

# Shalom, start-up!

Vinod Vijayakumar, student, executive postgraduate programme in management 2015-16, IIM Bangalore, on a study trip to the start-up nation — Israel

A group of IIM Bangalore students recently visited Israel for a week-long study tour organised in collaboration with Tel Aviv University (TAU), as part of a new course created by the institute to facilitate technology collaboration between firms in India and Israel through academic channels.

The course, 'Developing technology partnership between entrepreneurial firms in India and Israel,' has been offered to students with exposure to the theoretical aspects of key business concepts and who are ready to take the next step to implement it.

Interactions with entrepreneurs in Israel gave the 28 postgraduate students insights into the gains and pains associated with being an entrepreneur and the kind of disruptive ideas that can be formed to change the world. The students were exposed to a variety of start-ups, right from companies working on cutting-edge technologies like big data analytics, augmented reality and printed

electronics to those solving real-life problems like water purification, 3D modelling and alternative energy harnessing. They had an opportunity to interact with start-ups at various stages of incubation. They visited some firms to better understand their daily operations. They also had an opportunity to present their business proposals before a panel of IIM-B and TAU professors, who shared observations and feedback on the same.

They were accompanied by professors Abhoy Ojha and Anshuman Tripathy from IIM-B. They were joined by Gadi Ariav, faculty member, Leon Recanati School of Business, TAU. Along with them, K Kuntar, professor, NS Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning, IIM-B, helped to ensure the students were ready to understand the key aspects of entrepreneurship and the scale of this initiative.

The study tour was launched with a special focus on understanding Israel's start-up ecosystem in Israel and finding

avenues to forge technology and commercial partnerships between entrepreneurial firms in the two countries. In line with the 'Make in India' initiative, the students had the opportunity to identify avenues wherein Indian firms could leverage Israel's advanced technology set-up to collaborate in hi-tech research and create products in India for the domestic and international markets.

In addition, the cultural journey was delightful. Visiting places such as Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Jerusalem, Masada, and the Dead Sea, to name a few, was a transformational experience. The students also met and discussed their ideas with Jaideep Sarkar, Indian ambassador to Israel, and the rest of the embassy team in Israel.

The initiative has laid the foundation of a fruitful and practical channel to bring India and Israel closer together.

The modern, commercial capital of Tel Aviv is vibrant with pockets of traditional markets, shopping streets and food outlets. The central square in Tel Aviv is abuzz with activity with several music performers and showmen entertaining the onlookers throughout the day. In sharp contrast is Jerusalem, the centre of religious activity where one can take a walk back into history. The historic Dead Sea is unique and should not be missed. The culinary experience is something to cherish with a range of options that would satisfy any palate. The falafels, shawarmas and baklavas, the freshly brewed 'mud coffee' and a host of other options definitely strive to satisfy the foodie in you!

The start-up nation does offer something for everyone.