



# Y-Point

*the webZINE of the IIT Bombay Alumni Association*

SPRING 1999

Volume III Number 2

In this issue ...

Letter from IIT Bombay

A message from Prof. S.L.N. Murthy, Dean of Resource Development

Editorial

From the desk of Ram Kelkar (B. Tech. 80) ...

Interview

Nandan Nilekani (B Tech 78), Managing Director of Infosys by Sanghamitra and Abheek Gupta

So why do Indians do so badly at sports ?

Networking works ...

Class Notes

Who, what, where ... updates about the whereabouts and new achievements of your classmates.

Bell Labs to Ventureland

The story of Hemant Kanakia and Torrent Technologies from the Speaker Series event in the Bay Area.

A Tryst with Excellence

A report on the Chicago Chapter's inaugural meeting.

News from IIT Bombay

Read in the June newsletter about Milind Kopikar winning the Shiv Chatrapati Award for swimming, in the May newsletter about Nandan Nilekani's Rs. 5.6 Crore donation, and in the April newsletter about the Board of Governors approving the naming of the Kanwal Rekhi School of Information Technology.

IIT Bombay in the News

Articles in the press and on the web about IIT Bombay and IITians.

Send comments and suggestions to .

§ Please review [disclaimer](#) prior to accessing this website.

Copyright © 1996,1997 [IIT Bombay Alumni Association](#), Wilton, CT, USA

Letter from IIT Bombay

**ALUMNI CONTRIBUTIONS**

by Prof. S.L.N. Murthy, Office of the Dean (Resource Development)

---

Dear Friends,

In my last letter in February this year, I had outlined some significant happenings and a few key concerns. The intervening period has been full of excitement.

Towards mid February, Nandan Nilekani (B.Tech EE 1978, now Managing Director, Infosys Technologies Ltd.) threw us a challenge. Nandan gifted IIT B a part of his personal holdings in Infosys, and the challenge was to complete all the paper work and sale transactions within two weeks. We succeeded in meeting the deadlines and also launching the associated endowments by 10<sup>th</sup> March – the Institution Foundation Day. While Kanwal's munificent donation helped the School of Information Technology take off, Nandan's generosity has launched it into orbit.



Nandan has also, unwittingly (or deliberately??) placed another big challenge before all of us who spent our times in hostels other than H-8. Thanks to Nandan's package, H-8 may soon attain a '5-star' status, and we will need to work so much harder to keep up with the Hostel-8 Joneses (or Johnnies!!).

Besides Nandan's landmark contribution, the preceding year was full of Alumni initiatives. The campaigns of H-10 girls, the batch of '95 of Mechanical Engg., and Computer Science & Engg. batch of '95 & '99 (would be alumni !) are specially heartwarming. The Heritage Fund has approached the task of converting all your warm feelings and concerns for your Alma mater into concerted action. I am particularly happy over the decision of the Heritage Fund to contribute towards an endowment for Library Journals – to help our students, faculty and research staff, and enable the Journal section of IITB library to retain its position of primacy.

With these levels of Alumni goodwill and support for the Institute, "it is hardly surprising that Sukhatme entertains a rose tinted view of the future, even in these troubled times" - to quote from Dilip Thakore (consultant Editor, 'School' and founder-editor of Business India and Business World).

Your Institute made impressive strides on several fronts. The Technology Development Mission projects helped the Institute establish a strong presence in hardware design and development (through pilot plants and prototypes), and has strengthened linkages with industries and potential entrepreneurs. Approvals for proposals for establishment of major facilities for Software Verification and Validation, and Large Scale Structural Integrity Testing and Assessment, represent very significant events. We were able to offer contract research and consultancy services to a wider range of national and international agencies. No wonder, the Dean (R&D)

sports a very broad smile – with funding from sponsored Research and Consultancy projects reaching an all time high (last financial year), and crossing the Rs. 200 million mark!

The Institute has launched a major initiative to ensure network connectivity in the academic and hostel areas. In this context, the Class of '75 campaign towards Internet connectivity for the hostels has been a bonus. Soon, we expect to have a 2 mbps band width – a far cry from the 64 kbps facility from which we were operating. With this initiative, we expect to have a radically transformed computational and information network environment in two years' time.

The Foundation Day, celebrated on 10<sup>th</sup> March provided us an opportunity to honour our Alumni and confer on eight of them the "Distinguished Alumnus" title.

The School of Information Technology has just completed admission to the first batch for the full time Masters degree programme. The School of Management building is practically ready for occupation - the final coats of paint, and landscaping are in progress. We are now ready to launch construction activity on the School of Information Technology building, after obtaining formal permission from the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay to cut forty eight trees and transplanting another seventy four trees, (of course paying a hefty deposit!), after months of effort. Those of you returning to the campus after the seventies and early eighties will observe the phenomenal increase in green cover on campus! The scales of justice, however, are even-handed, and despite a temporary lull in legislative activity, there are enough laws on the statute books for those who care to know and obey!!

This letter has already become too long. Before I close, let me refer to two major developments.

The recent substantial upward revision of faculty salaries and benefits, the work ethos and environment at IITB, along with the unique culture of Mumbai city itself make this Institute the best academic institution to work for. Those of you who have been deferring your decisions on plunging into academics in India can now make up your minds!

The plans we had prepared for increasing substantially the intake in IITs (to address the aspirations of youngsters emerging from schools, and also retain our small share of 'quality' graduates) had to be placed 'on hold', as the requisite funds cannot be readily found in the face of competitive demands in a developing country. The increases in intake IIT B has already implemented – through new programmes – has placed considerable pressures on laboratories, class rooms, and especially on hostels. Even with the commissioning (in late July 1999) of a hundred (double seated) rooms in Hostel-4, and the addition of another sixty places in H-8 in another eighteen months' time, we would be short of around eight hundred hostel places.

A lot of planning, preparatory work, follow up efforts (often repetitive) have become a part of our working ethos. The one single dream we all share – that of seeing IIT B among the 'International Super-Six' very soon (to use current cricket parlance), not only sustains but also augments motivation.

Prof. Sukhatme and I eagerly look forward to meeting as many of you as possible, in person, during our proposed visit scheduled for late September – early October, 1999.

All the best to all of you in all your pursuits,

Yours sincerely,

(Prof. S.L. Narayana Murthy)

Dean (Resource Development)

Office of the Dean (Resource Development)

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Powai, Mumbai-400 076, INDIA.

Ph.No. : +91 (22) 576 7090 / 576 7091

Fax : +91 (22) 578 3475

Email : [deanrd@admin.iitb.ac.in](mailto:deanrd@admin.iitb.ac.in)

[slnm@cupid.che.iitb.ac.in](mailto:slnm@cupid.che.iitb.ac.in)

Editorial

### **Nurturing a Growth Spurt**

[by Ram V. Kelkar \(B. Tech. \(EE\) 80 / H2\)](#)

It has been over three years since a group of IIT Bombayites began working toward establishing an alumni organization, with the goals of increasing alumni interaction and networking, and raising funds and other resources to help our common alma mater. Anil Kshirsagar and his merry band on the West Coast, and a few of us strewn elsewhere in Connecticut, Chicago and Boston linked up with the magic of the web, and a real organization began to take root.



As I sat here this morning reading e-mails ... from the Bay Area organizers, from the Chicago Chapter, from Boston, from Bombay, from Washington ... it was obvious to me that we are now moving from the initial phase of laying down the roots of the organization into a growth spurt.

The Bay Area effort is now well established, with two Speaker Series events already completed, and more to come. The Chicago Chapter, the Southern California Chapter and the Boston Chapter are now quite well established, and other areas gearing up include New York, Washington and Seattle. The Database team is actively working on an ambitious project to verify and grow the Alumni Directory by year-end. Others are focused on broadening the fundraising efforts to all alumni, in addition to a continued focus on our prominent alumni who are now CEOs and founders of their own companies.

All of you reading this should reach out to this growing effort, and ensure that we maintain the excitement in establishing an alumni organization that transcends all geographical barriers. Let us not keep the Heritage Fund localized to a few major cities and areas, but instead continue to build links between alumni all over the US and even the world.

We are in the process of finalizing a roadshow for Director Sukhatme and Prof. S.L.N. Murthy in September-October 1999 ... click [here](#) for a preliminary schedule, and I invite alumni to write to us, to either [president@iitbombay.org](mailto:president@iitbombay.org) or [events@iitbombay.org](mailto:events@iitbombay.org) with your ideas on what you believe should be the objectives for IIT Bombay and its alumni in the new millenium. We will share your ideas with them so that when you meet them, you can hear their plans for 1999 and beyond.

I will end by appealing as usual to all of you to stop and think about how you can help the institution that has given so much to you ... even \$100 from each of us per year could easily raise over \$200-250,000 if we also ensure that our employers match the contributions. Please take a moment to send in your tax deductible contributions to the IIT Bombay Heritage Fund. All it takes is a check and a first-class stamp ... the address is Treasurer, [IIT Bombay Heritage Fund](#), 10489 Rampart Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014.

---

Interview

### **Nandan Nilekani (BTech 78)**

by Sanghamitra and Abheek Gupta

*Article mirrored from <http://www.iitb.ac.in> ... click [here](#) for **InsighT** magazine in Mumbai*

Nandan Nilekani is currently Managing Director of Infosys Technologies. He started off Infosys Technologies at a time when Infotech was not so big in India. A graduate from IIT Bombay in 1978, Nandan Nilekani was working for Patni Computer Systems where he met a bunch of like-minded people including Mr.Narayana Murthy in the software division. Together they felt that they could set up a professionally owned and managed global software company functioning from India. They took the plunge by leaving PCS in 1981 and pooling in 10,000 rupees to create a globally respected software company something that was not the norm in 1981.

I: What's the work culture like in Infosys ?

NN: We believe in the knowledge based industry of which software is an integral part, Here we can't talk of hierarchies and closetedness . We need an open culture where people are free to express their views,thoughts and ideas because the best ideas don't always come from the top guys. So we endeavoured to create an environment where innovative ideas are welcome and pooling of thoughts is the order of the day. If you come to our campus at Bangalore, you'll feel its like IIT because its a big campus with a gym and libraries. Its quite a good environment and I think Software Industry has to be a place where the environment is conducive to creativity.<br>

I: About your recruitment philosophy?

NN: We recruit lots of IITians and from the RECs, IIMs ,Chartered Accountants,because we're getting into a lot of business oriented software development When we recruit IITians we don't look for people specifically from the Comp.Sc.dept..we take people from many disciplines. We have our own test to see if people have the aptitude for Software Development. What are the things we have to look for ? We have found an empirical relation between aptitude and performance in our industry. There is a high co-relation between selection and quality of performance.We also have our own Infosys University within the campus....with a 33 member

faculty many of whom are ex-profs. from IIT. There, we run intensive training programs and classes for the recruits and that prepares them for the challenges ahead. <br>

I: Regarding the expansion of Infosys, how do you envisage it as a global organisation?

NN: Already, 95% of our revenue comes from the global market so in essence our customers are global. If you look at our investor base, 20% of our equities are held by global investors and we're in the process of listing our stock on the NASDAQ, the US Stock Exchange. When that happens, we'll be the first Indian company to have achieved this. With that we become a part of the global investors. The other part of globalisation is having global employees. We already have 17 offices all over the world. We're setting up more development centres all over the world. We'll be recruiting Indians and local people. All these aspects make it a global concern. <br>

I: What is the Technology Thrust of Infosys right now ?

NN: Identify any upcoming areas for expansion. The emerging areas we see are e-commerce and banking. A lot of companies are restructuring their entire business process so as to avail of all the possibilities and potentialities of e-commerce - Business to business and business to consumer. Another area is package implementation. A lot of people don't develop software as packages and then integrate them together. These are some of the areas we are concentrating on. We have a foot in many other areas too since we cannot predict which will boom or how the markets will behave.

I: Management philosophy behind the treatment given to the employees ?

NN: Software is all about people. Its success or failure depends on people. So we should have a high level of commitment and motivation, feeling part of the company is very important, so they must have both emotional and financial equity in the ownership of the company. The employees should participate in the wealth creation of the company thus 10% of the stock is held by the employees. Stock options are very lucrative ..we try to create mass employee wealth as far as possible.

I: Will there be a slump after Y2K ? Will IT still be as important ?

NN: Right now the industry is booming ..we need to make the best use of all the people we have. And we want people to build a long term relationship with the company. No, I don't think there will be a slump at all, considering that there has been a fundamental change in the way technology is being used. Every business and social activity is being backed by technology. We're seeing a change in the way economies and societies function. <br>

I: Brain Drain ? How do you propose to prevent it

NN: We have about 11% attrition rate. A lot of people come in from IITs and after a couple of years they want to do their MBAs, and MTEchs and hence they leave, and of course there are quite a few people who just want to go abroad. You can't force people to stay back and we don't want to either. Our focus is on creating a good environment to work and to provide the best job satisfaction and wealth creation opportunities to them. After that it is for the employees to decide for themselves. The quality of the work out here is improving everyday and it's much more satisfying. Hence I believe this trend will soon stop.

I: Student Industry Interaction ?

NN: We have tried to do various programs with the IITs and IIMs. We have a visiting professor scheme where your prof.s spend some days with us. We also send some students for doing part time programs. But there is a lot of scope for improvement. We are sponsoring 26 scholarships at the IITs, IIMs and IISc. <br>

I: Any fond memories of IIT?

NN: I spent the best years of my life here. I was in H-8, and it was great. So I attribute a lot of importance and respect for the time I spent here. I was G. Sec Cult and organised MOOD-I. Such activities helped a lot to improve my organisational skills.

I: How do you envisage the future of IITs ?

NN: IITs do remain the centres of excellence in the country. All of us have the responsibility of ensuring that we maintain them so. While the students and faculty are terrific it might be difficult in maintaining the standard due to reduction in Govt funds. Over time IITs should become self-sufficient with the money coming from alumni and project work.

I: Are you satisfied with the way the Institute interacts with its alumni ?

NN: No. A lot more can be done. If you look at the west, the univ.s out there are very aggressive with respect to keeping track of their alumni. Here it's not just a problem with the Institute, but also with alumni. There are about 25000 graduates from IITB alone many of whom are in very influential positions. I think it's high time we tapped this resourceful network.

I: Any message for us ?

NN: I'm very optimistic about the future, there are a lot of wonderful opportunities out there. Anybody who is lucky enough to get an IIT education is can do very well in life. So do well!

---

Article

### **... so why do Indians do do badly at sports ?**

by Hemendra Godbole

San Jose, CA \_\_\_\_\_

I was seated across this exec. at a hi-funda company. He had just learned that his Marketing Director had quit. Usually, that creates a minor crisis for folks here, but this news did not faze him at all !

Calmly, while he was discussing our business proposal, he thumbed through a Stanford\_Alumnii website, highlighted a few names, and asked his admin. to reach five prospects. By the time we had finished our meeting, he had two prospects ready to be interviewed in the next 48 hours. Does Networking work ?

Flashback mode on:

-----

We were the first 4-year batch ('81-85) and much smarter than the ones who took 5 years to get through. Our secret ?

TEAMWORK ! The 85/EEs had perfected the art of collective-cramming at the H4/Wardens' office the day before the exams, had helped each other get to the only library reference, copied notes for each other, and even registered for electives on proxy ! (A classic remark in the H4/canteen in the last sem: "Oay! don't ask me the course number - we are all in BVRs class now"). And we did this in the face of overwhelming odds - like the time when the sole reference book had the critical pages torn out from it. Clearly a perfectly rational act by one schooled in the principle of "Relative Grading(RG)".

(Flashback mode off)

Few know of a recent scientific study that shows over 89% of graduating IITians had their genes altered due to dangerous overdoses of "RG" at a young age. You can spot them even today, at the supermarkets (ghissing ahead at the cash-only checkout counter with 240 items and a feeble excuse), at gridlocked freeways (refuse to let your bike get through), or even at exciting social evenings such as kids' birthdays talking about their recent stock trades (mislead the gullible non-IITians with disastrous tips).

On the other hand, there are several examples of IITians founding successful projects - be it camping trips or new ventures. These are the few who were smart enough to counter the RG-threat with long RLC sessions and long walks to Chansha/Vihar.

And that brings us to the present, sipping a chai at Starbucks. When asked what it would take to help out the RG-overdosed IIT alum, OKBABA smiled as only he can.

"Why do Indians do so badly in sports ?". Aha - we were on to yetannader really-deep thought.

"No cheerleaders !" was the mysterious answer as he gazed away.

WOW ! Got to hand it off to the one-and-only ! In an instant he had hit it. Too late for the "Cheerleaders" in the literal sense to excite the alum into "networking". However, they come in slightly different shapes and colors these days.

I was at a recent IIT-B/Alum talk. Neat scene. So big-Jake asked me outside if I had seen Ganesh. "Oh! about 5'7", glasses, medium build, in his thirties". That sorta described almost everyone inside the room. "Sorry, can't spot Ganesh for you, Jake".

Yogen's talk was insightful. And as the Alum-team began to talk, I spotted the cheerleaders that OKBABA was talking about.

JUNTA ! We have arrived ! Look around you, and hug the first IITian you see next. Leverage the network - that is your ONLY hope of ridding yourself of the RG-bug. Give that biker a ghiss-lane on a grid-locked freeway. And if you see Ganesh at the next IIT-B meet, tell him Jake was looking for him. And for the really critical cases, try not tearing out pages from a library book.

See you at the next ALUM-meet !

---

Article

## Bell Labs to Ventureland

Chicago, Illinois

---

In its second Speaker Series Event on May 16<sup>th</sup> '99, the IIT Bombay Heritage Fund hosted Dr. Hemant Kanakia, Chairman of Torrent Networks and his wife Dr Sonal Desai. While relating their days together in IIT, Paritosh Choksi and Rajan Shastri introduced Hemant and Sonal to the audience.

In many ways Hemant and Sonal were coming back home when they visited the San Francisco Bay Area. A lot of us remember Hemant and Sonal from their days in the early '80s when they were both doing their Ph.D. at Stanford University. I still have a wine glass dated 1981 when we all had gone



to a Wine Festival in downtown Palo Alto. Like many of us Hemant is a graduate of IIT Bombay, batch of 1975. After his Ph.D. Hemant joined Bell Labs until he quit to start Torrent Networks in 1996. He sold Torrent Networks to Ericsson for \$450M last month. Sonal in the meantime became a tenured Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Hemant was in town to thank his early investors for supporting him and Torrent Networks. And that is so much like Hemant. A simple and very intelligent person who is grateful to one and all for his success. Hemant is a techie who grew up to know the ways and means of the business world. His talk was impromptu, open, candid and very informative. His advice to the audience was down to earth. As my wife Manjiri put it, it was refreshing.

Commenting on his days at Bell Labs, Hemant mentioned that his focus there was to work on research that's useful to the real world. When Lucent Technologies was spun off Hemant decided that it was time for him to bring technology into the real world. That's when he started Torrent Technologies, a company whose primary goal was to productize next generation gigabit routers. This was in Aug of 1996. Knowing well that he had no idea how he would start a company he came to the Bay Area to talk to several of his friends who had done this in the past. He found some angel investors who advised him early on to raise venture capital.



While raising money, Hemant in his inimitable style told the VCs that he was a technologist with no experience in running a company and he would look to them for help in some areas of management. His approach was unique in that "he was clear about what he was not clear about" and he was forthright about it with his investors. Draper Fisher and Columbia Capital, convinced of Hemant's ability to deliver on technology, invested \$5M in Torrent Networks. The company was started with 4 key people on board.....all technologists.

Hemant said getting the money was the easy part. He had to overcome tremendous challenges in executing on the plan in the next 18 months before he went for a second round of financing of \$18M. Having never been a CEO before and having been a technologist throughout his life Hemant had an enjoyable learning curve to cope with. As CEO he spent a lot of time talking to people on a number of fronts. He gained a lot of knowledge doing so while working real hard on delivering on his commitments. Among the critical things he learnt was the role of marketing or the lack thereof. He said that a lot of mistakes that the company made were in marketing and positioning its products. Jokingly he said that the first "non-essential" person he hired was the VP of Marketing.

Hemant mentioned that building a company is a very family oriented process. One has to nurture its development like you would while raising a family. Besides you need to get buy in from the most important family – at home. He then introduced his wife Dr. Sonal Desai to give her version of what it takes to be involved in a Start-Up.

Sonal opened her remarks by saying that early on Raj Mashruwala asked her whether she was prepared to be involved with the "Start-Up" lifestyle. Having known IITians for more than 20 years she thought this was another example of an IITian inflating the effort needed. Moreover, she had sociologist colleagues who had concluded through research that Americans overestimate the hours they put into work. Sure, she at that time was putting 13 hours of work a day but that included commute time. So she thought that she could rely on Hemant putting in not more than 10 to 12 hours a day hoping that he will continue helping her in all the household chores that they always shared.

It did not turn out that way. On starting Torrent Networks, Hemant gave up on household chores early on. She could not schedule her time around his schedule. It turns out that in a Start-Up environment, Hemant was involved in so many things that he could not maintain a predictable schedule. Planning for child-care, vacations and attending conferences even a year in advance was impossible. "Who would have predicted that on the days she was supposed to be in a conference that she chairs and that she planned for a year in advance, Hemant would be unavailable because he was negotiating the sale of his company to Ericsson?" Sonal asked.

Sonal reminded people that a marriage is a long-term contract in which there are times when one has to yield to each other's needs. Under such circumstances, she mentioned that it always helps to have a role model. And in her case her Mom, who happens to be a physician, was her role model. Sonal said that her Mom also had to juggle her own career with familial responsibilities.

In conclusion Sonal, the sociologist, said that she could empathize with Hemant when he talked about Torrent Networks most often in terms of its people. I can believe that. Hemant was always a people oriented guy - sensitive to their needs. A Company after all is primarily made of people who are committed to make it a success.

Hemant then opened the event to a Q&A session. He provided the audience with a lot of sage advice as he answered their questions. Here are some of his quotes:

- Take your best shot at everything you do.....

- Always try to get a group of Venture Capitalists who are right for you. They should be able to provide you with contacts and the checks and balances needed in managing the growth of the company. Make sure you have the right chemistry with them and that they compliment the strengths of the company. It is like an arranged marriage.
- Have great people in your company. Spend a lot of time hiring the right people. I spent 50% of my time in the first 18 months in hiring people. Ericsson in the final analysis bought Torrent Networks for its people
- Remember to position your company and its products to differentiate yourself from your competitors who will try to stereotype you. Many competitors (9 in the case of Torrent) will also claim they do what you do. Maneuver to force their hands to show what they really have. Torrent did this by opening their architecture
- A lot of what you do is not all technology related. Be aware of marketing and sales tactics and strategies
- Time to market was critical...no time for building a prototype. Believe in your technology and then hire the best people to build it
- There is no one way of climbing a tree as long as you know that you are headed to the top
- Filing for patents is more a defensive move....
- If market research can discover the product the market needs then you are probably already too late to capture market share for the product....
- Let fairness be your guide when you distribute equity among employees.....do not do it either for fear or greed. Each employee should have enough of a stake to want to wake up and make a success of the company
- It is not essential to have knowledge in all areas to start a company. Hire top-notch people who have done it well before
- Learn to fire people and cut your losses before they damage the morale of the rest of your team
- Hire people who are constructive in their attitude. It takes 2 to 3 weeks to figure out whether the new hire is working out. The question is how long would it take for you to admit that you made a mistake in hiring and are willing to cut your losses
- If your exit strategy is to sell the company then make sure you are in the face of all your potential acquirers as much as you can
- IIT prepared me to take risks. It's like taking a tough exam. You prepare well, give the exam and if you fail to do well you just learn from the experience knowing well that there will be another exam another day

At the end, when someone asked Hemant what he plans on doing now, someone else suggested laundry at home at which point Hemant promised Sonal that he would do so for the next year.....Hemant please don't beat me up for putting this in writing!

It is wonderful to see very nice people do so well!

Vijay Gallagher, Coordinator of the IITBHF Speaker Series, ended the get together by thanking Hemant and Sonal and presenting Hemant with a video tape of IIT and Sonal with a bouquet of flowers.

Article

**A tryst with excellence**

"A tryst with excellence- in the Midwest" – these were guest-speaker Subhash Tantry's opening words to address the kick-off meeting of IIT-Bombay Alumni Association's Midwest Chapter. Mr. Subhash Tantry, who flew in from the Bay Area, describes the successes of the Bay Area chapter and shares with the goals of the IIT-B alumni association.



This first get-together was a grand success. In a great show of support for this nascent chapter, about 55 people attended the get-together, including about 45 alumni and their families. Alumni spanned the entire range of graduating years, from the sixties to the late nineties, bringing with them a wealth of experience and a multitude of perspectives. Quite a few alumni also came in from out of town, from cities as far away as Nebraska and Detroit. Mr. Subhash Tantry, an alumnus of IIT-Bombay, who is now settled in the Bay Area and who is co-founder of Vigilance Inc., flew in from San Francisco to be with us especially for this occasion.

### **Objective**

When Prof. Sukhatme last came to the US, he talked about our Tryst with Excellence. His dream is to make IITB a world class institution. All world class institutions like MIT, Harvard and Stanford are more renowned by what their Alumni have done in their own lives while helping each other. They are also well known for having given back to their alma mater in their own ways. Such attributes will reflect on the character of our beloved Institute and its products. And this is where we, as alumni of IIT-Bombay which is a world class institution in its own right, can come in.

The graduates of IIT Bombay are dispersed all over the world and hold eminent positions in industry and academia. Recent estimates show that there are over 6,000 IIT-B alumni in the US with over 1,000 of them residing in the Midwest region. As a group, we are influential people who could derive a lot of strength and value by building a network for our mutual good. We are also ambassadors of IIT Bombay, laying the groundwork to enable future generations of graduates to gain prominent positions in industry and academia. The Alumni Organizations and the IIT-B Heritage Fund are designed to provide a forum that will nurture this network of graduates through mutual guidance, advice, and support. Our alma mater, IIT Bombay, will also be able to derive value from its alumni by virtue of the alumni organization's ability to garner resources as needed for meeting its own objectives. Last, but not least, the alumni association will fulfill the social function of bringing together alumni from various graduating years to meet, reminisce about the good ol' times, and make the network stronger.

### **Immediate Goals**

A lot of excellent issues were raised at the event. Some of the most pressing needs seem to be centered around: (i) How to increase IITB-AA membership in the Midwest region, (ii) Possible future events for the chapter, (iii) How to provide a quick and efficient means of communicating and disbursing information to alumni in the Midwest region.

Some of the solutions that the chapter intends to work on to meet the above needs are: (i) Build a database containing the names of all the alumni in the region. The goal is to link up to the iit-bombay.org website to enable easy entry or update of database information by the alumni themselves. (ii) Contact alumni who are currently in the region's database and get them to ask other IIT-B alumni in the region to contact the chapter and put themselves on the database. (iii) Design and maintain a web-page for the Alumni Association's Midwest Chapter. This web-page can then be periodically updated.



Lastly, given the fact that this chapter is still in its nascent stages, there is a burning need for people who can donate time and effort toward the following activities: (i) Provide motivation, direction and leadership for the organization, (ii) Interface with the Bay Area Chapter to borrow ideas and keep them updated on our progress, (iii) Help us organize future events for this year, (iv) Help in calling their alumnus friends and acquaintances for the database and events.

Mr. Gopi Sethu (Class of 92, Chemical Eng.) can be seen above welcoming everybody to the chapter kickoff. Gopi gave everybody an overview of the chapter's objectives and what the kickoff meeting hoped to achieve.

### **Looking Ahead**

In summary, this event would not have been possible without the enthusiasm of our alumni in the Midwest region, the hard work of our volunteers, and the whole-hearted support of Subhash Tantry and Bay Area Chapter.

Our next goal is to organize more events, both professional and social, in the future in order to build a strong and flourishing chapter. We are also eagerly awaiting Prof. Sukhatme (Director of IIT-Bombay) and Prof. Narayana Murthy (Dean) visit to the US and specifically to Chicago. This event is currently scheduled in September of this year. From the enthusiastic response for this kick-off event, we hope the word spreads around and we will be able to see more people in the future. Mr. Subhash Tantry also described the functionings of the Bay Area chapter, which the Midwest chapter hopes to duplicate.

---

Article

### **IIT Bombay in the News**

---

- "[The man who would create 100 millionaires](#)" ... an article in the June issue of Rediff on the Net about Bharat Desai, founder-CEO of Syntel.

- "[Hit entrepreneur now wants to wash some linen](#)" ... an article about Hemant Kanakia, founder of Torrent Networks.
- Bharat Desai, founder-CEO of Syntel, visits his alma mater - "[Cyber millionaire ties up with IIT to set up hi-tech lab](#)", as reported in Economic Times, March 8, 1999 (© Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.)
- Vinod Dham, the chief designer of the Pentium, visits TechFest at IIT Bombay - "[A can of dreams](#)"- January 30, 1999. (© Rediff on the Net )
- Shailesh Mehta is featured in three articles in the Economic Times dated December 29, 1998 - "[Banking is no longer bricks & mortar](#)", "[Effective risk management success secret](#)", and "[Customised solutions our strength](#)" (© Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. )
- [Rekhi extends helping hand](#) ... click [here](#) to read about Kanwal Rekhi's visit to India and TiE's plans for India. (© Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd.)
- "[India's Hot School](#)" ... click [here](#) to read the articles from the December 7th Issue of Business Week (© 1998, The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc.)
- US DoC [refuses to renew software license](#) of IIT Bombay Computer Centre, and read about [Mood Indigo '98](#) ... from the December 8th issue of The Times of India (© Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. )
- [IIT to set up School of IT](#) (© 1998 Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Ltd.)
- [IIT Bombay ranked #1](#) by India Today ... click [here](#) for the story (© Living Media India Ltd.)
- "[IITs : Will they Swim or Sink](#)" ... click [here](#) for the story (© Living Media India Ltd.)