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PING!

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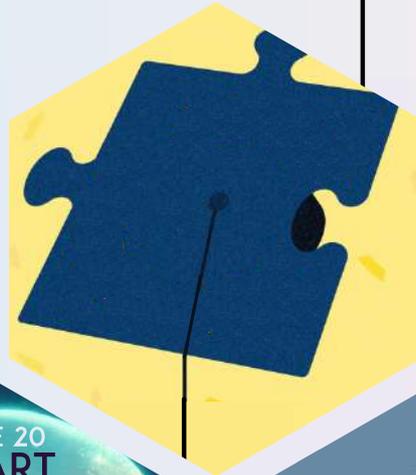
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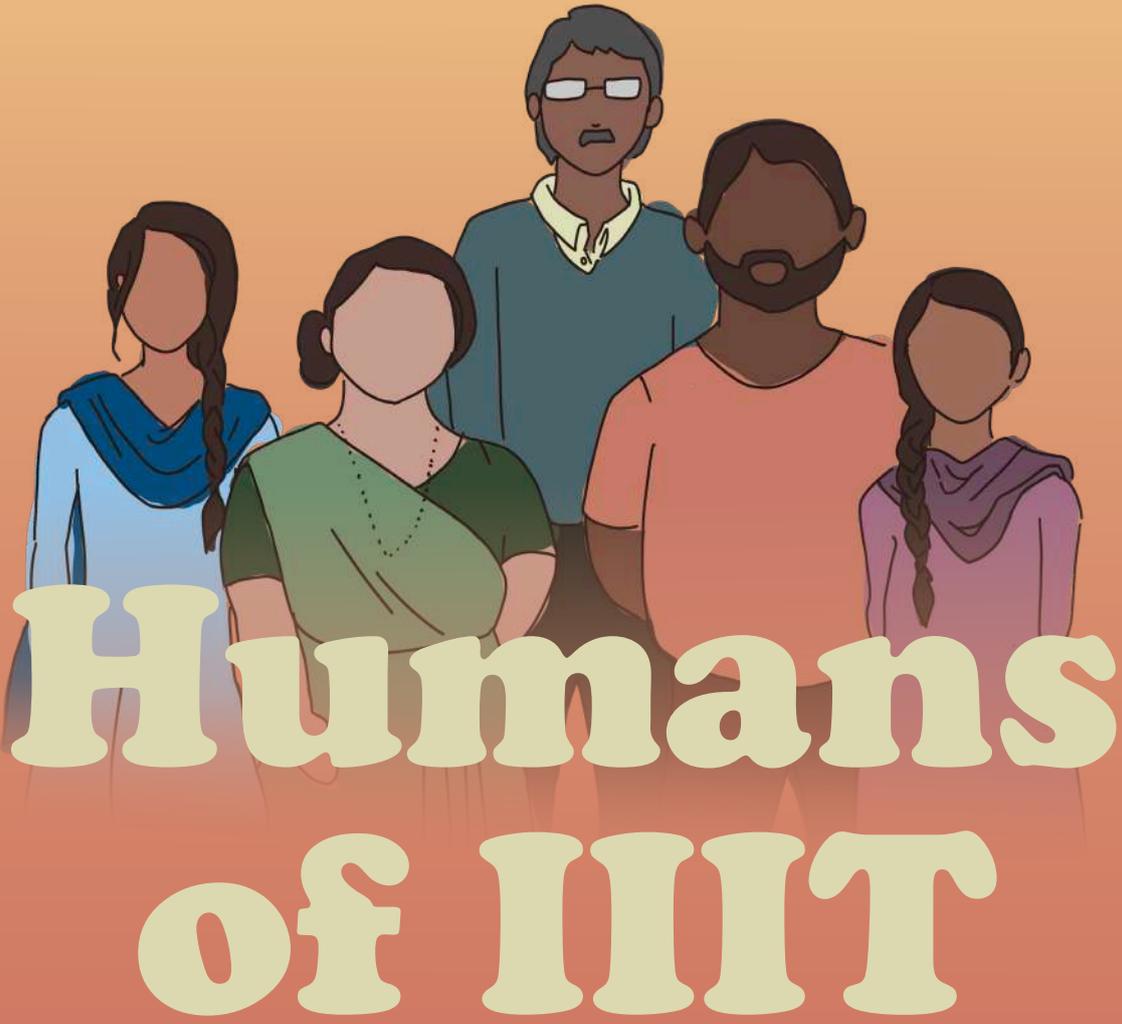
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As we walk through the campus everyday, we pass by so many people, each one of them leading different lives, all connected by a single thread of belonging to the IIIT family. With this series of articles, we will look at these interweaving threads of fates as we watch the stories of familiar faces around us. We watch how they started, how they came to be here at this very moment with us, and how they are weaving and linking all of us. It is so surreal to think of how all of these dots on the map have travelled to different places, yet all collided in this very spot that is IIIT. For today's story, we started by interviewing one of the Parijaat guards - Rajeshri, David and Ruby from the bakery, Ajitha - the yuktahar in charge, and the librarian Dr. Muralidar.

“Hardworking student cum breadwinner”

Rajeshri Parijaat Guard

Starting with our very own multitasking guardian eye, we have Parijaat Block-C guard, Ms. Rajeshri. This hardworking student cum breadwinner has begun her studies for BA at a local college 3 hours away in Karnataka this year. She balances it out by choosing a program where she only has to write exams every few weeks and can study the rest independently, though she claims that problems do arise when taking out leave for those days when she has to travel all the way out to college and back. Having started out newly at this job, Rajeshri did not go through the rough covid work period. Now working 12-hour shifts from 8 AM to 8 PM or 8 PM to 8 AM weekly with almost no holidays in between, she says it is indeed a rough balance between work, study, and life. Although there is this struggle for balance, she claims her parents and family help her out. This dedicated woman says her mother, who packs food for her daily and helps her at home after work, is her constant support.

Ajita Yuktahaar Incharge

Next, we head to a familiar face to those sitting down at our college's health-conscious mess. Ms. Ajita, having studied B.ED and Bachelor of Science, hails from a wealthy family in Vizag, Andra Pradesh. She moved to Hyderabad looking for a job after her family's business fell and started as a school science teacher. Simultaneously, she also learned how to cook using raw veggies, fruits, and multigrain millets, from a 13-day yoga program to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

A year later, her then neighbor, our previous yoga teacher, fascinated by her honed cooking skills, approached our friendly neighborhood healthy cook, asking her to come and start a nutritious 'yoga mess.' She decided to try out for the job and cooked a bunch of dishes for the faculty. Now, 12 years later, Ajita still remembers the day she was welcomed to the IIIT family, '22nd May 2010'.

"Students cross others' roll numbers or share with their friends, but she doesn't mind it"

Ajita's day starts with her commuting from outside to college at 9:00 AM and ends with her leaving around 5:30 PM. She claims that while the mess had 12 people working initially, at present, 10 people are working the mess, with everyone taking shifts from 6:30 AM to 3:00 PM or from 3:00 PM till 10:30 PM. She states that while they no longer had to come for work during the covid era, they were paid their full salary for the first three months, while the next three months, they received about 75% of it, while they finally returned back to normal in the December of 2021. Ajita also recalled how she sold clothes and dress materials from her apartment to continue earning through the peak-covid times.

Ajita proudly exclaims that she loves the collaborative student atmosphere in IIIT, starting with the mess committee, which she also claims are the final decision makers on the menu after consulting with her. Earlier she used to be allocated 20000 Rupees

weekly for her groceries, but now she states that the mess committee takes care of that as well. She says that student favorites are always the paneer and chole days, during which they always make sure to prepare extra. She claims that it does happen pretty often that students cross others' roll numbers or share with their friends, but she doesn't mind it as it's just food and everyone deserves to be fed. Finally, we ended the interview with this cheerful and bubbly person by asking about her favorite thing about IIIT, to which she exclaimed, "the students' fashion trends, of course!".

David and Ruby The Bakers

Next up, we visit our friendly neighborhood bakers, David and Ruby! David's story begins back in 2005 when he started as an assistant baker in a bakers association in the city. Quickly rising through the ranks, he became the head chef. Soon enough, he left the association to start an independent stall just like the one on campus for a company, this being his learning grounds for running a bakery and business. After his contract ended, he moved his stall to IIIT through friends and networks.

During our interview with David, he would not stop exclaiming about the tremendous support he received from the students and institutions. Starting with 900 Rs at the bakers association, he claimed that the institution and its management's continuous support to parties like him is why his business has exploded from sandwiches and baked goods to biscuits and more from outside vendors as well.

As the college grew, so did the student's support for his business, which he says is why he decided to open his business till 3 AM. When Covid struck the college, they were given an initial 15-day

leave period which later continued, but David exclaims how the student body gave them 4000 Rs monthly to ensure they were taken

"Be it a professor or student, as long as you treat them with respect, they will keep coming back, and at the end of the day, that's all we want."

care of and weren't forgotten. While the pandemic did bring them down, David and his wife started sanitizing their stall a month back and bringing it back up to what it once was a couple of years ago.

Ruby, having finished her M.Com in her hometown, is a constant presence in the business and a familiar smile to those of us who frequent the stall. She and David stay up till 4 AM, clearing up the day's business before heading to the city to their home. While they are always welcome to eat at the college messes, they prefer cooking in their stall's kitchen.

When asked about his customers, David firmly quoted, "Be it a professor or student, as long as you treat them with respect, they will keep coming back, and at the end of the day, that's all we want." And with that, we asked him the most awaited question, 'his favorite item in his canteen,' to which he said without missing a beat, 'My brownies - the best and cheapest you'll find.' So, do try out his famous brownies (my recommendation - with the vanilla ice cream) and give a shout-out to our most welcoming bakers!

Dr. Muralidhar G. The Librarian

Dr. Muralidar, starting his tenure as a librarian in 1994, has been long at his passion for the past 28 years. Having done his Masters, Ph.D., and UGC NET in library sciences, Muralidar worked in various private and research-oriented institutions such as Warangal before joining IIIT in the January of 2005.

As a librarian, Muralidar's day starts with procuring book requests from students and faculties, curriculum-required textbooks, securing vendors, analyzing and bringing availability quotations, and then getting approvals from faculty and committee. They further search for course and research-related publications. He states that if these publications are available in India, it will take 2 weeks to procure them. In comparison, it would stretch to 6 weeks for international editions.

He claims that this whole library is run by just three professional staff, managing it from 9 in the morning till 12 midnight, often taking morning and evening shifts. They only observe Sundays and 6 cultural events - Independence and Republic day, Dussehra, Christmas, Sankranti, and Ramadan as holidays,

thus working almost year round.

When asked about the effects of the pandemic, Muralidar claimed that the library's resources were always accessible through the library's portal and IIIT VPN. From 2018, the library's online collection substantially increased to almost 6394 online journals and claimed 10181 e-books under various collections. It also has an institutional membership to the National Digital Library of India and access to NDLI e-Resources.

Talking about the library resources, Muralidar proudly acclaims the library's rich collection of 37618 books in Computer Science, Electronics, Civil Engineering, and Social Science and Humanities in the form of textbooks, reference books, general reading, and 75 journals of both international and national repute in print. Their collection also expands to various rare books and handbooks on different subjects. Around 1370 Compact Disks and 940 theses from all Research Centres are readily available for students' reference.

However, the job doesn't end with the procurement of the books; the library also sends out emails and updates the portal monthly for their new book collection. The current library portal, also developed by a IIIT student, is maintained by the library staff, but Muralidar claims that they do have plans for a more dynamic website underway. While the plethora of online resources is endless, he acclaims that physically reading a book is preferred in academic society and is, in fact, the primary motivation for the recently developed reading spaces in the upstairs library.

"The most underused library resource, Muralidar states, is the book request section in the library portal."

The most underused library resource, Muralidar states, is the book request section in the library portal. Receiving less than 20 monthly student requests, he hopes students discover and use it more with this interview. Before we reached the end of this interview, we had one final question for Dr. Muralidar, 'his favorite thing in IIIT'. To this, he claimed with fondness, 'the familial nature of the IIIT student and faculty committees.' ■



IIIT is Small, but...

IIIT is a small institution. The student strength, across undergraduate and postgraduate, in IIIT in 2020-21 was 1537 - a number much smaller compared to other institutions. However, we had our 21st convocation recently and can no longer use the excuse of being a young institution to offset the issue of our alumni interactions and network not doing justice to our reputation.

Alumni Network

Alumni networks are basically large collections of contacts that can be leveraged to build and grow personally, as well as professionally. They have great value as they give alumni a chance to stay

in contact and keep connections alive. Formal alumni networks in colleges are organized through the efforts of college bodies. In IIIT, we have two such bodies - the Alumni Cell and the Alumni Affairs committee.

The Alumni Affairs Committee consists of faculty members and manages major events such as convocations and alumni meets. Alumni meets are particularly useful as they allow interconnection between graduated batches. IIIT organizes annual alumni meets annually to maintain a sense of bonding among them. Further, alumni get together outside Hyderabad too in places all over the world. On the other hand, Alumni Cell organizes events and talks and works with the Alumni Affairs committee on different occasions.

Alumni Interactions

The talent of IIIT alumni is undeniable - we have alumni in myriad fields ranging from civil services to cutting-edge research positions. Yet, the dearth of engagement with the student community

reduces the visibility of such alumni and hinders students from approaching them. Alumni

engagement can contribute to academic matters as well as student support.

Alumni Talks

One way to increase alumni interactions is through alumni talks. When alumni come and engage students by talking about their experiences, challenges and life-changing decisions they become great models for students and have the required experience to provide apt support to students who wish to pursue a similar career path. The alumni cell has plans to invite alumni on a weekly basis to talk about their careers for the aforementioned reasons. However, the current dearth of alumni interactions and talks is apparent as the last Alumni talk was organized in 2021 as part of a series called Alumni Speak in which alumni shared their journey post college life.



More Examples

Further, many colleges have introduced mentorship programmes that allow people to form stronger bonds with their alumni and seniors. This might sound similar to the functions of the Apex body, but it is fundamentally different. The apex helps

freshers transition into college, whereas the mentors help them throughout their college life and later, through guidance and by creating environments for students to grow. As IITians we

Conclusion

The International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad

has an

Alumni Disconnect

Especially between the existing batch and the ones who have already graduated, as we could clearly be doing so much more. We have so many alumni working in such exciting fields and such important positions, yet we do not come to know of them until we actively search for them.

I encourage IIIT-ians to rise up to the challenge and fill in the gaps that stop us from building networks and initiating interactions that should be expected from an institution of our stature.

Vineeth Bhat
Writer

Kriti Gupta
Designer



Startups At IIIT

‘Mission Statement’, ‘Crowdfunding’, ‘Monetization’ – there’s a whole bevy of buzzwords around entrepreneurship that are becoming increasingly popular as start-up culture grows in the nation, especially in the technology sector.

IIIT-H is potentially poised to lead the charge amongst institutes for this, with significant infrastructure and support for start-ups to get going. For most students though, the institute’s start-ups are a bit of a mystery, so here’s a deep dive to demystify IIIT’s start-ups. What are they? Where are they now? What is the institute’s role, and what is CIE’s? Why do start-ups fail? We discussed all this, and more, with Professor Ramesh Loganathan, who heads the institute’s Research/Innovation Outreach. Further, he shares ideas and experiences that he has gained from the industry with start-ups through CIE.

What Do IIIT’s Start-Ups Look Like?

Broadly speaking, IIIT’s start-ups can be categorised under three umbrellas – external start-ups that approach the institute and CIE, start-ups that students initiate independently, and start-ups that come up organically out of research and seek to solve specific issues.

The third category is what the institute seeks to actively promote and broaden the scope of, since it aligns with the larger goal of exploring ‘research that matters’. Identifying real-world problems, connecting the issue with ongoing, cutting-edge research, and finally implementing solutions based on that research, is a great example of putting this into action. Often, IIIT faculty are significantly involved in the process, either as co-founders or advisors. Such start-ups may receive six to nine months of initial

funding, as well as nonfinancial support.

Apart from this, there is also great scope for students independently identifying a mission statement, and

exploring scalable solutions for it. There is extensive support for start-ups like these –

financial and otherwise.

It is also possible that in the very initial stages, students

may want to simply explore the

space, and experiment part-time with the core

idea. If a student approaches the institute with a serious start-up, they could be given

office space and other support. IIIT students don’t often formally approach CIE as they already have

access to the research labs, faculty, and other students – the significant perks that external start-ups seek as

a part of their collaboration. However, CIE can also help out in other important aspects which become

necessary as the start-up grows, including legal compliance, incorporation, patents and accounting.

Lastly, as mentioned above, there are external start-ups that approach CIE and IIIT. Since it is an

incubator based in an academic institute, these CIE start-ups usually converge with the research being

done in the institute – either by seeking to solve problems which IIIT is already looking into, or to

use tech solutions as tools to help the process. CIE is a great plus for this category of start-ups, because

of its benefits of colocation with other start-ups, an expansive network, and funding provided as

per competitive selection processes, through its accelerator programmes.

CIE – What It Has to Offer

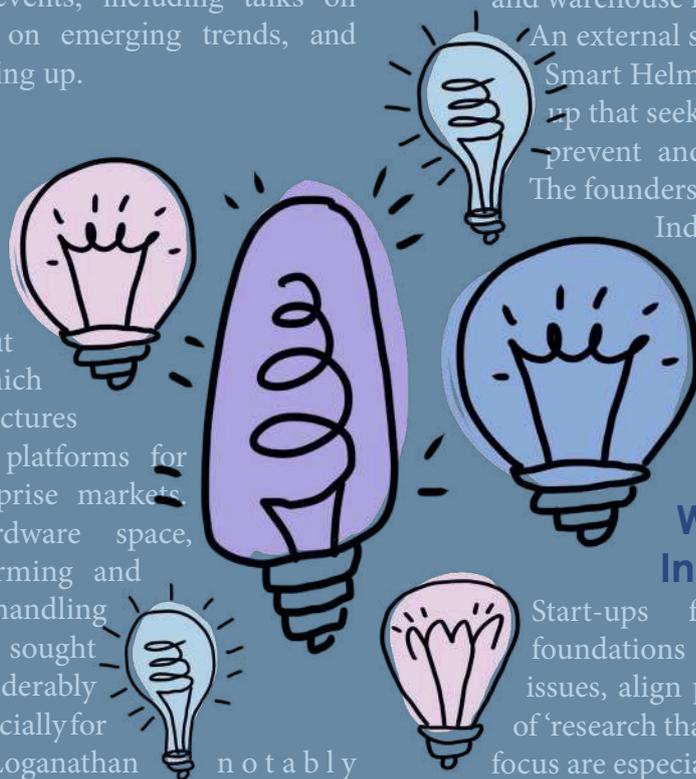
CIE's accelerator programme and microaccelerator programme provides finances, office space and nonfinancial support to young start-ups that have been selected through rigorous processes. The location of CIE in the middle of Hyderabad's established tech scene and access to the institute's research labs, faculty and students is also a benefit. Further, the colocation with other start-ups and the network that it provides is great for new founders. CIE also conducts events, including talks on inspiration, sessions on emerging trends, and masterclasses on starting up.

IIIT's Startups

XMachines is a robotics and AI company based out of Hyderabad, which designs and manufactures autonomous mobile platforms for consumer and enterprise markets. Being in the hardware space, with their smart farming and industrial material handling robots, XMachines sought to navigate considerably untreaded waters, especially for start-ups. Professor Loganathan notably mentioned their unique designs that set them apart, giving them a great foundation, and helping them get through CIE's selection processor to enter the accelerator programme. One of the most well-known startups in the institute is DreamVu. In many ways, it fits the description of the 'ideal' start-up born of IIIT, founded by students based on current research in the hardware space, with a member of the faculty as a co-founder. It has established large-scale supply chains based in China, Taiwan and Europe, and has received several bulk orders. DreamVu has also been in discussions with Star Sports to use their cameras for a VR, 360° live experience of premium box seats for cricket matches. Subtl, a start-up built in partnership with the institute's Language Technologies Research Center (LTRC), has built technology to read and understand documents using AI and NLP, and answer questions naturally asked by users. It creates personalised models based on ratings to the responses, for each user.

Another research-oriented start-up founded in partnership with the institute is Matchday.ai, which uses computer vision tech to automate data collection in sports, transforming the space to move away from the traditional manual method. Through their technology, they provide high-quality analytics on their own devices to players and coaches for training. A start-up built in partnership with the RRC at IIIT, Arka Aerospace, is developing the world's first commercial re-configurable drone, which has numerous multi-payload applications like delivery and warehouse movement.

An external start-up based out of CIE is Altor Smart Helmets, an IOT and ML-based start-up that seeks to prevent and detect two-wheeler accidents. The founders notably appeared on Shark Tank India and were offered deals from all five judges.



What's In It For The Institute?

Start-ups founded on solid research foundations seeking to solve real-world issues, align perfectly with the institute's goal of 'research that matters', so IIIT's major areas of focus are especially scalable as startups.

Deep tech start-ups are few, and have a high entry-barrier into the area, but the institute is uniquely positioned to contribute greatly to it, with students having the technical know-how and research background to succeed in the space.

On the flip side, however, when it comes to managing different aspects of running a start-up, is IIIT being majorly technology-oriented a disadvantage? Often, start-ups require co-founders from other areas, including finance, design or management to get going. Despite this, a core technical background could be a significant advantage for a founder. Depending on the individual, it is also possible that having an MBA

could actually pose a drawback, since it trains one to work within existing structures, instead of determining the structure themselves. However, bringing on a diverse team to form the leadership of the company is important – having a good COO, CFO or even CEO is paramount for good business strategy.

IIIT's initial push to promote startups actively a few years back did not garner as much sweeping support as initially visualised, possibly owing to an overall focus on research and the contrast of that to the industry. The mindset of industry experience versus research is different. Many of those in research are there as a result of saying "no" to valuable opportunities in the industry. Nevertheless, progress has been made, albeit slow, and companies founded in IIIT are increasing.

Why do Start-ups Fail?

A common, and large, problem faced by many young companies is an imperfect understanding of the market scope for a product. Often, founders naturally have an unrealistically wishful understanding of the opportunity for their product, overestimating the situation. There needs to be a realistic understanding, on the part of the founder, of who the target consumer base for the product is. It's important to identify the initial niche segment of the initial customers, target that and then scale as it goes along. The example of Amazon is perfect for this – it started as a used books store for colleges, then shifted to a general bookstore, and put the majors out of business. Later, having acquired greater computer infrastructure for the bookstore, Amazon was able to lease the servers out for profit as Amazon Web Services, and is now a huge success. Scalable solutions are effective core ideas.

No one seeks to invest in concepts alone. There has to be something to show for it, be it a prototype or a smaller scale solution. The problem addressed needs to be clear, and its solution has to be smart, executable and scalable. Only then does investment significantly come in, and then the enterprise succeeds.

Notes for Prospective Founders

It may seem like all it takes is the "perfect idea". The core of a company may be its founding mission statement, but the success of the company hinges on a lot more than just this. It is a consequential decision for any individual to choose to be an entrepreneur as opposed to simply joining the existing industry, especially considering its inherent uncertainty. It is a challenge to first get an idea, decide to pursue it, and most importantly decide to pursue it over all other possible opportunities, possibly including high-salaried jobs and the security that comes with

the establishment. Having clarity about your choices is paramount.

Another suggestion that cannot be overstated is interacting with others in the space. The value of a strong network of fellow entrepreneurs and experts is incredible, and talking to people that have experience in the area is vital. Most would love to speak about their own story as founders, and give insights into the journey.

The Social Acceptability of Starting Up

How acceptable is it for a young entrepreneur to start up now? Trends of what is socially acceptable are constantly shifting. For a long time, government jobs were the only option for employment. Later, this became the public sector in general, then became working at TCS or Infosys, and eventually opened up to being in the private sector in general, and MNCs. Now, the needle is moving swiftly towards finding unique solutions to real-world problems, and founding a company yourself to act upon it. In the late 2000s, it was much harder to start up, but now there is a pivotal paradigm shift. The risks remain, as does the significant opportunity cost, but the motivation and potential for success is greater now. Regardless, to be able to carve out a niche for oneself, and set new standards for companies, the need for social acceptability is likely secondary. It does, and should, come down to honing in on the core idea, identifying the team to carry it forward, and implementing and scaling the idea with clarity.

Sincere thanks to Professor Ramesh Loganathan for his valuable insights for this article.



messi is no longer here to carry the team. barca is now history.



damn it took barca just one year to rebuild their team. where are they getting all this money?!



man i really was scared for a while that i had to go and play in man u. thank god i'm still here. but then honestly, with laporta, you never know what he'll suddenly force me to do...

i thought we'll get players like de jong and instead i got malacia, a finished eriksen and lisandro who is too weak for PL



don't worry coach, we'll rescue this club.

lmao they'll realise soon enough that no one can rescue this club. they really lost €105m on me just because of their trash management.



the €115m on lukaku seems like an entire waste but at least chelsea got 2 good players.



i really don't know what it is about me and this club. nah inter is good enough for me. two tries being the chelsea no. 9 is enough for me.



i am so excited for this season. looks like we can finally win a trophy!!!



lmao they're just gonna bottle again in true spurs style.



MBAPPE!!!!!! WE LOVE YOU!!!!!!
COME TO MADRID!!!!!!



finally, it's your time to shine at madrid. this era will be amazing.

tell me what you want, even more money? you got it pochetto sacked? done deal. you want a 300 million signing bonus? it's all yours. what about image rights and sporting control? you can take that too.

you know why don't you just become the sporting director. all i ask is for you to stay at PSG, don't leave your home.

will mbappe follow his idol or is the other offer too tempting to leave?



BOOOO!!!!!!
BOOOO!!!!!!
BOOOO!!!!!!



BREAKING NEWS
CR7 misses Man Utd training due to "personal reasons"

PING!

The 2022/23 Pre-season Saga

Cheap Thrills

What're the two characteristics of every student who's here at IIT? No, it's not being single. And no, it's not the clouds of smoke either. Yup, it's that all of us are hungry and strapped for cash, and from experience the two status effects don't gel well with each other. So here I am, with a collection of the cheapest good food I could find in Hyderabad. Well, at least whatever my wallet could afford. Note that this list is not in order.

DLF

TASTE: ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY: ★★★★★

CLEANLINESS: ★★

SERVICE TIME: ★★★

Well, we all know that DLF deserves to be here. This is the go-to place for people to get food and drinks whenever they're hungry, and the timings suit the work culture of IIT. The shops open starting from around 4pm, and stay open till nearly 4-5am. I won't be naming shops here, because let's be honest, nobody ACTUALLY KNOWS THE NAMES OF THE SHOPS (AND ALSO BECAUSE NEITHER DO I :P).

FOR BREAKFASTS, I'VE BEEN TO SEVERAL PLACES IN DLF (BOTH 1 AND 2), AND I CAN CONFIDENTLY RECOMMEND THE GUY THAT SELLS TAWA BONDA, just before AM-PM. It's a bang for the buck, and is

properly filling for someone who is looking to eat something a little different than the breakfasts that the messes in our college offer. For ₹60, he also offers puri with aloo ki sabzi, which is a go-to for a lot of people. For someone who would prefer a more southern approach, there is Varalaxmi Tiffins in DLF-2, the only downside of which is the distance one has to walk in the morning. The ghee karam dosa and soft dosa there is by far the best that I've had. It's just the thing you need to hit you in the right spot.

For the times you're working late in the night, there's SK Shawarma (yes, this is the one name I remember because- Swiggy) directly in front of AM-PM. He sells chicken shawarma for ₹120, and it's quite filling and tasty to satiate your late night cravings. For the vegetarians out there, there's the Maggi Point at the very beginning of DLF-2, where the maggi serves a similar purpose. There are different types of maggis available, similar to the ones you might find in our own Tantra canteen..

Editor doing his own stuff- I can personally swear by the Premium coffee of Madras Cafe next to Varalaxmi Tiffins at DLF-2. Absolutely worth the walk

**HOTEL SITARA GRAND
- MIYAPUR**

TASTE: ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY: ★★★★★

ORDER PACKAGING: ★★★★★

SERVICE TIME: ★★★★★

This place is one place that I've not been to physically, but I've ordered from, and it's quite good. I won't exaggerate and say that it's absolutely mind blowing, because quite frankly it wasn't. But that being said, it's not bad either. It's relatively cheap, the portions are filling and it is good food. I particularly liked the mushroom butter masala along with naan. If you're planning to order for a lot of people, it's easy on the wallet since 8 rotis are cheaper than 6 naans. One thing I would point out is that this place would not be for people who are conscious about having too much oil in their food.

**SAHARSH UDUPI GRAND
- KOTHAGUDA**

TASTE: ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY: ★★★★★

CLEANLINESS: ★★★★★

SERVICE TIME: ★★★★★

I am a little biased towards South Indian food being a South Indian myself <insert generic Ille Ille idli sambar jokes here>, but I can confidently say, this place will blow anyone's minds away. Just Facts. You can check out the Zomato page for the prices, but take my word when I tell you, you will not find cheap and delightful-to-the-taste-buds food such as this. It is simply amazing. I won't name items from the menu because every dish is just amazing. I've given 3 stars for the service time because there's such a rush that the dishes get inevitably delayed. The only downside to this place is the distance, which takes half an hour by walk, but 10 minutes by auto.

**MADURAI CAFE
- KONDAPUR**

TASTE: ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY: ★★★★★

ORDER PACKAGING: ★★★★★

SERVICE TIME: ★★★★★

This is one of the lower rated ones on the list, because well if everything's so highly rated you guys will have a hard time picking which one to go to. Again, not saying the food here is bad, but compared to the others here it doesn't live up to the mark. But then again, as the name suggests, it's a small place where you can go and eat with at max 4 people at a time. I would personally recommend the Chicken Kothu biryani, coupled with a nice sarbat. The portions are more than enough, and you can get seconds free of extra charges. And, the people running the store are very nice and polite, so don't be shy to ask them for more.

**ONESTA
- GACHIBOWLI**

TASTE: ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY: ★★★★★

CLEANLINESS: ★★★★★

SERVICE TIME: ★

I guess almost everyone knows this place in IIIT. Everyone has seen the 3 letter unlimited deals that Onesta releases on its Instagram page. This place has decent pizza for a decent price, and coupled with the 50% off on PIZZA UNLIMITED, makes it good enough to come on this list. One thing to note would be the abysmal service times. It seems to take hours for them to make pizzas, probably because they're severely understaffed and somehow never expect people to flock in during the unlimited offer periods. But, that being said, I will say again, the pizza is decent for it's prize and is a nice change of pace from the mess food we all have come to 'love'.

In the modern political climate of the world, protests are part and parcel of our everyday world. Whether it be protests related to the efficacy of HIV medicine or the suspension of MPs in the Indian Parliament, the crowd and the topics are always diverse and driven by the desire to change. A general observation is that universities and colleges behave as embers that, when neglected, can lead to a fiery rebellion. We have historically seen that to put an end to revolts, academic institutions are targeted by organisations trying to protect the status quo. A few relatively well-known examples are the clamping down of protests by the students of JNU after the CAA was passed by the Indian Government and the students of Hong Kong University protesting the increasingly tightening grip by the Chinese Communist Party.

Given the importance of academic institutions to protests, one wonders why IIIT rarely participates in any protests, if any. Compared to its neighbouring institute, the

2011 – Post Felicity Protests

Felicity week has traditionally been that one week in which students would enjoy their souls out and de-stress themselves with all the various events that take place. One would be so involved in the one and only fest that it's natural to get mentally/physically exhausted from it.

Such was the case for the students of IIIT back in 2011, when there was a huge demand for a one day off after Felicity, citing the above reasons. Students sat on the road that connects Kadamb to Research Street. The IIIT Apex had spread awareness among the batches that there could be potential DISCO consequences if they did participate in the protests, which wasn't the last time they'd do this, as we'll see later in the article.

However, despite all these efforts, a holiday was not granted after Felicity and all students had to report to classes just as usual. This was the first instance of a widespread protest in IIIT.

2018 – Removal of Washing Machines (?!)

As absurd as it sounds, the IIIT administration wanted to remove washing machines from few/all hostels and replace them with a paid cloth washing service (₹6 per cloth). This may have been a consequence of misuse of the machines and the high maintenance frequency. The sudden decision incited confusion among the students, who went on sending emails to the authorities to clarify the same.

The Email wars began, a first instance of protests through an online platform. The students had stated all their reasons for having regular maintenance of the machines and how it would help both the students and the institute in the long term, and ultimately it was agreed upon by the administration. This directive was revoked and washing machines were repaired, in contrast to 2011.

University of Hyderabad, or fellow engineering institutions such as Jadavpur University, IIIT Hyderabad falls behind in exercising opinions and participating in protests. This article tries to analyse why IIIT refrains from participating in protests with such a high frequency as other institutes.

While the occurrence of protests has been largely absent from the history of IIIT, we try to understand when and where protests in IIIT reached their peak, who participated in the movement and what separated this issue.

PROTESTS

@IIITH

2022 – UG-1 Curfew Walk Out

IIT has always been known for its anti-curfew, pro freedom values and policies, and the deans have almost always been in favour of no hard campus in-time for both boys and girls.

However, 2022 was one special year. Campus life was returning back to pre-COVID days, and the new UG-1 batch was coming for offline classes in their 2nd semester. But a late start to the academic year (due to COVID delays in admissions) meant that the 2nd semester would start in late March, and would go on till early July.

It was also a unique situation of UG-1 being the only undergraduate batch to have classes in the summer, while the other batches had their summer holidays.

Many students in UG-1 were seen to be under bad influence such as coming drunk into campus, having no limits when outside campus and other things which should not be talked about here. The administration reportedly felt that them being the only batch on campus was the primary reason for such uncontrollable activities. The Apex body was also disappointed with some students of this batch and called an urgent meeting with all UG-1 students to discuss the potential consequences, which included a 11pm campus curfew for the batch.

The next noon, UG-1 students received an email from the Chair, CoW that they would have to return to campus by 7pm and take special permission from the hostel manager in order to go out later.

There was an immediate sense of revolt, not only among UG-1, but also the rest of the IIT family, as it would set a bad precedent for the upcoming batches. Sources say that most professors weren't even consulted on this topic, and they had to find this out after the email.

Biggest of all, a Walk-Out was announced by a few students in UG2 to protest against the seemingly unjust curfew in place then. UG-1 was asked to march from Nilgiri to the academic block to show the dissent, however like back in

2011, the Apex body warned them about potential DISCO consequences if they'd participate in this. Now as UG-1 was already anxious about further escalations, the majority stayed quiet about this issue, with only around 15 students showing up for the march, making it ineffective and the walk-out was a failure. However, it did incite a widespread discussion to lift the curfew that we will look into.

Prior to this, the Chair, CoW had demanded breathalysers at the main gate, but many UG2+ students were strongly against this. They argued that if drunk, one is safer on campus than outside, and that if breathalysers were in place there could be cases of intoxicated students spending a night outside campus with nobody to help them.

The Chair, CoW had to be convinced by the Student Parliament and the Apex body that such instances would not happen in the future, and there were several meetings called for the discussion of the same. There were repeated discussions for a week, and the curfew was ultimately lifted. As per sources, the administration demanded 5-6 parliament members to stay back in campus so as to prevent any further mishap, and Apex meets were scheduled every week to maintain a relationship between UG-1 and their seniors.

Others

IIT has no political influence, unlike many IITs, JNU, etc where there are political party representatives in the colleges themselves, which is why we see more cases of dissent/protests there.

During the adaptation of the Farm Bills in December 2020, students were seen to send postcards to the central government in revolt/support of the same, but there was no protest. There was also a demand for co-ed hostels at a time



in IIIT history, with which the talks of a ‘Parijaat Raid’ came up.

As we see, the landmark protests in IIIT are largely apolitical and essentially surround campus life. This is consistent with other national institutes of the country like the IITs and NITs, with the most recent protest in IIT Bombay being related to a fee hike. However, while we give the example of traditionally apolitical IITs, we can see that recently there has been a shift to a more widespread form of vocalisation. In the recent past, students of the major IITs participated in the protests against the CAB or voiced their opinions about the farmer protests in Delhi.

Next, we will discuss the key differences between students of IIIT and other universities to understand why our college students refrain from participating in protests.

We must first recognise that there is large-scale political

politicisation and the presence of student wings in colleges across the countries. This politicisation is there from both wings of politics; there is large-scale left-wing politicisation in the colleges in the eastern parts of India, while there is a large presence of right-wing activism in colleges of North India.

Furthermore, I believe that a predisposition and an underlying current of rebellion are necessary for college protests. We see that with the examples we listed above, the colleges infamous for large-scale protests are recurrent in the news, and the list of institutes is rarely disruptive.

The last difference I would like to bring about is the difference in the strength of the “protesting” colleges compared to IIIT Hyderabad. Our campus houses a relatively small amount of students, arguable less than enough for a “mob” mentality to develop.

These factors, along with a general position of privilege of the majority of IIIT students, discourage them from going and participating in large-scale external rebellions, and the

students rather prefer protesting on in-house issues.

We must keep in mind that the objective of this article is not to incite rebellious thoughts and protests amongst the students of IIIT, and neither is it to criticise the lack of participation from the student community. However, we hope this article will function as a thought experiment, bolstering you to think about the everyday mundane of our lives from a different perspective.

■

WRITE AND DESIGN A MAGAZINE ARTICLE ABOUT AI ART

Or, upload content to edit

Generate

There has been a surge in AI research in recent years as the technology has become more sophisticated and widespread. This has led to new applications and insights in fields such as computer vision, robotics, natural language processing and various other applications of machine learning. The advancement of AI is also driving changes in how we live and work, as well as how we fundamentally interact with machines. It is, therefore, no surprise that artificial intelligence is starting to infiltrate the art world. A new generation of artists is using AI to create works that explore the relationship between humans and machines. AI art, or art created with the help of artificial intelligence, is a growing trend changing how we think about creativity and expression.

AI ART

So what exactly is AI art? It can take many forms, but generally, it involves using algorithms and software to create or generate artwork. This can be anything from using an AI program to generate new images based on a set of parameters to using machine learning to identify patterns in data that can then be used to create visualisations. These are the two main categories AI art is currently divided into: generative art and interpretive art. The former often produces unpredictable results, and the artist must learn to work with the machine to create the

desired effect. The latter, however, can be used to generate a new work based on the style of an existing piece in a much more reliable manner.

UNDER THE HOOD

In early 2019, thispersondoesnotexist.com took the tech world by storm. It is a website that uses artificial intelligence to generate fake images of people. A GAN or generative adversarial network powers the website. GANs train a generator to create new data and then a discriminator to classify the data as real or fake. The generator and discriminator are then trained together, with the generator trying to create realistic data to fool the discriminator, and the discriminator trying to become better at identifying fake data.



Using NVIDIA's StyleGan, novel faces are generated on the fly by constructing the output image in a layer-by-layer manner.

But there's a new cool kid in town now. OpenAI's landmark 2021 paper 'Diffusion Models Beat GANs on Image Synthesis' has shown that diffusion models can achieve image sample quality superior to the generative models. "The model architectures used by recent GAN literature have been heavily explored. GANs can trade off diversity for fidelity, producing high-quality samples but not covering the whole distribution," the paper added. Not long after, OpenAI launched DALL-E, the first truly 'productised' text2image

generator. In an avalanche of research developments, independent lab Midjourney launched its own image generator, which can be interfaced with via Discord, and Google came forth with 'Imagen', which seemed to beat the competition in terms of sheer realism. Stability AI's open-source solution 'Stable Diffusion' was quick to follow, with a large ecosystem being built surrounding it, including photoshop plugins which can render AI-generated images right there onto the digital artist's canvas.

THE DEATH OF THE ARTIST

The art competition at the Colorado State Fair in September 2022 awarded medals in all the customary categories, including painting, quilting, and sculpture. However, one participant, Jason M. Allen, used the MidJourney, as mentioned earlier, to compose, create and finetune his entry, 'Théâtre D'opéra Spatial'. It ended up winning the first prize in the digital art category. Unsurprisingly, this sparked ferocious backlash from other artists who accused him of, effectively, cheating.

Allen defended his writing. "I won't apologise for it", he declared. "I won and followed all the rules."



Théâtre D'opéra Spatial, Jason Allen x MidJourney, 2022.

Then comes the issue of other companies harnessing the power of AI art programs to drive in-app functionality. In September, Getty wiped all AI-generated content off its platform. "There are real concerns with respect to the copyright of outputs from these models and unaddressed rights issues with respect to the imagery, the image metadata and those individuals contained within the imagery", told Getty CEO Craig Peters to the Verge.

On the other hand, Shutterstock has launched a grand collaboration with OpenAI, with the CEO of the latter remarking "We're excited for Shutterstock to offer DALL-E images to its customers as one of the first deployments through our API, and we look forward to future collaborations as artificial intelligence becomes an integral part of artists' creative workflows".

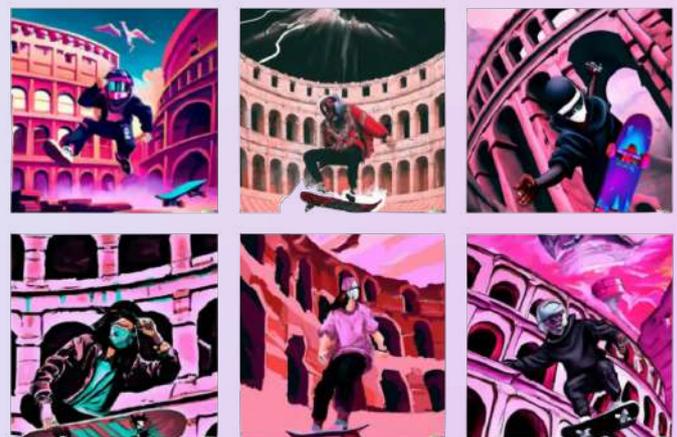
DESIGN TEAMS OF THE FUTURE

DALL-E has been making waves in the design community since its very inception. In June 2022, when the Beta version of the program wasn't even out, The Cosmopolitan teamed up with OpenAI and a digital artist named Karen X Cheng to create the first AI-generated magazine cover.



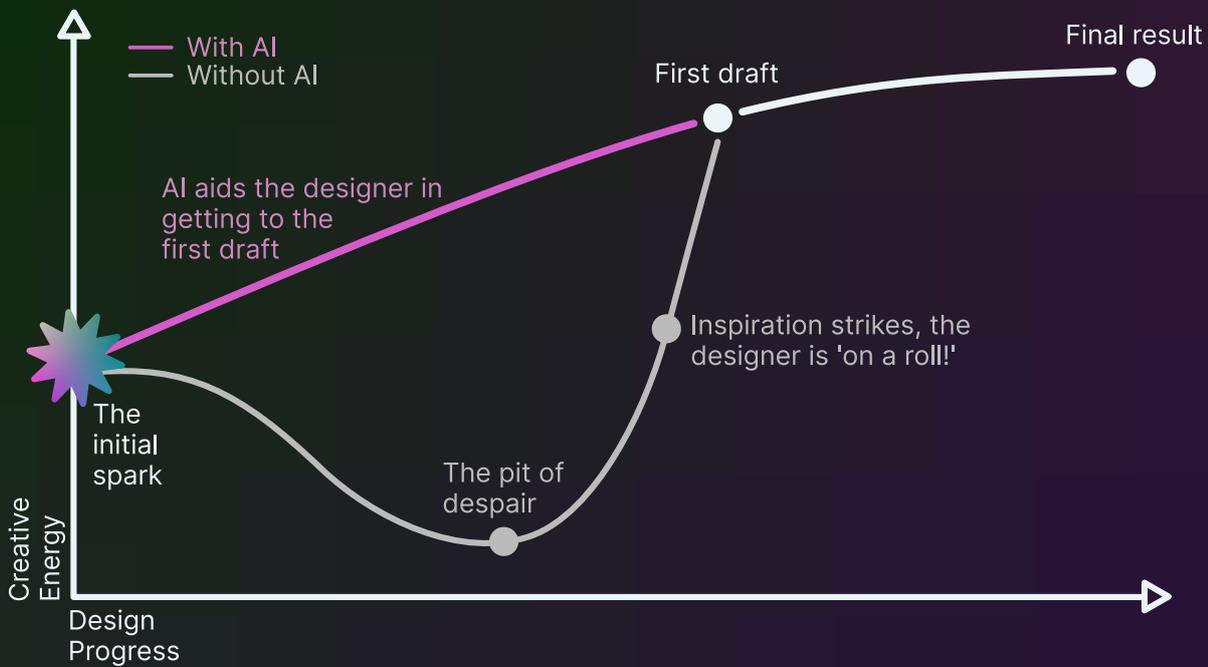
The prompt: "A wide angle shot from below of a female astronaut with an athletic feminine body walking with swagger towards camera on Mars in an infinite universe, synthwave digital art".

Taking not-so-subtle inspiration, the designers at Ping! too, briefly considered the idea of having one of our magazine covers be AI-generated, perhaps for this very issue. The editors mercilessly shot the idea down, and our first exploration with AI art was instead relegated to a 'D(all)esign Night'. In July this year, current and former Ping! members hopped into a meeting and played around with DALL-E, testing its utility and practicality and trying to recreate some existing Ping! posters using text prompts.



Scenes from the final round of the Ping! Dallesign Night.

The quest, some initial attempts, and the winning submission.



The designers' takeaways from the session helped informally formulate a model of how such tools could fit into design teams going forward. The point is initial ideation. In design, half the battle is won when the first stroke is drawn. Tools like DALL-E can effectively deal with creative block by enabling the designer to see visual prototypes of their idea. From a purely output-oriented point of view, AI art enables the conception of unique preliminary ideas at scale.

CONCLUSION

AI art is still in its early stages, but it has already begun to impact the art world significantly. Many established artists are incorporating AI into their practice, and the use of AI is becoming more prevalent in the work of emerging artists.

Of course, there are also some challenges associated with AI art. One big challenge is ensuring that the artwork still has a human touch; after all, part of the appeal of art is its ability to connect with us on a personal level. Additionally, there are concerns about how AI will impact the future of jobs in the creative industries; will humans become obsolete as machines become better at creating artwork?

Overall, though, the potential benefits of AI art, at least in its current state, far outweigh the challenges. As we continue to see advances in artificial intelligence technology, we can only imagine what kinds of unique and innovative artwork will be created via human-machine collaboration in the years to come!

DALL-E: A computer from the 90s in the style of vaporwave, smiling lenny face



GOTCHA!

A part of this article has been written using GPT-3, a language model developed by OpenAI that uses deep learning to produce human-like text.

Conveniently, the division of authorship has been made quite quite clear throughout: most of the text on a dark background is (almost entirely) AI-generated. The prompt used herein is the same as the title of the article! The text placed on a light background has been written by me, the (human) author.

On that note, my sincere apologies to you, dear reader; my intention behind this brief attempt at deception was to organically display how seamlessly AI-generated content can integrate into the creative process. I, Pratyay Suvarnapathaki, and my creative assistants: DALL-E and GPT-3 hope this has been a worthwhile read. ■

