

# A Wizard of maths

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Sabir Shaik

There's always that one person in every group who's handed the bill at a restaurant to calculate each one's share. And if you think that person's a maths genius, you should meet Sabir Shaik.

Sabir is an 18-year-old who has just returned from the Boston University after being awarded the PROMYS fellowship from the Ramanujan Project. He is one of only four selected from across rural India. From Darsi in Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district, Sabir's history with maths has been quite stellar. "In class 7, my maths teacher Mr Gangadhar gave my classmates and me a problem, and I found the ratio of the sides of almost all triangles if the angles are integral multiples of three.

Later I came to know that I had actually calculated trigonometric values using pure geometry, and the ratio of sides of a Scalene Triangle without using any trigonometry formulas," he says. Sabir then went on to take part in, and win, maths Olympiads around India. But becoming a mathematician seemed to be a dream he couldn't pursue, as his parents wanted him to join one of the IITs instead. "I had the happiest life with mathematics," Sabir says, "But things changed a lot as I grew up as every parent and teacher here want their child to get into IIT."

But not giving up hope, he then heard about the Ramanujan Project — a nationwide search to find 'geniuses' — through his college. After being drafted, Sabir went on to spend six months at the Boston University, learning with students from around the world.

“The camp was collaborative, not competitive at all,” Sabir said of the program, adding that one of his professors, Glen Stevens, has become his inspiration, “He’s almost deaf, but the way he teaches in class, you just wouldn’t know it.” Currently studying at the Chennai Mathematical Institute, Sabir says that getting a PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Harvard University will definitely be on the cards.