

Manavi Chandra & Anoushka Sahney
AIS VKC Lucknow, XII A

The crackle of a handheld console. The fizz of a forgotten soft drink. In moments like these, memory rushes in unannounced. Nostalgia feels deeply personal, a quiet comfort drawn from the past. Yet in today's marketplace, this emotion is no longer left to chance. It is engineered, packaged, and sold—reshaping not just what we remember, but what we consume.

Iconic products return

The global trading card games market is projected to reach 21 bn USD by 2030-34, while the retro gaming market already generates 3-6 bn USD annually. In India, the revival of Campa Cola alone generated 400 cr INR in FY24. Brands are no longer merely resurrecting old favourites; they are relaunching them with modern relevance. Pop culture has amplified this revival. Netflix's Stranger Things rebuilt 1980s aesthetics into a commercial ecosystem. Upon its release, Eggo waffle sales rose by over 10%. Fast food and cinema followed suit. McDonald's adult Happy Meals, with collectible toys and retro packaging, targeted millennials who associated the brand with childhood rituals. When old favourites return, the line between memory and money blurs. Some brands rely on recognition for quick returns. Others, such as LEGO and Paper Boat, invest in emotional longevity.

Unplanned purchases

Nostalgic products have become a new form of instant gratification. Online trends celebrating the 90s attract millennials, often described as 'unsupervised adults with money'. Viral content around childhood toys, TV shows, etc, fuels impulse buying, particularly during limited-edition launches. Brands like Good Humor, which re-launched Vanilla Viennetta in

the US, and Pepsi, whose 2023 logo echoed its 1990s design, relied on emotional familiarity rather than innovation. In fashion, Nike's retro sneakers (Air Jordans and Dunks) demonstrate how archival designs

often outperform new silhouettes. As per Emotional Branding and Attachment Theory, individuals form bonds with products that signal comfort and security. Re-releases allow millennials to relive

childhood while sharing these experiences with their children, strengthening attachment across generations. Furthermore, during COVID, people became nostalgic even for the recent past, as familiarity offered psychological stability in uncertain times.

Carefully crafted launches

Several modern brands thrive entirely on curated remembrance. Founded in 2013, Paper Boat built its identity around 'Drinks and Memories', generating 585 crore INR in FY24. Through Gulzar's narration, references to Malgudi Days, limited-edition packaging, and influencer storytelling, the brand blends physical and digital nostalgia to build trust rather than novelty. Similarly, Nintendo's re-release of mini-NES and Super NES consoles priced between 60-80 USD sold over ten million units globally by 2018, forming a significant share of its hardware sales. The company positioned the consoles around shared family experience rather than technical advancement, reinforcing emotional value.

The feel-good factor

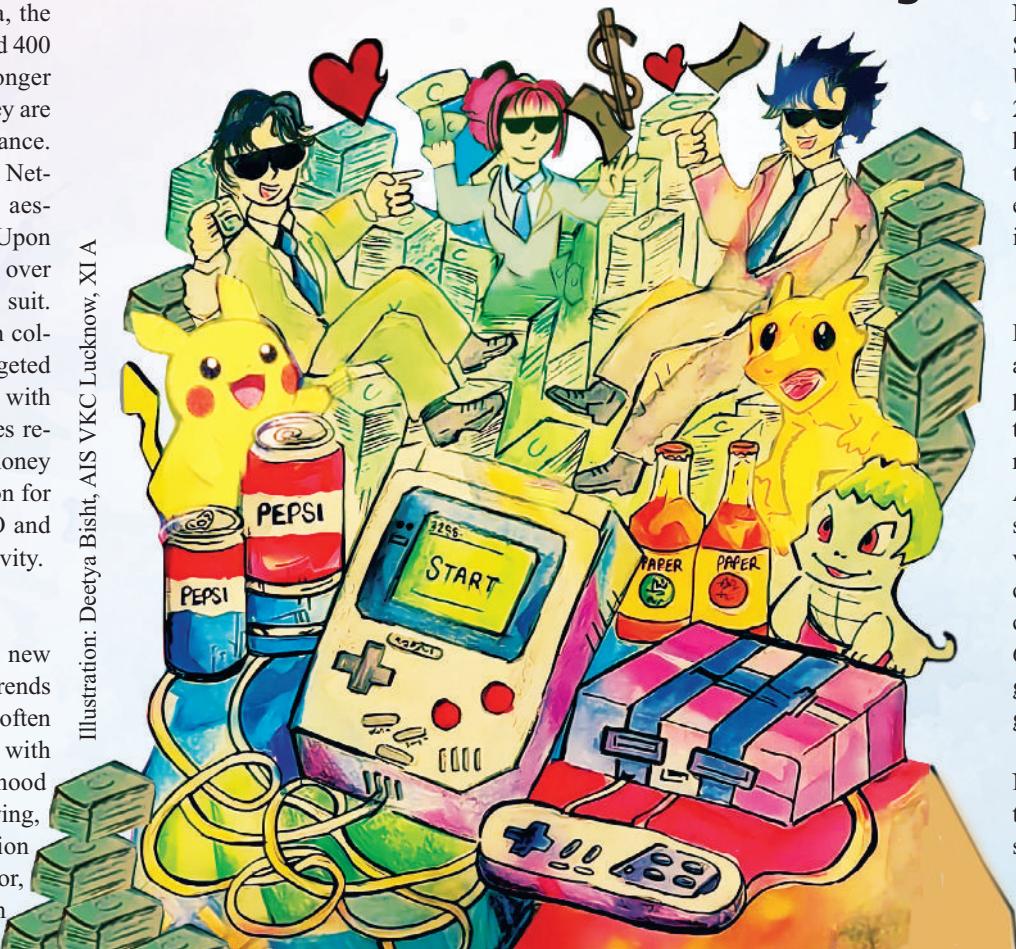
Retro advertisements, familiar packaging, and old jingles deliver instant joy, a brief pause in overstimulated digital lives. Yet, this comfort is increasingly engineered. The return of Coca-Cola's classic glass bottles, Adidas' Originals line, Sony's Walkman-inspired audio products, and India-centric revivals such as Amul's enduring topical cartoons reveal how memory quietly steers consumer behaviour. Research indicates that 60-75% of consumers are more likely to engage with advertisements that evoke nostalgia, boosting purchase intent by 13-27%.

Nostalgia marketing is no longer a passing trend, but a powerful emotional lever. By selling the past, brands are not only reminding us of who we were; they are actively shaping what we choose next.

NOSTALGIA back in stock

Memories Return With A Price Tag

Illustration: Deetya Bisht, AIS VKC Lucknow, XI A



Page editors: Manavi Chandra & Anoushka Sahney, AIS VKC Lucknow, XII A

THE GT @ POLL

Do you think SHE-Marts from Union Budget 2026 will effectively empower women entrepreneurs from all sections?

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) Can't say

To vote, check out our Instagram page @the_global_times

Coming next

AIS VAS 6 Contest Edition



This special edition has been brought to you by Amity International School, Viraj Khand, 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 ninth edition of 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2025-26'.

What's inside

- A voice for change, P3
- Zer(0)Step, P4
- I, the toothbrush, P5
- Reading for applause, P6
- Wonder villages, P7
- Moo-ves gone wrong, P8
- Gold fever, silver spark, P9

@ POLL RESULT

for GT Edition February 2, 2026

How will Arijit Singh's retirement from playback singing impact India's music industry?

Loss of a popular voice

An opening for new talent

20%

68%

Industry adapts

12%

Results as on February 6, 2026

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES WITH PRESTIGIOUS FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

Earn two degrees, one foreign and one Indian, by starting your studies at Amity in India and completing at a Partner University abroad.

Save cost | Go abroad at a more mature age | Get prepared for a global career



#1 in Australia (QS, THE and US News)

#13 in the world (QS)

B.Sc. Advanced (Hons.) from Melbourne and B.Sc. (International) from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)

GLOBAL DEGREE PROGRAM



Top 3 in Australia (THE, US News)

B.Tech. CSE (International)
2 years at Amity, India
2 years at Monash University, Australia
Bachelor of Software Engineering

B.Tech. CSE / AI (International)
3.5 years at Amity, India
2 years at Monash University, Australia
Master's in Artificial Intelligence

BA Applied Psychology (International)
1 year at Amity, India
2 years at Monash University, Australia
Bachelor of Psychology

B.Sc Biotechnology (International)
2 years at Amity, India
2 years at Monash University, Australia
BS in Biomedical Science



Russell Group university,
Top 100 in the world (QS, THE and US News)

B.Sc. (Hons.) - Business Mgmt. from Birmingham and BBA from Amity (1 yr in India + 2 yrs abroad)

B.Sc. - Comp. Sc./ AI & Comp. Sc. from Birmingham and B.Tech. - CSE from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)



Russell Group university,
Top 20 in UK (QS)

B.Sc. (Hons.) - Biotech from Nottingham and B.Sc. - Biotech from Amity (1 yr in India + 2 yrs abroad)

M.Sc. - Biotech from Nottingham and M.Sc. - Biotech from Amity (1 yr in India + 1 yr abroad)



Ranked #29 'Best Value' College in U.S. (US News)

One of America's most beautiful college campuses (Forbes)

BS - Psychology from Illinois and BA - Applied Psychology from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)

BS - CS / AI / Comp. Engg. from Illinois and B.Tech. - CSE from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)

BS - Business Administration from Illinois and BBA from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)

MBA - Business Analytics from Illinois and MBA from Amity (1 yr in India + 1 yr abroad)



Russell Group university,
Top 25 in the UK (The Times)

B.Sc. - Business Mgmt. from Cardiff and BBA from Amity (1 yr in India + 2 yrs abroad)



Russell Group university,
Top 100 in the world (QS)

B.Sc. - Business Mgmt. from Queen Mary and BBA from Amity (2 yrs in India + 2 yrs abroad)

M.Sc. - Management from Queen Mary and MBA from Amity (1 yr in India + 1 yr abroad)

M.Sc. - Biotechnology from Queen Mary and M.Sc. - Biotech from Amity (1 yr in India + 1 yr abroad)



Ranked in top 50 in UK (THE)

BA (Hons.) - Intl. Business & Mgmt. from Nottingham Trent and BBA from Amity (2 yrs in India + 1 yr abroad)

M.Sc. - Management from Nottingham Trent and MBA from Amity (1 yr in India + 1 yr abroad)



And Many More...

Amity University, Noida Campus | Helpline : 9560411667 / 8447786431
For details and to apply, visit www.amity.edu/dualdegrees or scan QR code



Admissions also open for 400+ UG & PG degrees. Apply at www.amity.edu/noida; Contact: 0120-2445252



AMITY
UNIVERSITY

A voice for change

Najma Heptulla Talks On Politics, Progress, And Social Impact

Abhiraj Srivastava, XI C &
Aditi Singh, XI A
AIS VKC Lucknow

Dr Najma Heptulla is a dynamic stateswoman whose journey bridges science, advocacy, and high politics. She earned a PhD in cardiac anatomy before embarking on a distinguished career as a six-time Rajya Sabha member, deputy chairperson, union minister, and governor. She speaks to GT about her multifaceted career and her quest to elevate the human spirit.

Carrying the legacy

After school, I received some priceless advice from my uncle, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, that "Study as much as you like, but aim to master your craft so people honour what you know, not who you are related to." This advice has stuck with me. Despite my family's roots, I paved my path in politics. My heart was set on teaching and research, but after marriage and kids, lab time grew rare, and grants dried up. So, I dove into fixing basics like toilets and clinics. This slowly dragged me into public offices.

Redefining politics

When I stepped into politics, there were barely 6 percent parliamentary seats for women in the Rajya Sabha, and this figure has merely crawled ever since. Women deserve tough portfolios, not just the domestic



Dr Najma Heptulla with GT reporters

ones. As president of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I chaired a global conference focusing on boosting women's political presence. We have come a long way since, seeing women leaders like Nirmala Sitharaman serve as Finance Minister. But full equality in voting, campaigning, and cabinet seats are still a concern.

Equity and empathy

Leadership is about taking chances to make things better. It means treating people, animals, and the planet with basic respect. Each little change in our neighbourhood slowly adds up. As a leader, my best stress remedy is stepping back, breathing, and looking for a real fix instead of getting lost in the drama. When I served as deputy chairman, my job was like that of a football referee. Keeping that distance helped me make impartial decisions.

Taking tough calls

Quitting the party that had been a legacy for

my family was difficult, but it was in line with my aspirations. When the parliament of a country was dissolved, and martial law was declared, I made sure that parliament members were safe and cared for. I did not shy away from having discussions with leaders on how to restore democracy. These experiences have taught me the importance of courage to stand by my principles.

Echoes of the past

Through my work as a zoologist, I have learned that stagnation results in decay, but movement results in life. I urge myself to continue learning and adapting, like a river that flows and continues to grow. One can learn from anyone, regardless of their age, or experience. It helps you appreciate as well as acknowledge the efforts of people around you, and create a positive community.

Message for Amitians

In politics, it is crucial to be honest and serve others wholeheartedly. So, aim to contribute something worthwhile, no matter how small. For it is about concentrating on your own potential and striving to make the world a better place, one step at a time.



Dr Najma Heptulla, politician

Degrees and dedication

Amity Maharashtra Honours Class Of 2025

AUM

Amity University Maharashtra celebrated the achievements of the batch of 2025 at its Annual Convocation Ceremony held on January 21, 2026, at Shanmukhananda Hall, Mumbai. The ceremony marked a significant academic milestone, with the University conferring degrees upon 1,521 graduates, including 25 doctoral scholars, and awarding 151 medals for academic excellence. Delivering the welcome address and annual convocation report,

Prof (Dr) A W Santosh Kumar, vice chancellor, Amity University Maharashtra, congratulated the graduates for their perseverance and hard work. He highlighted Amity University Maharashtra's distinction as the first private university in the state established under a Government Act and noted that over 15 percent of students received full scholarships. Addressing the gathering, Dr Aseem Chauhan, President and Chancellor, Amity University, congratulated the Class of 2025 and emphasised that Amity graduates are shaped not only by aca-

demic rigour but also by values, ethics, and social responsibility. He also encouraged students to pursue purpose along with professional success.

The ceremony was graced by leaders who were conferred honorary doctorates for their contributions to nation-building. Dr R Venkataramani, attorney general for India, was awarded the LL D Honoris Causa, and Hital R Meswani, executive director, Reliance Industries Limited, was conferred the D Phil Honoris Causa.

Reaffirming the University's stature, Prof Kumar highlighted the



Dr R Venkataramani (left) & Hital R Meswani (right) conferred with honorary doctorates by Dr Aseem Chauhan and dignitaries

inclusive ethos of Amity University Maharashtra, and its recognition among the top 10% of South Asian institutions by QS World Rankings. He also outlined achievements in research and innovation, including participation in an ISRO scientific mission, along with student-led work in clean hydrogen energy, AI-driven

healthcare, and advanced monitoring systems. He also shared that 95 percent of students secured placements, with participation from 582 leading companies. The convocation reaffirmed Amity University Maharashtra's commitment to nurturing future-ready professionals and responsible global citizens.



INTERVIEW

zer(0)Step



Leap Beyond Earth's Surface With The New Gravity Defying Shoes



Powered by electromagnetic propulsion



Anti-gravity discs cause dynamic lift with low-g leaps and breezy glides



Inertial Measurement Units (IMU) sensors ensure safe balance



Feel the float-fest with gyro-stabilised low gravity

Inspired by inertial guidance and anti-gravity concepts, perfect for:

Space training

VR experiences

Next-gen sports

Walk on Earth

Feel Moon's gravity

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

Anushka Mittal

AIS Vasundhara 6, VII A

You may have felt the ground beneath your feet tremble when a teacher announced a surprise test, but have you ever stood on a land that actually bounces back? Such magic exists at Loktak Lake, India's largest freshwater lake, located in Manipur's Bishnupur district, about 45 km south of Imphal.

Floating islands

This shimmering wetland is dotted with phumdis, floating masses of vegetation, soil, and organic matter that drift gently across waters. Their core consists of a spongy, peat-like material rich in organic carbon, plant residues, and minerals, which lowers density and allows them to float freely. Some phumdis are so thick that they can support huts, fishing platforms, and even forests. The most remarkable of them forms the Keibul Lamjao National Park, world's only floating national park.

A floating haven

Loktak Lake: Where The Ground Refuses To Stay Still



Anatomy & ecology

Phumdis are living systems with a three-layered structure: a green vegetative top, a middle mat of intertwined roots and stems, and a lower peat layer where slow decomposition occurs. Together, they support around 200 species of aquatic plants and nearly 400 animal species, including reptiles like

the Indian python. Its most notable feature is its ability to provide habitat to the endangered Sangai, or brow-antlered deer, often called the 'dancing deer' for its delicate gait on floating ground. These also act as biological filters, absorbing nutrients and pollutants, which helps reduce sudden algal blooms, but excessive organic buildup can

sometimes reduce oxygen levels in the water.

Floating life

Communities living around Loktak have long depended on phumdis for fishing, vegetable cultivation, and collecting biomass for fuel and housing. In recent decades, artificial phumdis, known as

'athapums', have been created for fish farming. While economically beneficial, their unchecked spread has greatly disrupted water circulation and affected the lake's ecological balance.

The ups and downs

Traditionally, phumdis followed a natural cycle: floating during the monsoon and sinking in the dry season to absorb nutrients from the lakebed. This cycle maintained their thickness, buoyancy, and strength, crucial for supporting large animals like the Sangai.

A changed rhythm

In 1983, the construction of Ithai Barrage altered Loktak's water regime by keeping water levels permanently high. Deprived of contact with the lakebed, many phumdis began thinning and weakening. Farms submerged, human pressure increased, and equilibrium of this Ramsar-designated wetland was thrown off balance, putting one of India's most unusual ecosystems at risk. **GT**



A WINTER TUNE

Before The Ice Melted

Navya Singh, AIS Mayur Vihar, VII A

H ave you heard the story of Frost Guardian who has been looking over its beloved Earth since eons? It is known for the peace that hides within ice. But the bard sings a different tune, of the wildest winter that arrived one June. With a mere huff of its icy breath, the world turned colder. A gentle sway of its hands froze the northern lakes solid. It draped a blanket of snow across the Earth, quieting the clamour of life. Rooted at the poles, where its power surged strongest, it revealed its wildest fury to the natives, commanding the Sun to retreat and plunging the land into months of darkness. People suffered from Seasonal Affective Disorder as a result. No one could halt the Frost Guardian's reign. It stepped upon the ground and froze it forever. Thus, no one resides there now. When the Frost Guardian advanced toward the temperate zones, the Sun leaped forward to challenge it. To preserve its influence, the Frost Guardian grew gentler. Hence, winter became the break that Sun needed and helped the colder species survive. It stored water through the snowpacks, releasing it slowly during spring, which became vital for plant growth and replenishing groundwater. The winter temperatures also killed pests, reduced disease spread, and forced plants into necessary dormancy, which prepared them for spring growth. Soon, it became vital to the ecosystem: a season for nature to rest, coaxing leaves to fall in a striking aesthetic display. Its cold, pure breath brought mental clarity and deepened human sleep, safeguarding weary souls. Soon, winter began to fade quietly, its heart aching as the world awoke – nature stirring, soil enriching. Every year, when Earth grows tired, she recalls winter's comforting silence, bows her shoulders in rest, and ushers the Guardian home.

Your Hygiene Hero, Helper, And Paintbrush

Shambavi Mishra

AIS VKC Lucknow, XII C

BEEP! BEEP! You hear that? That's not just your alarm. That's my cue to a brand-new day with the same old schedule. Every morning, I'm the first one to greet your drowsy face, before coffee and conversations. Lucky me, I guess? I am your toothbrush, the unsung hero of hygiene. You pick me up half-awake, rush through barely forty-five seconds instead of the recommended two minutes and leave me for the rest of the day only to meet before bed (if I'm lucky). Yet here I am, defending your smile with roughly 2500 bristles.

But your bathroom shelf became my humble abode long after I came into existence. Around 3000 BC, ancient Egyptians and Babylonians used twigs and leaves to clean their teeth. The Greeks, Romans, and Indians frayed one end of a twig so it could sneak between teeth. During China's Tang Dynasty (619 CE-907 CE), the first bristled version of me appeared, made with animal hair attached to handles. Europe got its hands on me in the 17th century, when travellers carried the idea back from China.

Thanks to an English man named William Addis, I was transformed into a whole new avatar. While serving a

prison sentence, he drilled holes into a bone, tied bristles into tufts, sealed them with glue, and created the first mass-produced edition of me. I was a mere prison experiment, but upon his release, he turned me into a fortune, and suddenly, I had a future.

For the longest time, my bristles were made from Siberian hog hair, with pig hair for cheaper versions and badger hair for expensive ones. Then came 1938, the year nylon changed everything, thanks to Dupont de Nemours. My nylon bristles version became Doctor West's Miracle toothbrush, and within a decade, companies like Oral-B were mass-producing versions like me.

And I kept getting fancier. My first electric variant, Broxodent, buzzed into existence in Switzerland in 1954. Eco-conscious cousins followed, like the Hoke2 brush with a reusable handle. You see, I am not exactly recyclable. Once I materialise, I live till the end of time, or at least 500 years, irrespective of the state I am in. My bamboo cousins are the torch bearers of eco-consciousness though. But not all my cousins are as humble. The Reinast Luxury Toothbrush, made of titanium and priced at 4200 USD, comes with antibacterial coating, replacement heads, and even a service plan.

Even after going through all that transformation, I work harder than you think. Over a lifetime, you'll spend about 38.5 days using me to brush your teeth. And I'm as good a cardio as any other exercise. Brushing properly three times a day can burn over 3500 calories a year. I may even save your life by reducing periodontal disease, which is linked to heart disease, arthritis, and pneumonia. But gloating isn't my style.

Yet you place me dangerously close to the toilet, ignoring the fact that flushing sends bacteria airborne. Always maintain a two metres distance, please. I deserve boundaries.

Forget not, all of us are equally essential for your existence, humans. In 2003, the American public voted me as the one invention they couldn't live without. Not bad for a piece of plastic. So, remember, I'm not just some bristles on a handle. I'm tradition. I'm science. I'm your smile's secret keeper. I'll be waiting in my stand; morning, night, and during every chocolate emergency.

Autobiography

I, the toothbrush

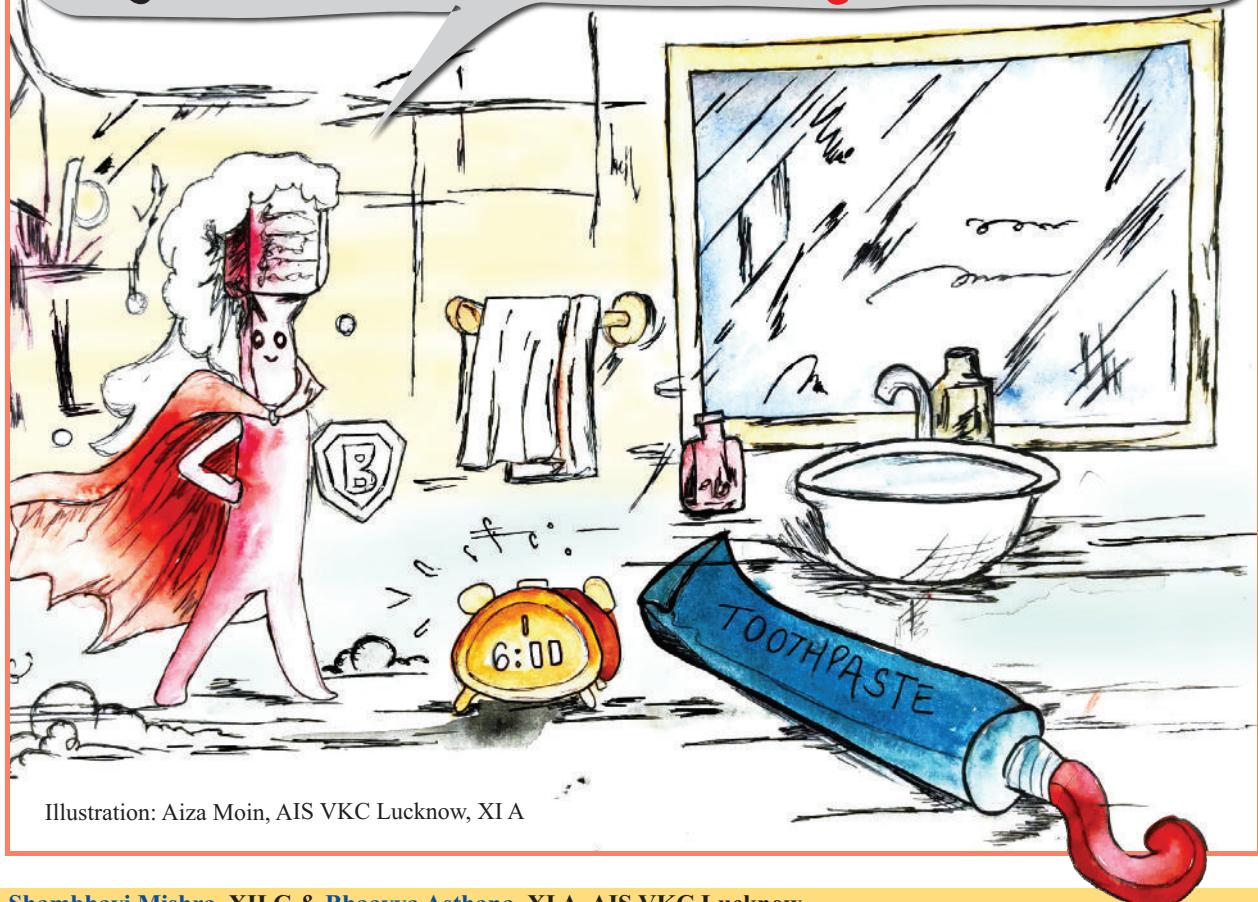


Illustration: Aiza Moin, AIS VKC Lucknow, XI A



Lessons In leadership



Dr Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

The past few weeks at Amity have been filled with a quiet yet powerful joy - the joy of welcoming a new generation of leaders. As I visited different branches for the Investiture Ceremonies, my heart was filled with pride. In each badge pinned and oath taken, I saw the fruition of a long-held dream: to create a lineage of leaders who have the courage to think differently and act responsibly.

At Amity, leadership is not reserved for the future; it is cultivated every single day. From the moment a child enters our school, we encourage confidence and expression. Whether it begins with a simple Show and Tell, where a young learner finds the courage to speak, or grows through platforms like The Global Times where they articulate their thoughts like real leaders, champion social crusades with Youth Power, and deliberate at MUNs; leadership takes many forms.

The recently concluded Investiture Ceremonies stood as a powerful testament to this belief. Our newly elected student council - Head Girl and Head Boy, Sports and Cultural Captains, Editor-in-Chief, and Prefects - are future leaders of the nation.

The leadership spirit witnessed during these ceremonies reaffirms what Amity strives to nurture from the very beginning - leaders who go beyond authority and lead with purpose, carrying these values from school into the world beyond.

Hip Hip Hurray

I am delighted to share that Amitians have brought home laurels in two prestigious science competitions. Suhani Gupta, of AIS Gur 46, secured a Gold Medal at the IRIS National Fair, while seven out of the 12 students selected from Delhi and UP for the Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) this year are from Amity. **GT**

Gateway to learn



Rachna Mishra
Principal, AIS VKC Lko

Amity has always stood as a gateway to the haven of learning, where curious minds find direction, creativity gets medium of expression, and every learner finds their unique voice. It makes me feel proud to notice how students from other institutions, who visit us for competitions and events, get inspired by our school. Once they leave, their hearts are full of admiration for the opportunities, warmth,

and excellence that Amity captures so vividly.

Truly, the core of this inspiring journey is the vision of our respected Chairperson, Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, whose mission is to foster compassionate leaders and global citizens. Her firm belief in all-inclusive education continues to transform classrooms into creative ecosystems of thought and innovation. As Vince Lombardi aptly said, "Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence." This pursuit of excellence defines every Amity School.

The same spirit reflects in our latest edition of The Global Times. I greatly acknowledge the efforts of the GT editorial board whose imagination and diligence have shaped this contest edition into a celebration of ideas and expression. Each page vibrates with originality, collaboration, and the spirit of Amity. My heartfelt congratulations to the GT team and all contributors. I hope this edition continues to inspire and open gateways to infinite learning and joy. **GT**

Reading for applause

Is It Reviving Reading Or Risking Its Soul?



Aditi Singh, AIS VKC Lko, XI A

Ever stumbled upon hashtags like 'Bookstagram' or 'BookTok' while doomscrolling through social media? What began as a niche corner of the internet for book lovers has now grown into a global literary phenomenon. These platforms have undeniably revived interest in reading, all the while boosting book sales and building communities where book lovers connect across borders. However, beneath the cautiously curated enthusiastic reviews lies a rapidly growing trend: performative reading.

Policing the pages

Perhaps one of the more damaging effects of this shift is the imposition of rigid hierarchies on genres. Fantasy, young adult, or romance novels are often dismissed as 'lowbrow' or 'mindless escapism', while classics and literary fiction are elevated as markers of intellectual seriousness. While literary gatekeeping is not new, social media intensifies it by rewarding certain books with algorithmic reach. Research on cultural consumption shows that reading choices are used to indicate social status; in the digital age, this signalling becomes performative. Book clubs both online and offline begin to resemble courtrooms rather than communities. The conversation shifts away from storytelling toward status.

The joy of reading

Surveys of young readers influenced by BookTok show that nearly half report reading more because of social media exposure, rather than what



Illustration: Shubhanshu Singh, AIS VKC Lko, XII C

genuinely interests them. Annual targets and streaks popularised by platforms like Goodreads and TikTok turn reading into a measurable task. Finishing 50 books a year becomes more impressive than lingering over one that demands time and reflection. Research on BookTok's impact on backlist titles shows that while some books experienced sales jumps of over 1,000 percent, discussion around them is often reduced to quick summaries before attention shifts to the next recommendation.

Guilty pleasures?

Whether it is a romance novel, a YA fantasy, or a fast-paced thriller, enjoyment is often prefaced with an apology: "It's just a guilty pleasure." This reveals how deeply literary elitism has altered our bond with books.

Yet the data tells a different story. Genre fiction dominates global book sales, sustaining authors, and bookstores alike, with even older titles seeing dramatic revivals after gaining traction online. Enjoyment needs no defence. Romance foregrounds emotional intelligence and human connection, while thrillers sharpen our understanding of tension and pacing. To love these genres is an act of resistance against outdated hierarchies.

To preserve the soul of reading, we must resist turning it into a spectacle. Books are not meant to impress an audience; they are meant to move the reader. And it is only when we read for ourselves, rather than for display, that literature truly comes alive. **GT**

Enter the pent(a)house of power

As we celebrate our fifth edition, we are energised by the 'power of five' just like the five senses that awaken perception, and the five fingers that shape creation. Similarly, the five stages of this paper namely ideation, drafting, writing, editing, and finally publishing has been a balance of hard



Mili Garg
GT Coordinator

work, and insight. The Global Times contest edition by AIS VKC Lucknow is a canvas that reflects curiosity and creativity. From the gripping cover story on cashing on nostalgia to adding a futuristic viewpoint via the science ad of anti-gravity shoes, every article captures students'

imagination and research proficiency. The interview with Dr Najma Heptulla further enriches this edition.

Behind the pages lies a partnership of young writers, artists, and editors who morphed ideas into storylines. Readers will find delight in reading, where each narrative resonates with thought, creativity, and the collective spirit of our editorial team.

Illustration: Arnav Verma, AIS VKC Lucknow, XI A



AL-SOGARA

Our world holds many secrets where some are already uncovered, others are yet to be discovered. Some of these wonders are hidden in faraway lands. Join **Aishwarya Miho, AIS VKC Lucknow, XI C**, on her quest to unveil what these villages can teach us.

Moniker: The cliffside village

Site: Oman, 195km south-west of Muscat

Unique Feature: Entirely carved into the limestone cliff of Jabal al Akhdar ('Green Mountain'), standing 2,980m high. Its unique construction protects it from the harsh climate of the mountain.

Backstory: This isolated village has been inhabited for over 500 years.

NAGORO

Moniker: The scarecrow village

Site: Iya district, Tokushima, Japan

Unique Feature: Known for having more dolls than humans! These dolls, despite being beautiful, are used as scarecrows. The village maintains a 'basic scarecrow register' which notes each scarecrow's name, personality, story, and more.

Backstory: With rapid ageing and shrinking population, people left for better opportunities leaving behind a select few, and dolls.

WONDER VILLAGES

SHANI SHINGNAPUR

Educational
Poster

MATTUR

Moniker: The no-door village

Site: Maharashtra, India

Unique Feature: An unusual village where the houses have no front doors or locks. The police station has no front door and The UCO bank remains there as the only bank branch in the world with no lock.

Backstory: It is believed that Lord Shani, the God of Saturn, is the guardian of the village, who will punish thieves.

Moniker: The Sanskrit hamlet

Site: Shivamogga, Karnataka

Unique Feature: It is the only village where residents use Sanskrit language in their day to day life, despite Kannada being the official language.

Backstory: Until the early 1980s, the villagers spoke Sankethi. Following a 10-day workshop by Sanskrita Bharati, community transitioned to daily spoken Sanskrit.

Illustration: Tanya Verma, AIS VKC Lucknow, IX A

Moo-ves gone wrong

Ifa Zehra, AIS VKC Lko, IX A

Lila had never met a cow she didn't like, which was lucky, because today she was at Cloverfield Cow Farm, ready to help with the morning chores. She had imagined serene green fields, gentle moo-ing, and a poetic sunrise moment paired with soft background music. Reality, however, arrived loudly. And possibly with hooves.

She began with milking. Easy peasy, right? After all, Lila had memorised six YouTube tutorials and considered herself certified. She approached Bessie, the oldest cow, who stared at her as if Lila had just insulted her great-grandmother and her entire lineage. Lila smiled bravely. "Good moo-rning! Ready to work together?" Bessie blinked and then delivered what could only be described as a Bruce Lee-inspired kick. Lila leapt back just in time. "Wow," she gasped, "she's got the moo-ves like Jagger."

Buttercup, the next cow, had a more creative approach. She leaned forward, sniffed Lila's bucket, and decided gravity was optional. With one elegant nudge, the bucket toppled. Milk flowed like an unrestrained river onto Lila, Buttercup, and a very smug goat observing from the fence like a reality-show judge. "Okay," Lila laughed, surrendering. "Clearly, you're the boss."

By mid-morning, the cows had organised what Lila strongly suspected was a tiny



union. They mooed in perfect unison whenever she tried to clean the stalls. Buttercup introduced a new sport called Sneak-Up-and-Nudge-the-Human-into-the-Mud. It was very

popular. Feeding time brought fresh humiliation. Lila handed Bessie a bag of hay. She sniffed it, then tossed it aside like a food critic rejecting a dish for having only one Michelin

star. Lila shrugged, "Fine, picky eater. I'll make you something special tomorrow." She felt seen, but not heard.

Despite the mess, the mooing, and the repeated mud baths, Lila couldn't stop laughing at this cow-trastrophe. By noon, she collapsed onto the grass, sticky and exhausted. The cows lounged nearby, basking in the sun, then wandered over to nuzzle her as if to say, "Okay, human. You've survived the Herd Games. You may stay."

On her way home, covered in hay and artistic drizzles of milk, Lila smiled to herself.

The cows were chaotic and completely unpredictable, but they were also affectionate and entirely lovable. Working on a cow farm, she realised, wasn't about perfect chores or spotless fields. It was about patience, laughter, and learning to embrace a little mess.

As she waved goodbye, Buttercup winked. Lila had decided she'd be back tomorrow. Because life with cows might be cow-aotic... but it was also utterly fun.

The missing pastry

Ifa Zehra, AIS VKC Lko, IX A

My mom brought two yummy pastries home
One glazed and one with a chocolate throne
I saved it for dessert, if dinner turned spicy
And prayed it wouldn't end up stiff and icy

I stashed it covertly, with my love and care
Guarded by leftovers and a half-rotten pear
Then off I went smirking, like Agent Red
Back from a mission that news never read

I feigned no hunger as dinner was served
Wore a mask to keep my secret preserved
Tossed praises at my master chef's buffet
To keep suspicions and side-eyes at bay

Then fled with my plate in a flash of light
To our fridge like thief in the dead of night
But lo and behold! The space seemed bare
No pastry, no glaze, just that rotten pear

My chocolate throne was gone, misplaced
Vanished without a note and single trace
I gasped and groaned, I dropped my spoon

Pic courtesy & Model: Aadya Dubey, AIS VKC Lucknow, IX B



Interrogated fridge like a Sherlock cartoon

Was it the dog? Was it Saanvi, the sneak?
Or was it Grandma on her nightly streak?
Oh, I guess there is no way to figure it out
For the culprit sits with an innocent pout

Maybe next time, before the warning bell
I'll hide my future chocolate throne well
So, the unresolved case of missing pastry
Shall be solved, remaining no mystery. **GT**

Read Play and Win

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!

101



Q.1 Name any two villages mentioned on page 7.	Q.2 Which futuristic product has been featured on page 4?	Q.3 Which famous politician has been interviewed on page 3?
Q.4 Which two precious metals have been talked about on page 9?	Q.5 Who is the author of top story on page 1?	Q.6 How many bristles does a toothbrush have?
Q.7 What is the headline of the perspective article on page 6?	Q.8 Who is the EIC of AIS VKC Lucknow?	Q.9 What is the name of the cow farm in the short story on page 8?

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

Results of Read Play & Win-100: **Aviraaj Singh Bajaj**, AIS MV, II A; **Ritvik Gupta**, AIS Gur 46, IV H; **Prakriti Das**, AIS Gur 43, IV B

Gold fever Silver spark

A Dig Into Why Gold And Silver Are Hitting Record Highs

Utkarshita Bajpai
AIS VKC Lucknow, XI A

Anchor (to audience): Good evening and welcome. For centuries, gold and silver, symbolising wealth have risen steadily. But what we are witnessing today is extraordinary. Since 2019, gold prices have nearly doubled, with the sharpest acceleration between 2023 and 2025. Now, as we step into 2026, gold has surged a record 17 per cent in just weeks, grabbing headlines and triggering anxiety among households, investors, and policymakers alike. And it isn't gold alone. Silver is also stealing the spotlight. Prices touched USD 110 an ounce in January, and analysts warn it could climb to USD 125 if demand continues at the current pace. To help us decode this unprecedented surge, we're joined tonight by financial expert Dr Rajendra Mehta.

Anchor (turning to expert): Dr Mehta, this sudden spike feels very different. What's driving it?

Dr Mehta: This surge is unusual. A key factor is geopolitical uncertainty. Rising tensions between Iran and Israel, US naval deployments, and warnings of a wider regional conflict have unsettled global markets. Historically, whenever uncertainty rises, investors rush towards safe-haven assets—and gold and silver top that list.

Anchor: Besides geopolitics are there other forces at play?

Dr Mehta: Several. Trade disputes and diplomatic standoffs between major economies have added to global unease. Ongoing tensions between the United States and China over technology transfers, semiconductor restrictions, and tariffs have disrupted supply chains and weakened growth prospects. At the same time, central banks in countries like China, India, Turkey, and Russia are aggressively buying gold. This isn't about ornamentation; it's about reducing reliance on the US dollar and strengthening economic resilience.

Anchor: Is inflation influencing prices?

Dr Mehta: Inflation plays a crucial role. When inflation rises, fiat currencies like the rupee or the dollar lose purchasing power. Gold and silver, which can't be printed, become natural hedges. In fact, the US dollar fell nearly 8 per cent year-to-date in 2025, making gold cheaper for overseas buyers and boosting global demand. In India, cultural factors matter too, such as the ongoing wedding season has kept jewellery demand strong despite soaring prices.

Anchor: What's surprised many is silver's meteoric rise since mid-2025. Why is silver suddenly in such demand?

Dr Mehta: Silver's surge is largely industry driven. Nearly 60 per cent of its

global demand comes from industrial use. It's critical for electric vehicles, solar panels, electronics, and battery technology, thus referred as green metal.

Anchor: And technology seems to be amplifying this trend?

Dr Mehta: Absolutely. AI data centres require high-performance electronics, relying heavily on silver. Adding to this, China imposed strict export controls on silver from January 1, 2026, tightening global supply. When demand rises and supply contracts, prices soar upwards.

Anchor: How are these rising prices impacting India and global markets?

Dr Mehta: For investors, the rally has been rewarding. Gold and silver ETFs have seen strong inflows, offering diversification. However, the jewellery sector, especially in price-sensitive markets like India is under pressure. Higher prices usually dampen demand, though the wedding season has cushioned the impact for now.

Anchor: And as a broader economy, should we be concerned?

Dr Mehta: A bit. Rising gold prices can weaken the rupee, making imports costlier and adding to inflation. Globally, central banks closely track gold prices while shaping monetary policy. Increased gold demand can also pressure the US dollar, influencing trade balances

and currency valuations worldwide.

Anchor: Looking ahead, what can viewers expect from gold and silver?

Dr Mehta: If inflation remains elevated, gold and silver are likely to stay strong as safe-haven assets. Higher interest rates may slow gold's momentum, but persistent uncertainty can keep demand firm. Silver, meanwhile, has further upside due to its growing role in renewable energy, AI, and electronics. In times of global stress, both metals continue to serve as financial anchors.

Anchor: Before we wrap this discussion up, what advice would you give to our viewers watching these soaring prices with equal parts hope and concern?

Dr Mehta: Staying calm and informed comes first. Gold and silver are long-term assets, not vehicles for quick speculation. Align investments with your goals, time horizon, and risk appetite. For households buying gold for weddings or cultural needs, stick to need-based purchases and avoid panic buying. And remember diversification is key. Prices move in cycles. Discipline and patience matter far more than trying to time the market.

Anchor (closing): Thank you, Dr Mehta and thank you viewers for tuning in. Hope you keep a close eye on these markets and make your money shine.



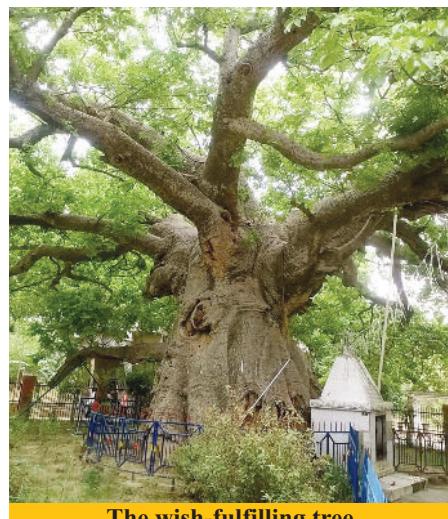
Parijaat eh har ko naam . . .

GROUND REPORTING

... reads the *Sukhmani Sahib*, which translates to 'the name of the Lord is the mythological tree'. It captures the deep reverence associated with the Parijaat tree. Standing in the quiet village of Kintoor in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki district, this tree feels less like a botanical wonder and more like a living legend. Bharat Das, the 'uttaradhihari' and long-time caretaker of this sacred site, reveals the beliefs, history, and emotions connected to Parijaat Dham in an exclusive conversation with **Naisha Tripathi & Sanvi Sharma, AIS VKC Lucknow, IX B.**

Rooted in myth

The Parijaat is no ordinary tree. Ancient scriptures describe it as one of the Chaturdash Ratnas—the fourteen divine treasures that emerged during the Samudra Manthan. "Revered as the *Kalpavriksha*, or the wish-fulfilling tree, it is also known as *Kalpa Taru*. According to popular legend, the tree was brought to Earth by Arjuna from Lord Indra's heavenly abode during the Pandavas' exile, so that his mother, Kunti, could offer



The wish-fulfilling tree

its sacred flowers to Lord Shiva. Ever since, the tree has stood here, becoming a symbol of faith and devotion for countless generations," shares Das. Other legends suggest that Lord Krishna brought the tree for his queen, Satyabhama or Rukmini - adding layers of mythology to its sacred past.

A marvel of nature

Beyond mythology, the Parijaat fascinates even scientists. "This tree does not grow from seeds, nor does it bear fruit," explains Das. Attempts at grafting have failed, as the branches wither away, making this tree im-

Pics: Arnav Singh, AIS VKC, Lucknow, IX A



GT reporters with Bharat Das

possible to replicate. Folklore attributes this uniqueness to a curse by Lord Indra when Arjuna brought it to earth, ensuring that no other Parijaat could ever exist.

The tree follows an unusual life cycle - it sheds all its leaves for six months and regains its lush green canopy for the next six. Its physical features are equally intriguing: the lower leaves have five tips, resembling fingers; while those higher up have seven. The white flowers, with five delicate petals, turn a golden hue as they dry. Blooming rarely, usually after Ganga Dussehra, the flowers fill the surroundings with fragrance. Local belief also holds that the branches never break or dry; instead, they shrink and merge back into the trunk. Estimated to be between 1,000 and 5,000 years old, the Parijaat has a trunk circumference of nearly 50 feet and rises to about 45 feet in height.

Revered with hope

Devotees visit daily, tying threads around the enclosure as they make wishes. "When their wish is fulfilled, they return to untie it," says Das, adding that nearly 70% of visitors come back to offer gratitude. Many also perform *parikrama*, believing it brings relief from troubles that they face. The site sees its largest gatherings during Saawan and Holi. Newly-weds seek blessings here, and a weekly fair is held every Tuesday, attracting high footfall. Fallen flowers are considered auspicious and devotees often take them home for worship.

Treasure of the world

Das describes the Parijaat as a "treasure of the world" and stresses that its greatest protection lies in non-interference. "Don't touch the tree - that's its only protection," he says. Revered by locals as a guardian, the tree's leaves and flowers are fiercely protected and widely admired.

A visit to Parijaat Dham feels like stepping into a space where history, legend, and devotion exist in quiet harmony - a reminder that some wonders survive best when they are left untouched. **GT**

Pics: Siddhant Pathak, AIS VKC Lucknow, XII B

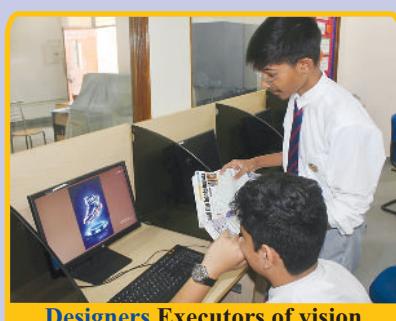
News Room HULCHUL



Writers Symphonists of stories



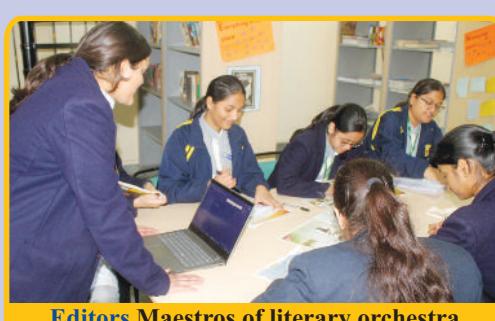
Editorial Board of AIS VKC Lucknow Custodians of words and cultivators of minds



Designers Executors of vision



Photographers Moment captors



Editors Maestros of literary orchestra



Illustrators Sculptors of perception

For more pictures, log on to www.facebook.com/theglobaltimesnewspaper or www.instagram.com/the_global_times



Honouring the warrior

A Powerful Ode To Leaders Who Shaped India



The life and times of Shivaji came live on stage



Chairperson Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan with the chief guest, special guest, and principal

AIS Vasundhara 6

The school celebrated its 20th Senior Annual Day titled 'Shivraya - The Warrior King' on December 12, 2025. The enchanting programme presented by Class VI-XII was based on the inspiring life and times of Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosle, the brave and wise ruler who shaped the 17th century India. Further, contributions of freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar in shaping Indian freedom movement were also key themes.

Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools & RBEF graced the event along with chief guest, Geetali Tare, additional deputy comptroller and

auditor general (western region), Indian Audit and Account Service, who has also served as CFO, NDMC smart city and national health authority. Air Marshal SK Vidhate (retd) AVSM, YSM, VM served as the special guest.

The cultural extravaganza began with the depiction of the role of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar in igniting national awakening through the newspaper *Kesari*, which helped revive the nationalistic spirit among the masses. It further transitioned to the enactments of the birth of the great warrior Shivaji at Fort Shivneri and his formative years under the guidance of his mother, Jijabai. The blend of musical and theatrical performances showcased Shivaji's bond

with his trusted and loyal friend, Tanaji Malusare, and concluded with his legacy as a visionary leader and administrator who built the magnificent Sindhudurg Fort on the Arabian Sea, which is now India's iconic naval fort and a treasured cultural asset. The cultural event concluded with nearly 1000 participants presenting a lyrical tribute to *Vande Mataram*. In their addresses, the chief guest and special guest both deeply appreciated the talent of Amitians and urged them to imbibe the spirit of patriotism from our leaders. In her inspirational message, Chairperson encouraged Amitians to remember the past with pride and carry forward the legacy and wisdom of the warrior king to make India proud.



The golden girl Shivani smiles for lenses

IRIS gold medal

AIS Gurugram 46

Shubhani Gupta from Class XI of the school won a gold medal at the IRIS National Fair held in New Delhi from January 29-31, 2026. She is one of the top 15 students who have won the gold medal this year and has earned the coveted prize for her research in Theoretical Physics and Astronomy, titled 'Vacuum Polarization Effects from Dark Fermion Loops in Z' mediator

models and their Impact on Angular Observables in Rare B-Meson Decays.'

Initiative for Research and Innovation in STEM (IRIS) National Fair is organised by EXSTEM-PLAR Education Linkers Foundation every year to promote science and research among young Indian innovators and recognise outstanding projects across 21 subject categories. The short-listed projects are showcased at the annual IRIS National Fair.

Amitians ace @ VVM



Anirudh V Kamath, Divisha Gupta, Saesha Mishra, Kanish Mathur, Yashasv Malik

AICE

Amitians have made their mark at Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) state level held in January 2026 with seven students from various branches being selected for the prestigious national level camp to be held in May 2026. It is remarkable that from each state 12 students from Class VI-XI were selected for the National Level Camp, out of which total 7 students were from Amity (3 from Delhi state and 4 from UP)

The ignited minds of Amity are:

Delhi State: Yashasv Malik (VIII, AIS Pushp Vihar) and Divisha Gupta (IX, AIS Mayur Vihar) bagged first rank; Adarsh Kumar Singh (XI, AIS Mayur Vihar) secured second rank.

UP State: First rank was won by Saesha Mishra (VIII, AIS Noida), Kanish Mathur (IX, AIS Noida), and Anirudh V Kamath (XI, AIS Vasundhara 6) while Avika Srivastava (VIII, AIS Vasundhara 1) secured second rank.

The amazing feat has been



achieved under the leadership of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF and guidance of AICE (Amity Institute For Competitive Examination) and its faculty who provided strategic intervention and specialised academic support like targeted practical training and integrated academic excellence to the students.

The digital based largest science talent search examination of India, Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan (VVM) is a national programme for popularising science among students of Class VI to XI. Aimed at identifying 'Ignited minds', the exam is an initiative of Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA), in collaboration with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and National Council of Science Museums (NCSM).

Experiencing AI with HKU

ACCGC

Amity Global Schools, Noida and Gurgaon, hosted hands-on experiential workshops under the aegis of Study @ Abroad initiative of Amity Career Counselling & Guidance Cell (ACCGC) in collaboration with The University of Hong Kong (HKU). Students from Class IX - XII attended the workshops aimed at creating awareness about global education opportunities amongst students.

The workshop titled 'Product Design Engineering with AI Integration', hosted by AGS Gurgaon on December 8, 2025, was led by Dr Ko, programme director, Mechanical Engineering, The University of Hong Kong. It focused on integrating AI into the product design lifecycle and applying engineering concepts to real-world



Workshop on AI driven innovations in motion

challenges. Dr Ko explained how AI enhances, the role of engineers and demonstrated how everyday problems can inspire meaningful product innovations.

The other workshop titled, 'AI-Driven Innovation Entrepreneur', conducted by Prof Joseph Chan, associate director, Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, HKU Business School was hosted by AGS Noida on December 12, 2025. It helped students understand how AI is reshaping innovation and entrepreneurship globally. A key highlight of the workshops was the participants presenting their own innovations and project ideas, which were highly appreciated by the mentors.

The job hunt jungle

Where Degrees Don't Guarantee Survival, And Rejection Spree Is Wild

Utkarshita Bajpai, AIS VKC Lko, XI A

Ah, the job search, the modern gladiator pit where hopeful candidates march in armed with degrees, over-polished LinkedIn profiles and at least one existential crisis. It is a land ruled by application portals, automated rejection mails, and the sacred phrase, "We'll keep your résumé on file." Logic occasionally pops in, but irony runs the HR department. To understand this intricate ecosystem, let's observe some familiar species in the wild.

The degree hoarder

Mr Overqualified has it all. A bachelor's, double master's, a PhD, a postdoc, and probably a certificate in underwater basket weaving. His résumé reads like an academic version of a Marvel origin story. He enters interviews quoting Nietzsche, managing statistical crises, and casually fixing the Wi-Fi simultaneously. The interview panel nods in awe. "Impressive," they say, before leaning back and delivering the verdict. "You're amazing, truly. It's just that we are not ready for you right now." Why, you ask? Because Mr Overqualified is a flight risk. He may get bored. He may ask uncomfortable questions. He may expect a salary that involves actual money instead of free snacks. And so, despite being 'perfect', he receives the gentlest rejection.

Bachelor of unemployment

On the other side of the Savannah stands Mr Under-qualified. Fresh, enthusiastic, with that wonderful mix of hope and innocence that still hasn't been disillusioned by capitalism. He has just graduated after years of hard work, student loans, motiva-

tional reels, and learned about office politics from TV. His résumé lists internships where he made coffee, organised files, and once clicked 'Send' on a very important email. Recruiters skim his application for seven seconds before murmuring, "Not a good match," as if it were a relationship gone bad. Sometimes they're kinder and say, "Lacks experience" fascinating, because experience is something one usually gains by being hired. It is the same as being informed that you cannot be a gym member until already in shape.

The true survivor

Now let us turn to the real MVP of this circus: the hiring manager. Weeks into the hiring process, they are drowning in hundreds of

applications. Their inbox is a battle zone. One résumé uses 17 fonts. Another is a YouTube video. Their eye starts twitching when anyone says 'team player'. While dodging geniuses and dreamers, they find themselves thinking, "Is there anyone who is not too ambitious, not too clueless, but just so?" Unfortunately, Goldilocks is off freelancing. Eventually, the hiring manager chooses someone who 'feels right', meaning they had a normal email address, arrived on time, and did not ask about paid leave within the first five minutes.

Comedy of contradictions

The job hunt, in the end, is a comedy of contradictions dressed in business casual. Too many diplomas? Red flag. Just one degree? Red flag. The perfect qualifications, but the candidate wore a paisley tie? Red flag. So, to all job seekers, keep rewriting that cover letter, survive the professional ghosting, and please do not submit your résumé as a scented scroll. And to hiring managers, may your coffee be strong and your mails merciful. In this job jungle, most people do not have any clue about what they are doing, and somehow, that is what keeps the whole system running.



Graphic: Arnav Singh
AIS VKC Lucknow, IX A

Pics: Siddhant Pathak, AIS VKC Lucknow, XII B

In spotlight



Editor-in-chief: Manavi Chandra



Elevating the message, eliminating the mistakes - the Editorial Board of AIS VKC Lucknow

