

THE XAVIER'S PRESS

VOLUME VII, ISSUE 6 THE ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2015

POLLS APART

Alleged malpractices and instances of violence led to the banning of student elections in various universities and colleges across Maharashtra in 1994. The decision on campus elections lies with the state government, which intends on reinstating them. We take a look at both sides of this proposal that will impact students, teachers and educational institutions in more ways than one.



FOR

“We can produce many good politicians through fair elections in colleges,” says Vinod Tawde, Minister of Human Resource Development of Maharashtra. Students represent an important chunk of India’s population and since independence, this nation has upheld the prominent tradition of student politics through student unions.

The question arises then that if students can vote in assembly and parliament elections, why should they be deprived of the opportunity of voting for their own representatives? These elections introduce students to democratic systems at the university level which will make them wiser for the national election process, and may even encourage them to enter the political arena in the future. Citizens are often disinterested in the political processes of the country and student elections are a sure shot way of engaging the youth in contemporary politics.

Arguments to oppose the reintroduction of this regular feature of student organizations in most other universities country wide point to the inefficient and unfair management of

AGAINST

The newly appointed Maharashtra State Government is looking to reinstate student elections in all universities in the state after almost a three decade long absence owing to the murder of a student and widespread violence and vandalism. Twenty five years on, the question on student elections resurfaces. But has the scenario truly changed at all? Ostensibly not.

Delhi provides us with an adequately equivalent case study for Mumbai wherein the beliefs of the proponents of the proposal have been found to be deeply flawed. Marred as these elections are by mob brutality, racism against North Eastern students in particular and blatant disregard for campaign funding rules, one can see that the institution is increasingly extractive and not inclusive.

Invariably, politics intermingles with student elections, implicitly or explicitly, as it allows political parties a platform to gain political capital both in the short run (through youth votes) and the long run (by framing voting preference at a young age). For political parties, the small monetary investment in student politics allows for large returns, which may not

Participate in our exciting fictional writing contest! Refer to Page 7 for details.
The XPress would also like to wish all its readers a very Happy New Year!

(Cover Story continued on Page 3)



OF DOCTORS AND DEVELOPMENT

In a country with over a billion people, only 32% of them have access to urban healthcare, making it a matter of serious concern.

With a maternal mortality rate of 190 (one of the highest amongst the BRICS nations) and 6.49 physicians and 9.9 nurses per 1000 people, the statistics clearly indicate that we have some of the worst healthcare infrastructure in the developing world. With countries like South Africa and China spending 8% and 3% of their GDP on healthcare respectively, India tags far behind at a measly 1%. However, there hasn't been a worse blow than the recently announced budget cut of 20%.

Apart from rendering the plan for Universal Health Care (UHC) a distant dream, simply providing subsidized medicines in the most primitive government hospitals will be difficult. Our country had the third largest number of people



living with HIV in the world last year, and yet there is a 30 percent cut in the HIV/AIDS control budget. This will badly affect public health and hit implementation of many programmes. Not only will medical

and drug research disappear, the abysmal public health facilities, if not upgraded by budgetary support, will cause an increased demand for private providers, making access to affordable and efficient healthcare impossible for the poor.

Progress will be brought to a grinding halt without robust population and a lack of medical care. Perhaps we need a reality check on development priorities, if we consider air conditioned subways a better indicator of progress than infant mortality rate.

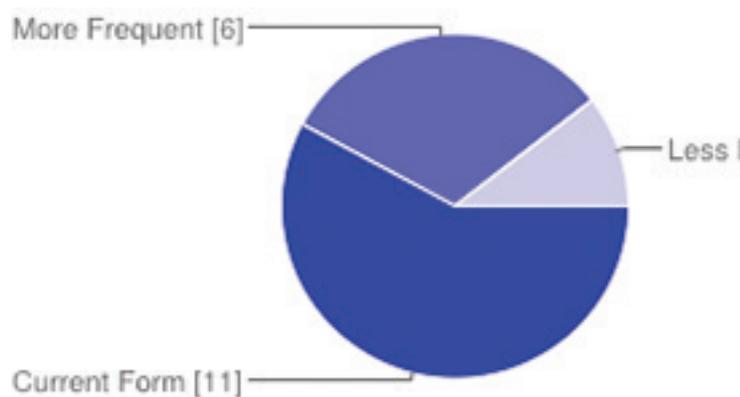
-Rashi Pant, TYBSc.

THE XPRESS POLL: PERCEPTIONS OF THE XPRESS

To help us delight you some more during the coming year, we conducted a short poll to evaluate how we were perceived, what our shortcomings were and how we could improve in our future issues. The survey yielded some interesting findings.

Nearly 58% of the populace liked our current monthly format, and disapproved of making it bi-monthly or fortnightly. Regarding our content, a majority of 42% wanted us to have more college related news in our sheets and less world related news. A paper

called The Xavier's Press, they felt, ought to live up to its name. An overwhelming majority of



74% of respondents urged us to conduct more contests in forthcoming issues (*your wish is our command, refer to Page 7*). Regarding the distribution, a significant majority felt that though this had improved from

previous years, copies were hard to come by. We urge our readers to get their copies from The XPress Newspaper Stand in the foyer and follow The Xavier's Press page on Facebook for updates regarding future issues.

Finally, 53% of readers told us they loved reading fictional articles, humorous pieces and interviews with college denizens in the paper over factual pieces and debates. We have duly noted your requirements and hope to continue to entertain and instruct in our forthcoming issues. Thank you for your responses!

-Raadhika Vishvesh and Stuti Trivedi, TYBA



the polls. But with the assumption that the execution of the proposal will be faulty, one cannot overlook the need for political education as an imperative component in ensuring the overall development of students. As far as violent occurrences are concerned, such cases can be curbed by vigilant supervision of the elections when they are underway. Candidates with a criminal background should also be strictly disallowed from contesting the student polls.

The Union government appointed a committee which recommended a code of conduct, restrictions on spending, election administration and the establishment of a grievance redressal body for complaints. Earlier, the polling process dragged on for months, but it is now likely to be completed in about a week's time, if allowed. With such positive steps in place to improve campus polls, the aim of these elections can be served adequately. Every change takes time to reap benefits and this proposal is a step in the right direction for a country that needs competent leaders to sustain progress.

-Jheel Gada, SYBA

be amoral in theory, but the utility attained out of this entire idea may be miscalculated.

Finally, it is important to recognize that an organic clustering of businesses has occurred in Maharashtra, -more specifically in Mumbai, 1/5th of the state's population- that may have eluded the more politically active New Delhi. This organic geographical specialization is an age old phenomenon and one that is unlikely to envisage any significant ambition among students to join the political class. This brings out the apparent wastage of resources and time in setting up a political leadership base for the business-oriented youth of Maharashtra.

Student elections are therefore an exercise in futility and the Maharashtra Government would do well to consider the proposal wisely and deliver an appropriate verdict.

-Ashwin Chandrasekhar, TYBA

A FEAST OF FESTS

It's a fiesta of college festivals this winter at Xavier's, some established, others fresh entries, each filled with enthusiastic volunteers and equally entertaining events. Here's a guide to some of 2015's best fests!

1)Janfest:#makeamusicalw is this January is this fest's hashtag. Along with their fantastic PR and an attractive blog, Janfest is doing its utmost to attract all music lovers for a magical 25th and

26th January in the 1st Quad.

2)Zeitgeist: A humble reminder (for the 1000th time), this is a media



conference, not a fest. Come listen to talks by the likes of Devdutt Pattanaik and attend workshops on Musical Media

and more. Mark 1st and 2nd February on your calendars!

3)Paradigm: Wizarding Symposium? Check. Attractive Speaker line up? Check. A thrilling detective event named Optimus Crime? Check. Paradigm took the college by storm on the 16th and 17th January. Well done!

Besides bonding opportunities and a chance to get ECC hours, fests impart valuable life skills. Take your pick from the wide variety at your disposal!

-Adityesh Mitra, SYBSc.



IN CONVERSATION WITH FATHER FRAZER

This academic year, The XPress brings to you a futuristic view of what to anticipate in the coming years of this glorious institution. An interview with our very own Father Frazer brought to light the changes, improvements and basic outline of plans for St Xavier's in the years to come.

We are all aware of the new Bachelor in Vocational Studies and diploma in Counselling Psychology courses, which have been introduced recently at Xavier's. Apart from these, Father states that there are no further plans for additional courses at the moment. Similarly, there aren't any physical expansionary plans currently underway.

In recent years, this college has also witnessed an immense rise in the inception of a variety of societies like the Theatre Society, Book Club, and Debate Society. When questioned whether these would be integrated in the Malhar setup, Father argued that Malhar, having its own student organisation, would not be the apt platform for the integration. The societies are for the purpose of encouraging

a 'performing arts' culture in the students for all-round personality development. They fall under the purview of the ECC, where they shall remain.

Many of us are not aware of the extent of the contribution offered by the college alumni. Father Frazer explained how they have been integral in giving us



over Rs. 10 crore in funding, and described how the Alumni Club works on bringing improvements in the curriculum. They were also instrumental in the adoption of the autonomous system by being major supporters of the concept in the ideation phase. Father also mentioned that an 'Alumni Connect' program had been initiated, wherein students would be able to interact with alumni

to gauge an understanding of the 'afterlife'. However, the plans have not been taken forward after the initial stages.

In the course of the interview, Father was also asked whether allowing transfer of credits for students going on exchange programs would be allowed. We were told that the University has granted permission for the same, and now it is only a matter of execution. The Board of Studies for each department has to be consulted to set the ball rolling on this.

In recent news, under the direction of HRD minister, Smriti Irani, the University Grants Commission has asked all universities to include semester courses and a 10 point grading system from the following academic session. Father Frazer said that Xavier's is not exempted from this and will have to move to the compulsory grade system as mandated.

Change is the only constant and St. Xavier's College is no exception, as it is persistently reinventing itself to keep up with the changing times.

-Stuti Trivedi and Ashwin Chandrasekhar, TYBA

GLOBAL CRISIS SIMULATION

This February, we'll be witness to the most exciting and innovative event the college has ever hosted. In partnership with the University of British Columbia, Xavier's is proud to inaugurate the Global Crisis Simulation Conference of 2015. Organized by the students

of both institutions, GCS is an interdisciplinary convention, whose delegates shall rally to create solutions for current issues. The conference's unique focus is a tri-sector approach that operates in a constantly changing crisis environment, to provide dynamic solutions sustainable in the long-

term. A refreshing change from the Model UN structure, GCS hopes to nurture individuals 'who can overcome disciplinary boundaries and create solutions across Business, Government and Non-Profit sectors'. Be there between February 13th and 15th!

-Rishi Thomas, TYBA



FOYER PHENOTYPES

You see them every day, lurking in their natural habitat. These creatures of habit frequent the foyer regularly and have some unique features.

1) **The JC:** Haunting the arches, they are observed eating the contents of a dabba while furiously completing journal work or preparing for their prelims. Spotted primarily between 1:00 pm and 1:50 pm, they also occasionally sport track pants and engage in strenuous physical exertion in the first quad.

Can be identified by: Overlarge backpacks, guitars, new clothes.

2) **The TY:** They lounge in the foyer at their ease, in the best chairs under the fans, sipping chai. Unperturbed by mundane things like lectures, they always reach their classrooms ten

minutes after the bell rings.

Can be identified by: Overlarge, ancient clothing, chappals, nostalgic looks thrown at the foyer's younger inhabitants.

3) **The Hostelite:** He struts around as if he owns the place, carrying no backpack. He sleeps till 7:59 am and still gets attendance for the 8:00 am lecture. Preying on the food of those who live at home, he is too cool to carry his own stationery.

Can be identified by: Pyjamas, unshaven beards, perpetual

hungry gleam in the eye.

4) **The BMM/BMS student:** The camera carrying, impeccably dressed creatures that you will find when you arrive late for an 8:00 am lecture (and an 8:50 am one), sipping their coffee and eating their French toast at leisure while the rest of college struggles through the morning classes.

Can be identified by: Cameras, files, formal clothes.

Which phenotype fits you best? Send in your thoughts to thexavierspress@gmail.com.

-Raadhika Vishvesh, TYBA

FROM TYs TO JCs, WITH LOVE

Nothing intimidates a young and impressionable JC more than a Third Year student. With four years of experience and vast knowledge about college life, we JCs often look up to them, but are too shy to say more than a few words in their presence.

Now, as the TYs start to move on to bigger and hopefully better things, and SYJC students take their place in the circle of life, here is some advice from the Class of 2015 to their Junior College counterparts:

- Don't just aim for marks in the exams, but learn and develop an understanding of things. Know your field and make sure you pick subjects that you love and wish to pursue, not simply scoring ones.
- Despite our grumbling about the vast syllabi and the frequent exams, they change you for the better and truly prepare you for the future.
- Don't be afraid to be different. Discover yourself and step out of your comfort zone. College is a safe space to truly experiment.
- Don't judge people by appearances and be open and receptive to new experiences.
- One bad paper does not a bad GPA make. CIAs are not your enemy. Laziness is.
- Make the most of your three years in college - you'll miss the place when it's over.

And perhaps the most valuable piece of advice, for senior college and for life, is this:

- Don't worry so much. Things will work out.

The very best of luck to the Junior College students who will be giving their Board exams come February, and to the soon-to-be-graduates, for whatever they plan to do in the future!

(Written by a JC with inputs from seniors from the Class of 2015.)

-Nikita Mujumdar, SYJC



A CAREER IN THE PURE SCIENCES

A pure science in India is considered a means to an end and not an end in itself, which prompted recent Fields Medal winner Manjul Bhargava to claim that ‘mathematics and science are tools for engineering in India.’

This truism has prompted enlightened folk into action and push for educational institutions that make the pure sciences an attractive career alternative. For example, Bangalore University’s unique interdisciplinary Bachelors in Science course aims to build scientists with impressive soft skills through classes in languages and social sciences along with the core coursework.

As prospects improve, we look at interesting alternative careers for students in the

pure sciences, to help quell some probing questions on their employability.

1) Sound Engineer – Use 3D models and laser measurement devices of the concert hall to figure out optimal slots for amplifiers and speakers.

2) Molecular Gastronomy - For both physicists and chemists, food science allows combining your understanding of the human senses with natural and artificial chemicals to produce Michelin star worthy stuff.

3) Material Scientist – Check for defects in fighter planes, bullet trains and roller coasters using ultrasound. Help make thrill –creating behavior safer.

4) Communicating Science – Use all your Malhar soft skills to become a publicist for large science organizations or find a

thrilling career with Nat Geo or Discovery channel.

5) Natural Capital Measurement – This astounding field combines modelling, ecology and economics and is measuring Natural Capital. With possible environmental apocalypse just around the corner (in Universe years), there is a dire need to quantify and communicate the importance of natural resources to consumers.

For more check out www.physics.org and www.aibs.org

-Ashwin Chandrasekhar, TYBA

OIL KILLS

On the 9th of December 2014, an oil spill occurred in the Sela river of the Sundarbans in Bangladesh (a UNESCO World Heritage site). An oil tanker, Southern Star VII, carrying 350,000 litres of furnace oil sank into the river after it was hit by a cargo vessel. By the 17th, the oil spread over 350 square kilometres, coming dangerously close to Indian reserves as well.

This isn’t the first time such an incident has occurred- and the consequences are far from manageable. An oil spill means an ecological catastrophe. Water birds leave the rivers

with their feathers coated in heavy oil- making it impossible for them to take off. Mangroves are adversely affected as their roots are submerged in oil, thus affecting their oxygen intake. But the species hit the hardest are those that make up the aquatic ecosystem of the river. Irrawaddy and Ganges river dolphins, otters, crocodiles and monitor lizards showed up dead along coastlines, in pools of black oil near the site of disaster.

Oil can be naturally dispersed by sun, wind and water; however when the oil is prevalent in larger quantities,

artificial dispersals need to be added. Apart from this, some microorganisms are used closer to coastal areas to digest and degrade the oil. Sadly, these methods aren’t reliable and often, are nowhere near enough.

Apart from affecting the entire ecosystem- from plankton to dolphins- casualties and two fatalities from the oil tanker, too, were discovered. Greater safety measures need to be employed across the world during oil extraction, for the damage once done, cannot be reversed.

-Ishika Ramakrishna, SYBSc.

A LITERARY EXTRAVAGANZA



Jaipur Lit Fest, from the 21st and 25th of January, is back with Nobel laureates and Man Booker Prize winners all on one platform to satiate your literature-starved palate! In its 9th edition, the Lit fest has grown to become one of the biggest of its kind in Asia, despite carrying the unique identity of being a think tank, with an inclusive ideation process through live music sessions and interactive workshops. Novelist Hakan Nesser, movie critic Anupama Chopra, BBC World

Music Award Winners Transglobal Underground and sufi musician Saieen Zahoor are just some of the big names who will make an appearance this year. The festival has been criticised for its elitism and irrelevance amid the socio-economic squalor of India, relying heavily on the 'celeb' factor to enhance the grandeur of the event. Will they turn the tide this time around with a truly inclusive festival? One has to wait and watch.

-Stuti Trivedi, TYBA

XPRESS RECOMMENDS: NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE

With the New Year comes happy partying and hectic resolution-making. Now even if we assume for a second that the latter isn't an entirely silly idea, there are some resolutions that we should just never make.

Weight loss: It may seem like the right time, but it is about to be spring. All you really want to do is curl up with a warm beverage and some pakodas. Vada Pav will finish a close second. Hey! Did someone order pizza?

Studying: HA! Sure. It's almost the end of the year, your GPA is past salvaging.

Books: Far be it from this writer to discourage reading, but don't force yourself to pick up a novel just because it won an award, or because your literature loving friend has been raving about it.

New Experiences: Remember that you're a college student on a budget, with CIAs looming. (Because CIAs – unlike winter – are always coming your way.)

Goal-setting isn't a bad thing. Just don't add the pressure of a huge change. Instead of resolving to study more, how about we all focus on finishing that first CIA II assignment?

-Sroojana Iyer, SYBMS

The XPress Team

Editor-in-Chief

Raadhika Vishvesh, TYBA

Editors

Adityesh Mitra, SYBSc.
Stuti Trivedi, TYBA
Ashwin Chandrasekhar, TYBA
Rashi Pant, TYBSc.

Writers

Sroojana Iyer, SYBMM
Jheel Gada, SYBA
Nikita Mujumdar, SYJC
Ishika Ramakrishna, TYBSc.
Rishi Thomas, TYBA

Photographers

Gauri Nair, TYBA
Aishwarya Nair, TYBSc.IT

TEDxStXaviersMumbai has opened attendee registrations. Registration open to all. The event will be held on 8th February in college. Register at www.tedxstxaviersmumbai.com.

THE XPRESS FICTIONAL WRITING CONTEST

The XPress brings to you its final contest of the year! Write a fictional account of "A Day in the Life of the College Gargoyle" in about 250-300 words. It can be dramatic, humorous, realistic...anything you choose! Send in your entries to thexaverspress@gmail.com by 12th February 2015. The best entry will be published in our final issue and will win an exciting prize!



Canteen inflation
hitting your
pockets?

Don't worry,
we're here to save
your money!

COUPONDUNIA

Bachat ka Boss

Get Free Coupons & Deals
1800+ Online Brands | 3000+ Restaurants
@
www.coupondunia.in

Coupon  Dunia

India's #1 Coupon Website

What began as a small company in 2011 has now expanded to 5 major cities and boasts of more than a 100 employees. But with half the workforce in their early twenties, Mumbai-based CouponDunia retains the heart and soul of a start-up.

And guess what? We're hiring! To apply for open positions, log onto careers.coupondunia.in and also check out our company culture.

The CouponDunia Mobile App is now Available on:  | 