

Connections

A quarterly newsletter for friends of IIT Gandhinagar

2020-2021, Volume XIII, Issue IV
April - June 2021

INSTITUTE HIGHLIGHTS

COVID CARE FACILITY ON THE CAMPUS

During the second wave, the Institute converted its newly constructed guest house into an isolation-cum-COVID Care Facility to treat COVID positive patients from the community with mild to moderate symptoms. Based on the defining institutional principles of inclusivity and empathy, the facility provided isolation and health support to the entire IITGN community, including students, project staff, faculty, admin staff, contractual workers such as drivers, mess staff, housekeeping staff, gardeners, security personnel, and their family members. More than 240 COVID patients, including 121 students, were treated at the facility, with a peak of 95 at a time in mid-April. The facility provided basic medical services, such as temperature and oxygen readings, advice from doctors and nurses, medicines, RT-PCR tests, nutritious meals, as well as hard-to-access health services such as oxygen concentrators and cylinders. Institute medical staff and ambulance services were available 24x7. The facility also helped patients find beds in local hospitals when needed. Moreover, counselling services offered psychological support to patients, medical staff, and their families. The facility was managed by the **COVID-19 Medical Response Team** of IITGN under the leadership of **Prof Gaurav Srivastava**.



WHITEPAPER ON THE COVID CARE FACILITY

The Institute released a Whitepaper outlining its experience and lessons from the development and management of a community COVID Care Facility on the campus. It aims to encourage other institutions and communities to develop similar facilities to provide support and relief to their community members, which can ultimately reduce the strain on the medical infrastructure of the country. Besides highlighting the benefits and the journey of setting up a 190-bed community care facility on the campus, the document outlines the protocols, SOPs, guidelines, and medical support and essential supplies required for setting up such a facility. It points out how various organisations and even residential communities can utilise their available infrastructure and human resources to set up similar facilities. The Whitepaper can be downloaded from: <https://iitgn.ac.in/pdf/ccf.pdf>

ACADEMIC RELIEF TO STUDENTS

The second wave of the pandemic posed a number of challenges for the students in Semester II 2020-21, as the pandemic affected them and their families in different ways. Considering the extraordinary and challenging circumstances and their possible impact on the academic performance of students, the Senate approved several measures to provide relief to the students for Semester II 2020-21, including provision for multiple make-up examinations, opportunity for reassessment to students who receive E/F grade, option to drop project courses, among others.

VIKRAM SARABHAI RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

IITGN introduced Vikram Sarabhai Research Fellowship that aims to encourage PhD students to complete their PhD early and enable them to have a competitive advantage. PhD students who submit their thesis within four years of joining will be eligible for this 12-month research fellowship. It will enable IITGN doctorates to explore new research areas, extend their PhD work, and publish scholarly articles and books, besides looking for rewarding career opportunities.

MORE INTERNATIONAL FACULTY ON BOARD

Looking at the brighter side, one of the new horizons opened up because of the pandemic is the possibility of remote teaching by faculty from across the world. Remote instructions allowed the Institute to engage a

substantial number of best academics from countries such as the USA, Mexico, UK, Switzerland, Brazil, Turkey, Portugal, Germany, and Japan, who taught more than 20 formal courses to IITGN students during the last one and a half years. As a result, IITGN students could learn diverse and specialised courses from faculty around the world.

MOMENTUM IN FACULTY RECRUITMENT

The Institute did not let the pandemic disrupt faculty recruitment and quickly shifted to online platforms to connect with the faculty candidates. From July 2020 to June 2021, the Institute made 25 offers, of which 19 accepted the offer. The number of career faculty at the Institute now stands at 110, and 8 others are expected to join in due course. The Institute has also made significant progress in engaging Professors of Practice.

ART ON CAMPUS

To further enhance the campus experience, add to its beauty, and encourage academic development, IITGN has embarked upon an ambitious "Art on Campus" project, which focuses on art installations around the campus. The Institute has engaged an external consultant to develop a dynamic long-term master plan for this project that is aimed at establishing a connection between buildings, social settings and their surrounding environments.

SUPPORT FOR THE INSTITUTE

LAKSHMI VADALI EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

Mrs Lakshmi Vadali and Mr Kishore Konteti, UK-based well-wishers of the Institute, have established the **Lakshmi Vadali Excellence Scholarship** at IITGN. The scholarship of Rs 1 lakh per year will support a top-ranking and financially disadvantaged female student admitted to IITGN until completion of her BTech programme. Mrs Lakshmi and Mr Kishore, both born and brought up in India, emigrated to the UK more than two decades ago. Mrs Lakshmi completed her Post-graduate

Certificate in Education from the University of Greenwich. She has been a passionate Mathematics teacher, Director of Mathematics, and Governor of two secondary schools in the UK. Currently, she is Assistant Principal at a large comprehensive public school in Suffolk, UK. Mr Kishore had completed his Master's in Engineering from Guindy College of Engineering, Chennai. He is working as a Solution Architect for a large technology company in London.



Mr Kishore Konteti and Mrs Lakshmi Vadali

OUTREACH

Prof Sudhir K Jain, Director, was invited by various organisations and forums to discuss and share his thoughts in the areas of education and institutional management. On Apr 14, 2021, he was invited as a panelist to discuss 'Education 4.0: Role of Industry Partnership and Curriculum' in a webinar by BW Education. He delivered Prof G S Ramaswamy Memorial

Lecture as the Chief Guest of the 57th Foundation Day celebration of CSIR-Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC), Chennai, on June 10, 2021. Prof Jain also delivered the 5th Vikram Sarabhai Memorial lecture at Shri Vaishnav Vidyapeeth Vishwavidyalaya, Indore, on June 16, 2021. Ahmedabad Management Association invited Prof Jain to give a talk on 'Managing COVID-19 on Campus: Learnings from the Innovative Practices of IITGN for Educational Institutions' on June 22, 2021, as a part of their webinar series on "Wellness through Management".

FACULTY NEWS

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- **Prof Ashutosh Srivastava**, Assistant Professor in Biological Engineering has been selected for the prestigious DBT Ramalingaswami Re-entry Fellowship for the year 2020-21 by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- **Prof Rosa Maria Perez**, a Guest Professor in Humanities and Social Sciences discipline, has been conferred the Medal of Scientific Merit on June 28, 2021, as part of Ciência 2021 - the annual meeting of Portuguese science, technology and innovation.

FACULTY CHAIR POSITIONS



Prof Sivapriya Kirubakaran



Prof Kabeer Jasuja

Two faculty members were awarded Faculty Chair positions with effect from Apr 7, 2021: **Prof Sivapriya Kirubakaran**, Associate Professor in Chemistry (Kankuben Bakshirambhai Gelot Chair) and **Prof Kabeer Jasuja**, Associate Professor in Chemical Engineering (Dr Dinesh O Shah Chair).

SPONSORED AND CONSULTANCY PROJECTS

To find the list of sponsored and consultancy projects, please follow this link: https://iitgn.ac.in/newsletter/projects/q2_2021 or scan the QR code.



NEW FACULTY

Name	Designation	Discipline	PhD	Date of Joining
Dr Tarun Kumar Agarwal	Assistant Professor	Electrical Engineering	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	19/04/2021
Dr Jhuma Saha	Assistant Professor	Electrical Engineering	IIT Bombay	07/05/2021
Dr Rohit Kumar Mishra	Assistant Professor	Mathematics	TIFR, Bangalore	10/05/2021
Dr Soumyadip Sett	Assistant Professor	Mechanical Engineering	University of Illinois at Chicago	24/06/2021

IITGN guest house converted into a COVID Care Facility



ACTIVITIES AT IITGN

LEADERSHIP CHAT SERIES

The sixth talk under the Leadership Chat Series was held with **Major Devender Pal Singh**, a Kargil War veteran and India's first blade runner, on Apr 22, 2021. The session was moderated by **Mr Mukul Pandya**, Former Editor in Chief, Knowledge@Wharton and **Prof Achal Mehra**.



Major D P Singh

HOMI'S YOUNG SCHOLARS' CONFERENCE

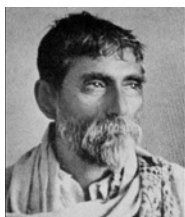
As part of the 'History of Mathematics in India (HoMI)' project, the Institute conducted a two-day online Young Scholars' Conference on History of Mathematics, with a special focus on India, on Apr 17-18, 2021. The virtual event provided a platform for young researchers from around the world to present various advances in the history of mathematics or related fields. Renowned subject experts shared their insights and thoughts during the conference. **Profs Michel Danino, Indranath Sengupta, Sudipta Sarkar, and Atul Dixit** were coordinators of the event.

THEORETICAL PHYSICS SCHOOL

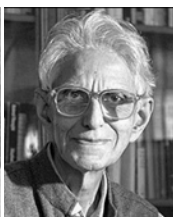
The discipline of Physics organised a virtual 'Theoretical Physics School' during June 7-11, 2021. The School, attended by over 100 participants, aimed to provide a unique opportunity to students to learn selected contemporary theoretical physics topics through a set of pedagogical lectures. The lectures were crafted to introduce advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students and PhD scholars to new and future research directions in theoretical physics. The event was coordinated by **Prof Sudipta Sarkar**.

SEMINAR SERIES ON INDIAN SCIENTISTS

IITGN hosted the third edition of 'Seminar Series on Indian Scientists' in online mode on Apr 17, 2021. The event had two online seminars on the lives and works of renowned Indian scientists - Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray and Obaid Siddiqi. **Prof Amartya Kumar Dutta** from the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, delivered the first session on 'Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray: Glimpses from his multifarious contributions'. The second session titled as 'Obaid Siddiqi' was delivered by **Prof Sharmistha Majumdar**. The seminar series is being curated by **Prof Sudipta Sarkar** and **Prof Michel Danino**.



Acharya Ray



Obaid Siddiqi

14TH BIENNIAL NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN RADIATION AND PHOTOCHEMISTRY

The discipline of Chemistry, with support of the Indian Society of Radiation and Photochemical Sciences, hosted 14th Biennial National Symposium in Radiation and Photochemistry on June 25 & 26, 2021. Besides 16 invited talks by distinguished faculty from across the world covering a wide spectrum of topics, the two-day symposium hosted 17 oral presentations and 55 flash talks from senior PhD and postdoctoral students. More than 100 delegates participated in the virtual meeting, and a total of 18 students were awarded citation certificates. **Prof Sriram Kanvah** from IITGN and **Dr Jyotirmayee Mohanty** from BARC were the conveners of the symposium.

LAUNCHPAD 2021

IITGN Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IIEC) has introduced LaunchPad, an initiative for final-year students of the Institute to provide them with an opportunity to try their entrepreneurial idea. As a part of this programme, students get a platform where they validate their start-up idea and receive mentoring support from IIEC. Student teams are also provided with product development funding support and fellowship to cover sustenance. Currently, two teams of seven students are working on their ideas under this programme.

INCREASE IN POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS

Having developed an excellent and interdisciplinary research ecosystem, the Institute has witnessed a significant increase in its Postdoctoral Research Fellows in one year. As on May 1, 2021, the total number of Postdoctoral Research Fellows at the Institute equalled nearly 50% (47.22%) of the total faculty strength. The ratio was about 34% in May 2019 and 33% in May 2020. Compared to 34 and 35 Postdoctoral Research Fellows as on May 01, 2019, and 2020, respectively, the Institute recorded a total of 51 Postdoctoral Research Fellows as on May 01, 2021. The Institute has launched several programmes to encourage young researchers and provide impetus to cutting-edge, collaborative and interdisciplinary research in India. Research-oriented programmes like IITGN-ECF and 50-50 Scheme have opened up exciting opportunities for young scholars to work on innovative research problems in a creative and interdisciplinary ecosystem.



Student Hostels

NEWLY COMMISSIONED BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS

Campus development continued to make significant progress, and the Guest House, Central Arcade, Open Air Theatre, 1 BHK, 2 BHK, some studio apartments, and some new hostel blocks were occupied by IITGN. The Bank and the Medical Centre have already started operating from their new location in the Central Arcade. Construction of remaining hostel and housing blocks, Research Park and Sports Complex are also nearing completion.



Grocery kit distribution at Palaj village

REACHING OUT TO NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES

IITGN continued to extend a helping hand to its neighbouring villages during the second wave of COVID-19. In April 2021, the Institute took the initiative to form a team of volunteers comprising young villagers and IITGN community members to spread awareness about the pandemic and provide initial medical care. The volunteers went around the villages for door-to-door monitoring of oxygen levels of villagers and shared contact details of the IITGN medical centre for any emergency. Villagers requiring immediate medical care were brought to the IITGN dispensary in the Institute's ambulance for free basic treatment. **Dr Riya Saini**, Resident Medical Officer of IITGN also conducted weekly medical camps in Palaj and Basan villages. Through this, the Institute could reach out to more than 800 villagers directly during the pandemic.

The Institute's **Padosi Gram Sahyog Samiti** distributed grocery kits containing high nutrition essential food items such as oil, flour and pulses, and an informative pamphlet on precautions against COVID-19 to 84 needy families in Palaj village.

ONLINE WORKSHOPS & SHORT COURSES

- Managing Personal Finance 101 by **Mr Gaurang Sanghvi**, Head of e-Business, DSP Mutual Fund, Apr 10, 2021.
- Think. Design. Print - Metal 3D Printing Workshop by **Mr Aditya Savardekar**, Senior Application Engineer, 3D Printing, June 17-18, 2021.
- Waacking Workshop by **Ms Riddhi Upadhyay**, professional dancer based in Mumbai, June 27, 2021.

- Some Aspects of Topological and Cold-atom Systems, a short course by **Prof Krishnendu Sengupta**, Professor of Theoretical Physics, IACS, Kolkata, every Tuesday and Friday from May 25 to July 02, 2021.

ONLINE LECTURES & COLLOQUIA

Follow this link: <https://events.iitgn.ac.in/> or scan the QR code to see the lectures held at IITGN.



STUDENTS AND STAFF

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Three PhD scholars - **Abhishek Chowdhuri** from Physics, **Deepshikha Ghosh** from Biological/Chemical Engineering, and **Prasanth Nair** from Mechanical Engineering - have been awarded the prestigious Prime Minister Research Fellowship (Dec 2020 cycle).

CULTURAL COUNCIL

The **Quizzing Society** organised a quiz competition and a poster presentation competition on the occasion of World Earth Day on Apr 22, 2021, and also conducted 'MELAS Quiz' on June 6, 2021. The third edition of **Rangmanch** was organised on Apr 25, 2021, with musical and poetry performances by students. The **Cultural Council** organised 'Valo League', a multiplayer online gaming event, from May 22 to June 13, 2021. The **Palette Club** organised 'ReCreate It!', an art competition to recreate

popular artwork, from May 16-23, 2021. The **Literary Society** organised 'Queerentine', a literature and art competition to celebrate international pride month, from June 1-15, 2021.

TECHNICAL COUNCIL

The **Technical Council** organised 'PrepBytes' - a competitive coding and placements workshop-cum-webinar by **Ms Mamta Kumari**, Co-founder, PrepBytes, on Apr 17, 2021; 'Restarting the IITGN Drone Society' - a series of eight online lectures by **Mr Ajay Kumar Ucheniya**, an IITGN alumnus, on Apr 18, 2021; 'Thriving in Your Research Journey' - a talk by **Prof Himanshu Shekhar** on May 22, 2021; 'Machine Learning Workshop' by the **Mean Mechanics Club** on May 23, 2021; 'ROS (Robot Operating System) Workshop' by the **Tinkerers' Lab** on alternate Sundays starting from June 13, 2021; 'One Month of Unity Challenge' - a one-month long game design and development competition by the **DiGiS Club** from June 14, 2021; and 'The Summer Solstice' - an astro-talk series under the **Odyssey Club** - by **Govardhan Ingle**, a first-year BTech student, on June 23, 2021.

SPORTS

YOGA SESSIONS

The Institute celebrated the seventh International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2021, with a virtually guided yoga session by Mr R L Sharma and Ms Bharti Makwana. The Physical Education (PE) section has also been organising offline and online yoga sessions for the campus community by **Ms Bharti Makwana** and **Ms Tulsa Pujhari**.

FITNESS PROGRAMMES

With the goal of improving the overall fitness of the community members, the PE section started online aerobics classes and meditation classes by **Ms Payal Vaniya**, online weight loss programme by **Mr Harsh Mehtab**, online core exercise programme by **Mr Rahul Gupta**, offline theme-based

event '20 Weeks 10 themes' by **Mr Ratnesh Singh**, and offline Taekwondo sessions by **Mr Aman Chaudhary**.

OPEN GYM SESSIONS

The PE section restarted open gym sessions for the student community while following all the precautionary measures against COVID-19. The sessions are managed by **Mr Amit Kumar Mishra** and **Mr Dinesh Parmar** in the morning, and **Mr Harsh Mehta** in the evening.

RESUMING SOME SPORTS OFFLINE

The PE section resumed cricket and football sessions for the students in offline mode with all the COVID-related safety precautions. The cricket sessions were conducted by **Mr Ratnesh Singh**, and the football sessions were guided by **Mr Dinesh Parmar**.

View of the Central Arcade from the Sports Complex



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