asset devaluation.

Now, the US Govt, Banks and the Federal Reserve have joined hands to bring the situation under control. New measures like short term loans to banks and interest rate reviews leave us with the hope that the worst is behind us. Even so, with Lehmann Bros. bankrupt and Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs converted into retail banks, the pink-paper crowd may well reconsider their priorities.

## Should the Bhawan allocation system be department-wise?

When I was in first year, the token system was prevalent and the student body was divided into groups of fifteen. I think that system was sufficiently efficient, wherein everyone got to stay with the group of their choice, with just one constraint - everyone in the group had to be from the same branch. Here too, nepotism (poly) existed, and some groups got the Bhawans of their choice, simply because they knew the right people. I support the lottery system, with the additional flexibility of choosing students from all departments. This system has a lot of scope for poly but the solution isn't to remove even that one bit of flexibility but to make the lottery system more transparent. The only restriction should be on the size of the groups so that it is easier for the administration. We must not force the students to forcefully join a Bhawan. There should be interaction between different groups from different departments. So in brief, my idea of the hostel allotment is one of very flexible groups, the only restriction being on the size of the group, with a transparent lottery system, so that a student friendly approach can be arrived at.

As long as poly exists, the lottery system is just not feasible. The Administration took the right move in allotting the hostels according to proximity to their departments. This move has completely removed the influence of the students on the allotment procedure. It will also eliminate

the inter-department rivalry simply over better hostels. Critics point out the reduction of interdepartmental interaction. But there are many forums outside the hostel where the students can interact with students from other departments. Another idea floated was to revert back to the concept of year wise allotment of hostels. But the administration rightly abandoned that to increase bridge the M.Tech and B.Tech gap. In any case, the old adage is always true, "birds of a feather flock together". Students of the same department come together as they help each other in tutorials, practical reports and projects, increasing their efficiency. Moreover, it is only in the present system that the administration can ensure that every student gets a Bhawan adjacent to his department- this single factor tilts the balances in favour of the present system.

## FACE OFF



Neeraj Agarwal  
CS-IV year



Sushant  
Mech-III Year

# THOMSO 2008

it's happening...

Thomso 2008 is just around the corner. Tired of the incessant gossipry and hearsay, we interviewed the Thomso team for a sneak-peek into the event. Here's what they had to say.

## Big Names

Hazel (of Mera Pehla Pehla Pyar fame) will be part of the panel of judges for Vogue.

Kumar Vishwas will be anchoring Thahake once again.

Strings will be performing during Pro-Nite.

Vayu will perform in Wargasm, apart from the finalists of Maryjane Greenfields..

Reliance is the title sponsor this year as well.

Other major sponsors include Cafe Coffee Day and Nirula's. Hindustan Times, Rolling Stones Magazine, ZEE and MTV are our media partners while WatchOut is their on-campus counterpart.

For the first time Adidas has agreed to sponsor any college fest in the country. And the hunt for more sponsors is still on!

## The Crowd

Anticipating a much bigger crowd than last year.

Over 50 colleges have already registered for Thomso this year from Dehradun, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Noida, Faridabad etc.

Much better participation from the best bands in the nation in Wargasm.

JAM magazine rated Thomso as one of the best cultural festivals in the country.

Lanthrax, the gaming event for the gaming freaks.

A Punjabi singer at the DJ.

This year will also be more special as we will be celebrating Diwali during Thomso.

## Freshers

Abhishek Chaturvedi

Sunny Shekhar

Prateek Agarwal

Mayank Kumar

Rahul Gupta

Akansh Dubey

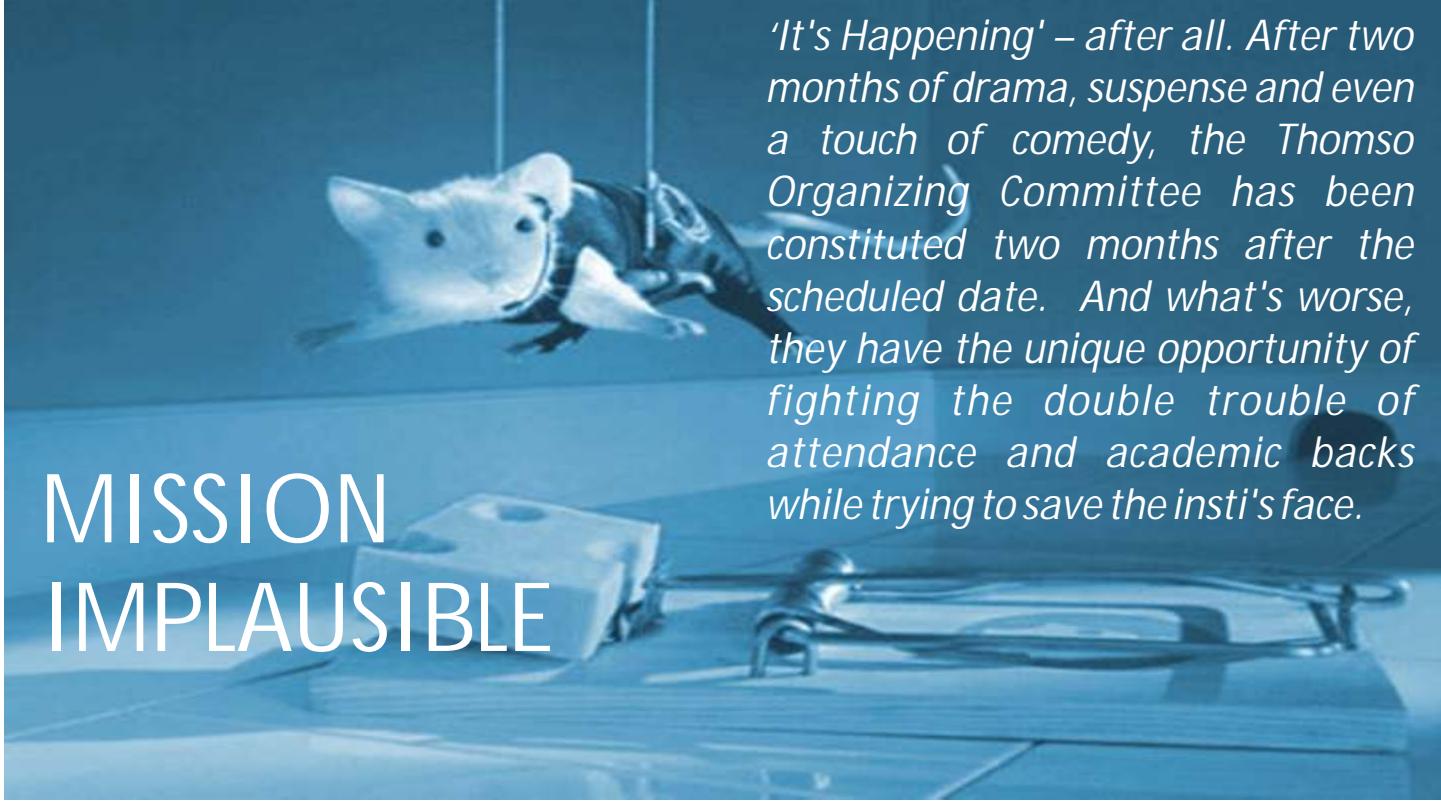
## Sponsors

Sujata Singh

Manish Soman

Shakti Nandan

Ashutosh Pandey



# MISSION IMPLAUSIBLE

*'It's Happening' – after all. After two months of drama, suspense and even a touch of comedy, the Thoms Organizing Committee has been constituted two months after the scheduled date. And what's worse, they have the unique opportunity of fighting the double trouble of attendance and academic backs while trying to save the insti's face.*

This incident of mismanagement and inflexibility exemplifies the impracticalities that linger on...

How often have you had two classes at the same time? How many times have you written down the details of an experiment without understanding a word? And how many times have you wondered how relevant a course is to you? How many times... One would think that after eight years of being an IIT, the scenario would improve, but one is forced to think again.

## The Signs

Six identical registration cards beckon you every single semester, soon followed by a frantic search for the barrage of identification cards that we have been generously provided with- an I-card, a library card, a TBLS card (which has only recently been reduced- Amen to that!) and a hospital booklet. The rumour mill informs us of a compulsory Bhawan library I-card being in the pipeline. Are all these essential in this era of Science and Technology in a 'premier' institute of technology, one wonders. It is indeed a shame that the foremost institute of the nation still loves paperwork.

## Sports "Complex"

In spite of there being no shortage of resources, the situations we find ourselves in imply just the opposite. Although the *insti* boasts of modern sports grounds and courts, we fail to excel wherever and whenever it matters.

The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that not enough is being done to enable the players for putting the existing resources to best possible use. The funds that are being allocated for various sports equipments and other facilities seem to disappear midway. Those that do appear have no tangible result either. A badminton court without shuttles, a glass squash court that has been in the pipeline since the day we were born, a sports complex that stays open only for two hours a day, floodlights that are turned on once in a blue-moon, stringent attendance rules even for those representing the *insti* at various sports meets- the reasons for the debacles at the Inter-IIT meets time and time again are not too far to seek.

The problem of resource utilization isn't restricted to sports alone. Members of every section can be seen hunting for auditoria virtually every day of the week. Moreover, comparisons between the functioning of the

messes in IIT-K and IIT-B with those in ours reflect the glaring differences in terms of quality and services offered. All this while their fees are little over half that of ours. One cannot help but wonder whether it is our cash that fuels their kitchen fires!

## Academics

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Innumerable *tutes* and a dozen practical reports haunt us week after week. And if you have a back, well that's your luck. Clearing totally unrelated electives is a further icing on the cake. Often, courses having just a single lecture in a week are scheduled on a day that may have the most number of scheduled holidays. This not only hinders the timely completion of the course but also intensifies the possibilities of an attendance backs. Tutorials once made are passed down year after year, irrespective of the advancements in technology, conventions and even changes in courses. One such case is a 1976 tutorial sheet in machine drawing, still in use even though the conventions used were revised a decade ago! Quite a few professors can be heard reminiscing how they themselves had solved the same questions while conducting tutorials.

Whether it is Archi II year or Civil IV year, forty-two hours is about as impractical as it gets. Why can't these be off-loaded over two semesters? Why can't we have evenly distributed contact hours? Is it due to a shortage of faculty? Or lack of resources? Or is it just the lack of will to change? Inertia, the opposition offered to any change, is embedded in the rule-book, it seems.

Talking of transitions over time, one of the few changes the institute has seen is the introduction of the concept of relative grading. This change, though more than welcome, has seldom been followed. 148 backs in Mathematics-II alone and another 130-odd in C++ bear testimony to the fact. The very reason for having relative grading was to smoothen out the differences between easy and difficult papers. That definitely is not the case here. "The evaluation process leaves a lot to be desired," feels Rishabh Ajela, II Year Architecture. "In subjects like mathematics or electronics, there is no transparency at all in the grading system. Students remain forever confused about relative and absolute grading." Those with backs have woes of their own. More often than not, they have more than one lecture at the same time at diametrically opposite corners of the insti (Time-Turners, anyone?).

## QUOTE IN THE ACT

**Dr. Kushu Lahiri, Assistant Professor, Humanities Department:** "Perhaps our time tables are longer than usual because, after having been made an IIT, we have simply included new subjects without dropping the older obsolete ones"

**Dr. S.P. Gupta, Head of the Department, Electrical Engineering:** "Two years after the entire insti was wi-fi connected, inter departmental transactions are actually done by 'post'."

**Dr. A.K. Agarwal, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Department:** "It is a pity that students with academic backs have to attend two classes simultaneously and manage 75% attendance in both of them, let alone study for both the subjects."

**Dr. Swaminathan, Assistant Professor, Maths Department:** "The only change in the institute in the last ten years is its name"

Taking this to a new high, people with backs in subjects which were subsequently scrapped are now forced to earn these credits by clearing totally different courses.

The rest of the world lives in the era of the Internet – an era in which lectures can be uploaded, tutorials submitted on-line and e-books downloaded on a mouse-click. We, on the other hand, still harp on 75% attendance. Tutorials, furthermore, were created in order to clear your doubts and not merely to turn every IITian into a photocopying machine.

Attempts are being made to modernize the curriculum by the introduction of new courses, though few of these ideas are planned beyond the introductory stages. Courses are introduced even when the lab for the given subjects haven't been built yet. Occasionally, even the curriculum is not framed. A fine example would be the Computer Aided Graphics course for the second year students. Lack of a proper syllabus has forced students to drawing huts and flowcharts on MS Word! Even if the course is fine, the professors required to teach it are missing. How can one forget the CPP fiasco that many of us had to put up with and are putting up with? The situation is aptly summarised by a respondent who, on the condition of his anonymity, told us that, a professor while taking the introductory class of CPP remarked with

a very forlorn face, "Now that I have been allocated this course, let us learn CPP together", leaving the entire class in a tizzy. So much for being the benchmarks of technical excellence.

If the planning is flawed, the implementation is even more so. More often than not, new equipments enter our labs after being declared obsolete by the rest of the world. We boast of super-computers and gamma ray emitters but are still trying to figure out how to use them. Every department is fraught with devices and machinery that haven't been used in decades. The professors are as frustrated with the state of affairs as the students, if not more so. Requests for the procurement of new equipments by the departments have to face a barrage of senseless objections from the Main Building. An attempt by the Physics department to order special sodium lamps for their new lab was turned down and they were asked to make do with ordinary light bulbs.

## Lessons (to be) learnt

The instances of red-tapeism delaying processes are innumerable. Any query that might require just a phone call takes days thanks to the rabid obsession with paperwork i.e. fill out countless forms, sign and testify multiple documents etc. One minor mistake in your application is often all it takes for it to be rejected, forcing you to start over afresh. A student, on the condition of anonymity, revealed, "My marks had been entered incorrectly during the end-sems. When I tried to get it corrected, I was forced to redraft my application three times, because each time they would find some mistake in some line or even some word. Moreover they would inform me about the 'mistake' after I had run to the office five or six times. In all I had to suffer a month trying to fix the administration's mistake."

With all the bottle-necks created due to these ineffectual red-tapes, one might expect some of the work load to be shared by the students' body; something, it seems, the management is still very apprehensive about. With such bodies reduced to mere redundant entities, the students - the ones actually affected by the prevalent rules, are sidelined and consigned to eating *samosas* during the SAC meetings.

All said and done, the issue of the girls' curfew continues to



be a thorn in the flesh for boys and girls alike, with most of the females attributing this as a reason for their inability to participate in various activities actively. Agreed that due to certain circumstances, the campus can't be barred to outsiders; but other alternatives still exist. Rather than taking the easy way out, stepping up the security procedures seems like a more obvious and lasting solution.

As we come across various people and situations, a realization sinks in – there exists a sort of 'inertia' among all of us; the very reason we resist any kind of change from our predisposed motion which generally amounts to stagnation. This inflexibility seeps into the administration and the rules and regulations they put to practice, as well. From the same courses continuing unchanged on since ages to the policies of some bygone era- our unwillingness to change and to progress is blatant.

We have talked of the few glaring impracticalities but there are countless more which we do not wish to delve into for we would then have to publish a book rather than a magazine. Individually, each of the many aforementioned instances may seem trivial or may not even catch your attention. The bitter truth, however, is that our institute is ridden with such trivialities. These have become so much a part of our system that they no longer appear as anomalies or aberrations. Like the proverbial drops adding to form an ocean, the many trifling trivialities have accumulated and make our entire system seem impractical.



# Watch Out Excess Cell

As the premier institute of technical education in the country, IIT Roorkee has a lot of expectations to meet. But even after 8 years into the IIT system of education, are we following the globally accepted practices or at those that seem best for the students?

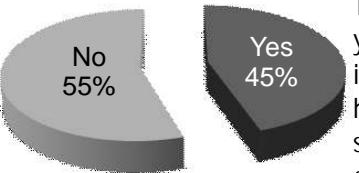
*Watchout investigates...*

Dr. Alok Mishra, Asst. Professor, Physics Deptt.

Dr. G. S. Srivastava, Dean Under Graduate Studies

## Should attendance be compulsory?

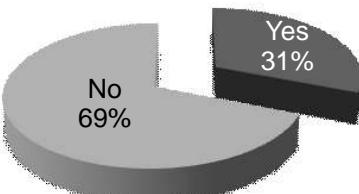
I don't see the point of compulsory attendance. I trust students and their intelligence. If a student feels it is not necessary to attend a class, why force him?



The clause for compulsory attendance has been there for years. It was 60% till a few years back but it's been increased to 75% to be more vigilant. The number of credits has been reduced by 30-35 to give time to the students for self-study. However, they are found spending their time either in Nescafe, Alpahar or the University Canteen.

## Are tutorials a waste of time?

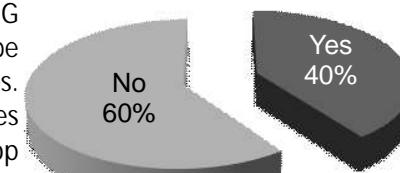
All teachers don't go to tutorials. Research Scholars go instead and not all of them are well equipped to take tutorials. Solving tutorials is up to the students. I feel calling them to the board to solve is a good way, but some students may be apprehensive about facing a crowd. Tutorials are at times just formula based and repetitive.



I agree to the fact that the tutorials must be taken by the lecturers but it's not feasible. Due to a managerial clause the Asst. Profs or the Research Scholars have to be given some academic work but their performances are unsatisfactory. The management will take steps to monitor them and will be more vigilant.

## Do you prefer PowerPoint slides to traditional teaching?

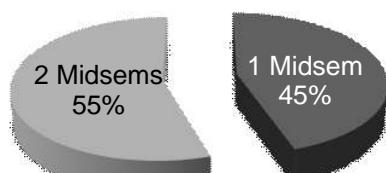
Blackboard teaching is the best. For UG teaching, using ppt is not good. It can be used as an assisting tool sometimes. Writing step by step on the board gives students time to assimilate and to stop the teacher to ask questions. I believe in speaking and writing while teaching.



The new faculty prefers PowerPoint presentations as it saves a lot of their time and it also enhances the understanding of topics especially in subjects like CS or Biotech. Moreover it is more fruitful in a classroom having a large strength of students as blackboard teaching requires personal attention which isn't feasible in such classes.

## How many mid semester exams should we have?

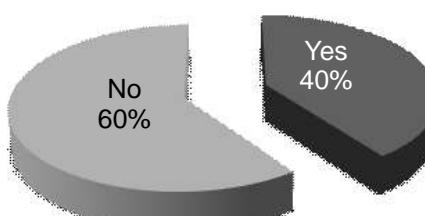
Present examination system is not bad. Because of low faculty strength regular quizzes with normalized marking are not feasible.



Having regular class tests might lead to a large number of absentees and if the Prof. informs about the quiz beforehand then the purpose of the quiz is defeated. So I prefer to stick to the mid semesters system .Next year a clause might be introduced that a student has compulsorily appear in both the mid semester and the end semester as well.

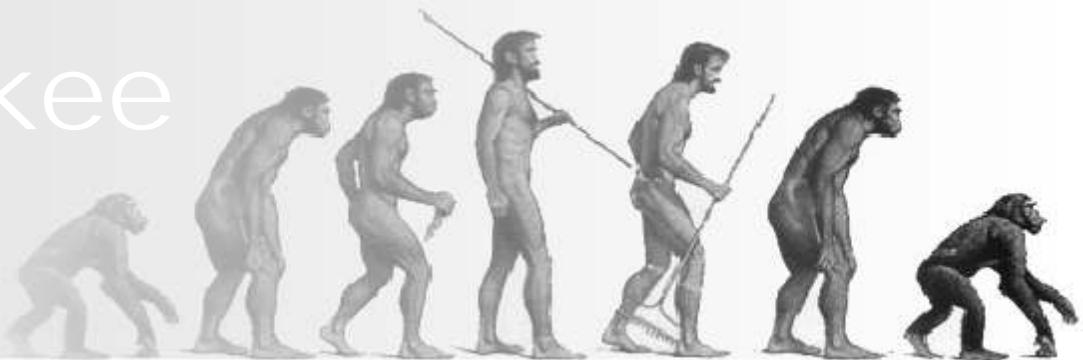
## Is the grading system transparent?

There is some amount of ambiguity here. Even as a teacher all things are not spelt out to me. But some normalization is done while grading and some E grades are pushed up to D. However, 4-5 teachers can't satisfy 300-400 students. Online display of results is a good idea.



The grading system is transparent. Some errors do occur while entering the marks or while checking of the scripts but it is the student's duty that he must look at his scripts properly and point out such discrepancies if any and get them rectified. The Profs do their jobs sincerely and even show the marks range and the corresponding grades.

# Rude-kee



*When was the last time you flushed your toilet? When was it that you last stood in a line for rotis? If your answers to the above questions run into months or perhaps years, we assure you, you are not alone. Uncouthness, it seems, is the latest fad in the insti.*

These traits of uncivilisation (sic), which include a wide array of habits such as breaking queues, wrestling for chapattis, and littering the roads, are normally gained only after spending a period of time at the insti. Barring the few who were privy to these outstanding capabilities even before they got here, most of us imbibe these talents through the age-old monkey-see-monkey-do mechanism. The few who do care, do not do anything. Epitomizing this callous attitude, a student says – “Nothing can be done about it. We just can't go to everyone and tell them to flush or throw trash in the bin. Frequent cleaning by the staff is the only solution.”

## The Central Library

After a seemingly everlasting wait, we finally got a Central Library we can be proud of (judging by the number of its pictures on Orkut profiles). Now, however, we seem hell bent on making it worse than its predecessor as fast and as efficiently as possible. With people sleeping on the sofas and stretching their legs over the tables, their noble aims are fast getting fulfilled. The age old gospel – ‘Silence in the library’ is seldom left untarnished. Headphones constitute highly advanced technology well out of our reach. With heavy-metal and psychedelic-rock resonating, the authorities grapple with the daunting task of making the ambience more of a library and less of an air conditioned rock-concert.

With the first-come-first-served TBLS scheme, the believers in Lady Luck have begun to feel left out, and the tradition of hiding library books in the lesser known corners of the library has been taken to new levels. Some reasons we hear rationalizing this behaviour – “The rules are too stringent and we aren't allowed to keep the books. So we are forced to hide them.” In fact, according to Sharad and Ibrahim, Electrical - 2<sup>nd</sup> year, some people go to the extent of ripping the pages off library books. “The only solution is to provide a separate section solely to hide the books!” exclaims one

particularly exasperated sophomore.

### The ‘Mess’

While talking about lack of civility, how can one forget the mess we create daily in the mess? The daily fight over chapattis reminds one of the UN's food distribution programme in the starving corners of Somalia. Worse, most people lack the decency to handle their plates with care, happily sloshing it on the clothes of any unlucky guy who dares come too close for comfort. The height of the matter is the line-breakers' unrepentant justification of their deeds with Charles Darwin's oft-quoted ‘survival of the fittest.’ May the great man's soul rest in peace.

In order to prevent the commotion, Mohit Kalra, III year E&C, suggested that railings be put in every mess. However, they are already in place in the Rajendra Bhawan Mess and all they have done is ensure a highly ungraceful display of gymnastics (see pic below).



*Barbed wires anyone?*

Things were definitely much better during the UOR system when food was served on the tables and people were expected to dine with the decency we expect of an IITian.

The blame, however, does not lie with the students alone. The increase in the intake of students into the institute is partly responsible for the "mess" we endure. With new wings mushrooming in every nook and cranny, the situation in the mess was bound to deteriorate.

This incivility is also reflected in our attitude towards those around us. Be it the mess workers or the *canteen-wallah*, we are at our snobbish best with conversations bereft of any sign of respect for the other person's age, if nothing else.

While the rusticity of the students is one thing, that of the mess workers is quite another, owing to the consequent compromise on hygiene. State-of-the-art equipments such as ladles and table-spoons are yet to be invented in our primitive worlds, where we still use traditional belief in the age-old policy of '*apna haath jagannath*'. Rice or rotis, our messes serve them with a copious coating of the grime on the server's palms.

## The Loo

The worst, however, is yet to come. The filthiest and the most inexplicable facet of our conduct is that displayed in the loos. Inspired no doubt by the "Conserve Water" initiative of the government, most people simply refuse to bother the lever on the flushes. Quite a few even feign ignorance about the entire concept (as though taps had been placed above the urinals purely for decorative purposes). The reasons range from feeling too lazy to considering taps in the bathrooms to be dirty (quite conveniently forgetting that they are the ones who make them so). However there are other reasons too. "The problem is mainly due to the 3rd grade staff. The problem is more prominent in the toilets on the ground floor than others as the cleaners, canteen people et al use and dirty the place," opines Prateek Kothari, II year, Biotechnology.

Our honesty is hardly worth writing home about either. Shampoo bottles, toothpastes and even toothbrushes cannot be left unattended to for over a minute.

The solutions that were proposed were as lackadaisical as our attitude itself. Prathamesh, II year, MSc Physics IDD, suggests that automatic flushes be installed in the toilets! One wonders if it is really that difficult to exercise a minimal amount of self-control and develop some basic civic sense.



## Litter

For all its shortcomings, the library still remains one of the cleanest places on campus, probably due to lack of use. How often have you seen a dustbin, and thrown trash near it, rather than into it? Empty ice tea cups at Nesci, banana peels near the fruit chaat place beside Ravindra, Lipton coffee cups at Cautley and tutorial sheets everywhere else - it is inexplicable how the presence of the green trash-cans all over the insti goes unnoticed by one and all.

The problem extends to our classrooms as well. Agreed that most of the professors are highly strict, the few who choose to be liberal have to face everything from paper planes zooming across their heads to chalk attacks. "The students throw chalks, planes and slip out of the back door. Such people are highly egoistic" says Karan Chhabra, Electrical II year. Do we then deserve the tolerance that we so often demand?

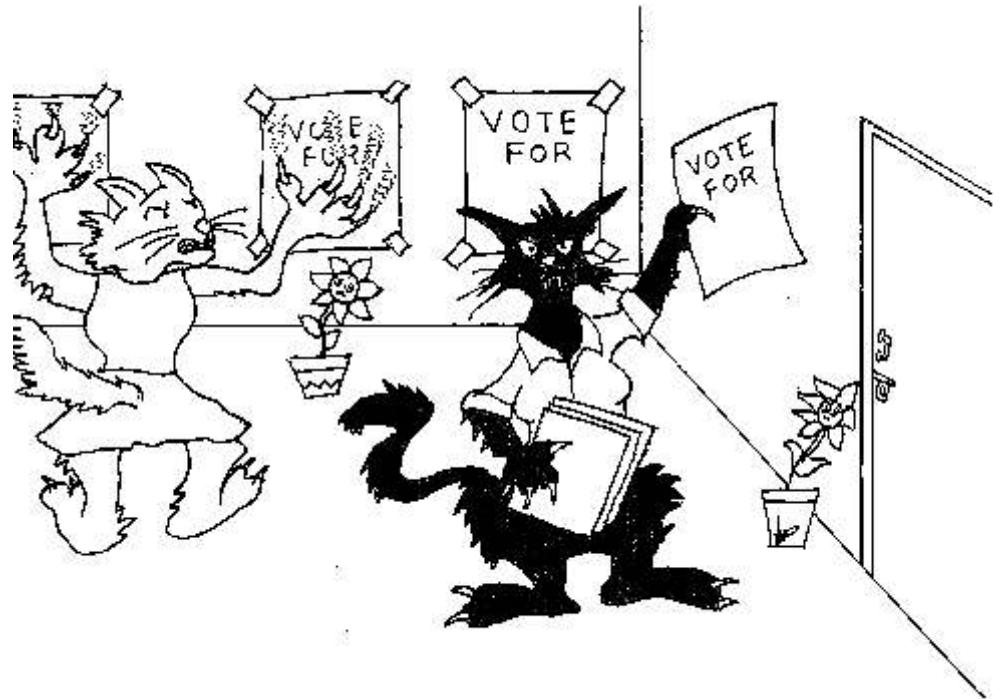
The situation that faces us is a paradoxical one. On one hand, we cry ourselves hoarse demanding more freedom, scrapping of the minimum attendance rule, a 24-hour library and a more prominent role for students in administration. On the other, we misuse even the little freedom that we already are endowed with and give the administration more reasons to continue the status quo, if not lay down more restrictions. Freedom, as the cliché goes, cannot be separated from responsibility. We don't have to fight for freedom; we just have to work for it.

# Polite Tricks

Politics is the ultimate entertainer. Drama, suspense, twists, comedy, tragedy, heroes, sidekicks, villains- it has it all.  
And more.

Nowhere does politics get more interesting than good ol' SB, with twists and turns beyond the imagination  
of even the greatest of playwrights.

*So much for following the rule-book tooth and nail...*



*If only cat-fighting was an Inter IIT event....*

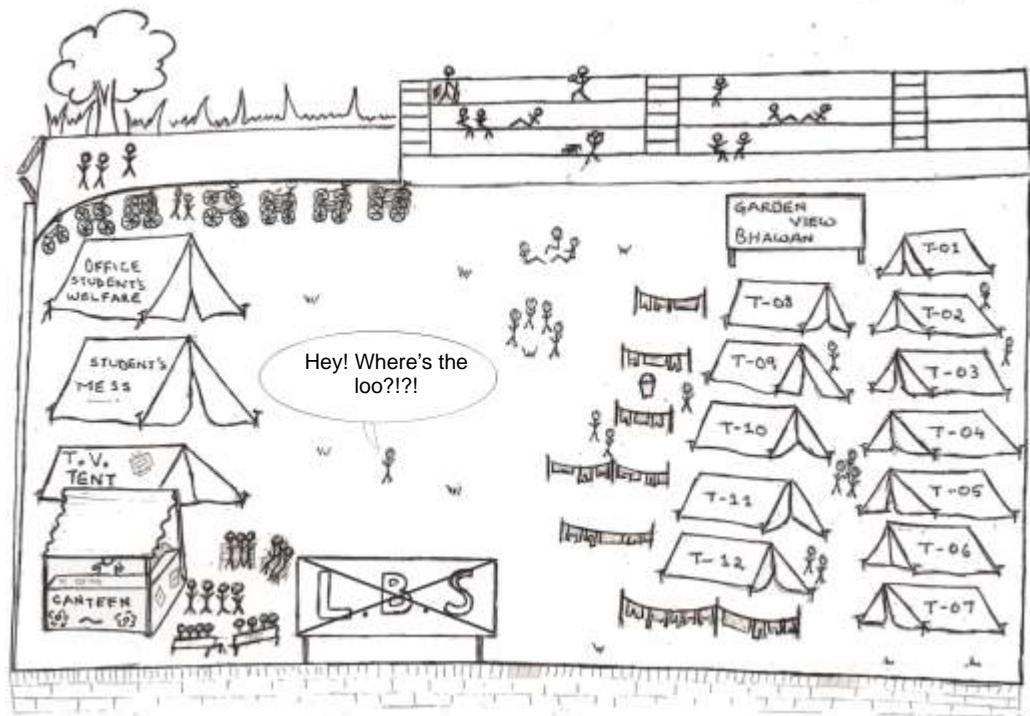
# Innumerable Institutes of Technology

Disappointment is hard to swallow, particularly for an immature teenager.

Realizing this, the ingenious minds ruling our country have decided to spare the millions of JEE aspirants the anguish of failure, by significantly increasing the intake of every IIT.

The move, though considerate, might have repercussions of its own.

*The LBS will be used for more productive purposes. With IITR drawing a blank at the Inter-IIT Meets year after year, the pointless Sports Camp will be done away with, to be replaced by camps of another sort.*



*Is it Wargasm? Is it yet another strike?*

*Nah, it's just a routine mathematics lecture.*

*The E&C Tower has finally made itself useful, though..*

# Almost Famous

*Power speaks for itself. And it yells at you when you are around Karan Gupta, better known as Zulfi. Wargasm Coordinator, member of the Insti Football team, newly turned kingmaker and most importantly, the heir apparent to the throne of the First Family of IITR.*

WONA: Why are you called Zulfi?

KG: On the very first day, a couple of seniors spotted me with long hair and called out to me by that name. In fact, now people think it is my actual name.

(Yawn! And I had potatoes for lunch today.)

WONA: Tell us about your first crush on campus.

KG: Navneet Chehal. I saw her for the first time during my formals.

(Mum's the word now, we heard.)

WONA: How has your stay in this campus been so far?

KG: Excellent. I love this campus and I guess the campus has been good to me. Life here with friends is cool.

(Not again...)

WONA: What is the craziest thing you have done in the campus?

KG: (Ahem) Going to Solani cycling with friends late at night. (Is this really the legend-aary Zulfi we all revere?)

WONA: What have you learnt in this campus so far?

KG: Humility. I was terribly arrogant when I came here. (So basically you've learnt nothing.)

WONA: What kind of music do you like and which is your favourite band?

KG: Led Zeppelin is the God Band for me. Presently I'm into the 60's music rock and roll, right where it all started. In fact, I skipped metal totally. I used to play drums and congo but I am out of touch.

(Is nth degree listening?)

WONA: What do you think of Watch Out?

KG: You guys do a good job. I think the magazine should come out more frequently.

(Please pay our printers first.)

*The Legends of Zulfi left us expecting a tad too much from the torch-bearer of the Family. 'Political' correctness, one thinks. We might as well call him Karan Gupta from now on.*



*Another election has passed with its usual round of pacts, alliances and the inevitable backstabbing. But despite of all the underground work there were a few sincere candidates who tried to win over some votes by taking us on trips to dream-land. Well here are a few sops we won't be forgetting in a while:*

## SOP OPERA

1. Automatic Dhobhi Machines: No more "Bhaiyya! Kapde de do!" at six in the morning. A fully automatic washing machine will be installed on every floor. And what's more, all you lazy people who find bathing a pain; just jump into one. All your troubles will be washed away.

2. Grade Improvement Scheme:

*Tum mujhe votes do*

*Main tumhe aazadi doonga (tutes se)*

In a desperate plea for votes, the Matka Congress makes us an offer we can't refuse.

3. Cooling Solutions to Help Your Bhawan (and our campaign) Do Better: Do you find your room too hot? Always stripping down to the bare essentials (or even lesser)? Here is a brilliant solution – Central Air-conditioning for the entire Bhawan. You'll never have to run to the library in the middle of the afternoon ever again!

4. Bhawan Cineplexes: A proposal by an RS contender doing research in the field of optical illusionary isolation amplifiers. If elected he promised to replace all the present junk boxes a.k.a TVs with his own invention - a 200" High Definition 3D screen with a 7.1 Bose Surround System and lots of other random details that 'll certainly enthrall the geek in you.

5. Dial M for Meal: Queues for mess *rotis* will be a thing of the past; the mess will now come to you. Paneer to pizzas, on call at your doorstep. No need to get up early in the morning for that much-needed breakfast. And in case you're cash-strapped, you could always sign up as one of our delivery-boys.



IITs are modern India's answer to the far less efficient concentration camps and internment zones of the Nazi era. There are 7, sorry 13, no 16, err, actually, with the rate at which the new IITs are cropping up, the exact figures might change significantly in the time lag caused by our highly efficient printers. However, the figure can be arrived at using the Apu Nahasapeemapetilon Integral (a professor from IIT Ghaziabad Sector 12) which, in layman's terms, is the complex solution of the Laplacian transform of the product of time-dependant Schrodinger probability wave function with the Helmholtz exponential function differentiated a hundred and twenty seven times with respect to time. These institutes of "national importance" have been setup in all corners of the country and everywhere in between as per the Indian government's 'Every Indian, an IITian' initiative.

The increase in the number of seats in every existing IIT has resulted in the usage of new, state-of-the-art 'sleepod' (developed based on a prototype in a certain wing of Azad Bhawan) that has conveniently done away with the need for the obsolete and space gorging concept of rooms. All the structures in IIT are constructed in the 'Ground+ 8 – 4' format, i.e., a ground floor, 8 floors above it and 4 below (another brain-child of the legendary Apu Nahasapeemapetilon). Every student is allotted a pod to sleep in while all his belongings are stacked away in the Room of Requirements based on his observations that the bar of soap and the text book are accessories IITians use as often as a light saber.

The ministry has been persevering to make the entrance exams easier every passing year and soon the admissions are expected to be made solely on a 'first come, first served basis'. Due to a dearth of subjects in technical fields, IITs have also started giving Pre-Kindergarten, Middle School, High School, Pregraduate, Undergraduate, Postgraduate as well as Diploma courses in Technology, Science, Arts, Commerce, Law, Dance, Music, Handicraft, Carpentry etc. (Work is underway for a degree in Magic too.)

Classrooms and lecture halls are passé. They have been replaced by Lecture networks. Each student has a mobile device in his sleepod and the professor has one in his room too (They, thankfully, haven't yet been allotted sleepods. Yet.)- a new system inspired by the ad of a certain cellular service provider starring Mr. AB Jr. ('What an idea sirji', anyone?). Not all is lost though. The silver lining in the form of easy-proxies and trouble-free naps have made most students huge fans of the new system.

## Agony Aunt

Dear Aunty, I was lucubrating for GRE, and now I can't palaver with the hoi polloi without actuating highfalutin words. Please help me confabulate pellucidly.

-The Magniloquent Soul

AA: English please...

Dear Agony Aunt, the power always goes off when I sit down to study for my exams. How can I improve my CGPA like this?

-Ghissu-2B

Dear Ghissu-2B, when the lights go off dimaag ki battijalao.

Dear Aunty, I chucked a 40 Lakh job in order to become my own boss but now I feel my company is sinking due to a lack of publicity. What should do?

- The True Sage

AA: Dear Sage, sponsor Thomso, TOC is getting desperate now!

Agony Aunt, Vogue Auditions required me to appear in the fashionable clothes. Since shedding of clothes is the in-thing, I appeared naked. Yet, they rejected me and I can't comprehend (duh) why?

-Bal Bahl

AA: I don't know, I thought dumbness was in vogue these days.

Namaste Aunty Ji, I'm the lifeline of a hostel canteen and probably the most popular person in the campus. My work is very hectic and is physically and mentally stressful. I'm so tired now and want to quit, but this work has taken over my life. I just keep hearing my name all the time. Please help.

-Bhupp

AA: Dear Bhuppi, do what your heart tells you to, don't get senti. And as soon as you are fine, get me a fry maggi.

 MOSTLY HARMLESS

September 20, 2008: The dream of every first -yearite, it seems, is to get a branch change, except perhaps for those fortunate few with triple digit ranks who made it to the cool shade of the E&C Tower (Though why they still ghiss more than anyone else is one of the greatest mysteries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.) No wonder then that I too spent the most of my first year in IIT attempting to make up for the fact that I'd ended up with a rank five times that of the others in the elite group I hoped to join. The going was tough and the tough got going. Sadly, I wasn't one of them. Not quite. After an exhausting year, my fate seemed to be hanging on a razor's edge. A tense holiday later I was saddened to see that my name was not on the list. Consoling myself with the age-old, 'Meta rocks', I set off with life as usual.

To my pleasant surprise, there was a twist in the tale yet to come. Two days later I received my grade-sheet. Inspecting it casually, I was stunned by the C I'd received in a subject other than Maths. 2 weeks and 10 meetings later I was reminded that 'Piyush' wasn't the most unique first name in the world. Realizing that my end-sem marks had been mixed up with those of another Piyush, I set off to lodge a 'formal' complaint only to find the entire office in various states of stupor. When I finally managed to wake them up, I was informed that it would take at least a week because the application would have to be sent by 'post' to the concerned people. Another week later, the prospects of my making it to the coveted 'list' dawned upon me. The case was unprecedented and so was the procedure. Shunted from one dept. to the other, I ultimately landed at the doors of the highest authorities in Roorkee. "What? An application for branch change now! But the mid-sem is two days away." With the usual ado, I was left with my fingers crossed. A surprisingly brilliant exam later I was greeted with news, "Your branch has been changed. Kindly join your batch immediately. You will have to take the tests again next week. " Hmph!

September 15, 2008: Two hours and six chapters to go for my Solid Mech T.S, I was totally freaked. The Prof's frequent threats ("Even if you miss this one small arrow mark on the diagram... 0! That's what being an engineer is all about. If you are given complete freedom on the job, you'll have to be more responsible, and that's why, you'll have to be PERFECT in everything that you do.") didn't do my self-confidence a world of good either.

An hour passed and I was still as morose as ever, completely unprepared and convinced that the only perfect figure I could manage was a perfect zero. Anyhow, I went through the local Geek God's tute diagrams on the long walk to NEH, with my fingers crossed. I came out an hour later with the threats of failing to register a score looming large. Two days later, I got my paper back. More to my own disbelief than anyone else's I had managed a 'perfect' 20/20. Never had I beamed so much after looking at an answer sheet, at least not after coming here! I guess the moral of the story is to expect nothing from your actions. That way, even with a measly score, you would have got much more than what you had expected originally!

August 20, 2008: Classrooms are the place where the best of our ideas surface! As the mind wanders through the hitherto unexplored realms, new ways of keeping oneself awake strike in a quick succession of brain-waves. Sheets are heartlessly torn out of the notebooks (brought to some use finally!) and soon airplanes of various kinds invade the skies (the ceiling of the class, to be more precise!). Some of us take the expression 'Let your imaginations fly high' a bit too seriously, I guess!

After the implementation comes improvisation as the various groups compete amongst themselves to make better and flashier planes- aerodynamics at its very best. The whole class can be found gasping in unison as the planes fly tantalizingly close to the non - flying zones. Soon the budding physicists can be found verifying the laws of gravitation. A day-old, half-eaten apple, wrapped in paper, served as the object of our study. The target was located and the ballistics came into play. The unfortunate victim was caught unawares as the inconspicuous projectile hit the mark hard (and he thought it was just a harmless ball of paper), spraying the juices all over his face. It is not long before the prof realizes that the entire class is awake and decides that something is definitely amiss. Needless to say, the next guy he catches in a compromising position is unceremoniously thrown out of the classroom. The attendance follows and I survive yet another class without dozing-off. All's well that ends well...for most of us, at least.

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