

# WATCH OUT

STUDENTS NEWS MAGAZINE IIT ROORKEE

## THE *OTHER SIDE*

AN INSIGHT INTO THE FACULTY'S  
PERSPECTIVE OF *IIT ROORKEE*



# ARTH 2009 the business plan competition ISIS Reincarnated...

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT CELL  
under the aegis of STEP, IIT Roorkee

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- I. Send your executive summaries to [bplan.iitr@gmail.com](mailto:bplan.iitr@gmail.com) by 15th Feb '09
- II. Intensive Mentoring to shortlisted entries for 1 month.
- III. Mentored Teams would present B plans at IIT Roorkee on 5th Apr '09

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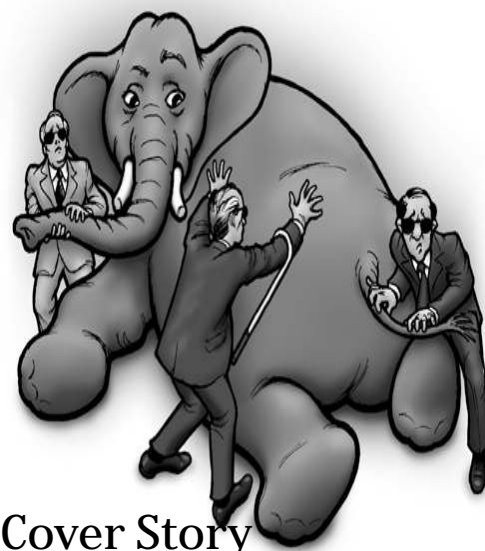
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Of disasters, optimization and George Bernard Shaw

### THE OTHER SIDE

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A look at the lives and views of the forgotten race of IITR- the professors.

## PHANTASMAGORIA

Promenading is one of the better avocations my stay here has endowed me with. It wasn't entirely a matter of choice, I must admit. With the erratic ways of the Azad wi-fi and the cheeseparing Uttarakhand Electricity Board, setting out on long walks to nowhere is the only perennially feasible activity in the insti. Apart from *ghissing*, of course.

The other day, while returning from the *gaon*, my saunter was cruelly cut short by a couple curiously draped in identical jackets, and shocking pink ones at that. 'Could you guide us to *Saraswati Kunj*, young man?' requested Mr. Pink. I politely admitted my ignorance, following it up with a lame joke that the only *Saraswati* I knew was an extinct river a hundred leagues away. Ms. Pink seemed far from amused, though. Puzzled, "How can you not know parts of your own insti?" she reprimanded. Flashing the sweetest smile I could manage, I replied, "I never felt the need to," and resumed the long journey to my beloved G-27.

I thought about a lot of things during that five-minute trip. I thought about the *Amods*, *Saraswatis* and bazillion other *Kunj*s that I'd conveniently ignored all along. I thought about professors and how little I knew about their lives despite living only a stone's throw away. Then, for some reason, I thought about Penelope Cruz. But soon, I was back on professors again. What do they do on a desolate, blacked-out evening? Where do they hang out on a Saturday night? What do they do while we head-bang away to glory in a jam-packed Hangar? What is their stand on the blocks of concrete mushrooming on every vacant space in the insti?

WONA hopes to answer these questions by talking to a smattering of the faculty from every department and taking their views on life, the insti and everything. Elsewhere, we vent out our frustration at having to make the daily voyage to the distant Earthquake Department at the crack of dawn by giving our two cents' worth on the elective system. Additionally, we have a plethora of articles, surveys and cartoons; all in an attempt to take your minds off the impending end-sems for a few wonderful moments. As for me, it is about time I remove the cobwebs from those red books lying in long-forgotten corners of my room. With some luck, I should be able to avert the dubious distinction of three straight *chaggis*. On a brighter note, the holidays are around the corner and it is nearly time we set off on our separate ways to different corners of the world map. It will be a brand new year by the time we meet again, so here's wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Cheers!

-Ed

During the months of tedious *ghissai* for JEE, PC had resorted to watching K-serials for solace and so our PC was full of Ekta's K spirit

## THE PURPLE COW



when she first stepped into the campus. College started in full swing and then it rained auditions upon the First-years. PC tried her luck everywhere, the Darkness Club, the Spice Macaroni club (they cook up strange stuff), Rogue... but was shown the door everywhere.

PC auditioned for Drams too, "*Ek chutki sindoor*", she wailed, welling up the emotions of the cheated wife effortlessly. Yet, she was again rejected on account of a not-so-powerful thorax. Rejected, dejected and disappointed, PC decided that she would start her own cell and thus started PM, the Parivaar Management cell. PC intended it to be a platform for all the gossip-mongers, a place solely to discuss affairs, politics and back-stabbings, a forum to bicker and nag in general... and also to spread the values of the *Bhartiya Naari*.

PM kick-started its meeting with a special screening of the hit sitcom *Kahaani Bhawan Bhawan Ki*. PC put her heart and soul into the *parivaar*. She went on prowling about the campus, snooping for snatches of juicy gossip. The whole campus got cheesed off with the spectre of PC going around with binoculars. People at Nesci could no longer have *bakar* sessions without the fear of spotting gossip-hungry PC hidden in a bush, ears cocked up. All in all, PC's menace had become unstoppable.

Then came a day, the TOI front page bore a headline: "Kyunki. TRPs dropping. K serials going off air". Devoid of their daily inspiration, the *parivaar* started falling apart. The unbearable strain took its toll – PC had a stroke. Several hundred double takes later, PC finally collapsed and a glycerine eyed PM dragged her off on a journey of the endless hospital corridor. Pretty soon, everyone who had ever known PC right from her childhood nanny to that neighbourhood gardener miraculously appeared on the scene. But unluckily a few tense hours (spent reminiscing about all the good PC ever was) later, she was declared dead. With howls and screeches that threatened to bring the entire hospital down, PM finally departed only to be joined by PC at Nesci a few moments later. Reincarnation, you see.

# Verbatim



*Contrary to the general perception, IITR has a number of MoUs with universities in India and abroad. WONA caught up with Prof. Surendra Kumar, Dean Finance and Planning to throw more light on them.*

WONA: What is the total number of MoUs we have with other universities?

DEAN: We have signed a total of 43 MoU's, with universities in India and abroad, out of which 34 are active presently and the rest are being renewed.

WONA: What is the procedure followed while signing an MoU?

DEAN: When we get a proposal for an MoU a departmental professorial committee is set up. Once approved by this committee, the Board of Deans (headed by the Director) is called upon to assess the MoU and finally permission is sought from the Board of governors.

WONA: How does an MoU benefit our institute?

DEAN: An MoU is a channel for exchange of technical knowledge and ideas. We have experts from all over the world who deliver guest lectures and it provides exposure to our faculty regarding modern teaching methodologies and latest technical advancements.

WONA: Despite having so many MoUs why dont we have the corresponding number of Student Exchange Programs?

DEAN: We do have some Student Exchange Programs but mainly for P.G. courses. This is because there is no provision for providing the travel expenses, boarding and sustenance allowance for the SEPs in the UG courses. This year NUS withdrew its financial aid to the students and hence no applications have been invited.

*Interested students may visit the intranet for more information where a copy of almost all the MoUs has been uploaded.*

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Moving around in a vehicle, turning and twisting your lappy in all possible orientations and voila! The target has been spotted – an unsecured WiFi network. If any of this sounds new to you, welcome to the world of Wardriving (WiFi-hijacking), the newest jargon added to the layman's lingo thanks to the recent terrorist attacks.

Wardriving has also given rise to spin-offs like warbiking, warwalking (warghissing, anyone?) all sharing the same theme.

It does not take a godly computer geek to wardrive - anybody with a car, a laptop/PDA and a wireless Ethernet card (obviously integrated with every laptop today!) can hijack a network. Even if there is some security, free softwares are available a dime a dozen on the net. The WiFi Alliance has predicted that about 90% of WiFi networks aren't password protected, i.e. anybody can connect and use the net. The significance for us is quite evident from the fact that the whole campus thrives on WiFi. However, since outside vehicles are not debarred from entering the campus and due to the fact that WiFi network from certain Bhawans spills over to adjacent localities, the potential for misuse is tremendous.

Recently terrorists have taken advantage of the generosity of network owners to send terror-mails without fear of being traced simply because the police can only trace it back to the innocent network owner, who inevitably faces the music. Spammers can use the network as a proxy and send out bulk mails, which can bypass spam filters. Recently a group of hackers, in Boston wardrived and hacked the unsecure networks of retail stores to steal credit card numbers of customers. But sadly, in most parts of the world, Wardriving is not a crime and there are no laws against it; even if there are laws – they aren't implemented.

While any security measure might seem a nuisance initially, it's about time the management steps up the security in the networks via password-protection, identification, strong encryption for all applications and regular testing taking the long-term consequences into consideration. Cyberoam, anyone?

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## Let's (not) put a Smile on that Face

A group of friends whiles away time at the canteen. Joblessness drives them to pointless gossips. Their gossips turn into inane mockery, which is targeted at that one piteous creature sitting sheepishly amongst them. A hangdog expression creeps on his face as the humour gets darker, more personal and humiliating. He doesn't retort, lacking the spine to stand up for himself. He pays dearly for all the laughter around- somebody always does, and the price of this jesting may be one's self respect. Sounds too dramatic? Think of the times when you have yourself fallen bait to some not-in-good-taste prank, and had a huge crowd howling in laughter at you. Perhaps when your friend pulls out your private diary and declares your secret crush aloud. Or when the usually nice neighbour borrows your laptop and leaves your Orkut profile littered with profanities. These 'little, friendly, harmless' pranks sting you and make you want to go into hiding for days, months and, at times, even years.

Dark humour can be a lot more demoralizing than stark criticism. It can be the fruit of a bored person trying to inject some liveliness in the situation, or merely a means of getting back at someone. Often, it's insecurity that causes people to bully the meek and the submissive to give oneself a false sense of superiority. Dark humour is their way of gratifying their bloated self-worth. At school, teachers make that one unfortunate victim the butt of all their sarcasm-laced humour. At an early age, if all one hears from around is jeering laughter directed at oneself, one tends to develop a low self-esteem. They get gripped by a fear psychosis, cowered down by the ridicule, afraid to believe in themselves. Their self-confidence gets totally ripped apart.

Callous jokes don't necessarily come from the heart. Even people who mean well often go overboard revelling in satire and unknowingly harm the victim. For that one bout of laughter, the victim suffers many hours of suppressed agony. Maybe, if we put ourselves in the other person's shoes, we will be able to gauge the impact of our statements. It's not easy to face a joke on oneself, to be the laughing stock and to have the worst sorts of parodied stories being told about you. But somehow if you learn to face it, if you learn to firmly deal with it, you save yourself from ending up in your private inferno. Friends can get cruel in their supposedly light hearted jokes. Tackling the situation with a cold aloofness is a better option than flaring up. Alternatively, if things get too hot to handle, changing one's company becomes a requisite. In the words of Ethel Barrymore - "You grow up the day you have your first real laugh at yourself." Sense of humour is the ability to laugh with others and not 'at' others. It should never be confused with ridicule and mockery, however obscure the difference may be.



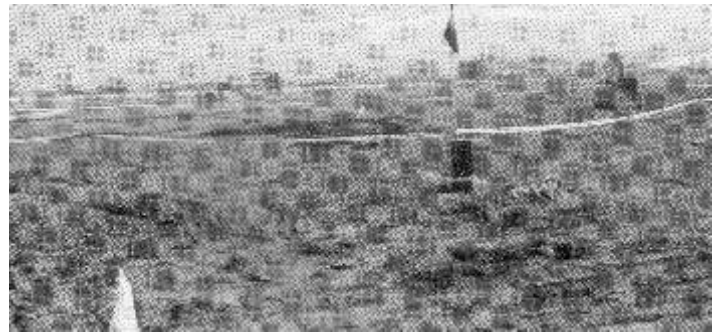
# NEWS NOTES

## Construction at IIT Roorkee Noida Campus begins

The speculation on whether or not the Greater Noida Campus would ever materialise finally came to an end. The long awaited construction at Greater Noida Extension Centre, Knowledge Park-2, began on Oct 14th. Director IITR, Prof. S.C Saxena laid the first brick and gave a traditional start to the construction work. All members of IIT Roorkee construction committee

were present at the bhumi puja. In addition, the representatives from M/S Engineers India Ltd, the supervisors of the construction and officials from construction company M/s Samiah International Builders Pvt. Ltd. were also present during the ceremony.

The 10 acre campus, when built, will be mainly used for specialization courses. Also,



it will serve as a placement centre for the companies to our geographical location, and will hopefully give a well needed boost to our placements. Reluctant to travel all the way to Roorkee to recruit, thanks

## IIT Roorkee hosts 3rd State Science & Technology Conference

The 3rd State Science and Technology Congress was held in the institute from 10th to 11th November. The main theme of this conference was 'Science and Technology for Mountain Development'. Over the course of two days the institute played host to several eminent intellectuals and scientists

as they presented their views and offered solutions to problems in areas as diverse as environmental science, home science, veterinary science, chemistry, physics, botany and biotechnology. Sessions were held in various venues and many presentations were given on the respective topics. Not

many students attended these talks as the subjects were highly specialized and hence, one could see many professors but fewer students. Organised by the State Council of Science and Technology, Dehradun the congress was sponsored by, among others, the Department of Science and Technology Govt. of India,

the Uttarakhand State Biotechnology Programme 'Haldi', Pantnagar, and the National Research and Development Corporation, Govt. of India, New Delhi. All in all, the event drew a healthy response with some events receiving a particularly high attendance.

CONVO STARS	GOLD Medalists		SILVER Medalists	
	President's Gold Medal	Abhisek Gupta (CSE)	Civil Engineering	Karan Agarwal
	Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Medal	Rahul Singh (CSE)	Electrical Engineering	Manish Gupta
	Director's Gold Medal	Rahul Singh (CSE)	Mechanical Engineering	Gautam Arora
	Dr. Jai Kishan Medal	Rahul Singh (CSE)	Production & Industrial	Durgendra Singh

Noida Campus:  
IIT Roorkee  
spreads wings

Science Congress:  
Host to the  
State's best

Samadhan:  
Solving through  
Innovation

## Samadhan '08: Building Rural Infrastructure

Entrepreneurship Development Cell (EDC) organized Samadhan 2008 - a B-Plan Competition aimed at promoting social entrepreneurship. This year, the event was exclusively sponsored by Ministry of Comm. & IT. In the wake of problems being faced by people in rural areas, this year 'RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE' was chosen to be the theme for Samadhan'08.

The competition received more than 85 entries, and finally 12 were selected for the final presentation. The final entries were from institutes like IMT Ghaziabad, IIIT Allahabad, ISB Hyderabad, IIFT Delhi etc. All these entries had been shortlisted by a faculty panel and were provided extensive mentoring sessions by EDC's panel of



mentors and advisors.

The final presentations were given on 2nd November where they were evaluated by a panel of judges which included Mr. Manoj Sharma (a social entrepreneur & IITR alumnus), Dr V. P. Wani (Director of Business development opportunities, Nagpur) and the like. The team from ISB Hyderabad walked away with the top honours, while IMT Ghaziabad bagged the

runners-up position, winning a total cash prize of Rs. 60,000. The event concluded with the Chief Guest, Prof. Harsh Sahmval, Dean of Alumni Affairs, IIT Roorkee, addressing the crowds present at the event.

As is customary with B Plan Competitions, Samadhan attracted thin crowds primarily comprising of the participants and the organizers.

## Institute Lecture Series Ashok Soota

Shri Ashok Soota delivered a lecture on 'Leadership and Management' under the banner of Institute Lecture Series on 30th September. Ashok Soota is the cofounder of leading IT Solutions firm MindTree and one of the most successful alumni of erstwhile University of Roorkee. He spoke about the qualities of a manager and a leader and of how the two are different with respect to the roles they play and the responsibilities they have. The lecture continued for more than an hour and was followed by an interactive session wherein questions ranging from MindTree to financial crisis were put forth. In the end, Director IIT Roorkee presented the 'Distinguished Alumni Award' to Mr. Soota.

### SILVER Medalists

E & C Engineering	Sparsh Mittal
Chemical Engineering	Sai Sandeep
Metallurgy & Material Engineering	Anshul Mittal
Pulp & Paper Engineering	Anwar Shaik

### SILVER Medalists

Architecture	Kushagra Mittal
Chemical Engineering IDD	Arnab Dev
Chemical Engineering IDD	Parikshit Sondhi
E & C Engineering IDD	Amit Singh

## SPIC MACAY: *Mohiniyattam* for 3rd this sem

## STIKFI: Gaining Popularity

## IITR's Endeavors: Library soon to Go Green

### SPIC organizes its 3rd this sem



SPICMACAY organized its third event of the semester, a Mohiniyattam performance by Dr. Deepti Omchery Bhalla, a leading exponent in this field. The program was held in the O.P. Jain Auditorium on 13th Oct. For a change, the organizers decided to follow the tradition of IITR and the event scheduled to start at 6:30 pm kicked off almost an hour late resulting in the loss of a some audience.

Dr. Deepti was initiated into the world of music and dance quite early at the age of four. Since then there has been no looking back for her. She studied Kathakali at International Centre for Kathakali in Delhi and is also an accomplished singer. She

did her M.A., M.Phil and PhD in Carnatic music from University of Delhi. Currently, she is a reader in Carnatic music at the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts at the Delhi University. She has even performed at the Festival of India in USSR.

Her performance here comprised of three acts. The Shiva dance, a mother singing lullaby to her baby and a lover's song. The event had a very responsive audience, which included a good number of professors, clapping in perfect synchronization with the beats of the mridangam. All in all the event has been considered by far the best SPICMACAY performance ever by the spectators.

### STIFKI: Projects up for Grabs

STIFKI 2 started on a good note with over 75 students attending the forum. The professors who presented their projects were Prof. Vijaya Aggarwal on 'Mechanical alloying by high energy ball milling' (HEBM), Dr. P.M. Pathak on 'Travel together for the victory drums' and Prof. Satya Prakash on 'Coatings for protection from corrosion and erosion'.

STIFKI 3 gained an even bigger audience mainly from Civil and Chemical 2nd year. The professors who presented their projects were Dr. B.R. Gurjar on 'Megacity Emissions & Air Quality', Dr. C. B. Majumder on 'Removal of Arsenic compounds from the Water Sources/ Industrial Effluents in Bio Active GAC columns'

and Dr A.A. Kazmi on 'Waste Solid and Waste Water Management'.

Around 100 students participated in STIFKI 4. The professors who presented their projects were Prof. Arun Kumar on 'Small hydropower and renewable resources', Prof. H. Sinwhal, Prof. A. K. Saraf from the Earth Science Dept. on 'Satellites and earthquakes' and finally Prof. B. Tyagi from the Electrical Dept. on 'ABT scheme for freq. modulation in India'

All three events attracted a very wide participation and everyone got a chance to interact with all the professors and got to know more about their projects. So those wanting to do a project anytime sooner, look out for STIFKI!



### IIT R library goes the solar way

If things go well, this oldest library on engineering and technology books will be the first library building of the State to run on solar energy. "The project is likely to cost around Rs 1.5 to 2 crores and in the next ten years we will be self reliant in generating energy for our own use," said the librarian, Yogendra Singh.



## SPORTS

## Aquatic Inter IIT: A Medal, finally!

### IIT R bags a silver at Inter IIT

The 44th inter-IIT Aquatic meet was organised in Chennai from 6-9 October and all the seven IITs took part in it. For the first time in recent years IIT Roorkee brought a silver medal in water polo. The team had a slow start, being defeated by Chennai in their very first match but after that they gave a mind-blowing performance and thrashed IIT Delhi in a one-sided match, they then proved everybody wrong by beating IIT Kanpur in a nail-biting match to reach the finals. In the other events IIT Roorkee was nowhere close and the performance by girls was quite dismal.



### Insti Open Tennis Tournament

Officially the tournament started around mid September, and 26 players registered for it. The turning point of the tournament was when Sayyam Mehra [IYR,CSE] defeated Tarun Barthwal [IYR,GPT] to reach the semi-finals where he was accompanied by Sudhir, Nitin Jain, & Ravinder. The two who made to the finals were Ravinder Singh [IYR B.Arch] & Sayyam. The much awaited finals, after more than a month of delay, [thanks to our sports authorities] took place on Nov 3rd and Ravinder emerged the new insti champion, winning every match in the tournament in straight sets.

## SNIPPETS

**Convocation :** IITR's 8th Convocation was held on 8th Nov. The event had Dr.Abid Hussain, an eminent economist and Formerly Indian Ambassador to USA as its Chief Guest, who also proved to be a very good and entertaining speaker, a rarity in IITR. The function started well on time breaking the norms yet again and ended only 15 minutes later than the scheduled limit.

**Alumni Meet :** Alumni meet of IITR took place from 30th Oct to 2nd Nov. The alumni gracing the event were from the Silver Jubilee batch of 1983, Golden Jubilee Batch of 1958 and 1948's Diamond Jubilee batch. The four day celebration included a visit to all the Departments, hostels, Hobbies Club, Saraswati Mandir, Roorkee school for the Deaf and Haridwar. S. K. Goel, a Golden Jubilee Alumnus, gave a lecture. An interactive session with the students was also organized where all the student communities active in IITR gave presentations. The Aim was to bring the alumni up to date with the current happenings in IITR and to widen the prospects of funds for the interested sections.

**Hospital Golden Jubilee:** The IITR Hospital celebrated its 50 years of service to the institute on 16th Nov. There was a workshop on Emerging Technologies in Medicine with special emphasis on Genetics and technologies in Endocrinology, a lecture on Telemedicine by Prof. Vinod Kumar and a tour of the 'Paperless' Hospital which acquainted the visitors with the electronic working system of the Hospital.

**NSS Yoga Camp :** The latest offering of NSS was the yoga camp which was held keeping in mind the good health of students but ended up in a different way. The owls of IIT Roorkee found it difficult to leave their warm cozy beds and turn up for yoga in the shivering cold but attendance compelled them to do so. Still there were a lot of students who came just a few minutes before the attendance. Under the tutelage of Ajab Singh from Patanjali Yogpeeth and our own Dr. Katiyar, students were made to do pranayams and asans like suryanamaskar, chakrasan, sheershasan and the like. Shavasan remained the favorite of the students compensating for atleast five minutes of the slumber. While a few benefitted from it, most of the students ended up with a bodyache.

# Special Economic Zone Cash Reserve Ratio

It is a bank regulation that sets the minimum reserves each bank must hold by way of customer deposits and notes. CRR is also called the Liquidity Ratio as it seeks to control money supply in the economy. CRR influences the country's economy as it controls the borrowing and interest rates. CRR works like brakes on the economy's money supply. CRR requirements affect the potential of the banking system to create higher or lower money supply. For example, the CRR is pegged by RBI at 20%. If a bank receives Rs. 100 as deposit, then they can lend Rs. 80 as a loan and will have to keep the balance Rs. 20 in the customer's deposit account. Now, the borrower who has received Rs. 80 as a loan will deposit the same in his bank. The borrower's bank will now lend out Rs. 64 (Rs. 80 X 80%) and keep Rs. 16 in his deposit account.

The higher the CRR required, the lower the money available for lending. Every time a customer borrows money and deposits money into an account, the bank has to ensure that only a certain part of the deposited money can be further lent to other parties. This reduces the amount of cash that goes out by way of loans. Hence central banks in the world increase the requirement of cash reserves whenever they feel the need to control money supply. CRR is increased to bring down inflation which happens due to excessive spending power. Spending power is amplified by loans - if money that goes out as loans is controlled, inflation can be tamed to some extent. Conversely, if the government wants to stimulate higher economic activity and encourage higher spending to achieve economic growth, they will lower CRR.

Due to recession, the RBI has reduced the CRR to protect financial institutions from bankruptcy. As on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, the CRR was slashed to 5.5% from its value of 7.5% exactly a year ago, infusing about Rs.270000 crores in the Indian economy.

## Is the imposition of monetary fines justified?

I think imposing monetary fines, more often than not, is the only way to penalize students. Though I am not a huge fan of monetary-fines, it is a question of alternatives. We can't put students behind bars, so if we were to do away with fines, the administration would have to resort to deducting the defaulters' discipline marks or other such things which would turn out to be far more harrowing for the student community. We are beyond the stage where a phone call or letter to our parents was all it would take to make us shiver in our pants (though the practice of informing our parents is still followed, for some inexplicable reason.) As a member of the SAC, many instances of discrepancies in the imposition of monetary fines have been brought to my attention. Having said that, I still believe monetary fines are a necessary evil and, for all their shortcomings, are the only feasible means to keep a check on indiscipline.

### FACE OFF



Akansh Dubey  
III Year, P&I



Achuth Menon  
II Year, Elec

I don't think monetary fines are the right way to impose a punishment. There are two sides to the story, depending on the financial status of the student. For a well-off student, the fine is hardly going to hurt and the lesson will still be left unlearned. For someone less comfortable financially, a monetary fine would be grossly unfair. Hence, in both instances, the case for monetary fines falls apart. Quite often, heavy fines are imposed for acts of indiscipline where there is no damage involved such as late registration for REGOL or wearing improper attire in the mess. Where does the fine go in such cases? An additional issue is the non-uniformity in the imposition of fines. A few students are always singled out and made scapegoats (the usual suspects?). As a result, a rebel attitude currently prevails in the students and they tend to challenge the law rather than realize its importance.

#### Tilok Chand Narsingh Lal

Engineers, Manufacturers & Suppliers of :  
 Drawing, Survey, Mathematical Instruments &  
 Interchangeable Display Systems  
 Specialist in: All types of Auto Levels,  
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# MOSTLY HARMLESS

**November 10, 2008:** Yet another day commenced with my waking up to the incessant drones of my alarm at 7:30 A.M. I lay in a stupor, contemplating the futility of attending lectures. This daily meditation over the 'Higher Truths of Life' lasted a little longer than usual leaving me five minutes from the dreaded stroke of eight. I geared up for an action packed sprint courtesy a few minutes too many of slumber, making mental vows to get to bed by 12, wake up at 7 et al.

Clutching a bag in one hand and a comb in another, I made it to the mess at 8:05 at a pace that would put even Usain Bolt to shame. I was greeted by my friend standing in a similar condition. I hurriedly stuffed a sandwich in my mouth, and with long strides took off to the unwelcoming entrance of the Archi Department. It was seven minutes past 8 and we were out of KB, mentally coming up with means of transport that would get us to class within the 10 minutes grace time allowed to us. Deciding that neither Floo Powder nor broomsticks were a viable option, we continued running.

With a sense of achievement worthy of an Olympic gold-medallist, we entered the hall at 8:15 with our lungs puffing and hearts hoping against hope for a warm welcome. His sight did little to reassure us. Red eyes, frowning face and two sweet words, "GET OUT!" were all it took to shatter our dreams of glory. With shame laced faces attempting to avoid the grinning ones of our classmates we 'got out' as instructed and made our way to Nesci. After ten minutes of contemplation, we resolved to work harder during the NSO work-out sessions in order to run faster. Getting up early was out of question!

**October 20, 2008:** They say little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The only safe way out, I decided, was to possess no knowledge whatsoever. Having missed most lectures and slept through the ones I attended, I set out for my C++ exam fearing the worst. After a threadbare analysis, my brand-new cargo jeans seemed to be the only solution. Cargoes -with their innumerable pockets- I declare, are the greatest invention in human history, second only to cell phones. Overloading my pockets with the few drowsily created manuscripts for reference, I set out with a new-found confidence.

The battlefield was reached, the battle awaited me. I parked my cycle near a window adjacent my seat and with a clear vision in mind, placed the hitherto untouched text-book on its carrier. In came the invigilator, with our death warrants. My arsenal of weapons helped me sail through the first few questions. However, with limited resources, reinforcements had to be sought from the database mere feet away. My outstretched hands came in contact with an unexpected surface. Stealing a peep out of the window, I saw a majestic cow relishing the delicious pages of programming. A few blank stares at the question paper confirmed my worst fears, as I began calculating the approximate score I would need in my end-sems to avoid a back. Halfway through my calculations, the supervisor hurried in and nervously declared in a tizzy, "Exam cancelled due to paper leakage. Further announcements will be made later." Murphy's law, anyone?

**October 3, 2008:** For most freshers, the first few months of college are spent in fear of a word that began with R and rhymed with lagging. Ventures outside the hostel were made on the lookout for big, scary and hirsute monst... ahem, I meant seniors. But the inevitable room call finally happened! When it happened, it was nothing like the dress rehearsals I had experienced during my less pleasant dreams. To my surprise, the hunters seemed more nervous than the hunted, thanks to the bright yellow notices in every nook and corner.

One would think that after the Fresher's party, first-yearites would no longer remain the newly arrived species in the zoo, but it takes a while longer for the initial buzz to settle. There was this one senior who seemed slighted by my stubborn refusal to address him as 'sir', as the unwritten protocol demanded. Eventually, I gave in. Mr. Tough Guy still didn't seem impressed though. In a further attempt to make me realize that he was in no mood for cordiality, he asked me to give a formal introduction. By then I was adept at it and gave him a flawless intro in every language he could comprehend. Halfway through my rant on '*Bharatiya Proudhyogiki Sansthan*', a prof happened to step out of a classroom. Tough Guy panicked and in a hushed tone, he mumbled, "I'm sorry. Please don't complain to the prof, please" and skittered away. I couldn't help the malicious grin on my face as I turned back to leave. Ragging is scary. Particularly for the sophomores...

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# THE

# OTHER SIDE

*For 15 years, we have cribbed, complained and whined incessantly. We have stood by the students' cause all the time and have offered solutions par excellence. This has been possible largely because we looked at these issues through the students' eyes. However, in order to have a complete perspective of the prevailing conditions, we have decided to put ourselves in a different standpoint – one we haven't tried so far. This issue we have taken the views of the professors on life, the insti and everything. We take the liberty of delving deeper into hitherto unexplored realms – the lives and views of the educators of IITR.*

## LIFE AWAY FROM THE BLACK BOARD

IITR boasts of a distinguished faculty from every nook and corner of the country. Many studied in this very institute while others still chose to graduate abroad. Yet, their lifestyle and views on most issues converge. As Dr. D.K. Nauriyal reflects, "We hardly have time for ourselves. Most of our time is spent teaching, preparing for the next day's lecture, correcting the answer sheets, preparing for the conferences, devoting time to our research papers or are busy with our official assignments. We hardly get any time to enjoy, contrary to what students might think. But I have no regrets, I enjoy my work and I enter my house leaving all my professional worries behind" – a view shared by most of his colleagues. Despite this hectic schedule, some professors still find time for sports and brisk morning walks. Dr. Rajdeep Chatterjee, a new faculty member in the Physics department, says – "When I'm not in office or classroom, I read a lot of fiction. And then you can also find me at Nescafe or sometimes at Ravindra Canteen in the evening. There is a faculty club too behind KIH with billiards tables and Tennis courts; life here is about so much more than just lectures and tutorials."

As for their professional lives, most seem content with their job prospects and the opportunities available to them. Pay scales range from a basic of Rs. 18000-22,400 to a maximum close to Rs. 50000. Though the private sector offers more lucrative jobs, most professors seem content here, mainly due to the nature of their jobs. However the general feeling is that the salary levels here are not good enough to lure the younger graduates into the teaching profession. The driving force that keeps the professors motivated to continue in the field is their job itself, which involves imparting knowledge to the youth and bringing out the best in them.



## US AND THEM

Most professors felt that the IITR vs other IITs comparisons were baseless and illogical. Though the insti has a locational disadvantage, that does not influence the quality of the IIT in any way. Dr. Rajdeep Chatterjee remarks on the research that is going on in IITR – “Research atmosphere here is good. I have been to a lot of places and in most places in India, you can't do research and teaching together. At any place a proper balance needs to be struck by the faculty between teaching and research and that is being done admirably here at IITR.”

Many felt that the older system of JEE was better as it tested the mental capability more thoroughly and ruled out the possibility of a candidate getting through by chance. Dr. S N Sinha says, “The new system has diluted standards and there is a great element of luck involved too. Most of the faculty were opposed to the change, but the ministry was completely in favour of it as it would reduce the pressure on the students.”

Many also felt that the number of new IITs will reduce the brand value of IITs and even described it as 'mockery of technical education.'

Some, though, expressed the counter view that 'new IITs are a necessity'. Dr. R K Jain, ADOSW opines, “The new IITs are a good step forward. Hopefully the quality of IIT won't be compromised this way.” Dr. Ritu Barthwal seconds this opinion – “The new IITs might take time to come at par with other already established ones in terms of culture. It is the exclusive culture of the people at this place which adds glory to its name.”

“New courses have been started with inadequate facilities. Certain departments have even started without the basic infrastructure. There are research centres without any research being carried out in them. In the end they end up being just a farce.” Dr. S.N. Sinha, E&C Dept.

“Whether it be placements, administrative setup, culture or extracurricular activities, IITR has a charm of its own. Though it is not located in a metro city like IITD, IITB or IITM, the campus life here is as marvellous and scintillating as any of the other IITs. The location of the insti doesn't really affect its quality in true terms.” Dr. Ritu Barthwal, HOD, Dept. of Biotechnology

“Authorities are always willing to accept suggestions. We hardly have two SAC meetings per semester. Problems must be discussed at students' forums. It's the students who do not make a concerted effort to address issues.”

Dr. R.K. Jain, Assistant Dean of Students' Welfare

## TOO MANY COOKS?

Increased intake, an issue closer to our hearts, has been received with a number of frowns. Most professors feel that the already poor student-teacher ratio will be adversely affected by this sudden increase in the number of seats. Dr. Nagendra Kumar feels, “Increasing the number of seats surely reduces the grade of students being inducted. Politics has replaced common sense and

is coming into the picture everywhere. The fact that it has entered the field of education as well is particularly saddening. With elections approaching, the government is trying to please the people by promising more 'elite IITians'.

Broaching the issue of infrastructure, most feel that it is barely adequate and has plenty of scope for improvement. Inadequate use of the available facilities is another general complaint, especially in the area of sports. Mr. Sukumar, the Chief Sports Officer comments, “At this time we have the facility to let more than 500 students play at a time. Yet only 200 turn up. Everyone is welcome to come, play and enjoy in the evenings. That is why we have even allowed them to come on Saturdays and Sundays. Sports are for all and it is a great exercise for the body.” He even felt that the students here are too serious and show too much fear and hesitation in taking up any new activity!

However, a few other professors were quick to quip that the infrastructure isn't lacking, but isn't actually there at all in the first place.

"The schedule is too tight. I don't know the exact details but classes are just too long. Students should be given time to enjoy. We should have counsellors in all Bhawans on whom students can rely on. The teachers should also come and attend the sports events."

Mr. Sukumar, Chief Sports Officer

## FESTS

Though it is common knowledge that they are the two most widely anticipated weeks among the student fraternity, contrary to popular perception, they seem to be among the professors' favourites as well. They felt that such things ought to be a must for students as it gives them a break from studies, help them unwind and provide a much-needed break. Some, though, expressed their concern that at times students overindulge in such activities and lose their focus completely. Dr. Nagendra Kumar opines, "They are very important as they provide real life challenges to the students and teach them the valuable lessons of team building, team management. They gain confidence, their hidden talents are revealed and they realize their true potential. In many ways, it's a dress rehearsal of their professional life." Dr. Kazmi was more sceptical, saying, "These fests have become more about showbiz and the competitive events are being sidelined, which defeats the very purpose of such fests."

## ALL WORK AND NO PLAY?

According to Dr. D.K. Nauriyal, "We have already reduced the contact hours to a great deal. I feel very uncomfortable when I have to cut short or skip a topic which I think is of importance to the students. In fact I think we don't get enough opportunities to interact with students. Contact should be somewhat increased." The counter viewpoint suggested that the students were already under a lot of pressure. In other IITs there are fewer contact hours which provide them with more time for extra-curricular activities. Dr. RK Jain, when approached with this problem, suggests, "SAC should investigate this matter then. Authorities are always willing to accept suggestions. We hardly have two SAC meetings per semester. Such problems must be discussed at students' forums. It's the students who do not make a concerted effort to address this issue. We should also try and find out the contact hours of other IITs and try to bring about some sort of uniformity."

Though none of us actually know the state of affairs in the erstwhile UoR, however, some teachers like Dr. S N Sinha feel, "In UoR, the system was much better. In the present system, students are simply uninterested. Perhaps it's because they are burnt out due to the tough preparation and are no longer willing to study when they come here." However, many professors like Dr. Ritu Barthwal beg to differ- "The discipline of students and the quality of teaching remains fabulous as always. IITR has inherited the culture, ethics and values of Roorkee University which is commendable."

The B. Tech – M. Tech divide is not anything new. It has always existed and the professors, all agree that it's a gap that must be bridged. Most feel that B. Tech students are exuberant, possess great confidence and have got oodles of energy. They are extrovert, ambitious and are ever enthusiastic to venture into new domains. The M.Tech students on the other hand are a tad reclusive and subdued but they are more obedient as compared to their B.Tech counterparts. The source of the divide lies here.

Dr. D K Nauriyal's comments on the student community summarize the topic aptly- "Most of the students just go the classes in a routine fashion, gather theoretical knowledge and never bother to apply it. They should keep a track of all the recent advancement in technology and all new innovations. They should realize that knowledge is much more than a mere set of grades. That said, I still enjoy interacting with them a lot. There is a lot to learn from this younger generation and are very enlightening at times." Most professors seem to echo this viewpoint.

Over the course of our work on this story, many startling facts came to light. Facing the personal side of the men with the chalk was not only an interesting experience but also a pleasant change. The greatest revelation, though, is how similar their views and opinions are to those of our own. It makes one wonder more than ever why the invisible wall has sprung up between the two communities, making any form of interaction outside of the classrooms an impossibility. Is it the rules? Is it fear? Or is it merely a case of both sides waiting for the other to take the first step?



At IIT Roorkee, we have Hobbies Club to satisfy and encourage the needs of the students to create and enjoy their work in fields other than the traditional class-room education. With the club celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year, Watchout investigates if it has served its true purpose.

Interview with M Sahit, Convener Shrishti 2009

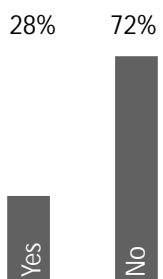
Q. Do you prefer hobbies club...

This year fine arts section itself has 36 interested 1st yearites apart from 2nd and 3rd year. In case of the 3rd and 4th yr students some might join in spite of a lack of interest, but for them it is not a course with credits. So far 4-5 meetings and workshops have been conducted in Fine Arts and other sections. Students who are interested are active and they are doing a good job.



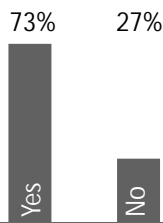
Q. Do you think the hobbies club has adequate infrastructure?

Sections like electronics, modeling and software development have some infrastructure problems. In case of the former two geographical location is a problem, while there are not many computers for the SDC. Some have viruses and old softwares. There is no place in hobbies club with a projector, where 50-60 people can meet for a computer presentation or a workshop. In case of a photoshop workshop, 35 students have to stare at 2-3 computer screens in large groups. However, things are improving slowly.



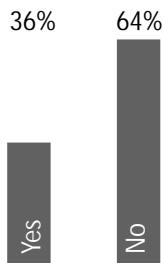
Q. Do you need a formal instructor?

Formal instructors is not a viable option. We will need too many and they will turn out to be costly. Students can share knowledge and ideas here. They can learn from each other. I have myself conducted a few workshops like origamy and pastel colour painting. A 1st yearite knowing chalk carving may soon organize another workshop. Professional instructors have always come for workshops during Shristi though.



Q. Have you learnt anything new?

Some people have learnt new things though in small numbers. Last couple of years the section has not been very active. But things are changing. So far most of the workshops have been for 1st year students but soon we will have workshops for all members. Even those who don't have hobbies club related proficiency are welcome. If anyone wants to do some work, he/she may go to the secretary of that section and ask him to open the section.



Q. Does your cell work only during Shristi?

Shristi is an exhibition. We work year long so that we can present something during Shristi. Electronics and modeling section is open even at night 2-3 months before Shristi and students work there. All these workshops and meetings are held so that we can produce something good for Shristi. Some people work hard for it with a competitive spirit, to win a prize during Shristi. I request every one to be here and experience Shristi this year in its Golden Jubilee edition.



Interview with Prof. P K Jain  
Staff Advisor, Hobbies Club

I don't think that hobbies club has become redundant. Yes, students do take up hobbies like Gardening, Philately and Numismatics for easy grades just because there is not much to be done in these sections. But sections like Web Designing, Electronics, Model Making and Photography are fairly active throughout the year. If you come to hobbies club around 7:00 pm, you can find quite a few students working. As far as the rest of the students are concerned, all they want is certificates. Last year in Shrishti I distributed around 600 certificates.

It is difficult to decide what would be considered as a satisfactory infrastructure. We have the best we can provide in the budget allocated to us. Hiring a professional for each section will cost a lot and the budget again makes it impossible, though we have experienced, if not professional people looking after the sections currently. We can hire people on a part time basis but for this an initiative has to come from a section, which has not come so far.

This year our funds have been increased to Rs.10 Lakhs and the per student contribution has been increased from Rs.100 to Rs.200. We thus plan to improve the conditions further. We intend to buy new computers for the Web Designing cell and binoculars for Star-gazing. We would also increase the number of components in the inventory of electronics section and model making section. But again it all comes down to the students to put these facilities to optimum use, which is something most of them are very mildly interested in.



*Free will is a fundamental necessity and a constitutionally granted right. It is most fiercely sought after, especially in this stage of our lives when we seem incarcerated by rules and bound by the system. Electives give us a say in our curriculum and give us a sense of responsibility towards ourselves, our career and our lives. Or do they?*

### **Haves and Have-nots**

Like it or not, our entire future is currently decided by our performance in a single examination. For those of us compelled to take up courses in which we have little interest, electives are the only avenue for pursuing a course of our interest. Choice, however, comes at a price, making it a luxury enjoyed only by the crème de la crème of the junta. Pallavi Ahuja, Electrical II year says, "When CGPA is a criterion, many people end up with electives they're not interested in and the entire concept of the 'freedom of choice' is lost."

But is there an alternative? Most of us seem to have issues with CGPA being the basis for the allotment of electives. What we fail to comprehend is that other alternatives are far less viable. Aptitude tests and interviews, widely suggested by the students, are definitely not the most practical solution. They would require prior knowledge of the subject and hence discourage students from pursuing anything new. Others still, feel that the seats must be increased in the more 'popular' courses but perhaps, with the dwindling number of faculty, this is an unrealistic target. So CGPA seems to be the best alternative available to us. After all, it is all about the 'Survival of the Fittest'.

The story of 'CGPA and the elective' is a vicious circle. One needs a good CGPA to get a good elective and a good elective in order to improve their CGPA. This rush to increase one's CG has people plunging headlong into courses irrelevant to their interests just to ensure better grades. Amit Kumar, Electrical III year, aptly summarises the situation – "Students with higher CGPA take on the basis of their interests but those with lower ones take them to increase CGPA without working much. For instance, in the earthquake engineering department, it was announced on the very first day that the

students would get at least B+. The result need hardly be explained."

There is a day every sem when every third person's GTalk status message reads, "Regol, don't miss it". But when we finally remember to open Channel I, we are greeted with a screen full of unintelligible jargon and are asked to choose between them. That sums up the current system of 'electives'. "How are we supposed to choose when we do not even know what we are choosing" - is an oft repeated complaint. The problem luckily does have plenty of solutions - "At the time of Regol, a brief summary about course content as well as the name of the prof concerned should be displayed" as Neeraj Sarin, Elec II year suggests. Others like Rohit Sharma, Chem II year were all for intro talks and descriptive lectures by the concerned professors. The 'freedom of choice' isn't helped by the number of courses floated either. "With thirteen courses to choose from and half of them from the Earthquake Engineering Department, the average six or seven pointer virtually has his electives chosen for him," laments Akshay Rawat, III year, Electrical.

### **Much ado about nothing?**

Coming to the result of it all – do electives enhance one's resumé at all? Students seemed to express a variety of opinions. Some feel taking up an elective of another branch out of interest often helps students in switching lanes in their profession. As Dhawal, Meta II year puts it – "Taking up an elective of another branch out of interest often helps students in switching lanes in their profession. Selecting electives from management and humanities gives an edge to the ones who intend to deviate from core jobs." However, sceptics opined that electives served no purpose apart from chipping in four credits to the magic figure of 216. However, certain electives receive better reviews than others.





Take, for example Optimization Techniques, which seems to be widely considered the most useful offered. However, courses like Modern Drama can only help those who wish to pursue a career in Broadway.

### The Story Elsewhere

Taking a peek into the system prevalent in our sister instis, 'Open Electives' are definitely an attractive option. Unlike our institute, some other IITs float a number of electives that are available to all students over the duration of their entire course irrespective of branch and year. These give rise to a lot more flexibility and comprehensive coverage of courses. This also tackles, to a certain extent, the problem of allotment of courses which is presently done on the CGPA basis.

Another concept prevalent in most other institutes is the system of 'minors'. Minors provide students with the option of pursuing alternate courses from a department of their choice. At the end of four years, you receive a dual degree (and we don't mean an IDD)- a major from your main branch and a minor in a course of your choice. The administration is with us on this issue, agreeing that minors would be a boon for those stuck in a course they aren't particularly keen about. Why these seemingly wonderful schemes not being implemented, is a million-dollar question.

Like many other initiatives taken by the administration, electives are steps taken in the right direction that have failed to serve their purpose owing to a combination of poor implementation and lack of coordination. A few corrective measures are all that are required to rectify the shortcomings. Their importance can never be exaggerated. The minor hitches apart, electives are a boon and still manage to incite a spark in our otherwise mundane curriculum.

### INTERVIEW WITH DR. PRAMOD AGARWAL

What are your views on the system of deciding how the electives have to be allocated?

Presently in the insti, there are two parallel elective allotment patterns. In the old pattern (which is being followed by the present 3rd and 4th year), the students were allowed to choose electives from any branch but their own. However, in the new pattern, students have to compulsorily opt for 6 electives- two each from science, engineering and humanities. But unlike the old pattern, the students can opt for electives from their department. This has been done as firstly it would give them wide exposure and provide them with knowledge in other fields as well, hence leading to an overall personality development. Secondly, this system can in a way prevent the students from opting only for easily scoring electives as there is a restriction to choose electives of all the fields apart from their own branch.

What is the system of allotment of electives?

Allotments of electives on the basis of CGPA seems to be the only wise option available at the moment because if the students are allowed to choose courses without any CGPA restriction then probably too many students might end up opting for one particular course which makes it unmanageable. There has to be a concrete system of allotting the electives as choosing electives out of interest is a qualitative approach which can't be rationally implemented.

What about transparency in floating of electives?

Every elective course's structure is explained in detail. However, due to lack of time and change in the pattern, the new electives' structure couldn't be published. Their structure will be soon uploaded on the net.

Why are open electives not floated?

Due to acute shortage of faculty the number of electives floated by each department varies greatly (for instance Maths department has fifteen, Physics department has eight while the chemistry department offers only two electives). Thus, choosing two electives from each stream lessens the load on faculty and ensures adequate availability of teachers. As far as open electives are concerned, within each stream, every student is free to opt for any course irrespective of his branch or year. If a student wants to opt for more than six electives, he can take up the extra course as an audit course. Each sem, a student has to earn twenty-four credits but he has an option of taking it up to twenty eight.

# When the going gets tough...

The Sensex's downward spiral continues. The NIFTY is also following suit. About the NASDAQ, the lesser said the better. With every third company going bankrupt, all is certainly not well at the Placement Office. A look at the only prospective employers who have turned up so far.

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# Almost Famous

Member of the insti tennis team. Student advisor to TOC, HEC Secy, Almost Bhawan Secy of SB. Yet, it isn't her credentials that we associate her with. Controversy is spelt 'SUJATA SINGH' in the insti. Run in fear, the Godmother is here.

WONA: Tell us about your first crush...

SS: Umm... uh... well... nobody as such. But I do have a lot of good friends.

WONA: Okay. Tell us about your "good friends".

SS: Pri, Anu, Gogo, Gaurav Singh and Karan Gupta.  
(In that particular order?)

WONA: Tell us what conspired between you and the ex-convenor of Thomso.

SS: We had a quarrel about some sponsorship thing and gradually things got nasty to the extent that I ended up outside Govind Bhawan wanting to beat the hell out of him! I do respect him though since he conducted Thomso very well last year.  
(Respect!)

WONA: Your comments on the SB elections.

SS: I don't hold any grudges against people who want to win in that way. They are welcome. It is bound to happen at any level of politics, you know.  
(Tip for the day: Most other 'levels of politics' do not forbid the use of photocopying machines, you know.)

WONA: We heard you have registered a company.

SS: Well, it's a trading company called "ARX India" that I registered two months back in partnership with a senior Chirayu. It's my passion and I hope to make it very big someday!  
(Do give us a job in case we end up getting none.)

WONA: The craziest thing you have done on campus....

SS: Me, Pri and Anu got high in the ABN ground in the middle of the night!  
(Err, are we forgetting something here? Aren't the SB watchmen supposed to prevent this from happening? Or did you beat the hell out of them too?)

WONA: What do you think of WONA?

SS: You guys do a brilliant job but I think you should take up more SAC related issues.



Another Inter-IIT Sports' Meet is around the corner. With the prospects of drawing another blank looming large, WONA discovers a new realm of extreme sports that we actually excel at. A few that would ensure success if included in the sports meet:

## GAMES WE PLAY

**Stargazing @ IITR:** This is one sport that will surely take your adrenaline to the very stars you are looking for. The pictures pasted on the telescopes give the gazers a false impression of gazing at the heavens. The explorers of the heavens soon give up to look for other heavenly bodies, training their "telescopes" towards SB and KB. Needless to say, they're left disappointed again.

**'Mess'i Affair:** As you plunge your spoon into hitherto unknown varieties of food available in the mess, you identify with Doctor Livingstone as he explored the dark jungles of Africa. Fighting your way through the grub requires what made the Spartans what they were. But survival instincts kick in as you launch into the food and gulp it down in one go. In this extreme sport, even if you win, you are still a 'loo'ser.

**Proxy Service:** With 50 voices making up for 150 people, giving proxies is a sport that is a necessary sport which all must excel at. With massive risks involved, prizes at stake involve *chaapos* from the absentees. Risks involve getting caught and losing your hard-earned past 15 attendances, or simply forgetting to call for your own self.

**Ghissu Talk:** Men are from Mars, Women from Venus and *ghissus* from Pluto. Usually their speech is interspersed with complex formulae. Revering the likes of Schrödinger and Bernoulli, they identify each other by their CGPAs rather than names. *What an idea, sirji!*

**Maze:** Fighting their way out of the winding passages of Ravindra Bhawan has proved to be a harrowing experience for many a RJB resident. But experience has reduced this extreme sport to an indoor girly game. However the authorities are doing their best to increase the difficulty levels by adding more twists and turns.

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## Agony Aunt

Dear AA, I have a 9 point GPA and have completed 7 projects in my department. I have sent close to 1000 apps but to no avail. I also turned up for every single company that came to the insti, but wasn't even short-listed, while others with two thirds my CG made the cut. What do I do?

- Tired Ghissu

AA: There are some things *ghissing* can't buy. For everything else, there are *farras*.

Dear Aunty, I had a difference of opinion with a girl that turned serious and resulted in a furious exchange of expletives. I am now desperate for revenge. Help me out.

- Ex Con

AA: Let it pass. She might beat the hell out of you.

Abe Agony Aunt, I am telling you I'm a really nice guy. For some reason, though, everyone finds me annoying and I have become an outcast. Help please.

- Stinking Wiper

AA: You again? I thought I had blocked you.

Dear Aunty, I worked my life out for a major event that took place from the 23rd to the 26th of October. Now, though, the credit for the success of the event is being stolen by one of my 'advisers'. How do I get my due?

- Bio Con

AA: Read above comment.

Dear Agony Aunt, I have a strong feeling that the water here is radioactive. My hair is falling faster than ever and so is my popularity in SB. What do I do now?

- Baal Ding

AA: Popularity? What popularity?

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