



The Nation Decides

As India goes to polls this April and May, the world witnesses the largest democracy in action. This time round, more people are going to exercise their democratic right to vote, than the world has ever seen before. With an mammoth electorate that is twice the population of USA, this is undoubtedly the largest election ever held. More importantly, this time a majority of the electorate consists of youth.

On the darker side though, the biggest festival of democracy comes at a time when we face double threats of Naxalites and Cross-border terrorists. Nothing exemplifies this point more than the shifting of IPL to South Africa. This move placed India in the same stead, as regards security, with Pakistan in the world's view. This can be seen in the refusal by the Australian team to participate in Davis cup tournament being held in Chennai due to "security concerns", the assurances by the Indian government not withstanding. The nation also worries over the rise of Taliban and its strong sanctuary in Pakistan. The global recession continues to haunt the masses.

Adding more woes is the dismal situation of Indian politics. The campaigning this year has been more about slandering and vilifying the

members of the rival party than about solutions to the problems the country is facing now. One often ponders why genuine issues and collective problems are never addressed to. Besides, ideologically inconceivable alliances between political parties pre and post election shows the largest democracy in jaundiced light.

The only hope to salvage the biggest democracy of the world is the healthy participation of voters. Internet and mobile phones have been extensively used for the first time to create awareness about polls and ofcourse to publicize the party manifestos. Thanks to the efforts of some NGOs and newspapers, increased participation of the youth in these elections both as contestants and voters is something to be celebrated.

Is this election going to result in a hung and unstable government as the popular prediction goes? Will the elected leaders be a boon or a bane for the country ? Only time can tell ! Let us all be optimistic that our leaders are elected on their sterling qualities, instead of their caste or religion. Let us all dance to the tunes of democracy.



Did You Know?

This April, for the first time in the country a CEC has assumed office in the midst of general elections.

Navin B. Chawla took over as the 16th CEC on 21st April, 2009 after the first phase.

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The Team

B Snehith
Yashasvi Meka

SHG Stall @ Waves - Summer 2009



Waves - Summer 2009, the annual cultural festival of BITS, Pilani - Goa Campus held during 6-8 March has attracted the biggest crowd any Goan festival has ever seen. What could be the best platform than this occasion to showcase and market the various products made by our SHG

women?

A Nirmaan SHG - Marketing Stall was setup in the library lawns during the three day festival. It was inaugurated by Prof. Suresh Ramaswamy, Chief Warden, BITS-Pilani, Goa Campus. The products for sale included kurtas, wrap-around skirts, Waves bandanas and purses which

are made by the women of Zari and Birla.

A new product - home made chocolates were also put up in the stall. The feedback on quality and taste was satisfactory and encouraging. The project is still in its trial phase and will be launched next semester. The visitors were made aware of all the activities of Nirmaan who appreciated the efforts to uplift the Zari and Birla slums.



Marathon is named after the fabled run of the Greek soldier Pheidippides, a messenger from the Battle of Marathon to Athens

Spree Open Marathon - Run for a Cause

An Open Marathon was organised here at BITS-Pilani, Goa campus on 12th April 2009 during its national inter college sports festival Spree-Pure Sport. The marathon truly exemplified the spirit of "pure sport" and the spirit of life. Unlike the previous marathons conducted in the campus this was associated with a social cause. Nirmaan and HelpAge India were the social organizations associated with the event.

It consisted of two legs viz., a fun marathon that was 3 kms long for casual runners, and a full

marathon 9km long for serious runners. About 200 people participated for fun marathon and the full marathon saw a participation by 41 people. The money was generated through registrations and pledging. About 860 people pledged money for the cause majority of which included the BITSian community on campus. A promotional stall of Nirmaan was also setup during the festival.

The donations received through the marathon will be utilized for the School Adoption Program of Nirmaan which aims at transforming rural and urban backward Govt. schools to model schools.



HERDES - Dr. Elattuvalapil Sreedharan

The builders of modern India are often unseen. And amongst them are some men who are worthy of a salute. One such true hero is the Indian technocrat, **Dr. Elattuvalapil Sreedharan**.

Dr. Sreedharan was born on 12th July, 1932 in Karukaputhoor in Kerala. He graduated as an engineer from the Government Engineering College, Kakinada (now JNTU). In 1954, he joined the Indian Railways in its Service of Engineers.

His first major assignment on duty was to repair the Pamban bridge (that connects Rameshwaram with Tamilnadu mainland) which was badly damaged by a huge tidal wave in 1963. The Railways set a target of six months for the bridge to be repaired, which was reduced to three months by his boss. Sreedharan was put in-charge of the execution and he restored the bridge in 46 days. He was awarded with the Railway Minister's award in recognition of his achievement. He later worked for Calcutta metro and Cochin shipyard in various key designations. He retired from Indian Railways as Member Engineering in 1990.

But it just turned out to be a mere retirement from a post but not work. In recognition of his project management capability and uncompromised work attitude, he was appointed the CMD of Konkan Railway on contract in 1990. It was the first public sector project under BOT (build-operate-transfer) basis. Even designing the project was a Herculean task given to the unpredictability of western ghats, but Sreedharan finished the project within seven years and today it stands in the list of modern marvels of India with 760 km track comprising of 93 tunnels, 150 bridges. That a public sector project could be completed without significant cost and time overruns was

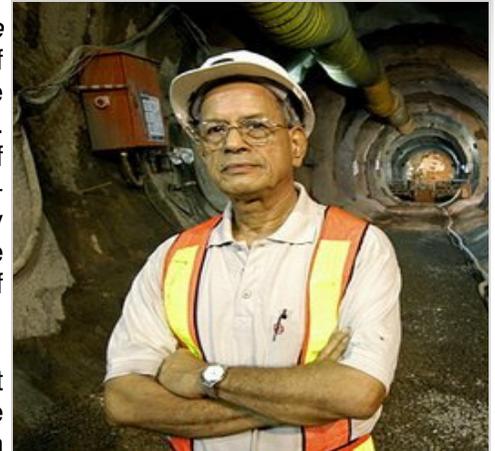
considered an achievement by many.

Later he was made the managing director of Delhi Metro and by mid-2005, all the scheduled sections were completed by their target date or before and within their respective budgets. Today Delhi metro railway corporation (DMRC) is the most punctual metro transport in the world with 99.5 % punctuality last year.

He has been honoured with Padma Shri by the Government of India (2001), Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India (2008), *hevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* (Knight of the Legion of Honour) by the government of France (2005). He was also chosen as one of Asia's Heroes by Time magazine and *Man of the Year* by The Times of India. In 2007, he has been given the "Indian of the year" title by CNN-IBN.

Some of the qualities that made him stand out is his love towards work. He hasn't taken a vacation in twenty years. His only break was taking a few days off when travelling to England on work, to spend time with his son. He clocks in at work on the dot at 0845 HRS (IST) every morning, 15 minutes before his staff. And admits that he is not a workaholic but he simply likes his job.

Truly he is one of the heroes India has ever produced as he is not just a dreamer but also a builder, but most of all one who has dedicated his achievements to every Indian.



**Today Delhi Metro
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year.**

Blood Group Detection Camp

A blood group detection camp was conducted on 3rd April 2009 for the students Govt. Primary School in Zari. This was the first medical camp conducted by Nirmaan in Zari area. A total of 180 school students were benefitted through this activity. The detected blood groups were written on cards and handed over to the them.

The students of Biological Sciences Department of the campus helped in the successful conduction of the camp which was volunteered by Nirmaan members as well as school staff. This enabled the children to know their blood groups which will be useful in emergency situations.

For the outgoing batch and PS-2 students :

Nirmaan chapters are active at various cities with BITS Alumni coordinating the activities. You can either join a chapter or help in opening a new one. Please mail us if you are interested. Active corporate chapters are at

Bangalore
Mumbai

Hyderabad
Chennai
Pune

For more info on chapter activities you can also log on to
<http://www.nirmaan.org>

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A Note of Thanks

Our sincere thanks to all the BITSians, Faculty community at Goa Campus and other donors for your donations towards the social causes of Nirmaan through Open Marathon. A regular project update will be sent to you through our newsletters. For any further details you can contact our president or secretary.

Our Student Teams/Chapters @

BITS-Pilani, Goa Campus
BITS-Pilani, Pilani Campus
BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus
NIT - Warangal
JBIET - Hyderabad