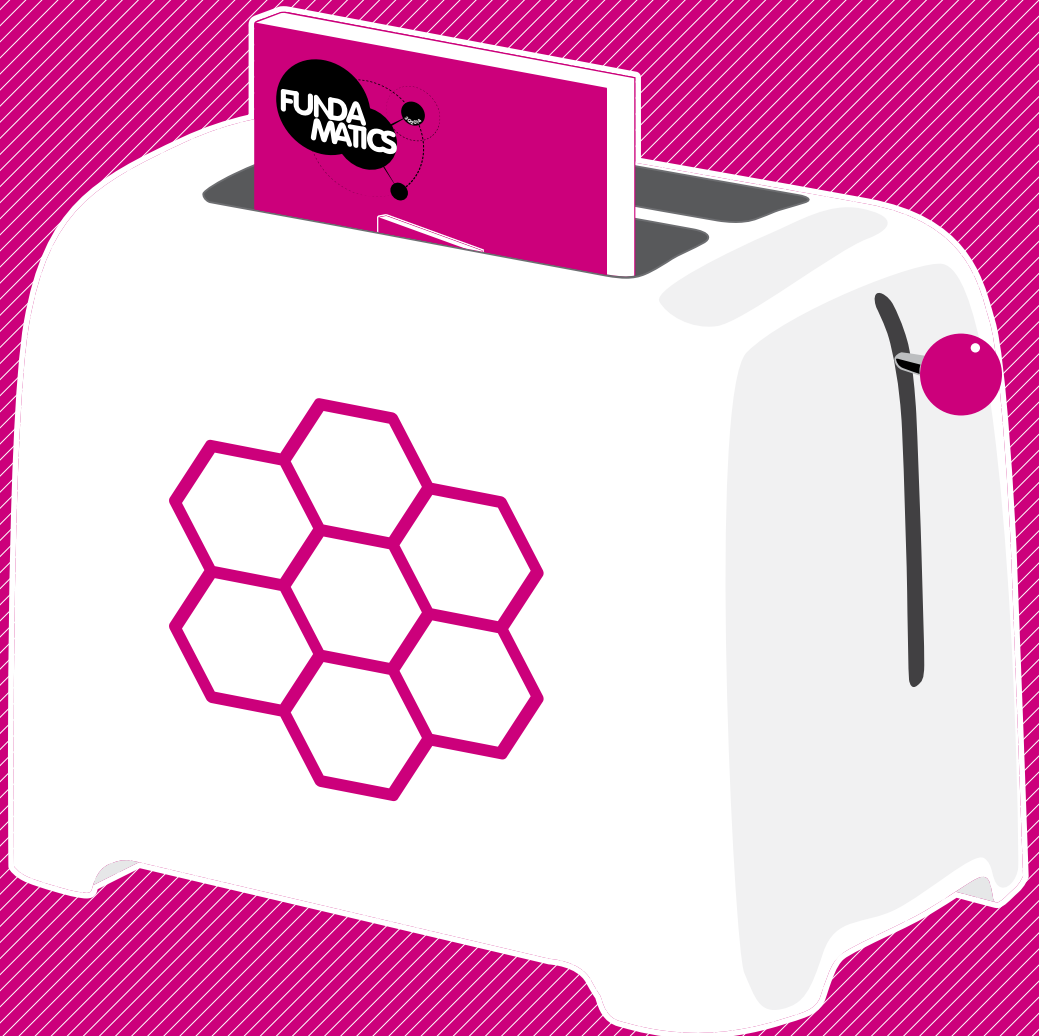
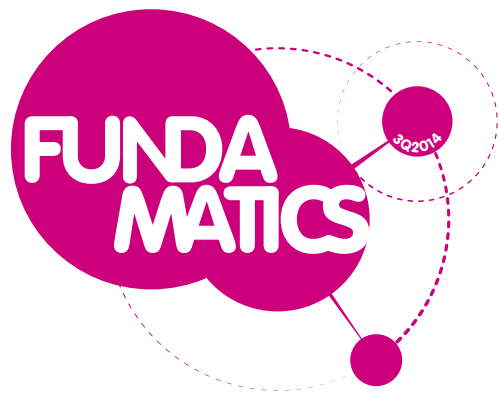


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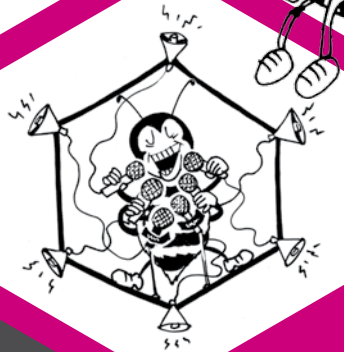
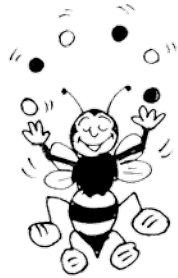


Quarterly magazine of
The IIT Bombay Alumni Association

Contents

<i>From the Beehive</i>		<i>1</i>
<i>JEE Huzoor</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>3</i>
<i>Bungle in the Jungle</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>5</i>
<i>The Cabinet Re-bungle</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>8</i>
<i>Tearing up Nonsense</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>10</i>
<i>Aap, Baap & Paap</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>12</i>
<i>IIT Bombay – Build, Build, but Where is the Imagination?</i>	SHRIPAD DHARMADHIKARAY	<i>14</i>
<i>Politickle Pickles and the Art of Shreyas Navare</i>		<i>19</i>
<i>A Linnaean Taxonomy of Fauna In Communiti Indianae Scientificum</i>	PROF.VIVEK BORKAR	<i>26</i>
<i>A Brief History of IITBombay Dot Org Part One</i>	RAM KELKAR	<i>30</i>
<i>Plane-ly Speaking</i>	GRUMBLEBEE	<i>35</i>
<i>The Hagiwara Tandav</i>	SRIKRISHNA KARKARE	<i>39</i>
<i>The Perfect Murder</i>	DR. RUSTOM KANGA	<i>42</i>
<i>Who Do You Think You Are, Steven Jobs? (The Invention of Writing)</i>	DR. RUSTOM KANGA	<i>43</i>
<i>Salt'n Pepper</i>	PROF. ARUN INAMDAR	<i>45</i>
<i>A Slow Jakartan Travel Tale</i>	JAYA JOSHI	<i>55</i>
<i>Hatti o Hatti</i>	SATISH HATTIANGADI	<i>59</i>
<i>Close Encounters of the Chinese Kind</i>	AKSHAY MISHRA	<i>61</i>
<i>Vikram aur Vetal</i>		<i>64</i>
<i>The Ambassadors' Fiat</i>	BANKIM BISWAS	<i>68</i>

<i>The Sexist Pronoun: Problem and Possible Solution</i>	BEHERUZ N. SETHNA	70
<i>Vivek Borkar and his Chinese Dhobi</i>	GAUTAM SAHA	74
<i>Up next - Perfect babies, tailor-made to your specifications!</i>	TEJAS SHYAM	78
<i>Student Choir</i>	ARPIT AGARWAL	80
<i>The Girl From EE</i>	S MURALIDHARAN	87
<i>Philosophy in a Teacup</i>	BAKUL DESAI	88
<i>The Adventures of Zappa Man (A futuristic fantasy)</i>	VIVEK BORKAR	92
<i>When IITians helped make the Taj</i>	SATISH HATTIANGADI	94
<i>The N-eww Pharticle</i>	ANIL GANDHI	98
<i>When I Graduated</i>	VAIBHAV SAMBRE	99
<i>Creative Bees at Fundamatics</i>		101



From the Beehive

Fun-damatics

Our readers are *gaali* giving. They are telling that Fundamatics is always late coming. It is *Late Latif*. They are telling that like teacher, they will make us *khada karoing* in the *kona*. When they are *paisa-giving* for subscription, and we are *late karoing*, whose grandfather will pay interest? We are telling, “*Arre Baba!* We are not *jaan boojke late karoing*. We are *Late Latif*, no? Then in this issue, we are telling some *latifas*.”

Madam is telling us that this is humour issue. There should be some *hasna-hasana*. Some readers are telling that we are *chhapoing* good articles. But most are serious. You are telling about environment and global warming. But we also want to *hasso*. We are answering back, “*Arre Baba!* Why you are not reading about *fart-icle* and effect on environment? You’re not *hassoing* for that article?” Readers are telling that they are missing it. Others are telling that they are reading *Role of Entrepreneurship in an Evolving Ecosystem and Emerging Markets* but are missing article on how ITians are making Taj Mahal. Or how Karkare is doing *Hagiwara tandav*.

So we are thinking that your mood is *gussa karoing* to us. So we will *hasao* you by running some old articles for which you are *paisa bharoing*, but not reading. We will *chhapo* again so that you will *pet-pakad-ke-hassoing*. We are *phir se* telling how Madam G is bungling. How Satish is *Leja ko line maroing*. How Akshay is *China mein gadbad karoing*.

How Gautam Saha is telling about Chinese dhobi. How Rustom is murdering through poetry. You will *hasso* and start *taali maroing*. If you are *hassoing*, you are forgetting your *gussa* till next time we are *late karoing*. Before that, we are subscription renewing and ads taking and finding other *latifas*.

When teacher is *gussa karoing*, you are *joke-maroing* and making forget the *gussa*. But we are sorry telling for *late karoing* and are also requesting that you give us articles in time. If you are liking this issue and *hassoing* loudly, then you please going to ezine site at www.fundamatics.net and commenting that you are *hassoing*. You please go to our Facebook page and telling that you are liking Fundamatics. You please renewing subscription and please supporting with ads/donations so that we can *hasao* you some more.

Fumblebee is bye-bye telling now and meeting you again next issue which we are trying to *jaldi karing*. If you are articles bhejoing on energy, education, entrepreneurship (EEE), we are even more *jaldi karing*. Why we are choosing EEE? Why because we are *baap* of EE department which is *rula-ing* you, but we are now going to only *hasao* you.

(Read this editorial again, sung to the tune of

*Hassomati Maiya se bole Nandlala
Radha kyoon soti, main kyoon saala)*

Fumblebee

A Deck full of Jokers

If the discerning readers of Fundamatics have not figured it out already, Grumblebee is the true *God* of Satire within the beehive. Back in 2012, when the controversial JEE reforms brought out the latent grumblers in all of us, we were sure that it would send Grumblebee on a long extended holiday. Instead, Grumblebee's rusty keyboard went into overdrive venting, fuming and doing what he does best – grumble. He took on the erstwhile government at the centre while remaining smart enough to camouflage names, camouflage the narrative as a fairy-tale and above all, to camouflage his identity.

What emerged was a series that was sheer genius of comic timing as Grumblebee ranted and raved at the murky goings-on at MGPL – Madam G's Private Limited – a private estate where the dramatis personae are all assigned tasks in which they have to bungle. The bunglers also get shuffled like a deck of cards that contains only jokers. So when they bungle – which they do with unfailing regularity – they are all promoted and given other jobs so that they can bungle up all over again.

Grumblebee reported on bungling around the JEE Huzoor scam by Uphill Cymbal, and Coalgate scam and Vadra-danti scam by Raabert, P Chillum Humdrum, Shudder Jowar, Pepsodent Prefab Musterjee, Uphill Cymbal, Jari Rummage, A Roger, S Calorie-Muddy, Menace Tawry, Salmon Cursed-it, and a few more are the bunglers led by COE

(Chief of Estate), a blue-turbaned, remote controlled head nodder. As the series progressed, Madam G attempts to save the estate from a hostile takeover by a saffron T-shirt, khakhi short wearing Marauder Moody. But by the final episode of this 5-part series, *the bungling level had reached such a feverish pitch, that Grumblebee had taken up a permanent station at Madam G's bungalow called 10, Warpath. MGPL as a unit was out of control with bumbles in all directions.*

As the centre piece of this 'Humor' themed issue, we reproduce the entire series and end with a fervent wish that Grumblebee start sharpening his satirical wits to take on the bungling of Marauder Moody with equal fervour.

Queenbee



JEE Huzoor

GRUMBLEBEE

Once upon a time, there was a huge estate controlled by one family. The Estate was known as MGPL-short for Madam G's Pvt. Ltd.; named after the current head of the family. The Caretaker of the Estate (COE) was a simple man with a simple blue turban who never spoke ill of anybody. That's because he hardly ever spoke and only nodded every time Madam G spoke. He also volunteered to be implanted with an electronic device that allowed him to be remote controlled by Madam G, from wherever she chooses.

But the other staff members of the Estate were a frisky lot. For instance, there was a Shudder Jowar who was in charge of cultivation of the Estate and he aspired to be the COE. But he spent too much time playing cricket and rather than growing Jowar, he measured the fields and planned on constructing concrete jungles on them and was hence out of favour with Madam G.

Then, there was a P. Chillum Humdrum who was formerly, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Estate. After he managed to successfully bungle the accounts big time, he was promoted as the Chief Security Officer (CSO) of the Estate. He was brought in because he had it in him to hit a "home" run, but instead, he managed to spend more time scoring self-goals.

And there was this Prefab Musterjee who came in as the CFO after P. Chillum Hum-

He wanted everyone to address him as JEE Huzoor. Now Cymbal was a HaRD nut to crack and he always wanted to be HeaRD and not hear anyone, not even the guys who were manning the stations.



drum. Musterjee managed to pre-fabricate muster rolls and bungle the accounts and finances of the Estate even more than his worthy predecessor and for this act of mucking up things he was rewarded with a huge promotion. He, with his beaming smile that earned him the nick of Mr. Pepsodent, was moved to a sprawling mansion in the Estate, from where he would sign on dotted lines and make liberal use of his new found toy, a rubber stamp and its readily inked pad.

And let us not forget the PT instructor S Calorie-muddy who bought hockey sticks at the cost of gold sticks and converted the Estates commonwealth into his personal wealth.

A Roger was a telephone operator of the Estate who drew some Spectrum Graphs in 2D. For some reason, this caused a huge loss that the accountants could not evaluate, since no one had learnt to count up to that much. As a reward, he and some of his cronies were rewarded with an all expense paid stay at the

Tahir Hilton hotel on the Estate. After a brief stay at the Tahir Hilton, these guys were welcomed back to bungle some more and await their next promotion.

One of the members of this staff was Jari Rummage and he was in charge of keeping the gardens and the pool clean. He did not know how to bungle this seemingly easy task and hence, in order to join the brigade of the bunglers, he decided to look at the electric sub-stations on the Estate and declare that these were not world-class. This remark got him the attention that he wanted.

And this incident brings us to the hero of our story-Uphill Cymbal. It was an uphill task to talk to him without getting interrupted because he always beat his own cymbal drum at the drop of a drumstick. Cymbal was the Estate's attorney who had figured that bungling would win him just rewards and taking a cue from Jari, he decided to target the electric sub-stations on the Estate which were running flawlessly for over 50 years now. Cymbal also had another fetish. He wanted everyone to address him as JEE Huzoor. Now Cymbal was a HaRD nut to crack and he always wanted to be HearD and not hear anyone, not even the guys who were manning the stations. "One Station, One Quest". That was Cymbal's new mantra for all the stations on the Estate. He wanted to be the Sole Questor who would InQuest all the Station Heads into listening to his cacophonous rendition of his cymbal drums.

Now these efficient Station Heads were running their operations smoothly and generating sufficient high quality power without any JEE Huzoor to report to. Cymbal wanted to change things. First, he ordered the commissioning of many more Stations in all corners of the Estate. He then insisted that all power cables should flow through a "Board". He did not understand the concept of MCBs and insisted that all wires should be routed through a Board that led to the "Mains". ITI trained electricians would check the Board

and the Mains and if they were satisfied, they could let the Station Masters do the "Advanced" Questing that would lead to power generation. Few realized that Cymbal had a hidden agenda. The Stations were generating power because they used some smart transformers manufactured in Kota. Cymbal did not like Kota. He only believed in Quota. So, to break the stranglehold of Kota made transformers, he brought in Quota controlled Boards and Mains that would bleed Kota and make his Chandni Chowk shine like silver.

Needless to add, this move by Uphill Cymbal did not go well with the Station Honchos. They met and decided that the quality of their power should not be tempered down by power mongers. They all went to the COE who continued to remain silent and nod his head. Two Station Heads protested and threatened to cut Power and break away from the Estate. Realizing that this would diminish his Power, Cymbal mellowed a bit, but only a wee bit. He continued to beat his drum into a loud cacophony. While the hapless Station Honchos mulled over the next steps, a wise man offered them this advice: "Do not do anything. Cymbal is trying to bungle up and he has succeeded. He is bound to be rewarded by Madam G and moved somewhere else. Someone else will come in and it will take a while before he starts to bungle. Be patient and wait. After all, you want to march to the tune of a different drummer, right?"

Should the Station Heads take this advice? Yes, they should. Why? Because this is a Fairy Tale and Fairy Tales end with, "everyone lived happily ever after." 🌸

Bungle in the Jungle

GRUMBLEBEE

The mood at 10, Warpath was somber and grim. A strategy session had been called, entertainment had been arranged to uplift the mood and a sumptuous meal was served by the accomplished Planner – *One Trick Sing-Dana Aloowalla*. With a stern and angry look, Madam G turned to Jethro Tull and asked him to start the session with the Bungle anthem, while the rest stood in attention in starched designer khadi kurtas designed by Rohit Bahl. Ian Anderson belted these lines from his hit song.....

Walking through forests of palm tree apartments ---

scoff at the monkeys who live in their dark tents

down by the waterhole --- drunk every

Friday ---

eating their nuts --- saving their raisins for Sunday.

Lions and tigers who wait in the shadows --- they're fast but they're lazy, and sleep in green meadows.

Let's bungle in the jungle --- well, that's all right by me.

I'm a tiger when I want love, but I'm a snake if we disagree.

No sooner had he sung the first verse, Madam G raising her hand, shushed Jethro Tull into silence and announced, "Gentlemen! I have called all of you here to discuss a very serious matter. "All of you are top class bun-

"But all your bunglings end with G and that is bothersome to me." "Just look at them- with names like 2G, CWG and so on. Even Uphill Cymbal bungling with JEE sounds like G." She then pressed her remote and COE started nodding his head vigorously.



glers", she continued, "But all your bunglings end with G and that is bothersome to me."

"Just look at them- with names like 2G, CWG and so on. Even Uphill Cymbal bungling with JEE sounds like G." She then pressed her remote and COE started nodding his head vigorously.

"But Ma'am", Uphill Cymbal piped in, "May I respectfully submit that we all wish to attribute these signature achievements under the trademark G and, in doing so, develop a strong Brand Identity. In fact we want to take this Brand international. Next stop is Rome. That is why as Telephone Operator I have done away with all Roaming charges." "Yes, yes, Madam G," quipped P Chillum Humdrum, "when in Rome we will do as the Romans do".

Madam G was not amused with this re-



mark. “Do you realize”, she shot back, “That if we chalo Rome, those horrible guys from the outside will take over our estate? As it is, that guy with the saffron T-shirt and khakhi shorts...what’s his name...Marauder Moody... is constantly attempting a hostile takeover of our estate. We should not be caught with our khadi chaadis down. We must be on the alert to thwart his attempts.”

CFO P Chillum Humdrum spoke up. “Ma’am, there is nothing to worry about! Whenever this Moody tries to gather the required proxies, there are many of his own kinsmen who fight him. That Lukkha Thadani has already scuttled his attempts twice ever since his own hostile take over charge fell with a thud, a few years ago. And these other blokes...Overrun Jetlag and Suzy sore-as... oops, I mean Suzy Swear-aaj would rather fight Moody than fight us. So let us continue to pull more G-strings. Even the CAGe men, who check on us, like our G brand.”

“Gentlemen, I sometimes wonder why I call you gentlemen! Why don’t you get it? I do not want any more bungling with the G brand. We must launch a new series. Even the Bees at Fundamatics will loose interest if we don’t do something different.”

The little known SP Justwell jumped in. “Ma’am! I have a brilliant idea for some new bungles and foibles that can be marketed under a new brand name - The Coalgate brand.”

“That’s silly!”, Prefab Musterjee countered. “Colgate is an old brand. Now that I have moved to the Rasta Potty Bhavan, I will issue a Rasta Potty order to use only Pepsodent.”

“No! No! You misunderstand me Rasta Potty ji...oops, this ends with another G...what I meant was Coalgate, like in Koila and not Colgate like the toothpaste. Do you remember that in early days, people used coal as toothpaste?” Justwell replied. “Anyway, I think your suggestion to switch to Pepsodent is a good

idea. Also instead of Coke we should all drink Pepsi.”

Jethro started humming “Old King Coal, gave away merry old dole!”

“Aw! Shut up you! Save your energy for the bungle anthem at close. Keep your wisecracks to yourself.” Madam G growled.

Uphill Cymbal remarked, “Hmmm! Justwell’s idea sounds good. With Coalgate, all of us can cover ourselves in soot and no one will be able to recognize us. The khakhi

“Do you realize”, she shot back, “That if we chalo Rome, those horrible guys from the outside will take over our estate? As it is, that guy with the saffron T-shirt and khakhi shorts...what’s his name...Marauder Moody... is constantly attempting a hostile takeover of our estate. We should not be caught with our khadi chaadis down. We must be on the alert to thwart his attempts.”



chaddis also have a Coalgate lite version in their portfolio and they cannot rake us over coals for this. And isn’t our estate a bed of hot coals? Best of all, with coal, we can bring in such a huge haul that the numbers will have lots of zeroes at the end. Some 12-13 of them and we can again declare this to be another zero loss venture.”

“I must confess that this idea ignites my mind. Very creative and best of all keeps the G in the clear. I think we can all disperse with a resolve to outdo all our past bungles and take up Coalgate in real earnest. After all, coal has the same colour as our money.” She clicked the

remote and the COE nodded vigourously in agreement. “Meeting adjourned. Jethro Tull, please sing our anthem and let’s Bungle in the Jungle.”

Jethro belts out the anthem with this variation.....

Walking through jungles of high rise duplexes ---

scoff at the donkeys who pay their taxes down with the common man --- bled every Friday ---

We’ll eat his nuts --- saving the rest for Sunday.

Cannibals and vultures who wait in the shadows ---

they’re hungry and thirsty, and party at Lido’s

Let’s bungle in the jungle --- well, that’s all right by me.

I’m a lizard nobody wants to love, but I’m a snake and will always disagree. 🖐️

The Cabinet Re-bungle

GRUMBLEEBEE

The meeting at Bungalow 10, Warpath situated in MGPL was about to commence. There were some new faces this time. All the bunglers had been rewarded in Operation Re-bungle by getting new responsibilities assigned to them, so that they could practise their bungling talent in new departments. And some people with a known propensity for bungling had been drafted in afresh. Madam G, ice maiden as ever, looked at Alka Yagnik and nodded. The nod signalled that Alka should start with the bungle anthem of MGPL. Melodious as ever, Alka sang out these lines from a famous jingle.

Vajradanti, Vajradanti, Vicco Vajradanti

Toothpowder, toothpaste

Ayurvedic jadibootiyon se banayi gayi

Sampurna swadeshi

Toothpowder, toothpaste, Vicco Vajradanti.

“You all may have noticed that I have fired Jethro Tull after he bungled our anthem last October. Every Fundamatics reader is laughing at us because of Tull and his distortion of the ‘bungle-in-jungle’ number” Madam G said. “I have now got in Alka to sing our opening and closing anthems. You will understand the significance of the anthem soon. But let me start by asking the COE if he has called

Oh-mama and congratulated him on getting elected in the estate abroad.”

COE started nodding his head vigorously.

“Can’t you wait till I press the remote?”

Madam G frowned.

COE stopped nodding, but resumed immediately as soon as the remote was pressed.

“Ma’am!”, Uphill Cymbal piped in, “As the telephone operator of the estate, I dialed Oh-Mama and connected the call with the COE. But Oh-mama just said...‘Hello! Hello! Who’s there? Stop making blank calls!’. And he banged the phone down.”

“Well! Well! We have a COE who does not speak. And we have an operator who is not a silent operator. Anyway, gentlemen! I must congratulate all of you on some top class bungling. You have all been rewarded with new assignments in our operation re-bungle.”

“Ma’am!”, the operator spoke again, “I am glad that you have rewarded me by making me focus on my telephone operator’s functions. This dual responsibility of handling the estate’s power plants was getting to me. Even the bees at Fundamatics had predicted that you would reward me. Let me read out what the bees wrote in the July issue. They had said....*Cymbal is trying to bungle up and he has succeeded. He is bound to be rewarded by Madam G and moved somewhere else. Someone else will come in and it will take a while before he starts to bungle....*”

“Yes Ma’am! I’d like to thank you too”

Salmon Cursed-it chimed in, “ I shouted Shut-Up and Get-Out and I’ll-bash-you-up at the press conference and you rewarded me by making me the estate’s travel agent. I can now go abroad and shout Shut-up and Get-out in different languages.”

Madam G raised her hand and shushed everyone into silence. “Gentlemen! I have convened this meeting to tell you that Grumblebee called me this morning. He said that the next issue of Fundamatics is going to focus on ecology, environment, and similar stuff that none of us know about. If we don’t bungle in that direction, I’m afraid we will not be featured in this issue.”

“Ma’am, I have an idea. You have put me in charge of all the newspapers and the TVs of the estate. People tell me that when they run out of manure in biogas plants, they use my speeches as a substitute. If you let me write for Fundamatics, the copies can be used as a substitute for manure of the bovine variety.” This came from Menace-Tawry.

“Oh Come on Menace! What you speak is a lot of hot air that has contributed to global warming. We need Madam G’s stare to freeze the earth back again to the ice age” Jari Rum-mage opined with wisdom derived from some world class faculty from his time.

Madam G spoke up again, “Gentlemen! I have given some thought to this. Our hands are soiled. Our linen is dirty though it gets washed in public everyday. But our teeth are still white and sparkling, except Shudder Jowar’s. So let’s change our toothpaste. Let’s switch to a herbal toothpaste that will sound eco-friendly and...”

“Ma’am, you’re being unfair!” Pepsodent Prefab Musterjee interrupted. “Ever since you made me Rasta Potty, people still do potty on the roads. But while I was busy playing with the rubber stamp, you changed our brand from Pepsodent to Coalgate just because this Justwell fellow told you to. Now, you want to change the brand again...”

Justwell got up from his seat agitatedly. “Ma’am! On my suggestion, you made us all switch to Coalgate in the previous issue of Fundamatics. We have been using it religiously since then. Our teeth will definitely become as black as our money and our deeds. Can you not be a bit more patient?”

“I understand your anxiety gentlemen. But let us understand that Coalgate will not get us a feature in Fundamatics. If we switched to a herbal toothpaste like Echo Vadra-danti, we will make it into Fundamatics’ special anniversary issue in December. Think about it.” Madam G advised.

The CFO P Chillum Humdrum raised his hand and said, “I second your suggestion Ma’am. I use Echo Turmeric Vanishing Cream to make files vanish from my office. That’s why, no one can find my diagrams of a spectrum. But we are all busy with our own bungling assignments. Who will bungle with this Vadra-danti toothpaste?”

“I have it all worked out” Madam G smiled. “I have roped in Raabert from villain Ajit’s gang. Earlier, I poached on his Number 1, Number 2 etc., Now, he’s left with only his Mona darling. As a matter of fact, Raabert knows how to bungle well. I asked him to do a deal with LDF (Left Democratic Front). But he went ahead and struck a deal with DLF. He’s just like any of us. So now that we have decided to patronize Echo Vadra-danti and we are assured of a place in Fundamatics, let us all rise and stand while Alka sings our closing anthem.

Alka Yagnik sang....

*Vadradanti Vadradanti, Echo Vadradanti,
Coal powder, loot-in-haste
DLF imaraton se banaayi gayi
Adhi videshi, coal powder, loot-in-haste
Echo Vadradanti. 🌸*

Tearing up Nonsense

GRUMBLEBEE

All the estate employees of MGPL – collectively known as the Cabaret – had assembled at 10, Warpath, official residence of Madam G.

“Gentlemen!” Madam G started. “By the way, I am the only person in the world who still calls you gentlemen. I have called you all to make an important announcement.”

The cabaret listened silently in anticipation.

“Firstly, I must compliment all of you.” Madam G continued. “You all are top-class bunglers and have indulged in some top-class bungling. Sawan Kumar Duncel-bungled with the estate’s trains. Lawyer Sushwini-ku-maar bungled while correcting some typos in the CBI report. Dig-my-grave Singh keeps opening his mouth every two minutes to change his feet. Our very own CoE has made files disappear and has brought the focus back on Coalgate over Echo Vadra-danti. Our farm manager Shudder Jowar has made onions disappear. CFO P Chillum Humdrum has started a “race for 100” between an onion, petrol and dollar. But alas....!”

“Alas what madam?” telephone operator Uphill Cymbal questioned.

“Think! Think!” Madam G continued with what sounded like a cruel instruction – asking the cabaret to actually think. “Have you gentlemen (argh, I did it again!) ever thought why Fundamatics has stopped featuring us? They featured us last when we

launched the herbal toothpaste Vadra-danti. After that, despite a series of top class bunglings, the bees have not approached us. Not even for ads or subscriptions, leave alone a lead story. That’s because they like to focus on stories that have an ecological angle. The beehive is full of environmentalists.”

“Ma’am, you’re right!” TV repairman Menace Tawry piped in. “I called them to tell them that when I speak, I generate a lot of biogas that can fill their pages. But they somehow find my gas to be toxic.”

“But Ma’am,” CFO P Chillum Humdrum chimed in. “I heard that the next issue of Fundamatics is focused on economy. And I have bungled the estate’s economy big time with my race-for-100. So why don’t they feature me?”

“Chillum, you’re too educated to understand some rustic wisdom,” Madam G answered. “Economy is out. Ecology is in. But worry not gent....er.....men. I have a plan. A foolproof plan. No, I don’t mean a cabaret-proof plan. Foolproof does not refer to us this one time. My plan is to first change the CoE. Present CoE nods well, but he’s getting old, his nod is getting slow and the batteries on my remote are wearing out. I cannot recharge the batteries because there is no power. There is no power because we gave it away free and we do not have gas or coal to generate more power.”

“So here’s my plan” she continued. “I

want to appoint Rollback Aandhi as the next CoE. I already appointed Rollback as our Vice President as you all know.”

“Ma’am”, Uphill Cymbal interjected. “We had one wise man and he’s already the President. Do we have another wise man who will become the wise president?”

Madam G was aghast. “I said vice president, not wise president. Rollback will preside over all our vices. Present CoE is a goody goody man who just knows how to nod.” CoE, blue turban and all, started nodding as Madam G pressed the remote.

“But what does Rollback have to do with ecology?” Jerry Rummage asked. “After all, he’s not world-class faculty at IITB...”

Madam G’s icy stare froze Jerry in his tracks. “Here’s the plan,” she thundered. “You all have to pass a bill in the Shok Sabha.”

“But Madam!” Shudder Jowar spoke. “We are not used to paying any bills. I do not even pay for cricket match tickets that my constituency people watch. In fact....”

Madam G turned on the ice again. “I am not asking you to pay bills. Just pass a bill. A law, for heaven’s sake. Just pass a law that all crooks will get a gold medal from now onwards. That way, you’ll all get gold medals, see?”

“What has that got to do with Rollback and ecology and Fundamatics? We all have enough gold stashed away in the bank neighbouring yours in Switzerland.” CFO P Chillum Humdrum countered.

“Listen to the whole plan,” Madam G answered icy countenance and all. “You all call me the ice maiden but Fundamatics walked away with its maiden ICE awards. They are ecologists, whatever that means. They say that by printing emails, we are wasting paper and a forest. A jungle. No wonder one of their own founded jungle.com. So, in order to make an ecological statement, we should tear up papers. First, you all pass a bill and print the bill on lots of papers. If you cannot pass the

bill, pass an ordinary-sense and print the ordinary-sense on lots of papers. And then....”

“Then what?” the entire cabaret rose up to ask while dancing a bhanga.

“Then....” Madam G continued with a sinister smile. “Then, Rollback will walk into a press conference that Ajay Makhan will convene. Rollback will convert an ordinary-sense to nonsense. He will tear up all the papers that you jungles will print. He will say “nonsense” and “tear the paper” with lot of aplomb while hiding in a beard that’s eco friendly. Get it? By the way, I’ve printed these instructions on lots of paper that you’ve all been given. I forbid you to tear up this.”

“But what happens to our dear CoE and his head nodding?” This question was from CFO P Chillum Humdrum who dreamt of being CoE.

Madam G broke into a raucous laughter. “I am sending him away across 7 seas to meet a Sharif Badmaash in Oh-mama land and nod away while Rollback tears papers and CoE’s future into a dynastic submission. I own a football team that scores self-goals. See, how I created 2 regions within my own estate. Regions named Naach-gaana and Seema Bhindra? Rollback will roll back anything the CoE says. Not that CoE says or speaks. I have programmed him to just nod.”

The cabaret broke into a cabaret dance and sang,

*G-ya (G=madam G) tu, ab to aaja
Cola pee le, aag bujha jaa.
(Sonika, oh my darling, Sonika, oh my
darling)
Tan ki juwala thandi ho jaaye, aise gale laga
jaa
Dil bhi kala, coal bhi kala, India buja ja,
buja ja, buja ja..*

Nonsense Zindabad. 🙌

Aap, Baap & Paap

GRUMBLEBEE

How often have we said this? The mood at 10, Warpath was somber and grim. Madam G's countenance was icy as ever, but her eyes breathed brimstone and fire.

"Men!" she thundered. "After this, I will never address you as gentlemen."

"You know that I want you all to bungle big time and I reward you all every time you bungle," she continued. "But for God's sake, when did I ask you to bungle so big that our existence is threatened and that Marauder Moody takes over our estate? He has already taken over 4 of our regions, thanks to your bungling gone overboard."

"Ashok Payload!" she addressed the vanquished one from Rajasthan. "Thanks to you, Rajasthan is now a Ranisthan. Why did you crash so badly?"

"Madamji!" Payload replied. "I am payload, not a pilot. There was a pilot amongst us who could have helped me soar. But he maneuvered our aircraft into a tailspin that made me crash-land. His non cooperation is the last straw that broke the back of all camels in my desert land which finally deserted me."

"Excuses! Excuses!" Madam G hissed under her breath. "Ajit Rogi! What have you to say for yourself?"

"Madam! You know I am a rogi on a wheelchair. True, I told people of Battisgarh that I would break the *battisi* of that Ravan Singh. But your son Rollback Aandhi visited

here and people broke my *battisi*."

"Horrendous people! Have you all forgotten to take flak when it comes, but pass on credit to me when and if it comes? Not that any comes nowadays. OK! Let's see what Mad-row Rescinder has to explain about his sorry performance." Madam G continued with some F&B (not food & beverages: fire & brimstone)

"Ma'am!" Mad-row Rescinder was a cool dude who could say *ma'am* and not *Madam*. "Ma'am! I was about to vanquish Save-raj Chouhan. Nobody would have saved him. But our very own Dig-my-grave Singh undid my efforts. He pressed CTRL-ALT-DEL while Save-raj clicked on *save*."

"Madam, Madam, Madam!" Dig-my-grave interjected. "10 years ago, I was the Raja here and they made me take sanyas. And they made this *sanyaasin* Amma Bore-thi, the Raja. So what is wrong if this Raja Rescinder also takes *sanyaas*? *Raja bana sanyasi* and *sanyasin bani Raja*."

"Enough all of you. Excuses! Excuses! Don't you know that excuses are the privilege only I and Rollback can avail of? Whatever happened to good old fashioned sycophancy you all were notorious for? Anyway, let me now turn to Sheila-in-Deepshit. Her trespass is unpardonable. So close to my own backyard." Madam G continued.

"Sheila! Delhi!" Madam G said while turning towards Sheila.

“Pardon me Ma’am” Sheila quizzed.

“I said, Delhi”.

“I didn’t get it” Sheila replied in confusion.

“Precisely! That’s what I meant. You didn’t get Delhi. Why? What is the reason?” Madam G thundered in a rare display of sarcasm.

“Reason is AAP” Sheila replied in defiance.

“Are you blaming me?” Madam G thundered and her F&B level rose by a few notches.

“No, no... don’t get me wrong. I am

“No, no... don’t get me wrong. I am talking about the mango people who call themselves AAP. AAP got 28 seats, BAAP got 32, and we at PAAP got just 8.”



talking about the mango people who call themselves AAP. AAP got 28 seats, BAAP got 32, and we at PAAP got just 8.”

“Where has our PAAP gone wrong? Can’t we indulge in simple cardinal sins properly anymore?” Madam G wondered.

“Ma’am!” the lawyer’s assistant Abhi-shook Sting-me chimed in. “Did you mean cardinal sins? I thought you meant carnal sins and that’s why I indulged in some. In fact, if these undersized BAAP guys can expand from 32 to 36, I would...”

“Shut up Sting-me! Enough of your carnal misdeeds which did me in. By the way, who are these mango people and who let them into our estate?” Madam G wondered.

“Madam!” Dig-my-grave answered. “Ever since you told us that Fundamatics guys love the environment, I let the swamps and marshes grow unabated in our estate. But when the marsh started sprouting too many lotuses, I called some *jhadoo-walas* to come and clean up the lotuses. How would I know that these rascals would invade our estate in droves and

clean us up while leaving the lotuses untouched?”

“And you know what ma’am?” Jonti Natak-rajan piped in. “Delhi has become totally unsafe for women like us. See what they did to Sheila and her *jawani*! God knows what they’ll do to you and me after this. Not only that, this AAP outfit is headed by a guy called All-wind Jhaduwal. His cronies are plucking mangoes from our orchards and waving *jhadoos* and singing *tera jhadoo chal gaya...* I think they are breakaways from the pop band called ANNA.”

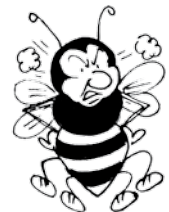
“Not only that,” Uphill Cymbal spoke up finally. “These AAP and BAAP guys are a funny lot. Till now, we would all fight to form the government. But these guys are now fighting to NOT form the government. How strange!”

Madam G’s face turned quizzical at this revelation and then broke into a smile, followed by a raucous laughter. The entire cabaret looked at her in anticipation and begged to know the cause of her elation.

“This is good news gentlemen.” She now acknowledged that they were gentlemen even as Abhi-shook Sting-me listened with suspicion. “The solution is simple. Next elections, we shall let Marauder Moody and All-wind Jhaduwal fight over NOT forming the government. Let them both win. That way, we may be able to keep our estate and bungle some more.”

“But what if people ask us to support AAP, since Rollback has also praised them?” P Chillum Humdrum wanted to know.

“Answer is simple!” Madam G replied. We will tell people, “*Hum AAP ke hain kaun? And BAAP is kumwara. PAAP zindabad.*” 🙌



IIT Bombay - Build, Build, but Where is the Imagination?

SHRIPAD DHARMADHIKARAY

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, now Mumbai – my alma mater – has undoubtedly been a happening place, even when I was there some 25 years back. Still, I was quite taken aback to see how much was “happening” when I visited it sometime last week. This was not the usual campus sort of activity. Rather, what is happening is that the campus is in the middle of a construction boom. It is abuzz with the sounds of excavators (popularly called JCBs), bulldozers, concrete mixers and the likes. Mingling amongst young men and women wearing the characteristic look – half earnest, half I could not care less – of students on campus, are seen men in plastic hard hats and bright yellow and green coloured reflective jackets. Construction is on everywhere.

Excavator at a construction site near YP Gate

Now, anywhere in the world, construction is a sure sign of progress. Or, to use a more nuanced and lively word, construction is a sure sign of “vikas”. In the last few months, the word (and its more mundane sounding English equivalent “development”) has been much thrown around as India witnessed an energetic and loquacious election campaign. While India waits for the new government to unleash vikas, the IIT Bombay campus – as always – seems to be miles ahead of the country.

Naturally, all this must be great for the campus and its residents. But somehow I am

left feeling just the opposite. Not surprising, of course, because I am amongst the minority which believes in such odd-ball things like rivers should flow, and dams that stop the flow of a river are not exactly great news; that open spaces are nice, nicer than glass-fronted tall buildings; that mountains are great, particularly when they are not hollowed out and cratered by mine pits; that if we need to forego some coal extraction to keep in place centuries old forests, that’s not a bad deal; that animals, plants, fish – in fact, the entire non-human biota, have a right to live and a right to an ecological space that will ensure that they live; and that such a right accrues to them not because they are useful to the human race, but rather because its intrinsic to their being on this planet.

So when I saw the campus last week, I was, to repeat what I said earlier, quite taken aback. I saw, in the happenings on campus, a microcosm of what is happening in the larger world out there - things that go against the grain of what I have outlined in the earlier paragraph.

But I must qualify my above thoughts. I am neither an extreme ecologist nor, to use a word that has often been thrown at me and my friends, an eco-terrorist. If I think a river should continue to flow, I also agree that it’s okay to extract some of its waters for human use. But some, not all. How much, and how to arrive at this how much, is a complex interdisciplinary field of science, technology, social,



environmental and political processes, called “environmental flows”. Similarly, I feel that we need to mine minerals, but “how much and how” remains the crucial question. This approach needs to be extended to all things described above.

So when I felt bad at what was going on at IIT campus, it was not because open spaces are being eaten away rapidly, but because it seems to be done in a mindless manner. I understand that IIT badly needs more hostels, residential quarters for staff, departments and so on. Yet, I wonder whether all this cannot be built without destroying open spaces, dumping muck in the lake and destroying the greenery?

Old Hostel 10 makes way for a new high rise 16 storey H10

Indeed, if there was one place where one could expect an innovative answer to this question, which is a smaller version of the larger question confronting humanity – how can we meet the needs of human beings at the same time ensuring that we destroy the surroundings the least – it could have been IIT Bombay. It has the brains, it has the talent, it has the funds; what it probably lacks is the interest to take a particular approach to developing the campus. Else, we would not have

While India waits for the new government to unleash vikas, the IIT Bombay campus – as always – seems to be miles ahead of the country.



a flashy new air conditioned sports complex coming up on the gymkhana grounds – a sports complex that takes away significant part of the sports ground itself! (Alumni may be interested in knowing that construction is coming up on all three sides of the gymkhana grounds H1 to H3 side, H4-H5 side and H8 side.). Or muck being disposed into the Powai lake. And so on. When I asked around if there was indeed a master plan, several people – who I know are sensitive and concerned campus residents – said if there was one, they were not in the know of it.

While walking along the lake side path from the (old) guest house to behind hostel 8 (hardly a lake side path, now that the lake has receded so much), I wondered aloud: With so many alumni donating generously to the Institute for a variety of causes, including for big new departments and buildings (sometimes named after themselves!), why has someone not thought of donating funds with an express purpose of preserving a part of the



campus? A sort of a no-build fund, a modified version of “debt for nature swap”? My friend, an alumnus and a faculty, Prof. Milind Sohoni, immediately responded saying that apparently the batch of 1980 had done something like this, giving funds to preserve the very stretch of the path that we were walking on. I also saw a small park called Kshitij built as a part of this. But it seems the authorities have renegaded on the promise to preserve the area, as there is a new big multi-storey guest house being built next to this very path.

A heap of excavated debris piled up. A common site at several places in the campus

Certainly, part of the reason for me to feel bad about the campus is because I spent five incredibly great years there, and have a residual attachment to it. But I don’t want to make too much of this attachment – I no longer live there, and have visited it probably all of 10 times in the 25 years since I left it. But my disquiet stems more from a sense of missed opportunity. IITB could have showcased a different way of doing things, an approach that would not only keep the campus as beautiful it was, but would have also been an inspiration and guide for how to do things in the larger world outside.

But then again, maybe IITB and the world

outside wants to do things in this very manner, and they are indeed showcasing and inspiring the world with an approach they believe in?

Maybe I am really in a minority! 🙌



Shripad Dharmadhikaray

Shripad Dharmadhikaray, B.Tech., Mech Engg, 1985

is an activist academic who practised applications of technology in real world as an activist fighting against a big dam in India as part of NBA (Narmada Bachao Andolan). He is now trying to understand what is right and what is wrong with water and energy in India. He is the Founder of Manthan Adhyan Kendra, a policy studies centre engaged in research, monitoring and analysis of water and energy issues.

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Politickle Pickles and the Art of Shreyas Navare

Collins

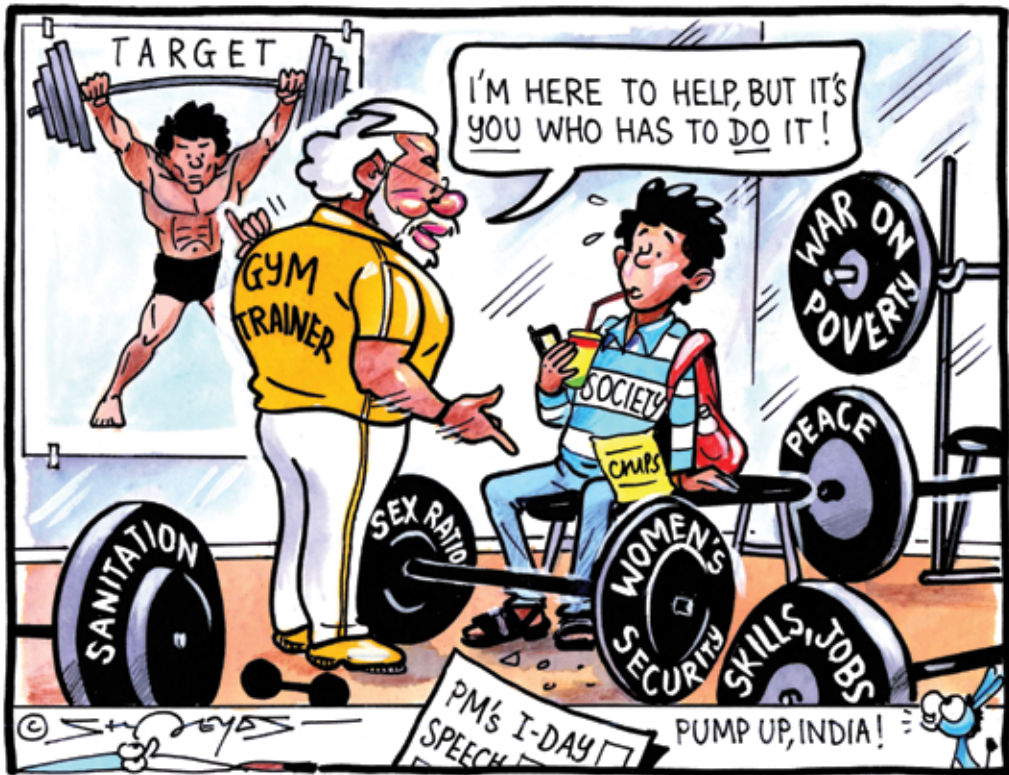
The Politickle Pickle Vol. 2

Battle of the Ballot



Shreyas Navare

'Keep it up! You show great promise.' –R.K. Laxman



‘Fun-damatics’ would be incomplete without a feature on the beehive’s in-house cartoonist – Shreyas Navare. Shreyas is an alum (MBA, SJSOM) who began his career as a banker but then chose to walk off the beaten track by pursuing the career of a full time cartoonist. He freelances as the Editorial Cartoonist for Hindustan Times and in that capacity has covered elections in six Indian states and the Presidential polls in the US. His works have also been exhibited in India and abroad. We reviewed his first book by Harper Collins in an earlier issue but have never done a feature of his work. We rectify that omission here with a sneak peak from his next book “The Politickle Pickle Vol. 2 Battle of the

Ballot” slated for release next month.

In this new volume Zero, the witty donkey, is back with this latest collection of hilarious cartoons and caricatures on the who’s who of our ‘politickle pickle’ locked in the battle of the ballot! With the deft strokes of a cartoonist’s brush, Zero splashes the canvas with sharp satire, resulting in yet another collector’s item that’s guaranteed to leave you in splits!

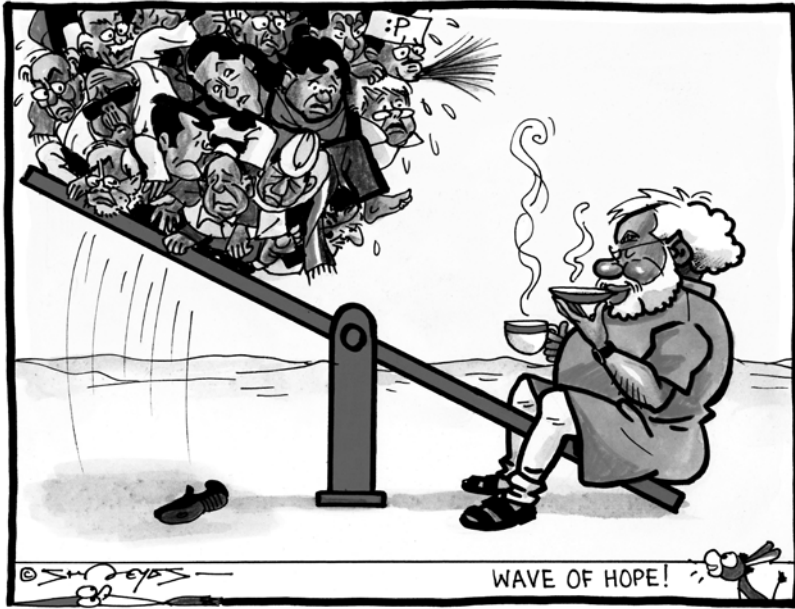
So look out for this book and be sure to grab a copy ‘cause they are sure to fly off the shelves.

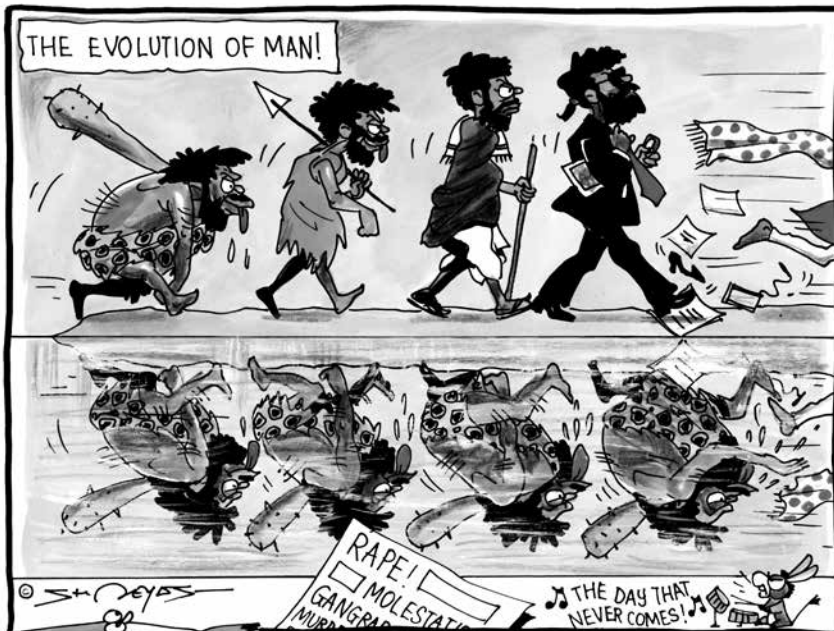
Fundabees



'Shreyas Navare's cartoons are technically sound, informed by an awareness of current affairs, and delightfully acerbic.'

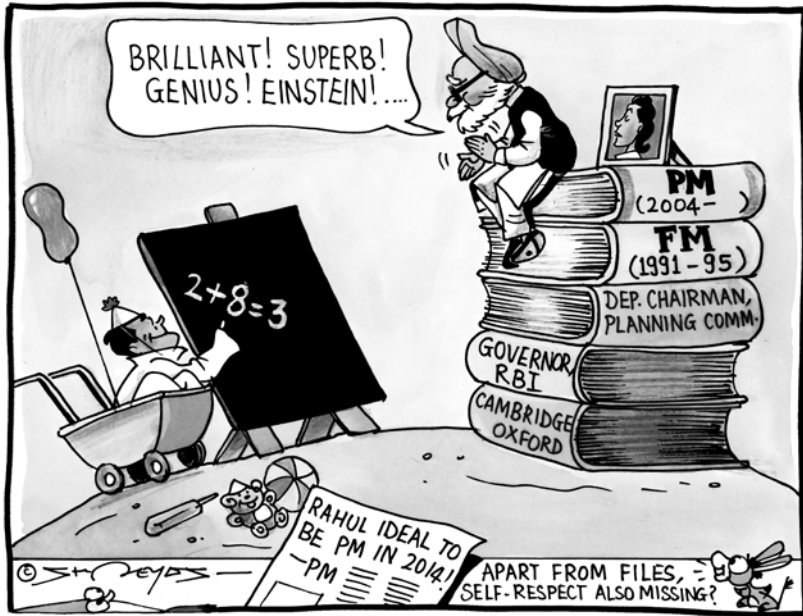
Soumya Bhattacharya, author and editor of Hindustan Times, Mumbai





'Shreyas Navare's cartoons on various facets of public life not only make us laugh but also compel us to think! May this excellence sustain and grow in the future!'

Dr. Jayant Narlikar, world renowned astrophysicist



'Acute wit and wisdom in this delightful book... will be a best-seller'.

Alyque Padamsee, India's advertising guru



Shreyas Navare

Shreyas Navare freelances as Editorial Cartoonist, Hindustan Times and is a

WCFLA Fellow on international affairs at Harvard University. He holds an MBA from IIT Bombay and a bachelors in engineering (IT) from VJTI, Mumbai University. Previously, he has worked at a private bank for five years in the areas of marketing and technology. On behalf of HT, Shreyas has covered elections in six Indian states and the Presidential polls in the US. His works have been exhibited in India and abroad. Shreyas' HT cartoons and caricatures have been published by HarperCollins in a book series titled *The Politickle Pickle* (Vol 1 and Vol 2). Twitter: @dabsandjabs

A Linnaean Taxonomy of Fauna In *Communati Indianae Scientificum*

PROF.VIVEK BORKAR

After two decades of intensive research on the fauna inhabiting the ecological niche *Communati Indianae Scientificum* (colloquially known as the Indian Scientific Community), we have been able to identify, characterize and classify a number of species inhabiting this habitat. With distinctive aspects such as high rates of emigration, immigration and mutation (sometimes within a lifetime) and a variety of foraging techniques, they make a fascinating microcosm worthy of serious biological research. The present article is but a preliminary step towards a comprehensive study, being merely a taxonomy for the dominant species in the Linnaean tradition. We have identified twenty-seven major species:

1. *Vicious Incumbentus*: This species is one of the early occupants of this habitat and is noted for its ability to capture new uncharted territory for its foraging activity. Thanks to this, they are able to generate surplus even with rather limited foraging abilities. They have strong territorial instincts and guard their territory by means of a poisonous sting with which they attack any encroacher. The population of this species is maintained by mutation from other species. While they do reproduce by cloning, the offspring belong to the species *Protegii Sidekickus* discussed next.

2. *Protegii Sidekickus*: Being cloned from *Vicious Incumbentus*, these inherit many attributes of the latter except the enterprise. They tend to adapt a narrow range of foraging

techniques which they apply repetitively in a narrow area. Because of low adaptability, they tend to die out rapidly in face of any abrupt changes in the environment. They multiply by cloning.

3. *Nerdu Paperchurnus*: This species is characterised by a very high facility with one or the other foraging technique and great diligence. Akin to the worker bee in their social role, they produce most of the community surplus. However, being suited only for narrow specialised tasks, they usually have a weak flank which makes them vulnerable to attack. Thus they either fall prey to other predatory species or build a symbiotic relationship with a member of another species, trading their surplus for protection and patronage.

4. *Committimemberii Rulesenbylawquotus*: The members of this species take charge of the more mundane chores of the community. Nevertheless, foraging being the most socially respected activity, they feel obliged to fake a nonexistent foraging prowess. Because of their willingness to undertake the less exciting tasks, the society has evolved the evolutionarily stable strategy of pretending that they are not pretending.

5. *Bigmoni Projectovoros*: This species specialises in acquiring and organising ancillary foraging equipment for others for which it gets a part of the surplus. Like *Committimemberii Rulesenbylawquotus*, they are given to faking a foraging ability which is not

really there, but their pretence is tolerated by common consensus.

6. Whiningus Leanandhungryfacus: This species has low foraging ability. It generally congregates near sources of certain liquid and gaseous stimulants and makes shrill sounds. Their main activity is to build elaborate justifications for their own low foraging ability and to discuss and rank order the more successful foragers from other species. Their social utility is derived from their willingness to function

Salivatii Bootlickus:
**This species has a
symbiotic relationship
with Primmadonnae
Fundsenhonourdisbursae
and is allowed to live off the
droppings of the latter for
services rendered, such as
picking fleas in the latter's
coat and crooning in unison
whenever the latter makes
a sound so as to amplify its
effect.**



as foot soldiers for other species during intra- and inter- species conflicts.

7. Smoothtalkus Jetsetae: This species is characterised by a sonorous sound and bright plumage, and is highly mobile. Its role is analogous to that of a canary and it traverses different parts of the region entertaining other species. For this it is allowed to live off the community surplus.

8. Genealogicus Favorabilis: These are offspring of highly successful foragers in *Communitati Indianae Scientificum* or from neighbouring habitats such as *Communitati Indianae Administrativii*, *Communitati Indianae Politicum* or *Communitati Indianae*

Commerciali. They are allowed to start their lives with an abundant supply of food from the community surplus and an artificially implanted plumage. After the supply runs out, they usually mutate into one of the other species, notably 4 and 7 above.

9. Beamingfaceus Peckatfringeus: This is a very benign species, very diligent but not very successful as a forager. Its primary task ends up being grooming of the young ones in the community.

10. Senilae Almosttherebutnotquiteus: Many successful foragers compete to match the foraging standards of other better endowed habitats and come close. When their foraging ability wanes with age, they mutate into *Senilae Almosttherebutnotquiteus* and spend their time spinning somewhat inflated tales of their near miss with glory. Because of their inspirational value to the young ones of the community, they are generally allowed to live handsomely off the community surplus.

11. Anecdotus Historicalii: This species serves as a chronicler of the community and makes a living by narrating real or imaginary tales of great foragers of the past (from fifteenth century to the previous decade) to the young ones. For this, they are allowed a part of the community surplus.

12. Sonofsoilii Virtuosi: This species remains in one location throughout and also refuses to use other than its traditional foraging techniques. With claims of additional spiritual superiority purely on the basis of its immobility and immutability, it claims larger than its share of the community surplus.

13. Bombasticus Posturomaticae: This is a parasitic species which lives rather well off the community surplus by successfully faking foraging prowess. In this it is aided by an artificially acquired plumage and a loud voice.

14. Reflectoglorius Lastyearsnobelprixus: This is another parasitic species which lives off claims of expertise in foraging techniques that have proved very successful elsewhere in recent

past, and on those grounds, demanding (and usually getting) a larger than fair share of the community surplus.

15. *Backgroundnoisus Coauthorship-grabbae*: This is yet another parasitic species which latches on to members of other species with better foraging skills and by sheer presence of working along, manages to corner a part of the surplus for itself.

16. *Nirvanae Seatwarmacus*: This is the most parasitic species of all, which does nothing at all and is allowed to live off the community surplus simply because *Communitati Indianae Scientificum* has not evolved the evolutionary strategy, prevalent in other similar societies, of killing off its useless members.

17. *Trivialis Letterstoeditorii*: This semi-parasitic species specialises in secondary and tertiary foraging activities, but by the sheer volume thereof and a not inconsiderable bombast to go with it, it manages to fake primary foraging prowess and corner a larger than fair share of the community surplus for itself.

18. *Mezbanus Gracious*: This species has the job of arranging visits of successful foragers from other better endowed societies and playing host to them. As a token payment for this, they are allowed a share of the community surplus.

19. *Exchangeprogrammae Internationalis*: This species is closely related to *Mezbanus Gracious* and specialises in exploiting mutual arrangements between Comm. Sci. Ind. and other, usually better endowed societies, to visit the latter and live off the community surplus there.

20. *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae*: This is the most powerful species in this society. Small in number and created by mutation of the more successful foragers of the other species (notably *Bulldozus Upwardmobili* discussed below), they control the distribution of community surplus, because of which the other species are obliged to pay

homage to them from time to time. This is also aided by the fact that they carry lethal poison in their stings. They are extremely wary of each other, but put up a united front, sharing their surplus with each other generously.

21. *Bulldozus Upwardmobili*: This species has moderate foraging ability, but a strong voice, bright plumage and lots of energy which allows them to corner more than their share of the community surplus. The most

***Nirvanae Seatwarmacus*:
This is the most parasitic
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successful members mutate into *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae*.

22. *Salivatii Bootlickus*: This species has a symbiotic relationship with *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae* and is allowed to live off the droppings of the latter for services rendered, such as picking fleas in the latter's coat and crooning in unison whenever the latter makes a sound so as to amplify its effect.

23. *Cantankerus Unionleaderii*: This species is sometimes mistaken for *Whiningus Leanandhungryfacus* because of the similar sounds that it makes, but is far more dangerous because of its lethal poison. By willing to act as masterminds in intra- and inter- species

conflicts of other species, they gain much social clout, often ending in a symbiotic relationship with a member of *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae*.

24. *Exgenius Frustatis*: This species shows very high foraging prowess for a short time, which then dries out. At this point they mutate into one of 4–7, 9–11, or 13–23 above.

In addition to these, there are three species who emigrate to other better endowed habitat when they are young and return much later:

25. *Firangis Coolcatus*: This is the most benign of these species and is characterised by a bright plumage and distinctive sounds acquired during their travels. They have the advantage of starting with a good initial endowment of food and better foraging techniques acquired elsewhere, and tend to live off these rather well till these run out. At this point, they usually mutate into 4, 7 or 10, an occasional one making it to *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae*.

26. *Pardesis Chiponshoulderus*: These have been reasonably good foragers elsewhere but cannot adapt back to this habitat, resulting in lowered foraging ability. This makes them develop poisonous stings with which they attack all and sundry. Finally, they either emigrate again or mutate into *Whiningus Leanandhungryfacus*.

27. *Nonresidentus Megalomaniacus*: The members of this species typically have spent a long time in better endowed habitats before return and have been successful foragers there, acquiring an impressive plumage in the process. They expect this to fetch them a position of power on return. This does happen to some, but never to their satisfaction. They then develop lethally poisonous stings with which they attack all detractors. The more successful ones mutate into *Primmadonnae Fundsenhonourdisbursae*. The relatively more benign ones mutate into *Senilae Almostthere-butnotquiteus*.

We are currently in the process of catalog-

ing the various subspecies and a detailed study of their characteristics, including their mating habits. This will be presented in a forthcoming monograph. 🙌



Vivek Borkar

Vivek Borkar aka Borya (B. Tech. EE '76 H3) got his MS in Systems and Control from Case Western and PhD in EECS from UC Berkeley. After working in TIFR-CAM, Bangalore, IISc, Bangalore and TIFR, Mumbai, he finally got back to where he once belonged - joining IITB as Institute Chair Professor of Electrical Engineering in August 2011.

A Brief History of IITBombay Dot Org

Part One

RAM KELKAR

Eighteen years is how long it takes for a baby to grow up and mature into a bright young person about to head out to IIT Bombay. It's hard to believe that iitbombay.org, which was registered way back in December 1996, is just about as old as freshies entering the hallowed portals of IIT Bombay this year.

To give netizens of today some perspective on how archaic things were in 1996, it may be hard to believe that Google did not exist, Hotmail had just been founded as the very first web-based email service, Netscape Navigator was the browser of choice, people were using modems to get dial-up Internet at speeds measured in kbps instead of the Mbps, and AOL was considered cool. There were only about 100,000 websites at the time compared to some 600-700 million active websites today. If we had spent the time and energy we spent building the IIT Bombay Alumni website and infrastructure on an e-commerce site, we could be lounging on a beach in the Caribbean instead of working for a living.

And yet much more satisfying than any realistic (or otherwise) dot-com day-dream is the fact that iitbombay.org helped lay the very foundation of IIT Bombay's alumni network connecting 40,000-plus IITB alumni across the globe. The sapling planted in 1996 has grown into a thriving tree that is being nurtured and enhanced by a terrific team of volunteers and IITBHF/IITBAA staffers from Hyderabad to

Mumbai to London to New York to Chicago to San Francisco.

It is widely acknowledged as the best alumni network of any university in India. It has changed lives and made a real difference for alumni, whether for job searchers, business connections, going to graduate school, assistance in emergency situations, or simply to find a familiar face while in a strange new place.

The genesis of the IIT Bombay website itself goes back to December 1996, when IIT Bombay's then Deputy Director, Prof. Sahasrabudhe, was visiting Citibank's trading room floor in New York City. He had come to meet with Victor Menezes ('70) who in many ways provided the inspiration for forming an alumni organization to help build Brand IIT. We had been debating back and forth on how to get the alumni effort started. This was still close to the dawn of the Internet era, and yet the powerful global reach of the worldwide web and the role it could play in connecting widely dispersed alumni was already becoming evident.

In the spirit of the old saying – Kal kare so aaj kar, aaj kare so ab, right there on a surreal trading floor, surrounded by traders and flashing screens of market prices, Prof. SC Sahasrabudhe and I called up a few ISPs, and signed up the domain titled www.iitbombay.org for IIT Bombay's alumni website.

The Alumni Directory database was in a

nascent stage since most alumni did not even have an email address. A fellow Class of '80 alumnus, Rajeev Rohatgi, had started an IIT Directory in printed form way back in the early '80s. The preamble to this directory stated that "The IIT directory project was conceived and put into execution during fall 1981. It was felt that the directory would fill a long-standing need for a means of communication within our community" ... this directory was produced at MIT primarily using MULTICS. As Prof. Ujjit Yajnik IITB's Dean of Student Affairs and another member of the Class of 1980 noted, "... data were gathered by manually filled forms travelling by post." This was after all the days of UUCP and ArpaNet, which were predecessors of what eventually became the Internet.

Rajeev ended his paper-based IIT Directory with the words ... "I should mention that my involvement with this project ceases with the publication of this directory, and I'm looking around for an heir apparent." Without really planning to, yours truly became the heir apparent and webmaster for the next 10-15 years.

Meanwhile, the alumni webzine Y-Point, which in many ways was the predecessor of Fundamatics, was launched in Winter 1997. Articles in the first issue included a message from Director S.P. Sukhatme, an interview with Kanwal Rekhi ('67), who was the original inspiration for the movement to give back to IIT Bombay, news from each batch written by class representatives, and an update on the 1997 Bay Area alumni picnic, amongst other stories.

As of March 1997, the online alumni directory had a grand total of 30 entries including 9 Public Entries and 21 Private Entries. Fast forward to today; the Alumni Directory has over 45,000 entries, showing how far we have come since the early days.

By January 1998, we had converted the paper IIT Directory into an Excel spreadsheet,

with total entries of 1,025, including 100 or so alumni each from the Bay Area, New York and Mumbai metro areas.

Alumni were told that "If your name does not appear in this list, please send the following information to webmaster@iitbombay.org ... listings will be Public unless you specifically request a Private Listing. Information such as address, phone number etc. is not publicly displayed on the website, and will be kept for Alumni Association use only. "

As of March 1997, the online alumni directory had a grand total of 30 entries including 9 Public Entries and 21 Private Entries. Fast forward to today, the Alumni Directory has over 45,000 entries, showing how far we have come since the early days.



For the next 3-4 years, alumni data was manually entered into a spreadsheet by me, and thus the alumni database was built, one row in an Excel spreadsheet, one name at a time. Meanwhile, not everyone had emails which meant that phone calls and snail-mail updates were not unusual.

Sometime around the year 2000, with Rahul Herwadkar ('93) playing a lead role and supported by a company appropriately named Y-Point, founded by IITB alum Jiten Apte from the Class of 1985, the database was converted into a professional SQL database which alumni could update by logging into the website.

Along with the SQL database, another key development was the acquisition of IMail Server to provide email services for alumni mail. Taking a cue from alumni websites of major US universities, Anil Kshirsagar ('75),

then President of IITBHF, suggested that a lifelong email forwarding facility be provided to alumni to create a bond with the alma mater. With the help of Xoriant and under Rahul Herwadkar's supervision, personalized @iitbombay.org e-mail ids and chapter/batch mailing lists became a reality circa 2000. Having a real database backbone instead of an Excel file maintained manually was crucial in supporting the provision of email forwarding services for alumni who could now get a

Raj “Mashru” Mashruwala ('75) reported that “our batch has made many new business ventures. Guys you saw in worn-out lungis and pajamas are now strutting around in 3-piece Armani suits ...



personalized @iitbombay.org address.

For several years after the initial launch of the website, alumni names were listed on an open webpage, and those who did not request for private listings had their email address on public display. After all, these were the early innocent days of the web when professional spam artists had not quite perfected their art. Following a rise in incidents of the Alumni Directory being used for bulk-spamming alumni, a password protected version of the Alumni Directory was finally launched in August 2000.

The website itself was being edited using HTML editing tools like FrontPage and hosted on a server of a San Francisco based company, which was a precursor to current-day hosting companies like RackSpace. In Year 2000, with the help of Y-Point staffers, the website was re-designed completely with a new look and feel, and edited using Microsoft's FrontPage, since CMSes like Drupal and Plone were not yet commonly in use.

The website featured online news updates

about IIT Bombay alumni and campus news culled from newspapers and online news sources. Old-timers may remember nuggets such as the time in December 1999 when then Director S.P. Sukhatme had to issue a public letter disavowing any plans for alumni from Infosys and other IT firms to take over the IITs. The News pages also recorded the summit meeting with distinguished alumni in Chicago where Prof. Sukhatme said memorably that “I dream of an IIT which never forgets that it has a tryst with excellence,” echoing the words of Pandit Nehru on the eve of India's independence.

The iitbombay.org website featured website tools and facilities such as chat rooms and a guestbook which were cutting edge for the time. In an attempt to connect alumni online in an interactive chat session like a Group IM, a Weekly IIT Chat Hour was scheduled on Sundays from 9 to 10 am West Coast Time. The Chat Room was open 24 hours each day, and alumni could set up a time slot for IIT classmates or other friends to join a Chat Session by e-mailing to them.

Class Notes, a forum for batch-wise news and updates, like many other features on the website, was modeled on a similarly named facility offered by The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Sameer Anand('90) wrote in July 1998 about a batchmate who was “a very eligible bachelor, looking for a sweet Gujju girl.” Raj “Mashru” Mashruwala ('75) reported that “our batch has made many new business ventures. Guys you saw in worn-out lungis and pajamas are now strutting around in 3-piece Armani suits ... we are also getting older – this year marks the first time that second-generation '75 kids are polluting institutes of higher education .. (such as) .. MIT and Harvard”. The Class Notes feature was replaced by batch-wise Yahoo Groups in November 2003.

A custom designed Jobs Board also made its appearance in the same time frame. The

Board displayed job openings at companies ranging from Microsoft R&D India, who had recently launched their R&D operations in Hyderabad, to openings for financial engineers for jobs on Wall Street. Alumni looking for positions could also post their resumes for employers to peruse.

The alumni database proved tremendously valuable after the terrible events of 9/11. Within hours of the tragedy, we could identify alumni working for firms in the World Trade Center area and efforts were under way to contact them to make sure they were safe. One riveting anecdote from that traumatic period was learning that Sunil Mohandas ('82) who worked in 1 WTC had missed the train to work that morning and was safe. The alumni database was cross-checked with the names of Indian-Americans from published lists of those who lost their lives in the World Trade Center disaster.

The Global Alumni Newsletters had begun in the 2001-2002 timeframe and were sent out by me as the webmaster of iitbombay.org, unlike the situation today where they are compiled and sent by a terrific global team of alumni and staff volunteers. To this day, some of those who used to receive the newsletters and other IIT Bombay alumni mail remember the webmaster, a designation which had a special connotation in the early days of the web but is relatively uncommon now. The September 2001 Newsletter went out more or less on time in spite of the fact that it was just 12 days after 9/11. It began with "Dear fellow IITian ... September 11, 2001, was a day of infamy that none of us will ever forget." It included an announcement that "... events including the New York Chapter banquet and Hudson River Cruise as well as events planned in Texas, California and elsewhere have been postponed till further notice due to the aftermath of the events on September 11."

The year 2002 was a landmark year because it marked the unification of the

Alumni Directory database, which is unique to IIT Bombay unlike all the other IIT alumni organizations. The US-based IITBHF Alumni Directory which began as a spreadsheet in the late 90s and was then moved into an SQL database in 2000 remained independent of the IIT Bombay database till April 2002. While the Alumni Directory SQL database had about 5,000 entries, IIT Bombay had its own database using somewhat outdated pre-SQL technology with close to 4,400 entries.

On April 29, 2002, Prof. Gaitonde gave the green signal to combine the IIT Bombay database with the Alumni Directory being maintained by IITBHF.



Several months of intense discussions took place regarding sharing of IIT Bombay's alumni data between IITBHF and then Director Ashok Misra, Prof. Uday Gaitonde, Professor-in-Charge of Alumni Affairs, and Prof. SL Narayanamurthy, with the primary concern being coordination between the campus website and iitbombay.org, and privacy issues to protect alumni data.

On April 29, 2002, Prof. Gaitonde gave the green signal to combine the IIT Bombay database with the Alumni Directory being maintained by IITBHF. The dream of unification had finally come to fruition, and alumni were not going to be confused by two apparently competing sites. The importance of this event cannot be understated because it has led to a global alumni database that is now used by IIT Bombay, IITBHF and IITBAA.

Meanwhile, in that same month of April 2002, the iit.org website was acquired from someone who was cyber-squatting on the URL, and the PanIIT website was co-hosted on the iitbombay.org server as a courtesy to

the PanIIT organization.

Continuing the foundational work done by Rahul Herwadkar ('93), the baton was passed in this time period to Balaji Srinivasan ('93). Rahul and Balaji have played a critical role in building the core infrastructure for iitbombay.org, including facilities such as the ability to login to the website and update personal information in the Alumni Directory, lifelong email forwarding, mailing lists for batches, chapters, and departments using IEmail, ChatRooms, Jobs and Resume Board, and much more.

The first half of our story ends in February 2005 with the coming together of IITBHF and IITBAA to share the alumni web infrastructure and use the unique strengths of each organization to build a single virtual global alumni organization.

To be continued ...

Editor's Note: Readers can visit www.archive.org for historical snapshots of iitbombay.org dating back to the 1990s. The Class Notes in particular may bring a smile to your face if you recognize the names. 🌸



Ram Kelkar

Ram Kelkar, B. Tech., 1980, Elec. Engg., currently heads Capital Markets and Trading at Milliman in Chicago, and has worked for over 25 years in the financial markets, after beginning his career as a chip designer in Silicon Valley. He is a recipient of both the Distinguished Alumnus Award (2014) and Distinguished Service Award (2012) from IIT Bombay. Ram is the Co-founder, current Trustee Emeritus and Former President of the IIT Bombay Heritage Foundation (IITBHF) Apart from IIT Bombay, Ram is a MSCS '82 from UW-Madison, and MBA '87 from The Wharton School. His interests include hiking, mountaineering and travelling, and writing for rediff.com and India Abroad.

Plane-ly Speaking



GRUMBLEBEE

Back in the vintage 60s, air travel in India was the exclusive refrain of the rich – no, make that stinking rich. The aerial route was not for one in a hurry. Because back then, no one was in a hurry. Weddings and deaths, both were preplanned events that could be marked on a calendar well in advance to plan a train booking. Sometimes, trains were exchanged from Dadar to Bombay Central. Sometimes, from broad gauge to metre gauge. Sometimes, one changed from a train to a bus in much the same fashion as one changed trousers. Onward journeys were a way of life, a travel period spanning a week was in vogue and bedding (didn't some people also call it a hold-all?) with one suitcase full of clothes and another full of snacks, pickles, Glucose biscuits, pooris, papads, paan kit were necessary and sufficient embellishments that one carried on train travel.

Train compartments by themselves were awesome social networking sites. Forefathers of the present Facebook Express, perhaps. In days of internetlessness, victims of random allotment of seats, say cycle store owner Chandubhai, ittar salesman Agnihotri and Major Bhalla spent two nights and one day in adjacent hold-alls, trading dhoklas, biscuits and chiwda with each other, and playing rummy before disembarking from the train in a new spirit of back-slapping bonhomie.

Each discovered India in one's own commonly unique way. Train travel was more than

a commute from one place to another. It was an experience in community living and very often, a lesson in survival. A mega Indian joint family per bogie. People lent their soaps and shaving creams to one another. They played antakshari, shared ribald jokes, revealed gotras to each other, discussed alliances and 'matches', heard commentary on All India Radio. Camaraderie reigned supreme between total strangers who came together for a fleeting moment in their lives, by sheer happenstance.

But air travel – aha! That was a game in a different league. The stinking rich didn't care why they paid so much more than the more 'down-to-earth' Chandubhais to move from say, Madras to Bombay. Was it necessary to fly just because you could save mere two days of time? Bombay was going to stay in Bombay, no? Wasn't it going to be stationary? (pun intended) Even among the rich, there was a silent caste system. Some stinking rich stank more than the rest and travelled only in the new and snazzy Caravells, that didn't need a propeller to propel itself. And they made a lot less noise than the downmarket Viscounts and Dakotas, and outshone the Avros any day. Trips cost the same bomb irrespective of the aircraft.

But there was snootiness in opting for a travel on the day the Caravell wheezed into your aero-space. Technically, it was not a money matter. It was more of a style statement.

The Dakota-er was like a Safari suit wearer, while the Caravell-er was like a smart pleated trouser ensemble.

Every air traveller was accompanied by a retinue of see-off-ers and also receivers, depending on which direction you were flying – out or in. The see-off-ers waited till the aircraft had taken off. When the see-off-ee had presumably seated and strapped himself, the gawking entourage would run up to the viewing balcony and wave at every window as

It was just phoren. Plain and simple, with no synonyms. For a guy going phoren, wedding-like festivities preceded his travel.



the aircraft moved past, in the hope that their see-off-ee would see the farewell waves and wave back. This was reflected glory. In some mystical way, the riches of the air traveller rubbed off on those who waved louder than others.

But when it came to the stinkiest and the filthiest from among those rich, it was at a different level. Because these guys travelled phoren. Back then, it was not abroad, not overseas, not even the rather neutral ‘out of country’. It was just phoren. Plain and simple, with no synonyms. For a guy going phoren, wedding-like festivities preceded his travel. Every colony resident and relative in town would step in unannounced, days in advance, and offer help with packing, shaking hands, canvassing for getting gifts and photos. Newspaper adverts by sycophants wished them a ‘Bon Voyage’. Dozens of huge Samsonite bags, plastered all over with labels and names added to the pride of the traveller. He was not one of the ‘masses’ anymore. Bye-bye, common man-ism.

The see-off party at the airport boosted

the fortunes of garland makers and photographers. People descended at the airport in hordes. This was a hand-me-down style statement. The next best thing to travelling phoren was to garland the one who was, get photographed with them, shake their hand and hope that enough people had seen the phoren traveller recognise and smile at you. When they returned – they all did – they were called phoren-returned. How often have you been asked if you were a ‘phoren-returned’?

But I digress. When he returned, it was as if a silhouette of the Eiffel tower was growing out of his shoulder blade and the Statue of Liberty was imprinted in the halo around him. While unpacking bags for days, and handing out gifts and postcards, he would regale you with stories about how he unpacked and ate his bhel-puri in the lawns outside the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and how he put his bio-chemical paan kit to good use on a boat ride at the Thames. Some tez channa, katha, kacchi supari, star chutney sprinkled in paan leaves from Banaras would be found, still moist in the plastic bag they were holed up in. This was the advantage of being a rich Indian. You carried India with you in Samsonites, and unleashed them in phoren lands. Guerilla warfare at its best.

All this had to change. As years went by, time did become a precious commodity. Many people came on a short-duration visa to get married, and had to marry quick. More and more people began eloping and there had to be a hurried, respectable wedding to be carried out in a hurry. People still died of cancer and long-term ailments, but there were now peculiar and new diseases that killed people unexpectedly. More people needed to travel quickly and by air. Middle class-ism was up for an overhaul.

They wanted a change in the default settings. Do you think that the middle class should also travel by air? Click ‘Next’ to proceed and ‘Cancel’ to go back to the Main

Menu. The entire class clicked 'Next'. And then, there was a lofty socialistic objective at play. The skies had to get more inclusive. They had to broaden their base. There were no urban sky ceiling laws. Radio waves, sparrows, pigeons, bacteria, pollutants, clouds, political speeches – they all flew by air, didn't they? So why not the middle class Indian, who still argued, but argued in English now?

Aircrafts were bought, airports were re-furnished, airlines were invented. New wannabe pilots did a crash course in flying. (This pun is very much intended.) A new breed of air traveller was thus born – and it took over. Witness the new dynamics at any airport waiting lounge now. Air travel is now a composite experience, less about going from Point A to Point B. There is an ambience that has to be imbibed, drunk and internalised.

There is a protocol about how to alter the decibels you generate. Shout a loud "Ta-ta!" to your son while getting off the car, but switch into library/hospital mode as soon as you enter. When your crotch itches, just amble over to the edge of the baggage trolley and get your nirvana by a surreptitious rub against the handle. Scratching is reserved for Nampallys and Howras, please. Stand in the check-in queue without walking into the butt of the guy in front. Look around to see if you spot familiar faces, and impress a known acquaintance with your apparent ease at what seems like a familiar environment for you.

Walk to the bookstore. Browse a few magazines and books. Pick up a couple. Flash your credit card. Amble into the waiting lounge. Open your laptop. Type out the "quick brown fox..." if you want. Someone stupid enough to be watching you may believe you're writing a nuclear treatise. Bring out your mobile. At this stage, your decibel level can be upped a bit. Tell the called one that you are leaving by the 19:35 flight. You have to say 19:35, not 7:35 pm if you want to be fashionable. Why you need to say 'flight' after you've already

announced that you're at the airport is a question that may not have any answers. Not a sane one anyway.

And when they announce that your flight is boarding, mayhem breaks out. Eager Indians, anxious men and women in a hurry all get up in unison, and jostle to reach the departure gate. This brings out the grim reminder that there still exists in our DNA Dadaji's genes. Genes which fought pitched battles at railway stations to wade through throngs in order to reach the bogie at the 7:35 pm time because back then, some trains occasionally did hoot and chug away at the promised 7:35 pm, irrespective of whether you had got yourself and your hold-all into the train or not.

Some residual fear about being stranded still seems to exist in the jostlers' minds. And when Indians jostle, they jostle hard. They can ram their laptop bag into a guy's vertebrae. Pitifully, grown-up men are asked through mike announcements to 'please form Q' and to 'please do not push your fellow passengers'. But they still push, still spit and still scratch all the way to the aerobridge or ladder.

To a certain extent, it depends on whether you're in a metro or a wannabe metro like Udaipur, Patna or Baroda. The metros are being formed faster than the protagonists are causing their formation. Sounds like a good deal. But a DNA correction is in order which is not happening. And that's not good news. Because when a neo-traveller is in the aircraft, he's plying two massive suitcases, three magazines, gifts, roses, kids and a forgettable attitude, despite being told that he is entitled to carry just one compact handbag.

But there's a Mahesh in his office who told him, "Balls! Just carry what you want. Whose grandfather will stop you?" The angry, youngish man, braver and newer in this world than Amitabh Bachchan, listens to Mahesh more than he listens to his conscience and an attempted upbringing. End result: he's got multiple bags in tow that he's deftly maneu-

vering down the aisle, opening every overhead baggage locker and cussing like a stable-boy, when he finds them full and occupied by other beneficiaries of Mahesh's advice.

Part of the attitude of the neo-traveller is the realisation that he or his company has paid through their nose to fund his ticket. He pays for not just the octane and pilots, he pays for services. He's into a call-button-pressing-spree. "Hello, madam!" No, madam

Welcome to the new caste system in air travel. Domestic is untouchable. International is Brahmannical, esoteric and ethereal.



is not being wished. This 'hello' is an order that means, "You'd better come here right away." So back to "Hello, madam! What can you serve me?" Madam has been there and done that for some time now, so she smiles and says that she can serve coffee and tea. Mr. Neo wants to be difficult. "How about some fresh lime and soda?" Oh, yes! Why don't you simply ask for Russian salad? Or maybe rajma cooked in Agra by a Mithalal Maharaj from Jodhpur, if he's married to Radha, but sleeping with your servant Shravan in 3/RT, Post Office Colony, 8-3-141/A/123-C Part, Hyderabad? Sometimes, a reminder of the grim realities and humble origins and nonsensical existences are in order.

Bags are jostled into nimble manufactures by Boeing and its plastic overhangs. There is tension in the air. High level demands by high level travellers. They animatedly argue about the bad Indian habit of spitting and eating paan. They are livid when they recollect that a flight from Aurangabad took off after a 25 minute delay without an apology or an

announcement. But they are equally appreciative of the saucy stewardess who told an irate Cathay Pacific traveller in Hong Kong, "What is you hurry?"

Welcome to the new caste system in air travel. Domestic is untouchable. International is Brahmannical, esoteric and ethereal. Indian skies are pliable and very nicely security checked. Clouds don't throw a tantrum or a hurricane like their Houston counterparts. They allow visibility and safe landings and move according to Air Traffic Control's wishes. And when the aircraft finally lands, taxis and stops, passengers spring to their feet in synchronised unison.

Simple logic – the plane stopped, we have to get out. We have to get up to get out. So why are you snarling at me, old man, if I get up, slide over your knees and invert-turn to open the overhead baggage locker, in the face of whoever is foolish to stand in front of it with polite manners and a smile? Yes, I'm fanning my face with a newspaper that I grabbed from your seat's front jacket. And while walking over you, your knees, your persona and your existence, I am going to show you my finger, pull my bag down on your shoulders just as you get up, and hurt you enough to remind you that you are an old fogey who doesn't know how to catch an early locker.

This is an attitude with a vector, it has direction and a velocity. It makes for a good recount. But at the end of the day, the bottom-line is what Nawab Aminuddin Khan had to say to a tossing, turning, agitated lady traveller who went ballistic on the pilot for a not-so-smooth landing. Amin chacha cocked half-an-eyebrow at her and murmured, "Having a tough menopause, eh?" 🖐️

The Hagiwara Tandav

When a Japanese Giant Danced with an Indian SME

SRIKRISHNA KARKARE

I look at the mirror now, when I am 53 years old. Eighty percent white hair! Only to be expected at this age? Actually, it happened to me a long time ago, back in 1993 when I was only 34. That was when Hitachi stumbled upon Enpro, a company founded by Alka and I to design and manufacture packaged piping systems.

On a sleepy afternoon back then, I got a phone call from our friendly neighbors, Thermax. They say there is a team visiting them from Hitachi of Japan. They want to visit Enpro and wanted our permission to do so. It was a bolt from the sky! I bolted from my chair and got our team together. We had to put out best foot forward! Hasty housekeeping exercises were undertaken to create the semblance of a walkway in our cluttered shop.

A team of five Japanese, led by Mr. Y Hagiwara turned up at sharp 10:00 a.m., wearing immaculate black suits. After a few pleasantries (repeatedly bending at the hip at right angles, and exchanging business cards as though they were our most precious belongings), they very politely asked for permission to take photographs. Once granted, all five of them suddenly pulled out their cameras and went berserk through our tiny shop, capturing on celluloid every tiny detail in every nook and corner. (Remember, this was pre-digital age when cameras had film, drawings were made by drafting machines, messages were sent on fax with thermal paper and one had

**“Mistal Kalkale, what is the wolkin time at Enplo?”
“8.00 am to 5.00pm
Hagiwara san”! I replied
meekly.**

**“All these people came to
Enpro after 8.30? You must be
fie (fire) them at once!!”**



to book STD calls to talk to other cities.) The photo session was followed by detailed personal interviews of everybody right from the Managing Director to the shop welders, and an audit of all functions.

This one day audit was followed by an enquiry, which we quoted with the same recklessness of a four-year-old child (after all, we were only four years old in the business and had practically no exposure to international business.) What followed was a whirlwind tour to audit all our sub-suppliers (8 cities in 4 days, six flights, 1,800 kms on road and three sleepless nights.) After this not-so-cursory due diligence, Hagiwara San was ready to talk business. After a lot of technical back-and-forth he offered a price and a delivery date and told us that the order would be ours if we agreed to both. We were really salivating at the prospect of getting our first international order and agreed almost instantly (again with

the same ease as a four year old would agree to do an errand in exchange for a lolly pop.) No sooner had we shaken hands, Mr. Hagiwara pulled out a neat box file and handed it over to me: “Congratulations, Mistal Kalkale – This is your lertal of intent!”

That box file (letter of intent) was destined to change the future of Enpro and the color of my hair forever.

In the coming few weeks, we spent thousands of rupees and dozens of reels of thermal

The six-month interaction with Mr. Hagiwara was indeed baptism by fire for the fledgling Enpro. Today, Enpro is one of the best known brands for lubrication systems globally.



paper, sending drawings over the fax and receiving comments/approvals from Hitachi. Every time the fax machine rang and I saw a message from Hitachi, my heart would sink (here goes another thermal paper roll worth Rs. 800 and several hundred rupees added to the telephone bill!). Two months after shaking hands with us, Hagiwara San realized that things at Enpro were not going exactly as planned. Hagiwara San would be on the phone with me every single day, running through the minutest details of our order. “Mistal Kalkale you told me a lie!” he would shout on the phone (meaning you did not do what you said you will do.) If I told him that a part did not arrive because a truck broke down or a supplier could not be contacted as telephone lines were not working, he would simply fail to understand what were to us common facts of life.

After about a month of shouting (his) and cowering (mine) over the phone, Mr.Hagiwara decided to take things in his own hands. He

packed his bags and landed up at Enpro with one of his sidekicks, Kudo, and a welding expert Mr. O Tanaka whose entire vocabulary in all foreign languages (including English!) was “Namaste!” besides a big smile (which, fortunately, is understood the same way in all languages).

But when Hagiwara San arrived, he had another universally understood expression on his face: a highly contemptuous and contorted frown. For the next two months he took virtual command of Enpro, questioning anything and everything he felt affected the execution of the Hitachi order.

Once, a worker was distributing pedhas to celebrate a new vehicle he had purchased, and offered one to Mr. Hagiwara. “Why Now!” he hissed with a contorted viscous face. “Is this eating time? Please go and work on Hitachi Order!”

One day he was about to attack me with his most vicious abuse for our daily ‘non performance,’ when his expression suddenly changed from extreme anger to extreme fear and almost started shivering with fear at the sight of something behind me. I turned around to see it was just a common house lizard lurking on the wall!

Another day, he started frothing at the mouth and almost burst with fury when he saw one of the much-awaited plates for his job being delivered to our shop on a bullock cart!

One day, I arrived at the factory at 9.00 am and found Mr. Hagiwara sitting at the gate on a chair with a notebook in his hands. He followed me into my office, brandishing the notebook that had a list of names written in it.

“Mistal Kalkale, what is the wolkin time at Enplo?”

“8.00 am to 5.00pm Hagiwara san”! I replied meekly.

“All these people came to Enpro after 8.30? You must be fie (fire) them at once!!”

We started serving him tea in steel mugs after he broke a couple of china cups during

one of his fits of fury. We also adopted an open door policy so he did not have to kick the doors while entering or leaving cabins.

Whenever he introduced himself by name, many of our vernacular workers could not help laughing. This would infuriate him to no ends. No one dared to tell him that the name was so funny when said in Marathi.

The fits of fury continued nearly till we completed our first order six months later (against the scheduled four months.) We were already 200% over budget. We were also 200% sure that Hitachi had totally written us off.

But to our utter surprise, they placed another much larger order with Enpro, even before the first order was shipped. Alka went to Hitachi Japan to get trained on lube systems (and that is another story in itself.) We executed the second order well within schedule and the budget and to Hitachi's full satisfaction. This was the beginning of a relationship that then lasted and flourished for almost 20 years. It has also spawned new relationships with other global giants like GE, Siemens, Ebara, Alstom, etc. It is true that the teachers who are hardest on you, teach you the most. The six-month interaction with Mr. Hagiwara was indeed baptism by fire for the fledgling Enpro. Today, Enpro is one of the best known brands for lubrication systems globally. This would certainly not have happened if Mr. Hagiwara had not kicked asses at Enpro a long time ago.

Today Mr. Hagiwara is retired and at peace with himself; whenever his name is mentioned at Enpro, a smile lights up on every face that hears it. 🙌



Srikrishna B Karkare

Srikrishna B Karkare IITB B Tech (Mech) C' 82,H5 or KRACK as he is known to his friends in IIT, founded Enpro Industries in 1987 along with his wife Alka (nee Vaidya) (also IITB Btech Chem 82, H10). Enpro is a globally recognized brand in mechanical fluid systems. Alka and Krack are blessed with two sons, both also IITians: Siddharth (IITKGP Btech 2009) and Anuj (IITB B/Mtech 2014). This makes them a unique ALL IIT family. KRACK and his entire family are keen mountaineers.

The Perfect Murder

(Inspired by a very, very boring business meeting)

DR. RUSTOM KANGA

*I have an old acquaintance
Who's perfected the art of crime
He can kill in 20 minutes
Which is not a lot of time*

*He doesn't use a poison
Or a rope or gun or knife
So there's no forensic evidence
That he has shed a life*

*He's not as nasty as the Ripper
Nor as gory as Macbeth
He talks to you for 20 minutes
And just bores you to death*

Who Do You Think You Are, Steven Jobs? (The Invention of Writing)

DR. RUSTOM KANGA

(On discovering that his friend, Shirin, did not own or use a computer)

*I am incredibly pleased to find
One who is so strong of mind
Who won't use a keyboard or a mouse
And doesn't have a computer in the house*

*What's wrong with traditional writing skills
You get pleasure from manually paying your bills
If computers are all you can use then
You will not recall how to use your pen*

*I will tell you a tale from long, long ago
As this isn't a new issue, you know*

*In Sumeria in the reign of Asherhods
At a time when all men talked to Gods
They learnt to chip on stone and hey
Writing was invented that very day*

*With chisel and hammer they honed their craft
If you couldn't chisel you were quite daft
In cuneiform they'd communicate
Chipping essays and poems on their stone slate*

*But if you were commuting to Stone Henge
Lugging rocks in your luggage was a big challenge
So innovation became the talk of the day
And someone discovered the new i-Clay*

*Then one day an Egyptian from Buxordobs
Whose name was Horus AmetobGobs
Who loved to create clever inventions
Decided to relieve them of all their tensions*

*While he was sitting on a camel bus
He came up with the idea of papyrus
No need to carry around lumps of clay
With pen and ink you can have your say.*

*This is bad said the mothers of Buxordobs
Who does he think he is - Steven Jobs?
Our kids - their brains will melt away
If they lose their skill of chiselling clay*

*They will spend all day playing with the pen
Coming back for a milkshake now and then
Does he think that we are silly old fools
They should ban these things from all the schools*

*It's possible that very soon
No kid will know how to chisel in stone
Everywhere they'll carry ink and pen
(The ballpoint had not been invented then).*

*So don't you dare blame Steven Jobs
The problem started with Horus Gobs*



Dr. Rustom Kanga

*Dr. Rustom Kanga, B.Tech.
Chem.Engg, C'73 went
on to get a Masters in Management and a
Doctorate in Finance from the London School
of Economics. After a career in the oil and
computer industries, he founded his own com-
pany, iOmniscient, which focuses on Artificial
Intelligence based Video Analysis. Rustom in-
dulges himself by writing humourous stories,
songs and poems.*

Salt'n Pepper

ARUN INAMDAR

Atlas Today !



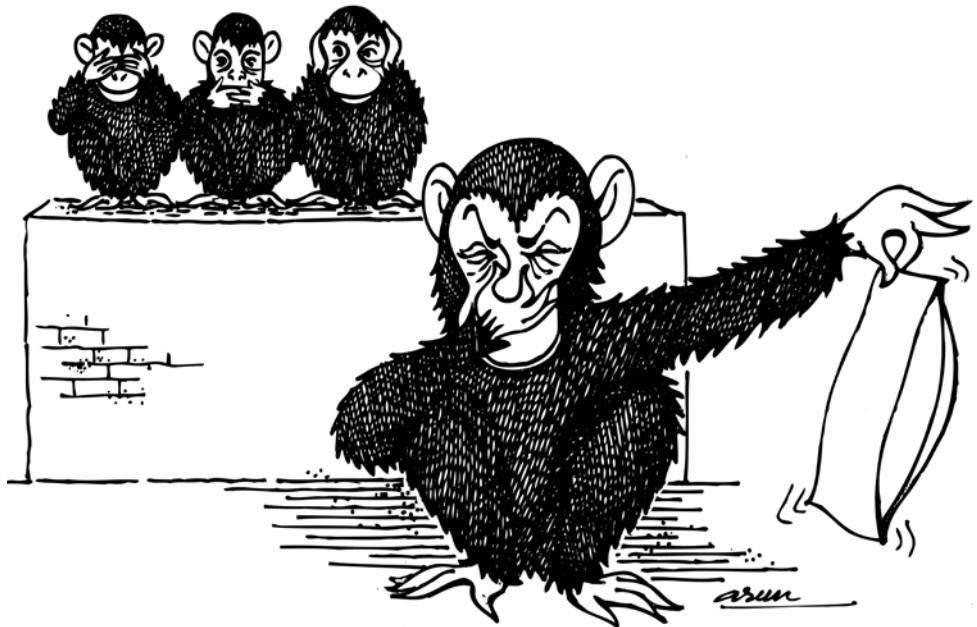
Arun Inamdar is an example of the breadth and depth of talent in IIT Bombay. A geologist by training and a professor at the Centre for Studies in Resource engineering, he is a perceptive cartoonist and a caricaturist with a soft corner for the campus and its ecology. Over the years many of his cartoons were regularly featured in Campus Diary then Raintree and also in Fundamatics. They have also been compiled

in a book 'Salt'n Pepper'. His caricatures have brought smiles to an array of celebrities who have visited the campus and his cartoons hold up a mirror to our follies without causing offence. An alumnus of the class of 1976, he can be counted upon to come to the rescue of the ACR office and IITBAA at very short notice.

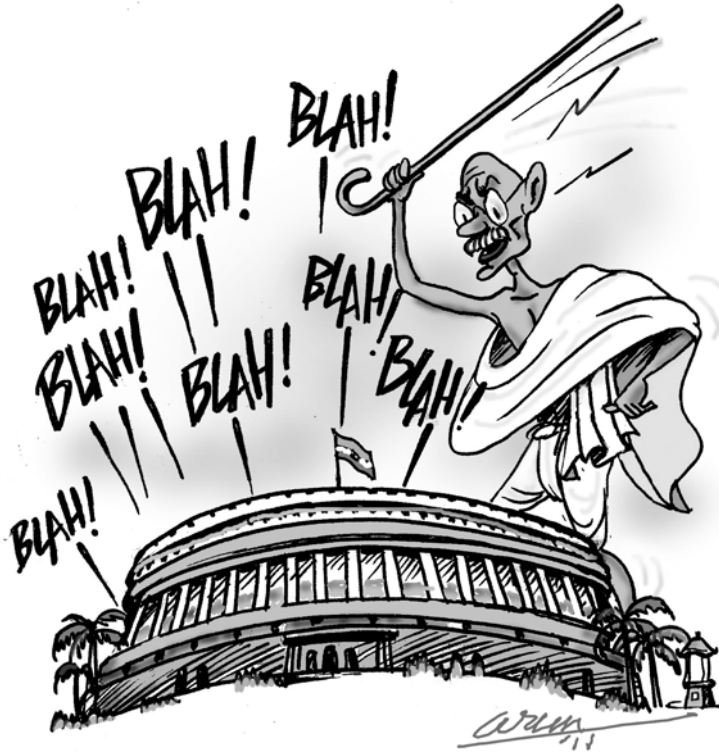
Fundabees



Globalisation



POLITICS TODAY!



Mahatma on lokpal debate



At your service



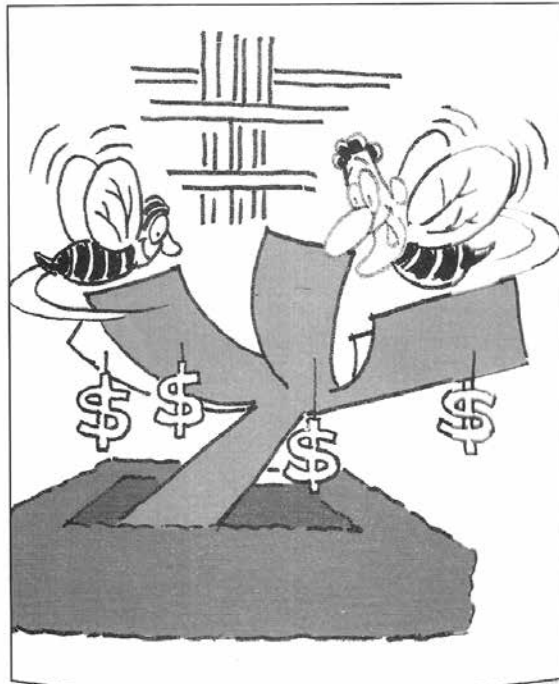
Bal Thakare



IIT then and now

Déjà vu

Flower of knowledge: The flower is still the same ... only the bees around are more focused on the 'nectar' than its 'fragrance'



Most old Timers from the Campus feel life at IIT Bombay has totally changed! Still there are lots of things that have remained the same despite the changes... Here is an update!

Life in general: Still a great adventure with reckless Tumtums adding to snakes/crocs/panther visits.



Mess food: Tastes the same as in yesteryears despite millions spent on renovations and 5 star training of the cooks!



MI: Still the same familiar faces/names
repeat hopelessly in the Pronites ..
despite bloated budgets!



Trees/Green cover : We had very few trees/green cover when we started (1970s and before) ... we are trying our best to get there!



A Slow Jakartan Travel Tale

JAYA JOSHI

In my 2-month long Southeast Asian trail, Indonesia featured third. The fatigue was setting in and my bones and back and legs and shoulders were starting to ache. To top it all, my welcome to the city was harsh. After a tiring 1.5 hour bus ride from the airport, I got off it with a suitcase and rucksack- just to get soaked to the bones. The pouring rain on the dark streets of Jalan Jaksa made my attempts to find a cheap, decent motel sluggish and ineffective.

Still, all was not doomed. Roy, my Indonesian couchsurfing host, whom I had never met before, came to my rescue with just a quick phone call. Roy, bless him, requested one of his friends to keep my bags and took me on his motorbike to find a hotel room. We found the best we could, which was way more than my budget and just not worthy of its price. Musty room, broken locks and seeped in melancholy, it was such a forgettable experience that I don't even remember the name of the hotel.

Determined to make something more than a hotel room in Jakarta, I got out of it early next morning for a walk on the short backpackers street in central Jakarta. Jalan Jaksa is nowhere near as touristy, modern or developed as the Khaosan Road in Bangkok, nevertheless the street still manages to offer a selection of services helpful to the average budget tourist including travel agencies, second-hand bookstores, money changers, laundries and pubs.

Fawad said, “I came to Jakarta via Singapore on a fake Indian passport packed with many like me in a large container with a pin-hole window for some air.”



I chose a local cafe to have breakfast all by myself and was soon spotted by two Afghani men. Fawad and Huzair walked towards my table with such disarming confidence and charm that it was difficult to turn down their odd request. They wanted to join me at my table because they were curious to know more about this single female traveller with unmistakable Indian looks, who was holding a cigarette between her fingers and puffing it too.

We sat and chatted and of course we started with Bollywood and Katrina Kaif and Deepika Padukone but we also spoke about politics in both the countries and their love and respect for India and all things Indian and their unreasonable dislike for Pakistan and all things Pakistani. It sounded a bit annoying, especially when some of my dearest and closest friends are Pakistanis. I tried reasoning this absolute love for one and absolute hatred for the other. But when emotions are both running too deep and surging too high, a casual conversation over coffee hardly creates even a ripple. There was no talking them out of it.



I encouraged them to move on from this morbidity and asked them about their families back home and life in Jakarta. What followed sounded like an exciting thriller to me but, looking back, I think it was too unfeeling of me. Both of them came from a village close to Kabul, had old parents, brothers and sisters. Fawad's brother was a neurosurgeon and lived in England, sisters went to school, mother was a home-maker and father-a shop owner. Fawad was to join his brother in England and find some work. So far, it was much like any other family that led a normal life and stayed shielded from any trouble in the area.

But last year, when his brother was visiting home, he along with his sisters were shot dead without a warning by the Talibani militants. Fawad, sitting across me, was now talking fluently in a vocabulary used exclusively by CNN war reporters. And it was a chilling account that he narrated!

The night of his brother's murder, he and Huzair decided to leave the country and the only way to do it quickly was through human trafficking. Fawad, the talkative one, spoke of being smuggled out of the country with such ease as if it was just another mode of transport.

To the question, "How did you travel to Jakarta?" I would have said that I flew in from Bangkok, while Fawad said, "I came to Jakarta via Singapore on a fake Indian passport packed with many like me in a large container with a pin-hole window for some air."

I was numbed by the reply and suddenly all my woes of last night seemed like nothing and rather indulgent.

I was hooked and wanted to know more. What were they doing in Jakarta and what were their aspirations, hopes and dreams? Did they have any? They told me that they, along with others like them, were put up in a small house in Bandung – north of Jakarta. They could not move around in Indonesia as even their fake passports were taken away. That day, they had come to the noisy streets of Jakarta to get away from it all, just for a few hours. The agent put them in touch with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) for getting all the papers in place so that they could seek asylum in their final destination – Australia. Why Australia? Ask this to an average Indian youth and he would talk about opportunities, possibilities, growth, money and experience. For Fawad and Huzair, it was simply an escape to a land without



murders, rapes, killings and gun shots in the neighbourhood. It had nothing to do with hopes and dreams.

The one-hour breakfast got extended to lunch, tea and, not to miss, a few tens of cigarettes nicked from each others packs. No matter how insensitive it makes me sound, there's no denying that those were the most enthralling 3-hours in my two days in Jakarta. But it was also more than that. It was about getting a whack on the right side of the head regarding making choices. I could either feel sorry about my wretched days in the city or try and make the most of it by going out, meeting people and doing things that I do.

For me, travel is not just about places and beaches and mountains; it's about feeding on those chance encounters to draw my own perspectives of days gone by and days to come.

It is not about capturing the place through a camera, but about getting lost in the moments spent with strangers. I may never meet Fawad and Huzair again, but will always wonder if they ever ended up on Aussie shores or were packed-off back to Afghanistan. Once in a while, I will raise a smoke to them.

Getting around in Jakarta

Jakarta has lots to offer. Most tourists make a short stop in Jakarta for its night life and shopping. There are museums, a palace, theme parks and heritage sites.

I decided to poke around the back streets of Jakarta on an ojek (a motorcycle taxi), haggled for good price rides on a Bajaj (Jakartan equivalent to Indian auto rickshaw or Thailand's tuk-tuk) or went the slick and comfortable bus-way. Of course, my all-time favourite was exploring the city on foot, stopping for some street food and either liking it or hating it, while slyly observing fellow walkers, getting strangers to click my photos when selfies got tedious and, like a true Indian, asking for directions when lost.

I did manage to see and spend time at a few of these sites:

Old town Batavia or the Dutch quarter had to be one such place. It is situated in north Jakarta near the Glodok China Town. The square, surrounded by old Dutch architecture and complete with sets of Museum and cafes, is a great place for people-gazing. You can sit with a drink at any café facing the Square and watch time go by, or get busy clicking photographs of the grand backdrop.

On a friend's recommendation, I also visited Taman Mini – a theme park that features Indonesian culture of all the 30 provinces of Indonesia. Of course, it's not an ideal way to see Indonesia. But Taman Mini can give a clever snapshot of the whole country if you are pressed for time and cannot cover the length and breadth of all the 17,000 islands, volcanoes, and so much more.

But I visited it on a weekend- and that was



a wrong day. That endlessly huge park was still teeming with busloads of local city dwellers. Every inch of it was covered with Indonesian sounds and sights and smells. It was nice to see that so many locals don't take their city for granted and still enjoy it as tourists would. It could've been enjoyable but sadly it wasn't. Coming from a country as populated as mine, it's a bit strange to say that I'm claustrophobic- but I am.

Sweet Budi, a Javanese who worked at the Information Desk, found me looking utterly lost and sick. Without being obnoxiously intrusive, he came to me and offered to help. We walked together for a bit and jointly decided that a movie at a multiplex would be a better way to spend my remaining 4 hours on a rainy day in Jakarta. He dropped me off to a taxi, directed the driver and left.

The taxi driver took me to a mall that housed the biggest multiplex of Indonesia. It was for the first time that I bought a ticket, not for the movie of my choice but for any movie that was playing at the time. After two and a

half hours of the Korean blockbuster called Miss Granny (with Indonesian subtitles), I came out of a packed theatre with some left-over un-dried tears and a sniffing nose.

I took an Ojek to my hotel, got wet in the rain yet again, packed my bags and checked out to get to the railway station to catch a train to Jogja.

Blurb 1: Fawad said, "I came to Jakarta via Singapore on a fake Indian passport packed with many like me in a large container with a pin-hole window for some air."

Blurb 2: my all-time favourite was exploring the city on foot, stopping for some street food and either liking it or hating it, while slyly observing fellow walkers, getting strangers to click my photos when selfies got tedious and, like a true Indian, asking for directions when lost. 🙌



Jaya Joshi

Jaya Joshi is an ex-specialist, current generalist, penniless, compulsive, urban, single, mostly solo, full-time traveler. She lives, earns a little and saves as much to travel. After 15 years of presentations, press releases, PR events, cocktails, kissing in the air, high heels, Jaya decided to move. She moved with no certain plans, ambitions, strategies and road maps but with a large, thinly explored map of the world and very little money. She writes sparingly but when she does it is about her encounters with strangers, what the travel did to her the impressions she came back with, and the crevices it underlined. Jaya is the former PRO of IIT Bombay and blogs about her travels at <http://twotornshoes.wordpress.com/>

Hatti o Hatti

SATISH HATTIANGADI

A Short love story!
A story has an end, and we are yet to reach it!

But an incident can be related...

We were fortunate to have a home where water was never in short supply. So it was a serious problem when, one Sunday, the underground and overhead tanks were being cleaned, and we had no water in the house.

Water or no water, it did not stop Leja from her weekly cleaning-up program. And I, as usual, picked up a crossword to solve and went to one corner and sat down. (Those were the days before SUDOKU hit town!)

Leja peeped at me out of the corner of her eye, and I could feel the ambient temperature rise.

But I soon forgot the situation, and was contemplating the 15-letter word at 13 down while relishing a cigarette, and I saw her peep again, with the ambient temperature going up another notch.

But that fifteen-letter word was a tough one, and needed a second cigarette to do justice to it.

That is when I saw Leja's third peep, and the temperature had now reached boiling point!

"Hay, Hatti, fetch me some water!" ("Hatti" was the term used when the situation was in vapour phase!)

"In what shall I fetch it, dear Leja, dear Leja, in what?"

"But there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, dear Leja, there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, a hole!"



"In a bucket, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, In a bucket, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, in a bucket!"

And so I got up and went to the bathroom and picked up a bucket and examined it...

"But there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, dear Leja, there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, a hole!"

"Then fill it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, fill it, dear Hatti, FILL IT!"

"With what shall I fill it, dear Leja, dear Leja, with what shall I fill it, dear Leja, dear Leja, with what?"

"With a straw, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, with a straw, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, with a STRAW!"

So yours truly went out in the garden and brought a straw that was lying around.

"But the straw is too long, dear Leja, dear Leja, the straw is too long, dear Leja, too long!"

"Then cut it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, cut it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, CUT IT!"

"With what shall I cut it, dear Leja, dear Leja, with what shall I cut it, dear Leja, with what?"

"With an axe, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, with an Axe, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, WITH AN AXE!"

And so I amble to the tool box and pick up

the axe. I feel along the edge, and then park myself in front of the mirror and see if I can use the axe to shave myself, and when I can't, I am convinced.

“But the axe is too dull, dear Leja, dear Leja, the axe is too dull, dear Leja, too dull!”

“Then sharpen it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, Sharpen it, dear Hati, dear Hatti, SHARPEN IT!”

“On what shall I sharpen it, dear Leja, dear Leja, on what shall I sharpen it, dear Leja, on what?”

By then, I had got my word for the crossword puzzle: 'PROCRASTINATION'



“On a stone, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, on a stone, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, ON A STONE!”

Back to the tool box to pick up the whetstone, then on I went to the work bench to put the stone on it, and I picked up the axe to sharpen it.

“But the stone is too dry, dear Leja, dear Leja, the stone is too dry, dear Leja, too dry.”

“The wet it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, wet it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, WET IT!”

“With what shall I wet it, dear Leja, dear Leja, with what shall I wet it, dear Leja, with what?”

“With water, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, with water, dear Hatti, WITH WATER!”

“But there is no water, dear Leja, dear Leja, there is no water, dear Leja, no water.”

“Then fetch it, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, FETCH IT!”

“In what shall I fetch it, dear Leja, dear Leja, in what?”

“In a bucket, dear Hatti, dear Hatti, IN A BUCKET!”

“But there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, dear leja, there is a hole in the bucket, dear Leja, a hole!”

By then, I had got my word for the cross-

word puzzle: ‘PROCRASTINATION’

Yes, as you may have guessed, this bares an uncanny resemblance to a certain Calypso tune hummed by Harry Belafonte. But then, all love stories are alike, aren't they? 🌸



Satish Hattiangadi

Satish Hattiangadi : (B.Tech. 1971, Chem Engg., H5) did his Masters in Chemical Engineering from the University of Massachussets, Lowell (at that time Lowell Technological Institute). He did a Post Graduate Diploma in Software Technology from NCSDCIT, and has worked extensively in software development. He is married to his classmate from IIT Bombay, Leja. Satish has all along been working alone, and tends to work 24/7 till the problem at hand is solved. He has retired from software development for the last eight years, and has been a regular participant in his Rotary Club and Rotary District activities. He is also member of the Executive Committee of the Mumbai Chapter of IITBAA.

Close Encounters of the Chinese Kind

AKSHAY MISHRA

I put my hand in my pocket and realised that my pocket had been picked. Considering that I had to cross over to mainland China from Hong Kong as soon as possible, this was the third event which could be termed “unfortunate” in a matter of two hours. Also, the fact that this was my first trip to a foreign land made me think that it was all a part of some grand design.

It all began when I was asked to rush to Beijing immediately to help a customer. The short notice meant I did not have time to get a visa, so after discussions with my colleague and clients I decided that I should apply for a Chinese visa at the Shenzhen border when in HK. I left for Hong Kong the same night while a driver and car was arranged for me at HK airport, a room was booked for me in Shenzhen and I was booked for a flight to Beijing the next day of my arrival.

After an uneventful flight, once I reached Hong Kong, the aforementioned events unfolded with clockwork precision. Immediately upon arrival I was *politely* whisked away by custom officials. Upon reaching the interrogation room, I was told by the officials in halting English that they have caught a Pakistani and need help on translation. I had nothing pressing at hand, moreover, the request was more like an earnest order and I obliged. The Pakistani was caught carrying a large quantity of drugs and it was a grave situation. I still remember his eyes. I was told he might be

The rifles were not AK-47 but were gas operated, most likely a Chinese replica cocked in full auto mode, fully capable of puncturing me at a rate of 100 bullets/minute each.



executed and I shuddered. After about 20 minutes, I requested to be excused since I could not tolerate it. I was allowed to leave.

I reached my highly anxious driver who had almost given up on me and was about to leave assuming I'd not turn up. Soon we were speeding towards Shenzhen and everything seemed settled now. I finished my exit formalities at the Hong Kong border checkpost and dozed off, trying to forget the Pakistani. After some time when my driver asked for my passport, I gave it to him, turned and slept again. In a moment, I was pulled out of my car and 12 Chinese Border Policemen had their guns on me at a distance which is known as Point Blank. I cannot put in words the feeling I went through but my mouth went dry and my eyes almost popped out. And to say, I was pitying the Pakistani only a couple of hours ago.

I put my hands up and said “English Please”. My voice came out as a squeak and I barely heard myself. I felt that this was surely my end and what would make it more



tragic was the fact that I had no idea what was happening. The Border Police promptly opened up my luggage and its contents were strewn everywhere in the car and on the road. I did not care and only kept repeating “English Please” over and over again. What had happened was that the driver, assuming that I had a Chinese visa, had taken me into Chinese territory, leaving the Shenzhen checkpost some 15 kms behind, and now here I was, staring at the wrong end of numerous Chinese rifles. *I was within China without a visa !!* The rifles were not AK-47 but were gas operated, most likely a Chinese replica cocked in full auto mode, fully capable of puncturing me at a rate of 100 bullets/ minute each. I almost shouted, “You pigs, get me somebody who can speak English, I am an engineer out here to help a Chinese customer”. I am not sure if it was the word “pigs” or “engineer” or something else, but the commander’s eyes softened and he powered up his wireless. After a brief conversation he commanded that I be taken to an interrogation room. This time, ironically enough, I was the victim needing a translator.

My driver who seemed equally scared refused to translate and stayed put in the car.

Finally some high ranking Chinese military official came in and I spoke with him. He saw my passport, saw my tickets, spoke to my driver and then told me that what I had done could be punished severely but he will make an exception and allow me to return to the border where I can get my visa. But to ensure I am out of China immediately, an escort car will accompany us. I breathed and realised my bladders would burst but never gathered the courage to ask for the wash room. I ran, picked my luggage content spread all over and scooted and we were at the border at break-neck speed - the driver was trembling and I could not feel anything. I was detained for 45 minutes and it had seemed like a lifetime.

I arrived at the border checkpost at 5:03 PM and was told it closes at 5 pm so I should come again next day. I inquired if visa is issued to Indians, and was stonewalled. I asked my driver to take me to some hotel - he said he will drop me at some metro station and I should fend for myself. And all this will cost

me US\$100. He had made his judgement - I was a bad man and should be avoided. I did not say anything and he dropped me at some metro station. I stepped out, went to the loo and then went to buy some sandwich, I put my hand in my pocket and realised my pocket had been picked ...

I turned back and ran like mad towards the only man I knew there - my driver. He was sitting in his car and maybe planning to turn back. I almost begged him, with the crowd

I ran, picked my luggage content spread all over and scooted and we were at the border at breakneck speed - the driver was trembling and I could not feel anything. I was detained for 45 minutes and it had seemed like a lifetime.



staring at us, to take me to some hotel and told him that my wallet had been picked. He looked in his car, muttering there are no pick-pockets in Hong Kong, found my wallet, and drove me to one of the best hotels in Kowloon.

I had survived.

Inquiring at the hotel travel desk I was informed that China does not issue travel visas and I should return back to India. The next day I with my driver reached the HK border checkpost where the official was staring at me, for what was I doing entering, leaving, re-entering and now again leaving HK within a day. When I recounted my story, he said Indians are welcome as many times as they want from whichever end of HK and I smiled - I knew what it meant. At the Shenzhen checkpost, visa was a mere formality and about 15 kms away at the border patrol station, the same border patrolmen from the day before, looked at my visa, spoke to each other, laughed and

called me for some tea. I politely refused and sped away for the airport. 🙌



Akshay Mishra

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Vikram aur Vetal

TRANSLATED FROM AN ORIGINAL HINDI ARTICLE BY SATISH AGNIHOTRI WHICH APPEARED IN THE 1980 ISSUE OF PRAGATI

Background for those who don't know Vetaal stories:
BRaja (king) Vikram would climb up a tree to get the corpse of some person down, and carry it on his shoulder to some place. During his walk, the vetaal (spirit) in the body would tell him a story, and then ask a question about the story.

The conditions for Vikram are:

1. if he speaks (breaks his silence), then the corpse returns to the top of the tree, and Vikram has to restart
2. if he knows the answer to Vetaal's question, he must answer otherwise his body will fall into pieces

High-Funda was determined. Patiently he got the dead body onto his shoulders from the roof of the main building (MB in IIT-B) and began climbing down the stairs. Vetaal said, "Hey High-Funda! I admire your perseverance, but sometimes I doubt your intentions. I wonder if, after capturing me, you would utilize me for the benefit of others or yourself. But I want to warn you up front. Do not use me for cogging (IIT slang for cheating in tests) in tests and quizzes. God will punish you if you do that."

High-Funda listened quietly, just as he would listen to a professor preaching in the class about things not to do. Within his mind, however, he was thinking, "Let me first capture you buddy! Then I will make you write

not only my home assignments, but also the home paper (thesis). For small small things such as cogging I am expert myself."

Vetaal continued, "You IITians are used to listening with a plain face. This reminds me of a story. I am telling it to you so that you don't get bored of walking. Listen carefully."

Raja (king) Bhoj was in his darbar as usual. As soon as the daily routine began, the minister notified that a representative of the Director of Bhartiya Takaniki Sansthan (IIT) wanted to speak to him. Raja granted the permission. The representative came in the darbar and bowed to raja Bhoj. Everybody in the darbar was surprised to see the four identical persons that followed him.

The representative said, "Rajan, I am here with a huge problem. The four samples standing in front of you are four distinct individuals, and not four xerox copies of the same person. Out of these, one is a UG meaning a B.Tech. student, one is a Research Scholar, one is an M.Tech student who has done his B.Tech. in IIT, and one is an M.Tech student who has done his B.E. outside somewhere. Their identical looks has caused tremendous confusion. Once the UG stole a name plate from the security department, and the poor freshie M.Tech. got punished. At another time, the Research Scholar collected the school for all four of them. Hence our Director feels that this would be a nice problem for the intelligent people in your darbar. Using non-de-

structive tests, you need to determine who is who. For your convenience we have marked their T-shirts with the letters A, B, C and D. If you cannot decide who is who, then you will have to concede defeat, and pay 100 million Rupees to IIT in foreign currency.

Bhoj looked at his darbar. Everybody kept quiet. Bhoj said angrily, "What is this? Out of all these pandits, isn't there anyone who can take this challenge? Is Dhara nagari full of fools except for Kalidas?" All darbaris still kept quiet.

Bhoj: "Mantri! Where is Kalidas?"

"Maharaj! He must be on his way," the answer came.

Bhoj: "This Kalidas is getting late everyday lately."

(Within his mind Bhoj thought Kalidas had become a head of the department.)

One of the pandits, Varahamihira, gathered his courage. He had done a short course of three weeks in IIT.

Varahamihira: "May I try, your Majesty?"

Bhoj: "Surely! Surely!"

Varahamihira invited the Gaali-Pandits to the darbar, and whispered some instructions in their ears. A, B, C and D stood in a row, and Varahamihira ordered, "Get set! Go!" Immediately, Gaali-Pandits began saying obnoxious gaalis (foul words). All the darbaris were stunned. One after one, they began stuffing their ears with their fingers. Bhoj himself stuffed his ears, because he could not stand the disgusting language.

Varahamihira was watching the four carefully. He thought, at least the freshie M.Tech. will express resentment. But the IITians showed no expressions. These routine gaalis were all too familiar to them in the hostels. After the Gaali-Pandits were done, Varahamihira was looking down with shame. He tried saying something to Bhoj. But Bhoj looked at his hung face, and said, "Pandit! This is a matter for Kalidas only. So don't worry about it."

Varahamihira did not lose heart altogether.

He said, "Maharaj! Let me try only one more time. I am confident that I will identify at least one of them."

Bhoj: "OK! But this is the last chance."

Varahamihira sent a man with some instructions. The darbaris waited curiously for what was to follow. In the meanwhile Kalidas entered. Just like an IITian's face blooms when he gets an intro with a non-IITian girl, Bhoj's face bloomed with delight when he saw Kalidas coming. Kalidas also understood the

at least the freshie M.Tech. will express resentment. But the IITians showed no expressions. These routine gaalis were all too familiar to them in the hostels.



matter as soon as he saw the IIT representative with the four identical students with their Mood-Indigo T-shirts. Kalidas went and sat right next to Bhoj and began discussing the matter.

Varahamihira's man came back with four staff members from the jail. They had four dishes of food from jail. Varahamihira ordered the four students to eat that food. The darbaris and Bhoj himself felt bad to see the guests eating the food meant for prisoners. Some soft hearted ladies had tears in their eyes. But Varahamihira was quiet. He was certain that he will see different reactions for the food. The freshie M. Tech. adjusted himself for the gaalis, but he would surely complain about the food. And the one who eats without cribbing (complaining) must be the UG. Then I can think of distinguishing between the other two. He began dreaming about defeating Kalidas.

Alas! The four IITians ate the food without any complaints and regrets.

Varahamihira was puzzled. He asked them in a stuttering voice, "How was the food?" And a unanimous answer came, "Just like the

food in our mess!”

The darbar was filled with a huge laughter. The insulted Varahamihira walked out of the darbar, and never showed his face again in Dharanagari. Some people say that he joined IIT. Some say he joined some psychiatric ward. Although, those who know, know that these are equivalent things. Now Kalidas had the responsibility to save Bhoj's face. Kalidas was calm and composed. He said in a confident tone, “Maharaj! I believe that I will be able to

“A is the freshie M.Tech. who did his B.E. outside of IIT. B is the Research Scholar. C is the UG B.Tech. student and D is the M.Tech. student who did his B.Tech.in IIT.”



take this challenge. But I will need some ten days to do this.” Bhoj gladly agreed.

Kalidas arranged for the four students to stay in the splendid guest house. He had his spies ready to watch the four. He said to the students, “See, today is Monday. Next Monday I will give you all a test at 9:30 AM. Good bye until then.”

On Sunday night Kalidas got the report from his spies.

1. A began mugging (studying) right on Monday night. B, C and D relaxed.
2. B, C and D went to see a movie on Friday night. It seemed that without the movie, they were feeling pretty restless. In the cinema hall they kept making a lot of noise during the film. After the show they ran to the guest house and jumped to the food. They were excited to see dry dinner (sandwiches and milk shake). A continued with his mugging.
3. On Saturday B began browsing through his notes. After dinner, however, he played bridge. He looks like an expert bridge player. A kept on mugging. C and D were

enjoying themselves.

4. B, C and D were watching TV or playing carom for most of the day on Sunday. B studied for one hour in the afternoon. After news at 10:10PM they returned to their rooms. B went to bed. C and D began studying for the first time. A continued mugging.

Kalidas ordered to watch C and D more carefully. On Monday evening, he received another report and the results of the test.

1. A was reading during his breakfast.
2. B had stopped his studies on Sunday night, and seemed without any tension.
3. C and D were reading throughout the night. They came late to the breakfast table. They hurried through the breakfast and rushed to the examination hall. They had cog-sheets in their pockets.

Test results were: A and B got a 'C' grade, and C and D got a 'B' grade.

Kalidas had mixed expressions of relief and puzzlement. He had recognized A and B, but could not yet distinguish between C and D. He had to solve the problem by Wednesday. He went back to his room, and thought for about three to four hours. When he came out of the room, he was happy. He gave a few more instructions to his spies.

The next day yet another report was waiting on his desk. The report was, “This morning C and D were strolling through the lawn. I went to C and said what you wanted me to say into his ear. He just smiled. When I said the same thing to D, he got angry and hit me.”

Kalidas had got his answer. The darbar was full the next day. Everybody was wondering if Kalidas would succeed this time. Bhoj was also concerned. Kalidas came with the IITians at the right time. After seeking Bhoj's permission, he announced, “A is the freshie M.Tech. who did his B.E. outside of IIT. B is the Research Scholar. C is the UG B.Tech. student and D is the M.Tech. student who did his B.Tech.in IIT.”



Bhoj looked at the representative of IIT. He was looking down with a quiet face. Bhoj: “Does your silence mean that Kalidas is right?”

Rep: “Yes!”

The darbaris applauded. Bhoj hugged Kalidas.

After narrating the story, Vetaal asked, “Hey High-Funda! What logic did Kalidas use to reach the right answers? You probably know the answer, and if you try to avoid answering intentionally, then your body will fall into thousands of pieces and they will fall into the ditch dug under the name of the swimming pool.”

High-Funda took a deep breath and said, “Vetaal! I knew that you will ask me such a sidey question. So listen. Although A adjusted himself for gaalis and food, he could not escape the tension of a test. That is why, after all his mugging, he got only a 'C' grade.

B's limited mugging was natural, because to keep his schol, all he needs is a 6.0 CPI (GPA of 6 out of 10), and needs no more. So he utilized his time effectively in playing bridge, and got a comfortable 'C' grade.

Despite all the activities of C and D, they got a 'B' grade. Thus it is clear that they are good old sinners of IIT, and are expert in cogging and techniques of taking tests. The only problem was to distinguish between the two. So Kalidas applied Varahamihira's technique in a different form. When his spy said a certain thing to C he smiled, but D could not stand it, and hit the spy. Clearly, there is only one such gaali, and that was “PG m***d.” Therefore, C was the UG.”

“Very good!” Vetaal said. But High-Funda's silence was broken. So Vetaal escaped and flew back to the roof of the main building. High-Funda cursed, and returned to his hostel. He had to prepare cog sheets for the test the next day.

And people say IITians are modest. 🙄

The Ambassadors' Fiat

BANKIM BISWAS

I am Bankim Biswas and what I write is a lot of bunkum and wishwash.

I am like most of you... we, the people of India. We have solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign democratic republic. Ask the preamble who asked me to mug up this line. Some naughty mischief-mongers said that we are a sovereign democratic socialist republic. Socialites getting socialistic on us via the 42nd constitutional amendment. Some naughtier and mischief-ier folks asked us to also become a sovereign democratic socialist secular republic.

They told us to get socialistic when they found that 70% of the population can afford one meal per day. The thin... wafer thin actually... the thin middle class was too thin to be divided into a lower and an upper section. Lower guys could afford a bicycle. Atlas or Hero. You choose. One was from Ludhiana, other was from Lucknow. But if you were amongst the paltry guys who could be called upper middle class, you could buy a Vespa or a Lambretta. It all depended on whether you could wait 5 years or 7 years. Of course, some of us were the so called rich. We had to buy a Fiat or an Ambassador. Simply put, you bought a Fiat if you wanted a horn that sounded a "peep peep" and you bought an Ambassador if you wanted the horn to sound a macho "Pomp Pomp".

Ambassador was distinctly designed for the machismo-most amongst the paltry rich.

If you could twirl its steering, you could vanish the pehelwan in your local akhada. You could seat kids, dogs, servants, and an ice-box in your lap. You could roll down the windows all the way down. This was the only car that could kill dogs that were unfortunate enough to get run over. Other cars managed to only dent a dog's leg while it whined and scampered away behind the bushes. An Ambassador was clearly the car with a difference. A loud statement that made its promoters refer to one of its models as a Landmaster. When you hurtled the Ambassador down the ghats like Shammi Kapoor did in most of his movies, you had to rotate the steering at 78 RPM while "badan pe sitare lapete hue" played in the background at some 33 RPM.

In contrast, the Fiat was a nimble manufacture from guys who named their city as Walchandnagar. Cute. Bought by nice guys who looked upon gears as playful joysticks and not spears and swords. If you were a husband, you could seat your wife and your Pomeranian in the front seat and your naughty brats and their ayah in the back seat. You could not roll down the back windows all the way down, but that was an affordable deficiency. Who wanted kids to stand up and jump out of a full window? If you owned a Fiat, you were a cute clean-shaven nice guy and not the heavily mustachioed burly Ambassador driver who slapped wives, traffic cops, and mechanics.

Was there anything in common between Fiats and Ambassadors? Too many things actually. For one, they were Indian cars that drove on Indian roads and they often coughed, spluttered and choked to a stop much like the roads themselves that coughed, choked and spluttered to a stop. If the car didn't start, you pulled a choke and a starter to make it cough, splutter and choke to a start. If it stopped again, you pulled open the bonnet with pliers, and fed the radiator with tons of water like you would feed a thirsty camel. If that didn't work, you reckoned that there was water in the delco. Or that the spark plugs had stopped sparking. Or there was kachra in the carboretor. Technologically, Ambassadors were superior to the Standard Herald, Morris minor and other wannabee cars. Yes, the royalty drove Impalas and Chevrolets bought before exorbitant custom duties invaded our socialistic fabric. Some UNESCO and CARE officials drove snazzy Datsuns that were allowed in by funny laws. And yes, one occasionally spotted ladiz driving cars while smoking a cigarette. Back then, we did not need gyms and slimming mantras. Papa could take the wheel, family, neighbours and retinue could push the car instead of working the bullworker and volia! car would cough splutter and choke to a grand start that lifted the spirits of the colony of its origins.

While the cars coughed and choked, socialism rose to the fore. Clearly, car driving was for the savage. Running over dogs and hiding dents with Mansion Polish wax. There was a Japan waiting to unleash technology and common sense in locomotion. They knew how to brake a car when you braked. They built cars where one did not say that "everything except my horn is bajao-ing". You did not have to travel to a chor bazaar to buy back a Landmaster fender that your driver stole and sold. Japs sold their yens for air-conditioning in Vijaywada, power steerings in Jeedimetla and fuel efficiency that made

Caltex fold down. Middle class was going to expand like never before. Lower rung wanted to buy cars. Upper crust wanted to buy cars. Rich wanted to buy cars. They all bought Maruti and Japanese common sense. Ambassadors and their burly logic were consigned to truck drivers who wanted to reform into respectable human beings. Ambassadors still ferried cargo and idiots and its bonnets still went up on highways where it was stranded. But the roads got smoother and wider. A dog could not get killed unless it was on a suicidal mission through 8 lanes on a highway. New technologies made cars forget how to cough, choke and splutter. Socialism was being re-crafted. It was pushing poverty and wealth aside at both seams. Ambassadors were now being sold in antique shops in London while Fiat-Premier Padmini-ed for long years, was up for a re-invention in Europe.

When too much happens too fast, the had-beens undergo a trauma. They're not sure if they were happy plying monstrous Ambassadors before anyone else did or whether they drive a comfortable air-conditioned masterpiece that is the same as what Ramlooamma's son drives. Comfort is nice and fun, but discriminatory. It is too common and does not set the men apart from the boys. It is socialistic. Makes one want to run away to England or Monaco. Who could have guessed that aristocracy and zamindari would become extinct faster than the tiger? One could fly down from Pataudi to Hyderabad, drive down to Srisailam in a Jeep and shoot tigers. But on the return journey, one could be pelted by stones from Naxalites who drive Jap stuff and overtake your vehicle that still does not know how to tether a tiger skin on the Stepney. 🐾

The Sexist Pronoun: Problem and Possible Solution

BEHERUZ N. SETHNA

Once upon a time, there was a job description written for a managerial position in a company. This is the way one of the paragraphs read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of his department, will assist in the development of his direct reports, will directly supervise his second-in-command and delegate such duties to him as he deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of his budgets and his major projects. He will provide departmental reports to his supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by him.

Ms. Goldie Locks, a new Personnel Manager, saw the job description and said, “That’s sexist. It’s too “male”; it always uses male pronouns. It needs rewriting.” So, she gave it to her assistant to rewrite. And, this is the way it now read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of her department, will assist in the development of her direct reports, will directly supervise her second-in-command and delegate such duties to her as she deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of her budgets and her major projects. She will provide departmental reports to her supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by her.

Most people who have written job descriptions or other similar paragraphs that use male or female pronouns can relate to the frustration that Ms. Locks and her assistant felt.



Ms. Goldie Locks, the Personnel Manager, saw the revised job description and said, “That’s still sexist. It’s too “female”; it always uses female pronouns. It needs rewriting.” So, she gave it to her assistant to rewrite. The assistant was told not to use exclusively male or exclusively female words. So, the new version alternated between each. And, this is the way the job description now read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of her department, will assist in the development of his direct reports, will directly supervise her second-in-command and delegate such duties to him as she deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of his budgets and her major projects. He will provide departmental reports to her supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by him.

Ms. Goldie Locks said, “Huh? I don’t even know who you’re talking about. It’s too

confusing. The manager cannot be “female” in one part of the sentence and “male” in another. This won't do. It needs rewriting.” So, she gave it to her assistant to rewrite. And, this is the way the job description now read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of the manager's department, will assist in the development of the manager's direct reports, will directly supervise the manager's second-in-command and delegate such duties to the second-in-command as the manager deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of the second-in-command's budgets and the second-in-command's major projects. The manager will provide departmental reports to the manager's supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by the supervisor.

Ms. Goldie Locks read the new job description and said, “Well, at least it's not sexist any more. But, it's too cumbersome not to use pronouns. It needs rewriting.” So, she gave it back to her assistant to rewrite using non-sexist pronouns. And, after much grumbling from the assistant, this is the way it now read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of their department, will assist in the development of their direct reports, will directly supervise their second-in-command and delegate such duties to them as they deem appropriate, always maintaining oversight of their budgets and their major projects. They will provide departmental reports to their supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by them.

Ms. Goldie Locks read the job description and said, “Well, it's not sexist and it does use pronouns. But, it's not correct. We do not have agreement between the antecedent and the pronoun; the manager cannot be responsible for the smooth functioning of

their department. On the other hand, if we change “manager” to “managers”, the pronoun will agree with the antecedent, but the job description will not be correct. There is only one manager at this level and only one second-in-command and only one supervisor. So, it would not be correct to use the plural either. The job description needs rewriting.” Then, she gave it to her assistant to rewrite. And, after much gnashing of teeth and strong words heard muttered from

As every parent knows, there appears to be a new word added to the language every week (each of which it is at least a minor crime not to know and be able to use correctly).



the assistant's office, this is the way the job description read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of his or her department, will assist in the development of his or her direct reports, will directly supervise his or her second-in-command and delegate such duties to him or her as he or she deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of his or her budgets and his or her major projects. He or she will provide departmental reports to his or her supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by him or her.

Ms. Goldie Locks was more satisfied than she had been before. But, she said, “This still is too clumsy. Can't you rewrite it?” And, she gave it to her assistant to rewrite.

This time, there was no grumbling, nor were there strong words heard emerging from the assistant's room. Within minutes, there was a note on Ms. Goldie Locks' table. It was

a brief note from the assistant saying, “Your Assistant / He or She / We / I Quit!”

Most people who have written job descriptions or other similar paragraphs that use male or female pronouns can relate to the frustration that Ms. Locks and her assistant felt.

Perhaps it is time for our language to consider the addition of a few new words to make our lives easier. It is not as if we don't keep adding words. Each edition of every dictionary proudly lists new words, often slang words, it has added. As every parent knows, there appears to be a new word added to the language every week (each of which it is at least a minor crime not to know and be able to use correctly). Also, many professional groups keep adding new buzzwords every year. Given that we have not exactly been parsimonious with the creation of words, a couple of new ones should not strain us significantly.

We might consider the creation of one word that we can use instead of “him or her”. The process of constructing such a word is reasonably straightforward. The first letter of him and her, h, is common to both words and so, should be the first letter of the new word. We could have the second letter belong to the female pronoun and the third letter to the male pronoun to get “hem”. Or, we could take the second letter from the male pronoun and the third from the female pronoun to get “hir”.

Now, to create a word for “his or her”. By the reasoning of the preceding paragraph, it would be “hes” if we use the second letter from the female pronoun and the third from the male pronoun. Alternatively, if we use the second letter from the male pronoun and the third from the female pronoun, it would be “hir”.

It would not be productive to have two “hirs”, one for the objective case and the other for the possessive case. It is true that the objective and possessive cases for the third

person singular female pronoun are currently spelled and pronounced the same, “her”. However, since we are making changes, we might as well avoid that possible confusion.

Even if readers are in agreement so far, we may now get into tough “gender politics”. Perhaps most men would vote for “hem” and “hes” since they most closely resemble “him” and “his”. Perhaps most women would want “hir” (the objective case) and “hir” (the possessive case) because they most closely resemble “her” (the objective case) and “her” (the possessive). It seems reasonable, therefore, to let each camp have its way for one of these words.

Knowing that any one of these alternatives would be equally (un)acceptable, I propose “hir” as the one objective case pronoun to substitute “him or her”, and “hes” as the one possessive case to substitute “his or her”.

To get picky, but to be fair to both genders, the pronunciation of the letter in the original word would have to come along with the letter into the new word. So, the start of the word “hir” should be pronounced as if we were pronouncing him, but should end with the r sound. Similarly, the start of the word “hes” should be pronounced as if we were pronouncing her, but end with the s (z) sound rather than the r sound — hez would be the correct pronunciation

Also, instead of using “he or she,” the not-uncommonly used “s/he” should be recognized as a word, and probably pronounced “ss-he” or perhaps “see”.

These new words would not substitute the individual words “him”, “her”, “his” or “her”. So, the girl would still use her book, and the boy would still use his pencil. If Mr. Jones shakes hands with Ms. Smith, he would still shake her hand, and she his.

However, a job description might read:

The manager will be responsible for the smooth functioning of hes department,

will assist in the development of her direct reports, will directly supervise her second-in-command and delegate such duties to her as she deems appropriate, always maintaining oversight of her budgets and her major projects. She will provide departmental reports to her supervisor according to the published schedule, or as required by her.

And Ms. Goldie Locks will read the new job description and say, “This is just right!” 🙌



Dr. Beheruz Sethna

Dr. Beheruz Sethna (B. Tech., 1971, EE) is a Professor of Business and erstwhile President of the University of West Georgia (UWG). A distinguished alum from both IITB and IIMA, he is the first known person of Indian origin ever to become president of a university anywhere in America. He also obtained the University's first endowed Chair. Beheruz has published a book and 69 papers (30 since becoming UWG President), several case studies, and obtained externally funded research from the U.S. Department of Energy, IBM, AT&T and others. Amongst his many awards, he has been named among the 100 most influential Georgians.

Vivek Borkar and his Chinese Dhobi

GAUTAM SAHA

Part I – The Matter of The Collars

Vivek Borkar is well known in certain circles, one of which is the group of hostelites and colleagues from hostel 3. Over the years, his scholarship and erudition have grown exponentially. His research has moved into more and more esoteric areas. But his politeness and decency has remained, unlike many of his tribe who accompany their professorship with tantrums and idiosyncrasies. His relationships with others are based more on “correctness” rather than on practical expediencies. A case in point is his relationship with his Chinese dhobi.

Vivek Borkar first met his Chinese dhobi one Chinese New Year’s Day, when the latter had made special “chow mein” and had carried round bowlfuls of the same to his potential customers in the plush housing colony that Vivek resides in. On being asked what his name was, the Chinaman replied “chow mein”. Since Vivek’s mind was simultaneously engrossed in some complex algorithm, he did not pay particular attention to the man’s reply. But later reflections making him ponder on the improbability of there being such a name, he asked the man again a few days later. This time the man did not exactly reply “chow mein”, but said something which sounded similar to “chow mein”. After a few more attempts to question the man, Vivek simply gave up, assuming that his knowledge (or ignorance) of the man’s name did not matter at

all. In the meantime, Mrs Borkar had installed this Chinaman as the family’s daily dhobi and istriwallah.

The Chinaman washed Vivek’s clothes well. But being an ethnic Chinaman, he was used to Chinese collars more than the conventional collars we are all used to. A lifetime of ironing Chinese collars had induced and habituated the Chinaman to treat all collars the same way. Hence the unintended victim was Vivek’s shirt collars. What with having to contend with crushed and disfigured collars everyday, Vivek’s morale was being hammered with regularity, till he was reduced to a state of despondency. Several attempts to redress the situation fell on deaf ears since the Chinaman did not change his ways.

One day, mutual friend Satish Kini decided to call upon Vivek, to discuss a highly technical point, with momentous and far reaching consequences for communications technology. Satish met Vivek at just such a moment of the latter’s despondency. He was immediately solicitous, and initiated the following conversation:

Satish: What’s up Vivek? Why the crushed look? Had an accident?

Vivek: (in deep despondency) No yaar. It’s my collars that are getting crushed day after day.

Satish: What? Still having violent disagreements with the missus after so many years of marriage?

Vivek: It's not that, yaar. It's the Chinese dhobi who is ruining my collars.

Satish: What are you doing about it? Why don't you tell him?

Vivek: I have already written three letters to him. There does not seem to be any response.

Satish: (mouth agape) What do you mean, written? Did you write in Marathi or in English?

Vivek: In English. I did not think that he would read Marathi, even though he is presently residing in Mumbai.

Satish: Why don't you just shout at him?

Vivek: That's just not done. The man may be offended. I thought writing a letter might be more polite and the correct thing to do.

Satish: (very curious now) Do you have a copy of at least one of those letters?

Vivek: Yes, I have the copies here, meticulously filed in my filing cabinet.

(One of the letters is reproduced below)



By Courier

Mr Chow Mein
(Chinese dhobi)
Dhobi's Chawl
Behind Navy Nagar
Colaba, Mumbai 400 005

Dear Mr Chow Mein,

It is with great regret that I have to draw your attention to the state of my collars of late.

My collars are just not done right. They are folded at the wrong place, crushed, and in many ways, mutilated out of recognition. I would remind you to see the way other dhobis and istriwallahs iron collars, so that you are fully apprised about the proper operating procedure required for attending to collars.

I am deeply grieved that in spite of several written reminders, there does not appear to be any positive response from your end. Mean-

while all my collars have been crushed out of recognition, and in consequence, almost all my shirts have been ruined due to your negligence and inattention.

I strongly urge you correct the way you are ironing my collars, so that I do not have to suffer the indignity of going out with well washed shirts but with crushed collars. Many persons have already started giving me odd looks.

It appears that my previous letters to you

Just yell: DEM COLLARS NO GOOD!



have not received the seriousness and attention that they deserve.

If there is no improvement in the quality of your work, I might have to deduct from your monthly bill. And if the situation still does not improve, I might be constrained to have to discontinue your services permanently, with the mandatory legally applicable notice period, which please note.

Your's sincerely,
(signed)
(Dr) Vivek Borkar
TIFR, Mumbai



Satish: Are you telling me that you actually sent the Chinaman this letter?

Vivek: Yes. Shouldn't I have?

Satish: Man, you're crazy. Would he understand this letter ? Does he read English?

Vivek: Then what should I have done?

Satish: You should have just yelled at him.

Vivek: But what do I yell?

Satish: Just yell: DEM COLLARS NO GOOD!

Vivek: What are you saying? Would he understand?

Satish: He will jolly well understand.

Vivek: I really do not think so.

Satish: Let's ask Mrs. Borkar (who has just entered the room). Madam, how should

you complain to the Chinese dhobi?

Mrs. Borkar: Complain? You just yell at him.

Vivek: Okay, but what does one yell?

Mrs. Borkar: DEM COLLARS NO GOOD!

Vivek: Satish, do you think that you can do this for me.

Satish: Certainly, if you say so.

It is on record that after Satish Kini's forceful intervention, the Chinese dhobi cum istriwallah soon mended his ways, and Vivek

Not only did he buy them over the strong objections of Mrs Borkar, but he also insisted on wearing them to bed every evening, as they matched well with his pyjamas



Borkar goes about with his collars in place and his head held high. If only Vivek Borkar had listened to the wise counsel of his wife earlier, instead of dictating officious letters to his secretary, he might have been saved a lot of chagrin and despondency, not to mention a large number of crushed collars.

Part II – The Matter of the Purple Socks

The Borkars are an ideal couple. Mr and Mrs Borkar are pointed out at public functions as “that ideal couple”. Outwardly they seem very much like one soul in two bodies. But underneath the surface, there are strong undercurrents. Underneath his simplicity and undemanding demeanour, Vivek possesses a streak of adamancy which sometimes drives Mrs Borkar, underneath her calm exterior, to frustration and desperation.

The other day, Vivek spotted a pair of purple socks at the supermarket. He immediately took a fancy to them. Not only did he buy them over the strong objections of Mrs Bork-

ar, but he also insisted on wearing them to bed every evening, as they matched well with his pyjamas, he said. This did not go down well with the missus. It was like adding insult to injury. Vivek was impervious to her pleadings, her objections, her vociferous threats. He said nothing would induce him to part with his precious purple socks.

There was a noticeable impasse for a few days. Vivek tried his level best to persuade his madam that a small pair of purple socks should not come between them. That he would make amends in other ways, provided that she gave up her objections to his purple socks. But, as she remarked, if he can be adamant, so can she also. Two can play at the game. For a few days, the matter lingered at the uncomfortable “status quo” zone, with none of the partners recapitulating. While Vivek insisted on wearing his purple socks to bed, there was a frigid indifference from madam. She ignored whatever he told her as if she had not heard anything at all.

But as events unfolded, even the best of brains is no match for feminine wile. One fine day, Vivek observed that Mrs Borkar was much more cheerful than ever and had a song on her lips. Hoping that she had now forgotten and forgiven the matter of the purple socks, Vivek's heart was considerably lightened now that madam had forsaken her coolness towards him. He therefore proceeded to go to bed with a light heart and a song on his lips. But as he prepared for bed, he was anguished to find that the purple socks were missing. Repeated enquiries made to madam fell on deaf ears. Vivek was forced to spend the night without his beloved purple socks. Vivek was greatly grieved. The fact that all these days he had missed out on his madam's affections due to the presence of the purple socks had not yet occurred to him.

After having spent a partly sleepless night on account of the missing purple socks, Vivek left for work next morning, and met

his Chinese dhobi on the landing, who smiled broadly at him, flashing all his teeth.

Chinese Dhobi: Good morning, sah.

Thank you very much, sah.

Vivek: Good morning, my man.

Chinese Dhobi: You are very kind, sah, for giving me your purple socks.

Vivek: What? I gave you my purple socks?

Chinese Dhobi: Madam gave dem to me yesterday. Thank you sah. Very kind sah.

Vivek: (with clenched teeth) : you are welcome, my good man.

Vivek, with all his genius and skill to solve complex mathematical algorithms, is no match for the wile and craft of the opposite sex. He is today a sadder but wiser man.

Author's Note* Vivek Borkar was the all India topper at JEE 1971. 🙌



Gautam Saha

Gautam Saha (B.Tech. '76, Chem Engg., H3) holds a diploma in export management and is engaged in business development and investment in a few African and Asian Countries. He has been CEO of Indo-Angola Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He is a guest speaker at Mumbai University's Centre for African Studies and is on the editorial board of ISKON's magazine BTG, to which he contributes regularly.

Up next - Perfect babies, tailor-made to your specifications!

TEJAS SHYAM

Several millennia of evolution have taught us an invaluable lesson - keep pace or get sidelined forever. While Darwin aptly captured the essence of this argument in his hypothesis on natural selection, there was one aspect that was conspicuously untapped in his exposition. The role of technology in biasing the natural selection process was overlooked.

Fortunately for us, over the years scientists have been extensively probing this angle and their results have been, at the very least, astounding! Unsurprisingly, today, we possess the requisite technology to 'manufacture' near-perfect babies. A little tweaking of that ever-so-tiny strand of DNA, and we have the next wonder-kid ready to rock the world! Of course, this comes at a steep price today but, in the near future, technological advancement is sure to make this an affordable solution for the masses.

Soon we will probably have thousands, nay, lakhs of couples queuing up outside the friendly neighbourhood genetic laboratory to create their super-babies. All hereditary problems and medical nightmares will be avoided even before the embryo takes shape. Indeed, all medical practitioners will go out-of-business, for they'll have no one to treat. The world will become a perfect place!

Seems desirable, doesn't it? Who wants children who're anything but perfect? How can any parent possibly wish for an inferior child? After all, Darwin needs to be defeated

A little bit of gene-tampering won't really stop them from re-mutating and attacking more virulently. So the dream of 'ailment free humans' is no more than a wishful dream.



by making everyone so perfect that nature cannot possibly select who's to go and who's not to.

Welcome back to reality. Let's take one step back and analyse what'll happen if genetic tailoring is allowed. For a start, let's talk about Dolly, the sheep. She was cloned using the best possible technology wasn't she? She still died of a lung disease. Moral of the story-technology can create the perfect set of genes but it can't avoid them from mutating due to changed environments!

In today's world when hazards of technology are introducing newer illnesses everyday by toying with natural balance, technology is yet to catch-up with primitive infections such as viral fever, let alone dealing with cancer and AIDS! Viruses have constantly mutated in a bid to survive and have successfully done so for billions of years, beating all forms of technology (including what we call as state-of-the-art medicine). A little bit of gene-tampering won't really stop them from re-mutating

and attacking more virulently. So the dream of 'ailment free humans' is no more than a wishful dream.

Yes, genetic tailoring can help eliminate, or at least minimize, hereditary issues. But is that really enough to justify the huge ethical arguments on either side of this raging debate? Is toying with natural selection, which was intended to weed out the weaker species, a viable option? At present, few have the answers. But one thing's certain- this issue will certainly remain a hotbed of medical ethics. After all, who doesn't want a super-kid?! 🙌



Tejas Shyam

Tejas Shyam: (Dual Degree, ME&MS, C'12) Tejas has been working as a freelance journalist with the Times of India group for the past 5 years. After a brief stint as the Technology Head of an MNC, he chose to pursue his passion-teaching. As such, his inquisitive mind seldom accepts anything without proof- English included! An avid public speaking and music enthusiast, Tejas loves to spend his spare time composing music.

Student Choir

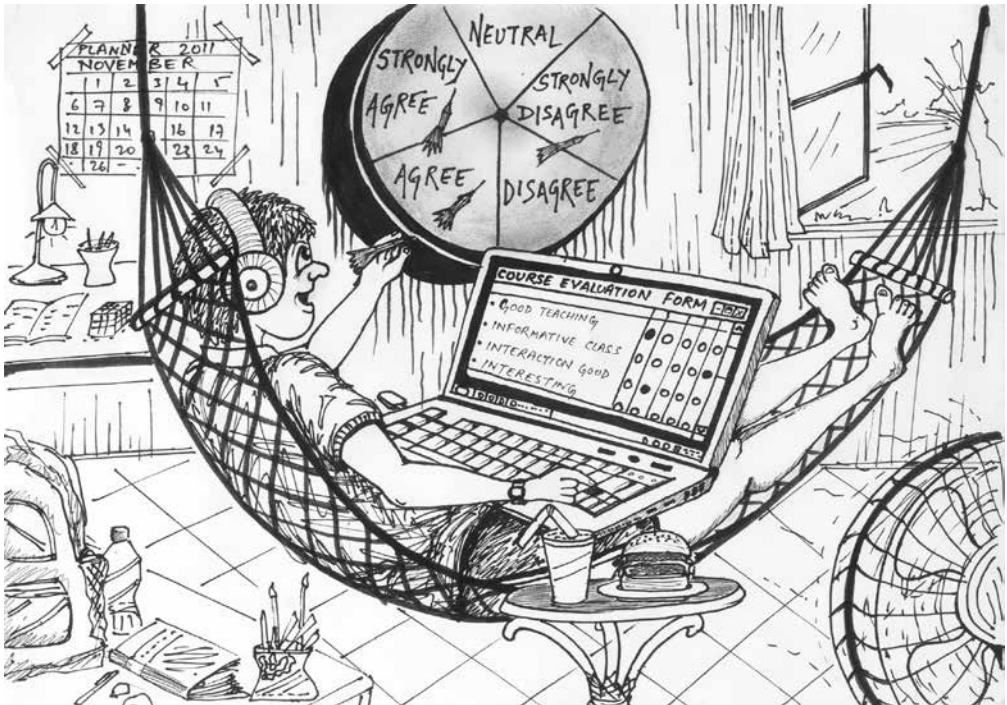
ARPIT AGARWAL

In this issue we have carried features on cartooning from an alumnus (Shreyas Navare), a faculty member (Arun Inamdar) and close it with a feature from a student - Arpit Agarwal currently the General Secretary, Cultural Affairs of IIT Bombay.

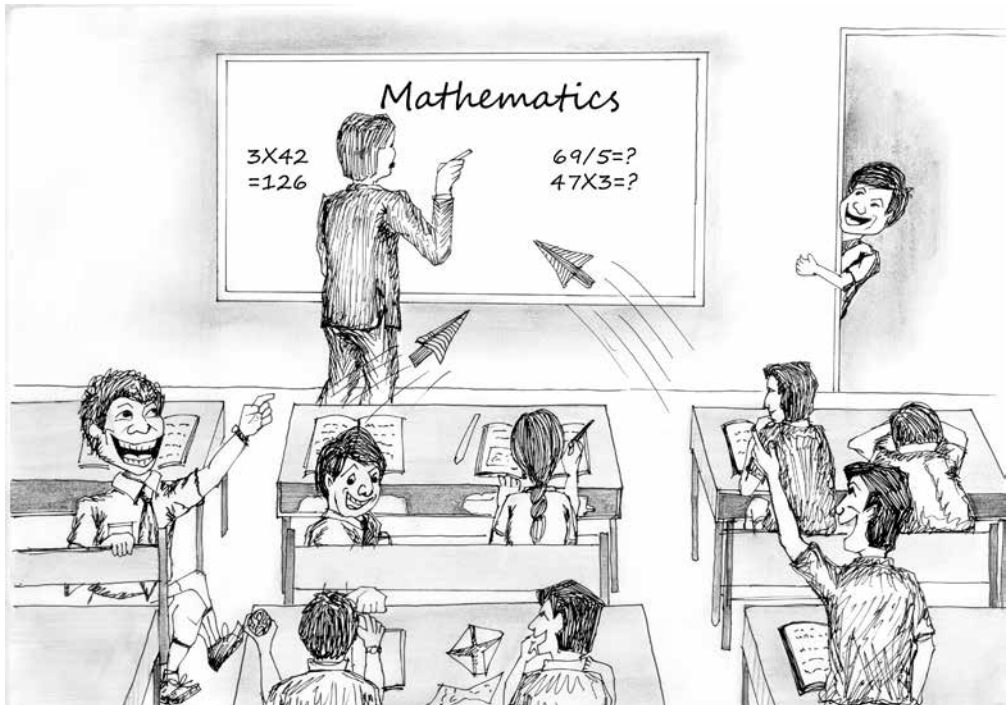
Arpit is a fourth year undergraduate from the Department of Energy Science and Engineering. He is passionate about photography and fine arts, 'cartooning' in particular and has a six-year senior diploma from the Vidyasagar Academy, Kolkata. Arpit has won numerous competitions since his childhood: Mood Indigo, Antaragini, Rendezvous and Malhar to name a few at the inter-collegiate level. Photography and graphic designing were his unexplored areas of interest before coming to IIT, which have now become an inseparable part of him. He was the Institute Photography and Fine Arts Secretary in his third year and the Convener of Rang - The Fine Arts Club of IIT Bombay in his sophomore year. Arpit also likes exploring new visual art forms, film-making, dramatics, playing cricket and technical activities.

While we are on the subject, a quick note on 'Rang' the fine arts club of IIT Bombay will not be amiss either. 'Rang' started in 2003 to bring together the art enthusiasts from campus and over the years this has become a key informal forum through which the students interact with other sections of the campus community. Be it the KV school children, family of faculty members, professors staff - if you have an interest in art, to learn, make, share or do, Rang creates the avenue for you to do so. And if you have not heard of 'Kaladarshan' the annual fine arts and photography exhibition organized by Rang in March, then swinging by campus on those days might definitely be worth it. You can find out more about Kaladarshan and Rang at www.fb.com/kaladarshan and <http://rang-iitb.blogspot.in/>

Fundabees



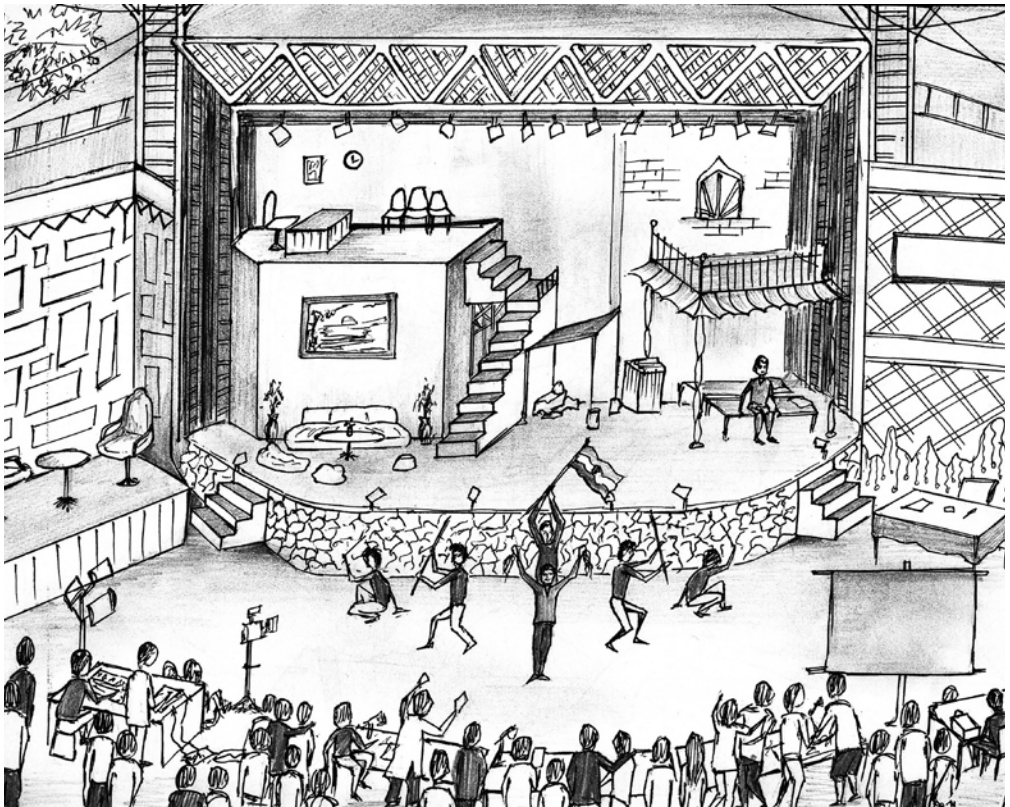
*Course Evaluation 101= strong hammock; 'happy meal';
100% dartboard strikes.*



High school never ends



Hostel 15.



No faff only PAF



The only royalty of IIT Bombay



Valfi=Free Aamras + Starters.



Freshie curriculum

The Girl From EE

(With apologies to deMoraes and Gimbel)

S MURALIDHARAN

The gender imbalance at Powai is well known. If the present day residents think it is bad, it was way... way... beyond-bad those days. If you were on friendly talking terms with a girl on campus, you were a hero, and much sought after for an intro.

The women students had to walk down the long corridor from the Physics Department to the Admin building on their way to their various classes. In doing so, they had to walk through a guard of honour or run the gauntlet - depending on the viewpoint - of pubescent hormonal boys lined up outside their various departments along the way.

This used to remind me of a Brazilian song which had become very famous around that time. Adapted to our reality, it went as follows:

*Tall and tan and young and lovely
The girl from EE walks to her classes
And when she passes,
Each one she passes
Goes "A-a-a-h"*

*When she walks, she's like a samba
That swings so cool and sways so gentle
That when she passes,
Each one she passes
(On her way to classes)
Goes "A-a-a-h"*

*Oh, but we watch her so sadly
How can we tell her we love her
Yes, we would give our hearts gladly
But each day as she walks to her class*

She looks straight ahead, not at us

*Tall and tan and young and lovely
The girl from EE goes walking
And when she passes, we smile,
But she doesn't see.
She just doesn't see...*

No, she never sees us.

Before you jump to conclusions, trying to match the year, the department, and such to figure who exactly was this tall and lovely lass, let me warn you that it is a composite picture of many girls put together. They all walked the guard of honour; they were all admired from afar. The really clever ones pretended not to see us lining the corridor.

Some had time only for academics; some found time for a campus fling. A lucky handful found the love of their lives. But all were admired from afar. 🙌



S Muralidharan

S Muralidharan: M.Sc. Physics '72, the self-styled "Cool Cat" of H9, joined the Banking Industry in '72 and went on to found India's biggest private Life Insurance Company in 2001. He retired in 2011 and lives in Chennai. A jazz fan, he never missed a Mumtaz movie at the Convo, sometimes watching both shows.

Philosophy in a Teacup

BAKUL DESAI

During my sojourn at IIT from 1977 to 82, I liked the HSS department for one strong reason and one stronger reason. HSS canteen chai was the best. At 25p, it was 5p dearer than the ChemE canteen chai, but the cups were larger and the ringside view from the stairwell afforded a better view than any other department. There were more women here than anywhere else. And they did not wear thick specs and mull over differential equations and SP_3 hybridization. For some reason, homo-sapiens of the female kind look better when they are writers, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and economists than when they are engineers and nuclear physicists.

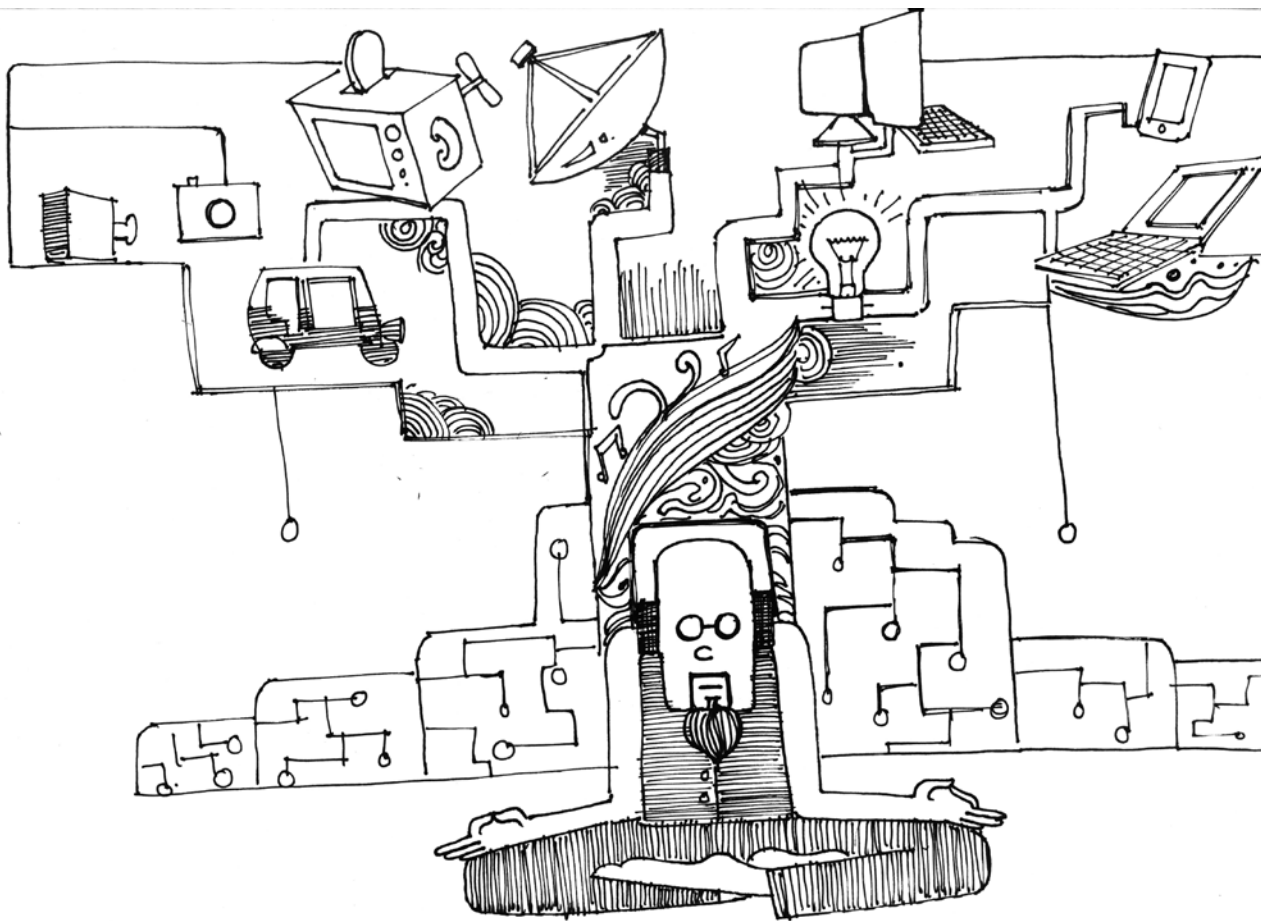
Coming to the stronger reason, I loved the HSS department because it was the only department that gave me A grades. They did not D-Grade and E-grade me like everyone else in IIT wanted to. Looking back, I often wonder why I was not the HSS type by a long shot. I did not sport ponytails and French beards. I did not smoke bidis while wearing a soiled kurta and torn, faded jeans. I did not even know Marathi, leave alone Latin and French. I did the philosophy courses in HSS because it was compulsory to select one elective in HSS for every semester in which some of us tried to learn some engineering. Maybe the curriculum setting chaps knew that we would have to practice some social engineering in the real world outside, once we got there. Or maybe

Outside lecture halls and in cycle stands and while sharing a 'bidi', these Profs asked us, "I piss and shit, you piss and shit, Sartre pisses and shits. So, why is he special?" SHIT, we didn't know. Om Piss Piss Piss (that's gujju for "peace")!



they had a stake in the canteen that needed to wean tea-drinkers away from its counterpart in ChemE.

I think I landed with all philosophy courses like Ancient philosophy, Indian philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy, Moral & Political Philosophy etc., because some of my been-there-done-that seniors had advised me that you can "faat" your way through a philosophy exam. The first lecture witnessed standard questions from inquisitive IITans. What do we mean by philosophy? Is philosophy a science? Is science a philosophy? Define metaphysics- serious questions from serious folks who believed that philosophy can be learnt; that it was not a means to 'faat' your way into an A grade. Some learnt fast. Some were slow in learning. But eventually, it was clear. Philosophy was means to an end. "The ends justify the means"-that's what one philosopher had said while we gawked and gaped at a buxom



student to pronounce that “the ends justify the jeans”.

Some valiant professors fought back at the barrage of questions. “Philosophy is all-encompassing, while science is limited by empirical models that it has imposed upon itself” they thundered from the pinnacle of a 12 inch high platform. Some of us were a valiant lot too, before we gave in to the compulsions of ‘faating’. “Philosophy is the creation of fluids emanating from chemico-physico-biologico-neuro-cortico-haemmo agglomerates of the human body.” Finally, everyone gave in. “What is philosophy” was a question that had plagued mankind (there’s a philosophy about whether man should be called kind, but let’s defer it for a later day philosophical

discussion) for many centuries, and it was not about to be closed in a lecture hall at the HSS department while some hot tea was brewing downstairs and asking to be drunk.

So, lecture after lecture, semester after semester, some eminent personalities were unleashed on us. Names like Shankaracharya, HF Bradley, Emmanuel Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidelberg, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Karl Marx were drummed into our psyche and our vulnerable sensibilities. Amongst this set, there was a Charvaka who would have posted maximum “likes” on his FB page, had it existed then. He gave us a reason for our existence in our humble hostels. Drink and make merry, he said in Sanskrit long ago. English speakers called it hedonism, but we

didn't care. The experience was headier than Sanskrit or English and explained away our absence in the lecture halls to equally hedonistic Profs. Outside lecture halls and in cycle stands and while sharing a 'bidi', these Profs asked us, "I piss and shit, you piss and shit, Sartre pisses and shits. So, why is he special?" SHIT, we didn't know. Om Piss Piss Piss (that's guju for "peace")!

From the nasty lot, there were exactly 3 devils- Rene Descartes, Ludwig Wittgenstein

Karl M was a marketing genius. He threw in some dialectic materialism and historical determinism to confound and psyche some engineers into a stupor. rHe attled the world into a movement that had to stop moving some day.



and Karl Marx. Just look at this Descartes guy. He assaulted us with coordinate geometry in the Maths lectures. And while we trekked to HSS, assaulted and mauled, presto! He was there too in a phenomenological avatar with his Latin-ish "Cogito Ergo Sum". He was so "all-pervading" that even the canteen boy Shankar knew what cogito whatever meant. "I think, therefore I am." Well, I also think. And I think you are a jerk. So are you a jerk? But how did this Des-what's-his-name travel from MA to HSS faster than we did? Or was he faking his coordinates and his geometry, not to mention, his phenomenology? Whatever, he tried to become a "basis" for existentialism. Coordinate (0, 0) for the funny graph that would be called existentialism. And the existentialists suffered from an identity crisis about whether they were Buddhist or communists. Truth be told, this confusion worked well for us 'faaters'. In the exam, I forgot the

cogito phrase but substituted it with "Citius, Altius, Fortius." That was Latin for "faster, higher, stronger" of the Olympic motto fame. Quote was wrong, but the Descartes name was correct and A-grade-able.

So also was with Ludwig Wittgenstein and his "Tractatus Logico Philosophicus". His name sounded like a Sten gun. His book title made us duck for cover. And expectedly, he wrote his treatise in bullet points, in clauses and in a cheap paperback that must have made his publisher laugh his way to the bank. Approximately, he said that language and vocabulary are faulty communication tools. Very true, considering his language and vocabulary. But then, with a name like his, you can get away with anything. I was tempted to 'faat' that Ludwig W said, "H4 mess food sucks" and I am sure that my A-grade would not have been impaired.

About Karl Marx-less said the better. Would he and his-ism have worked had he called the rich as rich and the poor as poor rather than calling them bourgeois and the proletariat? No sir, definitely not. Chaudhary Charan Singh called the rich as rich and he called the poor as poor and he did not progress beyond his Baghpat constituency in Western UP. Karl M was a marketing genius. He threw in some dialectic materialism and historical determinism to confound and psyche some engineers into a stupor. rHe attled the world into a movement that had to stop moving some day. Russian airline Aeroflot ferrying passengers from Mumbai to Delhi to Moscow to Leningrad to Nairobi at a cost of INR 2000 and with a free copy of Das Kapital thrown in was guerrilla warfare unleashed by activists that did not visit the HSS department. But quoting Marx and his nonsensical-ism was a ticket to getting high marks, while those brandishing his philosophy on railway stations and in messes were consigned to low marks.

At the end of the day, exam time was a free-for-all. Quote anybody on anything. If a

question asked you to define physicalism, you could repeat your Prof's statement verbatim but get only a B. For instance, if you said what the Prof said i.e., "Physicalism is defined as repudiating the view that there exists anything in the universe that lies, in principle, beyond the scope of scientific explanation", you would get only a B. But if you could embellish it with, "Physicalism is Polemically defined as..." or "physicalism is paradigmatically defined as..." you were guaranteed an A grade. We didn't know it then, but it was marketing gimmickry- brand merchandising and value addition. I did not know...and still do not know...what polemics and paradigm mean. Just know that they are commodities that can get you an A grade. Semantic embellishments, you can call them!

So also was with other quotes. A Charvaka-ed KT once said in my wing during one of his customary staggering binge, "Worshiping idols is an intellectually immature act of depicting a supra-personal absolute." I quoted him verbatim in the exam, but attributed it to Shankaracharya and his Advait philosophy. Neither Shankaracharya, nor Hasmukh nor I know what a supra-personal absolute is, but it sounded nice and more than that, it was a guarantee to an A Grade and a claim to be an avant-garde. The jury was out. 'Faating' was a resounding success. Misquoting a somnambulist as a "critic of the age of reason" was *raison d'être* to get an A grade. Yes, there were times that we did suffer from some pangs of guilt. Every time I misquoted someone, I felt like a leg-spinner. I threw the ball outside the pitch, but knew it would turn in and get the target. I felt like a conman, like a modern art painter who asked his dhobi to thrash away at a canvas with a 'lungi' dipped in coloured dye and turned out as a winner.

After having spent over 30 years in the real world, as compared to less than 5 in the HSS department and its canteen, it is but fair to look back and see if there was a tangible

takeaway from the philosophy classes. Yes, we now know how to 'faat' at parties and impress our audience by referring to Hinduism as an uninstitutionalized religion and by referring to Herman Hesse as an Aryan-come-lately. What more? Seriously speaking, the philosophy classes did influence us beyond honing our survival instincts. They set the background and gave us a basis of understanding life that sets us apart as "thinkers". They are an integral part of the value-systems that we have evolved for ourselves. They have made us more inclusive in our thought by exposing us to various viewpoints and paradigms (in case paradigm means what I think it means). To quote Sir Bertrand Russell, "You are a sum total of all your experiences. Your strengths and follies are an outcome of what you imbibed from your education. Even while you pillory your learning process, remember that you have taken back something from it." Really? Did Lord Bertrand Really say this? Well, let me start confessing and stop 'faating'. This wonderful quote came from Lady Jaya Joshi who assures me that the HSS canteen still serves some good chai which may remind me about mysticism and teleology.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti. 🙏



Bakul Desai

Bakul Desai (Chem.Engg., 1982, H4) was infamous in his student years for many things. He is famous in the alumni community for many other achievements. What has not changed in all these years is his love for "faat-ing". Similar examples of his unique brand of nonsense can be found in his book "H4 Madhouse: True Stories from the inmates of hostel 4".

The Adventures of Zappa Man

(A futuristic fantasy)

VIVEK BORKAR

Zappa Man was getting cosy with his girlfriend Lympha in their chamber in Zap-podome, when his phone implant buzzed. It was the President of Rothan City himself.

“Zappa,” the President sounded tense. “It’s an emergency. Come quick.”

“Right on,” said Zappa, as he zapped out of the bed into his Zapsuit and was soon racing the Zapmobile towards the presidential palace, leaving a very unhappy Lympha behind. Within minutes he was striding into the large, oblong presidential office which every citizen of Rothan City knew about, but few had the privilege to enter.

“Zappa,” the President fired away, “the mysterious recent epidemic in Rothan City has been linked by our scientists to the pollen of *Bizzarum obscurantum* from Planet Simpleton, which has accidentally crossed over the intergalactic space. Your job is to go there and bring a sample of *Bizzarum obscurantum* for our scientists to analyse.”

“Done,” said Zappa, as he zapped out of the palace on his Zapmobile, which promptly morphed into a spacecraft at his command. In no time he was landing on the open plains of Simpleton, and racing towards Simple City in a reconvered Zapmobile. Zapmobile’s GIU (Geographical Intelligence Unit) took him to the presidential palace of Simple City before you* could say, ‘Zappa Man’. He stormed into the palace, zapping off with his Zapgun the few foolish sentries who tried to stop him.

“Zappa,” the President fired away, “the mysterious recent epidemic in Rothan City has been linked by our scientists to the pollen of *Bizzarum obscurantum* from Planet Simpleton, which has accidentally crossed over the intergalactic space



Inside, a meeting was in progress, presided over by a serene old man with a flowing white beard. Zappa correctly surmised that this indeed was the President, and conveyed to him his mission.

* or I

“Why do you think your problems come from somewhere else?” the President asked him.

Zappa had no time for such babble, so he quickly zapped off the President with his Zapgun, zapping off a few more in audience to quickly quell a nascent uproar. As he stormed out, he was surprised to see that word had gone around and a crowd of angry citizens was waiting for him outside. Being quite adept at crowd control, his Zapgun went into action and the crowd (or what was left of it) became quiet. He grabbed the nearest guy still standing on his feet by his collar and asked him where the fields of *Bizzarum obscurantum*

were located. The man pointed a shaky finger eastwards.

“Good man!” Zappa patted him on the back, “From now on, you are the President.” He thrust the man onto the presidential seat from where the corpse of its previous occupant had recently rolled down. Soon, the Zapmobile was zapping eastwards.

Sure enough, Zappa found a large savannah covered with lush, green vegetation, swaying in the breeze. He quickly inflated his

“Trying to palm off ordinary grass from your backyard as *Bizzarum obscurantum*? What do you think we are? A bunch of morons?”



inflatable haversack and filled it up with a generous load of samples. In no time the Zapmobile, a spaceship once more, was zapping back to Rothan City.

Zappa delivered his booty at the presidential office and was back in Zappodome with Lympha to complete their unfinished business, when his phone implant buzzed. Again.

“Zappa!” the President screamed into the phone, “you jerk!”

“Umm...,” Zappa mumbled, but the President thundered on.

“Trying to palm off ordinary grass from your backyard as *Bizzarum obscurantum*? What do you think we are? A bunch of morons?”

“Umm...,” Zappa tried again, but the President wouldn't stop.

“You are sacked, Zappa! Out! Fini! The contract now goes to Snappa Man.”

“Umm...,” Zappa tried yet again, but the phone implant went dead on him.

Snappa Man was getting cosy with his girlfriend Zeta in their chamber in Snappodome, when his phone implant buzzed.

(To be continued) 🙌



Vivek Borkar

Vivek Borkar aka Borya (B. Tech. EE '76 H3) got his MS in Systems and

Control from Case Western and PhD in EECS from UC Berkeley. After working in TIFR-CAM, Bangalore, IISc, Bangalore and TIFR, Mumbai, he finally got back to where he once belonged - joining IITB as Institute Chair Professor of Electrical Engineering in August 2011.

When IITians helped make the Taj

SATISH HATTIANGADI

“Hey, Grandpa! I have this great business idea. I need you to fund it. It is going to make India a rich country!”

Shah Jahan was just a teenager when he made that statement. But, as usual, it elicited different reactions from his grandparents.

“Shah Baby, how many times should I tell you that your father should be called Jahanpana? Really, you drive me up the wall!”

“Well, son, let’s hear it!”

“Suppose I made a fantastic mausoleum. All marble, and inlaid with lapis lazuli and mother of pearl. People would come from all over the world to see it. Just imagine. A million people coming and visiting every year! If they stayed for just ten days in India, and spent just Rs. 10,000/- on their hotel charges, can you calculate how much money they are going to spend in India?”

“Let us put it to Birbal,” was the instantaneous reply. Akbar had a clear idea of his limitations as far as calculations were concerned. And so, the question got relayed the next day to the famed courtier.

Birbal was keenly aware of his own limitations at calculating, and equally aware of Akbar’s lack of capabilities.

“The amount of money you will make can be correctly estimated only after you have made the mausoleum. What you have to first calculate is how much the mausoleum is going to cost, and how and where you are going to

get the money.”

“Oh, I was thinking of tapping my Grandpa for that,” said the candid SJ.

“Your Grandfather will have to sell all the family jewels and then empty out the entire treasury, and still it will not be enough. In fact, he will have to hock the country to get loans, but all the ‘marwadi’ and the ‘pathan’ money-lenders in the country would run out of money to lend, and it still will not be enough!”

Akbar got his message, and that was that as far as his grandson’s mausoleum idea was concerned.

But Shah Jahan was not going to give up so easily. He caught up with Birbal when he was alone, and pushed the matter further.

“Thanks for your help,” he started sarcastically, “you have nicely poured cold water on my plans of reaching out to my Grandpa for a loan. Now, what do I do?”

“Tapping His Imperial Majesty was not such a good idea. It will keep raising all kinds of questions... But your idea of a mausoleum is not bad. It needs a bit of polishing, but we can explore it. And for the funding, what you need at this stage is some ‘Angel Funding’.”

“Who is going to provide the ‘Angel Funding’ for such a project?”

“Let us wait for Deshmukh to come to India. He normally visits in December, to catch the IIT B alumni meeting.”

When Deshmukh was born, it was reported that he would fly into a rage even before he

learnt to cry. That reputation led to his being given the name ‘Jamadagni’. The reputation, of course, was quite unfounded. ‘Jamadagni’ Deshmukh was, in fact, born slightly premature, and had a voracious appetite. When the milk supply stopped before his appetite was satisfied, it caused his sphincter muscle to contract. This led him to hold his breath and press against his sphincter. The contortions of his face and the flush on his face were a direct result of this, and not of any anger.

“No, I was just wondering. When Jama gets children, do you know what they will call Jama? They will call him Pa Jama!”



But the reputation of flying into a rage stuck to Jamadagni. Is it any wonder that he was taken very seriously by all around him? Even his teachers in school would not dare to ignore his questions, however trivial or foolish they might have been. Jamadagni never learnt to smile and relax, but the constant seriousness, coupled with constant support from his teachers, helped him to qualify for IIT.

His stay at IIT changed him totally. To start with, his “Jamadagni” was shortened to ‘Jama’ on the day of his arrival itself. And, about a month later when his classmates had gathered around him to polish off the goodies that his mother had sent, Pandy Shahani suddenly and inexplicably burst into laughter.

“What happened, Pandy?”

“No, I was just wondering. When Jama gets children, do you know what they will call Jama? They will call him Pa Jama!” and everyone burst out laughing. That was how IIT transformed the forbidding Jamadagni Deshmukh into “Pajama Deshmukh”.

The Bard of Avon might have thought that a rose by another name would smell as sweet, but that is not true of humans. Where Jama-

dagni Deshmukh brought seriousness to all around him, the sight of Pajama Deshmukh brought a smile to every face around him. Reacting to all those smiling faces, the reserved Jamadagni became a jovial Pajama.

Pajama Deshmukh was extremely lucky. He passed out of IIT to land up in the Silicon Valley at just the right time. He was not much of a cook, so he ended up making salads for himself, day in and day out. He made his own salad dressing, which he thought of selling locally to augment his assistantship. He coined the name “Window Dressing” for it, and put in a small ad in the Palo Alto Chronicle.

This advertisement was noticed by an executive of a software house, which resulted in Pajama Deshmukh getting several hundred million dollars for giving up the exclusive right to his product. What that company wanted to do, or did, with the salad dressing is not known but Pajama Deshmukh, the Angel Investor, was born- with a good stockpile to invest.

Pajama Deshmukh helped a lot of projects that needed financing. None ever gave any return on investment, but his reputation as a source of Angel Funding spread all over the country.

And so it was that Shah Jahan, with considerable assistance from a lot of IIT alumni scratching through their email and phone lists, finally traced Pajama Deshmukh and fixed up an appointment.

A Saturday evening in December saw Pajama Deshmukh and the Moghul Prince ensconced in a corner of Taj Land’s End lobby.

“Imagine a monument to the world’s greatest love! Or, if you want it another way, the world’s greatest monument to love! It doesn’t matter which option you choose. You are going to have droves of people coming to see this monument!”

“I agree, Shah Jahan. I can see the cash rolling in once the reputation of the monument is established. But it is a long term game,

a very long term game.”

“But then, this monument may last a thousand years! Can you even imagine any other project that can keep giving returns for a thousand years?”

“You have a point there. But maybe your business plan can be improved upon. I want you to meet Pandy Shahani. He is excellent at making new businesses more viable. He is a good friend of mine. I know him from IIT days. He will help you polish up the proposal

**: “Hmm...Monument to love!
Great! But a mausoleum?
Nah! Tourists would be
turned off by dead bodies
sitting in the middle of the
whole thing...”**



to make it viable and also have more investor appeal. Here, call him on his mobile and tell him that I referred you to him.”

Shah Jahan did call up Pandy Shahani, but could not meet him for a while, as his own wedding plans overtook him. So he met Pandy only after he had married Mumtaz.

“Pajama Deshmukh was telling me something about a mausoleum that you wanted to build?”

“Yes. I just married Mumtaz. I was thinking of making a mausoleum for her after her death, and calling it Mumtaz Mahal. A building fully made of white marble, with mother of pearl and lapis lazuli inlay work, something absolutely out of this world! A building that will shine on a full moon night, a monument to love that would last forever!”

“Hmm...Monument to love! Great! But a mausoleum? Nah! Tourists would be turned off by dead bodies sitting in the middle of the whole thing...”

“They won’t be in the middle. I was planning to have the bodies interred in the basement...”

“Even that is a turn-off. Why not ditch the ‘makhbarah’ stuff and go for something more attractive? I suggest that you fill the basement with slot machines and then see how the tourists swarm to the place!”

“Slot machines instead of Mumtaz? I don’t know...”

“And even the name ‘Mumtaz’ is worrying. It won’t catch on. The ‘Mum’ in it would remind people of Egyptian Mummies. Nah... A bad connection. Let us see. Why not call it the ‘Taz Mahal’? That should click! Anything that rhymes with jazz should click, especially if we can make a good jingle and put it on the radio and TV all over the western world!”

So Taz Mahal it became. But subsequently, as semi-literates ignored the dot under the ‘Ja’ in the Hindi spelling of Taz, it got more popularly known as the ‘Taj Mahal’.

“And where are you going to put this Taj Mahal?” Pandy was not quite done with it yet.

“First, you must understand. I am having this round dome on top, built on a large square building, which itself is on an extra-large square pedestal. The square-ness of the pedestal is highlighted by four minarets springing up at the four corners, also made of white marble! And this whole monument I can embed in a moghul garden, enhancing the square design by the symmetry in layout of the plants and the fountains... You will be able to see the monument in front, as well as its reflection in the pool below!”

“Yes, terrific! But where is this going to be?”

“I was thinking of building this in Agra. My old man is building a whole city nearby – Fatehpur Sikri – so why not build this near that city, and the benefit from the tourists staying at Fatehpur Sikri will be enormous!”

“Yes and no! Yes, the benefit would be enormous to the nearby city, but the city also should have the proper infrastructure. And Agra and Fatehpur Sikri suck!

Nah... That will not do at all. I suggest

Las Vegas. Or Atlantic City. Or, if you want to stick to the east, how about Macau? These are all tourist destinations, man! You cannot buck the trend! Go along! If the Mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the Mountain! Yes, your idea is great. Just put some slot machines in the basement and relocate the monument in Las Vegas! Then you will see how the money comes rolling in!”

And so the Taj Mahal would have been built at Las Vegas, with slot machines in the basement, if only the constraints of time had not prevented Shah Jahan from getting the excellent advice of IIT alumni! 🙌



Satish Hattiangadi

Satish Hattiangadi: (B.Tech 1971, Chem Engg., H5) did his Masters in Chemical Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell (at that time Lowell Technological Institute). He did a Post Graduate Diploma in Software Technology from NCSDCT, and has worked extensively in software development. He is married to his classmate from IIT Bombay, Leja. Satish has all along been working alone, and tends to work 24/7 till the problem at hand is solved. He has retired from software development for the last eight years, and has been a regular participant in his Rotary Club and Rotary District activities. He is also member of the Executive Committee of the Mumbai Chapter of IITBAA.

The N-eww Pharticle

ANIL GANDHI

In a hastily arranged press conference at the headquarters of the Beano group, the head of public relations, Paris Hilton, walked up to the podium, and announced, “We have made a discovery last week that will forever change the world of Pharticle Psychics”. And then she went on to describe the elusive Stinky Pharton that was theorized by the Nobel Prize winning psychic, Biggs Moron, years ago. The half life of the Stinky Pharton has been the subject of much debate in recent years and has given many a scientist a bad stomach. Normally, this pharticle is short lived. However, new findings suggest that under certain conditions it may live long enough to cause death and destruction in the immediate vicinity. With the destructive potential in mind, the Union of Concerned Scientists issued a directive that any scientist working on the Stinky Pharton must ensure double containment procedures. They cited a recent incident when, erroneously, the Stinky Pharton was let loose in a grocery store aisle with a mushroom cloud that would shame Hiroshima.

In the meantime, ruthless Mexican drug cartels and the Russian mafia have expressed interest in the Stinky Pharton to replace the less-than-efficient and aging torture methods. The epitome of this interest by the underworld was captured on the cover of the latest issue of Terrorist International Magazine, titled “Stink ‘em up”. Separately, the FBI has been concerned that if this top secret research

finding were to fall into the wrong hands, a terrorist could put together a dirty bomb rather easily. Addressing security concerns, Paris Hilton, said, “We are now following strict security protocols, gentlemen. All lentils and beans (and especially Lima beans) have been sequestered in silos in the Yuck Ah mountain, under 10 feet of concrete.” The sequestration of lentils, however, has caused grave concerns for PPL (Phart Propulsion Lab) in Pasadena, California and it is rumored that the mission to MARS may be postponed until better propulsion methods could be found. Under water tests, though, continue. 🖐



Dr. Anil Gandhi

Dr. Anil Gandhi is a data scientist and an entrepreneur. His current interests include using data to predict the future of using data to predict the future. In his spare time he data mines to improve performance metrics in semiconductor and other manufacturing. You can admire his work by e-mailing to him at mindrate@gmail.com.

When I Graduated

VAIBHAV SAMBRE

*When I graduated
dressed in pure white
with an uttariya to grace
I sat with my friends*

*The same friends
some whom I knew
would be difficult to catch up
still we managed to smile and look up*

*The friends with whom I missed classes
were all set to be missed
the same people who made insti a home
will soon disappear in the world, amiss!*

*When I graduated
I was told to look forward
that the world awaits me
that I needed to prove my worth*

*Somehow I looked behind
and saw all my 5 years
like a recap they flashed
and now the end was so near*

*I looked behind all the talks,
banter, masti did I find
it would not be easy I said I had to do it I said*

*Preparing for the next world
I saw all the worlds
which had been my part
from which I was set to depart*

*Coz when I graduated
I got what I sought for
but I lost what I craved for
and the feeling is difficult to explain.*



Vaibhav Sambre

**HOSTEL 3, M.SC. CHEM, CLASS
OF 2013**

Creative Bees at Fundamatics

ILLUSTRATION



Shreyas Navare
C'08, SJMSOM, H-13

Shreyas Navare, Mumbai, Senior Manager, Marketing and Corporate Communications at a private bank. He freelances as a Editorial Cartoonist for Hindustan Times. He has covered elections in 6 Indian states through the eyes of a cartoonist on behalf of HT. Shreyas has held many cartoon exhibitions, two of which were inaugurated by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. His first solo international cartoon exhibition was held recently at Bangkok. His second exhibition was held at Nehru Centre recently. Cartoons featured in this issue are from the exhibition.

EZINE



Abhishek Thakkar

Abhishek Thakkar or just 'Thakkar' as he was known throughout campus is an alumnus of H5 from '03. Having a lot of it, he loved throwing his weight around, and escaped many a bumps which he'd have got for his PJs. Now he channels all that creative energy in designing beautiful, scalable web and mobile interfaces.

DESIGN



Anand Prahlad
C'07, IDC, H-8

Anand Prahlad is an independent graphic designer and artist. When not designing books, magazines, corporate identities or illustrating, he is an active gardener, culinary expert and amateur musician. He runs www.magic-marinade.com, a food and travel blog, and also www.thenewvitruvianman.com, where he writes and illustrates articles on design, gastronomy and music.

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