



BITS ECHO

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PROF. SOUVIK BHATTACHARYYA VICE CHANCELLOR, BITS PILANI

As fireworks illumine the night sky, toasts are raised and mirth all around, the New Year brings with us an opportunity for reflecting on the past and making things better in the future - a time for a new beginning and fresh starts. It is also a time for celebration, to celebrate all the good deeds, all the successes and joy that we have brought to others. We take a vow today that we continue on that path, with renewed vigour.

It is a great pleasure to share with you all the recent stories from BITS Pilani. While you enjoy these narratives, please write to us and share yours so that we spread it to all our friends across the globe.

Nights will be dark but days will be light, wish your life to be always bright – Happy New Year.



PROF. ARYA KUMAR DEAN ALUMNI RELATIONS

Here comes the second issue of BITS ECHO brought out by Alumni Relations Cell driven by a team of ten students to connect with Alumni across the globe with developments at institute front and Alumni front. Today, there are more than 53000 BITS alumni through on campus and another 73000 through Work Integrated Learning Programmes spread around the world, making valuable contributions to their chosen vocations, their communities, and their families, all while contributing back to their alma mater in a variety of ways. We would like to reach out and connect with you, where ever you are.

I am sure this effort by the student team will go a long way in bringing the whole community of BITSians together by sharing and caring for each other. Wishing all BITSians Season's greetings and Good Wishes for the Year 2018 on behalf of Alumni Cell and all at BITS Pilani.



CAMPUS UPDATES



BITS Pilani India's top private university in BRICS ranking

The latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking of BRICS universities for 2018 saw BITS Pilani as the highest ranked private university in India. In all, the University was ranked 109 among the BRICS countries. In the overall rankings, the top 3 remained

unchanged from 2017 – Tsinghua University, Peking University and Fudan University all from China. IIT Bombay was the highest ranked Indian university in the list, ranked overall at 9.

Career Mentorship Program

Two of BITS Pilani, well-known Alumni, Ghurair Sheikh and Chandra Bhople along with Deepak Mehra - Head of Asset Management at Commercial Bank of Dubai and author of the book "Ready, Steady, Go!" (Published by India's leading publishers Jaico Publishing House (India) in 2015), joined the students of the dubai campus, for the Career mentorship program on 5th October 2017. The program revolved around alumni's giving students their personal experiences on how to tackle circumstances and emerge victorious. They instigated ideas of self-confidence and encouraged students to come forward and present themselves on a number of topics. This gave students the much needed head start into their respective fields. A follow up session for the same was conducted on 2nd November 2017 by Chandra Bhople of Pilani Campus.

Contribution to Prominent Committees

Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor served as a member for the following National Committees during 2017:

- DST Swarna Jayanti Fellowship National Core Committee of Experts for Engineering Sciences.
- DST Ramanujan Fellowship Conclave Review Committee of Experts
- DST Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) of Mechanical and Civil Engineering.

Prof. V. Lakshminarayanan Memorial Lecture held at BITS Pilani

Prof. V Lakshminarayanan Memorial Lecture was held on 4th December 2017 at BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus as a mark of respect to the great teacher, educationist, administrator and philosopher all modelled in one. Prof V Lakshminarayanan (VLN), the first Director of BITS Pilani, was a legendary leader. Born in 1906, he came to Pilani in 1946, served the Institute in various capacities until 1970 and left for his heavenly abode in 1984.

Prof. Surendra Pal delivered the Prof. V. Lakshminarayanan Memorial Lecture on "Aerospace Paradigm of India." Prof. Pal is a space communication technologist, an accomplished researcher, an academician, an administrator and a visionary of great repute is an alumnus of Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani and Indian Institute of Science Bangalore. During his 42 years of career at ISRO, he developed many innovative

technologies which were and even now are new for other world space agencies.

Prof Souvik Bhattacharaya in his welcome address said it is a wonderful and joyous moment to share the memories of such a great educator and welcomed all the family members of Prof V Lakshminarayanan on this occasion. Prof. D Balasubramanian, a Padmashree awardee and former Director of CCMB Hyderabad and currently Research Director of L B Prasad Eye Research Institute, Hyderabad and also a nephew of Prof V Lakshminarayanan talked about how this lecture series was started and mentioned about distinguished lectures held since 2006. Thereafter, Dr. Nirmala, daughter of Prof. Lakshminarayan shared her fond memories about her father and mother and Pilani as it used to be in the remote past.

At the end, Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean, Alumni Relations, BITS, Pilani thanked all dignitaries, guests and others present and shared

briefly about great contributions and contributions of Prof V Lakshminarayanan in building BITS Pilani which Alumni remember forever.



BITS 1975 Trust

The Gurudakshina programme by BITS 75 Trust was organised on 22nd October, 2017 at Bangalore to felicitate 10 prominent Gurus. It was a marvellous event that could only fructify because of the untiring efforts put in by Mr. Hanuman Bengani, Dr Vijay Chandru and many more. The music programme revived many memories including golden era songs performed by Mr Rakesh, Mrs. Harsha and the team. The Trust has successfully nurtured two ventures

and is in the process of supporting the third one. Prof Arya Kumar Dean Alumni Relations shared about the developments at institute front and especially a new and distinct impetus given to connect with Alumni for strengthening ties for growth and development of the institute.

Visit of Foreign Dignitaries

Following important dignitaries visited different campuses in connection with entering into academic collaboration with BITS Pilani and for delivering special lectures.

Pilani Campus

- Hiroshima University: Prof. Yamamoto (Vice president HU), Prof. Ishii, Prof. Kaneko, and Mr. Sushil
- Nottingham University: Prof Helen Foster and Prof Maneeta Sahmey
- Tel Aviv, Israel: Prof Danial Chamovitz, Prof. Yosi Shacham-Diamand, Prof Nir Ohad, Dr Ram Fishman and Dr Gary Sussman
- Cardiff University: Prof. Dylan Jones, Prof. Phil Stephens, Prof. Shanthini Paranjyoth, Prof. John Chester, Prof. Peter Kille, Mr. Richard Cotton, Mr. Somnath Nandy and Prof. Nora De Leeuw

Goa Campus

- Ghent University, Belgium: Prof Korneel Rabaey, Department of Biological Science
- Tel Aviv University, Israel: Prof Hadas Mamane Steindel, Environmental Engineering Program
- Pacific University Hawaii (HPU), USA: Prof. Carlos E. Juárez, Department of Political Science
- Texas A & M University, USA: Prof Paul M Koola and Prof John C. O'Day

Hyderabad Campus

- Hong Kong University of Science & Technology: Ms. Fenny Wong - Assistant Director External Development & Professional Programs, Prof. Eric Zhang - CIEM Program Director, Ms. Wendy Yau - Executive officer of External Development and Professional Programmes
- Rank Global Services Company: Mr. Rajiv Mathur- Director and Ms. Ujala Chadha - Director
- University of Toyama, Japan :Prof. Keisuke Hatad, Department of physics, Faculty of science
- University Technology Petronas, Malaysia : Prof. Varun Jeoti
- MIT USA : Dr. Amit Vernekar
- Macquarie University, Sydney : Prof. Barbara Messerle - Executive Dean, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Professor

Tracy Rushmer – Associate Dean, Higher Degree Research

- Matthew Monkhouse – Director, Global Engagement & Business Development, Anuradha Gupta - Head-Partner Engagement
- University of Toledo : Prof Mansoor Alam
- University of Pittsburgh : Professor Sanjeev Shroff
- Space Physics Research Laboratory, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, USA : Prof. Gulamabas G. Sivjee
- University College of Dublin (UCD) : Prof. Ravindranath Thampi Beckman University, USA : Dr Amitab Gaur

Sunil Nanda conferred 2017 Prof L.K.M. Foundation Distinguished Alumni Award

On 11 Nov 2017, in a glittering function held at BITS Pilani NAB Auditorium, Proud to be BITSian Sunil Nanda was conferred the Prof L K Maheshwari Foundation Distinguished Alumnus Award 2017 by Dr AK Sarkar Director BITS Pilani - Pilani Campus. Sunil Nanda also gave a talk titled "The Profound, the Elegant and the Useful". A whole lot of classmates of Sunil Nanda from different parts of India and across the globe had descended at Pilani to cheer up and watch emotion choked buddy Sunil Nanda receiving this coveted BITS Pilani distinguished alumnus award.



Sunil has three decades of experience in VLSI Technology in all three areas of Research, Development and Management. He graduated with a BE (Hons) Electronics from BITS, Pilani (75-80) followed by MS-Computer Engineering from University of Iowa (80-82). Besides VLSI Design, Sunil is a recognized industry expert in domains of Computer Architecture and Computer Graphics. He has multiple patents to his name related to these domains.

Batch Reunions

Alumni Relations of BITS Pilani K. K. Birla Goa Campus organized the first ever reunion of our campus from 11-12 February 2017. Alumni of the batch 2004, 2005 and 2006 were invited along with their spouses. The event involved talks by some of the alumni about their days in BITS and there was an introduction to Alumni Mentorship Programme (AMP), a pilot project set-up with the help of the alumni mentoring few on-campus students on different areas as selected.

More than 300 Alumnus of Batch of 1988 of



BITS Pilani Campus joined for the Silver Jubilee Meet on campus between 10th and 11th November 2017. Prof Souvik Bhattacharyya addressed the batch online from Goa Campus in the tele presence room. Batch took lot of interest in finding the developments on campus and contributing back to the Alma Mater.

Alumni felicitated the teachers who taught them during their studies at BITS. Batch joined hands together to contribute Rs 1.30 crores to the institution for research/ faculty enrichment or infrastructure development that would be jointly decided by the institute and batch representatives.

More than 240

Alumnus of 1967 Batch joined for celebration of their Golden Jubilee Meet between 27th and 29th October, 2017 on Pilani campus. Prof Souvik Bhattacharyya and Prof Sarkar addressed them about developments at the BITS front. Prof Arya



Kumar shared about initiatives taken by the institute in recent past to build strong alumni connect for mutually beneficial relationships for institutional development. Batch took an initiative and collected around Rs 38.7 lakhs to be contributed for the growth and development of the BITS Pilani.

Nineteen veteran Alumni from the batch of 1959 along with their spouses visited Pilani campus between 24th to 26th Nov 2017. It was rare to see the energy in them and spirit of proud to be BITSians.

Seven Alumni of first Batch of MMS from BITS Pilani visited Pilani campus between November 4th and 5th, 2017 and interacted with faculty and students of management Department for looking



into the possibilities of contributing back to the development of management programme by way of curriculum development, guest lectures and placement support.



OASIS 2017 - Realms of Fiction

All one thousand people there sitting calmly stuck on their chairs, waiting just to listen. All eyes focused and looking at an average looking persona with a deep affectionate smile on his face and without an inch of ego, he continues to speak and all people just speechless listen to the awesome life advises and inspirations, with white beard shining with the changing spotlight on his face Mr S S Rajamouli, inaugurated the Oasis 2017 at BITS Pilani old Auditorium. This led to the beginning of 96 hours of the continuum of fun excitement, quizzes and events which will take you far away from reality and truly into fiction. It all started every day with dance competitions like Desert duels, Street Dance or the classical one Tandav which included both group and solo dance acts of various teams selected by tough scrutinies from all over India. Musical events were the major highlight of this Oasis with the melodious soothing voice of Vishal Shekhar on 2nd Nov. followed by EDM Night on 3 Nov. There were many competitions organised by various societies which covered all artists from sketching to poetry to speaking. Some of the events for language enthusiasts were Wordstock, Cocktail etc. There were quizzes for movie geeks such as Potter quiz and Otaku for animal fans.

To feel the adrenaline rush there were events such as escape room where you have to work as

a team to work on the hints and escape out or to accomplish a mission with the clock ticking. For artists, there were events like Contrasto, poster making event and splash - a face painting event. One of the most sought after competitions was the food challenge where you have to eat as much as you can in 60 seconds. There were stalls to eat some good food which is generally missing on campus. There were events called trailer making and metamorphosis where you have to shoot a short movie while still being on campus during Oasis. Classical Professional shows and performances by various bands with new progressive genres such as Agam was what seemed to propagate the breath further upwards. In the whole hurry and adrenaline of quizzes and competitions there was a satisfaction and rest at night on FD 3 terrace with all tired eyes looking at the dark sky lightened up with bright twinkling stars or singing at free jam organised at M lawns near food Stalls just till sleep.

The plethora of events ended on 4 Nov with N2O a stand-up comedy event featuring AIB famed Aashish Shakya and Karunesh Talwar along with a group of 4 comedy stars selected via a competition all over India. This marked the ending of the most awaited, loved and awesome Cultural fest of BITS Pilani which was bid goodbye by laughing faces and exhausted sleepy eyes who have not been able to shut for 96 hours.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr. NN Ghosh elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC) UK

Dr. Narendra Nath Ghosh, Associate Professor of Department of Chemistry, BITS Pilani KK Birla Goa campus, Goa has been elected as Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC), London, UK. This is a prestigious fellowship awarded through election in recognition of his academic contribution to the field of Chemistry.

Founded in 1841, Royal Society Chemistry (RSC) is the world's leading chemistry community, advancing excellence in the chemical sciences. RSC partners with industry and academia, advises

governments on policy, and promotes the collaboration, innovation, talent, information and ideas that lead to great advances in science. The designation of Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC) is given to elected fellows who have made significant contributions to the chemical sciences.

Dr. Narendra Nath Ghosh
Associate Professor of
Department of Chemistry
BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa
Campus

MOU with Team Beyond Borders

BITS Pilani has signed an MOU with Team Beyond Borders Pty. Ltd. (TBB) – Sydney, Australia; a company by Sanjay Singhai of 1988 Batch. TBB has agreed to provide free of cost license of a software product which it has developed to BITS Pilani for strengthening the industry and academia relations and to provide additional



learning opportunity to BITS students.



BITS Pilani Student Sanat Sharma Wins Global 'Capture The Flag' Cyber Challenge

Sanat Sharma, a second year undergraduate student of Computer Science at BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus has been declared the winner of the Global 'Capture The Flag' Cyber Challenge in the recently concluded Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS 2017) that was held at JW Marriott, New Delhi during November 20-21, 2017. The award and certificate were presented by the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji.

Global Cyber Challenge is an important part of Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS), 2017, which was attended by participants from nearly 120 countries.

Global Cyber Challenge comprises of two contests namely Capture the Flag Event and Peace-a-thon. The contest was open to participants from India and abroad. The participation could take place in either or both the contests

Apart from awards and certificates, the winners will get an Internship opportunity with Government of India and the chance to deploy the solutions at Government of India, State Governments, Civil Society Organizations working to address the social problems with the help in the form of mentorship from Internet and Mobile Association of India.



BITSian Startup highlighted at Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2017

On the 28th of November, 2017, the eighth edition of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) was held in Hyderabad. Hosted at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), the Summit saw an estimated 1500 entrepreneurs show up across four broad Industry sectors - Energy and Infrastructure, Healthcare and Life Sciences, Financial Technology and Digital Economy, and Media and Entertainment. Approximately one-third of the entrepreneurs were from the US, one-third were from India, while the remaining one-third were from other countries around the globe.

GES is the preeminent annual entrepreneurship gathering that convenes emerging

entrepreneurs, investors and supporters from around the world. GES 2017 created an environment that empowered innovators, particularly women, to take their ideas to the next level

However, prior to the inaugural, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and First Daughter, Ivanka Trump - took time off to visit five shortlisted startups. Amongst them was the startup, Hyperloop. Founded in 2015 by a group of students in BITS Pilani, Team Hyperloop India is a multi-disciplinary multi-university think-tank comprising over 60 motivated student volunteers in the fields of engineering and business. These students have the long-term goal of reinventing transportation in India.



ALUMNI NEWS

Amitabh Chaudhry led HDFC Life makes mega debut



Sar utha ke jiyo!



The initial public offer (IPO) of HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company was overall subscribed nearly five times on the last day of the bidding process on 9th November. Data available with the NSE showed that the issue received bids for 107.61 crore shares, which is 4.90 times against 21.98 crore shares offered by the company. The company led by Mr. Amitabh Chaudhry had fixed price band of Rs 275-290 per share for the public offer.

Mr. Amitabh Chaudhry, the Managing Director and CEO of the company, holds a

B.E degree from BITS Pilani and an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad. He is a Bitsian from the batch of 1985. He was the MD & CEO of Infosys BPO from 2006 to 2010 before being appointed as the MD & CEO of HDFC Standard Life Insurance.

Sanofi India Limited (SIL) appoints N Rajaram as MD



Sanofi India Limited (SIL) announced the elevation of N. Rajaram, a BITS Pilani alumnus, as the Managing Director of the Company, with effect from 1st January, 2018. He will also continue as a Non-Executive Director on the Board of Sanofi India Limited. N. Rajaram joined Sanofi India in February 2014. Under his leadership, the Company has doubled the size of its diabetes business and established a foothold in the consumer healthcare sector, while significantly transforming its market operations. Rajaram brings

with him diverse experience of nearly two decades. Rajaram holds a bachelor's degree in Engineering from the Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani, India and an MBA in International Business from the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi. He is also an alumnus of the Advanced Managed Program of the Harvard Business School.

BITS alumnus has created 2,000 organic micro-entrepreneurs in Naxal-hit Dantewada

Quitting a high paying job and doing what you love is one thing while giving up a comfortable lifestyle to help the poor is something else entirely. Most millennials might see a sacrifice in it, but Akash Badave, an alumnus of BITS Pilani, is certainly not one of them.

Akash Badave was always interested in social work; he just did not know how to channelize his efforts. At the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, Akash decided to study Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Biology. But soon enough, after he entered college, he became a part of Nirmaan - an organisation based out of the BITS Pilani campus and one that takes social welfare very seriously. Thanks to Nirmaan, Akash found an opportunity to fuel his dream, and he went to visit many villages around Pilani and worked on various social issues. What he validates as a wonderful experience, made him think of social



entrepreneurship as a career.

After graduation, he got placed in Barclays, a 300-year-old British bank. Six months into this high paying job and Akash was already introspecting his career choice. That's when he came across Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellow Scheme (PMRDFS) — a government initiative that was already on the lookout for highly qualified candidates to monitor development activities in Naxal-affected areas of Chhattisgarh state. After persistent attempts to convince his parents who were vehemently opposed to the idea, Akash chose to move to Dantewada.

In August 2016, Akash started Organic Farmer's Producer Company named 'Bhoomgaadi' and brought together the farmers in the district to teach them

sustainable agriculture practices. 300 self-help groups were formed and more than 1,000 farmers were empowered directly. The self-help groups are collaborative, insightful and serve as platforms for anyone in the district looking for employment opportunities.

With Bhoomgaadi and the self-help groups, Akash is now responsible for

converting 2,000 micro-entrepreneurs to organic farming. These farmers aren't accountable to anyone but themselves — they sustain themselves with what they produce and how much they sell the products for, in the district markets.

UAE talent working on Malayalam film 'Parava'

Len Prasad, Alumnus of BITS Pilani Dubai campus was assistant director to filmmaker Soubin Shahir who directed box office hit Malayalam film Parava in which challenging task of production involving pigeons was covered. "The pre-production work took over a year. It was exciting observing the pigeons and understanding their behaviour," says the engineering graduate from BITS Pilani (Dubai). "We kept the camera rolling for four months capturing ample footage from



different phases of their lives. Every day we let the pigeons out to fly and waited anxiously until they returned home."

Professor Raaj Sah honoured by the Government of Japan

Professor Raaj Sah has been awarded the “Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon” by the Government of Japan. He is Professor of Public Policy and Economics, at the University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy.



Conferred on behalf of the Emperor of Japan in autumn 2017, the award honours Professor Sah for his analysis of Japan’s economic and financial policies. He has engaged with government policies such as those on tax reforms, public revenues, deficits, and redistribution. These are some of the central issues for contemporary Japan.

“His ideas have impacted many societies and not just Japan and India,” said Professor Errol D’Souza, the Director-in-Charge of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. Professor Sah is Distinguished Fellow at this Institute.

Professor and Deputy Dean Dan Black, at the University of Chicago, remarked, “Professor Sah combines his researcher’s

incisiveness and his vast knowledge with his practical wisdom. He works seamlessly across cultures and societies, deeply respecting the differences and, at the same time, transcending them. He is admirably original in all domains of his work.”

He has previously held faculty positions, in business and economics, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University.

Professor Sah holds a PhD in economics from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a Gold Medal MBA from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. His earlier education is from Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani, and from St. Xavier’s College Ranchi.

Square Plums: Affordable housing



Square Plums co-founded by Rajesh Kotta BITS Pilani graduate with Hemant Attray has chipped in with an experiment that has never been attempted before of converting shipping containers into homes. In addition to being several grades cheaper than traditional apartments, his

container-homes which would be fully furnished can be made ready in just two weeks, unlike its brick-and-mortar counterparts which can take anywhere between 18 months to 3 years to make.

Daring Collector

Ms. T V anupama wrote the 2010 UPSC examination after earning an engineering degree from BITS Pilani, Goa. She prepared in the State Civil Service Academy in Thiruvananthapuram, the Civil Service Institute in Pala and ALS in Delhi. The Alappuzha district collector whose rigorous and fearless fact-checking brought about the downfall



of transport minister Thomas Chandy, says nothing can replace commitment and hard work when it comes to cracking the elite test.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear All,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. With a brand new year ringing in, hope of setting and meeting new goals braving the challenges is high on everyone's mind. The campus at Pilani, cocooned in fog and mist with occasional rays of mellowed sun is earnestly longing to shake off its holiday slumber and get back to work. The recent success of BITS and BITSians all around the globe have infused great pride and inspiration into us to reach new heights. It would surely act as a stimulus for us to work harder as "Nothing succeeds like success."

However, success, albeit a very important one, is but one chapter in the entire story of life. Human instinct craves for merriment as well. With this note, we all look forward to a more fun-filled Oasis'18 as everybody has heard the story of Jack, the dull boy with all work and no play.

Several batch reunions took place this quarter with great gusto and genuine 'givebacks.' It was a great time for long lost friends to reunite and reminisce their good old days. Moreover, these reunions stirred up tremendous excitement among us here on campus. We were thrilled and overawed once again to realise that such eminent alumni had once passed out of our own alma mater. We thronged to listen to whatever the alumni had to say with great passion. After these reunions, I can surely say that you, dear Alumni are our guardian angels and your homecoming is something we will earnestly look forward to always.

Trust our bond will be stronger with time to come. Cheers!

Debshankar Ghosh,
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