



BY DIVYA DIVAKARAN ('01 INSTRU), SANDEEP MUKHERJEE ('95 PHY MECH) & AKASH RAMAN ('04 GOA)

BITS, PILANI-GOA!

You've all heard about the new BITS-Pilani, at Goa. Sandpaper profiles the new campus with information about campus life, academic quality and infrastructure. For those of you who have family and friends considering applying to engineering schools, this article gives insights into the "student life" aspects of BITS, Pilani-Goa.

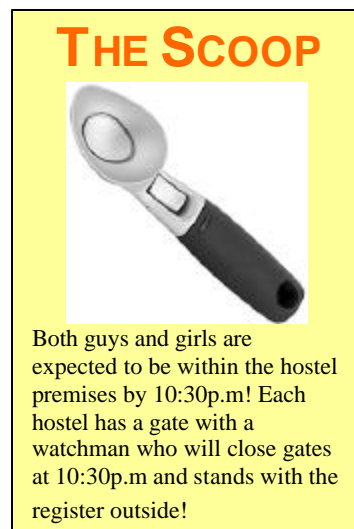
The spanking new state-of-the-art campus at Goa is being built on 180 acres of land and overlooks the Zuari River located on the National Highway NH17B connecting Marmugao Port to the National highway NH17. The campus is easily accessible being only 5.5 km from the airport, 22 km from Madgaon Railway station and 9.5 km from Vasco Railway station.

The new campus is being positioned as **BITS, Pilani-Goa**, to leverage the "Pilani" brand value proposition. In the following sections, we attempt to communicate the various infrastructure and campus life aspects of the Institute to help you better understand the state of the affairs.

FACILITIES

The main building, much like the Pilani campus, comprises of

administrative offices, classrooms, and laboratories and is nearing completion. Separate hostels for boys, girls and faculty residences are ready for occupation.



Other infrastructure including a shopping complex, a bank, a post

office, medical and recreational facilities for students and staff is also in the works.

Two boys' hostels and two girls' hostels are in place and are without any identity of their own with names like BH1 BH2 etc. A hostel naming contest was recently conducted so we speculate that this nomenclature nightmare will soon be over for the Bhavans!

No more dhobis as they've been replaced by a laundry system, akin to western laundromats, is in place. 'Messes' are efficiently run and there are separate messes for girls and boys. Pilani-Goa lore has it that originally they had a common mess, but it was located far from the girls' hostel and since it rains a lot in Goa, this policy was done away with to prevent the girls from being inconvenienced.



As for those of you who are wondering about RAF movies – an auditorium is under construction and movies are screened at the Lecture theatre instead. We did not discover any evidence of laser pointers being used at these movie screenings!

ACADEMIC

Attendance is compulsory – that alone must have a lot of the alumni gasping for breath! Also, at this year's registration students did not have the opportunity to make their own timetables as the appropriate systems and facilities were not in place. Thus they were given 6 ready-made timetables and had to choose one of them – certainly inconsistent, and far easier, than registration rioting in Pilani! Ordinarily it wouldn't matter in your first year, but the rules make it mandatory to attend your 'registered

professors'.

Goa students face three test series, so life is all about studying all the time, especially with the minimal opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular activities (Akash, one of the students there we spoke to, thinks the "standard of papers set" there is marginally higher than that at Pilani. They had looked up previous papers from Pilani, which are pretty tough themselves, and finds ones set there to be tougher! Given that their first Physics test average was 7/60, we are inclined not to disagree!

CAMPUS LIFE

As of now they have no fests – i.e. No OASIS, no BOSM, no APOGEE – which, in turn, means no clubs or departments. Akash and a classmate recently started a Dramatics Club – the first extra-curricular association the

campus has. Given the rich history of BITS Pilani activities, this is going to be very temporary. Goa is likely to be no different than Pilani.

Sports activities are currently limited to table tennis, carrom, chess and cricket, but both the faculty and student communities are active participants and competitions are frequently organized between the two groups. Plans of starting an official Sports Club are also in the offing; however the sports facilities are still under construction. As of now, there is also no Student's Union!

Thus the non-academic environment is clearly in need of improvement for the students to enjoy broad based development that the parent campus offers.

They do, however, have a hangout spot, *a la* C'not., again 'nameless' yet. It's the place they spend their evenings at. With little to no infrastructure for extra-curricular activities - life isn't quite as exciting as Pilani – hard as that may be to believe! However, the nearest town, Vasco, about 5km from the campus allows more off-campus entertainment than downtown Pilani.

A beach trip on weekends is a regular feature and a source of lots of fun for all on campus! ♦

FACT, NOT FICTION!

- Every student has his own room with furnishings and even mirrors !
- Attendance is compulsory!
- No dhobis. But there is a state-of-the-art laundry system.
- Girls & Guys need to back in to their hostels by 10:30 pm.
- No Students Union.
- The first Physics test average was 7/60!

