



ROUSHAN KUMAR JHA

Age: 22

Job: Works in the investment banking department in Verity Knowledge Solutions, an associate of Swiss bank UBS

Year of admission to IIT: 2005

Rank in JEE: **1,041**

Jha displays a cheeky sense of humour. When told that 'Mint' is profiling some Super 30 students who have graduated from IIT, he quips: "Nobody will believe you." People see Super 30 students, he adds with a laugh, "as a bunch of deprived, poor kids".

The son of a farmer, Jha says IITs continue to be the domain of the privileged. It was only because of Super 30 that "people like me, who did not have money at that time, had the chance to invade the institute".

Jha graduated from IIT-Delhi last year with a degree in chemical engineering, and now works at Hyderabad's **Verity Knowledge Solutions**, which does investment banking outsourcing for Swiss bank **UBS AG**.

He initially took up a job as a chemical engineer, but while declining to name his employer, he says he soon realized he had nothing to do there.

So he posted his resume on online job portals and landed the new job. "I wanted a company where I can stretch myself," he says.



PITAMBAR KUMAR

Age: 25

Job: Management trainee in the design department of Goa Shipyard

Year of admission to IIT: 2004

Rank in JEE: **2,505**

Kumar helps design ships in Goa for the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard. He graduated from IIT-Kharagpur last year with a dual degree in ocean engineering and naval architecture.

Kumar's father farms a 9-acre plot near Purnia, Bihar. He says in the days before his joining IIT, the financial situation at home was going from "bad to worse" due to the rising cost of agricultural inputs.

His parents, he says, could never afford the kind of education he eventually got, thanks to Super 30. Now, he pays for the education of two younger brothers and has helped put a sister through college.

"If you had talked to me before JEE, I was not very confident. Now I am very confident. JEE was a dream for me.. When I went there (to IIT), I did not care who was sitting next to me, even if he was the son of the prime minister," he says.

He still keeps in touch with Super 30's "Anand Sir", and says he met him on nearly all his vacations from IIT.



RITESH KUMAR SINGH

Age: 24

Job: Works with building design consultancy Dar Al-Handasah

Year of admission to IIT: 2005

Rank in JEE: **532**

Singh enjoys Pune's "pleasant weather". When he is not helping design a women's college to be built in Saudi Arabia, he goes out with friends on treks to places around the city.

Life for Singh is starkly different from how it was until 2005. Good at mathematics, he was himself giving tuitions by the time he got out of school to supplement his father's income from a medical shop and meet the needs of a large family.

Singh sat for JEE in 2004, but failed to make the cut. He then joined Super 30 and made it to the mechanical engineering programme of IIT-Delhi, missing the same programme in IIT-Bombay by a few ranks.

He has visited Super 30 in recent years, but feels that the community feeling that existed earlier among students has gone missing.

Students now have a tiffin arrangement, and the motto of "eat together, stay together" is gone. "It has changed a lot", he says.



JAINESH SINHA

Age: 22

Job: Works at sales and marketing consultancy ZS Associates

Year of admission to IIT: 2005

Rank in JEE: **557**

Every time the news of most or all Super 30 students making it through JEE hits the headlines, Sinha tells friends: "Guys, news flash! I am from Super 30."

Sinha admits he stumbled into IIT, a place he was told "will set him up for life". He could not afford private tuitions while preparing for JEE. But his father, who retired from the maintenance wing of the Indian Air Force, told him he would make it if he worked hard.

That was when he heard of Super 30, appeared for its entrance and got through. He found the atmosphere stimulating, with all the students helping each other. "It is not a hotel. The facilities are not the best. It is a 'gurukul' (ancient Indian schooling) system (but) you never felt the need for other things," he says.

Sinha graduated last year from IIT-Delhi with a degree in mechanical engineering. With few jobs in his field due to the economic slowdown, he began working on sales and marketing consultancy projects of pharmaceutical firms. Most of his clients are from the US.



SHASHI NARAYAN

Age: 23

Job: Pursuing a postgraduation degree with Erasmus Mundus (European Union-funded) scholarship. Currently at the University of Malta

Year of admission to IIT: 2005

Rank in JEE: **3,059**

"I am planning to take them to Paris next year," says Narayan, speaking of his family in Bihar. He will be heading to the University of Nancy in France next year for his second year of postgraduation, with a scholarship funded by the European Union.

Narayan is studying language and communication technology—or telling machines how human beings think with language—which firms such as **Google Inc.** find interesting. He completed B. Tech in computer science and engineering last year from IIT-Kharagpur.

Instead of jumping into the job market, he decided to pursue postgraduation. He says this was thanks to his internship with a French research institute while still at IIT, which built his interest in higher academic study.

The family he plans to take to Paris includes a younger sister, a homemaker mother and a father who works as a clerk at a hospital. "With my family background, (only) after getting into Super 30, I thought I could crack JEE," says Narayan.



ABHISHEK RAJ

Age: 26

Job: Seismic engineer working for Schlumberger-WesternGeco, currently working on oil exploration in Gulf of Mexico

Year of admission to IIT: 2003

Rank in JEE: **3,002**

Raj is proud to belong to the first batch of Super 30 students who made it to the IITs. But he has a little story to tell of how he made it to the Super 30 itself.

"I could not get proper rank for admission in the first objective-type test. So I requested Anand Sir to give me another chance," says Raj, in an email from the US, where he is currently working.

"His kindness (got me) not only into the first Super 30 batch, but also got (me) a very high score in the main test (JEE)," he adds.

Raj studied exploration geophysics at IIT-Kharagpur. His family is based in Bihar Sharif, where his father is a farmer who also helps out in his uncle's business.

In the US, Raj says he is beginning to enjoy the culture of saying "How are you doing" to everybody.

He travels on weekends, and says, "I love my work. Since I am doing exactly what I studied in IIT, I find it very fascinating and challenging."