

Tiny territories, big aspirations

Does size matter? **Vaishnavi Yadav, AIS VYC Lko, X B**, asks this pertinent question as we explore the fascinating world of micronations - tiny, self-proclaimed independent countries that may not find their way into any official map, but continue to exist and thrive.



Graphic: Yuvraj Dixit, AIS VYC Lucknow, XII B

A world of their own

Micronations are DIY countries with their own governments, flags, constitutions, anthems, passports, and currencies. Take the Principality of Sealand, founded in 1967 on a British naval platform, complete with a flag, currency, and royal family. Or the Commonwealth of Dracul in Houston, Texas, established in 2017, which conducts elections and public initiatives. Lithuania's Užupis, an artistic enclave, celebrates its independence annually. Then there's Slowjamastan, 11 acres of California desert ruled by self-appointed Sultan Randy Williams, a radio DJ who declared independence in 2021 after buying the land for 19,000 USD. Micronations might seem quirky, but they're serious communities with unique identities.

An old story

Micronations can be traced back to Knights Hospitaller, a band of knights which operated with complete sovereign authority in the medieval times. Over the years, more than 100 micronations have sprouted for various reasons – for protest, for fun, or merely as act of self-expression. The Hutt River Province in Australia, for example. Leonard Casley declared his farm as an independent state in 1970 to protest against government's farming policies. This 'state' operated for 50 years with its own currency, stamps, and even a monarch! Micronations symbolise social movements on issues like environmental decay, human rights violation, and corrupt governments.

Where borders are pixels

When modern technology knocked,

creative souls did not even need physical space, and virtual micronations became the new norm. We have the whacky Aerican Empire, a self-proclaimed micronation that exists entirely online and claims sovereignty over a number of disconnected territories on Earth, Mars, Pluto, and an imaginary planet! Founded on May 8, 1987 by Eric Lis and a group of friends, the nation's motto is 'The world is ridiculous; let's keep it that way'. Wirtland, founded in 2008, is another internet-based micronation that calls itself 'the first sovereign country based entirely in cyberspace' and promotes online citizenship with focus on global unity.

Exciting, but bumpy journey

These tiny countries have mastered the knack of turning peculiarity into profit, and make money via selling personalised coins, stamps, unusual tours, and passports. It's difficult to not be impressed by the success stories of micronations like Sealand and Molossia which thrive by attracting tourists and enthusiasts, or good, old Imruland. The latter was created on July 16, 2022 by current Governor Showib Ahmmmed to pay 'tribute' to the Bangladeshi cricketer Imrul Kayes, who is also serving as the 'King' of the country. But wait, before you decide to declare a cricket stadium your own country, be aware that sustaining a micronation is no small feat. Without legal recognition, micronations often struggle to enforce law and order or face difficulties to protect their territories. The Hutt River Province faced mounting debts, and had to be eventually dissolved in 2020, leading to its reintegration into Australia.

Continued on page 2...

Page editor: **Smita Bharti**, AIS VYC Lucknow, X A

THE GT POLL

Do you think technology such as tablets and laptops improve learning outcomes?

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

Poll question by: **Devina Singh, AIS Jagdishpur, X B**

To vote, check out our Instagram page @the_global_times

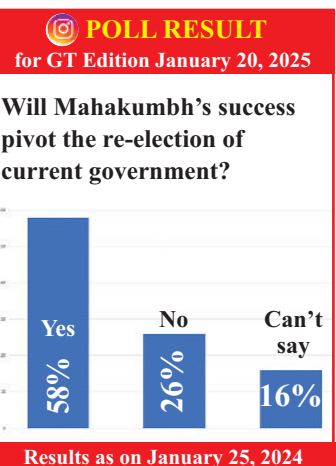


This special edition has been brought to you by **Amity International School, Vrindavan Yojna, Lucknow**, as a part of the 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest'. Each page of this unique edition carries a special story handcrafted by the school's editorial team as a part of the competition. The inter-Amity 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 **eighth edition** of 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2024-25'.

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Timeless melodies

Malini Awasthi's Rendition Of All Things Folk **INTERVIEW**

**Ishi Pandey, XI C &
Aarnavi Singh, XI B, AIS VYC Lko**

Renowned as the 'folk queen' of India, Padma Shri awardee Malini Awasthi, a classically trained singer has captivated listeners with her soulful renditions of *Dadra*, *Thumri*, *Kajri*, *Chaiti*, *Ghazals*, and Sufi songs. Awasthi speaks to GT about her passion for *Hindustani* music.

Musical upbringing

My musical journey began at home. Music was a shared passion for my parents and this shaped my childhood. While my sister pursued music only for a while, my interest in it only grew stronger. My parents introduced me to exceptional teachers like Shujaat Husain Khan and Rahat Ali Khan, who taught me not only the technicalities of music but also its deeper connection to life. It was during these early years that I began to discover myself as an artist.

Spiritual process

The traditional *guru-shishya* system was transformative for me, as it nurtured a relationship far beyond structured classrooms. It was an immersive experience, where music was a living, breathing entity that transcended time. My *gurus* allowed me to grow as an individual and as a musician.

Pic: Yuvraj Dixit, AIS VYC Lucknow, XII B



**GT reporters with Padma Shri
awardee Malini Awasthi**

Every lesson was internalised through repetition, listening, and practicing. My mentor Girija Devi, did not just impart knowledge of ragas, she emphasised on the importance of humility and patience as well. I recall how she often said, "The day you think you know everything, you stop learning." So, learning music is a continuous journey.

Magic of fusion

Fusion must happen only from a place of respect for all styles and forms. I have a solid foundation in classical music, but when I ventured into the world of folk music and Bollywood, I began to see the beauty in combining diverse forms. In Bollywood, the challenge often lies in staying true to the roots of folk music while adapting it to fit the cinematic world. The ability to marry the traditional with the contemporary creates music that's authentic while re-

maining relevant in today's world.

Connected to roots

Music cannot be learnt by earning degrees. You must connect with the culture, heritage, and the world around you. My *gurus* exemplified this – they may not have had formal schooling, yet their brilliance was undeniable. I believe that folk music is a bridge between cultures. Whether performing in Berlin or New York, I've witnessed how folk music transcends boundaries. I remember an elderly woman in Berlin who told me my music reminded her of her grandmother in India. That moment affirmed the universal power of folk music.

Staying authentic

Technology has revolutionised the music industry. What once required large orchestras, expensive recording studios, and extensive sessions can now be done from the comfort of our own homes. I recall recording a track for Coke Studio with Vishal Mishra. He sent the music via phone from London, and within days, the track was part of a major film. While technology accelerates pro-

cesses, it must not overshadow the integrity of the music. Tools like auto tune should amplify, not replace the raw authenticity of the artist's voice. Ultimately, music is meant to be felt and shared. It's the emotions that make music powerful, not the tools used to create it.



Malini Awasthi, folk singer

Bravehearts

Avika Agarwal, AIS Vas 6, IX B

All the brave soldiers, steadfast and true
Who gave their lives for me and you
With courage unmatched, they fought the fight
For our nation's freedom, our guiding light

I dream to follow their noble way
With bravery and courage every day
To stand for justice, to serve and care
And protect the freedom we proudly share

They sought no praise, no wealth, no fame

Their duty alone was their eternal flame
To rescue, to save, they stood so tall
Guarding the nation, giving their all

On Republic Day, let's pause and say
We owe our freedom to their brave way
A debt of gratitude we all must show
For their sacrifice made our spirits grow

So, let us unite and stand together as one
To honour the deeds these heroes have done
With hearts of pride, we'll always proclaim
"Jai Hind" to the brave who earned our name.

Tiny territories, big aspirations

Continued from page 1...

To survive, they adapt

With the entire world going digital in a big way, micronations are adapting too. Many have transitioned into having a virtual presence, so that they can interact with global audiences and elicit support from people far beyond their physical boundaries. For instance, the Aeric Empire and Sealand have become vibrant online communities through their e-citizenship programs, with Sealand even granting titles like 'Lord' and 'Lady' for purchase. Atlantium, another micronation,

has physical headquarters in Australia, but emphasises its status as a global, virtual nation that is open to anyone. Micronations may not have official recognition, but they challenge how we see nations and borders. In a world usually ruled by powerful leaders, micronations show us how the 'aam junta' can govern with panache. They may seem cute and quirky, but micronations also prove that the smallest of dreams can truly inspire the biggest of ideas.

Nurturing curious minds



Dr Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

At Amity, our aim has always been to nurture happy, curious learners; and with this goal in mind, we have incorporated several quizzes in our regular school curriculum. Amity offers several signature quizzes meticulously designed by Academic Research and Development team in collaboration with educators. Bazinga, an inter-school science quiz, was conceptualised as an inter-Amity event to make science engaging for Class IX and XI students. It is a

much sought-after platform where students demonstrate their scientific prowess. While, Mental Math, another hallmark quiz of Amity, aims to sharpen the mental calculation abilities of students. Equally vibrant are the Heritage Quizzes conducted at inter-school, inter-house, and classroom levels. These encourage students to explore India's cultural, geographical and demographic diversity. Quizzat, another annual inter-school quiz, includes topics such as culture, history, current affairs, etc. For commerce students, the Ecom Forum includes a quiz competition to hone the business and economic acumen.

The versatility of these quizzes - with rapid-fire and buzzer rounds, video and audio clues, makes them powerful tools for self-regulation and positive reinforcement. They not only help educators to identify knowledge gaps and provide immediate feedback, but also provide a dynamic platform to cultivate skills of public speaking, presentation and communication.

It's Time to Say Hip, Hip, Hurray!

A three member team from AIS Noida won team trophy and bronze medal in CBSE's National Chess Championship 2024, while AIS Gur 46 also won bronze medal at the 62nd National Roller-Skating Championship. 🏆🇮🇳

Empowering minds



Roli Tripathi
Principal, AIS VYC Lko

It gives me immense joy to pen down my thoughts on the launch of our third contest edition. Each issue of this publication is a testament to the talent, creativity, and dedication that define our vibrant school community. This edition is particularly special, as it highlights not only the innovative ideas of our students but also celebrates the invaluable guidance and inspiration provided by our respected

Chairperson, Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan. The top story on micro-nations showcases the spirit of curiosity and exploration that our students bring to the table, diving into unique and lesser-explored realms of knowledge. The interview with Padma Shri Malini Awasthi, the esteemed folk queen of India, adds a touch of cultural richness and serves as a reminder of the timeless beauty of our heritage. The inclusion of the autobiography of Monalisa brings an artistic perspective, blending creativity with history. Furthermore, the perspective on career trials opens new avenues for our young minds to embrace challenges and make informed choices about their future.

This edition stands out for the relentless efforts of the editorial board. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team and urge everyone to dive into this edition with an open mind and a curious heart. Together, let us continue to celebrate the power of knowledge and the joy of creative expression. 🇮🇳

On a career trial

Internships - An Experience Or Not?

Aarnavi Singh

AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

Internships are like trying on your first pair of professional shoes, slightly uncomfortable, but they make you feel like a grown-up. They give you a chance to step out of the classroom and into the 'real world', where deadlines, teamwork, and coffee-fuelled meetings replace grades and group projects. They let you test the waters without committing to a full-time role. You get to network with professionals who have 'made it', learn industry jargon, and sometimes even work on exciting new projects.

According to a NACE report, 70% of internships in the US lead to job offers - a statistic that underscores the critical role internships play in recruitment pipelines. For many, internships are more than just a learning experience. They open doors to mentorship, networking, and exposure to real-world challenges. In short, internships help you figure out what you want to do. Hate number crunching? Maybe finance isn't your thing. Loved organising that office event? Event management might be calling. It'll be fair to say that internships let you conduct a mini 'career trial' before signing a lifelong contract with a specific job.

But for every glamorous internship where you're learning new skills and working on cool projects, there's

another side where you're just running errands or stuck in a corner updating excel sheets. Sounds familiar? Here's the kicker: 47% of internships in India are unpaid. For the ones who pay, the average stipend ranges from 5,000 to 20,000 INR per month.

Illustration: Vaishnavi Yadav,
AIS VYC Lucknow, X B



This means you're working full-time while still shelling out for rent, food, and Wi-Fi to join all those 'important' Zoom calls. Beyond monetary concerns, the lack of standardisation in internships leads to exploitative practices. Vague job descriptions, overburdened schedules, and irrelevant tasks such as fetching coffee or being the unofficial social media manager or

photocopy person dilute the learning experience. The promise of 'flexible working hours' often turns out to be a myth, leaving you stressed, sleep-deprived, and wondering if all this effort is worth it.

So, where do internships truly stand? Are they a golden opportunity or just another grind fest? The answer lies somewhere in between. The

truth is, that internships can be incredibly rewarding if they're structured and well-regulated. On the flip side, the applicants instead of jumping at the first opportunity, should look for internships that align with their interests and ask about job roles during the interview.

There's also a bigger call for change. Institutions and companies need to now adopt global practices, like providing standardised contracts and offering fair pay. At their best, internships are a career springboard; at their worst, they're just a lesson in what not to do. For applicants, the key is to approach internships with both optimism and caution. For employers, it's time to step up and ensure that internships are a two-way street of learning and value. After all, an internship should leave you with more than just a certificate, it should give you a glimpse of the career you're chasing and the confidence to take it on. And maybe, just maybe, make those long hours and endless coffee runs worth it. 🇮🇳

Confluence of talent

In the words of Maya Angelou, "You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." Our third contest edition stands as a paragon of how our students constantly push the boundaries of their imagination, crafting stories, poems, and ideas that resonate far beyond the confines of classrooms. Each submission reflects not just tal-



Namrata Amit Sharma
GT Coordinator

ent, but the courage to dream and to share it with the world. This edition is not merely a competition but a celebration of voices. It is a space where every story reminds us of Emily Dickinson's words, "I dwell in possibility."

The editorial board has embraced this possibility and explored the

depths of their creativity to present a publication that speaks of their passion and brilliance.

With the support of our dynamic principal ma'am, the young minds have crossed the realm of imagination and experience to create a world of beauty in words. From the editorial meet with GT team to the selection of ideas, drafting, editing, proofreading, working on illustrations, graphics etc, this edition has a complete story to tell. Hope you all will enjoy each piece and work of art as you flip over the pages!



Graphic: Mohammad Ali Jamee Saeed Khan, IX B | Pic: Vatsalya Yadav, VII B | Model: Vaishnavi Yadav, X B, AIS VYC Lucknow,



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Seamlessly integrates with your smartphone. Just ask "Where's my wallet?" and it instantly overlays the exact location on your phone screen through an intuitive AR interface

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Ultra-wideband (UWB) and Augmented reality (AR) to map your surroundings in real-time.

Forgot those keys yet again? Don't remember where you kept your math notebook? Can't recall where you last saw your left sock? Don't bother, welcome Memoratech – a personal memory assistant that enables you to remember detail

Offers real time memory assistance

Made with recyclable materials

Created by leading neuroscientists


Real time memory assistance

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

Winners on wheels

AIS Gurugram 46

Six students brought glory to the school as they won bronze medal in sub junior category in the 62nd National Roller-Skating Championships organised by the Roller Skating Federation of India held at Coimbatore from December 5 to December 12, 2024.

These six winsome skaters who hauled in the bronze are Saransh Sharma (IV), Krishiv Sharma (V), Navya Puri (V), Vyan Chawla (III), Sruthi (V) and Bhavesh Dagar (XI). 




Amitians bring laurels to their school



Amitians make a statement by winning in the CBSE National Chess Championship

The chessmaster

AIS Noida

The team comprising Ananya Dudhoria (IX), Ridhima Gupta (IX), Anika Tyagi (VIII), and Inaaya Kukreja (VIII-L) bagged the team trophy along with bronze medal at CBSE National Chess Championship, Manthan 2024 for U-17 Girls held from October 25-28, 2024. They won the medal by winning three out of five rounds and drawing one round. The competition saw 19 participating teams, with competitors from various countries, showcasing exceptional chess skills. 


The Bengal legacy

AIS VYC

Students of class IV- VIII conducted a special assembly based on the theme 'Heritage of West Bengal' to celebrate state's rich cultural and historical legacy and educate students about West Bengal's contributions to India's cultural identity on December 9, 2024. The event began with students highlighting West Bengal's significance in shaping the nation's heritage. A captivating video followed, showcasing historical landmarks and cultural treasures. The assembly featured a soulful performance of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Ekla Chalo Re' and a lively dance on the folk song 'Fagunero Mohonay,' celebrating the colourful spring festival. Stu-



Amitians stole the show by their dance performance

dents also enacted the roles of eminent personalities like Tagore, Subhash Chandra Bose, Mother Teresa, Swami Vivekanand and Satyajit Ray bringing their contributions to life. An interactive quiz session engaged all the students, followed by an inspiring message from school principal Roli Tripathi about preserving India's cultural heritage. 

Mona Lisa: unframed

From Leonardo da Vinci's Brush To The Louvre's Hush



Illustration: Palak Verma, AIS VYC Lko, X B

Aditi Verma

AIS VYC Lucknow, X A

Personifying serenity and mystery, I've gazed at the world for centuries, my lips sealed in eternal mystery, my eyes holding secrets of millions that stood before me. I was born in Florence, Italy, in the early 16th century, brought to life by my creator, Leonardo da Vinci. You might think you know me, but my name isn't actually Mona Lisa! The face you see belongs to Lisa Gherardini Giocondo, an Italian noblewoman, who I'm sure must be as alluring as I am. Besides my enigmatic beauty, another extraordinary thing about me is that I was painted on a poplar wood panel, and not a regular canvas! Da Vinci and I traveled together, perfecting and refining me along the way. And it wasn't so difficult given my petite size – a mere 18 pounds across 30 inches by 12 inches. I know its too small for a

masterpiece like me. We travelled together from Florence to Milan and finally back to France, where I lost my creator in 1519. Following his death, I found myself in the Louvre Museum of France, placed there by King Francis I. It has been my home ever since, where I have been admired by millions every day. I even have a mailbox, where people often drop fan mails, letters, and gifts for me!

My charm is so irresistible that an Italian artist and patriot, Vincenzo Peruggia, stole me from The Louvre! He believed that I actually belonged to Italy; he kept me hidden in his apartment for two long years! Those were the worst and lonely days – the dark era of my life. I wanted to be where people could see my beauty and admire me, not hidden away in some thief's apartment! He attempted to sell me to an artist in Italy, but thankfully, he was arrested by the police! Oh, what a sigh of relief that was!

At times, the museum gets

overwhelmingly busy, so much so that there's barely any room to stand. People come from all over the world to see me because they want their picture taken with me, regardless of age! It may be hard to believe, but I have been attacked several times! It was so scary, once an angry viewer threw a rock at me! It was very painful; you can still see the scar near my elbow! Protesters threw hot soup at me, too; they were angry at the government for starving children apparently. Thank God, I stand in a bullet proof case now! Scholars and artists have meticulously analysed each brushstroke, attempting to uncover Leonardo's intention behind my creation. Despite all the efforts, I remain a mystery, a timeless reflection of beauty and the human spirit. Not to brag, but I am definitely one of the most famous and legendary paintings in the history of art! I just know that if my creator was alive, he would've been the proudest artist ever! 🇮🇹

Magical millets

A Nutritious Choice For A Nutritious Future

Manan Babbar, AIS Vas 6, IX B

Small but mighty, nourishing our bodies and nurturing our planet, millets are a sustainable and nutritious choice disguised in a delicious grain. Known as mankind's ancient crop, millets were the first domesticated cereal grain and were consumed in the Indus-Saraswati civilisation. Their documentation in ancient texts dates as long back as 1200 BCE in Yajurveda texts, which identifies foxtail millets, Barnyard millet, and black finger millet. Today, there are about 6,000 varieties of millets throughout the world. As millets improve immunity to withstand any pressure, they themselves are of resilient nature. They

can withstand harsh weather conditions, thrive in less water, and can flourish without fertilisers or pesticides in poor soils too. Besides, they also have significantly lower carbon footprints fostering the 'Sustainable development: Goal 11 of sustainable cities and communities.' Renowned as a nutritional powerhouse, they are rich in fibre, protein, and minerals. They're also a medicine cabinet as it alleviates asthma, lessens migraine, and drains out toxins from one's body, allowing our organs to work optimally. Because of these special qualities, 2023 was declared as the 'International year of Millets' by the United Nations. In its initiative to promote millets, the Indian government provided subsidies and other

incentives to farmers to encourage them farming of millets. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also highlighted its benefits in one of the editions of 'Mann ki Baat'.

In a culinary twist, the eighteenth G20 summit also showcased the power of millets in the world of gastronomy. From the vibrant Bharat Mandapam to the elegant delegate hotels, millet-based creations stole the show, turning heads and taste buds alike.

Millets are not only the future of agriculture but the future to health. Its qualities are good for health and cultivation besides being scrumptious. Millets are not just ordinary grains but wellness warriors that transform health with every bite. [G.T](#)

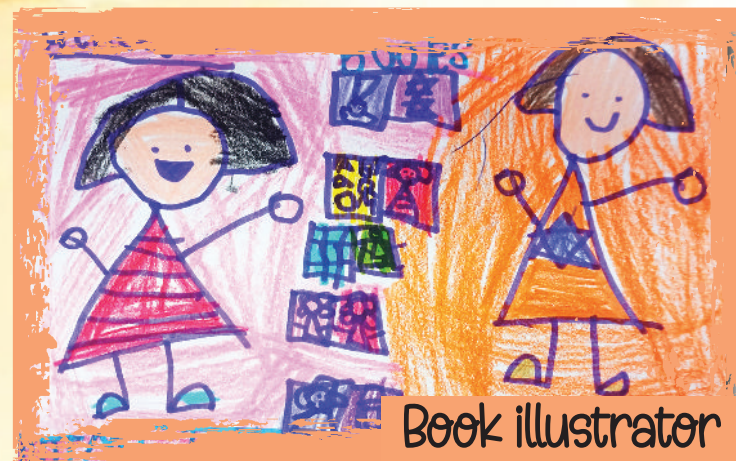




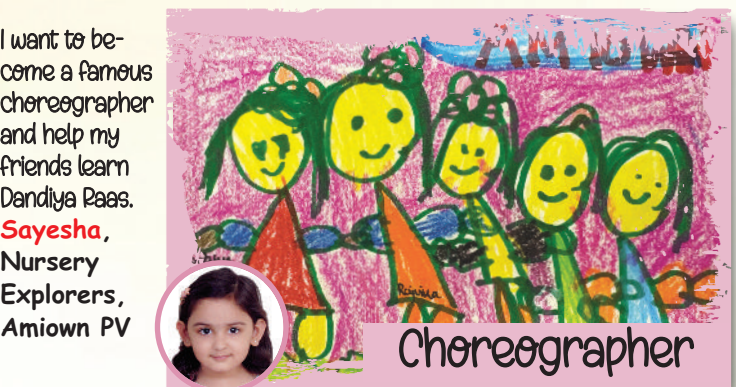
I dream of becoming an archaeologist so that I can protect our precious monuments for the future. I want to make sure they stay clean.
Bhavyansh, LKG Exemplars, Amiown Gur 46



I dream to be an educationist like our Chairperson Sapna ma'am and make school like Amiown which will provide many surprises for children.
Amyra, LKG Achievers, Amiown Gur 27



I dream of being a book illustrator. Many authors can come to my office, and I want to create colourful pictures for their books.
Hinaya, UKG Adventurers, Amiown Gur 46



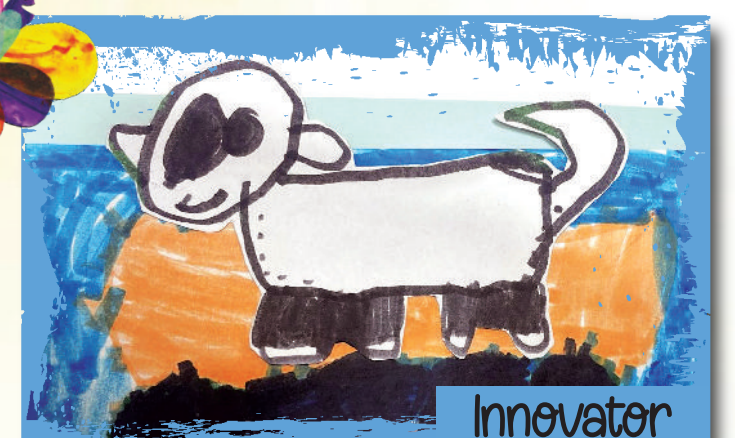
I want to become a famous choreographer and help my friends learn Dandiya Raas.
Sayesha, Nursery Explorers, Amiown PV

Believing in the boundless power of a child's imagination, Amiown Preschools hosted the 'I Love To Dream' activity - giving a chance to some of our youngest Amitians to think big, dream big and envision their future selves. Our hardworking, ambitious and talented Amies aspire to be budding sports stars, educationists, innovators, astronauts, doctors, environmentalists, musicians, artists and pledge to love and care for

their India always.

"Our focus in the early years is to help and support our Amies to build and develop a strong sense of self and national identity. Discussions, stories and curricular activities related to our diverse and vibrant India, our rich cultural heritage and festivals, our flora-fauna, landscape, music, food and the Indians who have helped and are helping India progress and prosper are ongoing in Amiown. I am so proud of my

Amies and am confident that they will achieve their dreams of becoming responsible and compassionate future leaders, change makers and nation builders," happily shares Mrs. Sapna Chauhan, Chairperson, Amiown Preschools. Amies showcased their **dreams through colourful artwork**, brimming with endless potential. Here's presenting some of the dreams sketched in multiple hues in **PART 1** of this two part series.



I aspire to design a supercar with autopilot and a special space for my friend Bernie's skateboard. We'll enjoy the views while the car moves on autopilot.

Agastya, LKG, Amiown Noida



I dream to be a firefighter and will use hose pipe to rescue princess and her baby from the big building from fire.
Shivansh, LKG Achievers, Amiown Gur 27



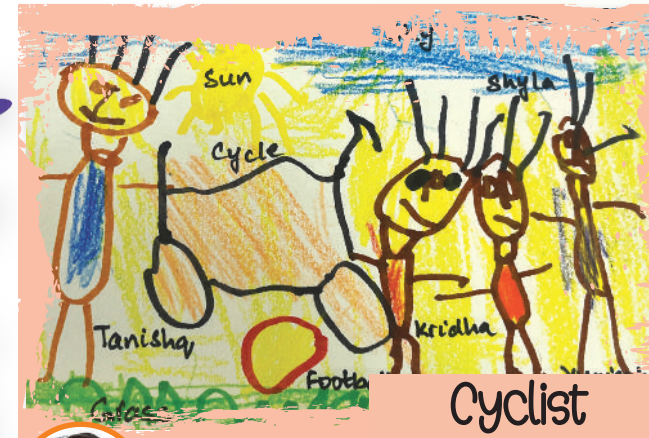
I dream of becoming an environmental fairy. I will use my magical wand to take care of our environment and keep the air fresh. I will tell everyone to grow more plants.
Hitanshi, LKG Exemplars, Amiown Gur 46



I aspire to become a teacher and teach in Amiown School.
Samisha, LKG Motivators, Amiown Gur 27



I imagine myself as an astronaut. I want to fly my rocket into space, just like Kalpana Chawla. I am curious to know more about the colourful Earth, Moon, and shining stars.
Bhuvisha, UKG Adventurers, Amiown Gur 46



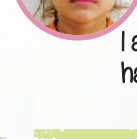
I want to become a cyclist. I aim to win gold medals for my country, India some day.
Tanishq, Nursery Browsers, Amiown PV



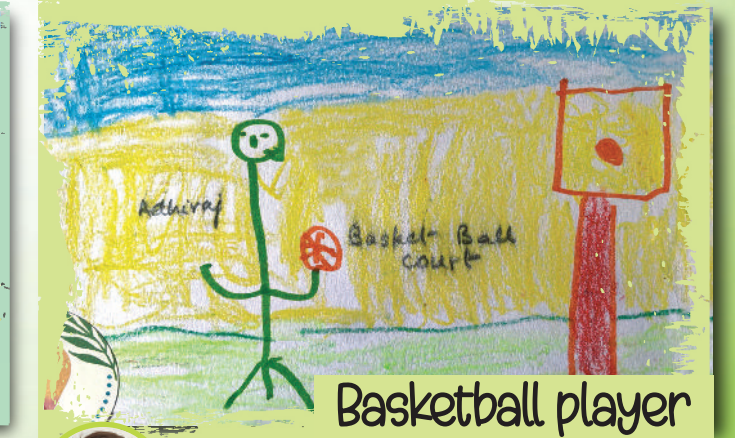
I want to become a caring gardener by watering beautiful flowers in our Amiown garden.
Avyaan, Nursery Adventurers, Amiown PV



I dream to safe guard my little sister Nandika and want to help her always.
Advik, LKG, Amiown Noida



I aspire to be a pilot and have my own airplane. I will be happy to take my friends Saanvi, Sia and Drishti for a ride.
Kashvi, LKG, Amiown Noida



I love playing basketball. I dream to represent my country in basketball one day.
Adhiraj, LKG, Amiown Noida



I dream to perform at the Olympics representing my country India in skating!
Aradhya, LKG, Amiown Noida



The whisper library

Aish Nandini Doharey
AIS VYC Lko, VIII A

As I stepped off the bus with the other students, the oak-painted façade of 'Whisper' Library loomed ahead, its stone walls seeming to hum secrets into the wind. Despite the sun's warmth, a shiver crawled up my spine. "What secrets lie within those walls?" I wondered. The library had mysteriously appeared in June 1874, standing silent in the city square. No one knew who built it or placed the books inside. Those who entered spoke of silent whispers that followed them, haunting their thoughts, giving rise to its nickname - 'Whisper'. Unlike the dull monotony of Lark, the library's entrance was mesmerising. Statues of angels and demons flanked the doors, locked in a fierce debate. They seemed to say, "Enter, but tread carefully." My heart thudded as I pushed open the heavy, creaking door. Inside was a labyrinth of shelves packed with ancient tomes, their worn leather bindings carrying

As I wandered in awe, trailing my fingers along the spines of the books, a faint sound reached my ears. The whispers.

the scent of parchment and age. Familiar yet impossible names, like Oeorge Gorwell and Gabriel García Quarmez, lined the spines - authors who had yet to exist. As I wandered in awe, trailing my fingers along the spines of the books, a faint sound reached my ears. The whispers. "12th bookcase, 3rd shelf, 4th book. Come to us. Reveal our secrets." My heart skipped a beat. The whispers seemed meant for me. Driven by curiosity, I crept toward the indicated shelf. My trembling fingers grasped a black leather tome, its symbols shimmering faintly, almost alive. As I opened the cover, a musty scent wafted out, mingling with the murmurs of the past. The first page bore a message: "To the chosen one, In the grand tapestry of existence, your soul is woven with curiosity and wonder. Knowledge, a treasure trove of secrets, awaits your

discovery. You have been chosen by the universe to unlock its chambers.

I appoint you Librarian of Knowledge, the guardian of the forbidden and forgotten.

- The Creator"

The words weighed heavy on my adolescent shoulders. Was this a prank? A coincidence? Or was I truly the chosen one?

As I turned the pages, the whispers intensified, urging me on. The last page displayed a glowing magic circle. Hesitating, I placed my hand on it.

A shift occurred. My attire transformed into elaborate robes. I had actually become the librarian.

"Welcome, Sire," came a soft, overpowering voice.

Ahead stretched an endless expanse of shelves and shadows. The whispers urged me forward as questions flooded my mind.

What lay in the darkness?

What price would I pay for the secrets I now guarded?

But the cosmos whispered no more...



Illustration: Aayushi Singh, AIS VYC Lko, XI B

Making A Newspaper Contest
AIS VYC Lko
2024-25

Both hers

Kaavya Shukla, AIS VYC Lko, X B

Once was a mountaineer
The other bookworm
One kept things neatly
The other caused a storm

One was an extrovert
The other an introvert
One was careless
The other was alert

One was like sunshine
The other chilling cold
Two opposites right in front
A miraculous site, behold

One tried to get to the bottom
The other tried to rise
One was strong and brave
The other was calm and wise

She glanced at her twins
Strength or wisdom
Which works best
To win over kingdoms

Both are needed
Warriors and kingmakers
Both were with her
They both were hers.



Illustration: Vaishnavi Yadav & Palak Verma, X B, AIS VYC Lko

Read Play and Win 76

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 is the name of the library on page 8 short story?

Q.2 Who is the author of top story on page 1?

Q.3 Which Indian delicacy has been reported on page 10?

Q.4 What's the tagline for autobiography on page 5?

Q.5 What is the name of the product that has been advertised on page 4?

Q.6 On which page can you find poster on mysterious creatures?

Q.7 Who has been interviewed on page 2?

Q.8 Who is the illustrator of page 3 article 'On a career trial'?

Q.9 Name the editor-in-chief of AIS VYC Lucknow.

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

Results of Read Play & Win-75: Lakshyaa Maheshwari, AIS Gur 46, III I; Aaliyah Kousar, AIS Saket, VII D; Arnab Kumar, AIS MV, VI B

Rudraksh Diwakar Sinha
AIS VYC Lucknow, XI B

January 6, 2025: The Madhya Pradesh High Court directed the State Government to dispose of Union Carbide's waste from the Bhopal Gas Tragedy within six weeks. This decision follows protests in Dhar district's Pithampur, where 358 tonnes of toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory are set for incineration. The move revives memories of the world's worst industrial disaster.

What went wrong in Bhopal?

On Dec 2, 1984, a catastrophic leak of methyl isocyanate gas from Union Carbide's Bhopal plant killed around 5,000 people instantly and claimed over 20,000 lives over time. More than 500,000 individuals suffered severe health issues. Investigations attributed the disaster to substandard safety protocols and inadequate staffing at the facility.

Where is toxic waste going?

On Dec 3, the High Court pulled up various authorities stating that the authorities were "still in a state of inertia despite 40 years". The waste was moved on January 1, 2025, to an incineration facility in Pithampur, 250 km from Bhopal. Packed in leak-proof bags and containers, the waste is being stored in this industrial town with

BHOPAL'S UNFINISHED STORY

40 Years On, The Nightmare Persists

a population of 1.75 lakh.

Why now?

Within days of the disaster, American personal injury lawyers brought civil litigation in the US against Union Carbide Corporation (UCC). The cases were first brought on behalf of individual claimants and later by the Government of India 'as the official representative for everyone who is seeking compensation due to the tragedy, based on a law created by the Indian Parliament in 1985'. Between 1999 and 2007, three class action lawsuits were filed in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York against UCC. Legal battles stalled waste disposal for decades.

How will the waste be disposed?

The waste will be incinerated at high temperatures to neutralise

toxic components. Workers handle the waste in 30-minute shifts and undergo regular health check-ups. To counter misinformation, the Madhya Pradesh government will employ 50 master trainers, including science educators and officers.

Who is protesting and why?

Pithampur residents fear contamination of groundwater from the incineration process. Activists like Rachna Dhingra question the government's assurances, citing past incidents of hazardous waste mismanagement. In 2008, 40 tonnes of chemical waste was secretly dumped at the same site. Critics label the current disposal efforts as a reaction to public pressure, warning that mishandling the waste could result in severe health and environmental crises. Similar cases, like the 2023 Surat tragedy

that killed six workers and exposed 22 others to hazardous gases, amplify these fears.

Where are we headed?

The HC's directive to ensure safety measures offers hope for resolving this decades-long issue. However, the anxiety of Pithampur's residents underscores the challenge of balancing public safety and efficient disaster management. Will this effort close the chapter on Bhopal's nightmare, or will history repeat itself?

The Bhopal Gas Tragedy remains a grim reminder of the catastrophic consequences of industrial negligence. As waste disposal efforts gain momentum, the responsibility to ensure safety and accountability weighs heavily on authorities. The question remains: can we learn from the past to prevent future disasters?



A history of toxic controversy

1999: Greenpeace finds massive contamination around the Bhopal plant. Activists file lawsuits in US courts against UCC.

2001: Dow Chemical acquires Union Carbide.

2004: Activist Alok Pratap Singh files a PIL in the Madhya Pradesh High Court seeking action against Dow Chemical.

2007: MP HC orders 350 tonnes of waste to be incinerated at BEIL, Gujarat, with 40 tonnes sent to Pithampur's landfill.

2008: 40 tonnes of hazardous waste dumped in Pithampur, sparking protests.

2009: Gujarat govt files a Special Leave Petition in SC appealing against this order. The MP HC order is stayed.

2010: Union Minister Jairam Ramesh flags dumping as a violation of hazardous waste rules.

2012: Group of Ministers decides to incinerate 10 tonnes of similar waste at Pithampur.

2023: Supreme Court dismisses the Indian government's curative petition to reopen the 1989 settlement.



A cloud of sweetness



Pics: Lavanyaa Verma, X A & Nilay Gurdasani, XII A, AIS VYC Lko



Makhan Malai, known by names like Daulat ki Chaat, Nimish, Malai Makhhan, and Malaiyo, is a light, frothy winter delicacy steeped in heritage. **Ashutosh Verma, XII A & Aarnavi Singh, XI B, AIS VYC Lucknow**, delve into the magical world of this Indian dessert.

Rare seasonal delight

Makhan Malai, prepared from November to March, has its roots in the Mughal era and remains a signature North Indian dessert. Its authenticity lies in its airy texture, which collapses quickly when served in kulhads. Known as Nimish in Lucknow, Daulat ki Chaat in Delhi, and Malaiyo in Benaras, “it is crafted from churned milk, sugar, cardamom, and kewra essence,” shares Munna Thakur, a renowned vendor of this delicacy in Lucknow. Saffron, rabdi, and edible silver foil (varq) add a festive charm. “The preparation is delicate and requires cold weather to retain its shape, making it a rare seasonal delight,” he adds. Believed to be the favou-



Makhan Malai vendors of Lucknow



GT reporter with Makhan Malai vendor

rite of Lord Krishna, Makhan Malai is often savoured during festivals and street fairs.

Waking up with dawn

The journey of Makhan Malai begins in the early hours. “I wake up at 3 AM to start the process,” says Thakur. “In my youth, I would whisk milk, blend cream, and perfect the recipe before opening my shop at 6 AM” Pintu, another artisan, starts even earlier. “I begin at 1 AM. Aerating milk foam over hours and layering saffron and rabdi is an art that requires precision,” he explains.

Generations of excellence

For vendors, Makhan Malai is a legacy. “Since 1965, I have carried forward this tra-

dition,” says Thakur, a staple in Lucknow’s Chowk. Another vendor, nicknamed ‘The India King,’ speaks of his grandfather Ram Singh, whose skills earned the family’s iconic title. “I take pride in continuing this legacy,” he says. Pintu, though newer, values authenticity. “My passion and persistence have helped me earn respect among customers,” he adds. Many families guard their recipes, passing them down through generations to preserve the dessert’s authenticity and flavour.

The magical touch

Each vendor adds a unique element to their Makhan Malai. “My consistent quality keeps customers coming back,” asserts Tha-

kur. “My grandfather’s techniques set a benchmark I strive to surpass,” shares ‘The India King.’ Pintu attributes his success to traditional methods. “Sticking to authenticity sets my dessert apart,” he states.

Never giving up

The reliance on cold weather makes Makhan Malai a seasonal challenge. “We use ice to maintain its shape,” says Thakur. “In summer, I switch to selling kulfi.” Some vendors experiment with insulated storage to extend the season. “Even with innovations, we remain committed to the dessert’s winter roots,” adds Pintu. Their resilience and flexibility highlight their dedication to preserving this heritage despite challenges.

Reward is as sweet

For Makhan Malai vendors, customer satisfaction is the ultimate reward. “Hearing customers’ praise makes all the hard work worthwhile,” says Thakur. Pintu finds joy in patrons’ smiles. “Their happiness motivates me daily,” he shares. ‘The India King’ values the opportunity to engage a younger audience through social media. For all, the sweet reward of bringing joy to others justifies their effort and resilience. 🇮🇳

Pics: Lavanyaa Verma, X A & Nilay Gurdasani, XII A, AIS VYC Lko



Illustrators, representing the Picasso squad



Editorial board of AIS VYC Lucknow, with whom every word finds its right meaning



Writers, transforming into 21st century Wordsmith



Photographers, clicking the best shot



Editors, acing the deadline game

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

Graphic: Mohammad Ali Jamee Saeed Khan, AIS VYC Lko, IX B

Educational
Poster

Big Foot

Bio-label: The Gigantopithecus
Sighted at: Mount St Helens, Washington
Exquisite profile: Standing around 7 to 10 feet tall, Bigfoot is described as a muscular ape like creature covered in black, dark brown or red fur. The giants are described as having a wide flat nose, no visible neck and long arms.

Factual fallacy: Believed to exist by Pennsylvania Bigfoot Association, there are legends that this creature has been cited helping and harming people.

Starring in: BigFoot (2012), Harry and the Hendersons (1987), Throwback (2015)

The Yeti

Bio-label: Dinanthropoides nivalis
Sighted at: Mount Everest or broader Himalayas

Exquisite profile: The Yeti has a very large frame, hairy, man-like creature, in fact, almost an ape or a giant bear that walks on two legs.

Factual fallacy: Yeti's existence is still highly debated.

Starring in: Caveman (1981), The Abominable Snowman (1957), Ajooba Kudrat Ka (1991)

CRYPTIDS UNLEASHED

Lion's head, panther's body - fiction or cryptozoology? Cryptids like these spark endless curiosity. These mysterious creatures, believed by cryptozoologists to exist but unproven, open a gateway to the unknown. Join **Vaishnavi Yadav, AIS VYC Lko, X B**, as she dives into the world of the unexplained.

The Loch Ness Monster

Bio-label: Aquilamappreluendens forcipe
Sighted at: Appalachian Mountains
Exquisite profile: According to eyewitnesses, the Wampus cat is large and really fearsome with a bobcat face. There are often illustrations of it as a hybrid of man and cat with long, sharp claws and fangs.

Factual fallacy: The beast made headlines for being pinned down to account for many livestock killings. They surmised that the Wampus might be a specimen of a species considered to be extinct long ago.

Starring in: Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (2018), The Wampus (2024)

The Wampus Cat

Bio-label: Nessiteras rhombopteryx
Sighted at: Loch Ness, a river in Scottish Highlands
Exquisite profile: In eyewitnesses' accounts, it has been described as similar to a giant eel or long-necked dragon; in popular culture, it's more frequently depicted like a long neck extending over the water.

Factual fallacy: Some zealous believers hypothesise that the Loch Ness monster could be a plesiosaur, a massive and infamously already dead marine reptile that existed way back in the Mesozoic era.

Starring in: The Water House (2007), Loch Ness (1996), Beyond Loch Ness (2008)

Mokele-Mbembe

Bio-label: Polypterus mokelembembe
Sighted at: Congo river basin
Exquisite profile: An amphibious dinosaur-like reptile is cited to have a long neck and long tail. It is also believed to be an herbivore with a single horn which it uses to kill elephants.

Factual fallacy: There is no credible scientific evidence and claims to support its existence. It is argued by scientists that this creature is likely to be a myth and can't be linked to eyewitness testimony as it may be based on misinterpretations, hoaxes or cultural beliefs.

Starring in: Godzilla: King of the Monsters (2019)

On today's episode of Fun Personality Quiz, we present to you a hot topic that you've surely thought about during those existential moments spent sharpening pencils near the dustbin. Yes, you guessed it right! Are you the reliable pencil, the overly enthusiastic highlighter, or the emotionally clingy sticky note? Let's find out which type of stationery you are!

RULES

Award yourself points for your choices. Try to keep it honest, but hey, if you cheat, just know you're living up to your inner eraser: smudging the truth and hoping no one notices.

QUESTIONS?

Kaivalya Krishnam Mishra
AIS VYC Lucknow, XI A

1. How do you spend your free time?

A) Reading alone in the library (1 point)

Ah, the silent intellect with a faint superiority complex.

B) Having a conversation (2 points)

Social butterfly? Or are you just avoiding your own thoughts?

C) Physical activity or sports (3 points)

Wow, you actually move? Bragging rights secured.

D) Regaining sleep (4 points)

The ultimate escape plan for life's chaos.

2. Your prep strategy?

A) Study in advance (1 point)

You give nerd-vibes,

but we love that for you.

B) Study sessions in groups (2 points)

Translation: pretend to study while gossiping about literally everything else.

C) Universal helper: Coffee (3 points)

Who needs sleep when you can function purely on caffeine-induced anxiety?

D) Pray to God (4 points)

Because divine intervention is definitely on your syllabus.

3. Your go-to snack?

A) Nutritious snacks (1 point)

Sure, broccoli is fun... said no one ever.

B) Candy or

chips (2 points)

Bold for someone with no self-control.

C) Energy drinks (3 points)

The lifeblood of poor time management.

D) The universal mom's slipper (4 points)

No snack? No problem - fear is the ultimate appetite suppressant.

4. Your approach to a challenging task?

A) Plan it in advance (1 point)

What is this witchcraft?

B) Join forces with classmates (2 points)

Nothing like a group project to mask your lack of initiative.

C) Shape-shift into a night owl (3 points)

Procrastination: the art of doing everything but the thing you need to do.

D) Plea for help in the 11th hour (4 points)

Desperation is an underrated problem-solving skill.

5. Which Kung Fu Panda character do you relate to?

A) Master Oogway (1 point)

Wise, calm, and probably insufferably smug about it.

B) Tigress (2 points)

Intense, focused, and likely judging everyone else.

C) Master Shifu (3 points)

Stressed out, but still trying to hold it together with sheer willpower.

D) Po the Panda (4 points)

Your personality is 80% snacks, 20% naps, and we're here for it.

Pic: Mohammad Ali
Jamee Saeed Khan,
AIS VYC Lko, IX B

Results

Tally up your points

Pencil (10-13 points)

Reliable? Sure. Exciting? Not at all. People love you because you're easy to control, but they'll toss you aside the moment you get blunt. Work on your self-worth, kid.

Sticky note (14-16 points)

Clingy but efficient, you're always in the middle of things. Your need for organisation is admirable, but you stick to people a little too much.

Eraser (17-20 points)

You're the martyr who is so busy cleaning up everyone's mess that you're slowly erasing yourself out of existence.

Which one are you? Share your results, and remember: no matter what you got, at least you're not a stapler.

JUST FOR
LAUGHS



Highlighter (5-9 points)

You're the human equivalent of neon: loud, impossible to ignore, and occasionally blinding.



Pics: Nilay Gurdasani, XII A & Lavanyaa Verma, X A, AIS VYC Lucknow

In Spotlight



Editor-in-chief: Vaishnavi Yadav



Serving narratives, deadlines, and good vibes in one swing - the editorial board of AIS VYC Lucknow