

Figure 2: Luis A. Maldonado at the bench. Genome sequencing still cannot tell you about the microscopic traits of a strain

produce novel bioactive compounds. Lecturing is an integrative part of this strategy in order to promote microbial systematics and its importance at all levels from bioprospecting and clinical perspectives. Luis concentrates on Actinobacteria from aquatic origin while Erika on the terrestrial counterpart(s). Their work is supported by a major collaborative agreement between their two academic institutions; the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN), respectively. This secures a constant flow of students from both institutions to tackle the unexpected-unforeseen but yet uncultivated actinobacterial diversity.



Figure 3: Erika T. Quintana taking notes during the first BISMIS meeting in Beijing, May 2011

Get Ready for BISMIS 2016

Kamlesh Jangid

Continuing on from the grand success of the first two BISMIS meetings, the third meeting of the society will be held from September 12-15, 2016, at the newly formed Microbial Culture Collection (MCC) in Pune, India. BISMIS-2016 will focus on the *changing face of microbial systematics and the use of genomics/envirogenomics data for description of novel taxa*. Although a session was dedicated to this theme in the recently concluded BISMIS-2014 meeting, the interesting discussion that followed the session and vast information generated from the merger of these two branches demands that the next meeting be focused on this aspect.

Plan for the Meeting

Venue for BISMIS-2016 will be MCC (located at Sai Trinity Complex, Pashan, Pune- 411021, India), whereas accommodation will be arranged in nearby hotels. Vehicles will be arranged by the host to pick-up and drop-off participants.

The Bergey's Award presentation and lecture by the recipient will mark the opening of BISMIS-2016. An opening mixer will follow this in the evening. The remaining three days of the meeting will begin with a sunrise talk by renowned systematists, followed by theme-based sessions that will include talks by the session chair and speakers along with poster presentations. The specifics of the sessions will be decided in due course depending on how the field is developing or influenced in the next two years by some newer methods. An Indian cultural program performed by local student artists is planned before the closing dinner on the last day of the meeting.

Travel Awards for Students

A total of four-student travel awards; two each for international (max \$1500 each) and national (max \$400 each) participants are planned. The awards will cover travel and accommodations, but not registration for these participants.

Industry Sponsors

HiMedia® and ThermoFischer Scientific®, India, have kindly agreed to sponsor the BISMIS meeting.

Ancillary Workshops during BISMIS-2016

BISMIS-2016 is strategically sandwiched between two other important events planned at that time. Proceeding BISMIS, a board meeting of the National Biodiversity Authority, India, which governs the exchange of biological samples between countries, will be held in Pune. Inputs from renowned microbial systematists, some of whom would be participating in both meetings, are likely to change obsolete laws to allow a more open exchange of cultures for taxonomic purposes by Indian researchers.

While BISMIS will offer a unique opportunity to exchange specialized expertise, a more general one-and-a-half-day workshop is planned immediately following BISMIS. This workshop will specifically target undergraduate and master students from nearby colleges and universities and will contain general talks on microbial systematics and ecology by some of the invited speakers to generate interest for the field among the younger generation. The participation for this workshop is limited to 350.

About Pune

Known as 'Oxford of the East', the city of Pune (formerly known as Poona) has a rich legacy in education. It is the seventh largest metropolis in India and the second largest in the state of Maharashtra (Fig. 1). Being the cultural capital of Maharashtra, the city has always had an intrinsic connection with history, theatre, music, arts and literature and been a centre of learning and research in all fields (Fig. 2). It is home to more than a hundred educational institutes and nine universities.

Pune has a rich microbiology history. The first laboratory of Microbiology, the original 'Imperial Bacteriological Laboratory', was established in December 1889 at the College of Science at Pune. Pune is also the birthplace of biotechnology / industrial microbiology in India with the establishment of the 'Penicillin Factory' at Pimpri, Pune, in 1952. It is probably due to the early exposure to science that Pune is home to some of India's important research institutes, including several military and armament research organisations. With so many centres of international repute and larger research involvement in microbial systematics, organizing BISMIS in Pune was an obvious choice.



Figure 1: Location of Pune on the map of India. Source: Google Images

About the hosts

MCC, which is affiliated with the National Centre for Cell Science, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India will host BISMIS-2016. Established in 2008, MCC now holds the largest collection of microbes in India and second largest in the world. It is amongst the topmost provider of services to the nation in the field of microbial systematics and is actively involved in research in the field of culture preservation, microbial ecology and systematics, bioinformatics and other allied branches of microbiology. It is registered with the World Federation of Culture Collections, is an International Depositary Authority under the Budapest treaty, and a Designated National Repository of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Along with MCC, the meeting will be co-hosted by the Pune unit of the Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI). Established in 1938, AMI is one of the oldest and reputed scientific organizations of the country. Since its inception, it has contributed significantly towards development of microbiology, particularly in areas of research, teaching and commerce. The Association publishes a quarterly journal, "Indian Journal of Microbiology" for the last 45 years and holds a National convention annually at one of the well-established centers of microbiology in the country.

A local organizing committee comprising Dr. Yogesh Shouche, Principal Investigator-MCC as the Chair, Dr. Kamlesh Jangid, Secretary-BISMis, as the Convener and four other MCC-faculties will be responsible for the management and organization of the meeting.

BISMis-2016 will be an excellent opportunity for researchers to empower themselves with the latest trends in the field of microbial systematics. In view of the significant contribution by Indian researchers to microbial systematics, this meeting will further motivate them to pursue research and contribute to the advancement of this field. Indeed as rightly said by Prof. Michael Goodfellow during the opening session of the 'Workshop on Actinomycetes' at the Institute of Microbial Technology, India, 1992:

"The Sun of Taxonomy is rising in the East"

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Figure 2: Aga Khan Palace that served as a prison for Mahatma Gandhi. Source: Google Images.

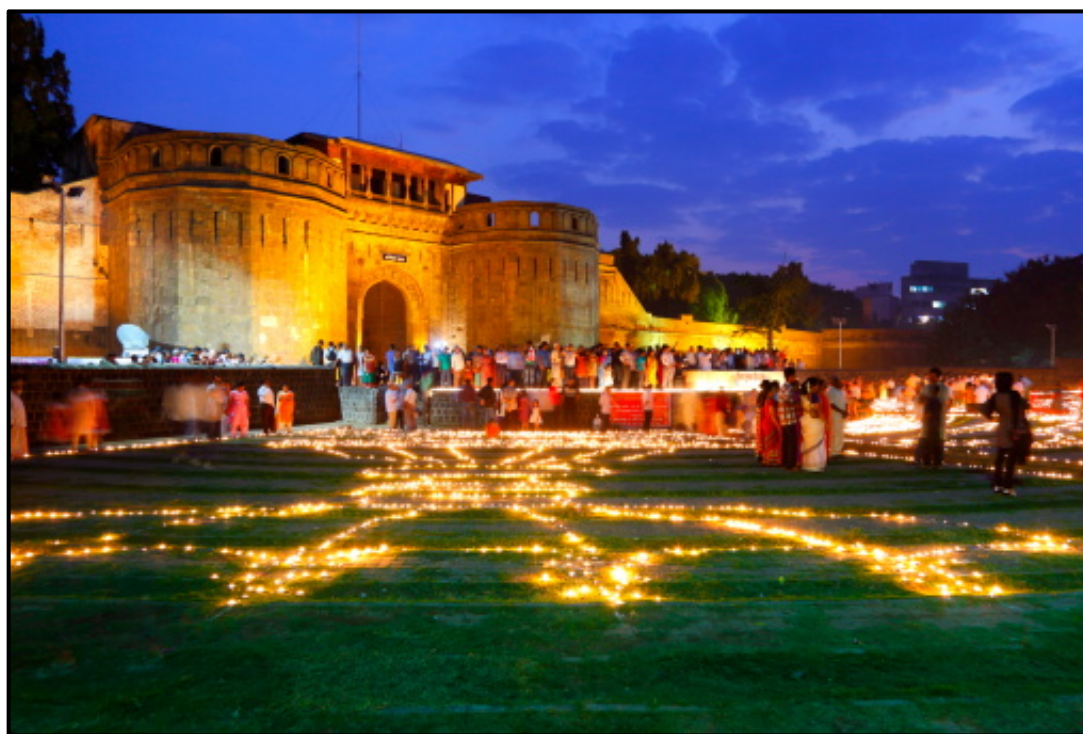


Figure 3: Entrance of Shaniwar Wada, the palace of the Peshwa rulers until 1818 Source: Google Images.