

# Campus Beats

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"Everyone in this world should sleep without fear, at least for one night. There should be at least one day when there is no violence. Everyone should eat to their fill at least for one day. This is my dream" - Amma

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## NAAC accreditation raises hopes for better placements

Roopa K M & Vidya Varghese

When Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham created history by becoming the youngest ever university in India to be awarded 'A' grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the students and staff at Ettimadai campus seem to have higher expectations after the accreditation hoping this is going to help the university reach higher standards in placements and research.

"We deserve A-grade" says M P Chandrasekharan, Dean of Amrita School of Engineering. "It is definitely going to benefit the students for their placements and further studies abroad."

Ms Latha Parameswaran, faculty of the Computer Science and Engineering Department shared

the views of her Dean, but adds that it's a prestige for all members of the Amrita fraternity. "It is hard for a young university like ours to get such a top grade. The NAAC officials were impressed with discipline in the 5 campuses. Getting A grade at this time of global slow down will effect positively on placements for students", she said.

### Preparations

The preparations for the NAAC visit began in AMRITA University by September 2007 itself. Self study report was prepared by all the campuses and departments. "Since the accreditation was applied for the university level there was a lot of work to be done. Coordinators were appointed at university, campus, school and department levels by Amrita

University. It was a very complex and unique accreditation because we have 5 campuses" says Prashant R. Nair, Vice Chairman of Department of IT, appointed as a university coordinator.

NAAC is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. The 7 criteria on which various institutions accredited are - Curricular Aspects, Teaching-Learning and Evaluation, Research, Infrastructure, Student Support and Progression, Governance and Leadership and Innovative practices.

"Resources are more than enough here. If students utilize it properly, I'm sure we can reach on top in no time" says Rohit Kumar Tandey from II MBA.

## Awareness programme on women's health issues held



Dr. Meera addressing the women of Ettimadai

Savithri Suresh & Namitha Venkat

An awareness program on "Female reproductive health" for the women of Ettimadai village, Coimbatore, was conducted at Amrita Village Resource Centre, Ettimadai, on 19th February by the Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (CORD). The program was presided over by Dr. Meera Krishna, a gynecologist working with the CORD, an organization aimed at improving the living conditions of people in rural areas.

Dr. Meera talked about the various aspects of women's health,

like problems occurring during menses, pregnancy and old age. She also discussed the issue of the rise in number of women with cervical cancer and breast cancer in India, ways to prevent and/or detect them and also the treatments available. They were made aware of the various deficiencies seen in women and children and also ways to overcome them.

The participants mostly belonged to various (Ettimadai-centered) women's self help groups. S. Vijaya, one of the participants, said "The program was very helpful. I will definitely follow the instructions given to us by Meera madam".

## Gear up for fun and frolic during Amritotsavam

Shahista N V & Varsha Mohan

The annual cultural fest, 'Amritotsavam' is round the corner. On March 6th and 7th, students will take part in a host of cultural competitions on and off stage, including creative writing, debating, quiz, drama, dance and singing.

The selection process started

from February 25th, and will end by March 3rd. Held at venues like Sudhamani hall, Amriteswari hall and the Open car porch, this year will host 23 events. Mr. R. Chinawami, Head, the Students' Welfare Office and the main coordinator for Amritotsavam said, "It is unique because the celebration portrays the Amrita way of life and will highlight Indian culture."

## 11th Annual Sports Day Held

The 14th annual sports meet of the year 2008-2009 in Amrita University was held on 20 February 2009. Padmashree athlete M.D. Valsamma was the chief guest of the event. Chinmayi team won the first prize and Amritamayi became the runners-up.

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The main block at the Amrita University Ettimadai campus: In 1992 (above) and now

## A hurdle check with Valsamma

**Ms. M. D. Valsamma**, former Olympian and two times gold winning athlete in Asian Games, was in the campus as the chief guest for the valedictory function on the sports day. In spite of her busy schedule, she found time to give the interview on her way back home. Driving with her till Olavakode, **Anaswara Bhanu and Priya A. Nair** got to know her exuberance and passion for her favourite sporting event- the athletics.

The excerpts:

Why is that children from poorer section of the society come to athletics while children from well to do families prefer to get trained in cricket or tennis?

Athletics is known as poor man's game. Athletics give children a lot of opportunities to display their talent at various levels whereas cricket or tennis doesn't provide lot of opportunities. Also if one could get a medal at national level, one gets a government job. So, athletics is also about securing a job for oneself.

Why are children, who perform well at the school meets, usually not seen at the national meets? What can the government do to improve the situation?

It's mainly because the schools squeeze out all the energy and talent of a child at the school meets. To participate and to get a medal at national meets, children have to be trained gradually and systematically. But the schools think only of immediate results and the medals they can achieve, without even



thinking of the future of the aspiring sportspersons. Governments have to help the children who perform well at the school levels get good and adequate training.

When you were active in the field of athletics, you didn't have much of provisions and opportunities. But now it is easy for an athlete to prove his/her mettle with so much of resources available. How do you view this change in the sports arena?

It's good that today's generation is getting

so many opportunities and facilities. But in our times, we had worked very hard to achieve whatever we have achieved with meager provisions. I think, today's generation has become lazy because of the overflow of facilities and chances they get. Instead of making use of the facilities available, they waste time sitting in front of television and computer.

Your contemporary, P T Usha has started a school for training children in sports. What do you think about such a mission? Do you have any such plans?

Usha is doing a commendable job. She catches hold of young children and train them targeting big sporting events like Asian Games and Olympics. But she can afford to do that as she is a sports officer with the Southern Railways whereas I am a commercial officer under the same network. I have to work almost round the clock, so no time could be spend on coaching and training.

Last Olympics saw least expected personalities like Abhinav Bhindra, Susheel Kumar and Vijendar Singh winning medals for India. But a much hyped Anju Bobby

George failed to qualify. Do you think too much expectations create pressure on the players?

We didn't expect medal for Anju Bobby George. In the list of world class players, Anju doesn't even feature in the top ten. As an athlete I know that one can perform well only till a certain stage. In last time's Olympics Anju could have won a medal but she was unlucky.

Do you think that the new achievers like Abhinav or Vijendar can inspire more people to turn into either shooting or boxing?

New demands and popularity for those two sporting events can happen. But the problem here is the expense. To get trained in a sport like shooting is very expensive. The equipments and the technology needed for the practice of these sports cannot be afforded by common man.

It is heard that from next Olympics onwards Twenty20 cricket will also be included in the competitions. Do you think that the importance of other games would be lost because of this?

Not at all. Tennis is already a part of Olympics. World class players like Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal had played in the Olympics. But Tennis received the same kind of attention received by every other sporting event. Olympics gives equal treatment to all the events.

What do you think about the future of athletics in India?

Their future is safe. Today a medal at a national game can fetch you Rs. 3 lakhs. A record can earn you Rs. 5 lakhs. So, sport has become a money spinner for everyone and with money comes power.

## Pragati concluded

Vidya Varghese

The 11th Annual B-School Meet 'Pragati-09' which saw active participation from students across the colleges of South-India concluded with a grand Valedictory ceremony on 14 February. Amol Mahamuni, the programme director of IBM India Software was the guest of honour. "Invention should be put to practical use. It is not just the invention that matters" said Amol Mahamuni. This was followed by prize distribution to the students who won in numerous competitions held at the college. The award to the 'The Best Manager' of Vini Vidi Vici was bagged by Shreyas of SDM IMD College, Mysore. "This B-Fest just got better than the last year. We will surely ask our juniors to come here too because it will get even better" said Tejasvi, a participant from SDM IMD College on behalf of his entire team. The programme came to an end with the vote of thanks delivered by Aravind Nair, President of Pragati. Two dance programs, one based on the epic of Ramayana and other with a mix up of a number of melodious music followed.

## Looking ahead for a bright future

Employees of Amrita University study part-time to better their careers

Nishanth M.V.

In his Department of Social Work here, Classroom E-104, Kanakaraj can be spotted sitting attentively in the first bench. At a glance, there is no difference between Kanakaraj and his classmates – they dress the same, attend the same classes and give the same assignments. But the difference lies in the way they spend their free time. While his classmates hang out at the canteen or walk around the campus, Kanakaraj works as an attendant in the same department where he studies.

Kanakaraj's life experiences can be related to one of those heart wrenching movies we see from time to time. Having lost his father Kanakaraj tutoring the children in his early childhood,

he had to resort to herding cattle and goats and also did coolie jobs to etch out an income for his family. He still remembers the look of guilt and worry on his mothers face when he used to return from

work while all his friends were able to continue with their studies. He worked as a sweeper in companies like ITC Paper Mills and Trigger Jeans. At that time one of his friends got him a job as suppli-



Kanakaraj tutoring the children in his early childhood,

er in one of the canteens of the Amrita University.

"I approached the management here and expressed my desire to study further. The authorities were very encouraging and I did my

BA in Psychology from Coimbatore Arts College", said Kanakaraj. He had to juggle between his work and studies, but he managed to secure 75% for his undergraduate and joined the



Velvalingam at the reception

MSW department here. "I used to be in college from 8 in the morning to 2.30 in the afternoon, and immediately rush back to work in the canteen from 5.30 pm to 11 in the night. Now that I study in the

campus, I also take tuitions for school children in Ettimadai village till 10 pm", he adds.

Around the same time, if one enters the main building of Ettimadai campus, one can spot

25-year old Velvalingam at the reception busy handling calls. His shift at the reception desk ends at 6.30 every morning, when he leaves for Coimbatore to attend classes at Bharatiar University, Coimbatore. With such a busy schedule he sleeps less than 25 hrs a week. He returns to campus by 8.30 pm, when he has to again work a full night shift at the reception. When anyone in his place would have given up long ago, Velvalingam seems to enjoy what he does. "It gives me great satisfaction to be able to work along

side with my studies. My parents are farmers and i don't want to burden them in any way. So I work in order to complete my education", says the student of Social Work.