

INDIA'S OXFORD

Actually, Oxford it may not be, but India's own education supermarket Karnataka's Manipal definitely is. BY VENKATESHA BABU



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEEPAK G. PAWAR

53 schools and colleges, 30,000 students: Every building you see is an educational institution

DR. RAMDAS PAI IS A STOCKY, SELF EFFACING and taciturn 66-year-old, who looks every inch what he is: A relatively well-heeled, middle-aged gentleman from western Karnataka. There's nothing to suggest that he is, at once, the de facto emperor of a small town, India's most successful (and, arguably, its richest) educationist, and the man behind a large educational empire. Pai is all that.

Manipal (74°46' E, 13°20' N) lies 400 kilometres north-west of Bangalore, a small town tucked in the Western Ghats and it would have probably remained

just another beautiful village overlooking the Arabian Sea had it not been for one family, the Pais. Dr. Tonse Madhav Anant Pai (father of Ramdas Pai) was a physician by qualification, but a banker at heart. He founded Syndicate Bank, which was later nationalised and is today among the 10 largest PSU banks in India. It is as the progenitor of a chain of educational institutions, however, that he is remembered.

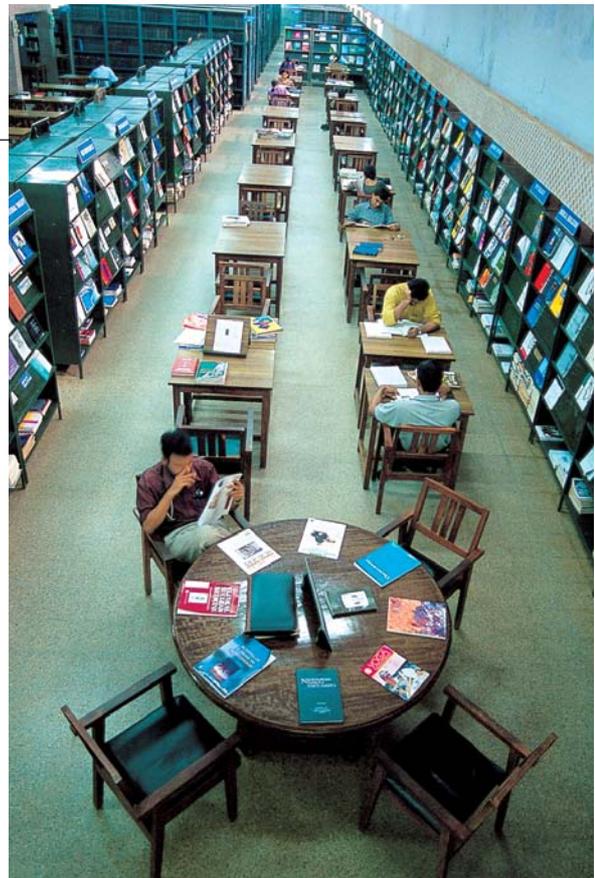
Rainy Manipal—it received some 280 cm of rain last year and has already got 200 cm this year—boasts some 53 schools and colleges, 30,000 students from 32 countries, and 3,000 instructors and administrators.

DOCTORS-TO-BE AMONG BOOKS

The Pais don't stint on investing in infrastructure as this Manipal Medical College Library amply proves

From usual suspects such as engineering, medicine, and management to nursing, communication, even journalism, there's a course for everyone at Manipal. And the Pais, whose corporate entity is called the Manipal Group own it all: Of the 1,000 acres of land that constitute the town of Manipal, they own 700 acres. All told, the group's revenues from its educational institutions could range from anything between Rs 600 crore and Rs 750 crore. Ramdas Pai himself is loath to put a number to this, and argues that the Manipal Group runs its educational institutions more as a "service". "Thanks to the medical colleges (there are five in all), Manipal has hospitals such as Kasturba Hospital, Shirdi Sai Baba Cancer Hospital and Dr. T.M.A. Pai Hospital which between them have over 7,000 beds and serve the deserv-ing from villages around the town."

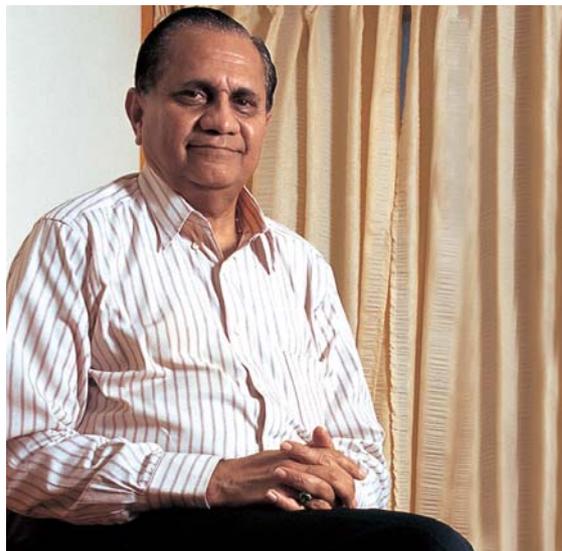
The Manipal Group's schools and colleges have always followed a unique self-financing model. Simply put, that means admission is on the basis of merit and ability to pay. Today, 25 per cent of the seats in all institutions run by the group is set apart for NRIs (non-resident Indians) or PIOs (people of Indian origin) like Vikram Rathore, a second-generation American and a student of medicine. "The cost of my studies have halved and I am picking up Indian cultural nuances which my family is keen on," he says. Then there are foreign students like Mohammed Bakr, a Malaysian pursuing a course in dentistry. Students who fall under any of these categories are charged a tuition fee that is



KARNATAKA'S SECOND COSMOPOLIS

As this scene outside International Centre for Health Sciences shows, Manipal is hip and happening





EDUCATION'S ENTREPRENEUR #1
Ramdas Pai of the Manipal Group is, arguably, India's most successful (and richest) educationist

typically four-times what Indian students pay. For instance, an NRI student of medicine shells out \$12,000 (Rs 5.65 lakh) a year. Pai hastens to add that this doesn't mean students can buy their way to a degree in Manipal. Popular perception has it that they can. "Last year, the cut-off for our medical colleges was 92 per cent," he gloats. "My own son, who scored 78 per cent had to go elsewhere to study."

The town's other residents (some 20,000 of them) aren't complaining. Thanks to the Manipal Group, the town has a cosmopolitan profile and a booming economy. For the past 20 years Ganapathi Bhat has run Shanta Hotel, a Manipal eatery famed for its *Bunn* (made out of mashed and deep fried bananas mixed with *atta*). "If not for the educational institutions," says Bhat, who does Rs 1.2 lakh of business every month, "Manipal would be nothing." "It is money from the students that drives the economy of this place." There are adventitious benefits as well. "We are in the rocky hinterland and even agriculture wouldn't have flourished here," says Vishweshwar Hegde, an autorickshaw driver. "Today, if there are modern means of transport, communication facilities, and banks in Manipal, it is because of the colleges." And the Manipal Group has, on the strength of its experience in India, established colleges in Malaysia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, "with cumulative investments of Rs 550 crore", according to Pai. That's some money, pal. **bt**

TREADMILL

Ripped Diet

ONE OF THE WAYS TO GET RIPPED IS TO add a generous portion of cardiovascular exercise to your regime. That was what *Treadmill* talked about last time. Sensible weight training combined with a nice dose of cardio equals lean, ripped body. Provided you follow a sensible diet. It's a no-brainer that everything about maintaining a good weight and lean muscles depends not only on how you expend your calories but also how much you take in. That's why diet is an important part of any exercise regime. Many people tend to overlook that and figure that since they're working out, what they eat hardly matters. They couldn't be more wrong.



KAJAT BARAN

First off, let's begin with a simple question. How many meals do you eat in a day? If your answer is three or less, everything's wrong with your diet. Break your meals into four or, better still, five meals a day. Eat smaller portions but spread your eating pattern across the day. That helps the body metabolise food more easily. A typical meal schedule could be breakfast at 8 a.m., followed by a small meal at 11 a.m., lunch at 2 p.m., an evening snack at 5.30 pm and dinner at 8 p.m. If you can squeeze in a fruit break between the evening snack and dinner, all the better.

Now for the toughie. What do you eat at all these meals? The idea is to keep a good balanced diet going through the day. A good mix of carbohydrates, proteins and, well, fat. Also, it's good to keep your meal pattern like an inverted pyramid. A big (not heavy!) breakfast, a big lunch and a small dinner, with tiny snacks in between. A friend at the gym calls those tiny in-betweens "boosters". He's 38, in good shape and works out four days a week. Here's what he says he eats. Breakfast is 2 slices of toasted wholewheat bread, 1 egg white omelette cooked in olive oil, a glass of low-fat milk. This is followed by an in-between of around 10 grams of fresh bean sprouts. For lunch, he has 2 *rotis* (or a cup of rice), *dal*, lots of green salad (sans dressing) and a cup of lightly cooked vegetables. The next in-between booster is a couple of wholewheat cookies and a glass of milk and some fruit. For dinner, my ripped (yeah, he's really ripped!) friend has a soup, two *rotis* and 100 grams of chicken.

Dull diet? Well, if you say so. But then if you really want to get ripped, you have to work for it. Oh, and lest you lose faith in all this, here's a secret that I didn't mention before. You can go on a binge once a week. Yes, bring on the pizzas and that case of beer. But remember, just once a week.

MUSCLES MANI