

## 'The focus will be on attracting senior faculty'

AJIT RANGNEKAR, appointed as the dean of the Indian School of Business (ISB) on January 8 for a five-year term, has been with the B-school for the last seven years. He has a background spanning over 30 years in consulting and industry across Asia. Prior to this, he was deputy dean from March 2003 to January 2009. Rangnekar spoke to **B Krishna Mohan** on a host of issues including the difficult days after his predecessor M Rammohan Rao resigned in January last year, increasing faculty and promoting entrepreneurship. Edited excerpts:



### Q&A

**Ajit Rangnekar**  
Dean, ISB

**You will now steer ISB for five years...**

I am proud to be a part of the ISB growth over the years. It is an honour entrusted with responsibility of leading the school in the next phase of its growth.

**What was the high point at ISB as interim dean?**

The high point was when we realised the placement for class 2009 was as good as class 2007. It was a pleasant revelation that the downturn did not make any big impact on the careers. It only proved that brand ISB was strong enough to deal with market conditions.

**What were the challenges you faced in the last one year?**

Everyone was pessimistic about the happenings around. Overcoming this and keeping the morale of the stakeholders was a real big challenge. It was a time when everything was going wrong in the country. I must say it was not an easy job. Fortunately, the end result was good. This happened due to the support from various quarters.

**Achievements you would like to list during the last one year...**

One year is too short a time to speak about achievements. Nevertheless, it was during the last year that most of the spade work for the newly launched

post graduate programme (PGP) Max happened. It was a big task considering the slow-down. Also, we succeeded in ensuring good careers to the outgoing students. The transition to the new post (interim dean) happened smoothly.

**What is the roadmap for ISB over the next five years?**

We will increase the number of faculties gradually. Our aim is to have 80-100 resident faculty in the long term. In the short term, we would like to increase it to at least 60 from the present 38. The focus will be on attracting senior faculty. This will also increase the research capabilities, particularly with reference to emerging economies. Second is getting the Mohali campus ready in all respects and the third focus area will be nurturing the newly launched PG Max programme. More researchers will be recruited and systems to promote research will be put in place.

**Have incidents like the Satyam scam and Galleon case (where ISB director Anil Kumar was one of the accused) impacted brand ISB?**

The two incidents have nothing to do with ISB. Various stakeholders have accepted this and pledged their support to ISB. The number of placements (this paper reported that ISB

has already received a Rs 40 lakh offer so far from a consulting firm), which is a measure of brand value, only tells that there was no impact of both the incidents.

**What is ISB doing to promote entrepreneurship?**

The ISB last year launched entrepreneurship development initiative. It is now supporting 13 alumni members to blossom into entrepreneurs. Next year, the number of alumni to be supported will be increased to around 20. We have already got more than 100 applications seeking institutional support. The institute is also working with the Government of Andhra Pradesh to identify the impediments to the development of the SME sector. We are excited at the big employment potential in the state.

**You worked closely with former dean Rammohan Rao. What points or systems of his would you take forward in your new journey?**

It has been a lovely association with Rammohan Rao. He is genuine in his approach and very supportive. I am fond of him and will never hesitate to seek his help. He recruited quality faculty and has put in place several academic and administrative systems in place. They will go a long way in the growth of ISB.