

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Friday, December 13, 2002

## A semester in review

### International students reflect on experiences of the fall semester

By Lyndsey Sage  
THE BATTALION

Just as Texas A&M students travel abroad to study, students from foreign countries come to A&M in hopes of enhancing their own education. As another semester comes to a close, these international students contemplate the opportunities and experiences they have had while at A&M.

Mayur Kamat, an international student from India, can think of one word to describe his general impression of A&M: "awesome."

Kamat, who has been in the United States only four months, said this has been one of the best experiences of his 22 years.

"The traditions, the student bonding, the plethora of activities and the effort the University and student organizations take to make us feel at home away from home is commendable," said Kamat, who is pursuing his master's degree in management information systems. "There has never been a dull moment in these four magical months."

Kamat said he came to the United States to further his education because he did not feel satisfied with a bachelor's degree alone. His urge for "higher and more practical-oriented curriculum" brought him overseas.

Since his arrival at A&M, Kamat said he has had many interesting experiences.

"Roaming around the first month on campus carrying a 12x6 map was unusual, for starters," he said.

The United States is very different from his native country in terms of customs, traditions and lifestyle, Kamat said.

"But after all, it's humans who inhabit both (countries) and that's where they are alike," he said. "People from all parts of Texas remind me so much of Mumbai (Bombay), which houses one of the most cosmopolitan crowds in India."

Adam Adil, an international student from India who has been here five months, is studying for a master's degree in ocean engineering.

One of the major differences he observes between India and the United States are the greetings and the way students behave in the classroom setting.

"Here, the usual addressing line like 'Howdy,' 'How are you do'in?' or 'How's it goin'?' are totally different from the way the majority of Indians do. We, in our country, would share a smile and greet in the native language or pass a 'hi,'" Adil said. "Walking out of a classroom when the class is mid-way through or putting your leg above the chair when the professor is taking class (catches) many from (different countries) off-guard."

Although such acts may be common to American students, they would be considered poor classroom etiquette in India, Adil said.

Despite the differences in general classroom etiquette, Adil said one thing he sees that A&M has in common with his homeland is the overall campus mood. He said the "fun-filled atmosphere" could be one of the most common features of campuses across the world.

In reflecting on his time here, Adil said one of his most interesting experiences was attending Yell Practice.

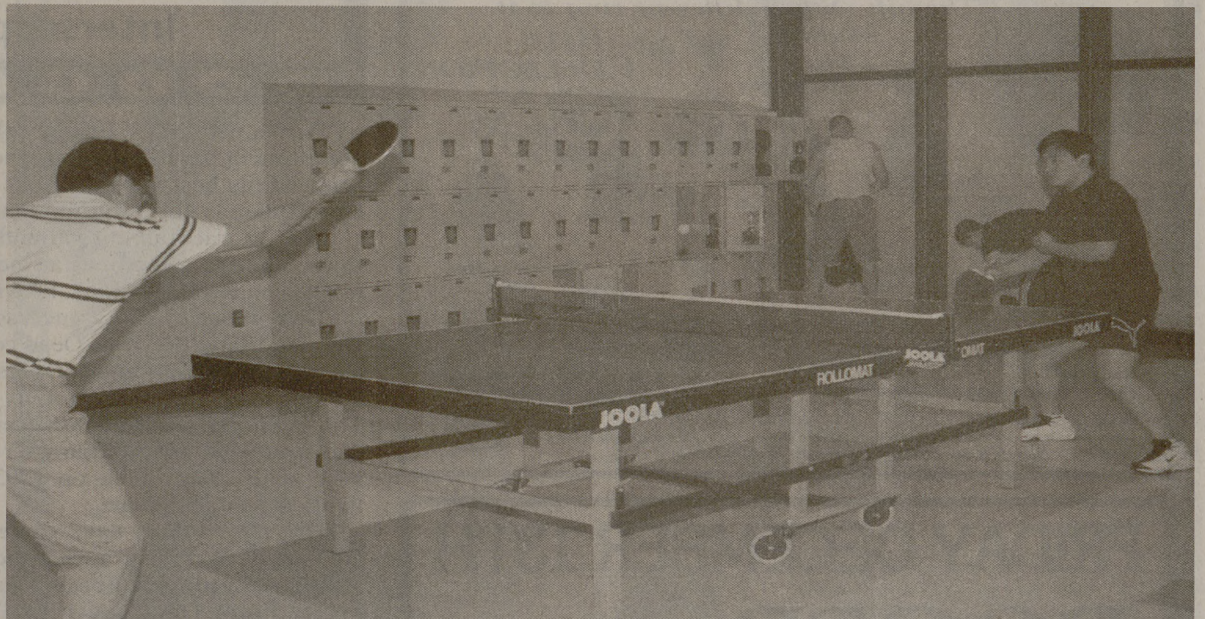
"You really feel that you are part of the Aggie tradition, and you really start to feel for the Aggie football team," he said. "Generally, A&M is a really fun place, where you have umpteen opportunities for fun, like Aggie Nights and Yell Practice, which are really new for (international students)."

Taraka Donti, an international student from India pursuing his Ph.D. in biochemistry, said he came to the United States in search of greater opportunities, both scientifically and socially, not available in India.

"Here, I have the freedom to study what I want. In India, if you enter a field once, you can't change it, you are stuck with it for life," he said.

One of the major differences Donti recognizes between the countries is the direction traffic flows.

"Even after three years here, sometimes I



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Yongqing Huang and Jing Chao Yang, international students from China and graduate chemical engineering students, take a break from studying to play ping pong at the Student Recreation Center on Thursday night.

look the wrong way before crossing a road," he said. "If I'm in a car, I don't have a problem, but while crossing a road on foot, this thing happens to me."

Atil Nanchahal, a graduate student in biomedical engineering from India, agrees that the Aggie traditions are one of the best aspects of A&M.

"Of what I know, no other college has such strong traditions as us Aggies," he said.

Nanchahal said he came here because the United States, as a developed nation, has some of the best educational facilities in the world. He said he was initially taken aback by the enormous size of the campus.

"It is one of the largest (college) campuses in the United States, so everything is big, from Kyle Field to the Rec Center to the dining halls

to the Student Computing Center to research funding," he said.

During his year and a half in the United States, Nanchahal said he has noticed many differences between the two countries, including transportation.

"All the motorbikes here are 'huge bikes'; we have small ones in our country," he said.

Rima Ajlouni, an international exchange student from Jordan, has studied at Texas A&M for the past four months. While Ajlouni may be thousands of miles from home, she said she is not home sick.

"What I really liked here was the way people treated me," said Ajlouni, who is earning her Ph.D. in architecture. "College Station is a very close and cozy community. It really feels like home."

**MSC CAMAC & MGC PRESENT**

**Aggie Grooves**

**Dance Teams from all over campus competing for their favorite charity.**  
We don't think you're ready for this jelly!!

**Performances Include:**

- Alpha Phi Alpha
- Aggie Wranglers
- Sigma Lambda Gamma
- Delta Sigma Theta
- Lambda Theta Phi
- Fade to Black
- Lambda theta Alpha
- Classic Ballet "A Fairy Serenade"
- Ballet Folklorico Celestial

**AND MANY MORE SURPRISES!!**

**Saturday Dec. 14 @ Rudder Theatre**  
Doors open @ 6:30  
Show starts @ 7:00

\$5 Admission/Tickets available at MSC Box Office  
Parking by Kyle Field/ Rec Center

**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO CHARITY!**

Performances Judged by: MSC president Barry Hammond- Student Body President  
Zach Coventry- Former Texas Aggie Yell Leader Boo Boo Davies

msc camac  
camac.tamu.edu

Questions or interested in performing? Contact Julian @ 845-1515