

# THE XAVIER'S PRESS

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## THE HIKE THAT ALMOST WASN'T



The recent proposal regarding the railway fare hike and the subsequent partial rollback due to widespread protests left the country teetering with shock, relief and apprehension. For the blissfully unaware, here's a quick recap: On the 20th of June, the new government announced a hike in the railway fares for both passengers (by 14.2%) and freight (by 6.5%). After much fury, protest and generic complaint, the government announced a partial rollback, revoking it for local trains and enforcing it for travel over a distance of 80 km. The XPress deconstructs the issue and examines the pros and cons of the proposal.

### FOR

Dealing with poor financial health, hapless infrastructure and falling freight and passenger traffic in the wake of the low cost airline revolution, the Indian Railways require a major facelift. Finally, we have a government who has the gumption to take on a country that has become accustomed to populist handouts.

The railway charges, on an average, 27 paise per passenger for every kilometre travelled, which makes it one of the cheapest transportation services. In comparison, China charges over 2.5 rupees on the same statistic, making the 14% hike seem measly. With one derailment occurring once every 5 days, the million dollar question is, is 14% too less?

Being an outstation student, I often travel home on one of our many low cost airlines and I have, at least on 3 occasions, aided moderate discussion between a stewardess and a rookie traveller, who is gob smacked by the price of a samosa. This example

### AGAINST

Liberal philosopher John Rawls said that in a society constructed from behind 'the veil of ignorance', where you don't know what kind of situation, looks or talents you're born with, you have to make the best of what you get. According to him (and me), the best we could do to set up a 'fair' society in spite of this all-pervasive veil, is to ensure that inequalities are structured to provide the most benefit to the least advantaged.

The Indian Railways has been functioning at a loss for decades now, and is definitely in need of salvaging. But their solution was to propose the doubling of the fare in a single increment, costing passengers 100% more. When rolled back, it still stands at Rs 190 monthly pass for (II class) priced at Rs 480, and from Rs 1,740 to Rs 2,120 more for the same journey in I class. For a transport medium popularized as that of the common man, it is essential that the hike occur in proportion to the rate of income increase. To claim that the economy



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We frequently encounter a multitude of questions and queries regarding our monthly publication. Like any other diligent institution, we have thus compiled a list of FAQs for your benefit. Write to us at [thexavierspress@gmail.com](mailto:thexavierspress@gmail.com) for any further clarifications.

**Q) What is The XPress?**

The XPress (both X and P in uppercase) is the official newsletter of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. It is different from the college magazine and from the alumni newsletter. A monthly publication, created by the students, currently in its sixth year of publication, it is presided over by an Editor in Chief and a four member Editorial Team, all of whom are selected by the ECC based on their applications, experience, interest and a rigorous set of interviews.

**Q) What is it about?**

Within its pages, you'll find interviews, college news, announcements, economic and political issues, reviews, fiction, contests and even the occasional comic strip. We try to bring you quality content every month, featuring an eclectic mix of the interesting, the inexplicable and the informative.

**Q) Where do I find it?**

You may do so in the newspaper rack in the foyer, beside the Juice Counter. We also prowl around, distributing stacks of papers every month. Notices are always up regarding the dates of publication on our Facebook page, The Xavier's Press. We also put up online copies at the end of every month on the page.

**Q) Is The XPress an Arts centric publication only for Arts students?**

No. The XPress is a college newsletter. We cover a multitude of issues every month and have writers from all branches of college. We also have an Editor from the Science stream. We try our hardest to feature all streams and students equitably. If you think your stream is not being adequately represented or we're missing out on something important, write to us and give us suggestions to improve on our content. We are, after all, only human, and can therefore only write about what we are aware of, not the unheard.

**Q) Isn't it expensive?**

No, it is not expensive. The XPress is absolutely free. No, we are not going to extort rupees from you to fund our future issues. We do that from our sponsors instead.

**Q) Does The XPress have any media standards or code of ethics like the Times of India?**

We have a large pool of writers and a strong editorial team that ensures a certain amount of quality in our issues. We also have to submit a final draft of our publication to our faculty and the Principal to ensure that we aren't hurting anybody's sensibilities too adversely. Our door is open to

criticism in every shape, size and form and you can either speak to one of the editors or contact us via email if you wish to reprimand us.

**Q) You guys must waste a lot of paper.**

Not as much as you'd think. You will often see us replenishing the XPress stand with those left in the foyer. We had a college-wide collection drive at the end of last year. We seriously discuss supply and demand, cut down on orders when we perceive wastage and look at multiple ways to expand our outreach.

**Q) Can I write for The XPress?**

We regret to say that applications have now closed. However, we do accept guest articles on occasion, provided they meet the required standards. Write to us at [thexavierspress@gmail.com](mailto:thexavierspress@gmail.com) if you have something to contribute.

**Q) Does writing for the XPress give me ECC hours?**

Unfortunately not. But we are a lovely bunch that enjoy writing and are open to contributions from every kind of writer, the polemical to the whimsical. Your reward is seeing your name in print and the satisfaction of being a part of the great cause of furthering student journalism. If it is hours you require, please apply to be a Malhar volunteer.

- Raadhika Vishvesh and Ashwin Chandrasekhar



(Continued)

points towards a new class of Indian consumers picking a low-cost airline over the Railways. And if stinky toilets and exasperating delays continue to dominate the image we have of the Railways, then it's all downhill for one of our oldest means of transportation.

The railway is a government owned enterprise precisely because it used to be the lifeline of the nation, but now, that phrase is likely to be questioned. Expenditure on intra-city travel is a large component of one's income and hence, a hike in fares would adversely affect the purse strings of every commuter. The government has rightly rolled back those fares, understanding the difference between daily commute with no substitutes and occasional commute with affordable options and in that sense, the railway hike has a deep sense of pragmatism embedded in it.

The government has rightly recognized that to compete, popular perceptions of delays and incompetence have to be erased and services that focus on efficiency, security and cleanliness have to be emphasized upon. Complaisance had kicked the teeth out of the Indian Railways and now it's time they got a new set of dentures.

- Ashwin Chandrasekhar

can only be saved by increasing pressure on those people who never reaped the benefits of its growth is questionable.

Trust in a system is earned, not bought. While it is inarguable that the infrastructure, hygiene and technology of the railways require betterment, there have been laughable efforts in the past to ameliorate them, giving us no reason to have faith this time. The fact that the monorail system too had technical glitches a mere five months after it was commissioned is testimony to the same.

The most popular argument for the fee hike is that the subsidy is the reason for poor quality. However, the Delhi Metro, which is heavily dependent on government subsidies (receiving nearly Rs 3,000 crore in 2003), has been cited as effective by the UN. Its gains aren't assessed only financially, because although its returns are only 2% financially, the overall economic return rate is 214%. Which even this non eco- student writer knows is a big deal.

While the subsidy of Rs 2900 crore definitely needs to be reduced, it would be highly unscientific to ignore the benefits of 6.1 million people being able to go out and earn a living every day, not to mention the injustice of depriving the person who has no other livelihood of that option.

-Rashi Pant

## WHAT STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY

Walk around the foyer during the start of a semester, and you'll overhear a hundred conversations about railway passes, concession forms, and the like. While some think that the hike of railway fares is no longer relevant ("Why should I care? It never happened anyway."), we've caught up with a few Xavierites who beg to differ.

According to analysts, India would have reduced its Rs 260 billion railway subsidy bill by about Rs 80 billion. But to students, the hike has been the epitome of irrationality. "Price hikes should be gradual and with transparent reason," critiques Ishika Ramakrishna from TYBSc. "If they thought that they could get away with hiking the prices by a margin that high, they were being unreasonable and delusional."

Other students, like Akansha Ganguly of TYBSc, discussed the trade-offs one inevitably has to face. "You can't have subsidized prices, world-class amenities and superb maintenance without compromising on one of them," she says reasonably. "The scale has to tip somewhere."

Many feel that a future attempt to heal the near-crippled railways must happen with much forethought. "It's okay as long as the government finds a middle ground between absolute rollback and steep hikes," summarizes Shubhi Rao, SYBA.

-Sroojana Iyer



## FROM THE SPORTS SECRETARY'S DESK



Without you ever noticing, St. Xavier's College, *your* college, has been at the forefront of every competitive sport offered at the district and University level. Apart from staple team sports such as football, handball, basketball, hockey, volleyball and individual sports such as swimming, athletics, judo, chess, carrom, badminton and table tennis, our college, believe it or not, has a well-established water polo team as well.

Xavier's also organizes inter-class tournaments which usually prove to be a fertile ground to unearth talent. In individual sports, specifically, the top 4 sportspersons, along with a few other promising performers, are picked from these intra-college tournaments to try-out for the college team and from then on, it's working your way up to the top. Certificates of achievement are also taken into consideration, especially in those cases wherein the said

sport is not available at the college gymkhana.

If you're keen to see your sporting potential actualize, keep a keen eye on the Gymkhana board and like and contact us on the "St. Xavier's College Gymkhana" Facebook page for online updates.

*-Stuti Agrawal*

Say hello to Chapter #1, a clever student social initiative by Shivika Bhasin and Ashrav Paul, which aims to expose those, with limited access and means, to a world of reading and learning. Chapter #1 began with a burning desire to help change the lives of a lot of people through some of our best friends - books. By building and restocking libraries in collaboration with partner organizations, Chapter #1 hopes to act as an intermediary to

## CHAPTER #1

fulfil its agenda of creating a culture of self learning. Their valiant attempt to promote readership among those excluded from access to libraries, one hopes, will create a group of people who understand the value of a good book in a world where book reading is being outsourced to contributors of Wikipedia and Sparknotes. This is truly a noteworthy initiative.

Chapter #1's book collection drive begins on 8th July 2014 and shall go on till the end of the month. Please bring any and all books, magazines, journals to the collection boxes kept in the library and the SSL Office. Your contribution will make a difference.

*-Malvika Patil*



## WELCOME, FYs

After waiting in sweaty queues for months, the moment you've dreamt of is finally here! The XPress welcomes you to St Xavier's College.

Though Xavier's is delightful, it requires some effort in order to survive in the midst of fests, tests and everything else. We've compiled a survival guide for your benefit.

**1) Get in shape:** The 56789934 staircases will leave you panting and wishing you hadn't put on that freshman fifteen over the summer.

We recommend some rigorous cardio to ensure you make it from LR 12 to 41 intact.

**2) Ditch the camera:** Nothing screams 'newbie' as loudly as the sight of you leaning against a pillar in the arches, waiting

for your friend to take your first Xavier's profile picture, to be uploaded with the caption "1st day of college #excited."

**3) Foyer Etiquette:** The seniors *will* hog the best seats under the fans. You *will* be



trodden on and shoved about and will usually end up in a huddled mass in the arches. A spot in the foyer is earned, not given. Secure yours through persistence. By the end of TY, you will succeed.

**4) Learn languages and make friends:** A friendly word in Gujarati at the Photocopy Centre will save you hours of waiting. Similarly, a smattering of Marathi helps to stay on good terms with the office staff.

**5) Get a library card:** Both libraries are well stocked havens of happiness. Ensure you can access academic books as well as fiction all year long by getting a card made.

**6) Make new friends:** Go beyond your classmates! Wish the watchmen every morning, you're going to forget your id card someday soon. Befriend Shiva, the chaatwala, for that extra spoon of dahi in your Delhi chaat. These are people you will miss when you graduate.

-Raadhika Vishvesh

## INTERNET PRIVACY

While we all (hopefully) know not to click on advertisements proclaiming us as winners of ten free iPads, the internet is filled with less obvious traps, not all of which can be safeguarded by using the private browsing tool. Your browsing history, searches, messages, location and even the Facebook profiles you search for are all tracked and stored. Snapchat was recently charged for violating its privacy claims when it was found that users weren't notified of screenshots, wherein images could be saved and locations transmitted. All of this data can be sold to other companies, accessed by government officials (under Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act), and even used by criminals to track your physical location.

But without a legal framework to prevent crime or even to persecute criminals, your best bet is to be on your guard. To safeguard your location, you can block your IP address by utilizing a service such as Tor, or Virtual Private Network. Ensure that when you use a credit card online, you are able to see the charges before you pay for them, giving you an opportunity to dispute (unlike in debit cards). Make sure it's an unbroken padlock on the address bar of your screen, and also that the web address has the letter 's' after http in the address bar, indicating that your information will be encrypted during transmission. Lastly, while browsing, be sure to change the settings to restrict cookies. Browse safely!

- Rashi Pant



## I-WRECKED

As the world discusses the recent developments of terrorism in Iraq, you may be wondering how it concerns you. Being among the world's top ten oil producers ensures that all of its crises are subject to the international involvement of importing countries.

Currently, the crisis revolves around the recent undertakings of a militant extremist group, The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). They've been aiming to form a separate state, and succeeded in doing so. The invaded portions of northern and western Iraq, along with Syria, were declared a separate state, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

has declared himself the new global leader of Islamic citizens.

Iraq has declared that the caliphate will prove to be a threat to all countries. The ISIS's taking over of northern Iraq, kidnapping Shia Turkmen, dynamiting Shia places of worship, and controlling the oil refinery of Iraq at Baji, has led to half a million civilians fleeing the country. Indian troops and nurses are marooned with no means of safe return. Taking over the oil refineries also implies a price hike which could occur in the oil sector, further proving disadvantageous to Indians and other countries worldwide.

The St Xavier's College Student Council recently organised an

enlightening panel discussion on the crisis, with Professor Aggie, Professor Kishu and Father Keith discussing the economic, political and religious aspects of the issue respectively. Says Father Keith, "War is a hard and vicious political and economic game in which the softer social factors such as culture and religion are often shrewdly misused." The religious conflict between the Sunnis, the Shias and the Kurds in this war torn region is evidence to this.

With the Iraqi crisis worsening, all that can be done is to hope that international intervention can save the day.

- Stuti Trivedi

## INTRODUCING THE ECC

The ECC is back this year with new activities, ideas and goals. As Cultural Secretary Siddhant Sarpate, puts it, "The ECC will serve as a platform for everyone, covering all areas of culture, and initiating workshops in all fields."

Its biggest challenge has hitherto been publicity, but the ECC is coming out with an Android application (the first of its kind for any college in Mumbai), where students be updated on ECC activities, but will also be able to check their registered and completed ECC hours over their three years of college.

Sooraj Bishnoi as WPA Coordinator enthusiastically describes his vision. He aims to focus on going back to the roots to understand the evolution of various world performing arts.

Sindhuja Bheesette as IPA Coordinator wants to promote cultural understanding by organizing educational conferences and seminars on a variety of topics connected with Indian performing arts.



"Fine Arts comprises of not only the creative arts, but also the visual arts of movie making and photography," says FA Coordinator Meeta Tarani. This department has already conducted a

comprehensive film workshop and has several others lined-up.

"Under LA, the Debate Society will continue functioning and the Theatre Society will be restructured to include both

English and Hindi theatre, as well as films, thus becoming the Theatre and Film Society," says LA Coordinator Kadambari Shah.

And with Shubha Srishti as Informals Coordinator, the ECC promises to amass and further the diverse talent pool that St. Xavier's has.

For any queries/suggestions, write to [eccxaviers@gmail.com](mailto:eccxaviers@gmail.com).

- Compiled by the ECC

## XPRESS RECOMMENDS: THE SEVEN BEST STUDENT APPS

Be it completing assignments on time or scurrying to an 8 am lecture, the student life is not easy. We've come up with a list of 7 useful apps to help you make the most of your day.

**1) Duolingo:** Thanks to the good people at Duolingo, learning a new language is fun, easy and above all else

– free. Choose from 5 different languages – French, Spanish, German, Italian, or Portuguese, and begin your multilingual journey with this neat app.

**2) Alarmy Sleep If U Can:** It's the alarm clock from hell. This app requires you to get off your bed (the horror) and take a picture of a designated place or thing in order to snooze or switch it off.

**3) AndroMoney:** Have you ever spent so much money on an after-



college lunch that you vowed to fast for a week after? Manage your finances and track your budget with this app that's more sorted than you are.

**4) Self Control:** This app blocks your own access to all sites that might distract you while you're studying for a stipulated period of time, even after you uninstall it. Harsh, but you know you need it. Goodbye to Facebook before CIAs.

**5) Mathway:** Your phone calculator can't do a lot more than solve simple math problems. When you have to deal with some serious calculations (think trigonometry, calculus, et al), Mathway will help you out.

**6) Studios:** This app is designed to set reminders, take notes and organize your college life to help you be the student your parents always wanted you to be.

**7) Simple Mind+:** Mind-mapping is a rising trend amongst students today who want to plan clearly and visually map their thoughts and ideas. Use this nifty app to pen down yours.

- Malvika Patil

Many thanks to Tarana Rachael Rao and Arunima Banerjee from the Malhar Marketing Team for their invaluable assistance.

### NOTICE FROM THE CIP OFFICE:

All students interested in taking part in international study programmes, kindly ensure you have a valid passport. If not, renew/create your passport as soon as possible. Watch this space for more details and contact [cip@xaviers.edu](mailto:cip@xaviers.edu) with any queries you might have.

### WRITE TO US

Applications for the post of writer have now closed. But if you have something to contribute, send it to us at [thexavierspress@gmail.com](mailto:thexavierspress@gmail.com) and we'll let you know if we can feature it.

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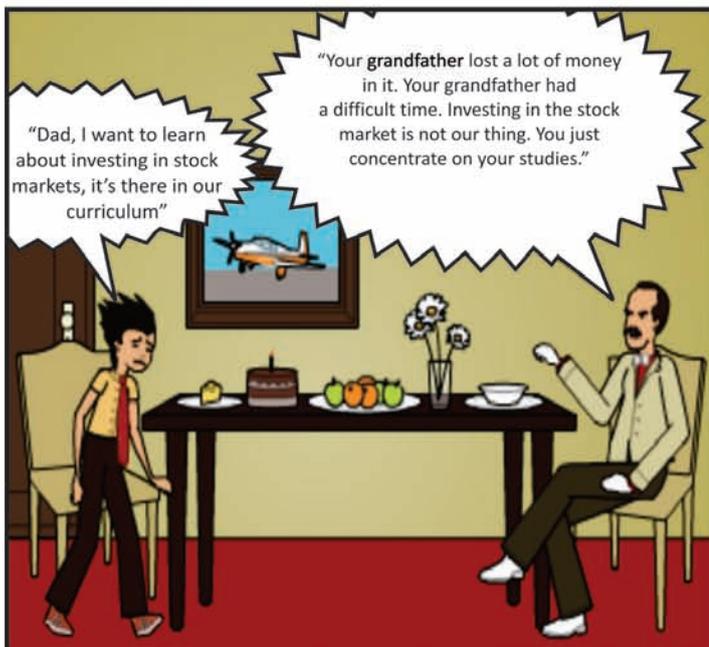
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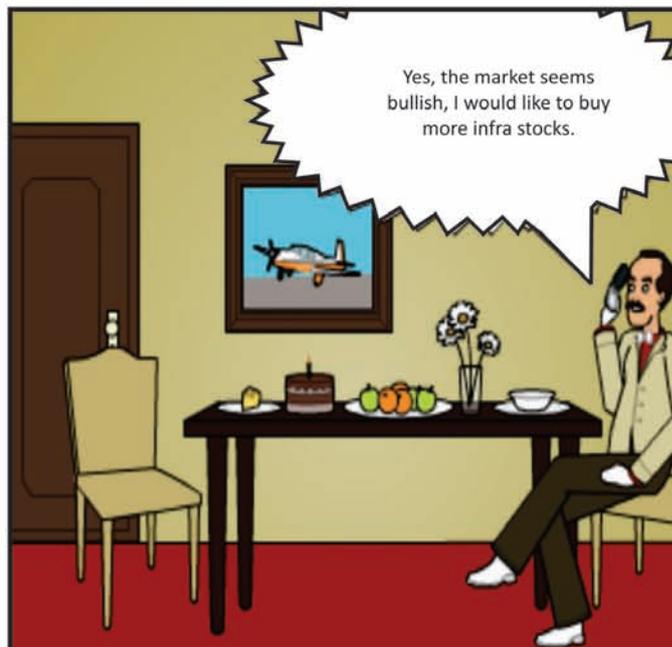
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Rohan's dad's advice to him on investing in the stock market.



After Rohan leaves, his dad on the phone with his broking agent.

## Understand investing or accept hypocritical advice

For a free one day workshop on how to invest in the stock market, register at [harsh.acharya@nsdl.co.in](mailto:harsh.acharya@nsdl.co.in) or call on 022 4994792



“Until I started investing in the capital market, I used to think I'm saving by not spending. Now I 'buy' to save. It really is the best use of my pocket money.”

-Roshni Sharma, TYBAF, KP B Hinduja College.

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