

INSIDE



The NDEAring change, P3



The braveheart Holkar, P7

AMITEpoll

Do you agree with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that India is now the "new attractive" investment destination in the world?

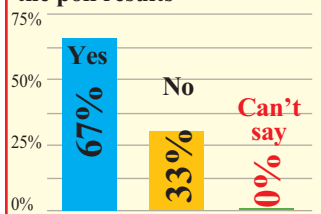
- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Can't say

To vote, log on to
 www.theglobaltimes.in

POLL RESULT

for GT issue January 17, 2022

Do you think the recent decision made by the EC to replace traditional means of election campaigning like physical rallies with virtual campaigns is going to affect the poll results



Results as on January 22, 2022

Coming Next

Warriors of India

The freelance rise

The Rise Of An Economy That Focuses on Income Generation Via Gigs

Shreya Dwivedi, AIS VKC Lko, XII E

While it is common knowledge that scores of people lap up a steady paycheck and other perks that a conventional job proffers, one simply cannot dismiss the appeal to work for none but oneself that comes with freelancing. A look at the stats and things become more pellucid - out of the total global workforce of around 3.5 billion, an estimated 1.1 billion (and counting) are presently moiling as gig workers in one field or the other; one-third of which come from India alone. And if projections are anything to go by, gig economy would go on to become a 455 billion USD entity by the end of 2023, which is nearly double the 2018 value of 204 billion USD substantiating that it's here to stay and surge. So, here's what's up and why!

A not so slow but steady rise

Spawned by jazz musicians in 1915 to refer to any sort of job opportunity, the term 'gig' truly gained prevalence in the 1990s in tandem with the digital era. For nearly 10% of the US workforce then labored as contractors or on-call workers peddling their craft without the constraints of corporate obligations. The 1995 launch of Craigslist, an American classified advertisements website (active in 70 countries with an annual revenue of over 1 billion USD today), however, proved to be a watershed moment in the history of freelancing, for it helped countless locals search for jobs, services, etc., online. Soon after, websites like Upwork and other crowdsourcing marketplaces surfaced, offering gigs to those wanting to work on a contractual-basis and get paid for it. Currently, Upwork has over 145.4 thousand registered clients, with its annual revenue amounting to about 373 million USD. With these steady advancements at play year on year, the Great Recession of 2007-09 ramped gig economy up another notch. With over 15 million people being laid off and an acute unavailability of conventional jobs withal, people found freelancing to be the new avenue to seek employment in. Consequently, independent workers worldwide proliferated - in EU, the numbers rose from 7.7 million to 9.6 million between 2008 and 2015, marking a steep rise of

24%; in US, concurrently, nearly 1.3 million new non-employer establishments were set up. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its benefits of remote working and flexible scheduling, dispelled any residual doubts regarding the viability of a gig workforce, as is evident in how participation in this sector soared by a whopping 33% and its earnings reached 1.7 trillion USD in the last year alone; where India was one of the fastest growers with 160% upsurge in its gig revenue.

A not so easy but smooth ride

Similar to any other job, freelancing has its own perks...

■ The most evident benefit of the gig economy is the work freedom that freelancers enjoy. They get to choose where, when, with whom, and what they wish to work on, as against the traditional 9-5 desk job. For instance, Uber, with its services spread over 71 countries, allows people to avoid the bureaucracy of a taxi agency and apply as a taxi driver as long as they have their own vehicle; the drivers get to decide whether or not they want to go for a trip as well. Besides, as per The State of Remote Work 2021 survey, 31% freelancers see flexible schedule as the biggest reason behind their preference of gig work, with 51% going as far as to say that they have a better quality of life as a free worker, so won't consider going back to traditional work for any amount of money.

■ Though the remuneration of a gig worker varies from company to company, but they often charge hourly rates for their work. This gives them the power to control their work hours and get paid for any number of extra hours they work for. According to Payoneer, freelancers worldwide earn 21 USD an hour on average. As a result, more than half of freelancers in 2019 considered themselves more monetarily secure than traditional workers.

■ Flexibility of gig work provides the inactive populace such as those old-aged, disabled, retired, etc., with a fair chance at working again. For instance, Airbnb, that permits anyone with a spare room to make an income by renting it, has over 400,000 senior hosts (aged 40 and above), making it their fastest-growing host demographic. In one such incident, in 2016, nearly 320,000 Airbnb hosts aged 60 and above managed to earn 747 million USD.

■ Gig economy helps organisations reduce their costs and also save their time, for they aren't hiring a fixed-term employee who would demand all the privileges that come with the post. Apart from that, it also helps them with scalability as well as hiring the right person for the appropriate amount of time. Google's workforce comprised 120,000 workers in 2019, higher than its permanent employee count of 102,000. Likewise, 30% of the Fortune 500 companies today rely on freelancers to fill gaps.

Continued on page 6...

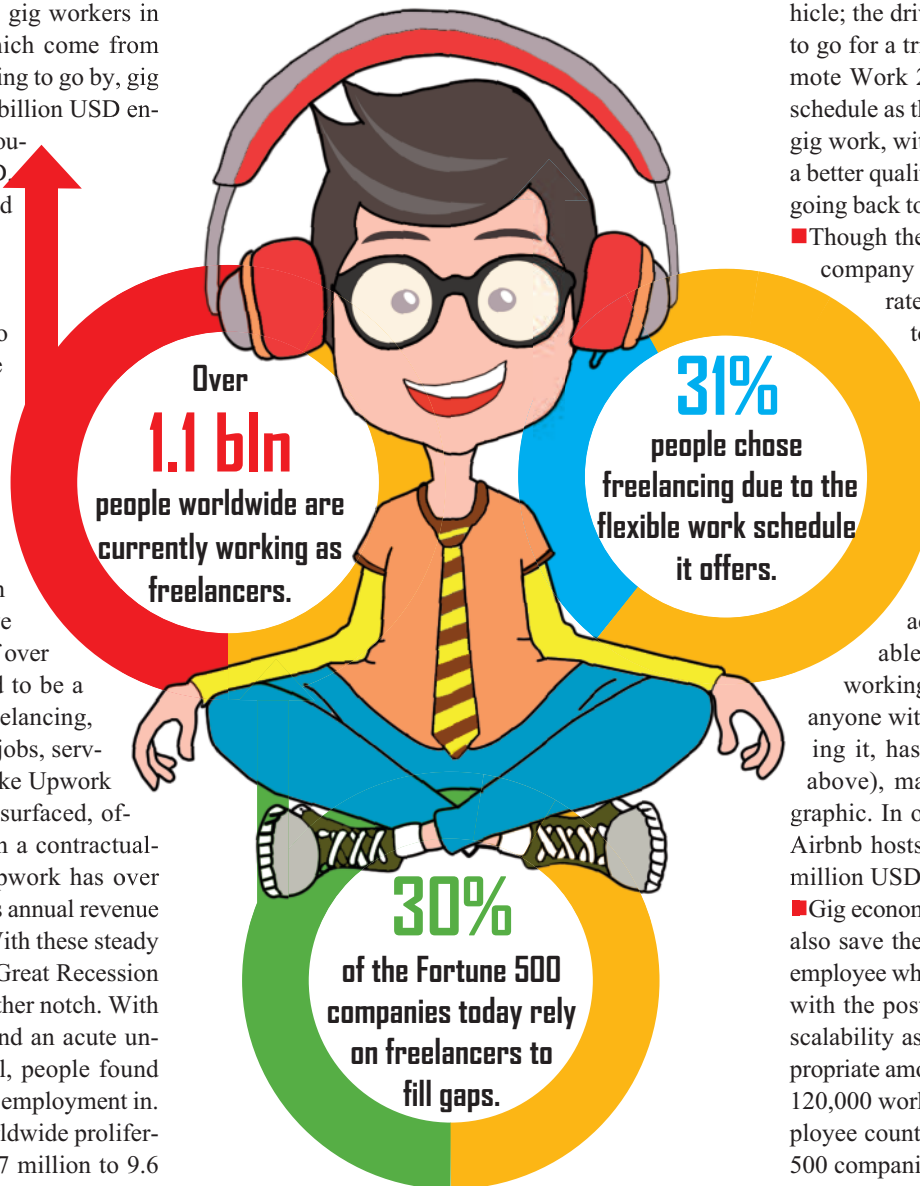


Illustration: Ravinder Gusain, GT Network

Dance is the rhythm of my life

Pandit Birju Maharaj shares his passion and love for dance in an exclusive interview with The Global Times Reporters...

“T a Thai - have you ever looked at these words closely? ‘Ta’ is straight, ‘Thai’ has a curve; one is male, the other female. And when they join to make ‘Tat’, they create the world in which we live our entire life,” said Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj in an exclusive interview with The Global Times. His thought provoking conversation brought forth the passion, simplicity, and humility of a legendary Guru whose pioneering journey into the world of dance and music left its trail, inspiring and evolving, capturing the hearts of all. Read on as we bring you excerpts from the same.

When did you discover your leanings towards dance and music?

My rendezvous with Kathak began early at the age of 3. Hailing from the Lucknow gharana, I would often accompany my father to the dance class and to the darbars of Kings and Nawabs. The Nawab of Rampur was so fond of me that he would actually tell my father not to come without me. At times, I would be woken up at midnight to perform for him and then, in a childish way, I would



In a candid tete-e-tete with Pandit Birju Maharaj

pray he dies so that I don't have to get up from my sleep! However, as a good learner, I realised early on that I could perform flawlessly. Thus, I travelled with my father, perfecting my love for dance and securing a job as a dance teacher at Sangeet Bharatiya Sansthan in Lucknow, all at the tender age of 14.

You have travelled extensively, sharing and teaching Kathak. Please share some interesting episodes with us?

From dancing in the courts of Nawabs

to the international 'arena stage', my journey into the world of Kathak has been a very enriching experience. One incident that I would never forget is when I had to perform on an 'arena stage' in the US. I still remember how perplexed I was to have the audience all around me. Nevertheless, changing our direction with each step, my troupe and I gave the entire performance and silently giggled away. The next day, as we saw everybody appreciating the performance, we all had a good laugh!

What has been the impact of dance in your life?

Dance is the poem of which each movement is a word. It is the expression and communication of emotion. Thus, as the rhythm of my life, Kathak is so much a part of me that I can feel it flowing in my veins and every breath that I take. We are inseparable!

How can we revive the declining interest of youth in classical dance forms?

Television and cinema have a great influence on people. One dance direction for Madhuri Dixit in Devdas shot me to instant fame. Hence, this medium should be thoroughly harnessed to promote Indian classical dance forms in an interesting manner. But what we do instead is create reality shows which have nothing new to offer. Dance and music are not just about presenting something already there. For even a layman can sing a song in tune if he has heard it 300 times. It is thus truly sad that this medium is being used to promote mediocres who walk away with Rs 50 lakh cash awards, while the real talent lies hidden, lost and obscure.



This is a tribute to the Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj. For he may have left for his heavenly abode but his inspirational words will stay with us forever. Re-printing his interaction with GT reporters published in August, 2008.

What message would you like to give to the students?

Patience is the foremost quality that every student needs to imbibe. For patience teaches concentration as well as creates a balance in our physical, mental, and emotional state. Life offers many temptations in the path to success; patience helps us overcome them. Whether you become a doctor or an engineer, let the rhythm in your pen and the wave in your voice guide you for good.

(As told to Meghna Bansal & Charu Gupta, AIS Noida, and Shantanu Dey & Ankita Naik, AIS Pushp Vihar)

Sikkim is a state in northeastern India that borders Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and West Bengal.



See Sikkim

Paying Homage To The Two Legends Who Made The World Their Stage



"I wish to create an atmosphere which aims at bringing back to dance all that sensitivity and delicate aesthetics which are threatened in this age of violence."

- Pandit Birju Maharaj

If dance and music is the way to the soul, then Pandit Birju Maharaj, a prolific poet, singer, composer, Kathak dancer, and choreographer, has touched and bewitched many in his lifetime. Born on February 4, 1938, to Achhan Maharaj of Lucknow gharana, he went on to become the most influential musicians and dancers of India, whose contribution to the cultural space in general and the Indian Kathak dance scene in particular cannot be put into mere words. As such, trained by his father and uncles in early childhood, his energetic dances, extraordinary choreography, perfect sense of taal, and melodious voice will remain unparalleled, come what may. And today, he might have left his corporeal form to foot it in the abode of the angels, his magnanimity and reverberating style will live on and be celebrated by artists across the globe for eons to come.

A eulogium

To enlist his achievements in the cultural realm is thus no easy task. The Kathak Maestro is, however, believed to have given his first solo dance performance at the Manmath Nath Ghosh celebrations in Bengal at the tender age of seven. And then there was no looking back for him. Over time, his solo performances, interlaced with incidents from his life, became an integral part of all musical conferences across the world in countries such as the US, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, Burma, Austria, and so on. In fact, he was the one who popularised the dance-drama genre. His flawless performances made him famous amongst people as a storyteller, who had the charm of narrating tales by the graceful movements of his flexible body and the great expressiveness of his eyes and face. And if that wasn't enough, he strived to give Kathak a new dimension altogether, that by inculcating and choreographing classics like Makhan Chori, Katha Raghunath Ki, Shahi Mehfil, and Naad Gunjan amongst others. He has also been credited for composing and choreographing several Bollywood hits such as 'Kahe chhed mohe' (Devdas), 'Aan milo sajana' (Gadar), etc. Thus, in order to appreciate and honour his dedication towards performative arts, he was conferred with numerous laurels throughout his career. He has received the country's second highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Lata Mangeshkar Puraskar, National Film Award, and Filmfare Award for Best Choreography amongst many others. So, as a way of honouring Maharaj ji, let us carry forward his legacy by immortalising Indian classical music and dance as an integral part of the modern culture worldwide.

Ananya Agarwal, AIS Gur 46, VI D

"Much more difficult than scaling Mount Everest is scaling the Everest within, but anything can be achieved with the power of the mind."

- Major H P S Ahluwalia

Born on November 6, 1936, Major Hari Pal Singh Ahluwalia had always had an enduring fondness for mountains, for their beauty and splendour attracted him from the get-go. Thus, at the age of 26, fuelled by his indomitable spirit and never-give-up attitude, he went on to conquer the world's highest peak Mount Everest, a feat that made him a part of the first successful Indian expedition to the said mountain in the year 1965.

But becoming a mountaineer wasn't the only thing on his to do list! After successfully climbing the peak, he went on and joined the Indian Army on the exact date of scaling the Everest. But to his utter dismay, fate had some other plans for him. For while courageously defending our nation in the Indo-Pak war (1965), he got shot near his neck. Being unconscious for 15 days owing to the injury, chances of his survival became bleak but the determination to never stop made him scale the Everest within. And though the injury left him paralysed waist down and confined him to a wheelchair, he never lost hope for a better tomorrow.

For his further treatment, Major Ahluwalia went to the UK where his dream to set a centre for comprehensive care of spinal injuries was knitted for the first time. Within some time hence, in 1993 precisely, he executed it by setting up the ISIC (Indian Spinal Injuries Centre) in Vasant Kunj, Delhi. Consequently, throughout his lifetime, he worked extensively to aid specially-abled people and was also



associated with numerous rehabilitation centres. Major Ahluwalia certainly donned many hats and thus, to acknowledge his strenuous efforts, the government conferred him with the Padma Shri, the Padma Bhushan, the Arjuna Award, and the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award amongst others. No hurdles, no avalanches, no disability could stop him from achieving what he wanted in his life. For he conquered it all with his unwavering determination and power of mind and became an inspiration for so many young aspiring mountaineers and fighters. And though not amongst us anymore, he has left behind a legacy that will be cherished and celebrated for generations to come.

Madhav Sharma, AIS Vas 6, X D

Around The WORLD

GT keeps the newswire ticking by bringing you news from around the globe



UK

PM faces revolt within party

PM Boris has faced a defection from seven members of his own party over his lockdown breach. The members have filed letters with a demand of 'Tory vote of no confidence' against the PM, and even more than 20 other members were named to be a part of the revolt. Boris, with this recent criticism, is struggling to regain his balance, but has made statements vouching that he'll keep working and soon be lifting most of the Covid restrictions in the UK.



RWANDA

First woman referee for AFCON

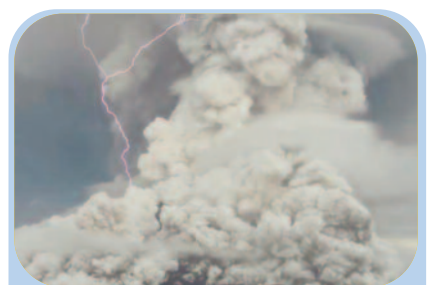
Rwandan referee Salima Mukansanga made history by becoming the first ever woman to officiate a game for Africa Cup of Nations by referring the match between Zimbabwe and Guinea. The move was supported by the public that sees it as a great step for 'women being represented and involved in this sport'. The 33-year-old referee and player further aims to be a part of the Nations Cup to represent her gender and fight discrimination.



NORTH KOREA

Threatens to resume nuclear tests

The country reportedly plans on strengthening its defences against the US and is considering resuming 'all temporarily-suspended activities', including tests of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. The re-consideration comes after US's push for fresh sanctions over recent Korean missile tests, where North Korea has replied with a threat of going back to the hostile missile-induced 'fire and fury' stage of 2017.



TONGA

Hit by tsunami post eruption

The Polynesian kingdom has been hit back-to-back with natural disasters which have shaken the core of the country. It was first hit with the undersea volcanic eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano (which had an explosive force more than 600 times the atomic bomb of Hiroshima), which, in turn, triggered a 15-metre tsunami. At least three people have been killed so far and one entire village has been completely wiped out due to the tragic events. The evacuation efforts for which are well underway.



SPAIN

World's oldest man dead

Saturnino de la Fuente Garcia, the Spaniard who held the Guinness World Record for being the oldest living man in the world, died at the age of 112 years and 341 days. Born on Feb 11, 1909, he died just weeks away from his 113th birthday. His death comes just months after he was awarded the Guinness World Record in Sept 2021. He is survived by 7 daughters, 14 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.



INDIA

Delhi to have EV charging stations

The Delhi government and Convergence Energy Services Limited have signed a joint agreement for installation of charging and battery-swapping stations for electric two, three, and four wheelers at bus depots around the city. The first phase of the project will see these facilities being installed at 14 stations where each will include 6 charging points, three for two and three wheelers, and three for four-wheelers.





It is the least populous and smallest of all Indian states.

Looking through the glass

Rediscovering Old Glass Making Tradition As A Booming Career Option Today

Shreya Dwivedi, AIS VKC Lko, XII E

Have you ever wondered how much thought and careful execution goes into the designing of a simple looking glass artifact adorning your showcase? Does moulding dull blobs of molten glass into magnificent shapes and forms sound interesting to you? If yes, read on to know more about the art form of glass designing and the career opening it entails!

Understanding glass art

When we talk about glass art, we refer to a piece of art that is substantially or wholly made up of glass. For glass as a medium is highly versatile; at its transformation temperature, it can be blown into a bubble, rolled to be casted in any shape, and even be spun like a yarn thread. Interestingly, even after cooling, the glass can be polished, beveled, chipped, etched, engraved, or painted to be turned into an intricate artwork. Besides, pieces of glass art can be worked to create glass vessels, sculptures, wearables (maybe a glass slipper) or in commercial buildings and architecture.

The sparkling history

Glassblowing dates back to the 1st century BC. The Roman world that came post, created every possible type of glass art with a newfound obsession for stained glass designs, which continued well after the medieval ages as a major architectural and decorative element in Cathedrals and civic buildings. The Murano in Venetian Lagoon still holds its status as the birthplace of modern glass art, and the exquisite Tiffany stained glass with its naturalistic flowers and stained colours is in fashion even today and remains amongst the most expensive glass works ever.

Techniques involved in the process

In glass art, there are three main techniques that an artist follows - hot glass, warm glass and cold glass. The most common and oldest form is the blowing method that is achieved by heating glass

in a furnace at 2000 degrees in order to create delicate vases and sculptures. In the warm category, glass is heated at 1600 degrees using a kiln and by applying slumping technique plates, tiles, and sheets of glass are made. Lastly, polishing and etching to change the texture and feel of the glass is done by cold glass method.

Qualifications required

This area of work is open to all graduates but a foundation degree in Fine Arts, Decorative Art, Design and Applied Arts with Glass, 3D design, Business or Graphic design would certainly help aspiring candidates flourish in the field. Apart from

this, additional training to acquire basic knowledge and required skills would be beneficial.

Skills required

Glass artists create works of art with specially shaped glass pieces made of lead, mastic or epoxy. They create a broad range of products that are highly valued for their beauty and durability. In this field, one should be creative with colours and patterns, detail oriented, focused, and hardworking. One should always be ready to learn as this field requires technical and visual skills with an advanced material knowledge. Graphic designing skills are also something that can help one a lot in

creating samples for potential customers.

Career prospects

One can take up a professional career in a glass factory, museum, glass studio or art gallery as a freelance designer, glass artist, glass blower, ceramic designer, or even a glass engineer. The basic remuneration offered depends on your profile, experience, and qualifications. On an average, it can vary anywhere around 2-3 lakh INR per annum and above. Thus, if you think you want to be the master creator and are ready to ace the glass world, then this job is definitely for you and you must give it a try! All the best!



The NDEARing change

The Metamorphic Phase Of Digital Education In India We Are Going To Encounter

Kavya Verma & Anwita Agarwal, AIS Saket, IX C

The government of India has introduced National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR) as

one of their initiatives under the Union Budget 2021-22. Presented under the aegis of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with MeitY, it aims to work as a diverse educational ecosystem for development of digital infrastructure, and will also help the central and state governments in planning, administering, and governing school education. All of this sounds amazing, but let's take a deeper look into all that this NDEARing plan entails!

Purpose? Check!

NDEAR is an architecture blueprint plan that aims to boost the digital infrastructure in the country vis-à-vis education. It focusses on the creation of open, interoperable, and evolvable public digital infrastructure in the education sector. It will help in strengthening the country's digital infrastructure for online education, along with supporting teaching and learning activities. It will also aid educational planning and governance of administrative activities of the Centre and the States/Union Territories.

Myth: It acts merely as a medium to provide access or links to other websites or web pages.

Fact: The government simply works as an enabler by providing a framework where technology can be built by anyone. In simple words, this works much like providing good quality bricks (framework) which any builder (teachers or parents) can use to make a building of their choice and design.

Features? Check!

It has a unifying and evolving design which addresses diversity, inclusion, and special needs. It also provides privacy, security, trust and choice. Some other key features include seamless interoperability, and functionality in a fed-

erated, decentralised manner.

Myth: The framework will be weak and will not help much.

Fact: Data systems would be able to interact with each other using a common framework, thereby enabling policy-making, particularly to drive learning outcomes. Technology systems are strong and will be consistent in handling of data, protection of individual data - particularly children's data.

Technology? Check!

A thrust of technological interventions will be introduced for improving teaching-learning and evaluation processes, enhancing educational access, and streamlining educational planning. Hence, the relationship between technology and education at all levels present is bi-directional.

Myth: NDEAR is not adaptable and will become obsolete after a few years.

Fact: NDEAR is meant to be an evolving framework to keep pace with changing and emerging technologies, while staying true to its core principles. The NEP 2020 lays significant emphasis on the use of emerging technologies for making a quantum change in the quality of education, governance, and immersive content etc., which will be part of NDEAR. Thus, the NDEAR ecosystem

approach will enable the wider ecosystems to participate and contribute.

Implementation? Check!

It is evident that millions of students in India suffered during the pandemic due lack of access to digital infrastructure. The government has ensured that this does not happen in the near future by opting for a 'Digital First' approach.

Myth: The government will not be able to implement NDEAR, as no systems are in place.

Fact: The Government of India has enabled several programmes to achieve the goals. Namely, the 10+2 structure of school curriculum is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is Government of India's flagship programme as mandated by 86th amendment of the Constitution of India making free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age group, a fundamental right.

Vision? Check!

The NDEAR vision statement reads "NDEAR is a globally pioneering effort in education." To be effective in the long term, NDEAR must have a learning and evolving core. The vision of NDEAR reflects this, both in its architecture and in its institutional framework.



Sikkim hosts a part of the eastern Himalayas including Kangchenjunga, the highest peak in India and the third highest on Earth.



Rough and tough

Rivers, lakes, and wetlands are indubitably amongst the most biodiverse places on earth, but the diversity that dwells in them is often overlooked. As such, despite being vital for communities, economies, and ecosystems alike, scores of fish species today are heading towards extinction; fisheries that trade in them and provide employment opportunities to millions across the globe are increasingly shuttering down withal. Being mindful of the same, the United Nations has designated 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in order to make us au courant with the catastrophe that awaits these marine miracles and ensure their continuity for the foreseeable future. Aiming to make this vision a reality, GT presents a brand-new series, wherein each segment will either cover an endangered fish species on the verge of extinction or a renowned fishing village in any part of the world in need of immediate human attention.

Kanak Verma, AIS Gur 46, VI D

I am: Orange roughy

My taxonomic name: Hoplostethus atlanticus

I am native to: The deep waters of the Western Pacific Ocean, Eastern Atlantic Ocean, Indo-Pacific, and the Eastern Pacific off the coast of Chile

My life expectancy: Greater than 140 years often crossing over 200 years



Why I am in danger

I am on the verge of being extinct as I was overfished in the 70s and 80s due to my growing popularity as a food item. I often gather in large groups, so fishermen could easily catch us in big batches using trawl nets—wide-mouthed nets that are dragged behind boats. These sudden, large harvests did not leave us enough time to reproduce, which led to no breeding for the upcoming years. This led to the decline in our number enormously. Making things worse is the fact that I cannot reproduce until I am 30 years old. So, even though I can

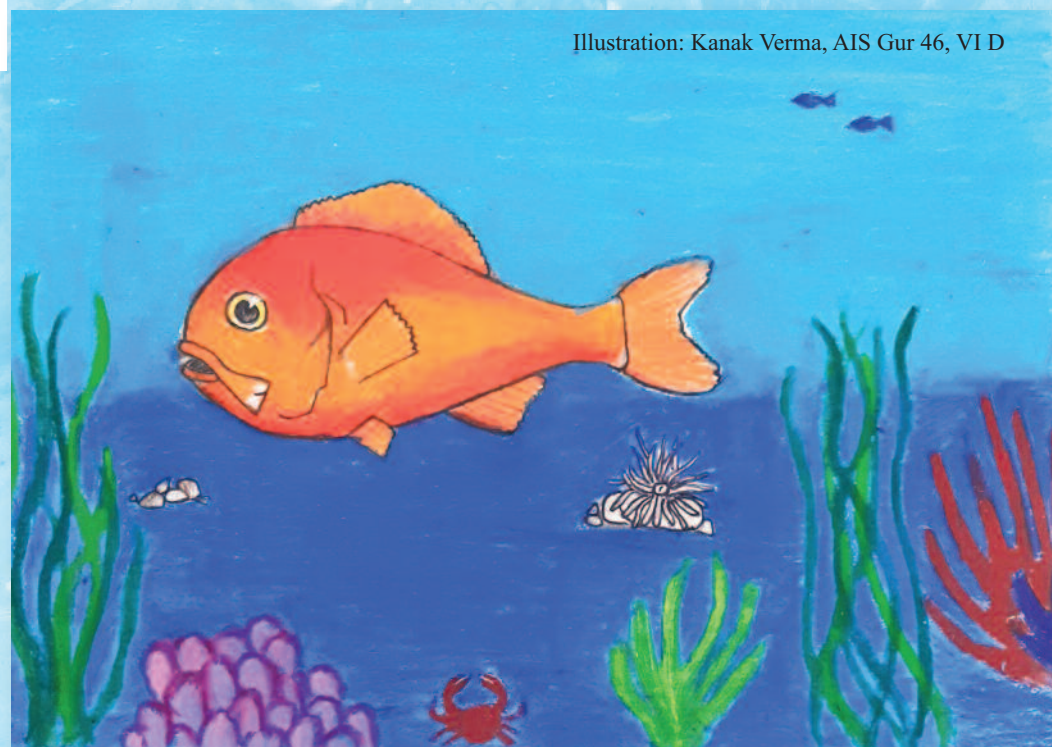
live up to 140 years, I start reproducing only much later, which further curbs my head count.

You can guess my fate from the fact that I became the first commercially sought fish to be added to Australia's list of endangered species due to overfishing. I have now been listed as an endangered species under the EPBC act, and even scientists claim that the true impacts of historical overfishing me have not yet been fully felt, which means worse times are definitely ahead for me, unless humans have tried to help.

About me

- I belong to the Trachichthyidae family and am bright reddish-orange in colour.
- I am a deep sea-dwelling species usually found in temperate water.
- My body is compressed and oval, while my gill cavities are bluish-black.
- I am also known as 'slimehead' as my bonehead contains muciferous canals that produce mucus.
- My head is covered with bony ridges and deep mucus cavities.
- My dorsal fin has six spines that can measure up to 75 cm in length and they can weigh up to seven kilograms.
- I prefer to stay in areas where the current is strong, usually at the depths ranging between 590-5,910 ft.
- Though my average length ranges from fourteen to eighteen inches, my longest appearance was recorded to be thirty inches.

Illustration: Kanak Verma, AIS Gur 46, VI D



How I am being saved

I can be saved by restoring my population. A catch limit should be set and regular reporting and monitoring sessions must be conducted. Conducting accurate stock assessments are some steps the Australian Fisheries Management Authority already takes. In some places, I have been restricted, but scientists expect my recovery to take many years due to my slow-growing process. WWF and the Australian Marine Conservation Society have also done their best in keeping me safe, especially by stopping Australia's orange roughy fishery from getting me certified to the MSC standards. This step also helps me sustain myself from mass fishing and will surely help me recover slowly yet surely. AMCS research showcases that my number have just begun to recover in very small parts, but with the lingering impacts from fishing, there are chances that these numbers could decline again if not paid proper attention and care. So, please do your bit and keep me safe.

The junk funk

Let's Talk About The Threat We Did Not See Coming To Us

Chitrlekha

AIS Vasundhara 6, IX D

Yes, the world we live in is plagued with problems, some that are right in front of our face like COVID-19, and some that are a little hidden out of our sight...or even atmosphere. But it is still disheartening to know that one of the most concerning issue of the era - the problem of space junk, is still unknown to many of us. Space junk, if explained in simple terms, is the

tracked pieces of space debris that orbits around our planet. But why is the debris threatening at all, you ask? Well, because the debris possesses a risk to hinder space missions, and also the fact that cleaning up the debris is actually really difficult. Donald Kesser, a retired NASA senior scientist, during his orbital debris research, stated that finding several ways to remove this debris must be a top global priority, and when we look at facts, we realise that he is right.

More than 27,000 pieces of orbital debris, or

'space junk', have been tracked by sensors in the outer space till now. And much more debris - too small to be tracked, but large enough to threaten human spaceflight and robotic missions - exists in the near-earth space environment. The reality is that both the debris and spacecraft are travelling at extremely high speeds, and if they were to crash, even if it were a tiny piece of orbital debris, it would create huge problems for us. This means that all space operations stand threatened because of this space debris. And even when we have no-

ted events of this collision, even though they were not on large scale, we cannot just afford to sit quietly, because who knows what will happen in the coming future!

Apart from the big bang, this space junk also comes with other problems. Economist Matthew Burgees stated that the space junk will increase the fee and the cost of orbital usage, which, in turn, will increase the long-run value of the space industry. On the other hand, Akhil Rao, assistant professor of Economics, Middlebury College, said the solutions proposed so far are primarily either technological or managerial on our own level. Scientists explain that humans switching to eco-friendly ways to do better for earth might help the situation overall, but still that can only do so much. In reality, there are ways to solve this problem, but all of these solutions seem a little hard to implement. Like the most common solution we tried to adopt - controlled re-entry. This seemed fine until its drawbacks showcased themselves which are likely to be the high expenses and more usage of fuel. Another solution proposed by the scientists is to move this space junk. The European Space Agency is considering several kinds of "capture mechanisms" to pick up the debris with nets, harpoons, robotic arms and tentacles. Even a space debris slingshot was suggested with Texas A&M University's Sling-Sat Space Sweeper which proposes capturing an object, swinging it towards earth's atmosphere, and then using the momentum to sail on to the next piece of space debris for removal.

Overall, it is clear that most organisations are focusing on avoiding space junk by either ensuring that their rockets use all its emergency fuel to avoid explosions or by ensuring that they do reach graveyard orbit so they are out of the way. But the point remains that all these 'solutions' aim at controlling rather than cleaning up the space junk that has already been spread. Maybe it is high time for us to stop being on the defence and start playing offensive, that is if we don't want our outer space to become another garbage bin.





See Sikkim

The largest city in Sikkim is Gangtok. It is also the capital of the state, located in the eastern Himalayan range at an elevation of 1650 m.

Naam. Namak. Nishan...

...The Secret Formula To Become A Successful Cadet

Whenever I will look back at my life, the Kasam Parade hosted by AIMC will stand out as one of the most cherished memories of my life. As I speak to you all, my heart is full of nostalgia. I distinctly remember the words of our ADM officer Colonel Ravinder Singh who had assured our parents with just one phrase, “Kal tak jo aapke bachhe they, aaj se wo hamaare bachhe hai.” Indeed, I was to become a part of a new family away from my own for the next two years. On this occasion, I would like to share other memories with everyone about my time at AIMC. I can recall the satisfaction I got from the tea served here. The reason was obvious, as the tea here was not bought, it was earned. Yes, earned after sweat-dripping parades and kadam taals. Who does not know that the fruit of labour is the sweetest? What had also stood out for me was gaining a new perspective at AIMC, one that found resonance in a quote by our Headmaster Colonel RC Patial, “Naam, Namak and Nishan, where ‘Naam’ being the name of



Smarth Bhatnagar at the Military Training Camp

the institution which is Amity Indian Military College (AIMC), ‘Namak’, being the unparalleled support and guidance of teachers that’s to be returned by students in the form of success wrapped

in gratitude; and ‘Nishan’ being the very symbol of the school which stands for Kartavya, Maan, Saahas which means duty, honour and courage.” As I look upon the eager faces

waiting to embark on a new world of adventure and spirit, the only words of wisdom I can share with you, my young cadets, is follow two rules in life. The first one, always have honesty in intent and the second one, never compromise with integrity in purpose. However, no words can sum up the role AIMC had played in shaping me into the person I have become. I wish you all the same success. And finally, the only lines I can think of as my parting words are the ones which were often told to us by our hostel warden HK Naath, “Khudi ko kar buland itna ki har taqdeer se pehle khuda bande se khud pooche bata teri raza kya hai!” (The above is an excerpt from a speech delivered by Smarth Bhatnagar (Batch 2020) during the Military Training Camp (MTC) function held on December 24, 2021 at AIMC. Smarth made his alma mater proud by clearing NDA written exam and SSB interview as well as securing AIR - 90. The MTC function was also virtually attended by Founder President Dr Ashok K Chauhan and other dignitaries.)

MOVIE REVIEW

Rake in that review

Name of the movie: Passengers
Director: Morten Tyldum
Released on: Dec 14, 2016
Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt, Michael Sheen and Laurence Fishburne
Genre: Science-fiction



Synopsis: The Avalon, an autopilot sleeper star ship transporting 5,000 passengers and more than 200 crew members in hibernation pods, while on its long voyage to the planet, unanticipatedly suffers a malfunction in one of its hibernation pods, awakening mechanical engineer, Jim Preston, almost a century too early. As time passes, another passenger and a writer Aurora Lane wakes up too. She starts writing her experiences in a book. Gravity loss, diagnostic failures, and rising temperatures caused by meteor collisions add to their dilemma. What does fate have in for them? Watch and see for yourself.

Why is it watch-worthy: This movie fulfils the expectations of a perfect Sci-fi movie splendidly. Waking up after spend-

ing 30 years in hibernation and finding out that the destination is still 90 years away is not a common affair. It makes the viewers wonder about fate, morality and destiny. It has been remarkably executed. The plot, theme, and worldbuilding all come together perfectly to make it a must-watch.
Iconic dialogue: “It’s funny. We all have dreams; we all plan our futures like we’re the captains of our fates. But we are passengers, we go where fate takes us.”
Rating: 4.5/5
Review by: Deetya Gambhir
 AIS PV, X A

The building block

The Interesting Tale Of The Muddy Brick And Its Evolution Through Generations



Anupriya Bhatnagar
 AIS Vas 1, Alumna

coughs

Excuse me for these huge clouds of dust. I don’t mean to choke you or something. You know, it’s just how I am manufactured and transported to you. *Flaps through the mini dust storm* Oops! Looks like I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Bricky and as my name suggests- I am a brick. Yes, the very DNA of your house. Ever heard the tale of The Three Little Pigs? Well, the wolf had nothing on me, absolutely nothing!

Enough of the boasting *coughs* Today, I’ll be giving you a tour of my own house. But first, let me familiarise you with my history; firstly, you need to know about my origins lest my grandpa startles you with a pop quiz. Let’s go back to 7000 BC. Yep, that’s how ancient we are! According to grandma, we are originally Turkish. My ancestors were solely mud bricks dried in the sun for hardening. As time passed, Ancient Egyptians experimented our composition and introduced clay and straw to us. If you get to observe the ruins of Buhem,



Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, you would notice that the clay hybrid was extensively in use during the Egyptian civilisation and Indus Valley Civilisation. The old Indus folks were so particular about our proportion that each one of us would correspond to sizes in the perfect ratio of 4:2:1. By the way, did

you know that our clan is the most energy-efficient and weather-resistant construction material? All this history is making me drowsy! *Yawns* Let me introduce you to my immediate family now. The head of our family is my grandpa, a mud-brick; he was made from mud or clay and air-dried. Then came my father, a fired brick made in a kiln and the most popular red brick. Well, I myself am a concrete brick. My sister is the coolest of the house, like literally cooler. She’s a green brick, which means that she’s made out of recycled waste and provides a

fresh atmosphere and lower temperatures than normal bricks. I know, she’s an icy blast to have around! Brick by brick, our existence has truly defined construction as we call it today. We have been party to how the concept of infrastructure has evolved through the years. From straw huts that provided temporary refuge and stagnant caves that provided better shelter, the early humans got the idea of combining the two to get the best of both worlds. Isn’t that intriguing? We have literally sheltered the evolution of human beings over the years. *proud*

Talking about all this reminded me of mentioning a crucial fact about my family: we always have each other’s backs (pun intended). If we weren’t always supportive of each other then we could not have laid the strong foundation required to support the tall buildings and skyscrapers that touch the skies. I know it’s dreary and repetitive rhetoric but that’s because it is that much crucial: united we stand, divided we fall. With that, I would like to take your leave, got to go and help the mason get some strong bases built. Hope to see you around soon!



Reimagining past perfectly



Dr. Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

What can be more powerful than mastery over words combined with an unhindered imagination? With her recent achievement at YUVA, the Prime Minister's scholarship-cum-mentorship scheme to promote budding authors,

Amity's Kainaat Arif (Page 11) has proven that such a talent can truly exist. Kainaat has been selected as one of the 75 under-30 young authors to receive this award, and what's even more heartening is that she is also one of the only two under-15 authors whose story has been selected from amongst 16000 entries pan India and abroad. This triumph becomes even more significant considering that the book proposals underwent a tough process of scrutiny by experts. I am not surprised, however, at this victory as I am aware of the sheer discipline with which Kainaat has worked on this well-researched 3000-word story. A fictionalised account of a true incident from India's historical past, the story reimagines the murder of Lord Hardinge through the eyes of a 11-year-old. In Kainaat's achievement, in fact, is also a message for every child to learn. It is only when you can look back into the past intuitively and intelligently that the true pursuit of a better future can take place.

I have always envisioned nurturing creative talent at Amity through various platforms, GT being one of them. I know that a penchant for weaving words into stories remains a passion for many of my Amity alumni whether they are full-time journalists, lawyers, or army officers. I hope to read many more of these fascinating tales in the future as well. [G](#) [T](#)

Rhythm of Life



Vira Sharma
Managing Editor

Some people come into your life and leave a mark forever; one such great personality whom I have had the fortune to meet is the late Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj. The recent news of his demise came as a shock, but when my sadness ebbed a bit, I was

transported to the happy memory of my first interaction with the legendary Kathak exponent. Those were my early years at GT and he had agreed to be our very first celebrity interviewee. Having watched his Kathak recitals on Doordarshan, I had always been in awe of his graceful mastery over movement, and I used to devour every newspaper article published on him and his performances.

Naturally then, I was both excited and nervous to meet him in person as the interview was to take place at his Delhi residence. I remember seeing his house and being filled with admiration. Simple yet elegant, it reflected his personality in every way. When he entered the room, it seemed as if it was filled with the presence of divinity itself. Gentle, courteous, and humble, he spoke in a voice that was soothing and enchanting. When asked what dance meant to him, the reply he gave was as mesmerising as his portrayals of Lord Krishna on stage. "Everything is dance. The entire existence - of nature in plants, flowers, wind, rain, sun, moon, stars, sky, me and you - is dance. Life itself is dance." It was a novel experience for me as I had never till then met a person who had explained the beauty in everything around us in such an evocative manner. His legacy is testimony to the fact that life is simple and joyful. All we need to learn from him is to flow with the rhythm of nature and be true to our inner self. [G](#) [T](#)

The power woman

Arunima Sinha - Fighting The Unfortunate With Great Confidence

Aashvi Vig, AIS Noida, X L

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trials and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." While this quote by Helen Keller has inspired many, it was Arunima Sinha who adhered to it strictly. A mountaineer, born in Ambedkar Nagar, Lucknow, Arunima has been awarded several accolades for her courage and bravery, but her story which is now full of glitter and achievements started with an extremely unfortunate event.

On April 12, 2011, she boarded the Padmavati Express train where some goons attempted to snatch her bag and gold chain. All eyes were open and witnessing the crime being committed, yet Arunima was left to fend for herself. As she fought to protect herself and her belongings, the goons forcefully pushed her out of the train. At the same time, another train running on the parallel track crushed her leg below the knee. She was down on the track throughout the night in pain, bleeding, and she counted how at least 49 trains passed her by, yet not a single soul came to help her. Finally, in the morning, she was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences for treatment, where the doctors announced that her leg had to be amputated. The news travelled fast through the media, and soon she was even offered a 5 lakh INR compensation, but no such amount could change or bring back what she had lost or even soothe the past she went through. But as she was being treated at AIIMS, she heard of Bachendri Pal and got in touch with her. The ambitious soul in her had decided to scale the Mount Everest and prove how strong she truly was.

The will and determination of any ordinary person would have been shattered. However, Arunima was



not one of those people. She showed immense courage and came back even stronger. She decided to do the unthinkable and started chasing her one dream that gave her the strength to keep going in life. She wanted to be the first female amputee to climb Mount Everest. Mindful of the same, she trained vigorously with the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering for over 18 months. Her patience along with her strong willpower, steadfastness, and perseverance helped her to overcome the negativity that came from the loss of it all. She broke the barriers of the dark and silence around her. Despite her deprivation, she neither indulged in any self-pity nor lost her self-confidence. That's how, under the able guid-

ance of Pal, Arunima reached the summit of Mount Everest at 10:55 am on May 21, 2013, becoming the first female amputee to scale Everest.

After climbing Mount Everest, Arunima Sinha's next goal was to climb the seven highest peaks of all seven continents. By 2014, she had successfully climbed the six summits in Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, Australia, and North America. And on January 4, 2019, she climbed the final summit in Antarctica and became the first female amputee in the world to climb Mount Vinson. This completed her mission of hoisting the Indian Flag on the seven highest points across the seven continents, teaching us that grit is what heroes are made of. [G](#) [T](#)

The freelance rise

Continued from page 1...

A not so negative but upsetting side
Similar to any other job, freelancing comes with its own pitfalls...

■ The biggest challenge that most freelancers face is the lack of a safety net. There is no social protection, nor are there any full-time employee benefits to be enjoyed. From health benefits and paid vacation plans to unemployment insurance and severance pack, to the chance to use a company's car and having paid fuel, the benefits of a traditional job are numerous. According to Statistics, around 27% freelancers whose gig job is their main job have no retirement savings; an additional 53%, with no traditional job training benefits to support them, cite cost as the main barrier to improving their skills.

■ Finding steady work is the toughest assignment in the world of freelancing. Projects can begin and then get shelved or sometimes clients may end a contract early. Pandemic made things worse as 52% gig workers lost their jobs without any prior notice and around 41% received less work.

■ As per a survey conducted by FlexJobs, 65% freelancers see finding clients as their biggest challenge. This lack of clients is directly proportional to a lack of meaningful reach. As a result, freelancers often find themselves in the need of forming connections and gaining contacts in their respective fields in order to increase their outreach.

■ Another common downfall to being a freelancer is that you will ultimately be isolated from a team or company. Solitude is often the main villain in the story of a freelancer.



Around 16% freelancers state loneliness as the biggest drawback. (The State of Remote Work 2021 report).

■ While freelancers can set their own fees to meet their income (and clients') needs, they are also responsible for collecting payment. Unfortunately, there are countless clients that either take too long to pay or do not pay at all.

A not so statutory but legal tide

As surprising as it may sound, freelancing is often encouraged by governments around the world as it increases self-employment quotas along with generating more employment opportunities. As such, US leads the world in the trends of gig economy where over 50% of the jobs can be worked remotely. India comes in a close second as an estimated 56% of new employment in India is generated by freelance companies across both the blue-collar and white-collar workforce.

Adding to which, in September 2020, the Government of India brought a new labour code - 'The Code on Social Security 2020', which extended

social security to the unorganised sector workers, including gig workers, by providing them benefits such as retirement benefits, health insurance, employment injury benefits, etc., amongst others. But that's not all, the central government has also signed MOUs with several gig platforms to augment social welfare. Case in point - the 2019 partnership between Uber and Ayushman Bharat that aims at providing free healthcare to drivers and delivery partners, or the 2017 partnership between Urban-Clap and National Urban Livelihoods Mission that ensures jobs with minimum assured monthly wages, at least 15,000-25,000 per month, for the urban poor.

Evidently thus, most countries have begun to realise that freelancing would soon become a core force on the stage of global economy; with the incessant rise of technological innovations and increasing preference for freedom of work over stability, this sector is destined to see a meteoric rise, and thus shall soon solidify itself as an economic powerhouse. [G](#) [T](#)



Issue: Page 6, Jan 17, 2022

Dear Editor,

This is in reference to the article 'Adversarial enemy' published in the GT edition dated January 17, 2022. Distinguishing between an enemy and an adversary by their rationality in thought, decision-making, or through the alignment of goals (or lack thereof), is a crucial life skill that determines the approach we may harness when faced with unexpected encounters. The article mentions examples like lawyers in a courtroom, football matches between friends, and standoffs between different political parties, which act as food for thought for a reader and makes one thoroughly analyse the nature of enemies and adversaries encountered at various stages of one's own life. The article also inspires one to dive deeper into the abyss of often unpleasant exchanges of thoughts and find converging perspectives.

Resham Talwar
AIS Saket, Alumna



The kingdom of Sikkim was founded by the Namgyal dynasty in the 17th century and was ruled by Buddhist priest-kings known as the Chogyal.

The braveheart Holkar

The human heart has always been stirred by tales of valour and adventure, and whenever we hear such stories, we cannot help but look up to those heroes who have chiseled their names onto the stone of history with the weight of their accomplishments. Such legends deserve to be celebrated and remembered for their bravery and all that they have done in the past to make the present better. Here's presenting the saga of one such warrior, **Ahilyabai Holkar**, who changed the course of history for the better.

WARRIORS of INDIA

Part 2

Name: Ahilyabai Holkar

Born on: May 31, 1725

Died on: August 13, 1795

Position held: Queen of Indore

Noteworthy achievements: Transformation of Indore; construction of numerous forts, temples, roads, rest houses, etc., in Malwa and the rest of India

Biography to read/watch: *Matoshree* (book) by Sumitra Mahajan; *Devi Ahilya Bai* (movie)

The roots of a warrior

An epitome of gallantry and valour, Ahilyabai Holkar was born to a respectable Dhangar family in the small village of Chondi (present-day Ahmednagar), Maharashtra on May 31, 1725. Her father Mankoji Sindhia was the Patil (chief) of the village, who, in his free time, also homeschooled Ahilya since women then had no access to schooling or learning of any sort whatsoever. Though Ahilya greatly admired her father for being her guru, she didn't take such injustices of the society, especially towards women, without putting up a fight. Her passion to raise her voice against discrimination thus, often landed her in trouble. But little did she then know that her very strength of character and resolve to fight inequality would etch her name in the pages of history so deep that she would become an unforgettable and ineradicable part of it for eons to come. Her rise to the ranks of royalty, however, feels like something straight out of a movie. Legend has it that while on his way to Pune, Malhar Rao Holkar, the subedar of Malwa, made a stop in Chondi only to run into the eight-year-old Ahilya at the temple service feeding the underprivileged and hungry. Moved by her piety and righteousness, he, without any second thought, decided to ask her hand in marriage for his son. As such, Ahilya got married to Khande Rao Holkar at the tender age of eight in 1733. In 1745, she gave birth to their son Malerao Holkar, and in 1748, their daughter Muktabai was born. Having raised her children with the same spirit, in what is referred to as the first of many traditions that she was fated to shatter, Ahilya married her daughter to Yashwantrao Phanse, a brave but poor man with no royal lineage, an anomaly in the world of royalty. Ahilya's revolutionary actions, thus, were an early indicator of her rise to fame and had somewhat already cemented her fate to be the fearless queen of Indore.

The sword of a warrior

Her ascent to the throne, howbeit, was filled with thorns. In 1754, her husband died fighting during the siege of Kumher. Seeing her world fall apart thus, she decided to commit sati and end her suffering once and for all, but her father-in-law persuaded her to not give up. He helped her stand her ground and got her military trained as can be noted from her 1765 capture of Gohad fort (near Gwalior) during Abdali's invasion of India. Her good days, however, came with an expiration date. As the old ruler died in 1766, the kingdom fell like a pack of cards. To make matters worse, Ahilya's son Malerao, having ascended the throne post his

grandfather, too died a few months into his rule in 1767. Thus, as fate wiped her entire family, Ahilya, grieving yet undeterred still, picked up her sword and ascended the throne of Indore on December 11, 1767, in a bid to protect her kingdom, her people from the doom that awaited them. Though a section of the kingdom did protest her assumption of power initially, the soldiers of Holkar supported her leadership and made sure to stick by her side come what may. Along with Malhar Rao's adopted son Subedar Tukoji Rao Holkar, the head of military affairs, Ahilya, capable of handling both military and civic matters by now, thus, began managing Malwa in a highly sagacious and enlightened manner, to the point that she even reinstated many who opposed her rule at first. As a never-before-seen monarch, she made it a practice to hold public audiences on a regular basis to help address the grievances of her people, and was always approachable and available for anyone who wanted her assistance. Historical accounts further bear testimony to how she encouraged the prosperity of merchants, farmers, and cultivators in her realm by rejecting any sort of claim to their money, whether through taxes or feudal rights. Under her reign thus, trade flourished to no end, with merchants producing the best of clothes, and the farmers reveling in excess. To compound it, she transformed her capital Maheshwar into a hub of literary, artistic, and industrial achievements by opening doors to famous Marathi poets like Moropant, Shahir Ananataphandi,

etc., and further honouring and paying handsomely to the various craftsmen, sculptors, and artists who were otherwise looked down upon. Her efforts towards the empowerment of women and widows were revolutionary too. She made use of her power to let widows retain their husbands' wealth and adopt a son, things which were otherwise unthinkable in her time and age. On the military front, she launched several campaigns to rid her kingdom of thugs and invaders, at times personally leading her army into the battlefield. As such, when the whole Central India was facing a power struggle, Malwa was never once attacked under her administration. As a model of effective and benevolent government thus, her 28-year-long rule is marked as a golden age in the history of Indore, a time when order prevailed, and people prospered.

The legacy of a warrior

Her list of achievements, however, does not end here! Making progress a keyword of her rule and legacy, she transformed Indore from a tiny village to an affluent and attractive metropolis. She constructed forts and roads in Malwa, funded festivals, and served as a patron for many Hindu temples. Additionally, she erected and embellished numerous temples, ghats, wells, tanks, and rest houses outside of Malwa as well, extending all the way from the Himalayas to the south. In India a pilgrimage centers. From Badrinath, Dwarka, Vishwanath to Puri, Gaya, Rameswaram,

every pilgrimage site in India, in one way or another, has a contribution from her. Most notable of all was her restoration of Kashi Vishwanath temple in 1780, 111 years after it was demolished by Aurangzeb. Her endless efforts to reform the Malwa kingdom, however, ended when she left for her heavenly abode on August 13, 1795, to be succeeded by her commander-in-chief and nephew, Tukoji Rao Holkar. Needless to say, thus, many poets and writers were inspired by her life, the way she ruled in a predominantly male-dominated society, and worked for the betterment of all, especially the marginalised. In one such instance, a recent one at that, former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan published her book 'Matoshree' (2017) based on the life and times of Ahilya Holkar. Likewise, one can find her mention in an English poem authored and published by the Scottish poet, John Baillie, in 1849. British socialist and author, Annie Besant, too, has made several references to the queen of Indore in her works. Closer to home, the government of India issued a commemorative stamp in her honour on August 25, 1996. In the same year, Indore's leading residents established an award to commemorate her memory further and honour an outstanding public figure in her name every year.

Thus, cherished with deep reverence and often compared to the likes of Catherine II of Russia, Elizabeth I of England, and Margaret I of Denmark, Ahilyabai Holkar was indeed a woman ahead of her time, time that was forced to surrender and transmute at her whim, with a flick of her hand and a fling of her mighty sword!



It became a princely state of British India in 1890, and continued its protectorate status with the Union of India after 1947 and the Republic of India after 1950.



See Sikkim

Where's Riana?

Storywala



Suhani Roy

AIS Noida, IX K

Ashley had just joined the boarding school. Away from home, she found it extremely hard to settle into her new environs and befriend anyone, until Raina came along. The two girls hit it off like a house on fire from the very start. They shared common interests and soon became inseparable, just like peanut butter and jelly. One fine morning, Ashley woke

up startled. She had a dream where she saw Riana sitting upright in her bed. Riana whispered 'sorry' in a weepy voice and faded away like dust into thin air. Ashley narrated the dream to Riana, who laughed it off saying, "Dreams are just dreams, they have nothing to do in real life." Ashley continued to have the same dream night after night. So scared she was of this nightmare that she decided not to sleep. Alas, she felt asleep. And this time, as Riana began to fade

away in the dream, Ashley gathered up the courage and called her out. However, Riana did not respond and sobbing softly, vanished. Ashley woke up, gasping for breath. She gulped down some water and looked out of the window. It was barely dawn. But as she turned to look towards Riana this time, she encountered an empty bed with the sheets neatly folded in place. A startled Ashley ran to the other rooms in the hostel corridor, looking for Riana. "Riana, where

The next morning, she went to class and saw another girl sitting at the back seat, where Riana used to sit.

are you?" she screamed through every corridor looking for her best friend. Hearing her voice, the other girls came rushing out of their rooms. "What's wrong Ashley?" asked one of the girls. "Riana...she's gone missing." "Riana...who?" "She's my roommate! Are you out of your mind?" Ashley shrieked and stomped away from the scene. She walked right back into her room, only to realise that all of Riana's stuff was missing. The room on Riana's side was completely empty.

The next morning, she went to her class and saw another girl sitting at the back seat, where Riana used to sit. What was happening? Ashley was confused. Not being able to concentrate in the class, she ran to her class teacher Mrs Smith and told her about the entire incident, asking for help to find her best friend Riana. Frowning, Mrs Smith replied, "But Ashley dear, we don't have any student by the name of Riana in school."



Pen holder

Prakshi Jain, AIS Vas 6, VIII

Material required

- Large plastic cup/bottle - 1
- Glossy tapes (for decoration)
- White sheet (A4) - 1
- Sketch pens
- Glue/tape

Procedure

- Take an empty plastic cup/bottle and cut it through the middle in two equal parts. If you can find a straight circular bottle, like the one I have used, it would work the best. If not, any normal bottle would also work.
- Now, take the bottom half of the bottle and cover it entirely with a white sheet.
- Use glue or tape to paste the white sheet on the bottle and make sure no transparent part of the plastic bottle is visible.
- Put glossy tapes all around the white sheet in vertical or horizontal pattern to decorate it. You can also draw border like patterns, using sketch pens on the visible white sheet spaces.
- Your simple yet pretty pen holder is now ready! You can put your pencils/markers/pens in it and keep it on your study table.

WORDS VERSE

Harbingers of winter solstice

Ashish Magoo,

AIS Saket, Alumnus
(EIC - Batch 2008)

'Tis not winter habiliments
Nor the frozen ligaments
That herald the northern run
Of our scintillating sun

'Tis not the palatable potpourri
Of oranges and strawberries
That serves as a culinary prelude
Betwixt fall and spring's interlude

'Tis not the hallowed hymns
Nor the wistful Christmassy whims
That signal the seasonal sonnet
Oh, so delicious and dulcet

'Tis not the dearth of mirth
Nor the bouquet of pansies
That usher the ultimate Uttarayan

Fostering fecundity and fun

Oh, it's the farmer's sickle
Reaping trickle by trickle
Harvesting his tenacious toil
From life stimulating soil

That heralds the hibernal solstice
And Mother Earth's blissful bounty
It's the seeker's spiritual longing
To savour the sense of belonging

Climaxing in a cocooning crescendo
With playful gravitas and gusto
That beckons the spring cornucopia
Its ethereal and dainty utopia

Both rejoicing the fruit of labour
Of the farmers' moiling saber
Come, celebrate with festive fervour
Their effortless endeavour 🇮🇳



India breathes again

Aditi Jha, AIS Saket, XI F

The azure and untamed Ganga flows
Down Himalayas, singing songs it knows

Tales of land with wounds overlooked
Still garnered with courage she stood

Commanded sons and daughters to create
World of love, not violence and hate

Of justice, social, economic and political
Provide citizen's with justice that's ethical

Of liberty to think and express opinion
Have faith and follow whichever religion

Of equality for all, not what bigots say
Grasp opportunities that come our way

Of fraternity to maintain sense of unity
Celebrate others, treat each with dignity

My nation has cried for way too long
But now we aim to see a new dawn. 🇮🇳



Brush 'n' Easel

Kirtida Agrawal
AIS Gur 43, IX C





Sikkim has the highest literacy rate and per capita income amongst all Himalyan Indian states.



I my India

Amitians Of AIS Vas 6 Once Again Knock The Patriot Hearts On Republic Day

Laurels and legionnaires



Aadya Kapoor

AIS Vasundhara 6, XII D

As thousands of people throng the lawns of Rajpath on January 26 year after year, in order to witness the annual spectacle that celebrates the birth of the Indian constitution, the spirit of patriotism rekindles and peaks to a new high. As a chief contributing factor in it, the Republic Day parade, with beautifully clad soldiers of the Army, Navy, and the Airforce, exhibits India's strength and unity along with decorated tableaux from different states of the country. Also, an integral part of the celebrations, the award presentation ceremony, acts as the icing on the cake. Read on to know the various awards that get presented on this day every year...

The Padma Awards

Instituted in the year 1954, Padma Awards are India's second-highest civilian awards. They have three categories, namely Padma Vibhushan which is given for 'exceptional and distinguished service', followed by Padma Bhushan pre-



sented for 'distinguished service of high order', and lastly, Padma Shree which is given for 'distinguished service'.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

A civilian honour in India, this award has two categories, namely Bal Shakti Puraskar and Bal Kalyan Puraskar. The Prime Minister has been felicitating the children under the age of 18 for their exceptional achievement in sports, innovation, social service, scholastic, arts and science, and bravery since 1996. The latter, on the other hand, is given to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution towards service for children in the field of child development, protection, and welfare. The awardees are conferred with a medal, a certificate, and

a cash prize of 1 lakh INR each.

The Gallantry Awards

India's military personnel are honoured with a total of six Gallantry Awards for their show of bravery and sacrifice. The Param Vir Chakra, given for displaying acts of valour during wartime, is the highest military decoration in this category. The Ashoka Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Vir Chakra and Shaurya Chakra, in the same order of precedence, are the other awards presented to the armed forces for their dedicated service to the nation.

Correctional Services Medals

The President of India awards Correctional Services Medals to the prison personnel for their 'special services' that include

management of duties during mass admission of prisoners, handling of riots, and the prevention of prisoner escapement.

The President's Police Medals

The law enforcement personnel are bestowed with three Police Medals for meritorious services, distinguished services, and gallantry in saving life and property, in preventing crime, or arresting criminals. These awards were established in 1951, and initially known as the President's Police and Fire Service Medal.

Jeevan Raksha Padak

Introduced in 1961, this award consists of three major categories - Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak. Civilians, law enforcers, and defense personnel are awarded with the aforementioned for saving the lives of other people from accidents involving electrocution, drowning, fire or natural disasters. Evidently thus, these awards play a paramount role in acknowledging the efforts of the people who dedicate their lives to serve India and its citizens. May the force (and awards) be with these heroes forever! 🇮🇳



Reminiscing the historic day

Reliving The Celebration

Anika Bansal

AIS Vasundhara 6, X D

January 26, 1950
Thursday, 8 pm

Dear Diary,

Today has been the most exhilarating day of my life as I got to witness the first-ever Republic Day parade that marked the culmination of our beloved nation's long struggle to become a sovereign, democratic republic. It commemorates the day when the Indian Constitution, adopted on November, 1949, came into effect. Thus, as we rushed to the Irwin Stadium, with some 15,000 people, the celebratory atmosphere all around us felt electric, and the spirit of freedom, infectious. Having seated as per the seating arrangements laid down, we eagerly waited for the festivities to commence. And as we thus waited, our new president, Dr Rajendra Prasad arrived at the amphitheatre with the Indonesian President, Dr Sukarno, in a state coach, bearing the Ashoka emblem, drawn by the majestic horses from Australia. Upon their arrival, the crowd, including me, cheered with our tricoloured flags raised high and unified cries of 'Jai Hind!' filled the arena. A resounding 31-gun salute followed next and for the first time since morning, as the gravity of this milestone in India's history slowly started to set in, the effervescence in me quieted into something solemn. As the President saluted the 3000-armed forces that had gathered immediately after, our

nationalistic fervour rose to new heights. Post that, having hoisted the tricoloured flag for the first time, the President gave a beautiful speech. Some of his words still echo in my mind, even hours later - "Today, for the first time in our long history, we find the whole of this vast land...brought together under the jurisdiction of one constitution and one union which takes over responsibility for the...men and women who inhabit it," he said, and trust me when I say this, a shiver ran down my spine yet again as I journaled it just now.

Moving on with the celebrations, he awarded the prestigious Param Vir Chakra, India's highest gallantry award, to four soldiers for their courage and sacrifices in the Kashmir Operation in 1947-48, two of them posthumous. Then, the Armed Forces put on a grand parade for us, synchronised to the last step and breath, after which we sang the national anthem and dispersed. Outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan, people, dressed in finery, came from adjoining states to take part in the celebration, and as we stepped out into the festive air, we felt the fact set in - India had become the first Commonwealth country to have entirely come into its own, making the Republic Day celebrations the biggest national ceremony of the 20th century. This historic day, as a consequence, has been etched in my heart as a profound memory and I am glad I got the opportunity to share it with you.

-A proud patriot

Solve the crossword

Here, test your constitutional knowledge by completing this Republic Day special puzzle...

Across:

- A term that implies-citizens cannot be discriminated against on any basis
- A term that implies-all the citizens should behave like the members of the same family
- A system where wealth is generated socially and shared equally by society
- A term that implies - no external power can dictate the government of India
- A country where the head of the state is an elected person

Down:

- A term for "all are equal before the law"
- A country where citizens have complete freedom to follow any religion
- A system of government through elected representatives
- A term that implies that there are no unreasonable restrictions on the citizens



Crossword by : Chitralkha A. Borah, AIS Vas 6, IX D



The official languages of Sikkim are English, Nepali, Sikkimese and Lepcha.



See Sikkim

Forever 'amar'

The Flame Of The Immortal Soldier Narrates Its Tale

Illustration: Vanya Rustagi, AIS Vas 6, V B

Ananya Mittal

AIS Vasundhara 6, X B

I know that just one glance at my being instantly makes you recognise who I am, and fills you with a bittersweet pride. Yes, you are right; I am Amar Jawan Jyoti, and I was created to honour and immortalise the martyred and unknown soldiers who bravely fought in the Indo-Pakistan war half a decade ago. A lot of you don't know how I came into being. Well, I was constructed underneath the India Gate in December of 1971 and was inaugurated by Indira Gandhi in the following year. My name tells you that I am amar, so ever since my birth, it has become an Indian custom that on every Republic Day, before the parade, the President, Prime Minister, Chief of the Air, Navy, and Army Staff place wreath on me to pay homage to those soldiers. I burn high to memorialise the soldiers who lost their lives in that 51 year old conflict, the one that resulted in the creation of now independent Bangladesh,



and it is my rich history that makes me a centre of attraction for the tourists as they pay a special visit to see me. I have the phrase 'Amar Jawan' written in gold on all four sides of my pedestal which means 'Immortal Soldiers' that stand true to my name. A self-loading rifle L1A1 has also been placed on my barrel on a pedestal and is capped by the helmet of an unknown soldier. On all four sides of me, I am bound by one urn

each, and on Independence Day and Republic Day every year, all the four flames around me are lit during the ceremony. However, the flame that sits on me is lit all year round, making it immortal, and thus, giving me my name.

My name is so wide and far-reaching that my twin, a new Amar Jawan Jyoti, was created in 2019 at the National War Memorial by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And now in

2022, after 50 years of existence, I am being merged with my twin at National War Memorial. A part of my flame was carried to the memorial, and together, we now burn anew. People pay tribute to the fallen soldiers by reading their names on my Tyag Chakra, and it makes me feel honoured to be a signifier of such a valorous act. My ultimate aim is to keep their memory, name and spirit forever amar with me. 🇮🇳



Tiranga salad

Saanvi Sharma & Kavya Sharma, AIS Vas 6, III C

INGREDIENTS

Kiwis (sliced)1 bowl	Powdered sugar1 tbsp
Bananas (sliced)1 bowl	Black salt 1 pinch
Oranges (peeled).....1 bowl	Lemon juice1 tsp

PROCEDURE

- In a small bowl, add lemon juice, powdered sugar and black salt. Mix them completely until a uniform liquid is formed.
- Now take a tall glass or even a custard glass and arrange cut kiwi slices as the first layer.
- Pour a little of your mixed lemon syrup on top.
- Layer pieces of banana on top of the kiwi for the second layer of your salad, and again, pour a little of your lemon syrup on top.
- Finally add oranges on top as the final layer of your tri-colour and again, drizzle your mixed lemon syrup.
- For decoration, you can add in a small flag on top, and your tiranga fruit salad is ready. It is so simple that even a tiny tot can make it for their family members and enjoy the true spirit of Republic Day.

POEMS

Saluting the brave

Harshita Pareek, AIS Vas 6, XI C

Those who worked hard enough
When things at border get rough
Are ones who deserve the most
Yet they're ones we never boast

Working hard all day and night
Flag-wrapped body fought right
How their families wish to know
Why our beloved really had to go

We as citizens of the country
Don't think of what we're to do
Neither did we visit the cemetery
Nor did what we're supposed to do

All it was a fight for the brave
That led the path to their grave



Illustration: Sheoli Agrawal, AIS Vas 6, VII F

We did nothing to protect them
At least respect without contempt

Celebrating utter joy of republic
Saluting sacrifices of the dynamic
Take a moment to present a tribute
They've earned this merited salute. 🇮🇳

The seeds of freedom

Avika Agarwal
AIS Vasundhara 6, VI E

Let's pay homage to the army
To the lives that are gone
And the people gunned down
For being awake at dawn

Let's respect their courage
For sacrificing their lives
Even after knowing the ills
Of war, and how a few survive

Let's be like our soldiers
We might think it's cruel
To walk in synchronisation
And to follow every rule

Thank you to the soldiers

Illustration: Sahitya Garg, AIS Vas 6, VI D



For every drop of blood
As in the hardest times
For the nation, you stood

Let's recall and appreciate
The anonymous once again
And put patriotism on display
On this Republic Day! 🇮🇳

Gandhiji's lathi

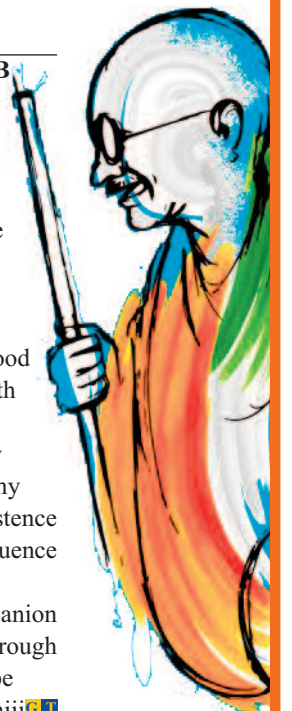
Ayana Sahay
AIS Vasundhara 6, XII B

In my decades of experience
Never had I ever thought
That I would get to witness
Such a mighty act of resilience

From Sabarmati to Dandi
I formed with Gandhiji a bond
For freedom and the greater good
With a thirst for purity and truth

In our sole quest for autonomy
The world developed dichotomy
As I became a symbol of persistence
My existence became a consequence

I'll always be his closest companion
Supporting him through and through
I am where I am supposed to be
Happily laid to rest with Gandhiji 🇮🇳



Do you know?

Rishi Garg, AIS Vas 6, IX D

Do you know why Republic Day is celebrated with so much zeal and enthusiasm?

The Republic Day means a lot to the citizens of the country because the day marks the empowerment of Indian citizens to select their own government, making them a fully functional democracy. On this date in 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect, replacing the Government of India Act, turning us into a newly formed republic.

Do you know where Republic Day

parade is held?

The Republic Day parade is held at Rajpath, starting from the gates of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in the capital of the country, and the parade aims to showcase the multifaceted sides of India's rich heritage and history, along with its aims and goals for the future.

Do you know how long the Republic Day celebrations last?

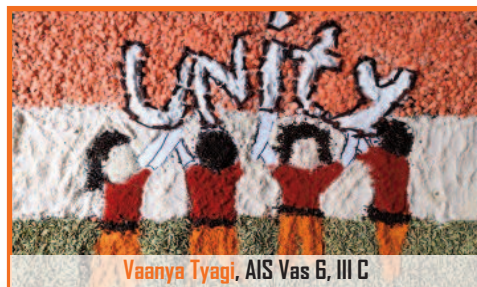
Well, the celebrations usually last for a few days, and from 2022 onwards, the Republic Day celebrations will begin from January 23 to include the birth anniversary of

Subash Chandra Bose and will conclude on January 29 with the Beating Retreat Ceremony.

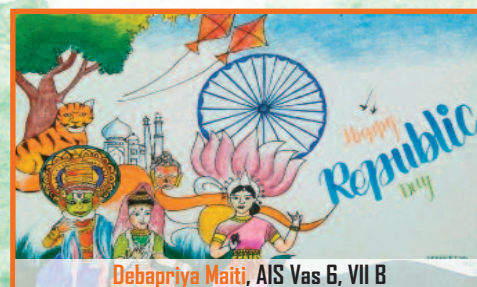
Do you know what Beating Retreat Ceremony entails?

Beating Retreat Ceremony is a centuries-old military tradition that first began in the 17th century with King James II ordering his troops to beat drums, lower their flags, and organise a parade to announce the end of a day of war. The same steps are re-enacted here as well by the Indian armed forces with various Indian songs and compositions added to make the performance even special.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



Vaanya Tyagi, AIS Vas 6, III C



Debapriya Maiti, AIS Vas 6, VII B



Ahana Anand, AIS Vas 6, VIII A



See Sikkim

The predominant religions followed in the state are Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

Amity's pen pride

Young Author Wins PM's Mentoring YUVA Scheme

AIS VYC Lucknow

It is a moment of great pride and honour for Amity as Kainaath Arif of Class X A got selected as one of the 75 under-30 young authors all over India for Prime Minister's Mentoring YUVA Scheme designed for mentoring young authors of India. She is also one of the only two students below 15 years of age who got selected at the national level in an event that received 16000 entries in 22 scheduled languages and English from India and the Indian diaspora. Final result of the national scholarship cum mentorship scheme, executed and implemented by The National Book Trust, was declared on December 27, 2021, with all the book proposals being analysed through three layers of scrutiny by an expert panel. Launched as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav on May 29, 2021, to commemorate 75 years of India's Freedom movement, the contest required young minds to write about India's freedom fighters - all the events associated with them and their tales of valour during the freedom struggle. Kainaath became victorious for her 3000 words story, 'The Tarsier', which reimagines the murder of Lord Hardinge through the eyes of an eleven year old waiter. Based on 'The Delhi Conspiracy Case', an attempted assassination of the Viceroy of India in the early 1900s, the story features a bespectacled young boy with an unusual name, Tarshi, and even more unusual thirst for knowledge of all sorts. The protagonist is clever and astute, and understands the problems his country



Kainaath (bottom left) at the event

faces with more depth than most of the adults. She titled the story as 'The Tarsier' after the main character and his namesake, a Southeast Asian primate. As the top 75 selected YUVA authors, Kainaath will now undergo six-months of mentorship, during which she will get research and editorial support and guidance from eminent authors and the editorial team of NBT for developing her book. During the mentorship, she will receive a consolidated scholarship of INR 50,000 per month for a period of 6 months, which totals to INR 3 lakhs. Her book will be published as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav flagship program, and she will receive 10% royalty for its suc-



The certificate of participation

cessful publication. The published books of 75 authors will be later translated into other Indian languages, ensuring the exchange of culture and literature between different states of India in the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

It is notable that Kainaath was also chosen as one of the 5, out of 75, YUVA winners to address the audience at the celebration of National Youth Day on January 12, 2022. Dr Vikram Sampath, noted historian and author, was the chief guest of the event, with Professor Govind Prasad Sharma, chairman, NBT and Yuvraj Malik, director, NBT also gracing the event.

About PM's Mentoring YUVA scheme
The unique scheme aims to develop a stream of under-30 writers, who can write on a spectrum of subjects to promote Indian heritage, culture, and knowledge. It aims to mentor budding authors to write proficiently across various genres and provide a window to them to express themselves in their mother tongue and represent India at the international level.



Cadets at the Kasam Parade salute the chief guest

The high josh

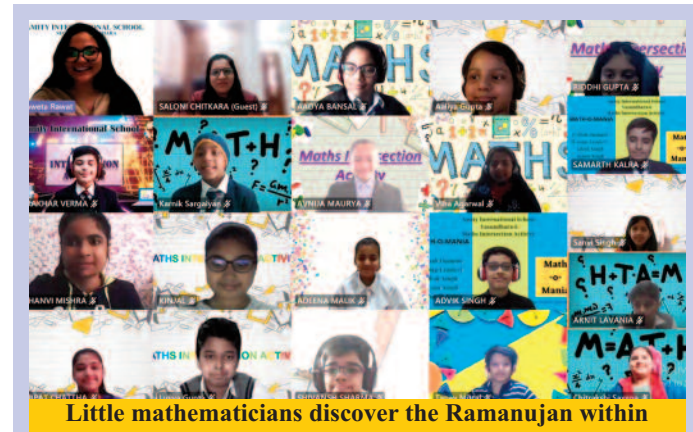
At Military Training Camp

AIMC

Cadets Saurabh Singh & Maurya Sharma, AIMC, XII

A five-day ACC-Military Training Camp (MTC) was held from Dec 18-24, 2021, at Amity Education Valley, Manesar, with its final Kasam Parade being graced by Dr Ashok K. Chauhan, Founder President, Amity Universe. Sixty six students from Classes VIII-XII attended the camp held in a forest. Each tent in the camp housed four buddy pairs of cadets, who for the next five days practiced drill, trained in shooting and parasailing, and engaged in adventurous activities like Zorbing, obstacles course, river crossing, etc. On the final day of the camp, Kasam Parade, headed by Cadet Saurabh Singh as the pa-

rade commander, was held. Rear Admiral Kishan K Pandey, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), Director (HR), AUH was the chief guest of the parade. For the first time in the history of Amity Universe, the parade was telecasted virtually across all Amity institutions. Founder President motivated the cadets with his wise words and shared his vision of fostering the youth of the nation as the soldiers of tomorrow under the mentorship of eminent retired, experienced army officers. The chief guest, in his address, asked the cadets, "How's the Josh?" for which the response "High Sir" reverberated in the entire Amity Education Valley. The cadets also interacted with AIMC alumnus Samarth Bhatnagar who was selected for National Defence Academy in the year 2020.



Little mathematicians discover the Ramanujan within

Ramanujan in me

AIS Vasundhara 6

To celebrate the genius of Ramanujan, students of Class VI highlighted the application of Math in real life through games and toys on Dec 23, 2021. The event also commemorated Ramanujan's birth anniversary that is celebrated as the National Mathe-

matics Day every year. Students created games on concepts like decimals, fractions, simplifications, integers, and ratio and proportion. They also got the opportunity to hone their skills of data mining, collation, communication, and collaboration, etc., by making virtual presentations on the various mathematical concepts.

Remembering Ramanujan

Celebrating The Genius Of The Mathematics Wizard

AIS Noida

The school organised 21st Ramanujan, an inter-school Mathematics competition, online on December 27, 2021. The competition is organised every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of legendary Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan, also celebrated as the National Mathematics Day on December 22. Conceptualised under the visionary leadership and guidance of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF, the competition aims to provide a challenging, competitive, and engaging mathematics exploration experience to young minds. The event began with 'Math O'



The young Ramanujans test their wit at Math O' Wit

Wit' for Classes VI-VIII, wherein the skills like problem solving, logic and reasoning, and analytical dexterity were assessed. Top six teams of this round then competed in the next round 'Matheletes', a nail-biting quiz, with five sub-theme rounds, namely calculation, dou-

ble trouble, statistics, clockwise anticlockwise, and rapid fire. In 'Math O' Wit', AIS Noida bagged the first position, followed by AIS Saket and AIS Gurugram 46 at the second and third position respectively. The competition for Classes IX-X was held in two rounds, first

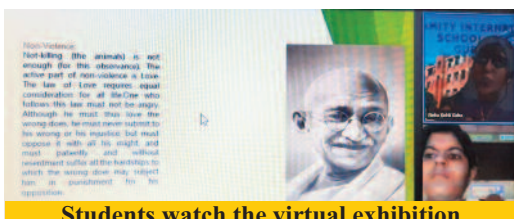
of which was a quiz. Top six teams of the quiz round then competed in the second round which comprised of mathematics activities like MCQs, riddles, HOTS video question, and myth blasters. AIS Noida again won first position in the event, with AIS Gurugram 46 and AIS Gurugram 43 at second and third spot respectively. At the end of the competition, the students were shown a movie based on the life and achievements of Srinivasa Ramanujan, followed by a video presentation about the journey of the Ramanujan Competition, conducted by Amity, over the last 20 years. The enthralling event of mathematics finally ended with the recitation of the school song.

To Sabarmati

Revisiting Gandhi

AIS Gurugram 46

A virtual tour of the famous Sabarmati Ashram was organised for Classes VII-VIII on October 12, 2021. The students enjoyed the virtual sojourn of the Ashram which houses a museum called Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya and is divided into five units - an office, a library, two photo galleries, and an auditorium. It also has a large open prayer ground and is a treasure trove housing the largest number of original manuscripts of Gandhiji's letters and articles. The museum has eight life-size oil paintings and ex-



Students watch the virtual exhibition

hibitions on Gandhiji's life titled 'My life is my message' and 'Gandhiji in Ahmedabad'. The virtual visit to Sabarmati Ashram helped students know more about Gandhiji's life and thoughts and their relevance for the youth, society, government, and humanity as a whole. They also learnt more about historical events like Dandi march, breaking salt law, taking care of mill workers via the concept of Udyog Mandir, and the importance of Khadi and Swadeshi. The tour was followed by an online quiz on Gandhiji which the students enjoyed a lot.

Incredible India

Exploring The Diversity

AIS VKC Lucknow

School organised *Atulya Bharat*, an online cultural fest, for Classes I-V on December 18, 2021, with the aim to make students aware of the diverse cultures, traditions, physical features, customs and rituals, and the rich heritage, all of which make India incredible. Students explored numerous facts about the states of Uttar

Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka, and amazed the audience with many hitherto unknown facts about them. The students also put up several performances highlighting the beauty of our incredible country. Apart from that, they also presented well scripted, real-life inspired, depictions of the lifestyles of the various states, throwing light on their long for-



From the heart of India

gotten rich history. Speaking on the occasion, school principal, Rachna Mishra, said that it made her immensely proud to see her students growing up as patriotic citizens of their country. She also urged the students to be responsible and dutiful towards their nation.

Sikkim has the largest production of cardamom in India and second largest in the world after Guatemala.

All top quotes contributed by Aditi Thakur, AIS Gurugram 43, VIII A



The new superhero award goes to...

...The Artists Who Made All The Lockdowns Bearable

Srusti Mishra

AIS Gurugram 46, XII I

There's always a flipside to each coin; similar is the case with the pandemic. If it restricted our movements on one hand, it showcased us the liberating quality of art that proffers positive relief and has always been intrinsic in the journey of mental care. Due credit, thus, must be given to their creators because in a life of strife, to be able to rise from personal anxieties, exhaustions, loss, and creative blocks, in an effort to comfort others, is nothing short of incredible. Art has never been easy and the pressure, both internal and external, adds on the severity of the thought, but it is beautiful and serene, and beautiful things provide joy and much needed relief, having bloomed from pain and sacrifice.

Like an arrow in the blue sky

With theatres closed due to pandemic-induced lockdowns, both film and theatre productions suffered substantially. Anticipated releases were postponed till next sea-

son, much to the disappointment of both the public as well as the production teams. However, there was a huge inflow of visual content on virtual platforms that received much praise for the marvelous content they put forward. Providing memorable productions during this time was like an episode of the Squid Games - may the best show win. From the iconic intro song of Scam 1992 and the close realities of Kota Factory to the conflict of A Family Man and the urge to pay for a higher subscription just to see the Friends Reunion, every show brightened our days with the anticipation of what's to come next, and calls for a much needed appreciation for the actors and producers who breathed life into the characters to help us persevere and get through that phase in our lives.

Like an echo in the forest

Music has always been irreplaceable and so was the case during the pandemic. As expected of them, several songs topped the charts, with social media content creators further adapting to the current trends of reels and edits on the same - an innovation

to survive and remain sane. From independent musicians like Lucky Ali who rose to their genuine desire to create, to the memes that were born thanks to the unforgettable 'Rasode mein kaun tha?' remix by Yashraj Mukhate, music helped us escape the grim reality of the world and acted as our only solace. To add to that, musicians like the South Korean act BTS, with their mini album BE, captured and showcased the varied experiences and emotions of people around the world as well as their own during the pandemic, all while sending out a message of happiness and hope for their fans and others to assure us of the better times that await us ahead. Because no matter what, 'life goes on'.

Like a lullaby in the night

Art echoes life and during the pandemic, artists expressed themselves through their art; whether it was expressing a block, lack of motivation, or overflowing creativity (a welcome distraction), whatever the mood was, it got reflected in their creations. They also used social media to their advantage by providing tutorials and creating reels. All in all, the content that came to life during the dead of the night, with due appreciation from the public, has given inspiration and learning to millions of others. For when a piece of art moves and touches you, you feel like your own feelings have been acknowledged. As you read the lyrics of your favourite song that resonates with you, it instantly establishes a connection between you and the artist's mind. To be able to achieve this connection is not an easy task and only a true artist can successfully deliver it. Besides, drawing out creativity is personal, subjective to individual will. Thus, if artists tear themselves apart in order to bring their art to us and hold us when we need it the most, perhaps, like a new generation of superheroes, it showcases nothing but the brilliance of human capabilities and the emotional depth with which they function. To these superheroes, thus, we owe our life!

A salute would be too formal for this, a thank you will almost be negligible, so we'll let the silence of comfort speak!

Shagun ka lifafa

Enveloping The Emotions



Suhani Malik

AIS Pushp Vihar, Alumna

Weddings. Birthdays. Festivals. What's common? Correct! Me! Yours truly, emotionally and economically, *Shagun Ka Lifafa* aka money envelope; *naam toh suna hi hoga?* As part of Indian customs and traditions, I am passed on as a gift with copious amount of spondulix inside (Sike! The money part, I hate to break it to you, is directly proportional to the nature of relationship you share with your *tauji*, *fufaji ke bete ki beti ka pati* etc., and is subjected to kinship risk!) I have come a long way, though. From my sapped chalky white self to the current trending polychromatic version; from my struggling days when you would scribble hard on my enervated self to now when the names are just inked on me as part of the production process, I have gone through it all and seen it all. The ups and downs, the folds and creases, all of it, yes.

I have spent days lying under scads of useless receipts, have been bruised, mishandled, abandoned and what not, but the one thing that backed me up this entire time (barring the one or two times when greedy, vacuous kids would rip me out and trade me for a useless candy. I don't miss them!), is my confidante Ek Rupay Ka Sikka - the only one who does not pout like that *dur ki massi* whether I am empty or full of cash. Together we have seen the best of days, the worst

of times...the season of darkness... the season of light.... that was my inner Dickens blathering. But this tale of the two of us transcends all monetary bounds. You, homo sapiens, on the other hand, confusticate me on occasions. I mean, one look at me and your distant relative knows how much I own; why so intrusive? Whatever happened to stop judging others and minding your own business! Furthermore, there are times when you all fuss over "Aapne 1100 daale ya 2100?" or times when some of you squabble and (pretend to) return me to your insisting relatives saying, "Iski kya zarurat hai?" Truth be told, it creases me up (no pun intended). Now I do understand, from what little I know about etiquette, that it is done out of propriety, but come on, you know you want those crisp, freshly withdrawn bills, so why be so modest? Also, as you present me to the new couple at weddings as some sort of blessing, well, fear the lord, it is a known fact that you do so to mark your attendance at the event so that the recipient fetches in the same amount or more (preferably) to the forthcoming events at your place (no, I didn't say that!). Not to forget the "we-have-given-1500-let's-eat-food-and-snacks-worth-that-much" troupe. Huh! P.S. Don't tie me with that inane thread next time, it hurts, okay! Also, I hate your Jamuna Nagar *wali chachi!* She eyes me up through and through and could never wait enough to open me. Don't tell her though, please!

