

**Interim report of the committee to investigate tragic incident that
happened on 12.02.2023 involving Darshan Solanki**

Name of the student involved in tragic incident:	Darshan Solanki
Roll Number:	22B0317
Department:	Chemical Engineering
Date of joining IIT Bombay:	20.10.2022 (as per ASC record)
Date of joining Hostel-16:	31.10.2022
Date of the incident:	12.02.2023
Time of the incident:	Around 1:05 p.m.
Place of the incident:	Hostel-16
Interim report submitted on:	02.03.2023

A committee was formed by the Director, IIT Bombay on February 13, 2023 to investigate the tragic incident that happened on February 12, 2023 involving Darshan Solanki.

Members of the committee:

1. Prof. Nand Kishore, Department of Chemistry, Convener
2. Prof. Sibiraj B. Pillai, Warden, Hostel 16,
3. Prof. Arghadeep Laskar, Associate Warden, Hostel 16,
4. Prof. Suvam S Kulkarni, Associate Dean of Academic Programmes
5. Prof. Bharat Adsul, Convener, SC-ST students cell
6. Mr. Lokesh Pawar, Overall coordinator, Student Mentor Program
7. Dr. Arvind Meshram, In-charge Hospital, Chief Medical Officer
8. Mr. Kartik Bachhav, General Secretary, Hostel Affairs
9. Prof. Pramod Kumar, Member, SC-ST students cell
10. Prof. Madhu N. Belur, Co-convener SC-ST students cell
11. Mr. Vishal Kumar, student of Department of Electrical Engineering, SC-ST students cell representative
12. Mr. Rajesh Babu B, student of Department of Civil Engineering, SC-ST students cell representative

The committee started the investigation from February 14, 2023 and by now has interacted/interviewed various persons for 15 days. An email was sent by the Director, IIT Bombay on February 17, 2023 requesting the campus community to provide any information that they believe might be relevant to the tragic incident involving Darshan Solanki (name henceforth mentioned as DS) by meeting any of the committee members, or emailing the convener, Prof. Nand Kishore, or the police. A reminder in this regard was also sent on February 24, 2023. A total of 79 persons (Table 1) were interviewed/interacted with to seek any information which they might have, related to the tragic incident.

Table 1. Details of persons whom the committee interviewed/interacted with

Persons interviewed/interacted with	Number
Wing-mates	11
Teaching Assistants (TAs)	7
Course Instructors (Teachers)	9
Mentors	2
Friends and other H-16 students including some girls from C-wing	11
Hall Manager of H-16	1
Mess Supervisor of H-16	1
Food Supervisor of H-16	1
Security/PHO/Mess staff	13
Individuals who deposed	9
Members of informal social groups	6
Family	3
Psychologist (Consultant - SWC)	1
Deans (SA and AP)	2
Doctor on duty	1
Delivery Boy	1
Total	79

The following possibilities were considered by the committee for investigation:

1. Academic
2. Personal relationships at IIT Bombay
3. Caste-Based Discrimination
4. Substance abuse
5. Accident/homicide

1. Academic

1.1 Information known to DS

In the first half of the semester, the grades awarded to him were FR (Fail-Repeat) in CH105, CD in DE109, PP in GC101 and DD in MA109. DD is the minimum passing grade. In PH117, DS did not appear in the end-semester examination. He was also absent in some of the quizzes, and did not submit several assignments.

1.2 Information obtained by the committee after the incident

Except in HS109, his marks in all other subjects were very poor. He has been awarded DD in CL101 and FF (Fail grade with re-exam option) in PH117, declared after February 12, 2023.

It appears from the marks obtained in various courses that his performance deteriorated specifically in the second half of the Autumn semester.

1.3 Committee's interaction/interview with friends and TAs of DS

Interaction with friends revealed that DS did not show much interest in studies and preferred to stay in his hostel room most of the time, including regular academic hours. It was also informed that DS used to skip classes regularly, sleep a lot and wanted to relax a bit for a few months. DS also used to mention that he was not adequately prepared for the exams. Some of the friends and his roommate mentioned that they used to encourage DS to pursue studies seriously as well as appear for exams. One of the friends also mentioned that DS had problems in understanding lectures. DS often expressed that he might quit the B. Tech. programme of IIT Bombay and join elsewhere in his hometown.

One of the TAs informed that DS showed interest in MA109 (a first half-semester course) during and after tutorial sessions. This TA also informed that DS had asked for Hindi help-sessions in this Mathematics course. Whereas the other course TAs who taught him in the second half of the semester mostly found him absent from the tutorials and informed that he did not submit several assignments.

It appears that DS was aware of his academic performance not going well. It was also mentioned that DS used to avoid discussion on academics and did not appear to show much concern about his academic performance.

The Chemical Engineering Department Faculty Advisor for 1st year B. Tech. students informed the committee that the names of 20 poorly performing students in CS101 from the same department were forwarded to him by the instructor. In response, the Faculty Advisor emailed all of them to come for a meeting. DS's name was also there in this list of students; however, he did not come for the meeting.

1.4 JEE-Advanced related details

Re-appearing for JEE-Advanced (in 2022) improved his rank (Table 2). It was mentioned to the committee by a senior friend that DS was keen to study in IIT Bombay.

Table 2. Information obtained from Chairperson-JEE (Advanced) 2023

Year	CRL	SC Rank	JoSAA Allocation
2021	24153	780	Did not participate
2022	16732	556	Chemical Engineering, B.Tech. IIT Bombay (allotted in the 1 st round, confirmed in 6 th round)

From the above observations and facts, it appears that with an improved JEE-Advanced rank, and admission to IIT Bombay, DS showed academic interest and enthusiasm in the first half of the semester. This academic inclination significantly deteriorated in the second half of the semester, as evident from his attendance and performance. It also appears that DS had difficulties in understanding lectures which might have affected him seriously and he started skipping the classes. As a result, his academic performance started dropping. In spite of the motivation and encouragement by his friends, including his roommate and wing-mates, to focus on studies and appear in the exams, DS appeared not to pay much attention, and gave indications of leaving the academic programme at IIT Bombay.

Therefore, the despair of deteriorating academic performance appears to be a very strong reason which might have affected DS very seriously.

2. Personal relationships at IIT Bombay

One of the TAs whom DS used to confide in, informed that DS could not bond with his wing-mates in the initial days; however later in mid-December, DS mentioned that he felt comfortable with them. Most of his friends and wing-mates informed that, although DS was amicable, he preferred to be alone, would not initiate conversations, and DS was perceived to be an introvert. It appears to the committee that DS initially might have felt aloof probably due to various possible causes including JEE-rank differences, computer familiarity and language barrier. The exact cause for his aloof nature is not known to the committee. The interaction amongst DS and his wing-mates appears to be friendly as he used to go out with them occasionally. On the evening of February 11, 2023, which was also the last date of semester-end examination, DS played chess and cricket with his friends. Furthermore, he was also a part of the group which planned to go out for shopping on February 12, 2023 (day of the tragic incident) and to Imagicaa: Theme Park on February 13, 2023 for which the tickets were already purchased by one of the wing-mates. The father informed that the tickets for himself and DS were already purchased to take DS home on February 14, 2023, for two weeks break before the start of next semester. DS was aware of this plan.

As per hostel records, DS did not have any visitors other than a few visits of family members.

There was no indication of any romantic relationships.

Therefore, even though DS was perceived to be an introvert, all the wing-mates including DS used to get along well with each other.

3. Caste-Based Discrimination

The committee interviewed/interacted with DS's friends, wing-mates, teachers, TAs, mentors (Student Mentorship Programme and SC-ST cell), staff of the hostel, seniors from SC-ST category, family members (father, sister and maternal uncle), informal student collectives and other individuals. Each one of them was specifically asked if he/she/they ever noticed or was/were informed about any discrimination, including caste-based discrimination faced by DS. They were also asked if DS ever approached them about any kind of problem that he was facing. The outcome of these interactions on caste-based discrimination is summarized below:

None of those interviewed/interacted person, including friends, wing-mates, teachers, TAs, mentors of DS and staff of the Hostel-16, mentioned about any kind of discrimination (including caste-based), either reported by DS himself or by any of his friends. Amongst those, three of the students informed that, even though they also belong to the SC-ST category, they never faced any kind of caste-based discrimination on the campus. However, one of the friends belonging to SC/ST category informed that DS was sensitive about his caste identity.

The only person who mentioned to the committee about caste-based discrimination faced by DS is his sister. During the interaction with family of DS, his sister said that DS used to mention about caste related issues faced by some students at IIT Bombay, and that he has also faced it himself. However, she also informed that DS used to say that he would adjust and manage. When asked for any specific incident mentioned by DS, she said that there was no particular incident to mention. She further mentioned about a few instances in which his queries related to computers and other subject matters were sometimes laughed at by some students. When specifically asked, his father and uncle said that DS did not mention to them about any type of discrimination faced by him.

Some individual students and student collectives such as Ambedkar Periyar Phule Study Circle (APPSC) and Ambedkarite Students Collective (ASC) deposed before the committee. Though they highlighted various issues related to caste-based discrimination on campus, none of them had ever met DS, or they directly knew if DS was facing any kind of problem individually. A senior SC-ST student, whose audio call recording was submitted to the committee by one of the student collectives, denied any specific instance of caste-based discrimination faced by DS during direct deposition to the committee.

DS neither contacted the SC-ST students cell nor the cell mentors about facing any kind of caste-based discrimination/difficulty. He also did not contact the Students Wellness Centre, Hospital of IIT Bombay or other institute functionaries in the context of any caste-based difficulty faced by him. Emails of DS on IIT Bombay webmail were also accessed by the committee and no discrimination related contents were found in his mail directories.

Therefore, other than the statement of DS's sister, there is no specific evidence of direct caste-based discrimination faced by DS during his stay at IIT Bombay.

4. Substance Abuse

Based on committee's interaction with various friends, no indication of any substance abuse was noted.

Hence the possibility of any substance abuse can be ruled out.

5. Accident/Homicide

Based on inputs received from the eye-witnesses, no one else was seen near DS at the time of the fall. One of the eye-witnesses was attending a phone-call from his father at 1:01pm, while standing near a window on the 8th floor (diagonal to the fall-point – refuge area 7th floor). Initially, DS was standing inside the boundary; the eye-witness noticed DS climbing and sitting on the open window platform at the outer edge of the refuge area on 7th floor of B-wing. These movements caused him to suspect DS's intention, which led the eye-witness to shout "Darshan, Darshan". However, DS did not seem to respond and then the tragic incident took place.

Therefore accident/homicide possibility can be ruled out.

6. The Day of the Tragic Incident

The committee interviewed all of his wing-mates (11 in number). The information obtained from them is summarized below:

There was a plan of wing-mates (including DS) to go out for shopping on February 12, 2023. From morning to about 12:30 pm, some of the wing-mates also visited the room of DS and found him relaxing on the bed with his laptop open. There were discussions in the rooms of individuals and in the corridor about the plan for the day. DS also participated in those discussions. The group decided to have lunch in the hostel and then proceed for shopping. It was mentioned that DS was seen dressed up to go to the market along with the wing-mates. Afterwards, the wing-mates did not specifically notice when DS left the wing. The wing-mates also felt that DS might have gone for lunch.

As confirmed by the family members, DS spoke to them twice: the first call was made by DS around 12:20 pm which lasted for about 6 minutes. This was followed by a brief call to DS from his father regarding the transfer of money. The committee found discrepancies in the statements from the father and maternal uncle of DS on the nature of phone calls: audio/video calls. The committee is not aware of whether there were any other calls made or received by DS after he spoke to his father. Upon the committee's request, the Police has been requested to provide audio/video call records, WhatsApp audio/video call records, forensic analysis of the cell-phone and laptop, and the post-mortem report of DS: these are still awaited.

As informed by the eye-witness, and information from the CCTV footage of Hostel-16, the tragic incident happened around 1:05 pm, following which his friends, security and mess-staff rushed towards the spot where DS fell. One of the security guards immediately called the ambulance. Meanwhile, effort was made to take DS to the hospital in the car of parents of one of the students who happened to be standing nearby. All the concerned authorities were alerted immediately as per IIT Bombay protocol, and the Quick Response Team promptly reached the spot. The ambulance then arrived and DS was shifted into the ambulance, and taken to IIT Bombay hospital. The doctor on duty at IIT Bombay hospital informed that DS did not respond to any stimulus, the peripheral pulse was not felt, the blood pressure was not recordable, pupils were dilated and fixed, there were blood-clots in both nostrils and ears, and also there was CLW (Cut and Lacerated Wound) in occipital region. Even after giving CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation), since there was no response, DS was declared brought dead to the hospital at 1:20 pm. No written note was found in the room of DS, at or near the incident spot.

7. Interim Conclusion

Based on the observations made above, the committee arrives at the following interim conclusion.

It appears from the marks obtained in various courses that the performance of DS deteriorated specifically in the second half of the Autumn semester. His deteriorating academic performance could have affected DS seriously.

Other than the statement of DS's sister, there is no specific evidence of direct caste-based discrimination faced by DS during his stay at IIT Bombay. The possibilities of substance abuse, accident or homicide can be ruled out.

The committee also noted that DS was planning to go out with his wing-mates for shopping and was dressed up in the afternoon of February 12, 2023. Some money was transferred to DS by his father. The committee has no information on what happened in the time span after the telephonic calls with the family and before the tragic incident. In the absence of call details, forensic analysis of the phone/laptop, and post-mortem report of DS, the committee at present cannot arrive at a final conclusion on what actually triggered DS to take this extreme unfortunate step.

After exploring various possible factors, it appears that the tragic incident was a case of suicide.

S. No.	Members	Signature
1	Prof. Sibiraj B. Pillai	
2	Prof. Arghadeep Laskar	
3	Prof. Suvarn Kulkarni	
4	Prof. Bharat Adsul	
5	Prof. Madhu N. Belur	
6	Mr. Lokesh Pawar	
7	Mr. Kartik Bachhav	
8	Prof. Pramod Kumar	
9	Mr. Rajesh Babu B	
10	Mr. Vishal Kumar	
11	Dr. Arvind Meshram	
12	Prof. Nand Kishore (Convener)	