

# Vasant Valley

July, 2013

T O D A Y

## What *REALLY* Happened?

India is a tropical country. It has a dedicated season for monsoons. So why is it that every once in a while, this expected bit of rain throws things out of gear and eventually snowballs into a disaster? After all, we're Indian. Rain is hardly new to us. What is it in this harmless shower that threw Mumbai out of gear in 2005, Ladakh out of gear in 2012, and washed most of Uttarakhand away?

**"In a simple sense, since I am not ready to solve these problems, how can I place trust in someone who claims he is ready but isn't?"**

There's a new cause stipulated every time rain disturbs our equilibrium. In Mumbai, there were clogged drains, and in Ladakh it was simply an 'unusual cloudburst'. While it is justified to offer an explanation for such things, why does it keep recurring? Why don't these explanations have any consequences for the future? Let's try and look at this objectively. There is one thing common to all governmental mishaps, be they scams, skewed rescue operations, or otherwise. This common element is reaction. The reason that this is important is because a government that relies on reaction and avoids prevention is unlikely to solve any problems.



Granted, each problem causing these disasters was unique, but perhaps what we're lacking is some foresight. Perhaps we don't examine these fundamental likelihoods enough. Every successive government has too many problems to look at. Poverty, education, health and the list goes on. This is why safety is ignored. Perhaps it is naïve to think that focusing on one vote-garnering measure is enough to actually benefit the people. As a voter in next year's general elections, I am fundamentally confused: who do I vote for if neither party will try to guarantee my safety? The fact that nature can so easily dismantle our daily functioning somehow tells me that our priorities are skewed. I would not feel confident, leave alone safe, with a government that is trying to educate millions but cannot respond effectively to a disaster that threatens those millions.

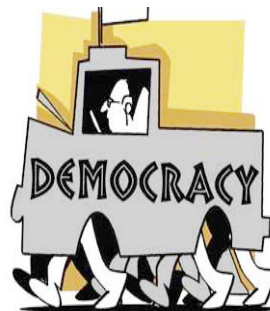
It's safe enough to announce a Rs. 1500 crore relief program for a flood-hit state, but as a discerning voter, this throws up two questions: where does that money go, and will such a measure be required again? I hate to be grim, and to write about these things as if they are independent of me, but in a simple sense, since I am not ready to solve these problems, how can I place trust in someone else who claims he is ready but isn't?

The Uttarakhand incident is an example of a natural disaster that snowballed into a human disaster. Every time we've gone for adventure camps, how many of us have noticed that these roads are random? That there appears to be no thought in them, that a gaping chasm in the mountains is not natural? It is this sad notion



of development without thought or method that caused landslides that increased the number of deaths by several hundred. The mob-like drive of pilgrims towards pilgrimage spots such as Kedarnath blew things out of proportion as well. After all, how can thousands fit into an area that at best can hold hundreds? I'm not particularly religious (not at all, actually), but even neutrally speaking I fail to see the appeal in a difficult and dangerous journey to a pilgrimage spot in the hills without much attention to one's own safety. It would be ridiculous to assume that someone who I vote for is at fault every time. I am also at fault for not being that person, but what we lack is common sense and a sensible, objective way of looking at all our problems. I feel like a disaster seems like a rude awakening, one that should have been prevented or at least mitigated. This will play heavy on the minds of a government 210 days away from a national election.

*Aditya Srinivasan, 12*



## in this ISSUE

**Page 2** - How to study for SAT by Arjun Srivastava

**Page 4** - Goonj: For Uttarakhand by Ragini Kothari

**Page 6** - Love Thyself by Malika Kishore

## School Watch

**Hindi Kavita Lekhan Pratiyogita, Class**

**10:** 1st - Sehej Singh, 2nd - Mueed Asad and Armaan Mehta, 3rd - Armaan Narang, Aadit Raj Gupta and Tanya Pawa

**Hindi E-Patra Lekhan Pratiyogita, Class**

**10:** 1st - Avanti Divan, 2nd - Aadit Raj Gupta and Armaan Mehta, 3rd - Raghav Minocha and Sidharth Mehra

## Note from the Editor

This past week has been especially hard for all members of the Vasant Valley family. Dhruv Singh, an alumnus of the Vasant Valley Batch of 2012, passed away last Friday. It is at times like these that one should take a moment, look around, and gain some perspective. It is worth realising that your today is not your tomorrow, and no matter who you are, someone loves you.

## How to study for the SAT :

Ahh, the daunting task of giving the SAT, the 2400 mark paper with negative marking, strict time limits and enough power to make or break your dreams of going to the college you believe deserves you. I am here to teach you how to procrastinate, most of these tips have been put together via personal experience and some via my friends experience.

1. Never learn the word lists that are provided to you by the books or the teachers at your SAT centre, remember you're a Vasant Valley kid, you know how to speak English (this is not always true, the words are mindblowingly tough)
2. Always leave all your work till the end, and when you feel the stress coming on, it's time to take a break.
3. Think about what you could be doing instead sitting on the table and pretending to study.
4. Buy a stress ball and play catch with it.
5. Take many baths.



6. Convince yourself that the SAT is not really that tough as it only contains class 10 Math and therefore you do not need to study.

7. When you think you are tired and you just sat down to study, go to the kitchen and eat all the food, after which you are bound to feel sleepy. Fall asleep and awake within 2 hours. Feeling energetic? Go to the gym, play a sport or go for a jog. When you return, you will be tired, so follow the same cycle. These are tried and tested methods of procrastination for this exam, follow these 7 simple points and I can guarantee that you will get a despicable score. Good LUCK!

*"Follow these 7 simple points and I can guarantee that you will get a despicable score. Good LUCK!"*

*Arjun Srivastava, 11*

### CORRUPTICS



This battle for power  
Between so many corrupt mind sets  
The two biggest Indian political parties  
Thinking we are vulnerable to their dark webs!

This battle for money  
The Filth of greed has overcast  
Feeling obliged by these animals  
No more is our task

This battle is for what?  
They say rubbish, political pride!  
For them a game of snakes and ladders  
For us it's the matter of our lives!

This war on so many battle grounds!  
But a simple solution they don't seem to have found

If they win the hearts of their people  
The power will stay forever  
And there pockets won't be empty, EVER!

But this job is dirty,  
The worm of corruption crawls  
over everyone,  
Even the most is less  
But yet it is never enough to rest.



*Ananya Jain, 8*

*Arjun is planning to give his SAT in November. Needless to say, we are very optimistic about his results. Now, for all those poor souls who really do want to study for their SAT:*



# SAT<sup>®</sup>

**Get It Right.** Think of it as your first and last time. Don't study with the mindset of: I'm giving it again. That's what you call wasting time.

**Don't get cocky.** Face it the SAT is not a walk in the park (contrary to popular belief). Not studying will get you nowhere.

**It's About You.** Your friends will often say that you are studying too much. Don't listen to them. Your hard work will benefit you in the end.

**Consistency.** Stick to a schedule that suits you & life will be easier. Take stock of your strengths and weaknesses and work accordingly.

**Take a Break.** Before those final few weeks, take it easy for a few days. Don't overwork yourself.

*- Armaan Grewal, 11*



*Armaan gave his SAT in June and got a staggering score of 2290. It's pretty evident whose advice you need to follow (Arjun's, obviously).*



## Being the New Kid in School

As I'm sure the new additions to Class 11 have realised by now, it isn't easy being new. It's awkward, teachers forget your name, you're not quite sure who to talk to, and you miss your old friends with a passion. However, this initial phase will pass. Until then, here's some advice from the 'new kids' of the batch of 2014 to the freshly sworn in Class 11's:



At the prime of teenage, a time in our lives when friends mean everything, it is not easy leave and move to a new school. The new students in Class 11 would understand this, and I empathise with them. A new school, especially in the first week, often feels like an alien, desolate place without anyone to talk or be with. But as time passes, you find people like you, and eventually everyone begins to feel familiar.

In retrospect, I realise that as a new kid I had a coloured view of the school: I would often play down policies and people of the new school. I would scorn at those who asked me: "Do you like Vasant Valley better than your old school?". I do sincerely hope, however, that Vasant Valley will eventually find a place in your heart at par with your old school. A small piece of advice for the new kids: be yourself, for that is the essence of who you are, but don't resist change when it comes your way.

*Raghava Kumar, 12*

So you're new, just like some of us were about a year back and you feel lost, disconcerted and quite frankly nervous, for you have yet to prove your mettle and more importantly form strong friendships. Yet, you should know that all the other feelings are more synonymous with panic and are really only superficial, for as a week passes, excitement will be your first emotion at the prospect of school. Change is always difficult and there will be times when you will complain about how you wish you hadn't moved.

Yet, all these emotions will soon be overshadowed by the joy of indulging in true and creative knowledge and being accepted by your peers as one of them. I realized that it takes us time to adjust, because initially we categorize ourselves as 'new' and in the process, treat everything as alien to us. In truth, all you need to do is be yourself and give others as well as yourself some time. You will be given chances and more than that, you will always be given choices. You will be appreciated for your talent, no matter which field it is in and you will always be respected for your opinions. So you're new right now, but I assure you, within no time at all Vasant Valley will be the only place you can call home.



*Sanskriti Sanghi, 12*

## नैल्सन मंडेला की जीत की अभिलाशा



94 वर्षीय नैल्सन मंडेला के नाम से कौन नहीं परिचित है। वह एक प्रसिद्ध राजनीतिज्ञ तथा विरोधी कांतिकारी है जिनहोंने विश्व भर में जनवाशियों को अपने कार्यों के द्वारा प्रेरित किया। उन वर्षों को हम कदापि नहीं भुला सकते जहाँ एक कैदी का जीवन व्यतीत करते हुए उन्होंने अपने दृढ़ संकल्प तथा शांत स्वभाव से दक्षिण अफ्रीका को स्वतंत्रता की प्राप्ति कराई।

**वह अपनी भांभ लेने के लिए  
श्री अस्पताल की एक मशीन पर निर्भर है**

परंतु आज अत्यधिक दुःख के साथ हमें उनके शरीर को पुनः एक खंड़ी के रूप में देखना पड़ रहा है जो एक गंभीर बीमारी से झूज रही है। वह अपनी भांभ लेने के लिए श्री अस्पताल की एक मशीन पर निर्भर है। यह बीमारी उनके लिए घातक भाषित हो रही है। इससे उभरने के लिए दिल की गहवाइयों से प्रार्थना कर रहे हैं। आम जनता पर उनका अत्यधिक प्रभाव किसी भी कीमत पर भुलाया नहीं जा सकता। हम सभी यह दुःआ करते हैं कि वह अपना 95 जन्मदिन मना सकें।

*सरीना मित्तल 9*



## धर्मशाला

जून के पहले तारीक से आठ तारीक तक दक्षिण कक्षा के अठारह जन "खिलिडिंग खिजेस" नामक इन्डो टिबेटन कार्यशाला के लिए गए थे।

**यह यात्रा एक याददायक जीवनीय अनुभूति थी।**

हाला कि खस रास्ते में खराब हो गई हम सब सही अलामत खस में अतवा घंटों के बाद धर्मशाला के "टी बी पी हाई स्कूल" पहुँच गए। अगले दिन हम सब अपने नए मेज़बान के साथ मक्लौदगंज के मंदिर गए। यहाँपर हम सब श्री दलाई लामा से मिले। यह मिलान निरभेदेह से इस यात्रा की सर्वश्रेष्ठ पल थी। तीनों दिन हमें तीन समूह में खोंटक अलग अलग ग्रामों में सामुदायिक सेवा के लिए भेजे गए।

ग्राम में हम अनेक घर जाकर उनके समर्थनों के आरे में पूँछा। शाम को वापस आने के बाद हमने अगले दिन की कार्य योजना के आरे में चर्चा की व अगले दिन उन ग्राम जाकर चर्चा की आत कार्य पार्स में लाई। पाँचवें व आठवीं दिन हम दलाई लामा के गीष्मकालीन महल गए। इसके बाद हम अपने मित्रों के साथ मक्लौदगंज गए जहाँ हमने लंच करके टेम्पल रोड की सैर की। वापस आने पर हम औपचारिक रात्रीभोज के लिए तयार होकर गए व अपने तिष्ठती दोस्तों को अल्पिदा कहकर अपने डॉर्म गए। यह यात्रा एक याददायक जीवनीय अनुभूति थी।

*ऋषभ चेटर्जी 10*



## Goonj: For Uttarakhand



**'Vasant Valley Students: Busking'**

***"It's amazing to see how music can unite a fragmented nation even in a time of such distress."***

A group of young people depending solely on their talent managed to make a dent in the face of disaster. The event raised 79,000 rupees and all proceeds were dedicated to relief work in Uttarakhand. It's amazing to see how music can unite a fragmented nation even in a time of such distress.

**Ragini Kothari, 12**



Another summer vacation has come and gone, and here we are, trying to use the weather to our advantage to perhaps extend the holidays by just a few more days. Tough luck. Yes, it is once more time to wake up at 6am, grapple with homework and keep ourselves awake through 8 hours of heat and humidity.

Through all the sweat and grime, upon the arrival of the dreaded day, student's teachers alike were all smiles. Excitement was palpable in the air along with the strange contradictions throughout the day.

***"Through all the sweat and grime, upon the arrival of the dreaded day, student's teachers alike were all smiles."***

Students were of three kinds for the first 3 days after the shock of school reopening. The first category were the 'silent sufferers', who kept their discomfort in their minds and contented themselves with martyr looks on their sorry faces.

The second category were the 'sheep shams', who behaved like sheep following the herd and pretending to be absolutely stricken by school but were in fact delighted at the prospect of actually doing something productive at last.

The last category was the 'perky positives'. Those optimistic children that saw the glass half full. The only ones in the entire school that were positively bouncing off the walls, gushing about the summer vacations in fond memory and looking forward to friends, teachers and learning.

To the cynical student, these peers were just the cherry upon the cake of sorrow. But as the end of the week neared, all of us began to shake ourselves out of the reverie and accept the norms of life once more. Unfortunately, the groans, moans and frowns are probably never going to fade. But the buzz of the new term is back, as we students prepare ourselves, thrilled with anticipation to meet and conquer the new obstacles that may block our paths.

**Ananya Gupta, 10**

## My Own Yatra



This summer, my friend Josh and I envisioned a trip that would marry our academic interest to our spirit of adventure. The trip along the Ganges was just that, a celebration of the rich cultural heritage of the Gangetic plains juxtaposed with its own dark irony: the river's been made filthy by the very people who hold it sacred.

We travelled across four states over two weeks, passing by just about all big cities, and some more, set by the river. The journey essentially began from Gangotri- a small religious town set amidst the middle Himalayas, lined with pine trees on the banks of a fast flowing Ganga. Having an esteemed position among the 'Char Dhams' of India, Gangotri is visited by millions of pilgrims from across the country: we saw ranks of buses, packed with villagers who had, perhaps, been saving money all their lives to undertake this yatra. After spending a day at Uttarkashi (and after two landslides and a mob fight), we arrived at the Rishikesh bus station, soaked to our skins but alive. We went from Rishikesh to Haridwar, Meerut, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Farakka, Kolkata and finally Gangesagar. We travelled the way India does - footboarding unreserved on trains in Second Class - and learnt about the lives of those who form the backbone of this nation. In Kanpur we realised that even bigger towns hardly have facilities that we take for granted in Delhi. Allahabad and Varanasi gave us picture perfect insights into our overly romanticised religions, and Ganga Sagar was a breath taking end to an incredible journey.

***"In the process, we learnt more about our country and its people than we could have imagined"***

As we followed the Ganga downriver, we not only saw the changing phases in the life of a river, but also cultures of various parts of India flowing into one another. We set out on this trip to both explore the land and measure the severity of the damage the river that supports it faces. In the process, we learnt more about our country and its people than we could have imagined. Otherwise stuck in a narrow minded city life oscillating between school and home, friends and studies, this trip was a refreshing, and enlightening, travel experience.

**Raghava Kumar, 12**



### Summer Delight

I look forward to summer vacation,  
It's my time for relaxation.  
I go off to summer camp,  
I don't burn the midnight lamp.  
I eat melons, mangoes, litchis and  
cherries,  
And with my friends I make merry.  
Up to hill stations, off we go,  
With indoor games, videos games,  
swimming, books, I love it so.  
Summer holidays means no school,  
I like to get up late and relax in the pool.  
I really enjoy eating ice-creams,  
And I have beautiful lazy dreams.  
I drink many cold drinks,  
And visit many website links.  
I like to sleep over with my friends,  
I would be sorry when the vacation ends!

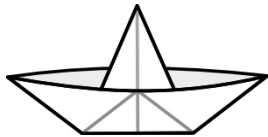
**Arav Kumar V- C**

### The Magical Paper Boat

Once upon a time there lived three children called Hannah, Shiv and Siddhant. They went to a school called 'Lotus School'. One day after school they



saw an orange piece of paper on the road. They picked it up and made it into a paper boat. Suddenly it started raining. They put the paper boat in a puddle. Suddenly it started floating and it did not get wet. As they played with the paper boat it became bigger and bigger! Then the paper boat said, 'Come, come children, I'll give you a ride.' The children ran and sat in the paper boat. Then the paper boat took them for a ride. After the ride they went home and told their mother and father about the magical paper boat. Mother didn't believe it. The children said to their mother, "If you don't believe, you can see it for yourself." When they took their mother to see the paper boat it had become small!! Their mother didn't believe them and thought they had played a trick on her.



**Chaya Paumier, Dakshyani Chandra,  
Yuvan Kapur and Brandan Pawar III - A**

### A Rainy Day

Gumboots on my feet, raincoat over my shoulders, I was drenched. A silence in my room and suddenly a- boom!! It was a birthday surprise! 11<sup>th</sup> December- the date of my birthday. I loved this surprise party but a birthday on a rainy day, can anyone even think of that? I was sad. Then suddenly, I saw everybody, they had a raincoat in their hands. I asked, "Why are you all holding a raincoat?" They screamed, "We are having a rain party on your birthday!" As I loved dancing in the rain I agreed. We all had lots of fun. In my heart I murmured- "The best Rainy Day of my life."

**Ishika Singh IV- B**

### River Wild

Hello mankind. I'm the river Mandakani that has been on everyone's mind. I have been painted as the destroyer of Utrakhand, but have you examined my history of the past million years? I have flowed peacefully, nurtured the land, fish and mankind in the past. It is true I have changed over the years just as everyone does, but never causing harm to the land or people as much. Of late, things have changed, forests on my banks and upper reaches have been cut, houses, close to my banks have come up. Don't you think I look better from afar? I have started feeling crowded now with so many houses along my river bed. All the forces of nature have not affected me as much as mankind's callous ways regarding nature. It really saddens me when torrential rain can cause a landslide that blocks my path. You see, there are no trees on the hillsides to hold the earth's soil. Now you must understand water is life and my job is to deliver it to all, the lands far and wide. If you block my path I will have to find a way, and all that gushing water is hard to control. The flimsy barriers of dirt, rock and mud can only hold me for so long. When they break, flash floods occur and in a moment, from a giver of life, I am termed a 'cause of havoc'--

destroying lives, property and ecological balance. Please take heed to my prayers, stop your logging and needless construction along my banks. If you do this, these woes of yours will come to an end. I will flow just as before, causing you no grief. The sound of my flow will be like music to your ears. So let's get back to the times when respect for nature was considered divine. Let me again become a giver of life.

**Ishaan Sharma V- B**

कक्षा चार मे मैं जब आई  
जब कक्षा चार मे मैं आई,  
मैं बहुत घबराई।  
हमने बहुत सारे नए दोस्त बनाए,  
हम बहुत सारे जगहों पर हो आए।  
हमने 2 - 3 projects किए,  
और बहुत सारी कविताएँ बनाई।  
हमने बहुत सारी चीजें सीखीं और सिखाई,  
और reviews में अच्छे अंक पाए।  
कक्षा चार में मुझे बहुत  
मज़ा आ रहा है!!

**खुशी आनंद चार - स**



**'Potting the Plants' Class I- B**



**'Sock Puppet' Class I- A**



**Ruhan Kumar  
II- A**



**Yash Sibal II- A**



## TOP TEN SONGS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD

1. Get Free - Major Lazer
2. Keep You - Wild Belle
3. Just Jammin - Gramatik
4. This Beat (Original Mix) - The Jazzual Suspects
5. Bellyful - A Boy in Static
6. Son's Gonna Rise - Citizen's Creek
7. Winter Air - Annasay
8. How Can You Swallow So Much Sleep? - Bombay Bicycle Club
9. Glamorous Indie Rock and Roll - The Killers
10. Youth (Alle Farben Remix) - Daughter

**Warning:** Some of these songs are weird, but I promise if you listen closely they'll all blow your mind.

Kaamya Sharma, 9



## Love Thyself



You're two inches too fat, your hair isn't of the right volume and your perfectly sculpted jaw line is missing. So what? Don't you dare scrutinize yourself for another minute. It's a cliché to say believe in yourself and you're perfect just the way you are. Admittedly, my feelings resonate with this perfectly, but you won't

buy it. So instead I say, love thyself.

**"We're young, and its just amazing to be right here, right now."**

I know you, I'm with you and I've been there too. The chances of someone who hasn't felt down or insecure are close to nil. Even those deemed "perfect" by you feel far from it. Truth be told, we're teenagers and our moods are up, down and mostly, just all over the place. So we exhibit envy, sadness, pettiness, you name it. But look around, because it's not just you it's all of us. We're together and we're alone, we're happy and then suddenly confused but it is time to attack and just take it by the horns. Don't conform, in fact I would advise you to expand. Enjoy these experiences, study hard and play harder. Don't be down on yourself because others look like they have it perfectly together. We're all the same and then completely different.

This is one of the most wonderful moments in our lives when the commitments are minimal and timings more flexible. Go on, take this push and discover yourself, let your spirit run wild and free. We're young and its just amazing to be right here, right now. I hope you treasure this moment and relive it with joy, not with feelings of regret or dejection.

So, believe me when I tell you this again: its a cliché to say you're perfect just the way you are, but what can I say when it's SO TRUE! I would like to leave you with a resurrected faith in yourself and your abilities. Once you have that inner glow it will shine bright and I promise, you will revel in it. But do me a favour, always love yourself.

Malika Kishore, 11



## VVIQ



The question we asked this time was 'Who is Mohamed Morsi?'

Must be a mughal emperor who probably built many monuments

in our country and had around 10,000 wives - Zoya Singh

King of Pakistan, I think... - Arjun Kapoor

Isn't he a singer? - Gurleen Badal

He's a Pakistani cricketer with a big beard, hai na? - Jahnavi Toshniwal

He's the one who wrote *Toota Toota Ek Parinda* or *Kaanta Lagaa* or some other really cool song like that.

Great lyricist, I tell you! - Savar Kapur

If it's not coming in a review or in any exam, I don't really care. So whatever, I don't know - Digjai Rawat

He's an author; I've read one of his books. He's a really good writer. - Hunar Anand

He's a big, scary boxer. He looks like a giant or a gorilla or a giant gorilla, if I'm not wrong - Madhav Bhardwaj

He's the Morsi of the Mohameds, Morsi means God...I think - Nimran Kang

He must be some famous person from Pakistan or Afghanistan. - Aasheer Bhatia

Answer : Mohamed Morsi is an Egyptian politician who served as the fifth President of Egypt, having assumed office on 30 June 2012. He was removed in a military coup on the 3rd of July, 2013.



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