

IIT-Gn places book amid circuits

By presenting its students with books for leisure reading, institute has inspired many of them to look beyond curriculum

By **Dhwani Pathak Dave**

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This year, 120 incoming students will be given *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. The books are selected purely on the basis of their simplicity and approach to the subject

Nishant Rao had not read a book apart from physics, chemistry and biology texts until last year when he joined IIT-Gandhinagar. Along with the offer letter came a pleasant surprise — Khushwant Singh's *Train To Pakistan*. Thanks to the institute's initiative, today Nishant is among the 114 students who have got back to reading for leisure.

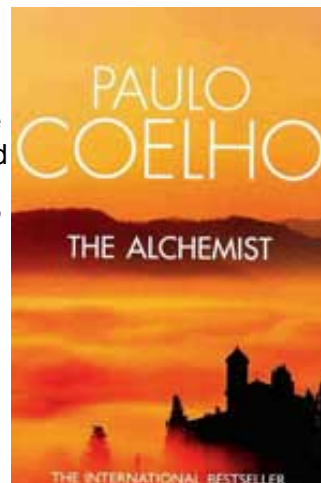
Sending a good book to read is a part of the IIT-Gn's programme. The idea is to bring the students back to the reading habit, says Associate Dean (academics) Amit Prashant.

While last year it was *A Train to Pakistan*, this year the 120 incoming students will be given *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. Says Prof Prashant, "This idea came to us during brainstorming sessions on how we can enable the students who come to the institute. We have noticed that there is a change in students who read books beyond the curriculum compared to the earlier batches."

The books are selected purely on the basis of their simplicity and approach to the subject. Says Prashant, "The books that we pick are the ones that are easy to read and fun. It does not necessarily have a message; it is an add-on."

To ensure that every student reads the book, they are asked a few questions from the book during the foundation programme, he says.

Nishant, who is pursuing mechanical engineering, has by now read many other books, including Kavery Nambisan's *The Story That Must Not Be Told*. Manasa Jangala, a student of chemical engineering, has also gone back to reading. A fan of



history books, she says, "After class 9, the interest in reading goes down as we are immersed in school texts. When the institute sent me this book, I started reading books once again."

She says, "It is a good break between books of technology and science. The way of looking at things changes entirely when you read about such inspiring people. Autobiographies and history have so much to tell us."


For electrical engineering student Shashank Jain, this is a way to boost his self-confidence. Says Shashank, "Khushwant Singh's book initiated my interest in reading. Earlier, I was not such an ardent reader. Once IIT-Gn sent me the book, I started to look at reading in a different manner."

He adds, "It not only brings to you the social issues surrounding you but also boosts your confidence. It can help one think what to do in a certain situation." Besides, it is a good way of passing time, he says with a smile.

Not only these books, students who excel in studies are also given some more books. They are under the 'Dean's list for Academic Excellence'.

Says Prof Prashant, "This year we will be giving 25 top students Unheard Voices. Last year, we had gifted them A Rainbow in the Night by French author Dominique Lapierre."

EXPERIENCING MAGIC OF WORDS

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