

# Of Tsunamis, Transitions and Thankfulness.

Tsunamis. Prior to last December's tragedy I personally would have thought of a Tsunami as something that might have appeared on a Geography test, never quite appreciating what it truly meant. Needless to say, my learning in this regard has been painfully accelerated. World Bank reports indicate that in addition to the several hundred thousand lives that have been claimed, the ability of 645,000 families to make a living has been affected and the impact to local economies is of the order of several billion dollars.

But inasmuch as our proclivity to wage senseless wars often frustrates me, our ability to bond together in the face of shared adversity never ceases to amaze me. The relief efforts have been



global, the international community generous and the concern, genuine. On a more personal note, I believe that BITS Pilani did not just teach us to develop algorithms or solve equations but also instilled in us the ethical and moral foundations of outstanding global citizenship. This belief was reaffirmed in the incredible unselfishness and sense of initiative demonstrated by everyone on the BITSunami team and by the members of BITSAA chapters around the world in assisting with rehabilitation efforts.

Gut-wrenching change has been thrust upon those affected by the Tsunami. But for all of us change is the order of the day, the norm. It's hard to turn a corner without butting heads with the many forms of change that induce transitions in our lives – our families, our careers, our industries and all else. Joseph Schumpeter's idea of Creative Destruction and continuous churn within capitalist structures is increasingly relevant given current socio-economic trends in the world.

In this issue we bring you the first in a series – *Transitions*. Each of us, at different stages in our

lives, is posed with choices. While we alone can decide what is in our best interest it is often beneficial to gain another's perspective. This issue's *Transitions* focuses on a clichéd, trite yet perpetually debatable issue of immigration and the associated pros and cons. As the Sandpaper team interviewed BITS Pilani alumni and raised the question, the responses evoked a great deal of emotion and debate even within the team.

Anytime people express their views emphatically, it's usually a pretty good indicator that they care enough and that caring was motivation enough for us to publish the story.

And finally, let's all learn to be thankful. Thankful for what we have, for the people we know, for the opportunities that we're privileged to be provided with every day. So does thankfulness imply respect for

and a willingness to accept status quo? *Sacre bleu!* Not at all! For all progress is predicated on a certain innate sense of dissatisfaction with status quo that is healthy, indeed desirable. The intent is to learn to appreciate and be thankful for all that we have and then set audacious goals and dare mighty things. Acceptance of modest goals and constrained dreams characterize too many lives. In framing the audacity of your goals, use your own benchmarks and definitions of success within businesses, academic institutions, communities or even within your own homes.

Our predecessors within the BITS alumni community are trailblazers and our goal at BITSAA is to tell you their stories, to inspire you and to provide complete and unequivocal support for your goals by facilitating the creation of the world's best knit, most collaborative alumni network.

**Sandeep Mukherjee ('95 Phy Mech)**

Chief Editor

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