

Rounding It Up

This year we present to you the round up in a new format. Everything that you read in these few pages is written not by one hand, but by a specialized team whose job over the year was to find out the truth behind every event that affected our lives. They may have been impulsive at times but "to deny the impulses is to deny the very thing that makes us human."

Prisoners Of Zenda

I can't believe my eyes. The Bhawans look as if they house convicts. Someone was talking today in the mess about renaming all the guys' hostels as Tihar Bhawan. Agreed, the grills increase our safety but...(passing or attending gate calls has become so difficult).

It's Mal, But...

"Finish your breakfast. Lunch can always be in RBM." Thus began my stay in the dreaded Mal wings. The master and his friends were nice to me. They let me clean up myself after I had cleaned their rooms, which at the end of the day seemed an isomeric equivalent to their morning forms. I hated them. Come on, I was human after all, just a bit younger perhaps.

But then, it was here that I learnt the essence of being a BITSian, it was here that I found a collection of books which neither the Cent-li, nor BSL had. So when they gave me their intros, I felt, "freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." Even after my fresher period was over, I went back to Ashok, RP and Mal whenever I felt like. No one ever stopped me. I had been inducted into the brotherhood.

I knew that it was coming but I could not help but feel a sense of loss when the last male bastion of BITS, Malviya Bhawan, fell to the might of the fairer sex. No more Golmaal Malites; no more RBM mess. Perhaps I am one of the last few guys to have actually stayed in Mal for almost a week. Goodbye Mal, thanks for those scary but wonderful evenings and for Machiavelli's- The Prince'.

Taste Of Fresh Blood

The other day a first yearite was moving up and down in C'not in Bermudas. He knows none of his seniors. They are also least interested in him. Traditions change. ANC chai hold is now extinct; BITSian salute is a thing of the past.



Seniors are afraid of the consequences of talking to the freshers. I don't believe that there is any severe form of ragging here in BITS but the fear makes even healthy interactions difficult. We ourselves stood aghast when one lovely little lady started sniffing in front of the MB gates and we decided to flee rather than wait for her to calm down. All that we had asked her was whether she misses her parents.

Unreal Tournament

Touted as a fierce battle, it ended in a foolish skirmish and after more than a month of anticipation, Election Day arrived with a notice cancelling the nominations of both presidential candidates. Why, how, who and where are questions that have been answered too many times by too many people in too many different ways, and perhaps not always in a gentlemanly manner. It would suffice to say that it happened and we are all sorry that it did. But it gave a fresh chance to those who really wanted to make a difference. With no "deals", a simple straightforward manifesto, and honest motives, BITS found its first woman president. MBites turned out in record numbers to vote, as traditions seemed to shatter under the new wave.

The result showed that absolute majority had prevailed and stray allegations of manipulations notwithstanding, it was pretty much a perfect election. A victory march (with the warden's permission, of course!) took jubilant MBites all around campus as the sceptics watched and waited for what the future would bring.

I Know What You Did Last Diwali

The EC panel came under a lot of criticism this year and they were accused of wasting time in futile debates. However, it cannot be denied that they did a lot of groundwork and extensively studied every candidate's manifesto, trying to present the feasibility of every point to us. EC also gave us a lot of information about the grand parties during Diwali where phenomenal amounts are spent in order to win over potential voters. Somehow the invitations have never made their way to my door; perhaps they too were '*absconding*'.



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It's Not My Birthday, Sir

No more birthday bashes, and some say no more cakes! That seems to be the new rule these days. Even if things have been a little boisterous in the past, this is a tradition that has been passed on. Whether it will endure the test of time, I cannot say. The birthday suit is not exactly my favourite, but then no one was ever forced to wear it! In fact, many amongst us have the habit of wishing each other below the Gandhi statue on 1st. October.

Citius, Altius, Fortius

Personally I was looking forward to the holidays. Then the outstis started coming and we kept hearing things about those "hep" Bangalore girls who were too cool for words. One thing I must say - they could not be inconspicuous - it is difficult anywhere I suppose, but especially so in BITS. Every morning BITSians waited along with the rickshaw-pullers at the MB gate and found girls in trendy sports wear, hair pulled back into a broad colourful headband, fully equipped with duffel bags, basketballs and other paraphernalia. Gym G was action packed throughout the day, and then packed with people till late into the night. Suddenly, BITSian girls were on the lookout for "cute guys" (Ah, those hypothetical entities that I am not sure even exist)

and BITSian guys were bemoaning the fact that BOSM only lasts three days. There was a spirit of festivity that survived the home team's loss in the Basky finals and kept going until the last outsti crossed the campus gate.

In Search Of A Lively Jack

The number of students is constantly on the increase but the enthusiasm that made BITSians different is seriously lacking. Departments are facing the brunt of it all. Almost all first yearites head back home during the festivals and there is no one to work. We owe the success of our fests to the hard work put in by the departments but they receive no incentives. No body cares whether they have a test the next day. You cannot possibly write a mech-sol open book after working till two in the night. Also, the ego clashes are constantly on the increase and we have seen almost an entire batch quitting a department. Is team spirit a disappearing quality?

Self Help Is The Best Help

Strange things seem to be happening these days. And I am happy that they are happening. For a change people after eating in the messes have to keep their used plates at a particular place.



Till last year it was totally unimaginable. It always seemed strange to me that these same students when they eat at some restaurant in any metro epitomize etiquette. With the introduction of self service a lot of money is expected to be saved. CRAC and the MMC must be commended for such a bold step. However I do not understand why some BITSians still refuse to follow these simple rules. Shouldn't we all help to make this endeavour a success?

Fourth Estates

The press clubs have been most erratic in bringing out their issues. It is true that they must try to report everything that happens on campus. It is also true that they try their level best on a shoestring budget. However, some accused the press of biased coverage during the elections, which I personally feel was not true.

Where The Mind Is Without Fear

There comes a time of trial in everyone's life. CF too is not an exception. As a result of some well spread (perhaps deliberate) rumours, people questioned our integrity. CF has been the guiding force in exposing various ills that plagued our very existence.

We have evolved into newer dimensions every year, but the essence and mission have never changed; will never change. Perhaps that is the reason why this year we have articles from every section of BITSian society and also from people who have been here for a long time and are troubled by certain trends.

Tradition, Culture And Heritage

A small town, somewhat isolated perhaps but culture-starved? Certainly not. Renowned artists from all over India come to perform right here in Pilani and if its not famous performers, then our own students take to stage to put their talents on display. Ragamalika and SPIC-MACAY are 2 groups of students devoted to keeping alive Indian art and culture, each in their own way. They do deserve their moments under the sun.



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Cultural Extravaganza

Wacky clothes, wackier attitudes, the Rocktaves bands, the TDC's who're at the dance floor all day, 24 hour rock music, spiky coloured hair, no 11 o'clock curfew for girls – Oasis was here and I was waiting with bated breath for the action to start. And start it did, when five girls from a college turned up three days BEFORE Oasis because, apparently, they THOUGHT Oasis was beginning on the same day it did last year. (I wonder why we bothered to put up a website and send invitations.) Campus was bursting at the seams with over 1200 participants showing up this year (this is AFTER subtracting the number of people who were thrown out for indulging in “objectionable” activities). The one highlight of Oasis 2002 was the concert by renowned percussionist Sivamani. For once, I saw the packed Audi absolutely quiet. In those few hours, he had definitively defined entertainment. And Brahma undefined it the next day when they put up their (ahem!) concert - the packed audi emptied out in a geometric progression. personally stayed for precisely two minutes and thirty-seven seconds.

As I was coming out a Red Indian war cry of ‘Dopeeee’ reminded me that I had to take a snap with the structure. On the fifth morning, when the fire in VK had been put out and all that was left in D-lawns was trash paper that no one had bothered to throw in the dustbins, I awoke as though from a dream and realized that for all I had expected Oasis to be, it had not quite worked its magic on me. Nevertheless, I will look forward to Oasis 2003, if only to experience again how ninety-six hours can feel like six.

Front Row Center

“You’ll get to meet really great new people, it will feel almost like a family... and oh yeah, we have reserved seats during Oasis!” This is how the argument for joining a department went. But the latter half had to be done away with this year, with departments and clubs not being given their usual front row reserved seats. High time too, I heard some say. Dedicated readers of CF might remember a certain epilogue in which we had stressed upon the importance of the GBM.

Two To Tango, Few To Mime

The dance and the mime clubs have been at the receiving end for quite some time now. I have always believed that it is not success but the



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dedication towards your work that ultimately matters. Believe me, the number of hours these people put in is staggering to say the least. Nevertheless, they are not always given due credit because of the high standards that BITSians have set for them. From all of us, I would like to thank them. In fact, the Oasis mime and the dance drama were novel attempts at experimentation.

One For All And All For One

Apart from fun, frolic and the to-die-for outstis, Oasis is a time of bonding for BITSians, especially those who work for the fest. Determined to avoid a deficit at all costs this year, Music Club, Sponz, Arbts, Jhankar and Controlz came together to discuss how best to sell tickets for the professional shows. For the first time, a professional show was being sponsored; but on the condition that the audi be packed. A minimum of twelve hundred tickets had to be sold in the thirty-six hours that remained before the Inaug. BITSians simply couldn't escape that evening - they were accosted in the messes, they were cajoled in C'not, they were compelled to sign up with their departments and clubs, and others were told to sign up simply to keep Oasis deficit-free.

Sixteen hundred and forty-eight tickets later, Sivamani had a packed auditorium.

Sparklers In My Hand

Oasis left an aura of festivity behind. The sari-clad girls kept the mood alive. A special lunch followed by an extra special evening in C'not... It's Diwali! The "meteors" shooting across a moonless sky and the cacophony set the adrenaline shooting. The pungent smell of burning sulphur did not deter anyone from landing up for dinner amidst the sonic booms. The situation is the same over the years, but do we ever sense monotony? I guess not. Sometimes a late night toast in the honour of the occasion adds to the saga of fun and frolic.



All The World's A Stage

Drama is the favourite hunting ground of HDC, EDC and PTM. HDC was really wonderful this year with one production after the other hitting the Audi. Though all did not live up to the expectations, their dedication towards their work was really praiseworthy. Mention must be made of a personal favourite, '**Fandi**', with a three-member cast.

However EDC let us down by failing to come up with a production in the first sem. This was unexpected and unaccounted for. The Oasis play was also not well received, so I have been told. (I was sleeping through it). In the second sem, knowing nothing of what to expect, I watched the curtain rise on "**Wait Until Dark**". It started slowly - not boring, but not gripping; not soft, but not loud; not funny, yet with hidden gems of humour thrown in. As it progressed, its unassuming hold on me took me by surprise. The plot was truly unique, the dialogues were sharp and a novice played a blind woman to perfection.

The PTM takes exceptional pride in their play troupe. Dating back to 1991, it has been one of the most conscientious and dedicated groups of 'cast' and 'crew' giving us a play every semester. Their speciality is that they are the only troupe not to take the help of Backstage in setting up the stage.

The play in the first semester, '**Nizhalai Thedi**' (oops! I hope I got it right), was highly appreciated and enjoyed by almost one and all. '**Marubadiyum**', much more hyped and looked forward to; however, the storyline could not deliver and even brilliant acting did not help much.

Austerity

Sweltering October heat! No power for over twenty-four hours! The old timers remembered the days when this was a common incident. People decide to be egalitarian when nothing else can be done. So, we saw every section of BITSian junta running to the insti with books and paraphernalia to reserve a seat under the fan. The second twenty-four hour power cut in January did not make that much of an impact, because BITSians decided to follow the Gandhian path of austerity.

We Are The World...

In late November, a group called "**Try Peace**" emerged on a small scale, with a few BITSians gathering to discuss recent incidents of communal violence.



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The larger aim, however, was to establish a permanent forum where open debate can take place on a variety of social issues. In BITS, such discussion is either absent or confined to late night ANC or wing sessions. The group was greatly welcomed since a medium of expression of this kind is a glaring omission from BITSian life. But then, there were fears that here words would speak louder than actions and we feel that unless something is actually done, the fears may well be confirmed.

There's Music In The Air

No psenti-semite who attended this special Music Club performance will ever forget the magic of the night. With Nihal George explaining that he was about to play his last song in BITS, it was an emotional night for Music Club, which was bidding goodbye to several long-standing and extraordinarily talented members. Those who attended the concert agreed that the music was great, but that there was, more importantly, a lot that tugged at the heartstrings. The clubbers were busy throughout the year with several concerts and thankfully they cut down a lot on the localized regional numbers this year.

Music transcends all boundaries but for the last few years in BITS, it had become stagnated – shouldn't it flow from Kashmir to Kanyakumari?

Dancing Queen

Ever heard of the ugly duckling? Well, DW takes pride in converting people who know nothing about dancing into graceful swans with the knee-jerking, hip-shaking and torso-twisting dances such as Jive, Twist and Tango. The DD instructors must be given due credit – we saw people with two left feet pull off the “dirty” dance without looking out of place in the spotlight. This has been a feature of the BITSian calendar for a long time now. Around 1991, ten couples were chosen every semester and put through the grind for three months. The spirit remains the same.



Pleading Not Guilty

1991- THOMSO, Roorkee- "BITS, Pilani sweeps through **23000 out of 24000** in prize money."

2002-2003- we return empty handed from IIT, Chennai and IIT, Mumbai.

Accusations fly, pessimists nod their head & say, "I told you so." However, very few congratulate the union who decided to send these people for the exposure we need so very badly. Think again – with test schedules & deadlines breathing down our necks & departments working round the clock to meet up to the standards, serious research is most impractical. In fact, some of us have been working for this magazine forgoing our duties to our projects & this is the situation everywhere.

WUPDRDE

World Union on Protection of Democratic Rights and Dignity of (hold your breath) **Elephants**. One wintry night, eleven wingies playing table tennis till 2:00 A.M., a Rep-wri compre the next morning and a debate to find out the greatest mammal gave rise to this latest group of animal lovers. They have one motto: "elephants

should not be made fun of because of their size." After all, Julius Caesar himself had said, "let me have men about me who are fat." Here's wishing them all the luck.

Broadening Our Horizons At BITS

On a more serious note, the "**International Symposium On Emerging Trends In Genomic And Proteomics Education And Research**" was conducted at BITS, in collaboration with the Uniformed Services University Of Health Sciences (USUSH), Bethesda, Maryland, USA. The inaugural session was graced by the presence by Dr. Robert Friedmen, who is the chairperson and Professor in Pathology of USUSH. Topics ranged from research in molecular mechanism of vital growth and cancer, to bioremediation of toxicants and all related issues in biotechnology and Pharmacy. An important panel discussion was held on Monday, January 13th to improve opportunities for BITSian graduate students who wish to study abroad. The key issue was whether BITS could formalize its relationship with foreign institutions, thereby



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making it possible for graduate students to complete a portion of their course abroad. It was of great help to the people who attended and we certainly look forward to more such endeavours.

Rapid Action Force

Whether RAF should be condemned or lauded for its maiden venture of on-line application of the movie tickets will remain controversial but the long queues in front of the SWD office on the last day of ticket distribution were quite a sight. Suddenly junta got engrossed in pushing each other and one of the windowpanes of the SWD office yielded to the collective strength of sturdy BITSians. Come on, we are all grown ups here and we are expected to behave, even if the procedures are confusing or inappropriate. After all, "we are all honourable men." Or are we not?

Games People Play

As I was passing by Budh the other day, I heard a lot of girls cheering for something or someone. As I walked closer, I

realized that the inter block cricket tournament of Meera was under progress. This was a part of the inter bhawan contests that were taking place sometime after Intrabits. The Sports Club was really innovative this year, I must say! However, the gentleman I saw umpiring did not look particularly happy. I forgot to ask him why.

Dhruv

Leadership forever – was the theme of Interface this year. The 26th edition of this All India Management Convention organised entirely by MMS students took place on 7th, 8th and 9th February. ILs, workshops, mock CAT, mock GRE, YMOM, forex game, clutters and clatters, Words I View – if you were not there, you really missed out on something. Devoid of any "cultural" touches, Interface chose purpose over popularity. A difficult choice, but one that must be appreciated nonetheless. It seems strange why Interface does not receive much attention from BITSians.



Will You Be My Valentine?

I have no problem with all those people who swear by St. Valentine until they disturb my afternoon siesta. And when you have enough of them in your wing, you have a hell lot of trouble. Then there were these lovely ladies who decided to help out these love bugged people by offering green, violet, magenta and other roses. Jokes apart, this effort at collecting money for charitable causes must be applauded.

Little Hearts

Our MB visitors room houses a lot of emotions. While the loner from Shankar waits for his damsel, a couple seeks retreat in a corner of this haven. A good place for a hearty chat session or an election campaign, the grapevine says that our Editor used this multi-purpose single room to sort snaps for CF.

Between Heaven And Earth

BITS, Pilani- a home away from home, a place that has enthralled and enchanted us all and maybe has made us fall in love with itself.

When a student first steps on to this platform, he or she feels lost, alone and maybe afraid. Those furtive eyes search for someone friendly, someone dependable. It is almost at this time that the associations make their entry into our lives as choms, ghaties, gults, mallus, bongos, illads... Maybe as we become familiar with the surroundings or when we consider departments and clubs to be THE place to be in, our love for the associations tend to decrease. We at CF wanted to have an article that would be a tribute to the regional associations. We are sorry to say that only **seven** associations came forward with their write-ups. The team after much debate decided to drop this novel idea, hoping that the office bearers would be more responsible in the future. The decision was theirs; we just know that we tried our best.

Listen To The Rhythm Of The Falling Rain

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon in Sky. Bright and sunny with white wisps of clouds floating about in the vast blue expanse. As the sunlight danced through the trees - light, dark, light, dark - in ephemeral shadows, I sat and watched and waited. I knew it would come.

The fair in Sky was doing good business. People wandered from stall to stall, admiring the goods but not the prices. One shopkeeper was trying to convince a young lady that the kurta she was pointing towards was indeed hand woven. The latter seemed unconvinced. She held it up to inspect it more thoroughly. Maroon was his favourite colour. A faraway look came into her eyes as she tried to imagine him in it.

Picture perfect. The assembling mass of grey, as if on cue, caught everyone by surprise. The shower began, first a few uncertain drops and then a firm drizzle. She put the thought of haggling out of her mind. Paying up, she ran to take shelter, carefully shielding the kurta. The shopkeepers quickly packed up their wares and scurried away. I heard each drop falling and watched Sky become mine once again. **She heard the dry leaves crackling under his approaching step.** The wet grass looked greener than ever. **He gently tapped her head with his pen.** I drew in my breath sharply...**she stiffened...** and felt an acute sensation ... **“Happy Birthday”, he whispered-** Pleasure? Pain? – **She felt that she was on top of the world; he had remembered-** the scent of the first rain.

Men In Blue

BITS stood united in gussing those all-important classes as India fought it out at the World Cup. The night before the match against Pakistan, I counted almost seventeen prayer services under way at different Bhawans. After the Sri Lanka match, some people were seen hugging each other and crying in C'not.

This is the only time when the common room TV remains common, or else either the **SUN** shines or **GEMINI** has its day. People who lament one more night of missing the **Zee-MGM** show on Saturday 21:00 hours are found sitting under Patel Statue and discussing the birds and bees of life.



The Quest For Knowledge

The students had been worried for a long time about the deteriorating quality of APOGEE. Luckily the council agreed to the viewpoint and this year saw major changes in the way of the functioning of the assocs. An Inaug without cultural, new competitions and a whole lot of innovative projects made their presence felt in this year's APOGEE. Departments kept on working with no refreshment coupons and bereft of even 'a small space to rest'. Kudos to them.

Till Death Do Us Part

Badri Narayanan, Karthikeyan D, Rahul Ramesh Samaji, Vikram Parshuram More and Annapurna Ch., friends, batchmates and more. Fate made us part our ways much before we wanted to. They will be missed.

"Pain sears the hearts of their peers
Helpless against His playful whims."

Life Is Beautiful

One fine day, the Council received a letter from a fellow BITSian who had dropped two semesters because of Spinal TB. She had to undergo an operation urgently, the expenses of which her family could not afford.

The Council felt that the Students

could help her and undertook the task of collecting contributions from BITSians. The response was overwhelming and our friend was successfully operated on and she has been able to register this semester. We would like to thank the Council for such a wonderful gesture and the selfless generosity of students that resulted in a collection of nearly Rs.2.5 lakhs. All is not lost for humanity.

The Show Must Go On

There is this favourite spot of mine from where I love to see the sunset. Today as I was formatting the last few pages of CF, a strange paradox came into my mind. Is sunset the beginning or the end? Whether I have done the correct thing by sticking to my ideals and my principles, I do not know; but be rest assured that my sole aim was to, "prove man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit- for gallantry in defeat- for courage, compassion and love."



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