

PEOPLE OF THE MONTH: ADITI PANY | DILIP D'SOUZA  
WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BITS !! BITSAA RAISES \$650,000

The BITSAA Edition

# Sandpaper [2.0]

Fall 2003 Issue Volume 2

Birla Institute of Technology & Science Alumni Magazine

**VIJAY CHANDRU**

When Academicians  
become Entrepreneurs

Top 10 Grad School  
Experiences

BITS  
Entrepreneurship  
Center named top  
five in India

BITSConnect Thank  
You

The State of the  
Vidya Vihar Campus

Scenes from a  
Pakistani  
Restaurant

A conversation with  
Lt. General M.  
Rajgopal, AVSM



The Top 20 BITSian CEOs in India  
(And their companies)



My thoughts on LEADERSHIP

By Vivek Paul

# Sandpaper [2.0]

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Fall 2003 Issue

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# We all stand on the edge of a vast greatness.

When I was applying to Harvard Business School eight years ago, I remember an essay question that genuinely got me thinking: “*Are you an ordinary person in extraordinary circumstances? Or an extraordinary person in ordinary circumstances?*”

That question stumped me. I was 26, living in London, hanging out at fancy watering holes, traveling to exotic destinations within Europe. It was all amazing to me. But for most Londoners, my circumstances would be considered ordinary. I don’t know what I wrote, but I must have made something up. HBS saw through it. I got dinged.

I have talked, met, read about leaders in all spheres during the last ten years. Entrepreneurs. CEOs. Founders of Charities. Millionaires. Even a billionaire. Most of them started out quite ordinary. No child prodigies. Maybe a few flashes that indicated they were destined for greatness. But, slowly, gradually, or sometimes suddenly, something struck. They succeeded.

I’m sure we can all relate similar experiences, where we met ordinary people living out extraordinary lives. And once in a while, we’ve even met the truly extraordinary person. Leading an extraordinary life. I’ve been fortunate to have met a number of them this year. A number of extraordinary BITSians.

At the CEVC events this year, Chatter, Nesamoney and Hukku told their amazing stories. In each instance we came away marveling at their humbleness, their lack of egos, their gratefulness for having had one big idea that succeeded, their incredible sense of humor. However, none of them had illusions of this being their destiny, that they would do it one day.

They all did have one thing in common. An unparalleled focus. A huge appetite for risk. The lack of pretensions about their achievements. But if you ask them, they won’t think it was a particularly amazing idea or a particularly outstanding quality they possessed that made things happen.

I heard Deepak Chopra speak in Boston six months ago. He said that successful leaders all had one thing in common. These leaders called it Luck. Coincidence. Right place. Right time. Deepak calls this synchronicity. In his inimitable style he related this to quantum physics, the human body and ultimately, the soul. He talks about the greatness lying within all of us.

This Sandpaper talks about 20 brilliant BITSians who run huge companies in India. All have achieved a measurable degree of greatness. The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership hopes to sow some of those seeds within our

juniors to reach for that vast greatness that lies beyond most of us.

I believe we all have it within us to achieve that greatness. To rise to and to reach, to experience the extraordinary. But if it hasn’t happened yet, if there is no light at the end of the tunnel yet, have patience. Spend time with leaders. Read about them. Talk to them. Learn what Vivek Paul says in his thoughts on leadership about that we must do. For the success that eludes us may be just round the corner.

But if we achieve no greatness, leave no legacy beyond our children, are not remembered by more than two generations of our family members, we’ll all still be able to answer the HBS essay that stumped me eight years ago. All 30,000 BITSians could fill pages and pages of that essay. We would all write about being ordinary mortals yet having an extraordinary experience in a small village 200 kms from Delhi. That experience lasted for years. And we didn’t even know it then.

During those years, we ate ordinary food in ordinary surroundings. Had ordinary GPAs (me anyway). Talked about ordinary things. Learnt from ordinary people (most anyway). Yet all those ordinary evenings, with an ordinary bunch turned out to be a pretty damn extraordinary experience.

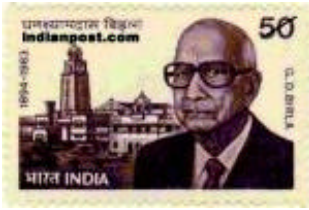
So while you go about striving for the greatness, don’t forget, that you’ve lived through the extraordinary. Stop for a moment and think about it. Better, pick up the phone and call someone. Re-live those moments. Remind yourself.

Kya din thé woh. Those were the days.

**Anupendra Sharma ('87)**  
Chief Editor



Anupendra (left) with Prasad Thammineni ('86), CEO of jPeople and CTO of BITSAA International at the East Coast USA Annual Event in October 2003.



# Chitthi Aye Hai

## On the launch of Sandpaper 2.0



**Please** accept my congratulations in bringing out the Sandpaper issue. It is very exciting to see the names of BITS alumni doing so well. Many names are very fresh in my memory. Wishing you and all other alumni very best.

*Professor L K Maheshwari, Deputy Director, BITS*

**It** was nice to see a nicely organized copy of the Sandpaper. Great work Team! Please keep the good work up! Whatever little help can come from my end shall be there.

*Professor Rahul Banerjee, BITS, Center for Software Development*

**Kudos** to the SandP team! Truly wonderful job with the webzine. I read it all in one go. Thanks so much for bringing back memorable vignettes of those glory days through the various articles. I have longed to go back there for a visit but somehow it has not been possible in all these years. Nice to have a bit (actually a lot) of BITS brought to us instead, through the magazine. Keep up the great work.

*Allalaghatta Pavan, 84A7PS041, Senior Principal Research Scientist, Honeywell Aerospace Electronic System*

**Excellent** material!! Please keep up the good work.

*Umesh Bhatia, '84*

**Only** now did I read the final version of sandp. it is phenomenal. I am really blown away. great job.

*Suraj Srinivasan, '86*

**Congratulations** to your team for publishing the Sandpaper magazine

*Deepak, Sydney*

**It** is great to see a revival of the Sandpaper masthead! Brings back some of my best memories. The broken down letter press -- working late nights -- NC chais ... Congratulations on a great job.

*Abani, Editor Sandpaper '86-87*

**Thank** you for your mail on the "Sandpaper". The Inaugural issue has come up well and very informative. I am sure BITSians and others will appreciate the way it has come. Congratulation to you and to your team for this effort.

*Dr. Motilal Dash, Chief, Community Welfare Unit, BITS Pilani*

**I** just came across the inaugural issue of Sandpaper 2.0. I greatly enjoyed reading the issue. It brought back many memories I did not even know I had ! Congratulations on a job well done, and thanks to the editorial team for their efforts in putting the issue together.

PS: It might be useful to include the batch/year of the various authors in future issues -- helps the reader know the frame of reference.

*Nitin Vaidya (82A3...)*

**I** read the Sandpaper online edition literally uninterrupted! Brought back loads of memories and made my day. I am urging as many people I know to get to read this. I can see the immense efforts that would have gone to produce such a slick magazine. Congratulations!

*Raja (Dr. K R V Subramanian), CEO, AnswerPal*

**I** really like what you guys are doing. I know first hand how difficult it is to put together a magazine. I used to publish a campus magazine by name "Vahini" in Telugu, all by handwriting.

*Krishna Vavilala, (1956-60)*

**This** is very neat. Thanks to all the editorial staff to put this fabulous magazine together. Its a nice trip.

*Arun Lakhotia, University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

**The** (e) SandP (2.0) seems to be the best idea BITSAA has come up with ever since I graduated in 1999. It is inspiring to see folks putting in efforts to get us all connected despite y our personal / professional schedules.

It was fun going through the sandpaper edition. **To be frank, I read it non stop (online) for 3 hrs and really am down with a severe bout of nostalgia.** It was nice to read through the achievements of BITSians and the class notes are a good way to keep track of people.

I remember vividly the changes that i had seen during my 5 yrs of stay there, right from the changing of marks distribution from 100 to 200, to the change of malviya bhawan to a girls' hostel. I just hope everybody devotes some time in updating the records, thereby contributing to its sprout in the long

run. Thanks very much and keep up your good work !

*Kannan P '99*

**Going** through the Sandpaper is not just nostalgic but is full of emotions. So many memories keep pouring out. Great Stuff and let us keep the enthu going. One more thing, I see that BITSAA international being a young body has a lot of enthu. Can we contribute articles from India ?

*Arjun Sinha Roy, '94, Head of Sales, PervasionOne*

**Thanks** a lot for the honor. The issue is indeed full of very attractive reading. Congratulations on a great first issue. Wish you all the best!

*Vinod Agarwal, CEO, LogicVision*

## On 12<sup>th</sup> Class Marks versus Entrance Exams for BITS Admissions (and some hilarious concerns about ghotus!)



**I** strongly disagree on BITS having entrance exams. This will dilute one of the key features of our Institute and going forward, we will just have 'Ghotus' in the Insti.

*Pushkar Nath Sen*

**I** feel the system of normalization so that there are representation from all states is really unique. May be we can develop a system so that every state gets a fair representation and the purpose of normalization is met.

*Ayusman Sarangi*

**By** having a different selection criteria, we are getting the best talent out of one group. This group comprises those who are more focussed on the 12th standard exams. Best of any group is always worthwhile. If we get into the entrance exam mode, we will be fighting for the same group as other insitutes, amd may end up with "Not-Best" inputs.

Also, the system of entrance system in itself devalues our education system of 12th standard, if we suggest that it is not the best parameter to gauge merit.

*Amit Jain*

**If** ghotoos will pour in through entrance exam.... we will become ghotoos and will be of no use to the country.

Entrance exam is something that brings all and sundry on a common platform for evaluation. That's the crux of the story and it's a good idea to go for entrance examinations.

*Baljeet Singh*

**It** will be really good if BITS will have an entrance system. It is really a true measure of one's hard work, competitiveness and intelligence in the 12th standard. In the current system every state does not has a unique marking scheme and has a different syllabus. Lets say a Board distributes marks like carrots and tomatoes. **Majority of fellow get marks between 98 to 99.99% marks by default. They are just born "ghutus".**

At the same time in pioneer country level boards, the difference between topper and other students is more. so even after normalization very few students (5 -7) are able to get into BITS. That too in some B or C grad courses.

By this, it seems that.... in other states the students are either above BITS standards or they are not even capable for BITS. So I strongly support government decision for the ENTRANCE TEST for BITS-Pilani

as it will allow meritorious and competent students from all over the country to compete for the best institution in India.

*Vishnu*

**Whoever** argues in favour of an All India Entrance Exam forgets the fact that these exams also do tend to be biased. A look at the finer aspects of the MHRD proposal shows that the exam is going to be conducted by the CBSE board !!!!! Wouldn't such an exam be biased towards the CBSE syllabus ??? Suggesting that we give in to such proposals would at best be a case of "out of the frying pan into the fire !!! "

**Today the MHRD would want us to follow their defined procedure for admission .. tomorrow it may be the syllabus taught at the institute ... the day after that they may want to take over the management. !!!!!!**

BITS has retained its status and grown into what it is due to its independence from government bureaucracy. A lot may be desired ... but to let the government interfere is not a solution !!!!!

*Praveen*

**Entrance** exams come with extra "benefit" called "Reservations". If the entrance exam is administered by govt. then the institutions are obliged to give 49% reservations (SC/ ST / OBC/ Girls, Ex-servicemen Children and other assorted categories). I think the only entrance test in India which does not follow this is IIT -JEE but they also MUST give 22% reservations for SC/ST. I think the current system is anyway better

*Guru*

# SandpaperOnline

[www.bitsaa.org/sandpaper/sandpaper.html](http://www.bitsaa.org/sandpaper/sandpaper.html)

## UP TO THE MINUTE STORIES YOU WON'T FIND HERE

This published version will appear twice a year. To access the latest news, stories, cartoons, humor, class notes and to find out the latest regarding the BITSConnect project, visit our website. In addition, find the Business News and archives of our past articles and news.

### **BITSAA Newsletter**

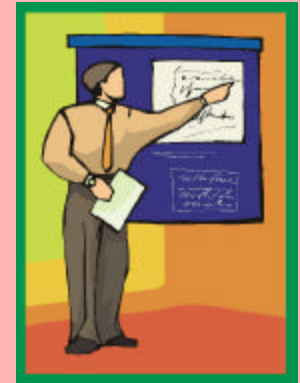
Every month we bring you a newsletter with stories about BITS and BITSAA through the Yahoogroups. In case you miss an edition, you can visit the Newsletter archives online and go through any issues and news that you may have missed out on.

### **BITSians IN BUSINESS**

Download the lists of the Top BITSians Leaders in Business. Also read about BITSian entrepreneurs who have started over 100 companies in the US alone. Nominate someone to this prestigious list by writing to us.

### **BITSians IN ACADEMICS**

At last count, there were **191 BITSian** alums teaching as professors at universities and research institutes around the world. All details including research, emails and phone numbers are to be found on the website. Contact these professors. Start a dialogue !



## TEAM SANDPAPER

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BY VENU PALAPARTHI ('87)

# 2003. THE YEAR THAT'S BEEN

**I**n 2002, BITSAA International laid the foundation promising to build a truly great alumni organization. With small and uncertain baby steps, we embarked on a journey – a journey to reconnect and to give. Small steps in the tradition of guru dakshina.

In 2003, those uncertain baby steps became stronger and surer, and as I write this annual review, we are already setting the standard for alumni organizations in India. The 'ex' in ex-BITSian must surely stand for exuberance! There is a buzz, and in every corner of the world, BITSians are stepping up, showing up or giving back. Connections are being made or revived for business and for pleasure, or quite simply, just for old times' sake!

There are many achievements to write about and numerous challenges lay ahead. Here are a few milestones that you will surely feel proud of on the eve of BITSAA's second birthday –

**Kicking up a storm!** The BITSAA network is now 4,000 BITSians strong – up from roughly 2,000 a year ago. Globally, the number of chapters with mailing lists and a schedule of events has doubled to 24! In addition, there are about a dozen cities that serve as BITSAA nodes and have permanent BITSAA contacts. 1,112 BITSians in India's Silicon Valley, Bangalore, are the biggest chapter in the world by a wide margin! Roughly 650 BITSians in the original Silicon

Valley constitute the second biggest chapter.

BITSAA had a busy calendar of events during 2003. Over 50 events were held worldwide ranging from a Golf Event in Princeton, New Jersey to a super-massive musical concert in Bangalore!

**BITSian leaders.** BITSians around the world have a lot to brag about this year. BITSians continue to be world beaters in anything they take an interest in. BITSians have won the Dewang Mehta Award for IT innovation for the second year straight! **Rajesh Hukku** took home the award for pioneering work in banking applications. Rajesh was also named one of the 25 Stars of Asia. **Rajesh Hukku** (I-Flex) and **Vivek Paul** (Wipro) were also named as two of the hottest dealmakers in India by Business Today.

BITSians started companies, saw their companies get funded, acted and directed movies, produced some excellent music, ran marathons, went on Everest expeditions – in other words, BITSians enjoyed life as only BITSians can!

**BITSians in Academics.** **Ravi Ravindran**, Penn State was named a Fulbright Scholar. **Kumar Venkataraman** won the Leo F. Corrigan Jr. Junior Faculty Research Fellowship, at SMU. **Krishnan Balasubramanian** of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was the recipient of the 2003



Distinguished Robert S. Mulliken Award 2003. **Krishna Saraswat**, Stanford has been selected to receive 2004 IEEE Andrew Grove Award for contributions to silicon process technology. **Srikanth Krishnamurthy**, UC Riverside won an NSF Career Award from the Advanced Network Infrastructure and Research division. **Suvrajeet Sen** has been appointed as Program Director of Operations Research at the National Science Foundation (NSF). **Sharmila C. Chatterjee**, Golden Gate University won the first prize in a nationwide competition organized by the Interactive Marketing Institute. **Yashwant Malaiya**, Colorado State University is the General Chair of the 14<sup>th</sup> IEEE International Symposium on Software Reliability Engineering. And **Nilay Yagnik** was awarded Best Faculty of the Year 2003 at NMIMS, Mumbai.

## BITS Pilani accomplishments.

# 5

The 2003 India Today rankings confirmed that BITS remains one of India's

top engineering schools, ranking No. 5 overall. Work on the spanking new, fully airconditioned, state-of-the-art BITS Pilani Goa Campus continues unabated in line for a grand 2004 opening. BITS students worked with faculty and alumni to be named one of India's top 5 university entrepreneurship centers by the

Wadhvani Foundation. A 5-student team from BITS won the IBM Great Minds Challenge leaving IIT-Delhi in second position in a 100+ entry India-wide contest. A 2-member student team consisting of **Gaurav Mathur** and **Vishakha Gupta** was chosen as one of 8 finalist teams for the Intel India Student Research 2003-04 contest. And three BITSians were amongst 10 recipients of the Aditya Birla Scholarships in 2003 – only 7 IIT's and BITS students are allowed to participate for these scholarships.

And now for a tour of BITSAA activities.

### Stepping up to the plate!

BITSians did not invent volunteerism but they surely have redefined it with their passion and loyalty! There are roughly 250 alumni volunteers worldwide, some devoting over 30 hours a week for their alma mater! Project BITSCONNECT alone has over 75 volunteers working in the fundraising, marketing, finance and project teams.

**Fun(d) raising!** Who would



have imagined that an organization still in its second year would be able to set itself a target to raise \$750K and then go on to achieve it before the

year is out? The Director asked and the junta responded in style.

It is official, the IT boom is still on! Leading the list of patrons from the front were the technocrats - BITSAA Silicon Valley and BITSAA Bangalore. BITSAA Bangalore wrote a check for Rs. 35 lakhs for BITSCONNECT and what fun they had raising the money at BITSCONNECTION - a music concert that brought many generations of music clubbers together! BITSAA chapters in all major Indian cities chipped in with another Rs. 12 lakhs.

### BITSCONNECT and other giving initiatives!

BITSCONNECT, the \$1.5 million project to wire BITS, took center stage and stands out as the biggest alumni initiative by BITSians to date. In line with BITSAA's charter, BITSAA also dedicated itself to initiatives to help the society at large. One such initiative bore fruit when Rajasthan Association of North America (RANA) selected BITS Pilani as its partner for a \$200K initiative to create a model for water conservation and rural development in Rajasthan. BITSAA led by Dr. B.P. Agrawal facilitated the grant and Prof. LK Maheshwari flew down to New York to present the grant proposal.

During 2003, BITSAA continued to fund two merit cum need scholarships to commemorate **Vamsi Pendyala** and **SS Seshadri**. In addition, BITSAA also launched the **Leuna Harkawat Thamatur** music award, a Rs. 5,000 annual prize that will recognize musical talent during Oasis, in memory of Leuna (class of '91).

**Sandpaper.** Sandpaper's alumni edition was launched in the first quarter of 2003. It is without

doubt the best alumni magazine in India - a labor of love of over thirty BITS alumni some of whom are real life writers and reporters. One Rediff columnist was awestruck when he read the Sandpaper magazine! He had never seen a grander or slicker alumni publication! He was even more surprised to see that one of the articles was by **Dilip D'Souza**, his colleague at Rediff!

**Academic Initiatives.** Efforts are on to launch new PS stations and sign MOU's for collaborative research between BITS and universities in the US, etc. An early success was the MOU that was signed between SUNY Binghamton and BITS in the area of Electronics Manufacturing Research and Services. This collaboration will include BITSians doing their thesis under the supervision of SUNY faculty. Five other US PS2 stations are currently in discussions. With over 180 professors teaching at over 100 universities overseas, we'd like to see a tremendous increase in international PS2 stations.



**Entrepreneurial Initiatives.** BITSAA launched the CEVC during 2003 to promote networking among BITSians with an interest in



entrepreneurship. CEVC organized networking events with BITSians such as **Mukesh Chatter, Rajesh Hukku, and Diaz Nesamoney** (photo above; credit: siliconIndia) speaking to small groups of entrepreneurial BITSians at Boston, Palo Alto, and Princeton. Since once of CEVC's objectives is to sow the seeds of entrepreneurship at BITS, CEVC launched the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at Pilani, and then played a key role BITS' winning the nationwide competition to form one of five foundation colleges of the National Entrepreneurship Network created by IIT Mumbai alum, Romesh Wadhvani's Wadhvani Foundation. **BITS joins IIT Mumbai, IIM Ahmedabad, SP Jain and Institute of Bioinformatics & Biotechnology** in becoming the backbone for entrepreneurship education in India.

**BITSAA.Org.** BITSAA.Org went from a loose collection of pages to a portal for BITSians worldwide - one that was recently profiled by Rediff NetGuide! BITSAA.Org has tools and content for linking the BITS community, for commerce and for project management. The Photo Gallery is the most popular section of BITSAA - some photos have been viewed over 3,000 times in the last year! This is closely followed by the monthly Sandpaper newsletter that is distributed to every



BITSian on our mailing list!

**BITSAA Store.** The

newly launched BITSAA Store is growing in popularity with the t-shirts designed by Art&Dee folks quickly becoming the best selling item. Also on sale here is the BITS CCTV production, a DVD (MPEG format) titled "A trip down memory lane."

**Media Attention.** Has the media taken notice? Of course it has! Thanks to the efforts of our marketing team, BITSAA is getting a lot of attention from Indian media. Times of India was spellbound by the Mumbai kick-off event aptly called "Time of your life!" Deccan Herald was bowled over by the standing room only BITSConnexion concert in Bangalore. India Abroad, Indian Express, Economic Times, The Hindu - in fact, there has not been a national newspaper in India that has not written about BITSCONNECT! Rediff NetGuide profiled BITSAA's web-site! India Tribune interviewed senior alumni **Prem Jain, Vivek Paul** and **Satish Gupta** regarding BITSAA and BITSCONNECT. BITSAA is in the spotlight. And this is only the beginning.

**Goals for 2004.** The foundation is now firmly in place for a global, leading edge organization. But leadership is not derived from position. It results from action. We cannot rest on our laurels nor can we sit back and hope that BITSAA will continue to grow stronger. Organizationally, our main objective for 2004 is to create democratic structures and processes for BITSAA so that the organization benefits from fresh ideas once the present leadership hands over the reins to people with fresh ideas.

Operationally, our goal is to shore up finances in 2004 so that the organization does not continuously rely on the benevolence of a few.

From an infrastructure angle, a key deliverable for 2004 is to offer membership benefits for fee-paying. These chapter level dues will be voluntary but critical for continued success of BITSAA. Member benefits will be similar to those enjoyed by alumni of comparable US universities like MIT. These include career guidance, mentoring, job board, enhanced networking opportunities, BITS alumni directory, photo albums, travel center for BITSians visiting BITS, etc. In addition to this, members will enjoy discounts to any chapter level events.

Another major milestone for BITSAA is to increase our membership to 10,000 BITSians worldwide. To that end, we will launch a massive campaign called "Reconnect" for discovering BITSians. From a marketing angle, our goal will be to generate the interest of mainstream press - the likes of Times or BBC.

But the most important goal of all for 2004 is to continue to make BITSAA fun! A place where people can relive those magical years of their lives! A place where they can hang out with their friends, their wingies, their batchmates, and their PS mates! A place where they can reconnect and through these connections, somehow inject some old BITSian sizzle into their lives. That is the reason for our being! ;

BY THE SANDPAPER NEWS TEAM

# BUSINESS NEWS

**October 27, 2003: Balaji**

**Krishnamurthy**, Planar's 50-year-old Chairman, president and CEO, was profiled in the

Wall Street Journal for exceptional corporate governance. He discloses to fellow top executives all of the self-evaluation that he prepares for the board. Mr. Krishnamurthy has overseen his company's fourfold stock increase during his four-year tenure. In his self assessment for the year ended Sept. 27, 2002, he also shared the following hard-hitting observations (and BITSian style grading) in giving himself an overall grade of B-/C+.

**October 7, 2003: Rajesh Hukku**, founder of I-Flex Solutions wins Second Dewang Mehta Award for Innovation, presented by the The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India. Hukku donated the money to I-Flex's foundation for underprivileged children.

**Sept. 29, 2003**

Talisma announced the appointment of **Vikram G. Shah**, an industry veteran with over 28

years of experience in IT, as Managing Director, India. In his last assignment before joining Talisma, Mr. Shah was MD of Andiamo Software in Bangalore. Prior to that, he served as MD of Novell. He has an MS in Computer Science from UC Berkeley.

**Sept 14, 2003: RK Arora**,

executive director of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), has been appointed as the Convener of the CSI-Nihilent e-Governance Awards 2002-03. Arora is also a recipient

of the Ratna Jyoti Award (1999) of the Indian Institute of Economic Entrepreneur Council and Man of the Year (1999) Award of the American Biographical Institute.

**Sept 9, 2003: CVL Srinivas**, chief operating officer, north and south, Madison Media, has put in his papers. "At this point, I have a couple of options, though I have not frozen on any one of them." He is an engineering graduate from BITS and XLRI MBA.

**Aug. 12, 2003 Harish Bhat** (Class of 1984 and former G-Sec.) is new Tanishq CEO. He was till recently Vice-President - Sales & Marketing at the Firm. He takes over the reins of Tanishq from Mr Jacob Kurian, who had, earlier this month, announced his decision to pursue other opportunities outside the company. Mr Bhat worked at TAS for 16 years before joining Tanishq.

**August 8, 2003 ML Agarwal**, MD of Ankit elected as the "President" of "Asian Corrugated Case Association" at its AGM held in Singapore.

**August 3, 2003: Baba Kalyani**, Bharat Forge and **Rajesh Hukku**, I-Flex, share the limelight of six famous Indian companies such as *Geometric Software*, *Apollo Hospitals*, *Divi's Labs* and *HDFC Bank* in Business Today's shortlist of Indian companies that could become the next Infosys - a hot global stock. Bharat Forge is a Rs 690 crore Indian automotive components supplier. I-Flex is the world no. 1 financial services software company.

**July 3, 2003: Anurag Jain**, Founder of Vision Healthsource sells company to Perot Systems for \$10 million, including \$3 million in cash and \$7 million in a structured earnout. Anurag



previously founded Brigade, which

raised \$100 million in financing from General Atlantic Partners.

**June 27, 2003: Srinivas**

**Balasubramanian**, Founder of Infravio raises \$6.2 million. Infravio, a provider of Web Services



integration and management software, said it has raised \$6.2 million in a second round of venture financing from Walden

International and Crystal Ventures. Infravio will use the funding to broaden its product development, sales and marketing efforts. The company intends to provide integration solutions based on Web Services standards.

**June 10, 2003: Sarvega Inc.**, a maker of extensible markup language (XML) appliances, announced raised a \$10 million second round of funding InterWest Partners, Bessemer Venture Partners, ComVentures, and KB Partners. **Girish Juneja** is Co-Founder and VP of Engineering at Sarvega.



**June 9, 2003: Rajesh Hukku**, founder of I-Flex Solutions, India's No. 1 Software Company, is named amongst 25 Stars of Asia by Businessweek.

**April 24, 2003: Sharad Mehrotra**, President & CEO of Fabric7 Systems, Inc. completed a Series A \$14 million financing in early April. Fabric7 is focused on delivering innovative system solutions for enterprise data centers. Investors in the Series A Round include New Enterprise Associates, Goldman Sachs and Fidelity Ventures, and other investors. Sharad raised a staggering \$300 million in financing for his previous venture, Procket.

# Supernatural thriller Rudraksh premieres on October 3



**Bollywood's** new generation directors are making an arduous effort of breaking away from the song-and-dance movies of the 80's and 90's. BITSian Chemical Engineer **Mani Shankar's** latest venture, Rudraksh, starring Bipasha Basu, Sanjay Dutt, Sunil Shetty and Isha Koppikar, hovers between science and magic, myth and reality.

Rudraksh is an unusual movie with mind-blowing seventy-five minutes of special effects - the most ever seen on Indian cinema. Its spellbinding narrative promises to keep the viewers enthralled till the end. †

## Greencard Fever is another successful crossover film



**BITSi an** Vijay Vaidyanathan joins an increasing number of Indians producing crossover films in the United States. This first venture produced by Vijay and his wife, Sheena (also a BITSian), and directed by first timer Bala Rajasekharuni, with recognizable Indian American actress, Purva Bedi, and Vikram Dasu, an actor that could pass for a BITSIAN (with kurta, jeans and no money in his pocket), the story is a classic one about Murali, who comes to America, looking for a way to get a green card and become legal. He becomes a victim of corruption, local politics and racism. The movie, which received mixed reviews, contained excellent performances, providing romance, comedy and drama.

# Masala & Spice

The performances certainly tugged at the heartstrings of BITSians who could relate to their first experiences in America. Vijay sees NEMI as a convergence of his passions for Technology and Theater. Vijay was the Chief Strategy Officer of NBC Internet (NBCi), on the Board of Directors and CTO of

Xoom, President & CEO of Paralogic Corp. and also on the Board of Directors at The University at Albany Foundation. †

## Alter Ego, hits New York with Tom Stoppard's Indian Ink.



**In** April 2002, a BITSian EDC veteran, **Anuraag Agarwal**, joined hands with Bhavna Thakur and other theater enthusiasts in New York to launch AlterEgo productions. Almost all founders were desi lawyers, doctors, or investment bankers that had 9-5 jobs! After successfully presenting Girish Karnad's Hayavadana at the Present Company Theatorium and Anuvab Pal's Chaos Theory at the Here Arts Center, Alter Ego is now launching its biggest production to date.

As NYMetro.com aptly put it - "Tom Stoppard's 1995 play Indian Ink hasn't been done in New York until now... It is how it's coming to the city has people talking: Usually, Stoppard plays debut on Broadway or at Lincoln Center, but in this case, the first staging will be in Tribeca's little Walkerspace Theater, in the hands of the one-year-old company Alter Ego." †

## Cover Story

BY ANUPENDRA SHARMA ('87), SANDEEP MUKHERJEE ('95) &amp; PUSHKALA VENKATRAMAN ('95)

# MADE IN PILANI : TOP 20 CEOs OF INDIAN COMPANIES

*This is the first ever survey of BITSian leadership in India, and what a remarkable collection of jewels we have uncovered ! This list of people represents generations of BITSians, showing examples of innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership and enterprise, in a wide range of industries. BITSian companies dominate in India's leading arenas such as Software, IT and BPO to rapidly growing industries such as Pharmaceuticals and Automotive, consumer-oriented products such as jewelry, televisions, cameras and computers and mature sectors such as real estate and infrastructure. Most of these companies are public traded in India. Many companies are world leaders in their sectors. The CEOs are household names, are or have been Presidents of their Industry Associations, and have won many awards domestically and internationally. Collectively these companies account for over Rs 11,000 crores in revenues and employ thousands. Here follows the story of the leading BITSian leaders and the companies that were made in Pilani.*

Rank	Name	Title & Company	Sector	Revenues (crores)
1	Vivek Paul	CEO, Wipro Technologies	Software & IT	2,500
2	Kuldip K Kaura	MD, Hindustan Zinc	Infrastructure	1,650
3	Sunil Duggal	CEO, Dabur Group	Pharma/Food	1,159
4	Gulu Mirchandani	C&MD, Mirc Electronics (Onida)	Electronics	907
5	Baba Kalyani	C&MD, Bharat Forge	Automotive	688
6	Rakesh Kalra	MD, Eicher Motors	Automotive	626
7	Rajesh Hukku	CEO, I-Flex Solutions	Software & IT	585
8	Harish Bhat	CEO, Tanishq	Jewellery	400
9	Ramesh D Grover	CEO, CMS Computers	Computers	306
10	BK Patodia	MD, GTN Textiles	Textiles	235
11	SN Zindal	Chairman, STPI	Real Estate	110
12	Anil Gupta	CEO, Microtek	Computers	100
12	JC Jain	Chairman, Texplas Group	Industrial	100
14	Deep Kapuria	CEO, High Tech Gears Ltd.	Automotive	89
15	Vijay Rao	CEO, Epicenter Technologies	BPO	80
16	RK Arora	Executive Director, CDAC	Computers	70
17	SK Garg	MD, Eldeco Group	Real Estate	33
18	Naresh Khattar	CEO, Avalon Resorts	Real Estate	30
19	Yogesh Vaidya	Chairman, STG	Software & IT	20
20	Anurag Jain	CEO, Vision Healthsource	BPO	15

## 1. Vivek Paul, Wipro Technologies



Not surprisingly, Vivek Paul, Chairman and Vice President of Wipro Technologies, comes in at No. 1. Vivek Paul is arguably the most well known BITSian name and face around. In his role as CEO of Wipro's global information technology, product engineering, and business process services segment he is responsible for a segment that has a revenue run rate of \$800m, with 20,000 employees and offices in 24 locations around the world and contributes no less than 90% of Wipro's overall profits, and a significant portion of its \$7 billion valuation. Its amazing that he has created Wipro into a global powerhouse in only four years at its helm. He initially built a strong position as a low-cost outsourcing firm that could integrate closely with client teams. One of Paul's first moves was to set up his headquarters in Santa Clara, California to be closer to his customers. He trained 7,000 employees in Six Sigma, moved the headquarters to Santa Clara, and has achieved 45% annual revenue growth and 50% annual earnings growth. His prior business experiences include

stints at Bain & Co., PepsiCo Inc and, in his last job, he spent over 10 years at General Electric. He started GE's initiative to source software from India and was a member of the very first evaluation team to visit India. In the early '90s he pioneered the joint venture between GE Medical Systems and Wipro and was soon appointed President and CEO of this joint venture. He took the venture from being a fledgling start-up to becoming a leader in the domestic Indian market. In 1996 he returned to the US to run GE's Global CT Scanner business, a business unit with over \$700M in revenues. The business bestseller book Six Sigma mentioned his pioneering work with the application of Six Sigma techniques in high tech product design. He graduated with a BE in EEE from BITS, Pilani, after which he went on to complete his MBA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He was one of 3 Indians to be named among Asia's 25 Movers & Shakers by AsiaWeek in March 2001. He is a member of the Board of the California Chamber of Commerce, and Vice Chairman of its Technology Committee. He is also a member of the BITS Senate, on the advisory board of Stanford University's Radiology Department and a charter member of The Silicon Valley Indus Entrepreneurs Organization. He is also heavily involved in BITSAA alumni activities.

## 2. Kuldip K Kaura, Hindustan Zinc

KK Kaura ran ABB India as Managing Director till 2001. ABB India had sales of over Rs. 800 crores when KK Kaura decided to leave to pursue other opportunities. When the Sterlite Group took a 26% stake in Hindustan Zinc in 2002, KK Kaura, who was then President of Sterlite's copper business, was appointed as Managing Director. Hindustan Zinc is one of the world's largest manufacturers of Zinc. KK Kaura holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering (1968) from Pilani. At a BITSAA Delhi event, he was presented with a memento on behalf of the association by Rear Admiral Arun Saxena in December 2000.

## 3. Sunil Duggal, Dabur Group



Sunil Duggal was appointed CEO of Dabur India Limited in June 2002 after just 5 years with Dabur. Dabur is one of India's oldest and best known names with famous brands such as Chyavanprash (who can forget that !) and Vatika. Sunil joined Dabur in 1995 as General Manager (Sales & Marketing), of the Family Products Division. This Division spearheaded the spectacular growth recorded by Dabur during this period. Vatika was also launched during this period and is now the Company's second biggest brand. His meteoric rise in the organization continued when he became Vice-President and SBU-Head of the Family Products and subsequently, Division Director Sales and Marketing of Dabur India Limited. Sunil has spent all his working life in the FMCG sector. He

had started out his career with Wimco Limited in 1981 as a Management Trainee after having completed his education in EEE at BITS and Business Management at Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. Between 1981 and 1995, he worked in many different roles at Wimco, Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd for a short period, and Pepsi Foods as GM, Sales Operation.

#### 4. Gulu Mirchandani, Mirc Electronics (Onida)



Gulu Mirchandani is the Chairman & Managing Director of MIRC Electronics Ltd. – manufacturers of the third largest brand of color televisions in India - ‘ONIDA’. We all remember the upstart company – Onida, that hit the market with its outstanding and controversial advertising campaigns in the 80s – Neighbors Envy, Owners Pride – and the face of the devil that became the face of the company and made Onida one of India’s biggest consumer product successes. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of ‘KEC International Ltd.’, ‘Blow Plast Ltd.’ and ‘Shoppers’ Stop Ltd.’. In 1999 under his leadership, MIRC Electronics Ltd. also won the ‘Award for Excellence in Electronics’ conferred by the Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India. He holds a BE in Mechanical

Engineering degree from BITS. He was the President of ‘Consumer Electronics and TV Manufacturers Association’ (CETMA) between 1992-94 and is a much sought-after industry spokesperson. He is currently the Chairman of the Bombay Chapter of the World Presidents’ Organisation (WPO), an International organization of more than 3000 CEOs with operations in more than 60 countries.

#### 5. Baba Kalyani, Kalyani Group (Bharat Forge)



Baba Kalyani is the Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Forge, India, the largest auto components company in India. The Kalyani Group also has interests in specialty steels, infrastructure and IT enabled services. Bharat Forge is the largest forge in the world and the flagship company of the Kalyani Group. The Kalyani group has successful joint ventures with global companies such as Robert Bosch, ArvinMeritor and Sharp. It is one of the largest Indian exporters of engineered products. Infrastructure development in India and IT enabled services has been identified as new growth areas for the company. Baba graduated with a BE in Mechanical Engineering from BITS and an MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is a National Council member of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and is involved in various philanthropic activities and projects including promotion of primary education for underprivileged children through the India Education Initiative and Pratham Pune Education Foundation. He is also Chairman of the Board of Governors, Indian Institute of Management, Indore.

#### 6. Rakesh Kalra, Eicher Motors



Rakesh Kalra is the Managing Director of Eicher Motors Ltd. He joined Eicher Tractors Ltd. in 1980 in the Materials Management function and moved to Eicher Motors Ltd. at Indore in 1985 going on to take over as Managing Director of the company in 1999. He started his career with Bharat Electronics Ltd, Bangalore, a leading manufacturer of radar equipment for the armed forces in India. He holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from BITS, Pilani and is an active member of the CII and is presently Chairman - Malwa Zonal Council. He is also a member of the CII - M.P. Council and CII-Western Regional Council. Eicher Motors manufactures and markets commercial vehicles and has a network of more than 500 contact points throughout India for sales, service and spare parts, backed by around 4500 private mechanics trained by the company. EML was incorporated in 1982 in technical and financial collaboration with Mitsubishi of Japan for the manufacture of 6 ton gvw LCVs. Eicher Motors currently has 23% market share in the 6-9 ton segment. The Eicher group is an established

name in the automobile sector. For instance, after a spate of accidents involving school buses in Delhi, the company promptly launched a variant of its Skyline bus, which specifically addressed the safety concern of children.

#### 7. Rajesh Hukku, I-Flex Solutions



With fiscal 2003 revenue of \$134 million and 2,370 employees, Rajesh Hukku is founder, Chairman and MD of India’s largest software (not IT) company, also the world’s largest financial software company. Rajesh started out his career, not unlike so many of us, as a Trainee Programmer, he went on to be employed as a Software Developer and Designer with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) before he joined Citicorp Overseas Software Limited (COSL) as Project Manager in 1987. He left with a group to start I-Flex in 1988. The \$1 million invested by Citicorp Venture Capital in the business is worth over \$400 million today. Rajesh is an outstanding marketer. When an executive gave him a brush-

off, telling him the bank's system was so complex that only God could figure it out, Hukku made a deft save. "Sir, we are Indians," he said. "We are very religious, and very close to God." He won the business. Rajesh holds a BE EEE from BITS Pilani (he graduated second in his class). and has also completed Post Graduate Research (sponsored by Tata Consultancy Services) in Local Area Networks from College Park, Maryland, USA. He is also heavily involved in BITSAA alumni activities. He has received two honors for his success story - the prestigious Ernst & Young, Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Information Technology in 2002 and the 'Dewang Mehta Award for Innovation in Information Technology' conferred by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology – the second time the award has been given, and the second time it has gone to a BITSian.

### 8. Harish Bhat, Tanishq



Tanishq is one of the top five retailers in India, with 60 showrooms in 47 cities. Only six of these are owned by the company. The rest are run by franchisees. It contributes 40 per cent to Titan's business and is expected to account for 55 per cent by 2007. The firm is run by Harish Bhat who was Chief Operating Officer till recently been named to the top post. He also successfully led the sales, marketing and retailing efforts over the past two years, in his capacity as Vice-President - Sales & Marketing, and helped turn around the company from its three years of successive losses. Harish now has ambitious plans to grow the company's revenues to Rs 800 crores in three years. Tanishq has tied up with a US retailing company and is looking to aggressively grow overseas. After graduating from BITS Harish went on to complete his MBA at the Indian Institute of Management (Ahmedabad). His diverse experiences with the Tata group began with the Tata Administrative Service (TAS)

and, over a span of 16 years, his Leadership roles have included FMCG marketing, sales and distribution, and strategic planning.

### 9. Ramesh D Grover, CMS Computers



CMS Computers Ltd. was started 25 years ago as a computer maintenance company with two colleagues, and Ramesh has been key critical in the development and growth of the organization, which today boasts of having almost 2500 people worldwide. He graduated from BITS with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and while in college pursued electronics as his hobby. Our very own Michael Dell, he assembled radios for his peers to earn pocket money. Every weekend he would travel to Delhi to buy a radio kit and assemble it during the week – assembling, over a couple of years, no less than 200 radios! After a brief stint with Larsen & Toubro, Ramesh joined IBM where, over the course of a decade, he rapidly evolving from his initial role of Trainee Engineer to National Technical Support Manager, picking up several service awards along the way. A couple of years subsequent to the introduction of FERA (Foreign Exchange Regulation Act), in 1976, IBM developed its exit strategy for India and this paved the way for the founding of CMS Computers. Today, the core divisions of CMS encompass all segments of IT - from manufacturing, through software development to customized product development. CMS boasts of 70 engineers in R&D centers in Mumbai, Pune and Trivandrum, engaged in the design and development of innovative IT empowered products. Key R&D initiatives have included touch screen point-of-sale, time attendance, access control and traffic control systems. Ramesh is definitely well on his way of realizing his vision of creating an IT powerhouse.

### 10. BK Patodia, GTN Textiles



When Bill Clinton visited Hyderabad to learn more about the IT industry there, GTN Textiles ended up in the headlines. T-shirts made by GTN are sold under the top-end Cutter & Buck brand – the brand that Clinton wears (The shirts retail for \$80-120). Clinton took back two Cutter & Buck golf T-shirts presented to him by the Chief Minister. An Engineering Graduate from one of the reputed Engineering Institute BITS Pilani, Mr.Patodia is the head of the well known G.T.N.Group. Of Companies, the Group has four export oriented Cotton Spinning Units. He is also the Director of Kerla State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd, Trivandrum, Committee Member Of Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, and Indo American Chamber Of Commerce & Industry, Branch (Kerla). GTN Group has Joint Venture with ITOCHU Corporation, Japan. GTN also has tieups with other companies like AM Player, Yves Saint Laurent, Leros and Louis Estere. GTN was established in 1966, and is now the national leader in fine-count cotton yarn exports. It has won the Textile Export Promotion Council Award for the best export effort in fine-count cotton yarn since 1984.

## 11. SN Zindal, STPI



STPI, The Software Technology Parks of India is arguably at the heart of India's software and BPO revolution, especially in key cities like Bangalore and Chennai. It houses the important software development centers of India and has some of the best infrastructure facilities in the world. But, Director General of STPI has global ambitions. A graduate from BITS Pilani and a post graduate from IIT Kanpur, he is making every effort to make STPI a world class player by forging important business associations with international players, opening many more centers and by increasing the inflow of technology and finance. Mr. Zindal is a senior member/fellow of many professional bodies like IEEE, IETE, and Broadcast Engineering Society. He previously worked in the capacity of Chairman and Managing Director ET&T corporation and is still associated with this company. As Director General, he is overall head of STPI having its presence at 21 centers in India and proposes to open more centers. He has about 29 years of experience and has headed major projects in government, private and public sectors. He is a senior member/fellow of many professional bodies like IEEE, USA, IETE, New Delhi, Broadcast Engineering Society, New Delhi. Earlier he was Chairman & Managing Director, ET&T Corporation Ltd., a Government of India enterprise, and is also presently holding additional charge for the same. SN Zindal says some companies, both Indian and foreign, have evinced interest to become STPI partner but the decision can be taken only after the government took the decision on corporatisation.

## 12. Anil Gupta, Microtek



Anil Gupta an Electronics Engineer from Pilani and the founder and director of Microtek, a company with 2,500 employees and 250 dealerships. Anil tried his hand at practically everything- From teaching, to manufacturing doorbells, to data processing, to computer education and to create a successful Rs. 400 crore computer peripheral business. A focused and a persistent mind lead him to move on from Televista where he was a service engineer to creating a company called Systems Technologies and Consultancies Services (STACS) which dealt with hardware and software design. Following several years of setbacks, diversification to other domains and pressure from international players, Mr. Gupta soon struck gold. He carefully analyzed the situation and decided to capitalize from the information technology industry which was still picking up in India. Some quick trips abroad and soon Mr. Gupta was completely into the business of selling monitors. Microtek was soon launched and became a big player in the monitors market. Mr. Gupta's perceptive analysis enabled him to keep Microtek in the game despite the entry of huge multinationals. It is surprising that Microtek continues to hold on in a highly-competitive market, where even domestic players like BPL, Samtel or global giants like Viewsonic have not tasted success. Today, the company continues to be the only player in monochromes with average sale of about 5,000 units per month. While the sale of color monitors has peaked and fallen from 450,000 units to less than 300,000 units, the huge channel network has ensured that Microtek continues to exist in the MC market. It is using the same channels to pump in other peripherals like keyboards, UPS' and motherboards. But the future doesn't look bright for smaller monitor players. Samsung, with an installed capacity of over 4 million units, in a country with a demand of less than 2 million units, can use the extra capacity to push out players.

## 12. JC Jain, Texplas Group



JC Jain has a career that is studded with awards and recognitions. A Master's degree holder in Production Engineering from Pilani and Bachelor's degree holder in Mechanical Engineering from Gwalior, Mr. Jain went on to establish Texplas (India Private Limited) in 1975. The company dealt with producing fiberglass based insulating materials for electrical equipments. At present, the company has graduated to become the Texplas group of industries that includes Texplas India (P) Ltd, Rishabh Velveleen Limited and Texplas International. He has previously worked in top management positions at Union Carbide India Limited and Hindustan Electro Graphite's and Carbon Corporation. One of Mr. Jain's most important contributions to the Indian Industry was to give the Total Quality (TQ) movement momentum and direction. He was responsible for several important developments in this area and has chaired many associations in this regard. Several companies have obtained his assistance in their quality initiative. For these efforts of Mr. Jain, he has received plenty of recognition both in India and abroad. He is one of the first approved from Registered Lead Auditors Accreditation Board (RAB), USA and an approved tutor by British Standards Institution, U.K. and RWTUV, Germany in India. He has been awarded the Udyog Ratn". "Udyog Patra" and "Samaj Ratn". In addition Mr. Jain is a member of International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee and the Managing Director of TQM International.



## 14. Deep Kapuria, Hi-Tech Gears



As President of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) and as Chairman and Managing Director of High Tech Gears, Mr. Deep Kapuria is an aggressive individual who sets high standards for himself. He has been persistent in his efforts of “upping” the auto industry in India by bringing in various collaborations and trade agreements. His efforts paid off when ACMA was conferred the ‘outstanding partner’ award 2002 by the Japan external trade organization (Jetro). He served as Vice-President of ACMA in the year 2001-2002 and, prior to this, was Chairman, ACMA (Northern Region) for four years. Mr. Kapuria holds an Honors Degree in Engineering from BITS Pilani and a management degree from Harvard Business School. He also undertook courses in quality control and processes and is today a certified Lead Assessor. In 1993 he held the position of Chairman of the Delhi Chapter of the Quality Circle Forum of India. High Tech Gears as the name suggests is a player in the auto ancillaries industry and manufactures automotive gears and shafts mainly for Hero Honda Motors.

## 15. Vijay Rao, Epicenter Technologies



Mr. Rao is considered a leader in the telecommunications industry in India with three decades of work experience in India and the US. As Managing Director (GBCS) at AT&T/Lucent, he was responsible for creating the market for call centers and voice mail in South Asia. As Executive Director and CEO of Escotel, an Indian Multinational cellular service company, he spearheaded his company to capture 67% of the market share in India. He has a Bachelors degree (B.E.) from one of India's best engineering institutes, BITS Pilani, and an MBA from the University of Colorado. Vijay has written articles on the telecom industry for the Wall Street Journal. He has also been on extensive lecture tours across India and the US.

## 16. RK Arora, CDAC



The development of the supercomputer by India after being denied the supply of US-made Cray supercomputer had once and for all proved that the country would never give in to technological blackmail, the scientists said. This was achieved under the watch of Eminent Executive Director for the Center for Advanced Computing (C-DAC), RK. Arora is an important contributor to an organization that has always attempted to be ‘three up’ over the rest in the race for being technologically sound in the process becoming a highly specialized corporation. CDAC - India's pride that has developed next generation technologies like the PARAM supercomputer is where RK Arora spends most of his time at. The combined and persistent efforts of eminent scientists like RK Arora himself has lead to C-DAC making vital contributions in the domain of high performance computing thus giving India the distinction of being amongst the few countries in the world to have accomplished something so significant. CDAC is now looking at developing A Grid Enabled Information Infrastructure for Next Generation High Performance Computing. Shri RK Arora is an graduate from BITS Pilani. (Note: RK Arora stepped down from CDAC after a very successful completion of his 5-year term at the helm of the group, at time of going to press)

## 17. SK Garg, Eldeco Group

Mr. SK Garg, a Civil Engineer from BITS Pilani, taught engineering at his alma mater. That was when the entrepreneurial surge took over him and he went on to found Ekdeco construction Pvt. Ltd. in 1975 and Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd thereafter. There was no stopping after that and Mr. Garg's passion propelled him to build more and more ambitious projects. From mini cities, to group housing projects to commercial complexes, Mr. SK Garg has been there, done it all and done it to perfection. It was thus no wonder when the company won the Builders Excellence award and Award for excellence in construction. From a humble beginning of 18 thousand sq. ft, the construction experience of Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd is an impressive 120 lakh sq. ft today. The company has already completed 45 projects in Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra and Ghaziabad with 18 more under-construction. The company went public in 1985 and is today listed on Mumbai, Delhi and Kanpur Stock exchanges.

## 18. Naresh Khattar, Avalon Resorts



Naresh Khattar is a civil engineer from Pilani and has made his niche in the highly competitive construction industry. Having been around in the field ever since 1978, he has the credit of successfully completing hallmark projects like the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Talkatora Swimming pool, Asiad Village, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Hilton Hotel, A. W.H.O. Som Vihar, Garden Estate and T.E.R.I. His prowess is visible not only in India but also many other countries including Germany, Argentina, UK and North America. Soon his untiring desire for 'more' overtook him and this time he set his sights on building resort hotels. Avalon Resorts, Mussorie the result of this latest venture has the 'Gold Crown' resort accreditation by RCI and is considered one of the most premium among holiday resorts in the country. Rita Khattar, an interior designer is perhaps Naresh's most valuable resource. Where Naresh builds, Rita adds the necessary ambience to make the project an impeccable piece of design. 'Gold Crown' resort accreditation by

RCI and is considered the most premium among holiday resorts in the country. Besides, Mr. Naresh Khattar also owns Enaar Exports, an export house recognised by the Government of India.

## 19. Yogesh Vaidya, Software Technology Group



With an extensive background in the corporate training and education markets, Mr. Vaidya guides eWebUniversity's focus as it addresses the high-growth e-learning market. Before co-founding eWebUniversity, Mr. Vaidya was founder and chairman of Software Technology Group (STG), one of India's top three IT software training and consulting companies. Prior to STG, Mr. Vaidya co-founded the HCL Group, one of the largest IT conglomerates in Asia. Mr. Vaidya holds bachelor's degrees in electronic and electrical engineering from Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS).

## 20. Anurag Jain, Vision Healthsource



Anurag Jain founded Vision Healthsource in 1997 to deliver end-to-end process outsourcing services to U.S healthcare providers. He functions as the Chief Executive of Vision Healthsource, Inc. He also co-founded Brigade Corporation, a customer support company, and managed the company's 700 customer support employees worldwide, as the Global VP of Operations that raised over \$115 million from venture capital firms such as General Atlantic Partners and Mohr, Davidow, although the company failed. AJ was a management consultant with Gemini Consulting where he launched wireless operations for telecom carriers worldwide. He holds an MBA from the University of Michigan and a BS degree in Electronics and Electrical Engineering from the Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences, Pilani, India. Chennai-based Vision Healthsource is one of the leading Health care Business Process Outsourcing (HBPO)

companies in India with a client base of over 25 US-based healthcare billing companies. A part of \$1.3 billion Perot Systems of the US, Vision offers its services to the US-based medical billing companies, hospitals, payors and third party processors with specialisation in claims, administrative processing and revenue-cycle management. The company handles US\$ 1 billion worth provider claims per year for physicians and hospital-based and physician specialties across the US and over 500 people process more than 25 million transactions from Chennai.

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**How we created this list:** *When we started working on this article, we "uncovered" so many successful BITSians in India that we didn't know how to create this list. Finally we settled on two simple criteria – the company had to be Indian and the individual had to be the CEO. This eliminated at least 20 CEOs of Indian arms of International companies (many large and famous ones) as well as many powerful board members, business unit heads and other such individuals. In creating our ranking we used only one measure – revenues. Although this may appear rather narrow, this is the least controversial measure we could think of. Over time, we will also introduce you to many other sparkling gems. And of course, if we've missed anyone or made any errors, please email us. We hope to make this list a regular annual feature. †*

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BY VIVEK PAUL

# MY THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP



It is truly a source of pleasure and pride to all of us BITS alumni to see how many successful leaders have been produced by BITS. What made the BITS experience so useful was that was that BITS did more than just teach us curriculum, it made us grow in multiple dimensions as we emerged from our protective familial cocoons to a melting pot of the best and the brightest from all economic strata and from all parts of India. The list of successful leaders in this issue is a salute to that diversity.

As I think about the essence of leadership, the first thing that comes to mind is that different circumstances sometimes throw up leaders that are right for that time and situation. But even if you hold aside the situational leader,

there are many threads in common for those that lead through all seasons, and I'll share a few through some key quotes.

“All progress owes itself to the demands of the unreasonable man”. To be reasonable is to accept the status quo, to accept small gains. You must be unreasonable -- have a vision, a change agenda, something that most people would not see or be willing to push. So look around you – what do you see changing that requires a different approach. Learn to pick up on the weak signals – change descends equally on everyone, but a few realize it faster than others. These few see a technology shift, a social shift, an industry shift and seize the agenda. So go explore the boundaries of knowledge. Be like

a jigsaw puzzle player who sees the full picture the fastest. And be unreasonable in demanding from yourself and others the effort it would take to change the status quo.

“Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself”. This skeptical view has checked many a leader in his or her tracks. Leadership can only be successful by example. If you expect hard work from others, you have to work the hardest. If you expect breakthroughs, you have to show a few yourself. There is no room in the world for “empty suits” and never let a formal designation lull you into thinking you no longer have to personally contribute. So always balance your time between directing and excelling as an individual performer in whichever aspect you can do well at.

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**All progress owes itself to the demands of the unreasonable man”. To be reasonable is to accept the status quo, to accept small gains.**

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“If it is not important to make a decision, it is important not to make a decision.” There is this stereotype of this macho leader spewing a barrage of decisions. The reality could not be more the opposite. You have to learn to live with ambiguity for about as long

as needed, able to balance the action list with “no regret”, “hedge the outcome” and “full steam ahead” moves. There are only two ways to get this mix right. First, use a lot of data for every decision. Irreconcilable differences vanish when enough data is mined. The disciplined training in thinking we all get at BITS is invaluable for this. Second, is listen – respectfully and with an open mind to your team. And here the diversity of your team is truly an asset. Foster the differences in perspective, and this is one area where I now see how BITS truly stood out in its encouragement of diversity in its population when I was a student. And since this is so critical, weed out yes men and foster people who are unafraid to tell you the unvarnished truth.

In the jungles outside Bangalore there are many elephant camps where one can see huge elephants chained to a tiny stake. I wondered why the elephants do not just pull them out of the

ground. I was told that as calves when they are tied to this stake, they try very hard to pull, but cannot, and reconcile themselves to being tied down by the stake. But as they grow bigger and stronger, they are mentally still tied to that stake and do not even try to break free. This then brings me to the next leadership idea – have an infinite faith in yourself. The problem in being a leader is that there is no one to say “well done”, no one to reconfirm your agenda against the whirlwinds of uncertainty you face every day. There is only you. And the good news is that just you is enough.



Credit: Fox News

I will end with something I learnt from Jack Welch, previous

Chairman of General Electric. He said that he loved international trips, because every time he got on the flight on the way home, he would pretend that he had just been appointed CEO, that this was his first day at the office and that the guy before him was quite a dud. He would come up with scores of things he would do differently as the new leader. And this brings me to my last leadership idea – always reinvent yourself, never being afraid to challenge your own past and your own success.

So in a nutshell, catch the wave of change for therein lies opportunity, be unreasonable in terms of your expectations, demand of yourself more than of others, have an infinite faith in yourself, never be reluctant to change yourself and when success swoons at your feet “always take your job seriously, but never take yourself seriously”.

## BITSian CEOs & MDs of Multinational Companies in India

Agendra Kumar		Ravi Sanghal	
Atul Saran		Sanjeev Khendry	
Deepak Sharma		Srikant Acharya	
Dinesh Mirchandani		Upinder Zutshi	
K Ramachandran		Vijay Yadav	
K S Viswanathan		Vikram Shah	
Lalit Ahuja		Surendra Surana	
Narendra Saxena		Pradipta Sen	
Rajendra Khare		Hitesh Bhatnagar	

Date: September 23, 2003

## DEAR FRIEND OF BITS



BITSConnect has been an extraordinary demonstration of loyalty and confidence in BITS. A big thank you to all the volunteers and supporters of BITSConnect for your time, energy and monetary contributions. It is largely due to your tireless support and financial help that BITSConnect has transformed from thought to deployment in under a year!

Many have asked us about the status of the project as well as the status of fundraising - how much was spent, which batch or chapter gave most money, etc. Here is a project summary as well as the answers to some of your questions while keeping in mind our donor's requests for privacy -

**ON TRACK AND BELOW BUDGET** We are happy to report that we have made excellent progress on Phase I of BITSConnect project implementation. Over \$250K of equipment has been deployed in Phase I. The BITSConnect campus backbone has been fully laid out and the new core of the network is now live.

Phase II equipment totaling \$470K after vendor discounts has been ordered and is being dispatched by our suppliers. The cost of deploying these phases is roughly \$300K. At the end of Phase II, BITS will have a fully functional network with all access points live and active.

The project team is 100% confident that the remaining work too will be completed on time, below budget, and BITSConnect infrastructure will be fully deployed by year-end.

**WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?** Over 15 kilometers of cable has been laid in Pilani and the core of the network is live. All hostel rooms now have voice-capable data network access points over a gigabit backbone. Staff quarters have been connected via Long Range Ethernet. The academic blocks are already on the new network. Wireless access points are being set up in the new library, the Senate Room and Sky. Configurations and 'bring-up' operations are progressing in full swing and the institute; hostel rooms and the staff quarters will all be on the network before the end of the semester.

**WHERE DID THE MONEY COME FROM?** Until BITSConnect came along, BITSAA International collected under \$10K in its under 2 years of existence as a not-for-profit organization. The estimated cost of BITSConnect was \$1.5 million. After substantial vendor discounts, the cost to BITS was \$1.2 million. Of this total, BITS laid out \$450K with BITSAA offering to raise the remaining amount of \$750K. This was a huge challenge - this amount was 75 times the amount BITSAA had raised in a single year! What's more, the \$750K had to be raised in under 12 months! BITSians had to quickly build fundraising capacity and launch a mammoth marketing campaign to lift the profile of BITSAA in the US. BITSians rose to the challenge and the proof is in the pudding. In all, BITSAA has raised about \$650K so far and here is an update on who gave how much and how can you help us in the last leg

**THE US NUMBERS!** Over 150 BITSians contributed roughly \$550K to BITSConnect in the US. This includes about \$58K from friends of alumni and other non-BITSian supporters! With the Silicon Valley Chapter in the driver's seat of the project, the two California chapters showed us the way - 90 Californians gave \$300K to BITSConnect! Boston based New England chapter surprised everyone with the highest per capita contribution!

Just 11 Massachusetts BITSians gave a combined total of \$63K – an average of about \$6K per person! Individual contributions ranged from \$20 to \$50,000.

**NERA BHARAT MAHAAN!** Chapters in India got into action only two months ago but posted an impressive total on the scoreboard! They contributed Rs. 45 lakhs or \$100K to the project. Bangalore came on top with over Rs. 30 lakhs. The Bangalore effort was helped greatly by BITSCONNECTION – a BITS style music night that has been the talk of India ever since. BITSians in Europe and Asia (outside India) contributed about \$2K.

**BATCH WISE – STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!** With memories of BITS fresh on their mind, the 90's batches showed strength in numbers. More than 50 BITSians from the 90's batches contributed roughly \$20K to BITSCONNECT.

**A ROUND OF APPLAUSE** A handful of BITSian grad students gave about \$200. For their unconditional love of their alma mater, they deserve the biggest applause!

**DIGGING DEEP...** It was the 60's and 70's batches that dug really deep into their pockets! Eight BITSians from the 60's gave over \$110K and roughly 40 BITSians from the 70's gave about \$160K to BITSCONNECT! One 60's batch BITSian based in DC wrote a check for \$50K! Only slightly behind their seniors, 35 BITSians from the 80's batches contributed roughly \$100K to the project.

**THE LAST MILE** The BITSCONNECT team takes this opportunity to thank all the contributors for your support. Thanks to your support, we are nearly at the finish line.

**BUT WE ARE RUNNING THE PROVERBIAL LAST MILE – WHICH HAS PROVED TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT MILE.** We are still \$100K short of the \$750K we committed. If you haven't already contributed and would like to do so, or you would like to contribute more to this effort, it is not too late to join in. When BITSCONNECT is completed later this year, we would have funded and implemented a massive 4000+ node network costing \$1.2 million in a little over 12 months! Thanks to your support, BITSCONNECT will provide a massive boost to preserve BITS' position as India's leading private sector university. Thanks once again for your help.

Your BITSCONNECT Core Team

*Anita Agarwal, BP Agrawal, Sandeep Arora, Dr. Rahul Banerjee, Shyamoli Banerjee, Mukul Chawla, Rajesh Chelapurath, Ajay Chopra, Mythreyee Ganapathy, Satish Gupta, Krishnaraj Inbarajan, Prem Jain, Roop Jain, Brijesh Khanna, Amit Khetan, Prof. S.P. Kothari, Jay Krishna, Karthik Krishna, Vidur Luthra, Ajay Madhok, Prof. J.P. Misra, Venu Palaparthi, Jayan Ramankutty, Anand Rajaram, Deepu Rathi, Devesh Satyavolu, Anupendra Sharma, Manish Sood, Mani Sundaram, Satish Tadikonda, Prasad Thammineni, Yogesh Vaidya, Prashant Viswanathan and many other volunteers across the globe!*

**We are still \$100K short of the \$750K we committed. If you haven't already contributed and would like to do so, or you would like to contribute more to this effort, it is not too late to join. Visit [www.bitsaa.org](http://www.bitsaa.org) to get more information or email [bitsconnect@bitsaa.org](mailto:bitsconnect@bitsaa.org)**

BY MANISH BAPHNA ('98)

## BITSCONNEXION – THE LARGEST BITSIAN ALUMNI GATHERING IN HISTORY

**Date:** 6th July 2003

**Venue:** Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore

**Occasion :** A Musical Nite by BITSians for BITSians!

BITSAA-Bangalore organized BITS ConneXion-2003, a unique event geared towards raising funds for the BITS Connect programme.

The auditorium witnessed performances from the Batch of 60s to the Batch of the new millenium. One was captivated by the diversity kinds of songs,

College". The event also brought together long-lost friends, and scenes like "If I am not wrong you are Suri, right ... ?" were common.

Towards the end of the show, the BITSAA committee members presented our Director with a cheque for Rs. 35/- lakhs, as the contribution from BITSAA Bangalore. This money was contributed by the sponsors as well as individual donors.

The BITS ConneXion-2003 event was made possible by the contribution of time and effort by over 30 dedicated volunteers. What started off with a simple idea to do something different, soon evolved into a full-scale Music Nite. Various teams like Publicity, Tickets, Hospitality, Venue-Management teams were formed to handle the various aspects of the show. The meticulous planning and publicity ensured that all the tickets were sold well ahead of the date of the show. It was a wonderful and well organized event directed towards a noble cause.

HATS OFF to the BITSians who made it possible. †



The chief guest for this momentous occasion was none other than the BITS Director, the favourite of all BITSians. Also members of our distinguished faculty like **Prof. R.K. Mittal, Prof. Gurunarayanan** and **Prof. Rahul Banerjee** graced the occasion.

The participants and the audience had converged from all parts of the country and even from as far as Malaysia. This only goes on to prove the enthusiasm and attachment that BITSians attach to their alma mater.

which ranged from KL Sehgal's to AR Rahman's; and a generous sprinkling of English Rock. The songs belted out by the performers brought the audience to their feet.

It was the typical AUDI scenario revisited, where people danced their way through the aisles, in front of the stage and even on-stage, and nostalgia was written large on the faces of the captivated audience. Some of the non-BITSian guests who attended the show were all praise for the event and even termed it the "BEST performance that they had seen from any Engineering

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**The BITSAA committee members presented our DIRO with a cheque for Rs. 35/- lakhs.**

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BY NIKHIL TATWAWADI

# THE STATE OF THE VIDYA VIHAR CAMPUS

*A trip to Pilani and Nikhil came back with plenty of news and a lot of interesting observations. For those of you who have not been back for a while, here's a virtual tour. Visit Photo Galleries at [www.bitsaa.org](http://www.bitsaa.org) to see a lot more photographs.*

All the roads were re-laid and all the roads have been named. To add to all these, now here are the new sign boards. They are neither big enough to be seen from a distance nor small enough to be ignored. They indicate directions to the newly named roads.

And if you come across, Shiv Ganga market the next time you

ones were removed. And to the most important thing, Audi has been provided with A/C, if you thought it was Air Conditioned, you are wrong, it is Air Cooling and the effect is good enough. All the side walls of the Audi have all been provided with false plastering and I doubt, if there would be any Audi Panels.

All Art n' Dee ites, please hold your breath, hope things fall in place. The lights room has given place to the A/C control panel and the sounds room is intact.

All the lights have been removed from the stage and they plan to provide better ones now. The sounds are still the same. Many people were of the

important feature of this Audi is the Fire and Smoke detector and Alarms, they are WORKING. So, tough time to lot of people who find thrill in smoking in the Audi.

The new shopping mall is yet to be completed but the sabzi shop from behind RBM has been relocated in the mall and it started functioning. All the BOGS in junior bahwans have been renovated. All of them have beautiful tiles. Two refrigerators have been provided in each bhawan (boyz) one for each floor. 76 first yearites are put in the new rooms between VK and RP. There were in all 780+ reported for admission and lo behold 275+ were gals. Infosys, EEE, CS, Maths, Eco had almost full reporting. This time there is a all time high of 16 gals in Mechanical. It is supposed to be highest for Mech in BITSian history. 120+ ME ites and a good no. of Ph.Ds. The reception center was a hi-tech one. All room allotment has been computerized and I bet it was very professional.

The banks opened counters just outside the reception counter. To top all these statistics is the fact that there are nearly 450+ students from Andhra alone. A small piece of info, there is this Pratibha scholarship for students from AP, who were outstanding in their 12th. This is given by the Govt. of AP. The interesting thing is, it seems the Chief Minister of AP promised free



come to Pilani... don't worry, it our very C'not Place. Audi has been TOTALLY renovated. The roof has been re-laid and a new false roofing was made. Apparently to improve the acoustics and I guess, it is still a lot to be desired. If you are a lover of the chandelier, do not worry, it is still there but, the other two small

view that some speakers should have been placed along the length of the Audi along with the false plastering. Anyway, there is always room for improvement. And the most





education to everyone who was eligible for this scholarship and joined BITS, Pilani. A wonderful way to encourage students, indeed. The there was this orientation, this time all the reporting and admission was preponed by a day.



**Malviya Bhawan now for girls** So, it was expected that 31st was an off-day for all the new admits, however, it was not to be so. The whole of the registration has been COMPUTERIZED. There were no more registration halls. All the students registered through the terminals available in all the 5 IPC rooms. And it finished of in time and it was really smooth. Every student was in for a surprise, as they could complete their registration in no time with the help of the menu driven software. The long time dream of computerized registration has been realized and the DTC cases have come down by 60%.

There were orientation sessions for the 1st yearites and all the seniors on the 31st of July and believe me the response of all the students was amazing. It was a great personal experience for me, conducting the presentation. It is a wonderful experience in all. Then coming to ragging, well, this time the institute authorities had to go a step further and take an undertaking from all the students. All the students were given an undertaking form along with their registration cards, where in they promised not to rag any

first yearite and they would accept any punishment, the worst of them being "getting expelled" from the insti, "if anything construed as ragging" had happened. So, you know what is going on in the seniors minds. The campus' political scene is hotting up. And now, after all the boy TAs have been placed in Ram Bhawan and some new admits in ME have been put there, there is a debate if a bhawan election has to be conducted in Ram. Weird is the thought process of these people. Some more..... Community Welfare Unit is now headed by Dr. Suresh Ramaswamy and RAF has been shifted to SWD. So, SWD shall handle the movies on campus and the committee is headed by Dr. Mahesh. The prices of the tickets have been hiked to Rs.75/- each for English and Hindi movies. ANC has now been totally renovated. Insti has taken over and SMC is running ANC. The wall is totally built and the opening is the gate that was there towards Shankar. Now there is a huge and beautiful entrance to our Gym grounds. It looks great. The entire ground has been walled. It would have been better if the gym ground is also totally renovated .

Some news about MB, now there is this 4-digit numbering to rooms in MB. This is for all the new blocks other than the oldest block. so, if a number is 9345, it means 9th block, 2nd floor (remember the ground floor is 1) and 45th room. The oldest block still retains the old room nos. All the gal TAs/PAs have been accommodated in the Old TA quarters. In my earlier mails, I guess I mentioned about the new flats being constructed near the TA quarters and behind the

Diro's house. Now, all of them are complete and are occupied.

There is also a change of guards as the Wardens of various bhawans. Dr. Muralidhar Rao - Shankar, Dr. MS Das Gupta - Budh, Dr. VK Chaubey - Ashok and a change is expected at VK as well. All the shop keepers in C'not have renovated their shops. GD went a step further and has introduced a whole new recipe of Ice Creams. He has taken up a dealership for Pastonji and he is doing a brisk business. He also introduced a whole new variety of packed sea food and some have complimented that the food is really great. Gem boys, next to Annapurna, has diversified to clothing and gift articles from electrical appliances, I expect this to be seasonal.

The CEERI gate is open only for pedestrians and cyclists, all others have to take the road besides the post office. The security in the entire campus has been beefed up and all the regular vehicles that come into campus are now given a pass, a sticker on the vehicles. CEERI also introduced a similar system. As for campus interviews, 57 companies have been listed in all. Dr. Raghurama had a talk with all the aspirants this morning in the audi. Most of the BIG companies were listed as tentative. So, everyone is keeping their fingers crossed. There may be no second job or dream job concept this time. Hope everyone makes a good job. On the GRE front, it is not all that great, as of now only on 2400 has been reported and only 2 2300+ have been reported, many landed up in the range of 2000-2200. †

BY THE BITS CEL STUDENT TEAM

# The BITS Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership:

## Named one of the Top 5 Centres in India

**F**or the first time in BITS history, a significant effort has been made to institutionalize the teaching of Entrepreneurship through its newest and eighth centre of excellence, the Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership. The idea was seeded by the **BITSAA Center for Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital (CEVC)** with the vision of promoting the spirit of entrepreneurial thinking among the BITSian community back in March this year. The students and the Institute shared this vision and came together in record time to set up the centre. In a short space of six months, the vision, energy and enthusiasm of a combined group of students, faculty and alumni has resulted in a significant progress in this direction – and in being named one of the Top 5

The idea of CEL was conceived in May 2003 and it kicked off with a splendid achievement within the 2 months that followed. CEL was one of over 200 applicants in The Wadhvani Foundation's search for a team of 5 universities that would form the hub of the National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN) they wished to create, that would formalize the teachings of entrepreneurship in India. **Professors VS Rao, RK Mittal, SB Mishra and Vijaya Ganesh** worked closely with alumni **Aashish Bhinde** and **Anupendra Sharma**, and in conjunction with **Vivek Pandita, Satish Gupta** and the rest of the CEVC team, and the founding CEL student team comprising **Aditi Pany, Harsh Jegadeesan, Venkatesan** and **Jimit Arora**. The final product was bold design for CEL. This was presented to the Wadhvani Foundation team

2003 summer vacation. BITS faculty laid out the red carpet, putting on an outstanding show. Various Group Leaders and Faculty rallied around the students. The Wadhvani Foundation team went back impressed by the Institute's programmes, in particular the PS programme, the close links to the BITSAA alumni network, the number of women on campus and the enthusiasm and energy of the CEL team. BITS was shortlisted with almost all the IITs, all the IIMs and a few other schools for the final round.

During the final round, the remaining short list of schools were asked to put together a proposal for CEL, and a vision for the Network itself. Very pointed questions were asked. As always, the alumni, students and faculty in Pilani, Mumbai, New York, Boston and San Francisco communicated extensively and put together an outstanding and visionary proposal for the Centre.

BITS, Pilani was selected to be a member of NEN (National Entrepreneurship Network) along with four premier institutes in India. As a member of NEN, CEL will receive \$40,000 for the first year, and a sum that could exceed \$1 million over the next few years. CEL will belong to India's top entrepreneurial think tanks, share its vision and will be guided by a world-class advisory board.

With a fantastic beginning, the CEL team started out to create a well defined, sustainable organisation, structure the team and plan out its activities, both



Centres of Entrepreneurship amongst Indian Universities !

that visited BITS Pilani in the

short term and long term. Over the last two months CEL has identified broad areas of focus: Venture Partnership Programmes, Rural Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Curriculum, Student Agencies, Technology/Business Plan incubation, and 'Meet the Entrepreneur' Lecture Series.



**Romesh Wadhvani, Founder of the Wadhvani Foundation**

Photo credit: Silicon India

With help from the alumni, CEL is already working on a live project from a US based Pharma company, as well as a software project too. A virtual communication network will be up and running soon to would help communicate with the clients of CEL and other members of the NEN.

In rural entrepreneurship front, CEL is in the the process of creating Self-Help Groups around Pilani. An effort is being made to commercialise the local 'Bandhej' craft that has over a 1,000 women involved. CEL is also exploring a possible collaboration with **HP Labs**, Bangalore which has a focus on developing ICT products for the rural community.

'Meet the Entrepreneur' Series has by far been the most successful in terms of promoting the spirit. (Wow! We had no idea there were so many successful BITSian entrepreneurs out there). Through the last 2 months we had a number of ex-BITSian entrepreneurs who came down and shared their experience and learning with us and inspired us. In September we had **Dr KRV Subramaniam**, CEO, Answerpal who had actually come to BITS for recruitment!!! During the time he led a very interactive session on his experiences as an entrepreneur which was attended by over 200 students and faculty members.

In the last week of September, the CEL team was fortunate enough to spend some time with few of the "7 Generals" as they were called in their BITSian days- **Vinod Agarwal** of Logic Vision, **Sireesh Chinnoy** among others and **Rajendra Khare** of Broadcom, Bangalore,. The interview was video-taped during which they shared with us the significant role BITS played in their success, the importance of believing in oneself and the importance of entrepreneurial thinking.

In October we had a series of 3 lectures conducted by **Ajay Chopra** of Pinnacle Systems,, **Satish Kajliwal** and **Shekhar Bhawe**. They spoke to us on what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur, about the current environment in India for entrepreneurs, about ideas and execution, about leadership and creating value systems. This session was also very well attended followed up by a discussion with the entrepreneurs.

The CEL team inspired by their stories organised a business plan competition within BITS for the first time ever. We have received

9 executive summaries that are in the process of being evaluated. Some of the ideas that we have received are based on the BITS environment and we hope to be able to incorporate it into "Student Agencies" that we plan to start where students will have hands-on experience in running a self-sustainable organisation.

Dr. VS Rao is the Professor In-charge of CEL and Director of the Technology Incubation Cell. He is ably supported by a cross-section of faculty members from all groups including Management, Computer Science, EEE, Mech, Civil and Finance. In addition, a search is underway to bulk up the Entrepreneurship faculty at Pilani over the next year as the offerings are expanded.

Next semester, the first ever Entrepreneurship course will start at BITS. A "learn while you work" styled course, it will teach the basics in entrepreneurship, require students to come up with a business idea that works in Pilani, and allow visiting lectures, case studies and a number of team-based exercises. This course will be rolled out to a large number of BITSians – and is expected to become the most popular course on campus in the next year.

Slowly but surely there is a momentum building up and we have a lot of ideas in store for the future. The vision of CEL, which is supported strongly by the CEVC, is clear; To sow the seeds of entrepreneurship amongst BITSians, to foster an environment of learning and to play a prominent role in leading diverse entrepreneurial activities at BITS and around the nation. CEL is going to make a significant impact on Indian entrepreneurship in the coming years. We are reaching out to all of you to join us and guide us.!

BY ANUPENDRA SHARMA ('87)

# Scenes from a Pakistani Restaurant

*Sadly, everything you read here is true. Except for the name of the restaurant and the characters.*

“**Y**eh Hindu hai. Yeh

*meat nahi kaat-ta*”. (He is Hindu, he doesn't cut meat) announced the Shere restaurant manager with pride to the team in the kitchen.



I had just started work one hour ago, on a typical grey, wet Saturday afternoon in Rusholme, the Pakistani section of Manchester, England.

Full of idealistic thoughts which included supporting myself and taking no money from home, I set out looking for jobs as soon as I stepped off the plane in the UK as a grad student at the University of Manchester. And slammed straight into the middle of England's worst recession.

After being turned down by everyone including McDonalds (where I had included my current Masters, my two BITS degrees, my 38 days at Index Computing and both PS I and PS II experiences, convinced that I would be a top hire), I knew this called for desperate measures. I headed for Rusholme Road, the street lined with Indian and Pakistani restaurants in the South Asian

section of Manchester. I turned into the first restaurant I saw. The manager was there. I told him that I was looking for a job. He asked me for two bits of information.

“I am from India.” “I can legally work in England.” From his stunned reaction, it appeared unlikely that he had heard any job prospect at his restaurant say either of those things. I was hired on the spot. At 2 quid per hour, I had joined the ranks of the gainfully employed.

“What do you want to do?” the greasy manager asked, his white shoes about as shiny as his bald pate. “*Waiter banega?*” (Will you be a waiter?).

I had been hanging out with the students from Manchester Business School, discussing high-falutin' things like investment banking, consulting, and the changing face of Euro-driven politics. I winced. Could I face running into my classmates, dressed in the black and white garb of a waiter? My un-Gandhian middle-class views on the dignity of labor made it difficult to risk this prospect. Hiding in the kitchen seemed the natural choice. But I had one condition – “*Meat nahi katoonga*” (I wouldn't cut the meat.) I cited religious reasons. The truth was I didn't know how.

He took me to the crowded room in the back. I was introduced to Shahji – the naan maker, who had stopped studying in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Pakistan and spoke no English. Khan Sahib was the cook. Nigel

was the Nigerian dishwasher. I was appointed assistant errand boy to all three.

The next three hours went by pretty uneventfully. That is if cutting 3 sacks of onions and 9 sacks of green peppers (simla mirch) can be considered uneventful. As someone who had never cooked, and spent the last five years in Pilani messes, I was unprepared for this ordeal. The hour I spent frying the onions to a golden brown passed by more difficultly. Every time one of his employees came into the kitchen, the manager would follow, and parade me like a newly acquired pet. “*Yeh Hindu hai. Yeh meat nahi kaat-ta*”, he would smile and say. I was an instant hit.

“Lets go shopping”, the restaurant manager said. Ten minutes later, we were headed back to the restaurant, a 20 lb bag of flour on my head. It was more dignified to carry it in my arms or on my shoulder, but it was so much easier on my head. Screw my dignity. I held it on my fast whitening head, and walked down the street, praying that no one would know me. The manager walked a few feet ahead. I felt numb.

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**Ten minutes later, we were headed back to the restaurant, a 20 lb bag of flour on my head.**

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At 6:00 pm the hustle of the restaurant increased in preparation for the 6:30 pm opening. Two waiters were there, young and fresh, their first

day on the job. They looked 17, their fear-filled private-schooled faces a reflection of the leafy, air-conditioned, pucca bungalows of suburban Karachi that they came from – where the maid washed the laundry, the guard took the dog for a walk. The fear in their faces strangely gave me strength. I could get through this.

At 7:00 pm, the manager came looking for the two new waiters he'd hired. They were nowhere to be found. Unable to withstand the culture shock, they'd run away. I felt sorry for them. And stronger.

By 7:30 pm the dishes were coming back faster than Nigel could handle them. As the dishes piled, I was added as reinforcement. My job was to load the dishwasher with the dishes Nigel gave me, and to unload a minute and a half later. Simple.

Nigel had another responsibility. He had to empty the dishes before they went into the dishwasher. *And ensure that no meat coming back from the restaurant was wasted.*

Whaaaaaat !!!

All the salad was recycled. Stained bits of onions were washed and rearranged. And most importantly, all the meat and chicken left in the dishes was carefully extracted and put back into two bowls – one for meat, and another for chicken. At least the gravy, thankfully was thrown away. My faith in the amazing institution of Indian restaurants, shaken to its core.

At Shere, the most astounding thing was the efficient meat extraction process. It involved a woman, a fork, and lots of screaming. Every half hour, the

female owner of the restaurant (a real b----- if I ever saw one) would come into the back of the restaurant and scream at everyone for no reason. Then she would grab a fork and head over to the trash can where all the food was being dumped. She'd poke around. Every so often, she'd lift out a piece of meat, or *paneer* or chicken – sometimes half chewn, sometimes not – and wave it in Nigel's face, screaming that he was letting good food go to waste and threatened to dock his wages. Nigel never said anything.

That first night, at 1 am, I tried to leave the restaurant after it had closed. The cook wouldn't let me go without eating. He fed me a good meal – good meat, good chicken, great nans. I felt like I was part of a team. Exhausted, numbed, and smelling of onions, I had the best sleep of my life.

I went back the second night – to a lot more onions, yelling, screaming and chaos. The cook stormed out at 9:00 pm – after throwing a whole bunch of mixed-up orders that had piled up on the kitchen floor. Thankfully I did not have to clean any of it up. He came back at 10:00 pm. At 1 am, I went to the manager, to ask for my money. Two days, twenty four hours, forty eight quid ! I was bone tired, but I was going to be rich.

He handed me a twenty pound note. "I'm keeping the rest of the money or you won't come back next week." Tears welled up. I pleaded but I was helpless. I walked out and went home.

I could not shake the smell of onions for a week – even though I was taking showers twice a day.

The following week I got a job at the library. At GBP 5.65 per hour, shelving books, with breaks in between. Thank heavens for British unions, I thought.

The story ends well. My local guardian, an angry Thakur from Rajasthan was furious when he heard of my experience. He went calling the same day, and no less than Kenneth Clarke, then Home Secretary. After scaring the living daylights out of Kenneth Clarke's assistant, he was put straight through to the man himself.

Four months later, the restaurant was raided. Citing illegal immigrant workers and a series of serious health violations, the restaurant was shut down and the owners were fined GBP 8,000. Almost two hundred times what the restaurant owed me. I celebrated.

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**Every so often, she'd lift out a piece of meat, or *paneer* or chicken - sometimes half chewn, sometimes not - and wave it in Nigel's face, screaming that he was letting good food go to waste.**

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I recently went to Manchester to attend a BITSian wedding. I drove around to Rusholme to see the restaurant. It was another drizzly Manchester morning. The whole area was deserted – things wouldn't start to hum till later that afternoon.

The restaurant was shut. The name on the board had changed. Vivid memories flooded back, of walking down the road with the bag of flour on my head, of hundreds of onions, of the first twenty quid I had earned in England.

I put my hands in my pockets and walked back to the car. I stopped to look back one last time, and felt a calming sense of closure. †

## Poetry by Anuradha and Vivek

## Plani! Plani! Plani!

BY VIVEK MISRA



Credit: Eric Bellamy

White hot yellow sands  
dance, myriad mirages green  
peacocks strut, colour riots  
tribes coded saffron  
pink red orange  
turbaned hardened warriors  
gaze from grey eyes  
at grey skies

rain of life  
pitter-patter pitter-patter  
mops grey-blue  
lustfilled sun's heat  
clouds burst, sheet the land  
with water cool, life anew  
smell of earth, anklets tinkle  
and muddy feet  
arouse passions...

chillums smoke  
rings that dissipate  
the smoker thinks  
the thinker smokes  
camels snort, spit  
spittle tourists  
high heels, and fair skin  
vs. smouldering dark eyes  
battle won, the mirrors reflect  
on life outside  
the red-orange veil...

cows the sentinels  
of night-time bus-stand  
asleep standing, and circling  
drunken  
reveling boys, tested and sure  
or unsure

no matter  
tonight alcohol, decimates minds  
while watchers watch  
and smoke, their thoughts  
chaotic....

a refrain floats  
on chill air  
and musky breath  
"...a brilliant red barchetta,...."  
floats away  
air-guitaring, gesticulating  
hop skip jumping  
to samosas and tea  
"aah ...giri!,  
goldflake! thanda! moda!  
chai!..."  
5 am high.... |



Credit: CBS

The 1986-1990 MB farewell  
song

BY ANURADHA GUPTA ('86)

"1. Where do we begin,  
To tell the story of how great a life  
it's been  
Of how the years have slipped by  
almost like a dream  
Where do we start ?  
(Love Story)

2. For so many years, we've lived  
a BITSian life  
There's been a lot of laccha and  
staying up till five -  
Now we've gotto get used to not  
living next door to all of U !  
We've lived thru many Compress  
and lived thru mess food,  
But on the whole BITS has been  
rather good,

Oh, we'll never get used to not  
living next door to all of U.  
(Living next door to Alice)

3. When we came in the summer  
of 1986,  
Young and full of life and bouncy  
too,  
There was ever so much for us to  
do,  
Now we wonder if it all was true,  
All the Oasis halloo and all the  
Bhawan nites  
And the many long hours in Sky,  
All the trips in Connaught and all  
the milkshakes too,  
We couldn't forget even if we try !  
(Summer of '69)

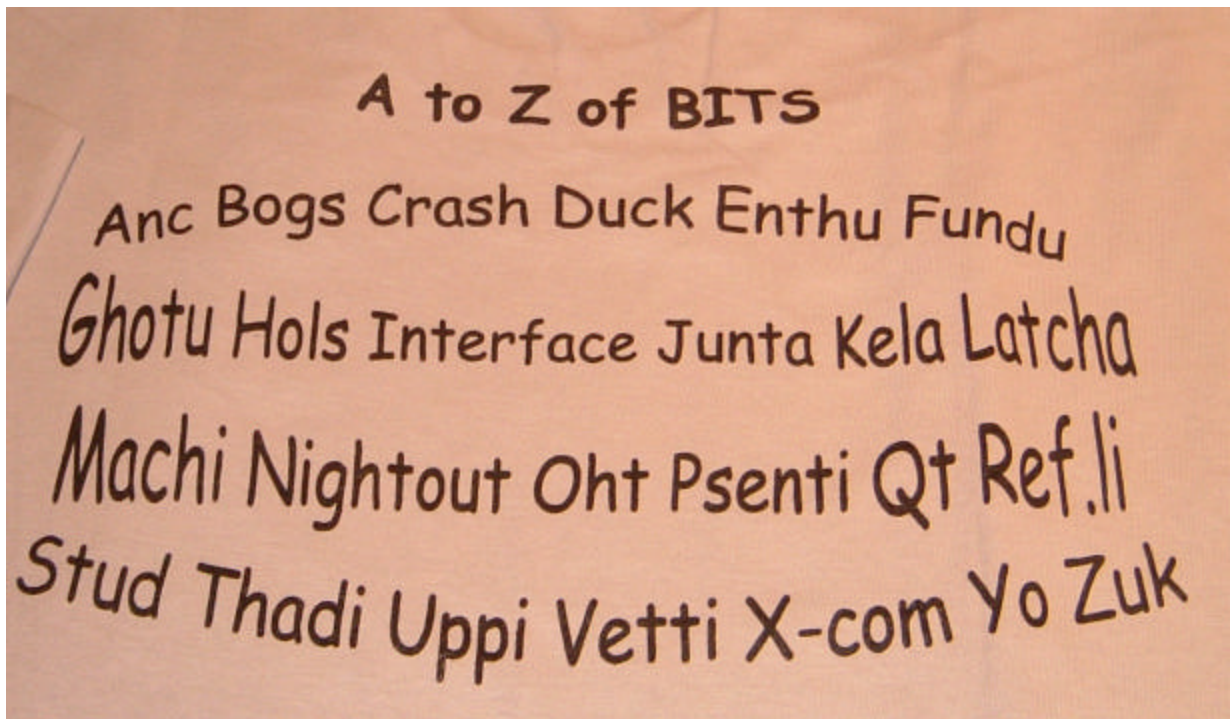
4. It's been a hard four years,  
And we've been slogging every  
day,  
Now all that's over,  
And we'll be going on our way.

But our memories will stay  
And though we're goin' away,  
We hope you will miss us too  
(It's been a hard day's night)

5. All the groovy guys we've  
missed,  
And all the pillows we've kissed,  
All the Mills and Boons we shared,  
All the secret we've bared

Now it's all going to end  
And , we don't want to go,  
Oh! We just don't want to go.  
All the plays and Acoustic Nites,  
All the water fights,  
All the birthdays and parties full of  
fun,  
All the things we've done !  
Now it's all going to end  
And we don't want to go  
Oh! We just don't want to go

6. Girls, we're all BITSians,  
And that's the way we'll stay-  
Girls, we'll be BITSians,  
Until our dying day ..."  
(Bachelor Boy) |



**Goodbye to BITSian days**

BY ANURADHA GUPTA

Endless cups of tea,  
 Between unending classes.  
 Yesterday was so fleeting,  
 How fast time passes.  
 Now it is all over -  
 The trips to C'naught.  
 The mornings in Sky.  
 I hadn't imagined -  
 How fast time would fly !  
 Is it chaos to pursuit,  
 or crayons to perfumes ?  
 I sit and muse  
 About the lilting words,

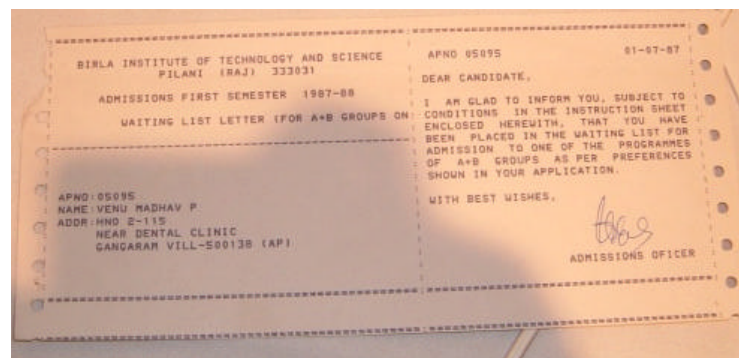
Of a familiar song.  
 And my heart says, 'So long'.  
 Am I very happy or very sad ?  
 I can't decide.  
 Sometimes -  
 I'd rather curl up like a hedgehog.  
 In some corner of BITS and hide.  
 Madness in the wing,  
 The senti 4th year wing.  
 Images big and small,  
 So mad, so special...  
 A countdown away from a world,  
 Captured in a memory-  
 Time, why did you flit away,  
 In such a dashing hurry ? !

**Indomitable Spirit**

BY ANURADHA GUPTA

I feel like a rudderless boat -  
 As a jest life set me afloat;  
 But I love the thrill of the raging  
 sea,  
 I love the storm, the feel of being  
 free,  
 And if my ship be wrecked.  
 I will assemble, bit by bit -  
 With a million brilliant stars,  
 My skies will always be lit! !

**Glimpses of BITSIAN life: A 1987 Batch ID Card and 1987 waitlist letter displayed at the East Coast Event**



BY SANDEEP MUKHERJEE ('95)

## TOP 10 GRAD SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

“Looks! Brains!

Determination!

What else do you need?

Grad School!”

That’s what the ETS brochure reads and I wonder...

“Looks!” It’s hard to argue against the notion that we all possess looks. After all, no claim is made to the effect of those looks on beholders.

“Brains!” Here again, that each one of us actually possesses a brain is indisputable. And absolutely no reference to the ability or usage of the brain is made thereby making the statement indisputable.

“Determination!” I’m now in awe of the astute conclusions that the ETS arrived at – determination? Anytime! Never mind, what about!

The logical conclusion – We all absolutely need to go to Grad School!

The skill gap assessment that would cost you a pretty penny in Career Assessment Specialist (Yes! They do exist!) fees is effectively, and concisely, I might add, addressed by a colorful brochure from ETS.

For the weeks and months that follow we dabble with the GRE, SOP, CAT, GPA and a vast myriad of 3 lettered acronyms. The process, not altogether painless, is suitably interspersed with 4 lettered non-acronyms too. The resources on the subject are nothing short of comprehensive.

Having rambled sufficiently, ‘tis time to elucidate the purpose of this elaborately researched and quantitatively sound treatise – i.e. objective of the document being

to prepare prospective graduate students for the most important grad school experiences that they’re likely to have.

We live in a world where rankings mean everything and to conceive of presenting lists without ranking them would necessitate the stretching of the mind in true Jane Fonda’s -aerobic video style! And being completely spineless and having no stance on most issues of consequence I’ll feebly acquiesce to society’s demands by ranking the Most Important Grad School Experiences too.

### 10. For here or to go?



A few years back a KFC cashier on Brigade Road asked me whether I wanted to “upsized it”. When I politely enquired as to what the devil he meant, he proceeded to give me a look that I would have carried to my grave had it not been for #2 (see below). After all, I merely wanted my darned food!

I swore that never again would I be cerebrally stumped by fast food servers of this world or the next. I have since mastered fast food parlance and can today, with pride and dignity, stare back at them and confidently answer the “for here or to gos” that they throw at me.

### 9. Running



Several thousand grad student-hours have been spent attempting to identify any semblance of rationality behind the average westerner’s fetish for running. The conclusion - Requiescat In Pace! At any given time, in any given season, anywhere in the United States there is a healthy probability of spotting joggers. Do not stare at them as if to indicate they are, as classicalists would say, nuts! Merely understand that this is a valuable part of your education. Learning to appreciate cross-cultural differences is integral to the graduate school experience.

### 8. Free

If there’s a single lesson that one absolutely cannot to without, it’s that nothing is ever Free. The founding fathers of capitalist society would frown upon the notion. As a consequence, please note that free DVDs, free Internet hours etc. that you see so attractively advertised are as real as the returns on Enron stock. And, do note, that the free sex that you read about from your days in Pilani refers to a world that existed more than 30 years ago.

### 7. Paper or plastic?

On account of serious linguistic differences a simple exercise like purchasing groceries can, unless carefully handled, become traumatic experiences. At the grocery store’s checkout counter, upon being asked “paper or plastic?” do not feel threatened, do not panic. Go ahead and choose one – they actually let you have the bags for free! The last I



checked these plastic bags were as valuable as Enron stock.

**6. You will hear silence at this time!**

Humans, in sharp contradistinction to, say microbes, are characterized by the desire to continuously acquire knowledge. Among the many centers of undisputed academic excellence – Online Bill Payment hotlines lead the way! Zen Buddhism being the subject of discourse! To the uninitiated, while making telephonic payments you will “here silence at this time”. Do not be flustered; merely marvel at the infusion of knowledge during quotidian activities.

**5. Flirting with Customer Service Representatives (CSR)**

That’s a No! No! The CSR may have a cute voice, a fake Spanish accent, may even go to the extent of asking you for your personal details, but remember that to stoop to such depravity would be in violation of the exemplary spiritual and moral conduct that is expected of you as a BITSian. The only exception to the rule is if you’re certain the person at the end of the line is not from outsourced call centers in Gurgaon, New Delhi.

**4. Eating out**

There will be occasions where your graduate student body will decide to “eat out”. You may then be invited to express your gastronomic preference. Do not, under any circumstance, propose McDonald’s, Burger King or the like even though these institutions, may, in your opinion, be at the cutting edge of the culinary cosmos. And although the Taco Bell tacos (with rice and beans on the side) may remind you of the chapattis, dal and rajma that you may have eaten back in



Agency originally introduced these to experiment with quarantined communists from ‘Nam who were frequently known to converse with themselves. Driving up to a seemingly unmanned box, speaking into it, and (it never ceases to amaze me!) have it talk back to you can be a traumatic experience. You would be

well advised to prepare yourself – pep talks from roommates are effective – and then take the plunge. Do not attempt to make prior appointments with the box. And oh by the way, don’t forget to take your car.

**2. Credit Cards !**

All of us have suffered the humiliation of receiving letter after letter of rejection on our credit card applications, while our broke American classmates are covered in enough plastic to warrant a Greenpeace demonstration. It hasn’t prevented us from getting that t-shirt, Frisbee or whatever crap that the credit card sales rep was giving away for filling out those darned forms. However, once we understand the strategy of acquiring store cards and actually making \$2.00 purchases at Montgomery Ward (now

India, that does not qualify as dinner either.

**3. Drive-throughs**

The Central Intelligence

Agency originally introduced these to experiment with quarantined communists from ‘Nam who were frequently known to converse with themselves. Driving up to a seemingly unmanned box, speaking into it, and (it never ceases to amaze me!) have it talk back to you can be a traumatic experience. You would be well advised to prepare yourself – pep talks from roommates are effective – and then take the plunge. Do not attempt to make prior appointments with the box. And oh by the way, don’t forget to take your car.



Cartoon credit: Tikka Masala

**1. Matrimonial Proposals**

And finally, at restaurants, shopping malls and other public places being addressed as “honey!” or “sweetie!” by the attendants is not to be interpreted as a proposal to contract a matrimonial alliance with the speaker. Many a brave BITSian soul has been slain on similar assumptions. Such interpretations are often seasonal and spring and summer are when you are most at risk – what with the changing scenery and dipping stock of the apparel industry.

That, prospective graduate students, is a \$50,000 grad school education in a nutshell. Remember them well ‘coz for these important, and potentially life-altering experiences, there are no make-ups! ! |

# Writings from another time: Articles from *The Cactus Flower* Magazine of 1997



BY SAYON MAJUMDAR

## THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY



Credit: Urbanposters

She has always been associated with my earliest memories of Pilani. Even in those days I was enchanted by her poise, her grace and those lovely warm deep-brown eyes. I've always suspected that it was those eyes that enthralled me.

In my first few days, I was compelled to go down on my knees and profess my undying love for her. One day I caught, or imagined I saw, a twinkle in her

eyes and the hint of a smile. But I never got an answer to my proposal.

And now she is dead....

For the first few years in Pilani, I saw her almost every day, serenely moving around noisy, boisterous students. She was always there, a benign presence, dearly beloved by all. And yet, those were the days when we first heard the whispers - "She's the last of her kind. There will never be another like her again." We knew then that the world was changing and one day she would be no more.

In her long life I do not think she ever made an enemy. We envied how she made everyone her friend. Friend? No, they were her slaves - slaves of her charm! The very mention of her name brought a smile on everyone's lips. Her tranquility consoled generations of students in their moments of sorrow.

The last year was painful to watch. She was in great pain. Her eyesight was dim. She was visibly ill. And yet, she would religiously do her rounds, everyday, to be with the students she loved.

And now Grass is dead.

Farewell, Grass! For a real bitch you were quite a lady.

Rest in peace.... |

BY SANDEEP DATH

## THE MAKING OF A CACTUS FLOWER ARTICLE

The circumstances were just right. Yes, that's it. The circumstances. Just right.

I was in India, specifically in Pilani. I was, as the metaphor goes, totally vella in life and therefore extremely susceptible to ridiculous suggestions. That was why, when a bespectacled pimply youth asked me to pen an article for *Cactus Flower*, I hitched up my trousers, pulled up my socks and fell asleep in his room.

When I woke up, it turned out that somehow he had conned me into signing on the dotted line and all that. In any case, I gave little or no thought to the matter right away. I mean, what's in an article? It's just a string of high sounding sentences. The only trick lay in knowing where to put the punctuation marks. But I was confident that with a little help from Wren and possibly a teensy-weensy bit from Martin, I could cope with even this.

A few solid weeks passed however, before I got down to the task ahead of me. I realised that

the whole affair was not, as I had believed, going to be a cakewalk. There I sat, without a single idea popping; just sitting and staring glumly at the chewed-up rear end of a Reynolds Fine Carbure.

One wonders how the big rad names like Hardy and Swift, not to mention Scott, managed to churn out the stuff in tons. I figured that there must be a method to their madness. I, for one, was confident in my estimation of Mark Twain's work, that the chap started out by deciding whether or not the butler or the baby-sitter was to 'have done it.' As for Sartre, with his characteristic flair for higher things, he functioned differently. Something instinctive told me that he used to plan out the best spot where the body could be buried. Why, I had but to follow on similar lines and the lads would soon be drinking in every word I wrote.

But it was the plot that persistently eluded me. I resorted to asking a very close friend of mine for help.

important thing to do is to get the location right."

"Right. Location. Yes. Definitely important. Go on." I made a mental note of this piece of information. It looked like I'd picked the right person to ask.

"Then," he continued knowledgeably, "you have got to get your dimensions correct. That is, if you want a garden, you'd better get your dimensions correct. If you make a mistake, your garden will look like it's part of your drawing room. And, of course, don't forget elevation, soil..."

My jaw dropped, catching me halfway through a chewing session and grossing out three weak stomached gentlemen at my table. I knew from experience that we were often served bilge of a most disreputable nature in the mess, but of all the bilge that I have ever witnessed, this was bilge of the highest order that my friend was dishing out across the table. I then realised, way too late, that this

But the bespectacled youth kept reminding me gleefully of my commitments, throwing in phrases like 'breach of contract', 'black eyes' and 'multiple lacerations' effortlessly into the conversation. I was in a dilemma, trapped between the devil and his secretary. My wingies steadfastly claim till today that I was often found staring at my wrists with a pained expression on my face.

I decided finally to brave the problem like a man and with a calm, sophisticated attitude.

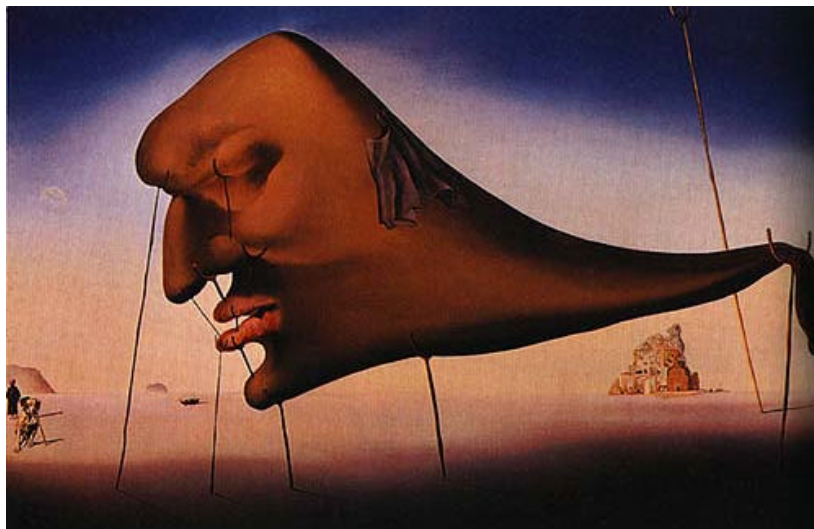
"Mommy," I yelled over the phone. "There is this article thing, mom..."

My words falling over each other, I explained the whole situation to my mother. Mom paused for a few moments on the phone, as if contemplating the situation. It was either that or she was adding the word 'strait-jacket' to her shopping list. Finally she said, "Son, write about something that has affected you personally and profoundly. And remember..."

As I stood watching the seconds tick away on the STD meter, I let my mind wander. A swarm of ideas and images flooded my mind. I thought of all my 'profound' experiences...

And then, suddenly, it all fell into place. My most profound, personal and harrowing experience. I knew what that was, and I could write volumes on it. Well, sort of.

Anyway, that evening when I sat back in my room and lifted my pen once more, it was with deliberation and feeling that I penned the words, "The circumstances were just right. Yes, that's it. The circumstances. Just ...." |



"Hey Garg, I need a good plot. Got any ideas?" I asked him one afternoon across the mess table.

A few moments later, when he had ceased to masticate the better part of a roti, he said, "The most

accursed BITSian was guilty of having an 'A2' in his ID number.

The situation was so trying that I nearly gave up at this point. I could always have backed out of my decision to write the article.

## Featured Article

BY ANURADHA GUPTA ('86)

# THE DATE

Leela was from a strict upbringing and her folks did not believe in dating or prospecting or any such thing. In fact, they believed only in following rituals, customs and traditions and sticking to the old age adage of 'arranged marriages are best'. They were sanguine about new trends as long as they just got to hear about them and gossip about them (and I don't mean gossip in a virulent, malicious form, but just harmless, good fun gossip which we all indulge in, to unwind, occasionally!).

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**One fine evening, late evening, there was a call, on the loudspeaker – the public address system in MB, for Room Number 124, Leela!**

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So when Leela was preparing to come to Pilani, she was tutored and lectured about her values and how she should not venture beyond the gates of the MB other than to attend classes, or visit the Computer center or attend some shows with girl friends. No dating. No men. Such things were strictly frowned upon by the family and could bring nothing but dishonor to the name. Leela promised to adhere to her family's traditions.

But on entering the gates of the surreal world of Pilani, some of those soon faded from Leela's memory, like the Photography Club prints that we purchased during Oasis when we were there.

Leela got to know the guys a little. Motu belonged to a group of guys that hung together. Motu was eminently likeable. Short of stature like her. He liked her shy, retiring, introverted, yet positive outlook a lot and asked about her often. Whenever we would go out as a group of girls and bump into Motu's group accidentally or by design, he would come and inquire after her, and try and make overtures of strictly the friendliest kind. He knew conservative, shy Leela, and did not want to scare Leela away.

Leela also liked his courteous and considerate ways. She eagerly lapped up everything we told her about him - him, the fact that he was from modest means and knew only Telegu till his 12th standard, but learnt English in a matter of months and transformed himself and his life and prospects considerably by applying to, and coming over to BITS.

She liked his funny, often ungrammatical English and the fact that he was brilliant! But most of all she liked his magnanimous ways and that he sometimes doled out scarce resources (of the monetary kind) and a lot of times spent a lot of time teaching us mere mortals



about the mysteries of Higher Calculus or Modern Physics and Relativity. Nothing was beyond his grasp and nothing eluded him or befuddled him, like it did us. He held special classes for Leela's roommate and me. We huddle together in the Library often, talking in hushed tones, or in the Café, going over obscure problems that made no sense to either of us, but were crystal clear to him. Sometimes, at his behest, we talked about Leela.

Then there was this one time when she thought he would muster up the courage to ask her out on a date. But as the semester wore on, she realized it was mere conjecturing. Like most evenings at Connaught, nothing exciting really happened and as the semester progressed; we forgot about it.



One fine autumn evening, one of those beautiful, cool Pilani evenings

when we know winter is coming, there was a call, on the loudspeaker – the public address system in MB, for Room Number 124, Leela!

Initially, she jumped out of her skin, frightened and puzzled. She had never been called on the microphone. Oh dear – the whole bhawan had heard. What would the girls think.



Then it struck her. This had to be Motu. She recovered from her state of shock, got dressed, hastily changing from her nightie into a nice looking suit chosen by her roomie powdered her nose, dabbed on a color lipstick (“just for confidence, not for effect” she told us). And finally, finally, ignoring the words of her mother, the honor of generations of her family, she tentatively stepped out of the room, walked in an awkward, self-conscious gait to the gate and looked around.

‘Hi, Leela’, said somebody from the shadows and stretched out his hand to shake her clammy, sweaty palm. She was so scared, her heart was beating, she was shaking like a leaf. Thank goodness it was dark !

‘Lets go to Connaught and have a shake’, he said, setting the agenda for the evening (no dinner ? Maybe funds were scarce, maybe, it was too soon to spend the entire evening together!). This was a first date, So they walked towards Connaught, she remained quiet, he chatted nonsensically about general platitudes, making no sense, she nodding, giggling sometimes, both quite nervous and shy !

When they reached Connaught, Leela waited for her Blue Moon Midnight Beauty and apprised her date from below her lashes as he stood waiting for their order. As he walked back, she thought. He looked a little different. Maybe a new haircut.

She thought it was time to break the silence. Maybe she should ask him about the health of his parents. ‘So, Motu...’, she started to say, much to his abject horror !

‘I am not Motu. I am Srinivas !’ he said with as much dignity as he could muster.

Leela was horrified. Thoroughly, thoroughly embarrassed. This was one of life’s most embarrassing moments that get listed as essay questions. She regretted that she had never really looked carefully at Motu. Here she was, on a date with an unknown species ! And worse still, he had discovered that she thought he was somebody else.

We had all often discussed how silly it is that people just flip for each other’s looks

‘I’m so sorry’, she stammered and hastily gulped down her Shake, trying desperately to find a subject that was appropriate. He sat in stony and dignified silence for some time and then relented, talking about not-so-sweet nothings. The romance was no longer in the air. The magic was gone. Soon, in what seemed like forever, they headed back for MB. Leela said a hasty goodbye and ran through the gates .

We learnt more about Srinivas’s later. Much later that is, after

many bouts of laughing and our wiping away tears from the efforts. He was a 9 something-pointer, a brilliant guy with a soft corner for Leela. He had never spoken to her, never met her, but had somehow gathered the courage to ask her out. I don’t remember Leela ever laughing about that experience when we were in Pilani.

Leela vowed never to go on a date again. Her mother’s words came flooding back. She wanted to conform to her background and her parents’ wishes. But we knew the truth. It was the shock of the first date ! And the last ! Down in history, recorded for posterity.

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**He was a 9 something-pointer, a brilliant guy with a soft corner for Leela.**

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Leela is now happily married into a very liberal background. And just the other day we were discussing how we should bring up our daughters ! Strict upbringing or normal or disciplined or permissive. Just normal, we decided, though there are no definitions for normal ! And I slyly reminded her about her first date. She spluttered with indignation and then laughed a lot, a whole lot ! It’s a story that will go down in the history of her family. I really hope she can find the courage to relate it to her daughters sometime ! And leave them with a definite message - Never be so shy that you don’t notice what the guy you like even looks like! !

## Featured Article

BY SAGARIKA JAGANATHAN ('93)

**SKYDIVING...& OF FEAR AND FUN**

My passage from childhood to adolescence had one significant undercurrent—rebellion. Despite growing up in a not-so-conservative suburbia of Chennai (then Madras) I faced one obstacle to unfettered childhood: fear. Not my own, but my father's...indelibly scripted over any tendency I may have developed on my own.

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**“Ours was a dad-daughter relationship wrought with tension so thick one could cut it with a knife**

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Ours was a dad-daughter relationship wrought with tension so thick one could cut it with a knife. Growing up in an all-boys neighborhood, ‘fear’ was non-existent in my dictionary. My dad found that out when I was five. Having searched the entire colony for a whole Sunday afternoon, he found me perched among the coolest and tallest confines of the backyard Neem tree, with three of my pals — all next-door boys. He ordered me down and marched me to his study, quietly fetching his wooden ruler. With three resounding thrashes that day, he inserted ‘fear’ into my dictionary.

Spending the next decade of my life in implicit obedience and strict conformity to parental “rules” intended at wresting every tomboyish trait from a girl “who will never otherwise find a good

husband,” I made up my mind to break the “fear” mold, slowly, yet surely.

At 15, I was the oldest in my school to learn to ride a bike. But I did -- over and above the din of dad’s voice reviling senseless Madras traffic--if only to fling myself out there amid the chaos of trucks, auto rickshaws, and water tankers, and ride the “fear” wave. It was my first triumph over fear since age five.

At 17, came the admission letter to BITS in faraway Pilani: “the land of endless desert sands, bitter winters and unbearable summer heat that causes nosebleeds,” according to what someone had told dad. My myriad arguments failed to pack the punch that would blow this fears away, instead, off I was packed to the cooler confines of a missionary institution...an engineering college nestled on the banks of the Siruvani river -- the lifeline of the city of Coimbatore. It wasn’t long before the rebel in me escaped the clutches of this academic ghetto -- which doubled up as a veritable nunnery -- by virtually threatening my dad into submission. He reluctantly accompanied me on the train journey toward my destination of choice -- Pilani -- to report for the winter semester admission to BITS in “frost-bitten January” (dad’s famous words). Triumph number two!

Dad and his fear ...there’s a story in our family that explains his whims: When dad was 22, he’d ridden a boat with friends from college, off the shores of Mahabalipuram--historical site of the Pallava temples. A sudden turbulence had sent him flying into the particularly rabid waters of the Bay of Bengal. “It was a miracle I even survived,” he often recounted. He never wanted me near a body of

water ever...or on a tree-top, or on a bicycle, or in a place where the heat made one’s nose bleed and the cold caused heels to crack...

But at 21, white water rafting seemed like a pretty cool idea to me (having learned to swim barely two years ago...). Of course, I never told dad until I got back in one piece -- surviving to talk at length about the experience of a lifetime. Triumph number three!

Conquering imposed fears was fast becoming a norm I was getting tired of. I didn’t want it to constitute a lifetime’s journey, despite being tremendously self-assuring at each instance. I believe each of us has inherent fears, which too must be dispelled during one’s lifetime. Mine was of heights. Not that I was paranoid about tall places but I often got the chills from imagining myself on an airplane and being required to suddenly bail out.

Having never been on a plane during the first couple decades of my existence, age 22 was a milestone of sorts. Not only did it mark my first flight journey, it also was my first ever attempt at bailing out of one!

Five or six or even seven paragraphs devoted to this perception-altering event may still fall short of fathoming the effect it had on my psyche -- liberating it from the shackles of its own making. But it’s definitely a worthwhile attempt, in my eyes, at underscoring the importance of overcoming one’s own fears and teaching oneself a lesson or two on living in the moment...

## "I'm on LSD," he hollered, splitting the steady drone of the Cessna with cackling laughter

As the airplane rose to 25,000 feet—a rusty, yellow Cessna, I looked around me. I was a novice rubbing shoulders with veteran skydivers who would enthrall me within minutes by their expertly choreographed mid-air calisthenics. I felt a knot in my stomach as my instructor patted my stiff shoulder, and sensing my rather uptight demeanor, said “You’re going to do just great,” with a flashing smile that suddenly became my lifeline. He was going to be right there with me, every step of the way, and I had to trust his over-a-decade’s experience jumping out of planes: a bizarre leap of faith, quite literally!

That early Sunday morning, there was just one other novice skydiver on the Cessna; he was sitting, fingers crossed and eyebrows knit, straight ahead—instructor in tow. We were each too absorbed in our own fears and elations to waste those precious minutes of ascent in small talk. But my instructor was bent upon playing the exorcist for his very own rib-tickling fancy: “I’m on LSD,” he hollered, splitting the steady drone of the Cessna with cackling laughter. I did an instant about face, a death-pale expression shrouding my face, masking the veneer of clarity I was trying hard to portray ...are we really going to jump to our deaths today, I wondered.

But the six expert sky-divers, seated ahead of us, booed him into silence. “It’s part of the rush,” they said. “You have no clue what it’s

like...just wait and see.” My mind was awash with hope and fear and everything else in between. The instructor, sensing my growing discomfort, said: “It’s time to roll now, and don’t worry, I haven’t had as much as my morning puffs of Marlboro today. We are going to soar, but not on the wings of LSD. So just relax!”



That was all I needed to hear; the rest of his instructions were lost in the Cessna’s drone and the sheer awe and excitement of watching those six veterans ahead of me tumble out in a matter of seconds, soaring toward a formation, the likes of which I’d only seen on RealTV. Then my eyes fell on the guy ahead of me, attached to his instructor: Siamese twins ready to be birthed from the Cessna’s comforting womb...Each of our tandem-jump instructors had been doing just this very thing for the past couple decades—taking novices like us down a wild dive from the skies: dispelling fears, broadening horizons and, literally, altering perspectives, changing, forever, the way we viewed the earth and the skies, and our places in the sun.

At the count of three, we spilled out of the mouth of the Cessna—from the warmth of her protective belly into the tantalizing arms of the roaring winds in a death-defying 250 miles per hour drop. I felt scared, vulnerable, like a prey clutched in the mighty eagle’s talons, about to

be torn apart; only in my case, being buckled to my instructor was a life-saver. I had evidently blocked out his instructions: lock your knees, draw ankles to your back, as close as you can, and tumble out in somersault-like motion....I only remembered the word ‘three’ severing the last shred of my Pollyannaish hope that somehow, I will not have to jump. I was flailing

my arms and legs, winds screaming in my ears in a ghastly mockery of every fear that was coursing through my spine. “This is it,” I thought, “There’s no turning

back” -- a final moment of revelation that stripped me of all fears and opened my eyes to the panoramic view: endless mounds of snow-white clouds...I was floating among them; mountain ranges, far below, curiously defining the margins of human territory beyond which wilderness assumed a life all its own...I was looming over them, high above, like a bird, who, for the first time, had learned to fly.

Amid this drama of exploding winds, the caressing clouds, and the colorful unfurling of the parachute across the blue skies, while I was trying to take in as much as my eyes could hold in those fleeting moments: the mountains, the rivulets and streams, the ground fast gaining upon us....a certain realization dawned upon me -- It was really about fun, not fear.

And as I floated above earth, I realized ah! life is beautiful.

Touchdown! †

BY DILIP D'SOUZA ('76)

# ALFA ALFA – THE NAKED TRUTH



**P**arty at a friend's place. Several new faces there; I met most as the party went on. One was, I found at one point, surrounded by a small group. As I strolled up to listen to what was going on, I heard him asking, and this is verbatim: "Which is the only word in the English language that follows the pattern 'x-y-z, x-y-z', repeated till infinity?"

Ignorance quickly got the better of me. Reluctantly, I had to admit that I had no answer. The rest of the group, more persevering, muttered on a bit. But they too gave up. Our questioner, pleased to score a triumph of the intellect over us, grinned triumphantly as he announced the answer.

"Alfalfa," he said. Which is produced, he said, by repeating "a-l-f" till infinity. Though, I thought, it works better if you chop after the third "a". Who wants to be saying "alfalfalfalfalfalfalfa..." till the cows come home?

But now I'm puzzled as well as ignorant. "So what?" I ask hesitantly. At least to me, "alfalfa" doesn't appear to have "a-l-f" repeated till infinity, it's only seven letters long. Besides, so what?

"This is not my research", he says, curled upper lip firmly in place, "it's Isaac Asimov's!" This, it seems, is the knockout punch. How can I possibly argue with the fruits of Isaac Asimov's research?

I banish from my mind a fleeting image of Asimov in a dingy lab,

spending years researching the patterns in "alfalfa", then revealing the secret to an adoring world: that it "follows the pattern 'x-y-z, x-y-z', repeated till infinity." Not quite Nobel prize winning research. But what do I know?

The rest of the party went by in a daze, and not just because of my drink. With research on my mind, I remembered a professor I had read about only days before. At an Illinois university in the US of A, the man spent years and great sums of money investigating one of Science's most Remarkable Phenomena, a Field of Fundamental Importance to the Survival of Mankind itself.

Nude beaches.

I am not making this up.

You will agree: this was difficult, pioneering research. Nevertheless, he stuck to it manfully, with passion. He spent long periods on said beaches, observing people there, noting the shape they were in, particularly feminine shapes. Months and years went by in this endeavour to further the Frontiers of Human Knowledge -- your Knowledge -- but he got nowhere near finished. He needed many more long hours to study many more nudes at many more beaches.

Aren't you glad that someone put in the effort to conduct this research? Well, lots of people were as glad. Including that university in Illinois and the agencies that funded his work. Oh, they were thrilled when this man's field of study was revealed, when they found out for the first time what their money had been used for. Overcome with joy,

they got the professor, now sporting a healthy tan and bulging eyes, fired. Last heard of, he was heading for the beach, determined to serve Science some more.

Nude beaches and "x-y-z." I spent the entire party batting these about in my mind. Eventually, inspired by these noble research efforts, but also by my vodka and karela juice, I decided to make my own contribution.

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## He needed many more long hours to study many more nudes at many more beaches.

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The group is still gathered around the Asimov Alfalfa man, still hanging on his every research-laden word. By now, he has moved on to other weighty Questions of our Times. I fight my way to the front. Summoning up all my courage, and bolstered to no small extent by alcohol, I ask, parentheses included: "What about 'tutu' (meaning a ballerina's skirt)? Doesn't that also repeat till infinity except that it is chopped short (the word, not the skirt and certainly not the alfalfa)?"

I am proud of myself. Isn't everyone looking at me with new respect?

Alfalfa man brings me quickly down to earth. In tones fairly dripping with contempt, he says: "'Tutu' is only 'x-y, x-y' repeated till infinity. There's nothing worth researching there!"

Tail between shaking legs, I slink away. I feel like I've been stripped naked. Research will do that to you. Or nude beaches. Gotta remember not to step in the alfalfa. †



BY PROF BALASUBRAMANIAN ('53), TV BALAN ('48), GEN RAJGOPAL ('47), DILIP D'SOUZA ('76) & ANU GUPTA ('86)

## NOSTALGIC NOTES

I am arguably the most ancient BITSian in Hyderabad, if you go by alumnal status. (Professor TSKV Iyer is of course the oldest Pilanian of us all in Hyderabad, but then he taught, while we learnt!). In fact, my claim to fame in this context is earlier than even BITS came about, since I am an alumnus of the Birla College of Science, having gone there for my Intermediate in Science in 1953 (as an innocent 13 year-old from Madras), and obtained my M. Sc. in chemistry from there in 1959. I taught there for 1 year before I left for the US in August 1960. Those of you BITSians who are interested in alumnal family tree should bark up my trunk, since I lay the claim to be the Jambawan or the Neanderthal of all alumni/alumnae.

I have a familial interest too. My uncle was Professor V. Lakshminarayanan, the Principal of the Birla Engg. College, who in the early 1960s fused the Birla College of Engg, the Birla College of Science, and the Birla College of Arts and Commerce into BITS. Having stayed with him as a member of the family during my years in Pilani, I had a ringside seat to the goings on, and the evolution of BITS - a process that started as an idea, after the first of the IITs got started at Kharagpur - into a comprehensive center of higher learning, where technology education will comprise some sciences and the arts - in order that the graduate is an all-rounder (as all of you no

doubt are). Help from MIT in Cambridge, MA, USA came in the form of academic course planning, lab practices, semester grade system, periodic tests and evaluation, and practical training. Thus, all you people can trace your academic DNA to my uncle!! And since he had six daughters and I was his "son", trace it to me by proxy!

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**When I look back at how I had to ride a camel back from Loharu at 2 AM all the way to Pilani right on my first entry to Vidya Vihar...I can see how we guys were made of steel.**

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When I look back at how I had to ride a camel back from Loharu at 2 AM all the way to Pilani right on my first entry to Vidya Vihar, and that the only way you could get to Loharu, Chirawa and then on to the Evil World was through rickety unpunctual buses, I can see how we guys were made of steel. The tempering of the steel was of course done by the Pedas of Madanjee and the supplies of Bagaria Stores at Connaught Place and the trysts with the girls behind



the tall walls of the Vidyapeeth. Happily enough most of these are still extant, so that quality steel production has been an ongoing enterprise at BITS.

Of course, we should sing a requiem to Madanjee the great. Many copycat Pedawallahs have since sprung up, and the last time I was in Pilani about 9 months ago, we could still buy those delectables - but then Madanjee was something else, he was to Peda what KC Das was to Rossogulla.

**Prof. D. Balasubramanian, PhD**  
Director of Research  
L. V. Prasad Eye Institute Hyderabad

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Soon after I joined Pilani in July 1948, my Dad wrote a post card to say that i had got admission in Benares also. I had paid at Pilani Rs. 347 (a lot of money those days) and I did not feel like throwing it away and rushing to Benares for the course in combined mechanical & electrical engineering. I stuck on at Pilani, and when I graduated in Sept. 1951 and soon joined ACC. At the interview, the MD Dr. RR.Hattiangadi asked me how good was the Pilani institution and I said " I had an option to join

Benares, and if I had joined Benares I might have been (deemed) a better engineer, but Pilani made me a better man" And this was quoted by the MD of ACC on many occasions when I went up the ladder in leaps and bounds. Those days if one said "Pilani" it was assumed that you never got admission elsewhere and so rushed to Pilani, where a South Indian was the principal and encouraged boys from South to join BEC. And we believed that he also kept a watchful eye on the bright students as he had 5 daughters.

*"TIME lapses,*

*TRADITIONS Change,*

*GENERATIONS pass*

*But WISDOM endures;*

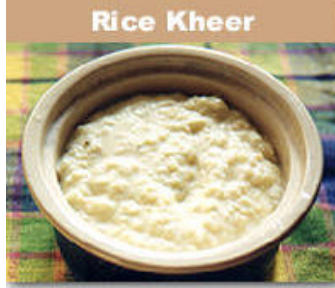
The Future is built with the WISDOM of the past"

It is 50 long years since I left Pilani after graduation, but at every opportunity I fly Pilani's flag high and mighty.

### **TV Balan (1948-51)**

I remember, we had a column for 'General fitness for profession' carrying 200 marks in our annual mark sheet. This was awarded personally by the Principal, Prof. V. Lakshminarayan, who knew all the students by name! Of course we were only 150 students or so by the end of the second year. These marks were awarded to make us "COMPLETE MEN" and not merely technical graduates!

### **Lt. Gen. Lalgudi Rajgopal (1947-50)**



**T**uesday night dinners? Always a little dreary: slopped into one of the compartments in our thalis was a concoction that, we were led to believe, started life as kheer.

When Dinesh and I sit down this Tuesday, that RPA mess servant institution, Girdhari, sports a troubled look. Before passing our thalis out, he turns one over. "Look," he says. "The stuff stays there." The kheer. It does. Stay there. So congealed, it won't fall out.

This is not something to take lying down, or even sitting there. We summon the manager. I speak to him. Meanwhile, Dinesh lugubriously picks up his spoon, sticks the business end into the kheer, and thumps the other end with his hand. The small piece he shovels out of the once-kheer then goes into his mouth. He drops the spoon. Thumps his head with one hand, his chin with the other at the same time. This way, he munches through the stuff.

Lugubrious still. The manager gets the point.

Maybe not. Next Tuesday, the kheer is the same.

### **Dilip D'Souza ('76)**

**W**e called Nitin "Bondo" for no apparent reason other than it was one more of those peculiar BITS names. But he was, in the

very best sense of the word, peculiar anyway. One incident summed up his outlook on life for us.

In a long-forgotten test -- some 3rd year Maths or Physics course, I think -- Bondo came home with half on twenty-five. (I got a big fat zero, but that's another story). That's right, half a mark out of a maximum of 25.

Still, that fraction alone was not what made this a special occasion. Good old Bondo picked up his paper and streaked off to the concerned professor's office. To protest. But not, as you might imagine, that he had been given an unfairly low mark. Or half-mark.

"Half a mark is a disgrace!" he wailed at the bemused professor. "Please reduce it to zero!" he pleaded. "At least then I can show my face to my VK wingmates!"

The odd thing was, he was right. When he returned with a resplendent zero, we looked at him with new respect. Then we gave him bumps.

### **Dilip D'Souza ('76)**

**W**e've all been confronted with payment options while shopping and even at work – of course we have. Earlier it was barter, then it moved to currency and then credit cards and debit cards and what have you. The list is endless and mind-boggling. But BITS had evolved a wonderful payment system called Baad Mein. I think, esp. with the kiosks or rerun's as we called them, 80 % payment occurred that way. The interest option must have been weighed against the opportunity cost of losing lots of broke hostler customers and so on. Credit ensured a steady stream of business. There was a write-off of bad debts as well, occasionally, when somebody passed out (literally or figuratively) without paying up.

But most guys (since the kiosks flocked around the guy's hostels

mainly) survived on baad mein. Till money from home arrived.



They would have chai (a hot cuppa tea) on baad mein. Nimbu paani on baad mein. Cutlets and samosas on baad mein. Even ganne ka ras (sugarcane juice) on baad mein.

Baad mein being synonymous with pata nahi kab...

And then some of us would take advantage of that and have a little-something (as Winnie the

Pooh calls his frequent snacks) and say, add it to our sub-account

in our friends' accounts - Panda's baad mein or Dev's baad mein or who-have-you's baad mein. Which we would pay up later. Because everybody's pockets were empty.

If ever anybody paid up in cash, everybody stared at him/her as if the person had gone nuts. It was not done. As a student, it was illegal to be anything but broke. Or transact in anything but baad mein.

The wiser kiosk chalak's realized that and wound their way around that, wrapping themselves around

the pinky fingers of eager baad-mein clients.

Except that when the bills piled up, they were mind-boggling, running into hundreds. And one would ask for an account, which was equally mind-boggling. I mean, how did I end up consuming 11 cups of tea and 13 samosa's in a day. But I did. Over a period of time, spread over the day. Food expands to fill the hours available.

It's just when they were 'heading home' in filmi style that they went a-collecting. Once a year or maybe once in two years, they went from Bhawan to Bhawan, demanding, pleading and trying to raise money.

And put it in my BM account is still oft heard, oft repeated and dreaded...Old habits die-hard. When we BITSian friends meet now, we try and palm off things to the BM account...but we are now older and wiser...and don't get conned having learnt the fine art of conning (and hogging) - amongst other things - at Birla Institute of Technology and Science **Anu Gupta ('86)** †

## BITSians Teaching Marketing at Universities (and you thought BITSians were engineers!)

Name	Department / School	College / University
1 Manoj Hastak	Kogod School of Business	American University
2 Joby John	Chair of Marketing	Bentley College
3 Rajendra Sisodia	Director, Center for Marketing Technology	Bentley College
4 Sanjay Putrevu	Department of Marketing	Brock University
5 Ajay Kalra	Graduate School of Industrial Administration	Carnegie Mellon University
6 Rajeev Kohli	Columbia Business School	Columbia University
7 Ashok Kapoor	Department of Marketing	Delhi School of Business
8 Prabakar Kothandaraman	Bennett S. LeBow College of Business	Drexel University
9 Ritu Lohtia	J Mack Robinson School of Business	Georgia State University
10 Sharmila C. Chatterjee	Edward S Ageno School of Business	Golden Gate University
11 Sanjay Singh Gaur	Shailesh J Mehta School of Management	IIT Mumbai
12 Shailendra P. Jain	Kelley School of Business	Indiana University (Bloomington)
13 Mukesh Chaturvedi	Director - Amity Centre for CRM	Infinity Business School, New Delhi
14 Banwari Mittal	College of Business	Northern Kentucky University
15 Alok N. Choudhary	Kellogg	Northwestern University
16 Deepak Agrawal	Krannert School of Management	Purdue University
17 Mohan Harsh	Department of Marketing	SP Jain Institute of Management, Mumbai
18 Puneet Manchanda	Graduate School of Business	University of Chicago
19 Ravipreet S Sohi	College of Business Administration	University of Nebraska
20 Rajagopal Raghunathan	McCombs Graduate School of Business	University of Texas at Austin

THANKS TO SAGARIKA JAGANATHAN ('93)

## KM DHOLAKIA - BITS FACULTY ('61-84)

*Dr.K.M.Dholakia's nearly 25-year-long love affair with BITS, Pilani, commenced in August 1961. He began as a lecturer in Civil Engineering, and became Professor in 1976 respectively. In 1973 he took over as head of the Civil Engineering Department and in 1981, was named Dean of Faculty Division-I. He also served on the Board of Governors of BITS for two years, while still in service, and another three years as Government of India nominee after leaving BITS in December 1984. He helped shape what we know as characteristics of Pilani – normalization, CGPA, BOSM and Oasis. Dr. Dholakia fondly reminisces about his days at BITS, a career steeped in the rich history that is now an integral part of the Bitsian heritage. The institute, he says, has always remained a part of him despite leaving it behind two decades ago. In his own words...*

My years at BITS were critical and exciting, and shaped the current institution. During this time, three former colleges were brought together to give birth to Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences...BITS. When three prominent colleges with eminent personalities come together for a common cause there are bound to be problems of differences in work culture, future perception and personalities. Despite the start-up glitches, BITS developed as one great institute with excellent open and forward-looking work culture, and cordial cooperative and socialist human relationships. The transformation has required a lot of patience, foresight, tact, mutual respect and concern and of course,



abundant hard work.

I was Warden, Gandhi Bhawan in 1965 and Chief Warden of the BITS hostel system in 1969. Incidentally, I was the first Chief Warden who was given charge of all the hostels of the former colleges..

I've had my share of involvement and responsibilities in addressing aspects of this grand transformation,

including the start of the normalization process, creation of the CGPA system. In 1965, I was appointed Chairman of the athletic club which oversaw all sports including athletics and the swimming pool. The Bits Open Sports Meet (BOSM) was initiated during my tenure, with the sole purpose of making these activities popular among students and through them, breed harmony, healthy competition and achievement.

On cultural front, I was involved in initiating the practice of inviting eminent classical artists – musicians and dancers – to BITS on the occasions of Founder's day and the cultural festival, OASIS. We also established the link with SPIC – MACAY. These efforts brought some of the greatest artists like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Ustad Bismillah Khan, Professor Nihkil Banerjee, Smt. Sonal Man Singh, Kumari Yamini Krishnamurthy, Kumari Uma Sharma, Smt. Sanjukta Panigrahi, among other, to the BITS campus. Community

celebrations of Holi and Dussehra through Mela-like activities and cultural programs was another area I helped promote.

Leaving BITS in 1984, I took over as Principal of the Birla Vishwakarma Mahavidyalaya (BVM) – a well-known Engineering college at Vallabh Vidyanagar in Gujarat. Established in 1948 as one of the first two engineering colleges of Gujarat under

the stewardship of the legendary Professor Junarkar, the college needed definite rejuvenation at the time. We revamped the academic structure, curriculum, examinations. The infrastructure was upgraded, as well as the skills of the staff, which made tremendous improvements.

I retired from BVM on December 31, 1992. The overwhelming respect and affection from students, staff and others in Vallabh Vidyanagar was my memorable reward. This stint also gave me the opportunity to work actively on important bodies Sardar Patel University like Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council, Faculty of engineering & Technology, etc.

Since October 1992, I had served as Director of Gujarat Energy Development Agency (GEDA) located at Vadodara. After retiring from BVM, I started working as full time Director. In my short term of little over 2 years I worked for the promotion of wind energy in Gujarat and development of regional rural energy development center with the assistance of the planning commission.

Since leaving GEDA, I have been serving as freelance consultant for the establishment and development of self-financed professional institutions like engineering and medical colleges, MCA colleges, etc. in the Gujarat area, pursuing my lifelong passion for perpetuating education among the masses.

BITS afforded an excellent opportunity for my development as a teacher, academician, administrator and organizer. In a more personal way, my tenure at BITS richly rewarded me with lasting relationships with a large number of students, colleagues and the simple, warm-hearted people of Pilani. To this day, my times at BITS are the most memorable in my life. †

BY AANAND KRISHNAN ('95)

## PROF VIJAY CHANDRU: WHEN ACADEMICIANS BECOME ENTREPRENEUR; THE SECOND IN A SERIES OF PROFILES

*Inventor of India's most famous PDA – The Simputer, Founder of India's first VC funded bioinformatics company – Strand Genomics and Pico Peta – listed by MIT as one of the 7 most exciting university spinoffs globally, and recipient of the highest honor for Innovation in India, the First Dewang Mehta Award, Professor Vijay Chandru has some outstanding learnings for us all in this somewhat nostalgic, somewhat outspoken, gripping interview.*

### Let's start with your memories of BITS.

**It has been more than 25 years since you graduated from BITS. How do you recall your BITSian days?**

Very fondly! I grew up all my life in Chennai, though my mother was from Andhra and my father, from Bangalore. In those days, BITS had very few students from the south and one had to get adjusted culturally.

I didn't like the basic courses in physics, math and chemistry in the first few semesters. I came to my own after we started to concentrate on core discipline courses in Electrical and Electronics. We used to share books that were loaned to us from the BITS library, because books were so expensive in those days.

Three incidents during my BITS days are firmly imprinted in my memory.

Listening to Stafford Beer lecture about Cybernetics and Operations Research - I ended up doing my PhD in Operations Research

Acting in Edward Albee's "The Zoo Story" with JK on the Museum Lawns (Teaching/Lecturing has always felt like being on stage)

An evening of music in my hostel room with Dinesh Sharma (Panditji) singing and playing the harmonium, and Ashok Pati playing the tabla. I recorded this session and have played the tape whenever I needed inspiration.

We had three strikes during my time at BITS, one in the very first year. Mayur, which later became Oasis, was started during our time.

As far as extracurriculars were concerned, I was captain of the BITS cricket team and part of the swimming team. I was also actively involved in the English Drama Clubs and directed and acted in a number of plays.



Photo credit: Annanava

**Name:** Dr. Vijay Chandru (back)

**Academic Positions:** Professor of Computer Science & Management, IISc Bangalore, Honorary Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies

**Business Position:** Founder & CEO, Strand Genomics

**Entrepreneurial Ventures:**

- Founder **Strand Genomics**, a VC funded bioinformatics company
- Co-Inventor of the **Simputer**

**Awards/Recognition:** Dewang Mehta Award for Innovation ; Asian Innovation Awards Special Mention, Rabobank Bio-innovator of 2003

**Education:** PhD, Operations Research, MIT (1982), MS Systems, UCLA (1977), BE (Hons) EEE, BITS (1975)

**The simputer has been all over the news in the recent past. How did the idea of the simputer come about and what does the future hold for the simputer?**

The Simputer grew from some soul searching that Swami Manohar (IISc), Vinay Deshpande (Encore) and I did in mid 1998 about the nature of IT and its role in development. Manohar christened the concept and we expanded the team by bringing in colleagues from both entities (including another BITSian **Shashank Garg** from Encore).

The Simputer is about to hit the market in two avatars. The IISc spinoff (PicoPeta - listed as one the seven most exciting university spinoffs worldwide by MIT's Technology Review in Sept '01) has designed "Amida" Simputers which will roll out from BEL and "Encore" Simputers which have been out but clearly in small numbers so far. We have about 1500 Simputers in all out there now mostly used for pilot projects and in the hands of some developers. I believe the next 6-12 months will decide whether the device actually flies. The promise of tackling the digital divide and other developmental goals would follow only after the device reaches some sustainable financial existence.

**Strand Genomics was the first bioinformatics company started in India. What prompted you and the rest of the team to embark on this venture?**

As academics we (Ramesh Hariharan, Swami Manohar, V Vinay and I) were exploring the interface of biology and CS by around 1994. In 1997 we started the Perceptual Computing Lab at IISc. After about two years of consulting, we were convinced that we could build world-class technology and wrote to IISc administration asking for permission to start Strand and PicoPeta. The goal in both companies is to build world class technology products that we can proudly sell globally. After three years of toil, I believe we are poised in both companies with such products.

**There must have been many intellectual, technical and logistical challenges to start such a venture ....**

The real challenge is to stay completely focused on the ventures. The rest follows. The metaphor of parenting is particularly apt.

**Is Strand Genomics looking to recruit engineers as well as interns from Pilani? Do you see a bioinformatics boom in India and abroad?**

Strand has recruited several BITSians - not sure if we did campus interviews though. Bioinformatics in the US is starting to look attractive as a qualification. The funding crisis in the biotech industry over the last 18 months or so has slowed down the prospects but there is an undeniable case for bioinformatics. Business plans for



companies in India that depend on bioinformatics as an outsourced activity have not been successful. So I do not see a massive need for bioinformaticians in India at this point. According to some estimates we need about 500 trained bioinformaticians for the country this year. This includes companies, CSIR Labs etc.

**BITS Pilani offers Pharmacy, Biological Sciences and Computer Science as undergraduate degrees. What would you suggest BITS should do to become better at combining these resources to suit the upcoming trends in bioinformatics?**

It is best not to combine these streams. Students can pick electives to cross boundaries. At Strand we have stuck to hiring computer scientists and biologists and made them talk to one another and get past the jargon and other cultural barriers to working together.

**What are your thoughts on the BITS connect program and its effort to link the whole of BITS through wireless access?**

Starting off with a very concrete program like the BITS Connect Program is a good way of getting the alumni focused. Wireless access is obviously an appropriate technology focus. I was at MIT last week and it is a joy to be able to work almost anywhere on campus with a laptop, handheld etc. I would love to work with the team and take the Amida Simputer into the campus (we have demonstrated WiFi/ WLL/ CDMA/ GSM/ RF compatibility).

**You have studied or worked in such renowned schools as MIT, IISc, Purdue, U Penn and so on. How has the BITSian experience helped you deal with academic and business problems and challenges?**

I always claim that the BITS experience was the perfect annealing of a young body, mind and spirit. With a temperature swing of 40-50 degrees

Fahrenheit in a day we were certainly physically annealed.:-)

More seriously though, I believe BITS gave us a very good balance of theory and hands on practice. There was healthy respect that existed between the two. The same theme continued at MIT and Purdue and to a lesser extent at IISc. I was well prepared to study matroids (my PhD thesis) and roll up my sleeves and work on CAD/CAM software - some of what I did at Purdue. I owe BITS a great debt of gratitude for this balance.

BITS also gave me a sense of self-actualization without feeling competitive. I believe that the absence of a "JEE" for BITS is actually a blessing as we did not have this notion of a "rank" that we carried as a chip on one's shoulder all through life.

**What, in your mind, is the single most important thing we need to do to improve our output, in terms of research?**

The key is of course to attract enthusiastic and bright young faculty. For a young professor to get a research track going along with teaching responsibilities, the alumni could give a leg up by providing a startup grant - say about 10 lakhs - will allow the person a chance to hire a postdoc / research assistant and get a small computing environment set up etc. This is routinely done at a place like IISc. Getting organizational help for grant proposal processing is also important. There are a lot of grants given by DST, MCIT, CSIR etc within India and many more internationally that can be a good way of bootstrapping research.

Finally, to create a great undergraduate institution you also need good research - this is the lesson one has learnt from places like MIT and UPenn.

**You have been both a researcher and an entrepreneur. What separates research from the spirit of entrepreneurship? How do you cultivate the entrepreneurial temper in young students?**

I think one can be entrepreneurial in research as well. Building a team, getting your funding organized, sticking your neck out a bit by trying ambitious projects - could very well define a research career track as it does an entrepreneurial one.

About cultivating entrepreneurial temper - I once heard Sabeer Bhatia say that Stanford runs a seminar series where they invite alumni / entrepreneurs to come talk to the students. By attending these, he felt quite confident about taking the plunge.

**What are your future career plans - at the academic and entrepreneurial level?**

The two companies are now poised to move into product sales, marketing and management. I believe it is time for a founder (of my vintage) to step back and allow young professional managers to run the show. It has been a riot for the last three years and I have had a great time.

I will return to academics soon but with new visions now to drive research agendas that are motivated by some experiences with the companies. †

## Featured Article

INTERVIEW BY DILIP D'SOUZA ('76) (GO ONLINE FOR THE FULL VERSION)

# JULY/AUGUST PERSON OF THE MONTH: ADITI PANY ('01) (FIRST WOMAN STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT & FOUNDING PRESIDENT, CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP)

*Aditi Pany is 21 years old. Which means she was born soon after I graduated from BITS in 1981. Now there's a thought. So in one way of looking at it, you might say there's a full BITS generation that separates us. In another way, there's all kinds of changes at BITS that separate us: from the way we were assigned our disciplines to the student lingo to the great increase in the number of women students at BITS.*

*And, too, this interesting fact: On September 8, 2002, Aditi was elected President of the BITS Students' Union. The first woman ever to hold that post. I mean no disrespect to the fine young ladies of my time in Pilani, but I have to say I cannot imagine, for reasons they had little control over, any of them becoming President. That Aditi has done so is really an indication of what has changed at BITS, besides saying things about her. So I was very intrigued by the prospect of speaking to her for Sandpaper. In June, we met very briefly in Bombay. Briefly, but enough to get a sense of the kind of person BITS has elected as its President. Enough to look forward very much to this conversation.*

*Aditi came 9th in Orissa in her 12th standard exam. She wanted to study engineering, and thus applied to BITS and did the Orissa Joint Entrance Examination; but remarkably for a budding engineer, did not do the IIT-JEE. Excerpts from our conversation, conducted by Internet chat.*

### Lets start with a little bit about yourself. Where did you grow up, go to school?

I'm from Bhubaneswar and I studied here till the 5th, after which I joined Welham Girls' High School, Dehradun. I was there till the 10th and then I shifted back to Bhubaneswar, to BJB College.

### What made you choose BITS?

Well, I had 3 options: OJEE (Orissa Joint Entrance Examination), SAT and BITS happened later. I wasn't keen on studying in Orissa, and I didn't want to go to the US so soon. I had a chance to go to BITS and pursue both engineering and economics, so I took it up.

### Now that you're close to graduating, do you think BITS turned out in any way different than what you thought it would be like when you entered?

Yes, for starters I certainly thought BITS would be more cosmopolitan, that courses would

be much tougher and the classes more exciting. But I also didn't expect the fabulous amount of student activities, and the in-depth student involvement in them.

### I'm intrigued when you say it wasn't as cosmopolitan as you expected ... I had the opposite experience. In the sense that for the first time in my life I met people from every corner of India, including tiny towns I had never heard of, and more than that, several of them started beating the pants off me in our courses!

Well, BITS was full of south Indians, mainly from TN and AP. The lingo, the food, everything was south Indian, and the rest were a small minority.

### OK, moving on... What made you run for President of the Union? Had you been involved with student issues before, either at school or in your first couple of years at BITS?

There were 2 major candidates from my batch, and lot of politics, a lot of money. Anyway, a night before the

election the two parties broke into a fight; it was a nasty scene and the EC cancelled their nominations. Then there was uproar on campus, and a group of us decided to give it a shot. We wanted to represent a neutral apolitical participation. We believed we couldn't win, but we wished to make a difference, instead of just criticizing. So I filed my nomination, with four others. It was a very short campaign.

Yes, probably my sex had to do with students accepting me as apolitical and neutral. But there were many doubts raised, because no woman had ever taken even a STUCCA post. Yes, I did get a lot of support from Meera Bhavan, but my victory was most unexpected! And honestly, I didn't know then what it entailed. I think I won it because they wanted to see a change, and maybe the Audi-ragging also played a part. It gave me confidence, and the students decided that I could be given a chance.

You see, there were many issues then: Oasis deficits year after year being billed to students, etc. So people were disillusioned. The union had lost a lot of respect. It was eventful, it wasn't an ordinary election, which is why I'm giving you so much background.



**Name:** Aditi Pany

**Position:** Founding President, Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership, BITS Pilani and In-charge of Rural Entrepreneurship Programs

**Selected Achievements:**

- ❑ First woman President of BITS Student Union
- ❑ Focussed on Rural Entrepreneurship at BITS – working with a number of rural organizations to set this up at Pilani
- ❑ 9<sup>th</sup> in Orissa Board Examinations

**Very interesting. I can see it wasn't ordinary! Goings-on at BITS! I'm reacting to your use of the word "apolitical": do you think there is such a thing as being apolitical? Also, educate this old-timer, what's Audi-ragging (I think I can guess, but tell me).**

Apolitical: I meant detached from BITS politics (mainly regional). Audi-ragging is held one day before the elections. A panel of senior students is selected by the EC and they grill the candidates on the stage in the audi, before a huge audience. They grill us on why we wish to stand for the post, what are the main issues that need to be addressed, etc. But when

you look back, you never know what influenced, or convinced, people to vote for me!

**Isn't it true that the majority of people who come to BITS have earlier tried to get into IIT and failed, or failed to get their discipline? Isn't that the Tier 2 perception we are talking about?**

True, but for a lot of them, had they tried a second time, they would have gotten into IIT. And we've experienced, in intercollege competitions, that we do as well. That's where the confidence is from. Of course they have a much larger brand. But what's tier 1 -- the top 10 institutes in the country? Top five? We're certainly in the top five. If tier 1 means the top two, then maybe not, but that would be a really small range for tier 1. Which is why we want to ask ET what tier 1 means to them.

**Tell me about this entrepreneurship initiative you are involved with. Are the students excited about it?**

Well, the initiative came from an alumni group called CEVC (Center for Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital) and we are working together to establish a "Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership" at BITS. The objective is to promote an entrepreneurial spirit among the BITSian community. We have a lot of activities planned; workshops, venture partnership projects, rural entrepreneurship, student agencies, guest lectures and more. We look to ex-BITSians to guide us and support us in this effort.

And I've observed it during this Apogee. We tried to completely rethink Apogee. We wanted to make it one of the best tech-fests in the country. So we were on this roll, new ideas, new ways to do old things, focus on quality. And there was so much participation, enthusiasm and creativity.

This Apogee had a new look, and the change was appreciated. This was, of course, just the beginning. But after having been part of that experience, I think BITSians will enjoy this initiation into entrepreneurial ventures. I think we need inspiration and a dose of confidence. We hope to provide exactly that. We're working on it!

**What are you going to do after BITS?**

I have a dream to set up a unit here in Orissa. So I shall follow a course which will help me achieve that best. And as I understand it now, I should work for two years, do my MBA (in the US because I want a global experience) and then go after my dream.

**What kind of unit?**

Hmm... Well, it's an idea: I want to take up a village and provide all facilities, from infrastructure to ideas and designs, to accessibility to international and national markets, all for promoting Orissa's textiles and handicrafts. We have tremendous talent here, and I think we need to channelise that. Indian textiles are getting recognition in a lot of countries, and by top designers.

**A little bit of nostalgia to (almost) conclude: what's your favourite spot on the campus? Why?**

The Student Union Block easily! Because I have spent most of my time there and we've had the most interesting discussions about BITS, its present and future there. And my 24 hr permission is valid in the SUB!

**Finally, if some of us alumni come to BITS for this year's Oasis, can you assure us of an event we can participate in in which we will win lots of prizes? We expect you to use your Presidential influence on our behalf.**

Ha ha! OK, hmm... Yeah, I can promise influence in the Mr and Ms Oasis event. Looking forward to seeing you this Oasis. Except that I won't be Prez. But I think I could still cast some influence. 🙄



INTERVIEW BY ANUPENDRA SHARMA ('87)

## SEPT/OCT PERSON OF THE MONTH: DILIP D'SOUZA ('76) (AWARD WINNING AUTHOR OF TWO BOOKS, REDIFF COLUMNIST, ENGINEER & PROMOTER OF SOCIAL CAUSES)

*When I met Dilip in New York in Mid October, it was to meet him for the first time face to face, and to make a decision on which of our deserving candidates would we choose for the Person of the Month. Halfway through our conversation I realized that Dilip should be that deserving person. Here follows an interview with Dilip, conducted through conversations, phonecalls and emails.*

**Tell us about your experience at BITS. Do you have any fond memories you'd like to share with us?**

The first lesson I learned, and very quickly, was that my city boy pretensions were just those: pretensions. At BITS I met guys from every corner of the country, many of whom were not fluent in English, but who proceeded to beat the pants off me in our courses nevertheless. A sobering, but necessary lesson for me. It was from them that I learned the true meaning of the word "cosmopolitan" -- for this was a cosmopolitan place in the best sense. BITS was probably the first time I truly understood what my country was about, and it's something I haven't forgotten.

There are all kinds of fond memories! The joy of friendships, the aching tenderness of first love, the untouchable thrill of finding what you're good at (and bad at, for that matter) and doing well at it ... and then I ran for President of the Union. Promised helipads in each Bhavan, promised to move the clock tower to the Main lawns so the time would be better visible from all over the campus, and collected all of 17 votes. I'm still trying to find out who the other 16 dodos were.

**You have written two great books about two great causes. Tell us about these books.**

"Great" is a word I quail from! But thank you nevertheless. I put a lot into them and I think they are good books. I'm dejected that they haven't

been more widely read. But I suppose that's the way it goes. Anyway.

My first book, "Branded by Law", is about our "denotified", or ex-criminal tribes. There are about 150 of these communities spread around the country. In 1872, the British passed the Criminal Tribes Act which actually listed ("notified") these tribes and therefore defined them as criminal. That is, if you were born into one of these tribes, you were automatically considered criminal. In 1952, independent India repealed the Act and thus they were "denotified". But in real life, little has changed for these people. They are still seen as criminal, and treated that way every day.

When I was done with writing that book, someone from Penguin approached me to write about the Narmada, an issue I've been writing about for many years. It's an issue close to my heart, and I had a lot of material anyway, so I said yes. Thus "The Narmada Dammed", in 2002. Of course it's a book against the dams projects on the Narmada, but I consciously tried to keep the Narmada Bachao Andolan out of it (even though I believe their argument). The case I tried to make in the book was simple: even if you believe in dams, you should be alarmed at the way this one, Sardar Sarovar, is being built. In other words, the strongest case against Sardar Sarovar is not made by the NBA or other dam critics, but by those who are building the dam -- because they are doing such a shoddy, haphazard and half-hearted

job of it. The basic problem with the dam is that it will not deliver what it promises, especially to thirsty Kutch and Saurashtra.



Denotified Tribes

**I'd like to hear about your most cherished moment from both projects.**

This happened in 1998, when I visited a tiny town called Santrampur, in Panchmahals Dist in Gujarat (an area that saw some horrible violence last year). I was at a meeting of denotified tribes -- Vagharis, Nats, and others. I got talking to one young man, Deepak, and he told me: "These speeches are OK, but if you really want to get an idea of our situation, come with me to our homes." I said fine. We walked through the whole messy town to the other end in about 10-15 minutes.

There, beyond a strip of black stinking ooze from a broken drain,

beyond a huge pile of garbage and set in some thorny bushes, were a few thatched huts. I went with Deepak to his hut, said namaste to his wife and daughter, bent down to look in and commented involuntarily on how neat his hut was. That was all I did.

Then we started walking back to the meeting, because I had to meet my colleagues and return to Baroda. On the way back, Deepak stopped suddenly and told me this: "Aap ke dil mein garibon ke liye jo bhavna maine dekhi hai, use kabhi khona nahin." ("Don't ever lose the feeling for the poor I can see you have in your heart.")

This is what I wrote in my book about this moment: *"I was speechless. Astonished, too, at how close to tears I suddenly was. It was both a compliment I will always treasure, and the saddest thing I have ever heard. All I had done was spend a few minutes with Deepak, as I might have with anyone else. Yet his few words told me just how novel an experience even that much was for him."*

As for the Narmada: perhaps the experience I cherish most was visiting a small village, Bilgaon, on the banks of one of its tributaries. Two young engineers from Kerala gathered the villagers, built a small dam -- small in comparison to Sardar Sarovar, but still some 50-60 m long -- there and blasted a channel through rock to take water to a tank from where it powered a turbine. So in a matter of 6 months or so, 300 families and a tribal school that had NEVER had electricity now had the stuff. Without any displacement, without any submergence of fields (both of which the Sardar Sarovar is threatening Bilgaon with). Can you imagine that? After half a century of listening to government promises about providing electricity and so forth, they produced these things for themselves.

It was a truly inspiring moment on many levels. I found myself wishing that more of us from BITS -- me, for one -- would choose to go do things like this pair from Kerala had. I can't think of a better use of the education we were privileged to get there.



**Name:** Dilip D'Souza

**Books:** The Narmada Dammed (2002) and Denotified Tribes:

**Regular Columnist:** Rediff

**Education:** MS Computer Science, Brown University (1984), BE (Hons) EEE (1981)

**You once wrote about 10 great reasons why you want to live in India. You have worked hard on about ills and injustices of the government. Do you think anyone is really listening ?**

Listening to the 10 reasons or to the ills and injustices?

More seriously. Yes, I suppose some people are listening, but not enough, and not enough who are in positions of power. But that's the challenge every writer faces: to write effectively so that people will listen. It's my challenge too, and it's what drives my writing. There are times I fail, sure, but that only means I need to try harder next time.

**Your next project concerns Kashmir. What motivates you to do this. Hasn't enough been written already ?**

The next project I want to work on concerns patriotism, war and

dissent. Kashmir is a sort of natural, convenient place to examine those issues, because what is happening there puts them in such sharp light. But my real intent is to examine what these things are doing to India as a whole, and to articulate something (I don't yet know what!) that will move us away from the steady bloodshed of war -- to make peace a patriotic pursuit, if you will. I think peace is much the harder thing to achieve than fighting a war (war is the soft option), and I think it's time we started doing that hard work.

So I am interested too in the tragedy of Gujarat last year, or in Bombay in 1992-93, or the Northeast, or even of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. Because all these have links to our notions of patriotism and nationhood, to our hostility with Pakistan in Kashmir. Whether we like it or not, our sense of who we are as Indians is now so intimately linked to Kashmir that it has some kind of bearing on much of what happens around us.

**Tell me something about your family. Is your wife your biggest critic ?**

I met Vibha Kamat in 1992, about 6 months after my move back from the States. (Meeting her is, of course, the best thing I've ever done in my life...). We were married in December 1993. Our son Sahir was born in June 1999. We are getting ready to submit our application to adopt a second child. Vibha grew up in Bombay, teaches French at the Alliance Francaise. Sahir is in KG.

On the face of it, I suppose I would have to say no when you ask if Vibha is my "biggest critic". My mother is often far more critical. But over the years I've learned to interpret Vibha's remarks about my writing. So when she's sort of non-committal about something, I know she thinks it is pretty hopeless and I had better get down to rewriting it!



### Announcing: MOU signed with State University of New York, Binghamton

BITS and SUNY-Binghamton have recently signed a MOU that would allow for faculty and student exchange between these two institutions. In addition, Binghamton will be a Practice School-2 Station starting this coming January. While this MOU is specific to the Department of Systems Science and Industrial Engineering (SSIE) at Binghamton, it is expected this will get extended to other departments fairly soon. The whole process took less than two months. A testament to BITS reputation within the academic world in the U.S. In fact, here is the quote from Prof. Srihari, Chair of Dept. of SSIE "we are extremely interested in initiating and developing interaction with BITS that would encompass student and faculty exchange programs. We have had numerous students from BITS in our graduate programs. They have performed very well at Binghamton. We are certainly interested in enhancing the participation of BITS alumni in our graduate programs. We are also interested in reviewing the potential for faculty from BITS to spend a semester at Binghamton. Our goal is broad-based interaction between our two universities. In closing, I hope that this is the first step in a long term multi-faceted relationship between the State University of New York at Binghamton and BITS". In addition, Prof. Srihari will sever as "visiting" faculty at BITS and in fact is visiting Pilani between November 4th and 5th.

**We hope to extend this initiative to other Universities outside India. Please call to help us in this effort.**

**Contact:**  
Santhana Satagopan  
PS2 Representative  
[ssatagop@brocade.com](mailto:ssatagop@brocade.com)

### Announcing: BITSAA Center for Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital (CEVC) holds events in Boston, New York and San Francisco

The CEVC held three outstanding events featuring Mukesh Chatter, Diaz Nesamoney and Rajesh Hukku in the United States. The CEVC, founded in November 2002 by Anupendra Sharma, has a mission to foster entrepreneurship amongst BITS alumni. It has quickly grown into a core global team of 15 dedicated advisors and coordinators with backgrounds in entrepreneurship, venture capital and private equity. The objectives are to:

- Nurture entrepreneurship amongst the BITSian Alumni
- Facilitate the creation of an ecosystem that consists of entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, professionals, academicians and the students of BITS
- "Sow-the-Seeds" for entrepreneurship on BITS Campus

CEVC and BITSAA are working together to bring you events and workshops around the world. The first of these events is a meeting with Diaz Nesamoney in San Francisco on May 22. The CEVC will be hosted shortly on [www.bitsaa.com](http://www.bitsaa.com), with tools, resources, advice and lots of information for BITSian entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. In case of any questions regarding the CEVC, please contact the person listed below:

**Contact:**  
Anupendra Sharma  
Global Coordinator  
[anupendra@bitsaa.org](mailto:anupendra@bitsaa.org)

### Announcing: The Leuna Harkawat Thamatur Annual Music Club Award

In memory of Leuna Harkawat, one of BITS Music Club's greatest voices, an annual award of Rs. 5000 will be given to one member of the club for his or her contributions to the Club, every year.

**Contact:** Venu Palaparthy  
[venu@bitsaa.org](mailto:venu@bitsaa.org)

### The New BITS Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) wins the National Entrepreneur Network Competition by the Wadhvani Foundation

**Contacts:**  
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### Virtual Projects at BITS CEL

The alumni directory, being developed by BITSAA with the underlying data from the current directory as well as other information at BITS, is currently under construction, but will be launched in a month or two. This directory, based on benchmarking similar directories at the world's top business schools, is intended to be our most important resource in keeping in touch with the BITSian community. We will inform you when this site is launched.

Since we started encouraging people to post jobs on the yahoogroups, BITSAA has been flooded with job announcements, which has been a boon to our students. To improve this process we are developing a board to easily post job announcements for BITSians.

If you would like to volunteer to help us in our technology development efforts, please contact our CTO.

**Contact:**  
Prasad Thammineni  
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### BITS Pilani's MMS Department ties up with Cornell's Johnson Graduate School of Management on Research Projects

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BY PUSHKALA VENKATRAMAN ('95)

## HEEDING HEART & RELENTLESS MIND

### CONVERSATIONS WITH LT GEN LM RAJGOPAL ('47), AVSM



**Name** – Lt Gen L M Rajagopal ('47)

**Awards** – Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Government of India

**Education** – Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering, BITS Pilani

**Resident** – Secunderabad, India

**Associations** – Fellow of Institution of Plant Engineers, Member of British Institute of Management, Member of Institute of Engineers, Retired Lt General Corps of Engineering and Mechanical Engineers, Founding Committee BITSAA Hyderabad, Ex Member of National Cadet Corps

Lt Gen L.M.Rajgopal's story is one of a wide eyed South Indian boy who etched a place for himself in India by following his heart. Of course, he worked tirelessly to placate its incessant demands.

At 17, when the General had to make the regular academic decisions it was a different time. In South India in 1947 general anarchy pervaded the atmosphere. There weren't half as many engineering colleges back then. The General always had his heart set on joining the army and at the same time wanted to study Engineering. But with a lack of credible

choices at the time, he enrolled at Presidency College, Madras for a Science Degree. His uncle was on deputation to the Government of Rajasthan, however had different plans. He had heard about a new Engineering college at Pilani, built by the Birla group and asked his teenage nephew to apply there.

The General belonged to the second batch of boys to join Pilani. There were just two disciplines at the time - Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.

Getting off from the train in Delhi, the teenager was amazed by the hugeness of the city.

Pandemonium reigned everywhere. The station was full of Hindu refugees streaming in from the other side of the border and Muslims fleeing from India alike. With his 10-strong group of friends, General Rajgopal took the rickety bus to Loharu and then another, to finally land in Pilani.

Krishna Bhavan, Gandhi Bhavan, a couple of thatched sheds and buildings completed the set up of Birla Engineering College as it was then called. The sheds were apparently used by the British as camps for prisoners of war. The General lived in Gandhi and was very impressed with the fact, that each student was given a separate room! This was (and still is) highly uncommon in other colleges in India. The 1947 batch consisted of 75 boys. It was a cultural eye opener too – meeting people from different parts of India. The friendships grew strong, and many joyful evening were spent in Shiv Ganga talking

about the newly independent and fast changing India.

The Breakfast in the mess of puris, potatoes, laddoo and a tall glass of milk was culture shock for the South Indian lad used to Madras coffee and Idli - Sambar.

Professor Lakshminarayanan, the acting principal was a strict disciplinarian and Mr. Rajgopal still fondly remembers how the professor kept all the students in tight control. The General is reminded of another time, when while returning from a vacation at home, there were no buses and the students had to hitch a ride on a camel in Chirawa, to reach Pilani.

Two violent periods are still vivid in his mind. The political scene in India turned ugly and communal riots plagued every inch of the country and spilled into Pilani. Fearing for their safety, the two batches of 150 boys took turns at patrolling the campus in the night. Then Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead some time later. Again, communal violence spewed tensions and the Pilani boys took up patrolling duties to maintain calm.

The General graduated in Mechanical Engineering with a First Division. After graduating, Mr. Rajgopal followed his heart again into the Indian Army after a short stint as an apprentice in HAL, Bangalore. He served in various command and staff positions in the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) for 36 years. Starting his career as a Second Lt in 1952, he rose with distinction, to become a Lt General, serving as the Director General of the Corps of EME. When the President of India awarded him the Ati Vishishta Seva Medal for “distinguished service

of most exceptional order”, it was one of Mr. Mr. Rajgopal’s greatest moments in his life dedicated to the service.

Gen. Rajgopal is married to Mrs. Kamala Rajgopal and they have 3 children. Two sons who live in the United States and one daughter who has settled down in London. Mr. Rajgopal is so attached to his life at the EME, that when he retired he decided to settle down in Secundrabad-the home of the EME. He is invited to the EME establishments often to share his

experiences with young recruits and officers and the General is more than thrilled to be doing this. Enthusiastic as he is, Gen. Rajgopal is one of the founding members of the BITSAA Hyderabad chapter and takes active part in organizing various events.

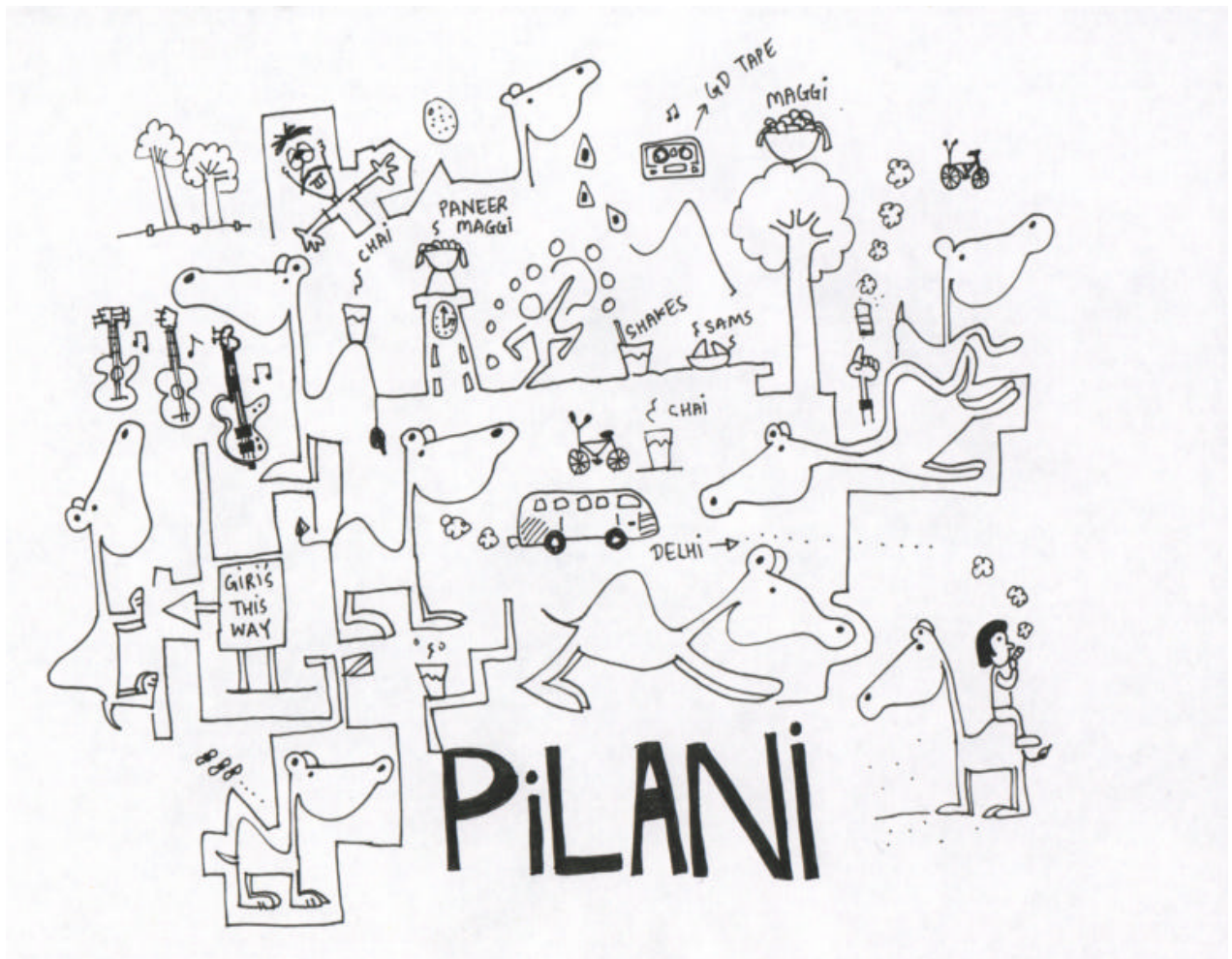
The Lt General, now 73 years of age, looks forward to taking life easy and spending time with his family, friends and grandchildren and playing golf once a week. He wants to however continue visiting the EME establishments

and be a guide for youngsters in the Indian Army.

He regrets that he has not had a chance to visit Pilani since he passed out. He still plans to make that trip.

But he often talks to people and eagerly laps up all the information he can, about the changes taking place in his beloved alma mater. He never passes up a chance to sit cross legged and reminisce the boisterous, youthful days at Pilani. Do call in on him when you are in India and want to share some good old Pilani tales. !

## <<Cartoons by Nikhil Adnani ( ' 88) >>



BY SURAJ SRINIVASAN & ALL THE BATCH REPRESENTATIVES

# SELECTED CLASS NOTES

For a full listing go to the website

## 1971

In October 2001 the batch of 1971 entry celebrated



the Silver Jubilee of our Batch graduation. We had enjoyable three days together at the new Birla Guest House (opposite Swimming pool) The arrangements were excellent and all had good time

The first day was the day of introductions with people arriving till late afternoon. We had the round of introduction in the evening which went on for many hours and then had tea snacks. Later there was a dinner arranged for which no one was hungry as in between all of us went to Connaught and had our usual round of tea. It is quite changed from our days of the seventies. The second day morning we went for a round of the temple and got to offer the prayers. It was voluntary of course.

Later we all went to Birla Museum and had some photographs. After that a visit to Senate room and a meeting where a meeting with Director was arranged. He was not available

unfortunately and we met the Deputy Director. We had some issues discussed and hot issue was on admission procedures. There were also some discussions on future Batch

gatherings and participations. We then had a lunch at our usual hostels and were served a little different delicious food. Some old faces in waiters could be seen. Not much change in hostels and messes. In the evening there was a cultural program well compeered by Kalyan Swarup. He really made the environment charged and we had some of our old pals singing nice songs. Even the new BITS team sang some good old songs. Dinner followed and then next day was time to depart.

Every one enjoyed the two nights three day stay and whoseover could not make it did miss a good time and chance of interacting with old friends. We wish to make it a more frequent with rotating host cities. Hope we can also do it now on our golden jubilee (2026) Hope many of us are around and can join it.

**Ravi Jain** I was a member of 1971 bat ch joining in BSc first and then moving to engineering based on merit. Only in 4th year I was allotted the Electronics branch and managed to pass out with Silver Medal after 5 years. Many of our batch mates remembered me as "Mota" or "Kota Jn". I was not so fat at that time but I did come from Kota, a place in Rajasthan. At prsent I work at Mahindra British Telecom, Pune as Vice President (R&D). My contact details re: Tel: O - +91 20 4018287 R - +91 20 5885201 M - +91 98230 67181

We have two children: son Beeneet pursuing Triple Degree Bachelors (2)/Master (1) degree from Wharton Business School/SEAS of University of Pennsylvania - class of 2004 and daughter Nivea pursuing Bachelor in Business - class of 2006.

## 1978

See Reunion Photo!

**Solomon Raj** says: Our batch was the first to experience "Assigned admission" and was the last to come out with a five-year degree. Apparently, we set new records for grades in Complex Variables! Find most of us at - excluding egroup for 78 batch junta. Friends call me Solo. Did Chemical Engineering while at BITS. Worked as a Research Associate with CDS Trivandrum, and then at NCAER New Delhi. Later worked as Systems Analyst at ICRIER, New Delhi. Did Ph D in Business from Florida International Univ, Miami. Currently am a faculty at Texas Tech University, Lubbock. Married to Chitra since 1990. We have a 1 year old daughter Chellam. Contact :

## 1972

**Navneet Kothari** lives in with my wife, Beena Kothari in Dix Hills, Long Island, New York since 1990 after having served RSEB for more than 12 years. Navneet is currently CTO for Telephonics Corp. among the Top 10 companies on Long Island, New York. Beena is working with IBM as a



Consultant for JPMorganChase.

[solomonraj@yahoo.com](mailto:solomonraj@yahoo.com)

1987

**Buvana Dayanandan** (second semite, MMS) and **Karthik Kannan (ET)** live in the California bay area. They have a daughter called Anamika (June '00), and a son Rohan (Dec.'02). After BITS, Buvana got an MBA, and Karthik an MS in Industrial Engineering, from Louisiana Tech. They spent a few years on the East coast working for various companies. Karthik is currently working for Network Appliance. Buvana is taking a break from her Cisco due to the recent arrival! **Sanjay Anand** (Alpha) married his girlfriend Jennifer in Delhi **Mani** blessed with the birth of his third daughter was promoted to Senior Vice President at Lehman Brothers.

**Venu Palaparthi** was promoted to Vice President and Head of Risk Management at Instinet

**Vidur Luthra** was promoted to Director at Microsoft and took additional responsibilities of the Desktop operations for Russia and Brazil in addition to India and China.

**Uday Sareen** visited the United States recently to receive a global award for his retail bank's performance this year.

**Anupendra Sharma** bought a house in the Princeton Area and moved out to New Jersey

1988

**Ganesh Sankaran (JB)** – After graduation, spent half a decade in steel plants automation before moving on to Wipro. Currently doing program management for Optical Networking companies and working with Ciena in San Jose. Got married to Sumati in 97 and has a 3 year old son Shashank. Nobody quite knows how the name JB came up but it is said that it referred to a

particular item on the Mess/Sarvi menu.

**Simu K.Thomas** - I certainly enjoyed the glory days a little longer since I went back to BITS for my Masters and then worked in a Pharma company in Bangalore for a year. Moved to Ohio long enough to get my MS



from University of Toledo and then it was off to Baltimore for a PhD. in Pharmaceutical Economics from University of Maryland. These days I'm with Novartis Pharmaceuticals, New Jersey, taking care of health economics research for Neuroscience and Transplantation products. Married Rebecca in Dec 2002, she currently works for Aventis Pharmaceuticals. Nope we dont discuss drugs!

**Kumar Thiagarajan (Bug/Andy)** - He was among the quieter lot on campus except when he was in the QT or the Gym lawns playing cricket. After graduating from BITS, he did his Masters from New Jersey and since then has been living in the Northern Virginia area. Besides focusing his energies on the USTA tennis league, Bug is also popular in the area for conducting and organising a number of activities among BITSians. He resides in South Riding, VA with his wife Lakshmi.

**Rajesh Ramadoss (Kannadi)** - Rajesh was a regular fixture on the Bank Canteen circuit in BITS and was also briefly coerced into student politics before wisely keeping away from it. After graduation, he completed his Masters from Rutgers and is now employed by Agere in Allentown, PA. Besides competing (and finishing!!) in marathons here in New York, Boston etc, he has also been setting the NJ cricket league on fire with his batting and captaincy. His other interests

include Moby, Steinbeck and brewing his own beer!!

**Srinivasan Vedantham (Pettai)** - The name was coined on campus during Pettai's first year (some say because of his attire!!) and it has stuck since then. Pettai completed his PhD from UMass, MA and is now an Asst. Prof (Research) at Emory University in Atlanta. Like most BITSians, Pettai competes in the Atlanta cricket league besides checking out every desi restaurant in the city. Srinivasan lives in Atlanta with his wife Manjula.

**Shivshankar (Shivri)** - Shivri is still the same garrulous guy he was on campus. After graduation, he finished his PhD from Lowell and is now employed by 3M in St. Paul, Minnesota. Shivri who was active in student politics on campus claims he doesn't really miss it now though that's quite doubtful!! Shivri resides in Minnesota with his wife Prithi.

**Srinivas Meenakshisundaram (MSrini)** - He was the "wired" guy in the wing who could solve CT problems in three different ways while we all struggled to find one solution!! He was also the "gazer of the stars" for being actively involved in the astronomy club on campus. He completed his Masters from UMass, Amherst and is now employed by Agilent at Santa Rosa, CA. He is now a semi-professional photographer and regularly contributes to National Geographic. He and his wife Vidya have just been blessed with a son Lakshman.

**Rajesh Ananthasubramaniam (Rantha)** - Initially he was a terror to the freshers and they would look for places to hide when he was around. But later, as other interests caught up with him, he really mellowed and let it be. He was also in BackStage working on several plays and projects. After graduating from BITS with an MMS, he has moved through several companies and is now in the Bay area working for IndiaPlaza, a Satyam company, as the head. He is married and has a daughter.

**Anuhasan Chhillar (Anu)** - Having a famous lineage didn't deter Anu from rolling up her sleeves and toiling for various productions in BackStage besides dabbling in music, art and the students' union. After graduating,

while on a stint with Thermax in Pune, she met and married Capt. Vikas Chhillar. Currently, she manages her highly successful financial company based in Calcutta besides acting in several movies, tele-serials and working behind the camera as well in production.

**Ranjeet Singh Malhotra (RSM, Rasam, Surdie)** - In theory a civil engineer, but tronix got his juices flowing. BITS got a special MS Electronic Sciences degree going for him enabling him to augment his love for chips while he got Mu-P and the Robotics lab on track. Dabbled in making the tea industry in Assam techno-savvy, but ditched all that entrepreneurial jazz for a hi-tech job at Trintech Technologies, Dublin, Ireland embedding amongst other things, solutions for point of sale systems. Presently single and giving the Irish a taste of his guzzling techniques as he downs his fav Guinness and Jameson while chasing pretty young things at most of the pubs in downtown Dublin.

**Amit Jain (AJ now)** is the serial entrepreneur of the group and the BPO guru. Having founded and quit Bridgade, he only recently started Vision Healthsource and sold it for gazillions to Perot Systems. He lives in Chicago and commutes back and forth to India.

Last we heard **Malini** married her BITSIAN sweetheart, **Sharat Dhall ('87)** and has not been heard since.

**Vivek Misra (Misra)** - After BITS, Misra did an M.S. in Comp. Sci. at Univ. of Southern California, Los Angeles where he had a great time amidst shootouts, muggings and helicopter searches in south-central L.A. Worked for Citibank in L.A. and then moved to a startup in the San Francisco-Bay-area and rode out the internet economy wave. Still in sunny, stressed-out bay-area with Adobe, having an occasional good time with old BITSian buddies while reminiscing about the good times and riding his red barchetta – well at least he thinks so. Currently single, but not ready to mingle! Ask him why...

**Ashvin Subrahmanyam (Ash)** - An MBA from the University of

Illinois at Chicago (94) however returned to the motherland to start work with Britannia, moved to Mattel Toys India in 2000. Ash then moved to Danone to join their business in China as Marketing Manager for a portfolio in their biscuits division based in Shanghai riding out the SARS wave by planning a holiday in India. Married in Sept. 2000 to Tenzin Dolkar Aukatsang who is a graduate of LSR and NIFT. Currently waiting in wings for their first kid. Congrats!

**Priya Gopalen (Gopes)** - This basketball champ from BITS, moved to Manila to do her MBA where she got much more than a degree. Came back with husband in tow (Ram) and stuck a nose up to the capitalist corporate world whilst starting to work in the NGO sector for the uplifting the downtrodden in India. We bow to thee O noble lady! Recently blessed with a kid, both hubby and Priya are currently making plans to move back to a student life in the US. Priya will shortly be at Columbia while Ram at MIT. All the best guys.

**Rajesh Chelapurath (C)** - After BITS, in 1993, went to work for Larsen & Toubro Ltd. in Bombay at their Medical Equipment Division. Then, in 1996, went to Tulane University, New Orleans for an M.B.A. in Finance amid all that Jazz, Mardi gras, etc. Released from studies in 1998 and went to work for Burnham Securities, Inc. in Houston, USA as an Investment Associate into portfolio management. Now he is an Associate Managing Director (a.k.a. yuppie with a BMW). Got married in March 2001 to Deepa Poduval - also a BITSian (99). Current status - DINK. Spends time with Shyam & Basu living close by.

**Pradeep Mirchandani (Mirchi)** - In his youth, i.e. when at BITS, Mirchi used to be a barber's delight (on the rare occasions when he visited one). His flowing

beard was a pleasure to behold, when you didn't trip on it. And his erudition was a delight to listen to and read (he edited the Sandpaper), when you could understand him. But strange are the ways of fate - while he could hold forth on everything from Shakespeare's tomes to Scotland's brews (especially the latter), he was completely befuddled by two areas of human achievement, Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. Alas, those were his very two chosen degrees at BITS. This queer anomaly played out its course over five mixed years - long periods of carefree abandon interspersed with the harrowing times of quizzes and exams. Anyway the Mirchi that emerged from BITS, naturally, had a morbid dread of formal education; but being a sucker for punishment, he went on to do an MBA in Mumbai and is now inching towards the completion of his CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst). He is today an equity research professional in an investment bank in Mumbai and his home by the sea is always open to any passing BITSian. Old Man by the Sea, they call him.

**Arvind Babu (Pazham)** - When we christened Arvind Babu, Pazham (Fruit) after the Gnanapazham (Fruit of Wisdom) of South Indian Hindu mythology, little did we realise how apt the name would be in the years to come. After several years in the IT field outside India, he has metamorphosed into a philosopher and has chosen to live the Thinker's life in Chennai. While it is heartening to see one of our own strike out on the road less traveled, one can't but wish that he would be less reclusive in his philosophical pursuits and share with us his experiences and discoveries.

**A. Arumugam (Aru)** - After plodding through five years at BITS and two years at B-school in IIM Ahmedabad, Aru joined AIG. He recently left to join the \$100 million StanChart / Merilion Fund. He is still on the lookout for his dream girl. On the flip side, knowing full well Mirchi's generosity, he never misses an opportunity to take full advantage of it.

**Vivek C. Philip (Philpot, Philip)** - Was mostly found in

the music room at the end of the auditorium pounding away at the skins. Philip followed his heart and pursued Sound Engineering at Film & TV Institute of India (FTII), Pune. Is currently at Mumbai, working in the music industry as a composer/arranger for ad-films, albums, film and television. Married with no kids and his hobbies include Chemical Engg!!! Hooks up with the boys in Mumbai whenever he raises his head out of the studio and his wife is out of town - hmmm.

**Baradwaj Rangan (Baddy)** - Quit Chemical Engg., which is what he did in BITS, to work as copywriter with J Walter Thompson, Chennai. An advertising scholarship to Marquette University, Milwaukee, led to his American stay, which then saw - for reasons too complicated to explain briefly - his becoming a software programmer, ending up with Motorola in Schaumburg. After some seven-odd years out there, he's now back in India, back to writing. You can find his movie reviews on SitaGitacom as well as select newspapers in Chennai.

**Vara Ramakrishnan** - Is married to Dinesh Ramanathan (Danda, 87B4A7) and lives in San Jose, California. They have a daughter, Anjali, born in November 2002. After BITS, Vara earned a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of California, Irvine. She works at PMC-Sierra, a networking semiconductor company.

**Nikhil Adnani (Nikki)** - Left BITS after 2 and half years and moved to Canada. Worked a number of odd jobs including a brief stint on a dairy farm (Moo! - source for his inspirations) before graduating with an MSC in Electrical Engineering from the University of Manitoba. Currently a research engineer and an independent (professional) animator/filmmaker (check out www.groovechamber.com for his flash films). Lives in Ottawa, Canada with wife Alison, son Nanik, two dogs and a big cat named Otis.

**Gurmeet Singh Sran (Nuclear Surd!)** - After a bout with his knee, he is currently at GE Capital International Services. Maybe he should be called a knee jerk surd J. Gurmeet is a Six Sigma Black Belt handling

'quality' projects in Gurgaon. Married to Rupinder and has a wonderful daughter named Jasleen.

**Diwakar Pingle** - After BITS started with software, completed my MBA in finance at Symbiosis Pune where I met my wife Aparajita. Spent 4 years at ABB Project Finance, 2 years as an Investment banker at NM Rothschild, was jobless for a while and had a short stint with Standard Chartered. Currently work with a trading firm Tionale Enterprises Pte Limited headquartered out of Singapore (but am based in Chennai). Currently developing projects in the SE Asian region. Harsh Pingle is the junior and is three years old.

**Jyotsna (Comp.Sci)** completed her MS in Computer Science from the University of Delaware. She currently works for Oracle Corporation and lives in the bay area, CA.

**Sandeep Dhar (Sandy - Comp.Sci.)** currently works for Cisco Systems. He is happily married and lives in San Jose, CA.

**Dilip Varadarajan (Eco)** went to graduate school in Oregon. He is currently working for Port era Systems. He got married recently, and lives in Berkeley, CA.

**NT Vikram (NTV - Chem/B.Pharm)** is working with Medfusion as a Project Leader. He is married and lives in North Carolina.

1992

**Anupam Gupta** moved to London with Microsoft, where he has been for five years and was promoted to Director.

**Ashok Bhakkad (Bhakkad)** has been working as an Oracle/DB2 DBA with i2 Technologies in Dallas for the last 3 years. He is married to Archana and is settled in Irving, TX.

After completing his Information Systems degree in BITS, **Jagadeesh Sunkara (alias Jaggu)** moved on to the land of opportunities and is now in Denver, Colorado working for Baan as a Software Engineer. He can be contacted at home no: 303-256-9143



**Mohan Atreya (Fartreya)** did his Masters in National University, Singapore followed by another Masters in Communications at Nanyang Technical University. He is currently working for RSA Security in Singapore as a Manager for their Systems Engineering, Developer Solutions group.

**Ramesh Yadav**, who did his General Studies in BITS, went on to do his M.E in Software Systems and then joined Mascot Systems. He is now currently in Kansas and can be contacted on his cell at 913-744-1998.

**Ramkumar Natarajan (nrk, kozhai, ramku)** joined the PhD program in Computer Science at Purdue University after working with IBM for 3 years. He is still the ambitious person we used to know and can captivate any crowd with his baritone voice and energy. His interest in the field of distributed computing is matched only by his interest in the quest for his better half!!!!

**Mansoor Ali Khan (Mak)** moved on to Hughes Software Systems for his PS-II and took up a fulltime position in their HR group (of course not software!). He has now taken up a marketing/sales position in their San Jose office & has recently been quoted to be closing million dollar deals. He likes taking trips with his wife (Tayba Sultana) and having fun with friends.

After graduating from BITS, **Ravikumar (Hoku – Honorable Kumar?..)** worked as a Software Engineer in Mascot Systems, India & PwC, Washington, DC. He is now working as an eBusiness IT Architect for IBM in Washington DC & is pursuing his never ending search for a lifetime partner! You can pass on any leads or tips to him at ravi\_r\_kumar@hotmail.com

**Vinod V (VV)** moved to Infosys Technologies after a 6 year stint as a software engineer in the bay area. He continues to captivate crowds with his thunderous laughter and sheer jovial self. He recently married Lalitha and is settled in Chennai. Look forward to hearing more from VV soon...

**Bhooma Rajanarayanan (Bhooma)** completed her Pharmacy degree from BITS, and is now working for Indian Immunologicals as a product manager in India.

After completing his M.M.S from BITS, **Kausthub Desikachar (Boing)** decided to become a full time yoga teacher, following the footsteps of his Dad & Guru. He obtained a p.g. diploma in yoga from the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram. Today he is a senior teacher himself, and globe trotting spreading the message of yoga. He lives in Madras with his wife, Lakshmi and their 6-month old daughter Sraddha.

**B.V. Anil Kumar (BV)** went on to finish his MBA in Pharmaceutical Marketing in Mumbai and is now into the Product / Brand Management work. He is currently working with Intas Pharmaceuticals, India as a Sr.Therapy Executive and can be contacted at 079-7458929.

**Mahesh Subramanian (a.k.a Masu from the Eco group)** worked in Bangalore for a couple years, completed his MS and is now working for Intuit in Mountain View, CA. He is still the ever enthusiastic best 5-year planner in town & has recently been making waves in the bachelor's market (rumor is he has finally found his true love!). He would love to hear from friends at masu@rocketmail.com

**Sriram Padmanabhan (Ponnu)** went to MICA (Ahmedabad) after BITS and worked in market research from 1998 till 2001. As if one master's degree wasn't enough, he is now in the second year of his MBA at the NYU Stern School of Business, New York. He likes bicycling, swimming, being outdoors in general... and listens to the same old music.

**Ganesh Panchapagesan (PG)**, who did his ET from BITS, is now working for Oracle in their India Development Center at Hyderabad. He would love to

hear from his friends who can call him at 91-040-23122600, Extn: 2679.

**Sakthieswaran P (powerman, sakthi)** always had the motto - Lets make things better. Needless to say Phillips was an obvious choice for him. From being a valuable contributor at APOGEE to group activities, Sakthi has come a long way. He recently married Innahai and is based out of Eindhoven(Netherlands).

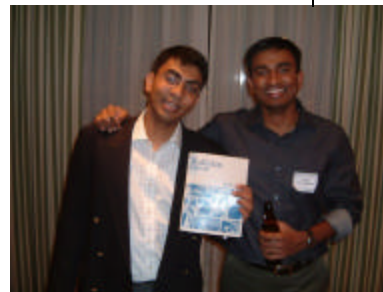
**Arvind Krishnamurthy (aravi)** works with Synopsys out of Bangalore (India). After several years in France and other parts of the world, Aravi finally decided to settle in Bangalore. He is happily married to Anusha and has a son Sundar.

## 1993

**Smitha Menon** is in California working on a state welfare project. Smitha is married to Shailendra Sadera ('92).

**Mathangi Gopalakrishnan (a.k.a matha)** is married to Venkatesh Atul Bhattaram ('90).

**Priya Ramachandran** is pursuing MA in Film & Video at the American University, Washington, D.C. Priya is married to Tojo Thomas.



**Lakshmi Krishnan (a.k.a Lux)** works for GE Financial, Hyderabad & Bangalore, India. Lux is as always the fun -loving, inquisitive, and experimental gal that we knew in BITS. Lux writes in, "I am having fun at the job, and it is really challenging and rewarding!" She is soaring to new heights in her career and may well tie the knot soon!

**Sharda Ramdas** works for Citibank NA in London, UK. She is married to K. Lakshminarayanan ('89).

**Karthik Ramani (a.k.a Karamani)** is pursuing his Ph.D in Pharmaceutical Sciences at SUNY in Buffalo, New York.

**Kaarthik Sivakumar (a.k.a Kash)** graduated with an M.S in Computer Science from the University of Delaware. He works for Ericsson IP Infrastructure in Rockville, Maryland. Congratulations to Kash who recently tied the knot with Ashwini ('97).

**M O Bhadrinarayanan (a.k.a. MOB)** completed his MSc in Computer Science from Queens University in Kingston, Canada. He works at the IBM Toronto Lab in Canada.

**Srikumar (a.k.a Sriks)** completed his M.S in Pharmacy at the National University of Singapore. He is pursuing a PhD in Pharmaceutics at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

**P. Chandramouliswaran (a.k.a Kocha)** completed his M.S in Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. After graduation in 1999, he worked for Cummins Engine Co., Columbus, Indiana for about 3 years. Kocha is now pursuing his M.B.A at the University of Chicago, Illinois .He says "I am still on the lookout for eligible mates"- Take a cue girls, this is one eligible bachelor!

**Bhaskar Viswanathan (a.k.a Mami, Byle)** completed his Maters in Pharmacy at BITS,Pilani and a Masters Diploma in Business Administration (Marketing & Finance). He now works as a Product Development Executive in Oral Care Business with HLL, Mumbai, India.

**Vinodh Shankar** completed his M.S in Operations Research & Industrial Engineering from University of Texas at Austin. Vinodh and his wife Deepa Nagarajan work for FedEx in Memphis, Tennessee.

**Mukund Ramachandran (MRC)** moves to Yahoo! Hot Jobs, NYC to take up the position of Assoc. Product Marketing Manager. He has been working for Yahoo! since 2001 after graduating from Thunderbird University. Good Luck with your new job Mukund and give us the insider on the best jobs before they hit the market !!

**Janani Varadarajan (a.k.a Jan)** completed her Masters in Molecular genetics and Microbiology at the University of Texas, Austin and is now pursuing her PhD in Botany and Plant Pathology at Purdue University. Janani says she and her husband Muthukumar Balasubramaniam also a doctoral student at Purdue Univ, spend most of their waking hours doing research!

After a technical writing stint in the software field, **Sagarika Srivatsan (a.k.a Sagi)** is pursuing her M.S in Journalism and Mass Communications. She writes "Out of the rat-race, I now juggle time watching my 2 year old, volunteering at the community center (teaching English to non-English speaking adults, writing material for a breast cancer awareness campaign in south east Asian countries) and studying for a master's degree." Sagarika lives with her husband Srivatsan and daughter Vidusha in the Bay Area.

**Sayee Priyadarshini Thyagarajan (a.k.a sayee)** is pursuing her Ph.D in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas, Houston after completing her ME Biotech at BITS, Pilani. She is married to **Avinash Kalsotra ('95)**. Sayee writes in "Avinash & I just passed our qualifiers, and now can devote our time to full-time Research!" Congratulations to Sayee & Avinash!

**Jayant Dhotkar** (Chemical) worked with Reliance after passing out from BITS, worked with Reliance Industries. He then completed an MBA in Mktg from Symbiosis, Pune. Currently he is working as an Area Sales Manager in Perfetti, an Italian confectionery company. Though he is based in Bangalore he covers part of AP (Telangana and Rayalaseema). His current

MBO is to master Telegu beyond some unprintable words.

**R Ganesh (MMS)** completed his MBA in Finance from Arizona State Univ in 2001 and is working in Santa Monica, California with a Mortgage Real Estate Investment Trust in Fixed Income Analysis. Here is one person who is REALLY looking forward to summer.

**Dexter** is working as a management consultant at Deloitte Touche Tomahatsu India Pvt.Ltd.

**Rajneesh Raina** is the latest among the long line of our batchmates who have tied the knot recently. He was married on Nov 27th, 2002 to Rajashri. Congrats Rajju and Raj!! Need any advice for a happy married life?

**M.A. Ranjith (a.k.a MAR)** works for Servion Global Solutions, Chennai, India.

1994

**Meenakshi Nagarajan (Chikku)**, after a 2 year stint with Infosys, Bangalore, she did her MS in Management Information System from UIC. She is working with a marketing and sales-force consulting firm, ZS Associates based in Chicago.

**Subha Chandrasekaran**, after graduating from BITS, went on to XLRI to complete her MBA. Joined CitiBank and right now she is busy Corporate Banking and juggling exports and imports for her customers. Met the man of her dreams in XLRI, Vinay Krishnan and now she is happily married and settled in Bangalore.

**Deepa Poduval** completed her Masters in from Dartmouth, New Hampshire. She is working with Lukens Energy Group. She is married to Rajesh of the 89 batch and they are based in Houston.

**Satish Ramanathan (rsat)**: After finishing his Masters in Oklahoma state, he is working for Mainsoft in San Jose. [r\\_sat@hotmail.com](mailto:r_sat@hotmail.com)

**Subramanian Hariharan (hsubs)**: Completed his Masters in Oklahoma state and is currently working for Bloomberg, New York. [Subbu77@yahoo.com](mailto:Subbu77@yahoo.com)

**Naveen Prabhakar (napra)**: Did his Masters in North

Carolina and is currently working for Bloomberg, New York.

**Sushil Chetal (kalli)**: Has been employed with Citibank and working in New York City. He got married recently.

**Visveish Ramanathan (kopine)**: Currently working for CTS (Cognizant) based in Madras, but almost permanently in the US. [visveish@yahoo.com](mailto:visveish@yahoo.com)

**Hari Natarajan (hari)**: Did his Masters in Texas A&M, and after a brief stint in a startup company, is working for i2 technologies in Dallas.



**Deepak A Kariyakar (kodi)**: Is working as a consultant in i2 technologies (Dallas) after his Industrial engineering masters at PennState. [deepbitz@yahoo.com](mailto:deepbitz@yahoo.com)

**Janarthanan Venkataraman (koja)**: After his Masters in Texas A&M, he got employed in Siemens, Orlando. One of the very few that is loyal to his undergrad discipline. His is married to Vidya of the same batch.

[Jana\\_venkat@yahoo.com](mailto:Jana_venkat@yahoo.com)

**Srinivasan Venugopalan (Chinu)**, Pursuing MS (IE) from Univ of Texas, Arlington. [srinivasan\\_venug@yahoo.com](mailto:srinivasan_venug@yahoo.com)

**Anush Sundar (Ganush)**. Graduated in MS(IE) from Virginia Tech, VA. He is currently working for Qualcomm Corp, San Diego, CA. [anush\\_sundar@yahoo.com](mailto:anush_sundar@yahoo.com)

**Samir Agarwal**: is a software professional at TCS, Calcutta. Presently he is in Washington DC, USA on an assignment. He is married to his school sweetheart and is happily settled in Calcutta.

**Hardik Chokshi**: is a budding business consultant with TCS after completing his MBA from Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad. Before taking up his MBA he was working with Wipro Systems for 3 years. He is getting married in late Feb '03 to his sweetheart, Padmaja, whom he found 3 years ago at WIPRO.

**Anirudha Patil**: is a consultant with Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in Munich, Germany. He completed his MBA from IIM-A. He had a short stint with Reliance Industries after graduating from BITS.

**Krishna Mamidipaka**: is employed by IBM as a consultant in their Supply Chain Management group. Presently he is based in Detroit, working on a project for Chrysler Corporation. He completed his Masters in Industrial Engineering from Texas A&M University.

**Senthil C (Coop)** is currently employed as a software engineer with Verizon in Maryland [coop\\_cs@yahoo.com](mailto:coop_cs@yahoo.com)

**Sundararajan Sowrirajan (Sundi)**: He joined the Tata Consultancy Services at Chennai after graduation and worked with them for two years. Lack of job satisfaction and a desire to learn more motivated him to pursue graduate studies. He then moved to California in 2000 to pursue Masters in Computer Science at the University of California, Irvine. He is one of the first members of the newly formed BITSAA Southern California chapter and is in-charge for Sponz and Finances. [sundie@rocketmail.com](mailto:sundie@rocketmail.com)

**Manoj Parthasarathy (DOS)**: After graduating in 1998, DOS

joined LearningByte at Hyderabad. After a couple of years there, he moved to their US office, which was bought over by DigitakThink. Currently he is working with DigitakThink, an e-Learning company based out of San Francisco as a Solutions Architect. He would love to get in touch with Bitsians in the bay area. (pmanoj007@hotmail.com)

## 1995

**Manjari Mehta:** I finished M.Sc. Tech in Information Systems in 1999. I accepted a RA position at Washington University, St. Louis in the Computer and Electrical Engg. Department, to pursue a Ph.D. Within a year, I moved to University of Houston and joined the Ph.D. program in MIS (Management Info. Sys.) at the Bauer College of Business. In 2001, Aneesh and I got married (finally :) and are in here in Houston for the past 3 years.

**Dokka Jagannadha Raja (95B3A4):** is working with Infosys Technologies straight out of BITS since July 2000

**Anshika Bajaj:** After completing my B.Pharm and M.Sc. in Biological Sciences I joined University of Rochester, NY for a Phd. program in Biochemistry and Biophysics. I am in my third year now. The first two years in Rochester have been great. I got married to Rahul who is a graduate student in the Dept of Computer Science. Life has been good all the way for me and I hope the same for others too.

**Srinivas Pullagujju (a.k.a PSR), 95C6:** I generously accepted a Master's degree in Computer Science that Florida State University had to present me. I could have been representing Indian cricket side at the world cup, but since I am

busy helping out Bill at Microsoft, our guys will have to do it without me. All the best Sachin!!!!!!!

**Manik Reddy P (95A5)** is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Medicinal Chemistry (Pharmaceutical Sciences) at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is expecting to graduate by the end of August 2003. He could be the first Ph.D from the 95 batch.

**Jaydeep Naha:** Passed out in 1999, with a CGPA of 9.72. Presently I'm with Siemens AG: Power Generation Division. Based out of New Delhi, I travel frequently to Germany, U.S.A., Holland, Austria and France. Job involves Designing of Power Plants. My previous projects have been in USA, China, Ireland and Israel. Currently, I am involved in a project in Cologne in Germany. I have also been appointed as the Corporate Communicator from this location. I have to attend conferences and meetings, and do presentations on Communications Strategy in Siemens as a Global Network of Innovation. Recently, visited Detroit and Orlando in the US for such purposes. I have also been promoted to the Designation of Senior Engineer in a record time of 3 years in Siemens. That is a part of the Technical achievement in Siemens. Currently, I am also the Cricket Captain for the official Siemens side. Also, I am the Editor in Chief for the Siemens Magazine - SPEL-BOUND. One past achievement: I was awarded (along with 7 other students) the Eveready Scholarship as one of the brightest engineering students in India (national basis) from 1995 to 1999.

**Muralidhar G (B4A3337)** Joined IBM after passing out from BITS and currently working with GE India Technology Centre, Bangalore. Another Cricket freak..

**Subhash Balam (B1A3542):** After graduating from BITS joined Motorola India Electronics Limited where I was working for 2 years. Currently pursuing MS at University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Rahul Koul a.k.a BUDDA (95B2A4):** A dual degree from BITS was enough for my grey

cells. :-). Joined Seranova from campus to work in web-technologies.....a brief stint with Orbitech and now the bread and butter of yours truly is being borne by Infosys (Mangalore-India). Kashmir still remains a passion with me and so does bollywood and music

**Sonali Vasekar (95A1):** Managed to crack some deals for Wipro Infotech as a marketing executive in Mumbai. Moved to Mahindra British Telecom to focus on software life cycles, and ended up enjoying a paid vacation in the UK for a year :) Am currently working with Guidant - Minneapolis and spending most of what I earn in watercolors, paintbrushes and skiing lessons! Hope it all pays off someday.

**Rajeev Reddy Tummala (95A1):** Current working as Senior Technical Member in Wilco Hyderabad. Right after passing out of BITS in 1999 joined TCS and then in 2000 Nov moved to Wilco, Hyderabad

**Subodh A:** After graduating from BITS in June 2000, I joined the ECE Dept. of the University of Illinois at Chicago to pursue my Masters in VLSI Design. After 2 years in Chicago, I made a job in Intel and moved to Phoenix, AZ. That was a welcome change from the cold plains of the north to the hot southwest desert. Astronomy and friends are my favorite things in life.

**P.V.U. Ram Sirish:** Passed out as a B.Pharm (Hons) graduate in 1999. But had something more to do at BITS: Joined M.E. (Software Systems) in 1999 as a Teaching Assistant... Finished in 2001 and joined Modena Software India Pvt. Ltd., Delhi. After 1 year of work experience in Java, thought of exploring something different and joined Infosys Technologies Ltd, Hyderabad where I am writing this from right now.

**Vasumathy (95B2A8):** I'm currently with Infosys Technologies Ltd. I'm working on the VOIP domain for customer Cisco at the moment. I'm married to Anantha Sankaran on April 11th 2002.

**Radha Krishna Murthy (radha) B3A6,** joined the then booming corporate world by entering into CitiGroup(COSL,

Now Orbitech). Got an opportunity to work in Citibank London and New York and now currently helping out Citi to manage its cash efficiently and effectively.

**Phaneendra Kumar V (phani) B3A7:** After my graduation from BITS I worked in Synopsys - Bangalore for two years. Currently pursuing my Masters at State University of New York - Buffalo and getting freed here in Buffalo.

**Yugandhar Dasari:** I am presently working in US Positioning, and whiling away time playing around with satellites and doing my masters from ASU, never moving out of phoenix. This MS never seems to end. Rest in peace.

**Surjith Reddy G (95A1):** After a successful role as STUCCAN of 'Spec n Audi' at BITS Surjith joined IIM, Calcutta. He is now the COO of Contiloe films, Mumbai. Contiloe films is into TV production and he is currently planning to get into movies as well.

## 1996

**Dindi Kesava Rao (Chebbu)** works for iflex Mumbai. Was in Malaysia for about 2 years on project work.

**Kiran Kumar Jinka (Jinka, 96A1PS211)** is working with Mahindra British Telecom, Mumbai.

**Anand Bharadwaj (AB, Andy, Andu, anything else?)** finished his MBA from IIM Calcutta and is selling hair oils and edible oils to hordes of Indians for Marico Industries, Mumbai

**Rajarshi Chakravorty** is working as a Management Trainee at Reckitt Benckiser, Mumbai after finishing his MBA from IIM, Lucknow.

**Ranjith (96A2PS383)** works for AmSoft Systems, New Delhi.

**Bhuvan Gupta, Deepak Nohwal, Madhav Vodnala** are working with Fiorano Software Inc., New Delhi. Deepak is working as Team Leader and looking to hire good-looking girls for his team.:-))) (The guys of his office are queuing up to join his team!).

**Kiran Chandra Z (Z aka Z-Ki, 96A7PS037)** is working as Sr.

Member of Tech Staff at Adobe, Noida.

**Ashok Inigo Roy** and **Rishi Jhaver** are doing their Master's in University of Cincinnati at Ohio.

Ashok worked at Hughes Bangalore for an year and is now doing his MS. Rishi worked at Orbitech Chennai for an year, then quit the job in Aug '02 just after returning from Citibank, London and now doing his MS in Computer Science.

**Manish Bothra** is doing his Master's in Material Science at Oregon State University, Oregon.

**Satyam Vaghani** graduated from Stanford a year ago and now works for a Palo Alto, California startup called VMware. For a month in summer, his alter ego drives him to work at the Performance Center at Spartanburg, SC.

**Juhi Mohan** (96A3PS085), has started her MS in Engg at San Jose State University this spring. After BITS, she worked at COSL/Orbitech Mumbai till Jan 2002. Got married in Feb 2002 and has been at Santa Clara, California since then.

**Mukund Adapala** (96A1PS294) works for Infosys at Pune.

**Rajesh Polimera** (Big B, Bade), **Ganesh Kumar Gella** (Gella, 96B2A4519) and **Jayaprakash Katari** (96A7PS194) are working for the Storage company of the world, Veritas at Pune. Rajesh works as Associate Software Engineer. Ganesh is a Software Engineer and is a core developer for Veritas "Netbackup" product.

**Pushkin P** finished his Masters in Computer Networking from NCSU and has just started work with CipherOptics Inc at Raleigh, NC.

**Prashant** (Pram, 96A7PS035) plans to graduate by December 2003 from North Carolina State University Raleigh, NC and make it big in the

area of network security. He is single and searching actively :-)

**Anand Sudarshan** (BBC) is doing his PhD at Mayo Clinic,



Department of Immunology, Rochester Minnesota.

**V Prasanna Krishnan** got a Masters in Computer Science from Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She says : "Chambana is a lot like Pilani (with a few more cars & a few less camel carts), but it's a great school & I really enjoyed my work there". And now working as a Program Manager at Microsoft, Redmond, Seattle.

1997

**Gurpreet Singh Sachdev** (A3) - After completing 2 years at Novell, he decided to go back to grad school at USC in Computer Science.

**Samik Das** (DJ) has crossed the Atlantic and is now at UC Santa Barbara.

**Ashutosh Sharma** has graduated from IIM A and is working with Adobe, Noida trying to ensure that your pdf documents don't get messed up.

**V. Sravan Kumar** is at ICICI Bank, Mumbai making sure your money is safe in ICICI's safe. (He is listed as still at IIMA)

**Adarsh Sreekumar** (A3) is almost finished with his studies at UFL And all set to join Microsoft.

**Shashikant Khandelwal** (A7) - He is pursuing his masters in Computer Science at Stanford.

**Chintan Turki** has been a real job hopper working for 3 companies in 2 years. Well he hopes to find solace at ICICI where he is currently working as Assistant

Manager, Organization Excellence Group.

**Vipul Gaba** is with Aditi Technologies Bangalore as a

Software Engineer.

**Sharad Kumar Somanchi** is at FSU doing his Masters in Chemical Engineering. Go Seminoles!!!

**Indira Muthumani** (Chemical) is with Cognizant Technologies, Chennai.

**KNR Praveen** is working in Fremont, CA, while **Murali Koppulu** is at Houston, TX and both of them are doing pretty good for themselves. Last heard **Sagnik** was doing an internship for IBM.

**G.V. Rangan** is in University of Georgia Athens doing his Masters in Chemical Engg.

**V Rajesh (fundoo rajesh)** who was at UC Riverside has transferred to UIUC for his Masters in CS. **Ashish Garg** is at UC Santa Barbara

**Shuvendu Dang** is at UT Arlington pursuing his PhD in Computer Science and **V Pradeep (EEE)** is also over there doing his Masters in Computer Science

**Shampa Kandoi** is pursuing her PhD in Chemical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Her area of research is Catalysis and Surface Science.

**Malaiappan Srinivasan (malai-B4A2529)** is doing his Master's in Water and Environmental Engineering at the University of Surrey, Guilford Surrey, UK.

**Pramila Rani** is at Vanderbilt Univ doing her Masters in Industrial Engg.

**Asad Iqbal** is at University of Arizona doing his PhD and has

recently cleared his PhD qualifiers

**Arvind Aiyar** and **Rengarajan** (both EEE) are at UMCP doing their Master's program.

**Jeevanand (Ande)** is at Oregon State University pursuing the Masters Program in Computational Finance.

**Deepak (day-scholar)** is doing his ME Software Systems from BITS Pilani and is also working as a TA at the CSD. **Rohit Gupta** and **Vikas Mallik** are also at BITS.

**These guys decided they did not want anything more to do with Heat Transfer and Digital Circuitry and so are studying at some of the best B-schools in India**

**Ashutosh Sharma (ashu-A7056)**, **Sravan Kumar** (97-gold medallist), **Suhail Kasim (suka)** and **B Karthik (Poo/Beaker-A5)** are having the time of their life in India's best business school - IIM Ahmedabad.

**Kunal and Rohit Kumar Choraria** are doing their post graduate program at IIM Calcutta. Oops Kolkata.

**K E Sriram (duck)** who was also with Orbitech for a year is now doing his post graduate program from MDI Gurgaon giving **Sharat Krishna (shark)** company. Last year, Shark spent about three months, enhancing his management skills at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, on an exchange program from MDI.

**Vasanth Kumar Mehta** (C6), who was teaching at the Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt's engineering college, is currently managing Mutt's IT Center.

**Sumit Gupta** who was previously with SteelAge India is now working with General Motors, Baroda.

**Vignesh** who did his Masters in CS from Purdue is now looking forward to work with Verizon USA

**Shilpa Gupta**, who was working as a member of the TVS R&D team at TVS MOTOR COMPANY, is currently pursuing her Masters in Industrial Engineering at the Arizona State University.

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