

the spark

ISSUE #17

AUGUST 2026

IIT KANPUR



The Evolution of the IITK Seal



A Conversation with Mr. Jeet Bindra

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KANPUR INDO-AMERICAN PROGRAM
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KANPUR

Letter MAY 20 1965

19 February 1965

FEB 26 1965
PROGRAM OFFICE:
KALYANPUR CAMPUS, KANPUR, INDIA

TELEPHONE: 3733
CABLE ADDRESS: CONSORTIUM

Dean B. Richard Teare, Jr.
Carnegie Institute of Technology
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
U.S.A.

Dear Dick:

I am sending a copy of Vol 1 No.1 of The Spark, a
new venture on the part of the student group, to each
member of the Steering Committee.

Please share your copy with any returnees from
Kanpur at your institution.

Cordially,

Robert S. Green
Program Leader

enc.

KANPUR INDO-AMERICAN PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES INCORPORATED

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY • CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY • CASE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY • MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY • OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY • PRINCETON UNIVERSITY • PURDUE UNIVERSITY • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA • UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



The tired old anvil on which so many ideas have been hammered into shape, once more throws off sparks as a new literary idea is forged into form today. While on the one hand, *The Spark* is the culmination of intense thought and action, on the other, it is the beginning of an arduous but happy journey.

History, it is said, abhors vacuums, and the students of IIT/K abhor it no less. In a rapidly expanding campus like ours, the gap has been felt for some time now. To bridge the gap between the various limbs of the community is the prime objective of *The Spark*, to let it grow into a vehicle of creative expression, its ideal.

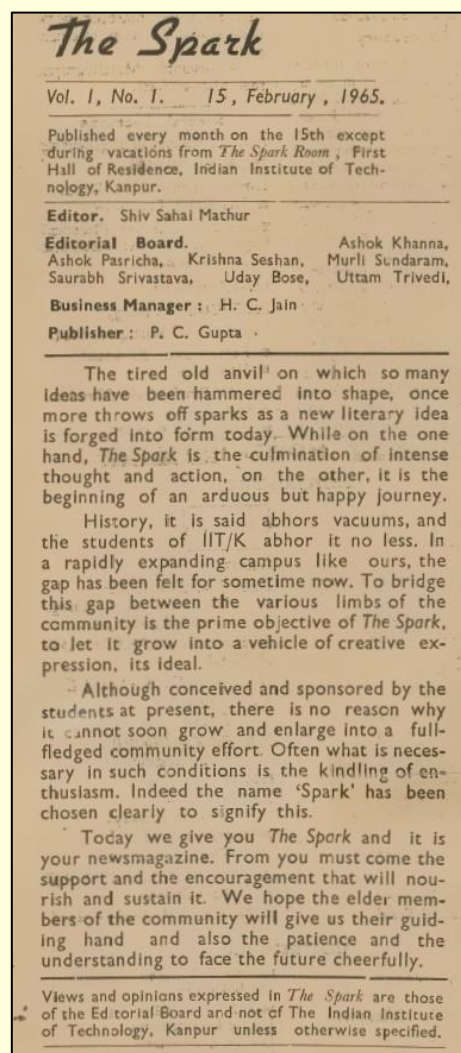
Although conceived and sponsored by the students at present, there is no reason why it cannot soon grow and enlarge into a full-fledged community effort. Often what is necessary in such conditions is the kindling of enthusiasm. Indeed, the name 'Spark' has been chosen clearly to signify this.

Today we give you *The Spark*, and it is your newsmagazine. From you must come the support and encouragement that will nourish and sustain it. We hope that the elder members of the community will give us their guiding hand and also the patience and the understanding to face the future cheerfully.

Editorial, The Spark, Vol. 1, No. 1, Feb 15, 1965

Images shared by Dhani Sahai Mathur (BT, ChE, 1961-66)

Digitally restored by Ishan Singh (BT, ChE, 2020-24)



The Spark

August 2026

Contents	Page
IIT Kanpur Celebrates Its 59th Convocation Congratulations to the new graduates!	829
The Inter IIT Cultural Meet A historic milestone for IITK	832
Team IITK Motorsports Designing and building high performance race cars on campus	839
Tributes: Professors MM Oberai and HD Bist Two much admired Professors who helped build a world class institute	846
A Conversation with Mr. Jeet Bindra A Distinguished Alumnus remembers his years on the IITK campus	860
The Evolution of the IITK Seal Professor Vijay Stokes reminisces on the redesign of the IITK seal	874
Our Fifth Anniversary: Two favorites Rewrites of Prof. Alve Erickson's Adventures and The Cassata Heist	887
Raman's Magical Gallery From IITK through today, the sketches we love!	895

* Pages 1-820 refer to **The Spark**, Issues #1-16, available at <https://iitk.ac.in/dora/spark/>

Editors: Anuradha Jagannathan, Aseem Shukla, Chilukuri K. Mohan, Shirish Joshi

Members/Contributors: Aarzoo, Aashvi Bist, Abhay Bhushan, Aditi Narain, Alpna Singh, Aman Kumar Singh, Amit Oberai, Amit Shukla, Anjani Kumar Singh, Anurag Bist, Anurag Dikshit, Dhani Sahai Mathur, Girish Pant, Hardik Tiwari, Ishan Singh, Jagjeet Singh Bindra, Jayant Kumar Singh, M Balakumaran, Manoj Shankar, Navpreet Singh, Prem Bisht, Priyanka Meena, Rajiv Singh Chowdhry, Rakesh Pandey, Ram Misra, Raman Bhatia, Sangeeta Bist Sankar, Shakti Chaturvedi, Siddhima, Srinivas Kache, Sudarshan Lakvalli, Sudhi Sheshadri, Suresh G Mishra, Sweta Kumar, Vinay Panchanadikar, Vineeta Mishra

Special Thanks to Professor Vijay Stokes, Captain Umesh Chandra, Mrs. Dharma Rajaraman, DORA Amey Karkare, and the Staff at the IITK Library and the Dept. of Chemical Engineering for their help with this issue.

*Views and opinions expressed in **The Spark** are those of the Editors and Contributors and not those of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, unless specified otherwise.*

© **The Spark**, IIT Kanpur, 2026. Articles published in **The Spark** may be reprinted with permission.

Editorial

Five years is just a blip in the scheme of things, but for *The Spark* to stay relevant for five years in our in-the-moment world says a lot about the love for IITK that resides in the hearts of its alumni. A fun effort started by a couple of *bakait* alums on social media blossomed into perhaps the biggest repository of memorabilia about IITK, with over six thousand actively participating contributors: a list including current and past students, faculty, technicians, employees, and so many others whose lives have touched IITK.

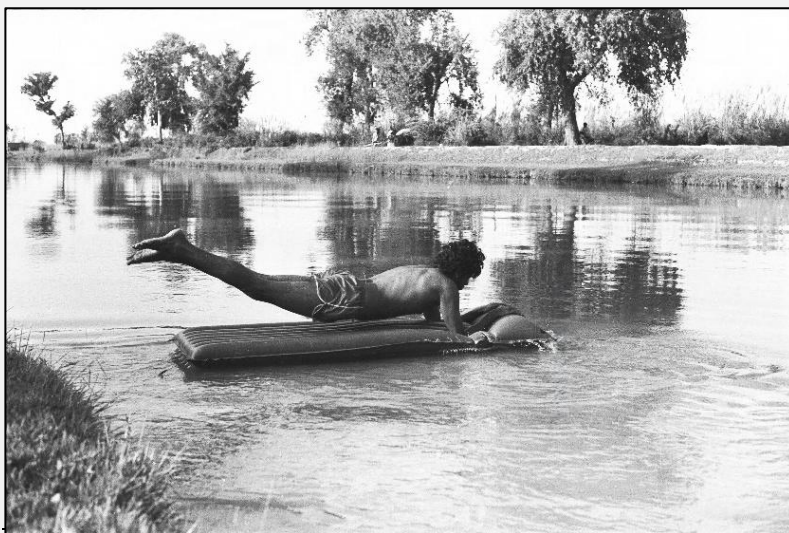
The idea of reviving *The Spark* was born during the COVID years, when participation from a vacated campus was at a standstill. We reached out to the Director (*then Prof. Abhay Karandikar*) and DORA (*then Prof. Jayant K Singh*) with the thought of using their help to connect with the alumni diaspora. Per our original communications, we thought that we might be able to publish 8-10 issues of 28-32 pages each. Perhaps, enough for two to three years' worth. Then, we would figure out what to do next.

What followed has exceeded all our expectations, connecting students, alumni, current and former faculty, KIAP families, the campus community, and so many others. As the issues grew larger, we returned to *The Spark's* original practice of dividing them into sections: campus updates and student contributions, tributes to former faculty, our featured stories, alumni memories, and photo features.

None of this could have been possible without your contributions. Thank you, dear friends and well-wishers. You are the most important part of this effort. It is you, your interest, contributions and participation that make *The Spark* what it is. Your letters have shown us that alumni and current IITians across the board appreciate the mix of news, nostalgia and photos in these 21st century issues.

To commemorate this occasion, we reproduce the very first editorial from the very first issue, which appeared in Feb 1965, with the letter announcing the inception of *The Spark* as 'a new venture of the student group'. So much of that first editorial remains relevant today.

The collage on our front cover is an assembly of the modern *Spark*, while the back cover shows a set of issues from 1965 to 1969. We have changed, clearly, becoming fatter and more colorful. But a passionate commitment to IITK and its community is still our driving force.



Yoga on the Panki Canal. Featuring Ekbal Gajadhar (1973-78) on an inflatable mattress. Amazing balancing skills! Picture: Shirish Joshi. More details on Page 915.

Letters to the Editors

Please write to us at spark@iitk.ac.in. We love to hear back from you and will try to publish as many letters as possible.

Thank you for the Feedback

Thank you 'team Spark' for bringing out memorable issues of The Spark. They will be a definitive archive for those who wish to find the lived history of IIT Kanpur. I especially cherish the issues on "celebrating the people who keep IIT going". I remember Sharma of glass blowing, Ansari of central workshop and Viridi of chemical engineering who helped me a lot. All of course know the impactful contributions made by the famous faculty who brought glory to IITK. Remembering the silent contributors is special. It is sad when stalwarts go, Professors Rajaraman and Dayaratnam were known to me, and PRK was my very dear friend. You brought out tributes worthy of the contributions made by them. It is also very nice to see articles from the 'recent' graduates. It makes The Spark a living document. Keep up the great work. With my best wishes,

KS Gandhi

Former Professor, Chemical Engineering, IIT Kanpur

Retired Professor, Chemical Engineering, IISc Bangalore

I received the latest issue of Spark. I am amazed at your efforts in bringing out an eclectic magazine that is both nostalgic and at the same time current. It is a treat to go through the articles. Maybe the title should be EYES and HEART. IITK had and has been famous for its many firsts and you have added another feather in bringing out sparks like 'SPARK'.

Keep it up. With best wishes,

MR Madhav

Professor, CE, 1967-2002, Institute Fellow 2019

Thank you for sending the latest issue of Spark. I enjoy reading every issue and learning about the new developments at IITK.

Best wishes,

D Balasubramanian

Faculty, Dept. of Chemistry, 1967-78, Institute Fellow 2015

Distinguished Scientist, LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad

Thank you for your kind words, Professors KSG, Balu and Madhav.

It's messages like yours that keep our enthusiasm high and motivate us to keep going!

Reaching Out to our Former Faculty Members

Many thanks for sending the latest issue of SPARK. I have a request: can we please have an article about Prof. Pinaki Gupta-Bhaya in one of the upcoming issues of Spark? As you know, Prof. Gupta-Bhaya was someone whose teaching and approach to science are unparalleled at IIT Kanpur. Even among the galaxy of stars in the chemistry department, he was unique and had influenced a very large number of students (not only in chemistry but across different departments).

Pradipta Bandyopadhyay
MSc Chemistry, 1994

Thank you Pradipta, for your note. The Spark would love to publish stories about, and tributes to, our former faculty members. However, to do so, we need assistance from our readers to help us write these stories and connect with them, or their family, for photographs and other memorabilia. We also request you to send us contact information and emails for our former faculty, to help us build a mailing list. Unlike that for the alumni, an organized database for former faculty contacts is not available.

From a Former Editor

Thanks for sending the Spark issue. I immediately went to Chutki Roy's piece, and it brought back some forgotten memories. A few weeks ago, I went through several boxes of stuff we moved from our old house. While organizing a shelf in my garage I found copies of The Spark. Here are the scanned versions. There are eleven files. Only three of them are from my time (1975-80) at IIT. The earliest one is from 1970. Chutki Roy's name appears as an editor in February 1973, though his surname is misspelled in this issue. At one time I had the masthead and typewriter that went with the Spark, but they were left behind on campus all those years ago. I skimmed through some of these issues and noticed Dr AP Shukla's name associated with a strike, though it was before my time. I remember his name cropping up at times and a brief internet search showed he became a labor activist, writer, and founder of "Jan Vigyan Samiti" and a leading figure in India's People's Science Movement. Then there was a more recent issue with the candidates for election. I think Anant Menon wrote most of that. Anyway, it featured the late Pravir Dutt.

Manoj Shankar
BT, ChE, 1975-80; Editor, The Spark, 1978-79



Thank you, Manoj! This is indeed a happy day for Spark aficionados 😊 Great job scanning all these old issues. It was a rainy day on this side of the globe, and dull, until your email came. Now it feels just right for scrolling through old yellowing pages!

The Spark reaches out to its former members for copies of any issues that you might have in your possession. While these issues are a welcome addition, we still have a very sparse collection in our archives and continue to search for the missing volumes.

Remembering Professor PRK Rao

Thank you for the tribute to Professor PRK Rao. The IITK alumni in Hyderabad remember him fondly and we had stayed in touch with him. I share a picture from my visit to Dr. PRK Rao's home with my wife in Oct 2020 on learning that he was experiencing some health issues.

He was delighted to meet us, and we spent about three hours together discussing various technological trends. He was curious to know more about AI / Chatgpt related topics. He showed me many research papers on AI related topics, and we stayed in discussion on AI papers through emails for the next year. It was a surprise to learn that he had quit smoking completely!

Meeting him was always a blessing.

Anjani Kumar Singh
BT, CSE, 1978-83



Alumni in Hyderabad often meet with each other and retired professors, especially when old classmates drop in from afar. In this picture, taken by Srinivas Kache in May 2022 in Prof. CVR Murthy's son Srinivas's house in Hyderabad, we meet Prof. CVR Murthy (Aero), Srinivas Kache (BT'83 Aero), Prof. PRK Rao (EE), G. Kashipati Rao (BT'83 EE), and Mrs. Sudha Kache.

IIT Kanpur Celebrates Its 59th Convocation



Shri Jayant Patil, Officiating Chairperson, Board of Governors, Dr. Pawan Goenka, the Chief Guest, and Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur at the Convocation Ceremony.

IIT Kanpur celebrated its 59th Convocation Ceremony on July 15, 2026, marking an important milestone in the academic journey of 3,104 graduating students from a diverse range of disciplines. The graduating cohort comprised 1,325 postgraduate students, 1,247 undergraduate students, and 532 students from the eMasters outreach degree programmes.

The ceremony was graced by Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairperson, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), Department of Space, Government of India, distinguished IIT Kanpur alumnus, and Padma Shri awardee, as the Chief Guest. The event was presided over by Shri Jayant Patil, Officiating Chairperson, Board of Governors, IIT Kanpur, and Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur.

Top honours, including the President's Gold Medal and the Director's Gold Medal, were awarded to meritorious students. Several students were also honoured with donor-established medals, prizes, and awards in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and all-round excellence. In addition, 38 scholars received the Outstanding PhD Thesis Awards for their exceptional research contributions. The Convocation marked the culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and learning, while celebrating the achievements of the graduating students.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026! We wish all our graduates a future filled with success, purpose, and opportunities to make a positive difference in the world.



Dr. Pawan Goenka addressing the new graduates



The Convocation Ceremony in the Main Auditorium



Congratulations Graduates!

Text and Images shared by the DORA Office and the Information and Media Outreach Cell, IIT Kanpur

The Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0

The Media and Cultural Council



At the heart of IIT Kanpur's creative and artistic ecosystem today is the Media and Cultural (MnC) Council – a student-led body dedicated to fostering creativity, expression, and cultural excellence on campus. Comprising of 14 clubs and 3 societies, the council provides students with platforms to showcase talents across a diverse range of disciplines: music, dance, dramatics, fine arts, photography, filmmaking, literary arts, animation, design, quizzing, fashion, culinary arts, debating, comedy, and more.

The Historical Legacy

Student cultural activities at IIT Kanpur date back to the earliest days of the institute, predating the establishment of the campus in Kalyanpur. Organized extracurricular activity was governed by the Students' Gymkhana, which came into existence in 1962 and began with a council of student secretaries and a faculty president. A new Gymkhana constitution, adopted in 1970, led to the creation of a Student President, the Student Senate, and the establishment of the Cultural and Games Councils and the Students' Films Society, each headed by an elected General Secretary. Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Cultural Council expanded rapidly, encompassing Music, Drama, Literary Arts, Fine Arts, and clubs ranging from Astronomy, HAM Radio, and Auto, to Roller Skating.

Subsequently, a Films and Media Council was added to the Gymkhana which focused on media and content creation. This Council later merged with the Cultural Council to create the Media and Cultural Council that we have today.

The Inter IIT Cultural Meet

The Inter IIT Cultural Meet is an annual celebration of art, creativity, and culture that brings together students from all the IIT campuses. Since its inception, the Cultural Meet has been more than just a competition, it is a festival of ideas, collaboration, and artistic excellence that allows IITians from across the country to connect, perform, and share their diverse traditions and creative expressions on one grand stage.

What began as a small initiative for cultural exchange has grown into one of India's most anticipated intercollegiate events. More than a competition, the Meet is a shared journey of learning and expression, from soulful music and powerful theatre to classical performances and dynamic street art, every act tells a story and adds a new shade to this cultural canvas. It is a true celebration of diversity, unity, and the creative spirit that defines every IIT.

While IITK had podium finishes at the early meets, in recent years its performance had been mixed, finishing 4th or 5th among the 23 teams.



Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0

The eighth edition of the Inter IIT Cultural Meet was hosted by IIT Kanpur from December 23–27, 2025. The competition was structured around a General Championship comprising thirteen cups, with each cup containing multiple individual and group events contested over the course of the meet.



Opening Ceremony of Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0 at IIT Kanpur

From Left to Right - Padma Shri Dr. Soma Ghosh, Dr. Pratik Sen (DOSA and Chairman, Inter IIT Cultural Board), Prof. Braj Bhushan (Dy. Director) and Prof. Manindra Agarwal (Director)

Events

The meet was organized under thirteen cups. The **Quiz Cup** tested participants across seven thematic quizzes: General, Sports, Sci-Biz-Tech, HELM (History, Etymology, Language, Mythology), TLC (Travel, Living, Culture), MELO (Music, Entertainment, Literature, Art), and India Quiz, each set created by reputed quizmasters from across the country. The **Literary Arts Cup** hosted prompt-based on-the-spot writing events including Hindi and English Story Writing, Hindi and English Poetry Writing, Cryptic Crossword, and Scrabble. The **Speaking Arts Cup** covered Hindi and English Poetry Slam, Mushaira, Just-A-Minute (JAM), and Asian Parliamentary Debate.



Comedic Cup Improv Performance by Deepak Yadav (Left) and Prathvi Rathore (Right)

The **Comedic Arts Cup** featured Stand-Up Comedy and Improv Battle, while the **Dance Arts Cup** brought together Group Dance, Just Duet, and Street Battle.



Dance Arts Just Duet Performance by Pratham Shah (Left) and Savi (Right)

The **Theatre Arts Cup** comprised Street Play, Stage Play, Mono Acting, and Mime -- some of the most anticipated performances of the meet.



Theatre Arts Cup contingent after performing Mime

The **Musical Arts Cup** included Band Competition, Pair on Stage, Solo Singing, and Classical Vocal Solo. The **Filmmaking Arts Cup** challenged participants with an Online Short Filmmaking competition and the gruelling 51-Hour Short Filmmaking Challenge. The **Fine Arts Cup** covered Live Sketching, Canvas Painting, Charcoal Art, and Costume Design.

The **Digital Arts Cup** featured Photoshop Battle, 3D Sculpting Battle, Graphic Design Competition, 3D Animation Competition, and the Design Marathon. The **Photography Cup** hosted Street Photography, Themed Photography, and the Photostory Competition. The **Fashion Cup** encompassed a Fashion Show and an Online Modelling Competition. Finally, the **Culinary Arts Cup** tested teams across Cook Off, Tag Team, and Mixology events, an innovative addition celebrating the art and culture of food.

IIT Kanpur's Performance in Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0



The IIT Kanpur Contingent for the Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0

The IIT Kanpur contingent, achieved a historic milestone by securing the **Overall Championship** (1st position) and bringing home the Gold Medal at the Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0. This achievement stands as a testament to the institute's vibrant cultural spirit and the creative efforts of the student community, supported by the club heads, secretaries, and faculty advisors whose dedication played a vital role in this success. IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur took the Silver and Bronze medals for the General Championship.

IIT Kanpur's Cup-Wise Podium Finishes	
Cup	Position
Speaking Arts Cup	Gold
Theatre Arts Cup	Gold
Digital Arts Cup	Gold
Photography Cup	Gold
Fashion Cup	Gold
Culinary Arts Cup	Gold
Dance Arts Cup	Silver
Musical Arts Cup	Silver
Comedic Arts Cup	Bronze
Fine Arts Cup	Bronze



Chaarp Diya, Boss! The Media and Cultural Council 2025-26 Core Team with the General Championship Gold Trophy (From Left to Right - Umang Garg (Institute Secretary, Non-Performing Arts), Kumar Vishal (Contingent Leader and Institute Secretary, Performing Arts), Ram Ratan Aggarwal (General Secretary, Media and Culture), Ansh Jain (Institute Secretary, Films and Media))



Fashion Show Performance



The Music Cup contingent after the Band Performance

Medal-wise Results

The contingent secured podium finishes across a wide range of events:

Gold	Silver	Bronze
• Hindi Story Writing • Hindi Slam Poetry • Asian Parliamentary Debate (Distinguished Adjudicators) • Group Dance • Mime • Pair on Stage • Street Photography • Photostory Competition • Themed Photography Competition • Fashion Show • Online Modelling Competition • Cook-Off • Tag Team • Mixology	• Design Marathon • Graphic Design Competition • Costume Design • Band Competition • Street Play • Stage Play • Hindi Slam Poetry	• Sports Quiz • Asian Parliamentary Debate (Debating Team) • Just Duet • 51 Hr Short Film Competition • Canvas Painting • Graphic Design Competition • 3D Animation Competition • Online Modelling Competition

As we celebrate this landmark achievement, it is clear that the vibrant cultural ecosystem at IIT Kanpur is stronger than ever. The pursuit of artistic excellence by our students, across diverse disciplines and platforms, continues to push the boundaries of what is possible on the campus. To sustain this upward trajectory and empower future cohorts of creators, performers, and innovators to dream bigger, we look toward our cherished alumni network. Your continued engagement, mentorship, and partnership are the cornerstones that will enable us to nurture this thriving community, ensuring that the legacy of creativity and passion at IIT Kanpur continues to inspire generations to come.

Written by: Hardik Tiwari (BT, CE, 2023-27) and M Balakumaran (BT, EE, 2024-28), both members of the IITK MnC Council. Special Thanks to Institute Media and Outreach Cell for providing us with the photos of the performances and opening ceremony.

Team IITK Motorsports



DESIGN | BUILD | RACE

IITK MOTORSPORTS IS THE AUTOMOTIVE CHAPTER OF INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KANPUR

At IITK Motorsports, we transform classroom concepts into engineering marvels, designing and building high-performance race cars that showcase innovation and technical excellence. Our diverse team brings together students from various engineering disciplines, united by a shared passion and a common goal. We proudly represent IIT Kanpur at prestigious competitions such as Formula Bharat, Formula Student Italy, SUPRA SAE India, and BAJA SAE India, where we put our skills to the test in environments that mirror industry standards. These events push us to excel, foster teamwork, and drive innovation, qualities that make IITK Motorsports a leader in student engineering.



Team IITK Motorsports 2025-26

Composition

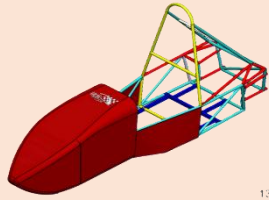
The team comprises Junior Technical Members from the second year, Senior Technical Members from the third year, and Team Principals from the fourth year, fostering a strong culture of continuity, collaboration, and knowledge transfer. We are deeply grateful to our Faculty Advisors, Dr. Amarendra Edpuganti and Dr. Twinkle Tripathy, whose constant encouragement, mentorship, and belief in the team have been instrumental in every step of our journey.

Our alumni have played a defining role in shaping Team IITK Motorsports into what it is today. Through their mentorship, guidance, and continued support, they have laid a strong foundation that inspires each new generation to push the boundaries of engineering and innovation. The culture of teamwork, perseverance, and problem-solving fostered within the team has also empowered many of our alumni to go on to build successful ventures across diverse fields, reflecting the lasting impact of their journey with the team.

Organization

Our team consists of six technical subsystems and two non-technical subsystems:

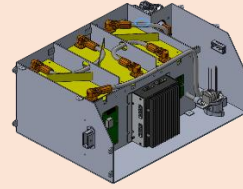
Chassis and Aerodynamics



Designs and manufactures the vehicle structure and aerodynamic package. Focuses on achieving high

stiffness, low weight, driver safety, and aerodynamic efficiency.

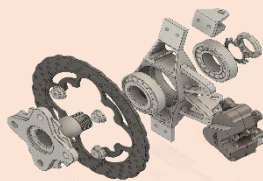
High Voltage



Responsible for the design, integration, and safety of the high-voltage system. Manages battery packs, power

distribution, and compliance with safety regulations.

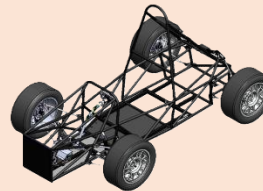
Brakes and Wheel Assembly



Designs the braking system and wheel-end components, including hubs and uprights. Ensures effective

stopping performance, durability, and reliable load transfer to the ground.

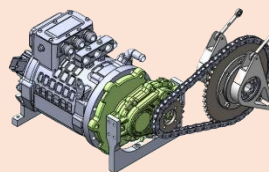
Suspension and Steering



Develops systems that control vehicle handling, stability, and feedback. Optimizes contact, suspension

kinematics, and steering response for maximum cornering performance.

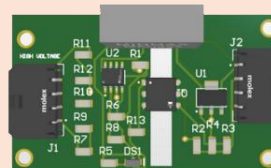
Powertrain



Develops the system that delivers power to the wheels. Designs and optimizes the drivetrain for maximum

performance, efficiency, reliability, vehicle drivability, and power delivery under dynamic racing conditions.

Electronics and Data Acquisition



Designs and integrates the vehicle's electrical architecture, sensors, control systems, and telemetry. Enables

reliable vehicle operation while collecting and analyzing data to support testing, validation, and performance optimization.

Finance and Marketing

Manages team finances, sponsorships, and brand outreach. Ensures financial sustainability while building strong industry partnerships and promoting the team's achievements.

Creatives & Web Development

Manages the team's visual identity and digital presence by designing content for merchandise, jerseys, posters, and social media, while developing and maintaining the team's website and online platforms.

Team History

2025 marked **15 years** of learning, building, and racing for our team.

Our team was officially founded in **2010** by **Pratik Parekh, Kewal Dharamshi, Abhinav Prateek, Rohit A., and Anmol Pandey** (left to right in the photograph). By **2013**, we were ready with our first Formula Student vehicle, **F13**, to compete at **Formula Student Italy**, where we ranked **9th in Cost Presentations** and **13th in Business Presentations**.



[Left] Founders of the Team, and [Right] Our First Formula Student Chassis

Alongside Formula Student, we also ventured into **All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)**. Our first ATV, **B15** brought us the **Best Rookie Team** Award at **BAJA SAEINDIA 2015**.



[Left] F13, our first Formula Student Vehicle, and [Right] B15, our first All-terrain vehicle

In **2016**, we competed at both **SUPRA SAE INDIA** with **F16** which received the **Lightest Vehicle Award**, and **BAJA SAEINDIA** with **B16** which earned us the **Best Tech-ready team award**.

We participated in **Formula Bharat 2018** with **F18** and secured Overall **14th** in the CV category while **B19** finished Overall **13th** with a remarkable **4-hour Endurance** run at **BAJA SAEINDIA 2019**.



[Left] F16, and [Right] B16



[Left] F18, and [Right] B19

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, we transitioned from **combustion to Formula Student Electric Vehicles**, leveraging years of experience to embrace the next generation of engineering challenges.

We were the **Overall Winners** at the **Formula Bharat 2023** (Class I). Our first Formula Student Electric Vehicle (FSEV), **Vidyut**, finished **14th** overall at **Formula Bharat 2024**. Later that year, it emerged as the **Overall Champion** at **Formula Imperial 2024**, alongside **six additional awards**.



[Left] Vidyut(E37) at FB24, and [Right] Cervo(E13) at FB25

Today, we are manufacturing our next-generation Formula Student Electric Vehicle, continuing our pursuit of engineering excellence and innovation with every iteration.

With every new vehicle, we challenge ourselves to push the boundaries of design, engineering, and innovation. We are currently manufacturing the team's third Formula Student Electric Vehicle, incorporating several technical advancements over its predecessors:

In-House Aerodynamic Development: Designed and manufactured wings for optimized downforce

Driverless Vehicle R&D: Driverless groundwork laid through data acquisition and control architecture

In-house Battery Management System: Custom BMS design for flexibility in PCB layout and packaging

843

Acknowledgements

Team IITK Motorsports is built on the unwavering support of the IIT Kanpur community and our industry partners. We are deeply grateful to **IIT Kanpur** for providing us with the resources, infrastructure, and environment that have enabled us to learn, innovate, and grow.

We sincerely thank the **Office of the Dean of Resources & Alumni (DORA)**, the **Office of the Dean of Research & Development (DORD)**, the **Science and Technology Council**, our **faculty advisors**, and the **faculty** and technical **staff** whose guidance, laboratory facilities, and encouragement have been invaluable throughout our journey.

We are equally thankful to **IITK alumni** for their continued mentorship, generosity, and belief in the team. Their support has laid a strong foundation for every new generation of IITK Motorsports.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our industry partners for enabling us to turn ideas into reality. We are especially grateful to **Noccarc** for its unwavering support through every season, and to **Kalyani Bharat Forge** and **B4W** for their continued partnership over the years. Their trust and support have been instrumental in our journey.

Community Outreach

The impact of Team IITK Motorsports extends far beyond the track. By engaging with schools, students, and the wider community through outreach activities and interactive events, we strive to make engineering more accessible, encourage innovation, and share our passion for motorsports.



[Left] FSEV Showcase at SnT Pavilion 2025 for Freshers, and [Right] FSEV Showcase at Vigyan Mela for school students organized by Shiksha Sopan, an initiative by Prof. H.C. Verma

Through these initiatives, we aim to inspire the next generation of engineers while showcasing the multidisciplinary nature of Formula Student. By sharing our work with students and the public, we hope to foster curiosity, encourage innovation, and highlight the impact of hands-on engineering.



[Left] Interaction with participants at Yuva Sangam, and [Right] Interaction with the Solar Butterfly Team at SAE Workshop

More than building race cars, Formula Student is a platform for learning systems engineering, project management, leadership, manufacturing, finance, and teamwork. Every vehicle represents thousands of hours of collaboration and problem-solving, preparing students for careers in industry, research, and entrepreneurship.



[Left] FSEV showcase at the inaugural lecture of the Kotak School of Sustainability delivered by Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi, and [Right] showcase at the Academia Symposium

Fifteen years on, our journey is still just beginning. With every vehicle we build and every challenge we embrace, we continue to carry forward the legacy of engineering excellence at IIT Kanpur.



Professor M.M. Oberai (1932-2022)

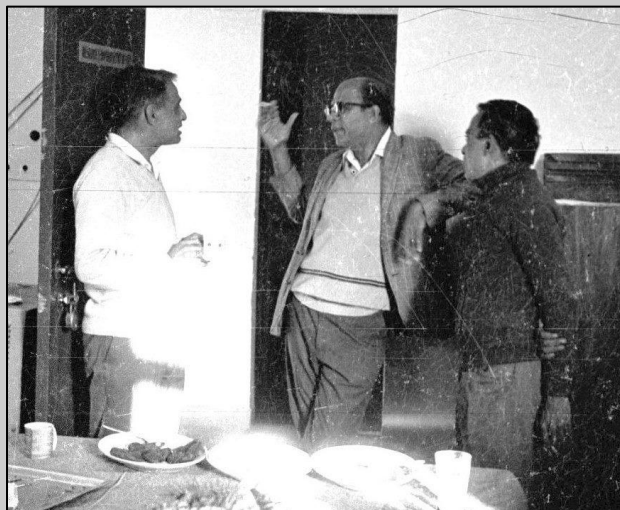
Professor Madan Mohan Oberai was born on September 10, 1932, in Rawalpindi, British India (*now in Pakistan*). Post partition, he grew up in Delhi where he completed his schooling and then his undergraduate studies at Delhi University.

Fluent in French, he obtained a scholarship to go to France for his graduate studies where he completed his PhD in Fluid Mechanics from the University of Paris in 1963. Subsequently, he accepted an offer from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he was an Assistant Professor in Mechanical Engineering from 1963-66.

At UCLA, a mutual friend introduced him to Rachel Shimkin, a student studying European History and Philosophy and working at the computer centre in the School of Engineering. Madan Mohan and Rachel were married in Los Angeles in 1965. When IIT Kanpur and the Kanpur Indo-American Program (KIAP) beckoned, they moved to India, and Professor Oberai joined the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in June 1966. Rachel joined the IITK Computer Centre in an operational and administrative capacity. Her most significant contributions included bringing the IBM SHARE software tapes to IITK through KIAP and the US Embassy.

At IITK, Professor Oberai was much admired by the student community and was deeply involved in student and administrative life. He served as Dean of Student Affairs; he was the first Dean of the newly created office of Academic Affairs (1978-80) and was Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering (1987-89). He would regularly take students on industrial tours over the winter breaks and would be present at student celebrations and festivals.

Rachel moved back to the US in 1979 but Prof. Oberai, and their son Amit, stayed on at the IITK Campus until Amit completed his schooling and then moved to the US for higher studies in 1987. Professor Oberai retired from IITK in September 1992. He initially settled in Delhi, near his brother and extended family, before moving to Bhowali, a town next to Nainital, in July 2019. He passed away on February 23, 2022, from complications related to COVID-19, at the age of 89. IITK students remember him as a mentor who genuinely cared about their welfare.



Professors MM Oberai, MA Pai and KR Sarma at IITK, late 1970s. Picture: Shirish Joshi (1973-78)

Images from IITK: 1980s-1990s



Professors K Sriram, MM Oberai, BL Dhoopar, and SG Dhande of the Dept. of Mechanical / Nuclear Engineering at IITK, early 1990s.



Visible are Prof Prabha Sharma (Math) and Prof. Oberai, with Prof JL Batra (Industrial and Management Engg.) partially visible on the right, late 1980s



Professor Oberai being felicitated by students on his retirement, 1992

Remembering Professor M. M. Oberai

My first real encounter with Dr. MM Oberai was during my third year (1980-81), when he taught our Fluid Mechanics course. Not a subject which I found endearing, and so avoided working on it, barely scraping through with a C.

But Dr. Oberai always made an impression. Forever smiling, a twinkle of mischief in his eyes, with his spectacles perched on his head, and the classic pipe hanging from his mouth. That's how I remember 'Mamu', our affectionate nickname for him. Dr. Oberai was always smartly dressed and carried himself with a bright and congenial demeanour, but was strict in his actions. He could be the most friendly, but also a bit stern.

We came across his personal side during our Industrial Tour in December 1981. He accompanied us throughout the tour, on the train, in the buses, along with his young son. He was genial, but managed to somehow keep a whole crowd of young men from being too adventurous. After our tour wound through the TELCOs and Kirloskars in Pune, we landed in Mumbai (Bombay at that time). The day we were getting ready to take the train back to Kanpur, Dr. Oberai announced that he would be taking off now, and that his proteges were old enough to manage the train journey back without an escort, with a warning, in jest, that we better behave ourselves. Five of us (young aspiring Mechanical Engineers) timidly asked if we too could forgo the journey back to Kanpur and take a detour – we were not specific about our plans – and kept them vague – meeting friends etc.

Us 'Famous' Five took an overnight bus to Goa and trekked the beaches. And lo and behold were we in for a surprise, when we saw Dr. Oberai sitting at a beach, fully dressed in his trousers and shirt, the spectacles and pipe in place, indulgently looking at his son who was frolicking in the sea. He looked at us, with possibly a bit of pride, and smiled.



Goa beaches, December 1981

Members of the ME batch of 1978-83 with Prof. Oberai. (L to R): Sudhanshu Goel, Sunil Singh, Manoj Srivastava, Prof. MM Oberai, Anurag Dikshit, clicked by Sanjay Prasad.

Picture: Anurag Dikshit

My last encounter with Dr. Oberai was on the phone, a few years later, when he called me. These were the times of the old landlines, and I was surprised that he had traced me to my telephone extension at a corporate office in Connaught Place. First, he reconfirmed that I had shifted to Finance – gave me some words of wisdom about not using the knowledge gained at IIT. And then he asked for some inconsequential help, almost apologetically.

A man who carried his position lightly, talked to you as a friend, and genuinely cared about his students' welfare. I have been privileged to have known him, albeit briefly, and admired him for his demeanor and his zest for life.

Anurag Dikshit (BT, ME, 1978-83)

The Rura Trot, August 15, 1982

IITK students, faculty and staff jogged 55 km from RPS Inter College, Rura to IITK, leaving Rura in the early hours of the morning and arriving at IITK twelve hours later. The team took breaks for drinks and lunch and stopped at the Hanuman Mandir at Panki before arriving on the campus in the evening.

The images show the team entering the IITK campus, and Prof MM Oberai greeting the runners with some well-deserved refreshments on the athletic field.



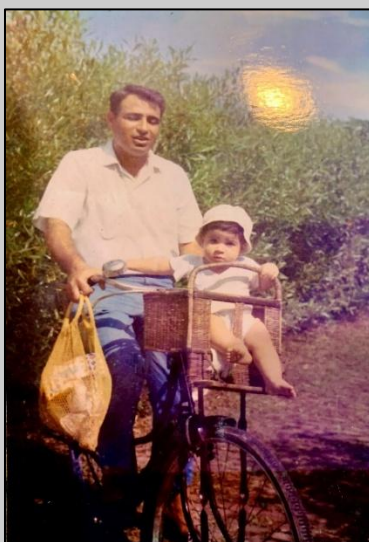
Back at IITK, on the Main Drive, shortly after the gate



At the Athletics ground with some well-deserved snacks. Visible (facing the camera, L to R) are: Prof. MM Oberai, Bipin Bora (in the back), Ghosh Dada (Hockey Coach), Vinay Panchanadikar and Prof. Dhande (later Director Dhande). Pictures: Vinay Panchanadikar (1978-83)

Remembering Dad

Amit Oberai



At IITK, c. 1972

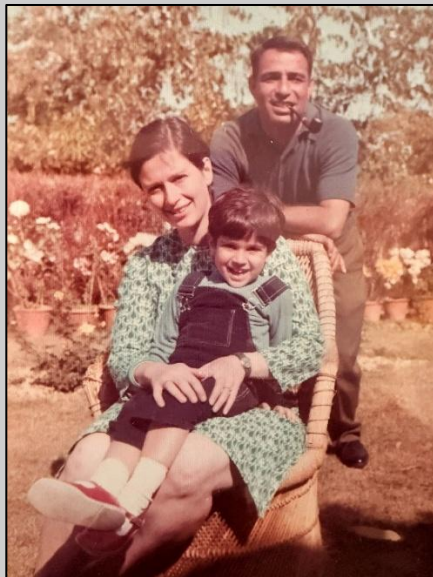
My father Dr. M. M. Oberai was a professor in Mechanical Engineering at IITK from the late 1960s through the early 90s, and I believe his greatest passion was for the students and community at IITK. I remember my dad from my childhood as a strong and loving man with a joke always at the tip of his tongue. Throughout my childhood our home was full of students visiting and the front door - and fridge door - were always open to them.

He loved teaching and was a truly gifted teacher. In the 1960s he left his professorship at UCLA and returned to India to teach at IITK until his retirement. In 1969-70 he went on a one-year sabbatical to ETH Zurich in Switzerland. I was born in Kanpur upon my parents' return to IITK on September 10 that year, sharing the same birthday as my father. Although trained as a mathematician, his heart was in poetry and literature, and he was deeply into Urdu poetry. Later he moved to Delhi to be with his brother and extended family, and finally moved to the hills to the town of Bhowali near Nainital.

One of my greatest wishes was to live near him as he aged but that could not happen as he stayed in India while I was in the US. I am grateful that I was able to visit him every year. He passed away from COVID-19 on February 23, 2022, at the age of 89.

To me, he was the most loving and self-sacrificing father imaginable. When I was little, I believed he could make anything happen. I grew up hearing stories of how he went door to door to all Punjabi family homes collecting what he jokingly called "gurdwara tax" to help build the gurdwara on campus, and how during strikes he would visit the Type 1 and Type 2 homes to check on families and make sure they were doing well. He always wanted to do everything he could for his family and for those he loved.

My memories of growing up on campus are filled with the friends and the activities we did. Life on campus as a child was simple and idyllic – the IITK campus was a unique and very special environment to grow up in. As kids we would play cricket in the open field behind the State Bank, and go to the student Halls to play ping pong and eat at the canteens there, usually at Halls 1 and 2.

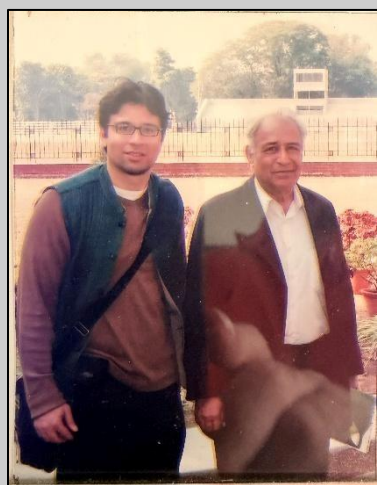


The Oberai Family. Front lawn, house no. 613, IITK campus, c. 1975

When I was little, my father and I would go regularly to the swimming pool on our bicycles. When I was very young, he would take me on his bike all the way from our house to the pool. I learned to play tennis at IITK, playing often with Dr Sriram's sons Gautam and Anil who are close friends. At home I had a croquet set my mom had brought and we would set it up on the lawn. Friends would come over and we would play UNO, croquet or badminton and drink *nimbu pani* (lemonade). Some of my closest friends were Dr TM Srinivasan's son Arun and Dr JL Batra's son Pankaj who was also my neighbor.

My mom had a group of friends at IITK and was part of a close-knit community. They would spend time cooking, sharing meals, and going for long walks together. I would join her when she visited her friend's house and sometimes on the walks. She was a great cook and even wrote a cookbook then. One of her passions was gardening. I remember we had a beautiful garden and how she would graft roses and win prizes from the plant nursery. I enjoyed going with her to the nursery and walking around among the plants and flowers.

About the author:



Amit Oberai grew up on the IITK campus before moving to the US in the final year of high school in 1987. In the US, he was with his mother, Rachel, in Boston, and attended Brown University where he studied Physics. Later, he moved to Los Angeles for his PhD at UCLA in Bioinformatics and Computational Biophysics. He has settled in Irvine, CA, as a scientist at a small biotech called Antigen Discovery, with his wife Lily and their son Jay Mohan.

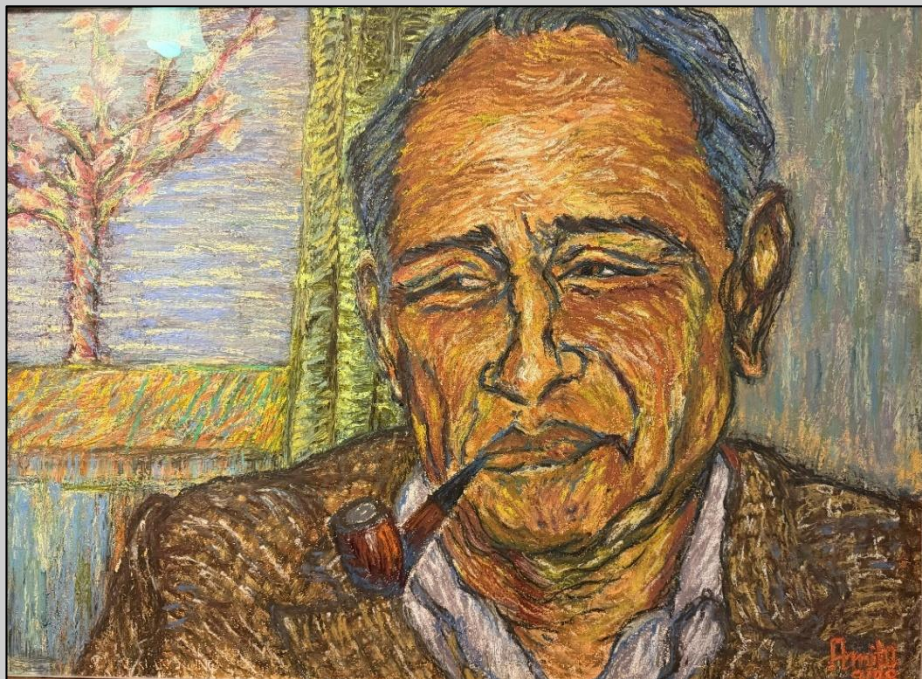
*Amit enjoys oil painting as a hobby, something he has enjoyed from his childhood days on campus. Several of his paintings, including those of his father, have appeared in the UCLA art magazine **The Beat**. Some of these are republished here.*

Image: On a campus visit. Amit and Prof Oberai, IITK, c. 2007

Paintings of Dad



Loving Father, by Amit Oberai, 1987



As I Remember Him, by Amit Oberai, 1998



A Tree Like Him, by Amit Oberai, 2012

The Golden Jubilee Celebration

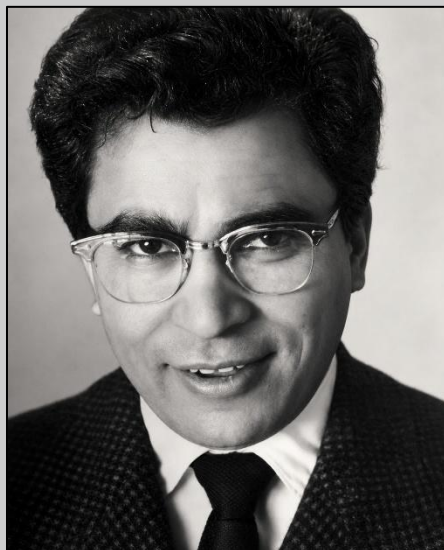
The Golden Jubilee Celebration of the ME Department was perhaps Prof. Oberai's last visit to the IITK Campus. We share an image of this get together from September 2010.



Senior Professors and Staff members visible in the seated row are (L to R): DV Kadambi, Birendra Sahay, GK Lal, MM Oberai, Barun Banerjee, Ayodhya Prasad, and H K Nathani. Picture: DORA Archives, IIT Kanpur

Professor Hari Datt Bist (1935-2025)

A Pioneer of IIT Kanpur, Distinguished Scientist, and Champion of Education



Prof. Hari Datt Bist, who passed away on December 13, 2025, at the age of 90, belonged to the remarkable generation of scholars who helped build IIT Kanpur from its earliest days into one of India's premier institutions of higher learning. Born on June 13, 1935, in the remote village of Darah in present-day Uttarakhand, he was the first child from his village to study beyond the eighth grade. Through determination and academic excellence, he pursued higher education in Physics and joined IIT Kanpur in 1962, just three years after the Institute was founded. As one of IIT Kanpur's early faculty members, he worked closely with the Institute's visionary founding leadership, including the first two directors Dr. P. K. Kelkar and Dr. Muthanna, and witnessed firsthand the challenges and excitement of building a world-class institution from the ground up.

Prof. Bist remained associated with IIT Kanpur for over four decades, helping shape both its academic culture and its research excellence through some of the Institute's most formative years. Among his many contributions to campus life, he served as the Warden of IIT Kanpur's earliest student batches, helping establish traditions of mentorship and student engagement that continue to define the Institute. He also took on important academic leadership roles beyond IIT Kanpur, including serving as Head of Institution at DSB College, Nainital, under Kumaon University in the late 1970s. A Fulbright Scholar, he spent extended periods conducting research and fostering collaborations at leading institutions in the United States, Japan, Canada, and Puerto Rico, strengthening IIT Kanpur's international academic connections and advancing its growing reputation for scientific excellence.

Prof. and Mrs. Bist on their return to IITK after a 4-year Post Doctoral Fulbright Scholarship (1963-67) to the Univ. of Iowa and Vanderbilt Univ.



An internationally respected Raman spectroscopist, Prof. Bist was part of the distinguished scientific lineage of Sir C. V. Raman. Over the course of his career, he published more than 250 papers in leading international journals, authored and edited several books, and accumulated more than 3,000 citations. His pioneering work on molecular vibrational spectroscopy, particularly the vibrational spectra of phenol, became widely recognized and extensively cited by researchers around the world.

One of his most enduring scientific legacies was the establishment of the modern Laser Raman Laboratory at IIT Kanpur in 1980. At a time when advanced experimental facilities were scarce in India, this laboratory became a national center for Raman spectroscopy research. For more than two decades, scholars from universities and research laboratories across India came to IIT Kanpur to conduct experiments and collaborate with Prof. Bist and his students. More than 180 scientists worked with him through this facility, making it one of the country's most influential centers for spectroscopic research.

Prof. Bist was also deeply committed to building international scientific connections. He collaborated extensively with researchers at leading universities and laboratories across the world, helping place IIT Kanpur's spectroscopy research on the global map. He organized three major international conferences at IIT Kanpur (in 1983, 1987, and 1995) which brought leading scientists from around the world to the campus and strengthened the Institute's growing international reputation.



Physics students and faculty at Prof. Bist's home. Seated in the chairs in the back are: Professors HD Bist, H Joshi, S Sathaiah, and Abhay Kumar, along with Mrs. Bist and Mrs. RN Soni. Seated in the front row are: Prem Bisht, Sanjay Bhargava, an MSc student and RK Soni (with child).

Picture: Dr. Prem Bisht (currently Professor of Physics, IIT Madras)

Equally important was his role as a mentor. He guided sixteen Ph.D. students at IIT Kanpur and influenced generations of researchers through his scholarship, intellectual rigor, and generosity of spirit.

Many of his students and collaborators went on to distinguished careers in academia, industry, and research institutions around the world.

Following his retirement from IIT Kanpur, Prof. Bist embarked on what he often regarded as the most meaningful chapter of his life - his second innings of service through education. Inspired by his own journey from a small Himalayan village to the frontiers of scientific research, he founded HIMWATS (Himalayan Welfare and Technology Society) and devoted the next twenty-five years to improving K–12 education in Uttarakhand. Under his leadership, HIMWATS worked with hundreds of schools, teachers, and students across the region through teacher training programs, science and mathematics education initiatives, school quality improvement efforts, scholarship support, and community engagement. His mission was simple yet profound: to ensure that children growing up in the remote hills of Uttarakhand would have access to opportunities that were often unavailable to earlier generations. Through this work, he touched thousands of young lives and helped strengthen the educational ecosystem of the region he never forgot. His legacy lives on through the institutions he helped build, the students and researchers he mentored, and the countless young minds whose futures were broadened by his vision, his hard work and generosity.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Asha Bist; his children, Sangeeta Bist Sankar (B.Tech., Aerospace Engineering, IIT Kanpur, Class of 1986) and Anurag Bist (B.Tech., Electrical Engineering, IIT Kanpur, Class of 1989); their spouses; and his grandchildren, Rahul Sankar, Aashvi Bist, and Marisa Bist.

Contributed by Anurag Bist (BT, EE, 1985-89)

My grandfather lived by the Sanskrit phrase “vidyadhanam sarva dhanam pradhanam” meaning “knowledge is the greatest of all wealth.” During calls and summer visits, he encouraged me to reflect on what exciting things my courses taught me and to “come with acquisitions” for him. This reflected his strong desire to continue learning from others, no matter their age or experience. It was from him that I learned that the beauty of knowledge lies in sharing it with others: the more you do so, the more your own knowledge increases and the greater its impact. When speaking with my grandfather, I was continually motivated by his passion for using his knowledge in service of others. My grandfather was the first student to study beyond the 8th grade from his village and eventually earned his PhD and became a professor of physics. After retiring, he dedicated his life to empowering and educating children in rural Uttarakhand, India by founding the nonprofit organization HIMWATS. His love for making education accessible and lifelong dedication to serving his community inspire me to carry these values through every experience.

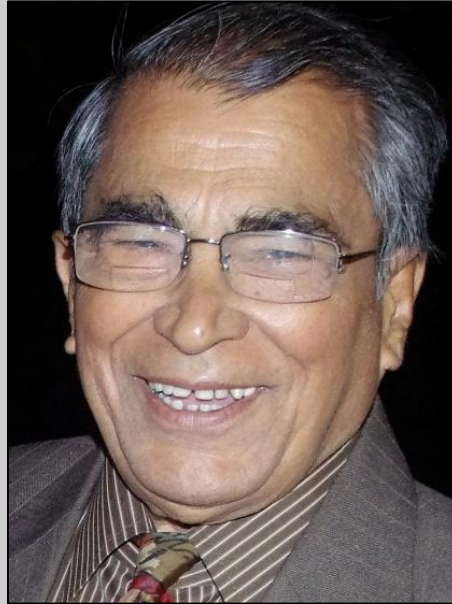
-- Aashvi Bist

Prof. Bist’s twin grand-daughters Aashvi and Marisa Bist are seniors at Georgetown University; Aashvi in the pre-medical program and Marisa in the Walsh School of Foreign Service. Image shows Marisa (left) and Aashvi (right) with their grandfather, March 2025.



Remembering My Father, Prof. Hari Datt Bist

Sangeeta Bist Sankar (BT, AE, 1982-86)



I grew up on the IIT Kanpur campus during the 1970s and 1980s. To me, my father, Prof. Hari Datt Bist, was much more than a distinguished physicist—he was my hero. He passed away on December 13, 2025, leaving behind not only a remarkable academic legacy but also countless lives enriched by his kindness, integrity, and quiet strength. As an alumnus of IIT Kanpur myself, I feel privileged to share a few memories of the man who devoted much of his life to the Institute.

My father joined IIT Kanpur in 1962, immediately after completing his Ph.D. at Allahabad University's Nainital campus under the guidance of Dr. D. D. Pant, himself a student of Nobel Laureate Dr. C. V. Raman. IIT Kanpur was then in its infancy, with the first batch of students attending classes at Harcourt Butler Technological Institute (HBTI) while the permanent campus was being developed.

When the first hostel on the new campus was completed, Dr. P. K. Kelkar, the founding Director of IIT Kanpur, asked the Deputy Director, Dr. Muthana, to move with the first batch of students into what became Hall 1. My father was appointed its first Warden, becoming part of a pioneering group that helped establish the culture and traditions of the young Institute. Those early years were marked by a spirit of optimism, camaraderie, and a shared commitment to building something exceptional.

Recognizing his potential, his colleagues encouraged him to pursue postdoctoral research at the University of Iowa. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, a significant achievement at the time. He married my mother just two days before departing for the United States, travelling by ship because air travel was still prohibitively expensive. Among his fellow passengers was Dr. Raja Ramanna, who would later become one of the architects of India's atomic energy programme. Six months later, my mother joined him, flying to the US, as air travel had become a little more affordable. I was born in Iowa two years later, and my father subsequently continued his research at Vanderbilt University.



About 50 Indian and other University of Iowa students gathered at the memorial union Wednesday evening in a memorial service for Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who died Wednesday. During the brief ceremony, several university leaders spoke and a letter was read that will be sent by the S.U.I. Indian student association to Nehru's daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. (Press-Citizen Photo)

Images from Iowa City: (L) At a party to celebrate Mrs. Bist's arrival in the US; (R) Professor HD Bist with other students at a memorial service for Pandit Nehru. Picture: Iowa City Press-Citizen, May 28, 1964.

Despite promising opportunities abroad, my father chose to return to India in 1967 because he believed he could make a greater contribution by helping build scientific education and research in his own country. That decision reflected his deep sense of purpose and commitment to nation-building.

The IIT Kanpur of those days was a unique community. My mother often remarked that the campus reminded her of an American suburb, not only because of its layout but also because of the openness and equality that characterized interactions among faculty. There was little sense of hierarchy; professors, department heads, and the Director interacted as colleagues and friends.

One family story illustrates that spirit particularly well. When my mother went into labor with my younger brother, the campus ambulance had broken down. My father called Dr. Muthana, who immediately drove her to the makeshift hospital on campus in his own car. Our neighbor, Dr. Sheila Shrivastava, delivered my brother, while a family friend arranged for someone to stay with me. It was a close-knit community where people instinctively stepped forward to help one another.

At home, my father was as much a teacher as he was in the classroom. One of my earliest memories is of a playful rhyme he had invented during his own school days to memorize the Periodic Table. It mixed Hindi, English, and his native Pahari dialect, ending with the unforgettable line, "Farac Thapa U... Yeh hai 92, yeh gaadi chal di, Ha He!" We would jump at the end of each line, shouting "Ha He!" with great enthusiasm. Only years later, when I first encountered the Periodic Table in school, did I realize that I already knew much of it through his ingenious mnemonic.

Perhaps the greatest lesson he taught me, however, had nothing to do with physics. It was about courage and self-reliance.

In 1982, I joined IIT Kanpur as a B.Tech. student in Aeronautical Engineering. I was the only woman in my class and felt intimidated about visiting the gliding centre for the flight laboratory. I asked my father to

accompany me. He gently but firmly refused. He told me that he would not always be there to help me and that if I was nervous, I should ask my classmates to go with me instead.

At the time, I was disappointed. Looking back, I recognize it as one of the most valuable lessons he ever gave me. My classmates were supportive, and I learned that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. More importantly, I learned not to be intimidated simply because I was the only woman in the room. That lesson stayed with me throughout my career as an aerospace engineer, giving me the confidence to navigate professional environments where women were few.

Many people will remember Prof. Hari Datt Bist for his contributions as a physicist, teacher, and mentor. I remember him as the father who sparked curiosity through stories and songs, who believed deeply in education, and who quietly prepared his children to stand on their own feet. His life was shaped by service—to science, to IIT Kanpur, and to India—and his influence continues to live on in the values he instilled in his students, colleagues, and family.

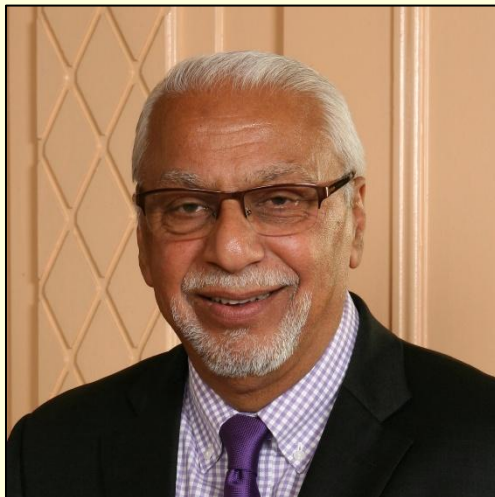
I remain grateful that I had the privilege of growing up in the extraordinary community that he helped build, and even more grateful that I was able to learn from him, both as his daughter and, years later, as a student at IIT Kanpur.



Prof. and Mrs. Bist with their daughter Sangeeta Bist Sankar and grandson Rahul Sankar, c. 2012

Sangeeta Bist Sankar is one of the few IITK faculty kids who got their B Tech at IITK. She was born in USA, raised in India, went to IITK, did her masters from the Univ of Cincinnati, and has worked on hypersonic propulsion of aircraft, thermal design of satellites like GPS, DISH NETWORK, TELSTAR, TIROS (weather), among other hot cutting-edge technologies. She is an avid runner (completed over 27 full marathons) and swimmer who loves to socialize and dislikes reading.

A Conversation with Mr. Jeet Bindra



Jagjeet (Jeet) Singh Bindra graduated from IITK in 1969 with a B.Tech. in Chemical Engineering. He earned his Master's in Chemical Engineering from the University of Washington, Seattle in 1970. Jeet also has an MBA (Honors) from Saint Mary's College of California.

Jeet started his career at Chevron Corporation as a research engineer. His career spanned over three decades during which he assumed roles of increasing responsibility. Before retiring in 2009, he served as President, Chevron Global Manufacturing with responsibility for leading the operations of 19 refineries across the world. His roles took him to Sudan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Australia and many other countries.

Upon his retirement, Jeet served on the Board of Directors of Lyondell Basell Industries, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Petroleum, Transfield Services Australia, Transocean, Worley Parsons Australia, GS Caltex Korea and Edison International (and Southern California Edison). Jeet is currently a member of the Board of Directors of HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd.

Jeet is a Diamond Award (Distinguished Alumnus) recipient of the University of Washington College of Engineering as well as a Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Kanpur. He served as the Chair of the University of Washington College of Engineering Visiting Committee for many years. He was also the Chair of the IITK Foundation in the USA. He has given back extensively to IITK, transforming the ChE department over the past 20 years. IIT Kanpur recognized him as an Institute Fellow in 2020.

Spark: Thank you, Jeet for taking the time to be with us today. IITK is proud of your accomplishments, and your support for the Institute and the Chemical Engineering Department means a lot to us. Tell us a bit about your family background. Why did you choose an Engineering career? Why IITK?

My father worked for Military Engineering Services (MES) as a Supervisor, on a salary that was barely sufficient to support a family of 7. Our family moved from Banaras (Varanasi), where I was born, to Allahabad when I was 3 or 4 years old. I first studied at the Cantonment Junior High School in Allahabad, walking over a mile to school, where we had to sit on the floor on a *chataai* (mat). Grades 6-9 were at City A.V. College, to which I travelled on a bicycle shared with my older brother. Then my father was

transferred to Ranikhet (District Almora), where I studied 10th grade at National Higher Secondary School, and grades 11-12 at Mission Inter-college.

I was a very good student, especially in science and math. One of my science teachers had heard about the IITs and encouraged me to sit for the entrance exam. I was selected for an interview and chose IIT Kanpur since I had spent all my early life in U.P. I was advised that the only discipline available at Kanpur at my JEE rank was Civil Engineering (CE). I wanted to stay in U.P. so I accepted CE with the understanding that, if I had good grades in the first 3 years, I may be allowed to switch my major. I felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to study at such a prestigious institution.

Spark: Tell us about hostel life. Presumably you were the first batch to move into Hall-2. Did you spend 3 years there before moving to H-1? Was ragging an issue?

I arrived on the campus in 1964 and was assigned to Hall-2, a newly constructed facility. On the bus to Kanpur, I had met another student, Girish Chandra Dwivedi, and we shared a ground floor room in the first wing of Hall-2. Our Seniors were experts in ragging and put us through a wringer for four or five days. Fortunately, we got to know a couple of senior students within our wing, and they shielded us from others.

I found the food in the Mess to be acceptable, especially the aloo parathas served over the weekend for breakfast. Rajma-chawal and kadhi-chawal were always the highlights. We had to pay extra to be served non-veg once a week. Invariably, I was amongst the first few in the queue for lunch and dinner.

I was awarded a National Scholarship which was Rs. 110 per month, but my monthly expenses including tuition, mess fee and incidentals exceeded that amount. My father and older brother sent some money, but still it was not sufficient. When my faculty advisor Professor C.N.R. Rao inquired, I told him about my financial worries. He said, "If you work hard and get a semester performance index (SPI) of 7.5 or higher, I will find an ad hoc grant to support you." He fulfilled this promise when my grades in the first 2 semesters far exceeded that requirement. I am forever grateful to him for his guidance and support.



Prof. CNR Rao in his office at IIT Kanpur. He was at IITK from 1963 through 1978, before moving to IISc Bangalore. For his contributions to Science, the Govt. of India recognized him with its highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna, in 2013. Picture: Climbing the Limitless Ladder, 2010

Spark: You must have put in a lot of effort into academics. Can you recall any classes, teachers or labs that you remember vividly? There were the KIAP professors, and also some very well-known Indian ChE faculty – CV Sheshadri, Vasudev Arakare... What do you remember about your professors?

The academic environment was extremely competitive. All of us had come to IITK thinking that we were amongst the best, but since exams were graded on a curve, some of my friends received C, D or F grades, which was depressing. I dedicated myself to never missing a lecture and taking outstanding lecture notes. This habit served me well, and I maintained very good grades. After the third year I was able to opt for Chemical Engineering, my preferred choice because I had very good grades in Chemistry and Math and thought that Chemical Engineering would offer me the best opportunity to succeed.

IIT Kanpur was amongst the first institutions in the country to have an IBM 1620 computer. A year or two later we received the IBM 7044 - a much faster computer. We had to program in Fortran which I hated. I realized that Electrical Engineering/Computer Science was not my cup of tea.

We had outstanding ChE faculty which included Professors Karunesh, C.V. Sheshadri, Vasudev, D.N. Saraf, and S.K. Saraf. Some of these were young, energetic freshly minted PhDs from the U.S. They knew how to interact with young students, and provided superb personal and professional guidance, but when it came to assessing performance, they were all consistently tough. It took me a while to get used to surprise quizzes, midterms and final exams. One of the highlights of IITK education was the hands-on experience in various labs. I distinctly remember our project to design and fabricate a walnut cracker using a block of wood. It tested our creativity and gave us much-needed hands-on experience.

Spark: You were very active in the Students' Gymkhana and served as Vice President (the student head of the body when the President was a faculty member). Tell us a bit about these activities.

In my third year I was selected as the Chief Under Officer for NCC. That role helped build my confidence and my ability to lead others. One of our NCC assignments was to start digging a large hole for the construction of a swimming pool.

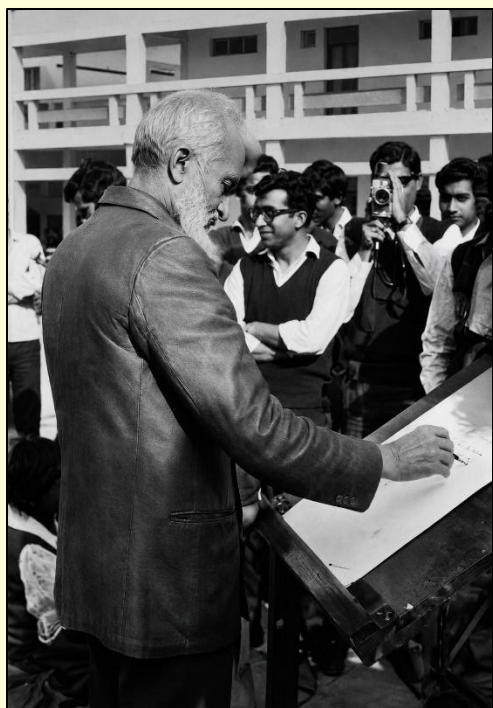


The swimming pool was excavated entirely through the efforts of NCC students. It took 10 years of back-breaking work before it was finally completed in 1975. Picture shows PhD students Suresh G Mishra and Vijaya Kumar Agrawal in a pool under excavation, early 1970s.

Picture: Suresh G Mishra (PhD Physics 1977)

I then started taking courses in my Chemical Engineering major which provided me a tremendous opportunity to interact with ChE faculty. Very soon Dr. Vasudev became my mentor and friend and guided me for the rest of my stay at IITK. With encouragement from Dr. Vasudev, our faculty advisor for sports, I decided to venture into student activities.

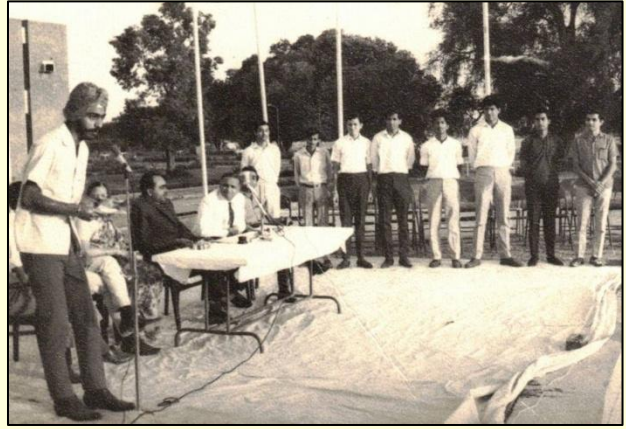
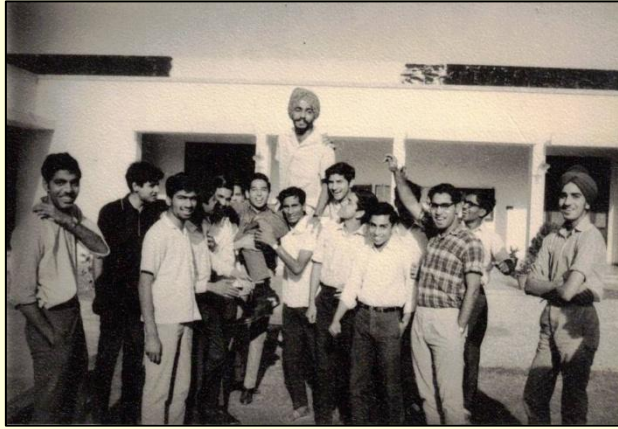
During my fourth year, I ran for Secretary for Cultural Activities and was elected for this office. I took this role very seriously and organized many new activities, of which the most important was the first “All India Cultural Festival” at IITK. This festival included competitions in Hindi/English debate, Drama, Singing, etc. We had participation from other IITs, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Loreto College, Miranda House and HBTI. This was a huge success and has evolved into what is known today as "Antaragni". I also organized lectures by Swami Chinmayananda and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and a Qawwali ki Raat where we invited a well-known qawwali singer, Nizam Ragi Chhangaa. (He had 6 fingers on his left hand, and that is why he was known as Chhangaa). This evening event was the highlight for the student body.



India's internationally acclaimed painter, Mr. MF Hussain, was a guest of honor at the first All India Cultural Festival in Jan 1968. He inaugurated and judged the fine arts, stamps and photography exhibitions and gave a display of his prowess with the brush and paint at the Visitors Hostel.

Image: Under the Cover, Anil K. Agarwal, 1968, digitally restored by Aman Kumar Singh. More information about the 1968 Festival is available in The Spark, Issue 11, Jan 2025, pg. 475-477, available [here](#).

Encouraged by my success, I ran for the position of Vice President of Students' Gymkhana in my final year. At that time the Gymkhana President was a faculty member (Prof. RSL Srivastava) appointed by the Director and the Vice-President was the Student Head. I was again elected with an overwhelming majority. This gave me an opportunity to grow professionally and build my confidence in public speaking and interpersonal skills.



(L) With friends, celebrating the election as the Vice President of the Students' Gymkhana;

(R) Introducing the newly elected officers of the Students' Gymkhana. Director Kelkar is visible sitting at the table

Spark: Tell us about your memories from your final year. Any specific incidents that you would like to tell us about? How did you reach the Univ. of Washington in Seattle?

Amongst the highlights of my tenure as Vice President of Students' Gymkhana was a visit by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the campus. To this day I vividly remember her visit as I was asked to propose the vote of thanks. I had prepared my remarks both in English and Hindi but opted to deliver my comments in Hindi at the end. Another highlight was when IITK hosted, for the first time, an Inter-IIT sports meet at Kanpur. We invited General Kumaramangalam, Chief of Armed Services, to be our chief guest at the opening ceremony. This was the first IIT meet where female students participated in competitions.



(L) Welcoming Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the campus. Deputy Director Muthana is also visible in this picture.

(R) The vote of thanks. This was Mrs. Gandhi's second visit to the IITK campus; she had earlier visited IITK in 1966.



The Inter-IIT Sports Meet, Dec 1968. This picture shows Director Kelkar introducing General Kumaramangalam to the faculty members. Also visible in the background are Prof RSL Srivastava (Faculty head of the Students Gymkhana), Sir Padampat Singhania (Chairman, IITK Board of Governors) and Jeet Bindra (Student head of the Gymkhana).

Source: The Spark, December 1968, IIT Kanpur archives

During my final year at IITK I decided to enjoy life at the expense of my studies. I remember seeing at least a dozen movies between Dussehra and Diwali. This required us to take the campus bus to Rawatpur and go from there on a rickshaw to Birhana Road to reach the various movie theaters.

That year, we also started focusing our attention on what lay beyond IITK. With encouragement and guidance from Dr. Vasudev, I applied for graduate studies at various universities in the U.S. Dr. Vasudev had completed his Master's in Chemical Engineering from Washington State University and his PhD from the University of Washington. I received a Research Assistantship at Washington State University very early in the process, but Dr. Vasudev told me to wait for responses from other institutions. I received more offers, but as soon as I was offered a Research Assistantship at the University of Washington, Dr. Vasudev told me that my search was over, and I accepted their offer.

Spark: Tell us about your experiences as a Graduate Student in Seattle. How did they define your future career?

I arrived in Seattle on an overcast day on September 7, 1969. I had carried a flag of IITK with me which I proudly displayed in my room at a student housing complex at the nearby church. My classmate, Brij Maini, also came to the University of Washington. Within the first week, we took an assessment exam to determine if we needed to take any prerequisite courses. I remember being called by the head of the department after the exam who informed me that there were no required prerequisites and I could start my graduate program right away. I was fortunate to complete my Master's in 15 months, including a thesis. The educational foundation that we received at IITK enabled us to succeed academically in the graduate program. During this period, I also led the Indian student body as the President of the Association.

While finishing my thesis I met a beautiful girl from Seattle and fell in love with her. Janice and I were married on May 23, 1971. We had a traditional Sikh wedding (Anand Karaj) in the morning and a church wedding in the afternoon. We are still enjoying our married life. We have been blessed with two wonderful sons, their spouses, and six grandchildren.

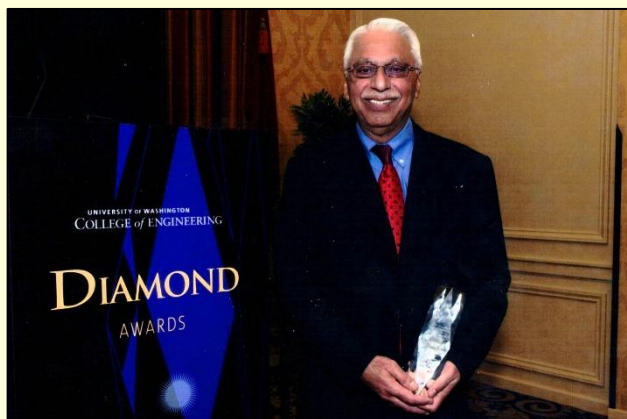


(L) Wedding bells toll in Seattle, May 1971; (R) Hosting dinner for friends. An excellent cook, Jeet had prepared all the dishes with the help of his friends. IITK batchmate, Brij B. Maini, is also visible in this picture

Spark: IITK stayed with you after you left the campus. Tell us about your learnings and how it impacted your professional career.

I worked for Chevron Corporation for over 32 years starting as a Research Engineer and working my way up the corporate ladder to retire as the President of Chevron Global Manufacturing. In the interim I completed an Executive MBA program which enhanced my business skills. I attribute my success largely to the great education, mentoring and guidance received at IIT Kanpur.

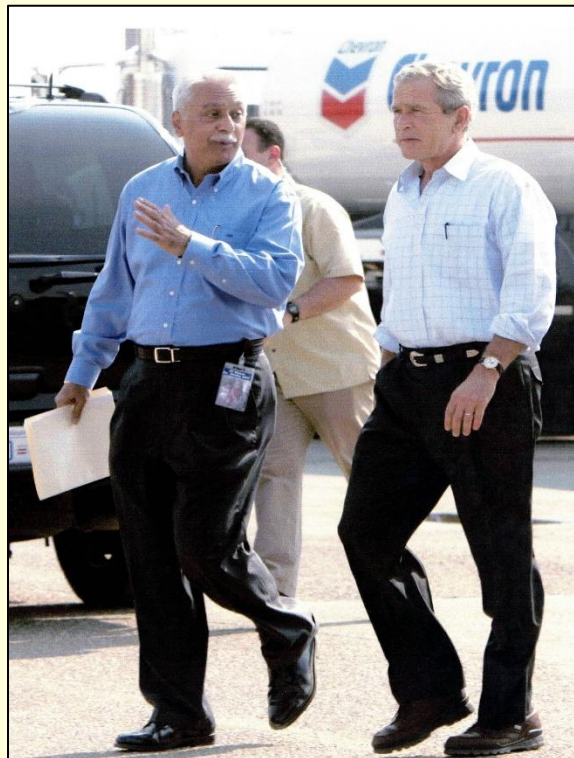
I have always believed in giving back to society and helping those who come after us. This philosophy has guided me in contributing to both the University of Washington, as well as IIT Kanpur. Over the last three decades my wife and I have worked diligently with the faculty at IITK to identify worthy causes that we can support. I am especially proud that we have established a Chair in the Chemical Engineering Department in the name of my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Gian Singh Bindra.



With the Diamond Award (Distinguished Alumnus) of the Univ. of Washington College of Engineering



Jeet Bindra was the lead negotiator on behalf of nine international oil companies to negotiate funding and construction of a \$2.7 billion pipeline from the Tengiz oil field in Kazakhstan to the Black Sea. The initial documents were signed at the presidential palace in Almaty in Kazakhstan in 1996 in the presence of Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev and Russian President Yeltsin.



With US President George W. Bush at Chevron's refinery in Pascagoula, Mississippi to review the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005

Spark: Based on your experience in industry, what advice would you like to share with students who are preparing to build careers in the evolving landscape of energy, chemicals, and sustainability?

The Chemical Engineering profession is at crossroads. There is a dire need to focus on energy transition, sustainability and environmental protection. Recent advances in AI will add a new dimension to the venues available for improvement in all these areas. We must find new pathways to economically produce renewable energy from natural resources. We must move away from a fossil fuel-based economy and develop new renewable alternatives. Areas that need immediate attention would be development of biodegradable plastics and chemical conversion of cellulosic material. There are several new frontiers to be explored by the next generation of Chemical Engineering students.

Jan and Jeet inaugurate the ChE Innovation Lab at U Washington, Seattle



And from our archives...

FAREWELL SENIORS

Love for the alma mater is perhaps one of the strongest emotions in J. S. Bindra, our ex-V.P. For him, the Institute is not merely a wave of concrete – she is responding, ALIVE. He loves IIT-K so much that he has made a huge silk flag with the institute's crest on it – to be put up in his room at the University of Washington, Seattle.

A chemical engineer, J.S. has won tons of laurels. But he is unassuming to a degree of being humble – except, of course, on the rare outbursts of temper. And when he is fuming, KEEP OFF. Apart from a brilliant academic record and productive socio-cultural life, J.S. has a rare devotion to his family. He hopes to send home a part of his scholarship, denying himself some of personal necessities. This sense of responsibility makes him a true leader. Viva J.S.!

The Spark, April 1969

Source: MIT Libraries, Cambridge, MA

shilly directed towards the attire of the younger "jet set". Let alone skin tight, top-toggies and bell-bottoms, even the sight of boys and girls in slappies makes her shudder! "Scandalous!"

She is ecstatic when it comes to books. As such, there are no others as delightful as Rensick and Halliday ("Though at a much higher level they themselves become a bit childish-like End Rytton"). Books she devours, digests sleep with cream stout and adorns. "They are my very life—these lovely hard bound American text books. I don't know what I'd do without them."

For her Ph.D. Kanta hopes to "go somewhere else" (a sigh follows). Go right ahead, Kanta. We wish you the best of luck and sigh deeply too, in

he's out for a 7 H. P. Super Bullet capable of carrying him to Canada; so that after graduation "dry" places like IIT-K will not feature on his fare list.

★ Love for the alma mater is perhaps one of the strongest emotions in J. S. Bindra, our ex-V.P. For him, the Institute is not merely a wave of concrete—she is responding, ALIVE. He loves IIT-K so

devotion to his family. He hopes to send home a part of his scholarship, denying himself some of his personal necessities. This sense of responsibility makes him a true leader. Viva J. S.!

Raddu

End of his rides

★ Lovingly (?) known as Raddu to his friends (and to his few enemies), this short (5'6") and stocky "bakkhili" built from Lucknow. My IIT for two consecutive years, K. has a flair for rolling up his sleeves and bearing his heavy and heavy chest, to "WOW" the girls. He has been known to stand for hours in half sleeved shorts near the gate of the festival pandal, gazing at the "dishes" from places as far as the Kurukshetra University. This is "Come Hither" look as a result of hard practice in all corners of India. Mayfair, Marine Drive, Marina Beach, to name a few.

Kaddu relishes bull sessions, weightlifting, and spending on mopeds. Having been successful in reducing his J.S. H.P. Bullet to a pig, K. has now turned to bigger things—

After her Ph.D she hopes to teach—? Preferably in a place like IIT-K." And? Suddenly Shaabi flashed one of her coy smiles. "Yes," she blushed, eyes, that'll come of course. Of course!

★ In his shorts, Bhaskar, also "Bongo," Ray can easily pass off as a junior school boy. It can be he can travel in half ticket! Yet he's an accomplished metallurgist and will be

FAREWELL

an outburst of emotion similar to that of the boys and men who have just been delivered from, well, never mind. But God bless them anyway.

After her Ph.D she hopes to teach—? Preferably in a place like IIT-K." And? Suddenly Shaabi flashed one of her coy smiles. "Yes," she blushed, eyes, that'll come of course. Of course!

★ In his shorts, Bhaskar, also "Bongo," Ray can easily pass off as a junior school boy. It can be he can travel in half ticket! Yet he's an accomplished metallurgist and will be

A Note of Thanks

Shri Jeet Singh Bindra is one of the most illustrious alumni of the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Kanpur. During his distinguished career at Chevron, he initiated numerous collaborative projects with the department and played a pivotal role in establishing the Chevron Corporation Chair. While the full extent of his contributions cannot be adequately enumerated, as they have positively impacted generations of undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty members, several of his transformative initiatives deserve special mention.

These include the establishment of scholarships for female Chemical Engineering students; the Jeet Bindra Unit Operations & Innovation Laboratory; the Jeet Bindra Student Travel Grant; the Mr. and Mrs. Gian Singh Bindra Chair; the Dr. Arakare Vasudev Faculty Fellowship; the Jeet Bindra Postgraduate Research Laboratory; the Jeet Bindra Graduate Lounge; the Jeet Bindra Distinguished Lecture Series; the Jeet Bindra Centre of Excellence in Specialty Chemicals; the Jeet Bindra Interdisciplinary Laboratory for AI in Engineering Science; and, most recently, the Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Chemical Engineering Annex Building.

List of Projects supported by Mr. Jagjeet S. Bindra (BT/CHE/1969)	
Establishment Year	Project Name
2006	Chevron Corporation Chair
2008	Modrenizing Under Graduate Chemical Lab Facility
2009	Mr. & Mrs Gian Singh Bindra Faculty Research Fellowship
2009	Jagjeet Singh Bindra Young Faculty Research Fellowship (Donation by Dr. D S Hur in Honor of Dr. Bindra)
2009	Foundation for Chemical Eng. Department
2009	Student Conference in Chemical Engg. Department
2011	Prof. Arakare Vasudev faculty Research Fellowship (Donation by Dr. D S Hur in Honor of Dr. Bindra)
2011	Mr. & Mrs. Gian Singh Bindra Chair
2020	Modernization of the Unit Operations Laboratory (UOL) and the Workshop Facility
2021	Jeet Bindra Scholarship for Female Students
2022	Jeet Singh Bindra Travel Grant
2022	Jeet Singh Bindra Lecture Series
2022	Graduate Students Lounge Chemical Engineering Department
2023	Post Graduate Research Lab in Dept. of Chemical Engineering
2024	Jeet Singh Bindra Center of Excellence in Speciality Chemicals
2025	Jeet Bindra AI in Engineering Science Lab
2026	MoU for Chemical Engineering Annexe Building

The impact of Jeet Bindra's vision, leadership, and generosity will be felt for generations to come. His contributions have strengthened the department's infrastructure, enriched its academic environment, fostered innovation, and expanded opportunities for students, researchers, and faculty alike. More importantly, his deep commitment to giving back to his alma mater and to society serves as an enduring source of inspiration for future generations.

The Department of Chemical Engineering at IIT Kanpur remains profoundly grateful to Jeet Singh Bindra for his extraordinary generosity, visionary leadership, and unwavering support of education, research, innovation, and institutional excellence. His legacy will continue to shape and inspire the department for many decades to come.

-- Department of Chemical Engineering and the DORA Office, IIT Kanpur



Inauguration of the Unit Operations Lab, April 2022. ChE Alumni will recognize the building in Northern Labs which has been the Unit Ops Lab since the earliest days of the campus.



Visible in the picture are Mr. Jeet Bindra, Director Abhay Karandikar and Mr. Mahesh Lal (BT, ChE, 1964-69, Distinguished Alumnus 2003). Prof. Jayant K Singh, then HOD ChE, is visible in the back.



A classic fluidized bed experimental setup in the Unit Ops Lab



The Graduate Students Lounge (Top) and the Post Graduate Research Laboratory (Bottom). Both of these facilities are part of the ChE Northern Labs



The facilities include an HPLC-GPC system equipped with advanced detection technologies like Evaporative Light Scattering Detection (ELSD), Light Scattering Detectors, UV-VIS and Refractive Index (RI) Detectors



The new Center of Excellence in Specialty Chemicals, inaugurated in April 2026. Visible are Prof. Jayant Singh (Dean of Infrastructure and Planning), Prof. Nitin Kaistha (current HOD ChE), Mr. Jeet Bindra and Director Manindra Agrawal



An overview of the facilities. These include a Freeze-dryer, Femtojet, 4i-Microinjector, Homogenizer, FTIR Spectroscopy, Vacuum Oven, Convection Oven, High Performance Liquid Chromatography with Mass Spectroscopy (HPLC-MS), Surface Tension Goniometer, and a Water-Perm tester.

The Evolution of the IITK Seal

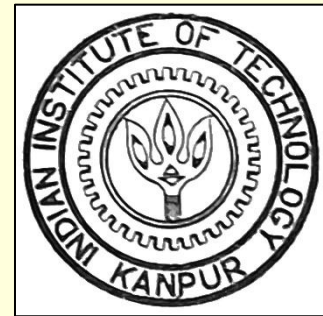
In our past issues ([August 2023](#) and [December 2025](#)), we reported on the origins of the IITK Seal and its redesign by Prof. Vijay Stokes (ME, 1964-78) in 1966. Professor Stokes has since informed us that our reports were not fully correct – there have actually been three iterations of the seal, not two, and the one currently in use is not the version that he had designed.

The Spark strives to be as accurate as possible in its documentation and appreciates the feedback. We have corrected the two previous stories with these updates. The revised documents are available at the DORA website ([here](#)) or the Spark’s publicly accessible drive ([here](#)).

The original design of the IITK seal was based on a suggestion by Dr. Sampurnanand (then Chief Minister, UP) and rendered by Mr. Sudhir Ranjan Khastgir, Principal of Lucknow College of Arts and Crafts ([Wikipedia](#)).

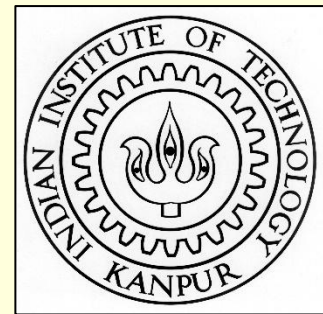
At its core is a ‘trinetra’ with three eyes symbolizing knowledge—an embodiment of the three fundamental aspects of learning: Perception, Analysis, and Synthesis. It is a powerful metaphor for inner perception, clarity of thought, and intellectual depth. Surrounding this is a gear, representing technology and the spirit of working around the clock—signifying the unending pursuit of engineering excellence and innovation, with the circles representing the wheels of progress.

Image: Abhay Bhushan (BT, EE, 1960-65)

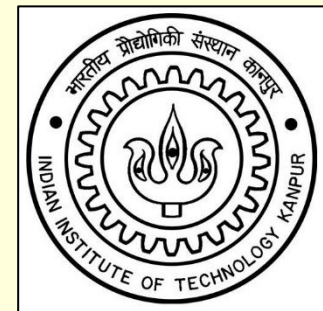


In 1966, ahead of the Second Convocation in 1967, the design of the seal was updated by Professor Vijay Stokes, with a more realistic *trishul*, the number of gear teeth reduced from 30 to 24, and the profile for the gear teeth corrected to that of actual gears. The classic font used was taken from the ancient Trajan Roman columns. These changes resulted in a cleaner and simpler seal. Together with the names of awardees, the new seal was printed on all degree certificates.

Image: Professor Vijay Stokes



Based on a Government of India recommendation, in the late 1980s the name of the Institute was rendered in both Hindi and English. While most elements of Professor Stokes’ design are still present in the current seal, the classic Roman letters in the outer circle have been replaced with smaller, sans serif Devanagari and English fonts. This seal was first used for the degrees awarded in 1989 and remains in use today.



Design of the IIT/K Seal and Diplomas

Vijay Kumar Stokes (Professor, ME, 1964-78)

I have always been interested in graphics. One of the first things I noticed on joining IITK was the seal or emblem used on all the letterheads, which I felt was very poorly rendered.



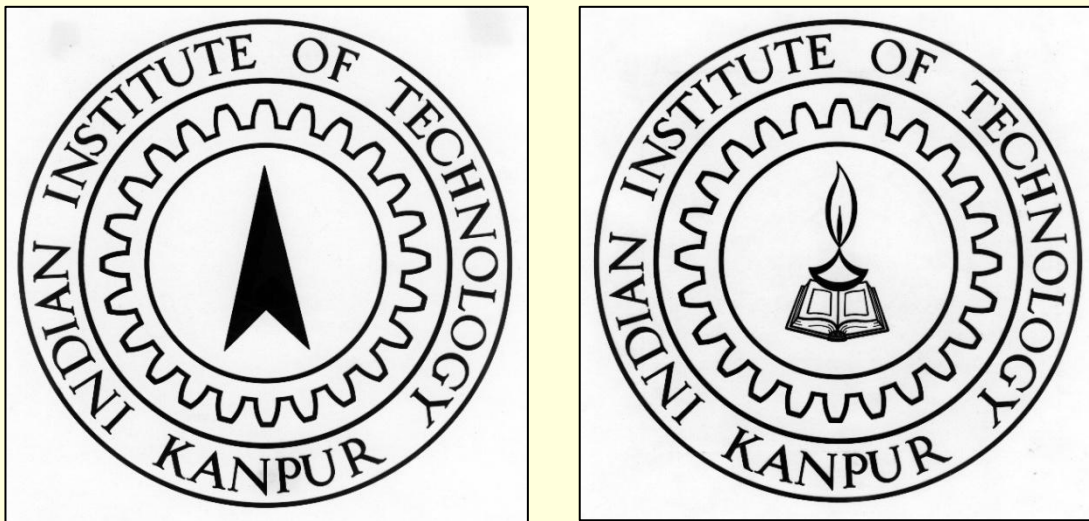
Besides the very poorly rendered “Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur” outside an equally poorly rendered ‘gear’ wheel representing technology, the center had an object that I could not place. My colleagues also did not have a clue regarding the origin or significance of this object. On pressing further, one colleague averred that it could be “the boy scout symbol, or the lily Fleur de Lis.” Another suggested that it must be a lotus flower, a commonly used Indian motif. I wanted to have a better seal rendered, and I decided to consult Professor Kelkar.

I remember my meeting with him very vividly. With his hands folded together, elbows resting on the table, and with a twinkle in his eyes, he first asked how I was doing, and then enquired about the purpose of my visit. His response to my query was very interesting, and something no one else in the Institute seemed to be aware of. Evidently, the idea for the seal was given by Dr. Sampurnanand, the eminent educationist, author, and journalist, who twice was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He suggested the concept of ‘trinetra,’ or the third eye of Shiva. This frontal eye of fire is the eye of inner perception; it looks mainly inward but, when directed outward, it burns all before it.

Sudhir Khastgir, who had studied under Nandlal Bose in Shantiniketan, and was at the time the Principal of the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Lucknow, suggested rendering this concept with a *trishul*, or trident with three eyes to represent this third eye of Shiva. I was then able to understand why the graphic on the existing seal could easily have been mistaken for a Fleur de Lis or a lotus flower!

While the conversation with Professor Kelkar clarified the idea behind the seal, I felt that this Hindu mythology-based concept went against the secular nature of the Indian Republic. While he agreed with my sentiment, Professor Kelkar felt that perhaps we should continue with it because it had already been adopted. However, most likely reading my body language, he suggested that I explore alternatives.

I then set about soliciting new ideas for the seal. Several colleagues suggested a *pipal*, or banyan tree—in ancient times sages would sit under them and ‘lecture’ their *shishyas*, or students—again, an oft used motif. But I rejected it when a young colleague said that “nothing grows under a banyan tree,” which was not a good metaphor for the Indian academic environment. I then considered using a *diya*, —a traditional Indian earthenware, oil lamp with a cotton wick—resting on a book to represent enlightenment based on knowledge. I had decided to keep the gear wheel with twenty-four teeth to represent technology; I was determined to have the gear teeth have the proper engineering shape.

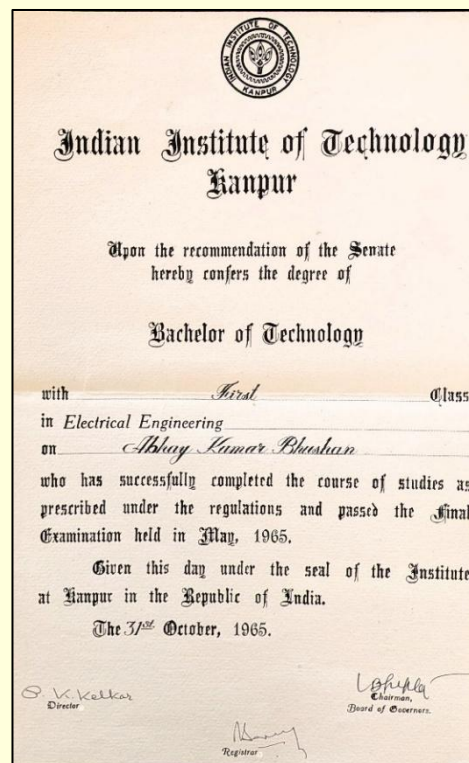
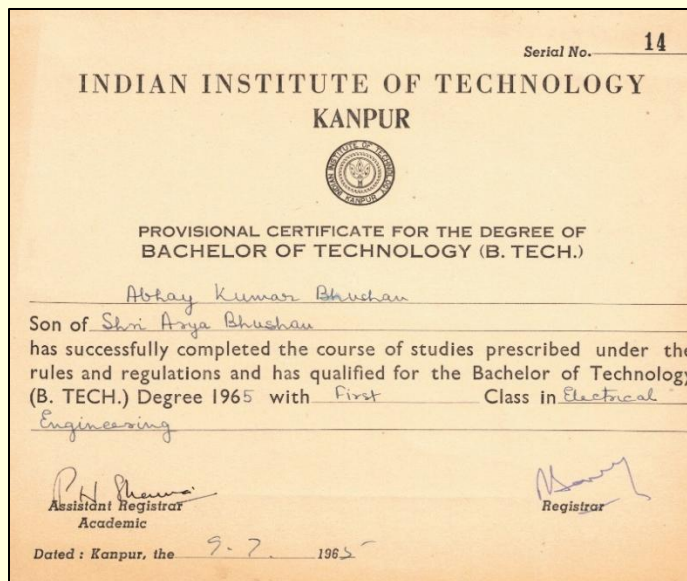


Some alternative designs for the new seal

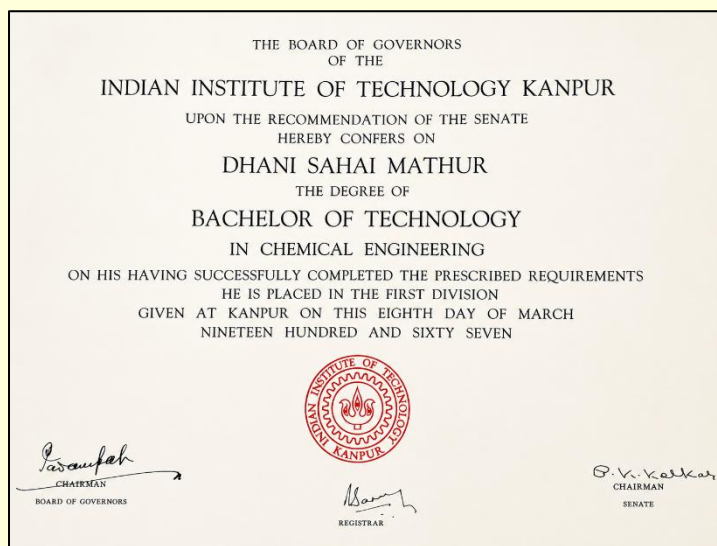
While I was working on the concept for the seal, one day I happened to bump into Professor M.V. George from the Chemistry Department. He mentioned that a committee was looking into the format of the diplomas that would be required for the 1967 Convocation for the graduation ceremony of the second batch. I told him about my aversion to the quality of Indian diplomas. He said that they were looking at many diplomas, including those from the US, to come up with something appropriate to IITK.

After a little sparring I realized we were arguing about two altogether different issues: His committee was drafting the language to be used in the diploma, with little thought about how it would look; I was interested in its graphics issues.

On understanding where I was coming from, he encouraged me to work on the graphic design of the diploma. I got together a draftsman, a supervisor of our new printing facility—which had a letter press and a small offset printing machine—and the Assistant Registrar of Academic Affairs. I sold everyone on the idea that each diploma would be made by printing the name of the person, I identified the font, and specified the paper and the size of the diploma. Then I asked them to have someone prepare a new high-quality seal as per the design elements I specified. They balked at the idea; what was wrong with the existing seal?



(L) A Provisional Certificate awarded to graduates at the First Convocation on October 31, 1965, and (R) the final degrees mailed to the First Batch, later that year.
Pictures: Abhay Bhushan (BT, EE, 1960-65).



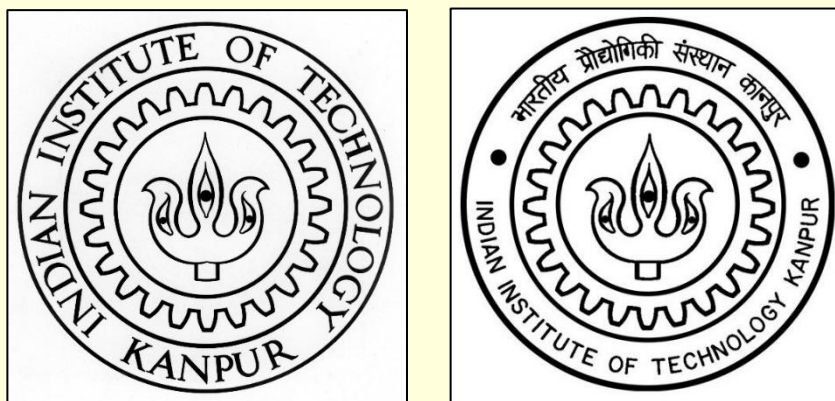
A Degree from the Second Convocation signed by (from left) Sir Padampat Singhania, Chairman, Board of Governors; Ratan Swarup, Registrar, and P.K. Kelkar, Director. Shared by Dhani Sahai Mathur (1961-66)

A chance encounter with the committee that was working on drafting the text to be used in the degree certificates for the second batch led to the new seal. Without this redesign, the certificates would have probably looked like those from 1965. Besides redoing the seal, Prof Stokes chose the layout, the fonts, and the 'imported' Kent' paper. And, at his insistence, the name of each awardee was printed on the certificate. This was a very big deal -- at that time digital technology did not exist. The certificates were printed on a small, in-house letterpress at IITK.

I ended up drawing the seal myself. The India-ink drawing, which is about fifteen inches in diameter, took me 55 hours. This excludes experiments in which I tested different thicknesses for the lines and fonts and different renderings for the *trishul* and *trinetra*. As alternatives to the *trinetra* concept for the seal center, I also prepared two other symbols, a lamp and a lamp on a book. For the fonts, I used the elegant script carved on the ancient Trajan's Column that I copied from a calligraphy book. Unfortunately, the "U" in Kanpur was a little offset; this was later corrected through a photographic process.

Photographic reduction of the three seal concepts—at decreasing sizes—were prepared to see how the seals looked at different magnifications. I then took the results to Professor Kelkar. After complimenting me on my effort, he still felt that we should stick with the 'trinetra' concept, which we did. As I look back, I still worry about the Hindu mythology basis of this logo. However, I must admit and thank Dr. Sampurnanand for this powerful metaphor for 'inner perception.' It felt good when the seal rendered by me began to appear on all the stationery.

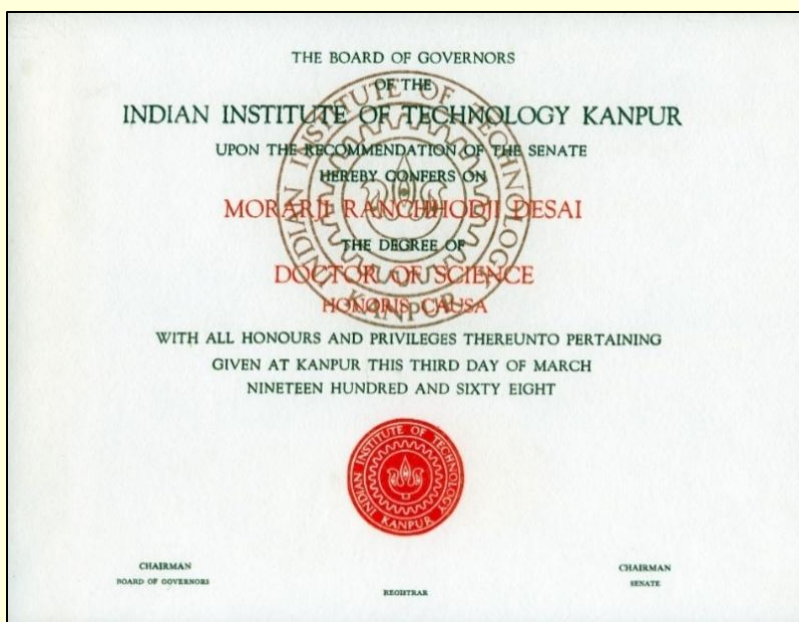
I oversaw the printing of all the diplomas for the second batch. Fresh lead type was ordered for our letterpress. I rejected any diploma that even had a minor printing flaw. At my insistence, each candidate's name was printed.



Much later, long after I had left IIT Kanpur, a decision was made to include the title "Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur" both in Hindi and English. I had talked about this possibility with Professor Kelkar who felt that that was not necessary. While I applaud the use of our National Language, the graphic representation could be better. The legends in both languages have been crammed in the same ring, because of which the clarity of a small seal has been lost. Perhaps, the legends could have been placed in two different rings. Of course, the ring widths would have to be rebalanced to produce an aesthetically pleasing effect.

Design of the Honorary Diplomas

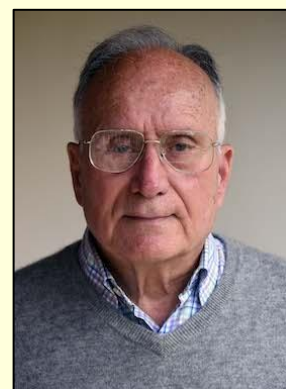
Ahead of the Third Convocation, Professor Kelkar was keen to award an honorary degree to Professor Norman Dahl, the first Program Leader of the Kanpur Indo-American Program. A decision was made to also award one to Mr. Morarji Desai, then Deputy Prime Minister of India. I was asked to work on the graphic design of the honorary degrees; if I remember right, a D.Sc. for Norman Christian Dahl and a D.Litt. for Morarji Ranchhodji Desai, I still remember their full names!



I chose a heavier handmade paper stock. To simulate sealing-wax seal I inverted the image so that the seal would appear white on a red background. By applying Virkotype resin powder on the freshly printed ink image, and then heating it, we were able to create the feel of raised lettering. I made several different versions, which I still have; I do not remember which one was finally chosen. I do remember giving proofs to the academic office to ensure that they had samples for future use.

About the author:

Professor Vijay Kumar Stokes, obtained his undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from BHU (1961) and his PhD from Princeton (1963). He taught at IIT Kanpur (1964-1978), where he headed the Mechanical Engineering Department (1974-1977) and was the Convener of the Nuclear Engineering and Technology Program (1977-1978). Very involved in student affairs, he served as the President of the Students Gymkhana, on completion of which he made two consequential recommendations that were later implemented: (1) That the President of the Students Gymkhana should be a student. And (2) that a Dean of Students Affairs position should be created.



Professor Stokes also started the Association of Mechanical Engineers. He designed the first logo of the IITK Television Centre. But his lasting legacy to IIT Kanpur is the redesign of the IITK seal in 1966, elements of which are embedded in the current seal that we use today.

Before retiring, Professor Stokes worked at GE Corporate R&D in Upstate New York from 1978-2002. He is the grandson of Satyanand Stokes, the American missionary who settled in India, was jailed during the Indian freedom struggle, and revolutionized the Indian apple industry by introducing the Delicious variety of apples in Himachal Pradesh. Today, besides setting up a world-class, science-based apple orchard at his ancestral home in Ilaqa Kotgarh, for over 35 years, Professor Stokes has been documenting the local language, culture, and music and dance of the region.

विद्या परिषद की अनुशंसा पर
भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान कानपुर
के संचालक मंडल द्वारा
सुदर्शन एल० वी०
को
प्रौद्योगिकी स्नातक
की उपाधि
रासायनिक अभियांत्रिकी
में
निर्धारित अर्हताएँ सफलतापूर्वक पूर्ण कर लेने पर
तेह्र मई उन्नीस सौ नब्बे को
प्रदान की गई ।

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF THE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KANPUR
UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SENATE
HEREBY CONFERS ON
SUDARSHAN L. V.
THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY
IN
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING
ON HIS HAVING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THE PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS
GIVEN AT KANPUR ON THIS TWENTYTHIRD DAY OF MAY
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY



अध्यक्ष, संचालक मंडल
CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

M.R. Syengar
कुलसचिव
REGISTRAR

A. Mallik
अध्यक्ष, विद्या परिषद
CHAIRMAN
SENATE

An IITK degree from the 1990 Convocation. Starting in 1989, consistent with the seal, the text in the IITK degrees is in both English and Hindi scripts. This bilingual certificate featured Hindi on the top half, while retaining the design of the existing English text in the bottom half. Shared by Sudarshan Lakvalli (BT, ChE, 1986-90).

विद्या परिषद की अनुशंसा पर
 भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान कानपुर
 के संचालक मण्डल द्वारा
अमन कुमार सिंह
 को
प्रौद्योगिकी स्नातक
 की उपाधि
जनपद अभियांत्रिकी
 में निर्धारित अर्हताएँ सफलतापूर्वक पूर्ण कर लेने पर
 तेईस जून दो हजार पच्चीस को कानपुर में
 प्रदान की गयी।



THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
 OF THE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KANPUR
 UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE SENATE
 HEREBY CONFERS ON
AMAN KUMAR SINGH
 THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY
 IN
CIVIL ENGINEERING
 ON HAVING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE
 PRESCRIBED REQUIREMENTS
 GIVEN AT KANPUR ON THIS TWENTY THIRD DAY OF JUNE
 TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE.

अध्यक्ष, संचालक मण्डल
 CHAIRPERSON
 BOARD OF GOVERNORS

कुलसचिव
 REGISTRAR

अध्यक्ष, विद्या परिषद
 CHAIRPERSON
 SENATE

प्रौद्योगिकी स्नातक उपाधि, प्रौद्योगिकी स्नातक - स्नातकोत्तर द्वैत उपाधि पाठ्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत प्रदान की गयी।
 B TECH DEGREE AWARDED UNDER B TECH - M TECH DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMME

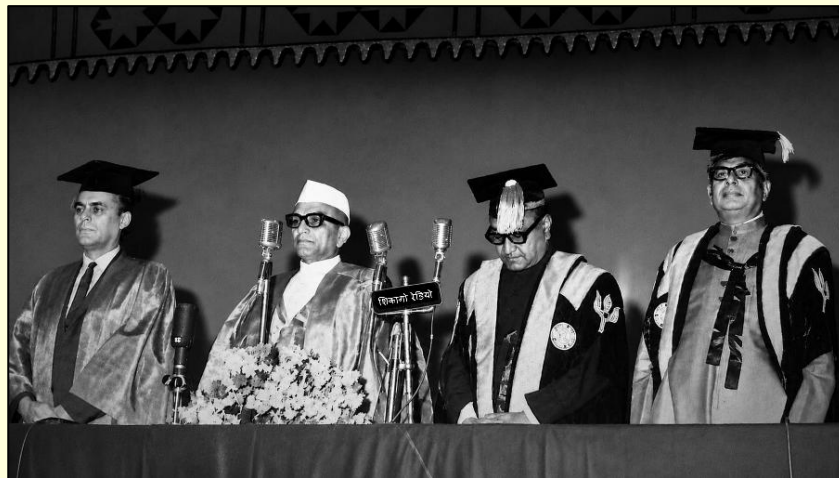
An IITK degree from the 2025 Convocation. The evolving academic program at IITK has allowed students a variety of choices, including a 5-year Dual B Tech – M Tech degree option. Students may also get Dual Degrees across two different engineering disciplines and choose from a variety of other programs at both the Undergraduate and Graduate levels. Shared by Aman Kumar Singh (BT-MT, CE, 2020-25), who received a similar certificate for the M Tech degree at the same convocation.

The Third Convocation

IIT Kanpur awards the Honoris Causa degree to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to science, technology, engineering, social work, or academia. The first two honorary degrees at IIT Kanpur were awarded at its Third Convocation on 3 March 1968: Doctor of Letters (D.Litt. Honoris Causa) to Morarji Ranchhodji Desai, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of India; and Doctor of Science (D.Sc. Honoris Causa) to Norman Christian Dahl, First Program Leader of the Kanpur Indo-American Program.



From left: Mr. BG Reddy, Governor, UP; Mr. Morarji Desai, Chief Guest; Sir Padampat Singhania, Chairman, Board of Governors IITK, arriving at the Convocation ceremony.



Prof. Norman Dahl, Mr. Morarji Desai, Sir Padampat Singhania and Mr. BG Reddy, Third Convocation.

Images of the Third Convocation are from the IITK Archives, shared by Navpreet Singh and digitally restored by Aman Kumar Singh.

The Spark thanks the many alumni from 1965 through today who sent us copies of their degrees, thus allowing us to accurately date the changes across the years. In hindsight, we could have simply requested the Registrar's Office to pull out their records, but it was a lot more fun doing it this way!

Honoring a Teacher, Mentor, and Institution Builder:

Dr. Vijay Kumar Stokes

On May 2, 2026, the IIT Kanpur East Coast Chapter felicitated Dr. Vijay K. Stokes, former Head of Mechanical Engineering and one of IITK's foundational institution builders. Joining IIT Kanpur in 1964 after completing his PhD at Princeton, Dr. Stokes helped shape the institute's academic philosophy, student culture, and early identity.

The event emerged from a conversation between Ram Misra (Class of 1963–68) and Dr. Stokes, who now divides his time between India and the U.S. Sensing a rare opportunity to gather alumni around a beloved teacher, the East Coast Chapter organized a celebration that became an afternoon of gratitude, stories, and fellowship.

Held at Mantra Indian Restaurant in Paramus, New Jersey, and generously sponsored by Anil Bansal (Class of 1977), the gathering drew nearly fifty alumni and spouses—from the pioneering Class of 1965 to graduates of 2000. The wide span of attendees reflected the enduring influence of a teacher whose impact crosses generations.



On the floor: Kanchan Joshi, Jaya Gupta, Saurabh Srivastava '00;

The first row: Jyoti Agarwal, Prem Gupta '70, Ram Misra '68, Prof. Stokes, Anil Bansal '77, Kumud Bansal, Vijay Tripathi '70, Purnima Misra, Astha Shukla, Satya Agarwal '67, Ramesh Gupta '69, Kanwal Aluwalia '67, Jayant Vir '69

The last Row: Amar Srivastava '98, Mayan Moudgill '88, Nita Jain, Dhiraj Sharma '71, Makrand Joshi '77 (behind Dhiraj), Ravi Jain '78 (Between Dhiraj and Prem), Sri Bali '65 (behind Anil, only a portion of head visible), Rajendra Swaroop '65 (only the head, left to Purnima), Ashok Saxena '70 (behind Purnima and Astha), Ratan Bajpai '97 (behind Ashok).



Prof. Vijay Stokes with Ram Misra

A highlight for Dr. Stokes was meeting members of the 1964–69 batch, the first cohort he taught at IITK. The formal felicitation included a brief introduction by Rakesh Pandey (Class of 1978), followed by Ram Misra presenting Dr. Stokes with a traditional IITK dupatta and a copy of the 1963–68 batch book documenting IITK’s early history—one in which Dr. Stokes played a central role.

Spouses added warmth and curiosity to the afternoon, eager to hear about IITK’s formative years. Dr. Stokes answered their questions with characteristic patience.

A touching moment came when Amar Srivastava introduced his wife Astha Shukla, daughter of Prof. A.P. Shukla. Dr. Stokes’ face lit up as he recalled that Astha’s grandfather had been his father’s classmate at BHU.



Amar Srivastava, Ram Misra, Astha Shukla (Dr A P Shukla's daughter), Dr Stokes



Dr Stokes, Ram Misra, Kumud Bansal, Purnima Misra

Led by Kumud Bansal and Purnima Misra, the spouses honored Dr. Stokes with a shawl—an affectionate gesture that underscored the personal bonds he has nurtured over decades.

Academically, Dr. Stokes was an early champion of an engineering curriculum that blended rigorous engineering science with practical application—an approach that set IIT Kanpur apart from traditional, compartmentalized models of engineering education in India. His vision helped generations of students learn to think analytically, solve complex problems, and bridge theory with practice.

Beyond academics, Dr. Stokes played a pivotal role in shaping IITK's student culture. Many alumni fondly call him the “Ambedkar of the IITK Students' Gymkhana.” His belief that students should govern their own union—without faculty involvement—established the tradition of complete Gymkhana autonomy, a defining feature of IITK's leadership culture. As President of the Students' Gymkhana, his recommendations resulted in the Gymkhana President being an elected student, and in the creation of the Dean of Students Affairs position.

During the event, Dr. Stokes spoke on a wide range of topics: his arrival at IITK, the institute's early challenges, and the collaborative culture that took root and endured. He shared personal stories as well: Rejuvenating his family orchard in Himachal Pradesh to a world-class, science-based apple orchard. His study and documentation of the local language, culture, and music and dance of the region. His current project: building a museum honoring his grandfather Satyanand (Samuel Evans) Stokes, the only American imprisoned during India's freedom struggle.

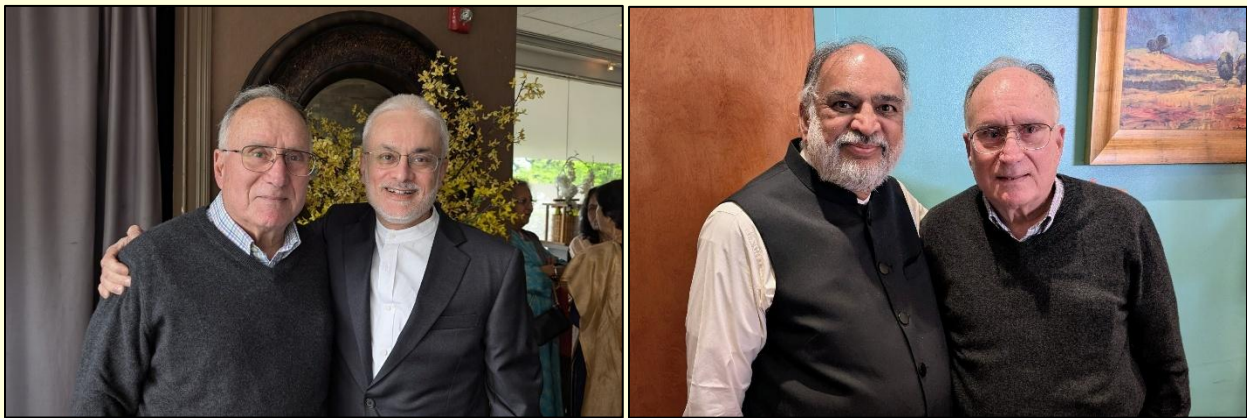
Throughout the afternoon, alumni shared memories that painted a portrait of a teacher who was rigorous yet approachable, principled yet progressive, and deeply committed to building institutions that would outlast individuals. The presence of alumni spanning thirty-five graduating classes affirmed a simple truth: buildings and curricula evolve, but the influence of exceptional teachers endures.



Ramesh Gupta '69, Satya Agarwal '67, Dr. Stokes, Ram Misra '68, Anil Bansal '77, Ashok Saxena '70

As a tribute to his lasting impact, the East Coast Chapter announced the creation of the **Dr. Vijay K. Stokes Scholarship**, conceived by Rakesh Pandey. More than financial support, the scholarship represents generations of gratitude towards a teacher whose vision helped shape IIT Kanpur and whose influence continues to inspire. Alumni wishing to contribute to this scholarship can use this link to make a donation: <https://iitk.ac.in/dora/vijay-k-stokes/>

Dr. Stokes' story is inseparable from IIT Kanpur's own. His legacy lives on in the institute's academic philosophy, its culture of student leadership, and in the thousands of alumni who carry forward the values he helped instill. The afternoon in Paramus was, above all, a celebration of a life devoted to education, institution building, and the empowerment of young minds.



*(L) Prof. Stokes with his nephew, Mayan Moudgill. Mayan and his wife Preeti are both IITK alumni.
(R) With Rakesh Pandey*

Contributed by Rakesh Pandey (BT, ME, 1973-78) and Ram Misra (BT, ME, 1963-68)

What's A Name Got To Do With It!

Umesh Chandra (Head, Gliding & Soaring Centre, 1980-2006)

During your active life in service, you sometimes come across stories of adventure that turn into misadventure. This is one such adventure of two American Professors associated with the Kanpur Indo-American Program (KIAP) under which IIT Kanpur was established. After reading an exciting article in *The Spark* (Issue 7, Aug 2023, available [here](#)) I got curious enough to find some more details on the episode. This turns out to be a true exciting thriller.

In December 1964, high drama was enacted at the immigration centre at Palam airport (now called IGI) New Delhi. Utter confusion due to two names that looked almost the same when written: "Walcott" and "W Olcott", and the commonalities of small aircraft (Piper/Cessna), flight routes through Pakistan, etc., put Delhi police in utter panic, resulting in detention of two American educationists. The episode relates to Daniel Hailey Walcott, Jr., a swashbuckling Texan and a notorious smuggler, and two Americans, Professor Alve Erickson (ME, MIT) & Pilot John W Olcott (AE, Princeton University) visiting IIT-Kanpur under the Kanpur-Indo American Program.

The Legend of Daniel Walcott

During the early 1960s, Daniel H Walcott, an American Pilot and a notorious smuggler, became famous for his daring aviation stunts and jailbreaks in India. Son of a Geologist, educated at the University of Virginia, and posing as an American billionaire, he secured a legitimate contract with Air India for his Trans-Atlantic Airlines to ferry freight between Afghanistan and India. However, he illegally flew planes in and out of India ferrying contraband, using his Air India contract as a cover. On September 20, 1962, he was arrested and lodged in Tihar Jail for smuggling ammunition and gold and his Piper Apache aircraft, parked at Delhi's Safdarjung airport, was impounded. Along with French smuggler Claude Donze, it is estimated that Walcott smuggled gold worth over 400 crores into India every year (*Surmised - The Economist* 1971).

Based on his bail application, the courts permitted Walcott to visit Safdarjung Airport every week under escort, to maintain his impounded aircraft and run up its engines periodically. He was permitted to purchase a limited quantity of fuel. His criminal mind worked out a strategy for escape from India. He bought the limited fuel sanctioned to run up the engines but cut the run time to conserve fuel in the tanks. The day there was enough fuel in the tanks, he operationalised his escape plan. As usual, he was escorted by the Delhi police guards to the Safdarjung Airport for the routine engine warmup exercise. Only this time, he did not stop after runup. He rolled out and took off!

ed for Release @ 50-Yr 2013/12/20

JAN 24 1966

AMERICAN SEIZED BY INDIAN POLICE

He Is Identified as Fugitive
In Gunrunning Case

Special to The New York Times
NEW DELHI, Jan. 23—The Indian Government announced tonight that it had arrested Daniel H. Walcott, a convicted American gunrunner who escaped capture by the Indian police twice in two and a half years.

A spokesman for the Home Ministry said Walcott was captured last night in a Bombay hotel, where he had registered under an assumed name. The spokesman said a French "accomplice," identified as Jean Claude Donze, had been arrested with him.

The two men were seized by agents of the Central Bureau of Investigation who had been checking on their identity since they moved into the hotel a few days ago and registered as British nationals.

Officials said the suspect contended that he was not Walcott, but that the police had "conclusively established" his identity.

Cartridges Found

Walcott has been one of the most elusive men ever sought by Indian authorities. In September, 1962, he was arrested at New Delhi's Ashoka Hotel, when the police found 760 16-mm. cartridges in his luggage.

Later, 10,000 more cartridges were seized from the plane on which he had flown here. Walcott was then identified as president of Transatlantic Airlines, which was flying freight between Stuttgart, Germany, and New Delhi.

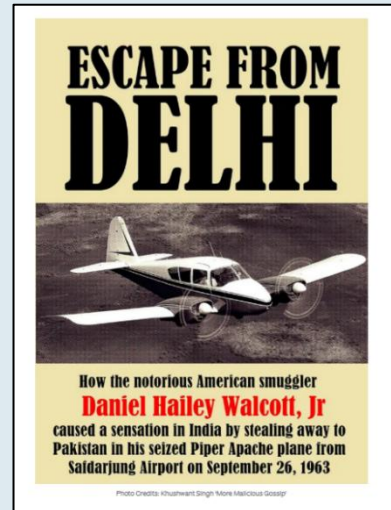
In August, 1963, he was sentenced to six months in prison and fined the equivalent of \$420. The next month, however, the court reduced his sentence to the time he had already spent in prison, but his light plane was impounded against payment of the fine and other money owed to private parties here.

On Sept. 26, 1963, Walcott got into the plane and flew off to Karachi, the Pakistani capital, before anyone could stop him. Opposition Members of Parliament accused the Government of having neglected national security in allowing him to get away.

Declassified CIA Files, 50-year Release 2013/12/20

Before the poor escort guards or ATC could realise it, he was airborne, made a few low-level passes over Tihar jail and headed straight to Pakistan. It is believed that during the low passes he threw packets of chocolates and cigarettes for his former fellow inmates at Tihar Jail. Flying low he eluded the Airforce jets that were scrambled to bring him back and landed at Karachi.

This was just one of his many escapes from the law. Walcott was involved in Beirut for selling aerial photographs of Lebanese military installations to Israeli agents. In another incident, he landed an aircraft 50 miles south of Bombay on a beach with a consignment of contraband Swiss watches. Sometime later, he was caught smuggling diamonds worth over \$32,500 (*now over 10x that value*) between Colombo and Bombay. The stories of his exploits and escapes from the law were unending.



His frequent escapes frustrated the police and law enforcement agencies in India. Therefore, when they heard that two Americans were flying from Lahore to New Delhi in a Cessna and the pilot was W Olcott (easily mistaken for Walcott in typed materials), the dreaded smuggler, they were elated that they had their man after all. Quickly, armed guards were sent to the Palam airport for the grand reception.

What happened next was related many years later by a passenger in that Cessna aircraft to one of the editors of *The Spark*.

That passenger was Prof Alve Erickson, headed to IITK.

Alve Erickson's Adventures

Alve Erickson, a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT, was learning to fly when he decided to go to IITK. To get a solo pilot license, you must put in a certain number of hours under instruction. So, he figured what better way than to fly to India with his instructor while getting some instruction and adding up his hours, plus completing his trip to Kanpur.

He got his plane shipped to West Germany, from where he and his instructor, John W Olcott (*also a KIAP participant, AE, Princeton*), took off. This was in December, and they had timed their arrival right before the New Year. They had heard that New Year's parties in the US Embassy in Delhi were quite something, and it was their intention to join the revelry.

All went well. Their little aircraft wasn't a long-haul plane, so they had been stopping along the way to refuel. Before Delhi, they stopped at Lahore to refuel, updated their flight plan, radioed ahead to Palam Airport of their planned arrival, and landed at New Delhi's Palam airport (*now called IGI*) in the afternoon.

Their arrival was dramatic. Right after their plane rolled to a stop, they were surrounded by armed police and ordered into a waiting van, to be taken straight to the nearest police station. Flabbergasted beyond belief, for they never expected this sort of welcome, Alve Erickson and John W Olcott didn't know what had hit them. Yes, they had come from Lahore. No, they were not carrying ammunition. No, John wasn't a smuggler. No, Alve was a professor.

No matter, these guys were detained while the police got busy. And Alve and John could see their merry parties vanishing into the night. They had no idea what they had done to cause this most unusual welcome.

Daniel Walcott, Tihar Jail and the Great Escape

Sometime earlier, some powers-that-be in Delhi had decided that their New Year's Party needed some excitement- with a bang. They wanted a shooting party: go out to Bharatpur, eat, drink, and hunt some gamebirds. They had organized the transport, the booze, and the shotguns, but ammo in India was highly regulated. So, they had enlisted the services of a small private air-freight company operating in the Middle-East/India/SE Asia sector to smuggle in large quantities of shotgun shells. Unfortunately, someone spilled the beans, and the pilot was caught, the ammo confiscated, and the pilot locked up. His name was Daniel H. Walcott, the smuggler, gun-runner, etc., etc.

Daniel Walcott was a broad-shouldered, persuasive Texan whose profile was known to readers of Interpol circulars the world over. A suave operator, he had at least four aliases and had been charged in half a dozen countries with a variety of violations, from running an illegal transatlantic passenger airline to swindling and espionage.

Arrested on the ammo smuggling charge, Walcott languished in Delhi's Tihar Jail for half a year until his bail was posted by Air-India's chairman, JRD Tata. (Walcott officially had an Air-India contract to haul freight from Afghanistan to Indian rail centres, which he had been using as a cover for his smuggling operations). Upon release from Tihar, he dutifully returned a few months later for the trial. He was found guilty, fined, but the prison sentence was commuted to the time he had already spent in jail. Walcott was free but not his Piper, which had been seized for unsettled debts. No one, however, seemed to mind that he continued to care for the plane, pouring a few litres of fuel into its tanks each day, in order to run up the engines for a few minutes.

He ran them up, all right, especially on that day, weeks later, when he finally had enough fuel on board for an escape. Five airport guards tried to stop him by hanging on to the tail. He blew them off with a blast of prop wash and headed for Pakistan, but not before circling over Tihar Jail to drop cigarettes and cookies to his former fellow inmates. Flying low, he eluded the Indian Air Force jets that were scrambled to bring him back. (*Time*, *The Good Bad Man*, February 11, 1966)

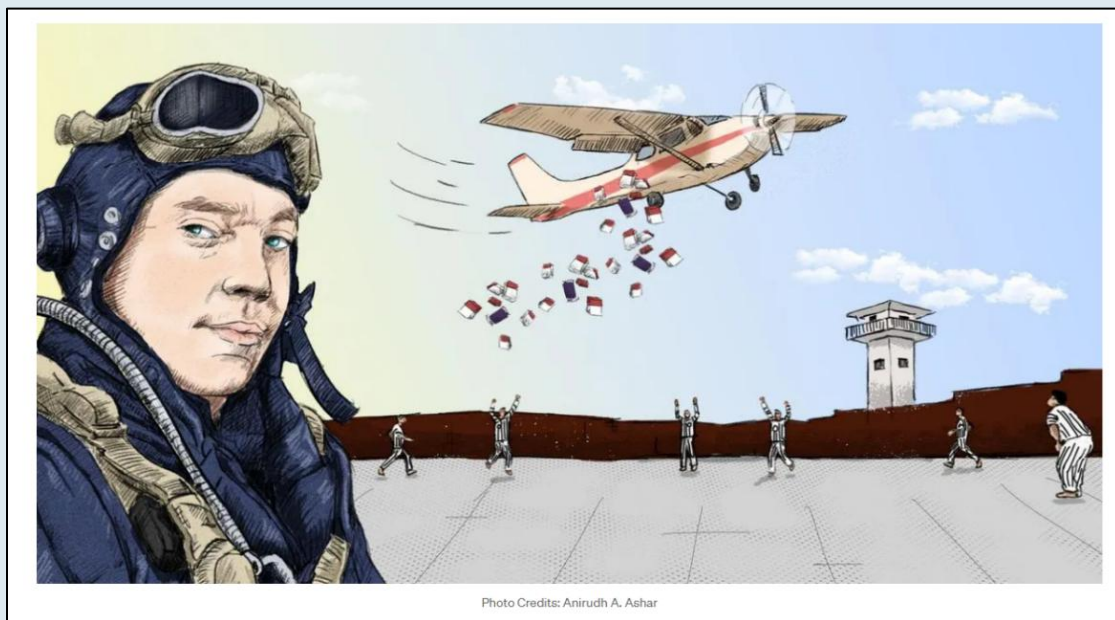


Photo Credits: Anirudh A. Ashar



Professors Alve Erickson and Bob Archer (Case Western) at IITK, Jan 1965. Picture: Dave Montenegro

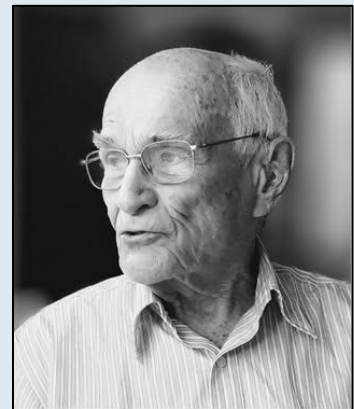
Just Alve's Luck

By a coincidence beyond imagination, Alve's instructor's name was John W Olcott. (And when typed or scribbled on a piece of paper, W Olcott looked and sounded suspiciously like Walcott).

When Alve and John's flight plan was received, the airport police couldn't believe their eyes. They had just seen Walcott escape with an impounded plane, and here was Walcott, that too, coming from Pakistan, that too, in a small private plane, once again on New Year's Eve. Did they think Delhi Police were stupid? Thus, the heavily armed welcoming party, taking them into custody, and a flurry of phone calls to the US Embassy where the revellers were too busy to deal with the problem, while Alve and John cooled their heels in the comforts of Tihar Jail.

It was well into the next morning when the matter was finally sorted out, and our two IITK adventurers were released.

Almost sixty years later, Alve Erickson regaled us with his story with a twinkle in his eye, while we were rolling with laughter.



Prof. Alve Erickson, June 2023. Picture: Shirish Joshi

Following the conversation with Alve, we caught up with John Olcott in New Jersey. A flight research specialist, John Olcott was associated with the Department of Aeronautical Engineering at IITK from Nov 64 – May 65, and again from Oct 66 – Jan 68. John is well known in the flying world: he headed the flying magazine Av Buyer, served on many organizations, and was Chairman, ACJ Business Aviation Advisory Board North America. He too has memorable recollections of 'that Walcott' incident.

This story previously appeared in The Spark, Issue 7, August 2023, available [here](#). Additional details and photographs are available there.

The Great Cassata Heist of Hall 2

By Someone Who Still Misses the Ice Cream

Cassata Ice Cream: A Brief Introduction

Cassata ice cream is not your ordinary ice cream. It is architecture. A half-log of layered ice cream resting on a cake foundation, crowned with toasted cashews and pistachios like a royal turban. It comes in colors that would make a Holi vendor rethink his palette—pink, yellow, pista-green, rose, tutti-frutti chaos. When cut, each slice reveals its geological strata: cake, layers, nuts. It's a complete sugar ecosystem.



Why it was special

Because it was *good*. Because it was *rare*. And because in Hall 2, circa 1974–75, cassata night was basically a national holiday.

Movies in L7 were postponed. Quizzes were rescheduled. Trips to the Chinese place in town were abandoned. People suddenly became punctual—just to ensure they didn't miss the cassata dinner.

The saga

Two batches feature in this saga: My batch (1973-78), and the 1970-75 batch. The 1970 batch was enormous—400 students instead of the usual 200.

Why does this matter? Because the 1970 batch was... different.

These were people who, in a parallel universe, might have ended up in IIT Bombay or IIT Madras. Smart, yes. But also, adventurous. These were people who climbed mountains for fun, swam in glacier melt for sport, and built amplifiers that could double as seismic equipment. They were brilliant, adventurous, and occasionally applied their talents to activities that were not listed in the curriculum. Like what follows.

Which brings us to:

The plan

To swipe the entire freezer of cassata ice cream on the next special dinner night.

Yes. Everything. The motherlode. The Great Cassata Extraction of Hall 2.

The ice cream's usual arrival was in a cycle-rickshaw freezer box — an innocent-looking container holding multiple logs of cassata, each good for ten slices. The plan was simple: grab as many logs as possible and vanish before anyone realizes that the dessert course has vanished.

Of course, there were complications:

The packaging was distinctive.

The shelf life was limited.

And the Mess Secretary stood in the way.



Key players in this saga were, on one side: the 1970 batch adventurers—men who feared neither exams nor brain freeze. On the other side, the Mess Secretary, Gajendra Dublish, my friend from my batch.



Dublish was a great guy. Big-hearted, loving to a fault, armed with a voice that could double as a public-address system. He looked like the classic drill sergeant — handlebar moustache and all. (His wife made him shave it off for that photo). If you followed the three principles — hear no evil, do no evil, etc., he was your best friend. Otherwise, he was otherwise.

Came the Cassata dinner day. The air was tense. People knew that something was going to happen, but nobody knew what. Breakfast, lunch and teatime came and went. Small groups huddled. All was quiet.

The Night the Lights Went Out

Dinner began at 7:30. Us juniors banged on the doors like starved barbarians. The ice-cream man arrived and took his cart to the back. A few people loitered nearby, trying to look casual and failing spectacularly.

At 7:45, just as the first rotis met the curry, it happened.

The lights went out.

Total darkness.

A collective gasp. Then, in the distance, a soft *'thunk'* — the unmistakable sound of a freezer lid falling open. Then rapid shuffling. Then running footsteps scattering in every direction like a herd of caffeinated antelopes.

As we breathed out and understood what had happened, someone struck a match. Its flame was like a flash of lightning before settling down. Gradually, the room became lit. What seemed like an eternity was barely a minute.

Everything looked normal. Suspiciously normal. But...

The freezer was empty. Completely empty. Not even a stray nut remained.

The ice cream vendor stared into the void. The mess workers looked stunned. The students looked betrayed. Dublish looked ready to declare martial law.

The clues

Slowly, evidence emerged:

A faint trail of condensation droplets leading away from the kitchen

A smear of pink on a wall

A lone pistachio on the floor

Someone swearing they smelled tutti-frutti in the air

Dublish surveyed the scene, moustache bristling.

"Nobody leaves the mess until we figure out what happened," he declared.

Which was adorable, because the thieves had already left. At high speed. With the frozen loot.

The Investigation

The mess committee fanned out across the hall, interrogating innocent bystanders.

"Did you see anything?" "No." "Did you hear anything?" "No." "Did you smell anything?" "Only the curry."

Rumors spread:

"They hid the cassata under someone's bed."

"They stored it in the Hall 3 water tank."

"They ate it all in 20 minutes."

"They're starting a black-market cassata ring."

Each and every room in Hall 2 was searched, several times over. Trash cans were emptied to try to find the wrappers. Window ledges were scanned. Every nook and cranny was looked into. Many objects considered lost were discovered, but 'The Evidence' was not to be found.

That night, they never found the people who had done it. And the next day was too late. As in the Roald Dahl story, *Lamb to the Slaughter*, the evidence had been eaten.

Nobody knew the truth. Except the perpetrators. And they weren't talking.

The Results

The official mess records for that night read:

“Special dinner served. Dessert: Cassata. Quantity consumed: Unknown. Quantity missing: Classified.”

The next morning, a notice appeared on the Hall 2 board:

“Due to unforeseen circumstances, cassata will not be served for the next three months.”

Unforeseen circumstances. Right. Everyone knew exactly what that meant.

Epilogue

Months passed. Tempers had cooled, though we knew that Dublish had not forgotten. One fine sunny fall day, a group of friends decided to take in the sun, and went up to the roof of Hall 2, up on the fourth floor. It was a windy day, and bits of paper were blowing about. An especially colorful paper caught the eye.

There it was. The wrapper of a cassata log.

They had checked all the rooms. But they never went up on the roof.

Written by Shirish Joshi (BT, ChE, 1973-78). This story previously appeared in The Spark, Issue 9, May 2024 ([available here](#)). Some additional details are documented there.



The Tilted Chair. A spot is reserved for a friend who will be joining soon... a well-accepted and time-honored practice. Hall-I Mess, 1977. Picture: Shirish Joshi (1973-78)

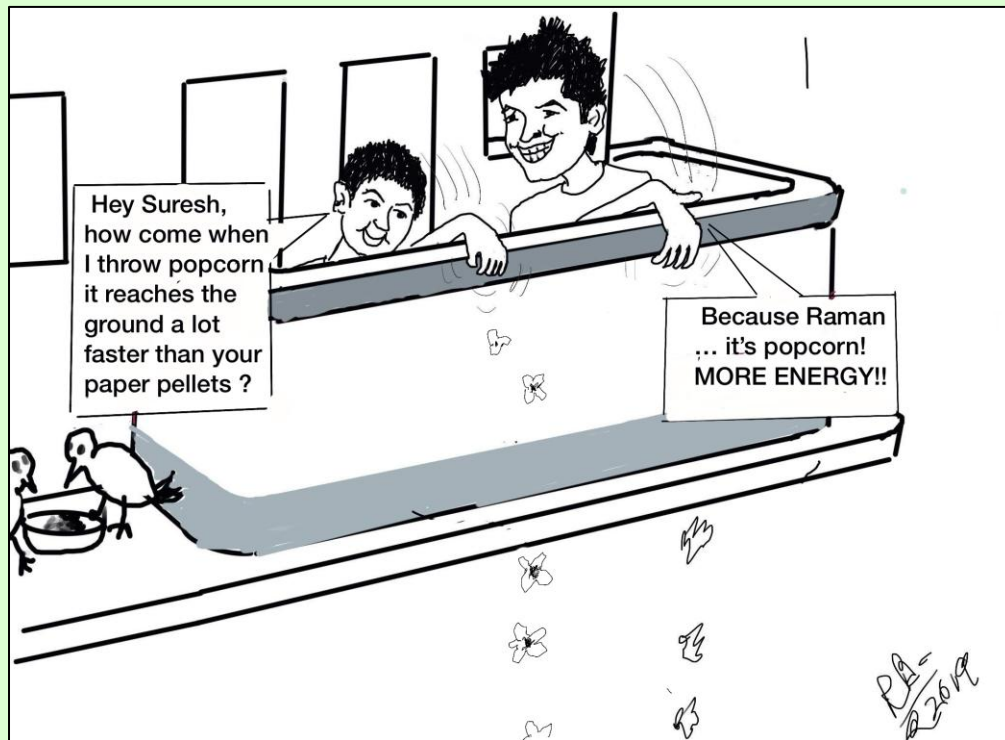
Raman Bhatia's Cartoon Gallery

Raman Bhatia's cartoons have been making IITK students laugh for nearly half a century. For alumni who were on campus in the late 1970s and early 80s, Raman (*BT, ME, 1977-82*) needs no introduction. The Institute drummer boy, as expert with drumsticks as with crayons, he is credited with cartoons in every Festival Souvenir from 1979 through 1983. He started with spontaneous sketches on the freshly whitewashed walls of F-Top (*Hall 2 and later, Hall 1*) and found his cartoons appearing in Festival Souvenirs and *The Spark*. The drawings became part of campus folklore. Long before smartphones and social media, students would gather around his latest creation, waiting to see what ... or who ... had become the target of his gentle and not-so-gentle satire.

The Early Years

We asked Raman about his journey and what got him into cartoons...

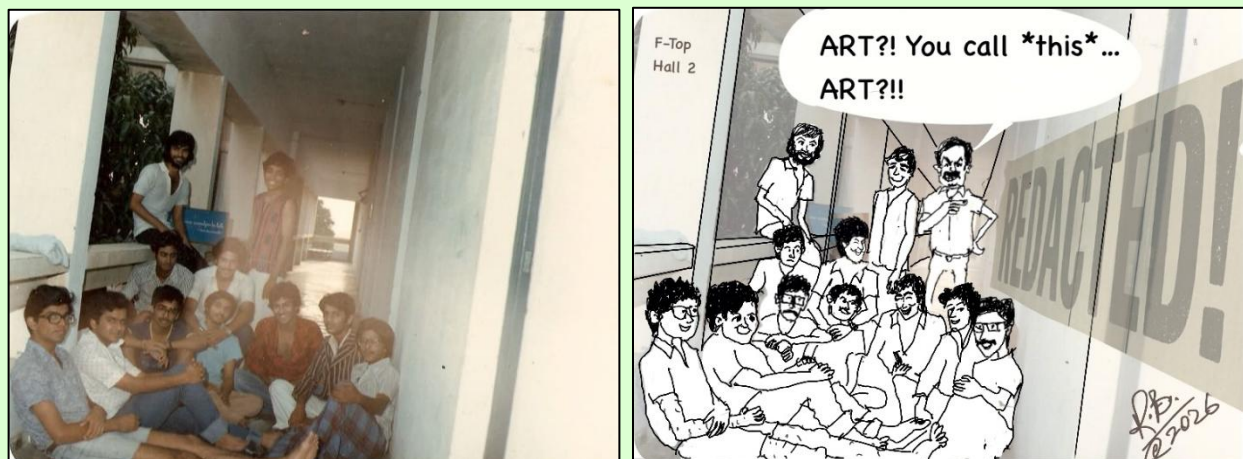
"My Mom had 8 sisters and 1 brother, and ALL TEN of them used to draw pretty well, and lo and behold! I inherited that family drawing gene! In fact, aside from me, my cousin and uncle also draw cartoons. The humor part comes from my Ex- IIT Bombay Uncle Suresh Lala (just 9 years older than me) who I consider my inspiration and the fountainhead of all things funny! Wacky Unca Suresh moments, such as the boredom-alleviating, paper-pellets-and-popcorn-throwing contest (coz Nintendo would take another 25 years to arrive!), as illustrated below, activated my funny bone (and also steered me toward physics, engineering and IIT)!"



Raman and Uncle Suresh tossing paper balls and popcorn from a third-floor balcony, c.1970

The IIT Years: 1977-80 and the Hall II F Top Wall

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your POV!) Raman's earlier works adorning the Hall II F-Top wall are not reproducible and are omitted from this collection. Their subject matter was... (*cough, cough*) shall we say... better suited to a young men's hostel wall than *The Spark* pages. They mainly catered to the audience of yet-to-mature young men shown in this picture (taken on a lazy Sunday afternoon, sometime in 1978, with the protagonist in the red shirt!) They disappeared later under several determined coats of whitewash courtesy of the Hall II wardens, who were considerably less appreciative of the kind of artistic expression than these pieces embodied!



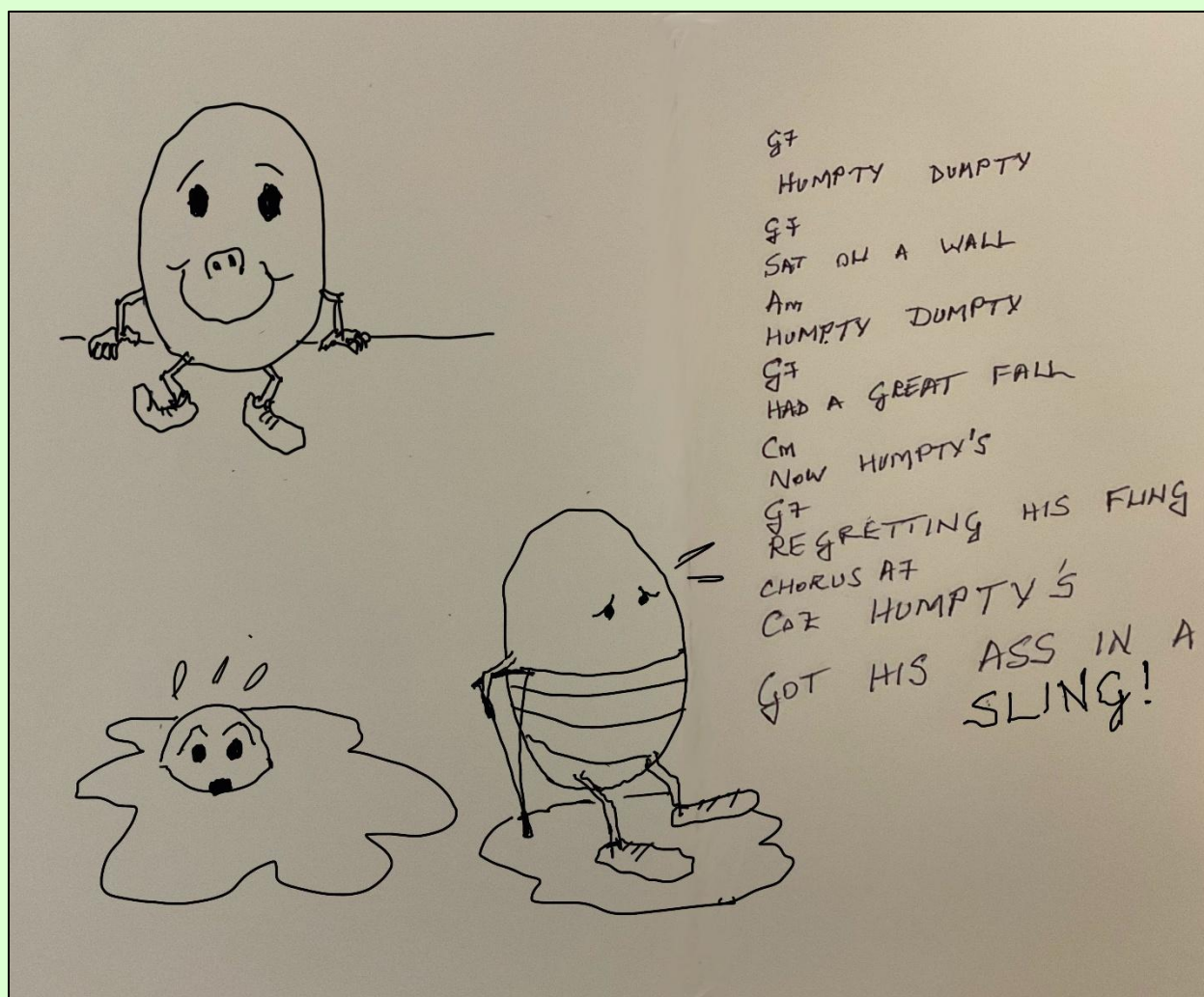
Left: Residents of F-Top Hall II, 1978. Seated front: Albert Lewis, Sailesh Shah, Raghavan Vardarajan, Ajay Vardhachary, Raman Bhatia, Ravinder Shende, the late Ravi Shankar Natrajan. Seated back: Sunder Ramachandran, Sanjay Patel. On the ledge and standing: Nitash Balsara, Kapil Paranjape
Right: Same group shown with a rather peeved Hall 2 Warden Dr. Vijay Gupta.

Nitash Balsara was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus of IITK in 2019. Raghavan Varadarajan and Kapil Paranjape received the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize in 2002 and 2005, respectively.

1980 to 1982: Hall I F Top

On moving to F-Top, Hall I, Raman was greeted by yet another vast expanse of freshly whitewashed wall, the white space looking less like a wall and more a tempting swath of blank canvas! "*We could tell exactly when a new cartoon was being cooked up! Raman would get a certain faraway look in his eyes... and a goofy smile!*" says a wing mate.

Once the Hall I walls had been duly liberated from their pristine condition, practically nothing was safe from reinterpretation—not nursery rhymes, not Disney characters, and certainly not the occasional IITian misfortune. Even Humpty Dumpty received an IITK upgrade. The original nursery rhyme merely gave him a great fall. F-Top felt he deserved a backstory and a musical as well!

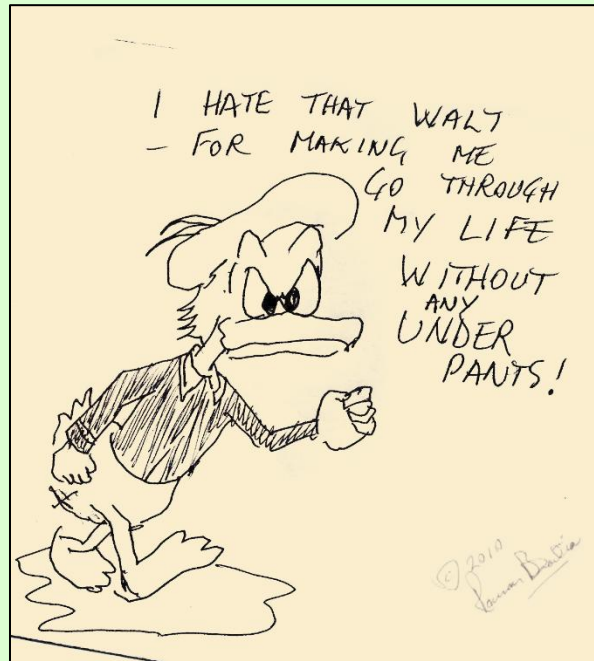


Humpty Dumpty's Great Fling. The Spark, October 1982

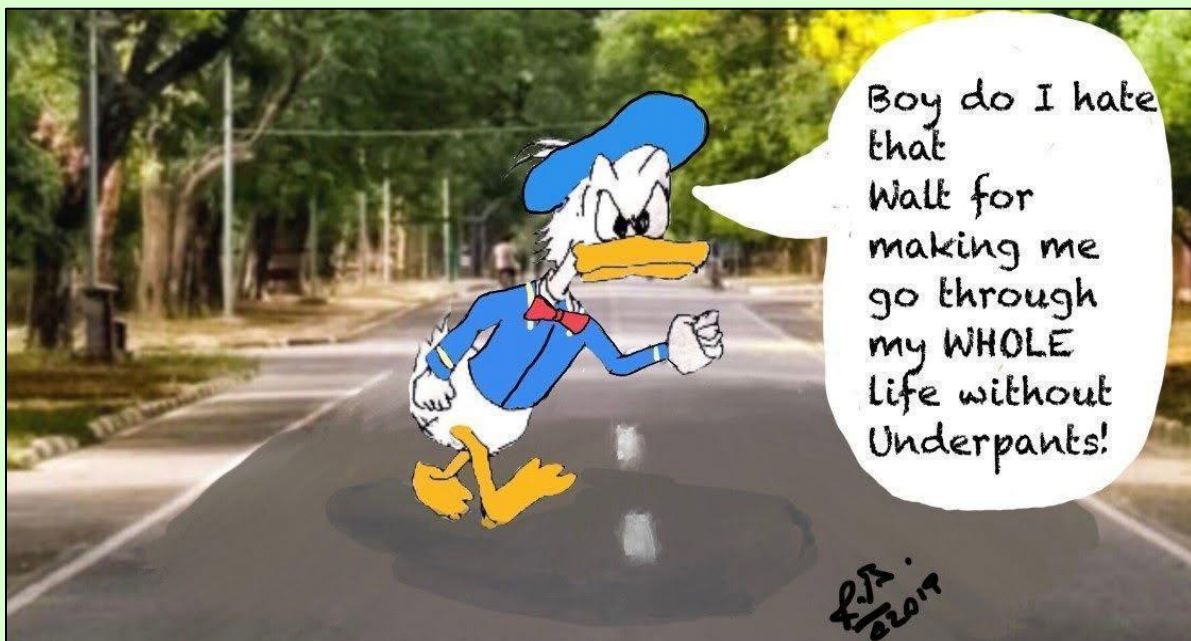
In Oct 1982, *The Spark* released a special Festival issue that featured a collection of these cartoons. In the days before cell phone cameras, emails, or even basic photocopying, *Spark* artists, primarily Sukanta Kundu, very carefully copied the wall drawings onto cyclostyling stencils, that we then duplicated using ink rollers on a rotating press.

Forty-four years later, the gallery returns to *The Spark* in a digital format, featuring many of those original drawings, lost originals recreated by Raman, our favorites from the post-IIT days, plus new sketches, including some from our recent issues.

Donald 'IITK' Duck Returns



Donald 'IITK' Duck proved surprisingly durable. The original wall drawing disappeared, was later recreated from memory, and in 2019 Donald finally returned to campus ... in technicolor, fully dressed above the waist, and still deeply resentful about the rest!



Donald returns to IITK, 2019, complaining about the limited Wardrobe from Walt Disney

The Making of an IITK Engineer – One Year Sooner

Stages in the making of an IIT engineer, copied off the Hall I wall, featuring the iconic Alfred E Neumann. Not exactly what the brochure that came with the JEE Admission told you! On the right is the same Alfie, decades later, made over in technicolor.



IITs introduced the New Four-Year BTech Program in 1981. Now students get to that end-state a whole year sooner! Left: IITK Festival Souvenir, 1983. Right: a recent recreation.

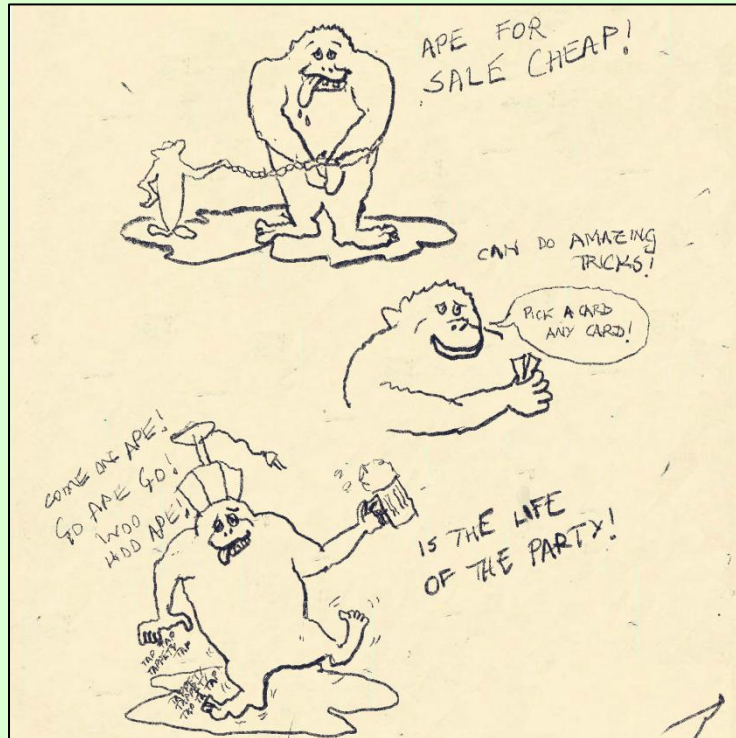
Decades later, some problems solve themselves. Eventually, you simply forget what you were worried about!

A later sequel to the original Festival Souvenir cartoon

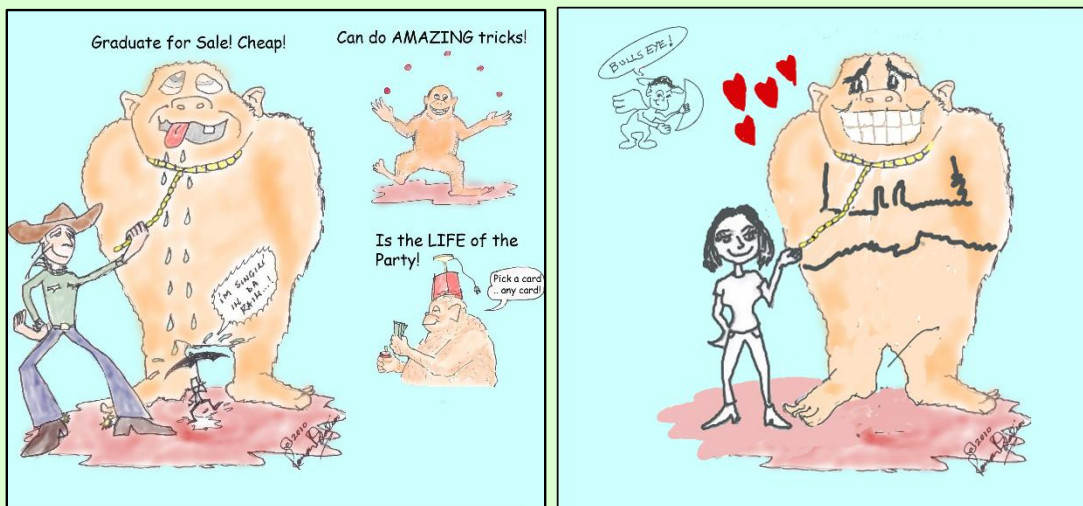


Self Portraits: The Ape Evolves

The “Great Ape of IITK” was another quirky burst of crayon that first appeared in 1981 on the walls of F-Top Hall I. It depicted the iconic Ape, being offered for sale, doing amazing tricks, full of good humor and “loaded” with spirit to entice buyers!



F-Top Hall I, 1980–82. *The Spark*, October 1982



Unlike most endangered species, the Ape survived graduation, sold himself to Grad School in Texas, continued to evolve, migrated to New Jersey, got smitten, settled down...

The Evolving IITs

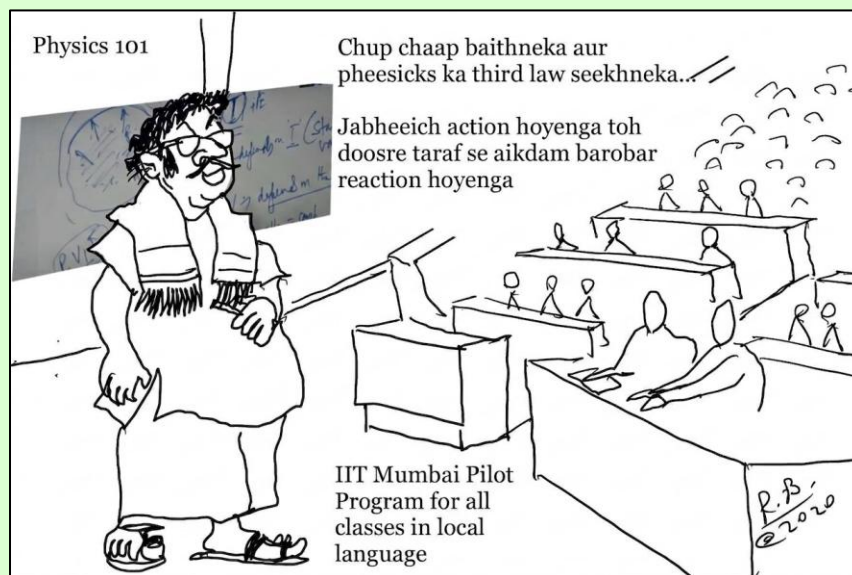
In the 1970s, there were 5 IITs. Now there are 23. Extrapolating the curve...



Admissions, however, remain competitive. Location flexibility helps.

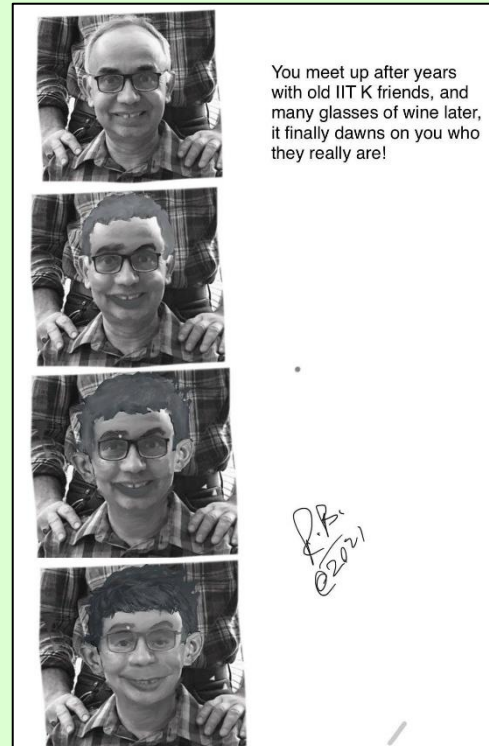
And the Language Evolves Too

If IITs conduct classes in the local language. Here's what a pilot program in IIT Bombay could look like!



The Spark Rekindled

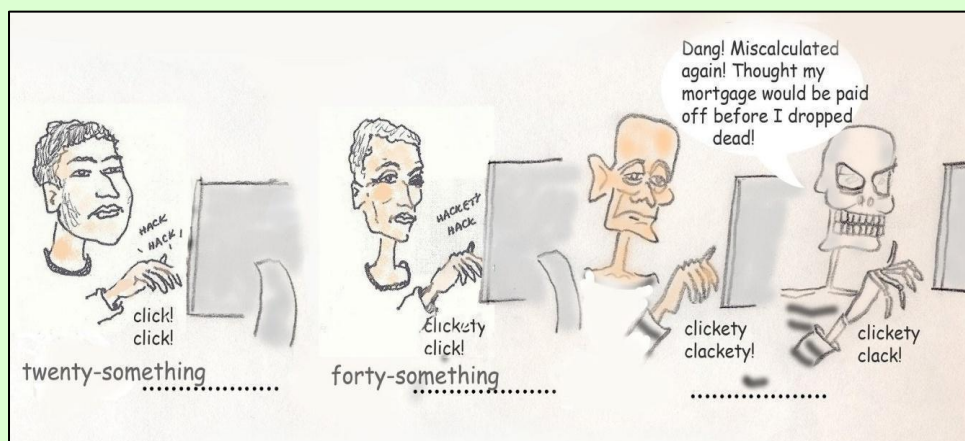
After 39 years, Spark editor and cartoonist meet again in Richmond, VA. They break bread, drink wine and after enough of the latter, the cartoonist discovers something he never knew in 1982!



Raman with Aseem Shukla E. Neumann, Richmond, VA, 2021

The IITK Longitudinal Study

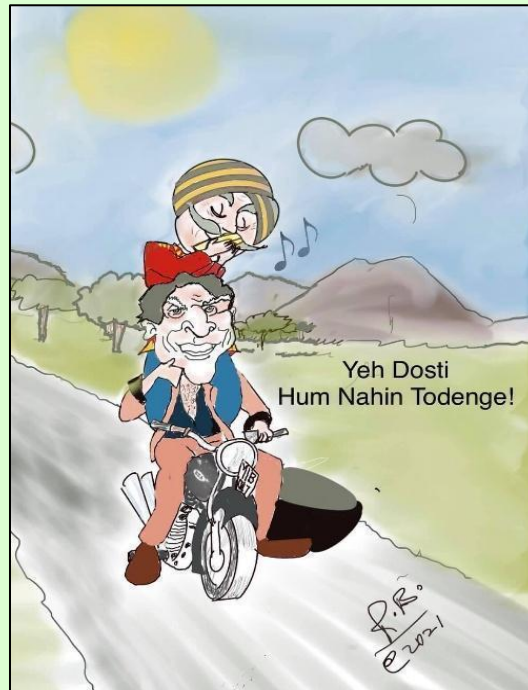
We hear enough stories of the highly successful IITK-ians' evolution over time. But it's about time we paid similar attention to the evolution of the average-Joe IITK-graduate...



After a long career, Average Joe IITians deserve at least an A for Effort!

Two of Our All-Time Favorites: Air India Returns to the Tata Umbrella

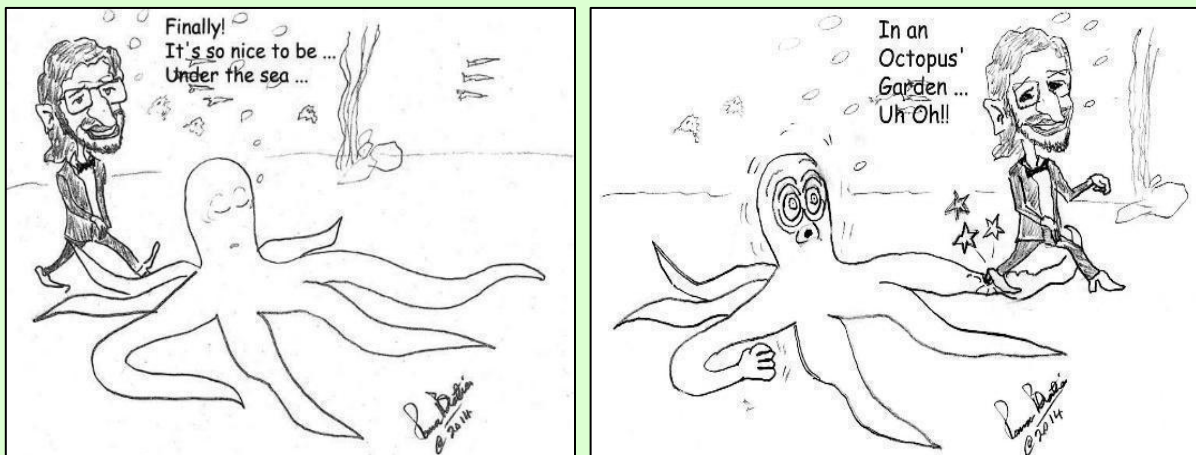
Raman's sketches were not limited to the subject of IITK. There are plenty of interesting subjects and other beloved characters and Institutions to celebrate. Here is the awesome, inspiring Ratan Tata... and the indomitable Maharaja.



Air India returns to the Tata umbrella, 2021

What Really Happened in Octopus's Garden

Raman's drummer side makes him an ardent fan of the Beatles' Ringo Starr. He delved into "Octopus's Garden", one of Ringo's famous compositions and reached the following conclusion about what really happened under the sea.



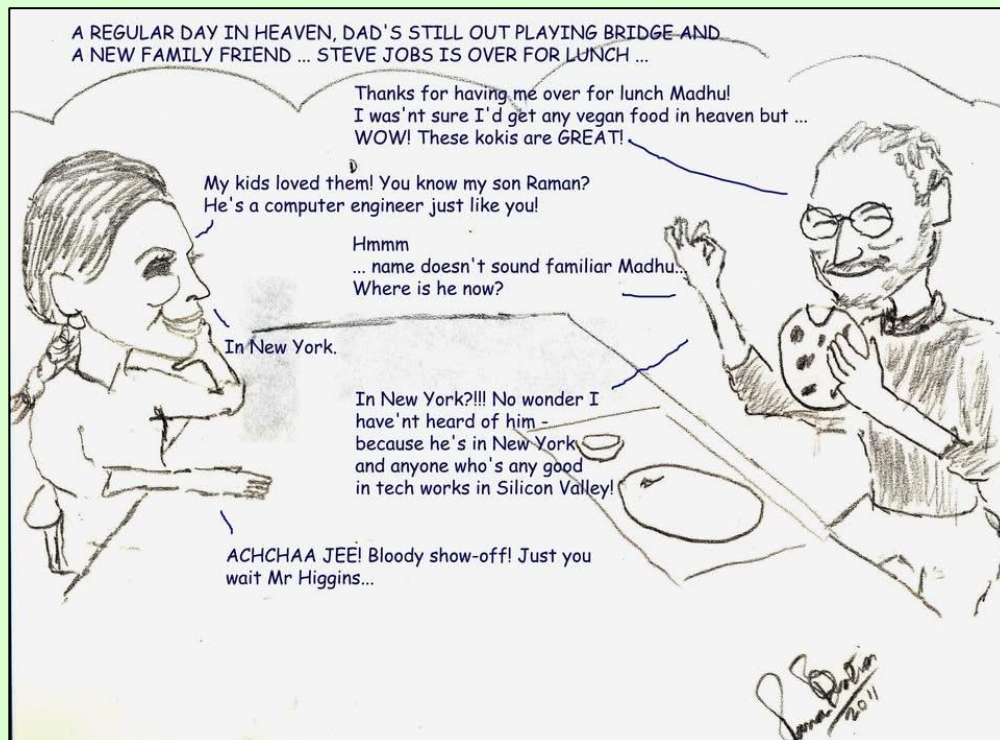
Octopus's Garden: The Finale



The evidence speaks for itself

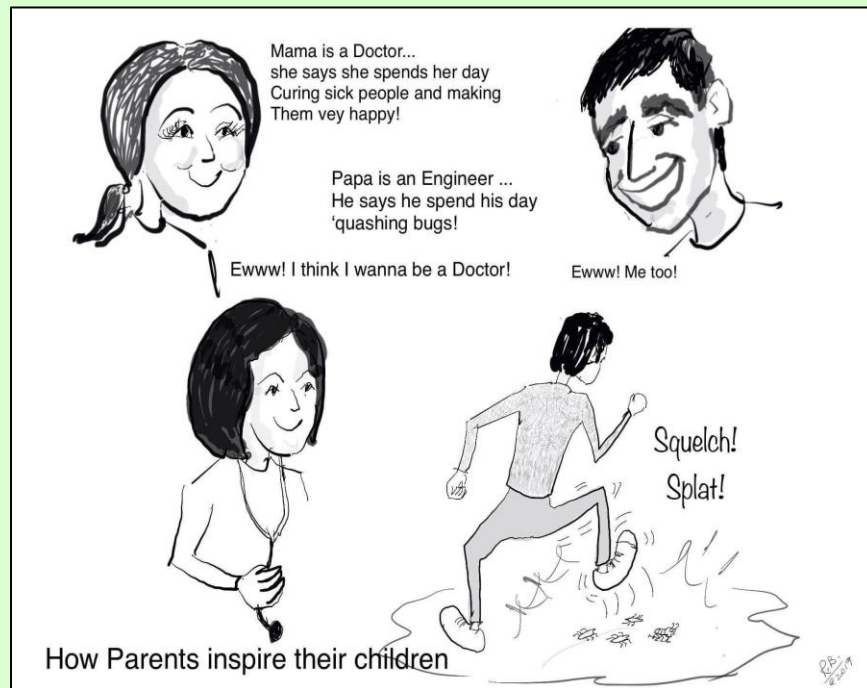
Family Album: Ode to Mom (Raman's personal favorite)

"I drew this one to alleviate the sad moment when my mom passed away, right around the time Steve Jobs passed away ... I imagined these two indomitable characters meeting in heaven!"

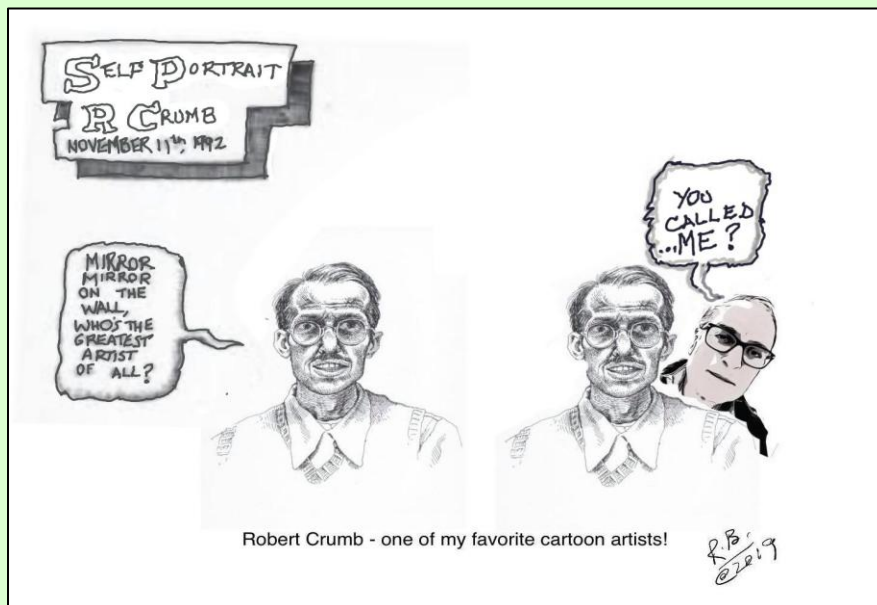


Family Album: The Next Generation

Parents spend years trying to inspire their children and send the right message. Transmission is sometimes buggy!



Sources of Inspiration



For Raman "The late great underground artist Robert Crumb has been a source of inspiration in my later years of cartooning. Here is a spoof of a celebrated Crumb self-portrait. Crumb asks a question (on the left.) The question is rhetorical, but I jump in (on the right) and answer it anyway!"

Forty-Four Years Later...

More than four decades have passed since Raman first regarded a freshly whitewashed hostel wall as an irresistible invitation. The walls have been repainted many times since. The cartoons moved from crayons to ink to pixels; the IIT system grew dramatically; and the students who once crowded around F-Top became engineers, professors, entrepreneurs, parents, grandparents—and occasionally, magazine editors!

Raman, meanwhile, is still drawing. Apparently, no one, not even the Wardens of Halls II and I, ever sent the memo telling him to stop.



Raman, with his wife Sonoo and their two children, Ranvir and Rhianna, makes his home in Summit, New Jersey. Like many IITK graduates, he moved from Mechanical Engineering into Tech and then Mobile Tech — while continuing to draw, play drums and maintain a healthy disrespect for blank white surfaces.

Every once in a while, the IITK band gathers to revisit songs such as Smoke on the Water, Wonderful Tonight and Sultans of Swing. The technology has changed enormously since F-Top; the urge to make some wonderful noise has not.

Crayons → ink → pixels. Drumsticks throughout.

Fun Fact: Raman says “Cartoon ideas come to me early in the morning. Strangely, it only happens when I QUIT coffee. My theory, which I have asked my physician wife to co-author a medical journal paper on (which she has repeatedly refused) is that Cartoon inspirations are triggered by a yet-to-be-discovered neurotransmitter ‘Cartoononin’ which gets suppressed by Caffeine. But she is not buying it!”:

Quietly, Behind the Scenes...

The success of *The Spark* would not be possible without the groundwork done by many people on campus and the DORA Team. They follow up on the many requests from the editors, constantly asking for information, photographs and so many other details. Two members of this support team deserve special mention.



Alpna Singh in the DORA office spends weeks digitising each issue, then putting the emails together, and finally, updating and maintaining the web pages – allowing us to have accurate versions of *The Spark* online, reach our wide audience, and have copies available for future reference.



Girish Pant and his team in the Information Cell provide us the many pictures that keep us abreast of campus happenings and follow up on our strange requests for new images. We have not asked him to climb the water tank above FB yet, but we will soon!

The Editors especially want to call out Alpna and Girish because, in addition to their day jobs and meeting our 'do-it-now' requests, they have been working quietly and efficiently for so many years, hitting their delivery deadlines without making excuses, ensuring that every issue of *The Spark* is created properly, and distributed effectively. For any employee, doing this work with sustained quality is creditable; doing this more-or-less volunteer work raises their work ethic to an exemplary level.

Thank you, Alpna. Thank you, Girish.

Thank you, DORA team, for your support for these five years.

We could not have done this with you.

Table of Contents

The Spark: 2021-26				
Issue	Date	Theme	Pages	
			From	To
1	October 2021	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 1	1	32
2	December 2021	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 2	33	72
3	April 2022	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 3	73	112
4	August 2022	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 4	113	152
5	December 2022	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 5	153	188
6	April 2023	Computer Science at IIT Kanpur - Issue 6	189	232
7	August 2023	Life in the Girls' Hostel - Issue 1	233	280
8	December 2023	Life in the Girls' Hostel - Issue 2	281	332
9	May 2024	The Way We Were, 1974-79	333	384
10	September 2024	Life in the Girls' Hostel - Issue 3	385	432
11	January 2025	Life in the Girls' Hostel - Issue 4	433	492
12	May 2025	The Support Staff of IIT Kanpur	493	548
13	August 2025	The Counselling Service - Issue 1	549	616
14	December 2025	The Counselling Service - Issue 2	617	680
15	February 2026	Professor V Rajaraman Tribute Issue	681	756
16	May 2026	The Counselling Service - Issue 3	757	820
17	August 2026	Fifth Anniversary Issue	821	916

Back issues of *The Spark* can be downloaded from the DORA website ([available here](#)) or our publicly accessible drive ([available here](#)).



Jugaad in its ultimate sense. Chair, tennis racket, unknown type of ball, in Hall 1, E top, c. 1978. At bat is Lokesh Shankar Jha, 1974-79. Picture: Shirish Joshi

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
Computer Science at IITK			
The IBM 1620 – Introducing Computer Science in India	Aseem Shukla, Ross Bassett	1	4
Our Experiences on the 1620	Ravi Sethi	1	16
A Larger Computer for the Institute	The Spark Archives, 1965	1	21
CSE at IITK – Some Recollections from those Early Days	V Rajaraman	2	40
Establishment of the CSE Academic Programmes at IIT/Kanpur	V Rajaraman	3	79
CSE Professors: Catching Up With Old Friends!	Ananth Sankar	3	84
CSE at IITK: The Arrival of the DEC-1090	V Rajaraman	3	89
A Brief History of the CSE Department at IITK (1982-2002)	Somenath Biswas	4	122
New Method Said to Solve a Key Problem in Math	The New York Times, Sara Robinson	4	128
PRIMES is in P: the Story of a Discovery	Manindra Agrawal, Somenath Biswas, Nitin Saxena	4	129
The IITK CSE Department in the 21st Century	CK Mohan, Aseem Shukla	5	165
Advances in Theoretical Computer Science	CK Mohan, Aseem Shukla	6	209
A History of the IITK Computer Centre	Navpreet Singh, Gurbur Prabh, Nirmal Roberts	6	215
The Godel Prize	CK Mohan, Aseem Shukla	13	581
The Chemistry Department			
Memories of the Chemistry Dept at IITK	Arvind Agarwal	11	436
A Pinnacle of Excellence	Siddharth Dasgupta	12	501
Prof. PK Ghosh: If You Cannot Procure It... Fabricate It!	Chandra Shekhar Verma	12	504
The Support Staff of IITK			
Standing on Their Shoulders	Shirish Joshi	12	530
The Legendary Shishupal	The Pioneer Batch, The Frontier Batch	12	532
Gangu Mochi Talks to the Cheshire Cat	The Cheshire Cat Archives, 1976	12	536
Three Generations: An IITK Family	Rajendra (Ginger) Kanaujia, Ishan Singh	12	538
Standing on Their Shoulders	Shirish Joshi Photo Feature	12	541
Remembering Shishupal	Readers' Tributes	13	556
Quietly, Behind the Scenes...	The Spark	17	907



The IBM-1620 arrives at IIT Kanpur, to mark the first beginnings of Computer Science education in India, July 1963. Picture: Harry D. Huskey: His Story, 2004.

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
The Counselling Service			
The Counselling Service: A New Experiment at IIT/K	The Spark / IITK Archives	13	584
Counselling Service at IIT Kanpur - My Reminiscences	Dharma Rajaraman	13	587
The IITK Counselling Service in the 1980s	MR Madhav	13	591
The Counselling Service	Readers' Memories	14	620
A Journey of Hearts, Hands, and Hope	Lilavati Krishnan	14	651
Combating Ragging – IITK Style	Bhuvan Mohan Prasad	14	655
A Student-Guide's Perspective	Alok Kumar	14	659
IITK Counselling Service – one student's story	Anonymous	16	773
Counselling Service: My journey of love and learning	Sharmistha Chakroborty	16	776
My days at 503	Shanu Vashishtha	16	779
The Counselling Service Today: Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing	The CMHW Team	16	782
Alumni / Faculty News			
Oregon State University names Jayathi Murthy its next President	The Spark	4	120
Mr. Narayana Murthy Visits Hall V	The Spark	7	243
Abhay Bhushan Enters the Internet Hall of Fame	The Spark	8	294
Gyanesh Kumar appointed Chief Election Commissioner of India	The Spark	12	508
Padma Shri for Prof. Ashutosh Sharma	The Spark	13	567
Catching Up with Mentors: Professors SK Gupta and RN Biswas	Aseem Shukla	14	669
Honoring a Teacher, Mentor, and Institution Builder: Dr. Vijay K Stokes	Rakesh Pandey, Ram Misra	17	883
Interviews / Reminiscences			
The Huskey Family: A Few Memories of IIT Kanpur	Linda Huskey Retterath	2	38
Meet Gio Wiederhold	Gio Wiederhold, Shirish Joshi	2	45
A Spark Interview with Mr. Narayana Murthy	Narayana Murthy	2	51
Rajeev Motwani: In His Own Words	Rajeev Motwani, Shivanand Kanavi	3	99
From IITK to IBM	Arvind Krishna	3	104
Prof Kesav Nori: In His Own Words	Kesav Nori, Shivanand Kanavi	4	136
A Conversation with Prof. Sanjeev Arora	Sanjeev Arora	6	202
Memories of IITK, 1966-78	Rachel Oberai-Soltz	7	236
Memories and Learnings from IITK	Anjali Joshi	7	260
Achieving the Gold Standard ...what it takes to do truly enduring work	Jayathi Murthy	8	315
Recollections of a Visiting Professor from the Post-KIAP Era	John Rothfork	10	391
A Conversation with Prof. Hiriyakkanavar Ila	Hiriyakkanavar Ila	10	406
A Conversation with Arundhati G Sankar	Arundhati G Sankar	10	414
Recollections of Timila Yami Thapa	Timila Yami Thapa	11	447
A Conversation with Eshan Chattopadhyay	Eshan Chattopadhyay	13	576
A Conversation with Mr. Jeet Bindra	Jagjeet Singh Bindra	17	860



Members of Counselling Service with Staff of DOSA (c. March 1979): Mr. D N Verma, Chander Ram, A Mohanty, R C Srivastav, Harish Chander, Budhan Singh, R K Srivastav, C P Jauri, Dr Prabha Sharma, Mrs. Dharma Rajaraman, Dr J D Borwankar. Picture: Mrs. Dharma Rajaraman

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
Tributes / Obituaries			
Professor Harry Huskey Plants a Tree	V Rajaraman, Shirish Joshi	1	11
Professor Kesav Nori	CK Mohan	1	23
Music lovers on the campus will recall Mrs. Vidushi Veena Sahasrabuddhe	Alok Kumar	3	88
Remembering Rajeev Motwani	CK Mohan	3	92
Professor HN Mahabala, A Journey to Saskatoon	Aseem Shukla, TR Viswanathan	5	161
Professor Gio Wiederhold	Amar Gupta, Shirish Joshi	6	196
Professor Narsingh Deo	Mukkai Krishnamoorthy, CK Mohan	6	198
Professor Yeshwant Waghmare	Samir Palnitkar, Anuradha Jagannathan	6	200
Gio's Contributions to the National Information Center	Amar Gupta	7	239
Professor MA Pai , From Toronto to Kanpur	Vijay Vittal, Srinivasa Prabhu	7	244
Professor Maria Goeppert Mayer	Anuradha Jagannathan, Aseem Shukla	7	249
Championing a Vision at IITK: Professor Maria Goeppert Mayer	Gyan Mehta and friends	8	289
Professor Arakere Vasudev, A Perspective Beyond Academics	Shirish Joshi, Rakesh Bhargava	8	295
My Friend, Sankar	V Rajaraman	8	299
Professor Usha Kumar - A Visit to Secunderabad	Arun Kumar	8	303
Memories of Professor Usha Kumar	Abha Verma	9	338
Professor TR Viswanathan	TL Viswanathan	9	345
Professor VP Sinha	Sudhanshu Jamuar, Kalidas Sen	9	347
Professor Sameer Khandekar	Dept. of Mechanical Engineering	9	349
Professor Amitabha Mukerjee, My Brother, Moni	Dept of CSE, Dipika Mukherjee	9	351
Memories of Professor Usha Kumar	Arun Dongrey	10	388
Dr. Kanwar Singh Nalwa	Dept. of SEE, Ravi Mishra	10	397
Remembering Arvind	CK Mohan	10	400
Professor MV George – a Mentor and a Friend	Gita Mithal	10	405
The Musical Legacy of Professor PT Narasimhan	The Narasimhan Family	11	464
Professor Yudhbir	Anuradha Jagannathan, MR Madhav	13	594
Professor Raj Kumar Gupta, The Awk Professor	G Neelakantan, Sanjeev Sharma, Sachidananda Mohanty	13	597
Professor Pasala Dayaratnam	Raj Bhattarai, MR Madhav	14	632
A Tribute to Prof. RK Gupta	Sudhir Gejji	16	760
Remembering Prof. Dayaratnam	The Dayaratnam Family	16	761
Professor Ponamgi Ramakrishna (PRK) Rao	Srinivasa Prabhu, KS Gandhi, Achla Raina	16	788
PRK Rao -- A Life Immeasurable	Kalyan Basu, Kavya Basu	16	791
PRK Rao -- The Meaning of Compassion, The Zen of Teaching, A Tribute	CK Mohan, Nikhil Nigam, Abhay Karandikar	16	795
Remembering Professor PRK Rao	Anjani Kumar Singh, Srinivas Kache	17	828
Remembering Professor MM Oberai	Aseem Shukla, Anurag Dikshit, Amit Oberai	17	846
Remembering Professor Hari Datt Bist	Anurag Bist, Aashvi Bist, Sangeeta Bist Sankar	17	854



Friends heading back after a night out and dinner. Here are the first-year residents of Hall 3 (L to R): Rajeev Motwani, Vivek Garg, Rakesh Kumar, Rajiv Singh Chowdhry, Ashok Singhal, Sudhanshu Goel, and Nirmal Saraf, all from the batch of 1978-83. Picture: Rajiv Singh Chowdhry, Winter 1978-79.

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
Professor V Rajaraman Tributes			
Remembering Prof. V Rajaraman	CK Mohan	14	630
The teacher who built India's computing mind	Shrikanth Govindarajan	15	684
Prof. V Rajaraman – a Tribute	Pramod Chandra P Bhatt	15	690
Prof. V Rajaraman - the father of computing in India	Narayana Murthy	15	694
Remembering Professor Rajaraman	Somenath Biswas	15	697
Tributes from Undergraduate Students	IIT Kanpur Undergrad Students	15	700
How Prof. Rajaraman shaped careers	Jaideep Srivastava	15	703
Memories of My Uncle, Professor V Rajaraman	Rishiyur S Nikhil	15	704
Prof. V Rajaraman: His Contributions to SERC, IISc	Jayant Haritsa	15	708
My Memories of Prof. Rajaraman at IISc	H Krishnamurthy	15	710
A Tribute to Prof. Rajaraman	Ramaswamy Govindarajan	15	712
Remembering Our Best-Selling Author, Prof. V Rajaraman	PHI Learning Team	15	717
Prof. V Rajaraman's Writing Journey Shaped Computer Education in India	PHI Learning Team	15	719
A Memorial Tribute to My Brother, Rajaram	Radha Balakrishnan	15	723
Remembering Raju Mama	Hari Balakrishnan, Hamsa Balakrishnan	15	728
My Affectionate <i>Athimbare</i> (Brother-In-Law)	Vasantha Sivaramakrishnan	15	731
The Human Side of a Leader	Shankar Sankaran	15	732
Remembering Professor V Rajaraman	Prashant Bharadwaj	15	733
Recollections and a Tribute to Prof. V Rajaraman	Padma Narayanawamy	15	734
My Rajaram Periappa	Sivaraj Sivaramakrishnan	15	736
The Architect of Indian Computing	Sesh Iyer	15	737
CSE at IITK – Some Recollections from those Early Days	V Rajaraman (<i>reprint</i>)	15	741
Establishment of the CSE Academic Programmes at IIT/Kanpur	V Rajaraman (<i>reprint</i>)	15	745
CSE at IITK: The Arrival of the DEC-1090	V Rajaraman (<i>reprint</i>)	15	752
Remembering Prof. Rajaraman	Readers' Tributes	16	762



Professor Rajaraman and Mrs. Dharma Rajaraman at their home in Bengaluru, Dec 2023.

Picture: Shirish Joshi

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
Campus News and Updates			
Construction Review 2022	Vox Populi	4	141
Flex-E Centre: Intersecting Engineering, Research, and Entrepreneurship	Vox Populi	5	172
APPROACH: Appreciation and Promotion of Arts and Cultural Heritage	Sameer Khandekar	7	265
The Particle Accelerator	Vox Populi	8	320
Republic Day Celebrations 2024	The Spark	9	341
Annual Flower Show 2024	The Spark	9	343
Convocation 2024: Prof. Jayathi Murthy Visits IITK	The Spark	10	393
The Online Rural Education Initiative	Vox Populi	10	421
Foundation Day 2024	The Spark	11	445
The IITK Flower Show, 2025	The Spark	12	509
In the Vault of Time: Discovering IIT Kanpur's Hidden Capsule	Vox Populi	12	517
From Vikram to Metro: IITK to Kanpur Central	Shakti Chaturvedi Photo Feature	13	559
Convocation 2025: RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra Returns to Campus	The Spark	13	565
A New Chapter for Halls 1, 2, and 3	The Spark	13	604
Foundation Day 2025	Amey Karkare, DORA Team	14	627
IIT Kanpur Celebrates Its 59th Convocation	DORA Team, Information and Media Outreach Cell	17	829
A Note of Thanks to Shri Jeet Bindra	Dept. of Chemical Engg, DORA Team	17	869
Campus Life and History			
Time traveling the Library Fountain	Aseem Shukla	2	63
Three Bumps (And Many Children) Ahead!	Shirish Joshi	3	106
Of Campus Residents (And Other Living Things)	Kaustav Das Gupta	3	108
Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Visit, 1966	EC Subbarao	5	166
From Dusk to Dawn	Anurag Dikshit	5	179
The Keating Visit	Paul Joseph	7	237
The IITK Seal	The Spark Archives, 1967	7	242
'International Arrivals' at the IIT Kanpur Airport	Alve Erickson, Shirish Joshi, Aseem Shukla	7	268
Rainy Days on Campus	Shirish Joshi	7	273
The Early Years, 1962-67	Udaya Bose	8	284
The Mighty Egg Coupon	Aseem Shukla	8	324
Murakh-ji's Survey on how to Remove Bees from Campus	Amitabha Mukerjee	9	354
French Toast and the Panki Thermal Power Plant	Farrokh Langdana	9	358
The Re-hung Door	Dinesh Jain, Deepak Gupta	9	361



A group of guys, slowly going mad? No, actually, practicing mime... It's a tug-of-war, but there was no rope! Members of the Theatre Workshop (L to R: Murali Vedula, Shailendra Dixit, Yezdi Talati, Sanjaya Mathur, Vivek Sarkar, Sanjit Sengupta, (hand only); Batches of 1974-79 and 76-81). Picture: Shirish Joshi, Hall II Quad, c. 1977.

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
Campus Life and History (Contd.)			
Days of Madness Past	Sanjiva Prasad	9	364
The Technical Arts: Workshop Woes	Anuradha Jagannathan	9	371
The Cassata Heist	Shirish Joshi	9	373
The Way We Were: The Memories	Shirish Joshi Photo Feature	9	377
Monkey Business in Hall I	Vimal Parikh	11	468
A Hypnotic Spell Cast during Our First Year in Hall III	Mohan Tambe	11	469
Teaching of Graduate Physics at IITK, Early 1970s	Pankaj Sharan	11	473
Hypnotic Spells – Part II	Ajay Singh	12	500
The Panki Thermal Power Station	Naresh Singh	12	525
IITK – Then & Now, 1983-2025	Raj Sehgal Photo Feature	13	608
Back to the Campus after 38 Years	Chitra Venkateswaran	14	639
The IITK Seal	Aman Kumar Singh	14	670
Peacocks Everywhere	The Frontier Batch	14	672
50 Years of the Green Issue: Ye Olde Spark	Debasish Roy	16	803
The Rura Trot, August 1982	Vinay Panchanadikar	17	849
The Evolution of the IITK Seal and Diploma	Vijay Kumar Stokes	17	874
What's A Name Got To Do With It!	Umesh Chandra, Alve Erickson, The Spark (<i>reprint</i>)	17	887
The Great Cassata Heist of Hall 2	Shirish Joshi (<i>reprint</i>)	17	891
Life at the IIT Kanpur Girls' Hostel			
Life at the IIT Kanpur Girls' Hostel	Amrita Tripathi Sheikh	7	253
Down Memory Lane – By Rickshaw and Tempo	Nivedita Dutta-Haran	8	311
Starting Out in the Girls' Hostel	Roli Garg Wendorf	10	418
The First 'Girls Hostel'	Neeru Mohan Biswas	11	441
Men are from Mars, Women are... from the Trans-Neptunian Kuiper Belt	Anuradha Jagannathan	11	452
Shadows Beneath the Lamp: A Minoritarian View	Sudha Bharadwaj	11	455
A Blast from the Past	Kajoli Banerjee Krishnan	11	461
The IITK Girls Hostels	The Spark	11	462
The 21st Century IITK			
The Summer Campus	Photo Feature	4	146
Astronomy Photograph: A Year in the Sun	Soumyadeep Mukherjee	5	159
From Dusk to Dawn	Photo Feature	5	180
Rainy Days on Campus	Photo Feature	7	273
Campus Architecture	Photo Feature	10	425



LHC, After the rain. Picture: Priyanka Meena, March 2024

Title	Authors	Issue	Page
The 21st Century IITK (Contd.)			
IITK's Rocketry and Space Exploration Team	IITK RaSET	12	521
Gaurav Kukreja -- The Apple Presentation	The Spark	13	569
Team Aerial Robotics, IIT Kanpur	Shruti Dalvi	13	571
Peacocks Everywhere	Photo Feature	14	673
Mission JUGNU	Shashank Chintalagiri, Kshitij Deo, Amrit Sagar	16	808
The OAT Tower	Photo Feature	16	814
Team IITK Motorsports	Siddhima, Team IITK Motorsports	17	839
Cultural Festivals / Antaragni / Inter IIT Cult Meets			
Antaragni 2022 – Houdini's Paradise	The Spark	6	226
Antaragni 2023 – A Glimpse of Empyrean	The Spark	8	326
Jan 1968: The First All-India Cultural Festival	Anil K Agarwal	11	475
Sept 1980: Here Comes the Rain!	Aseem Shukla	11	479
Oct 1984: Chitty Chitty Bang Bang!	Rishikesh T Krishnan	11	481
Jan 1995: The Fire Within	Rajiv Gupta, Ashish Singh, Bal Krishn Birla	11	483
Antaragni 2024 – A Syncretic Jaunt	The Spark	11	487
Antaragni 2025 – Kanreki's Oraculum	Riddhima Vijaywargiya, Muskan Kumari	14	662
The Inter IIT Cultural Meet 8.0	Hardik Tiwari, M Balakumaran	17	832
Techkriti / Udghosh / Inter IIT Tech Meets			
Techkriti 2025 – A Celebration of Innovation, Valor, and Vision	Lisa Verma	12	512
Udghosh 2025 – The Patronus Pursuit	Rahul Mahala	14	646
The Inter-IIT Tech Meet 14.0	The Science and Technology Council	16	768
Techkriti 2026 – Forging Futures, Fuelling Innovation	Lisa Verma, Rishav Raj	16	798
Sketches / Cartoons	Pages		
Raman Bhatia	25, 55, 111, 121, 178, 223, 288, 313, 376, 396, 431, 444, 468-472, 491, 500, 547, 615, 819, 895-906		
Sukanta Kundu	273, 368, 369, 478, 479		



And when the lights go out, the test carries on...

*Students complete the final questions of an (open book) exam using the light from their cell phones.
Picture: Shakti Chaturvedi, Dept. of Management Science, 2023.*

Covers: Our collages feature back issues of The Spark from 1965-69 and 2021-26

Front – collage created by Aseem Shukla

Back – The Spark, April 1969, the issue that inspired this one. Source: MIT Libraries, Cambridge, MA

Cover Design by Aarzoo (BT, EE, 2024-28) and Aditi Narain (BT, EE, 2025-29), Outreach Cell, IITK

The Yoga feat on Page 825 was accomplished through an accurately timed click, before the big splash.



Vol. V No. 5

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

April '69

Directorate of Technical Education
Uttar Pradesh Government

17th April, 1969

Student magazines provide an excellent medium for the students to express their views freely on various subjects and therefore deserve full encouragement.

The Spark has maintained a high standard. On the occasion of its fifth anniversary I heartily congratulate those responsible for its publication. I wish it greater success in the years to come.

L. D. Bhargava, I. A. S.
Director of Technical Education, U.P.

T
H
E

S
P
A
R
K

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



Published By
IITK Alumni