

# VASANT VALLEY

TODAY

## THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370

As of the early hours of May 23rd, it was fairly obvious that the government's lofty rhetoric had convinced a majority of the population that our promised 'acche din' were in the near future. Article 370 being abrogated came as no surprise to the few not enamoured by our supreme leader.

On Kashmir's accession to India, Article 370 was drawn up - it gave Kashmir a special status as a state where it could draw up its own Constitution and have its own legislature. It could also choose which central laws applied to its citizens. The government of India was only supposed to be in charge when matters concerning the defence of Kashmir arose - which is why many were shocked when Article 370 was revoked - but this was an incredibly well thought out plan, which involved finding loopholes in the law.

Ultimately, it is not the abrogation of Article 370 that incensed many in the country, but the way it was implemented. The government could not have changed the entire nature of the state, which brings up issues on the legality of the whole conundrum. The government's reasons for Article 370 being revoked were baffling. Home Minister Amit Shah claimed that Article 370 and Article 35A of the Indian Constitution kept Jammu and Kashmir poor, and delayed development of the state through provisions such as those that restricted the sale of land to non-Kashmiris and reserved jobs for Kashmiri citizens. It is not a commonly known fact that the same rules apply to land ownership in states like Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. An analysis of government data, however, shows the state's development indicators to be better than the national average, be it life expectancy to infant mortality, literacy and poverty.

As far as terrorism, another major reason for the abrogation, is concerned, the defence of Jammu and Kashmir has always been under the control of the Central Government since Kashmir became a part of India, and the government itself has been vague concerning how they would combat terrorism. Terrorism has essentially become a buzz word that the government can use to justify anything without a comprehensive plan.

### SCHOOL WATCH

#### Results of Inter-House Social Science Quiz:

1st  
Blue House  
Pradeep Mehra Sahni, Harsh Verma, Aamer Katoch and Kavia Ahuja  
2nd  
Green House  
Partiosh Grover, Aarush Shah, Suhanee Gupta and Yuvraj Mamik  
3rd  
Yellow House  
Siddhant Nagrath, Aamer S Aulakh, Arav Malhotra and Arnav Sethi

#### TOSS: Talk on Splendid Science for Class 9

1st: Advaita Sehgal  
2nd: Sonakshi Garg  
3rd: Shyla Upadhyay and Ruhan Chopra

#### Speed Math Class 11

Winner  
Rishnav Thadani  
Students who have done well  
Vedika Bagla, Siddhant Gandhi and Prithvi Oak

#### Class 8 Inter House Mathematics Quiz

Winner  
Blue House  
Anirudh Vats, Yashvardhan Goel, Vivasvat Rastogi and Smit Bachan

*Congratulations!*

Section 144 was implemented in the state, with hashtags like #RedforKashmir becoming popular on social media. Mobile services and the right to assembly of the people was taken away. Politicians like Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah were arrested for dissent, and Mufti said July 5th was the "darkest day for democracy."

Although the implementation of Article 370 was not permitted by the constitution, its abrogation does have some pros. Tribals in the state were not given the same rights as those in the rest of our country and no reservations were enjoyed by minorities in the state - which lead to a great disparity in the state. According to Article 370, only citizens of the state could purchase property in the state itself, so the abrogation increases the chance of industrial development in the state - now people who are not citizens of the state can buy property in it, which increases the chance of industrial development. It also increases the chances of employment in the state, and decreases the probability of the youth being brainwashed by the many terrorists who filter in through the porous border due to the lack of employment. After the many years of Kashmir being part of India, Article 370 had to go - for it was only supposed to be applicable to the state until it was ready to be integrated as a part of India. Kashmir is more than ready to become a part of India - but this was not the way it should have been done.

To be fair, the previous governments did pander to their Muslim vote bank by not revoking Article 370, but it is safe to say that the previous governments would not have suppressed the voices of thousands to bring about their will. Democratic rights and constitutional framework did not need to be violated under the pretence of development and security.

Sanaa Sharma & Rishnav Thadani, 11

# *If India could Speak*

*On the transformation of India since Independence* / by Anabita Jain

On the eve of Independence in 1947, when I finally broke past the chains of imperialism and emerged free, I was labeled as a country too poor and backward to be able to progress on my own. Today, as I look back on the past seventy three years, I write not as a victim, but as a warrior.

It has been seventy three years of giving power to my people and a nation built on democratic values of equality, liberty and secularism. At the same time, it has also been seventy years of struggle - struggle against the forces of social disharmony, economic inequalities, external attack, illiteracy and diseases. And through these blockages and barriers, and being so deeply imbedded in inequalities, prejudices and poverty, today I have emerged as a strong, independent nation ready to fight any complications that threaten my democratic character.

1947- the year that independence was eclipsed by religious divisions, fear, hate and anger. As the partition tore me apart, it also tore through the hearts of my people - separating them from their loved ones, homes and livelihoods. At that time, my narrative was only of hate, violence and carnage and the idea of people being uprooted and thrown across hand-drawn borders. Every time I reflect on my story, I can't help but wonder - what was lacking in me as a nation? Why were we disunited and how did artificial boundaries and shallow differences get the better of so many Indians? Today I see a truly secular nation, one where each is allowed to practice his religion in peace, without fear of being ostracised or criticised or killed or lynched. Nationalism is a feeling which strives. One where each man and each woman is proud to be an Indian, proud of me, and my development.

Over the years, I have fostered different ideologies and developed wholly only because of the integration of each of these. I have now become an amalgamation of different faiths and cultures. While I do acknowledge that inequalities still exist today, and are unfortunately ingrained in my social fabric itself, the way my social system has progressed over the past seventy three years is something to celebrate. For years, people have tried to tackle these issues and worked towards a more inclusive, accepting society with 'unity in diversity' and social harmony as its guiding principles. Now, as I compare the India of back then to the India of today, I see massive changes for the betterment and benefit of all as we are getting closer to achieving the nirvana of peace and prosperity.

Apart from the social aspect, the economic growth I have encountered is something that can't be ignored either. From a country that could not provide basic food grain to her people, today I have evolved into one that is not only self sufficient in food grains, but also has excess in case of shortage. The 1991 reforms and the advent of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation have also led to great industrial growth, modernisation, and have helped me establish a significant place for myself in the contemporary world.

I am proud of my people, and myself as a nation, for so many more achievements but most of all I have been able to battle the injustices and biases in society to create a fair and just environment for all. I have been able to truly imbibe my constitutional values and bring about a sense of social harmony and unity. By understanding the idea that all religions are one and all men and women are equal, I have been able to accept all into my fold. That is the beauty of India, that is the beauty of me.

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## REMEMBERING KARGIL - 20 YEARS OF THE KARGIL WAR

It was a gloomy morning on July 26, 1999 in Kargil, but the happy, bright faces all around brought immense light. The Indian Flag soared into the dark sky, lighting it up. The violent war of Kargil had come to an end. India had recaptured all the peaks. No more violence. No more blood. No more death. It was all over - for now.

It all started when Pakistani terrorists and military crossed the Line of Control and captured India's strategic mountains in the first week of May. The local shepherds of Kargil noticed some unusual movement and notified the Indian Army. Operation Vijay was launched and the Indian army men, with the help of their Bofor field guns, took down the Pakistani intruders. The war lasted 3 long months. The capturing of the Tololing Peak on June 13 was one of the main turning points of the Kargil War - it was a key strategic peak for the Pakistani intruders.

Pakistan claimed that their Army never crossed the Line of Control. However, India had solid proof. Indian Soldiers recovered identification tags and uniforms of slain jawans and officers of Pakistan. Pakistan rejected the corpses of their own soldiers. Other than that, a tape of a phone call between Pakistan Army Chief Pervez Musharraf and one of the senior generals talking about the Kargil War was unearthed. The Pakistani Prime Minister claimed to know nothing about the decisions made by General Pervez Musharraf. However, the Prime Minister had visited Kargil four times during January to May. During his visit on May 17, 1999, he was briefed on the peaks occupied by Pakistan and the bunkers made. On July 26, the last peaks were recaptured by the Indian Army with the help of the Navy and the Air Force. More than 500 Indian soldiers were killed over the three months.

The 26th of July is known as Vijay Divas. On this day, we honour the heroes who sacrificed their lives for a safer India. This year was the 20th Anniversary of the Kargil War. Kashmir has been through a long journey since Kargil. From Uri to Pulwama, and now the removal of Article 370 and 35A. Kashmir's new journey is uncertain. All we can hope for is that our heroes' sacrifice will not go in vain. That one day, there will be peace and harmony in Kashmir.

Shyla Upadhyay, 9

# If India could Speak

On the real path towards becoming a true democracy

by Devaki Divan

(Illustration by Sebej Kaur)

Seventy three years. Seventy three years of victories and heartbreak, of attempting to rub off the sticky stain of colonialism, of politics painted with promises and petty propaganda, and of erecting institutions and witnessing them crumble. At birth I was a mosaic of colourful patches, woven together by a miracle of sorts. Since then, however, some of the stitches have begun to fray, and the colours have begun to fade. I am not where I imagined myself to be by now. This is not to say we have not progressed, for we have and how. Yet there lies a long list of boxes I had hoped I could have ticked off my list. I flinch as I gaze into my reflection today, for my image is not one I can recognize. My favorite feature always was the unwavering hope in our democracy, but I fear it has lost its spark.

I shudder at the thought of becoming a nation that so selectively silences its citizens, that dismisses dissent as treason and hands out labels of anti-nationalism to anybody who dares to object to state authority. It is with such pride that we parade and print across our textbooks that I am the largest democratic country in the world. But for how much longer will we veil this authoritarianism as democracy? The muffling of Kashmiri voices in the current political climate seems far too convenient for everyone but the Kashmiri's themselves- it goes against the very fabric that binds us together. Censorship is being used as a sword to injure those that deserve empowerment the most. To deny citizens of their freedom of speech and expression is to infringe upon their fundamental rights. Our history is rooted in the traumas of colonialism, its memories are still fresh and far from forgotten. I can only hope our vast experiences of being the oppressed will reign us away from assuming the role of the oppressor.

The oppression of minorities is increasingly becoming a popular headline in the papers. Communalism has conquered the political sphere, and religious affiliations continue to dictate one's vote. Majoritarianism was not the future I had envisioned for myself. I have always been an amalgamation of different cultures, of festivals and faiths, of contrasting identities. It is our greatest strength and ally, but the current trend to homogenise culture threatens to dissolve every notion of my diversity. I want to hear the sound of every voice, outspoken and irreverent. I want every demand to be discussed, every citizen to be protected. We cannot allow the already vulnerable and marginalized groups to feel further alienated in their own homes. If the government refuses to protect them, who will?

I had hoped to nurture a market place of ideas, to foster different ideologies and cultivate generations of leaders that understood the aspirations of its people. Instead, today the dilemma of the youth has become a lack of choice to choose from. The political sphere has become a competition between a brand of saffron nationalism and a family firm that bars all outsiders.

The environment is perhaps the most prominent problem I face today, but it has been deemed too uninteresting for the nation. Apparently the fact that every citizen of this world, irrespective of caste or creed, may cease to exist in a few decades time does not grasp much attention. Delhi has transformed into a gas chamber of pollution, and yet its citizens live under the delusion that the consequences of climate change are far off in the future. Our rivers are choked with plastic and the air is blackened with smoke. If we want a shot at survival, countering global warming and climate change is the only way.

Seventy three years of independence have passed, and I have had my fair share of successes and failures. The idea of me - the idea of India- was an experiment of self-determination, bound together by the hope and dreams of its people. It is indeed an unending quest. As Nehru, one of my greatest political leaders once said,

*"So long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over".*

## शीला दीक्षित और सुषमा स्वराज का देहांत

एक महीने से कम समय में भारत की दो प्रसिद्ध महिलाओं ने अपनी अंतिम साँस ली- भारतीय जनता पार्टी की श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज एवं कांग्रेस पार्टी की श्रीमती शीला दीक्षित।

श्रीमती शीला दीक्षित के कार्यकाल में भारत की राजधानी दिल्ली के नीति-निर्माण में नवीनीकरण किया। जब दीक्षित जी मुख्यमंत्री थीं, उन्होंने मेट्रो, नए फ्लाईओवर आदि के माध्यम से दिल्ली की आधुनिक संरचना को बढ़ावा देने के साथ ही साथ दिल्ली में सी.एन.जी बस का आरंभ भी कराया था। उन्होंने ऊर्जा वितरण का निजीकरण भी किया था, जिसकी वजह से बिजली की उपलब्धि में भी बहुत सुधार आया। श्रीमती शीला दीक्षित जी तीन बार दिल्ली की मुख्य मंत्री बनीं। देश के विकास में उनका योगदान देशवासियों को हमेशा याद रहेगा।

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज भारतीय जनता पार्टी की वरिष्ठ नेता एवं भारत की विदेश मंत्री थीं। उन्होंने 'ट्विटर' के माध्यम से दुनिया के हर कोने में रहने वाले हर भारतीय की मदद की थी जिन्होंने उनसे सहायता माँगी थी- चाहे वे कॉलेज में पढ़ते हुए छात्र हों, विदेश घूमते हुए यात्री हों या अस्पताल में दाखिल हुए मरीज हों। श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज ने 'ऑपरेशन राहत' के माध्यम से हजारों लोगों की जान बचाने का सफल अभियान किया, जिसकी प्रशंसा सभी ने की। उनका स्वर्गवास देश की बड़ी क्षति है। भारत ने एक राष्ट्रसेविका एवं महान सांसद को खोया है। भारतीय जनता के लिए उन्होंने जो भी किया है, वह हमें हमेशा याद रहेगा।

# 28TH VASANT VALLEY SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL

AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER As the curtains came down on the 28th Vasant Valley Drama Festival last Friday, I



felt sad that it was all over so soon. The weeks and months of frenzied activity had come to an end, leaving me with a bunch of memories of a time well spent. Being in the 'Play' was an honour and a privilege. In the last two years of participating in the Festival, I've really enjoyed singing in the Musical Interlude but this year was different. As the time came for the selection, to my utmost joy, I was chosen to be a part of the Play. The theme 'Living in a Loop' was, at first, a little confusing but after many sessions of brainstorming, out-of-the-box thinking and endless practice sessions, our play was falling into place. I loved everything about the whole experience, from the time we were

divided into groups to work on small skits, to the acting workshops, from Brittany Baguette's accent to the jolly ol' Boo Boo Bear, from Rosy the Phone Addict to the Secret Society! Being a member of the Secret Society was great as we got to do the fun parts including jamming to Gangnam Style!! Our drama teachers, Ms. Pant and Mr. Mukherjee were very encouraging as they helped us prepare the script and taught us dialogue delivery. Sure, the Drama Festival is over but I feel honoured and proud to have been a part of it. I will always remember this magical year in VVS!!

Joshua George Kathett V-C



Ahh!! It was the day when the interludes were getting announced for the Drama festival. There were just so many amazing interludes like Celebrating Gandhi, Bravehearts and more, but the ONE thing I was

nervcited (excited and nervous) about was who will get selected for the play? After most of the children from classes 3 to 5 got allotted their interludes and their teachers took them to their respective practice areas. Now the teachers were going to announce the play participants. I WAS SELECTED WOOHOO! I still remember my name was the 2nd name to be called out. The theme for this year's drama festival was "Living in a loop" The process of getting ready for the play was quite peculiar at first. Our teachers made us do fun exercises and games to get us warmed up! One of my favourite exercise was to enact any character and introduce ourselves. A lot of my friends came up with funny characters like-Boo Boo bear, Brittney Baguette,the fearless knight. And I was a drama queen diva named Alyssa! I was happy to be a playing the role of a dancer. We also had a dance battle and a dance party while practising with pop music! Honestly practice time was the best time. And after some touch-ups and run throughs at the auditorium we were ready to perform. Being a part of the play was a great experience. The entire play cast was a total squad! Let's not forget about Mr. Mukherjee and Ms. Pant who guided us through the play. At the end all I got to say is.... I CAN DO THIS!



Kbandro Mevo V-C

## Vasant Valley Drama Festival - Some Conversations...

How did you go about preparing a play on this year's theme, 'Living in a Loop'?

First we sat and discussed to understand the theme. After that the ideas started flowing. But we were sure that we wanted to include a dance.

Gauri Nair, The Airforce School

Children had been selected for the play and we all attended a workshop in Vasant Valley School. We started brainstorming what Living in a Loop meant. That's when we got an idea and we started making our story with the help of our teachers.

Varda Arora, St. Mary's School

Do you like the idea of Drama Festival being a festival and not a competition?

I don't want it to be a competition as the team that does not win will feel so unhappy. Everyone has worked hard on these plays.

Megha, Ambience Public School

I think it should just be a Festival as then we just put our best foot forward without worrying about winning or losing. We have fun while preparing our play and cheer for other teams too while they are performing.

Veda Kalra, Vasant Valley School

I would like it to be a competition. Everybody would then do better than what they are doing and winning prizes is exciting.

Radhika Agarwal, Shiv Nadar School



Team of Interviewers

I prefer it as a Festival rather than a competitive event as now everyone is so friendly. So many other schools have wished us good luck. We all want that everyone should perform well. In a competition this kind of atmosphere would not have been there.

Aariv Garg, Step By Step School

Preparing for a play is all about working as a team. Can you tell us of an interesting incident that happened while preparing for the play or while performing on stage today?

When we started working on the play we did not know each other so well. There were so many times we fought with each other. But now we are all close friends. Kareen, Pathways School, Gurugram

**आपको इस बार का थीम 'लिविंग इन अ लूप' कैसा लगा?**

मुझे यह थीम काफी रोचक लगा, मैं इसे अपने जीवन से जोड़ पाती हूँ।

अहाना अरोड़ा, स्प्रिंगवेल्स स्कूल

मुझे तो यह थीम बहुत मजेदार लगा। आज कल हमारी दुनिया में भी तो यही हो रहा है। देखा जाए तो सबने इस पर कितने अच्छे-अच्छे नाटक बनाए।

तनिशी चौधरी, ब्लूबेल्स स्कूल

**हमारे ड्रामा फ़ैस्टिवल में हिस्सा लेकर कैसा लगा?**

पहले मुझे बहुत डर लग रहा था, मैं पहली बार इस तरह के नाटक में भाग ले रही हूँ पर नाटक करने के बाद मज़ा आ गया।

विभूति, टगोर इंटरनेशनल स्कूल

मुझे बहुत मज़ा आया। नाटक के दिलचस्प थीम ने इस मजे को और बढ़ा दिया।

मानसी शर्मा, कुसकैपकोलन

**क्या आपको लगता है कि इस तरह के कार्यक्रमों से बच्चों का उत्साह बढ़ता है?**

हाँ, उत्साह तो बढ़ता है। हमें अलग-अलग नाटक देखने को मिलते हैं। हमें पता चलता है कि कैसे हम अपने नाटक को और बेहतर बना सकते हैं।

यशस शर्मा, न्यू एरा पब्लिक स्कूल

**आपके विद्यालय से नाटक में कुल कितने बच्चे हैं? सबका चुनाव कैसे हुआ?**

हमारे चुनाव के लिए ऑडिशन हुए थे और हमें नाटक की तैयारी करने के लिए बीस मिनट मिले। फिर इसी पर हमारा चयन किया गया।

चैतन्या, निर्मल भारतीय स्कूल



Artwork in Process

चयन के लिए हमारी आवाज़, भाव और हमारे अभिव्यक्ति को देखा गया। इसके बाद अठारह बच्चों को चुना गया।

वीर गुप्ता, द मदर्स इंटरनेशनल स्कूल

**आपको किस विद्यालय का नाटक सबसे अच्छा लगा? इन नाटकों में से कौन सा पात्र आपको पसंद आया?**

मुझे स्टेप बाई स्टेप का नाटक सबसे अच्छा लगा क्योंकि यह एक मूवी की तरह मजेदार था। मुझे ब्लू बेल्स स्कूल के फेरी गॉड फादर का पात्र सबसे अच्छा लगा क्योंकि मुझे फैंटसि अच्छी लगती है।

रान्या कपूर, वसंत वैली स्कूल

मुझे ऐरफोर्स विद्यालय का सुपर हीरो पात्र और उनका नाटक सबसे अच्छा लगा क्योंकि उनका नाटक पुरानी चीज़ों पर आधारित था।

जूनाइराह खान, सरदार पटेल स्कूल

## SOME THOUGHTS ON INTERLUDES

Hi! My name is Shiv and my interlude for The 28th Vasant Valley Drama Festival was Indian Music. I have discovered that being in Indian music is really fun! I am playing the guitar for the orchestra on 7th August. Even though, it



is a five minute song, after every practice I rub my fingers in pain. Since I'm performing on two days, I am also singing a song "Ab ke Sawan" on the 9th. After every practice

Mr. Mishra, the Indian music teacher, let's us talk but only if we practise well!!! Indian Music is the best interlude I've ever been in. And if I wasn't in class 5 I wouldn't have to kiss Drama Festival good bye.

Shiv Sharma V-A

Talk about your experience while preparing for your Interlude.

I enjoy singing and I also liked the song we were singing. Learning the lyrics of the song was tough but we practiced every day and got better.

Myra Ojha V- B, Indian Music

I had a lot of fun while preparing for my dance, 'Yeh Mehra India'. We had to practice everyday. At first I thought that the steps were too tough but Ms. Kaur made them simple by teaching one step at a time.

Avni Garg III - C

How did you feel while performing on the main day?

Even though I knew my steps well, I was nervous and anxious. But once I started performing I forgot all about my nervousness.

Daevi Jain V - A, Celebrating Gandhi

Which Interlude did you like the most and why?

I liked the 'Celebrating Gandhi' the best as it showed what Gandhiji believed in. The dancers made a pyramid which looked very impressive.

Mohd Shadab V - B

I liked 'Dance Fiesta' the most. The dance was well coordinated.

Pari Darmora V - B

## बाघों का संरक्षण : एक सफल प्रयास

भारत के राष्ट्रीय पशु बाघ के संरक्षण की दिशा में सफल प्रयास प्रशंसनीय है। 'ग्लोबल टाइगर डे' के अवसर पर हाल ही में भारत ने पिछले चार साल की बाघ जनगणना रिपोर्ट जारी की जिसमें पहले 2,226 के मुकाबले पूरे भारत में 2,967 बाघ पाए गए (33% वृद्धि)। प्रधान मंत्री मोदी ने इसे 'ऐतिहासिक उपलब्धि' के रूप में स्वीकार किया और बाघों की रक्षा के प्रति भारत की प्रतिबद्धता की पुष्टि की। दुनिया के 80% से अधिक जंगली बाघ भारत में हैं, हम 2022 तक ग्लोबल टाइगर फोरम द्वारा निर्धारित जंगली बाघों की संख्या को दोगुना करने के लक्ष्य की दिशा में काम कर रहे हैं।

सबसे बड़ी वृद्धि मध्य प्रदेश में हुई है, 218 बाघों की वृद्धि (71%) महाराष्ट्र में 122 और कर्नाटक में 118। बाघों वाले 20 राज्यों में से केवल एक ही राज्य की संख्या में गिरावट देखी गई है वह है - छत्तीसगढ़, जिसका मुख्य कारण माओवादी विद्रोह बताया गया है।

बाघों की संख्या संबंधित 2018 के आंकड़ों में काफी हद तक विश्वसनीयता है, क्योंकि रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 2,461 बाघों (कुल का 83%) को वास्तव में ट्रैप कैमरों द्वारा हर एक का फोटो खींचा गया है। 2014 में केवल 1,540 (69%) बाघों की फोटो खींची गई थी।

वन्यजीव विशेषज्ञों ने सरकारी प्रयासों की सराहना की और कहा कि बाघों की संख्या बढ़ने से भारत में वन्य जीव संरक्षण का एक नया अध्याय शुरू हुआ है।

ग्लोबल टाइगर फोरम के महासचिव राजेश गोपाल ने कहा, "मूल्यांकन का पैमाना विश्व स्तर पर अद्वितीय है। बाघों को बचाना एक ही प्रजाति को बहाल करने से अधिक है। बाघ एक स्वस्थ खाद्य श्रृंखला को बनाए रखने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं। हर बार जब हम एक बाघ की रक्षा करते हैं, तो हम लगभग 25,000 एकड़ जंगल की रक्षा करते हैं, जो वन्य जीवन और स्थानीय समुदायों को बनाए रखते हैं।

लुप्तप्राय प्रजातियों की दुनिया में अच्छी खबर आम तौर पर एक दुर्लभ चीज है, इसलिए भारत के नवीनतम बाघ की जनगणना के परिणामों का जश्न मनाने का पल है।

Advaita Sehgal, 9

## कुलभूषण जाधव का मुकदमा

भारत ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय न्यायालय से माँग की थी कि कुलभूषण जाधव को भारत भेजा जाए और उन पर कोर्ट मार्शल के तहत सुनाए गए फैसले को अवैध करार दिया जाए। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय न्यायालय के अनुसार, भारत ने लगभग सर्वसम्मति से इस मामले को जीत लिया। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय न्यायालय ने पाकिस्तान को कुलभूषण जाधव को मौत की सजा पर रोक लगाया और उन्हें कांसुलर एक्सेस देने का आदेश दिया क्योंकि पाकिस्तान ने विना कन्वेंशन का उल्लंघन किया था।

कुलभूषण जाधव को पाकिस्तानी सैन्य बलों ने मार्च, 2016 में पकड़ लिया था और पाकिस्तानी सेना की अदालत द्वारा लगभग एक साल बाद पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ जासूसी की गतिविधियों पर उन्हें कांसुलर एक्सेस के बिना ही मौत की सजा दे दी। एक्सेस और रिकॉर्ड्स से वंचित होने पर, भारत ने 2017 में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय न्यायालय से संपर्क किया, जिसने जाधव की फौसी पर रोक लगा दी। जुलाई 17 को जो फैसला आया उसके बाद भारत और पाकिस्तान के बीच यह केस लंबे समय तक लड़ा गया। पाकिस्तान ने जानबूझकर देरी की है और कांसुलर एक्सेस पर शर्तें लगा दी हैं (पाकिस्तानी अधिकारी, सीसीटीवी कैमरे, आदि के सबूत दिए) जिसको भारत ने अस्वीकार किया और अप्रतिबंधित एक्सेस के लिए याचिका की। भारत को कुलभूषण जाधव के लिए अभी तक न्याय नहीं मिला है, लेकिन अब एक कदम आगे बढ़े हैं।

Kavyini Garodia, 10

## COLONIALISM - CAN IT BE BENEFICIAL?

*Yes, it can*

While we Indians most often associate the impact of British colonisation of India with a plethora of disadvantages, sorrow and losses, it is actually eye-opening to see that the colonial period has been a boon too. For starters, the British introduced a word in the Indian dictionary that probably was there before, but had been neglected like an orphan child: Humanity. The abolition of Sati provided the women of India with much needed dignity and respect among the society. The remarriage of widows was also made legal, which was a revolutionary movement in ensuring emotional stability of women who were earlier ostracised from society.

The British restructured the Indian society, that for centuries was polluted by the likes of dacoits, thugs, Pindarees and other such pests by setting up efficient and accountable constables. The introduction of novels and the ideology of education for both males and females opened new horizons for women to spend their lives doing something fruitful and in turn, increased the working age population in India. Materially, the English played an instrumental role in placing India in the global economic world by providing loans for the construction of railways and irrigation facilities for the export of indigo, spices, tea etc.

Most of all, the British built the foundation of what today, is the largest democracy in the world. India was enlightened by ideas of freedom of speech and liberty of the press, higher political knowledge and aspirations, improvement of government in the native states, security of life and property, freedom from oppression caused by the caprice or greed of despotic rulers, and from devastation by war, equal justice between man and man etc.

Therefore, while there may be hard feelings towards the Brits, one cannot help but feel grateful for the positive outcomes regardless of their number.

Arshya Gaur, 10

*No, it cannot*

Colonialism is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. Economic exploitation led to colonies becoming dependant on their colonizers to survive and to the looting of their culture and history. However, a big part of colonialism is also the exploitation of the people. They are sent to work in harsh conditions for their colonizers, have no human rights and can be killed at any time for any reason.

The sole advantage of colonialism is profit, but its disadvantages range from economic deprivation to lack of human rights. The British colonized India and reaped huge profits, while India wallowed in poverty, hunger and inequality. The average Indian had no food because he was unable to work his own land, but had to rely on British wages. The colonizers did not care about the plight of the people, as illustrated by their lack of action during the Bengal Famine in 1943. The people have no way of communicating which leads to the inability to organize a revolution or to win one if it were organized. Even if the people tried to rebel, they would be ruthlessly killed and tortured, which was the fate of the heroes of 1857.

Colonialism was a feature of the world in the nineteenth century however, it still exists in the world today. Former colonizers are more developed than former colonies and still levy much more power in global organizations such as the United Nations. In the decades since decolonization, it would seem that former colonies and their colonizers are finally equal and can meet on equal grounds. On the contrary, modern day colonialism does exist and much of the world seems blind to it.

Tara Jing Gopinath, 10



## AN INTERVIEW WITH MEGHNAD DESAI

\* Durga Basu, of class 8, interviewed Mr Meghnad Desai, a British economist and Labour Politician over the summer. Here is a snippet of the interview:

**Q. How has the character of British politics after the 2008 financial crisis changed?**

It changed because there was austerity, the first two years because Labour was in power and Gordon Brown was the Prime Minister. He tried, of keeping expenditure high, because when recession happens your revenue fall, expenditure remains the same and debt goes up. When Conservative came to power they had severe austerity, they cut expenditure for five years. So, at one point of time, there was a lot of hardship to people (especially poor people) between 2010-2015. One of the side effects was the shortage of hospitals, schools, so the people thought the fault lay with the immigrants who came in from Romania and Bulgaira. The economics of post 2008 recession, add political effect through Conservatives coming in to power, that meant there was general resentment amongst the poorer people against the outsiders. They happen to be white European outsiders. There was not white racism- but xenophobia, which we see in politics.

**Q. In the recent general elections, the Congress party lost by a huge margin, do you see the Conservatives suffering with the lack of leadership?**

Not to that extent. Indian elections are not a good model for this, because it was repeat of what happened in 2014. BJP got 30 and Congress 8 more seats, the status didn't change much. In UK, the situation is very much what happened in France the big parties collapsed and outside parties took over. It is likely, if voting in European election is any guide, only happened last month, the Brexit party which is anti-Europe progress and liberal democrat who are pro Europe may emerge as triumphant, Conservatives may come third or fourth. The Greens are doing very well, Liberals have done very well across Europe. Politics is changing, people are not satisfied with the traditional parties.

**Q. You said no single party will get full majority in 2019 elections, and we should brace for an NDA government. However, Modi won a landslide victory. What is the basis for right wing politics in democracy?**

I had said that BJP will not get majority but 230 plus or minus 10, but NDA will form the government. I completely underestimated BJP. I think, right and left wing are not the appropriate way to think about it, because Congress is not a Left wing party. It is really who delivers to the people and Modi's record is that he has delivered in rural electrification, toilets, Swachh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat. When everyone was worried about Muslims, Pakistan, Balakot, but what was really going on was effect of five years of lots of schemes being implemented. It camouflaged as the debate was on national security and terrorism like that. What got people to vote was these delivery schemes-roti, kapda, makan, bijli, sadak, pani, he has done that.

Durga Basu, 8

## THE POISONING OF NAVALNY, LEADING CRITIC OF PUTIN GOVERNMENT

There was a political furore in Russia when a leading Russian opposition figure, Alexei Navalny, was taken to the hospital after developing an allergic reaction that one of his doctors said could have been caused by an unknown chemical substance. Navalny who is the creator of the Moscow-based Anti-Corruption Foundation has spent 90 days behind bars this year itself, yet his following is only growing. More than five million Russians, most of them being the youth of the country, read Navalny's sharp, witty and often devastating investigations on social media. His confidence and courage is such that his arrests only burnish his popularity.

The opposition leader posted a message on his official website that addressed the possibility that the authorities had poisoned him. Navalny wrote that although it was unwise for the authorities to poison him while he was in custody as they would be the obvious culprits, this had never stopped them before. Navalny was released from the hospital a day later and transferred back to jail, despite the strenuous objections of his doctor, who also believed that he had been poisoned with a "toxic agent." While there has been a lot of speculation on what caused the illness of the most high-profile critic of President Vladimir V. Putin and his government, no conclusion has been drawn yet.

Anahita Kukreja, 10

## BORIS JOHNSON & THE BREXIT

Brexit has been a disastrous mess since its conception, and the recent shift of power in the U.K. has not aided the situation. In an election in which a mere 0.2% of the population of the United Kingdom voted, Boris Johnson came to power with an astounding two thirds majority. Boris Johnson has promised to either do what Theresa May could not - craft a deal that appeases the enraged EU and the British parliament - or fall out of the EU in the fiery crash of a no deal Brexit. Such a deal is vehemently opposed by the UK and was shot down by their parliament when Theresea May presented it, and the effect it would have would be disastrous.

If it were to happen, business and manufacturers would abandon England for more profitable parts of Europe and the sterling will hit unprecedented low levels. The new Prime Minister in charge of this country, however, is merrily driving the country over the edge. The Parliament, currently on summer break, has few choices right now. They could legislate to prevent this situation or pass another no confidence motion which is a risky gambit considering Boris Johnson could delay the general election to past 31st October, the date where the U.K. will leave the E.U. no matter what. We are all mere observers of this complex saga and can only wait to see what happens.

Siddhant Nagrath, 9

## TONI MORRISON – THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BLACK AMERICAN AUTHOR OF HER GENERATION

*“The function of freedom is to free someone else” – Toni Morrison*

Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison passed away on 5th August 2019 in Bronx, New York. She was a literary giant and a force to be reckoned with. Ms. Morrison was in a league of her own especially because her vivid, evocative and yet poetic narrative deftly dealt with topics that USA has been trying to grapple with to this day – white supremacy, white beauty standards, racism, slavery and sexism.

Toni Morrison’s career which spans decades, has produced exceptional literary work like *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, and the critically acclaimed Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Beloved*. Ms. Morrison’s stories revolved around people perpetually ignored – a formerly enslaved woman, an adolescent black girl, a war veteran and an abused child, among others. The central theme of Ms. Morrison’s novels is, of course, the black American experience; in an unjust society, her characters struggle to find themselves and their cultural identity. Her use of fantasy, her poetic style, and her rich interweaving of the mythic gave her stories great strength and texture. Not an activist in the conventional sense, nevertheless through her novels and essays, Ms. Morrison helped inspire a generation of black writers to reckon with American history.

However, even before beginning her literary career, Ms. Morrison ensured to champion the cause of Black writers, challenging the publishing industry on their behalf as a fiction editor in Random House in the 1960s. Moreover, she is responsible for some of the pivotal works associated with the rising women’s movement, like “Lesbian Nation” by Jill Johnston and “America’s Working Women: A Documentary History” edited by Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall, Linda Gordon and Susan Reverby. She also edited the voices of the Black Power movement, including Muhammad Ali, Huey Newton and George Jackson. She helped to create a lasting record that bore witness to the work of activists, marchers and protesters long after their activity had subsided.

The passing away of Ms. Morrison is a great loss to the literary community and the void left by her can perhaps never truly be filled. However, her presence on the American literary scene has radically changed it for the better and her works will continue to pave the way for Black writers to use language to challenge the entrenched racism and white supremacy of America.

Darinee Chandok, 12

## IMPACT 2019

It is often said that it is important to never stop questioning. This is the goal of Vasant Valley’s annual Impact science competition - to promote the desire to explore, especially among young and impressionable minds.



From a treasure hunt that tested basic scientific knowledge, a debate that challenged research, presentation and exploration abilities

to a quiz which went beyond the depth of textbook learning, this competition fostered the love for science among the enthusiastic participants. The spirit of competition, after all, is not to win, but to learn.

Along with these activities, participants learnt a great deal from Dr Amita Shah’s talk on cancer. Dr. Shah not only explained the causes, impacts, statistics, solutions and preventive measures for cancer, but also identified common misconceptions regarding cancer. Teachers and students alike learnt a great deal from what she had to say. As Dr Shah explained, a healthy life and positive lifestyle is the key to preventing diseases such as cancer.

The competition ended with a nail-bitingly close quiz that went beyond conventional knowledge. This provided both challenge and learning to the participants, who displayed an impressive understanding and application of science concepts. As the name suggests, this annual celebration of science at VVS attempts to make an impact on those who are eager to never stop learning.

Prithvi Oak, 11

## INDEPENDENCE IN ENTERTAINMENT

*Stories of courage and sacrifice to entertain you this Independence Day*

In 1947, the Independence of India came with a cost. The challenges of nation building that the Indian leaders were faced with were not easy to tackle, and led to countless stories of struggle and sacrifice. These stories, both of prominent leaders and ordinary citizens, found a way into the Indian entertainment industry. Books, movies and songs alike have traced the stories of many courageous “survivors” of an independent India. Here are a few to look out for:

### MOVIES:

1. Lagaan (2001)
2. The Legend of Bhagat Singh (2002)
3. Rang De Basanti (2006)
4. Gandhi (1982)
5. Sarfarosh (1999)

### BOOKS:

1. *Midnight’s Children* by Salman Rushdie
2. *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh
3. *Remnants of a Separation* by Aanchal Malhotra
4. *Anandamath* by Bankim C. Chatterjee
5. *Waiting for the Mahatma* by R.K. Narayan

### SONGS:

1. माँ तुझे सलाम
2. हर करम अपना करेंगे ऐ वतन तेरे लिए
3. कर चले हम फ़िदा तन साथियों अब तुम्हारे हवाले वतन साथियों
4. ऐ मेरे वतन के लोगों



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