



IIT Kanpur

IITKONNECT NEWSLETTER

DEAN OF RESOURCES & ALUMNI OFFICE



Volume 7, Issue 2, August 2026



DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Alumni & Friends,

Warm greetings from the Office of Resources and Alumni, IIT Kanpur! It is a pleasure to share with you the August 2026 edition of our newsletter, which reflects the many ways in which the IIT Kanpur community continues to grow, contribute, and create impact.



The past few months have been particularly meaningful as we welcomed the new batch of students and celebrated the graduating Class of 2026, while also celebrating incredible recognitions for our alumni around the world and the continued generosity that keeps this Institute moving forward.

A few moments stood out for us. Mr. Rakesh Gangwal's additional ₹300 crore commitment to the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology is nothing short of transformative, and we're deeply grateful for the trust he continues to place in this Institute. We were equally proud to see alumni like Mr. N. R. Narayana Murthy and Prof. Deepak Dhar earn some of the world's most prestigious honours this quarter — a reminder of just how far an IIT Kanpur education travels.

You'll find these stories and many more inside — from new faculty chairs and fellowships recipients to campus news, faculty achievements, and a heartfelt tribute to Prof. Kripa Shanker, whom we lost this quarter.

As always, this newsletter exists because of you — your stories, your support, and your continued connection to this place. We'd love to hear from you too, so if there's something you'd like to share or see featured, don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for staying connected with your alma mater.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amey Karkare'.

Prof. Amey Karkare
Dean of Resources and Alumni
IIT Kanpur

Alumni in Focus



Mr. N. R. Narayana Murthy
(MT/EE/1969)

was conferred with an Honorary Degree by the University of York in recognition of his exceptional contributions to business, entrepreneurship, and society.



Prof. Viney Aneja
(BT/CHE/1971)

received the Global Environment and Social Association (GESA) 2025 Senior Scientist Award and Gold Medal.



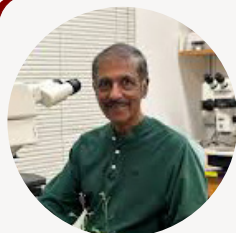
Dr. Anil K. Rajvanshi
(BT/MT/ME/1972/1974)

was featured by University of Florida.



Prof. Deepak Dhar
(MSc2/PHY/1973)

was awarded the 2026 Dirac Medal by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP).



Prof. Venkatesan Sundaresan
(MSc2/PHY/1973)

received the Wolf Prize in Agriculture.



Prof. Ashok Jhunjhunwala
(BT/EE/1975)

launched his authorised biography, *Roots & Wings: Building India's Deep Tech Ecosystem*.



Prof. Prakash Panangaden
(MSc/PHY/1975)

was elected Fellow of The European Association for Theoretical Computer Science (EATCS), 2026.



Prof. Ashoke Sen
(MSc2/PHY/1978)

received Honorary Membership of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAA&S).



Prof. Jitendra Malik
(BT/EE/1980)

was elected Fellow of The Royal Society, UK.



Prof. Sanjiva Lele
(BT/ME/1980)

was elected Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA).



Prof. Jainendra K. Jain

(MSc2/PHY/1981)

received the 2026 Penn State Honorary Alumni Award & the 2025 Wolf Prize in Physics.



Dr. K. Balasubramanian

(BT/MME/1982)

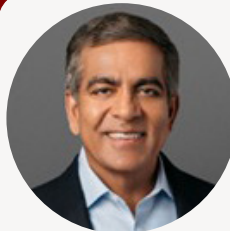
was conferred the Padma Shri 2026 by the President of India.



Dr. Sanjay Wahal

(BT/CHE/1984)

published two books titled *A Quantum Walk Through Sustainability: Nonlinear Thinking for a Nonlinear World* and *The eCarbon Card Blueprint: Digital Solutions for Carbon Accountability*.



Dr. Deepak Narula

(BT/EE/1985)

was invited to address Columbia Business School Graduation Ceremony.



Prof. Rajat Moona

(BT/EE/1985)

received the IIT Jodhpur Award for Nation Building for IITians in recognition of his outstanding contributions to academic research, technological innovation, and nation-building.



Prof. Saby Mitra

(BT/ME/1985)

was appointed John H. Harland Dean of Goizueta Business School, Emory University.



Prof. Rishikesh T. Krishnan

(MSc5/PHY/1986)

was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Ashoka University.



Prof. Manindra Agrawal

(BT/PHD/CSE/1986/1991)

was elected Fellow of The Royal Society, UK.



Mr. Manoj Kumar Agarwal

(BT/ME/1987)

was appointed Chief Secretary of West Bengal, India.



Prof. Ratnesh Kumar

(BT/EE/1987)

received the Passport to Prosperity Award.



Prof. Abhay Karandikar
(MT/PhD/EE/1988/1995)
joined NITI Aayog as a Full-Time Member.



Mr. Sunil Bajpai
(BT/CE/1988)
was appointed Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Tamil Nadu & Puducherry.



Mr. Sunil Paliwal
(BT/CSE/1990)
was appointed as Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.



Mr. Kamlesh Kumar Pant
(BT/ME/1990)
was appointed as the Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh.



Mr. Chanchal Kumar
(BT/MT/CSE/1990/1993)
was appointed Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.



Mr. Vinay Gulati
(BT/CSE/1990)
was honoured with the Global Excellence in Technology Leadership & Business Transformation Award at the NRI Achievers Awards 2026.



Mr. Abhishek Singh
(BT/ME/1992)
was appointed Director General of the National Testing Agency.



Prof. Anantharam Raghuram
(BT/CSE/1992)
received the 2026 Simons Fellowship in Mathematics.



Mr. Somnath Ghosh
(MSc/CHM/1994)
was appointed High Commissioner of India to Malaysia.



Prof. Siddhartha Sikdar
(BT/EE/1997)
was elected Member to the Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (VASEM).



Mr. Mohit Singh
(BT/CHE/1997)

was appointed Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Archrock.



Mr. Neelkanth Mishra
(BT/CSE/1997)

was appointed as Executive Director at the World Bank Headquarters, Washington DC, USA.



Mr. Amit Kumar
(BT/ME/2001)

was appointed Managing Director and Chief Business Officer at Moglix.



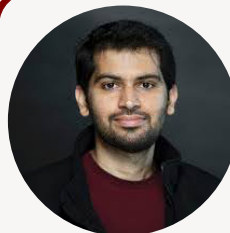
Dr. Sandip Patil
(PhD/CHE/2012)

E-Spin Nanotech Pvt. Ltd., founded by Dr. Sandip Patil ranked among Asia's Top 10 Nanotechnology Companies in 2026.



Dr. Mrityunjay Kothari
(BT/ME/2013)

received the NSF Career Award by the US National Science Foundation.



Prof. Deepak Pathak
(BT/CSE/2014)

received the 2026 Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence (PAMI) Young Researcher Award.



Dr. Bahadur Singh
(PhD/PHY/2015)

received Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam HPC & AI Award 2026 in recognition of his contributions to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and High-Performance Computing (HPC).



Prof. Varun Harbola
(BS/PHY/2015)

received iWOE Prize for Excellence in Research in Oxide Electronics.



Prof. Ajay Bhandari
(MT-PhD Dual/ME/2020)

received the INAE Young Engineer Award 2026.



Mr. Arjun Gupta
(BS-MS/ECO/2020)

was appointed as Joint Commissioner (Industries), Government of Delhi.

Celebrating Faculty Excellence



Prof. Abhishek

(Department of Aerospace Engineering, IIT Kanpur)

was awarded the NASI Reliance Innovation Fellowship (NASI-RIF) 2026 by the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI)

Prof. Amit Agarwal

(Department of Physics, IIT Kanpur)

received the J. C. Bose Grant from the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) and joined the Editorial Board of 2D Materials (IOP Publishing)



Dr. Anantharaj Sengeni

(Department of Chemistry, IIT Kanpur)

received the Associate Fellowship 2026 from the Electrochemical Society of India (ECI)

Prof. Arun Shukla

(Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT Kanpur)

received the International Award from the Biochemical Society, UK



Prof. Ashok Kumar

(Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT Kanpur)

was named an External Member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters

Prof. Dootika Vats

(Department of Mathematics and Statistics, IIT Kanpur)

was elected as a Young Associate of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA)



Dr. Koteswar Rao Jerripothula

(Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Kanpur)

received the Young Engineer Award 2026 from the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE)



Dr. Manabendra Chandra

(Department of Chemistry, IIT Kanpur)

received the Bronze Medal 2026 from the Chemical Research Society of India (CRSI)

Dr. Manjesh K. Singh

(Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT Kanpur)

received the NASI Young Scientist Award 2026 from the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI)



Prof. Rajiv Sinha

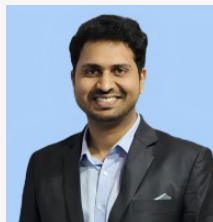
(Department of Earth Sciences, IIT Kanpur)

received the J. C. Bose Grant (2026) by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

Dr. Ritika Gautam Singh

(Department of Chemistry, IIT Kanpur)

received the Darshan Ranganathan Memorial Lecture Award 2027 from the Chemical Research Society of India (CRSI)



Dr. Shubham Sahay

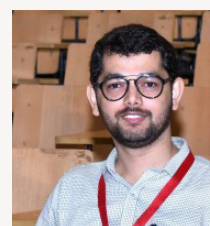
(Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Kanpur)

received the NASI Young Scientist Award 2026 from the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI)

Dr. Vishal Govind Rao

(Department of Chemistry, IIT Kanpur)

received the NASI Young Scientist Award 2026 from the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI)



Prof. Yogesh Singh Chauhan

(Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Kanpur)

received the J. C. Bose Grant from the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

Milestones, Initiatives & Collaborations

IIT Kanpur, in partnership with the Consulate General of India, New York, hosted an event on "**Reimagining Medicine: India's New Model for Innovation in the AI Age.**" The programme highlighted the vision of the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology (GSMST) and brought together alumni and the Indian diaspora to discuss AI-driven healthcare, innovation, and global collaboration.



IIT Kanpur signed an **MoU with Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL)** to foster collaboration in defence technologies through joint R&D, consultancy, and technology development. The MoU was signed by Sh. Kishore Gurdasani, Director (Operations), AWEIL, and Prof. Raja Angamuthu, Associate Dean of R&D, IIT Kanpur.

IIT Kanpur and BSNL signed an MoU to collaborate on research, innovation, and commercialization of next-generation telecom and digital technologies. The partnership will focus on areas including 4G/5G, Direct-to-Mobile (D2M) technology, AI/ML, cybersecurity, cloud and edge computing, and other emerging technologies to support India's digital transformation.





A **SATHEE KENDRA** was launched in Malanjkhanda, Madhya Pradesh, under the MoU between IIT Kanpur and HCL to expand access to quality education. The centre will provide technology-enabled learning and academic support, helping students prepare for competitive examinations and strengthen their academic foundations.

IIT Kanpur emerged as the Overall Champion at the **Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0**, winning the Gold Medal and securing the top position among all participating IITs. The institute delivered an outstanding performance across multiple cultural events, bringing home an impressive medal tally and making IIT Kanpur proud on the national stage.



IIT Kanpur announced the recipients of the **Pioneering Research and Innovation Award**, instituted by the Pioneer Batch (Class of 1965) to recognise outstanding contributions to research and innovation by faculty and students. This year, **Prof. Raghvendra Chaudhary** from the Department of Electrical Engineering was recognised for pioneering work in metamaterial-enabled antenna systems for stealth UAV platforms, with ongoing integration testing in collaboration with DRDO.

Mr. Piyush Kumar, a student in the Department of Biological Sciences and Bio-engineering (BSBE), was recognised for developing Vitalvanguard, a non-invasive early cancer diagnostic solution leveraging NanoGPS and advanced AI/ML-enabled biosensing technologies.





Prof. Anil K. Lalwani was appointed as the inaugural Dean of the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology (GSMST), IIT Kanpur. A distinguished physician-scientist, he will lead the school's vision of advancing interdisciplinary medical education, research, and innovation.

Prof. Jayandharan G. Rao of the Department of Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT Kanpur, has taken over as the Dean of Research and Development, IIT Kanpur, succeeding Prof. Tarun Gupta, who previously held the position.



Prof. Raghunath Tewari of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Kanpur, has taken over as the Dean of Digital Infrastructure and Automation, IIT Kanpur succeeding Prof. Nisanth N. Nair, who previously held the position.



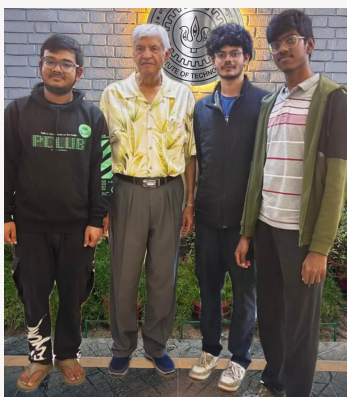
Department of Statistics and Data Science

IIT Kanpur has established a new Department of Statistics and Data Science (DSDS) in June 2026, marking an important milestone in strengthening the Statistical Sciences as a foundational discipline at the Institute. The Department builds on IIT Kanpur's longstanding legacy in probability and statistics and will integrate mathematical rigor, statistical methodology, and computational tools to address data-centric challenges across scientific, technological, industrial, and societal domains.

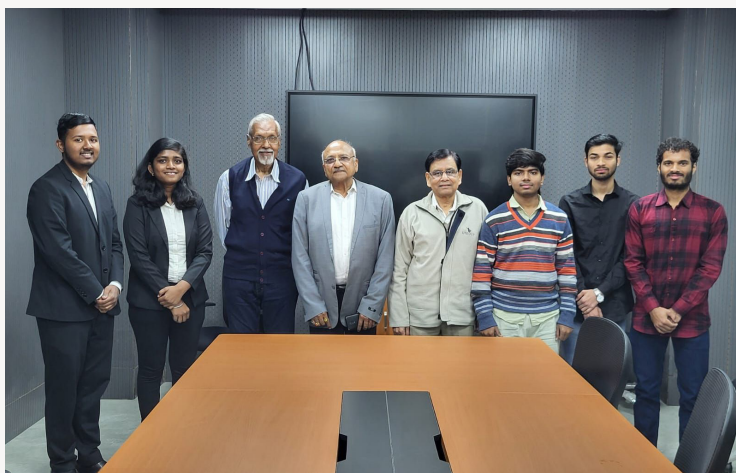
Bachelor's Programme in Cybersecurity

IIT Kanpur has launched the Bachelor's in Cybersecurity (B.Cyber.), a new undergraduate programme offered under the Wadhvani School of AI and Intelligent Systems (WSAIS) from the academic year 2026–27. The programme combines foundational training in computing, data engineering, operating systems, networks, cryptography, and cybersecurity with extensive hands-on laboratory experience in areas such as malware analysis, digital forensics, cloud security, and vulnerability assessment.

A distinctive feature of the four-year programme is its two-year internship component, providing students with practical experience in addressing real-world cybersecurity challenges. The programme aims to prepare students for careers and advanced study in the rapidly evolving field of cybersecurity.



Donor Mr. Ravindra Kumar Sakhuja (BT/ME/1966) met with recipients of the Ravi and Rohini Sakhuja Merit-cum-Means Scholarships. The interaction provided an opportunity to recognise this year's scholarship recipients and for the donor to connect with the students benefiting from his support. The meeting highlighted the meaningful impact of alumni support in enabling students to pursue their education and achieve their goals.



Members of the Class of 1973 met with recipients of the Class of 1973 Merit-cum-Means Scholarship, engaging with students and learning about their experiences at IIT Kanpur. The interaction offered an opportunity for the alumni to witness the impact of their support and reaffirmed the batch's continued commitment to supporting and empowering future generations of students at the Institute.



Through IITKonverge, IIT Kanpur brought together the Groww Foundation and scholarship recipients, highlighting the impact of the Groww Scholar Program. The initiative supported 70 students at the institute, reinforcing the importance of collaborative efforts in empowering students.

Abhinandan 2026

The Alumni Association, IIT Kanpur, in collaboration with the Office of Resources & Alumni and the Outreach Cell, hosted Abhinandan 2026 to bid farewell to the graduating Class of 2026 and welcome them into the IIT Kanpur alumni community.

The event was graced by Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur; Prof. Braj Bhushan, Deputy Director, IIT Kanpur; Prof. Amey Karkare, Dean of

Resources & Alumni and Secretary, AAIITK; Mr. Tarun Bhargava, Vice-President, AAIITK; Prof. Ketan Rajawat, Treasurer, AAIITK; Ms. Vijaya Mishra, Board Member, AAIITK; and Mr. Virendra Kumar, Board Member, AAIITK.

The event brought students, faculty, alumni, and guests together to celebrate the graduating batch and reflect on their journey at IIT Kanpur. The event concluded with best wishes to the Class of 2026 as they begin the next chapter of their personal and professional journeys and continue their lifelong connection with IIT Kanpur.



Y '26 Orientation



The Office of Resources and Alumni (DoRA), in collaboration with the Senate Scholarships and Prizes Committee (SSPC), organized an Orientation on Scholarships, Awards, and Alumni Engagement for the incoming Y '26 batch at IIT Kanpur.

The session introduced students to the various scholarships, awards, donor-supported initiatives, and alumni engagement opportunities available to them, while highlighting the spirit behind these initiatives - generations of IIT Kanpur alumni contributing to create opportunities for students to pursue excellence and realize their potential.

As the Y '26 batch began its journey at IIT Kanpur, the orientation reflected the Institute's enduring legacy of alumni giving back and empowering future generations of students.

The Impact of Alumni Support: Ms. Laxmi Agarwal's Journey to Success



This is the inspiring story of Ms. Laxmi Agarwal, a young girl from West Bengal whose journey reflects courage, determination, and an unwavering belief in her dreams.

Laxmi has always been a brilliant and enthusiastic student, excelling not only in academics but also in extracurricular activities such as singing and dancing. She enjoyed life to the fullest, just like any other young person, with dreams and aspirations for her future.

However, her life took an unexpected turn in 2021, Ms. Laxmi Agarwal met with an accident that severely affected her lower limbs. The accident changed many aspects of her life, and she has since been a wheelchair user. However, it could not diminish her determination to pursue her dreams. With remarkable resilience and academic excellence, she continued her educational journey and aspired to build a meaningful career.

In 2023, Laxmi was admitted to the M.Sc. in Statistics programme at IIT Kanpur. Her transition to a new campus was exciting, but the initial days were not without challenges. During the orientation week, she encountered difficulties in accessing some of the campus facilities and navigating the campus independently.

It was during this time that she came to know about the Cell for Differently Abled Persons (CDAP), an initiative at IIT Kanpur dedicated to supporting Students with Disabilities (SwDs) and promoting an inclusive and accessible campus environment. Through CDAP, Laxmi learned about the various support systems and accessible resources available to students with disabilities, including mobility services and accessible accommodation.

Recognizing Laxmi's mobility challenges, CDAP and the Dean of Resources & Alumni (DoRA) facilitated the arrangement of an accessible electric wheelchair with the generous support of IIT Kanpur alumnus **Mr. Ranodeb Roy**. This support has given Laxmi greater independence and made it easier for her to navigate campus and pursue her academic commitments.

With improved mobility support, Laxmi was able to focus more effectively on her studies. During her postgraduate programme, she began preparing for the UPSC Indian Statistical Service Examination in December 2024 and appeared for the examination in June 2025.

Laxmi shares:

"Those six months were one of the most challenging phases of my journey. I was fortunate to have the guidance of my professors at IIT Kanpur, along with the study material and academic resources that helped me strengthen my preparation and build confidence for the examination."

Her perseverance and dedication paid off. Laxmi successfully cleared the examination on her first attempt with AIR-33 and joined the Indian Statistical Service.

She is currently undergoing one year of professional training, which commenced on 6 April 2026. Her training goes beyond statistical concepts. She is learning how statistical evidence contributes to data-driven policymaking, monitoring and evaluation, and the implementation of government schemes. Laxmi’s journey is a powerful example of how determination, academic support, accessible infrastructure, and an inclusive institutional environment can enable persons with disabilities to pursue their aspirations independently. Her story demonstrates that accessibility is not merely about providing facilities-it is about creating opportunities for individuals to participate, excel, and realize their full potential.

From Support to Success: Team Symmetry Seekers at PLANCKS 2026

Four Master's students from the Department of Physics, IIT Kanpur, represented India at **PLANCKS 2026**, an international physics competition held at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands, from 21–25 May 2026.

The team earned its place at the international finals after securing second position at the Indian Young Physicists' League (IYPL), competing against nearly 50 teams from leading institutions across India. At the international competition, Team Symmetry Seekers secured the 27th position among 57 teams representing 27 countries.

Their participation was enabled through the support extended by the Office of Dean of Resources and Alumni (DoRA), IIT Kanpur. Beyond the competition, the students gained exposure to interdisciplinary physics, contemporary research, and the global scientific community. Academic visits to the University of Twente and the MESA+ Institute also provided insights into advanced research facilities, integrated photonics, and technological innovation. The team comprised Piyush Bhardwaj, Sidharth Thakur, Mahesh, and Abhi Raj.





IIT Kanpur celebrated its **59th Convocation**, marking the graduation of 3,104 students across undergraduate, postgraduate, and eMasters programmes. The ceremony brought together the graduating Class of 2026 to celebrate their years of dedication, learning, and academic achievement.

Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairperson, IN-SPACe, Department of Space, Government of India, Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Kanpur, and Padma Shri awardee, attended the ceremony as the Chief Guest. The Convocation was presided over by Shri Jayant Patil, Officiating Chairperson, Board of Governors, and Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur.

Academic excellence was recognised through the presentation of the President's Gold Medal, Director's Gold Medals, and other Institute awards. Several students were also honoured with donor-established medals, prizes, and awards for their outstanding academic achievements and all-round excellence.



The President's Gold Medal was awarded to **Saagar K V** from the Department of Computer Science & Engineering.

The Director's Gold Medals were awarded to **Aditya V** from the Department of Statistics and Data Science and **Ritwik Shankar** from the Department of Aerospace Engineering.

Addressing the graduating students, Dr. Goenka encouraged them to embrace lifelong learning, make bold decisions, and contribute towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 through innovation, leadership, and service to society.

The Convocation marked the culmination of years of dedication and learning while celebrating the achievements of the graduating Class of 2026.

Welcoming the New Occupants of Faculty Chairs and Fellowships Established Through the Generosity of Our Donors



Prof. Ashwani K. Thakur

Department of Biological sciences
and Bioengineering

Arun Kumar Chair

*Established by the family and friends of
Late Mr. Arun Kumar (BT/EE/1969).*



Prof. Raj Ganesh S Pala

Department of Chemical
Engineering

Prof. C V Seshadri Chair

*Established by the friends, relatives,
and well-wishers of Late Prof. C. V.
Seshadri.*



Prof. Saikat Chakrabarti

Department of Electrical
Engineering

Champa Devi Gangwal Chair

*Established by Mr. Rakesh Gangwal
(BT/ME/1975) in honour of his mother.*



Prof. Shobit Omar

Department of Materials Science
and Engineering

**Indian Oil Golden Jubilee
Professorial Chair**

*Established by the Indian Oil Corpora-
tion Limited.*



Prof. Jayandharan G Rao

Department of Biological Sciences
and Bioengineering

**KENT Entrepreneurship
and Innovation Chair**

*Established by Mr. Mahesh Gupta (BT/
ME/1975).*



Prof. Ankush Sharma

Department of Electrical
Engineering

**Ministry of Skill Development
and Entrepreneurship Chair**

*Established by the Ministry of Labour
and Employment.*



Prof. Basker Sundararaju

Department of Chemistry

N C Nigam Chair

*Established by the family and friends of
Late Prof. N. C. Nigam.*



Prof. Adrish Banerjee

Department of Electrical
Engineering

**Next Generation Broad-
casting Chair**

*Established by the ONE Media 3.0. LLC
Broadcast Group, Inc.*



Prof. Mainak Chaudhuri
Department of Computer Science
and Engineering

**Poonam & Prabhu Goel
Chair**

*Established by Mrs. Poonam and Dr.
Prabhakar Goel (BT/EE/1970).*



Prof. Raju Kumar Gupta
Department of Chemical
Engineering

Raj and Neera Singh Chair

*Established by Dr. Rajendra Singh (BT/
EE/1975) and Dr. Neera Singh (BT/
CHE/1981).*



Prof. Manabendra Chandra
Department of Chemistry

Ranjit Singh Chair

*Established by Dr. Ranjit Singh
Foundation.*



Prof. Bushra Ateeq
Department of Biological Sciences
and Bioengineering

**Sajani Kumar Roy
Memorial Chair**

*Established by Mr. Ranodeb Roy (BT/
CSE/1990).*



Prof. Ketan Rajawat
Department of Electrical
Engineering

Sanjay Mittal Chair

*Established by Mr. Sanjay Mittal (BT/
EE/1975) and his wife, Mrs. Priti
Mittal.*



Prof. Surender Baswana
Department of Computer Science
and Engineering

**Tapas Mishra Memorial
Chair**

*Established by the IIT Kanpur alumni of
the Class of 1997.*



Prof. Santanu Misra
Department of Earth Sciences

USV Chair

*Established by Mr. Prashant Tewari
(BT/ME/1979) and Mrs. Leena Gandhi
Tewari.*



Prof. Gururaj Mirle
Department of Electrical
Engineering
**Excellence in Electrical
Engineering Young Faculty
Fellowship**

*Established by Dr. Rajeeva Lahri
(MSc2/PHY/1974, MT/MSE/1976).*



Prof. Avinash Lahgere

Department of Electrical
Engineering

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.



Prof. Priyanka V Bagade

Department of Computer Science
and Engineering

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.



Prof. Ritika Gautam

Department of Chemistry

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.



Prof. Sudeep Kumar Ghosh

Department of Physics

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.



Dr. Sudarshan Narayanan

Department of Sustainable Energy
Engineering

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.



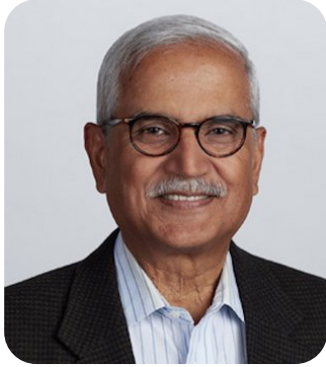
Prof. Umesh Madanan

Department of Mechanical
Engineering

P. K. Kelkar Fellowship

Established by IIT Kanpur.

Giving Back



Mr. Rakesh Gangwal (BT/ME/1975), Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Kanpur, has committed an additional ₹300 crore towards the development of the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology. This takes his cumulative contribution to the School to ₹400 crore, including his ₹100 crore contribution in 2022.

As part of this commitment, Mr. Gangwal will also match contributions of up to ₹300 crore from other donors, inviting alumni and well-wishers to support this transformative vision for healthcare. The School's development includes a 500-bed super-speciality hospital and a proposed 200-bed cancer care research centre on the IIT Kanpur campus.

Mr. Lokvir Kapoor (BT/ME/1987) has made a generous contribution towards key campus infrastructure projects at IIT Kanpur, including the Student Activity Centre 2 (SAC 2) and the Central Dining Facility. His support will contribute to the development of modern campus facilities and strengthen the Institute's infrastructure.



Dr. Naresh Chand Gupta (BT/CSE/1988) and Mrs. Nidhi Gupta made a generous contribution towards the construction of a residential tower in the Hall of Residence 15. Their contribution will support the creation of a modern, sustainable, and student-centric living space for nearly 1,000 students.

Mr. Ramakrishna Prasad Chintamaneni (BT/CHE/1990) has made a generous contribution to support the modernization of Lecture Hall 18 into a technology-enabled learning space, along with scholarships for meritorious undergraduate students with financial need. This support will enhance the learning environment and create greater opportunities for students at IIT Kanpur.



Mrs. Gita Mehra has established the Arun Mehra Scholarship Program in memory of her late husband, Mr. Arun Mehra (BT/EE/1966). The scholarship is exclusively for first-year undergraduate students of the Department of Electrical Engineering at IIT Kanpur, helping ease their financial burden and enabling them to focus on academics and self-development.

Mr. Anoop Pant and **Mrs. Ritu Pant** have established the Ishan Pant Memorial Scholarship for Excellence at IIT Kanpur in memory of their late son, Mr. Ishan Pant (BT/BSBE/2017). The scholarship will support one undergraduate student every year for four consecutive years, carrying forward Ishan's legacy through education and opportunity.



Mr. Sudhir Kumar Mathur (BT/ME/1973) has established the Sudhir Kumar Mathur Class of 1973 Travel Grant to support deserving Mechanical Engineering students in participating in national and international academic and research forums, providing them with opportunities to broaden their academic and professional exposure.

Mr. Palash Soni (BT–MT(Dual)/EE/2013), in memory of his late father, has established the Govind Das Soni Scholarship, which will be awarded annually to a meritorious first-year undergraduate student. The scholarship will support promising students in pursuing their academic journeys with greater confidence and purpose.



Mr. Prakhar Bansal (BT/CHE/1994) in honour of his brother, Dr. Rajiv Kumar Bansal (Senior Consultant & Head of Pediatrics at SDM Hospital, Jaipur), has supported the establishment of the Dr. Rajiv Kumar Bansal EWS Bay at the General Ward of the Gangwal School of Medical Sciences & Technology (GSMST), IIT Kanpur, contributing to the Institute's efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and support accessible medical care.

Mr. Deepak Kumar (BT/CSE/1996), Co-founder and Chairman of Kreatio Software and Co-founder and Chief Evangelist of Webnish, has extended his support towards the Class of 1996 Legacy Project at IIT Kanpur, contributing to the collective legacy of his graduating batch.



Mr. Rahul Mehrotra (BT/EE/1996), an experienced oil and gas industry professional with over three decades of international experience, has extended his support towards the Class of 1996 Legacy Project at IIT Kanpur.

Prof. Y. Sudhakar (BT/CHE/1980) established the Smt. Y. V. Sailaja Lakshmi Award in memory of his wife to honour the graduating female student with the highest CPI in the Departments of Mathematics and Scientific Computing or Physics, encouraging excellence in science.



The Ashok and Madhu Saxena Research Excellence Fund has been established through the generous support of **Prof. Ashok Saxena** (BT/ME/1970) and Mrs. Madhu Saxena to nurture and motivate excellence in research among PhD scholars at IIT Kanpur.

The Khullar Family Scholarship Program has been established through the support of **Mr. Vikram Khullar** (BT/EE/1990) to provide financial assistance to first-year undergraduate students from any department at IIT Kanpur. The scholarship aims to ease students' financial burden, enabling them to focus on their academics and self-development while providing a greater sense of security as they navigate their academic and career journeys.

Feature Article

A conversation with Mr. Rajnish Kumar - on lessons, near-failures, and building in the age of AI.



Mr. Rajnish Kumar

BT | CSE | 2001

Co-founder & Group Co-CEO, ixigo

Distinguished Alumni Award by IIT Kanpur, 2023

From an engineering graduate to the co-founder of one of India's leading travel brands, Mr. Rajnish Kumar has spent over two decades building ixigo around a simple belief: technology can make travel simpler and more accessible. What began as an effort to solve everyday travel problems has grown into a platform that millions of travellers rely on for their travel needs every day.

Mr. Rajnish began his career at Amadeus SAS in France - first as a Software Engineer, later heading its technical function - before returning to India and co-founding ixigo in 2007.

Under his leadership, ixigo has grown from an early-stage company into India's leading AI-based travel platform, serving over 57 crore Annual Active Users in FY26. He has led the company's product, technology, growth and AI strategy across this journey, while building the teams and technology behind its evolution. He was honoured with the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award by IIT Kanpur and recognised in the 'Comeback Kid' category at the Economic Times Start-up Awards 2021. He is also an active mentor and investor in India's start-up ecosystem and the author of *Made in Fire*, a book on entrepreneurship, resilience and building enduring companies.

After 25 years since his graduation, Mr. Rajnish Kumar returned to the IIT Kanpur campus as the Guest of Honour at the CSE Department Convocation 2026. During his visit, DoRA media team had the opportunity to speak with him about his journey from being a student at IIT Kanpur to co-founding ixigo.

In the conversation, he reflected on the challenges that shaped his journey as an entrepreneur, including the unprecedented crisis during the pandemic when ixigo saw its numbers drop to zero overnight. He spoke about the difficult decisions that helped the company navigate the crisis, the experiences that shaped its culture, and the lessons he learned along the way.

He also spoke about his book *Made in Fire*, drawing on nearly two decades of building ixigo to share lessons on entrepreneurship, resilience and building enduring companies, alongside his thoughts on what today's graduates need to keep in mind as technology and AI continue to reshape the world.

In his own words, he reflects on the journey.

"I had no idea what those years ahead would hold"

It feels surreal to be back here. I feel wonderful to be back after 25 years. Twenty-five years ago, when I walked out of this place, I had absolutely no idea what would happen in the years ahead. I had no idea I would go on to start a company - and, most importantly, that I would do it for the next two decades. I had no idea I would write a book, and I had no idea I would be back here as the Guest of Honour. So, I'm really, really excited to be back. Most of the meaningful things that happened in my life happened once I left IIT - but almost all of them were enabled right here.

How the definition of success has changed

Back in the day, success for most of us was either getting into the most coveted university in the US, or landing a well-paying job and building a great career out of it. I think what's changed now is that the definition of success is more about building something meaningful - creating an impact in the lives of millions of people. And I think that's what makes this moment so exciting.

The biggest lesson IIT taught him - beyond computer science

I look back at how difficult it was to crack the JEE. No matter how much you prepared, the questions were always different, never seen before - you had to learn how to solve a problem you'd never solved before. I think the most important thing I learned at IIT was **learning how to learn**. That lesson became the most important one in my life, because building a company means navigating constant uncertainty. You have to keep learning, keep reinventing yourself. That's the only real way to survive.

The second thing IIT taught me: I came from a school where I was probably the smartest person in the room for over a decade. When I arrived here, almost everybody around me was smarter than me. That taught me that you have to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you. When we started hiring at ixigo, the mantra became: **hire people who are smarter than yourself**. In the end, the success of a company doesn't depend on how smart the founders are - it depends on how great a team they're able to assemble.

Why he chose entrepreneurship - and how ixigo was born

When we started, we were solving for travel. We realized travel was broken, and that technology could solve a lot of those problems. That obsession with solving consumer problems is what made me start out on this path. If you're genuinely obsessed with solving consumer problems, at some point you'll find yourself on the same road to entrepreneurship.

The toughest moments - and what kept ixigo going

The easy answer is resilience - that's the reason we survived. But you're only resilient because you never give up. There were times we were probably one day away from shutting down, but we kept fighting, found a way out, and lived to fight another day.

The other thing that mattered was ingenuity. When you're in a tough spot with your back against the wall, instinct says there are only two outcomes - fight or flight. For us, it was always about finding ingenious ways to invent something and get out of that situation, so we'd come out stronger on the other side.

COVID was unprecedented. Just when we thought we'd seen it all, COVID happened. I remember the moment our dashboards showed zero - zero bookings, zero revenue, everything at a standstill. My heart rate went up to 120 while I was talking to my co-founder Alok about what to do next. The only thing we were worried about wasn't

the spreadsheets or the revenue - it was our people, and our consumers.

So, the first decision we made was not to let go of anybody. It was hard - we only had a few months of runway left, and the only obvious way to survive was to cut people. We decided against it, because we saw it as a humanitarian crisis: if we let them go, they wouldn't find another job outside. So, we invented a mathematical formula for salary cuts, proportionate to what people earned. There was no cut at all for people at the bottom of the salary curve, and very deep cuts for people at the top - several of us in the leadership team went to zero salary.

The second thing we did was refund every single rupee to every customer who cancelled a ticket - even before we'd received the refund from our own partners, which was a real risk.

"We'd rather go down doing the right thing than compromise on what we could live with."

Resilience and ingenuity got us through - but the real reason you do any of that is because you have the will to survive, and that comes from something bigger: purpose. For us, it was the purpose of building something bigger than ourselves, of creating impact for people. That purpose is what made us fight, and what made us live to see the next day.

What makes a great founder?

Having done this for so long, and met so many people in the founder community - and even at IIT, where most of my classmates were brilliant - I've realised there isn't much correlation between raw intelligence and the ability to build something. Founders tend to have a few qualities that set them apart:

- *A higher appetite for risk.* Most people are naturally risk-averse; founders aren't.
- *Irrational optimism* - about their idea, and about their own future selves. If someone could show a founder the two decades of blood, sweat, and tears ahead of them, they'd probably never start. But founders don't see that - they only see a positive future.
- *Empathy.* Even before I started a company, I used to keep a list - I'd notice a problem, find a solution, write it down, and tell myself: someday I'll start a company to solve this. That list is still very long, though I've started crossing things off as they get built.
- *The ability to articulate a vision.* Founders are good at convincing people of what they're building - that's what excites people and motivates them to follow.

Mistakes young builders should avoid

I never wanted to write a book - I genuinely thought I'd never have the time, and that it was unnecessary. But someone convinced me otherwise, and the reason I finally did it is that building a company is an excruciatingly painful exercise. Looking back, I wrote the book for my younger self - if I'd had a manual back then, I probably wouldn't have gone through so much unnecessary pain.

That's not to say you shouldn't go through pain at all - everyone needs their own painful experiences to truly learn. Resilience is built through near-death experiences, and you can't simulate those in a lab. Judgment comes from making tough calls. Instinct is built through experience. But sometimes, you don't have to learn only from your own scars - you can learn from other people's scars too. That's exactly why I wrote *Made in Fire*.

A company shouldn't die during a crisis just because it lacked financial discipline - that's something you can learn easily, without living through it. You shouldn't lose your health chasing a milestone. You shouldn't poison your culture just because you didn't understand how important hiring is.

"This book won't remove every fire from your journey - but it should help you avoid the unnecessary ones."

We learned almost everything the hard way in our own journey - pretty much everything that could go wrong, did - and that pain is what inspired me to write something that might help hundreds of thousands of young entrepreneurs out there.

Building in the Age of AI

Right now, is an extraordinary moment to be passing out of IIT Kanpur, because this is the best time in history to be a builder. I don't think there has ever been a time when a small team, armed with AI, could create something meaningful enough to impact millions of people. This is probably the biggest opportunity in the history of humanity - I've never seen a time when trillion-dollar companies get built in a matter of years; the last time it took a company that long to reach a trillion dollars, it took several decades.

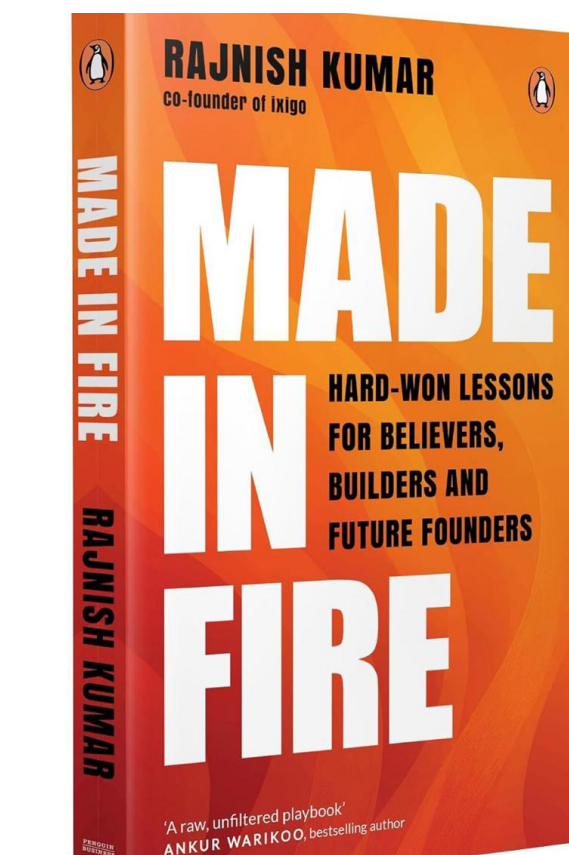
At ixigo, this is exactly the mindset we bring to how we build today - using AI not as a buzzword, but as a way for a small team to move at a scale that simply wasn't possible before. My suggestion to everyone graduating today would be: go out and build something, and create an impact.

"This is the time to build. Take the opportunity and run with it - it's almost like the dot-com boom all over again. Everything is up for grabs."

Advice for graduates - and for young builders everywhere

Years from now, nobody will remember your CPI, or which stream of engineering you graduated from. Everybody will remember what you built - the impact you created, how you treated people along the way.

So, stay curious, and go build something that matters. Students are graduating right now at an extraordinary moment - take it, and run with it.



In Memoriam



Prof. Kripa Shanker (MT/ME/1972)

August, 2026

We mourn the passing of Prof. Kripa Shanker, an esteemed alumnus and former faculty member of IIT Kanpur. Prof. Shanker made significant contributions to the Institute through his dedicated service as a faculty member in the Department of Industrial and Management Engineering (IME), as Deputy Director of IIT Kanpur, and as Secretary of the Alumni Association, IIT Kanpur. Beyond the Institute, he also served as Vice Chancellor of Uttar Pradesh Technical University (UPTU), Lucknow. His contributions to IIT Kanpur, academia, and the professional community will always be remembered with deep respect.



OAT IIT Kanpur

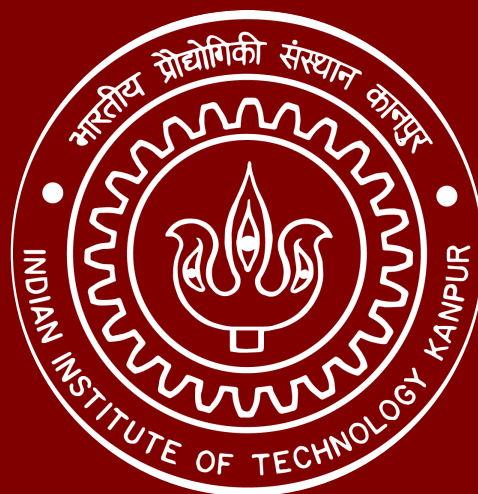
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