

Life of Pi gets another life at IISER, this time on stage

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THE never-ending Pi inspired the name of the movie *Life of Pi*, which in turn has been borrowed by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, for a skit to be staged on the the IISER Mathematics Day on Thursday.

During the discussion to hold the event, one of the faculty members came up with the idea of a skit titled *Life of Pi*. Once the title was fixed with great zeal in the conference room, a brainstorming followed that resulted in a plan for a script that

traces the use of Pi (3.14159365...).

Dr Steven Spallone, associate professor at IISER, and Neha Prabhu, a mathematics scholar at the institute, volunteered to write a script for a comedy based on the mathematical constant, which is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter.

"The skit is nothing like the movie. We have only borrowed the title. Our amateur production is a 51-minute skit that starts with Archimedes' idea of Pi. Nobody really knows when Pi evolved in the minds of mathematicians, but the first evidence of its existence can be



Neha Prabhu has scripted the play along with Associate prof Dr Steven Spallone

traced to Archimedes, so that's where our skit opens," said Prabhu.

Pi is depicted as a girl in search of her identity. Props like a large com-

pass, rings and other objects that are either circular or have some relationship with the circle denote the omnipresence of the central theme; Pi.

The play will be staged at 12 noon on March 14 on IISER campus at Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Near NCL Innovation Park, Pashan.

"The cast features students of Bs-Ms, the undergraduate course offered at the institute. Most of the students are also members of the ISSER drama club. Although we have an interest in theatre, this is our first hands-on experience. Dr Spallone is a guide for the cast and crew. Not only does he have a keen interest in

theatre, he also has experience in the art form," said Prabhu.

Spallon hosted workshops for students who volunteered and auditioned for the cast and crew of the play. He taught them basics of dialogue delivery, body language and stage presence.

The play is a humorous take on a vital mathematical concept.

The crew of students took on the task of making costumes for the play by themselves. Actors who play the part of ancient mathematicians wear robes. Those from the 17th century onwards will be seen in shirts and trousers.