

VINOD AGARWAL CEO, LOGICVISION IS PERSON OF THE MONTH
THE FACTS ON BITS ADMISSIONS | FLYING AEROFLOT !

The BITSAA Edition

Sandpaper [2.0]

May 2003 Inaugural Issue

Birla Institute of Technology & Science Alumni Magazine

Dr. AMIT SHETH

When Academicians
become Entrepreneurs

On the Road to
Pilani

My College,
My Country
By Dilip D'Souza

In Memoriam
Remembering Leuna
and Vamsi

Naagarji's
The last bastion of
BITS gastronomia

A conversation with
Krishna Vavilala

Racial profiling
grows post 9/11



BITSCONNECT

The ambitious **\$1.5 million** project
to create the best broadband network of
any university in the nation

Sandpaper [2.0]

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CONTENTS

3 EDITORIAL

FEATURES

- 4 Sandpaper Online
- 5 BITSAA Roundup
- 7 Business News
- 8 Masala & Spice

COVER STORY

- 9 BITSCoNECT: The \$1.5 MM project
- 12 The Impact of BITSCoNECT on Pilani
- 13 BITSCoNECT buzz

NOSTALGIA

- 14 On the road to Pilani
- 18 Naagarji's - The final frontier
- 19 Re-living BITS

IMMIGRANT SONG

- 21 Flying Aeroflot

CREATIVE & HUMOR

- 23 Cartoons
- 24 Poetry
- 25 Selected articles

GENERAL INTEREST

- 28 My college, my country
- 30 Racial profiling rises post-9/11
- 32 Setting the record straight on admissions

EDUCATION & ACADEMICS

- 34 Profiling Dr. Amit Sheth
Series: When academicians become entrepreneurs

PERSON OF THE MONTH

- 36 **May:** Vinod Agarwal, CEO, LogicVision

ALUMNI CORNER

- 38 BITSAA International Initiatives
- 39 Partyin' around the world

MERA BHARAT MAHAAN

- 40 A conversation with Krishna Vavilala

IN MEMORIAM

- 41 A tribute to Vamsi & Prasanna
- 43 Leuna Harkawat, Pilani's nightingale

44 SELECTED CLASS NOTES

52 JOIN BITSAA

GIVING TO BITS

- 53 BITSCoNECT pledge form
-

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE NEW SANDP !

Ten years ago I founded a newsletter for Economics at Pilani. Titled Zero Deficit, it aimed at providing newsworthy information in a casual way to the Eco Group. I doubt Zero Deficit still exists. Zero Deficit was all business. It required work, it had no masala, it stirred no emotions.

Magazines, like causes, survive because of people, passion and money. We believe we have ample quantities of two, and little need for the third.

Naming this magazine Sandpaper made sense to my team. In management-speak, "SandP" had unparalleled brand recognition. It conjured up images and passions for most of us like no other name. I was reluctant to grab the name from BITS, but my teammates were very convincing. So Sandpaper [2.0], or Sandpaper, the BITSAA edition, was born.

We've all grown and changed, so this Sandpaper has metamorphosed. But it remains a kaleidoscope of our lives.

We've replaced the gossip column with a more gentrified Class Notes that will be your companion for many years, to help you live and learn about the travails and passages of your friends and classmates.

We are intricately entwined with our past at Pilani. Hence Nostalgia opens avenues for travel down memory lane. At BITS, legendary tales of introducing non-veg food in the messes, banning the NC, of Bihari strikes, devastating fires and crazy professors were passed from batch to batch, generation to generation. History will bring to life all those tales of yore.

We've always been a gloriously funny bunch, so Creative and Cartoons is stocked with content to keep you smiling about this wonderful thing called life.

Business, Technology & Academics will bring news, ideas and stories of our unsung heroes. Some may even inspire you to start new businesses, to invent new technologies, to research new ideas in academia.

In Mera Bharat Mahaan and Giving to BITS, we'll highlight charitable causes and showcase generous hearts. Through Led Zep's Immigrant Song, we want you to tell us about your first experiences in the new world after you left Pilani.

We'll constantly bring you News about our People. Through Person of the Month, we'll inspire you with the extraordinary achievements of ordinary people.

To help you tell your stories, we've assembled an incredibly diverse team at SandP from around the world. I expect this team to expand with regular and guest contributors, as well as some of those writing legends from your past. We welcome them all to pick up the pen again and let the words flow like they used to.

BITSAA International got started because a dear friend and classmate, SS Seshadri passed away untimely. The desire of a small Eco '87 Yahooogroup, 20-odd volunteers in New Jersey, and the passion of the BITSAA alumni body resulted not only in a lifelong scholarship in Sessa's name at Pilani last year, but also ignited a small revolution with the birth of BITSAA International. By stirring our little idea with the magic of BITSian passion, we accomplished a small wonder. Sandpaper got started to tell all of you about this collective magic, these small wonders.

BITSAA Roundup, and Alumni Corner will tell you how we're collectively bottling and selectively releasing this passion in the years to come.

Unlike Zero Deficit, this first edition has all the ingredients of an Indian masala movie. Comedy, action, villains, heroes, heroines, drama, philosophy, and most of all, passion. Sit back, grab the cheeku shake and enjoy the magic.

There are no intermissions. Only sequels.

And you all are scripting the show.

Anupendra Sharma ('87)
Chief Editor



Anupendra (left) with Venu & Sandeep at the East Coast Golfing Event in summer 2002

SandpaperOnline

www.bitsaa.org/sandpaper/sandpaper.html

UP TO THE MINUTE STORIES YOU WON'T FIND HERE

This published version will appear at infrequent intervals. To access the latest news, stories, cartoons, humor, class notes and to find out the latest regarding the BITSCONNECT project, visit the website. In addition, find the 2002 Business News and archives of People in the News. In addition, delightful articles and stories such as [Sagarika Jaganathan's Moments in time](#), describing her white water rafting trip while at BITS, [Laxman Mohanty's Dining Dynamics](#), [Sandeep Mukherjee's Cricket in the Common Rooms](#), and the most complete [BITS encyclopedia](#) prepared by the 1996 batch, are to be found on the website.

BITSian AUTHORS

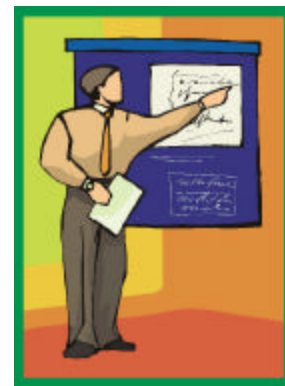
Sandpaper has started a database of all books published by BITSians. Support our BITSian authors, and read the works of our literati, be it fiction, non-fiction or reference.

BITSians IN BUSINESS

Find out about the Top 50 BITSian Leaders in Business. Also read about BITSian entrepreneurs who have started over 100 companies in the US alone.

BITSians IN ACADEMICS

At last count, there were 163 BITSian alums teaching as professors at universities and research institutes around the world. All details including research interests and awards are to be found on the website.



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The Sandpaper team is a globally distributed virtual team in the United States and India. We are looking to add people in Europe, Australia and most of all, Pilani.

Send your letters, comments, suggestions and articles by email to:

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Visit our website at:

www.bitsaa.org/sandpaper/sandpaper.html

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BY VENU PALAPARTHI

2002. THE YEAR THAT WAS

In 2002, we set ourselves a very aggressive agenda and succeeded on most fronts. As a group, we pushed the limits in our first year of existence and laid a tremendous foundation on which to build our future success. If you are wondering what these achievements are, read on ...



The Director in Boston with Prof. SP Kothari

BITSAA International (USA): We expanded BITSAA inland from our beachheads in New York and San Francisco. At the end of 2002, we had 7 active chapters (9 now) in the United States. We launched a massive discovery campaign and added over 1,000 BITSians to our chapters! We connected with BITSians from the 50's and 60's batches – BITSAA now boasts about 60 members from the 50's and 60's. In fact, Harish Jain (graduated in 1953) from Maryland visited BITS Pilani in February of 2003, exactly 50 years after he graduated from BITS,

Perhaps the most notable achievement for BITSAA in 2002 was obtaining our 501c3 status. As a tax-deductible not-for-profit organization, BITSAA immediately embarked on creating an endowment by

raising money from two East Coast fundraisers. This \$16,000 endowment now funds two merit-cum-need scholarships in Pilani in perpetuity. As a pilot project, it demonstrates the loyalty of BITSians to BITS and their keenness to give back. The first two scholarships were awarded to Krishnachaitanya and Charles Augustine in December 2002.

The global BITS community: Our biggest focus for 2002 was to bring BITSians together and enable them to communicate with and learn about each other. To that end, our website, launched in February 2002, has been a huge hit with BITSians, helping us organize, communicate and reconnect with each other around the world. We are continuously developing this website as a focal point of our community. Also in 2002, the Sandpaper team started brainstorming a launch. This issue of SandPaper has hopefully revived the magic of that old campus rag of ours.

BITSAA USA get-togethers in 2002: Until 2001, the only organized BITSian get-togethers were in the Bay Area and in NY. Most BITSians met their friends over long weekends or “ran into each other” at Indian grocery stores and at universities across US. BITSian reunions are no longer random run-ins at airports or shopping malls. In 2002, we had a total of nine (9) social events where nearly 800 BITSians met each other. And that is not including the chapter events that coincided with Diro's trip. Diro was pleased with the reception in all the cities he visited – NY,

Boston, Seattle, Detroit, and San Jose. It was the first time he had met so many BITSians in the US (or anywhere)!

To enable high-impact networking, BITSAA organized its first golf outing in NJ with about 50 BITSians in attendance. One particularly spirited BITSian insisted that he had played golf on the Sky lawns. Needless to say, BITSians found the sand traps on the course more treacherous than the sands of Pilani.

BITSian Achievements: BITSians won accolades around the world as they continued to blaze new trails in science, technology, and the arts.



The Simputer

Dr. Dorairajan Balasubramaniam, won the coveted Padma Shri in India for his contributions to the field of Ocular Biochemistry – a first for any BITSian. Two BITSians on the Simputer team, Professor Vijay Chandru and Shashank Garg, won the first ever Dewang Mehta award for IT innovation. BITSians were not only at the helm of companies that brought computers to the common man (the Simputer), they also brought supercomputers to the Indian scientific community (C-DAC led by Dr. Arora launched the ParamPadma).



BITSians won accolades both as entrepreneurs and corporate executives. Vinod Agarwal of LogicVision, was named “Entrepreneur of the year” by Silicon India. Ten other BITSians were on the Silicon

India 100 list. Among the professional executives, Vivek Paul of Wipro was the highest paid professional executive in India according to The Week.

BITSians who did not take the well-traveled path also did extremely well. Mahesh Ramasubramanian won an Oscar for Shrek. A BITSian music director, Aravind (of Aravind-Shankar) produced a major chartbuster in Tamil. Mani Shankar made one of those rare Bollywood hits in 2002 called “16

December.” Anu Hasan won the best supporting actress award for her role in a TV adaptation of Chitra Banerjee’s “Sister of my heart.” A BITSian from Pilani - Kaniha has made a name for herself as an actress with her debut in Five Star.

Last but always the most important achievement of all, our beloved alma mater was ranked third in India in the India Today ranking of engineering colleges finishing at the top in both academic input and curriculum.

Go BITS ! !

BITSIAN Companies in the Silicon India 100



Company	BITSIAN	Position	Category
Nuware	Venk Krishnan	Founder/CEO	IT Services
Intruvert	Raj Dhingra	VP of Marketing	Networking/Communications
Velio	Vijay Parikh	BoD	Networking/Communications
Axiowave	Mukesh Chatter	Founder/CEO	Networking/Communications
Pinnacle Systems	Ajay Chopra	Founder	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
LogicVision	Vinod K. Agarwal	Founder/CEO	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
Cradle Tech	Satish Gupta	Founder	Semiconductors /EDA/Hardware
NetScout Systems	Ajay Singhal	Founder/CEO	Software/Internet
Exemplary Software	Ravi Krishnamurthy	Founder/CTO	Software/Internet
Informatica	Diaz Nesamoney	Founder	Software/Internet
Sierra Atlantic	Raju Reddy	Founder/Chairman	Software/Internet

Excerpts from BITS Director’s welcome message on the BITSAA website



Dear BITSian:

You are a member of this extraordinary global family, a network of BITSians with tremendous intellectual potential and technical abilities. Many of you have reached the pinnacle of your careers thousands of miles from home. As a group you have started world-class companies, won critical acclaim in academics, written books, won awards from US corporations, universities and institutions, and donated generously to many noble causes for the United States, and especially for India.

...On behalf of the Institute I extend a personal invitation to each one of you to revisit Pilani, to meet and greet your old teachers, to share your experience and wisdom with our current students, faculty and to work with us to create a bigger, more powerful, and more dynamic world class Institute.

Regards

Dr. S Venkateswaran

BY THE SANDPAPER NEWS TEAM

BUSINESS NEWS

April 23, 2003: Rajiv Maliwal, Managing Director of Sabre Capital, announced the acquisition of Centurion Bank by a group of Investors led by Sabre. Rajiv is the former CEO of ANZ Investment Bank. Sabre was founded by Rana Talwar, former CEO of StanChart.

April 22, 2003: Ramesh Harjani, co-founder of Bermaj, has been selected as one of the most influential technical authors over the last 20 years by the International Conference on Computer Aided Design (ICCAD).

April 21, 2003: Epicenter Technologies, a leading call center in India promoted by **K Vijay Rao**, with investments from Infinity Ventures & Gary Wendt Capital announced that it would list within 18 months. Kotak Mahindra is raising \$20 million for the company.

April 7, 2003: For the first time in its history, commercial and industrial property insurer FM Global has been named to the Fortune 1000 list of America's largest companies. In the April 14, 2003 issue of Fortune magazine, FM Global debuts at No. 697 based on its fiscal year 2002 revenues. FM Global. **Shivan S Subramaniam** is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

January 25, 2003: Two BITSians are named amongst the 11 hottest dealmakers in IT Services and Software by Business Today. The article names **Rakesh Hukku** (left) of i-flex and **Vivek Paul** of Wipro.



January 21, 2003: Mukesh Chatter's Axiowave Networks Inc.,

a Marlborough-based networking company that makes equipment for core carrier and service provider backbones, has closed a third funding round worth \$45 million. Investors included Argonaut and Gainesborough. Axiowave Chairman is Ray Stata, founder of Analog Devices and co-founder of Nextabit with Mukesh.

January 16, 2003: Cradle Technologies, a next-gen silicon chip company co-founded by **Satish Gupta**, with Suhas Patil as Chairman, raised \$11 million in Series B-1 financing from Charter Ventures &



Smart Technology Ventures. Cradle also named Arthur Chang, veteran of two IPOs (Parallan Computer and Solopoint) as the new CEO. Satish assumes the role of VP, Business

Development. The firm has raised \$41 million to date.

January 14, 2003: Under the very able leadership of **Dr. RK Arora** (the Executive Director of Pune based Center for Development of Advanced Computing or C-DAC), India is about to launch its fastest supercomputer to date - the PARAM Padma.

January 12, 2003: Viewceler, a software startup founded by **Diaz Nesamoney**, former President & Chief Operating Officer



of Informatica, announced it has raised \$6.5 million in Series A financing from Lightspeed Venture Partners and Bay Partners.

January 3, 2003: Vivek Paul, Chairman of Wipro Technologies is

India's highest paid professional CEO, and No. 8 overall.

December 12, 2002: Ajay Chopra, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Pinnacle Systems [NASDAQ:PCLE] is profiled on the cover of Silicon India in article titled "I Edit, I Store, I Stream".

November 9, 2002: Vinod Agarwal, Founder, President & CEO of LogicVision [NASDAQ: LGVN] is named Silicon India 2002 Entrepreneur of the Year for the IPO of LogicVision.



October 8, 2002: Manish Sood's Salient Software is named in the Houston 100, for being the 69th fastest growing company in the Greater Houston region.

July 2, 2002: Hostile takeover attempt of Intelligroup [NASDAQ: ITIG] defeated. The takeover was attempted by **Ashok Pandey**, former CEO and shareholder. The current CEO is **Arjun Valluri**.

May 6, 2002: Walden International and International Finance Corporation invest \$3 million in Webdunia. CEO, **Vinay Chhajlani**, Founder & CEO, positioned Webdunia as the world's first multilingual portal company and language technology service provider.

April 12, 2002: Two BITSians, **Professor Vijay Charu** and **Shashank Garg** are amongst team that wins the First Dewang Mehta Award for IT Innovation, for their invention of the Simputer.

March 21, 2002 Planar Systems Inc. [NASDAQ: PLNR], acquired Dome Imaging Systems Inc. of Waltham, MA for \$61 million. **Balaji Krishnamurthy** is Chairman, President & CEO of Planar, based in Oregon. |

Anu Hasan stars in Run, another hit movie

"Run" ran to packed houses: The Madhavan starrer "Run" played to packed houses in the south. Anu Hasan ('89 Physics / MMS) plays Madhavan's sister in the movie and here is what one reviewer had to say about her role – "Anu Hasan looks beautiful and dignifies her role. Anu leaves a lasting impression. The dilemma of a woman when her husband and brother are at loggerheads, her happiness when they finally become friends and her concern for the family...Anu Hasan comfortably delivers the performance."

BITSians who were on campus between 1988 and 1993 remember Anu Hasan in some of the EDC productions of the day including "Fiddler on the Roof" and



"Spartacus." When not busy with movies, Anu Hasan runs her BPO company in Calcutta. †

Padmini Chettur, award winning international dancer and choreographer



If you were in Pilani between 1987 and 1991, you will certainly remember Padmini Chettur. PC, as she was known, was in several EDC plays and was a core Backstage member.

Masala & Spice

Trained in Bharatnatyam, Padmini (87 Math) never looked for a campus job like most of us, nor went for a dual. Instead, she joined the Chennai based dancer- choreographer - Chandralekha. While working with the Chandralekha group, Padmini has developed her own identity as a soloist and choreographer. She choreographed and danced the solo pieces "Wings &

Masks" (1994), "Brown" (1994), and in the same year, with Krishna Devanandan, the duet "Unsung." With "Soliloquy" (1996) and "Fragility" (2001) she developed choreographic pieces for a larger number of dancers. Padmini Chettur's dance and choreographic works have been shown in numerous forums in Indian and abroad. Both the India government and the UNESCO have honored her with grants. Padmini's latest work "Fragility" - a co-production of Theater der Welt, Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin and Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, received rave reviews in Europe. †

Mani Shankar, movie director scores a hit with Hindi film 16 December

Mani Shankar ('78 Chemical), has been making short movies, music videos and documentaries for many years via his Hyderabad based production house called Bhairav Films. In 2002, he got his break on the big screen - Mani Shankar's debut Hindi feature film, "16 December" was a surprise hit. The movie was an iDream production released by Columbia Tristar and starred Milind Soman and



model-turned-actress Dipannita Sharma. †

Featured Article

BY VENU PALAPARTHI, ANUPENDRA SHARMA & MUKUL CHAWLA

BITSCONNECT: THE \$1.5 MILLION ALUMNI PROJECT TO MAKE BITS #1

Around 8:30 am on a Sunday morning, 10 cars drive into the empty parking lot of Building #6 at Cisco's offices in San Jose. While the residents of this northern California city are still under covers, a conference room in Building #6 is filling up, buzzing with talk and activity. At the same time, people in other cities and time zones around the US are pulling off roads, excusing themselves from brunches, returning from the gym, dialing in one by one to a conference call.

All these people have two things in common. A degree from BITS and a mission called BITSCONnect.

This is the 25-strong BITSCONnect core group consisting of Marketing, Finance, Fundraising and Project Execution teams; a remarkably cohesive group consisting of three generations of BITSians disbursed around the US. The group is in pursuit of one goal – to design, fund and maintain one of the finest networks of any university campus in India.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

- ✓ Connects the Institute, hostel rooms, library, staff quarters and guest house
- ✓ More than 20 kilometers of cables
- ✓ 2-4 Mbps WAN connectivity
- ✓ 4000 voice-grade 10/100 access points over a Gigabit backbone
- ✓ Staff House connectivity through LRE (Long Range Ethernet) & Wireless
- ✓ Wireless Access (802.11b) at SKY and the Reference Library
- ✓ NMS, Router & Hardware Firewall
- ✓ VoIP Phones
- ✓ Voice-management Software

State-of-the-art elsewhere is the new status quo at BITS

In 2003, life without the internet is unimaginable on university campuses. A major university website describes its network:

“The campus-wide network, including (all) University Halls of Residence, provides the backbone of its service, with high-speed access, not only to University information, but also to national and international networks. All students have unlimited access to email and the Internet. With more than

6,000 PCs distributed across campus, including libraries and Halls of Residence, there is no difficulty in global communication and research; and for the really enthusiastic, some of the facilities are available 24 hours a day. A wealth of application software is available for use on these machines. For those with demanding computer requirements, there are a number of specialist facilities, the flagship being the local visualization supercomputer, which is used for compute intensive and data intensive tasks....”

This sort of infrastructure is *de rigueur* for universities in the developed world, but at Pilani, you have to line up to sit in front of a PC to send an email. With the completion of BITSCONnect, BITS will soon be able to cut-and-paste the paragraph above in its own brochure.



The story in fast forward >>>

How did it all happen? Here is the story in fast forward. BITS Director, Dr. Venkateswaran visited the US in late summer last year. At the offices of Cradle Technologies, on the morning of September 7, he presented a small gathering of 22 BITSian movers and shakers with his wish-list for Pilani. At the top of this list was connectivity. BITS wanted state-of-the-art, and nothing less would do. It had some funds that it was saving, but these funds would not be enough.

Prem Jain galvanized the team into action. Pulling in two BITSians at Cisco, Deepu Rathi and Mukul Chawla, the team started brainstorming how Cisco and the BITS alumni could

help implement the network. All the 22 movers and shakers jumped on the bandwagon.

By November, a project team was formed, and activity shifted into high gear. Prof. JP Misra of BITS scoped out the requirements. Mukul spent two weeks in Pilani and at the Cisco offices, surveying the campus and putting together the network design. The cost, a daunting \$1.5 million. With vendor subsidies and Pilani's savings, the alumni target was \$750,000. And BITSAA had 9 months to raise the money.

By January 2003, the RFP process was launched. Bids from vendors were evaluated by Prof. Misra and his team in a marathon overnight session. The core team picked Cisco, Wipro and Amp (Tyco) as the leading vendors.

The entire network was finalized in one 9-hour sitting by BITS professors, JP Misra and Rahul Banerjee, working with Wipro and Cisco engineers. Naagarji's kept a constant supply of tea and samosas going through the day. At the end of the day, the BITS Deputy Directors hosted a dinner for the team. Mukul convinced the Cisco and Wipro teams that the dress code for dinner was business casual, and was shocked when the hosts showed up looking resplendent in their 3-piece suits. BITS obviously took the project very seriously!

Timing is everything

In sync, BITSAA International obtained its 501c3 tax-exempt status in February. BITSAA International had gained considerable traction, opening up new chapters and galvanizing alumni around the country. BITSConnect fell as a perfect mission for enthusiastic alums. It was a call to arms. Passions were high, and the iron was hot. BITSConnect fundraising teams were pulled together from all over the US. Fundraising shifted to overdrive as the top 100 BITSians were identified. The goal was to raise enough money to make the first payment within 30 days. The target was easily reached and crossed, thanks to the superb efforts of the fund-raising team leaders, Roop Jain and Karthik Krishna. Alumni pledges totaled \$430,000 by the beginning of May. The Finance team of Jayan Ramankutty, Sandeep Arora and Anita Agarwal tightly monitored the budgets and the funds coming in.

With the launch of Phase I, BITS has become the hub of activity. After a brief delay due to the truckers strike in India, work is in full swing. Workers are digging up the campus, and vendor engineers are crawling all over campus. The excitement is palpable. The personal involvement of Prem Jain at Cisco and Vivek Paul at Wipro assures us of senior management attention to this project.

BITSConnect marketing, led by Satish Gupta and Venu Palaparathi, kicked off a big PR campaign globally, and soon big media started to pay attention. Times of India and Economic Times picked up the story. India Post ran a TV

program, interviewing Vivek Paul, Satish Gupta and Prem Jain about BITSConnect. A number of stories are expected to follow.

They say the first million is always the hardest

Although the first \$400,000 came easily, collecting the next \$300,000 will be a lot harder. The larger donors are all tapped out. It is time for grassroots giving to kick in. There are over 3,000 BITSians in the US, and approximately 7,000 alums are now connected online to BITSAA yahoo groups around the world. Most major chapters have been organized. Our goal: To get each and every one of these alums to contribute something, however small. The fundraising focus has shifted to the rest of the world. Ajay Madhok and Rohit Sah (Delhi), Subodh Mittal and Vikram Sah (Bangalore), Dinesh Mirchandani and Aashish Bhide (Mumbai) and Ashok Agarwal are coordinating fund-raising efforts in India. Coordinators have been pulled in for chapters around the world. BITSConnect has become a global agenda.

With our high per capita incomes and a 30,000-strong alumni body, the BITS alumni body represents the purchasing power of a small country. But most BITSians have never given to their alma mater, since BITS, like most Indian universities, has never asked its alums for anything. It's not a unique situation to BITS. When former IIT Mumbai students first started raising funds for their Institute five years ago, they had to go through a process of educating their alums, getting them used to the idea of donating money on a regular basis. It was a process of ushering in a change in attitude. We've experienced first-hand the generosity of BITSian giving, and believe that this transformation to pro-active donations is already happening amongst our alumni community.

A Message From The Director

Dear BITSian around the world,



We have jointly embarked on a mission to give BITS the most advanced network infrastructure of any educational institute in India. This is one of many steps BITS is taking to make us not just the leading engineering school in the country, but in all of Asia. I urge all of you to demonstrate the energy, enthusiasm, creativity and team spirit that makes BITSians so unique, and BITS such a special place, in making BITSConnect an outstanding success. We look forward to your support.

Regards

Dr. S Venkateswaran
Director, BITS Pilani

Why does BITS need this network?

We can think of four reasons.

Firstly, our students. We are ushering in the beginning of an information revolution at Pilani. That favorite line “couldn’t get a computer at IPC!” will no longer be a valid excuse for late submission of computer based assignments. Old test papers and solutions will no longer be the privilege of the “ghotus.” Lecture notes will be on the net. BITSConnect will provide connectivity to Institute servers from all hostel rooms, faculty and staff quarters, faculty offices, and classrooms via a gigabit backbone. This will result in greater access to academic coursework, ubiquitous computing access on campus, wireless access at many campus locations, web-based learning, tele-teaching, IP telephony (in all hostel rooms – go figure!) and IP video conferencing. The students will be free to communicate with and learn from the world outside Pilani. With 163 BITS alum professors, 30,000 alums. The classroom will be so much bigger.

Secondly, India Today’s 2002 rankings rated BITS rated 1st for curriculum and academic input but only 4th in infrastructure. Overall, we ranked 3rd, but who wants third! BITS’ ratio of users to computers is 12:1. BITS is among the select few schools in India that has a supercomputing facility but access to these resources is very limited. Besides, according to an AsiaWeek survey done in 2000, BITS was ranked only 19th in Asia amongst engineering schools. We can certainly do better than that! IIT Mumbai and IIT Kharagpur have completed or are in the process of completing their network upgrades. We’ve designed something more cutting-edge. This is our peer group and we have to stay competitive.

Thirdly, Distance Learning. A little known fact amongst alumni is that BITS is India’s # 1 school in distance learning both in terms of quality and market share. Through the Distance Learning Program Division (DLPD), BITS confers degrees to hundreds of engineers at Wipro, Infosys and other top-tier Indian IT companies. This brings in a significant chunk of revenues at BITS, helping us subsidize the education for the students residing at BITS and allowing us to compete with comparable schools that have budgets are over Rs 100 crores a year. It’s an executive education model that is very successful at US universities. To significantly improve the product offerings, BITS recently started Virtual University, a program to create and deliver high-quality digital audio, audio-visual and video programs to the DLPD. The new network will allow us to deliver media-rich content to the 7,500 students, maintain that competitive edge, and stay ahead of the pack.

There is a fourth reason. We BITSian alums need a mission. A BITSian (Sabeer Bhatia) invented e-mail as we know it (Hotmail). Another BITSian (Ajay Chopra) revolutionized

real-time video broadcasts. A third (Vivek Paul) made India into an IT outsourcing powerhouse. From semiconductor design to plasma screens, BITSians are running some of the most successful technology companies in the world. These BITSians feel strongly that their alma mater played a key role in their much-publicized success stories. They understand and recognize the power of the network. So even as BITSians dream high-tech, BITSConnect is really a dream-come-true for alumni who have waited very long to give back to BITS and their beloved professors.

TIMELINE

July 2003: Completion of Phase I

Complete Campus backbone, Staff Quarters, Institute and Guesthouse network

Dec 2003 : Completion of Phase-II

Complete wiring of all Bhawans

Today’s leaders are training the next generation

The vision shared by the alumni is that BITS needs to prepare its students to be leaders tomorrow. Leaders need to be connected to the outside world, to alumni, to each other. Communications will allow communities to learn together, faster and make future generations of BITSians more savvy and worldly-wise. BITSConnect bring us a step closer to achieving our collective vision.

The back of this magazine contains a pledge form. If you fill it out and send it in, you’d be guaranteeing that not only will BITS have a future; it will become a brand that you will always be proud to be associated with in your lifetime.

We’ve got to go now. Its 8:00 am on Sunday morning in the Valley, and some of us have a conference call to attend. 😊

Excerpts from BITSConnect In The Media

THE ECONOMIC TIMES Powered by Indiatimes

May 17, 2003: Alumni get back on the rolls. Over the past few months, BITS alumni world-wide have come together to work on funding a [\$1.5 million] project at their alma mater...

THE TIMES OF INDIA Powered by Indiatimes

March 27, 2003. Its payback time for the alumni of BITS Pilani. The IITs have long being nurtured by alumni funding. Now it’s the turn of BITS to lean on its students. In short its payback time...

BY PROFESSOR RAHUL BANERJEE, DIRECTOR, CSD

THE IMPACT OF BITSCONNECT ON PILANI

There are three areas where BITSCONnect will have an immediate benefit for BITS, as outlined below.

BITS Virtual University

To make Internet-enabled learning possible, the Centre for Development (CSD) has launched the BITS Virtual University. Virtual University shall assist the Distance Learning Programmes Division (DLPD) in providing improved educational support to over 7,500 students off-campus. This is a significant source of revenue for the institute. BITSCONnect has resulted in a move to significantly upgrade our server farms, which drives far superior performance of the Virtual University in terms of delivery of text and audio-visual course content. The external bandwidth has recently increased to 2 Mbps and as the demand increases, the network will allow it to go up to 4 Mbps.

Wide-Area Research Collaboration

BITS has already made its mark in the field of internetworking research, development and deployment and has several firsts (about ten) to its credit, specifically in the area of Internet Protocol version 6 (better known as IPv6). IPv6 HAS over twenty-two international collaborators, including BITS.

BITSCONnect shall enable BITS-Pilani to be the first ever Indian University to have a fully IPv6-capable Intranet. Also, once the adequate bandwidth is added both internally and externally, the Institute's could join the Internet2 initiative as part of a nation-wide research network that in turn shall be an MoU-partner to the Internet2.

BITSCONnect will thus enable quality collaborative research for some of the cutting-edge research in Computer Science like the on-going "BITS Multimedia Operating System Project", and Ubiquitous/Wearable Computing.

Naturally, with the increased WAN-link available now, the improved campus infrastructure provided by the BITSCONnect will also enable inter-BITS (across Pilani, Goa and Dubai campuses), intra-BITS, inter-institute and inter-industry collaboration on research projects.

Hybrid delivery of Campus Education

BITS has developed a framework to deliver courses on the web along with the conventional method of classroom teaching. The framework envisages archiving classroom lectures in audio-visual formats that can then be replayed by the student if and when he wants to.

The facilities include the internal interface of the BITS-Virtual University for on-campus students through the "CampusBuzz" and "IntraBITS" portals as well as an internal interface to Faculty of the institute through the on-line Course Management Tool (CMT).

BITSCONnect will allow real-time multicasting of lectures in an interactive mode. For this purpose, the campus has already the Cisco IP/TV facility in place that allows Live Delivery of the lectures over the Intranet, capability of Video-on-Demand and Scheduled Video Multicasting for on as well as off-campus students of BITS.

This will "virtually" reduce the student-teacher ratio on campus, allow more lecture notes to be placed on the institute's intranet for reference since already this is being done for a few courses across disciplines. Lastly, tests and assignments may be administered and submitted online. †

The Power of the Network

In 1992, I stood up in front of my thesis panel with a 5 ft by 4 ft chart with the results of my thesis. I had crunched about 10 years worth of time-series data for 50 companies listed on BSE after securing permission to use PS Division's only PC. This PC was important because it had SPSS - a statistical software. I had painstakingly copied the data from print publications into a book, and then stayed up many nights at the PSD, laboriously inputting the data as the PC was almost continually used during daytime. Of course, the thesis didn't amount to much from a GPA perspective, but it was certainly one of the first uses of statistical software for academic research in Pilani.

The following year, I joined an MBA program in Texas, and worked on a similar project. From my dorm room, I downloaded all the economic data from a Thomson terminal, then ran the tests using SAS, another statistical software.. I completed my analysis in less than a day.

At Pilani, I think I impressed my professor with the quantity of data I managed to transfer to a PC. At Texas, I was reviewed on the quality of my analysis.

That's when I realized how far behind was BITS in its infrastructure. If only we had the BITSCONnect network back then...

- Venu

Need More Information on BITSCONnect? Visit www.bitsaa.org

For more questions regarding BITSCONnect, visit the website. Here you can watch a recording of the India Post TV interview, watch an audio-visual presentation of BITSCONnect, and read about the latest updates. Or send an email to bitsconnect@bitsaa.org if you have any questions.

<<<BITSCONNECT BUZZ>>>

Shyamoli Banerjee, Trustee, BITSAA International

I see this as a great opportunity for all who care about higher education in India to contribute to the development of a world-class infrastructure for one of India's primary technology institutions. This infrastructure will serve tens of thousands of students over the next several years. What better way to impact the future of thousands of young minds!



Sabeer Bhatia, Co- Founder, Hotmail

Having studied at some of the finest institutions in the world such as CALTECH and Stanford, after my brief stay at BITS-Pilani, I find that the difference between these Universities and BITS-Pilani is student access to laboratory facilities and computing resources. BITSConnect is a gigantic step in the direction of bridging this resource gap. I strongly believe that it will move BITS closer to its goal of producing the highest quality of engineering graduates in the world.



Ajay Chopra, CEO, Pinnacle Systems

Expanding connectivity means expanding the horizons of BITS students to beyond the confines of BITS oasis. Think of the productivity enhancements that BITS students and faculty will enjoy with this infrastructure. BITS will leap into the next generation of educational institutions with broadband capabilities unparalleled at other Indian educational institution.

Mukesh Chatter, CEO, Axiowave

The proposed campus-wide network infrastructure will be the best among all the top academic institutions anywhere in the world and will immensely benefit everyone for years to come!

Dr. Krishna Saraswat, Stanford University

This is an extremely well-coordinated worldwide effort spanning five decades of BITSian alums graduating from the early 50s to the late 90s. It illustrates the tremendous passion that our alma mater evokes in our alums irrespective of when they graduated from Pilani.



Vivek Paul, Vice Chairman, Wipro

BITS provides Wipro's software engineers with the best distance learning program in India. With the new network, BITS will have the ability to tremendously improve the quality, breadth and depth of its course offerings, and remain the market leader in distance learning in India.

Dr. Inderpal Bhandari, CEO, Virtual Gold

BITSConnect has the potential to greatly enhance the quality of education at BITS. It will enable alumni and others to involve BITS students in cutting-edge research and software development, a prospect I look forward to.



Jayan Ramankutty, SVP, Cypress

BITSConnect is more than a Gigabit Network. It is the culmination of the confluence of all the aspirations of BITS and BITSAA of the past by the present for the future.

Roop Jain, CEO, AARCEE

It is such a great pleasure to be part of the BITSConnect

project. I feel much more connected to BITS today because of this project and the people involved in the project than when I was in Pilani. This project is guaranteed to succeed and I will assume we will have more exciting projects down the line.

Prem Jain, SVP, Cisco Systems

As an alumnus of BITS (class of 1973), I am delighted to be to part of this endeavor. A core team of BITS alumni at Cisco began developing a plan for helping BITS achieve its goals for an advanced campus network infrastructure and it is gratifying to see the entire chapter network working to see this achieve fruition.

Dr. SP Kothari, MIT

BITSConnect is a fine example of providing tremendous tangible benefit to the BITS community and thereby helping it advance its core educational mission. I proudly support the project.

Yogesh Vaidya, CEO, Software Technology Group

By bringing world-class connectivity to every student and faculty member, we are ensuring that BITS students and faculty remains not just current, but cutting edge.

Preetish Nijhawan, VP, BMC Software

It is wonderful to see BITS embarking on a project that is more ambitious than most others in the country. The access to instant information will result in huge productivity gains for both the students and the faculty. Having wireless access in Skylab would sure have helped me to be much more productive.!

Featured Article

BY SUHARSH DEV BURMAN

ON THE ROAD TO PILANI

Three batch mates take a delightfully funny journey back to the Vidya Vihar campus after many years...



Burman (left), Mirchi (Center) and Misra on the Horseshoe

“**A** ten point agenda?!?” I nearly fell off my futon (which is hard to slip out of if one has lounged on one). “You have an agenda to cover during this trip! OK, what would be some of those must do items on your list”, I asked. “Parathas at Kapoorji’s (sorry he died – no parathas), drinking in Nutan (not allowed anymore), Fried Maggi & Chickoo shake at C’not (still there – yippee), chai n ciggis at sky, samosas at Naagarji...”

I smiled as I quietly slipped a strip of Pudín Hara and some Alka Seltzers into my tote without them noticing. Yes, this was the one trip we were all looking forward to for some time. Been planning it over a few months, across a few thousand miles with the help of a few hundred emails on varied schedules of 3 men who bonded over a decade ago and were deciding to revisit the starting line, where, as someone aptly said – “the journey begins...”

Misra (LA), Mirch (Mumbai) & I (Delhi) decided to go back to BITS for a day to bask our past. 6:30 a.m. on a cold foggy Delhi morning of January 6, 2003, three of us bundled into my car,

picked up another friend (who had lived a hostel life at BHS, Pilani and generally knew about the BITS life as well during the 80’s), and were off. Freshly brewed coffee (from the thermos packed by my ever understanding wife) made the rounds inside the car, as the CD player exploded into Red Barchetta (Rush), which got Misra into such a tizzy and he screamed out the lyrics and his air guitar impression of Lifeson nearly knocking over the morning cuppa joy all over my almost unused, hence nearly new, backseat.

Old stories, new glories, pals, gals, good times, bad times, you know this, you know that, where this macha is, who is in touch with whom, and the journey weaved its way out of Delhi towards Rohtak. The route taken was, unfortunately, the familiar & the much travelled by: Delhi – Rohtak – Bhiwani – Loharu – Pilani (we promised to seek the road not taken on the way back). We were going back, Jack, doing it again! Wheels turning round and round...brought us closer and closer as the excitement grew. Somehow, by sheer coincidence, we never got around to playing ‘My Old School’ by Dan, even though it was on the CD too – wonder why?

The fog started clearing up after Bhiwani as we decided not to stop

anywhere and have our first break at Pilani itself. Misra was avidly shooting the local scenery from his vidcam and the background score was inter-sprinkled with the likes of good ole tunes from those good ole years, plus some new stuff like Dave Matthews, Morcheeba etc. We reached Loharu and Mirch screamed – Buggas, Jal T! We gotta have another snap of us!!! Well, at least we can have lunch, he protested – but better sense prevailed as the thought of the mouth watering fried paneer maggi started wafting thru the olfactory of our wonder years.

It was nearly 11 am and the gods started smiling as we crossed the railway line at Loharu on the final stretch of our trip. The fog cleared up totally, the sun was out and even the road improved ten-fold. The speedometer suddenly shot to over 80 kmph after struggling to even reach 50 kmph during the first three quarters of the way. We knew we were on a good wicket now and nothing was gonna stop us now...woooeyeah!

Is everybody in? Is everybody in? The town of our re-birth was on the horizon and a sudden silence crept in. Pahari loomed on the right hand side of the highway and the red flag on top of the mandir fluttered in the wind welcoming back the unsung heroes into the cocoon that cradled us into the guys we turned out to be. Suddenly the huge iron campus gates

approached us with a bold BITS emblazoned and the guards almost knowingly opened up automatically - just by seeing the smiles on our faces. Hey, we were not the only ones you have done this you know, and we will not be the only ones doing this in the future too...



Pappu & Girdhari together !

11:30 am and we parked into the guest house we were surprised to see it empty and even more surprised to see renovations. Where were we to stay? Upon asking the chowkidar, we were informed that a new guesthouse had been built next door at the Laxmi Narayan centre and ample acco was available. Phew – as today was registration day and we had tried to book the place by phone but to no avail. Luckily it was 2nd sem and not too many parents were around. Promptly we shot out our ID numbers, just like we were sitting for the comprees, at the registration desk and were told that we could avail an ex-students discount of Rs. 150 on the normal rental of Rs 600 per night for a double room with a/c and heater n attached loo. However, in order to avail that discount, we had to go to the insti, wait outside and seek audience with RK Mittal, get him to sign the form and come back. Hmmn, the more the things change, the more they

stay the same - as Geddy Lee aptly put it.

Forget washing our sandblasted faces, we headed straight to where we spent the maximum amount of daylight hours in BITS – sky lawns. Grins abound as recognition dawned on Pappu's same Alfred E Newman face.

Chais did the round as we sat on the amoeba but no ciggis. Not allowed anymore! The new face of change. However Pappu obliged us with a four square from his personal dibba and refused to take a single paisa for chai etc – still a

sweetheart! Couple of curious students kept gazing at the old fogies as they became more and more vociferous with their antics and stories. One obliged us with the new registration booklet to see which prof was taking what courses. A couple of recognizable names, but mostly new ones and hajjar new courses – Aaah, progress marches slowly on – at least the limbo of the Mitra years was being washed away steadily. Mirch brought up the agenda items as we were sitting on a park bench and eyeing little girls with bad intent... J

What! Mal is a female bhawan!?! What do you mean we can't enter!!! Another shocker –

Malviya, the bastion of the senior most on campus was now donning iron gates and walls and was Meera Bhawan II. The female populace had grown leaps and bounds (quantity yes, but quality still was to be desired for – one student commented. Some things you know, they can just never change – ha ha). There is even a girl student union president here – a first for BITS! Wow man, times they were a changing...

1 pm and hunger pangs started. We decided to check out the RBM, sorry the RB mess now, for some grub. We walked thru Ram Bhawan and discovered that the Bhawans were all now '8' shaped from the familiar 'E' of our times. The ends were blocked – quite good for QT cricket as the tennis ball was now boxed in! The loos – another shocker – tiles man! The loos were tiled. There were mirrors, solar geysers, doors coloured but those huge tiles really took the wind out of our sails. Mirch and Misra promptly went to their old rooms – knocked and woke up some poor buggas to take a snap and vid clips. The amount of PC's with the students came as a pleasant surprise too. Oh yes, we were aptly informed that porn mags were a thing of the past and now students exchanged PC hard drives overnight for 'entertainment', as a LAN was not on the insti agenda as yet. Technology in BITS was finally raising its 'head' – ahem - P2P reigned supreme.

What! Mal is a female bhawan!?! Malviya, the bastion of the senior most on campus was now donning iron gates and walls and was Meera Bhawan II.

Cell phones also made a grand entry into the hallowed halls this year. Pilani was on the mobile network of India. Was the cocoon crumbling?

The mess – what a mess! Same dingy atmosphere, same benches and huge tables, same bartans and even the same mess servants, well aged, but still around. We were informed that if mess food was our fondness for the day, then we had to go to Ashok/RP as that was the official mess for

outsiders. The sight of a dirty jhadu and pochla lying on top of the table next to a table being served just killed the scene for us and we decided to skip another of Mirch's agenda items and head to the safety of C'not.

C'not – without Mooras! Mould(y)ed plastic chairs and tables were everywhere. Blue Moon, Golden Dragon, and Kamal etc etc. No mooras man! Kamal (Pappu/Kallu Kapoor clan) had opened up a restaurant at the fag end of C'not and their old place was an techie corner with std/isd, fax, dtp, typesetting, computer education type of thing. Decided to visit his restaurant at night and to check out good ole Blue Moon. Shikanji (Rs. 5, with Bisleri for our US friend's delicate stomach) and Fried Paneer Maggis (Rs 20) made the rounds. BTW, Midnight Beauty comes in 4 flavours now and is Rs 25. Sitting around we noticed an authentic Andhra food joint doing brisk biz – apparently now the gult and the illad (no malice or ill will here, just revisiting ole jargons – wokay machha?) communities constitute over 80% of the populace. Maybe time to relook at the normalization process eh Mr Diro?

Post lunch and no sack! Enthu was brimming in Misra's bones. We walked to Shiv Gangs and remembered all the naughty things that we never did! Hah. The path to the guesthouse was locked but we were informed that never hampered anyone. Drove back to sky – hey we were up against time vs. agenda, and found good ole Giri as a hired hand to Pappu! Smiles and Photo sessions. A psenti walk thru the still damp n dingy hallways of the insti followed suit. We found that the

classrooms were now 4 digit nos. and the classes and the labs, at least from the outside, still looked the same – dilapidated, unpainted, and in various stages of decomposition. Some places we never visited during our times – ref lib and the insti café behind the Audi were rude awakenings. The Audi was shut however we got to know that they have fixed chairs now and smoking, drinking, and other toxins were not permitted. People were frisked before entry!!! Yikes.

Out of the D block, we saw a humdrum of activity on an otherwise sacked out Monday, at C block. Registration was on! IPC was humming and we got a whiff of the T in BITS finally. It was a computerized process. Too much for Misra too handle who had to capture it on video. A new building was also being constructed next to the C block as well. Don't know – Mgmt Centre maybe?

It was 3 pm now and a trip to the temple at Pahari was next on the cards. We drove thru Pilani town and reached the bottom of the hill. Trudged up the 250 steps and reached the top to be greeted by a dog first, then a Pundit. Caught the still fantastic view, offered our prayers, and caught our breath before heading down. Oh yes, Mirch had to stop at least 5 times before he reached the top. And promised to cancel this from his agenda for his future visits... A brief stopover at BHS and its hostel in town, a quick shopping trip for a tie-dye bedcover for home and we were back near the campus gates by 5 pm.

Went to sky and sacked on the lawns till the sun was going down. Went to Krishna bhawan for more photo opportunities for the M & M bros. Also, hostels have iron grills blocking the downstairs wings facing outside now and all

have just one or two points of entry – maybe a GKW menace in the wings? Or the loos?? Stopped at smiling Naagarji for some samosa chat, sprinkled with those fried peanuts and adrak chai. Mirch polished off some Rabri with chopped bananas as well. Aah the good life... Next stop - the

C'not – without Mooras!

Mould(y)ed plastic chairs and tables were everywhere.

Blue Moon, Golden Dragon, and Kamal etc etc. No mooras man!

Mandir.

The temple - still so calm and serene, despite the rising cacophony of birds on the trees lining the roads of the campus. Hey, we never got shat upon despite travelling down these memory lanes. Oh yes, these roads now have names and road signs too! Some roads have no entry signs and there are one-way streets as well. Anyhow, we stuck around for the evening aarti and saw the beginning sem rush to the temple. We fondly remembered the two times there was massive rush at the temple - at the beginning and near the end of sem – both for the same reason – God! Please help me get thru this sem! And thankfully Saraswati obliged us each time... We humbly acknowledged that fact as we lowered our heads and thanked her yet again. Our shoes were still there when we climbed down that made Misra happy - he was seen lurking trying to find his old pair of rubber chappals that were apparently whacked in his 3rd sem out there.

A quick drive thru the campus including agenda item Meera

Bhawan, where Mirch ever so excitedly wanting to see if he were to get lucky this time around. Bugga, maybe I can pull some senior vibes here... It was 7:30 pm by now and darkness was welcomed to provide the cover for our planned activities. C'not time again – but alas, the place was teeming with chitter chatter of movies watched over the hols, new pop bands, general catching up etc; we decided to move to the safety of our room. However, not before a massage by the nai. I started and then Mirch followed too. The general complaint was that maalish was now a forgone art – no one wanted one, as they were too much of delicate darlings. A good tip and more smiles – the mood for the evening was set.

We headed to Kallu's restaurant. Don't know what we ate, but had a nice time as we found some sounds guys sitting next to us. Adding fuel to the fire of our inquisitive minds on how things have turned around in BITS, we sat around and laccha'd.

Changes after changes surprised us – almost no shmokers, no drinking outside, all ghotus, Audi rules, this n that and the evening went on. Mirch found solace in a 5th yearite who was the Oasis English Press co-ord. Sparkle in those eyes shone in the moonlight – BUGGA! Mirch just could not control himself – spiel after spiel on how he started this, n that, and how he needed a copy of the last OEP issue, last Cactus Flower, till Kallu finally signalled that it was already too late for comfort – 11 pm!!! Apparently everything shuts in C'not by 10ish...

A quick paan – that was the only thing open then, to round off the evening and we were ready to hit the guesthouse.

Another laccha session followed in the guesthouse till about 1 am and we decided to call it quits. Guys had to catch a taxi to Agra the next day from Delhi so we had to leave at 6 am again. A sound sleep and awakened by a wake up knock on the door – a few rupees in the right hands can get you anything in Pilani – still!

Chais to break the grogginess and we were off by 6:30 am. Foggy again, but this time we took the road less travelled – Pilani – Loharu – Dadri – Delhi. A new road, nearly two lanes at places, but overall an excellent ride. Despite the fog, we were touching 60 kmph. Reached the outskirts of Delhi by 11 am and packed in some tandoori parathas at a dhaba with Amul butter generously thopoed all over the hot steamy surface. Yummy!

Reached back to the traffic and noise of Delhi by noon and soon everyone was gone. Mirch n Misra almost immediately took the cab to Agra to see the Taj and I started to shave and generally preparing to head to office. Surprisingly, the Pudina hara and Alka Seltzer remained untouched as I unpacked! Took out the Floyd, Dead, Dan, Dylan, Tull, Rush, Zep, Stones etc CD's and put in some new ones for the week ahead. And just as that feeling of weird kind of emptiness started to creep in, a thought raced through my veins - yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away...!

Calling twenty five BITSian entrepreneurs to an exclusive event with Diaz Nesamoney

On May 22, 2003 at the offices of Fenwick & West in San Francisco

Meet Diaz Nesamoney, current CEO and Founder of Viewceler, an enterprise software firm that recently raised \$6.5 million. Diaz is also former COO and co-Founder of Informatica (INFY: NASDAQ), a \$200 MM enterprise software firm. Only 25 invitations. Learn about entrepreneurship, raising financing and the Informatica story.

Time: 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM on May 22, 2003

Price: \$15 per person. Drinks, beer and snacks will be served

Place: Fenwick & West Law Offices, Silicon Valley Center, 801 California Street, Mountain View, CA 94041

Tickets: Email Rahul Chandra, Walden International at rchandra@waldenintl.com

An Initiative by
**The BITSAA Center
For Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital**

Thanks to
Fenwick & West

BY SANDEEP MUKHERJEE

NAAGARJI'S - THE FINAL FRONTIER

The initiation of the Indian palate to western fare ranging from hamburgers to chicken in fried batter has been fraught with emotion, controversy and political dispute. The depiction of America's food chains as symbols of western imperialist greed isn't new, at least not in the context of the past few decades. However, it appears that much of the resistance has been overcome, as India is dotted with KFC's Smiling Colonel and MickeyD's Golden Arches. Well not entirely! One small village of indomitable BITSians still holds out against the invaders.

Each year Anne Garber publishes a list of the planet's finest eateries. The crème de la crème of the culinary world. The champagne at these joints pours a pretty pink and the caviar's delectable... that, of course, is what I learned from the Internet. Needless to say, on account of my humble position in the world's food chain (literally!) I've not actually sampled the aforementioned delicacies.

That said, I'm thankful enough for having had many a satisfying meal at Naagarji's.

Even an optimist would be, to use an expression not dulled by extensive plebeian usage, "pushing it", if they recommended Naagar's to Ms Garber's List and 'tis also unlikely that Sinatra would feel the urge to burst out "Naagar! Naagar!" But for the discerning Pilani populace, no gourmet chef nor mass-food manufacturer could serve up a more satisfactory assortment of gastronomic goodies.

There are those who would make a strong case for *Shankar redi*, then there were (and I fear still are) still more who contend that C'not had all that it took to titillate and tantalize our taste buds... to them I, all the while quivering in disbelief at their audacity, choose to use the strongest expletive in my limited vocabulary – Baah! Still others may contend that *Munna Pavitra Bhojanalya* is where the edible excitement was at. I choose to direct their attention to page 42 of Philip Kotler's *Marketing Management* where he clearly specifies that comparison across market sectors is a No! No!

Sam chat, chai, shikanjee, jamun, burfi and, what every man, woman and child in Pilani quickly learns about, the *Kela*. Naagarji's had it all! And then some. After many a Mech Sol test did we seek comfort by drowning our sorrows in glasses of *shikanjee*. *Besan burfis* followed to ease the pain. With *jamuns*, our spirits rose to pre-test levels. *Sam chaats* elevated us to spiritual levels that would have the Buddhist monks of this world peeved at their inefficient standard operating procedures for the attainment of Nirvana.



While modern day writers, especially of non-fiction, are given a license to deviate from verity (or was it Macavity?) 'twould for certain push this piece over to the *avant garde* of modern day literature if I chose to touch upon hygiene issues – for there was none!

It was Jehangir's paradise – "If there is paradise anywhere on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here" – whether you were an animal lover or quite simply an aspiring lover.

Dogs, the odd monkey, camels, peacocks and even more dogs fought it out for scraps of edible excitement. Darwin would have beamed at the sight of his theories being played out in this microcosm – he may even have been swayed, in his moment of weakness, to open an account with Naagar.

For the Don Juans, de facto or not quite so, what better place to woo the woman, or, as it were in many a case, the multitude of wimmin', than at Naagarji's. Perched on bent blue benches, with the desiccated, barren tree branches above and the dirt and dust providing a suitable Gone With the Wind like ambience.

As the McDonald's and KFCs of the western world complete their conquest of urban India and continue to dilute our culture, gastronomic heritage and bring with them the calorific evils of the western world, Naagarji's remains our Final Frontier, the last bastion of our snacking traditions. We must prevail!

I trust you gentle readers are stirred to action and will do what must be done to hold the Pilani fort against the invaders. Let us raise our collective voice and say to the KFCs, McDonalds and Anne Garbers of the world... "Baad mein!" †

BY LAXMAN MOHANTY

RE-LIVING BITS

17 years have passed. When I left Pilani for my PS-II station in Bombay, I had no idea that I would be coming back one day to this place where I studied less but learnt a hell of a lot about myself. After coming back and spending two months on this campus, I have a bagful of feelings and reflections.

In returning to a place which had important influence in one's life, we risk that our carefully preserved mental images may be blown away. But surprisingly, Pilani has remained very much the same after almost two decades. This makes me happy as I know I can find my way out and even predict the dinner menu in the mess on a particular day. But it makes me sad too. When everything in this world is changing so fast, how can things here remain the same?

I'm not sure why I'm sad. Is it that we long for the "progress" and "change" that we never experienced? There's another perspective – one can't help but admire how the Birla's could build a campus that can still handle the pressures of a growing student population and the march of time. It's only when I see professors with graying and white hair, I feel that time is passing. This passage of time is also reflected in Pappu in SkyLab, who is no more the young boy that he used to be.

The other day I was sitting in the RBM mess and looking at the benches which have been proudly standing straight for so many years. Year after year,

thousands of students have sat on them. Now these students are gone. Many are highly successful, leading high tech companies, teaching at prestigious colleges and universities and carrying on many more challenging jobs. I wish these benches could speak of these people, their conversations, and their worries and thoughts when they were young. These benches may have given us an inkling into what made these BITSians into the successful men and women they are today.

During my first innings here, we had only around 100 girls and 2,000 boys. But this mix has changed dramatically. I did not believe my eyes at first when I saw girls standing in front of boys' hostels and looking for their friends. It makes me feel that you need not to carry out any serious research to find out if Indian women have really progressed in all these years.

Today there are hundreds of cycles in front of the "insti". Has Meera Bhawan moved far away from the clock tower? Or do these bicycles in some way symbolize the new generation on the move?

The two most interesting spots in BITS campus remain SkyLab lawn and C'Not. After visiting many campuses around the world, I believe that every campus must have a place like SkyLab lawn. Sky has come to represent a hub of community living. What better luxury than to lie on the lawn, sipping tea while reading a novel on a sunny glorious winter afternoon. I cannot imagine a better environment for debate and discussion than sitting around in a circle on the lush green lawns, with Pappu's foot soldiers

bringing you tea and shikanji. While the SkyLab lawn remains as glorious as it used to be, C'Not seems to be losing its charm. I miss those "moodas", where I used to sit on one and put my legs on the other) and the crowds. Of course more of the same kinds of shops have come up.

Some things have changed, though. Blue Moon has stopped making its trademark "samosas" and the old man "Jain sahib" is no more visible lying on his "khatia" in front of his book shop. There seem to be a lot of STD/PCO booths around, signs that even this small place has become an integral part of the networked world.

After visiting many campuses around the world, I believe that every campus must have a place like SkyLab lawn. Sky has come to represent a hub of community living.

Today one thing I miss badly is the cricket in the verandah. Cricket has moved to larger grounds; the open spaces within the hostel complex or the fields in front of the hostels.

In the last two months I have seen more cultural performances than what I saw at IIM Ahmedabad in a whole year. It makes me wonder how BITS has become so cultural, when all our cities and towns seem to be forgetting that we used to have a rich cultural heritage. Only by preserving and

enriching our heritage we can claim our rightful place in the world of nations. Kudos to the students.

I remember that the reference library used to be the forbidden place for me. But today, its the place where I spend more of my time. This change in me only confirms that the old memories, priorities and things may not match the new realities about yourself. I can relate to the ref lib. Its an owl, old and wise, maybe like me..?

Today, when I see wrappers of all kinds around, I fail to understand how students can be so lacking in civic sense. I don't remember seeing garbage lying around back then. Then again, I don't think I ever thought about civic sense as a student here. Maybe it's another thing about me that's changed.

In coming back as a student, I find myself enjoying attending classes. It is almost diametrically opposite of what used to happen two decades back. Classes were like punishment and they were

avoided at all costs. It may be because I am not moving like a subassembly on a conveyer belt. I am here because I wanted to be and I am paying from my own pocket for this opportunity. I wish there was a way for us to change the system so our education here does not be a burden, but instead be an enjoyable experience.

Today S-9 seems to be the hotbed of activity. It's a sight to see so many big photocopying machines sitting majestically and churning out copies. I wonder how we survived without these things back then.

While going through the systems and facilities I wish we could add a few things to BITS and make some improvements. I don't know why I feel like that. It may be because I have higher expectations now. Didn't Buddha tell that the root cause of sorrow is desire? Maybe to lead a stress-free life, I need is to curtail my expectations!

In the two months I've spent here, I've had time for a lot of reflection. The BITS campus lets one do that. I learnt a lot about

myself the first time round, and in my second innings, I confirmed many of these truths. This place is truly one for self reflection, with simple pleasures and uncluttered routines. I can begin to understand why we all feel so passionately about Pilani even 17 years after leaving this place !

In the two months I've spent here, I've had time for a lot of reflection. The BITS campus lets one do that... I can begin to understand why we all feel so passionately about Pilani even 17 years after leaving this place.

Kasam se, kya TV hai: One of India's best known consumer TV brands, was started by Gulu Mirchandani in 1975



Who doesn't know Onida? One of India's largest consumer electronics firms that makes and sells upwards of 1 million TV sets each year in the sub-continent. But do you know that this company and brand, which has withstood the onslaught of foreign manufacturers, was founded and is chaired by a BITSian? G.L. "Gulu" Mirchandani set up Mirc Electronics (Onida's parent company) in 1975 and formally launched Onida to assemble TV sets ahead of 1982 Asian Games. Now, Onida is a household name and ranked 2nd in India according to ORG. Onida grew at an incredible pace thanks to clever advertising and purposeful marketing. It is also one of the best recognized brands in India that is not only withstanding but competing effectively against the foreign entrants.

Gulu launched Igo in January 2002, with a Hindi-language marketing campaign titled "Kasam se kya TV hai" aimed at the rural market, which accounts for 65% of new purchases of color TVs as they upgrade from their old black and white ones.

Featured Article

BY ANUPENDRA SHARMA

Flying Aeroflot

Whatever you've ever

heard about Aeroflot, I can confirm its all true. Of course, my story goes back to 1993, when I boarded a giant Aeroflot plane to Manchester, England. A lot may have changed since then, but my memories are fossilized forever – after all, it was my first ever flight out of India at the impressionable young age of 22.

Enticed by the 50% savings offered by the world's largest airline, I boarded an aging plane with ripped seats and the old fan blowing cold air that only stopped when I tore out pages from the safety manual and squeezed them into the little vent. Most people on the flight were desis traveling for the first time, likely lured by the stories of riches in exporting leather, silks and garments, the possibility of illegally crossing the border into Eastern Europe or attracted by the flourishing life of Indian underworld criminals holed up in the lawless Moscow of the late-90s.



I come from a family of well-traveled, highly opinionated Dilliwallahs, who have

categorized every airline based on a) quality of food b) quantity of soaps and eau d'cologne bottles available for stealing and c) the airlines' gullibility in believing that it was their fault that our brand new suitcases were turned into old, broken, belted old Indian suitcases on the 8-10 hour flights that my family members took. In their opinion Aeroflot ranked rock bottom in all three categories, so I boarded the plane expecting nothing.

Well, food was one thing Aeroflot got right. I remember the Indian food served on the flight being fabulous and I am still waiting for remotely comparable fare on any of the higher ranked airlines that I have flown since.

There was a lot of yelling and screaming on the flight, most of which was done by the stone-faced and rather rude flight attendants, when they did show up. Most of the time they hid in their work zones, unsmiling, unhappy and rather bored with their jobs.

I wouldn't blame them completely. Many excited passengers traveling for the first time, did manage to make quite a nuisance of themselves. I continued begging for water, but my pleas went unanswered, till one flight attendant came to me and sternly told me to "drink at the airport" as we approached Dubai.

Dubai ?

An hour into the flight, the pilot announced that the Delhi-Moscow-Manchester flight was going to make a stop in Dubai.

Dubai ? My thoughts exactly.

I come from a family of highly opinionated Dilliwallahs, who have categorized every airline based on a) food b) quantity of soaps and eau d'cologne bottles available for stealing and c) airlines gullibility...

We made a 2 hour unscheduled stop at the glittering Dubai airport, where us rather-stretched-for-dollars Aeroflot passengers ogled at the pretty Thai shopkeepers, the Benzes and the Rolls Royces, the 24 carat gold bricks and the vast display of consumer electronics. Needless to say, no one bought anything, and when we got back on the flight, I wondered which corporate executive had the bright idea to convince Aeroflot to unload its high-rollers in Dubai. I did notice that Indians were running the airport, saw Arab security herding some sub-continental workers like cattle, saw Thai shopkeepers being rude to the Indians who daringly tried to enquire about prices, and decided that this was one place that Indians were still a long way from being welcome.

We reached Moscow without incident, but due to our Dubai layover, my flight to Manchester had

already left. So had the connection to Frankfurt. There was one plane waiting to take off for London with a hundred seats left. As four hundred of us ambled off the airplane, the horrible stories of passengers being stranded in Moscow airport for days (some true, some likely urban rumors), flashed through my head.

I raced to the front desk, past the long queue that was beginning to form.

“Please. I need to get to England today. My whole career will be ruined if I don’t get there today. The university said they would give my seat to someone else if I did not show up tomorrow morning. Please help me”, I begged at the desk.

I don’t know if they understood a word of what I was saying. If they did, I am sure they saw the logic. Any way, the airline clerk pulled out a pre-printed boarding pass and crossed out the name. She wrote in capital letters “A SHARMA” and handed someone’s else’s freedom to me. I could have kissed her!

I raced to the second line that was forming literally 20 feet away to board the London flight that was leaving shortly. My panic began to subside.

“Passport, Sir” said the smartly dressed security officer. I handed him my passport and boarding pass.

“We have problem, Sir. Come with me”, he said. My heart began racing again. He took me aside, merely ten feet away. Since he was the only person in-charge of boarding, the whole

line of passengers boarding for London came to a standstill, and everyone began to stare at us.

“Problem with your passport, Sir” he stated, looking down at my freshly minted passport and hand-scrawled boarding pass.

“What problem ?” I asked.



“Have you got cigarettes ?”

Through the fog of rising panic, my Indian instincts kicked in. I had heard of Russian corruption, and here I was evidencing it first hand. For once I regretted not being a smoker.

“Sorry, I don’t smoke. I have dollars” I said hurriedly.

“Give me dollars” he said.

“Is five dollars ok ?” I enquired meekly in a low voice. He did not understand or hear me. I pulled out my wallet, holding it close to me. I should start low, I thought and pulled out three dollar bills.

The security guard’s eyes lit up. He took the money and smiled broadly.

“Happy flight” he said, standing back and saluting smartly. I smiled at him too, as a wave of relief washed over. Now I know why Indians and Russians shared a bond. We were the same people, we spoke the same language.

I boarded the flight, realizing that every passenger had seen me pay him off. Maybe some others paid up too. I didn’t care. I was safe. I was headed for England. Some naïve British passengers were indignant at the way I was treated. I promised them I would write to the Chairman of Aeroflot, while wondering how this race had conquered the world. The Indians congratulated me on getting a bargain. I smiled and sat down in my seat.

The journey remained eventful. I sat next to a completely drunk Russian opera singer, who spoke no English, kept bending on one knee to kiss the hand of the woman sitting next to me and sang in a deep, loud, grating voice to her. Judging by the sounds coming from him, I could see why Italian opera was more popular.

The airhostesses didn’t come to our aid, choosing to chatter and laugh mostly at my predicament. When we landed in London, they stuck the immigration cards in his pocket. He had fallen into a drunken sleep, and snored loudly as the plane disembarked, and we made a hurried exit away from him. I still wonder if he ever made it through immigration.

At Heathrow, the Aeroflot desk feigned ignorance about us. After an hour of pleading and some phone calls by the staff to Moscow, they gave us boarding passes to British Airways, which was a pleasant, if unmemorable, 45 minute flight to Manchester. In case you want to know, there was no food, but they served Snickers ice cream.

A couple of years later I read an article in the Guardian about a journalist’s visit to Moscow. He was stranded and it cost him \$22 to get out of there.

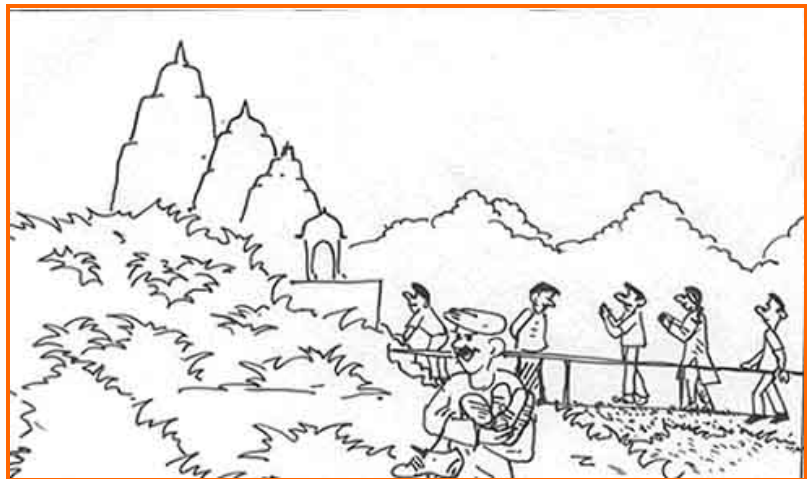
I smiled to myself. Capitalism was alive and well in Moscow. †

<<Cartoons by Sabya Kar>>



A mysterious location
An obscure and mysterious location hidden away in the sands of the desert...a favorite watering hole for the more spiritually inclined

Saraswati Mandir The center of devotion and divine last minute crisis consultation...for most an occasional bare feet walk home is but a small price to pay



Ratan's By the time one is past the initial scare of the 'mess grub' almost anything else tastes like nectar...even Ratan's desert insects fried inside the samosas or floating in the 'chai'.

Poetry by Antara and Sagari ka

Rain

BY ANTARA BHATTACHARYA

It rained today.
Sweet smelling showers
on the dry parched earth.
The grey steel sky above,
wept itself dry!

Music that drowned Lennon,
gentle gunshots, pleasant pipes.
Rising and ebbing,
with every moment passing.

A misty haze in the air,
moist dampness everywhere.
Ruined laundry on clotheslines,
the housewife's misery!
Little ones in the mud,
a new kind of dance.
Paper boats and buried memories.
Umbrellas, inside-out in the wind.
Wet cotton around your limbs
as you get drenched.

The boy next door,
never looked better before...
umbrella in hand, he was
a veritable knight!
Hot coffee and cigarette,
an open window, a soggy sight!
Dark room and tube lights...
Friends on the telephone,
exchange dreams and memories!
Waterlogged lanes and heavy
traffic.

Old men huddled in the park;
women with their shopping bags,
shelter in shops they'd never enter!

It rained today ...
And, the moment froze in time! †



Credit: jcrew



Another drop of light

BY ANTARA BHATTACHARYA

Another drop of light, and it'd be
far too hot
But just now, it feels perfect.
Mild sun, spray and mist.
Dreamy breeze with its airy fingers
Swinging along branches and
whistling thru leaves.

Could I live just a moment more?
Oh Death, you've come at a
moment so
When summer's at its end, and the
birds sing yet.
When dreams are at their very
best;
and, rainbows fear not the autumn
rain.
When, lovers, still, lie on the grass
whispering about all the happy
days.
When the world is all at peace and
I am a part of it.
When leaving is a sorry pain.

Must I leave when I least want to.
I have not said my goodbyes yet.
And need they be right away?
My love waits for me around the
corner
And life opens her arms wide.
The birds sing only for me
and the wind teases my flighty
curls.
Could you not wait till the bitter
winter's days
Could you not sit back and follow
Nature's way!

When the snow it bid my finger's a
cold farewell,
when pain is all but a numbed
remembrance,

then I could go with you, thru
colder paths still.
Follow in your wake, and trip over
your raven mane.
But not just yet, when there is light
still in the sky.
Until then, bid me live another day! †

Crossroads

A nostalgic poem

BY SAGARIKA JAGANATHAN

Life brings us to many crossroads
Lets us entwine our varied paths
With those we may never have met
Or known
Or cared for,
Ever before.

We all dance, scattered dances
Autumn leaves in the wind~
We sway gently, madly, to our
own
Orchestrated tunes, notes...
The wind guides, but lets us go
When we reach the ordained spot
Destiny, the ubiquitous architect
Has designed with such care
So we may never know why or
where...

And so we meet the friends
Who change our lives
In ways we can never fathom
And then, the wind blows...
The leaves disperse, yet again
Taking with them old memories
Dreaming new dreams...
And the wind prepares to let go,
yet again
And the cycle goes on...

And then the wind blows
And Destiny designs
And our paths cross, yet again... †



Pakeeza days

BY ANU GUPTA

Pakeeza was the ever-romantic classic film, much touted and mystic, with a touch of sadness. It was a popular hit of the seventies, directed by Kamal Amrohi and his wife, Meena Kumari, Bollywood's tragedy queen starred in it. We'd heard that the movie was completed over a period of a several years and when it was finally released, it did not generate any excitement. It was only after



Meena Kumari's death that it became really famous and popular.

It was the story of a courtesan, a 'naachne-waali' (dancing girl) who captivated and entranced an unsuspecting young man and much later, it was discovered that she actually belonged to a very good family but circumstances had driven her to this profession. It was tragic and romantic, quite a tear-jerker and when we heard that the movie would play at our very own Audi, we all decided to flock to the movie together and have a bit of fun.

The movie passed in a blur with the usual whistles and cat-calls, the usual comments and camaraderie. Just one scene registered. And I'll never forget that. Raj Kumar, the hero of the movie is traveling in a train and in his coupe, he finds that

a lady is fast asleep. Only her feet are visible from beneath the embroidered bedcover, the perfect background effect. He sees her feet, well-pedicured, polished and painted, and decorated with henna and anklets - and goes into eulogies about the beauty of her feet. And then he actually falls in love with her.

Imagine, falling in love with somebody because her feet look pretty. It was too much! I don't know whether it was too romantic or just plain silly. I apologize to the producers of the film. The interpretation of the scene may be too simplistic, but that's how our fuzzy, young minds saw it.

And from the Audi, we walked back in silence. We surreptitiously eyed the feet of every passing girl. We then eyed the feet of the sex-bombs - the popular women in BITS.

In silence we trooped into the Hostel and then gathered in one room. In silence we all flopped on the two beds and chairs in the room. In silence we surveyed our respective feet. Solemnly we surveyed each other's feet. None of them even closely resembled Meena Kumari's feet. We all had cracked heels, chipped nail-polish and unshaped nails, dry, slightly dirty feet. Nothing that would set somebody's heart afire, nothing that would make anybody fall in love with us, or make somebody in love with us fall in love with us all over again.

Dire straits. Something had to be done. Immediate attention was required. Camera. Lights Action.

And with our pedicure kits and buckets and foot scrapers and nail cutters and nail shapers and nail polish and liquid soap (actually just cheap, diluted shampoo), we

all sat, scrubbing, cleaning, women on a mission, holed up in one room, a team with a purpose, one common goal.

The acetone we had stolen from Chemistry class for nail polish removal was used effectively. In what seemed like a jiffy, everybody's feet were nice and glistening, soft and well-scrubbed, complete with garish, maroon nail-polish.

And soon, we all dissolved into giggles. I don't know whether it did any good and got us any rave reviews, or whether anybody as much as glanced at us or our feet, but it certainly gave us something to reminisce about in the times to come...!

Why am I an Illad?

BY RAJEEV MENON

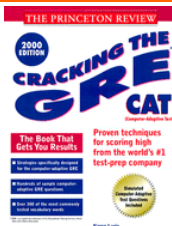
The day I received my letter of admission from BITS, there was unrest at home. I come from a little village in Kerala called Ottapalam, a place that has little to offer except its rustic beauty. My dad was visibly ecstatic, but I wasn't. I had never left Kerala and two days in a train with a one-way ticket was SIMPLY overwhelming, but it was my dad's decision.

The struggle of a BITSian and his quest for identity starts here. The taxonomy of BITSian follows well established norms. There are the Bhayyas, Gujjus, Bonges, Gults, Choms, Surds and Illads in decreasing order of respect. Evidently, very few people from Kerala venture all the way to Pilani, and we a hapless minority were clubbed as Illads, even though we rarely came to the mess

with gunpowder and oil for lunch, or read Ananda Vikatan in public places. The Choms were fondly referred to as aldehydes by Chemistry majors due to the CHO-prefix, but such esoteric explanations were usually lost on the largely ignorant masses. Gults and Illads sometimes clashed during mess committee meetings when the PH value of sambar was discussed, but the Bongs usually stole the thunder. "We Bengalis have a hard time stressing our bowels", I was told. If I had been exposed to the medicinal powers of oat bran I would have suggested that, but as luck may have it he was only worried about his vowels.



lot has changed since we left BITS. Surds want a new land, the Gandhi's have all perished, and rupee has fallen further behind the dollar. But the people from Kerala, also called Malayalees do not have an identity. We are still called Illads, Madrasis. Mallu was my first choice, but it offers no clue that we are from Kerala, so I propose we be called Kallus unless someone has a serious objection. †



GRE Virus. Should you be concerned ?

BY RAJEEV MENON

To the BITSian about to graduate, there are few options more attractive than a trip to dollar land. The land of milk and honey beckons one and all and we BITSian are human after all. The key to this whole deal is good GRE scores, especially verbal. You can learn all about turnpikes, talk in Fahrenheit, even memorize the area code of Vermont, but how do you tackle the GRE verbal? As we will discover, the battle affects the innocent bystanders too.

The GRE virus is one that affects some more than others. It starts off usually benign, but gets rough as you go along. One of my friends in particular, rumored to be still doing his PhD somewhere in the Mid-West, was badly affected. He was a carrier, and we of course the victims. It was lunch on a Saturday, after an intense hour of microprocessors. I really enjoyed APM's lectures and even managed to ask some sensible questions, but it is no picnic learning about 'cycle stealing', when it is lunch time and you are experiencing interrupts, in real time. In any event, I couldn't have gulped down more than a mouthful or two, when a scream of "Hey, Balajee..." spanning a couple of octaves suddenly jolted me and sent an amalgam of stuffed parathas and red hot meat curry on an unscheduled flight up my nostrils. It was him. No, my name is not Balaji. In fact there was no

Balaji within a 25 meter radius, but that didn't stop him. Apparently there was a Balaji whom he had met and found the name so fascinating that he decided to address everyone as Balajee, especially when he was in good spirits. (Balaji incidentally was a Biology student and his accent somehow made his name and his branch sound deceptively similar). He sized up my terrified expression, lowered the ubiquitous Baron's guide onto the bench and said "Bugger, don't be so pusillanimous".

He had just hit me where it hurts. My vocabulary was suddenly vulnerable to the GRE verbal assault, but as I later learned, he too did not know what a lot of those meant.

But he'd just successfully managed to infect me with the virus. †

The MB Wall.

BY RAJEEV MENON

It is interesting to speculate on when the MB wall will come down, if it hasn't already. As a symbol of oppression and denial, it is firmly etched in a lot of BITSian minds, a mute testimony to the relentless pursuits of several otherwise sensible aspirers over the years. Meeting a lady in front of MB can be a humbling experience, as I found during my first outing. A generous wingie of mine who wishes to retain anonymity, challenged me to meet a certain coveted lady and invite her to our Bhawan nite, thus promising her an evening of embarrassment and us some cheap thrills.

The provocative nature of this gesture, and the reward of ten milkshakes if I pursued this, made me jump out of my lungis and into more socially acceptable attire in a flash. I could sense the adrenalin as I raced towards the promised land, for a piece of glory. The chowkidar who sits outside the gate promptly gathered the relevant information and to my utter disgust, instead of sending out a dignified message to the lady signaling my arrival, let out a bellow that emerged from his inner sanctum and tore out his larynx, an act that must be painfully familiar to those who have endured this ordeal. To complete the exercise in masochism, yet another wing mate of mine had by then strategically positioned himself behind the bushes close by, for the perverse pleasure of watching me age before his very eyes. Subjecting a young and truly impressionable soul like me to such trauma would be illegal in most civilized societies you would hope, but you have to remember that this wasn't

an undertaking for the feeble minded.

Needless to say, my trip was unsuccessful. My reputation preceded me, or so she said, and that was that. No lady, no respect, even worse, no milkshakes. In about my third year, a couple of daredevils risked their lives and honor, in that order, and did the unthinkable - they scaled the wall. No mean accomplishment considering the enormous athletic prowess it called for, not to mention the sheer audacity to go with it. No, there were no Rapunzels to usher you in, but you were guaranteed a place in history, and an urgently called meeting with the Dean in a few hours. There was a hasty trial conducted behind closed doors and justice promptly served as the women at the receiving end, literally, were summarily suspended. The judicial system has considerably evolved since then, we are told, to punish the guilty as well.

When I went back to get my recos



in 1985, I took a bike ride around the monument, trying to capture its essence and savor the moment for the tough years ahead. I mentally rehearsed the scene where I was running towards the wall, a bamboo pole in hand, poised for a vault across the wall, cheered on by the raucous chant of "Menon, Menon" from my ostensibly exuberant buddies as I willingly committed hara-kiri. I had a hard time accepting that it was all over, bar the shouting.!

MMS graduates currently in Academia

Professor	Position	Department	University
Ram Ganeshan	Asst. Professor of Operations Mgmt	School of Business	College of William & Mary
Reena Agarwal	Professor of Finance	McDonough School of Business	Georgetown University
Nagesh Murthy	Asst. Professor of Operations Mgmt	Dupree College of Management	Georgia Institute of Technology
Ritu Lohtia	Associate Professor of Marketing	Mack Robinson School of Business	University of Maryland
Sharmila Chatterjee	Associate Professor of Marketing	Edward Ageno School of Business	Golden Gate University
Deepak Agarwal	Asst. Professor of Marketing	Krannert School of Management	Purdue University
Madhu T Rao	Asst. Professor of Information Systems	Albers School of Business	Seattle University
Kumar Venkataraman	Asst. Professor of Finance	Edwin Cox School of Business	Southern Methodist University
Ananth Seshadri	Asst. Professor of Economics	Department of Economics	University of Wisconsin-Madison
Sanjay Putrevu	Associate Professor of Marketing	School of Business	Brock University, Canada
Ashok Kapoor	Professor of Marketing	Department of Marketing	Delhi School of Business
Munindra Kakati	Head of the MBA Department	Department of MBA	Gauhati University
P Narayanan	Professor	Business Program	ICFAI Business School

Featured Article

BY DILIP D'SOUZA



MY COLLEGE, MY COUNTRY

Left alone in my room, suddenly the only certainties I had were the clothes in my bag and the cheque for my fees. The five years that stretched in front of me seemed endless, unknown, threatening. I got up and looked around: the expressions on the faces of the others in VK Bhawan were just as hesitant and unsure as mine must have been. Oddly, that made me feel better. I was not the only one who was scared. Here was a good lesson for a first day at college: shared trepidation is a fine stimulant. We had all come to this tiny town on the edge of the Thar desert in Rajasthan, where there was the incongruously green campus of an engineering college. Many of us had left home for the first time, fresh from generally protected childhoods. Twenty-six years and change ago, I first got to know Ravinder Kichlu and Neeta Gupta and Humayun Khan and Salil Agrawal, along with dozens more from every corner of my country. I don't know about the rest, but I certainly had never run into the sheer variety of Indians I met at Pilani. My country in microcosm: that was my BITS experience.

They had come, like I had, to learn a little about science and engineering. We did not know it that first day, but we had also come, as generations before us had come to Pilani and elsewhere, to learn a little about life. Exhilarating, exasperating,

but cherished: that too was our BITS experience.

All these years later, I often wonder where those friends are, what they are doing. I know many are now eminent in various fields: off the top of my head, I can think of a dotcom entrepreneur, a talked-about writer, several CEOs, and numerous fine mothers and fathers, all from my class at BITS.

“...I certainly had never run into the sheer variety of Indians I met at Pilani. My country in microcosm...”

I wonder if they ever stop to think what college -- this particular college -- has meant to their lives. I also wonder if they realize just how immensely privileged we were to go to Pilani. To go to college at all. To be educated at all, in my country. Nothing wrong with privilege, let's be sure. On the other hand, there is something eminently wrong when the overwhelming majority of Indians are denied the same opportunities for education as we had in Pilani. It's one thing to come by privilege by working hard for it. But when we happen upon it by default, because most of the country

cannot hope for and does not even know about the aspirations we had -- that's another thing altogether.

In an era of scams of every description, possibly the greatest scam in our country goes unremarked: that something as simple as a chance at becoming educated has turned into a privilege for the few. Our Constitution is very clear. One Directive Principle of State Policy urges the Government "to provide free and compulsory primary education within ten years of the framing of the Constitution." That is, by 1960 such primary education should have been in place. Over forty years later, you only need to look out of a window, nearly anywhere in my country, to see what we have done with this requirement. If you don't see at least one child out there who is clearly not in school and never will be, wait a few minutes. You will. More likely, several. Each of them is one more Indian who will never so much as know what or where Pilani is, let alone things far more important for their lives as Indians.

The excuses abound. Naturally.

Actually, the Constitution only says the State must "endeavor" to provide that primary education. Our leaders might choose to hide behind that loophole -- after all, whatever you do, you can always claim to be "endeavoring." But it doesn't need an education to see that not only have they not provided it, they never really endeavored either. From Nehru to Vajpayee, Azad to Joshi, Patel to Advani, for those in power or those aspiring to it, primary education has always been a distant and forgettable cousin of such other priorities as a dusty mosque in Ayodhya and buying

Bofors guns. Result: primary education for all remains a dream. Then there are people who say we are still a young country, that 55 years is not enough time to have accomplished the hard task of taking education to such a huge illiterate population. I feel confident these same people, or their descendants, will be saying the same thing for the next 55 years as well. By repeating it, they prevent education becoming the national endeavor it must be.

They also ignore the example of countries around the globe -- Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Malaysia, China -- that have made education and literacy a priority over the last half-century, and are seeing the fruits today. What they also ignore is that with our literacy rate of perhaps 60%, over twice as many Indians are illiterate today than in 1947. In

fact, we have more illiterates today than we had Indians in 1947. We also have the world's largest pool of illiterate humans. The world's largest pool, think of it, of wasted human talent.

If getting rid of illiteracy was hard in 1947, it's twice as hard today. It gets harder every day.

It's been said before, but it can always be said again: there's no more lasting solution to so many of the problems that hound my country than educating our people. Whether it is corruption, child labor, population or disease, a national commitment to free and rigorous primary education is the first step we must take.

What's more, it is those of us privileged enough to have got an education already who must realize this and demand it. For by depriving half my country of an

education, we have also deprived it of a voice. But there's more than that at stake. If we want to live in a prosperous and secure nation, education for all is in our own interest.

All those years ago, some four hundred wide-eyed boys and girls arrived in Pilani with me. Some struggled, some sailed through the next five years. Many did not study what they had wanted to, many others did. And when we left that sandy nest, we flew off in innumerable directions, pursuing every kind of career imaginable. Today, I have lost touch with Humayun Khan and B Ravikumar and many other friends from Pilani. But nobody can take away the five years we shared pursuing something very special: an education.

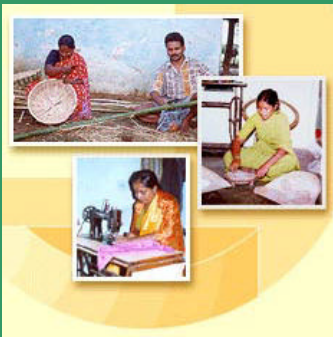
Even 26 years later, how many others in my country can say the same? †

Two Institutions, One Visionary: JANAAGRAHA & SANGHAMITRA

Ramesh Ramanathan, a successful banker, quits to focus on urban development and improving the lives of the poor around Bangalore.

A BITSian is the key architect of two social movements - Bangalore's Janaagraha movement for Urban Development and Sanghamithra - a pioneering micro-credit institution! Ramesh Ramanathan, MSc Physics from BITS and MBA from Yale, and the former MD and European Head for Structured Products at Citibank now presides over one of India's most successful urban movements and also serves as a Vice Chairman for a trail-blazing organization that strives to improve the lives of the poor by lending them money! Residents of Bangalore appreciate Ramesh's work as the Key Architect of the citizen movement for a Better Bangalore (Janaagraha). But many don't know that a micro-finance company for which he is vice-chairman, is changing the economic landscape of India. Sanghamithra, whose motto is "I shall destroy poverty," delivers credit to the poor who organize themselves as self-help groups. Over the last several years, Sanghamithra, with the help of international aid agencies, has shown that the poor are bankable, that they have credit discipline, and the potential to improve incomes and make a profit.

Sanghamithra has disbursed Rs. 460 lakhs so far and 97% of the loan recipients are women. The organization has a loan repayment rate of over 99.9%!



Featured Article

BY SAGARIKA JAGANATHAN

RACIAL PROFILING GROWS IN A POST-9/11 AMERICA

The author paints a balanced view of the arguments for and against racial profiling in America. This phenomenon has started to affect Indians who live here in sometimes a subtle, sometimes a not-so-subtle manner. It is a constant reminder of how our world changed as a result of the changes being implemented by the authorities in the wake of September 11.

When President George W. Bush declared in a February 2001 speech: "Racial profiling is wrong, and we will end it in America," little did he expect to eat his own words shortly thereafter.

Now, more than thirty months after the Al Qaeda terrorist group brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Center, and the Bush administration authorized the arrest and indefinite detention of possible terrorists on American soil, racial profiling is very much the many-headed hydra of public controversy.

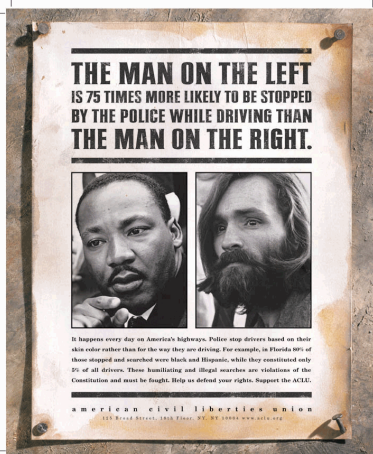
There are many high profile cases. The three Muslim medical students, who were detained by Florida authorities for 17 hours during a mid-September weekend of 2002. Arshad Chowdhary, an immigrant Indian from Pittsburgh, was booted out of his Northwest flight because the captain found his last name to phonetically resemble that of a terror suspect. In December 2001, Uday Menon was handcuffed and taken away because the ticketing agent informed her superiors that a foreign sounding person was making too many enquiries about the seating arrangements at a Broadway show.

These incidents, along with several others in the time frame, are proof enough that fear generated by the 9/11 attacks is pervasive and, coupled with ignorance, is a dangerous threat to individual freedom, particularly that of immigrants who often believe in America if you complied with the law, you would be all right.

Despite all the debate and speculation surrounding the issue in the current timeframe, it would be naïve to presume that racial profiling is a fall-out of the 9/11 aftermath. Its been around a very long time. Only it has

been confined to Hispanics and African Americans. Just recently, with racial profiling of Middle Easterners, have Indians begun to feel the brunt.

What then is racial profiling? According to Americans for Effective Law Enforcement (AELE), "Profiling" is the interdiction, detention, arrest or other nonconsensual treatment of an individual because of a characteristic or status based on race, national origin, citizenship, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, or sexual orientation.



Views among the common public, however, seem to run the gamut from informed observations to random ruminations.

Jim DeTar, a business news reporter from the Bay Area says "police in some U.S. communities statistically stop more black people and other people of color than they do white people." Another Bay Area veteran, Bob Schiffer from San Mateo has a different take: "It is a streamlined method to eliminate crime and terrorism from the American soil."

According to a 2001 Washington Post survey 52 percent of African-American males polled believe they have been victims of racial profiling. Approximately 60 percent of Americans polled believe racial profiling exists. Over the past couple years there has been intense national debate on whether racial profiling is a myth or a reality.

"There's no credible evidence that racial profiling exists, yet the crusade to abolish it threatens a decade's worth of crime-fighting success," wrote Heather MacDonald in 'The Myth of Racial Profiling,' "The anti-racial profiling crusade thrives on an ignorance of policing and a willful blindness to the demographics of crime," she argues.

Representative John Cooksey from Louisiana made it clear that if he saw "someone [sic] come in that's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over."

Among other things, it was the evidence of data collection, especially from studies conducted by the Post in New Jersey and Maryland, which transformed racial profiling from what many had labeled a minority-community perception, to what most people now accept as a national reality. Consequently, the focus of the debate seems to have shifted from whether or not racial profiling exists to whether or not it is essential.

The U.S. [government] says it is engaged in a war on terrorism. People of Middle-Eastern origin, or who look like they are, were initially singled-out for security checks because of heightened concern that Al Qaeda cells might be waiting to engage in more terror acts. The government did seem

to go the extra mile to assuage damage to sensitivities. President Bush visited mosques and authorized the arrest of hundreds of people for racially motivated attacks.

Now that racial profiling is accepted as a national reality, the focus of the debate has shifted to whether or not it is essential. Studies are underway to better understand racial profiling. Hot-button issues being revisited now to get a better understanding of racial profiling are traffic stops by the police and the legitimacy of data collection. An officer may stop a motor vehicle or pedestrian upon a reasonable suspicion that the pedestrian, driver or an occupant has committed a motor vehicle violation or other offense. Such stops conform to AELE policy and procedures.

Racial profiling...is now accept(ed) as a national reality. The focus of the debate (has) shifted from whether or not racial profiling exists to whether or not it is essential.

“Data collection may not be the solution to racial profiling, but proper data collection and analysis is a critical first step in developing solutions to end racial profiling,” says Oakland statistician, Shawna Williams.

“I believe that data collected at traffic stops is not credible unless the persons identify their race” says Captain Davis. But can an officer inquire about the race or ethnicity of a driver? Captain Davis adds that the percentage of stops police conducts on persons believed to be a certain race should be measured.

In response to public outrage over racial profiling, over 400 law enforcement agencies throughout the U.S. have implemented some form of traffic stop data collection. But what constitutes “proper” data collection and “credible benchmarks,” seems to be as yet undefined. Till we figure out credible ways to analyze the data and

draw accurate comparisons, the debate on traffic stops and data measurement are likely to continue.

In the litigious society that we live in, lawsuits are likely to mushroom too. In January 2003, the State of New Jersey agreed to pay \$775,000 to motorists who were victims of racial profiling. In June 2002, ACLU filed five lawsuits accusing three major airlines of blatant discrimination against five men who were ejected from flights solely based on prejudices of airline employees and passengers and for reasons wholly unrelated to security.

However, the law is increasingly on the side of the enforcers rather than the citizens. And it is only getting tougher. After the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the U.S. Congress passed an antiterrorism bill that allowed the government to use secret evidence to detain and deport immigrants suspected of terrorism. San Jose resident Fardeen Akhtar says the law that has since been used almost exclusively against Arab and Muslim immigrants. The ‘Patriot 2 Act’, entitled the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003, is going to increase government powers substantially. Its ramifications in terms of compromising civil liberties of a certain segment of society in an irrevocable way are likely to stir a hornet’s nest.

Dr. David Cole, Georgetown University Law professor declared the Patriot 2 Act “radical”. “It authorizes secret arrests. It would give the Attorney General essentially unchecked authority to deport anyone he thought was a danger to our economic interests. It would strip citizenship from people for lawful political associations, and ... it has not been put on the table so there can be a discussion about it”.

Is America, the upholder of free speech and liberty, turning into a police state? asks Joseph Farah, writer for WorldNet Daily. I should hope not. Freedom of speech and action requires there to be forums for debate. Then why is the Patriot 2 Act not open to discussion?

I’ll give you one last example of racial profiling. Rohinton Mistry, the Indian-

born Canadian author cancelled a portion of his book tour for “Family Days” after overenthusiastic security agents at American airports targeted him every single time he boarded an aircraft. Feeling like a second class citizen, he has even contemplated shaving his beard to avoid being conspicuous. Rohinton Mistry, as many of you know, is Parsi.

He cancelled his tour, saying he was fed up with traveling within the US, and returned to Canada.

Rohinton Mistry went home. As I sit in my apartment in Mountain View, California, I feel totally at home. So do millions of other Indians, Pakistanis and people of Middle Eastern descent who’ve chosen to live in America. The next time I hear of someone being singled out at the airport for an extra layer of security checks, I may if the person was a victim of profiling, suffering in silence to enjoy the comforts of this home

I will also hope, as the initial fears subside, that civil liberties of citizens as well as residents will be given top priority and we will all--immigrants or not--be able to express our opinions freely, without fear of being questioned or threatened with deportation from the homes that we have now come to love.”!



Rohinton Mistry
Credit: The Globe & Mail

Featured Article

AN EMAIL FROM PROFESSOR KR V SUBRAMANIAN TO BITS74-75 YAHOOGROUP

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON BITS ADMISSIONS

On April 30, 2003 the Ministry of Human Resource Development took BITS Pilani to court to ask it to join the All India Exam process. The case has been settled. India's famous lawyer, Shanti Bhushan took the stage on behalf of BITS and the Jaipur High Court ruled that a private educational institute can choose how to admit its students.

But around the world it has triggered a raging debate amongst BITSians. Should we stick with the current process? Should we join the All India Engineering Entrance or the IIT Joint Entrance exams. Should we conduct our own. Emails are going back and forth. Online polls have organized. Emotions run high.

Professor KRVS, or Raja as he is known was at BITS from 1974-00, and left only recently to start his own company, Answerpal. KRVS sheds some light on the process, shattering myths, providing facts and outlining the BITS admissions process that will certainly educate those who seek to participate in this debate.

Hello all:

I never intended participating in this discussion on BITS Admissions, although my involvement with BITS and Pilani often urged me to do so. Sorry, Durai, I was neither "sleeping" (I was trying to proactively help BITS and could not participate in the discussions), nor am I a "giant" in any sense (except for the dangerous paunch). But Nattu posted a mail meant for the Diro and well, I have to write some things here...Mostly, ramblings...

1. There are about 28 Boards in India that let students through the XII class (going by whatever name). Some Boards are very large (deals with large number of students) like the CBSE, some state boards like TN, AP, Maharashtra. There are also boards that deal with much smaller numbers, relatively (Vidharba). BITS takes into consideration every board that deals with a reasonably large number of students, and that comes to about 28 or so.

2. The BITS Admissions Officer accepts the marks obtained by the board topper directly from the Board (and from no one else or heresy). The system respects that each board has its own checks and balances to ensure fair play, efficiency, etc. If at a later date there is documentary evidence that there was manipulation at the Board's highest level, then BITS does (and has indeed done this at least on 3 occasions, I remember) strong steps to deal with the admissions (even canceling admissions in some cases) and the board itself.

3. The data on number of boards, number of applicants from each board,

the statistical distribution of marks, the numbers offered admissions - board wise, number ultimately joining BITS - board wise, state wise, region wise are all maintained. Indeed, many of these statistical analysis are reported in the Annual Report of BITS each year.

4. Let me share a few things I have personally observed by being on the Admissions Committee (the 1.08 Committee as it is called) during 1989-March 2000. The main boards from which persons join are the CBSE, AP, TN, Maharashtra (if I were to just list 4). Is that strange? No. Consider the percentages of applications received from these boards. The largest numbers come from the very same boards. In a statistical sense, the proportion of persons getting admitted from among the applicants in each board is fairly close. What I mean to say is that the deviation (variance) is small.

5. I know that the predominant talk is that the lingua franca of Pilani is Telugu/Tamil. That is a fact. But what it allows one to incorrectly deduce can damage the integrity of BITS. Contrary to most suppositions, the board that delivers the largest number of admissions to BITS is CBSE (it was so till 2001). It is also a verifiable fact that among the persons admitted from CBSE, there are significant number of persons who hail from TN, AP and/or whose native tongue happens to be Telugu/Tamil. Often the insinuation is that the system favors a few boards. This is not correct as the ratio of persons admitted to applied from each board do not dramatically vary. In fact, this piece of data is the one that has often been used by BITS to educate people on their incorrect perceptions. No,

the statistical data over the years do not show that the system favors just a few boards.

6. Some more on why few people join from other boards. The last date for receiving applications at Pilani is 30 June 2003. There are a number of boards which have almost never released the results of Class XII exams before this date. Examples of these are UP, Rajasthan, Punjab (and oh, there are others too). During those few occasions when these results were released on time, we found that the number of applicants from these boards were relatively smaller. For BITS this is not the first time its admissions policy is coming under scrutiny. Almost every year, BITS needs to present compelling data to various probes - from courts, to statutory government agencies, ministries, parliament, etc. And, please, let not anyone insult the BITS system by suggesting that there is a systematic doctoring of this data. Ask Nattu, whether any of us had any breathing time to indulge in such "creative pursuits".

7. My own \$0.02 about WHY a large proportion of chappies from the South get into BITS as against the national distribution. Guys note that this is purely my deduction based on data that I have had access to (and analyzed) at the Educational Development Division when the present Diro was the Dean - I could be hopelessly wrong. BITS offers a variety of degree programs ranging from Engineering to Sciences to Management to Humanities. If an applicant needs to improve his/her chances of getting admitted, he/she must not "cross out" any option. There are so many times I have seen guys with huge percentages just

apply for EEE, CS and Mech, (or a select few) and crossing out all other options. Based on the competition, if he does not get the above 3, he has kicked himself out of reckoning from all others. Do a large number of folks do something like this? Believe it or not, yes, a fairly significant proportion do this. And what is the pattern of filling applications from CBSE, AP, TN, Maharashtra? In this category, the number of persons crossing out options at all is very insignificant. These guys appear to be ready to go to BITS and do anything. Applicants from certain geographical areas appear to be focused on applying only for a few specific disciplines, while consciously crossing out the others. They do this in spite of the detailed instructions stating the consequences to them. Now to claim that the BITS System should also take care to ensure statistical uniformity of distribution from among states is a real tall order. Of course, never mind that the common entrance exams too cannot be designed to produce this. The only system that can be DESIGNED to provide such uniformity of geographical distribution would be some form of a "quota system". In my opinion, BITS has rightly rejected the quota system!

8. Does the BITS system get the meritorious students? This is a tricky area. I am going to cite an example to show this tricky situation. Assume that a person from CBSE gets 97% and gets into BITS, while another with barely 56% in CBSE, gets through JEE and joins IITK. Are they equally meritorious, or one is more meritorious than the other? I will leave the thoughts to you all. You will be surprised at the number of apparently logical deductions people can come up, all seeming to be equally compelling.

9. I started this long write-up with a mention that about 28 boards exist, and BITS often gets reasonable applicants from 25 or so (the rest send in just too tiny a number to be considered significant). So it is no big assumption to take 25 boards in the field. And how many toppers do we get each year? Each year, we get between 15-18 board toppers in BITS! Insignificant statistic? Think again. This is between 60% to 70% of the toppers of ALL boards of secondary school education in the country. One can argue: if they are all so good why don't they join IITs? I have another \$0.02 of my opinion on that, based on statistical evidence, but work his out yourself! Assuming that at least 50% of toppers would also appear in the

JEE, how come we are getting 60-70% of toppers each year? Inefficient admission system? Unbalanced system? Move along, guys, the days of having this infra dig about BITS being a rung or two lower than IITs are over. The present generation appears to know their mind better!

10. I have heard of some amazing arguments against the point 9, above from well-known educationists that populate the MHRD, UGC, and the infamous AICTE. One common one is that being the topper in a board is not an indicator that the person is actually meritorious! The not-so-subtle insinuation here is that (a) boards can be manipulated, (b) it takes only a "ghotu" to be a topper, but..., (c) why can't the same guys get through JEE to prove themselves... Well, I really don't want to comment. I have told what I think of those arguments to the former Dy. Sec. of UGC, a former Director of IITD, a Professor of IISc, and I can tell you, they have no love for me at all!

11. While talking about entrance exams, we almost seem to accept the JEE as a holy grail. Yet another \$0.02 of mine. Please take time to compare the syllabus of the various courses done in any board for class XII and the syllabus and coverage of the various subjects examined in JEE. The overlap in syllabus, coverage, topic and emphasis is very small - almost in every board, even though there are some significant variance. I am not questioning the JEE decision to prescribe that. In their wisdom, they solemnly think that such is the coverage required for a good engineering (and a few sciences) education. If that is required for good engineering education in IITs (a few that follow JEE), is it not prudent for the mandarins at MHRD to push NCERT, CBSE, ISC, etc. to upgrade their curriculum to prepare persons for a good engineering education? My \$0.02 says that nothing of this kind will come out, since this move will destroy the aura and exclusivity of JEE. Indeed, the very move to have AIEEE and to exclude JEE says all I want to and much more! Uniformity, indeed! Call me cynical, but my money is on the thing that this is a bit of a power game, a turf war, if you will, among the various agencies - UGC, MHRD, AICTE among others!

12. Regarding the suggestion for an entrance exam for BITS. Let me tell you that there is no emotional attachment to the existing system at BITS. There is a

constant debate regarding nearly all aspects of education. Too many things change at BITS, but admission seem to have fewer changes (oh, there have been changes in admissions too, although these are non-glamorous details). That does not mean there is a lack of debate on that. Far from it, I have participated in some many such discussions that have gone for such long hours that I have hardly spent any time with my daughter at home. The decision to go with the current system is based on logic, data, analysis, etc. Just work out the logistics and the costs of conducting yet another exam! And please do not forget to write the tangible benefits (the other scheme failed to offer). Tell me what you see...

13. One of the primary considerations for BITS is to make use of the marks awarded by the Boards and respect it. One of the main behind the common entrance exams is that diverse Boards are of different standards, different structure, different everything. Granted that differences exist. While several institutions chose to bring about a system of "normalization" through common entrance examination, BITS chose direct admission through the use of "normalized percentage". Unfortunately, there are several "common" entrance examinations and the proposed one is just to add to the pool.

14. I will not be able to write on aspirations of special groups of persons and their interests in the BITS admission policy. I am not saying that their aspirations are wrong. It is just that it does not fall into the category of thoughts I wanted to address here.

15. And, oh, there is no hidden agenda behind this posting of mine. I am not capable of personally benefiting from the BITS admission policy. I have a 15 year old daughter who would complete Class 12 after 2 years. If I were to have benefited, I ought to have continued in BITS! Indeed, many tell me that I have been foolish to leave BITS at such a stage, but then, that is an entirely different, uninteresting story.

I really think, it is enough said on this from me! I hope Nattu is able to support the factual nature of the data I mentioned.

- Raja !

Featured Article

BY VIKAS CHANDRA

WHEN ACADEMICIANS BECOME ENTREPRENEURS

THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF PROFILES

Let's start with your memories of BITS.

I was "76EEE056" at BITS. Of the 21 years spent in getting education, and nearly two decades thereafter, I look back at my BITS days more than school days. BITS was certainly more fun than graduate studies. I remember learning to live independently, the camaraderie, the unique experiences of OASIS and the practice schools, and the character building that involved knowing good students from all over India. I recall that our professors were mostly good to excellent, sincere, and some were also inspiring, but even more important was the educational process and curriculum, including the selection of reading materials.

Tell us how you came to the USA, and transitioned into life here?

It was relatively well planned. I remember going to the IIT-Delhi library during PS2. I decided to focus on Databases, the area I liked the most. Two of the most published Professors in Databases were at Wisconsin and Ohio State University.

Once I got in, I knew I would not stop at a Masters, but complete my PhD. Maybe this was because my father was a professor.

I was lucky to have assistantship offers from OSU and Wisconsin. OSU's offer came first with a letter from Prof. Chandrasekaran, strongly advising that it would look upon badly of Indians if I accepted their offer and backed out if I got a "better offer" later.

A week after I accepted OSU offer, I got a better offer from Wisconsin – better not only in terms of money and duration, but also overall. Wisconsin was "rated" higher in Databases than OSU. Well, Prof. Chandrasekaran's letter had its intended effect. I did not back out. Looking back, I do not regret my decision.



Name: Dr. Amit Sheth

Academic Position: Professor of Computer Science, Director of the Large Scale Distributed Information Systems Lab, University of Georgia.

Business Position: CTO, Semagix, Inc.

Entrepreneurial Ventures:

- Founder & CEO of **Taalee**, a VC funded enterprise software company. Acquired by Voquette Inc. (now Semagix) in 2001.
- Founder, **Semantic**, a web technology startup
- Founder, **Infocsm, Inc.**

Former jobs: R&D labs at Bellcore (now Telcordia Technologies) Unisys, and Honeywell.

Education: PhD (1985) and MS (1983), Ohio State University & BE (Hons), BITS (1981)

What prompted you to leave the commercial world and enter Academia?

I came to give the aspect of not having a boss a very high rating. It started with my first and only layoff. I had moved from Honeywell to Unisys, attracted by a higher position, higher salary and better technical focus. I got an out-of-turn raise and three levels of management told me how much they valued me, I was walking on water. But two months after that, Unisys decided to close down our entire location. I felt that many things were beyond my control.

At Bellcore, I was introduced to bureaucracy. My boss's boss's boss had to approve my travel. After I already won an externally funded project based on my proposal, I had to write a report on why we should accept the funds!

So I said to myself, if I can bring in my own funds why not do so in a University where I can decide what to propose and how to carry out the research?

And this was what I did exactly. External funding has allowed my LSDIS lab to set up a vibrant research environment where we carry out world class research.

You have worked in Industry, in academia and as an entrepreneur— which one you like most and why?

True-- I have had opportunity to have varied work experience—in industry R&D, as a professor, and as an entrepreneur.

In academia, what I enjoy most is my interactions with graduate students. One of the things I am most proud about is an award from UGA for helping in career advancements of my former students. This was determined based on interviews of

and inputs from UGA graduates. I am in routine contact with almost all my former students, whether MS or PhD.

As for entrepreneurship, I enjoy it because I am able to do it on my own terms and in parallel with my continued association with UGA. My primary purpose for starting Infocsm and Taalee (now Semagix) was to demonstrate the value of research carried out at the LSDIS lab. There are two ways to prove impact of research—through commercialization where research translated into technology and then operational products driving economic engine, and through trend-setting publications that others care to cite and use in their research.

Dr Sheth's top three reasons for doing a PhD

1. If you want to have a high degree of independence and “self governance” in your career
2. If you want to be a thought leader in your area of specialization
3. If you want an option to be a professor (even if some time in future) which would bring more job security

I feel that the focus on coursework during bachelors and masters simply does not allow for training one's other faculties and capabilities. It takes an effort to become a *thought leader*. Perhaps a PhD does not help a lot in becoming a business leader, but if you want to be a *thought leader*, especially involving technical vision, PhD has a lot to offer. Again, tying it back to my experience, it is a PhD that gave me the freedom to go to academia. And, from academia, I decided to launch a couple of companies and dabbled in being an entrepreneur on my own terms. I am delighted to

see sudden up tick in Indian applications for the PhD program. The applicants who are considering a PhD due to difficult job market conditions today will reap some good long term benefits.

Any thoughts on how to select a university?

There are three key factors: quality of teaching (for MS and PhD both) and research, selection of the right advisor, and an area of studies. The most important, in my view is to ensure you know what you like. A student who knows his research and career interest even before completing MS equivalent coursework is likely to be far more successful than the one who doesn't know what he or she likes for a year until after joining the graduate program. This is because the student who knows his/her interest can use that to make crucial decisions in selecting the university and/or advisor.

I think, too much importance is given to the ranking of the university or department. First of all, most the rankings are trailing indicators—reflecting the past. Second, the influence an advisor has in your success is often far more critical than the university and department. I think, selecting the advisor is simple—find someone who you would like to be like. Go to [citereer](#) and see if he/she is in top 1000. Or see if he/she has done things that you would like to do, or has funded projects in the area you wish to pursue. An advisor who has not worked in industry or consulted with industry substantially can hardly help you prepare for that in any substantial way. An advisor who has not either founded or consulted with a startup cannot help you understand entrepreneurship. And make sure your advisor does not have 10 PhD students or is too busy to spend quality time for you. An advisor—advisee relationship is, in fact, fairly close to the old tradition of *guru shishya parampara*. If you have a great advisor, you will be armed with all the tools and techniques you will need to take on a challenging and satisfying career path.

Do you have thoughts or advice to BITSians on pursuing graduate studies?

When I came to USA in 1981, the majority of the Indian graduate students came here for PhDs. During the 90s I saw a significant decline in this trend, with most students dropping out after completing their Masters. In my department, no Indian student finished his PhD from 1997-2001, during one of the greatest bull markets in American history. Jobs and careers in the business world appeared much more attractive than studying for a doctorate degree. Prospective students were also advised by their seniors that it was not worthwhile to do a PhD.

A PhD made it easier for me to lead projects and gave me a few years' lead over Masters graduates. It handed me opportunities to work on more exciting projects much earlier than those around me without PhDs. It seemed to me that the senior management in R&D in my industry were more likely to trust a PhD with a research-oriented project or a project involving development of newer technologies. Besides the greater specialized education, the experience in writing papers and proposals, and experience in conference talks prepared me much better to market my ideas to management, customers/sponsors and peers.

Whether you are in industry or academia, you have to sell—it is just that audiences are different. In industry you sell to your customers and upper management. In academia you sell your research sponsors and your peers who evaluate your proposals. Some techniques are different but some are the same. Even in industry, you are generally selling the promise of your product than the product itself. And if you have a good PhD advisor, he/she will help you hone this critical capability rather than just do narrow research and publish some technical papers (which are nevertheless unavoidable). He/she will guide you on how to effectively formulate ideas and their value propositions, and how to effectively present them. He/she will help you gain leadership skills. †

Featured Article

INTERVIEW BY AANAND KRISHNAN, ASHISH GARG & MUKUL CHAWLA

MAY PERSON OF THE MONTH: DR. VINOD AGARWAL ('68)

Vinod left a stellar career in academia to commercialize his theories that led to one of 2001's few successful technology IPOs with LogicVision, as the stock rose from \$9.00 to almost \$15.00 by the end of the year. LogicVision a small chip testing company that is reducing and eliminating the need for capital and labor intensive testing. LogicVision has kept Vinod on his toes, with a weak economic environment and a recent set-up in Bangalore, but he finds time to focus on BITSCONNECT. Vinod's faith in his alma mater is reflected in his teammates - Chairman Navindra Jain and India-head Hitesh Bhatnagar are BITSians. He has plans to recruit at Pilani.

Vinod, can you tell us a little bit about LogicVision and its technology?

LogicVision is a public company (NASDAQ: LGVN) in the semiconductor space. Our products help customers design chips that can test themselves. LogicVision has over one hundred customers worldwide. Blue chip customers from Cisco to Sun Microsystems in the US, Sony to Matsushita in Japan, and ST Microelectronics to Ericsson in Europe use our products. We are the largest provider of the so called built-in self-test (BIST) technology with 72% market share.

I find it really interesting that I have been working with the BIST technology for almost 30 years. When I came to the US in 1973, my very first graduate level course was on Semiconductor Testing. I went on to do my MS thesis, my Ph.D. thesis and all my research during the 16 years as a Professor in the BIST area. And now for the past ten years, LogicVision is the leader in the commercial offerings in the same BIST area. I keep telling people I have a long way to go because I have been doing the same thing for almost 30 years, meaning I must be very slow.

Our technology is very innovative because normally complex semiconductor chips are tested on multi-million dollar testers. Also, the size and cost of these testers keeps going up while the size and price of semiconductor chips continuously goes down. Hence, the idea I have been working on for the

past 30 years is that since chips have enough transistors on them, why don't we make a tester or multiple little testers on the chip itself? This way we can test the chip using these testers instead of testing the chip from outside. This is exactly what we do at LogicVision by providing a total solution, which includes automation, verification and complete design for putting tiny but comprehensive testers inside a chip.

How fast has LogicVision been expanding?

LogicVision has over a 100 employees and is headquartered in San Jose, CA with offices in Tokyo, UK and Canada. About six months ago we also started a center in Bangalore that has around 20 people right now and is headed by a very seasoned executive, my batch-mate from Pilani, Hitesh Bhatnagar. I am very excited about growing the prospects for LogicVision in India and the rest of the world.

Going back and working in India has been a pleasant surprise for me. I thought about starting in India many years ago but was discouraged due to the lack of IC design engineering expertise in India at the time. Recently there has been an influx of chip design knowledge in India and this has helped the chip business to grow in India. We most certainly will start direct recruiting from Pilani and other institutions.



Name: Dr. Vinod K. Agarwal

Position: Founder, Chairman & CEO, LogicVision, Inc. [NASDAQ: LGVN]

Selected Achievements:

- Founded LGVN in 1992, raised \$100 million and took company public in October 2001
- One of the very few tech IPOs of 2002; stock rose 60% by year end
- Voted Silicon India Entrepreneur of the Year 2002
- Nortel/NSERC Industrial Research Chair Professor at McGill University for 16 years with over 100 publications
- Fellow of the IEEE (1992) for contributions to the field of BIST and fault tolerant computing.
- Co-inventor of several U.S. patents on embedded technology.

Prior Jobs: Professor, McGill University (1978-94) and Wayne State U (1977-78)

Education: Ph.D, Johns Hopkins University (1977), MS, U Pittsburgh (1974) and BE (Hons) Electronics, BITS (1973)

What hurdles did you face in raising capital for LogicVision?

When I set out to get venture funding for LogicVision, many VC firms rejected us in the beginning and it took more than a year and a half to raise the 3 million dollars I needed. Dr. Navindra Jain, Chairman of our Board of Directors, and the gold medalist from our batch in Pilani and a very successful entrepreneur was a significant angel investor in the beginning and throughout. Since then we have had to go through several other rounds of venture capital funding, raising about \$50 million overall. We went public in October 2001, raising another \$45 million.

I learnt that if you have a vision that you want to follow through and if the passion exudes then people will be willing to fund you. Of course, you need the right story and the right management team, but without the passion none of it works out.

Being a professor must have had its own set of challenges. What do you recall most fondly about being a professor?

I always wanted to get involved in research and that is something that still drives me. I wanted to be a scientist when I was young and once I graduated, a faculty position at McGill University turned out to be an excellent opportunity for me. I had no real problems on my tenure track and also held an endowed chair position funded by Northern Telecom. I soon found out that teaching and research also involve getting funding for your projects, which means that you also need to have good entrepreneur skills. Eventually if you do things right, things move the way you want them

to. My experience as a Professor also taught me to respect professors back in Pilani. I feel that we need to provide better recognition to our Professors in Pilani for their contributions to our success.

Coming from an academic background, how do you want to see BITS evolve in the years to come?

BITS Pilani is at the helm of the IT revolution in India and has a greater role to play in the future. The recent efforts to organize and bring together the BITS alumni are a great start. The BITSCONnect project is going to go a long way in improving resources for students and expose them to world-class infrastructure. Coming from a research background, the next area I want to see Pilani grow is as a research institution, churning out world-class research work.



LogicVision Facts

Chairman: Navindra Jain*
CEO, Vinod Agarwal*
LTM Revenues: \$16 MM
Employees: 100
Headquarters: San Jose, CA
Market value: \$29 million
Stock price: \$1.87
52Wk high/low: \$9.6/\$1.3

Source: filings, Yahoo, Bloomberg, LGVN
 * BITSian

Tell us something about your days in Pilani.

My days at BITS were the best days of my life. We were in an environment, which not only allowed

us to learn, but also to have fun and just be ourselves. We spent a lot more time having fun and in cultural activities than with academics. That sort of environment is ideal to foster the entrepreneurship and hones your managerial skills. The experience of organizing events and getting things done in the institution, academically and culturally, instilled in us a sense of confidence, that doesn't come from just taking courses.

I was a part of a gang, called the "7 Generals". The 7 Generals were Anil Sethi, the highest executive at Sony Canada, Harsh Bhargava, Commodore in Indian Navy, Hitesh Bhatnagar, President of LogicVision (India), Anand Jain, based in UAE, and Kamal Lakhota and Shirish Chinoy, both running their own companies in Bombay. We did a lot of things that were not always appreciated by the Professors (laughs). One year, I was Chief Editor of Hindi magazine, at the time called "Rachana". It was during our time that we set OASIS on the path to become a national cultural festival. I am actually amazed how successful OASIS has become. We certainly did not dream this success for OASIS.

Is there any specific piece of advice for budding engineers from Pilani?

From my experience as a professor and as an entrepreneur, I've realized that Pilani produces some of the best engineers from our country. We need to have confidence in our overall capabilities, not just in our technical skills. The younger people need to make the best out of their years in Pilani. Just be yourself, have confidence and things will work out great. †

India Today 2002 rankings of Indian Engineering Colleges

Rank	COLLEGE	Academic	Reputation	Curriculum	Infra-structure	Student Care	Admission Procedure	Job Placement	Procedure Rank	Factual Rank
1	IIT Kharagpur	2	4	3	2	3	1	4	4	1
2	IIT Kanpur	3	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	2
3	BITS Pilani	1	2	1	4	4	5	3	2	6
4	IIT Mumbai	4	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	13
5	IIT Chennai	5	5	5	5	5	1	2	5	2
6	REC Surathkal	17	16	20	20	25	23	7	11	7
7	IIT Roorkee	7	7	7	7	8	9	6	6	-
8	Inst. of Tech., Varanasi	13	9	6	6	7	11	12	10	20
9	College of Enqq., Guindy	8	8	9	9	10	7	10	8	17
10	IIT Delhi	6	6	13	8	6	10	8	7	-

BITSAA Int'l Alumni & BITS-focused Initiatives (in addition to BITSConnect)



Announcing: \$15,000 SS Seshadri Memorial Scholarship Fund

SS Seshadri or Sesa passed away a few years back. When his Economics Class of 87 batch decided to put a scholarship in Pilani in his name in August 2001, BITSAA International was born. A scholarship fully pays for one deserving third year student at Pilani. This scholarship came about by the generous donations of BITSians in the US, particularly on the East Coast. Sesa, a student of Economics & Civil Engineering, will always be remembered as a gentle, smiling giant to all of the classmates he leaves behind.

This scholarship was set up at the same time as Vamsi's and has \$8,000 in funds. You may donate online at www.bitsaa.org to top-up our funds, or contact our Trustee to make a contribution.

Contact:
Sandeep Arora
Trustee, BITSAA International
sandeep@bitsaa.org
T: +1 (609) 203 1117

Announcing: BITSAA Center for Entrepreneurship & Venture Capital (CEVC)

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 14 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, 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

The BITS Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership (BCEL)

The CEVC team is working with the Institute and the BITS student body to launch the **BITS Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership** at Pilani. The Centre will leverage BITS' resources, the energy of the student body, and resources and ideas of the alumni body to create a vibrant, thriving culture of entrepreneurship on the BITS campus. A number of students have been identified, and Professor V S Rao has been named interim Director for the Centre. BITSAA working on this effort include Aashish Bhinde, Vivek Pandita, Satish Gupta, K Vijay Rao, Dinesh Mirchandani and Anupendra Sharma.

Contact
USA
Anupendra Sharma
anupendra@bitsaa.org

India
Aashish Bhinde
abhinde@viewgroup.com

Announcing: The BITSAA Academic Center

This Center is intended to keep students, faculty and BITSian in academics connected to each other. Over the next few months we will develop a list of objectives that will help the BITSAA

community with any and all of their academic-related queries and initiatives. The academic council is being created to start initiatives aimed at strengthening the links between BITSian in academics, BITS alumni in the United States, the Institute and current students at the Institute. The Academic Center website for BITSian students will be a wealth of resources for students applying to PhD, Masters and MBA programs. Led by Dr. SP Kothari, MIT Sloan and Professor Krishna Saraswat, Stanford, the Center will also aim to build the BITS brand around the world through the 160+ BITSians teaching at universities. Other alums involved include Prof Baheti, NSF; Prof Maheshwari, USUHS; Prof Ravindran, Penn State; Suraj Srinivasan, HBS and Vikas Chandra, Carnegie Mellon.

Contact:
Suraj Srinivasan
Academic Council Coordinator
suraj@bitsaa.org

In development: BITSAA Alumni Directory & Job Bank

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
CEO, jPeople
prasad@bitsaa.org

PARTYIN' AROUND THE WORLD

Coming soon: BITSAA Events in London, Sydney, Los Angeles/Southern California, Atlanta and Chicago. Check www.bitsaa.org for details

2003

April 5, Dubai: The active 40-strong chapter organized a small picnic for BITSians and their families.

March 22, San Francisco: Silicon Valley chapter annual event held with 200 guests at the Marriott Santa Clara. The focus was on dinner, dancing and BITSConnect. The theme was Giving back to BITS. With a play/skit by BITSians about marrying a BITSian, Mr. & Ms. India - San Francisco dancing and singing for everyone's entertainment, and a mime that reflected on BITSian life, it was a fun-filled evening.

March 8, Mumbai: The first Mumbai chapter event was a huge success, with the BITS Director, **Vivek Paul, Rajiv Malival, Shashi Warriar and Dilip D'Souza**. Over 300 people showed up, with lots of media in tow. The alcohol flowed freely.

January 26, New Delhi Picnic: On a beautiful winter afternoon, a number of families got together for a picnic at **Kapil Chopra's** SKN farms off Mehrauli Road. There were lots of fun-filled events including tambola, musical chairs, drinks and of course, lunch.

January 25, Pune Dinner: The Pune chapter, with over 100 members, got together for dinner at the Officer's Institute

in the College of Military Engineering.

January 24, Hyderabad Inaugural: The Hyderabad chapter had its inaugural bash with over 250 guests, one of the largest held this year. The party was held at the Chiran Fort Club, with alcohol, music and a DJ blasting music. It was a great turnout.

2002

September 28, New Jersey Music Nite: After an extraordinary music nite in 2001, **Tirthankar Das** and **Rasika** came back for another electric performance. The Director came from India, and 250 guests showed up. The auction sold bats, gloves and Anna Kournikova memorabilia. The BITS movie that the Director brought with him stirred a lot of emotions. He followed it up with a great speech about BITSAA in the US and the power of the network.

September 23, Boston: Dr. S. Venkateswaran met **Dr. SP Kothari**, MIT Sloan, **Mukesh Chatter**, Axiowave and a number of BITSians. The video presentation on Pilani was a big hit.

September 14, Detroit dinner with the Diro: Dr. S. Venkateswaran, Director galvanized the first ever meeting of BITSian alums in the area organized by **Krishnaraj Inbarajan** at **Deven Kataria's** house. The drawing room was standing room only.

September 7, San Francisco lunch with the Director: Dr. S. Venkateswaran had a private meeting with senior BITSians. **Mukul Chawla** gave a presentation on BITSAA International, and the Director spoke about the needs of the institute.

September 5, Seattle meeting with the Diro: **Mythreyee Ganapathy** and **Vidur Luthra** of Microsoft organized a welcome for the Director, who was in town to meet his son, also a BITSian.

August 23, Dallas & Houston Kickoffs. Two excellent events with a total of 95 alums and guests. This was the first ever event organized by BITSian for the South Chapter. **Manoj Saxena, Preetish Nijhawan, Shailendra Sachi** and **PS Raju** spoke at the events.

July 28, New Jersey Golfing Event. As the mist lifted off the splendid greens at the High Bridge Hills Golf Club in NJ, 28 BITSians and guests teed off at the first ever BITS East Coast golf outing. After an excellent breakfast of bagels and coffee, eager golfers grabbed their lunch boxes, jumped into their golf carts and headed over to play this gorgeous but challenging, par 71 course. The outing was sponsored by Radiant System's CEO, **Venu Myneni**, a spouse of a BITSian and a strong supporter of BITS

BITSians came from all batches - 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. It was an excellent mix of CEOs, technologists, venture capitalists, bankers, consultants and corporate executives. Beer, laughter and conversation flowed freely during the game,

and after the event was over, the cocktail platters were devoured by a hungry group of golfers.

The tournament was won by **Ravi Mehra ('67)** with a splendid score of 82, twelve strokes ahead of **Rajen Tibrewala ('65)** and **Ara Pararajasingham** who managed to complete the round in 94 strokes.

March 16, Silicon Valley Annual Event: The third Silicon Valley Annual Event was held on , March 16 at the Santa Clara Marriott. It was the largest event yet with 250 guests.

June 29, 2002, Boston Kickoff: This event was a great success with over 35 BITSians (not including their spouses and children) from batches ranging from 1966 - 1997 attending it. The event also featured talks by eminent BITSians entrepreneurs including **Prashant Rao** (CEO and President of Reflexis, Inc.) and **Satish Tadikonda** (Founder and principal of Tribiosys, Inc.) **Anupendra Sharma** (of BITSAA International) informed the audience about BITSAA International's upcoming events and roadmap. The party topped off with an excellent informal quiz conducted by **Srikanth Babu ('92-97)**, and the team sold over 20 BITSAA T-shirts too.

January 5, 2002, Bangalore Kickoff Event: Event organized by **Subodh Mittal** and **Anant Kansal** at the Eden Park restaurant.!

BITSians doing what they do best, at alumni events around the world...having a party !!!



Acoustic guitar and vocals !



Drum solo !!



Heavy metal BITS style!!!

BY PUSHKALA VENKATRAMAN

HOUSTON CALLING: A CONVERSATION WITH KRISHNA VAVILALA ('56)



Name: Krishna Vavilala ('56)

Education: EEE (BITS)

Resident: Houston, Texas

Associations: Director, India Cultural Center; Founder, Third Eye think tank, Active Member, Democratic Party; Federation of Indian Associations; American Society of Indian Engineers; Telugu Cultural Association

Award: Mayor of Houston Award, 2002 for exemplary community service

Mr. Krishna Vavilala ('56), has worked tirelessly towards spreading Indian culture in the United States since he first came here. He has also been active on the political front. In 1996, he introduced a motion in the Texas State Democratic Party Convention urging for US support to India over China. Mr. Vavilala has also published numerous letters in the national mainstream press such as the Houston Chronicle on a wide variety of subjects ranging from Indo-American relations to Taliban's tagging of Hindus in Afghanistan.

When he undertook the 1,400-kilometre train journey from his home town Rajahmundry to Rajasthan, he had no idea that those four years at Pilani would transform him completely from

a meek and shy 18 year old into a self-confident young man ready to take upon the real world. BITS being strictly a resident college, the close interaction with students from other Indian states broadened his outlook immensely.

Mr. Vavilala remembered the woman warden of the Arts College who would never allow her students to go out without prior permission and without a responsible person escorting them out and bring them back to the hostel before night fall. On occasions like the BITS College Anniversary Day the girls from the Arts College would be shepherded in a procession into the auditorium to their reserved front row seats led by their principal amidst cat calls, claps and whistles from the engineering students.

His innocent question about "segregation" of guys and girls in the present day BITS brought a smile to my face and he was visibly shocked when I told him about the Music Nites, late night department work, Oasis, gate calls and the 11.00 PM curfew.

There were no movie halls in Pilani at his time. The students craved to clandestinely go and see movies shown at CEERI.

Dr. V. Lakshminarayanan was the Principal of BITS during Mr. Vavilala's time. Mr. Vavilala recalls the time when students squat in front of his house to bitterly complain how tough that morning's test paper had been. Dr. Lakshminarayanan said "Don't worry. I will look into the matter."

He asked the very Professor that set the examination paper to sit down and answer all questions within 3 hours.

Mr. Vavilala fondly remembers the time when Dr V S Lakshminarayanan punished him for failing to wear the proper uniform. Mr. Vavilala was made to run three times around the BITS building on a cold wintry morning – all for wearing a gray instead of the official blue sweater. South Indian students were not accustomed to the severe desert cold of Pilani and since there were no hot water geysers in the hostels for bathing, students had to walk all the way to the mess kitchen and beg the Maharaj for a bucket full of hot water. Nevertheless, Mr. Vavilala feels those tough times prepared him well for the life ahead.

At 65, Mr. Vavilala an Electrical Engineer is happily settled in Houston with his wife and two daughters. He keeps extremely busy by working for Indian organizations that work towards spreading the Indian culture. He is often a part of committees that welcomes Indian dignitaries into the country and thus he had the opportunity of meeting with several dignitaries including Morarjee Desai, Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi and Atal Behari Vajpayee. He is also an active member of the Democratic party.

Mr. Vavilala, is spearheading a Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Statue Project in Houston on behalf of the India Cultural Center. The statue will become not only a landmark tourist attraction in the City of Houston and make future generations of all Indian-Americans proud of their Indian heritage. Perhaps he is motivated by our very own beloved Gandhi statue on campus. |

BY ANURADHA GUPTA

MEMORIES & TRIBUTE TO VAMSI & PRASANNA

The Twin Tower tragedy had the entire world horrified and millions of lives affected. One such poignant story seemingly of despair, has a message for people to not give up and live on for the sake of their loved ones.

When we attended the BITSAA East Coast Alumni get together on October 13, 2001, we were shocked to hear that good old, cheerful and dedicated Vamsi from the 1988 batch was on the Boston-LA flight that crashed into the WTC on September 11.

A software engineer with DTI Technologies, Vamsikrishna moved to the US from India 10 years ago, earned a master's degree from the University of Missouri and was working on a second one in Engineering Management from California Coast University. He and his wife, Kalahasthi Prasanna made their home in Los Angeles and had been married for 2 ½ years.

BITSAA proposed instituting a scholarship in his name at his alma mater and we all resolved to raise money for it. Vamsi's wife, Prasanna was actively involved in raising funds. We read that DTI had also established a Benevolent Account for Prasanna's benefit that was supposed to be open till November 1, 2001 and DTI was creating a scrapbook to celebrate his life. Notes, letters, photographs and other remembrances were being collected and had to be placed in a scrapbook that would be presented to her.

But none of that was meant to happen.

On October 20, A BITSian friend called me, overcome with emotion and told me that Prasanna, studying to be a dental student had committed suicide the previous day. When newspaper reports

came in, we all were shocked and almost defensive.



We told people that Hindus do not believe in suicide, that they believe in reincarnation and that their journey towards learning and evolution does not end with death...except that sometimes one can't handle despair beyond a point...

We heard that Prasanna, a USC graduate student in the International Student Program for Foreign-Trained Dentists since April 2001 had moved to US only a year back, and was found in her Catalina Street apartment on Friday, October 19. She was 25 years old. Near her body, they found a letter from New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani dated October 12 inviting her to a memorial service scheduled for October 28 to mourn the death of her husband.

From her friends I learnt that though she was devastated, she was determined to move on and complete her dental course. However, a few questions haunted her...

What if Vamsi had not missed his flight? Vamsi had been working 15-hour days and weekends in order to complete an XPI project for a

client in Boston. Unfortunately, his dedication to the completion of that project meant that he missed a flight home to Los Angeles on Monday and was on the Tuesday morning flight instead...

What if he had managed to speak to her? He left her a message before he boarded the plane, telling her that he would be home by lunch and would surprise her with a meal he was going to prepare...

What if...

They had so many plans; they wanted her to go through the demanding two-year graduate program she had begun only a few months earlier, and establish her career somewhere in the United States. Vamsi was prepared to go with her wherever her career might take her. They were going to start a family.

And now it is the family and friends she has left behind who are haunted by so many questions.

The University Director of Student Counseling Service, Bradford King had referred her to Nadadur S. Kumar, associate director of the Office of International Services. In their regular chats, Kumar reminded Prasanna that counselors, even Indian ones were available to help her. Bradford even offered to walk her across to the counseling center. But it was her choice to not go in for professional counseling, not because of the stigma attached but because she felt she was doing fine, as did everybody else.

Prasanna would see Osama bin Laden on CNN and say to Kumar, "What did I do to deserve this? I am a simple person. Why am I being punished? Why this senseless terrorism?"

Kumar said “She had a bright future but the pain was too much to bear. It was because of the World Trade Center. Whoever did this should understand that so many beautiful, innocent lives were destroyed.”

Her family and in-laws flew over from India for the funeral. They stayed to offer her support and offered to take her home. She refused to go. She felt the best way for her to remember her husband was to stay in the program and complete it. Kumar remembers her saying, “His memory is only going to strengthen my resolve.”

Both families went to Ground Zero at New York to say their prayers but she refused to join them – it was just too painful. They offered her all the assistance and Kumar says that financially, she had no issues; there was tremendous emotional support and academically she was in one of the best programs – there was a lot to look forward to...but the pain was unbearable...

Prasanna did reassure her families that L.A. was her home and that she would move on. Her brother was moving into the apartment she and her husband had shared near the USC campus to be with her, and she also had a new, extended family that included her friends, her classmates, and people at the University. As a Hindu, she believed in reincarnation and that she would be reunited with her husband one day. Her families left, but as Kumar says, they had to return under such unfortunate circumstances.

She attended class on Oct 18, Thursday morning, called Kumar about 3:30 p.m. to chat and even

called her friends and relatives. And on Friday, it had all ended...

A memorial service was held for Prasanna Kalahasthi at USC on Oct. 30, attended by a large number of her fellow students and professors and family. Harold C. Slavkin, dean of the USC School of Dentistry, and Dixon C. Johnson, the executive director of the Office of International Services, each gave a eulogy, as did Kumar.

Prasanna’s station at the University is empty now except for a large piece of paper with a note that reads, “Dearest Prasanna, We shall miss you a lot! Love, your friends and teachers.”

Leaving us all behind was Prasanna’s decision. We all know it was the wrong one, but we have to respect her for that, however saddened we all are. The families, Kumar, the University and all their friends tried their best but failed, and there is no point in wondering what they could have done differently.

It has been over a year since the dreadful plane crash that changed the lives of thousands around the world. With the ceremonies, the funerals, the messages, the hunt for Osama, it is hard not to linger. But its best to move on and pray for better things to come...My message, one shared by BITSians around the world, to grieving families who lose their loved ones in any situation, is to hold on. Don’t lose hope because your loved ones are gone. They would have wanted you to continue with your lives, to pick up the pieces, and to move on. Prasanna was doing just that, except for that fateful moment of weakness. Remember, time is a great healer, and even though the scars stay with us forever, the deepest wounds eventually heal and get better.

And life becomes livable once again. †

The \$15,000 Pendyala Vamsikrishna Memorial Scholarship Fund



- The scholarship was instituted by BITSAA International in the first semester of the academic year 2002/03.
- Rs. 30,000 is given to one second year student of BITS on a merit-cum-need basis, every year.
- All students of the University in their second year are eligible for the scholarship
- The student is chosen by a Scholarship Committee consisting of faculty at the Birla Institute of Technology & Science.
- Academic performance in the previous year is the primary criteria for selection of the student, once the student has demonstrated financial need
- Krishnachitanya P has been named the recipient of the first Pendyala Vamsikrishna Memorial Scholarship Award. Krishna, a resident of Chirala, Andhra Pradesh is a 4-year student completing his BE (Hons) in Instrumentation.
- This fund currently has \$8,000 in it, and still needs to be fully funded.
- To contribute money towards the fund in a tax-free manner, or for any other questions, please contact Sandeep Arora, Trustee & CFO, BITSAA International by emailing sandeep@bitsaa.org or calling +1 (609) 203-1117
- You may also add funds to this scholarship by contributing online at www.bitsaa.org and selecting the Vamsi Fund on the donation page

FROM LEUNA'S FRIENDS & FANS

LEUNA HARKAWAT THAMATUR, PILANI'S NIGHTINGALE PASSES AWAY



April 20, 2003: Everyone who was in BITS between 1987 and 1991 will remember Leuna Harkawat - a amazingly talented singer and a truly wonderful person. Leuna lost the battle to breast cancer on April 19, 2003 in Secaucus, New Jersey. Leuna is survived by her parents, her husband Satish Thamatur, her 3-year old daughter Anisha, and thousands of BITSian fans who remember her songs from the music nites at Pilani.

She had the warmest and most dazzling of smiles ! Her father told us yesterday that she kept smiling even as she battled cancer for over a year. Doctors and the nurses marveled at her bravery and cheerfulness in the face of so much adversity. Leuna fought her illness right until the very end.

Leuna, who worked at UNICEF, was an enthusiastic supporter of many worthy children's causes including Asha. BITS East US was very fortunate to have her here. Leuna loved BITS with a passion and worked hard for the success of the BITS East Coast kick-off event in 2001.

Dear All:

Leuna had the sweetest of smiles, the purest of thoughts and kindest of hearts of all people I've met and it just feels devastating to see her leave us like this. Personally, I will treasure every moment she graced my life with her presence. When I saw her lying down so peacefully yesterday, memories flashed back from BITS.... us laughing over another singer taking away the song she wanted to sing for the music night, her being so thrilled to wear her first pair of jeans in BITS, her being so nervous before tests because invariably we would have scheduled practice for her in the music club, her talking about what/how much she wants to do for her family, about her dream of supporting orphans and needy children after she started working.

The first time she sang on stage was when we played a medley of 10 songs with 8 females singing on stage, one after another. This sight did make the BITS junta loud and wild. She was literally shaking like a leaf. "Bhaiya, ye log tamatar to nahin mareng na".... I had answered..."Yahan tamatar to nahin milta hai..lekin bottle se daaru khatam ho gayi to shayad bottle phekenge" Ironically, we had a few empty bottles land on stage that night. Sincere that she was, she'd always be prepared with her song. Her husky voice did wonders to songs and won the hearts of all BITSians. Some of the songs she rendered were "Babuji Dheere Chalna", " Khilte Hain Gul Yahan" with Murali, "Mausam Mastana" with Ranjani, "Sheesha Ho Ya dil ho", "Kora Kagaaz tha Ye Mann mera" with Murali.

The last time I met her was at the BITS Alumni function in 2001. She was the same and looked so happy with Satish and Anisha. She had expressed to me that she has big plans for Anisha. "She has to learn music". Leuna had always wanted to learn music ! but never got to do so. She wanted to make sure Anisha did what she couldn't. Her leaving us like this should not be viewed as a conclusion to anything. She has left a sequel in Anisha who

would continue to lighten every life around her.

Her memories will last forever in our hearts, her pictures and her voice. May her soul rest in peace. - **Tirthankar Das ('86)**

Yes Leuna Harkawat, as we all knew her was a delight to be with, a gem at heart and an embodiment of sweetness. I remember playing the keyboards for her songs, always a great effort not to sound too "noisy" compared to her sweet and husky voice. She was always dear to our hearts. Her smiling face, her laughter, her voice and her radiance are always etched in our memories - **Simu Thomas ('88)**



Got the message late last night and was quite in a state of shock. Don't know how to react... Those days at music club cannot be forgotten. I remember singing Bade Acche lagte hain with leuna - my first song with her where she had done the "Aur? ..." part. May her soul rest in peace. **VP Krishnan ('87)**

Hey guys, Yesterday was a very strange experience. The smile on the photograph that was next to her, is how I remember her. I will always remember her amazing voice, her positive attitude to life and her soft spoken nature. One of the memories I have of her is that scared look on her face just before her songs would start. But when she would start singing...WOW!!! What a lovely person. - **Sandeep Nalgundwar ('87)**

I am really shocked and saddened by this news. Leuna was such a wonderful friend. Always cheerful, ever smiling and affectionate. I recall fond memories of music club, and more recently a few years ago when Sandeep Arora and I had gone to her house in Edison and later when Ranjan, Tanuja and I had visited Leuna and Satish in her home in Jersey City. She was the same sweet person as she was in Pilani, nothing had changed. Alas... the Mausam is NOT Mastana anymore.... - **Ganesh Anand / Daga**

Leuna was the most wonderful and sweetest person in Meera Bhawan in our times. She cooked for us and took care of all of us in our wing. She had a great sense of humor and humor is what got Satish (her husband) and her together. Satish and Leuna were one of the most romantic and humorous couple that we know. Unfortunately God's sense of humor is really cruel. **Anita Anne Sakuru ('87)**

I can always remember Leuna as a vibrant warm person. I remember how we all studied for our D Courses...and how she would poke me in the side when I dozed off to sleep while studying. She was forever positive, radiant and always had only nice things to say about everyone. This sad occasion has made me realize how transient life really is, and how fate plays such a cruel hand with the nicest people. I feel especially sorry for Satish - I have met them both in 1998 at their home and they looked the picture perfect couple - each "Janu" (if I get the word right) to the other and how loving they were to each other. I also remember how both of them would remind the other to carry their cell phones when they got out of the house. Inane incidents, but they leave such an impact on one's memory. Simple gestures conveying a lot about their love for each other...I pray to god as Anisha grows up, she learns about how great her mom was and I hope god gives Satish, Anisha and all the family members and friends the strength to carry on. - **Shobha Balsubramaniam ('87)**

BY SURAJ SRINIVASAN & ALL THE BATCH REPRESENTATIVES

SELECTED CLASS NOTES**For a full listing go to the website****1950**

The 1950 batch was the 5th to pass out from Pilani in the year 1953. Four batches - 1950, 1951 (two), and 1952 - graduated from the then Birla Engineering College (now a part of BITS).

Most of the 1950 alumni are either retired or self-employed doing their own business. The retirees are settled down in various parts of the world including some in the U.S. Some of them, settled in India, retired from senior positions held in the Government of India. Some held high ranks in the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

Our batch celebrated the 50th anniversary of joining the Birla Engineering College in November of 2000, which was attended by fellows from Delhi, Chandigarh, and even from the U.S. There were more in Mumbai, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Bangalore, Hyderabad and other places who could not make it to the reunion.

1975

Ashok and Anjali Galgotias' have been living and working in Dubai, UAE since 1986. Ashok runs a small company called Triveni trading company which specializes in 'Packaging Machinery and Materials' as well as in 'Cable Management Systems'. We have two children son Aditya (17 yrs.) and daughter Aparna (13 yrs.)

Vinod and Sarita Sawhny live in Chandigarh, India. Vinod is the CEO of Bharti Televentures and Sarita is the Media coordinator of CII (North). After BITS, Vinod completed his MBA from XLRI, Jamshedpur and was with Godrej and Godrej GE till 1999. After that he has been in the Cellular industry. They have a son Arnab who is 15 years old. Our contact is vinodsawhny@hotmail.com

Rajiv & Nutan Wakhle, keep moving all over, currently in Chennai with Britannia Industries Ltd., General Manager, as profit centre head for South India. Nutan is a Nutritionist and Dietitian. Aditya our son is 16 yrs, and is in 12 Std, aspiring to be an engineer God bless him !! email wakhle@hotmail.com

Arun and Mala Mehta live Down Under in Melbourne (Australia). Living here has been fun for the last 10 years. Arun works for RICOH in the Office Automation Division. I also enjoy tutoring Maths and Science subjects to the aspiring Year 12 students and it is very rewarding. We have two sons Adi (16 Years) and Sarrva (11 years). This is a great place to visit for a holiday. See some of you soon " My email address is amehta@ricoh.com.au

1986

G. Ram Kumar (Ramku) is Asst. Professor at the College of William & Mary's Business School in Williamsburg, VA in Operations & Information Technology. He is married to

Tonya and they have a one year old daughter Ava.

Govind Shankar Narayanan (Govoo - 86A1) works for TAS and has been in London UK for the last two years on an assignment with Tetley Tea. The assignment ends soon and he is scheduled to return to Mumbai in early 2003. Govind is married to Avanti and they are blessed with three year old twins - son Vinayak and daughter Kaamyaa (sp). Govind recently took some time off from work to complete a Masters in Finance degree at London Business School.

Raymond Miranda (Gerry - 86B3) works for Oracle and lives in Phoenix Arizona. He is married to Lekha and they have a daughter Isabelle who has just turned one.

Gourango Banerjee (Banjo - 86B3) teaches economics at the University of Texas at Brownsville. He is married to Malini and their son Avik too has just turned one.

Sanjeev Singh and **Aarti** (nee Ranjan - 86A5) have recently relocated to Canada. Sanjeev is heading the Logistics Department of a company in Toronto, while Aarti is working with Xerox Canada in Marketing. Prior to the move, they were both living in the Middle East for ten years. They have a five year old daughter Arushi.

Chandna Sethi (86C4) is married to Srivardhan Sharma (Shri - 85A3) and lives in the south of France. They have a year old daughter, Indira.

Upasna Kapoor (nee Kumar - 86B3) was just blessed with a second child, Shiv, a baby brother for two year old Joya. She heads her own Oracle consulting firm and lives in Minneapolis with husband Sanjeev.

Manisha Dahad (nee Kabra - 86C4) lives in Hitchin, Hertfordshire with husband Sudesh and four year old daughter Tanika. Manisha has recently started a business forum for Asian women entrepreneurs in the UK.

P. S. Devarajan (Deva - 86A3) has just returned to Hyderabad India after living in New Jersey, USA for the last seven years. He is now currently setting up home and actively looking for suitable job opportunities. He is married to Archana and they have a two year old son Aamish.

Kinnar Ghiya (86B5) completed MS in Systems Engineering and MBA in Technology Management after graduating from Pilani. He has been working for Intel for the last 5 years and lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with wife Nisha and 2 week old daughter Ameyaa.

Aparna Durvasula (nee Guruzada 86A3) lives in Maryland, USA. She is married to Naresh, with two kids Samir 7, Ankitha 3. Has her own firm and works as a freelance programmer.

Ravi Baid (Baid, Jabba - 86B2) has been running his own company, Alliance Infotech at Delhi. He is married to Shilpa, and has 2 daughters, four year old Srishti and 1 year old Yushika. He is generally seen hanging around the office or trying to grow goatees.

Arvind Gopalakrishnan (Adoor - 86B5) is working with Baid in Delhi. He is not married and does not have any kids. He is also seen hanging around the office listening to the same old music and trying to grow sideburns. He likes old monks a lot and reckons he is generally going senile. Has not played the guitar for 2 years now.

Luke Lenus Solomon Lenny Abrao (Lenny - 86A1) runs his own stevedoring outfit in Cochin. He is married to Priya and has a 2 year old daughter. He smokes India Kings, drinks the same booze and is mostly seen haunting old school pals. He has also not touched the drums for years.

Suraj Srinivasan (86B5) went to IIM Calcutta right after BITS and then worked till 1999 in India primarily in Madras where his last job was with a retail chain that he co-founded. Since then, he has been pursuing a doctorate in business administration at Harvard Business School and will be graduating in 2004. Suraj has been married to Radha who was working in India as a Chartered Accountant and is now pursuing her CPA. They have a 4 year old son, Krishna.

Madhu Rao (86B3) and **Amrisha Kacker** (86A7) have been married for two years. Amrisha works for Analysys, a UK telecommunications consulting company, while Madhu is with The Wildlife Conservation Society. They live in idyllic rural Cambridgeshire with a few scores of sheep as neighbours.

1987

Neha Goel nee **Modi** (second sem., Pharmacy) Neha lives in NOIDA with her husband Nitin Goel who she met while doing an MBA at Fore Foundation in Delhi. Nitin works at a trading house in Delhi. They have a daughter, Drishti (born in '00).

Neetu Khilnani (second semite, MMS). After working in Bombay for a while, and in Los Angeles for a few years, Neetu is now doing an MBA at UC Irvine, which she will complete in March this year.

Venu Palaparthi (Eco/Comp.Sci.) is Vice President and Head of Business Audit and Risk Assurance for Americas at Instinet in New York City. Venu holds an MBA in Finance from University of

Texas at Arlington (1994). Venu is married to Kranthi who is an alumnus of Guindy, Anna University, and did an MS in Texas Arlington. Venu co-founded BITSAA International in the US.

Sripriya Singh nee **Srinivasan** (second sem., Mech.) Sripriya lives in Noida with her husband Jagdeep Singh, and their 2 children - Saloni (born '96), and Sameer (born '99). Jagdeep founded a factory that makes machines used in manufacturing. He is an alumnus of IIT Delhi. Sripriya met him as her PS instructor.

Shanti Shri Katuri (Comp.Sci.) lives in Stamford, Connecticut with her husband Srinivas (also a BITSian). She has a daughter Gayatri (born '98). Shanti currently works for Oxford Health Plan.

Sanjay Anand or Beta (Comp.Sci.) and **Anju nee Gupta** (EEE) live in Seattle. They have 2 daughters, Aarti (born '98) and (Nov '02). Sanjay completed an MS in Computer Science from Arizona State University and works at Microsoft. Anju got an MS from University of Washington, and has worked at a few different companies.

Abhay Kataliha and **Meenu Sharma** (both second sem., MMS) live in Bombay. They have a daughter called Anoushka (born '95).

Sandeep Arora (MMS) Sandeep lives in NJ with his wife Rupali and son Neil. Sandeep currently is Director of Business Development at L&T Infotech based in New Jersey. He co-founded and sold Spark5 a company creating B2B solutions for the Healthcare Insurance industry which he sold to Webify Solutions (another BITSian company). Prior to that he worked for a number of years at at Intelligroup.

Sandeep co-founded BITSAA International in the US.

Gopi or C.P.Gopinathan and Ritu nee Vinayak (both second sem., MMS) live in Madras. They run a computer training institute.

Vidur Luthra (Eco/Comp Sci) lives in Bellevue, WA with his wife, Gunilla, and his three children, Yasmin, Ruben and Linnea and works at Microsoft and shuttles back and forth between the US, India and China. Before joining Microsoft, Vidur worked at Andersen Consulting in New Delhi. Vidur graduated with an MBA from Cornell University in 1998. Gaurav and Vidur were housemates at Cornell.

Gaurav Sharma (aka Anupendra) (Eco/Instru) started an investment banking advisory firm in New York. He worked in Mergers & Acquisitions at JPMorgan and Salomon Smith Barney after his MBA from Cornell. Gaurav and Vidur ('87) were housemates at Cornell. He lives in New York with his wife Rachna and son Rohan and co-founded BITSAA International with Venu and Sandeep.

Srikanth Jammulapati or Jamul (BioSciences, Chem.) lives in Salt Lake City, Utah with his wife Nimmy (Nirmala Challagulla, '88 batch). They have 2 children Maya (born '00) and Vishal (born '03). After BITS, Srikanth did an MS in Biotechnology from University of Texas, San Antonio in 1995 and currently works as a Bioinformatics Programmer Analyst at Myriad Genetics. Nimmi did an MBA from University of Utah in 1998 and works as a consultant for Mercer Human Resource Consulting.

V.P.Vedhanarayanan (Chemistry/Civil) 87B2A2484 is in Chennai at present, but is very soon relocating to Korea, to work with Hyundai heavy industries as HSE engineer. He has worked at Engineers India limited and Petrofac International Limited, Sharjah

in the past. Vedhanarayanan was married in 1996. He enjoyed every moment of his life in BITS, except the days before tests and comprehensives.

Uday Sareen (Eco/EEE) is married to Ishita and has a son and a daughter. He works with Citibank in Mumbai and is responsible for the Western Region. He went to FMS Delhi for his MBA soon after graduation and has been with Citibank ever since.

Alok Gupta (Eco/Mech) is a Healthcare investment banker with Rabobank. He lives in Mumbai with his wife and two children. He completed his MBA from IIM Calcutta and still listens to heavy metal

Amit Mathur (Eco/EEE) lives in London and works in Risk Management for Abbey National bank. He worked with Sanwa Bank and Citibank/Navios in New York after his MS in Economics from Tulane University, prior to moving to Europe. He is married to Parul and has a daughter.

Naveen Dureja is married and lives in the US. He recently moved from New Jersey to California and is still as funny as ever.

Lincoln Chaudhary works for Net2Phone in New Jersey

Ramana Y. Mulpury (Eco/EEE) is President, CTO and co-founder of MetricStream, based in the Bay area. He worked at Oracle after graduating with a Master's Degree in Engineering-Economic Systems from Stanford University. He is married and lives in San Francisco.

Thillai Rajan is currently working at Infosys Technologies Limited in Bangalore. Graduated in 1994, worked for a year in Thermax, completed my doctorate from IIM Bangalore, and spent a few exciting years in the VC industry before joining Infosys. Married to Kavitha in 1999, and the rest, as they say is yet to come ! I should be updating this page quite frequently. Do send in your details and look forward to a larger page with details about most of us.

1989

Raghavendra Chinhalli (89A3PS116) was, much to his chagrin known at BITS (1989-93) as Eli. Currently, he is a Technical Analyst with an insurance brokerage firm in mid-town Manhattan. He has been in the US since 1996 working chiefly in the data warehousing and business intelligence realm. He is happily married to Charumathi, an Managing Assistant Director (Internal Audit) at Kean University, since June 2000.

Anirban Deb worked for many years programming internet applications, before he quit and decided to follow his dream of learning computer graphics, ever since he saw the Titanic ! He is still a photographer- but now his computer is his camera. He is at George Washington University in DC doing his MS. His only other hobbies these days are Salsa dancing and all things Hispanic.

B.Muthukumar (89B5A4357) is settled in Nasik. His own business is with his uncle, and manufactures automobile parts. He's married to Gayathri, and has twin daughters Shreya & Swaroopa age 3 yrs. Lives with his parents, sister and her family in Nasik. email : muthukumar_b@hotmail.com

1991

K.Chandrasekar (KCS – Comp.Sci.) has been working for Cisco in the bay area for almost 5 years now. He is married to Lakshmi, and they live in Sunnyvale, CA.

Sumith Mathew (Comp.Sci.) completed his M.S in Computer Science from Colorado State University in 1997. He has been working at Sun Microsystems since then, and currently lives in San Jose, CA. He is married to his BITSian sweetheart Amitha (92 Chemical).

Srikanth Srinivasan (Maps - Comp.Sci.) completed his Ph.D. from Duke university in 2001, and has been working in Intel, Portland since. He has been married to Priya for 2 years and they live in Portland, Oregon. They are currently expecting their first child in 2003, and have also recently purchased a new house.

Dinesh Ramamoorthy (Eco/EEE) – worked in India after graduation with HCL etc., and was then in the East coast (Virginia) in the USA for a while. He joined Oracle Corporation in Feb, 2001 is currently working there. He married Bhavani in 2002, and they live in Mountain View, CA.

Suryanarayanan (Suri – Comp.Sci/Maths) – currently works for Sprint in Kansas. He finished his MS in Engineering Management with Honors last year from Kansas University. He has been married to Aparna for 2 years, and they live in Kansas City.

Sivasubramaniam (Sisu – Comp.Sci.) is currently in Cincinnati, Ohio where he works for Atos Origin. He has been married to Kadambari for 2 years and is very active in the cricket league in Cincinnati.

Anand Sankaran (Sana – Comp.Sci.) completed his M.S in Computer Science from Oregon State University in 1997, and then joined Sun Microsystems in the bay area in California. After a few years there, he decided to leave for the greener (and cheaper !)

pastures of Austin, Texas where he is currently rollerblading to his heart's content (when not working!).

Rahul Jalali (Rali/Jallu – Comp.Sci.) is currently a Systems Manager for Walmart Information Systems in Arkansas. He is happily married and the proud owner of a nice new home.

Kalyan Chakravarthy (Kalci – Comp.Sci.) works for IBM in upstate New York. He is married to Jyothi and they live in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Pankaj Vyas (Pankya – Comp.Sci) works for Cisco in Bangalore, India. He is happily married to Dolly, and they have a cute daughter Shraddha.

Bhaskar Thiagarajan (BAT-EEE) completed his MS from the University of Michigan. He is currently working for Anritsu in the Bay Area, CA. He is married to Arthi, and they live in Los Gatos, CA.

Prabjot Singh (EEE) is working for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). He is currently in Japan (has been there on project work since 2001) and is happily married.

Deepak Sharma (Chemical) completed his MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Rochester, NY. After that, he has had short stints at Xerox, Johnson&Johnson, and Merck.. He is currently working as Product Marketing Manager for Cypress Semiconductors in San Jose, CA. He recently married Karuna in August, 2002 (they met while he was at RIT), and lives in Mountain View, CA.

B. Mangalaganesh (Manglu – Chem/EEE) is working with IBM in Kuala Lumpur and has plans to move to Australia. He is married and has a daughter named Shruthi.

Desmond Wright (Dez) lives in San Jose, CA, and works for Intuit. He is happily married to Nicole. As in BITS, he is an

avid soccer player, and plays outdoor and indoor soccer.

Anupam Agarwal (Pom – Civil) works for Ernst & Young. He is married to Meera Gopinath (91 batch), and they live in the Bay Area, CA.

Tarun Bharti (EEE) works for Oracle Corporation in Redwood Shores, CA. He is married to Sunita Sharma (also from the 91 batch).

Mahendra Lodha (Slud/Lodha – EEE) works for National Semiconductors in Santa Clara, CA. He is happily married to Saritha, and they have a beautiful baby girl, Anushka (who recently celebrated her first birthday). He lives in Santa Clara, CA, and as expected has a superb sound system and CD collection at home (given that he was in Sounds at BITS !).

Balaji Subramaniam (Bee/Stud B – Mech.) completed his MS from the University of Arizona. He then worked in the Bay Area till 2001, and moved to Orlando, FL. He is currently in Minneapolis.

1993

Aparna Seshasayi (a.k.a Appu) completed her Masters in EE. She is currently at Honeywell, Bangalore, India. Although Instrumentation is her passion, she also spends time pursuing her interests in poetry and literature. Aparna is married to Pratap Parashuram who also works for Honeywell. Appu, the workaholic has learnt to spare time for her family and friends after her fast-track love affair and marriage to Pratap.

Praba Subramaniam is pursuing her Masters in Public Policy at UCLA. After a six-year long courtship period - before, during and after her Pilani days, Praba finally got married to her soul mate, Ram, in 1998. Praba & Ram have a baby girl named Kirthana. Aside from family and friends, Praba is also interested in understanding health policy issues that affect children and the elderly.

Prathibha Narayanan (a.k.a Prathi) works for J.Manheimer in New Jersey. Prathibha is married to **Kumar Venkataraman (a.k.a Kamal '88)**. Kumar & Prathibha have a baby boy named Shashwath. Prathibha has always been the help-line for her friends and the fact that she knows almost everyone in her town says something about her ability to reach out to people.

Anuradha Chandramohan is pursuing her Masters in Computer Science. She is currently at Intel, New Jersey. Anu and her husband **Harish Mahalingam ('86)**, have a baby girl named Ananya. Anu as usual, is fun to talk to and gives her honest brutal opinion about everything under the sun. The energetic Anu finds time to manage her career, family and a part-time education!

Nishi Mittal – *Sadly, we lost a beloved friend a couple of years ago. Although, we have nothing to say about what Nishi has been up to, we still have fond memories. We only wish that the bubbly Nishi were around to share her life with us.*

Nandhini GanapathyRaman (a.k.a Nandu) completed her M.S in Computer Science and is now at Intel Corporation, Portland, Oregon. Nandhini is married to Karthik.

Preetam Dandapani (a.k.a Thom) graduated with an M.S from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He works for Oracle as a Software Developer in the Advanced Planning and Scheduling group. Preetam is happily married to Veena Jaganathan.

Venkatesh Jayaraman (a.k.a despo) graduated with an MS in CIS from the

New Jersey Institute of Technology. He is now a Consultant at Art Technology Group. Despo says “Most of my consulting work is in Seattle, but I love to come back to New Jersey on the weekends and take a drive to NY City and just have a good time!” Party On Despo!

Sanghamitra Bhattacharya (a.k.a Sang) completed her Masters in Telecommunications from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She is currently at Lucent Technologies India Ltd, Hyderabad India. Lately, she has been touring the US and catching up with old friends. Sang says “I’m enjoying life with her parents in India”.

Gayathri Belapurkar (M.K. Gayathri a.k.a. Gui), works as Senior Security Consultant for SenaSystems, Inc. a boutique firm that specializes in Information Security Engineering in New Jersey. She is married to Abhijit Belapurkar.

Sripriya Krishnaswamy (a.k.a Sripri) is currently at XO Communications, Dallas, Texas. She is married to Prakash Kumar. Sripriya writes, “I would love to hear from ex-BITSians from our batch.”

Kavitha Venkatesan (a.k.a VK) is pursuing her Ph.D in Bioinformatics at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts. She is married to **Ashok Ramu (a.k.a Trash,'91)**. Kavitha is as usual, scintillating the culturally active Boston audience with her vocal chords. With a dream come true marriage, she travels the continent with a laptop and a PhD almost in the bag!

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.

Harish Shivram (a.k.a Vodka) works at Intel in Bangalore, India.

Padmapriya Krishnamurthy (a.k.a kutti PP) is currently at Infosys Bangalore, India. When she is not programming, she is honing her musical talent that she displayed in Raagamalika concerts and Music Nites at BITS.

1994

Amrita Sudheedran, after passing out from BITS in 1998, she worked with IBM India in Pune and Bangalore for two and a half years and shifted to Sun Microsystems where she worked till Jan 2002. She got married in December 2001 to her BITSian sweetheart Samonnoi Banerjee after 7 years of courting !! She is now settled in Mumbai with Samonnoi and both work at Accenture, Sam with consulting and she with their IT center. She has been taking lessons on the keyboard during the last year.

Divya Muralidhar (Dimu, Freshie) completed her Masters in EE from the University of Hawaii-Manoa. She has been working as a Research Engineer at Motorola's Arlington Heights facility since October 2000. Apart from work she goes for kathak and keyboard classes.

Soumya Krishnamoorthy graduated with a masters in EE from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2001 and has since been working as an analog design engineer at Applied Micro Circuits Corp (AMCC) in Andover, MA. She enjoys the Boston area and tries to keep active with sports related, cultural and volunteer groups in Boston.

Arun Subramanian (jan): Did his MBA, specializing in

Finance, from FMS, Delhi. He is married to Aparna of the 95 batch and is a proud father of a daughter, Aditi. He is currently working for Household Bank at Portland. arun163@yahoo.com

Abu Sebastian (Booze), Pursuing PhD (ECE) at Iowa State Univ, Ames, IA. abuseb@iastate.edu

Ashwin Menon (Ashwin). He works for Wipro, Bangalore, India. ashwin_menon329@yahoo.com

Nandagopal Kribanandhan (Nandu). Graduated in MS(CSE) from Penn State Univ, PA He works for Motorola Corp, Phoenix, AZ. knandu_rm@yahoo.com

Balaji Rangaswamy (Krab). Graduated in MS(CS) from SUNY Binghamton, NY. He works for Bloomberg L.P, New York, NY. kr_balaji326@hotmail.com

Prashanth Mohan (Pondy). He works for Infosys, Bangalore. prashant_mohan@yahoo.com

Raghunath RN (Rags). He works for Infosys, Bangalore. madrags321@yahoo.com

Lakshmi Kumar (Lux). Graduated in MS (ECE) Iowa State Univ, Ames. He is working for Texas Instruments, Dallas, TX. plkumar@iastate.edu

Anand Lakshmanan (Lana). Graduate in MS (CSE) from SUNY Buffalo. He is currently working for Intel Corp, Santa Clara, CA. mail_to_lana@yahoo.com

Sridhar Nagarajan (Oona). Graduated in MS(IE) from SUNY Binghamton, NY. He is currently working for Sanmina Corp, San Jose, CA.

Srinivasan Venugopalan (Chinu).

Akshay Anand: is working as a Business Analyst in a Financial Services company in Manhattan, NY. He has completed his MBA from University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Vaibhav Kumar: is working with HLL in Bangalore, India as a brand manager of Lipton. After graduating from BITS, he completed his MBA from IIM -A and joined HLL.

Gururaj Choudari: is working in TCS as a software professional in Delhi. He was one of the few in our batch whom we had thought would never end up in software. However he is happily settled with his wife, Usha in Delhi.

Nalin Dave: This guy is working at Infosys Technologies. He has spent a lot of time in Japan in the last few years on assignments from Infosys. Presently he is back in India and is located at Bangalore.

Rubal Sher: is based in Bangalore, working for Velanki Software Systems. Before this he was working in Wipro Systems and made a few trips to US on assignments.

Nishant Banthia: is a management consultant at Tata Strategic Management group (TSMG), Mumbai. After passing out of BITS he also had a short stint at Reliance Industries before joining IIM, Lucknow. He is currently on an assignment at Mithapur, Gujarat and is actively searching for a life partner.

Chetan Unadkat: is a consultant with Accenture and is situated in Mumbai, India. After BITS, he had a short stay at Pune with Geometric Software before taking up his MBA at XLRI.

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.

Abhishek Duggal: is working at Agere Systems, a spin-off from Lucent Technologies as a VLSI designer. He completed his Masters in Analog VLSI design from Texas A&M University and is presently based in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Recently he has enrolled at Stern Management School in University of New York and is working towards an MBA degree.

N. Mahesh: is in Norway working for Citicorp. He has also started his own rock band along with few other BITSians and they have recorded a number of songs.

Arunkumar (Dara): He is with Nexgen, Mumbai, the company he joined after BITS. He is a frequent traveler to US and is considered a guru at his place of work.
dara_in@yahoo.com

Naren Mohan wrapped up his Masters in Electrical Engineering at the University of Texas at Arlington and is currently employed at Ericsson, Dallas.
m_naren@hotmail.com

Santosh Gopalan (Santy) wrapped up a Masters in wireless communications from SUNY at Buffalo and is currently employed at a closely held wireless broadband firm in San Jose. san_gop@hotmail.com

Anand Venkatachalam (Pi) after acquiring a few years of work experience through ABB in India, he went for a Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering from University of Utah. He's currently employed at Stryker Endoscopy in the Bay area.
pi22by7@yahoo.com

Sai Vivek T (Sai) took the software path and after a couple of years in TCS, moved over to Verizon in Maryland. He's also currently pursuing a part-time MBA degree from UMBC. saivivekt@yahoo.com

Prasanna R (Golt) currently is employed with Daimler-Chrysler in Germany. Obtained a Masters from University of Ulm, Germany.
prasadanna@lycos.com

1995

Veena: After completing a dual in BITS (B5A4), I started on my MS in Industrial engineering at University of Illinois, Chicago. Happily married to Satheesh G.Subramanian('92, a.k.a GSat, of Art n Dee fame) since August 2002. We are settled at Portland, Oregon, where my husband works and I will be looking for a job and start work here once I graduate this semester. For now, I am enjoying working remotely from Oregon and the free time that it in turn gives me.

Krishna Chythanya Vutkuri (a.k.a KC,VKC): This C6 stud after shaking Wipro and HP, is now making waves at Microsoft, Redmond. He can be reached at chythu@yahoo.com

Siridhar Vellanki (95B4A3): After having lovely time in BITS, I am almost done with my MS in Computer Engineering at Texas A&M University, College Station. Will be joining Microsoft (never dreamt), Redmond pretty soon. Music and cricket are major driving force behind me.

Sandeep Mukherjee: After BITS I completed a Master's in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Ohio State University and have been working at Nationwide since June of last year. I've been in Columbus, Ohio, since Pilani

so no activity on the relocation front!

Harish Yerneni (95B3A4): I am currently pursuing my masters in industrial and management engineering at Montana State University, Bozeman. I will be graduating in spring 2003. At present, I am looking for a job.

Vijay Vempati (95C7): Graduated from University of North Texas with masters in Information Technology. Currently working for Fidelity Investments, Texas

Srivatsa Kediya is currently working in Lucent Technologies, Bangalore.

Kamesh Meduri: Joined TCS in Aug 2000. After training at Trivandrum and 2 yrs in Chennai, I am in San Antonio, Texas, US on a Websphere assignment. I visited BITS with my parents during Nov 2001 and had nice time with my few of batch mates doing ME there.

Srividya Subramanian (a.k.a Kuki) After graduating in 1999, I've been working on a PhD in Immunology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Malavika Raman: I'm pursuing my Ph.D at UT Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas) in Pharmacology. I got married last year to Madhusudan Natarajan who recently moved here as faculty. I'd love to get in touch with Bitsians in the Dallas area...the only one I know is Kuki/Srisu (who also goes to school here). Madhu and I just bought our first home, so between lab and settling down to married life I'm pretty busy! I will keep you posted !!

Pushkala Venkataraman: Did my MMS at BITS. Worked for about 3 years after which I got married to Vijay, a banker working in New York City. I now live in New Jersey and am doing my Masters in IS at NJIT. I am also a research assistant here.

Balaji Raghavan: Joined IBM Global Services, India in 1999 directly out of College. Still working with IBM as a Sr. Software Engineer on IBM's e-Business

(Websphere suite of products) products. Had some short trips to US (esp NJ/NY). Last trip to US- Returned to India for a vacation on Sep 9, 2001 a couple of days before the WTC crash...I cancelled my plans of going back immediately..This recent trip being turning point in my life. Started spending time with my parents & my brother Madhavan (Madhu,96batch BITSian, currently working in John F Welch center (GE, Bangalore). Finally, getting settled in Bangalore in my newly built individual house :-)

Jai Krishna (a.k.a Jackie): Life after BITS started with second sem PS which was spent mostly in sneaking out of work and watching movies. For those who know Chennai, it helped that my PS station was on Mount Road where most of the cinemas are. After PS I spent a boring 8 months at Mascot Systems. After that I joined Oracle, Bangalore and three years later am now Senior Member, Technical Staff at Oracle. After pretending to study in BITS, I am mostly relieved that I don't have to write any more tests and compresses ever! Life in Bangalore is as languid as ever and I'm living out my credo - Do not believe in miracles; RELY on them!

Ravi Kiran Yekula: ... probably never heard of this name.. Kongi as I am known among BITSians. I came to US just like some of my wingies and D-mates conceiving about the things I can pursue here but it turned out to be very different than I contemplated. Oh well! I graduated from University of Missouri- Rolla and still stuck here seeking for a job and..... When I am not searching for jobs I am either over the phone trying to get in touch with all my friends (usually max the cell phone minutes!!) or dreaming about things I can

do after I get a job. I just wish, I could go back in time to those dayz in BITS.

Kannan Palaniswamy (a.k.a "pkanns" and "The C") :I claim to be the guy with the maximum height, weight ratio in our batch. Started my career with GE Medical Systems in the Operations Management Leadership Program and then became a Six Sigma Black belt. I quit GE a couple months back to try banking (?) and then moved on to teaching six sigma to guys selling lexus in the desert (again!! - but a bigger desert this time).

Present, I currently consult in research for an Investments firm based in Chicago. Got a Masters in Finance, and a beautiful (in all respects) wife who I patiently wooed and quickly bullied into wedlock on 29th December 2002.

Future, Chicago has taught me to expect the unexpected. Randomness applies to the weather here as much as it does to the financial markets. Though I prefer taking things as they come, the general plan is to get an MBA and head back to India to give my country a little of what it gave me.

Stuff on the side, Beards for Charity (an annual charity effort with a bunch of beard growers naturally headed my moi and the less fortunate less hairy ones that simply pledge), Shaolin Kung Fu, Music, Books and the city of Chicago for all that it has to offer.

1996

Aparna RV, Vikram Pandita and Srinivasa Prasad Vangaru (SP) are working for Motorola, Bangalore. Aparna just finished a Masters from Illinois Insitute of

Technology. SP was with Hughes Software Gurgaon till Jan 2003 and recently moved to Motorola.

Aanchal Yogesh (formerly Aanchal Roongta) and **Yogesh Sundaramurthy** are the first BITSian couple of our batch to get married. They work at National Instruments.

Srinivasan has recently moved to SAP, Bangalore after a stint of two years with I-flex solutions. He's currently with a group that caters to Software Product Management for the Public Sector industry. Whether, he's comfortable working in SAP technology or not, he insists he's picked up a smattering of German to start with!

Srinivas V (Vasu / Sherni, 96B2A5496) works with SCT Software Solutions Bangalore.

State University of New York, Binghamton plays host to **Satish P (Satti,** 96B4A4328), **Satish Chaparala** and **Shiva Kalyan Mandepudi (Shivki,** 96A4PS226). Satti is doing his Masters in Mechcal Engineering. Satish Chaparala is writes in to say "After finishing my masters in mechanical engineering with specialisation in electronic packaging, I am working towards my doctoral degree. My research involves determination of material properties for various lead free solder alloys." Shivki just finished his Masters in Industrial Engineering.

Gopi Maguluri (Gopi, 96A4PS247), is at Boston University. He worked at Mahindra and Mahindra as part of their R&D team at Nashik (Scorpio??), for an year before moving to the US.

A certain **Narendar Shankar (Papa for everybody),** has been making waves with his research on wireless security(or rather the gaps in it). At present he works for HP Labs as Research Associate. Legend has it that he has become a white-collar mercenary and

works for the research lab that offers him the most challenging work and a compelling pay packet. Among those who have already used his services are Fujit su and IBM.

Tarun Desikan (Taklu, 96A3PS036), works at a optical networking startup in California after finishing his MS at Stanford.

Bandarupalli Sasikiran, Krishna Reddy (Kris) and Harsimran Singh work with Cognizant Technologies, Chennai.

V.Srikanth (96A4PS223,Vumma) is working in Covansys Chennai and also pursuing his ME SS from BITS DLPD program. He is very busy organizing cricket matches in his company and he won best batsman award twice.

V Sriram (96A3PS080) is a design consultant for the Embedded Systems Group at HCL Technologies at Chennai.

Srinivas Eushakoila (Srini, annai, 96B3A6487) is working for TCS, Chennai. And he is currently working as Tech Lead in one of the complex projects in Insurance Business Domain.

Sriram Sankaran (Thangamani, 96B1A3606) is doing Ph.D in Electrical Engineering at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Also at UIC, Chicago is **Siddharth Ramakrishnan (Hamsa).** After a brief tryst with a Master's in Computer Science, Siddharth is now avidly courting his passion in Biological Sciences. At present he is pursuing a PhD in the field of Neuroscience. Bored with the inanimate, digital media, his research now lies with the brains of snails.

Karthik Hariharakrishnan (Coonoor, 96A8PS073) is doing an MS in Electrical Engineering. Currently on the hunt for jobs. Having fun with hordes of Bitsians at Univ of Illinois at Chicago.

Jagadeesh (Jaggu, 96A8PS153) is working in Texas Instruments, Dallas since Sept 2002.

Ankur Jain finished his MS in photonic devices, and now working on a Ph.D on Biomedical imaging in University of Florida.

Shravan Kumar Chargonda (96C5C6653) is working as a Research Associate at INSEAD, France on Project Management Simulation since Aug 2001.

Nagavijayalakshmi (Naga) is working in Hughes Software Systems, Gurgaon.

Ashok Balasubramanian (Ska) is doing his Master's in University of Hawaii, Honolulu (very difficult to concentrate there??)

Sreenivas Kolanuvada (Banda, 96A4PS208) is putting night outs at ADP Wilco international, Hyderabad. Rumor is that he is getting married to one big shot.

Anukul (96A3PS072) Worked with Orbitech/COSL for a year, did a little bit of Europe trotting and then decided to get back to academics. He is currently pursuing his Masters in VLSI at Wayne State University, Michigan.

Manoranjan Das (96A2PS284) is working at Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Consulting, Mumbai.

Satish Chandra Sista (Sista, 96B3A3408) is working with O2micro Pte Ltd, Singapore.

Aparajit (Appu, 96A4PS217) is doing his Master's in Mechanical Engineering at University of Texas at Austin.

Chaitanya Reddy (96A3PS089) just finished Master's thesis. And still very very single. Interested?

Prasanth a.k.a Pashu (96A6C6506) is in the second year of his MBA from IIM Ahmedabad and will be graduating in March. He did his summer training at Goldman Sachs, London trading Currencies, Power, Oil, Gold and Government Securities. Final placements start in a couple of weeks time

Naveen Kumar Patha (Glow, 96A4PS195) now works with Accenture; He finished his bachelors in Mechanical to do his practicals in software at the world's database company, ie Oracle, Bangalore. Worked there for 2.5 years, then moved to Accenture.

Anil Sharma (96A7PS026), **Arunangshu Chakraborty** (96A7PS004) and **Nikhil Kolar** (96A7PS049) work at Celstream Technologies. Nikhil will be starting his MBA at Carnegie Mellon University during the Fall of 2003.

Bhanuprakash GVS (96A1A7207) and **Himanshu Gupta** (96A7PS033) are ensuring that the bits and bytes go places- by building software for Cisco. Bhanu has been with Cisco since June 2001. Himanshu is working on optical systems and has resolved to dump the TV and spend time with books.

Krishna Hegde (96A7PS034) has been working with Hindustan Lever - after a 15 month stint as Business Leadership Trainee that saw him sell soap at Adyar, study social cohesion in rural Rajasthan and learn the smarts on strategy and finance at IIMA, he works as Systems Manager and handles information management for the Levers sales function.

Alphonse Reddy, **Siddharth Toshniwal** (Sito), **Subhash Nayak** and **Vishal Kayship** (Ketchup) work for

Hughes Software Systems. Alphonse has finished his GMAT and plans to apply for an MBA next year. Rumor has it that he will soon be shifting to Sasken Technologies. Sito and Subhash are putting night outs working on Internet Telephony/SIP. Kayship in addition to software has been doing a client facing role and sweeping the women off their feet.

1997

Lets start off with all those people who decided to give up their single status and decided to get married

Abhishek Singh and **Sunayana Saha** got married last year. The two are pursuing their Master's in the US. **Amit Das** got married as well this past year. **Anupama** (Bio Sci) is married. As are **Anu** (MMS), **Mrudula** and **Sandhya** (C6). If you are married and your name isn't on the list you owe us all a huge party.

Quite a few decided that they had not had enough of studying and went from School to College and then Back to Graduate School

Anand Krishnakumar (Instr), engineer at large, is pursuing his Masters in Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Aravindh (aavi), Vishwanath (vichu), Amudhan Vel (ammu) are pursuing their Masters at North Carolina State University. **Ketan Bhatt** is doing his PhD at NCSU

Saurabh Kumar, Ram Koundinya and Anush Srivatsan (Gujilee) are pursuing their Masters at the University of South California. Saurabh's has planned to stick to USC for his Phd too.

Mayur Shah, Vivek Iyer, Arvind (heman), Payal Guha and **Kaushik (kottai)** are pursuing their Masters at the

Arizona State University. **Kumar Gautam (KG)** is pursuing his PhD at the same university.

Quite a few of our guys are at Purdue too namely **Vignesh (Viggi), Srijan (universally known as Dada)** and **Gautam Upadhyaya**

Sagnik Nandy, Rahul Lahoti, Tulika Agarwal, Urvashi Rao and Girija are all at UC San Diego to working on their PhDs. **V Rajesh (fundoo rajesh)** is at UC Riverside. **Aashish Garg** is at UC Santa Barbara. **Abhijit Pethe** is pursuing a PhD with Professor Krishna Saraswat (BITSian Prof in EE in Stanford).

Prasanna Venkatesh Kannan (PV) who is currently doing his Master's in Computer Engineering at UC Santa Barbara will be shortly taking up a job in Singapore in his are of interest.

Ajit Sharma (A3037) is currently doing his MS in Analog VLSI at Oregon State.

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

Shankar Ajay (shaq) is pursuing his Master's in Bio-informatics at the University of Michigan at Ann Harbor.

Sam Satriani (Sushil Agnel Mathews) is pursuing his postgraduate program at the Loyola Institute of Business Administration at Chennai.

Ram Kumar and Hariram (both MMS) are working with Oracle in Hyderabad.

Anand Morzaria (mooz) and **Ananth Vyas** are working as Operations Analyst with J P Morgan Chase in Mumbai.

Sreenivasan (A3) and **Ganarajan (faku)**, who started off an exciting and challenging career with Schlumberger Oilfield Services, are now in Mumbai and Kuwait respectively.

Sreenivasa Raghavan (naamka), Venkatavaradhan (pappu) and Anjani Kalyan work with Sun Microsystems in Bangalore. As are **Shameek Chakraborty (Subo) and Samik Das(DJ)**

Rahul Patil, Jasmeet Singh Dhall and Kannan Muthusamy work with Wipro in Bangalore.

K B Balasubramaniam and Uma Raghuraman (A7044) work with Orbitech Solutions Ltd. in Chennai.

Anand Narayanan (anna) works with I-flex solutions ltd in Bangalore and is now in Nigeria on product implementation.

1998

Let's start off with all those people who are in the last phase of the Golden period of their life.

Shruti Ramaswamy (Eco. & Mech.) and Chaitanya Tamane (Eco. & Mech) are currently doing their thesis and enjoying their Psenti-Sem at BITS.

Mohan Kumar.T(Moku) (Mech. & ME-SS), Bhaskar Choudhari (Mech. & Comp. Sci.), Shankar Raja (Shanky) (Mech. & Info. Sys.) and Arjun Biswas (Civil & Info. Sys.) are doing their PS-II training in Bangalore.

Sandeep Singla (Civil & Comp. Sci.) is doing his PS-II in Novell, Bangalore.

Phani Kesava Mallela (Phani) (Maths & Comp. Sci.) doing his PS-II program at Honeywell, Bangalore.

Niranjan Kumar V.S. (Ninja) (Comp. Sci.) is engaged in his PS-II in Tata Elxsi, Bangalore

M.Srividya (Alfa) (Pharm. & BioSci.) is doing her PS-II in CDRI, Lucknow. She is deeply interested in doing something related to Molecular Biology.

CGPA, Projects, Mid-terms, Semester are so imbued in these guys that they can't imagine themselves without them. Right, these guys are pursuing their higher studies.

Madhur Khandelwal (Khandu.) (Comp. Sci.), R. Aravinda (EEE), Chinmaya Mishra (EEE) are pursuing their Masters at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Vivek Saraf (EEE) is pursuing his Masters at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), Pittsburgh.

Mithun D'souza (Mooze) (EEE) is at University of Wisconsin Madison pursuing an M.S. degree in ECE, Majoring in Photonics.

Anup Kumar Sultania (Sult) (EEE) is pursuing MS in Electrical Engg. at Univ of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Karthik Sampath (Kazam) (Mech.) is in University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, doing his Master's in Mechanical Engg.

Antony Vivek Justin J (Anto) (Chemistry) is pursuing his ME Software Systems at BITS, Pilani and is also working as a TA at the CSD.

Ashis Panda (Civil) is doing Rural Management at IRMA, Gujarat.

N.Krishna Prasad (Sepaki, Chemical) is pursuing his MBA at NITIE, Mumbai.

Aha, about those who have decided to enter the dragon. These guys are all set to make a dhamaka in the dragon. Need any cash, just contact them.

Udit Kumar (Tidu) and Ashish Panpalia popularly known as PAN (both EEE) are working in ST Microelectronics, Noida.

Suraj Bharech (Comp. Sci.) is working as a software engineer at Spyglass Software Ltd. in Noida. While, **Srinivasulu Reddy K (Comp. Sci.)** is with Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) India Pvt. Ltd., Noida.

Srinath A (Comp. Sci.) Currently working as a project leader at INSEAD Business School, FRANCE.

Ravi Mantri (Civil) is in Sterlite Industries Ltd., Silvassa.

Aromal Amal Joshi has joined Geometric Software Solutions, Pune.

Rakshak Anand (Mech.) is working with Steelage - Gunnebo Industries Limited, Mumbai while **PTR Pavan Kumar (Mech.)** is in its Baroda division where as Raghavan (Mech.) is at Chennai's division.

Pradeep Reddy (Y2K) is BITS PS faculty at Mumbai.

Abhay Mumbare (Mech.) and Rahul Jaju (Jaja, Mech.) are working in Tata Consultancy Services, Mumbai while **Prateep Reddy (Mech.) and Shreeniwas (Mech.)** are at TCS, Chennai.

Rama Krishna G (MMS) works as a Software Engineer

with Leapstone Systems, Hyderabad.

S Md. Rafi (MMS) is working in Trina Systems, Hyderabad.

Kalyana Madhuri Kotta (Maddy) (Chemical), Sudhakar Ramabhotla (Pilli) (Chemical), Murali Krishnan M (Big Moose) (Chemistry, Chemical) are working in Infosys Technologies Ltd. Bangalore. So are **Praful Mantale (fool alias mentle, Comp. Sci.) and Kedar Gavhane (Comp. Sci.)**.

T.Vikas (EEE) and Rajeswari Gopinath (Info. Sys.) are working with i-flex solutions ltd, Bangalore.

Kaushik K and Maya Kumar (both Comp.Sci.) are presently working as Junior Software Development Engineers with Dell International Services, Bangalore.

Rajeev Kumar (EEE) works in Tele Soft, Bangalore.

Raghavan Damodaran (Rags) (Info. Sys.) Presently working with i2 Technologies, Bangalore as Consultant, SCM Solution Center.

Vikram Rai (Comp. Sci.) is working as Software Engineer at MerIndus Consulting Pvt. Ltd. Bangalore.

P. HemaLatha (E&I) is currently working in Velankani Information Systems, Bangalore as Software Engineer.

V.Renuka (ET) is Customer Support Officer in Allsec Technobgies, Chennai. **Nithiya N (ET.)** also works in Allsec Technologies, Chennai.

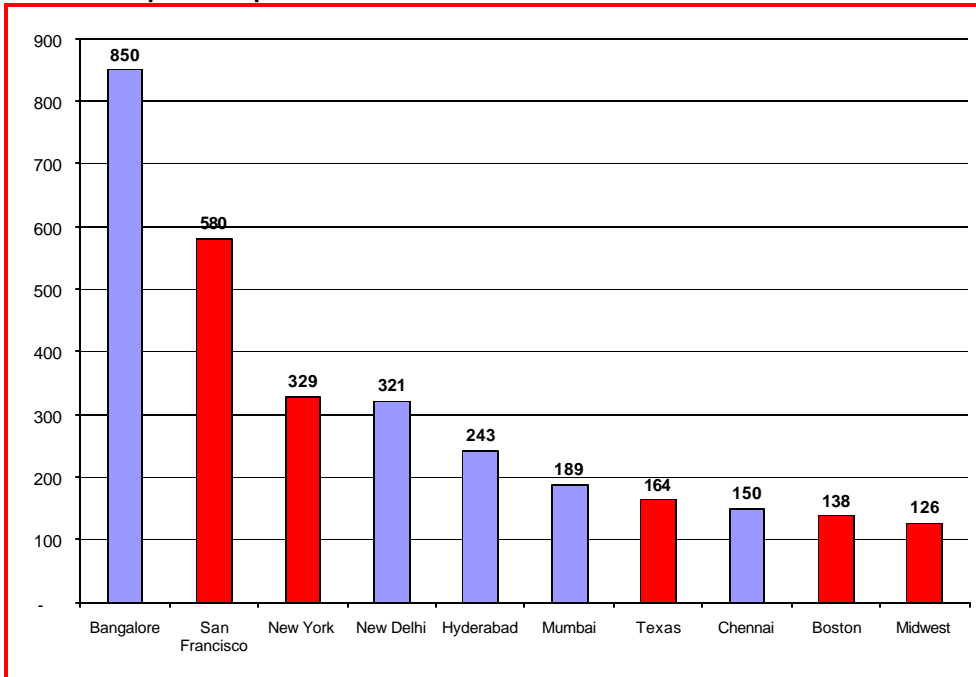
Radhesham Shah (Radhe) and Sudeep Subhedar (Susu) (both Mech.) are working in Cognizant Technology Solutions, Chennai. While **Hareesh V. H.** is creating terror in CTS, Hyderabad.

Nakaraj Sukumaran (MMS) is Senior Executive, Business Development at Cybernet Software Systems, Chennai.

Kahan gaye woh log

While 6,000 alumni are online, and more are being added everyday, we're a 30,000-strong family, which means the majority of our members are not connected to us. We need to track down the rest of the family. If you don't belong to a yahoogroup, and see here that makes sense for you geographically, please sign up. If there is no chapter where you live, but you believe there is critical mass to form one, please email venu@bitsaa.org and give us your suggestions. If you live where there is unlikely to be a chapters, please go to www.yahoogroups.com and request to join bits-pilani@yahoogroups.com to stay in the flow of information.

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Name	<input style="width: 30%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>First</small> <input style="width: 10%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>MI</small> <input style="width: 50%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>Last</small>																		
Year entered BITS	_____ (2 Digits)																		
Name of Spouse	<input style="width: 30%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>First</small> <input style="width: 10%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>MI</small> <input style="width: 50%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>Last</small>																		
BITSian Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if spouse is also a graduate of BITS Pilani _____ (2 digits for year spouse entered BITS)																		
Address	<input style="width: 100%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>Street1</small> <input style="width: 100%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <small>Street2</small> <small>City _____ State _____ Zip / Pin _____ Country _____</small>																		
E-mail	<input style="width: 25%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> Phone (Work) <input style="width: 25%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> (Home/Cell) <input style="width: 50%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>																		
Company	<input style="width: 90%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>																		
Anonymity	Please keep my contribution anonymous																		
About your contribution																			
Amount in US \$ (Fill One Box)	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Senate's Circle</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Director's Circle</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Dean's Circle</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Prof's Circle</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Friends of BITS</td> <td style="width: 14.28%; text-align: center;">Other</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(\$25,000 +)</small></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(\$10,000-\$24,999)</small></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(\$5,000-\$9,999)</small></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(\$1,000-\$4,999)</small></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(\$250-\$999)</small></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><small>(< \$250)</small></td> </tr> </table>	Senate's Circle	Director's Circle	Dean's Circle	Prof's Circle	Friends of BITS	Other	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	<small>(\$25,000 +)</small>	<small>(\$10,000-\$24,999)</small>	<small>(\$5,000-\$9,999)</small>	<small>(\$1,000-\$4,999)</small>	<small>(\$250-\$999)</small>	<small>(< \$250)</small>
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Does your company match?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, my employer will match my contribution . \$_____ Match limit, if your company has a limit on matching																		
Company Name	<input style="width: 60%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> Phone/Division <input style="width: 35%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>																		
Date of pledge	<input style="width: 90%; border: none; border-bottom: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>																		
Stock Pledges	For stock contributions: Number of shares: _____ Symbol: _____ Please e-mail sandeep@bitsaa.org to transfer shares.																		