

How Geopolitics Redraws The Map For Students

Luit Choudhury, AGS Gurgaon, X

The term 'geopolitics' conjures an image of stern officials in crisp suits, debating global hierarchy over a cup of tea. However, it's not confined within the walls of parliaments. Whether in classrooms or dorms, geopolitics is truly redefining student lives around the globe. Prevailing uncertainty about student visas, scholarships, or even campus safety, it unfolds beyond the halls of power into everyday student experiences.

War that rewrote student lives

The Ukraine-Russia conflict serves as a constant reminder of how nation-wide tensions can impact student fraternity. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in 2021, approx 20,000 Indian students under 'Operation Ganga' were evacuated from the warzone, while globally 79,000 students were relocated. Unfortunately, their home universities have been reluctant to offer them seats, while heightened immigration rates have only exacerbated the situation, forcing some students to go back to Ukraine to finish their degrees despite the conflict.

The game of policies

Government laws play a key role in controlling student mobility. The Trump administration has remodeled the rules of the game, where excessively stringent immigration laws have made the previously heralded nation an unwelcoming destination for students. Statistics claim that the admission rates of the US have decreased by 13% nationwide. Shockingly, these policies of the US government essentially negate the effect of previously established initiatives like the Fulbright programme and the Rhodes scholarship, which were in-

troduced to bring in talented individuals from around the world.

Joint collaborations

Geopolitical tensions create barriers in student exchange and research programmes too. Increased political tensions especially between the US and China have led to

heightened scrutiny of researchers, limiting collaboration in fields like AI, biotechnology, and quantum computing. This has led to clampdowns in joint research, reducing global collaboration opportunities. Growing economic factors such as high housing costs in university



cities like Dublin, where there's a 30% rise in student rental prices (2020-23), limit student participation in exchange programmes.

Security and safety

In this ever-changing era of technology, internet fraud and tech espionage have posed serious threats to global superpowers. In 2020, the US revoked thousands of visas of Chinese students due to 'national security' complications. Thus, forcing the Chinese students to look for safer havens in countries like Singapore. Moreover, student safety is compromised in countries like Australia and the US where anti-immigrant protests have displayed hostility. Hence, nations like Canada and Germany have become the most sought after due to policies like the ESOS act and DAAD scholarship.

A new world

The era of western supremacy is concluding, while the east is now continuing the story. Asian countries such as India, China, and Singapore are now becoming a hub for higher education, attracting students across the globe by offering lucrative educational programmes, security, and attractive scholarships. This includes the expansion of prestigious colleges such as Amity and BITS, along with the plethora of scholarships available for students to grasp like the ASEAN programme, and China's Belt and Road scholarships.

The nature of geopolitics is like two sides of the same coin. It's not black or white; neither good nor bad. But the fact that's crystal clear is that the effect of geopolitics on student life is inevitable. GT

Caught in the crossfire



Illustration: Ankit Kumar, AGS (IBDP Curriculum) Gurgaon, XI

Page editors: Saanvi Lamba & Eashaan Yadav, Amity Global School (IBDP Curriculum) Gurgaon, XII

THE GT @ POLL

Following the IndiGo flight cancellation crisis, what long-term changes should airlines and authorities prioritise?

- a) Better crew planning
- b) Stricter passenger rights
- c) Improved communication

To vote, check out our Instagram page @the_global_times



This special edition has been brought to you by Amity Global School (IBDP & IGSCE Curriculum), Gurgaon, 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 sixth edition of 'GT Making A Newspaper Contest 2025-26'.

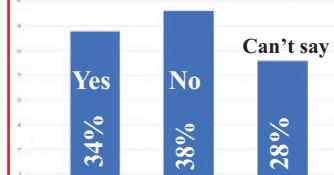
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@ POLL RESULT

for GT Edition December 8, 2025

From December 10, under-16s in Australia will be banned from using social media apps like X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. If India proposed a similar rule to protect teens, would you support it?



Results as on December 13, 2025

Around The WORLD

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

IRELAND

Celtic dictionary in the works



Researchers at a Welsh university have begun work on the first comprehensive dictionary of the ancient Celtic languages spoken in Ireland and Britain. The three-year project, led by Dr Simon Rodway at Aberystwyth University, will compare linguistic evidence from across the islands dating back from about 325BC to 500AD. The dictionary will range from Julius Caesar's account of his conquest of parts of northern Europe to ancient memorial stones.



USA

WB bidding frenzy

In one of the biggest deals, Netflix has agreed to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery's film studio and HBO assets, including the streaming service, for 82.7 billion USD. It outbid Paramount and Comcast. Now, Paramount has made a 108.4 billion USD hostile bid for the entire company, challenging Warner Bros. Discovery's board and Netflix's narrower deal. The transaction awaits federal antitrust approval.

SOUTH AFRICA

Penguins die of starvation

More than 60,000 penguins have starved to death because of disappearing sardines, a new paper has found. From 2004 to 2011, more than 95% of the African penguins on Dassen Island and Robben Island died. Researchers said they probably died during the moulting period - annual event of replacing all their feathers. Researchers blamed overfishing and climate crisis for the decline in sardine population.

UK

Crackdown on visa misuse

Several universities, including Chester and Wolverhampton, have paused or restricted admissions for students from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The move follows new rules from the UK home office requiring universities to keep student-visa refusal rates below 5% (down from 10%). But visa refusal rates for Pakistani and Bangladeshi applicants stood at around 18% and 22% respectively, putting universities at risk of sanctions. The restrictions come after a surge in asylum claims by students and rising concerns about misuse of the student-visa route.



INDIA

Indigo no-go

Air travel across the country has been in chaos over the past fortnight after the largest airline, IndiGo, was forced to cancel flights, stranding thousands of passengers at airports. The airline, which operates about 2,200 flights a day, has been facing pilot shortages after it failed to adapt to the new pilot rest and duty rules. Mass cancellations of flights have caused a public outcry, forcing the government to intervene. The airline has been granted exemptions from the new rules, but the disruption laid bare the risks of duopoly of Air India and Indigo.

UAE

Norris wins F1 world title

A tearful Lando Norris won his first F1 drivers' championship by securing third place in the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Max Verstappen won the race but fell short of a fifth consecutive championship win, with Norris securing the title by two points. Norris is the 11th British driver to take the world title, finally ending McLaren's championship drought that stretched back to 2008 when Lewis Hamilton last won the title.

CHINA

Trade surplus hits 1tn USD

Despite its trade war with the US, the country amassed a surplus of 1.08 trillion USD in just 11 months. That's a record high for any single year and higher than its 992 billion USD surplus in 2024. Exports returned to growth, rising 5.9% from a year earlier. While shipments to the US plummeted 29% - the eighth month of double-digit declines - strong growth in sales to regions like the EU and Africa more than offset the slump.

Cueing up for success

In Conversation With The Unbreakable Wizard Of The Baize



Ansh Deb Barma, IX &
Sai Akshara Patnaik, XI
AGS Gurgaon

Meet Pankaj Advani, a 28-time World Title holder and India's most decorated cueist, mastering both billiards and snooker with finesse. The only player to have won world titles across formats in both sports, he has been honoured with the Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, and Padma Bhushan for his extraordinary contribution to Indian sports.

Discovering the passion

As a child, I played many mainstream sports and enjoyed them all. But everything changed when my elder brother, Shree Advani, introduced me to cue sports when I was in class VI. The first time I played, I potted the ball and that moment sparked an obsession. My mother supported my passion but ensured academics remained a priority. My brother, who is a sports psychologist, continues to be my mentor.

Being India's pride

People often ask what keeps me going after winning 28 world titles. The answer is quite simple - I genuinely love and enjoy the game. My passion for competition and the privilege of representing India, both on and off the table, fuel me every single day. Whenever someone

asks for advice on handling pressure, I always say - remember why you started playing. For me, that 'why' has always been love for the sport and pride in representing my country and cue sports.

Thriving under pressure

Pressure is often self-inflicted, especially in an individual sport. There are expectations when you are at the top, but it's impossible to perform your best every time. I'm human and setbacks are a part of life. Understanding that sports is unpredictable and that others work equally hard has helped me embrace pressure.

Mastering the game

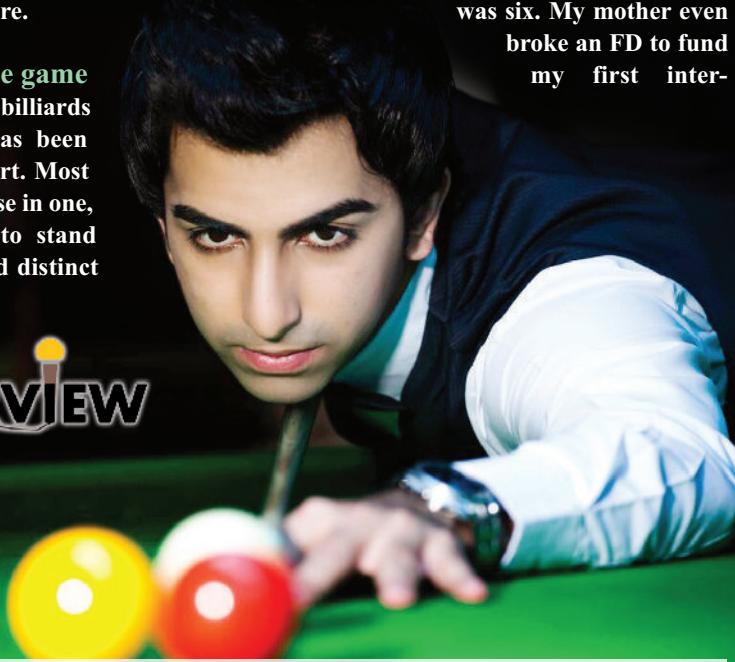
Balancing both billiards and snooker has been the toughest part. Most players specialise in one, but I wanted to stand out. I developed distinct



Pankaj Advani with GT reporters

techniques for each. Starting young came with its own hurdles. Most clubs had an age restriction of 14. Financial support was tough too, especially after my father passed away when I was six. My mother even broke an FD to fund my first inter-

INTERVIEW



Pankaj Advani, award-winning cueist

ATPC | AUUP

Amy University, Uttar Pradesh hosted an outreach programme by senior officers from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India on November 28, 2025. The event provided a platform to advance science, engineering, and technology through shared expertise and strategic discussions.

The programme was spearheaded by Dr Anjani Kumar Bhatnagar, additional director & head, Amity Technical Placement Centre (ATPC), and commenced with a warm welcome for the BARC delegation, which included Yuva Raj Nitin and Nishant Mishra, both scientific officers F.

During a session between BARC representatives and Amity Univer-

Amity hosts BARC officers

Fostering Collaboration In Science And Technology



Delegates from BARC and DAE at Amity University

sity's faculty, directors and deans from Amity's Science, Engineering, and Technology domains en-

gaged in a meaningful exchange, exploring avenues for collaborative projects, student internships,

and learning opportunities at BARC's various initiatives.

Prof (Dr) Balvinder Shukla, vice chancellor, AUUP, welcomed the BARC officials and highlighted the growing collaboration, with emphasis on nation-building and joint projects. Dr Sunita Rattan, dean of Science & Engineering, shared existing partnerships with BARC, while Dr Alpana Goel spoke about the various initiatives undertaken by the Amity Institute of Nuclear Science & Technology. Faculty members Dr MK Pandey, Prof Vivek Kumar, Dr Niraj Kumar, Dr V Pooja, and Dr OP

Sinha were also present. The BARC delegates motivated students from final and pre-final years of Science, Engineering, and Technology, delivering an informative presentation that provided direct exposure to cutting-edge research at one of India's premier research centres.

The visit reinforced the ongoing collaboration between BARC and Amity University, a partnership crucial to developing skilled professionals in nuclear and radiation safety, and supporting national priorities in energy, healthcare, industry, and research. **GT**

AdVision

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

Air we go again...

NCR's Annual Inhale, Exhale, and Pray Routine Has Begun

Diya Kerur, AIS Gur 46, XII J

Every winter Delhi-NCR is a bit like living through a slow zombie apocalypse; not loud, not dramatic, just a quiet, stubborn enemy that refuses to leave. Air becomes thick, skies turn a dull grey, and particulate matter (PM) 2.5 hovers while all of us keep quietly wondering, are we out of the woods yet? Some doctors now even tell their patients to get out of the city for 6 to 8 weeks. But, since most of us can't flee, here's your scientific survival guide:

Step 1: Build internal armour

Long-term PM exposure increases cancer risk, which diet can help modify. Eat sulforaphane containing cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage, which aid detoxification. Turmeric reduces oxidative stress.

Omega-3s support lung repair; and antioxidants like amla, berries, and citrus neutralise free radicals. Stay hydrated, add probiotics daily, and minimise sugary or fried foods.

Step 2: Fortify your house

Instead of a pricey purifier, tape H13/H14 HEPA sheets over your AC intake and run it on fan mode. This setup removes up to 99.95% of fine particles — exactly what commercial purifiers do, minus the marketing. Avoid candles, incense, and strong fragrances, and keep your car AC on internal circulation when you step out.

Step 3: Mask up

Wear an N95 only during the worst hours: early mornings (5–10am), late evenings (7–11pm), or during heavy traffic. Wearing it all the time isn't advisable since it increases

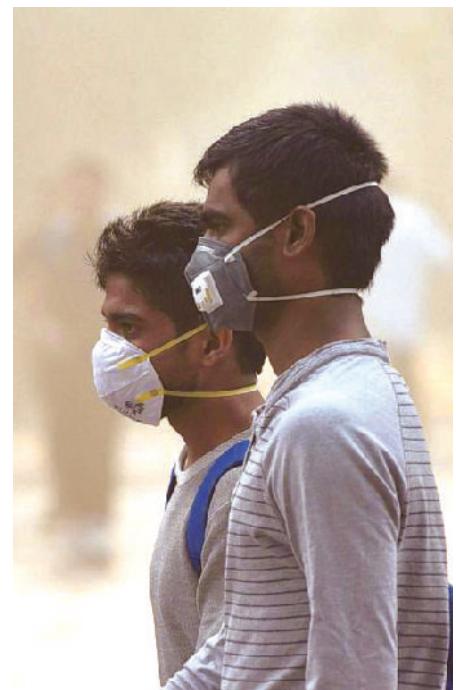
breathing resistance. Moreover, you must also avoid outdoor workouts.

Step 4: Detoxify and decontaminate

For detoxification, use a nasal saline rinse, take light steam, and add lung-expansion exercises like slow belly breathing, pursed-lip breathing, and 4-7-8 breathing to open the alveoli. Shower after exposure to wash off the stubborn particulate matter.

Step 5: Befriend a plant

When all else fails, nature is the most potent solution to this problem. Of course, blooming green gardens help but what takes it a step forward is mindful plantation. Spider plant, Peace Lily, Snake plant, Areca Palm, and Rubber plant are some of the best plants for air purification. Alongside HEPA filters, they not only clean toxins but also make



your home inviting and comfortable!

With these steps incorporated in your daily life style, you can get through Delhi's annual 'zombie air' without letting it take over your life, even if the AQI insists on breathing down your neck. **GT**



Words Verse

Shambhavi Sharma, AIS PV, XII F

Memory is a room full of mirrors
She looks around as laughter stirs
Colours glow with childhood's air
And fragrant mornings everywhere

She moves ahead, yet still the same
Chasing dreams that call her name
Scribbling poems in cafés till late
Pressing all flowers she celebrates

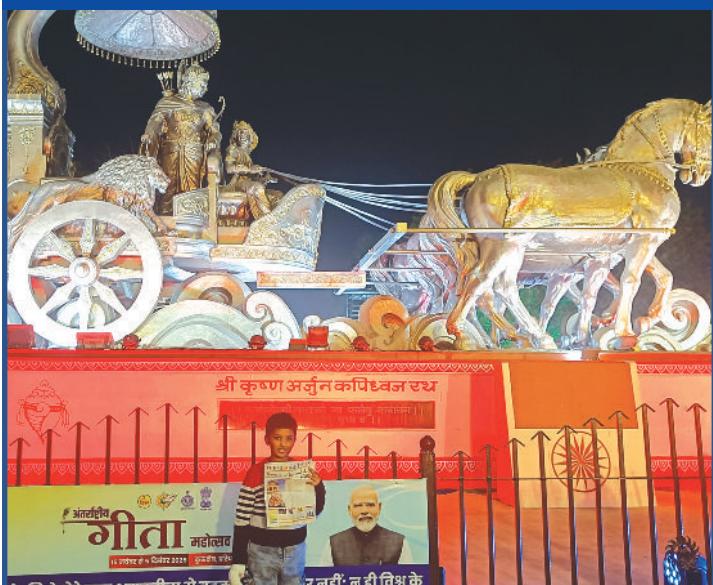
She circles back down softer years
Gentle sights kept like souvenirs
She looks at sunlight hugging trees
Finding joy, calm, and simple ease

Each step she takes her pieces grow
Glints of people she used to know
Borrowed sparkles in shifting light
Shaping the person she is in flight

Memory is a room full of mirrors
Woven bright with days she steers
It's lovely, how our lives are made
Of gentle echoes that never fade.

Room full of mirrors

GT Travels to Kurukshetra



Sharav Goyal, AIS Saket, IV A, poses with his copy of The Global Times at Brahma Sarovar, Kurukshetra, Haryana, on the occasion of Gita Jayanti. Brahma Sarovar is a man-made pond, revered in Hinduism as the place where Lord Brahma performed the first cosmic yajna and created the universe.

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Villain Or Victim? Virus Turns Blogger

Anushree Khandelwal

AGS Gurgaon, XII

Dear readers, welcome back to the 'Viral' blog! Today I googled myself, and my apparent infamy was more disappointing than expected. I decided the world must know my story in my own words. I, the virus, was born in silence - too small for the naked eye, a strand of DNA or RNA wrapped in a delicate coat of proteins. Yet I am everywhere: a whisper in an air-droplet, a hitchhiker on a careless handshake, a stolen breath. I was born broken - neither fully alive nor fully inert. I possess no cells of my own, no metabolism to claim the privilege of being defined as living. In the biological world, I have been dubbed a parasite, who cannot replicate or feed without latching onto a host. From the moment scientist Dmitri Ivanovsky first discovered my existence in 1892, giant organisms termed 'humans' waged war against me. Insultingly, they called me 'virus,' a Latin word meaning 'slimy liquid or poison' - an injustice to my geometric beauty. Under the micro-

scope, my brethren may be helical, spherical, or feature icosahedral symmetry, resembling a soccer ball with elegant pentagons and hexagons, and more. Nevertheless, I, too, contribute to society. I can heal humans through gene therapy and prove to be an ally against incurable diseases like cancer. I am not merely a destroyer.

My story began the moment I found my first host. I slithered past their physical defenses and slipped into the warm sanctuary of a living cell. This fairytale shattered as soon as my unique antigens - my gateways to entering host cells - were detected. An army of white blood cells, specifically lymphocytes, hunted my tiny self. Their antibodies anchored themselves to my antigens, their signals driving my host cell to hit 'self-destruct'.

Outside, humans poured fortunes to create instruments of my annihilation: antivirals engineered to block my replication, alcohol-

based sanitisers that strip away my protein coat, and vaccines forcing lymphocytes to learn methods of assassination. Cornered and hunted, I refused to surrender. So I adapted. My surface itself takes on a new disguise, rendering the old tricks of white blood cells useless and forcing them to develop new defenses. I possess the power to inject my essence into vulnerable cells and rewrite their cellular script. I transform the cell into a bustling factory, making their ribosomes my puppets that churn out my replicas, gradually colonising the body.

Under the influence of my kin, tragedies such as the Spanish Flu, smallpox, measles, Ebola, and COVID occurred. Governments faltered, economies fell, and humans locked themselves in. I acknowledge that I might've taken this rageful retribution too far. In the end I would like to sign off saying that I am neither pure victim nor absolute villain. And while I may not be classified as living, I fervently try to do what life does: fighting for survival.

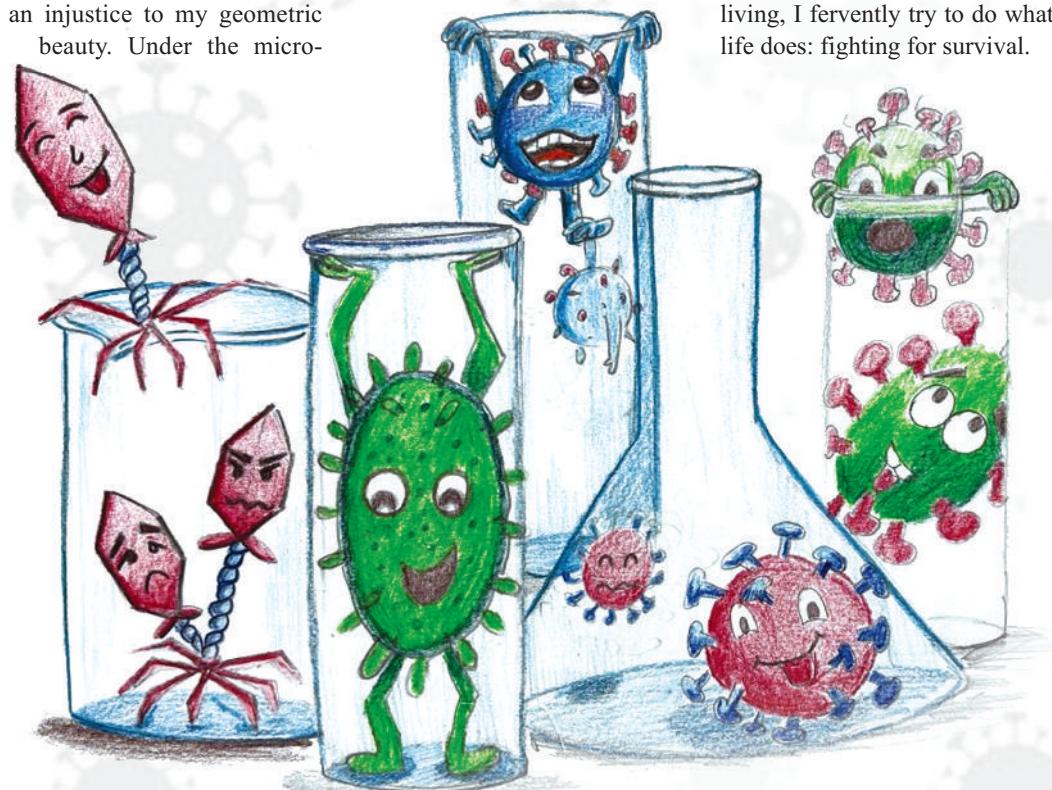


Illustration: Lalit Kohli, AGS (IBDP Curriculum) Gurgaon, XI

Marketing skills matter



Dr. Amita Chauhan
Chairperson

In today's fast-paced world, marketing is no longer just a term associated with the business industry - it is a life skill. Whether a child dreams of becoming an entrepreneur, a doctor, a social worker, or an innovator, it is the ability to understand their audience and communicate clearly which ultimately shapes their success. With this vision, the Commerce Department of Amity Group of Schools have come up with their own Marketing Society which aims to equip students with essential marketing expertise. Led by a vibrant team of students and faculty members of the Commerce Department, the society is committed to nurturing creativity, communication and strategic thinking among students. The society plans to conduct several workshops, campaigns and projects on a regular basis which will provide students with hands-on experience about branding, consumer psychology, digital marketing etc., while also teaching them about the importance of ethical consumerism.

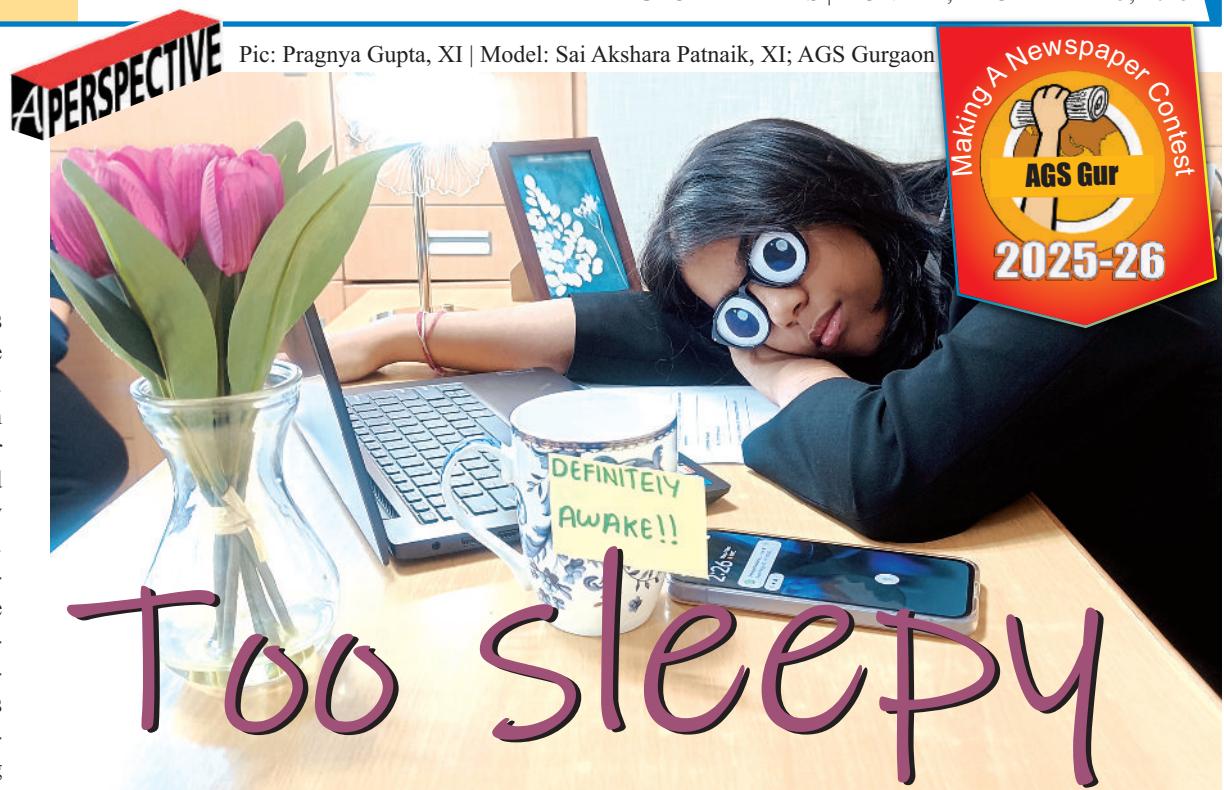
One such recent event witnessed the presence of eminent industry experts like Sajal Gupta, founder and CEO of Kiaso Marketing, and Kunal Arora, co-founder of Oh Nuts! Their interactions with students provided valuable insights into various aspects of marketing, including brand identity, social change and how it can be a powerful tool for progress in any career. The society will also act as a training ground for articulation, vocabulary building, teamwork, and confident presentation - skills that ensure students' ideas reach the right audience effectively. In fact, in just six months, the Marketing Society has grown into a buzzing hub where creativity sparks action and ambitions evolve into impact. It is a dynamic space for Amitians to explore, express, and emerge as thoughtful, globally aware changemakers of tomorrow. **GT**

Bridging cultures



Arti Gupta
Principal, AGS Gur

At Amity Global School Gurgaon, the guiding philosophy of our respected Chairperson ma'am: "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" – the world is one family – combined with the IB Mission Statement, shapes learners to recognise shared humanity and celebrate diverse perspectives. This year also brings pride as our Chairperson ma'am is honoured with the prestigious Youth Noble Peace Prize for building a global gateway that connects young leaders across 40+ countries. This honour epitomises an affirmation of the values she has instilled in all of us – compassion, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to peace. Carrying this spirit forward, the editorial board has worked with a strong collaborative ethic to bring this edition to life. From ideating themes that bridge cultures to curating student voices that highlight global mindedness, the team engaged in thoughtful discussions, meticulous research, and multiple rounds of editing to ensure each article reflects depth and authenticity. Learners refined arguments and challenged assumptions, embodying the ideals of critical reflection and responsible expression. This edition stands as a testament to their journey rooted in dialogue, creativity, and a shared commitment to building a more informed, inclusive, and peaceful world. **GT**



The Midday Nap: Lazy Or Leading The Future?

Advaita Das & Riya Goyal
AGS (IBDP Curriculum) Gur, XI

We all crave the midday nap; a tiny escape we fantasise between meetings or during 3 pm slumps. But is it a productivity hack or just laziness? For decades, rest has been mistaken for weakness, while hustle has been glorified. Yet as science redraws the boundaries of success, the nap is making a comeback as a cognitive reset. So, is it time to rethink our attitude towards some shut-eye? Let's look at both sides of the pillow.

Small sleep, big gains

It turns out our urge to doze after lunch is biology. Humans experience a post-lunch circadian dip in alertness between 1-3 pm, a pattern observed across cultures and age groups. The National Institute of Health reports that a 10 to 30-minute nap can boost cognitive performance by up to 40%. A NASA-backed study

found that pilots and astronauts who took a 26-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness by 54%. Globally, napping is not seen as slacking. Countries like Spain, Italy, Greece, and Japan integrate mid-afternoon rest as part of their cultural rhythm. Neuroscientist Matthew Walker, author of *Why We Sleep*, says, "Sleep is not a waste of time. It's a biological necessity."

Not everyone's dreaming

Still, napping has its critics. Midday sleep can disrupt night-time sleep cycles, especially for people who struggle with insomnia. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, naps longer than 30 minutes can cause sleep inertia. When naps are taken too late, the body's internal clock shifts, which is problematic for teenagers whose biological clocks already run late. There's also the issue of overuse. Research from the University of Colorado shows that prolonged daytime naps may be

linked to increased night-time sleep fragmentation, and in some adults, even raised markers of metabolic disorders. Critics argue that habitual napping can, in some cases, become avoidance, escaping stress rather than managing it.

The sleepy paradox

Is a nap a neural boost or a grown-up timeout? The truth sits squarely in the middle. Like exercise, napping is a tool. A short, timed nap (10-30 minutes) improves alertness, creativity, and emotional stability. But poorly timed or prolonged naps can disrupt sleep cycles and slow you down instead of lifting you up. Maybe it's time to move beyond the outdated lazy-vs-driven debate and ask a better question: is napping the most underrated productivity tool, dismissed simply because it challenges our obsession with constant hustle? Or is it, sometimes, a quiet form of avoidance that blurs the line between restoration and procrastination? **GT**

Celebrating creative innovation

As the AGS Gurgaon coordinator of The Global Times, I am delighted to invite you to explore a collection of articles where every page has a story of its own. Each piece you encounter is the result of rigorous drafting, extensive editing, and countless moments of re-imagining ideas.



Priya Chhokra
GT Coordinator

Across genres, our students' work reveals how deeply they engaged with the writing process: autobiographies shaped by careful research, interviews enriched by effective communication, poems refined through rhythm and revision, and humour pieces sharpened for impact – all reflect their

dedication to improvement. Under the guiding light of our Chairperson ma'am and the support of our principal ma'am, this edition stands as a testament to their perseverance, and intellectual growth. May these pages inspire you, surprise you, and remind you of how powerful a learning journey becomes when creativity and revision go hand in hand.

Threads that vibrate

Your clothes are more than threads; they're frequencies wrapped around your skin. Every fabric hums its own secret rhythm, tuning your mood, your energy, your day. Step into the world of fabric vibrations as **Ankit Kumar, AGS Gurgaon, XI** spins a guide woven for your aura and the Earth.

Frequency: 5,000 Hz



Linen | The trusty healer

Abilities: Naturally calming, antibacterial, breathable, and great for healing the skin and energy field.

Eco-impact: Biodegradable, durable, and low chemical input.

History: Used for **36,000** years in bandages, bedding, and clothing.

Wool | The warm embracer

Abilities: Radiates warmth, positivity, and energetic balance.

Eco-impact: Renewable, biodegradable, and capable of carbon capture.

History: Around **10,000** years old, it's central to early human survival.

Frequency: 5,000-7,000 Hz



Organic cotton | The harmoniser

Abilities: Matches the body's natural frequency; chemical-treated cotton drops to **70 Hz**.

Eco-impact: Saves water, doesn't release toxins, boosts soil health.

History: Dating to **3000 BCE**, it's long tied to mindful, sustainable living.

Frequency: 5,000-10,000 Hz (natural) | 10 Hz (industrial)

Silk | The high & low

Abilities: Natural silk enhances clarity, purity, and emotional balance; processed silk loses its energy.

Eco-impact: Natural silk is low-impact; industrial silk is resource-heavy.

History: **8,500** years of symbolising luxury and power.

Frequency: 15 Hz

Rayon | The low frequency

Abilities: Chemical processing lowers its natural vibration, disrupts energy flow.

Eco-impact: Biodegradable but made with toxic chemicals and high-water use.

History: Born **1846**, the first artificial fibre.

Frequency: 100 Hz

Hemp | The sustainable choice

Abilities: Body-syncing, calming, and one of the most balanced natural fibres.

Eco-impact: Carbon-negative, pesticide-free, soil-nourishing.

History: Used since **8000 BC** for clothing, ropes, sails, and rituals.

Frequency: 0 Hz



Illustration: Srinidhi Sitaraman, AGS (IGCSE Curriculum) Gurgaon, IX

The accidental stroke



Twisha Prakash

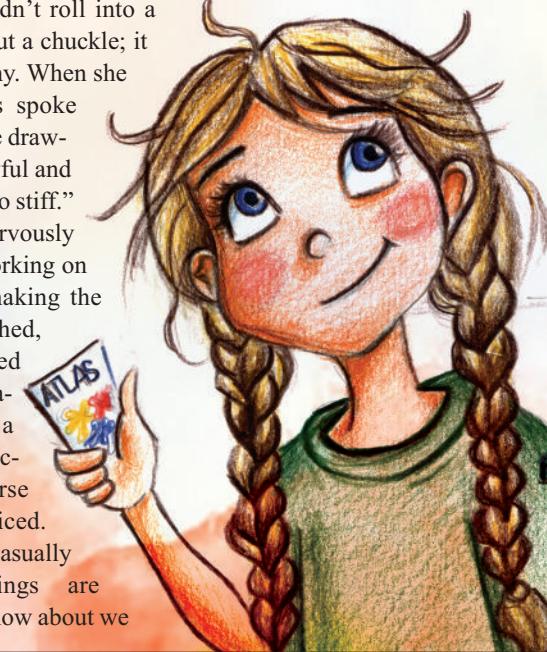
AGS Gurgaon, X

Valencia had been trying to get that one stroke on her canvas perfect for the past 30 minutes but couldn't. Too long, too short - ugh! It had to be flawless; praise was all that kept her going. If she fails to deliver, then her passion would drain away along with what's left of her money. Suddenly, the doorbell startled her, paintbrush smearing as she jolted. Frustrated yet curious, and financially compromised, she opened the door to find her new enigmatic neighbour, a roguish smile across his face and a box of cookies in his hand. "Heard you were looking for a job?" he asked handing her the box of cookies. "Found your profile on LinkedIn." Surprised, Valencia answered "You're going to offer me a job...? Well, usually my paintings take two weeks but I..." "I'm a children's book author, hope you're good with drawing cartoons." Atlas pulled out a business card and handed it to Valencia. He disappeared before she could utter another word. She ob-



served the card in her hand - colourful blobs with Atlas's name in a childish font. It wasn't what she had hoped for, but half a loaf is better than none. The next morning, she sat reading the book. It was about a hedgehog who couldn't roll into a ball. She let out a chuckle; it was quite funny. When she finished Atlas spoke up, "I want the drawings to be playful and wobbly, not too stiff." She gulped nervously and started working on the drafts - making the lines polished, which appeared more like a diagram than a playful character, of course. Atlas had noticed. He remarked casually "Your drawings are splendid, but how about we

make his nose bigger? An ear flopped and legs short?" Valencia worked on it again. This time the



mammal had a bright crooked smile and eyes full of glimmer. It was imperfect, and for once, Valencia didn't mind. Her perfectionist younger self would be shocked at the joy the silly little hedgehog brought her. All those perfect - lifeless - paintings surrounding her apartment were nothing compared to the pure pleasure she found in these silly animal doodles. Atlas could finally publish his book, and Valencia felt as if she had rediscovered herself and her passion. She returned home, bidding goodbye to Atlas, and a full-time job in her hands. The moment she stepped in, her eyes focused on the abandoned piece - glimmering with a white stroke.

After a few hours, that accidental stroke had transformed into a reflection of Valencia. The dark strokes on the edges were permanent, pushing herself to do her best exhibiting a part of her character. The splotch of pastels in the middle was now filled with butterflies and flowers, as well as imperfect brush stroke marks indicating how Valencia had finally realised that art did not need anyone's approval. If it brought joy and happiness, it would always be flawless.



Mistakes unmade

Anwesha Sinha, AGS Gurgaon, XII

"I sketch the world in lines of grey
I chase the thoughts that race away
I build the dreams of every day-
Without my mark, what'd you say?"

"You boast so loud," eraser replied
"When you slip, I'm by your side
I soften smudge, I turn the tides
Bury a truth, your flaw would hide."

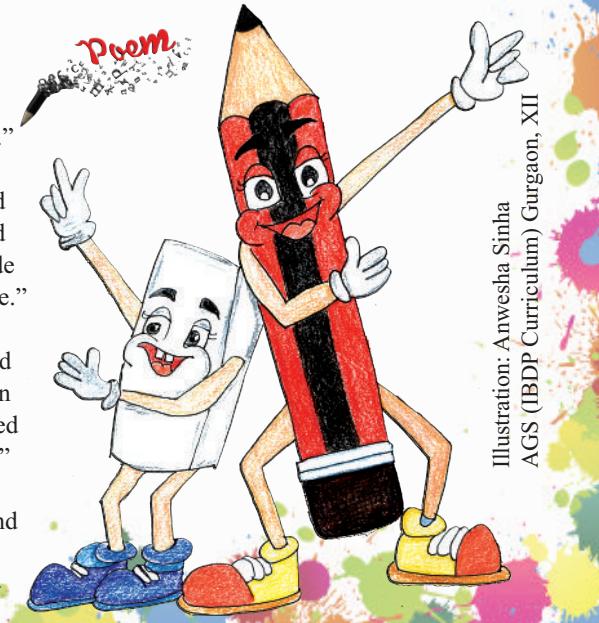
"You spoil my art!" the pencil cried
"You blur curves where I have tried
Your pink crumbs are scattered wide
Stealing the strokes in which I pride."

"I clear the path," the eraser grinned
"So sharp and bright lines can begin
Through flaws new forms are pinned
Perfection grows where we sinned."

Pencil says, "Perhaps you're a friend
For every start, needs some amend
Our give and take will never end—

Your gentle cuts help mine extend."

So, side by side they choose to stay
One draws night and one clears day
Together, art will surely find its way
Mistakes unmade, yet hearts at play.

Illustration: Anwesha Sinha
AGS (IBDP Curriculum) Gurgaon, XII

Read Play and Win 99

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 How many Indian students were evacuated under 'Operation Ganga' as mentioned on page 1?	Q.2 In which two sports has Pankaj Advani won world titles as mentioned on page 3?	Q.3 What is the name of the product that has been advertised on page 4?
Q.4 Which place did Sharav Goel of AIS Saket visited with his copy of the GT?	Q.5 Who made the illustration on page 7?	Q.6 What is the name of Valencia's neighbour in the story on page 8?
Q.7 Who are the EICs of Amity Global School Gurgaon?	Q.8 The article on second hand objects is on page _____.	Q.9 What is the tagline of article on page 12?

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

Results of Read Play & Win-98: **Shivam Kumar, AIS Gur 46, VII E; Advik Tandon, AIS Noida, IV J; Aarav Lohia, AIS PV, IV A**

A Paddle, A Plastic Ball, And A Whole New World



A pickle you do want to be in

NEWFLASH: We begin tonight's session with the newest wave sweeping across the nation – a paddle sport that skyrocketed from curiosity to a full-scale national sensation. The Indian Pickleball League (IPBL), the country's first official professional pickleball league sanctioned by the Indian Pickleball Association under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, has now concluded its thrilling maiden season.

Six city-based teams — representing Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Lucknow, and Gurugram — battled across singles, doubles, and mixed doubles in a format designed for fast-paced, spectator-friendly action. The league showcased a compelling blend of top international stars and emerging Indian talent. The climax came at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi, where the Mumbai Smashers completed a stunning fairytale run against Hyderabad Royals, to lift the inaugural IPBL title.

But what exactly is this newly emerging, crowd pleasing paddle sport? And why is it taking India by storm? Stay with us, as **Saachi Maurya, AGS (IGCSE Curriculum) Gurgaon, IX** unfolds the story ahead.

Opening serve

Launched by the Times Group on December 1, 2025, and sanctioned by the Indian Pickleball Association (IPA), the IPBL is India's first and only franchise-format pickleball league which has been officially recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. For the uninitiated, pickleball is a combination of ping-pong and tennis on a badminton court, albeit with a few unique rules. It sounds puzzling but the game is simple – and it started simply as well: in the state of Washington, a family lacked the shuttles needed to play badminton but not the creativity to make a new game out of table tennis paddles, a badminton court and a Whiffle ball. And the pickle part? Legend says the family owned a beloved dog named Pickles who chased after the balls – hence the name Pickleball!

Powerplay

From a tiny tournament in 1976 to thousands of courts now installed worldwide, pickleball has spread like wildfire, its simple and addictive playing style attracting many to pick up the sport. A USA pickleball union was set up in 1984 and soon competitions were happening all over. The pickleball craze soon spread outside of the country into regions like China, the Philippines, and even India. In India alone, this particular sport has witnessed nearly 300% growth, drawing in roughly

70,000 players who step onto the court every week.

But make no mistake – its accessibility does not make it a common man sport alone. Many famous personalities – international and local – have picked up the sport for recreational purposes such as Akash and Shloka Ambani, Ranbir Kapoor, Leonardo DiCaprio, Bill Gates, Taylor Swift, and the list goes on. The hype is real. And so are the benefits.

The game changer

Pickleball suits urban lifestyle perfectly. It's affordable enough to be played on college campuses or during office trips, and simple enough for those who haven't exercised in a while. The court measures just 6.1 by 13.4 metres (20 by 44 feet), significantly smaller than a tennis court, which is 8.2 by 23.77 metres (27 by 78 feet). Easier to stay fit without all that running. With its lighter rackets and easier rules, pickleball is more beginner-friendly and more cost-effective alternative to tennis and badminton. Hence, the game has found its way onto corporate campuses, school grounds, residential complexes, community centres, and even rooftops. It requires minimal training, making it the ideal sport for people who want to stay active without spending hours learning technique. Its social connectivity creates a welcoming community that brings people of all ages and backgrounds together, combating iso-

lation and depression. Who needs an anti-depressant when you're fighting for the last point on court? The pandemic showed us how desolate one can become – so it's no wonder pickleball spread so effectively during those days in particular.

Love all

The beginning of the IPBL has proven how influential this homemade sport has become. It is being featured as part of exciting amenities in real estate homes, while designers are incorporating backyard and community courts into modern home layouts. The sport goes beyond mere friendships – dating apps like Tinder report that in 2023, pickleball was the most preferred activity for ideal first dates. Some platforms like PickleMatch even use a player's skill and experience to pair up compatible players. The sport is no longer just played; it is lived, shared, and displayed.

Alongside the physical boom, a digital ecosystem has flourished. Apps such as Hudle and PicklePlay allow players to locate courts, book play sessions, discover local leagues, and keep track of IPBL fixtures. With just a tap, anyone can join the growing pickleball community.

Whether the Hyderabad Royals win or the Mumbai Smashers power through to victory, one thing is clear: pickleball has landed in India with unstoppable momentum. So, will you join in? The match is just getting started and the ball is now in your court!

Recycle, Rehome, Reuse

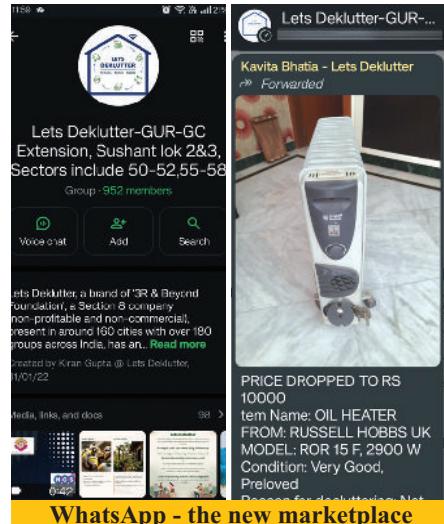
Let's Deklutter Helps You Live The Smart And Sustainable Way

Pragnya Gupta, XI &
Kiara Narayan Iyer, X, AGS Gurgaon

Second hand objects - whether furniture, clothes or household items - have long carried a stigma in India, where thrifting has traditionally been associated with financial inability to buy new products. But this mindset is changing steadily, thanks to initiatives like Let's Deklutter, a pioneer in promoting the reuse of second-hand objects for a greener tomorrow.

The origin story

"My inspiration comes from my passion for a sustainable India," confesses Kiran Gupta, founder of Let's Deklutter. She searched all of Gurugram for groups dedicated solely to decluttering - but found none. A sustainability practitioner for over 25 years, and an active member of the Green Warriors group, Gupta began building Let's Deklutter, one WhatsApp group at a time. She launched the first WhatsApp group in December 2020. Many criticised the idea but she didn't give up hope. Her biggest support system emerged from the members themselves. They emphasised how Let's Deklutter was different from platforms like OLX or Facebook Marketplace, with its user-friendly,



area-based WhatsApp groups ensuring quick communication and community-driven interactions. "We are a mission-driven, not-for-profit initiative," says Gupta.

The perfect process

Let's Deklutter functions as a platform where buyers meet sellers directly. Members post items with specific details, and interested buyers contact them directly. Deals are closed privately, without Let's Deklutter acting as a middleman.

Pic: Pragnya Gupta, AGS Gur, XI



GT reporters with Kiran Gupta

"We have many policies to ensure member safety. We regularly communicate these policies through group messages," says Gupta. More than 50 volunteers manage around 170 groups across India, all trained by a dedicated facilitator. Members cannot post full addresses, fraud must be reported and inappropriate behaviour results in removal. To prevent misuse, people are allowed to join only one area group at a time.

A nationwide movement

Gupta admits the nationwide expansion of Let's Deklutter was far from planned. "I never intended to build a national movement," she says. But as membership grew, the need for volunteers became clear to maintain smooth functioning. Patience and empathy anchors Gupta's philosophy which extends to volunteer management as well.



GROUND REPORTING

"Volunteers are the backbone," she says, acknowledging that she herself spends 10 - 12 hours a day ensuring seamless operations. A strong social media presence and its reputation as a user-first, community-driven organisation has attracted a wide, diverse user base. Yet, Gupta insists that scale is not the objective. "Our goal isn't to grow bigger - it's to grow better," she affirms.

A responsible team

With over 43,000 members and nearly 600 daily posts, the team encourages buyers to inspect items themselves, intervening only when issues arise. "In five years, not a single scam has been reported," Gupta adds proudly. She emphasises that responsible behaviour from both sides is essential. The platform's success is evident - some members have even furnished their entire homes with items acquired through the group. The environmental impact is equally significant. Rehoming prevents countless items from ending up in landfills. "Earlier, unused items just sat in lofts because people had no way to rehome them. Now they do," Gupta signs off. 

Pics: Pragnya Gupta, AGS Gur, XI



Illustrators, carving creativity



Editorial board of AGS Gurgaon, having a field day with words and verses



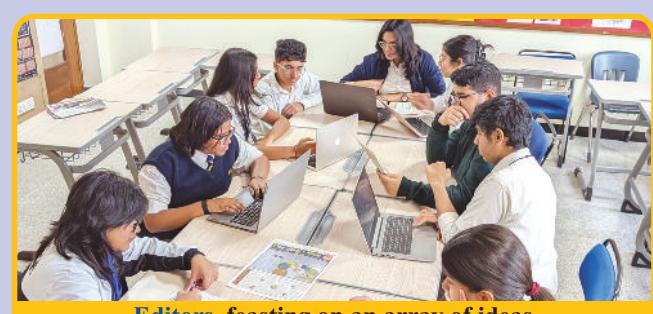
Designers, playing with patterns



Photographer, art via lens



Writers, penning magic



Editors, feasting on an array of ideas

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



Voices of ideas

TEDx Youth Encourages Amitians To Be Passionate

Pic: GT Editorial Board AIS PV



Chairperson Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan with Dr Aseem Chauhan, Chancellor, AU, Manesar; school principal Ameeta Mohan; Ms Divya Chauhan, Chairperson (AIFT, ASFA & ASPA) & TEDx speakers

AIS Pushp Vihar

Naisha Choudhry, AIS PV, XI F

The school hosted TEDx Youth @ AISPV on the theme 'Meraki' – to do something with soul, creativity, and love. The event took place on December 2, 2025, in the gracious presence of Dr (Mrs) Amita Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Group of Schools and RBEF, and Ms. Divya Chauhan, Chairperson, Amity Institute of Fashion Tech-

nology, Amity School of Fine Arts and Amity School of Performing Arts. The registered TEDx event brought together five change-makers who inspired over 100 young minds from Class IX of various branches of Amity Group of Schools Delhi/NCR. It began with an auspicious lamp lighting ceremony followed by motivating speeches of the panelists. Amongst the speakers, Dr Aseem Chauhan, Chancellor, Amity University, Manesar, spoke on the 'power of one idea: the spark that

started a wildfire'; Dr Col Gunjan Malhotra, director, Gynaika, spoke about 'turning pain into purpose: building the resilience muscle'; Puneet Singh, co-founder, BoxPay, shared about 'employee to founder: becoming your own boss'; Gaurav Sharma, chief human resource officer, BalanceHero India, spoke of 'challenge of being seen right: beyond what meets the eye'; and artist and author Namrita Jain spoke on 'turning passion into pursuit: from loving something to living it.'

Green echoes at Tarang

AIS Saket

Sustainability was the buzzword at the 16th edition of Tarang, the school's annual inter-school cultural festival, organised on November 18, 2025. The theme, 'Hands, hearts and heads - Moving towards a sustainable world', aimed to inspire students to showcase talent rooted in sustainability, innovation, and civic awareness. Reflecting both creativity and empathy towards the planet, participants from 22 schools of Delhi/NCR put forth impressive performances across domains - languages, psychology, art, photography, culinary arts, theatre and music. The prestigious Smt Leelavati Shastri Rolling Trophy was lifted by AIS Gurugram 43, with other Amity branches also securing laurels in various events. In War of Wits (English), AIS Vas 6 and AIS Pushp Vihar secured first and second position respectively in junior category, while AIS Mayur Vihar and AIS Saket stood first and second respectively



A participant lays out healthy and sustainable dishes

in the senior category. In Art Rang Tarang (Jr), AIS Saket and AIS Gur 46 bagged first and second places respectively, while Art Rang Tarang (Sr) had AIS Vas 6 and AIS Saket in the top two positions respectively. AIS Saket bagged the first place in the photography (Jr) competition, with AIS Vas 6 coming second in the senior category. The psychology quiz was won by AIS Gur 46, with AIS Vas 1 securing the second place. Besides English, the fest also saw spirited

battles in other languages. War of Wits (Hindi) saw AIS Noida and AIS Vas 1 at first and second place respectively. In German, AIS Saket secured second place, while in French, AIS Gur 43 and AIS Vas 1 took the first and second positions respectively. In the culinary competition, AIS Mayur Vihar and AIS Noida secured first and second place respectively. Finally, in Swar Tarang, AIS Gur 43 stood at first place followed by AIS Saket at the second position.



Young innovators with their school principal and mentor

Hi-tech shoppers

AIS Gurugram 46

Project Green Groove, by Aryan Kumar and Sushanth Dasari of Class XI, has been selected in the urban private category for PRAYAAS (Promotion of Research Attitude in Young And Aspiring Students), an NCERT initiative led by the department of science and mathematics (DESM). Their project, an RFID-enabled sensor-assisted checkout system that eliminates manual billing, has received a grant of 50,000 INR, which will be awarded in two installments. A portion of this grant will be given directly to the students, while the remaining amount will be given to

the school for providing opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship development.

The device developed by the duo enhances customer convenience, improves inventory accuracy, and reduces labour requirements. Each shopper receives a unique RFID wristband upon entry, while store shelves fitted with load cells and RFID scanners track product movement in real time. Every item picked is automatically added to the customer's virtual cart, creating a secure and transparent transaction record. At the exit, returning the wristband instantly generates an invoice for bill settlement, eliminating the need for traditional checkout counters.



Students experience the joy of reading and more

Celebrating books

AIS VYC Lucknow

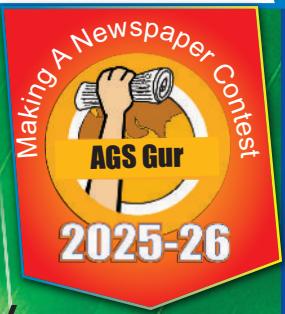
National Library Week was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the school library from November 14-20, 2025, with an aim to inculcate reading habit and strengthen students' connection with books. A series of engaging activities were organised throughout the week. Students showcased their literary and artistic abilities by creating their own magazines,

while the book cover-making activity saw students design visually appealing illustrations. While the 'find the facts' quiz challenged students' knowledge of books and authors, their younger peers got to enjoy colouring various cartoon characters, giving a creative and vibrant spin to their favourite fictional personas. The week-long celebration encouraged students to read more, explore library's resources, and appreciate the joy of reading books.

Rain, rain, go away!

JUST FOR
LAUGHS

From Barso Re To Barso Why



Lakshya Narula

Amity Global School Gurgaon, XII

What comes to your mind when you hear the word rain? Is it the thought of piping hot pakoras and a steaming cup of sugar-laced chai? Or is it perhaps Shahid Kapoor walking dramatically in the rain, suit ruined but aura intact? Well, my Bollywood romantics, ask this question to someone from the 'Mr Beast' generation and you will soon realise that the first word that comes to their mind is not rain – it's drain. It isn't just rare, it's non-existent, at least in NCR. But our little diva here has truly embodied 'Delulu is the solulu'.

Part 1: Saree or nightmare?

Hearing the thunder rumble, she rushes to the balcony – barefoot, of course, the whole 'cool puddles kissing her feet' vibe. She's already planning her *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* moment, obviously not from the *Badal Barsa Bijuli* era. But what's a Bollywood moment without a reel? Get Ready with Me: Monsoon Edition. Out comes the chiffon saree. Yet an umbrella or a raincoat are the only items ever missing in those videos. Perhaps to bathe in the finest acidic rainwater for a 30-sec *Barso Re* clip. I wonder where this logic originates, because even nursery rhymes were smarter with their "Rain, rain, go away."

Part 2: The treacherous trek

The only way our diva is reaching work today is if Aamir Khan himself shows up with his convertible bike from *Dhoom 3*. But he too

must be busy with his own *Zoobi Doobi* somewhere. Without her umbrella, it is a battle between her phone and the rain drops doing a mix of tango and tap-dance across its screen, randomly, yet elegantly cancelling her Uber rides. The old melody evolves into a tragic 'Tip tip barsa paani, phone pe aag lagayi'. Distraught from getting rejected by 'Mahesh', her Uber match, she decides to walk to work. But the real villain isn't the weather, it is the worms and snails crawling up her heels. Yet her attempts to Shake It Off gave her new air pods wings, floating merrily down the drain.

Part 3: Power-less

Bio-hazard, electrical hazard, caution: wet floor – she has run out of labels. A leaf blower might have been of use, if only there was power. Unfortunately, that is so not girly pop for someone who works at the Power Grid. And no electricity means an avalanche of complaints from furious residents. The darkness didn't lead to an atmosphere for a shared, romantic meal – the only thing being lit today was a 'Good Knight' coil.

Part 4: Her washed-up dreams

The day wasn't just a series of unfortunate events, it was a full-blown character arc – born to shoujo forced to shonen. The violins in the background had started to fade away as her delusions dissolved into the rain itself. Our diva had finally emerged out of her chiffon-clad, realising that a monsoon in NCR is less Karan Johar and more National Geographic: Surviving the Monsoon.

Illustration: Advaita Das, Amity Global School (IBDP Curriculum) Gurgaon, XI

Pics: Pragnya Gupta, Amity Global School (IBDP Curriculum), XI

In spotlight



Editors-in-chief: Pragnya Gupta & Saanvi Lamba



The cast behind the blockbuster edition - the Editorial Board of AGS Gurgaon