

SCHOOL WATCH

A team comprising of Jayati Modi, Amira Singh and Vandita Khanna went to Mount Carmel School for an Interschool Debate:

- Best Speaker - Vandita Khanna X - A
 - 2nd Best Speaker - Amira Singh X - B
- Vasant Valley won the Award for the Best Team.

SCIENCE ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION Class 6

First prize- Sanjari Kalantri
 Second prize- Yashaswini Jindal and Nikita Dhawan

Classes 7 and 8

First prize- Nishikant Nayak and Ayush Sharma,
 Second Prize- Aadit Raj Gupta and Rishabh Chatterjee

Third prize- Rishabh Periwal

Class 9-12

First prize- Vaasvi Goyal, Class 12
 Second Prize- Ramya Ahuja, Class 11 and Ishita Sethi, Class 11
 Third prize - Varun Datta, Class 11, Akarshita Dhawan, Class 11

The following students represented Vasant Valley School at the Don Bosco Psi-Phi for the Sigma (Mathematics Quiz). They stood first amongst 43 schools.

Ojasvi Goel
 Nirvaan Bharany

VVS Inter School Social Science Quiz - VVS won the 2nd place.

The Team was: Harsh Jain & Prarthana Gupta

InterHouse English Debate

(Classes 6-8)

- Best Speaker : Shaurya Abhi (Red)
- 2nd Best Speaker : Rishabh Chatterjee (Red)
- Best House : Red House.

Aftereffect-ed

2 phone calls, 4 half-articles and countless bouts of procrastination later, I still hadn't completed my article for the Independence Day issue of the Newsletter. My Maths homework lay unfinished on my table and my Political Science textbook lay unopened despite a review the next day. But all I had left to show for it were four crumpled pieces of paper littered around and a blank page in front of me.

And then I figured out why.

Despite what CBSE syllabi may say, you cannot define independence. For that matter, you cannot define patriotism, nationalism or any of the big words that everyone throws around at this time of year in the wrong contexts but with the right meanings intuitively inscribed somewhere inside of them.

So I shall not attempt to do so. Freedom, liberty, equality - these are all universally personal - I hesitate to use the word - concepts. Instead, I will talk about how India's independence (an event so much in the past that it seems, to much of my generation, more like the fairytale ending of a legendary epic than the reality of a mere six decades ago) has affected me as an individual 63 years after it occurred.

The creators and leaders of our then-fledgling nation had sworn to uphold the values of freedom - freedom of thought, freedom of mind, freedom of will. That era, a mere 63 years ago if not more recently, was marked by a society where women faced the Purdah system, Sati and other unimaginable atrocities. Yet today, I sit here writing this article, as a girl, a woman, with strong aspirations towards my future, and not-inconceivable potential opportunities to achieve them. I sit here as a propagator of feminism, a vacillating supporter of liberalism or communism depending on my mood, a staunch believer of individuality. I sit here as an opinionated female. All in a country where, when the voting lists were made for the first General Election, most women were simply listed as 'wife of' / 'daughter of'.

The abstract construing of independence has finally given way to a more concrete interpretation in my mind. India's independence has given the society a promised change to uphold, an ideal of equality to attain. India's independence has given me the opportunity to be a person with opinions, hopes and dreams rather than someone's property behind a veil. India's independence, that concept which until very, very recently simply meant a tug at my heart when the Flag was raised in school on Independence day and an innate sense of duty towards singing the National Anthem every Friday morning during Assembly, has meant the conversion of intangible notions into real, bona fide influences on my life. Independence Day is no longer accompanied by a vague, unexplained feeling in my heart that is construed or misconstrued as patriotism. Instead, it is my day of gratitude to the fathers of my country. The implementation of their values has given *me*, as an individual, as a part of the faceless nameless masses, the opportunity to know and the freedom to think.

That is what independence meant to them. The ability to influence every nobody's life 63 years from then. And though they are not here to witness it, they have succeeded. Happy Independence Day.

Ayesha Malik

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Is India Truly Independent?

“Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge... At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.”

These were the words said by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru on the eve of independence, 1947. His famous speech “Tryst with Destiny” marked the beginning of a free India with words symbolizing hope and triumph.

63 years after independence, is our country indeed free? India is the second largest growing economy after China, but it will overtake its neighbouring country by 2018, reports say. Are our politics and social divisions growing in sync with our economy and development? India has still not been able to get rid of its social evils and political malpractices. We cannot be defined as independent, till each and every soul in our country is independent of poverty, discrimination and injustice.

Self governance is a beautiful concept. A government for the people, of the people and by the people. It is healthy to have political competition and argument in a democracy, but at the end of the day, isn't this kind of governance supposed to benefit someone, somewhere? Congress blaming the BJP for its hard line stance towards its peace initiatives, or BJP blaming Congress for its lax anti-terror laws, is not going to lend itself to the benefit of the common man killed in a blast in Kashmir or Mumbai, or to those travelling on polluted roads amid chaotic traffic just to get home to their families. The time has come to jointly sit together as Indians, to think of where we went wrong and what can be done to eradicate this and many such problems at the grassroot level.

Though our President is a woman and our Prime Minister is Sikh, inequalities and discrimination are still prevalent all over the country.

India is home to a large and diverse population that has added to its vibrant character for ages. There are about 3,000 communities in India. This diversity, however, leads to colossal social division. Take for instance, the caste system. The caste system in India is a social system where people are ranked into groups based on heredity within rigid systems of social stratification. The caste is a group whose members are restricted in their choice of occupation and degree of social participation. If people are restricted from living a liberal, unconfined, free life just by accident of their birth, then can our country be labelled as independent?

Till we don't realise that women are an asset to our country's development, we don't deserve the right to be called independent.

Our country defeated British Colonial authority to become an independent nation, but do you really think that we can be labelled as independent if we cannot live united in our diversity?

- Faaiza Seyid

राष्ट्रीय प्रतीक

राष्ट्रीय प्रतीक है कई हमारे
हमारे गौरव के प्रतीक है आरे।
मोर भारत की राष्ट्रीय पंछी
अभिमानता अभ्यता य शोभा
प्रकट करती।

खूबसूरती से अपने पंखों को फैलाती
और भारत की अद्वितीय विविधता
बताती।

कीचड़ में भी खिलता हमारा
कमल का फूल
उसकी सुंदरता ना कोई कर
सकता भूल।
देवत्व धन और भौभाग्य बताता
हंसी खुशी जीवन बिताना
सिखाता।

शेर राष्ट्रीय पशु हमारा
जल ताकत और उग्रता दिखाता।
हिम्मत यह शेर कभी न हारता
दृढ़ निश्चय और संकल्प है
रखता।

नीला गोल चक्र पेश है करता
प्यार धीरज कृपा य पीरता।
क्षमता अत्य य आस्था
दिखाता यह चक्र भारत की ममता।
राष्ट्रीय प्रतीक है यही हमारे
हमारे गौरव के प्रतीक है आरे।
आस्था कामरा

Who's Your Favourite Freedom Fighter and Why?

(With the exception of Mahatma Gandhi)

Bhagat Singh... Because he has a nice moustache. - *Sanya Malhotra*

I like Rani Lakshmbai because she was a woman. - *Uday Talwar*

Who's the freedom fighter that came from Myanmar? Or Mongolia? - *Kimberly Ireland*

Rani Laxmbai, because she did a lot. - *Uma Narang*

Jyotiba Phule... because he's a feminist and we both have glasses. - *Sukhman Khera*

Bhagat Singh: Because he was a radical. - *Juhi Bahl*

Why are you asking? Oh Newsletter... wait..wait, let me think of something good. - *Brea Dutt*

Bhagat Singh...'cause he was violent and all. - *Ishaan Gill*

Jawahar Lal Nehru. I like the whole cap thing and the fact that he loved kids... and his ideas. - *Priyanshi Kumar*

-*Sharanya Thakur*

THE INDEPENDENCE LAMENT

This 15th August, India will have been Independent for 63 years. Each year, Independence Day is celebrated by large segments of our country's populace, in the form of flying kites, raising the national flag and indulging ourselves with traditional Indian sweets. However this apparently unified feeling of patriotism and national pride does not, sadly, seep down into the lower income segments of our country.

The beggar on the street does not identify with lofty statements and poems about our freedom fighters and the boons they have bestowed on us. He would rather have the government celebrate this national holiday by handing out free food at local stalls that would be set up solely for this purpose. He would rather have the government give him a job, education and means to feed his starving family. He would rather have a home to live in and clothes to wear. To him, it doesn't matter whether those in the seats of power are elected fairly or are the same foreigners who ruled for centuries. Either way, his lot in life remains unchanged.

The poor of our country just cannot identify with the concept of Independent India, simply because they lack freedom and independence in their own lives. Shackled by the severe disadvantage of the absence of even primary education, they are reduced to living lives of abject poverty and menial pleasures. So this 15th of August, let us question our beliefs about the independence of the people of our country and realize that this national holiday is not, in fact, a joyous celebration of freedom for million of our fellow countrymen. And let us pledge to do whatever we can, if not to help alleviate their poverty, at least to not add insult to injury by including them in the collective whole that celebrates Independence. For they do not have it.

Raghav Raizada

BE THE CHANGE

A few months back, as part of a General Studies project on learning history through a song, we were asked to write a song on India along the lines of Billy Joel's 'We Didn't Start the Fire'. I started writing it with just one aim in mind - to finish it by the deadline. That didn't happen. We all know about the Emergency of 1975, Rajiv Gandhi's assassination and other such important historical events, but trying to put them together in the form of a song just didn't work out.

So, two days after the day of submission, I sat down with the trustworthy Manorama Yearbook by my side to complete the song. Even then, nothing came to me- I left the task for another time. Later that evening I sat down not with an extensive list of historical events to incorporate into my song, but rather my thoughts about my country, issues that were close to my heart and a few inspiring words by Mahatma Gandhi – The birth of a nation- As Mountbatten declared the decision.

The empire was divided,
And new borders demarcated.
The start of communal killing,
Both Hindus and Muslims-
More than ten lakh killed.



Babri Masjid, Gujrat riots –
The tiff has still not been resolved.
When will truce be called?
Can't we see that we are all the same,
Should we keep fighting in religion's name?

We can't go on pretending
That someone someday will make a change.
A change will only come,
When we stand together as one,
Let's all be the change we want to see in the world.

Kashmir, once "Heaven on Earth",
Torn apart by numerous wars
And by unrelenting militants.
Scarring the innocent,
Changing their lives forever.
Can't we let the people decide
To go to either side?



Victims of the Bhopal Tragedy,
Still suffering the fate of reality.
Jaipur, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad-
The people have had enough
When will these terrorists stop?

We can't go on pretending
That someone someday will make a change.
A change will only come,
When we stand together as one,
Let's all be the change we want to see in the world.

The mighty Ganga,
Reduced to a sewer -
The lifeline of our nation...fading away.
As we reach for the moon –
Let's not forget about our Earth.
Glaciers melting, temperatures rising-
Does it have to be man vs. environment?

Even after the recession
Our economy is growing
New malls and hotels we are building
But it seems we've forgotten
To build the very foundation-
To educate and nourish our population.

We can't go on pretending
That someone someday will make a change.
A change will only come,
When we stand together as one,
Let's all be the change we want to see in the world.

There are kids in the street,
With not enough to eat.
They've got nowhere to go
No place to call home
We see this on the streets
And we walk right by –
What little value we give to human life!

People are cold,
They ignore others' pain
People are proud,
Too proud to realize that we're all the same.

We can't go on pretending
That someone someday will make a change.
A change will only come,
When we stand together as one,
Let's all be the change we want to see in the world.

I know making a change isn't easy, but even as we complete 63 years of Independence, the Kashmir "issue" still hasn't been resolved. For the past few days newspapers have been overflowing with reports of the youth in Srinagar taking to the streets in protest against police forces killing people who are protesting against police forces killing people who... I guess are just tired of being helpless.

And then there's the other fiasco a.k.a. the Commonwealth Games Organizing Committee, with officials who loudly protest their innocence. I'm not so worried about whether we'll be ready for the Games, I'm sure we'll manage at the last minute in true Indian fashion. What really concerns me is the blind eye the Centre is turning to errant and corrupt officials.

We can't go on pretending
That someone someday will make a change.
A change will only come,
When we stand together as one,
Let's all be the change we want to see in the world.

I know it's easier said than done. But, the least we can do is try.

- Sanjana Malhotra

एकदा एकः कच्छपः उड्डयितुम् इच्छति ।
सः तु द्वयोः हंसयोः समीपे अगच्छत् ।
कच्छपः हंसौ काष्ठेन सह तम् उड्डयितुम् अकथयत् ।
तान् आकाशे दृष्ट्वा नीचैः तिष्ठन्तः जनाः चीत्कारम् कुर्वन्ति ।
कच्छपः तान् श्रुत्वा विस्मितः अभवत् सः च भूमौ अपतत् ।

महक मान 10 स

WHAT HAVE WE BECOME?

It was the dawn of an era they said,
As that faithful clock struck twelve,
India would awake to freedom, they said

In newfound independence we would dwell.

And we believed in them, and stood,
Like a spine to our founding fathers
And did support their every step.

And thus, we carved our path forward.
Yet, we stand today unsure,

Was the right path taken?
As doubt fills the common mind,

Were we truly mistaken?
A nation with issues infinite,

Battling with continual corruption,
Facing an age of political upheaval
Labelled a third world nation.

Poverty still finds a place to spend,
Its nights on our nation's footpath.

Hunger, disaster, and overpopulation
Still counter our *efficient* diplomats
Our pride may be far beyond us.

As a country, have we truly grown?
Don't blame that neighbor, or that
'filthy' beggar.

In this outcome, even your seeds are sown.

So, before we point at one another,
Let us look in the mirror.

What have we done for our starving nation?

What have we done for us?

Rishabh Prakash



Ria Dayal: I had this Spanish nanny when I was small, and she used to taught me. *And she did such a good job that now you need an English Nanny to make you learn English!*

Kaveri Gupta: You're in the newsletter, na? *No, I'm under it.*

Naushera Debu: They have just played the football. *You have just lost the match.*

Ishan Sardesai: Let's photoshop the video *And after that, can we photoshop you out of the Editorial Board?*

Nirbhay Bakshi: I should be an invention. *Your parents must be proud!*

Vivan Puri: Big tv, more screen. *Big head, small brain.*

CONVERSATION BETWEEN PATANG AND MYNAH

Patang: "I did it, now I can fly. I am not afraid of flying anymore."



Mynah: "Congratulations! I am glad that you achieved such a difficult task."

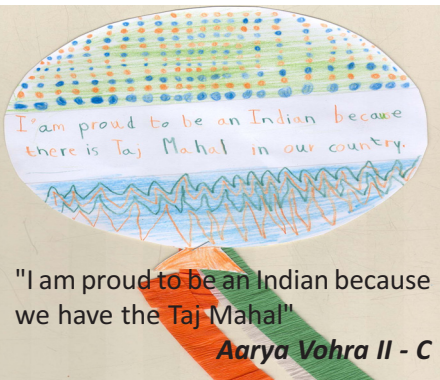
Patang: "Thank you! I had a lot of fun. I am very proud of myself."

Mynah: "I knew that you could do it."

Patang: "Thank you for your support. I'll never forget you."

Mynah: "Welcome! Now, let's fly together. Come on, we'll have a lot of fun."

Dhruv Rattan & Asmita Shah III - C



"I am proud to be an Indian because we have the Taj Mahal"

Aarya Vohra II - C

My Dogs

My eldest dog's name is Duke. He is 13 years old. He's as old as my brother and that's old for a dog. We don't have him in our house that much because he can't climb the stairs. When we come out then we pet him. I think the cutest dog in the world is Brownie. He's only a year old. I wanted a small puppy for my birthday. My mom had refused so my father made a pact and promised that he would soon get me a small brown puppy. Then, when it came to our house my mother, my brother and I were in Hong Kong. When we first got Brownie, he was the size of my brother's dog, Cody. We had got Cody on Armaan's birthday. He was tiny but now if you see him he's like a black panther! Cody is 2 years old. I love my dogs.

Rhea Grewal IV - C



THE DRY YELLOW LAND

As hot as the sun, as dry as a bone,
The arid desert, a yellow huge zone.
As cold as ice, throughout the night,
With dunes shifting, during the daylight.

The oasis with crystal clear water
and the water as blue as the sea,
With date palms giving nomads shade,
while walking through the barren sand bed.

Hot with dust storms, through the year,
the weather the same,
A big dry belt on our sphere.

Aditya Kapur V - C

FOOD AND HEALTHY LIVING

I love junk food
I know what gives me a good mood
Burgers are the best
Pizza you have to include
Because it is better than all the rest!
How will I have a healthy living
Burgers, pizzas, nachos and fries
Sometimes I eat too much
If I become too fat
I'll have to go to the gym
Then once I become thin
I can start chasing a rat!
Normal food isn't that good
The day I don't complete my meal
I write it on a sheet!

Aditya Venkataraman IV - A

उड़ी - उड़ी रे पतंग उड़ी रे...

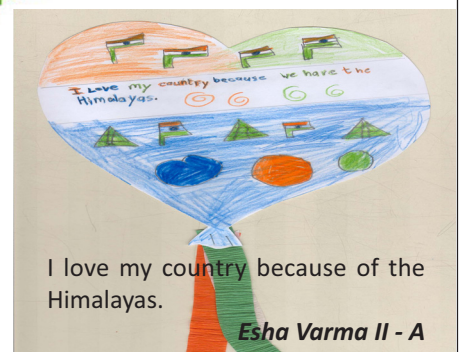


स्वातंत्रता दिवस की सर्वाधिक शुभकामनाएं

वर्षा ऋतु

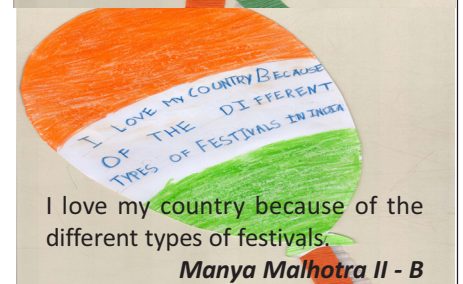
वर्षा ऋतु मेरा प्रिय मौसम है। वारिश के शुरू होने से पहले काले - काले बादल छा जाते हैं। टंडी - टंडी हवा चलती है पेड़ अपने तनों पर फूल सजाते हैं। सारी नदियाँ बहने लगती हैं। अंकुर सारे फूट निकलते हैं सब के मन खुशी से झूम उठते हैं और सबसे ज्यादा खुशी किसानों को होती है। धरती हरी - भरी हो जाती है। वर्षा ऋतु ऋतुओं की रानी होती है। वर्षा ऋतु जुलाई और अगस्त महीनों में आती है। वारिश होने के बाद सब जगह कीड़े - मकोड़े पैदा हो जाते हैं। हमे सतरंगा इन्द्र - धनुष भी देखने को मिलता है। लेकिन जब बहुत ज़ोर की वारिश आती है तो कई बार बाढ़ आ जाती है और लोगों के घर डूब जाते हैं तथा वे बेघर हो जाते हैं।

राबिया गुप्ता चार - स



I love my country because of the Himalayas.

Esha Varma II - A



I love my country because of the different types of festivals.

Manya Malhotra II - B

Measure in Love - APYLS 2010

78 delegates, 22 facils, 100 students, 1 Apyls 2010. The Asia Pacific Young Leaders Summit at Hwa Chong Institution in Singapore was a complete success bringing together eager students- from twelve different countries- who were ready not only to learn about Global Citizens but also to form life long bonds with each other.

The theme of this years Summit was 'Citizens without Borders: Locating the Global Citizen.' And that is exactly what it did. It helped define a global citizen, highlighting its challenges and responsibilities. The very well organized and structured schedule was full of Organizational Visits, Student Dialogues and Summit Dialogues to help improve our understanding to develop and unify our diverse ideas and opinions towards our common goals. We were very blessed to meet with the President of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. S. R. Nathan. Not only that, we were given opportunities to interact with esteemed guests such as Mrs. Tan Ching Yee, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Singapore, Professor Kishore Mahbubani(NUS) and Mr. Warren Fernandez (Shell) amongst others. Student Dialogues gave the delegates the opportunity to make presentations on various sub topics relating to the main theme and then to discuss each of the sub topics in smaller groups. Everyone was able to express their opinion, highlighting the diversity in our way of thinking but the unity in our dreams.

But it was not all work. Several activities were organized to help delegates get to know each other and the facilitators! The Changi Coast Adventure Camp was one of the most exciting days. All the delegates along with the facilitators had an amazing time conquering their fears and cheering each other on during the 'High Element' activities. Building rafts and after couple of hours of rafting together many people were brought together and so many new friendships were created as it was early in the summit. Community Service at Pertapis for children who aren't as privileged as us really brought smiles not only to the kids' faces but to ours as well.

But the most important thing everyone took back from the twelve days at APYLS was the amazing and unforgettable memories with some of the most interesting, friendly and wonderful people. The connections that we made were not just for those days that we were together, but will last forever. And we all know, that no matter where we go in the world, be it Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, United Kingdom or United States, we would have a friend or more to visit; someone we can count on.

Its unlikely that any of us our going to forget all those late night chats, learning phrases in all those different languages, exploring the city of Singapore together, dancing on the closing ceremony/ unofficial celebratory party, singing on the buses, watching and trying to learn each others cultural performances or singing the APYLS theme song and hooting the official cheer together. But this fantastic experience would not have been possible without the super efficient and remarkable facilitators who were more like friends! Nor would it have been the same without any of the kind, open minded, super smart and fun delegates! In true APYLS style, leaving each other was 'nothing but a heart ache' but we know we can 'always count on each other, for sure, that's what friends are for.' It may seem cheesy but only all the APYLS people will really understand its true significance!

Tanvi Tandan

15th August, A History

Every article related to India's independence always starts with "Midnight, on the 15th of August 1947, India awoke to her freedom" or something similar. This article is not about India's independence, but the date on which she was freed; her birthday, in some ways. Interestingly, many other historical events took place on this day.

Throughout history there have been numerous interesting events that all took place on the 15th of August <insert year>, dating back to 778CE, when the Battle of Roncevaux Pass took place between Spain and France, up till 2007 when an 8.0 magnitude earthquake shook the Pacific Coast, hitting Ica and Peru, killing hundreds. Among the more interesting establishments, in 1843, Tivoli Gardens, one of the oldest still intact amusement parks in the world, opened in Copenhagen, Denmark. This date was also the historical birth of stadium rock, when The Beatles played live to nearly 60,000 fans at the Shea Stadium in New York City in 1965. The Woodstock Music And Art Festival also opened on this day in 1969.

India also shares her technical 'birthday' with a lot of famous personalities, including Napoleon Bonaparte, Sri Aurobindo, The Royal Princess Anne of the UK, Jack Russell, Rob Thomas, Ben Affleck and even Adnan Sami, not to mention one of the Jo Bros - Joe! On this date, we share our Independence Day celebrations with the Republic of Congo, which attained freedom from France in 1960. The city of Panama was also founded on 15th August 1519. Following the famous Polish-Soviet clash in the Battle of Warsaw, the Poles defeated the Red Army on this day.

World War II and the Cold War also mark some important events on this day, like USA's victory over Japan (the day the Japanese surrendered) and Korea Liberation day both in 1945. The Republic Of Korea was established on 15th August 1948. The US also ended its bombing of Cambodia on this day.

But the most important event of all was how India finally gained her freedom after decades of struggle. When the dream of a million men led by the ideology of one great Mahatma finally triumphed in setting her country free. When the hearts of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and every other religion, caste or community in India, burst with emotion and honour, cherishing the value of being simply "Indian". And that is what I will remember this day for. Now and forever.

-Tanvi Tandon

Where Is The Freedom To Think?



Every year as we move ahead from class 8 to class 9 and on to class 10, we never fail to point out to our teachers that "we studied the same concept last year." The teachers respond in the same way each year - "but this year we will do the concept in more detail". However, that just confuses me. Why is the Central Board of Student Execution (CBSE) forcing us to repeatedly study the same concepts year after year?

According to me, the NCERT textbooks are not allowing students to think beyond the CBSE fixed curriculum. We feel so satisfied once we have completed the 9th or the 10th grade. We feel relieved that those exams are over. Some of us feel happy about getting that 90% in the tests. Almost all of us walk out of those classes feeling a bit smarter. But what have we really accomplished? Yes, we have mastered the art of writing scripted answers, the art of completing our tests within the stipulated time and the art of memorizing the important points. But in this way, we are not challenging the human brain enough.

According to me, the CBSE does not give us the freedom to think for ourselves. Where is the liberty to be independent and not rely only on textbooks as a source of "guidance"? Why is there a "fixed" syllabus and a "fixed" way of studying? Why can't we have the freedom to explore, rather than being shown the way? A simple method is by letting us analyze the data we have studied and letting us come to conclusions ourselves. In subjects like English, we should be given the opportunity to write our opinion, our thoughts about the story, instead of answering the futile questions at the back of the textbook!

There do exist educational systems that focus on such methods of teaching. Take the IB system of education as an example. The way they teach helps students apply that information in real life easily. Through brainstorming sessions and with the freedom to decide their textbooks, the IB offers a less "structured" method of teaching. A student's analytical, research and application skills are tested, rather than memory and speed.

I am not saying that the students who study CBSE cannot apply their minds or think logically. All I am saying is that the CBSE makes us forget that there is more to life than what lies in the textbook. Instead of giving systematic answers to questions, we should have the freedom to question the answers. It is time to allow us to read between the lines and think beyond what is given to us. It is time to think freely in a free nation.

Akhila Khanna



जब मैंने बहाना बनाया

स्कूल नहीं था मुझे जाना,
इसलिए मैंने बहाना बनाया।
हवा चल रही थी बड़ी सर्द,
मैंने बताया पेट में दर्द।
मुनकर मेरी बीमारी की कहानी,
बढ़ गई मॉ की परेशानी।
जब मॉ परेशान हो रहीं थीं,
मैं मन ही मन मुस्कुरा रही थी।
जानकर कोई बीमारी खास,
मॉ ले गईं तुरन्त डॉक्टर के पास।
मैंने चेहरे का भाव ऐसे बनाया,
डॉक्टर बुरी तरह चकराया।
दवाई लेकर जब मैं वापिस आई,
तो घर पर मेरी शामत आई।
विद्यालय से टेलीफोन आया,
जिसे मॉ ने ही उताया।
जब मॉ फोन पर बात कर रहीं थीं,
मैं मन ही मन डर रही थी।
सोचा था दिन मज़े से कटेगा,
मुझे क्या पता था इतनी जल्दी भांडा
फूटेगा।
मॉ ने कहा, बेटा तुम्हारी कहानी साफ है,
इस तरह मॉ से झूठ बोलना पाप है।
मैंने मॉ की बात गॉठ बांध ली,
बहाना न बनाने की कसम खा ली।
यशस्विनी जिंदल

15TH AUGUST, INDEPENDENCE DAY

A great day.
15th August, Independence Day.
Family reunions, picnics, parades,
The Indian spirit never fades.
Children come together and fly their
kites.
People salute the flag, no one fights.
Every Indian joins hands, a national
holiday.
15th August, Independence Day.
Flag-hoisting ceremonies are
conducted everywhere.
The magnificent *tiranga* can be seen
here and there.
For every Indian, a proud day,
15th August, Independence Day.
At Red Fort, the flag is hoisted, the
Prime Minister proud.
Every Indian watches and sings the
Anthem out loud.
In 1947, India was finally
independent on this day.
15th August, Independence Day!

Ishan Sardesai

अस्मिन् चित्रे सरोवरे हंसौ कच्छपः च सन्ति।
हंसौ कच्छपम् दण्डेन सह आकाशे
उड्डयतः।
कच्छपम् दण्डेन सह आकाशं दृष्ट्वा जनाः
चीत्कारम् कुर्वन्ति।
मूर्खः कच्छपः चीत्कारम् श्रुत्वा शब्दान्
वक्तुम् दण्डम् उदसृजत्।
कच्छपस्य मूर्खतायाः सः नीचैः अपतत्।
निवेदिता द्विवेदी 10 अ

VVIQ

We asked the students of Vasant Valley the question:
"Dr. Zakir Hussain was born in 1897. Who was he?"

Rhea Badal - That Sitar player?
Vedika Singhee - That 'marg' Seerat lives on!
Pooja Sawhney - That Tabla guy.
Shaurya Dhir - A person who completed his PhD.
Udai Chawla - He was a tabla player. No, no, a Doctor.
Tulsi Sharma - The "Wah Taj" ad guy.
Zara Adil - Do I look like an idiot to you? The tabla player.
Sahyr Kohli - The Tabla Player. No, his dad. Wait, no, his grandfather.

Dr. Zakir Hussain was the 3rd President of India. He was in office between the 13th of May 1967 and the 3rd of May 1969. He was the first Muslim Indian President, and also the first Indian President to die in office. He headed Jamia Millia Islamia University for 21 years. This University was intimately involved with India's Freedom Struggle and it experimented with value base education along the lines advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. Hussain emerged as one of the most prominent educational thinkers and practitioners of modern India. His personal sacrifice and untiring efforts to keep the Jamia University afloat in very adverse circumstances won him appreciation, even from his arch political rivals like Mohammed Ali Jinnah. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1954 and the Bharat Ratna in 1963.

PINK CHUDDIES AND THE SRS: HOW FAR WE'VE COME

When the Bajrang Dal beat up a couple on Friendship day in Raipur, it was a direct reminder of the controversial Pink Chuddy campaign (which happened about a year ago) when hundreds of women planned to send pink underwear to Muthalik and other members of the Sri Ram Sena. The Sri Ram Sena had condemned women who celebrated Valentine's Day. These women later formed the Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women, urging Indian women to "walk to the nearest pub and buy a drink" on Valentine's Day. After this drastic step, attacks and threats like these were kept on the down low by the SRS, but their vicious attempts and accusations undermined the spirit of these young women, and what independence meant to them. Maybe being independent, free of any kind of oppression from their families, bosses or even a larger colonial power, does mean celebrating American festivals in pubs to them. The belief of the Sena is that "Valentine's Day reflects loose morality and undermines Indian culture." But I think that the only thing that was being undermined was every citizen's individual independence. After all, the much sought after democratic status that India adopted after independence entails giving citizens a choice and not influencing their frame of thought. Leadership and forced ideals like those of the SRS simply don't belong in a nation that gained Independence, with a forward looking, modern ideology, 63 years ago.

Noor Singh



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR COUNTRY?

- How many national holidays does India have?
a. Around 20 b. 3 c. 10
- When did Pakistan gain its independence?
a. 15th August, 1947 b. 14th August, 1947 c. 16th August, 1947
- What happened to Mountbatten after India's independence?
a. He became the first Governor General of India.
b. He went home to Britain.
c. He was killed.
- In 1997, the 50th anniversary of Indian independence, the US senate passed a resolution, designating it as a National (US) Day of celebration of...
a. Freedom from the British rule
b. Indian and American Free Trade
c. Indian and American democracy
- How many verses did "Janagana Mana" originally have? (Our national anthem is one verse of the original).
a. 5 b. 4 c. 2
- What does the navy blue wheel that appears in the Indian national flag stand for?
a. Religion b. Krishna c. Law
- Name the first woman minister of Independent India.
a. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
c. Sarojini Naidu
d. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit

Answers: 1) b, 2) b, 3) a, 4) c, 5) a, 6) c, 7) a

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