

Campus

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Fitting forum for breaking free



IIT, KHARAGPUR'S SPRING FEST 2016 HAD TO BE THE BIGGEST OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY ~ AND FOR GOOD REASON, WRITES KRISHNASISH DASGUPTA

Between 29 January and 1 February, whatever might have been wrong in Bengal was best forgotten as IIT, Kharagpur's Spring Fest 2016 got off to a rocking start with Papon belting out his trademark Assamese folk song *Boitha maro boitha maro re* and the young crowd made up of poets, musicians, actors, painters, writers and techies cheering him on. Indeed, this 57th edition of a show staged by what is arguably the oldest IIT in the country began with a bang, its 2,100-acre campus all decked up with bright lights and playing host to thousands of participants from colleges across India. In fact, this one had to be one of the largest college fests in the country in terms of footfall.

The National Level Debate started off in a rather serious manner and there were myriad topics for discussion, one being "Should we humanise the brands?" Then again, if "Short is Sweet and Less is More", then Mumbai-based micro-blogging initiative Terribly Tiny Tales — its India's largest online story-telling platform — conducted a literary workshop where art-lovers experienced the art of modern story-telling in as few as 140 words and Anuj Gosalia, curator and ttt founder explaining that "our main goal is to promote ttt as the world's largest micro-content platform where one can write stories and share it with the world". Co-founder Chintan Ruparel put the icing on the cake by adding, "Spread the tales."

There was a platform for Creative Writing in English and one of the topics was "Yesterday is history, Tomorrow is a mystery, and Today is a gift, that's why we call it the Present". At the end of it all, Sumedh Borkar of the Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, emerged as the fest's best creative writer, followed by Sayani Bhattacharjee of the Neotia Institute of Technology Management and Science, Kolkata.

In the Karaoke segment, the performances



SXC, Ranchi.



Anuj Gosalia and Chintan Ruparel.

might have come across as pretty ordinary but for Aditya Hembram of Asutosh College, Kolkata, proving the exception and standing out with his rendition of *Tum Hi Ho* from *Aashiqui 2*.

Resident DJ Joy Banerjee of UG Reincarnated, Kolkata, kept the throng entertained his mixes and re-mixes, playing the likes of *Lean On, Magic, Wakhra Swag* and more. And by way of bonus there was Paint The Sky Red, a Singapore based post-rock, instrumental band, that read the signs right and, before hitting the stage, said, "We are humbled to play in such a prestigious festival. This is the first time we are performing outside the Southeast Asian region, so this is something really special." They performed hits like *While We Sleepwalk* and *In Amber*.

Centrifuge (group dancing) saw PEC University of Technology, Chandigarh, student Japnaam Kochar and his troupe perform brilliantly, showcasing all the razzle-dazzle around and even whipping the crowd into the act of cheering them with unstoppable zeal.

Hilarity Ensues (stand-up comedy), introduced for the first time in the spring fest, turned out to be a massive hit. One of Kolkata's best known stand-up comedians and founder of Kalkutta Komediens, Raof Gangjee, was very impressed with first-prize winner Prakash Natarajan, a student of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology. Pranav Meshram, a student of the National Institute of Technology, Jamshedpur, had the audience laughing out aloud when he went through the motions of how a friend behaved while religiously "sexting" his girlfriend! Gangjee had a viable suggestion for aspiring stand-up comedians, "One must know how to judge the crowd; connecting is very important."

Lakeside Dreams (solo and group) provided young musicians and their groups with the chance of flaunting their skills in the form of a Western acoustic jamming competition. Here, National Institute of Technology, New Delhi, student Naman Jain performed brilliantly with his solo-act with an Ed Sheeran number, *Give*



Amit Trivedi and Namon of NIT, Delhi.



Sai University of Technology, Burla, students putting up a seriously witty performance that was too sardonicism personified. They invariably took a dig at a prominent TV host and editor-in-chief. Their act, "News-Our-Show", ran from social stigmas to the catastrophic Chennai flood, but with a witty twist, aptly showcasing how trivial TV talk-shows could become. Sachin Gupta, CEO of Chilsag Entertainment Network and one of the judges of the event, was quick to admit, "College theatre has really improved in the last four-five years."

"The whole event was great. It helped us meet likeminded individuals," said Magnus Roberts, a student of Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, who performed wondrously in Sargam (battle of the bands). As lead vocalist and lead guitarist of his group, he impressed, singing his self-composed *Khush hu mein, Fakir* and *Dur Kyou*. Band-mate and cover-guitarist Imran Sarvaia felt events such as the Spring Fest always helped one grow as an artist.

Anamika Sinha, a student of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majitar, and her group Ambiguity left no one disappointed, singing soul-stirring tracks such as *Bulla ki jana* and *Bandeya Ho*. College-mate and group bassist Bilswrang Boro performed pretty good on guitar.

Aatma, a team comprising St Xavier's College, Ranchi students, participated in the Nukkad (street-play) event, dealing with social-issues that pointed to the fact that while most of us paid attention to the Aamir Khan controversy, on the other hand, to ignore issues such as the Damini rape case.

In Wildfire (rock band competition), Lalchhanhima Ralte, a student of AAT Media College, Chennai, and his group, Gorillas in Groove, rocked everyone with their original number *Out*. Band-mate and Loyola ICAM College of Engineering and Technology, Chennai, student Pravir Ramasundaram supported him brilliantly on drums. The Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music, Chennai, held a workshop and winners of the Lakeside Dreams event got to win an all-inclusive music contract at their residential campus.

With the curtain winding down, well-known Bollywood singer Amit Trivedi made his way to the stage and the 12,500-odd strong crowd simply went berserk, drowned in a feeling called music! The Jnan Ghosh Stadium was packed to the seams, with Trivedi interacting, singing and conquering hearts. And this time around, the air rang with *Je naina karu bandh bandh, behey jaye boond boond...*



Papon Set, the ball rolling



PEC University of Technology, Chandigarh.

Me Love. Sushmita Ganguly of Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College enthralled with her mash-up of Adele, Linkin Park, Sia and Poets of the Fall. On the other hand, Heritage Institute of Technology, Kolkata, student Anshuman Roy came across as a real pro with his rendition of *Hotel California*. Band-mate Nilavro Ghosh gave him brilliant guitar support and their group, Planet Earth 1980, also played a self-composed *Gasoline*.

Rangmanch (stage-play) saw Veer Surendra