Pre-Zeal events such as Love-letter writing, Antakshari, Dumb Charades, etc. kick-started the grandest and the most awe-inspiring festival of VCET. Carpe diem or 'seize the day', being this year’s theme, showed us how important it was to live in the present and make the best of what you have, whilst striving for a better future.

Zeal’14, just as always, saw the Student Council and the Magazine Committee coming together and joining hands to chalk out and dispense another vibrant and unforgettable cultural festival.

Events like Treasure hunt, Crime Tracker, Troll Making, Twist The Tunes kept the contestants on their toes; constantly testing their wit and their quick thinking capabilities. VCET’s Best Bahanebaaz got many thinking about their own reactions to the various probable situations that they themselves could possibly encounter. The Street Plays flaunted some refreshingly new and extremely talented actors. The participants were rightfully applauded for not only their brilliant acting but also for their effective execution.

The evenings were usually jammed with various dancing and singing competitions, both intra-collegiate and inter-collegiate. The performances were worth commending. It was pleasantly surprising to watch the timid engineering geeks move gracefully to the music. Spoof ’em up, being one of the additions this year, received quite an appreciation and cheering from the ZEALous crowd. Octaves had people grooving to their hearts’ content. Zeal’14 was concluded by the long-awaited and the most cherished part of the evening, dancing to the DJ’s tunes.

Zeal’14, thus, charmed us all the way, bringing into focus the various hidden talents of VCET, who successfully delivered some breathtakingly mesmerizing performances thereby raising the bar higher, and giving us something to look forward to in the next year.
THE INDIA OF TOMORROW

Today I think it's the right time to ponder upon the evil condition of our country, where are we heading to and what we have in store for the future.

The root cause of all evil in India is Crime and Corruption. Each one of us contributes to this state in some way or the other. Our country is neck deep in the sea of crime and corruption. It's up to us the people of the country, especially the youth who have the electoral power, to decide the fate of the nation. Today we must fight for another independence, we must demand and fight for independence from this crime and corruption. It distorts social and economic development, denies security and justice to residents and even poses security hazards.

Everyone, including the media, complains about the rise in crime and corruption in India. Everyday newspapers are full of sordid and awful stories, many of which can be traced back to the declining standards of our politics. Murders, rapes, bribery and cheating, scams galore. Most of them are a direct fall-out of the terrible way we conduct our public life. Without principles. Without shame. Without God!!

Why is it that we are unable to stop this rising graph? The answer is the increasingly short memory of people. Encouraged to be even shorter by a media that flits from one subject to another, one clever headline to another, one horrible crime to another everyday. No one wants to see a case through. It does not sustain readership to persist with a single story beyond a week. Last week's hottest scam yields way to this week's quadruple murder. This week's quadruple murder, will yield way to next week's sensational scandal. It is a rollercoaster ride and no one has the time to mourn over the story that died because of lack of adequate follow-up.

What we do not realize is that it is precisely in this kind of environment that crime and corruption flourish even more. Simply because everyone knows that even if he or she is caught, it would mean suffering the embarrassment only for a few days. Time is not just the biggest healer. It is also the biggest whitewasher. It is not how big or small your crime is that matters; it is how much you can take and for how long. If you have the nerves to face the backlash for a week or two, you are usually in safe haven. The biggest headlines eventually dock themselves into small, easily forgettable niches in public memory.

The media is so busy chasing new stories, new headlines every week that we allow the old ones to lapse. Every one of us has his or her personal checklist of such crimes to which we want answers. If we cannot get answers from our blind, deaf, dumb rulers, at least the media should keep the stories alive so that justice is eventually done, the truth is finally revealed. Otherwise, not only will the criminals escape, similar crimes will only multiply.

Let us all make a sincere attempt to curb crime and corruption. It is up to us the youth of today to save our country. We must take up the challenge of eliminating crime and corruption and work hard to win this fight. This may look far fetched but remember all revolutionary movements were started by a single step. So, Let us take a step forward in this direction!

Astrid Gomes
T.E-Comps
A GIFT TO REMEMBER!

The scene she was witnessing sent chills down her spine. Meanwhile, Rohit, busy in chalkling down his devious plans, noticed a stir in the backdrop. Slowly, the head turned and revealed a shady face with dark circles around the eyes, casting an unaffected glance at the lady. Swapna looked in horror as firm hands rushed to grip her gentle neck leaving no space to breathe.

Point! Beads of perspiration dropped onto the floor. Not a word was exchanged between them. Painstakingly, with a bell lot of efforts, she gathered up courage to ask, "Why? Wh... What do you want from me?". "Hahaha... Want? I need you... All of you!", replied the shadow with a devilish laughter.

The scene, the words, every breath seemed to send pounds of shocks down her heart. What a day it was! Celebrating their wedding anniversary, having dinner together, remembering the times of marriage "Mahesh! Oh, why don't I ring him up? He will surely come to my rescue", saying this, dainty hands grabbed to the hand purse. In a frantic bid to remove her cell phone, a pin fell from her purse. Prick! The sound notified the monstrous human and quickly he snatched away the phone. "No stunts lady! No one can save you today".

"You... You need mo... money? I'll give you... Umm...my bank accounts.. cards... everything...please...please leave me alone", stammered Swapna. Never had she thought of having to witness such a scene. "Money? Naah... I need you... your love... your time. Do you have accounts and cards for that mommy?" Thud! She fell back. The truth hit her quite painfully.. It's always the lack of it which cause such incidents.

"You come home from your job and then do the same work at home. You prepare meals, you keep the house clean. Excellent home-maker you are, mommy, but where is the 'mother' in you? Some good words for us, some sleep-in-the-lap moments, few pretty games and at least an hourly talk with us daily... you deprived me of this, you are not a good mother. I don't need you!", the words slowly gained temper as they reached her ears.

Quite true! All these years, all those job hours, client meetings, she forgot to live the moments with her family. Living each moment as if there's no tomorrow... for her children. Dreaming every time for a better tomorrow. Sigh! Tears trickled down Swapna's face. Quick realization dawned upon her and she vowed to do something once she escaped from Rohit's clutches. But Rohit didn't loosen his grip.

Strong hands clutched her neck, nearly strangling Swapna to death... Poof! The hands vanished, Rohit disappeared and Swapna found herself lying on a bed in her room. "Thank God it's a dream. That was a unique gift from a son to his mother on her wedding anniversary. Petty realization not too late". A scene well remembered... well thought of... always sending chills down her spine!

Varna Mohan
BE- Extc.
Creative Story Writing - 2nd Prize
“IT STARTED WITH A FAKE PROFILE”

The scene she was witnessing sent chills down her spine, she felt numb, she cried, shouted but no one was there beside her. She cried and cried but could not stop herself. All the memories flashed back to her. She sat in the corner of the room. She remembered the days she spent with Aarav and she kept saying just one thing, “Please get up, I need you”. She screamed again, ‘Please don’t go’. Hearing the screams her mom came running to her room & saw her weeping in bed. She sprinkled some water on her face & woke her up. She woke up & then hugged her mom.

Her mom consoled her and said it was just a dream that she saw that night. She sat up in hurry, she took her phone and called Aarav.

"Hello Aarav, are you okay?" she asked on the call.

"Yes sweetheart, I am fine & its 3 am in the midnight? What made you call me?" he asked.

"I saw a horrible dream about you, I am still shivering", she said.

"Nishi, chill! I am fine at my place & please stop crying. I promise that we will meet tomorrow, now please stop crying", he said in an understanding way.

"Okay. I am sorry for whatever I saw. Miss you", Nishi replied.

"Miss you too."

"Sorry to wake you up at this time, sleep well".

"Okay & you please take care of yourself, you haven’t recovered yet", Aarav requested.

"Yes I will, goodnight", she said & fell asleep…

Nishi, a young dolly up girl, famous in college for her liveliness. A young, smart girl who could charm any guy, had a power of winding up all the problems & could make everyone happy just by her smile. Her sense of dressing was up to date, her style of walking attracted boys. She was a bright student with a good sense of humor. She was pretty and had features which were enough to melt any guy. She had a spark in her eyes & craze about the things she did. The only drawback she faced was that she was very attached to her dad who died due to cancer two months ago. She had nightmares about every person she loved. Today it was about Aarav. This made her suffer all the time.

This continued for more than 6 months, later her friend Disha took her to a psychiatrist, but it did not help her. She developed a habit of writing letters to her dad as that progressed it made her depressed. Her mom was tense & wanted her daughter back. She took her for a walk & always looked at her. But it didn’t help.

One fine day, a friend of her named Kanav entered her life. It was somewhat like a miracle which changed her to someone she was not. She turned into a happy gal. It started due to Kanav. Kanav made everything possible for her. The name was enough for her to accept the request. Kanav….. or rather Aarav made her feel better. She was fine but still wrote letters to her dad.

"This needs to be stopped", her mom told Aarav.

Aarav was a family friend of Nishi & always came to visit Nishi & her mom.

"I will find some solution".

The next day Nishi wrote a letter to her dad & kept it near her dad’s secret cupboard. Aarav told Nishi’s mom to take her away for an hour or two. He went to her father’s room & looked for the letter. He got it & started reading. It was very small
but Aarav felt tough reading it. It wrote as:

Dear dad,
  I miss you very much. I have found a very loving & dear friend Kanav. He always makes me smile & keep me attached to you. I am very lucky to have him. Love you dad…. And whereever you are I'll always miss you. Mom misses you too. Take care.

    Your love,
    Nishita…..:

Aarav was flattered. He didn't know what to do. He took a pen & paper & started writing.

Dear Nishi,
  I miss you too! I am very sorry I am replying to you after a very long time but I was too busy with some stuff. I read all your letters & I just want you to stop writing to me as it too tough to read them it. If you love me please don't tell anyone about this letter, keep it a secret between you & me…. And promise me, you will never cry because of me. Give my love to your mumma. Take care.

    Your loving,

Dadda….  
  After Nishi came home, she went to her dad's room as usual & felt so happy when got the letter. She made up her mind & started living her life bliss filled. Aarav winked at Nishi’s mom. Nishi’s mom silently thanked Aarav.

    Happy thy man, happy he alone,
    He who called the day his own,
    He who recured within can say,
        Tomorrow do the worst,
    For all I have lived today…..

FORGOTTEN SOMEONE

The photograph lay tucked, hidden, 
In the pages of a forgotten book. 
It's edges curled and 
It’s colour blurred. 
My mind was decided 
as I picked it up, 
That it was something to discard, 
nothing worthy of a find. 
But I carelessly ran my fingers over it, 
Two faces beamed back at me. 
and I remembered the friend 
I'd forgotten I'd known. 
Memories & places that were ours 
those long ago faces now revealed. 
The ravages of time were finally healed 
and her last words echoed through that 
picture that had captured time for us 
I was grateful for this lost gift.

Kiran Vargaonkar
SE-Mech (A)

Aishwarya Dandgwal
SE-Mech. (Dip.)
Creative Story Writting - 1st Prize