

# THE INSIGHT QUARTERLY

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**02** Find out how the PT Cell's merger with the Placement Office will impact your internships.

**04** An exclusive interview with the Registrar that throws up some eye-popping facts.

**06** Why have we become apathetic to academics at IIT-B? Your responses.

## You call it attitude, we call it superiority

■ ANAMIKA AGRAWAL, ANANT KEKRE, AYUSH MISRA, MADHU KIRAN, MANOJ REDDY, PARTH LOYA, SHRUTI MITTAL, YAMINI BANSAL



**This is Mr. X. His kind can be spotted quite easily on the streets of IIT-Bombay. He, like any other student, wishes to lead a happy/healthy social life. He's proud of the fact that he's in the premier engineering college in India, yet at times he wishes, that he'd rather be doing arts in some other college in Mumbai (for obvious reasons of course). Mr. X speaks in a lingo (somewhat similar to parselongue) which only the other 'gifted' ones like him can understand. He loves his campus and his fellow peeps so much that he rarely goes out and makes friends outside the institute.**

Following in the footsteps of other top notch national newspapers, 'InsIghT' being the official media body of IIT Bombay decided to do its bit of investigative journalism and dig deeper into the life of Mr. X. We viewed different aspects of Mr. X's life under the microscope and the findings were very interesting.

### Mr. X's campus-bound social life

Mr. X keeps whining about the skewed sex ratio in the institute. However, what was interesting to know was that Mr. X, like 52 % of his other friends, is actually happy with his social life on campus. Of course he desires to make more friends from outside IITB and widen his social circle.

On the contrary only 24 % of Mr. X's friends felt depressed about the lack of social life at IITB and were saddened by the fact that they stay in an institute which is cut off from other colleges.

### Mr. X-Forever Alone

Mr. X, like a majority of the male population at IITB does not have a girlfriend. About 75% of the people, like Mr. X, who responded to 'InsIghT's Social life survey' said that they were single. This can of course be correlated to the number of girls on campus. The situation for girls however is quite the opposite. About 74% of the girls that InsIghT came in contact with said that they were currently dating.

### Mr. X's social skills

At IITB, Mr. X is provided with a number of opportunities (MI, Techfest etc.) to interact with other college students. However, when InsIghT tried to find out the reason behind Mr. X's incapability to make new friends, he responded by saying that it wasn't due to shyness or the lack of confidence to make conversation, but due to sheer laziness. About 44% of Mr. X's kind also shared his views and felt that they were too lazy to go out of their way to make new friends. Only 30% of the students at IITB admitted to being shy and found it awkward to start a conversation.

Next, we dug deeper into the frequency of visits Mr. X makes outside the campus for hanging out, grabbing a bite, drinking and the like. One would heave a sigh of relief to know that only around 3% of respondents to

the 'Social life survey' never leave their lairs. But the fact that Mr. X chooses to go out only once or twice a month, similar to 40% of his other fellow mates, would be too huge a chunk of the pie to make peace with. "And what is it that he does for the rest of the month?", one might wonder.

### Mr. X's group dynamics

Mr. X, like majority of the respondents on the survey is part of 1 or 2 'close friends' groups—most of the members of which are his wingmates, hostel-mates or his classmates. Mr. X also finds himself more comfortable with people from his home state like 30 % of the other people who filled the survey. One may conclude that even with a garden of cultural, sport and other activities enlivening the campus, regionalism would seem a bigger binder than cultural clubs at IITB.



### Decreased Interest in making new friends

As a freshee, Mr. X made hundreds of new friends at IITB, as can be seen from his Facebook friend list which shot up threefold in the first year. However as the years went by, Mr. X's interest in making new friends somewhat diminished. Majority of the respondents to the survey shared this view.

### What's on Mr. X's mind?

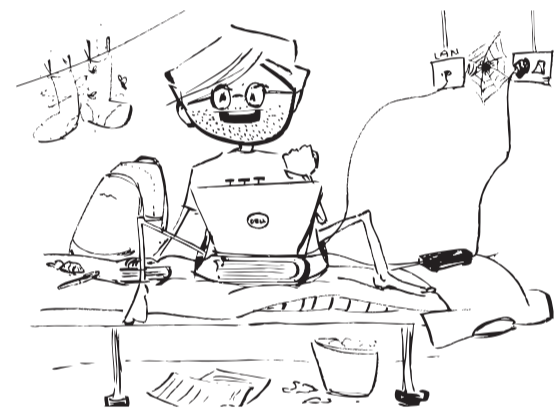
Here's another little snippet of information. InsIghT zoomed in once again on Mr. X's group to find out what he and his friends generally talk about. Talks about the opposite sex emerged as the most frequent topic of discussion. Academics and placement followed in a close second and third respectively. This result could also be correlated to the change in priorities over the years in IITB, specially during exams or placements.

### Mr. X-Couch potato?

Now that we know that Mr. X doesn't go out that often and as the 'Why people don't study at IITB' article on page 6 of this issue suggests, Mr. X isn't exactly

the nerdiest guy around, its pretty obvious that Mr. X has a lot of free time on his hands. The next question would now be, what does he do with this free time?

According to 60% of the respondents most of the free time is spent on the laptop, either Facebooking, Gmail-ing or watching TV shows. Mr. X, being no different generally spends over 6 hours of his day in front of the laptop (need to get a life?)



### Mr. X - "What's fashion?"

Mr. X is crippled when it comes to dressing sense or fashion. He generally doesn't think twice before picking up something from the cupboard to wear. Like nearly 70% of his folks, he finds it a complete waste of time. He goes scavenging for clothes with his eyes shut and just wears whatever he can get his hands on in the cupboard. ■



Illustrations by Vaibhav Bhalékar

# Merger of the PT Cell and Placement Cell

■ ANISH GUPTA, AYUSH MISRA, BATTULA CHETAN, PRAKHAR SINGH, SOMASEKHAR, YASH TAMBAWALA

This year onwards, the erstwhile Practical Training cell (PT Cell) has been merged with the Placement Office at IIT-B. The merger has given a new structure to the Internship scene in the Institute and has tried to unify the strengths of these two bodies under a single umbrella. This merger now aligns Placement Office at IIT-B with that of other IITs in terms of the basic structure. The new cell now consists of two parallel outfits, with distinct responsibilities and roles defined for each of them. But, whether the new outfit is able to carry forward from where its predecessor had left, will only be determined only in years to come. With this article, we try to analyze the reasons behind this move and will give you a feel of the internship cell in the current scenario.

## Why this merger?

There has been a lot of speculation about the reasons for the merger of the PT Cell and Placement Cell. As of last year, the PT Cell was directly under the purview of Dean AP and the General Secretary, Academic Affairs. In the previous semester, the present Dean AP Prof. Shiva Prasad took the decision to appoint the Placement Office as the caretaker of the PT Cell. InsiGhT spoke to Dean AP to find out the reason behind the merger.

Prof. Shiva Prasad said he was already engaged with immense amount of academic work and was unable to dedicate sufficient time and attention towards the happenings of the PT cell. Also, whenever any problem relating to policy measures or administrative affairs came up, the Dean AP was put into the loop to redress it. However, having little knowledge or insight into the matters of PT Cell, the issues were not resolved effectively. He felt that the Placement Office and its people were better equipped at handling these affairs.

Facing all these issues and realizing that the ideology of the Placement and PT Cell were parallel, a Dean's committee on this issue decided to merge them. The idea behind the merger was that both the cells would have mutual benefit and would receive guidance as and when required since their overall philosophy and problems remain similar.

## The New team structure

Currently, The Placement Office acts as the umbrella for the two outfits running under it, The Placement Cell and The Internship Cell. The Placement Office is headed by a Professor-In-Charge who is supported by the Assistant Placement Officer and the supporting staff, who oversee the operations of the two units. The Placement Office nominates Placement Managers, Company Coordinators, Department Placement Co-ordinators and Associate Coordinators to work primarily for placements. It also nominates Internship Coordinators (ICs) from the various departments to work for the Internship Cell alone.

	IITB	IITK	IITD	IITM	IITKGP
<b>Team</b>	PMs, CCs, APCs, DPCs and ICs. Over a hundred students working in the Placement Office.	Overall Placement Co-ordinators, Core team members, DPCs and ICs in the Student Placement Office.	Placement Team and Training cell, central & nucleus (dept.) team, Pitching Coordinators.	IRs (Intern Representatives) and PCs (Placement coordinators) under one BC (Branch Counsellor).	Student Co-ordinators working for both summer training and Placements.
<b>Industrial Internships (Compulsory or not)</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (can be university training)
<b>University Internship Scene</b>	Internship cell gets a few univ. internships. Students can apply on their own.	TnP cell doesn't offer University internships. Students can apply on their own.	University Internships are not allowed at the end of 3rd year.	TnP cell doesn't offer University internships. Students can apply on their own.	TnP cell offers University internships. Students can apply on their own.
<b>Penalty policy</b>	A maximum of 5 penalty points for placements and the placement resume will be void of any activity during the period of Internship	A maximum of 10 placement penalty points Penalty points on opting out of selection process at any stage	No strict policy of having a resume penalty. Students can't approach companies which are coming on campus	Companies are categorized as starred and unstarred If someone declines a starred company, he/she is not allowed to sit for placements	

## The New Role of an Internship Coordinator

The role of ICs remains nearly the same as last year except for minor changes. Internship Coordinator are involved in bringing companies and universities for internships. As far as university internships are concerned, the procedure involved in bringing them is the same as before. This process has not been affected by the merger of the two cells.

**The idea is that both cells would mutually benefit and exchange guidance since their overall philosophy and problems are similar**

For companies which come for both placements as well as internships, Company Coordinators are the only point of contact. CC's also pitch for internships to the companies which come for placements, increasing the number of internships and strengthening the relations between IIT and the companies. The IC's coordinate with the CC's during the internship procedure.

## Interaction with Companies: Anything amiss?

The Placement Office, across IITs, is run by student teams who coordinate with companies to bring placement and internship opportunities. This process of bringing companies involves interaction with HR professionals of reputed firms. On a few occasions in the past, this process of interaction had gone awry which had ultimately left the student community at a loss. As a student organization, a mistake on their part is usually pardoned by experienced by companies which realize this fact. But, Is it possible to train our representatives to avoid such slips or have HR professionals deal with companies instead?

We asked this question to the authorities who had a very interesting take on it. The Professor-In-Charge of the Placement Office said that the process of "ground-work" is quite exhaustive and the amount of time put in by the student team is much higher than any team of HR professionals can possibly put in. He also said that a certain amount of "innocence" was lost when an HR professional is involved in the interaction which companies understand well and thus respond quite well to the student team. Prof. Ravi Sinha, the ex-PIC of the Placement Office said that HR training modules for the student team did not exist and such training opportunities are missing.

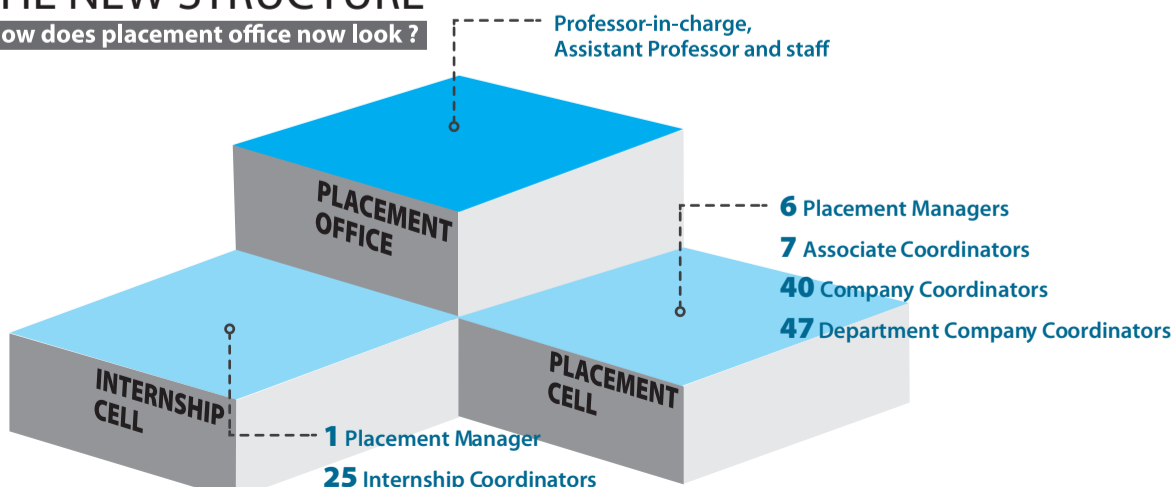
## What does the future hold?

With the guidance and support of the Placement Office, the number of companies offering internships will see an upswing as compared to previous years. As far as academic internships are concerned, the process remains unchanged and will not be affected by this move.

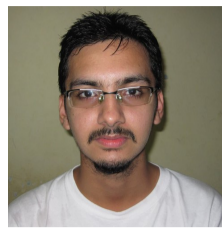
Probably the most important student organization in the Institute, the Placement Office has a lot of changes underway to make the the process of Internships and Placements much more smooth in the future. As with any merger or acquisition, the post-merger Integration holds the key for the future of the combined entity. Prof. Avijit Chatterjee, the Professor-In-Charge of the Placement Office also believes that this integration process will involve multiple iterations in the policy and structure of the cell in the future after a thorough review of the current cell. As of now, only time can tell whether the merger was a good decision or a bad one. ■

## THE NEW STRUCTURE

How does placement office now look ?



**In Conversation with**



**Shashwat Shukla**  
Placement Manager,  
Internships

**InsIghT:** The new PT cell policy has seen a change from A,B,C categorization to I1,I2,I3, I4 and U. What has been the philosophy behind this move? Also, what is the basis of classifying any company into these categories?  
**Placement Manager:** Internship offers have been categorized into 5 categories- I1, I2, I3 , I4 and U.

It was felt that the original categorization criterion comprising of A, B and B\* was slightly simplistic and hence warranted some refining. We also wanted to isolate university internships which was another reason for the current categorization. As mentioned in the policy, the internships offered are categorized based on the nature of organization, nature of internship, past relationship with IIT Bombay, student preference and stipend. All universities will be considered to be in the U category. Stipend is not the only criterion.

**I:** Why has a penalty of 5 placement penalty points been imposed in addition to the resume penalty for refusing an Internship offer when a sufficient penalty already existed in the form of the resume penalty?  
**P.M.:** The need for imposing additional penalty points arose from the new categorization process. Category

I1 internships are the most preferred company internships and if students decline such internships, it ends up straining the Institute's relations with the company. It was felt that to deter students from declining these internships, the penalty needed to be further linked to placements to make it more severe.

**I:** Why has the registration charge of Rs. 300/- been introduced? Why was this figure of Rs. 300/- chosen and how would this amount be used?  
**P.M.:** There are many expenses that we have to bear -- office maintenance, payment for booking venues, support staff, overheads, etc.. These expenses are much greater than the money that we are taking from students. The registration fee is a token amount on the lines of the placements fee (Rs. 500) to fund a part of these costs.

# What's so Zen about 10(P.M.) ?

■ ANAMIKA AGRAWAL, BODHI VANI, NAVODIT SHARMA, SOMESH SONTAKKE

One of the many rules taken for granted on campus is the 10-7 rule: that members of the opposite sex are not allowed in each other's hostels from 10 PM to 7 AM. For this issue, InsIghT asks a few pertinent questions. Is the 10-7 rule still required, or has it become redundant? How much does this rule affect us in terms of inconvenience and whether this is or isn't more important? We talked to several people in positions of responsibility, and circulated a survey regarding the same, and here we compile the results of the same.

The student community at IIT recognises two important facts: we have a less than a 1:10 gender ratio on campus, and our society is no longer as conservative as it used to be. The largest problem a girl in IIT faces is that she is very likely one of the only girls in class, and does most of her studying, or course project work in groups with boys. In this respect, the 10-7 rule proves to be a terrible hindrance to academics. As far as common areas are concerned, apart from during the endsems, the library timings are restrictive, especially on weekends, and study rooms are crowded and noisy, while common rooms of hostels are almost always occupied for one or the other extracurricular activity.

On similar lines, extracurricular activities done in teams, ranging from technical activities, start-ups planned, to less serious cultural activities have the same gender ratio. One's room or wing remains the only spot of comfort to execute any such project and hostel restrictions make group activities severely gender divided, just as they make study groups and projects. Is it really right, in this day and age, to knowingly create divides and curb interaction for no

## Going down memory lane

Historically speaking, the hostel-entrance issue has seen changes following student protest. Back in 1980, the restriction was a blanket rule- no men were allowed past the common areas of the Women's Hostels. The then G.Sec. Ms. Revathi Kasturi, organized a movement against the authorities, on the lines of a civil disobedience act- radical at that time- in which she gathered a bunch of her male friends in the Hostel 10 super lounge (1st floor) to push forth the point. Eventually this led to men being allowed inside the hostel till 7 PM, provided someone signed them in. Fast forward to 2004, several students found the deadline inconvenient and after due deliberation the deadline was pushed back to 10 PM.

reason? Especially with a gender ratio like ours, these restrictions are severe for the female portion of the community, often reducing academic and extracurricular opportunities, and an academic support system.

However, given all the arguments concerning the inconvenience of the rule, there are several students who believe the rule is a necessary evil, so to speak. Their reasons usually are on the lines of them being

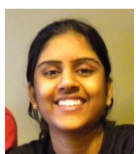
## Are you in support of extending the 10-7 deadline?

<b>NO RESTRICTION</b>	<b>52 %</b>
<b>SHOULD REMAIN THE SAME</b>	<b>14 %</b>
<b>12 AM</b>	<b>12 %</b>
<b>2 AM</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>1 AM</b>	<b>7 %</b>
<b>3 AM</b>	<b>5 %</b>

not mind members of the opposite sex up to a certain time in the night, say 12 or 2 AM.

At the end of the day, the only real objections are on the lines of privacy - which is a little unfair. If one is entitled to the privacy of one's room, so is one entitled to the freedom of inviting one's friend into one's room. Where roommates are concerned, people have made agreements and compromises both ways, and will continue to do so. On an idealistic level, most students on campus are of legal age who are capable of taking their own decisions and thinking rationally. So, as free adults, it is imperative that an environment which is free to that extent be available to us. Having the rule is yet another façade which masks the underlying irrational moral policing. Is it right for us to be so heavily inconvenienced and be forced into a gender disjoint simply because the Main Building is still conservative? To conclude, however, it should be noted that if the 80's are anything to learn from, the only way any change can actually be seen is if yet another uprising is seen in the community. ■

**In Conversation with**



**Pragya Maheswari**  
General Secretary  
Hostel 10

**Pragya** is of the opinion that a 12-6 so rule would be ideal- at least for girls' hostel. She believes that some women are still not completely comfortably with the idea of men in their living quarters at night, but also agrees that the current 10-to-7 rule is very inconvenient, mainly in terms of academic work. She also thinks that timing restrictions should be removed from common areas of the hostel completely, since she believes safety is not the primary reason for the rule, but that it is more of a matter of encroachment of private space in the society we currently live in.



uncomfortable with members of the opposite sex in their rooms/wings and societal impressions related to interacting with the opposite sex.

While we face resistance from several people, implementation of security, as well as preserving privacy should not be much of a hurdle. The girls' hostels- those actually concerned with security- already have CCTV cameras posted at their entrances - these just need to be monitored regularly. Above this, since only students of IITB will be present post 11 PM, submitting the entree's i-card can be made mandatory too, apart from the entrant's, thus monitoring 'legitimate' males who have been entered. Our statistics also show that most people affected by the 'privacy' issue would

**In Conversation with**



**Professor U. A. Yajnik**  
Dean of Student Affairs

The essential reason the Dean quotes for the restriction of entry in hostels is the still existent societal norm against the interaction amongst opposite sexes. This viewpoint is further strengthened by the supposed attitude that girls have with regard to boys being allowed in their hostels. Aside from this, several cases of thefts and break-ins have been reported in H10. Not having a rule disallowing boys from being present may prove to be a huge barrier in terms of security, and knowing who is legitimately entered into the hostel and who isn't.



**Mr B. Punalkar,**  
Registrar

As an economics graduate, Shri B.S. Punalkar joined the staff of IIT Bombay in 1976. Rising through the ranks, he served as Deputy Registrar (Accounts) before his current posting. Mr. Punalkar has served the IIT system in various capacities, including that of Mentor Registrar to IIT Gandhinagar. One of the seniormost figures in IIT Bombay's administrative wing today, Mr. Punalkar is set to retire in the coming academic year. IIT Bombay, without doubt, will miss him.

**The poor little rich people**

1861 crores. That's the worth of the total transactions reflected on IIT Bombay's annual balance sheet. Even in a period seeing generous alumni contributions and improving industry interactions, the Government of India remains IIT Bombay's main patron. The HRD ministry paid around 450 crores to IIT Bombay for the year 2011-12. The total fee collection stood at around 20 crores, while a sum amounting to 40 crores came in through engineering consultancy projects commissioned by the industry or governmental organizations. But this inflow barely meets the expenditure needs, says the Registrar. With infrastructure having still not kept up with the burgeoning student growth, IIT Bombay hardly has any savings to show. Essential costs like electricity alone take up around 1.5 crores a month. The reversal in the UG/PG ratio, with PGs now outnumbering UGs by two times, also has contributed to rising academic costs. These factors contribute towards the current period being one of the most testing times in the history of IIT Bombay.

The Registrar outlined a contrast in Main Building's approach towards Independent Bodies like Mood Indigo. He recalled the decades when Mood Indigo was run almost solely on funds provided by the institute. However, the rapid commercialisation of MI made it sustainable. The approach was reversed around 7 years ago when MI then started paying IIT Bombay a percentage of earnings to compensate for the huge strain in resources on the institute for those four days and beyond. IIT Bombay's treasury is housed in the State Bank of India, in keeping with

ministry guidelines of maintaining an account only in nationalized banks. However a few alumni and trust fund endowments are stored in various other banks such as the ICICI in a bid to maintain cordial relations with the donors.

**The Minitrue**

The Registrar is the prime intermediary between the institute and the ministry, with him being personally responsible for the influx of funds from the ministry. Everything ranging from the funds for the construction of the new gymkhana to our TA stipends and scholarships have the Registrar's involvement in it. However, it isn't about travelling to New Delhi and signing a bunch of documents. The ministry has to be explained the need for most expenditures and cajoled into shelling out. Be it the construction of a new ladies hostel, or a new swimming pool, the Registrar painstakingly explains the need to the undersecretary in the ministry. At other times, the Registrar has to explain how the institute is running a mini-municipality with its own security, medical care and maintenance. "Those who sip from the banks of the Ganga do not know the costs of drinking water", he jokingly quips, referring to how the ministry gets its security from the CISF, healthcare from the CGHS and construction from the CPWD, thus minimising the actual cost billed directly to the ministry. Explaining the ground reality in the IITs and justifying the soaring expenditures forms a prime role of the Registrar.

**The band of brothers**

The IITs have a strong support structure which helps them immensely as opposed to other institutes. "The problems faced by other universities in India just cannot be compared to those of the IITs", says the Registrar. The ministry has by far been generous in its treatment of the IITs compared to the other institutes. The Registrar says that the average age of the Director of an IIT has dropped and the energy levels are higher. Moreover, there are a large number of IAS officers who are alumni of the IIT system, which further helps the IITs' cause. IIT Bombay is quite favourably placed, as it has been home to most Directors of IITs today. "We have contributed the most towards Directorship in the IIT system. Currently, the Directors of IIT Delhi (Prof R.K. Shevgaonkar of our EE Dept), IIT Roorkee (Prof P. Bannerjee of our Civil Engg Dept), IIT Indore (Prof P.Mathur of our Chemistry Dept) and IIT Hyderabad (Prof UB Desai of our Elec Engg Dept) have served for decades as faculty members in IIT Bombay.

"Like I said, the Director and the Registrar run the institute as a couple. And sometimes, just as a couple goes together to invite people to a family function, so does the protocol dictate that the two go together to invite dignitaries to functions at IIT Bombay". For a man at the helm of thousands of crores, and ex-officio roles which run into scores, Mr Punalkar is the hero IIT Bombay deserves. A watchful protector, a silent guardian. A Registrar.

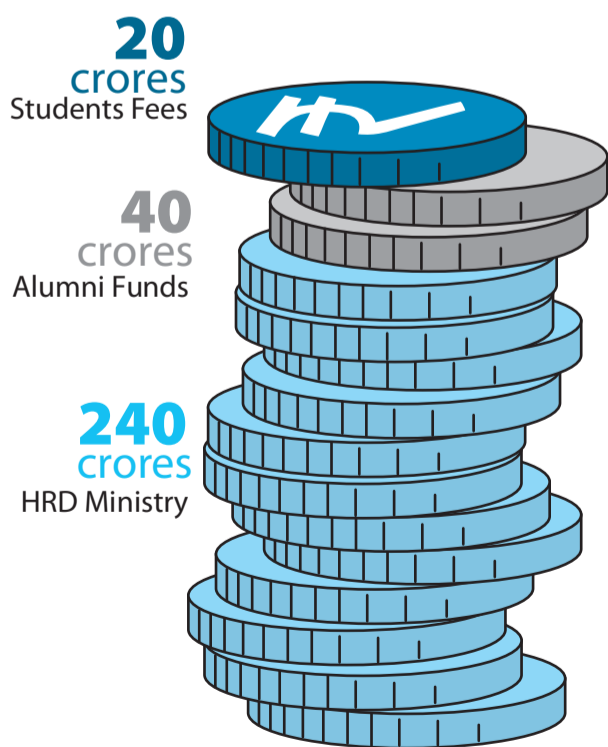
**HIGH TE**  
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The Registrar and the Director are like a couple running a... Director travels, networks and makes policies, while the P... and Suman Rao talk about IIT Bombay's affairs with the n... students, head of administration, secretary of the Senate

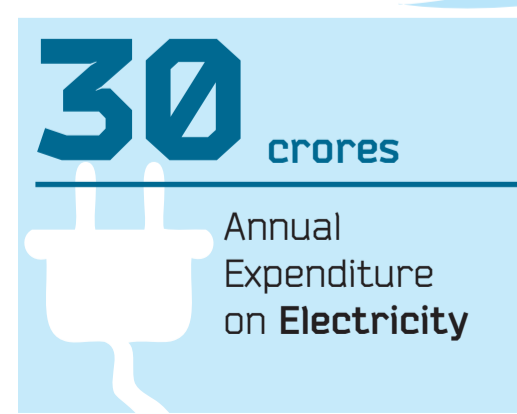
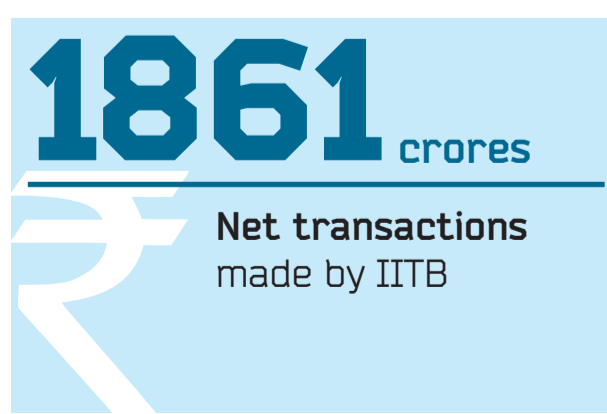


**Registrar**

An intermediary between  
**IITB and HRD**  
for allocation of funds

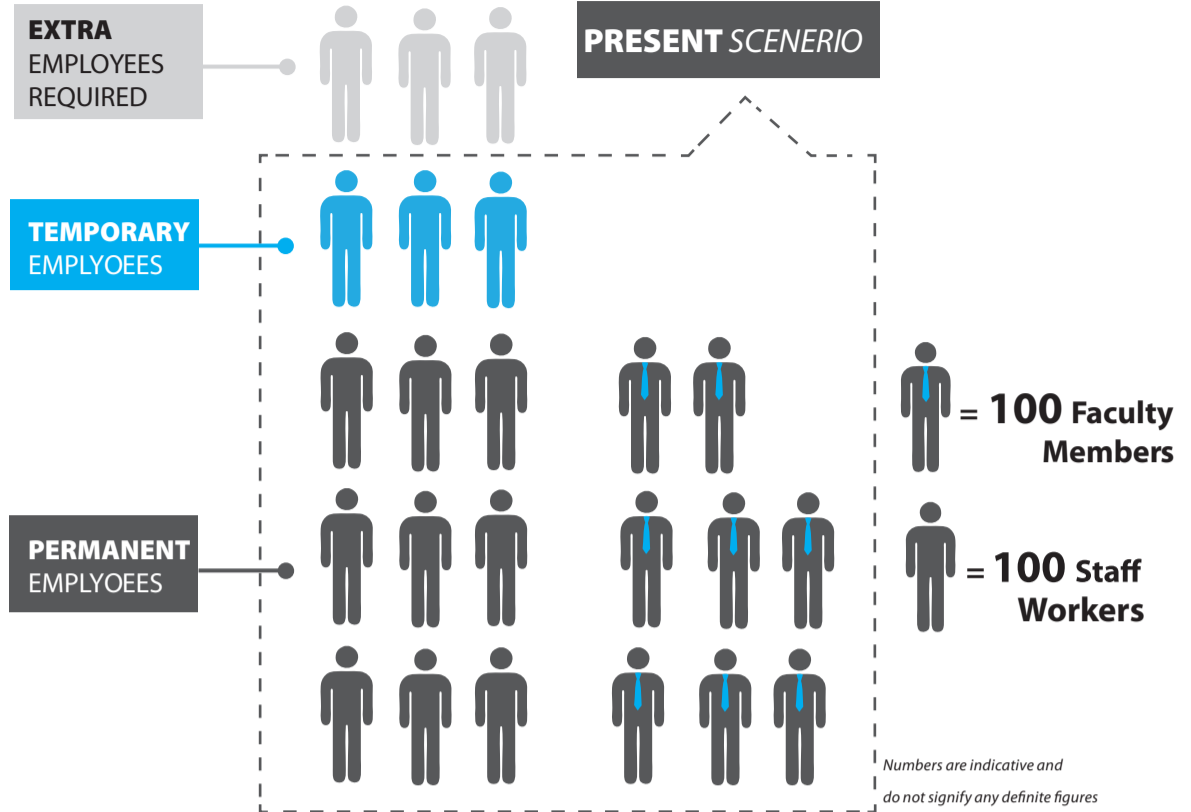


**Inflow of Money**  
in IIT Bombay



# EA WITH GISTRAR

family, says Mr B. Punalkar, Registrar – IIT Bombay. The Registrar executes them and runs the family. Nivvedan S man who is the signatory to all funds, local guardian of all and the HRD Ministry's go-to man for all things IIT Bombay.



### How subsidised is our education at IIT Bombay?

By at least 4.5 lakh per student per year, if these calculations are any indication. The Registrar quotes a figure of around 240 crores as the average annual amount which the Ministry of HRD pays IIT Bombay to cover its running costs. The fee collection stands at around 20 crore a year. Coupled with alumni donations and ministry/industry consultancy sponsorships, past data suggests that the total funds available to the institute for an average academic year is around 300 crores. Now a student pays about a lakh a year in fees to the institute. However, there are varying ranges of scholarships disbursed to students based on their caste, economic means and their programme of study. In fact, it actually pays to be a PhD student. Now typically, in a private college without external aid, all expenses would be covered by student fees. Considering that IIT Bombay houses around 8000 students in various programmes, this amount of 300 crores comes out to a cost of 3.75 lakhs per student per year. The General Category Undergraduate pays the highest fees (excluding SOM students, who go largely un-subsidised in this regard) of around 1 lakh a year. Thus, even for him/her, the subsidy comes out to at least 2.75 lakhs per year.

### A few good men

The Registrar admits a manpower crunch in the institute, as is seen in the slow pace with which grievances are addressed in the estate office or the hospital. He points to extremely restrictive ministry policies as the reason. However, he outlined the plan which the institute has adopted to alleviate these problems. The ministry has set a cap of 11 non-academic staff for every 10 faculty members in the institute. With IIT Bombay's sanctioned faculty strength being 800, this allows for about 900 members of staff only. However, the current number of 1200 non-academic staff is barely sufficient to run the institute. The security section alone is around 250 members in size. The institute has begun outsourcing most of its work in a bid to overcome the restrictions in manpower recruitment. The housekeeping on campus has been largely outsourced. Slowly but surely, smaller tasks such as gardening and estate management is being outsourced. The institute has adopted a policy of handing out only 89 day contracts to class D workers, to avoid them being counted into IIT Bombay's quota of 900. However, the problem is being far from solved. The Registrar says that the pace of outsourcing is very slow, as existing employees such as government mess workers can't simply be replaced by permanent workers. He says that initially, in a bid to improve comfort, a staff size of 3500 was recruited to serve a campus of 2000 students. Those were times when ministry interference in staff recruitment were minimal. This past generosity is creating problems today. ■

### Digitization of Hospital Records - Follow Up

This is a follow up to our investigation in the last issue on why our medical records are yet to be digitized. Our talk with the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Nisha Shah pointed to operational constraints and manpower shortage as the two major roadblocks to digitization. To gain a better InsIghT into the causes of these roadblocks, we had a chat with the two persons who're instrumental to the working of our Hospital - Prof. SV Nataraj, the Chairman of the Hospital and Health Services Advisory Committee and Mr. B Punalkar, the Registrar of IIT Bombay.

Prof. Nataraj recognizes the need for digitization and even pointed out that a couple of other IITs have already done it. However, he mentioned that they were merely health-centres while IIT Bombay is unique since it has a full-fledged hospital, which complicates matters. He also pointed out that the underway construction of the new hospital wing is a huge project in itself and all other major projects would be on hold until it is complete, including digitization.

The Hospital too hasn't been spared by the manpower crisis plaguing the Institute. Even as student numbers multiplied, it saw a cut down in the number of staff due to the inability to replace the retiring staff. The administration battled to salvage possible excess non-academic positions in the institute and reallocate them to the hospital. Prof. Nataraj is of the opinion that outsourcing is the only way forward and in keeping with it, Housekeeping and Maintenance at the hospital has already been outsourced from this year.

Finally, Prof. Nataraj mentioned that there are also some technical glitches. The Hospital has repeatedly been facing some problems with the printers which have taken their own time to be fixed. He says that incidents like this might make the doctors not too enthusiastic about digitization or any other forms of computer-aided technology. He feels the need for professional hospital management solutions that are robust and tested and tried in multiple places, if we are to convince our doctors. Faced with a multitude of holes to plug, one comes to realize the huge magnitude of the ambitious digitization project. It will truly need to be considered carefully and implemented in stages so as not to affect the essential hospital services.

**3.75** lakhs

Average Annual Subsidy for a General Category Undergrad

# Why don't we study at IITB ?

■ ANSHUL AVASTHI, AYUSH KANODIA, KSHITIZ SWAROOP, MADALSA SINGH, NIVVEDAN S., RAHUL SHARMA, SAAZ SAKRIKAR, VAIBHAV PITTIE, YAMINI BANSAL

**This is the first in a series of articles that InslghT will sport to examine the role that academics plays in undergraduate student life on campus. The motivation for this piece arises from some concerns that were raised with us on the apparent dip in the quality in Academics, remarks by professors comparing the current batch to previous batches and opinions voiced on the impact of the switch to Biswas Curriculum. A constant theme in these articles will be an attempt to answer the question - 'Why don't we study at IIT Bombay?'**

We realize that this is a very complex issue with no simple answers or solutions. We believe that complexity should not prevent us from probing deeper, much to the contrary we solicit active participation especially from authorities and faculty, due to this very complexity. Please speak out to one of our team members or email your views to [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in) or message us on our Facebook page.

It is popular knowledge in our campus that most students amble through semesters at IIT-B, lost in the maze of extra-curricular events with little or no regard for lectures. Come the mid- semesters or end- semesters, this campus shakes off this stupor, has more than the usual amount of caffeine and gets its act together in a couple of mind-numbing weeks. Its a matter of huge concern, because the vision of the Institute is to be a place where the leaders and innovators in Science and Technology emerge, and it would be hard for any rational person to believe that preparing solely for examinations and cramming at the last minute is the way towards technological innovation. Through the course of this article and

subsequent articles on print and the website, we aim to analyze and unravel the reasons behind the problem plaguing us, resulting in the status quo. Before we get into the nitty-gritties, of why and how much it is that people study, let us examine the role that academics ought play in an undergraduate's life at IITB. A simple view might suggest that more study is better, but this would turn a blind eye to the various other factors that play a role in a student's overall development. We would also be ignoring the fact that most of the undergraduates here would be trying to figure out what they want to do in life, and providing such avenues for exploration apart from academics is definitely in the best interests of the students. This suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to defining the role of academics would be very misleading. The exact role of academics is thus a complex, personal issue. On the basis of our survey, we observe that there seems to be a variety reasons why students don't study at IITB. In this issue, we aim to exclusively analyze how a lack of zeal for our courses is one of the major reasons for academic apathy – **Pursuit of other passions.** Passion is something that a person is genuinely interested in - something through which the individual derives a great deal of satisfaction. In keeping with the institute's vision statement, passion in Science and Technology should ideally be the reason for a student to seek admission in IIT-B. However, we have come to find that a lot of students generally don't tend to have a single concrete aim or reason for entering IITs and there is a clear mismatch of ideals at the entry point. While in school, students tend to be confused as they are not sure why they aspire to IITs in the first place; their decision to prepare for JEE is mostly driven due to parental pressure or herd mentality. In

short, passion for Science and Technology is not what drives most school students to prepare for IIT-JEE. However, as an undergraduate student of IIT-B, one gets an opportunity to explore and gets exposed to a number of different activities, and some students tend to cultivate and develop interest in one of these domains. These domains can vary right from Photography, Entrepreneurship to Hard Core Academic Research. We see a lot of people who follow their passion to such an extent, that they tend to overlook Coursework to a great degree. Pursuing one's interest certainly consumes a huge chunk of a student's time, which automatically implies, that these set of students have less available time to devote to their courses. InslghT has conducted a couple of interviews\* of students who have taken up their passion very seriously, and given an account of their reasons of not studying much. All of their accounts have brought us to the conclusion that, these students value their passion to a huge extent, and that they go out of their way to use time most effectively to develop it and that they tend to be not much bothered much about Academics. In totality, from a neutral perspective, we believe that it is great that students are able to realize their passions and continue to develop and reach new heights in their area of interest. InslghT believes that our Institute currently provides a decently conducive environment to cultivate interests and passions of individual students and should continue to operate with this fact in consideration.

*\*[Read the fascinating accounts on our website [www.insightiitb.org](http://www.insightiitb.org) of 2 IIT-B students pursuing their passions -- Arpan Saha, aspiring physicist and Rahul Ranka, aspiring entrepreneur]*

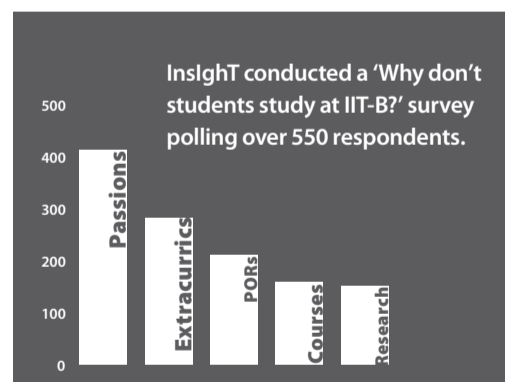
**70%** of students claim that **engineering** is their preferred stream of choice. In spite of this, **why is it that they don't study?**

## Pursuit of other Passions

Passions (start-ups, hobbies, gaming, etc.) seem to be the biggest driver for students in IIT in terms of where they choose to invest their time. What was surprising to the authors was that PoRs rank lower than extra-currics, and not so surprisingly, coursework and research rank even lower.

## Course-content and teaching methodology

A majority of students feel that they're unable to relate to the courses and that most professors are unsuccessful in making them feel interested in the courses.



## Time invested in academics

Less than 20% of the respondents say they study more than 3 hours a day with 50% of the respondents not studying at all unless there are imminent exams. 75% don't spend any time on academics if there are no upcoming assignments and only about 15 percent study in general when they aren't being cornered by deadlines. The little time that is devoted to academics is mostly spent on assignments and quizzes. Thus, perhaps one way to encourage larger focus on academics is to modify evaluation towards more regular forms of assessment rather than on just mid- semesters and end- semesters. The caveat however is that there need to be better check mechanisms to avoid potential plagiarism which can defeat the whole purpose of assignments serving as fair measure for grading. The CSE department, for example, has had a lot of success in this regard via checking against others using plagiarism detection software.

## Other Distractions

Many students stated that Facebook, movies, etc. distract them from academics. While self- control is largely an individual's own responsibility, this is what perhaps motivates the institute's stance towards LAN Ban. However, such a stance towards LAN Ban would be unjustified unless the academic impairment caused due to LAN Ban is also sufficiently analysed.

## Poor Hostel Infrastructure

Nearly 69% of the students felt that no space for a table and a chair in their hostel rooms and the loss of privacy and increased disturbance caused by shared accommodation had an impact on their academics. A conducive environment and good ambience is extremely important for one's studies and a quick look at the state of our hostel accommodation would suggest that we're lacking in this very important requirement.

## Common Myths Busted

Interestingly, the commonly perceived notions prevalent in media about JEE burnout and intimidation from competition at IIT and fear of being labelled a 'maggu' are categorically dispelled by the survey. Most students claim that they are NOT factors why they don't study. Most students have also stated that they don't have problems with the lack of personal attention from the professors due the large size of the classes. This is possibly due to most lectures now being held in LHC, which has adequate infrastructure for supporting large class size.

Watch out for more interesting analyses from your survey responses in upcoming InslghT articles. ■

# Tum-Tums: Your Questions Answered

■ ANAMIKA AGRAWAL, ABBAS ALI BOHRA, ANUBHAV MANGAL, ROHAN SATISH SABLAY

This article is the second part of a trilogy of articles on Tum-Tums that form the lifeline of transportation in the Institute. In this series of articles, InsIghT explores the current Tum-Tum system as it currently is and the various problems that students face with various aspects of it. InsIghT conducted a 'Tum-Tum' survey in which a whopping 600 students reported their Tum-Tum usage habits and major peeves that they had with the Tum-Tum system.

The first article in the series dealt with the issue of the bus-stop outside H8 being moved overnight without informing or consulting the students to a spot outside H11 and the student and administrative dialogue that led to it being relocated. This article focusses on answering some basic questions that were asked by our respondents about our friendly institute Tum-Tums.

**Q. Which body governs the Tum-Tum system?**

A: SWS-Student Welfare Society. In 2007, the institute created a committee composed of 8 members with the established mandate of looking over the Tum-Tum system. At that time they felt that over time they would expand their working mandate to various other student related issues, such as hostel canteens. However due to various funding problems they were restricted only to Tum-Tums. The committee is composed of the Dean Of Student Affairs (DoSA), Hostel Co-ordinating Unit (HCU) -Chair, Chief Security Officer (CSO), SWS head- Mr. Vijay Kumar, General Secretary Hostel Affairs (GSHA), General Secretary Academic Affairs (GSAA)- PG, one women's representative and two assistant registrars. Responsibilities include looking after the general working of the Tum-Tums -maintenance of the current Tum-Tums, purchasing new Tum-Tums, deciding bus stops and routes and hiring drivers.

**Q. How are drivers employed? Is there any way to change the drivers or ensure that they are not rude to students or do not slack off?**

A: Currently IITB does not employ any permanent drivers. Drivers are employed on a daily wage basis based on the amount of time that they work, at a rate of Rs 330/8 hours. However, the SWS is currently looking to change this to a system where drivers are employed on a contractual basis from a central contractor. The SWS is hopeful that this will help in taking care of some of the issues that students currently face with Tum-Tum drivers.

**Q. Rumours have been heard about 'ladies Tum-Tums'. Fact or urban legend?**

A: . InsIghT has received complaints that some tum-tum drivers are refusing entry to boys stating that it is a 'ladies only' tum-tum. The fact is that the institute has no special ladies Tum-Tums. There is only one small 15 seater bus that runs from H11 to SOM in between 8AM and 10AM. This bus has no restrictions on the gender of students that may use this bus. Drivers do not have the authority to refuse boys from using this bus.

**Q. If a student wants to register a complaint/suggestion, is there a hotline that can be used?**

A: The institute has a Tum-Tum hotline - 25761118, that can be used by anyone wishing to file a complaint or suggestion between 7am to 11pm. However, this extension number can only be called by numbers that are attached to the IITB-EPABX connection (eg: the telephone near the watchman's desk). Therefore students cannot register their complaints via their cellphones. Efforts are underway to establish a general Tum-Tum hotline number accessible to all. Students have also been encouraged to mail chairman.sws@iitb.ac.in for any complaint, queries or suggestions.

**Q. Are there any other points other than**

**H12/13/14 where Tum-Tums start from?**

A: Officially, the SWS states that out of 19 buses, 2 buses start from Hostel 4. One goes via Hostel 5 to SOM, the other via Hostel 1. However, InsIghT was unable to verify the existence of these Tum-Tums.

**Q. How was the Night Tum-Tum system implemented?**

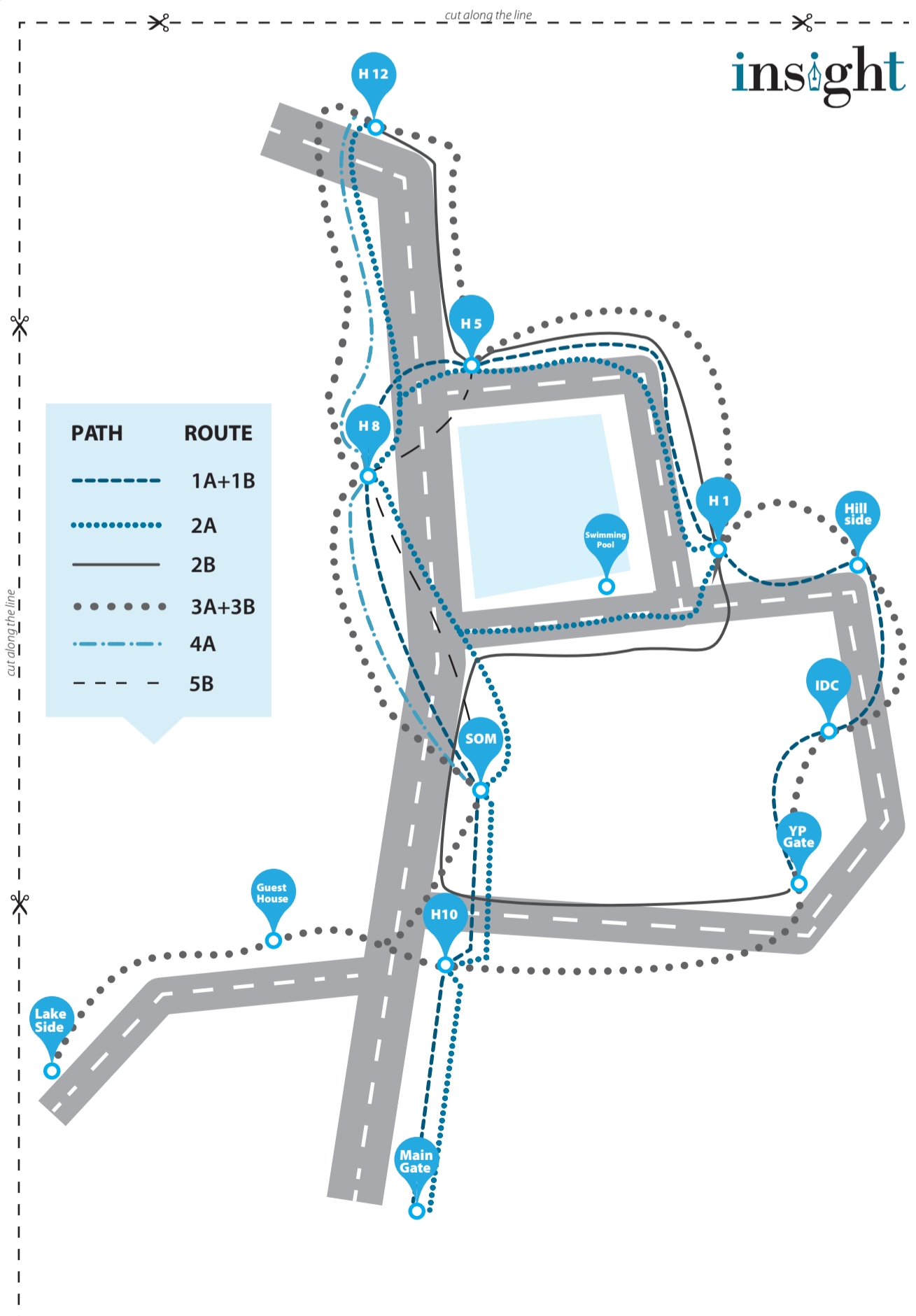
A: The proposal for Night Tum-Tums had been verbally put forth last year by the then-GSHA Abhishek Agrawal (Monty). However, it was not feasible then due to insufficient fleet-strength of Tum-Tums -breakdowns and other maintenance issues with the Tum-Tums running for longer durations could have impacted their day-schedules. However, it had been accepted in principle. Thus when the 6 new buses came along this year, the current council made a renewed push and secured the approval and implementation of the Night Tum-Tums. ■

## TUM-TUM FACTOIDS

Total no.of Tum-Tums :19, a maximum of 8 are running at any given time. The purchase of 6 new Tum-Tums is in the pipeline. However since the SWS is still exploring its options for the buses, InsIghT was unable to ascertain the exact amount of time this would take.

The Night Tum-Tums that run at approximately half-hour frequency all night can be flagged down at any point by any student and they do not necessarily have to be stopped at a Tum- Tum stop.

All Institute Tum-Tums run on CNG.



insight

## G\*\*\*\* P\* L\*\*\*

■ SABAREESH, NIVVEDAN, TANMAY SRIVASTAVA, SIDDHARDHA SUKKA, SAHIL VAIDYA

## FOR

For as long as anyone - even the most retentive Fifthie - can remember, GPLs have been an integral, if not essential, part of birthday celebrations at IITB. However, for the life of me, I can't figure out the point of this activity - whose futility is unmatched in magnitude by any other recurring activity on campus. While severe consequences are a rarity, their very possibility should be enough to dissuade all but the most foolhardy. On the contrary, GPLs have intertwined themselves within the "IITB Culture", with freshies jumping on the bandwagon, thinking of it as a necessary criteria for eligibility to be an IITian.

Meanwhile, the only reason anyone seems to be able to come up with for rationalising the existence of this ridiculous tradition is the fact that "everyone else does it". It's interesting to wonder how a society of individuals who pretend to believe that they're the best and brightest in the nation could simultaneously try to convince themselves that acting like worthless, primitive savages once in an year is a custom to be looked forward to. While I neither advocate, nor appreciate an overly sentimental display of emotions at birthdays, it just seems necessary for there to exist a mechanism to cry out for help for cases where the "victim" has a problem with a GPL. For some reason, people have a hard time understanding that most of the so-called enthusiasm of the victim stems from the fear of ostracisation he/she fears being subjected to if they were to deny their friends this opportunity for entertainment. Hence, the fact that the DoSA, Prof. Yajnik, has explicitly stated that he won't be entertaining any "requests for GPLs" from the to-be victims, tells me that he's actually given some thought to the situation, before rushing into a decision.

If bringing in such a law comes at the cost of a little bit of fun for people willing to beat each other up, so be it. Long-term decisions have to be taken based on principles, with slight modifications for exceptional cases, and not the other way around. In principle, an ideal campus should be non-violent, and this is a rule that stands by that principle. While many amendments to this rule are necessary, it's plausible that they'll definitely be undertaken by the DoSA in the upcoming semester. However, we should applaud Prof. Yajnik for having taken a severe stance against a practice that seems to have attached itself to the very fabric of life at IIT Bombay.



**We don't just study at IIT Bombay. We live here. Consequently, engineering at IIT Bombay is as much about the culture as about the education; as much about the friends we make as about the courses we take, if not more. In this defining stage of our life, the intricacies of the cultural fabric of IIT Bombay arguably shape us into how we think and what we become.**

**Woven thoroughly into this fabric is the GPL, the one that causes goosebumps to erupt - yes, the birthday bumps !Despite being a source of elation to most, GPL poses a potential danger to the physical well-being of the person, and is increasingly seen to be a cause of injury. A tendency for the theatrical is seemingly on the rise as 'good GPLs' are coming to be synonymous to the popularity of the victim, and items that were earlier only used as kitchenware are now integral parts of a successful GPL. This increasing similarity between Bollywood fight sequences and GPLs has prompted the Dean of Student Affairs (DoSA) to put his foot down and reiterate a ban against GPLs, only with more stringent rules in place. In a mail to all Hostel Councils, the DoSA holds the Councils responsible for the occurrence of GPLs in their respective hostels. Underlying this directive is an idea to leave it at the student level, since beefing up the vigilance only results in unwanted animosity. In this article, InslghT takes up a View-Counter-view analysis of the system in place, and tries to evaluate the relevance (or otherwise) of the rules introduced. ■**

## InslghT's view

True, GPL is a great way to socialize, but it isn't the only way. As students of a university that boasts of a multitude of social activities, it makes little sense that GPLs be allowed to continue merely for the 'social factor'. Should GPLs therefore be allowed to remain only for the sheer feral delight associated with them? Does the adrenaline gushing through one's veins while inflicting pain upon a friend dissuade us enough from banning GPLs, despite the fact that they defy the very essence of the word 'society'? Should GPLs be encouraged as platforms for students to drive home their machismo? The answer is a strict 'no'. The DoSA's new rules do not invade our privacy, but inspire us to empathise with the 'victims of GPLs' - and see beyond the savage delight of engaging in a GPL. After all, we wouldn't want our friends to be hospitalised from coccygeal injury, only because we indulged in an hour of subhuman instincts, do we?

## AGAINST

While it is commendable that the Dean has put his foot down in an effort to stop this practice (or malpractice maybe), a closer look at the rules reveals a small loophole. The decision to punish a council member in case a GPL was proved to happen in his/her presence seems faulty. After all, the majority of the hostel council consists of 2nd year students who seem to be quite enthusiastic when it comes to GPLs. Moreover, it would be a near impossible task to complain against close friends or seniors who are involved in the brutal act. It is highly unlikely that anybody would report such incidents under peer pressure or out of fear, thus proving the decision to be a bad one. All other rules could turn out to be effective and seem to have been penned down after a thoughtful procedure. Prof. Yajnik himself feels that it would not be a good choice to send out special security to hostels as it would unnecessarily beef up security and make the students feel uncomfortable.

Even a slight mention of the seemingly terrifying G-word can send shivers down the spines of many. Given this, it is almost crazy to think of something in favour of this concept. But since the act is religiously performed almost everywhere across the institute, banning it would simply mean infringing on a person's choice and ending a long lasting tradition which had been thoroughly enjoyed by people - at least, quite a lot of them. More importantly, a GPL is an event where many people gather for the giant kill and enjoy together, ensuring a healthy and fun-filled interaction for almost everyone present. Though it gets dirty at times, it has a great psychological impact on the birthday boy's mind too. People would be ready to bear the brunt of a huge mob just because it shows that they have a large following and a good social circle. So the 'feel good' factor that comes along is something which actually encourages people to get their GPL done! "So what if it is dangerous? Even Diwali and Janmashtami celebrations are. Does that stop us from celebrating?" argue the pro-GPL students. Well, they do have a point.

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## From the Editors' desk

We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of InslghT as much as we enjoyed working on it. For the past few months we have aimed to approach complex issues holistically by breaking them into multiple pieces of both written and video content. In a similar vein, you would find us exploring issues like those of the Tum-Tum and Academic apathy more in the coming weeks. If you have any issues that you would like us to take up, drop us an email at [insight@iitb.ac.in](mailto:insight@iitb.ac.in).

We thank our readers for supporting us through the past few months and hope to strengthen this bond we share. To stay connected with IITB, please visit our website [www.insightiitb.org](http://www.insightiitb.org) or join us on Facebook.

Here's wishing you a fabulous New Year!  
Nidhi & Saideep