

The worst out of waste

As Garbage Piles Up And Up, Maybe It Is Time To Finally Take Out The Trash

S. Mysha Urooj & Vasudha Sharma
AIS Noida, XII

One sweeps, sweeps, and sweeps the dirt out of the house, thinking it enough to be clean. Yet this trash, thrown out of our eyes and our mind, accumulates, speck by speck, until the mountain towers over us. But the question is – why is the tower for our country so much bigger than the ones who throw away more? Statistics suggest that Americans produce almost eight times more waste than an Indian; they consume 109 kg of plastic in comparison to an Indian's 11 kg. Europe, too, stands to be responsible for more e-waste than we are, so why exactly are their streets and lanes clean and oh-so-shiny whereas we struggle to sweep our sidewalks clean?

Look at heaps & heaps of garbage Why does it plague the modern age

The problem of the mountain starts at its root cause – the garbage generated by the nation. According to the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, around 34.7 lakh tonnes of plastic waste was generated by the nation in the year 2019-20. Not to mention that India generates around 62 million tonnes of waste annually, and the figure is only bound to increase to 165 million tonnes by 2030. As if these figures aren't harrowing enough, 43% of plastic generated in the country is meant to be single use, thrown away in seconds but taking centuries and centuries to break down. As it ends up in our rivers, the terror of this garbage carries on – 90% of the total plastic that

ends up in oceans are from rivers in South Asia and China, Ganges and Indus being one of the biggest culprits.

Heaps & heaps of problem piles up When will solution join the club

All these monumental figures would not transform themselves into such a big headache if it weren't for the real problem of India – its garbage isn't dealt with properly. Out of the entire waste generated in India, only about 43 million tonnes of it – 70%, is collected. Out of this, only 12

million tonnes is treated, and the remaining 31 million tonnes is dumped in landfill sites to rot away. The numbers for the rising plastic waste are actually no better. The country generates 34.7 lakh tonnes of plastic waste every year, where only 15.8 lakh tonnes is recycled and 1.67 lakh tonnes is co-processed, meaning that only half of it is even dealt with. A part of the problem lies in the municipalities not having established waste collection, segregation, or recycling systems that work efficiently. The garbage collectors hired in the country, too, are unmotivated as no fair wage or needed technology for safe

and efficient collection is provided.

Oh, lord, look at that heap & heap Will the dirt always be ours to keep

Even when such a tormenting reality is overshadowing us, we need to remember the ray of hope – the garbage can be dusted away if dealt with correctly. Various initiatives for the same have already been taken or are well under the way. Just in the last year, from July 1, 2022, India banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of identified single use plastic items. And the same July came with more good news – earth sciences minister Jitendra Singh stated that more than 200 tonnes of garbage, mainly single use plastic, was removed from the seacoasts during the first part of their Coastal Clean-Up campaign. Every wrapper swept away counts towards success. For the same, multiple waste management rules are in tow; and waste segregators, waste pickers, and rag pickers have been included in the MCD process. Of course, being mindful of littering and not creating waste in the first place comes as the best solution as prevention is better than cure.

The reality of the situation is that if the privilege of creating more and more waste is bestowed upon us, it is also our liability and duty to sweep all of it in its rightful place – the biggest reason why our country, despite creating less waste than others, suffers so much. If change is to be witnessed, proper management is the key. Otherwise, it will keep on piling up in heaps and heaps. 🇮🇳



Illustration: Tarishi Agarwal, AIS Noida, XI C

THE GT POLL

What should the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai do to deal with the alarming air pollution in the city?

- a) Install air purifier towers
- b) Cut out vehicular traffic
- c) Regulate construction sites

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Coming next

Best of luck for your exams!

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What's inside



The sense of belongingness
Tête-à-tête with Gaur Gopal Das, renowned monk, lifestyle coach, author, motivational speaker, filmmaker, as well as a member of ISKCON.

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And Bangladesh was born
Decoding the 1971 Liberation War, a revolution sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist movement that led to the birth of Bangladesh.

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Hop. Swirl. Sway
A look at the artistic brilliance of various traditional Indian folk dances that are a trademark essence of the country's culture.

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POLL RESULT

for GT Edition, February 6, 2023

How do you rate the current budget?



Results as on February 11, 2023

Around The WORLD

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



USA

Beyoncé breaks Grammy record

By bagging her 32nd trophy at the 65th Annual Grammy Awards, Beyoncé breaks the record for the most Grammy wins by an artist in history. Claiming the award for Best Dance/Electronic Music Album for Renaissance, the singer surpassed late Georg Solti, who had won 31 awards in his career. She also bagged the awards for Best Dance/Electronic Music Recording, Traditional R&B Performance, and Best R&B Song at the ceremony.



TURKEY

Emergency announced

A three-month state of emergency has been announced by president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in ten provinces that are worst affected by the earthquakes which killed around 7900 people and counting. With more than 100 aftershocks, tens of thousands of people have been injured, various buildings have collapsed, and freezing weather conditions have further endangered survivors in Syria. The quake, one of the strongest to hit the region in more than 100 years, struck 23 kms east of Nurdagi at a depth of 24.1 kms. Even WHO has warned that up to 23 million people could be affected by the massive natural calamity.



CHINA

Trade with US hit record

Even as the diplomatic relations between USA and China reach new lows, the trade between the two have hit a record high. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the trade between the nations totaled 690.6 billion USD in 2022. The stats showcase that the US imports from China have increased to 536.8 billion USD and US exports to the Asian country has increased to 153.8 billion USD. Despite the numbers, the two biggest economies in the world have been locked in a bitter trade war since 2018, ever since the then President Trump imposed tariffs on China.



BRITAIN

King Charles stamp unveiled

For the first time since the death of Queen Elizabeth, a new 'everyday' stamp featuring King Charles's image has been revealed. This counts as the latest item in the series where the government is slowly replacing the depictions of the Queen with the new monarch. Items like coins, bank notes, and royal cypher have been changed to King Charles. With this, King Charles becomes the seventh British monarch to appear on a definitive stamp.



CHILE

Deadliest wildfires

In one of the deadliest wildfires in the country, 270,000 hectares of land has been destroyed along with the death of 26 people so far. According to a report by the National Forestry Corporation, there are 275 active fires in the area, 69 of which are currently in combat. Though firefighters are battling to hold back the forest fires, the authorities have warned that the hot and dry weather in the country could possibly exacerbate the deadly blazes.



TANZANIA

Voiceless frog discovered

In an expedition to discover the tree toad Churamiti maridadi, a group of researchers have discovered a new species of frog, *Hyperolius ukaguruensis*, that does not croak, ribbit, or emit any sound. Found in the Ukaguru mountains, the new species belongs to a group of 'spiny throated' reed frogs which are rare and are already at the risk of extinction. Because of its uniqueness, they are not identified by their croaks, but rather by the unique spines on their throats.



INDIA

New judges for SC

Five new judges took oath as the Supreme Court judges, taking the court's strength to 32. The newly appointed judges, as cleared by the Union government, include Justice Pankaj Mithal, Justice Sanjay Karol, PV Sanjay Kumar, Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, and Justice Manoj Misra. The judges were recommended by the SC Collegium in December last year, and their oath was administered by the chief justice of India, DY Chandrachud.

News Flash

► **Pakistan:** Authorities block and then unblock Wikipedia over removal of 'blasphemous content' ► **Australia:** T20 captain Aaron Finch announces retirement from international cricket ► **Italy:** Tsunami alert issued; pupil told to stay away from coasts

The sense of belongingness

Mastering The Art Of Connectedness With Lifestyle Coach, Gaur Gopal Das

Mentor Talk

In the race to achieve material gains, we often lose the sense of where we truly belong. Read on as renowned monk, author, and lifestyle coach, **Gaur Gopal Das** shares with us stories that teach us how to inculcate the value of belongingness in our lives, on the birth anniversary of Dr Atul Chauhan, Chancellor, AUUP, which is celebrated as the Day of Belongingness every year.

Belongingness brings real joy

Story: When I was studying engineering in Pune, I, along with some of my friends, happened to visit Delhi once for a vacation. Since one of my friends hailed from a very affluent family, he booked us the presidential suite in a five-star hotel for our stay. However, once we started exploring the city, the same person had no qualms travelling with us in rickshaws and autos.

Moral: It is not the vehicle we are



Chairperson with lifestyle coach, Gaur Gopal Das

traveling in, but our companions who truly matter. We focus so much on the external stuff that we forget that the quality of our journey of life depends on our relationships and the deep connection we make with people.

Time's both objective & subjective

Story: During the same trip, we once returned to our hotel both famished and tired. Our friend decided to order food service and we were really looking forward to relaxing in our room. Howbeit, as

luck would have it, there was a power cut and even the generators were not working. Our room was on the 18th floor, and the prospect of climbing those many stairs was indeed a daunting one. However, cheered and motivated by this friend, we decided to do the needful. While climbing up, we shared jokes and experiences, and time just flew. We had made it to the 16th floor when we were sheepishly informed by our friend that he had forgotten the keys at the reception desk. Instead of fretting

and fuming, we went back to fetch the key the same way we had gone up, laughing and joking.

Moral: We all have 24 hours in a day, and that is the objective nature of time. How each one of us experiences those 24 hours is what makes it subjective. When we are having a good time, time flies in a jiffy, but when we are not having a good time, it comes to a standstill. How much we belong to the moment, to people around us, and to our own soul is what decides whether we will be happy or not.

The thread that keeps us afloat

Story: There was once a boy who was flying a kite with his father. As the boy noticed that the string was stopping the kite from going any higher, he asked his father to cut it and so he did in order to teach his son a very important life lesson that day. As he cut the string, the kite flew high for a few seconds, and then came crashing down. The father told his son that the kite could never go up without the help of the string, as it was the latter which held it up firmly in the sky.

Moral: The thread signifies three things in life:

•**Staying connected:** For it is the bond we share with our family, friends, society, nation, etc., that helps us achieve big things in life.

•**Values:** For only immature people alter their values to fit their ideas, unlike mature people who never compromise on their values.

•**Culture:** We often tend to let go of our cultural roots due to our misplaced notion of progressiveness. Remember, a tree needs to be deeply rooted for it to grow. [GT](#)

The book rap



Kabir Singh Negi, AGS Gur, IV

Books, books, and books
Don't judge them on their looks
Perceived as boring and bad
On the inside, they're fab

Wondering now what to read?
Here's a list, do pay heed
If it's adventure that you dig
Choose The Wimpy Kid

For magic lovers, it's no joke
Harry Potter is the one I vote
If you want simpler stories
There's Enid Blyton, my dearies

Give me humor, you say?

Read Hitchhiker's Guide to Galaxy
For those who love fantasy
Worry not, there's also plenty

No doubt, books are the best
Whether in a library or a fest
Every book is just amazing
Because reading is like craving

Books are our friends forever
Read them anywhere, wherever
Have faith and get going
Or you'll become boring

Books do make our brain spin
But finally you are bound to win
These lines are not a hoax
That's the rap for today folks! [GT](#)



Book Review

Rake in that review

Book: A Thousand Splendid Suns

Author: Khaled Hosseini

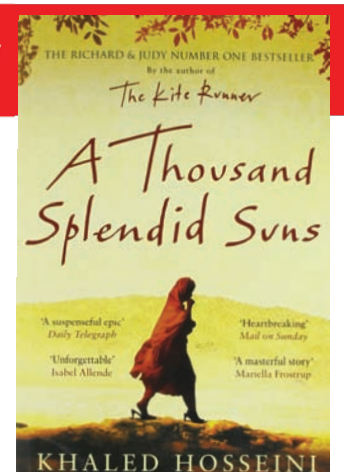
Published in: May 22, 2007

Genre: Fiction

Synopsis: The novel is set in an era when the Taliban had taken over Afghanistan. Being an extremist group, Taliban imposed several regressive laws, many of which led to the segregation and subjugation of women. The story follows the life of Mariam, a fifteen-year-old girl, who has lost everything and is sent to marry a much older man, Rasheed, who is a widowed shoemaker in Kabul. Mariam's life takes a turn for the worse as she is regularly abused by her husband. Nearly two decades later, her life gets

intertwined with a young teenager, Laila, who is set to face the same fate that Mariam had once suffered. Hostile with each other at first, they soon form a close bond. The story then follows their shared struggle to escape the clutches of abusive men and finally, flee the country for good.

Why is it worth reading: This is a phenomenal book whose powerful narrative explores the issue of women's rights. Through its two female protagonists, Mariam and Laila, the author delves deep into the condition of women under the Taliban regime. It is an emotionally challenging read which showcases the hardships and resilience of Afghani women. At the same time, the



book highlights the power of love and hope, and reiterates that one can overcome the hardest of obstacles armed with these qualities. A New York Times Bestseller for 15 weeks, this book is worth a read.

Iconic quotes: "One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs, or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls."

Rating: 5/5

Review by: Niyati Matta

AIS Vasundhara 1, XI D

Technology vs nature

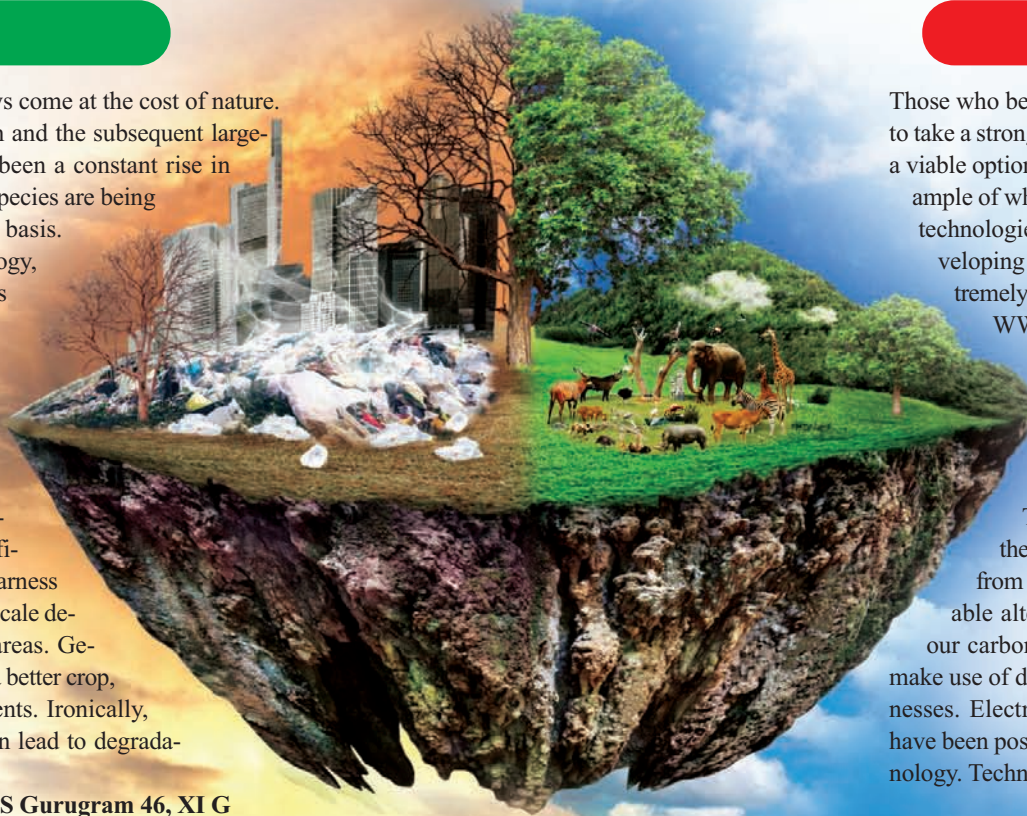
What's Your
Opinion?

The advancement in technology has made humans achieve brilliant feats that were once never even dreamt of, but in pursuing these advancements, have we left nature behind along the way? Does technological upgradation imply a downfall of the nature around us? Or can the two walk hand in hand? Here's presenting both sides of the coin.

VIEW

Technological advancements always come at the cost of nature. Ever since the industrial revolution and the subsequent large-scale use of fossil fuel, there has been a constant rise in global temperatures. Hundreds of species are being driven to extinction on a regular basis. Human demands, aided by technology, are increasing by the day. This has resulted in mass production and consumption, eventually leading to both the household and industrial waste actually being dumped in rivers and seas. Even technology that is used for development can have negative ramifications. Dams which are built to harness hydro-electricity often cause large-scale destruction of green cover in those areas. Genetically modified seeds may yield a better crop, but deplete the soil of all its nutrients. Ironically, even environmental technology can lead to degradation of nature.

Jyantika Ranjan, AIS Gurugram 46, XI G



COUNTERVIEW

Those who believe that technology degrades nature need to take a strong reality check. Because, first of all, there is a viable option known as 'green technology', a prime example of which is renewable energy. In fact, renewable technologies are also suited for remote areas and developing countries. Technology has proven to be extremely advantageous for wildlife as well. In China, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) and tech giant Intel are together harnessing the power of artificial intelligence through which endangered wildlife can be successfully tracked using drones and digital mapping.

Technology has also helped in dealing with the plastic menace by finding solutions ranging from melting plastic completely to developing viable alternatives. In fact, technology has reduced our carbon footprint too, as millions of people now make use of digital platforms to conduct their daily businesses. Electric vehicles that reduce carbon emissions have been possible only because of advancement in technology. Technology and nature thus can surely co-exist.

Arshiya Tyagi, AIS Gurugram 46, XI C

Arnav Goel, AIS Gurugram 43, XI B

Ding! Your batch of cookies are perfectly baked as you pull it out of the oven. You remove your mitts and wipe your hands. You are salivating and bite into the cookies like a gluttonous wolf. Your senses drift to bliss, but suddenly, a thought comes to your mind about the ethereal nature of the cookie and its voyage to reach this wondrous place (or do they call it seventh heaven?)

Status at 33 degrees Celsius

The dough starts its journey at this temperature. The butter starts to melt, flattening it. Butter is an emulsion comprising water and fats along with some dairy solids that hold the substances and prevent them from flying apart. The melted butter and the trapped water separate as bonds start to break, changing into steam, and exert pressure on the inside, trying to burst through.

Status at 62 degrees Celsius

At 58 degrees Celsius, the salmonella present in your eggs is fighting for its life due to extreme heat. As the heat rises, we begin to witness changes in the proteins originating mostly in eggs. There are dozens of proteins, each sensitive to a different

The seventh heaven

The Transmutation Of Dough Into A Yummy Cookie



temperature. In a newly laid egg, these proteins are like a yarn ball, and slowly the ball starts to uncoil and tangle with other yarn balls. This analogy describes the phenomenon of runny eggs becoming nearly solid and making the dough squishy.

Status at 100 degrees Celsius

Water completely boils away and your

cookie dries out, stiffens, and develops cracks across its surface. The steam previously trying to escape has completed its mission and leaves behind airy pockets giving the cookie its inherent flakiness. Your leavening agent (sodium bicarbonate) plays a secondary role. It reacts with acids to create carbon dioxide gas, thus making the air pockets larger.

Status at 154 degrees Celsius

This is the moment we have all been waiting for. The sweetest reaction that is known to humanity - all hail the Maillard reaction! This occurs when broken down proteins and sugars rearrange themselves, forming ring-like structures that give foods like a loaf of bread and a cookie their distinctive brown colour as these structures reflect light in a specific way. Maillard reaction also forms various flavour and aroma compounds, producing even more redolent smells and nectarous tastes.

Status at 180 degrees Celsius

Caramelisation commences at this temperature, changing the cookie's structure for the last time. Caramelisation is the process where molecules of sugar break down under high heat, creating the nutty, sweet, and slightly bitter flavour compounds that define caramel.

The last step is for you to take the cookies out and eat them, with a novel in one hand and a glass of warm milk to dunk them in the other. As you finish the cookies, you wonder why warm milk makes cookies taste even better, only to forget about this thought and drift into a peaceful sleep with a belly full of baked goods shortly after.

Voyage of Liberty

A Sneak Into How Statue Of Liberty Became A Symbol Of Power

Arnav Goel
AIS Gurugram 43, XI B

No. Not again. And I am certainly not giving you one for the gram. Sure, you'd like to show off that you were with me, but I am more than just your arm candy. I am history that is over 150 years old. I am pride ensconced in 225 tonnes of metal. I am heritage, celebrating the friendship of two nations. I am iconic, for I am a symbol of independence for one of the leading superpowers. I am Statue of Liberty. Yes, the one you all tourist-ey creatures have downsized to a mere photo prop.

I mean someone whose birth was christened with noble intents needs better place. When Frenchman La-bouyale envisaged me in 1865, he envisioned me as a gift to commemorate America's 100 years of Independence as well as a celebration of France and US' friendship. Soon, sculptor Frederic Bartholdi was on board, who de-

signed me with even nobler thoughts. Each element of his design encompassed symbolism. My crown represented light, with its spikes as sun rays reaching out to the world; the tablet engraved with July 4, 1776, i.e., the date of American independence; and shackles and chain placed at my foot marking the end of slavery in America. But all things beautiful come at a cost, and when it is about mammoth beauties like me, the cost is pretty high. No wonder then that both the Americans and French had to indulge in extensive fundraising to bear my costs. While France was responsible for creating the statue, the US was tasked with funding and building the pedestal.

I remember that time when I thought I would never be able to see the light of the day, but I was loved even before I was born. In 1885, Joseph Pulitzer put an ad in his paper New York World, inviting funds and in turn, printing the name of each and every donor. Though his efforts did generate some 100,000 USD, countless alterations were made in my structure due to lack of funds. For instance, my imposing pedestal was

supposed to reach 114 feet in height and be built of solid granite instead of its current 89 feet and concrete composition.

But with all the efforts and outpour of love, I was finally completed in 1884 in France. And then came the next challenge – transporting me across Atlantic to the US. They had to reduce me to 350 pieces, which were packed in 214 crates. But it

was only in 1886 that I was released to the world in a dedication ceremony that was overlooked by President Cleveland, and was un-

veiled by Bartholdi himself as 'Liberty Enlightening the World'.

Today, I stand as the most iconic symbols of American culture, loved both by the government and the masses. A staple of pop culture, my face is plastered on stamps, coins, currency and what-not. The New Colossus, in fact, honoured my role as a beacon of hope for the millions of people who come to the US. Various replicas of me as such exist around the globe but what they don't realise is that I am inimitable, not boasting though. So, the next time you are seeking a photo-op, remember, I am a lot more.

Autobiography

Pic Courtesy: Romir Vedi, AIS Saket, III C

To Singapore!

The Beauty Of The Lion City

Romir Vedi, AIS Saket, III C

Place: Singapore

Top sights: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore Zoo, Universal Studios, Merlion Park

Best time to visit: Dec-June

Delicacies to try: Hainanese chicken rice, chilli crab, laksa, char kuay teow, hokkien prawn mee, satay, ya-kun kaya

Things to carry: Comfortable clothes, hat, walking shoes, sunscreen, umbrella, camera

Souvenirs to buy: Peranakan pottery, merlion souvenirs, orchid perfumes, traditional jewelry, batik clothes

Languages to know before you

visit: English, Chinese, Malay, or Tamil

My experience: How do I describe my visit to the Lion City and my birth country – Singapore! My journey started with visiting the largest bird park in Asia, the Jurong Bird Park, which is home to over 3500 birds; the hornbills, swans, toucans, penguins, and Australian lorikeets were a treat to my eyes. I also visited the Singapore Zoo, which has about 315 animal species. I watched the beautiful sunset from the Singapore Flyer with my parents, which is an ob-



Romir as he enjoys his trip to Singapore



ervation wheel with 28 air-conditioned capsules. I also visited sites like Madame Tussauds, the marvel 4D cinema (that depicted the history of Singapore from 1965 to present), ILight show at Marina Bay Sands, the famous Durian fruit-shaped dome and much more. I bought presents

for my friends and family back in India and also enjoyed the yummy food in the country.

My favourite memory from the trip: This was not my first time visiting the country, but it surely was my favourite, because I was able to meet my dad after a good 2.5 years. COVID-19 pandemic had ruined my pre-

vious travel plans, and I couldn't meet my father, but finally I did, and as soon as I saw him at the famous Changi airport, I screamed and ran towards him for a hug. We talked all night when I was there, so much so that my mother had to separate us in different rooms, so we'd get some sleep.

Learn to love



Dr Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

Love is, perhaps, the most significant emotion that all humans feel in their lifetime. It is the main manifestation of Sringara rasa, and it celebrates everything that is beautiful and benevolent, gentle yet passionate. And, even though love is often considered only in the context of romantic love, it can exhibit itself in various ways – love for your parents, your siblings, your teachers and mentors, and even more importantly, love

for your country and the entire humankind.

Love, in all its splendour, is also what drives me to work harder on a daily basis for my Amitiens. In return, I receive so much love from the Amity family that no amount of work or hardship seems like a challenge I can't conquer. When done with love, all our daily work becomes more than just karma yoga. This is the true path to forming a connection with the divine and finding eternal bliss. Indeed, love for everything and everyone around you instills a sense of belongingness, one which empowers you to enjoy the journey of life. It is really simple to practice the emotion of love, and it is one the world needs in abundance today. As is written in the Bhagwad Gita: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love". At Amity, our foremost emphasis is on instilling the values of love, empathy, and compassion in our children.

As I talk about love, it is hard for me to not mention Amitasha - Amity's wing for the underprivileged girl child. While a mother doesn't have a favourite child, this is one initiative that remains entrenched in love. Aimed at empowering the girl child and thus the nation, it overwhelms me with emotions. So, when I see Amitasha students venturing into uncharted territories like they did this week by visiting Radio Mirchi, I can't help but feel love for these girls who have come a long way. Let love prevail! **GT**

Reduce waste



Vira Sharma
Managing Editor

Recently, on a visit to his son's home in Australia, a relative of mine learnt an important lesson. As one day, in order to use his time fruitfully while the children were at work, he cleaned the house up and accumulated all the waste outside the house for collection and disposal, he was taught something new. When his son returned home, he told him that one cannot discard garbage mindlessly as authorities there now

collect only an approved amount. This practice in most western nations is to inculcate the habit of producing less waste in households, thereby reducing the carbon footprint and burden of waste on the planet.

I feel that this is a practice which we all must also try to follow in our daily lives. When single use plastic was banned, people replaced it with biodegradable plastic, not realising that they are just replacing waste with waste. In a recent interview with a noted industrialist, we found out that the word 'eco-friendly' is really just a misnomer because, despite using alternative sustainable products, our focus still remains on unrestrained consumption. The more we buy and consume, the more production will happen to meet this demand, and hence, more waste will be produced. This will never let the planet breathe easy from all the pollution and degradation. We need to follow Gandhiji's philosophy of minimalism, where he taught us to consume only what we need and not what we want. To bring about this change, we need to start at an individual level. For every little effort, in a planet of eight billion humans, can create a world of difference. **GT**

Into the meta...what?

Giving Up On The Real World To Revel In A Virtual One

Farhan Siddiqui

AIS Gurugram 46, XII

Ever since the internet was invented, our world has been turning virtual. At first, it started out as a simple way of staying in touch and gaining knowledge. Yet, since then, a lot has changed, including the world of internet truly becoming a 'world' indeed. The latest development, and the most daring one, being Facebook Inc. changing its name to Meta. However, the hot topic of conversation is not the name, but what it stands to signify.

According to Mark Zuckerberg, "The metaverse is the next frontier in connecting people," changing the direction of the company as well as the internet. It aims to create a complete virtual world for people to escape to, and even big brands like Adidas and H&M have opened their stores in this 'Metaverse' to attract the audience. Now, the concept sounds like a posher version of Minecraft, but with its aim to attract people to live, eat, breathe, shop, study, and basically do everything there, is it really as innocent as it sounds?

If we were to get to the crux of this whole rage of metaverse, its basic purpose is to shift our consciousness from the physical world to a virtual one. When presented in such a blunt statement, it sounds absurd and impossible. Why would we ever abandon the green grass, our actual friends, and the world in front of us for a small screen? Yet understanding of the deeper reality that it is possible and is already more than halfway through in its plan is what is missing from the common consensus. Perhaps that is exactly why it has succeeded so much till now. Our life has



shifted to laptops, Zoom meetings, followers, selfie filters and whatnot. And now with cryptos and NFTs, all our assets are online as well. The invention of TVs shifted our 100% attention on real world down to 85. Computers downgraded it to 70%, and now mobiles to less than 50%. Some might still be unwilling to accept our inclusion in the virtual world, but the truth is that we have been sinking into it all along. Think about it for a second – Facebook, now Meta Inc., anyway owns almost all major social networking sites, and now that it has invested around 10 billion USD in creating their augmented reality, we will soon see the entire world in smart glasses or lenses that cover our eyes all day to make it 'easier' for us to access this virtual world. With the way things are progressing, it won't then be too far-fetched to say that soon we will start caring more about what we do in the virtual world than in real life. Just like how, right now, we care more about what we post on Instagram (also owned by Meta Inc.) than what we do in real life.

So many theorists have forever been worried of AI invasions, claiming that the robots we are building will soon learn about us and use this knowledge to overthrow humanity. And here, we already have the same humanity that is willing to hand over all their information – from their bank details to what toothpaste they prefer – to this metaverse, simply because it is the new 'technology' and seems 'exciting'. What if, with the information we have fed social media platforms, our own software-generated bodies or 'avatars', as they are called in Meta, really did gain the power to overthrow us? Maybe a day will come when this Metaverse will have our complete attention and energy, shifting humanity to a virtual earth where physical presence no longer matters. Should we now be worried for it as it aims for us to leave our physicality behind? Or should we be excited about it as we enter a new realm of reality? The question can only be answered once people open their eyes and at least realise that the shift is coming, whether they believe it or not. **GT**



Dear Editor,

This is in reference to the article 'Ode to opinions' published on page six of the GT edition dated February 6, 2023. The article successfully highlights how we look at the world through our own set of prejudiced lenses, and how, despite that, it is our approach towards others' opinions that defines us. It also calls into question our tendency to invalidate and disregard the opinions of

others. For we do have the right to express ourselves, but that doesn't mean we can dismiss other people's opinions calling them unfounded. In fact, instead of demonstrating defiance and contempt, we must try to understand where they are coming from. The article also makes it a point to divert our attention to the fact that different points of view enrich us in new ways, and how it is actually refreshing to see things from a different perspective.

Avika Mishra
AIS VKC Lko, IX A



For Times When 'Right To An Opinion' Wrongs You
The...
Issue: Feb 6, 2023, Page 6

And Bangladesh was born

A Revolution And Armed Conflict Sparked By The Rise Of Bengali Nationalists

Ishanya Sharma, XII & Riddhi Rastogi, Alumna, AIS Gur 43

The 1971 Liberation War is of tremendous importance in the history of events that led to the birth of a nation we now call Bangladesh. And India contributed significantly to it. Read the ensuing broadcasts made by the only radio network of the country at that time, All India Radio, to know more about the struggles and victory that ensued.

The backstory

The freedom spark was ignited when Muslim-majority East Bengal chose to become a part of Pakistan, as East Pakistan, during the partition in 1947. However, the West Pakistani government branded the people of East Pakistan as inferior, and were intolerant towards them. From denying Bengali the status of a state language to imposing Urdu on them, the West did it all to suppress their culture. East then naturally had to do something to fight back!

And hence, it all began... December 7, 1970; 20:00

You are listening to All India Radio. Here's an update on the Free Bangladesh Movement. The first general elections in Pakistan have swung in favour of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman of the Awami League. Yet, the government dominated by West Pakistanis has no intention of handing over power to the new leader. This dismissal has brought fierce reactions amongst the people of East Pakistan, with Mujib resort-

ing to a five-day long strike. Jai Hind!

The insurgency... December 12, 1970; 20:00

Today, on the 5th day of the strike, Mujib has urged East Pakistani people to embark on an Independence struggle. As a result, countless Bengalis have taken to the streets, breaking curfews imposed by the West Pakistani government. Jai Hind!

Black night... March 25, 1971; 20:00

Protesting Bengali mobs have killed some 300 pro-West Pakistan Biharis in Chittagong. As a result, Pakistani Army has launched a secret military mission code-named Operation Searchlight to suppress the Bengali uprising. Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman has been arrested too. Before his arrest, he declared East Pakistan as an independent sovereign country. Jai Hind!

The black night that continued... April 2, 1971; 20:00

The Pak military has not even spared the civilians, even though their main targets were the politicians and activists who were actively demanding independence. Operation Searchlight has led to the massacre of 30,000 Bengalis and has resulted in a refugee crisis in India, with millions fleeing to India's Eastern Provinces. Jai Hind!

Preparing for attack... May 30, 1971; 20:00

The Bengali nationalists have formed a guerrilla resistance movement called Mukti

Bahini against the West Pakistani military. Indian Army has also started providing aid to them. In the meantime, some exiled Awami League leaders have formed a provisional government for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, with Sheikh Mujib, a prisoner of the West Pakistan government still, as the president. Jai Hind!

Forming allies... July 12, 1971; 20:00

You are listening to All India Radio. Pakistan is now being supported by the US and China. Henry Kissinger, the advisor to the US President Nixon, made a secret visit to China via Pakistan. Jai Hind!

Counter-diplomatic attack... August 9, 1971; 20:00

To allegedly counter the US-Pakistan-China axis, India today signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. It seems as if the Indian government wants to intervene in East Pakistan, if for no other reason than the growing humanitarian and economic crisis on its border. Jai Hind!

A state of war... December 3, 1971; 00:00

PM Indira Gandhi: "Some hours ago, the Pakistan Air Force struck at many of our airfields. Today, the war in Bangladesh has become a war on India. We are peace-loving people, but peace cannot last if we don't guard our freedom. Aggression must be met, and India will meet it with fortitude and determination. Jai Hind!"

Battle on three fronts... December 5, 1971; 20:00

War has finally broken out. Pakistani Air Force attacked Indian Air Force bases under Operation Chengiz Khan. Amongst many of our victories, the most significant has been the sinking of PNS Ghazi. Our navy has suffered absolutely no major losses. Jai Hind!

A victory to remember... December 16, 1971; 20:00

The Pakistani Army has surrendered to Mitro Bahini, the joint command structure of Indian and Bangladeshi forces. This is a watershed moment for all Bangladeshis as they finally have a home they can safely return to. After years of political suppression and social turmoil, the people of Bangladesh have hope for stability and peace. The words of Rabindranath Tagore's Amar Sonar Bangla echo through the streets of every village and every town of independent Bangladesh. Jai Hind!

And so it ended... July 2, 1972; 20:00

Namaste, you're listening to All India Radio. In recent advancements, PM Indira Gandhi and the first elected ruler of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, today signed the Shimla Agreement to bring the war to an end and to also formalise the return of peace between the two nations. It is being seen as a landmark in the bilateral relations of the two countries, marking the importance of respecting each other's territory and sovereignty. Jai Hind!



Rêveuse

(A female daydreamer)

WORDS VERSE

Anika Bansal, AIS Vasundhara 6, XI C

She's a little hard to find in the crowd
She's a little different than you'd expect
She'll be the one who's lost in the clouds
Next to impossible to anyway detect

You'd think that she'd be easy to spot
You'd think she'd be the odd one out
But you know, she's perfect at hiding
In absolute plain sight and there's no doubt

She'll be the one always zoning out
Exploring her own head inside and out
She's the one choosing her own world
Over everybody else, there's no doubt

You must make an effort to see that
It's nothing but merely a curious place
In other words, it is actually an escape
From the everyday hurdles and race

Keep in mind that her body isn't big
And her vision and dreams aren't small
A dull, monotonous, and boring life
Is not something she wants to haul

Her imagination is honestly quite vivid
Something that is beyond the ordinary
It is a place extremely different and true
Captivating enough and extraordinary

Can you believe that she exists on a plane
Where the normal rules do not apply
No doubt that she is way more than
What will catch the sight of your eye

Breaking apart the cycle of reality

Is something she badly wants to do
You see it's an inescapable prison
It is a pain; she and everyone knew

Simple people were just something
She could not ever truly comprehend
Lifeless, dull, and crowd-followers
Something she didn't ever recommend

Soon she will be the one standing out
She'll be the colour in the absolute plain
Her life something precious and valuable
And she does not want to spend it in vain

She's been reminded and told every day
And every hour for countless times
Her aspirations are actually slippery vines
That are useless and worthless climbs

But she goes ahead, lives on every day
As strong as pure enthusiasm and love
For she keeps reminding herself that
Haters stay below, winners stand above

Her sole ambition actually consists of
Being unique than others and different
Her heart throbs and beats to a rhythm
That sounds to be unlike and magnificent

Her story is yet intriguing, interesting
Sounds to be a riveting fairy tale
One needs to observe carefully and
Let the thrills and adventure unveil

When she's just at the age of five
Young and angelic, tender and tiny
She will have a tiara in her hair
That is all sparkly and all shiny



The world outside her window
But alas, she cannot even dare
She dreams 'too big', you know

Twenty is a milestone now she achieves
Possibilities have had an increase
She is thinking about the future
For her dreams are yet to cease

She misses being younger than this
She wished she could've travelled
To a place where she was truly free
And mysteries could be unravelled

She is a full adult at twenty-five
She's actually a grown-up now
Afraid that her world is something
Her responsibilities won't allow

She tries her very best to hold on
To tiny little pieces of her past
She is scared that this cruel reality
Won't ever let her freedom last

She may not actually even realise
She may not actually even see
A dreamer's life lasts forever
A long time, she and I believe

There's a universe in her mind
And spirit in her determined soul
Let her remain jovial and free
There's no need to take control

If within all the above-mentioned lines
There's still a little part and a piece
Of you that's not exposed and hidden
How hard the times, don't let it decease

Enjoy and live life your own way
And remain to be a dreamer true
Remember this, my dear pretty reader
This one happens to be for you.

Surely, a castle to call her very own
A fierce sword firmly held in her hand
She's not a princess, but a true queen
Sole ruler of her territory and land

The wild day when she is at the age of ten
Her imagination begins to drastically grow
Magical beings entered her colourful life
Her essence that is bloomingly aglow

Her eyes seem to be gleaming with a light
Soul full of amazing, uncrushable power
There is a chance that she's slightly fragile
But not if compared to a little flower

Now she's reaching adolescence - fifteen
Not so young, but ironically not so old
She's a grown up, ready to be mature
But she's still the same, devilishly bold

She dreams and aspires of exploring

Brush 'n' Easel

Amayra Jain
AIS Saket, X



Read Play and Win

15

Reading GT can be fun as it can fetch you a prize too. Participate in this interesting contest simply by clicking on the link mentioned below in the online edition/taking a picture of the sheet and mailing us your responses at editor@theglobaltimes.in. So, get set, go!



Q.1 The title of the second sub-heading in 'The worst out of waste' is _____.

Q.2 The birth anniversary of Dr Atul Chauhan is celebrated as what day every year in Amity?

Q.3 Who presented the counterview in the article 'Technology vs nature'?

Q.4 Which entity is the autobiography on Page 5 about?

Q.5 Name the author of the article 'Into the meta...what?' on Page 6.

Q.6 "The 1971 _____ is of tremendous importance in the history of events."

Q.7 Which school is Amayra Jain, X, from?

Q.8 "I am Polly the pollen, and I will _____, making them sneeze is so much fun!"

Q.9 Name the DIY created on Page 9.

Name:.....Class:.....School:.....

Results of Read Play & Win-14: **Jiya Arora**, AIS Gurugram 43, IX B; **Kush**, AIS Pushp Vihar, VIII A; **Aahana Singhal**, AIS Noida, VII A

[Click here to participate](http://theglobaltimes.in/readplaywin/)

or log on to <http://theglobaltimes.in/readplaywin/>

Ash and Smokey

Imaging: Deepak Sharma, GT Network

Short story



On one of their meetings, Ash noticed that his friend was getting thinner by the day and always had a frown on his face.


promised, Ash came to Smokey's house and stood by the corner in case he needed any help. Dinner was served to Smokey. The seagull appeared right on time, enticed by the smell of food. It moved towards Smokey eyeing the juicy fish. But Smokey gathering all his courage pounced on the seagull using his claws to keep the bird in its hard grip. Ash silently cheered for his friend from the shadows of the house. The seagull, taken aback by this sudden aggression of Smokey, tried to scamper off to safety. Smokey let go off the seagull, hoping that he was able to scare off the bird once and for all. He spewed all the feathers out of his mouth, shocked at his own strength. Ash went to his friend and hugged him. He asked Smokey to come with him to the park for a stroll, but Smokey replied with a smile on his face, "Sure, but let's relish and rejoice in our victory first!" 🧡🐱

So what did you learn today?
A new word: Reluctant
Meaning: To be unwilling

Shreeja Pal, AIS Noida, X H

Once upon a time, there were two cats, Ash and Smokey. They were best friends cum neighbours and met every day to talk about everything under the sun. Ash's family adored him, always showering him with gifts and love. Smokey's family, on the other hand, was kind of wary of him. While they liked to cuddle and play with him, when it came to taking care of him, they appeared a bit **reluctant**. Even on his birthday, Smokey only got a used ball as a gift, while Ash received a cat cave that he could sleep in. Ash got to eat his dinner inside the house, whereas Smokey had to eat his dinner outside. His owners thought that he was bit too clumsy, and they couldn't be both-

ered to clean up after him. On one of their meetings, Ash noticed that his friend was getting thinner by the day and always had a frown on his face. Therefore, he asked, "What's the matter, Smokey? Is everything alright?" Smokey replied in a dejected tone, "You know that I have my dinner in the garden every night. Every night a seagull comes and takes away all my fish. I've not had a proper dinner in weeks." Ash understood his problem. He suggested him to confront the seagull, but Smokey was too scared to mess with the bird. After another week of torture and constant encouragement from Ash, Smokey decided to confront his fears and fight for his food. He asked Ash to come to his place in the evening to be his support. As




Samarth with his card

Daisy flower card

Samarth Srivastava
AIS Mayur Vihar, III A

Material required

- Cotton swabs - 15
- Fevicol
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Cartridge sheet (different colours)



Methodology

- ◆ Pick a coloured sheet of your choice. Lay it on a flat surface and draw a 25 cm x 36 cm rectangle on it.
- ◆ With the help of scissors, cut out the rectangle and fold it into half along its length.
- ◆ Next, take 15 cotton swabs and cut each into two halves of equal length.
- ◆ On the front of the card, stick these cotton swabs in the

- shape of a daisy flower (refer to the image).
- ◆ Now from a yellow paper, cut out two small circles of radius 2 cm and paste these in the centre of each flower.
- ◆ Next, using light green-coloured paper, cut out two stems and four leaves. Paste them as shown in the image.
- ◆ Voila, your beautiful daisy flower card is ready!

Riddle Fiddle

Shobhit Raj
AIS Gur 43, IX D

catch but not throw?
 4. What is always in front of you but can't be seen?
 5. What goes away as soon as you talk about it?

- 1. What belongs to you but your friends use more?
- 2. What starts with P, ends with E but is full of letters?
- 3. What is it that you can

Answers: 1. Your name
 2. Post office
 3. A cold
 4. Future
 5. Silence

It's Me



KNOW ME

My name: Atharv Singh
My Class: KG
My school: AIS VYC Lucknow
My birthday: November 18

MY FAVOURITES


Teacher: Alpika ma'am
Subject: Mathematics
Friend: Avyukt
Game: Basketball
Cartoon: Chhota Bheem
Food: Ladyfinger and Bittergourd
Mall: Lulu Mall
Book: Rhymes

MY DREAMS AND GOALS

Hobby: Playing with friends
I like: Watching cartoons
I dislike: Crying
My role model: My parents
I want to become: An engineer
I want to feature in GT because: I want to make my parents and family proud

PAINTING CORNER

Arainna Arora, AIS Pushp Vihar, VI



Hop. Swirl. Sway!



Indian folk dances are the soul of our heritage - a reflection of joy, belongingness, enthusiasm, and companionship. Hop on as we delve into some traditional folk dances famous in and around the sugar bowl of India, Uttar Pradesh, with *Vaishnavi Yadav, AIS VYC Lko, VIII B.*



Raas leela

Origin: Emanated from the holy cities of Mathura and Vrindavan, this dance form is as old as 'Bhagavad Purana'.

Relevance: When Lord Krishna used to play his flute, all the gopis and Radha would dance with him. Raas leela as a dance form as such became famous to narrate the story of their divine love.

Presentation: Men wear a yellow dhoti and a turban with a peacock feather, while women wear lehenga-choli with a dupatta. Melodious songs are played with drums and cymbals for this dance form.



Karma

Origin: It is mainly performed by the people belonging to the Kharwar or Kol tribe of Mirzapur and Sonbhadra districts.

Relevance: It is performed by the tribal group during the festival of Karma Puja. They dance in front of the Karma tree that symbolises Karma Devta and is believed to bring prosperity in people's lives.

Presentation: The dancers wear ethnic costumes and jewelry, and dance to the beat of Thumki, Chhalla, Payri, and Jhumki. The dancers move their feet in perfect rhythm in a to-and-fro style.



Charkula

Origin: This dance form is popular in the Brajbhoomi region of Uttar Pradesh.

Relevance: It is said that Radha's grandmother ran out of the house with the charkula on her head to announce the birth of Radha. Since then, Charkula is performed on the third day after Holi and also during other festivities.

Presentation: Women dress up in colourful blouses, skirts, and dupattas that veil their faces. They dance carrying a multi-tier pyramid of 108 oil lamps on their head to songs devoted to Lord Krishna.



Diwari pai danda

Origin: Initially, this dance was performed by the cow herding community or the Ahirs of the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh.

Relevance: It traces its origins back to the time when Lord Krishna lifted the Govardhan mountain to protect the villagers.

Presentation: Male dancers wear vibrant clothes, flashy belts, and ankle bells. They carry sticks to display mock fights and peacock feathers as a marker of Lord Krishna. The dance is performed throughout the year on celebratory occasions.



Chhapeli

Origin: Common to both Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, this dance form is performed by married couples.

Relevance: The dance form's graceful movements evoke the Sringara Rasa and display the immense strength of love and bond in relationships.

Presentation: Partners wear colour-coordinated clothes, with women holding handkerchiefs and hand mirrors, and men carrying small drums in their hands. The man tries to impress the woman through songs complimenting her beauty.



Dhobiya

Origin: It is popular amongst the dhobi (washermen) community of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Relevance: The unique and traditional dance form is a ritualistic way of praising God in order to show gratitude and simultaneously ask for his blessings.

Presentation: Performed mainly by men who are dressed in their daily attire, Dhobiya is more like a dance-drama which is clubbed with Bhojpuri and Awadhi folk songs. It is mainly performed in the Ajamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh.



Kajri

Origin: This mesmerising dance form has always been popular amongst the women and peasants of Mirzapur, Banaras, and Mathura.

Relevance: It celebrates the onset of monsoon. Also, folk songs accompanying Kajri are an integral part of Indian classical music's heritage and usually describe a maiden's longing for her beloved.

Presentation: Women wear colourful and vibrant skirts with heavily decorated dupattas. They swing together on *jhulas* and sing songs.



Rai

Origin: This enchanting dance form marks the return of victorious armed forces after a ferocious war. It was primarily started by the Bediya tribe of Bundelkhand region but was then adopted widely to celebrate victory.

Relevance: Performed to exhibit the spirit of joy and hope for a better future, the dance form is also a way of paying tribute to God for saving lives during war. **Presentation:** It is performed on the beats of *dholak* and *nagara* by men perfectly disguised as women.

Amitasha at Radio Mirchi

Making Waves With The Voice Of Their Dreams



Amitasha students interact with RJ Rabia at the FM studio

Amitasha

Twelve students of Amitasha from Class IX-XII visited Radio Mirchi 98.3 FM studio for an exciting conversation with RJ Rabia, which was broadcasted live on the occasion of National Girl Child Day observed on January 24, 2023. The unique learning opportunity extended by Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools & RBEF, aims to give

wings to the dreams of the less privileged girls studying in Amity. The students of Amitasha expressed their views on the importance of education and good human values for girls, and also presented a power packed show that urged people to make way for life saving ambulance as part of the programme 'Sunn Siren Sunn', an initiative of Radio Mirchi to raise awareness among the public regarding rules and protocols to be

followed on the road when ambulance is passing. Furthermore, the students also understood the functioning of audio media by taking a look at equipments used for audio mixing, sound recording, etc. They also enquired about the career prospects and qualifications required for entering into audio media industry, and learnt about the prime role of radio channels in keeping the common man updated about the world around. [G I](#)



Amitians try their hands at pottery and rock climbing

Adventure Camp

AIS VKC Lucknow

An adventure camp full of fun and frolic was organised for the students at Kukrail picnic spot on January 31, 2023. They took a tour of the organic farm and learnt about plants and animals, watching exotic species like crocodiles, alligators, macaws, parrots, etc.

The students also enjoyed their picnic, sharing and eating snacks and delicacies and learnt

pottery making. Fun games like Burma bridge, crossing obstacles, commando net, tyre maze, rock climbing, tug of war, bungee jumping, zip lining, tent pitching and hopscotch completed their joy. The camp was not only fun, but also was a great lesson in physical and mental fitness.

School principal, Rachna Mishra expressed her happiness over the fun and learning experience children had at the camp through games and excursion.

Vasantotsav



Tiny tots of AIS Vas 6

AIS Vasundhara 6

In a bid to welcome spring and celebrate Vasantotsav, students of Class Nursery-I worshipped Goddess Saraswati on January 23, 2023. They also indulged in numerous activities like flower arrangement, dancing, singing, all dressed up in colourful attire. The students also received the opportunity to relish delicacies like *motichoor laddoo*, *mathari*, [G I](#)



Dance by AIS Vas 1 students

AIS Vasundhara 1

School organised Vasantotsav on January 25, 2023 to welcome the season of spring. For the same, the entire school was decked up in the hues of yellow, and children too came dressed in yellow clothes, wearing marigold garlands. The celebrations commenced with the invocation of the divine blessings of Goddess Saraswati through chanting of shlokas and lamp lighting ceremony. The auspicious day was marked by *Vidyarambh Sanskaar*, the ritual signifying the formal initiation of a child into education. Each and every child as such got the chance to sit in the lap of their teacher, holding venerated 'Kalam and Pustika' and trace their first alphabet. The program enchanted parents as well, giving them a glimpse of how culture gets woven into learning at Amity. [G I](#)



Young RJs of Amity interact with the audience

World Radio Day

AIS Vasundhara 6

To mark the World Radio Day celebrated every year on February 13, students of Class II conducted a special assembly on January 25, 2023. It was held to remember the unique power of radio that brings people together across the globe. The event, in order to highlight the importance of radio as a perfect medium to keep the world connected, began with the presentation of a short inspirational skit of two

army officers posted in the Siachen Glacier. Post which, students enacted a radio show, in which young RJs apprised the audience with radio's history, importance, and the process of how radio programs transmit information around the world. The highlight of the assembly was Radio V-6 quiz.

School principal Sunila Athley also apprised students on radio as a vital source of learning, especially for those living in the remote areas of the world. [G I](#)

What's in the box?

A Day In The Life That Is More Offline Than On It



Naisha Prem, AIS Noida, XII I

Momentarily inspired after watching too many glow-up reels, I decided to visit the forest behind my house to workout. A day with perfect lighting and open space, but still my eyes gravitated towards a few caves. After all, as an influencer, it was my duty to gather interesting content for my 25 followers. It was pitch black, but after walking in a little further, I discovered a box covered in weird marks and writings. "It's like Harry Potter meets Harappan civilisation. Cool!" I took some pictures and opened the anticlimactic box. Nothing much was in there, but I'm going to post the photos on IG Stories nonetheless.

As soon as I reached back home, I tried to open Instagram, but it glitched and shut down. After this failed attempt, I tried to open WhatsApp, which shut down too, and so did Twitter and Snapchat. And soon Wi-Fi gave up as well!

I tried again with my 4G, opening my side account on Reddit (where I post all my embarrassing confessions), but the hair on the back of my neck stood up as soon as I saw my real name on the account, not baburaobro16. All my posts showed my real name, even the one where I confessed to liking pineapple and banana on my pizza, before the app shut down on its own. My eyes widened and the phone slipped from my hand. Has mercury retrograde already begun? I took in a sharp breath, and shakily picked up my ringing phone.

Bill, my BFF, laughed in my ear, "You still watch Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai?"

"How is your Reddit still working?" I groaned.

"It isn't. I was just scrolling, but it suddenly closed, like everything else. If you hear Banshee screams in the background, that's just my sister because she can't watch Baby Shark on YouTube.

Maybe *yeh* apocalypse *kehlata hai*."

I was still trying to figure out what had happened when I heard my parents gasp. I ran over to them and - why on earth would someone use a radio on a Nokia (*dubba*) phone?

"Major social media apps have shut down and the internet is down as well. Terror fills the AI and IT offices. It's almost as if someone has re-opened the Pandora's box," called the voice.

"Did you hear what the DJ said?" I asked.

"No, no, he's called an RJ," answered my father.

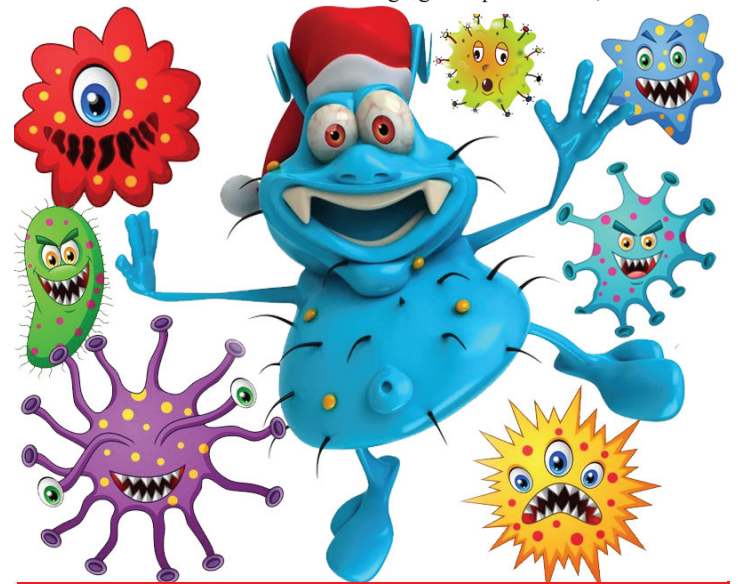
"What is Pandora's box? Is it like a bomb-nuclear-thingy?" I asked to no avail.

Dejected, I slumped on my parents' bed as I understood the gravity of the situation. I won't exercise anymore because my dumbbells shipment from Amazon won't arrive. And Instagram isn't working so where will I post the #fitnessfreak pictures anyway? On top of that, I don't even have Google to find out what Pandora's box is. What am I supposed to do now? I have homework but I need Wi-Fi to complete it, so thankfully that is not an option. Wait, I think dad has a bookshelf in his study. Should I try reading a book? I can't even listen to music because I did not download my playlist on Spotify. What will I do now?

My thoughts were interrupted as I heard a loud yell. "Oh my God, mom! What happened? Is everything working again?" "No, that's just the children playing in the basketball court." "We have a basketball court in our neighbourhood?" "Beta, they play every single day!" she said followed by a deathly stare.

"The RJ said that no possible explanation can be found for these shutdowns. We'll have to subscribe to a newspaper and get in touch with the post office," my mom stated. "Ah! I can't live like this. I wish I could make a thread on Twitter about this hellish day!" I cried, and like I expected, my mom was giving me the death stare again.

Imaging: Deepak Sharma, GT Network



An allergic reaction

Small Inconveniences, Big Aftereffects

Koyal Das, AIS Gur 43, XI S

A long itchy day at Allergen Academy had begun, signalling the start of the new session. As I made my way into the classroom, I sighed. It was the usual sight - a bunch of overconfident attackers ready to bring humankind to their knees, or that was what they thought. Every year, I would see such a bunch but when will I find students who were more bite than bark?

All ready for another wave of disappointment, I finally got myself together. "Good morning, everyone! Welcome to the new academic session," said I, the teacher. "Let's begin by chanting our mantra - Om Allergy Devatay Namah! Now, let's go around and introduce ourselves."

"Oh, madame, I will go first. Hello, I am Polly the pollen, and I will leave you swollen. I love when humans inhale me in, making them sneeze is so much fun! Once a bride sniffed me on her wedding stage and voila, she became my new prey! She sneezed so hard that her father's wig flew off, and then he spent the entire function scoffing."

As if on cue, the class started sneezing; Polly stood there with the confidence of a pro.

Next, a lanky boy stood up, too eager to talk. "Oh, hi, everyone! I am your one and only, the Peanut Parker who is never lonely. I am the genius who causes allergic reactions, always doing best to spring in action. So, dare to eat me if you have the guts, and

watch me be the lethal nut!"

Before I could answer or call someone else, a group of students stood up. "Our fellow classmates, we are the band, Ghastly Insects. We buzz and we make a fuss, but these humans still cannot see us. We will cause coughing and itching, that's how lethal is our sting. We have very severe side effects, because we are the Ghastly Insects."

I was overwhelmed. I had seen quite a few bright students already. Not wanting to up my expectations too much, I quickly moved on to the others. On cue, another student started introducing himself. "Bonjour, mes amis, je suis Medication. I can turn into a nightmare from a vacation. You can be allergic to me, and if you are, I will not work to make you free. Do you want hives or skin rash? I will give them all to you in a smash. There might even be facial swelling, and wheezing might be the only thing you end up feeling!"

Now excited, I decided to give the kid sleeping at the back a chance. "I am sorry for sleeping, I was so tired of humans weeping. Hello, I am Mushroom, and I make their stomach go vroom-vroom. Yes, I am so cool because I am a fungi, and you can also say that I am a fun guy! I may look so innocent and yummy to eat, but do so only if you think I am a real treat!"

I clapped, knowing that I had found the batch I had always sought. So, without any further ado, I announced, "Let our attack on humans begin!"