



# PRESSADISE LOST

ISSUE

0

APOGEE ENGLISH PRESS



# THE REBIRTH OF RELIGION

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The Dark Ages saw the Catholic Church exert influence not only over the religious, but also the social, economic, and political lives of people all across Europe. The Church held sway over what people considered to be “true” and as a result, was able to declare scientific breakthroughs as apostasy against Christian virtues. However, with the onset of the humanist movement in the 14th century, the invention of Gutenberg’s printing press, and the patronage of the powerful Medici family, there was a rebirth of classical art, literature, and scientific breakthroughs. This challenged the power of the Church and ultimately led to the Reformation Movement.

One perspective on the concept of religion is that it is a set of codified ethics and social practices that have been propagated and cemented by an institution. These codes are often ostensibly set in stone for the populace and their interpretation is considered to be the sole right of the clergy. They shape society by influencing marriage, the idea of an afterlife, social hierarchies, and even the administration of land. There have been numerous examples of the amalgamation of Church and State to create a nexus that could effectively control each and every aspect of an individual’s life, and in turn, increase each other’s power. The proponents of religious orders argued that the fear of God and the idea that certain rules were just meant to be followed prevented the world from descending into chaos. This was supported by the belief that faith in a divine power gave people the ability to hope against hope and made them believe that their lives have some meaning.

Cut to the present day. The moment we wake up, we reach for our phones to catch up with everything that has happened around the world. The wonders of modern technology have made our lives more convenient and have granted us access to a treasure trove of information. This has led to the birth of a new generation of gods (leaders of technology giants, prominent celebrities, and to some extent, the gadgets we use), a new set of social norms, and an increasing dependence on the virtual word for self-validation. The rapid growth of technology has hence given rise to a new sort of religious order that has encompassed all aspects of our lives.

Take for example the existence of an omnipresent and omniscient God who would monitor, evaluate, and pass judgement on our actions. In today’s world where most of our data is being stored on servers, monitored, and flagged, there is an increasing realisation that we are under the ever-watchful eye of a new age deity.

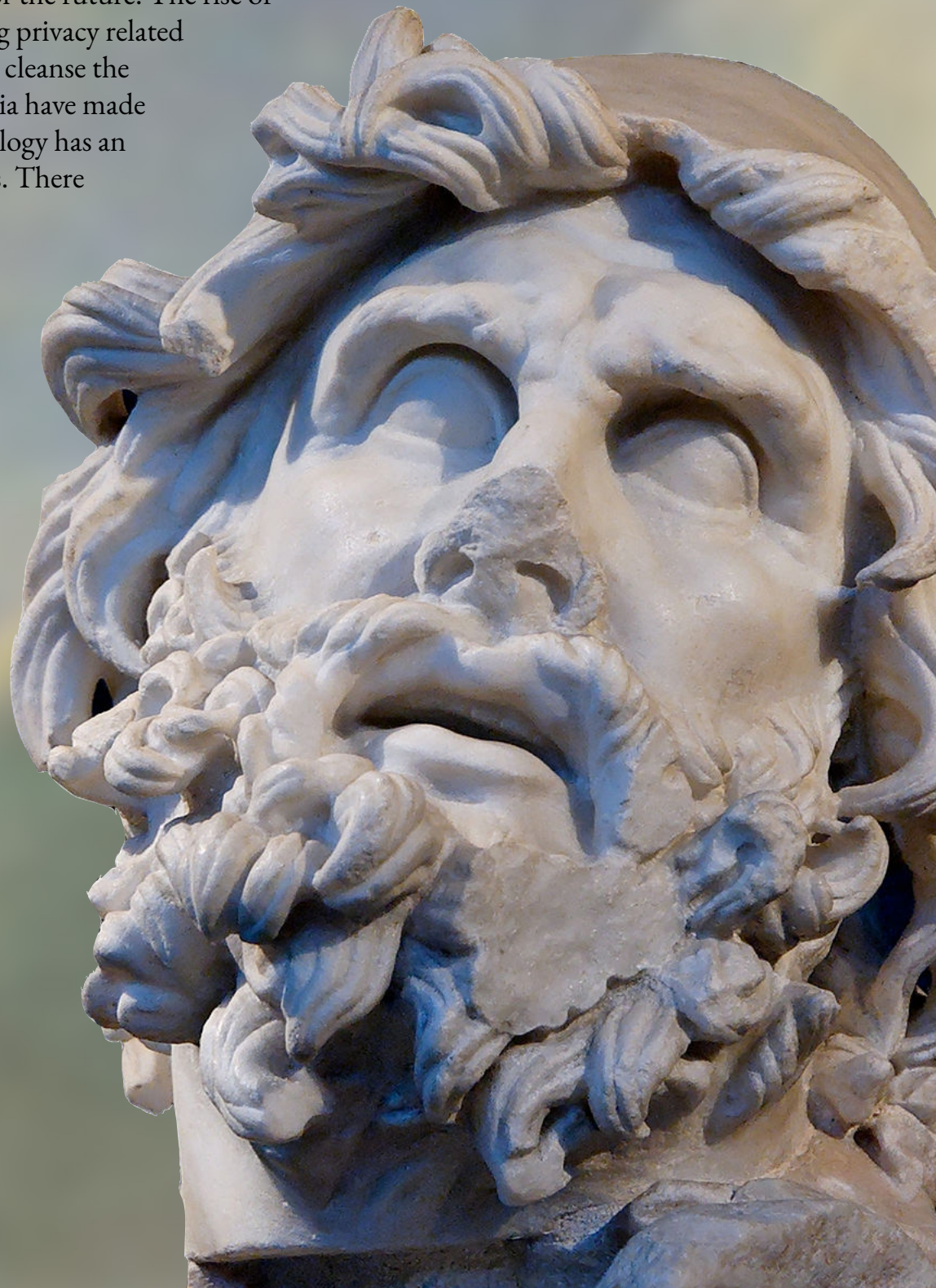




In the world of social media, people often tend to conform to certain set standards, be it of beauty, of an aesthetic, or even worldviews. It is clear that people have a desire to fit in—to be accepted as a member of a social circle—lest they be considered incompatible with the choices of their peers. This is akin to how there was a socially enforced adherence to certain guidelines that were set by the clergy in the Dark Ages.

The greatest similarity between the new religious order and the old is the ability to convince the common man that there are no pitfalls to an overarching dependence on their institutions. Just like the Roman Church convinced the common man that there was a divine will that had directed the clergy to spread their interpretation of what was holy, CEOs of tech giants—our new gods—have blinded us against the harmful effects of technology.

However, there is hope for the future. The rise of internet activism, growing privacy related awareness, and a desire to cleanse the toxic effects of social media have made people realise that technology has an unfair grip over their lives. There is an attempt to reduce our overdependence on technology and to ensure that we are aware of our rights while on the Internet. Whether this can lead to a modern day renaissance against the diktats of a new religion is yet to be seen.





# EDITORIAL

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Issue zero is finally upon us. We tried something new this year, and I grossly underestimated how exhausting it would be. But the fest is finally upon us, and I cannot help but feel hyped—even if it is the shortened, online version of the real deal. The effort that has been put into replicating our college in a virtual environment is truly commendable. A stroll through the FDs and Rotunda is bound to evoke nostalgia. It has been almost a year since we were sent home. We have come a long way since—I have a better relationship with my laptop than I do with most of my college friends. It can be overwhelming at times, when you realise you have gone almost a year without interacting with the people you had once considered to be your closest friends. Okay, this is getting too dark. I blame a former presidential candidate and his cursed drum machine. The point is, everything has changed since we got that two-week notice that allowed spiders and mold to reign supreme in our rooms.

This year's fest is about rebirth—Several clubs and departments have worked extremely hard over the past few months to revive a fest that was the first to succumb to this godforsaken lockdown.

As you make your way across pixelated walls that hold treasured memories and test marks, be sure to take it all in. This is the closest we will get to going back to college, for now at least.

## TEAM

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Mustansir

Abhinav, Aditya, Anirudh, Archith, Debarpan, Jai, Saksham, Vinay

Adit, Chiraag, Effy, Gandhar, George, Hamza, Pranav, Sabhya, Sarthak, Shreyasi, Utkarsh

Abhigya, Advait, Ani, Anuneet, Ashutosh, Ayushmaan, Dash, Digvijay, Kumaraditya, Parimi, Saksham, Siddharth, **Tejas**, Ved

Aarjav, Aada, Antash, Nandinee, Priyansh, Shaz, Shreya, Varun, Vishnu, Zehaan

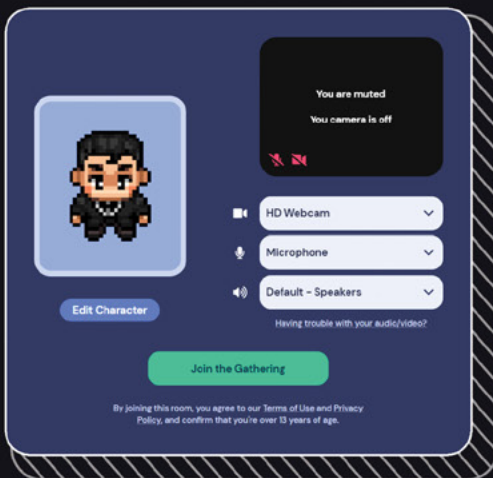


# Guide to gather.town

## Getting Started



create your character, give it a name, and customise the look of your avatar



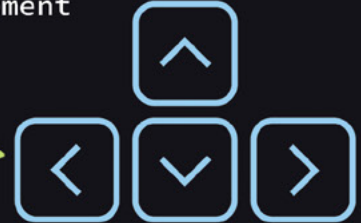
check your camera, microphone, and audio settings



edit your name and avatar by clicking on this card at the bottom of the screen

## Keyboard Controls

use the arrow keys for movement



interactive objects glow yellow when you are close to them

posters appear as pop-ups when you are close to them



whiteboards can be used by multiple people at the same time

press X to interact with objects



press and hold Z to make your character dance

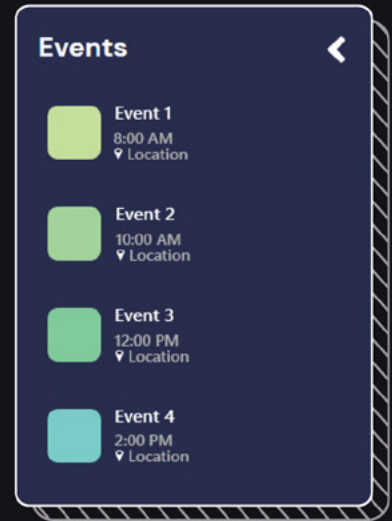
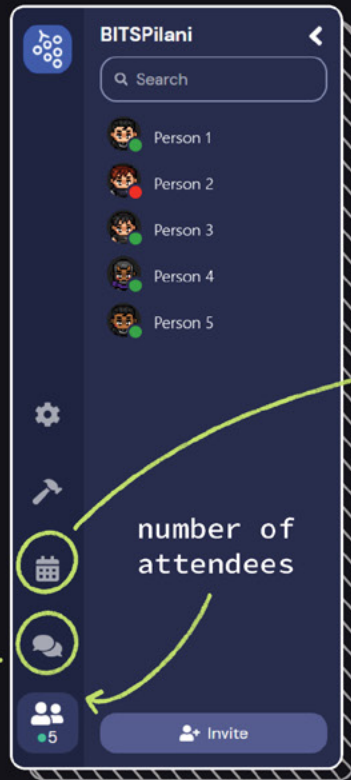
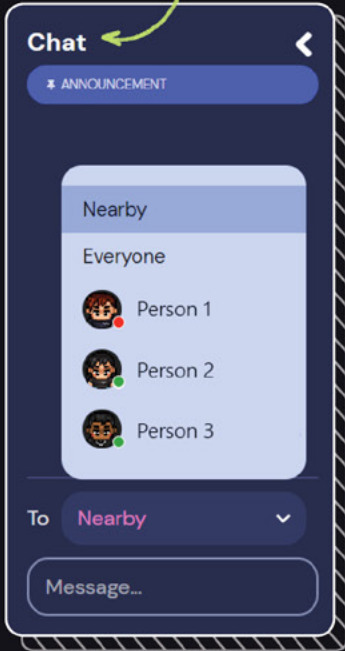
press and hold G to activate "ghost" mode (allows you to move through the crowd)



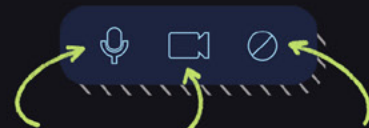


# Key Features

talk to other people using the chat option



calendar shows a list of upcoming events



microphone videocam block



the video and audio of a "spotlighted" individual is broadcasted to the entire room

you will automatically be connected to everyone in a private room

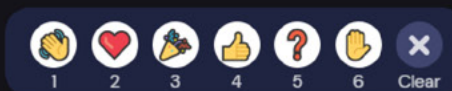
in an open area, a video call automatically starts between everyone within a five-tile radius

share your screen with other people

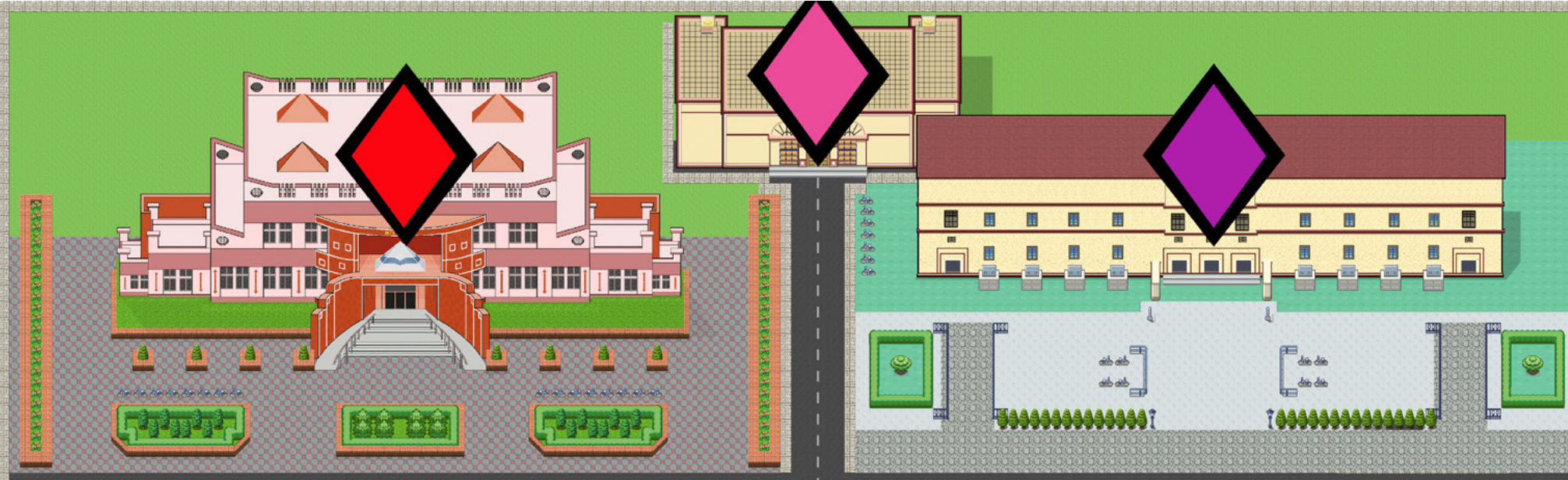


react with emojis

mini-map of the area you are in





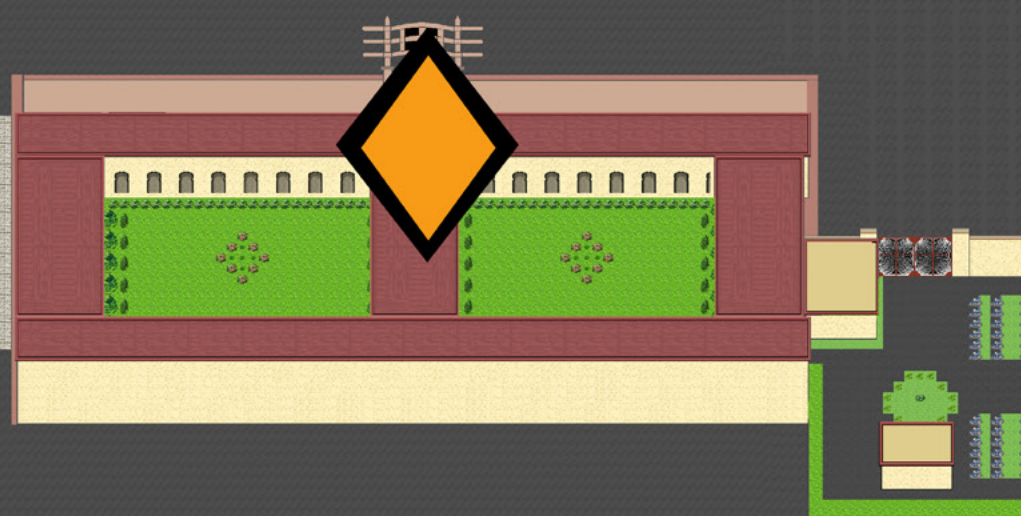
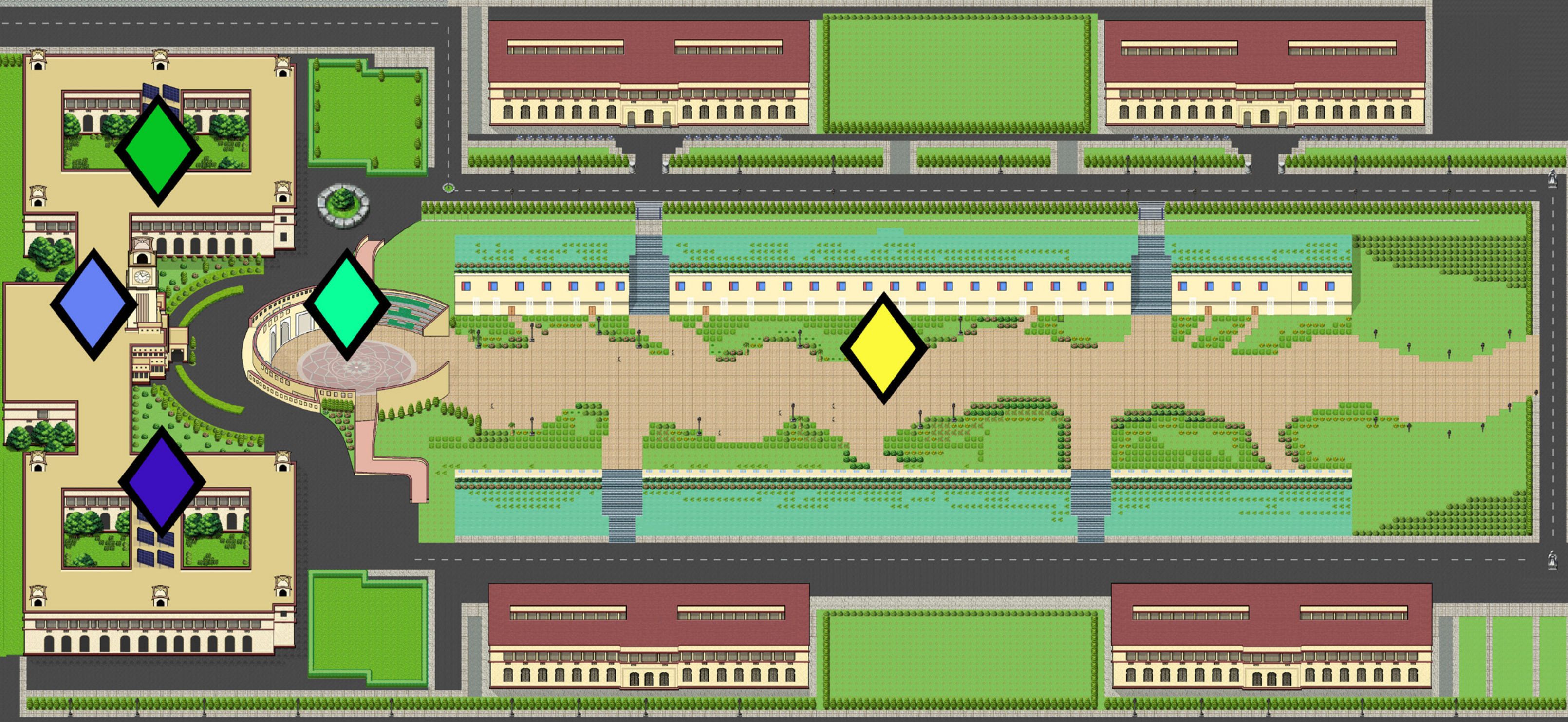


● LIBRARY  
● LTC  
● AUDI

● FD1  
● FD2  
● FD3

● NAB  
● SAC  
● ROTUNDA

**KERNEL EVENTS**  
**INTERNATIONAL CODING LEAGUE - FD1**  
**AI ROBO SOCCER - 6103**  
**AEROSTABLE LYNBYRD SKYNYRD - 1230**  
**GAMBLING MATHEMATICS - 1226**  
**ANALOG DESIGN CHALLENGE - FD3**  
**HACKATRONIX - G-MEET**





# SPONZ

An interview with the CoStAAAn

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Preparations for the upcoming APOGEE, though tinged with a looming awareness of the circumstances, nevertheless push forward with great vigor. The APOGEE English Press sat down with Aakash Shankar, the CoStAAAn of the Department of Sponsorship, to discuss the arrangements that were being made for the fest over the past few weeks.

As the department's work requires a large and skilled workforce, they made a point of recruiting and training first years as soon as possible. Shankar mentioned that it was important to the functioning of the department that the new recruits get experience working for the fest before they enter their second year.

The primary role of Sponz involves securing sponsors to cover the finances. This role also extends to handling the on-campus deliverable elements provided by their sponsors during the fest itself. Such as setting up signs, stands, and various stalls, as well as, transporting and delivering all the physical kind to the designated areas during the fest. However, for this fest, all work involving deliverables, which took up most of their time and energy during the fest, was completely eliminated, as this was entirely a campus-based task. As most of the work involving attracting and pitching to sponsors is conducted via phone calls and emails even in an offline setting, the process of securing sponsorships remained relatively unaffected. However, while pitching the fest to sponsors, it is often necessary to have a secure understanding of the events and working of the fest yourself. The uncertainty and confusion surrounding the organization of APOGEE this year, with many unprecedented details and issues arising, made that element of the pitch challenging.



That being said, the main adjustments being made to the work were strategic rather than procedural, involving a radical change in the approach to choosing the companies contacted, and the nature of sponsorship “in kind” received. Having a tactical approach in deciding which companies to target was critical as, according to Shankar, they could not take “random shots in the dark” during this fest. Decisions were made with more background research on the companies and while keeping in mind which organizations would be negatively affected by the pandemic, and which would be flush with cash at this time. For this reason, it made much more sense to target software institutions, ed-tech firms, graphic design companies and coding companies. These could also be of much more support in the organization of an online fest. Further, financial institutions and certain startups that had recently received funding from VC funds were considered a part of the tactical approach.



The sponsorship in kind, on the other hand, was much more complicated to organize, given the logistics involved in an online setting. Despite this, the department managed to close sponsorship deals with companies such as Brewhouse, which was willing to provide close to 50 gift hampers individually shipped to required addresses. However, as this is a tedious process, most companies preferred to offer in-kind sponsorships in the form of internships and coupons. Approaching companies for internships was a “big change”, but proved to be successful, with over 35 to 40 internships in firms working in sectors such as equity research and automation, being made available to be given out during the fest. Alongside internships and physical kind, coupons and vouchers for discounts on courses and online shopping were secured with relative ease as they work well for the online setting.

The budget fixed by the CoStAA for the fest this time was close to eight lakhs in cash, as compared to the approximately twelve lakh sponsorship budgets of an offline APOGEE. In an on campus fest, the department would often over-deliver and secure nearly fifteen to seventeen lakhs in cash sponsorship. When asked for an estimate for the amount of sponsorship that can be secured for the fest, Shankar confirmed that they had already surpassed the budget, estimating that they will secure a total cash sponsorship of eleven to twelve lakhs. Sponsorship in kind (including gift baskets, internships and vouchers), were surprisingly easy to secure, and reached a total value of fifteen to twenty lakhs.

The interview concluded with Shankar extending appreciation towards all the members, clubs, and departments who participated in the organization of the fest, despite the challenges. He ended by saying, “what we have lined up is itself extraordinary, and whatever we do end up pulling off will be commendable on our part”.

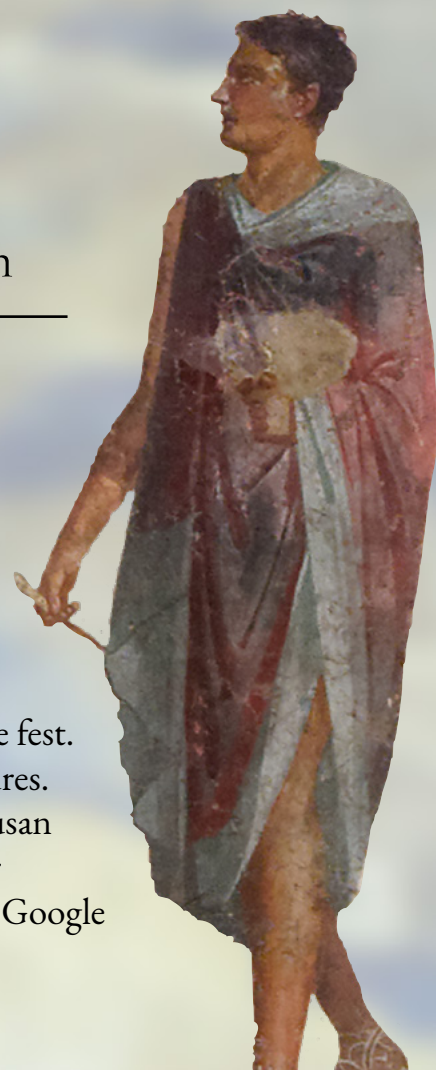
# PEP

## An interview with the CoStAAAn

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The Department of Paper Evaluation and Presentation (PEP) conducts events across four verticals—Think Again Conclave, Papyrus Trails, Paper Presentation, and Entrepreneurship Conclave. The English Press Club interviewed the PEP CoStAAAn, Kishan Panpaliya, to learn more about the work of the department and the challenges that they have had to face in the organization of a virtual APOGEE.

Kishan started off by talking about some of the positive aspects of an online fest. There was a significant increase in the number of pre-APOGEE guest lectures. They hosted Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways; Susan Bennet, the original voice of Apple’s Siri; Padma Shri Kiran Karnik, former Managing Director, Discovery Networks; and Ruth Kedar, designer of the Google logo.





Although the pre-APOGEE talks lineup boasted an increase, Kishan remarked that a lot of speakers were apprehensive of the online platform due to ‘certain technical issues’. He also states that people are unwilling to attend online events because of ‘zoomophobia’.

When asked about reaching out to speakers from the previous year, Kishan responded that they had only reached out to Zainab Nagin Cox, Engineering Operations Deputy Team Lead of NASA’s Mars Exploration Program, who declined as she was engaged with work on the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover mission. Kishan also mentioned that they reached out to and received replies from Priyanka Chopra, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Talking about Papyrus Trails, Kishan remarked that events like ‘Book Chor’, ‘Human Library’, and ‘Word Chain’, which required physical participation had to be scrapped.

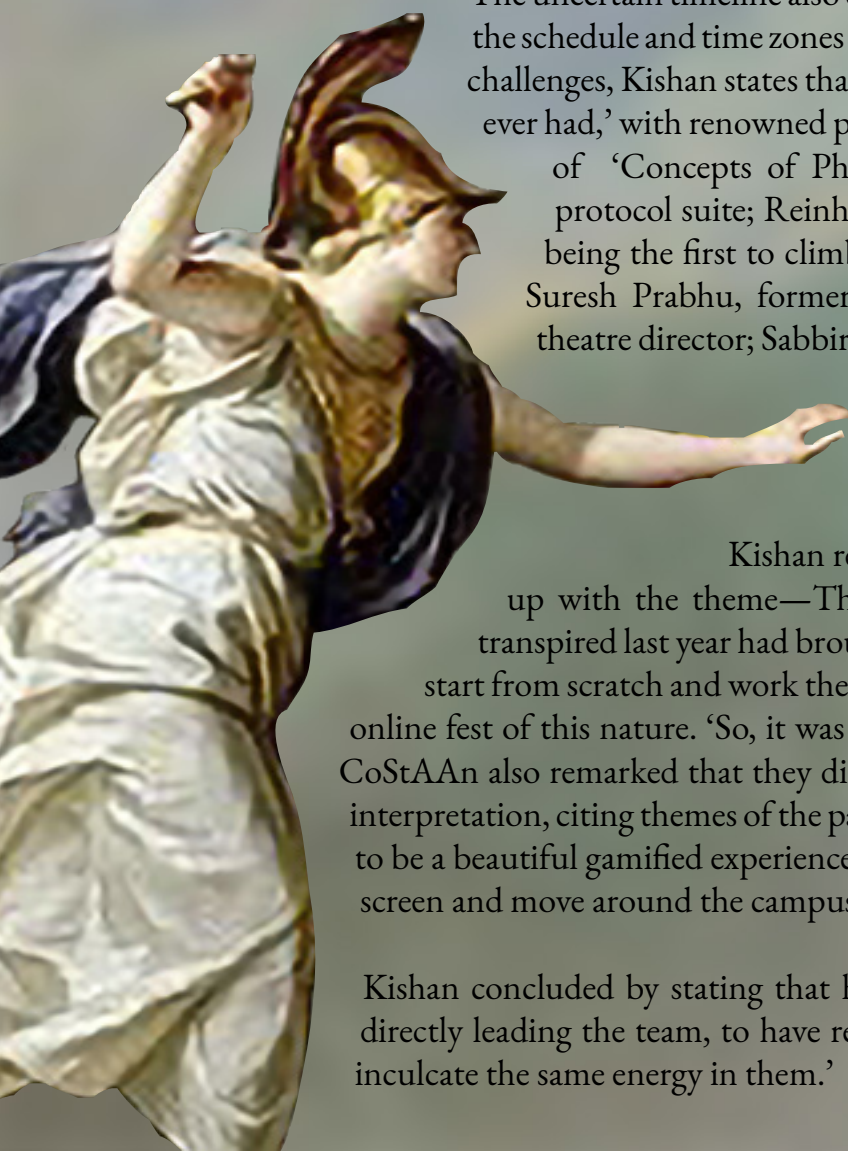
Due to the uncertain timeline surrounding APOGEE and the reopening of the campus, the Paper Presentation Event had to be delayed. However, the event received ‘a decent amount of traction,’ receiving entries from the ‘remotest parts of the country’ owing to increased accessibility, claimed Kishan. The department has also introduced a new category this year called ‘Youth Leadership Summit’ for school students with the intention of demystifying the process of conceptualising and framing a research paper.

Talking about the changes in the structure and organization of events, Kishan says that the talks are going to be held on Airmeeet, and significant efforts had to be made by the team to convince speakers to use a platform unfamiliar to them.

The uncertain timeline also caused a delay in outreach, as they had to adapt to the schedule and time zones of international speakers. Notwithstanding these challenges, Kishan states that they have ‘one of the best lineups APOGEE has ever had,’ with renowned personalities like Professor HC Verma, the author of ‘Concepts of Physics’; Vint Cerf, co-developer of the internet protocol suite; Reinhold Messner, an Italian mountaineer known for being the first to climb Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen; Suresh Prabhu, former Minister of Railways; Avijit Dutt, actor and theatre director; Sabbir Khan, film director and screenwriter; and Nobel Laureate Jean-Marie Lehn, French Chemist renowned for his work in supramolecular chemistry.

Kishan recalled that CoStAA ‘took a lot of time’ to come up with the theme—The Digitized Renaissance. Since the events that transpired last year had brought everything to a halt, the current team had to start from scratch and work their way up. There was no precedent for an entirely online fest of this nature. ‘So, it was a kind of Renaissance,’ noted Kishan. The PEP CoStAA also remarked that they did not want a very fancy theme that was open to interpretation, citing themes of the past like “Reality Roulette” as examples. ‘It’s going to be a beautiful gamified experience,’ said Kishan, as one can witness the campus on screen and move around the campus attending events in APOGEE.

Kishan concluded by stating that he would have preferred to be ‘on the ground’, directly leading the team, to have regular meetings in person, and ‘to motivate and inculcate the same energy in them.’





# EVENT PREVIEWS

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## SMS

The Economics and Finance Association (EFA) and the Association for Computing Machinery - BITS Pilani (ACM), have collaborated to host “Stock Market Simulation”; a two-day long event that aims to provide participants with a deep insight into the world of trading. It tests the participants’ ability to analyse situations quickly and manage resources in a risk-free environment.

Initially, participants will be provided with ₹25,000 in virtual currency to build a portfolio of various hypothetical stocks. The value of each stock will react to live news clippings and updates, which will be made available on the Stock Market Simulation (SMS) app. This is an in-house app developed by ACM that simulates a real-world stock market. A highlight of this event is the fact that it will take place throughout APOGEE. A leaderboard will be maintained during this period which will help participants make further decisions pertaining to the event. The participant with the highest portfolio value at the end of the final day of APOGEE will be declared the winner.

This event offers an excellent opportunity to learn the basics of investing, risk management, and short-term predictions. The organisers expect a significant increase in participation owing to the online medium. This will present a robust challenge to all participants and will make the event an exciting experience for all.

## ELAS QUIZ

The English Language Activities Society (ELAS) is BITS Pilani’s primary quizzing club and is responsible for organizing quizzes for the BITS student community during fests, and conducting events spread across the year. ELAS usually conducts four quizzes during APOGEE—Overhead Transmission (APOGEE’s flagship general quiz), The SciTech Quiz, The Biz Quiz, and The India Quiz. This APOGEE, since everything is online, the club has decided to try out something new and conduct BITS’ first-ever set of fully open quizzes which will include non-college participants as well. Instead of conducting four quizzes, two quizzes have been scheduled—Overhead Transmission at 6:00 pm on March 20, and The SciTech quiz at 10:00 am on March 21.

The quizzes will primarily be conducted on Zoom. However, other platforms will be used for logistics in particular rounds that require infrastructure for “pouncing” and for written rounds. The events will be streamed to multiple other platforms for interested people to watch. Both the quizzes will be team events with not more than two participants per team. The prelims will be conducted via a google form, and the teams for the finals will hence be shortlisted. Various tactics, including “Google traps” have been adopted to prevent cheating and maintain the spirit of the event.





For the finals, the selected teams will be on a Zoom call with the Quizmaster. The participants will be expected to keep their cameras on the whole time with their hands always visible to prevent them from cheating by using phones or other devices.

The Quizmaster for this APOGEE is Major Chandrakant Nair, a well-loved and celebrated quizmaster in the Indian quizzing circuit. Major Nair has been conducting quizzes throughout the quarantine and is well prepared to ensure that the quizzes are conducted with rigor and high standards. The quizzes tentatively have a prize pool of about 45,000 INR, which is one of the largest prize pools for any event this APOGEE.

## CONFERENCIA DE YOUTH

The National Service Scheme (NSS) was established to assist the less-fortunate and instil a sense of social responsibility in its members. Every year, during APOGEE, NSS BITS Pilani organises Conferencia De Youth, collaborating with other organisations and individuals working in the same field. This provides a common platform for all these changemakers to pool in their resources and strive towards achieving a common goal.

It aims to channel the youth's potential through their participation in a wide range of activities. Having featured speakers such as Nipun Malhotra (Founder, Nipman Organisation) and Medha Patkar (Narmada Bachao Andolan), Conferencia De Youth consistently attracts a large number of students every year.

The event's first online edition will comprise four kernel events and a set of interactive sessions with two eminent speakers. While B-Plan and Volunesia (an event for non-BIT-Sians) offer a chance to pitch unique social ventures, Naarabazi and Auctzone confer a stage to make impactful statements on a lighter note. The three-day conference will also feature dignitaries such as Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, a Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan recipient and Mrs Manasi Pradhan, a Rani Lakshmibai Stree Shakti Puraskar awardee.

With a structured line of events and speakers gracing the conference to address the attendees, Conferencia De Youth aims to be "the inch-perfect opportunity for all those who wish to make a difference in society".

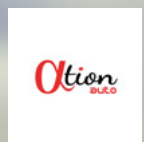
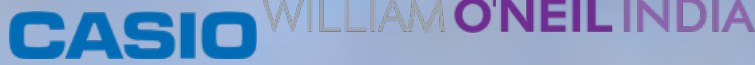
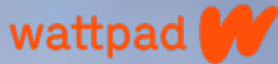
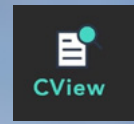
## ARMAGEDDON

The Gaming Club at BITS Pilani will be hosting Armageddon on Day-1, March 20th. This year it will feature two multiplayer first-person shooter games, CS:GO and VALORANT. The events will be conducted in a single knockout format requiring a team of five members each to compete. All rounds until the semi-finals will be held in a best-of-one format, and conducted without an audience. The semi-finals and the finals, however, will be conducted in a best-of-three format and will be streamed live on Youtube. The map used for a particular round will be chosen based on a veto process. Both events begin at 11 AM and will go on till midnight. With twenty-nine teams registered for the VALORANT event and eleven teams registered for CS: GO, both the events promise to be high octane entertainment for all the gamers out there.





# SPONSORS



## Sonnet 18: POB Shady of the Slim

*This flippity dippity-hippity hip-hop  
 You don't really wanna get into a  
 pissin' match  
 With this rappity brat, packin' a  
 MAC in the back of the Ac'  
 Backpack rap crap, yap-yap,  
 yackety-yack  
 And at the exact same time,  
 I attempt these lyrical acrobat stunts*

-Shakespeare