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ReNews

Newsletter of Research Scholars





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Hi everyone. As is our custom, we will now let you know what edition of ReNews we are publishing. This is the first edition of the second volume of ReNews or as the superstitious may consider it, the 13th edition. We hope it doesn't bring us bad luck, especially with our end sems coming up. On that note, good luck to everyone and we hope all of you survive the coming onslaught of end sems and emerge victorious (both of the editors hope to come out with at least B's)!

We're starting up a "Letters to the Editor" column where we hope to publish many interesting letters from junta, voicing their feedback on the articles and opinion pieces. This time we have some feedback on the anonymous article we posted last month entitled "Do We Need Professors Here". Please do check it out and be inspired to write in.

We also have our first RAS Desk from the new RAS-in-charge, Aravind Anthur. He's outlined his plans for the coming academic year. He's also put out a call for new teams for various activities. We're including that as well in this edition. If you are a research scholar and enthusiastic to get involved, please do drop him a mail at ras@smail.iitm.ac.in.

With interest being shown in the plagiarism detection software, turnitin, we at ReNews thought it would be a good idea to find out a little more about it. In that regard, we have an article from our correspondent, Ashwaj Mayya, shedding a little more light on the subject.

We also have a slew of interesting articles and some very nice poems. In fact, it's pretty cool to see so many poetically inclined junta on campus. Keep it up guys and gals.

And what ReNews editorial wouldn't be complete without a call for more correspondents, cartoonists, photographers and what-have-you. We hope to publish at least one cartoon, not made by one of the editors, before we step down. Please help us achieve our editorial ambitions! If you want to be involved with ReNews, whether you know how you want to be involved or not, drop us a mail at renews@smail.iitm.ac.in.

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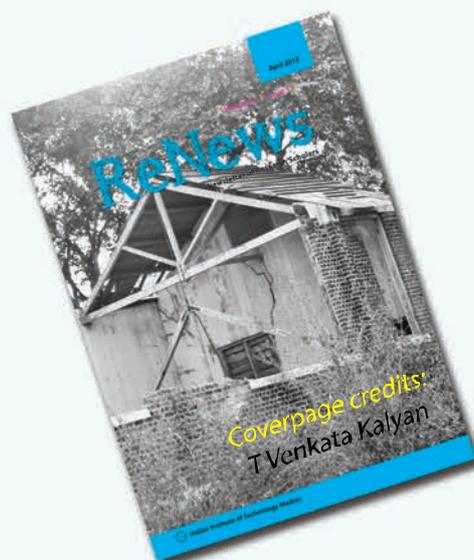
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It is unfortunate that ReNews has not published the name of the author who authored the report "Do we need professors here?"

Anyway the report is wrong in 2 out of 3 points. The only place where professors can be replaced is admin work which sucks their precious time.

How can a professor be replaced by a graduate student for teaching courses? I can't fathom what will happen to the quality of teaching if the authors' suggestion is implemented. Having studied under some of the finest professors in the campus like Prof. David Koilpillai and Dr. Krishna Jaganathan, I can vouch that teaching is not an easy cup of tea as many of us think. The kind of insights that such professors bring to a class does not come in a single day of reading but years of working in that particular field. Will post graduates be able to answer some of the brilliant questions posed by B. Tech.s? Some questions even stump the greatest professors here.

And professors being replaced by senior research students in guiding them! I don't want to even reply for such absurdities in this column and waste my time.

It is good that ReNews gives space to such extreme view points. As a famous quote goes. "I might disagree with you, but will defend your right to freedom of expression till my death."



Sudharsan Parthasarathy
Ph. D Scholar
Electrical Engg.

'A concerned citizen who rants about the problems that plague India and tries to find a solution for them.'

RAS DESK

One Month as a Bogus RAS

Come on, let's admit it, I am not RAS, I am RAS-in-charge. But who cares, I have the email id and the phone number, I say to everybody that I am RAS (officially I am not! Since I didn't give my nomination on time). I just wanted to utilize the opportunity to the maximum extent possible.

I will try to tell you what my vision is and what I am doing towards achieving that goal. My main goal is to increase the quality of research to the highest standard so that you should want to stand up and be proud to say "I did my research degree in IIT Madras." I feel that the best way to achieve this is to have a very motivating and conducive environment for research scholars here. Let's start by admitting that research scholars are now the underdogs of IIT Madras. As Ishita says, scholars have an identity crisis, and we need to understand that participating in all the activities by coming together will only motivate them towards doing better quality work. But everything, every single thing has one goal – making IIT Madras the best research institution and not an engineering college churning out frustrated minds.

The first few weeks was an attempt to meet all the Deans. First met Dean ICSR and had a discussion with him about

(a) opening up inter-disciplinary projects for research scholars and financially supporting that, (b) having talks and informative sessions on patents,

(c) having a better link with research park and research scholars of IIT Madras. Efforts are going on towards these directions and I'm planning to meet him again next month when these targets are met, after setting more targets.

The important points of the discussion with Dean IAR were

(a) organizing events to increase the contact with research scholar alumni of IIT Madras. He has asked that it first be organized at the de-

partmental level with the aid of supervisors who will be having their contacts,

- (b) increasing the interaction between foreign scholars and the Indian scholars in the campus,
- (c) facilitating more fellowships and internships for the research scholars, at least one semester in industry/foreign university,
- (d) MOU's are going to be signed with foreign universities for joint PhD programs in the campus very soon, he is going to various universities for the same.

I met Dean AR last, with the Ph. D. councilors and placement core team lead, Oswald. He addressed us and told us his vision, and admitted frankly the issues here in IIT Madras with respect to research, faculty and environment. He has promised us that he will give full support to all the activities and initiatives towards making the campus not just one of the leading research institutions, but THE best research institution. When we suggested, he has asked us to write a proposal,

- (a) for TA waiver for the students who are actively involved in such activities, on submission of a report at the end of every month,
- (b) official feedback for advisors on their guidance just like course feedback,
- (c) elaborate orientation session for the new research scholars introducing them to different research labs and scholars and telling them about the activities taking place in IIT Madras.

Last but not the least, I met Prof. Karmalkar who was redesigning the Introduction to Research course, and he was meeting various student groups, patiently listening to all of them and taking the inputs of everybody. Some of the discussions lead to making the course more interactive and having more sessions where the students are actively taking part in the course through writing, presentation and various group activities.

A few talks on the anvil are the talk by G. M. K. Raju, senior project consultant, IC & SR, IIT Madras on patents and IP. These are two things that are not an integral part of Indian culture

and I feel that we are not very well educated on them. Hope this talk clears up a few things and throws some light on patenting and IP. V. Ramanujachari, Director, Research Division, DRDO, Research Park, IIT Madras has promised to give a talk during June. Attempts are on to have a talk by Balki and if any of you know professors, scientists and researchers who can give a talk or workshop, please do feel free to contact me. It will be a great opportunity to listen to such great minds.

Trying to build up a team which can bring together research scholars, organize activities for them (as well as themselves) and make IIT Madras a vibrant research institute. Most importantly, make it independent of any individual including RAS/myself/whoever. ■

AWARDS

The following are the list of awards as taken from the IITM website as well as an award brought to our attention by the RAS.

1. The paper by Ms. N. Amutha (EE10D019), Ph. D Scholar, Electrical Engg. entitled 'Initialization of Fixed Speed Induction Generator Based Wind Generator Connected to the Grid' has won the 'Best Paper Award' at the IEEE sponsored 1st National Conference on Power Electronics Systems and Applications organized by the Department of Electrical Engg, NIT, Rourkela. She was guided by Dr. B. Kalyan Kumar.

2. Ms. K. Sowmya (MS12D005), Ph. D Scholar, Management Studies has won the 'Best Paper Awards' for her paper entitled: (a). 'Strategic Bidding for Cloud Resources under Dynamic Pricing Schemes' at the International Symposium on Cloud and Service Computing (ISCOS 2012) held at NIT Surathkal during December 17-18, 2012. (b). 'A Simulation Model to Determine the Bidding Strategy for Bidders in a Cloud Spot Market' at the International Simulation conference of India (ISCI 2013) held at IITM Research Park during February 21-23, 2013. She was guided by Prof. R. P. Sundarraj.

3. Mr. T. Ram Prabhu (ED11D002), External Research Scholar, working with Dr Srikanth Vedantam, Engineering Design, IIT Madras presented the paper entitled "Layer Fe/SiC composites - Preparation, characterization, evaluation of Tribological behavior" at a conference (NCAMA-2013) at NIT Trichy on Apr 5th, 2013 and won the 'Best Oral Award'.

CORRESPONDENT'S CORNER



Ashwaj Mayya
Ph. D Scholar
Applied Mechanics



With an ever increasing focus on the matter that one publishes, plagiarism could catch you unawares. That particular phrase in 'X' paper could be irresistible to your subconscious. However, plagiarism that was un-intentional is still plagiarism! What one needs is a guard against plagiarism like those spell checkers which avoid the embarrassment of poor vocabulary skills. After all, who would like to be upheld for poor writing skills?

"Are these my words?"



Turnitin is one such software that aids in guarding yourself against plagiarism. Being one of the most popular anti-plagiarism pieces of software on the planet, turnitin boasts of publishing houses such as Springer, Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, etc. amongst its clientele. IIT-M also has bought pay-per-use licences and the access is currently restricted to faculty.

With a wide variety of resources in its repository, within a matter of minutes one can determine an un-original sentence and its place of origin. The originality report provided at the end of the check has sentences/phrases highlighted with bookmarks to the supposed original content (internet, journals, student papers e-books). It is also important that once the check is over, the original report that was uploaded to the repository be recovered, failing which the document would be returned as 100% plagiarised in future checks!

Turnitin can also be used to grade assignments, reports, SOP documents and other possible writing assignments given at grad school. Browsing through the website, one can defi-

"On Muscle, Tendon And High Heels" - A Review

The given paper was aimed at studying the structural and functional changes in the calf MTU induced by wearing high heels. The hypothesis made was that regular use of high heels leads to shortening of Gastrocnemius muscle(GM) fascicles and also causes changes in the mechanical properties of Achilles' tendon(AT). The experiment was carried out on a group of 11 women who regularly wore high heels(at least 5cm) and 9 women wearing flat shoes. All measurements were carried for the dominant leg only.

Measurements:

The morphology of calf muscles were assessed from MRI scans along the length of the triceps surae. Sagittal plane MRI scans of the ankle joints were obtained at an angle of 0 deg. Using a modified Reuleaux method (Reuleaux, 1875) AT moment arms(MA) were determined from these scans. The MA was defined as the perpendicular distance of AT from the center of rotation. The GM fascicle length(L_f) and pennation angle(θ) were determined using real-time B-mode ultrasonography in the middle of the muscle belly. The validity of this method was previously tested on human cadavers by others (Chleboun et al., 2001; Kawakami et al., 1993; Narici et al., 1996). The tendon elongation during an isometric ramp contraction was measured. According to the principles described by Maganaris and colleagues (Maganaris, 2002; Maganaris and Paul, 2002) the structural stiffness (K) and Young's modulus(E) of the AT were calculated. A series of isometric maximum voluntary contraction (MVC) were measured using an isokinetic dynamometer (Cybex NORM, Cybex International, New York, NY, USA). Torque-angle characteristics of plantar flexor muscles were assessed from this. Torque-velocity characteristic was calculated from the maximum isokinetic torque. The torque oscillations due to limb-lever system were adequately accounted for. An external analog to digital converter was used to record the torque and joint angles simultaneously. To account for the antagonistic coactivation, electromyographic activity on the tibialis anterior muscle(TA) was recorded during both plantarflexion and dorsiflexion MVCs.

Results:

Tendon CSA was significantly greater in high heels(HH) group, but the GM PCSA: AT CSA ratio was similar(P>0.05) in both the groups. The resting position of the ankle was found to be more plantarflexed in the high heels group. Resting L_f was significantly shorter in the HH group no significant difference in the resting θ was observed. Tendon stiffness was found to be significantly greater in HH groups (HH 136.2±26.5Nmm⁻¹; CTRL 111.3±20.2Nmm⁻¹; P<0.05) but no significant differences in E (HH 471.19±94.76MPa; CTRL 417.43±85.09MPa, P=0.203) were observed. The greater K in the HH group was due to differences in tendon dimensions (tendon CSA approximately 7% greater in HH) rather than to tendon length or tendon material properties. differences in maximum strain were found to be significant (HH 5.74±1.19%; CTRL 6.98±1.00%; P<0.05). The torque-angle relationships for both groups are similar on normalization to maximum torque. The torque-velocity relationship was not statistically different between groups.

Discussions:

In line with the reduced GM L_f, we observed tendon-to-fascicle length ratios that were 14% greater in the HH group. This ratio is used to predict the amount of fascicle shortening during isometric contraction (Zajac, 1989), as it reflects the compliance of the MTU and thus the degree of sarcomere shortening (Ito et al., 1998). Similar relative torque-angle relationships were found in the two groups; this suggests that the effects of the altered tendon-to-fascicle length ratio(right-shift) are compensated for by the increased tendon stiffness (left-shift) in the HH group. Thus the present results suggest that shorter L_f and increased tendon stiffness both contribute to the reduction in the ankle active range of motion. This may also explain the muscular discomfort that women regularly walking in HH report experiencing when walking in flat shoes (Opila et al., 1988). Functionally, the observed MTU adaptations seem to compensate for each other since no significant differences in torque-angle and torque-velocity relationships were observed between the HH and CTRL group women.

C

ORIGINALITY REPORT

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 70 % | 69 % | 5 % | 3 % |
| SIMILARITY INDEX | INTERNET SOURCES | PUBLICATIONS | STUDENT PAPERS |

PRIMARY SOURCES

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1 | jeb.biologists.org Internet Source | 69% |
| 2 | Csapo, R. Maganaris, C.N. Seynnes, O.R. . "On muscle, tendon and high heel... Publication | 1% |

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EXCLUDE BIBLIOGRAPHY OFF

EXCLUDE MATCHES OFF

nately learn about the importance that the research community gives to plagiarism in general. A 'Plagiarism Education Week' was hosted recently, April 22-26 with numerous web casts re-

lating to the issue. Interested people can log on to http://turnitin.com/en_us/resources/plagiarism-education-week and view the on-demand webcasts.

On exploring the alternatives to turnitin, Google returns a whole load of freeware that claim to do the job as well as turnitin. Proprietary or not, one definitely has something to protect against the evil of plagiarism. So, next time you write your report for your GTC/DC meetings, feel free to check with your advisor or better still get yourself one of those freeware (with the consent of your advisor ofcourse!). ■

CALL FOR RESEARCH AFFAIRS TEAM

The Research Affairs Secretary (RAS- In-Charge) has called for applicants for the Research Affairs Team for the year 2013-14. This team will work with RAS towards making IIT Madras a great research institute. Below are the various teams and their descriptions. Each team will be given all the freedom to innovate, start new initiatives, suggest solutions and debate. Basic pre-requisite is just a huge amount of motivation and enthusiasm, rest will follow.

» ReNews

ReNews team consist of Editors, Designers, Correspondents, Photographers, Columnist and lot more. This team will be responsible for the smooth running of ReNews.

» Research Guidance Cell (ReGCell)

Be a mentor to the other research scholars in institute. Identify problems areas in the various departments, groups through branch councilors and most importantly, find solutions for them.

» Placement Team

Tasks of placement team include interacting with company professionals and pitching for the M.S /Ph. D scholars in their companies. Create department level research brochures. Point of interac-

tion between the placement office and research scholars. Assisting the placement office during the time of the interviews. Organizing placement drives, organizing training sessions, mock interviews, and mock tests training the scholars to get into good companies. This will also involve bringing in more companies for placements this time, especially companies with R&D for research scholars.

» Cultural Team

Organizing cultural events to bring together scholars interesting in cultural activities together. Provide a platform for scholars to demonstrate their talent, get appreciation from peers and provide a relaxing atmosphere for the scholars and themselves to chill out. Great work can come only from a calm mind!

» WebOps team

Running the research portal, which is the most important link between all these activities and research scholars. All the information will be present in the research portal - scholar profile, placement related information, forums, videos, music station, blogs, complaint box (will go to ReGCell).

» Alumni and PR team

Help build up the alumni relations. Organize talks by the alumni, invite alumni for mock interviews during the time of placement. Publicity for all the research related activities, and other activities planned by the other teams under the RAS. Get funds and sponsorship for various events.

» Sports Team

Organizing a sports event exclusively for the Research Scholars of IIT Madras.

» Events team

Initiate and organize events like talks (ReJoys, Joy of science), workshops, and colloquium.

Now, these descriptions are very obvious. No, not good at all, requesting all the teams to re-write, re-define everything written above and demonstrate the meaning of "independent" team! ■

कनक या धतूरा ..

जब मुट्टी खाली लगती है,
हर दूर-दूब हरी दिखती है ..
कर पाए ना कुछ जब बेचारा,
किस्मत को कोसे जग सारा ..
क्यों मुझको बस इतना सा,
क्यों उसको दिया ढेर सारा ..

जो पाए इक इक को तोले,
बुद्धी के क्यों ना पट खोले ..
दुःख से ना कोई निवृत्ति है,
बस यही मनुष्य प्रवृत्ति है ..
क्यों उसके हाथ कनक पूरा,
क्यों मेरे पास सिर्फ धतूरा ..

धन-दौलत की जो खाई है,
ग़म की छाई परछाई है ..
कोई पाटे ना इस खाई को,
मन में जमती इस काई को ..
क्यों उसके साथ हमेशा भला,
क्यों मुझको मिले बुरा ही बुरा ..

इक प्रेम ख्याली शब्द है,
जिसे देखो वही निशब्द है ..
है कौन यहाँ किसका प्यारा,
जहाँ देखो बस पानी खारा ..
हर बार कहे मन बेचारा,
क्यों साथ रहे ना जग सारा ||



Aditi Yadav
M. S Scholar
Dept. of Management Studies

*'Researching myself...
phrasing the feelings.'*

Pure Work

Does the work done under the pressure of producing outputs reduce the quality of work? I am asked to write a column by the 28th of every month. Previously I used to write for the kick of it, I just wrote for myself. I never published it, neither did I tell anybody that I write. I used to write a lot then, even when there was no pressure to write from anywhere and I also saw an increase in clarity of my writing during that period. When I started writing, I was a novice, I used to struggle to write a paragraph. But very soon, I started writing without much struggle. Then it happened, I started writing for this magazine and publishing it and made it my monthly "job". I believe I lost my purity of writing at that very instant when I decided to make this a monthly "job". I believe my writing is dying as I am writing. But, why am I making such a fuss about it? Let it die, I am kind of fine with it. But what about professions like singing, painting and all. I was wondering whether they felt the same. Maybe yes, I have seen artists, people who do work not because of deadlines and peer-pressure but because they just like doing it and they just do it and do not bother about anything else. Most of these artists are extraordinarily good. The people who work under pressure and deadlines also do some brilliant work – but very rarely do they produce an extraordinary piece of work.

I am not very sure whether this is true. But if it is true, why is it true. My reasoning is the following – every work has a reason behind it and the purity of the reason decides the outcome and quality of the work. In the case when a person wants to do something because he likes it a lot, or just likes the kick he gets out of it – it's very pure, it is full of love and very positive. But when a person does it to finish off some work simply because he is supposed to do it, the reason is not pure, neither is it brilliant and there is definitely nothing positive about it. When the cause

(reason) is not great and pure, how can it produce an extraordinary work? What is the point? The point is I am fine if my writing dies. But I do I hope it gets a rebirth when it is allowed to be free and pure. ■

COLUMN

Chai - monks



Vision

It's quite a routine thing that we come across articles about highbrows like Abdul Kalam, Einstein, Steve Jobs, Zuckerberg, etc., either admiring them or unmasking in great detail their troubled childhoods, if any. But, by being a bit more inquisitive, we may arrive at a point, "were they mere intellectuals?" N-O. Essentially, if you ask us who they are, our answer would always be visionaries. Yes, you read that right, VISIONARIES.

But, then what is the essential difference between dream and vision, to which you have to wait a little longer. Before that, ask yourself, "do I know the vision statement of IITM or have I ever read it somewhere, of course, inadvertently?" If your answer to this question is YES, or even more mildly, hazily ahh YES, just give yourself a big pat on your back for you're in the small league of people who've taken a few seconds off to know the real purpose of our presence here. For those to whom it hadn't occurred to read the vision statement at any point of time in the midst of the 'cutting edge' research being done here, please give it at least a glance on the IITM homepage.

What is a vision? How is it different from a dream? A vision (acc. to us) is a thought or a perception that takes reality into account while viewing the kind of future one aspires to enjoy with the mirror of the mind. But dreams are fantasies; all it takes to frame them is the desire to achieve something big.

A vision helps us know the very purpose of life. It acts as a stimulant; it inspires us till we scrape the bottom of the barrel. It lets us feel the reality that has not come into being. It helps in knocking off the mental obstacles and helps us stay focused whenever the going gets tough and keeps reminding us what we're aiming at, what we'd wished to become.

Vision lends answers to the what and why factors of the things we're doing. The moment we lose track of the reason behind our very existence, we lose the spur and start to live life backwards or it just turns into a sheer sequence of episodes. A vision statement indirectly contains three different things: What is today? What is the future going to be? Third and the most important of all, it draws the thread of what you'll do and what you wouldn't.

Why is it so important to have a vision? A life without a vision is like a ship with a tiller but devoid of a rudder; a life where one is in peril of meandering aimlessly. Every future that is envisioned has to essentially pass through the acceptance of the present. In a way, one introspects in detail his attitude, outlook toward things, perception, etc., before enjoying the perks of tomorrow's reality. Only when one whole-heartedly accepts the way he/she is, regardless of how bitter the truth, he/she starts clearing off the vagueness in him/her. So that way, you start learning more about yourself. Besides, A vision gives you the courage to explore untrodden paths and the nerve to retreat from the crowd and live life on your own sensible terms.

You'll feel much appreciated when you set a vision, for you feel you have something worthy enough to strive for and a drive that stands as the benchmark of success. As Helen Adams Keller once said,

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision." ■

College Blues

The weeks walked on wearily
The days dragged on drearily
The hours felt heavy
weighed down
by a bevy of blues
Unfinished assignments
Single digit marks
Fast approaching exams
The subsequent night outs
The consequent breakdown

But then all was not lost
My swansong was yet to come
I made it into the portals of IIT!

The name inspires awe and respect
Its fame transcends borders
Entering it with hopes and dreams
what I found was something else
A cesspool of hopes
A mire full of dreams

The classes were good
But the distractions were better
Independence-unchecked and unlimited
has only one playmate – anarchy
You know not what to do
with none to guide you through
Stepping into the unknown seems so cool
As you go deeper
you are lost and lonelier

Attendance gets scarce
Profs tend to be hoarse
Appetite gone and arrear-filled GPAs
You want to cry out
Dreams turn distant vistas
Hopes are ultimately lost

Quite a few times
guilt and anger take over
The degeneration of life
disgusts the heart and mind
and then the soothing words
“Losing hope is liberating”
make life just about bearable
You expect low, you achieve low
and you are satisfied
It is sweet – this darkness
It is complete – the decadence

IIT Madras

The first time you enter the college, you have this sudden rush of excitement. Your heart starts beating faster and you are overwhelmed by a myriad of emotions. That is when it finally sinks in. That you have made it after all. Even as you enter IIT a second or a third time, you feel small and have a sense of reverence towards the campus. As time passes, your eyes now search for the deeper and subtler beauties of the woods. Deer running around and dogs chasing them don't make you stop in your tracks anymore. But sometimes, you stand still to take a look at a creature jumping around or ambling aimlessly. They symbolize the serene and laid-back environs of the campus. The cool breeze flowing around keeps you calm when Chennai is virtually burning outside. The banyan trees give you a sense of safety when rains and the occasional cyclone threaten to break the city apart. The never ending corridors of each department building give you time enough to muse about life, grades and girls instead of rushing from one class to another. The staff at Tiffanys, Campus Café, Gurunath and Zaitoon work quietly while you have a laugh with your friends and discuss the latest fads over some yummy food. The buses may not be punctual but then you have all the time in the world and wouldn't really mind squeezing yourself in when you can see the greenery rushing past for those few lazy minutes. The sprawling Himalaya mess is hardly seen by you for breakfast but you climb its stairs often enough to stay alive. Standing in the lines for food can be a pain in the neck but then whoever said insti is just sweet honey and white chocolate? You wish you had gotten residence in one of those old hostels bursting with life and teeming with sports, arts and what not! Your new hostel doesn't have a quadrangle but then you don't really bother after some time. You go out when you feel like playing in the open grounds full of cricket-mad students. Whoever thought of an air-conditioned SAC was a genius. You can't but admire its structure and facilities for any activity. When the weekend finally rolls in, you don't have the need to go out of campus to watch the latest movie. You have the Open Air Theatre. You wouldn't really mind sitting in its gallery and catching your favourite hero on the big screen. You have probably never seen the doors of the library but you hear it is awesome with AC halls, a great many books and reading rooms. Café Coffee Day, 10 metres from the library, is where you go once in a while to indulge yourself. At the end of it all, you feel small again and pass up a thanks-giving to the elements for being a student of IIT Madras.



Vamsi Viraj
M. A (Economics) Student
Humanities & Social Sciences

'You must have heard of the 3 types - those who take inputs and retain it, those who take inputs and blabber it all away and those who take in one ear and release it out the other. I am the 4th type. Nothing ever gets in!'

READER ARTICLE

BURDEN OF FREEDOM

A buffalo appeared at IIT Madras. So what? Well, this one was unusual. She didn't have any ropes tying her, nor was she driven by anyone. She was all alone and looked terrified and confused. She wasn't walking leisurely, enjoying the scenery. She was trotting, and seemed to be desperately trying to find her way out. From the looks and gestures of that cattle lady, one may assume that she has absconded from whoever claimed to be her owner, and now has lost her way in this little forest. Nevertheless, we should refrain ourselves from making assumptions on things beyond us. The fact is that, one fine day, a buffalo was seen at IITM.

Now, it is not very often we get to see a big buffalo walking in our neighbourhood all alone. The said buffalo passed by Zaitoon and was walking in front of Saraswathi hostel, when it caught the attention of this writer and had him follow her. She passed Saraswathi hostel and entered Sangam ground. There were some guys practicing cricket on one side. She glanced over the vast open space and found another exit across it. The grass at the edges of Sangam, which the blackbucks use to munch on, didn't interest her. Even the temptation of the shrubs at the end of the ground, which spotted deer find it hard to resist, was not enough for her. She had no time for all these things. All she seemed to want was to get out of this place. Freedom, a thing she craved for, seemed to be too much for her. She now wanted to go back to 'the familiar', escaping this frustrating influx of 'the unknown' that came along with freedom. She would be happy to have a master to guide her. She would rather eat the fortified cattle feed than risk her tongue on these wild grasses and shrubs. She would rather walk on the path she is driven on than be in this situation of not knowing where to go. She was desperately in

Raja Keshav Jayakrishnan
B. Tech Student
Aerospace Engg.

'A final year Aerospace Engineering student, a prodigal poet, a crazy artist, a mad philosopher, and an ardent romantic.'



need of guidance, a "goad". The thirst for freedom lured her to run away from routine, but the inundation of choices and uncertainties made her regret that.

She crossed the Sangam ground and reached the road and for a moment, was on her way to the exit, but a motorbike prompted her to cross the road and continue on to Alakananda hostel. When she reached the dead-end at Alakananda, she was in a 'now-what?' situation. After about a minute or two of silent contemplation, ignoring the startled look of the hostel security, she made her decision and entered the thicket near Alakananda. Now, it so happened that the traditional lords of IITM thickets, the monkeys, were occupying the branches there. They got alarmed at the sight of this giant black beast that was invading their long kept territory. They don't mind the benign spotted deer, but this was something that could not be tolerated. Never before had they seen such an animal intrude into their space. They started screaming in unison. There were some deer nearby, who also joined monkeys in shouting away this uninvited guest. Our buffalo was also surprised to see these new life forms. Never before had she seen monkeys or deer. She waited there till she got acclimatised to the cacophony and then, disregarding the cold welcome, moved on, passing the thicket, and again made her way to the road. She had had enough of this. She wanted to get back to wherever she came from. The freedom that was quite enticing and luring came with lots of uncertainties and choices and thereby lots of risks and responsibilities. The familiar routine of walking the driven path was devoid of choices and thereby, any worries. She's searching for that familiar way. She's searching for her master.

Freedom is, surely, something everyone wishes for. However, that precious thing called freedom doesn't come alone. It brings along with it

choices, risks and responsibilities; those uncomfortable things. The buffalo here believed that she had a way out and was searching for that. Unperturbed by all the wonderful things that the campus offered her, she was holding on to her belief of a "goat" that would guide her, and was frantically searching for a way to reach it. But, what if her belief was untrue? What if there was no "goat" to dictate her? What if she was 'condemned' to be free, solely responsible for everything she does? Truly, that's something to ponder upon.

READER ARTICLE

Dancing with Shiva

Power = Force X Velocity. The force with which you execute your thoughts and the velocity of your thought train. Who is the most powerful person or rather what is the most powerful thing that exists? Is it the brain, brawn or something else which cannot be explained RATIONALLY. It is really a crazy thing one can spend a lifetime craving for and the moment one gets it, one takes it for granted. It takes your mind to a new level of ecstasy whose levels of addiction can lead to the direst of the direst circumstances. Wars waged for, blood shed for, millions killed for BUT a lot many have sold their soul...in pursuit of POWER. Have I not craved for power? As a matter of fact I did...every single stage of my life I did. When I was a young kid, it was to have a lot of goodies to eat. When I grew older, it was to have more popular friends and thereafter it was to be *HERE*. At present you can see me as a lazy, boring, no-good doer to any person of any kind and shamelessly self destructing my life, typing away my equally morose thoughts in search of something exotic. I proudly proclaim that I am **HAVING THE TIME OF MY LIFE!**



Rahul Thadi
B. Tech Student
Mechanical Engineering

"The quirkiest moodswinger you have come across ever."

Dancing with Shiva: The unexplained fragile emotion of feeling vulnerable and firm, gullible and unforgiving at the very same time, trying to find a balance in my super shaken up life. All in a rather vain attempt to find the right amount of power to make all things fine.

READER ARTICLE

"किनारा - समुन्दर का"

था वो किनारा समुन्दर का ;
पर लगा नज़ारा मेरे अंदर का, तेरे अंदर का ।।

जितनी नज़र, बस उतनी खबर;
ना और पता समुन्दर का,
ना और पता मेरे अंदर का, तेरे अंदर का ।

बेचैन लहरें वो समुन्दर की ;
लगी मुझे मेरे अंदर की ,तेरे अंदर की ।

एक पल को बढती , दूजे पल को घटती;
जैसे थी तमन्ना मेरे अंदर की , तेरे अंदर की ।

आगे बढ़ी तो सब कुछ पास , पीछे हटी तो फिर खाली हाथ;
है यही नज़ारा मेरे अंदर का ,तेरे अंदर का ।

था वो किनारा समुन्दर का ;
पर लगा नज़ारा मेरे अंदर का, तेरे अंदर का ।।

वहां मैंने कुछ लकीरें खींची ,तो मुस्कुरा उठा तेरा चेहरा,
मुस्कुराने लगा मैं जो देख तुझे ,
तोड़ मेरी आँखों का पहरा ,पहुँचा वहां किनारा समुन्दर का ।
पर नहीं बदला नज़ारा मेरे अंदर का ,
रुख जो हो चुका था तेरे अंदर का ,मेरे अंदर का ।।

है अथाह गहरा, अकूत आबाद ,
पर है इक किनारा, समुन्दर का ।
चाहे कितना भी हो पास , पर फिर भी बेदम भूख ;
शायद नहीं किनारा मेरे अंदर का ,
शायद नहीं किनारा तेरे अंदर का ।।

था वो किनारा समुन्दर का ;
पर लगा नज़ारा मेरे अंदर का, तेरे अंदर का ।।

Ajay Chahal
Ph. D Scholar
Metallurgical and Materials Engg.

इन्हें लिखने एवम राजनीतिक चर्चाओं के साथ -साथ प्राकृतिक सुंदरता व आध्यात्म से भी बेहद लगाव है ।



READER ARTICLE

I'm Pavin From IIT!

My name is Pavin Kaadithyan (meaning: the bearer of beauty). One of my friends used to make fun of me by saying that it's the weirdest name one could ever have and unfortunately I cannot disagree with him this time (like I always do). To be honest it really worried me a lot in the beginning but not anymore. I'm a Tamil and I'm proud to be a Tamil (the second part was inevitable as we Tamils are supposed to say that, else it would make us traitors by default). I'm from Coimbatore, the best place in the whole of Tamil Nadu to which every one of my friends disagrees (the best place part). They say that a person is considered dumb, even if he utters the name Coimbatore, and nothing can stop them from saying such things, not even my numerous requests as well as threats. But right now I'm in Chennai - the "safest city in India" (according to The Hindu there was a public riot in Mumbai last Tuesday which was followed by three brutal murders. I think Chennai got its reputation considering the bad situations prevailing in all other cities in India) studying in IIT Madras, one of the most prestigious institutions in the country (the other institutions being the six other IITs) and the reason for me calling the IITs the most prestigious institutions is because I'm supposed to. If you ask any parent in India where they want their children to study, without wasting a moment, they'll say IIT. But the student's version of IIT completely differs from that of the parents. IITians themselves call IIT as Institute of Infinite Torture. But all this bullshit applies only to the maggus (insti word for people who study, study and study while watching porn) or the "engineering students". Fortunately I'm in the HSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) department and I'm calling this fortunate not because of the fact that it is the only course in the whole of India where students are jobless but because it is the one and only department in the whole of the college to have female students in a large proportion.

However, that part is still of no use for me because I'm from Coimbatore. Students from every other department in the college hate us for the same reason: HSS has more girls than boys. But none of us gives a damn. After all, in a place like IIT who cares what boys think. Apart from girls, the other things which interest an IITian are late night parties. My classmates and I gather to drink tea and eat samosa in the midnight, because that's how cool we M. A. students are!

For my first semester my only objective was to get a girlfriend, but whenever I approached a girl and said "Hi, I'm Pavin, from Coimbatore", she would start shouting "SECURITY". After reading this, one may come to the conclusion that I'm the only loser in a class of Shakespeares and Platos. I accept this fact like a real man. Having said that, one may like to know how a day of my college life would be. And I'm not going to disappoint you. So here we go (please excuse me if you think I've exaggerated somewhere).

Today I got up around 7:40 for my class at 8:00 and this made me very happy because I woke up early after a very long time; the last time I woke up early was on the first day of my college. Having spent almost a year here, if there is something that I have learnt not to do, it is not to wake up early because it simply distinguishes you from the other students, landing you in a group of students called studmax (insti word for people who are punctual and good at what they are doing). This was the last thing I wanted to happen (everyone hates studmax people). After brushing my teeth and accidentally taking a bath - a true IITian never bathes in the morning - I left for the cycle stand only to see that my cycle's tire was punctured. I didn't worry about it and instead for some reason I was strangely happy. I reassured myself that "at least I didn't lose my cycle like my friend Vamsi (another loser) who lost his cycle yesterday." As usual I skipped my breakfast (if there is something which is common among all IITians, then it is the breakfast. We all hate breakfast) and

reached my class at 7:57. I entered the class hoping that no one would be there, but I found Sahil (studmax) sitting in the farthest corner and doing something with his laptop; probably studying for tomorrow's exam. And by the way the end-semester exams start tomorrow. Last week in the institution, when a survey was taken on the major headaches the students face in their college life, the end-semester exams came first followed by the mess food and the professors. Except for the studious guys, no one likes exams. Around 8:05 most of the students came and it was a bit surprising for me to see most of the students turning up for the last day before the exams. Normally every HS student tries to imitate the engg. guys by planning to do group-studying before the day of the exams. During group-study sessions people would start studying around 6:00 in the evening, then go on till 6:00 in the morning - performing a night-out in other words. But nobody reveals what they do in these 12 hours. Since I took a vow not to hide anything, I'm going to tell what we do.

We start our group-studying session by planning on what to do, and once we've fixed the targets we take a vow that we will at any cost achieve them. This entire process of planning what to do will take an hour. So by 7:00 we start our session and at around 7:30 one of the guys would say that he is feeling hungry to which all of us would agree and we decide to go to the mess to have dinner, which again takes another hour. Once finished we come back to our room where the same guy who first called out for dinner will again propose a movie before going back to study as a movie in the middle of a study session can be very refreshing. We all say in unison "why not?" Then we watch a movie till 12 or 1 depending upon the duration of the movie. Once the movie gets over the same guy who proposed the movie would say "Come on guys, we're gonna study till 6:00 so we better sleep a little" and this time again we all say in unison "why not?" The best part of all of these happenings is we never regret our doings. Having said that I will come back to where I left.

Our philosophy prof. was a bit late. I could tell from his face that he was not in a great mood today but nevertheless he is still a cool prof. as he never cares about attendance or what people do in the class while he teaches (in IIT anyone who is not worried about attendance is considered to be God!). He started teaching us the last topic of the semester - Hegelian Principles - for about 50 minutes. It was quite obvious that none of us understood anything and none of us could help it including the professor. I sometimes wonder whether he himself understood it or not, but that never mattered to us. For us, the definition of a professor is someone who talks in other people's sleep. The next period was a free period. Now that's the best thing about the HSS department. We have so much free time that sometimes even we get bored. After the last period I made up my mind on what to do for the rest of the day. Accordingly, I planned to study 5-7 hours for the exam which was to be held the next day. After I finished studying I could watch a movie as a reward and then go to sleep. All IITians plan well, but when it comes to the execution of that plan we suck. That's the reason why we take a vow not to break the promise before every promise.

Reaching my room at around 2, I thought of giving a go at my plan, but I didn't know where to start and more importantly what to start with. And that's when I realized I didn't know what exam was going to be held tomorrow! I was confused as to whether it was going to be philosophy or ethics, (now that's a big problem or I would say a disadvantage with the HSS department. All courses teach the same thing - in Ethics we read what Kant did and in Philosophy we read why he did that). After a couple of phone calls I confirmed that the exam was on German! That was the last thing I really wanted to happen because I suck at German and more over my German professor hates me. But alas! Nothing is going to stop the exam from happening. Sensing no use in cribbing about it, I felt the need to act fast. I went straight to Sahil's room (the class topper, I always wanted to know

what that guy eats) who was again doing something with his laptop (he is a mysterious guy, he never reveals what he does with his laptop; probably studying?!). I asked him to teach me something in German so that I can at least pass. Being a good guy, he readily accepted and we started at around 3 and by 6 I gained some confidence that I can pass. I then went back to my room and looked for something to eat (IITians are always hungry) but found nothing as usual even though I always knew that I won't have any food in my room. I still search, being a confident young boy. So I go to Vamsi's room. Now some background about this guy. He is basically a gluttonous loser who spends most of his time eating, eating and eating. He is probably the only guy in the entire college who would never miss his breakfast, lunch, dinner and most of the times even his supper! I got some biscuits. I love biscuits when I get it free of cost; after all I'm a typical Indian. After 8 I went to bed keeping an alarm for 7.15 in the morning, so that I won't be late for the exam. I got up at 7.55; my alarm failed me for the 100th time. I had no time to waste. So I rushed to the bathroom, brushed my teeth, put on my clothes and left the room along with my lucky pad. While crossing the cycle stand I got the shock of my life. I couldn't see my cycle. Damn! Someone must have stolen it. But now is not exactly the time to worry about it because it's already 5 past 8:00 and I have to run to my department where the exam would be going on. Checking out the girls as I go, I at last reached the exam hall. While running to the hall I could see another guy running along with me. It was Vamsi. It was so funny watching him run (fun becomes funnier when it happens amidst chaos). At last I reached the exam hall. I was late by 15 minutes (the best and the only good thing about IIT exams are the timings; even if the student reaches the exam hall late, the prof.s won't mind. The record for coming late was set by a B. Tech. guy who came late to the class by an hour but surprisingly was the first to finish the exam).

With a frown, the invigilator handed me the question paper along with the booklet in which

J. J. Siddharthan
M. A (English) Student
Humanities & Social Studies

'Ever heard of the guy who finishes his exam portions a day in advance? Neither did I! If you feel that faring badly in the exams qualifies a guy to write, I am the very epitome of that guy!'



I was supposed to write the answers. Before looking at the question paper, I prayed for some 5 minutes (God plays an important role in our college life only twice, first when we propose to a girl and second when we face our exam). Looking into my paper I thought to myself, today must be a day of shockers, first my cycle and now this question paper. I couldn't understand a bloody thing in it. Almost 80% of the questions were asked from the part which I didn't learn. The more I looked into the paper the more worried I became. I was looking for some miracle to happen; I wanted an earthquake or a disaster of some kind to save me from this exam. But miracles don't happen. From Plato to Pamela Anderson, lots of random thoughts passed my mind. I considered myself the 'wisest man' (Socrates's famous theory on wisdom: A man who accepts that he knows nothing is the wisest of all).

As I was simply sitting and playing with my pen, something like a miracle did happen. The invigilator made Sahil who was sitting in his usual farthest corner to sit before me. I don't have the slightest idea why she did that. I was overjoyed by this incident. Sahil while sitting asked me how the paper was and I lied to him saying "It's great." You may really wonder why I lied to him, but my theory behind that lie is ingenious. Normally a studious guy never allows anyone to copy from him. When they suspect that the person sitting next is trying to copy, they would certainly go to any extent to prevent him from copying, even if he is their best friend (girl friends are exceptions). So now I can copy some answers from him without his knowledge. By the time he realized that I was copying from him, I was sure I would get 50% marks and that was more than enough for me. By 11:45 I handed the answer sheet to the invigilator. I came out of the exam hall only to see people doing the post-exam discussion. I also joined them and I was very happy that most of the

guys didn't do the exam well. I then went with my friends to the mess where we planned to have a group-study session for the upcoming Philosophy exam. Later, I returned to my room and had a deep sleep with the hope of getting up around 6 in the evening to participate in the group-study session. ■

work. Then the curious soul searches for all software packages which match the specifications given by a mentor or a peer. As a pattern with every search there are some common words like 'TeX', 'LaTeX', 'MiKTeX', 'TeXworks', and 'TeX Live' which pop up every time. But again there are similarities among those words. For example 'TeX' is visible everywhere.

READER ARTICLE

Nature changes as it likes.



Clouds transform to the shape of a bird.

R.Sriranjani
M. S Scholar
Applies Mechanics

READER ARTICLE

Retribution by a Software Routine

This article mainly accounts for a researcher's struggles associated with learning LaTeX, the delusional software routine which has become a popular tool to present scientific data in a uniform format.

The reign of so called hardship starts when a researcher gets a hint about software which can be used for a systematic arraying of his/her

After flexing every possible brain muscle the hunting mind figures out that TeX & LaTeX are actually the ones which were to be searched for and will have to be used further. The researcher then tries to install supporting software packages but again the confusing ghost of the past imparts its secret powers and the user starts wondering which software GUI is to be used for LaTeX because it is only a backend set of commands. Alas!

As an engineer, assumptions always act as life-guards in difficult situations. So it is assumed here that the researcher has finally installed the software GUI and other supporting elements. The next step is to make a presentation using

Sameer Sharma
Ph. D Scholar
Engineering Design

*'Take chances when you're young,
tell stories when you're old.'*



the newly born tech baby 'LaTeX' in his/her laptop. Like a slap of thunder, the researcher clicks on Menu> File>New and with the nice hassle free GUI, the researcher tries to write the text contained in his/her work. But as facts say, life is not a bed full of roses. With the very first compilation, errors occur and keep mounting and so do the tabs in the internet browser searching for help.

The user who is riding a merry-go-round comes back to the point where his/her quest actually started.

Although the article pokes fun at the power of technology there are no intentions of challenging the superiority of minds that developed it. It's an honour to be a part of a community which searches for the truth and in case if they don't get it, research it. That's where researchers are born! ■

READER ARTICLE

It's Time! Wake Up

Night out", it may be the most favored word for a partygoer. But there is another meaning used colloquially, nights becoming days for graduates and post graduates are always a bush-league. It can be even seen as a way to show off in the recent decade. Some years ago these night outs were only during the examinations. However, I see it becoming a practice which is rather highly dangerous. I myself being a night owl had once thought of its pro's and con's which made to write this article. To support the night owls I can give them an encouraging and interesting finding. Surprisingly I found from the biggest online encyclopedia a list of famous night owls which included Win-

ston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Elvis Presley and Adolf Hitler, a night owl during World War II, who slept from 4 am to 10 am and napped from about 5 to 7 pm.

Being common people, it is important for us to be sensible and ponder over our well being. One basic thing that I thought of is that we are behaving against nature. Further, there is a large percent of people hanging on with stuff late nights and getting exhausted by the start of the weekend. By stuff I mean usage of electronic gadgets, which should be used to wake people but has rather deprived people of their sleep. To be technical, melatonin, a chemical that promotes sleep, is reduced to 22% on a two-hour exposure to light from electronic device. Sleep is stored for the weekend which again affects your schedule for the following week and you end up again doing you work late in the nights. It has thus become a vicious cycle. A survey by National Sleep Foundation (NSF), an independent and non-profit organization in USA, found that teens short on sleep were significantly more likely to experience depression, stress, excessive worrying, and anxiety. Students in India are also vulnerable to these problems. Lacking a foundation in our country to address such pressing issues, it's high time we start researching about these on our own. At the outset there is a feeling that knowledge on such issues is extraneous, but an insight into it will deeply influence your thoughts of shedding the night outs. I refrain from giving detailed information of the ill-effects of a night out since reading about a topic doesn't have a profound influence on our minds. Rather, working on our own always has an impact. I would like to give you some recommendations to effectively avoid night outs. Dr. Philip Alapat Medical Director, Harris Health Sleep Disorders Center, notes that chronic sleep deprivation may contribute to development of long-term diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and



Rahul P. R.
M. S Scholar
Chemical Engineering

'Loves being on his own and has interest in political science.'

heart disease and he briefly highlights the do's and don'ts

1. Get 8-9 hours of daily sleep at night (especially before final exams)
2. Try to study during periods of optimal brain function (usually around 6-8 p.m.)
3. Avoid studying in early afternoons, usually the time of least alertness
4. Don't overuse caffeinated drinks (caffeine remains in one's system for 6-8 hours) ■

READER ARTICLE

Thank You R A S

There are very few people in this world who inspire you through their actions. This article is about a person amongst us who has inspired me a lot in the past one year.

Most of us are glorified by the posts we occupy and a very few individuals glorify the post they occupy like a Kofi Annan as UN general secretary, John Paul as a Pope, Abraham Lincoln as the president of the United States of America. In this league comes our **outgoing RAS, Ishita Kumar**. There won't be a research scholar on campus who doesn't know her name or the new initiatives she has taken as RAS in the past one year.

For the purpose of writing this article, I had to go back and check my mail to jot down the list of new initiatives she has taken. It is just mind boggling.

Below are some of her new initiatives:

1. ReNews
2. Research scholar's portal
3. Established a research guidance cell
4. Established ReJoys, ReEcho, ReFoc groups
5. Organized various workshops to help us develop our skills in LaTeX, Drupal, and soft skills.

To top this all was the successful organizing of

Sudharsan Parthasarathy
Ph. D Scholar
Electrical Engg.

'A concerned citizen who rants about the problems that plague India and tries to find a solution for them.'



Research Scholars' Day and the various events related to it.

She has also been effectively representing research scholars' grievances to the administration and secured a hike in 5th year 'pension' and HRA for married scholars who are staying outside. She also got us a hike in the amount allocated for attending international conferences abroad and for thesis preparation. Her efforts to see scholars placed in good companies are well known.

I am sure behind all these there must be a team of scholars helping her. In life, as in sports it is the inspiring leader who deserves all the praise.

And now the time has come for her to move on after a successful one year stint. The news might have saddened many of us and rightly so.

The bar has been set so high that research affairs secretaries in future will be inevitably compared to her. This could be one of the reasons for no one applying to the RAS post.

I would like to end this small article by wishing her good luck for her future endeavours. ■



Photo credits: T Venkata Kalyan

READER ARTICLE

मन को भाने वाली कविता
लिखना कवि का धर्म नहीं
कह देना सच्चाई शब्दों में
इसमें कोई शर्म नहीं
जब घर की इज्जत चौराहों पर
नीलामी में खोती है
कवि की स्याही निकल शिराओ से
कागज़ पर रोती है
घोर निराशा जीवन के
जब हर कोने में भर जाती है
यह कविता उम्मीद किरण की
लेकर जग में आती है

कृते अंकेश



Ankesh Jain
Ph. D Scholar
Electrical Engg.

अंकेश जैन "ताज नगरी" आगरा के उभरते हुए कवि हैं। आप भारतीय प्रोद्योगिकी संस्थान मद्रास में शोध कार्य कर रहे हैं। आपकी वचन से हिंदी के प्रति विशेष अभिरुचि है। उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य स्तरीय वाद विवाद प्रतियोगिता में वर्ष २००१, २००२ में आपने प्रथम स्थान प्राप्त किया।

चल रही उसकी कुदाली
एक नज़र आँखों ने डाली
था रहा लेकिन नहीं
मेरा कुछ अधिकार
रहा पास ही वो हर बार

मेरी सीमा मेरा सपना
पंक्षी मेरा ही था अपना
टूट रही थी लेकिन डाली
टूट रहा घर बार
रहा पास ही वो हर बार

साँसों ने जिसे देखा
सपना था जो पलकों का
पलकों ने कहा छोड़ा
आंसू को समझ बेकार
रहा पास ही वो हर बार

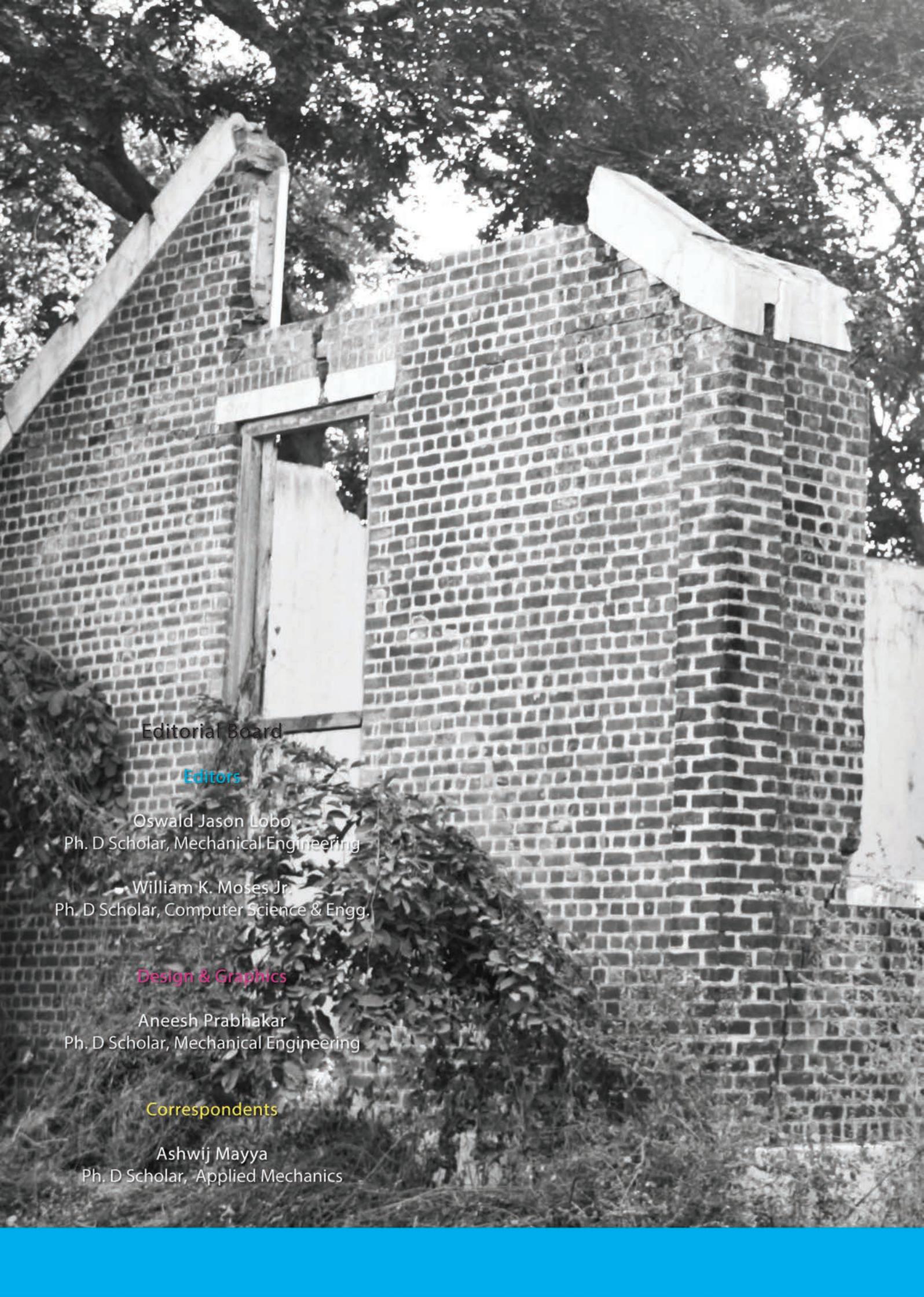
कृते अंकेश

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