

VASANT VALLEY

TODAY

To Mrs Bakshi, With Love

From playing in the splash 'taal' to scurrying around the Jhoola Bhaari, it would have been unmatched without your constant love and presence. Your warm smiles let us know that we always had someone to talk to and someone looking after us. You never failed to liven up our spirits which were often dampened with the long and lengthy school days.

What feels like an end of an era is marked by your departure from school. Your office was always home to the most nervous of kids on their first day of school with tears streaming down their face. There wasn't a single moment we felt that we weren't loved as long as you were there.

As Head of Junior School, you had one of the toughest jobs. You had to make sure all of us were happy, healthy and safe. And you were unmatched in doing so. We couldn't have asked for anyone better to nurture us in our primary years! We extend the heartiest of 'thank you's' to you, ma'am. Junior school wouldn't quite have been Junior School without you!



ON MEN'S DAY AND TOXIC FEMINISM

We live in the comfort of our homes, with walls literally and metaphorically protecting us from the evils of the outside world. We wrap ourselves around in privilege in the same way we did with our scarves from H&M. We clothe ourselves in oblivion, the way we did with the sweaters we bought from Zara last week.

Women's day. A day when all profit-driven companies suddenly become women-friendly to fit in with society's 'woke-culture' phase. The irony of this tokenism being nothing short of comical. They are proud to put out clothing items in particular, emblazoned with "Feminist AF" to feed into the consumerist culture of accumulating more. They are also proud to have underpaid workers working in some faraway country with little-to-no labour laws, practically slaving away to earn less than forty cents on the dollar. The sweatshop workers mainly ranging from children to women, because of course, it is easier to swindle them. Selling their clothes as a form of conscience-clearing that we, too, have become accustomed to. But don't we hear enough about women? Ah, the misogynists awake. They are almost as quick to castigate a day about women, as a predator about to pounce on their prey. They are only one search away from being educated. But enough. We hear so much hubbub about women's day, that we almost forget that there is a day for men. Yes sir, there is indeed a day for men! Men's day, celebrated on the nineteenth day of November.

SCHOOL WATCH

Sanskrit Shabd Gyan Pratiyogita:

Class 8

1st Vivasvat Rastogi
2nd Shashvat Rastogi
3rd Soumya Garg

Class 7

1st Kayra Dhar
2nd Jai Kalra
3rd Diya Nambiar

Class 6

1st Inika Gour Tirath
2nd Reanna Singh, Mohammad Misbah Karimi & Kaavya Mukherjee Saha
3rd Nirvaan Manaktala, Ritika Panwar

Speed math- 8

Class 6:

Winner: Samarth Khosla
Student who has done well: Reanna Singh

Class 7:

Winner: Kyra Dhar

Students who have done well: Aarush Kapur, Savya Meattle

Class 8:

Winners: Shashvat Rastogi and Vivasvat Rastogi
Student who has done well: Yashvardhan Goyal

Class 12:

Winners: Shubham Kalantri and Rohil Bahl
Students who did well: Jayati Gupta and Vidur Jain

Congratulations!

Feminism has grown with times in a multitude of ways. From the origins of the suffragette movement, to intersectional feminism. Today, the basis is choice. When the choice between wanting to work and wanting to stay at home (among other things) is stripped off women, feminism becomes too radical. We see enough MTR ads to know that "having it all" is another idealistic measure slapped upon a woman. However, people often find it easier to detest and succumb to the commercialisation of a social movement, than actually educate themselves about it. We are quick to hate on feminists wanting equal rights for men and women and somehow link them to man-haters and misandrists. We use the term "feminazi" so often it becomes colloquial.

What people fail to realise is that feminism doesn't just fight for women. Feminists rally against idealistic notions imposed on men too. From toxic masculinity to mental health awareness for men, these concepts wouldn't have been conceived if there wasn't a concern for equality. And men's day, does just that. It is supported if not endorsed by feminists. You'll see your timeline flooded with posts about why men should speak up about harassment, about how men can wear pink. The empowerment borderlines on beautiful. Beautiful. Being able to use predominantly feminine words to describe things. To be able to embrace your masculine and feminine sides. To wrap yourself in the warmth of self-love, rather than that overpriced sweater for which the company rakes in more profit than its workers. So, instead of whining about feminists, using the word itself as an insult, and equating them to those who hate men, take a step back. Allow yourself to be open to the idea of being vulnerable.

Because, after all, every day should be everyone's day, and having one designated day for that is a step in the right direction. You should know you're valid on every single day. That your achievements will be marked, that you're allowed to ask for help, and everything in between and beyond.

There is more to these days than companies have made of them. There is more to these movements than shallow remarks made by those who cannot comprehend their purpose. So, instead of joining those who hate on a social movement for being a social movement - support. Become an ally, because being accepting of people is in fashion today.

Ananya Rani Malhotra, 11

THE JNU PROTEST : *An Unbiased Perspective*

Is being anti-government or anti-establishment necessarily anti-national? This debate pales into insignificance when violence replaces protest. I believe when human beings lose their power of verbal expression, the battle becomes senseless and dark.

Our Constitution guarantees us the right to protest. However, its expression gets skewed if it is tempered with violence and turmoil. On the 18th of November students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University walked to the parliament demanding the rollback of their fee hike. The hike broadly entails payment of a service charge that previously did not exist. Rent for a single room has been increased from Rs. 20 per month to Rs. 600 per month. Rent for a double-sharing room has increased from Rs. 10 per month to Rs. 300 per month.

40 percent of students who go to JNU are from BPL (below poverty line) families, and their situation is made worse with this hike. To solve this problem, however, the college heads came up with subsidized rates for students below the poverty line. The revised version changed these prices to Rs 200 per month and Rs 100 per month for single and double occupancy rooms respectively. The caution deposit and service charges will continue to be charged at Rs 5,500 and Rs 1,700, respectively. The students believe that being people of meagre resources, their education and future is at stake due to this decision. The administration had announced this fee hike over night, triggering immediate student protests. Intellectuals believe that the alumni of JNU should create networks to help fund the college to mitigate the problem.

Students walked to parliament and were protesting in Jor Bagh and other areas. They claim that the police behaved with brutality and that they used their lathis and water cannons. The students further said that all street lights were turned off and physically disabled students were manhandled. On the contrary, police have filed two FIRs- both for vandalism and for rioting, armed with deadly weapons. Objectionable messages, most of which being directed towards right-wing nationalist groups, were also found written on the base of yet-to-be-unveiled Swami Vivekananda statue inside the campus, tantamount to vandalism of public property. In fact, the university, on the flip side, is known to have squatters who enroll for research to use the subsidized facilities for unjustifiable periods of time.

We, as a society, have also given JNU the tag of an ever protesting university, post the infamous incident in 2016. As a student, I personally believe that what they demand is not wrong; however, their methods are questionable. As a citizen, I believe that the fee hike is justified, although it should have been implemented in installments. Donning the glasses of a simple onlooker, I believe that the police did what was essential to maintain peace, but, like always, no one comes out unscathed from a scuffle.

In conclusion, all I can hope is that in this whole process, the students' education should not get affected and that once again a protest doesn't emerge only to be coloured with political flavor. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."

Daksayani Chandra, 9

Thinking is an evolutionary process: Letter #1

Destiny. Do you scorn the people who think the world is pre defined and dismiss it as superstition? Think again. This concept may be ridiculed as "lazy men evading work", but many of the world's renowned physicists have been searching for a unified "theory of everything" for a long time. The theory of everything is a potential self-contained accurate projection of the universe that accounts for everything in the universe. Before we even attempt to understand what such a theory could possibly mean, however, it's important to understand why the human race is even attempting to find this theory. The anecdote below (credit: The Scientific American website) may get us thinking regarding the issue:

A few years ago the city council of Monza, Italy, barred pet owners from keeping goldfish in curved fishbowls. The sponsors of the measure explained that it is cruel to keep a fish in a bowl because the curved sides give the fish a distorted view of reality. The story raises an interesting philosophical question: How do we know that the reality we perceive is true? could be us staring out at the world through a distorted lens.

The goldfish is seeing a version of reality that is different from ours, but can we be sure it is any less real - our entire lives

Yesterday, my father drew a line on the flappable face of a book. When seen in 2D, it was just a dot. As he flipped the pages, I saw a line. The line that existed in itself - the whole time. The concept of time being the fourth dimension means that everything is just a mere speck, a dot in the universe's time thread. This could mean that everything is fixed - like the line in the book with the dot illusion.

This is, indeed, a puzzling phenomenon. Many theories, like the String Theory, have been popularized because of their basis in something this mind boggling. It leaves a lot of questions. Some which may never be answered - was you reading this article a dot in the line of our life's time thread? We may never know.

-Aryan Agarwal

पंडित हरि प्रसाद चौरसिया

पंडित हरि प्रसाद चौरसिया प्रयागराज में जन्मे एक प्रसिद्ध बांसुरी वादक हैं। उन्हें अपनी कुशलता की वजह से पद्म भूषण और पद्म विभूषण जैसे पुरस्कार भी मिले हैं। १९ नवम्बर २०१९ को हमें पंडित हरी प्रसाद चौरसिया को अपने विद्यालय में स्वागत करने का अवसर मिला। राग 'सारंग' से उन्होंने सम्मेलन का आरम्भ किया और सबको अपने साथ उसकी मधुर ध्वनि में मग्न कर दिया। पंडित जी ने हमें कुछ भजन और लोक संगीत भी सुनाए और हमें उनकी अति उत्तम शैली देखकर अत्यंत प्रसन्नता प्राप्त हुई। इसके बीच हमें पंडित जी के साथ प्रश्नोत्तर अधिवेशन करने और शास्त्रीय संगीत के विषय में अपनी जानकारी बढ़ाने का मौका भी प्राप्त हुआ। हम कृतज्ञ हैं कि पंडित हरी प्रसाद चौरसिया जी हमारे विद्यालय आकर उसकी शोभा बढ़ाई और हमने उनसे बात-चीत करने और उनके वादन को सुनने का अवसर पाया।

- अद्वैता सहगल, ९

CURTAIN CALL

Goodbye, Batch of 2020

As we woke up every morning crying to the sound of our alarms,
We thought going to school was a chore which had no charm.
And now we sit and reminisce,
All the things that we're going to miss.

From Mr. Sabu being angry with us again for being late,
And walking into the classroom to hear our teachers go on and on
about the absentee rate,
To bribing the drivers of our lucky friends who were leaving early
to get us out of the gate,
The 8 long and tedious hours we forgot to appreciate.

How can I forget to mention,
All the P.E teachers who were tired of us not changing for our
lessons.
We waited for them to say "go for your games",
And then gossiped when we went for the same.

Performing art lessons meant dancing with Mr Dutta,
And the highlight of Class 7 was maths with Mrs. Ratta.
Ms. Tiwana was fed up of the batch that would chat more than
read,
And Mrs. Surendran was always ready to shove the food down
our throats if we didn't eat.



The highlight of school was our nap time which we now crave,
And we were the only batch that Mr. Jha thought during Yatra
didn't misbehave.

The deadly golgappas at Vrindavan gave us the runs,
But all in all Yatra was the most fun.

As you all already know our luck was bad,
We're still jinxed they've pre-poned our grad!
The math students always sat with their eyes on the board,
And the science students laughed at the rest of us when we
spoke about workload.
The plight of the Humanities students no one understood,
Mrs. Sayam's still waiting for all our files to be finished for good.

The mere mention of Ms. Krishnan's office would make us
quake,
The tears that ran down our face were never fake.
Sister would be ever ready to feed us Digene even if we had a
headache.
We would salivate standing outside the staffroom while teachers
enjoyed birthday cake.

From our playroom fights to the Yatra hikes,
We've come a long way.
It's been quite a ride,
With each of you beside.
Now it feels silly that we believed,
That our home we couldn't wait to leave.

Amiya Kumar, 12



A Message from Your Resident Educated Indian

These days there's quite a bit of hullabaloo going around about politics. Your Resident Educated Indian is particularly impressed by the strong opinions expressed about our current government - especially when they are called fashionable or fashionistas or something like that. Considering myself quite 'awakened,' I would love to express my views on this government's 'fashionism,' and the current political weather. I wholeheartedly agree with the fact that they have brought a fashionable change around. I mean, saffron is the new black, isn't it? Those orange colors really dominate this country, from the Delhi aunties to the brilliant babas.

I love how we're becoming health freaks these days, doing anything to stop our citizens from consuming unhealthy beef. What makes everything better is that the hot topics of discussion are no longer sad topics like harassment, but in its stead International Yoga Day, making parties live up to their name. The Prime Minister is embracing these fashionable changes as well - he recently donned his spurs and fringe jacket to meet the President of the US of A, who seems to be trendsetting freelancing by going against the fashion capital-Paris!

We're really giving attention to Kashmir's mental health - they have time off from screens now, which is important considering what I refer to as the digital plague. It is very heartwarming to see that the whole of India wants this move, excluding those confused journalists who first criticize the government and then call them right; I mean, it's better than being wrong, isn't it?

Prithvi Oak and Sanaa Sharma, 11

The Starving Dog: There lived a dog in a village. He was hungry so he went to a chicken shop and picked up a huge piece of meat lying on the floor. He wanted to eat it alone, so he went to the jungle, next to the village. He sat under an orange tree and just as he was ready to take his first bite, a tiger came near him and said, "Give me this piece of meat!" The dog got scared but replied, "I am very hungry and if I don't eat, I will die." The tiger got so angry and he roared so hard that the dog ran away with the piece of meat, before the tiger could reach him. The tiger started chasing him, but he was left behind. As the dog stopped to catch his breath, in front of him stood a lion. In no time he knew that the lion wanted to eat his piece of meat too. The dog was tired of running, so he just gave him the piece and went back to the village, very sad. As he was walking back, he saw a man taking pieces of meat in a plastic bag. He bit the plastic bag and some pieces of meat fell on the ground. He picked two pieces and ran away before the man realised it. He sat in a corner and quickly ate it. Moral 'Keep trying until you succeed'. Abhinav Mandal, Anoushka Barua, Ichcha, Siddharth zova Chand, Viraj Kathuria, Natin. 3B

Book Review: The name of the book I wrote a review for is 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. The author of the book is Roald Dahl and the genre is fiction. The main characters of the book are George, Mr. Cranky, Mrs. Cranky and Grandma. The book is set in George's kitchen. One day, George swaps Grandma's medicine with a medicine that he makes. The medicine was so powerful. It could turn everything very large. When George gives the medicine to his grandma, she becomes humongous. Is George able to save his grandma or not - to find this out, read the book. I like this book because it is so funny. My favourite character is George because he made the medicine which could make everything gigantic. I would recommend this book to all the children who want to have a good laugh. I give this book five stars. Arnavi Jain III - C

Teachers should be replaced by robots: In today's world technology has replaced humans in many areas. So teachers should also be replaced by robots as robots have better brains with memory storage systems that can remember each and everything. They also have excellent detectors so if any child is being mischievous it is possible the robot can detect it right away. However, many believe teachers can't be replaced by robots because teachers are real beings. They have emotions and can deeply connect with their students. They are also better at loving and caring. It's of course better to hug a human instead of a piece of metal, right? And the fun of being a teacher is also going through different emotions with your students, scolding them and explaining them when they go wrong. For instance, you come back after winning a cricket match and a robot will be like, "H-ow G-reat N-ow G-et B-ack T-o Y-our S-eat." And a teacher would be like, "Awesome job! Come on class 5 claps for these stars!" So I'm sure ninety percent of the students would not want their teachers to be replaced by robots. Khandro Wangmo Mevo V - C

Sofi The Dancer

There was a little girl called Sofi. She loved dancing. So she went for classes. She practiced at home too. She did it because she loved it and wanted to go on stage. She also wanted to wear a beautiful dress. She wanted her parents to say "Wonderful!" Her most favourite part was running and doing a split jump. She did it with a lot of flexibility and focus. She also used some strength in it. Once she twisted her arm so she could not do dancing for five days. She ate medicines. By Friday she was fine. She performed on Sunday and her parents really said "Wonderful!" Shirali Bose II - A



VVeaves 2019

VVeaves, an inter school event to celebrate creativity through cross curricular approach was fun. The theme of VVeaves this year was 'Over the Moon'. It was a great way to discover our talent and showcase it on stage. Also we got to interact with children of other schools. All the Class 4 children explored the theme in their own area of interest. I was in Performing Pictures. Some other domains were Craft, Drama, Western Dance, Western Music, Art, Indian Dance, Indian Music, Percussion and Music and Movement. It was great how all of us together put such a good show in two days. I also learned that if you put your mind to something you can do it no matter how short the time is. We all had a great time. Aisha Goyal IV - A

दिल्ली में बढ़ता 'प्रदूषण'

दिल्ली में बढ़ता प्रदूषण काफी जलाले फसल पंजाब हरियाणा के निवासी।
 और इवल शुरू हुआ है।
 प्रदूषण इससे कुछ कम हुआ है।
 विदेशी दिल्ली की हालत पर इससे।
 यहां के लोग लोग मास्क पहन बसते।
 गाड़ियों और फसलों का धुआं,
 दिल्ली बता मौत का कुआं।
 पेड़- पौधे होगा अब लगना,
 क्योंकि दिल्ली से प्रदूषण है भगाना।
 अमृत्य कपूर, वैदिका शर्मा, अश्वज गुप्ता, अख्यान बाबर,
 अरवि अथवात कक्षा ५

Dragon Gets Wizzed Away



Once a fire breathing dragon named Blade came by a lake to play with her friend Blaze who was also a dragon. One day, when the two dragons were playing on the tornado canal, Blaze got scared but Blade came closer to the tornado. Suddenly, the tornado went faster than ever. When Blaze opened her eyes she saw that Blade was gone. So she went to a scientist to see if he could trace Blade on the computer. When they tracked Blade on the computer, Blaze was shocked and immediately ran to the forest to save her friend. Blaze flew miles and miles to save her friend but she didn't know that there were many traps in the forest. But she still made it through. When she pulled Blade she asked Blade why she ran towards the tornado. Blade told her that she saw a human inside the tornado so she ran to save her. Blade and Blaze together went to help the human out of the tornado. The human was scared to see the dragons. They told her that they were not harmful at all. So they all became friends.

Meera A. Mann II - B



Once upon a time a farmer called Sonu worked in a farm. He used to come back from work at 12 o'clock at night. He used to get sleepy and tired. One

Sunday his wife said, "I want a castle and in that I want a big room." Her husband said, "I will try." So Sonu worked hard all night till the morning. One day when he was giving water to the animals he saw a cow race happening. He wanted to join in too. So he took his cow and rushed off and stood in the line. The coach announced that whoever wins will get 2000 rupees. Then the coach said, "Go!", Sonu's cow was the winner. Sonu hugged his cow with joy and when he told his wife she started to jump. After three months they shifted to the castle and lived happily ever after.

Miraya Chhabra II - A

I recently read a book called "No News is Good news". Its author is Annie Burrows and it is illustrated by Sophie Blackall. My favourite character in the book is Bean because she is entertaining and thoughtful. And she also thought of this idea that they should sell newspapers and raise money. The genre is thriller and mystery. So Bean along with Ivy start a business. They sell recycled newspapers. They're collecting the money because in their school every child gets Belledon cheese except them. They really love it too and want to buy it. They want the cheese so they can also taste a



little. Will Ivy and Bean manage to collect the money for the cheese or not? To find out you must read this book. I like this book because it's interesting and fun. The part which I found most interesting was when Ivy and Bean had tons of fun selling newspapers. I give it five stars and recommend this book to all the 8-year old boys and girls.

Avni Garg 3-C

Surprises Class Five has for You!

When you will be in Class Five,
You all will be busy like a million bees in a hive.
Writing with a pen will be most exciting,
And will beautify your hand writing.
Some of you will become prefects,
And some will be Class Representatives,
That means you are going to miss a lot of breaks,
The schedule of fun time will completely shake.
In Drama Festival, some of you will be in the play,
And you will be on Center Stage for Founder's Day.
There will be more assignments,
And you will go to Jim Corbett as migrants.
Being the senior most means,
You will be role models now,
And when youngsters see you doing good,
They will be like, 'Wow'.
And when you will leave Junior School,
Believe me friends,
That's not going to be cool.
Class Five will be a storehouse,
Of lovely memories,
This will be your favourite year, we guarantee.
Ved Agrawal and Shreyansh Mishra 5A

My year in Class 4

Oh! How dearly I will miss Class Four,
And my heart wishes it to last some more.
Visiting the Taj was an experience so wonderful,
All memories of Agra trip were beautiful.
We had so much fun in Adventure Camp,
Though it rained and it got cold and damp.
The learning during VVeaves had no match,
I enjoyed creating a song from scratch.
Oh! How can I forget about Drama Festival,
For which we practiced and performed to our best.
All the competitions taught me a lot,
Some I won and some I did not.
This year in Class Four was so much fun,
And now the time is here that we are done.
Leaving behind dearest Ms. Bhatia feels awful,
Class Five is just as good, I'm hopeful.

Kushagra Thakur IV - B



कक्षा ५ की मेरी यादें - कक्षा ५ में दिन इतनी जल्दी बीत गए पता ही नहीं चला। पर यह साल बहुत मजेदार रहा। इस साल हमने बहुत सारी नई-नई चीजें सीखीं। हिंदी में हमने भाववाचक संज्ञा, काल, जीवनी लेखन और भी बहुत कुछ सीखा। अंग्रेज़ी में क्रिया विशेषण, निबंध लेखन आदि चीजें सीखीं। इन सभी चीजों को सीखने में मुझे बहुत मज़ा आया। इस साल मैंने बहुत सारी प्रतियोगिताएँ जीतीं। मैंने गण्य और कविता वाचन प्रतियोगिता में प्रथम स्थान प्राप्त किया। कहानी वाचन प्रतियोगिता में दूसरा स्थान व Spell bee में तीसरा स्थान प्राप्त किया। मुझे सबसे ज़्यादा खुशी तब प्राप्त हुई जब मैं ड्रामा फ़ेस्टिवल में किए गए नाटक के लिए चुनी गई। अब साल के अंत में आ गए हैं हम। जूनियर स्कूल में बस अब कुछ दिन ही रह गए हैं। यह सोचकर दुःख हो रहा है कि अब झूलाबाड़ी में खेलने के कुछ दिन ही बाकी बचे हैं। मुझे और भी दुःख होगा क्योंकि मुझे अपनी tutor (मनपसंद अध्यापिका), जो पिछले तीन वर्षों से मेरी मार्गदर्शक रहीं हैं उन्हें छोड़कर जाना पड़ेगा।

रुहीन मटिन खान ५ - ब

THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

Although the government has only been actualising claims that for them secularism is merely word without meaning in the constitution, the Citizenship Amendment Bill still surprised many because of its highly discriminatory nature. The Citizenship Amendment Bill proposes to grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhist, Jains and Parsis from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who arrived in India before 2014. In other words, it offers Indian citizenship to the numerous immigrants who identify themselves with any of the given religions, even if they lack any documentation to prove their residency. It also means that any immigrant who does not belong to the said communities would not be eligible for Indian citizenship. The main reason behind its highly discussed controversy is that it singles out Muslims who constitute nearly 15 percent of country's population.

The Centre's logic is baffling - they say these minority groups have come escaping persecution in Muslim-majority nations. The only comment made was the usual blame game - that this bill wouldn't be necessary if the Congress hadn't agreed to the Partition in 1947 - which is our government showing their characteristic selective comprehension of facts for their own benefit - India was not created on the basis of religion, Pakistan was. All the founders of India were committed to a secular state, where all citizens irrespective of religion enjoyed citizenship- which is why it goes against the very grounds the country was based upon - it is dividing people on the basis of religious lines. Although the government has already done that and some during its tenure - this seems final. Not only is it giving precedence to religion over legal practices, but is essentially labelling Muslims as second class citizens, and also placing Hindus on a pedestal.

If the government actually wanted to provide shelter to persecuted minorities, religion should not be affiliated with it, for only then can India not undermine how rich in diversity it has been all these years. They have conveniently left out the fact that people from other neighbouring countries are also being persecuted, and thus deserve to be allowed citizenship in the country, if its being provided to others. Myanmar has been left out completely, even though we share a long border with them, where Rohingya Muslims and Hindus face severe persecution. Christian Tamils as well as Hindus in Sri Lanka have been overlooked completely - which sets the precedent that only Hindi speaking Hindus deserve a place in the country.

The bill is a travesty to the very values the country was founded on. Not only does it disrespect the Constitution makers - whose names are now only used as buzz words - but it disrespects one entire community that has been a fundamental part of India since its independence. In the words of Dr. Shashi Tharoor (who was not allowed to finish his speech in the Lok Sabha), "Do not reduce us into a Hindutva version of Pakistan. Do not create a climate of hatred and discrimination against one community. Let us offer shelter to persecuted minorities from other countries, for only then can India hold its head up high in the international community, as it always has."

- Sanaa Sharma

2019 - A YEAR IN REVIEW

The year was incredibly tumultuous, and even though we are moving into a new decade, 2019 should not be forgotten. Here are the most important events of the year:

14th February: A Jaish suicide bomber rams a vehicle carrying over 100 kgs of explosives into a bus in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. 40 jawans are martyred in one of the deadliest attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

12th March: Theresa May's government faces a second defeat on the Brexit deal.

15th March: Approximately 1.4 million students skip school in 123 countries to demand for better climate policies. On the contrary, on March 15th New Zealand witnessed the horrific Christchurch attacks on two mosques.

8th April: Protests held in Sudan against Omar-al-Bashir's government. Blue became the colour of the movement on social media.

15th April: A massive fire sets the Notre Dame Cathedral on the brink of destruction.

23rd May: The results of the elections to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha are announced. The NDA secured a majority with 353 seats of which 303 seats were acquired by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

9th June: Protestors in Hong Kong march to the government office to highlight their opposition of the extradition bill. The police fired tear gas and rubber pellets at the demonstrators. On 15th June, Carrie Lam indefinitely suspended the bill.

22nd July: India's Chandrayaan mission is launched

23rd July: Boris Johnson becomes PM of the UK

5th August: Jammu and Kashmir status as a state and Article 370 is abrogated making J & K and Ladakh different Union Territories.

31st August: 1.9 million people are left off the NRC conducted in Assam, as India revokes their citizenship

26th October: A raid by US Special Forces kills ISIS founder Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Syria.

9th November: The Supreme Court gives a much awaited verdict on the Ayodhya Mandir- Babri Masjid case.

11th December: The Indian Parliament passes the Citizenship Amendment Bill, which instigates multiple protests for its discriminatory nature; it grants refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan citizenship if they are from one of the 6 religions mentioned.

19th December: Donald Trump is impeached by US lawmakers in the House of Representatives. Section 144 implemented in various parts of the country, including Delhi.

-Shyla Upadhyay and Daksayani Chandra

A VISIT BY SIMON TAUFEL

Simon James Arthur Taufel, a former Australian cricket umpire and a former member of the ICC Elite umpire panel, visited our school for the promotion of his new autobiography, "Finding the Gaps". The meet started with a quick round of Q&As that got the audience exceedingly engaged in his journey towards success and his many life lessons.

Simon Taufel started out his career in cricket by playing in club cricket as a fast-medium bowler. In the 1990-1991 season, was leading wicket-taker and had the lowest bowling average in the association. However, his career was cut short by a back injury. This in turn, paved the way to his career in umpiring. As he told the students, he went along with one of his friends to an umpiring course, having no intentions to pursue umpiring, but he ended up passing the subsequent exam and began umpiring professional cricket. He quickly progressed through the ranks and made his first-class debut in 1995, aged just 24. He soon became considered one of the greatest umpires of his time.

He told us about how cricket functions, what the fundamental rules are and what the responsibility of a player is to know his or her game. He brushed us up on our knowledge of the DRS technology and DLS method in the game of cricket. In his book he delves into profuse subjects, ranging from "How to bounce back from a failure" to "The role of discipline". He explained to us the importance of remaining calm at all times, being honest in whatever we do and maintaining respect for those around us. He spoke to us about his experience on the field as an umpire, his favourite dismissals, judgements, and other landmarks in his career. The session was extremely interesting for teachers and students alike.

-Krishna Agarwal

जाती न पूछो साधु की, पूछ लीजिए ज्ञान

कबीर की साखी की इस पंक्ति का संबंध आज कल बनारस हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय के परिसर में जैसे किसी को सुनाई नहीं देता | बनारस में जन्मे कबीर की साखी की इन पंक्तियों का अर्थ है 'सज्जन व्यक्ति को ज्ञान से परखना चाहिए न कि उसकी जाति से'

भाषा को जब धर्म की सीमा में बांधा जाता है तब समाज के बुद्धिजीवी वर्ग कुछ न कुछ प्रतिक्रिया करते ही हैं | पिछले दिनों फिरोज खान को बनारस हिन्दू यूनिवर्सिटी में एक संस्कृत अध्यापक के पद पर नियुक्त किया गया। कुछ दिनों से उनके खिलाफ बहुत से विरोधी उठ खड़े हुए हैं। उनका मानना है कि एक मुसलमान शिक्षक पारम्परिक व प्राचीन हिन्दू धर्म की भाषा - संस्कृत- नहीं पढ़ा सकते। उन्होंने पोस्टर बैनर के माध्यम से विरोध प्रदर्शन आयोजित किया। मेरे विचार में यह सरासर एक शिक्षक का अपमान है। फिरोज खान की नियुक्ति उनकी योग्यता और सारे नियमों के मुताबिक हुई है, अतः उनके पद पर प्रश्न उठाना ठीक नहीं है। एक अध्यापक की योग्यता उनके धर्म नहीं अपितु उनके काबिलियत निर्भर होनी चाहिए। एक लोकतान्त्रिक देश में केवल धर्म के आधार पर भेदभाव करना बिलकुल गलत है।

"मैं एक मुस्लिम हूँ, तो क्या मैं छात्रों को संस्कृत सिखा नहीं सकता?" यह सवाल बनारस हिन्दू यूनिवर्सिटी के मुस्लिम प्रोफेसर फिरोज खान का है। उन्होंने कहा कि - "संस्कृत से मेरा खानदाना नाता है।" उनके समर्थन में भी छात्र आंदोलन आयोजित कर रहे हैं। भारत जैसे देश में किसी धर्म या जाति के खिलाफ भेद-भाव न्याय के विरुद्ध हैं। हमारे देश की नींव ही धर्मनिरपेक्षता है। इसलिए, हमें किसी अध्यापक की काबिलियत पर, केवल उनके धर्म के कारण, प्रश्न नहीं उठाना चाहिए और न ही भाषा को किसी धर्म की सीमा में बांधना चाहिए |

-वेदिका बागला



MICROFICTION MORNINGS

the theme for this time's microfiction was 'Examinations'

Class 7: Deadline

She hurriedly churned out the juicy details of the affair. She had a deadline and a celebrity friend whose comings and goings could be ratted out.

- Amara Lal

Class 7: Deadline

It was the day that decided her future. She was scared. The imminent decline was pressing her and she hadn't done anything.

- Kyra

Class 8: Under pressure

Whilst under pressure she made a choice. Little did she know that something so seemingly insignificant would tie her down for the rest of her life.

-Saanya Anand

Class 9: Stress Buster

"Okay." I took a deep breath, "Just calm down." I anxiously pace outside the examination hall. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a piano. Quietly, I sat down and played a melody. The music enveloped me and took my fears away.

-Navya Prakash

Class 9: Stress Buster

Stress was but a construct, and she didn't realise it. If only she had played the piano, her stress buster - would she have been able to focus better.

- Anonymous

Class 10: All Nighter

All Nighter, Nail biter. If only it could be averted - but I had put it upon myself to lay when the birds began to chirp.

- Kavyini Garodia

Class 10: All Nighter

Drowning in the rapids of my mind, Turning and tumbling - dawn approaches

-Mahika Dalmia

Class 11: Careless Whispers

Under the roving eye of the invigilator, I could hear the careless whispers around the classroom. Even though I knew that George Michael said guilty feet have got no rhythm, I was never the dancing type.

-Kushagra Goenka

Careless Whispers do a world of harm, not even an abundance of charm can save you from the wrath of any rule enforcer. If only I knew that when I walked into the silent room, heads bent over the papers.

- Prithvi Oak

THE AYODHYA VERDICT

In Favour:

The Ayodhya verdict was based on the evidence, facts and findings of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). In the unanimous verdict, the court said that a report by the ASI provided evidence that the remains of a building that was “not Islamic” was beneath the structure of the demolished Babri mosque. The court, owing to hard facts, awarded the disputed site to the Hindus for building a Ram Mandir and five acres as compensation to the Muslims.

Justice would not have prevailed if the Court were to overlook the entitlement of the Muslims who have been deprived of the Babri Masjid through violent and unconstitutional means. This was necessary because the court “must ensure that a wrong committed must be remedied,” the judges said, adding that “tolerance and mutual co-existence nourish the secular commitment of our nation and its people.” The bench said, leaving no doubts, that till the scheme and allotment of alternative five acres to the Waqf Board was worked out, possession of the disputed land would continue to remain with the Centre. Hence, delivering a balanced judgement.

The verdict also tipped in favour of the Ram Mandir because the Hindu petitioners had established their case, that they were in possession of the outer courtyard at the site, while the Sunni Waqf Board had failed to do so. However, looking beyond the communal aspect; we should not miss the economic dimension of the Ram Mandir. It will result in big economic gains for the relatively poor eastern Uttar Pradesh. In a country struggling to create jobs for our millions, temple tourism offers one major focal area for investment with a huge job multiplier potential that benefits not a particular religious community but the citizens of a country as a whole.

Against:

-Katyayani Jha

Indian history is replete with instances of foreign invaders and rulers who came to India to plunder and extend their sovereignty. To show their supremacy many temples were destroyed and in their place mosques were built. But today as we stand as the largest democratic and secular state in the world, the Ayodhya Verdict stands contrary to our ideals.

The demolition of the Babri masjid was a sheer act of vandalism and a gross violation of the rule of law . By giving a verdict in favor of the Hindus the court is allowing for communalism in India. It is giving Hindu supremacists the ability to destroy as many mosques as they want with no fear of any consequences. While the court has taken into cognizance the remains of the Hindu temple under the mosque , the continued worship of Ram Lala over the years on this pious spot of the birth of Lord Ram it has in one master stroke given a nod of acceptance to the demolition of the mosque and the subsequent riots and loss of thousands of lives that followed. The reality is that there will always be an older structure beneath every modern building but this verdict allows Hindus to go on a rampage to show their supremacy with complete disregard of another's faith.

- Anahita Kukreja

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Apart from the long lasting tradition of freshly prepared eggnog and rum cake, Christmas is known to create a spirit of joy and prosperity. Although it is celebrated universally, each part of the world celebrates this ubiquitous festival in their own way.

In Austria, young men dressed as Krampus; a beast-like demon creature, roam the city streets frightening kids with clattering chains and bells and punishing the bad ones (if you're thinking of Dwight Schrute's infamous "Impish or admirable?" line from The Office, you're absolutely right.) He is said to be St. Nicholas' evil accomplice. In Austrian tradition, St. Nicholas rewards nice little boys and girls, while Krampus is said to capture the naughtiest children and whisk them away in his sack.

In the 13 days leading up to Christmas, 13 tricky troll-like characters come out to play in Iceland. The 'Yule Lads', as they are commonly known, visit children across the country over the 13 nights leading up to Christmas. For each night of Yuletide, children place their best shoes by the window and a different Yule Lad visits leaving gifts for nice girls and boys and rotting potatoes for the naughty ones.

Perhaps one of the most unorthodox Christmas Eve traditions can be found in Norway, where people hide their brooms. It's a tradition that dates back to when people believed that witches and evil spirits came out on Christmas Eve looking for brooms to ride on. To this day, many people still hide their brooms in the safest place in the house to stop them from being stolen.

A close competitor in the unorthodox Christmas Eve traditions is Venezuela. Every Christmas Eve, the city's residents head to church in the early morning but do so on roller skates - for reasons that are unknown. This unique tradition is so popular that roads across the city are closed to cars so that people can skate to church safely.

However, despite the varying ways of celebrating this auspicious day, the essence of compassion & forgiveness; a vision of doing everything with a positive mindset & from a place of love underlines all traditions - as well as the notorious concept of naughty and nice.

- Katyayani Jha

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