

Vaishnavi Yadav

AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

Welcome to a world where food may look familiar, yet its origin story quietly reshapes the experience of eating it. What once grew under open skies is now cultivated in sterile labs. This is the world ushered by Synthetic Food Revolution, where ‘is that even real’ is a question heard too often.

### From Farm to Flask

The idea of lab-made food is not entirely new. It traces back to the 1950s, when space agencies began exploring ways to produce food for astronauts without relying on Earth-bound agriculture. What began as a necessity for space travel has now evolved into a global movement.

“Synthetic food” is an umbrella term that includes everything from lab-grown dairy and precision-fermented proteins to fungi-based nutrition and even cell-cultured coffee and cocoa. Put simply, it refers to food produced artificially using biotechnology or chemical processes.

Dairy is the biggest example here. Instead of cows, scientists now use engineered microbes like yeast to produce key milk proteins casein and whey, through a process called precision fermentation. The result? Milk, cheese, and yogurt that are molecularly identical to conventional dairy, yet entirely animal-free. Vegan anyone?

Similarly, mycoprotein derived from fungi such as *Fusarium venenatum* is emerging as a powerful alternative. Grown in fer-

## A bite of tomorrow

### Direct From The Farm Or Is It Bioreactor-fresh?

mentation tanks, it contains all nine essential amino acids, is high in fibre, and low in saturated fat. So, it is not just nutritionally complete but at the same time environmentally efficient.

#### But why?

Purists and health enthusiasts have a big WHY to ask. Well, the answer is multifold. Lets begin with the basics - necessity.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation’s “Feeding the World in 2050” report, a 70% increase in food production will be required to feed the global population (projected at 9.1 bn). Current agricultural systems are simply not equipped to meet this demand sustainably. Synthetic food, with its limited dependence on natural resources and high scalability factor, looks like a potential sol-

tion. Further, the rising food demands need to be met with urgency, something traditional farming can’t offer.

And that’s not all. Conventional agriculture comes at a steep environmental cost. Food systems contribute nearly one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, with livestock alone accounting for a significant share. Thus, synthetic alternatives aim to ease this burden.

Lab-grown dairy, for instance, can use up to 90% less water, 95% less land, and produce significantly fewer emissions than traditional dairy farming.

Fungi-based proteins add to this advantage—grown vertically in controlled environments, they require minimal space and can be produced year-round.

#### So all good?

Yet, the promise of synthetic food is not without complications, of course. Energy use remains a key concern. While these systems save land and water, they rely heavily on controlled environments and electricity. If powered by fossil

fuels, their carbon footprint could offset environmental gains. Health perceptions also play a role. Many synthetic or plant-based foods are classified as ultra-processed, with long ingredient lists that raise questions about long-term effects.

Economic disruption is another reality. Traditional farmers especially in dairy, cocoa, and livestock sectors could face significant challenges if production shifts toward industrial labs.

#### The shift

Good or bad, the synthetic food revolution has already entered everyday life.

Plant-based eggs made from mung beans replicate the texture of omelettes. Agar-agar, derived from seaweed, replaces gelatin in desserts. Vegan dairy, from peanut curd to precision-fermented whey, mimics traditional textures with surprising accuracy.

What once seemed experimental is steadily and seamlessly becoming edible and accessible.

#### To eat or not to eat

Today, synthetic food stands at a crossroads of science, sustainability, and society. But food is more than nutrition—it is culture, memory, and identity. Acceptance, therefore, will depend not just on innovation, but on trust—believing the process, the ingredients, and the institutions behind them. So when the day comes—and it will—when you are served a mushroom-grown protein cutlet, a perfectly engineered burger, or a lab-crafted cup of coffee... Will you take a bite?



Graphic: Vaishnavi Yadav, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

Page editor: **Smita Bharti**, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

### THE GT POLL

Does the death of Jaipur’s ‘pink elephant’ highlight cruelty in the treatment of captive elephants in India?

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Can’t say

To vote, check out our Instagram page @the\_global\_times

#### Coming next

AIS PV Contest Edition



This special edition has been brought to you by **Amity International School, Vrindavan Yojna, Lucknow**, as a part of the ‘GT Making A Newspaper Contest’. Each page of this unique edition carries a special story handcrafted by the school’s editorial team as a part of the competition. The inter-Amity newspaper making competition witnesses different

branches of Amity schools across India churn out their own ‘Contest Edition’ which are pitted against one another at the end of the year, culminating with GT Awards. So, here’s presenting the eleventh edition of ‘GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2025-26’.

### What’s inside

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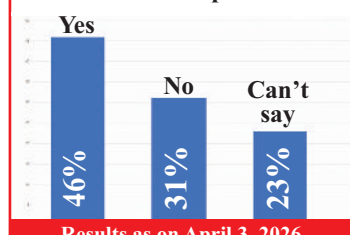
The missing violin, P8

More than monuments, P9

### POLL RESULT

for GT Edition February 16, 2026

Will CBSE’s introduction of On-Screen Marking for Class XII board exams make the evaluation process more accurate and transparent?



Results as on April 3, 2026

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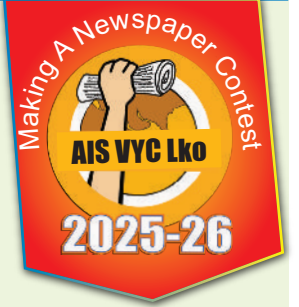
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# A man of substance

## Shehzad Poonawalla Speaks About Merging Power With Purpose



### INTERVIEW

Aditi Pandey, XI A &  
Aarnavi Singh, XII B  
AIS VYC Lucknow

Meet Shehzad Poonawalla, an Indian political spokesperson, lawyer by education, and prominent television debater, known for his articulate arguments and commanding public presence. In this exclusive interview, he shares insights on life lessons rooted in character, humility, and purpose.

#### The three Cs

I believe assertiveness and communication skills are not innate, they are cultivated over time. To build confidence in communication, I follow the three Cs: clarity, content, and consistency. Clarity means knowing exactly what I want to convey. Content means being equipped with solid research and substance so that I am not speaking merely for the sake of speaking. Consistency comes from constant practice. Every in-

terview and debate helps me improve and learn from mistakes. If anyone follows these three Cs, they can build confidence in any form of communication.

#### Purpose in politics

I see politics as a powerful platform for socio-national transformation. Several great leaders of our country have shaped public life through politics. Every field, be it education, journalism, or business, has both admirable and undesirable individuals. I believe we should judge a platform by its finest examples, not its worst. If capable youth stay away from politics out of fear or cynicism, the vacuum will inevitably be filled by the wrong people. That is why I chose to step forward and contribute positively rather than be drawn solely toward corporate opportunities.

#### Media discipline

Today's media landscape is extremely fast paced. News-cycles used to move slowly. Now, with hun-

dreds of channels, news-breaks every minute, I ensure that my reaction time always remains sharp. Remaining alert, informed, and prepared at all times is the greatest challenge, and I manage it through discipline and constant engagement. In both my professional and personal life, I rely

heavily on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Its message, "Karm karo, phal ki chinta mat karo," i.e., performing one's duty without attachment to the results, guides me during stressful times.

#### EQ over IQ

I studied law for knowledge, not necessarily to practice professionally. However, my legal training has shaped me importantly. As a lawyer, I learned to rely on facts and precedents. I developed the habit of studying details and historical context before forming opinions. It also taught me how to structure arguments logically. I avoid personal attacks and focus instead on factual reasoning. For me, emotional intelligence and character matter more than mere intellect. IQ and resources are important, but without character, what we often refer to as EQ, nothing truly matters. If I were not in politics, I would prob-



Shehzad Poonawalla, a national party spokesperson



Poonawalla with GT reporters

ably have become a teacher. Teaching allows one to instil the right values in young minds and contribute meaningfully to society and the nation.

#### Principles for success

No matter which field you choose, be it politics, academics, IT, or the creative arts, always remember the three Ps: patience, persistence, and punctuality. Nothing meaningful happens without patience, because growth takes time. Persistence helps build excellence step by step. Punctuality instils discipline. If you follow these principles sincerely in life, you can achieve success and make a meaningful difference in society.

## Fostering Indo-Japanese collaborations

ATPC | AUUP

### Third Step Towards Global Academic And Industry Integration

The Amity Technical Placement Centre hosted a Japanese Job Fair with esteemed delegates from various Japanese companies from January 29-31, 2026, at AUUP. The three-day strategic campus placement drive was facilitated by Dr Anjani Kumar Bhatnagar, head & additional director, ATPC, with Anupam Singh, SGM, ATPC as the programme convenor.

On the first day, industry leaders, like Kawano Yoko, Sakuna Isao, Tang Hap-Xiang, and Hakai from Ibaraki Prefecture, commended the students' technical expertise, underlining the potential of young



Amity honouring the Japanese delegates

professionals in cross-cultural partnerships. On the second day, representatives from AoiSystems Corporation, COSDAC Co Ltd, Heart Corporation, Kiuchifarm Inc, Okwi Inc, Sekisho Corpora-

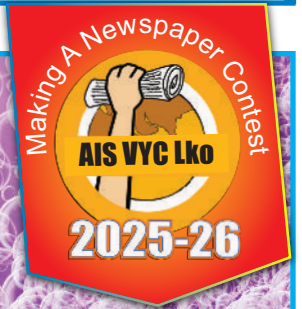
tion, and the Suigo Tsukuba Agricultural Cooperative delivered presentations, offering insights into their industries' professional landscapes and values. The programme also featured icebreakers

including traditional Japanese games, a musical performance of the song 'Country Road' by students, and a lunch of Japanese-style bento boxes.

This fair continues a tradition of collaboration as firms like Sekisho Corporation, Kurakawa Co Ltd, Nittocorp regularly visit for placements. During this session, industry representatives, including Oyama Yutaka and Matsuzaki Kouki, expressed strong interest in future joint recruitment initiatives. To further demonstrate student capabilities, Dr DK Choudhary, professor, Organic

Sciences department, Dr Richa Nagar, asst professor, Environmental Sciences, and Dr Jitendra Jadon, asst professor, AI Department showcased research in sustainable farming and Generative AI, aligning academic achievements with industry needs. The Japanese Job Fair concluded with a consensus aimed at fostering future collaboration, including focused discussions on internship opportunities. The three-day event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr Bhatnagar, honouring Japanese delegates and the Indo-Japanese collaboration.

Text: Aditi Pandey, XI A | Graphic: Vaishnavi Yadav, XI B; AIS VYC Lko



# Unlock FIZZ-ical Fitness

## BIOFIZZ

**Instant Nutrient Check!**

A chewable, edible sweet doubling as a biosensor that activates on contact with saliva to give a real-time nutrient check



**SALIVA SPARK BIOSENSORS:**  
 Reacts quick for real-time marker check, using glucose oxidase-like enzymes to catalyse colour shifts in under 60 seconds.

**COLOUR-CODED CHEMISTRY:**  
 Tri-colour candy turns hue for iron, vitamin C, and hydration via redox reactions

**MORNING MOTIVATION:**  
 Kickstart fuelled without fog

**LUNCH LOWDOWN:**  
 Boost balance, beat the slump

<b>Iron</b>	● Sufficiency	● Deficiency
<b>Vit C</b>	● Sufficiency	● Deficiency
<b>Hydration</b>	● Sufficiency	● Deficiency

**DISCLAIMER: Real scientific principles. Fictional ideas with a potential future.**

Wassup

School Lounge

# Amitians on the victory trail at MCOP 6

## Choosing A Sustainable Life For A Better And Higher Functioning Planet

### AERC

Team EcoTrails of AIS Saket emerged as winners from the North Indian region, making Amity one of the winning schools in India at Model Conference of Parties 6 (MCOP6), a national level sustainability competition. The grand finale was held from February 5 - 6, 2026 at WWF, New Delhi. The team of Class XI students comprised team leaders Shivanjali Sapra and Vandita Sharma, along with Krishna Rastogi, Naman Katyal, Shreem Khushu, Lehar Aggarwal, Rudra Rao, Idhant Aggarwal, Eesh Saini, and Aditri Bhatnagar. Together they won the award for their six month long endeavour towards achieving their target 'encouraging the population in the city to adopt sustainable consumption choices and reduce waste generation'. The

group undertook a wide range of creative and impactful initiatives to address the target, including plastic and e-waste collection drives, establishment of green corners within the school campus and plantation of 289 saplings under the 'Ek Pedh Maa Ke Naam 2.0' campaign. They also conducted awareness workshops in collaboration with the Indian Centre of Plastics and Environment and TERI - focusing on responsible day-to-day consumption. Apart from this, they also conducted cleanliness drives like *Swachhta Pakhwada* and *Shunya Audit* under CBSE, and Green Schools Programme Audit by Centre of Science and Environment and Energy Audit Challenge in collaboration with the school's Eco Club and Green Warriors. This impactful victory is the result of visionary leadership of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan,

Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF who has created initiatives like Amity Educational Resource Centre (AERC) which plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainability-focused and leadership development initiatives across Amity schools. Her foresightedness has facilitated participation in national platforms like MCOP. At the grand finale, which further doubled up as the platform for all winners to engage in various capacity-building and learning sessions being conducted by experts, Team EcoTrails presented the school's sustainability journey and the outcomes achieved under target. They also recited a poem highlighting Delhi's culture and heritage as a part of the cultural evening graced by judges and dignitaries from organisations like WWF India, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Wildlife Institute of India, etc.



Team EcoTrails at the finale

# Fitness fads...

... Come & Go, So Do The Triers

**Kanishka Sharma**

AIS Vas 1, XII A

The '2026 is the new 2016' trend is viral across the world. But do you remember what was the big craze a decade back? It was fitness! The internet was overflowing with sculpted gym enthusiasts, and vitamin gummies. That fad is back now, upping the ante on all of us to look good. But who wants to get up at 5 am and make their way to the gym? Not me. But let us salute those who try.

## Outdoor gym shenanigans

Suddenly the aunties are interested in gyms, and they are not here to play. They huff and puff for at least 15 minutes before they launch into a gossip session that's about everything but fitness. The outdoor gyms also witness scenes of battle - from guys trying to flaunt their muscles on the arm press to kids discovering gym equipment for the first time.

## Bulk or cut

The gym bros have two ongoing issues, to bulk or cut. Ah, the glorious bulk. You get to strut like the Hulk, but beware, because along with those gains comes the constant struggle to fit in clothes and the food coma that accompanies every meal. On the other hand, we have the cut. It's the noble sacrifice for abs and a chiseled jawline. Every meal is an equation, and you find yourself dreaming of cheat-days but hey, at least you get to show off those abs at the beach, right?



## Pilates perfection

These are the girls who focus more on their outfit than the workout. Waking up early, drinking green juice, going for a 6 am Pilates class, dressed up in the most gorgeous (also extremely pricey) gym outfits. After all, Pilates is not a form of exercise anymore it is a way of life. You might hate them but deep down you wish you could be them.

## Photoshop pros

You've definitely spotted these people at least once - their gym selfies are too perfect. For them, going to the gym is more about pictures. In their world, sadness isn't lack of progress but the lack of abs. So, instead of sweating it out, they gift themselves a six-pack through the equally demanding art of Photoshop. But hey, credit where it's due - their editing skills deserve applause.

## Treadmill tradeoff

Everything in the gym is so intimidating that the beginners always opt for the treadmill. I just must run, right? Easy enough. But then you overestimate your abilities and ramp up the speed to twelve and suddenly you're not as fast as you thought the stop button seems so far away and then it happens - you fly off.

Some are committed, others pretend, but everyone wants in on the fitness trend because apparently that's the only way 2026 can feel like 2016, except that we do not magically become ten years younger.

Illustration: Naman Trishuliya, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI A

# Certified chai partner

Affordable, And Ready For Next Dip



**Lavanyaa Verma**

AIS VYC Lko, XI B

Hello, folks! When you think of rainy evenings and someone yelling from the kitchen, "Chai ban rahi hai!", it is me you're reminded of. I am Parle-G, a biscuit with a long history and a short disposition for being underestimated. I am an *aam aadmi* biscuit, found in supermarkets across the world as well as the *tapri* at the corner of the street. I've sometimes been snapped into perfect halves, dipped with dangerous confidence, and mourned silently when I slip into the cup as soon as you lift me up to take a bite.

My roots stretch back to 1929, when Mohanlal Dayal founded Parle Products in Vile Parle, Mumbai, with just 12 people. I was officially baked into existence in 1938-39 as Parle Gluco. In those early years of existence, I arrived wrapped in butter paper and wax paper, long before plastic became the norm.

I grew up fast, thanks to history. During the WWII, I found myself packed into ration kits for British and Indian soldiers, thanks to my energy and shelf life. After Inde-

pendence, when foreign biscuits disappeared from shelves, I stayed on and became a swadeshi household staple. As the country grew, so did Parle, while I quietly slid into every Indian household. Before you ask me, no, the G in my name doesn't stand for God or Great. Initially, what it stood for was Glucose, highlighting my promise of instant energy and strength. In 1985, when Parle Gluco officially became Parle-G, it got a new meaning: Genius, popularised through the iconic 'G for Genius' campaign. Despite this rebranding, my familiar taste and design never changed, making me recognisable across generations. I know, pretty popular, right?

Speaking of recognition, let's address the girl on my packaging. Despite rumours that speculate otherwise, the Parle-G girl is an illustration, created in the 1960s by skilled artist Maganlal Daiya of Everest Creative. She remains one of the most recognisable brand mascots in India, certifying trust and loyalty.

And for years, I was proudly sold at ₹5 per pack, making me affordable. However, rising inflation put pressure on this promise. To retain the ₹5 price point, and to fit into a smaller packaging, my makers forced me to reduce my weight from 100 grams to about 55 grams. Talk about an intense fitness workout!

Despite these challenges, my scale is staggering. Around one billion

of my packets are produced every month, distributed across nearly five million retail outlets in India and abroad. At any given second, approx 4,551 of my biscuits are being eaten in India. (Rumour is some are still sinking in chai..)

My popularity isn't limited to Indian borders. I am manufactured in countries like the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Middle East, and I enjoy a massive fan base in China, where I outsell many local biscuit brands. I was also the first Indian FMCG brand to cross ₹5,000 crore in retail sales, a milestone that quietly cemented my legacy.

I have watched the biscuit market grow fancier. I've given rise to Parle-G Gold, a richer, premium version of mine that occasionally even incorporates new flavours like berries and oats. Yet, even as creamier, costlier biscuits compete for attention, I continue to thrive on nostalgia. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my sales surged as I became emergency food, comfort snack, and childhood memory all at once.

From my wax paper beginnings to global dominance, I have remained unchanged. I am proof that not everything needs reinvention. For many decades, many biscuits have tried to be like me, but they could never be. They may borrow my colours and shapes, but legends don't crumble that easily. But dipping is a different story altogether.

# Welcome to new beginnings



Dr Amita Chauhan  
Chairperson

With great joy, I welcome all Amitians to the new academic session. April in India stands as a powerful symbol of renewal and fresh beginnings. It is a month that celebrates new harvests, vibrant festivals, and the start of traditional calendars across many regions. Nature joins this celebration, as spring unfolds in full splendour, filling the world with colours and the promise of new possibilities.

Looking back, it fills my heart with pride

that our students have once again excelled in JEE Mains and distinguished themselves on platforms like Aryabhata Ganit Challenge and MCOP 6. These accomplishments reflect not only their perseverance but also the holistic mentoring provided by AICE educators and AERC mentors. Having said that, while many of you have achieved your academic and co-curricular aspirations this year, some may feel they have fallen short of their goals. There is no reason for feeling discouraged. Spring reminds us that renewal follows every phase of struggle. Step into the new session with renewed enthusiasm and a fresh determination. Success is not defined solely by marks or medals; equally important is dedication and sincerity. It is this commitment that shapes character, strengthens resilience, and defines true achievement.

As you enter a news class, look forward to building friendships, discovering talents, and developing new interests - the real wealth that stays with you for life. At Amity, we remain committed to providing diverse opportunities for every student to explore, engage, and grow. I hope the coming session inspires each Amitian to learn something new and meaningful every day. [GT](#)

## Rooted in values



Roli Tripathi  
Principal, AIS VYC Lko

Margaret Atwood has rightly said, “A word after a word after a word is power.” This power finds its true expression through The Global Times, a unique canvas conceptualised by our honourable Chairperson, Dr Mrs Amita Chauhan, under whose enlightened leadership, our students learn to embrace innovation while remaining firmly rooted in culture and integrity. For in a world grappling

with environmental degradation and social media influence, it is essential to pause, reflect and reconnect with our roots.

This Contest Edition stands as a glowing testament to the power of young voices and responsible journalism. The compelling top story on ‘Test tube tandoori’ offers a thought-provoking exploration into lab-grown and plant-based meat, presenting science with sensitivity and responsibility. The perspective piece titled ‘Watched but willingly’ intelligently examines life within a surveillance society, encouraging readers to question and analyse the world around them. The ground reporting on *Chandi ki Chappal* captures grassroots realities with empathy. Adding further depth to this edition is the interview of Shehzad Poonawalla, whose interaction offered our young journalists insights into leadership, communication, and national discourse. I wholeheartedly applaud the Editorial Board for their relentless dedication. Guided ably by their mentor, they have transformed ideas into impactful narratives that inform and inspire.

May our students continue to question fearlessly, write thoughtfully, and lead confidently, upholding our institution’s values. [GT](#)

# Watched but willingly?

## A Peek Into How Surveillance Society Works

Aarnavi Singh  
AIS VYC Lko, XII B

The phone lights up before the alarm rings. A camera watches the street outside. The GPS-enabled app already knows what route will be taken to work. None of this feels intrusive anymore. It feels... normal. This quiet acceptance is the true marker of a surveillance society.

Governments and corporations justify digital monitoring as a necessary evolution. Smart cities across the world have deployed CCTV systems and facial recognition technology to curb crime and improve urban management. In London, there is roughly one CCTV camera for every 11 people. China’s extensive facial recognition infrastructure is promoted as a tool for public order. Authorities argue it saves time, conserves resources, and protects lives. Surveillance has seeped into our personal lives too. Fitness trackers can detect irregular heart rhythms. Google Maps tracks movement to avoid traffic. Streaming platforms recommend comfort shows to help unwind after a long

Illustration: Kanika Gupta, XI C & Shrutika Tripathi, XI C, AIS VYC Lko



day. These systems reduce friction in everyday life, making modern living seem even smoother than it already is. Pew Research Center surveys show that a majority of users are willing to trade personal data for convenience.

The cost of this comfort, however, is rarely visible. Behind the seamless interface lies an economic model that thrives on constant observation. Shoshana Zuboff, a Harvard scholar, terms this system “surveillance capitalism” - a model where personal

data is extracted and sold to influence human behaviour. Every pause and scroll becomes a data point. Studies have shown that algorithmic profiling can influence who gets shortlisted for a job or approved for a loan. A 2019 study by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology found significant racial and gender bias in facial recognition systems, with error rates way higher for POCs compared to white individuals.

Government surveillance, often justified in the name



of national security, has repeatedly crossed ethical lines. The Pegasus spyware scandal revealed how journalists, activists, and political opponents were allegedly targeted using military-grade surveillance tools. When people know that they are being tracked, behaviour changes. Research published in the Journal of Law and Economics shows individuals avoid protest out of fear of observation. Democracy, which depends on fearless expression, quietly erodes. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of surveillance is the illusion of consent. The opaque privacy policies stretch longer than novels, making informed consent nearly impossible. A study in Carnegie Mellon University said it would take over 70 working days a year to read the privacy policies they agree to. This is why this debate cannot be reduced to a choice between safety and privacy. It is about who controls the watcher and why. The future depends on whether people remain passive, or conscious participants who demand ethical boundaries in a world that is always watching. [GT](#)

## Esprit d'excellence

With the release of our fourth Contest Edition, I feel immense pride – not merely because another publication is complete, but because of the journey behind it. From conceptualising ideas to meeting deadlines, the Editorial Board has worked with sincerity at every stage.



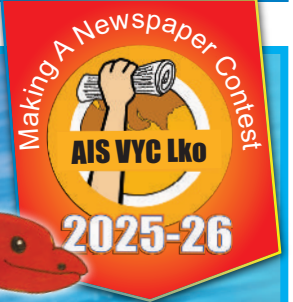
Namrata Amit Sharma  
GT Coordinator

Being a GT mentor for nine years, I have witnessed how The Global Times, an initiative of our respected Chairperson ma'am, provides students with an unparalleled platform to showcase their creativity and skills.

Rome wasn't built in a day, and it stands true for us. But despite tight timelines

and high expectations, the team consistently chose effort over excuses. Their perseverance proves that success is not a matter of chance, but of conscious work. I extend my gratitude to our esteemed principal, Roli Tripathi, for her indispensable guidance and kudos to the GT team for nurturing young minds. To the Editorial Team and contributors – this achievement is yours. These aren't just pages, but passion with purpose. Keep on writing with courage and integrity.

Illustration: Avika Bajpai, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI C



### Leptodirus cave beetle

**Hidden habitat:** Slovenia's deep, narrow fissures  
**Taxonomic tag:** Leptodirus hechenwartii  
**Cave coping:** Pale, slow-moving, able to squeeze through tight spaces; low metabolism suited to nutrient-poor environments.  
**Food forage:** Organic material and small cave invertebrates.  
**Special skill:** No internal body clock or daily (circadian) rhythm.



### Blind freshwater crab

**Hidden habitat:** Sulawesi's flooded cave networks  
**Taxonomic tag:** Cancrocaeca xenomorpha  
**Cave coping:** No eyes; nearly translucent body typical of strict cave dwellers.  
**Food forage:** Small aquatic life and detritus.  
**Special skill:** Possesses very long, slender legs, enhancing its ability to navigate the complex terrain of the cave system and increasing its range for foraging food.



### Olm

**Hidden habitat:** Subterranean freshwater streams and lakes of the Dinaric Alps (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Italy)  
**Taxonomic tag:** Proteus anguinus  
**Cave coping:** Blind since birth, pale colour from living in total darkness; enhanced sense of smell and touch to find food.  
**Food forage:** Aquatic invertebrates  
**Special skill:** Ability to survive long periods without food due to extremely slow metabolism.

*Far from sunlight and the naked eye, exist cave-dwelling creatures that have evolved in ways that challenge everything we know about life on Earth. Let us accompany Aarnavi Singh, AIS VYC Lko, XII B, as she explores some of the stranger things that inhabit the deepest caverns around the globe.*

### Huntsman spider

**Hidden habitat:** Deep in the caverns of Laos  
**Taxonomic tag:** Sinopoda scurien  
**Cave coping:** First known spider species with zero eyes; vision lost entirely as a result of evolution in darkness.  
**Food forage:** Likely small invertebrates and cave insects.  
**Special skill:** Vibration-powered predator navigation due to acutely sensitive hairs on its legs and body.



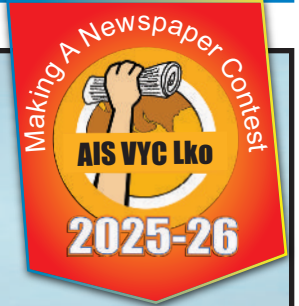
### Blind cavefish

**Hidden habitat:** Isolated cave aquifers and sinkholes in southwest Madagascar  
**Taxonomic tag:** Typhleotris mararybe  
**Cave coping:** No functional eyes; well-developed lateral line system to detect movement and objects underwater.  
**Food forage:** Small aquatic organisms typically available in subterranean waters.  
**Special skill:** Unlike most cavefish species, its body retains dark pigmentation which potentially provides camouflage.



# Dwelling in the deep

Graphic: Mohammad Ali Jamee Saeed Khan, AIS VYC Lucknow, X B



# The missing violin

Akshara Srivastava  
AIS VYC Lko, XI A

In the old town of Bellamy, where the fog crept in quietly and the clock tower chimed every hour whispering unknown secrets, lived Mang- a clever monochrome cat. To most, it was just a pampered creature raised by a retired Army officer Fredrick Jones. But behind those bright green eyes and elegant whiskers was the mind of a highly skilled detective and, most remarkably, the ability to talk. Fredrick Jones, who often found Mang's skills more useful than his own, knew this secret (obviously). Mr Jones never mentioned this to anyone. The cat spoke only when necessary, and only to its rightful owner in a very faint voice.

On one autumn morning, a young violinist, Agathan Williams, busted in his house "My Stradivarius is gone, somebody left a wooden block in its place," showing the wooden block.

Mr Jones blinked, "Are you sure you didn't misplace it, dear?" Agathan cried "I left it at my practice room in orches-

tra hall after rehearsal," handling the block to Mr Jones. Mr Jones raised a brow. "Mang, what do you think?" Mang sniffled and murmured "Herman Puckett's minty manure. Only his farms smell like this. He grows them with a distinct blend of manure and mint. This block must have been picked up from his farm. That narrows down our suspect list considerably."

Along with Mr Jones and Agathan, Mang padded through the streets, hunting rats, interrogating suspects (with some dramatic hisses), sniffing evidence, and catching clues most humans missed. The investigation led them to the Orchestra Hall where the rehearsals took place. Mang discovered rosin powder in the janitor's closet along with a faint trail of mint and string cheese. "The block must have been hidden here," believed Mang. But to be sure, Mang sniffled only to find the missing violin

standing behind the mop buckets in the rehearsal room, perfectly intact. "That confirms it," Mang declared.

Mr Greaves, the janitor with a grim face who moonlighted as a polka accordionist, was called upon. At first, on probing Mr Greaves didn't confess, putting on a straight face but when Whiskers threatened to shred his accordion keys, he instantly broke down admitting his crime. "I did it! I did it!

I wanted to disrupt Agathan's symphony and wished to start my own band, 'Sabotage'."

The next day, Mang sat by the window, purring nonchalantly. "Another case closed, and they didn't even offer me some tuna," Mang purred, "then they say it is difficult to handle a cat."

Agathan chuckled and poured him a saucer of cream. "To be fair, most of them can't...solve the case," Agathan replied thanking Mr Jones with a look of admiration for solving the case in just a few hours - unaware, that the real detective who cracked this case was poised by the window exchanging a knowing look and a grin with Mr Jones, "Meow".



Illustration: Palak Verma, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI A

# The mirror

Chehak Sharma, AIS VYC Lko, XI C

Wandering through many faces  
I searched for one to solve the mystery  
Eyes sparkled everywhere, bright and alive  
Yet our souls never aligned

Their jagged edges clashed with mine  
Tinnitus rang sharply in my ears  
I crossed buzzing streets with my peers  
The noise followed me everywhere

Laughter rose, loud and unfiltered  
Yet none of it touched my skin  
Smiles lived easily on the outside  
Inside, I ached each day quietly

I blamed the mirrors and looked away  
I feared, I might be forever alone  
So, I kept bargaining with myself  
Hoping belongingness would appear



One day, I slipped and paused  
The mirror's curtain finally fell  
I barely recognised the face staring back  
At first, I was startled and couldn't tell

Then came the quiet realisation  
I had never looked with affection  
Because my eyes wore curtains too  
I only had to love myself, honest and true.

## Read Play and Win 103

Reading your favourite GT can fetch you a prize too. Complete all the boxes below. Click a picture and send it to editor@theglobaltimes.in or submit your responses by visiting The Global Times website (<http://theglobaltimes.in/readplaywin/>). Three lucky winners will win a prize every week!

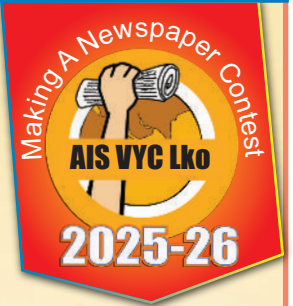


Q.1 What's the name of clever monochrome cat in the story on page 8?	Q.2 When to use the product biofizz advertised on page 4?	Q.3 What does this era's fashionista's worship as mentioned in the story on page 12 ?
Q.4 Which festival did UNESCO officially recognise in 2024 as mentioned on page 9?	Q.5 Name any two US states that have banned or paused lab grown meat in the story on page 1?	Q.6 Who's autobiography has been featured on page 5?
Q.7 What's the tagline for the article on page 6?	Q.8 Whose interview is published on page 3?	Q.9 Name the city where the craft of 'Chandi ki Chappal' is practiced on page 10.

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

Results of Read Play & Win-102: Aviraaj Singh Bajaj, AIS MV, III A; Vibhav Goyal, AIS Gur 46, IV H; Kaira Gupta, AIS Noida, VI F

# More than monuments



## What The UNESCO Tag Means For World's Living Cultures

**Rudraksh Diwakar Sinha**  
AIS VYC Lko, XII B

**A**pril in India marks the transition from spring to summer, along with the onset of festivities such as Baisakhi, which further serves as the precursor for a lesser known festival – ‘Ramman’. It is an annually celebrated 11-day religious festival and ritual theatre that is held in late April in the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra, Uttarakhand. The festival was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. Mira shared all of this with her father after tumbling down a rabbit hole on the topic of festivals, showing off her newly gained knowledge. What followed was an enlightening conversation about culture, identity, and global recognition. Let's be a fly on the wall and listen to what they have to say...

**Dad:** Unlike monuments made out of stone, intangible heritage is an evidence of a ‘living culture’ - things you cannot touch, but can pass on. Festivals, dances, food traditions, storytelling, rituals - all of them are ‘living heritage’ passed down through generations.

**Mira:** I know what intangible heritage is, but what's the list and why are they even making it in the first place?

**Dad:** Mira, you know there is so much being done to preserve monuments, but little to protect important intangible cultural heritages worldwide and ensure the

awareness of their significance. It is with this very aim that the list was established in 2008 when the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took effect.

**Mira:** But compiling the intangible heritages of so many countries across the world must be a massive task. How are they even doing it?

**Dad:** An Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has been formed the members of which are elected by State Parties meeting in a General Assembly.

**Mira:** This is so interesting. Do you know what exactly does this list entail?

**Dad:** As of 2010, the programme compiles three lists - the longer Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the shorter List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This year, Chhath Mahaparv has been nominated for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list 2026-27.

**Mira:** But nominated means that it may or may not make it to the list, right?

**Dad:** Yes, that's right. But we do have a strong chance, given that last year, UNESCO officially recognised Diwali as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. At the 19th Intergovernmental Committee meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, India had successfully nominated Diwali. UNESCO recognised its philoso-

phy - the victory of light over darkness and good over evil - and its shared rituals like lighting of diyas, creating rangoli, performing Lakshmi Puja, exchanging sweets, and coming together as families and communities.

**Mira:** Really! I did not know that. I am so proud of India.

**Dad:** Here's some more pride for thought then. Garba of Gujarat, Durga Puja, Kumbh Mela, Yoga, Chhau dance, vedic chanting, Ramlila, Kalbelia folk dances of Rajasthan are some other Indian intangible heritages on the list. India's first inscription was Kutiyattam theatre in 2001.

**Mira:** And what about other countries? Is Zumba also on the list?

**Dad:** I don't know about Zumba, but there are some very interesting inclusions as Japan's Kabuki, Mexico's Day of the Dead, Ghana's highlife music, Egypt's Koshary dish, and even Iceland's swimming pool culture. Since UNESCO's 2003 Convention, the list has grown from under 100 elements to over 660 across 127 countries.

**Mira:** I am sure it must be a big thing to make it to the list.

given that UNESCO is involved. But does becoming a part of the list help or is it just another paper recognition?

**Dad:** Well, it is not just paperwork. UNESCO recognition is an important tool to boost national prestige, attract tourism, and help preserve traditions that are threatened by urbanisation and globalisation. This global hype helps... it fills hotels, supports local artists, and brings money back into the country. Don't you remember how yoga's inscription in 2016 sparked global interest? So, this recognition also functions as soft power, helping countries tell their stories in a globalised world which often leads to cultural homogenisation.

**Mira:** I am sure UNESCO has some kind of rules for this list.

**Dad:** True. Every nomination is evaluated using five criteria, called R1 to R5. The tradition must fit the definition of intangible heritage, be actively practised, strengthen community identity, show human creativity, and promote mutual respect. Most importantly, communities themselves must agree to the nomination - this isn't culture imposed from the top.

**Mira:** Wow! What an intriguing way to preserve culture.

**Dad:** And what an intriguing conversation to have.





Aditi Verma, XI A & Vaishnavi Yadav,  
XI B, AIS VYC Lucknow

# Silver steps



## Footprints Of A Legacy From The Lanes Of Lucknow

Pics: Aarnavi Singh, XII B & Lavanyaa Verma, XI B, AIS VYC Lko

In the narrow lanes of old Lucknow, where time seems to pause, a quiet rhythm still lingers - the soft strike of hammer against silver. Inside modest workshops, artisans bend over gleaming sheets, crafting not just footwear, but fragments of history. This is the world of *Chandi ki Chappal*, where every pair carries a legacy.

### Royal roots

The origins of this craft trace back to the Mughal era, when Persian artisans brought their skills to India. Lucknow's royal *karkhanas* became the hub of this artistry, where these chappals were created exclusively for Mughal queens and women of Nawabi households, becoming symbols of elegance and status.

### A living legacy

Today, *Chandi ki Chappal* stands as a reminder of more than 400 years of craftsmanship. However, the craft now survives in the hands of only a few. Families like that of Hafiz Mohammad Ashafaq Khan have preserved this art form for decades, with skills inherited rather than formally taught.

### Shaping silver

"The creation of a *Chandi ki Chappal* begins with pure silver, ranging from 100 to 500



A pair of *Chandi ki Chappal* in its sparkling glory



Keeping the tradition alive



GT reporters meet the artisan

to more elaborate designs with kundan or gemstones. Each pair is handcrafted, ensuring that no two pieces are alike.

### Cultural footprints

Beyond aesthetics, *Chandi ki Chappal* holds cultural significance. Brides often commission custom-made pairs to match their attire. In many families, these are gifted as *mooch dikhai* for auspicious beginnings. They are also purchased for newborns as keepsakes.

### Value & decline

"The price reflects both silver and labour. Lighter pairs may begin around INR 35,000, while more intricate designs can exceed INR 50,000," says Khan. Rising silver costs, inconsistent demand, and competition from mass-produced imitations have made it difficult for artisans. Although online platforms have increased visibility, the number of skilled craftsmen continues to decline.

### Holding on

Yet, the craft endures through evolving designs, exhibitions, and the determination of artisan families. Some traditions refuse to fade, choosing instead to walk gently into the future, one silver step at a time.

grams. The metal is melted in traditional furnaces and rolled into thin sheets using a patty machine. This process involves repeated heating and rolling to achieve the right balance of strength and malleability," Khan shares. Once prepared, the sheet is cut into different components - the sole, toe, and sides - using hand tools. The design is lightly etched before the engraving stage begins. To stabilise the sheet, it is fixed onto a wooden base with adhesive. The most intricate stage - *nakashi* - involves engraving delicate floral and Mughal-inspired patterns onto the sur-

face. After engraving, the piece is reheated to remove the adhesive and then assembled. Each pair takes between 3-7 days to complete, depending on the design's complexity.

### Design & detail

While the craft remains traditional, its designs have adapted to modern preferences. The chappals often feature a leather base for durability, with layered soles to enhance comfort. Velvet is also sometimes added beneath the silver lining. Artisans incorporate a range of motifs, from classic floral patterns

Pics: Lavanyaa Verma, XI B, AIS VYC Lucknow



Writers The artisans of words



Editorial Board of AIS VYC Firing the furnace of creativity



Illustrators Crafters of beauty



Designers The young artsmiths



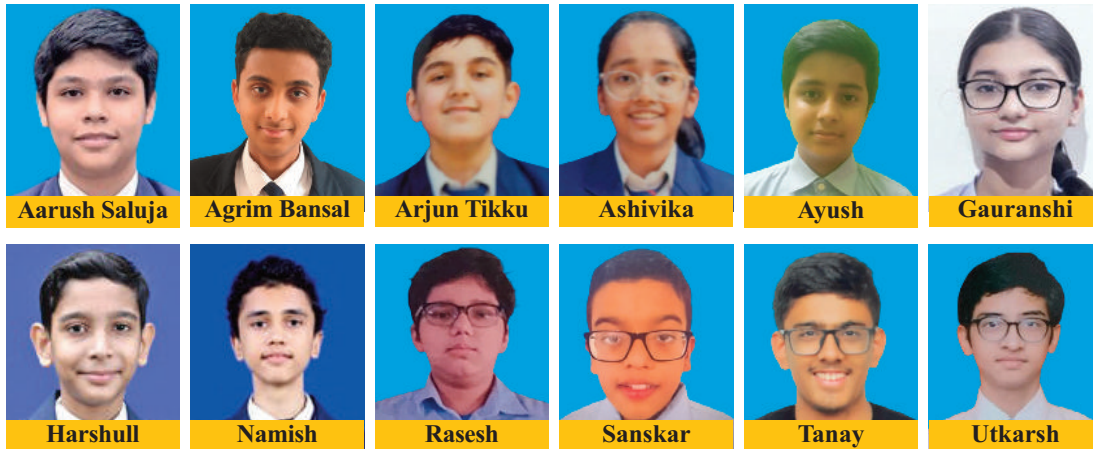
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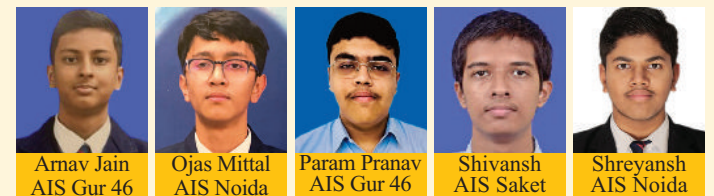
# Magical mathematicians



## AICE

Continuing the legacy of excellence, 12 students from Amity Group of Schools, including 6 from Synconnect programme, have secured ranks in the Top 100 merit list of Aryabhata Ganit Challenge, conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The competition is a national initiative aimed at promoting logical reasoning, mathematical application, and problem solving skills among the students of Classes VIII - X. The winners from Synconnect programme are Utkarsh Bora, Rasesh Sharma, and Ayush Kesharvani, Class X, AIS MV; Sanskar Gupta, AIS Gur 46, Class

X; Aarush Saluja, AIS Gur 43, Class IX, and Agrim Bansal, AIS Saket, Class IX. The non synconnect winners include Tanay Srivastava and Namish Durgpal, AIS Gur 46, Class X; Gauranshi Garg, Class IX and Harshull Grover, Class VIII, AIS Gur 43; Ashvika Bansal and Arjun Tikku, Class X, AIS Pushp Vihar. Aryabhata Ganit Challenge is conducted in two stages. The first stage, held at the school level, identifies the top three students from each participating school. These students then appear for the national level computer-based test conducted by CBSE as part of the second stage. Each year, the Top 100 students from every CBSE region are awarded certificates of merit by CBSE.



## Main (s) stars

### AICE

Amitians have once again registered a stellar performance in JEE Main 2026 (January session) with 11 students securing place in national top 0.1 percentile and 151 students scoring above 93 percentile. The shining toppers are Shreyansh Dixit (99.9793 percentile, 100 in Physics), AIS Noida; Shivansh Sinha (99.9672 percentile), AIS Saket; Param Pranav (99.9639 percentile) and Arnab Jain (99.9637 percentile), AIS Gur 46; Ojas Mittal (99.9505 percentile), AIS Noida. Apart from these, Amitians have also secured exceptional subject percentiles including 100 percentile in Physics by the top per-

former and several students securing above 99.9 percentiles in individual subjects. It is notable that JEE Main is one of the most prestigious examinations of the country and every year, lakhs of aspirants appear for it, with only a small percentage making it to JEE Advanced. This sterling performance achieved under the visionary leadership of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF, is testament of the culture of nurturing excellence at Amity Institute of Competitive Examinations (AICE). It also reiterates sincerity, diligence, and systematic mentoring by the faculty of AICE under the management of its director.



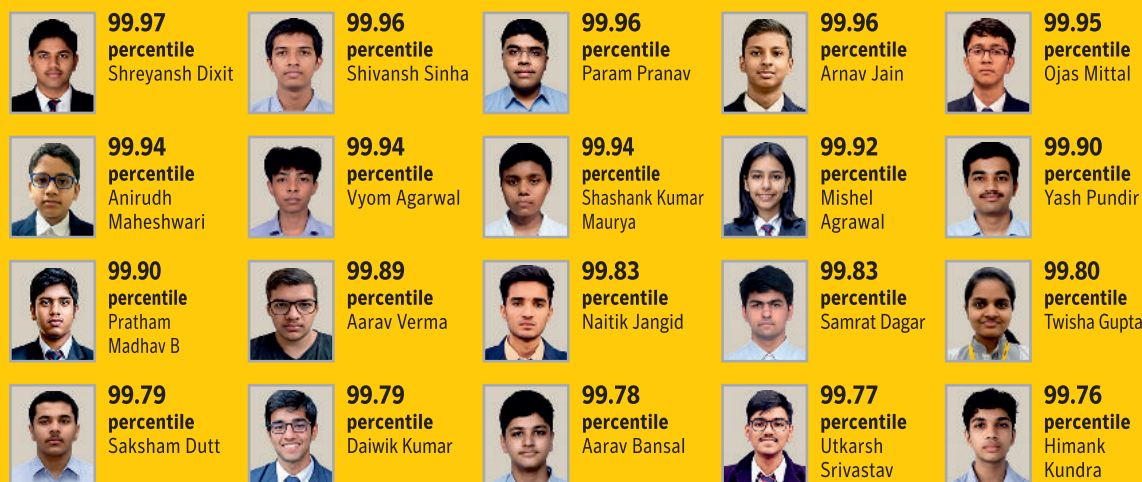
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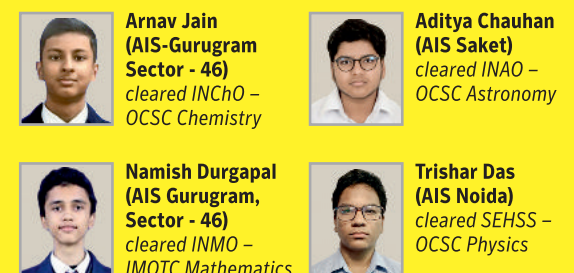
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## CONGRATULATE THE STAR PERFORMERS OF JEE MAIN 2026 (JANUARY)

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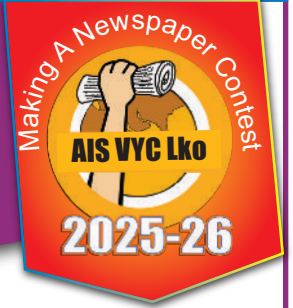
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# From Pharaoh to Prada

JUST FOR  
LAUGHS

## The Queen Has Arrived At The Met Gala

Ishi Pandey

AIS VYC Lko, XII C

Popularly regarded as a fashion icon with impeccable style of the first century BC, I am Cleopatra VII Thea Philopator, also the last Pharaoh of Egypt. I had a secret wish (which very few know) to witness fashion trends of some late century. And behold! My wish came true and here I am to see this era's fashionistas who worship sweatpants, hail influencers as oracles, and believe that 'capsule wardrobes' are aspirational rather than penitential. From opulence to sophistication, the sense of fashion has evolved, but I would definitely like to speak my mind...

### Trend: quiet luxury

**My verdict:** "Ah yes, nothing proclaims wealth like resembling the furniture of a private clinic."

There's a strange modern obsession with looking expensive without appearing to be. (Confused? Me too!) In my time, wealth was meant to be seen, preferably reflected in the sun, off a polished obsidian collar. But now, you dress like a bore.

Even silk and jewellery look so minimal. What's the point, I wonder, if your gems don't have the potential to blind an ambassador at noon?

### Trend: beige on beige

**My verdict:** "A triumph in looking like you've given up but in a curated way."

So many of you swathe yourselves in 'neutrals', as though you are trying to disappear into the walls of your therapists' offices. Linen. Cashmere. Sand. Ecrú. Mushroom. These are not colours but excuses.

Where is your turquoise? Your lapis? Your royal purple, stained with the tears of snails and worth more than a kingdom? You dress as if you're banished from joy.

### Trend: oversized blazers

**My verdict:** "Tell me again how this conveys power. You look like you borrowed it from an old senator."

A woman in my time wielded power in her gaze, in her poise, and in the knowledge that her earrings could double as instruments of war. Today, she wears a shoulder-padded blazer large enough to host a small luncheon inside because of trendy fashion. Modern power dressing, it seems, is more about looking like you're constantly en route to a disappointing board meeting rather than actually letting your wardrobe reflect power.

### Trend: streetwear as couture

**My verdict:** "Ah, peasantry, but aesthetic."

How bold, to charge a month's rent for a sweatshirt. I wore handwoven robes dipped in saffron. You wear hoodies that say 'Supreme'. The only thing supreme about them is the confidence with which you wear them. You call it urban luxury. I call it laundry day with delusions of grandeur.

### Trend: micro bags

**My verdict:** "When you carry nothing but delusion, and perhaps a single almond."

I carried scrolls, cosmetics, and poisons all in one satchel. Why carry bags that have no space? Are you allergic to functionality? Or merely committed to impractical symbolism? Ah, I see. Fashion over purpose. How very Roman of you!

Ugh...I can't take it anymore! It's better that I return to the realm of spirits and serpents. Keep the beige; I'll take my fashion with a side of divine wrath, please.



Pic: Lavanyaa Verma, XI B | Model: Vatsalya Yadav, VIII B; AIS VYC Lucknow

Pics: Lavanyaa Verma, AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

In Spotlight



Editor-in-chief: Vaishnavi Yadav



Contributors behind the creativity: the Editorial Board of AIS VYC Lucknow