



# THE BITS BEAT

A BITS student publication

Pilani | Dubai | Goa | Hyderabad

## PILANI

### BITS Hyperloop takes off

The newly formed BITS Hyperloop team was one of the 100 teams that were selected to present their design at the SpaceX Design Weekend in Texas in January. Described as a "cross between a concorde, an air hockey table and a railgun", the Hyperloop is a metal capsule that will be propelled, while levitating on an air cushion, down a long metal tube at the speed of sound, in partial vacuum. It was suggested as a means of transport by Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX which has challenged universities all over the world to design Hyperloop pods. "We've managed to strike up collaborations with a lot of top teams like the MIT team," informs Sibesh Kar, leader of BITS Hyperloop. The team is off to a great start and plans to expand by adding other campuses to the fray, since no university in India has enough resources to build the Hyperloop on its own. It is also a multi-disciplinary challenge; expertise from various fields is required. Needless to say, the Hyperloop and Musk enthusiasts on campus are bound to see exciting and bold steps in this field pretty soon.

## GOA

### Mana Maali: The Gardener Of The Mind

Think back to a time in your life when you felt stressed, anxious and overwhelmed, as if an elephant was sitting on your chest; and you didn't know who to approach. "Does this lead you to a memory from your university days?" asks 24-year-old NRI, Nitya Kanuri, who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. She is the brain behind Mana Maali, a project funded by Stanford, BITS Hyderabad, VNR, and other private donors, which essentially provides students with mental health support through applications they can access online and on their phones. The main benefit is that students can get help anonymously and privately on their own time and on platforms they are already comfortable with. After a well-received launch at the Hyderabad campus of BITS in early 2015, the project is being extended to the Pilani, Goa campuses as well. The Application used by Mana Maali is called 'Lantern', and offers structured, 10-minute modules that asks users about their mood and stress levels, and accordingly recommends specific techniques to help them.

## DUBAI

### Second Phase of Construction

Keeping up with the undergoing Project Parivartan in the Pilani campus, BITS Pilani - Hyderabad Campus has also embarked upon a major expansion of facilities in lieu of increasing student strength. The foundation stone for the second phase of construction was laid by the IT Minister of Telangana, K. T. Rama Rao. Phase II is expected to be completed by 2018 and includes the construction of a New Academic Block, a thousand-seat capacity open air theatre, four new hostel *bharans* and expansion of sports facilities.

### BITS Excels at Business Challenges

Team Ophiuchus from BITS Pilani, Dubai Campus bagged the "Best Case Study Analysis" award, after competing against forty other teams from universities across the country, in the Business Case Study Challenge held by Middlesex University. In a similar challenge called The CFA Institute Research Challenge, an annual global competition, another team won the Regional Finals. The crowning glory for the institute was that our team of engineering students beat teams who were specialising in finance either at a bachelors' or masters' level, thus, once again proving that our institute is indeed a force to be reckoned with.

BITS is a saga of its own. A grand story - equal parts enchanting and mysterious - writing itself for well over a wonderful sixty years. And for those who have been ardent students of its history (like yours truly), the past remains a subject of fascination - the past wherein this eclectic newsletter's origins also lie.

The year of 1964 witnessed a group of students create history - they brought out 'BITS Beat', the institute's earliest student newsletter - a peerless gem with definitely some of the most refreshing writing that the institute has seen. However, after a short stint, the newsletter disappeared, giving way to its numerous offsprings. Fast forward to 2016, and here we are.

Legacy - that's something we BITSians cherish and find endearing; indeed, it adds to our very identity. This special publication you now read is not, however, merely the celebration of an old legacy; it is also a potential

harbinger of increased sharing, dialogue and journalistic expression. A community that ushers in the exchange of thoughts and ideas is a well-knit one, and this issue of our all-campus newsletter is but a start to that ideal end. As the kindred souls of the first issue of BITS Beat 1964 so very eloquently put it:

"The paper will be a success only if it finds a place in the hearts of the majority of students."

Yes, there is a long way to go. But hopefully, this monthly leaflet will eventually spark some interesting collaborations. It is definitely worth a shot, if nothing else.

From the sands of time, now in a new avatar, we bring with enthusiasm for your perusal - BITS Beat.

Only the name stays the same. Everything else changes.

## New scholarship opportunities

The recent formulation of the International Programmes and Collaboration Division (IPCD) has been a conscious step towards designing suitable aspects of Study-Abroad and Study-in-India programmes for students. IPCD has established several MoUs with various foreign industrial institutions and universities which would facilitate internships or Semester Abroad programmes. The scholarship offers partial funding for select applicants who wish to pursue their thesis in an international university. To supplement the Merit-cum-Need Scholarship offered by the Student Welfare Division (SWD) and reconcile the multiplying needs of students, the Laundromat has also taken the decision to provide the SWD with a scholarship fund of 1,00,000 INR per annum. The introduction of such initiatives promises to act as a gateway to providing a thorough platform for student learning.

## Melange 2016 - A Thespian Treat

It was a delectation for the theatre lover as the second edition of Melange, the three-day theatre festival took place on 5th through 7th February. The first day featured a melodious narration of a section of the Mahabharata by The Manganiyar Seduction - a group of Rajasthani folk artists. The novel stage setup was worthy of mention. Platforms were erected, making it a multi-tier stage and opening up a whole lot of new opportunities for lighting. On the second day, the audience witnessed a play directed by Seema Biswas called '*Streer Patra*' - a monologue by a character named Mrinal narrating the story of her life. The fest ended on a high note with Raghavveer Yadav's '*Piano*', a part comedy which explored the theme of loneliness. Despite the low attendance, Melange was a success, leaving the audience hopeful for more such events in the future.

## TEDxBITSGoa 2016

Arguably one of the most awaited events of the year, TEDxBITSGoa 2016 was held on January 24th. This year's conference, themed 'Just Look Around', marked the 7th edition of TEDxBITSGoa, giving it the unique description of being India's oldest running TEDx conference. It was headlined by Ad-guru Piyush Pandey, the talented music group - The Indian Jam Project, Forbes 30 Under 30 nominee Lubhyati Rangarajan, celebrity chef Ritu Dalmiya, alternate and blues band LemonGrass, street artist and illustrator Shrey Sawant, MIT TechReview 35 Under 35 nominee Nitin Sisodia, ace brand consultant Rahul Sen and former army man and NATGRID ex-CEO Raghu Raman.



## Quark '16

Quark 2016 was all set to take you on "A Cosmic Odyssey" - which was its theme on - February 5th 2016. The three days of the fest abounded with technical competitions, quizzes, workshops, guest lectures and special performances. Additionally, the institute's annual international Model United Nations - BITSMUN and the inaugural version of its very own Literary Festival - Carpe Dictum also took place as part of the festival. The Quark 2016 Guest Lecture Series featured a diverse and dynamic array of speakers like Stephan Pastis (of Pearls Before Swine fame), Sanjay Jha, Rajdeep Sardesai, Jerry Pinto, Aditi Rao Hydari and Raheel Kurshid.

## Renaissance

The second edition of Renaissance, the inter *bbawans* cultural competition, was conducted from February 8th to 13th and engaged students for the entire week in entertaining and quirky events organised by all the clubs. A participant who won an event in the competition obtained cash prizes while accumulating points for his *bbawans* alongside. This cultural extravaganza was a run up to and a teaser for Pearl 2016, the annual cultural festival of the campus.

## Pearl

The annual cultural festival of the campus, Pearl 2016, took off on a grand note. With the theme 'Live Evil' and a line-up of seventy-seven events put up by various clubs on campus, the three day long fest from 17th to 20th March provided a platform to students from around India to showcase their talent. The professional shows included wildly popular musical performances by the famous groups Thaikkudam Bridge, Nucleya, Indian Jam Project, Farhan Akhtar, and a comedy show by Abish Mathews.



## Sanskriti

BPHC saw the students celebrate their regional identities during Sanskriti 2016, when all the regional associations brought alive the rich cultural traditions of their homelands with music, dance and dramas. Students thronged to the auditorium in huge numbers to gather and rejoice in their cultural ties, making the event a grand success.

## Box of Happiness

Fighting anxiety is one of the most difficult fights a student has to put up, more so because of the stigma associated with mental illness. Mana Maali is a Stanford-BITS initiative with the mission to help students cope with anxiety and stress. Started with the objective of allowing students to speak freely, Box Of Happiness was an initiative taken by the MAD Club, BITS Pilani Dubai Campus, wherein boxes have been set up to enable students to anonymously write about their problems and seek help. The professional counsellor then responds back on an online forum.

## Recharge 2016

Recharge is the most anticipated event among the family of hostellers and the staff. As the name suggests, it is an escape route for the tired souls from their clock-work college life. Held for a period of five days from 15 to 19 February, the event brought together the staff members and the students as they played a plethora of games in unison. Hostel week was an unmissable event for students and staff. As if the fun events were not enough to pamper the hostel students, there was an overhaul of the mess menu with special dishes served. The cheers, celebrations, taunts and music were ones for the ears to savour.

## Enginuity '16

The gates to Enginuity '16, an inter-university event opened up on 15th March. It was an open invitation to all colleges in the Emirates to showcase their talent in the technical field with an innovative approach. More than 100 teams participated in over 16 competitions, showcasing some top-notch performances. Ingenuity is the strongest tool of mankind and added to technical knowledge of the engineer, it sure leads to some exciting time, becoming "Enginuity" in true sense.



## The Team

Pilani - Vijay Sankar and V. Soumya  
Dubai - Aastha Bhardwaj and Akshita Angara  
Goa - Aparajita Haldar and Tulasi Ravindran  
Hyderabad - Meghana Yerabati and Subham Soni