

TechNews

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TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

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Turkey bans YouTube, Twitter

Shireen Gul
COPY EDITOR

"The Turkish government banned YouTube on March 27, less than a week after Ankara made a similar blackout of the social networking site Twitter, which is estimated to have more than 10 million Turkish users" reported CNN.

The shutdown came into being just a few days before the municipal elections were taking place nationwide. According to the Turkish government, they have blocked YouTube as a response to the leak of a confidential conversation which was taking place between top government officials discussing the probability of attacking their neighboring country Syria. The leak is "a despicable attack, an act of espionage," the Foreign Ministry says.

However, Turkey's Twitter ban is still going on, and it has affected the social life of many people as they were connected through Twitter. Although, the good part is that the block has actually attracted many people in the country to use Twitter than ever before. NBC reported that "while Turkish residents were originally getting around the Twitter ban by changing their Domain Name System (DNS) settings, recently the Erdogan government has been cracking down, forcing Twitter users to download mobile Virtual Private Network (VPN) apps or tweet via text message."

The Christian Science Monitor explains this ban thusly: "Turkey is a complicated country, largely split between a secular, liberal youth, and older, more religious conservatives."

Overall, Turkey is a very digitally-connected country: Pew Research found that 80 percent of Turkey's 34 million Internet users are on social networks. It remains to be seen whether banning social media weakens opposition or fuels the flame.

On March 20, after Twitter was banned

in the country, it offered a work-around for Turkish users which uses SMS messaging. Within less than 24 hours, Twitter use in Turkey rose 138 percent, according to social media firms Brandwatch and WeAreSocial. According to Turkish research group Gonzo Insight, there were almost 2.5 million tweets from Turkey from when the ban was put in effect to the next morning, setting records for Twitter use in the country. #Twitterisblockedin-Turkey also became a global Twitter trend. Google also offered its own Twitter access backdoor: DNS addresses that went viral online and on the streets. Immediately after the ban, searches for "DNS" in Turkey boomed. But soon, the telecommunication department executed a tougher IP-level block, and searches for DNS fell off. This social media ban can be called "the Streisand effect," which means that when we try to control access to something, there are high chances that we end up bringing more attention to it.

The move triggered additional public outrage toward the government and it made them move towards international condemnation. It is said that this scandal has grown into the biggest challenge of Erdogan's 11-year rule.

It has affected the behavior of the public in the way that they have become aggressive towards their government's continuous ban on their social life. Earlier, they had banned the use of alcohol, then threats were given to ban Facebook, and YouTube was once banned which caused educational and entertainment blockage to many people. People have started to feel helpless and have come out to the streets to protest against this imposed law. The issue has become a tug-of-war between Erdogan's administration and Twitter.

Some 2.5 million tweets were posted within three hours of Twitter getting blocked in Turkey. Just before midnight on Thursday, March 27, 2013, over 10 million users started wondering why they could not access the site. Twitter users

were able to continue posting by changing their DNS on their computers or downloading certain VPN applications on their smart phones.

Most people think that the Prime Minister did this on purpose because in the recent weeks, almost daily anonymous internet tapes of telephone conversations were released which clearly highlighted that Erdogan was involved in corruption.

The controversy over the ban has added to an already febrile atmosphere ahead of elections, with some rival candidates even warning of armed provocateurs and possible assassination attempts during the polls.

Within less than 24 hours, Twitter use in Turkey rose steeply to 138 percent which is a beneficial effect for the Twitter Company but not for Erdogan because he wants to disconnect the public from the world, which is, of course, not possible in today's situation where everyone is well-aware of their rights.

Erdogan has decreased his chances of coming back into power, and by making this move, he has increased his chances of being caught by the forces for corruption.

The people, especially the youth, are highly affected by this ban because in this age, when they are told not to use something, they tend to use that more. People have left their houses and are on the streets protesting against the government.

They are being abused by the forces as well as mentally by themselves thinking what might happen next.

Their daily and personal lives are affected by this move; they don't get to eat, sleep, or socialize the way they did before. This may cause depression to many people and it may also hit the economy of the country because when people come out to the streets to protest, they won't work.

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TechNews election endorsements

3rd Year Architecture Major
Claissa Lugo

4th Year Biochemistry Major

A three-way race between Bafia, Johnson, and Lugo may be a tough decision.

Bafia is currently a senator for the College of Science and sits on the Food Advisory Board (FAB), and has more experience within SGA than his two running mates. His answers during the debate were concise, and offered realistic solutions to big issues.

Johnson is currently a Resident Advisor (RA) in MSV, and cites his time as an RA as sufficient experience to assume this position, as well as involvement with other student organizations. He seeks to improve the communication between the administration and SGA, and hopefully the students as well.

Lugo is also an RA in SSV, and is running on the platform of improving response time in terms of facilities, and cites the Admitted Undergraduate Facebook group as a direct line of feedback from the students on this issues.

TLDR: The Executive VP's strength is not in their experience but their ability to work well with either presidential nominee, while Johnson and Lugo would be dedicated professionals for SGA. Bafia would be more likely to spearhead more initiatives and ideas. Whether you want that desire in an Executive VP is where your vote lies.

Vice President of Academic Affairs
Candidates:

Thimmariah Honaganahalli

2nd Year Engineering Major

Manoj Pennmathisa

1st Year Engineering Major

Rahul Wadhvani

2nd Year Engineering Major

A diverse set of candidates, at the debates we learned that all of our candidates for this position are from India, for your fun fact of the day.

Honaganahalli and Pennmathisa were the only candidates bold enough to wear casual clothes to the debates, but TechNews won't hold that against them.

Honaganahalli, currently a Senator for Armour College, and is running on the platform to create an introductory class repository, where the first class session of every class offered would be available to IIT students to peruse. TechNews, after extensive debate, knocked down this idea based on the attitudes of students and faculty during syllabus week, but with the right manipulations, it might become something realistic. We did champion Honaganahalli's idea of improving instructor feedback and knowledge thought.

Pennmathisa is running on a transfer credit policy reformation. While TechNews sees this as an important issue, there are far more important issues plaguing the Academic Affairs VP's list of concerns.

Wadhvani's suit was particularly memorable, but whether that was due to the stark contrast between him and his running mates has yet to be decided. Wadhvani is a former senator, and when TechNews inaccurately printed his information last week (oops!) he was extremely understanding, so he's got that going for him.

TLDR: Each candidate has their own strengths, but seem to approach the solution to these problems in different ways.

Vice President of Student Life
Candidates:

Sonia Kamdar

1st Year Biochemistry Major

Hamze Sukkar

2nd Year Architecture Major

Kamdar is a first year student, but has really made a name for herself as a student leader; she headed the EI transformation, and other various SGA committees, which she made special note to promote and allude to their importance in SGA, as well as their importance to students who do not hold a position in SGA. Kamdar also (cleverly?) planned an SGA Smoking Forum directly after the debates, in which she further demonstrated her ability to gather opinions and make informed decisions.

Sukkar has participated in previous SGA elections, and has held various on-campus leadership positions. Sukkar does not outline any specific platform for which he is promoting, but has chosen to stick to broad ideas, like promoting the involvement of on-campus students. Not to influence your decision, but he did defend the Sodexo prices, which may be honorable, but is a stupid campaign move to side with a widely unpopular campus staple. TechNews acknowledges the operations costs and varying factors that keep our campus moving, but politics isn't about the facts, it's about the voters, baby.

Vice President of Communications
Candidates:

Daniel Lopez Morales

2nd Year Computer Science Major

Elvin Moy

1st Year Engineering Major

Neesha Narayanan

2nd Year Architecture Major

Kyle Stanevich

1st Year Engineering Major

A four-way race between candidates who are current and former senators, and all are deeply involved with SGA. This taste from the president race will be the most heated.

Lopez Morales stressed the importance of improved communication between SGA and other student organizations. Lopez Morales was assured in his answers and solutions, but not knowledgeable of the specifics.

Narayanan emphasized the poor communication between not only the administration

and the students, but rather between the students themselves. As a former TechNews writer Narayanan is an effective communicator and has an established and friendly relationship with TechNews (and we wouldn't hate to have someone in a position of power like SGA's Executive Board to access all of the wonderful opportunities TechNews has to offer.)

Both Lopez Morales and Narayanan have sufficient experience and drive to complete the job and would do well if elected, but based on their intended voter base alone, the race between Moy and Stanevich will be quite vehement.

Stanevich approaches his role as a member of the SGA executive board as a bipartisan, and even keeled member willing to let the students decide the topics they want to see changed. Stanevich's minimalist approach to the SGA Candidate Biographies (fully available online through SGA) make it clear that he is able to put aside personal conflicts in favor of purely ethical decisions, based solely on student voices, rather than SGA voices. (Full disclosure: Stanevich is currently TechNews' Business Manager, and has done an efficient job in his time as part of TechNews' executive board, and is a dependable content contributor.)

Moy, a current senator and a member of the FAB, has run on a platform of creating a bi-weekly video series to display around campus. During his time on campus he has shown himself a proactive and (overly) driven student leader.

Moy has been outspoken against TechNews' role on campus, and with the video idea, we can't help but to feel a little threatened, especially considering Moy has been one of the few senators featured on our occasional feature, "Senator of the Week." While we commend the idea of a video production entity on campus, the realistic probability is low without a large anonymous or alumni or scholarship donor. The use of funds or effort towards the idea is futile and short-sighted, when there are more immediate goals and hurdles to jump over.

Union Board exists to program for students, SGA exists to serve the students' needs, and TechNews exists to inform. The ideology of the "Big Three" has become a bit lax in the current campus climate, but TechNews is behind any candidate that will make a conscientious effort to improve communications between the groups that already exist, rather than creating a new group to circumvent a previous one. We endorse Narayanan and more so Stanevich on this issue, and believe that Stanevich would be the first person in the memorable history of SGA and TechNews (within this editor's time at IIT) to repair the chasm that has separated SGA and TechNews, and SGA and Union Board.

TLDR: We're biased against Stanevich, but vote for him anyways.