

Editor's Note

The stereotypical society we live amidst is changing enough, mostly due to the outlook of the youth. So did the youth of Billabong High portray a very successful Annual Concert with its theme 'Challenging Stereotypes'.

This concert, a tour de force, was honoured by the presence of the very seasoned Mr. Vinay Pathak as the Chief Guest and the founder of Billabong chain Ms. Lina Ashar, as Guest of Honour.

The honour to interview Mr. Pathak was accorded to the school Editorial Board, the members of which were extremely thrilled and delighted.

With the closure to a very successful Annual Concert and interview with the esteemed Mr. Vinay Pathak, this issue of 'The Billabong Bulletin' additionally touches upon the concern of examination stress, includes an array of reviews, and divergent views related to the 'Cookie-cutter education system' prevalent in our country.

The Annual Concert comprised a variety of acts ranging from plays to musicals to a heterogeneity of dances, along with a special act to honour the youngest Nobel Prize laureate - Malala Yousafzai. The students performed enthusiastically and put their heart and soul into every act.

In the light of the first ever Council monitored examinations for grades 9 and 11, along with the unremitting Board examinations of grades 10 and 12, exam stress has been catered through the perspectives of students as well as teachers, for both are under tremendous pressure.

Reviews and divergent views provide valuable insights from students, of different age groups, which help the readers to formulate their opinions. In our endeavour to cater to a miscellany of tastes, I hope this issue of the Billabong Bulletin keeps you engrossed, and anticipating the next.

- Ira Fatma Khan (11C)
(Editor-in-Chief)

Student Editorial Board



Ira Fatma Khan, Aditya Rajan, Rida Aamir,
Agrima Chopra (L to R)

Examination Stress

It is time at last to unmask the true and perhaps the sole purpose of examinations. Being a 16 year old with almost non-existent information about why they exist, I turned to the godly internet. Most articles mentioned how it instils a certain 'sense of strive' to learn. If it is not tested, there is no fear to concentrate and well, perform.

The wind that gives sail to the alleged intention to do well is something we have all been through- be it high school or middle school. In layman's language, it is called 'examination stress'.

Examination stress is seasonal. It is the feeling that arises just before the finals knock at our door; almost like you are heading towards impending doom. Many causes contribute to it. Be it being underprepared, competition or even performance pressure from your teachers and family.

Not only does it make the preparations harder, but also makes the students believe that when they step into the examination hall, the test they are about to take is bound to go disastrously wrong. This results in poor academic performance followed by a vicious cycle of peer pressure, performance stress, and the burden of never-seem-to-be-ending studies.

A certain amount of stress, however, is expected and is often considered an incentive towards scoring better grades. But too much of it can interfere with daily activities and ultimately success in one's academia, especially in the Indian context where the board exams are extolled to a great extent. Students are bound to succumb to external pressure or even internal, that they put upon themselves. Competition is the added seasoning to the rally of reasons. Students witness a direct comparison with their classmates when they are segregated on the basis of marks they score or when they start competing with their own friends. This discourages them greatly and they lose the will to study, resulting in them being underprepared for their exams.

With board exams being a stone throw away, our high school students taking the examination this year share their valuable experience –

Sulaiman Khan from Grade 10 emphasised on the fact that the hype created around boards makes him more nervous than the external pressure itself. There is a natural sense of fear as these exams determine his future. However, he admits that teachers have helped make the process easier and friendlier through motivational tactics, less homework, and engaging classes.

Aarya Shrivastava from Grade 12 reveals that

in 10th grade there was still some hope as everything was new but in 12th she is completely on the edge, balancing between competitive exams and school exams. Teachers have, at numerous times helped her enhance her strengths and tone down the pressure by giving her the freedom to prepare and perform to the best of her ability.

A prominent issue that most people talk about is how a faculty's reputation is also at stake when results draw closer. A student's performance in a way also determines the teacher's performance.

Swati Ma'am, our High School English Mentor throws light on this matter as she explains, "As faculty, being true to your profession is not just essential but expected. A teacher does not and should not, consciously or otherwise, segregate students on the basis of their calibre or performance. While it is an expected and accepted norm these days that a student's performance does impact a teacher, one who has done all that was possible during

classes: explanation, notes, resolving doubts and the like, has nothing really to fear. Besides, a teacher like a parent, wishes only the best for every student. Years of experience bring in the needed wisdom and detachment from such aspects of the job."

Each child has their own unique way to learn and perform. Enough freedom, support, encouragement, and promptness can help soothe the nerves when the examination week is approaching. Teacher-student cooperation, parental involvement when necessary, and a clear communication can help reduce test anxiety.

Our high school teachers Ms. Shagun Lakhanpal and Ms. Swati Panvalkar have some tips to combat pressure:

- Remember to breathe deeply before taking an exam.
- Eat, sleep, and exercise well.
- Set realistic goals.
- Pace yourself through preparation to avoid panic.
- Believe in yourself.
- If you feel like you are struggling, talk to someone who can guide.
- Understand what is troubling you the most.
- Allow yourself to vent your thoughts, fears.
- One on one conversation where a timetable can be chalked out and weekly meet-ups with a teacher help keep a tab on one's progress.

Golden Rule- 'It always seems impossible until it is done'.

- Agrima Chopra (11B)



Image credit: newindianexpress.com

Annual Concert 2019-20



The Annual Concert this year was a glamorous extravaganza, one that proved to be a perfect culmination to the rigorous hours of practice put in by the students and the staff. From breathtaking musical performances to elegant dances and powerful plays, the theme, fitting to the school's ideology, was reflected in the true sense. Challenging Stereotypes, a thought-provoking theme formed the base of the event, moulded around the basic idea that prefixed opinions and judgment

about one another are doing us no good.

The presence of eminent personalities, including our honourable Chief Guest Mr. Vinay Pathak and our Guest of Honor, Ms. Lina Ashar made the event even more memorable, and as the curtains were drawn after the last performance, the audience was left satiated with memories of the evening's proceedings, an underlying message of Challenging Stereotypes and the delectable palate that was on offer.

Music

- **Instrumental** - Instruments are humanity's oldest support. They act as media to channel one's emotions into beautiful music. From Beethoven pouring his destitute heart onto the piano, to Vivaldi erupting as infuriated music emerged from his baroque violin; instruments have always been present. Music has been 'instrumental' in humanity's evolution, introducing such a sense of belonging and culture within various people. With this artistic spirit in heart, our young maestros charmed us all with their heavenly melodies echoing under the stars.



- **Choir** - The school choir left the audience spellbound with amazing renditions of crowd favourites such as 'Roar' by Katy Perry and 'Hall of Fame' by The Script. Kudos to our 170 young virtuosos for making the night even more memorable.



Dance

- **Hip Hop** - For too long, dancing has been portrayed as an art of subtlety and elegance, generalized as a



combination of class and perfection. But as the world grew rife with stereotypes and discrimination, people channelled their dissent and opinions into a form of dance that we now call 'Hip Hop'. Contrary to popular belief, it is not just about backflips and break-dancing.

Hip Hop music is not just fast poetry and raucous beats; it is one of the very few art forms that convey pure, unbridled emotion; be it anger or despair, dissent or harmony. Our students put on a wondrous show with awesome choreography, zeal, and emotion. The riveting performance surely left the audience awestruck, and a befittingly glorious dance brought the evening to a glorious end. What a perfect night!

- **Ballet** - The ethereal ballet incorporated in the play 'Ella Enchanted', had the audience spellbound. The perfection, with



which the girls of Grades 8 - 11 performed ballet with their delicate movements, was indeed a treat to the eyes! In harmony with the music, the tippy-toed ballerinas leapt and swayed gracefully, and the lights on their tutus blinked on and off in coordination with the beats of the music. The ribbon performance was an absolute nonpareil, and the swirling motions of the ribbons and the pirouettes of the dancers was altogether an enchanting experience.

- **Junior Ball** - As an inclusion to the play 'Ella Enchanted', this ball comprising students of Grades 6 - 8 was the first of the the balls thrown by King Jerod for his son to choose his bride. As the dresses



'changed' from orange to blue, so did the effect of the ball. The partners portrayed a magnificent piece of dance where not once did they lose coordination or synchronisation.

Plays

- **Senior Ball** - The masked ball where Prince Char meets Ella under the alias of Lady Lela, performed by the students of Grades 9 and 11 was as rhythmic as the music itself. Ella gets a chance to talk to her beloved prince and to dance the night away with him. The second ball, is where Hattie removes Lady Lela's mask revealing her true identity: 'Ella'.



- **Call for Peace (Malala Dance)** - The essence of the Annual Concert was enhanced by the contemporary dance 'Call for Peace' performed by Grades 8-11, paying tribute to Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech (voiced by Vibhuti Rao of Grade 12). Pressing subjects like women empowerment, the importance of education, terrorism, and child



marriage were effortlessly and beautifully portrayed in the dance. The fluid and graceful movements were a visual treat.

- **Foxtrot** - The foxtrot that contributed to the richness of the play – Beauty and the Beast, dates back to the 1920s. Popularised by the famous couple Irene and Vernon Castle, it is a smooth and enchanting dance form. Performed by enthusiastic students of



Grades 6 and 7 on the melodious tracks of 'The Greatest Showman' and 'Havana' got even the audience pumped up. Set in bewitching costumes and lovely smiles, the 43 children outdid themselves.

- **Kathak** - The melodious classical music of 'Murshid Khele Holi' and the amazing Sufi track used in this beautiful, accoladed performance truly showed everyone the beauty in simplicity and grace. With an enchanting performance by a whopping 60 girls from Grades 8 to 11, the dance held everyone's attention with a melody of colours and movements.



- **Ella Enchanted** – Magic - sounds fascinating, doesn't it? A decked-up princess with bewitching features and speech being rescued by a swashbuckling prince on a white horse. A picture-



perfect fairy tale. But Ella Enchanted was not just that. It was about a young lady who didn't wait for her prince to come and rescue her. She used her prowess and skills to fight the world. Even though she is cursed into being obedient by a powerful fairy, she finds enough strength in herself to break the curse. She rescues the Prince on more than one occasion. The grandeur of the play increased manifold with the perfect costumes, backdrop, light, and the magical props created by the art department.

- **Beauty and the Beast** - Originally written by the Brothers Grimm, and later adapted in a Disney movie, this fairytale was beautifully performed as a play as it challenged gender roles. The lead character, Belle, a smart and the curious girl ended up becoming the Beast's prisoner under unfortunate events. She then fell in love with him for his true and loving nature even though he tried to force his rules upon her and prevented her from leaving the castle. Instead of being submissive as expected of her, Belle stood up for herself and proved to be defiant and independent. Performed to perfection, the play was all about choosing substance over appearance.



- **Kaash Aisa Bhi Hota** - The Hindi play was a hilarious mix of breaking gender norms with a 'desi' flair portrayed flawlessly through a role reversal. While in most, if not all, Indian households, the man coming to seek his bride is the norm; this play showcased something quite the opposite. The woman came to the man's house to see if he could make a fitting partner. Most certainly, it was a



'yes' from her after learning that he could not only make her favourite sweet but also cook anything she wanted. The audience was already in fits of laughter and scenes like the 'Vidai' and 'Baraat' only highlighted the issues surrounding gender stereotypes with more than a hint of the comical.



Farm Day

Old Mac Donald and his farm friends visited BHIS Bhopal to offer Preschoolers and Grade 1 students along with their families, an ethnic countryside experience.

Farm Day was organized with the objective of providing children with a concrete experience of farm life, helping them visualize and integrate the knowledge related to the concept of 'Farm'. Livestock, traditional cuisines, pottery making, and some ethnic song & dance performances added excitement to the day. Swings and rides like Merry-Go-Round, Not-So-Giant-Wheel, and Little Columbus captured children's imagination as they indulged in a plethora of games, fun rides, and art & craft activities.



Farewell

(Class of 2020)

Every beginning has an end. And every end is a new beginning. It's a relentless cycle seen across all aspects of our lives. The school routine we used to hate is no exception. A year starts; a year ends, only to give birth to another. As much as we anticipate the start of college life, we know that the present one will cease.

Farewell - 2020 bid adieu to our beloved 12th Graders in an awe-inspiring way where every minute detail had been thought and pondered upon; performances, entrance, lightning and of course the titles.

As a tradition that originated long ago, Grade 11 was expected to plan the farewell. We, the incompetent souls who had never ever planned a birthday party in 16 years of existence, were hit by strange feelings of nervousness and excitement.

The only talk in our classrooms a month before the event, was about what we are going to do – the budget, contribution, food, and theme. We hardly knew that soon this will get more intense and extreme. It's only a week later that the plans are finalized after numerous internal fights and a thousand different opinions.

Seems like coming through all this wasn't enough because that's when you deal with the real world, outside your bubble of imagination with all the rough estimates you made. After combing through the city for the most effective prices and calling in favours, you get a final so-called 'lowest' budget that is still way over your limits.

Working as a team is not a piece of cake; in my personal opinion - well I



guess I should not be that candid. Finalizing vendors is the hardest part, as compared to paying them. A team of 90 kids trying to handle things is surprisingly fun to see, allotting duties is the most hilarious part since everyone's competitive spirit is at an all-time high.

The final day is when the coffee refuses to kick in but the rush does. Getting the stage set up to running around to picking up sashes- all that happens this day seems worth it at midnight. The time when you check the sound system with EDM's to checking the stage for any loose bolts is by when you are completely drained.

It's time for the show to start and you see the vintage car coming through the tunnel driveway as your first set of guests arrive. The planning comes through and all that you hope for is that the people you did this for found it enthralling.

It was a remarkable event that the graduating batch admitted, they will profoundly remember. The satisfaction that this line offers is worth all the effort!



- Sahanj Jose (11A)





Is the 'Cookie-Cutter Education System' justified?

NO!

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. The very fundamentals of an educated person comprise knowing, learning, adapting and understanding.

To put it in a sentence, no I am not in favour of the standard cookie-cutter system of education that exists today. The purpose of education is not to 'manufacture identical simulations of the human form' but to enlighten, guide and enrich a generation.

Imagine it is your biology class and you are learning about the Vena Cava or the Sickle cell anaemia or that while in your history class you learn about the governing methods of all the Mughal emperors; the question that begs to be asked is 'why this?' Why am I learning this when I do not have any interest in biology or history? This is not to pinpoint these two subjects, both extremely useful and entirely interesting, but definitely not everyone's cup of tea.



Image credit: thegadgetflow.com

To those who believe in our education system as-is, you will already have begun to chant out all the benefits of having a basic set of skills; to you, I ask, pray tell me what set of 'basic' skills require a minimum of ten years of rigorous and heart burning practice?

These are not the only shortcomings of the cookie-cutter education system; this system entrenched in the aeons old times of knights and damsels entirely neglects the dynamic fields of vocational education. To say the least, the study at conservatoires, culinary school, shop class, and most ardently the sports field are all ignored by the present education system. Each individual learns differently. While some are visual learners, some prefer auditory, and still, others prefer to experiment with their learning methodologies. Knowing people's temperaments and acknowledging their innate interests demands an education system which gives the learner the freedom to perform

So how are we still singing the praises of an education system that has time and again grossly displayed its shortcomings and has generally the same redeeming qualities as that of a thumbtack?

- Arya Shukla (12B)

YES



Isn't the world getting along just fine? I mean, in the last hundred years we've managed to send men to the moon (and bring them back in one piece), discovered penicillin and invented sliced bread. We've stopped public stoning, gory genocides and racial discrimination (to an extent). We've even managed to perform surgery on a grape.

Humanity has come a long way and we ought to give ourselves a pat on the back. Sure, not everything is perfect. We could be taken over by Artificial Intelligence (AI), get burnt down by global warming or even worse, elect Boris Johnson as PM again. (wait, that's actually happening?!)

Be that as it may, what I'm trying to say is that we're not exactly at the brink of a global existential crisis (at least not right now). The world is being run quite well by our traditional method of schooling or as you deluded millennials would like to call it, "the Cookie-Cutter Education system". Listen here you entitled \$!@#*, you have no right to demean or criticize this established entity that made your dad and your granddad and your great-granddad what they are today. In an abstract way, this education system gave birth to you and your friends. And that brings me to the important question, 'IF IT AIN'T BROKE, WHY FIX IT?'

Contrary to popular belief, a standardized method of education does not stifle the qualities of an individual. It prepares students to face the inconsiderate cut-throat world of the present day. Children these days are too soft and do not want to get out of their comfort zone. They want the education system to be moulded according to their whims and fancies but aren't ready to strive hard in an effort to match expectations and goals. This brings me to my most important point- the value of honest hard work. Children these days just want to make everything easier for themselves, nothing in the world can be achieved without putting in the hard yards. This concept has to be drilled into the children of the present so they can survive the future and our current education system does that to the T. A standardized method of schooling sets a precedent which has to be followed. It teaches students the importance of following rules and adhering to guidelines.

This traditional and practical approach to teaching is a tried and tested method which has borne results. Do you think it is right to leave the administration and execution of teaching methods in the hands of rash teenagers? They don't know what's good for them and what's not (otherwise they wouldn't spend five+ hours on social media each day!). The perception that this education system produces brainless zombies is a rebellious and vain belief. Rather it imbibes in a student the essentials of life and encourages individualistic ideals and venturing into the uncharted.

One must be the twig that bows down in the storm, not the adamant tree that stands tall and gets uprooted.

- Areeb Mohammad Siddiqui (10D)

CONTROL

(2019)



Image credit: metro.co.uk

From the developers that created the famous series of games Quantum Break, Alan Wake, and Max Payne comes another Third-Person Shooter, Mind-boggling Action Adventure game; Control. It was not too long ago that it won 'Critics' Choice Award' at the Golden Joystick Award and 'Best Art Direction' award at the Game Awards 2019. It was also nominated for 'Game of the Year' Award.

Jesse Faden arrives at 'The Oldest House' seeking the whereabouts of her younger brother Dylan. She quickly figures out that the place is, in fact, the secretive U.S. Government agency known as the Federal Bureau of Control (FBC). She finds the building seemingly isolated until she meets a janitor who directs her to an elevator for 'her interview'. Upon reaching the Director's office she finds the Director of the Bureau dead with a gun lying by his side, seeming like a possible suicide.

Taking the gun, she learns that it

is an 'Object of Power', a Service Weapon. She is transported to the 'Astral Plane' a world devoid of colour. There, she gains an understanding of what the Bureau really is about but also unearths more questions than answers.

In the Astral plane she happens to complete a ritual and becomes the new director of the Federal Bureau of Control (FBC). As the agency is corrupted by otherworldly threats, Jesse struggles to gain control, meeting allies on her journey as well as learning the whereabouts of her brother.

Through the game, you start to realise that Jesse knows of our presence and often we find her talking to us, or at least through her thoughts.

The breathtaking environment of this game really gives you an immersive horror-like experience even with its limited colour palette. As you venture through the distorted Metroidvania like the

world, you meet enemies who were formally the FBC agents, but now corrupted, possessed and sometimes mutilated. This game stresses a lot upon the theme of 'nothing is as it seems'.

The Combat mode of the game really surprises you with its everchanging and

customisable options fit to meet each player's preference perfectly. You're able to craft new weapons to suit your tastes. Of course, weapons are not the only option, the game takes an interesting turn when Jesse acquires supernatural powers like telekinesis, levitation and mind control. If you wish to send debris flying across to smash into the enemy's skull, so be it. The actual combat of the game is exciting, exhilarating and electrifying with its satisfying controls which revolve around and shift between Jesse's supernatural abilities and the third person FPS aspects of the game, despite having no dodge options or the health being able to regenerate automatically (where it must be picked up from the fallen foes).

The game offers quite some cut-scene cinematics during the gameplay, the story at times may get hard to follow but, in this game, there is something for everyone. Some people may very much enjoy the story-based aspects of the game while the others, the rewarding and gratifying Combat. Control is a game worth playing; playing on the theme of 'nothing is as it seems' it is hardly surprising how much it has to offer. Control challenges you with a particular type of horror: the lack of control.

- Dakshita Dehelwar (11C)

Marvelous Mrs. Maisel



In 1958 New York, Midge Maisel's life is on track- husband, kids, and elegant Yom Kippur dinners in their Upper West Side apartment. But when life surprises her, she needs to decide what else she's good at - and going from a housewife to a stand-up comic is a wild choice to everyone but her. First aired on 17th March 2017, this Amazon original has everything a good comedy must have - characters you are pleased to see and momentum. Usually, it is your favourite characters that make you exclaim and brighten the scene and when they depart, all that's left to do is wait until they appear again. But it is not the case with Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, where every character and the show itself will keep you gripped throughout.

The 'Marvelous Mrs. Maisel' brims with dialogue where every syllable is dead on the comic beat, and scenes are choreographed like Broadway musicals. The show's delightful, exhausting spirit is turbocharged by the dialogue of the creator, Amy Sherman-Palladino, and embodied by its protagonist, Midge (Rachel Brosnahan). The art direction reflects the show's sensibility. The series' personal conflicts are well-grounded, but the details — the upscale Jewish New York milieu, the fashions,

the repartee — are idealized. (As is parenthood; single mom Midge benefits from a wealth of convenient child care.) 'Mrs. Maisel' takes place less in the 1950s than in a 2018's idea of a 1950s movie.

As for Midge herself, her tendency to get up on stage and improvise comic routines commenting on recent plot developments is both the show's biggest thrill and its steepest suspension of disbelief. Brosnahan, who has an Emmy and a Golden Globe already for Maisel, is miraculously skilled at banging out these pitch-perfect monologues.

I can just say that watching this show takes you to a land where every day is a holiday. Returning to the wretched real world is a sad obligation. All that's left to do is watch the third season which just breezed in.

- Sahanj Jose (11A)



Image credit: imdb.com

The Girl In Between

Author: Laekan Zea Kemp



The story is about a girl, Bryn, who has a very rare neurological disease called the 'Klein Levin syndrome' which causes her to sleep for long periods of time, weeks, and sometimes even months. Bryn, being a high school student and a sculptor, struggles to put her life back together every time she wakes up from an 'episode'.

Every time she sleeps, waiting for her to wake up is her tired and overly protective mother, her highly superstitious grandmother, a loving uncle, an on again off again boyfriend, two best friends who are in love with each other, and an absent father.

Her sleeping state is much more peaceful. A dream world made up of beautiful and loving memories from her past; being the only person in this ever-changing landscape, she is waiting to wake up. Never has she ever seen anyone else in this world of hers. But that changes one day when a strange teenage boy washes up on the shore of the beach. Since it was her dream, she had no memory of who he is or how he got there. Along with his sudden appearance; other things are changing with Bryn's disease.

Throughout the book, the reader is kept guessing as to why Bryn's disease is changing, who the boy is, and whether he's even real or just a figment of Bryn's dream world or her disease.

I highly recommend this book to all readers who like high-quality suspense. The book captivates its readers and leaves them wanting more, urging them to read the sequel 'The Boy in Her Dreams'.

- Yashika Agrawal (11B)



EB's Rendezvous with Mr. Vinay Pathak

“Excitement is the bottom line, first and foremost”, says this actor. He is etched in our memory of Indian comedy, as a VJ on Channel V's The Great Indian Comedy Show, or in films like Bheja Fry.

To say that he is a versatile actor is an understatement. He was one of the few in the country to set a course in comedy when stand-up and improv wasn't even a thing in India, and his repertoire of work in showbiz makes him an actor to remember.

Mr. Vinay Pathak, is a Bollywood phenomenon with outstandingly versatile roles ranging from the humorous and eccentric Bharat Bhushan in Bheja Fry, to the diligent employee Suyash Chaturvedi who kills his colleagues in a macabre turn of events in the beautifully scripted movie, Island City. But his authenticity as a person is what most admire about him.

The BHIS Editorial Board had the golden opportunity of meeting



Mr. Vinay Pathak. The members share their account of having met the legend followed by an exclusive interview with him-

“23rd of November 2019, the day I met my first celebrity. The experience comprised a lot of feelings which can not explained in words, of which surprisingly, nervousness, is not one (if you know me, you know what kind of a nervous being I am).

Meeting Mr. Vinay Pathak was not at all like meeting a celebrity, (since I was prejudiced about celebrities being arrogant and rude). He was so humble, down-to-earth, and friendly that we did not feel awkward, hesitant or anything close to it. Of all the members, I had to pose the first question to him but being a bundle of nerves, I ended up asking the second question before the first, and he was like “that's the second question”, and I was so embarrassed.

His diligence and intellect struck me the most. The way he answered all the questions, so deeply considering all aspects, was incredible.

On a lighter note, I hope Vinay Sir you clear out the stereotype of girls with long hair having lice because I totally have none. 😊”

- Ira Fatma Khan (11C)

“Now I had never thought I'd get a chance to interview a celebrity, but here I am with an article specifically talking about how great Mr. Vinay Pathak was in person. And if it's Vinay sir, who's reading this then- 'Hi sir, it's that tall

one whom you definitely did not judge for not watching Bheja Fry'.

So how do I begin with Mr. Pathak and his charms? For one, he was right on time for the interview, which is actually quite a big deal as it says a lot about a person. Not to mention, his quick wit and wise responses to all our questions had me star-struck and tongue-tied. His comic personality and knowledgeable answers made him, all in all, a delight to be around.

You know, the type of a person whom you could listen to all day? Since what they're talking about actually makes sense? Yup. That's him. A person whose words held weight and whose voice seemed like it was used to being heard. All his answers were to the point, contradictory, elaborate, and meaningful.

Before going to meet him, I had been coaxing myself into thinking of him as just another person who I was going to interview (not that I've interviewed many people before) and definitely not a film star! With that in mind, and with no prejudice in my heart, I got to meet an experienced, and kind soul. Mr. Pathak spoke about serious topics like education, different perspectives to life, and stereotypes in a light manner but somehow his words still stressed on their importance. I didn't even know that was possible (eh, the more you know by meeting new people).

He described the beauty of having different perspectives, thoughts, and opinions by giving us a wonderful example of how we would visualize a city through our own eyes. If one would see it through a bird's eyes, while soaring through the sky, another would think of it as a haven where each and every alley is familiar.

Mr. Pathak's jovial nature had all of us engrossed in conversation. His positive vibe had us surrounding him like moths attracted to a flame. The man talked sense, and made lighthearted conversation most of the time. Sitting next to him and talking to him felt like

joining an old friend in small banter. And that's saying a LOT.

It's quite marvellous to note how a person one has known for barely three hours could leave such a lasting impression on one. Meeting Vinay Pathak was a completely new and fabulous experience. I might've seen him in only one movie (Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi, if anyone's wondering) but I'm definitely a fan now.”

- Rida Aamir (9A)

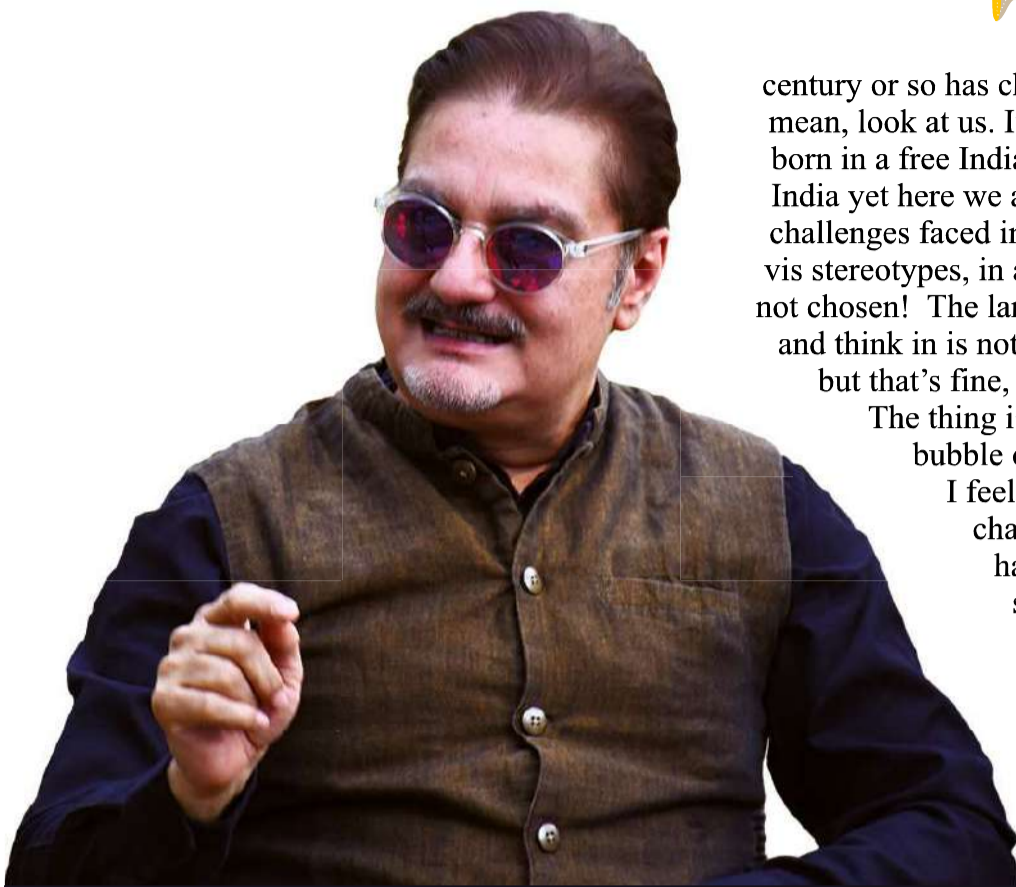
“We, the very nervous and underprepared EB kept pondering about greeting Mr. Vinay Pathak with a “Welcome to Bhopal, we have great lakes here and an aromatic chai.” He put out his hand first and, however fortunately there was no longer a necessity for any greeting. The only description of those 60 minutes is that it was a truly immersive experience and ever so enriching! Right from his views on the Indian education system to CISCE students and his doubt about me knowing Hindi well enough, every answer seemed effortlessly excellent! There is so much one can learn from him. Thank you, sir, for providing us with a valuable opportunity of getting to know you better!”

- Agrima Chopra (11B)

“One might expect a distinguished actor such as Mr. Vinay Pathak to be prim, proper, and austere. But it proved to be quite the opposite when I, along with the Editorial Board, went to interview him. In a word, Mr. Pathak was extremely 'chill'. His brilliant sense of humor and witty limericks lightened the mood, which was very helpful for the awkward ones like 'yours truly'. His answers to our questions were so profound (so much, that his words could be used as dialogues in a drama!). He seemed to us not an actor, but a friend. He could probably befriend anyone with his happy-go-lucky spirit. Truly he is the coolest, best-rounded and genuinely kind actor I've ever had the luck to meet. And Sir, if you're reading this, thank you for meeting us and being so kind. From one 'minority' to another (our little inside joke 😊).”

- Aditya Rajan (9B)





Tête-à-Tête with Mr. Vinay Pathak

What advice would you give the younger generation regarding challenging stereotypes?

First of all, I would like to elaborate on what a stereotype actually is. Just because you [Ira] and Aditya are wearing glasses, doesn't mean you both are nerdy or extremely good at academics (smiles). According to me, a stereotype can be born out of anything. And especially in younger kids, when stereotypes are registered in their heads, inadvertently by their parents, they subconsciously enforce those stereotypes without even realizing it. There are different aspects surrounding stereotypes- psychology, primal instinct, tendency and so much more! So ultimately, if the essence of stereotypes is to be understood (which it must in order to challenge them), a detailed 'why?' has to be asked. Why is it that women are considered the weaker sex? Is it because of the physical aspect that men think as strength? Men can't bear children, and it is described as one of the most painful experiences a human can undergo. Who is aesthetically strong and who is mentally strong? I feel that this debate in itself is a stereotype! It incites disparity. Why must you prove one gender is stronger than the other? Why do we have to give first prize or second prize? I believe awareness is very important. Acknowledging something as what it is, is of paramount importance.

The world we live in today is full of stereotypes. If you could change one thing about stereotypes, what would it be?

I believe that the most important one is education because I think it's the basis of all good or evil aspects. What we have done in our country (there might be other countries in similar situations) is that we think and propagate that education is of utmost importance, which holds true. But our understanding of education in the last

century or so has changed drastically! I mean, look at us. It's 2019. You were born in a free India, I was born in a free India yet here we are; discussing the challenges faced in our daily lives vis-à-vis stereotypes, in a language we have not chosen! The language we speak in and think in is not our language, per se. but that's fine, any language is fine.

The thing is that we are stuck in a bubble of our false modernity, I feel, and the people in charge of education haven't done squat since 1947! We have been raised to

believe, to a certain extent, that English is a pious language and all who speak it are automatically superior to those who don't. Speaking English has become one of the many societal norms that dominate the hierarchy of our society. I don't

mean to condemn the language or its study in any way, but the mentality that says knowing English is a 'sign of superiority' is damnable. Another aspect is the competitive nature of our education system. It is because of this restrictive bubble that our country is still rendered as a developing nation. So a quality education system that promotes progress and shuns orthodoxy must be incorporated in the country because if the education given to the youth is right, everything falls into place.

What are your views on the portrayal of the fine arts and theatre in society as 'unstable' careers?

This question can be related to the position of India in the modern world. We are a developing country, and obviously, if the citizens are struggling for food on their tables, their priorities wouldn't be '*Aaj kaunsi picture dekhni hai*'. But, of course, that is not the case anymore. Our economy is booming, irrespective of a few rough patches. We, the citizens, have made this country lucrative and prosperous. However, now we need food on the table for 1.3 billion others. So naturally, skill-based occupations are considered more volatile and one tends to go into a more profitable stream. But, defaming an entire industry is not cool. One cannot just say that the film industry is predatory, or the theatre industry is comprised of hobbyists. These empty statements are detrimental to our society.

Art plays an immeasurably important role in human life, and calling it 'inferior' or 'the easy way out' is outright evil. Art is the basic ethos of any culture, and without culture, progress is practically impossible. Culture is the identity of a place, not only a chunk of history on display for tourists. The educational pursuit of culture, art, theatre, music and so on is what makes us human. It

is said that if we were left only with the cold austerity of science, Earth would become a barren land, eternally dull and boring. But I do not agree. I feel that science in itself is an art, and art is no less a science. The unnatural beauty and symmetry of nature is art. The stars and planets on a cosmic canvas are art. The miracle of life itself is art.

Science is about the logic of things, while art is about the mindfulness of things. Art brings a smile to your heart, it compels you to take a step back and think a little bit more about happiness. It makes everything bearable, it makes everything beautiful!

According to you, what are the aspects required to do full justice to a theatrical character?

If I say that I can do full justice to a character, that would be preposterous. You just do! You do all that you can. That's the beauty of it, the spontaneity! So, if you are told to write a '*nibandh*' on Bhopal, you can pen down a multitude of things. The history, the present, salient features et cetera. But how would you, through your writing, make Bhopal your own? So, you could write about the most trivial things of Bhopal, which to you makes Bhopal yours. Imagine you were sitting on the shores of a lake. Now a tiny songbird of no particular intrigue swoops down to you, chirps, and leaves. But that bird has given you access to a world previously unknown. '*Usne tumhe ek duniya di.*' Nobody else has seen that world. It's a little secret only you and the bird know. And from that bird's perspective, you witnessed the life of a city. Bustling, teeming with life and commotion. Full of alien fragrances, flavours, and features galore. And you are the only one, besides the songbird, who can experience the splendour that is your city. That, to me, is what all art is about. The process of imagination is lovely, its nuances even more so. So much so, in fact, that you eventually fall in love with the process, lost in the thrill of it. That portrayal of what the eyes of the character observe, what their heart feels is what acting is all about. So you have to make yourself love the process, in order to become one with it. That's how you prepare for your character. But we are humans after all, so there is always room for improvement.

You stood out with your character in 'Bheja Fry'. What other plans and projects can your fans look forward to in the near future?

Well, we have a good amount of work in our hands. I'm travelling with four different plays, as we speak. This is a very peculiar thing we (theatre group) do, wherein we travel across India and perform four different Shakespeare plays, but as a clown company, reinterpreting the stories. 'Nothing like Lear' is one of them. We also have 'Hamlet the Clown Prince', there's a humorous rendition of 'Macbeth' which we call 'What's Done is Done' and others as well.



The World We See



Image credit: weheartit.com

This world consists of many things peculiar,
Yet one finds nothing so special in particular;
Running a race, we often forget to look around,
Buried under our hasty world there is a secret sound;
A melody so lovely, but to many it remains unfound.
Focused on our targets our eyes remain fixed,
Unable to see the beauties so wonderfully mixed,
With our surroundings hiding in plain sight-
In plain sight, there also are terrible things,
Not everything glitters, not everything sings,
There is sorrow along with joy in this world of ours,
Both concealed by our ignorance.
There are shadows to every light,
A dark deadly black to every white,
Yet both remain out of our sight,
As we see it in a monotone of grey.
Maybe because we fear the gloom that we ignore the glow,
Maybe we don't want the pain that comes with bliss,
That is why we clamp ourselves up in our own little worlds,
Clutching to our little dreams to keep us warm,
Or perhaps clinging to someone else's to keep us from harm.
We ignore this world and keep ourselves invested in our lives,
Maybe that's why the world seems dreary and dull,
While we look up with hope to some blessed dream,
To add color to our little world.

- Juveria Fatima (6F)



Image credit: baomoi.com

Black Hole

Darkness will swallow me whole,
Once I fall into this black hole.
I'm standing on the edge,
Waiting for my death.

I look around
But there's no one to be found;
No one to go through this journey
With me.

I don't know what to do,
I'm stuck with my thoughts,
Contemplating whether or not
I should give up yet.

Darkness has swallowed me whole,
I have fallen into this black hole.
Over the edge,
Awaits the sweet release of death.

Drowning in this darkness,
I'm counting seconds.
Waiting for death,
My last breath.

- Shreya Patel (11C)

Stress never gets over



Image credit: tamaradonn.com

Tough and obstinate
Exams never go away
Difficult and annoying,
They are here to stay,
Boring and tedious,
They will always seem.
For them to get over,
You will always dream.
So instead of waiting,
Losing continuously,
Just focus on doing well
And prove yourself worthy.

- Leeza Khan (5A)

If I Were A Bird

I wish I were a bird
Mighty, prominent, and white.
I would dance among the birds,
All so beautiful, stunning, and bright.

I would fly above the clouds
To hear the bird sing.

I would purge the evil powers,
With the quick flap of my wings.

I would roam around my sky,
Playing with birds and fishes,
I would reveal myself to animals,
And grant their dreams and wishes.

I would banish the ghosts away,
With my magical beak.

I would flood the world with love,
If I were a bird.

- Janhvi Malviya (5E)

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(HOP)E IN A DREAM

Wandering in the forest all alone,
Brings me to the middle of nowhere.
I never thought I'd do something like this.
Never thought I'd be so grown.
Watching the birds, watching the trees,
Flying above the highest of clouds.
So lost walking around,
Neither to know North, nor to know South.
The flowing river has a noise,
Peaceful and serene is its voice.
Nature has its awesome grace,
Forever is this alluring pace,
When the leaves dance,
A new wind blows,
When the birds sing,
A new song is composed.
I open my eyes,
Wanting to scream.
Now all I know is,
It was a dream.

- Alisha Aslam (8E)

Image credit: utthere.com

The House Mice

There was a mouse in my house,
She gave birth to little ones.
The little mice ran all around,
Bringing everything upside down.
Oh boy! They got us going round & round!
They had big ears and tiny legs,
"Oh get them out!" My mom begged.
We looked high and we looked low,
But they ran around with us in tow.
They finally nibbled on some bread and milk,
And ran away to their home, I think!
I hope I don't spot them too soon,
As they have me dancing to their tune!



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- Krishnakshi Merchant (4C)



Should developing countries like ours prioritise nuclear power?

India is a populous nation with a staggering 1.3 billion population and counting. As a developing nation with rising demands and limited resources, nuclear energy could come to its rescue. Many people think nuclear power can bring harm and cause a lot of disasters, which is true to some extent but the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Moreover, we can prevent such mishaps if we are careful.

After 20 years of stagnation, plans to use nuclear power for electricity generation are being revived around the world due to the following reasons:

- Nuclear-generated electricity contributes little, on a life-cycle basis, to greenhouse gas emissions and could, therefore, help in solving global warming problems.
- The eventual introduction of a carbon tax on fossil fuel use, as one instrument to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from thermoelectric stations, would make nuclear-generated electricity more competitive vis-à-vis the use of natural gas and other fossil fuels for that purpose.
- Nuclear energy can contribute to energy security, reducing or even eliminating the need for

natural gas or other fossil fuels which are being used frequently for electricity generation.

Most people associate the word 'nuclear energy' with war and weapons but not all uses of nuclear energy are war associated. There are nuclear scientists around the world who are burning their midnight oil to make this world a better place through nuclear power. For example, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is an international organisation that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons. The IAEA was established as an autonomous organisation on 29th July 1957. India too is a part of the IAEA and is slowly but surely getting better.

The only sensible justification for developing countries to go nuclear is to enhance the security of supply. This was an important consideration some 30 years ago in France and Japan, both of which

installed large parks of nuclear



Image credit: canaltech.com.br

reactors. Today, nuclear electricity accounts for 78 percent of the total electricity produced in France, and 30 percent in Japan. However, there is a fundamental difference between the problems of these countries decades ago and the developing countries today. France and Japan didn't have other options, having exhausted at that time indigenous fuels (or hydro) to generate electricity. The choice was to import fossil fuels (gas and oil, and even coal) or set up nuclear reactors.

According to me, developing countries like ours should prioritise nuclear power but should be wise about making such a decision. They should also aim to use nuclear energy for the betterment of the country rather than using it for war.

- Bhaavani Dehalwar (8A)

The Serrated Mountains

From my Himalayan expeditions

"The mountains were bone - white and loomed in the distance. We made our way towards them as we had to make base camp by nightfall. They were flour white and brooded over the land. Just as we



Image credit: britannica.com

approached, a chute of snow detached itself and went trundling down one of the mountains. It slid over the knotted edge and then went crashing into the chasm below. The silence that followed was spine chilling. It froze our marrow to think that we would be climbing in these conditions tomorrow.

The heaven-touching apex of the mountain was drenched in brilliant light. Spikes of thin light impaled the snow in a bristling, moving line. We assumed that the heat had displaced the snow from the hip of the time chiselled mountain. All across our line of sight, the tips of the mountain range stuck up like a row of thorns. Swaddled around them were necklaces of powdery snow. The air was chilling and numbing, rather arctic cold as we came closer to the base camp. We could smell a pot roast being cooked. The unmistakable whiff of chargrilled lamb wafted to our noses. Dinner that night was cosmic."

- Sunjana Singh (10D)

Permanent Impermanence

Humans are defined by their ability to change. The prehistoric sapiens would never have dreamt of flying machines or industries, and yet, here we are. Change bears an interesting correlation with intelligence. I would even go as far as to say, that change is that edifying impetus that has enabled humanity to reach the great heights that it has today. However, change is often rendered useless if there is no apt response.

Humans have reacted to several stimuli that have helped them to become a better version of themselves. What has been just described is what has now been dubbed 'evolution'. An exemplary instance would be the fact that humans advanced from the rudimentary stages of a flying machine (developed by the Wright brothers in 1903) to the first space mission (the Vostok program, launched in 1961 by the USSR) in a matter of 58 years!

One of the most sizeable changes in human history occurred in merely five decades. One might even say that change, along with a befitting reaction to it, had a potent catalyzing effect on our progression.

The ability to change dictates how well one adapts to a certain stimulus, and in a world where change is the only constant entity, the ability to conform to these incessant variations in our society, culture, education and even environment is quite essential for proper human development. If one remains in their static and orthodox mindset or condition, their mentality is often regarded as uninformed or obsolete. Dwelling in one's past or not changing with time is a massive detriment to one's growth as a person. The root cause of social discrimination, bigotry, bias and prejudices can be traced back to a collective mentality that was not ready to change. These myopic ideologies are all created due to the fact that certain groups of people refuse to accept change and, in turn, deny themselves the right to progress.

Now, in the purely didactic sense, change is of paramount importance when it comes to the growth and development of children. Education, or learning, is also dependent on the change as change is conducive to a better understanding of one's surroundings. For example, a gradual change in the learning atmosphere of a child is introduced when he/she progresses from middle school to high school, or better yet, from school education to collegiate education. This helps the child in comprehending the global and local affairs taking place. A college student will obviously have more clarity on the subject of governance and other relevant issues than a school student. This is because of the gradual alterations in their learning patterns. However, the ability to change is instrumental in one's intellectual progress, which means that a proper response to the change is required. Thus, change's relation with intellect is two-pronged.

It is very well evident that change is a prerequisite, a sort of fillip for intellectual progress, and the ability to accept it, nurture it and allow it to enhance oneself is what truly defines intelligence. Change is human nature, and intelligence is what humans nurture within themselves.

- Aditya Rajan (9B)

'The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.'

- Albert Einstein

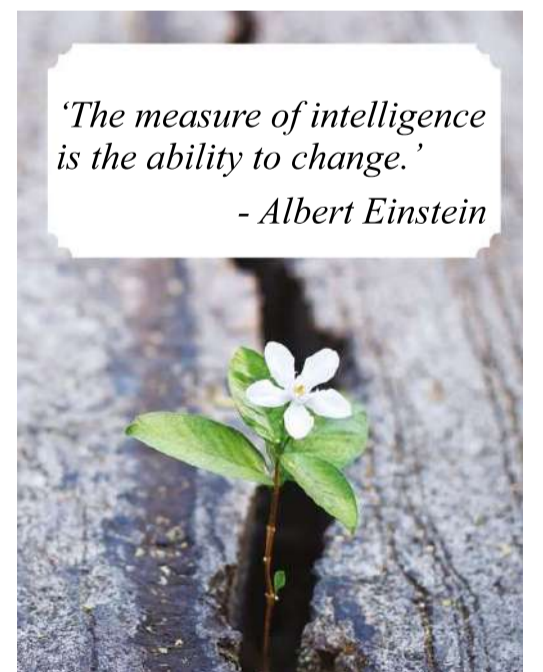
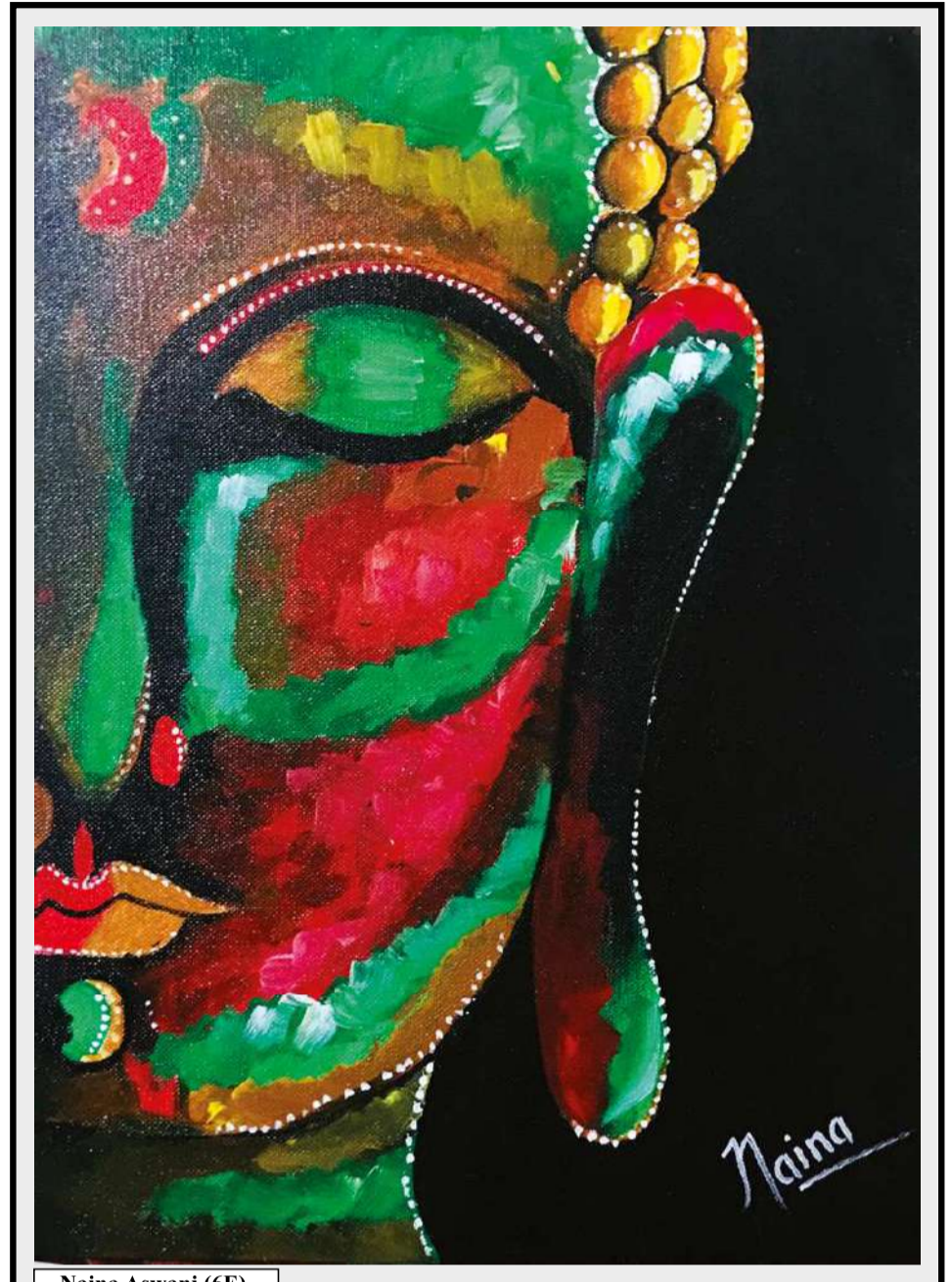


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Prisha Arora (7B)



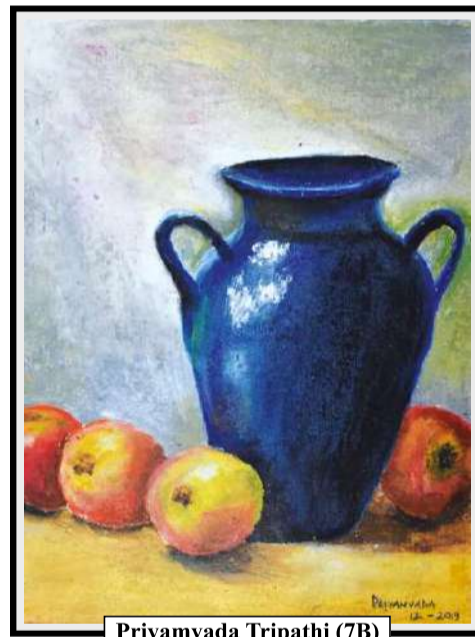
Naina Aswani (6E)



Keya Sharma (6A)



Alfiya Hussain (8C)



Priyamvada Tripathi (7B)



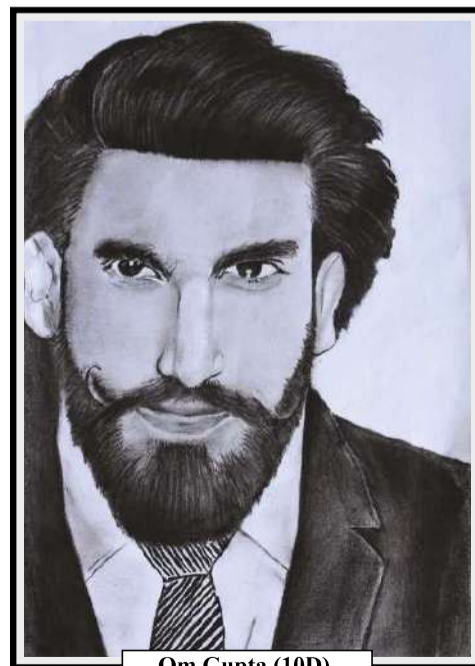
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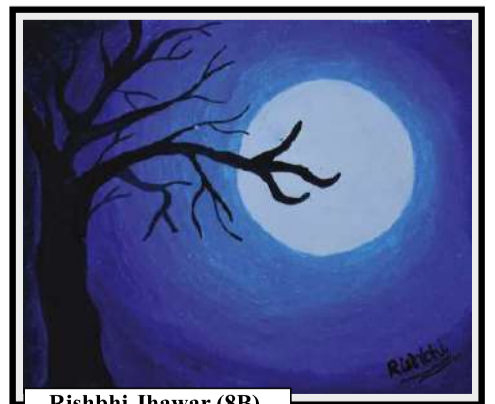
Kashvi Motwani (11C)



Vaani Dosi (3A)



Nysha Agrawal (3B)



Rishbi Jhavar (8B)