

twilight

## CHIP on Assignment

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weeks8  
cities63  
PCs...1  
crazy team...

**K**eeping up to our own standards of excellence can be demanding—we are expected to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of our discerning readers. October is the peak buying season for most families in India, since Diwali and the period before it is considered an auspicious time for acquiring new possessions. Therefore, it was also the most appropriate month for giving our readers the biggest-ever comparison test of PCs in India. So that they can evaluate the results of this first-of-its-kind exercise by any computer magazine in the country and make their buying decision.

The entire operation demanded military execution, and Mohit Gogia, the co-ordinator of the Test Centre rose to the occasion. Fairness demanded that we test PCs across the country but it would have been unreasonable to expect every PC manufacturer in India to send us all their models at a short notice. So we resorted to the innovative idea of making two teams of one Test Centre engineer and one photographer each.

Usual posters of attractive girls on the walls of the Test Centre were replaced by a map of India. Mohit, who finds it very hard to concentrate on any one thing longer than two seconds, surprised us all by spending long hours browsing the Railway timetable to come up with the most effective itinerary. Tickets were arranged and adieus and instructions were exchanged—'Write the specs on the test format and fax them as soon as you finish testing every day'. Photographers compared notes on angles to shoot the PCs from in order to ensure consistency.

Deepak Dhingra, the newest recruit to the Test Centre was despatched on his first assignment. Accompanied with a photographer Pesi Dubash (hired specifically for this assignment), armed with the CDs containing the benchmarks, he took off on an ambitious itinerary covering Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Ban-

galore, Hyderabad, Pune. Photographer Ira Awasthi joined Deepak in Chennai for the second leg of the tour.

Our other new photographer Rahul Sharma teamed up with Marco to cover the second round of Delhi.

The CHIP staff in regional offices, Alok in Chennai, Rameshwar in Pune, and Vivek, Murli and Marjorie in Bangalore—all ensured that the PCs were ready and waiting for Deepak and the photographer to test at the appointed time.

Things went smooth, a little too smooth for the first-time ambitious project.

However, like all well-executed programmes this one too had little glitches.

Deepak had to bribe a cybercafe owner in Calcutta with a copy of CHIP in order to allow him to save his files on his PC. He also lost Ira at the Chennai Railway Station, called up the police and everyone else in Mumbai, only to realise two hours later that Rajan—our circulation executive there—had already escorted Ira to the hotel.

The teams barely had time to recover from their hectic travelling that Deepak was back in the office, coordinating with Marco and the desk. But what frustrated Deepak was not the two non-stop journeys of over 24 hours, the heat of Chennai or the fact that he almost missed boarding the train in

Hyderabad. He only got wild when after travelling 1,700 kilometers and spending two days in Delhi, he got just an hour to spend with his girlfriend, Vanita, who lives there.

Testing times, these.



Deepak at Mohan Computers in Hyderabad