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'BAIT. Beer. IT. Friendship': Toasting to beer and better days

By [Nirupama V](#), ET Bureau | Updated: Jan 25, 2017, 03:48 PM IST

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BENGALURU: The Beer drinkers Association of Information Technology sounds very ornate and official. But BAIT, started in 1993, was the opposite of that. One could see it in the way the old members gathered for a reunion on Tuesday after eighteen years.

They were launching a coffee table book - 'BAIT. Beer. IT. Friendship.' Starkly different from today's entrepreneurs, over ten members and their spouses came dressed like they were going to meet their extended family.

BAIT was born in July 1993, when, at the request of Pradeep Kar, founder of Microland, a small group of old-world techie tipplers gathered at The Pub World in Residency Road.

Drowning their anxieties and discussing ideas over a few pegs of beer, they soon became a community that looked out for each other. Their name was a spoof of MAIT (the Manufacturers Association of Information Technology). Among its members were tech pioneers Bikram Dasgupta, Pravin Gandhi, Ashok Soota, and Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani.

The reunion, at Hard Rock Cafe, saw a lot of grey hair, and many happy hugs. Every now and then, someone exclaimed how long it had been since they last met.

The 100-odd page book chronicles the history and life of BAIT, with trivia, personal anecdotes, newsletters and photographs from the group's outings - tug of wars, dances and drinking contests.

The idea for the book came about when Pradeep Kar found two box-files full of keepsakes from the BAIT days in his office a couple of years ago. "I found every attendance sheet and every paper napkin in which we had recorded minutes of meetings," Kar said.

Toasting to the good old days, Kar, Gandhi and Dasgupta launched the book. They were already making plans for the next meeting.

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IT pioneers and founders of Beer Drinkers Association of Information Technology (BAIT) Bikram Dasgupta, Pravin Gandhi and Pradeep Kar share a light moment at their reunion after 18 years at the launch of the coffee table book, BAIT.

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