



BITS Pilani
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BITS ECHO

MESSAGES || ALUMNI CORNER
STUDENTS' CORNER || CAMPUS UPDATES

VOLUME 2 || ISSUE 3



MESSAGES

PROF. SOUVIK BHATTACHARYYA, VICE CHANCELLOR, BITS PILANI



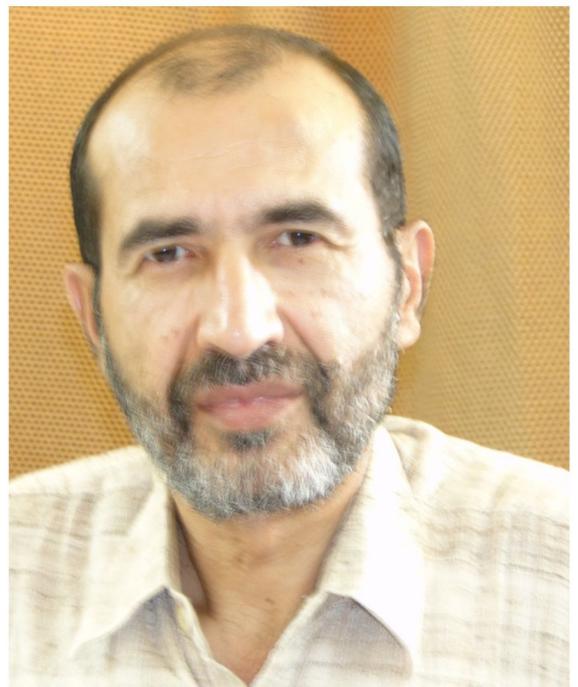
Greetings, BITSians. We have ended 2018-19 with a very happy note on research metrics, international rankings as well as Alumni Relations. For the first time, BITS Pilani has entered the World 500 University Subject Rankings (QS and THE 2019) in four subjects areas. All our research metrics registered unprecedented growth and improvement during the year. For the first time, distinct Alumni engagements were initiated that has started yielding results. We could set up the first Rs 100 cr research fund with generous seed support of Mr. Prashant and Anuradha Palakurthi that will go a long way in strengthening our research programs. As we progress through 2019 and beyond, I encourage all BITSians to look up, endeavor to

achieve new heights, and reach out to your friends for strengthening BITSian community across the globe. I invite each one of you to join in supporting your alma mater in an initiative of your choice.

PROF. ARYA KUMAR, DEAN, ALUMNI RELATIONS

Here comes the next issue of BITS ECHO that I am sure all of you must be looking forward to. We would be happy to receive your suggestions and contributions to make BITS ECHO a purposive, interesting and sought after newsletter.

We have been taking multiple steps to closely connect with all of you and develop the BITSian community as one of the most vibrant communities to share, exchange and love each other. We have been receiving overwhelming response from BITSAA International, different chapters and individual Alumni to connect with each other and contribute in different ways to lift the institution to great heights.



Shall keep looking forward to your support in our Alumni driven initiatives and endeavors.

BITSAA CHAPTER MEETS

BITSAA CHENNAI ANNUAL MEET

On Saturday, 5th of January, 2019, Hotel Ambassador Pallava, Egmore, Chennai was abuzz with BITSian's presence for the BITSAA annual meet. Mr. Srikanth took the center stage and kicked-off the event with the felicitation of the Chief Guest, Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani and Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean, Alumni Relations, BITS Pilani.



Thanks to Praveen's (Kuka's) standup comedy for steering us to a humorous start. His clean comedy enlivened the audience and kept the spirits up for rest of the event. Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya then shared the developments across the institute's four campuses, and the strategic thrust that has been given to alumni connect for the growth of the institute in the coming years. He also presented the recent accomplishments of the institute and outlined how the alumni can help to keep them up. B Raj (1970) presented the Chief Guest with his book "Spirituality - A Road Map". Later, Naveen captured the audience's attention with his brief overview on BITS spark and startups.

The event was further elevated with the artistic touch of two people: Viswa (2000) who showcased his serene paintings and Srinath Nadathur (1999) whose ROFL@work comics reminded one of the Dilbert comics, and furthermore Vignesh's (2000) postcrossing collectibles.

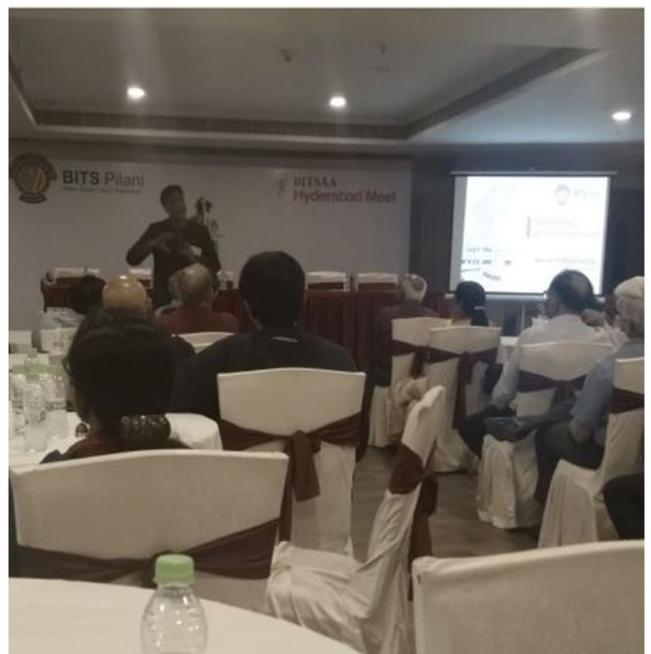
The official photographer Naveen and the organizing team - Raghu, Naren, Sriram, Jaya, Hari, Rathish, Kireeti, Venkatesh, Jayalakshmi, Aarthi, Abhinaya were appreciated for their efforts that made the event a roaring success. Finally, the event ended gracefully with a sumptuous lunch, not to forget the 'latcha & networking' sessions, which ensued.



BITSAA HYDERABAD ANNUAL MEET



The BITSAA Hyderabad Chapter organized their annual alumni dinner event on 2nd March, 2019 at Paryatak Bhavan, Begumpet. This year, the event was attended by Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani, Prof. G. Sundar, Director, Hyderabad Campus and Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean, Alumni Relations who shared their thoughts about the institute growth plans and distinct thrust and initiatives about the engagement with the alumni.



ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

Prof S.P. Kothari as a Chief Economist and Director of DERA of U.S Securities and Exchange Commission (Batch 1974-79)



Prof S.P. Kothari, a distinguished alumnus award-ee, BITS Pilani, has been elevated to the position of Chief Economist and Director of the Division of Economic and Risk Analysis (DERA) of U.S Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). He is a Professor of Accounting and Finance, and recently ended a six-year term as Deputy Dean of MIT Sloan School of Management. He brings with him a wide-reaching insight from his decades of contributions as a leader, in applying sophisticated research to the operation of financial markets.

Ms. Revathi Advaiti as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Flex (Batch 1986-90)



The world's third largest electronic manufacturing service provider, Flex has appointed Ms. Revathi Advaiti as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Flex's corporate administrative headquarters is based in San Jose, California. Flex Ltd. provides design, engineering, manufacturing and supply chain services and solutions. The company designs, builds, ships and services packaged consumer electronics and industrial products for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). Prior to joining the company, Ms. Advaiti was the President and Chief Operating Officer of Electrical Sector of Eaton Corporation plc, a power management company.

**Mr. Sanjay Ramabhadran has been appointed as the President of Texas Lyceum
(Batch 1988-92)**



Mr. Sanjay Ramabhadran, an alumnus of BITS Pilani, Pilani campus has been appointed as the President of Texas Lyceum, a non-profit organization focused on cultivating the next generation of Texas leaders. He is the first immigrant and Indian-American President of Texas Lyceum. He is Managing Partner of VERSA Group in Houston. Lyceum is a non-partisan, state-wide organization that works to identify the next generation of top leaders in Texas. It is led by 96 men and women from across the state who begin six-year terms while under the age of 46.

**Mr. Manu Sawhney as CEO of International Cricket Council
(Batch 1984-88)**



The International Cricket Council announced Mr. Manu Sawhney's appointment as its new Chief Executive Officer. Sawhney is the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and Managing Director of ESPN Star Sports. The appointment was ratified by the ICC Board following a global search and appointment process led by ICC Chairman Mr. Shashank Manohar and the Nominations Committee. He joined ICC in mid-February and worked closely with Mr. David Richardson, the outgoing CEO to ensure a smooth transition of leadership before assuming control in July.

Mr. George Jacob, President and CEO of Aquarium of the Bay receives 2019 RCGS Medal (Batch 1982-86)



Mr. Geroge Jacob has been honored with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) medal, joining former President Jimmy Carter and Sir David Attenborough, the only other recipients outside Canada. He did his M.Sc.(Tech.) Museum Studies from BITS Pilani, and then an Industrial Design Masters from University of Toronto where he was a Commonwealth Fellow. He became the Director of B.M. Birla planetarium, Jaipur, when he was just 25 years old.

Mr. Jacob is the President & CEO of Bay.org— a non-profit watershed conservation group in the San Francisco Bay Area that operates five branches including the Aquarium of the Bay and the Sea Lion Center. He has been honored for his three decades of commitment to exploring the unexplored and discovering the undiscovered, creating shared memorable experiences of compelling narratives, through the medium of museums worldwide.



ALUMNI REUNION

Ruby Celebrations of Batch 1974-1979: Nostalgia, bonhomie mark alumni meet at BITS Pilani

It was a walk down the memory lane for former students of BITS Pilani at the 40th year 'Ruby' anniversary celebrations for the batch of 1974-79, conducted during 22nd and 24th February, 2019. The batch reunion, spread over 3 days, was filled with smiles, laughter, warm embraces and friendly banter. More than 100 BITSians, along with their families, attended the event at Pilani. Speaking at the alumni-faculty interaction event, Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani, welcomed the alumni back on campus and said, "BITS is proud of its alumni and feels happy to have such an illustrious set of alumni". Prof. Bhattacharyya also shared various developments and updates with the alumni. Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean of Alumni Relations, underscored the importance of contributing back to BITS Pilani and urged the alumni to actively engage with the institute in any manner that they can.

Reliving their old days, the alumni explored the campus, visited their hostel rooms, classrooms, shops, etc. The event involved certain programs providing ample opportunities to socialize and share their experiences. Recalling his days at the institution, Mr. Bhaskar Sharma, an alumnus, said that he used to spend a lot of time hanging out with his mates and fighting over minor issues during college days. Another alumnus, Mr. A.P. Mitra feels that the reunion was quite nostalgic as most of his friends attended it and it took back them to the old days. "We not only got a chance to meet our old friends but also relive those precious times we spent on this campus. Whatever I'm today is because of this institute and the faculty who taught us", said Mr. Mitra.



FIRST ALUMNI REUNION

First Alumni Reunion of 2008 - 2009 Joining Batches of Hyderabad Campus

BITS has always been known for the relationship it maintains with its students and alumni. One of our greatest assets is our highly accomplished alumni network. To strengthen this relationship, Student Alumni Relations Cell, BITS Hyderabad, organized the first alumni meet of Hyderabad campus on the 12th of January, 2019.

The first two batches of the Hyderabad campus, 2008 and 2009 were invited. Meeting friends with whom one started his or her campus life, and spent 4 to 5 years with them must have been nostalgic for everyone and that was the sole purpose of the event.



The event started off with Prof. G. Sundar, Director of the campus, welcoming and addressing the alumni followed by Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean of Alumni Relations, BITS Pilani, sharing details about developments in the institute and laying distinct emphasis on alumni connect for the growth of the institute in the coming years. Some of the Professors also addressed the alumni and were more than happy to see their students once again. Few of the alumni took the opportunity to share their happiness on being back to the place where memories of a lifetime were made and expressed how grateful they are to be a part of BITS. After the events in the auditorium, the alumni planted saplings on the path towards the new academic blocks.

Thereafter, all of them had lunch in the library lawns and the students interacted with them and exchanged stories about how life on campus has changed. Later in the evening, an interactive session was organized with Mr. Harsh Bhargava, an alumnus from Pilani campus, who had served in the Navy. The students on campus got to know about the success stories of the alumni and learnt from their experiences of making professional choices. The alumni were more than happy to share their feelings about the campus and how it played a role in framing their present life. They were grateful for the reunion and were happy to see how the campus has improved.

ALUMNI TALKS

Antarctica, A No Man's Land - Divya Nawale

Ms. Divya Nawale, a Clean Energy Programs Coordinator at Asian Development Bank (Indonesia) made two expeditions to Antarctica (2002 and 2018). An alumna of BITS Pilani, she became the first BITSian woman to go on an Antarctic expedition. The talk was fun as she delivered it in the most engaging way possible. She was inspired by Mr. K.C. Ramakrishnan at a BITSAA presentation where he spoke about his expedition to Antarctica. With the help of the 2041 foundation headed by Mr. Robert Swan (named in the Guinness World Records book as the first person to walk both the Poles), she started her journey.

Since her first expedition was such a blast, she decided to go back with the same foundation but this time, as a Director. She states that although the journey requires a lot of mental strength and physical fitness, it is worth giving it a shot. Apart from her expeditions, she is also known for her work for humanity and the environment. She has worked extensively with Nirmaan in her college days, the UN Association in the UK and with many more reputable organizations.

A graduate in Public Policy from the University of Pittsburg, she has worked with many companies like Sphoorti, The Climate Reality Project, Checkerspot, Ecomagination, Amazon, etc. which helped her continue her work in disaster management. She has set up education bases in Ladakh and Pench and taken up a lot of social ini-

tiatives. Towards the end, she says that no one is too late to help in conserving the environment and motivated the audience to join the movement.

Ms. Divya Nawale is truly an inspiration and has proved that one can maintain a balance between career and passion and motivated the audience with her life-changing experience. A role model for many, she told us to believe in our passions. The talk ended with a small question and answer session. It was mind-opening and at the same time motivating. BITSians like her have made a mark on this world and made us proud!

Is Entrepreneurship Romanticized In The 21st century? –N. S. Parthasarathy

Co-founder, Vice-Chairman, and COO of MindTree India, Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy gives us an idea about Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The talk was engaging and his sense of humor made it all the more interesting.

At the beginning of the talk, he told us what led him to leave a well-earning job and shift to entrepreneurship. An alumna of BITS Pilani, he worked as a software engineer at Wipro in the late 1990s. He soon realized that IT companies in the late 90s had people who understood scale and technology well but the products they made were far too expensive for people to consume. Hence with the help of five of his friends, he gave entrepreneurship a chance which he considered to be a "ride or die" decision.

He shared his perspective on what skills are required to be a successful entrepreneur, like having a clear vision, being persistent etc.

He also gave us valuable advice on running a successful business.

Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy concluded his talk by saying that entrepreneurship isn't as "cool" as people make it sound. There are many ups and downs and initially one feels like giving up at every moment, especially since the entire enterprise falls under one's responsibility. Even the profits are spent on the company and not personally. The globe serves as the market for all entrepreneurs and one has to be determined throughout the hindering path. The audience was pretty active throughout the talk and there was a long and interesting "question-answer" session towards the end.

After 20 years, Mr. Parthasarathy has earned almost a billion dollars and has around 20,000 people working under him. He is truly an inspiration for every youngster who is trying to fulfill their dream of becoming a successful entrepreneur and leave a mark on the world.

Alumni Talk

Mr. Sanjay Thirumalai, a 1991 batch alumni, delivered a talk on "Future-proofing yourself in an era of smart machines" on 18th of January 2018, in BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus. He is currently the Managing Director at Grant Thornton LLP, and is the Former Director of KPMG. He also mentors start-ups under NASSCOM's 10K start-ups program. A large number of students attended the lecture and interacted with him during QnA session.



Life in an IT Firm

Core skills, leadership, hands-on experience, networking, and passion - the major factors for effective career planning in the IT industry. "Set aside time to reflect, consistently review the progress you've made, be aware of latest developments in the industry and the world in general" – advised the panel to a gathering of current students at the Pilani Campus.

Four young alumni working in technology companies led the panel on "Life in a Technology Firm", the second edition of "Life in a...." series, organized by the Student Alumni Relations Cell (SARC) of Pilani campus. Mr. Goutham Harsha (Apple), Mr. Vishwesh Srimali (Big Vision LLC), Mr. Varun Kumar Kadambala (Quantiphi), and Mr. Hardik Malhotra (JP Morgan) formed the panel. The panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Abhishek Gupta and saw more than 150 students listening and participating intently. The event saw the panel answering questions posed by the interested students, and the students appeared to benefit from

the experience shared by the panelists.

“Life in a...” program is a series of panel discussions designed to help students gain deep insights into various industry sectors, from the eyes of young BITSians. Previously, SARC conducted “Life in a Consulting Firm” to explore career and life in strategy and management consulting firms.



Alumni Research Talks 8.0

BITS Embryo, in collaboration with Computer Science Association (CSA) conducted a series of research talks by distinguished professionals from BITS, Pilani on 26th and 27th March, 2019. The panel consisting of Mr. Ashish Kulkarni, ML scientist at Amazon, Mr. K Madhava Krishna, Associate Professor at International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad, Mr. Shashank Gupta, Data Scientist at Flipkart discussed the practical applications of their work in various fields.

Alumni Research Talks (ART) 2019

The first edition of Alumni Research Talks (ART) was organised on 12th of January, 2019, by the Alumni Relations Cell, and the IEEE chapter of BITS Pilani – K. K. Birla Goa Campus. The event featured interactive

sessions by five eminent alumni of BITS Pilani, who shared their stories of success, and delved a bit into their research interests, and how they could affect the future as we know it. The event was graced by Prof G. Raghurama, Director, Ms. Sai Kothai, d/o the late Prof S.S. Ranganathan and Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy, Executive Vice Chairman and COO of Mindtree Ltd. A series of talks were delivered by the eminent alumni of BITS Pilani, namely Prof. Umesh Garg (Nuclear Physicist, University of Notre -Dame, USA), Dr. Surendra Pal (Program Director, ISRO, Bangalore), Prof. Sharmila C. Chatterjee (Professor of Marketing, MIT, USA), Mr. Sanjay Padode (Secretary, Centre of Developmental Education, IFIM Institutions, Bangalore) and Prof. Govindan Rangarajan (Professor of Mathematics, IISc, Bangalore).

Prof. S.S.R Memorial Teaching Excellence Award felicitation ceremony also took place on the same day. An accolade that is bestowed on the Best Teacher was awarded to Prof. Biju K. Raveendran, CS & IS Department, K K Birla Goa campus, for the year 2018 that included a cash prize of one lakh rupees. In his acceptance speech, Prof. Biju, in accordance with the theme of the event, spoke about how he was always inspired by his own professors, and that the best teachers always remember to teach from heart, and never from the mind. Ms. Sai Kothai also spoke about the award, in remembrance of her late father, as did Mr. N. S. Parthasarathy – an alumni.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY ALUMNI

Dr. Goel's OMKARA Fellowship

Dr. Satish Goel, an alumnus of BITS Pilani has created an endowment (with a corpus of INR 21 Lakhs) for funding 50% fellowship to a research scholar pursuing Ph.D programme at BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus. This endowment has been created in recognition and honor of Dr. Satish Goel's parents, Shri. Omprakash Goel and Smt. Kamla Goel and grandfather, Shri Ramkishan Goel. The intent of this endowment is to provide 50% fellowship to a PhD candidate pursuing research work in the area of Chemical Engineering, Chemistry or Computer Science. The fellowship is to be awarded from August 2019 onwards.

Ramesh D Grover Memorial CMS Computer Scholarships

CMS Computers Limited has created two scholarships for the first year students in recognition and in honor of Late Shri Ramesh. D. Grover, a 1968 batch alumnus from BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus. The intent of the scholarship is to provide opportunities for needy students who are qualified to get admitted in BITS but might not be able to enroll due to personal financial constraints. The scholarships are expected to be awarded from II semester 2018-19. As per the MoU, the funds donated by the company will be used for paying the tuition fee of two students eligible for 80% scholarship under merit-cum-needs scholarships scheme of the institute.

Crowdfunding Campaign

Mr. Vasu Sharma, Mr. Sidhartha Namburi, along with other BITSians and alumni set

up a crowdfunding campaign in order to raise funds for the treatment of the wife of beloved "Chowki Bhaiya," Shri. Vikram Singh, who got diagnosed with advanced stages of blood cancer in January 2019. Having worked on campus for over 25 years, he is well known amongst Pilani campus students. The cost of the treatment was too heavy for him to bear. The message was then spread on various groups and platforms. What followed was a true representation of what the BITS community stands for. People from all four campuses came together in this time of need, more than ready to lend a helping hand. This was about the family of man who played an integral role in the lives of many highly successful individuals. In less than a week, thirty lakh rupees was obtained through donations made by alumni from all over the world, showcasing the incredible strength and unity we possess. Thanks to the efforts from everyone, the bone marrow transplant was arranged for.

Donations from 1989 - 93 & 1993 - 98 Batches

The 1989-93 batch alumni that celebrated their reunions in Pilani campus in November 2018 established a collective target of contributing \$120000 for their Alma mater. They have so far donated a fund of INR 24.29 Lakh. The 1993-98 batch alumni that celebrated their reunions in Pilani campus in December 2018 established a collective target of contributing \$333031. They have so far donated a fund of INR 20.89 Lakh. The purpose of these funds are yet to be decided.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT BITS PILANI

Collaborations and Ranking

BITS Pilani has been recently recognized as 'Institute of Eminence' by MHRD, Government of India. It was ranked 17th in the University category and 5th in the Pharmacy category of NIRF in 2018. It is also India's highest ranked non-government institute as declared in QS BRICS, QS Asia, and QS India in 2019. BITS Pilani is in the world's top 500 QS subject rankings 2019 in Mechanical & Manufacturing, Electrical & Electronics and Computer Science and the 2019 world's top 500 subject ranking in Life Sciences where BITS Pilani is among the top 8 in India. BITS is an active member of the joint initiative between the Government of Telangana and Government of Taiwan on research work. IHE Delft under their call for Global Sanitation Graduate program has accepted a proposal from BITS Pilani and a new ME program will be launched that would be funded by them.

BITS has signed MoU's with University of Virginia, IWA Delft and the University of Agder, Norway between January and March 2019 for student and faculty exchange programs and also for undertaking joint research initiatives. Prof Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani and Prof Mitsuo Ochi, President of Hiroshima University signed the Agreement on Doctoral Student and Researcher Mobility on March 18 at Hiroshima. Prof Y Yamamoto, Executive and Vice president (Research) of Hiroshima University also attended the signing ceremony. This will provide a significant boost to collaborative doctoral research between the two institutes.

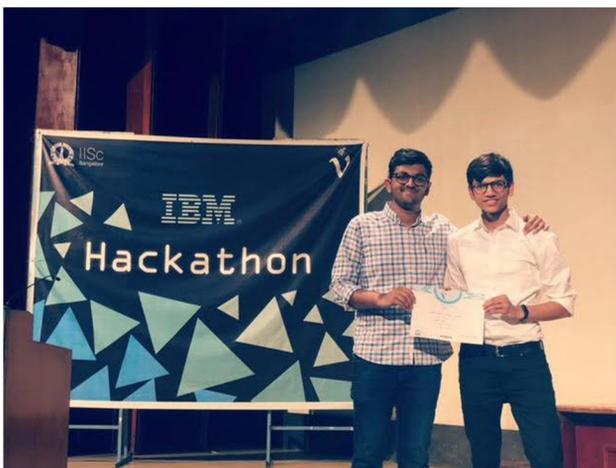


STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

PILANI CAMPUS

They Agarwal and Raghav Raman Garg won the IBM accurate code section award

More than 100 teams from all over India participated in Pravega's IBM Hackathon. The problem statement of this hackathon was – "Binary Classification of News". With two initial rounds of screening that involved codes on Data Mining, only 10 teams made it to the finals. The finals were held at IISc Bangalore on 18th January 2019. Shrey Agarwal and Raghav Raman Garg – first year students of BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus secured first place in the least error/most accurate code section of the event. With the least time, complexity and maximum accuracy rate, their code involved the use of Machine Learning blended with NLP and neural networks which served its purpose of classifying news articles into fake or real. Their use of IBM's API was also widely appreciated.



BITS Pilani represented at "WePOWER" – Women in Power Sector Professional Network in South Asia

Ms. Divya Rathore, a fourth-year undergraduate student of Mechanical Engineering at BITS Pilani, Pilani campus was selected as a Student Representative to the first Regional Conference of WePOWER - Women in Power Sector Conference. The conference was organized by the World Bank Group along with Asian Development Bank, Australian Aid and Energy Sector Management Assistance Program in Kathmandu, Nepal on 20th and 21st of February, 2019. Over 250 women energy sector professionals and engineering students represented their countries at the WePOWER Conference. These included representatives from 60 participating institutions, from local and international power utilities and multi-lateral agencies.

K.K BIRLA GOA CAMPUS

The Chemical Weekly Prize

Mr. Arjit Chakraborty, a Chemical Engineering student has been awarded by the Chemical Weekly Prize for the best research paper (First prize) published in a high-impact factor International Journal by an undergraduate Chemical Engineering Student by the Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers. The paper has been titled 'Seasonal Variations in River Water Properties and Their Impact on Mixing Energies and Pressure Retarded Osmosis', in Environmental Engineering Science. He co-authored the paper with Anirban Roy. The award was presented during the 71st CHEMCON held at NIT Jalandhar from 27th to 30th December, 2018.



All India Essay Writing Event 2018

Mr. Tushar Damani secured second place in the All India Essay Writing Event 2018 organized by Shri Ram Chandra Mission in the state of Goa.

Tata Crucible Campus Quiz

Mr. Lucky Kaul and Mr. Shiv Kumar won the Goa edition of Tata Crucible Campus Quiz, 2019 held on 27th Jan at BITS Auditorium. They went on to secure third place in the regional round held in Mumbai on 17th of March, 2019.

Student Innovator of the Year 2018

Ms. Muskan Pramod Taneja, a Mechanical Engineering student won the Student Innovator of the Year 2018, by Indian Automotive Technology and Innovation Awards, by renowned magazine AutoTech Review for the project "Design Optimisation of an Automobile Crash Box". The Supervisors were Dr. Kiran Mali & Prof. Ranjit Patil. The project proposed a novel design for a major component of the frontal impact zone of a car. This innovation aims at reducing the injuries caused to the passenger and the damage caused to expensive car parts during a car crash. The project was awarded in a national conference in New Delhi and received Rs. 50,000/-, a gift voucher worth 350 Euros, a gift hamper, a framed certificate, and a trophy. It was recognized by BMW, Mercedes, Frost and Sullivan, and Maruti Suzuki Ltd and SAE India.



National Academia Conclave – Poster Presentation

Ms. Priya Sharma from the Department of Biological Sciences won Best Poster Award for one minute on water sanitation poster presentation in National Academia Conclave on Urban Sanitation held at CEPT University, Ahmedabad on 9th and 10th March 2019.

HYDERABAD CAMPUS

Hackathons Accolades

HackHarvard Hackathon 2018 - Himanshu Gupta and Anshul Dubey of EEE department have made it to the top finalists out of 650 international teams and will take part in the finals. Their project revolved around creating a website that curated resources which aimed at providing a proper roadmap for students who did not have access to proper industry guidance.

Microsoft CodeFunDo Campus Hackathon 2018– Krut Patel, Computer Science, won the first prize.

Conference papers

Harshavardhan Takawale presented a paper at IOTSMS 2018, Valencia.

Single author paper by Afroz Ahmed on Adversarial Neural Text Generation was accepted at NAACL SRW, 2019.

Business Incubator B-Plan Competition

Devansh Dhrafani and Prakhar Vaishnav came up with a startup named Wogi which is about making flexible cabin for open offices. They won a monetary prize of fifty thousand in The Business Incubator Business Plan competition organized by E-Cell for students from all over Hyderabad. They were also funded by the college's Student Innovative Project which was used to build the prototype.



SBI Numero YONO Quiz

The team consisting of Shaheer Azam, Kushagra K Chanda and Srikanth Sridhar secured the second place and got a total cash prize of Rs. 1.44 Lakhs.

DST and Texas Instrument's India Innovation Challenge

Manan Gupta, Prathmesh Mahalle, Rishabh Singh and Sumanth Keshav Kotha participated in DST and Texas Instruments' India innovation challenge design contest with an idea of co-axial octocopter where they were shortlisted for the second round and received \$200 worth of TI equipment to build their prototype. They qualified for the quarter-finals and are now contesting for the semi-finals.

Google Summer of Code 2019

Rohitt Vashishtha (Zulip) and Afroz Ahmad (FOSSAsia) have been selected as mentors.

CAMPUS EVENTS

PILANI CAMPUS

A Working Session on Product Design and Design Thinking

Desert Hack is an initiative by Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) aimed at inculcating problem-solving and analytical thinking amongst the students of BITS Pilani in the sphere of business and start-ups. A Hackathon organized in the second semester gave teams 54 uninterrupted hours to work on a problem statement along with the guidance from domain specialists of CELs extensive mentor network. In the lead up to Desert Hack, the students were equipped with an arsenal of skills that we believe are instrumental to make an impact on the startup ecosystem. The first session of this series was conducted by Mr. Akshansh Deva, a BITS alumni of the 2012 batch on February 23, 2019. His vast experience as a product designer at Belong.co and OYO Rooms has made him adept at the ins and outs of design and everything that goes inside the mind of a designer.

Founder's Day Celebration

With great passion and enthusiasm, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, celebrated its 68th Founders Day on Wednesday, 9th February, 2019 (Basant Panchami) in the Institute premises. In 1951, the Vidya Vihar Campus of BITS Pilani was formally inaugurated by First President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on Basant Panchami, which is perennially celebrated

as Founder's Day every year. This year the programme was spanned over the entire day and a large number of students and faculty members participated in the different events organized.

10-Day Long Study India Programme for Hiroshima University, Japan

Study India Programme is a cultural interface between India and Japan that provides an opportunity to the young learners to observe, interact and participate in each other's cultures in both academic as well as in co-curricular activities. It was a 10-day long programme organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani campus for the students of Hiroshima University between the 25th of February and 7th of March 2019. The programme helped in raising the participant's awareness about multi-cultural and multi-ethnic diversities. It aims to help students understand the rich cultural heritage of India, its philosophy, languages, arts, people and history.

Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani, formally welcomed the guests and shared his views on the importance of cultural exchange programmes, the need for international collaboration in knowledge sharing, education and research. Further, he emphasized on how the programme would facilitate in strengthening the collaborative bonds between academic institutions internationally and provide an immersive experience that could be treasured for a lifetime.



Workshop on Institutional Digital Repository (IDR) for National Digital Library

BITS Pilani library in collaboration with National Digital Library of India (NDLI), IIT Kharagpur organized a two-day workshop on Institutional Digital Repositories on the 25th and 26th February, 2019. During the inaugural session, Prof. P. P. Das, Joint Principal Investigator, NDLI Project, IIT Kharagpur, introduced the NDLI project and the various technical requirements needed. He said that NDLI was initiated by IIT Kharagpur with support from MHRD, Govt. of India. It already has over 2 crore digital resources on wide ranging subjects which are made available to the people of India. The content is very versatile which can serve right from school children to the research scholars.

Dr. Sutradhar, librarian, IIT Kharagpur, talked about the how librarians can contribute to the NDLI project by digitizing the contents of their institution, universities, colleges etc., and how NDLI can help the librarians set up the Institutional Digital Repositories using open source software such as D-Space and share their content with NDLI.

Prof. Souvik Bhattacharyya, Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani, in his inaugural address congratulated the BITS Pilani library and IIT Kharagpur for conducting the workshop for the benefit of librarians and in turn to their institutions. He further stressed that it is very important to get the contents from various institutions, colleges and universities in India as a part of the NDLI project for supporting academic and research related work. He encouraged the participants to implement IDR in their respective libraries.

K.K BIRLA GOA CAMPUS

Quark

The technical fest of K K Birla Goa campus - Quark 2019 was organised between 1st and 3rd February. It continued the recurring theme set in place by the previous editions and was an immense success, providing a platform for young minds to showcase their ideas which have the potential to shape the course of humanity. A plethora of events was organised to complement the sheer variety and talent of the attendees, ranging from the crowd's favourite, Robowars to paper presentations from students across the country.

The magnitude of participation was truly one of a kind. Several eminent personalities spoke to the students and provided them with invaluable knowledge that they had garnered over the years. From the missile woman of India, Dr Tessa Thomas, to the former secretary general of Amnesty International, Mr. Salil Shetty, there was something for everyone to take back with them.

Along with these events, BITS MUN successfully conducted the 11th edition of their international MUN. With 7 committees and close to 210 attendees, including international executive boards, this event was a major highlight of the fest. Meanwhile, high school students got to savour a taste of what college life and their festivals taste like when they attended School Bag, a debate tournament organised for them.



Talks by Alumni

A number of talks by the most accomplished personalities from across various fields of work to create awareness and inquisitiveness among young minds as well as provide them with the right way to pursue their interests and dreams were organized by the Alumni Relations Cell.

Microsoft Research Program (MSR) TALKS

On the 18th of January, the Alumni Relations Cell hosted yet another interesting and informative talk on the Microsoft Research Program. Mr. Anmol Panda, a BITS Goa graduate and a current Microsoft Research Fellow was the guest of the day. This talk was a hit amongst all the Machine Learning and Data Science enthusiasts on campus. His research area involved the identification of false information on social media platforms using Machine Learning and Data Science techniques. He informed the students about the skills and approach required in order to apply for this experience and also how this program can have a great impact on one's career or research endeavors.

BITS2Startup

As a part of the BITS2Startup series, the Alumni Relations Cell held its first ever BITS2Startup event on the 22nd of January 2019. We had three alumni, namely Mr. Dheeraj Bhaskar, Co-founder and CEO of The Other Side of the Wall, Mr. Bala Kamal-lakharan, founder of Startup Iceland and Mr. Piyush Kumar, founder and CTO of IgnisNova Robotics shared their experiences on how to lay the foundation of a successful start-up and tackle the difficulties on the way. They have successfully ventured into the world of start-ups and are excelling with their great ideas.

BITS2CivilServices

The BIT2CivilServices talk organized on the 5th of February 2019, gave the students an opportunity to learn the idiosyncrasies of cracking the UPSC exam from our very own alumni, namely Mr. Ashutosh Garg, IAS, Special Secretary, CEO, Himurja,UP, Mr. Anmol Sher Singh Bedi, IFS, Language Trainee at the Indian Embassy in Beijing and Mr. Kshitij Singhal, IAS, CEO, Zila Panchayat, Betul district, MP. Behind all the fascination and limelight associated with the job, the panel assured that the scrutiny and accountability is huge. Hence, a dedicated and output-based approach was highlighted.

CAT CHAMPS

The much awaited and anticipated third edition of CAT CHAMPS was hosted on the 12th of February 2019 by the Alumni Relations Cell. The panel consisted of three outstanding Bitsians - Mr. Kshitij Gangal, Mr. Anshuman Paranjape and Mr. Divij Sinha who have cracked the CAT exam with remarkable percentile. They informed the students about the format of the examination and assured that the CAT exam preparation is not about remembering an

exorbitant amounts of information but is all about practice and time management.

BEING BITSIAN

Living to capture the most beautiful moments of someone's life: someone's wedding, is our very own Alumnus – Mr. Anupam Maurya who recently made it to top 20 list of 'wedding photographers in India who have mastered the art of telling stories through their images' category of Sony Better Photography of the year 2018-2019. He has also been featured in Professionals of LinkedIn this month. Founder of KnotsbyAMP, this Mumbai based wedding photographer and filmmaker awed us all by his inspiring story from an engineering graduate to a wedding photographer on the March 18, 2019. This talk, away from the usual notion of professions was like a breath of fresh air and convinced audiences that may be following our passion and dreams isn't a bad idea after all.

BITS2BSchool

Management and business studies are one of the popular career options after college for many engineering undergrads. Most of the aspirants struggle at some point of time to make a choice between an Indian and a foreign Business School. To make this choice easier a panel comprising Mr. Apurv Chaturvedi, an ex-investment banking analyst at JP Morgan, currently an MBA candidate at HEC Paris, Mr. Saurabh Sachdeva, a London Business School graduate, currently a Manager at AT Kearney and Mr. Sandeep Murishetty, an IIM Ahmedabad graduate, currently working as a Strategy Consultant at Deloitte India were invited to shed light on the pre-requisites of an MBA candidate and on how to build one's profile.

HYDERABAD CAMPUS

Ignite

Ignite is an annual event of BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus. It is conducted by the Nirmaan organisation. It is a social fest during which children from underprivileged backgrounds are brought to the campus for three days for a series of educational and entertaining events. It is a rewarding opportunity to give back directly to the society by spending time, teaching and guiding the children.

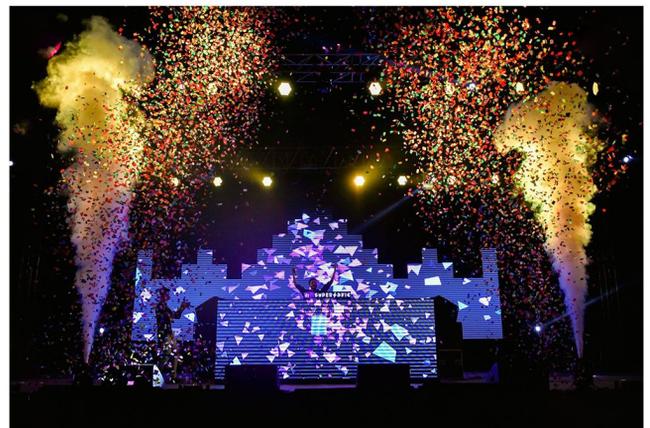
Ignite was conducted between 8th-10th February, 2019. Over 300 children from various orphanages in Hyderabad were brought to the campus to experience a multitude of workshops and shows. Most of the events were organized and conducted by student volunteers, with a few being conducted by external agencies such as IUCAA Pune and Art of Living.

During these three days, both the children and the volunteers learnt a lot and took home with them a lot of cherishable memories. Despite the grueling efforts taken to organize these events, all the volunteers had a smile on their face at the end of the day.



Pearl

Celebrating the shades of Hyderabad, Pearl took off on the 22nd of March, 2019 as thousands of students from a plethora of colleges from all across the country came together for the 3-day cultural extravaganza. With competitions spanning photography, music, dance, drama, literature, fashion and many more, there was no shortage of talent. At night, the energy levels of the campus did not drop one bit thanks to the brilliant pro-shows. From Mashd N Kutcher getting everyone pumped up, to Nishant Suri and Vipul Goyal tickling funny bones and musical performances from Pineapple Express, When Chai Met Toast, After Acoustics and Vishal-Shekhar, the three nights were lively and exhilarating. All these things ensured that Pearl '19 was a huge success.





Launchpad 2019

In the corporate world, it really takes a commendable mind to work hard and stand out. Coming up with new ideas and bringing them to practical fruition is a challenging task. To give a thrust to these offbeat minds, the Entrepreneurship Cell (E-Cell), Hyderabad Campus, held its annual entrepreneurship summit, Launchpad. The chief guest of this year's Launchpad was a BITS Pilani alumnus, Mr. Anil Agarwal, who started off as a software engineer in 1984 but then went on to become a UP police officer. Launchpad '19 witnessed a number of speakers: Mr. Jeyandran Venugopalan, Head of Engineering, Flipkart; Mr. Dhiraj Agarwal, CEO and co-founder of Campus Sutra and Mr. Anil Chikkara, a well-known start-up mentor in India. There was also a panel discussion on 'content creation as a new form of entrepreneurship'. The speakers were Mr. Hitesh Pardeshi, Head of Filtercopy, Ms. Kamiya Jani- Chief Travelling Officer of Curly Tales; Mr. Angad Bhatia- COO of Indiatimes Lifestyles Network and Mr. Mayur Sethi- CMO of TheWittyfeed.

DUBAI CAMPUS

Research Showcase Event

Dubai Campus organized a research showcasing evening for the alumni on 19th December, 2018. Approximately 14 student teams showcased their prototypes to the alumni and received positive feedback. A few of the alumni also committed to providing sponsorship towards advanced prototype development, some of them being Ms. Sandhya Prakash, Mr. Ashok Galgotia, Mr. Nitin Bhalla, Mr. Surya C.



Workshop on Project Management Techniques

Mr. Lalit Jain conducted a workshop on Project Management Techniques on 23rd March, 2019. The workshop revolved around the basics of project management, going up to details on planning and execution of the projects. The workshop was extended to all the campuses and it was a pleasure to have good participation. He also conducted a quiz towards the end of the workshop, where the team from Hyderabad campus emerged as winners.



MESSAGE FROM SARC

It is during our time in college that we discover ourselves and our true mettle. BITS Pilani, for the past many years, has produced diverse individuals of immense calibre and talent. Our paths may have diverged and maybe we are not the same person who walked into that college gate all those years ago, but it is certain that we are all indeed chips of the same old block. Perhaps it is this BITSian mould that we are all forged from that sets us apart in this highly competitive world. Teachers and alumni are the pillars of any educational institution and with alumni like ours to guide and support us, it is of no surprise that BITSians have achieved seemingly impossible feats. We can state with absolute conviction that BITSians will continue to deliver stellar performances and rise to greater heights everywhere.

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