

# naturejobs

**JOBS OF  
THE WEEK**

**W**hen I checked into my Bangalore hotel — an unexpectedly lavish establishment — I was politely shown to my room. A few minutes later, a gentleman in a crisp white evening jacket appeared at my door. “Watermelon juice?” he asked. He entered the room and placed it on the desk. “I’m your butler,” he said. “If you need me, just call.” He pointed to a red button on the wall labelled “Butler”. Then he handed me his card. Under his name, in neat script, it read “Butler.” I smiled, slightly taken aback. He bowed and grinned as he backed out the door, tray in one hand.

Like much of India, Bangalore is a place of contrasts. My hotel, which caters mostly to business travellers, is part of a service industry stemming from the proliferation of information-technology firms and call centres (and, more recently, biotech companies) in this once-sleepy city. Compared with much of India, Bangalore is wealthy, although the infrastructure doesn’t always show it — the population boom has all but overwhelmed the area’s traffic-choked roads. In a typically disorganized scenario, the new international airport may open its doors before the road linking it with the city has been completed.

As I sipped my watermelon juice, I considered the prospects for a foreign scientist deciding whether to come to Bangalore, as well as for a native weighing up whether to stay or go abroad. Although still not common, more foreigners have started to work and study at the region’s companies and institutions. Going the other way, Uptal Tatu, a biochemist at Bangalore’s highly selective Indian Institute of Science told me that representatives of organizations such as Germany’s Max Planck Society come to his institute to interview Indians who didn’t get accepted, luring some abroad. And Tatu says that none of his PhD students who went abroad for postdocs returned to India.

Still, some Indians are returning to Bangalore (see page 660). And in a few years, the city, building on its biotech growth and pleasant academic campuses, should be an even more appealing destination for foreign scientists — as long as it finishes that road from the airport.

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