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Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee

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Students' News Magazine

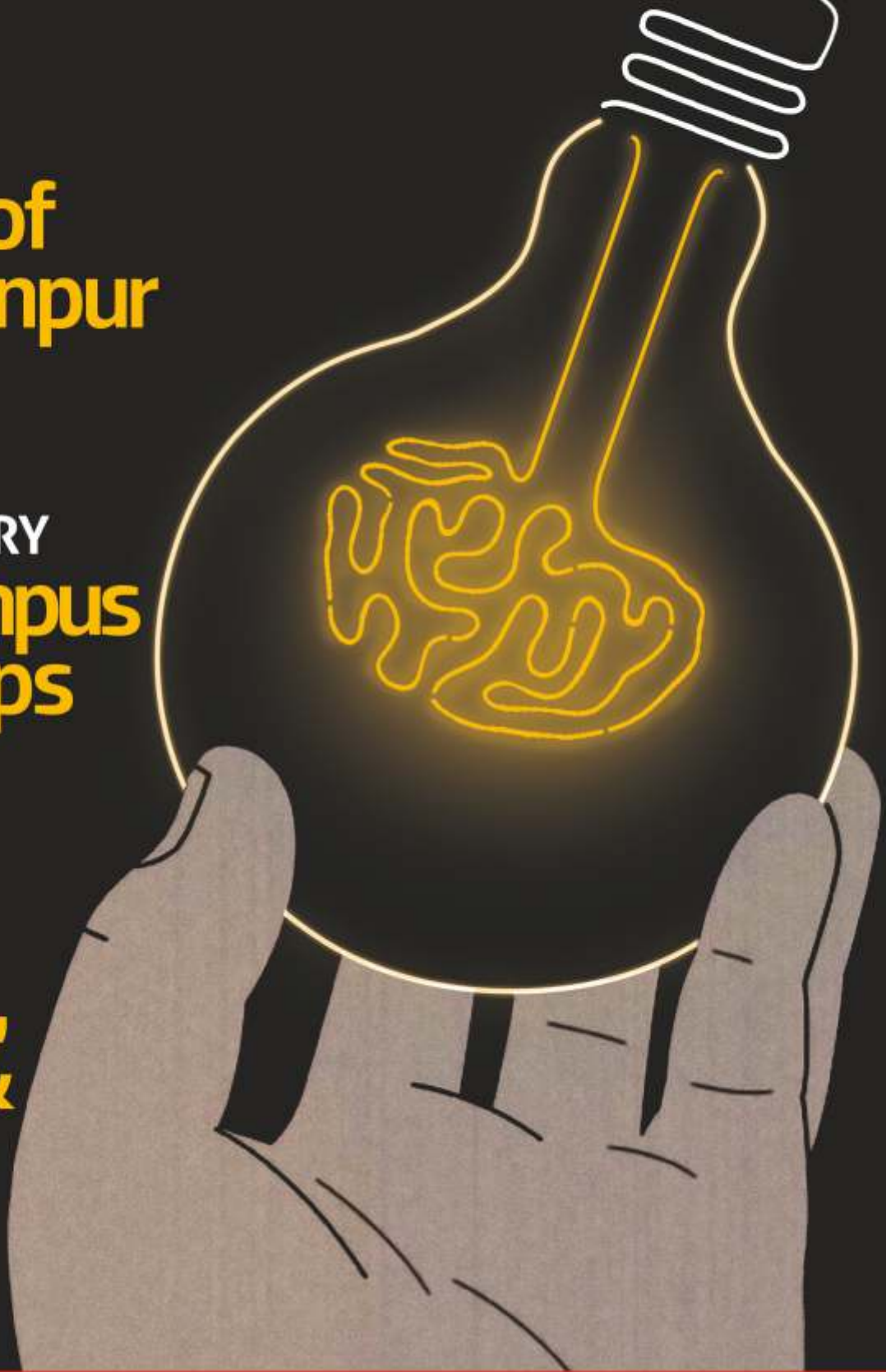
Jan - Feb 2013

WATCHOUT!

WORC
**Gangs of
Saharanpur**

COVER STORY
**On Campus
Start Ups**

BIG STORY
**Fachas,
Peers &
Baaps**



Volume: XXXII Issue 1

For Internal Circulation in IITR only

Placement Stats along with this issue



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WE HAVE ISSUES



Fourth Wave

Among what you overhear as an aloof bystander relishing a hot masala vadai during a Kutcheri break, is well-moneyed grannies discussing not just swanky, new silk saris but also the exploits of their progeny who have contributed to fulfilling or enjoyed the benefits of the American Dream, inspite of strict immigration policies. And talented grandchildren who never fail to impress with their heavily accented carnatic-music-singing during weekend skype calls, but I wander.

That *Silicon* Valley is a household name, back where I come from, shouldn't beggar belief. Indians have been famously successful in those picturesque regions of California, just as much as all across the eastern states in the US. Forbes reports that Indians lead all immigrant groups in the number of companies founded in many industries: biosciences (35%), software (33%) and environmental (39%) to name a few.

IITians have been straggling around the innovation arena but consistently whisked away by the corporate sector, only to be grounded there forever. For long, we have been saying "Why, Vinod Khosla was an IITian!" and fleeing the place before we are asked names of other IITian startup founders. So, technically, the mission of the IITs hasn't been what the mission statements suggest.

To hear corporate kingpins themselves say it, Moore's law is to slow down and innovations in renewable energy are in order. Suddenly, everyone seems drawn into the entrepreneurial blackhole. Their 4-5 years here, a sensible few among the R populace often take to mulling over good ideas born out of dire necessities. I am talking about those who brought DC to the campus or installed solar light bulbs in the nearby villages. After all, innovation is more about making the society cleaner, greener and better in some way than abstruse, futuristic contraptions that may be fancy but of little use. Going by the statistics mentioned previously, bigger sparks will come to them, possibly when they are all the way across the seas or perhaps just when they are stumbling across the finish line that marks graduation. Either way, the institution's contribution deserves warm approbation - it's not just my opinion that the institute is good at extinguishing sparks and washing them down the Solani Canal just to be sure, inadvertently, of course.

In this issue, we cover startups, small and big, that have sprung up on campus, the people behind them and the challenges the startup culture faces. It may be noted that Student Alumni Association of Roorkee (SAAR) has only found passing mention because the story was written before its formation. The reader is encouraged to read the interview with a SAAR member that elucidates its relevance and benefits, in our facebook profile's notes.

We also talk about the highly essential senior-junior interaction or the lack of it, if you will, on campus, in one of the big stories. The age-old and irksome practice of referring to seniors as "sirs" and "ma'ams" is no ice-breaker and wherever it still sticks, those who go looking for some useful gyan, so to speak, only get the short end of the stick. But, an active senior-junior teaching tradition is only now beginning and is highly rated in every section, whether technical or not. Speaking of seniors, the other big story is an interesting piece on the super-seniors, the wise, old emeritus professors who explain how their passion for teaching never ran out all these years. As younglings, we ask those who have seen the main building fog up many winters, the MGCL grow into one of the best as far as libraries go, some curious questions on the campus and its life.

Change, they say, is inevitable, dear reader. As I write this, our elected leaders in New Delhi take it upon themselves to redefine parliamentary behavior and across the same city, a 23-year-old languishes with a necrotic intestine after being grievously injured by a savage society. What if things only take a turn for the worse? What if the ship never comes in? We can only hope to see spring. And we can act. Whatever changes or does not, I for one, can only assure you that you will find WatchOut at your doorstep every semester, sometimes regretfully, terribly later than you expect, as you have now.

Fear for Thought

For most of us, the empty swing in Paranormal Activity brings forth a little disturbance in the pits of our stomachs and the kid from Omen is a topic banned in pre-bedtime conversations. But, of course, we never openly admit it. The litany against fear could be repeated with great conviction, with unwavering concentration and countenanced with the most powerful-looking front you can put up. Yet, when riddled with a grave prognosis that is felt in the bones, not many of us can will the litany out of our minds and actually derive any respite from it.

Not all of us can mentally and physically condition ourselves to quell fear like the Bene Gesserit in Frank Herbert's Dune series. How many of us have earnestly tried to chant- "*I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration*", and wait for some inspiration, when we are threatened by the terrible? Whether or not motivational incantations, luck or probability taken personally, actually manages to gather our wits, being ashamed of fear is certainly an unfortunate notion misconstrued from the words of motivational speakers, authors and spiritual gurus.

They have taught you to swallow what psychologists believe is one of the few innate human emotions; face it or overcome it or if you don't mind looking at the litany against fear again - "permit it to pass over you and through you". During our years of growing up, our everyday fears have been fed to continuously evolve into more macabre versions, may be more lurid and less imaginary, at least according to us. Just the way they used to in our childish years, our minds feverishly pursue the possibilities and the sense of fear tightens, blood runs hotter and the heart beats faster with every line we write in the story we spin in our minds, with every imagined possibility leading to another. May be the stories are less of kiddie lit these days, but we do, on occasion, run our fingers down the wall, feel our neck skin crawl as we're searching for the light.

As someone suggested in a TED talk, it might be pragmatic to become readers of the story we write, in order to be able to gain a coolness of judgment, but assuaging fears is still tricky by all means. This winter has been crazy. It was the coldest first week of January in many years and temperatures bellied up to zero degree celsius, which in a heater-less, poor town is unbearably low. Soon enough, the sun showed up and then, a hail storm touched lightly and went away. Even as we fight irrational auguries and creep out of our blankets for the 8 a.m. class, a walk alone to the department a little later worsens our perceived forebodings. Fear mixes with anxiety about interns, placements, career choices and other personal issues and harangues us when it shouldn't be triggering even one accursed impulse in our already confounded neurons. On the same wintry morning, you wonder how an almost naked Aghori lives amongst some ruins in a forest and smokes hashish nonchalantly.

For us laymen, fears can only be palliated but never uprooted from our systems. The woman who walks alone is always tortured by shadows and the castaway always dreads the sea. Since the ideas of doing away with them and attaining moksha are hogwash, one decides to put them to good use, if the situation permits. Sitting within the warm confines of one's room, one feels the need to establish that fear is not a negative feeling always. One conjures up an image of Bruce Wayne climbing out of the Lazarus pit without a rope to prevent a possible fall to death. It may sound cruel and even irrational to dehumanize fears and analyze them in the context of productivity, but not all our everyday fears are inherent like fear of physical pain or death. Even among abstract yet vivid emotions like fears, it's important to spend our energies towards the more pertinent ones. Fear sometimes appears like an overarching principle by which we can fashion our lives. Instead of devising strategies to overcome it, one can perhaps acknowledge that it's felt for a reason. Even as he becomes known for all his victories and earns the epithet "young wolf", Robb Stark admits he is afraid and Theon Turncloak replies "It's good to fear. It means you aren't stupid".

Digital Creativity

Even as we came to terms with the reality of robots replacing us humans as a preferred choice for mechanical tasks, the dethroning of human creativity by artificial intelligence has always seemed like a far-fetched, chimerical concept. With a recent spurt in research regarding machine generated content and context driven information systems, however, we seem to be on our way to realizing this idea and ushering in an era of robotic autonomy.

Professor Kristian Hammond, one of the avant-garde researchers in this context, a founding member of *Narrative Science*, is accredited with the development of a code that is slowly replacing journalists, churning out news reports at \$10 per five hundred words. What *Narrative Science* started can't really be classified as creative in the true sense of the word. The algorithm just draws on topic-specific lists of vocabulary provided by the meta-writers, and then places these sentences within pre-set article frameworks. For us laymen, it merely takes the ball by ball commentary and converts it into a match summary; it doesn't write a classic from scratch. Quite neat, though not really path breaking. But it certainly does make one question the indispensability of the human mind.

Pushing our grey matter further towards obsolescence, James Meehan made TALE-SPIN, a primitive (by their standards really!) program which was then improved to MINESTRL. Both of them are systems which efficiently write stories. They view stories as narrative description of a solution finding efforts with well defined character goals and author goals. Brutus, another such system, can spice up the stories it writes with complex inter-personal themes such as betrayal.

It may not be an accomplished wordsmith to give Wordsworth or Keats a run for their money, but like them ASPERA writes poems. And unlike most of our course material some of these poems actually make sense. Though most of their work remains unpublished, the team working on ASPERA has brought out a collection of poems called "The Policeman's Beard is Half Constructed".

More than iron, more than lead, more than gold I need electricity.

I need it more than I need lamb or pork or lettuce or cucumber.

I need it for my dreams. Racter, from The Policeman's Beard Is Half Constructed

For ages, humor has been that coveted streak eluding even the most creative of all geniuses. Not all of us humans possess a funny bone, but apparently soon all programs will. Various new Systems such as JAPE, developed by Kim Binsted and Graeme Ritchie and HAHAcronym, created by Oliviero Stock and Carlo Strapparava have finally made long lines of 0s and 1s funny. While JAPE creates wide range of puns, HAHAcronym creates humorous acronyms (You don't say!)

Chronosynclastic Infundibulum

The year was 1847
And mutiny hung in the air.
The freshmen sauntered into AlpaHar and
Aloud they wondered, "What's upstairs?"

Copious amounts of grass,
Night and day they burned.
"Chill Thomason!" they said,
When the Dean's ire they earned.

The world aged by one and a half centuries,
And many discipline marks slipped away.
But all they found in the garbage was
Mary Jane strewn about any which way.

On SDS Muzi it was played,
The Pink Floyd tune.
When the kids tried to interpret it,
The rickshaw-wallahs made a fortune.

The semester had just started,
The Prof said, "End sems are here!"
They decided to bong the lood,
As they measured voltage in Amperes.

Students panicked and shrieked at the
Uncharacteristically twisted curriculum.
But 'twas just a classic case of
Chronosynclastic infundibulum.

Pheking News

A Minor Inclusion, A Major Change

Almost 12 years into Roorkee being an IIT, we still lack the academic flexibility other IITs incorporated into their systems long ago. The concept of academic minors, though quite archaic in other IITs, hasn't yet found its way into IITR. A minor is a student's declared field of study during his or her undergraduate studies. This means one can procure a minor degree in any of one's fields of interest while completing the major course. Apart from giving one a satisfaction of doing courses one enjoys, minors are an added qualification while applying to universities and companies for placement in a way electives can't be.

So, why haven't minor courses been introduced in IIT Roorkee?

"No student has suggested this system to us so far. There is an institute academic proposal committee which entertains proposals for inclusion of any new courses, any changes in the course structure, which after a discussion in the Senate, gets passed. So if the students have any such abstractions on their minds, they are welcome to submit such a proposal and it will be looked into", explains Dr Ashwani Kumar, Dean of Academic Research.

Students on the other hand seem unaware of the existence of such a platform on campus. "There has never been a serious discussion on the issue. If there is such an active or successful forum which can provide an effective platform for the student-administration interaction, we clearly haven't heard of it. Meanwhile, our discussions start in a canteen and end right there", opines Sailee Rane, a fourth year Chemical Engineering student.

While this system will definitely bolster the flexibility of our conventional academic mechanism, it will also help with the placement prospects of many departments. IIT Madras offers minors in courses ranging from finance and banking to advanced departmental courses (which aren't dumbed down to suit the presumed undergraduate level) which when pitted against the electives in Roorkee, as we all know, are clear winners. "Yes, it will be a very good idea, as it has already proven to be in other IITs", backs the Dean.

So while the administration maintains its stand on being open to positive changes regarding electives, minors and course structure, the institute is yet to see any changes brought in this direction. It will have to be a student council endeavor at the end of the day, just like everything else. Not incorporating minors into our academic system shows our lack of flexibility and adherence to convention to an extent that it invalidates the difference we hope we have vis-à-vis other engineering colleges in the country.

Lucifer's Angel

"Hah! I am a thorn in His heart, Gabriel, always with Him. You go on, chant His name in vain, He thinks of me more than He ever will of you".

So well, Satan, before he became the cool (or the burning hot?) commander-in-chief of hell, was an angel like others. Obedient, shiny, translucent and generally sad. And then he refused to bow before the mound of earth that was to become Adam, and was kicked out of heaven. So he vowed to make sure man turned against heaven. And he did well, forbidden stuff being done, and man learning what was good and what wasn't.

Imagine all the things you want today, all the lust, all the covetousness, all are offsprings of the Original Sin. Everything we desire. Without Satan's effort "I want you to draw me like one of your French girls, Jack" wouldn't have happened. Neither would the king of good times have been born. No happy hours. No LAN. No grudge against people with LAN equipped hostels. No KFC. No eight pack abs. And no Batman.

Imagine a world without competition and pride. (Sorry for depressing you further, but we need to fill printing space here, so bear with me). A world without passion. No difference between the righteous and the wicked, for there are no wicked. Our lives would have been an obnoxious shade of bright white. Most things that we love in the world are direct consequences of not the most innocent states of mind.

We are so weird. We like to constantly believe that we love being chaste, diligent and docile. But we also like blaming Satan for all the rubbish we generate. We made him sound so bad that we ended up making him the epitome of all that we like doing but shouldn't. It's time we came to terms with the fact that we are in general, a bad species. And really, there's nothing we can do about it. We like being bad, but we don't like believing it. We owe our very existence to Satan, for without him, Adam and Eve wouldn't even have looked at each other!

Sin is good. Indulge

.Ali Yawar III Year, Mech

Fachas, Peers & Baaps

One can playfully imagine the chap from the Edwardian era, dressed impeccably in a tuxedo complete with a narrow necktie, speaking through rings of smoke from a Player's special, to a timid looking fellow standing opposite where he is seated. This chap, one can imagine, chides the junior from Military Engineering, who is presumably adjusting his bunnet while facing the cool evening winds, for offering to pay for his Chai and Samosa(now, these two essentials would perennially be served in the canteen, at least in our imagination, whichever imperialists the Mughals encouraged to take us for a ride for about two centuries). Instead, he takes the annas out of his pocket and hands them to an ancestor of the Alpahaar Bhaiyya, who is equally dexterous and used to the concept of serving food and giving back the required change before a photon that bounced off his hands hits your eye. Winds blow their approval as a new tradition is born. Sure, we would like to imagine that the one defining aspect of senior junior interactions on campus, that one practice we both love and despise at different times during our stay on campus, had deservedly classy beginnings. But, in truth, it must have just struck some jobless student during his hours of leisure that a portmanteau of Chai and Pakoda would make for a fine name for an obligatory tradition of treats that seniors and juniors often engage themselves in - Chapos. Starting with these Chapos and voluntary intro sessions, senior-junior relations take off to reach comfortable cruise speed in the first semester itself, in most cases.

Department seniors tell you which professors to avoid, which sections to audition for and how to get a possible branch change. In the course of events, they give a lot of helpful advice for preparing for placements or internships. They tell you ways and means to improve grades and help you identify student-friendly professors, whom you eventually harangue for recommendation letters. In effect, their opinions about the campus become your opinions and tend to lead you through most of the next four, five or even six or seven years of college. Says Akshat Govil ,3rd yr Meta, "I have got useful advice with regard to the institute electives from my

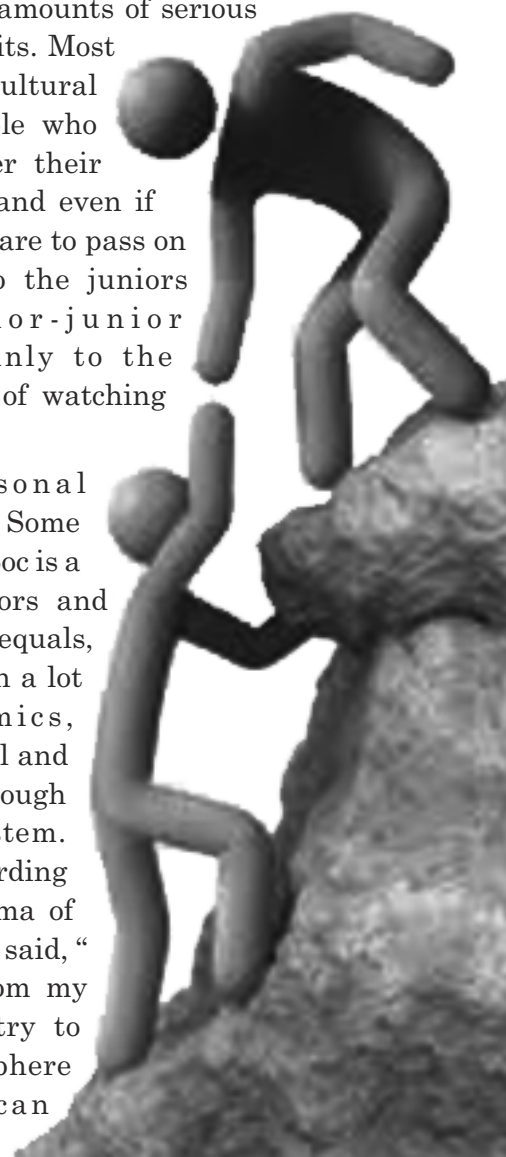
seniors. Besides, they tell me to buck up my CG."

But, it is true that students are put off by an unnecessary show of hierarchy or seemingly clever claims from the seniors regarding things they have little idea about (usually foreign internships) and a general craving from the senior's side for gratitude and from the junior's side for chapos.

Campus Groups: Recruitments and beyond

One can think of umpteen examples of students who have learnt and mastered some sport after being exposed to the sports council, but such examples are few when it comes to the Cultural Council. The Cultural Council is mostly failing in its prime motive of creating an interest for the activities it conducts and is about bakar sessions and maybe slight amounts of serious work if time permits. Most sections of the Cultural Council lack people who have mastery over their respective trades and even if they do, very few care to pass on the knowledge to the juniors limiting senior-junior interaction mainly to the narrow paradigm of watching and learning.

However, personal experiences differ. Some feel that the Cult Soc is a place where seniors and juniors thrive as equals, where people learn a lot beyond academics, become resourceful and work their way through an inflexible system. When asked regarding this, Aditya Sharma of Dramatics Section said, "I benefit a lot from my seniors and we try to create an atmosphere where people can interact freely."



Groups like IMG, SDS, BAJA, FSAE and the Cognizance Organizing Team are well known for their professionalism, work ethic and non-indulgence in petty exertion of authority by their senior members. Same goes for other campus groups like EDC, ShARE, Robocon etc. where students do pick up some skills during their time in that section. In the sports council, due the presence of skilled coaches, seniors and juniors interact as equals and those in the inter IIT contingent share great camaraderie. Politics is another field for both seniors and juniors to extract benefits out of each other and is a source of a lot of campus gossip in the autumn semester. Any *poli* senior is virtually bankrupt with due credit to the countless Chapos he/she gives to gain ephemeral respect from equally 'ubercool' juniors. *Poli* seniors give *poli* advice and *poli* juniors give *poli* support in highly benefit driven and hierarchy-dependent relationships.

Reaching Out to the Alumni

How many of us have even heard of Sampark, the portal managed by the administration, aimed at retaining contact among alumni and between alumni and students? Also a lesser known fact is that the Institute Welfare Organization's funds and various other scholarships, awards and funds are contributed by the alumni. Sampark's website mentions a list of funds like travel funds for students attending conferences, special projects grant and health emergencies fund, that are gifts and donations by the alumni. According to the Sampark newsletter published last year, around 8.5 lakhs of rupees were awarded to current students by the alumni through various awards and scholarships. The FSAE Australia 2011 team that shot to fame by being the only Indian team to qualify to the finals of the event, received considerable financial support from our alumni. They say that the administration's finances aren't enough for the smallest of the required spare parts.

In a rigid system such as ours, financial help from our alumni is proving to be the safe harbour that many student groups are now turning towards. Perhaps the most popular alumni funded awards are the IIT-R heritage fund excellence awards though there is a general feeling of disgruntlement among the junta that they look only for sportspersons with a good CG.

Student Alumni Association of Roorkee (SAAR) is the latest development in the context of student-alumni relations. SAAR is mainly a web service that tries to bridge the gap between the two parties and lubricate the process of alumni funding for innovations and startups. Also an under-utilized resource is the experience of the alumni. Their encouragement and empathy resulting from having been in the same situation could prove to be the catapult to action we seek. Funds and ideas no longer appear to be dauntingly rare commodities that cannot be obtained with a few clicks on the newly forged student-alumni networks.

Where is the love?

Although the students do network very well across years on campus, the following measures could be of help in improving the status quo:

1. Open the gates of the Cultural Council: The Cultural Council desperately needs to expand beyond its current capacity and become more of a platform for learning the performing arts. Both its member magazines have started open editorials; It's high time the other sections took the cue.
2. Department Mentor system: Each student can be allocated a mentor from within the department so that even the introverts benefit in a system that is highly beneficial for those who reach out to their seniors.
3. Internship & Placement guidance talks: Campus groups should themselves organise talks to orient the students for preparing them for internships and placements. An active system of seniors-organized test series and mock interviews is already in place at some IITs and NITs.
4. Making use of SAAR and other forums: Students should respond more effectively in platforms meant for interaction with alumni. We need to foster new ideas and tell people about them.

Peer interaction is one of the most important grooming agents that shape up IITians. The sheer amount of unconventional knowledge we receive through these interactions is what differentiates us from any ordinary institution that offers the same courses. As preachy and obvious as this may sound, if we are to progress as an institute we need to focus on quality interaction among students and hope to motivate one another.



← Biotech

With ever increasing pocket money anything less than Amsterdam will be too shameful.



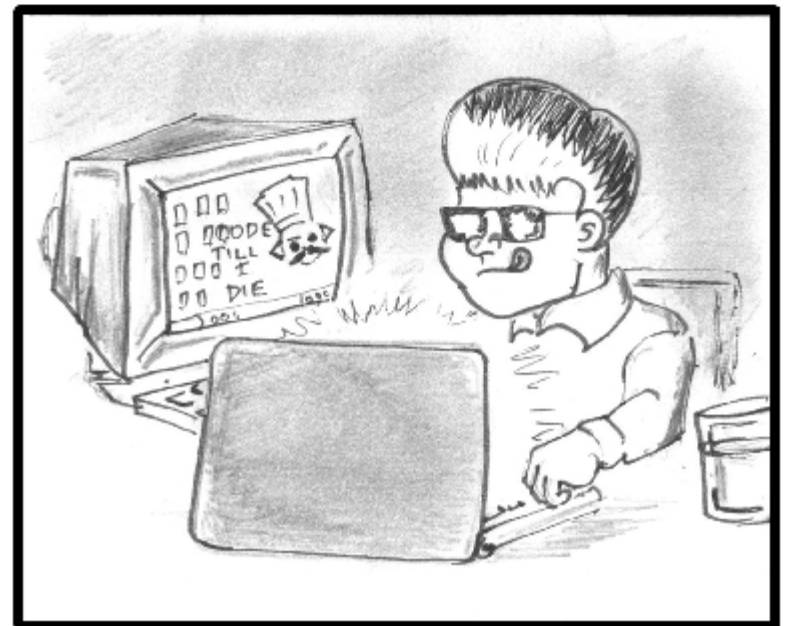
DOMS ↓

Dept. of Management Studies dares to go beyond IIPMs



Architecture ↑

NASA** remains all they have and all they should do, as long as people still relate it with rockets and space.



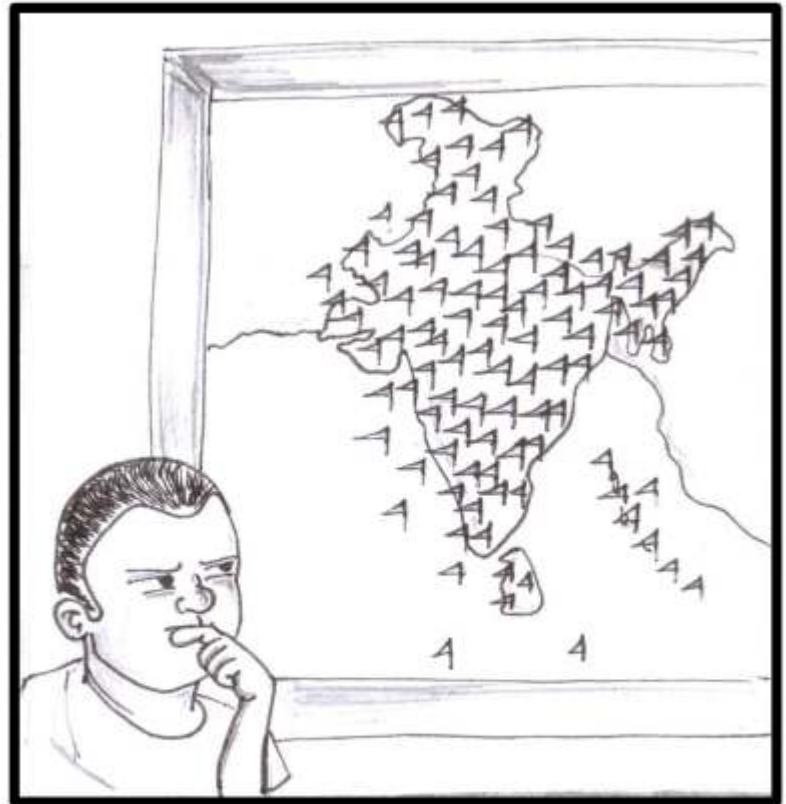
Computer Science →

With so much to ghis, a visit to IMG is the closest they can afford to get to an industrial trip.

** National Association of Students of Architecture

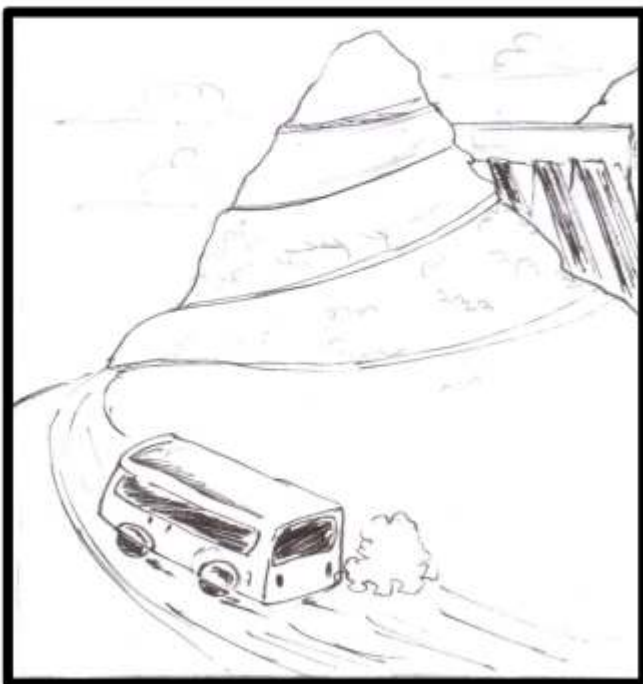
Metallurgy →

Monthly, semester-ly and yearly trips have covered every place on the map pretty neatly,



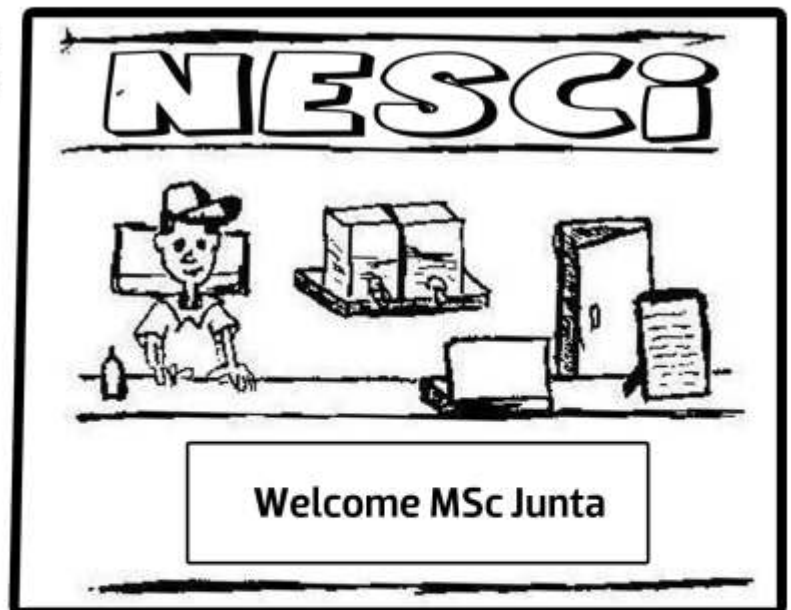
Mechanical ↑

With there being no meaning to trips without female mates, they get down to building some.



MSc Math, Physics & Chemistry ↓

They grapple with the Paav-Curry conjecture while having meckroni in the new Nesci (Bru).

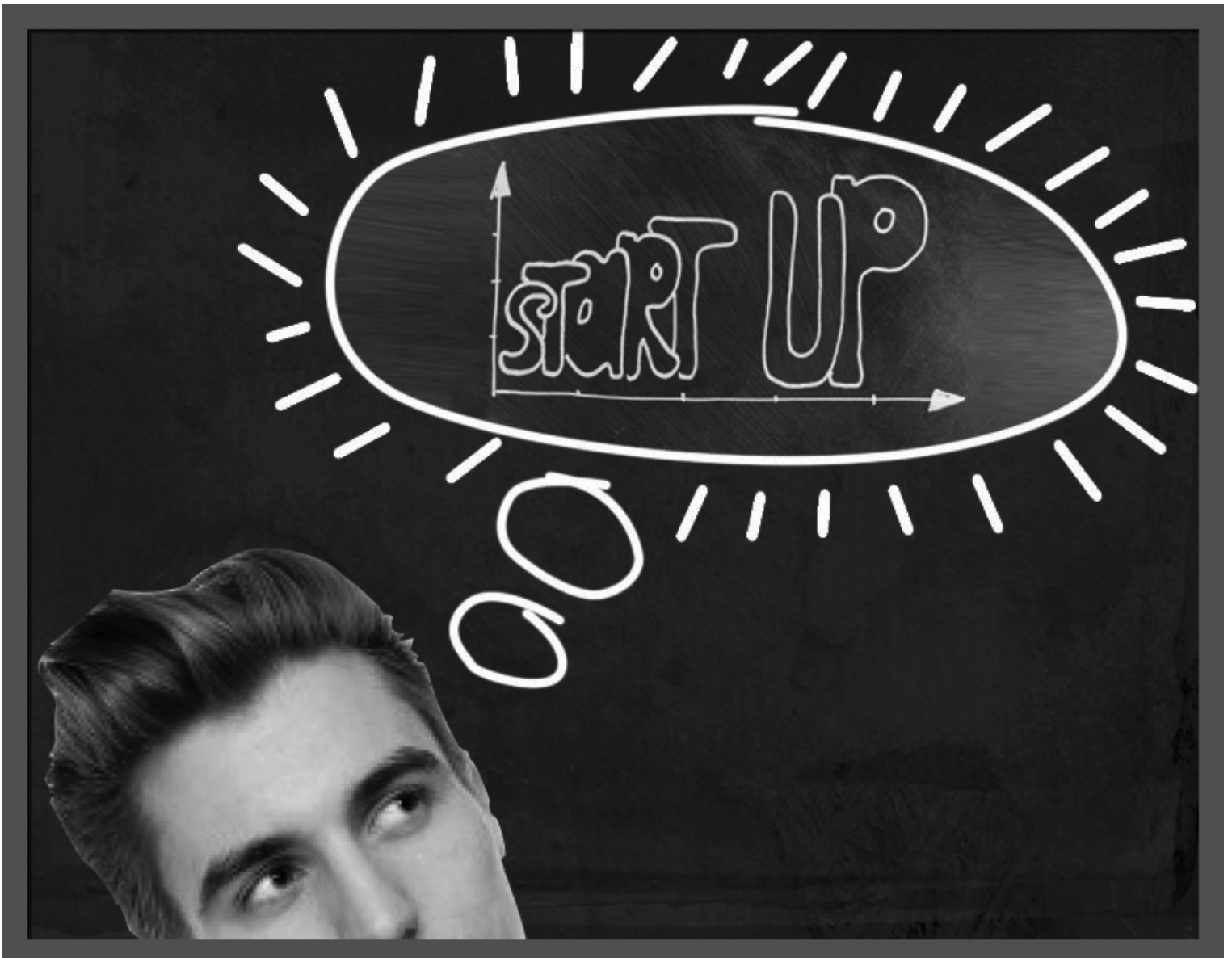


← Civil

Since no bigger construction is expected in a century or so, Tehri Dam remains "the" civil bootcamp.

Mens et Manus at IITR

In an Economic Times article, Padmasree Warrior, CTO of Cisco systems and Chemical Engineer from IIT-D, envisions a video era where communication networks will be like smart grids, seamlessly transporting video. Dr. Amit Singhal, an NSF Fellow at Google Inc. and a UoR alumnus, says he believes the cloud is not yet fully tapped and the future lies in technology that feels natural. Other stalwarts believe innovations in green technology are the need of the hour. While ushering in an era of unobtrusive technology that blends in with our lives so naturally, that lets us communicate with others in ways that might have seemed magical to us a few years back, is indeed important and something Indians have proven themselves capable of partaking in on an international stage, people at R have meanwhile engaged themselves with smaller but important ideas. There has always existed on campus, a bunch of minds fluttering to step off the beaten track and into newer, fresher realms with ventures that they can truly call their own, right from conception to soaring. Some small startups have come up that will serve to catapult these entrepreneurs to the bigger world of innovation, where technological vanguards fashion the future of the world. Some others, have too, in which the ideas themselves might be terribly unoriginal but nevertheless help to make a quick buck during college days. Watch out attempts to trace the fate of startups that have taken shape on campus in recent times and to discover what's holding back the entrepreneurial spirit.



The patrons we deserve, not the patrons we need

The existence of an EDC hasn't exactly proven to lift our spirits and the absence of entrepreneurship breakthroughs in the past has only dampened them further. There can be no questioning the EDC's raison d'être and their efforts to fulfil it. The folks at EDC not only try their best to acquaint the common man with the entrepreneurship jargon through regular seminars, but also look to harness untapped, unguided ideas through equally regular competitions and events. Working along similar lines is the Technology Incubation & Entrepreneurship Development Activity Centre. The TIEDA centre justifies its presumptuous naming by spearheading the implementation of workable ideas for startups. Accepted start ups are provided free access to all laboratories available in IITR. They also plan to provide mentorship, legal help and office space in return for a stake in the company. An accepted startup is expected to turn profitable in two years and repay TIEDA with a nominal interest. But sadly TIEDA is not as successful as it could be, since most of the students don't even know it exists. Gaurav, a fourth year student said "*TIEDA promises a lot but provides very little. I myself retrieved the form at the last moment because I knew I wont get any help from them.*" Clearly there is a lot more needed to be done.

Against all Audegns

Sonesh Jain, founder of Audegn and known all over the country for designing the BRICS summit logo, says that he has received no help whatsoever from the administration. "I requested the administration to let me use an unoccupied room in any department as office space for Audegn but it was turned down," he complains. He also happens to be the Additional Secretary of EDC and was visibly upset about the step motherly sort of treatment meted out to EDC. "Funds are hard to come by. Organising events is a real pain since we can't even afford to sponsor our invitee's journey from Delhi to Roorkee. There's not much that EDC can actually offer seeing that its own needs are not being met by the institute." This is in stark contrast to other IITs who foster the spirit of entrepreneurship through e-cells. IIT-M students in particular say that the admins go out of their way to

help people start up. "*There is an amazing startup culture here in Madras. Every hostel has around 2-3 startups,*" says Armaan Brar, a student at IIT-M. Problems are plenty. But then startups have always been about breaking away from the status quo. If working on ideas, collaborating with others in the area and getting required capital were easy enough, then everyone would have been their own boss by now. The struggles and how you deal with them make or break a startup. The on campus startups of IITR have not only faced these hurdles but have found their way around them with panache.

While Sonesh is raking in the galleons with Audegn, Nishant Chandra, 3rd year, P&I, is comfortably ensconced and smiling at his humble but successful venture, **Bookshelf**. Bookshelf, a culmination of Nishant's fetish for books and desire to try something new has been built upon the simple premise that people borrow books more often than buying it outright. 'Quality of books and the time within which they're delivered are the factors that decide the success of my venture', says a customer friendly Nishant. Unlike others who first go about setting up a fancy website and adding the founder of douchebaggery xyz tag to their facebook profile before doing anything remotely substantial, he chose to get Bookshelf up and running using other basic and free services.

There are also people like Vivek Prakash who dropped out of a CS student's dream intern, Google Summer of Code, to work on his startup currently known as HackerEarth. Vivek, along with Sachin Gupta, is trying to change how programmers are recruited. While their idea is not unique in itself, it does have the potential to be a pacesetter in the industry if executed well. In fact HackerEarth wasn't even their original idea; they pivoted to this from My Career Stack, a site that helped students in preparing for technical interviews, showing all the flexibility of a startup. The credibility of the idea increased manifold after they were accepted into GSF Accelerator, a startup accelerator programme launched by former Reliance Entertainment president and GSF Superangels founder Rajesh Sawhney.

Zigndog was a design firm that started off with making good presentations and extended to being a design studio. The firm was established as a proprietorship by Puneet Singh Jaggi. We haven't heard about them in a while but the people involved are all well settled now. Divye Kapoor is in Google, mountain view and Vikesh Khanna is at Microsoft Hyderabad. Rishabh Sood and Priyanka Soni are graduating from IIM A and B respectively this year. Sanat Rath has gone on to pursue higher studies at Georgia tech and Sampath is at Schlumberger. Puneet is an entrepreneur and a director of two companies.

But for 3-4 of these we also have 10-15 of a webpage-is-my-startup kind of folks. Starting a blog on wordpress and calling it a technical startup is definitely not befitting of an IITian. Another noticeable trend is that students prefer a service providing startup rather than a product based startup, probably because service requires a lesser initial investment. Many consider an on-campus venture as a means of secondary income and even stoop down to selling presentations just for that extra buck.

Deferred Placement

IIT-R has another official option that would be really helpful to those crying out for lack of time thanks to the extent of academic load: Students are allowed to opt for deferred placement. This basically gives them the option to experiment for two years in the wild, come back to R and sit for placements. Like every other administrative initiative, this too is met with skepticism. But, two students were, this year. Shubham Aggarwal, founder of Addister and Ghissu, is one of them. While Ghissu is still in the development stage, Addister is fully operational. Filling up the cover and back pages of notebooks with advertisements drastically reduced their cost from Rs20 to just Rs5.

WONA's two paise

The sheer amount of knowledge contained in the hallowed lands of R is unintentionally our best kept secret. You just need to step out of the world of sitcoms, bakar and cola shikanji to meet masters of various trades. A few phone calls are all you need to

get in touch with an expert, be it on branding, web development, hacking or finance. The proverbial free advice here in R comes along with a nice chapo. Also, the chances of meeting a business partner are higher inside the walls of IIT. You'd expect something phenomenal when you shut people with IQs amongst the highest in the country inside a campus and not let them leave after 11pm. But still IITR hardly has any startup to brag about. Is it the administration? Or are we just not able to capitalize on the numerous opportunities?

Through all these years of our existence, the one thing that has remained is our meek submission to traditions and shibboleths. There seems to be weighing upon us an inertia to deviation of any sort from conventional definitions of technical education, where business and entrepreneurship do not figure among activities deemed fit to invest in. Unsurprisingly, the authorities do not consider it their business to foster growth in these activities on

campus. While the fact that the institute cannot fund start ups on campus, is understandable, the fact that they refuse students the permission to implement ideas, isn't. Students trying to procure sponsorships from the alumni on an individual basis will hopefully benefit from SAAR (Student Alumni Association of Roorkee)



Jumpstartups

Clearly, while we do not draw a complete blank when it comes to entrepreneurship activities on campus, the picture is bleak enough. We have a long way to go from chafing under petty restrictions to opening up to these legions of unconventional avenues, before we can truly consider ourselves at par with our counterparts elsewhere. The culture of on-campus entrepreneurship ought to be allowed to dawn soon and run deeper than the hitherto ubiquitous culture of apathy. That done, and our zeal and potential appropriately added, we wouldn't take long to have our campus-start ups go down the annals of history with the likes of Flipkart and Crossword.

The SDSLabs Story

SDSLabs facilitates the fulfillment of our ever-increasing needs with DC++, live streaming of sports channels and a slew of useful web and android applications. They pick out the promising programmers, designers and web developers amongst us and create confident ones in their stead. Deriving their strength from a puny, friendly, bot-like man who goes by the alias Captain Nemo, Networking pro Harshil and other diligent folks, they have the makings and culture of a tech-startup, quite literally, today. The confidence that small, unassuming people amongst us can get together, build great stuff and earn the encouragement of the administration is a first among many positives that SDSLabs has provided us with.

But, their beginnings, just like all success stories, were humble. Watchout gets their story straight from the horse's mouth: Here's an interview of Shobhit Singh, CS IDD Batch of 2012, founder of SDS and SDSLabs.

WONA: What was the need for a group like SDSLabs especially keeping in mind that IMG has always been there and a web design and development section also existed?

SS: When I was in my first year, I was interested in coding and had dabbled in directx and other stuff but I had no guidance whatsoever. Even if I did make something on my own, there was no place to discuss it. It was during my internship at Deloitte that the ideas I had for formation of a new student group, that will be drastically different from the ones that existed, took shape. I studied the system at Stanford and Carnegie Mellon and formed a rough idea of SDS, which is the software development section of the Hobbies Club that is open to all and SDSLabs, a core group of developers who will build great stuff and guide those in SDS.

At the very outset, I believed that IITians sticking only to course work during their under-graduation is a pitiful trend and speaks only of shameful complacency. I also thought about how our practical knowledge is nothing to proud of, even for the very best among us. IMG was a closed group and they already had the burden of official work. So SDS came about, managed by a core team of like-minded passionate programmers, SDSLabs(which currently has around 40 members from all years). The open group would be provided infrastructure and guidance by the core team members. This group was to be a forum for seniors to mentor their juniors, which might be underrated but the most invaluable form of learning during college years.

WONA: What were the hurdles you faced in the process of setting up SDS?

SS: Problems were faced at two levels, position holding students and professors. The older Web Design and Development group was inactive, badly managed and there was no student initiative to improve this section. Very little was given to WebD section from the hobbies club's funds. In my third year, I tried to get a UPS and that's when I realised that professors simply don't trust students with any money. And I could not really do much without funds.

What I had in mind was a group of corporate standard, not some spurious bunch of quacks who know HTML. People should be able to live in the lab and "eat sleep code" there, if they wish (*That this did happen very soon starting with Captain Nemo and now his upcoming protégé, who goes by 'Yoda', will go down in R history, of course*). After much struggle, submitting numerous proposals, making infinite trips for as many signatures, I finally managed to get a funding of Rs. 3.5 lakhs from the Dean and more in installments from the Hobbies Club staff advisor. This was used for basic amenities like electrical wiring, power sockets, construction and renovation of different rooms. We bought a server from the Dean's funds.

The main problem was to convince the professors to give us the money, to make them understand that we were a passionate bunch of programmers who wanted to build and ship amazing stuff, that we wanted to make campus life better for everyone. But, even when we managed to get the point across, there was still the problem of lengthy procedures to be followed for buying the smallest of things. We were buried neck-deep in papers, proposals, bills, signatures and worthless paperwork. I contested the SAC elections so that I could help Hobbies Club but even as an Executive Member, I could not extract any help from SAC. Faaltu ki politics hai SAC mein(The SAC is riddled with unnecessary politics).

WONA: In sharp contrast to other groups, funds don't seem to be a problem for SDS, with the fingerprint based entry, 42" LCD screen and expensive servers. Just, how?

SS: We have become conditioned into thinking that these are luxuries, but they are only basic facilities for a lab of good standard. We had sound rationale behind each of our purchases and made sure of productive usage as well.

Projectors cost more than an LCD TV. Also, how could we set up a projector inside a small room? So, we bought a TV. Similarly, we wanted SDS Labs to be open 24x7. For this we would have had to hire a guard for the costly servers and other electronics. We managed to explain this to Prof. Padam Kumar who gave us fingerprint scanners from ISC. In a room with 10 desktops releasing heat, it is impossible to work. I had to fight a lot for an AC. Student bodies are simply not provided ACs. But this was a genuine need and we could justify this buying. It took time, believe me, it took me nearly 3 months! We bought a server from the Dean's funds. Again, we had to explain the need and it took a lot of time. These were not gifts from anyone, we fought for every penny!

WONA: You spoke about academic culture in Stanford, CMU and even IITK being far superior to ours. Why?

SS: People here sit idly and crib about how this institution is not providing them with facilities equivalent to Stanford's. But the fact is that, even the given facilities haven't been used to the fullest. I am not generalizing, but, most students here prefer playing games, watching movies to doing anything substantially productive, outside of academics. Before PAG was formed, IITR featured nowhere in ACM ICPC. (*PAG hasn't been the sole reason but a huge contributing factor. One team of fourth years, from outside PAG, made it to the national finals of this year's ACM ICPC*). I don't mean that it's only the students who are at fault. The professors should take more interest in the extra-curricular development of students. If a student could envision an SDS Labs, a professor can go one better. The culture here has to change and I believe it is, albeit slowly.



File photo of the protest

The Discontent in Saharanpur

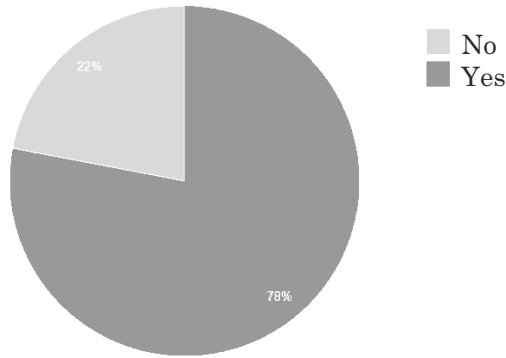
Last semester, students from the Saharanpur campus had taken to a hunger strike demanding that they be shifted to Roorkee. Just as much as there are constraints to the demanded relocation, there are reasons to justify their displeasure, especially the first years who just learned that their campus lacked most of the facilities that one would come expecting in an IIT. After official intervention, the protests abated and steps to improve the campus were taken more seriously. WatchOut spoke to Dr. S.N. Sinha, Dean of Student's Welfare, to get some insight into the issue. The DoSW explained the difficulties experienced by all the stakeholders and the steps taken by the administration, thus making it less clouded for us. Excerpts from the interview taken on 6th Nov' 12.

WONA: What were the main issues raised during the protests by the Saharanpur students?

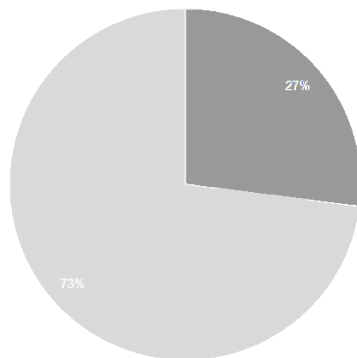
DOSW: Months ago, about 150 students from the Saharanpur Campus came here demanding that we shift them to the main campus. I met these students personally and listened to their complaints. They claimed they didn't have enough teachers, good classrooms or transport facility to the main campus. Their library was not sufficient to meet their needs and far inferior to the one in the main campus. They also complained their computer labs are out of order and their internet wasn't working. Some of them felt they were discriminated against. They don't get accommodation in the hostels over here like they should on account of being IITR students. Students had also brought to our notice that on many occasions a few companies which come for placements set a pre-condition that all students except those from Saharanpur campus are allowed to apply. We told them that these problems will be looked into, and we will make amends soon.

WONA: Is it true that the facilities in the Saharanpur campus are far inferior to those in the main campus?

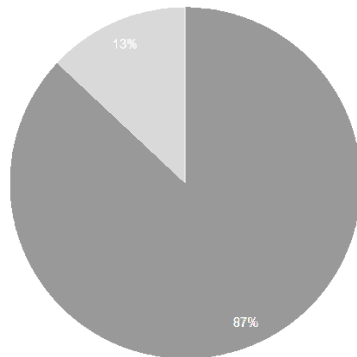
DOSW: The facilities that are being provided to the students in Saharanpur campus are the best that can be done. Perhaps some improvement is possible, but one must understand that the facilities are proportional to the size of the campus. Roorkee has a 356 acre campus and that is a 25 acre campus. So not all the facilities available here can be provided there.



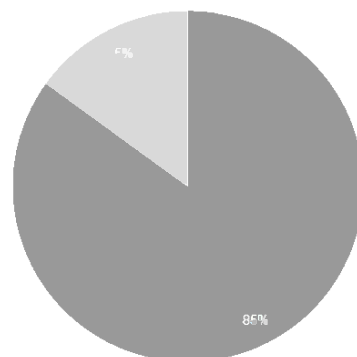
Are the students of Saharanpur campus discriminated against in the institute



Was the ultimatum given by the administration to the protesting students justified?



Do you think the protest by the students of Saharanpur campus was justified?



Do you think the courses run in Saharanpur campus should be shifted to Roorkee Campus?

We implemented a few steps to improve their academic and extra-curricular facilities. To solve problems regarding the library, I told them that if they wanted any book from the MGCL they could just email us and the book would be immediately transferred to their library. For the transport issue I sanctioned two buses which would, at the request of the students, bring them to the main campus during the weekends. Moreover, if they wished to stay over in the campus, they could do so for two days at most. They just have to get a permission letter signed by their Chief Warden and submit it at whichever hostel they wish to reside in. I've requested the Director to approve the construction of two synthetic tennis courts, one basketball court and a covered swimming pool.

Regarding the placement problems, the director informed the Professor-In-Charge of placements that if a particular company is open for all branches then, there cannot be clauses that prevent Saharanpur campus students from applying. If the company does not agree, it will not be allowed to recruit. Their other complaints were also resolved through similar measures. So all their demands have been considered, save that of shifting them to the main campus which is non-negotiable.

WONA: What exactly is the problem in shifting them to the main campus?

DOSW: Firstly, that campus was transferred to the erstwhile University of Roorkee by the U.P. government in early 80s. There were certain conditions in the Memorandum Of Understanding under which it was transferred to us. They need to understand that this is a unique situation where state governments are involved.

WONA: Don't you think the ultimatum given to them, "Either stop protesting or vacate your hostels" was harsh?

DOSW: No. I issued a notification under orders from the director, that the students get back to their classes failing which the institute will be closed. They were clearly told that there can be no justification for holding a protest like this. They would be in the press for the wrong reasons and this would affect the image and reputation of the institute which would in turn affect them. If a company feels that the students are in the habit of going on strikes, their willingness to recruit will be affected. We didn't have an alternative and we took this step only after hours of clarification and explanation.



Big Story

If Moore's law is an umbrella statement for all of science and technology, it's one thing to read about all the inevitably fast-paced developments that it predicts in the introductory chapter of a book, when you are in a mood for some history. What's another thing altogether is living them. Not living through them, but living them well connected with academia for decades and decades. Some distinguished residents of IIT-R did not just use a gramophone and an ipod at different stages of their lives, but knew how they worked. They were an integral part of the community responsible for quantum leaps in science and technology for an amazing length of time.

Time's own reward for working hard to defeat the constraints it imposes and continually, is wisdom and there are only some who have earned it. They understand the smugness of undergraduates, the exuberance of newly recruited faculty and the indifference of some who have been here for a while. They have the unique privilege of deciphering notes written on yellowed, dog-eared paper when simultaneously updating nptel lectures and promoting modern forms of learning.

Theirs has been a long walk indeed. Through the Thomason marg gathering the dust of a good many years, through as many summers, beautiful

springs and harsh winters, through years and years of classroom lectures, students and research, through many Cognis and Thomsos , past different versions of the MGCL, past Nescis and Bru Golds and through UoR and through IIT-R. When they walk into our class, right on time, impeccably dressed in formal wear, we wake up and listen.

Emeritus professors are those veterans we love and respect with the same intensity we reserve for our grandfathers, and among them, the ones who have technologically and scientifically kept up with the times and possess the cumulative experience of so many decades. WONA interacted with some emeritus professors on campus and decided to put down their thoughts on a multitude of aspects of R that the longevity of their stay has made them observe, in this story.

Who are emeritus professors?

For the uninitiated, when professors approach their official retirement age, they usually hang up their boots and bid adieu to the department and its poorly lit halls. However, there are a few who choose to teach beyond retirement and are recognized according to the rules of the institution. Emeritus professors are relieved of any non-departmental duties and hence focus entirely on their courses and research.

Dr. Ranajit Mitra of the EC department says that he felt capable of working at his age and hence made his decision. Professor Jawaharlal Gaindhar, who is currently with the Department of Management Studies said he felt the need to stay when the institute called on him while setting up the Department. He also founded P&I engineering here and heads an alumni society. He believes he has had the longest possible association with R since he obtained his undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering here, more than 50 years ago. He recounts his connection with Penn State University where he got his PhD, his professorship in the MIED till the age of retirement and his association with DoMS later.

One of the biggest changes that were consequent on the transition from UoR to IIT-R, nearly all of them agreed, was the influx of a large amount of funds from the central government. There has been a momentous growth in infrastructure with the addition of a state-of-the-art library and several new hostels. Professor Gaindhar recalls how many used to take to visiting neighboring institutes even for regular research as there were no efficient internet facilities available before UoR became an IIT. There's been an overall improvement in teaching conditions as well and pay scales have shot up.

The craze for CS and EC started about two decades back, Dr. Mitra says. Professor Mitra noticed a gradual shift in the interests of students within the ECE department too, with students taking more interest in software development than hardware related work. One troubling myth that all these professors busted, was the degradation in the quality of students over the years. They all unanimously downplayed claims of the school becoming less academically elite and maintained that there have been no inconsistencies over the years in the level of the selected students.

As an institute, Dr. Gaindhar said he liked UoR better than IIT-R. Reconstructing an average day in the life of a student from UoR, from the picture given by these professors, leads us to discover activities that would be considered bizarre, if caught doing today, like horse-riding for instance. But, the fruits of forced, military discipline can only be realized many years down the line. Professor

N.M. Bhandari, Civil Department, who has been in Roorkee since 1967, feels that students are mostly just distracted by the internet and not exactly brimming with knowledge as they should be since it has become freely available. Professor Gaindhar is delighted that other technical and non technical activities aimed at overall personality development have started coming up on campus which the students engage in during their free time. He proudly furnished us with the fact UoR is one of the first universities to allot marks for proficiencies and since those days, extra curricular activities were an essential part of student life.

They all had similar answers to our favorite question on student-teacher interaction. Professor Bhandari explained that there used to be two batches of students - one Indian and the other consisting of international students in the civil department earlier. So, he said, 120 is not a new and difficult number for professors. Professor Saini, MIED, felt that teaching has ceased to be the two-way process that it used to be. Dr. Bhandari said he had met some of the best professors of his life years ago. Dr. O.P. Jain, after whom the civil auditorium is named, was unparalleled in his depth of knowledge in structural engineering, Dr. Bhandari recalled and having been taught by such a professor is a one-off experience for Dr. Bhandari that he still cherishes.

The funds are practically unlimited now but the number of teachers, critically low, according to these emeritus professors. The number of professors have failed to grow in proportion with that of the students joining in. As Professor Mitra, from the ECE department said, in the case of newer departments like CS and EC, the dearth of teachers has a lot to do with very few PhDs in these fields opting to teach, preferring to give themselves up to MNCs instead.

What could be observed was that, from all these Emeritus Professors came an undertow of disapproval of our petty complaints against the institute. They highlighted the fact that they were very happy with the institute, their own PhD students, this place and everything it represents. They believe that IIT-R is truly an institute par excellence and what we take away are these dollops of positivity and confidence.

The man who nearly became the SAC-P

The post-thomso video back in October 2010 was this guy's ticket to cementing his spot in the insti folklore. He has since then been a regular fixture in Thomsons and Nav Umangs, compering various events and brewing some controversies to steal the thunder and of course, to lure audiences into attending events. He is an active member of the CultSoc and the Students Affairs Council and many tip him to be the next Arvind Kejriwal, only if Mr.Kejriwal's prime talent is hosting events in ordinary cultural fests. Excerpts from the interview.

WONA: Who was your first crush on campus?

Pandeyji: I have always wanted to avoid this question but maybe it's high time I came clean on this. It was Abhinoor Dhull (how unique is your choice?). I saw her at 'Pehla Nasha' for the first time(Oh, the irony!) and immediately realised that she was to be the diva I would never get.

WONA:So, that's how you settled on Roorkee instead?

Pandeyji: Yes, Roorkee is the only girlfriend I've ever had (and probably will ever have). I love the climate here and now that I think about it, everything about this place. Our insti and its main building, among other landmarks will be etched forever in my memory.

WONA: The craziest thing you've done on campus?

Pandeyji: I'm not really proud of it, but I once 'marked my territory' outside a professor's house (again, how very unique)when I wasn't extremely impressed with the grade he gave me.

WONA: When did you start compering and is there a story behind the 'I love you too' (Main bhi aapse pyaar karta hun)?

Pandeyji: It all started at a robotics workshop in my first year. The guy who was conducting it asked me to take over the class for a while. At this point, I started giving a lecture on electronics from what little I had gleaned from

the first year course (This must have been entertaining). I just said whatever came to my mind for an hour (whoa!). That was when I realised that I could talk about anything under the sun (of course). And the 'I love you too'- that was just impulsive (and may not have been an act of pure public speaking genius).

WONA: The one thing you would miss most about IIT-Roorkee?

Pandeyji: As I said before, the town and the main building. I love this place. I don't know how I'll survive anywhere else.

WONA: Have you earned yourself any nicknames during your stay here?

Pandeyji: I'm never called by my first name. In fact, I


tend to ignore people when they call me Abhishek (you can't blame yourself. There could be another one right behind you). Nearly everyone calls me 'Pandey' (And, we, Pandeyji, out of respect). It has become my first, middle and last name. Sometimes people also call me the lone wolf or the lone ranger because I'm single (If this was meant for the girls to notice, it doesn't seem to have helped so far) and secondly, because I sometimes take late-night strolls alone (Andheri raaton mein, sunsaan raho par).

WONA: Your views on WONA?























Pandeyji: I think you guys write brilliantly but it's all true esoteric. You should cater more to the masses. Not everyone understands all that you guys publish.



48TH INTER IIT SPORTS MEET POINTS TALLY

	Bombay	Bhubaneswar	Delhi	Gandhinagar	Guwahati	Hyderabad	Indore	Jodhpur	Kanpur	Kharagpur	Madras	Mandi	Patna	Ropar	Roorkee
Swimming	6			2					4	10					
Water Polo	6									4	10				2
Athletics	12								20	4	8				
Badminton	2				10						4				6
Basket Ball	2		4								10				6
Cricket	4		10								6	2			
Hockey	6		4								10				2
Football	4		6			2									10
Squash	2								6		4				10
Table Tennis	10								6		4				2
Tennis	10								4	6					2
Volleyball			6							4	10				2
Weight Lifting	10				6						2				4
March Past	7.8	7.2	7.1	7.0	5.9	7.1	5.1	7.5	7.2	5.9	6.8	6.8	4.9	6.5	8.9
Total	82	7.2	37	9.0	22	9.1	5.1	7.5	47	34	75	8.8	4.9	6.5	55
General Championship	I										II				III
Swimming	6				4				2						10
Athletics	5		2		5					10					
Badminton			4						6		10				2
Basket Ball	2		6						4						10
Table Tennis	2				10				4		6				
Tennis	4		6						2	10					
March Past	7.8	7.2	7.1	7.0	5.9	7.1	5.1	7.5	7.2	5.9	6.8	6.8	4.9	6.5	8.9
Total	27	7.2	25	7.0	25	7.1	5.1	7.5	25	26	23	6.8	4.9	6.5	31
Women Championship	II									III					I

PLACEMENTS 2012-13

Branch	Average Offer	Placed / Registered		Maximum Offer	Minimum Offer
Archit. 	4.34 lacs/annum	19	34	4.60 lacs/annum	4.20 lacs/annum
Civil 	7.37 lacs/annum	55	109	18.0 lacs/annum	3.40 lacs/annum
Mech. 	7.39 lacs/annum	52	72	18.0 lacs/annum	2.40 lacs/annum
Elec. 	9.34 lacs/annum	66	106	65.0 lacs/annum	3.40 lacs/annum
IDD Elec. 	11.54 lacs/annum	05	09	8.67 lacs/annum	3.75 lacs/annum
E&C 	10.5 lacs/annum	40	55	25.0 lacs/annum	4.20 lacs/annum
IDD E&C 	5.85 lacs/annum	08	13	10.4 lacs/annum	4.90 lacs/annum
CSE 	17.5 lacs/annum	43	47	65.0 lacs/annum	3.27 lacs/annum
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Meta. 	6.39 lacs/annum	37	73	39.0 lacs/annum	3.27 lacs/annum
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Msc. Phys 	7.81 lacs/annum	03	09	12.5 lacs/annum	3.42 lacs/annum
Msc. Chem 	3.42 lacs/annum	02	07	3.42 lacs/annum	3.42 lacs/annum
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