



February & March 2022

The Official Newsletter of Vissanji Academy

For Private Circulation Only

The months of February and March always see the school corridors abuzz with a different kind of liveliness. It brings the culmination of all the academic pursuits of the year, exams, results, open houses, promotion to the next grade.....there is excitement galore! Our students at Vissanji enjoy a short break of a fortnight during this time. After the frenzy of the exams, this break is a welcome one to rejuvenate and revitalise them for the next academic year.

Significant Days of the Month:-

1st February – Indian Coast Guard Day -On 1st February, the Indian Coast Guard celebrates its foundation day. This year, the Indian Coast Guard celebrated its 46th Raising Day. Indian Coast Guard has played a significant role in securing the Indian Coasts and enforcing regulations within the Maritime Zones of India

4th February - World Cancer Day - Every year on 4 February World Cancer Day is observed globally and is celebrated by WHO to inform people of the disease Cancer and how to cure it. The theme for 2022 is 'Close the Care Gap'. Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally. The day aims to prevent millions of deaths each year by raising awareness and education about cancer.

5th February to 13th February- Kala Ghoda Festival -The prestigious Kala Ghoda Arts Festival of Mumbai is an exhibition and celebration of theatre, music, films, comedy and world art. It is held every year in Mumbai and attracts over 150,000 people from the city and beyond. 2021 marked the twenty second edition of this festival which was held in the Kala Ghoda Art District as it has been in the past years. The festival presents plenty of events that reflect the rich history of art in Mumbai. The festival this year has been postponed to a further date.

8th February - Safer Internet Day - The day calls all internet users to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, mainly for children and young people.

10th February - National Deworming Day -It is observed on 10 February. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to make every child worm-free in the country.

10th February - World Pulses Day - It is observed on 10 February to spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.

12th February – Darwin Day - 12 February is celebrated every year as Darwin Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of the father of evolutionary biology, Charles Darwin in 1809.

13th February - World Radio Day - World Radio Day is celebrated on 13 February to raise awareness about the importance of Radio. In several countries, it is the primary source for providing information.

13th February – Sarojini Naidu Birth Anniversary -The Nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu was born on 13 February 1879 in Hyderabad to scientist and philosopher Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and Barada Sundari Devi. She was the first Indian woman President of the Indian National Congress and also the **first woman governor** of an Indian state that is **Governor of United Province which is now known as Uttar Pradesh**.

18th February to 27th February - Taj Mahotsav - On 18 February every year Taj Mahotsav or Taj Festival is celebrated at Agra revealing the rich cultural heritage of our country. The magnificent structure displays one of the finest specimens of Indian craftsmanship.

21st February - International Mother Language Day -International Mother Language Day is celebrated annually on 21 February worldwide to be aware of the diversity of the language and its variety.

27th February - World NGO Day - The day is dedicated to recognising, celebrating, and honouring all non-governmental and non-profit organisations, and also the people behind them that contribute to society.

28th February – National Science Day - National Science Day is celebrated every year in India on 28 February to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by the Indian physicist Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman who was honoured by the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.

1st March - MahaShivratri - This year, the festival of MahaShivratri was celebrated on Tuesday, March 1, 2022. It is one of the most auspicious Hindu festivals celebrated annually in honour of Lord Shiva.

1st March – Zero Discrimination Day - Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated globally on 1 March every year so that everyone lives life with dignity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, skin colour, height, weight, etc. The symbol of Zero Discrimination Day is the **butterfly**.

3rd March - World Wildlife Day - The theme of World Wildlife Day 2022 is “Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration”.

3rd March - World Hearing Day - World Hearing Day is observed on 3rd March every year to raise awareness about how to prevent deafness and to promote hearing across the world.

4th March - National Safety Day - National Safety Day is celebrated in India on 4th March by the National Safety Council of India.

8th March - International Women's Day - This day is observed globally every year on 8 March to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.

9th March - No Smoking Day (Second Wednesday of March) - No Smoking Day is observed every year on the second Wednesday of March to raise awareness about the harmful health effects of tobacco via smoking and to encourage people all over the world to quit smoking. This year, it falls on 9 March.

10th March - CISF Raising Day - The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day is observed every year on 10 March. The CISF was set up in 1969 under the act of the Parliament of India. It works under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and it's headquarter is in New Delhi. This organisation works for seaways, airways, and some of the major installations in India. There are some reserved battalions in the CISF which work with the state police to protect law and order.

14th March - International Day of Action for Rivers - Every year on 14 March, the International Day of Action for Rivers is observed to raise voice to protect rivers and demand for improving the policies for Rivers.

15th March - World Consumer Rights Day - It is observed on 15 March every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs.

FAREWELL TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Today was the last day of primary section,
And I promised my teacher that I won't cry.
But in my soul, there was a question,
Which was, "Why does time fly?"

Our teachers were always sympathetic and accommodating,
And there is something they should know,
How we loved to be their students,
In the secondary section now we go.

In standard 1, we learnt something fun which was अ, आ, इ, ई
And you guessed it right, we were introduced to the language- Hindi
In standard 2, I was the ugly duckling in 'Poems Come Alive'
And Winnie the Pooh who wanted to eat 'honey' from a beehive.

In standard 3, everyone enjoyed the song 'Shotgun'
That was played during our Annual Day,
And we were introduced to lessons in the dark where we learnt
How to be self-dependent when our parents were away.

In standard 4, everything was online
But our teachers made online studying a pleasurable time.
But don't you forget Uncle Podger who broke a wall,
Just to hang a single picture,

He needed the help of all.
And there we go in standard 5, when masked students came offline,
I have to admit, Offline School was better than online.
We exclaimed thanks to our teachers for treating us with care and affection,
Even though sometimes in class, we did not pay any attention.

Well, even though we are advancing to the secondary section,
Our primary section teachers won't be forgotten.
And as we bid farewell to them,
I would like to say- "Thank You" for helping us in studies, activities and play
In every possible way.



Aashna Anjaria, 5B

HARVEST FESTIVALS IN INDIA

India is famously known as the land of festivals all throughout the world. The festivities not only bring the people from different backgrounds and ethnicities closer but also turn the country into an alluring carnival, always having something new to offer to its tourists and visitors. India is a diverse country with different parts of the country growing different grains and crops throughout the year. This has given the country its true essence and to celebrate this essence with merriment, various harvest festivals are celebrated in several parts of India during the harvest season. The harvest festivals in India involve customary traditions and joyous celebrations.

Makar Sankranti

Makar Sankranti is one of the few Indian Festivals to be celebrated on a fixed date i.e. 14th January every year. In the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, you can see the sky covered with beautiful, colourful kites as it is also considered a kite flying festival. People often donate clothes, blankets, food, etc. to the underprivileged on this day. Food majorly made of sesame seeds like Til Ke Laddoo and Til Ki Chikki is enjoyed on this festival along with delicious, colourful rice. While flying kites, the word Kai Po Che is often used when a person cuts another's kite.



Art work by Rashi Chheda, 7A

Lohri

Lohri is considered a significant harvest festival in North India. The main celebration includes lighting up a bonfire followed by traditional Punjabi song and dance. People most often feast on delicious Sarsonka Saag & Makki ki roti on this day. People also remember Dulha Bhatti – a famous legendary hero who helped the poor by robbing the rich. OyeHoye!!



Art work by Sriya Desai, 7C

All these festivals have given the country its true essence and to celebrate this essence with merriment, various harvest festivals are celebrated in several parts of India during the harvest season. The harvest festivals in India involve customary traditions and joyous celebrations.



Prisha Desai, 5B



Art work done by Vamika Parmar 8C

Pongal

The festival of Pongal is celebrated over a duration of four days. People buy new clothes and household items during this festival and exchange gifts with one another. There are traditional dances and buffalo-taming contests. Cooking an authentic Pongal dish on the second day is an important event of the festival.



Art work by Aharyan Marathe, 6C

Onam

The harvest festival of Kerala, Onam is a time for sports, festivities, and ritual celebrations in Kerala. Onam is celebrated over 4 days; Thiruvonam is the 2nd day and the most important day of the festival. On this day you get to experience the world-famous Snake Boat Races, song, and dance, lots of good food, and as much exotica as one can take.

Baisakhi

Baisakhi is a major harvest festival of Punjab as it marks the beginning of the solar year. People of North India, particularly Punjab, thank God for a good harvest. Baisakhi processions are known as "Nagar Kirtans," and legendary performances by the Gurdwaras in Punjab are the highlights of the day. Bhangra and Gidda performances take place all over the state. Hadippa!!

COMING BACK TO OFFLINE SCHOOL

The ongoing pandemic has kept the school children away from the school premises for the past two years. Like all my classmates, I had been longing to come to school, meet my friends and my new and old teachers, eat from the canteen and so on. That wait period finally came to an end, when the school reopened on 31st January, 2022.

The very thought of attending school offline had stirred a feeling of excitement in me. I had to make a few preparations beforehand. I made cards for my teachers. The previous day, I took out my old, washed school bag from the cupboard and packed it with the pencil box, books and notebooks. Among the new items that were made mandatory to carry, was a small bottle of hand sanitizer, a handkerchief, a spare N-95 mask, tiffin-box and water-bottle. Though we used to wear school uniforms for the online classes, what gave me the feeling of going to Offline School was wearing the school shoes. When I tried to slip-in my feet in the old school shoes after two years, I found my feet had outgrown the size and I had to buy a new pair. This also confirmed that I grew tall during this pandemic.

The first day at school was electrifying. The school gate was sparsely crowded by children of primary classes. As I walked inside the school building, my excitement rose high as it was my first time on the second floor. I found my classroom, and I was elated to see my class teacher and meet my classmates. But we had to follow the protocols. We could not hug or shake hands, but waved hands to greet each other. The sparkling eyes of my friends helped me recognise them, even though they were masked. They had all grown so tall! Sitting on the school bench after this long hiatus was exciting, so much better than sitting on bed with the make-shift study table. Though we could not have our bench partners for the sake of maintaining social distancing, their presence in the classroom itself was highly rewarding. The canteen used to be a place which I frequently visited, but now it is closed. We weren't allowed to leave the class during the short-break. I also missed commuting to the school by the school bus. We had mixed feelings. But honestly, I enjoyed every moment that I spent at school after the restrictions due to COVID -19 were relaxed.

Since it was really fun to come back to Offline School, I am eagerly waiting for the school to start with regular school hours and operate with a full offline mode of teaching, as before. I am looking forward to meeting teachers and friends in the new academic session and secretly wish for the school canteen to restart.



Sparsh Sen, 5A

IF I HAD A TIME MACHINE

If I had a time machine, I would visit the future and make it more beautiful and virus-free for all our lovely citizens. I would press the red button of the time machine designed by me and reach March 2022. With the magical powers of the time machine, I would remove the dangerous Corona and Omicron viruses from the air, remove all dirty garbage and plastic from the roads and replace them with more trees and beautiful gardens with blooming flowers. My powerful time machine would create more buildings and employment for the poor and needy people. Indeed, my time machine would create a better life full of happiness.



-Aarush Nair, 4C

HOAX NEWS

'Breaking news! Today King Kong was sighted on the main,' as I read on my family group chat, there was panic amongst them all. As I gazed out of the window, the citizens looked terrified. They were running around and screaming. The people were talking about the monster. I heard them saying that the monster was wild, massive and maybe a man - eater.

I wished to investigate this matter, for which I rushed downstairs. I handled the situation by pacifying the citizens. I told them that I had not seen any footprints near the area where the monster was sighted. At once, the newspapers started interrogating me. The news turned out to be fake. They called me a hero and their saviour. I told them that I was not a hero or a saviour. I was just a normal person like them. The lesson that I learnt from this story is not all rumors are true and never trust rumours.



Naisha Singh, 6A

THAT EERIE NIGHT

Halted. The bus halted after we had heard the screeching sounds of the tyres. We had not faced any problem on our way out in the bright and fresh morning, but now, the night with its mysterious dark roads made my skin crawl. The skies were dark, no stars at all and there we were in the bus, stuck.

Breaking into a cold sweat and sudden chirpy but fearful chatter, we began analysing the situation and how we would reach the hotel. We were still quite far from the hotel, considering we were right around the eerie village. Cold winds hitting the windows, our fear and angst increased. The road was empty, the village was silent, all we could hear now was the whistling of the wind.

Looking out the window with curiosity, we examined the roads which were filled with dense fog, even the bright headlights of the bus could not cut through it. The driver was calling for help, anxiously. He took out a smoke alarm as a distress signal but no help was received. It was almost 1 a.m., we were stuck for over three hours and the uncertainty of the situation grew in the pits of our stomachs and the lumps in our throats.

A shrill and strong horn woke up a few asleep, and alarmed the ones who were awake. The other bus which had the other half of the students had stopped right behind ours. Its blue lights shone through the windows as the driver got down with an enormous container of fuel. Our bus driver skillfully changed the tyre with the help of the other driver.

There was cheering and sighs of relief, loud and clear ones. Our bus was fixed, we could finally return to the hotel. Safe and sound, we traversed along the winding route ahead of us, away from the village. All of our faces decorated with gleeful smiles, we went into our rooms with stories to tell our families.

Sonia Deval, 9B



CHOCOLATES AND OBSESSIONS

I have always hated chocolates, so I was more surprised than anybody to find myself standing outside the quaint chocolate shop on the outskirts of town. Earlier that day, I had lost a bet with my best friend, Maya, and she exhorted me to visit her favourite chocolate shop as payment.

Everyday, she would run her mouth about the quality, the richness and the taste of these chocolates. Maya nudged my elbow and went in. I followed her. From outside, the shop looked a little old and monotonous but the inside was a different world. Every wall of the store was covered with shelves of chocolates of all types, like milk chocolates, dark chocolates, white chocolates etc. The owner of the shop was an old woman who stood in the corner. My friend gave me a bar of milk chocolate saying it was allowed to try free samples first. I hesitated but then took a bite. I was fairly flabbergasted at the quality, the richness and the taste of the chocolate just like Maya would always chronicle. I tried some more samples and was taken aback by how good they were.

Later, we bought loads of chocolates and tried them all at home. That's how my obsession with chocolate grew. At least chocolate's good for your heart.

Dalika Shah, 7A



A DELUSION IN THE DARK

The bus was making creaking noises before we heard the crickets. Everyone was worried as they looked around only to see pitch-black darkness. Fear and excitement filled us while we quietly awaited our teacher's instructions. Our teacher, herself unsure of where we were, advised us to remain calm and let the bus driver inspect the vehicle.

Not long after that, we were sitting outside the bus listening to the turning of screws. The bus driver was attempting to repair the vehicle. The ground was cold and rough. Mosquitoes circled around our heads. This felt like something out of a horror film. Everyone kept silent to keep up the theatrics. I slid my hand across the floor to find some rocks to play with but instead, I found something else.

I touched something cold, cold and hard. My heart started beating faster and faster when suddenly a gust of cold, eerie wind blew. Another human hand grazed mine. A torch was flashed on my hand. I closed my eyes and braced myself for being devoured by a cybernetic extraterrestrial creature.

"Umm... I'm going to need the screwdriver. "Do you mind if I take it?" It has the ability to communicate, I reasoned. It wasn't until I completed comprehending the sentence's contents and the cyber alien monster's voice that I realised it wasn't a cyborg alien monster, but rather the bus driver. He needed to use the screwdriver to repair the bus's engine. It must have landed here by accident. I let out a sigh of relief and nodded. I appeared to have seen a ghost, which I had in my imagination.

The bus's lights returned, illuminating the entire area. The bus was in good working order. I stepped inside after taking a deep breath of the pine forest while smiling at my own wild imagination.

Aminah Syed, 9B



HASTE TO REACH THE RACE

Punctuality is one of the most important virtues a person is supposed to have. If you are not a punctual person, you can miss out on some very important things in your life. Today I am going to narrate an incident when I was not punctual and I had to pay the price.

I had my MSSA Sports Meet on 27th of August 2017. I was in the girls' under twelve one hundred metre final'. I was supposed to reach the Marine Lines Ground at nine o'clock in the morning. The ground was one and a half hours away from us and we were taking the train so I thought we would reach much faster. I was watching my favourite TV show- Bizaardvark, and I was not planning on leaving before the episode was over. My mother kept telling me to get ready, wear my shoes, comb my hair and pack my bag but I was indifferent towards her call, until it was eight o'clock. On hearing the clock strike eight, I started panicking. I did not want to miss my finals as I had a very good chance at winning.

So I started packing my bag hastily and ran out the front door with my mother, who by now was furious at me. My mother is a woman who cares a lot about punctuality, probably more than anyone else, and I can say it without a doubt that I have not gone on my mother's side of the family regarding my punctuality. It was about 8:10 when we boarded the train and the estimated arrival time was 9:10, which was 10 minutes late for my final. By this time I was on the verge of crying but if there was anyone to blame it would be me.

The MSSA Sports Meet was no joke, only forty five athletes from Maharashtra were selected. If you won gold you would get your name in the newspaper. Of course I did not know it at the time, if my mother had told me, I would have left much earlier knowing that I might have a chance of getting my name in the newspaper. But it was not my mother's fault. As I packed my bag in haste, I never realised that I forgot my poster number at home without which an athlete was not permitted entry in the race. But I did not lose hope, I called my coach and requested him to give us an extra number. By the time we reached the ground it was 9:12 and they were handing out the certificates and medals to the winner.

Seeing that I was faster than the girl who won gold, I was devastated and heartbroken. My coach and my parents were also very disappointed. And that was the day I learned my lesson, to never be late and to always check my bag before leaving.



Jiya Moitra, 9B

A LETTER TO COVID

5th January, 2022

Dear COVID-19,

I hope that now you would be filled with ecstasy after re-accomplishing your goal of tormenting us school going children. You must be aware that the schools have deferred from reopening once again in the New Year. I am writing this letter to you with utmost disappointment but with the hope that you would understand.

Firstly, hats off to your perseverance. Although, all countries including India took necessary measures, developed vaccines and also imposed the lockdown multiple times yet you did not fail in expanding your circle of friends and siblings that now include the delta and the omicron variant as well. I wonder how many siblings you have because there is one in each country. Also your friends Delta and Omicron being social butterflies have their own friends and siblings in so many countries.

Secondly, now it's high time you return back. All the people are suffering just because of you. People have not been going to work, there have been pay cuts that took place in many companies, schools and colleges have been closed and everything has been taking place online. It has led to several psychological disorders amongst children due to lack of social interaction and the relationships with relatives and friends have deteriorated. Just imagine the plight of the students who had fervently waited to enter into college and experience college life and the ardent students of medical and engineering colleges who never went to labs for experiments. Their future is at stake because of your bullheadedness. I know it is quite rude of me to say that but I am requesting you to show some sympathy towards humanity and move ahead.

I hope that you will understand our plight and go as early as possible and permit us to freely interact with people.

Yours affectionately,

AleinaSaigal

(A middle school student from the COVID batch)

Aleina Saigal, 8A



A FUN EXPERIENCE!

School trips are among the few things which keep us going to school. It is the most awaited time of the year. We can wear casual clothes, explore new places and spend a lot of time with our friends. This year our school was taking us to the serene Shimla. Shimla is a well-known hill station. As students, we have the most fun time on the bus while travelling. After reaching there, we did not start exploring immediately so that our body could get acclimatised to the bone-chilling cold. After resting for a few hours, we went to visit Jakhoo Hill and Temple. It is the highest point of Shimla and offers scenic views of the Himalayas. We had just begun our trip back to the hotel, after dark, when the bus suddenly halted with a jerk, making a few of us fall down in the process. After inquiring about the sudden jerk, we were told that the bus broke down. In the middle of the road! With nothing but trees around us! In the dark!(Not that I am complaining.)

We were thinking of walking to our hotel but were disappointed to hear that it would take hours to reach on foot. We were not that far from Jakhoo Hill. Though it was dark, we could see the blanket of alpine trees surrounding a humongous statue of Lord Hanuman. Some of us were cranky, while some were panicking, whereas my friends and I were having the time of our lives. I mean how many times does one get to be stranded in the middle of the road beneath the starry night along with your friends? The air was mystic and foggy. It was quite calming to breathe the pure air without the pollutants. It was dark but the moon shone bright enough to see the misty valleys and magnificent mountains. After decluttering our mind and having a short moment alone, we came back to the problem at hand. We got to know that there was a village nearby. We decided to walk there as we did not have dinner. Our stomachs were grumbling, making us embarrassed. The village looked as if it had not been repaired for over a decade. The villagers were kind enough to give us food to eat and a place to sleep at night. As we did not want to sleep immediately after eating, we decided to explore a bit by strolling around. We made a few friends and did not mind playing with them. After playing with them, I realised that luxury is not the only thing that brings us happiness. Friends and family give the best comfort.

After a long and tiring day one wishes to go back home in the warmth and comfort of family or friends. They are with us through the trials and tribulations of life and love us to the moon and back. We got tired after a long day and could feel our eyelids getting heavier by the minute and eventually sleep got the best of us.

The sunrays beamed on our face making our eyes flutter open. Recalling the memories of the previous day, we could see our original bus being towed away and a new one just behind it. After bidding farewell to our new friends we left for our hotel. In a nutshell, the breakdown of the bus was not all bad. We got to experience how the people in the village are living happily though they cannot afford the basic necessities, and they were kind enough to help us. We had an overall enthralling experience.



Kaniesha, 9C

IS INDIA A POOR COUNTRY?

A 'poor country' could be defined as a country that is not doing economically well. However, in my opinion, India is not such a country and thus, I strongly believe that India is not a poor country.

Compared to previous times Indians, on an average, are doing far better financially and have a stable income. My parents are currently earning much more than my grandparents ever did during their entire lives which clearly proves that India's financial status has drastically improved.

Moreover, India has been known worldwide for being one of the fastest growing economies in the world. India presently ranks as the fifth largest economy and that evidently shows that India is a strong country economically.

Gandhi always believed that rural India should be strengthened along with cities as it is the backbone of our country and India has worked relentlessly on doing so. When I recently visited my hometown in Kerala, I was surprised to see the numerous changes made in the town since my last visit. Earlier, water shortage and power outages were common problems faced but now access to water, electricity, hospitals and schools became hassle-free. Electronic gadgets such as mobile phones, laptops etc. were also easily available as they were in cities. Infrastructure had developed and our relatives told us about the various job opportunities that flourished there. These developments require finance which is provided by the government. So, how can one say that India is a poor country?

India still has a long way to go when it comes to economic development but for a country that got its independence only seventy five years ago, I believe India has done a great job in catching up with the modern world and it is high time we give them credit for it. We cannot focus entirely on the negative side because if we do, then how will a country progress if its own citizens are not optimistic about its own future?



Shazmecka Nair, 9A

THE MYSTERIOUS VILLAGE

One day while on a School trip our class was returning to the hotel after a long day of hiking. Even though all of us were very exhausted, we were singing and dancing and having a lot of fun, songs blasted from the speakers and the bus felt like a radio on wheels.

From the beginning of the trip each class was allotted a bus. Earlier that day some children seated in the back had heard a slight screech but didn't pay much attention to it. After the bus had covered almost half the highway there was a sudden, loud and unpleasant noise from the back of the bus. 'Bang!' and then 'grrr....' The bus came to an abrupt halt.

The bus driver, teachers and the students got concerned. All of us quickly got out of the bus and further investigation revealed that the back right wheel of the bus got loose and flew off the axle while the bus was moving and flew into the lake below the highway. We all felt hopeless as we could not just put on the spare wheel as the axle scraped against the concrete highway and got deformed.

One of the teachers was brave enough to start to explore the surrounding areas in order to find help. He found a village nearby and we followed right behind him. Upon our arrival we could not see any sign of life and I also found it very strange that when I opened Google Maps I could not see the village "Huh, it could be a glitch" I said to myself and continued walking. After going deeper into the village we discovered a handful of huts along with an old lady sitting on a chair beside one of them. We could feel a gentle cool breeze while standing here even though it was summer. When we asked her for help she grinned revealing her crooked teeth and said "Nobody lives here, you should leave". Every time we asked her something she would repeat the same phrase. I somehow had a strange, creepy feeling about this place.

Being annoyed and rather uncomfortable, we decided to leave. While returning to the bus we heard the roaring engine of another bus of our school. We let out a sigh of relief and waved at them for help. They thankfully noticed us and stopped by to help us. Our bus got towed on to theirs and we were soon moving back.

While returning we passed the location where the village we just visited should have been but it wasn't. All of us were surprised and spooked at the same time. We decided to play 'Hanuman Chalisa' instead of DJ music the rest of the way back to the hotel.



Shubhan Dabholkar, 9A

A CATASTROPHIC ENCOUNTER

"Stay in the car, children! We will be back soon", instructed Ms. Parker, an elegant lady with a lively spirit. She got down the bus with the driver to check what had happened. She widened her almond peepers as she realised that the back tyre of the bus had been punctured. The children in the bus started whispering to each other in confusion. I was asleep but woke up due to the noise. I tied back my long black hair and thought what could be worse than having your bus broken down on a highway beside a gloomy village and the forest.

Tension and anxiety filled the air in the bus. It was already past eleven o'clock in the night, and the only light we could see was of the pretty crescent moon. Unlike a car, we could not fix the tyre of a bus and could do nothing but wait. The other buses had already rushed past us and were in the hotel. Ms. Parker was scratching her head having no idea what to do. It was not a very safe place to wait. We could hear the rustling of leaves in the bushes which increased our fear. The little children started to cry. Ms. Parker came in and told us to stay in the bus with locked doors.

Jake, my best friend, was playing video games on his phone undaunted by the unfortunate calamity. He was a pretty athletic and adventurous boy with an agile body. Everyone in the bus was sound asleep. He asked me to go out and explore the village with him and I, being a scared cat, barked at him for coming up with such a bizarre idea. We were already tired from the hiking earlier that day. So, my eyes slowly closed and I fell asleep. A little while later, I heard a knock on the outside of my window. I nearly screamed out loud but then saw it was just Jake from outside the bus. His large eyes were shining at the thought of exploring the village and having a little adventure.

I went outside and gave in. I was sleepy yet quite vigilant of the surroundings. We went to a hut and saw an old man with a humped back and walking stick. He looked scary no doubt but I thought we could just run away in case something happened. We were going to ask for help when Ms. Parker came running from behind and caught our ears. She apologised to the man. He called his heavily built son for help. Luckily, they were mechanics! With a screw jack, they fixed our bus. We paid them and left. I was still in deep thought. I had seen them somewhere.

We reached the hotel but I could not sleep. Jake told me to forget it and sleep but my curiosity did not let me do so. The next day, I saw the same old man standing and staring at us with his stern eyes. He was quite far away. So, I thought it was just a coincidence. Later, while sightseeing, I remembered him. I gazed blankly at the 'WANTED' poster with my mouth open. Yes, those criminals were following us.



Niyati Bhatt, 9A

THROUGH YOUR HEAD

One morning as I woke up rushing to get ready for school, I felt something unusual. Thinking it was not such a great deal, I carried on. Once I reached school I could hear all sorts of voices talking in my head and it did not stop. Then when I heard closely I realised I could hear my classmates' thoughts.

I was happy that I could hear their thoughts but feared at the same time that it might be wrong as well as scary. I sat down on my bench and as the first period began I could already hear one of them think how sleepy she was and did not feel like being in school.

As more time passed, I could hear things like "I am so hungry, when will this class get over?", "This lecture is so boring, when will the P.E. period begin?", "I want to go home." and I also heard so many people sing in their minds. But the worst part about hearing their thoughts was listening to their ill thoughts about other people. I could then see how people pretend to be friends with one another even though they hate each other; such two-faced creatures! By the end of the day I was just tired of listening to them. I began to wonder if there was anyone real even out there.

And I just wished that I could not hear them anymore. Then as the bell rang for the end of the day I could not hear the voices anymore and I started wondering why my friend was looking at me so strangely as if she could read my mind. I wondered if the negative power had passed on to her. It was one of my best experiences hearing my classmates' thoughts because some of them were really fun, but also a painful experience at the same time because of all the ill thoughts and the fact that you cannot focus on yourself but just think about what others think.

The next day I could hear the voices again and it went on for a week. How tired I was by then that I could hear no more talk anymore.



Eksha Achar, 9A

MY MAGICAL POWERS

"What is wrong with you?" my mother asked me. I stood still, trying to recollect what had just happened to me. I ran to my room and closed it with a loud bang. I discovered something was strange. So I calmly sat on the bed and made a wish. I wished for a laptop. Just a minute later, my father came from his office early. He told me that he had some great news. He said, "I am promoted and now I am the senior manager of the company." and then he suddenly gave a laptop to me saying that that day was a great day.

It dawned on me that I had magical powers. The magical power was that, whatever I said, came true. To test it, I made many other wishes to make sure if I really have them. I was totally sure by now. I made a wish that whenever someone lied to me, I would get fifty rupees. I went to my school after the summer vacation. I met my best friend and we started a conversation in which she told me that she missed me. My hands were in my pocket and I realised that I got fifty rupees. I met a mean girl in the class who was telling everybody that she went to New York and Los Angeles during the summer vacation and yes, she was showing off and I got the money. When the school time ended and when students were dispersed, I ran home. My mom asked me, "How was your first day at school?" I ignored her and went to my room to check how much money I had accumulated. A total of two thousand rupees was there with me. For the following days it was the same routine, until suddenly I started seeing number one in front of my eyes. It was in a clock format so it was obvious that I had one day left. It was just a normal day but then I started to realise that the people whom I care the most about always lied to me.

The timer was ticking that I had only a minute left. I had to think of something wise. I made a wish that my powers should go away forever. I made this decision because I was mentally getting hurt and I could not bear it anymore. It is often said that whatever we do can affect us both in a positive and in a negative way. It is great to have magical powers until it starts hurting you.



Vanshika Dagli, 9A

We are all aware of the grim situation that has gripped Europe. A war which breaks out in one part of the world cannot be contained to that area alone. Its repercussions are widespread. It is a fact that war is not the answer to any problem. No one emerges a winner.

"The war will end. The leaders will shake hands. The old woman will keep waiting for her martyred son. That girl will wait for her beloved husband. And those children will wait for their heroic father. I don't know who sold our homeland. But I saw who paid the price." Mahmoud Darwish