



IITians Run for Alma Mater

IITians are known for their intellectual pursuits. However, on Sunday January 20, 2008, many of them were onto a different pursuit. A hundred-strong contingent from Indian Institute of Technology Alumni Association took part in the Mumbai Marathon. While most other groups pre-dominantly participated in the 6-km dream run, the hardy IITians were overwhelmingly gunning for longer distances. Seventy of them ran the half marathon, seven finished the full marathon and the rest settled for the dream run.

IIT Alumni Association has kicked off an initiative called “Run for IIT” wherein its ex-students participate in various road-races conducted around the world under the IIT banner. While the main theme is fun and fitness, in a spirit of camaraderie, the group is also looking at donations for IITs. “Worldwide, corporations pledge amounts for various causes against runners completing road races. We intend to generate funds for our alma mater through this initiative,” said Dr Ajit Ranade, Group Chief Economist, Aditya Birla Group and the Chairman of IIT Bombay Alumni Association. As all donations to the IITs are fully tax-exempt, Dr Ranade mentioned, “if we get a corporation to donate, say Rupees one lakh per IITian runner, that will go a long way towards helping the IITs.”

Many participants were ecstatic about their experiences. “There was an immense flow of positive energy from the body and I have decided to make running an integral part of my life now”, said Nitin Jain, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, who did the half-marathon in 3:10. Rajiv Ranjan, President of Mafatlal Industries, ran with his IIT Delhi buddy, Anil Chandiramani, who heads the Mumbai Chapter of IIT Delhi Alumni Association and Mahendra Kapadia of IIT Bombay who works for Larsen & Toubro. “It was a great experience”, said Kapadia. Pankaj Mithel of IIT Kharagpur, after finishing the half-marathon in 3:10, said, “Great sense of achievement. My buddies, Jimmy from Perth and Rao from Dubai, will join us in future races.” Prateek Mehta, an alumnus of IIT Bombay, had flown in from Bangalore to run the full marathon, “I was bowled over by the excellent execution in Mumbai.” The group has kept a target of 1000 participants for the next year’s Mumbai marathon run, with most of them doing the half and full marathons.

As a part of the “Run for IIT” initiative, various groups will be participating in Zurich Marathon in April, Bangalore Marathon in May, Helsinki Marathon and San Francisco Marathon in August, Silicon Valley Marathon (USA) in November and Pune Marathon in December. “The most exciting way to tour a city is to run or walk the local marathon. Often, the course is through its most scenic and prime areas. The crowds are encouraging and the atmosphere is exhilarating. A city is at its best on its marathon day,” said Madhur Kotharay, a veteran of dozens of marathons around the world. Kotharay is co-coordinating the worldwide “Run for IIT” activity of IIT Alumni Association. For more details, he can be contacted on iitian_runner@yahoogroups.com